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What have you been doing since the publication of your article in JPUR, volume 5?

Since the publication of my article in JPUR I graduated from Purdue in 2017 with a BA in Classics and a minor in English. I then moved to Washington, DC, to work toward my MA in Classics at the University of Maryland–College Park, which I received in 2019. Upon graduating from UMD, I moved to New York City to begin working toward my PhD in Classics at Columbia University.

What are your career goals?

I hope to be offered a tenure-track position in Classics at a university after I receive my PhD.

How did the research you did as an undergraduate at Purdue impact your current endeavors? What is the value of undergraduate research?

The research experience I gained during my time as an undergraduate at Purdue was incredibly influential on the work that I currently do. I view my undergraduate research experience as the foundation upon which my current research has grown and developed, and it enabled me to embark on the path that would

eventually lead me to the PhD program at Columbia. Undergraduate research is essential in initiating a person’s development as a researcher, as someone who engages critically with the world around them. It encourages them to find their voice, to further develop their current interests and craft new ones that will take them in directions they have yet to explore.

How did the faculty mentor relationship impact you during your time at Purdue?

The faculty mentor relationship that I developed with Elizabeth Mercier positively impacted my research experience while at Purdue. Passionate, genuine, kind, and brilliant, Liz not only provided me with the necessary resources to carry out my research and intellectually develop, but she also instilled within me the confidence that one must have in order to carry out their research.

How did the experience of publishing an article in JPUR benefit you? What advice would you give to other undergraduates at Purdue who are interested in contributing to the journal?

Publishing an article in JPUR was incredibly beneficial.

It not only exposed me to the process of writing an article but also taught me how to write effectively about a specialized topic for a broader audience. For those who are interested in publishing in the journal, I very much encourage it. Publishing in JPUR allows you to experience the peer review process that will be required to publish in the academic journals of your field. Furthermore, the reviewers provide you with invaluable feedback on your writing that you will be able to implement in all of your work going forward.



OUT OF THE BOX
MEDDLING WITH MEDIEVAL MANUSCRIPTS

Two undergraduate students, one graduate, and their instructor work to transcribe and translate medieval Latin manuscripts in order to make them accessible to a wider audience. The official website of the Purdue Paleography Project is purduepaleography.cla.purdue.edu/index.html.

The year is 1490. A scribe hunches over a piece of parchment, quill in hand. He refers to another manuscript and hesitates. “FACT?” his master shouts. The quill of the startled scribe accidentally marks the parchment, allowing students at Purdue University to contemplate the meaning of the mark 526 years later.

The Purdue University Virginia Kelly Karnes Archives and Special Collections Research Center houses a collection of ancient and medieval manuscript leaves that date from 30 BCE through the fifteenth century, and are written in ancient Greek, Latin, ancient Egyptian, and Persian. It is believed that Purdue University came into possession of these leaves when librarian Eleanor Cammack ordered the manuscripts from a book shop in Southern California in the mid-twentieth century, as it was believed that acquiring manuscripts increased the importance of the library.²

Predating October 2014, Elizabeth Mercier, a continuing lecturer in the School of Languages and Cultures, brought the collection of leaves out of storage to provide never-before-available transcriptions and translations of those that were written in Latin. This includes a leaf from an *incunabulum*,³ a leaf from a medieval antiphonary, leaves from St. Jerome’s Bible,⁴ one leaf from a Book of Hours, one leaf from a Roman breviary, and one leaf from the twelfth-century theologian Peter Lombard.⁵ Mercier also began the project with a desire to provide additional images and information about the leaves to allow for ease of access by anyone wanting to learn more. In the words of Mercier:

“The beauty of this project, for me, is being able to provide for students that incredible interaction with an unedited text. The wormholes, the primitive repairs to the parchment, the ink slips, all of these things instantly bring the student in direct contact with the history that the Latin language spans.”

For the spring 2016 semester, Mercier, graduate student mentor Dustin Meyer, and third-year undergraduate student researchers, Sabrina Mielczarski and Marissa Hicks, focused on designing their own website that supplements the digitized leaves, explains the project in detail, provides tutorials on how to read the manuscripts, and links to additional resources.



A website created by Mercier, Meyer, Mielczarski, and Hicks explains the Paleography Project in detail and provides those interested with tutorials on how to read the manuscripts, as well as links to additional resources.

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What advice would you give to other undergraduates at Purdue who are interested in doing research?

To the undergraduates who are interested in conducting research: be creative. Unapologetically ask questions and push the boundaries of your field to its limits. Situate yourself in those areas of research in which you have a genuine interest. Most importantly, be confident in your unique voice and in your ideas.

Hicks, S., & Mielczarski, S. (2016). Out of the box: Meddling with medieval manuscripts. *Journal of Purdue Undergraduate Research*, 6, 97–100.
<http://dx.doi.org/10.5703/1288284316218>