

ARMA (Postsecondary) Learning Scenario 4

Title

**Medieval Book Production: Manufacturing the Printed Book
(The first printed books, the book market, book makers, sellers and consumers)**

Author(s)

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Abstract

This lesson plan introduces post-secondary students to the medieval printed book trade in the late Middle Ages, focusing on the editing and manufacturing process, the book market, as well as how the physical appearance of the page evolved over time. Students will learn to navigate available digitized collections (such as Europeana and Gallica) to gain access to these books and consult them in detail. The aim of this activity is to come into contact with the first printed books (incunabula) up until the year 1500 and beyond, in order to understand their physical qualities, their commercial value and the ways in which they imitated the appearance of the medieval manuscript and evolved with the trade, developing into the modern book.

*If used in conjunction with Learning Scenario 3 (Book Trade in High to Late Middle Ages: Manufacturing the Manuscript) students will be able to further compare and contrast what they have learned in each part and realize that these two methods of book fabrication were not mutually exclusive and that, on the contrary, they coexisted for decades after the invention of the printing press.

Table of summary

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|------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Subject / Field of study | Medieval Studies, Books and Digital Media Studies, Art History, (Medieval) (European) Language and Literature, Book History, Literary History |
| Topic | The early printed book: How was it manufactured? What did it look like? How did it change over time and why? Who were the consumers? The producers? What characteristics defined an important center of trade? |
| Is Part of ... / Category | ARMA (The Art of Reading in the Middle Ages) |
| Prior Knowledge of Students | This learning scenario is created for postsecondary students (17-25 years old). First or second-year BA students (e.g. Book and Media Studies, Codicology, Art History, etc.) as well as students in graduating classes at school. |
| Preparation time | Approx. 60 min. |
| Teaching time | 90 min. |



Online resources used

- **Medieval Book Production: Manufacturing the Printed Book** (worksheet and glossary):
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/14i5nE71uWwEe26G7rshQPOU6Hz7P39KF/view>
- Europeana Blog: **From Manuscript Production to the Printing Press**
(<https://www.europeana.eu/en/blog/from-manuscript-production-to-the-printing-press>)

Online digitized early printed books on Gallica:

- **The Romance of Jason and Medea by Raoul Le Fèvre** : Bibliothèque nationale de France, département Réserve des livres rares, RES-Y2-349
(<https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k1502285s/f124.planchecontact.r=Biblioth%C3%A8que%20nationale%20de%20France,%20d%C3%A9partement%20R%C3%A9serve%20des%20livres%20rares,%20RES-Y2-349>)
- **The Romance of Jason and Medea by Raoul Le Fèvre** : Bibliothèque nationale de France, département Réserve des livres rares, RES-Y2-153
(<https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k15022866/f153.planchecontact>)

Europeana resources used

Preparation at home :

- **Medieval Book Production: Manufacturing the Printed Book** (worksheet and glossary)
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/14i5nE71uWwEe26G7rshQPOU6Hz7P39KF/view>
- Europeana Blog: **From Manuscript Production to the Printing Press**
(<https://www.europeana.eu/en/blog/from-manuscript-production-to-the-printing-press>)

Digitized books from Europeana:

- [Manuscript] **Legenda Aurea by Jacobus de la Varagine (15th century)**: Bibliothèque nationale de France. Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal. Ms-1091
(https://www.europeana.eu/fr/item/9200519/ark_12148_btv1b55008902r)
(<https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b55008902r/f24.planchecontact>)
- **Legenda Aurea by Jacobus de la Varagine (1475)**: Bibliothèque nationale de France, département Réserve des livres rares, RES-H-292
(https://www.europeana.eu/it/item/9200520/12148_bpt6k858662g)
(<https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k858662g/f25.planchecontact>)

- **Legenda Aurea by Jacobus de la Varagine (1499)** : Bibliothèque nationale de France, département Réserve des livres rares, RES-H-1120
(https://www.europeana.eu/it/item/9200520/12148_btv1b8604282b)
(<https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b8604282b/f29.planchecontact>)
- **Le livre de bonne vie appelé Mandevie**: Bibliothèque nationale de France, département Arsenal, RESERVE 4-BL-4355
(https://www.europeana.eu/it/item/9200520/12148_bpt6k15113000)
(<https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k15113000/f11.planchecontact>)
- **The Divine Comedy** : Bibliothèque nationale de France, département Arsenal, RESERVE 8-BL-6810
(https://www.europeana.eu/it/item/9200520/12148_bpt6k1511348t)
(<https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k1511348t/f8.planchecontact>)
- **Biblia pauperum** : Bibliothèque nationale de France, département Réserve des livres rares, XYLO-2
(https://www.europeana.eu/it/item/9200520/12148_bpt6k1040368w)
(<https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k1040368w/f12.item.r=biblia%20pauperum>)
- **Mainz Psalter**: Bibliothèque nationale de France, département Réserve des livres rares, VELINS-223
(https://www.europeana.eu/it/item/9200520/12148_bpt6k994191w)
(<https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k994191w/f9.planchecontact>)
- **The Chronicles of Nuremberg**: Bibliothèque nationale de France, département Estampes et photographie, RESERVE FOL-QE-55
(https://www.europeana.eu/it/item/9200520/12148_btv1b8490060t)
(<https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b8490060t/f311.planchecontact>)
- **The Gutenberg Bible**: Bibliothèque nationale de France, département Réserve des livres rares, VELINS-67
(https://www.europeana.eu/it/item/9200520/12148_bpt6k9912811)
(<https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k9912811/f13.planchecontact>)
- **Letter of indulgence**: Bibliothèque nationale de France, département Réserve des livres rares, E-1137
(https://www.europeana.eu/it/item/9200520/12148_bpt6k9921980)
(<https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k9921980/f2.item>)

Integration into the curriculum

This LS can be adapted in different curricula and/or sections.

Aim of the lesson

1. To learn how early printed books were manufactured and what they looked like.
2. To discover how the medieval book trade evolved after the invention of the printing press.
3. To understand what types of books were printed and who read them.
4. To discover the similarities and differences between early printed books and medieval manuscripts, and how they evolved over time.
5. To get in contact with digitized early printed books present on the Europeana platform as well as to learn how to use the Gallica platform to gain access to medieval manuscripts.

Outcome of the lesson

1. Students will learn how to use online sources to observe and study digitized printed books.
2. Students will learn how to differentiate early printed books from manuscripts, while understanding how similar they were throughout the first years of the printed press.
3. Students will explore the Europeana platform as a research tool.

Trends

- Cooperative Learning

Activities

| Name of activity | Procedure | Time |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|
| Preparation at Home | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ask your students to prepare at home prior to this lesson. They should read the worksheet. <p>Worksheet: Medieval Book Production: Manufacturing the Printed Book:https://drive.google.com/file/d/14i5nE71uWwEe26G7rshQPOU6Hz7P39KF/view</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• They should also read the following Europeana blog post: From Manuscript Production to the Printing Press https://www.europeana.eu/en/blog/from-manuscript-production-to-the-printing-press | Approx. 60 min |
| Introduction | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Introducing the topic:• Guiding questions: <i>How were early printed books manufactured?</i> <i>How many processes are involved in the fabrication of an early printed book?</i> <i>What aspects of their production determine the difference between their monetary value and that of the medieval manuscript?</i> <i>Who were involved in the manufacturing of a manuscript?</i> <i>In what ways were their production and trade different from those of the medieval manuscript?</i> <i>Who were the readers of these books?</i> | 10 min |

| Name of activity | Procedure | Time |
|------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|
| Introducing Europeana and Gallica | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to find a printed book on Europeana, following the links to the holding institution: Gallica • Introduce the basic functionalities of Gallica: • First: Access the printed book by searching its shelf mark on the main catalogue of the Bibliothèque nationale de France: (https://catalogue.bnf.fr/index.do) • A first global view of the object is available through its bibliographical record. Here students will find the link that will allow them to access the digitized document on Gallica. • Click on the link to the digitalized document: • Show the different viewing, zooming, cropping, page-researching, instrumentation • Then: Show the download options (the whole document in .pdf format or single page or image in .jpg format, perma-link, etc.) • Now that you are more familiar with Gallica, let's take a look at some early printed books! | 10 min |
| Exploring the medieval manuscript | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exploring the early printed book: • Looking closely at 3 digitized books (one manuscript copy and two printed copies of the <i>Legenda Aurea</i> of Jacobus of Varagine): What are some evident similarities among the three books? In what ways are they different? • The materiality of the book: Based on aspects such as page layout, typography, size, margin width, ornamentation, etc., what can we infer about how book production is changing? Can we infer anything about the choices made by the publishers? The context of the book? The relative value of each book? | 20 min |
| Students work in groups | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students can explore the other books, writing down the salient aspects of each one. • Each group takes on 2 or 3 books and writes up a brief description: Title, date, place of production, dimensions, and shelf mark • Based on the type of book and its context, ask each group to justify any choices made by the publisher (taking into consideration things such as: typeface, the presence of illustrations, of color, of ornamentation [handmade or printed], the presence of a title page, the language of the text, etc.) • Based on these aspects, what can students infer about the type of market the book belonged to, its price, and its readership. | 20 min |

| Name of activity | Procedure | Time |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|
| Discussion and final thoughts | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Each group briefly presents the books they have explored, presenting their answers, justifications and hypotheses. Possible questions for further discussion: What did they discover about these books via Europeana and Gallica/BnF? What types of books did they see? What reading contexts did they belong to? What were some interesting characteristics of each book? What aspects allowed them to understand what the book was for and what context it belonged to? What information did the page layout give about when the book was made? What information did the types of script give about the genre of each book? | 30 min |

Annex

- Europeana Blog: **From Manuscript Production to the Printing Press**
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(<https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k1502285s/f124.planchecontact.r=Biblioth%C3%A8que%20nationale%20de%20France,%20d%C3%A9partement%20R%C3%A9serve%20des%20livres%20rares,%20RES-Y2-349>)
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- **Legenda Aurea by Jacobus de la Varagine (1475):** Bibliothèque nationale de France, département Réserve des livres rares, RES-H-292
https://www.europeana.eu/it/item/9200520/12148_bpt6k858662q
<https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k858662q/f25.planchecontact>

- **Legenda Aurea by Jacobus de la Varagine (1499) :** Bibliothèque nationale de France, département Réserve des livres rares, RES-H-1120
https://www.europeana.eu/it/item/9200520/12148_btv1b8604282b
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- **The Divine Comedy :** Bibliothèque nationale de France, département Arsenal, RESERVE 8-BL-6810
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<https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k1511348t/f8.planchecontact>

- **Biblia pauperum :** Bibliothèque nationale de France, département Réserve des livres rares, XYLO-2
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<https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k1040368w/f12.item.r=biblia%20pauperum>

- **Mainz Psalter:** Bibliothèque nationale de France, département Réserve des livres rares, VELINS-223
https://www.europeana.eu/it/item/9200520/12148_bpt6k994191w
<https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k994191w/f9.planchecontact>

- **The Chronicles of Nuremberg:** Bibliothèque nationale de France, département Estampes et photographie, RESERVE FOL-QE-55
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<https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b8490060t/f311.planchecontact>

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