

Institute of English Studies, School of Advanced Study, University of London

Medieval Manuscripts Seminar: Spring Term 2020

Dr Seng T Lee Centre for Manuscript and Book Studies, Senate House Library, London WC1E 7HU

All meetings at 5.30 p.m., Tuesdays, followed by a wine reception

14 January 2020

James P. Carley, Distinguished Research Professor, York University, Toronto

John Leland and Asser: Otho A XII revisited

11 February

Elaine Treharne, Roberta Bowman Denning Professor of Humanities, Stanford University

Hazardous guesses in dating and localizing English manuscripts, 1175-1225

This paper will consider how scholars determine the 'when' and 'where' of palaeographical features that belong to a period of significant transition in scripts and scribal practices. How much does a cautious and non-committal approach assist in moving knowledge forward? I will argue for the benefit of hazardous guesses, particularly in providing broader contexts for future investigation of written materials produced between 1175 and 1225.

24 March

POSTPONED

Laura Cleaver, Senior Lecturer in Medieval Manuscripts, Institute of English Studies

Wilfrid Voynich's dealings in manuscripts (c. 1898-1930) and why they matter

At the peak of his business, trading in rare books and manuscripts, Wilfrid Voynich's letterhead listed offices in London, Paris, Florence and New York. The resulting documentation of his purchases and sales of manuscripts is now widely scattered, but the Grolier Club in New York houses the archives from his American offices. From this archive and his catalogues, it is possible to reconstruct Voynich's dealings in medieval manuscripts, chart the movement of manuscripts between London and New York, and analyse the place of manuscripts in both his broader business and his clients' collecting patterns. This evidence challenges the dominant narrative of America as the great recipient of manuscripts in this period and instead suggests a more nuanced history of interest in medieval manuscripts in the first half of the twentieth century.

Organisers: Julia Crick, King's College London

David Rundle, University of Kent