

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

Medieval Manuscripts Seminar 2020-21

Autumn Programme

13 October 2020

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

[Wilfrid Voynich's dealings in manuscripts \(c. 1898-1930\) and why they matter \(watch this seminar online\)](#)

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.

Tuesday, 3 November 2020

Lisa Fagin Davis, Medieval Academy of America, and Christoph Flueler, University of Fribourg, Director, Fragmentarium project

Fragmentology: what, why and where next?

This session brings together two leading experts in the field of fragment studies. Prof Davis will focus on the historical context of manuscript fragments, both chronological (i.e. the timeline for binding fragments vs. initial cuttings vs. leaf sets) and geographical (the development of the corpus of fragments in Europe vs. North America). Prof Flueler will ask 'part of what?' How do we work with fragments? How do descriptions of manuscripts differ from descriptions of fragments? What is the subject and working methods of fragmentology? What are the limits of this new discipline? This will be followed by a roundtable discussion allowing you to provide your insights.

Tuesday, 1 December 2020

Dr Caitríona Ó Dochartaigh, Department of Early and Medieval Irish, University College Cork

The Relationship between the Manuscripts of the ‘Irish *Liber Hymnorum*’

The title *Liber Hymnorum* refers in an Irish context to a collection of hymns in Latin and Irish, as well as much ancillary material, preserved in two extant manuscripts (Trinity College Dublin 1441 and University College Dublin OFM A2) It is doubtful whether the *Liber Hymnorum* codices were intended for regular liturgical celebration, since each hymn is preceded by a preface detailing the supposed place, time and cause of its composition as well as the author. Certain elements of the provenance and transmission of the manuscripts can only be sketched and the relationship between the two surviving witnesses is only partially understood. It is clear, however, that the codices are not reproductions of the same exemplar but the precise relationship between these two important sources of medieval Irish hymnody merits further investigation.

Tuesday, 23 February 2021

Dr Stewart J Brookes, Lyell Fellow in Latin Palaeography, Bodleian Library

Dilts Fellow in Palaeography, Lincoln College

Computer-Assisted Palaeography: What? Why? Whither?

With many of us locked away at home and unable to spend time with our beloved manuscripts, the large-scale digitisation projects of recent years have taken on an unanticipated importance. Arguably, the current situation has sharpened our awareness of the limitations and strengths of encountering medieval manuscripts in the digital arena. With that in mind, this paper will explore a number of questions: what would we like to do beyond browsing with the “Turning the Pages”-style and IIIF viewers provided by repositories? How might letter-forms or iconographic motifs be catalogued, curated and compared to support evidence-based scholarship? How fine-grained should our descriptions be? And do Digital Humanities projects and Machine Learning change the scope or even the nature of our research questions?

Tuesday, 2 March 2021

Ainoa Castro Correa, University of Salamanca

The Secret Life of Writing: A Holistic Palaeography Project

Dr Castro has been recently awarded an ERC-funded project entitled "The Secret Life of Writing: People, Script and Ideas in the Iberian Peninsula (c. 900-1200)". In this seminar she will tell us about how this project came up to being, discussing the new and somehow strikingly holistic method upon which it builds, its aims and first results.

30 March Early Career Researcher double bill

Stephanie Azzarello, History of Art, University of Cambridge

Divine Riddles & Monastic Puzzles: Palaeography and the Dismembered Manuscript

During my PhD, I focused on reconstructing a now-dismembered series of illuminated choir books, produced in Venice in the early fifteenth-century. This series of manuscripts—made for the Camaldolese monastery of San Mattia di Murano—was lavishly illuminated and contained script and music notation. In this talk, I will present some of the intellectual tools that I used to ‘recreate’ the original liturgical order in which the excised images once existed. I will discuss how palaeography played an important role in this process.

Alison Ray, Carnegie Project Archivist (Medieval Manuscripts), Trinity College Dublin Library

The pecia system of the Paris university book trade and its users, 1250-1330

Paris was the leading centre of the university book trade in the thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries, and the study of wide-ranging written and visual evidence available in surviving pecia manuscripts demonstrates the major influence of Paris intellectual life on English scholars, preachers and illuminators. The textual content, decoration and user-added marginalia of university-produced manuscripts provides a unique insight into the workings of the English cultural community at Paris during this period.

Tuesday, 30 March 2021

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Meeting on Zoom, 5.30 p.m. London time, link available on request and on IES website: <https://www.ies.sas.ac.uk/events/research-seminars/medieval-manuscripts-seminar>

Organisers:

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