

International Graduate Symposium
University of Vienna, Vienna, September 1-2, 2017

The Book as a Medium – Medieval Manuscripts and Their Functions

As an object of scientific investigation every manuscript is a matter where several fields of research intersect. Thus, working with manuscripts generates the wish to improve interdisciplinarity by connecting different subject areas and interlinking their specific approaches and professional questions. With this in mind, we invite junior researchers whose work explores 12th-to-15th-century manuscripts from Euro-Mediterranean regions to participate in our meeting on “The Book as a Medium – Medieval Manuscripts and Their Functions”.

A single look at a medieval manuscript reveals a highly complex structure. It comprises numerous material components such as writing materials and the binding, on the one hand, and medial functions of the manuscript in its role as an intellectual creation for the purpose of knowledge transfer, on the other hand. Traditionally, the work of most experts serves disciplinary interests and focuses on specific characteristics like illumination or text. However, in the course of studies it usually turns out that medieval books can be more than mere repositories of knowledge. In fact, the varying and countless combinations of content, writing, layout, binding and, in many cases, illumination produced examples of highly individualised design, all of which served different areas of interest such as law, theology, liturgy, sciences, philosophy, literature, music, and medicine, and rooted in different institutional contexts like universities, monasteries etc. In addition to this, books met highly specific requirements in terms of representative, symbolic or performative functions. So, today, many of the manuscripts shed light not only on the persons who ordered them and the history of libraries but also on questions of knowledge transfer in medieval times, and they carry information about the trading of manuscripts and the process of book production as such.

Our meeting of doctoral students at the Vienna University is designed to bring together junior researchers who wish to submit their reflections on the functions of Euro-Mediterranean manuscripts from the 12th to the 15th century to an international and interdisciplinary audience. Addressees are all those in the humanities and cultural studies whose contributions will help to deepen our expertise on the subject. To strengthen the international network of junior researchers is a further goal of our conference.

Possible session titles would be:

- 1) Books and their commissioners
- 2) Books as objects of representation
- 3) Books in context of law/jurisprudence
- 4) Codicology
- 5) Text and image
- 6) Books as performative objects
- 7) Books endowing identity
- 8) Books in liturgical use
- 9) Books and knowledge transfer
- 10) Books and music

Call for Papers:

Please send an abstract or proposal (max. 500 words) and a short CV (max. 150 words) until March, 3th 2017 to:

tagung.buchfunktion.kunstgeschichte@univie.ac.at

Accepted participants will receive notification by e-mail not later than April 1st 2017. The entire presentation should not last longer than 20 minutes. A section of three presentations is followed by a discussion (max. 30 minutes) with focus on specific approaches and professional questions of different disciplines.

Journey/Accommodation:

1. The meeting takes place from September 1 to September 2, 2017 at the Department of History of Art at the University of Vienna.

Institut für Kunstgeschichte, Universität Wien
Universitätscampus Hof 9
Spitalgasse 2
A-1090 Wien

2. Participants are asked to organise their travel and accommodation. Costs cannot be incurred entirely, but we try to cover a portion of the expenses. Further information will be sent in time.

3. At September 1, 2017 we will visit the library of the monastery Augustiner Chorherrenstift Klosterneuburg. Detailed information will be provided in time.

For additional information, please e-mail:

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Proposals (abstract, CV):

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