



CFP: *Monastic libraries and book collections in times of crisis, c. 1000- c. 1600.*

International Medieval Congress, Leeds. 1-4 July 2024.

Deadline 12 September 2023.

The proposed session(s) focuses on religious communities' responses to crisis in relation to convent libraries and book collections. We aim to investigate what happened to medieval convent libraries and book collections in times of peril during the Middle Ages, but also the early modern period and up until our time. At certain times, these changes were detrimental and meant the original context of collections was lost. On other occasions, crises' effects were incremental in book collections of various religious institutions.

Written documents and book collections were used to address the economic, social, political, and cultural crises that affected religious communities. We aim to discuss how manuscripts and book collections were used to mitigate or reject the impact of external or internal crises, to create a narrative about these upheavals and to foster renewal.

We aim to establish a broader comparative and geographical approach opening new perspectives, provoking new questions, and reformulating questions widely debated in the historiography.

Suggested topics on book collections in times of crisis from any geographic area and encompassing a wide chronological framework may include, but are not limited to:

- Dismembering and dispersion of manuscripts in times of peril. How could these collections be interpreted anew? What happened to the identity of these collections in their new surroundings? How were these 'orphan' collections used by their, potentially, new owners? Was there re-assembly?
- The post-medieval life and *Nachleben* of book collections. Dispersion and loss as a result of wars, turmoil, and ecclesiastical suppression during the modern times.
- Assembling of manuscripts as a result of crisis. Medieval and early modern recycling history of manuscripts, and how these processes inform not only medieval book culture but also religious communities' identities and religious and cultural networks more broadly.

- Assembling versus dismembering manuscripts as a result of crisis. Analysis of the factors that led to one or the other option. Did these occur at the same time in the same community?
- Crisis, continuities, and disruptions in production of manuscripts, re-use, and function of books within religious communities.
- Interplay between manuscript production and the making of other *ornamenta sacra* in times of crisis.
- The role of manuscripts and book collections in the creation of crisis narratives among religious communities. Who is to blame during crisis? Entangled scales and agents involved at micro and macro levels.
- Explicitly gendered approaches to crises in religious communities. In what way religious women, including nuns and *mulieres religiosas*, used manuscripts and book collections.

We welcome papers from a variety of disciplines including but not limited to history, art history, material culture, codicology, cultural history, musicology, history of liturgy, anthropology, literature, gender studies with a focus on religious communities from different orders/religions, different territories, and geographical regions exploring what happened to medieval book collections (c. 1000-c. 1600) during and beyond the Middle Ages. We invite speakers to explore the impact of crisis in book collections from religious communities and these communities' management of their libraries in times of peril.



Please submit an abstract of no more than 300 words and a short bio to Julie Beckers (julie.beckers@kuleuven.be) and Mercedes Pérez Vidal (mercedes.pvidal@uam.es) by September 12. All proposals should include your name, email address and academic affiliation, and your preferred format (in-person or virtual).

Organisers:

Dr Mercedes Pérez Vidal (Autonomous University of Madrid) mercedes.pvidal@uam.es

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Image: Schedel, Hartmann. *Liber chronicarum* (Nuremberg:Anton Koberger, VII, 1493), f. 92v © BSB/ Rar. 287.