

Priests and their Manuscripts in the Holy Land and Sinai

Conference at the Austrian Academy of Sciences, Vienna
Institute for Medieval Research, Department of Byzantine Research
8–10 November 2023

Call for Papers

Where did priests learn to read and write? What did they copy and where? How did their libraries look? What did they do with their books? Little is known about these topics, and a general overview is missing, especially if we focus on clerics active in the Holy Land and Sinai. By addressing these and related topics, this conference will aim at gaining a better understanding about the social and cultural role of priests *latu sensu* (preferably priests and priestmonks, but also monks, nuns, lectors, deacons, bishops) in the Holy Land and Sinai.

We invite the submission of abstracts (300 words max.) for 20-minute papers dealing with manuscripts copied, owned, and used by priests in Sinai and Palestine during the Byzantine and immediate post-Byzantine period in the languages of the Christian Orient. Contributions by historians, archaeologists, art historians, epigraphers, liturgiologists, which aim at shedding light on the social and cultural role of priests in this region and historical period are welcome as well.

Topics that that may be addressed include the following, but participants are encouraged to develop their own questions and approaches within the parameters of the conference theme:

Social context: Which sources offer information about the social role and cultural life of priests in the Holy Land and Sinai? What can we learn from them?

Priests as copyists of manuscripts: Where and how did priests learn how to read and write? What was their level of literacy? Which script styles did they use? Which techniques of book-making did they employ? How many languages did they know and write?

Priests as owners of manuscripts: Which manuscripts did priests own? What do we know about their private 'libraries'?

Priests and their use of manuscripts: Which signs of use (including annotations, colophons, etc.) did priests leave on the manuscripts they used? Where were manuscripts used and how?

Organizer: Dr. Giulia Rossetto (Austrian Academy of Sciences)

Please send the title of your paper and an abstract (max. 300 words) to Giulia Rossetto (giulia.rossetto@oeaw.ac.at) no later than March 15, 2023. The speakers will be notified by April 15.

If selected, we can offer you reimbursement for your travel expenses (second-class) as well as pre-paid accommodation for two nights in Vienna.

This conference is organized within the framework of the project "Priests, Books and the Library at Saint Catherine's (Sinai)" (T1192 – G25) funded by the Austrian Science Fund FWF.