

Understanding of the Parchment in the Medieval Manuscripts

21st – 25th May 2012, Horn, Austria

Course held by Jiří Vnouček, conservator, The Royal Library Copenhagen.

Program of the workshop and lectures

Monday 21st May

10:00 Lectures: Introduction

History and methods of preparation of parchment

Description of the process used in course, safety instructions

13:00 Lunch

14:00 Practical workshop: Lime bath, dehairing and cleaning of the goat and sheep pelt

17:00 End

Tuesday 22nd May

9:00 Practical workshop: Stretching of the goat skin on the frame

12:30 Lunch

13:30 Lectures: Visual observation of parchment in medieval manuscripts

17:00 End

Wednesday 23rd May

9:00 Practical workshop: Shaving of the goat skin on the frame, pouncing and finishing

12:30 Lunch

13:30 Practical workshop: Stretching of the sheep skin on the frame

17:00 End

Thursday 24th May

9:00 Lectures: Observation of animal in manuscripts, characteristics of parchment

12:00 Excursion to St. Pölten's archive and library

Friday 25th May

9:00 Practical workshop: Shaving of the sheep skin on the frame, pouncing and finishing

12:30 Lunch

13:30 Lectures: Ageing and types of the damage of parchment in the manuscripts

17:00 End

Saturday 26th May

9:00 Breakfast and evaluation of the course

10:00 Lecture and workshop: Preparation of parchment for writing, formation of the quires of manuscript, example of binding of parchment text block

12:30 Lunch

13:30 Practical workshop: Finishing of all kinds of practical work, cleaning etc

15:00 – 17:00 End of the course (depending on time of departure of participants)

Notes:

There will be time for short tea brakes in the middle of the each respective lectures and practical workshops.

Time and duration of lunch is only estimated. It is expected that the time for lunch will vary depending of the workflow and common agreement.

Please note that the time schedule and arrangement of the lectures and workshops can vary depending on the weather and other unexpected reasons.

Program will be discussed into detail during the introduction of the course.

Practical and safety information, tools and working dress

Parchment making is a rather complex process. Although we will experience all the steps of the process, some of its parts will be simplified for the sake of time. Both wet and dry parts of the parchment making process do demand lots of focus. Safety regulation must be strictly followed any time.

During the first, wet part of the process we will work with animal pelt prepared in lime bath, which will be ready for cleaning and dehairing. Lime bath is alkaline and although is not very highly concentrated protection of skin and eyes from the effect of the liquid is necessary. It is demanded to bring your own protection glasses, strong rubber gloves, rubber apron and working dress and shoes which can withstand lime liquid (rubber boots is a good option). Pelts have rather strong and unpleasant odor during the wet part of the process. It has to be noted that cleaning of the flesh side of pelt is a part of the process. Even though the lecturer and his assistant will be ready to assist you during all parts of the process, the meaning of this practical workshop is that you do all of the tasks by yourself.

Very sharp knives will be used during the second, dry part of the process. All participants should operate them responsibly, with great care and strictly follow all safety instructions! As stated by ERC earlier – it is important that have your insurance arranged.

Participants will be provided with two pelts (goat and sheep), frames and all tools and other necessary material to make two parchments. About 90 Euro for material will be charged by Mrs. Wieland from ERC in cash. Participants can also bring and use their personal tools if they like.

All participants are politely asked to fulfill the questionnaire, which will help the lecturer to organize the course respective of each participant. Although the frame of the main course program is set, it will be possible to organize some personal variations especially in the practical part of the course.