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Gender & Christian History

Archival Expedition 'Roadmap' for Students

Module Day 1.

1. Today, you will encounter manuscripts in the Rubenstein library.
 - a. You are not expected to know anything about them yet!
 - b. The manuscripts have been sorted into five groups.
2. Fill out the worksheet pages below about *one* manuscript in one of the groups.
 - a. You are encouraged to work collaboratively!
 - b. The worksheet will help you prepare to share your findings with the class.
3. You will have time to debrief with students in your group.
4. Each group will share its findings with the class.
5. Before we leave today, we'll explain the homework assignment.

You do not need to answer every question on the worksheet: it is a guide, not a graded assignment. Use the worksheet in order to **be ready to explain the following to the class when it is time to share your findings:**

A.) What inferences might be drawn between the physical format of your manuscript and the reading practices in which it was used?

B.) What questions or inferences can you suggest about the ways in which the creation and use of this manuscript might have been 'gendered' or entailed gender performativity?

More space for notes and directions for the homework are on the "verso." →

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Archival Expedition 'Roadmap' for Students, cont.

Use this space to jot down notes from the class:

Homework Assignment:

You will be provided with secondary sources related to your manuscript. Treat these as research materials. Synthesize your findings from the archival expedition today and from the secondary sources. You *may* research other sources but are not required to do so. You **MUST** cite all sources, even those provided.

Write a report of 250-500 words answering the following question:

What are some of the ways in which gendered roles influenced the production and use of sacred texts and/or what are some of the ways in which practices of reading sacred texts were 'gendered' and entailed gender performativity?

Post your report online and prepare a presentation for the class.

You will present your research on Module Day 2.

* * In your presentation, you are expected to point out physical elements of your manuscript that relate to the information you gathered in your secondary sources.

* * *Please do not simply read your written report. Demonstrate* your findings to the class with the physical material of the manuscript.

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Archival Expedition Student Worksheet

Directions: This worksheet invites you to engage in imaginative exploration, investigating the physical material of the manuscripts and thinking about what those features might help scholars discover about religious devotion, scriptural reading, and gender. The goal is to generate *hypotheses*, which means that your *creative inferences* and *wondering questions* are welcomed and encouraged!

1. Describe what you notice about the physical format of your manuscript.

- Consider the size of the parchment, the size of the script, and the style of the font – how much of the page is taken up by the text, by blank space, or by other elements?
- Can you detect lines that were etched to facilitate straight lines of text? Are there illustrations, ‘rubrics’ (red lettering to mark sections apart), notes in the margins, or any other interesting features? Is all the text in straight columns or organized complexly?

2. Besides the visual, what other senses can engage with this manuscript?

- For example, if you can touch the parchment, can you feel a difference between the “hair” and the “flesh” side of the animal skin? How thick or thin is the parchment?
- Imagine yourself as a medieval user of this text. How can you imagine any of your other senses engaged as you use this text?

3. Still imagining yourself as a medieval user of this text, what is your posture as you hold and read this manuscript?

- How is your body a part of the experience of reading?

4. What does the format of the manuscript suggest to you about the way in which it was used by its original audience?

- What do you think users of this manuscript would *do* with it?

5. How does your manuscript compare or contrast to others?

- How is your manuscript similar to or different from others in its assigned group?
- Feel free to move carefully around the room. How are manuscripts in your group similar to or different from others?

6. How do you think your manuscript mattered in the spirituality or religious devotion of those who used it? Or of those who made it?

- How was this specific manuscript meaningful to those who used it?

7. Do you think this text could be described as “gendered”? Why or how so?

- Was it designed for use by readers of a specific gender?
- Were the practices themselves, to which the text was intended to be used, “gendered” in certain ways?
- What might this manuscript be able to illustrate about gender performativity, gender roles, and gender discourse in medieval Christianity?