

‘Opening the Sacred Text: Meaning, Materiality, Historiography’

Dates: Two-day workshop: Monday 14th December – Tuesday 15th December 2020

One-day conference: Wednesday 16th December 2020

Place: The Bodleian Library, Broad Street, Oxford, OX1 3BG

We are delighted to announce our call for papers for ‘Opening the Sacred Text: Meaning, Materiality, Historiography’, an interdisciplinary workshop and conference to be held at the Bodleian Library, Oxford. Bringing together scholars from around the world, we will study the decorative frontispieces and so-called carpet pages that are a remarkable feature of manuscripts from diverse cultures, including Islam, Judaism and Christianity.

The questions that we hope to see addressed in ‘Opening the Sacred Text: Meaning, Materiality, Historiography’ include:

- How were these opening pages of sacred texts intended to work?
- Might they prepare the viewer, reader, or artist, for prayer or meditation?
- What senses were activated by means of colour, ornament or other design elements?
- Which genres of texts do they occur in, and why not others?
- How do we approach manuscript examples that display other solutions to opening or articulating the sacred text?
- Does materiality relate to patronage?
- Were they based on actual materials: on textiles, floor mosaics, window screens, or book bindings, for example?
- Are they meant to call to mind these particular materials and their functions?
- Might we identify commonality in the decorative frontispieces in books from diverse traditions despite the different cultural settings and time periods?
- What are the sources for decorated openings and carpet pages?
- How might we problematise the paradigm of the ‘carpet page’ in scholarly literature and address the implications of the term itself?

How to propose a paper

Papers are 20 minutes in length. To propose a paper, please email a brief abstract (250 words max.) to Stewart J. Brookes (stewart.brookes@bodleian.ox.ac.uk) or Julie Harris (marfiles@comcast.net)

The **deadline** for the receipt of abstracts is 2pm on **Friday 14th February 2020**

Edited Volume

Please note that it is our intention to include selected papers from the conference as part of an edited volume. If you are unable to attend the conference, but would like to be considered for the volume, please be in touch.

Funding

We hope to attract funding to assist with travel and accommodation, in particular to support early career researchers and independent scholars.