

Franklin Humanities Institute Manuscript Migration Lab

Annual Report 2021-2011

The focus of the Manuscript Migration Lab in 2021-2022 was on building our knowledge about our collections and responding to what we are learning. We worked to develop skills in the digital humanities, deepen our understanding of Ethiopic (Ge'ez) manuscripts, respond to research on the papyri collection, and learn from and with colleagues at NC State on a project involving bio-codicology. On-going work on the Byzantine, Hebrew, and Arabic collections continues. In the coming year we hope to present some of that research more formally as well.

We were thrilled to welcome Dr. Gay Byron as an affiliate during her first year as a Humanities Unbounded fellow. We also welcomed a guest researcher and affiliate from the Freie Universität Berlin, doctoral candidate Avinoam Stillman, as well as Post-Doctoral Fellow Pratima Gopalakrishnan and doctoral student Abigail Emmerson. Matthew Hayes, Japanese Studies and Asian American Studies Librarian in IAS, joined our team and, with the help of our Affiliate Clare Woods, we are now planning an event on manuscript fragmentation that will take place early next fall. Brogan Hannon joined our Lab as a Research Assistant for Dr. Byron's project on the Ethiopic collection and Hen Kennett joined as Undergraduate Coordinator. Eli Meyerhoff took on the role of Lab Staff Coordinator. The work of these colleagues has been essential to what we were able to accomplish.

We also owe a debt of gratitude to Will Shaw, Joseph Mulligan, Giao Luong Baker, and Henry Herbert, each of whom generously shared their expertise and experiences with us in the context of our Fall Semester workshops. Of course, our work would not be possible without the skilled and inspirational leadership of Ranjana Khanna, Christine Chia, and Pamela Montgomery.

EVENTS

Dr. William H. Willis and the Duke Papyri: A Conversation

Featuring Dr. Daniel B. Sharp, Associate Professor, Brigham Young University, Hawaii, and Dr. Nicholas Wagner, Postdoctoral Associate, Duke University, as well as Dr. Roberta Mazza, Lecturer in Greco-Roman Material Culture, University of Manchester, and Dr. Brent Nongbri, Professor, MF Norwegian School of Religion, Theology, and Society
Ahmadiyah Faculty Lecture Hall, FHI, Smith Warehouse, and on Zoom.
Friday, September 10, 1-2:30 pm

We kicked off the year with this conversation about the Duke Papyri collection inviting Daniel Sharp, a papyrologist who has been studying Willis's papyrological work, and our own Nicholas Wagner, who prepared a presentation about Willis's work at Duke. Responses by Roberta Mazza and Brent Nongbri, scholars active in addressing the ethical stakes of papyrological collections, helped to expand our discussion. In response to this event, we organized a "Papyrological Confab" in February (see below).

Ethiopic (Ge'ez) Manuscripts: An Informational Event with Examples Drawn from Duke's Collection

Featuring Dr. Gay L. Byron, FHI, Humanities Unbounded Visiting Fellow
Perkins Library, Room 217. Reception following adjacent to the Perkins and Bostock Libraries.
Tuesday, October 21, 3:30-5:00 pm, with reception 5:00-6:00 pm

Professor Byron introduced her current project, highlighted some of the Ethiopic manuscripts in the Rubenstein collection, and addressed the complex set of challenges associated with studying early Christian Ethiopian sources in the context of this hybrid lecture. Curator Armacost prepared an exhibit of manuscripts to share and remained on hand to address the collection and its broader history at Duke.

Of Peptides and Scribes: Applying Life Sciences to the Study of Manuscripts

Featuring Dr. Timothy L. Stinson, Associate Professor, Department of English, North Carolina State University

Tuesday, November 2, 1-2 pm on Zoom

This talk offered an overview of the emerging field of biocodicology, or the study of books via the biological information stored in them, covering the history of the field and both the promises that it holds and the challenges faced as this area of study emerges. Several items in the Rubenstein collections are being included in a study led by the NC State team.

Papyrology Confab

With Roger Bagnall, Emeritus Professor of Ancient History, NYU, Brendan Haug, Assistant Professor of Classical Studies and Archivist of the Papyrology Collection, University of Michigan, Todd Hickey, Professor of Ancient Greek & Roman Studies, Director of the Center for the Tebtunis Papyri, University of California, Berkeley, and AnneMarie Luijendijk, Professor of Religion, Princeton University

Friday, February 25, 9:00 am – 5:00 pm

We met with colleagues at institutions in the USA also working to address the ethical and legal challenges presented by papyrological collections with the goal of sharing information and developing a coordinated response.

Using Genetics to Unlock the Secrets of Medieval Parchment Books

Featuring Dr. Kelly Meiklejohn, Assistant Professor of Forensic Science, Department of Population Health and Pathobiology, NC State University.

Monday, April 11, 12:00-1:00 pm via zoom

Dr. Meiklejohn introduced the advances in genetic techniques currently being employed to non-destructively sample parchments held in the Rubenstein collections for DNA analysis and presented some preliminary results.

Manuscript Traditions in Ethiopia: Preliminary Remarks

Featuring Dr. Amsalu Tefera and facilitated by Dr. Gay Byron. Reception following adjacent to the Perkins and Bostock Libraries.

Thursday, April 28, 12:00-1:00 pm. Reception 1:00-2:00 pm.

World renowned scholar of Ge'ez language and literature as well as Ethiopian history, culture and religion visited Duke to examine the Ethiopic manuscript collection in the Rubenstein with Dr. Byron. He then presented a lecture to the community that placed Duke's holdings within a much broader context of manuscript production, collection, and use. This event was followed by a luncheon reception and accompanied by an exhibition of manuscripts selected by Curator Armacost and Dr. Byron.

WORKSHOPS

Organizational Strategies in the Digital Image Archive

Led by Joseph Mulligan & Will Shaw

Duke Libraries Digital Scholarship & Publishing Services
Monday, October 11, 2:00-3:00 pm on Zoom

In this workshop, participants were given an opportunity to learn how to create an archive of visual materials for research using Tropy, an image management toolkit that allows users to organize images, record metadata about them, transcribe text from manuscripts or printed material, and export data for other uses.

Visualizing Historical Networks and Conceptual Maps

Led by Joseph Mulligan & Will Shaw
Duke Libraries Digital Scholarship & Publishing Services
Friday, November 5, 1:00-2:00 pm on Zoom

Participants in this workshop were introduced to Kumu, a powerful, open-source network analytics software that has a variety of applications for the humanities and beyond. We learned how to build a project from the ground up, compiling, structuring, and styling data to visualize a web of affiliations with an interactive network map.

Imaging/Imagining Manuscripts with Future Technologies

Led by Giao Luong Baker, Digital Production Services Manager, and Henry Herbert, Conservator for Special Collections, Duke University Libraries with Nicholas Wagner, Postdoctoral Associate in Classical Studies and Religious Studies
Wednesday, December 1, 12:00-1:00 pm on Zoom

This event introduced participants to the application of Multi-Spectral Imaging and other advanced technologies that assist with the examination of manuscripts. Giao Luong Baker and Henry Herbert led us through the process of working with these technologies, offering examples of what can be learned, and Nicholas Wagner presented specific examples from his own work.

Spring Work-In-Progress Presentations

Featuring Andy Armacost, Gay Byron, Abigail Emmerson, Maroun El Houkayem, Jennifer Knust
Monday, February 21, Monday, March 14, Monday, March 28, 12:00-1:00 pm at the Rubenstein Library and on Zoom, followed by lunch.

Affiliates met to present their current work on the Willis papyri (Andy and Nick), the Hebrew collection (Abigail), Arabic manuscripts (Maroun), the Ethiopic collection (Gay), and the Kenneth Clark Papers (Jenny).

In addition to these formal events, workshops, and meetings, research has been published and/or shared in several venues, including:

- The publication on our website of the “Duke Papyrus Collection – Provenance Statement and Report” - <https://sites.fhi.duke.edu/manuscriptmigration/portfolio/duke-papyrus-collection-provenance-statement-and-report/>.
- Included with the “Duke Papyrus Collection” statement is a table documenting the acquisition history of the Duke Papyri: <https://sites.fhi.duke.edu/manuscriptmigration/files/2022/05/Duke-Acquisition-history.pdf>. These materials were prepared by Andy, Nick, and William and put on the website by Eli.

- Elizabeth Schrader's online exhibit of Greek MS 65: <https://sites.duke.edu/greekms065/lectionary-timeline/>
- William Johnson's Lecture in May, "Not the Pharaoh's Curse: Tales of Greek Literary Papyri and Colonial Entanglements," Sigmund H. Danziger Jr. Distinguished Lecture at University of Chicago.
- Jennifer Knust's presentation at the Chester Beatty Library in October, "Papyrology as an Art of Destruction" (forthcoming in print).
- Maroun El Houkayem's forthcoming article, "Orientation, Disorientation, and 'the Other Side of the World.'"

PLANS FOR 2022-2023 THUS FAR

Symposia and Roundtables

Manuscript Fragmentation Across Cultures

Friday, September 9th, 3:00-6:00 PM - In Person

Smith warehouse, Bay 4, Ahmadiéh Family Lecture Hall

Featuring: Lisa Fagan Davis, Executive Director of the Medieval Academy of America; Christopher Nugent, Professor of Chinese, Williams College; and Akiko Walley, Maude I. Kerns Associate Professor of Japanese Art, University of Oregon.

Ethiopic Manuscripts

Tentative date: Spring 2023

Featuring: Solange Ashby, Professor of Near Eastern Languages and Cultures, UCLA; Aaron Butts, Associate Professor of Semitic and Egyptian Languages and Literatures, Catholic University of America; and Amselu Tefera, Esdros Theological Seminary; and Lucas von Rompay, Professor Emeritus of Religious Studies, Duke University.

Workshops and Ongoing Research

We will organize a series of workshops and affiliate meetings to prepare for an exhibition displaying the results of our work to be held in Fall 2023,

We will continue to share our research with one another over the course of the coming year and will gather further suggestions from affiliates as we prepare for another exciting year.

Digitizing Ethiopic Manuscripts

Friday, October 7, 2022

Gay L. Byron, Humanities Unbounded Visiting Faculty Fellow (2021-2022) will host a seminar featuring the Tweed Collection of Ethiopic manuscripts at Howard University School of Divinity.

In this seminar, Alice Ogden Bellis, Steve Delamarter, and Ralph Lee will describe the *Beta Mesaheft* (*BM*) platform for digitally preserving and presenting Ethiopic manuscripts and some of its advantages over other choices. They will explain the process of how the metadata from manuscripts is coded and entered into *BM*, by demonstrating some of the manuscripts from the Tweed Collection currently accessible on *BM*.

Welcome!

Michael Freeman, papyrologist, doctoral candidate in Classical Studies, and Graduate Affiliate of the Lab has joined the Lab as the Graduate Coordinator.

Emily Gebhardt, historian of medieval culture, spirituality, and politics, and doctoral candidate in History, has joined as a Graduate Affiliate.

Lyla Halstead, Faculty Affiliate, Assistant Research Professor of Art History, has joined a Graduate Affiliate.

We look forward to another year of productive collaboration!

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jennifer Knust". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jennifer Knust
Co-Director, Manuscript Migration Lab
Professor of Religious Studies

