Collecting, Curating, Assembling (St Andrews, 13-14 Sep 19)

University of St Andrews, Sep 13–14, 2019
Deadline: Feb 15, 2019

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Collecting, Curating, Assembling: New Approaches to the Archive in the Middle Ages

The School of Art History, SAIMS and Special Collections Division at the University of St Andrews are pleased to announce an upcoming two-day conference on the archive in medieval art and thought.

The word archive suggests the acts of taxonomy and conservation, but also interpretation and regulation. Its etymology traces back to the Greek arkheion, thus highlighting the political nature of the physical archive and the act of archiving itself. The medieval world maintained this sense of privileged access. Isidore of Seville connected the Latin word archivium with arca, strongbox, and arcanum, mystery. But the term was malleable, referring to collections of various goods and treasures, not just of parchment records and registers. And yet, Michael Clanchy has argued that the medieval mind did not always distinguish between the library and the archive, as we do today.

The organisers therefore invite proposals on the theme of the expanded medieval archive, as it relates to art and material culture. What can medieval collections, compilations, and assemblages of material things tell us about the accumulation of knowledge and the preservation of memory? How is the archive manipulated to fit political or social agendas, and by whom? What are the limits of the medieval archive? Paper topics and themes may include, though are not limited to:

- Records or inventories of collections, secular, civic, and ecclesiastical;
- The archive as a physical object or visual record, including books and manuscripts, buildings, reliquaries, etc.;
- The accretive nature of written testimony in the form of: chronicles, herbals, visitations, necrologies, inscriptions and tituli;
- Time, writing history through the material, and collapsing temporalities;
- The creation and perpetuation of memory, identity, and authority;
- The accumulation and transmission of cultural or familial knowledge via material culture;
- The politics of preservation, documentation, and display in the medieval world, and of the medieval in the modern world.

Collecting, Curating, Assembling: New Approaches to the Archive in the Middle Ages will take place 13–14 September 2019 in St Andrews, Scotland. Professor Erik Inglis (Oberlin College) will deliver the keynote. The organisers intend to publish the conference proceedings as an edited vol-

ume.

All papers must be no more than 30 minutes maxmimum. Please submit a 250 word abstract and title by 15 February 2019. Prof Julian Luxford, Prof Kathryn Rudy, and Dr Emily Savage, along with Senior Archivist Rachel Hart, warmly welcome all submissions and queries at medievalarchive@st-andrews.ac.uk.

Reference:

CFP: Collecting, Curating, Assembling (St Andrews, 13-14 Sep 19). In: ArtHist.net, Jan 14, 2019 (accessed Nov 11, 2026), <https://arthist.net/archive/19912>.