

The Centre for the Study of Manuscript Cultures (CSMC)

cordially invites you to a lecture by

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Signatory Markers.

Materiality, Personhood, and the Printing Process (France, England, Germany, 8th-14th Century)

Wednesday, 10 November 2021, 6:00 pm (CET)

Zoom-Meeting

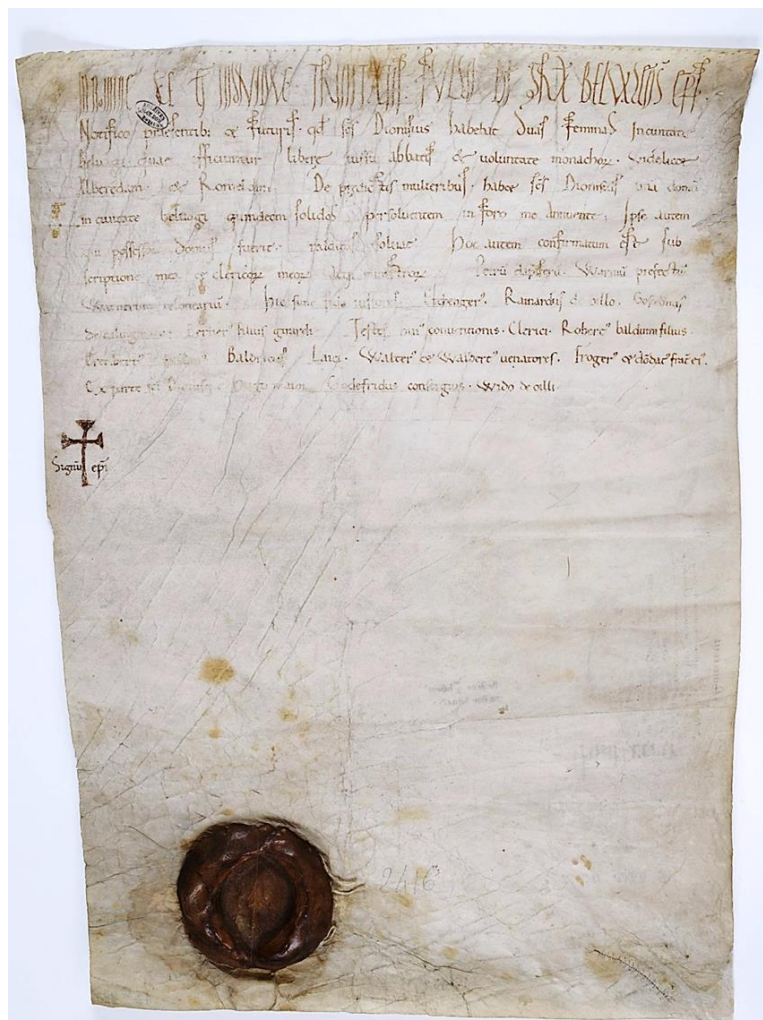
Registration:

<https://www.csmc.uni-hamburg.de/en/register-lecture10>

Within pre-modern manuscript cultures, signs of identity for the purpose of documentary authentication derived their efficacy from the interaction between uniqueness, personality, and reproducibility, a strategy rendered feasible by the printing process.

In this talk, I will investigate the interaction between signing and imprinting by first focusing on the materials, the skin of charters and the wax of seals, that received the signatory marks. The apposition of these marks, whether the *manus propria* or the seal, was termed an *impressio* in diplomatic discourse, and was accompanied by a flurry of graphic signs and in some cases by the affixed seals' auto-reproduction. I will suggest that these graphics and self-replicating seals mapped mimetic forms of haptic reactions and were implicated in the appreciation of the medium itself. That is, skin-charters scripted for themselves the role of sensitive entities, capable of receiving, reacting to, and retaining impressions, and thereby constituting a living memory of the legal actions they recorded.

The next focus will bear on the imprinting tool itself, the seal-matrix. Archaeologists and metal detectorists continue to unearth large numbers of seal-matrices, which, when carefully recorded, have been transforming our understanding of medieval personhood and of the overlapping boundaries of human and artefactual agency. In arguing that imprinted signatures gained credibility through the destruction of their engraved originators, I will explore the significance of imprinting and replication as combined techniques which were perceived to have the capacity of substituting for personal intentionality.



Charter of Foulquise, Bishop of Beauvais (1095)
 Paris, Arch. Nat., K 20 no 6/13 in Charte Artem/CMJS n°3073