



\*\*Pre-CfP\*\*

## Practices of Knowledge Selection in Early Medieval Manuscripts

An International Workshop and Conference

October 2018 – June 2019

@ University College Dublin

[Practices of Knowledge Selection](#) (PoKS) is a two-part international research event focusing on the codicology of early medieval manuscripts. The first meeting will be a selective workshop of scholars whose complementing expertise will represent the range of PoKS's enquiry and will establish the foundation for the topics of the inclusive conference in late Spring 2019. The precise dates will be determined in the coming weeks, after which a formal conference CfP will be circulated. Both events will be held at UCD and sponsored by [Networks and Neighbours](#).

The complex road from selecting a text in the early middle ages to producing a copy of it in a book is still poorly understood, yet it is the key to the historical context of medieval books. The practice of knowledge selection consisted of three key stages: the intellectual selection of the textual content of manuscript collections; the pragmatic action of arranging the textual content in a draft form by authors or editors; and the material representation and aesthetic exposition of texts in manuscripts. These stages were part of a linear development, but also exercised reciprocal influence upon one another. By tracing this process in surviving manuscript collections we can better understand in what practical ways knowledge was encoded, and how these often innovative and experimental practices contributed to the emergence and consolidation of both intellectual and scribal traditions. This has important implications for how we understand education, reform and the exercise of power in the early middle ages. Most importantly, this approach re-focuses attention on the medieval manuscript book as a dynamic, constantly changing object, entangled in intellectual and cultural networks, constructed and deconstructed by different people, and transmuting in both form and meaning over time. By considering manuscripts not as the static, permanently bound objects they are today, but rather as bodies of evidence for the layered relationships between texts and their material supports, we gain a more nuanced view of medieval manuscript culture as driven by the agency and intellectual exchange of the people that created it.

This conference will therefore investigate knowledge selection practices by focusing on the connections between the texts and codicology of manuscript collections. The papers will examine the key questions around the broad themes of knowledge selection, material representation, and scribal agency. What were the practices behind the selection of texts and text extracts? Who made the choices and why? In what different physical appearances did scribes put together collected texts? What can we know about the relationship between manuscript collections and their draft forms (e.g. wax tablets/schedulae)? What influence did these draft forms have on practices of knowledge selection? What new developments in book culture might have arisen as a direct result of increasingly sophisticated text selection practices? How was knowledge acquired and organised generally?

PoKS is organised and hosted by Dr Anna Dorofeeva ([anna.dorofeeva@ucd.ie](mailto:anna.dorofeeva@ucd.ie)), Government of Ireland Postdoctoral Research Fellow at University College Dublin, and Networks & Neighbours. Proceedings will be published by N&N/Punctum Books, subject to peer review.

For further details, including (as it emerges) the programme, please go to the PoKS website at: [www.practicesofknowledge.org](http://www.practicesofknowledge.org). All content questions can be directed to Dr Dorofeeva, with general event enquiries sent to [networksandneighbours@gmail.com](mailto:networksandneighbours@gmail.com).

