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Workshop Title: “Making Ink, Making Text: Composition Technologies in Medieval and Early Modern Manuscript Construction”

Workshop Proposal: Visual literacy is not only an essential skill for archivists; it also serves as a way for students and scholars in the humanities to develop a deeper understanding of the materials they are creating, reading, cataloging, and preserving. By experiencing some of the material processes of manuscript creation, students and scholars may develop an appreciation for and an understanding of the unique characteristics of historical image-making technologies. This workshop provides an in-depth and hands-on exploration of pigments, dyes, and other media related to the making of manuscripts in the medieval and Early Modern periods. We begin with a discussion of materials used across medieval Eurasia and the Americas and their implications for the texts they represent visually. We then explore (with samples) the pigments and ingredients that were fundamental to the preparation, construction, and preservation of manuscripts during the Middle Ages and Early Modern periods. Students create their own vials of medieval iron gall ink and demonstrate the ink’s useability with quills and paper. The workshop concludes with a roundtable discussion and a question-and-answer session. Through our explorations of ingredients, media, and processes of manuscript composition, students understand more deeply the meanings and significance assigned to the media they work with.

Length: The total time for the workshop is expected to be 1.5 hours, but it can be adjusted to meet the needs of attendees/organizers.

Speaker Bio: Elizabeth Brissey received her master's degree from Auburn University, where she is currently a doctoral candidate working on her dissertation. Elizabeth’s research investigates the intersections and homologies between the written word, its medium, content, readers, and writer(s). She has a chapter forthcoming in *The Routledge Companion to Global Chaucer* and is currently writing her dissertation on representations of geography in medieval romance.