



**Yale Medieval Studies, in partnership with the Beinecke Rare Book & Manuscript Library, invites abstracts for the following panel for Kalamazoo 2019 (May 9-12):**

## **Scripts, Ciphers, Shorthands**

Writing in the Middle Ages is often described in terms of language, scribes, and authors. Yet, the practice of writing calls attention to both technical elements of composition and to the visual aspect of the script, spurring innovations in efficiency and a desire to imitate or adapt hands to a variety of uses and settings. From the fake and decorative scripts described by Christopher Wood to the notarial arts recently discussed by John Haines, abbreviation and symbolic uses of language permeate both visual and manuscript culture. More specifically, ciphers were developed, used, and discussed by figures as various as al-Kindī, Hrabanus Maurus, Hildegard von Bingen, and Roger Bacon. This panel seeks papers that interrogate medieval systems of writing, specifically notarial shorthands, ciphers, and simulated scripts, from a variety of disciplinary perspectives. We hope this panel will be of interest to paleographers and codicologists, but also to scholars working on the use of script in visual arts and textual transmission.

Possible topics might include:

- Early medieval ciphers, especially those found in Arabic treatises on cryptography, Anglo-Saxon and Carolingian manuscripts, or Viking Rune stones
- Ciphers, shorthands, and visual symbols in alchemical and mystical texts
- Caligraphic scripts and decorative writing, the use of abbreviation conventions in inscriptions
- How did the system of Tironian notes develop and flourish in the early Middle Ages?
- How does the appearance of a script for a particular language lend itself to simulation, such as pseudo-Arabic and pseudo-Hebrew, or forgery?
- What do systems of signs, whether integrated into a text or used for indexing or some marginal purpose, tell us about writers, readers, and scribes?

Please send proposals of 250 words to [icmsyalecfp2019@gmail.com](mailto:icmsyalecfp2019@gmail.com) by **September 8, 2018**.

*Organizers Kristen Herdman, Carson J. Koepke*