

PARCHMENT-MAKING COURSE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF NAMUR

7TH – 11TH SEPTEMBER 2020,
GÎTE DU DOMAINE D'HAUGIMONT

Course lecturer Jiří Vnouček, the Beast to Craft project (founded by ERC).

PRELIMINARY PROGRAMME

MONDAY 7TH SEPTEMBER

9.30 Arrival of the participants

10:00 Introduction of all participants and presentation of the program of the course. Description of the processes used in the course, health and safety instructions.

11:30 Lecture: History and methods of parchment making and their variations.

13:00 Lunch

14:00 Practical workshop: Lime bath, de-hairing and cleaning of all skins (goat and sheep pelts, eventually calf or other type of animals?).

17:00 End

TUESDAY 8TH SEPTEMBER

9:00 Practical workshop: Final cleaning and stretching of the first skin (goatskins) on the herse (rectangular frame).

13:00 Lunch

14:00 Visual observation of parchment in medieval manuscripts

15:30 Practical workshop: Final cleaning and stretching of the first skin (goatskins) on the herse (continuation from morning).

17:00 End

WEDNESDAY 9TH SEPTEMBER

9:00 Practical workshop: Surface treatment of dried goat parchment (pouncing and finishing).

12:00 Lunch

13:00 Excursion: Study of parchment manuscripts (place will be specified)

17:00 End

THURSDAY 10TH SEPTEMBER

9:00 Practical workshop: Final cleaning and stretching of the second skin (sheep skins) on the circular frames

12:30 Lunch

13:30 Practical workshop: Special methods of parchment making

Observation of results coming from practical work, small tests, discussion

15:30 Lecture: Identification of animal species in manuscripts and their characteristics

17:00 End

FRIDAY 11TH SEPTEMBER

9:00 Practical workshop. Surface treatment of sheep parchment.

12:30 Lunch

13:30 Practical workshop: Finishing of all practical work, cleaning & packing

14:00 Evaluation of the course, discussion of results, any other business

15:00 End of course

NOTES:

The course will follow a pre-arranged format, but it will be possible to alter certain parts especially during the practical work depending available raw material and special wishes of participants.

Please note that the arrangement of lectures and workshops may slightly change depending on the weather and other unforeseen circumstances. The detailed program will be discussed at the beginning of the course.

The course will take place at the site of *Gîte du Domaine d'Haugimont*. If weather will allow most of the practical part of the course (dehairing, cleaning, stretching and surface treatment) will be carried out outside of the building. Lectures will be in the building. Place of the study of historical material will be specified.

There will be short tea breaks in the middle of each lecture or practical workshop and the timing and duration of lunch is approximate, as it will depend on the workflow.

Practical and safety information, tools and working clothes

Parchment making is a complex process. Although we will experience all steps of the process, some parts will be simplified for the sake of time. Both wet and dry stages of parchment making demand full attention and safety precautions must be strictly followed at all times.

During the first, wet part of the process we will work with animal skins pre-soaked in a lime bath, which will be ready for cleaning and dehairing. Lime bath is alkaline and although not highly concentrated, protection of skin and eyes is necessary. Protective glasses, rubber gloves and waterproof aprons will be provided, but please make sure you wear working clothes and rubber shoes. Pelts have a rather strong and unpleasant odour during the first part of the wet process and you will be required to carry out cleaning of both the flesh and hair side of the skin. Even though the lecturer will be ready to assist you during all parts of the process, the meaning of this practical workshop is that you attempt all the tasks yourself.

Very sharp knives will be used during the second, dry part of the process. All participants should operate them responsibly, with great care and strictly follow all safety instructions.

Each participant will have the opportunity to produce two types of parchment (goat and sheep). Some special types of skins as calf or deer (if available) will be only demonstrated for all by the lecturer (but participants will have chance to cooperate).

Frames, all tools and other necessary material to make the parchment will be provided. Participants may bring and use their personal tools if they wish.