**Manuscripts for Medieval Studies Report Summary December 2021**

*[Limited non-confidential detail extracted from Project Report to our funder – Carnegie Corporation of New York]*

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| Project Metrics | Grantee Updates |
| A total of sixteen medieval manuscripts will undergo targeted and comprehensive conservation treatment, and full digital imaging. | Twelve manuscripts have complete catalogue entries, with four left to complete. Conservation work is completed on 10 manuscripts with four remaining. Digital imaging work is completed for 14 manuscripts with two remaining. |
| The research symposium will bring together 100 individuals from across the local and international academic and collections sectors. There will be one keynote speaker and one session led by the Archivist/Project Manager exploring the outcomes of this project. Intervening sessions will include up to four academic paper presentations/panel discussions. | Research symposium proposed – early 2023. Continued Covid restrictions may require an adjustment to the method of delivery. Cross-national networks are being established. The first event took place in a joint palaeography teaching session and ‘transcribathon’ challenge with students and researchers from the University of Kent (Dec 21). |
| In order to provide sustainability for the library’s future imaging program, Trinity College Dublin will acquire the following equipment under this project (creating one new full, high-specification imaging workstation): • Camera • Lens • Copy stand • Computer Station • Image Quality Assessment Software • Lights • Flash lighting pack • Light stands, clamps, rails • Light modifier • Targets and mini-targets This equipment will have a lifespan of 7-10 years. | All equipment proposed has been acquired (via competitive tender) – excepting the following, which will be acquired with the remaining funds: - Lights; - Copy stand; - Targets. The equipment is the highest quality digitisation equipment available for this type of work – with at least a seven to ten year lifespan. |
| The Trinity MPhil in Medieval Studies is expected to grow in 2020/21 and, led by Ussher Assistant Professor Dr. Mark Faulkner, the full class (17+ students) will actively engage in archival research using the digitized and physical items. The Life of St. Alban by Matthew Paris will be of specific interest in 2020 due to a planned exhibition in St. Albans from July to October. Trinity College Dublin will monitor online usage of the manuscript (current annual usage of the digital collections platform is 113,000 visits). | MPhil 2021/22: 27 Students. Digitised manuscripts used for palaeography teaching; other events (EU Researchers night September; Kent workshop November). Images supplied for St Albans exhibition: July - October 2021. 110,000 page views on Digital Collections yr 2020-21; 38,000 users; increase in daily users from average of 50 to 200. |
| The Archivist/Project Manager will organize a reception accommodating 200 people at Trinity College Dublin, celebrating the project outcomes. The guests will participate in the PROBE: Research Night event on campus, which will attract approximately 3,000 visitors. At least twelve blog posts will be created and the project will be further promoted on the university’s social media – incorporating video content. A press release will also be issued and coverage in at least one major newspaper can be anticipated. This project will feature prominently on the Library of Trinity College Dublin’s website (which receives more than 225,000 visits per year) and the Corporation will be acknowledged on the digital collections platform. | - Reception March 2022, with press announcement and media. - Dr Vartan Gregorian guest speaker for online launch of Virtual Trinity Library. - Project featured in START EU Researchers Night – 32 international online participants. - Eight blog posts have been published. – The digitised manuscripts feature Corporation as ‘Sponsor’. |

**Please summarize grant-related activities. What are some of your successes and noteworthy achievements? Did you encounter any challenges? If this grant is part of a longer term project supported by the Corporation, please describe the outcomes to date for the project and the next steps planned:**

The primary aim of this project was to make a selection of sixteen of the medieval manuscripts from the collections of the Library of Trinity College Dublin accessible in a digital form. Through the process of digitisation, and the preparatory research, cataloguing and conservation, these manuscripts become accessible to anyone anywhere in the world via our Digital Collections repository. The manuscripts were selected because of their individual value, significance, and varied subjects and construction: but also due to them being featured manuscripts included in Trinity’s MPhil in Medieval Studies – which is a hybrid taught postgraduate course. In digitising the manuscripts, they become accessible for deep scholarly research (at any time of the day: even when the reading room is closed).

As described in the project metrics, despite a delay to the commencement of the project and a deferral of some activities due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the primary objectives of the project have been fulfilled against the project plan established at the outset of the project. This has been a major achievement, particularly as the work necessitated regular onsite working (deemed “essential”) during periods when “work from home unless essential” was the prevailing advice. This necessitated health and safety protocols being a core activity to be incorporated into all project planning.

Three project team members were appointed – an Archivist/Project Manager (with an academic specialism in medievalism), a Conservator, and a Digital Photographer: all of whom have been exceptional. New digitisation equipment was procured and deployed to ensure the digital images were captured at the highest possible standard. This equipment also gives the Virtual Trinity Library programme a sustainability path to ensure the ongoing scaling and achievability of our digitisation aspirations.

The project has been supported by an underpinning programme governance including:

- The Virtual Trinity Library Steering Group

- The Virtual Trinity Library Operational Group

- The Manuscripts for Medieval Studies Steering Group

- The Manuscripts for Medieval Studies Project Team

Within and alongside these groups, the project team have been supported by experienced personnel (all of whom were named in the project proposal), but especially Estelle Gittins as the curatorial lead in the Library’s Research Collections division. Additionally, the project has been able to work closely with the academic lead for the MPhil in Medieval Studies at Trinity, and his associated network of colleagues.

These supports and the positive collective vision have no doubt aided considerably to the project’s success.

From the Library’s perspective, every additional item fully conserved, catalogued and digitised represents major progress. However, this project has allowed us to complete this work on two of our most significant and valuable manuscripts:

o The Winchcombe Psalter (TCD MS 53)

o The Book of St Albans by Matthew Paris (TCD MS 177).

This is a considerable achievement, as the process of digitising such items requires the highest levels of security protocols (again, achieved in a pandemic with reduced onsite resource). The result will have positive repercussions for decades of research and engagement due to their widespread appeal and the extensive academic interest in their becoming available. The Feast of St Alban in June 2022 will give us another opportunity to celebrate this milestone achievement.

Alongside the operational activities resulting in the achievements against the project objectives, networking around the project has brought new academic engagement which fulfil in the delivery of an excellent scholarly symposium planned for early 2023. The Project Archivist has also spoken extensively about the project and presented specific manuscripts at events throughout her time in Trinity. We know the collection is being used in teaching not only in Trinity, but also now in Universities in the UK. A forthcoming collaboration is impending with the digital reunification of two manuscript segments at Trinity College Dublin and The University of Oxford.

There have been six project blogs published so far, with a number awaiting publication. These will remain on the Library’s blog platform for the long-term and provide useful ongoing descriptions of the manuscripts featured and the work undertaken. The Medieval Manuscripts section of the Library website has been updated to give a more visual and descriptive representation of the manuscripts featured. The project has regularly used social media (Twitter and Instagram) to promote the release of new digitised content and discoveries within manuscripts. Particularly popular Tweets have been videos showing the manuscripts “in action” - 19 July 2021, showing the 14th century bible in a video – viewed 1.3k times – and 15 Dec 2021, showing a hidden fold in a folio with a diagram of hands – viewed 1.4k times.

The activities undertaken in this project have ensured the objectives of the project proposal will be achieved by the end of the project term and employment of the current project team. The governance structures and careful approach to project planning (including a shared scheduling spreadsheet) will allow us to follow an existing framework as we move into our next Carnegie Corporation of New York funded project – to work on a selection of medieval music manuscripts. There have been useful lessons learned from the first project, particularly in relation to staff recruitment timescales and appointment processes, that will assist our preparations and structures for the second phase. The ongoing supports of the governance structures will be vital

**We want to know more about what you are learning. Is there new information or data that you are learning or tracking that has not already been shared in your responses above? How has this affected your strategy?**

We have recently been exploring Research Impact reporting mechanisms with the Trinity Long Room Hub Arts & Humanities Research Institute, and expect to deploy methodologies utilised in other research projects for our events and online exhibition in the Manuscripts for Medieval Studies Project. This approach will also assist in the development of impact planning for our second Carnegie Corporation of New York Medieval Manuscripts Project – which will commence in 2022. Such impact reporting goes beyond the quantitative data we usually record (e.g. number of attendees at events) to the qualitative impact of research engagement through case studies and interview. For example, we experienced unexpected public engagement at the PROBE researcher night in this project, where a member of the audience had joined the event not as a scholar but due to an interest in cookery, and the possibility of recipes being included in our medieval manuscript collections. This aligns with our ambitions to make the Virtual Trinity Library programme, of which this project is a flagship component, a means by which to make our collections accessible to everyone – from schoolchildren to scholars