

WEDNESDAY, 27 OCTOBER -  
FRIDAY, 29 OCTOBER 2021:

## HYBRID WORKSHOP

<AUTHOR><TITLE><PLACE>

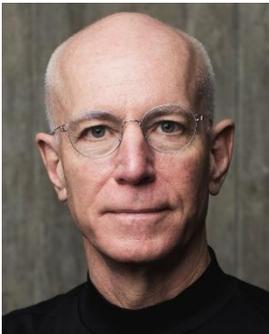
AUTHORITY RECORDS AND MANUSCRIPTS IN LIBRARIES AND RESEARCH



### Public Evening Lecture

co-organised by *Orient-Digital*, Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin – Preußischer Kulturbesitz  
and *Bibliotheca Arabica*, Sächsische Akademie der Wissenschaften

Wednesday, October 27, 2021, 6 PM



Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin – Preußischer Kulturbesitz  
Otto-Braun-Saal  
Potsdamer Straße 33  
10785 Berlin

Columba Stewart:

**The Digital Dawn of Comparative Manuscript Studies: How Authority Control Has Become the Critical Link**

Before 2003, Hill Museum & Manuscript Library worked in Europe and Ethiopia and had a rudimentary online catalog based on standards developed for western medieval manuscripts. As we made the transition to a fully digital preservation process and expanded into several new eastern Christian manuscript cultures and then into Islamic traditions, the limitations of our previous cataloging practices became obvious, especially as we were encountering so many texts that moved across linguistic and even religious boundaries. Although it was clear that we needed to be much stricter about authority control, many of the traditions we work with lack internationally recognized name authorities. There were also cases of multiple authorities because catalogers did not recognize a name that had been transliterated or adapted when a text was translated into a new language. Given that our work provides the basis for truly comparative manuscript studies, attention to these challenges became imperative. This led to the HMML Authority File (HAF) project, where both new authorities and established forms could be included in a searchable database that would be used by HMML catalogers and freely shared with projects around the world. This presentation will provide the broader context and then tell the story of this evolution at HMML.

Columba Stewart, OSB, is Professor of Theology at the Saint John's School of Theology and executive director of the [Hill Museum & Manuscript Library](#) (HMML), both at Saint John's University in Collegeville, MN. A native of Houston, Texas, he has been a Benedictine monk of Saint John's Abbey since 1981. Fr. Columba received an A.B. in History and Literature from Harvard University (1979), an M.A. in Religious Studies at Yale University (1981), and a D. Phil. in Theology from the University of Oxford (1989). He publishes regularly in his field of eastern and western Christian monastic history. Most recently he has been a member in the School of Historical Studies at the Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton, NY (2016-2017), a Guggenheim Fellow (2016), and a Resident Scholar at the Collegeville Institute at Saint John's (2018-). He delivered the 2019 Jefferson Lecture for the National Endowment for the Humanities. Because of his work at the Hill Museum & Manuscript Library leading the digitization and cataloging of more than 300,000 endangered Christian and Islamic manuscripts in libraries around the world, he has been featured in international radio programs, newspapers and documentaries, and the CBS News television program "60 Minutes."

The evening lecture will take place online and on-site. If you wish to attend in person, please contact [orientabt@sbb.spk-berlin.de](mailto:orientabt@sbb.spk-berlin.de) and take note of the current [Covid-19 regulations](#).

Link to the Webex event: <https://spk-berlin.webex.com/spk-berlin/j.php?MTID=meb226c6af79a7f86993d001caeabb72f>