

The Centre for the Study of Manuscript Cultures (CSMC)  
announces a Lecture

by

**Dr. Chiara Barbati**  
**Institute of Iranian Studies, Vienna**

## **The Christian Sogdian Manuscript Tradition in Context**

Leaving aside archaeological and epigraphic evidences, circa 550 Christian Sogdian fragments coming from the Turfan oasis (present-day Xinjiang, Uyghur Autonomous Region, China) are the only material witnesses of the existence of Christian communities of Sogdians (speakers of an eastern Middle Iranian language) in early medieval Central Asia/Western China. In spite of a very well-established tradition of philological and linguistic studies, few efforts have been made to systematically analyse the material aspects of these fragments. By outlining the main codicological features of this corpus, and, in so doing, the scribal practices that led to the creation of the Christian Sogdian manuscript tradition, this lecture will show how this peculiar manuscript tradition is inextricably related to the Church of the East, to its history, to its missionary activity along the Silk Road, to its mainly centres which were based in Mesopotamia. At the same time, we will discuss if and to what extent the Christian Sogdian manuscript tradition is related to the multilingual, multicultural and multi-religious Turfan milieu in the 8th – 11th centuries.

**Thursday, 3 December 2015 at 6 pm**  
**Room 0001, CSMC**