

International *Medieval* Congress

AUGUST 2014 NEWSLETTER

IMC 2014: 7-10 JULY



2014 ACADEMIC PROGRAMME

The twenty-first annual International Medieval Congress took place at the University of Leeds from 7-10 July. A record 2,061 delegates attended, from over 50 different countries, making this the largest Congress yet. The Congress welcomed a wide range of delegates, from early career academics to established scholars.

For the second year, the IMC returned to the University of Leeds main campus, offering a variety of on-campus accommodation options, purpose-built session rooms, and this year building on the favourite social and networking spaces from IMC 2013.

This year, more than half of delegates came from outside the UK: over 700 from Europe (not including the UK) and over 390 from outside Europe, from as far afield as Georgia, Taiwan, and Argentina. A programme of 542 sessions and round table discussions explored all aspects of the European Middle Ages, with diverse papers such as 'Medical and Legal Explanations for Hallucination in Medieval England', 'Sustaining Fleets - Shaping Empires?: The Conscripted of Non-Muslim Sailors in Umayyad Naval Warfare - Coptic, Syriac, and Armenian Historiographies as Alternatives to Arabic Sources and Papyri', 'Marrying into Empire?: Merit, Kinship, and Hereditary Office in the History of the Yuan Dynasty', and 'La politique franciscaine des Angevins à la fin du XIIIe siècle'. The programme also included the second annual Early Medieval Europe Lecture by Maria Cristina La Rocca (Dipartimento di Storia, Università di Padova): 'Foreign Dangers - Activities,

Responsibilities, and the Problem of Women Abroad, c. 500-1000'. The IMC was also pleased to celebrate the return of the annual Medieval Academy of America Lecture with Rita Copeland's 'Emotional Knowledge: Figurative Language in Medieval Rhetoric'.



The special thematic strand of 'Empire' proved to be one of our most popular themes to date with over 196 sessions presented in this strand. Keynote addresses were given by Mark Chinca (Department of German & Dutch, University of Cambridge) and Christopher Young (Department of German & Dutch, University of Cambridge). A further two keynote lectures were given by Naomi Standen (School of History & Cultures, University of Birmingham) on 'A Forgotten Eurasian Empire: The Liao Dynasty, 907-1125' and Hugh Kennedy on 'The End of Islamic Late Antiquity - Change and Decay in the 10th-Century Middle East'. The keynote lectures, alongside a full programme of Empire themed roundtables, widened the scope of discussion at this year's IMC to cover the eastern Middle Ages and conceptions of empire beyond the medieval period. The 'Empire' strand was expertly co-ordinated by Björn Weiler (Department of History & Welsh History, Aberystwyth University), and we would like to express our thanks to him for all of his hard work over the past year. The special thematic strand clearly opened up new avenues of interest, and we hope that all who presented in or attended sessions found them engaging and fulfilling.

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EVENTS AND EXCURSIONS

Events and excursions continue to play an important part in the conference programme. The events programme opened on Sunday with a range of activities and performances, both formal and informal, including a voice workshop on Burgundian Chanson, another workshop on medieval embroidery, as well as our long-running traditional music evening, which was housed for the first time in the Marquee. Local story-teller Matthew Bellwood also performed medieval tales surrounded by the second-hand and antiquarian bookfair, giving the audience opportunities both to listen and to browse.

During the week, the Dufay Collective presented a concert featuring exquisite arrangements of Middle English Poetry and the Clothworkers Consort of Leeds performed a series of works reflecting upon Christ's Passion. Silvan Wagner, from Universität Bayreuth, gave a multimedia presentation of Wolfram's *Willehalm* featuring music, text, and manuscript images. Delegates were also treated to a Middle English reading of the *Reeve's Tale* by Paul Thomas from the Chaucer Studio and a calligraphy workshop in which participants learned to write in Gothic script. Another highlight of the events programme was the feast, 'Recipes from a Forgotten Empire', featuring cuisine from the Kingdom of Aragon. Participants enjoyed a range of dishes including eggs stuffed with cheese, herbs, and spices, chicken in a lemon and almond sauce, and crespells, a pastry resembling small crispy doughnuts. IMC excursions included trips to medieval sites such as Byland, Rievaulx, and Bolton Abbeys, a tour of castles associated with Richard III, and York Minster, as well as behind the scenes visits to the Royal Armouries and the Leeds Discovery Centre.



As last year, the IMC concluded with its Making Leeds Medieval Celebrations. The birds of prey from SMJ Falconry returned in both a static display on University Square as well as flying displays behind the Union Building, but the event also included



IMC 2014: SPECIAL PUBLIC EVENTS

This year the IMC was pleased to host two very special public events for both the enjoyment of IMC delegates and the wider Leeds community. On Monday evening, award-winning poet, writer, and TV presenter Simon Armitage (School of English, University of Sheffield) gave a special session entitled, 'Middle English Poetry in Translation - A Reading' in which he read sections from his translations of *Gawain* and *Arthur*, describing the processes, excitements, and pressures of undertaking this kind of work as a practising poet rather than an academic or scholar.

On Wednesday, the IMC alongside the Yorkshire Archaeological Society welcomed film-maker, broadcaster, and historian Michael Wood (Maya Vision International, London / Public History, University of Manchester) for a lecture entitled 'Celts, Saxons, and Vikings: The 'Great War' of 937 and the Battle of Brunanburh'. In this special lecture Michael Wood reflected on one of the great events of the period, in which a Viking and North British coalition was defeated by King Æthelstan at Brunanburh. The site of the battle has long been controversial, but the consensus now is that it should be located in the Wirral in the North West of England. This lecture questioned this view. Reviewing the evidence from annals, numismatics, onomastics, and topography, Wood argued that the context of the war is Northumbrian history of the Viking age and that the battle probably took place south of York in the main war zone of the second quarter of the 10th century. A new location is proposed near the River Went (in Yorkshire), whose name it is suggested is contained in an alternative Northumbrian name for the battle.

displays of combat by Dean Davidson and Stuart Ivinson of the European Historical Combat Guild as well as demonstrations of medieval food, metalworking, and a market of crafts and produce. The event also featured the world premiere of the Dance of the Seven Deadly Sins by Nonsuch History and Dance. Delegates watched as Adam, the first man, was tempted by seven dancing girls, each determined to lead him astray from the path set by the Good Shepherd. The festivities concluded with a ceilidh, giving delegates a chance to unwind while kicking up their heels to the music of the Assumption Ceilidh Band. The wider University of Leeds community was invited to join in, giving everyone around the opportunity to be inspired by the Middle Ages!



Throughout the week, the Leeds University Union Medieval Society also offered a programme of events, including film screenings of *The Secret of Kells* and *Les Visiteurs*, sessions of medieval and medieval-inspired board games, and even a medieval-themed pub quiz! For more information on LUU Medieval Society, please contact luumedievallsociety@gmail.com.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR FEEDBACK!

We are currently working on reporting all the feedback gathered both during and after the IMC through our series of paper and online questionnaires. Thank you to everyone who contributed to our evaluation process.

POST-CONGRESS TOUR: 'THE CASTLE COUNTY OF ENGLAND'

Robert Woosnam-Savage and Kelly DeVries once again teamed up to lead a tour of the medieval castles of Northumberland. The sites visited ranged from Roman forts to palatial residences and fortified towns. Aside from a few spells of rain, the weather was lovely as delegates learned more about castle construction and how these castles actually saw active duty defending the border between England and Scotland.

The feedback from the on-campus move has continued to be overwhelmingly positive in our second year, with many delegates indicating that the move has strengthened the sense of community at the IMC and provided excellent opportunities for networking and socialising with fellow colleagues. Some delegates felt that networking spaces could be improved and we will continue to strengthen the social heart of the IMC to help facilitate further networking opportunities.

Further comments about the IMC continued with such positive responses as 'Impressive', 'Wonderful campus inside a very nice city; perfect organization', and 'It was a great conference; I thoroughly enjoyed it and went to some excellent sessions'.

In 2013 we listened to feedback and made efforts to alleviate problems of overcrowding in session rooms. For IMC 2014, we asked our Programming Committee to estimate audience sizes for sessions and increased the average session room size. This year, the number of reported overcrowded sessions has decreased, but there is always room for improvement. For example, the number of sessions that were in rooms that were considered too large increased as a result of measures put in place to lower previous instances of overcrowding. In the coming year we will continue to refine our room assignment procedures to reduce the issues further. If you have any feedback that you would like to pass on to the IMC administration team, please get in touch at imc@leeds.ac.uk.





TWITTER AT THE IMC

The #IMC2014 hashtag took the twittersphere by storm during this year's IMC. Dedicated medievalist tweeters kept all followers up to date with the latest from inside the session rooms, concerts, special events, lectures, and exhibitions and fairs. Over the four days, hundreds of tweets were exchanged between the IMC and delegates and IMS alumnus and media aficionado Kate Wiles even hosted a twitter evening for tweeters old and new to meet up and share tips in the ever-increasing digital age!

The IMC is happy to report that the hashtag #IMC2015 is already in use and currently filling up with calls for papers in organised sessions. Be sure to keep checking in for all the latest! Follow us @IMC_Leeds



IMC FAIRS

Returning again to the iconic Parkinson Building, the IMC Bookfair hosted thirty-seven academic publishers and organisations displaying their latest publications in medieval studies. IMC delegates, University staff, and members of the local community were able to browse the wide selection of titles while exhibitors took the opportunity to catch up with current authors and meet potential new ones.

The University Union Building was also a hub of activity, hosting the ever-popular Second-hand and Antiquarian Bookfair in the Riley Smith Hall and the Craft Fair in the foyer. The increased number

of sessions and activities in University House and the Union Building gave delegates plenty of opportunities to peruse the items on display, from a wide range of books, to haberdashery, hand-dyed wool, jewellery, and stained glass.

The Historical and Archaeological Societies Fair played an essential part of our Making Leeds Medieval event, with stands in both the Marquee and the University Union Foyer. IMC delegates and other visitors had to opportunity not only to learn about these societies and their activities, but also handle archaeological finds and become versed in church monuments and brick buildings.

CONTACT DETAILS

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IMC 2015: 6-9 July 2015

Special Thematic Strand 'Reform and Renewal'

The IMC seeks to provide an interdisciplinary forum for the discussion of all aspects of Medieval Studies. Paper and session proposals on any topic related to the European Middle Ages are welcome. However, every year, the IMC chooses a specific special thematic strand which - for 2015 - is 'Reform and renewal'. The theme has been chosen for the crucial importance of both phenomena in social and intellectual discourse, both medieval and modern, as well as its impact on many aspects of the human experience.

The changes brought about by deliberate individual and collective interventions demonstrate the impact of reform and renewal on the development of spirituality, ideologies, institutional and socio-economic realities, literary and artistic expression, and a sense of shared identity amongst communities. Change could be justified by referring rhetorically to a 'restoration' or 'renewal' of a perceived former reality. Monastic and ecclesiastical groups regarded spiritual and institutional reform as closely interconnected. Secular rulers invoked divine will and natural order to validate interventions in political and socio-economic structures. Innovators in literary and artistic spheres referred to a desire to return to a more 'authentic' or 'original' intellectual, spiritual, or aesthetic experience. In reality, reform and renewal could be profoundly radical but could also be more ambiguous, remaining virtually unnoticed by contemporaries. Medieval commentators' tendency to append positive and negative connotations to accounts of reform and renewal continues to impact upon modern discussions of both phenomena and their rhetorical uses.

AREAS OF DISCUSSION COULD INCLUDE:

- Justifications for reform by ruling or dissident groups (e.g. oligarchies, heretics, parliaments)
- Memories of reform: historiographical justifications
- Changing evaluations of reform and renewal: medieval commentaries and modern scholarship
- Relevance of reform and renewal as terms to describe change across different periods, regions, social layers, and landscapes
- Renewal without reform: intentional change that was not presented as a reform
- The individual as agent of reform/renewal: charismatic leaders, innovators, and bureaucratic reformers
- Collectivities as agents of reform and renewal
- Significance and/or impact of individual, social, political, and institutional reform/renewal as well as impact on individuals and societies
- Religious and/or ideological renewal
- Reform and renewal in literary and artistic production: genre and style reforms, reformist literature
- Reform and renewal in manuscript production, translation, and dissemination
- Medieval rhetorics of reform and renewal
- Physical remains of reform or renewal: architecture, texts, iconography
- Reform as renovation or continuity: maintaining continuation of structures, continuation of knowledge, or 'Back to basics'
- Reform in education / moral renewal

IMC DIARY DATES

IMC 2015 Paper Proposals Deadline: 31 August 2014
IMC 2015 Session Proposals Deadline: 30 September 2014
IMC 2015: 6-9 July 2015
IMC 2016: 4-7 July 2016

We prefer proposals to be completed online - a quick, easy, and secure method. Paper proposals must be submitted by 31 August 2014; Session proposals must be submitted by 30 September 2014. The IMC welcomes session and paper proposals submitted in all major European languages.

ABOUT THE INSTITUTE FOR MEDIEVAL STUDIES AT THE UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

TEACHING AND RESEARCH

Formed in 1967, the IMS continues to go from strength to strength. IMS research spans all across Europe, from Late Antiquity to the end of the Middle Ages. Areas of specialisation include:

- Art and iconography
- Crusades and the Latin East
- Warfare, tournaments, and chivalry
- Arms and armour
- Bible exegesis and theology
- Early medieval European history and culture
- Church history, monasticism, and the papacy
- Religious culture
- Italian literature
- Latin literature
- Old and Middle English literature
- Medicine
- Old Norse literature and mythology
- Music and liturgy
- Politics and society of the British Isles, France, Germany, Italy, and the Baltic region
- Gender studies

Leeds is noted for medieval languages and their associated literatures: in addition to Latin and Old English, Leeds caters for Old Norse, Arabic, Hebrew, Old High German, Italian, French, and Spanish www.leeds.ac.uk/ims/study/index.html. Co-operation with the Royal Armouries and Leeds City Museum enriches teaching, research, and career development opportunities.

The Institute's community includes some forty scholars from constituent Schools and partner institutions, together with a nucleus of medievalists within the Institute who work alongside the interdisciplinary teams that produce the International Medieval Bibliography and organise the Congress. The Bibliography and Congress attract international visitors and lecturers, who contribute to the Institute's lively programme of seminars, lectures, and a year-long programme of excursions and events www.leeds.ac.uk/ims/about/events.html. The co-location of postgraduate teaching and research with the International Medieval Bibliography and Congress provides an environment in which students have the opportunity to gain practical as well as academic experience while strong links with heritage bodies and museums enable internships.

INTERNATIONAL MEDIEVAL BIBLIOGRAPHY: CALL FOR CONTRIBUTORS

The editorial team is looking for individuals or organisations to become contributors to join its existing range of partners throughout the world. Contributors take responsibility for identifying and cataloguing publications relating to specific subjects or geographical areas, and are rewarded with free subscriptions to IMB (online or print), other free publications and additional benefits. Contributors are sought for national, regional, and local history in France, Germany, Italy, Denmark, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Sweden, Russia, Belarus, Ukraine, Portugal, Serbia, Israel, Lithuania, Greece, Cyprus, Latvia, Brazil, Mexico, Chile, Korea, and the Arab world. Thematic contributors (who may be based anywhere) are particularly sought for art history, humanism, Italian literature, French literature, German literature, Jewish Studies, linguistics, numismatics, and music.

MEDIEVAL STUDIES ON-LINE

The Leeds Institute also provides an online gateway for Medieval Studies at www.leeds.ac.uk/ims/med_online. This gateway provides a annual calendar for conferences within the fields of Medieval Studies, as well as Medieval Resources Online, a site with links to and information about medieval resources on the web. This site aims to provide the most current and relevant research guides and sites online of relevance to medievalists. If you have a resource that you would like to share and promote, we would be keen to hear from you. Please email the details to imc@leeds.ac.uk.

