



# LEEDS INTERNATIONAL MEDIEVAL CONGRESS

August 2019 Newsletter



## Scholars Report ‘Material’ Benefits from Attending IMC 2019

Thank you to the 2,810 medievalists from 59 countries who came to Leeds to make IMC 2019 such a success. This year’s special thematic strand ‘Materialities’ involved a record-breaking 382 sessions, bringing together speakers to discuss and reflect upon material culture in medieval studies. This was alongside 368 sessions across 39 strands that showcased research from all areas of medieval studies.

At the time of going to press, our feedback survey showed that over 92% of delegates rated the academic content as good or excellent across the Congress as a whole.

In particular, delegates praised the international breadth of participation, the diversity of strands and sessions, and the variety of new and established scholars. The friendly community, and “special atmosphere” was also praised, as were the various extra-curricular activities, including the programme of excursions, the Book and Craft Fair, and Making Leeds Medieval.

**You can find our full IMC 2019 Congress review inside along with details of how to get involved in next year’s Congress...**

### Keynote Lectures

Congress opened on Monday with introductory remarks by special strand coordinator, **Anne Lester**. Anne introduced several keynote lectures which set the tone for the week by providing fascinating insights into the theme of ‘Materialities.’ **Katrin Kogman-Appel** discussed the transformation of the Haggadah and its significance in the historiography of Jewish art. This was followed by a keynote by **Emma Dillon**, on the movement of song across medieval Europe, accompanied by singer **Chloë Allison**. At lunchtime on Monday, **Maria Giuseppina Muzzarelli’s** lecture considered sumptuary legislation. Also on the opening day of the Congress, the **Early Medieval Europe** annual lecture by **Ian N. Wood** explored the influence of the church on post-Roman Europe.

Tuesday’s keynote was organised by **Boydell & Brewer** and delivered by **Richard Barber** on the subject of princely magnificence. Later, **Aden Kumler** gave the annual **Medieval Academy of America** lecture, exploring how medieval objects and texts embody ‘destructive acts of un-making’ in the context of Christian concepts of salvation.



On Wednesday, delegates enjoyed **Marina Rustow's** keynote discussing the writing tools of the Fatimid caliphs. Now entering its second year, the New Voices Lecture was given by **Tom Johnson**, who spoke about the 'materiality of law in later medieval England.'

The keynotes and special lectures established the tone for the 26th annual International Medieval Congress, stimulating debate among delegates throughout the week.

## Sessions

As a result of increased demand for alternative session formats, a grand total of 54 round table discussions and alternative format sessions took place at IMC 2019. Amongst these were a number of panels addressing topical issues within the wider medievalist community.

In our feedback survey, delegates praised the "range and quality" of papers, the "broad range of topics" covered and the "opportunity to talk to people from all over the world." Delegates also rated the sense of community engendered by the IMC and praised the high quality of networking opportunities available through sessions and social activities.

## Difficulties Obtaining Visas for Overseas Delegates

We were distressed to learn that a number of delegates experienced issues getting visas in order to attend the Congress. The vibrancy and diversity of large, international conferences such as the IMC are seriously threatened when delegates from overseas are prevented from attending.

We feel it is essential to provide support to delegates through the visa application process, and are able to offer letters of invitation and/or acceptance to delegates who require them.



*One of the musical highlights of this year's Congress - a selection of medieval music performed by the Senior Boys and Girls Choirs of Leeds Cathedral*



*Workshop leader Mark Farnadi-Jerusalmi demonstrates traditional Jewish scribal practices during his workshop on Wednesday.*

With the uncertainty caused by Brexit, we are acutely aware that advice and guidance for delegates from overseas may change at short notice. Therefore, in the lead-up to registrations opening, we will also be providing relevant links to the UK government website so that delegates can access up-to-date information on visas for IMC 2020. We are also looking into our policies regarding how we help and support applicants who require a visa to come to Leeds.

Congress Director, **Axel Müller** said: "one of the IMC's greatest strengths is that around 60% of delegates come from outside the UK. We are actively looking at how our policies and systems can be improved to support those individuals affected by this issue."

"We are keen to know more about the scale of this problem so if you, or someone you know, has been affected, please get in touch." You can contact our team by emailing [imc@leeds.ac.uk](mailto:imc@leeds.ac.uk).

## Concerts and Performances

This year's Congress boasted an expansive programme of concerts, performances, and workshops for delegates, with nine performances spread throughout Congress week. On Monday night, we were delighted to welcome the **Senior Boys and Girls Choirs of Leeds Cathedral** and their director, **Benjamin Saunders**, to Clothworkers Concert Hall. The young performers sang a variety of religious and secular songs for a packed house of admiring delegates, parents, and eager local medievalists.

Later in the week, **Trouvère** commemorated the 800th anniversary of England's greatest knight, **William Marshal**. The performance combined thorough historical research with musical experience, bringing together a variety of pieces likely to have been known to **Marshal** during his life.

Elsewhere, delegates enjoyed a variety of more intimate performances which evoked the musical and



cultural life of the Middle Ages, including the **Leeds Waits** (official musicians of the city of Leeds) who performed 'The Private Life of Henry VII' to a packed crowd on Sunday night. A large crowd also gathered on Wednesday evening for the **Lords of Misrule's** performance of **Hrotsvit of Gandersheim's** play 'Calimachus'. This colourful outdoor performance in Beechgrove Plaza drew a capacity crowd with their captivating tale of a lustful pagan's conversion and redemption.

## Workshops

Delegates enjoyed eleven specialist workshops throughout the week covering a wide variety of medieval crafts and skills. Delegates took time out from the academic programme to pick up new skills or simply find out more about practical aspects of medieval life, including embellished book covering, traditional bookbinding, and making late medieval church textiles, combat skills and using medieval astrolabes. Delegates also enjoyed a rewarding programme of professional development activities, including using zines to publicise research, a workshop from the **National Archives**, and drop-in sessions with the **University of Leeds Library Special Collections** team.

We were particularly pleased to host **#medievalwiki**, a free session directed by **Kate Cook** in collaboration with the **Women's Classical Committee (UK)** and the **Society for Medieval Feminist Scholarship**. The project aims to improve the representation of women in the world's largest and most influential source of knowledge. In the workshop, delegates collaboratively edited and improved Wikipedia pages both for medieval women and women working in medieval studies.

## Fairs and Exhibitions

This year's Congress saw 68 local and national organisations and charities come together to exhibit and sell their wares throughout Congress week.

Of course, no IMC would be complete without our legendary Bookfair. **Fred Taylor**, our bookfair manager, told us this was the busiest IMC Bookfair he'd ever seen. And, to judge by the overflowing bags of books some delegates were seen with, he may well have been right! The range of works available - as well as the discounts offered by some publishers - proved popular with delegates throughout the week.

From Sunday to Tuesday, the foyer of Leeds University Union bustled with our second-hand and antiquarian bookfair, with delegates eager to find a bargain or browse the wide variety of rare and historical works.

The final two days of IMC 2019 saw one of the largest Craft Fairs to date, with sellers exhibiting medieval-inspired handmade items. From ceramics to woodwork, historical musical instruments to quirky medieval-inspired jewellery and stationery, delegates



*Pictured, from top to bottom: IMC favourites **3 Swords** returned to provide a fascinating demonstration of medieval combat techniques; a delegate gets up close and personal with Julianne, a hooded vulture, at **SMJ Falconry's** display; Late Antique cavalry horses from **ARC Cavalry** wowed crowds in the combat arena; a demonstration by **Eran ud Turan**, the world's only central Asian living history group was a highlight of **Making Leeds Medieval**.*





The sun shone - though not as much as last year! - for much of the Congress allowing delegates to enjoy fresh air on University Square.



Delegates got the opportunity to handle a variety of medieval weapons at the workshop organised by the Society for Combat Archaeology

were delighted by the wide range of items on sale.

### Making Leeds Medieval

Always a highlight for delegates, university staff and students alike, this year's public events programme featured calligraphy, medieval surgery, rope-making, embroidery, and combat demonstrations.

One particular highlight was the Late Antique cavalry display by **ARC Cavalry**. Cavalry horses paraded into the combat arena where they demonstrated how the horses were prepared for battle. We were also thrilled to host **3 Swords**, who provided a lively recreation of 12th- and 13th-century combat.

We welcomed 12 local and national historical and archaeological societies to campus as part of Making Leeds Medieval. These organisations do important work preserving historical sites across Yorkshire and around the UK.

### Excursions

Throughout Congress, we were pleased to offer a range of full- and half-day trips to local sites of historic interest. This year's excursions included visits to a variety of local and specialist museums, quaint market towns, castles, and even a battlefield.

The visit to Beverley Minster and town was a particular



Materialities - the special thematic strand for 2019 - features prominently in this word cloud containing every session title from IMC 2019.





One of our craft fair exhibitors, *Marginalia Paraphenalia*, ready and eager to welcome delegates on Wednesday morning.

highlight, as delegates got to explore the ecclesiastical heritage of this picturesque Yorkshire town. Delegates were also fortunate to view – and translate, possibly for the first time – a text found in a post-Reformation painting displayed at the Dominican Friary, adding substantially to knowledge of this historic site. [Find out more about this discovery in our News section.](#)

## Bursaries

Nearly £17,000 was distributed to 75 recipients of the IMC Bursary Fund, including students, unwaged and low-waged delegates, and medievalists from regions with less access to research funding.

We are extremely grateful to the donors who have contributed to the IMC Bursary Fund for next year's Congress. We have already received over £1,000 in donations. If you would like to donate to the fund and help ensure marginalised scholars can attend future IMCs, visit the [Bursaries and Awards pages of our website.](#)

We are also keen to hear from individuals and organisations who would like to support scholars. If you are interested in contributing in this way, please get in touch by emailing [imc@leeds.ac.uk](mailto:imc@leeds.ac.uk).

## #IMC2019

Reaction online to the 26th International Medieval Congress was largely positive, with delegates engaging in extensive live-tweeting of many sessions. Craft fair purchases, as well as our feathered friends who visited campus on Thursday as part of Making Leeds Medieval, also proved popular.

Engagement with the Congress on Twitter peaked this year with over 29,000 views of welcome tweets in the lead-up to Congress, and a similar audience for other material shared throughout the week. The hashtag #imc2019 trended at number five in Leeds on the Monday of Congress, and appears to have briefly entered the top 10 trending topics across the UK on the same day.

Ahead of IMC 2020, medievalists seeking speakers for their own sessions can share calls for papers with us. Tweets are being added to the ['#IMC2020 Calls for Papers' Twitter Collection](#) and being shared on our Facebook page on a regular basis. Don't forget to tag us in your posts or use the hashtag #IMC2020 to have your call for papers included.

## New Registration System Success

Following a serious technical issue with the previous system in early February 2019, this year marked the trial-run of our brand new registration system. It has proved popular with delegates, with a number of you getting in touch to let us know that you think it an improvement on the previous system.

There are still kinks to iron out and, over the coming months, we will be reviewing the registration process from top to bottom, taking into account all the suggestions received via our feedback survey.

## Changes to Proposal Guidelines

As numbers attending the IMC have grown in recent years, we have undertaken a detailed review of our [Proposal Guidelines](#).

The aim of these changes is to ensure the IMC fully reflects the wider medievalist community, and to further encourage participation from under-represented groups and subject areas.

You can find our new [Proposal Guidelines and Acceptance Criteria on our website](#), along with an expanded guide on how to submit your paper or session proposal.

## New Disciplinary Policies

We recognise the importance of the IMC to the whole community of scholars interested in medieval studies. Therefore, we have been consulting extensively with the University of Leeds legal team to establish new disciplinary policies and processes to handle those



Put your hands in the air if you love the IMC! Delegates prepare for an interactive workshop.





*The IMC Bookfair brought out everyone's inner bookworm as over thirty publishers from around the world exhibited their latest works.*



*Beautiful weather at Wednesday's reception where dignitaries, including the Lord Mayor of Leeds Cllr. Eileen Taylor, Tom Ward, Deputy Vice-Chancellor of the University of Leeds, and Emilia Jamroziak, Director of the Institute for Medieval Studies, met Axel Müller and Emma Thornton from the IMC team.*

rare situations where delegates experience bullying, harassment or other unwanted or untoward behaviour while at the IMC.

The first phase of this consultation is now complete and our new [Dignity and Mutual Respect Policy](#) can now be viewed online. This details how we seek to ensure a safe and productive environment for all delegates so that everyone can make the most of the academic, networking, and social opportunities that the IMC affords.

Going forward, we are putting the finishing touches to our new disciplinary processes which will set out, for the first time, a formal process for dealing with serious complaints and breaches of our Dignity and Mutual Respect Policy.

We will be rolling out our new disciplinary policies following consultation with various key stakeholders both within the University and across the wider medieval studies community.



**International Medieval Congress - University of Leeds**



**@IMC\_Leeds**



**@IMC\_Leeds**

### Contact the IMC Team

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*The 6m long 1066 Battle of Fulford Tapestry was one of the organisations in attendance at the Historical and Archaeological Societies Fair.*



*On Wednesday, delegates enjoyed the early evening sunshine and a performance by the Lords of Misrule of 'Calimachus' by Hrotsvit of Gandersheim.*





# Delegate Feedback Survey 2019

Here's a taste of what our delegates loved about IMC 2019...

“I don't know what makes Leeds unique: it's my very first conference. But I'm very excited to return!”

“In Leeds, there is a special atmosphere [and] all people are very kind and respectful. It feels like a big festival with friends who are interested in the same things!”

“I saw some very good papers, and made some good and unexpected connections with scholars working in other fields.”

“There is nothing like [the IMC] at all for quality and consistency of research.”

“I thought the theme was very good this year... Virtually all the papers I saw made a good effort to engage the theme.”

Key areas for improvement were also identified via the feedback survey. The issue of visas for overseas delegates is under active consideration as we seek to gather information on the scale of the issue.

Sustainability is another key area where we are working hard to do better. Many delegates may not have realised that, this year, all single-use cups were recyclable and/or biodegradable, vastly reducing the landfill waste generated by delegates' thirst for caffeine!

The University of Leeds is aiming to be completely free from single-use plastic by 2023. We will be keeping delegates updated on our sustainability commitments via our website and social media.



A delegate examines archival material from the **University of Leeds Special Collections** archives during one of their lunchtime drop-ins.



Delegates enjoy the networking - and refreshment! - opportunities on offer at the IMC reception on Monday evening in Parkinson Court.



# About the Institute for Medieval Studies

## Medieval Research and Teaching at Leeds: A Unique Environment

Leeds combines exceptional interdisciplinary teaching and research with access to some of the best aspects of the British Isles in the medieval period.

The Institute for Medieval Studies (IMS) is the home of the International Medieval Congress as well as the International Medieval Bibliography, the world's foremost interdisciplinary bibliography of the Middle Ages. Together, they provide opportunities for students to combine paid work experience with academic practice. Formed in 1967, the IMS today is one of the largest communities of medievalists in the UK, with over 50 members of staff and associated specialists.

The University's world-class library has the best medieval resources in the north of England and, with the archive of the Yorkshire Archaeological & Historical Society, houses important collections of medieval manuscripts and rare books. Many of the medieval manuscripts of the Library can now be viewed online: <https://library.leeds.ac.uk/special-collections>

The libraries of the Royal Armouries and the British Library at Boston Spa are close at hand. Cooperation with the Royal Armouries and Leeds City Museum enriches teaching, research, and career development opportunities.

## MA in Medieval Studies

Full-time (12 months) and part-time (24 months)

The MA in Medieval Studies programme is made up of a core of language and skills modules, which give students an excellent grounding for postgraduate study, plus a range of interdisciplinary, team-taught, and single-discipline optional modules, and an extended piece of supervised independent research.

Our teaching and supervision expertise spans 1300 years and enables the student to study either a closely interrelated set of subjects or to spread their interests across an outstanding range of disciplinary and interdisciplinary fields.

There are also specialised modules offering language teaching for beginners in Old and Middle English, Old French, Old Norse, and Middle High German.

The MA Medieval Studies programme provides an excellent basis for further work at doctoral level, either full-time or part-time, including key skills for research on medieval topics. An MA in Medieval History is also available at Leeds.

## PhD Research in Medieval Studies

The IMS supervises doctoral research on interdisciplinary medieval topics, across a wide range of subjects. Research degrees in the IMS are structured so that, as well as embarking on their doctoral project, in the first year of study students take the following taught modules in foundational skills for research:

- Research Methods and Bibliography
- Medieval Latin
- A modern foreign language for reading scholarship on the research topic

Usually, IMS research students have two co-supervisors from different relevant disciplines. They work with the students to shape the project and give bibliographical and methodological guidance and will continue to read and advise throughout their research. Each student presents an annual paper on their work in progress at a research seminar in the IMS. Research students are also encouraged to give papers at national and international conferences.

## 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. For more information contact the Editorial Director, **Alan Murray**: [a.v.murray@leeds.ac.uk](mailto:a.v.murray@leeds.ac.uk).

### **Contact the IMS**

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# Call for Papers - IMC 2020, 6-9 July

## Special thematic strand: 'Borders'

The IMC provides an interdisciplinary forum for the discussion of all aspects of Medieval Studies. Proposals on any topic related to the Middle Ages are welcome, while every year the IMC also chooses a special thematic focus. In 2020 this is '**Borders**'.

Medieval borders have preoccupied scholars for several decades in various guises. The term 'border' designates a wide variety of phenomena: physical geographical limits, that can be signalled by border markers or natural features, points where tolls have to be paid, political boundaries, that vary from points in space to linear and fortified military fronts, ways of controlling space, frontier zones, borderlands, porous zones of encounters and contact, ways of limiting community and identity, ideological and metaphorical delimitation including discourse and representation, bordering practices, the process of creating and performing borders, and borderscapes to capture fluidity and change over time.

This strand seeks to bring together medievalists of all fields interested in both the theory and practice of borders in all their variety, from physical boundaries and material borders to dynamic social and spatial relationships. Borders can be linked to power and the formation of states, to definitions of self and other, to violence and military engagement, to belonging and becoming, to material and symbolic construction, to relational and perspectival production of space, to mapping and discourse, to experience and theory, to negotiation and performance. Borders can also be found in frescoes, textiles, clothing, ceramics or coins, with practical, symbolic, or aesthetic functions. Borders are also subject to evolution and significant change over time not just between the medieval and modern, but within the medieval period.

You can also [read the Call for Papers online](#).

Themes to be addressed may include, but are not limited to:

- Political and military borders
- Living in border zones
- Medieval and Modern perceptions, descriptions, and conceptualizations of borders
- Delimiting borders, border markers
- Border maintenance
- Encountering and experiencing borders
- Bordering practices
- Borderscapes in the *longue durée*
- Symbolic borders
- Belonging and exclusion
- Mapping borders and border zones
- Border institutions
- Materiality of borders
- Border and power
- Migration
- Medieval imagery of borders
- Transnationalism
- Political, social, cultural, religious performance of borders
- Village and parish boundaries
- Boundaries between town and countryside and within towns
- Practices of delimitation
- Blurring boundaries such as human/animal, animate/inanimate, gender, age, status, religion
- Self and other, boundaries of the self
- Fluidity and fixity of borders
- Borders in manuscripts
- Material and visual borders
- Processual and performative turns and medieval borders
- Disciplinary boundaries
- Paratexts as borders
- Borders of the body
- Transcending and reaffirming boundaries between life and death
- Borders, boundaries, frontiers

### IMC 2020 - Key Dates

**Paper Proposal Deadline:** Saturday 31 August

**Session Proposal Deadline:** Monday 30 September

**Submit your Proposal:** <https://www.imc.leeds.ac.uk/imc2020/>

**Read our Proposal Guidelines:** <https://www.imc.leeds.ac.uk/proposals/proposal-guidelines/>

The IMC welcomes session and paper proposals submitted in all major European languages.