

## IMC 2021: "I've heard some remarkable papers and met some brilliant people"

IMC 2021 brought together over 2,000 delegates from around the world for the largest global gathering in medieval studies.

We are delighted by the level of positive engagement with the online event, in which over 1,600 speakers discussed the special thematic focus of 'Climates' alongside exciting new research from across the field of medieval studies.

Each of the keynote lectures received nearly 300+ live views, with hundreds more attendees catching up on the recordings later. Meanwhile, the most popular fringe events proposed by delegates, publishers, and scholarly societies attracted over 100 attendees, with many more engaging directly with host organisations via social media.

The academic programme featured 504 sessions with 1,600+ speakers. The average session saw 47.5 attendees, a substantial increase on the average attendance for sessions at the in-person IMC!

Unusually, these numbers are likely to rise as registered attendees can still access over 750 hours of session recordings until the virtual platform closes on 31 August. Social and networking tools, including private video meetings, messaging, and public forums, will also remain open for this extended period.

You can find our full write-up of IMC 2021 inside, as well as more about our plans for IMC 2022 which, we hope, will feature both an in-person and virtual component...

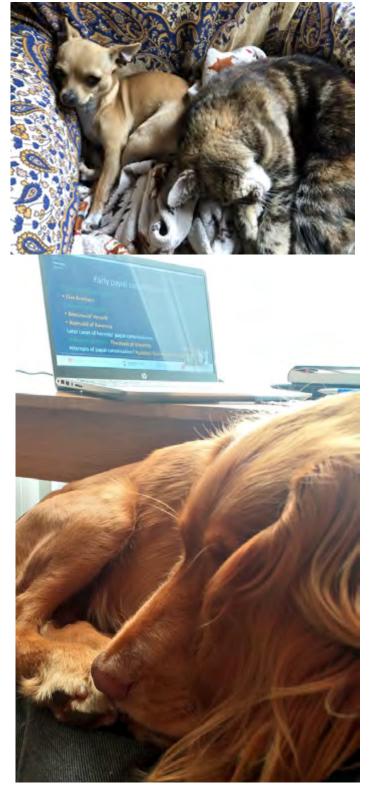
#### **Keynote Lectures**

IMC 2021 saw six leading speakers from across medieval studies contribute keynote lectures covering aspects of the special thematic focus, 'Climates'. These lectures were introduced by Amanda Power (Faculty of History, University of Oxford) the Special Thematic Strand Coordinator, and brought together archaeologists, historians, and eco-critics from across medieval studies and around the world.

Monday morning began with the traditional double-bill of IMC keynote speakers as Jean-Pierre Devroey (Département d'enseignement d'Histoire, Arts et Archéologie, Université Libre de Bruxelles) and Innocent Pikirayi (Faculty of Humanities, University of Pretoria) opened IMC 2021 to a packed, if virtual, crowd. Both papers provided perspectives on historical climates and environments, with Jean-Pierre exploring 'How to Write and Think about Political, Social, and Economic History in Dialogue with Climatic and Environmental Data: A Case Study in the Age of Charlemagne, 740-820' and Innocent spoke on the topic 'Towards New Climate and Environment Change Understanding in Africa: Re-Engaging the Medieval Climate Optimum/Anomaly and the Little Ice Age'.

History, Zhang (Department Ling of Boston College, Massachusetts College of History & Culture, Shanxi University) spoke on Tuesday lunchtime about 'Geoengineering an Empire: The Consumptive Mode of Analysis and China's Medieval Economic Revolution'. Next up was Johannes Preiser-Kapeller (Institut für Mittelalterforschung, Osterreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Wien), who spoke on Wednesday lunchtime on the subject 'Crusaders of Climate Change?: The Debate on Global Warming between the Medieval and the Present Age'. Heidi Estes (Department of English, Monmouth University, New Jersey) gave the final IMC 2021 keynote which was entitled 'Climate Then, Crisis Now: Medieval Ecocriticisms and Environmental Activism'.

On Tuesday evening, we were also delighted to host the annual Early Medieval



**Above, from top:** Attending IMC can be tiring for non-human delegates, as Binky and Bissou demonstrate their energy-saving mode. Thanks to Eleni Ponirakis (@EleniPonirakis); Cuthbert shows his concentrating face during IMC sessions, thanks to Charles West (@Pesudo\_Isidore)

Europe Lecture which was delivered by Mischa Meier (Institut für Alte Geschichte, Eberhard-Karls-Universität Tübingen) and Claudia Rapp (Institut für Byzantinistik & Neogräzistik, Universität Wien / Institut für Mittelalterforschung, Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Wien). This discursive lecture focused on 'Studying Medieval Mobilities: Problems and Perspectives'.



Above: The IMCTeam demonstrate social distancing in this team photo taken after IMC 2021 completed on a sunny Friday here in Leeds!

Alongside these keynote lectures, the IMC was pleased to collaborate with the Instituto Cervantes to host the 2021 Cervantes Lecture on Wednesday evening. Juan-Carlos Conde (Magdalen College, University of Oxford) spoke on 'Disability, Gender, and Literature in 15th-Century Castile: Teresa de Cartagena's Intersectional Self', with an introduction by Instituto Cervantes director, Pedro Jesús Eusebio Cuesta (Instituto Cervantes, Leeds & Manchester). This lecture was also open to the public as part of their public lectures series.

If you missed out on one of the IMC keynote lectures then there is still time to enjoy them. All the keynote presentations were recorded and remain available for registered delegates to view via Pathable, the IMC 2021 virtual event platform, until 31 August.

#### Revisit IMC 2021 until 31 August!

Once you have checked those out, make sure you dive into the 750+ hours of recorded content from the main body of the academic programme! We were delighted that the vast majority of IMC speakers were happy for their contributions to be recorded and made available to registered delegates until the platform closes on 31 August 2021.

In addition, many speakers have also provided supplementary written materials alongside their papers, including summaries of key points, PowerPoint presentations, as well as other resources. All these can be accessed alongside recordings on the session details page for the relevant session.

Feedback from delegates show that these recordings have been hugely beneficial for attendees. We are also pleased to report that elements of online delivery, including automatic (though not, alas, always 100% accurate!) subtitles, the countdowns for when a session begins, and access to session recordings were also praised for improving the accessibility of IMC 2021 sessions.

#### IMC 2022: 'Borders' Update

The special thematic focus for IMC 2022, which will be held from 4-7 July 2022, will again be 'Borders'.

The IMC team have already began work exploring various possibilities for the format of IMC 2022. It is our intention that next year's Congress will feature an inperson Congress held in Leeds, and virtual components for those unable to travel.

IMC Director Axel Müller said: 'The unprecedented conditions of the last sixteen months have demonstrated the resilience and adaptability of colleagues across medieval studies as we have all got to grips with new technologies and new means of communicating and sharing knowledge and research.

'While we do not yet know what the local, national, or global coronavirus situation will be like in July 2022, it is our belief that an event which incorporates both inperson and virtual components will be the best way forward. By combining the best elements of our recent online experience with the tried-and-tested in-person format, we hope that the IMC will remain at the forefront of new research in medieval studies.

'You could say that we are trying to break down "Borders" between in-person and virtual conferences!' Over the coming months, we will be working with colleagues across the university, as well as trusted event platform partners, to assess the feasability of various approaches to an event with both in-person and virtual elements, and one which ensures participation remains as accessible as possible for all.

When you submit your paper, session, or round table proposals, you will be asked about your preferences for in-person or virtual delivery of your paper, session, or round table. This information is essential to help us ensure that IMC 2022 caters to all delegates needs as much as is feasible and to ensure that virtual and in-person attendees have a positive experience.

As we further clarify the format of IMC 2022, these responses will allow us to



**Above:** Wild animals welcome at IMC! James Baillie (@JubalBarca) shared this delightful wild hamster, photographed in Vienna.

ensure that on-campus elements are safe and work within any relevant coronavirus capacity restrictions, while also ensuring that virtual components are accessible for anyone unable to travel to Leeds.

You can read the full Call for Papers for IMC 2022 on the back page of this newsletter and also via our website.

#### **Bursaries & Low-Wage Scheme**

Applicants to this year's IMC Bursary Scheme accounted for over 10% of IMC 2021 registrants, with 116 receiving a full-fee bursary which covered the full cost of their Proposal and Registration Fee for IMC 2021 while all applicants were entitled to register at the lower Concessionary registration rate. This represents 258 attendees, the vast



**Above:** Not all animals wished to photobomb their owners' presentations! Quentin the rabbit was more than happy to pose for the camera, though. Thanks to Chloe McKenzie (@ChloeRMcKenzie)



**Above:** It's important to bring snacks to virtual sessions, as demonstrated by Emma Herbert-Davies' (@HorsesinHistory) horse, Moll.

majority of whom were speakers or otherwise actively involved in the academic programme as session organisers, moderators, or round-table participants.

For our first wholly online IMC, 57% of delegates registered at the Standard rate, with the remaining 43% being entitled to the Concessionary registration rate as students, retired, low-waged or unwaged individuals.

We are also grateful to the 128 individuals who made donations to the IMC Bursary Fund. These donations really are vital in enabling us to provide bursary registrations for delegates for IMC 2022. If you feel able to make a contribution in spite of the ongoing financial impact of the pandemic, you can do so via our website.

Meanwhile, the IMC 2022 Bursary Application Form is now available on our website and applications are welcomed from delegates from the Global South, who may be employed on zero hours contracts, as well as those experiencing financial precarity, or who are employed on a low wage, who have additional caring responsibilities, or who may be working outside of academia.

#### **Round Table Reminder**

Alongside individual paper proposals and session proposals, which consist of 3 or 4 papers grouped together, you can also propose Round Table discussion sessions for IMC 2022.

These sessions should be qualitatively different from traditional academic sessions and should not feature traditional 15-20 minute papers. Rather, a Round Table session can be structured differently, for example, featuring several substantially shorter presentations of 5 minutes each, pecha-kucha style presentations, or panel discussions in which formal presentations are eschewed in favour of discussion of an artefact, document, archive, topic, theoretical approach or some other aspect of medieval studies.

Please note that although the IMC Criteria for Acceptance do not permit an individual speaker to present more than one paper per IMC, owing to the alternative format requirement, delegates may contribute to one or more Round Table session alongside delivering a traditional paper at IMC 2022.

You can find the full IMC Proposal Guidelines, including our criteria for acceptance, here.



**Above:** Carey Fleiner (@AugustaAtrox) shared this beautiful portrait of one of her cats, Susan Bucket. Portrait made by Sam at VecPrints, available on Etsy!

#### **IMC Bookfair Goes Virtual**

We were delighted to welcome over 30 international publishers to exhibit at the IMC 2021 online Bookfair. Alongside regular stalls to display recent titles, special offers, and the traditional virtual shop window, many publishers benefitted from live booths during each lunchtime and afternoon tea break. In these sessions, delegates were welcome to drop-in and discuss future publication plans with the editorial team.

During the IMC 2021 congress week, over 950 delegates visited publishers' booths, either to find out more about their offers, to browse titles, or to engage with publisher representatives.

We look forward to welcoming publishers back for IMC 2022 and details of both inperson and virtual exhibition options will be available via our website during Autumn 2021.



**Above, from top right:** Fips was an eager viewer of our virtual falconry session with SJM Falconry, courtesy of Sylvia Hufnagel (@PaperTrailsIS); social networking of sorts between Chelsea Shields-Más' dog Miley and local horse Lucky during IMC 2021 (@DrCSchieldsMas).



Social and Networking Summary

At time of writing, over 150 delegate-initiated private meetings have taken place, bringing together colleagues virtually from around the world. From social activities to networking to extending post-session discussions, we've been delighted by the range of ways in which delegates have made use of this tool.

Alongside these informal sessions, we were delighted to welcome nearly 100 medievalists to our drop-in social and networking sessions on Wednesday and Thursday. Seeking to recreate those chance encounters in the coffee queue or around campus, the IMC team utilised Zoom's breakout rooms to group together small groups of attendees in order to chat, network, and find out more about each other's research. We were also pleased to see over 250 public conversations using the text-based chat, as well as the majority of delegates making use of the private messaging service.

Don't forget that all the social and networking tools within the platform remain freely available for delegates to use until the end of August 2021!

## Fringe Events, Excursions, Performances & Workshops

Despite being online, delegates had a wide range of activities to choose from. Interactive workshops in Cyrillic calligraphy, wikidata editing, and with the National Archives proved popular. Delegates could also book workshops in bookbinding and Opus Anglicanum embroidery in which they received pre-recorded videos to follow at their own pace.

Performances included storytelling Daisy Black, with a programme of medieval tales and folk songs in which women gain the upper hand (and sometimes the upper arse). Joglaresa offered a recorded concert featuring the band performing within medieval manuscript images and a mashup of Guillaume de Machaut's Douce Dame Jolie with Donna Summer's I Feel Love. Other songs focussed on human mortality and, appropriately for 'Climates', the weather. The Lords of Misrule from the Centre for Medieval Studies at the University of York presented their audio adaptation of stories from *The Canterbury Tales*. There was also a film screening of the Old English Elegies short film series, followed by a Q&A with director Jo. George. Delegates also enjoyed a short film presented by Stephen Brennan

## IMC 2022, 04-07 July 2022 Key Dates

Paper Proposal Deadline: Tuesday 31 August 2021

Session Proposal Deadline:

Thursday 30 September 2021 **Submit your Proposal:** 

www.imc.leeds.ac.uk/imc-2022/

**Read our Proposal Guidelines:** 

www.imc.leeds.ac.uk/proposals/criteria/

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

Proposals submitted for the cancelled IMC 2020 are welcome to be resubmitted, unless already presented at IMC 2021.









**Above, from top:** A taste of the 'old normal' as a delegate considers a book purchase at the IMC 2019 Bookfair; Erad ud Turan demonstrate at IMC 2019; delegates socialising at distance during IMC 2019; re-enactors in costume during Making Leeds Medieval at IMC 2019.



and Lizi Patch of the Leeds Grand Youth Theatre about their current project, a play about the Battle of Agincourt, written and performed by the cast of 8-11-year olds.

Perennial favourites such as the Leeds University Union Medieval Society pub quiz, the Storytelling Circle, and the disco also returned. Moreover, much to the delight of delegates, we were able to host a virtual falconry display in association with SMJ Falconry. Although attendees were not able to pose for a selfie with these marvellous birds, they were able to see them at home in the beautiful Yorkshire Dales. A virtual excursion to Rievaulx and Fountains Abbeys (always popular destinations) provided attendees with an in-depth view of these sites in comparison with other monastic sites in England and in France, something

that simply would not have been possible at an in-person excursion.

Indeed, many of these events are still available! A range of virtual embroidery workshops can be found here from Opus Anglicanum Embroidery, and the Folded Almanac workshop is still available from Anachronalia here.

Other events, such as the Medievalists.net workshop on earning an income outside of academia, the virtual excursion, and the filmed versions of the Old English Elegies, as well as Daisy Black's storytelling performance (Unruly Women) and the Lords of Misrule's audio play of *The Canterbury Tales* can be viewed on Pathable until 31 August.



International Medieval Congress - University of Leeds



@IMC\_Leeds



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#### Contact the IMC Team

imc@leeds.ac.uk www.imc.leeds.ac.uk

Our team remain working remotely and so we are unable to receive enquiries via telephone, post, or fax.



Delegates also proposed and hosted a wide range of fringe events, ranging from networking events and quizzes to singing, storytelling about horses, and performances of Bardcore! IMC exhibitors also offered a range of book launches as well as sessions about publishing. As with last year's virtual event, we were truly impressed by the range of activities proposed, and we'd like to thank everyone who hosted a fringe event.

#### Sessions

IMC 2021 saw over 500 sessions take place across 23 timeslots over 5 days. While the programme was somewhat smaller than for the last in-person IMC in 2019, we were delighted to see substantially higher attendance at sessions. Delegates praised the "extremely thought-provoking" papers and the organisation, especially the accessibility of the recorded sessions.

Our survey found that 95% of attendees rated the academic quality of the IMC as 'good' or 'excellent'. Meanwhile, more than 85% found the platform easy to navigate and 88% of you felt that the IMC compared positively with other conferences.

#### Social Media Highlights

IMC 2021 saw record-breaking levels of engagement on social media, with nearly 60,000 views of the official @IMC\_Leeds Twitter feed on the first day of IMC alone. This is around double the engagement seen either for the smaller virtual IMC in 2020 or any previous in-person event.

Unfortunately, as attendees were dispersed around the globe, #IMC2021 did not trend either locally or nationally. However, as other trending topics on the first day of IMC 2021 saw between 30,000 and 80,000 impressions, it is highly likely that, had we been able to meet together here in Leeds, #IMC2021 would have featured in the Top 10 UK trending topics for the first day at least!

We were also delighted that delegates engaged with our #IMC2021Pets contest, with King Louis reigning victorious over other competitors (pictured, above).

Above, from left: Competitors in the #IMC2021Pets contest run on Twitter during Congress week: Sabrina from FiftyEleven's handsome rooster, Blackwell, (@FiftyEleven1) Ivy undert the bed (Maieke Röben (@AMedievalMare); Pirate Cheeky Patch, Catherine Clarke's guinea pig (@CathAMClarke), and Alice Hicklin's crowned King Louis, voted best #IMC2021Pets by our folowers on Twitter! (@AliceHicklin)



Here's a taste of what our delegates loved about IMC 2021...

"I really enjoyed the experience, especially being able to catch up on missed panels through the recording and have appreciated the ability to message other attendees on the platform"

"I was consistently impressed by the keynotes and the ways in which so many papers engaged with the theme [of climates], connecting our current crisis with the study of the past"

"It was so great to feel like a scholar again among peers during the pandemic"

"The sessions I attended this year were very lively and the papers were of a high academic quality"

"I really enjoyed the networking event organised on the Wednesday because it provided a good means, under the circumstances, to socialise and feel more part of the conference"

"This is going to sound really geeky, but I really liked the online platform! I found it easy to navigate and it was great to have the countdown timer as I get anxious about being late for things!"

"While I prefer in-person attendance, the online conference was well organized and easy to navigate which made the overall experience very enjoyable"

"The fact that it is virtual, otherwise I would be unable to attend, and the fact that the papers are recorded so I can continue to enjoy it for longer"

"Fascinating lectures, the website easy to navigate.

Thoroughly enjoyable and interesting"

While we were delighted to find that the majority of delegates found the platform intuitive and easy to use, we have taken on board the issues raised regarding platform navigation, as well as provision of further social, networking, and wider interactive opportunities at virtual events.

As we look forward to 2022, your feedback is invaluable as we begin planning for next year's event. The global situation surrounding the coronavirus pandemic remains uncertain, and we are keen to see a return to in-person activities here on our beautiful Leeds campus alongside incorporating successful aspects of IMC 2021.

Therefore, IMC 2022 will feature both in-person and virtual elements, and we will provide more details on this via our website and social media over the coming months.



A delegate examines archival material from the University of Leeds Special Collections archives during one of their lunchtime drop-ins at IMC 2019

## **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: library.leeds.ac.uk/info/1500/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 comprises a core of language and skills modules, giving students an excellent grounding for postgraduate study, plus an outstanding range of interdisciplinary optional modules and an extended piece of supervised independent research.

Our teaching and supervision expertise extends over 1000 years and ranges across the Christian and Muslim world. Our programme enables students to study either a closely interrelated set of subjects or to spread their interests across time, space, and discipline. We offer specialised language teaching in medieval English, French, German, and Norse, as well as Arabic, Persian and Turkish. The MA in Medieval Studies provides an excellent basis for further work at doctoral level, either full-time or part-time, including key skills for research on medieval topics.

#### PhD Research in Medieval Studies

The IMS supervises doctoral research on a wide range of medieval topics. 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 cosupervisors 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.

#### Contact the IMS

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# LEEDS INTERNATIONAL MEDIEVAL CONGRESS

## 4-7 July 2022 - CALL FOR PAPERS



## **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 2022 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 toll has 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. 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

Proposals should be submitted online at www.imc.leeds.ac.uk (from 31 May 2021). Paper proposal deadline: 31 August 2021; Session proposal deadline: 30 September 2021. The IMC welcomes session and paper proposals in all major European languages. Resubmissions from the original IMC 2020 programme are welcome, unless already presented in 2021.



