A record 2,444 delegates from 56 countries attended the 24th International Medieval Congress (IMC) at the University of Leeds, 3-6 July 2017. Bringing together researchers from Chile to China, the US, Russia and Algeria, the IMC continues to provide an open forum for scholars at all stages in their careers to share ideas on all aspects of the Middle Ages.

The academic programme swelled again this year to include 1,939 individual papers, spanning the full range of disciplines in medieval studies. Sessions covered topics including medieval Ethiopia, religious conversion narratives, Byzantine architecture, palace cities in Japan, Europe and the Middle East, and Old English riddles, to name just a few.

In addition, an eclectic programme of public events, concerts, and fairs provided plenty of opportunities for delegates to immerse themselves in the Middle Ages, as well as getting to know each other informally at the many social spaces on campus.

Special thematic strand: ‘Otherness’

Of the 627 sessions which took place this year, 230 were related to the special thematic strand, ‘Otherness’. This brought together papers on an incredibly wide range of topics, from monsters and monstrousity to the relationship between otherness and time, via cross-cultural encounters, otherness within individual religious traditions, and the discourses of otherness in contemporary medieval studies.

The special thematic strand on ‘Otherness’ provided a focal point for important discussions on diversity and inclusiveness – in the medieval period, at the IMC, and in medieval studies and academia as a whole.

We hope that these discussions will continue and contribute towards the broadening, deepening, and
overall growth of the field of medieval studies.

We want the IMC to provide an open forum for all medievalists to share their ideas. We are listening to the complex and ongoing discussions surrounding both the IMC and medieval studies as a whole. As part of our review to improve the IMC each year, we have been discussing plans to develop the diversity of the Congress and encourage and support medievalists from under-represented groups.

Aside from the keynote speakers, who are proposed by the co-ordinator of the special thematic strand, every session at the IMC is either proposed by individuals or collated from papers that were submitted individually. With the exception of keynote speakers, the IMC programme was delegate-led; for 2017, every one of the 230 sessions submitted on the special thematic strand was accepted. We are keen to receive proposals from the widest possible community of scholars.

In addition, we seek to widen the dialogue in and around medieval studies through engagement with scholars from outside the traditional disciplinary and geographic boundaries of the field, incorporating non-arts and humanities disciplines, researchers working on different time periods, and wider communities outside the academy (including, but not limited to, libraries, archives, museums, heritage organisations, teachers, and other groups and individuals interested in research on the Middle Ages).

We are dependent on input from IMC delegates and seek participation in the IMC from many different disciplines and walks of life. Every year, the IMC bursary fund aims to support delegates from all over the world. For the IMC 2017, £12,500 was distributed through the bursary fund, not only to students but also to scholars from underrepresented and less well-funded regions.

We are committed to creating an open, accessible, and inclusive environment. We also take the principles of dignity and mutual respect very seriously, and we are sorry for any offence caused by comments made during the introduction to Monday’s opening lecture. We are determined to create and encourage a positive, inclusive event for all medievalists to enjoy.

Developing the IMC

We have been considering how the structures and systems of the IMC can help to increase diversity among our delegates and in medieval studies. At the moment, the only quantifiable measures of diversity the IMC has are a) self-defined gender, and b) country of residence.

This enables us to identify that at this year’s Congress almost 40% of delegates were from countries where English is not an official language – an achievement of which we are very proud. Out of all 2,444 delegates, 47.7% (1,165) of all IMC delegates self-identified themselves as male and 51.9% (1,270) as female.

It has always been the aim of the IMC to provide a truly multinational platform for Medieval Studies: an open and inclusive forum for discussion, sharing experiences, and exchanging perspectives. With the experience of nearly 25 years of the IMC, we believe that a lot has been achieved, but much more can be done.

About 18 months ago we started a substantial review of the IMC’s format, structures, and ways of working. While this review is ongoing, we have made some preliminary decisions.

Firstly, we plan to add four new strands to the IMC’s existing strand structure:

- Global Medieval Studies
- Health and Medicine
- Manuscript Studies
- Mediterranean World

All of these were decided in spring 2017: we would welcome suggestions for new strand co-ordinators, or anyone who you feel would be a good addition to the IMC Programming Committee in relation to these subject areas. The decision on who to invite
will be taken by the IMC Standing Committee.

For more details on the Programming Committee membership and duties, see https://www.leeds.ac.uk/ims/imc/strand_index.html.

Secondly, we will seek to improve diversity at the IMC, both at the Congress itself and in our various committees and supporting groups. The addition of four new strands provides an opportunity to involve a wider range of scholars in the Programming Committee to assist in coordinating the academic programme. We will incorporate a position for postgraduates and early career researchers into our Standing Committee, which oversees practical concerns.

As part of IMC 2018, we will feature a special lecture, highlighting new voices in the field of medieval studies. We have also revised our guidelines for paper and session proposals, encouraging those who submit proposals with us to incorporate scholars from a wider range of backgrounds.

In addition, we plan to continue gathering and listening to constructive feedback from as many medievalists as possible. Suggestions and comments are always welcome via email, Facebook or Twitter, and we will consider every comment we receive. The IMC will continue to be a work in progress, and our newsletters will keep delegates updated on all future developments.

We are always grateful for your suggestions and feedback on how we can keep developing the IMC. If you have any more ideas to add, please feel free to get in touch using the contact details below.

Special lectures

In addition to the four keynotes chosen for the special thematic strand, we welcomed Wendy Davies (formerly University College London) to give this year’s Early Medieval Europe lecture, entitled ‘Gardens and Gardening in Early Medieval Spain and Portugal’. A reception provided delegates with an opportunity to socialise and share their responses after the lecture.

Jeffrey J. Cohen (Department of English, George Washington University, Washington, DC), also gave the Medieval Academy of America lecture, ‘Outside Noah’s Ark: Sympathy and Survival as the Waters Rise’, which sparked stimulating conversations over drinks at the post-lecture reception.

Papers and sessions

Beyond the sessions in the ‘Otherness’ strand, all 35 of the IMC programming strands were well represented in the academic programme, from archaeology to theology and biblical studies.

To accommodate the number of sessions taking place, and while old favourites such as the Michael Sadler Building were out of use for refurbishment, the IMC expanded to new buildings across campus. The Fine Art and Maurice Keyworth Buildings were both generally popular with delegates; Maurice Keyworth introduced visitors to the Western Campus, giving them access to campus facilities such as ULITÂ - An Archive of International Textiles.

‘Off-programme’ sessions

Because of the practical challenges associated with producing the IMC printed programme and Addenda/Corrigenda, it is not always possible for us to include new events in these publications. However, we were pleased to welcome two informal events to this year’s programme, discussing timely issues which have a significant impact on medievalists.

One of these gatherings was an open meeting for medievalists with disabilities and others interested in supporting colleagues with disabilities, organised by Alicia Spencer-Hall and Alexandra Lee. The other, organised by Sihong Lin and James Harland, aimed to help medievalists develop methods to counter the appropriation of the Middle Ages by extreme right-wing activists, especially on social media.

We hope that both meetings were productive and inspiring to everyone who attended, and welcome proposals for similar events in future years.
**Policy on dignity and mutual respect**

In winter 2016, all acceptance emails to speakers and session organisers said, for the first time, that delegates, staff, and exhibitors would be expected to abide by our policy on dignity and mutual respect. This sets out the behaviour expected of everyone at the IMC – and, crucially, the behaviours that will not be tolerated – to make sure everyone feels safe, valued, and welcome.

To support this policy, we invited Acas, the UK’s employment relations service, onto campus to facilitate training for IMC staff in equality, diversity, and inclusion, including methods of investigating and dealing with reports of inappropriate behaviour. The training was invaluable for the team, but we remain committed to working on our policies and procedures to ensure the most inclusive and enjoyable experience for everyone.

We have already received some suggestions regarding developing this policy, which is always under review. If you have any further feedback, please feel free to get in touch.

**Social media**

Another first for 2017 was our social media policy. Setting out both how to make sure users can follow tweets about the IMC and the etiquette for discussing sessions and experiences online, this was made available, along with the policy on dignity and mutual respect, from the end of last year.

The #imc2017 hashtag was extremely lively on Twitter, even becoming the no. 3 trending hashtag in the UK on Monday evening. Delegates frequently tweeted about the content of sessions, sharing their experiences with medievalists who could not attend and expanding conversations beyond the session rooms.

Ahead of IMC 2018, medievalists looking to distribute calls for papers for their own sessions can also share them with us. Tweets are being added to the ‘IMC 2018 Calls for Papers’ Twitter Moment and Facebook posts are being added to the ‘IMC 2018 Calls for Papers’ note on our Facebook page.

Please get in touch if you would like to add your call for papers to either platform.

**imc2017.co.uk**

One of this year’s major developments was the introduction of a new, short-term website, specifically to provide resources and information for IMC 2017. The mobile-responsive site, http://www.imc2017.co.uk, is still online until the end of September to see news stories and an image gallery from this year’s Congress.

The site provided information on everything from locating publishers at the IMC Bookfair to collecting registration packs and using the campus WiFi. One of the most popular innovations was providing a downloadable copy of the IMC programme in PDF format, incorporating all the changes from the *Addenda/Corrigenda* document. Analytics data shows that the programme was downloaded more than 800 times.

**Concerts**

Trouvère Medieval Minstrels performed the first of our two musical concerts on Monday. ‘The Franks in the East: Music for a Medieval Prince’ used music taken from the *Chansonnier du Roi* to explore the
story of the Villehardouin family, lords of the Morea in southern Greece.

Unfortunately, Thomas M. Schallaböck’s planned concert ‘Minnesang as a Mirror of Otherness’ had to be cancelled due to unforeseen circumstances. However, Jon Erik Schelander offered his programme ‘Otherness in the World of the Troubadours’, in which he performed and provided commentary on songs and poetry from a number of Troubadours.

Both of these events proved very popular with delegates, and we would like to extend our sincere thanks to all of the performers.

Events

A number of workshops focusing on medieval crafts and skills contributed to the IMC events programme, including calligraphy, jewellery, and even combat. Kristine Larsen, astronomy professor at Central Connecticut State University, introduced delegates to the workings of the astrolabe, while storyteller Anne Lister performed the tale of Jaufre to a packed house. Author Justin Hill also led an historical fiction masterclass on Thursday evening.

Wednesday saw a screening of a new film adaptation of the Second Shepherds’ Play, a popular event followed by a lively Q&A session with director Douglas Morse, producer Heide Estes, and two of the film’s actors. Among the events completing the programme were a traditional music session, open mic night, and medieval dancing with the Arbeau Dancers that closed the Congress on Thursday night.

Of course, the IMC Dance is a perennial favourite. New rules regarding use of the Leeds University Union building meant we could not hire a band for the occasion, but hundreds of delegates took to the dancefloor with a local DJ on hand.

IMC Fairs

The IMC Bookfair is one of the pillars of the Congress. Delegates had the opportunity to network with publishers and distributors as the Bookfair took over Parkinson Court, and were able to take advantage of special conference discounts.

While the Bookfair tempted delegates throughout the week, the Second-Hand and Antiquarian Bookfair brought them together with smaller book dealers in the Leeds University Union Foyer for the first part of the week. From Wednesday, craftspeople from as far away as Italy brought their handiwork to the Medieval Craft Fair, including medieval-inspired jewellery, hand-bound books, early musical instruments, and art prints.

As the IMC came to a close with the flagship Making Leeds Medieval event, the Marquee on University Square hosted the Historical and Archaeological Societies Fair – a chance to find out more about some of the societies working to preserve the heritage of Leeds, Yorkshire, and the UK as a whole.

Public events

While all of the fairs and concerts at the IMC are open to the public, some events were specifically targeted at the wider community. These began with Medieval Day at Leeds City Museum on Sunday, which included musical performances, storytelling, demonstrations from the Royal Armouries Museum, and embroidery displays courtesy of the Stamford Bridge Tapestry Project.

Making Leeds Medieval takes place on campus as the IMC comes to a close, bringing birds of prey, combat displays, food demonstrations, and craft exhibitors to University Square.

Ahead of the new series of Game of Thrones, visitors also had the chance to take selfies with a replica of the Iron Throne of Westeros which drew queues for most of the day. Crowds gathered to watch 3Swords as they performed dramatic combat displays, while Levantia demonstrated medieval horse-riding techniques. Delegates also had the chance to meet the King Edward’s Living History Group, a school-based re-enactment group demonstrating aspects of daily life around the year 1392.
Excursions

Visitors benefited from opportunities to discover a rich variety of destinations. In addition to a special object-handling session at Leeds’ own Royal Armouries Museum, delegates were able to visit religious sites such as Lincoln Cathedral and Bishops’ Palace, priories of the canons regular, and Ripon Cathedral.

In a first for the IMC, one excursion also visited Stonyhurst College, home of the largest collection of Catholic material culture in Britain. Two of North Yorkshire’s stunning medieval castles, Helmsley and Knaresborough, also proved popular with visitors.

Highlights from Leeds University Library Special Collections

Replacing the public lectures of previous years were a series of daily drop-in sessions hosted by Leeds University Library. These gave delegates the chance to drop into the Treasures of the Brotherton Gallery during the lunch break and get up close with items from the Brotherton Library Special Collections.

Delegates embraced the opportunity to talk to Special Collections staff about medieval manuscripts, incunabula, the Ripon Cathedral Library and Archives, and the archival collections of the Yorkshire Archaeological and Historical Society. All four sessions attracted plenty of visitors, many of whom took to social media to post photos of items they had seen or touched.

Development workshops

Rounding off the IMC’s academic programme, Friday’s workshops provided opportunities to explore different aspects of professional development for researchers.

Lisa Fagin Davis of the Medieval Academy of America and Rhiannon Lawrence-Francis from the University Library Special Collections led a workshop on working with fragments, using examples from the Ripon Cathedral Library and Archive. Each delegate had their own fragment to examine. Elsewhere, The National Archives, Kew ran a workshop on using TNA’s collections as a research resource, while Peter Konieczny from Medievalists.net explored ‘How Medievalists Can Engage a Wider Audience’.

We hope these sessions were useful to everyone who took part. If there are any topics you would like to see covered in one of these workshops, or you have any other suggestions, feel free to let us know.

Feedback

We are always grateful to everyone who passes on their feedback about the IMC, whether through the online survey, paper questionnaire, email or social media. We are still going through your individual comments over the summer.

Ongoing building work on campus proved a challenge for some delegates, and the level of noise was a cause for concern in some rooms. Unfortunately, there was little we could do to control these issues, but we look forward to welcoming you to a campus with improved facilities in 2018. Completed venues included the newly refurbished Old Bar, a firm favourite which delegates were pleased to see returning this year.

In total 53 moderators said their session room was too large, 45 said it was too small, and the remainder said their rooms were just right. We will continue to look carefully at room allocations in future years.

IMC Bursary Fund

This year the IMC Bursary Fund distributed around £12,500 to students, unwaged and low-waged researchers, and delegates from under-represented and less well-funded regions of the world. We are keen to increase the amount that we can distribute in 2018. This year, donors contributed around £1,800 to the fund, and a further £200 was raised through donations in exchange for selfies on the replica Iron Throne.

We are keen to work with individuals and organisations who are interested in providing further support for individuals who would not otherwise be able to attend the IMC.

If you or someone you know would be interested in participating in this way, please get in touch.

**Sieglinde Hartmann Prize for German Language and Literature**

Thanks to the generosity of Prof. Sieglinde Hartmann, president of the Oswald von Wolkenstein-Gesellschaft and a long-standing supporter of the IMC, a new prize has been instituted for the 2018 IMC.

The prize of €250 will be awarded for the best abstract for any paper proposal in the field of medieval German language and/or medieval German literature. All individual paper submissions will be considered automatically; anyone taking part in an organised session who wishes to be considered should send a separate abstract of their own paper to the IMC Administration by email by 1 November 2017.

The winner’s name will appear in the 2018 IMC programme, and the prize will be presented during the Congress.

**Templar Heritage Trust Bursaries**

We would like to thank the Templar Heritage Trust (THT) for offering three bursaries of £200 each to IMC delegates.

THT operates as part of the Charities Aid Foundation and makes a number of grants each year in support of academic research and conservation of historic buildings. THT takes a particular interest in the literary, architectural, and cultural legacy of the medieval Knights Templar and their period in history.

**IMC Memories**

In 2018, we will welcome delegates to the 25th annual IMC. Ahead of this landmark occasion, we want to hear about your memories, stories, and hopes for the future of the IMC. It could be your first IMC Dance experience, the sessions and papers that have inspired your research, or even meeting a friend or partner.

Many delegates filled in one of our IMC Memories postcards at the Congress, and others have submitted their stories via the form at https://www.imc2017.co.uk/imc-memories/.

The form is still open until the end of September, or you can also email us with any stories you would like to share.

We hope you will join us in marking the 25th IMC by both celebrating the past and looking to the future.

**Memories of Leeds**

In addition to the 25th IMC next July, the next academic year will mark the 50th anniversaries of both the Institute for Medieval Studies and International Medieval Bibliography. We are also gathering memories from the people who have contributed to the success of medieval studies at Leeds.

If you have been involved with any of Leeds’ medieval institutions, we would be very grateful if you would take the time to complete our short questionnaire about your experiences. Your contributions will help us to write the history of these influential institutions.

Complete the survey at https://leeds.onlinesurveys.ac.uk/ims-newsletter-survey
The IMC provides an interdisciplinary forum for the discussion of all aspects of Medieval Studies. Paper and session proposals on any topic related to the Middle Ages are welcome, while every year the IMC also chooses a special thematic focus. In 2018 - the year of the 25th IMC - this is ‘Memory’.

There are many kinds of memory - personal and social, natural and artificial, political and cultural. Along the lines of this general taxonomy, memory operates in many diverse modes: as a mechanism, process, instrument, and cognitive framework relating to, and concerning recreations of, the past - the social past, the institutional past as well as the past of an individual. Central in the process of storing, retrieving, and (re)constructing the past, memory is by no means a stable entity; it is always undergoing transformation.

In recent decades, memory has become a very fashionable research topic. In Medieval Studies, the concept of memory has been studied as permeating history, literature, language, religion, science, philosophy, and other fields.

In addition to treating the processes of storing and retrieving information, the study of memory now naturally also encompasses personal and communal identity and self-fashioning, conceptualization of the world, perception of time and space, intellectual cognition and emotional reactions, established patterns and creativity, continuity and discontinuity, memorization and forgetting - to name but a few conceptual domains under scrutiny.

This, however, also means that the study of memory has gradually become very complex and even somewhat elusive. In this sense, this special thematic strand offers a unique opportunity for a fresh and vigorous treatment of the field of memory in its astonishing breadth and variety.

The IMC welcomes proposals in all areas of memory. Themes to be addressed may include but are not limited to:

- Personal memory, self-fashioning, and identity
- Social, political, and religious memory
- The art of memory, mnemonics
- Memory: orality and literacy
- Knowledge and education - and its dissemination
- Metaphors for memory
- The media, mechanisms, and methods of memory - visual, verbal, and material memory
- Memory and beauty: aesthetic relevance and impact of memorization and remembering
- Objects of memory
- Lieux de memoire - communities and identity
- Construction and reconstruction of the past
- Memory: order and disorder
- Memory: sense and sensibility
- Commemoration and re-enactment
- Memory and immortality
- The arcane and daily life
- Memory and virtue
- Performance/drama/music - memory and playfulness
- Memory: habit and improvisation
- Forgetting and oblivion: natural processes vs. damnatio memoriae
- Forbidden memory
- Manipulative memory
- Categorization in language (analogy vs. anomaly, etc.)
- Etymologizing (including folk etymology)
- Formulas and catalogues
- Remembering the Middle Ages

The IMC online proposal form is now available.

Proposals should be submitted online at: www.leeds.ac.uk/ims/imc/imc2018_call.html

Paper proposals must be submitted by 31 August 2017

Session proposals must be submitted by 30 September 2017.

The IMC welcomes session and paper proposals submitted in all major European languages.
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 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 Lending Division are close at hand. Cooperation with the Royal Armouries and Leeds City Museum enriches teaching, research, and career development opportunities.

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.

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 the student an excellent grounding for postgraduate study, plus a range of interdisciplinary, team-taught and single-discipline option 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.

*We stand with CEU*: Emilia Jamroziak, Director of the IMS, speaks at the Wednesday evening IMC reception