

Social Agency of Secular Goldsmiths' Work in the Late MA (Leeds, 3-6 Jul 23)

International Medieval Congress, Leeds

Deadline: Sep 12, 2022

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Organized session: Social Agency of Secular Goldsmiths' Work in the Late Middle Ages

Wrought for a vast range of mundane practices and contexts, in an abundance of forms, styles, and techniques, European late medieval secular goldsmiths' work remains an elusive category of artistic production. Perhaps deterred by this overwhelming variety, the study of late medieval secular goldsmiths' work has been eclipsed by scholarship on liturgical metalware. However, publications by R. W. Lightbown and others, as well as archaeological discoveries such as those of Jewish hoards, have opened a new window onto the world of secular goldsmithery and everyday life, and shed new light on how secular objects circulated and operated outside ecclesiastical environments.

This session seeks to explore the arena of secular goldsmiths' work in the later Middle Ages and its manifestations in different contexts such as domestic, civic, courtly, juridical, academic, diplomatic, etc. Acknowledging the centrality of secular goldsmiths' work objects in the rituals of various social frameworks, we wish to explore these objects' roles in shaping relationships, defining hierarchies, and constructing identities.

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

- Objects such as: nefs, university scepters, reliquaries for swearing oaths, automata, fountains, table utensils and decorations, jewelry
- Adaptations of goldsmiths' work by newly established institutions like universities or civic juridical authorities
- Entanglements of the sacred and the secular via the production of goldsmiths' work objects
- Production of secular goldsmiths' work
- Guilds and networks of goldsmiths
- Patronage of secular goldsmiths' work
- Material, iconographic and formalistic aspects of secular goldsmiths' work
- Use, performance and handling of goldsmiths' work in rituals such as marriage, oath-taking, etc.
- Exchange of secular goldsmiths' work
- Representations of real and fantastic secular goldsmiths' work

Please submit a 250-word abstract for a 20-minute paper, and a short CV, including email and current affiliation as PDF or Word.doc, by 12 September 2022, to the following:

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Reference:

CFP: Social Agency of Secular Goldsmiths' Work in the Late MA (Leeds, 3-6 Jul 23). In: ArtHist.net, Sep 6, 2022 (accessed Apr 5, 2026), <<https://arthist.net/archive/37274>>.