CALL FOR PAPERS

Unity and diversity of medieval (Central) Europe
Social order and its cohesive and disruptive forces

The second biannual conference of the MECERN, as announced at CEU, Budapest in March 2014, will be organised in Olomouc (Czech Republic) by Palacký University, Olomouc and University of Ostrava, on 31 March–2 April 2016.

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS: János M. Bak & Miri Rubin

Social order and the structure of medieval society has been a topic of research ever since the early studies in medieval history. A new modern approach has been, however, only slow to appear in historical books and articles. Similar to ‘new’ political history the recent approach does not disregard the power structures and relations in the society, but strives to include all other elements that form the human society in the Middle Ages. Thus, the approaches of the conference will be related to the analysis and comparison of cohesive forces that hold society together and, on the contrary, of disruptive powers and elements that have the potential of bringing changes to medieval society and its order. The analyses of such influences may focus on local or general level; they may concentrate on various components of the life of the society providing insights into the social order and its function.

‘Cohesive’ and ‘disruptive’ forces are any cultural, political, ecclesiastical or social elements that were able to make a difference as far as the medieval society is concerned. Their components and constituting parts might be identity, law and justice, economy, church and religion, politics and political system, authority, town, gender, military, art and architecture, ritual, literacy etc. As is clearly visible, the scope might be extremely wide. The focus of the conference, thus, will be on few central features of the topic connected with transfer and dynamism, and change and transformation of society and individual elements, be they cohesive or disruptive.

As a conference within the framework of Medieval Central Europe Research Network it will focus on medieval Europe in general, but most importantly on the region of medieval Central and East-Central Europe. Two approaches are desirable: 1) by concentrating on this region an analysis of the development of the above-mentioned elements could be elucidating the crucial tendencies in society; 2) by focusing on a wider geographical, social or temporal frame a comparison might also explain the changes, shifts and transformations in the society as well as its parts and sections. A general question ‘How does medieval society work?’ might be then transformed into ‘How (and why, when, under what circumstances, how often) does medieval society (and its components) change?’ And, even more importantly, ‘What brings the changes of the society? How is the structure of society reflected in written or material sources?’, and finally, ‘What holds society together and what destructs the social cohesion?’
Organisation

- Proposals for individual contributions or posters in general areas and topics in cultural, ecclesiastical, political, art, economic, urban, literary, intellectual and legal as well as social history are welcome.
- Paper presentations: 20 minutes.
- Poster session presentations: 5 minutes.
- Abstracts: 300-500 words, send by 30 November 2015 to mecern.olomouc@gmail.com; the organisers reserve the right to select papers; selection will be announced by 10 December 2015.
- Language of the conference is English.
- Conference fee: €30 (payment methods will be provided later).
- Bursary for young scholars will be available, applications by 31 December (for selected papers) – in categories a) participation fee waiver; b) accommodation costs support.
- Evening meals and coffee breaks will be provided.
- Accommodation: a selection of conference accommodations will be provided with pre-reservation until the end of January; prices vary between €15 (university facilities) and €70 per night (a list will be provided later for individual booking).
- A book fair of Central European and Medieval publishers will be organised during the conference.
- Possible publication of selected papers will be negotiated after the conference.

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