

Human / Animal

9th Annual Symposium of the International Medieval Society - Paris

CALL FOR PAPERS

Dates: Thursday 28 – Saturday 30 June 2012

Location: Paris, France

Deadline for submissions: 15 January 2012

Keynote speakers: TBA

The International Medieval Society in Paris (IMS-Paris) is soliciting abstracts for individual papers and proposals for complete sessions for its 2012 symposium organized around the theme of *human/animal* in medieval France.

Animals – both real and fantastical – were frequently central to medieval culture, thought and artistic production. This symposium addresses a particular aspect of this centrality: the relationship between humans and animals and the way this was imagined, defined and re-defined across the historical and cultural spectrum of the Middle Ages. The distinction between human and animal that modern culture often takes for granted is far from clear-cut in medieval contexts and was subject to historical and cultural change. Historians have suggested that the concept of the animal and the extent to which it represented a form of life distinguishable from that of human beings underwent considerable alteration in the twelfth century. This may be seen in shifts in the terms used to describe animals; developments in the ways animals were represented in literature and art; and the evolution of key texts such as the *Physiologus* and its variants, the bestiaries. Within this context, the boundaries between humans and animals – which might be established through elements as diverse as the possession of language, a capacity for laughter, or legal responsibility – were subject to change and negotiation. The conference aims to interrogate the questions that the fluctuating relationship between

human and animal in the Middle Ages raises from an historically inclusive, cross-disciplinary perspective by focusing on a number of key questions:

- How was the relationship between human and animal conceptualised, represented and discussed in medieval cultural traditions (philosophical, literary, artistic, architectural, musical or other)?
- What significance does the relationship and/or distinction between humans and animals have in the social and legal contexts in which they interacted?
- To what extent were human and animal thought of as separable or confusable categories? How is this related to behavioural, linguistic, physical, cultural, or other factors?
- In what ways does thinking about animals in the Middle Ages serve to define a notion of the human? Is it possible to conceive of the animal in a way that does not reflect on the human?

Participants are free to interpret these questions broadly, in line with their particular areas of specialism. Priority will be given to papers that address French and Francophone topics. Please send a proposal of 400 words or less (written in English or French) for a 20-minute paper should be e-mailed to contact@ims-paris.org no later than **15 January 2012**.

In addition to the proposal, please submit full contact information, a CV and a tentative assessment of any audiovisual

equipment required for your presentation.

The IMS-Paris will review submissions and respond via e-mail by 6 February 2012. Titles of accepted papers will be made available on the IMS-Paris web site. Authors of accepted papers will be responsible for their own travel costs and conference registration fee (35 euros, reduced for students, free for IMS-Paris members).

The IMS-Paris is an interdisciplinary and bilingual (French/English) organization founded to serve as a centre for medievalists who research, work, study, or travel to France. For more information about the IMS-Paris and the schedule of last year's symposium, please see our website: www.ims-paris.org.

IMS-Paris Graduate Student Prize

This year the IMS-Paris is pleased to offer one prize for the best graduate student paper proposal.

Applications should consist of:

- 1) Symposium paper abstract/proposal,
- 2) current research project (Ph.D. dissertation research),
- 3) names and contact information of two academic references.

The prizewinner will be selected by the board and a committee of honorary members, and will be notified upon acceptance to the Symposium. An award of 350 euros to support international travel/accommodations (within France, 150 euros) will be paid at the Symposium.