

SSCLE and IMC Leeds 2020: Call for Papers

Lands of heroism, tyranny and false Christianity: Lithuania and the “margins” of Europe

Organizers: Loïc Chollet (University of Neuchâtel, Switzerland) and Grant Schrama (Queen’s University, Canada)

Dates and places: Ninth Quadrennial Meeting of the Society for the Study of the Crusades and the Latin East, from June 29th to July 3rd, in London; International Medieval Congress, from 6th to 9th of July, in Leeds.

Altogether a target and an actor, the Grand Duchy of Lithuania played a major role in the crusade movement during the later Middle Ages. The aim of these two sessions is to explore the place of Lithuania within the larger geopolitical and social sphere of Europe during the later Middle Ages. The first, to be held at the Ninth Quadrennial Meeting for the SSCLE in London, looks to explore the following questions: what were the actual encounters between Lithuania and the other political and religious groups that held stakes within the Baltic arena? What types of encounters existed and what do they say about Lithuania’s relations with its Christian neighbours? How were perceptions of the Lithuanians, reflected primarily in written sources, confirmed or questioned by these encounters? The second session, set to take place at the International Medieval Congress in Leeds one week later, will examine the various perceptions Christian Europeans had of Lithuania and place said depictions in a larger comparative framework. Specifically, the goal is to compare the image of the so-called “margins” of Europe in the Western European discourse: how can descriptions of peoples, rulers, religious practices, nature, and so forth tell us about the mental construct of the “frontier of Europe” at the end of the Middle Ages? Through comparing perceptions of Lithuania to those of the Balkans, Spain, Northern Europe and the Eastern Mediterranean, this session examines how Europeans who lived in the so-called ‘centres’ of medieval Europe think of and portray the ‘frontiers.’ Papers could discuss, but are not limited to:

- Nature and climate of the ‘lands of margins’
- Peoples and leaders depicted by crusaders and/or commentators
- Religious diversity and practices
- Cooperation between crusaders and local peoples
- Travel and crusade
- Archaeological remains of interaction
- Development of ethnographic writing related to the European frontiers
- Warfare and its many impacts
- Criteria for belonging and/or exclusion
- Definitions of ‘frontier’ or ‘border’

Please send abstracts of no more than 300 words to either Loïc Chollet (loic.chollet@gmail.com) or Grant Schrama (Gs07ru@gmail.com) by August 30th, 2019. Please indicate which conference you are planning to speak at.