

MARKET PLACE AND GROUP MEETINGS
CARMEN
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2012
CENTRAL EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY
BUDAPEST

The CARMEN AGM 2012 will include a Market Place and Group Meetings.

Market Place

The aim of the Market Place is to enable projects, in any stage of development, to find partners. Each participant in the Market Place is provided with a stall, where they can display posters, leaflets or a PowerPoint presentation and discuss their project. Participants are also welcome to bring information about projects led by other colleagues.

After the Market Place there will be informal and formal opportunities for further discussion (see below Group Meetings).

If you would like to have a stall, please send the following information to me (by 31 July 2012):

Name

Institution/Group

Topic

Will you need a power point and internet connection?

Group Meetings

The aim of these meetings is to stimulate intellectual discussion among CARMEN members. The outcomes will be various, ranging from the exchange of ideas, to ties made between individual scholars, to establishing the beginnings of networks, to the identification of areas for funded projects.

We have identified six initial topics, which will meet in two sessions on the Saturday afternoon (8 September):

Session 1 (14:00-15:30)

Investing in a European Past in the Globalized World (Felicitas Schmieder)

Looking Beyond the Horizons of Medieval Courts (Jitske Jasperse)

Nature (Gerhard Jaritz and Alasdair Ross)

Session 2 (16:00-17:30)

Cities (Pam King)

Cultural Encounters (Kateřina Horníčková)

The Languages of Medieval Europe: Interactions across the Spoken and Written Word (Elizabeth Tyler)

Further information on each of these topics is posted or will appear in April and May on the CARMEN website. Two initial examples are included here (see below).

Anyone attending the AGM is warmly invited to join in any group. There is no need to sign up in advance – just come along on the day. If you would like to contact the organizer of the meeting in advance, please feel free to get in touch through me.

Additionally, if any member of CARMEN would like to organize a meeting on another topic, please get in touch me (by 31 July 2012), with a brief description, and we can add a further group meeting to the program. We will also aim to provide space to any group arising from the Market Place.

There will also be plenty of opportunities during the AGM for informal discussion. Immediately after the Group Meetings, there will be time before dinner for further discussion in local cafés.

Elizabeth Tyler (elizabeth.tyler@york.ac.uk)

Descriptions

Investing in the Past – European Identities in a Globalized World

Organizer: Felicitas Schmieder (Fernuniversität in Hagen)

Memories of the past, which make and remake history, constitute human groups. It is not that the past determines the present, but vice versa that groups define their past within their present. What is remembered and what is forgotten, which memories are given greater or lesser weight, how history is written, re-written, changed, and adopted from other groups that are in- or excluded. At any point in time, all this is determined anew when a community imagines itself on the basis of “its” history of its “foundation myth”.

Among others, “the Europeans” imagine themselves as a community (B. Anderson, 1983). Who “has always been” part of Europe, and shared “European culture” from “the very beginnings” – who is thus accepted in (or who is segregated from) a “euromantic” memory of the common past. Who contributed as a member or as an outsider, who learnt from it as “heir” or only borrowed it as an outsider?

Foundation myths, moreover, migrate and can be kept or accepted by migrating groups. Thus these imagined pasts go beyond the geographical borders of Europe and research in this field is of wider, global relevance. Which groups in the globalized world see themselves as European due to their “heritage”, which

groups define themselves as hybrids from European and non-European cultural elements, which groups emphasize their “European roots”, which emphasize (frequently in demarcation from “Eurocentric” points of view) their non-European “ancestors”? Is it even possible to trace typical “migrant identities” for which mobility is constitutive? What is the relationship between modern experiences of emigration and our study of medieval migrations?

Language has become one of the most important defining elements in modern notions of nation and therefore “ethnicity”. In a global perspective race may be more important, but also religious culture in a very wide sense, art and architecture, literary traditions. Which images are moving “everybody” why and when? What are the “lieux de mémoire”, which are the preserved or newly erected, collected or newly composed monuments, in which investment in the past becomes manifest? What are the ways popular culture appropriates the foundation myths and the demarcations from other groups: in holidays and “events”, in museums and history-tourism, in “living history” and medieval markets, in movie and TV (educational broadcasting as well as historical romance), in theatre and historical novels, in children’s and schoolbooks?

Research, including comparative research, on the foundation myths of the European nations is well established. This CARMEN initiative seeks to build on this work to investigate the origin myths of imagined European cultures all over the world.

The Languages of Medieval Europe: Interactions Across the Spoken and Written Word

Organizer: Elizabeth Tyler (University of York)

This meeting aims to stimulate discussion among CARMEN members about the interactions, translations and conflicts between languages in the Middle Ages. This wide topic ranges across and connects issues such as the nature of sacred and vernacular languages, interactions among Europeans and between Europeans and neighboring peoples, the languages of trade, literacy and orality, the emergence of written vernaculars and the intellectual and literary consequences of multilingualism.

The topic provides a context in which the disciplines of philology, linguistics, literary study, history and theology (to name a few) can work together both to access the past and to reassess and reshape their own methodologies, objects of study and aims.

Regardless of whether our field of study is poetics, the language of devotion or the sociolinguistics of trade (for examples), approaching the languages of medieval Europe demands that we engage with the continued impact of 19th and 20th century nationalism on our own linguistic experiences and identities and thus on our study of the Middle Ages. In this context, the nature of Europe must never be taken for granted.

CARMEN, with its worldwide membership, stands to make distinctive contributions, at once international and interdisciplinary, to our understanding of language in the Middle Ages.

Looking Beyond the Horizons of Medieval Courts: Performativity, Alterity and Materiality

Organizer: Jitske Jasperse (Amsterdam)

The subject of medieval courts is such a multifaceted one that, even when it seems to be an already well-researched topic, there are many good reasons why it still appeals to medievalists in the twenty-first century. The ongoing attraction arises not only because the elite, whom we associate with courts, left distinctive marks such as written documents, art-works and architecture, but also because medieval courts can be studied from numerous perspectives. Research on medieval courts can, furthermore, bring together medievalists from different disciplines and regions and stimulate interdisciplinary research.

Whether viewed as places where rulers, their wives and their entourages gathered (forming networks or ‘social figurations’ as Norbert Elias labelled them), as places where art and culture flourished (networks of cultural exchange), or as places where day-to-day business and issues such as disputes were handled, medieval courts still offer a wide range of research issues. Other more recent approaches are also highly relevant. Along with gender studies, subjects such as performativity and alterity also offer significant opportunities to discuss medieval courts amongst literary historians, art historians and cultural historians. In addressing, for example, questions concerning femininity-masculinity, space, audience and clothing as part of performativity and alterity, researchers can mutually benefit from discussing their approaches and research objects and goals. Together with subjects such as material culture, gift-giving, memory and a variety of ‘new’ sources, both new and more established approaches can stimulate researchers to look beyond the horizons of courts in Western Europe. Comparative work which extends also to encompass the medieval courts of Byzantium, the Islamic world – including the Iberian Peninsula – Eastern Europe and beyond into Asia will provide new insights into court culture across Europe.

This CARMEN meeting aims not only to stimulate an exchange of the research questions and objects used by those studying medieval courts, but also to discuss old, new, different and interdisciplinary approaches and their limitations.

Cultural Encounters

Organizer: Kateřina Horníčková (Austrian Academy of Sciences, Krems)

The theme of “cultural exchange” and “cultural encounter” represents one of the most popular politically-fostered and integration-oriented research topics of

humanities - as the current call by European HERA Network scheme demonstrates. Recently, the interest in cultural encounters shifted from “seeing the other” towards studying social and cultural structures of “otherness”, as well as unveiling functional relations among different cultural, religious and social groups. At the same time, the research questions have come to focus more on “intra-societal” cultural friction (for example in urban space or in particular regions) and the role of corporations in the construction of cultural narratives. Across the European funding environment, historical perspectives on cultural heterogeneity (or homogeneity), communication and interaction are being generously supported by both national and supranational funding bodies.

The historical study of cultural encounters has therefore good potential for the development of collaborative research projects that require multidisciplinary and comparative approaches, including comparisons along spatial and temporal lines, the study of social, religious, economic and political dimensions of cultural encounters, and of practices of preservation, translation, interpretation and mediation of cultural goods. The studies include historical cultural communication of minority and dissent groups in urban and rural space, constructing “the other”, exchange of (cultural) goods, cross-border encounters and imagery, travels, etc.

The CARMEN meeting will discuss questions, such as how the political perspectives on cultural encounters can be made to work for medievalists, how to place medieval research on cultural encounters within cultural studies in general and within large historical perspectives? Other key questions will include: what challenges face us when studying cultural differences and group communication in the Middle Ages (e.g. preservation, representation, unique vs. general patterns, transformations of cultural codes as well as the objects themselves up to now, different and conflicting canonical narratives, etc.), to what extent cultural encounters support development of new collective identities, and last but not least, how to cooperate with social and cultural studies, and how to go beyond the contemporary optics on cultural encounters set by the EU policy agenda?