

Call for Papers: Gender, Work and Service in Late Medieval Europe (1300-1600)

International Conference, University of Cologne, 29th – 30th September 2022

Organisers: Eva-Maria Cersovsky (University of Cologne), Dr. Julia Exarchos (RWTH Aachen University)

Deadline: 31st January 2022. Please send proposals to cersovse@uni-koeln.de and exarchos@histinst.rwth-aachen.de

Speculum humanae salvationis, Southwest Germany or Upper Austria, 1330-1339. ÖNB Cod. Ser. n. 2612, fol. 5r (<http://data.omb.ac.at/tee/AC14376520>).



Work has long been recognised as crucial in both articulating and shaping gendered norms about one's role and place within a given society. Medievalists have gained important insights by attention to gender, reassessing the very nature of work and blurring the lines between home and workplace, productive and reproductive labour, remunerated and unpaid work. Focussing on women's work in particular, they have broadened the scope beyond the adult male worker to shed light on the varied economic contributions of women which were not only central to the survival and prosperity of

medieval families and households but also crucial to the entire medieval economy and society. Yet, the conditions under which different men and women worked could vary tremendously as reflected by gendered regulations, earnings, work status, levels of coercion and autonomy, and cultural values attached to specific types of work. Thus, there is still considerable disagreement amongst scholars about the effects patriarchal structures had on women's and men's working opportunities, particularly during the late medieval period.

This conference aims at revisiting the complex relations between gender and work in Europe from 1300 to 1600, both in urban as well as in rural contexts. It seeks to bring together medievalists at all career stages currently working on any aspect of the field, providing a forum for international discussion. However, we would especially like to draw more sustained attention to service as an understudied but important socio-historical reality of work and working relationships. This includes e.g., domestic service, service work within institutions such as hospitals or brothels, at ports and on ships as well as services provided for a city via

public office. We also encourage approaches that view gender within a matrix of other factors examining the flexible and complex interrelations of different labels, identities and experiences (e.g. socio-economic status, age, life cycle, marital status, religion, ethnicity). Papers attentive to men and masculinities are especially welcome, too. We invite speakers to present unpublished work in progress and focus on still-unresolved methodological or theoretical problems.

Possible topics in relation to gender include, but are by no means limited to:

- Working experiences
- Work, migration and mobility
- Training and skills
- Working relationships (collaborative, interdependent, or mutually dependent)
- Forms of bondage and coercion, e.g. slavery
- Positions of authority or leadership
- Navigating and negotiating legal, social or cultural constraints of work
- Visual, material or literary representations of work
- Changing ideas and landscapes of work, e.g. at times of epidemics, famines or religious change

Please submit abstracts of 300-400 words (in English) for 30-minute papers to Eva-Maria Cersovsky (cersovse@uni-koeln.de) and Dr. Julia Exarchos (exarchos@histinst.rwth-aachen.de) by 31st January 2022. The proposal should also include the paper title as well as your name, contact information and academic affiliation.

Our aim is to hold a face-to-face event and we hope to be able to provide funding for travel and accommodation expenses. However, depending on the state of the COVID-19 pandemic in September 2022 the conference might be held as a virtual meeting. We also plan on publishing an edited volume with extended versions of the conference papers.