

CALL FOR PAPERS



Locational Lives: Medieval Experience in Town and Country



Graduate Centre for Medieval Studies (GCMS), University of Reading

Thursday 16th April 2026 – Hybrid event, In-person & Online

Throughout the Middle Ages, most of the population lived in the countryside, but although the number of town residents was small, they played an important role in shaping the economy and culture. Towns also varied from one another, reflecting their close connections with the surrounding rural areas. Towns, especially along the coast, were also affected by the movement of people through trade and pilgrimage.

This day will offer postgraduate students a chance to share their developing research areas within a supportive forum dedicated to interdisciplinary medieval studies. The event aims to explore culture, religion, and trade associated with Town and Country. Some sessions will focus solely on Town, others solely on Country, while some will directly examine the different experiences.

We invite submissions for 20-minute papers that investigate the experience of medieval lives in Town and/or Country. Respondents might consider themes including but not limited to:

- Reflections on how individuals and communities experienced life in Town and/ or Country, including but not limited to how legal frameworks, weather, religion, occupations, etc shaped these experiences.
- Reflections from various perspectives, including society as a whole, the elite, the churchman, the merchant, the artisan or craftsman, the yeoman, the peasant, and the female perspective.
- Town and Country culture as expressed in literature and the visual arts
- Influences on culture in Town and Country from travellers, such as pilgrims, royal circuits, travelling justices, entertainers, etc.
- Influences on culture and daily life resulting from trade, including international trade.

We look forward to receiving abstracts of up to 150 words by 5th January 2026
to gcmstowncountry@gmail.com Acceptance confirmed by 19th January 2026.