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CALL FOR PAPERS

Migrations and the Perception of the Other in Medieval East-Central Europe

DEADLINE

30 April 2025

LANGUAGE

English

MORE INFO

<https://czasopisma.kul.pl/index.php/am>

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One of the major issues faced by modern Europe is migration: the movement of individuals and groups of people within the continent and, most significantly, from without. This phenomenon was also present in the Middle Ages, especially in the polyethnic and multicultural, multiconfessional communities of Central and Eastern Europe.

Dukes and kings of Poland, Hungary, Bohemia and even pagan Lithuania invited settlers to defend their borders, develop urban communities, reform agriculture and mining, and expand trading networks. These foreigners were granted special privileges, based on German Law. Settlers arriving in East-Central Europe brought their own traditions, social behaviour, customs, and religious diversity. In the late Middle Ages, in particular from the mid-fourteenth century, mass migration of Jews made Bohemia, Hungary, and Poland hubs of Jewish settlement and culture.

Migrants also contributed to developments in learning. In the fourteenth century both Cracow and Prague were homes to universities with valued theologians, philosophers, lawyers, astrologers and astronomers. Mobility of scholars and students did not only facilitate the transfer of knowledge, but it also provided the platform for wide circulations of reformatory ideas, which boosted the conciliarist movement, but at the same time stimulated the growth of the Hussite reform movement in Bohemia.

Migration is a topic of medieval European imagination and self-identity, too. National origins' myths often reflect memories of actual migrations, whilst some use them as metaphors explaining the rights of particular classes. The gentry of medieval Lithuania justified their right to political power by claiming to be the descendants of refugees persecuted under the Emperor Nero. The Czechs allegedly viewed their future homeland from Mount Říp like Moses viewed Canaan from Mount Nebo. Hungary, Croatia, Ruthenia and Poland also had their own origins myths.

Migrants interacted with local populations in different ways, stimulating processes of accommodation and integration on the one hand, but also giving a strong impulse to the rise of conflicting collective identities on the other. Curiosity and inclusion of the other existed alongside misunderstanding and fear of newcomers who spoke incomprehensible languages, cultivated strange customs, and held different religious practices.

Acta Mediaevalia. Series Nova welcomes papers on East-Central Europe focused on migrations and the perception of the other, especially in the context of various genres of source material (e.g. narratives, sermon collections, codes of law, charters, visual representations).

Suggested research areas include (but are not limited to):

- politics, economics
- religion, art, architecture
- education, philosophy
- travel routes
- origin myths

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