



You are here: [Membership](#) > [Newsletter](#) > SIGILLVM NEWSLETTER No. 7 - 2016

[Home](#)

[About SIGILLVM](#)

[News and Events](#)

[Research](#)

[Conservation](#)

[Education](#)

[Collecting](#)

[Membership](#)

[Edit Profile](#)

[List of members](#)

[Bibliography](#)

[Weblinks](#)

[Newsletter](#)

[FAQs](#)

SIGILLVM NEWSLETTER No. 7 - 2016

English Version

SIGILLVM NEWSLETTER No 7 – SEPTEMBER 2016

Dear Members,

Welcome to your third Newsletter of 2016, brought to you by SIGILLVM. This issue features a wealth of news and events from our community, including updates from several new and ongoing projects on seals from around Europe. We also have calls for papers and proposals for two of the largest international medieval conferences for 2017, which we hope members will be inspired to contribute to next summer.

As always, feel free to tell us about anything that might interest our members (publications, conferences, exhibitions, visits, and websites – anything), please use our contact form: <http://www.sigillvm.net/contact-us/>.

The SIGILLVM Newsletter is produced for you – but also thanks to you! Once again, many thanks in advance for your input.

BOARD MEETINGS 2016

The last meeting was held in Paris on Friday 17 June 2016, hosted by the Archives Nationales, Paris. Professor Paul Harvey welcomed Dr Maria do Rosário Morujão, to the Board of Directors.

CONFERENCES - PAST AND FUTURE

International Medieval Congress 2016 – Leeds, UK, Session 804: Seals of Men, Women, Families, Clergy: Contrasting European Regions, 1300-1500

On 5 July 2016, SIGILLVM hosted its second themed session at the International Medieval Congress, entitled 'Seals of Men, Women, Families, Clergy: Contrasting European Regions, 1300-1500'. Speaking this year was Dr Arnold Otto of the Erzbischöfliches Generalvikariat Erzbistumsarchiv, Paderborn on 'Charters in Westphalia: Sealing Practice and Implications for Social History'. Dr Otto's paper surveyed the seals connected with the Lords of Büren and prominent religious institutions of Westphalia, as well as covering some of the civic imagery employed on seals in the region. The study is drawn from an ongoing conservation programme on local charters.

The session also welcomed Guðrún Harðardóttir, from the Faculty of History & Philosophy, University of Iceland, whose paper 'An Investigation of Some Architectural Elements of Two Icelandic Bishop's Seals', is based on her current doctoral research. The episcopal seals that were examined show fascinating connections with examples of Scandinavian stave church building, raising intriguing questions about the specificity of architectural designs on seals in this part of northern Europe.

Also, back for a second year and close to the completion of her PhD, was Laura Evans, from the Department of History & Welsh History, Aberystwyth University. Her paper, 'How Women Made Their Mark: Women's Seal Impressions from a Medieval Market Town' examined the choices and changes to the seal used by a woman through her changing life cycle, from wife to widow and wife again. Laura's work on England and Wales in the Middle Ages demonstrates the great potential for further studies on individuals and their social groups through patterns of imagery surviving in seals.

International Medieval Congress 2017 – Leeds, UK Call for Sessions: Otherness

Following on from the success of our last two seals sessions, SIGILLVM plans to submit another session proposal for 2017. The theme of the International Medieval Congress next year will be 'Otherness', and we aim to explore this through multi-disciplinary approaches to seals.

Possible entities to research for 'Otherness' could include (but are not limited to):

- Peoples, kingdoms, languages, towns, villages, migrants, refugees, bishoprics, trades, guilds, or seigneurial systems
- Faiths and religions, religious groups (including deviation from the 'true' faith) and religious orders
- Different social classes, minorities, or marginal groups
- The spectrum from 'Strange' to 'Familiar'
- Individuals or 'strangers' of any kind, newcomers as well as people exhibiting strange behaviour
- Otherness related to art, music, liturgical practices, or forms of worship
- Any further specific determinations of 'alterity'

SIGILLVM welcomes interest from our members and colleagues from the seals community.

Suggestions for titles of papers that address this theme should be sent to Dr Matthew Sillence ([webmaster\(at\)sigillvm.net](mailto:webmaster(at)sigillvm.net)) by **Friday 16 September 2016, 17:00 (GMT)**.

Please remember to include your full name, affiliation, full contact details, at least two keywords to index your paper.

[Read more](#)

The 52nd International Congress on Medieval Studies - Kalamazoo (Michigan), 11-14 May 2017

Organisers: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, Jonathan Shea and Lain Wilson; and Susan Solway, DePaul University

The Individual in Material Culture I–II: 400– 1000; 1000–1400

These two sessions (Session I: 400–1000 and Session II: 1000–1400) invite papers that use surviving elements of material culture, for example coins, seals, textiles, and jewellery, to discuss questions relating to the to the individual in the medieval European, Byzantine, and Islamic worlds. Material culture offers us a unique way to explore a number of issues related to individuals, such as self-presentation and the creation of one's own identity, to the imposition of an identity on an individual by others, social and familial relationships, and religious and ethnic identities. We encourage papers that allow discussion of the above-mentioned themes across the entire medieval period and a broad geographical range. These panels strive to draw audiences not only of specialists working with material culture, but also those interested in questions of medieval identity and the individual in society. Papers extending disciplinary boundaries and utilizing interdisciplinary approaches and methodologies are particularly welcome.

Submissions: Abstracts of approximately than 300 words, a brief CV, and a completed Participant Information Form (<https://wmich.edu/sites/default/files/attachments/u434/2016/medieval-pif-2017.doc>) should be sent to Jonathan Shea at [sheaj\(at\)doaks.org](mailto:sheaj(at)doaks.org).

Deadline: **15 September 2016**, though earlier submissions would be much appreciated.

[Read more](#)

Heraldic Badges: From Miniature to Monumental, 1300–1500 The Courtauld Institute of Art, London

The question of how to represent a person was of great importance to artists and patrons in the later Middle Ages. While much attention has focused on the development of facial likeness in portraiture, the concurrent fashion for expressing identity through symbolic codes has been comparatively ignored. Heraldic badges – a form of symbolic representation whereby individuals are represented through objects, plants, animals, letters or mythological beings – were extremely popular in the royal and aristocratic courts of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, proliferating across a wide range of artistic media and contexts.

This one-day conference brings together experts from across Europe, and aims to stimulate cross-cultural conversations on the display, function and circulation of heraldic badges in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. The theme 'Miniature to Monumental' focuses on the size and context of badges, interrogating why these devices were represented in radically different scales, and the shifts in meaning incurred in these transformations.

10:15 - 18:30 (with registration from 10:00) Research Forum seminar room, The Courtauld Institute of Art, Somerset House, Strand, London, WC2R 0RN

Organised by

- Jessica Barker: University of East Anglia
- Lloyd de Beer: University of East Anglia / British Museum
- Jana Gajdošová: University of Cambridge

Programme details and tickets available from the website.

[Read more](#)

EXHIBITIONS

A new exhibition at the Musée de Cluny in Paris opens this autumn. *Les Temps mérovingiens*, runs from the 26 October 2016 to 13 February 2017. The exhibition seeks to reveal all the richness and intellectual and artistic originality over three centuries, from 451 to 751, and the reign of the last Merovingian king.

[Read more](#)

Another exhibition, *L'Austrasie, le royaume mérovingien oublié* also explores the Merovingian world, and will be held from 16 September 2016 to 26 March 2017 at the Espace Camille Claudel, Saint-Dizier, then at the Musée d'archéologie nationale de Saint-Germain-en-Laye from 22 April 2017 to October 2017. Further details on planned conferences in December linked to this exhibition will be posted on the SIGILLVM website very soon.

[Read more](#)

VARIA

Recent Publications

- Bedos-Rezak, Brigitte Miriam and Hamburger, Jeffrey H. (eds.) 2016. *Sign and Design: Script as Image in Cross-Cultural Perspective (300–1600 CE)*. Dumbarton Oaks Symposia and Colloquia. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Cherry, John. 2016. *Richard Rawlinson and his Seal Matrices: Collecting in the Early Eighteenth Century*. Oxford: Ashmolean Museum.
- Morujão, Maria do Rosário Barbosa. 2015. "A imagem do poder no feminino: selos de rainhas portuguesas da Idade Média." In *Reginae Iberiae. El poder regio femenino en los reinos medievales peninsulares*, Miguel García-Fernández and Silvia Cernadas Martínez (eds.). Santiago de Compostela: Universidade de Santiago de Compostela, 89-110.
- Nieuw, Jean-François. 2016. "Early Aristocratic Seals: An Anglo-Norman Success Story." In *Anglo-Norman Studies XXXVIII: Proceedings of the Battle Conference*, Elisabeth van Houts (ed.). Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 97-123.
- Schofield, Phillip (ed.) 2016. *Seals and Society: Medieval Wales, the Welsh Marches and their English Border Region*. Cardiff: University of Wales Press.

Seals Research on Academia.edu

Members seeking recent publications and forthcoming papers might be interested in joining the scholarly social network, www.academia.edu. The site features several professionals in different fields who have an interest in seals and sealing practices, and many make pre-prints of their work available online. By joining the network, you can search for researchers using the 'sigillography' tag: <https://www.academia.edu/People/Sigillography>

Verkörperung kommunaler Identität: Eine forensische Analyse von Fingerabdrücken auf den Prägungen des mittelalterlichen Speyerer Stadtsiegels

The blog of this new German research project into fingerprints in the sealed wax has new summaries of papers from the recent workshop in Giessen. The papers can be found at the blog of the project: <https://siegel.hypotheses.org/>.

Imprint Project Blog

Imprint is an AHRC-funded collaborative project between the University of Lincoln and the Aberystwyth University. It merges cutting-edge forensic techniques with traditional historical investigation to analyse the fingerprints and palm prints found on the back of wax seals. The project has a new blog called First Impressions, with all of the latest news from the project: <http://imprintproject.blogs.lincoln.ac.uk>.

Sigillvm Index Rerum

The recent project to develop a digital corpus of Portuguese seals been publicly presented and is now online, available at sigillvm.indexrerum.com. The presentation took place on 24 June 2016, in Lisbon, at the Portuguese Catholic University, where the full team was present with scientific advisor, Jean-Luc Chassel. Recent articles by project coordinator and newest SIGILLVM Board Member, Dr Maria do Rosário Morujão, can be found here: http://portugal-sigillvm.net/livros_capitulos.html and <http://portugal-sigillvm.net/artigos.html>.

[Read more](#)

News from The National Archives at Kew

The National Archives (UK) has now revised its [Research Guide on Seals](#) to take into account the recent digitisation of its seal card index, familiar to members who have visited the Map and Large Document Room at Kew. You can now look at the card index for free on the Archives' website. The card index has been given the record series label: **QFA 1** (i.e. Kew Finding Aid) and has been subdivided into the old drawers so that QFA 1/1 contains the existing first drawer of cards which happens to be England and Wales: Ecclesiastical. In addition, the old tagged cards within each drawer which subdivided the cards into sub-sections such as the different law courts or towns, have been listed on the catalogue so that these can be keyword searched and the individual cards found more easily. The research guide already has a search box specifically for the seals in Duchy of Lancaster series 25 and 26 which were catalogued by Paul Harvey and which were digitised; the images of over 2000 seals can be downloaded for free. You can search these two series of deeds for example by seal design. The National Archives' collection of over 6000 seal moulds has now been indexed and entered into a database and plans are underway to digitise these. It is hoped that these too will be made available on line in the coming year.

Dr Adrian Ailes, The National Archives

Provenance and Season of Production of Beeswax

There has been much discussion recently in SIGILLVM about the wax used for sealing. In this article Anton Zeven explains how the composition of surviving beeswax might hold the clue to location and season of its production.

Beeswax was mainly used for the production of wax candles, as wax candles produced less fatty smoke than candles made of animal fat. During the burning of the candles the beeswax burnt up. Only a small part of the beeswax was saved up in seals and an even smaller part in pieces of art.

The provenance of beeswax can be established by searching for and identifying of pollen grains. If these grains are identified as produced by heath plants (*Calluna vulgaris*) one may conclude that the beehive stood on or near a field of flowering heath plants. However, for The Netherlands holds that in the 17th-18th centuries much beeswax was imported from Baltic countries. Would it be possible to identify the region and the time of the year of the beeswax production?

This question was positively answered by Carol A. Furness (The extraction and identification of pollen grains from a beeswax statue. *Grana* 33 (1994): 49-52), who investigated the pollen grains in a waxen statue attributed to Michelangelo (1475-1564). Carol Furness found pollen grains of plants growing in the coastal areas of the Mediterranean. Maybe Michelangelo obtained wax produced in the neighbourhood his Italian studio.

So, on the basis of the pollen grains in the beeswax it is possible to locate the region of wax production and the period of the year of collecting. I am searching for similar papers as the one by Carol Furness reporting the provenance of wax for wax seals impressed in the 16th-17th centuries.

The investigation of seals by tomography, a method borrowed from medical research, is known to me.

Anton C. Zeven, NL-Wassenaar August 2016.

www.antonzeven.nl

[anton.zeven\(at\)hetnet.nl](mailto:anton.zeven(at)hetnet.nl)

Members' Publications

SIGILLVM encourages members to submit their latest publications to our bibliography section of the website, which can be found by logging into the Membership area: <http://www.sigillvm.net/login/>. A <media 82 _blank external-link-new-window "Opens external link in new window">video guide</media> is available on the website to help you add to our Bibliography.

SIGILLVM Newsletter

Editor: Matthew Sillence, Webmaster

[To top](#)

© SIGILLVM

[Imprint](#) [Contact us](#) [Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQs\)](#) [Sitemap](#) [Privacy](#) [Cookies](#) [Disclaimer](#) [Copyright](#) [Legal](#) [Logout](#)