

Gradations of Life.

Representing Inanimate Matter in Medieval Manuscripts

International Medieval Congress

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Chair: Sara Ritchey, University of Louisiana at Lafayette

On the Scala Naturae, the steps between the realms of inanimate nature and the animals are so small that we struggle to see the boundaries, as Aristotle holds it in his *Historia animalium*. The session aims to explore these boundaries and gradations between inanimate and animate matter in medieval manuscripts. Reconsidering medieval definitions of minerals and stones, plants and animals according to the paradigms of existence, life and moving, we seek to provide perspectives on the transgression of these definitions. What is the status of transgressive matter like amber, corals, fossils, ivory, silk or fur? Looking at manuscripts as the site of textual and visual knowledge, as material object and as aesthetic realm generating the marginalia's own reality, this session brings together interdisciplinary perspectives on the ways materiality was constructed, categorized and valued in the Middle Ages.

Representation with inanimate matter in Medieval manuscripts

Spike Bucklow (Cambridge)

Moving Patterns: Textile Pages in Medieval Manuscripts

Anna Bücheler (Zürich)

The Life of Silva and the Work of the Poet in the Cosmographia of Bernard Silvestris

Anya Burgon (Cambridge)

Being Licked Into Shape: The Bestiary and the medieval margins of creation

Diane Heath (Kent)

Living Stones: Vegetated Architecture in Medieval Canon Tables

Ilka Mestemacher (Hamburg)

Recreating transgressive matter: Pearls in Girolamo da Cremona's illuminations

Isabella Augart (Hamburg)