

CALL FOR PAPERS

Bequeathing and Inheriting Animals

LEEDS INTERNATIONAL MEDIEVAL CONGRESS, 6 - 9 JULY 2026

*Session(s)
sponsored by:*

**Medieval Animal
Data-Network
(MAD)**

Animals and the ideas embodied in the products and ascribed characteristics of an animal can all be passed on to be inherited by future generations as a reflection of past identities. Representative items such as furs and fine leather can be inherited through wills as can living animals of various kinds. Depending on their value at any given historical period and social context time possession of such items or animals can confer social status and the power that comes through accumulated wealth on the inheritors. Rights to exploit certain kinds of animals (what could be hunted, what animals were used during the hunt) were also inherited.

Symbols materialized in animal form can be inherited through family lines, kinships, and as totem. The right to use such symbols can be inherited animal symbols and bequeathed through marriage or decree. An example of the latter is the Holy Roman emperor Sigismund bequeathing the order of the dragon on nobles who fought against the Ottomans. Their descendants were sometime also known by their connection to the dragon symbol bequeathed to their ancestor as with the infamous Wallachian prince, Dracula (son of the Dragon) whose father had earlier been awarded this honor by Sigismund.

Potential themes include (but are not limited to):

- ❖ Animals inherited in wills
- ❖ Animals inheriting in wills and bequests.
- ❖ The effects of animal bequests on wealth and status
- ❖ Inherited animal husbandry traditions
- ❖ Inherited traditional use of secondary animal products (horse meat and bone would be a typical example)
- ❖ Inheriting animal symbols of power
- ❖ Inherited beliefs about animals in particular socio/economic contexts
- ❖ Animal power and agency bequeathed to humans
- ❖ Human characteristics bequeathed to animals and affecting traditional attitudes towards them.

SUBMIT A PROPOSAL

Please send a title and abstract of your paper (250-300 words), some keywords, and a short biography with your precise name, affiliation, address and email to Alice Choyke (choyke@ceu.edu) by **Wednesday, September 10th, 2025**, at the latest.

