Medieval cities, in East and West and beyond, were regularly the scene of popular crises: people complaining about a new tax, worrying about a shortage of grain, rejecting a local minority, raging against a religious reform, panicking by an imminent attack or a catastrophe, protesting against an official measure or simply rejecting current authority... Though the scale and consequences of such crises could vary a lot, most medieval sources generally confirm what Plato had stated: the “people” (ie, the mob) always react in an intense, noisy, agitated and “irrational way”. Their social-political body is one of movement, sensation and emotion. (Re)actions of urban populations have been studied extensively as part of the history of the cities and scholars shed light on the socio-political dynamics, the form of political expression and the methods used to re-establish order. However, most of these studies focus only on very specific and particularly “turbulent” events, times and places. Both the making and the experience of the urban crisis remain relatively unexplored.

By its very nature, an urban crisis is first and foremost a public experience and an experience of the people in town. In such specific moment, the people yell and scream insults, sing parodic songs, and shout like beasts; they gesticulate, jump, dance, applaud, raise their hands or their weapons; they run, shove, mug, hit, break and set fire to the buildings; or they panic, cry out loud, sing hymns and beg God for mercy... Every urban crisis is tagged by a specific “sensescape”, a lived experience which is made, stimulated and amplified by combined strong sensations, emotions and gestures. In fact, one can recognize a crisis and locate it in place and time by hearing, seeing and feeling its specific “sensory regime” of violence, disorder, anger or dispar, drive and immoderation that suddenly impose a new way of being, feeling and behaving in the city. In this sense, a public crisis is to be lived more than to be explained, narrated or described. It can spontaneously spread, grow and intensify because of the “crowd effect”, excitement and buzz. The authorities and elites are most concerned by this almost-organic sensory dimension, since history-writing, city records and legislation focus more on the public experience created by the crisis than on its reasons and revendications. Therefore, we propose to investigate what builds this lived experience and what makes it so powerful.

However, investigating medieval public experience of the crisis enlightens a methodological bias, since all the sources were written by the elites, who despised the turmoil of the crowd. Medieval documentation reveals more the elite’s etic experience of the crisis than the emic experience of its participants. It do also shed light on how the elites perceived the people in/of the city. Considering the nature, intention and context of production of the historical evidence leads us to question the phenomenology of the crisis experience: Is our understanding of that experience shaped by emic descriptions, formulated by people actually involved in the crisis? Or is it only built on the etic views provided by the literate elites who look down on the crowd with despise? As a consequence, focusing on the issues of lived experience makes it necessary to dedicate one of the sessions to the questions of sources and methods.
Therefore, to answer the main strand of IMC Leeds 2024 (“crisis”), this CFP propose to **study urban crisis as a lived experience** — both that of those who are making the crisis and who are witnessing and describing it. We shall consider proposals exploring the following topics:

- The soundscape of the crisis: insults, protest songs, obscenities, parody, sacred music...
- Emotions in and of the crisis (collective & individual): anger, contempt, fear, pain, despair...
- Bodies in crisis: vocalisation, enthusiastic gestures, stone-throwing, violence, lynching, hooliganism, crying, pulling the hair out...
- Agentivity of the crisis: modes of action and of constitution of collective groups...
- Gender in/of crisis: feminine and childlike presence, actions and gestures...
- Triggers of crisis: rumours, claque, agitators, preacher, public “dialogue”...
- Narratives of crisis: verbs, adverbs, adjectives, literary *topoi*...

Papers focusing on all medieval societies (Byzantium, Islam, North, West and beyond) are welcome. Comparative and interdisciplinary perspectives are strongly promoted, as well as methodological reflections.

Proposals comprising an abstract of 300-words and keywords, for a 15-20 min presentation, including paper title, full contact information and affiliation, equipment and accessibility requirements and a short cv, should be sent by **September 20, 2023** to: experiencecrisis@gmail.com

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