Peacemaking and the Restraint of Violence in Medieval Europe (1100-1300): Practices, Actors and Behaviour

In high medieval Europe, conflict took a number of different forms, from large-scale battles, such as disputes over crowns, power and lands, to more local disputes over inheritance and property. In the absence of well-developed administrative structures which could limit conflict, cultural conventions, rituals and behavioural norms evolved to moderate violence within the elite community. The exchange of hostages, ransom of defeated opponents, oath-taking and creation of new bonds of friendship, all helped to re-establish stable relations between former opponents. With peace came a change in the balance of power within a region. Relationships between adversaries were restructured and redefined as treaties were concluded and new agreements made. Peace rituals allowed the new status quo to be publicly proclaimed and understood. By studying the restraint of violence and the imposition of peace, we can examine both the long and short term implications of conflict, and improve our understanding of how violence shaped the elite community in medieval Europe.

From 15th – 16th February 2018, the Centre for Advanced Study in Oslo and the Department of Archaeology, Conservation and History at the University of Oslo will host a two-day conference on the practices and behaviours related to peacemaking and the restraint of violence in high medieval Europe. Participants’ accommodation and transport will be paid for. We plan to publish an edited volume based on the papers given at this conference, and would like all those who participate in the conference to contribute to this publication. Prospective contributors are invited to submit 300 word abstracts for 30 minute papers which relate to the conference theme and focus on any region of Europe from 1100-1300. Comparative approaches are particularly welcomed. Papers must be given in English.

Topics could include:

- Behavioural norms which serve to restrain violence, e.g. ransom, granting of mercy
- Conventions of warfare, e.g. surrender, truce
- The conditions under which peace could be negotiated
- Peace rituals, diplomatic practices and dispute resolution
- Actors of peacemaking (mediators, arbitrators, clerics, women, etc.)
- The themes of peace and restraint of violence in medieval historiography

Abstracts should be sent to: louisa.taylor@iakh.uio.no and s.p.l.lebouteiller@iakh.uio.no. The deadline for receipt of abstracts is 15 September 2017.

Organisers: Simon Lebouteiller (IAKH, UiO) and Louisa Taylor (IAKH, UiO)