



**Subject Centre for
History, Classics
and Archaeology**

INTERNATIONAL MEDIEVAL CONGRESS 2006

Career Development and Training for Medievalists: A Workshop for Postgraduate Students

On 13 July 2006, the final day of the International Medieval Congress at the University of Leeds, several taught and research postgraduate students gathered to take part in a workshop on career development and training. It was sponsored by the Higher Education Academy Subject Centre for History, Classics and Archaeology with a reception afterwards sponsored by Brepols Publishers. Dr. Alan Murray (University of Leeds), who conducted the workshop, began by asking the students to introduce themselves and give a brief synopsis of their research interests. The subject areas represented were very diverse, spanning history, art history, music, literature, and many others. After the group had got to know each other, Dr. Murray went on to discuss how although we all came from different disciplines, the topics covered in the workshop would be relevant to all of us.

The first half of the workshop focused on introducing the group to the International Medieval Bibliography. Dr. Murray's goal in doing so was to present its strengths as a search engine specific to the field of Medieval Studies, and he instructed the group on how to make the most of the IMB's features (i.e. using the various types of search terms rather than "Googling" for a keyword and hoping for the best) by using certain group members' research topics as a springboard to create queries for the database. This use of 'real' topics relevant to the group made the example queries appear more concrete. Dr. Murray's presentation on the IMB was clear and helpful; the main thing that could have improved this half of the workshop would have been allowing the group members to try the IMB out for themselves. Unfortunately, restrictions on both time and location made this impossible.

In the second half of the workshop, Dr. Murray presented strategies on getting one's work published. First, the group discussed the motivations for trying to get published in a peer-reviewed journal. Secondly, Dr. Murray requested that each student write down the title of an article that he or she would hope to write, and then asked them to share with the group the titles of six journals to which their future article could be relevant. This task was especially useful, as Dr. Murray helped the group discern the advantages and disadvantages of submitting their articles to different publications. After this task, Dr. Murray set the group some 'homework': each student was supplied with an A4 sheet of copy that had several errors in it and was requested to proofread the document. The students took to this task readily, some even consulting the complimentary MHRA style guide for appropriate proofreading symbols without even being required to! Having marked up their papers, the students then engaged in discussion over how the paper ought to be 'marked up' and equally importantly, how essential it is to submit an article that is as error-free as possible.

Dr. Murray closed up the workshop with a question and answer session, allowing the group to express any other concerns they may have had about either the IMB or the nature of publishing. At the following wine reception, many of the students commented on how they felt the various 'tasks' they were set allowed a real dialogue to open up between the group and the presenter, and the general consensus was that the workshop had been very informative and helpful.