Technique & Technology in the Middle Ages

12th-Annual Medievalists @ Penn (M@P) Graduate Conference

<u>Date:</u> April 17, 2020

<u>Keynote:</u> Elly Truitt (Bryn Mawr College), author of
Medieval Robots: Mechanism, Magic, Nature, and Art (2015)

Is medieval studies experiencing a "technical turn," or is technology an inherent part of any study of the Middle Ages? Innovations in the last two decades have demonstrated the advantages of bringing contemporary digital technologies to bear on the medieval past, but interest in the ways technology shapes life and history is not new. Medieval people were constantly innovating. What, then, is the relationship between technique and technology and the Middle Ages? What reactions did technology, new and old, provoke in its users? Why were certain technologies considered worthy of record, representation, and mass distribution in the Middle Ages? How did technical knowledge connect socially, politically, or geographically distinct groups of people? Inspired by our contemporary obsession with rapid innovation, this conference seeks to examine

Bishop Gerbert and his steam organ (New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, MS M. 751, f.100r)

the proliferation of medieval technology, to map out medieval notions of the technological, and to think about the ways innovation intertwines with our own understanding of the past.

We invite papers of 15-20 minutes (8-10 pages) on this subject from any discipline, including History; Art History; History of Science and/or Medicine; Musicology; Manuscript Studies; Literary Studies; Religious Studies; Critical Race Studies; Gender, Sexuality, & Trans Studies; and more. We also welcome papers on technologies that emerged outside of the Western world/definition of "medieval." Topics may include, but are not limited to:

- Adaptation and Development of *Artes Mechanicae*
- Restricted and/or Dangerous Technologies (Alchemy, Magic, Silk Production, etc.)
- Theatre and Stage Craft
- Region-specific Artistic Techniques (*Opus anglicanum, Opus lemovicense,* etc.)
- Medieval Codes, "De-coding" Medieval Objects
- Robots and Invention
- Surgery and Medicine
- Innovations in Palaeography, Codicology, and/or Connoisseurship
- New projects using 21st-century technology to study the Middle Ages, *especially* those underrepresented in the MAA's [Medieval Digital Resources](#) database.

Please submit abstracts of no more than 300 words as attachments to **pennmedieval@gmail.com** by **<u>January 15, 2020</u>**. Submissions should include your name, paper title, email, and institutional and departmental affiliation. Papers will be due April 3, 2020 for distribution to faculty respondents. *Limited, need-based travel grants may be available for accepted speakers.*