

## [Scientific Recreation / Recreational Science in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe](#)

Announcement published by Eveline Szarka on Monday, January 10, 2022

Type:

Call for Papers

Date:

July 15, 2022 to July 16, 2022

Location:

United Kingdom

Subject Fields:

History of Science, Medicine, and Technology, Early Modern History and Period Studies, Medieval and Byzantine History / Studies, Research and Methodology

### **CfP: Scientific Recreation / Recreational Science in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe**

July 15-16, 2022, University College London (in person)

Vanessa da Silva Baptista (University College London) and Dr Eveline Szarka (University College London / Harvard University)

Application Deadline: 31 March 2022

This two-day conference, funded by the Institute of Advanced Studies (IAS) at UCL, exploits the ambiguous meaning of the term “recreation” to bring together two important but disparate themes in the current scholarship of medieval and early modern recipe literature: the experimental turn centred the reproduction of scientific, craft, and household recipes, and studies highlighting how the playfulness of scientific activities contributed to contemporary scientific developments. Science is often associated with professionalism and seriousness. It is frequently forgotten that many scholars and non-scholars alike carry out playful science experiments as a form of recreation or entertainment. This was especially true for the late medieval and early modern period, when people from different backgrounds engaged in playful experiments, for example to produce astonishing magic tricks, invisible inks, or unusual hair dyes.

This conference will provide a unique opportunity to bring together scholars and practitioners from different disciplines such as history, chemistry, and physics to discuss the significance of fun and enjoyment in science. Furthermore, a hands-on section, hosted by the Institute of Making at UCL, will provide participants with the opportunity to work with historical recipes and conjoin theory with practice. This practical session will offer a better understanding of the opportunities and difficulties that arise in the recreation of historical scientific practices which frequently rely on the tacit knowledge of contemporary compilers and audiences. For

Citation: Eveline Szarka. *Scientific Recreation / Recreational Science in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe*. H-Announce. 05-27-2022.

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example, in recreating seemingly impractical recipes which aim to make a ring jump around the house using mercury, we can unveil how late medieval and early modern people understood and exploited chemicals and their properties.

This conference will take a broad approach to the term “scientific recreation”. Papers might address the following topics:

- Methodologies, Potentials, and Limitations of Scientific Recreation
- Scientific Recreation for Education and Entertainment
- Performing Scientific Spectacle and the Role of Wonder
- Experimentation in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe
- Sites of Scientific Recreation / Recreational Science
- Transmission, Modification, Enhancement and Corruption of Recipes and Instructions

The conference will be held, circumstances permitting, at University College London. It will be accompanied by keynote lectures by Prof Simon Werrett (University College London) as well as Dr Tillmann Taape (The Warburg Institute).

**We strongly encourage graduate students and other early career scholars as well as conservation scientists and artists to apply to present papers. We invite applicants to submit abstracts of 250 words for 20-minute papers accompanied by a short biography to Vanessa Da Silva Baptista and Dr Eveline Szarka ([recreation.conference2022@gmail.com](mailto:recreation.conference2022@gmail.com)) by 31 March 2022.**

**We invite anyone interested in demonstrating recreations of late medieval or early modern recipes to submit an abstract with a maximum of 500 words including a description of the recreation process and a list of materials and equipment together with a short biography to Vanessa Da Silva Baptista and Dr Eveline Szarka ([recreation.conference2022@gmail.com](mailto:recreation.conference2022@gmail.com)) by 31 March 2022.**

Contact Info:

Vanessa da Silva Baptista (UCL) / Dr Eveline Szarka (UCL / Harvard University)

Contact Email:

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