

## SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

Thanks for your interest in writing for *The Public Medievalist*! These guidelines will help to ensure that your work is the best it can be, and that the editorial process goes as smoothly as possible.

As a first point of action, please read the process and timeline for submissions [embed link] here at *TPM*. The basics of our house style rules are listed below: following them will speed the acceptance process and help you understand the revision and editing notes you might receive.

### Audience and Style

Over half of our readers at *TPM* are not academics. Many others use *TPM* posts in their classrooms. Thus, you need to think of your audience as a group of educated lay readers.

If you're used to academic writing, you might not think you have much practice translating your ideas for lay readers, but you probably do. Consider how you might explain a complex topic to your non-academic friends, your family, or your undergraduate students: you need to avoid jargon, define foundational terms and concepts, and keep their interest. Here are a few "rules of the road" when it comes to writing for a public audience:

- **Don't bury the lede.** Most people won't read beyond the first paragraph if there isn't a good, juicy hook. Put your main argument in the opening paragraph so readers know where you're leading them.
- **Avoid long sentences.** Try to ensure that you're communicating one or two ideas per sentence only.
- **Avoid academic jargon.** If you use any words that an intelligent high schooler wouldn't know, you'll need to define your terms or rephrase. If a reader can't understand your writing, they're going to go read something they can.
- **Assume that your reader knows very little about the Middle Ages.** Introduce any complex concepts or topics before proceeding into the details.
- **Being clear is more important than being clever.** That brilliant intellectual curveball or the all-important Derrida quote that made the last chapter of your dissertation sing is probably going to be lost on readers who aren't scholars.
- **Show, don't tell.** Readers love concrete examples, quotations from primary sources, and illustrative anecdotes.
- **Cite your sources via hyperlinks.** (see Formatting Requirements below) That said, don't use them as a shortcut for defining terms or discussing important events. Readers won't be inclined to follow links to educate themselves before they keep reading your article—and you wouldn't want them to do that anyway.

### Formatting

Articles that fail to conform to these guidelines will be sent back to the author for revision, so please save our editors some time and follow these rules:

- **Length:** Your article should be between 1,000 and 2,500 words. If you have a longer piece you're considering submitting, you might review it to see whether you're really looking at two separate articles. We are always happy to consider multiple pieces simultaneously. And, the strongest articles communicate one idea well, rather than four badly.
- **Citations:** Please cite your work using hyperlinks. Use Google Books when you can, since you can link directly to a quotation. At the very least, take the reader to where an article or book can be found if there is a paywall. That said, never expect your reader to follow your links. The sad truth is, very few do.
- **Recommended Reading:** This section is optional. If there are vital sources on your topic, you can include them at the bottom, but remember that this section is not a comprehensive bibliography. Include three works at most.
- **Subsections:** Divide your article into well-organized, easily-digestible sections. Use subheadings that are eye-catching and informative.
- **Images:** Please provide at least one cover image and two additional images to illustrate your article. Images used on *TPM* fall under "Academic Fair Use" guidelines, but it is important, wherever possible, to credit where the image originated and offer a link to the source. Your cover image should be as high-resolution as possible, and landscape-oriented (i.e., the closer to a 1 x 1.91 aspect ratio the better).
- **Author Profile:** For your author profile, please include a 100-word bio and a photo—ideally a headshot. Include links to your social media, website, and any recent publication you would like to promote.

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Thanks again for your interest in writing for *The Public Medievalist*!