

Pluralizing Hospital Histories.

Charity, Resilience, and Transformation in the Longue Durée

October 7-9, 2024 | St. Katharinenhospitalstiftung Regensburg, Germany

Application deadline: January 31, 2024 as one PDF to spitalarchiv@spital.de

Application documents: Title, paper proposal (max. 1,000 words) and academic short CV

ENG

The conference asks about socio-economic and cultural conditions for the resilience or vulnerability of historical hospital institutions. Through the discussion of concrete case studies, the conference aims to stimulate cross-disciplinary reflections on historical lines of development and ruptures in the genesis, practice, and reception of pre-modern hospitals. The selection of papers aims to be as broad and open as possible, both epochally and spatially. A special temporal focus will be laid on the dynamics of the European / Mediterranean Late Middle Ages with their specific framework conditions for the emergence of hospices and hospitals, some of which persist to the present day.

Specifically, the conference will focus on long-lived welfare institutions in urban contexts. Can resilience strategies be derived from the source material? Which symbols, patterns of representation, and framings are taken up, and do (administrative) practices of inclusion and exclusion come into play? Which narratives are inscribed in pre-modern hospitals with regard to an idealization, normalization, systematization, and standardization of extra-familially organized care tasks? To what extent did these welfare institutions stabilize value systems of communities?

Of course, prosocial collaboration and "care work" can be seen as evolutionary constants of the human condition per se. In this light, the comparative view of the Spitaltagung 2024 is aimed at practices of care in the *longue durée* that can be grasped from historical sources. The conference inquires into those marked as "poor," "sick," or otherwise worthy of support in the hegemonic value system of the respective pre-modern social structure under consideration. In all cases, the organizers understand hospitals as historical actors with immanent agency.

The case studies presented at the conference will examine historical welfare institutions in a variety of forms: xenodochia, hospital brotherhoods, hospital and nursing orders, hospitals, but also bimaristan, dar alshifa or darüŝŝifa - for example in the form of a charitable hospital foundation or a waqf - or similar institutions.

The Hospital Conference 2024 addresses international scholars and early career researchers with research interests in the history of hospitals, welfare and health care. We encourage papers from diverse disciplines (including, for example: history, cultural studies, art history, religious studies, Islamic studies, Jewish studies, Byzantine studies, archaeology, linguistics, philosophy).

The conference will take place on the grounds of the St. Katharinenspitalstiftung in Regensburg, which will celebrate the 800th anniversary of its existence in 2026. An adequate budget for travel reimbursement is available.

A timely publication of the proceedings within the framework of the "Studien zur Geschichte des Spital-, Wohlfahrts- und Gesundheitswesens" (Verlag Friedrich Pustet) is planned. The editors welcome contributions in German, English, French and Italian.

Organisation

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