

Special Issue

Medieval and Early Modern Finger Rings from Christian and Jewish Contexts

Message from the Guest Editor

Finger rings are one of the most important types of jewelry, and they have been present in various cultures since the Stone Age. In the Middle Ages, they were made from simple materials such as wood or bone, but also from glass, ivory, or metal. In the case of metal rings, the spectrum ranges from iron or bronze and brass to silver and gold. As often beautiful and precious pieces of jewelry, rings mostly served the self-presentation of the wearer. In addition, however, they could have certain functions: Signet rings functioned to authenticate documents, rings with special symbolism distinguished holders of office or dignity, while other rings played an important role in special ceremonies, such as marriage. Since antiquity, rings have been given and worn as a sign of love and loyalty, and since the late Middle Ages, they have also been used as memorial and mourning rings in memory of the deceased. Amulet rings, meanwhile, were intended to protect or heal the wearer through special inscriptions or materials used. This Special Issue focuses on the wide range of different medieval ring types with different symbolism, function, and religious backgrounds.

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