

My motivation:

Dear fellow PhD students,

We've all heard the saying, "a PhD is a marathon, not a sprint." I've lost count of how many times I've been told that over the past year and a half — and I'm sure you have too. But I've always had mixed feelings about this metaphor. A marathon still sounds like a lonely, gruelling race that depends solely on your own stamina. And besides, research is rarely a single discipline – wouldn't it make more sense to call a PhD a triathlon, at least?

Our work takes many forms: staring at a computer screen until your eyes go square, spending long hours in the lab until the fumes make you lightheaded, or diving into archives until the dust makes you sneeze. Some days, it's all of that – plus trying to rewrite an argument in your head on the way home. Add to that the challenge of moving to a new city, country, or even continent, and it truly becomes a multi-event endurance test.

Learning French for my PhD on medieval Latin texts taught me firsthand what it means to adapt to a new culture and language. It showed me that, even after 25, your brain can still learn new tricks – and that embarrassing moments can turn into lasting friendships. It also proved to me that good ideas can shine through, even when expressed in imperfect grammar.

Most importantly, I've learned that you don't have to go through this journey alone. At every conference or summer school, I've found peers who share the same challenges and triumphs – people to celebrate discoveries with, or to commiserate about the struggle of turning ideas into pages.

As your representative in the HGGS, I want to foster more of these connections –through events and seminars that bring us together across disciplines, allowing us to share experiences, exchange ideas, and learn from our diverse backgrounds. I also hope to create more informal opportunities to present our work in low-pressure settings, where we can discuss our research freely and supportively.

If a PhD is such a "multi-event endurance test," then let's make sure we're all on the same team, cheering each other on, sharing the snacks, and celebrating every finish line together.

Eva Marie

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Short bio:

Eva Marie Heimers is a PhD student in Medieval Latin Philology at the University of Heidelberg and the École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales (EHESS) in Paris. She holds a BA in Medieval Latin Philology and English Literature from the Universities of Erlangen and Canterbury, and an MA in English Literature from Heidelberg, where she focused on the modern Irish novel. Her MPhil at Trinity College Dublin explored medieval women's visions of the afterlife. Her current research involves a new critical edition of the life and visions of St Aldegund. She is supervised by Professor Tino Licht (Institute for Medieval and Modern Latin Philology, Heidelberg) and Professor Sylvain Piron (Centre de Recherches Historiques, EHESS). In her free time she likes to read Irish literature, make music and meet with her friends.