Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies

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Greetings

Let me begin this issue with the happy news that a prominent member of our community has been awarded a John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation Fellowship. John N. King receives this prestigious award for the 2009-2010 academic year to undertake a book-length study with the working title of *The Reformation of the Book, 1450-1650*. John’s achievement offers us the opportunity to reflect on Ohio State’s remarkable success in this particular competition. In the last quarter century, thirty-two Ohio State faculty members have won Guggenheims, which is more than all other public and private Ohio universities combined, and I’m proud to say that affiliates of our own center have contributed more than their fair share: Barbara Becker-Cantarino, David Cressy, Robert Davis, Dick Davis, Carter Findley, Fritz Graf, Gregory Jusdanis, Geoffrey Parker, and Dale Van Kley are all former winners, and no less than four CMRS directors, Joe Lynch, Nick, Howe, Barbara Hanawalt, and myself, have held them. (If I have overlooked anyone, please accept my apologies, and please let me know so that I can include you in our next *Nouvelles Nouvelles*).

I have mixed news about the two initiatives I announced in our last issue. Sarah-Grace Heller’s study abroad component to her Gothic Paris course has been approved by the Office of International Affairs and we hope to offer it for the first time in Winter 2010; the GIS proposal, however, after sailing through two other committees, is currently held up at the Graduate
School Curriculum Committee, but we still have hopes of getting it on the books by 2009/10.

This is the time of year when I am kept busy organizing the lecture series for next year. Our theme is to be “Mementoes, Keepsakes, and Tokens,” and at the time of writing we have five speakers already signed up: Anna Maria Busse Berger (Musicology), Peter Stallybrass (English), Joyce Coleman (English), Bonnie Effros (History), and Cynthia Robinson (Near Eastern Studies); furthermore, negotiations are well under way to bring Sam Armistead, the world expert in Sephardic balladry, here as our Utley lecturer. This year we have launched a new initiative by asking our graduate student society (MRGSA) to suggest one of the lecturers for our series. We have always made every effort to involve our graduate students in the visits of our lecturers, but we hope that they will play a particularly prominent role in entertaining the MRGSA lecturer and providing an introducer for his/her lecture.

However, we still have three more lectures in our current Culture of War series remaining, including a double-header with Rutgers University. On Friday May 1, Christine Chism will speak to us on “Ain’t Gonna Study War No More: Geoffrey of Monmouth’s Vita Merlini as an Antitext to the Historia,” and two weeks later (on May 15) her Rutgers colleague Camilla Townsend will speak on “Lost in Translation: The Spanish, the Aztecs, and the Meaning of Conquest.” We hope to see you at these two talks, and at our final lecturer (by Sarah Kay of Princeton) on May 29.

Best Wishes,

Richard Firth Green
Director, Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies
James Bennett (PhD Candidate, History) presented “Expanding Practical Literacy in Medieval St Albans” at the graduate student conference “Expanding Literacy Studies” on April 4, at The Ohio State University.


Amanda Gerber (PhD Student, English) read for the Medieval Reading Group’s performance of “Medieval Animal Fables” for the OSU Libraries Read Aloud at the Wexner Center on April 16.


Daniel Hobbins (Assistant Professor, History) published *Authorship and Publicity before Print: Jean Gerson and the Transformation of Late Medieval Learning* (University of Pennsylvania Press).

Ryan Judkins (PhD Candidate, English) chaired the session “Historical Issues of Literacy in Europe” at the graduate student conference “Expanding Literacy Studies” at OSU on April 4. He also read for the Medieval Reading Group’s performance of
“Medieval Animal Fables” for the OSU Libraries Read Aloud at the Wexner Center on April 16.


John N. King (Professor, English) has received a John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation Fellowship for the 2009-2010 academic year. His project is a book-length study with the working title of “The Reformation of the Book, 1450-1650.” He has also published an edition entitled Foxe’s Book of Martyrs: Select Narratives (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

Lisa J. Kiser (Professor, English) organized and led the Medieval Reading Group’s “Medieval Animal Fables” performance for the OSU Libraries Read Aloud at the Wexner Center on April 16. She also translated the material for the performance.

Ethan Knapp (Associate Professor, English) published, with Richard Firth Green, “Thomas Hoccleve’s Seal,” Medium Aevum 72.2 (2008): 319-21.


Please submit any news you would like included in “Among Us” to judkins.7@osu.edu.
Just Around

The books described individually below are our oldest here at Ohio Wesleyan, except for about 6 pieces of cuneiform, and a piece of papyrus from the late Roman period. As for incunabula, we have 8 volumes. From the 16th and 17th centuries we have 162 volumes, if I counted correctly. We have other rare books, such as Johnson’s Dictionary, Shakespeare’s second folio, Bishop Usher’s work, an Idylls of the King with a foredge colored view of the Crystal Palace, a large collection of first editions of the 1920s, a collection of the Brownings’ books with their inscriptions plus some letters, a collection of rare and out-of-print pamphlets, book materials, and lithographs of the Spanish civil war, a collection of James Joyce materials, early government documents from congress before the war of 1812, a collection of atlases and county histories of Ohio, and a large collection of Walt Whitman books, photographs (100s), and first and later editions of Leaves of Grass, a collection that attracts interest from all over the U.S. and abroad, usually wanting photographs of Whitman for forthcoming books. Many of our rare books, because we have a Methodist affiliation, are texts of early Christian authors.

Manuscripts of particular note:

A large antiphonal from Bologna, late 14th century or early 15th century, 273 leaves, binding is tooled leather over oak boards with metal bosses, probably added during the 19th century, but certainly not in the 15th century. The parchment is coarse, but practical for
a work that will be used over and over. This is a "summer antiphonal" or antiphonary, which covers the music and chants for Easter through the feast of St. James in July. There are 20 large illuminated initials, of which 6 are historiated. The colors are typical of northern Italian work. Other initials are approximately 3" by 4", with trailing curls. The first initials of a beginning section or a phrase have a yellow tint within the initial, a common Italian practice. There are some 40 small faces mainly in the first third of the volume, and some in the last third. Probably 3 scribes produced the Italian gothic script. This volume is the high point of my lectures on writing and early bookmaking because of its size, 54 x 37 cm, and its illuminations.

The Cistercian Order and Service Book or "festive collectarium" (De Ricci calls it a "lectionarium"), late 14th century, contains collects or prayers for the various divine services of the day. It is from the monastery of Santa Maria Vallis Serena, Parma diocese, in northern Italy, also called St. Martin at Valserena, founded 1298 A.D. Binding is brown calf skin, blind tooled decorations, with bosses similar to the Antiphonal bosses, also added much later. Clasps are missing. Size: 15 x 22 cm. It belonged to Abbot Sigismund, 10th abbot of this monastery. The "title" or illuminated first leaf contains a portrait of a bishop, possibly Sigismund, and the bottom of the leaf contains a shield device and the word "Sigismund". It contains Italian script by Genesius de Pazzanis. Text is embellished with finely drawn gray or red initials. The parchment is much finer than that of the Antiphonal.

Antiphonum Parvum or breviary, second half of the 15th century. Size: 23 x 16 cm. Called a "missal", or a book containing prayers, chants, readings for the mass. Also called a "small antiphonal" with music/songs to accompany Catholic church liturgy and ritual. German parchment binding with
stamped, intricate darkened blind tooling, certainly German, as are the musical notes, called “Hoefnaglschrift” or horses’ hoof nails, in shape. Leaves have decorated initials, sometimes called “peas in a pod” initials. Script is German gothic with pointed, very compact letters.

*Horae Diurnae Sacri Ordinis Praedicatorum cum Calendario,* Dominican liturgy, mostly 14th and 15th centuries in Latin, except for some bits of German in the latter parts, probably added in the 16th century. Used by a Dominican nun in a monastery (or convent) in southern Germany. This manuscript contains repeated references to St. Peter the Martyr, who was presumably the patron saint of this monastery. It contains the finest parchment, practically transparent, with very finely drawn letters with curls. The nun has tabbed the sections of this tiny volume so that she could turn to that section quickly. Few pages in the back are on paper and added at a late date, some German script present. Size: 3 1/2 by 2 1/2 inches or 9 x 6 cm. 72 folios. Many red and blue initials with pen decorations, some look Italian, some French. Bound in red leather that has worn away from the spine, revealing the bands. Said by Dr. Parkes, of Oxford University, to be our most valuable book. It is called “The Nun’s Book” in our department.
Following the retirement of Patricia Swinehart, who admirably fulfilled the administrative duties of the CMRS for several years and held a number of other university posts before that, Jared Boyd joins us at CMRS through a job-sharing agreement with The Melton Center for Jewish studies.

Jared now serves as the fiscal and office manager of both centers, working part time in each center managing the business and operational aspects of conferences, programs, lecture series, and courses. Jared graduated from Ohio State in 2003 with a B.A. in Philosophy before entering the business world. An interesting tidbit -- Jared took several classes in Medieval Philosophy, including a course with Tamar Rudavsky, who is part of the CMRS Advisory Committee. Jared is married with 3 little girls and commutes to work by bike.

Welcome to the CMRS, Jared. No doubt we’ll all get to know him better as time goes on.
Upcoming Events

THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY
CENTER FOR MEDIEVAL AND RENAISSANCE STUDIES
PRESENTS

“Ain’t Gonna Study War No More:
Geoffrey of Monmouth’s Vita Merlini as
an Antitext to the Historia”

Christine Ohism
Rutgers University

Friday, 1 May 2009
Science and Engineering Library, Room 090
2:30 pm

This is the seventh lecture in our 2008-09 lecture series
“The Culture of War”

For additional information, please visit our website at
http://cmrs.osu.edu or telephone us at 614-292-7495.
The problem: to understand the context of a grievance included in Parliament’s Grand Remonstrance against King Charles I in 1641, about the “vexation and oppression” of the “saltpetermen.” This will expand as research progresses, and will take me into unexpected areas of the legal, military and manufacturing history of early modern England.

The Grand Remonstrance is well documented, so a first line of inquiry takes me to recent scholarship on the politics leading up to the English Revolution. The open-shelved books are easily found, but tell me nothing about saltpeter, except that its collection made some people unhappy. It’s time for a different tack, through the history of gunpowder. I’m not ashamed to say I used the internet, as well as online bibliographies and library catalogs, to get me going. Saltpeter, I learn, is the primary ingredient of gunpowder, along with sulfur and carbon. My initial reading list on this topic includes books published between 1916 and 2008, and periodical articles from the 1930s to the 1990s. Some of these are relatively obscure and rarely consulted, and I am grateful to find them on open shelves.

The books are cataloged in diverse areas, from the history of chemistry to the history of warfare, but all can be tracked down and brought to a desk for consultation. These texts lead in turn to a chain of references in other books.
and articles. Studies of the gunpowder industry in ancien régime France, and of saltpeter generation in revolutionary America, I set aside for later, but other leads take me back to Tudor and Stuart England. Works by Jo Guilmartin and Geoffrey Parker on Renaissance naval warfare are especially useful, and I make a pile of them. The Tudors, I learn, like their European competitors, needed increased amounts of gunpowder for their armies and navies. By the time of the Spanish Armada in 1588 Queen Elizabeth had 34 battleships, with 700 heavy guns, using 100 lasts of gunpowder a year. By the reign of Charles I the firepower of the royal navy had trebled, and the state needed 300 lasts of gunpowder annually.

I had better find out what a ‘last’ is. Ten minutes in the library leads me to studies of historical weights and measures, where I learn that a ‘last’ comprised 24 barrels. Just to confuse things, lasts were measured differently in different parts of Europe, being bigger at Hamburg than Amsterdam. In England a standard barrel of gunpowder weighed a hundredweight of 100 pounds, whereas a hundredweight of saltpeter weighed 112 pounds. By my calculation, Charles I’s forces went through 360 tons of gunpowder a year, which demanded a lot of saltpeter. Where did they get it, and why did it become an issue in revolutionary politics?

The Tudors imported saltpeter from Italy and northern Europe, before trying to make their own. Seventeenth-century merchants brought back shipments from north Africa and India. Foreign saltpeter was not controversial, but attempts to extract it in England caused endless ‘vexations.’

Saltpeter comes from earth impregnated with nitrous matter, ideally urine and dung, which can be refined to yield potassium nitrate. It can be dug from stables, dovecotes, and outhouses. Elizabethan England developed a network of saltpetermen who collected and processed the raw material
for the royal gunpowder-makers at the Tower. It was their successors who were targets of the Grand Remonstrance.

To find out about the activities of saltpetermen, and the grievances they occasioned, I turn to the *Calendars of State Papers* and *Acts of the Privy Council*, which are shelved together with other editions and summaries of English government documents. Some of these are now searchable through online databases, such as MEMSO (Medieval and Early Modern Sources Online) to which OSU subscribes. But the digitization seems to have been done by transcribers or software with an unsure grasp of early modern English spelling and abbreviation. It leads to such gibberish as ‘eooecution to be done upon whT’I,1if”â€ 58,’ though some navigation is possible. A trawl through *State Papers* finds references to dozens of petitions, letters and memoranda concerning saltpeter, including commissions for the saltpetermen and proclamations regulating their business. But these are just summaries and extracts. The originals are in the British National Archives, but some American libraries, including OSU, have purchased microfilms. So it’s off to the microfilm section, taking a dozen books along as finding-aids and for reference. It saves hours of research time to be able to scan back and forth between microfilms, reference books, articles, and databases. I make dozens of dips into the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (available online at OSU) to identify some of the players. References to proclamations take me to modern edited collections with scholarly apparatus, and to facsimiles of the originals in *Early English Books Online* (available at OSU).

Some of the seventeenth-century cases involved saltpetermen prospecting in churches, disrupting services and overturning seats to dig up the floors. They explained that church floors were rich in nitrates, because parishioners relieved themselves where they sat. This case pitted the crown’s hunger for saltpeter against
concerns for the propriety of sacred spaces. A footnote leads me to the diary of William Laud, Archbishop of Canterbury, included in the seven-volume edition of his works published in 1853. Fortunately this too is on open shelves, and I can consult it alongside other sources.

Many of the complaints against saltpetermen came from land-owners who resented their intrusion on private property. Some raised the ancient cry, that ‘an Englishman’s home is his castle,’ but this was met by claims that the crown had prerogative rights, and that national security concerns over-ruled all other considerations. If England was at war, or faced the threat of invasion, it needed all the gunpowder it could find, and consequently all the saltpeter. This raises legal and constitutional issues of high importance, about which I know little, so it’s back to the catalogs and databases to develop a quick research bibliography.

By now it’s lunchtime, and a chance to stretch my muscles. Over lunch I meet a visiting historian of science, who describes the chemistry of saltpeter, as understood in the fifteenth century. A literary scholar at the table tells me about a play by Thomas Middleton called A Fair Quarrel (published 1617) which includes reference to saltpetermen as ‘varlets’ and ‘knaves.’ I had better look it up. Fortunately the library has several copies, easily to hand.

Fighting afternoon fatigue, I turn to the history of English law, beginning with the nine-volume survey by W. S. Holdsworth (1932). This leads me to The Reports of Sir Edward Coke (written between the 1590s and 1630s, published 1826), part twelve of which discusses the power of the royal prerogative, with particular reference to the digging of saltpeter. Because he needs it for national defense, the king is entitled to search for saltpeter on private land. But his men could not dig in people’s dwellings, at least not in rooms where they slept, and were supposed to make good any damage. Many
of the complaints in State Papers refer to the ‘abuses’ and ‘exactions’ of the saltpetermen, who interrupted farming, broke down walls, ruined pigeon houses, and generally broke the rules. The ‘vexation and oppression’ of the 1641 Remonstrance had a long history.

Complaints came from all points of the ideological spectrum, from champions of parliament to proto-cavaliers. Though divided on other matters, they agreed that the crown’s quest for saltpeter should be better managed. Unfortunately, their bigger disagreements led to civil war, and unprecedented demands for gunpowder, and parliament that challenged saltpeter-digging soon sent out saltpetermen of its own. The crisis was only resolved when the East India Company brought in huge amounts of saltpeter from India, rendering the domestic enterprise unnecessary.

Not bad for a day’s work in the Huntington Library. If only the same could be done at OSU.

David Cressy, March 2009
Mark your calendars! 5 June 2009 is the admissions and grant-in-aid request deadline for the following Folger Institute programs:

**Contact and Exchange: China and the West**  
A fall conference on Saturday, 26 September 2009 (for grants-in-aid; conference registration extends through 4 September 2009)

**Theatre and the Reformation of Space**  
A fall symposium offered in collaboration with the Making Publics Project on Thursday through Saturday, 29-31 October 2009

**Ben Jonson, Man of Letters**  
Martin Butler directs a fall semester-length seminar on Thursdays

**India in British Political Thought, c. 1600-1800**  
Robert Travers directs a fall semester-length seminar on Fridays

**Researching the Archives**  
Steven Zwicker and Derek Hirst direct a year-long dissertation seminar meeting monthly on Fridays

**Full program descriptions and application guidelines can be found at** [www.folger.edu/institute](http://www.folger.edu/institute). **Please contact institute@folger.edu with any questions.**
Reading Groups

**Medieval Latin:** Tuesdays, 4:30-5:30. Dulles 308. Contact Professor Richard Green (green.693@osu.edu).

**Medieval Occitan:** The Occitan group will be meeting regularly this quarter. Please contact Lisa Bevevino (bevevino.1@osu.edu) for the next date and time.

![Image of medieval manuscript]

Papers-in-Progress Mtg

Three English graduate students, Michael Van Dussen, Amanda Gerber, and Aaron Mercier, will be reading their papers in progress for Kalamazoo. The purpose of the gathering is to present papers to a friendly and supportive audience for helpful feedback before presenting in the less familiar terrain of the conference itself. If you would care to come to hear the papers and offer feedback, it would be most appreciated.

Commons Room (311) in Denney Hall
Tuesday April 28, 5:00-7:00 p.m.
At the Library

Medieval and Renaissance Books
New to the University Libraries
Compiled by Eric Johnson
Associate Curator, Rare Books and Manuscripts


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Architettura medievale: la pietra e la figura / A. Cadei ... [et al.]; a cura di Paolo Piva. NA5453 .A73 2008


Bildwirkungen: die kommunikative Funktion mittelalterlicher Skulpturen / Bruno Boerner. NB170 .B64 2008


Enamels, crowns, relics and icons: studies on luxury arts in Byzantium / Paul Hetherington. NK5013.H48 2008


The idol in the age of art: objects, devotions and the early modern world /


Merchants, princes and painters: silk fabrics in Italian and northern paintings, 1300-1550 / Lisa Monnas.  ND1460.T49 M66  2008


La miniature chrétienne dans l’Espagne des trois cultures: le Beatus de Gérone / Ludivine Allegue Fuschini.  ND3361.R52 B4315 2008


Signs of the Apocalypse or Rapture / conceived by Front Forty Press; visual curation by Doug Fogelson, Ryanne Baynham; audio curation by: Doug Fogelson, David Castillo, Rob Lowe; design by: David Castillo; edited by: Front Forty Press, Christine DiThomas. NX650.A6 S54 2008 + CDs

The St Albans Psalter: a book for Christina of Markyate / Jane Geddes. ND3357.S12 G33 2005


The usurer’s heart: Giotto, Enrico Scrovegni, and the Arena Chapel in Padua / Anne Derbes and Mark Sandona. ND623.G6 D38 2008

The virtual tourist in Renaissance Rome: printing and collecting the Speculum romanae magnificentiae / Rebecca Zorach; with contributions by Nina Dubin ... [et al.]. NE954.3.I8 Z67 2008

Virtus und voluptas: Beobachtungen zur Ikonographie weiblicher Aktfiguren in der venezianischen Malerei des frühen Cinquecento / Peter Lüdemann. ND621.V5 L83 2008

As we approach the $31,000 mark, the Howe fund is just over halfway to reaching its endowment target of $50,000. This sum may look like a tall order for a small program like the Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, but I intend to make this particular fund our flagship appeal over the next few years, and with a display of the same kind of generosity and good will that typified Nick Howe himself, I’m very confident we can make it.

If you wish to contribute to the Nicholas G. Howe Memorial Fund yourself, you can do so in three ways:

You can donate online at https://www.giveto.osu.edu/igive (the fund number is #480256); or you can send a check to

either

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308 Dulles Hall
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or

M.J. Wolanin
Director of Development
020 Mershon Center
1505 Neil Ave.
Columbus, Ohio 43210-2602

With most sincere thanks,

Richard Green
April

If April be dripping, then do I not hate,
for him that hath little, his fallowing late:
Else otherwise fallowing, timely is best,
for saving of Cattel, of plough and the rest.

From April beginning, til Andrew be past,
so long with good huswife, hir dairie doth last:
Good milchow and pasture, good husbands provide,
the residue good huswines, know best how to guide.
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