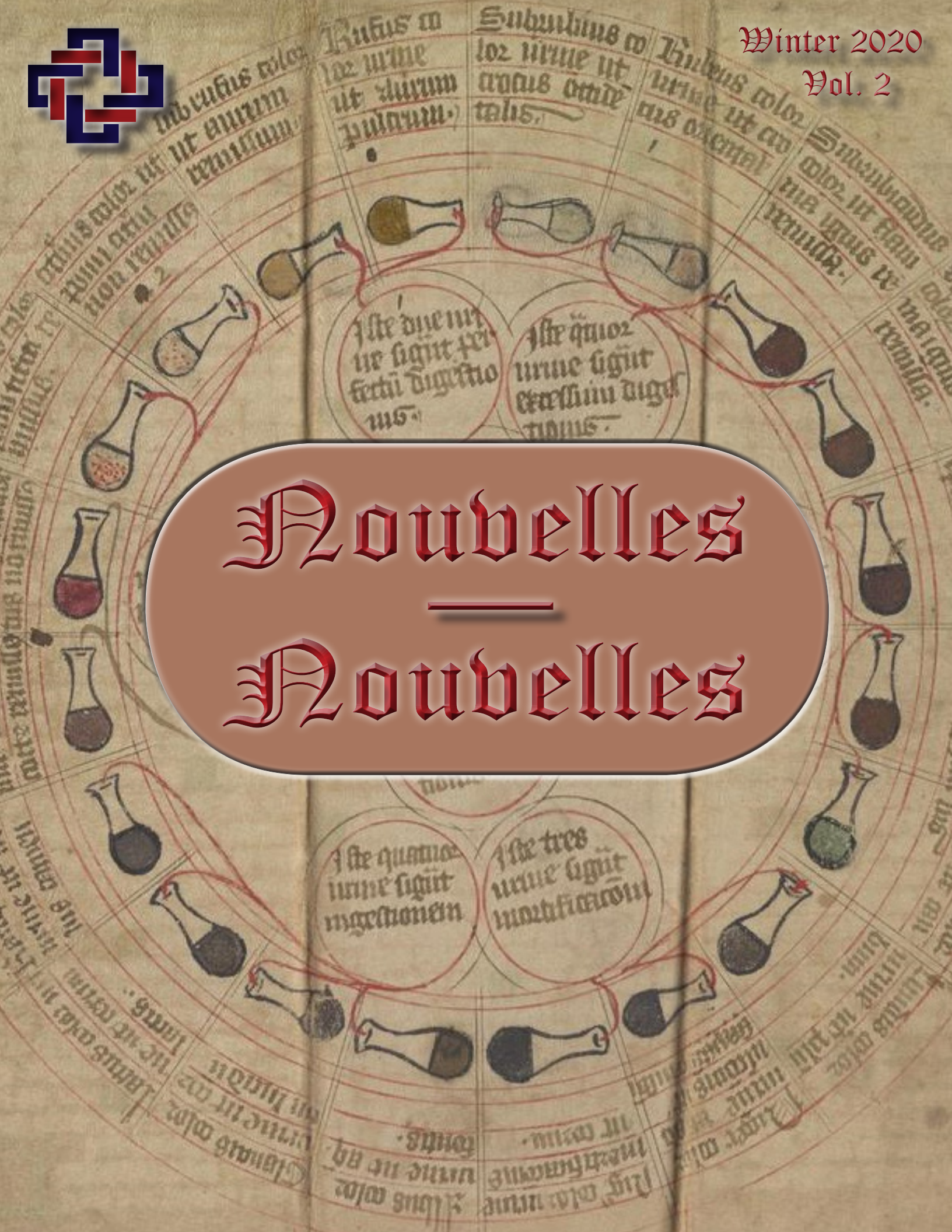




Winter 2020

Vol. 2

Nouvelles — Nouvelles



February

07 February, 2020

CMRS Lecture Series: Haruo Shirane (Columbia)

“The Six Realms, Hell, and Resurrection in Medieval Japan”

4:00 PM, 18th Avenue Library, 3rd Floor, Research Commons

21-22 February, 2020

Symposium: “The Americas Before 1620: Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Indigenous Cultures, Colonialism, and Slavery”

202 Thompson Library

21 February, 2020

CMRS Lecture Series: Herman Bennett (CUNY)

“The Americas Before 1620” Keynote Lecture

“Before the Human: Africans, Sovereigns, & Slaves”

4:00 PM, 202 Thompson Library

March

20 March, 2020

CMRS Lecture Series: Lisa Klein (Independent Scholar)

2020 Barbara A. Hanawalt Public Lecture

“*Ophelia*: From Book to Film”

6:30 PM, 180 Hagerty Hall

April

10 April, 2020

CMRS Lecture Series: John N. King (OSU Emeritus)

“How Anne Askew Read the Bible”

4:00 PM, 18th Avenue Library, 3rd Floor, Research Commons

Stay tuned to our email lists, social media, and website for information about our Spring Film Series and our upcoming CMRS Colloquia.

CENTER FOR
MEDIEVAL AND RENAISSANCE STUDIES

DIRECTOR
Christopher Highley

ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR
Leslie Lockett

PROGRAM COORDINATOR
Nicholas Spitulski

GRADUATE ASSOCIATES
Stephen Barker
Manuel Jacquez

Nouvelles Nouvelles is published by the Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies and is also available in pdf at <http://cmrs.osu.edu/nn>. Please contact cmrs@osu.edu for more information.

CMRS
The Ohio State University
455 Hagerty Hall
1775 College Road
Columbus, OH 43210-1361
Tel: 614-292-7495
E-mail: cmrs@osu.edu

World Wide Web
<http://cmrs.osu.edu>

The Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies is an interdisciplinary center in the College of Arts and Sciences at The Ohio State University. Its central mission is to foster interaction among faculty, students, and the public around themes involving the study of history, culture, society, technology, intellectual thought, and the arts from late Antiquity to the early modern era. With over twenty affiliated departments and over 100 affiliated faculty, the Center offers its own course curriculum, together with lectures, conferences, film series, and special events of interest to local, regional, national, and international audiences. Affiliated with the Medieval Academy of America, the Renaissance Society of America, and the Folger Institute, the CMRS contributes to national and international discourses on the place of medieval, Renaissance, and early modern studies in the academy and in society more generally.

In addition to this Newsletter, the Center offers courses at both the undergraduate and graduate levels, an undergraduate major and minor, a graduate certificate program and Graduate Interdisciplinary Specialization, a series of lectures and colloquia, graduate administrative and teaching associateships, and other activities and events during the academic year. It also aspires to serve as a resource for medievalists and Renaissance scholars at other institutions throughout the state.

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GREETINGS

from the DIRECTOR

The Fall semester got off to an excellent start with Professor Seeta Chaganti's lecture on the politics of Blackface in Morris Dance Scholarship. We have our wonderful Medieval and Renaissance Graduate Student Association to thank for inviting Seeta as the keynote speaker at their symposium on 'Bodies in Motion.' This well-organized and well-attended event featured a full day of talks and panels in the 18th Avenue Library Research Commons--our regular venue from now on for CMRS lectures.

Another highlight of the Fall was the highly anticipated Barbara A. Hanawalt Public Lecture of OSU alum and magician Josh Jay. In the first part of his show, Josh amazed us with incredible feats of prestidigitation and psychic power, transforming objects, reading audience member's minds, and ingesting and regurgitating steel pins--an illusion described in Reginald Scot's *A Discoverie of Witchcraft* (1584). Josh spoke movingly about this book in the second part of his show, arguing that all magicians owe an enormous debt to Scott who risked his life by debunking the then dominant view that all forms of magic were demonically inspired. Josh also described how he is inspired by his own copy of the book that he was given when starting out in the profession by an older magician. You can watch an



interview with Josh conducted during his visit by CMRS Graduate Associate Steve Barker: <https://cmrs.osu.edu/resources/nouvelles-nouvelles-podcast/nouvelles-pod-4-video-interview-joshua-jay>.

Our second Public Lecture of the year will feature local young-adult author Lisa Klein (March 20, 6:30PM, Hagerty 180). Like the Josh Jay event, this is not a traditional lecture: the evening begins with a reception, continues with English Professor and screenwriter Angus Fletcher interviewing Lisa about the translation of her novel *Ophelia* to the big screen, and concludes with a screening of the movie.

The CMRS Spring symposium on ‘The Americas before 1620: Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Indigenous Cultures, Colonialism, and Slavery’ will be held on February 21-22 in 202 Thompson Library. The original idea for the event grew out of the recognition that 2020 marks the 400th anniversary of the establishment of Plymouth Plantation by English settlers. Speakers will use this occasion as well as the first arrival of African slaves in North America in 1619 to think about colonial encounters, racial theories, and forms of commemoration in both the old world and the new. Our keynote speaker is Professor Herman Bennett from NYU, a historian of the African diaspora, especially in Latin America, and author most recently of *African Kings and Black Slaves: Sovereignty and Dispossession in the Early Modern Atlantic* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2018). The six papers by invited speakers on Friday will be followed by a round-table discussion Saturday morning.

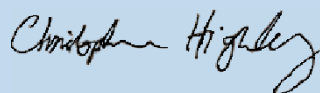
Turning to CMRS courses, I am heartened to report that Professor Michael Swartz’s Spring MEDREN 2266 ‘Magic and Witchcraft in the Middle Ages and Renaissance’ has an enrollment of over 100. This is especially gratifying since it’s the first time we have offered the class in back-to-back Fall and Spring semesters. It’s reassuring that even in the 21st century, the supernatural still fascinates our undergraduates.

When you are in Hagerty Hall in Spring semester please take a few moments to visit the Global Gallery on the first floor of the building facing the Oval. For a couple of months, the display panels there will be devoted to the five Centers and two working groups that presently make up the Humanities Institute. CMRS is designing a set of colorful panels that will showcase our many affiliates and activities.

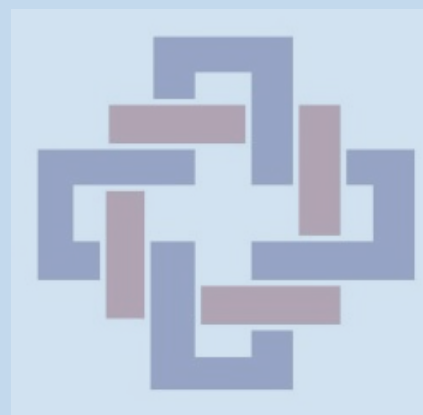
The awards season will soon be upon us, so please encourage your students to apply for the Nicholas G. Howe Memorial Fund that helps with travel expenses to research sites and conferences. The deadline for applications is Friday, February 28, 2020. Also be on the look-out for strong undergraduate and graduate papers that can be submitted for the Stanley J. Kahrl and Barbara A. Hanawalt Essay Awards. Completed applications are due on Monday, March 22, 2020. See here for details and the names of past winners: <https://cmrs.osu.edu/awards-grants>.

Wishing you all the best for the holidays and a wonderful 2020.

Best wishes,



Chris Highley
Director, Center for Medieval and
Renaissance Studies



Dot Porter: Digitizing Manuscripts

Dot Porter is a digital humanist, medievalist, and librarian. She is the Curator of Digital Research Services at the Schoenberg Institute for Manuscript Studies at the University of Pennsylvania. She focuses on the digitization and visualization of medieval manuscripts, digital edition development, and digitization workflow. She just digitized nearly 500 manuscripts from Philadelphia Special Collections libraries as part of the Bibliotheca Philadelphiensis project.

Tell us about being Curator of Digital Research Services at the Schoenberg Institute.

The Schoenberg Institute is a research and development group located in the Center for Special Collections at the University of Pennsylvania. We focus on manuscript studies writ very large. That includes the collections at Penn, so we have a few different medieval manuscript collections and also more modern manuscripts: we digitize them all. All of our images are in the public domain—the metadata as well. We also host digitized collections from other institutions. The Bibliotheca Philadelphiensis project, which we call Biblio Philly, is one of these. We just digitized all of the manuscripts, and now that they're digitized, we have all this stuff to play with! What I'm really interested in is what it means to digitize manuscripts. You can put a manuscript online, but you're not really putting the manuscript online, right? You're taking pieces of things that look like the manuscript and presenting them in different ways. This is something that I think about a lot.

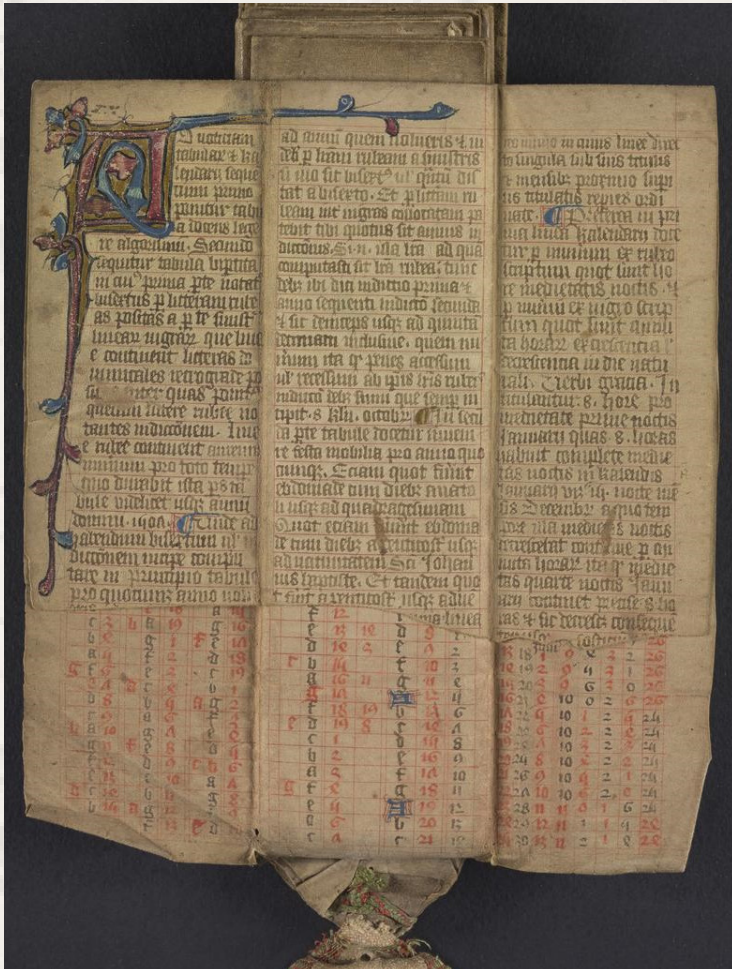
Next year, I'm going to be curating an exhibition at the free library of Philadelphia, which I'm very excited about, which actually comes out of the Bibliotheca Philadelphiensis project. We're going to be celebrating the manuscripts in Philadelphia, but it's aimed at a very general audience, which is exciting and also really challenging. Most people on the street don't really know anything about medieval manuscripts, so the library is interested in getting people to come in and see the exhibition. The challenge is to take these manuscripts and make them accessible: interesting for the people on the street.

The exhibition is being organized according to five different themes, and each theme will be addressed through the manuscripts to encourage people to think about how we deal with these themes today. So we can say, here is an example of how medieval people thought about religion or family or law and justice or the natural world. So you can look at medieval manuscripts, and you can see that, for one thing, people did work according to the season. So if you were a farmer, your work, what you can do, really depends on what the weather is like, or if it rains enough. Whereas for most of us, we spend our days in air-conditioned rooms. And so we're not necessarily thinking about the natural world in the same way. And so encouraging people to think, to think about it this way, as a way I think, to bring the medieval mind closer to us. So instead of putting it up and saying, “Look at these weird people and all the weird things they thought,” have them say, “Okay, they actually had some of the same concerns that we did.” And how do we think about the things that they also thought about?

What are some of the highlights of the Biblio Philly?

The Free Library of Philadelphia is the Public Library of the city, and because of donations early in the last century, they have a really amazing collection of new manuscripts, something like 250 of them. And a lot of them are very nice. But I think a lot of people just don't know about them. That's really the most exciting thing, getting these manuscripts out into the world. One specific book that I'm really excited about is at the Rosenbach [Museum and Library]. It's a belt book, so it's small. It would have been carried by a medical practitioner of some sort. And it was attached to the belt, written on large sheets that are then folded and put together in this pouch. And when you unfold it, it's actually really impressive because they're very large. And there's a calendar, which is sort of interesting. But then there's a urine wheel. So you could imagine I'm going to somebody's house and they're sick. And I check my chart and say, “Well, all right, what color is your pee?” which is something that they were actually

very into. It's drawings of little vials of colors. So the idea is you hold it up to the light, and if it's red or black maybe there's something wrong with it. They have all the different colors and maladies written next to them. The foldout is not super common, but I guess somebody at least thought it was useful. I've heard it called a bat book because of the way it folds out like the wings of a bat.



*The belt/bat book: MS Rosenbach 1004/29 1c.
Background image is the tabula urinarum, 9c.*

What is digital surrogacy?

The term surrogacy is one that I've used in a class that I've taught for a couple of summers. Surrogacy is something that stands in for something else, so if you say digital surrogacy, then it is implying that the digital copy stands in for the real thing, which is a little provocative. It's important to digitize and make things available online, but then don't be mindless about it. Best practices: you also take photos of the covers, the spine, and the leaves. And if you're cataloging manuscripts, you are going to make a collation formula, and the measurements.

The thing that that digitization enables that you can't do in microfilm is that you can then start using that data to give you different visualizations to actually bring the idea of the physical object closer to you. So it's not just about "Oh, here's a page, and can I read it?" but you can start thinking "How is this leaf connected to other leaves that I've taken photos of?" Another basic thing that gets lost with digitization is the size. You can look at five digital images, and the images are all going to be the same size because that's the best practice, to take them the same size. Maybe one manuscript is very tiny, and another one is big. You also can't tell if you can open it all the way. If you look at an opening on any digital viewer, it's not actually the page opening. The image on this left was taken at a different time than the image on the right, so it will always look flat, even if when the photos were taken, the book had to be held at a 90 degree angle because it couldn't be opened any further. So you lose that sense of how the book moves. And then there's more obscure things like how it smells and how the parchment feels under your fingers on these sorts of things, which are part of the experience of interacting with a manuscript. It's part of that human experience that is lost.

There are people doing work on the tactile part. Bill Endres at the University of Oklahoma does work in VR [virtual reality]. It's not like you go into a room and there's the manuscript and you can turn the pages. He uses 3D modeling so that you actually get a sense of the texture of the page, which is another thing that often is lost in digitization. In making a microfilm, we often set glass on the page before it is photographed to make it flat so that the text will show up better. But then it doesn't actually look like the page anymore because no page in the book is flat. Similarly, Johanna Green at the University of Glasgow is very interested in viewing digitized manuscript pages and how you touch it in a different way on your phone, for example, from how you would touch the actual manuscript.

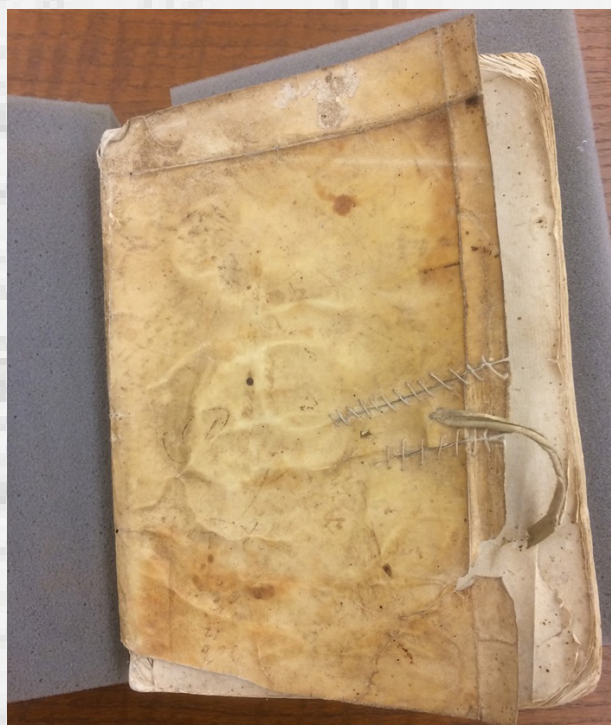
Fernando Lima e Morato: Lisbon and OSU

I received the Howe Award a few weeks before defending my dissertation, therefore, I didn't use it for any further research concerning my PhD. Nonetheless, the award was fundamental for me to take a few steps forward on my academic career. I used it to go to Lisbon, Portugal, during the Summer of 2019, in a very fruitful visit. Despite the limited amount of time I spent there, I managed to present papers in two international conferences, conduct research on important Lisbon archives, and meet a few Portuguese scholars. Not to mention that I had the chance to enjoy again the good environment of one of the most beautiful cities I know. All that in less than three weeks.

In order to better explain my activities in Lisbon, I have to take a step back and talk a little bit about my PhD research. My dissertation deals with the poetic works of one single Luso-Brazilian author, the mixed-raced poet Manuel Inácio da Silva Alvarenga (1749-1814). Reading his poems in the political and cultural context of late-eighteenth-century Imperial Portugal, I raised many issues about the relations between poetry, above all lyric genres, and politics. I resist the idea of allegorical readings, because I believe that the symbolic space created in poetic works actually sets in movement human relations which are, ultimately, political. In my perspective, writing about love and personal feelings is not an innocent subjective expression, but the legitimization of certain public behaviors. That opens different lines of research to follow up. Now I am trying to expand the scope of this research, looking at other authors and times to apply the same theoretical framework I developed to analyze Silva Alvarenga's works. The travel to Portugal functioned as an official start of this expansion, because all my activities there dealt with topics beyond Silva Alvarenga, even though somehow related with his universe.

The first conference I attended was the CHAM (Center for the Humanities) International Conference, in which I delivered a paper with my first thoughts about

the use of narratives of metamorphosis in Portuguese early modern poetry. Using the same approach that considers the symbolic space created through poetic works as the actual arena where political issues are discussed, I argue that Portuguese-speaking poets used the genre that Ovid systematized in the Classical Tradition to represent an imperial subordination of colonized areas. I found many Portuguese poetic narratives, either in autonomous poems or episodes within larger ones, in which people change into animals, plants, or geographical structures. Significantly, none of these narratives takes place in Europe, but always in one of the Portuguese colonies instead. This suggests that the use of such narratives plays a role in subordinating peripheral realities to a central body of references. Some of these poems are extremely rare and have not yet been considered together. That makes my approach somehow groundbreaking.



Columbus, OH. The Ohio State University Libraries, Rare Books & Manuscripts Library, Spec.Rare.MS.Por.1

This new research path proved fruitful. I am negotiating with members of the CLEPUL (Centro de Literaturas e Culturas Lusófonas e Europeias – Center for Lusophone and European Literatures and Cultures) from Lisboa University in order to organize an anthology of “Brazilian metamorphosis.”

At the second conference, the MLA International Symposium, I presented on an autobiographical poem of another Luso-Brazilian early modern author. “A Doença”, by Domingos Caldas Barbosa (1739-1800) is a unique text. It describes the struggles of a poor Brazilian to establish himself as a poet in the imperial metropolis. The strategies that Caldas Barbosa tells us he used to gain the favor of noblemen give us a glimpse into the everyday life of people of African descent from the late eighteenth century. This research is one I have been conducting in parallel with my PhD, collaborating with my advisor, Dr. Lúcia Costigan, and proves to be a promising path as well. In 2018 we published the first individual edition of this poem since the eighteenth century, and the presentation at MLA was an opportunity to promulgate that work.

In between the conferences, I took advantage of my stay in Lisbon to expand a study I have been conducting in the Rare Books and Manuscripts collection of OSU’s Thompson Library. The library happens to have an interesting Portuguese manuscript of more than 200 folios with satirical poems, little theatrical plays and mock-documents about the political fall of one of the most important figures of Portuguese history, Sebastião José de Carvalho (1699-1782) the marquis of Pombal. He was the plenipotentiary first minister to the Portuguese king Dom José I (1714-1777), and an enlightened despot who promoted numerous changes in Portuguese society, even as he cultivated many enemies. While Pombal was in power, many poets—including Silva Alvarenga and Caldas Barbosa—celebrated him. Many of these celebratory poems had the government’s support for printing, but also several pieces circulated in manuscript miscellanea. However, as soon the king died, Pombal lost the favor of the new monarch, and lots of manuscripts satirizing him started circulating within the Portuguese Empire. Very little of this network of poetic circulation has been studied.

Concerning this research path, my aim in Lisbon was to look at some of the manuscript miscellanea they have and compare them with those I studied at OSU. This can cast some light on the political meanings of poetry in such a controlled society as was the Portuguese. Luckily, it was not my first time at Lisbon National Library, nor at the Ajuda Palace Library (the two archives I consulted); thus I knew what to look for and where.

During both conferences as well as the research sessions, and at other social events, I established contact with some Portuguese scholars. It was due to these meetings that the opportunity for organizing the “Brazilian metamorphosis” emerged. I also received an invitation to collaborate on a collective volume about the marquis of Pombal that will allow me to take the research on the satirical poems forward. On a completely different front, I am also joining another project of the CEPUL called “Portugueses de papel” (Portuguese made of paper), which is mapping the depiction of Portuguese characters in nineteenth-century Brazilian fiction.

Considering all that, I can say that the support I received through the Howe Award played a key role in my academic career. As I mentioned before, after finishing my PhD, I had to take a “step forward,” and this travel represented such a step. It allowed me to network, join research projects, present research ideas, promote my publications, get involved in other academic works ... not to mention return to a beloved city in which I had exquisite meals, reencountered friends—living people as well as artworks—and enjoyed one of the most beautiful places to walk around.



Sheridon Ward: CMRS Major

What got you interested in the CMRS major?

I've always had an interest in it, British history specifically, mostly early modern. My mom was a big influence on me. I didn't even know there was a Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies until I took Intro to Shakespeare with Professor Highley, and that's what got the ball rolling. *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, put on by Lord Denney's Players that term, was the first Shakespeare play I had ever seen. I didn't realize how funny it could be. My paper that term on sexual selection in the play bridged my interests in science and the Renaissance.

I really enjoyed it, so I wanted to be involved. I couldn't commit enough time to act, so I did props, which was not super involved because the budget for props isn't very large, but I did keep track of the swords. That's an intense process because having even stage weapons on campus can be a worry. I was the backstage person who kept all the swords in one place, made sure that they were put back in between scenes, and made sure that the characters didn't forget their props when they went on stage.

Now I'm taking on a more involved role. This year, I'm the dramaturge, and I'm going to be stage managing for *Much Ado About Nothing*. We're working on cutting the script, which I don't want to say too much about, since we're still working on the concept. I'll be attending all of the rehearsals throughout the entire process, doing the line notes, making sure that people know where they need to focus their attention for their lines.

Tell us about your wardmote project.

This developed out of a MEDREN class with Professor Highley on 16th- and 17th-century London. The [Map of Early Modern London](#) has an encyclopedia attached to the different locations. They scanned the "Agas map" of 1561 in very high resolution, and they have people contribute and write articles surrounding each location on the map. And it's very heavily based on John Stow's writing. He was a surveyor of London, so he walked around all of the wards in London and took an account: "this bar is right here, and then you come to Ludgate, and then you come to St. Martin's." Professor Highley went to the London Metropolitan Archives and took some pictures of this inquest book, and put them on screen for us and said, "If any of you are interested in this project, you'll have to learn how to read a Secretary Hand and really kind of dive in to primary texts. It's funny. He had given me some resources, like this guide on the Cambridge website that shows you samples. I was having a hard time with it. And he said, "Oh, you'll figure it out; it's not that hard. Just dive into it. It'll be fine." Haha. But I figured it out.

My entry for the MOEML encyclopedia is about inquest books, and the wardmote inquest book of St. Dunstan in the West parish specifically. The inquest only met once a year, and aside from special inquisitions—one year they looked into adultery—you find things like schools in there, tax avoidance, and the like. The book itself is the ward-mote, the ward's inquest registers, an account of their sessions.

You see all sorts of things in there: “this person is dumping their chamber pots on my head as I walk by,” “this person's dung heap hasn't been cleaned out lately,” or “this person is putting their baskets for sale too far out in the street, and I can't get my cart by.”

Recusancy (or religious nonconformity) was also a big issue. This character Henry Lusher appears every single year for forty years as a recusant. And the ward or the Mayor's office obviously didn't do anything about it since he appears over and over again. His relative William Lusher was also a recusant. It's made me question the enforcement of recusancy laws and how enforcement varied through time. You can kind of get a snapshot of the authority's priorities by seeing what behavior actually gets punished.

The wardmote doesn't have any power to inflict punishments. Essentially, it functions as a reporting body, ‘presenting’ offenders to the Lord Mayor. So the Lord Mayor is the one who has the power to fine people. You do get memoranda inserted that say there's a person who was carted through the streets for ‘bawding out’ their daughter, although this could just mean they overlooked her activities. And that's where we bump up against the limits of what the wardmote book can tell us, at least by itself.

You work in Rare Books?

Yes, I do class prep for Special Collections. When classes come in, some professors have a very clear idea of what they want to see, and I will pull those things. For instance, in Professor Farmer's History of the Book class, he had me go to the stacks one day and pull down a bunch of pamphlets to feel them for different paper types, which was fun because I have no experience feeling paper. In other cases, people don't know what we have that might be relevant, so I'll look in the catalog and find things. It's a really good way to develop research skills and get familiar with the collection.

What else have you been up to?

I went on an archeological dig of a medieval friary in Trim, Ireland. It's a partnership between the Irish Archeology Field School and Ohio State. Professor Alison Beach leads it. I wasn't sure how much I would like it because I've always seen myself as a bookish person, but being in the field is real manual labor with a shovel. It's not just brushing things off. We had to de-sod the entire plot to get a couple hundred pounds of rubble because the friary was completely demolished after the Dissolution. And much of it was used to build other things. But if you dig down half a meter or so, you reach the medieval level. And you find stained glass, pottery fragments, and occasionally larger fragments with patterns on it. We found lots of lead from holding the glass. We also found disarticulated human bone from people buried there. Just after we left, they found a full burial right by the altar.

What's next for you?

Graduate school! Since I'm still a junior, I have until next year to work on my applications.



The Medieval College of St. Brutus

The College of Saint Brutus is a historical re-enactment group located on the campus of The Ohio State University. We study and recreate pre-16th century combat and art skills. Our group composition is mostly students (both undergraduate and graduate), but we also have members from the greater Columbus area. Over the past few years, we have been steadily increasing our membership and involvement in the larger re-enactment community around us.

The College is the OSU-based branch of the Society for Creative Anachronism (SCA), which is a global organization dedicated to studying pre-sixteenth century history. There are several other SCA groups throughout the greater Columbus and Ohio areas with which we regularly interact, either through practices or local events. Some of our members will even travel throughout the Midwest and occasionally even further than that to attend SCA events throughout the country. The benefits of being part of such a large organization are that there's always a new event to attend or something new to learn about from the thousands of other members studying all aspects of history!

The SCA studies all aspects of pre-sixteenth century history, including combat techniques, armor, clothing, sewing, embroidery, leatherworking, cooking, calligraphy, illumination, and woodworking, to name a few. As we like to say, if someone was doing it prior to the sixteenth century, someone in our organization is studying it!

Our group holds weekly meetings where our members practice the aforementioned skills. On certain days, we'll also hold classes where we'll bring in more experienced members to teach us about a topic in which they have special expertise. Recently, we've had classes on medieval embroidery techniques and woodcarving, but in the past, we've

also had classes on coin making, comparisons of different fighting styles, Norse culture and the Hávamál, and weaving.

At least once a month, we also attend weekend events both locally and throughout Ohio and the Midwest. These weekend events are attended by members of the SCA community at large and feature fighting tournaments, arts displays, lecture-style classes on topics in history, tutorials on how to make medieval items, and a feast featuring original medieval recipes. These events serve as an opportunity for us to network with other members and share knowledge about our studies.

One of the goals of the SCA is to educate the public with the knowledge we've gained from our studies of history. To this end, we enjoy taking part in demonstrations outside of regular SCA events. We regularly put on demos at the OSU Involvement Fair that include fighting and arts displays. We've also collaborated with CMRS in the past to put on more in depth demos regarding historical fighting techniques and European fashion from the Roman Empire through the 14th century. We're also starting to expand our demos into the larger Columbus community. This past year, some of our members took part in a fighting and clothing demonstration at the Origins Game Fair. We're also more than happy to talk in informal settings as well. Oftentimes when we're on our way to events, people will stop to ask us about our medieval clothing. We love getting to share a little bit of history with them!

We meet on Mondays from 6:30-9:30pm in St. Stephen's Episcopal Church on the corner of Woodruff and High. If you want to get involved, you can stop by a meeting to learn more, or email us at collegeofsaintbrutus@gmail.com or check us out on Facebook at "College of Saint Brutus."



Drilling melee techniques



Practicing sewing, calligraphy, illumination, and embroidery



Attending local event "Red Dragon"



Demonstrating medieval art, armor, clothing, and historical fighting techniques



Joshua Jay: November 11, 2019





The Discoverie of Witchcraft



Hannibal Hamlin: Allusion and Translation

Hannibal Hamlin is the author of *Psalm Culture and Early Modern English Literature* and *The Bible and Shakespeare*, which recently came out in paperback. He has edited *The Sidney Psalter*, *The King James Bible after 400 Years*, and most recently, *The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare and Religion*. He's won numerous awards and fellowships and co-curated "Manifold Greatness," an International Exhibition with the Folger and Bodleian libraries on *The King James Bible*.

What drew you into studying the Renaissance?

When I was an undergraduate, I actually was more focused on modernism. I was very excited by Joyce and Pound and Elliot and all of that. But I always loved Shakespeare. And actually, I have a music background, so I was always interested in Renaissance music and Renaissance culture more broadly. And when the time came for me—after a number of sort of hesitations and different career paths that didn't ultimately pan out or at least that I decided not to pursue—when I went back to do a PhD, a program at Yale really interested me. They have had since the sixties an interdisciplinary PhD in Renaissance studies, and I really liked the idea of something that would allow me more interdisciplinary scope. I wasn't quite sure what I wanted to do at that time; I was thinking maybe something in music and literature. And it turned out wonderfully. I was able to do coursework not only in different national literatures, but in music and history, religious studies. And ultimately, that led to my dissertation on Psalm culture, which was pretty broadly interdisciplinary. And the more I studied the Renaissance as a graduate student, the more I really fell in love with the period.

It's some of the greatest literature, theater, art, music. It's a fascinating period. Since you're a medievalist, I won't claim that we invented the human or the individual or anything like that, but it's a great period. It's a very, very stimulating and productive and problematic period. And so I've never regretted focusing on that. It's always interesting to look back. I mean, it's not as if there was one morning when I woke up and thought, "Okay, I'm going to be a Renaissance scholar." But I'm certainly happy

to be one. It is a particularly good period if you have interdisciplinary interests. The cliché of the Renaissance man, maybe it's been overdone, but it does testify to the fact that there were a lot of people who were not just cubby-holed in one disciplinary area. Think of Michelangelo, for instance. He's not only a painter and a sculptor and an architect, but he writes fine love poetry, and he's not alone in that. There are lots of people who are bridging different disciplines, and that's exciting.

You've written a great deal about allusion.

I've been working on allusion and intertextuality in different ways for a long time. And I've been sort of thinking about writing something more general or theoretical about the topic. It's actually built into our communication. It's more than a literary issue: it's a fundamental mode of language. It's a means by which we connect to each other. I mean, there's a dark side: some critics of allusion might argue that there's a kind of cliquishness about it, which there can be. You develop a sort of jargon or set of cultural shorthands that not only include a certain group, but exclude others. But I think, generally, it's more healthy. Think about people who are close friends, people you're intimate with. Part of the development of that intimacy comes through the development of a set of allusions, whatever that is. If you're friends with a fellow scholar, they could be scholarly or literary, but it can often also be a set of allusions to popular music or popular culture, or even just conversational things, snippets from TV or film that become a kind of shorthand, that would be puzzling to somebody else who doesn't know you, but that are a way in which you can connect instantly and deeply to somebody unfamiliar. So in that way, allusion is built into who we are and how we communicate. And what we see in literature is really just a more sophisticated development of that. Writers are doing what, in fact, we ourselves do all the time: alluding to different kinds of works—in more complicated ways, perhaps.

Is it built into language as well?

There are some fascinating biblical idioms that have

crept into our language, like “the skin of our teeth” or “the apple of his eye,” which are fascinating for me because they’re examples of early English translators trying to capture the Hebrew Bible as literally as possible. And the result of that is that they come up with idioms that actually don’t make any sense in English. And yet they’ve stuck in the language and so even now, if you say you escaped by the skin of your teeth, people know what you mean, even though if you pressed them and said, “What exactly does that mean? Do your teeth have skin? What is the apple of your eye? Is it the pupil?” Another interesting feature of that effect is that sometimes those borrowed idioms can lose contact with their originals. It’s not as if every Shakespearean or biblical idiom in English is an allusion. Sometimes people use these things, use these phrases or metaphors, without any awareness of their originals. It’s a fascinating sort of linguistic phenomenon. I’ve played around with this sometimes in various courses. It’s interesting to that, that figures of speech, or proverbs can mean some, they can develop sort of original meanings, which are not actually right there. They’re incorrect in a way and that they don’t reflect the origin of the phrase, but so long as they’re meaningful they work. An interesting one is “toe the line” to “tow the line.” When I ask students what this means, most of them tend to think about something being pulled by something else, being towed by a car or a ship or what have you, but it actually means sort of lining up in a row: it’s a military metaphor from lining up on parade.

Proverbs is a genre in the Bible, and I often play around with lists [of them] because they reveal something interesting about proverbs and proverbial wisdom, which is that you never actually start with a proverb. You’re in a situation, and you look for a proverb that will support what you’re already trying to do. Because you can say “look before you leap,” but then “nothing ventured, nothing gained” or “he who hesitates is lost.” So it’s not as if there is any kind of absolute proverbial wisdom, it’s just that there’s a little ka-ching which you can use whether you’re inclined to go ahead or hold back.

“Answer a fool according to his folly” vs. “don’t answer a fool?” Exactly. Those two verses in the book of Proverbs are absolutely and perfectly contradictory, and it seems to me that whoever assembled the book of Proverbs eons ago must have been aware of that feature of Proverbs, and that, presumably, is why those two verses are stuck close right beside each other, just offering either one: take your pick,

depending on how you feel about fools here. There’s nothing in the proverbs themselves to tell you which you should apply in which circumstance. Though presumably there are certain situations you find yourself in where on the one hand you think it is appropriate to answer a fool, and on the other hand, not. These proverbs are still with us. I sometimes experiment also with classes. If you say “a bird in the hand,” a lot of your class will say, “is worth two in the bush.” Where did they get that? Who knows? We’re back in the realm of popular culture.

What are you working on?

The Bible is an inexhaustible source of interest for me. I got back a few weeks ago from a trip to Israel, my first. The sensible reason for that was a conference at Ben Gurion University on reading the Bible in the Middle Ages and Renaissance. And that was just wonderfully stimulating and productive. And I’m editing for Bloomsbury Press a six volume cultural history of the Bible, which is daunting. I’m glad I don’t have to write the thing, but I’m the General editor and the Renaissance volume editor, so I’m shepherding a host of others who are doing that. I’m also thinking a lot about Milton these days, and a lot of my thinking does revolve around biblical issues, especially the book of Job, which may say something about my temperament.

I’m working on some papers and a couple of Milton pieces. I’m finishing up an anthology of 16th and 17th century English translations of the Psalms, which is a fun project, but I need to get it done. It’s for a British series: Tudor and Stuart translations, which is a revival of an earlier twentieth-century and late-nineteenth-century series of Tudor translations, with the idea that a fundamental part of Renaissance culture or Reformation culture, for that matter, was translation. Some of the great accomplishments of the period in terms of both scholarship and literature are translations. This is the period of Chapman’s Homer and Arthur Golding’s translation of Ovid and a host of other translations of classical works. But I’m also arguing in this anthology that that biblical translation was really at the center of this, that, from George Steiner, the translation is the “matrix of culture.” It’s through translation, whether it’s biblical or classical, or even just contemporary foreign works, that one develops one’s own culture.

CMRS Affiliate Accomplishments

Charles Atkinson (Emeritus, Musicology) delivered a paper “On Modulation in Byzantine and Early Western Chant: The Treatise of Manuel Chrysaphes, the *Papadikaí*, and the *Enchiriadis* Complex” at the conference “Musical and Cultural Osmoses in the Balkans,” held in Bucharest, Romania, 2–6 September, 2019, and at the 85th annual meeting of the American Musicological Society, held in Boston 31 October–3 November, 2019. Appearing a week later was his article “A Matter of Scale: *Constitutio* in its Earliest Latin Sources and their Greek Antecedents,” in *Rem tene, verba sequuntur: Die lateinische Musikterminologie des Mittelalters bis zum Ausgang des 15. Jahrhundert*, Symposiumsbericht ed. Ulrich Konrad, Symposion anlässlich des Abschlusses der Arbeit am Akademienprojekt *Lexicon musicum Latinum medii aevi*, München, 15. und 16. Dezember 2016 (München: Verlag der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften in Kommission bei der C.H. Beck’schen Verlagsbuchhandlung, 2019): 45–53.

John Block Friedman has published a number of articles:

- “Bottom Kissing and the Fragility of Status in Chaucer’s Miller’s Tale,” *The Chaucer Review* 54.2 (April 2019):119–140;
- “The Marvelous Beasts of the Secrets of Natural History,” *De Medio Aevo* 13 (2019): 13–44;
- “Dressed to Kill:” The Clothing of Christ’s Tormentors in an Illustrated Polish Devotional Manuscript,” in Maren Clegg-Hyer and Gale R. Owen-Crocker, eds., *Refashioning Medieval and Early Modern Dress: a Tribute to Robin Netherton on her 60th Birthday* (Cambridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2019), in press;
- and Melanie Bond, “Fashion and Material Culture in the Tabletop of the Seven Deadly Sins Attributed to Hieronymus Bosch,” in Monica Wright, ed., *Medieval Clothing and Textiles*, Vol. 15 (Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell and Brewer, 2020), in

Chris Highley gave a keynote address on “Noisy Neighbors: Playhouse and Church in a London Parish’ at the Medieval and Renaissance Conference XXXIII, University of Virginia’s College at Wise, September 27, 2019.

Eric Johnson has published an article on his efforts to reconstruct the Hornby-Cockerell Bible, an early-13th century illuminated manuscript. The manuscript was created ca. 1210–1220 and survived intact until it was cut apart in 1981, its parts dispersed around the world on the secondary collectors’ market. It traces the provenance history of the

Bible as a complete codex, as well as the paths of over 200 of its individual folios from their dispersal from Akron, OH in late 1981 to their current homes around the world. Additionally, the article discusses the important place the manuscript occupies in the medieval history and transmission of the Bible as both text and textual format, its illuminations and iconographic significance, and the evidence it preserves of its production and use by medieval scribes, artists, and readers. Interested readers can find it here: “Breaking and Remaking Scripture: The Life, Death, and Afterlife of the Hornby-Cockerell Bible.” *Manuscript Studies* 4.2 (Fall 2019): 270-333 (<https://muse.jhu.edu/article/738213/pdf>).

Leslie Lockett delivered an invited lecture, “Dialogue, Devotion, and Episcopal Culture in the *Old English Soliloquies*”, at the Symposium on The Aesthetics of Devotion in Medieval England at the University of Chicago, Chicago, IL, 25 October 2019 and gave a conference paper, “Was Alfred’s *Enchiridion* a Source for the *Old English Soliloquies*?” at the International Society of Anglo-Saxonists Conference at the University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, NM, 29 July 2019.

Shaun Russell gave a paper at the Sixteenth Century Society Conference in St. Louis in October. The title was “Behind ‘The Altar’: Revisiting Typography in George Herbert’s *The Temple*” and was presented on a panel called “The Poetry of George Herbert,” chaired by our own Hannibal Hamlin.





THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

CENTER FOR MEDIEVAL AND RENAISSANCE STUDIES
455 HAGERTY HALL
1775 COLLEGE ROAD
COLUMBUS OH 43210-1361

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