Nouvelles
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Autumn 2022
Forthcoming Events

November

November 18, 2022
2022-2023 CMRS Symposium: Environments and Sustainability in the Medieval and Early Modern Worlds
9:00AM-3:15PM | Thompson Library 202

November 18, 2022
CMRS Symposium Keynote/Lecture Series: Kimberly Borchard (Randolph-Macon College)
"Appalachian and Apalachee Environments in the Renaissance and Today: Historical Precedents and Contemporary Struggles"
4:00-5:15PM | Thompson Library 202

November 19, 2022
2022-2023 CMRS Symposium: Environments and Sustainability in the Medieval and Early Modern Worlds Roundtable Discussion
10:00-11:30AM | Thompson Library 202

December

December 1, 2022
The Don and Barbara Davis Lecture in Christianity
(CMRS co-sponsoring): Adam Davis (Denison University)
"Lending to God: Charitable Giving in an Age of Commerce"
4:00-6:00PM | Faculty Club North Dining Room

January

"For you, there’s Rosemary, and Rue, these keepe Seeming, and savour all the Winter long:
Grace, and Remembrance be to you both."
William Shakespeare, The Winter’s Tale

February

February 17, 2023
2022-2023 MRGSA Colloquium: Premodern Race
Times and Location TBD (check back to CMRS’s website for details)

February 18, 2023
2022-2023 MRGSA Colloquium Workshop: Teaching Premodern Race
Times and Location TBD
4 Greetings
A welcome message from Director Chris Highley

6 An Interview with Dr. Hussein Fancy
Nouvelles Nouvelles Podcast

15 A Day at the Faire
Interviews from the 2022 Ohio Renaissance Festival

17 Staging Henry V's 'Bad Quarto'
Spotlight on Lord Denney's Players and Director Sean Naughton

21 Leeds and the Black Prince
Spotlight on Howe Award Recipient Lauren Colwell

24 MedRen-Themed Art Exhibitions

25 MedRen-Themed Podcast Episodes

26 MedRen in Popular Culture

27 CMRS Accomplishments
Celebrating our affiliates
Dear Affiliates and Friends:

The new academic year got off to a busy start with two back-to-back Friday talks in early September. Our usual venue in the Research Commons proved too small for the overflow crowd that turned out to hear Professor Hussein Fancy’s fascinating lecture on imposters and impostacy in the multi-cultural Medieval world.

Not wishing to run afoul of the Fire Marshall again, we changed the venue for Professor Leah DeVun’s talk to a larger space in Pomerene Hall. We were glad we did because her talk on ‘Nonbinary Gender before Modernity’ attracted another large audience. Clearly, returning to in-person lectures has not depressed turnout; even as we miss the global reach of Zoom, we also welcome the return to unmediated human contact!

It is my great pleasure to announce that Professor Jonathan Combs-Schilling of the Department of French and Italian will be taking over as the Associate Director of CMRS beginning in Spring 2023. I can’t think of anyone better suited than Jonathan to step into Leslie Lockett’s shoes and to work with me and the whole CMRS team. Jonathan has always been a great supporter of the Center; with his record as a passionate and brilliant teacher of undergraduate and graduate students, the CMRS teaching mission will be in good hands. I am sure you will be hearing from Jonathan as we invite you to teach for the Center, to propose new courses, and to help us recruit more majors and minors. Jonathan specializes in Medieval and Renaissance Italian literature and culture from the thirteenth through sixteenth centuries. He has published widely on Dante, Petrarch, Boccaccio, and Tasso, and has special interests in travel literature and literary representations of the sea.
His first book, *The Edge of Pastoral: Dante, Petrarch, Boccaccio*, is about to be published by Notre Dame University Press. Jonathan is also a great advocate for study abroad: most summers he can be found exploring Bologna in northern Italy with OSU undergrads as part of a course that he created. Please welcome him on board!

In further positive news about staffing, the Humanities Institute will be appointing a new Marketing and Communications specialist as well as an Event Management specialist who will work with CMRS and the other Centers. I am especially delighted that Nick Spitulski will be getting the support he has long needed, thus allowing him to oversee broader budget, development, and curricular issues. The Marketing and Communications specialist will be especially helpful as we seek to reach new audiences and connect with different groups in Columbus and beyond.

I’d like to acknowledge the excellent work of our GA Elise Robbins (Ph.D. in English) who has pretty much single-handedly put together this stunning issue of *Nouvelles*. As a member of the Medieval and Graduate Student Association (MRGSA), Elise is also involved in planning their symposium on the topic of ‘Premodern Race’ (February 17-18, 2023). Before that, though, we have this month’s CMRS Symposium on ‘Environments and Sustainability in the Medieval and Early Modern Worlds’ to look forward to. I hope to see many of you at the talks and roundtable on Friday and Saturday, November 18-19.

Finally, I want to make you know that the extraordinary Raphael exhibition at the Columbus Museum of Art has been extended. *Raphael—The Power of Renaissance Images: The Dresden Tapestries* and their Impact can now be seen until January 18. I’ve been three times, once with students in my Early Stuart Culture class, and each visit is a revelation.

Best wishes,

[Signature]

Chris Highley
Director, Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies
ER: Hello, this is Elise Robbins with the Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies at Ohio State University. I'm talking today with our guest, Dr. Hussein Fancy, the first speaker in our 2022–2023 lecture series, who will present a talk later this evening, entitled “The Impostor Sea: The Making of the Medieval Mediterranean.” Dr. Fancy is an Associate Professor of History at Yale University. He received his B.A. in English from Yale and a Ph.D. in History from Princeton University. Before coming to Yale, he taught at the University of Michigan for eleven years, and he has lived and worked extensively in Spain, Italy, France, and across North Africa. His award-winning first book, *The Mercenary Mediterranean*, explores the service of Muslim soldiers from North Africa to the Christian kings of the Crown of Aragon in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries and asks us to rethink how confessional backgrounds shaped these complex inter-religious interactions in ways that often contradict the more secular framework of much current scholarship. He is currently working on two book-length projects: *The Eastern Question*, which looks at Western views of Islam from the seventh century to today, and *The Impostor Sea: The Making of the Medieval Mediterranean*, which I think we will learn more about in his talk later today. Thank you so much for being here with us today, Dr. Fancy.

HF: Thanks, Elise, I’m so happy to be here.

ER. Awesome. Before we delve into more specific questions, can you tell our listeners a little more about yourself? When did you first become interested in medieval studies? What are some early experiences that shaped your research directions?

HF: Well, first, let me say that this whole visit so far has been so lovely. I'm so pleased to be here. There's such a lively and rich community at The Ohio State University.

ER: You got the “the” in there.

HF: I was going to say, I was at the University of Michigan for many years. We know about The Ohio State University.
ER: Infamous.

HF: We know to say the “the.”

ER: Yes.

HF: I backed into medieval studies. I don’t think I ever had an intention to be a professor. I don’t think I really had an intention to study medieval Spain even. I had been exposed to a wonderful scholar as an undergraduate. Her name was María Rosa Menocal, and she was a professor of Spanish literature at Yale when I was an undergraduate. And I had taken some classes with her, and I think that was the first time I had learned anything about medieval Spain. But my family background is South Asian. It didn’t mean anything particularly to me other than an interesting place where Jews, Christians, and Muslims “met,” as we were told many times. After college, I did like many people do. I tried on many hats; I tried on many careers. I wanted to be a writer. I wanted to be a journalist. I did a Fulbright to Egypt. And over the course of that time, not knowing what to do next, I decided to apply to grad school because it seemed like a safe place to go. It seemed like, “If you don’t know what you’re doing, why not get a PhD?” It seemed like a really practical decision. I knew nothing about what I was getting myself into, is what I’m trying to say. When I arrived at Princeton—I was very fortunate to get in, I think people had taken a chance on me, which I appreciate—I fell entirely in love with historical practice. I fell in love with documents. I fell in love with research. I don’t think I realized or knew before that point what it is historians did. And every creative bone I have, every part of me that wants to write a novel, every part of me that wants to write poetry was satisfied by the intellectual challenges of making documents speak.

ER: That’s really beautiful. I love that, the “making documents speak.” So, you said that you had the question of “What do historians do?” Would you say that is what historians do? Or is there—how would you describe?

HF: You know—we had lunch together before this, our listeners won’t know this—but I’ll reference something I said there, which is, “I’m not sure what historians do.” I’m not sure what other historians do still. I often would love the opportunity to go sit in on somebody else’s class and see what they think they’re doing as teachers of history. I would say—and I wouldn’t be surprised if they’d say the same thing—I would say that what I do is to teach students how to get documents to speak. I don’t think what I’m trying to do in class is to get at the truth of anything. I don’t think I’m trying to show them what lies behind documents or how to instrumentalize them. I’m actually trying to tell them that the truth lies in the problem of the document itself, that this is what we have, this is what we know. How can we possibly know more than this? And I think it’s in that tension that one builds up in the process of reading, the resolution, which often leads you to another problem, another question, another document.
I would define what I do as a historian as getting documents to speak, but also chasing them, following them around, seeing where they go, attending to the problems that arise.

It becomes this infinite paper chase—I think I used that expression at lunch as well—but it becomes this infinite pursuit of questions and knowledge. Yeah, so I would define what I do as a historian as getting documents to speak, but also chasing them, following them around, seeing where they go, attending to the problems that arise.

ER: Absolutely. And we talked a little bit about this at lunch—since we’re letting our listeners in on our lunchtime conversations—

HF: Yes, this is a postprandial discussion.

ER: Right. Do you feel that your background in English, how has that kind of shaped your being a historian or your approach to history? Since I study English myself, that kind of chasing the documents where they go sounds similar to a lot of things that we do, so I guess, how would you say your background in English has shaped your research?

HF: Yeah, you know I was a college student at the time that postcolonial theory was dominating the discussion, new historicism was dominating the discussion. I think that also attuned me to some degree to be thinking about history, to be thinking about power, asking certain kinds of questions about texts. I think some of the theoretical questions that still drive my work are informed by the kinds of questions that preoccupied scholars in the late nineties, which is to say questions of hybridity, questions of colonialism, questions of power, questions of historicism—or critiques of historicism, let's say—still bounce around in the back of my mind when I do my work and inform the kinds of reading I'll do. I'm a very capacious and wide reader. I don't read just in my field; I read all over the place. And I think being an English student as an undergraduate primed me to want to read lots and lots of different things. But I do think the close reading skills I gained as an English student are what I try to teach every day in the classroom. And that defines me as a reader as well, that what I do in my books and my work is I try to push documents as far as I can get them to go. I think my fear is that we instrumentalize material that we find and we lose, in some sense, the joy in them being manifold, of their meaning being multiple, and that there can be something really lovely, redemptive, life-affirming about the complexity of documents without them needing to mean in any particular way or any kind of instrumentalizeable way something. I resist that very strongly in my writing and my teaching practices.

ER: Mm. I love that, I love that, and as I've thought about my own research in archives and documents, I think being with that material thing kind of helps to see it for its possibilities—

HF: I agree.
ER: —and the diversity of voices. So, I wanted to ask you a little bit about researching in the archives. What has that looked like for you? Where have been the joys? Where have been the challenges?

HF: Yes. I am by nature a very introverted person, and you would think the archive is the perfect place for the introverted person. I, in my third year of graduate school, had thought I was going to write about a Mamluk ambassador who had died in Venice and left a number of Arabic records in Venice—and this is a good dissertation project for anyone who wants one; I'm happy to share the details. But I ended up going to Barcelona. The Archives of the Royal Crown of Aragon are the second largest medieval archive in the world. They include the daily comings and goings of the kings, their behaviors, tax records, court cases, just an extraordinary cache of documents. So, I decided to go there because naïvely I thought, “There must be something in there because there's so much.”

I would say my first experience of going to the archive was sheer terror. It took me maybe three days before I could even enter the building. The Archive of the Crown of Aragon is this very modern building. It has this patio in a triangular shape that leads to this glass set of doors behind which is a security guard.

ER: Ominous.

HF: Yeah. And for me, just walking on the patio meant declaring in very clear terms that you were walking into the building. There was no hesitating or going back, so it took me a while to step onto the patio and commit to going in. Once I got over the fear—and it was really palpable—the next problem was making sense of the documents. On my first day at the “ACA”—as they call it—the Archivo de la Corona de Aragón, they handed me a microfilm because they didn't trust me to look at the documents myself. I didn't touch them myself. I wasn't very adept at using microfilms, and I inserted it into the machine upside down and spent the rest of the day trying to decipher upside down Latin, thinking maybe I had found a Hebrew text that no one had ever known about. My point here is that I was a bit of a bumbling fool. I was terrified. I made lots of mistakes. But by the time I had been there for a few weeks and they'd let me touch documents myself, that frisson, that shudder down your spine, this sense that you may be among a handful of people ever to have touched this document, that you are looking at something that somebody inscribed 800 years ago on a piece of parchment—or paper, in this case. I felt a really visceral connection to these documents themselves.
And again, I think because they became almost alive for me, I felt this duty to be faithful to them in a way that I don't think I would have had if I'd been reading these things from a distance. If I'd been looking at them digitized, I think that would have cut me off from them. If I had been reading them edited, I don't think I would have understood that I had a connection to a person who lived 800 years ago and a duty to empathize with them directly. I think I've told you this already, but, in my naiveté, I decided that my best method for dealing with this very large archive was to read the whole thing. Of course, I didn't read the whole thing. But I started from the beginning, and I read straight through. This is not a practice that I would recommend to every graduate student, but it is a practice I would recommend if it is possible to you. You cannot understand archives by diving in and out of them. I think we are too quick to photograph. We are too quick to make copies. It is often the things around the documents that you're reading that are going to be the most interesting. It is often learning the hand of the scribe that is most valuable. It is also the archivists and the other people working in the archive who will come to your aid and rescue and make things legible for you that you wouldn't have known otherwise. So, I read. I read every document. I read about, I think in the end it was roughly 200,000 documents. It's an extraordinary amount for a medievalist to look at, and that has become the basis of my whole career. The time I spent with those documents now informs every argument I make, and all my projects start and end with this database I built while a graduate student.

ER: Wonderful, I love the intimacy it sounds like you have cultivated with these artifacts, these connections to people in the past. I feel like that comes through—I haven’t heard about your most recent project—but in looking at your first book, I feel like that comes through. Can you talk a little bit about how your duty to be faithful to these texts shaped where your first book went?

HF: I wrote a dissertation. I wrote it in a rush. You know, I wrote it quickly in some sense. I think it was a good dissertation. I think people who are really interested in where I've been and how I've come might want to look at that dissertation and look at my book as well just as a good example of where one goes and how wrong you can be in the first and how different you can be in the second, how much you can change in the course of a few years. I think what I wanted to do in this first book—again, since there isn't a right and a true [way]—what I wanted to do was play. What I really wanted to do was ask questions that weren't being asked and test theories that weren't being tested.
So, the first question I asked—and you said this very eloquently in the introduction—the first assumption I wanted to challenge—and I didn’t know I would be right—is that when Jews, Christians, and Muslims interact with each other in medieval Iberia, they set aside their beliefs. Or, I said it very pointedly earlier, when Jews, Christians, and Muslims meet in Iberia, there is a meeting happening. It is though they emerge, they've sort of pawed themselves like those lions in Milton's *Paradise Lost* out of the ground fully formed. And this didn't intuitively seem right to me. It didn't theoretically seem right to me, it didn't intuitively seem right to me, and it also didn’t reflect what I was seeing in the documents. So, I wanted to say the exact opposite. I wanted to say when they met—when these Muslim soldiers met these Christian kings—they also met on the terrain of something we would call “religion.” And I wanted to probe what we meant by those terms. I wanted to ask first questions. And I think this is something I say to my students often, that if you’re not asking first questions, you’re probably not pushing yourself as far as you need to go. There should be something vertiginous about really great thinking. It should make you feel dizzy; it should make you feel like you’ve lost the ground beneath you. So, my book was play. In some sense, it started off as a joke: what if I could write this story very differently than everybody? Could I prove this? Could I show this? Despite lots of people waving red flags and telling me to go back and go the other way, I wanted to keep going. And I really wrote it in a spirit of conversation with my colleagues. I didn't mean for it to be polemical. I didn't mean for it to say, “I’m right, and you’re wrong.” I meant it to say, “I wonder how many other ways we could assemble the material, and what could we gain by thinking otherwise?” And I think the real charm of it for me was starting off on that. The other thing I did is I—again, something that I also tell students to do—I started from documents, and I wrote up. Every chapter, every part of the book is about me and my relationship to reading a certain set of documents, how I got them to make sense, where I had to go to fill in the gaps. Sometimes I went through Arabic, sometimes I went through other countries, sometimes I went through secondary sources. There was a long digression into the work of Ernst Kantorowicz in the middle of the book. It’s a strange book, but it is meant to foreground my thought process and my interpretive process and the kind of tactile, as you said, the visceral feeling of being with the documents. I wanted to impress that on the page too, that I wasn’t working with something inert. I’m not naïve enough to think I was invisible in this process. I wanted to make myself visible as an interpreter who is flawed and making decisions.

ER: I really appreciate that kind of visibility because I think a lot of times, we can see history as something that’s handed to us when really it’s not. It’s gone through an interpretive and subjective process, so I appreciate you foregrounding that in your book. I’m interested in one of the projects I saw that you’re working on: *The Eastern Question*. In the description, it ranges from, what, the seventh century to modernity? It’s pretty wide-ranging. Can you tell us a little bit about your goal with that work and the audience and who you’re hoping to reach?
HF: Yeah, I'm very excited about this project. It is something I've been writing and teaching on for many years now. This is meant to be a book for a trade press. This is meant to be a book for my mother, frankly. I think one of the things that—I don't want to say “hurt,” although that was the first word that came to mind—one of the things that troubled me about writing *The Mercenary Mediterranean* is that it was a very successful book, but its readership was actually quite small. It was a book for specialists. It was not a book—and I don't come from a family of academics—it was not a book that anyone in my family really understood. I don't mean to belittle them; I only mean to say it doesn't ask questions and doesn't provide them with a roadmap that I think I needed to provide them with. It just assumed so much about the reader. It assumed an academic reader, somebody who already knew a lot about medieval Spain, somebody who knew a lot about—as my wife often jokes, “You talk about Frederick II as though everybody knows who he is, but who in the world is Frederick II?” and I'll say, “Who in the world is Frederick II?! The most important person!” So, the impetus was to write a book for my mother. And really in a voice that—if I didn't mention earlier, I wanted to be a writer before I became an academic—it's to return to that initial mission now that I have tenure. I'm a writer first, and a historian second, I think. The premise of the book is as follows: it is, as you say, a history of everything. It is the history of Western views of Islam from before Islam up until “the end,” as I say, the present. And it is written in reverse. It starts with the present moment, with people holding signs that say, “Islam is an ideology, not a religion.” And it ends with St. John of Damascus, the sort of first polemic against Islam.

**It is about people that I think are part of the Western tradition, the Western canon...but telling their story in a way that is surprising, about their interaction and relationship with Islam or their views of Islam. It is about the centrality of thinking with Islam to the Western Christian imagination.**

I do something very unlike what a historian should do. I say that there is an intellectual coherence—which is an intellectual history, this book—and transcendence to certain ideas about Islam that have shaped not only Christianity but also the possibilities of encounters between Muslims and Christians. One of the arguments I make is that positive views of Islam, of which there are many that I stop at in the book, are freighted with, filled with polemical notions about Islam. There's something very bleak and dark about this book. I'm still struggling to not make it be a sad book. It is, to some degree, an extension or discussion with Edward Said's *Orientalism*, though far more grounded I think, obviously, in premodernity but also in a different set of documents and texts. I don't think I quite have the same humanist strain that defines Said's work, or the safety that he finds in humanism, I think I don't have. The book is character-driven. It is about people we know. It is about Voltaire; it is about Thomas Jefferson; it is about Petrus Alphonsi, a character I think we should all know but maybe we don't all know. It is about people that I think are part of the Western tradition, the Western canon (again, Goethe is another one), but telling their story in a way that is surprising, about their interaction and relationship with Islam or their views of Islam.
It is about the centrality of thinking with Islam to the Western Christian imagination. And ultimately the argument of the book is that the polemic, to some degree, overwhelms the encounter with actual Muslims. *The Eastern Question* really isn't about Muslims, it is about Islam without Muslims, to some degree. I'm very excited about the book. It takes me very far away from the kind of archival work I'm doing. I mentioned this to you earlier, but I have a little kid, and I was thinking, “What is a book that I could write from the library? What is a book I could write without going away for years at a time to sit in a dusty archive somewhere in Rome, or in a library in North Africa? What could I do and still be present in my daughter's life?” And this book really excited me. I think the pandemic also accelerated the notion that I would write a project that could be done from my office. What we do as medievalists is very hard fought. You know, we must spend a long time gathering our materials, translating them—it's a difficult task. So, I wanted to throw myself a softball.

ER: It sounds like it's going to be a very important softball, though. I look forward to putting this on reading lists, you know hopefully, if I get to be teaching in the future. It sounds like what we need, so I'm very excited to read that. We're almost out of time. I would like for anyone who is unable to come to the talk this afternoon to get just a little taste of what you're working on with *The Imposter Sea*. So, I know I've just asked you to describe several projects already, but if you could give just maybe a little preview, especially for anyone who can't be there this afternoon so that we can know what to expect with that as well.

HF: This book, I'm so excited about. It has been so much fun to write. I think writing after tenure is a whole new game. You write without the same kind of anxiety and pressure. The theme “imposters” is so capacious. This really allows me to draw on all my reading interests and my background in literature. But what the book is about is, over the many years of doing research in North Africa, Italy, and Spain, I kept coming across cases of fraud, of impostacy—of people pretending to be things they were not—of people and things that are not what they seem. These “tricksters,” let's say, fascinated me. I was also fascinated by the obsession, let's say, with “tricksterdom” in cultural theory: the idea that these people who are betwixt and between are somehow modern characters or people yearning to be modern in the midst of oppressive societies. So, I wanted to write a story about impostacy—that's the word I'm using, I'm fairly certain it's a real word. I wanted to write a book about impostacy that overturned some of the ways we write about fraud and impostacy. So, the book is written in this way, all grounded in archival material: it is an effort to write a history of the Mediterranean in which there are no Jews, Christians, and Muslims, but only people pretending to be Jews, Christians, and Muslims. And my argument here is—it's a little tongue and cheek—that what we're really looking at when we're looking at these records is a change in both Christian and Islamic law... (and now I'm stumbling, and you can see the book is still in process).
What we are seeing in the medieval Mediterranean in legal cases that deal with fraud and imposters is, in fact, a jurisdictional turn. It’s not a change in the people of the Mediterranean; it is a change in which the law is coming to define what it means to be Christian, Jewish, and Muslim. And what I’m arguing here is that it comes to define them by understanding that they are all imposters first, that it actually holds within its core an understanding that the law cannot define what a Jew, Christian, and a Muslim is, that that is a necessarily slippery category and that the law remains slippery but people cannot remain slippery. It’s an upside-down telling. This is now becoming old hat for me, but I’m telling a story that’s different than the story that’s been told and trying to make it work, trying to have some fun along the way. But yeah, I’m telling a story about Jews, Christians, and Muslims in which they don’t meet, in which they are made in the course of interacting with one another in the Mediterranean.

ER: It’s so interesting! And why do this work if it’s not a little bit playful and rewriting stories in very fascinating [ways]. I mean, it gives us a whole new perspective and challenges these received ideas that we have, and I think that that is really exciting work to be doing.

HF: I appreciate that. I mean, I think part of why we are humanists, part of why we are readers and writers is to cultivate this joy and to question how things come to mean.

ER: Yeah.

HF: And if we assume that meaning is stable, then we participate in a form of reduction, a form of limiting the meaning and possibilities of the world. I don’t want to participate in a world like that, where things are becoming narrower. I want to participate in one where things are becoming more capacious.

ER: Absolutely, and I agree. It has been such a pleasure to talk with you today. Thank you for being with us.

HF: Thanks, Elise.

ER: You need a little bit of a break before your lecture, so we’ll sign off here, and we look forward to hearing your lecture in just about an hour now. So, thank you!

HF: Thank you.
After driving in bumper-to-bumper traffic to an expansive field-turned-parking-lot in southwestern Ohio, I passed through the massive gates of my first ever Ohio Renaissance Festival. The first great shock of the day was the sheer number of cars driving to Waynesville on a Saturday in September. It was a beautiful fall day, but I wondered how many people could really want to spend our first nice fall weekend pretending we were in England over half a millennium ago. Turns out, it’s quite a lot.

Beyond the gates of the town wall, I met a sea of people, winding in lines to turkey legs and mead and pies, running after young kids with capes and streamers trailing behind them, and ogling over chain mail and capes and crowns in dozens of quaint open-air shops. The crowded paths were a veritable runway of the most exquisite costumes, from traditional Elizabethan nobility to upscaled peasantry to Highland warriors (it was, after all, the Highland-themed weekend of the festival) to all manner of fae folk. Indeed, those in costume so outnumbered those in street clothes that I reflected on whether those dressed “normally” were actually the ones in costume, interlopers from a different place and time.

Much was crammed into my day, from cheering on knights in a joust to watching the queen direct a game of human chess to rolling a giant D20 to determine what song would be sung next at the pub. As I spoke to attendees, shopkeepers, volunteers, and actors, the tone was one of warmth, welcome, and belonging. They love the spectacle and the costumes and the immersive fantasy, but the overwhelming sentiment I heard was that this was a place to be oneself. I recorded just a few of many conversations that capture the buzz of being present in this Renaissance village:
Whether actual Renaissance Britain was known for its inclusion aside, it seems that the Renaissance Faire community has claimed it as a healing haven of whimsy, self-expression, and found family, where history, fantasy, and contemporaneity constellate in a magic that speaks joy to the nerd in all of us.

Emily

What keeps you coming back to the Renaissance Festival?
I like the ability to dress up and be myself. I also like to see the looks on the faces of both adults and children as they see everyone in their costumes (including me in my fairy wings!).

Carrie & Earl

How many times have you been to the Ohio Renaissance Festival? 15
What keeps you coming back?
Mead, cool shops, the chance to nerd out and feel normal

Brenda

What's your trade?
Jewelry making/metalwork
How long have you been doing it?
Since 1997
What do you love about it?
The challenge never really ends with the torch. You can never fully "get there."

Kelli, Faye, Cass, Vi, Ellie, & Cory

How many times have you been to the Ohio Renaissance Festival?
(between all 6) 68
What keeps you coming back?
Turkey legs, the aesthetic, social comfort "It's a safe space that is nice for experimentation."
"I leave with greater confidence."

Mike & Jamie

What about the medieval and renaissance periods do you find interesting or compelling?
We're kind of English history nuts, and we really like to feel connected to the period. Jamie is really great with historical costuming... It's such a long history, with a lot of connections to today. There are differences, but a lot more connections with people and places and culture then and now.
In November, Lord Denney’s Players (LDP) will be tackling what few (if any) theatrical groups have done in recent memory. LDP—housed in OSU’s Department of English and under the creative direction of Professor Sarah Neville—will be performing William Shakespeare’s *Henry V* but not *Henry V* as it is often staged. Instead of the well-known and oft-performed folio version (F1, from the 1623 first folio of Shakespeare’s plays), they are staging the first quarto version, the so-called “bad quarto” of 1600. The bad quartos aren’t really all that bad; they’ve just gotten a bad rap. These texts are the earliest versions of several of Shakespeare’s plays published in quarto. Shakespearean scholars have debated their authenticity because of significant textual variations between these versions and what are sometimes considered more “authoritative” versions that were printed later, often in the first folio of 1623, which are the ones we typically see on stage. Many contemporary scholars have challenged this notion of authority, bringing more attention to these bad quartos as part of Shakespeare’s creative process and a crucial component of Shakespearean textual history.

From a performance standpoint, these quartos present an interesting set of choices to be made and issues to be dealt with, but LDP has not shied away from bad quartos in the past. In fact, *Henry V* will be the last of the four bad quartos to be performed by the group, completing the set that also includes *Hamlet*, *Romeo and Juliet*, and *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. But what sets Q1 apart from its more popular counterpart? Most notably, the Q1 version of *Henry V* lacks some of the most famous speeches of F1, the “crowd favorites and stone-cold bangers that Shakespeare wrote and threw in the middle,” as the LDP production’s director, Sean Naughton (Lecturer in OSU’s Department of Theatre, Film, and Media Arts), put it. What’s more, the chorus of F1 (unique among Shakespeare’s plays) is missing from Q1, as is its function as an omniscient commentator that contextualizes the play’s events, locales, and, most importantly, protagonist Henry. Professor Neville explains, “Dropping the choruses are like dropping Hamlet’s soliloquies—what’s left? But as Richard Dutton points out in *Shakespeare, Court Dramatist*, the choruses do a lot of work in valorizing both the king and the art of theatre more generally—when you drop them, you have a very different play, one where Henry’s actions are far less heroic. The nationalistic mood of *Henry V* is really possible only in the Folio text; the Quarto leaves a lot more ambiguity about this figure […] What we’re getting in Q is more raw, riper fodder for the experimentation of the kind Sean is doing.”
I was able to attend one of LDP’s rehearsals and talk to Sean about his work with Q1 and his approach to staging Henry V for LDP more generally. He called it “an interesting theatrical experiment,” as neither he nor Professor Neville have been able to locate solid evidence that the Q1 version of the play has been staged in the last several centuries. Sean shared that “Lord Denney’s Players, as much as possible, is trying to grapple with some of these texts, particularly these bad quartos, and figure out how they work onstage, figure out where they're clunky so that they can look to the folio and see, in comparison, how Shakespeare solved some of these issues in an earlier draft. I think that’s a noble pursuit, to just better understand the way that theatre worked at the inception point of these plays.”

While it’s easy to interpret something as “missing” between the two versions, Sean looks at it more as an opportunity to locate a novel “set of interesting discoveries that are there to be excavated” in the Q1 text. Speaking specifically about the lack of chorus, he shared that “Henry can’t exist under the cover of this flourish-y language that is setting up his escapades in France. He’s got to own the decision to go to war in a different way than having the chorus coming out and setting the tone and giving us a bit of a fanboy perspective on Henry.” It’s an interesting challenge for the actors, too, as they have to become “stewards of difficult scenes in a more active way.” The chorus is often practical in a way, adding a clarity that can no longer be relied on in Q1, which has given Sean and the rest of the team the opportunity to “solve for X with some of these problems, to stage things in way that the story is going to be told with clarity and try to resist ambiguity and limit confusion as to what’s happening.”

Aside from the set of difficulties that come with staging the Q1 text specifically, there are also, of course, the difficulties of setting a Shakespearean play on a modern company for a modern audience, especially one of Shakespeare’s history plays. The histories are steeped in a shared national and cultural knowledge and experience. As Sean put it, “we don’t quite have the same relationship to medieval English history that maybe an Elizabethan audience would know.” So, he’s building some bridges between the Elizabethan and the modern to facilitate the timeless themes the play offers: “The production will be in this modern silhouette. They'll be wearing combat fatigues and it will be modern, not the red and blue with the lion kind of vibe to it, and I’m excited to contextualize this in a modern framing that will help audiences latch onto some of these big themes that we’re talking about in the play about war, about violence, about power: who has it and who doesn’t.”
The talented group of players had clearly developed a comfortability with this early modern text by the time I was able to visit in the third week of rehearsals. For Sean, dismantling the intimidation that comes with Shakespeare was crucial and the focus of the entire first week of rehearsals. He shared that he has a workshop he usually goes through to help actors “approach a piece of heightened text and not feel overwhelmed by it,” which involves several exercises centered around language, structure, breathing, and breaking up the narrative. Through these exercises, he helps actors see the text as something to “hold hands with Shakespeare with and he’ll help you through.” Sean shared that, since the role of director didn’t really exist in Shakespeare’s theatre, Shakespeare uses the text to fill a kind of directorial role. “Shakespeare’s really got one hand on the steering wheel for you if you know what to look for.” And Sean is committed to helping actors figure out those things to look for, giving them a command over and intimacy with the text that is really lovely to witness.

I asked Sean what he’s most excited about with the production, in addition to the opportunity to bring Q1 to performance. He’s looking forward to seeing everything come together and adding elements of costumes, lighting, and staging made possible by the performance space. He’s chosen to do some interesting visual work with large wooden staffs that stand in for swords, spears, banners, pretty much every prop, through which he aims to create a “visual pastiche that will reflect what we’re trying to say thematically.” One of the themes Sean and his production team have identified is that of fracturing and attempted mending. “Henry kind of breaks the world apart in deciding to go to war and spends the entire play trying to put the world back together again and realizes that the same tricks that he used as Hal in Henry IV don’t work anymore now that he’s king. So, what I see is Henry wrestling with this duality where he has to decide: is he going to be one or the other? And that’s his emotional journey in this play. That fracturing and that fissuring within himself has become a thematic focus for some of the design elements of the play. So, these kind of long staffs become these lines in space that actually fracture the vertical and three-dimensional space on the stage.”
He's also excited about the opportunity to place a different interpretive lens over the masculinity and misogyny of the play. “We've done some interesting stuff here in casting,” he shared. Isabella Sanchez is playing Henry V, and Sean is excited about the filter through which audiences can see the play with a woman playing the titular role. “It's a difficult play because it is so deeply misogynistic. And there are themes in this play that are really begging you to cast a man in that role. Henry's journey sort of requires him to be a misogynist at the very beginning of the play. There's a certain toxic masculinity around this play, which makes it challenging in 2022 as well.” Speaking of Isabella, Sean says, “A good actor is able to embody whatever it is. And we're not playing her like Queen Henry V or Princess Henry V. Bella is playing a man. So, she's kind of pulling double duty as an actor a little bit here.” He's excited for the possibilities for the audience to see the play in a new light. “Casting that role as a woman takes these themes of power and misogyny and just turns them slightly in a way that I'm hoping will allow the audience to kind of look at it at a bit of a remove, perhaps, and see it in a different context. Because casting matters, bodies on stage matters, identity matters when you're contextualizing a piece of theater. I think 99 out of 100 productions of this are looking for a young man to play this role. So, we're very fortunate, actually, to be able to bring that conversation into the space and be able to have that with the cast.”

All this (and much more, I assure you) to look forward to, though, of course, you must see it for yourselves! Don't miss Lord Denney's Players' production of The Chronicle History of Henry V November 9, 10, 15, 16, and 17 at MadLab Theatre (227 S. 3rd Street). Performances begin at 7:30, and full information on the production can be found at LDP's website: www.lorddenneysplayers.com/productions/.

Elise Robbins is a Ph.D. student in the Department of English
This summer, I received the Howe Award to present at the International Medieval Congress in Leeds. Not only did I attend the Congress, network with other medievalists, and present on a topic I developed in a CMRS course on Premodern Race, but I followed in the footsteps of one of my favorite medieval figures, Edward the Black Prince. (More on that later!)

My current research interest lies at the intersections of early medieval asceticism and attitudes towards the natural world in early England. My presentation at Leeds allowed me to expand my focus to the later medieval period and current trends in premodern critical race studies. My presentation covered the life of saffron in 14th- and 15th-century Europe, as saffron became one of the few Eastern foodstuffs that was both prized and grown throughout Europe. Native to present-day Iran and northern India, saffron's presence in Europe extends back to the crusades, as knights were said to have brought saffron back from their travels as a sort of exotic, spicey treasure from the East. While sources from the period praise the medicinal and culinary appeals of saffron as the reason behind the introduction of the spice into Europe, more likely is the fact that saffron was, and still is, the most expensive spice in the world. 14th-century merchants selling saffron could ask for 15 shillings for just one pound of the spice, which equated to about a month's worth of labor. To put this into perspective, medieval people would more than sympathize with the fact that even today less than 0.1 oz of saffron costs around 20 dollars at our local grocery stores.
By the 15th century, saffron was grown throughout Europe and was so loved in England that the city of Chipping Walden changed its name to Saffron Walden and became the leading grower of saffron in the 1500s.

Because of saffron’s steep price, the spice came to represent social prestige and class in late medieval Europe. Wealthy medieval Europeans included saffron into a variety of dishes; even a simple meal of rice and beans would have been dusted with saffron as a status symbol served during the entrée courses of courtly dinners. More elaborate dishes, such as Turk's Pie, showcase how saffron reinforced and solidified medieval imaginations of the East. The Turk’s Pie was shaped and decorated to look like the face of someone of Middle Eastern origin. This pie was probably served to delight European dinner guests fascinated with tales of crusading romance that depicted the peoples of Middle Eastern nations as racially othered. Ostensibly, these wealthy medieval Europeans were literally eating the other.

One of the figures that loomed large in the period when wealthy Europeans were indulging on dishes spiced with saffron was Edward the Black Prince. As the eldest son of Edward III, the Black Prince was heir to the English crown after his father; however, he died before his father of a sickness that he contracted in Spain during the Hundred Years' War with France. While Edward the Black Prince didn’t style himself as a romantic chivalric knight (he was nicknamed the Black Prince because of his stoic nature and the fact that he was known to wear head-to-foot black clothing), he is remembered in English history as a model of chivalry and a great military leader. In Leeds, where I attended the Congress, a massive statue of the Black Prince greets visitors in the City Center. Apparently, when Leeds gained city status in 1903, the mayor decided that a statue of the Black Prince should grace the streets of his northern city. Needless to say, the statue is enormous and intimidating!
After attending IMC in Leeds, I had the chance to spend time in London and even took a trip to Canterbury. Forever the black sheep of the family, Edward the Black Prince chose not to be buried and immortalized with the rest of his royal lineage in Westminster Abbey, but in Canterbury Cathedral, possibly because the Black Prince associated the Cathedral with spiritual penance. While touring the Cathedral, I even spotted saffron growing in the gardens!

I’m grateful to have received support through the Howe Award this summer, as it allowed me the opportunity to attend IMC in Leeds and explore the U.K. Moreover, I’m grateful for the amazing CMRS courses that allow graduate students to explore and approach topics outside of our Ph.D. research and help us cultivate a well-rounded understanding of Medieval and Renaissance scholarship and texts.

Lauren Colwell is a Ph.D. student in the Department of English
Columbus Museum of Art | Columbus, OH

**Raphael—The Power of Renaissance Images: The Dresden Tapestries and their Impact**

Friday, 7/15/22 to Sunday, 1/8/23
The exhibition centers around six tapestries, woven in the 17th century from Raphael's early-sixteenth-century cartoons, which are on loan from the Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister (Old Masters Picture Gallery of Dresden), Germany, one of Europe's most renowned museums.

Cleveland Museum of Art | Cleveland, OH

**Text and Image in Southern Asia**

Friday, 8/26/22 to Sunday, 3/5/23 | Gallery 242B
Buddhist manuscripts from the 1100s and Jain manuscript paintings from the 1200s to 1500s, as well as contemporary stone and gold sculptures.

Metropolitan Museum of Art
New York City, NY

**The Tudors: Art and Majesty in Renaissance England**

Monday, 10/10/22 to Sunday, 1/8/23 | Gallery 899
"This exhibition will trace the transformation of the arts in Tudor England through more than 100 objects—including iconic portraits, spectacular tapestries, manuscripts, sculpture, and armor—from both The Met collection and international lenders." (from website)
Podcasts

BBC's You're Dead to Me

**Medieval Animals**

Podcast host Greg Jenner along with guests Dr Tim Wingard and Kiri Pritchard-McLean discuss what sorts of things we know about animals in medieval Europe.

History Hit's Not Just the Tudors

**Malay’s Dynasty of Reigning Queens**

Podcast host Professor Suzannah Lipscomb discusses with Professor Stefan Amirell, an expert in female political leadership in world history, four early modern queens in the Sultanate of Patani (today Thailand).

The Multicultural Middle Ages

**S01 E06 - Reading Chaucer in Mandarin: How Do We Teach the Global Middle Ages Outside the West?**

Dr. Elizabeth Liendo talks with podcast hosts Jonathan Correa-Reyes, Reed O'Mara, and Logan Quigley about how we can reimagine pedagogical practices of the Middle Ages and early modernity for non-Western students, including questions of how do we really teach globally in these typically Westcentrically conceptualized time periods.

Speaking of Shakespeare

**Christopher Highley: Blackfriars in Early Modern London**

CMRS's own Professor Chris Highley speaks with podcast host Thomas Dabbs about his book about early modern London's Blackfriars district and Blackfriars complex, shedding new perspective on intriguing religious and social features of this significant area of London.
Bloodmarked (#2 of the Legendborn Cycle)

By Tracy Deonn | Released 11/08/2022


Act of Oblivion

By Robert Harris | Released 09/06/2022

This historical suspense fiction set in Restoration England and New England follows the protagonist's mission to track down and eliminate those who signed the death warrant of Charles I.

Boundless

Directed by Simon West | Released 06/10/22

A Spanish historical drama/adventure about Juan Sebastián Elcano and Ferdinand Magellan's famous voyage. Watch on Prime Video.

Becoming Elizabeth

Created by Anya Reiss | Released 06/12/22

The series follows a young Elizabeth during political, social, and religious turbulence of the English court following the death of her father Henry VIII. Watch on Starz and Hulu.
CMRS Affiliate Accomplishments

Warm congratulations to our affiliates on their many recent accomplishments!

Charles Atkinson (Emeritus, Musicology) participated in several sessions at the Meeting of the International Musicological Society in Athens, Greece, August 22-26, 2022.

"On Modulation in Early Medieval Chant: The φθορα in Byzantium and the vitia in the West," co-authored by Professor Gerda Wolfram (University of Vienna). Paper.


"Tonality, Modality, Pitch." Session chair.

David A. Brewer (English) published the chapter "Institutions without Addresses," in Institutions of Literature, 1700-1900: The Development of Literary Culture and Production, ed. Jon Mee and Matthew Sangster (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022), 65-82.

Amrita Dhar (English) and Adélékè Adéẹ̀kọ́ (English) along with their international collaborator Amrita Sen (University of Calcutta, English) were awarded an OSU Arts and Sciences Large Grant for 2022 for "Shakespeare in the ‘Post' Colonies," a project comprised of a series of interviews with postcolonial Shakespearean creatives (novelists, actors, theatre practitioners, and film directors) from around the world.


He also published an article, "'Very Well Liked': Sir Henry Herbert and Professional Drama at The Courts of James I and Charles I," The Castle Chronicles – Annals, 8.74 (2021): 7-31. (Actual publication date September 2022.)
Hannibal Hamlin (English) has published two reviews.


He has also given several lectures and paper presentations.


John B. Friedman (Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies) has recently published an essay and has two essays in press.


He will also have two entries in the forthcoming *Chaucer Encylopedia*, ed. Richard Newhauser (New York: Wiley, 2023): “Chaucer and Clothing” and “Yorkshire.”

Sarah-Grace Heller (French and Italian) gave two invited lectures this fall:


“Medieval Luxury: Shopping for Status and Pleasure,” University of Minnesota Center for Pre-Modern Studies, Minneapolis, MN, September 8, 2022.

Eric Johnson (Curator, Thompson Special Collections) gave an invited lecture and hands-on workshop titled “Meeting with Mundane Manuscripts (and their Paratexts),” Mediaevalia at the Lilly, Indiana University and the Lilly Library, Bloomington, IN, November 2, 2022.


In September, she participated in the Folger Institute workshop “Shakespeare and Performance Studies: Researching and Teaching Recorded and Live Broadcast Theatre."

Over the summer, she had a short-term fellowship at the Folger Shakespeare Library, which she wrote about for the library’s blog, The Collation, on June 14, 2022: “Women Patrons as Playmakers.”
**Leslie Lockett** (English) published a paper and a book chapter.


**Erin A. McCarthy** (Alumna, English) won a €600,000 Irish Research Council grant to support a four-year research project at the newly renamed University of Galway.

**Shaun James Russell** (English) published an essay, "‘Superliminare’ and the Textual Authority of the Williams Manuscript of George Herbert’s Poems,” *George Herbert Journal* 43 (2020): 8-31.

**Karl Whittington** (History of Art) wrote a review.


He also gave an invited lecture.

MS 5408. Queen Elizabeth I’s funeral procession. British Library.