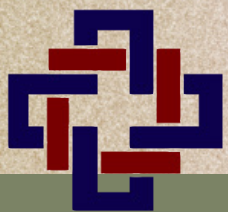




Nouvelles Nouvelles



Spring 2023

Forthcoming Events



February

February 17, 2023

2022-2023 MRGSA Colloquium on Premodern Race Keynote Lectures:

Jonathan Hsy (George Washington University) and Ambereen Dadabhoy (Harvey Mudd College)

4:00-6:00PM | 260 Pomerene Hall

February 18, 2023

2022-2023 MRGSA Colloquium Workshop on Teaching Premodern Race:

Professor Amrita Dhar (OSU) moderates discussion with Professor Mira Kafantris (Butler University), Professor Carol Mejia LaPerle (Wright State University), and Professor Kristen Mendoza (University of Dayton).

11:30AM-2:30PM | 311 Denney Hall (registration required, see [event webpage](#))

March

March 3, 2023

2nd Annual John N. King Lecture in Medieval and Renaissance Studies: Paul W. White (Purdue University)

4:00-5:30PM | 18th Avenue Library Research Commons Colloquium Space (3rd Floor)

March 31

14th Francis Lee Utley Lecture (co-sponsored with the Center for Folklore Studies)

Christopher Marsh (Queen's University Belfast)

4:00-5:30PM | 18th Avenue Library Research Commons Colloquium Space (3rd Floor)

April

April 10

CMRS Colloquium Series

Amanda Respass (OSU-Marion)

Details TBD

April 14

Annual Barbara A. Hanawalt Public Lecture

Caroline Dodds Pennock (University of Sheffield)

4:00-6:00PM | Faculty Club Grand Lounge (1st Floor)



Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies

DIRECTOR: Christopher Highley**ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR:** Jonathan Combs-Schilling**ADMINISTRATIVE COORDINATOR:** Nick Spitulski**GRADUATE ASSOCIATES:** Elise Robbins & Mengling Wang

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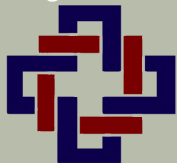
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The Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies is an interdisciplinary center in the College of Arts and Sciences at The Ohio State University. Its central mission is to foster interaction among faculty, students, and the public around themes involving 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.



Cover image: Quintus Curtius Rufus, and Vasque de Lucène. *Historia Alexandri Magni*. parchment, c. 1470-1480. Bodleian Library, University of Oxford

Contents image: Raphael. *Stanza Della Segnatura: Disputa* (*Disputation over the Sacrament*). fresco, c. 1509-10.



contents

4 Greetings

A welcome message from Director Chris Highley

6 Meet the Associate Director

Getting to know Professor Jonathan Combs-Schilling

8 The 'Sleep No More' Experience

A Review by Director Chris Highley

9 An Interview with Dr. Paul Milliman

Nouvelles Nouvelles Podcast

13 History of Art Field Trip

Kristen Adams' class visit to the Columbus Museum of Art

14 Shakespeare in the "Post" Colonies

Research spotlight on Professor Amrita Dhar

17 "The Price is Right" with Medieval Manuscripts

Course spotlight on MEDREN 5610

19 Howe Award Recipients

Research developments for MEDREN graduate students

23 MedRen-Themed Art Exhibitions

24 MedRen-Themed Podcast Episodes

25 CMRS Accomplishments

Celebrating our affiliates



Greetings: A Welcome Message from the Director

WRITTEN BY CHRISTOPHER HIGHLEY

Dear Affiliates and Friends:

First, I'd like to welcome our two new staff members. Mengling Wang is the new CMRS GA this semester. Mengling is a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of East Asian Languages and Literatures where she researches early medieval Chinese literature. Her dissertation examines the role of poetry anthologies in shaping literary communities. Mengling is currently TAing in MEDREN 2666, 'Magic and Witchcraft,' for Professor David Brewer, and is also supporting Elise Robbins with other Center tasks. Elise, by the way, recently passed her Ph.D. Candidacy Exams in English, so please congratulate her when you see her next! I'm also pleased to announce that Megan Moriarty is now the official 'Communications Specialist' for the Humanities Institute and will be helping us develop and disseminate publicity for our events and other initiatives.



Mengling Wang



Megan Moriarty

Our first event of the Spring is the much-anticipated Colloquium on 'Pre-Modern Race' that has been expertly coordinated by Tamara Mahadin and her fellows in the Medieval and Renaissance Graduate Student Organization (MRGSA). This is a two-day event featuring two invited speakers on the Friday and then a workshop on teaching about Pre-Modern Race on the Saturday morning (see details below). The workshop will be ably moderated by our own Professor Amrita Dhar and will include my former Ph.D. student and friend of the Center Professor Mira Kafantaris, whose work on foreign queens has garnered international attention.

The second annual John N. King lecture on March 3 has special significance for me because I recently collaborated with our speaker Paul W. White on a multi-year NEH grant proposal. Paul's talk will set out his vision of developing highly-detailed digitized maps of some of Early Modern London's entertainment districts. Once complete, these interactive maps will allow us to visualize and navigate the neighborhoods surrounding playhouses and other entertainment venues in completely new and stimulating ways.



March 31 is the date of our annual Francis Utleigh Lecture that CMRS and the Center for Folklore Studies organize together. Our speaker Professor Christopher Marsh from Queen's University Belfast will be our first guest from overseas since COVID struck. His talk on 'How to produce a hit song (in seventeenth-century England)' promises to revive the spirit of last year's rousing address by Professor James Revell Carr on ballads and sea shanties that had us all singing along and dancing in the aisles. Okay, maybe just singing along.



Our final event of the year is the Barbara A. Hanawalt Public Lecture on April 14. We are fortunate that Dr. Caroline Dodds Pennock will join us to talk about her important new book, *On Savage Shores How Indigenous Americans Discovered Europe*. By looking at the perspectives of non-Europeans who travelled to Europe from their homelands, Dr. Pennock's book reverses the standard trajectory of colonial studies and allows us to hear long-silenced voices discussing the metropole. A historian from the University of Sheffield, Dr. Pennock has made quite a splash in the media with this groundbreaking work and with her earlier work on Aztec-Mexica women. She's a regular podcast guest (on 'Not Just the Tudors' and 'Talking Tudors' for example) and is one of a new generation of TV historians who are sharing their expertise with a wider audience.



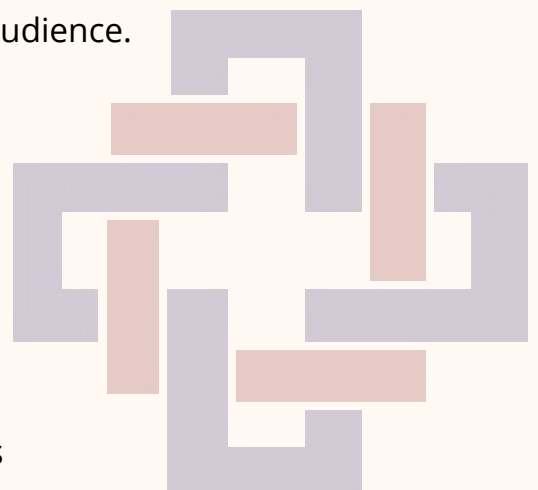
Looking forward to seeing you at these events.

Best wishes,



Chris Highley

Director, Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies



Meet the Associate Director!

Written by Elise Robbins

We are so excited to welcome Professor Jonathan Combs-Schilling into the role of Associate Director for CMRS! As he and I sat down to talk about how he'd like to be introduced to the wider CMRS community, he jokingly said, "I guess I could be 'The Associate Director who has Not Read Chaucer'," but as I talked to him, I saw other fitting titles emerge:

The Stocking-Clad Associate Director

Professor Combs-Schilling is invested in learning that combines scholarship with passion and hands-on experience. This comes in part from several definitive experiences he himself had in college. After his first year, he had the opportunity to take a six-week course to learn Italian in Scandiano, Italy at the Rocca dei Boiardo (Boiardo Castle), home of the Italian poet Matteo Maria Boiardo. He was hooked. He declared an Italian major and wound up studying in Bologna, Italy. While he was there, the university where he was studying was staging Boiardo's Renaissance epic *Orlando innamorato* for American students and local Italian actors. Lo and behold, they needed an Orlando! And so, Professor Combs-Schilling found himself acting the hero of the epic sword fighting in tights.

Moments like this (the communal and experiential learning, not the tights) are not uncommon in Professor Combs-Schillings' history. As he very eloquently put it, "the exhilarating but abstract experience of the classroom takes on physical form within a community." The excitement of making texts come alive within a community illuminates his work to this day.

The Operatic Associate Director

Though he admits he has never sung to anyone other than himself, Professor Combs-Schilling is an avid lover of opera. In fact, he was an opera critic in a past life! After graduating with his bachelor's and before going to graduate school, he was the west coast opera correspondent for an Italian magazine. His passion for opera goes back much further. Growing up in New York, he enjoyed opera as an art form. When he suffered a sports injury in high school, opera took on even deeper significance, becoming a kind of therapy for him. He described how the multidimensional nature of opera gave him a lot of what he needed at the time: "It was both an escape and an exorcism."



On the one hand, in the ethereal and transcendent beauty of music and melody, “you forget your body entirely and are transported.” On the other hand, the intense emotions, vendettas, and melodrama create a cathartic space to help you feel and express your fears and frustrations.

He carries these components and experiences of opera into his teaching and his research. Of himself as a scholar and instructor, he says, “I approach the Middle Ages and Renaissance with a great deal of melodramatic passion. I approach my scholarship with the highest of interpretive rigor, but it’s also a forum for sharing passions.”

The Community-Creating Associate Director

One of Professor Combs-Schillings’ earliest memories at Ohio State is of the community and support that CMRS allowed him to find on campus. After being welcomed into the excellent community of the Department of French and Italian, CMRS allowed him to make meaningful interdepartmental connections in his first year. He met other professors at all stages of their careers with whom he was able to make connections, and he says that these connections helped him map the university around him. He told me, “In a beautiful but elephantine institution, CMRS gave me a sense of belonging and orientation that I wouldn’t have been able to have otherwise.”

He likes to bring a similar sense of support and community to his students each semester. He says, “One of the things I love most about this profession is how I can foster and be surprised by community as I have a chance to engage with new students each semester.” He loves to see students, who generally haven’t had past experiences with medieval and renaissance texts or even access to them, find passion and personal engagement. In a course a few years ago, he gave students the opportunity to do a creative project of their choice on the Renaissance epic poem *Orlando Furioso*. One student decided to add an episode to Ariosto’s chivalric romance using stop action animation with action figures and dinosaurs to tell an additional adventure of Charlemagne’s knights.

Even in darker moments when community seems elusive, he values sweet moments of connection with students. He taught a Zoom course in Summer 2020, a course that was originally supposed to be a study abroad course, on Italian cities as a cultural phenomenon. As the pandemic raged across the world and protests wracked cities across the United States, including Columbus, the shared classroom experience gave him and his students anchors and opportunities to reckon with what was happening in the world. Professor Combs-Schilling shares, “It was incredibly powerful to share that time with the students and myself in a moment of crisis, voicing fears but taking great comfort and solidarity through the chance to think about how culture can be a balm as well as a beacon.”

We are so excited to have Professor Combs-Schilling as our brilliant and lively Associate Director to continue to grow the CMRS community and infuse it with the best kind of drama and passion.

The 'Sleep No More' Experience

Written by CMRS Director Chris Highley

When I was in Manhattan recently, I went to the show 'Sleep No More' that bills itself as 'an award-winning theatrical experience that tells Shakespeare's Scottish tragedy through a film noir lens.' The most impressive part of the 'experience' is the setting: five spacious floors of an old hotel on West 27th Street. And on each floor, different spaces evoke scenes and settings inspired by *Macbeth*. Audience members (AKA guests) wander freely without directions or guides. After donning the required full-face white plastic mask, I began my journey in a dimly-lit graveyard, before stumbling into a hospital ward, a speakeasy, and a forest. If you are lucky, you will encounter actors 'performing' characters from *Macbeth*. I saw Lady Macbeth undress and get into a tin bathtub before disappearing down a secret passage. In another room, I saw two characters tussle on top of a billiard table (Macbeth and Macduff perhaps?). Some guests will frantically pursue the actors from floor to floor perhaps hoping to find some sort of narrative thread. I quickly gave up on this approach after nearly being stampeded. Instead, I waited in one spot, hoping the action might come to me. Which it did. I followed an actor into a tailor's shop where he was measured for a suit. Suddenly he (Macbeth?) grabbed me by the arm and led me into another room, locking the door behind us. He then opened a casket and gestured that I should choose one of the eggs inside it. Holding it up to the light, he crushed it in the palm of my hand and inspected the dust as if reading runes. He then got right in my face and spoke for the first time: 'Macbeth does murder sleep,' or words to that effect. Then he ran off. The moment was exhilarating and bewildering, but what did it all mean? Emboldened, I decided to become a more creative spectator. My first ploy was to sit motionless in a 'film noir' psychiatrist's chair as if part of the spectacle. I then tried to lie in a hospital bed but was prevented by one of the guards (AKA team members) who lurk in the shadows. Evidently audience participation has its limits.



Images of the show in-progress and the masks worn by the audience from the show's [Facebook page](#).



After about two hours of aimless wandering and inspecting the different 'sets' (the pharmacy is especially good), the PA announced it was time to leave and we were ushered out. Was I glad I did it? Yes, even if it was rather pricey. If you do go, enjoy the strangeness and spontaneity of it all, but don't strain after meaning. And don't follow the crowd. Life, after all, 'is a tale / Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, / Signifying nothing.'

If you find yourself in Manhattan anytime soon, see the [McKittrick Hotel's website](#) for show information and tickets.

Interview with Paul Milliman

Interviewed by Elise Robbins

Click on the icon to open the podcast.



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. Paul Milliman, who will present a talk later this evening entitled "Do Gamer-Historians Dream of Virtual Sheep? The Playful Pedagogies of the University of Arizona Enhanced Experience for Age of Empires IV." Dr. Milliman is an Associate Professor of History at the University of Arizona. His research is wide ranging. His first book, *The Slippery Memory of Men: The Place of Pomerania in the Medieval Kingdom of Poland*, analyzes the records from a series of disputes between Teutonic knights and the neighboring Poles, Pomeranians, and Prussians during the 13th and 14th centuries. His current interests include the social, political, and cultural values and meanings of food and games, both of those played in the medieval period and modern games set in medieval times. His article "*Ludus Scaccarii: Games and Governance in Twelfth-Century England*" in the edited collection *Chess in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Age* was awarded the Medieval Academy of America's 2014 Van Courtlandt Elliott prize. I'm so excited to hear more about some of his work. Thank you so much for being here with us today, Dr. Milliman.

PM: Oh, thank you for having me. I really appreciate it.

ER : Before we delve into more deeply specific questions, can you just tell listeners a little more about yourself? When did you first become interested in medieval studies more broadly?

PM: That's an excellent question. I can't really remember. It seems like I've always been interested in medieval topics. I always thought it was a cool era. I mean, when I was a little kid, watching shows, with you know, wizards and warriors or playing Dungeons and Dragons and that kind of stuff. So, I would say it was definitely more the fantasy that brought me into the actual study of history. So, I understand other people who approach history that way too.

ER: Yeah, that absolutely makes sense. I've been reading fantasy from early on, so it makes sense that I ended up here. What about some of your more kind of specific specialties in things like food, games—like medieval games and video games more specifically? How did you arrive at those things?

PM: That's a great question. I played a lot of chess growing up and played competitively for a while. I was never very good. But I used to play in tournaments, and I had a ranking and all that stuff. The more I played, the more interested I became in the history of chess. So that was really the game that got me into the study of medieval games and historical games in general. And, you know, one of the best chess collections in the world happens to be right here in Ohio, in Cleveland.

ER: Oh, really?

PM: The Cleveland Public Library has an amazing collection of chess material. So, anybody who's interested in chess, go check it out. It's great. And then I mean, the more I read about it, the more fascinated I became with studying this idea of games and what it meant to people at that time. You know, there's so much writing about chess in the Middle Ages. You know, I haven't even discovered it all yet. Every time I find another reference, I'm like, "Oh, I didn't know about that, that's great, tell me more." From that, I'm looking at other games too. And it's just a fascinating topic, and I never get tired of studying.

ER: Oh, that's awesome. So, what did chess mean to people in the Middle Ages?

PM: That's so great. It's meant so many different things to different people. You can approach it from the negative point of view, and you have the bonfires or the vanities; there's always chess boards in there, with the other instruments of gambling. That's one of the earliest written references, is to chess being a gambling game.

ER: Chess was considered gambling?

PM: It was! Well, they gambled on everything. But yeah, definitely, because you could play chess with die because it could be kind of boring because it doesn't have our modern moves. The queen was the weakest piece on the board. She could only move one square diagonally. The bishop had to move two squares diagonally. That's it. So that really slowed down game play. So, people could make it more interesting. You could assign a value to each of the six pieces. You know, if you rolled a one, you had to move a pawn or whatever. So you could play chess that way. Also, there were lots of chess problems because either you're alone and you're trying to entertain yourself playing chess, you solve a problem like we have today, all these chess problems, or you just got bored of playing. And I think that's why chess functions in a lot of medieval literature, sort of a lot of background stories. It's something that lovers are doing to get away or something that people are doing just to pass the time.

Chess is something that lovers are doing to get away or something that people are doing just to pass the time. It's also something that could be deadly serious.

It's something that could be deadly serious. There's a great story from one of the sagas where the king asks to take a move back and the guy he's playing against says "no," and then it doesn't end very well for that guy.

There's the great Jacob de Cessolis's book on chess, which has all these great stories from the Matter of Rome and Matter of France and all these ideas of "this is the way an ideal king should be," or queen or other people. So you could just do with it what you wanted to do with it. And I think that's what makes chess really interesting. You're never going to get tired of it. You're never going to figure everything out. There's always more questions to ask.

ER: That's interesting because I feel like that has carried over to today, right? Somehow chess never gets old.

PM: Right, now we have all the chess scandals too, the cheating scandals.

ER: Right? Thankfully, no one's getting murdered, hopefully. Interesting. So aside from chess, what did people play in the Middle Ages?

PM: Yeah, so other board games are very popular, like Nine Men's Morris, which at its most basic level is tic-tac-toe, you tried to put three counters in a row. It's so great because it's a scalable game, so you could scale it up to as many pieces as you wanted. It was most common to have each person to have nine and then you'd place the counters and tried to get three in a row, and when you did that, you'd take off one of your opponent's counters. So, once you got all nine on the board, you move them around to try to find them. So that was a really fun game. And it's great because anybody can play this. You find game boards everywhere, scratched into the floors of buildings. You don't even need to do that. You can just draw it in the dirt, you can use sticks and stones. That's one of the things that makes board games so popular, is that you didn't need that. Everybody thinks of these super expensive chess boards, like the Lewis chessmen, and these intricately carved things, and that's great. There are wonderful things like that, but at its most basic level, you don't really need that much to play board games, and anybody can do it. And, like I said, games like Morris are scalable. There's a great image from Alfonso's *Book of Games* in the late 13th century, where there are two children and their mothers playing tic-tac-toe. It's in the section on Morris, where they're talking about more difficult games, but they're like, "Look at this game. Anybody can play this." And I think that's what's really great. It's such a great teaching device. It's a fun way for people to interact with each other.

ER: That's cool. It's almost transferable or equalizing in a way because everybody, everybody can play them in their own ways and with the materials they have. It's really interesting. I was interested when you said they're scratching it into the floor. There's art where this is depicted. What does research in medieval games look like?

PM: A great question. It's just like going down endless rabbit holes because there are some books dedicated just to games like Alfonso's *Book of Games* or Cessolis's book on chess. But for a lot of it, it's just a passing reference, sometimes, you know, an amazing passing reference, like the floating chest sets in the Arthurian stories that I'm forgetting.

ER: Oh yeah, I don't remember, either, but I remember of them.

PM: Maybe it's one of the Gawain stories? Anyway, sometimes it's just a passing reference. I'm reading a great new biography of Albertus Magnus that came out, talking about him mentioning hunting when he was a kid, just somebody reflecting back on their childhood and the enjoyable time they had engaging in this game. A lot of times, it's just that little passing reference, and you're digging through all this stuff, trying to find just a little bit. Almost always it's some chance encounter. I'm not looking for games. I'm just reading something, and I find it, and I'm like, "Oh, that's great." So I have to write it down, keep track of it. I've noticed there's an alarming rate at which people die of hunting accidents, especially rulers. I'm not sure if they're all accidents. That seems to be a common theme.

ER: A conspiracy theory. I mean, I guess it's not surprising. Kill the boar or kill this king you don't like?

PM: You're alone in the woods.

ER: Things happen.

I especially like the reference you made to him hunting as a child. I guess I haven't thought a lot about games in premodernity, but it's really interesting that these types of nostalgic things carried so far into the modern day. I was thinking, I've read about your teaching and it feels like you have a really interesting approach to pedagogy that involves not just studying these games, but using games for students. So, I guess, what do you typically teach? And how do you approach teaching those things?

Head over to the [CMRS Nouvelles Nouvelles podcast page](#) to listen to or read the rest of this fascinating interview with Professor Milliman. You don't want to miss hearing about his innovative and engaging approach to teaching students!

History of Art 3521 Field Trip!

This past fall, Kristen Adams and her students from History of Art 3521 (Renaissance Art) visited the Columbus Museum of Art's special exhibition "Raphael - The Power of Renaissance Images: The Dresden Tapestries and Their Impact." Students had the unique experience to view in-person the Dresden tapestries, which were created based on Raphael's designs for the *The Acts of the Apostles* tapestries that originally hung in the Sistine Chapel and which the students had read about in class.



Dr. Adams commented, "Students enjoyed seeing these objects firsthand because the scale and material of woven tapestries cannot be fully appreciated in any other way, and certainly not by a screen in a classroom. It was fun for the students to connect with many artworks, including a couple drawings, which were made by the artist's hand. Connecting past and present across the space of 400 years doesn't happen every day, but it was a great opportunity for students studying Italian Renaissance art to bring some of that history to life by visiting this special exhibition while it was here in Columbus."



Shakespeare in the "Post"Colonies



Research Spotlight on Professor Amrita Dhar

Written by Elise Robbins

What began as a panel at the 2021 Shakespeare Association of America annual conference has grown into something much bigger.

I recently sat down with Amrita Dhar, Assistant Professor of English at OSU, to talk about a series of projects that began as a wildly generative conference discussion led by her and Professor Amrita Sen (University of Calcutta). The multi-national group of participants (which quickly filled to capacity) coordinated a massive Zoom call across numerous time zones to discuss the meaning and stakes of Shakespeare and his works in "post"-colonial geographies.

The scare quotes around "post" carry a great deal of meaning for this project. As Dhar explained, "The 'post' part is under debate here. You might even say under rejection. The violence of colonialism is such that there is no genuine moving past it, moving 'post' it, having an after of it in any real way."

She also distinguished between two kinds of 'post' 'colonial' they're dealing with. "'Post-colonial' with the hyphen is supposed to be about this temporal marker. Postcolonial we don't have any problems with, as a marker for a very capacious critical school of thought that uses the matter of colonialism to look at equations or non-equations of power along various other intersecting lines in many geographies across the world. That we don't have any problems with. If we employ the lens of the postcolonial (no hyphen), then we understand that colonialism is part of our everyday existence. That kind of postcolonial we want to do."

In the aftermath of the conference, it was clear that there was much more conversation that wanted to be had and, indeed, needed to be had around this topic in scholarly, educational, theatrical, and popular communities around the world for whom Shakespeare and the postcolonial inheritance he and his works carry loom so large. The conversation has broadened, deepened, and transformed into three major endeavors.

The first is an edited collection under contract with Bloomsbury, co-edited by Dhar and Sen. The second focuses on a particular “post” colony. A forthcoming special issue (also co-edited by Professors Dhar and Sen) of *Borrowers and Lenders: The Journal of Shakespeare and Appropriation* will focus specifically on Shakespeare in Bengal. For Dhar and Sen, the choice of journal was important, as *Borrowers and Lenders* is peer-reviewed, digital, and open access. Dhar affirmed that, with this project, “of course, the goal is for none of this to become its own colonial exercise, complete with Global North electronic gatekeeping. Hopefully we will be able to have this as a bilingual issue. For sure, we want it to be read in Bengal.”



Project Collaborators Professor Amrita Sen (University of Calcutta) and Professor Adélékè Adéèkó (OSU)

The third project on “Shakespeare in the ‘Post’ Colonies” aims at an even larger and broader audience. It is an archive of open-access, digital interviews with postcolonial Shakespearean creatives from around the world, in which collaborators Professors Dhar, Sen, and Adélékè Adéèkó (OSU English) ask “What is Shakespeare up to in all these places?” In conversations with each other and with Shakespeare-influenced creatives from around the world, they consider the use of Shakespeare as people might expect to see him in his early- modern-English-speaking, British context and also as he transforms in new contexts.

“The moment Shakespeare hits the shores of these other parts of the world, including my part of the world, he changes,” observed Dhar. “Shakespeare comes into the subcontinent in an already fully appropriation ready form. So, what does that look like in these ‘post’-colonies?” By way of example, she described *Bhranti Bilas* a Bengali-language theatrical adaptation of *Comedy of Errors* that is further adapted into a film and also embeds a short video of an indigenous theatrical form.



Movie poster from *Bhranti Bilas*,
Uttam Kumar Films Pvt Ltd

When I asked what inspired Professor Dhar to pursue this project specifically, she described her desire to understand and explore her own personal and lifelong experiences with Shakespeare in a different way. “I am an early modernist by training. I am postcolonial by identity, circumstance, geography, and the air I have breathed growing up but not by training. I wanted to understand my own ambiguous relationship with Shakespeare: the historical person, the works, and the historical baggage associated with it all.” In talking with collaborator Adéèkó, a postcolonial scholar at OSU, she learned that they had uncannily similar experiences of Shakespeare in their individual pasts in geographies with postcolonial inheritances.

Dhar hopes that this project can allow her and others to “unpack the strange, sometimes conflicted, colonial legacies we carry and leverage the weight of the Shakespearean literary canon against the harmful discourses that the canon has been complicit in creating.”

Through the interviews they’ve conducted so far, they’ve been able to observe the numerous, sometimes unexpected ways that Shakespeare is embedded into creative processes. Dhar shared that “there are surprising places where Shakespeare has been the animating part of a person’s training, of their understanding of form, and now they’re a novelist or now they’re a film director or now they are writing screenplays.”

In one interview, they spoke with an indigenous Australian theater performer who played Ariel in Shakespeare’s *The Tempest*. Ariel is one of the two inhabitants of an island who are colonized and enslaved by the character Prospero. This performer spoke about the difficulties of assuming that role. “She has to learn how to be, how to react to something like *The Tempest* and find out how to be Ariel,” Dhar shared. In another interview, they spoke with a novelist who adapted *King Lear* and used that adaptation as a site for contemporary political commentary. Shakespearean adaptations can give space to do this, as Dhar claimed, because “Shakespeare is that ticket that lets you talk about things.”

Dhar, Sen, and Adéèkó are excited to make this archive accessible to so many and hope that it will be particularly appealing to non-Shakespeareans and non-academics as a space to think about the cultural importance and cultural baggage of Shakespeare the person, his works, and all the ways they’ve been used globally.

The first phase of 10 conversations is set to go live this summer, and we’ll make sure to keep you updated when it does!

"The Price is Right" and Other Encounters with Medieval Manuscripts



Course Spotlight on MEDREN 5610 Written by Eileen Horansky

The Fall 2022 Manuscript Studies course (MEDREN 5610), co-taught by Prof. Leslie Lockett and Prof. Eric Johnson, offered a wide-ranging introduction to the history and study of medieval manuscripts. Over the course of the semester we explored the codicological study of manuscripts as physical objects with Prof. Johnson, who took us through each step in the process of a manuscript's production from the making of parchment, to the work of scribes and illuminators, to the final binding of the finished manuscript. With Prof. Lockett, we learned about the development of scribal culture through the study of paleography, learning to identify and decipher various styles of handwriting script along the way. We also explored various genres of manuscripts, drawing on the strengths of Ohio State's Rare Books and Manuscript Library collections. These genre studies were supplemented by a series of guest lecturers who brought their own incredible expertise in manuscripts to the course. These guest lecturers included Prof. Pasha Johnson, who spoke on Slavic manuscripts, Prof. Karl Whittington, who discussed manuscript illumination and illuminators, Prof. Daniel Frank, who introduced us to Hebrew manuscripts, and Prof. Sara Butler, who gave us insight into legal manuscripts and documentary culture.

Beyond studying the historical contexts of pre-print manuscript culture, throughout the course we also discussed the place of manuscripts and their value in the world today. Ohio occupies an important place in the history of manuscripts in the United States—the notorious bookseller and manuscript breaker Otto Ege lived and taught in Cleveland, Ohio, and leaves from manuscripts that passed through his hands can still be found in institutions and private collections all over the state. Manuscripts, both complete codices and fragments, are still highly prized by rare book dealers, collectors, and institutions, including Ohio State.

One of the most rewarding experiences of this class was the opportunity to see the study of manuscripts at work in the world of the rare book and manuscript trade. Over the course of the "The Price is Right!" project, our class was tasked with selecting and acquiring a manuscript for the Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

Under the guidance and expertise of Prof. Johnson, we first worked individually to analyze and evaluate individually-assigned manuscripts on offer by several different manuscript dealers before coming together as a class to select which manuscripts from the class corpus we wanted to acquire for RBML. Over several weeks we worked together to evaluate each manuscript's potential as a teaching and research object, considering each manuscript's historical contexts as well as how it fit into RBML's current collections. We even had the opportunity to meet with manuscript scholar and dealer Dr. Sandra Hindman of the firm Les Enluminures, who offered valuable insight into how manuscript dealers put the same codicological and paleographical skills we were learning to work in their business. This project provided important insight into the many factors that influence how libraries build their collections and, thanks to Prof. Johnson's fundraising efforts, we were eventually able to acquire our top 3 manuscript choices for the Rare Book and Manuscripts Library.

This course was at times challenging but ultimately incredibly rewarding—I learned so much from both Prof. Lockett and Prof. Johnson, and I'm looking forward to continuing to learn more about manuscripts in the future!

Eileen Horansky is a Ph.D. student in the Department of English

Meet the 3 New Manuscripts that will make their home in the OSU Rare Books & Manuscripts Library!



Miracles of the Virgin and narrative exempla arranged by topic.
Northern Italy, c. 1350



Roberto Caracciolo da Lecce, *Quadragesimale de poenitentia* (Lenten Sermons)
Central Italy, c. 1470-1475



Lucius Fenestella (Andrea Domenico Fiocchi), *De Romanorum magistratibus* (On the Magistrates of Rome) [and other texts], Italy, c. 1477

Make sure to visit our [Courses page](#) on the CMRS website to see what engaging MEDREN offerings are slated for Fall 2023!

Howe Award Recipients

Thanks to the generosity of donors to the Nicholas G. Howe Memorial Fund, CMRS offers funding for graduate students working on any aspect of the Middle Ages or Renaissance. Here, three recipients of the 2020-2021 and 2021-2022 awards share how they used these awards to further their research.

Fabia Weisser

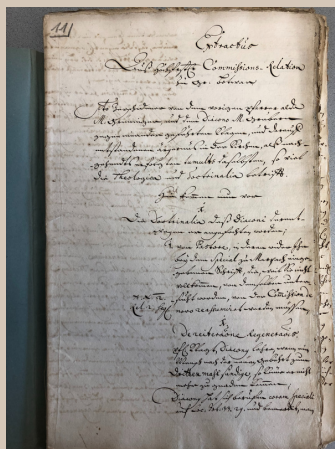
MA Student, Germanic Languages and Literatures



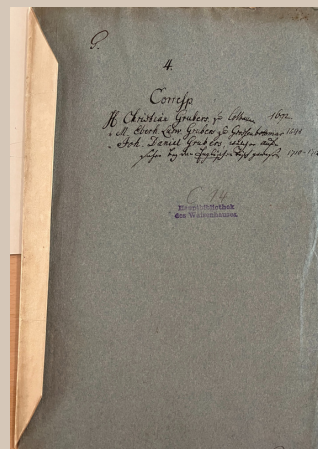
I still feel very lucky to be a recipient of the Howe award. The \$500 I received were a very helpful contribution to fund travelling to archives in Iowa and Germany in summer 2022.

I am currently working on an M.A. thesis for which I have transcribed over 300 pages of a handwritten 17th-century travel diary by Eberhard Ludwig Gruber, a clergy man from Württemberg, whose

journey took him through Northern Europe to collect alms. The manuscript is kept at OSU's Special Collections Library. The Amana colonies in Iowa consider Gruber one of their founding fathers, as his son later emigrated to the United States, building the community of the *Wahre Inspirierte*, 'Truly Inspired.' In my thesis, I aim to show that the diary played a crucial role in the traveler's development to become a radical Pietist in later years, as he reflected on his spiritual experiences and interactions with other clergy. I use Stephen Greenblatt's theory of self-fashioning to trace the shaping of Gruber's identity. By integrating archival materials, such as letters and records of church disputations, I explore how his travel was an essential part leading up to expulsion from his community due to religious disputes after his return. Because the journal was composed in the context of collecting donations and therefore differs from other travel diaries in the 17th and 18th century, it is also my goal to contribute to the sparse studies and research on literature related to such journeys.



Church disputation between Gruber and Grüniger, not dated. Landeskirchliches Archiv Stuttgart, Stuttgart, Germany.



Letter from Mattheo Esenwein to August Hermann Francke, 13 April 1698. Studienzentrums August Hermann Francke – Archiv und Bibliothek, Halle, Germany.

The award helped me to visit archives in Halle and Stuttgart, Germany in August 2022. In Halle—one of the most influential centers of Pietism in the early modernity—I visited the archive of the Franckesche Stiftungen ('Francke Foundations'; named after August Hermann Francke) to research letters documenting the travel of Gruber and some other clergy men who were sent out by the Duke of Württemberg to collect alms for burned down towns. In Stuttgart, I visited the Landeskirchliches Archiv Stuttgart ('State Church Archive of Stuttgart') to seek information about Gruber's undertakings as a clergyman and deacon. I found a very interesting disputation, detailing the reasons why Gruber was later expelled from the church community due to radical Pietist beliefs.



Franckesche Stiftungen, Halle, Germany

In May, I also visited the archive of the Amana colonies in Iowa where I found original documents written by Gruber on religious matters. This allowed me to trace the impact of Gruber on the community of Pietists in the U.S. and also gave me the chance to compare the handwriting from his journal to some other documents. The question that still stands is, Who did he write the journal for? Having seen other documents in much neater handwriting at the archive in Iowa, I suspect that he wrote this for himself only and not for a greater public.

I am still in the process of writing my thesis and I will graduate with my M.A. in May 2023. I am very grateful for the support my project has received and I am looking forward to sharing my research on Gruber in a publication in the future.

Clinton Morrison, Jr.

PhD Candidate, English



I am thankful to have received support through the Howe Award this summer. With this support, I presented my work on Chaucer's *Anelida and Arcite* at the 22nd Biennial New Chaucer Society Congress in Durham. I was also fortunate to attend the NCS graduate student manuscript workshop at Durham University Library. Three of the manuscripts in the collection were particularly stunning for someone interested in England's fifteenth-century literary imagination: a copy of Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde* (Cosin V.ii.13), a copy of Lydgate's *Siege of Thebes* (Cosin V.ii.14), and an autographed copy of Thomas Hoccleve's poetry and prose (Cosin V.iii.9).

Overall, my July would be full of appointments with medieval manuscripts! I was also able to consult Middle English, Middle French, and Latin manuscripts at the British Library and the Bodleian Library. It was incredible to sit with the manuscript witnesses of Troy stories, Arthurian romances, and most of Lydgate's oeuvre in-person.

Prior to NCS, I had the opportunity to visit Yorkshire. I took Professor Eric Johnson's advice and made my way to Beverely Minster, also known as the Parish Church of Saint John and Saint Martin, in Beverely, East Riding of Yorkshire. Beverely was a cultural center for music and minstrelsy during the late Middle Ages, which, given my specific research interests in dance and movement, was a huge draw for me. Beverely Minster is home to the beloved minstrel guild—a series of miniature statues that decorate the Minster's nave. I danced around the space (just prior to the entrance of a wedding party who I can only assume would also dance in the space), moving between the stone columns, dancing angels, and the sculpted minstrels.

Maggie Wilson

PhD Candidate, History of Art



With the support of the Howe Award, I traveled to Germany and Belgium to pursue pre-dissertation research on the art of the medieval convent. I visited intact convent sites, discovered new case studies, and visited works of art that I have written and presented on in the past. I am currently preparing my dissertation prospectus based on several of the objects I was able to view in Germany's vast collections!

One highlight of my trip was the opportunity to meet with collection experts at the Schnütgen Museum in Cologne, Germany to discuss a 13th-century beaded ciborium originally from Hildesheim. Due to the constraints of Covid, I had studied the ciborium but never been able to view it in person. This unique vessel used to store the consecrated host during the medieval Mass is made of wood, but covered in dense, intricate bead embroidery illustrating the Passion of Christ and other iconographies. I had the pleasure of discussing the ciborium's recent restoration with its conservator. I learned new information on the origin of its unusual coral and bronze beads, as well as the importance of bead embroidery as a regional art form in medieval Lower Saxony.

The Wise and Foolish Virgins portal (14th century) at the Frauenkirchen, Nuremberg, Germany.



Maggie with Hildesheim ciborium (13th century) at the Schnütgen Museum, Cologne, Germany



I was inspired by an unusual set of objects in the Dommuseum in Hildesheim, Germany, the so-called *Heilige Häupter* or 'Holy Heads.' Constructed from the fragments of early Christian skulls in the fifteenth century, the holy heads were carefully reassembled with the help of plaster and adorned with highly decorative textile veils. I found these six skulls to be both macabre and enchanting. They are classified as relics by the museum, but I look forward to exploring their making and meaning as art objects in my dissertation. Most likely made by women, the relic skulls of Hildesheim may have represented a kind of spiritual convent populated by the virgin saints of the past.

In Antwerp, Belgium, I had a long-awaited encounter with the sculpture that originally inspired me to pursue the study of medieval art. The Christ-John group is an iconography derived from Gospel accounts of the Last Supper, wherein the apostle John rests his head against the heart of Christ. Christ holds John in his embrace and in several examples the pair are holding hands. One example of this group on view at the Cleveland Museum. The other famous example is now in the Museum Meyer van den Bergh in Antwerp. The Antwerp Christ-John group genuinely took my breath away. Christ and St. John, carved from one solid piece of walnut, symbolize the perfect state of contemplative union with the divine that medieval nuns aspired to. While the work is symbolic, it also represents a same-sex union. I look forward to exploring the queer dimensions of the work in my dissertation, particularly how the intimacy of Christ and John might illuminate the relationship of the sculptor to the convent.



**Heilige Häupter,
15th century,
Hildesheim
Dommuseum,
Germany.**



**Christ and St. John
the Evangelist, ca.
1300, Museum
Meyer van den
Bergh, Antwerp,
Belgium.**

CMRS is accepting applications for the 2022/2023 Howe Award through March 3, 2023. See the [Howe Award page on the website](#) for more information.

Cleveland Museum of Art | Cleveland, OH

The Tudors: Art and Majesty in Renaissance England

Sunday, 2/26/23 to Sunday, 5/14/23

The Kelvin and Eleanor Smith Foundation Exhibition Hall

If you weren't able to see it at The Met, you can see it in Cleveland! View the exquisite artistic products that emerged from a tumultuous and pivotal time in English history. The website describes the exhibition thus: "This exhibition traces the transformation of the arts in Tudor England through more than 80 objects—including iconic portraits, spectacular tapestries, manuscripts, sculpture, and armor—from both the Metropolitan Museum of Art's collection and international lenders."



Philadelphia Museum of Art
Philadelphia, PA

Medieval Treasures from the Glencairn Museum

Saturday, 6/25/22 to Fall 2023 | Gallery 307

Features selected works on loan from the Glencairn Museum in Bryn Athyn, PA, which includes a selection of medieval art and architecture, including Spanish ivories and stained glass from the Abbey Church of Saint-Denis.

National Gallery of Art
Washington, D.C.

Looking Up: Studies for Ceilings, 1550-1800

Sunday, 1/29/23 to Sunday, 7/9/23

West Building, Ground Floor, G22

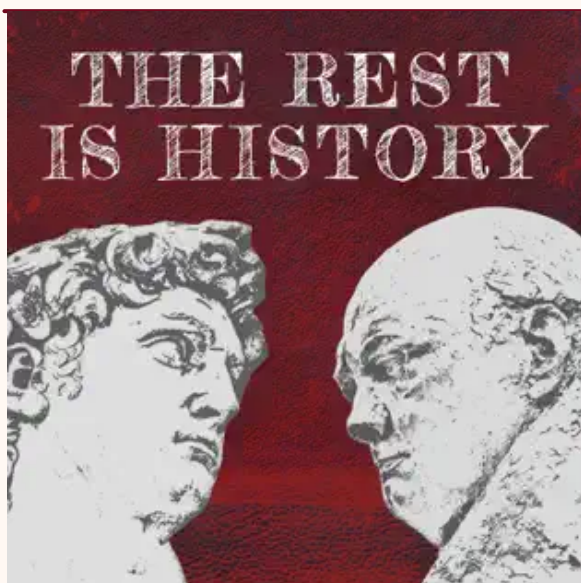
"This exhibition presents some 30 examples of the evolution of ceiling decoration. These works move from architectural frameworks housing conventional paintings to the illusion of a single, soaring space teeming with figures and dynamic movement during the baroque, and then on to the geometric organization and idealized form associated with neoclassicism." (from exhibition website)



Gone Medieval

The Mysterious Voynich Manuscript

Podcast host Matt Lewis explores the notoriously mysterious Voynich manuscript from the early 15th century. Its unknown script accompanied by astrological and botanical illustrations make it a fascinating object of study. Raymond Clemens, Curator of Early Books and Manuscripts at Yale University, joins to talk about the manuscript's origins, authorship, purpose, and why it has puzzled scholars for so long.



The Rest is History

Lady Jane Grey: The Nine Days' Queen

In the first of two episodes, hosts Tom Holland and Dominic Sandbrook discuss what happened in the succession controversy following Edward VI's death and how the ill-fated Lady Jane Grey was put on the throne at 15 years old.

True Crime Medieval

The Cursed Carolers, Saxony 10th Century

Medievalists Anne Brannen and Michelle Butler discuss popular legends of "cursed carolers," or people who were cursed to dance for extended periods of time. It turns out these are based on or related to actual, unexplained experiences of sudden, uncontrollable dancing as recorded across Europe from the 14th to 17th centuries.

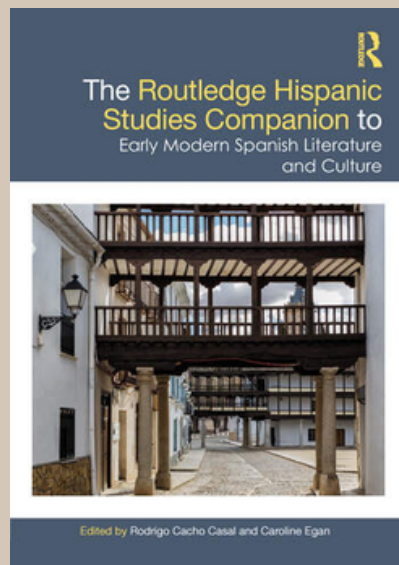
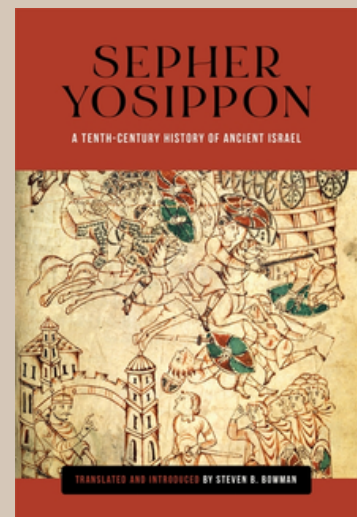


CMRS Affiliate Accomplishments

Warm congratulations to our affiliates on their many recent accomplishments!

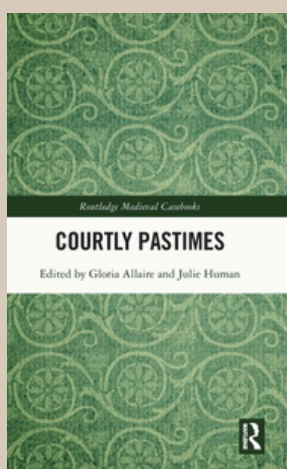
Charles Atkinson (Professor Emeritus, Musicology) published his article "Über den Wechsel der Tonarten im östlichen und westlichen Gesang: Techniken, Texte und Rhetorik" ("On Modulation in Eastern and Western Plainchant: Techniques, Texts, and Rhetoric") in *Beiträge zur Gregorianik* 74 (2022): 27-85. The article is the redacted version of his keynote address for the German-Language Section of the Associazione Internazionale Studi di Canto Gregoriano, held in Reichenau, Germany, 12-14 November 2021.

Steven Bowman (Emeritus, Judaic Studies, University of Cincinnati) published an English translation of *Sepher Yosippon: A Tenth-Century History of Ancient Israel* (Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 2022). *Sepher Yosippon* has been the most popular book on the Second Temple Commonwealth for the last millennium



Elizabeth B. Davis (Spanish and Portuguese) published a chapter titled "Time of catastrophe: temporalities in the transatlantic relación of Diego Portichuelo de Ribadeneyra" in *The Routledge Hispanic Studies Companion to Early Modern Spanish Literature and Culture*, edited by Cacho Casal and Caroline Egan (London and New York: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group, 2022), 61-75.

Amrita Dhar (English) published a chapter titled “When They Consider How Their Light Is Spent: Intersectional Race and Disability Studies in the Classroom” in *Teaching Race in the European Renaissance: A Classroom Guide*, edited by Anna Wainwright and Matthieu Chapman (Tempe, AZ: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies Press, 2023).



Kristen M. Figg (Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies) published the chapter “Blind Man’s Buff: From Children’s Games to Pleasure Gardens in the Late Middle Ages” in *Courtly Pastimes*, edited by Gloria Allaire and Julie Human (London and New York: Routledge, 2022), 126-49. An earlier version of this article was a keynote address at the Fifteenth Triennial Congress of the International Courtly Literature Society held at the University of Kentucky in 2016.

Leslie Lockett (English) published her book *Augustine’s Soliloquies in Old English and in Latin* (Dumbarton Oaks Medieval Library 76, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2022).



Karl Whittington (History of Art) published his article “Diagrammatic Formats from Page to Wall: Dante and the Strozzi Chapel, Revisited” in *Dante Studies* 139 (2022), 24-57.



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Canto Sestodecimo (from Ariosto, *Orlando Furioso*). woodcut, ca. 1572. Division of Rare and Manuscript Collections, Cornell University Library.