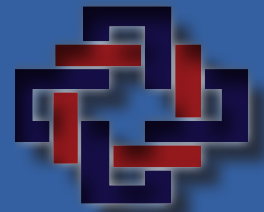


Nouvelles Nouvelles



Spring 2018
Vol. 1



February

23 February 2018

CMRS Lecture Series: Richard Firth Green, The Ohio State University
"Fairies and Witches: An Unexplored Connection"
Barbara A. Hanawalt Public Lecture
6:00PM, 220 Sullivant Hall

March

06 March 2018

CMRS Film Series: *Kladivo na čarodějnice (Witches' Hammer)* (1970)
Directed by Otakar Vávra
7:00 PM, 455B Hagerty Hall
Free Pizza and Refreshments

23 March 2018

CMRS Lecture Series: Shannon McSheffrey, Concordia University
"Evil May Day, 1517: Riots Against Immigrants in Tudor London"
4:00 PM, 090 18th Ave. Library

April

03 April 2018

CMRS Film Series: *The Witch: A New England Folktale* (2015)
Directed by Robert Eggers
7:00 PM, 455B Hagerty Hall
Free Pizza and Refreshments

13 April 2018

CMRS Lecture Series: David Areford, University of Massachusetts, Boston
"Christ Child Creator"
4:00 PM, 090 18th Ave. Library

20 April 2018

CMRS Food Festival
Bring a Medieval/Renaissance Dish to Share
5:30PM, Denney 311

Cover Art: Detail of a miniature of Sir Lancelot, in conversation with a lady holding a small dog on her lap; from *Morte Darthur*, France (St. Omer or Tournai?), c. 1315-1325, Royal MS 14 E. iii, f. 146r

CENTER FOR
MEDIEVAL AND RENAISSANCE STUDIES

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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.

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GREETINGS

from the Interim DIRECTOR

I begin with the disappointing news that this year's MRGSA lecturer Misty Schieberle has had to cancel her visit to Columbus.

However, we are hoping to reschedule Misty for Fall 2018. We still have plenty of great talks to look forward to this semester, beginning with William Ian Miller's intriguingly titled talk, 'Getting Even: or Just You Wait and See.' Miller, a professor in the Law School at the University of Michigan and a specialist in ancient Icelandic legal codes, has also captivated a broad readership with his cross-cultural examination of topics like humiliation, disgust, and aging. He will be speaking in Jennings Hall 001 on Friday, February 9, starting at 4:00PM.

Miller's visit is followed by the much-anticipated return of Richard Firth Green, the Director of CMRS between 2005 and 2013. Richard's CMRS Public Lecture entitled 'Fairies and Witches: An Unexplored Connection' is scheduled for Friday, February 23 at 6:00PM in Sullivant Hall 220 (note the later start time). Anyone wanting a foretaste of his talk might look at his latest award-winning book, *Elf Queens and Holy Friars: Fairy Beliefs and the Medieval Church* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016).

We are also looking forward this semester to a CMRS food festival scheduled for the evening of Friday, April 20 in Denney Hall 311. For this informal gathering, we invite folks to dig out their best MedRen recipes and to cook something up for us all



to sample. As we munch and imbibe, there will be a chance to share recipes, recount challenges, and generally discuss the delights of strange cuisines. By the way, if you have mislaid your favorite recipe for pickled head of boar you can find plenty of ideas here: <http://emroc.hypotheses.org/>

Spring semester is also the time to plan ahead. It is my privilege as Interim Director to have the opportunity to invite so many outstanding scholars to speak on campus. With the help of the CMRS advisory committee and other colleagues, I have drawn up a shortlist of speakers for next year. We have also started planning for a symposium in Fall 2018 on 'Books and their Use[r]s' that will ask participants to ponder the many and often

unexpected ways in which people have interacted with books as both texts and material objects. Stay tuned for further details.

This Spring's CMRS courses are now well underway. Professors Ethan Knapp and Leslie Lockett are teaching seminars on 'Arthurian Legends' and 'Medieval Latin' respectively. Our big Gen Ed course on 'Magic and Witchcraft' is being taught by Kristen Figg with the help of GTA Liz Steinway. The course enrolled a very healthy 126 students, evidence of the enduring fascination of the occult.

There is still not a great deal to report about the pending college reorganization of the various interdisciplinary centers in Arts and Sciences. The center directors, key staff members, and Humanities Institute interim director David Staley have held a series of meetings about our collective future and our vision for moving forward. We now await a response from the dean. Needless to say, the directors were unanimous in wanting to see the individual centers retain their autonomy and unique strengths, while at the same time collaborating more closely under the umbrella of the Humanities Institute.

Best wishes,

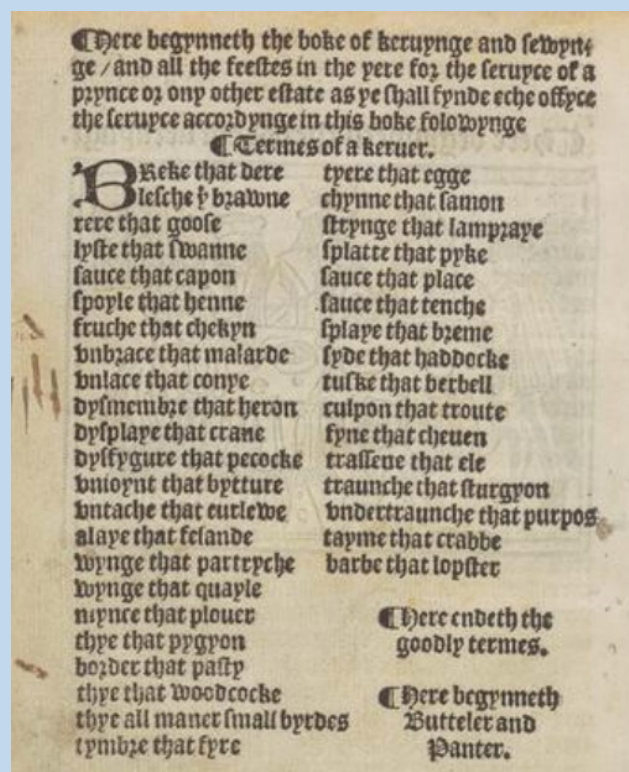
Christopher Highley

Chris Highley

Interim Director, Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies



The woodcut at the opening of *The Boke of Kervynge*. In particular, the book warned against the consumption of salads and raw fruit: "Beware of green sallettes and rawe fruytes for they wyll make your soverayne seke."



The list of carving terms from *The Boke of Kervynge*.

Monastic Reform and Cultural Trauma

by Alison I. Beach

Imagine for a moment that you are a monk or nun living in a Benedictine monastery in the twelfth century. Perhaps you entered the community a child and there learned to read and write and to sing the liturgy. Or maybe you took your monastic vows as an adult, joining a community already in operation for decades, or even centuries, spanning perhaps four or five generations of monks. Even though the Rule of St. Benedict gives the monastery its basic daily structure, your community has its own cultural tissue, comprising particular customs, social hierarchies, and rhythms.

Now imagine the sudden and uninvited arrival of a group of outsiders -- “reformers” -- stepping into this highly developed social and spiritual landscape. Charged with putting a stop to old practices now deemed unacceptable and with showing the old monks how things are now to be done, they immediately begin to make changes. Perhaps the newly installed reformer-abbot introduces new ascetic practices and tightens up long relaxed rules prohibiting the monks from leaving the monastery on personal business. He places his own monks in top positions of authority -- as cellarer, cantor, or prior -- and holds them up as examples of right practice. It is particularly troubling when the new cantor displaces your old liturgical expert, and he or she changes the most basic rhythms of your community by tinkering with your time-honored liturgy.

This sort of uninvited reform was seen, at least as early as Gregory the Great (c. 540-604), as one that could plausibly inspire thoughts of murder in the targets of a change in customs, at least in the literature of monasticism. In Dialogues 2.3, Gregory tells of monks who

conspired to poison Benedict rather than submit to his reforms. The monk John of Salerno (10th c.) describes the murderous intentions of the monks of Fleury toward the reformer Abbot Odo of Cluny (927-942), and in his History of my Calamities, Peter Abelard (1079-1142) complains of a similar reaction from the monks of Saint-Gildas-de-Rhuys in Brittany when he tries to reform them. Tampering with the old way of doing things could be a perilous business. Benedict himself, a savvy observer of human nature, had recognized the problems that could develop within a monastery's social landscape, even when those problems didn't incline toward murder. "Envy, quarrels, slander, rivalry, factions and disorders of every kind," were sure to emerge (RB 65.1-10). Resentment could result when the abbot or the cellarer played favorites (RB 2.16 and 34). Angry or jealous brothers might gossip and grumble about others. Monks linked by friendship or kinship might stand up to defend one another when accused or reprimanded by their superiors (RB 69). Friends might chat and visit instead of reading or sleeping at the appointed times, meet surreptitiously, or even send illicit messages to one another when one of them was excommunicated (RB 48.17-28 and 26).

The anonymous author of the Chronicle of Petershausen – the starting point for my recent Cambridge monograph, *The Trauma of Monastic Reform: Community and Conflict in Twelfth-Century Germany* -- would surely have recognized this troubling scenario. In 1085, a delegation of monks from the monastery of Hirsau had made their way out of the Black Forest and headed south toward the city of Constance where his monastery had stood since the tenth century. Their mandate was to introduce the customs of Hirsau at Petershausen – an impulse that had come from the Bishop of Constance, not the monks

themselves. Not everyone at Petershausen welcomed the impending arrival. Some of Petershausen's monks fled to the nearby monastery of Reichenau just before the delegation from Hirsau arrived. Others returned to the secular world as priests. Seven stayed on and experienced the process of reform.

My book goes beyond the common reading of monastic narratives of reform primarily as retrospective expressions of support for the deeds and ideals of a past generation of reformers. Such interpretations, while certainly valid, tell only part of the story by underestimating the real human impact that reform could have, not only on the individuals who comprised a target community as the reformers arrived, but also on those who lived, sometimes for several generations, in its aftermath. The uninvited and unwelcome reform of a well-established community like Petershausen, accustomed to its own customs, rituals, and hierarchies, dealt a shock to the life-world of the monks with rapid and fundamental changes to the deep-rooted "cultural tissue" of the monastery.

In *The Trauma of Monastic Reform*, I argue that the shock to the core community of monks dealt by the arrival of the reformers and the structural changes that they introduced, together with both the regional violence and broader spiritual changes reshaping the religious landscape of the late eleventh and twelfth centuries, initiated decades of anxiety for Petershausen: doubt about its continuity as a community, about the changing contours and boundaries of its internal landscape, and about its place in the broader spiritual and social landscapes of Constance and Swabia. Although initiated in the last decades of the eleventh century, the reform of Petershausen was a traumatic process that was still playing out at the end of the twelfth.

The book also draws on a variety of wider textual and material sources (necrologies, liturgical texts, architecture, and archaeology) to place the reform of Petershausen in the broader context of Benedictine reform, amid the new and competing forms of reformed religious life emerging in Swabia in the twelfth century, and within the troubled and intertwining social,

political, and ecclesiastical landscapes of contemporary Germany.

I was very fortunate to have had a year in Academic Paradise -- the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton, New Jersey -- to focus entirely on this project. And just in case your interest is piqued and you would like to read the Chronicle of Petershausen yourself, the first English translation of the text -- a collaborative effort undertaken over several years with two of my doctoral students in History, Dr. Shannon Turner Li and Dr. Sam Sutherland -- will be published this year by Manchester University Press. It is a great read, with many sections useful for undergraduate courses!



Alison I. Beach is an Associate Professor of Medieval History. She is the author of *The Trauma of Monastic Reform: Community and Conflict in Twelfth-Century Germany* (Cambridge, 2017) and *Women as Scribes: Book Production and Monastic Reform in Twelfth-Century Bavaria* (Cambridge 2004), and editor (with Isabelle Cochelin) of the forthcoming two-volume Cambridge New History, *History of Medieval Monasticism in the Latin West*. She is a historian of medieval Christianity with a special interest in religious women and their communities. She moonlights each spring as an archaeologist at the site of a former Blackfriary (Dominican monastery) in Trim, Ireland where she is Resident Director of OSU's wonderful learning abroad course on The History and Archaeology of Medieval Ireland.

Teaching Medieval Women

by Karen Winstead

English 4592, “Special Topics in Women and Literature,” has been part of my repertoire for most of my twenty-five years at OSU. Teaching this course effectively is a challenge. Many of the students I get arrive unaware that *my* “special topic” is *medieval* women, and many others have enrolled not because of their keen interest in either women or the Middle Ages but only because they are on the pre-Education track and a course dealing with women is required of them. To compound the difficulties, teaching about medieval women and literature means spending time on genres and texts that are tough sells to modern readers—saints’ lives, for example, or *The Book of Margery Kempe*.

Still, the course offers golden opportunities, including the chance to educate future educators and the chance to spark an appreciation for the literature I love in students who might not otherwise encounter it. Back in the 1990s, I was aghast to find students writing “mid-evil” for “medieval,” a misspelling that I suspect originated with high-school teachers who were forced to teach works like *Beowulf* without either liking or understanding them. Ever since then, I’ve been waging a war against the perception of the medieval as “evil,” cognizant that the period’s reputation for misogyny is a large part of what makes it “evil” in the minds of many “moderns.” Of course, misogyny was rife in the Middle Ages. But seeing women simply as victims of the patriarchy both obscures their achievements and facilitates a fallacious opposition between the Dark Ages and “our” Enlightened Present.

My goal, therefore, is to enrich students’ understanding of the past while encouraging them to use that understanding to think more critically about the present. They readily see the chasm that separates their world from that of, say, Heloise, but they are less likely to discern the commonalities between her world and theirs. I vividly recall a student paper from several years ago that asserted no modern woman would have put up with what Heloise endured from Abelard; yet here we are with the “#metoo” phenomenon demonstrating how many female celebrities and professionals, to all appearances the most successful and autonomous of modern women, have put up with the same or worse. And in 2018, the question Christine de Pizan posed in the early fifteenth century is still relevant: If women can do anything men can do, why are the highest-paying and most prestigious occupations overwhelmingly held by men? The question of how biological sex relates to gender and to sexual identity that is being asked with such urgency today was being pondered in the thirteenth-century *Romance of Silence*. In saints’ lives we find unexpected strategies of empowerment as well as practices of self-harm that have persisted into the present.

I have discovered that most students are game to learn anything—it’s a matter of piquing their interest. To complicate the ways in which my students think about the past, I aim to surprise, and sometimes to shock. I teach the alien(ating) lives and writings of “queer” mystics and “holy anorexics” along with the inherently appealing chivalric romances and troubadour lyrics. I challenge students to extract from the autobiography of Guibert of Nogent the biography of Guibert’s unnamed

mother. With future high-school teachers in mind, I cover the representation of women in canonical texts, unsettling past interpretations they may have learned in high school. The women in *Beowulf* who distribute mead to warriors are diplomats and powerbrokers rather than trophy wives. Chaucer's Wife of Bath's Prologue and Tale are not just about women's desire for mastery but about their experience of battery and assault. Malory's *Morte Darthur* challenges the assumption that "service" entitles a man—or a woman—to love.

Of course, not every student will come to love Hrothsvitha's virgin martyr plays the way I do, but I hope that most do come to see with greater clarity and nuance the women of the Middle Ages as reflected in its literature.



Karen Winstead is a medievalist in the Department of English. Her publications include *Virgin Martyrs: Legends of Sainthood in Late Medieval England* (Cornell University Press, 1997) and *John Capgrave's Fifteenth Century* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007). Her study of medieval life-writing, volume 1 of the *Oxford History of Life-Writing*, is coming out this spring. She has also published editions and translations of medieval saints' lives and is completing a monograph entitled *Fifteenth-Century Lives*.



From *The Book of Margery Kempe*, the birth of her first child.

Lord Denney's Players, *The Merry Wives of Windsor* by Christopher Highley and Sarah Neville

This coming April 4-7, Lord Denney's Players (LDP) will stage the first North American production of the short, early (Quarto) version of William Shakespeare's *The Merry Wives of Windsor* (up until now, editions and productions of the play have been based on the longer First Folio text). Lord Denney's Players was established in the English Department in 2014 to allow faculty and students to produce, perform, and research Medieval and Renaissance plays (<https://english.osu.edu/about/lord-denneys-players>). *Merry Wives* will be the group's fifth play, following on from *The Tempest* in 2017.

Coinciding with the production will be a two-day conference that will bring together OSU faculty and students, as well as scholars from other universities, for in-depth discussion of the texts, criticism, reception, and performance of *Merry Wives*. Part of the conference will be devoted to papers and round-table discussions led by undergraduate OSU students with responses from faculty. The undergraduate part of the conference will invite papers that discuss not only *Merry Wives*, but also the representation of women and ideas of gender in Renaissance drama and culture more generally. The keynote speaker will be Professor Jean Howard of Columbia University.

Merry Wives has issues of gender at its center. It is in many ways Shakespeare's anti-*Taming of the Shrew*. The latter has proven relentlessly popular on stage, in spite of, or perhaps because of, its anti-feminist gender politics. Attempts to rehabilitate the play's message for a contemporary audience have consistently valorized and romanticized

women's oppression, lending Shakespeare's cultural authority to the misogynist narrative that women would be happier if they simply learned to submit to their husbands. *Merry Wives*, as the only play that Shakespeare set in England and in his own time period, tells a very different story about the lives of women in his world, one more accurately reflective of women's historical experiences.



Buck Washing on Datchet Mead from *The Merry Wives of Windsor* (Act III, Scene V) by William Shakespeare, 1849, John Skinner Clifton, Yale Center for British Art.

Rehearsals are now well under way for the performances that will take place at the Columbus Performing Arts Center. Keep an eye out for announcements and further information.

Call for Nominations: CMRS Essay Awards

Barbara A. Hanawalt Award

for Outstanding Graduate Student Essay

Professor Barbara Hanawalt was Director of CMRS from 2003-2005 and worked with the Mershon Center for International Security Studies at the Ohio State University. She previously served as Director of the Center for Medieval Studies at the University of Minnesota, and was President of the Medieval Academy of America. She is a distinguished scholar, twice receiving the prestigious National Endowment for the Humanities Fellowship, and is considered by colleagues to be one of the world's leading scholars in the social history of late medieval England. The Hanawalt Award continues her legacy through recognizing and celebrating the very best of graduate student work here at OSU in Medieval and Renaissance Studies. Papers are nominated by CMRS faculty affiliates and judged by a committee of affiliated faculty and the CMRS Director.

Stanley J. Kahrl Award

for Outstanding Undergraduate Student Essay

The Stanley J. Kahrl Award was first given in 1987 in honor of Dr. Stanley J. Kahrl, distinguished scholar, professor, and the founding Director of the Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies. Dr. Kahrl was Director of CMRS from 1969-1978. He published widely on Renaissance drama and was one of the founders of the Records of Early English Drama project (REED). Originally there was both an undergraduate as well as graduate student Kahrl Award, but in 2010 the graduate student award was re-named in honor of Barbara A Hanawalt. The Kahrl award recognizes excellence in undergraduate research at OSU in the field of Medieval and Renaissance studies. Papers are nominated by CMRS faculty affiliates and judged by a committee of affiliate faculty and the CMRS Director.

How to Nominate a Student

Nominations for the 2017-2018 Barbara A. Hanawalt Award for Outstanding Graduate Essay and the Stanley J. Kahrl Award for Outstanding Undergraduate Essay will be due by **5:00 p.m. Friday, March 23, 2018**. Any affiliate may nominate any essay on a Medieval or Renaissance topic written for a course offered **Spring 2017, Summer 2017, or Autumn 2017**. (Papers written during Spring 2018 will also be accepted if available before the deadline.) Papers written for individual-study credit are eligible for consideration; however, honors theses, masters' theses, and chapters of dissertations are not. The nominating form to be used for all submissions is available online at <http://cmrs.osu.edu/awards-grants/essay-awards>; the second page contains further guidelines on the nominating process. If you need any additional information or have questions about the process, please write to Nick Spitulski.1@osu.edu.

End-of-Semester Events



Professor Scott Bruce (University of Colorado, Boulder) presented "The Dark Age of Herodotus: Shards of a Fugitive History in Medieval Europe." Using as a case study the tale of King Cyrus' vengeance against the Ganges River for drowning his favorite horse, this talk investigated the modes of transmission that carried this and other tales of Herodotus from Greek into Latin, from the Mediterranean across the Alps into northern Europe. Professor Bruce argued that the dismemberment of the *Historiae* into literary shards in Roman antiquity, and the repurposing of those shards by late antique authors of historical compendia and epitomes like Orosius, made many of these ancient stories available to medieval Christian readers long after the name of Herodotus had been forgotten.



Left to Right (Elizabeth Steinway, Leighla Khansari, Carmen Meza)
CMRS Graduate Student Associates enjoyed food and refreshments at the CMRS holiday party in Hagerty Hall.



CMRS graduate student affiliates Shaun Russell (Department of English), Clint Morrison (Department of English), and Bethany Christiansen (Department of English) enjoy their conversation with Professor Eric Johnson (OSU Rare Books and Manuscripts) at the holiday party.

Queer Sexuality in Medieval Studies

by Caitlyn McLoughlin

My dissertation examines narratives of medieval holy women, considering specifically the relationship between community, sexuality, and devotional practice. While these narratives are commonly referred to as “hagiographies,” that word often suggests a genre that is limited to a very specific set of details and events. Violent executions, mass conversions, and perhaps sexualized torture come to mind when thinking about hagiography, and this characterization is indeed fair, but I hope to expand the possibilities for the genre, showing that hagiographies did more than simply inspire their readers to lives of pious religiosity. By broadening the definition of hagiography, my dissertation also aims to expand current understandings of medieval sexuality and extend the bounds of queer history by foregrounding queer practices and relationships in medieval narratives. My research specifically traces the development of queer futures in medieval religious writing, identifying the political and textual affordances provided by the presence of these futures to nonnormative individuals and communities in the medieval period as well as postmodern queer individuals now. By “queer futures,” I mean a type of utopian ideality constructed as a result of a subject’s dissatisfaction in her present that ultimately wields a particular political or cultural force.

While studies of medieval sexuality have often been delineated by gender, my work moves past this essentialism, focusing on

the *effects* of sexuality, rather than the facts of their enactment or production. However, many surviving narratives that detail the devotional and daily practices of medieval women were written by men and thus, female desire or agency is always already constructed under a layer of male mediation – and perhaps even, *male* desire. My work also considers this construction but does not constrict my focus on the texts themselves as artifacts of a queer medieval history. Considerations of medieval sexuality must be extended beyond binaristic gendered categories and account for the ultimate representations of nonnormative sexuality inextricably tied to religiosity that are represented in the texts and in the relationships between hagiographers and their subjects.

Of course, queer conceptualizations of medieval literature and religious practice have been around for roughly two decades and are at present gaining wider repute, moving beyond the simple identification of a text or textual identity *as* queer. Considerations of how queerness operates influence reconsiderations of canonical texts or figures and encourage the treatment of previously neglected figures. However, research that considers medieval female religious practice through an explicitly queer lens seems almost absent. Most importantly, reconsidering holy women in this way challenges modern understandings of past histories that would generalize and essentialize identity in order to legitimize racist and sexist ideologies. It is incumbent on medieval specialists to loudly challenge

reductive thinking that would monolithically reduce medieval experience in order to justify modern romanticizations of a medieval past that would sanction or “prove” the supremacy of “normative” social practice with evidence of diversity and non-normativity as an important and *existing* part of pre-modern society.

My dissertation looks specifically at John Capgrave’s *Life of Saint Katherine of Alexandria* and its endorsement of mystical marriage and textual reproduction over temporal marriage and biological reproduction. I also examine the written lives of Dorothea of Montau and Margery Kempe, both women who, as wives with earthly husbands, engaged in polyamorous relationships where one lover was an idealized version of Christ. Finally, I consider Julian of Norwich’s experience as an anchorite, reading her rejection of social existence in favor of living as “dead to the world” as a uniquely queer enactment of community. While each of these experiences differs in execution and intention, they do share a rejection of a heteronormative social position and a focus on a world and future outside of the earthly realm and outside of any anticipated political system.

In the courses I have taught at OSU – and especially those that deal with pre- and early modern texts – I make a point to ask my students at the beginning of the semester for their general conceptions of medieval culture and literature. Often, I hear words like “oppressive,” “boring,” “violent,” and “sexist” in response. I work the rest of the semester to show that the Middle Ages were anything but boring and not any more oppressive or sexist than our own modern culture. Of course, this is not a particularly

encouraging sentiment, but one that is necessary to help students identify the fallacy of linear social progress. It is easy to get wrapped up in research and theory and the dissertation itself, but I find greatest fulfillment in expanding my students’ understanding of a period that was indeed, quite diverse.



Caitlyn McLoughlin is a fifth year PhD candidate in the Department of English. Her areas of interest include late medieval writing by, for, and about women, saints’ lives, mysticism, and queer/sexuality studies. She is originally from Pasadena, California and completed her undergraduate degree at UCLA. She enjoys hanging with her two cats Athena and Hecate, riding her bike around Columbus in warmer months, and beer. She’ll talk to you for days about ‘The X-Files’ if you give her the chance, or she’ll just do it anyways.

The Sorcerer's Apprentice: Teaching Magic and Witchcraft in 2018 by Kristen Figg

When I agreed to teach “Magic and Witchcraft in the Middle Ages and Renaissance” for the first time, I didn’t anticipate the enthusiasm of friends and acquaintances. People would ask me what I was teaching this term, and nearly all would respond with “Oh, that sounds so interesting!” or “I wish I could take that course!” I was delighted to know that my audience was likely to be highly motivated. But I also was a bit worried, since I had a feeling that my students—all 130 of them—would have high expectations, and perhaps a high level of disappointment if the course didn’t deliver. So what are they looking for? And, even more important, what can I give them that they perhaps weren’t expecting but can benefit from as part of their university education?

Since I am now only four weeks into the course, I don’t yet have a clear answer to either question. But I do know this is a course rich with opportunities for critical thinking. And its success, in my mind, depends upon students developing enough factual knowledge to negotiate historical periods and cultural shifts, with all the religious, political, social, and psychological forces these entail. So in a good “General Education” sense, this course should both offer a coherent experience of the subject itself and provide a set of tools for exploring any cultural idea that has been shape-shifting over the past few thousand years. And, with luck, it will also satisfy some of that innate curiosity that lurks in the souls of magic-lovers.

One of the keys to the course, I believe, is that it is based almost exclusively on primary texts. In order to understand witchcraft in the Middle

Ages and Renaissance, we have to begin with the Greeks, Romans, Hebrews, and early Christians. But descriptions of events and ideas from these periods are much less interesting than the problems raised by close reading. Every text opens up questions of definition and context. If, for example, Medea was a witch, why did Euripides have her perform so little “witchcraft”? Does the fact that she is descended from gods mean that classical witchcraft was entirely different from the witchcraft of the Early Modern period? How does all of this match up with what scholars and theorists like Margaret Murray, Carl Jung, and Bronislaw Malinowski have said about witchcraft? After watching a film version of *Medea*, students are exploring these kinds of questions on our on-line Discussion forum, where they can see what others are thinking and respond in turn.



In this image, wax dolls are being given to the devil. <https://wellcomecollection.org>

So far, some of our liveliest on-line discussions have addressed biblical texts, where students have engaged in lively debate as they try to differentiate between magic and miracles. Our textbook provides only the story of the Witch of Endor, but I added other examples: what of the Magi who visited Jesus? What of Pharaoh's sorcerers who changed staffs into snakes? And who is this Simon Magus? As the course moves into the Middle Ages, students will be accustomed to addressing issues of motive and power. One student recently wrote that she had heard on the radio that Joan of Arc was first tried and burned for witchcraft and then designated a martyr and saint. Ah, but she is getting ahead of me....

Since the specters of current allusions to magic hover over all our discussions, we make ample use of media. Each class begins or ends with magic-themed music. Why is love like magic? When is it like witchcraft? And why can't we seem to give up our attachment to these metaphors? On these questions, we have a bit of real-time response and discussion despite the size of the class. The primary texts are also supplemented by films, both in class and in the CMRS Spring Film Series. In an era where the term "witch hunt" has been increasingly used to characterize political investigations and accusations of misbehavior, a film like Arthur Miller's *The Crucible* raises the issue of parallels between the Early Modern era and recent history—inviting us to look carefully at Salem trial transcripts and examine the changes Miller made to enhance both the similarities between eras and the audience's sympathy for the male protagonist. Liam Neeson has recently raised the question of whether the current #MeToo movement isn't "a bit of a witch hunt." I expect the discussion—on line and in class—to be lively.

All of the elements of the class are meant to contribute to a narrative—a story of magic and witchcraft built on a foundation of historical fact and critical inquiry. If students learn to see how "Magic and Witchcraft" can redefine itself, hover in the language, insinuate itself into popular culture, become a political football, and yet appeal to some inner yearning, then the course has done its work.



Dr. Kristen Figg is Professor Emerita from Kent State University, where she taught English and French. Before delving into the world of Magic and Witchcraft (with many thanks to Dr. Richard Green and Dr. Sharon Collingwood for generously sharing their materials!), she had, since coming to OSU, taught Introduction to the History of English, Fundamental Grammar, and Gothic Paris 1100-1300. Her publications include a book on the lyric poetry of the fourteenth-century poet and chronicler Jean Froissart, as well as a volume providing the first English translations of most of his narrative poems. Currently in press is a transcription/translation of a fifteenth-century manuscript of *Secrets de l'histoire naturelle*, Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale MS fr. 22971, which includes some wonderful stories of medieval magic.

Memoires, Travel Accounts, and Commercial Handbooks at the Southern Border of Spanish America by María Victoria Marquez

Colonial Tucumán (today's center and north-west of Argentina, bordering Chile and Bolivia) was a key mercantile hub at the south of Spanish America. Since the 17th century, it supplied Andean mining centers with mules. The following century, changes to the distribution of European imperial power over the Atlantic economy reshaped the region as a re-distributor of imported manufactures that entered via Buenos Aires and later Montevideo. This prompted merchants and traders active in this peripheral but pivotal area to reflect on their position within the colonial system, resulting in a rich textual production from which I'm identifying imaginaries, languages and forms of representation of the world of trade. Like this, a goal of my project is to overcome the limitations that an economic historiography focused on the structural analysis present.

I started this journey with a book of memoirs, its title translated to English, *Failures of the fortune and various events that happened to Miguel de Learte*, written by an anonymous author (1770-1780?). This native of Navarra's town of Sanguesa, Spain, wrote to restore his reputation after falling in disgrace with the Spanish administration—he had been an agent within the Jesuit Order's commercial network in Tucumán when Carlos III expelled the friars in 1767. These memoirs provide a unique perspective since the author codifies his colonial and transatlantic experience from within his insertion and participation in mercantile life. He tries to legitimize himself as an honorable individual with a very high sense of morals, by defining himself as an agent of the colonial trade. This piece consti-

tutes a *sui generis* report of merits and services, although it doesn't address any of the usual "merits" we find in a nobleman, a military, or an official of any sort: his principal assets are himself and the social credit he achieved in Spanish America thanks to his involvement in the market both legally and illegally.

I cross read *Failures of the fortune* with the more extensively studied, *Guide for Blind Walkers* (Lima, 1772) by the Spanish traveler Carrió de Lavandera. The Guide, an eighteenth-century travel account with picaresque undertones, dedicates several pages to Tucumán and Rio de la Plata, where most of the author's informants were merchant travelers. This led me to outline the concept of "mercantile subjectivity", a place of enunciation, beyond the isolated case of Learte, as a regional marker of identity.



Frontispiece of Veitia y Linage's *Norte de la contratación de las Indias Occidentales* (1672), a treatise on Spanish commercial law.

Last summer, I visited the John Carter Brown Library (JCB) where I traced a portion of the Spanish-language bibliography on commerce that populated Tucumán's libraries at the time

Learte and Carrió de Lavandera were in this region. This mercantile archive includes theological debates on the legitimacy of commerce and the problem of the salvation of merchants' souls that occupied 16th-century religious scholars (Mercado, *Suma de tratos y contratos*, 1569), as well as mercantilist legal treatises and traders' handbooks (Hevia Bolaño, *Labyrintho de comercio*, 1617. Also in the archive is Veitia Linage, (*Norte de la contratación*, 1672) that struggled to constrain commerce within the national interests, or posited merchants as essentially virtuous subjects because their personal credit was their main capital. One also finds the works of the two most prominent Spanish neo-mercantilists, Jerónimo de Uztáriz (1724) and Bernardo de Ulloa (1740), whose works shifted the focus from the merchant's identity and his position in the social scale to commerce itself as a primordial energy that sets the whole social system in motion.

The many sources found at the JCB helped me visualize how the notions of “commerce” and “merchant” in the Spanish imagination entailed a thick sediment formed through the centuries --since the early years of the colonization of the Indies that shook the entire conception, and scale, of Spanish trade. Tying back sources, I suggest this archive frames Learte's memoirs as well as the informant's contributions to Carrió de Lavandera's narrative. In Learte's case, it makes visible how his discourse is nurtured by, at times productive, and at times tense, dialogue and coexistence of an enlightened attitude --individual's self-awareness, a critical approach to authority and government, rejection of superstition— along with pre-modern traits such as a corporative notion of the mercantile world, and a strong providentialism. In Lavandera's *Guide*, what emerges is the frequent reference to a “para-legal” code of norms that governed this sphere of activity for centuries. While merchants' aspirations were expressed in a relentless preoccupation with profit, they were

also anchored in a shared sense of ethics that regulated everyday life and the realm of business, even beyond the letter of the law. Both texts show an insistence in reminding their readers of the rules of the trade. Finally, I suggest these texts, as examples of mercantile subjectivities in colonial Tucumán, manifest an existing sense of moral crisis stemming from the abandonment of practices and principles both by other merchants and the government, which these merchants perceived was happening alongside changes in the colonial market structure. By exploring further these questions, I aim to shed light on the regional experience of a changing world order.



María Victoria Marquez is from Argentina and a PhD student in the Department of Spanish and Portuguese. María has a degree (licenciatura) in History from the National University of Córdoba, Argentina. Between 2008 and 2011 she held a research fellowship at Argentina's National Council of Research in Technology and Sciences (CONICET). In 2011-2013 she was awarded a Fulbright grant to complete her MA in History at OSU. She has published articles in Argentina on Tucumán's colonial mule trade. Her book, *Los Mendiolaza. Relaciones mercantiles y poder político en Córdoba y Perú en el siglo XVIII*, (Editorial Ferreyra, 2016), is a case study based on an eighteenth-century family of Basque origin residing in South America whose influence on the mule trade spanned the colonial Andes for decades until the Tupac Amaru rebellion destabilized their social network.



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The Temperate and the Intemperate (detail), miniature from Valerius Maximus, *The Memorable Deeds and Sayings of the Romans*, Bruges, Master of the Dresden Prayer Book, about 1475–80. The J. Paul Getty Museum.