

NOUVELLES

Nouvelles



Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies
The Ohio State University
November 2005

Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies

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Greetings

As the end of what, for me, has been a particularly strenuous quarter it's pleasant to contemplate what vistas the New Year, with its promise of a greater familiarity with at least some of the ropes and hence the prospect of more time to devote to the actual art of sailing, has to offer.

In addition to our continuing, and so far untrammelled, negotiations with the Folger, CMRS hopes to launch a number of other initiatives next quarter.

A slight surplus in our budget last year, due to Barbara's astute management, means that we are able to offer a couple of small grants (\$500 maximum) to assist graduate students in the medieval and early modern periods with their research costs. A notice on how to apply will go out early in January. We hope to be able to turn this into an annual award, but obviously that must depend upon the continuing good health of our finances.

A second (and much cheaper) proposal is to hold a weekly reading group in the Center on post-Classical Latin. This will be an informal gathering of anyone who would like to brush up, or maintain, their Latin reading skills by translating passages around a table. We hope that once the group is up and running, it will choose its own texts to read and establish its own skill level. Again, watch for an announcement early in the New Year. Everyone, faculty and students alike, will be welcome.

Greetings, cont...

Finally, and this time primarily for undergraduates, we are planning to show a series of movies with medieval or Renaissance themes or subjects. The idea is to have four meetings a quarter, with pizza and soft drinks, and our first series is to be devoted to Robin Hood. A schedule will be sent out at the beginning of the quarter, and once again, everyone will be welcome.

As we look forward to the New Year, however, we should not forget that we still have events scheduled for December. On Friday December 2 Heather Webb will be giving a talk entitled "From Heart to Foot: Locating the Center of the Body in Late Medieval Texts" (1:30 in Hagerty 206), and on the following Wednesday (December 7th) we will be holding our annual end-of-year party on the top floor of Dulles. We hope that you will continue to give the excellent support you have shown us throughout the quarter by coming to both these events.

With best wishes,

Richard Firth Green
Director, Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies



Among Us

Frank Coulson (Professor, Greek and Latin) was awarded the Humanities Exemplary Faculty Award, which is given by the College of Humanities on an annual basis to a tenured faculty member in recognition of his/her distinguished and sustained achievements in the areas of teaching, research, and service.

David Cressy (Professor, History) presented the plenary address on “The Gunpowder Plot of 1605: Contested Memory and Changing Performance” at a conference on “Early Modern Terrorism” at the Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington, DC, 5 November.

Laura Michele Diener (Ph.D. Candidate, History) presented “‘*Communes in Viventes*’: Holy Women in Germany, 1080-1200,” at the Florilegium Conference for Medieval Graduate Studies, Yale University, 28 October.

Richard Dutton (Professor, English) and Jean Howard edited *A Companion to Shakespeare’s Works: 1 The Tragedies; A Companion to Shakespeare’s Works: 2 The Histories; A Companion to Shakespeare’s Works: 3 The Comedies; and A Companion to Shakespeare’s Works: 4 The Poems, Problem Plays and Late Plays* (Blackwell, 2005).

Valerie Emanoil (Ph.D. Candidate, History) presented “Widow’s Property Holdings in Late Medieval London Wills” at the Southern Conference on British Studies, Atlanta, Georgia, 2-5 November.

Alan Farmer (Assistant Professor, English) and Zachary Lesser published “The Popularity of Playbooks Revisited” in *Shakespeare Quarterly* vol. 56.

Matt Goldish (Associate Professor, History) presented “Sephardic Life After 1492” at the College of Humanities’ Inaugural Lecture, 15 November.

Among Us, cont...

John King (Professor, English) published “The Eighteenth-Century Folio Editions of Foxe’s *Book of Martyrs*” in *Reformation* vol. 10; he also published “Literary Aspects of Foxe’s Acts and Monuments” in *Foxe’s Book of Martyrs Variorum Edition Online* v. 1.0; he also published “Confessionalisation, the Reformation, and the English Book Trade” in *E-colloquia* vol. 2; and he presented “Reading Foxe’s *Book of Martyrs*” at the University of Aberdeen, Scotland, 3 June.

Lisa Kiser (Professor, English) read samples of Middle English literature as a featured speaker at the Read Aloud meeting, Main Library, 13 October.

Leslie Lockett (Assistant Professor, English) read samples of Old English literature as a featured speaker at the Read Aloud meeting, Main Library, 13 October.

Predrag Matejic (Associate Professor, University Libraries) presented “Watermarks in 14th-Century Slavic Manuscripts of Hilandar Monastery” at *Classica et Beneventana: A Symposium to Honor Virginia Brown on the Occasion of Her 65th Birthday*, Columbus, Ohio, 28-29 October.



Terence Odlin (Associate Professor, English) presented “Two Thousand Years of Language History in Scotland: Will Multilingualism Return?” at the English-Speaking Union, Columbus, Ohio, 19 October.

Mark Rankin (Ph.D. Candidate, English) edited the “Complete Set of Woodcut Illustrations from the First Four English Editions of John Foxe’s *Actes and Monuments* (the ‘Book of Martyrs’), with Selected Images from the 1554 and 1559 Latin Editions” (American Theological Library Association, 2004).

Phoebe Spinrad (Associate Professor, English) published “The Fall of the Sparrow and the Map of Hamlet’s Mind” in *Modern Philology* vol. 102.

Michael VanDussen (Ph.D. Student, English) published “Betokening Chastity: Margery Kempe’s Sartorial Crisis” in *Forum for Modern Language Studies* vol. 41.

Karen Winstead (Associate Professor, English) presented “‘I am so trobilled . . . with Crysten lawe’: Conversion in Fifteenth-Century Saints’ Lives” at “Conversion: A Conference at Harvard University,” Cambridge, Massachusetts, 24 September.



Our New Affiliates

Raffaella Fabiani Giannetto
(Architecture):

Raffaella received her Master in Landscape Architecture and Ph.D. in Architecture from the University of Pennsylvania. Her dissertation addressed the role of the garden in early Renaissance literature, philosophy, and architecture. An excerpt of her dissertation, entitled “Writing the Garden in the Age of Humanism: Petrarch and Boccaccio,” was published in *Studies in the History of Gardens and Designed Landscapes* in Summer 2003.

After graduating in 2004, Dr. Giannetto was awarded a post-doctoral fellowship in Garden and Landscape Studies from Dumbarton Oaks (Washington, DC). During the fellowship year she worked on a book manuscript on the Medici gardens of fifteenth-century Florence. The book is forthcoming in the series Penn Studies in Landscape Architecture by the University of Pennsylvania Press. Her future research will involve the study of the written tradition of garden making, and focus on the ways in which garden making evolved into garden design in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

As an assistant professor in Landscape Architecture at the Knowlton School of Architecture she teaches design studios and seminars on contemporary design; in the future, she hopes to collaborate actively with the Center by offering courses on Italian late medieval and Renaissance gardens. Outside the classroom, Dr. Giannetto enjoys Argentine tango music and dance.



New Affiliates, cont...

David Sanson (Philosophy)

David pursues research in contemporary metaphysics (primarily the metaphysics of time and change), and, somewhat separately, research in medieval philosophy. Under both guises, he worries about the ontology of the past, present, and future, the metaphysical status of change, the proper analysis of tensed language, and the nature of future contingent truth, among other things. He is also co-authoring a study of discussions of the liar paradox in medieval Arabic texts.



A reminder to our affiliates:

Please don't forget that we are accepting nominations for the Stanley J. Kahrl Awards, which are given to the writers of the best graduate and undergraduate essays. If you need a nomination form, please contact the CMRS and we will send one out. We request that you submit papers electronically to cmrs@osu.edu. The deadline for submission is 5:00 pm on Friday 31 March 2006.

What I've Been Reading Lately...

By Daniel Collins (Slavic and East
European Languages and Literatures)

Every time one of my students mentions a “great new vampire book” that I really must read, I groan inwardly. (This happens rather a lot, as I teach a class on vampires, which, I always hasten to point out as my interlocutor’s left eyebrow goes up, is actually a class about changing ideas of evil, from folklore to the twenty-first century.) Of course I’m always delighted to hear that a student enjoys reading; so many will now unblushingly admit the opposite. It’s just that it’s hard for me to pretend that I want to read “great new vampire books.” Most, after all, are excruciatingly bad franchise commodities; they revolve endlessly around scenes of gore and sex mixed with rather muddled ideas about immortality and higher knowledge hidden from the masses. If the authors make any attempt to invoke the folklore, history, or general atmosphere of Eastern Europe, they are usually ignorant at best, and at worst heavy-handed stereotyping of the benighted-East and West-as-the-Savior-of-civilization variety.

A new first novel about vampirism, Elizabeth Kostova’s *The Historian* (New York: Little, Brown and Company, 2005), is refreshingly different. First, it is well-written, and at times even beautiful and moving. This makes it a rarity for the genre; indeed, I’m in doubts that it really belongs to the genre of vampire novel, for all that it depicts a mid-twentieth-century quest to locate and destroy a vampiric Vlad the Impaler, the historical Dracula. There’s scarcely any gore, the few amorous scenes would pass muster in a mid-Victorian novel, and there are no addled musings about endless life or arcane knowledge. Kostova gives appreciative descriptions of such Eastern European settings as “Emona” (Ljubljana), “Ragusa” (Dubrovnik), Istanbul, Budapest, and Sofia, as well as villages in Romania, Hungary, and Bulgaria, which are

neither Gothic nor orientalist in intent; she has evidently seen not only the sights but the side streets and has absorbed the atmosphere. She treats the reader to loving descriptions of Turkish and Hungarian cuisine—why don't we have a Hungarian restaurant in Columbus?—and somewhat less loving descriptions of Bulgarian peasant fare. (“She... poured us a beverage—something white and thick... the stuff was lukewarm and tasted distinctly of barnyard floor. I tried not to gag visibly while Baba Yanka twinkled at me. ‘Sheep’s milk blended with water,’ Helen told me. ‘Think of it as a milk shake’” [543].) One of the quests in the novel culminates in a remote Bulgarian village during the feast day of a locally venerated saint; Kostova’s depiction of Bulgarian church processions and traditional folkways (some purely fictitious) are quite convincing. The playing of the *gaida* (goatskin bagpipe) “had the sound of an animal, too, a loud bleat, a shriek or squawk” (549). Two old women “began to sing, their arms twined around each other’s waists now, and the sound they made—a stomach-churning harmony, harsh and beautiful—seemed to come from one body” (550). Characterizations like “Baba Yanka... took my arm proudly, as if to show her neighbors what good connections she had” (548) show genuine insight into peasant mentality. As a Slavist with an interest in folkways who has travelled in some of the regions Kostova describes, I can read her book without embarrassment for the author. (I should note, of course, that there is no folk tradition whatsoever of Vlad the Impaler’s having been a vampire; that idea originated with Bram Stoker.)

Second, *The Historian* makes entertaining reading for the medievalist. Thankfully, it eschews medievalism; except for a brief reconstruction at the end, the settings are modern. The short framing narrative is set in Philadelphia at the beginning of the twenty-first century. The main embedded narrative, in which the narrator, as a teenager, tries to uncover the secrets haunting her father and, ultimately, finds her missing mother, takes place in Amsterdam, Yugoslavia, Italy, Oxford, and Southern France in the early 1970s. The narrative within this narrative begins in an unnamed Ivy League (no doubt Yale, Kostova’s alma mater) in the early 1950s, as the father, then a graduate student in Early Modern History, finds (or is given) a mysterious incunabulum and sets

What I've Been Reading, cont...

off on a quest to rescue and redeem his lost advisor, who has fallen in the hands of Vlad the Impaler, with the help of another graduate student, a Hungarian (ultimately Transylvanian Romanian) anthropologist. Within this second embedded narrative are still others: the advisor, Bartholomew Rossi, an ancient historian, writes about his finding of a similar incunabulum and his pursuit of Vlad in Oxford, Istanbul, and Romania in the 1930s; the anthropologist's mother, a Romanian peasant descended from a boyar family of Dracula's time, recalls her love affair with Rossi; an Oxford don recounts his brief encounter with the evil of the Impaler in England in the 1940s. Kostova's heroes are scholar adventurers—not so much of the Indiana Jones variety (though Helen, the Hungarian anthropologist, proves to be a crack shot with a revolver) as the intrepid researchers in Richard D. Altick's nonfiction. Their natural habitats are libraries and archives; they track Vlad the Impaler by determining the provenience of incunabula, deciphering medieval maps, searching for documentary evidence, going to archeological sites, collecting oral history, conferring with Bulgarian scholars persecuted by the Communist regime, and translating texts from Latin, Church Slavonic, Ottoman Turkish, and Quranic Arabic. There is an excruciatingly funny account of the graduate student hero throwing together a paper on medieval Balkan history (a topic in which he has no expertise) and presenting it, trembling in his boots, before a grave audience at a Hungarian academic conference. (Some of us have nightmares of this kind at least once a week.) Even Dracula is a historian in the novel; he has an astonishing library, and he wants to recruit (or enslave) scholars in order to study and catalogue his collection.



For all that the villain of the novel is Vlad Dracula, *The Historian* says very little about the Impaler's life—a thrilling, often nauseating story of treacheries, vengeance, scorched-earth warfare, hair-raising escapes through secret passages and across high mountain passes, unfathomable atrocities of refined cruelty, and lost characters written on rabbit hides. Dracula courageously waged, and for a time won, a forlorn struggle against Turkish invaders; his people revered him, as many Romanians do to this day, for defending Christianity against Islam and for establishing law and order in a chronically corrupt state. Kostova spins a plausible tale of why monks would risk the plague and martyrdom to retrieve Dracula's head from Istanbul, where it was (in historical fact) struck on a pike to prove that *Kaziklu Bey* had finally been vanquished, and why they would want to reunite that relic with the rest of the body. (The body, notoriously, is no longer in what is thought to have been its grave in Snagov Monastery, because of *furta sacra* or desecration.)

Kostova flirts with the issue of whether such a man could be forgiven; she has his library include a copy of Origen's treatise claiming that even the Devil would ultimately be redeemed. Towards the end of the novel, her narrator imagines "a clear autumn morning in 1476" at Snagov Monastery: "The abbot has forgiven him everthing, privately—everything. Has not Dracula devoted his life to holding back the infidels, the monstrous sultan who is battering down all the walls of Christendom? But he wonders just as privately what the Almighty will mete out to this strange man" (638, 639). Strange man, indeed—a monster of despotism whose only measure of right and wrong was his own capricious will. Kostova's Dracula, like his historical namesake, raises troubling questions about whether the best of ends can justify any possible means. When Vlad proudly inspects the image of St. Michael slaying the Dragon in a printed book from "the first printing press in Wallachia," he observes that it should rather be "the Dragon slaying the infidel" (641)—and the abbot privately winces.

What I've Been Reading, cont...

As ambitious as it is, the novel does not shed any light on the nature of evil. Apart from Dracula himself and a Yale University librarian (not a Special Collections librarian, by the way) whom he has turned into a vampire, the only evil that Kostova's heroes encounter comes in the form of a Secret Police agent and informant—petty servants of corrupt regimes, who embody Arendt's banality of evil. The more cosmic evil of the Impaler himself is never explained and seems almost ontological. "Did He who made the Lamb make Thee?" Dracula himself commissions the incunabula, blank except for an image of a Dragon [*Dracul*], which mysteriously appear among the papers of the scholar adventurers, seemingly to lure them to his service, or to their doom (a distinction without a difference). The evil represented by Vlad, however it is understood, is endless, as the closing of the novel suggests: thirty years after the vampire is destroyed, the narrator finds one of the dragon incunabula among her own papers after she reads again of Dracula's atrocities. Her response to the problem of evil is left, tantalizingly, to the imagination of the reader.



A Faculty Colloquium

From Heart to Foot: Locating the Center of the Body in Late Medieval Texts



Presented by Heather Webb
Department of French and Italian
Friday 2 December
1:30 pm
206 Hagerty Hall

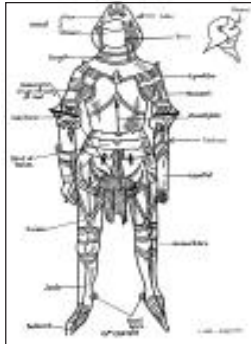
For many in the medieval period who followed Aristotle's teachings, the heart was the indisputable center of the body and of the soul. But Galen, that other great authority for medieval scholars, held that many functions that Aristotle attributed to the heart were in fact functions of the brain or even of the undignified liver! The medieval period reveals much about the ways in which a political, theological or philosophical framework can integrate, suppress or shift to accommodate new evidence. This talk follows some twists and turns in the search for the center of the body.

Questions? Contact the CMRS at 292-7495 or cmrs@osu.edu

Upcoming Events

Age of Armor
Columbus Museum of Art
23 October - 1 January

This exhibit investigates the roles and the development of armor as an art form. Highlights of the exhibition include a “Corinthian” helmet from 550 B.C. and a complete set of field armor made in the sixteenth century in Germany. For more information, visit their website at <http://www.columbusmuseum.org>



Calls for Papers and Upcoming Fellowships

We have devoted a lot of time to updating the Calls for Papers and the Fellowships section of our website. We have recently received a number of Calls for Papers, particularly in Early Modern literature, courtly literature, East Asian literature and culture, and Old English literature.

To view these, please visit: <http://cmrs.osu.edu/opps/cfp.cfm>

To view our updated list of fellowships and grants, please visit: <http://cmrs.osu.edu/opps/funding.cfm>

Lecture Series

On 20 January 2006 at 1:30 pm, David Klausner (Department of English, University of Toronto) will present "Playing the Unplayable: Staging the Crucifixion in Medieval and Early Modern Britain." This lecture will be held in Room 122 of the Main Library. This is the fourth lecture in this year's "Anniversaries" series. This lecture will be given in honor of Stanley Kahrl.

History of the Book Discussion Group

Under the auspices of Harvey Graff's Literacy Studies project, a group of faculty members and graduate students from the Humanities and Sciences have formed an interdisciplinary "History of the Book" group. The "history of the book" encompasses any inquiry that treats the production or consumption of texts (including manuscripts, imprints, broadsheets, cartoons, etc.): authorship, publishing, printing, bookselling, and reading. We plan to meet roughly once a month to present our own research on the history of the book, discuss new works in the field, invite speakers to lecture or run seminars, and, should interest prove great enough, organize a workshop or conference. If you would like more information or are interested in joining the group, please contact Cynthia Brokaw (History) at brokaw.22@osu.edu.

Traditional Ballad Singing Group

There is a traditional ballad singing group currently being organized in Columbus. The group will perform unaccompanied singing of English, Scottish, Irish or Appalachian ballads. If you are interested, please email Mary Bertke at mfbertke@sbcglobal.net.

Upcoming Events, cont...

M e d i e v a l S l a v i c S u m m e r I n s t i t u t e

The Hilandar Research Library/Resource Center for Medieval Slavic Studies, in conjunction with the Department of Slavic and East European Languages and Literatures at The Ohio State University, will host a four-week intensive Summer Institute for qualified graduate students, 25 June-22 July 2006. The program will offer Practical Slavic Palaeography (Slavic 870) and Readings in Church Slavonic (Slavic 812). The deadline for applications is 1 March 2006. For further information, view their newsletter, "Cyrillic Manuscript Heritage" at <http://cmrs.osu.edu/rcmss/>, or email hilandar@osu.edu.

21st Annual Conference on Medievalism

The Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies and the Department of English present the 21st International Conference on Medievalism, to be held at The Ohio State University, 12-14 October 2006. Plenary Speakers will include Tom Shippey (Saint Louis University) and Laurie Finke (Kenyon College). Please send inquiries and proposals by 1 May 2006 to:

Clare A. Simmons
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The Ohio State University
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Or e-mail to simmons.9@osu.edu

H o l i d a y P a r t y

Please join us for our annual holiday party on Wednesday 7 December from 4:30-6:30 pm. The party will be held in our office at 308 Dulles Hall. If you plan to come, please RSVP to cmrs@osu.edu. We hope to see you there.

At the Library

Prepared by Assistant Professor and General Humanities
Bibliographer Marti Alt

Medieval and Renaissance Studies Digital Videos

OhioLINK's Digital Media Center (<http://dmc.ohiolink.edu/media/ffhLogin>) offers several videos online in the areas of Medieval and Renaissance Studies. These can be viewed using RealPlayer (free from Internet) and/or downloaded on your computer for viewing at a later time or shown to a class. Listed below are a few of the titles you might be interested in:

African Ascetics and Celtic Monks: Christianity in the 5th and 6th Centuries (1999)

Apocalypse: The Reinvention of Christian Art (1999)

Arabs Make Their Entrance: Islam and Empire (1999)



Bankers, Builders and New Beginnings (2004)

Battle for the Language of the Bible (2003)

The Beginning: The Emergence of the Renaissance (1999)

Birth of a Language (2003)

Byzantium and the Holy Roman Empire: Christianity in the 7th and 8th Centuries (1999)

The End of the Renaissance? (1999)

Christians, Jews and Moslems in Medieval Spain

Christian vs. Christian (2004)

At the Library, cont...

The Circles of Light: The Divine Comedy (1995)

Crescent and Cross: Rise of Islam and Age of Crusades (1998)

Crusaders and Schism in the East: Christianity on the 11th and 12th Centuries (1999)

Douceline de Digne (2000)

Feudal System (1989)

The Fires of Faith: Dissidents and the Church (1995)

The First Secular Music (1982)

Francois I

From Arabic to Latin: The Assimilation of Arab Knowledge (1999)

The Golden Age (1982)

Heresy, War and the Black Death: Christianity in the 13th and 14th Centuries (1999)

Hildegard von Bingen's Ordo Virtutum (1997)



Invention of Banking (2004)

Islamic Science and Technology

The Jeweled City: The Cathedral of Chartres (1995)

Journey of the Magus: Artists and Patrons in Renaissance Italy (1999)

Julian of Norwich (2000)

Knights and Nobles (2004)

Light and Liberty: Renaissance Art in Venice (1999)

Luther and the Reformation (1982)

Medieval Drama (2000)

Medieval London 1066-1500

Medieval Philosophy: Thomas Aquinas (1987)

Medieval Spain (2002)

Medieval to Elizabethan Poetry (1987)

Monks, Keepers of Knowledge (2004)

Peasants, Serfs and Servitude (2004)

Pierrefonds and Viollet-le Duc

Print History (1997)



Reformation: Luther and the Protestant Revolt (1998)

The Renaissance (1982)

Revolution of Conscience: The Life, Convictions and Legacy of Martin Luther (2003)

Sacred Space: Art, Architecture, and the Role of the State (1998)

Sectarianism and Schism in Europe: Christianity in the 15th and 16th Centuries (1999)

St. Clare of Assisi (2000)



*Testament: The Early Church and the Jewish
Diaspora (1998)*

*This Earth, This Realm, This England
(2003)*

The Vikings (1996)

Visions of Prophecy, Voices of Power (2000)

*Voices from Heaven: The Religious Music of Europe in the Middle Ages
(1997)*

A list of additional newly-received resources is available at
<http://library.osu.edu/sites/humanities/medieval/>



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2005-2006

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History of Art	Barbara Haeger
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Philosophy	Tamar Rudavsky
RCMSS	Predrag Matejic
Slavic and East European Languages and Literatures	Daniel Collins
Spanish and Portuguese	Elizabeth Davis
Theatre	Tom Postlewait
University Libraries	Marti Alt Geoffrey Smith

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