

Mirabile dictu!

The Newsletter of the Center for Medieval and Early Modern Studies (CMEMS) at the University of Colorado



In principio: Welcome to the New CMEMS!

by Professor Scott G. Bruce

Mirabile dictu!

Welcome to *Mirabile dictu!* the monthly newsletter of the Center for Medieval and Early Modern Studies (CMEMS) at the University of Colorado at Boulder. I am very pleased to begin my three-year term as Director of CMEMS and I am very excited to share with you the details of the many events that we have in store for students and faculty alike.

There is so much going on! In 2013-2014, we have planned a robust schedule of visiting speakers, several faculty work-in-progress talks, a faculty roundtable discussion of an influential new book, a spring symposium on an important scholarly trend,

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Faculty Profile: Medieval Art Historian Kirk Ambrose

Learn more about the work of Professor Kirk Ambrose, CU's historian of medieval art.

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Sub arboribus: A Medieval Latin Reading Group

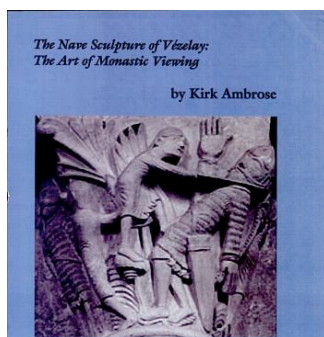
Read the sixth-century *Rule of Benedict* with Professor Scott G. Bruce "under the trees."

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Recursive Origins: Writing at the Transition to Modernity

A path-breaking new book by Professor William Kuskin (Department of English).

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FACULTY PROFILE: KIRK AMBROSE

Kirk Ambrose is Associate Professor and Chair of the Department of Art and Art History. He has published extensively on topics in medieval art history, including a book entitled *The Nave Sculpture at Vézelay: The Art of Monastic Viewing* (Toronto, 2006) and a co-edited collection called *Current Directions in Eleventh- and Twelfth-Century Sculpture Studies* (Turnhout, 2010). His forthcoming book is *The Marvellous and the Monstrous in Twelfth-Century European Sculpture*. He is currently at work on a book-length study of Portuguese Romanesque sculpture.

Kirk Ambrose, Chair of the Department of Art and Art History at CU, has recently become editor of *The Art Bulletin*, the foremost journal of art history.

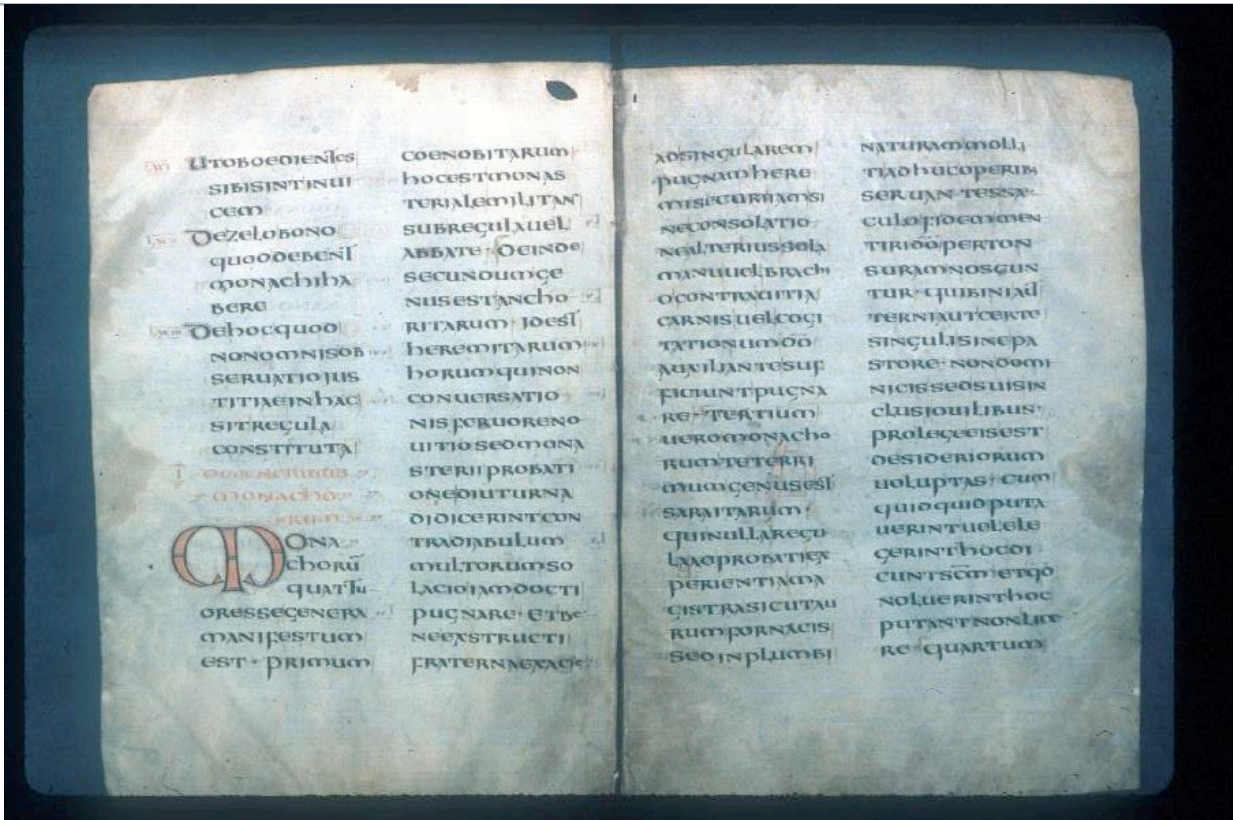
In recent years, Kirk Ambrose has emerged as a leader in the field of medieval art history, but this summer he has raised the bar even higher. On 1 July 2013, Ambrose became editor-in-chief of *The Art Bulletin*, the foremost journal of record for scholarship on the history of art in the English language. During his three-year term as editor-in-chief (2013-2016), he will have a formative influence on the trajectory of the entire discipline of art history. Ambrose is well prepared for this challenge. In 1999, he earned his PhD in the history of art from the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, completing his dissertation under the guidance of Ilene Forsyth and Elizabeth Sears. He joined CU Boulder's Department of Art and Art History that same year. Since then, Ambrose has taught a wide range of courses on medieval art history at all levels. But in

addition to teaching and advising students and publishing books and articles on medieval art history, he has also thought broadly about the influence of "global history" on the history of art in general (an issue he plans to engage in a new series of short essays that he has solicited for *The Art Bulletin*) and about the cultural influences of the nineteenth century that shaped the modern field of art history as we know it (the subject of a exhibition he is co-curating with Professor Davide Stimilli called *Encountering Cultures: Aby Warburg in the American Southwest, 1895-1896*, which will take place at CU Boulder in 2014). Ambrose's broad view of the history of premodern material culture and the intellectual currents that have influenced its interpretation is one of the many qualities that will make him an excellent editor of *The Art Bulletin*.

On August 29, Kirk Ambrose will present "Saints and Ex-Convicts as Artistic Collaborators" as the first CMEMS Faculty Work-in-Progress Talk.

Sharing research in progress is an important way for scholars to advertise their work, formulate their ideas for a public audience, and garner critical feedback from other specialists. Over the 2013-2014 school year, CMEMS will sponsor four Faculty Work-in-Progress talks by faculty members in Art History, English, Music and History. Attending these talks will give you a strong sense of the fascinating topics that medieval and early modern scholars at CU are working on.

Professor Ambrose will deliver the first of this year's CMEMS Faculty Work-in-Progress talks on Thursday, August 29 at 12 noon in UMC 425. The title could not be more provocative: "Saints and Ex-Convicts as Artistic Collaborators." We hope you can join us for what promises to be a stimulating presentation and discussion. Please bring your own lunch to the event. CMEMS will provide a selection of cold drinks, tea and coffee, and some delicious desserts.



Sub arboribus (“Under the Trees”)

A NEW MEDIEVAL LATIN READING GROUP AT CU BOULDER

Starting on 30 August 2013, CMEMS will sponsor a new weekly Medieval Latin Reading Group called *Sub arboribus* (“under the trees”). This group is open to all students, undergraduate and graduate, who have completed at least two semesters of Latin. Interested faculty members are encouraged to take part as well. The goal of *Sub arboribus* is for students to gain a firm knowledge of important medieval Latin texts and to spend time every week with a professor they might not otherwise get to know in a small group setting. The professor and the text will change every semester.

In the fall of 2013, Professor Scott G. Bruce will inaugurate this new medieval Latin reading group by reading selections from the *Regula Benedicti* (*The Rule of Benedict* or RB for short) with students. This sixth-century handbook for the organization of cloistered communities and the duties of monastic officials is arguably the most important and

influential text in the Christian monastic tradition. The RB is available in an excellent new facing page Latin-English edition translated by Bruce Venarde and published in the Dumbarton Oaks Medieval Library. Students can purchase this text on Amazon.com or through the Harvard University Press website.

If you are interested in joining this new medieval Latin reading group, please email us to let us know that you will be attending (cmems@colorado.edu). The first meeting of *Sub arboribus* will take place on Friday 30 August at 12:30pm. Please gather at Professor Bruce’s office (262 Hellemss), from where we will proceed outside to read together *sub arboribus*. For the first meeting, we will start with a short chapter (Chapter 6: “On Silence”) and proceed at a pace measured by the group’s general level of Latin proficiency. We look forward to reading medieval Latin with you under the trees!

(continued from p. 1) and a new medieval Latin reading group. In addition, this newsletter will keep you up to date on current issues in medieval and early modern scholarship, provide reflections on teaching, research and translation practices, and offer profiles of CU faculty members and their work as well as announcements about their most recent publications.

Amicus, amici, amico...

The fastest and easiest way to keep track of what is going on with CMEMS is to “like” us on Facebook. We also encourage students and faculty alike to follow us on Academia.edu, where we will archive *Mirabile dictu!* and other documents relevant to the Center. You can find the URLs for these sites on the last page of the newsletter.

New Invited Speakers Series

Over the course of the coming year, CMEMS will invite a number of scholars from diverse disciplinary backgrounds to share their current research on topics in premodern history, art history, literature, philosophy, music and religion. Some, like Professor Kirk Ambrose, are CU faculty members (please read the profile of Professor Ambrose and learn about his upcoming talk on p. 2). Some are neighbors, who have been invited from other parts of Colorado and Wyoming as part of our “Front Range Speakers” series. And others are highly distinguished scholars from across North America and Europe who are coming to us from the very best research institutions in the world.

Announcing the James Field Willard Lecture in Medieval History

This coming autumn, CMEMS will host the first annual James Field Willard Lecture in Medieval History. This lecture is named for Professor James Field Willard, the first medieval historian to teach in the state of Colorado. Willard earned his PhD in Medieval History at the University of Pennsylvania in 1902 and joined CU Boulder’s History Department in 1905. He became Professor of History and Chair of the department the next year and held both positions until his death in 1935. In memory of the first medieval historian to teach at CU, the James Field Willard Lecture in Medieval History will invite a distinguished historian of the Middle Ages to the CU Boulder campus every October to present a public lecture on their research.

We are delighted to announce that on the evening of Tuesday October 29, William C. Jordan, Dayton-Stockton Professor of History and Chair of the Department of History at Princeton University, will deliver a public lecture entitled “The Lorn Land” as the 2013 James Field Willard Lecture in Medieval History. An expert on the history of France in the High Middle Ages, Professor Jordan has authored numerous award-winning books, including *The Great Famine: Northern Europe in the Early Fourteenth Century* (Princeton University Press, 1996), which won the Haskins Medal from the Medieval Academy of America in 2000.

Further information about the work of Professor Jordan and details about his lecture will appear in the October issue of *Mirabile dictu!* In the meantime, you can read more about the life and career of Professor James Field Willard in a biographical note by Scott G. Bruce and Anne E. Lester, “James Field Willard: A Pioneering Medievalist,” in *The Medieval Academy News* (Winter, 2006), p. 12, available on Facebook and Academia.edu.

Medieval Latin *sub arboribus*

Finding regular opportunities to read medieval Latin can be daunting and frustrating for undergraduates and graduates alike, who already face heavy work loads and strict course requirements for their respective degrees. To make matters worse, medieval Latin does not fit easily into the curriculum structure of modern universities due to the awkward and outmoded division between the departments of Classics (where ancient languages and history are taught) and History (where postclassical history is taught, but premodern languages are not). While other departments have specialists in medieval literature who teach the relevant languages to their students (Anglo-Saxon in the English Department, Old French in the French Department, etc.), medieval Latin does not enjoy the same advocacy as its vernacular kin. As Director of CMEMS, I am working closely with my colleagues in the Classics Department to increase

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the profile of medieval Latin on the CU campus. Over the next few semesters, we hope to see an increase in course offerings that will give students exposure to medieval Latin. Moreover, starting this fall, CMEMS will sponsor an informal medieval Latin reading group called *Sub arboribus* that will meet weekly on the CU Boulder campus. For more information about this exciting opportunity, please see the announcement on p. 3.

The CMEMS Undergraduate Certificate

CMEMS is also undergoing a major administrative reorganization that will have a positive impact on our undergraduates. With the help of a new Executive Committee comprising Professors Anne E. Lester (History) and Katherine C. Little (English), we are drafting new by-laws for the Center and establishing an Advisory Board to help with fund raising and the public promotion of the Center. Most important to students, however, is our renovation of the CMEMS Undergraduate Certificate Program. By the end of the fall semester, we plan to have new rules and requirements in place for those undergraduates who wish to add this certificate to their B.A. degree. If you are interested in completing the CMEMS Undergraduate Certificate, please email your intention to do so (cmems@colorado.edu) and include the following information: your major(s); the date you are going to graduate; and a list of all of the courses that you have taken at CU. In addition to the Certificate, we are also in the process of developing two team-taught CMEMS core courses: an undergraduate lecture course on medieval and early modern cultures; and a graduate research seminar called *An Introduction to Research Methods in Medieval and Early Modern Studies*. We will share news on these exciting course offerings as soon as possible.

Graduate Work in Premodern Studies

CU Boulder is an excellent place to pursue graduate work in premodern studies. We boast specialists in almost every field of medieval and early modern research. Many departments offer both M.A. and PhD programs that allow students to specialize in premodern research topics. The Department of History offers an M.A. degree in medieval history that combines rigorous philological training with courses in advanced research methods intended to prepare students for the most competitive PhD programs in the country. You will have the opportunity to hear about the research and careers of some of our talented CU alumni in future issues of *Mirabile dictu!* If you are interested in pursuing graduate work in medieval or early modern studies at CU Boulder, please contact the Director of Graduate Studies of the department relevant to your field of interest and read up on the scholarship of the professor(s) that you might like to work with to make sure that their research interests compliment your own.

Looking Ahead to September

The September issue of *Mirabile dictu!* is already in the works. You can look forward to a profile of Professor Renee Trilling, a gifted Anglo-Saxonist in the Department of English, University of Illinois at Champagne-Urbana, who will present her research to us on September 12; a preview of some of the graduate and undergraduate courses on premodern topics offered at CU Boulder in Spring 2015; and an editorial on the tradition of translating classics of children's literature into Latin.

Servus,
SGB

About the Director: Professor Scott G. Bruce, Department of History



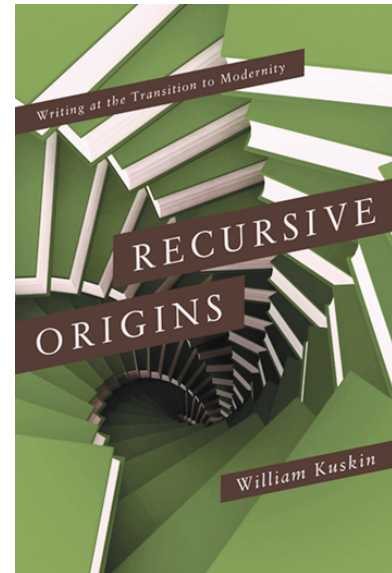
Scott G. Bruce earned his B.A. in History and Latin *summa cum laude* (1994) at York University in Toronto, Canada. He pursued his M.A. (1996) and Ph.D. (2000) in History at Princeton University, where he concentrated on topics in religion and culture in the early Middle Ages and wrote his dissertation under the supervision of Professor Giles Constable.

A specialist on the history of the abbey of Cluny, SGB has published widely on many aspects of medieval monastic culture and literature. He also serves as an editor of *The Medieval Review* (TMR) and plays an active role in the Medieval Academy of America (MAA). For more information, including a complete list of publications, please visit: www.colorado.academia.edu/ScottBruce

Recursive Origins: Writing at the Transition to Modernity A New Book by William Kuskin, Professor of English

The University of Notre Dame Press announces a new book by William Kuskin, professor of English and Chair of the Department of English at CU Boulder: "This volume reconsiders the relationship between the Middle Ages and the early modern period to suggest that rather than a revolutionary break, literary time is dominated by a process of recursion. Kuskin uses the term "recursion" from computer science, where it describes a computer program's return to a subprogram within itself to perform a more complex procedure. Books, for Kuskin, are recursive: they imagine within themselves a return to an earlier moment of writing, which, when read, they enact in the present. His is a profound claim for the grip of the past on the present and, more locally, a reclamation of the importance of the fifteenth century for any discussion of sixteenth-century literature and of the relationship between the medieval and the early modern."

You can order your copy directly from the University of Notre Dame Press (<http://undpress.nd.edu/book/P03047>) or on Amazon.com.



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IMAGE SOURCES:

The scroll-bearing individuals on page 1 are from a fourteenth-century copy of the *Secreta secretorum* owned by the British Library and featured in the 2012 exhibition *Royal Manuscripts: The Genius of Illumination*. See the article by Roya Nikkhah in *The Daily Telegraph* (30 October 2011).

The manuscript on page 3 is Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Hatton 48, the oldest known copy of the *Rule of Benedict*, probably written around 700 in Anglo-Saxon England. You can browse through this manuscript at <http://bodley30.bodleian.ox.ac.uk:8180/luna/servlet>.

And lastly the historiated letter M on this page is from the Lindisfarne Gospels. It appeared in the *Durham Today* article entitled "Lindisfarne Gospels and Cuthbert's Treasures on Display Together for First Time in 500 Years" (28 June 2013).

Postscriptum: On 16 June 2013 the BBC broadcast a Sunday Feature on the return of the Lindisfarne Gospels to Durham for a new exhibition. Now you can listen to "The Gospels Come Home" on the BBC website and leaf through one of the most famous medieval manuscripts at The British Library's Digitised Manuscript Collection! You can find these links and much more on our Facebook page. We look forward to seeing you all there!

