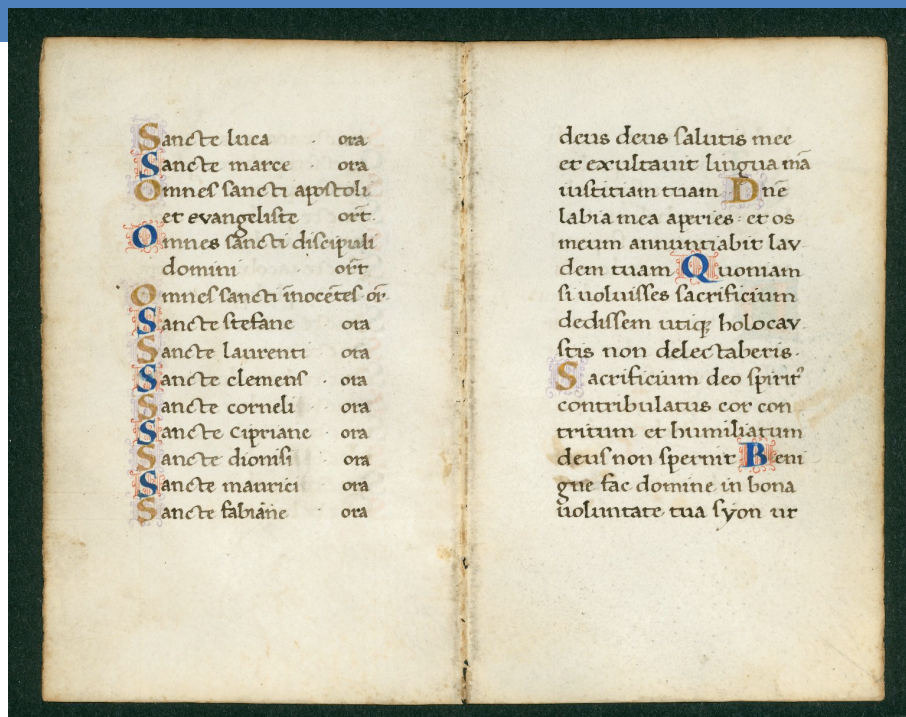


# Mirabile dictu!

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



## *Aliena misericordia: The Kindness of Strangers*

by Professor Scott G. Bruce

### *Mirabile dictu!*

Just before Christmas, I received an email from my friend Professor Maryanne Kowaleski (Fordham University) informing me about an amazing new blog written by Lisa Fagan Davis, Acting Executive Director of the Medieval Academy of America (MAA). Dr. Davis is a specialist in medieval manuscripts who has catalogued many manuscript

collections in North America. Back in September 2013, she began a virtual tour of premodern manuscript holdings in American libraries. Every week she updates her blog – “Manuscript Road Trip” – with fascinating insights and glimpses at some of the treasures held in American collections.

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### *This Month's Invited Speaker Crosses Disciplinary Boundaries*

On February 11, Dr. Pascale Bermon (CNRS, Paris) talks about philosophers and nature.

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### *CMEMS Alumnus Profile featuring Richard Payne*

CU Graduate Richard Payne teaches the Ancient Near East at the University of Chicago.

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### *CMEMS Hedgehog T-Shirts On Sale Now for a Limited Time*

Find out how to order your very own CMEMS T-Shirt. Nothing says “Te amo” like a hedgehog!

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### SPEAKER PROFILE: Pascale Bermon

Pascale Bermon conducts research at the Laboratoire d'Etudes sur les Mono-théismes, a division of the Centre national de la recherche scientifique in Paris. She earned her Ph.D. in Philosophy at the Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes, Sorbonne, in 2000. Her research expertise includes the history of western spirituality and medieval philosophy. In 2007, she published a book entitled *L'assentiment et son objet chez Grégoire de Rimini* in the series *Études de philosophie médiévales* (Paris: Vrin). She is also the author of many articles and for many years she was the co-editor of the annual *Bibliographie annuelle du Moyen Âge tardif*, an invaluable, annotated bibliographical resource for medieval scholars. Her current research is on perceptions of nature and the environment in the Middle Ages.

Pascale Bermon, a researcher at the Centre national de la recherche scientifique in Paris, specializes in the history of medieval philosophy and spirituality.

Pascale Bermon reads medieval philosophical and theological texts like no one else. Her current research considers the texts of medieval Latin philosophers and theologians of the later Middle Ages as sources for the history of the perception of the medieval environment, especially on the topics of food, animals, natural disasters and climate. Experts in medieval philosophy are typically not interested in environmental history; likewise, historians generally do not consider philosophical and theological texts as important sources for their work. Bermon reads these texts in search of explicit

conceptions of nature as well as incidental traces of the perception of this vanished world.

On Tuesday 11 February at 5pm, Pascale Bermon will present this new research in a public lecture in HUMN 180 entitled "Reading Medieval Philosophers and Theologians as Sources for Environmental History." For this lecture, she will draw examples from the works of Thomas Aquinas (d. 1274) and Robert Holkot (d. 1349). This talk is free, open to the public, and catered with yummy food and drink. Please spread the word, especially to your undergraduate students!

On February 11, Pascale Bermon will present her research on philosophical texts and the medieval environment as a CMEMS Invited Speaker.





## CMEMS Alumnus Profile: Prof. Richard Payne

For more than a decade, CMEMS faculty at the University of Colorado have been training some of the best and brightest students in the state of Colorado in medieval and early modern studies. Many of our students earn their B.A.s or M.A.s with us before departing to pursue their Ph.D.s at some of the most prestigious research universities in the United States. Every few months, *Mirabile dictu!* will profile one of our former students and introduce you to their current research.

This month's CMEMS Alumnus Profile features **Richard Payne**. Richard is currently Neubauer Family Assistant Professor of Ancient Near Eastern History at the University of Chicago. After completing his B.A. *summa cum laude* in the Department of Classics at CU Boulder (2004), Richard pursued graduate training in the Department of History at Princeton University, where he completed a Ph.D. dissertation entitled "Christianity and Iranian Society in Late Antiquity, ca. 500-700," under the direction of Professor Peter Brown (2009). He was Assistant Professor in the Department of History at Mount Holyoke College (2009-2013) before taking up his new position at the University of Chicago. Richard has also held several prestigious visiting research fellowships, most notably at Trinity College (University of Cambridge) and at the Institute for the Study of the Ancient World (New York University).



Richard's research deals with a constellation of topics and problems raised by sources produced in late antique Iraq and Iran in the centuries before and after the expansion of Islam. His recent publications include "Monks, Dinars, and Date Palms: Hagiographical Production and the Expansion of Monastic Institutions in the Early Islamic Persian Gulf," *Arabian Archaeology and Epigraphy* 22 (2011): 97-111; and "Avoiding Ethnicity: Uses of the Past in Late Antique Northern Mesopotamia," in *Visions of Community: The West, Byzantium, and the Islamic World* (Ashgate, 2012), pp. 205-221 (a volume that Richard co-edited with Walter Pohl and Clemens Gantner). This past year, Richard's work appeared in one of the foremost journals of historical research in the English-speaking world: "Cosmology and the Expansion of the Iranian Empire, 502-628 CE," *Past & Present* 220 (2013): 3-33. You can find a copy of this essay on the CMEMS Academia.edu webpage: <http://colorado.academia.edu/cmems>. We are eagerly awaiting the publication of his first book, tentatively entitled *A State of Mixture: Christians, Zoroastrians, and the Making of the Iranian Empire*.

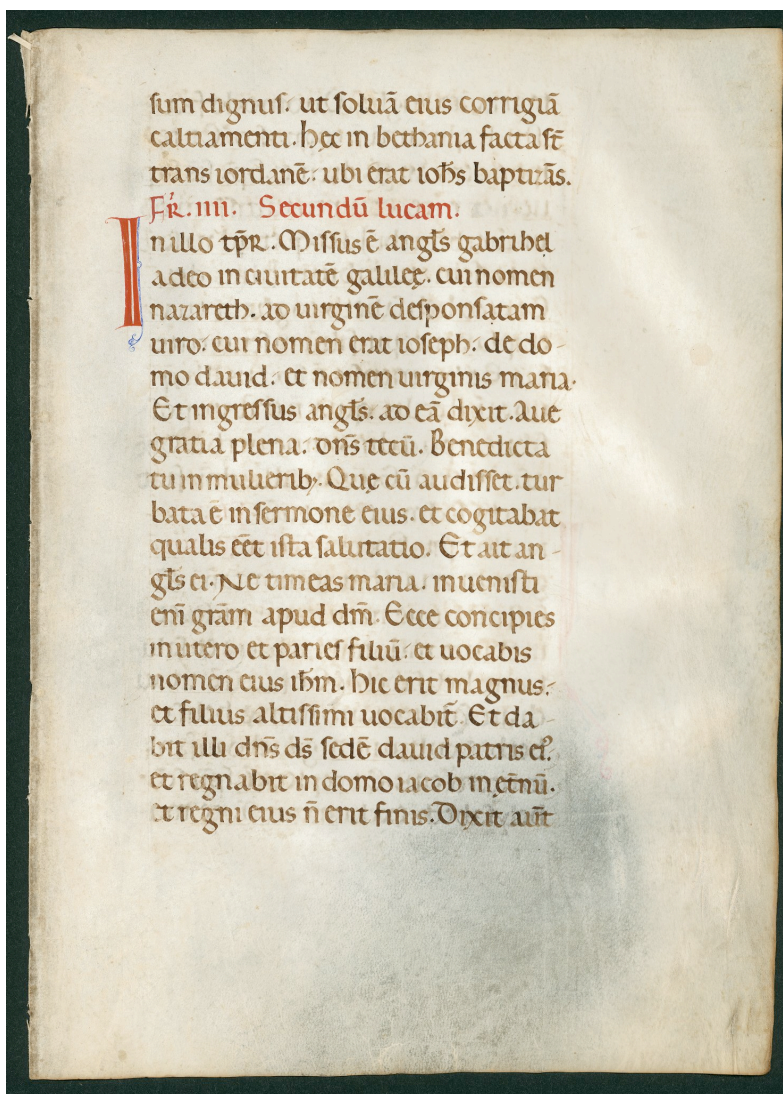
For those of you in Chicago, Richard will be giving a talk entitled "The Rise of Christianity in Iran" on 5 February 2014 at 7pm in Breasted Hall at the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago. This talk will explore how Christian institutions came to flourish in the late antique Iranian world (226-636 CE), from Eastern Arabia to Bactria. Bishoprics multiplied, sophisticated Christian literatures developed in Syriac and Middle Persian, and monasteries were established at a dizzying pace. And yet the rulers of this empire were avowed Zoroastrians, adherents to a religion supposedly hostile to Christianity. Richard's lecture will examine how Christian institutions took shape, expanded and accumulated social and economic capital with a Zoroastrian political system. It promises to be a wonderful lecture.

(continued from p. 1)

Dr. Davis has done us all an incredible kindness. Her blog serves as an easily accessible catalogue of premodern manuscript holdings in American collections, which highlights especially interesting books and leaves and offers many nuggets of learned commentary. It is nothing less than the virtual companion to her online *Directory of Pre-1600 Manuscripts in the United States and Canada*.

But even more importantly Dr. Davis has reminded us about the riches in our own backyards. While I was well aware that my home institution, CU Boulder, owned medieval and early modern manuscripts, it was Dr. Davis' introduction to our collection that compelled me to delve further into the premodern sources housed a short walk from my office. Since then I have been thinking a great deal about how best to use them in my seminars.

Dr. Davis' blog entry for 21 December 2013 "Christmas in Colorado" features a sample of manuscripts from up and down the Front Range of the Rockies. Three medieval leaves in the CU Boulder collection receive special notice. The first is a ninth-century Gospel Book page (MS 355) that preserves a portion of the Gospel of Luke (Davis mistakenly refers to the text as the Book of Job). This very early leaf survived as part of the binding of a later medieval book. The hand is a very fine sloping Carolingian miniscule. The margins contain references to parallel passages in the Gospels written in a smaller script.



The second CU Boulder manuscript featured on Davis' blog is a fifteenth-century Book of Hours (MS 315) that boasts a rare illumination of the martyrdom of St. Eustace, which shows him being boiled alive in a hollowed out statue of a bronze idol shaped like a calf. The image is very unusual for a Book of Hours, but as Davis notes, "[t]he text is a Suffrage to St. Eustace and would have been included in the manuscript at the request of the original owner."

The last page from CU Boulder presented by Davis is from a thirteenth-century lectionary of Italian provenance (MS Ege 3, shown above), which preserves the Christmas readings from the Gospel of Luke (1:26-33) describing the Annunciation to Mary and the birth of Jesus. These readings have rubricated headings as well as lovely initials painted in red with blue details.

Continued...



You can find Dr. Davis' Manuscript Road Trip blog here: [www.manuscriptroadtrip.wordpress.com](http://www.manuscriptroadtrip.wordpress.com). The many links to virtual manuscript collections allows you to use her blog as a research tool to learn more about lesser known manuscript collections across the northern United States. Over the next few months, Davis will survey libraries in the southern States. An introduction to Canadian collections is promised in the near future.

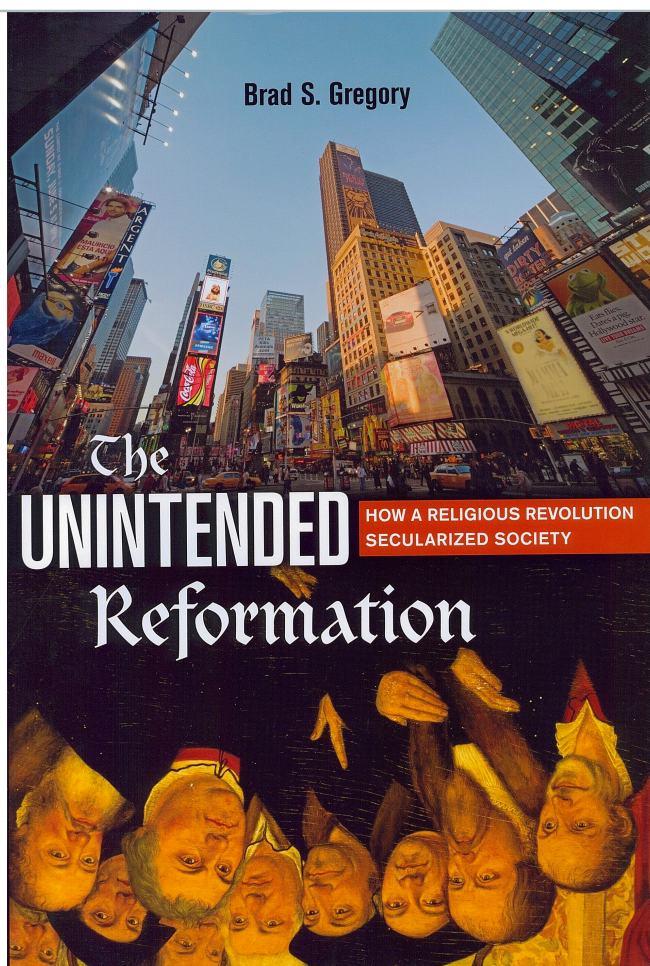
With respect to the premodern holdings at CU Boulder, you can access these materials on the Norlin Library webpage ([ucblibraries.colorado.edu](http://ucblibraries.colorado.edu)) by clicking "Libraries & Collections," and then "Special Collections," and then "Medieval and Early Modern Manuscripts." Future issues of *Mirabile dictu!* will feature highlights from local Colorado manuscript collections.

February is a busy month for CMEMS. In addition to Dr. Pascale Bermon's talk on Tuesday 11 February, we have our annual Faculty Roundtable Discussion on Tuesday 24 February. See below for the full details.

Servus,

SGB

**MARK YOUR CALENDARS!** On Tuesday 24 February at 1pm in The Aspen Rooms in the UMC, CMEMS will host our second annual Faculty Roundtable Discussion. Every February we gather together as a community to talk about important new books in premodern studies. This year, we are discussing Professor Brad Gregory's book, *The Unintended Reformation: How a Religious Revolution Secularized Society* (Harvard University Press, 2012). This conversation will feature CU professors from the departments of Classics, English, History and Religious Studies.



In order to encourage your participation, CMEMS is giving away ten (10) copies of Gregory's *The Unintended Reformation* to the first ten people who email us at [cmems@colorado.edu](mailto:cmems@colorado.edu) and confirm that they will be attending the event. Please include your CU mailbox number or your home address so we can send you the book when we receive your email. We look forward to seeing you at what promises to be a stimulating discussion of a provocative book!

## 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.

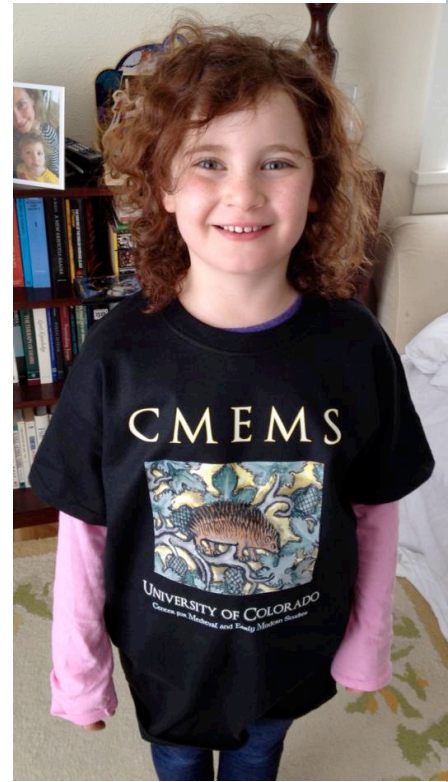
A specialist on the history of the abbey of Cluny, SGB has published widely on many aspects of medieval monastic culture and literature. He also serves as an editor of *The Medieval Review* (TMR) and plays an active role in the Medieval Academy of America (MAA). For more information, including a complete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

## Da mihi basia mille? Nothing Says “Te amo” like a CMEMS Hedgehog!

The Center for Medieval and Early Modern Studies at CU Boulder proudly presents to you its long-awaited 2014 Winter Fashion Collection. Behold! It is now possible to display our adorable hedgehog mascot with pride while attending academic conferences, exploring derelict castles, LARPing with strangers, or reading Old English by the light of a waning moon. And with Valentine’s Day on the horizon, you can say “Te amo” with a medieval hedgehog for a fraction of the price of a dozen roses or a bottle of gin.

We have printed a limited edition of fifty (50) shirts that will only be on sale until 22 February 2014, so be sure to order yours today! You can find all of the information at [www.tfund.com/CMEMS](http://www.tfund.com/CMEMS). The shirts are very high quality, the reproduction of the Getty hedgehog illumination is gorgeous, and the cost is a mere \$7.72 plus postage. Be aware, though, that the sizes tend to run a little small. The shirt(s) will be delivered to you at the beginning of March. The adorable child is not included.

Show your hedgehog pride today! And when your t-shirt arrives, send us a photo for the CMEMS Facebook page. Thanks so much for your support of CU Boulder’s Center for Medieval and Early Modern Studies!



## CMEMS@Boulder

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### IMAGE SOURCES:

The images on pp. 1 and 4 are manuscript leaves owned by the University of Colorado. You can find further information about them on the CU Special Collections website (see this month’s editorial for access instructions).

The illumination of peasants eating on p. 2 is from the fourteenth-century *Livre du roi Modus et la reine Ratio* (Paris BN MS Français 22545, fol. 72).

The coin to the right is a limited edition 10 EURO coin issued by the Central Bank of Ireland in 2011 to celebrate St. Brendan the Navigator as an important part of Irish heritage. Note the whale’s tail and the volcano!

*Postscriptum:* The spring semester brings the stalwart members of *Sub Arboribus*, the CMEMS Medieval Latin Reading Group, together once more! This semester, Professor Carole E. Newlands (Classics) is reading the Voyage of Saint Brendan (*Navigatio sancti Brendani*) with all interested undergraduates, graduates and faculty members. The group meets at 4pm every Tuesday in HUMN 345 with refreshments provided by Classics. For more information and to obtain a copy of the readings, please email Professor Newlands at: [carole.newlands@colorado.edu](mailto:carole.newlands@colorado.edu). Thanks!

