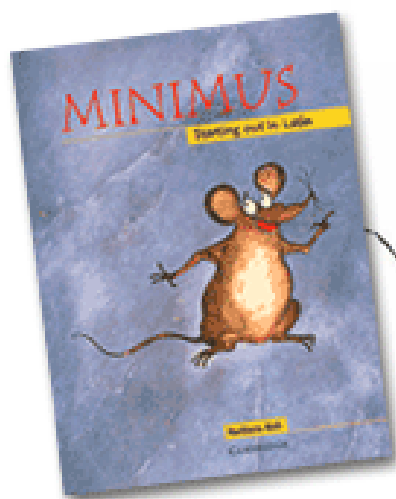


# Mirabile dictu!

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

## MINIMUS



### *The Mouse That Made Latin Cool*

by Professor Scott G. Bruce

#### *Mirabile dictu!*

CMEMS is very pleased to announce our first outreach initiative. Beginning in January 2016, Whittier International Elementary School in Boulder, Colorado, will offer its very first weekly afterschool program in Latin! In the winter and spring semesters, fourth and fifth graders in the Whittier Latin Club will have their first exposure to

Latin vocabulary and grammar as well as Roman literature and culture. Our textbook is the highly acclaimed *Minimus*, widely considered to be the best introduction to the Latin language for elementary age students. Read on, gentle reader, to learn more about the mouse that made Latin cool!

Continued on

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#### *Speaker Profile: Professor Elisheva Baumgarten*

Professor Baumgarten will give a public lecture on consent in medieval Jewish marriages.

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#### *Mark Your Calendars for the Annual CMEMS Conference*

*Religion and (the Master)  
Narrative* Takes Place at CU  
Boulder on October 22-24.

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#### *CMEMS Sponsors 2015 Medieval Writing Workshop*

Anglo-Saxon scholars gather at  
CU Boulder to discuss new  
projects in Old English Lit.

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**SPEAKER PROFILE:  
ELISHEVA  
BAUMGARTEN**

Elisheva Baumgarten is Professor of History in the Department of Jewish History and Contemporary Jewry at The Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Professor Baumgarten received her Ph.D. from The Hebrew University of Jerusalem in 2001. Her first book, entitled *Mothers and Children: Jewish Family Life in Medieval Europe* (Princeton University Press, 2004), won several awards, and her most recent book -- *Practicing Piety in Medieval Ashkenaz: Men, Women, and Everyday Religious Observance* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014) -- has already received rave reviews. Professor Baumgarten has been a research fellow at IAS Princeton, and at the École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales (EHESS)

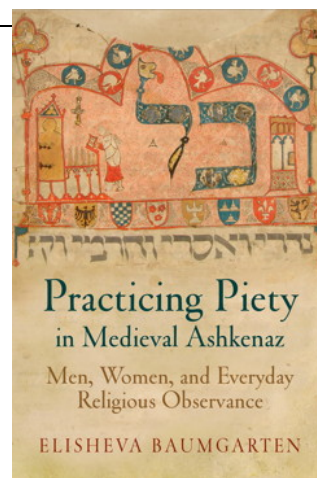
**A specialist in medieval Jewish communities in northern Europe, Elisheva Baumgarten is Professor of History at The Hebrew University of Jerusalem**

Professor Elisheva Baumgarten's research focuses on the Jewish communities of medieval Germany and northern France. She is a social historian who uses gender methodology and comparative methods to examine the daily life of medieval Jews within their Christian surroundings. Her research has examined family life, life-cycle rituals, education, midwifery, and piety. Reviewers of her books have been deeply impressed by the way that her studies have illuminated both the lived experience of medieval Jews and the ideological and ritual frameworks that structured and reflected it. By examining "the non-elite, non-official sphere" of Jewish women and children in the wider comparative context of medieval Christianity, she has made "a major contribution in so carefully delineating the interconnections of medieval Jewish and Christian family life.

Professor Baumgarten is currently writing a social history of medieval Jewish marriage in northern Europe. Her CMEMS-sponsored lecture will examine evidence from a wide variety of medieval Hebrew sources discussing the age of brides at marriage and their agency in choosing their spouses in the medieval Jewish communities of Germany and northern France. Contrary to recent scholarship, Professor Baumgarten will argue that Jewish brides and grooms were far from passive in the arrangement of their own marriages and that the brides were generally older than has commonly been assumed. In comparative fashion, she situates changes in this pattern in Jewish communities over the course of the High Middle Ages within shifting conceptions of marriage in medieval Christian Europe at large.

**On 8 October 2015, Elisheva Baumgarten will deliver a public lecture entitled "Consent and Choice Reconsidered: Marriage in the Medieval Jewish Communities of Northern Europe."**

On Thursday October 8 at 5pm, CMEMS is proud to present Professor Elisheva Baumgarten, who will give a public lecture entitled "Consent and Choice Reconsidered: Marriage in the Medieval Jewish Communities of Northern Europe." The event will take place in HUMN 1B90. Refreshments will be served. The talk will last 45 minutes, to be followed by a Q&A with Professor Baumgarten.



## RELIGION AND (THE MASTER) NARRATIVE:

AN INTERDISCIPLINARY CONFERENCE ON MEDIEVAL AND EARLY  
MODERN BELIEF AND PRACTICE

THIRD ANNUAL JAMES FIELD WILLARD LECTURER:

**JOHN VAN ENGEN**

ANDREW V. TASKES PROFESSOR OF MEDIEVAL HISTORY AND DIRECTOR OF  
THE CENTER FOR MEDIEVAL STUDIES AT THE UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME

PLENARY SPEAKERS:

**SARAH BECKWITH** (DUKE UNIVERSITY)

**KENNETH MILLS** (UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN)

**NINA ROWE** (FORDHAM UNIVERSITY)

UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO BOULDER  
CENTER FOR MEDIEVAL AND EARLY  
MODERN STUDIES

**22-24 OCTOBER 2015**

THURS: 5-7:30PM

NORLIN LIBRARY, BRITISH STUDIES ROOM

FRI: 8:30AM-6:00PM

NORLIN LIBRARY, BRITISH STUDIES ROOM

SAT: 8:30AM-5PM

VISUAL ARTS BUILDING

PANELISTS:

HEATHER BLURTON • SUSAN STAKEL • THERESA TINKLE • KATHARINE BILEEN •  
CATHERINE SAUCIER • CAROL NEEL • ROSS LERNER • ZACHARY STEWART •  
JASMIN MILLER • MICHAEL D. BARBEZAT • DOROTHY F. GLASS • MAYA SOFFER •  
IRISH • ANNE HUIJBERS • NICOLE ARCHAMBEAU • CHRISTOPHER M.  
KURPIEWSKI • JEFFREY SCHRADER • HUNG-HSIU EILEEN LIN • TERRY TOULOUSE •  
SARAH RIVETT • BRIAN CATLOS • NAN GOODMAN • PAUL HAMMER •  
ANDRÉS I. PRIETO • DEBORAH WHITEHEAD

SPONSORED BY: CENTER FOR MEDIEVAL AND EARLY MODERN STUDIES, CENTER FOR HUMANITIES AND THE ARTS, CENTER FOR WESTERN CIVILIZATION,  
ARTS & SCIENCES FUND FOR EXCELLENCE, THE DEPARTMENTS OF ART HISTORY, CLASSICS, ENGLISH, HISTORY, AND PHILOSOPHY, AND THE PROGRAM IN JEWISH STUDIES

CONFERENCE DETAILS AT: [CMEMS.COLORADO.EDU/CMEMS-CONFERENCE](http://CMEMS.COLORADO.EDU/CMEMS-CONFERENCE)



(continued from p. 1)

### Welcome to Vindolanda!

Minimus is a little mouse who lives with a Roman family at Vindolanda, a well-documented first-century fort in the north of Britain. Vindolanda is well known to historians because of the remarkable survival of several hundred letters and other texts written on thin wooden tablets that were discovered in the garbage pits of the fortress during excavations that took place in the 1970s. You can see many of these Roman letters on display in the British Museum in London. You can also learn all about them and what they tell us about Vindolanda and its inhabitants in Alan Bowman's excellent study, *Life and Letters on the Roman Frontier* (Routledge 1998). All of the human characters in the *Minimus* books are based on historical individuals attested

in these sources. In fact, Minimus himself plays little more than a cameo appearance in these books; most of the dialogue and stories involve events in the daily life of an extended Roman family, including their children and their slaves.

The pedagogy of the *Minimus* books makes them attractive and fun for elementary school students. Each chapter uses a short Latin dialogue to introduce a new topic (family, food, the military, travel, religion, health, etc.). There is a loose storyline that connects all of the chapters together. The Latin dialogues form the basis for brief lessons in vocabulary, grammar, and etymology. Every chapter concludes with a story, usually a well-known myth. There are many illustrations throughout the book and some nice images of the Vindolanda letters that have

inspired the narrative.

The first *Minimus* book (*Minimus: Starting Out in Latin*) was so popular that a second one geared to slightly older children soon followed (*Minimus: Moving On in Latin*). Thereafter the creators of the series, Barbara Bell and Helen Forte, created three sets of ten minibooks – thirty individual Latin stories – detailing the further adventures of Minimus and his human family.

The goal of the Whittier Latin Club is to expose children to the language, literature, history, and culture of the premodern world as early as possible and to make this encounter as fun and exciting and stimulating as it can be. In future issues of *Mirabile dictu!* we will follow the progress of intrepid young Latinists. In the meantime, consider sharing *Minimus* with a young person in your life. You may just inspire a lifelong love



Continued...



of Latin!

### Sub Arboribus

The weather is getting brisk as the heat of the Colorado summer turns abruptly to the very short autumn season that heralds the first frost and snow. Defying both the chill in the air and the dew in the grass, a group of stalwart graduate students (Sean Babbs, Amanda Nerbovig, Sarah Luginbill, and Manon Williams) gathers under the trees in front of the Hellems Building every Thursday morning to translate yet another chapter of the *Vita Pardulfi*. Written in a difficult (sometimes nigh impenetrable) Latin, this early eighth-century saint's life is a very good example of why the Carolingian educational reforms were necessary. But the struggle earns rewards! The early chapters of the work have yielded some remarkable insights

into late Merovingian religion and culture in the Aquitaine.

### Looking Ahead to November

November is a month of travel for those of us at CMEMS Boulder. The Annual Meeting of the Charles Homer Haskins Society takes place at Carleton College in Northfield, MN, from Nov. 6-8. And thereafter, over Thanksgiving Break, medievalists from around the world will gather for a week-long conference in Rome to mark the 800th anniversary of Pope Innocent III's Fourth Lateran Council of 1215. CMEMS is hosting one local event next month: a book launch for our friend and colleague Katherine Eggert (English). We hope to see you there!

Servus,

### 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)

## CMEMS Sponsors 2015 Medieval Writing Workshop on New Directions in Anglo-Saxon Studies

Five Anglo-Saxonists will convene on the CU Boulder campus from October 2-4 for the 2015 Medieval Writing Workshop, hosted by the Department of English with support from CMEMS and the Office of the Provost. Participants include Elaine Treharne (Stanford); Stacy Klein (Rutgers); Britt Mize (Texas A&M); Heather Maring (Arizona State); and our very own Tiffany Beechy (CU Boulder). Each scholar will be bringing a new project to the workshop for discussion and development. Professor Treharne will present a book project on materiality and medieval manuscripts entitled *The Phenomenal Book*; Professor Klein will present a book project on sexual difference in Anglo-Saxon literature entitled *Men, Women, and Metaphor*; Professor Mize will present a book project, *The Medieval Invention of Judas Iscariot*; and Professor Beechy will present an article in progress on Alcuin's *Rhetoric* and the late medieval *Dialogue of Solomon and Marcolf*. CMEMS welcomes these distinguished Anglo-Saxonists to campus and is proud to sponsor this stimulating event!



### CMEMS@Boulder

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Boulder, CO 80309-0234

Graduate Assistant: Ms. Kimberley Smith

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<https://www.facebook.com/cmemsboulder>

<http://colorado.academia.edu/cmems>

## 'THE MOUSE THAT MADE LATIN COOL!'

### IMAGE SOURCES:

Images of characters from the Minimus books have been rendered by Helen Forte. While you can find the two Minimus course books on Amazon, the minibooks and other accessories are only available through the official Minimus website: [minimus-etc.co.uk](http://minimus-etc.co.uk)

The manuscript page above depicts a dog-headed man (*Cenocephalus*), one of the many monsters featured in the so-called Beowulf manuscript (British Library, Cotton MS Vitellius A XV).

*Postscriptum:* November is almost upon us! On November 6-8, I will be attending the Annual Meeting of the Charles Homer Haskins Society at Carleton College in Northfield, MN, so next month's newsletter will feature a profile of the CHH himself and news from the conference. More anon, SGB

