

Mirabile dictu!

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



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Religion and (the Master) Narrative

by Professor Scott G. Bruce

Mirabile dictu!

After a semester and a summer on leave, I am very happy to return to the directorship of CEMS and the monthly publication of our newsletter. We have a very exciting event schedule planned for the 2015/2016 academic year. We look forward to learning from a host of visiting speakers and celebrating the accomplishments of our premodern

faculty. The highlight of the coming year is the 3rd Annual James Field Willard Lecture in Medieval History on October 22, which serves as the keynote to our conference on *Religion and (the Master) Narrative* on October 23-24. Read on for more information on these upcoming events!

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CEMS Profile: Professor Anne E. Lester becomes CARA Chair

Professor Lester (History) assumes leadership of an important MAA committee.

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Sub Arboribus Reconvenes this Autumn "under the trees"

The CU Boulder Medieval Latin Reading Group tackles some Carolingian hagiography.

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CU Professors Co-Edit an Issue of English Language Notes

Professors Lester (History) and Little (English) edit a special issue on premodern materiality.

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CMEMS PROFILE: ANNE E. LESTER

Anne E. Lester is Associate Professor of History at the University of Colorado at Boulder, where she teaches the history of Europe in the High Middle Ages. She earned her Ph.D. (History) in 2003 at Princeton University. She is the author of *Creating Cistercian Nuns: The Women's Religious Movement and its Reform in Thirteenth-Century Champagne* (Ithaca and London, 2011) and has co-edited the following volumes: *Cities, Texts, and Social Networks, 400-1500: Experiences and Perceptions of Medieval Urban Space* (Aldershot, 2010); *Center and Periphery: Studies on Power in the Medieval World in Honor of William Chester Jordan* (Leiden, 2013); and most recently *Crusades and Memory* (London, 2015), which was originally published as a special issue of the *Journal of Medieval History* (2014).

Anne E. Lester, Associate Professor of Medieval History at CU Boulder, was recently elected Chair of the Medieval Academy of America's Committee on Centers and Regional Associations (CARA).

Professor Anne Lester has been an active member of the CMEMS executive committee for the past two years. With Professor Katie Little, she organized last year's CMEMS conference on the theme of medieval materiality and has co-edited a special issue of *English Language Notes* comprised of papers from that conference (see p. 6, below). In addition, she has played a major role in the organization of the CMEMS conference that will take place in Boulder this fall (see this issue's editorial). Lester has also represented CMEMS as an active participant in the annual meeting of CARA, the Medieval Academy of America's Committee on Centers and Regional Associations. Her participation was so valuable that she was recently elected chair of this important committee.

Developed from organizations active in the 1960s, CARA became a standing committee of the Medieval Academy in 1969 to serve as a forum for those who are concerned with the administration of graduate centers, undergraduate programs and committees, and research libraries; with the organization of regional and local groups of medievalists; and with teaching. CARA's mission is advocacy and problem-solving. The committee assists institutions and individual medievalists in meeting the challenges that face medieval studies in the classroom, the library and other institutional settings locally and nationally.

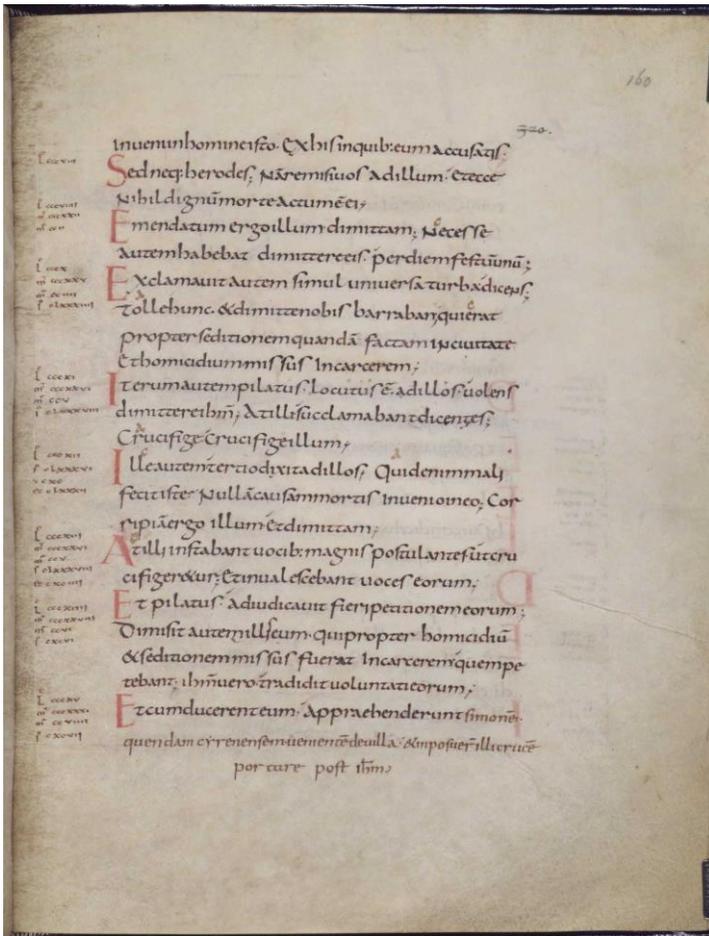
We are proud to have Professor Lester representing CMEMS and CU Boulder as the chair of this national committee!

In July 2015, Professor Lester Organized Seven CMEMS-Sponsored Sessions of Papers on the Legacy of Herbert Grundmann at the International Medieval Congress at the University of Leeds, UK.

In addition to serving on the CMEMS executive committee and as the new chair of CARA, Professor Lester has been active in promoting CMEMS and medieval scholarship abroad. In July 2015, she organized seven sessions of scholarly papers on the legacy of German medievalist Herbert Grundmann at the annual meeting of the International Medieval Congress (IMC), which takes place at the University of Leeds in the UK.

2015 marked the 80th anniversary of the first publication of Herbert Grundmann's monumental study *Religious Movements in the Middle Ages* and the 20th anniversary of its translation into English. Over twenty speakers and more than one hundred audience members participated in these lively and informative sessions, which were sponsored by CMEMS. Many of these papers will appear in print in a volume co-edited by Lester.

CU's Medieval Latin Reading Group Begins a New Thematic Strand this Autumn: Encounters with Islam in Early Medieval Hagiography



After a semester-long hiatus, CU's Medieval Latin Reading Group (*Sub arboribus*) will convene once again this autumn. In the past, students of all levels have gathered for an hour once a week "under the trees" in front of the Hellems Building with a faculty member from History or Classics to read important and influential medieval texts like the *Rule of Benedict*, the *Voyage of Saint Brendan*, and the *Gospel of Nicodemus*. The aim of *Sub arboribus* is to provide students with an opportunity to read medieval Latin in a small group with a professor outside of the traditional classroom setting. The meetings are informal and fun. Preparation is optional for students, who are always welcome to attend, regardless of their Latin proficiency.

This semester the reading group will begin a new thematic strand: encounters with Islam in early medieval hagiography. From the Carolingian period to the eve of the First Crusade in 1095, Christian holy men had some harrowing encounters with Islamic warriors on those frontiers of Europe where Muslim incursions took place with regularity: the Aquitaine, the Alpine passes, and Provence. Our meetings of *Sub arboribus* will focus on these little known saints' lives that feature an encounter with Islam.

This autumn *Sub arboribus* will tackle a saint's life from the early Carolingian period: the *vita* of Saint Pardoux of Guéret. Saint Pardoux (*Pardulfus* in Latin) was a holy man from the area around Limoges who died in 737. An anonymous monk composed the *vita Pardulfi* in the middle of the eighth century to celebrate his virtuous life. This text is important for the light that it sheds on culture and society in the Aquitaine in the late Merovingian period. It contains a wealth of incidental information about rural life in the early medieval countryside, from the work of Frankish lumberjacks to the harvesting of mushrooms. It also relates Saint Pardoux's encounter with Muslim warriors returning from their defeat at the Battle of Tours in October 732.

The initial meeting of *Sub arboribus* will take place in early September. Anyone interested in taking part should email Professor Scott G. Bruce (bruces@colorado.edu). Please include in your email the times that you are available to meet this semester. The Latin text of the *Vita Pardulfi* is available online at www.dmgh.de (MGH *Scriptores Rerum Merovingicarum*, vol. 7, pp. 24-40). CMEMS is proud to sponsor another semester of reading medieval Latin at CU Boulder. We look forward to seeing you all "under the trees."

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Religion and (the Master) Narrative: An Interdisciplinary Conference on Medieval and Early Modern Belief and Practice will take place on the UC Boulder campus from 22-24 October. The conference features a public keynote lecture by Professor John Van Engen (University of Notre Dame) as well as three plenary lectures by Sarah Beckwith (Duke University), Kenneth Mills (University of Michigan), and Nina Rowe (Fordham University).

John Van Engen

We are very pleased that Professor John Van Engen will deliver the 3rd Annual James Field Willard Lecture in Medieval History on October 22. Van Engen is Andrew V. Tackles Professor of Medieval History and Director of the Center for Medieval Studies at the University of Notre Dame in South Bend, Indiana. Van Engen is a renowned historian of culture, intellect and religion during the European Middle Ages. His work may be divided broadly into three areas: cultural and intellectual renewal during the twelfth century, religious movements in the later Middle Ages, and notions of "Christianization" in medieval European history. His books and many essays deal with monasticism, women's writing, schools and universities, inquisition, canon law, notions of reform, and religious culture generally. His recent book, *Sisters and Brothers of the Common Life: The Devotio Moderna and the World of the Late Middle Ages* (2008), is already a classic and has been recognized with three major book prizes.

Professor Van Engen's lecture, entitled "After the Year 1000: Religion and Narrative in the Making of Medieval History," will take place in the British and Irish Studies Room in Norlin Library at 5pm.

Sarah Beckwith

Sarah Beckwith is Chair and Professor of English at Duke University. She works on late medieval religious writings, medieval and early modern drama, and ordinary language philosophy. She is the author of *Christ's Body: Identity, Religion and Society in Medieval English Writing* (1993); *Signifying God: Social Relation and Symbolic Act in York's Play of Corpus Christi* (2001); and *Shakespeare and the Grammar of Forgiveness* (2011). She is currently at work on a book about Shakespearean tragedy and about philosophy's love affair with the genre of tragedy.

Professor Beckwith's plenary lecture, "*King Lear* and the Avoidance of Charity," will take place in the British and Irish Studies Room in Norlin Library on October 23 at 9am.

Kenneth Mills

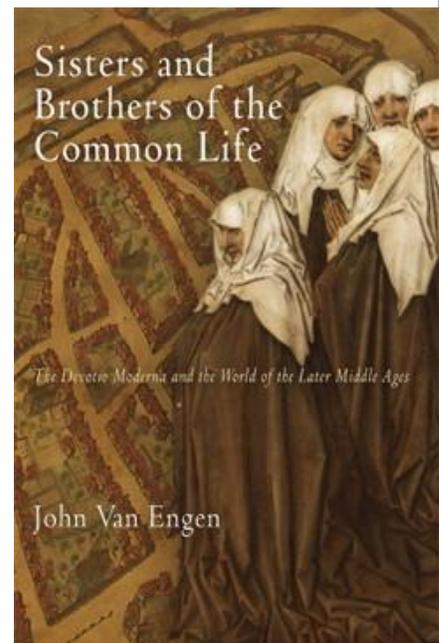
Kenneth Mills is the J. Frederick Hoffmann Professor of History at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor. He is an anthropological historian of the early modern Spanish world, with an emphasis on religious and cultural transformation and re-creation in the Andean region. He is the author of *An Evil Lost to View?* (1994); and *Idolatry and its Enemies: Extirpation and Colonial Andean Religion, 1640-1750* (1997); the co-editor of two

source books of translated primary texts and visual images and the co-editor of several collections of essays. He is currently writing a book about and around the transatlantic journey of a Castilian image-maker and alms-gatherer named Diego de Ocaña (c. 1570-1608). The book gathers many years of research into aspects of Ocaña's experience and repercussions.

Professor Mills' plenary lecture, "Lost is Found in the Journey of Diego de Ocaña, O.S.H., 1599-1608," will take place in the British and Irish Studies Room in Norlin Library on October 23 at 5pm.

Nina Rowe

Nina Rowe is Chair and Associate Professor of Art History at Fordham University. She specializes in the art of northern Europe in the high and late Middle Ages (twelfth to



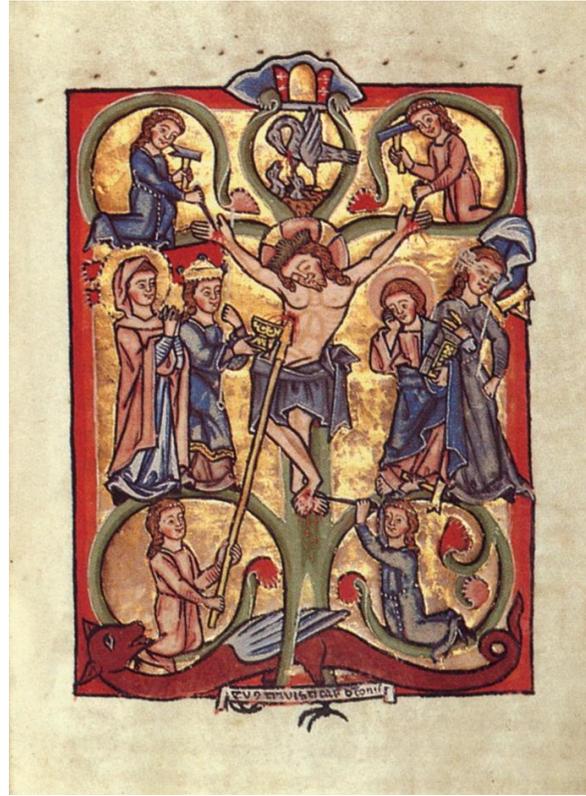
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fifteenth centuries). Her work examines images of Jews and Judaism in settings ranging from monumental cathedral façade sculpture to hand-held carved ivories. Her scholarship also addresses the production and reception of illuminated manuscripts in the medieval and modern eras. She is the author of *The Jew, the Cathedral and the Medieval City: Synagoga and Ecclesia in the Thirteenth Century* (2011). She is at work on a book on late medieval German illuminated World Chronicles.

Professor Rowe's plenary lecture, "The Bible Revamped: Daily Life and Dissent in Illuminated World Chronicles," will take place in the Visual Arts Center (1B20) on October 24 at 9am.

In addition to these exceptional scholars, the CMEMS conference will also feature interdisciplinary papers by twenty visiting speakers. Please visit cmems.colorado.edu for more information about the conference program, registration, and the CMEMS fall event calendar.

Students are especially encouraged to attend all CMEMS events. If you have an undergraduate student who is interested in premodern history, culture or literature, they may be eligible to earn the CMEMS certificate. This handsome certificate, adorned with our Getty hedgehog mascot, recognizes students who have taken four or more courses in late ancient, medieval or early modern studies, irrespective of their major. The only prerequisite for the certificate is enrollment in the annual interdisciplinary MEMS course, which is offered every autumn. Past MEMS course topics have included the soul in literature and philosophy, medieval materiality, and ghost stories in the western tradition from the Romans to the Renaissance.



Looking Ahead to September

September is a busy month for CMEMS. We look forward to our first meetings of the Medieval Latin Reading Group and to hosting our first invited speaker, Professor Alexa Sand, a medieval art historian from Utah State University, who will speak on Thursday 24 September. We look forward to seeing you all there!

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

Anne E. Lester (History) and Katie Little (English) Co-Edit a Thematic Issue of *English Language Notes*

Memories of the hugely successful interdisciplinary CMEMS conference entitled "Medieval Materiality: A Conference on the Life and Afterlife of Things" held last October on the CU Boulder campus are still fresh in our minds. Over the course of three days, we were treated to a remarkable variety of scholarly papers on the importance of material culture for the recovery of the medieval and early modern past. In a few short months you can revisit many of those papers (or encounter them for the first time, if you were unable to attend the conference) in a thematic issue of *English Language Notes* (ELN, no. 53.2, Fall/Winter 2015) edited by our conference organizers: Anne E. Lester (History) and Katie Little (English). ELN is a semi-annual journal devoted exclusively to special topics in all fields of literary and cultural studies. The journal is dedicated to interdisciplinary and collaborative work among literary scholarship and fields as disparate as theology, fine arts, history, geography, philosophy, and science.

Congratulations to Anne Lester and Katie Little on this publication!



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IMAGE SOURCES:

The cover image depicts mummers in Oxford's Bodleian Library MS Bodl. 264, fol. 21v.

The manuscript on p. 3 is a page of text from a Carolingian Gospel Book (British Library, MS Add. 11848) written in Carolingian miniscule; while the illumination on p. 4 shows personifications of Ecclesia and Synagoga at the foot of the cross from a German psalter (c. 1260).

The 14th century ostrich egg reliquary pictured above is from the Quedlinburg Treasure (Photo: Ann Münchow, Art Resource, NY).

And our awesome hedgehog to the right comes from a Franco-Flemish manuscript dated around 1270 now in the possession of the J. Paul Getty Museum.

Postscriptum: Congratulations to Manon Claire Williams, the recipient of a hedgehog-adorned CMEMS certificate for course concentration in premodern Europe. Manon graduated *summa cum laude* with a double B.A. in History and Classics in May 2015 and won the University of Colorado's Jen Hlavacek Award for the Best Honors Thesis on Religion, Culture and Society for her thesis "From the Holy Land to the Cloister: The Decline of Female Ascetic Pilgrimage in the Early Medieval West (c. 350-615)." This fall she begins her M.A. in medieval history at UC Boulder.

