As Chair of the Medieval Studies Advisory Committee for the 2006-2007 Academic Year, I am delighted to report on the year’s events. In recent months we have brought an impressive array of speakers to the UCSB community – thanks, largely, to the industry and ingenuity of our Executive Director, Edward English.

We began the 2006-2007 academic year with a lecture by Judith Bennett, who recently joined the History Department at the University of Southern California. This occasion marked the reunion of Bennett and Ed English, two former all-stars from the Centre for Medieval Studies at the University of Toronto’s championship-winning softball team. In addition to her skills as an outfielder, however, Dr. Bennett is best known for her path-breaking work illuminating the lives of women in late medieval English society.

In November, we celebrated a homecoming as Mary Lampe, a Ph.D. student in the History Department, regaled us with tales from her recent experiences (both triumphs and tribulations) in the archives of Sicily. Lampe, who is completing her dissertation under the directorship of Carol Lansing, showcased the fruits of her painstaking detective work in tracing the linkages uniting merchant families in medieval Palermo.

In December, our own Sharon Farmer (who was on leave the past academic year) demonstrated why her current research project has garnered both an NEH and a Guggenheim Fellowship, with a presentation making plain how we need to rethink the relationship between Northern France and the Mediterranean sketched by Robert Bartlett in his work *The Making of Europe: Conquest, Colonization and Cultural Change, 950-1350*. Calling attention to the human migration into Northern France that paralleled the flow of crusaders from west to east (and back again), Farmer revealed how migrants from southern Italy, Greece, the Iberian Peninsula and the Middle East introduced to northern France not just new fashions and garden design, but also innovations in luxury craft production, administrative techniques, and horse breeding.

In January, we welcomed one of the foremost experts on the history of women’s health, Monica Green from Arizona State University. Dr. Green shared with us a spectacular court case recently uncovered in the archives of medieval Marseilles in which a Jewish midwife was sued by her Christian clients for malpractice. In addition to noting how this is the first-known malpractice case involving a midwife, Green, who is collaborating on this project with Daniel Smail of Harvard University, highlighted how the case constitutes both striking evidence for collaboration between women that crossed religious boundaries as well as underlying tensions.

Finally, this February it was my pleasure to plan and host the annual colloquium for the Medieval Studies program. The theme was “Conversion and Apostasy in the Medieval World,” and I was particularly pleased to be able to integrate into one program speakers from multiple disciplines (English, History, Romance Languages, Arabic and Religious and Middle Eastern Studies) who could tackle this theme from Muslim, Christian as well as Jewish perspectives.

In conclusion, it has been great fun serving as Ed English’s co-pilot in terms of programming events for the 2006-2007 Academic Year and I look forward to welcoming you all to the events we have planned for next quarter.

—Debra Blumenthal
Winter Colloquium:
Conversion and Apostasy in the Medieval World

On February 2nd and 3rd, the Medieval Studies Program hosted its 2007 Colloquium, “Conversion and Apostasy in the Medieval World.” Scholars from across the United States converged to “examine the process and experience of religious conversion from Muslim, Christian and Jewish perspectives.” The sunny weather for which Southern California is known helped make the occasion complete.

The colloquium started off Friday afternoon with the first panel exploring the ways in which the writings of Jewish and Muslims converts to Christianity were used by their own communities and either rejected or accepted by the Christian community.

Steven Kruger, Professor of English and Medieval Studies, Queens College, CUNY Graduate Center, presented his paper “Convert Othodoxies” in which he explores how Jews remained central to Christian identity. Though they were considered the “other” and often marginalized, convert Jews were seen as the ideal spokespersons for Christian orthodoxy because conversion identity was central to Christian identity.

A. Katie Harris, from the History Department, University of California, Davis, presented “Christians You Were, and Christians You Must Be: The Lead Books of Sacromonte and the Conversion of the Muslim Past in Luis de la Cueva’s Diálogos de las Cosas Notables de Granada.” Harris examined a Morisco attempt to revisit antiquity and depict an uninterrupted Christian past transcending Islamic history. In the document, the Moriscos were portrayed as old Christians with an exalted pedigree and with importance in a larger divine plan. Aranye Fradenburg, English Department, UCSB, provided commentary for the first panel of presenters.

Saturday was a full day of sun and conversion experiences. The first panel consisted of historians Robert C. Stacey from the Department of History, University of Washington and Sara Lipton from the Department of History, SUNY-Stony Brook. Both presentations touched on the intersection of conversion and gender.

Robert Stacey’s paper “Gender and Jewish Conversion in the Ritual Crucifixion Tale of Adam of Bristol” examines the grotesque and graphic crucifixion involving the Jew Samuel, who after brutally murdering a Christian boy named Adam, proceeds to murder his wife and son after they express their desire to convert to Christianity. Samuel enlists the help of his sister—who remains unnamed throughout the course of the tale—to aid him in covering-up the murders. Though Samuel and his sister witness several miracles, they refuse to convert, demonstrating the inconvertibility of Jews and the ultimate point of the drama; that the only solution to the “problem” of the Jews was expulsion.

“WHAT SHOULD WE MAKE OF THE FAILURE TO CONVERT SAMUEL AND HIS SISTER?”
—ROBERT C. STACEY

In “A Leaky Vessel: Woman, Conversion and Vision in the Cantigas de Santa Maria,” Sara Lipton explores Christian depictions of Jews in the beautifully illustrated Cantigas. Jewish men are represented as exaggerated caricatures with distinctive and dark features indicating their obstinacy to conversion. Jewish women, on the other hand, are depicted in much the same way as medieval Christian women. Lipton examines the connection be-
between the pale, blank, and non-descript features of Jewish women in the Cantigas and the belief in their increased receptiveness to Christianity. The Cantigas were Alfonso X’s attempt to reconcile the important role that Jews played in his kingdom with Christian theological and legal traditions. Ramzi Rouighi of the Department of History at USC provided commentary.

The first afternoon panel featured James T. Monroe, Professor of Arabic and Comparative Literatures at the University of California, Berkeley, as well as David Wacks, from the Department of Romance Languages at the University of Oregon. Monroe and Wacks explored literature written by Jewish and Muslim converts to Christianity that provided commentary on Christian society.

In “Literary Hybridization in Medieval Iberia: The Case of the Book of Good Love (Antecedents and Implications)”, James T. Monroe argues for the author of the Book of Good Love as Juan Ruiz. The language of the book has knowledge of colloquial Arabic, Islamic songs, and Provencal courtly culture, all of which Juan Ruiz theoretically was knowledgeable of as an individual born a Muslim who converted to Christianity and spent three years in Provence. The central character of the book being a priest who repeatedly attempts to bed a variety of women, the book’s agenda was a veiled critique of ecclesiastical celibacy.

In “The Converso Question in Jaume Roig’s Spill,” David Wacks examines whether the social reality of conversion is reflected in literature. Jaume Roig, a Jew, was writing in a Muslim dialect of Valencia and speaking through the rustic voice of a Muslim peasant. The Spill was a way to express his own feelings of marginalization concerning his secret identity as a Jew. Harvey Sharrer, of the Department of Spanish and Portuguese at UCSB, commented.

The last paper of the day was presented by Tamer el-Leithy, of the Society of Fellows, Harvard University. In “Suspicious Muslims: Representations of Coptic Converts in Medieval Cairo,” Tamer el-Leithy examines epithets applied to 14th century Coptic converts by later Muslim historians in biographical dictionaries of notable people. Fifteenth century mistrust of conversion is notable because though Copts were first marginalized, Coptic converts to Islam later became integral to the re-orthodoxification of Islam. Racha el-Omari, Religious Studies, UCSB commented on the paper.

The conference concluded with a lively reception on Saturday night.

—Bethanie Petersen & Colleen Ho

THE SIXTH ANNUAL UCSB MEDIEVAL STUDIES GRADUATE STUDENT CONFERENCE

URBAN CULTURES AND RITUALS

Saturday, May 19, 2007

Centennial House

9:30 AM - 5:00 PM

Plenary Speaker:
Edward Muir of Northwestern University

Please visit the website for more information:
http://www.medievalstudies.ucsb.edu/events.html
Cynthia Brown (French and Italian) has recently published two articles, “Books in Performance: The Parisian Entry (1504) and Funeral (1514) of Anne of Brittany” in a special issue of Yale French Studies (Meanings and Its Objects: Material Culture in Medieval and Renaissance France (eds. Margaret Burland, David LaGuardia, and Andrea Tarnowski, 2006), and “From Stage to Page: Royal Entry Performances in Honour of Mary Tudor (1514)” in In Poetry on the Page: Book and Text in France, 1400-1600, edited by Adrian Armstrong and Malcolm Quainton (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007). In addition she gave an invited lecture at the Centre Saulnier at the University of Paris-IV (Sorbonne) on November 9, 2006 entitled: “Auteurs, mécènes et libraires à l’aube de la Renaissance: autour de deux traductions, Les Nobles et cleres dames de Boccace (1493) et les Héroïdes d’Ovide traduites par Octovien de Saint-Gelas (1497).” On November 14, 2006 she taught a graduate seminar at the University of Paris-IV (Sorbonne) entitled “Corps et paysages dans les miniatures des Héroïdes d’Ovide traduites par Octovien de Saint-Gelas (1497).”

Harold Drake (History) edited Violence in Late Antiquity, which is out and available for purchase. In month he delivered a paper, “Toleration of Violence in Late Antiquity” at a symposium at Duke University.

Carol Lansing (History) is launching her new project, Noble Romans, on noble culture in central and southern Italy in the thirteenth century. She will deliver several lectures this year, including a conference on Religion and Civic Life at Saint Andrews, Scotland, in June and a conference on Communes and Despots at a conference at Oxford in September. In the winter and spring of 2008 she will a visiting professor at Villa I Tatti in Florence.

Carol Pasternack (English) delivered “Postmodern Beowulf: How Do We Read?” in a session “Is Beowulf Postmodern Yet?” at the 41st International Congress on Medieval Studies, Western Michigan University, May 2006. The reprint of her first chapter of “The Textuality of Old English Poetry” in The Postmodern Beowulf (Routledge, 2006) is now available. In addition, Carol has two new articles in Women and Gender in the Middle Ages: An Encyclopedia (Routege Encyclopedias of the Middle Ages), ed. Margaret Schaus (New York: Routledge, 2006): “Literature, Old English” and “Beowulf.” She will return to the site of her first professional employment, University of Wisconsin at Madison, to be a discussant at a conference honoring A. N. (Nick) Doane on his retirement, with whom she co-edited Vox intexta: Orality and Textuality in the Middle Ages. Carol will also give a paper, “Sex, Text and Power in Anglo-Saxon England,” at a session in Doane’s honor at Kalamazoo in May 2007.


Harvey Sharrer (Spanish and Portuguese) has recently published “Tablante de Ricamonte before and after Cervantes’ Don Quixote,” in Medieval and Renaissance Spain and Portugal: Studies in Honor of Arthur L-F. Askins (Woodbridge, Suffolk: Tamesis, 2006) and “Um novo fragmento da General Estoria de Afonso X em português medieval” co-authored with Arthur L-F. Askins and Aida Fernanda Dias, Santa Barbara Portuguese Studies, vol. 6 (2002 [2006]). “Um novo fragmento” was also published in Biblos [Universidade de Coimbra], n.s., vol. 4 (2006). He has also co-edited with Eduardo P. Raposo (UCSB Spanish and Portuguese) Santa Barbara Portuguese Studies, vol. 6 (2002 [2006]). This is a special volume dedicated to medieval Galician and Portuguese literature and historical linguistics. He has co-edited with Antonio Contreras Martín of the Spanish Prose Lancelot (MS. 9611 of the Biblioteca Nacional de España): Lanzarote del Lago. Los Libros de Rocinante, no. 22. Alcalá de Henares:Centro de Estudios Cervantinos, 2006.
The Graduate Student Register

Donna Beth Ellard (English) won an IHC Predoctoral Fellow for 2006-2007 and the Philip and Aida Siff Graduate Fellowship, 2006-2007. She also received a UC Humanities and Social Science Research Grant, which she used to spend a month in England during the Fall quarter. While in England, she examined manuscripts at the British Library and College of Arms in London, researched archaeological data at the North and South Lincolnshire Archaeological Units, and traveled to several Anglo-Saxon archaeological sites in Lincolnshire. In November 2006, she presented her paper, “Writing in Stone, Writing in Ink: Writing the Body in Anglo-Saxon England” at SMLA (South Atlantic MLA) which was based on research for her first dissertation chapter. In March she presented “Writing in Stone, Writing in Ink” at the Medieval Association of the Pacific. In May, she will present “Violence, Historicism, and the Rite of Blood-Eagle” at the International Congress on Medieval Studies. In April 2007 Donna Beth was awarded the U.S. Department of State Critical Language Scholarship with which she will travel to Tangier, Morocco to study Arabic during the summer. She was one of 150 scholarship recipients from a pool of 3300 applications.

Mary Lampe (History) will be featured at a roundtable discussion on “Notarial Culture in Medieval Italy and the Mediterranean” at Forty-Second International Congress on Medieval Studies, May 10-13, 2007 in Kalamazoo, MI. Katie Sjursen (History) delivered a paper titled “Peaceweavers’ Sisters: French Noblewomen Commanders during the Hundred Year’s War,” for the War & Peace in the Middle Ages and Renaissance conference, held at Barnard College in December 2006. She has also been teaching a course at Suffolk University this past academic year.

Corinne Wieben (History) will be presenting a paper entitled “Italy in the Age of Dante: Papers in Honor Of Richard ‘Skip’ Kay” at the Forty-Second International Congress on Medieval Studies, May 10-13, 2007 in Kalamazoo, MI. The panel is entitled “It Came to Her Knowledge: Marriage in Dispute in the Fourteenth-Century Diocese of Lucca” at the Forty-Second International Congress on Medieval Studies, May 10-13, 2007 in Kalamazoo, MI. The panel is entitled “Italy in the Age of Dante: Papers in Honor Of Richard ‘Skip’ Kay” and sponsored by the Mid-America Medieval Association (MAMA). Corinne will also be teaching a supplemental course for the history department at UCSB during summer session B. The course will be HIST 102CW – Medieval Breakups: Scandal, Adultery and Divorce in Medieval and Early Modern Europe (1075-1500).

Letter from the Executive Director,
Edward English

Since the last edition of the newsletter, there have been numerous multi-disciplinary events sponsored by the Program in Medieval Studies and generously co-sponsored by departments and programs from across the university. Most of them are described elsewhere in this newsletter.

Debra Blumenthal of the Department of History served as chair this year and was the prime mover behind the successful annual colloquium in early February on “Conversion and Apostasy in the Medieval World.” Edward Muir of Northwestern University is the main speaker for the upcoming Sixth Annual Graduate Student Colloquium entitled “Civic Culture; Cities and Towns in the Middle Ages” on Saturday, 19 May 2007 between 9:30 and 5:00 in Centennial House on the UCSB campus. Professor Muir is a well and widely published scholar on the civic culture of Venice. The program will include graduate students from UCSB and from across the University of California system from various disciplines. The year ends with lectures by William Tronzo on gardens and Islamic styles in Palermo on Thursday, 24 May and a lecture on 1 June in 4020 HSSB at 4:00 on ideas about love in the twelfth century by Bernard McGinn of the University of Chicago Divinity School. Professor McGinn is the JE and Lillian Byrne Tipton Distinguished Visiting Lecturer in the Catholics Studies in Religious Studies. Both lectures should be excellent capstones to another busy year for the Medieval Studies Program. The Medieval Studies Committee has already begun work on next year. The program will be welcoming several new graduate students next year – four in history alone.

In terms of my own activities, I read a paper “The Magnates of Siena Strike Back: Lordship and the Commune, 1350-1400” at The 15th Biennial New College Conference on Medieval and Renaissance Studies in March 2006 at Sarasota, Florida. This is an excellent conference at which to read a paper, especially in Italian history. This June 1st I will be reading an invited paper, “Civic Ethics and Religion in Siena in the Fourteenth Century: The Problems of Integrating an Elite” at a conference

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**Exhibitions in the UCSB Area**

**Medieval Beasts**  
The Getty Center, Los Angeles  
May 1-July 29, 2007

This exciting exhibition will feature the way beasts play a “central role” in medieval art and in the way in which the world was conceived at the time. Illustrations vary from depictions of domestic animals in images of everyday life, to depictions of fantastic animals, such as unicorns or dragons. The manuscripts that will be on display will include the Getty’s “two popular bestiaries” as well as a manuscript of Aesop’s fables.

**Sacred Gifts and Worldly Treasures: Medieval Masterpieces from the Cleveland Museum of Art**  
The Getty Center, Los Angeles  

This traveling exhibition will provide visitors with the opportunity to view medieval masterpieces normally housed at The Cleveland Museum of Art. The exhibition will include approximately 125 various works of art, including “media painting, sculpture, metalwork, decorative arts, textiles, and illuminated manuscripts” that span the time between the Late Antique period through the Age of Humanism.

For more information on these or other exhibitions at the Getty Center, Los Angeles, visit: http://www.getty.edu/visit/exhibitions.

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**Visiting Scholar Judith Bennett Lectures on “Phyllipa Russell and the Wills of London’s Late Medieval Single Women”**

Judith Bennett, professor of History at the University of Southern California, presented her lecture, “Phyllipa Russell and the Wills of London’s Late Medieval Single Women,” on Monday, 23 October 2006 in the McCune Conference Room. Her talk was based on research conducted by both her and her colleague Christopher Wittig on the will of Phyllipa Russell, a ‘self-identified’ single woman of late medieval London. Comparing Russell’s will with wills by other contemporary never-married female testators, Bennett provides a means by which we can come closer to reconstructing the lives of women from this period.

Though little is known about Russell’s life, Bennett’s research did succeed in finding information related to Russell’s parents and her brothers, all of whom died before her. Both Russell’s mother and father were members of the brewer’s guild. At his death, Russell’s father left her money and land and Russell’s mother was provided with a lifelong allowance. Russell’s mother remarried and at the death of Russell’s step-father, Russell was left with an additional twenty pounds to be used toward marriage.

Russell’s will was made in June 1458 when she was between thirty and fifty years of age. Her will states that she was a ‘single woman’ and therefore we can assume that she never married. Russell died only a year later, in January 1459. At her death, Russell’s estate was worth a total of £225, with £94 on hand and £120 pounds out on loan. Though Bennett was unable to find any more information on the money that was out on loan, she was able to conclude that the amount of funds left by Russell seemed to indicate that she must have liquidated her father’s land. In addition, Russell’s estate also included material goods.

Bennett’s talk then turned to the complicated meaning behind the phrase ‘single woman’. Women who were never married were thought of as maidens or spinsters. As Bennett pointed out, the term ‘spinster’ was actually still in use by the British government until just a few years ago, when the use of the phrase in government documents was abolished. In the fifteenth century, the phrase ‘single-woman’ was commonplace, though the meaning of the phrase had different connotations a half century before and in the time following Russell’s creation of her will. A single woman in Russell’s time referred to not only women who were single in the sense that they were never married, but also in reference to widows, and to some extent prostitutes. Bennett herself was puzzled

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**GRADUATE FELLOWSHIP AND GRANT OPPORTUNITIES**

**Dissertation Fellowships**

**Medieval Academy Schallek Fellowship and Awards**
Fellowship provides a one-year grant to support Ph.D. dissertation research in the field of late-medieval Britain (ca. 1350-1500). Five graduate student awards are also available to provide research support to graduate students working in the same field of study. Applicants must be members of the Medieval Academy.

Stipend: one fellowship of $30,000; five awards of $2,000
Application Deadline: October 15th
For more information: http://www.medievalacademy.org/grants/gradstudent_grants_schallek.htm

**Medieval Academy Dissertation Grants**
Support advanced graduate students who are writing Ph.D. dissertations on medieval topics. Applicants must be members of the Medieval Academy as of 15th January of the year in which they apply.

Stipend: $2,000
Application Deadline: February 15th
For more information: http://www.medievalacademy.org/grants/gradstudent_grants_madis.htm

**Support for Article Writing**

**Van Courtland Elliott Prize**
Prize awarded annually for a first article published in the field of medieval studies. To be eligible, the article must be at least five pages long and the author must be a resident of North America. Winner will be announced at the annual meeting of the Medieval Academy of America each spring.

Award: $500
Deadline: October 15th
For more information: http://www.medievalacademy.org/grants/gradstudent_elliottprize.htm

**Postdoctoral Fellowship**

**A.W. Mellon Postdoctoral Fellowship in Medieval Studies**
The fellowship supports a junior scholar in any field of medieval studies to continue his or her research while in residence at Notre Dame’s Medieval Institute. Mellon scholars must hold a regular appointment at a U.S. institution following their fellowship year. Applicants must have the Ph.D. in hand as of the application date and must not be more than five years beyond the Ph.D.

Stipend: $40,000
Application deadline: January 15th
For more information, contact: Roberta Baranowski, (574) 631-8304, Roberta.Baranowski.7@nd.edu.

**For those planning to attend the annual meeting of the Medieval Association of the Pacific:**

**The Founders’ Prize**
Maximum of three prizes for the best papers presented by graduate students at the annual MAP meetings. To be considered for the Founders’ Prize, graduate students should submit their papers, preferably electronically, to Blair Sullivan (sullivan@humnet.ucla.edu).

Stipend: $500/$250/$250
Deadline: July 1, 2007.
For more information, contact: Blair Sullivan (sullivan@humnet.ucla.edu) or Phyllis Brown (pbrown@scu.edu).

**The John F. Benton Award**
A maximum of three awards are available to provide travel funds for all members of the Medieval Association of the Pacific—particularly independent medievalists and graduate students—who might not otherwise receive support from institutions. Funds can be used to defray costs connected with delivering a paper at any conference, especially for MAP conferences, or connected to scholarly research. Applications should be submitted to the vice president of the Association.

Stipend: $400
Deadline: November 1st
For more information: http://www.cmrs.ucla.edu/MAP/grants.html

**WEBSITES OF INTEREST**

The Old English Newsletter 40.1 is now online: http://www.oenewsletter.org.

The online Middle English Compendium, including the online version of the Middle English Dictionary, is now available through the University of Michigan Press for free. Passwords are no longer required: http://ets.umd.umich.edu/m/mec/.

You can now access a website showcasing the collections of medieval and Renaissance manuscripts of The Rare Book Department of the Free Library of Philadelphia. The collection can be explored at http://libwww.library.phila.gov/medievalman/ and can also be accessed via the homepage of the Free Library (http://www.library.phila.gov).
Christopher Baswell, professor of English at UCLA, joined us Thursday, 15 February to present his paper on “The Medieval Virgil Meets the Italian Humanists: MS Cambridge, Jesus College 33.” Baswell discussed the presence of Italian miniscule in this manuscript known to be produced in England during the later twelfth century. Rather than just identifying the hand of the original scribe, Baswell seemed to be more concerned with the “layered qualities of the book” itself. To that end, Baswell’s lecture traced the history of MS Cambridge Jesus College 33 and proposed a theory for how this particular copy of Virgil’s Aenid came to include fifteenth-century marginal notes in both English and Italian humanist hands.

Baswell began his lecture with a description of MS Cambridge, Jesus College 33. The manuscript is a copy of Virgil’s Aenid—a very important text in the medieval period judging from, as Baswell stated, the “vast commentaries on it, almost from its first appearance.” He continued his analysis of the manuscript with an examination of the various annotations and glosses that can be found within it. The age of the glosses range from immediately after production to the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries.

Baswell noted that there are an “unusual number of thirteenth century notes or annotations” and that the blunt nib used to write these notes makes it difficult to read the writing. The next set of notes appear to be by a fifteenth century hand that used this manuscript like an encyclopedic source. Based on an analysis of the text and these notes, Baswell concluded that this particular manuscript was heavily used, in that many copies of Virgil’s work were often used as a kind of teaching tool in the classroom. As Baswell observes, these “books get used to pieces.” Jesus 33 is no exception.

In addition to writing glosses and notes, the fifteenth century hand seemed to also have replaced a number of pages, approximately twenty leaves or more. Baswell notes that these additions were not done by a professional, but rather by a student who had taken it upon himself to replace the missing leaves with his own. These newer additions do not include any of the glosses that might have been in the original.

But who was this student and why is there Italian miniscule found among these fifteenth-century, English annotations? As Baswell remarked, these glosses have “no business being there.” To contend with this anomaly, Baswell suggested John Free as the one responsible for both the English and Italian notes in this particular manuscript, and proposes that Free was one of a number of fifteenth century Englishman who went to study in Italy due to a burgeoning interest in Italian humanism.

Baswell then went on to describe the historical context for how this may have come about. As Baswell argued, the trend of studying in Italy began with Duke Humphrey, the youngest brother of Henry V, who raised people’s interest in humanism thereby creating a trend of Englishmen going to Italy to do advanced studies in theology and law.

Baswell posits that this manuscript belonged to Free while he was studying overseas with the celebrated (and very long-lived) humanist teacher Guarino. By tracing this MS to Guarino, as Baswell concluded, “what this gives us is access to the English connection with Italian humanism.”

As Baswell argued, Jesus 33 provides a unique example of a manuscript that was copied and annotated in England, then annotated further in Italy, and finally returned back to England to be recirculated following Free’s death in Rome.

Baswell’s analysis showed the way in which Jesus 33 can be perceived within the context of Italian humanism. Additionally, his presentation gave new insight into the historical context surrounding those Englishmen who went overseas to Italy in the fifteenth century.

Lydia Balian
In 1403, a Christian woman in Marseille died in childbirth; of the two midwives attending her, one was brought before the criminal court on charges that some of her procedures caused the woman’s death. This midwife was Floreta d’Ays, a Jewish woman who had been brought into the birthing room during the third stage of birth by the woman’s brother-in-law. Floreta's trial, during which she adamantly appealed the ruling that she be tortured, was the subject of a fascinating talk in January by Monica H. Green, Professor of History at Arizona State University. Dr. Green is well known for her work on medieval women and medicine, and is the author of The “Trotula.” An English Translation of the Medieval Compendium of Women’s Medicine (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002), and the forthcoming Making Women’s Medicine Masculine: The Rise of Male Authority in Premodern Gynecology (Oxford University Press).

In this lecture, Green presented recent research into Floreta's case that she has undertaken jointly with Daniel Lord Smail of Harvard University. One of her central questions has been: how did medieval European women of differing religious beliefs communicate with each other? In Floreta's case, Green theorizes, communication soured when it became clear that the Christian woman was not going to survive childbirth; Floreta, though she was not even present at the moment of the baby's birth, became a scapegoat for the mother's death at least partially because she was Jewish. Throughout her lecture, Green’s extensive knowledge of medieval women’s medicine was evident; her illustration of Floreta’s particular midwifery techniques and how these techniques might be read as specific to Jewish medical understanding was particularly interesting. Green’s talk also included a strong component of close reading of the court documents for Floreta’s case, and a discussion of the general religious composition of Marseille in the early fifteenth century. Green is an animated and engaging speaker, and the picture she assembled of both a difficult medieval childbirth and of a remarkable legal trial was evocative and thought-provoking. An essay on this topic is forthcoming.

—Megan Palmer

“Philippa Russell”
Continued from page 6

by the association of prostitution with the phrase ‘single-woman’ and questioned whether Russell was aware of the phrase in reference to prostitutes. At the same time, however, Bennett observes that “Russell must have been sure no one would mistake her meaning” when she used the phrase to refer to herself in her will.

Bennett observes that Russell’s will is very organized, with clear indication of where she wanted to be buried and how her funds were to be disbursed. Russell indicated that she wanted to be buried in a parish other than her own in order to be next to her mother. She also commissioned three hundred masses to be said in her name after her death. She left a certain amount of money to be given towards almsgiving for prisoners and the poor, though Bennett notes that these kinds of civic bequests, though generous, were actually quite conventional. What is unique about Russell’s bequests was her choice to leave twenty marks or approximately thirteen pounds sterling to the parish in which she was to be buried. These funds were to be made available to parish members in the form of loans. Parish members who wanted to take advantage of these funds had to pledge some kind of collateral. These funds would also be tapped yearly to provide a service on the day of her death.

Bennett then compared the information derived from Russell’s will with what is known about other female testators of the time, noting that Russell was not the “only single woman in medieval London to leave a will.” In late medieval London, there were many women like Russell who delayed marriage or avoided it entirely. These women were sometimes wealthy, but rarely were they property holders. Like Russell, who chose to be buried next to her mother, many of these women wanted to be buried next to their mothers or fathers. Inheritors of single women testators were more often women rather than men. Russell, on the other hand, chose to leave money to six men and four women, which clearly delineates her will from that of other single women of the time. Finally, Bennett observed that single-women were more common in cities in that they were “attracted to towns for employment opportunities.”

Bennett’s presentation style and interesting subject matter allowed for an enjoyable experience for all who attended.

—Lydia Balian
Letter from the Executive Director

Continued from page 5

entitled “Religion and Public Life in Late Medieval Italy” at The University of St Andrews, Fife, Scotland. I also hope to visit Iona and several lochs, battlefields, and castles during the visit — not sure about haggis. Last summer I represented the program at the annual conference in Leeds and another in London on the vernacular in Medieval and Renaissance Italy at the University of London.

After teaching a reading course on Medieval and Early Renaissance Italy in the Fall quarter of 2007, I am taking a leave of absence for the Winter and Spring Quarters to be a visiting professor at Harvard University’s Villa I Tatti in Florence. This will be a wonderful opportunity to spread the fame of our program and finish my first volume on Siena.

—Edward English

UPCOMING EVENTS AT UCSB
Thursday, 24 May 2007

Historian of Italian and Mediterranean art and architecture, William Tronzo of the Stanford Humanities Center will present “Zisa and Cuba: Gardens and the Image-Performative.”