Greetings from the Chair

It is a pleasure to be serving as chair of Medieval Studies this year. In these lean economic times our program is both growing and flourishing. The return of our Director, Ed English, from Florence, Italy, puts us in skilled administrative hands and greatly eases my job. Our colleague, Carol Lansing, has been awarded the American Historical Association’s 2008 Howard R. Marraro Prize for the best book or article in any field in Italian History, for Passion and Order: Restraint of Grief in the Medieval Italian Communes (Cornell, 2008). Graduate students with major fellowships this year include not only John Scholl, Donna Beth Ellard, and Sophia Rochmes, whose research fellowships were described in our spring Newsletter, but also Jennifer Hammerschmidt (Meadow, History of Art and Architecture), who holds a Graduate Humanities Research Assistantship Fellowship, for research in Belgium, the Netherlands and France on her dissertation, “Towards a New Medieval Subjectivity: Rogier van der Weyden and the Art of the Carthusians.” Additionally, the Medieval Studies Program was able to give 2008-2009 travel grants to five graduate students – Nicole Archambeau (Farmer, History), Christine Bolli (Armi, History of Art and Architecture), Jennifer Hammerschmidt (Meadow, History of Art and Architecture), Colleen Ho (Lansing, History) and Sophia Rochmes (Meadow, History of Art and Architecture). We’ll learn more about their research travel in a later issue of the Newsletter. Finally, our faculty has been augmented by the addition of Heather Blurton to the English Department. Professor Blurton’s interests in post-colonial theory and twelfth-century romance, hagiography and historical writing intersect nicely with those of a number of faculty and graduate students in the Medieval Studies program.

With the continued generosity of Dean David Marshall, Ed English and I have put together an exciting line-up of events for this academic year. In November, Brian Copenhaver of UCLA and Lodi Nauta of the University of Groningen spoke on Lorenzo Valla and the Transition from Medieval to Renaissance Philosophy. On January 23 we have a mini-conference on “Pre-Modern Perspectives on Torture,” with talks by Alison Frazier of the University of Texas and Kenneth Pennington of the Catholic University of America. On Monday, February 23, Allen Greico of the Università delle Scienze Gastronomiche, the University of Tours and Harvard University will speak on the “Evolution of the Mediterranean Diet”; and on April 3 Paolo Squatriti of the University of Michigan and D. Fairchild Ruggles of the University of Illinois, Champagne-Urbana will give talks in our mini-conference on “Medieval Perspectives on Environmental History.” Graduate students Megan Palmer Browne (English) and Brigit Ferguson (Art History) are organizing the line-up for our graduate student conference, which will take place on May 2. We will also have a talk in May by former UCSB English graduate student Kathy Lavezzo, who is now an Associate Professor in the English Department at the University of Iowa.

—Sharon Farmer
LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

As you probably know, I am back in Santa Barbara after a six-month stay as a visiting professor at Harvard’s Villa I Tatti in Florence. It was an excellent experience and one in which I benefitted from the supportive intellectual atmosphere, visits with old friends, access to the excellent facilities of the villa, and the ability to finish my research in archives and libraries in Siena, Florence, and Rome. I also was able to visit many towns and castles in Lazio, the province around Rome. This gave me many ideas about comparisons between “my” Tuscan or Sienese magnates and those in and around Rome. In more direct terms of my study on fourteenth-century Siena and its elite, I was able to familiarize myself in more detail with the topography of their rural properties and strongholds, some of which are still occupied and some abandoned ruins. This made it more clear just what kind of agriculture they engaged in and their abilities to manipulate foodstuffs to their political advantage. All and all it was a great experience and I must thank I Tatti’s director Joe Connors, his wife Françoise, Michael Rocke, the librarian, and the great staff of the villa for all their support and assistance, especially Patrizia, Rosa and Alessandro.

Back at UCSB, I am pleased to be able to teach courses that are so fundamental to our Medieval Studies Program. In the fall I taught a course on Medieval Latin in which fifteen graduate and undergraduate students worked on a variety of texts and reviewed their grasp of grammar and syntax. In the winter and spring quarters, I will be teaching paleography (Manuscript Studies I) and Diplomatics/Codicology (Manuscript Studies II). We will go beyond the history of handwriting and study manuscript culture as it functioned in the Middle Ages.

The colloquium program in 2008-2009 is especially rich in topics such as seminars on Lorenzo Valla the Middle Ages, and others obviously relevant to contemporary political issues: torture, the history of Mediterranean food and diet, and the environment. I am again pleased to be back with our Medieval community of faculty and students exploring these issues.

—Edward D. English

CAROL LANSING VISITING PROFESSOR AT VILLA I TATTI

By Carol Lansing and Judy Kingkaysone

With the gracious invitation of the director, Dr. Carol Lansing was the Robert Lehman Visiting Professor at the Harvard University Center for Italian Renaissance Studies, also known as Villa I Tatti, from January 2008 to July 2008. Dr. Lansing had been a fellow at Villa I Tatti in 1994.

[In Lansing’s own words] The villa and library belonged to the art historian Bernard Berenson, who left them along with his art collection to Harvard to create a research institute. It still follows the pattern he established: an interdisciplinary community of scholars of Renaissance Italy who meet every weekday for a formal lunch. There is a program of seminars, lectures and early music concerts. I adored a concert by Accordone, who do traditional Neapolitan songs, including an astonishing tambourine solo.

I Tatti is an oddity because Berenson also left a farm, some villas and an old convent. There is a formal garden, which has recently been beautifully restored. The farm produces wine and olive oil. And many of the buildings have been converted into apartments and studies for the fellows.

It is very much an international crossroads for people in my field; you never know what old chum or famous scholar you might bump into having an aperitif in the garden before lunch. The fellows are junior scholars and it is a pleasure to get to know them and their work. We also had fun with Paul Barolsky, an old friend who is a Michelangelo specialist and spent hours

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STUDENT’S SUMMER WORKING IN ITALY

By Colleen Ho

This summer, I was fortunate enough to spend two months in Siena, Italy. Part research, part language acquisition, and part learning experience, this was my first visit to Italy. In my travels through Europe, I’ve been skirting around Italy for years, so this year was as good as any to head over.

I am a third year PhD student in the history department studying under Carol Lansing. My dissertation focuses on thirteenth century Franciscans who, by order of the papacy or through their own volition, traveled to the Mongol Empire as envoys and preachers. Innocent IV initiated papal diplomatic missions to the Mongols by sending John Plano di Carpini to the Mongol capital in 1245, partially to garner allies against the Muslims in the Near East, and also because rumors of the Mongols being friendly to Christians or even being Christians themselves had piqued interest in Europe.

I was in Siena to take Italian language courses at the Università per Stranieri, as well as to scope out primary and secondary sources discussing, among other things, the Franciscan institutional apparatus for educating their friars for missions abroad. But much of the trip was an experience in cultural immersion. I lived with four Italians for six weeks, which greatly encouraged my acquisition of Italian.

In addition to studying every day and reading secondary sources in Italian, I was able to watch the famous Palio horse races in July and August, I had the tastiest steak ever at a fantastic neighborhood outdoor celebratory dinner, I drank loads of delicious Chianti, ate way too much gelato (only to alleviate the relentless heat and sun), and grew accustomed to traversing the cobblestone-covered hilly streets of Siena. I had a wonderful time and thank you to Medieval Studies for assisting my travels.
MEDIEVAL GRADUATE STUDENTS MEET TO PLAN FOR UPCOMING YEAR

By Judy Kingkaysone

On October 2, 2008, the Medieval Graduate Student Association had their first meeting of the year. At the meeting, future plans for the Medieval Graduate Student Conference, the Medieval Studies Newsletter, and social events were discussed. It was decided that Brigit Ferguson and Megan Palmer Browne are to co-chair the upcoming Medieval Graduate Student Conference. Judy Kingkaysone is this year’s editor of the Medieval Studies Newsletter. The new officers for the Medieval Graduate Student Association are president Christine Bolli and co-secretaries Seth Ford and Joe Figliuolo-Rosswurm.
NEW GRADUATE STUDENTS

Carlos Pio

Interests:
Medieval Portuguese Philology, Old French, Old Portuguese Arthurian Literature

Department:
Spanish and Portuguese

Degree:
M.A., University of Lisbon
B.A., University of Lisbon

Joe Figliuolo-Rosswurm

Interests:
13th and 14th century Court Proceedings (largely from the Inquisition)

Department:
History

Degree:
B.A., Lake Forest College

Paul Megna

Interests:
Late Medieval Studies, Critical Theory (deconstruction, psychoanalysis, post-colonial), Hip-hop Studies

Department:
English

Degree:
M.A., University of Rochester
B.A., SUNY Buffalo

NEW ENGLISH PROFESSOR FOR MEDIEVAL STUDIES PROGRAM

By Judy Kingkaysone

Dr. Heather Blurton is the latest addition to the ever-growing UCSB Department of English. Blurton received her Ph.D. at Columbia University in English and Comparative Literature and for the past five years has been teaching at the University of York in the U.K.

Blurton studies English literature from 950 to 1250. Her interests are in literary responses to the Norman Conquest; the intersections of romance, hagiography, and historiography; relationships across borderlands; hybridity; the question of memory; and how history responds to the question of context. Blurton is very much an academic concerned with how our views speak to our understanding of the past.


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On a sunny day in late-October, the UCSB medievalists again made the trek up Santa Barbara’s Skofield Park to enjoy a lovely picnic and barbecue. Here was a chance for medieval students, faculty, and family members to meet and catch up from the summer. Volleyball was enjoyed. Burgers and hot dogs—gourmet and plain—were eaten. A dog from the neighboring campsite visited. A game of frisbee so intense that it resulted in a sprained ankle was played. All-in-all, this year’s picnic was a fun and memorable weekend.
UCSB STUDENTS AND FACULTY ATTEND MEDIEVAL CONFERENCE IN KALAMAZOO

By Judy Kingkaysone

Last spring, the UCSB Department of History had three students present at the 43rd annual International Congress on Medieval Studies hosted by Western Michigan University in Kalamazoo, MI. The conference welcomes medievalists from all disciplines around the world. Proudly representing the UCSB Department of History were students Jessica Elliott, Karen Frank, and John Scholl, professor Sharon Farmer, and recent graduates Mark O’Tool and Tanya Stabler.

John Scholl’s paper was titled “Durand of Osca and the Waldensian Version of the Vita Apostolica.” Here, he discusses a section of Durand of Osca’s Liber Antiheresis which is a key source for the Waldensians during the late 12th and early 13th centuries. Scholl argues that Durand who was a leader of the Waldensians articulated a vision of the Apostolic life which was distinct from that of other groups (such as monks, mendicants, bishops, and canons) and even heterodox within his context.

Meanwhile, Karen Frank presented a paper titled “A Matter of Cultural Accommodation? Female Financial Autonomy in Jewish Perugia.” The presentation of this paper led to more conference invitations and a publication. Shona Wray, who organized Frank’s panel, asked Frank to be a contributor in a volume coming out from Routledge on women and property in the Mediterranean. Frank’s reaction: “There are some fairly big name people in the field included [in the publication], so I am really excited.”

Because the conference was so large, Frank could only go to a small fraction of the papers in which she was interested. She attended the presentations of those in her field and in doing so, gained a sense of community with other Italianists and Jewish scholars. She also made sure to attend the book sale and picked up some new publications. In Frank’s own words: “Overall, while intimidating because of its size, it was still a useful place to network, meet new scholars and encounter new perspectives.”

For Elliott, this was her first time attending the conference in Kalamazoo. She was delighted to be invited and was quite overwhelmed by the number of medievalists in attendance. This would not be Scholl’s first time in Kalamazoo, MI, and he was honored to return.

The attendees of the 43rd annual International Congress on Medieval Studies were able to meet many wonderful scholars in their fields and other medieval fields.

PROFESSOR MARK COHEN GIVES LECTURE ON ANTI-SEMITISM

By Judy Kingkaysone

On a sunny day last spring, Princeton Professor of Near Eastern Studies Mark Cohen spoke at UCSB to a room bursting with faculty, students, and members of the community. Dr. Cohen’s talk was titled “Modern Myths of Muslim Anti-Semitism.” There are some scholars that claim that anti-Semitism has always been present among the followers of Islam. Dr. Cohen argued that this is not so. He discussed the reasons for the rise of anti-Semitism in the medieval era and how these prejudices have transformed in the modern era.

Cohen implies that anti-Semitism began in Christian society and was picked up by Muslim society. Jews were for the most part secure in Christian society until the eleventh century. In the eleventh century, the blossoming of anti-Semitic sentiments was a result of the loss of Germanic pluralism; the spread of Christianity; the erosion of St. Augustine within the Christian Church; a commercial revolution; the political unification of England, France, and Spain; the Crusades and the resulting encounters with Muslims; and the twelfth century advent of rationalism. Medieval Christians hated all forms of the so-called other. There was a myth by society of the all-powerful and malevolent Jewish and their conspiracy against mankind. For Christians, Jews were the most threatening of any religious groups because they claimed that Jesus was not the son of God. The Christians though were not alone in condemning the Jews and their faith.

Jews were seen as unbelievers in all sects of the Mediterranean world, although the followers of Judaism found more tolerance in the Islamic world than in the Christian one. Muslims had less reason to be intolerant of other faiths because the Muslims had quickly conquered the lands of these peoples.

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Scholars Present Talk Titled “Transitions from Medieval to Renaissance Philosophy”

By Abby Dowling

On Friday, November 21, 2008 Medieval Studies hosted a seminar entitled “Transitions from Medieval to Renaissance Philosophy” co-sponsored by the departments of Philosophy, History, French and Italian, the IHC, and Renaissance Studies. The program presented two medieval philosophy scholars: Lodi Nauta, professor at the University of Groningen and Brian P. Copenhaver, director for the Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies at UCLA. The program focused on the relationship between medieval and Renaissance philosophy in the thought of Lorenzo Valla (d. 1457). The talk was well-attended by faculty members and graduate students from all of the sponsoring departments. The engaging and thought-provoking talk was followed by a lively Q&A session and a light reception.

Lodi Nauta in “The Transition from Medieval to Renaissance Philosophy: Lorenzo Valla,” provided an overview of the major themes in Valla’s work as well as their treatment by scholars. Valla, who was a cantankerous and unpopular man, wrote widely but is most famous for his challenge of the papacy in revealing the Donation of Constantine as a fraud. In addition he wrote a critical review of Jerome’s Vulgate on which Erasmus based his critical edition. Nauta spoke on his lesser-known work on Aristotelian logic, the Dialectica. In this work, Valla critiqued the theories of scholastic logic and introduced a much-simplified version that reduced the categories to “res.” Valla attacked the scholastics for abusing language by breaking with Classical Latin, removing language from its context and developing a highly specialized and technical vocabulary. Nauta’s larger point was to rethink Valla’s relationship with scholastic thought: Valla’s emphasis on language does not fit the usual dichotomies of scholasticism versus humanism, medieval versus renaissance, and literary versus philosophical.

Copenhaver argued that Valla’s critique largely addressed not the “new logic” current in his day, but rather the “old logic” of Peter of Spain’s thirteenth-century textbook, the Summulae logicales. Copenhaver made the controversial argument that despite his critique, Valla drew his notion of res in part from a passage from the Summulae logicales. In general, Valla’s philosophical framework and targets allowed him to criticize the scholastics more directly than scholars like Petrarch, who emphasized literary and moral values. Though Valla’s Dialectica was not directly influential, both Copenhaver and Nauta argue that it did have an impact on Rudolph Agricola and his influential and bestselling De inventione dialectica.
with us looking at the Medici tombs in San Lorenzo. Ed [English] reciprocated, or tried to: Paul has a theory about the Lorenzetti Good Government frescoes in the town hall in Siena, and Ed of course is a specialist. We drove out to look at them and then couldn’t get in because they were filming the James Bond film!

In addition, Dr. Lansing became immersed in an unexpected archival project: peasant denunciations of noble violence to the Florentine Executor of the Ordinances of Justice. These mid-fourteenth century records, usually in the vernacular, offer an extraordinary look not only at representations of lordship and violence but at peasant political ideas. She has also been tracking the ensuing court cases to see how village communities responded.

Lansing’s post at Villa I Tatti was a rewarding and pleasurable academic experience, leading to events that she will never forget and the glimmers of possibly another award-winning project.

from seeing Durham Cathedral on a train ride, thinking about how its presence affected her and wondering about its place in relation to the poem. Many of the questions in this article came from exploring the post-colonial theory model, and its relationship with medieval studies.

In the Fall Quarter, Blurton taught a graduate course on monsters in medieval literature. This quarter, she is teaching an upper-division undergraduate class titled “Sex, Saints and Sinners: Hagiography and Romance in Medieval Culture,” and for the spring term will be teaching two undergraduate classes pertaining to English literature in the Middle Ages.

In the Middle Ages, there was respect between Muslims and Jews. There were Jewish men who occupied positions in the Islamic government, although these were low-ranking positions. Jews were seen as beneath the followers of Islam but Muslims were tolerant of Jews because Jews were never a threat to the Muslim world until the modern era.

Muslims first encountered European anti-Semitism in the Ottoman Empire. Muslim states also never went through the modern revolution of liberalism that the Latin Christian states went through. Now, much of the hatred between Muslims and Jews is prevalent in Israel and Palestine, especially after the military successes of the modern state of Israel. Both states are fighting for territory. There are now myths about Jews being promoted by both sides in this area of the world. Dr. Cohen does not believe this mutual friction will evaporate quickly because the Israel and Palestine both have a history of terrorism.

Dr. Cohen’s talk generated many questions during the question-and-answer session. His talk was insightful on the current conflict between Muslims and Jews in Israel and Palestine, showing how relevant past anti-Semitism is to current anti-Semitism. UCSB would be delighted to welcome back Mark Cohen for any future talks.
UPCOMING MEDIEVAL STUDIES EVENTS

Colloquium: “Pre-Modern Perspectives on Torture”
Marine Sciences Institute, rm. 1302
January 23, 2009, 3:00-6:00 PM

Alison Frazier from the University of Texas will be presenting “Machiavelli, Trauma, and the Scandal of the Prince.” Kenneth Pennington from the Catholic University of America will be presenting “Women on the Rack: Three Trials.”

The History of the Mediterranean Diet in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance
McCune Conference Room, rm. 6020
February 23, 2009, 4:00-5:00 PM

Allen Grieco of Harvard’s Villa I Tatti, the Università delle Scienze Gastronomiche, and the University of Tours will be lecturing.

Colloquium: “Medieval Perspectives on Environmental History”
Location TBA at http://medievalstudies.ucsb.edu/events.html
April 3, 2009

Paolo Squatriti from the University of Michigan will be presenting “Storms Floods and Climate Change in the Dark Ages: An Italian Case.” D. Fairchild Ruggles from the University of Illinois, Champagne-Urbana will be presenting “Islamic Gardens in the Mediterranean (7th-15th Centuries): Environmental Perspectives on Water and Landscape.” UCSB graduate students will also be presenting papers.