

13TH ANNUAL SYMPOSIUM ON MEDIEVAL AND RENAISSANCE STUDIES

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PAPER ABSTRACTS

Abstracts for all papers at the Symposium may be found below, with the exception of (1) plenary or keynote lectures, for which we did not solicit abstracts, and (2) Society for Medieval and Renaissance Philosophy papers, for which there is a separate document found on smrs-slu.org. Abstracts appear in alphabetical order, according to the last name of the presenter.

Section I contains all abstracts, combined, for the general SMRS.

Section II, beginning on p. 35, contains the abstracts for the International Arthurian Studies Mini conference.

Section III, beginning on p. 41, contains the abstracts for the South-Central Renaissance Conference.

Section I.

General SMRS

Sana Asifriyaz, Lehigh University, USA

“A World in Spice: The Poetics and Politics of “Spices” in Early Modern English Poetry”

The proliferation of the early modern spice trade bespeaks England’s reliance on spices. Due to their versatility and popularity, however, spices also disconcerted English people critical of cross-cultural exchange. Gitangali Shahani argues that spices were perceived as foreign substances whose entrance into English bodies and lands threatened cultural homogeneity. Thus, as Kim F. Hall posits, women’s domestic work was essential in familiarizing foreign commodities in European diets and increasing their demand through trade and colonialism. Timothy Morton argues that, when it appears in poetry, spice contains a spectrality that signifies its historical roots—including imperialism—not only its definition or metaphoric abilities. Despite the extant scholarship on women’s domestic labor with spice and spice in poetry, little has been said about how spice appears in women’s poetry. I aim to address this gap by yoking Hall’s and Shahani’s scholarship on Englishwomen’s interaction with foreign commodities in domestic settings (and Englishwomen’s subsequent impact on imperialist expansion) with Morton’s work on the appearance of spices in poesy to understand how women poets evoke spices. Using Margaret Cavendish’s poetry as a case study, I close read “A World in an Earring” (1664) to explore how the poem, in describing an earring containing spices and other phenomena, complicates the foreignness and familiarity of not only spices but also the earring and its wearer. As the historical context of the spice trade heightens the significance of spices in women’s poetry, I consider how women’s poetry may conceptualize spices as both prone and resistant to domestication.

Jessalynn Bird, Saint Mary’s College, USA

“Paris Masters, Gregory IX, and the Reformation of Benedictines: Sermons and Synods”

Although studies of the reform of Benedictine monasteries have typically focused on the episcopal visitation register of Odo of Rigaud, archbishop of Rouen, Honorius III and Gregory IX followed Innocent III in their concern for the reform of Benedictine religious houses. Perhaps best known for his Decretals (1234), Gregory IX also issued influential statutes for the reform of the Benedictine Order (1235 and 1237), including instructions for specific decretals to be copied and enforced by the abbot and prior of each Benedictine house. These included provisions for visitations to be conducted and those guilty of violating the new statutes or the Benedictine Rule to be publicly shamed at the triennial general chapters mandated by Lateran IV. By examining the papal registers of Gregory IX we can construct a top-down view of orders for the reform of monastic houses and appeals against inquests and visitations. The careers and sermons of reformers including Jacques de Vitry, Guiard of Laon, Odo of Châteauroux, and Philip the Chancellor, provide further insights. Most notably, their sermons to religious and for synods sought to persuade audiences of the necessity of reform, even as some of these individuals, most notably Odo and Guiard, were also appointed as visitors to reform specific Benedictine houses. This enables us to ascertain the workings of canon law in practice in specific regions and periods of time, and calls into question the processes for the formation of Gregory IX’s reforming statutes—were these a top-down mandate or formulated in dialogue with individuals such as Guiard, who had a long track record as a judge delegate appointed to investigate and reform specific religious houses and Jacques de Vitry, who was a cardinal in Gregory IX’s curia?

Dackerie Bowes, Saint Louis University, USA.

“Tailored Devotion: Textile Culture and the *Virgen de los Sastres* in Seville and Cuzco”

The *Virgen de los Sastres*, or Virgin of the Tailors, emerged from the medieval devotional culture of confraternities in Seville after Ferdinand III besieged the Muslim city in the thirteenth century. She was bound to urban guild life, where tailors and artisans did not simply venerate her but also emphasized her in their collective memory, material forms, and Corpus Christi celebrations. She was not static nor exclusive to Seville, but a devotional model that could be transported, adapted, and reassembled across oceans in Spanish America.

This paper examines how textile culture, and its intertwining with devotional practice, provided a material framework through which the boundaries between Spain and New Spain, the divine and human, and mobility and permanence became porous in the early modern Iberian worlds. The circulation of Marian devotion, in which dressed sacred figures moved through urban streets during annual festivals, demonstrates how textiles enabled the presence of Spanish Virgins across geographic and devotional boundaries. Focusing on the Virgin of the Tailors, this study argues that material forms of devotion did not travel in a fixed fashion across the Atlantic, but rather as images that took on new meanings in distinct contexts shaped by shared roots in textile labor.

Eric Bryan, Missouri University of Science and Technology, USA

“Material Philology and Textual Criticism: Uncoupling Ideology from Materiality in Old Norse Manuscript Studies”

In Old Norse-Icelandic (ON-I) studies, material philology has always been understood in opposition to the traditional philological approaches of textual criticism. While the former prizes the materiality of manuscripts that embody a text, the latter relies upon longstanding Lachmannian editorial methods to construct an ideal version of a target text based on available material manuscripts as well as a range of other linguistic and literary tools. Despite its emphasis

on a rather uncomplicated view of materiality, material philology has its roots in the highly theorized works of Bernard Cerquiglini, Stephen Nichols, and others, who applied Poststructuralist theories of authorship to medieval manuscript variation. These efforts (then called New Philology) also tended to embody overt accusations against traditional philologists for perceived patriarchal and nationalist agendas. The rift between the two sides was, in a word, ugly and has never been fully mended, yet in ON-I studies, the two sides have until recently more or less learned to coexist. In 2023, however, two prominent scholars of ON-I textual criticism published articles rekindling the old enmity, accusing material philologists of sustained ideological biases and a poor understanding of textual legacies. This presentation aims to reconcile the two sides of this unfortunate argument. Using manuscript variation of the Icelandic Laxdœla saga as a test subject, this presentation hopes to demonstrate that textual criticism and material philology represent two distinct-but-compatible methodologies whose value depends upon what research questions are being asked rather than the ideological predilections of one approach or the other.

Daniel Buck, The Catholic University of America, USA

“In the Regiment of Rogues: The Rogue Nation and the Construction of Nationality in Early Modern England”

This paper uses the genre of Early Modern English Rogue Literature as a lens to explore the construction of English national identity in the Elizabethan and early Stuart periods. Specifically, it argues that the writers of rogue pamphlets imagined that their community of rogues in England was organized as a counter-nation against which ideas of Englishness could both be imagined and critiqued. This follows studies on rogue literature of the past few decades which have read these pamphlets as literary constructs rather than as accurate reports of criminality. This study also follows recent works which have seen early modern printed texts, especially works of cheap print, as useful sources to understand the development of a nascent sense of national identity in England, both as reflections of and contributors to that development. The primary source base of this study is a selection of the rogue pamphlets produced by Thomas Harman, Robert Greene, Thomas Dekker, and Samuel Rid, all of which were produced during the reigns of Elizabeth I and James I. Through a focused analysis of these sources, it contends that there is a construction of a “nation of rogues” which is placed in opposition to England and sets out to qualify what the national character of this nation of rogues is and how its negative traits were used to set up positive construction of Englishness. It also examines the ways in which these authors subtly critique ideas of Englishness and the ways in which Englishness itself is a construct.

Jochen Burgtorf, University of California Fullerton, USA

“*Eles sunt estrages de nostre maison & mesconeues de nos: William of St. Stephen’s Concerns about Legal Norms in the Order of the Hospital (1296)*”

In 1296, while on Cyprus, the Hospitaller William of St. Stephen compiled his two-part Saterian (Paris, BNF, fr. 6049, fols. 217r-298r), a work in which he assembled several texts to illustrate the history of his community; his Order’s rule; those statutes he deemed particularly relevant for the Brothers to be able to settle whatever issues might come before them “according to law;” as well as his extensive reflections on the different types of law, on judgment, and on justice and injustice—based on Cicero, Augustine, the Decretum Gratiani, Aristotle’s Ethics, and other influential writings. As the author explains, he felt compelled to do this, at least in part, because legal norms were “unfamiliar in our House and unknown to us” (*estrages de nostre maison &*

mesconeues de nos). According to the eminent Hospitaller scholar Joseph Delaville Le Roulx (1855-1911), William of St. Stephen's Saterian reflects the author's profound erudition and astute mind, as well as his preoccupation with history, law, and spirituality. The 1291 fall of the Latin kingdom of Jerusalem's capital Acre, the various subsequent calls for a new Crusade, and a leadership crisis in the Hospitallers' headquarters in the last decade of the thirteenth century all cast their shadows over this work. Taking up Delaville Le Roulx's assessment that this work is "personal" rather than "official," this paper will attempt to shed light on the dichotomy between norms and realities; it will discuss the ramifications for our use of current editions of Hospitaller statutes; and it will attempt to get a better sense of William of St. Stephen's individual agenda.

Sarah Burt, Saint Louis University, USA

"Written Down: Reading Marie de France's *Laustic* as Reflective of Birds In Manuscript Production"

In 2023, Bruce Holsinger's *On Parchment: Animals, Archives, and the Making of Culture from Herodotus to the Digital Age*, was published, and has brought attention back to animal ethics and participation within medieval manuscript studies. Holsinger, along with scholars such as Sarah Kay, have laid groundwork for considering animal ethics when considering the animal-sourced materials to create manuscripts such as parchment. While skins used to create parchment have had great attention, the same attention has not been given to the animal-sourced quill-pens, also integral to manuscript production. The role of birds in putting human words onto parchment through their quill-feathers in the context of medieval manuscripts makes them a necessity to the production of any text of the Middle Ages. This closeness is highly allegorized throughout the many bird-centric texts of the Middle Ages, but the role of the facilitator of the text itself is seen clearly allegorized in Marie de France's *Laustic*. This paper will demonstrate how the titular bird's ability to facilitate the romance between the adulterous lovers within *Laustic*, runs parallel to the reality of birds and their quill-pens facilitating the writing of any text, including romances, of the Middle Ages.

Emmaleigh Calhoun, Saint Louis University, USA

"Mapping the Bellcote: Alternative Sources for the Identification of Workshops in Twelfth through Fifteenth Century Ireland"

Evidence for metalsmithing workshops in high medieval Gaelic Ireland is astoundingly rare. The limitations of the documentary sources – particularly that the annals give few details, and that much surviving literature leans Anglo-Norman and tends to focus on the exclusion of the Gaelic Irish – leads to a search for alternative sources for workshop identification. This paper seeks to explore sources which can work in concert with more traditional excavation reports and documentary sources to identify areas which were likely to have been sites of craft production. In particular, it will explore the frequency and distribution of bellcotes in medieval western Ireland. The paper will ask the following questions: how common were bellcotes and belfries in parish churches? Are they present in other ecclesiastical contexts? Are there perceptible patterns in the distribution of bellcotes, and do these patterns follow diocesan lines? Most importantly, can these patterns point us to locations likely to have provided the bells once housed within? While the focus of the paper is on western Ireland, particularly the dioceses of Tuam, Elphin, Killala, for whom there is a dearth of even early modern documentary sources, this paper aims to compare the results with those in the broader Anglo-Norman sphere. This paper investigates the relationship between parish churches and sites of craft production in high medieval Gaelic

Ireland. It seeks to examine if there are perceptible patterns in the distribution of bellcotes, and if those patterns can point us to locations likely to have provided the bells once housed within.

Martina Camelli, Università Roma, Tor Vergata, Italy

“‘faciens et complendo inventarium de bonis’: The documentary world of a merchant in early 13th century Verona”

In the first decades of the 13th century a merchant travels around the countryside of Verona, mainly between the city, Lake Garda and Venice. His movements involve the trade of animals, oil and cereals.

When he dies, he leaves two long parchment deeds - called inventarii - where his testamentary bequest is arranged. It consists not of mobilia et immobilia but of documents, and surprisingly, of 225 deeds – that really is an impressive amount for a private archive of a man for that time – attesting his transactions. These are important and totally unusual documents in the Italian documentary landscape which arouse many reflections, also considering the fact that in recent years a significantly and consistently growing interest in inventories and toward objects as material and tangible stuff (as the DALME Project shows) and material culture in general has been registered.

The distinctive feature of these Veronese inventories is that, what is tangible there, are not simply and generically objects but documents, specifically instrumenta, regarding objects that were traded, loaned, and probably used to hide usury practices.

They also constitute a lively fresco of a historical period and a geographical area in which multiple aspects (cultural, juridical, social, economic, commercial, documentary) converge. These long lists of deeds reveal their value in telling us the story of a man but also the bustling fervour of life teeming with people, industriousness and their activities (cultivation, breeding, grazing, exchanges, bargaining, loans, credit, usury): a snapshot of life, history in its making, in real time.

Jean Marie Christensen, Southern Methodist University, USA

“‘In the Softness of the Flesh’: Picturing Beauty Standards and Portrait Repetition in Peter Lely’s Windsor Beauties”

This paper presents a reexamination of Peter Lely’s Windsor Beauties Series as promoting the seventeenth-century beauty standard through portrait repetition. Although scholarship has noted female beauty in Lely’s portraiture, analyses dismiss replication as an expedited studio practice and identify Barbara Villiers as Lely’s so-called muse. This paper argues that the Windsor Beauties trace Lely’s experimental approach to visualizing the beauty standard, allowing him to develop portrait conventions that are then replicated to exemplify beauty, not identity, as a woman’s principal attribute. The series’ early portraits demonstrate a spectrum of beauty. Painted as St. Catherine of Alexandria, Lely’s 1663 portrait of Elizabeth Hamilton represents moralistic beauty by combining the saint’s virtue with her pale skin and curled hair. By contrast, Lely’s portrait of Barbara Villiers as Minerva (1663-1665) envisions beauty defeating deformity, represented by Medusa’s image on the goddess’ shield. (Figure 2). While Barbara’s power emerges as a foil to Elizabeth’s honor, Lely’s later portraits depart from curated personifications to align beauty with sensual undress. Between 1663 and 1669, Lely’s portraits replicate bodily attractiveness, codifying representational beauty. Instead of Barbara being Lely’s muse, he constructs her likeness within the parameters of the textual beauty standard to reconfigure portrait conventions. Lely’s use of portrait replication produces a visual signature that matures

during the Windsor Beauties, indicating that compositional recycling, far from being a second-rate production method, constructed conventions that idealized femininity. Lely's beauties picture the English Restoration not through hallow, sacral kingship but through the painted flesh of ornamented, prescribed female beauty.

Anthony G. Cirilla, College of the Ozarks, USA

“Principles, Prosimetrum, and Participation: Consolation III and *Quomodo Substantiae*”

The Christian status of Boethius' Consolation of Philosophy, with its lack of appeal to Scripture, is one of the oldest debates surrounding Boethius's otherwise theistic Consolation of Philosophy. I will present on the relationship between Boethius's *Quomodo Substantiae* (sometimes referred to as the *Hebdomadibus*) and the Consolation, specifically in respect to Book 3 of the Consolation but with reference to the structure of the Consolation as a whole. Boethius's theological tract on

the doctrine of participation, *Quomodo* serves as a useful tool because it provides an interesting structural insight into his perspective on what it means to talk about God. *Quomodo* begins with a series of axioms which are turgid, difficult to parse, and left unexplained, followed by a discourse on the relationship between absolute and temporal goodness which is never explicitly connected to the list of axioms. The Consolation of Philosophy has its own bifurcation: between poetry and prose, which serve, one could say, a similar function to that of the dual structure of the *Quomodo*. In a word, the function of that duality is to demand participation from the reader – so that the act of reading the text mirrors the doctrine Boethius seeks to teach. As he leads us through the insufficiency of worldly sources of happiness, Boethius also leads us to dissatisfaction in a monological interpretation of the world – so that the very act of thinking becomes, at its core, participatory, awakening desire for scriptural truth while leaving Scripture to do the work of satisfying that desire.

Camarie Cirilla, Ozarks Technical Community College, USA

“‘Strong of Limb If of Purpose Weak’: The Boethian Failure of Misordered Love in Christina Rossetti's *The Prince's Progress*”

In this fairytale poem, Christina Rossetti demonstrates the catastrophic consequences of failure to recognize the summum bonum and the futility of attempting to pursue goodness through the means of worldly goods. Documenting Rossetti's familiarity with Boethius, I then demonstrate how she employed the fairy tale to explore Boethian themes. Boethius and Rossetti show that having misordered affections cripple a soul in its journey of pursuing ultimate goodness through the negative exemplum of Orpheus and the Prince. The five plot components of “The Prince's Progress” correspond directly with the philosopher's journey as portrayed by Boethius. The Prince's failure to stay within his mental citadel relates to Boethius' faltering outside of his true home. Rossetti's character of the milkmaid contains elements of all the negative female figures of Boethius, including the Muses, Lady Fortune, and Circe. The Alchemist represents Boethius' point of trying to attain happiness through the means of materialism and power and connects to the bad philosophers who tore off pieces of Lady Philosophy's dress. The newfound friends who rescue the Prince from drowning portray a misuse of the good of friendship. However, the Prince, unlike Odysseus, never reunites with his true love and is a more unsuccessful Orpheus who, unlike Orpheus, fails to see his bride still living. While *The Consolation of Philosophy* ends with Boethius returning to the true home of his mental citadel, Rossetti uses a tragic ending to portray the gravity of failing to find one's true home.

Susan Cobbledick, Missouri Botanical Garden, USA

“Mysteries of the One-pull Press: Crescenzi Holds a Clue”

The wooden platen press that dominated the hand-press era changed little between the 15th and 18th centuries. This press, known as the common press, was a two-pull press. This means that in order to cover the entire surface of a sheet, the small platen had to be brought down twice, first on one half, then the other half of the paper. This shift was accomplished by moving the bed of the press back and forth. The earliest incunables, however, were not produced on a common press. Little is known about the first printing presses other than the fact that they were single pull presses. The workflow on such presses would have differed significantly from that of their two-pull successors, but how it differed is difficult to know. One way to infer information about single-pull press work is to examine early incunables for physical artifacts of the printing process. A copy of Crescenzi's *Opus Ruralium Commodorum* (1478) in the Peter Raven Library offers some clues about the arrangement of the paper on the press's tympan. Pin holes at the 2 fore edge corners of each leaf suggest that the sheets were lowered unto the type while folded in half. Why does this matter? Printing technology and processes affected the character of the page and the economic viability of the craft. The two-pull press eventually dominated because it was more efficient, but decades would pass before it could produce work of the quality associated with its single-pull predecessor.

Consuelo Concepcion, Independent Scholar, USA

“‘Convey them with safe conduct:’ Language and Legal Authority in Henry V”

Henry V deploys the use of legal language throughout the play to assert his authority. Whether the king himself or his advocates and ministers use such language to justify his claim to the French throne and assert his right to use his royal prerogative to change law and custom, Shakespeare's seminal play was written and performed at a moment when the assertion of legal authority was changing drastically, and the assertion of royal power would be challenged by jurists, such as Sir Edward Coke and Sir John Davies, and external forces that sought to change the definition of the royal prerogative through the deployment of specific language to assert new legal precedents, changes which were happening even during the king's reign more than 170 years before the first performance of the play. I will show how Shakespeare uses legal language to determine Henry's speech and actions to project his royal authority. Using statutes passed during his and Shakespeare's times and language used in the play, I show that Shakespeare understood the political events using Henry V to impart to his audiences the crises determining how monarchical power defined the law stemming from royal prerogative.

Margaret Cotter-Lynch, Southeastern Oklahoma State University, USA

“What Makes a Desert Holy? Translating the Transjordan in the Lives of St. Mary of Egypt”

St. Mary of Egypt was one of the most popular saints of the Middle Ages, with her story told and retold in multiple places and languages from the 6th century onward. The earliest version of her vita was written most likely in Jerusalem, and recounts her 47 years of ascetic withdrawal into the Transjordan desert after crossing the river at the monastery of St. John the Baptist. This story is intricately entwined in the biblical landscape, as she baptizes herself at the same spot where John baptized Jesus, then proceeds into the same desert where Jesus withdrew for 40 days and

underwent temptation before beginning His ministry. Generically, the narrative draws heavily on the tradition of the Desert Fathers and Mothers, with episodes in Mary of Egypt's life directly echoing the Life of Paul the Hermit and the Life of Mary Niece of Abraham. However, in subsequent centuries, the story was translated and retranslated, finding popularity in, among other places, England and France, where the immediate landscape of the hagiography's audience was very different from that originally described in the vita. In this paper, I will compare the ways in which the holy landscape of Mary of Egypt's Life is rendered in Old French and Middle English, maintaining the setting of sacred geography but translated onto Western European landscapes.

Jennifer Courts, University of Southern Mississippi, USA

“Unbound: Empire and the Multivalent Breast in Renaissance France”

Women's breasts emit a cacophony of meanings, some of which are evidenced in François Clouet's 1571 painting, *A Lady at Her Bath*. The topless bathing woman is paralleled to Biblical exempla including Bathsheba, Susanna, and even the Virgin Mary to ascertain meaning for noble spectators. This traditional notion of “disguised symbolism” holds the potential to reveal hidden meaning not only of the woman, but a multitude of other objects, such as the unicorn and the dianthus as symbols of purity and fidelity, all of which are meticulously represented in oil; however, meaning is not always restricted to the art object. Instead, the artwork exists within distinct social and political spaces and creates new meaning with each unique audience. The objecthood of the work indexes people, places, and practices that extend beyond a reductive symbolic meaning. In this paper, I investigate the development of the represented breast in later Valois France not simply as a symbol for the use of aristocratic audiences, but as a tool for, among other things, social mobility in an expanding global empire. Ultimately, by examining the breast as an object beyond the painted panel allows for a more expansive view of sixteenth-century visual culture.

Lucien Lin Dabadie, Yale University, USA

“A New Latin Daniel Apocalypse from Western Sicily: Messianic Prophecy and Anti-Elite Sentiment in the Wake of the Rebellion of Frederick II's Impersonator John of Cocleria (1261)”

Despite their popularity in Eastern Christianity, pseudonymous Daniel apocalypses are thought to have exerted virtually no influence in Latin Christendom (DiTommaso 2018). My contribution looks to alter this assessment by presenting a hitherto unknown Daniel vision preserved in a mid-14th-century prophetic compilation from the Nürnberg Stadtbibliothek (Cent. IV. 32, 41vb-45va), the lone identified Latin example of the genre predating 1450. A composite patchwork, the prophecy displays clear parallels with the Slavonic Daniel, yet also contains a quasi-literal translation of the vision 'Daniel Kai estai'. Internal and external evidence suggest that the text in its final form was translated in Western Sicily from a Greek original in the aftermath of Michael VIII's conquest of Constantinople (1261). Hence, the 'Latin Daniel' adds to a body of evidence testifying to the transfer of Byzantine prophecies to the Latin West via Italy around this time. More specifically, it points to bilingual Sicilian milieux as overlooked channels of transmission for such prophetic literature. I then adduce two prophecies composed in Messina in the 1260s—*Nascetur aquila* and an original version of the Tiburtine Sibyl quoting the 'Latin Daniel' (Beinecke, Marston 225)—to argue that the rebellion of John of Cocleria, a mysterious impersonator of Frederick II who dressed as a pauper (1261), revived expectations centered on a

poor messianic emperor who shall uplift the humble. In turn, such prophecies' markedly anti-elite character and their egalitarian undertones modify our understanding of an episode framed by chroniclers as a rebellion of the Sicilian nobility against royal authority.

José Miguel de Toro, Universidad de los Andes, Chile

“Reassessing the East: Material Objects as Forms of Proof in Fourteenth-Century Travel Narratives”

After the Mongol expansion into Europe and the establishment of their vast empire, European kingdoms developed a dynamic and sustained relationship with Asian territories during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Prominent travelers such as Marco Polo and Odoric of Pordenone introduced European audiences to distant Eastern lands, yet their accounts often blended observation with elements of the Oriental imaginary, perpetuating stereotypes through depictions of monsters, barbarity, and extraordinary creatures. In the fourteenth century, the Franciscan John of Marignolli traveled to the East and recorded his journey in a detailed chronicle. Unlike his predecessors, John actively sought to demystify familiar tropes of the exotic, challenging both earlier travelers and ancient cosmographers. Central to his approach was the use of material objects as evidence, including cement from the Tower of Babel, Indian garments crafted from coconut fiber, and an umbrella misidentified as the foot of the Sciapods. In doing so, he moved beyond the conventional reliance on “I saw it with my own eyes” or “I heard it from trustworthy sources,” emphasizing the material dimension as a basis for validating his narrative. John’s chronicle thus represents a shift in European perceptions of Asian geography, offering a more critical understanding of its alleged marvels. Furthermore, it introduces a new rationality grounded in material proof, where tangible objects serve as vessels of credibility and reinforce the meaning and authority of the travel narrative.

Teymur Malikov, ADA University, Azerbaijan

“The Original Version of Ibn Sīnā's Salāmān and Absāl?: An Alternative Extended Version of the Text”

The earliest examples of philosophical allegories in the Islamic world, such as Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān and *Risālat al-ṭayr*, penned by Ibn Sīnā (980–1037) in the later period of his intellectual activity, represent a pioneering attempt to blend literary form with a philosophical systematism. Due to their conciseness and allegorical nature, the mentioned stories were perceived as quite enigmatic by the public, raising a controversial discussion among modern scholars. The story of Salāmān and Absāl, on the other hand, is probably even a more debated topic, since neither its full original version survives, nor is its authorship unanimously accepted as being written by Ibn Sīnā. Until nowadays the Western scholarship was aware only of one surviving version of the allegory – a summary version by Naṣir al-Din Ṭusi (1201–1274). Yet an extended version is available in a medieval collection of philosophical works (N2385 – *Majmū‘a Rasā’il Ḥukamā’*) preserved at the Institute of Oriental Studies (Tashkent, Uzbekistan). Translated and analysed for the first time by an Uzbek scholar, Abdusodik Irisov in 1973, this version of Salāmān and Absāl remained unknown to the international academia. The story in this manuscript follows the same plotline as Ṭusi’s version, but it adds numerous details and factual elements that bring the work closer to a fuller, more complete recension. Although the text contains recognisable motifs (e.g., the seduction attempt and the lightning disclosure), it is massively expanded, re-voiced, and merged with another story cycle (the prophet Yūsuf), which increases its probability of being later reworking (mystical, adab, homiletic, or literary pastiche).

Rebecca Faletti, The University of Washington, USA

“Materiality and the Use of Spolia from Late Antiquity to the Renaissance”

The use of spoliated Roman material, particularly architectural elements like columns, was widespread in Europe both geographically and chronologically. Interpretation of these spolia has had a tempestuous history, often being reevaluated in light of new perspectives on the sweep of ancient history and new interpretations on how antiquity was interpreted in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. Most commonly, discussion considers the extent to which the use of spoliated material was in the interest of creating a common link with classical antiquity, or whether instead its use was intended to signal a kind of despoliation of and triumph over earlier regimes. In each case, the role of materiality in the act of spoliation is neglected. Materiality, in this case referring to the physical qualities inherent to a substance and also to the physical experience of seeing, interacting with, and moving that material, is neglected in investigations seeking to understand the motivations behind using ancient spolia in favor of newer building materials. This paper seeks to trace the use of spolia, particularly in the form of columns reused in the naves of Roman-style basilicas, from late antiquity to the high Middle Ages, with a brief note on the Renaissance. With an emphasis on how the physicality of marble might affect the interpretation of different audiences, it offers possible ways in which considerations of materiality could be used in tandem with earlier theories of spoliation.

Sophie Feingold, Independent Scholar, USA

“It’s a Ladder, not an Elevator: Shakespeare’s Sonnets and the Neoplatonic Vision of Love in The Courtier”

The influences on Shakespeare’s “Sonnets” include Renaissance Neoplatonism and hermeticism (see Ronald Gray, 2006, 2011 and Margaret Healy, 2011); one possible source for their Neoplatonism is Baldassare Castiglione’s “The Book of the Courtier,” translated in 1561 by Sir Thomas Hoby (see Philip Collington, 2006). Not only do Shakespeare’s “Sonnets” display broadly Neoplatonic themes found in the Castiglione/Hoby “Courtier,” but Shakespeare shapes his persona in the sonnets (“Will”) against Pietro Bembo of “The Courtier.” Both Will and Bembo are older, scorned by their beloveds, and instructors in the art of love; but while Bembo prefers love as a spiritual experience, Shakespeare shows the risks of attempted ascents from corporeal to spiritual love. Shakespeare’s critique of Neoplatonic spiritualized love, however, is complicated by his engagement with particular questions “The Courtier” raises: whether the lover truly suffers more than the beloved during rejection, whether invention or wit is key to creativity, whether love’s blows are medicinal, whether love adequately responds to human mortality, whether pretending a virtue one cannot possess is fruitful, whether errors come from ignorance or malice. In working through these questions in the experiences of “The Sonnets,” Shakespeare portrays the Neoplatonic account of love and human flourishing as dangerous chiefly when it enables shallow imitations of Neoplatonic love. “Will” thus illustrates Bembo’s warning against lingering on the lower rungs of love’s ladder, while simultaneously showing how the suffering inherent in corporeal love may be precisely what helps a lover achieve spiritual insight.

Thomas Finan, Saint Louis University, USA

“Holding History Without Breaking It: 3D Replicas, Pedagogy, and the Ethics of Access”

3D-printed replicas have reached a point of technical maturity where they are no longer experimental novelties, but practical tools for teaching, museums, and public engagement—provided they are used transparently and ethically. Rather than treating replicas as poor substitutes for originals, I suggest we understand them as a distinct category of object: pedagogical instruments that allow institutions to reconcile preservation mandates with access, handling, and inclusive learning. In classrooms, replicas enable inquiry-based. Students can measure, weigh, compare, and handle objects safely, turning abstract discussions of manufacture, use, and wear into concrete experience. In museums, replicas resolve familiar tensions: conservation versus handling, access versus risk, universal design versus glass-case display. Tactile replicas expand access for visitors for whom visual interpretation alone is insufficient. Replicas are ethically defensible only when transparency is absolute. I argue for a set of non-negotiables—permanent physical marking, unambiguous labeling, and robust documentation—without which replicas quickly become misleading or even fraudulent. When these standards are met, replicas do not undermine authenticity; they protect it. Done carefully, replica programs allow institutions to extend the life of original objects while putting material history back into human hands, where much of its meaning has always resided.

Stephen Gregg, University of Dallas, USA

“Sacred Books in Faerie Land: the Matter of Faith in Spencer’s Allegory”

Twice in the first book of the Faerie Queene (and never again) the books of the Scriptures are presented as material objects possessed by particular persons: one “writt with golden letters rich and brave” is given by the Red Crosse Knight to Prince Arthur, and the other is held by Fidelia in the House of Holinesse, “A booke that was both signd and seald with blood, / Wherein darke things were writ, hard to be understood” (FQ 1.10.13). This paper proposes to account for the curious iconography with which the Bible is presented in both cases and to assess what the entry of the sacred texts into the poem in material form within the allegory shows about the poem’s relationship to religion and to sacred writing (particularly in comparison to the Divine Comedy of Dante) and how materiality in general should be considered within allegorical narration.

James Harr III, Christian Brothers University, USA

“Integrating DNA Analysis and Machine Learning to Identify Medieval Manuscript Reuse”

This paper presents ongoing research that combines manuscript studies, bioinformatics, and classification algorithms to investigate whether mitochondrial DNA (mtDNA) sequences can distinguish palimpsests, particularly those that were chemically washed for reuse, from single-use parchments. Palimpsests provide crucial insights into intellectual history and material culture, but traditional detection methods rely on visual examination, specialized imaging equipment, or destructive chemical reagents. This research employs non-destructive sampling techniques using conservation-safe brushes to collect microscopic parchment samples from verified palimpsests and comparable single-use manuscripts (pre- and post-sampling conservation assessments validated the method’s safety by documenting any structural or surface changes). Sequencing technology was then used to analyze mtDNA preservation quality and genome coverage, including in chemically treated manuscripts. To explore computational detection capabilities, I compile an expanded library of ancient genome datasets and apply machine learning models to mtDNA control region sequences. Classification approaches include logistic regression and neural networks, alongside techniques such as SMOTE oversampling,

PCA dimensionality reduction, and sequence-level cross-validation to address challenges including class imbalance and feature separability. This interdisciplinary approach discusses a) whether genetic material survives manuscript reuse processes and b) whether computational methods can detect subtle biological signatures associated with palimpsesting. The research establishes methodological foundations for broader applications in species identification, manuscript provenance studies, and cultural heritage preservation, while demonstrating how data science and genomic analysis can advance the interpretation and understanding of historical materials.

Kenneth C. Hawley, Lubbock Christian University, USA

“Weakness of Mind and the Limits of Reason in T.R.’s Annotations on Boethius”

In the opening pages of his 1584 translation of Boethius's *de Consolatione Philosophiae*, T.R. inscribed a summary of his source that accounts for its obvious lack of explicitly Biblical content and that asserts the purpose of the text: "This Booke doth In effect show how near god Humayn Reson is able to reach without The assystance of the devyne scriptures." Throughout his rendering of Boethius, T.R.'s explanatory annotations emphasize the challenges of discerning divine truth, enduring great hardship, living in freedom, finding true happiness, and perceiving God's providence. These annotations provide a lexicon for articulating the dimensions of self that are engaged in this path toward consolation—e.g., the conscience, the mind, the will, and human reason. He consistently shows a particular interest in helping his reader appreciate the argument and application of the metra, and he offers multiple reflections on the dense prose passages in Books 4 and 5. In his epilogue, T.R. assures his patroness that Boethius purposefully confined himself to the consolations of philosophy: "he doth rather seek to lay open the devyne nature of man then to bynde any reader to beleef." T.R. presents Boethius, then, as "a prophan wise man speaking in the person of philosophy by naturall Reson"—so that Lady Philosophy is herself limited by the bounds of human reason when attempting to divine the heights of eternal providence.

Emily Heimerman, The University of New Mexico, USA

“The Bones beneath the Altar: Plague, Landscape, and Materiality in Lisbon, Portugal”

When a devastating plague tore through Lisbon at the turn of the sixteenth century, the King of Portugal, Manuel I (r. 1495-1521), requested that relics of St. Roch (São Roque) be sent from Venice to Lisbon to combat the plague. The Venetian government agreed; and a bone fragment was delivered, processed to Lisbon's mass plague cemetery, and enshrined there on March 24, 1506. This enshrinement was fittingly placed above the bodies of Lisbon's plague victims in a macabre show of São Roque's power over plague and a divine presence over death. Less than 60 years later, the burial landscape was repurposed. Manuel I's son, King João III, commissioned the construction of the Igreja de São Roque on behalf of the Jesuits at the site. The physical structure of the Igreja officially 'broke ground' in 1567 – just 61 years after the creation of the mass grave and hermitage – and was completed in 1619. São Roque's shrine was elevated within the new structure, but the bodies of the plague victims were broken apart, built over, and scattered. This paper will focus on this landscape and physical remains of the plague pit beneath the Igreja. By centering the archaeological reports published through the Museu de São Roque, it becomes clear that the church's genesis and religious legacy are imbued with plague history, trauma, and materiality.

Abigail Hinrichs, University of Minnesota, Twin Cities, USA

“‘To Rain upon Remembrance’: Shakespeare’s Historical Widows and Testimonial Bodies”

In Sara Ahmed and Jackie Stacey’s 2001 article, “Testimonial Cultures: An Introduction,” the authors write on the “contemporary” urge for individuals to bear witness to the events which have an effect on them—an act now “mobilised by disenfranchised subjects and celebrities alike.” This movement, the authors argue, has created “...new obligations of witnessing.” My project, “‘To rain upon remembrance’: Shakespeare’s Historical Widows and Testimonial Bodies” argues that obligations of witnessing, far from being limited to our modern period, also have a strong foothold in early modern drama. Rather than being a modern spectacle, “testimonial culture” is an always already active site of personal, interrelational, and indeed even national narrative creation that has thrived through literary mediums for centuries. I argue that, for Shakespeare’s historical widow figures, testimony becomes an integral property of the widow as we understand the purpose of her stage presence. Through the process of examining the figures of these semi-historic women in his *Henry IV Part 2* and *Richard III*, I argue that Shakespeare’s historical widows offer a particularly attuned form of “testimonial culture” which negotiates the bounds of early modern English national storytelling, female embodiment, mysticism, and a female-centered understanding of trauma’s ongoing and ever-evolving effects on expressions of subjectivity. Further, I argue that Shakespeare’s stagings of the widow’s trauma through the genre of theatre—which inherently implies a listening audience—seek to create an active site of traumatic witness, which directly implicates the listener in the widow’s felt experience of suffering.

Hannah Jew, Boston University, USA

“Esaias Boursse’s Eternities: The Fabric of Labor”

This paper analyzes the genre paintings made by the little-studied Dutch artist Esaias Boursse in the 1650s and 1660s. Best-known for the drawings he brought back from his sojourn in Sri Lanka with the Dutch East India Company, Boursse’s frank genre works have been little studied to this point. When they appear in scholarship, their “realist” aesthetics have been the beginning and end of analyses; they have been more useful as historical illustration than artwork. By considering Boursse’s favored compositions and motifs, as well as his unique career, this paper uncovers an artist devoted to the material fundamentals of labor, for himself and for his subjects. Among Boursse’s approximately fifteen images of women unsentimentally conducting their household labor, the most famous is the *Interior with Woman Cooking at the Wallace Collection*, which features an eye-catching pile of laundry in the box bed, strewn at the end of a mattress stripped to its ticking. The layers and stripes are a testament to Boursse’s skill and his classical Italian education, and also to humble household textiles that were used at home and among travelers abroad during the early modern period. These rumpled, irregular draperies, also a feature of Boursse’s Sri Lankan drawings of laborers, wet-nurses, and midwives, refer to the basics of artistic training, household textiles, and housekeeping labor. The draperies appear in at least seven Boursse paintings, never the same way twice. I argue that in this signature motif, Boursse expressed a kinship with his varied subjects and their myriad labors.

CJ Jones, University of Notre Dame, USA

“How Liturgical Standardization Fails in the Face of Manuscript Culture and Lived Performance: The Dominican Maundy Thursday Altar Washing Ceremony”

Medieval Christian communities developed two frameworks for the Office liturgy: the monastic use of the Benedictine tradition and the secular use of papal liturgy, parish churches, and the orders of friars. Although these structures were functionally universal, the specific texts and melodies varied from place to place. The new orders of the high Middle Ages sought to reform and standardize liturgical observance throughout their networks, along with their other norms and forms of life. Yet despite the numerous strategies employed, liturgical uniformity remained an elusive and unachievable goal. This paper focuses on a particularly thorny example in order to illuminate how the material conditions of medieval worship impeded full implementation of standardized liturgical norms: the ritual washing of the altars on Maundy Thursday according to the Dominican Rite. Following the production of liturgical exemplars in 1256/59, the Dominicans attained notable success in spreading liturgical norms. However, they could not standardize the number, layout, and patron saints of the altars in each church of the order. Therefore, for the ritual altar washing, the order's exemplar processional provides the chants for movement from altar to altar, followed by instructions for the scribes: "Hic ponantur antiphone et uersiculi et oraciones de sanctis secundum dispositionem altarium in quolibet conuentu." This directive itself strains the conception of what constitutes a "liturgical norm," and tracking how scribes then handled the situation when copying manuscripts reveals an astonishing diversity of approaches. This case study raises fundamental questions about the nature of liturgical normativity: Are liturgical exemplars intended to govern the contents / format / visual aspect of manuscript copies, or do they seek to regulate the lived performance? Can a norm encompass situations that demand flexibility and local variation, or do such circumstances signal an inevitable failure at the heart of any attempt at uniformity?

Hannah Jones, Texas A&M Texarkana, USA

"Localized Sanctity: Clare of Assisi, Virgin Martyrs, and England's Hagiographic Landscape"

This paper situates the legacy of Clare of Assisi at the intersection of dynastic ambition, devotional practice, and Franciscan theology of martyrdom. It examines how the courtly networks of the Plantagenet dynasty appropriated the legacy of Clare of Assisi to embed mendicant ideals within England's hagiographic landscape, thereby reinforcing the spiritual authority of the royal family. Through visual and textual evidence, I argue that Clare's identity as a virgin martyr was localized within English sacred geography through strategic saintly pairings and crusading narratives. A striking example appears in the Nuremberg Book of Hours (Solger 4.4), produced in Paris for an English patron, where Clare is paired with Osyth of Chich, an Anglo-Saxon virgin martyr beheaded during a pagan raid. This pairing situates Clare within England's sacred past and aligns her spiritual martyrdom with Osyth's defense of chastity. Similarly, the Chronicle of Lanercost, drawing on accounts by Hugh of Gibelet, recounts the beheading of Lucceta, abbess of Tripoli, during the Mamluk siege of 1289 and her subsequent burial in England. This episode underscores how Clarissan martyrdom was woven into political and devotional propaganda for an English audience. Together, these examples show how Clare's cult was reframed through local hagiographic traditions and crusading motifs, transforming her into a figure of English sanctity. By embedding Clare within England's sacred geography, Plantagenet patrons advanced a vision of Franciscan spirituality that served both dynastic and devotional ends.

Harold Kaylor, IBS Executive Director Emeritus, USA

“Boethius's Concept of the *Deus* in His *Consolatio*”

Boethius was first and perhaps foremost a translator of ancient Greek texts into his Classical Roman Latin. The concept of the *Deus* developed in his *De consolatione philosophiae* derives from his translations of works by Aristotle. A major question surrounding the *Consolation* is the relationship between the Aristotelian *Deus* of his final work and the *Deus* of Christianity in his theological writings.

A neglected consideration, however, in Boethius' understanding of *Deus* is his translation of Euclid's *Geometriae Libri Duo*. For this paper, the most essential element among Euclid's statements is the first of his definitions: "A point is that which has no parts." This Euclidian definition is likewise employed of God, whom Boethius refers to as the "punctus." I contend that Boethius, having said what he had to about revealed religion in his theological tractates, is more concerned to complete his understanding of the *Deus* as the Euclidian center of his thought, which lead to his conclusion: "A great necessity is solemnly ordained for you if you do not want to deceive yourselves, to do good, when you act before the eyes of a judge who sees all things." Some readers find Boethius's ending somewhat unsatisfactory or even complete, but through this Euclidian reading I will seek to demonstrate that he has, at this point, completed the picture of the *Deus* which he set out to demonstrate from the very first encounter with *Philosophia* in Book I of the *Consolation*.

Rob King, Bristol University, England

“Chaucer, the Revenant, and the ‘Effable ineffable’: A Balladic Reading of *The Book of the Duchess*”

Ballad scholarship in English has been developing steadily since the Eighteenth Century, and has periodically prompted heated debate. More recent ballad criticism, for example in the work of Douglas Gray, has indicated that for as long as ballads have existed they have enjoyed a closer relationship with the poems which we now term ‘canonical works’ than was accepted in earlier critical periods. This paper will explore possible ‘balladic’ aspects of the composition of Chaucer’s first major poem, 'The Book of the Duchess', by identifying stylistic qualities of the poem which have a close relationship with those of both the popular ballad and folk song. To quote David Fowler, ‘the ballad is a special narrative form within the larger context of folksong, of which it has become a part’; and although it is not possible to give any approximate date to the beginnings of ‘balladry’ itself, the manuscript copy of the ballad ‘Judas’ does indicate that it was a developing genre by the year 1300. The ‘revenant lover’ topos, central to Chaucer’s poem, has a long history, present in Virgil’s 'Aeneid' as well as in Chaucer’s source, Ovid’s 'Metamorphoses'; however, it is also a recurring ‘balladic’ theme, as demonstrated in this paper, which also explores one of the greatest strengths of the ballad style: the way in which the ballad can convey in very simple language an inexpressible, or ‘ineffable’ anguish – which Chaucer’s poem also succeeds in doing so powerfully.

Deirdre Klena, Saint Louis University, USA

“‘Ad avivar lo zelo’: Temporality and Liminality in Early Modern Votive Inscriptions”

In his seminal work *Devant l’image* (1990), Georges Didi-Huberman characterized votive objects as vulgar, diffuse, and resistant to both perceptible evolution and art-historical categorization. Their capacity to disappear and reappear, to simultaneously transform and remain unchanged, was in part due to their materiality: Didi-Huberman highlights, for instance, the uses of wax and wood, both substances easily manipulable yet capable of withstanding time. Less

central to Didi-Huberman's analysis is the role of inscriptions in narrative ex-votos. How do these inscriptions, formulaic while also specific, contribute to votive objects' capacity to resist perceptible evolution? This paper will apply Didi-Huberman's theory of material ex-votos' "history without evolution" to narrative votive objects and, more specifically, to their inscriptions. Like wax and wooden objects, votive panel paintings also transformed in response to changes in devotional culture. Therefore, such paintings and their inscriptions provide accounts of different temporalities that, nevertheless, do not progress along traditional chronologies. In order to demonstrate this, two votive paintings and their inscriptions from seventeenth-century Italy and eighteenth-century Mexico, respectively, will be examined. This analysis, spanning over a century and over the Atlantic, will demonstrate that ex-votos, while belonging to specific temporalities and places, existed in liminal spaces of artistic sensibilities that render them resistant to traditional chronologies of style and taste. The evolution of votive objects over space and time cannot be simply discerned by the naked eye. Rather, it is tied paradoxically to both specific and universal devotional cultures.

Dillon Knackstedt, Saint Louis University, USA

"The Mendicants and Louis IX's Parlement"

2026 marks 800 years since the death of St Francis of Assisi. In honor of this anniversary, my paper reexamines the role of the mendicant friars in the parlement and inquisitions of Louis IX/St Louis. Louis IX was obviously close to the friars, promoting them and assisting them in their early formative decades. The Cathedral Basilica of Saint Louis even has a mosaic portraying him as joining the Third Order, which counts him today as one of their patron saints. Far less well known is that the parlement of Paris back-dated its record keeping to 1254, the year Louis returned from his first crusade and heard the preaching of the Franciscan mystic — urging him to be a just ruler and correct the abuses of his administrators, lest God take away his kingdom. The parlement became central to his effort to do just that, as did the friars. Louis and the pope heavily relied on the Dominicans (and some Franciscans) to staff the church's inquisition, while he relied heavily on the Franciscans to conduct "secular" inquisitions for his parlement. Both were aimed at correcting abuses and reforming the kingdom. However, there has been no systematic study of how the mendicant orders and the individual friars worked with Louis and the parlement and connected his government to their own spirituality. This paper will provide a much needed update in our thinking about Louis' reliance of the friars to promote orthodoxy and law in his kingdom.

Courtney Knight, Saint Louis University, USA

"Bodies, Blood, and Prestige: Learned Physicians and the Social Politics of Medicine in Castile in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries"

In the fifteenth and sixteenth century, the University of Salamanca underwent an extended period of energetic development and profound institutional reorganization. For the medical faculty and students, these institution-wide changes resulted in the expansion of the number of medical chairs, a larger body of students, and stricter codification of the educational content to be taught. By examining study materials used by students and recent graduates, university statutes dictating what was to be taught in detail, changing examination requirements, and complaints made within the claustros of the school, this paper examines the evolution of medical education at the university in this period and gives special attention to the scholarly life of students and teachers. It reveals the integration of humanist principles into the medical curriculum, the general

standardization of education under the centralizing ambitions of the monarchy, and the increasing regulation of professional expertise.

Emily Knoppe, Independent Scholar, USA

“Liminal Original Sin Theology in the Mid-Fifth Century: Neither an Augustinian nor a Pelagian, St. Patrick’s Pastoral Perspective”

In the mid-fifth century, the doctrine of original sin began to take shape with two primary positions emerging in the writings of Augustine, bishop of Hippo, and Pelagius, a British monk. Yet these two figures did not fully encompass the range of contemporary understandings of the doctrine. Augustine argued that all humans are affected by Adam’s sin because it corrupted human nature and this depraved state of being is passed down to all offspring through the sexual act. By contrast, Pelagius maintained that Adam’s sin had no effect on human nature and that all people are born into a morally neutral state, possessing the capacity to choose a sinless life. Although modern scholarship on late antique and early medieval Christian conceptions of original sin has been dominated by discussion of the conflict between these two theologians, some fifth-century Christians adhered to neither position. When discussing sin in his *Confessio*, Patrick the bishop of Armagh delivers a deeply personal and pastoral narrative shaped by repentance, divine mercy, and vocation, rather than a systematic explanation. The *Confessio* lacks the juridical language of Augustine’s inherited guilt, yet it simultaneously rejects any notion of Pelagian human moral autonomy. Patrick’s perspective thus occupies a liminal space in which concern for human sinfulness is primarily pastoral rather than systematic or speculative. This paper moves beyond the binary of Augustine versus Pelagius to explore how original sin was understood in early Insular Christianity, revealing a more nuanced reception of the doctrine where rigid theology was disregarded and personal devotion emphasized.

Christina Koliass, Claremont Graduate University, USA

“Chastity as Comedy: Exploring Early Modern Representations of Virtue in Post-Reformation Comedies”

With a strict focus on exploring chastity—as it is mediated through humor—in post-Reformation comedies, my dissertation seeks to expose why and how the studies of chastity and post-Reformation comedy strategically overlap on the early modern stage. In other words, how can chastity be read as a site of comedic negotiation? My core argument is to explore how chastity is performed, surveilled, and/or subverted through humor in post-Reformation comedies, and to consider the social ramifications—if any—of reading chastity as comedy through intersecting female categories of gender, race, religion, and class. Each chapter focuses on one Renaissance play to examine how chastity—and the female body as both concept and object—function as sites of comedic materiality. For this presentation, I will focus on Shakespeare’s *Measure for Measure*. In contemporary readings, this play is labeled a “problem play,” due in part to the abuses of males in power. However, it cannot be overlooked that the play is designated a comedy in the First Folio, printed in 1623. This play opens up avenues to explore the irony of chastity as erotically and sexually stimulating, while simultaneously analyzing the implications of Isabella’s bold declaration in Act II, scene iv: “More than our brother is our chastity.” In this play, written under James I, chastity veers between sexual persecution and comedic toleration, and this chapter seeks to uncover the different modes by which chastity operates in the post-

Reformation—as a comedic device for patriarchal regulation, moral edification, or possible female catharsis.

Mary Ellen Lamb, Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, USA

“Macbeth as ‘a woman’s story at a winter’s fire’”

Women’s tales—what we might call ‘old wives tales’—constitute more than sources; their generative power appears in several Shakespeare plays. At the generative core of *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* lies “Bottom’s dream”, an enactment of familiar fairy lore in which a fairy kidnaps a mortal to serve her sexual purposes. The title *The Winter’s Tale* describes Shakespeare’s play itself as a version of the “sad tale” that is “best for winter”. Lady Macbeth characterizes Macbeth’s unmanly fear in response to Banquo’s ghost as befitting “a woman’s story at a winter’s fire/ Authorized by her grandam”. This acculturation into “old wives” values and beliefs took on an ideological charge when, as a sign of their class and masculinity, elite and middle-class boys were inculcated into a schoolroom culture whose Latin instruction, designed to harden them into strong leaders of the future, invested their earlier childhood experience of domination by lowly female caretakers with shame. The success of the schoolroom project was not universally complete. Boys became hybrid subjects negotiating the selves formed within two incompatible cultures. This paper will focus on *Macbeth* as a way of exploring the terms of this negotiation and in the process demonstrate the continuing power of these tales, and the enduring impact of the women who told them.

Atria A. Larson, Saint Louis University, USA

“How a Canonist Justifies Breaking the Rules: The Letters of Stephen of Tournai on the Dispensation and the Relaxation of Discipline”

Stephen of Tournai was a renowned commentator on Gratian's *Decretum*. He was also an ecclesiastical administrator. He was the abbot of the famed monastery of Sainte-Genevieve in Paris before his appointment as bishop of Tournai. In addition to decretist works, Stephen left behind a large epistolary collection and had a high reputation for his rhetorical skill, which is evident in the eloquent Latin of the letters. Underneath the beautiful and persuasive speech, however, lie serious questions and issues in individual cases about how to apply norms of canon law. In many cases in these letters, Stephen intervenes on behalf of a monk or other individual who has broken the rules and mediates in the situation while advocating for mercy. This paper will examine some of these cases and the canonistic and theological rationale that undergirds Stephen's interventions in these cases.

Meghan Lescault, University of Toronto, Canada

“According to Custom: The Role of Tradition in the Administration of Nivelles”

By the end of the twelfth century, the Abbey of Nivelles (Low Countries, present-day Belgium), which had been founded in the seventh century, had become a mixed chapter of secular canonesses and canons. The abbacy was retained, and an abbess stood at the head of the chapter with approximately forty canonesses and twenty canons under her leadership. While such a model held secular esteem as an institution of the Holy Roman Empire, its ecclesiastical status was more ambiguous, due, in part, to the fact that the secular canonesses of Nivelles retained many of the practices of the original Merovingian monastic community and traced their religious

lineage in an unbroken line back to Nivelles's first abbess, Saint Gertrude. Moreover, because canon law did not officially regulate this specific structure, especially in terms of its female members, the rights and duties of the abbess and chapter were subject to interpretations that varied based on time, place, and most importantly, the interpreter. Ambiguity persisted even in the internal operations of the community, as secular canonesses had no centralized order or religious rule to which they could appeal. Given the lack of firm regimentation, this essay will examine how the women of Nivelles engaged with and responded to the ideas and realities of norms and discipline in their community, as revealed through their archival sources, especially those related to land transactions, privileges and immunities, capitular elections, legal processes, and the regulation of prebends. Special attention will be given to the emphasis that the chapter placed upon custom and tradition over ecclesiastical law within conflicts that transpired both internally between abbess and chapter and externally between chapter and bishop.

Mattheis Lorimor, Saint Louis University, USA

“The Carolingian *Cura Monachorum*: Methods of Monastic Pastoral Care in Late Eighth Century Rhaetia”

The past decade has witnessed a growing awareness of the extent to which the Correctio program of religious reforms initiated by the Carolingian court reached and effected highly diverse local religious communities in the Carolingian Empire. This realization has created a new need for analyses into the unique ways in which the wider values, methods, and goals of the Correctio influenced the spiritual practices of specific communities in particular contexts. To help address this new scholarly lacuna, this study seeks to assess methods of pastoral care utilized within monastic communities in the Carolingian province of Rhaetia (modern Switzerland) in the late eighth and early ninth centuries and how such monastic pastoral care may have been impacted by the wider Correctio. To do so, this study will analyze two compendium manuscripts produced in Rhaetian monastic communities during the late eighth century – Sangallensis, Stiftsbibliothek 193 and Einsiedeln, Stifstbibliothek MS 281 – as pastoral manuals designed to facilitate pastoral care in a monastic context. Each text within these eclectic manuals will be assessed for both its potential use in administering pastoral care within an immediate Rhaetian monastic context as well as connections to the wider monastic reform efforts being promoted as part of the Correctio. This research will ultimately indicate that Carolingian religious communities continued to employ a wide range of didactic, ritual, penitential, and even spatial techniques to facilitate monastic pastoral care even as these communities began to rely increasingly on an emerging corpus of monastic texts fostered by the Correctio.

Alistair Maeer, Texas Wesleyan University, USA

“The Wonders of Nature (and of the God of Nature): Natural Theology and Edward Barlow’s 17th Century Maritime World”

Historically, mountains have occupied many different spaces in the human imagination, variously understood as portals to heaven and hell, remnants of creation itself, or obstacles inhibiting progress. Until recently, scholars have assumed that our modern sensibilities towards mountains developed during the 18th century. However, Martin Korenjak’s 2017 article, “Why Mountains Matter: Early Modern Roots of a Modern Notion,” has pushed back the association of a “positive aesthetic or emotional reaction to mountains” to the 16th and 17th centuries. Korenjak convincingly outlines a shift in early modern religious and scientific discourses wherein mountains acquire increasingly positive connotations. While Korenjak examines the

writings of scientists and theologians, he does not directly address to what degree this shift found expression in the lived experience of mariners. At sea, a distant mountain can be an inviting reminder of safe harbor, while the fiery outlines of volcanoes signify the opposite for those aboard wooden ships; when the ocean rages, waves become harrowing mountains. All of these associations bear theological implications. Edward Barlow, a 17th-century English mariner, composed a richly illustrated and highly expressive journal that parallels the evolving emotive history towards mountains and the natural world outlined by Korenjak. In fact, Barlow's descriptions demonstrate that the ideas of natural theology permeated the 17th-century maritime world. This paper will examine Edward Barlow's writings and maritime drawings as an expression of an evolving early modern aesthetic of emotional reactions to sacralized landscapes, specifically mountains.

Franco Manni, Liceo Scientifico Statale Leonardo, Brescia, Italy
“Renaissance Neopelagianism and Its Suppressed Trajectory: An Uchronia Without Luther”

This paper proposes a counterfactual reconstruction of early sixteenth-century European Christianity by treating the Italian Renaissance not primarily as an aesthetic revival, but as a profound anthropological and theological shift: a renewed form of Pelagianism grounded in humanist philosophy. Central to this shift was the conviction, widespread in Florentine humanism, that *homo faber suae fortunae*—that the human being, endowed with intact reason and will, can achieve moral and civic perfection through his own capacities, without radical dependence on grace. The case of Lorenzo de' Medici illustrates how this anthropocentric worldview moved from cultural patronage to ecclesial power. Lorenzo's Florence promoted a vision of human excellence rooted in classical virtue, merit, and dignitas. This vision was transmitted directly to Rome through his son, Pope Leo X, who embodied a Renaissance Christianity confident in human capacities and largely indifferent to Augustinian doctrines of original sin and salvific grace. Within this framework, the invitation—traditionally attributed to Pico della Mirandola—to bring Girolamo Savonarola to Florence appears not as an act of self-negation, but as an attempt to integrate prophetic moral critique within a still humanist horizon. Savonarola, however, radicalized the Augustinian pole and exposed the inner theological instability of Renaissance optimism. The paper argues that Martin Luther's Reformation constituted the decisive external interruption of this trajectory. Without Luther's radical anti-Pelagian theology of grace, the Renaissance might have produced a dominant form of Western Christianity: aristocratic, merit-oriented, anthropocentric, and only weakly dependent on redemption. This uchronia reframes the Reformation not as an accident, but as the historical force that halted a possible transformation of Christianity into a humanistic religion of self-perfection.

Jerry Marino, Independent Scholar, USA
“A Cinquecento Conundrum: Reconsidering a Plaster Relief Attributed to Pierino da Vinci (c.1548-50)”

At a Christie's Auction in July of 1929, John Ringling acquired a sizeable low-relief sculpture, depicting what was thought to be an allegorical subject, datable stylistically to mid-sixteenth century Italy, possibly Florence. Unbeknownst at the time of purchase, though, this relief was just one of eight almost identical versions in variety of media (plaster, terra cotta, wax, bronze), long held in European collections and, together, forming a “family” of objects whose artist and

subject matter remained at large. Nearly a century since the purchase of this relief – now entitled the Ringling "Count Ugolino and His Four Sons" – many, but not all, of the puzzle pieces have fallen into place. The designer of the relief has been identified as the Florentine sculptor Pierino da Vinci (1530-1553) to whom the bronze version is attributed with certainty. And, the subject was drawn from Canto 33 of Dante's *Inferno*, following the express wishes of the patron now known by name. Less certain, however, is how the Ringling plaster relief operates within this larger network of related and possibly contemporary objects of the sixteenth century. This paper will draw scholarly attention to a very important albeit understudied work in the John and Mable Ringling Collection (Sarasota, Florida) and attempt to broach the topic of Pierino's authorship, both of the Ringling plaster relief and members of its extended family in multiple media.

Amanda Martin-Parras, Cincinnati Art Museum, USA

"Daggers Drawn: Deconstructing Niklaus Manuel's Signature"

Niklaus Manuel's (c. 1484–1530) oeuvre of early sixteenth-century drawings provides an invaluable insight into artistic progress and intellectual development in the Swiss Confederacy, and ultimately unveils Manuel's self-fashioning as a transformative Swiss creator during a time in which proclaiming artistic individuality was still nascent. This paper explores the three elements of Manuel's signature—his initials (text), personal device of a Swiss dagger (image), and a flourish (line)—both whole and deconstructed, which, I argue, reveals his transformation of authorship from passive symbol to active role. Although previous research has discussed Manuel's signature, Manuel's communication—with international humanistically-minded artists, with the Swiss Confederacy, and with the viewer—have yet to be explored, and are crucial to understanding Manuel's iconography and references, and to ultimately unveil his underlying motivations as a unique draughtsman and intellectual. In this paper, I propose that the artist's juxtaposition of his monogrammed initials and a Swiss dagger as his personal device could reference the practice of textual inscription onto Swiss daggers by patrician families in the Swiss Confederacy, as Schweizerdegen were worn horizontally to transmit signs of identity and artistry from the wearer to the viewer. Similarly, I illustrate how Manuel's signature would have traveled as the drawings circulated among like-minded artists, functioning as a representation of his personal identity, nationality, and artistic creation. Thus, I negate previous research deeming Manuel uneducated, ultimately recontextualizing the three elements of his signature that signify his self-fashioning as a Swiss humanist dialoguing with Antiquity and with contemporary Germany.

Randall P. Moffett, Southeastern Community College, USA

"English Garrisons in Wales and their Equipment during the Second Quarter of the 14th Century"

During the 13th century Edward I escalated the English hold on the Welsh by building and reinforcing a string of fortifications across Wales. These strongholds were seen as anchor points to English power and retaining control. Edward, his son, and grandson, would all continue employing these structures to keep and consolidate their power there. But without garrisons these fortifications were of limited to no value. Who were the people who filled these posts? What did they look like and what tools did they utilize? This paper will try to answer some of these questions by reviewing information found in several specific manuscripts from the second quarter of the 14th century to identify the possible types of arms, armour and other equipment that these soldiers would have used to defend these fortifications. Recreated objects will be used

to demonstrate this equipment and what these defenders may have looked like during this era, giving life to the average man in these garrisons.

Thomas Morin, St. Charles Community College, USA

“The Crossbow and the Oar: Towards a Greater Understanding of Fourteenth Century Littoral Warfare Using Material Surrogates”

This paper explores the use of material surrogates as an experimental methodology for examining the tactics of late fourteenth-century littoral warfare. Naval conflict in this period was largely characterized by coastal raids, amphibious assaults, and rapid ship-to-shore actions. The nature of such engagements has traditionally been interpreted by historians through contemporary narrative chronicles. While this insight is invaluable, with few exceptions these sources were typically composed by people with little to no firsthand experience or practical knowledge of the combats they were describing. As such, very often their descriptions lack depth, or call back to classical examples. Such practices cast doubt on the techniques, tactics, and practices of warfare that they describe. This paper argues that, by employing administrative records and carefully researched material surrogates of weapons and equipment, these methods can provide a means for historians to independently assess and verify chronicle descriptions of warfare through experimentation. This paper focuses primarily on the naval and littoral tactics of the Genoese in this respect, drawing upon administrative documentation from the records of the *Officium Guerrae* and carefully researched replicas of weapons and equipment that were available to Genoese sailors and soldiers of the fourteenth century. Through this combined approach, the paper demonstrates how experimental methods and material surrogates can refine our understanding of medieval coastal warfare and contribute to a more materially-grounded interpretation of late medieval military practice.

Francis Nicolas, University of Maine, USA

“‘Barbarous field people’: Depictions of Central Asian Peoples in The Book of John Mandeville and The Voyage of Master Anthony Jenkinson”

The 14th century travelogue *The Book of John Mandeville* is called by Geraldine Heng a medieval “blockbuster”. She argues that its influence was so far-reaching that it impacted exploration in the early modern era, serving as a point of reference to voyagers like Christopher Columbus. Less well-known among these early modern explorers is merchant Anthony Jenkinson, the first documented Englishman to travel to Central Asia. Despite the accounts of his voyage appearing in Hakluyt’s influential travel anthology, Jenkinson’s writings have been largely neglected in scholarship. Jenkinson, whose search of an overland route to China brought him to Silk Road cities in what is today Uzbekistan, describes at length the Central Asian peoples, or “Tartarres”, he encounters from 1558 to 1561. Although the fictitious Mandeville also presents a Western readership with an account of Central Asians, Jenkinson provides his Anglophone audience with the first that was based neither on another author’s experience nor was a translation of a foreign text. To what extent was Jenkinson influenced by Mandeville’s works? I argue that although the merchant’s descriptions of Central Asia and its peoples were informed by real-world experience, they nevertheless conform to the expectations of their author, informed by Mandeville’s own account. Using Edward Said’s idea that the Orient serves as a place through which Westerners confirm their own assumptions of the East, I will demonstrate that Jenkinson’s preoccupation with the foodways, martial prowess, and morality of the “Tartarres” in his writing have a precedent in Mandeville’s depiction of the same peoples.

Grace Nicoll, University of Alberta, Canada

“The Weaponization of the Papal Tiara: Material Symbolism in the War of Church and Empire”

Popes were active participants in the medieval debates concerning the temporal authority of the Church, and an essential component to their language of power was the use of objects and the wearing of imperial insignia. The papal tiara was one of the most iconic examples of these symbols, and artistic depictions of this special form of headwear increased dramatically over the course of the thirteenth century. This was the era of papal monarchy, when popes sought to gain greater influence over western Europe at the expense of temporal powers such as the Holy Roman Empire, and it was not coincidental that the papal tiara became more prominent during this period. In this object-driven study of papal power, this paper will examine the significance of the tiara and other material symbols in the papacy’s propagandistic struggle against the Holy Roman Emperor Frederick II. This paper will focus specifically on Popes Gregory IX (r. 1227-1241) and Innocent IV (r. 1243-1254) and their weaponization of papal symbols in letters, rituals, and artwork. Objects wielded a peculiar power in the medieval West, possessing the power to animate and even transform their subjects. Engaging the visual and materialistic nature of the medieval Christian imagination, these popes wielded objects like the tiara to construct a particular image of papal power. Such symbols were used in the hopes of justifying the papacy’s right to intervene, violently if necessary, in temporal affairs in order to protect the Latin Church and its divinely appointed role in western Christendom.

Michał Tadeusz Noworyta, University of Silesia in Katowice, Poland

“The Nicolaus' of Kozłów *recommendatio* ‘Viri isti corpus virtutibus aedificaverunt’ as an Example of Criticism of Attachment to Earthly Goods in the University Context”

In late medieval Kraków university sermons, the problem of desiring earthly goods emerges with striking intensity. As texts of explicitly didactic purpose, these speeches were intended to shape the attitudes of their audience—professors and students alike—by indicating not only the behaviours befitting an academic, but also the practices that ought to be avoided. In this context, materiality, taken in context as attachment to possessions, prestige, or external signs of status, becomes a key element of the moralising discourse. The paper focuses on analysis of the *recommendatio* ‘Viri isti corpus virtutibus aedificaverunt’, authored by Nicolaus of Kozłów, a philosopher, theologian, and casuist, whose works remain painstakingly understudied. This sermon—preserved in a single manuscript (Kraków, Jagiellonian Library, Ms. 2216, ff. 112r–116r)—will be critically edited and then compared with selected fragments of university speeches by other masters contemporary to Nicolaus. Such a comparison makes it possible to identify rhetorical strategies, differences in emphasis, and specific ways in which materiality is conceptualised in university context. The aim of this paper is thus to show how the critique of materiality becomes a tool for shaping the academic ethos and how it fits into the broader intellectual and moral context of the University of Kraków.

Rebecca Onken, University of Toronto, Canada

“The source of all evils in Wales’: Revolt, Race, and the Label of Welsh Monstrosity in Fifteenth-Century English Chronicles”

Well into the late medieval Conquest Era, England was still grappling with how to perceive Wales in regards to itself. Though Welsh independence had been taken away by force in the late thirteenth century, periodic revolts, particularly that of Owain Glyndwr in the early fifteenth century, ensured that Wales exercised a continuous pull on English imagination. In response, the era's English chroniclers (and even a Welshman brought into the English fold) portrayed Wales using all the textbook signs of monstrosity; it was Othered, made fearsome and inhospitable, riddled with stormy weather born of "diaboliic art" and blood spouting spontaneously from rivers and stable floors. In these chronicles, Wales is the revolt, the revolt is Wales, and whatever ills the land commits, the Welsh themselves are held responsible for. What emerges from a comparison of the chronicles together is a concerted effort to racialize, colonize, and subdue a newly conquered, rebellious region. It is this effort that this paper illuminates and deconstructs.

David Pedersen, College of the Ozarks, USA

"Fate Got Wyrđ: Epistemological Obstacles in The Old English Boethius"

For nearly a century, The Old English Boethius's conflation of Latin *fatum* and Old English *wyrđ* has served as a bedrock of the comfortably baptized translation of *wyrđ* as "lot" or "event," without any connotation of the word's pre-Christian associations with a divine will. In such a reading, Old English *wyrđ*, like Boethius's *fatum*, represents a simple, immature misunderstanding of God's Providence. But such a reading fails to account for two important factors: 1) that this conflation of *wyrđ*, *fatum*, and God's Providence occurs at the end of an adaptation that is meant to bring consolation about the relationship between these very concepts, and 2) that The Old English Boethius also maps many aspects of the personified fortuna onto *wyrđ*. In light of these factors, *wyrđ* marries the acute relevance of Boethian fortuna to the terrifying authoritative domain of Boethian *fatum*. In other words, *wyrđ* is far grander in its scope than fortuna and lacks the obsolescence of *fatum*. The Old English Boethius still unequivocally subordinates *wyrđ* to God's Providence, but the connotations of *wyrđ* impute far greater stakes to this subordination than Boethius imputes to either of *wyrđ*'s Latin counterparts. And the care that the Old English adaptation takes to build this menacing straw man suggests a relevance of the ontological questions it raises that have rarely been entertained since the early twentieth century.

Danielle Pigeon, Bryn Mawr College, USA

"Aumônnières Sarazinoises and the Translation of Materiality in Medieval French Fashion"

This paper examines the materiality and ornamentation of silk aumônnières produced in fourteenth-century France. I suggest that these objects were uniquely attuned to a material mythos centered around Islamic textiles described in Old French literature. These alms purses were a part of an emerging fashion system in France and were frequently exchanged in the practice of courtly love. A subcategory of these Parisian-made purses, aumônnières sarazinoises, were especially valued for the use of gold thread and elaborate embroidery in their production. It is understood that "Saracen" is frequently used as a sweeping marker of otherness, but in the context of textiles this preservation of a term of alterity denotes an elevated craft. Less concerned with the cultural meaning embedded within Islamic textile ornamentation, Frankish crusaders focused on the value and visual impact of their masterful craftsmanship. Aesthetic splendor formed a shared language of courtly excess that animated a shared culture of objects. The Islamic textiles recounted in Old French texts influenced Frankish imaginings of courtly opulence and attributed a nobility to elements of material culture that overrode sentiments of Christian superiority. The lasting impact of Islamic textiles on French courtly styles can be seen in the

elaborate weaving and embroidery techniques that were adapted for domestic production. The naming conventions for aumônières sarazinoises further suggests that these domestically produced purses were intended to evoke the aesthetic impact associated with the Islamic textiles so fervently desired by the nobility of the medieval West.

Marcos Fabián Polisena, Université Rennes 2, France

“*Subtili Artificio, Indissolubili Materia: Materiality and Philosophical Memory in Boethius’ Consolation*”

This study examines the relationship between materiality, philosophical memory, and visual representation in the *Consolatio Philosophiae* through a precise lexical and iconographic detail: the unique occurrence of the adjective *subtilis* and the image of Lady Philosophy’s torn garment. The discussion begins from a fundamental philological observation: *subtilis* appears only once in the entire work, and exclusively in the programmatic opening passage, where it qualifies the thread of Philosophy’s dress. This singular occurrence grants the term a disproportionate interpretive weight and anchors it, significantly, in a material and textile register rather than a strictly intellectual one.

Through a close reading of this passage, the argument developed here suggests that the torn garment is not merely an allegorical trope but an explicit reflection on the fragmentation of philosophical memory and the contested transmission of tradition. The tearing of the dress symbolizes the partial and violent appropriation of philosophical doctrine, as well as the need for its rational recomposition.

A further dimension is introduced by considering medieval illuminated manuscripts of the *Consolation*, in which Lady Philosophy’s garment is never depicted as torn or damaged, despite the clarity of the Latin text. Rather than interpreting this absence as an iconographic failure or oversight, this analysis reads it as a conscious visual response to the problem staged by the text. The image does not reproduce the crisis articulated in the discourse; instead, it repairs it by restoring the integrity that the text recalls as lost.

César Reigosa Soler, University of Groningen, Netherlands

“Auriol on Omniscience without Future Truth”

In his *Sentences* commentary, Peter Auriol takes himself to follow Aristotle in saying that future contingents lack truth-value. As a result, Auriol gives up divine foreknowledge but wants to keep divine omniscience. However, on the prevalent view that knowledge requires truth, it is difficult to maintain omniscience unless there are truths about the future. In this paper, I first consider Auriol’s line of reasoning as to why future contingents do not have a truth-value and then, I turn to his account of divine omniscience without future truth. Whereas on the standard interpretation, Auriol preserves omniscience at the expense of future contingency, I argue that, on the contrary, Auriol preserves future contingency but is only entitled to what I call ‘gappy’ omniscience. Truth-value gaps are not responsible for ‘gappy’ omniscience, as one might expect. Rather, Auriol’s criticisms against prevalent accounts of foreknowledge independently rule out anything close to the stronger notion of omniscience typically attributed to Auriol by modern readers. The interpretation defended here is more philosophically apt and better explains the medieval reception of Auriol’s views.

Edward Reno, Adelphi University, USA

“*Sine hac suppletione non bene intelligeres: Was There an Historical Jurisprudence in the Thirteenth Century?*”

Gregory IX's 1234 bull of promulgation for the *Liber extra*, *Rex pacificus*, mandated that this canon law collection become the exclusive source of decretal law going forward for both courts and schools. Previous canon law scholarship has noted instances where the decretal collections replaced by the *Liber extra*, primarily the *Quinque compilationes antiquae*, continued to be consulted despite the Gregorian decree. This paper will report on a systematic study of Bernard of Parma's Ordinary Gloss to the *Liber extra* where he continues to make use of laws in their pre-1234 form, including portions of decretals (*partes decisae*) that were edited out by the compiler of the *Liber extra*, Raymond of Penyafort, as well as texts that were discarded in their entirety. This study reveals a much more aggressive exploitation by Bernard of pre-1234 material than previously understood, and notably, his mining of this material actually increased in subsequent revisions of the gloss. When combined with what other 13th century jurists like Hostiensis and Innocent IV said about the status of pre-1234 collections or the form of individual decretals, as well as manuscript evidence pointing to continued use of the *Quinque compilationes* after 1234, we are led to the conclusion that 13th century jurists were much more interested in the historical development of canon law than has heretofore been appreciated.

August Rickard, Saint Louis University, USA

“*Phantasmatic Fears, Prodigious Fallacies: Who’s Afraid of Gender in *The Duchess of Malfi*?*”

In John Webster’s *The Duchess of Malfi* (1613-14), the titular Duchess’ villainous brother Ferdinand suffers from intense anxieties about the threatening capacity of her womanly body, conceiving of it as both monstrous and unthinkable. Centuries later, in *Who’s Afraid of Gender?* (2024), Judith Butler traces the view of LGBT+ individuals as monstrous to the psychosocial phenomenon of gender as a phantasm. Initially evoking images of haunting specters, phantasms are projections of personal fears and anxieties that incite political passions on a wide scale by appearing to threaten the natural order. I use Butler’s concept of the phantasm to take a new look at TDoM and explore how Ferdinand’s anxieties about gender spiral into the phantasmatic, generating larger fears about gender and monstrosity that are heightened by a slippage between the personal and the political. The Duchess’ sovereign hybridity (i.e. her dual embodiment in the body natural and body politic) is twisted by Ferdinand into something terrifying, as his vivid imaginations of her range from the sodomitical to the prodigious. Though I argue that TDoM itself pushes back and questions the reality of the phantasmatic fears inflamed by Ferdinand, namely by inflicting upon him a monstrous quasi-transformation of his own, Butler’s contemporary work on the gender-critical and anti-gender ideology movements suggests that the phantasm of gender persists today and has very real consequences for queer and trans individuals. I ultimately use this theoretical crossover to advocate for further readings of early modern texts through the lenses of contemporary trans studies.

Ondrej Šály, The Institute of History at the Slovak Academy of Sciences, Slovakia

“*The Peasant and his Lord in the Kingdom of Hungary (1500-1700)*”

For several years, my research has focused on economic history, specifically on the institution of serfdom in the Hungarian Kingdom. Within current historiography, this topic represents a challenge that may even point toward a paradigm shift, as scholarly interest within this particular field of research has significantly declined after 1989. Earlier Marxist historiography

occasionally produced important results, yet it remained methodologically constrained by its reliance on the concept of class struggle. My work approaches the subject on three interconnected levels: first, by reassessing the existing historiographical production; second, by developing a new methodological framework; and third, by conducting my original microhistorical research. Through this combined approach, I aim to reopen the discussion on peasant–lord relations and to reconsider their place in the broader economic and social history of the region.

Marvin Jhan Santos, Don Bosco Cristo Rey High School, USA

“*In Hoc Signo Vinces*: The Trinitarian Red-and-Blue Cross between Byzantine Iconography and Medieval Religious Identity”

This article reconstructs the emergence of the red-and-blue cross of the Order of the Most Holy Trinity and of the Captives (O.S.S.T.) as a historically contingent emblem rather than a timeless visionary gift. It argues that the order’s “sign” originated not as a chromatically defined cross, but as a narrative image of Christ freeing captives, and that only in the mid-thirteenth century—within the 1267 mitigation of the rule—did this sign become a formally codified cross whose vertical arm is red and horizontal arm sky-blue. Drawing on papal bulls, Trinitarian rules, seals, the Cosmatesque mosaic of San Tommaso in Formis, and modern Trinitarian and Byzantine scholarship, the study situates this development within broader post–Lateran IV efforts to standardize religious habits and within Mediterranean exchanges that transmitted Byzantine colour codes—especially the red/blue pairing used to articulate Christ’s two natures—into Latin art. By comparing the Trinitarian cross with the emblems of military and redemptive orders such as the Templars, Hospitallers, and Mercedarians, the article shows how symbols functioned as badges of corporate identity in an increasingly crowded religious landscape. It concludes that a historically precise account of the red-and-blue cross enriches, rather than undermines, its theological interpretation: as a mobile icon of Christological and Trinitarian doctrine and as a sign of merciful liberation that continues to orient Trinitarian mission toward contemporary forms of captivity.

Quincy Schmechel, Pennsylvania State University, USA

“Milton’s Angelic Epic: The Primacy of Angels and Ontological Aspiration in *Paradise Lost*”

In-depth investigation of Milton’s angels has been largely neglected or addressed only in passing. In this paper, I argue that via the proliferation of angels throughout *Paradise Lost*, Milton articulates his theories of materiality and natural philosophy. Milton’s angels embody his heterodox ontology, portraying the higher stakes within the fluid hierarchy of the universe he portrays throughout his epic and providing varied pedagogical models by which Adam and Eve may understand and ascend through such hierarchy. Focusing upon the cross-species interactions of humanity and angels, I divide the poem into three central acts, each defined by the ontology presented by the angels with whom Adam and Eve interact: Raphael preceding the Fall, Satan at its precipice, and Michael in postlapsarian Eden. Focusing upon the differing portrayals of education, embodiment, and corporeality by these three angels, Milton encodes the causation of the Fall as a failure of ontological understanding and crises of education and emulation, resulting in postlapsarian material consequences. Tracing the three direct angel-human interactions, I argue that angels present competing salvific modes of ascent to heavenly life, and that postlapsarian humanity must rely upon a Christological, rather than angelic, model. Central for

Milton's materialism and Mortalist beliefs, this shift encodes the limits of redemption Milton saw as imposed by the Fall. Thus, *Paradise Lost* becomes as much an epic as doctrinal tragedy portraying the true devastation of the Fall in Milton's unique theodicy, metaphysics, soteriology, and eschatology. Man must now endure, rather than enjoy, his earthly existence, in the hopes of eventually attaining a heavenly one.

Evan Schulteis, Independent Scholar, USA

“Reconstructing the Fantasy of Images: Surrogate Sources as a Method for Deconstructing Medieval Art”

In arms and armor studies, the interpretation of artwork can present a major stumbling block for authenticity and accuracy in the modern understanding of Ancient and Medieval material culture. This problem is especially poignant in Byzantine art. An artists' intent or vision was not always meant to represent reality, or was informed by a present reality different than the modern viewer or scholar's. However, this barrier can be surmounted through the use of careful methodological approach to interpreting imagery. This paper looks at approaching the problem of understanding clothing, armor, and fashion in often Medieval Art through the use of surrogate sources both physical and digital. This paper argues that, building on a methodology pioneered by Timothy Dawson, even the most fantastical of depictions can be deconstructed and understood through the artist's contemporary eyes through a mix of a comparative approach, experimental methods, and surrogate sources.

Mackenzie Scott, Durham University, England

“Adapting Shakespeare: How the Bard Uses *Imitatio* and Adaptation in Fashioning an Authorial Identity”

The idea of Shakespeare as adaptor of fellow authors is not one well-factored into the common image of the bard. Indeed, we conceive of the man as an innovator, creator of over 1700 words in the English language—but how, in choosing to adapt popular works by his contemporaries for the stage, did he conceive of himself as an author? In this paper, I propose a literary model of adaptation by placing the literary theories of reception theory and structuralism, in essence defining the authorial act of adapting a source, in communication with self-fashioning, as defined by Stephen Greenblatt, and the way students in Renaissance classrooms were taught to interact with the world around them via acts of *imitatio* and personification. By examining two of Shakespeare's adapted works, pairing *The Winter's Tale* with Robert Greene's *Pandosto: The Triumph of Time* and *As You Like It* with Thomas Lodge's *Rosalynd: or, Euphues's Golden Legacy*, I examine what was kept consistent between the tales, determine what was changed, and elaborate upon how these patterns reflect Shakespeare's process of creating a tale that was both true to the original and yet recognizably his own. In this way, the ouroboros-like process of adaptation can serve as a model of Shakespeare's concept of his own “authorial identity.” Adaptation, as such, demonstrates how an author negotiates the distinction between social and individual perceptions of the self in much the same process as an adaptive author chooses what is changed in their tale—and what becomes truly “theirs.”

Natasha Shahid, Northwestern University, USA

“Alamut's Lists of Assassinations: A Textual Analysis of Nizari Ismaili Assassination Records in Mongol Ilkhanid Historiography”

The Nizari Ismaili polity of Alamut (c. 1090–1260 CE), commonly known by the misnomer “Order of the Assassins,” acquired lasting notoriety in the Crusading and post-Crusading worlds for its practice of targeted, religio-political assassination. Modern scholarship has largely sought to reconstruct these acts through scattered references in medieval Muslim and Latin chronicles. Far less attention, however, has been paid to the structured lists of assassinations preserved in early fourteenth-century Persian Mongol (Ilkhanid) historical compendia. These lists are of particular historical significance, as the Ilkhanid historians present them as records maintained by the Nizaris themselves.

The lists enumerate more than ninety assassinations, providing names of victims, dates and locations of attacks, and, in some cases, the identities of the assassins. Owing to discrepancies between these details and information found in other chronicles, modern historians have often dismissed the lists as ahistorical or unreliable. This paper challenges that assumption through a close textual and comparative analysis of the assassination lists as preserved in three manuscript witnesses of two Ilkhanid histories: Rashīd al-Dīn Hamadānī’s *Jāmi‘ al-Tawārīkh* and Abū’l-Qāsim ‘Abdallāh Kāshānī’s *Zubdat al-Tawārīkh*.

By examining patterns of transmission, internal consistency, and points of divergence with other contemporaneous sources, the paper argues that these lists warrant serious consideration as reflections of Nizari internal records in the absence of a surviving archive. In doing so, it reopens discussion of assassination as a strategic tool in the polity’s survival amid hostile Muslim powers and Crusader states, and calls for a reassessment of “ahistoricity” in medieval Middle Eastern history to privilege some source traditions and marginalize others.

Margaret K. Smith, Southern Illinois University, Edwardsville, USA

“Access and Infrastructure in the Digital Archive”

On October 28, 2023, the British Library went dark, taken hostage by ransomware. Besides employee personal and financial data, casualties included the library’s digitized collections, searchable catalogs, the databases it hosted, and even the system by which in-person visitors could request physical materials. Over two years later, the library has not yet been able to restore full access. (Ironically, some research requires recourse to digitized 19th-century catalogs via Google Books.) In 2025, meanwhile, UNESCO launched its Virtual Museum of Stolen Cultural Objects, a fully digital space that highlights stories of theft and repatriation. Through high-production graphics and AI-assisted 3D modeling, the site invites visitors to consider the materialities of both the objects themselves and the museum contexts from which they are missing. But the technologies that underpin the site make it slow to load and bandwidth-hungry, inhibiting access in many of the countries. This paper explores these and other case studies to revisit the perennial question of digitization as access from the standpoint of infrastructure. This paper explores the relationship between digital and physical infrastructures in an era of increasing austerity in the cultural heritage sector, as well as the impact of those infrastructures on scholarly and community-engaged practices.

Andrea C. Snow, Independent Scholar, USA

“Strange Body: Ornament and Figuration in Early Medieval Scandinavian Art”

In late 2011, a layer of stones was uncovered between the remnants of an elite lodge and a cult house at the famed settlement of Uppåkra, Scania, in southern Sweden. Fragmented, cracked, and burned, they had been used to prepare large amounts of victuals such as meat and ale. Amidst their scalded remains was a spectacular and perplexing item: a gilded copper amulet in

the form of a winged man. Likely produced during the second half of the tenth century, the object is thought to depict the mythic metalsmith, Völund, as he was imagined in *Þiðreks saga*. Here, the body is a splayed form that melds human and animal elements with ornamental motifs, obscuring any formal delineations between such categories. This paper contextualizes the representational strategies used on Uppåkra Völund within the broader material corpus of humanoid figures from early medieval Scandinavia, arguing that such modes suited and reflected the ontological perceptions of bodiliness that were carried by pre-Christian communities. Proposing that scholars must eschew the replication of the seen world as the entrance point into an image and instead replace it with an imagistic experience relational to that of being in the world, in a particular way, and alongside particular forces, it advocates for the assemblage of cross-disciplinary methodologies that will reveal more about the semantics of the premodern North's visual vocabularies.

George T. Summers, University of Mary, USA

“Hospitaller Discipline in Its Social Context: Fra Fantino Querini, c. 1408–1452”

The case of the Venetian Fantino Querini, admiral of the Knights Hospitaller from 1440 to 1452, demonstrates the social, political and financial complexities attendant on disciplining high-ranking Hospitaller brothers in the late Middle Ages. Born into the prominent Querini family of Venice, Fantino amassed a large fortune before his order imprisoned him on unspecified charges in 1452 on Rhodes, where he soon died. Using original materials from the Archivio di Stato di Venezia, the National Library of Malta, the Archivio Apostolico Vaticano, and the Fondazione Querini-Stampalia in Venice, this paper demonstrates how Fantino's punishment threatened the financial interests and honor of the Querini family, contributing to the most serious diplomatic breach between Venice and the Hospital to date. At the urging of Fantino's brother Francesco, the Venetian Senate pressured the order to return Fantino's person and wealth by withdrawing its merchants from Rhodes. Trade between Venice and Rhodes resumed in 1456, as Pope Callixtus III urged an anti-Turkish crusade, but the Hospital's choice to discipline Fantino proved expensive: the order agreed to a monetary settlement with the Querini and recognized the family's long-term lease of Hospitaller lands on the Venetian terra firma. While the Hospital carefully guarded its right to punish errant brothers, Fantino's case shows how Hospitaller discipline was not always a purely internal affair. The choice to punish could bring the order into conflict with families and states who could claim an interest in, or attachment to, a disciplined brother and place corresponding pressure on the order.

Richard Swinney, KCU-GME Consortium, USA

“Reshaping the Past: Digital Technologies Changing our Understanding of Medieval Trauma Care”

In 1350, Charles of Luxembourg (1316 - 1378) - later Holy Roman Emperor Charles IV - suffered sudden onset quadriplegia from which he gradually recovered. Historians believe the symptoms were due to a catastrophic jousting injury, but that the cause was censored from official records because of well established, severe papal disapproval of the sport of jousting. In the 1970's, a comprehensive physical examination of Charles' skeletal remains supported the jousting injury theory, but reexamination in the 1990's (with the addition of imaging technologies) revealed far more extensive injuries than those previously noted: skeletal injuries so well healed that they were missed entirely on the physical examination of the skeleton in the 1970's. The introduction of digital imaging technologies is transforming not only our

understanding of the nature and extent of historic traumatic injuries, but also our appreciation of the quality of trauma care for those injuries.

Donovan Tann, University of Dubuque, USA

“Inedible Cooking: Vinegar, Cosmetics, and Starch in the Early Modern English Kitchen”

Over the past decade, literary critics and cultural historians have devoted increased attention to the materiality of food and cooking in early modern English society. Works such as Goldstein and Tigner’s edited collection, *Culinary Shakespeare*, drew literary texts into the conversation about food’s materiality and complement scholarship in cultural anthropology, history, and social history. Interest in domestic writing—which individuals collected in manuscript or disseminated in household manuals—further extended food studies to include a broader culture of reading and writing about food. In this expansive food studies, socially-determined categories have long been part of the conversation (including distinctions between culinary and scientific knowledge). Scholars have, however, devoted considerably less attention to the inedible products of the early modern kitchen. Although Claude Levi-Strauss sought to explore how raw materials interact with cooking procedures and the properties that destabilize food through change or spoilage, his emphasis on food preparation illuminates only a partial story. Procedures for household brewing might produce alcohol for local consumption, but individuals also applied that same knowledge to produce vinegar or “alegar.” In the diary of English wigmaker Edmund Harrold, he records purchasing malt for his “horse hair wig” and contentious interactions with officials about taxes on starch, since cosmetic use of food affects the availability and price of food for the poor. By exploring how cooking procedures and knowledge reach beyond the kitchen into the rest of English society, this presentation explores inedible cooking as a site of early modern social and economic negotiation.

Zachary Thomas, Cornell University, USA

“*Expositiones missae* in the Canon Law Tradition”

This paper looks at the *Decretum* and a handful of its commentators—Rufinus, Huguccio, Guido Terreni, and Juan de Torquemada—to reveal a much deeper and enduring preoccupation with the liturgy than is usually allowed. I show how jurists writing from roughly 1150 to 1450 adapted a genre they shared in common with the theologians—the *expositio missae*—to teach Latin mystagogy within the context of the *Decretum*, its glosses, and in independent treatises. Though there have been several surveys on the development of Eucharistic doctrine within canon law, none have so far pointed out the existence of a tradition of liturgical commentary, which was present from the beginning. Though the debt of Gratian to the mystagogical tradition is great, and pervasive especially across *De consecratione*, I focus on 1 de cons. 1–73 as a locus for mystagogical reflection within the juristic tradition. A literary analysis of this section proves that it is conceived as a treatise on the Mass, analogous to an *expositio missae*. This insight is confirmed when we turn to the *Decretists*, who state as much explicitly. Unsurprisingly, therefore, we find that the *Decretists* have left a wealth of liturgical interpretation, and indeed a handful of independent and undiscovered *expositiones missae* within their glosses on the *Decretum*. Likewise, a short review of spiritual works on the Mass by professional canonists shows us that the spirituality of the Mass was a subject that these “practical theologians” were expected by their bishops to understand, write, and lecture about.

Catalina Tressler, Universidad de los Andes, Chile

“Literacy and Written Culture in the Waldensian Heresy (12th-13th Centuries)”

This paper examines literacy and written culture within the Waldensian movement between the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries, questioning the traditional portrayal of the Waldensians as an essentially illiterate popular heresy. It asks to what extent Waldensian religious practice relied on written texts, oral transmission, and memorization, and how these practices challenged clerical definitions of literacy in the Middle Ages.

The argument here is that, although often described by ecclesiastical authors as illiterati, the Waldensians developed alternative forms of access to Scripture and religious knowledge that combined vernacular translations, collective reading, oral recitation, and memorized learning. Rather than reflecting a lack of engagement with written culture, this analysis reveals a different, non-clerical mode of literacy.

The sources used for this research consist of primarily ecclesiastical polemical and inquisitorial sources, including the writings of Stephen of Bourbon, the Anonymous of Passau, Bernard Gui, Durand of Huesca and conciliar legislation, as well as later testimonies concerning Waldensian texts and teaching practices.

These sources are read critically as rhetorical constructions rather than neutral descriptions of Waldensian practice. Therefore, this paper will present the Waldensian case, since it allows us to reflect on the relationship between literacy, preaching, and written culture among popular sectors of the Middle Ages. This approach contributes to questioning the view of heresy as ignorant and to recognizing the importance of the book, memory, and the spoken word in the formation of religious identities.

Andrew Wadoski, Virginia Tech, USA

“Spenser, Political Economy, and the Reformation of Ireland”

The closing pages of Edmund Spenser’s *A View of the Present State of Ireland* offer a provocative solution to the “reformation” of Ireland. In a remarkable bit of both speculative fiction and future-casting social analysis, Spenser imagines Ireland’s complete submission to English rule taking shape in its transformation from a feudal to a market economy. The transformed social order Spenser describes is peopled with self-regulated subjects in a fully rationalized—and rationalizing—commercial society, peacefully engaged in specialized labor and with their lives organized around exchange at urban markets. Their individual and collective well-being, in turn, depends wholly on removing any impediments both to production and exchange. While these closing speculations get less critical attention than do the work’s reflections on colonialism’s race-making and violence, this utopian near-future Ireland offers, I argue, just as trenchant an analysis of Early Modernity’s emergent mechanisms of power. Spenser’s analysis is shaped by an intuition of the market as fundamentally coercive: his market society encodes compulsion and coercion as opportunity and choice. Spenser’s imagined commercial society finds its coercive force in making simple survival impossible without participation in market relations. Market participation, in turn, sustains, enforces, and internalizes as natural and necessary the power relations subtending those economic ones. In Spenserian terms, the market materializes The Faerie Queene’s proposed social engineering project, working “to fashion” its subjects “in virtuous and gentle discipline.”

Benjamin Wand, Saint Louis University, USA

“‘Our Blinded Brother’: The Synod of Duisburg and the Blinding of Bishop Benno of Metz”

Two synods in the early tenth century, at Hohenaltheim (916) and Duisburg (929), directly tackled recent blindings of bishops at the hands of secular authorities or by "the people." This paper explores these two case studies in-depth, as well as the canon law tradition surrounding episcopal blinding and its use as a tool to depose unpopular bishops. The Synod of Hohenaltheim dealt with the blinding of Bishop Einhard of Speyer, and this ruling may have created a precedent for the later Synod of Duisburg, which discussed the blinding of Bishop Benno of Metz, a blinding which paved the way for his famous replacement, Bishop Adalbero of Metz, who was instrumental in establishing the Gorzan Reform.

Simon Whedbee, Loyola University New Orleans, USA

“Peter Lombard's Recently Discovered Biblical Prologues: The Codices”

Ongoing research has recently confirmed that a collection of Latin biblical prologues attributed to Peter Lombard does in fact contain teachings that can be attributed to the famous master of the Sentences with reasonable confidence. The 'Lombardian' prologue on the Gospel of Luke survives in at least two versions, witnessed by at least three manuscripts. This paper will seek to contextualize Lombard's Luke prologue by examining the other texts in each manuscript as well as the manuscripts' materiality, origins, and provenance to situate this biblical teaching text within the educational, social, and institutional developments of twelfth-century France.

Matthew Wilde, Donnelly College, USA

“Maternal Concupiscence and Conversion: Monica’s Conversion in Augustine’s Confessions”

While Augustine's conversion dominates his Confessions, Augustine is not the only saint who converts in the work. I argue that Monica also undergoes a conversion. While some Augustine scholars, such as Paffenroth, believe that Augustine offers an immaculate Monica, others like Starnes and Sehorn believe Augustine gives a more levelheaded portrayal. My argument will be an extension of the later. Throughout his Confessions, Augustine sees that Monica needs further conversion. Augustine faults his mother on three occasions. First, he criticizes Monica for postponing his baptism. Then, in Book II, he critiques her for not finding him a wife in his youth, instead enabling his lust. Finally, in Book V, he notes that God chastises Monica's "too-carnal desire" for her son while she weeps his stealthy departure on Carthage's shores. Monica then repents of these sins by acting contrary to them. First, she does not follow Augustine to Rome, but joins him only later in Milan. Then, in Book VI, she finds her son a potential spouse. Finally, when Augustine tells her of his conversion and his intention to be baptized, she rejoices with him. This essay concludes with Augustine's last words about Monica. Augustine exhorts his readers to pray for her. Despite knowing his mother's holiness, he echoes his mother's last request. This act confirms how Augustine understood his mother, and the nature of conversion, throughout Confessions: she is a redeemed sinner, a Christian still in need of God's grace. Conversion is not over at baptism; it is just beginning.

Hanxue Zhang, University of Missouri, Columbia, USA

“Faith, Authority, and Lineage: Constructing Noble Identity in a 1575 Carta Ejecutoria de Hidalguia”

This paper examines a Carta Ejecutoria de Hidalguía issued in 1575 by the Granada Royal Chancery, confirming the hidalguía of Diego López de Valcárcel and his siblings. While such documents are often regarded as legal instruments, this study argues that they also functioned as

material performances of noble identity. The Carta Ejecutoria—now held in the Special Collections of the University of Missouri—reveals the complex interplay of faith, royal authority, and lineage in sixteenth-century Spain through its craftsmanship, juridical text, and illuminations. It examines the document's material composition and analyzes the textual layout and decorated initials, showing how they organize testimonies and rulings into a coherent visual order. The depositions stress the antiquity and legitimacy of the family's patrilineal lineage, revealing the dual role of lineage and testimony in legitimizing *hidalguía*. It analyzes the symbolic and political functions of the illuminations, showing how the Valcárcel family used religious iconography, heraldic emblems, and royal inscriptions to assert legitimacy. Two key images—the Immaculate Conception and Santiago Matamoros—resonate with the state ideology of Philip II, visualizing faith and royal authority. Taken together, these images construct a rigid social hierarchy grounded in divine authority, royal power, and lineage: sacred figures at the top; inscriptions and emblems in the middle; and the kneeling figures of the Valcárcel family at the bottom. Integrating iconographic and historical analysis, this paper argues that the Carta Ejecutoria embodies juridical and visual authority, revealing how sixteenth-century Spain used visual language and symbolism to sustain social hierarchy and political loyalty.

Section II.

International Arthurian Studies Mini Conference at SMRS

Alexander (Lex) Ames, University of South Carolina, USA

“Linguistic Materiality and the Stuff of Chivalric Performance in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*”

Much has been made throughout the scholarly history of the study of later Medieval literature, particularly the genre of Romance, of the role detailed descriptions of the materiality of narrative. The role of precise linguistic detail in Middle English romances, especially those treating Arthurian themes, has, perhaps, received less scholarly attention than their continental counterparts. While some, perhaps less literary, Middle English romances cling to their oral origins, there are numerous others, perhaps most notably *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, for which close, specifically pragmatic, linguistic analysis reveals ways in which the language used of and by characters functions as the material through which the poet effects not only characterization but also plot, theme, etc. On the surface of it, this seems an obvious claim—of course the material reality of the poem is formed by the poet's particular uses of language. But my intent is to explore the extent to which the poem's character, particularly his depiction of the performance of the titular hero as quest knight or chivalric performance artist, rely on particularly performative linguistic choices without which neither Gawain nor his quest is recognizable as such or as German poet Stefan George puts it, "where word breaks off, no thing may be." Where Gawain's words break off, may he and his performance of chivalry yet be?

Stephen Atkinson, Park University, USA

“‘and never to enforce them’: Rights and Real Estate in Malory's Round Table Oath”

Readers bring to literary texts ideas which are already in place, and though they may characterize those ideas as timeless or universal, they are in fact always local. In the case of texts with a long history, the ideas shift over time in often startling ways. The Round Table Oath has come to be seen as legislation or as a constitution of sorts—even as a set of injunctions suitable for Baden-Powell's boy scouts. None of these are concepts available to the earliest audience. In 1480, they hear the Oath as centered on the prime concern of their own lives, the control of land, and they recognize it as a traditional oath of enfeoffment—a fundamentally different legal structure from the ones under which they themselves operate in the fifteenth century world of trusts and contracts. In addition, they recognize the Oath's attention to the most unstable situation: where a family's land must be held by a woman. Shifting reception is epitomized in the injunction “never to enforce them”: the seemingly obvious gloss is unavailable to the early audience.

Jessica Bates, Florida State University, USA

“Palamedes, Race, and Friendship”

Palamedes receives plenty of focus within Thomas Malory's *Le Morte Darthur*, enough to showcase the relationships that he has with his fellow knights, unrequited love of Iseult, and his rivalry with Tristan. He is also, a “Saracen” knight in a Christian court who spends much of the text unconverted. This racing feature of Palamedes has received much focus in the past, and I wish to expand upon it through combining the study of medieval race and the study of medieval perceptions of friendship. Through examining the ideas of friendship and love in the Middle

Ages, I aim to see if these interpersonal relationships help Palamedes become more accepted despite his difference or if they only serve to highlight his primary “othering” feature, to discover how social relationships affect perception of race within the medieval mind.

Sarah Burt, Saint Louis University, USA

“Reading the Boars’ Head Ceremony within *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*”

Scholarship on *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* has often highlighted its use of games as a core component of Gawain’s quest. However, no scholar to date has suggested that the Green Knight’s “Beheading Game” might be a parody of the Christmas tradition of the Boar’s Head Procession. When Gawain takes up the Green Knight’s challenge and beheads him, the Green Knight subverts the typical serving of the Boar’s Head at Christmastime by instead serving his own decapitated head in a ceremonial fashion. The Christmas tradition of carrying a boar’s head decorated with greenery into dinner at the high table, known as the Boar’s Head Procession, is first recorded as taking place at Queen’s College Oxford in 1340, which antedates the writing of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* by mere decades. It is therefore possible that this Oxford tradition was known by the late fourteenth-century audience of the poem. This parodic inversion is further impacted by the material of manuscripts, including the Pearl manuscript which holds *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* (British Library ms cotton nero a x/2), being made entirely of animal bodies or animal by-products. This paper will explore how reading the Green Knight as parodically “standing in” for the boar’s head, while simultaneously considering the animal materials used in manuscript production, expands our understanding of the relationship medieval readers had with animals and how courtly identity, games, and rituals may be defined by animal actants and participants.

Nicole Clifton, Northern Illinois University, USA

“Morgan and her Companions in Malory”

In two scenes from very different points in Malory’s *Morte Darthur*, Morgan le Fay appears in the company of three other ladies to take charge of a knight’s person. In “Sir Launcelot du Lake,” Morgan is one of four queens who encounter a sleeping Lancelot, enchant him, and take him to Morgan’s nearby castle, in hope he will choose one of them as a lover. In “Sir Mordred,” Morgan, two other queens, and the Lady of the Lake receive the mortally wounded Arthur into their barge, then—perhaps—take his corpse for burial. In studying these scenes, scholars have tended to focus on Morgan, who is of course interesting in all her roles: Arthur’s sister, a queen consort, a sorceress, a healer, a maker of trouble for Arthur’s court. But what about her companions? What does it mean that the Queen of North Wales is with her in both of these episodes, but that the kidnapping queens of the East Lands and the Out Isles are replaced in the funeral barge by the Queen of the Waste Lands and the Lady of the Lake? This paper studies the geographical and familial connections among these ladies, their positions vis-à-vis Lancelot and Arthur, and the thematics of rumor, knowledge, and choice in both episodes.

Joseph Derosier, Beloit College, USA

“An anti-Arthurian Queen: Blindness and Insight in the *Perlesvaus*.”

In the 13th-century prose romance of the *Perlesvaus*, a blind, pagan queen called the Reine Jandrée refuses to see (as in welcome) Christian knights and refuses to see (as in recognize)

Christianity, or, as the *Perlesvaus* refers to it, The New Law. Jandrée blinds herself in refusing to see and is in turn rewarded for her blindness, for which she is grateful. This undermines (and yet reinforces) medieval clichés of blindness coded as Jewishness, as punishment, as a defect. Reine Jandrée is one of the rare characters in this romance to choose her conversion, and unlike other pagans in the text, her impetus is not force but a Marian revelation where Jandrée witnesses the pain of the Virgin at the Crucifixion. Her conversion mimics those of witnesses at martyrdoms, one of reflection and compassion, whereas elsewhere the very masculine-focused romance privileges violence and forced conversions. This paper looks at the role of Jandrée as a queen through lenses of disability studies to better understand her role in her own blindness, in her own conversion, and how her resistance to Arthur and Christianity is rooted in her role as a reigning queen. Further, thinking with Eve Sedgwick reading Silvan Tomkins, can we think of the affective or “weak theory” aspects of Jandrée’s experiences as subtle refusal to a larger Arthurian regime or paradigm?

Melissa Ridley Elmes, Lindenwood University, USA

“Cards Against Arthuriana: A Practical Application of A Student Materiality Assignment”

In my 200-level general education Arthurian Legend course, my students are tasked with developing a materiality project which engages some aspect or figure of the Arthurian legend in a non-textual fashion, going beyond the traditional essay. I encourage my students to follow their personal interests and proclivities in these projects; past efforts have yielded original songs, cosplay outfits, paintings, and a Green knight doll, for example. This past spring, one of my students developed a “Cards Against Arthuriana” game that demonstrates her strong understanding of all of the elements and tropes of the Arthurian legend, alongside her understanding of the concept of the Arthurian multiverse, adaptation, interpolation, and similar, and employs game theory in adapting the popular “Cards Against Humanity” game for the Arthurian legend. This talk first shares the prompt for the materiality project, and then permits those in attendance to play the game and see for themselves the power of critical/creative hybrid assignments to harness student skills and interests beyond the traditional classroom approach, engaging them in high-level, sophisticated, complex, and meaningful learning experiences driven by their intrinsic motivations and going well beyond what a conventional approach typically yields from general education students in the medieval literature classroom.

Arundhati Ghosh, Southern Methodist University, USA

“Queenly Record Keeping in Sir Tristram’s Books”

A major function Arthurian queens serve, especially as represented in Sir Tristram’s books within Malory’s work, is tied to their sentimentality. Gwenevere and Isolde maintain a correspondence that keeps them updated on not only each others’ lives but on their respective knights’ and kings’ lives as well. Marhault’s sister keeps a fragment of the sword that kills him, and Alexander’s mother keeps the bloodied clothing her husband was wearing when he was murdered. I argue that these queens serve as unofficial record keepers, significantly affecting the male characters’ lives by collecting proof for their own purposes. Gwenevere and Isolde keep each other updated on the goings on of their courts, underscoring the implicit importance of romantic relationships to these stories (no matter what Dynadin thinks). The sword fragment serves as a point of revelation within Tristram’s story, and Alexander’s father’s bloody clothes are the pieces of evidence that spur Alexander on into the quest that ultimately leads to his death, foreshadowing the true depth of King Mark’s treachery. The record keeping of these mortal queens cements the

reality that their worlds turn even while the knights and kings are away killing and plotting, emphasizing that they are just as important to the storytelling as other characters. Their record keeping methods function as a way in which they demonstrate their agency.

Alexandra Sterling-Hellenbrand, Appalachian State University

“Playing Arthur: Arthurian Games and Material Culture”

The figure of King Arthur looms very large in representations of the “real” and the “imagined” Middle Ages in contemporary popular culture. This paper is part of a larger project on “Playing Arthur” that explores not only the persistent fascination we have with the legends of King Arthur but also the dynamic way in which audiences and fans have enacted this fascination from the Middle Ages to the present. In a recent essay, I explored the ethical implications of adventure as play illustrated in various media from medieval romance to modern tabletop games. For this mini-conference, I would like to turn my attention explicitly to games as a facet of Arthurian materiality. Games are material culture on two levels at least: as created physical artifacts themselves, they fall into the category of “consummables,” or objects provided for various audiences to consume (e.g. to purchase or to experience). Games also offer a way for consumers (readers, listeners, viewers of Arthurian literature) also to inhabit particular stories, to participate performatively in adaptations and/or to create new iterations of familiar older narratives. While Stafford’s *Pendragon* carved out a unique niche among role-playing games. Here, I would like to delve into the legacy of Stafford’s pioneering *Pendragon* with an analysis of two more recent tabletop role-playing games: *Knight: An Avalon RPG* (Antre Monde Editions) and *Shadows of Camelot* (ShadowDark RPG). Fundamentally, I am interested in how the dual materiality of Arthurian game-play, as artifact and as performance, adapts aspects of Arthurian narratives and Arthurian discourse to engage modern audiences.

Isabelle Lee, Bowdoin College, USA

“The Kisses, the Ring, and the Girdle: The Magic and Gendering of the Exchange of Winnings in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*”

The late fourteenth-century romance *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* deeply concerns itself with the institution of chivalry, Sir Gawain embracing and embarking on a deadly quest to honor his commitment to the framework of chivalric ideals governing knighthood. His honor and chivalry are notably tested through the temptation scenes in Lord Bertilak’s castle, throughout which Gawain engages in a game of exchange of winnings with Lord Bertilak while attempting to cling to his knightly values and resist the Lady’s seductive advances. In these exchanges, the Lady offers Gawain a series of clandestine gifts: kisses, a ring, and a girdle. Examining these gifts as rendered both magical and gendered by the gift-giving of the Lady, the intersection of gender and magic manifested in physical forms throughout *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* becomes curious and compelling points for analysis, particularly against the innately “masculine” background of protecting and upholding chivalric ideals. Applying material culture studies, close reading, and a feminist reading to *Sir Gawain*, the relationships between gender, magic, and the physical become more tangible to the reader.

Margaret Marcum, Southern Methodist University, USA

“Sir Percival’s Sister: Beyond Victimhood and Piety”

In the Vulgate *Queste del Saint Graal* and Malory's *Le Morte d'Arthur*, Sir Percival's sister occupies a liminal space between saintly martyr and exploited commodity. Traditionally, scholarship has viewed her through these two primary lenses: the hagiographic perspective, which frames her fatal bloodletting to cure a leprous lady as the ultimate sacrificial virgin, and a feminist-materialist perspective, which views her as a trafficked body whose blood is bartered to sustain a decaying aristocratic order. While the former emphasizes her spiritual purity, the latter underscores her lack of bodily autonomy and agency within a patriarchal chivalric system. I propose a third alternative framework for interpreting Percival's sister vis-à-vis the Grail Quest. By moving beyond the binary of passive victimhood (trafficking) or divine inevitability (sacrifice), I argue that Percival's sister operates as the Quest's primary sovereign agent to bring about its completion. She is the person clothing the Sword of the Strange Girdles with her own hair and guiding the knights to the Ship of Solomon, thereby performing a role that is distinctively sovereign rather than merely instrumental or subordinate. And her sacrifice is not a surrender to male demands but a self-authored ritual of autonomy that exposes the limitations of martial chivalry. By analyzing Percival's sister in terms of sovereign agency, I seek to reposition her not as a tragic object of exchange or sacrifice, but rather as the intellectual and spiritual architect of the Quest's achievement, challenging the narrative that her agency must end when her life does.

Molly Martin, University of Indianapolis, USA

“The Ghost-Turned-Friendly in the *Roman van Walewein*”

Gawain, in his many manifestations (Gauvain, Wawayne, etc.), repeatedly encounters ghosts and experiences hauntings across stories—and even becomes one. The Middle Dutch *Walewein* is no exception. But it is a peculiar encounter, to be sure, between the titular character and ghost in the *Roman van Walewein*. While questing for a variety of marvelous objects, *Walewein* encounters and promptly kills “die rode ridder fel” [“the evil Red Knight”](l. 8372) who violently mistreats a damsel. Before dying, the Red Knight requests that *Walewein* perform burial rites, which he does without delay. Immediately the Red Knight reappears as a ghost and proceeds to assist *Walewein*. Indeed, the evil Red Knight becomes, for a short span, *Walewein*'s knight in shining armor. This paper will examine this episode through the lens of sociologist Avery Gordon's theory of haunting. Gordon argues that “[h]aunting raises specters, and it alters the experience of being in time, the way we separate the past, the present, and the future. These specters or ghosts appear when the trouble they represent and symptomize is no longer being contained or repressed or blocked from view.” By being a decidedly friendly ghost, the Red Knight seems to skew the expectations for hauntings. I suggest, however, that this haunting is every bit as symptomatic of problems endemic to the story and the customs of the (fictional) Arthurian court and the romance genre more broadly, particularly with regard to the treatment of women.

Evelyn Meyer, Saint Louis University, USA

“Playing with the Arthurian Material: A Late Adaptation of Wolfram's *Parzival* in the Bernese Cod. AA 91”

The Cod. AA 91 in Bern of Wolfram von Eschenbach's *Parzival* was completed in 1467 and was commissioned by Jörg Friburger, an up and coming and influential merchant in the city of Bern who pushed his family into the realms of the lower nobility. This manuscript shows remarkable revisions in the content, and in the illuminations throughout this manuscript which not only

reflect the self-interest of this family, but especially their interest in and emphasis on the secular-chivalric Arthurian materials at the expense of the spiritual content that is of equal importance in Wolfram's 13th century version of this Arthurian Grail romance. It is as if the Friburgers are asking "Who is interested in the Grail stuff anyway?" as these areas are reduced to the necessary "bare bones" of the plot. Instead, they show a key interest in emphasizing chivalric fighting, prowess, proving your importance that aligns with the ideology of Arthurian knights proving their value and importance by means of chivalric acts. I propose to analyze the plot or content revisions of this late manuscript vis-à-vis the plot of the earlier 13th century version of the narrative to demonstrate this greater interest in Arthurian material in addition to arguing how this manuscript fits into the larger idea of Arthurian materiality that is the theme of this session.

Evan Webster, Saint Louis University, USA

"Geoffrey of Monmouth's Arthur: 'Taken Away to Avalon' and the Mechanics of Supernatural Preservation"

Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia Regum Britanniae* represents the beginning of the uncertainty of Arthur's end. Geoffrey has Arthur "mortally wounded" (*letaliter uulneratus*) and "taken away to the island of Avalon to have his wounds tended" without another word of his status afterwards. Prior scholarship, such as Siân Echard's, observes that "Geoffrey, famously, does not say that Arthur dies." However, scholarship has yet to fully explore the interpretive possibilities generated from Arthur's uncertain departure. This paper explores one such interpretive possibility through close examination of the material details presented in the text. Arthur's departure highlights the interplay between explicit and implicit material in the text and between natural and supernatural.

This project engages with scholarship examining Morgan le Fay's involvement in Arthur's treatment, analyzing the extent to which Morgan's involvement encourages this reading of supernatural preservation—a method of healing that operates outside both natural medicine and divine miracle, and has the potential to encompass practices from magical healing to necromancy. The primary methodology involves close reading of the Galfridian texts (the *Historia* and its successor the *Vita Merlini*) alongside frameworks addressing medieval epistemologies of the supernatural and of magic to establish the potential for a reading outside the realms of natural healing and divine miracle. The result offers a holistic approach to recognizing Arthur's departure as deliberately constructed for political ends but also as a means to enable specific interpretive readings of his end that complicate his status as a Christian king.

Keynote speakers

Eighth Annual Loomises Memorial Lecture: Honoring Gertrude Schoepperle Loomis, Laura Hibbard Loomis, Roger Sherman Loomis, and Dorothy Bethurum Loomis

David F. Johnson, Florida State University, USA

"Jacob van Maerlant and the Matter of Britain"

Third Annual Tolhurst Lecture

Robyn Thum-O'Brien, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, USA

"Once & Future Narrative: Arthurian Literature & Narrative Temporality"

Section III.

South-Central Renaissance Mini Conference at SMRS

Madeline Cisneros, University of Miami, USA

Shrouding the Crown: Queen Elizabeth I and the Optics of Autonomy

This paper seeks to interrogate the complex persona and iconic image of Queen Elizabeth I“ not merely as a monarch and figure of power seated at the helm of England, but rather as a woman contending with her own survival, agency, and legacy. At its core, this inquiry hopes to decode and unravel the various ways in which Elizabeth I resorted to "self-mythologizing" □ as a means to maintain control over her station and body. Known for being the "Virgin Queen," □ Elizabeth utilized her skills as a rhetorician and politician as means to preserve her independence and autonomy, famously refusing to marry or produce heirs throughout her tenure as Queen. Further, it was through her masterful use of iconography, spectacle, and performance that Elizabeth established herself as a "larger than life" □ figure within the social fabric of early modern England, solidifying her as an immovable specter presiding over the entirety of the period. Subsequently, this paper also seeks to answer the questions: Who even was Elizabeth I? Can we truly say, with any certainty, anything about her? Or is the very success of her reign measured in the permanence of her obfuscation? What should it say, then, that one of England's most iconic Queens could only become so by obscuring herself enough?

Consuelo Concepcion, Independent Scholar, USA

“Spenserian Skeltonics: Anti-pastoralism and Political Authority in *Colyn Clout* and *The Shepheardes Calendar*”

Does Spenser's Colin have a Skeltonic moment? This may not be the most appropriate question, as it is apparent in the gloss of the January Eclogue that Spenser was making an obvious allusion to Skelton's Colyn. If we assume that Skelton's Colin is a satire against the very church of which he was a servant, what is the turn for Spenser's Colin who enacts and reenacts the pastoral as a melancholic moment of loss and uncertainty? This is where an understanding of Spenser's pastoral operates as a critique of his politically charged poetic project he was to confront in his long service in Ireland. Â If Skelton's Clout is a not so veiled Â criticism of Cardinal Wolsey's administration, then it is also possible to see Spenser's Clout as critique of Grey's administration in Ireland even before the massacre at Smerwick the following year. Â However, as some scholars have noted, Spenser defended Grey's policies in Ireland, so it would be of note as to how his Colin Clout functioned as a political critique of Elizabethan policies in a similar manner. While Skelton's Colyn has no particular setting, Spenser places Colin in pastoral as a way to deflect any closer analysis of his critique of Tudor policy, particularly as questions were raised regarding Elizabeth's succession and the beginning of Spenser's administrative life in Ireland as secretary to Lord Grey.

In this paper I will contend that through the multiple uses of Colyn/Colin Clout, Skelton and Spenser attempt to negotiate the political changes occurring in the Tudor Royal administration while offering a critique of the functioning of royal privilege. As an ambiguous figure in the pastoral, I will also contend Skelton and Spenser are negotiating their own ambivalence in the performance of their service to the Tudor monarchy.

James Conlan, University of Puerto Rico, Puerto Rico

“In Re Portia's Gloss: Recovering the Response to *The Merchant of Venice* When Staged at Court on 10 and 12 February 1605”

Shakespeareans, attorneys and even American jurists celebrate Portia's gloss on Shylock's bond in the Merchant of Venice as an effective exercise of equitable justice. This paper shows that the dignitaries known to have attended the court performances of the play on 10 and 12 February 1605 would have unquestionably disagreed.

Applying the evidentiary rule, *falsus in uno, falsus in omnibus*, they would have understood that Portia was an unreliable interpreter of the law.

Applying enduring civil law principles of contract interpretation, they would have recognized that the penalty clause which places a lien on a pound of living flesh, was contrary to law, morality and public order, and therefore the notarized bond was radically void.

Referencing the multiple damage actions defined in the Institutes, these attendees were prepared to calculate the extraordinary damages that the Republic of Venice owed the Sultan for corruptly denying his Jewish subject a judicial remedy for the multiple injuries Shylock suffered in the play.

Guided by the 1598 title page which defines the genre of the play as a "most excellent Historie," and noting the prohibition in Portia's gloss depends on a finding that Antonio is a Christian, they had warrant to imagine that Portia's gloss sets the stage for the most infamous atrocity of the Second Cyprian War "“ a Jewish butcher flaying Marc'Antonio Bragadin alive "“ which, as Shakespeare imagined it, could have derived from comity: a Turkish officer's deferential execution of a firm and final sentence issued by a corrupt Venetian Court.

Jasmin Cyril, Benedict College, USA

Evidence of Islam in the Material Culture of 14th and 15th Century Italian Material Culture

Traditionally, the overriding concern in researching and identifying influence in Italian Medieval and Early Modern art has been the revival of remnants Classical culture and the transmission of eastern influence through the conduit of Byzantine images and stylistic trends. While considering how Islam might have an aspect relative to the major focus of my research interests, I realized that the evidence of contact and transmission of Islamic influence is visually present in many aspects of the visual culture of 14th and 15th century Italy.

From the geometric patterning in the Cosmati pavements and intarsia in Rome at San Clemente and Santa Maria Maggiore, arguably strongholds of Western Christian visual culture, it is clear that the stone workers of the Cosma clan were involved in creating patterns relative to the type of inlay visible in Jerusalem at the Dome of the Rock. In the paintings of Fra Angelico, or Beato Angelico, a fifteenth century Dominican monk and painter, the artist uses pseudo-Kufic script as the inspiration for the golden bands of jacquard and embroidery on the robe of the Archangel Gabriel in Fra Angelico's many versions of the Annunciation iconography. Giotto, the acknowledged father of painting for the 14th and 14th century artists of Italy, carefully explored the Islamic identity in his paintings of St Francis and the Trial by Fire before the Sultan, notably in the Bardi Chapel, Santa Croce, Florence from the 1320's.

Dennis Doyle, University of Health Sciences and Pharmacy in St. Louis, USA
“The tempest in my mind’: Portraying King Lear as Modern Dementia Sufferer, 1968-1974”

When Victorian critics first began writing about Shakespeare's tragic characters, they essentially evaluated whether these creations represented good or evil. With the psychologization of Shakespeare criticism and the rise of a more naturalistic acting style, some postwar audiences and performers became much less interested in judging whether the characters were good or bad. These folks were far more invested in determining how realistic or human Shakespeare's creations were. Prior to the 1960s, King Lear was a bigger-than-life morality play. Here in the US, between 1968 and 1974, directors, actors and some like-minded critics less tethered to British standards of classical acting scaled back what should be expected from King Lear, reducing this tragedy to a story about three daughters contending with a rapidly declining, elderly dad. In Lee J. Cobb's 1968 Broadway performance, James Earl Jones' 1974 New York Shakespeare Festival rendition, and Morris Carnovsky's 1976 turn on Connecticut's Stratford stage, Lear became an opportunity to portray dementia and senility as realistically as possible. In this paper, I will explore the initial response to these three attempts to modernize this character. Many audiences were receptive to actors bringing relevance and humanity to this role. Nevertheless, I will contend that more skeptical reviewers slammed these performances precisely because the reduction of King Lear to a small psychological drama not only challenged their view of this play as a classical tragedy full of transcendent, metaphysical truths, it also questioned the pedestal to which they had raised Shakespeare and the Western canon.

Susan Dunn-Hensley, Wheaton College, USA
“Creating the Narrative of an Evil Stuart Queen: Memory of Elizabeth I in the reign of Charles I and Henrietta Maria”

This paper draws from a chapter of my forthcoming book, which is part of the Queens and Power series. The chapter will consider the consequences of the sixteenth-century dethroning of the Virgin Mary, the execution of two queens, and anti-gynocracy rhetoric in the seventeenth century as the English reopened the debates of the Reformation through bloody Civil War. This paper will specifically consider how Parliament deployed comparisons between Henrietta Maria and Mary Tudor to galvanize support for Parliament in opposition to the king. It will also discuss how nostalgia for a carefully constructed version of Elizabeth I overshadowed and offered an imagined alternative to the embattled Stuarts. By examining the more radically Protestant voices of well-known writers and Parliamentary propagandists, I will show how powerfully Reformation era narratives continue to inform public response to female authority.

Geoffrey Emerson, University of Alabama, USA
“Magnetic and Narrative Mediums in Francis Godwin's Man in the Moone”

Through an experience narrated in *Man in the Moone* (1638), Francis Godwin speculates about the medium that allows not only gravity to function, but also narrative itself. Following William Gilbert's theory of magnetic gravity, Godwin's narrator, Domingo Gonsales, relates the feeling of weightlessness during his voyage from the Earth to the Moon. Gonsales identifies the absence of moisture as the reason for the lack of gravity and the temperate climate in space. Yet, Gonsales' observations are clouded by his social and political climate as a Spanish aristocrat. Godwin, an English Bishop, chooses to present his speculations through a narrative medium that potentially distorts observation.

In *De Magnete* (1600), William Gilbert presents an investigation of magnetism which builds into a theory of gravity claiming the Earth is a magnet. He speculates about how magnets exert influence over other objects without touching them by analogizing the magnetic field to the "earth's effluvium," (atmosphere) claiming that moisture makes objects stick together. Gonsales specifically reports that there is no moisture in outer space, echoing Gilbert's analogy to "effluvia."

By narrating his embodied experience of weightlessness in space, Gonsales theorizes not only about magnetic gravity, but also its connection to moisture, climate, and how it distorts sense perception. Yet, his perceptions and speculations are couched in the sociopolitical climate of Early Modern Europe. Just as our senses are filtered through gravity and the Earth's "effluvia," our perceptions of Gonsales' assessments of science social context are filtered through the sociopolitical effluvia of the Early Modern period.

Sophia Feingold, Independent SchoLAR, USA

Falstaff and Fish: The Early Modern Sea Creature as the Anti-Body Politic

In 1556 Pieter Bruegel the Elder completed a print of a whale-sized fish whose guts spill smaller sea creatures, inscribed with a form of the proverb *Piscem vorat maior minorem*. That same year the Marian exile John Ponet observed that "without politike power and autoritie" the great fishes eat up the small." Four decades later Falstaff, preparing to con Justice Shallow, justified himself by appealing to aquatic life: "If the young dace be a bait for the old pike, I see no reason in the law of nature but I may snap at him" (2 Henry IV 3.2). These early modern examples indicate no mere accidental survival of a Latin tag (whose origins Wilfrid Parsons traced in 1945) but an imagistic connection between perceived chaotic natural life of the ocean and humanity's ungoverned condition. For political thinkers like Ponet and authors like Shakespeare, Spenser, and Donne, fish and the sea emblemize chaos and monstrosity: their apparent corporeal disorganization, relative to land animals and seemingly social creatures like bees, made them analogues for "monsters" and especially for monstrous bodies politic, which were conceptualized as lacking the organizing sinews of law. In contrast to an animalistic body politic, where good laws enable the mutual cooperation of members, incorporating them as distinct individuals into an integrated whole, the seemingly lawless and disorganized ("monstrous") piscatory body can only "integrate" by consuming and destroying its sea-going peers.

Emma Fleckenstein, University of North Texas

"Bound to Speak: Women's speech and the Role of Interrogatives in Othello"

This paper analyzes the way the interrogative mode functions within the speech of Desdemona and Emilia in *Othello*. It compares the way that women's speech is received within the play to other early modern texts' reception of women's speech and its role (or lack thereof) in the public sphere. Throughout the play and contemporaneous texts, parallels are shown between the credibility of speech, ideals of chastity, and the role of slander. As Iago's rhetorical influence on *Othello* grows via increased use of slander, Desdemona's lines shift from primarily imperative to primarily interrogative. The shift in grammatical mode coincides with the idea of her chastity and credibility of her speech being undercut. Emilia's speech remains primarily in the interrogative, but rather than the interrogative mode diminishing her credibility, she uses it to assert her own rhetorical ability. Emilia's speech in Act 4, Scene 3 is afforded special attention in both performance and reception history and literary analysis. The way that each woman's speech operates within the play and how staging choices alter character reception provides immense

insight into how Shakespeare was thinking about women's voices. The characters' endings, both being silenced through death, warn audiences of what fate lies in store for rhetorically deviant women. The reception of their speech by other characters within the play and audiences/critics illuminates how cultural perceptions of women's speech have shifted, and the ways in which they have hardly shifted at all.

Alex Garganigo, Austin College, USA
“Milton and Silkpunk”

How does the speculative fiction writer Ken Liu rethink the Renaissance in his *Dandelion Dynasty* quartet (2015-2022)? As part of a larger project on the reception of the Renaissance in science fiction and fantasy, this paper will focus on Liu's responses to and adaptations of Renaissance authors such as Milton in a new genre, silkpunk, that combines fantasy with alternate history in a non-European setting.

Caroline Hampshire, Florida State University, USA
“Embrac[ing] and Experimenting with Prospective Glass Travel in *The Travels of the Three English Brothers*”

In the epilogue of John Day, William Rowley, and George Wilkins' *The Travels of the Three English Brothers* (1607), Fame gives to each brother a "prospective glass" through which the brothers, although globally separated, perceive one another. This scene's intriguing directive that the brothers "offer to embrace" across the glass barrier is the axis of my interrogation into the playwrights' performative transmission of the Sherleys' concurrent global travels. Within my larger study on the stage property mirror in early modern English drama, this paper focuses on the virtually transportive qualities of the prospective glass and its performance in *Travels* as a staged travel experiment, situated at the scientific juncture between optical and transportation technology in early modern England.

In their efforts to propagandize and mythicize the Sherley global campaign, the collaborative playwrights present the performative prospective glass as a technological medium which experimentally transcends material barriers in order to bridge both geographical and cultural gaps. The prospective glass stage property's accruing appropriations in the hands of Fame ensure that the Sherley narrative is propagated across the globe and throughout history just as the glass's metaphorical and metatheatrical interventions throughout *Travels* contextualizes the Sherley story within globally shifting reflective ontologies. By transmitting the Sherley brothers' narrative through the theatre-as-prospective-glass, Day, Rowley, and Wilkins experiment with a new visual and virtual technology that anticipates and promises increased human connection that we can still only theorize today, gazing through our screens, imagining we might reach out and connect with our fellow human beings.

Accordingly, this paper responds to recent intersections in early modern scholarship between media and technology studies, performance theory, virtual reality and cognition studies, and travel writing, responding in particular to recent works by David McInnis, Jane Degenhardt, and Anthony Parr.

Sarah Keeling, Angelo State University, USA
“Staging the Final Moments of *Doctor Faustus*”

There are two common, distinct staging options concerning the devils' timing at the close of Faustus's contract found in editions of Doctor Faustus. Faustus's call of "My God, my God, look not so fierce on me!" (5.2.117) is sometimes placed prior to the arrival of hell's entourage, but, with almost equal frequency, editors place this cry after their arrival as well. Placed in conjunction with the play's presentation of Faustus as continuously oscillating in his relationship with repentance as well as with the longstanding debates regarding Doctor Faustus's religious loyalties, this editorial choice is well poised to shape the play's representation of God's silence. If Faustus's call to God is before the arrival of his escorts to Hell, the probability that an audience is inclined towards sympathy is increased as the apparent legitimacy of Faustus's repentance is more believable. This serves to reinforce a reading that favors religious critique, especially towards Calvinism and salvation based in predestination. On the other hand, placing the staging directions after may function in the opposite manner. This may serve as a tool for editors to reinforce a reading that emphasizes Doctor Faustus's connections to morality plays, positioning God as righteous and Faustus as a non-repentant figure to be wary of. Neither editorial choice can singularly vindicate or condemn Faustus. However, it can serve as a powerful tool in shaping an audience's reception of a critical moment and can swing the play towards particular religious narratives depending on the choices made by editors.

Rob King, Bristol University, USA

“The ‘Ballad of Macbeth:’ A Lost Source for Shakespeare's Tragedy?”

I am currently researching a book entitled "The Art of the Ballad", one of the chapters in which offers an examination of the relationship between 'Macbeth' and the traditional Scottish ballad. There have been many critical appraisals of the play which attempt to address the question of why 'Macbeth' seems so different from Shakespeare's other tragedies. Most of these involve, to a greater or lesser extent, consideration of the source materials that form the background to the play, with Holinshed's 'Chronicles' being of course foremost of these. However, as Furness says in his New Variorum Edition, 'Shakespeare did not confine himself to the history of 'Macbeth''; and it is the purpose of my paper to consider one of the "possible" other sources, which is now lost "this being a medieval Scots "Ballad of Macbeth'. When one considers the stylistic aspects of the play, and places these against those of (especially) the Scottish traditional (or "popular") ballad, one is struck by the considerable number of similarities which 'Macbeth' shares with the ballad tradition. This paper will illustrate, by close comparative critical analysis, these shared stylistic aspects; and although, of course, it is not possible thereby to resurrect the lost ballad manuscript itself, the study will nevertheless attempt to create the "presence" of this putative source by providing extracts from traditional balladry and placing them against Shakespeare's text.

Jane Lawson, Emory University, USA

Some Intricacies of the New Year's Gift Exchanges: Free, Sundry, Regifted

By definition the New Year's Gift Exchange involved a reciprocal exchange of gifts between the sovereign and the courtier. The object given given by the courtier to Elizabeth often reflected attention to detail and much thought invested into the choice; an attribute usually absent from the queen's return gift. There are, however, several gift categories providing a different view. The phrase, given again the same day, appears as does the category of free gift. Another category is found at the end of the "To side" whereby Elizabeth given gifts at sundry times during the year. This paper will take a closer look at this categories of gift exchanges.

Carole Levin, University of Nebraska, USA

Queen Elizabeth Barefoot in Rome, Her Many Violent Deaths, and her Wandering Ghost

In August 1588 in Paris, Don Bernardino de Mendoza, who had the Spanish ambassador in England until he had been expelled, was thrilled as he was convinced that Spanish Armada had defeated the English fleet, successfully invaded, and captured Queen Elizabeth. He exclaimed that she would be forced to walk barefoot in Rome where she would have to beg the Pope for pardon. Both during her life, and after, there were stories about the horrors she endured that she so deserved, and the range of terrible violence some were sure had caused her death one way or another, including being stabbed or poisoned. There were even stories of her wailing, wandering ghost. This paper analyzes these stories, and examines what they say about attitudes toward an unmarried Protestant queen.

Catherine Loomis, University of New Orleans, USA

“A Mirror for Her Majesty: Imperiled Imperial Women in Elizabethan De Casibus Literature”

As Philip Sidney and others reminded English poets, literature aimed at a monarch and her retinue was meant to use its ability to delight the reader to perform the vital functions of informing, cautioning, educating, alerting, warning, guiding, or otherwise assisting the royal or aristocratic audience in ruling well. Early modern tragedies provided powerful aural and visual evidence of the perils of monarchs who put the personal or pleasurable above the political. These messages were reinforced in the first-person narratives found in collections like the 1559 *Mirror for Magistrates*, published shortly after Elizabeth took the throne. While Elizabeth was clear that she ruled as a prince, and the body politic remained male, the queen also acknowledged her "weak" female body. This paper examines the poems in *Mirror for Magistrates* and similar collections to consider what messages a female monarch could find in the narratives written in women's voices. Was Elizabeth meant to draw her lessons only from the histories narrated by kings, or are the texts by queens, consorts, and other courtly women also intended as a way to guide or correct Elizabeth's behavior?

Ani Margaryan, Soochow University, China

“Decoding the Dialectical Semiotics of Chinese Porcelain: Inclusion and Ambivalence in the Early Modern European Still Life”

This paper interrogates the formative role of Chinese porcelain within the early modern Western still life, arguing for its centrality not merely as an exotic motif but as a critical semiotic vehicle through which European artists negotiated emerging concepts of global trade, spiritual allegory, and imperial consciousness. Moving beyond a synchronic analysis of Chinoiserie, this study provides a diachronic excavation of the genre's nascent phase in the 16th and 17th centuries. It posits that the integration of Chinese ceramics—from blue-and-white kraak porcelain to blanc-de-Chine figurines—into works by pioneers such as Andrea Mantegna, and later masters including Willem Kalf and Rembrandt van Rijn, established a foundational visual syntax. This syntax operated within a dialectical framework: one pole celebrated the object's materiality, chromatic brilliance, and intricate ornamentation as metaphors for worldly affluence and mercantile triumph; the opposing pole mobilized the same objects as vanitas emblems or vessels for Christian iconography, embedding them in narratives of spiritual contemplation and moral transience. Consequently, these still lifes functioned as ambivalent sites where aesthetic admiration for Chinese craftsmanship converged with, and was instrumentalized by, the proto-

imperialist impulses of a Europe constructing its identity through global commodities. The paper thus reframes these early still lifes as primary documents in the history of cross-cultural encounter, where the "Chinese porcelain" was less a passive decorative element and more an active agent in shaping Western visual epistemology and its attendant ideologies of power.

Madeline McMahon, University of Texas, Austin, USA

“Writing Ecclesiastical History in Early Modern Milan: Collaboration and Contention”

Archbishop Carlo Borromeo's extensive synodal legislation included a mandate for all bishops in the archdiocese of Milan to ensure that the histories of their diocese were researched and written. How was this accomplished, and who did this work--including in Borromeo's own diocese? This paper looks at the scholarly work of and methodological disagreements between two members of Borromeo's staff, Carlo Maria Bascapè and Pietro Galesini. These two men collaborated with each other and with other scholars in Borromeo's orbit to unearth both material and textual evidence for church histories for the wider archdiocese, including Bascapè's later see of Novara, from the very beginning of Borromeo's time as archbishop until long after his death. In examining their working methods and arguments over these methods, this paper illuminates how issues of consensus over evidence worked on a local level during the Catholic Reformation. Recent work on various facets of this issue -- trust, doubt, and authority in history-writing during the Catholic Reformation - has often focused on the relationship between center (papal Rome) and periphery. By shifting our focus to the archdiocese of Milan, we can approach these questions from a new perspective. Furthermore, the fact that a research team worked in tandem on Milanese church history shows that Catholic historiography was not always written by lone practitioners like Baronio, but could be the product of a coordinated group, much like the Protestant Magdeburg Centuriators -- again offering a new perspective on Catholic history-writing in this period.

Tim Moylan, University of Health Sciences and Pharmacy in St. Louis, USA

Elizabeth I as "Imperial Vot'ress": The Emergence of the Theme of Empire in the 16th Century

Professor Roy Casagrande, a Professor of Government at Austin Community College, but also prolific creator of Youtube videos on a wide range of historical periods as well as cultural and political issues, shared out a lecture short on Elizabeth I in which he addressed, briefly and erroneously, her virginity, but also and more germane to this paper, the emergence of the imperial theme in English political and literary thought. This piqued my interest because in teaching Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, I have regularly noted what I thought to be a curious adjective in the paean to Elizabeth spoken by Oberon to Puck in Act II, Scene I. Oberon is recounting the origin of the special property the flower "love-in-idleness" acquired that makes anyone dosed with the nectar of it fall passionately in love with the next thing he/she sees. Oberon tells how he saw "Cupid all armed", loose his love shaft smartly from his bow" but as it passed through the "chaste beams of the watery moon" it was "quenched" and missed its intended target a "fair vestal throned by the west" and this "imperial vot'ress passed on, in maiden meditation, fancy-free." It is generally agreed, I think, that Shakespeare here tucks in a nice reference and compliment to Elizabeth I, as so much of the figurative language is coded with her themes. However, the adjective "imperial" modifying vot'ress seems more than usually hyperbolic. England, at that time, was only just entering into the exploration and colonization game. Any pretensions to "empire" were more than just an imaginative stretch. Casagrande

asserts that it is Ralieggh who "gets this crazy idea" that England might embark on such an ambitious undertaking and worked to convince the generally parsimonious Elizabeth to not only begin thinking in such terms, but to fund it. Casagrande's lectures are crafted to appeal to undergraduates and his simplifications and characterizations, while engaging, are often somewhat misleading and sometimes inaccurate. Yet Shakespeare's use of "imperial" offers an intriguing hint that this "idea" was "in the air." This paper examines how widespread such thinking was, who was engaging in it, and to what degree Elizabeth herself might have imagined England at some future time becoming an empire.

Victoria Myhand, University of Nottingham, England

“Anne Bacon's Apology: Female Authority Embedded in Material Culture”

Every Sunday in early modern England, congregations encountered the voice of a woman whose learning and intellectual authority quietly shaped the religious identity of a nation. This paper argues that Anne Bacon's *An Apology, or Answer, in Defence of The Church of England* positioned her not only as one of the most educated women of early modern England but as an active architect of the nation's religious settlement. As the English translation of John Jewel's Latin *Apologia Ecclesiae Anglicanae*, Bacon's work was mandated reading in every Church of England parish, ensuring an unparalleled reach for a text produced by a woman. This paper contends that Bacon's humanist education, particularly her command of classical rhetoric, patristic theology, and vernacular prose, enabled her to shape the doctrinal voice of the Elizabethan Church at a foundational moment. Far from acting as a neutral translator, Bacon made interpretive choices that clarified, emphasized, and at times sharpened Protestant arguments for an English audience, embedding reformist theology within the rhythms of everyday worship.

Central to this analysis is the material life of the book itself. Circulating in multiple printed copies and physically present in parish churches, *An Apology* functioned as material culture that enforced orthodoxy through repetition, accessibility, and institutional mandate. The book's compulsory presence transformed Bacon's words into a tangible and authoritative object, one read aloud, handled, and encountered by congregations across England. By tracing circulation and use of these copies, this paper demonstrates how Bacon's intellectual labor was disseminated and embodied within ecclesiastical space throughout Renaissance England.

Margaret Oakes, Furman University, USA

“The Guy in the World”

Guy Fawkes himself did not wear a mask. But a mask of "the guy" has morphed into an international symbol of resistance to -- something. The graphic novel *V for Vendetta* and the film made a stylized guy mask ubiquitous at many protests worldwide, from the Occupy protests in 2011 to the Anonymous hackers to Hong Kong in 2019 to the Jan. 6 Capitol riots. A participant in a No Kings rally in Beaufort, South Carolina was arrested in June, 2025 for wearing a V mask. (Ironically, Warner Brothers owns the right to the contemporary V mask and earns licensing fees whenever a mask is purchased). I argue that the mask can be both a liberating agent for those fearful of repressive retaliation but also a way to avoid responsibility for one's actions, depending on which side of the mask one stands. However, the history of Guy Fawkes is usually lost on those who adopt it and the political significance of Fawkes' plot has become unmoored from contemporary usage. The Guy and the mask have become whatever its user wants it to be. I then consider the importance of facial recognition and "masks" of power in early 17th century

England and how public recognition was created and manipulated by those who could afford to use their images for political purposes.

Samantha Perez, Southeastern Louisiana University, USA

“The Gesuati, the Problem of Learnedness, and the Performance of *Sancta Rusticitas*”

Developing in response to moral anxieties surrounding mercantile culture in the late fourteenth century, the Clerici apostolici Sancti Hieronymi, more commonly known as the Gesuati order, was founded by the Sienese merchant-turned-penitent Giovanni Colombini in 1355 and soon established confraternities in Venice, Florence, Lucca, and other cities across northern and central Italy. From their beginnings and from Colombini's example, the Gesuati practiced abject poverty, prayer, and self-mortification and participated in public, sometimes disruptive demonstrations that emphasized their professed simplicity, rejection of worldly attachments, and an apparent resistance to scholarly pursuits. Following guidance of the Golden Legend's Dream of St. Jerome, the Gesuati demonstrated an antipathy towards learning and discouraged secular studies in favor of strict spiritual focus, leading Colombini to suggest that "all sciences, natural, ethical, political...are merely a dark cloud over the soul." Such association with anti-intellectualism prompted Eugene IV to convene a special commission in 1438 to investigate the order's possible association with heretical beliefs.

However, despite frequent performances of willing and pious ignorance, the Gesuati cultivated forms of learned and technical expertise, engaging in literary and poetic expression, in chemical processes related to the refinement of lapis lazuli, and in mathematics that informed the later work of Bonaventure Cavalieri and Stefano degli Angeli. Relying on Gesuati texts, including Colombini's fifteenth-century vita written by Feo Belcari and the rules for the order designed by Giovanni Tavelli, this paper argues that the Gesuati's theatrical displays of *sancta rusticitas*, coupled with controlled scholarly exercise, reflected the order's intentionally designed devotional identity, one which challenged the exclusivity and elitism of scholarly authority and positioned learning as an achievable and meaningful act of spiritual service.

Will Pewitt, University of North Florida, USA

“The Grammar of Authority: The Phenomenological Shape of Shakespearean Political Lifeworlds”

This paper investigates how Henry V and Coriolanus linguistically construct political virtue as a lived horizon of meaning, drawing on phenomenological concepts of the "lifeworld" (Husserl's *Lebenswelt*) alongside close attention to Renaissance political language. Rather than treating authority as a fixed moral quality diachronically stable across Shakespeare's career, the paper examines how authority is phenomenologically built, borne, or bestowed through speech—particularly in moments when figures articulate their relation to collective bodies such as the army, the city, or "the people."

Using Voyant-based frequency analysis and AI-assisted collocation mapping, the study traces how terms related to duty, burden, honor, office, obligation, and political belonging cluster around each protagonist's speech. Particular attention is paid to referential pronouns, prepositions, and lexical markers of place via quieter semantic environments such as "seat," "room," "among," "within," or "service." Leadership in these plays is approached not as a position freely chosen or naturally embodied, but as a condition into which figures are "thrown" (*Geworfenheit*), with speech patterns indexing degrees of civic embeddedness.

The comparative approach resists easy binaries between triumphant kingship and tragic failure. Instead, it asks whether both plays register authority as a form of "care" (Sorge) that is linguistically burdensome and structurally isolating. By attending to how political identity becomes visible and intelligible within public space (following Arendt), the paper situates Shakespeare's political imagination within Renaissance debates about virtue as relational, enacted, and fragile—an authority that accrues meaning not through abstraction, but through proximity to communal and exclusionary language.

Jesse Russell, Georgia Southwestern State University, USA
“Bruno's Ficino”

Archbishop of Canterbury, George Abbott, infamously noted that that Giordano Bruno, during his own Oxford debates, plagiarized from Marsilio Ficino's *De vita coelitus comparanda*, the third book of Ficino's 1489 *De vita libri Tres*. Many scholars have taken Abbott at his word. However, Ficino's work is primarily a Platonic work that draws from medieval natural magic. Bruno, by the time he was sojourning in London, had abandoned much of his Platonism for his variation of the Copernican worldview. This does not mean that Bruno abandoned Platonism or magic completely. Rather, a careful examination of Bruno's London works—especially his *Ash Wednesday Supper*—reveals a combination of elements of Plato, Ficino, Hermeticism, Copernicus, Lucretius, and others, which reveal a distinctly Nolan philosophy. Thus, while we cannot know the exact matter of Bruno's Oxford debate, we can help exonerate the Nolan from the charge of plagiarism of Ficino.

Deborah Scaggs, East Texas A&M University, USA
“Elizabeth Cary's *The Tragedy of Mariam* and Transnormative Subjectivity”

Early Modern woman writers, such as Elizabeth Cary, whose subjective identities came under attack as they negotiated alternative responses to their marginalized positions (ones controlled by traditionally male or defined by a male code of conduct), were considered unnatural and, thus, unacceptable. Performance (theatricality), however, created space for exploring characters who could act, perform, or seem other than they were (as defined by the externally constructed cultural and ideological norms) in response and in resistance to identity constructions placed upon them by those societal expectations. What survives in Cary's drama is not the submissive female, but one that transcends patriarchal structures because it redefines those structures from within it.

Although traditionally read as a tragedy of heroic martyrdom, Cary's *Tragedy of Mariam* (1613) offers an alternative view of what it means to be female and a female in Early Modern England. What emerges from an analysis of this closet drama is a fragmented identity that, on the one hand, includes one's gender, designated by one's discursive practices, and, on the other hand, includes one's sex, designated by approved gendered speech. Using the characters Graphina, Mariam, Alexandra, and Salome, readers encounter competing, gendered discourses on a spectrum of (un)acceptable manifestations of female subjectivity. Emerging as the dominant discursive identity is Salome's male-gendered female subject position. Instead of ambiguity of gender resulting in submission or death, a metaphorical or discursive performance of gender that is both/and is what allows for power and survival, one that is transnormative because it is transformative.

Mackenzie Scott, Durham University, England

“Adapting Shakespeare: How the Bard Uses Imitatio and Adaptation in Fashioning an Authorial Identity”

The idea of Shakespeare as adaptor of fellow authors is not one well-factored into the common image of the bard. Indeed, we conceive of the man as an innovator, creator of over 1700 words in the English language”but how, in choosing to adapt popular works by his contemporaries for the stage, did he conceive of himself as an author? In this paper, I propose a literary model of adaptation by placing the literary theories of reception theory and structuralism, in essence defining the authorial act of adapting a source, in communication with self-fashioning, as defined by Stephen Greenblatt, and the way students in Renaissance classrooms were taught to interact with the world around them via acts of imitatio and personification.

By examining two of Shakespeare's adapted works, pairing *The Winter's Tale* with Robert Greene's *Pandosto: The Triumph of Time* and *As You Like It* with Thomas Lodge's *Rosalynd: or, Euphues's Golden Legacy*, I examine what was kept consistent between the tales, determine what was changed, and elaborate upon how these patterns reflect Shakespeare's process of creating a tale that was both true to the original and yet recognizably his own. In this way, the ouroboros-like process of adaptation can serve as a model of Shakespeare's concept of his own "authorial identity." Adaptation, as such, demonstrates how an author negotiates the distinction between social and individual perceptions of the self in much the same process as an adaptive author chooses what is changed in their tale”and what becomes truly "theirs."

Elizabeth Skerpan, Texas State University, USA

Reading Milton's *Areopagitica* in the Present Moment

Written in opposition to the Parliament's licensing order of 1643, John Milton's *Areopagitica* has long been regarded as a foundational document of political liberalism. More recently, its call for the suppression of works that promote "Popery" and the burning of "mischievous and libellous" books has been cited as evidence that Milton was possibly a protofascist. Examination of Milton's educational background offers a reading of *Areopagitica* that both refutes the charge of protofascism and offers a response to Karl Popper's paradox of tolerance in service to the maintenance of a free and civil society.

Its presentation as a classical oration has led to seeing *Areopagitica* as a fundamentally rhetorical work that aims to persuade both readers and Parliament and win the argument. However, Milton's repeated emphasis on the relationship of wide-ranging discourse to the search for truth suggests that his foundation is logical, founded on the logic of Petrus Ramus, who understood verbal exchange as a process of uncovering truth. Reading *Areopagitica* as a demonstration of this process uncovers its recognition that, without the testing of ideas, truth can be reduced to dogma that, in both society and politics, precludes critical thinking and promotes self-censorship. When read from this perspective, *Areopagitica* offers an explanation and defense of the boundaries in which the search for truth can occur, and a coherent response to current battles over the mission of the university and the liberties of citizens in these, our own politically charged times.

Erzsébet Stróbl, Károli Gáspár University of the Reformed Church, Hungary

“Queen Elizabeth's Memory in Jacobean Sermons”

On 24 March 1608, Richard Crackanthorpe delivered a sermon at St Paul's Cross, London, marking King James I's Accession Day, in which he commemorated the fiftieth anniversary of

Queen Elizabeth I's accession to the throne as the beginning of God's blessing on England for more than half a century. Although a new King from a new dynasty reigned the country, the memory of the late Queen was kept alive by preachers who closely linked her remembrance with concepts of true faith, providence, and the elected status of the English. This paper examines early Jacobean sermons to explore the ecclesiastical rhetoric that foregrounded Queen Elizabeth as the first successful Protestant leader of her country. Yet, with the mounting religious tensions on the Continent, and especially with the outbreak of the Thirty Years War in 1619, her commemoration became increasingly associated with the secular notion of military leadership, and her name was used as a pointed allusion to political expectations promoted by radical Protestants.

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“Reading Like a Queen in the House of Busirane”

Though each book of *The Faerie Queene* explicitly addresses Queen Elizabeth in its proem, Book 3 is most clearly designed to appeal to the queen, not only because it depicts the virtue of chastity, but also because its hero, Britomart, is “according to Spenser's fictive family tree” the direct ancestor of Elizabeth. This paper explores the implications of Queen Elizabeth as the reader and interpreter of Book 3, focusing on the book's pivotal scene of reading in the House of Busirane. There, Britomart, the queen's ancestor, views and reads tapestries that depict mortal women tricked and raped by gods, who nevertheless claim that they themselves are the suffering victims of overpowering passion. The tapestries raise the question: Who is the victim? Britomart, and the reader, must decide.