



The **MEDIEVAL**  
**STUDIES INSTITUTE**  
*of Indiana University*  
**NEWSLETTER**

Vol. 29 No. 2 Spring 2020

**“Wonderfully full.”** “A busy one.” These are the turns of phrase we have used to describe past semesters as we open our newsletter with a recap of the news and events that each brought. No single phrase can summarize Spring 2020 as adequately. It was indeed wonderfully full and busy, though not as complete as we hoped and expected. Spring 2020 was an unusual term that saw campus life cut short, but it was a semester that still saw much activity from medievalists at IU Bloomington—both in the first half of the term and as we all took our teaching, scholarship, and community online in an effort to flatten the curve and mitigate the communal impact of the novel coronavirus.

The semester opened with the **Medieval Studies Alumni Lecture and Workshop**, featuring IU Art History graduate, Dr. Sigrid Danielson, who is now Associate Professor of Art History at Grand Valley State University in Michigan. Dr. Danielson’s talk, “Forgotten Texts and Audiences: A History of Carolingian Art in Early 20th Century America,” explored how medieval manuscript illustrations were depicted in medieval art textbooks from the early twentieth century and was followed by a pedagogically-focused workshop for graduate students.

Shortly thereafter, MEST held its second **Medieval Game Night**. This event is part of the Institute’s outreach to IU’s undergraduate students and the broader Bloomington community who joined us as we played board games derived



from the Middle Ages alongside modern board games with medieval themes.

At the end of February, MEST welcomed two events sponsored by affiliated faculty and departments: **“Lyric Landscapes”** organized by Liz Hebbard and Akash Kumar (French and Italian)

and a **Department of Art History Burke Lecture**, “Why the Dirt Matters: Approaching Signs of Wear in Medieval Manuscripts,” given by Kathryn Rudy (University of St. Andrews).

In early March, just before Spring Break, the two-day **Medieval Studies Symposium** organized by MEST GSAC, “Past Forward: New Ways of Seeing Old Things,” unexpectedly became the final on-campus event of the semester.

Although many of our events were canceled—a lecture by Anthony Bale (Dean of the Arts & Humanities, Birkbeck College) titled “Margery Kempe (c. 1373-1439): Biography and the Mixed Life,” two lectures by Chris Abram (Old English and Old Norse, Notre Dame) and Amy Mulligan (Old Irish, Notre Dame) on “Astroturfing Dreamland: The Environments of Medieval Vision Literature” and “In the remotest angle of the world’: Writing in the North Atlantic Landscape,” GSAC’s Bad Medieval Movie Night and its annual Transcribathon, even our annual awards luncheon—we are proud of the resilience and flexibility that our community has displayed.

From the contributions of MEST faculty to the IU Arts and Humanities Council’s



Quarantine(d) Conversations to Song School and QMR hosting their reading groups via Zoom, we have seen faculty and students alike carry on our commitment to interdisciplinary study this Spring.

We look forward to celebrating and supporting the study of the Middle Ages with you all, whatever shape that may take, when we return in the Fall.

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# CALL FOR PAPERS: MAA 2021 AT IUB

The Medieval Studies Institute is excited to share that the Annual Meeting of the Medieval Academy of America will be hosted by Indiana University, Bloomington on April 15-18, 2021. MEST has brought together the largest Program Committee in MAA meeting history: 28 members with representatives from IUB, IUPUI, Ball State University, and DePauw University led by chairs Deborah Deliyannis and Diane Reilly. This Committee, as well as the Call for Papers below, reflects the diverse array of areas that participate in medieval studies on our campus.

**The 96th Annual Meeting of the Medieval Academy of America will take place on the campus of the Indiana University in Bloomington, Indiana.** The meeting is jointly hosted by the Medieval Academy of America and the Medieval Studies Institute of the Indiana University. The conference program will feature a diverse range of sessions highlighting innovative scholarship across the many disciplines contributing to medieval studies.

The Program Committee invites proposals for papers on all topics and in all disciplines and periods of medieval studies. Any member of the Medieval Academy may submit a paper proposal; others may submit proposals as well but must become members in order to present papers at the meeting. Special consideration will be given to individuals whose field would not normally involve membership in the Medieval Academy.

The Program Committee encourages medievalists of all professional standing to submit abstracts. We are particularly interested in receiving submissions from those working outside of traditional academic positions, including independent scholars, emeritus or adjunct faculty, university administrators, those working in academic-adjacent institutions (libraries, archives, museums, scholarly societies, or cultural research centers), editors and publishers, and other fellow medievalists.

## THEMES:

Rather than a single overarching theme, the 2021 Program Committee has put together a set of themes (listed below), and hopes to put in conversation papers that approach each theme from diverse chronological, geographical, methodological, and disciplinary perspectives. We also welcome innovative sessions that cross traditional disciplinary boundaries or that use various disciplinary approaches to examine an individual topic. The themes listed below have been proposed by the Program Committee but the list is not meant to be exhaustive or exclusive:

**After Dante, 1321-2021**

**Approaching the Middle Ages with Modern Science**

**Appropriation of the Middle Ages**

**Commemoration**

**Connections and Networks in Medieval Social Life**

**Digital Humanities**

**Form and Genre**

**Humans and the Natural Environment**

**Identity, Race, and Ethnicity**

**Manuscripts and Book History**

**Migration, Immigration, and Exile**

**Moments of Intercultural Interaction**

**Multilingualism and Diglossia**

**Natural Philosophy and its Applications**

**Objects and Material Culture**

**Performance from Sacred to Secular**

**Playfulness**

## PROPOSALS

Individuals may propose to offer a paper in one of the themes above, a full panel of papers and speakers for a listed theme, a full panel of papers and speakers for a session they wish to create, or a single paper not designated for a specific theme. Sessions usually consist of three 25-minute papers, and proposals should be geared to that length, although the committee is interested in other formats as well (poster sessions, digital experiences, etc). The Program Committee may choose a different format for some sessions after the proposals have been reviewed.

*The deadline for proposals is June 1, 2020.*

Please do not send proposals directly to the session organizers. All proposals, for individual papers, sessions, or special formats, must be submitted through the conference web portal; please see instructions at <https://maa2021.indiana.edu/>.

## SUBMISSIONS, & EVALUATION

All proposals will be submitted online, and will require the following pieces of information:

- Proposer's name (in format for the program)
- Statement of Medieval Academy membership (or statement that the individual's specialty would not normally involve membership in the Academy)
- Professional status/affiliation (in format for the program)
- Email address
- Postal address
- Telephone number(s)
- Paper title
- Theme for which the paper should be considered (or "general session")
- Abstract (max. 250-words)
- Audio-visual equipment requirements

If a full panel is being proposed, the above information will be required for each paper, as well as for the session as a whole. For alternative format session proposal submissions, also a description of the alternative format (max. 300 words).

Paper and panel proposals will be reviewed for their quality, the significance of their topics, and their relevance to the conference themes. The Program Committee will evaluate proposals during the summer of 2020 and the Committee will inform all successful and unsuccessful proposers by 1 September 2020.

Since all submitted proposals will undergo blind review, any identifying information inadvertently left in proposals will be removed before the review process begins. Please help us by ensuring that your abstract is free of all references to your name, your institution, and your publications.

**Program Committee: [maa2021@indiana.edu](mailto:maa2021@indiana.edu)**

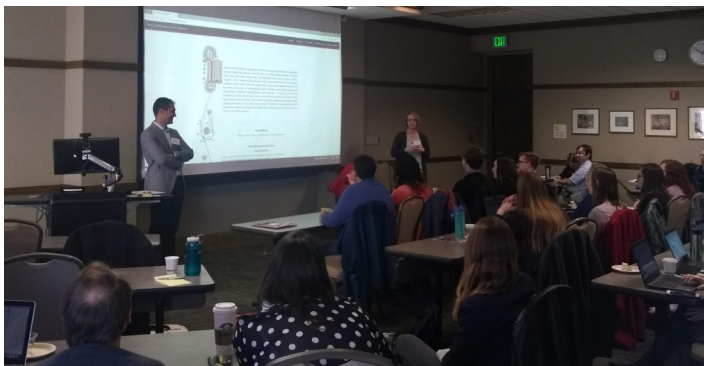


# 32<sup>nd</sup> MEDIEVAL STUDIES SYMPOSIUM

## PAST FORWARD: *New Ways of Seeing Old Things*

This Spring, the Medieval Studies Institute's Graduate Student Advisory Committee (MEST GSAC) proudly presented the 32nd annual Medieval Studies Symposium. The symposium theme was **Past Forward: New Ways of Seeing Old Things**, a two day symposium that created space for medievalists to consider how the digital age, which is presenting us with new technologies for data mining, data management, and forensic analysis of material culture, intersects with interdisciplinary methodologies and modern theories to help us pose new questions about the past and to enable us to set new boundaries for framing "the bigger picture."

The symposium considered how applying new, potentially anachronistic, theory to medieval literature or art might strengthen or challenge our understanding of the past; what digital surrogates/avatars/reproductions do for/with/to medieval objects; how we can use Digital Humanities in the classroom and in our research; what we can learn from medieval technologies as we continue to develop and refine our own; and finally, how modern theories and technologies help us better understand the Middle Ages while drawing the period into our present.



**Workshops** explored new ways of approaching research and teaching, with Liz Hebbard and Akash Kumar (IUB, Department of French and Italian) leading attendees through the technical and logistical considerations of digital editions and Michelle R. Warren (Dartmouth College) guiding us through approaches to teaching sensitive to "Diversity, Racial Underrepresentation, and the Future of Medieval Studies."

In addition to these workshops, a **roundtable and traditional panels** allowed medievalists from IUB



and beyond to share their work—presenting new and renewed ways of working collaboratively or with digital tools and exploring medieval knowledge and experience through modern technologies.

The exciting and well-attended series of workshops and panels was capped by the **keynote presentation, "From the Ground to the Cloud: A Medieval Book in the Digital Dark Ages,"** presented by Michelle R. Warren (Dartmouth College).



The symposium itself was brought to a close, as is tradition, with the Reader's Circle Banquet.

Although MEST GSAC will not hold its annual Medieval Studies Symposium in 2021, in anticipation of the excitement of the Medieval Academy of America's Annual Meeting, we look forward to organizing many of our regular events (including our Transcribathon, Professionalization Events, and Friendsgiving Potluck and Reader's Circle)—whatever form they may take. MEST GSAC is also pleased to welcome its incoming officers for 2020-21: Maggie Gilchrist, GSAC President, Gregory Tolliver, GSAC Vice-President, and Mary Gilbert, GSAC Treasurer.



# FACULTY AND STUDENT NEWS AND AWARDS

**Asma Afsaruddin**, Professor, Near Eastern Languages and Cultures, was inducted into the Johns Hopkins University Society of Scholars and was invited to join the International Advisory Council of the World Congress of Middle East Studies (WOCMES). She published the article “Jihad, Gender, and Religious Minorities in the Siyar Literature: the Diachronic View,” in *Studia Islamica*, as well as the chapters “Qur’anic Jihad Refracted through a Juridical Lens: An Exercise in Realpolitik” in *Locating the Sharia* and “Learning and Scholarship: Unearthing the Roots of Humanism and Cosmopolitanism in the Islamic Milieu,” in *Cosmopolitan Civility: Global-Local Reflections in Honor of Fred Dallmayr*. Additionally, she gave several invited lectures, including at Princeton University; Rice University, Houston; Georgetown University in Doha, Qatar; Nanyang Technological University, Singapore; University of Nebraska, Omaha; and the University of Frankfurt, Germany. She also gave an invited public presentation at the King Abdul Aziz Alsaoud Foundation in Casablanca, Morocco, and taught a summer workshop there on “Tolerance in Mediterranean Societies: History, Ideas, and Institutions.”

**Christopher I. Beckwith**, Distinguished Professor, Department of Central Eurasian Studies gave an invited lecture at The Oriental Library (Toyo Bunko), Tokyo, entitled “The Scythian

Language of the Hsiung-Nu in Mongolia and North China.”

**Giulia Benghi**, Ph.D. Italian Department, completed her Ph.D. in March 2020. Her dissertation is titled “Un’ ‘edizione integrata’ di Petrarca lirico a fine Trecento: i Fragmenta e le Disperse nel codice Bodmer 131 e in alcuni suoi affini.” She has a forthcoming article in the Spring issue of *Textual Cultures*, “Transcribing Petrarch’s Genres in the Late Fourteenth Century: An Ongoing Conversation with the Observations from MSS Cologne Bodmer 131 and Gambalunga SC- Ms. 93.”

**Deborah Deliyannis**, Professor, Department of History received the 2020 Robert L. Kindrick-CARA Award for Outstanding Service to Medieval Studies by the Medieval Academy of America and is Co-chair, with Diane Reilly, of the Program Committee for MAA 2021 in Bloomington.

**Margaret Graves**, Associate Professor, Art History, received a 2019 International Center of Medieval Art (ICMA) Annual Book Prize for *Arts of Allusion*. She published “Casting Shadows” in *The Seljuqs and Their Successors: Art, Culture, and History*, and gave an invited lecture in the Archaia Lecture Series at Yale University, “Beyond the Beholder’s Share: Painting as Performance in Medieval Islam.”

**Liz Hebbard**, Assistant Professor, French and Italian, is the PI on a

CLIR Hidden Collections Grant for her project, “Peripheral Manuscripts: Digitizing Medieval Manuscript Collections in the Midwest.” For information on co-PIs and a project description, see <https://peripheralms.org/about/>. She was also awarded a CAHI Conference Grant for “Lyric Landscapes,” a symposium co-organized with Akash Kumar, and presented at the University of Michigan Department of Romance Languages and Literatures a talk titled, “The Lyric Authority of Goats and Women.”

**Akash Kumar**, Visiting Assistant Professor of Italian, Department of French and Italian, received the CAHI Conference and Workshop Grant for presenting “Lyric Landscapes: A Symposium on Poets and Their Places Across the Medieval World” with Liz Hebbard. He also published “Walls of Inclusivity: Dante’s Divine Comedy and World Literature” in *A Companion to World Literature* and “Giacomo da Lentini” in *Oxford Bibliographies in Medieval Studies*.

**Andrew Woodworth, Kayla Lunt, Maggie Gilchrist, Natalie Levin, Pouyan Shahidi, and Clare Mills**, with help from **Andrew Bartels** (who also co-organized “Diálogos,” the literature and linguistics conference in the Department of Spanish and Portuguese), **Clara Miller-Broomfield, Mary Gilbert, and Gregory Tolliver**, organized the two-day Medieval Studies Institute symposium, “Past Forward: New Ways of Seeing Old Things.”





## ANDREA S. MCROBBIE FELLOWSHIP

The Medieval Studies Institute is delighted to announce this year's winners of the Andrea S. McRobbie Fellowship, an award presented by the McRobbie family in memory of Andrea McRobbie's interest in medieval studies. This fellowship is designated to honor an advanced graduate student engaged in scholarship in medieval history, specifically some aspect of its social history or some theme in medieval social history related to its art, philosophy or literature.

This year, the award committee decided to make two awards to two exceptional students and active participants in the Institute who exemplify the rigorous, interdisciplinary scholarship on the social worlds of the Middle Ages that this award honors: Kayla Lunt (Art History) and Nicolò Sassi (Religious Studies). **Congratulations to both!**

### **Kayla Lunt (Department of Art History)**

Kayla's dissertation, *The Performance of the Breviary of Saint-Sépulcre: Devotion and Difficulty in a Thirteenth-century Liturgical Manuscript*, reevaluates the power of central and marginal illuminations in medieval liturgical books. She treats an illuminated breviary as a site of reader-response, bringing together a study of its practical use and use-history, illustrative program, and the dirt and wear that evidence reader



engagement to demonstrate that even profane marginal illuminations contributed to the overall religious experience of the book by triggering and extending the interpretive process. She argues that the Breviary of Saint-Sépulcre and books like it were more than mere supports for ritual performance—they were private, devotional, contemplative spaces opened within the corporate affair of the Divine Office.

### **Nicolò Sassi (Department of Religious Studies)**



Nicolò's dissertation, *Forbidden Theology. The Forgotten History of Origenism in Medieval Syria*, focuses on a Medieval Syriac text, the Book of Secrets, to explore why humans resort to forbidden forms of

theological discourse in religious practice. Through a paleographical, literary, and historical analysis of the Book of Secrets and the manuscripts that record it, his study illuminates how this text was read, annotated, commented on, scratched, and re-written all through the Middle Ages by spiritual seekers who used it in their religious practice. Ultimately this study contends that the history of this text is of fundamental human significance, as it yields vital insight into why, in any period, culture, and religion, humans may make use of condemned, heretical, and culturally forbidden forms of theological discourse.

*Medieval Studies Minor Recipients:*  
**Pantalea Mazzitello & Claire Riley!**

# KEEP UP WITH US!

## *Announcing the Medieval Studies Institute Blog*



The Medieval Studies Institute is proud to announce our new blog, where we celebrate the work of our faculty, alumni, and students as they bring the Middle Ages to life both on and off campus. The blog provides a digital space for medievalists to learn from each other, to share our news, and to share what excites us about our work with the general public.

This is exactly what Lindsey Hansen (PhD Art History, 2016) has done in our very first guest post, which features the Virtual Visits she has developed to bring the monuments of Paris into our living rooms while we all practice social distancing. Hers is the first of a series of posts sharing news from MEST alumni which you can follow in the coming months. Read it now at [blogs.iu.edu/medieval/](https://blogs.iu.edu/medieval/)

Our blog is a place where you will find new and exciting ways of engaging with the medieval past and where you can share your projects, ideas, and news. **You are invited to share your ideas for posts and guest-contributions by emailing the MEST Communications Assistant, Kayla Lunt, at [kalunt@indiana.edu](mailto:kalunt@indiana.edu).**

Look for new posts on the first Monday of each month!

## *Welcoming Our New Director & Staff*

This Fall, MEST welcomes its new Director, **Jeremy Schott (Professor, Religious Studies)**. Jeremy writes:

I would like to thank all the students, faculty, and community members involved with Medieval Studies at Indiana for the opportunity to serve as Director of MEST. I hope to maintain and build upon the solid foundation of my predecessors, especially our outgoing director, Shannon Gayk. For those who don't know me, I am Professor of Religious Studies, and have worked at IU since 2013 (I was previously a faculty member at UNC-Charlotte). I am a specialist in the history of Christianity in the first millennium CE with secondary expertise in early Judaism, ancient philosophy, and late-antique/early Medieval/Byzantine history. I am currently studying the role of middle Byzantine (c.9th-c.12th centuries) readers and book culture in the transmission and reception of early Christian and Platonic literatures.

I have benefited greatly from the intellectual culture fostered by MEST, a culture that views Medieval Studies as intrinsically interdisciplinary and, increasingly, geographically and linguistically expansive. I see the fundamental role of the MEST director as that of advocate and supporter of faculty and student success. I am a strong advocate of shared governance, and view the director as implementing an agenda developed by faculty and students. Certainly, the most significant event for MEST over the coming year will be our hosting of the meeting of the Medieval Academy of America. The meeting of the MAA will be a major opportunity to showcase Medieval Studies at Indiana, to our colleagues at other institutions but also to the wider IU campus. I look forward to ensuring that our already-successful cadre of programming—like Symposia, the Readers' Circle, and Mediaevalia—continue to flourish, and working with students and faculty to develop additional programming that showcases the depth and breadth of Medieval Studies at Indiana.

We also look forward to welcoming our new Assistant to the Director, **Natalie Levin (History)** and our new Journals Assistant, **Jennifer Lopatin (English)**.



# Letter from the Director

May 1, 2020

Dear Medieval Studies Faculty, Students, and Friends,

I hope that this newsletter finds you all healthy and well-sheltered. I write this note during the final week of this spring semester. Like many other programs, the Institute needed to cancel a number of its spring and summer programs, though many of our faculty and students have begun to gather virtually to continue their work on medieval languages and skills.

Many of us medievalists have noted that in these uncertain days our areas of study feel more relevant than ever. Some of us teach the history of the plague, others study early social distancing. I've personally been thinking often about the lives of medieval anchoresses, those women who were enclosed in small dwellings attached to churches. Perhaps the most famous of these anchoresses is the fourteenth-century visionary, Julian of Norwich, who likely survived the Black Death and later wrote a searching exploration of her visions of suffering, full of passages that speak to this moment, from her comforting mantra that in the long run "all will be well" to her fiercer and more defiant, "We shall not be overcome."

As you will have seen elsewhere in this newsletter, the Medieval Studies Institute is in a period of transition. I will conclude my four-year term in June and Dr. Jeremy Schott, Professor of Religious Studies, will begin his term as Director in July. Like you, I look forward to seeing the new paths that medieval studies at IU will take under his leadership. As I reflect on my four years serving as Director, I find myself grateful for you all, for your investment in and curiosity about all things medieval and for all of the work we have done together in the past four years. It has been a privilege to work with you and on your behalf to support the interdisciplinary work of medieval studies at IU.

I hope that your summers are full of rest and learning.

May you all be well,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Shannon Gayk". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Shannon Gayk  
Director, Medieval Studies Institute



# CONTACT MEST

The members of the administrative staff of MEST are:

**Shannon Gayk**, Director

**Andrew Woodworth**, Assistant to the Director

**Kayla Lunt**, Special Projects/  
Communications Assistant

If you have communications you would like to have distributed as a general announcement in Medieval Studies, or for general correspondence with the Institute, please contact Andrew at [MEST@INDIANA.EDU](mailto:MEST@INDIANA.EDU).

[MESTDIR@INDIANA.EDU](mailto:MESTDIR@INDIANA.EDU): for direct and confidential communications with the Director; this is an administrative account we have established that will transfer from director to director. Please note that [DIRMEST@INDIANA.EDU](mailto:DIRMEST@INDIANA.EDU) is the personal account of another faculty member.

In addition to these two email accounts, we also maintain six distribution lists: one for undergraduate students, one for graduate students, one for alumni, one for faculty, one for core faculty, and one for community members.

If you would like to be added to any of those lists, please contact Andrew at [MEST@INDIANA.EDU](mailto:MEST@INDIANA.EDU).

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## *Help Support the Work of the Medieval Studies Institute*

**Why?** Your tax-deductible financial contribution allows MEST to continue to provide a diverse array of lectures, programs, and fellowships that promote the scholarship and teaching of the Middle Ages.

**What?** Gifts can be directed to any following funds:

- *The Medieval Studies Institute General Fund*: Your donation will provide general support to the Institute, helping us host events, invite speakers, and continue with our outreach.
- *The Medieval Review Support Fund*: Gifts will support the Medieval Review, an open-access journal that publishes reviews of books in medieval studies.
- *The C. Clifford Flanigan Awards*: Your donation will help support medievalist graduate students.
- *The Shirley Jean Cox Undergraduate Fellowships*: Your donation will help fund our two undergraduate prizes (for the best thesis and paper in medieval studies) and several grants to support undergraduate summer study, study abroad, or internships.

**How?**

- *By mail*: Checks made out to “Indiana University Foundation” may be mailed to The Medieval Studies Institute, 874 Ballantine Hall, Indiana University, Bloomington, IN 47405
- *On our website*: <https://medieval.indiana.edu/about/alumni-giving/index.html>
- *Recurring bank or payroll deductions*: Perhaps the easiest way to offer ongoing support of the work of the Institute, you can make a recurring monthly, quarterly, or annual gift that is deducted from your credit card or bank account. IU Employees can also set up recurring donations through payroll deduction. See <https://www.myiu.org/recurring-gift>.