The annual newsletter, edited by Michael Cornett, is designed to inform the Medieval and Renaissance Studies faculty and students about the activities of the Center and our colleagues. Any comments or suggestions about the newsletter are very welcome.

Executive committee

For the 2000-01 year David Aers continues his excellent work as Director of the Center. Helen Solterer has finished her term as Director of Graduate Studies, and Leigh DeNeef is now in the first of his three years as DGS. Tom Robisheaux will conclude his term as Director of Undergraduate Studies at the end of fall 2000, when Kristen Neuschel will take over and serve through spring 2003. We thank Tom and Helen for their generous involvement with the program without which we could not meet the needs of our students, and Leigh and Kristen for volunteering their service. Many thanks also to Ron Witt, who steps down from the committee, for his valuable contributions throughout many years of service. The Executive Committee also consists of Sarah Beckwith, Kalman Bland, Michael Cornett, Valeria Ficinucci, Cynthia Herrup, Catherine Peyroux, Ann Marie Rasmussen, David Steinmetz, and Annabel Wharton.

Two lecture series


The lectures explored notions of sacrifice within the context of medieval and early modern cultures, and as a means for exploring the way medieval culture and its transformations have been perceived. Frantzen ranged from the late medieval Chester play of Abraham and Isaac to works by Wilfrid Owen, Benjamin Britten, and Derek Jarman that respond to the Abraham and Isaac story. Patterson examined Jewish-Christian relations and violence in Chaucer’s Prioress’s Tale. The vexing topic of the sacrifice of Jesus for seventeenth-century English lyricists was Schoenfeldt’s focus: Why did the Passion, a site of deepest imaginative engagement for medieval Catholic writers, prove defeating to the Protestant lyrics of Donne, Herbert, and Milton? The theologian William Cavanaugh explored how the Reformation debate over eucharistic sacrifice can illuminate the transition of the European social and political imagination from the medieval to the modern.

These lectures have been revised as essays forming a special issue of the Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies (fall 2001), along with another study on the motif of dying for love in medieval literature, by Simon Gaunt of King’s College, London.


These lectures attempted to uncover the very different kinds of knowledge that can be brought forth when one focuses on things—actual physical objects such as books, cloth, jewelry, sugar—rather than on psychological subjectivity. They broached more broadly theoretical questions as to the usefulness (or not) of dealing with material objects as such in our study of the period. A special issue of JMEMS is in the works, which will publish these essays and others submitted in response to a call for papers.

Sponsored events and activities

The Center also sponsored the following lectures and activities in the 1999-2000 year:
Deborah Deliyannis, Western Michigan University, “Bury Me in Ravenna? Approaching Galla Placidia’s Body in the Middle Ages”; organized by Annabel Wharton and the Center for Late Ancient Studies (Oct. 1999).

Undergraduate luncheon for Medieval and Renaissance majors and minors; organized by Michael Cornett (Oct. 1999).


Annual Fall Reception for faculty, graduate, and undergraduate students, held in the Brummer Collection of Medieval Sculpture in the Duke Museum of Art; organized by Michael Cornett (Nov. 1999).


Benjamin Bagby of Sequentia, voice and lyre, performing a portion of Beowulf; organized by the Duke Institute of the Arts (Feb. 2000).

First Annual North Carolina Colloquium in Medieval and Early Modern Studies; organized by Duke and UNC graduate students (Feb. 2000).


Undergraduate luncheon for Medieval and Renaissance majors and minors; organized by Michael Cornett (Feb. 2000).

The Shenandoah Shakespeare Express Residency, with performance of Much Ado about Nothing and workshop for students; organized by the Duke Institute for the Arts (Feb. 2000).


Undergraduate program

The Center began keeping statistics last year on the numbers of students taking our undergraduate courses, and some surprising results emerged illustrating the remarkable vitality of the program at Duke. In fall 1999, 413 students registered for 28 courses; and in spring 2000, 466 stu-
Students took 28 courses. A total of 879 students took 56 Medieval and Renaissance courses last year, which is 17 percent of the Trinity College student body. Though we have a small number of majors and minors, it is very clear that Trinity College students find Medieval and Renaissance Studies courses to be attractive choices for fulfilling requirements and electives.

Four students graduated in Medieval and Renaissance Studies in May, majors Erin Gilson and Catherine Signorile, and minors Adam Decker and Erin McNamara. Several recent graduates have let us know what they are now doing.

Allison Bevan (1998) is an admissions officer in Duke’s Office of Undergraduate Admissions.

Lindsay Cohn (1999) is currently fulfilling her service requirement with the army and is planning to go to graduate school in Medieval and Renaissance Studies.

Phuong Doan (1999) is in medical school at UNC.

Erin Gilson (2000) taught at Governor’s School East during the summer and has moved to San Francisco to work with a theater company.


Kevin Kornegay (1998) is in UNC’s law school, hoping to specialize in art law and property law and possibly to work for a museum or government organization. He hopes eventually to get a Ph.D. in art history.

Erin McNamara (2000) worked in Duke’s undergraduate admissions office this summer and is now assisting with research on HIV at GlaxoWellcome; she is currently applying to medical school.

Catherine Signorile (2000) is enrolled in the M.A. program in Library Science at UNC, hoping to become a rare book and manuscript curator.

Jonathan Spanier (1999) is in medical school at Vanderbilt.

Heather Wasserstrom (1999) is working at the NYU Medical Center in the Cancer Center’s chemotherapy lab assisting with clinical trials; she is applying for medical school.

This year’s undergraduates in the program (12, before this year’s new declarations of majors) include 6 majors: Rabia Geha, Joanne Gonzales, Michelle Kalas, John Lasalle, Eva Sayre, and Alixe Steinmetz; and 6 minors: Jason Dean, David Evans, Justin Fishkin, Lisa Rying, Torrence Thomas, and Christine Varnado. Michelle Kalas, Eva Sayre, and John Lasalle gave outstanding help last year as assistants at the Center, and we are fortunate to have them all back for this year.
Graduate program

There are 62 current graduate students working in Medieval and Renaissance Studies at Duke in ten departments.

The following students have completed their Ph.D. in 1999-2000 and/or have begun new teaching positions or other pursuits: Aric Anderson (Philosophy) completed his M.A. and is attending law school at Catholic University of America; Andrew Cole (English), Asst. Prof., University of Georgia; Danny De Cillis (Romance Studies) Editorial Asst., Journal of Robotic Systems (published by John Wiley), Dept. of Electrical Engineering, University of California, Riverside; Beth Kreitzer (Religion), lecturer at St. Vincent College, Pa., where her husband, also a graduate of Duke, has become the new dean; Scott Kugle (Religion), two-year Mellon Post-Doctoral Teaching Fellow at Swarthmore College; Philippe Rosenberg (History) Visiting Asst. Prof., Emory University; Ben Saunders (English), Asst. Prof., University of Oregon; Martha Yeide (English), is looking for a teaching job for fall 2001.

Incoming graduate students this year who are planning to work in Medieval and Renaissance Studies include the following: Justin Berg (Music), Esther Chung (Religion), Mina Garcia (Romance Studies), Jenny Hubbard (English), Jana Matthews (English), Vin Nardizzi (English), James Palmer (History), Carrie Schroeder (Religion), Tina Shepardson (Religion), Julie Singer (Romance Studies).

Lara Bovilsky (English) was awarded a Medieval and Renaissance Studies Dissertation Fellowship for 2000-01.

Timothy Dickey (Music) presented a paper, “L’art du Musicien: Text-sensitivity in Selected Ballades of Guillaume de Machaut,” at the SE Regional conference of the American Musicological Society. He will take his prelims this fall.

Megan Drinkwater (Classics) passed the prelims for Classical Studies, including a special field exam in Palaeography. She hopes to defend her dissertation prospectus this fall, with Gregson Davis as committee chair.

Caery Evangelist (Philosophy) was awarded a Medieval and Renaissance Studies Dissertation Fellowship for 2000-01.

Sam Findley (Classics) and Brooke Heidenreich Findley (Romance Studies) in August became the proud parents of a baby girl, Coriander Martha Findley. (Congratulations on this Medieval and Renaissance baby!)

Paul Gaziano (History) is in his final year of a Medieval and Renaissance Studies Fellowship.

Giuseppe Gerbino (Music) was awarded a Medieval and Renais-
sance Studies Dissertation Fellowship for 2000-01.

Paul Graeve (English) is in his final year of a Medieval and Renaissance Studies Fellowship.

Ellen Gray (formerly Music) has switched to the Cultural Anthropology Department, where she will work on contemporary representations of the medieval in music performance.

Rebekah Long (English) passed her prelim exams in April. She received a travel award to visit England to look at several illuminated manuscripts of the Apocalypse. She also delivered a paper at the North Carolina Colloquium of Medieval and Early Modern Studies on anti-Wycliffite hermeneutics in the N-town drama cycle.

Katie MacLean (Romance Studies) passed the dissertation exam and defended her prospectus. She is advised by Margaret Greer and Walter Mignolo. She delivered two papers in the past year: “The Profession of Holiness: Hispanic Nuns and the Colonizing Project” at the Tenth Annual Duke University Women’s Studies Conference; and “Imperial Visions: Spanish Mysticism and Colonial Expansion” at the First Annual North Carolina Colloquium of Medieval and Early Modern Studies.

Deborah Marcuse (Religion) was awarded a Jacob K. Javits Fellowship for 2000-01.

G. Sujin Pak (Religion) delivered two papers in the past year: “Luther and Psalm 50/51” at the Sixteenth Century Studies Conference; and “Melanchthon’s Reply to Luther on Astrology” at the Mid-Atlantic Renaissance and Reformation Seminar.

Jake Selwood (History) won a fellowship from the Huntington Library.

Julie Singer (Romance Studies) is receiving a Departmental Fellowship and a James B. Duke Award for the 2000-01 year.

Sumie Song (German) spent the last year at the Free University of Berlin studying with Prof. Ingrid Kasten. She won a Medieval and Renaissance dissertation research support award, and while in Berlin, won one of the three Ernst Reuter Stipendiums awarded annually to foreign students at the Free University to support dissertation research expenses.

Andrew Sparling (History) was awarded a fellowship last summer for the 25th Wolfenbütteler Sommerkursus at the Herzog August Bibliothek, Wolfenbuettel, Germany: “Learned Medicine in the Late Renaissance (1530-1630): Themes and Insti-tutions” under Prof. Ian MacLean (Oxford). He is scheduled to take prelims this fall and will then begin work on a dissertation on the 17th-century alchemist Johannes Glauber.
Sandra Summers (German) won a FLAS Fellowship through European Studies for 2000-01. She will take her prelim exams this April.

Edwin Tait (Religion) gave a paper at the Sixteenth Century Studies Conference last year.

Olga Trokhimenko (German) holds a James B. Duke award and plans on taking her prelims in the spring.

Faculty and staff news

David Aers (English) gave papers at Harvard University, Ohio State University, and Kalamazoo. He has also published the following articles in the past year: “Visionary Eschatology: Piers Plowman,” in Modern Theology 16 (2000); “Interpreting Dreams: Reflections on Freud, Milton, and Chaucer,” in Reading Dreams, ed. Peter Brown (Oxford University Press, 1999); and “Chaucer’s Tale of Melibee: Whose Virtues?” in a festschrift for Derek Pearsall edited by Aers, Medieval Literature and Historical Inquiry (D. S. Brewer, 2000). Prof. Aers is also serving his final year as a trustee of the New Chaucer Society.

Sarah Beckwith (English) has a new book forthcoming from the University of Chicago Press entitled Signifying God: Social Act and Symbolic Relation in York’s Play of Corpus Christi. Last year, she gave lectures at the University of Cardiff, University of Wales, and Colgate University.


Diskin Clay (Classical Studies) is teaching in the Duke in Florence Program this fall, where he plans to offer courses on Dante, Greek Philosophy, and the Renaissance. He also co-authored a book with his wife, Andrea Purvis, entitled Four Island Utopias. The book includes Bacon’s New Atlantis and devotes much space to More’s Utopia; it was fea-
tured in the first issue of Duke Magazine this year.

Vince Cornell (Religion) has left Duke to become the new director of the Middle East Center at the University of Arkansas.

Michael Cornett (Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies) served as a judge for the 1999 national awards competition for the Council of Editors of Learned Journals. He was elected Vice President of CELJ for 2000-02, and is now in charge of the journals competition, and is CELJ President-elect for 2003-04. He continues under a Mary Duke Biddle Foundation grant as advisor to the Duke student publication Museum.

Valeria Finucci (Romance Studies) received a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities, a Gladys Krieble Delmas Fellowship for research in Venice, and a Trent Foundation Grant from Duke University. She has co-edited a collection of essays entitled Generation and Degeneration: Tropes of Reproduction in Literature and History from Antiquity through Early Modern Europe, forthcoming from Duke University Press. In the spring of 2001, she will be teaching a new course “The Myth of Venice” for the Duke in Venice Program.


Margaret Greer (Romance Studies) published two books in 2000: Maria de Zayas Tells Baroque Tales of Love and the Cruelty of Man (Penn State University Press); and an edition of Pedro Calderon de la Barca’s Basta callar (Dovehouse Press, Canada).

Cynthia Herrup (History) will be a Visiting Professor at Birkbeck College, University of London, and a Fletcher Jones Foundation Distinguished Fellow at the Huntington Library during her year on leave. She has also been appointed Associate Chair of the Duke History Department and a member of the Publications Committee of the American Society for Legal History and the Committee on Committees of the American Historical Association. Prof. Herrup published an article, “Finding the Bodies,” in GLQ (1999); and a book with Oxford University Press, A House in Gross Disorder: Sex, Law, and the Second Earl of Castlehaven (1999).

Lynn Joy (Philosophy) has moved back to Indiana, with Alastair MacIntyre, and will be teaching at Notre Dame.
Catherine Peyroux (History) published an essay entitled “The Leper’s Kiss,” in Monks and Nuns, Saints and Outcasts, ed. Sharon K. Farmer and Barbara H. Rosenwein (Cornell, 2000). She will be teaching a new course this year, “Topics in the History of Monasticism,” which will deal with the development of Western medieval monasticism from its third-century origins through the twelfth-century explosion of devotional communities.


Ann Marie Rasmussen (Germanic Studies) began this past spring a two-year term as President of the Society for Medieval Feminist Scholarship. She also accepted a position as Speculum’s book review editor in the field of German literary studies. She edited the winter 2000 special issue of the Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies, “Gender and Secrecy.” In the Cambridge Companion to Medieval Romance, ed. Roberta Krueger (Cambridge University Press, 2000), Rasmussen contributed “Medieval German Romance.” She also published “Good Counsel for a Young Lady: A Low German Mother-Daughter Poem,” in Medieval Feminist Forum 28 (1999); and “The Crisis in the Humanities: Feminism, Medieval Studies, and the Academy,” in Medieval Feminist Forum 29 (2000). She is currently serving a one-year term on the Executive Committee of Duke’s Academic Council and was recently cross-appointed to Duke’s Women’s Studies Department.


Laurie Shannon (English) received a fellowship from the American Council of Learned Societies for 1999-2000 to support her year on leave. She has succeeded Cynthia Herrup as the Duke liason to the Folger Shakespeare Library. This fall she will publish an article in Modern Philology,
“Nature’s Bias: Renaissance Homo-normativity and Elizabethan Comic Likeness.” Also this fall she will be the featured speaker at the English Institute at Harvard, giving a talk entitled “Prose Tails” on Renaissance prose, natural history writing, and the formation of the cultural categories of “man” and “animal.” A new book manuscript “Sovereign Amity: Figures of Friendship in Shakespearean Contexts” is currently under consideration by a publisher.


Helen Solterer (Romance Studies) will have an essay, “The Freedoms of Fiction for Gender in Premodern France,” in the forthcoming collection Debating Men, Women, and Gender in Premodern France, ed. Thelma Fenster and Clare Lees. She is also completing a book manuscript “Playing the Dead: Reviving the Medieval Past in Modern-Day France.” This year, Prof. Solterer is teaching two new classes: “The Making of France” (fall) and “ Allegory and Love” (spring).

David Steinmetz (Divinity) was elected to the Council of the Society for Reformation Research. The second revised edition of his book Reformers in the Wings will be published by Oxford University Press in December. He edited Die Patristik in der Bibel exegese des 16. Jahrhunderts (Harrassowitz Verlag, 1999) and published “The Judaizing Calvin” in this volume; and he also published the following: “The Scholastic Calvin,” Protestant Scholasticism: Essays in Reassessment, ed. Carl R. Truman and R. Scott Clark (Paternoster Press, 1999); “The Re-evaluation of the Patristic Exegetical Tradition in the Sixteenth Century,” in The Bible as Book: The First Printed Editions, ed. Kimberly Van Kempen and Paul Saenger (British Library, 1999); and “The Intellectual World of the Sixteenth Century,” in Relationen: Studien zum Übergang vom Spätmittelalter zur Reformation, ed. Athina Lexutt and Wolfgang Matz (Lit Verlag, 2000). He continues to be busy as the President of the American Friends of the Herzog August Bibliothek, and continues as the general editor of Oxford Studies in Historical Theology and as the Director of Graduate Studies in Religion. He spent fall 1999 as a resident member of the Center of Theological Inquiry in Princeton, where he completed two essays and presented a faculty seminar, “The Intellectual Appeal of the Reformation.” His seminar paper will be published in Theology Today (Jan. 2001). At the AAR Convention in Boston, he was interviewed by A&E Television for a documentary on the second millennium of Christian history. He participated in an external review of the Theology Department at Marquette University. In January 2000, he retired from the United Me-
Methodist ministry after 40 years of service.

Marcel Tetel (Romance Studies) retired last spring from teaching and will devote his time to research.


Faculty on leave