

MEMS

PROGRAM IN MEDIEVAL & EARLY MODERN STUDIES



NEWSLETTER

University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Summer 2015

GREETINGS FROM THE DIRECTOR



Brett Whalen, Director of MEMS

It's been a busy two years for the Program in Medieval and Early Modern Studies, filled with transitions and changes, but also marked by the program's continued vitality and vibrancy. First, in 2014, we mourned the loss of Darryl Gless, a former director of MEMS, among many other roles on campus. He is missed. That same year, the funding from the Andrew W. Mellon foundation that created MEMS eight years ago came to its conclusion. MEMS cannot thank the Mellon foundation enough for its generosity.

Yet, thanks to ongoing support from the Dorothy Ford Wiley (DFW) fund, the Senior Associate Dean's office in Fine Arts and Humanities, and several private donors, the Program in Medieval and Early Modern Studies has continued—and is continuing—its mission to foster excellence in premodern studies at UNC-Chapel Hill for undergraduates, graduates, and faculty, as well as the wider public.

Browse the pages below, and you will see what MEMS has been up to: hosting lectures by visiting scholars from around the United States and abroad; organizing seminars and colloquia, including the First and Second Annual Dorothy Ford Wiley Compact Seminars; offering financial support to graduate students and faculty; overseeing the popular MEMS minor for undergraduates; and more.

I would also like to offer some words of thanks to UNC faculty who have assisted the program with one of their most valuable commodities: their time. In 2013-14, **Marcus Bull** (History) confidently acted as interim director during some of the

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LECTURES

Every year MEMS sponsors numerous lectures and events on campus.

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COMPACT SEMINAR

MEMS is in its second year of these innovative, interdisciplinary, exchanges.

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RESEARCH

MEMS is proud to support the research of UNC faculty and students.

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important transitions described above. **Tania**

String (Art History) helped to coordinate the DFW Crossroads Lecture Series; **Morgan Pitelka** (Asian Studies) and **Anne MacNeil** (Music) organized the First and Second Annual DFW Compact Seminars, respectively.

Other faculty offered their services on our grant-review committees: **Shayne Legassie** (English and Comparative Literature), **Glaire Anderson** (Art History), **Jessica Wolfe** (English and Comparative Literature), **Megan Matchinske** (English and Comparative Literature), **Emma Flatt** (History), and **Wei-Cheng Ling** (Art History).

Last year also saw the formation of a “semi-official” MEMS graduate steering committee, to encourage a keener sense of community on campus

for graduate students in premodern fields, and to foster better communications between that community and the program. MEMS thanks the charter members **Beth Hasseler** (History), **Josh Hevert** (History), **Allie Locking** (History), **Beth Fischer** (Art History), **Katie Walker** (English) and **Whitney Winters** (Romance Languages).

Last but not least, **Kirsten Cooper** (History) acted as the new assistant program coordinator, providing indispensable help with the daily challenges of running MEMS, along with the History Department staff, **Adam Kent**, **Joyce Loftin**, and **Michael Williams**.

Be sure to check out our webpage for more information: mems.unc.edu. And, if you would like to join our listserv, contact me at bwhalen@email.unc.edu.

Dorothy Ford Wiley Crossroads Lecture Series

2013-2014

IN THE FALL OF 2013, **LAURA ASHE** (English, University of Oxford) visited Chapel Hill to deliver the Fall MEMS DFW Crossroads Lecture, a stimulating discussion of “Writing in the Age of Magna Carta.”

Ashe is a specialist in English literature of the High Middle Ages. Her research has focused particularly on the multilingual environment of post-Conquest England in which the writing of literature flourished in Latin, French, and English. During her lecture she shared with us



her extensive experience with the literary history of England in this period.

BETH WILLIAMSON (Art History, University of Bristol) joined us for the Spring 2014 DFW Crossroads Lecture. Williamson spoke on “*Bricolage and Varietas: Medieval Multi-Media Objects.*”

Williamson is a specialist in the history of Italian art as well as religious devotional practice, especially as it relates to visual and aural culture. Her presentation provided a taste of her newest research project, which explores the forms and functions of mixed-media reliquary tabernacles in medieval Siena.



ON 13 NOVEMBER, 2014, BRIGITTE BEDOS-REZAK (History, NYU) delivered the Fall DFW Crossroads lecture on “Printing in Medieval Europe Before the Printing Press (800-1300).” The invention of the printing press in the mid-1400s features commonly in narratives of Western Civilization as a

DFW CROSSROADS 2014-2015

transformative moment between the Middle Ages, characterized by orality and limited literacy, and the widespread literate culture of modernity.

In this ambitious and stimulating lecture, Professor Bedos-Rezak called our attention to the many forms of “imprinting” that characterized the medieval world, first and foremost represented by royal seals. Accompanied by a rich collection of images, her presentation challenged some of our long-held stereotypes about the Middle Ages and its relationship to the early modern era.

ON 9 APRIL, 2015, WENDY HELLER (Music and Italian Studies, Princeton University) delivered the Spring Dorothy Ford Wiley Crossroads lecture, entitled “Enchanted Gardens: The *Locus Amoenus* in Seicento Opera.” Heller is committed to the study of opera from an interdisciplinary perspective. In her work she incorporates gender, sexuality, dance, art history, as well as classical traditions.

She demonstrated this interdisciplinary approach in her engaging, multi-media presentation, which explored the links between actual garden spaces in sixteenth-century Italy and their representation on stage in early Italian operas. This exposed a rich world of aristocratic imagination



about music, performance, architecture and the viewing public that Heller was able to share with us at UNC.

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Dorothy Ford Wiley Compact Seminars

INAUGURATED IN 2013-14

The DFW Compact Seminars represent an intellectual and professional hybrid—organized thematically, the interdisciplinary seminars are part conference, part colloquium, part workshop.

These innovative seminars involve exchanges between UNC faculty and graduate students, as well as outside scholars invited to campus. Ideally, each Compact Seminar acts as a first step in the creation of ongoing collaborations and projects.

THE MATERIAL AND THE SOCIAL IN THE ENCOUNTERS OF PREMODERN EMPIRES

The first MEMS Compact Seminar in Fall 2013 focused on the role of material culture and the politics of sociability in the meetings of premodern empires. The goal was to explore the emerging theory of “inter-imperiality,” or the notion that world history is defined less by European centrality than by diverse and contingent encounters between distinct imperial entities,

heterogeneous groups, and individuals.

Morgan Pitelka (Asian Studies and the Carolina Asia Center, UNC) organized the seminar in consultation with **Sahar Amer** (formerly of Romance Languages, UNC) and **Emma Flatt** (History, UNC). In the semester leading up to the event, he also worked with a graduate student co-organizer, **Greg Mole** (History,

UNC), as well as two graduate student participants: **Beth Fischer** (Art History, UNC) and **Josh Hevert** (History, UNC).

The seminar was held in the University Room in Hyde Hall, beginning with a keynote lecture by **Laura Doyle** (English, UMass Amherst) on Friday, November 15, 2014 that explored the “connected histories, cross histories, interactions, and connections” that emerge from an examination of social and material rituals in the field of inter-imperiality in the premodern world.

On the following day, eight presenters—including **Maghan Keita** (Villanova University), **Dorothy Wong** (University of Virginia), and **James McHugh** (University of Southern California)—also gave papers, discussed primary sources, or walked us through work-in-



BIG DATA FOR INTIMATE SPACES

Held on Feb 25-28, 2015, the second annual Dorothy Ford Wiley Compact Seminar was entitled “Big Data for Intimate Spaces: An Interdisciplinary Seminar in Renaissance Studies and Digital Humanities.”

Anne MacNeil (Music, UNC) organized this multi-day seminar, which aimed to bridge the distance between the massive scale of the twenty-first century digital world and the intimacy of music-making, letter-writing, quiet contemplation, and dining at the Mantuan court of Isabella d’Este (1471-1539).

The seminar, designed as a think-tank for problem-solving and project design, paying particular attention to the uses of multimedia, assembled experts in the fields of Renaissance Studies and Digital Humanities from around the US and abroad, including **Roberta Piccinelli** (Università di Teramo), **Lorenzo Pasquinelli** (Florence, Italy), **Antonella Guidazzoli** (Inter-university Supercomputer Center, Bologna), **Luigi Marini** (National Center for Supercomputing Applications, Urbana, Illinois), **Valerie Taylor** (Pasadena City

College), and **Lisa Boutin Vitela** (Cerritos College).

UNC graduate students **Megan Eagen, Samuel Brannon, Alberto Napoli** and **Karen Atkins** also joined the conversation.

THE SEMINAR FEATURED A SPECIAL PUBLIC

PERFORMANCE with **Marco Beasley** (vocals, featured top) & **Paul O’Dette** (lute, featured bottom) on Saturday February 28. Their concert featured frottolas and lute music of Renaissance Italy and provided an authentic experience of music from early 16th-century north Italian courts.



“A THINK TANK
FOR PROBLEM-
SOLVING AND
PROJECT
DESIGN”

OTHER MEMS EVENTS

ON NOV 18, 2014, MARTIN BIDDLE (Emeritus Fellow, Medieval Archaeology, Oxford) spoke on the “The Great Winchester Dig.” Looking back at a fascinating intersection between North Carolina and the archeology of medieval England, Biddle revisited the ground-breaking excavations done at Winchester between 1963-1971, carried out with the help of UNC student and faculty volunteers (including **Michael McVaugh**, now emeritus professor, History), along with participants from Duke and NC State. In addition to discussing the fascinating history of Winchester and its medieval sites, Biddle reminded us of a long-standing connection between Carolina and the study of the European Middle Ages.

ON 23 APRIL, 2015, MEMS HOSTED NICHOLAS PAUL (History, Fordham) who gave a lecture entitled “Up from the Well: Recovering the Lost Legend of a Crusader and His Treasure.” In this personalized discussion of medieval research, Paul recounted his “detective work” searching for—and finding at a relatively obscure seminary library in



Martin Biddle with several former participants of the Winchester Digs.

Belgium—an apparently lost manuscript that recounted the arrival of a relic of the True Cross at the monastery of Brogne during the era of the crusades. Among many other implications, Paul’s engaging talk revealed the constant need for historians to head back *ad fontes*, “to the sources,” even in this digital age.

ON 16 JANUARY, MEMS HOSTED A BOOK COLLOQUIUM discussing Duke professor **Jehangir Malegam’s** *Sleep of Behemoth: Disputing Peace and Violence in Medieval Europe* (Cornell, 2013). In this important study, Malegam explores conflicting concepts of peace in Western Europe during the High Middle Ages (1000-1200), which he ties to well known and important events such as the Peace of God, the Investiture Controversy, and the emergence of communal self-governance, among other phenomena. Special guest **Bjorn Weiler** (Aberystwyth University, Wales) acted as an interlocutor for this engaging seminar.

IN ADDITION, MEMS CO-SPONSORED the graduate-student run conference “Consequences of the Fall” hosted at the Carolina Asia Center. This event featured a lecture by **Virginia Burris** (Religious Studies, Drew University), a lecture by **Cemal Kafadar** (History, Harvard), and a lecture by **E. Bruce Brooks** (Asian Languages and Literatures, UMass Amherst).



OVER THE LAST TWO YEARS, MEMS CONTINUED ITS SUPPORT FOR THE VENERABLE NORTH CAROLINA COLLOQUIUM IN MEDIEVAL AND EARLY MODERN STUDIES (NCCMEMS)

This colloquium (which predates UNC's MEMS program) is an interdisciplinary and interinstitutional effort that is organized each year by graduate students from Duke and UNC. The event brings together graduate students from these two institutions as well as from a variety of different programs across North Carolina and the southeast. The event alternates annually between Duke and UNC.

On 7-8 February, 2014, at Duke, the colloquium focused on the theme of "Sovereignty: Individuality and Empire in the Medieval and Early Modern Periods." **Lee Manion** (English, University of Missouri and a fellow at the NHC) delivered the keynote address, "Fictions of Rule: Debating Sovereignty and Empire in England, Scotland, and France" Students from a wide variety of fields, including history, art history, literature,

languages, and philosophy then engaged in scholarly exchange on topics ranging from gender and the body, to sovereign ideals, to physical embodiments and reconstructions of royal power.

In 2015 UNC hosted the colloquium from 13-14 February. This year's colloquium centered on the theme of "Imagining the Sacred," featuring keynote speaker **Shannon Gayk** (English, Indiana University-Bloomington and a fellow at the NHC), who spoke on "Invoking the Sacred: Medieval and Early Modern Prayer Rolls." Panels explored this theme in relation to memory, politics, and the body from the approaches of history, art history, romance languages, and english literature.

We look forward to next year's colloquium, to be held at Duke!

FACULTY RESEARCH & CONFERENCE TRAVEL

WITH GENEROUS SUPPORT from the Mellon foundation, MEMS awarded five faculty research grants in 2014

First, to **Glaire Anderson** (Art History) for her book project “Architecture, Identity & Kinship Across Religious Borders in Early Medieval Spain,” which explores Islamic and Christian architecture as interconnected statements of royal authority and self-identity by tenth-century rulers in Iberia, with a focus on the Umayyad dynasty of Córdoba.

Second, to **Robert Babcock** (Classics) for his book project “The Abbey of Gembloux as an Intellectual Center in the Eleventh Century,” which closely examines manuscripts from the Belgian abbey’s medieval library collection, part of his wider investigation into how specific medieval writers interacted with and responded to the material culture of their intellectual environment.

Third, to **Lucia Binotti**

(Romance Languages) for her book project “*Pornographia* or the

Libertine Discourse in Spanish Renaissance Literature,” specifically for her chapter on the editorial fortune of Pietro Aretino’s *Ragionamenti* (1534–1536), a neo-Platonic dialogue set in a brothel which questions the gendered dichotomy of nature and culture.

Fourth, to **Shayne Legassie** (Comparative Literature) for final manuscript work on his book *The Enigma of Place: The Medieval Invention of Travel*

Writing (1250–1500), specifically relating to the travel writings of Marco Polo, Franciscan missionary Odoric of Pordenone, and Franciscan pilgrim writer Niccolo da Poggibonsi.

Fifth, to **Jessica Wolfe** (English) for her critical edition of Thomas Browne’s *Pseudodoxia Epidemica* (1672), a text that engages a wide field of subjects in natural philosophy, botany, mineralogy, medicine, and natural history, along with

geography, travel literature, art and iconography, religious controversy and popular culture.

IN ADDITION, MEMS OFFERED support for faculty conference travel, awarded to **Glaire Anderson** (Art History), **Jessica Boon** (Religious Studies), **Mary Floyd-Wilson** (English), **Carmen Hsu** (Romance Languages), **Anne MacNeil** (Music), and **Hassan Melehy** (Romance Languages), allowing program faculty to present their

GRADUATE RESEARCH & CONFERENCE TRAVEL

IN 2014 THE PROGRAM WAS ABLE TO AWARD four dissertation-writing grants to promising junior scholars in the final stages of their doctoral work with generous support of the Mellon foundation.

First, to **Rose Aslan** (Religious Studies), whose dissertation “From Grave to Shrine: The Making of Sacred Place at the Tomb of Ali ibn Abi Talib in Najaf” focuses on the shrine town of Najaf, the



MEMS RESEARCH

Encouraging new scholarship in Medieval and Early Modern Studies at UNC

burial place of Ali ibn Abi Talib (d. 661), the son-in-law and cousin of the Prophet Muhammad (the fourth caliph for Sunnis) and the first of the twelve Imams for Shi'is.

Second, to **Jeff Erbig** (History) for his dissertation "Where Nomads and Mapmakers Meet: Rethinking Borderlands from the Rio de la Plata (1700-1805)," whose project aims to redefine historians' understandings of colonial space by examining the relationship between cartography and interethnic interactions in eighteenth-century South America.

Third, to **Benjamin Reed** (History) for his dissertation "Oratorian History in Mexico City, 1659-1821: A Political Culture of Religious Identity," which traces the "transculturation" of the Congregation of the Oratory from its founder Philip Neri's Florentine roots, through its institutional establishment in sixteenth-century Rome, to its adaptation to the local culture and society in Mexico.

And finally, to **Diane Woodin** (English), for her dissertation "Envisioned Networks: Science, Gender, and Social Allegiance in Early Modern Europe," which analyzes the ways in which the visual culture of astronomy brought together discourses of self, gender, and social place within the intellectual circles of

early eighteenth-century Europe.

THE PROGRAM ALSO AWARDED research and travel grants to **Beth Fischer** (Art History), for her dissertation "The Representation of Space in Early Carolingian Gospel Books (783-814)," allowing her to consult several important ninth-century Gospels in Germany; to **Matthew Lynch** (Religious Studies) for his project "Expanding the Sufi Epic: Situating the Structuration, Inception, and Reception of Rumi's *Masnavi*," to continue archival work in Istanbul; to **Jon Powell** (History) for his dissertation "Memory and Historiography: Franciscan Identity Construction in the Jordan of Giano's *Chronica*," allowing him to examine original manuscripts of the Franciscan chronicle, housed in Poland; to **J. Christian Straubhaar** (German) for his dissertation "Giving Your Self Up to God: Henry Suso's *Annihilations* and (Re-)Constructions of Mystic Identity, Masculinity, and Body," allowing him to examine the earliest manuscripts of Suso's work at the BNF, Paris, and University of Strasbourg; and to **Diane Woodin** (English) for her project "Envisioned Networks: Science, Gender, and Social Allegiance in Early Modern Europe" to return to Paris for

follow-up archival research after her stay in France during her Lurcy Off-Campus Dissertation fellowship.

IN ADDITION, MEMS PROVIDED several summer stipends to assist graduate students working on early stages of their dissertations. First, to **Krista Turner** (English), whose project "Toxic Encounters: Literature, Poisons, and Empire in the Early Modern Atlantic World argues" argues that the discovery of the New World produced deep changes in early modern conceptions of health, agency, and national identity.

Second, to **Ashley Bruckbauer** (Art History), whose work "Ambassadeurs à la turc: Assimilation and Dissimulation in Eighteenth-Century Images of Franco-Ottoman Diplomacy," examines depictions of cultural cross-dressing in eighteenth-century Franco-Ottoman diplomatic encounters.

And third, to **Liz Ellis** for her dissertation "'Altho You Are But Few In Numbers': The Petites Nations in the Lower Mississippi River Valley from the Natchez Wars through the Louisiana Purchase," which examines the experiences and strategies of small Indian groups, called "the petite nations," and their efforts to navigate the tumultuous

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political and social landscape of the Lower Mississippi River Valley in the eighteenth century.

LAST BUT NOT LEAST, THE PROGRAM

awarded conference travel grants to **Rose Aslan** (Religious Studies), **Kevin Chovanec** (English), **Miranda Elston** (Art History), **Jeff Erbig** (History), **Grant Gearhart** (Romance Languages), **Ani**

Govjian (English), **Tessa Gurney** (Romance Languages), **Josh Hevert** (History), **Allie Locking** (History), **Greg Mole** (History), **Annegret Oehme** (Germanic Languages), and **Krista Turner** (English), allowing them to attend scholarly conferences, present their work, and make professional connections.

THE DONALD GILMAN RESEARCH SUPPORT FUND



In 2014, the Gilman Research award went to **Emma Flatt** (History), a fellow (2014-15) at the Institute for Historical Research at the University of Texas at Austin, where she has been working on her current book project, “Courtly Pursuits: Living Well in the Courts of the Deccani Sultanates.” This book examines the widely shared ethic of courtliness that allowed Persian-speaking individuals of diverse origins to move to Southern India and succeed at court. During the year, Flatt presented her work at a variety of national and international conferences, including a workshop on aesthetics in Delhi, India, a workshop on religious materiality at the University of Toronto, a panel on food history at the Association for Asian Studies in Chicago, and a talk on perfumes and social stimulants at New York University. She was also able to undertake a brief research trip to India during the winter break.

In 2015, the Gilman Research award went to **Kirsten Cooper** (History), who will be carrying out dissertation research at the *Bayerische Staatsbibliothek* in Munich. Cooper’s dissertation project explores the use of national stereotypes in political pamphlets from the late-seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. During this time, central Europe increasingly became the battleground upon which the centuries-old rivalry between France and the Austrian Habsburgs was fought. Both powers campaigned for support among the semi-autonomous German principalities, for which printed pamphlets served as an important tool. Appeals to “Germanness” or “Frenchness” proved very useful in this process of justifying wars and gaining allies. Kirsten’s dissertation analyzes public political discourses and the use of national rhetoric to understand how and why these categories—“French” and “German” as well as “Austrian” and “Prussian”—served as useful tools of persuasion well before the rise of modern nationalism.



THE RYAN-HEADLEY DISSERTATION FELLOWSHIP

Awarded every other year, in 2014-15, the Ryan-Headley dissertation fellowship went to **Josh Hevert** (History), for his dissertation "Orthodoxy Abroad: John XXII and the Policing of Global Christendom." Hevert's work examines how the Latin Church under Pope John XXII (1316-34) struggled with defining "Christendom" in the international arena of the fourteenth century, creating spaces for the proper practice of Latin Christianity, while policing relationships between Latin Christians, non-Latin Christians, and non-Christians that had the potential to undermine the orthodoxy of the Roman church. Hevert's dissertation examines the various methods employed by the papacy to care for its "flock" abroad, defining the range of mechanisms developed by the head of the Latin Church as it tried to fulfill its "pastoral mission" outside the borders of Europe.



THE MEMS MELLON DISSERTATION FELLOWSHIP

Thanks to a generous funding-extension from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, and support from the Senior Associate Dean in Fine Arts and Humanities, MEMS was able to offer a final Mellon dissertation fellowship. The 2014-2015 award went to **Justin Blanton** (History), whose dissertation project focuses on the indigenous groups living in the Chiquitos province of present-day southeastern Bolivia and southwestern Brazil, as well as their interactions with Iberian institutions from the late sixteenth to the late eighteenth centuries. It aims to provide a deeper understanding of how native peoples mediated the changes brought on by forces of colonialism and constructed new communities and ethnic identities. His research relies on archival documentation relating to labor, migration, commerce, and cultural exchanges between diverse indigenous populations and the Portuguese and Spanish empires.



MINOR IN MEMS

THE MEMS UNDERGRADUATE MINOR SEES ITS SIXTH YEAR

The Undergraduate Minor in Medieval and Early Modern Studies provides students with a broad, humanities-based approach to the rich and fascinating cultures that flourished globally from around 500 CE to 1800 CE. This challenging, interdisciplinary minor cuts across departments and disciplines and encourages students to discover connections among diverse aspects of medieval and early modern culture. Currently there are twelve departments and over one hundred and fifty departmental offerings from among which students may create their minors—an amazingly rich pool of resources!

This year we had six new MEMS minor graduates. Congratulations to **Lauren Vannest, Sarah Plascyk, Meredith Griffin, Deborah Lee, Sarah Faircloth, and Camille Zimmerman.**

SUPPORT MEMS!

While MEMS continues to enjoy critical support from the Senior Associate Dean's office in Fine Arts and Humanities, along with the UNC History Department, the continued vitality of the program will also depend the generous support of private friends and supporters. MEMS will be grateful for gifts of any amount.

For further information on supporting the program, please contact the University of North Carolina Arts and Sciences Foundation, 134 East Franklin St., Chapel Hill, NC, ph. 919-843-0345.

MEMS emerged from Chapel Hill's traditional strengths in the study of the European Middle Ages, the Renaissance, the Reformation, and other early modern fields. From its inception, the program also embarked upon innovative, global approach to medieval and early modern studies within and beyond the traditional borders of the European world, including Byzantine and Islamic lands, peoples and polities from Eastern and Southern Asia, as well as the Caribbean, Latin American, and North American territories of the "New World." The MEMS program thus gives our existing strengths in medieval and early modern studies a new impetus and global reach.

This newsletter is a collaborative effort of MEMS faculty, graduate students, and staff. Thank you to all who contributed