FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear fellow ICMA Members,

You should all, I hope, have received back in early May the first of the issues of Gesta edited by Linda Safran and Adam Cohen, and published by the University of Chicago Press. If it has not reached you, please contact Ryan Frisinger in the ICMA office (at ryan@medievalart.org). Gesta is now published simultaneously in print and electronic form, and if you visit JSTOR you will see that there is no longer a “blackout” of five years, and all issues of Gesta are now available electronically. Please remember that ultimately the production of the journal relies upon the support of you, our members, and we hope that this enhanced access will be convenient for you and, along with the many other benefits of membership in ICMA, merit your continuing support.

The volume on Pennsylvania and New York (not including the Metropolitan Museum of Art) in the ongoing ICMA census of medieval sculpture in America, edited by Joan Holladay and Susan Ward, is now almost ready to go into production, with what we hope will be final negotiations concerning the publication and distribution almost completed. We hope to have this important volume available later this year or early next, thanks to the hard work of the editors and many others. Again, we depend upon the continuing support from you, our members, to make such valuable projects possible. A generous grant from The Getty Foundation was indispensable, but we also need to draw on our own funds to complete the project. Our Newsletter is now digital, thanks especially to Martha Easton, its wonderful Editor, who will soon be completing her term. I am happy to be able to announce that her successor will be Sherry Lindquist, and that Martha and Sherry will be working soon on the transition. The richness of the Newsletter is due not only to Martha’s efforts, but to all who send her material, so please do keep that coming, to newsletter@medievalart.org. The new website design introduced recently by Anne Harris, Editor and Chair of its Editorial Board, is an ongoing work in progress, and we have not yet managed to make every item fully current. Thank you for your patience.

Elsewhere in this Newsletter you will read about recent and upcoming activities on many fronts, such as the Programs and Lectures Committee’s sponsored events and session, the recent well-attended session at Leeds organized by Matt Westerby and our Student Committee, and the many events organized by the Development and Membership Committees. The next meeting of the Board of Directors of ICMA will be in New York City at 10:00 AM on Sunday, October 20, at the offices of the American Council of Learned Societies, 633 3rd Avenue (between 40th and 41st Streets), 8th Floor. It has been timed to roughly coincide with the symposium at Columbia University, which ICMA is pleased to co-sponsor, in connection with the “Medieval Treasures from Hildesheim” exhibition that opens at the Metropolitan Museum on September 17. Our next ICMA Annual Meeting will be during the College Art Association Annual Meeting, in Chicago, February 12 through 15, details to be settled in coming months.

The changes in our administrative staff have been working well, thanks to Danielle Oteri, now our Programs Director, and to Ryan Frisinger, our Operations Administrator in New York. Danielle is now mainly involved in...

(continued on Page 2)
“Eco-Critical Approaches to Medieval Art, East and West: I (Landscapes) and II (Objects)” were presented at Kalamazoo in May 2013 under ICMA sponsorship. They were organized by Anne F. Harris (DePauw University) and Nancy Sevcenko (Independent Scholar, ICMA Vice-President). Introductory comments placed an emphasis on how eco-criticism invites questions of the constructions of nature, the natural, and that amorphous place we have built for ourselves: the natural world, and on the ways in which medieval images mediate the category of the natural through their materiality (the very stuff that medieval images are made of hold power and meaning) and their agency (the anagogical invitation of medieval images to perceive beyond the material world). In doing so, medieval images activate the category of the natural, they frame the agency of nature – manufactured from the natural, they oscillate over and ultimately blur the built boundary between artifice and nature.

The first set of papers was grouped around the idea of landscape: of nature as place, of nature as a built environment, manufactured by pilgrimage, patronage, and paint and represented to viewers questioning their place in the world. The eco-critical exploration of landscape in literary studies has a long tradition, but is still forming in art history. What is the materiality of landscape? What is the agency of a landscape image? Landscape is not a thing the way that an object is a thing: there are entirely different dynamics of participation and becoming for viewer and artist. Does landscape signify nature and the natural, or, especially in medieval Christian representation, might it not more often represent the super-natural, the divine? The three papers devoted to landscape set out to explore these questions.

Anastasia Drandaki (Benaki Museum) discussed “Deserts, Rivers, and Mountains: Nature and Divinity in Byzantine Pilgrimage Art,” with a focus on the intersection of natural forms and divine presence at the Katholikon of the monastery at Mount Sinai. Fig. 1 depicts a bit of the stone from the site, pyrolusite, whose dendritic crystals miraculously manifested the Burning Bush itself. At stake was the material agency of this phenomenon in the landscape: the crystals are not an imprint of branches, they possess no mimicry, but they are wondrous to pilgrims in their ability to imitate elements of the natural that have been deemed as such. The site is thus miraculous because it existed outside of human intervention, but miraculous also precisely because it could intervene in human lives, as stories of healing miracles pro-claim; independent of humans and yet deeply involved in their fate.

Barbara McNulty (Lebanon Valley College) spoke about a “Fresco at Kaminaria: A Donor Portrait Set in the Cypriot Landscape.” She explored the possibilities of interpretation for a series of trees, signifying a landscape behind the donors, from territorial signifier, to indicator of a mapping vision, to allegory of Paradise. This paper brought forth issues of signification: Does a tree a landscape make? How minimal can the representation of nature be? The question becomes how nature is signified. Discussion afterwards noted the minimalism of natural representation in the fresco, and its possible relation with the signifying practices of allegory.

Martha Easton, Editor
Amber McAslister (University of Pittsburgh–Greensburg) prizd the material experience of paint in the process of “Painting Paradise: The Use of Terra Verde in the Chiostro Verde, Santa Maria Novella (Florence).” The Dominican monks of the Chiostro Verde of Santa Maria Novella in Florence made meaning when they made their choice to use terra verde to paint the Old Testament cycle of the cloister, the cheap and earthy pigment uniting Creation and creativity. Perception for the monastic viewer oscillated between pigment and Paradise: not seeing the Paradise for the pigment, seeing the Paradise through the pigment. Key to the understanding of the representation of landscape was its material manufacture: the tedium of grinding colors, the transformation of brute stuff into refined matter, the marvel of a representational form appearing beneath the brush.

The second set of papers gathered around objects: things made from stuff, announced by their agency, by their ability to shape (among other things) human behaviors and desires. Eco-criticism here seeks to move the conversation beyond animism and anthropomorphism, to speak of active objects, of objects that activate; to acknowledge the agency of objects unto themselves. The scale shifted from that of the landscape panel: from untouchable landscape to hand-held book or relic, from all-encompassing to all-engrossing. Jane Bennett’s book Vibrant Matter; the political ecology of things (Duke University, 2010) makes a consistent appeal to move from epistemology to ontology – from what we know to what is, from meaning to matter, from knowledge to experience. These are not mutually exclusive categories, but they do shift the conversation about objects.

Heide Estes (Monmouth University) explored “Nature and Sacred Text in the Old English Riddle 26: An Eco-Critical Reading.” In presenting an eco-feminist reading of the Old English Riddle 26 (the “book” riddle), the paper made a point of rejecting dualistic thinking (which resonated with the riddle's moves and slippages from animal to skin to book, and its oscillation between thing and object). The poem speaks in the ever-shifting voice of an animal whose skin becomes a gilded book: it tells you of its animal origins, of being killed and cut and written upon, and taken and covered with gold and read with fervor.

Brad Hostetler (Florida State University) addressed “The Presence of Nature within a Devotional Context: A Case Study of a Middle Byzantine Reliquary from Mount Athos,” through the Protaton Reliquary, which gathers four stones and aligns them into/as a Holy Land arrangement. The representational field exists without making a nature/art distinction; it assembles matter partly for possession (emphasizing the “EK” from) of the inscriptions next to each stone: from the Tomb of Christ, from Golgotha, from Bethlehem, from Gethsemane) and partly for salvation (the donor on the cover of the reliquary kneels in tight proskynesis). There is a reason, here, to think of the act of assemblage, of putting these stones into this frame, as itself a devotional act.

Alexa K. Sand (Utah State University) brought forth “Exquisite Corpses: Animal Remains, the Virgin Mary, and Jesus Christ,” through a rare work [Fig. 2] whose inner leaves received, at one time, plant wax upon which could be written prayers, and which resonates with the Hours of Jeanne d’Evreux. The paper explored the becoming of both: the five hundred sheep needed for a large codex; the “bark” that must be stripped from the dentine on its way to being ivory; and the gestures and knowledge that moved around the materials of ivory and parchment. A key claim for the eco-critical idea of the persistence of materiality put forward the idea that “the origins of parchment and ivory were never entirely obscured by their processing” (Sand). The states of being (dentine, pillaged object, luminous carving) are all simultaneous here. Materiality does not precede and recede - it persists.

[Fig. 2: Ivory booklet (from Alexa K. Sand’s talk)]

Lively queries concluded both panels, with discussions involving the process and challenge of further applications of eco-criticism to art history, the presence and representation of nature and the natural, the persistence of materiality in wrought objects, and the ways in which eco-criticism can intersect with interests in materiality, agency, and human/non-human interaction already present in the discipline of art history. A Facebook group has been created where these conversations continue, and you are warmly invited to join in at https://www.facebook.com/groups/meval.ecocriticisms/. The organizers and panelists wish to thank ICMA for its sponsorship and for the opportunity put eco-critical theory into the practice of art history through close studies of landscapes and objects from European and Byzantine traditions.

Anne F. Harris, DePauw University
The Multi-Media Middle Ages

For the 48th International Congress on Medieval Studies at Kalamazoo, the International Center of Medieval Art sponsored a session entitled “The Multi-Media Middle Ages,” co-organized by Melanie Garcia Sympson (University of Michigan, Ann Arbor) and Trevor Martin Verrot (Yale University). Following the recent rise in popularity of the term “medium,” especially in the wake of its sister term “materiality,” the organizers sought to focus attention on the media of medieval image-making. Medium refers to both the material substratum of a given work, with all of its connotations, as well as the medium’s ability to disseminate form and information. The panel provided an opportunity to examine the connotations of various media, both alone and in concert, and their possible significances to medieval audiences. The panel’s three speakers analyzed works of art whose interpretations hinge on the proper historical contextualization of medium.

Rachel Danford (Johns Hopkins University) delivered a paper entitled “Making Images in the Tempietto Longobardo,” on the eighth-century oratory of Santa Maria in Valle in Cividale del Friuli. After describing the various media found within its interior, Danford focused on the stucco and fresco registers of the tempietto especially with regard to their material and iconographical contexts. The material substrate of both media is very similar, involving—among other things—water, sand, and gypsum, and there is evidence that the same craftsmen were responsible for both. As Danford pointed out, the processes of executing imagery in both media are identical in its early stages: a layer of rough plaster is applied to the wall. However, whereas fresco is essentially a process of absorption (pigments are drawn into a layer of wet plaster applied to the rough under layer), stucco work is inherently an accretion process: its protruding forms result from the application of successive layers of plaster. Danford’s paper related these practices of making to the religious valences of composite and homogenous materiality in works by influential thinkers, such as Gregory of Tours.

Heidi Gearhart (Busch-Reisinger Museum, Harvard Art Museums) gave a presentation titled “Looking Across Media: Ornament and Illusion in the Gospels of Helmarshausen (Getty Museum Ludwig MS II 3),” wherein she explored the simulation of media in a manuscript illuminated around 1120 at the Benedictine monastery of Helmarshausen in northern Germany. Gearhart both complicated and enriched previous observations about the relationship between the Gospels and contemporary metalwork by closely examining the depiction of various materials in the manuscript’s illuminations. She argued that the simulation of other media was not always intended to evoke physical presence or convey iconographic meaning. Rather, in many instances, the mimicking of different media emphasized the materials as works that not only came from God, but were also products of medieval craftsmen. Gearhart expanded on this idea through an analysis of the treatise On Diverse Arts by a certain Theophilus, whose interest in the manipulation of materials for artistic purposes reflects, according to Gearhart, an interest in the changeability and mutability of substances.

The final paper of the panel, “The Objects of Ottonian Art History” by Eliza Garrison (Middlebury College), centered on the Marriage Certificate of Theophanu, produced by emperor Otto I for the occasion of the wedding of his son, Otto II, to the Byzantine princess Theophanu in 972. Garrison pointed out that the certificate, which formalized the marriage agreement, confounds many of the material expectations for a legal document. Instead of a chancery script, it is written in Carolingian miniscule, a bookhand; instead of a folio, it is a rotulus; instead of unadorned writing, the document is replete with expensive dye, illumination, and gilding, all of which seem to suggest the media of an Ottonian sacred ceremonial text. The marriage document introduces a further layer of evocation with the pairs of purple roundels that conjure Byzantine silks, perhaps directly referencing Theophanu’s origins. These references with regard to media may have functioned politically, legitimizing the Saxon court to Byzantine envoys in visual terms. Garrison referred to the useful concept of re-mediation, that is, the phenomenon of an object made in one medium but evoking another, to describe part of the process art historians might use to work with objects like this certificate.

Papers in this session provided evidence that medieval artists were often hyperaware of particularities of the media in which they worked, exploiting the distinct physical properties of a given medium and drawing on its worldly and spiritual connotations to convey messages. This panel was offered as a way to redeploy the term ‘medium’ through the historical characterization of various media in relation to each other, in order that art historians might reconsider medium as a useful critical tool in the pursuit of historical work. These papers were well received by the audience, who ensured that there was a lively discussion, and the organizers would like to express their gratitude to all three speakers as well as to the ICMA Programming Committee for their generous support.

Melanie Garcia Sympson, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor
Trevor Martin Verrot, Yale University
The Scandalous and the Marvelous in Medieval Art

The ICMA Student Committee sponsored a session at the 49th International Congress on Medieval Studies (May 8-11, 2014) titled “The Scandalous and the Marvelous in Medieval Art.” The session, organized and presided over by Alice Isabella Sullivan and Lehti Mairike Keelmann (both Ph.D. candidates, History of Art, University of Michigan), was a great success with more than 45 audience members in attendance.

Three graduate students from universities in the U.S. presented on various aspects of their dissertation projects that complemented the goals of the session of exploring the materiality, iconography, and significances of the scandalous and the marvelous in medieval art. The first speaker, Scott Miller (Ph.D. student, History of Art, Northwestern University) analyzed courtly automata from an art historical perspective. He argued that while these kinds of objects could have been interpreted both as marvels, when used at prestigious courtly festivities, and as frauds, easily debunked upon closer inspection, the artists who created them sought to conceal artfully their mechanism in an effort to delight and engage the viewers. Scott’s paper, “Subverting and Imposing Marvel through the Courtly Automaton,” took as a case study a fourteenth-century table fountain currently in the Cleveland Museum of Art (1924.859).

Anna Siebach Larsen (Ph.D. candidate, Medieval Studies, University of Notre Dame) was the second speaker in the session. Anna’s paper, “Creating Scandal in Bodleian Library MS Selden supra 38,” examined the relationships and tensions between creation, miracles, vision, and scandal in the extensive illuminations and the text of the Anglo-Norman version of the Enfâncies du Jesu Crist found in this little-known early fourteenth-century manuscript from the Bodleian Library.

The third speaker, Kyle G. Sweeney (Ph.D. student, History of Art and Architecture, Rice University) examined the socio-political and art historical contexts of a Gothic portal brought to Cairo by the Mamluk Sultan al-Nasir Muhammad from Acre in 1291. Kyle’s paper, “‘Magnificent in form and beautifully wrought’: A Gothic Portal in Cairo and Mamluk Constructions of Visual Identity,” argued that Gothic architectural elements were not incorporated into existing monuments to make necessarily a political statement. Rather, they were seen primarily as exotic features, and were valued for their aesthetic qualities and symbolic powers by medieval Mamluk patrons in the royal city of Cairo.

We would like to thank our presenters for their enthusiastic participation! The result was a session which enticed the audience with its content of courtly splendor, scandalous imagery, and exotic flair, yielding thoughtful discussion and ideas for future research directions for participants and listeners alike.

Anna Siebach Larsen (Ph.D. candidate, Medieval Studies, University of Notre Dame) was the second speaker in the session. Anna’s paper, “Creating Scandal in Bodleian Library MS Selden supra 38,” examined the relationships and tensions between creation, miracles, vision, and scandal in the extensive illuminations and the text of the Anglo-Norman version of the Enfâncies du Jesu Crist found in this little-known early fourteenth-century manuscript from the Bodleian Library.

The third speaker, Kyle G. Sweeney (Ph.D. student, History of Art and Architecture, Rice University) examined the socio-political and art historical contexts of a Gothic portal brought to Cairo by the Mamluk Sultan al-Nasir Muhammad from Acre in 1291. Kyle’s paper, “‘Magnificent in form and beautifully wrought’: A Gothic Portal in Cairo and Mamluk Constructions of Visual Identity,” argued that Gothic architectural elements were not incorporated into existing monuments to make necessarily a political statement. Rather, they were seen primarily as exotic features, and were valued for their aesthetic qualities and symbolic powers by medieval Mamluk patrons in the royal city of Cairo.

We would like to thank our presenters for their enthusiastic participation! The result was a session which enticed the audience with its content of courtly splendor, scandalous imagery, and exotic flair, yielding thoughtful discussion and ideas for future research directions for participants and listeners alike.

Alice Isabella Sullivan, University of Michigan
Lehti Mairike Keelmann, University of Michigan

Obituary for Jens Wollesen

(Editors note: We received two obituaries for Jens Wollesen, and upon consultation with his colleagues and family, we have decided to publish both.)

Professor Jens Wollesen was long a major force in medieval studies at the University of Toronto, where he was an esteemed colleague and teacher. He came to Toronto after conducting graduate work at the Universities of Heidelberg and Munich. He was an expert on the art of Italy and the Mediterranean region and specialized in late medieval pictorial imagery; indeed, he addressed the relation between image and text in a variety of media, including fresco, mosaic and panel painting. He was the author of four books on aspects of medieval art—most recently, Patrons and Painters on Cyprus. The Frescoes in the Royal Chapel at Pyrga (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 2010), and he contributed numerous articles to leading journals such as the Römisch-Jahrbuch der Bibliotheca Herziana and the Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte. Another book, Acre or Cyprus? A New Approach to Crusader Painting Around 1300, is forthcoming from Akademie Verlag (2013). Dedicated to undergraduate teaching, Professor Wollesen was an early innovator in setting up digital technology in support of teaching in the Department of Art. He designed the first-year introductory course, “The Practice of Art History,” exploring the intellectual foundations of the discipline and working methods in the study of art history. He offered the course for many years to the wide acclaim of the student body, and enduringly engaged many students with the history of art. Professor Wollesen was remarkably learned but wore his erudition lightly. His humor, his warmth, his collegial generosity, and his personal charisma will be greatly missed.

Ethan Matt Kavaler, University of Toronto

Professor Jens T. Wollesen, a specialist in the art of medieval Italy and Cyprus, died in Toronto on April 22, 2013. He received his B.A. from the University of Hamburg, his Ph.D. from the University of Heidelberg, and his Habilitation from the University of Munich before traversing the Atlantic to join the Department of Art at the University of Toronto in 1985. For the rest of his life he
remained firmly anchored to Toronto, where his contributions to the pedagogical and scholarly missions of the university took many forms. At various times he directed the undergraduate and graduate programs in Art, and also served on the Art Committee of U of T’s Victoria University, where he was a Fellow.

Jens Wollesen’s work probed several salient issues in medieval art, from the devotional function of panel paintings to images of everyday life. Among his many articles and books are the influential Die Fresken von San Piero a Grado bei Pisa (Bad Oeynhausen, 1977), Pictures and Reality: Monumental Frescoes and Mosaics in Rome around 1300 (New York, 1998), and Patrons and Painters on Cyprus. The Frescoes in the Royal Chapel at Pyrga (Toronto, 2010). He had recently completed a second book on Cyprus, entitled Acre or Cyprus: A New Approach to Crusader Painting Around 1300.

Jens Wollesen could discourse equally on Asian painting, contemporary art, or the medieval artists and patrons who commanded most of his scholarly attention. His intellectual range and curiosity served him well in the classroom. Literally thousands of undergraduates first encountered the discipline of art history in his legendary Intro courses at Toronto. He garnered legions of fans in such adventurous courses as “The Body: An Exercise,” “The Practice of Art History,” and “Is There Crusader Art?” He flourished outside the classroom and study as well as within; he was an accomplished painter and photographer, and a passionate sailor who commanded the waves of Lake Ontario at the first sign of spring. He is survived by his wife, Elena Lemeneva, and children Leon Wollesen, Hanna Wollesen, Christina Wollesen, Victor Wollesen, and Kate Wollesen.

Jill Caskey, University of Toronto
Adam Cohen, University of Toronto

ICMA at Leeds 2013

Variegated Pleasures – the Sensation of Stone in Medieval Material and Visual Culture

Responding to the theme, “Pleasure,” the Student Committee organized a session for the International Medieval Congress at Leeds in 2013 on the materiality of stone in a medieval context. “Variegated Pleasures – the Sensation of Stone in Medieval Material and Visual Culture” sought to explore the appeal of imitation, real and re-used stone for its visual and symbolic significance.

The session delighted the audience with convincing papers that responded to and affirmed one another. Our first paper was delivered by Beth Fischer, a doctoral candidate at UNC-Chapel Hill. She interpreted the strigils on late antique sarcophagi reused in the Middle Ages as evocative of falling water. What might once have been abstract ornament was re-imagined by tenth-century Gallic Christians as symbols with baptismal significance. Stone surface patterns in North African churches were the subject of the next paper given by Nathan Dennis, who is finishing his doctorate at Johns Hopkins University. He examined the purposeful use of mosaics rather than marble slabs for revetments within basilicas and baptisteries in order to replicate the flow of water. The final presentation was made by Mattia Guidetti from the Art History Department at the University of Edinburgh. He spoke about the use of marble spolia from Christian churches in Islamic buildings in the early medieval Mediterranean. Among the issues he raised was the potential for a marble surface to suggest patterns and even figurative motifs in the mind of a viewer.

While there were strong links between Fischer and Dennis’ work on the use of stone to evoke baptismal themes, there was also overlap among the three papers with regard to corporeality and stone. Noting that marble was regarded as having supernatural qualities in the scheme of early Islamic aesthetics, Guidetti observed that marble columns embodied sacred space by commemorating locals of holy events or associations with blessed persons. Likewise, Fischer identified an analogy between a painted figure and a sacred spring which was reinforced by the strigil motif on the sarcophagus. The strigils, acting as living waters in stone, mediated the experience of the divine for the believer. Finally, Dennis read the purity of the white marble for the baptismal font in contrast to the variegated surfaces of the surrounding mosaics as a metaphor for the nude body of the catechumen and the transition experienced through baptism.

Response to the panel was decidedly positive and comments continue to arrive from those who attended the conference reiterating praise for the papers and the organization of the session. The well-crafted session abstract has been credited for providing a point of focus and the work of Stephanie Chapman and Matthew Westerby must be acknowledged here. Facilitating a session at Leeds has been made far easier by international members such as myself on the Student Committee. The cooperative efforts of the ICMA Student Committee members and the panel of speakers made for a successful session at Leeds.

Colleen M. Thomas, University of Dublin,
Trinity College
ICMA AT THE BYZANTINE STUDIES ASSOCIATION OF NORTH AMERICA

Perspectives of the Body and Sacred Space in the Medieval Mediterranean

For the first time, the ICMA sponsored a session at the annual conference of the Byzantine Studies Association of North America, held this year at Holy Cross Hellenic College in Brookline, Massachusetts. Organized by Katherine Marsengill on the theme of “Perspectives of the Body and Sacred Space in the Medieval Mediterranean,” the session explored the location and cadencing of the human body in spatial frames across a deliberately broad range of media, societies, and methodologies. Jelena Bogdanović’s agile “Micro-Architecture as a Spatial and Conceptual Frame in Byzantium” opened the session with an investigation of architecture itself. Though architectural frames have been extensively analyzed in other media, she noted, Byzantine architecture itself has been paradoxically rarely analyzed as a spatial frame in its own right, or examined in the light of modern theories of framing. To redress this neglect she singled out the form of the architectural canopy as seen in four examples within the church of Hosios Loukas in Phocis: the only fragmentarily preserved but readily imagined ciborium over the altar, the canopy of the saint’s shrine at the junction of the old and new churches, the canopy denoting the Temple in the mosaic of Christ’s Presentation, and the canopy of the dome itself over the naos of the church. She concluded that neither Kant’s ornamental parergon, Derrida’s frame stripped by its contractuedness of a capacity to distinguish inside from outside, nor Deleuze’s multi-faceted but firmly secular fold was able adequately to address the ‘glorious spaces’ of the Byzantine architectural canopies. “On the contrary,” she concluded, “micro-architectural frames, such as here analyzed canopies in the monastery of Hosios Loukas, were ontological constructs and functioned as ‘spatial icons’ that aided the believers in their spiritual quests while never fully dissolving the distinction between the earthly and heavenly realms.”

Maria Cristina Carile and Patricia Blessing, in turn, asked about the place of bodies within built spaces. Carile’s “Imperial bodies and sacred space?” asked about the relation of Byzantine dynamic portraits to the architectural spaces in which they were placed. While the dynastic portrait brings with it a message of continuity in most contexts, the portraits assume more nuanced significance when seen in terms of their placement in space: their movement even in secular settings like banqueting halls into close proximity to relics or other points of sanctity brings out the inherent holiness assigned in Byzantium to the imperial body; the inclusion of women in sacred spaces customarily closed to them throws into relief their centrality to dynastic succession; and the placement of a dynastic portrait replete with sacred imagery in a private space like the bedroom of Basil I must have served as a visual confirmation, not least to Basil himself, of divine sanction of his issue though he was a usurper.

Patricia Blessing’s “Approaching the Sacred, Guided by Text” turned to the spaces of mosque and madrasa, in which physical portrayal of bodies was not sanctioned. She asked how the religious spaces of Islam—especially in territories familiar with Byzantine sacred spaces richly articulated with human representations—situated their visitors and led them at the appropriate pace and sequence along the physical and psychological paths required for their effective use of the space. Her focal material was inscriptions, which she analyzed in two architectural complexes in thirteenth-century Asia Minor: the Buruciye Medrese in Sivas, and the multi-functional complex of Sahib Ata in Konya. Comparing the scale, script, embellishment, medium, and placement of historical, devotional, Qur’anic, and legal inscriptions in the spaces of the complexes, she showed how effectively they directed the movement and attention of the devotee or visitor, addressing the presence of the viewing body without representational imagery, and guiding it whether the viewer could actually read the words or not.

The session closed with Katherine Marsengill’s “The Influence of Icons on the Perception of the Human Body,” an inquiry into the framing of the sacred portrait. She argued that Byzantine icons were seen and understood as portraits, distinguished not by being different from other portraits, but by the kinds of framing applied to them. Saints revealed their sanctity in their types, and as their persons assumed sanctity in popular recognition, so their physiognomies settled into the framing typology of their holiness. The framing was formal, but it could also be quite literal: she showed how the Cypriot holy man Neophytos shaped the very apertures of his Enkleistra to frame his own presence as a holy image. Neophytos framed in the entrance to his lower cell would have echoed the figure of Christ framed by a door that was painted just above, just as the aperture to his upper cell surely framed his face like an icon. For him, as for those moving amid Jelena Bogdanović’s canopies, framing both established the ‘glorious space’ of his sanctity, and set off its sacred difference.

Annemarie Weyl Carr, Southern Methodist University
ICMA STUDENT COMMITTEE

In the Pursuit of Knowledge...Apps as Allies?

With the advent of PowerPoint and a shift towards digital image collections, art historians are amidst a technological revolution. Harnessing technology to benefit one’s academic research and teaching is an essential component in today’s scholarly world. One of the latest trends is Apps. Apps, or Applications, have surged in popularity with the rise of ‘smart’ cellphones and tablets. So, the question is, can an App be a useful tool for an art historian? The answer is a cautious, yes! Like many other mainstream Internet marvels such as online image collections, blogs, and thematic websites, Apps need to be approached with a critical, informed eye. Armed with a mentality attuned to the audience, an awareness of the context for which specific Apps are created, and complemented by a desire for the pursuit of knowledge, these nifty virtual programs can become your allies in academia!

While traveling, a smartphone or tablet can be your best friend. Not only do they allow you to keep in touch with email or surf the web, they can also carry useful Apps such as those which keep track of practicalities such as flight information, provide you with tourist information and city maps, or grant access to online dictionaries and translators. When working in an archive, if you are lucky, the institution may grant you permission to photograph materials at no or little cost. Instead of a traditional camera, you can employ an App called “TurboScan” which takes a photograph of your document and immediately creates a pdf file of it that is stored in the memory of your device and can also be easily emailed to you.

Museum Apps can be downloaded ahead of one’s visit to preview a collection or to enhance the museum experience. Many of these Apps eliminate the need to use traditional paper floor plans or brochures (thus helping to lessen paper waste). In the classroom, Apps can be used to enhance the learning environment and may entice students, who are ever more technologically oriented, to explore subjects taught in class. Often, all it takes is a stylish interface and snazzy features to draw students in. One example is the “Art Museum – Timeline,” which when used appropriately, can be a study tool for students in survey courses.

By no means are Apps and other Internet mainstays necessary for academic growth, but they can find a place in an art historian’s life whether as a travel companion, or as a classroom tool. With an informed approach, Apps can become useful in our pursuit of knowledge and in making this pursuit a more enjoyable one.

Along the lines of the Internet and technology, please visit the Student Committee’s Tumblr (http://icma-student-committee-cfp.tumblr.com/) for information on CFPs, including our sponsored CFP for the upcoming International Congress on Medieval Studies in Kalamazoo entitled, “Facing the Abyss: Visualizing Submarine Worlds, Aquatic Life, and Hybrids in Medieval Art.” We have also recently created a Facebook page (entitled ICMA Student Committee) and we encourage interested parties to join!

Lehti Mainke Keelmann, University of Michigan

ICMA DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Colum Hourihane, Director, Index of Christian Art, Princeton University, hosted ICMA members and donors on April 13, 2013 to an afternoon at Princeton. Don Skemer, Curator of Manuscripts, Princeton University, displayed and discussed medieval manuscripts in the library’s collections. Joaneath Spicer, Curator of Renaissance and Baroque Art, Walters Art Museum, provided a tour of her exhibition, “The African Presence in Renaissance Europe” in the Princeton University Art Museum. The afternoon ended with a lovely reception in the offices of the Index.

On May 23, 2013, members and donors were treated to a special tour of the recently opened exhibition, “Illuminating Faith, The Eucharist in Medieval Life and Art.” Roger Wieck, Curator of Medieval and Renaissance Manuscripts, Morgan Library and Museum, discussed his concept for the exhibition, ending in the dramatic story of the “Sacred Bleeding Host of Dijon.”

Fall events will include a tour of the exhibition, “Medieval Treasures from Hildesheim,” at The Metropolitan Museum of Art, and a visit to the offices of the World Monuments Fund in New York. Dates for both events will be announced soon.

The Development Committee met on May 30, 2013, and has scheduled a fall meeting for October 4, 2013.

Doralynn Pines, New York, New York
The depths of the sea have long been an uncanny void accessible to little more than the powers of imagination. This is especially true of the Middle Ages, which conceptualized the submarine world as a space of mystery, monsters, and maelstroms. Despite these enigmas, many individuals were also believed to have navigated the profundity below the waves. Alexander the Great famously explored the sea in a diving bell. The relics of Saint Clement subsisted magically in a shrine on the ocean floor. These and many other miraculous legends fostered a deluge of imagery throughout the Middle Ages that constructed the fabulous and often fearsome nature of the submarine worlds.

This panel is dedicated to exploring visual depictions of the medieval ocean and its inhabitants and to charting the voyage of the imagination both over and under this space. Potential topics might include: the Hexameron and saints’ lives; fish, whales, amphibians, plants and other aquatic life; sea monsters, sea beasts, sirens, mermaids, and hybrids; bestiary traditions; the zodiac, astronomical diagrams, portolan charts, mappae mundi; and the history of submersibles and marine technology.

We are currently seeking proposals for three twenty-minute papers. We encourage submissions from students and scholars in all disciplines. The Student Committee of the International Center for Medieval Art involves and advocates for all members with student status. As a committee that addresses the concerns of students, we see this session as a forum for discussion and informal mentorship within our field.
Historians of all time periods and various sea basins have, since then, embraced and expanded Braudel’s approach, emphasizing the maritime ties between otherwise distant regions and people through travel, trade, and conquest. Art and architectural historians have increasingly adopted this model during the past decade, with a dominant focus upon the Mediterranean Sea. This panel invites papers that explore the importance of medieval cross-sea networks within the fields of art and architectural history. By focusing on the practical considerations of medieval travel and exchange within a maritime context, it is possible to expand, refine, and complicate established assumptions of regional styles, artistic production, cultural exchange or appropriation, and, as Eva Hoffman notes, the portability of objects and ideas. Submissions related to all eras and river/sea routes of the medieval world are encouraged. Topics might explore: art produced by maritime empires, ship construction or ornamentation, cross-sea cultural contacts, depictions of the sea in maps or manuscripts, maritime archaeology, and the reception of sites or products accessed by sea routes.

We are currently seeking proposals for three twenty-minute papers and encourage submissions from students and scholars in all disciplines. The Student Committee of the International Center for Medieval Art involves and advocates for all members with student status. As a committee that addresses the concerns of students, we see this session as a forum for discussion and informal mentorship within our field.

**Deadline: September 15, 2013**

Please submit a one-page abstract and brief CV with contact information to organizers Matthew Westerby (m.westerby@gmail.com) and Peter Bovenmyer (pbovenmyer@gmail.com).
Other Animals and Humans in Medieval Art

Organizers: Corine Schleif (Arizona State University) and Martha Easton (Seton Hall University)

For some “animals are good to eat.” For others “animals are good to think with” (Levi-Strauss). Medieval art and society could not have existed without nonhuman animals. Human knowledge of animals is and was produced and exchanged largely through images (Berger) – albeit differently during the Middle Ages than today. Papers may address the ways in which humans defined themselves against animal others in and through visual images, or the ways in which interspecies relationships were prescribed and proscribed pictorially. We welcome not only papers in which animals are absent and employed as signs for persons and things outside of themselves, but also and especially studies that interrogate “real” animals (Fudge, Hobgood-Oster) as sentient beings with agency as well as filaments within tangled interdependent networks (Haraway, Latour). Participants may explore relationships that manifest themselves in art in terms of companionship, communication, entertainment, food, clothing, energy, gift giving, or liturgical rituals. Panelists may wish to examine intersections with issues of gender, class, race, and breed. Papers may question critically the manner in which art functioned ideologically on behalf of human hegemony, as well as ways in which animals were perceived to “look back,” to be privy to divine omniscience, to utter otherwise hidden truths, and to rise to the level of the holy.

Astrology and its Objects in the Middle Ages

Organizers: Sarah Guérin (University of Montreal) and Ittai Weynrub (Bard Graduate Center)

The objective of medieval astrology was to study the stars in order to determine optimum moments for human action. Proof of the effect of celestial bodies on the sublunary spheres was manifested in everyday life: tides, vegetal growth, and the changing of the seasons. That astral forces also determined human personalities and passions was taken for granted by the most influential thinkers of the Middle Ages. The stars thus needed to be consulted before undertaking any project, and the most important actions to synchronize with the skies were ritual ones—executed at opportune moments, physical rites gained energy and power from the sympathy of planets. Within this conceptual framework, the production of images, talismans, and objects was also determined by celestial movements. This session thus seeks to explore the role of images and objects in the charting and harnessing of natural forces in the Middle Ages.

CALL FOR ICMA SPONSORED SESSION PROPOSALS
INTERNATIONAL MEDIEVAL CONGRESS AT LEEDS, 2014

The International Center of Medieval Art (ICMA) seeks proposals for sessions to be held under the organization’s sponsorship in 2014 at Leeds. Session organizers and speakers must be ICMA members. Proposals for ICMA sponsorship should consist of a title, an abstract, a CV of the organizer, as well as the names of three speakers. Thanks to a generous grant from the Kress Foundation, funds may be available to defray travel costs of sponsored session participants. Please direct all session proposals and inquiries by September 15, 2013 to the Chair of the Programs Committee: Elina Gertsman, Department of Art History and Art, Case Western Reserve University, email: elina.gertsman@case.edu
The Material Collective got its start in Maggie William’s living room when Maggie, Karen Overbey, and Rachel Dressler met to determine what to propose as a session at the First Biennial Meeting of the BABEL Working Group, in Austin, Texas 2010. What brought us together was a shared conviction that the progressive, developmental models of style that drive so much of art history do not seem to capture the power of our encounters with physical things—objects. At that meeting, and at the session that resulted, we took as a shared prompt a passage in Vladimir Nabokov’s novel *Transparent Things* (1972):

> When we concentrate on a material object, whatever its situation, the very act of attention may lead to our involuntarily sinking into the history of that object. Novices must learn to skim over matter if they want matter to stay at the exact level of the moment. Transparent things, through which the past shines!

Our session explored transparencies: of objects, of scholarly practice, of historiography, of pedagogy, of experience. This session resulted in the publication of *Transparent Things, a Cabinet* by punctum books (http://punctumbooks.com/uncategorized/transparent-things/). Through the panel, and the dialogue it generated, we began to think about the kinds of medievalists we are and want to be, and we considered what might arise from the encounter with physical objects: unique collisions between the past and the present, the human and the inanimate, the practice of history and lived experience. We grappled with the role of the historian and our inevitable desire to know the past, and in this struggle we found ourselves challenging the tradition of the detached scholarly posture, allowing our own subjectivity as writers, viewers, historians, and human beings into our scholarly production. And we—speakers, presiders, audience—organized the Material Collective (www.thematerialcollective.org). Our principles are best expressed by the following manifesto which we performed at the BABEL Working Group’s session “Burn After Reading: Miniature Manifestos for a Post/Medieval Studies” at Kalamazoo 2012:

> We are the Material Collective, a group of medievalists interrogating visual materials. We seek to:
>  
> - cooperate
> - encourage
> - share
> - promote transparency
> - touch
> - desire
> - destabilize
> - amuse
> - and blunder

As a collaborative of students of visual culture, Material Collective seeks to foster a safe space for alternative ways of thinking about objects.

We strive for transparency in our practice, and we encourage the same in our institutional surroundings.

Our project touches upon both form and content, as we pursue a lyrical and experimental style of writing along with a more humane, collaborative, and supportive process of scholarship.

We encourage spontaneity in writing art history, including an acknowledgement of our subject positions; therefore we embrace the incorporation of personal narrative and reflection in our historical interpretations.

Our specific interests vary, but we are all committed to prioritizing the materiality of things, the relationships between those things and the human beings who experience them, and the intimacy of past and present moments in time.

As we celebrate, dwell in, and embrace the basic materiality of our objects, we work to find ways to foreground the material of the objects themselves into larger historical analysis.

Central to this effort is a desire to support each other as we attempt to create experimental approaches, and to embrace both the successes and potential failures of our ventures into new ways of thinking.

We are also working to increase the legitimacy of these approaches in the academic world, primarily by practicing them, loudly and often.

We are as much a support group as a scholarly group. We share the joys and sorrows of career, life, and our academic work.

For us, this is not a mere exercise — we stand by our manifesto. And we revel in this opportunity to raise a glass with all y’all, right here and now.

We value: experimental processes  
- risk-taking  
- transparency, revelation  
- a blank space  
- joy in faltering. Together

So say we all.

So say we all.
At that same Kalamazoo we organized a pair of sessions for the ICMA and offered our vision to a packed house of art historians. Both panels, entitled “Active Objects,” were inspired by exhibitions of reliquaries in Cleveland, Baltimore, and London. The sessions invited considerations of how object-centered approaches might develop our understanding of shrines, vasa sacra, and other instruments of faith through two broad themes: visuality and agency. The session organizers also asked presenters to engage phenomenology, optical theories, relational aesthetics, thing-theory, and other object-centered approaches, to explore the making and meaning of devotional objects beyond iconography and patronage. Four of the papers from that session are currently being prepared for publication as a special issue of the journal Different Visions: A Journal of New Perspectives on Medieval Art (www.differentvisions.org); these essays enlarge our understanding of the ways in which materiality shapes the visual and sensorial encounter with medieval objects. The Different Visions volume will also include an introductory essay with two goals: first, to examine the current scholarly interest in “New Materialism” and its implications for Art History, especially the tension between historicist and materialist concerns; and second, to draw out more fully the resonances between the five essays and the larger issues raised by the juxtapositions.

Since then, the Material Collective has been actively sponsoring sessions at BABEL conferences, Kalamazoo, and most recently, the newly-inaugurated Annual Symposium on Medieval and Renaissance Studies at Saint Louis University. “Hoarders and Hordes,” two sessions the Collective sponsored for cruising in the ruins: the question of disciplinarity in the post/medieval university, BABEL’s second conference, focused on the Staffordshire Hoard, the largest collection of Anglo-Saxon metalwork yet found. The papers from these sessions, in which those working from various disciplinary perspectives—medievalists, artists, scientists, performers, poets, curators, art historians, educators, and philosophers—were able to dialogue and collaborate, are now being prepared for a special issue of the journal postmedieval: a journal of medieval cultural studies in the area of visual culture and art history. To further encourage collaboration, we have asked contributors to respond to one another’s work in the form of a mini-crowd review and the postmedieval volume will incorporate both the original papers and comments, and online discussions beyond the conference.

Members of the Material Collective perform their manifesto at Kalamazoo 2012
First: Who Are We?

Finally, several Collective members participated in the BA-BEL Working Group’s session “Blunder (A Roundtable),” dedicated to fails of all varieties. Our contributions by Nancy Thompson and Maggie Williams, Marian Bleeke, and Asa Mittman explored the possibilities that the unexpected, even the mistaken, can lead to greater collaboration, conversation, openness, and dialogue within the academic domain. The greater visibility and engagement with the Material Collective after this Kalamazoo is evident from the spike in the number of Facebook users joining our page after this conference.

Most recently, in June of 2013, the Collective conducted a roundtable on “Networks of Then and Now: Medieval Objects and Their Publics” for the Annual Symposium on Medieval and Renaissance Studies at Saint Louis University. This event was conceived as a roundtable in part to put into practice one of the tenets of the session—networks—but also to tie it in with the broader work of the Material Collective. Included was an introduction to some key methodologies informing the session—Bruno Latour’s Actor-Network Theory and Ian Bogost’s “flat ontology.” What followed was a series of ten-minute presentations featuring objects that each panelist had used to prompt his or her thinking about networks, between the past and the present, and between objects and people. The session sparked a lively informal conversation covering topics such as the historian’s compulsion to seek an unattainable “truth,” the generational divide within academia and its impact on the publishing and production of new work, and questions concerning how we construct our arguments, especially when we venture into new methods and approaches. A fuller discussion of the session is available in Jennifer Borland’s blog for the Material Collective (“MC in the Midwest,” May 18, 2013; http://thematerialcollective.org/mc-in-the-midwest/).

Second: Why Does it Matter?

One way to answer the question, why does the Material Collective matter, is to consider what has been the standard practice of art history to this point: deadly serious, isolated individuals working alone and seeing the results of their work subjected to the scrutiny and evaluation of scholars who may or may not be temperamentally or ideologically appropriate to make such judgments. The situation is often worsened by the blind peer review process. When conducted by responsible and generous colleagues, the process can provide the individual scholar with necessary and constructive feedback to improve her or his work. But when the reviewer is either non-comprehending, or willfully harsh and oppositional, the process can be soul-crushing and career-destroying. What the Material Collective advocates is openness, transparency, good humor and even playfulness. We do not suggest replacing academic rigor with vapid niceties, but rather hope to substitute genuine collaboration for unnecessarily cutting critiques that grow out of competition; we believe in collegiality in the fullest sense of the word. We aim to foster a safe, supportive space for experimental, process-oriented approaches and to open up what is considered scholarship to include exchanges beyond the world of printed books and journals. We embrace social media, Facebook, blogs, online conferencing, and seek to use what new media has to offer to provide for the exploration of new ideas, new discoveries, soliciting the help and inspiration of our colleagues at every step along the way. Ironically, the Collective deploys virtual communication to connect with what is real—real things—in this way enlivening and enriching what all too often has become the numbing emptiness of online existence. The Material Collective is thrilled at the enthusiastic response we have received thus far and invites in all who are interested with open arms. There is no official membership, simply join our Facebook group (https://www.facebook.com/groups/361590540565696/), visit our blog (http://thematerialcollective.org/) and join us for the ride.

Maggie M. Williams, William Paterson University
Rachel Dressler, University of Albany,
State University of New York

The Delaware Valley Medieval Association: 30 Years

The Delaware Valley — the region encompassing southeastern Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Delaware — is rich in colleges and universities and also, happily, in medievalists. With a membership of about 100, the Delaware Valley Medieval Association (DVMA) brings these medievalists together, facilitating interdisciplinary exchange and intra-regional collegiality.

The hub of the region is Philadelphia, and from the start the University of Pennsylvania has offered essential support. The DVMA is the progeny of a four-year program (1979-1983) funded by the Lilly Endowment for the purpose of promoting collaboration among faculty at Delaware Valley colleges and universities by inviting them to share the research facilities of UPenn. The Lilly-Pennsylvania Program focused on five areas of research, including Cognitive Sciences, Literature and the Visual Arts, Mathematical Modeling, Technology and Society, and Medieval Studies. Only Medieval Studies survived as an ongoing association after the expiration of the grant. The success of Medieval Studies owes much to the clever design and adroit administration of the original
program by Edward Peters and Thomas Waldman of Penn’s History Department, who also oversaw the transition to the DVMA.

The Lilly funding was lavish, supporting overnight accommodation for those who needed it, and travel costs and honoraria for distinguished speakers from Britain, Europe, and North America. The format fostered collegiality, with two lectures and dinner on Friday evening and discussion of the lectures the next day – after everyone had had a chance to think about them – along with briefer presentations by colleagues from the Delaware Valley. It was in the learned and smart discussion sessions that one discovered the remarkable depth of expertise among those local colleagues. That and the thrill of hobnobbing with the likes of Walter Horn, Brian Stock, Michael Clanchy, Natalie Zemon Davis, Alexander Murray, Florentine Mütherich, and Beryl Smalley made every meeting a special occasion. There were six two-day colloquia each year – one every month from October through April – on a theme chosen largely by Peters and Waldman. Six week-ends were a major commitment, but profoundly rewarding. The series on “Literacy and Society in the Middle Ages” (1980-1981) forever changed my understanding of the communicative strategies and possibilities of medieval art.

By the time the Lilly grant expired at the end of 1983, there was a cadre of local “Lilly Fellows” excited enough about the periodic meetings to carry on. After a transitional year in which the participants’ colleges and universities were asked for contributions to cover expenses, the organization became self-sustaining. Members pay modest annual dues (currently $35) plus a $10 registration fee for each meeting, and regional institutions continue to subsidize the group with hospitality. The DVMA still meets often at the University of Pennsylvania, but it is a movable feast that, over the years, has convened at just about every college and university in the area, from Rutgers University in New Brunswick to the University of Delaware. When Giles Constable became Professor of History at the Institute for Advanced Study (1985-2003), he offered an annual meeting in Princeton that featured presentations by the medievalists among the Institute’s Visiting Members, followed by a gracious reception at his home. Colum Hourihane has picked up this tradition – including the generous reception! – and the group now meets once a year at Princeton University for a program of papers by colleagues from Princeton and the surrounding area.

Art history has been well-represented from the outset. Larry Nees was a member of the original steering committee of the DVMA and served as president in 2009-2010. Tina Bizarro, Martha Easton, Colum Hourihane, Dale Kinney, Lynn Ransom, Dorothy Shepard, and Matthew Shoaf have also been officers. Will Noel is currently a member of the executive committee, and thanks to him and Lynn the first meeting of 2013-2014 will be hosted in the beautiful new Special Collections Center of the U Penn library. No matter the specialties of the officers, however, the DVMA strives to keep a balance of disciplines in its programs. For many of us, the fascinating alterity of other fields of medieval studies is one of the main reasons why the meetings are compelling and fun.

The DVMA has evolved with changing circumstances. The lavish two-day format of the Lilly-Pennsylvania years proved unsustainable, not only because of the cost but because faculty have become too busy, with many more demands on their time than in the early 1980s. The group now meets on Saturdays, four times a year. Independent scholars, graduate students, and medievalists who hold non-faculty appointments have become important constituencies within the membership. The DVMA now awards an annual Graduate Student Paper Prize and an annual travel grant for members who do not have access to institutional funding to support their research. Regular programs tend to focus on the work of members rather than guests, functioning more than ever to acquaint DVMA members with one another’s research. As the number of medievalists employed at individual colleges and universities declines, meetings are increasingly an opportunity to keep up with fields no longer represented at members’ home institutions. Unchanged is the mission to encourage intra-regional collegiality, still one of the DVMA’s most significant contributions.

In April 2013, the DVMA celebrated its 30th anniversary with a gala program organized by then-president Martha Easton. Following presentations by our founding father Ed Peters, Agnieszka Szymanska (Temple University), another art historian and winner of the year’s Graduate Student Paper Prize), and Jeffrey Jerome Cohen (English, George Washington University), the day concluded with a roundtable on “The Future of Medieval Studies” with presentations by Celia Chazelle (History, the College of New Jersey), Dallas Denery (History, Bowdoin College), Darin Hayton (History of Science, Haverford College), Ann Matter (Religious Studies, UPenn), Karen Overbey (Art History, Tufts University), and David Wallace (English, UPenn). The panelists’ thought-provoking remarks will be posted on the DVMA website (www.dvmamedieval.org), which also contains additional information about the organization.

Dale Kinney, Bryn Mawr College (Emeritus)  
President, Delaware Valley Medieval Association

(Special Reports continues on page 18)
Atmospheric landscapes are also a distinct trait of his style that reflect the most important innovations of northern Renaissance panel painting.

By the middle of the fifteenth century, the region around Ghent and Bruges was well established in Europe as the preeminent locus for the creation of secular illuminated manuscripts. At this time, the voracious collecting of Philip the Good, Duke of Burgundy (1396–1467) was rivaled only by that of his councilor and trusted advisor, Louis de Gruuthuse (1422–1492), Prince of Steenhuijs, governor of Holland and Zeeland, and Earl of Winchester. Louis, the patron of the van Lathem manuscript, is one of history’s greatest manuscript collectors.

Formerly in the collection of the Dukes of Chatsworth, the new work joins the only documented manuscript by Lieven van Lathem, the *Prayer Book of Charles the Bold*, already in the Getty’s collection (Ms. 37). This primary work provides the basis for all other van Lathem attributions. The two manuscripts were together once previously, when the *Gillion* manuscript was loaned to the Getty Museum’s 2003 exhibition “Illuminating the Renaissance,” where it was one of the highlights.

The new manuscript will be on view at the Getty Center from September 3, 2013 to March 2, 2014.

Elizabeth Morrison, The J. Paul Getty Museum
The Mishneh Torah at The Metropolitan Museum of Art and The Israel Museum, Jerusalem

At auction in April, The Metropolitan Museum of Art and The Israel Museum, Jerusalem jointly acquired an illuminated copy of the Mishneh Torah, the renowned twelfth-century work of the Jewish scholar Maimonides. An ambitious commission and justly celebrated work of art, this Hebrew manuscript attests to the opulence of north Italian book decoration in the fifteenth century and to the refined aesthetic sensibility of the elite members of Italy’s Jewish community. The book is richly decorated, with six large painted panels embellished with precious pigments and gold leaf, as well as forty-one smaller illustrations with gold lettering adorning the opening words of each chapter.

The manuscript’s paintings are attributed to the Master of the Barbo Missal. The artist’s name comes from the missal he created for Marco Barbo, Bishop of Trevizo, a noted bibliophile and cousin of Pope Paul II who later became a cardinal. The same artist worked for important patrons in the Veneto and Lombardy and contributed to the decoration of the Bible of Borso d’Este, Duke of Ferrara. This Mishneh Torah is the only surviving example of this master’s work for a non-Christian patron.

The manuscript is one of the most lavishly illustrated copies of the Mishneh Torah ever made. It was conceived in two volumes. The first, owned by the Vatican, comprises Books I-V (Book VI is missing) and is associated with the workshop of Cristoforo de Predis. In the manuscript belonging to the Met and the Israel Museum, full-page illuminations illustrating aspects of the law serve as the frontispieces for six of the seven books (books VII-XIV), with smaller illuminations and decorated text blocks added throughout. With no iconographic precedent to guide him, the artist often looked to the world around him even as he relied upon courtly decorative conventions. Thus, men and women in typical Renaissance attire frequently appear within a lush, flower-strewn landscape and against a cerulean sky ornately textured with white scrollwork. The manuscript is not only a primer of north Italian ornament, but also a compendium of contemporary costumes, buildings and customs.

The Mishneh Torah, literally the “Second Law,” is the magnum opus of Moses Maimonides (1135-1204), one of the most important Jewish philosophers of all time. Born in Córdoba, Spain, Maimonides (aka the Rambam) moved to Morocco and eventually settled in Egypt, where he was the personal physician of the vizier. He wrote a number of classic Jewish texts, including the philosophical treatise Guide for the Perplexed. With the groundbreaking Mishneh Torah, which he completed in 1180, Maimonides consolidated the unwieldy post-Talmudic code of law into a systematic, comprehensive, and accessible anthology.

The manuscript underwent a complete restoration in the Paper Conservation Laboratory at the Israel Museum, where it has been on long-term loan since 2007 and on view to the public since 2010. It can be seen in New York from October-December, 2013. It will then go to Israel for two years before returning again to New York for a lengthier stay.

Barbara Boehm and Melanie Holcomb, Department of Medieval Art and The Cloisters, The Metropolitan Museum of Art
Medieval Memoria Online (MeMO)

Medieval Memoria Online (MeMO) has recently launched an extensive database containing images, inscriptions, epitaphs, altarpieces, tomb monuments, stained-glass windows, and archival sources. This valuable resource is the result of a multi-year project headed by art historian Truus van Bueren at the University of Utrecht. The research team has catalogued material for the area corresponding to what is today the Netherlands for a period ending in 1580. You can access it at [http://memo.hum.uu.nl/database/index.html](http://memo.hum.uu.nl/database/index.html). Plans are underway to expand the database to include Belgium, Denmark, Germany, and Austria.

Book of Kells.

Many readers of the Newsletter may already have discovered that Bernard Meehan’s new volume *The Book of Kells* (Thames and Hudson, 2012) contains dozens of sumptuous photographs of the manuscript. At the same time Trinity College has produced a remarkable app (available for download from the Apple store for €12) containing images of all 340 folios. This allows for manipulation of twenty of the best known folios, including magnification to a high level.

Theft and remorse in Ireland

Sometime between April 16 and May 10, 2013 the octagonal stone support of a fifteenth-century font was stolen from the ruined church at Rathmore (Meath). Made of a single block of stone, the shaft is carved with figural subjects, which include the Baptism of Christ, saints Peter and Paul, and Christ showing the five wounds. Once the theft was discovered there was a national outcry which soon brought results. Some days later, in the hours of darkness, the culprits drove up to the church and replaced the stolen shaft. The case is now under investigation by the local Gardai (police). Despite the happy outcome, the incident underlines the vulnerability of the many small ruined churches of Ireland. The theft is one of a number that have taken place in recent years, the most serious of which was the removal of the twelfth-century shrine of St Manchan from the (modern) church of Boher (Offaly), though this too was happily recovered within a few days.

Many photographs of the Rathmore font were taken by the late Edwin Rae of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, whose collection of Irish photographs is now online at [www.gothicpast.com](http://www.gothicpast.com), a website launched by Trinity College in 2012.

Roger Stalley, Trinity College Dublin
**Visual Histories of Islamic Cultures**

A new monograph series for Islamic art and architecture, *Visual Histories of Islamic Cultures*, will be published by the well-respected German publisher de Gruyter, and co-edited by Avinoam Shalem and Finbarr Barry Flood. The editors will be assisted by an advisory board comprised of international scholars in the relevant fields.

*Visual Histories of Islamic Cultures* is the first professional academic book series devoted to the art, architecture, and material culture of the Islamic world that approaches cultural production as a series of interrelated aesthetic rather than predominantly regional or religious phenomena. The series focuses on aesthetics, mobility, translatability and, conversely, on the limits of both, the tensions between mobility and rootedness, and the transformation of cultural forms and practices in translation. Seizing the moment of a growing interest in questions of mobility and the intersections between the global and the local, the series encourages approaches that move beyond the traditional search for origins or influence to emphasize the role of "Islamic" art as one of the main vectors in a global history of art. The series will mainly publish submissions in English that demonstrate innovative scholarship of a high caliber; works dealing with areas or subjects marginalized within canonical histories of Islamic art are especially welcome. It will include monographs on relevant work in any media from the beginnings of the Islamic period to the present as well as critical approaches to the historiography of the visual in both academic and museological contexts.

Manuscripts and proposals should include a short (3- to 5-page) description of the book, its significance and relevance to the field(s) that it engages, a table of contents and a brief c.v. of the author(s)/editor(s). They should be submitted to: Katja Richter, Editor, Art & Music Division, Walter de Gruyter GmbH - Genthiner Strasse 13 - D-10785 Berlin / Germany; katja.richter@degruyter.com.

**Manuscripts-on-Microfilm Database at Dumbarton Oaks**

Dumbarton Oaks Research Library holds almost 2000 microfilm rolls that are reproductions of medieval and early modern manuscripts, the originals of which are held in institutions around the world. In 2011, the Library began a project that included the creation of a database representing the Library’s microfilm holdings. Thanks to the combined efforts of Library and Publications staff, a version of that database, with records for 1252 microfilm and 1221 manuscripts, is now available on the D.O. website: [http://www.doaks.org/library-archives/library/mmdb](http://www.doaks.org/library-archives/library/mmdb).

**Christine de Pizan Manuscript Now Online**

A lavishly illustrated copy of Christine’s poems made under Christine’s personal supervision for Queen Isabeau of Bavaria (London, British Library, MS Harley 4431) is now available online. A summary of the digitization project, together with sample images, can be found in this entry on the Library’s manuscripts blog page: [http://britishlibrary.typepad.co.uk/digitisedmanuscripts/2013/06/christine-de-pizan-and-the-book-of-the-queen.html](http://britishlibrary.typepad.co.uk/digitisedmanuscripts/2013/06/christine-de-pizan-and-the-book-of-the-queen.html).

**“Bridging Cultures”**

As part of the Muslim Bookshelf portion of its Bridging Cultures initiative, the NEH asked D. Fairchild Ruggles to make a series of seven short films on Islamic calligraphy, illustrated manuscripts, textiles, ornament, mosques, architecture of
travel, and gardens. They are now available online, gratis, and are designed for students and teachers in fields outside of Islamic art history. For a classroom in medieval art, where Islam may get only a lecture or two, they may be a good resource. See NEH Islamic Art Spots at http://bridgingcultures.neh.gov/muslimjourneys.

The Medieval Electronic Scholarly Alliance (MESA)

The Medieval Electronic Scholarly Alliance (MESA) is a federated international community of scholars, projects, institutions, and organizations engaged in digital scholarship within the field of medieval studies. MESA seeks to provide a community for those engaged in digital medieval studies, and to meet emerging needs of this community, including making recommendations on technological and scholarly standards for electronic scholarship, the aggregation of data, and the ability to discover and repurpose this data. MESA aggregates the best scholarly resources in medieval studies and makes them fully searchable and interoperable. This interface also provides a collection and authoring space in which researchers can create and publish their own work. For more information, see http://www.mesa-medieval.org/about/.

The Portable Antiquities Scheme Website

The Portable Antiquities Scheme is a DCMS funded project to encourage the voluntary recording of archaeological objects found by members of the public in England and Wales. Every year many thousands of objects are discovered, many of these by metal-detector users, but also by people walking, gardening or going about their daily work. All finders of gold and silver objects, and groups of coins from the same findspot, which are over 300 years old, have a legal obligation to report such items under the Treasure Act 1996. Prehistoric base-metal assemblages found after January 1, 2003 also qualify as treasure. This website provides background information on the Portable Antiquities Scheme, news articles, events listings, and access to a database of objects and images. For further information, see http://finds.org.uk/.

Educational Study Tour of Malta and Cyprus

Dr. Veronica Kalas will be leading an educational study tour to Malta and Cyprus this fall and is searching for interested participants. This is an excellent opportunity to learn about the cultural heritage of these two amazing Mediterranean island nations combined uniquely into one trip. For more information, please see the following link: http://mideasttrvl.com/malta-and-cyprus/, or contact Dr. Kalas directly at vkalas@yahoo.com

CONTRIBUTORS