

Medieval Chronicle

THE MEDIEVAL STUDIES PROGRAM
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN–MADISON



Textile with Animals, Birds, and Flowers. Late 12th–14th century. Eastern Central Asia. Rogers Fund, 1988. [The Met Museum](#)

Director's Note:

It's been another busy semester for **Medieval Studies at UW-Madison!** Our community continues to grow, with our undergraduate studies certificate in particular attracting interest. This spring alone we have 9 undergraduates graduating with the certificate – congratulations to all! As you'll see in the news that follows, people are publishing and giving talks on exciting new research, completing PhDs, winning awards, getting jobs, and sustaining a vibrant medieval studies community!

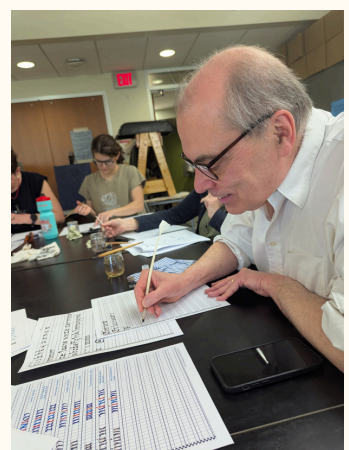
This spring we wrapped up our speaker series on “Border/Crossings,” generously supported by the Anonymous Fund and many other departments and programs on campus. **Professor Denva Gallant (Art History, Rice University)** presented a dynamic lecture on Giotto's frescoes in the Scrovegni or Arena Chapel in Italy to a packed lecture hall. Dr. Gallant offered an astounding model of how to close read a single image, focusing on the representation of a Black African at the center of a fresco on the Mocking of Christ, who is poised on the edge between joining the violence and repenting. Attending carefully to details like clothing, hands, and hair, Dr. Gallant explored how blackness could rhetorically create a spiritual whiteness. *(continued)*



Dr. Gallant also presented a workshop for faculty and graduate students on a chapter from her book manuscript in progress. This chapter is on visual representations of the Miracle of the Black Leg, a medieval legend in which an ailing white man is cured by removing his leg and surgically replacing it with the leg of a recently deceased Black African.

Next, **Meg Lionel Murphy**, an MFA candidate in Art at UW-Madison, gave a public lecture on how her own paintings have been inspired by medieval art, as well as why the medieval matters so much in this moment, and has mattered to other artists in the 20th and 21st centuries. Attendees even got to spend 5 minutes drawing while looking at a medieval-inspired artwork and listening to a song by the Spanish musician Rosalía, whose 2025 album *Lux* engages with the work of female saints and mystics, including the medieval Hildegard of Bingen. You can check out some of Meg Murphy's work at www.meglionelmurphy.com.

In April, **Medieval Studies** also collaborated with **Professor Jonathan Senchyne** of UW-Madison's Center for the History of Print and Digital Culture and **Professor Mary Hark** (Design Studies, UW-Madison) for a series of events with **Professor Krista Sue-Lo Twu** (**English, University of Minnesota Duluth and University of Minnesota Imagine Fund Arts, Humanities, and Design Chair**), who is leading an interdisciplinary team on Book of the North, a project to create a late medieval book from the ground up using materials accessible in the Upper Midwest. Medievalists were lucky to join **Dr. Twu** for a spinning workshop and a calligraphy workshop:



In the first, **Dr. Twu** demonstrated carding wool and spinning both wool and flax on spindles and the great wheel. Participants got to try spinning wool on a drop spindle and examine samples of wool from a variety of sheep, as well as fibers from milkweed, cotton, hemp, and silk. I can attest that spinning wool is even harder than it looks, but we all made good progress! *(continued)*



In the second workshop, **Dr. Twu** taught two styles of medieval handwriting. We used metal nib pens and quills to write with walnut ink (made by Dr. Twu from walnuts collected in Duluth, where climate change has recently made it possible for the trees to fruit) as well as two iron gall ink recipes – one medieval and one from Jane Austen. We also got to see examples of Dr. Twu's truly impressive calligraphy skills and learn about the science of ink-making, including examples of writing in ink made from buckthorn, an invasive species.

Finally, I would like to thank **Mariana Sarkis Olson**, who has been our PA this year, for all her amazing work running social media, updating the Medieval Studies website, creating posters and fundraising appeals, and assembling this newsletter! Mariana is moving on to other projects at UW-Madison next semester, and we are grateful for all the work she's done to keep Medieval Studies running!

If you are graduating or changing jobs, please contact me with your new email address so I can add you to our Medieval Studies alumni email list and/or our Madison-area medievalist community email list. Once again, congratulations, and we hope you'll stay in touch!

Wishing you all a wonderful summer,



Jordan Zweck - jlzweck@wisc.edu

Associate Professor of English and Director of Medieval Studies.



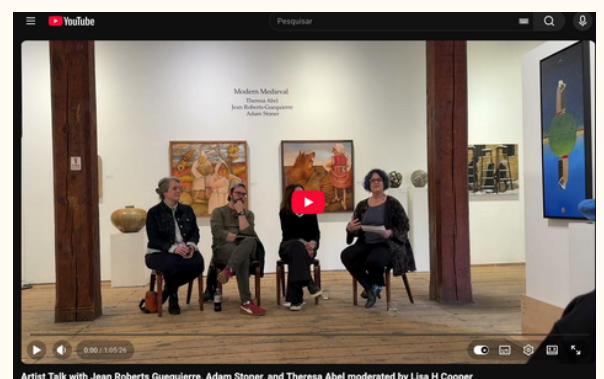
Faculty News

Professor Emeritus Christopher Kleinhenz (French and Italian)

published two articles: “Poetic Translation: Art and Architecture in Dante’s Comedy” in *A Cultural History of Translation in the Age of Cross-Cultural Interaction*, ed. Marie-Alice Belle and Michelle Bolduc (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2025), Volume 3, 173-80 and 209-11; and “Translations of Dante’s Comedy in Other Media,” in *Dante’s Comedy in English Translation: Critical Perspectives, Reception Histories, Assessments*, ed. Jacob Blakesley, Federica Pich, and Theodore J. Cachey, Jr. (New York: Routledge, 2026), 228-32.



Professor Lisa H. Cooper (English) recently published two open-access articles: “Knives Out: Culinary Violence, Alimentary Texture, and Chaucerian Character” in *postmedieval* 16 (2025): 439-456, and “Of Catalogs, Cupboards, and Chemists: Revising the Handlist of the Ordinal of Alchemy” in *Manuscript Studies* 11.1 (2026): 102-35; a copy of an image used in this article appears on the cover of the journal issue. She presented the paper “Liquid Learning” at the meeting of the Medieval Academy of America in March, and will present a different paper on alchemical poetry this summer at the Biennial Meeting of the New Chaucer Society in Freiburg, Germany. In April, she led a gallery talk with the three artists presenting work in the exhibition “Modern Medieval” at Abel Contemporary Gallery in Stoughton, WI; the paintings and discussion can be viewed online here. She has also just been appointed to the Editorial Board of *PMLA* (Publications of the Modern Language Association of America) for a two-year period beginning July 1.



Congratulations

 **YouTube**
Click to watch!

Faculty News

Professor A. N. “Nick” Doane (English) ed. *The Werden A Glossary, (Corpus Christianorum, Continuatio Mediaevalis, Lexica Latina Medii Aevi, 8)*, Brepols: Turnhout, Belgium.

Walton O. Schalick III, MD, PhD (Orthopedics & Rehabilitation, LEND/Waisman, and Medieval Studies) will present “The Twin Paradox: A Study of Health, Disease, and Disability in the Twelfth-Century *De gemellis*” at the American Association for the History of Medicine meeting in June, where he will also chair a panel on teaching the history of medicine in medical settings. Walt published an online English translation of a Renaissance medical consultation by Paolo Zacchia—*Quaestiones medico-legales, Consilium LII*—as part of a collaborative project led by Jacalyn Duffin to translate Zacchia’s medico-legal consilia (“[Paolo Zacchia, Quaestiones Medico-Legales CONSILIUM LII — English Translation](#)”)

In April, he was an invited plenary speaker on mentoring at the Society for Humanities, Social Science, and Medicine in San Francisco, an organization he helped establish. At that meeting, he presented novel research entitled, “Bless Us All, Every One’: Children with Physical Disabilities in Long Nineteenth-Century London.” He also delivered “An Apple a Day?: Medicine and the Medieval Manor” for the Manorial Society of Great Britain.

New volumes continue to appear in book series Walt co-edits, including *Premodern Health, Disease, and Disability* (with Wendy Turner and Christina Lee; formerly Amsterdam University Press, now Routledge) and *Disability History* (with Julie Anderson, Coreen McGuire, and Aparna Nair; Manchester University Press).

(continued)



NEW

Recent titles in the former include Eyice & Forss, *Health and Society in Early Modern Sweden* and Hella & Korhonen's *Cultural Perceptions of Health, Illness and Medicine in Medieval and Early Modern Europe*. In his clinical research, collaborating with Amber McKenna, Kimberly Arndt, and Bonnie Weigert, Walt coauthored grants and posters on adaptive crayons for children and adults with complex conditions; he also continued participation in PECARN, the federally funded pediatric emergency research network. He chairs a national ethics and quality review committee for PECARN and serves as chair or member on three clinical Data and Safety Monitoring Boards for pediatric emergency research.

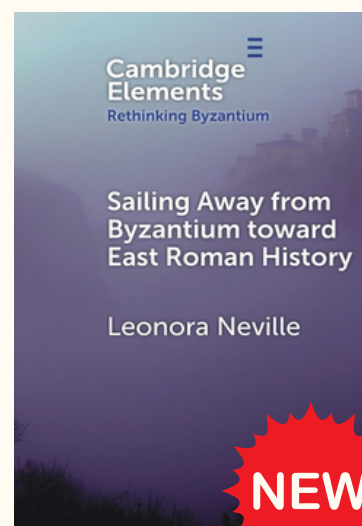
Given that “Byzantine” means “frustratingly complex” far more often than “the Roman empire in the medieval east Mediterranean,” **Professor Leonora Neville (History)** has been pushing her colleagues to rethink their field without the rubrics inherited from 18th-century European ideas about historical periodization. In 2025 she published a short book on the subject: *Sailing Away from Byzantium toward East Roman History*, and an even shorter article in the centennial volume of the journal of the *Medieval Academy of America*: “Western Supremacy and ‘Byzantium’.” *Speculum* 101.1, 2026, 76-81. Both make for humorous light reading. While on sabbatical she gave two lectures in Greece, four in Turkey, and finished a draft of a big book on religion and government in the east Roman empire.



Congrats!

Lectures:

- “Komnenian Shifts in Imperial Christomimesis,” in The Komnenian Restoration of Byzantium and its Legacy, symposium at Ibn Haldun University, Istanbul, May 8-9, 2026.
- “From Creation to Constantinople: Byzantine Visions of History,” Boğaziçi University Byzantine Studies Research Center, Istanbul, May 7, 2026.
- “Byzantine Gender: Nature and Effort in pursuit of Masculinity,” Bilkent University, Ankara, May 5, 2026.
- “Thinking and Translating “Byzantine Gender”, Leonora Neville and Berke Çetinkaya organized by Boğaziçi University Byzantine Studies Research Center and ANAMED, Koç University Research Center for Anatolian Civilizations, Istanbul, March 27, 2026, 4:00 pm.
- “Introduction to Byzantine Gender” Department of Classical Philology, University of Athens, March 19, 2026.
- “God and Good Government: Civic Religion in the East Roman Empire, ca. 843-1180,” National Hellenic Research Foundation, Byzantine Studies Lecture, Athens, Greece, March 16, 2026.



Graduate Student News

Patrick Eickman (Ph.D. Candidate, History) has won the Mosse Teaching Fellowship for 2026-2027. He will be teaching a course on the history of emotions in medieval and early-modern Europe. This summer he will be organizing several panels for both the Society for the Study of the Crusades and the Latin East Conference in Porto and the International Medieval Congress in Leeds. Patrick will then spend the rest of his summer conducting research in Berlin having obtained an International Research Grant from the Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz (Prussian Privy State Archives).



Congrats!

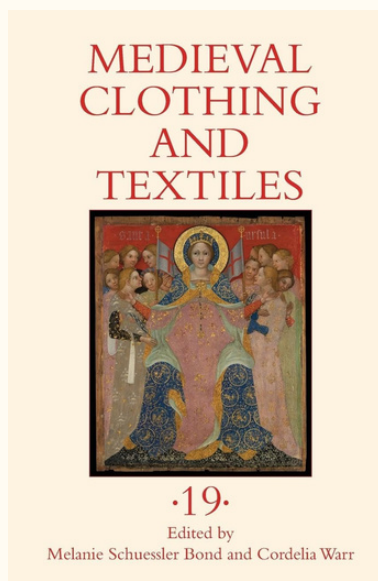
Claire Kilgore (PhD Expected December 2026, Art History) published her peer-reviewed article “Clothing the City’s Martyrs: Weaving and Spinning in Late Medieval Cologne and Devotion to the Cult of the Eleven Thousand Virgins” in Volume 19 of Medieval Clothing and Textiles. The article received an honorable mention in the 2025 Emerging Scholars Essay Prize competition administered by the Historians of German, Scandinavian, and Central European Art (HGSCEA).



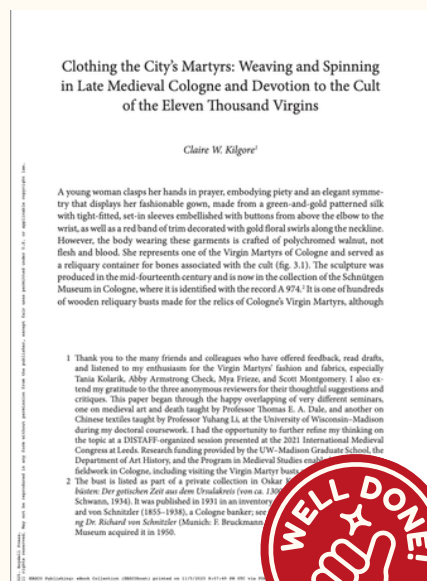
Claire and Charlie!

Claire's research in Cologne on the Virgin Martyr Busts was funded in part by the Medieval Studies Program Lemoine-Midelfort Fellowship.

Congrats!



Journal Cover Photo, with an image from Claire's article on the cover!



Graduate Student News

Abby Armstrong Check (Art History) will be defending her dissertation, "Hostile Architecture: Visualizing Jewish Urban Identity of Late Medieval Provins" on Friday, May 1, 2026. She will be graduating this Spring 2026.

Abby's work re-examines the medieval fair city of Provins, southeast of Paris, to reveal how its built environment was shaped both for and against its Jewish community between the eleventh and fourteenth centuries. Though the Jews of Provins enjoyed unusual social and economic integration as merchants and moneylenders, Abby argues that anti-Jewish sentiment was nonetheless embedded in the city's architecture. From the sculptural programs of the Priory-Church of Saint-Ayoul in the lower town, to the visually charged "surveillance zone" formed by the Collegiate Church of Saint-Quiriace, the Palace of the Counts, and the Jewish quarter in the upper town, Abby's dissertation traces how proximity and design communicated ideological tension—linking royal and ecclesiastical power to the marginalization of Jewish life, even amid periods of prosperity and learning. To conclude, her epilogue reflects on how the Jewish presence in Provins has been erased from modern narratives.

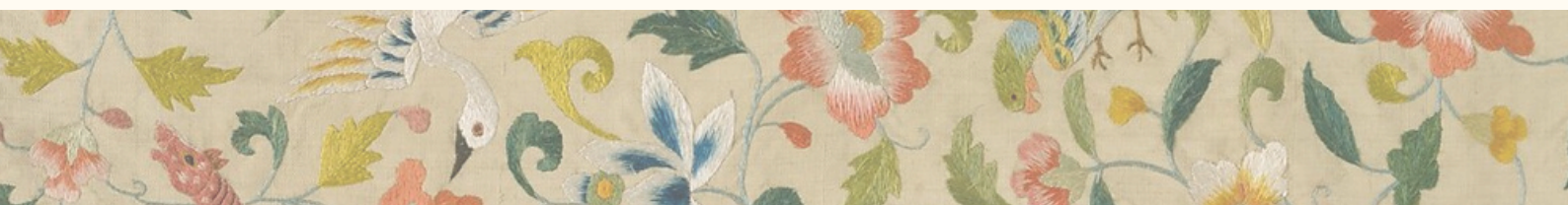
Following the defense, **Abby will join the Milwaukee Institute of Art and Design** faculty as a tenure-track Assistant Professor of Art History in the Department of Critical Studies, beginning this fall.



CONGRATULATIONS!

*The MSP extends its warmest **congratulations** to Abby on this remarkable achievement and wishes her every success and fulfillment as she begins this exciting new chapter at the Milwaukee Institute of Art and Design!*

We welcome your photos from talks, archival work, and research adventures — please, send them our way!



Undergraduate Student News

The Medieval Studies Program is delighted to recognize and congratulate our undergraduate students who are expected to graduate with a Certificate in Medieval Studies this Spring 2026:

Lily Adams

Heba Haq

Emma Karpfinger

Erin Ross

Magnolia Goodin

Chloe Plunkett

Violet Scharf

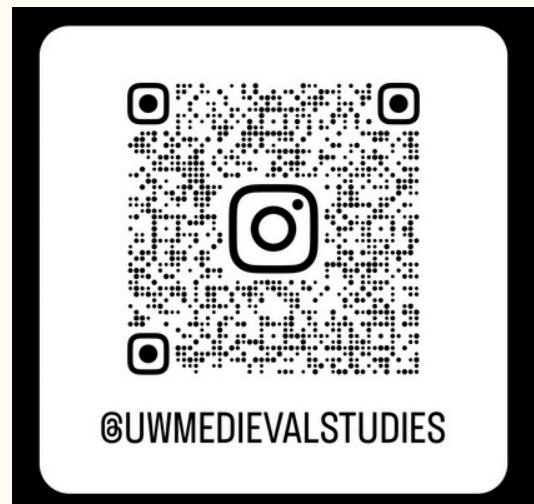
Anthony Scott

Brynn Sullivan


Congrats!

We celebrate their accomplishments and wish them every success in their future pursuits!

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And visit our website to keep up with everything happening.

