

historians, he and Moorhus had tried to insure that cinematic considerations did not outweigh historical accuracy in the film's presentation.

The film itself begins with the battle to seize the bridge at Remagen and progresses to the withdrawal of the bulk of American forces in the mid-1990s. The narrative line is carried by the observations of those who lived the experience rather than by an omniscient narrator. Music consonant with the chronology of the story underscores the cross-cultural influences. A lively discussion followed the screening of the film.

Comments ranged from laudatory for all that the film covered in its 52 minutes to critical of some of the issues it left out. Cinematic choices, such as the staging of interviews, occasional rough transitions (both visually and historically), and the multiplicity of focal points attracted commentary. Some observers found the selection of interviewees too heavily weighted towards officers, so that the experience of the enlisted soldier received less attention. As co-producers Grathwol and Moorhus acknowledged that the film remained a work in progress. The film's producer-director, Max Lewkowicz, of Rainmaker Productions Inc., in New York City, hopes to use the nearly 200 hours of videotaped interviews and the substantial collection of archival footage that he has acquired to develop a six-hour series for public television.

*Robert P. Grathwol
Philipp Gassert*

MEDIEVAL HISTORY SEMINAR

Seminar at the GHI, October 25–28, 2001. Conveners: Caroline W. Bynum (Columbia University, New York), Johannes Fried (University of Frankfurt), Patrick J. Geary (University of California, Los Angeles), Christof Mauch (GHI), Christoph Strupp (GHI).

In 2001 the German Historical Institute successfully launched a new annual program for German and American doctoral students in medieval history: the Medieval History Seminar. The seminar is based on the format of our well-established Transatlantic Doctoral Seminar for students of modern history. Every year in the fall it will bring together an equal number of doctoral students from both sides of the Atlantic for a weekend of scholarly discussion and exchange.

For the first seminar, proposals from all areas of medieval history were taken into consideration. The conveners selected seven American and nine German students to present their dissertation projects. Over the

summer all students prepared papers of high quality for a conference reader, that was distributed among the participants in advance. Unfortunately, due to the developments after the terror attacks of September 11, only five of the German students and only one of the German mentors were able to come to Washington for the seminar in October.

Although the first Medieval History Seminar thus had to start with a smaller group of participants, it nevertheless managed to create an atmosphere of lively discussion and intensive intellectual exchange. Since the papers had been pre-distributed, there was ample time for questions and arguments in the six panels. Each panel featured two papers, introduced not by the authors themselves but by two of their fellow students acting as commentators. The discussions benefited greatly from the enthusiasm of the participants and the expertise of Professors Caroline W. Bynum, Johannes Fried, and Patrick J. Geary, who had agreed to serve in this year's seminar as senior scholars and moderators. Without claiming to be representative for the discipline as a whole, the papers provided fascinating insight into current research in medieval history in Germany and North America.

The majority of the papers concentrated on aspects of late medieval history. Three projects dealt with earlier periods: Steven Stofferahn presented his work on the political culture of Carolingian exile. He posed a broad range of questions about the nature, function, execution, and the legal and cultural basis of exile in the Middle Ages, as opposed to later periods. It became clear that an analysis of the practice of exile offers valuable insights into Carolingian political culture, the structure of aristocratic relationships, medieval political rituals, and questions of cultural identity in general.

Valerie Garver dealt with the *prudentia*—the knowledge, professional, and intellectual skills—of Carolingian aristocratic women. The high level of social competence they could acquire enabled them to effectively manage essential activities, like the running of a household or monastery, the education of children, and the memorial preservation of the family. *Prudentia* tended to overcome divisions between lay and religious women, but although noble society valued those abilities, they did not necessarily pave the way for a greater public role of medieval women.

Jonathan Lyon's paper concentrated on a different aspect of family history in the Middle Ages. He explored the kinship networks of the noble family Andechs-Meranier. The Andechs-Meraniers held important secular and ecclesiastical positions in southern and central Germany in the eleventh to thirteenth centuries. Lyon argued in favor of a broad understanding of medieval kinship groups and called for historians to pay equal attention to male and female branches of the family. Family

history in the Middle Ages should be more than a history of “counts, margraves, and dukes” alone. The discussion focused on several methodological aspects of Lyon’s approach.

Ilse Freudenthaler dealt with the account books of René of Anjou, King of Sicily and Naples, and Duke of Anjou, to shed light on the relationship between the financial capabilities and the representational demands of a king. The account books were an important part of the complex everyday organization of a late medieval court and marked the transition from an oral to a written culture in the late Middle Ages. The theoretical approach Ms. Freudenthaler applied to her main source in her paper was based on modern theories of communication and led to an intense debate, whether account books can be treated as means of communication in this sense.

Several papers dealt with questions of religion and reform in the late Middle Ages. “Drinking, gambling, clamorous late-night songs and music; lewd images of women in private rooms; dissolute behaviour in public”: James Mixson’s paper opened with a colorful picture of Dominican religious life in the fifteenth century as contemporary critics saw them, before taking a fresh look at the Observant Movement. This movement was a crucial influence in the changes that late medieval orders underwent. Mixson tried to escape the limits of traditional scholarly models of analysis by concentrating on the “*propriarii*,” who have been commonly held up as perfect evidence of compromised ideals. Based on a careful reading of contemporary sources, he called categories such as “radicalism,” “decline” or “reform” into question and situated the Observants in a much broader and more complex pattern of change in late medieval religious life.

June Mecham used the *Dornenkron* prayer books of the Cistercian Convent of Wienhausen in Lower Saxony in the late fifteenth century to enrich our understanding of female spirituality and daily religious life in general. Through their graphic descriptions the narratives of the *Dornenkron* books enabled the nuns to identify with Christ and to appropriate the memory of Christ’s Passion as their own. They created a very special form of unity with Christ. Through a detailed analysis of the differences between the books, Mecham aimed at recovering authentic female voices and the spiritual concerns of individual nuns. Several participants in the discussion stressed the importance of gender as a category for a historian’s picture of the past.

In his paper on Prague in the age of Charles IV, David Mengel managed to bring together two topics that are seldom discussed in connection with one another: prostitution and religion. His paper served as a fine example of taking a local perspective on religious manifestations. Prague in the later fourteenth century was a flourishing city that was going

through great physical changes. Mengel explained his concept of “religious topography,” which allowed him to view together instances of religious dynamism and the city’s changing urban structure. This paved the way for a new kind of contextualization of the religious movements of the time.

The revelations of the holy Brigitta of Sweden in the old-Czech translation of Thomas of Štítné served as an example of the Bohemian literature of edification in Pavlína Rychterová’s paper. The revelations Brigitta received in the late fourteenth century dealt with a broad range of subjects: the moral decay of Christianity in general and the church in particular, current political events such as the Hundred-Year War, and the rule of the order she founded. They were published after her death in eight volumes. Rychterová’s paper concentrated on the reception of these texts in Bohemia, where they were translated and edited by the religious writer Thomas of Štítné and aroused the interest of Emperor Charles IV. and professors at Prague University.

Several other papers also focused on developments in regions or cities. Henning Steinführer examined the process of *Verschriftlichung*—growing literacy—in a number of medium-sized cities of Wettin Saxony between the thirteenth and fifteenth century. The economic development of the region, demographic growth, and a more specialized administration all contributed to this process. His research illuminated the development of medieval municipal institutions as well as the everyday life of the cities.

David Sheffler contributed to the history of medieval education, a difficult subject because of the lack of traditional sources for southern Germany. He focused on the schools of Regensburg and reconstructed the educational landscape of the city through a case study on the murder of the cathedral canon Conrad von Braunau during a popular school festival in the city in 1357. Beside much detailed information on the operation of two ecclesiastical schools in Regensburg, the paper contained valuable information on the tense relationship between cities and church-run schools in general. Steinführer’s and Sheffler’s papers both raised the problem of micro-history, which is always vulnerable to criticism of the selection criteria used for the case-study and can be in danger of overstating the importance of single cases.

The last panel featured two papers on medieval historiography. In his discussion of the medieval historiography of the West German city of Münster, Oliver Plessow concentrated on the methodological aspects of his subject. Medieval texts challenge modern historians through their usually complex tradition. This is also true for Plessow’s main source, the “Chronicle of Florence of Wevelinghoven,” the first history of the bishopric of Münster. Using contemporary theoretical models of “narrativ-

ism" from France and the Anglo-American world (including the work of Roland Barthes and Hayden White), Plessow was able to shed new light on the difficult process of the "contextualization" of medieval texts and the element of construction that is inherent in modern interpretations. This led to a lively debate on the relationship between language and reality in general.

Matthias Maser also dealt with a historiographical topic. His paper on the *Historia Arabum* of Rodrigo Jiménez de Rada took the seminar away from Central Europe to the medieval Spanish peninsula. The book by de Rada represents the only surviving history of the Islamic world in Latin. Maser introduced its author, who was the archbishop of Toledo and a leading representative of the Spanish Reconquista, and his historiographical writings, which circled around the remarkable project of a "Spanish" national history.

The final discussion of the Medieval History Seminar, chaired by Professor Fried, focused on the commonalities and differences between German and American medieval historiography. The papers and discussions as a whole concentrated largely on aspects of medieval culture and social relations. They avoided well-trodden paths of research by using new sources and new theoretical approaches and stayed away from dogmatic discussions and scholarly jargon. The group agreed that international medievalist research during the last decades has been characterized by several important developments, including: increased thematic convergence, a dwindling of the nationalistic dimension of research on the Middle Ages in Germany, and the growing importance of a European dimension in research topics. But the discussions in the seminar also shed light on the important differences between the ways in which topics are approached and discussed on each side of the Atlantic. Participants also stressed the differences in the university systems, which lead to different career paths for German and American medievalists. The seminar certainly reached its goal of bridging the gap between the two scholarly cultures and helping young medievalists establish professional contacts within the community of medievalists, especially in USA.

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Christoph Strupp

Participants and Their Topics

ILSE FREUDENTHALER, University of Augsburg, "Hofkultur und Repräsentation. Die Rechnungsbücher Renés von Anjou (1409–1480) als serielles Medium"

VALERIE GARVER, University of Virginia at Charlottesville, "*Prudentia* and Carolingian Aristocratic Women"

JONATHAN LYON, University of Notre Dame, "Expanding Kinship Networks: The Broader Family of the Andechs-Meranier"

MATTHIAS MASER, Friedrich-Alexander University Erlangen-Nürnberg, "Rodrigo Jiménez de Rada und seine 'Historia Arabum'. Historiographische Konzeption und Formen der Darstellung"

JUNE MECHAM, University of Kansas, "Female Piety and Private Prayer: The Dornenkron Prayer Books From the Cistercian Convent of Wienhausen in Lower Saxony, c. 1450–1500"

DAVID C. MENGEL, University of Notre Dame, "From Venice to Jerusalem: Prostitution, Conversion, and the Religious Topography of Emperor Charles IV's Prague"

JAMES D. MIXSON, University of Notre Dame, "Observants, Conventuals, and the Problematic of Reform in the Late-Medieval Religious Life"

OLIVER PLESSOW, Westfälische Wilhelms-University Münster, "Überlegungen zu einer Methodik der Untersuchung mittelalterlicher historiographischer Texte: Das Beispiel der münsterschen Geschichtsschreibung"

PAVLINA RYCHTEROVA, University of Konstanz, "Die *Revelaciones* der heiligen Brigitta von Schweden in der alttschechischen Übersetzung des Thomas von Štítné. Die Erbauungsliteratur in Böhmen, ihr Charakter und ihre Wirkung"

DAVID SHEFFLER, University of Wisconsin at Madison, "Festum Stultorum: The City, the Bishop, and the Schools of Regensburg"

HENNING STEINFÜHRER, University of Leipzig, "Stadt und Schriftlichkeit im wettinischen Sachsen zwischen dem 13. und 15. Jahrhundert"

STEVEN A. STOFFERAHN, Purdue University, "Renegades, Relatives, and Refugees: The Political Culture of Carolingian Exile"