

University of Toronto: Centre for Medieval Studies

The Faculty Perspective

Suzanne Conklin Akbari

I hope it's not out of place to begin a description of Medieval Studies at Toronto with a personal anecdote. In early 1995, as a newly-minted Ph.D., I came to Toronto as a prospective job candidate. Already aware of Toronto's long-standing reputation in the field, I was prepared to be impressed; but I was not prepared to be seduced, as I was, by the collegiality of the faculty and students and the riches of the libraries. I can still vividly remember being shown the Library of the Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies by the then-librarian, John Magee, and whispering to him over and over again, "It's like a candy shop, John!" It was indeed like a candy shop to those of us who, as bookish children, had grown up seeking out the few works on medieval topics in our elementary school libraries, and ended up spending our graduate careers buried in piles of paper and microfilm.

What I experienced that day, both in the luxuries of the Library and the warm, engaged conversation of the faculty and students, was a foretaste of what would prove to be an extended banquet. Medieval Studies at Toronto, anchored by the Centre for Medieval Studies and enriched by the strength and traditions of the Pontifical Institute, has proven to be a magnet for scholars of the Middle Ages, both established faculty who come for research visits and beginning graduate students who are drawn by the opportunities to learn in an environment dedicated equally to research and teaching. At the same time that it attracts scholars, however, the program in Medieval Studies is also a source of newly trained specialists who move out into the wider scholarly

community—not just across Canada but also in the United States and abroad—disseminating the strong linguistic, paleographical, editorial, and interpretive skills acquired at Toronto for the benefit of new generations of students. It is a heritage of pride for Canadian medievalists.

The cornerstone of Medieval Studies at Toronto is, of course, the Latin program. Entering graduate students are expected to take examinations either at the M.A. or Ph.D. level; exams not passed on entrance are retaken later in the year, until the student fulfills the Latin requirement for the degree undertaken. Students are supported in their efforts to master the language not only in formal classroom instruction but also in informal study groups and, of course, the regularly scheduled Latin Scrabble tournaments! George Rigg has led several generations of students along the sometimes tortuous path of Latin learning, and the Centre has been very fortunate to have been able to persuade him to keep teaching in the Latin program even after officially retiring from the University. With the recent addition of Lawrin Armstrong (Ph.D. Toronto 1996) to the faculty, alongside George Rigg and David Townsend (Ph.D. Toronto 1985), Latin language instruction at the Centre has never been stronger. After passing the Ph.D. Latin requirement, some students go on to take advanced seminars in medieval Latin literature or philology; other students choose to integrate their knowledge of Latin with the study of medieval vernacular languages which are also offered at Toronto: not just the usual choices of Anglo-Saxon, Middle English, and Old French, but also Old and Middle Irish, Middle Welsh, Old Norse, Anglo-Norman, Occitan, Catalan, Middle High German, and so on. Recently, some students have even expanded their exploration of medieval literary culture beyond its traditional European boundaries, including medieval Arabic in their programs in order to study (for example) the multicultural environments of Muslim-ruled Spain or Norman Sicily. The Centre hopes to continue to foster this kind of ground-breaking expansion of the field of Medieval Studies.

Though Latin language and literature is at the heart of the program, literary studies are just one of the strands of specialisation available to students in Medieval Studies. The Centre works closely with related departments in the University of Toronto; these harmonious interactions have been especially well cultivated over the last several years under the directorships of Roberta Frank and David Klausner, to the benefit of the departments and the Centre alike. Students perhaps benefit the most, being able to take advantage of academic resources both in the departments and in the Centre, and to gain valuable experience as teaching assistants in appropriate

departments. Being trained in an interdisciplinary field like Medieval Studies surely confers tremendous benefits on a developing young scholar; at the same time, however, the interdisciplinary nature of the training can sometimes make it more difficult to land that first tenure-stream job, at a time when departments are increasingly rigid in their definition of field and specialisation of job candidates. The experience of teaching in large, mainstream departments such as English, History, and Philosophy makes it easier for new Ph.D.'s trained in Medieval Studies to demonstrate to their prospective employers that their interdisciplinary background is purely a strength, and in no way a limitation.

The integration of teaching and research in Medieval Studies at Toronto is evident in the participation of graduate students in the several research programs ongoing at Toronto: not just the Dictionary of Old English and the Records of Early English Drama (both described separately below), but also in projects such as DEEDS (Documents of Essex, England, Data Set). Links to these and other research projects can be found at the Centre's website (www.chass.utoronto.ca/medieval/), as well as information on the journals and publication series in Medieval Studies directed by faculty at the University of Toronto. These include *The Journal of Medieval Latin*, Toronto Medieval Latin Texts, Toronto Old English Series, and Toronto Medieval Texts and Translations. In addition, smaller research projects centred on the work of individual faculty members are under way, funded by granting agencies such as SSHRCC. Andy Orchard, for example, has integrated several graduate students into one of his current projects: the construction of a database of repeated formulaic phrasing in Anglo-Saxon literature, both Old English and Anglo-Latin.

The annual cycle of research and scholarly interaction at Toronto flowers, as it were, in the spring, when the Centre for Medieval Studies hosts its annual conference. This year's conference, "Perceptions of the Past/Visions of the Future," held on 22 February 2003, centers on the ways in which the medieval world dealt with the passage of time. In addition, the dynamic community of students at Toronto recently organised the "Vagantes" graduate student conference, co-sponsored by fellow students at Harvard University and, beginning this year, by students at Cornell. The inaugural conference, held at Harvard in the spring of 2002, was a great success, and the 2003 conference hosted by Toronto promises to be even better. Several graduate students also choose to enrich their program of studies by involvement with the PLS, or Pociuli Ludique Societas. This group, founded in the 1960's, is dedicated to the production of medieval and early modern drama in a mode faithful to the historical circumstances

in which the plays were written. The group's recent staging of the York Cycle was a great success, and the PLS is looking forward to its production of the Digby Mary Magdalen play in May 2003.

In a time of financial cutbacks for Canadian universities, Medieval Studies at Toronto has benefited from the University's strong commitment to our program. Just last year, new appointments were made in medieval philosophy (Peter King) and musicology and liturgy (John Haines). These appointments were shared with related departments, again illustrating the ongoing effort made by the Director of the Centre to cooperate with other parts of the faculty in creative ways. This year, medieval searches are under way in English, Fine Art, History, Jewish Studies, and Philosophy, and future hires in cooperation with other departments are planned for the following year. Currently, almost one hundred faculty members are directly appointed or cross-appointed to the Centre, while graduate student enrolment is steady, with approximately eighty students in the program at any given time. The new Graduate Funding Program recently implemented by the University of Toronto has made it possible for us to offer consistent financial support to graduate students over the whole length of the program, so that we no longer lose our best applicants to private (and relatively affluent) U.S. universities. Collaborative programs in Medieval Studies in conjunction with Ancient and Medieval Philosophy, Women's Studies, and Book History and Print Culture are thriving, while a new collaborative program in Editing Medieval Texts has just been introduced. In short, Medieval Studies is healthy and well at Toronto—*floreant in aeternum!*

The Student Perspective

Mark Sundaram

The Centre for Medieval Studies, as an interdisciplinary organisation, provides its students with an experience that differs in many respects from that of students in other departments such as the Department of English or the Department of History. The usual refrain that I hear from Centre students is that they appreciate the opportunity to interact with other student medievalists. Those with literary interests can converse on medieval matters with those with more historical interests, and so forth. Indeed the Centre's program leads directly to this sort of interdisciplinary contact. From the very beginning of the M.A. program the students interact with each other in the context

of the Latin classes. Students who might not share any other classes at least have the opportunity to share this class. Indeed, the rigorous Latin program at the Centre often serves to create a bond among students, who must all endure the same trial by fire. In addition to the required Latin classes, students of different disciplinary interests often take other Centre courses such as Latin Paleography together.

In addition to the interdisciplinary involvements, Centre students also interact with students from other departments in a variety of contexts. Beyond the courses offered through the Centre, there are numerous courses with medieval foci offered through other departments at the university, and many students of the other departments find themselves in classes with Centre students. What is more, many Centre students elect to take courses outside of those with medieval subjects. Indeed for those students who expect to be employed in departments other than medieval studies departments, taking courses with subjects outside of the Middle Ages can be very useful.

Beyond the classroom, there are many other opportunities for interaction with other medievalists. The Work in Medieval Studies (WIMS) series of lectures is an opportunity for both Centre students and medievalists in other departments to present their work in a friendly and casual environment. Students can test-run conference papers or thesis chapters on their peers in this less formal context. Similar to WIMS is the Medieval Britain (Med-Brit) discussion group. There are, in addition, a number of more formal contexts for presenting and listening to papers. The Centre's Annual Conference not only gives students the opportunity to hear the conference papers of the many scholars from around the world who take part and submit their own papers for consideration, but also the opportunity to take part in the organisation of such a conference. In addition to the student co-organiser and the several students who serve on the Annual Conference Committee, numerous students volunteer to help organise every aspect of the conference. Also, in recent years, Centre students, in association with medievalist graduate students from other universities, have organised a graduate student conference called "Vagantes," which changes its venue from year to year. And of course it should also be noted that as the Centre is located within driving distance of Kalamazoo, Michigan, Centre students are easily able to attend the International Congress on Medieval Studies held there without the necessity of plane fare which is often difficult to manage on a graduate student's budget. Each year a van-load or two of Centre students drive there together, reducing the costs further still, and increasing the enjoyment of the conference for everyone.

On the lighter side of student interaction, there are various informal ways in which students socialise with one another. There is a long-standing tradition at the Centre of pairing up new M.A. students with veteran students who host them for dinner, after which follows an evening party for the whole Centre. This arrangement not only serves to introduce the new students to the more seasoned students, who can provide a wealth of useful insight, but also helps the older students to fight off the solipsism of dissertation writing. In addition to this beginning of the year party, there are various other parties organised by the very active student committee throughout the course of the year. Another lighthearted activity which students and faculty alike take part in is the frequent Latin Scrabble games which are held at the Centre, which are both entertaining and edifying. And during the summer months, Centre students form a softball team, the Papal Bulls, which competes in an intramural league within the university.

The Centre is an orphaned department within the University of Toronto, in that it has no undergraduate program. One of the main consequences of this for graduate students is that there are fewer teaching assistantships available within the department. With the exception of teaching assistantships for classes such as Latin and palaeography, students must seek such work outside the Centre in the various departments. Fortunately, for the most part these jobs are forthcoming, and in a way, this arrangement is to the benefit of the students. In addition to the teaching assistantships in medieval courses administered by the cognate departments, many students are assigned courses in areas outside of the Middle Ages, and this can be quite useful in demonstrating one's versatility down the road. Centre students also have access to employment in the numerous research projects which are ongoing at the Centre, such as the Dictionary of Old English (DOE), Records of Early English Drama (REED), and Documents of Essex England Data Set (DEEDS). Such projects not only provide employment for students, but also give them an opportunity further to develop research skills. Another way in which students can improve their academic skills is through the series of presentations organised by the Sources and Resources committee, which cover such topics as the use of materials in the PIMS library, applications for grants, various options for publications, and other essentials of a grad student's life.

Finally, one immense advantage of studying at the Centre is the easy access to a wealth of resources, at the PIMS library, which is a restricted access non-lending library of medieval materials; the Robarts library, which is the main university library; and

specialised collections such the DOE materials, which are an indispensable resource of Old English editions, manuscript facsimiles, and other research tools all in one location. It is very rare indeed that one cannot find anything one needs, and this makes every aspect of doing research easier, and, most importantly, faster. Everything that will speed up a student's work, and help us finish our dissertations more quickly, is a great boon!

Records of Early English Drama

Alexandra F. Johnston

Records of Early English Drama is an international research project based at the University of Toronto that is revolutionising scholarly understanding of Shakespeare's dramatic context. The aims of the project are to locate, edit, and publish systematically all evidence for drama, music, and ceremony in Great Britain from the earliest surviving record in any location to 1642 when the professional theatres were closed by the Puritans. In assessing the work currently underway in early drama, William Tydeman, writing in the *Cambridge Companion to Medieval English Theatre* (1994) says "the REED project is of major significance, providing as it will all the evidence available to modern systematic researchers, in order to assist our efforts to perceive how local conditions, resources, influences, preferences, and prejudices helped to shape the dramatic experiences of which the extant scripts can provide only pallid reflections" (33). So far twenty collections have been published in twenty-two volumes. The most recent publication is the three-volume records of *Kent: Diocese of Canterbury*, containing much of interest to medievalists. The next collection to be published will be *Oxford City and University* in two volumes. Research into many other collections is far advanced and will be published as quickly as our financial resources allow.

The interdisciplinary value of the project is being increasingly recognised by leading scholars outside English studies. Eckehard Simon, the Professor of Germanic Philology at Harvard, has written, "REED has shown how the humanities can make a permanent contribution to human knowledge. Drama scholars, social historians, musicologists, and art historians will be using REED volumes long after the literary publications of our age have been forgotten." Eamon Duffy used the REED volumes extensively in his magisterial *The Stripping of the Altars* (Yale, 1992).

Fresh information about the extent of folk drama, touring entertainers (professional and otherwise), civic and parish drama, patronage and musical activity becomes available to the scholarly world with each new publication. We are compiling a comprehensive database of traveling companies and their patrons from the late medieval period on. Many new fifteenth-century patrons have been identified in the recent *Kent: Diocese of Canterbury* collection, significantly extending our understanding of traveling entertainers back into the medieval period. We are also working on an interactive web site that will provide information on touring routes, playing spaces, and patrons' biographies.

The central REED office in Toronto can be visited by interested researchers. We have an extensive library of material that can be consulted in the office. It is primarily a collection devoted to works on early drama, music, entertainment, and ceremony including most of the standard works on early drama and music and some on dance in monograph and periodical form. We also have a collection of basic reference books for paleography, genealogy, biography, chronology and dating, weights & measures, coinage, and parish history. Our map collection includes a complete set of the counties of England with the parishes marked with their jurisdictions (i.e. "Archdeaconry of Worcester") and a full set of modern Ordinance Survey Maps with some nineteenth-century equivalents. We also have several complete collections of transcriptions for collections waiting to be published that can be consulted with the permission of the editors. Several doctoral dissertations for universities in the U.K. have been researched in Toronto using this material. Our manuscript collection in microfilm, though mainly from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, does include substantial material from before 1500, including city and town records, records of cathedrals, great aristocratic houses, monastic houses, schools, parishes, craft and religious guilds, and ecclesiastical courts. Researchers have used our material for books and articles on civic and ecclesiastical history. We have concordances in English, Latin, and Anglo-Norman that were generated for our own editorial purposes for each collection; these contain much information about the history of each language.

The office of REED is located on the campus of Victoria University in the University of Toronto at 150 Charles Street West. The phone number is 416 585 4505. For further information, visit our website at www.chass.utoronto.ca/~reee/reed.html.

The Dictionary of Old English

Dorothy Haines

A visitor to the St George campus of the University of Toronto may be surprised to learn that the top floor of the concrete block known as the Robarts Research Library is home to the Dictionary of Old English, an historical dictionary of the language of the Anglo-Saxons who themselves knew of neither concrete nor, in our sense of the word, dictionaries. But, dreary exteriors can deceive. Active productivity and collaboration characterises the eight staff members of the DOE (five editors and three support staff). The editors not only write the entries of the Dictionary but periodically teach courses in a variety of specialties (e.g. Old English Philology, Old Norse), mentor Ph.D. theses, and serve on committees at the Centre for Medieval Studies. Student research assistants are an indispensable help to us, and they themselves gain by acquiring valuable research skills and competence in the language. All entries are sent out to specialist readers, located all over the world, who provide expert advice and feedback. Because of this support network and our frequent international visitors, the DOE has always felt itself to be a part of the larger community of Anglo-Saxonists worldwide.

Working here it is easy to take the resources that surround us for granted, but speaking as one who has returned to the DOE following four years of teaching in the U.S., I view with renewed appreciation not only the considerable research resources of the University of Toronto, but also the DOE's own library containing a comprehensive collection of editions of Old English texts, microfilms of nearly all the manuscripts containing Old English, copious word studies, and secondary materials.

Furthermore, the DOE, both by necessity and by design, has always found itself on the frontier of technological change. The present is no different: fascicles A-E, previously only available on microfiche, will soon be joined by the letter F and published on CD-ROM, which will represent a giant leap forward in terms of the kinds of searches possible in the dictionary entries themselves.

As with most projects of this kind, securing funding and writing grant applications are an ongoing part of the annual routine. The international nature of the DOE is reflected in its funding, which comes from Canadian, American, and British funding agencies as well as from a variety of generous and much-appreciated individuals.

Finally, we are glad that, with both the Centre for Medieval Studies and the Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies a few blocks away, there is a community of medievalists to keep us company and to invite us, occasionally, out of our concrete tower into the more suitably medieval decor of wood and tapestry.

Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies

Ann M. Hutchison and Fred R. Unwalla

The Pontifical Institute, the oldest research institute in the humanities in Canada, continues to thrive with a new academic program, an expansive list of scholarly publications, and a library that remains outstanding in its research collections.

Academic program

In the 1998–1999 academic session, the Institute inaugurated a new post-doctoral academic program for its Licence in Mediaeval Studies (LMS). That year four applicants from Canada, the United States, and Europe were accepted. Since then, the program has continued to grow (there were nine candidates in 2001–02, and eight in 2002–03), attracting scholars from various parts of the world and in many areas of medieval studies.

Generous funding from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation of New York City has also enabled the Institute to provide for up to four post-doctoral fellowships each year (until 2005). The Mellon Fellowships, awarded to young medievalists of exceptional promise, have attracted scholars in a range of disciplines. All Mellon Fellows have also undertaken the Licence in Mediaeval Studies.

Each candidate for the Licence is given the status of Research Fellow and assigned an Academic Advisor from among the Fellows of the Institute. All candidates participate in the program's mandatory Interdisciplinary Research Seminar, which is attended by Institute Fellows, all Research and Mellon Fellows, as well as faculty from the University of Toronto and other interested scholars (some of whom come from out of town to attend). The candidates for the LMS are each required to give two presentations, one in the autumn term and the second in the spring. The aim of the program, however, is to provide an optimal opportunity for the development of the candidate's personal research within the context of the Library's resources and the interdisciplinary tradition of scholarship that has long distinguished the Institute.

Publications

The Institute's Department of Publications operates as a small university press, and produces studies, texts, translations, reference works, and collections of articles relating to the history and culture of the Middle Ages. Recent publications have included the long-awaited critical edition of Guerric of Saint-Quentin's *Quodlibets*, edited by Walter Principe, CSB (1922–1996), for many years Senior Fellow in theology at the Institute, as well as a new translation of Etienne Gilson's magnum opus on the philosophy of Thomas Aquinas. The annual journal, *Mediaeval Studies*, begun in 1939, continues to flourish, publishing critical editions and articles by Institute Fellows, alumni, and prominent medievalists in the field.

Each academic year, usually in early March, the Etienne Gilson Lecture, established in honour of the Institute's founder, is given by a senior medievalist. Among the distinguished contributors to the series are Marcia Colish, Giles Constable, Jocelyn Hillgarth, Edouard Jauneau, James K. McConica, Joseph Owens, Brian Stock, and this past year, John D. North. A number of the lectures have been published and are available free of charge from the Institute's Department of Publications.

Through a generous anonymous benefaction, the Institute has acquired funds to publish original work in the field of medieval Christian moral teaching. The Medieval Moral Teaching Fund seeks to foster knowledge and interest about moral issues in the world and how they were pondered and taught in the Middle Ages. The Fund also sponsors lectures and research fellowships.

The Library

The Institute Library, which opened in 1929 with a mere 3,000 titles donated by St Michael's College, today has holdings of more than 100,000 volumes, complemented by specialised collections of microfilms and slides. Recognised as the finest collection of its kind in North America, the Institute Library is also acclaimed as one of the outstanding repositories of medieval publications in the world.

The Friends of the Library of the Pontifical Institute, an active group composed of faculty, students, and alumni, was formed in the spring of 1991 with the aim of helping the Library to maintain its status as a major resource for scholars. For the long term, the Friends have established and are building up a capital fund that will eventually assist the Library in making important acquisitions in the face of limited annual budgets. In addition, each year the Friends undertake a special project aimed at

addressing a particular need of the Library. Last year, the Friends helped underwrite the costs of conserving and restoring the more than 300 volumes of the Rolls Series, important source books containing charters, texts, and other documents related to the history of the British Isles. On a very ambitious level, this year the Friends are raising funds for the purchase of a state-of-the-art digital microfilm reader-printer, a welcome addition to the Library in view of the new collaborative program in Editing Medieval Texts at the Centre for Medieval Studies in the University of Toronto.

The Friends also sponsor two annual lectures. The spring lecture has been named to honour the memory of Leonard E. Boyle, OP, a long-time Senior Fellow of the Institute. This year the fourth lecture was given by Eamon Duffy of the University of Cambridge; other lecturers have been William Sheehan, CSB (Curator of Printed Books, Vatican Library), William P. Stoneman (Librarian, Houghton Library, Harvard), and Elizabeth A.R. (Peggy) Brown (Brooklyn College and the Graduate School and University Center, City University of New York).

Further information about the Institute's academic program, publications, resources, and events may be found on its comprehensive and up-to-date website at <http://www.pims.ca>.