

Dalhousie University

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There are only a handful of scholars who have their primary appointments in Dalhousie departments and a primary interest in medieval fields. In French, we have Hans Runte, best known among medievalists for his work on the Seven Sages of Rome, but his more recent publications have been in the field of Acadian letters. In English, we have Hubert Morgan, who works in Middle English, Old Norse, and Old English (romance, saga, and epic are particular interests), and Melissa Furrow, who has finally completed a long labour on reception of romances in medieval England (*Expectations of Romance: Drasty Rymnyng or Noble Tales*, currently under review) and is now returning to an earlier editorial project (*Ten Fifteenth-Century Comic Poems*) to revise for a new edition with TEAMS. In History, we have Cynthia Neville, well known personally to members of CSM for her extensive work on the national and international scene on prize, review, and adjudication committees, and more broadly known through her scholarship on late medieval English legal history and on Scottish social, political, and cultural history. She is the author of *Violence, Custom, and Law: The Anglo-Scottish Border Lands in the Later Middle Ages* (Edinburgh UP, 1998) and the forthcoming *Native Lordship in Anglo-Norman Scotland: The Earldoms of Strathearn and Lennox, 1170-1350* (Four Courts Press). A recent and exciting addition is Jennifer Bain in Music, a music theorist who works on Hildegard of Bingen, and on fourteenth-century music. This tiny number and the clearcut disciplinary boundaries proclaimed by departmental organisation might suggest that medieval study at Dalhousie has fallen off steeply from the days when we had a formally recognised honours degree in Medieval Studies and a bigger pool of faculty. It is true, a bigger pool would be helpful, and the priority within English for the next appointment is for a medievalist. But in various ways medieval studies at Dalhousie does better than it looks as if it should.

We don't have a formally integrated program in Medieval Studies, but we do have an informal and productive co-operation with each other in neighbouring institutions and neighbouring departments within Dalhousie. This is most critical at the graduate level. Allan Mitchell, for example, is our most recent Ph.D. graduate in the medieval field (October 2002): he has won a SSHRCC postdoctoral fellowship, taken it to Bristol where he works among such luminaries as John Burrow, Elizabeth Archibald, and Ad Putter, and has had a book manuscript accepted by Boydell and Brewer (*Ethics and Exemplary Narrative in Chaucer and Gower*). Mitchell's supervisory committee included Melissa Furrow from the Dalhousie Department of English and Janet Hill from our neighbour Saint Mary's (*Stages and Playgoers*, McGill-Queen's Press). Sara Butler graduated with a Ph.D. from our Department of History the previous year under the supervision of Cynthia Neville, with Melissa Furrow on her committee. Her book manuscript, *The Language of Abuse: Marital Violence in Later Medieval England*, is currently under review at the University of Toronto Press, and she is pursuing further research at Saint Mary's on a SSHRCC postdoctoral fellowship, allied there with Tim Stretton (*Women Waging Law in Elizabethan England*, CUP). Such flexibilities of supervision are also possible at the master's level, where for example in the English Department Nadine d'Entremont wrote her thesis on "Breton Lays: Medieval Orality and Morality" (1997) with Hans Runte of French on the committee; Karen Berrigan, "Woman, Why Weepest Thou?: The Influence of Mary Magdalene on *The Book of Margery Kempe*" (1999) with Anna Smol of Mount Saint Vincent University (Adjunct Appointment at Dalhousie with several graduate seminars taught here) on the committee; and Margaret Fast, "From a Corpse to a Life: The Body in Old English Hagiography" (2001), under the supervision of Smol. Elizabeth Edwards (*The Genesis of Narrative in Malory's Morte Darthur*, D.S. Brewer, 2001), Vice-President at King's College, has a second academic home in our Department of English, where she has just served as committee member on Andrew Lobo's thesis ("Kay's Reputation and Malory's Audience") and has now taken on supervision of two new theses, Joe Haigh's "For the have I bigonne a gamen pleye": Reading the Rhetoric of Friendship in *Troilus and Criseyde*" and Matthew Flanagan's "In Golden Letters: The Role of Prophets and Prophecy in Sir Thomas Malory's *Morte Darthur*."

Such lists give a sense of the variety of work being done here, and the way in which scholars of different disciplines and institutions work together. In part this is a product of the peculiar nature of our mystery: work in medieval literatures and languages and history has always had to be interdisciplinary. In part it is a product of necessity: these are all small departments, and we need to pool together to achieve the

mass needed for graduate supervision. And in part it is a product of shared interest. A Medieval and Early Modern Reading Group, swelling, shrinking, and shifting in attendance depending on the particular scholarly book being read, brings together graduate students and faculty members (from Saint Mary's and King's as well as Dalhousie) to discuss recent work of interest to some or all of us, and to wash down our criticisms or punctuate our praises with a glass or two, perhaps the strongest sign that we are not only working together, but we are enjoying the experience.