Greetings, Friends & Colleagues--

I sincerely hope that you are all resting well after another full academic year. Much has happened in the Association, and much is planned for the future. The Pocatello conference went off swimmingly; new leaders were elected; the RMMRA returned to Kalamazoo; plans have been laid for next year's conference in Denver; &c. Details below! -- Jefferey H. Taylor, RMMRA President.

Item: 2012 Conference @ Pocatello

The 44th Annual Conference of the Rocky Mountain Medieval & Renaissance Association was be held in Pocatello, 12 - 14 April 2012, under the exquisite direction of Dr. Thomas Klein & Associates of Idaho State University. Those who attended can testify to the high quality of many stimulating presentations and discussions; those who missed missed much. So, for the reminiscence of the fortunate attendees and the enlightenment of others, we present here an archive of the 2012 RMMRA Conference:

Classifying the Medieval and Renaissance World

Idaho State University - Pocatello  12 - 14 April 2012

The moone mandeth hire light,
So doth the seemly sunne bright,
When briddes singeth breme.
Dewes donketh the downes;
Deeres with here derne rownes
Domes for to deme.

--14th century lyric
2012 RMMRA Conference Summary

Friday Sessions:

“Classification and Genre in Medieval to Early Modern France” Presenters: Scott Hiley, Brooke Donaldson Di Lauro, and Michael Call

Hiley discussed the definition of usury in the late twelfth and thirteenth centuries and held “that the analysis of usury is a key locus for understanding both the relationship between philosophy and the economic practice and discursive models of medieval subjectivity.”

Di Lauro presented on Maurice Scève’s Délite, and argued that “recognizing the degree to which the visual elements of the woodcuts and the verbal elements of the poems complement and augment each other deepens our understanding of the work as whole.”

Finally, Call focused on the controversy surrounding Molière’s The School for Wives, and stated that, “For Conti and anti-Molière authors of the quarrel, genre troubles…share a common logic with the scandalous gender troubles incited by Molière’s play, illustrated by parallel descriptions of indecision and ambiguity. Generic discussions and moral considerations in the quarrel therefore constitute pendants, allied discourses mobilized to oppose Molière’s ethics and aesthetics of pleasure, the ambiguous Gordian knot posed by The School for Wives.”

“Chaucer, Lydgate, and Hoccleve” Presenters: Erin Lehmann, Alaina Bupp, and Alice Blackwell

Lehmann explored the role of friendship for women in medieval society, focusing particularly on Chaucer’s Troilus and Criseyde, and argued, “By exploring the link between Criseyde’s relationships with friends (or lack thereof) and the map of her transformation, new understanding of the importance of friendship to interpreting the medieval world may emerge.”

Bupp looked at John Lydgate’s Troy Book from the perspective that “[t]he book itself becomes a literary production about literary production. Lydgate’s model and its transmutable categories emerge clearly from the words and images, directing each reader to be part of the work and a contributor to English literary history.”

Blackwell finished the session by presenting on Hoccleve’s Complaint and Dialogue, and asserted that the faculties these works refer to “the heart, wit, mind, memory, imagination, and reason, among others,” afford “a more detailed picture of Hoccleve’s alleged illness and regeneration, complete with a more nuanced picture of their significance, and, furthermore, the significance of the gossips’ unchecked imagination that mirrors his own.”

“Theology, Chastity, and Virtue” Presenters: Michael T. Walton, Jane Foster Woodruff, and John Henry Adams

Walton delved into the world of Juadaism, looking specifically at Eliezer Eilberg and Rabbi Leon of Modena, and their “expressed doubts about fundamental rabbinic teachings…in the medieval and Renaissance world.”

Woodruff explored Saint Augustine’s acceptance of the Roman virtue Continentia, and argued “that it was indeed Augustine’s understanding of Continentia as a Roman civic virtue which led him to choose ‘her’ as his new mistress.”

Adams concluded the session by discussing John Milton’s Comus from the stance that the “clear mind-body dualism” presented in the masque “is undermined by the way that the good magicians of the text — namely the attendant Spirit and the nymph Sabrina — use physical objects to achieve their ends as well. The difference between evil and good magic in the masque seems to be based in their purpose rather than their methodology.”

“Modern Categories of Medieval Texts” Presenters: Zac Dilbeck, Wendy A. Matlock, and Mark Adderley

Dilbeck looked at the relationship between medieval settings and fantasy, and showed “that by setting their fiction in a (pseudo) medieval world fantasists optimize the sustainability of their secondary world (in the mind of the reader), allow for the literal and metaphorical binary opposition of good and evil without seeming paradigmatically anachronistic, and promote a holistic and therefore spiritual model of human existence.”

Matlock focused on the classification of debate-poetry as one genre or many by looking at Ashmole 61, and more specifically the poem, “The Debate of the Carpenter’s Tools.” Within its manuscript context, she asserted the poem “speaks to themes of gender, family, and labor that unite many works in the manuscript and thus participates in larger cultural discourses related to the growing late-medieval bourgeoisie; however, the poem also employs deliberate and sustained patterns of opposition that distinguish it from other poems in the manuscript, even other dialogues, suggesting that, at least by the end of the fifteenth century, a tradition of debate poetry with specific horizons of expectation may be posited.”

Adderley finished the session on a light note by looking at the character of Lancelot in the writings of Chrétien de Troyes, the Prose Lancelot, and Malory, and contended that “the genre of these three works, at least as they relate to the character of Lancelot of the Lake, is comedy.”

“Renaissance Categories of Language” Presenters: Tom Flanigan, Sean Lewis, and Darin Merrill

Flanigan discussed Shakespeare and “the song classification systems of early modern English music theorists,” and ultimately sought to demonstrate “through comparison of Shakespeare’s songs with more doctrinaire models of period song types, the author’s unique capacity for creative adaptation: his uncanny facility for embracing and epitomizing popular song modes on the one hand—for bending, parodying, and transcending them on the other, and finally for integrating them into dramatic contexts.”

Lewis focused on John Skelton, and explored “the ways in which the editorial presentations of Skelton in the sixteenth century reveal the process of reclassification and reevaluation of Skelton and his works over the course of the English Renaissance, a process that reveals much about developing attitudes towards England’s medieval inheritance.”

Finally, Merrill presented on the changes in the uses of “thee” and “thou,” particularly in the King James Bible, by discussing “the roots and prescriptive ‘correctness’ of the uses of ‘thee’ and ‘thou’ as opposed to ‘ye’ and ‘you,’ while analyzing the use of these pronouns in the New Testament (primarily), but in other contemporaneous documents as well.”
“Epics, Sagas, and Riddles” Presenters: Joseph O’Mara Weidenboerner, Melinda Linscott, and William Klein
Weidenboerner considered the epic genre and Homer’s mastery of the field by looking at “the relationship between the Homeric epic and the Anglo-Saxon Beowulf, the Irish Táin Bó Cúailgne, and the German Nibelungenlied,” and asserting that these “medieval texts…are best understood as clan epics, mainly in relation to their heroes.” He went on to argue “that the ‘clan epic is fundamentally different from the Homeric epic in structural content, societal sensibilities, and the nature of the hero’” and that it is necessary to reconsider “the clan-based, medieval epic genre as producing texts that are masterpieces in their own right.”

Linscott examined our philosophical thinking of animals by looking at “the quill pen, in Riddle 49 of the Exeter Book…as a means of demonstrating the Riddles’ usefulness to the emerging, interdisciplinary field of animal studies and how these medieval concepts, this ‘prehistory of the posthuman,’ might serve to de-center the human, uproot the inherent anthropocentrism in humanism, and lead to a postmodern means of relating and thinking with animals in the current age.”

Klein concluded the session by presenting on ironic wit in sagas, particularly Hermann Palsson’s Hrafnkel’s Saga and Other Stories, and held that, “Palsson’s sense of Hrafnkel’s Saga as a carefully linked series of events that take the story from its beginning in the theology of the old order all the way to a more than equal restoration of Hrafnkel’s status certainly makes good sense. I would like to enhance that sense by explaining the play of irony in the links.”

“Elizabethan Political Acts” Presenters: Andrew Wells, Jessica Winston, and Kristin M.S. Bezio
Wells explored translation in Renaissance England, focusing particularly on Elizabeth’s translations, and arguing “that the classics were a system of meaning that the educated classes could use to make political statements while hiding behind the name of translation. Not only the content, but the style of translation (from Elizabeth’s strict literalism to Golding’s loose equivalents) could also carry special political significance.”

Winston presented on the Inns of Court and a series of plays—Gorboduc, Supposes, Jocasta, Gismond of Salern, and Thomas Pound’s two marriage masques—that have previously been considered criticisms of Elizabeth and the succession, and took the stance that, “There is little doubt that Gorboduc responds to the succession, but the relationship between the later plays and their political commentary is less clear. I argue that after Gorboduc, the men at the Inns created plays that, in fact, actively presented them as disinterested in the succession.”

Bezio explored conservatism and progressivism, looking particularly at Shakespeare’s Richard II, and stating, “Critical tradition has classified Shakespeare’s Richard II as questioning the medieval ideology personified by King Richard II, replacing it with the more modern and progressive political ideology embodied by Henry Bolingbroke. However, Richard’s monarchy is in fact the more progressive of the two, while Bolingbroke’s rebellion is the product of a much more conservative and medieval tradition. Shakespeare’s politics, therefore, should more rightly be classified as radical medievalism, advocating for both the responsibility of the monarch to uphold the rights of the populace and the corresponding ability of the populace to censure, depose, and even execute a ruler who endangers those same rights.”

Keynote Address: Antonette di Paolo Healey
“Contested Categories, Anxiety, and Resistance in Early English and Beyond.”
Professor Healey described how an adjective such as ‘hard’ has a long and distinguished history, an intoxicating richness that helps us to imagine its Anglo-Saxon past. What did the Anglo-Saxons describe as ‘hard’? Were their designations objectively ‘hard’—or subjectively viewed as such? Can we detect the concerns of the culture through the use of this adjective? Is it a lens for the social / political / economic / religious issues within medieval society? Or is it simply a descriptive adjective, neutrally and factually employed? This paper searches the hidden history of ‘hard’ to discern what our English-speaking ancestors found ‘hard to bear’.

Saturday Sessions:
“Historical Approaches to Medieval Spain and England” Presenters: Lisa Moynihan, Jaime Leanos, and Stephanie Mooers Christelow
Moynihan explored the roles of women in feudal society, stating that, “[W]omen played an integral role in the development and function of feudal society in medieval Spain from the 10th to the 14th centuries.” She went on to propose that, “due to the ongoing conflict on the Iberian Peninsula and the emergence of a feudal law steeped in Visigothic tradition, the perfect storm was created to require women to take on a more active role in their homes and communities. This necessity made women cornerstones of the Spanish feudal structure and gave them a uniquely powerful opportunity to attain autonomy in an otherwise patriarchal society.”

Leanos looked at the medieval Poem of Mio Cid, its religious elements and their role in nationalism within the piece. He posited, “[T]he figure of el Cid serves as a national symbol, as an emblem, as a religious figure to incite the masses to fight against the enemies of the cross with the purpose of unifying Spain under the Christian crown.”

Christelow ended the session by considering French colonists and their roles after the Normal Conquest of 1066, and took the stance that reviewing “narrative and charter sources,” and studying “economic records,” would allow for “a reconsideration of issues of dominance, dependence and status pertaining to Frenchmen colonizing English landscapes after 1066.”

Daniel looked at Milton’s First Defense from the perspective “that the primary context for his First Defense is not the creation of the new republic (as important as they might be for Milton) but the destruction of the Caroline monarchy, especially its cultural apparatus of divine right. From this perspective, Milton’s political argument prevails, in Eikonoklastes as well as his First Defense, almost even before it is made.”

Carlisle explored how the portrayals of characters in Milton’s Comus “illuminate the racial discourses surrounding the Welsh, the foreign, and the role of religion within Milton’s unstable aristocratic world.” She drew on “ideas and terms from work on hybridity, monsters, and...
Eastern/Western categories to focus particularly on the character of Comus and the racial, sexual, religious, and political threats he presents.”

Wall finished the session by looking at Book VIII of Milton’s Paradise Lost in relation to modern day physics, Copernicus, and the anthropic principle, and maintained that, “Book VIII of Paradise Lost presents astronomical science as human art. By so doing, the poem reveals a deep kinship between knowledge and creativity,” and that “both the anthropic principle in physics and Book VIII in Paradise Lost respond to Copernicus and to a Copernican model of astronomical space.”

Plenary Session: Curtis Whitaker
“Sights of the Seventeenth-Century Taxonomists”
Whitaker described how advances in zoology and botany during the Renaissance led to a number of biological classifications that remain with us today. These discoveries, all well before the time of Linnaeus, provide some perspective on debates going on in the late Renaissance between philosophers and sociologists of science regarding the objective description of nature.

“Figurating the Medieval World: Owen Barfield and the Participated Medieval Consciousness”
Presenters: Brandon Pearce, Jefferey H. Taylor, and Tiffany Martin
Pearce focused on the differences between modern and medieval minds in reference to “Orality/Literacy,” and through the use of Owen Barfield’s “theories of evolution of consciousness and the making of meaning” explored “the implications of the aural nature of the Middle Ages. Special attention will be paid to liturgy and scriptural exegesis, but its conclusions can be broadly applied to many facets of medieval culture.”

Taylor discussed theatricality, particularly in terms of Barfield, and the “spectator/spectacle definition of theatricality.” He took the perspective that “the study of Medieval and Renaissance drama is supremely significant to understanding the evolution of consciousness because they inscribe a pivotal refashioning of the human experience… As such, they serve as pointers toward the development of a reflective understanding of participation at the very moment that Early Modern cosmology is shifting toward fully suppressing participation in favor of externalizing our common representations into the idols of modern consciousness.”

Finally, Martin focused on Barfield’s Eager Spring, and held that, “Drawing on medieval and Renaissance sources and themes, such as allegory and courtly love, Barfield affirms the significance of the past in connecting with and shaping the present with future implications. History, language, and the imagination are central to Barfield’s literary endeavors as he writes to challenge current issues and urge individual and collective change.”

Smoak presented on midwifery in the Middle Ages and argued, “Rather than the oft-claimed argument that midwifery regulation was a result of midwives’ ignorance and lack of skill… it was in fact a way of using the social capital of midwives to the advantage of Church and State… Ultimately regulation was part of a widespread manipulation of authority by both of these institutions.

This paper will argue that women were on both sides of this manipulation of authority, a process that comes to fruition in the Early Modern period.”

McNabb gave a paper on records of female witnesses in English courts from 1550-1650, and held, “These archival sources describing interrupted and fractured relationships thus indicate the variety of ways in which early modern women were actively engaged in defining and problematizing ideals and realities of their society as they shaped their stories before the authorities of the early modern courts.”

Skousen finished the session by focusing on the 1624 Parliament bill that allowed women to use the “benefit of clergy” privilege to get out of minor offences. She stated, “[A] close reading of many early modern texts supports the beginnings of an understanding of sexuality as an identity class… Through an examination of the language within Marlowe’s Edward II, we may come to see that same-sex desire becomes part of the title character’s identity, even if Marlowe did not possess a word to describe it.”

Klimek presented on the changing nature of medieval gender and the past views of concepts such as “femininity” and “masculinity,” and held that, “The Aristotelian and Galenic notion of the single-sexed body was the prevailing ideal until the early twelfth century when the influx of scholastic-style arguments changed the vocabulary of men’s and women’s bodies to agree with the dialectic of oppositional difference.”

Bruso concluded the session with a paper on Sir Gawain and the Green Knight that argued it “resists binarial definitions of ethnicity—Englishness versusWelshness. Through its refusal to identify Camelot asEnglish (Center) and Bertilak/Bertilak’s kingdom as Welsh(Other), the poem refuses nationalizing paradigms andencourages readers to see the similarities between the two.”

Session: “Early Modern Commerce and the New World” Presenters: Hugh Glenn Cagle and Devori Kimbro
Cagle discussed Tertian Fever and its early classifications, and held that the Portuguese encounter with the overseas tropical world was a pivotal moment in the history of humoral pathology. Subsequent medical practice in warm, verdant places unfolded in response to understandings of the link between nature and disease.

Finally, Kimbro presented on early modern English commerce and its concerns with “morality, aesthetics, and even religion,” and focused particularly on Thomas Milles’ The Misterie of Iniquitie and Milles’s amalgamation of the religious and economic ideologies.
Item: 2012 RMMRA Business Highlights

New President-Elect: Thomas Klein of Idaho State University was elected President-Elect of the RMMRA. Tom will serve in this capacity for one year, then become the RMMRA President at the 2013 Conference in Denver and serve until the 2015 Conference. Congratulations, Tom! And THANK YOU!!

Four new Council Members were elected to serve 2012-2015:
Michael Call of Brigham Young University;
Kimberly Klimek of Metropolitan State University of Denver;
Lisa Myers of University of New Mexico;
Brandon Pearce of Western Michigan University.

The Website: The Board approved a major update of the RMMRA website. Take a look: http://clem.mscd.edu/~tayljeff/RMMRA/Index.html

Item: RMMRA @ Kalmazzoo 2012

The RMMRA sponsored a session at the 47th Annual International Congress on Medieval Studies, a welcome return to the ‘zoo after many years:

Refiguring the Medieval World: Participation, Perception, and Consciousness.

Organizer / Presider: Jefferay H. Taylor, RMMRA President.

Session Papers:

#1-- Todd P. Upton, Independent Scholar & RMMRA Councilor:
"Revertamur Jersualem": Perceptions of Community & Liminality in the Scholastic Age"

#2-- Leslie A. Taylor, Independent Scholar & RMMRA Treasurer:
"Shifting Consciousness on the Boundaries of Modernity"

#3-- Kurt M. Boughan, Dept. of History, The Citadel:
"Tommaso Del Garbo on Sensible Species"

#4-- Brandon Pearce, Medieval Institute, Western Michigan University:
"Intersections between Owen Barfield & Lev Shestov: Medieval Perception & the Suppression of Participation"

Item: 2012 Breck & West Awards CFP

We invite all 2012 Pocatello Conference presenters to submit their papers for either the Breck or West award.
The **Allen DuPont Breck Award** is for the best paper given by a younger scholar (up to Assistant Professor rank). The award comes with a $300 dollar prize, inclusion in the next volume of *Quidditas*, and recognition at the RMMRA luncheon at the next year’s conference.

The **Delno C. West Award** is for the best Conference paper by a senior scholar (Associate Professors, Professors, and other long-standing scholars). The award includes recognition at next year’s luncheon, a handsome plaque, and inclusion in the next volume of *Quidditas*.

Submissions should be substantially the paper presented at the conference, though revisions are permitted. All submitted papers will also be reviewed for submission to *Quidditas*. If you win the award but have other plans for the paper, you may choose to decline *Quidditas* publication.

Please email the paper as an attachment in Word (.doc or .docx) or Rich Text (.rtf) format or PDF, to Dr. Jefferey Taylor, RMMRA President: tayljeff@mscd.edu

The deadline for submissions is June 15, 2012.

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### Item: *Quidditas*, the RMMRA Journal

You may find PDF archives of all past issues of *Quidditas* (and its earlier manifestation as *JRMMRA*) at [http://humanities.byu.edu/rmmra](http://humanities.byu.edu/rmmra). The most current issue is Volume 32 (2011). The production of Volume 33 (2012) is well under way. Submissions of scholarly papers and book reviews are welcome at any time during the year.

From the Notice to Contributors: "*Quidditas* is the annual, on-line journal of the Rocky Mountain Medieval and Renaissance Association. The editor and editorial board invite submissions from scholars whose work falls within the domain of all Medieval and the Renaissance disciplines: literature, history, art, music, philosophy, religion, languages, rhetoric, or interdisciplinary studies."

*Quidditas* is a peer-reviewed, academic journal, accepted and indexed by the major scholarly index databases, such as MLA International Bibliography and Historical Abstracts. For more information, check out the latest issue at the link given above.

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### Item: RMMRA 2013 @ Denver

We invite proposals for our 45th Annual Conference:

**Shifting Figurations: Consciousness & Perception in the Medieval and Early Modern Centuries**

Denver, Colorado 11 – 13 April 2013

How did consciousness in earlier periods differ from modern perception? We might apply various theories to re-examine the figurations of consciousness in the Medieval and Early Modern periods: Owen Barfield’s theories of evolutionary
consciousness, Kenneth Burke's Dramatism, Norbert Elias's Figurational Sociology, the Grid/Group Anthropology of Mary Douglas, new research trends in Scholasticism, the current conversations relating performativity to the social production of meaning, and the general milieu of post-post-modern thought in our post-theory era. The goal is to map the cultural contours of consciousness itself and describe significant transformations of consciousness in the Medieval and Early Modern periods. We welcome approaches from all fields -- literature, history, sociology, anthropology, cultural studies, art, music, philosophy, religion, linguistics, the sciences, and so on.

As always, all proposals related to Medieval and Renaissance studies are very welcome. The theme is not required. Though focused in the Intermountain region of western North America, the RMMRA has members from many areas of the US, Canada, and other parts of the world. We welcome the world to join us in our beautiful region to explore our common interests in the cultures of the Medieval & Renaissance periods. Come join us in Denver for our 45th Annual Conference!

Proposals for individual papers and for panels should include the following information:

- Name(s) of presenter(s)
- Academic Category (Faculty, Graduate Student, Undergrad, Independent Scholar, &c)
- Institutional Affiliation (if applicable)
- Mailing Address(es)
- Email Address(es)
- Any Audio-Visual requirements &/or special requests
- Title(s) & Abstract(s) of 300 words or less

Please email one file as an attachment in Word (.doc or .docx), Rich Text (.rtf) or PDF to Dr. Jefferey Taylor: tayljeff@mscd.edu

Proposal Submissions are Due by 31 December 2012.

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Item: RMMRA Membership

Membership in the Rocky Mountain Medieval & Renaissance Association is open to anyone interested in furthering the advancement of learning in any of the many fields of Medieval and Renaissance studies. Membership is attained through the payment of annual dues. Though focused in the Intermountain region of western North America, the Association has members from many areas of the US and Canada, and even more far flung corners of the globe.

Find the 2012 membership form below:
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**Dues Category:**
- [ ] $25.00 Individual Member
- [ ] $30.00 Joint Membership for Civilly Acknowledged Couples
  
  Your partner's name:_______________________________

**Remit this form with your check to:**
Dr. Leslie A. Taylor, RMMRA Treasurer
c/o Dr. Jefferey H. Taylor
Dept. of English - Metro State
Campus Box 32
P.O. Box 173362
Denver, CO 80217-3362
The Spring 2012 RMMRA Newsletter was composed and assembled by Jefferey H. Taylor, President of the Rocky Mountain Medieval & Renaissance Association & Professor of English at Metropolitan State University of Denver. Please direct questions, comments & corrections to: tayljeff@mscd.edu

Rocky Mountain Medieval & Renaissance Association