Dear Members and Friends of the Rocky Mountain Medieval & Renaissance Association,

Intersections. Meetings. Exchanges. Crossroads are on my mind as the RMMRA begins its 53rd year in nationally troubled times with the armed insurrection on January 6th in Washington D.C. and an ongoing COVID-19 pandemic that this month reached a ghastly milestone of claiming more than 500,000 American lives. That’s one intersection. Add to it the broad avenues of still-needed institutional reforms for racial equality, social justice, law enforcement restructuring, immigration policies, educational challenges, and ongoing climate-change ameliorations, and the interconnectivity of our nation and world becomes vividly apparent, as does an urgency of what we in the RMMRA can do to engage and educate students of a new generation. For me, besides trying to grow and learn on a personal and professional level (this week’s reads were John Lewis’s *Across that Bridge* and Lenski & Cameron’s *What Is a Slave Society? The Practice of Slavery in a Global Perspective*), that means interpreting the past with an historian’s eye and aspiring in the classroom to help students better understand legacies of the past that inform their present and challenges of the future.

Many of us in the RMMRA have an opportunity to facilitate part of those changes by being an active force in the classroom environment. For example, “crossroads” are everywhere in my undergraduate medieval world history course because I use the theme of the Silk Road as a connective storyline for a discernible “globalization” in the period c. 500-1500 C.E. The approach offers students a chance to fulfill their Global Diversity requirements by seeing how peoples interacted and exchanged goods and ideas in the regions between the Mediterranean-Chinese termini (Rome and Xi’an), the Islamic World, and stateless societies and kingdoms of sub-Saharan Africa. By the time we get to the 13th-16th centuries and assess the Americas in the late medieval and early modern period, the course ends full circle from where it began, and adds an ominous “prologue” to the modern age. Yes, there is still a “Rome” at course’s end, but students see both that the center of empire had moved to Istanbul and — after 16 weeks of seeing the social, economic, political, and cultural exchanges that occurred via the Silk Road and Spice Route networks — they hopefully grasp that the consequences of what happened after Byzantium fell in 1453 resonate historically to this day. That is, when the eastern Silk Road was closed because of the Islamic Ottoman and Mughal empires, Europeans pivoted west to the Atlantic Ocean in their search for commodities to which centuries of Silk Road and Spice Route activities had accustomed them, and thus began a process of discovery, conquest, and colonization that forcibly depopulated the African continent, enslaved millions of Black and indigenous Native American peoples, and created a legacy of institutionalized racial injustice that we’re still working to correct some 400+ years later. The in-class discussions about a host of topics make this class one of the most meaningful that I teach, and a chance to directly engage a generation at the forefront of the changes sweeping across our society.

You’ll find in the following pages of this newsletter a variety of the ways that the RMMRA intersects as an academic society to fulfill its mission of promoting learning in Medieval and Renaissance studies. From a report on the first-ever “Digital Workshop” that we held virtually from October 9-11, 2020, to our continued invitation for contributions to our growing medieval and Renaissance “Databases of Scholars of Color” and “Database of Period Authors & Artists of Color,” to a brand-new volume of *Quidditas* (and extended CFP for submissions to this year’s edition), we are striving to maintain a continued space for serious scholarship. Happily, you’ll also find news of our annual conference with a CFP on Page 7 for a virtual meeting that will occur on the weekend of June 25, 2021. I’m very excited at the prospect of crossing paths with many of you again, albeit via Zoom, so please prepare those abstracts for papers, workshop or discussion panels, and have a safe and healthy spring semester!

— Todd P. Upton, Ph.D., President, RMMRA
Thanks to the organizing efforts of Kristin Bezio and Samantha Dressel, the RMMRA proudly hosted a “Digital Workshop” in a COVID-19 year marked by cancellations of many academic forums across the spectrum of disciplines. Here’s an excerpt from the CFP for the event that ran from October 9-11, 2020:

“Now more than ever, academic organizations such as the Rocky Mountain Medieval and Renaissance Association are vital for maintaining a sense of scholarly solidarity and support. With these goals in mind, RMMRA hopes to provide a platform for constructive feedback and conversation in lieu of our annual conference.

Please join us for a “Works in Progress Workshop” digital conference. This forum is designed to enable RMMRA members to share and gain productive feedback on any work in progress. Participants will be divided into small working groups and encouraged to exchange substantive and constructive feedback, culminating in a video chat discussion of the works shared, hosted by a RMMRA Board Member. You may submit a Medieval- or Renaissance-focused work-in-progress at any level, up to approximately 7500 words in length. We welcome pedagogy work as well as other scholarly approaches....”

The full schedule is on the opposite page, and our presenters’ variety of interesting topics and scope of investigations demonstrate that meaningful academic work continues amidst the heartbreak, challenges, and disarray posed by the pandemic. Our organizers sent out an anonymous survey after the event, and here is a sampling of the heartening replies:

➢ “… both workshops I participated in were excellent and really useful. I can’t really think of anything else I wanted. The small group size was perfect for really workshopping papers, rather than reading them and answering questions. The level of depth we got into was superb....”

➢ “Do more of them [digital workshops]! This was the highlight of my academic year and a wonderful reminder of why I want to be in this field.”

➢ “Keep doing them! This format was a great one and worked very, very well. It felt good to be vulnerable about my work, and to ask for help, instead of just fielding questions about what I’d written. The piece of writing I had workshopped has definitely benefited from the process, and I learned a lot from being a respondent as well. Thank you very much for doing this!”

➢ “…very enjoyable and fruitful conference event. Should be part of all conferences, even when they aren’t virtual.”

➢ “One of the things I love about RMMRA is the camaraderie and collaborative thinking.”

A hearty THANK YOU to the participants, respondents, moderators, and organizers, and good luck to all who will use the feedback and conversations in the workshop to develop papers, chapters, or coursework into final versions!
FRIDAY, OCTOBER 9, 2020

3pm Session

Esther Liberman Cuenca
Oath-Taking and the Politics of Secrecy in Medieval and Early Modern British Towns
Helen Davies, The Hypocrite: the Ostrich or the King
Respondent: Kim Klimek
Moderator: Sarah Davis-Secord

5pm Session

George Sieg, Caliphate or Imamate? The Duel for Sovereignty in Persian Islam
Keolanani Kinghorn, Satan and the Reader: A Shared Interpretive Community in Paradise Lost
Kristin Abbo, Mimesis, Rivalry, and Violence in King Horn
Moderator: Samantha Dressel

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 10, 2020

12pm Session

Samantha Dressel, The Life and Struggles of Our Mother Wälättä Petros in the Undergraduate Survey Classroom
Respondent: Jamie Paris
Moderator: Kristin M.S. Bezio

1pm Session

Daniel Melleno, The Regnum Francorum and the Gens Danorum
Thomas Klein, Savage and Medieval in C.S. Lewis’s The Discarded Image
Jonathan Davis-Secord, Evil in Early Medieval England
Respondent: Rose Hentschell
Moderator: Thomas Klein

2pm Session

Jessica Brown, St. Bridget in Yorkshire: A Dialectical Analysis of M.S. Cotton Claudius B I
Jennifer Knight, Collateral Damage and the Cost of Vengeance in Ulster Cycle Death Tales
Nicholas Hoel, The Curious Case of the Graptai: Disability and Authority in Byzantium
Respondent: Kendra Preston Leonard
Moderator: Kim Klimek

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 11, 2020:

11am Session

Kendra Preston Leonard, Musical Tropes, Transactions, and Dominance in Film Adaptations of The Merchant of Venice
Moderator: Eileen Mah
RMMRA WALTON & ROSENBERG TRAVEL AWARDS

The COVID-19 pandemic obviates the need this year for traveling to our annual academic conference (due to its digital nature), but the Travel Awards programs still do exist and will resume when we return to normal operations. When we do, scholars interested in getting financial support for travel expenses will be able to apply for the RMMRA Walton and Rosenberg Awards. (Please see details below!)

These awards exist because of the very generous donations from members such as Jane Woodruff that made it possible to create the awards, and we rely on the financial support of the RMMRA and continued contributions from members and friends of the association. If interested in donating, please visit us at the following websites:

Michael T. Walton and Phyllis J. Walton Travel Award for Graduate Students
Harry Rosenberg Travel Award for Untenured Scholars

Michael T. Walton and Phyllis J. Walton Travel Award for Graduate Students

This award has been established to honor the many years of support, service, and enthusiasm for the Rocky Mountain Medieval and Renaissance Association of Michael T. Walton and Phyllis J. Walton. Over the twenty-seven years he was with us, Michael Walton gave twenty-four papers, some joint with his companion in life and scholarship, his wife Phyllis. He organized two of our conferences (2000 and 2011); he drafted our Constitution; he helped guide our transition from a hard-copy to an electronic journal; and from 1996-2013, he brought continuity to our Board. Phyllis Walton has likewise served the RMMRA in many different and essential capacities, including as treasurer, and with Michael wrote four distinguished monographs.

This award is meant to recognize the particular informal support both Waltons have given to junior scholars at the RMMRA conferences and elsewhere. The Michael and Phyllis Walton Awards will be available to graduate students in any medieval or Renaissance field of study who are presenting papers at the annual Rocky Mountain Medieval and Renaissance Association Conference and who have not defended their degree-granting projects at time of the meeting.

There will be a maximum of four awards for each conference: $250, which will be sent out in check form before the conference, plus waiver of the registration and RMMRA membership fees.

Harry Rosenberg Travel Award for Untenured Scholars

The RMMRA Travel Award for Untenured Scholars will be available to postgraduate medieval and Renaissance scholars with insufficient institutional funding working in any field of study who are presenting papers at the annual Rocky Mountain Medieval and Renaissance Association Conference and who have completed a doctorate but have not been granted tenure prior to the time of the meeting.

There will be a maximum of four $250 awards for each conference, sent out in check form before the conference to defray the costs of travel to and lodging at the conference, plus waiver of the registration and RMMRA membership fees. Note: graduate students are not eligible for this award because of the RMMRA award dedicated to supporting graduate students at the annual meeting, the Michael T. and Phyllis J. Walton Award.
The RMMRA is looking to provide resources for scholars, teachers, and students which help to diversify and decolonize our classrooms and our research. In light of this desire, we are moving forward with a plan to create two databases of resources for our members.

**Database of Scholars of Color**: We would like to create a list of articles, books, and reviews authored by scholars of color.

**Database of Period Authors & Artists of Color**: We would like to compile a list of primary works —literary, chronicle, sermons, accounts, etc.—by authors of color from the medieval and early modern periods around the globe. We are seeking citations from members to be submitted to our growing lists for inclusion in a more formal future database.

To contribute, please visit one of the two Google Doc links ([Scholars of Color](#)) and ([Authors/Artists of Color](#)) and submit a citation (with a link, if there is an online version available).

You may also submit citations to rmmraconf@gmail.com. We will be collecting these lists throughout the year and will be working on creating a set of more formal databases in 2022.

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**Dear Members of the RMMRA,**

I greet you a year into this pandemic with the hope that you and your loved ones are healthy. On behalf of the RMMRA Board, I ask you to please [renew your RMMRA membership](#) if your circumstances permit. We would also greatly appreciate any donations to our support funds for early career or untenured scholars (RMMRA, Walton, and Rosenberg funds).

This year's conference will again be digital, and therefore low-cost, but consistent membership dues and donations help our organization to stay strong in the long term. We are very much looking forward to seeing everyone again in person when it is safe, and your continued support helps us to keep conference costs low.

The RMMRA prides itself on its commitment to collegiality and mentorship; your continuing contribution will help support these goals now and in the future.

*Sincerely,*  
Samantha Dressel
**Quidditas**

*Quidditas* is the annual, on-line journal of the Rocky Mountain Medieval and Renaissance Association. The journal’s content is eclectic, publishing articles focused on medieval and early modern topics from all disciplines. The journal also accepts “Notes” for short articles pertaining to factual research, bibliographical and/or archival matters, corrections and suggestions, pedagogy and other matters pertaining to research and teaching. The journal welcomes contributions to “Texts and Teaching,” a section that seeks reviews of literature, articles on teaching approaches and other aspects of pedagogy, and short reviews of individual textbooks and other published materials that instructors have found especially useful in teaching courses in medieval and early modern disciplines. These features furnish readers and contributors venues not available in other scholarly journals.

**NEW DIGITAL ARCHIVE FOR QUIDDITAS!** Thanks to the efforts of Jim Forse, Ginger Smoak, and the folks at BYU’s Scholar’s Archive, *Quidditas* has a new permanent archival home where you may find all volumes of the journal:

[https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/rmmra/](https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/rmmra/)

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**EXTENDED CALL FOR PAPERS: VOL. 42 (2021) OF QUIDDITAS! DEADLINE: MAY 30, 2021**

Articles in *Quidditas* are abstracted and indexed in *MLA, Historical Abstracts, Feminae: Medieval Women and Gender Index, America: History and Life, EBSCOhost*, and *Oxford Standard Periodical Directory*, and *Ex Libris* has designated *Quidditas* as a peer-reviewed journal in its SFX Knowledgeable. *Quidditas* includes a “Notes” section for short articles pertaining to factual research, bibliographical and/or archival matters, corrections and suggestions, pedagogy and other matters pertaining to the research and teaching of medieval and Renaissance disciplines. Our “Texts and Teaching” section seeks longer review of literature essays, articles on teaching approaches and other aspects of pedagogy, and short reviews of individual textbooks and other published materials that instructors have found especially valuable in teaching courses in medieval and early modern disciplines.

Membership in RMMRA is not required for submission or publication. [GUIDELINES FOR SUBMISSION](https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/rmmra/)

Please send Articles and Notes to: [James H. Forse, Editor](mailto:james.forse@byu.edu)

Please send submissions for Texts & Teaching to: [Dr. Ginger Smoak, Associate Editor](mailto:ginger.smoak@byu.edu)

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**TABLE OF CONTENTS, VOL. 41 (2020): ACTIVE LINKS! QUIDDITAS, V. 41 (FULL TEXT)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Authors</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Saint and the Swan: Animal Interactions in the Hagiography of Hugh of Avalon</td>
<td>Emma Grover</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allusive Fontaines, Sicamors, and Pins: Figurative Prophecies of Grail Piety in the Prose Lancelot</td>
<td>David S. King</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Sparrow Hawk Castle - A Mostly Ignored Literary Motif Across the Cultures and the Centuries</td>
<td>Albrecht Classen</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Vanishing Lady: Mélusine, Emblems, and Jacques Yver’s Le Printemps d’Yver (1572)</td>
<td>Joshua M. Blaylock</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“That Kingdom is Mine”: On Spain’s Early Modern Polemics of Possession Over Jerusalem, circa 1605</td>
<td>Chad Leahy</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explanations and Justifications of War in the British Kingdoms in the Seventeenth Century</td>
<td>Roger B. Manning</td>
<td>134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Roch Military Marches in Wallonia: Memory, Commemoration, and Identity, 1866-1940</td>
<td>Erik Hadley</td>
<td>182</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CALL FOR PAPERS FOR THE ROCKY MOUNTAIN MEDIEVAL AND RENAISSANCE ASSOCIATION 2021
“Reimagining the Medieval and Renaissance in a Post-Pandemic World”

The 53rd annual meeting of the Rocky Mountain Medieval and Renaissance Association will take place digitally on the weekend of June 25th, 2021. We are excited to host a variety of events this year ranging from works-in-progress workshops through traditional panel presentations.

The RMMRA invites papers on any topic relating to the period 400-1700 CE and welcomes scholars in a broad range of disciplines including history, pedagogy, literature, art history, music, and gender studies. Papers may wish to respond to this year’s theme of “Reimagining the Medieval and Renaissance in a Post-Pandemic World.”

Participants are encouraged to propose:
• a paper to be read in a typical panel;
• a full panel of papers linked by theme or approach;
• a work-in-progress for detailed workshop-style feedback; or
• a moderated discussion panel in which audience members can participate in conversation about relevant topics or texts.

All participants are also welcome to volunteer as readers for works-in-progress seminars, which will involve pre-reading submitted papers and offering critical feedback during the conference.

The RMMRA is dedicated to creating an inclusive scholarly community. We encourage papers from scholars regardless of race, national origin, gender, gender expression, sexual orientation, age, religion, political views, military status, (dis)ability, and career paths. Our organization is committed to providing a safe, accessible, harassment-free, and collegial conference experience for all attendees. The RMMRA recognizes and supports the inclusion of diverse scholars from across the academy.

Please make sure your membership is up to date for conference participation. There will be an additional (minimal) conference fee to help support future RMMRA events.

Submissions should be directed through our online portal at MemberPlanet RMMRA 2021 Annual Meeting. Questions about the conference or membership should be directed to rmmraconf@gmail.com.

Abstracts are due April 15th, 2021. Session chairs and individual presenters will be informed of acceptance no later than May 1st. On the website, please include 250-word abstract or session proposals (including individual abstracts) and the following information:
• Name of presenter(s) / email & mailing address
• Participant category (faculty, graduate student, undergraduate student, or independent scholar), etc
• College/university affiliation (Please note: RMMRA prides itself in welcoming scholars from all positions and walks of life. This answer will only be used in an effort to diversify working groups.)
MEMBERSHIP

Rocky Mountain Medieval and Renaissance Association
Membership Form / Annual Dues
We use Member Planet for membership and dues. Please visit:
https://www.memberplanet.com/rmmra

If you wish to pay via US post, please fill out the membership form below (or here) and mail, along with a check, to the treasurer.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Position/Affiliation (if applicable):</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Email:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mailing Address:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Interests:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Dues Category**

- [ ] $25.00 Individual Member
- [ ] $30.00 Dual Membership for Civilly Acknowledged Couples

**Remit this form with your check made out to “RMMRA” to:**

Samantha Dressel, Ph.D.
Treasurer, RMMRA
555 N. Glenrose Dr.
Orange, CA 92869

**Membership Benefits:**

- Association with a vibrant group of medieval and Renaissance scholars centered in the Western Mountain States that’s served the West for almost 50 years.
- An annual conference where national and international scholars present new works.
- Sponsored sessions at the International Medieval Congress in Kalamazoo and the Renaissance Society of America.
- Awards and grants presented annually, including presentation of the Alan D. Breck and Delno C. West Awards, with each prize given annually at our conference to senior and junior scholars.
- The RMMRA as a publisher of the on-line journal, *Quidditas*, which publishes peer-reviewed articles, Notes, Review Essays, and a section on Texts & Teaching.
- An annual newsletter regarding conferences and events of interest to our members.
The Rocky Mountain Medieval & Renaissance Association is a nonprofit academic society dedicated to the advancement of learning in Medieval and Renaissance studies. The Association especially promotes the interchange of ideas among various fields of specialization, such as literature, history, philosophy, religion, art, music, architecture, sociology, anthropology. The Association advances these purposes by sponsoring an annual conference, publishing a peer-reviewed journal, and cooperating with other relevant academic organizations.

Membership in the RMMRA is open to anyone interested in these endeavors by the payment of annual dues. Though focused in the Inter-Mountain region of western North America, the Association 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.