

# ACMRS NEWS

DECEMBER 2014

## 'TIS THE SEASON... TO GIVE!

During this season of joy and giving, please consider making a contribution to the Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies. ACMRS is recognized internationally as one of the top three research Centers in the world and enjoys affiliations with Oxford and Cambridge Universities, University of Toronto, and Monash University. As a valued friend of the Center, you will further strengthen the Center's ability to provide education, research, and service to all university students in Arizona, K-8 students, scholars continuing research, and our community at-large.

Despite the budgetary difficulties of the past four years, ACMRS has continued to flourish. Our publications programs continue on their 25-volumes-per-year pace; our summer program at the University of Oxford continues to attract enthusiastic students; and we continue our contribution to the online *Iter: Gateway to the Middle Ages and Renaissance*, which includes the largest and fastest growing bibliography of medieval and Renaissance Studies in the world. Serving all of Arizona since 1981, ACMRS made a difference in 2014; here are some of the ways:

- Initiated "Educational Workshops for Teachers," offering training in the history, literature, and methodology of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. This program enables teachers to use a wealth of folklore from Europe, North and South America, Southeast Asia, and West Africa, contextualize it in its chronological framework, and most importantly, bring out the value and the fascination of these stories for elementary and intermediate school students.
- Continued the "Fearless Females: Audacious and Feisty Women of the Middle Ages and Renaissance" Program, which has been running since 2012. This program provides free lectures to the public about fascinating women from history.
- Continued the ACMRS Scholars Series, which brings medieval and Renaissance scholarship to the community on a variety of topics from a global perspective.
- Published two historical novels in the ACMRS imprint, Bagwyn Books.

As you make your year-end gifts, please include ACMRS. Your investment in our students, public programs, and community outreach will help many learn from the past, analyze the present, and find solutions for our future. Thank you for your generosity on behalf of the students, scholars, and community. To donate securely online, visit: <https://acmrs.org/friends>

Happy holidays and best wishes for a happy New Year!

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# CASA BRAZIL: LEARNING HISTORY WHILE HELPING OTHERS

By Sharonah Fredrick, Assistant Director, ACMRS

On November 5th, Professor Bob Bjork, Assistant Director Sharonah Fredrick and Outreach & Media Coordinator Kendra TerBeek took part in a charity event hosted by Casa Brazil, which collected funds for children at risk throughout Brazil. The event, which took place in Vincent's Restaurant, showcased ACMRS in its best and perhaps most unexpected light: an academic organization which brings the history and ethnography of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance period to the community, in a manner that includes the broader reaches of the globe, and that showcases the interaction between different human groups in that time period that spans from the collapse of the Roman Empire in Europe to the beginning of the first nation-wide slave uprisings in Brazil.

The subject matter covered in ACMRS' presentation ranged from the prehistoric park at Brazil's oldest archaeological site, Serra da Capybara, where petroglyphs and rock art from over 12,000 years ago adorn cavern walls, to the slave uprisings of Aqualtune and her grandson Zumbi, in 17th century Brazil, uprisings which set a new course for the ending of slavery, due to their multi-racial and multi-class nature. But not all was politics and history: art, one of the most sublime examples of Renaissance and Baroque esthetics, was also showcased in the presentation. Aleijadinho, Brazil's most outstanding Baroque sculptor, son of a Portuguese artisan and an African slave-worker, became known throughout the New World as Brazil's Caravaggio, and Italian art critics have often returned the compliment by citing Aleijadinho as one of the finest examples of Caravaggio's

influence in the New World. His realistic and often agony-filled pieces depict human and divine suffering and fill the churches of Brazil's Minas Gerais region, site of one of the largest gold deposits in the New World.

ACMRS would like very much to thank Marilia Baker and Graça Martinet for having enabled us to participate in this excellent, and altruistic, event, and we look forward to continued collaboration in the future.

If you would like to learn more about Casa Brazil, you can visit their website at:

<http://casabrazil.org/>



Help us put a smile on a child's face...

#FEEDOURCHILDREN #NOMOREHUNGER #SEMEADOR #CASABRAZIL

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# RENAISSANCE GRADUATE STUDENT TRAVEL AWARD REMINDER

**Application Deadline: Tuesday, December 30, 2014**

The Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies (ACMRS) announces a research award for the outstanding paper written by an ASU, NAU, or UA graduate student working in any aspect of Renaissance Studies. The award provides \$500 toward the travel expenses of the student to attend any Renaissance or Medieval and Renaissance conference at which their paper has been accepted. The winning paper will also be included in the ACMRS Spring lecture series.

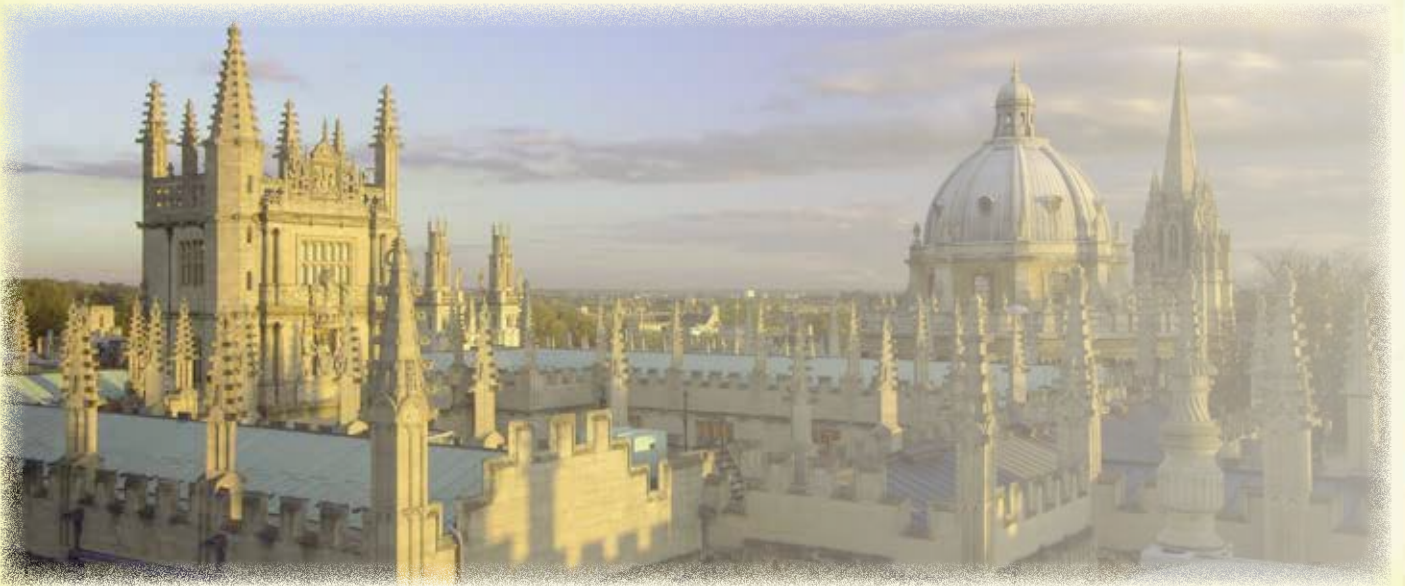
For more information visit: <https://acmrs.org/academic-programs/awards-grants/renaissance-travel> or email [acmrs@acmrs.org](mailto:acmrs@acmrs.org).

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## MEDIEVAL AND RENAISSANCE STUDIES IN OXFORD

Spend your summer in the City of Dreaming Spires! Travel abroad with ACMRS to the Centre for Medieval and Renaissance Studies in Oxford and study for 5 weeks with Prof. Edward Mallot (English, ASU) and Prof. Ralph Hanna (Keble College, Oxford). Students earn 6 credits in 5 weeks with "The Afterlives of Beowulf" and "Shakespeare and His Contemporaries in Performance" while visiting London, Stratford-upon-Avon, Glastonbury, and Stonehenge.

This interdisciplinary opportunity is open to all undergraduate and graduate students, regardless of major, discipline, or institutional home. Apply through the ASU Study Abroad Office. Please visit the ACMRS website to learn more or contact ACMRS Outreach Coordinator, Kendra TerBeek ([Kendra.TerBeek@acmrs.org](mailto:Kendra.TerBeek@acmrs.org)). <https://acmrs.org/academic-programs/oxford>.



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# SHAKESPEARE IN THE WEST INDIES: A JAMAICAN TEMPEST AND A TRINIDADIAN HAMLET

By Sharonah Fredrick, Assistant Director, ACMRS

When William Shakespeare wrote *The Tempest*, sometime between 1610 and 1611, his former patroness, Elizabeth Tudor, had been dead nearly eight years, and her successor, James I, was markedly less sympathetic to many of the bard's more questioning, and sometimes downright iconoclastic, attitudes. In this, his possibly last solely authored play, the presence of the Americas, colonization, and the presence of the "other" subaltern being, and the very question of the humanness of all peoples, came to the fore. This was the age of colonization and exploration, of mass slavery and great art, some of which lambasted the export of human beings, and some of which turned a blind eye to that same export. Shakespeare's opinions on slavery are an absolute mystery, and *The Tempest*, while providing certain clues, offers no clear stance. Is this story of Europeans shipwrecked on some magical island, with the conquered man/beast Caliban chained up in a most un-magical way, a symbol of imperialism, or a sly satire on the call to conquest, or something else entirely?

The Little Theatre Company of Jamaica—that real-life and beautiful island first colonized by Spain and later England, with its population of African, Native American, European and Chinese immigrants—seems to think that *The Tempest* is worth a good look. Perhaps it is that ambiguity which pervades the play itself that makes it, and indeed all of Shakespeare's works, so fascinating to a young nation like Jamaica, in the decidedly post-colonial world. Is Caliban sympathetic? Is he degraded? Is he a multi-dimensional figure who is struggling past stereotypes, or is he a stereotype himself? And what can be argued in this sense if the word "stereotype" would not have appeared on Shakespeare's lips, as the terms and ideas of his time were quite different than the standard that we judge him by today? Jamaican theatre companies, which embody Jamaica's multi-racial identity and delve into the issue of attitudes towards African culture, as more than 90 percent of Jamaicans are of African heritage, have studied and presented *The Tempest* as a way of stimulating debate regarding the colonizing of the New World. Can there be co-existence in the end? When Prospero throws his staff into the sea, does that herald the end of Conquest, of his supernatural powers, and the beginning of a more human interchange? Is the beautiful sprite Ariel the underside of the tortured



and enchained Caliban, and why is it that every important critic, from Richard Sill at the end of the 18th century to Alden Vaughan in our own time, agrees that Caliban is the character with the greatest lines, with the Bard's finest poetry. Is Shakespeare being ironic? Is he suggesting that, while colonization dehumanized peoples of the New World, those people possessed great culture—great poetry—that their conquerors could not perceive? (Continued on the next page.)

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When Jamaica received its independence from Britain on August 6, 1962, England, and Shakespeare, had become part of every Jamaicans' heritage. There was no way to ignore that this heritage had been instilled during the Colony and conquest, but it was because Shakespeare himself opens up a path to dialogue on those very subjects that his plays continue to resound in Jamaica with a power that astounds the audience. These are no dry, Victorian productions; they are living, breathing plays that force the audience to engage with the same questions that Shakespeare engaged with. And Shakespeare's relevance to our own time is the reason that the theorist of Black culture in the West Indies, Aime Cesaire, chose Shakespeare as his centerpiece in his adaptation of *The Tempest*, which he set in Haiti: *Le Tempete*. Cesaire believed that Shakespeare was the key to overcoming the color paradigm in the Americas: by engaging with the Bard's own ambiguity, Cesaire and other great West Indian intellectuals have found a powerful manner of making audiences debate the modern-day resonance of the question of what makes us human.

## SPOTLIGHT ON SCHOLARSHIP

### LESLIE S.B. MACCOULL

- "Psalm Exegesis in Coptic Translation: Aspects of Biblical Knowledge in Shenoute's Monastery," in *Synaxis Katholike: Beiträge für Heinzgerd Brakmann zum 70. Geburtstag*, ed. D. Atanassova and T. Chronz, 2 vols. (Münster, 2014), 1: 441-50.
- "Isaiah's Scroll at Kom al-Ahbariya and Miaphysite Church Programs in Egypt," *Ostkirchliche Studien* 62 (2013 [published 2014]): 252-61.
- Review of *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 65 and 66 (2012), *Mediaevistik* 27 (2014): 191-92.

## NEW COLLABORATION WITH THE IRISH CULTURAL CENTER



The Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies (ACMRS) in tandem with the Irish Cultural Center of Phoenix, is offering a fascinating exploration of Celtic myths and legends, and their similarities with the Hopi and Navajo traditions of the American Southwest. Ancient Irish, Hopi, and Navajo oral (and later written) literatures will illustrate parallel perspectives in life, love, music, war, and above all, the realm of the sacred. The evening will also explore legends regarding hypothetical Irish voyages to the Americas prior to the Age of Exploration. The event will take place on January 31st at 7pm at the Irish Cultural Center in Phoenix.



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# UPCOMING PUBLIC EVENTS



DECEMBER

**HAPPY HOLIDAYS!**

Please consider donating to ACMRS to help support our programs for scholars, students, and the community.

Learn more at <https://acmrs.org/friends>

JANUARY

FEARLESS FEMALES SERIES

**"Lady Macbeth and Ophelia: Beyond Drowning and Sleep-walking"**

Tuesday, January 27, 2015 at 7:00pm - Changing Hands Bookstore, Tempe

Click here to reserve a seat: <https://ladymacbethandophelia.eventbrite.com>

PUBLIC PROGRAMS SERIES

**"Celtic and Native American Legends: Shared Symmetries from Medieval Arizona to the High Court of Tara"**

Saturday, January 31, 2015 at 7:00pm - Irish Cultural Center, Phoenix

Click here to reserve a seat: <https://celticlegends.eventbrite.com>

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