

# GSC NEWSLETTER

The Graduate Student Committee of the Medieval Academy of America

Volume IX, Number 4

Fall 2017

## Message from the Chair

We want to welcome everyone to the start of a new academic year! The GSC is excited to announce this year's initiatives for graduate students, including roundtables, receptions, and the Mentorship Program at the MAA Annual Meeting in Atlanta, ICMS Kalamazoo, and IMC Leeds.

We are happy to announce that the GSC experienced a successful conference season in the 2016-2017 academic year. The roundtables at the Annual Meeting in Toronto and Kalamazoo focused on pedagogical approaches for graduate students to use as teaching assistants, and how they could use these approaches once they entered into academia. In addition, our receptions at the Annual Meeting and Kalamazoo had great attendance and brought students across disciplines together to talk about their projects. We also made successful matches for our Mentorship Program and will be continuing the program this academic year.

During the 2018 conference season, the GSC roundtables will discuss a variety of topics that aim to help graduate students with professional development. At the Annual Meeting, panelists will present on alternative/non-academic career options, such as careers in museums and archives, for graduate students of medieval studies. At Kalamazoo, we are hosting a panel about how to successfully publish, and at Leeds, our panelists will give advice on how to achieve an academic work-life balance in graduate school. At each of these conferences, we will also host graduate-student receptions.

In addition to attending our conference panels and receptions, the GSC encourages you to take advantage of our Mentorship Program. The GSC

matches experienced faculty with graduate students to discuss a variety of topics related to professional development, such as conference preparation, dissertation completion, and navigating the job market (to name only a few). We also encourage you keep an eye out for our newsletter, which will feature a new section dedicated to funny research/teaching stories, and to visit our social media pages (Facebook/Twitter) for information about the GSC and posts about upcoming conferences, the job market, and more!

We wish you a great start to the Fall semester and hope to see you at upcoming conferences!

Sincerely,  
Danielle Griego  
MAA GSC, Chair 2017-2018

## 2017-2018 MAA Graduate Student Committee

Danielle Griego (University of Missouri) - Chair  
[dngg28@mail.missouri.edu](mailto:dngg28@mail.missouri.edu)  
Theodore Chelis (Pennsylvania State University)  
[chelis@psu.edu](mailto:chelis@psu.edu)  
Caitlin Hutchison (University of Delaware)  
[chutch@udel.edu](mailto:chutch@udel.edu)  
Courtney Krolikoski (McGill University)  
[courtney.krolikoski@mail.mcgill.ca](mailto:courtney.krolikoski@mail.mcgill.ca)  
Emerson Richards (Indiana University)  
[emstrich@indiana.edu](mailto:emstrich@indiana.edu)  
Katherine Sedovic (Trinity College Dublin)  
[sedovick@tcd.ie](mailto:sedovick@tcd.ie)

Please feel free to contact any member of the committee with questions, comments, and concerns. We strive to serve the graduate students of the MAA, and are always happy to hear from our constituency.

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## GSC Mentorship Program

Interested in being a mentor/mentee for the 2018 conference season? Our new application is ready with upcoming deadlines to sign up for the GSC-MAA Mentorship Program for the MAA Annual Meeting, ICMS Kalamazoo, and IMC Leeds! Our goal is for graduate students to meet with mentors across disciplines to discuss professional development. Please sign up and spread the word! You can contact Theodore Chelis ([chelis@psu.edu](mailto:chelis@psu.edu)) and Danielle Griego ([dngg28@mail.missouri.edu](mailto:dngg28@mail.missouri.edu)) if you have any questions. Link to our application is below:

[https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdNsl2j2qGIkeGX\\_gMosv4Qi36x87dz8e7SGRskoCmnu66G1w/viewform](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdNsl2j2qGIkeGX_gMosv4Qi36x87dz8e7SGRskoCmnu66G1w/viewform)

## Medievalist Musings: Tales from Grad Students in the Field

**Christopher Paoella**

PhD Candidate, Medieval History  
University of Missouri, Columbia

Preparation and commitment: the keys to a successful graduate career, especially as one embarks, post-comps, on the harrowing journey across the sea into the uncharted lands of European archives. Preparation means not only knowing your sources, languages, and locations and the hours of

operation of your intended archives, but also of little things, such as the terms and conditions of your Rail-Europe pass.

It was in Dijon, at the train station, that I learned the true value of preparation and commitment. Prior to my departure to Europe, I had purchased a Rail Europe pass which allowed me passage on any nationally-operated train in France, and as I made my way through the train station I delighted in my careful preparation and attention to detail... or at least most of the details. For as I passed all those sorry souls waiting in line for tickets, I noted smugly that I was in the fast lane, striding through the crowds as a lord among men, a god among mortals.

As I attempted to board the train in Dijon for passage to Toulouse, the conductor very politely asked me for my pass. I automatically held up my Rail-Europe pass, as I so often had done before, and repeated mechanically "Rail Pass," channeling Mila Jovovich with such conviction and faith in my paper ticket of freedom that surely the conductor would be awestruck and roll out the red carpet to welcome me aboard with all the fanfare and solemnity befitting someone of my status. Imagine my surprise then, when he pursed his lips, shook his head, and said, "This is not a reservation." I was confused. Perhaps I had not been clear, for what is a pass if not a reservation? I held up my pass again and repeated, "Rail Pass." Obviously repetition would clear this momentary confusion. He then dutifully informed me that I needed to purchase a reservation for this train in addition to the Rail Pass, and therefore I could not board the train. Flummoxed, I asked where I might obtain this reservation, and he told me I had to go to the ticket office. "But.... Rail Pass..." I insisted with such insightful eloquence, waving my ticket around as if a flurry of movement would now resolve our impasse. He shook his head, and pointed me back towards the ticket office. I was aghast.

Hefting my forty-pound backpack upon my defeated shoulders, I trudged back to the ticket office and waited in line...and waited...and waited.... and waited. Finally it was my turn, and I indignantly explained to the young lady behind the

counter that I needed to board the train from Dijon to Toulouse. Imagine my disappointment when she shook her head, because clearly I had a ticket to ride, but she didn't care. She then showed me the details that I had overlooked: certain trains required a reservation to be purchased separately, regardless of the Rail Pass. The train I needed was now booked full, and the next train that I could book a reservation on would leave the following morning, meaning I would be sleeping in a train station that evening. Preparation: it's important.

Commitment: where there's a will, there's a way. I squared my jaw and decided to take a chance. Thanking the woman for her time, because in the end she was just doing her job, I then turned and hurried back to the train platform to see a large crowd of people trying to get on the train and the conductor trying to get everyone through. I mingled, edging closer to the door of the car, humming the theme to Mission: Impossible. The conductor turned his back to answer a question, and I leapt: *Deus Vult! Carpe Diem! YOLO!* I would have made a dashing leap onto the train, but it's hard to do that with a forty-pound backpack on, so it was more like a stumble, a tumble, and a desperate scamper! I scrambled up into the train and quickly scanned the area for a place that was out of sight, nondescript, and easily overlooked...the luggage rack. The space between coaches was reserved for luggage and its gleaming chrome bars beckoned me thither. I clambered up into its welcoming embrace, nestled (crammed?) between Samsonite and American Tourister, and plopped my pack down into my lap, ingeniously camouflaging my presence. Who would possibly notice two sweaty hairy legs protruding from the bottom of a bulging backpack? My plan was perfect in every way, flawless in its execution.

The thing about luggage racks is that they're made for luggage. A chrome bar wedged between the cheeks of your buttocks grows wearisome as the hours roll by, not to mention the regular blunt force trauma inflicted by Samsonite and American Tourister upon my person with every bend in the rail. Then I heard the sound of footfalls, and my heart skipped a beat. I hazarded a peek through the gaps in my impenetrable camouflage. It was the

conductor...the bane of my existence, my own personal Sauron. *Stay calm*, I told myself. *Be one with the luggage: I am the Samsonite; I am American Tourister.* He stopped directly in front of me; his gaze pierced nylon and flesh. *I see you...* he seemed to say. He towered over my pack and twisted his lips as he asked ominously, "Ticket?" I raised my eyes to meet his gaze and, swallowing hard, I stammered, "R-Rail Pass?" This was the moment of truth; he couldn't possibly kick me off a train going a hundred miles an hour...right? I could see the conflict in his eyes. A rail pass meant I had a right to be on the train, but no reservation meant I couldn't have a seat; yet here I was on the train with no seat. *Ha! Victory is mine!* I thought triumphantly, ignoring my aching rump. He shrugged with a nod and moved into the next coach anti-climatically. Granted, I ached in places I needed three mirrors to see, but I would be in Toulouse by this afternoon and in a bed by this evening! Commitment!

After another long hour a woman got up from her seat and stood by my nigh flawless camouflage, and turned to regard the backpack with hairy legs. In perfect English with a slight French accent, she said with a smile, "My stop is next. Why don't you take my seat?" How could she have known I was there? She must have witnessed my final confrontation with Sauron the Conductor; that was the only logical explanation. Nevertheless, my heart leapt for joy, and with a profusion of thanks I scrambled out of my precarious nest, and made my way to her seat. It was the most comfortable seat ever in the history of comfortable seating. I watched the rolling hills of southern France pass by the window, ready to journey deeper into parts unknown.



*Toulouse, author's photo*

## Spotlight on Professional Organizations: Getting Involved in the Medieval Community

AMERICAN SOCIETY FOR IRISH MEDIEVAL STUDIES



The American Society for Irish Medieval Studies (ASIMS) encourages the work of American and international Celticists, who 'believe that medieval Ireland is essential for understanding the medieval world at large'. The Society is comprised of a cabinet of officers, as well as disciplinary representatives comprised of archaeology, art history, history, literature, philology, and theology. Two members stand as regional representatives for North America and Ireland.

ASIMS sponsor sponsors three sessions at the International Congress on Medieval Studies (ICMS) held at Western Michigan University in Kalamazoo, Michigan. The sessions for the upcoming ICMS will be The Robert T. Farrell Lecture, Early Ireland in a Roman Context [co-sponsored with *Heroic Age: A Journal of Early Medieval Northwest Europe*], and Living and Dying in Viking-Age Ireland. The Robert T. Farrell lecture is a 45-minute address, followed by a 20 minute presentation from a second speaker and response from a third.

In addition to the ICMS, since 2014 ASIMS has organized an annual conference in Ireland, presenting leading scholarship on the period between 500 AD and 1650 AD. This year, the event took place the 22-24<sup>th</sup> of September at Glenstal Abbey with five sessions.

ASIMS has two presences on Facebook: the [Society's main page](#) and a [teaching forum](#). The main page serves as a hub for Irish and Celtic related CFPs and discussion of trends in Celtic Studies. The teaching forum is relatively new, since May of this year, but proves an important reference for those teaching Irish material to ask for and share resources for teaching this material.

*Eolas: Journal of the American Society of Irish Medieval Studies*, an interdisciplinary publication, is sent out in hardcopy each year and also appears on JSTOR. The most recent volume (10) was published in May 2017 and the journal [is now seeking submissions](#) for the next volume (11). The deadline is 15 October, 2017. A submission guidelines can be found [here](#). The journal also includes book reviews.

The Society offers to annual prizes: the *Michael Adams Prize* for best publication (in partnership with Four Courts Press) and the *Terry Barry Prize* for best graduate student presentation.

ASIMS is open to grad students and faculty alike, and independent scholars, who are interested in medieval Irish material and its wider context. Annual membership dues are \$20 for students, \$30 for part-time faculty, and \$50 for full membership. During the interim period, the fees of scholars resident in Ireland are waived. Membership provides a subscription to the newsletter, *Eolas*, voting rights, and access to the Society website. The fiscal year runs from May 1<sup>st</sup> to April 30<sup>th</sup>, therefore, memberships should be renewed by May 1<sup>st</sup> of each year. For further information, please contact Westley Follett  
([Westley.Follett@usm.edu](mailto:Westley.Follett@usm.edu))



## Pilgrimage Narrative

**Ali Frauman**

PhD Candidate, Comparative Literature  
Indiana University, Bloomington

I earned BAs from Penn State University in Comparative Literature and Japanese, with minors in Asian Studies and History. While I was an undergraduate, I studied abroad at Nanzan University in Nagoya, Japan, and also held an internship at the Palmer Museum of Art researching and cataloguing the gallery's ukiyo-e (woodblock print) collection.

I came to Indiana University's East Asian Languages and Cultures program as an MA student in Fall 2010, with the intent to specialize in the Heian (8<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> century) and Kamakura (12<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup>) eras of Japanese history. While it had been women's courtly literature, such as *The Tale of Genji* (*Genji Monogatari*), that initially drew me to this period, during my time as a Master's student I turned my focus to religious and mythological texts, particularly the ways in which Japanese mythology was re-interpreted during the Middle Ages to understand and justify power struggles between the imperial court and the shogunate. I wrote my MA thesis on the loss of the sacred imperial sword Kusanagi at the Battle of Dan no Ura (1185) as interpreted in the martial *monogatari* *The Tale of the Heike* (*Heike Monogatari*) and Jien's religious history *Gukanshō*.

When I entered Indiana University's Comparative Literature PhD program, I needed to pick up another language, and because my thesis had dealt with war, a magic sword, and the struggle between warriors and aristocrats, Old Norse felt like a natural choice. However, the more I studied Old Norse, the more I realized that a direct comparison between the two literary traditions was hardly tenable.

Instead I used analytical tools I had developed while writing my thesis – reading the ways mythology can construct or challenge sovereignty, and the struggle between a “monsterized” nature and human heroes that often rests at the heart of these so-called

“legitimizing myths” – and expanded that to include analysis on gender, othering, and mythologies as a mechanism for enforcing or destabilizing existing hierarchies. Now I find myself looking in particular at the contest between gods and giants in Old Norse Eddic poetry and *Snorra Edda*, and how ambiguous figures like Loki confront, challenge, and undermine Æsir authority precisely because of the position they occupy at the boundary between insider and outsider. My background with *The Tale of the Heike* and *Gukanshō* sparked my interest in medieval readings of nature and divine authority, and led me to take up these issues again when I turned to Old Norse literature.

Moreover, I have not completely given up my interest in Japanese; although I found a full comparison between Japanese and Old Norse medieval literatures to be unsound, my interest in 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century interpretations of mythology, particularly how nationalist movements have used/misused and continue to use/misuse medieval myths to justify violence, racism, and conquest, has allowed me to bring these traditions into dialogue with one another, observing the impact this abuse of medieval literature has had in the West as well as in Japan.



*Thirteenth century leaf from Íslendingasögur,  
housed in Árni Magnússon Institute*

## GSC Focus on Inclusion and Respect

During the GSC annual business meeting at ICMS Kalamazoo in May 2017, the committee discussed ways that it could best serve graduate-student medievalists by attending to the oft-neglected yet persistently urgent issues of diversity, inclusion, and respect.

Discourse requires an understanding of terms, yet any effort at definition is likely to be contentious, especially when usage differs from source to source. Nevertheless, we've found it helpful to consider these issues in the following manner:

Diversity typically refers to numerical representation. Inclusion pertains to genuine engagement, community, and access to opportunity. Respect suggests that the perspectives of all group members hold value. In other words, diversity is about "who"; inclusion and respect are about "how."

One way to help promote inclusion and respect within the discipline is to cite minority voices in scholarship and public discourse. As part of the effort to encourage awareness and acknowledgement of such voices, the GSC suggests making use of the [crowdsourced bibliography on Race and Medieval Studies](#), launched by medievalists on social media during the summer.

"A key to white allyship and antiracism is to speak with and alongside minorities, not 'about' (or for, or over) such voices," explains Dr. Jonathan Hsy, Associate Professor of English and Co-Director of the Digital Humanities Institute at George Washington University, in a blog post (["#MoreVoices: Citation, Inclusion, and Working Together](#)," 13 June 2017) for [www.inthemedievalmiddle.com](http://www.inthemedievalmiddle.com).

The committee welcomes your suggestions as it begins to develop initiatives and programing focused on inclusion and respect: [GSC@themedievalacademy.org](mailto:GSC@themedievalacademy.org).

## GSC Digital Presence

The GSC's [Facebook page](#) is rapidly increasing in number of "likes". We have reached 1,555 followers! If you have not done so already, be sure "like" us on Facebook.

Additionally, we invite you to follow us and tweet at us on Twitter, [@GSC MAA](#), where we are moving towards 1,000 followers!

The GSC has made an executive decision to retire the medieval grad student listserv, and will now relay all updates through its Facebook page, Twitter account, and newsletter.

We encourage members of the MAA to contribute by posting links to relevant news content both in terms of professional development and research.

**Would you like to get more out of our digital presence?** Please feel free to email Caitlin Hutchison ([chutch@udel.edu](mailto:chutch@udel.edu)) or Courtney Krolikoski ([courtney.krolikoski@mail.mcgill.ca](mailto:courtney.krolikoski@mail.mcgill.ca)) with your suggestions and/or comments.

## (Some) Upcoming Deadlines for Fellowships and Grants

### November 15

#### [MAA Birgit Baldwin Fellowship](#)

The Birgit Baldwin Fellowship provides a grant of \$20,000 to support a graduate student in a North American university who is researching and writing a dissertation for the Ph.D. on any subject in French medieval history that can be realized only by sustained research in the archives and libraries of France. It may be renewed for a second year upon demonstration of satisfactory progress. Applicants must be members of the MAA.

#### [The Thesaurus Linguae Latinae \(TLL\) Fellowship:](#)

The Society for Classical Studies invites applications for a one-year Fellowship, tenable from July 2018 through June 2019, which will enable an American scholar to participate in the work of the Thesaurus Linguae Latinae (TLL) Institute in Munich. Fellows at the TLL develop a broadened perspective of the range and complexity of the Latin

language and culture from the classical period through the early Middle Ages, contribute signed articles to the Thesaurus, have the opportunity to participate in a collaborative international research project in a collegial environment, and work with senior scholars in the field of Latin lexicography. The Fellowship carries a stipend in the amount of \$50,400, and is made possible in part by a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities. Before leaving for Munich, fellows receive up to \$1,850 in additional funds to support training in Latin lexicography and (if necessary) German.

### December 1

#### [The Katharine Pantzer Senior Fellowship in Bibliography and the British Book Trades:](#)

Supports research in topics relating to book production and distribution in Britain during the hand-press period as well as studies of authorship, reading and collecting based on the examination of British books published in that period, with a special emphasis on descriptive bibliography.

The BSA-Harry Ransom Center Pforzheimer Fellowship in Bibliography:

Supports the bibliographical study of early modern books and manuscripts, 1455-1700, held in the Ransom Center's Pforzheimer Library and in related collections of early printed books and manuscripts, including the Pforzheimer Gutenberg Bible.

#### [The BSA-Pine Tree Foundation Fellowship in Hispanic Bibliography:](#)

Supports the bibliographical study of printed and manuscript items 1) in the Spanish language produced during any period and in any country; or 2) in any language provided they were produced in Spain, or in its overseas dominions during the time of Spanish sovereignty; or 3) the bibliographical study of book and manuscript collections in Spain, or in its overseas dominions during the time of Spanish sovereignty; or 4) the bibliographical study of Spanish-language book and manuscript collections during any period and in any country.

#### [Bibliographical Society of America 2018 Fellowship Program:](#)

BSA awards are open to any member of the scholarly community engaged in bibliographical scholarship, including: academics, faculty, graduate students, booksellers, collectors, and scholars studying the materiality of books, manuscripts, and other cultural documents and artifacts.

### December 15

#### [The Newberry Short-Term Fellowships:](#)

Stipends of \$2,500 per month for PhD students demonstrating a need to use the Newberry's collection

### January 15

#### [Shohet Scholars Grant Program 2018/19, International Catacomb Society:](#)

This annual grant program funds research on the Ancient Mediterranean from the Hellenistic Era to the Early Middle Ages. Shohet Scholars may do their research in the fields of archeology, art history, classical studies, history, comparative religions, or related subjects. Of special interest are interdisciplinary projects that approach traditional topics from new perspectives.

**Additional fellowships** can be found on the following databases:

Cornell: <http://gradschool.cornell.edu/fellowships>

Duke: <https://researchfunding.duke.edu/>

Harvard: <http://gsasgrants.fas.harvard.edu/ggg.cgi>

H-Net: [http://www.h-](http://www.h-net.org/announce/group.cgi?type=Funding)

[net.org/announce/group.cgi?type=Funding](http://www.h-net.org/announce/group.cgi?type=Funding)

MAA:

<http://www.medievalacademy.org/?page=Awards>

UCLA:

<https://grad.ucla.edu/asis/grapes/search.asp>

### **(Some) Upcoming Conferences and Deadlines for CFPs**

**CFP deadline: November 15, 2017**

[Attending to Early Modern Women: Action and Agency](#)

Milwaukee, WI

[13th Annual Macro Manuscripts Workshop:](#)

[Transmission](#)

The Macro Institute for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, The University of Tennessee, Knoxville  
February 2-3, 2018

**CFP deadline: November 24, 2017**

[15th Annual Conference of the International Medieval Society-Paris \(IMS\), Truth and Fiction](#)

Paris, France  
June 28-30, 2018

[The 30th Annual Medieval Studies Symposium](#)

Indiana University, Bloomington  
April 6-7th, 2018

**CFP deadline: November 30, 2017**

[Early Career Workshop in Medieval Intellectual History](#)

All Soul's College, Oxford, UK  
March 22, 2018

**CFP deadline: December 10, 2017**

[Walking with Saints](#)

Ronse, Belgium  
May 24-26, 2018

[Saint Louis Symposium on Medieval and Renaissance Studies](#)

Saint Louis University, Saint Louis  
June 18-20, 2018

**CFP deadline: December 15, 2017**

[Lordship, Landscape, and Lineage in the Medieval and Early Modern Isles](#)

Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, St. Louis University, Saint Louis  
June 18-20, 2018

**CFP deadline: January 15, 2018**

[International Graduate Students Colloquium: Why did they choose this place?](#)

[Settlements, Representations and References of](#)

[Buildings and Objects \(11th-17th centuries\)](#)

Amiens, France  
May 29-30, 2018

**CFP deadline: January 31, 2018**

[6th Annual Association of Celtic Students of Ireland and Britain](#)

University of Edinburgh, Edinburgh, UK  
March 2-4, 2018

**CFP deadline: February 1, 2018**

[Rethinking the Medieval Frontier](#)

University of Leeds, Leeds, UK  
April 10, 2018

**November 18, 2017**

[Astronomy Across the Medieval World](#)

St. Cross College, University of Oxford, UK

**January 8-10, 2018**

[Gender and Medieval Studies Conference 2018: Gender, Identity, Iconography](#)

Corpus Christi College, University of Oxford, UK

**January 12-13, 2018**

[Law and Legal Agreements 600-1250](#)

Faculty of English, Cambridge University, UK

**February 9-10, 2018**

[The Waldensians in the Medieval and Early Modern European Context](#)

Trinity College Dublin, Dublin, Ireland

**March 8-10, 2018**

[The New College Conference on Medieval and Renaissance Studies](#)

Sarasota, Florida

**July 15-20, 2018**

[Medieval Monks, Nuns, and Monastic Life](#)

University of Bristol, Bristol, UK



\*\*Additionally, a thorough list of conferences and CFPs can be found on the Medieval Academy of America's [conference calendar](#).

**\*\*For more information about the newsletter**, or to discuss features in future issues, please contact Katherine Sedovic ([sedovick@tcd.ie](mailto:sedovick@tcd.ie)) or Emerson Richards ([emstrich@indiana.edu](mailto:emstrich@indiana.edu)).



*Sura 7.96 from a ninth century Qur'an (Islamic Calligraphy 86), housed in the Wellcome Library.*

## FIND US ONLINE!

Join the GSC's  
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(blog, forum, member profiles)

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Or reach us by email:

[GSC@themedievalacademy.org](mailto:GSC@themedievalacademy.org)

