

# DESERT HARVEST

COLLEGE OF SOCIAL AND BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES

"People ask me why I take an interest in this little division for medieval and Reformation studies, and I say that we have an obligation to keep the story of our civilization alive."

—The Honorable Stanley G. Feldman, Chair, Advisory Board

## The view through the round window \*



udolf Agricola, Johannes Reuchlin, Georg Friedrich Hegel, Hermann Helmholtz, Robert Bunsen, Ernst Troeltsch, Max Weber, Karl

Jaspers . . . Have I left out your favorite Heidelberg professor? Since its founding in 1386, this university has been the academic home of a succession of Europe's greatest minds, not to mention students who after finishing their studies made their indelible marks elsewhere. The first woman professor would appear to have been Gerta von Ubisch, a botanist, whom the Nazis banned in 1936 for having Jewish grandparents. The scent of history, whether sweet or sour, is always in evidence here.

It is my special privilege this year to be in Germany as a Guggenheim Fellow. I recall my good fortune each day as I pore over sources, either in the reading room of the main library or that of the Theological seminary. I cannot help but observe the vast differences between American and German higher education. In this country, the federal government picks up nearly the entire tab for educating its youth, who pay virtually no tuition and often receive a stipend for attending. Today's International Herald Tribune carries a front-page article about American universities building resort spas and five-story climbing walls to attract students.

Such actions would be incomprehensible here, where I have yet to see a PowerPoint presentation or teaching-evaluation form and where professors seldom hold office hours.

By contrast, I have been conditioned, and am personally inclined, to watch over my students. Every day my thoughts waft toward them in Tucson, to whom the most expert Professor Helen Nader is skillfully ministering. I also think of the progress of our common enterprise—yours and mine—to perpetuate the accomplishments of the Division through the acquisition of the Oberman research collection and the endowment of the Heiko A. Oberman Chair. It gives me great pleasure to report that as of July 1 we have advanced the fund to an impressive total of over \$600,000 in cash, pledges, and testamentary provisions. I know that you too are pleased. However, this is not yet enough. Our goal remains, and must be, \$2 million, the minimum amount required to sustain a named chair. Here in Germany, when my eyes tire after a full day's reading, I turn my attention to drafting grant applications. The Fundraising Committee continues on, hard at work. Do lend us your gracious hand as we labor toward the goal that we share, many of you and I.

*Susan C. Karant-Nunn*  
Heidelberg, 6 October 2003

\* In case you have not been our visitor, the main office of the Division affords its only view through a round window.

### A SEMI-ANNUAL NEWSLETTER OF THE DIVISION FOR LATE MEDIEVAL AND REFORMATION STUDIES

Founded in 1989 by  
Heiko A. Oberman  
(1930-2001), Regents'  
Professor of History

*DIRECTOR*  
Professor Susan C. Karant-Nunn

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Luise Betterton

*ADMINISTRATIVE SECRETARY*  
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THE UNIVERSITY OF  
**ARIZONA**®

## Division News



James Blakeley

Robert Christman,  
Victoria Clisham

### Congratulations

**James Blakeley**, Division doctoral student, won a Fulbright Fellowship to Switzerland, in addition to a scholarship from the Swiss Confederation to participate in an intensive language program at the University of Fribourg. He will remain in Fribourg to begin his archival investigation of the peasantry and their respective churches in sixteenth-century Francophone Switzerland.

**Robert Christman** and **Victoria Clisham**, Division doctoral students, tied the knot in late July in a small ceremony in Elkins, New Hampshire. Both have returned to Tucson from Europe to write their dissertations.

**Michael Crawford**, History Department doctoral student of Professor Helen Nader, received a grant from the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences Research Institute for research in the Habsburg archives in Valladolid, Spain.

**Professor Pia Cuneo**, Professor of Art History and Division associated faculty, won a six-month grant from the Herzog August Bibliothek in Wolfenbüttel, Germany, for research to be conducted in 2004 on hippology and early modern visual culture.

**CynthiaAnn Gonzales**, History Department doctoral student of Professor Helen Nader, spent the summer investigating the archives in Barcelona and Valencia, Spain, through funding provided by the Tinker Foundation.

**Professor Helen Nader**, Professor of History and Acting Director of the Division, won a graduate assistance grant from the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences Research Institute for work on a digitized mapping project of the province of Guadalupe in the sixteenth century and 1785. She is editor of a new book due out this month, *Power and Gender in Renaissance Spain: Eight Women of the Mendoza Family, 1450-1650* (University of Illinois Press).

**Joshua Rosenthal**, Division doctoral student, won an award from the Hayek Fund for Scholars (Institute for Humane Studies, George Mason University), enabling him to begin archival research in Paris.

**Joel Van Amberg**, Division doctoral student, returned to Europe in October to do additional archival research for his dissertation. Visits to the archives in Bratislava, Slovakia, and Brno, Czech Republic, were made possible by the intervention of Dr. Martin Cico, curator of the Bratislava city gallery, who visited The University of Arizona last winter to arrange an exhibition at the Museum of Art.

### Conferences

The Division sponsored three sessions at the 2003 Sixteenth Century Studies Conference in Pittsburgh this October:

"Poetry, Piety, and Processions: Shaping Public Opinion in the Sixteenth-Century Low Countries," **Professor Henk van Nierop**, chair, **Professor Brad S. Gregory**, commentator, **Victoria Clisham**, **Emily Peters**, and **Professor Judith Pollman**; "Masculinity and the Reformation," **Professor Scott H. Hendrix**, chair, **Professor Susan C. Karant-Nunn**, commentator, **Professor Raymond A. Mentzer**, **Professor Allyson M. Poska**, and **Professor Ulrike Strasser**; and "Confessional Polemics in the Sixteenth Century," **Professor John M. Frymire**, chair, **Brandon Hartley**, **Professor Peter E. Starenko**, and **Joel Van Amberg**. Among others to present papers at the conference were seminar students or Division alumni **Robert J. Christman**, **Dr. Aurelio Espinosa**, **Professor Andrew Gow**, **Professor Sigrun Haude**, **Professor Scott M. Manetsch**, and associated faculty **Professor Pia Cuneo**. Our annual *Combibium* was convened once again thanks to the generosity of **Mrs. Nancy J. O'Neill** of Cleveland, Ohio.

**Dr. Cristian Berco**, **Michael Crawford**, and **CynthiaAnn Gonzales**, current and former doctoral students of Professor Helen Nader, presented papers at the international congress of the Society for Spanish and Portuguese Historical Studies in Madrid, Spain, in July.

**Professor Susan C. Karant-Nunn**, Professor of History and Director, was an invited speaker to the Berkeley Reformation Seminar at the University of California in April. In May, she was the Lilly Endowment Lecturer at Luther College in Decorah, Iowa, where she delivered the address, "Created for the Man": Katharina Lutheryn as Martin Luther's Helpmeet." And in June, she attended a conference in Ascona, Switzerland, on violence and aggression in early modern Europe where she was a discussion panelist. She was interviewed for a documentary about Martin Luther (Lion Television) that was picked up and released in the United States in July by the Public Broadcasting Service. This academic year she is a Guggenheim Fellow in Germany.

**Professor Helen Nader** was an invited speaker in September at the J. Paul Getty Museum conference, "Mencia de Mendoza: Renaissance Collector and Patron." The topic of her address was "The World of the Mendoza Women in the Golden Age of Spain."

### Alumni

**Professor Robert J. Bast**, University of Tennessee, Knoxville, has been named Director of that university's multi-unit Medieval and Renaissance program.

**Dr. Cristian Berco** is conducting research in Spain on a two-year Canada Council

Post-doctoral Fellowship. He has published an article in *Confraternitas* on a sixteenth-century hospital for syphilis patients in Barcelona, Spain.

**Professor Peter Dykema**, Arkansas Tech University, married his fiancée, Norah Sams, in June and moved her and her two sons, Colin and Mason, to the wilds of Arkansas.

**Dr. Aurelio Espinosa**, University of Arizona, won a grant from the Committee for Cultural Cooperation between Spain's Ministry of Culture and American Universities for further research in Spanish archives to expand his dissertation for publication.

**Professor Andrew Gow**, who recently attained full professorship at the University of Alberta, Edmonton, won a major research award from that university, the Martha Piper Cook Prize. He recently held a Humboldt Research Fellowship in 2002-2003. Professor Gow has three new books recently released or pending: *Male Witches in Early Modern Europe*, with Lara Apps (Manchester University Press, 2003); *The Apocalyptic Year 1000: Religious Expectation and Social Change, 950-1050*, ed. with Richard Landees and David C. Van Meter (Oxford University Press, 2003); and *Anglo-American Millennialism: From Milton to the Millerites*, ed. with Richard Connors (Brill Academic Publishers, 2004).

**Professor Brad S. Gregory** accepted an associate professorship in the field of late medieval and early modern Christianity at the University of Notre Dame.

**Dr. Nicole Kurovka** took her Second Theological Examination in her training as 'Vikarin' in Wuppertal, Germany. In March, she must pass eight oral exams in order to finish her 'Vikariat.'

**Professor Marjory E. Lange**, Western Oregon University, published "Humorous Grief: Donne and Burton Read Melancholy," in *Speaking Grief in English Literary Culture: Shakespeare to Milton*, ed. Margo Swiss and David A. Kent (Duke University Press, 2002).

**Professor Darleen Pryds**, Graduate Theological Union (Berkeley), was promoted to Associate Professor of History and Christian Spirituality in May.

**Professor Eric L. Saak** and his wife, Diana, and son, Jonas, 5, welcomed a new member to the family in August: Hugo Friedrich Petrakopoulos Saak. Professor Saak's first book was published in September 2002: *High Way to Heaven: The Augustinian Platform Between Reform and Reformation, 1292-1524* (Brill Academic Publishers).



# Fulbright won—Destination: Switzerland

by James Blakeley, doctoral student



fter months of peering into a disappointing mailbox, I finally learned last spring

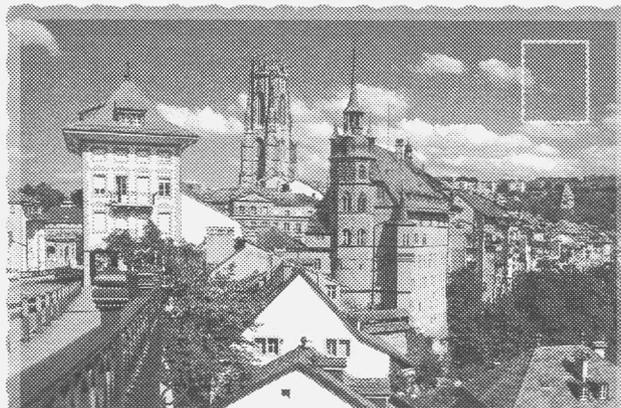
that I had been awarded the Fulbright scholarship for dissertation research in Switzerland. The award letter explained that I had also won a grant from the Swiss Confederation to participate in an intensive language program conducted by the University of Fribourg. From July until October, I endured the rigors of the German language and the record-setting heat wave that scorched Europe this summer. As an Arizonan used to temperatures above 100 degrees, I naively believed that I would fare much better than the Europeans until I realized that only the dairy cases of the grocery stores were air-conditioned. Thus I too sweated through six hours a day of language instruction in a stuffy classroom better suited to Swiss winters.

The population of Switzerland is multilingual. German is the mother tongue of approximately 65% of the population, while native French and Italian speakers comprise 35%. Therefore most Swiss are fluent in at least two, often three, languages. To facilitate intra-national communication and to promote Switzerland's peaceful and smooth governance, foreign language instruction is an important and serious aspect of the academic curriculum. Indeed my award letter noted that I was to appear promptly at 8:15 a.m. in Auditorium B for the entrance examination or forfeit my scholarship! Standing before a large group of foreigners at exactly a quarter past eight, the program's director explained to us alternately in Spanish, French, German, and English that his was not a two-

week language course for tourists and that the instruction we were about to receive would not be like American fast food "that contains only empty calories and makes one fat." I correctly assumed from this comparison that contrary to the popular American pedagogical models, Swiss teachers place rigorous training ahead of promoting the student's self-image!

Although I enjoyed perfecting my German, it was also rewarding to meet the other international students with whom I lived and studied. In my German class were three students from Iran, one student from Ghana, a medical student from Macedonia, one Slovenian, a woman from Croatia, an Albanian, and a Kurdish political refugee. Studying together for at least six hours a day and living in the same housing complex provided the right environment to foster a close-knit group. German was our common language.

Aside from sharing our latest frustrations with the Swiss immigration authorities, we also exchanged political ideas and discussed our academic interests. Given the current involvement of the United States in Iraq, I was often involved in discussions about U.S. foreign policy. Often it appeared that most were hoping to explain their views to an American rather than hear my personal political leanings, and I too desired to learn how others perceived the United States. Interestingly the opinions of my colleagues were as mixed as those of the American populace: some adamantly support the Bush administration's actions, while others consider the United States to be an arrogant, oil-hungry superpower. I sought to navigate the questioning like a Swiss



GREETINGS FROM FRIBOURG — Hôtel-de-Ville et cathédrale St. Nicolas

diplomat. My neutrality paid dividends; I was invited to several Iranian parties where my friends tried to teach me Persian pop songs and I also learned to eat Ethiopian food with my hands as an honorary member of the African group whose members derived from Nigeria, Ghana, South Africa, and Kenya.

By the end of September, as is the practice in Europe, the course culminated with a daylong final examination conducted under the scrutiny of roving instructors. Most of the students I met during the summer will travel to other Swiss universities. Beginning in October I, too, will start my dissertation research as a student at the University of Bern. Although French is the dominant language in the regions where I will conduct my dissertation research, a solid knowledge of Latin, French, and German is required to read historical documents from the sixteenth century. Thanks to the training provided by the Fulbright commission and the Swiss government, the hurdles of the German language will not be insurmountable. Now if I could just master the Swiss German dialect, Schwyzertütsch. . . \*

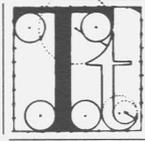
*After months of peering into a disappointing mailbox, I finally learned last spring that I had been awarded the Fulbright scholarship for dissertation research in Switzerland.*



## Putting the 'fun' in fundraising

*"Feeling gratitude and not expressing it is like wrapping a gift and not giving it." -Anon*

Photos by Randy Metcalf



The Division for Late Medieval and Reformation Studies has been fortunate enough to have two fantastic fundraisers this year.

In May, the Honorable Stanley G. Feldman, chair of the advisory board, and Mrs. Norma Feldman opened their art-filled home to guests to promote interest in the Division's continuing goal of providing an intensive program of study that will return highly trained students to the college classroom as the inspiring teachers of the next generation. To

perpetuate that goal, the Division seeks to secure Founding Director Professor Heiko A. Oberman's personal research library by meeting the Oberman family's challenge of endowing the Heiko A. Oberman Chair in Late Medieval and Reformation History. The sum needed is \$2 million.

In October, Mrs. Toetie Oberman offered guests the opportunity to view her Heineken prize-winning

husband's workspace and his scholar's working library of over 10,000 books dating from the sixteenth century to the present. Pia Cuneo, professor of art history, provided an illustrative demonstration of the uses of these historic volumes.

We would like to thank both our hosts and their guests for their abiding or burgeoning support of our program. \*

*We wish to express thanks to all the individuals who have given generously for the Acquisition of the Oberman Research Library and the Endowment of the Heiko A. Oberman Chair in Late Medieval and Reformation History*

Dr. David Alster and Mrs. Ellen Barth

Dr. Helen M. Amerongen Ms. Mina Ames

Mr. and Mrs. James E. and Caroline Bacon

Dr. Dolores Rivas Bahti Ms. Diane W. Barchy

Mr. David Bartlett and Ms. Janice Wezelman

Professor Robert J. and Mrs. Sarah Bast

Dr. Natali Bauer

Mr. and Mrs. Steven R. and Susan S. Bell

Professor and Mrs.

Eric A. and Luise Betterton

Dr. and Mrs. Baruch S. and Jean L. Blumberg

Dr. and Mrs. Karl-Heinz Bokeloh

The Honorable Ted B. Borek and the Reverend Karen Borek

Mrs. Patricia J. Bowman

Dr. and Mrs. Michael A. and Betsy Cina Boxer

Professor Thomas A. Brady, Jr., and Mrs. Kathleen Brady

Mr. and Mrs. Phillip and Katrin Bramley

Professor Martin Brecht Buchhandlung Gastl

Professor Robert A. Burns, OP

Professor Caroline Walker Bynum

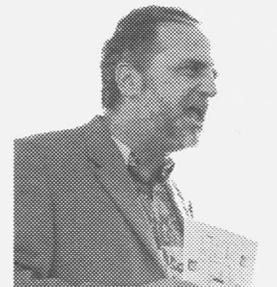
The Honorable Earl H. Carroll

Mr. and Mrs. Robert and Joan Kaye Cauthorn

Reverend and Mrs. Robert and Kay Christman

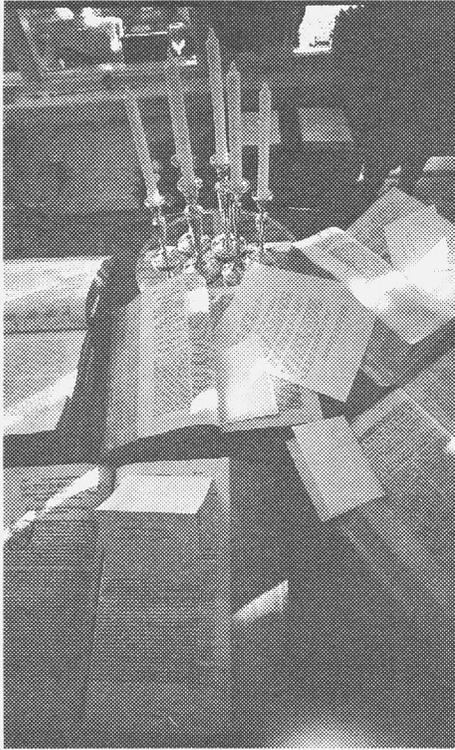


RIGHT: Edna Meza Aguirre, Michael Chihak, and Toetie Oberman pore over sixteenth-century volumes on display from the Oberman Research Collection. FAR RIGHT: Norma Feldman and Stanley G. Feldman (center couple) welcome guests Richard Threlkeld and Betsy Aaron to their gracious home.



Dr. Ed Donnerstein, Dean, College of Social and Behavioral Sciences  
"It is so rare to have a unit where virtually every student has won a Fulbright scholarship."





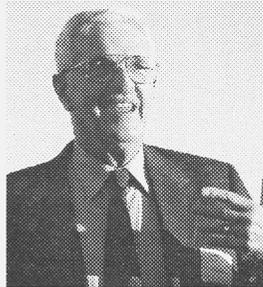
LEFT: Sixteenth-century volumes from the Oberman Research Collection on display at the Feldman residence.  
BELOW WITH INSET: Pia Cuneo, professor of art history, demonstrates some of the academic uses of a sampling of illustrations.



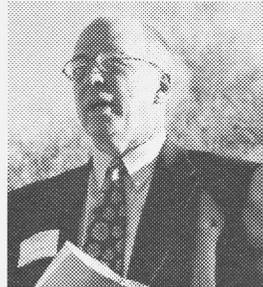
LEFT: (left to right) Michael Chihak, Edna Meza Aguirre, Danielle Thu, and Susan Karant-Nunn raise their glasses in a toast proposed by Stanley G. Feldman in remembrance of the late Heiko A. Oberman, who founded the Division for Late Medieval and Reformation Studies in 1989



Dr. Ida Oberman, eldest daughter of Heiko A. Oberman  
"My father taught us to ask the hard questions. Not 'Is this good or is this evil?' but 'What is good? What is evil?'"



The Honorable Stanley G. Feldman, Chair, Advisory Board  
"After I've finished reading—or listening to on audio tape—another historical analysis, I miss having Heiko around to get into a good debate about it."



Dr. George Davis Provost and Executive Vice-President, The University of Arizona  
"President Likins and I fully support the endowment for a Heiko A. Oberman Chair in Late Medieval and Reformation History."



Dr. John Schaefer President Emeritus, The University of Arizona  
"Books in the Oberman Library are unique treasures that document the high points of thought during the evolution of Western civilization. It is imperative that these gems be made a permanent part of the University's library holdings."

- Mr. Albert B. Chu
- The Reverend and Mrs. J. Wendell and Mary Clutz
- Professor Henry J. Cohn
- Ms. Sarah Congdon
- Professor and Mrs. Giles and Patricia Constable
- Professor and Mrs. Richard and Loretta Cosgrove
- Ms. Corine Cox, Ms. Kitty Cox, Ms. Lis Cox, and Mrs. Milly Flannery
- Professor and Mrs. George H. and Merrily Davis
- Professor Helene J. Farber de Aguilar
- Dr. Giselle de Nie
- Mr. and Mrs. David and Nancy DeConcini
- Senator Dennis DeConcini
- Mr. and Mrs. Dino J. and Mary Beth DeConcini
- Mr. and Mrs. Douglas J. and Dee M. Donahue
- Dr. Reinhard Dörrfuß
- Professors Gordon and E. Jane Dempsey Douglass
- Dove of Peace Lutheran Church
- Mrs. Elisabeth C. Dudley
- Mr. and Mrs. Richard and Mary Rose Duffield
- Ms. Susan G. Duncan
- Mr. and Mrs. Bruce R. and Margaret C. Edmonston
- Professor James M. Estes
- The Honorable Stanley G. Feldman and Mrs. Norma Feldman
- Mr. and Mrs. Richard and Catherine Firth
- Professor Andreas Flitner
- Professor Peter Foley and Professor Pia Cuneo
- The Friedrich Family
- Mrs. Marianne Frech
- Ms. Eugenia C. Gengler
- Mrs. Sally Gething
- Mr. and Mrs. Hugh and Shirley Gibson
- Professor and Mrs. Kenneth and Aldemar Hagen
- Mrs. Barbara Hanft
- Professor Marilyn Harran
- Dr. Nils Hasselmo
- Mr. and Mrs. C. Donald and Sandra Hatfield
- Professor Sigrun Haude
- Mr. and Mrs. Sam L. and Sara Hauert
- Professor and Mrs. Scott and Emilee Hendrix
- The Heuser Family
- The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation



## In Memoriam

*This year we sorrowfully said goodbye to two steadfast Friends of the Division. We wish to acknowledge the many years and many ways they contributed to our program. We will miss them deeply.*

### ORA DECONCINI MARTIN



ra DeConcini Martin, 1907-2003, together with her husband of 15 years,

Dr. Morris Martin, set up the first scholarship fund for the graduate students of the Division. As recently as March, she and her husband hosted a post-Town and Gown Lecture reception in their home, an almost annual imposition that we at the Division looked forward to with great anticipation. These generousities are mere glimpses into the life of giving she lived. Many communities like ours are indebted to her—the University of Arizona, the city of Tucson, the state of Arizona, the Catholic Church, the population of women voters, and the list continues.

The newspaper obituaries will give you the particulars of her life, tell you that she was born in Thatcher, Arizona, in 1907 to one of the pioneering families of this state, that she was the first person in her family to graduate from college (she earned an accounting degree from the UA), about her

marriage to Arizona Supreme Court justice and real estate developer Evo DeConcini, about her devoted and generous children—Dino, Dennis (U.S. Sen. Ret.), David, and Danielle (Thu)—and being named 1987 Mother of the Year. We want to share with you the Ora we knew, who valued education and saw as but one of her roles that of assisting young, talented students to realize their academic aspirations. There are a number of doctoral dissertations that owe their spark to Ora and Morris Martin's vision and generosity, for it was they who made these students' initial forays into European archives and their encounters with the primary sources of history a reality.

She has been thanked for her service to the many communities she has helped by voices that command much greater range than ours including Pope John Paul II and President Jimmy Carter. We wish to add our incalculable thanks to that resounding chorus.

### CABOT SEDGWICK



cabot Sedgwick, 1913-2003, will always be remembered by us as a man full of surprises. He became involved with the Division soon after its inception. Professor Oberman

deemed it a privilege to count him among his friends and would often tell the tale of how at a Division luncheon Cabot leapt out of his chair with an unsolicited but welcome roar of support—a toast to the professor and his next generation of insightful historians. Even beyond these words, Cabot's generosity and kindness touched us all.

In time and despite his own unassuming reticence, we learned of Cabot Sedgwick's full and varied past. With each new year, a singular accomplishment of his would be discovered: his roots in a prestigious New England publishing family, his ranching and rodeo years, his international service with the State Department including posts as a consul in Spain, his mastery of several languages, his informed enthusiasm for history, his establishment of a wildlife sanctuary near Nogales, his work in preserving historic landmarks. With each meeting, a new and impressive insight into Cabot Sedgwick's makeup.

We were surprised and delighted that only a few months before he passed away, he attended our fundraiser in May; his ever-present wit was manifest even then from beneath the brow of his cowboy hat. We shall miss his indomitable spirit and ardent support. \*

### SAVE THE DATE

TOWN AND GOWN LECTURE 2004

**James D. Tracy**

*University of Minnesota*

*Author of Erasmus of the Low Countries and Europe's Reformations, 1450-1650*

**MARCH 24, 2004**

Religious war in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries:  
Christian and Muslim relations

Mr. and Mrs. Robert H. and Katherine A. Hogan  
Professor Werner Jetter  
Mrs. Annemarie Jurgens  
Dr. Reinout J. Kasteleijn  
Mrs. Julia Kent  
Mr. and Mrs. Stephen M. and Sandra Kimball  
Mr. and Mrs. James O. and Lois B. Klemmedson  
Professor and Mrs. Helmut and Gisela Koester  
Mr. and Mrs. John F. and Beverly O. Kofron  
Mrs. Claire Kolins  
Professor and Mrs. Boris and Billie Kozolchyk  
Dekan Hans-Georg Kraft  
Dr. and Mrs. Peter Krebs-Schmid  
Professor and Mrs. Walter J. and Edna A. Kukkonen  
Mr. Ingo Kuroпка  
Mrs. Mechthild Litterscheid  
Mrs. Carol A. Little  
Mr. John D. Lundell  
Ms. Selma Paul Marks  
Dr. Morris Martin and Mrs. Ora DeConcini Martin  
Dr. Margaret F. Maxwell  
Mr. Sean D. Mayercek  
Ms. Annie J. McGreevy  
Professor Terrence McIntosh  
Dr. and Mrs. Henry P. and Lily Meijer  
Professor E. P. Meijering  
Ms. Margaret J. Modine  
Mr. Michael E. Moody  
The Reverend and Mrs. William and Grace E. Moremen  
Professor M. E. H. N. Mout  
Dr. Elisabeth Müller  
Mr. Gerhard Nicklaus  
Professor Frederick M. Nunn and Professor Susan C. Karant-Nunn  
Mr. Foppe M. Oberman  
The Reverend Gerrit Willem Oberman and Mrs. Ellen E. Winkler-Oberman  
Dr. Ida Oberman  
Mrs. Toetie Oberman  
Mevrouw Wija M. Oberman  
Mr. and Mrs. Arthur L. and Ruth A. Olsen  
Mrs. Lois Olsrud  
Mr. and Mrs. Charles Ott, Jr.  
Ms. Margot Panofsky  
Ms. Lyn Papanikolas  
Mr. Ray Pierson  
Dr. and Mrs. John and Lyn Pohlmann  
Ms. Esther T. Potts  
Ms. Donna Powers  
Ms. Sarah Drew Reeves



# Aestiva Romae Latinitatis

by Kathryn Jasper, doctoral student, History Department



ou can come without shoes, clothes, hair, but one stupid mistake and you go to the airport!" This declaration in a letter, from the instructor of the Latin course that I was planning to take in Rome, was very unsettling. How can one avoid a mistake in the Latin language, I asked myself, my trepidation growing.

Father Reginald Foster's bark turned out to be worse than his bite. He threatened students with expulsion but never actually banned them. I found that I could make the occasional mistake, but my skin had to thicken under the outspoken, unrelenting, but still constructive criticism of this outstanding teacher. This Carmelite monk is one of the world's most famous Latin scholars, an official Latinist to Pope John Paul II. With six or seven other colleagues, they make up the "Latin Letters" department of the Vatican Secretariat of State, whose offices are in the Apostolic Palace. He was able to keep precise track of the ability of each of the 45 members of the class and directed questions to them that he thought they were capable of answering.

In late June, I found my way to a neighborhood near the Gianicolo Park (the Roman equivalent of New York's Central Park), where I was to stay in a convent. Right about the Trastevere area of the city, a 20-minute walk from the Vatican, tourists rarely frequent this part of the Eternal City. I seldom heard a word of English. I was completely immersed in Italian culture for the entire five weeks, and in the classroom I was immersed in Latin as well.

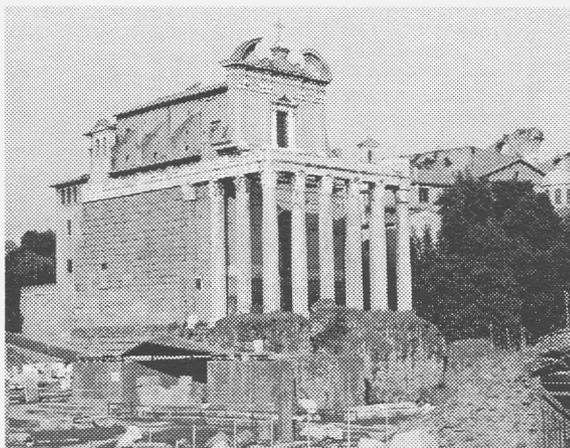
People say that Latin is a "dead language." Father Foster speaks it fluently, along with Italian, German, and English, to mention

only those used most often.

Father Foster's fluency allowed the course to become a veritable immersion program. We students not only read and translated Latin but also strove to meet our instructor's conversational challenge to us. I am learning to speak Latin! Father Foster provided incentive by regaling us with secret inner-Vatican anecdotes, and initially we strained to understand. Our voyeuristic desire to partake of his insider knowledge quickly produced in us the ability to understand what he said.

Classes began in the early afternoon and ended in the evening. Following class, Father Foster would invite us into the grounds of his monastery. He indulged us with white wine, and we sat *sub arboribus* (under the trees) speaking to each other in Latin or reading some of his favorite passages from the vulgate Bible, St. Augustine's *Confessions*, or perhaps some of Horace's poetry, until the sun set. Then, almost reluctantly, we would all make our way home. I had many hours in the morning to explore the city, or to sit in a quiet piazza reading Latin literature. I would also walk around the streets of Rome in search of Latin inscriptions.

Every Sunday, Father Foster took us on an excursion to a significant site. One morning, he took us south of Rome to the birthplace of St. Thomas Aquinas, and in the



Forum Romanum

afternoon to the Cistercian monastery where Aquinas died. Another time, he took us to the ancient port city of Ostia, where we read about the death of St. Augustine's mother, Monica. We visited the scene of Julius Caesar's assassination where our teacher provided the wine for a toast to this historic figure.

Father Foster has given me a new passion for Latin. The term "translate" has become obsolete. I am now simply reading and enjoying the beauty of the language. I am extremely grateful for this experience. I acknowledge that it was only possible through the support of Professors Alan Bernstein, Susan Karant-Nunn, and Cynthia White; the Division for Late Medieval and Reformation Studies, the Department of History, the Association for Women Faculty; and Renee Griggs, Senior Program Coordinator at the Office of Study Abroad and Student Exchange at The University of Arizona. If I am able, I would like to return. Father Foster has said that I may. \*

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