

Desert Harvest

Newsletter of the Division for Late Medieval and Reformation Studies

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College of Social and Behavioral Sciences

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From the Desk of the Director

Arriving in this country from overseas one is often stunned by self-deprecating evaluations of American society and culture. When one hesitates a moment in answering the complex question, "How do you like this country?" the interviewer is given to filling the ensuing—all too brief—pause with the 'right' response: We Americans are fundamentally a-historical and anti-intellectual. And if your destination is Tucson and the University of Arizona, it does not help much when this generalization is significantly qualified by the addition: "particularly in the Southwest."

Trekking between the continents this last year, I was struck by the fact that the millennium-rage is far wider spread and much more intensive in this country than in Europe. This striking contrast can still be taken as confirmation of a lack of historical perspective. After all, the year 2000 is at best a computer-challenge and, far from marking the beginning of a new era, at worst the expression of Christian imperialism.

And yet, I have gladly and eagerly participated in U.S. academic conferences and television programs dedicated to the millennial theme. The crucial concern—hotly debated on this continent, but seldom raised in Europe—boils down to two basic questions: where are we on the contorted path of civilization and do we have reason to be as optimistic in looking toward the future as our (grand)parents were on the war-ridden threshold of the twentieth century? Whatever the answers—the cosmos-oriented aerospace scientists are strikingly confident as compared to the globally thinking political analysts and social historians—a true grasp of the significance of historical insight necessarily underlies such a thoroughgoing quest for meaning.

The extent to which the Division is drawn into this debate can then no longer be surprising: in our field of European history between the Middle Ages and Modern Times, the central issue is to uncover the roots of modernity in the precarious legacy of containing religious intolerance, social injustice and racism. History teaches us that these are the three chief challenges which will determine the quality of life and provide the yardsticks for measuring the progress of civilization in the future. As long as this vision prevails, there can be no question of regarding the U.S.A. as anti-intellectual and a-historical, let alone "particularly in the Southwest!"

With warm regards,

THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA.



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A semi-annual newsletter of the
Division for Late Medieval and
Reformation Studies

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FROM THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

There's a saying: How quickly time passes when you're having fun! These last ten months of getting acquainted and acclimatized have been most pleasant. The atmosphere of mutual concern and assistance in the Division has made me look forward to coming to my office each morning. Students doubtless thrive best in such a nurturing environment. That they should grow intellectually within integrated lives is our and your common goal.

During the summer, I made three trips to Germany. The second one, in August, was to give a paper at the Second Joint Meeting of the Society of Reformation Research (North American) and the Verein für Reformationsgeschichte (Germany). The first Joint Meeting was in 1990 at the German Historical Institute in Washington, D.C. This time we met in Lutherstadt-Wittenberg, in a new conference center built on the site of the late medieval University of Wittenberg.

The conference theme was religious dissent within the Reformation movement. The European and the North American speakers tended to define this concept differently. For our part, we desired to interpret dissent as broadly as possible. To that end, in addition to distinguished contributions on Anabaptism by the leaders in this field (Werner Packull, University of Waterloo; and James Stayer, Queens University), we organized papers on topics like religious nonconformity in Holland between 1572 and 1618 (James Tracy, University of Minnesota); embassy chapels as protected enclaves of dissent (Benjamin Kaplan, University of Iowa); Anabaptism and the medical profession (Gary Waite, University of New Brunswick); and a typology of spiritualism (Emmet McLaughlin, Villanova University). My own presentation was on popular culture as in part a form of dissent. I argued that many uneducated—and some educated people too—failed to accept the Protestant leaders' disenchantment of the world. I shall carry the many insights garnered from this conference into my graduate colloquium this spring.

A number of prominent colleagues sent their regards to Heiko Oberman.

From behind a desk that is covered with papers and seemingly (but not really) in chaos, I extend the warm hand of incipient friendship. I do look forward to knowing you better.

Susan C. Karant-Nunn

Congratulations to...

Robert Christman on winning the Fulbright Fellowship. He is presently in Leipzig beginning his research on Erasmus Sarcerius. His sponsor at the University of Leipzig is Prof. Dr. Günther Wartenberg.

Michael Bruening on receiving the Ora-Morris Fellowship for Archival Research Abroad. He will use this to complete his dissertation research in Paris on Pierre Viret.



Northward From Spain

by Aurelio Espinosa

For a doctoral student doing dissertation research in the archives of northern Spain, my first trip to The Netherlands brought a number of sensations. Traveling northward to join Professor Oberman at Ekeby, I was reminded of Chronicler Laurent Vital's description of King Charles I's first journey in the opposite direction, from the Low Countries to Spain in 1517. Better known to us as Holy Roman Emperor Charles V, whose conquests stretched from Hungary to Indonesia, this teenage prince did not want to leave his native land, luxuriant Flanders. Not only did he experience a long and rough voyage at sea with Basque sailors, but he landed many miles from the designated port in an isolated village on the Cantabrian coast, perhaps a harbinger of awful occurrences during his reign. His Burgundian entourage did not fare any better. All along the route, these foreigners crossed over uninhabitable mountains and trekked through sparse valleys where, despite their eminence, villagers did not have much to offer them; unlike the Flemish, these coarse people cultivated only as much as they needed to survive.

Descending the barren southern ridges, the itinerant Court encountered a vast stretch of primitive plains, cloudless skies, and brown horizons. After four or five hours of continuous walking, the prince and his noble vassals rested in meager and simple huts. What kind of world was this God-forsaken place, these most august of men must have asked themselves—not at all like the rich cities of Brabant and Holland, where they were accustomed to silver goblets of wine, succulent wild game, gold halls, candle-lit pageantry, and intricate tapestries of classical beauty.

My first visit to The Netherlands was, by comparison, in a train, which toured along the Rhine. I thought about the vast ecological differences between Old Castile and the Low Countries. I noticed the charming towns of the Dutch and remembered the inelegant homes of Castilian villages. As I was transported via another train heading towards Holten, where Professor Oberman was waiting for me, I was overwhelmed by the density of life, both botanical and human. The attractive balance between cultivated land and wild growth is in stark contrast to the arid plains of Northern Spain, which are devoid of exuberant vegetation.

As Professor Oberman drove me along the lush roads leading to the seclusion of Ekeby, I saw the locals going about their household chores inside their modern

farm homes. During days and days on country roads through the plains of northern Castile, I had hardly seen an open window that offered a view of domestic life; because of the harsh winters and severe summer afternoons, people sheltered themselves throughout the day.

On my Fulbright year in Northern Spain, conducting

archival research, I came to understand the range of technological constraints that people of the past endured, the physical and environmental barriers that we no longer face, and how some places produce greater yields and develop particular customs due to the gift of good land and the luck of the seasons.

In a certain Netherlandic way, my own yields this summer in Ekeby were higher than during my months in Spain. For a number of years, I had been cultivating archival material, but it was only after the discussion and exchanges in the summer seminar that I was able to draft the first chapter of my dissertation on domestic policy and the Castilian administration (1520-1543).



Ekeby Seminar, Summer 1999. Left to right. Joel Van Amberg, Eric Saak, Aurelio Espinosa, Prof. Heiko Oberman, Nicole Kuropka, John Frymire, Jonathan Reid.



Division Graduate Updates

Robert Bast (1993)

University of Tennessee
Department of History

Curtis Bostick (1993)

Southern Utah University
Department of History

Andrew Gow (1993)

University of Alberta, Edmonton
Department of History

Brad Gregory (M.A. 1989; Ph.D.,

Princeton, 1996)
Stanford University
Department of History

Sigrun Haude (1993)

University of Cincinnati
Department of History

Marjory Lange (1993, English major,

History minor)
Western Oregon University
Department of English

Scott Manetsch (1997)

Northwestern College, Iowa
Department of Religion

Michael Milway (1997)

University of Toronto
Centre for Reformation and
Renaissance Studies

Darleen Pryds, (Ph.D., University of

Wisconsin, Madison, 1994)
Virginia Polytechnic Institute
and State University
Department of History

Eric Saak (1993)

University of Groningen,
The Netherlands
Senior Fellow, Federal Research Institute
for Medieval Studies

Jeff Tyler (1995)

Hope College, Michigan
Department of Religion

Die Deutsche Sommerschule von New Mexico, 1999

by Victoria Speder

The secluded mountain range of Taos Ski Valley, New Mexico, is not the first destination that springs to mind when you think of German language instruction! In fact, 1999 marked the twenty-fourth year that the annual German Summer School, sponsored by the Goethe Institute and the University of New Mexico, has taken place in this tiny mountain village. And the location is perfect. Up to sixty students, ranging in age from 18 to 78 (!), gathered in the charming Thunderbird Lodge, which is owned and operated by a German-speaking Bavarian family. Nestled in the mountains, 9,500 feet above sea level, you could easily delude yourself into believing that you were actually in the Bavarian Alps.

The summer school is a full-immersion German program, designed for students with at least two years of college-level German. This year, instructors were brought in from universities in New Mexico, Arizona, and Texas, as well as Austria, Switzerland, and of course, Germany itself—and not a word of English was spoken for the duration of the five-week session. All the students were evaluated upon arrival, and placed in language classes which varied according to ability. Classes were offered at both undergraduate and graduate levels, and included courses in German literature, film, culture, and even medieval German poetry.

The coursework was tough, but the natives were very friendly, and there were social activities aplenty to help ease the tension of a heavy work load. In addition to several hiking forays into the mountains, and the obligatory imbibing of much German "Bier," we visited the Santa Fe Opera and the Rio Grande Gorge, and were treated to several concerts featuring the music of German composers performed by musicians from around the Southwest.

My experience at the Sommerschule was entirely positive. I arrived having had no German instruction or experience for over ten years, since my high school days in England! Fortunately, I am not the most shy or retiring person in the world, and I quickly adjusted to the challenge of making myself understood in a language in which I was anything but proficient. After a few days of frustration, the German began to come back to me, and by the end of the five weeks, I was able to converse easily and read with far more fluency than before. The Sommerschule is an experience I heartily recommend, both for the excellence of its faculty, and its congenial atmosphere. It is a very successful creation of our own little Germany right here in the desert Southwest! I am very grateful to the German Club of Tucson and the Division for their support, which enabled me to attend a program which was as enjoyable as it was challenging.



Looking at Germany

by Joel Van Amberg

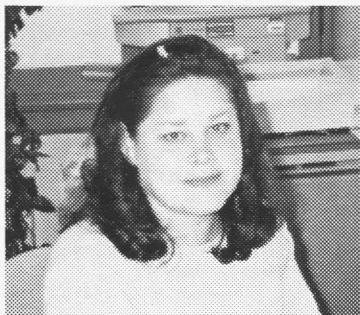
As my wife, our two children, and I sat on the platform of the Munich station waiting for the train that would take us to Erlangen, the university town where we would spend our summer, an elderly nun approached my wife. Solicitously, she asked her if we were refugees fleeing from the war in Kosovo. Although we were not in as dire straits as that kind nun had imagined, we were thoroughly exhausted after a long and eventful flight to Germany from Tucson, Arizona.

Therefore, as we stepped off the train in Erlangen three hours later, how grateful we were to encounter the kind smile and warm handshake of Dr. Berndt Hamm, Professor of Historical Theology at the University of Erlangen-Nuremberg. This former student and later colleague of Professor Oberman at Tübingen whisked us off to lunch and then to the apartment where we would be staying while I conducted research on my dissertation. The assistance that I received from Professor Hamm this summer, both academic and logistical, made me aware of the great value of Professor Oberman's network of European professional contacts to the work of his students in the Division.

My research has focused on the social forces which propelled the controversy over the proper interpretation of the Eucharist during the early years of the Reformation. The Eucharist repeatedly appears in the sixteenth century as a lightning rod drawing to it all the passionate sentiments of devotion, rage, and indignation

generally felt towards the medieval church. Conflict and dissension continued to swirl around it in a constantly shifting arrangement of parties and interests. Most studies hitherto have focused on the theological concerns as motivating factors in the debates. My investigations this summer in Germany have begun to uncover the social matrix out of which these ideas arose. Reading pamphlets and letters about the Eucharist written by laity of various social groups has allowed me to pinpoint the areas of concern for different levels of society. I am discovering that the desire to undercut the status and economic privilege of the clergy, the attempt to diminish the authority of Rome over citizens of German cities and towns, and an eagerness to avoid social disruption were some factors which influenced German laity to take a particular position on the seemingly theological conflict over the Eucharist.

My stay in Germany was also an ideal occasion for me to improve my language skills. Being forced to constantly communicate in German resulted in significant improvement in my proficiency. Finally, my summer in Germany has served as a stepping stone to a more extended period of research in that country. My findings from this summer provided the basis for my application for a Fulbright scholarship, which will provide me with the funding I need to spend next year in Germany. Moreover, I was able to enlist Professor Hamm as my foreign sponsor, an important component of any successful Fulbright application. My time in Germany provided an excellent opportunity to lay the groundwork for further research which I intend to carry out in Tucson and abroad.



Welcome, Sandra!

This fall we welcomed Sandra Swedeen to our staff. A graduate of the Journalism Department of the University of Arizona, she has returned to Tucson after several years in New York at Warner Books.

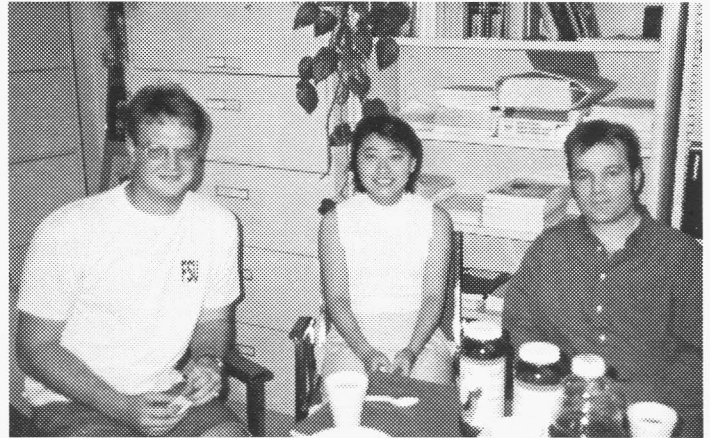


May we present....

The Division is pleased to introduce the three newest students in the Division:

- **James Blakeley** received the B.A. degree in International Affairs from Lewis and Clark College, Portland, Oregon; and then took the M.A. in History from Portland State University, with a thesis on the image of the peasant in early German-language printed pamphlets. Blakeley is a research assistant in the Division.
- **Brandon Hartley** earned the B.A. degree in Humanities from Florida State University and then proceeded to the M.A. degree in History from Utah State University, where he worked with Professor Norman Jones on gendered images of martyrdom in the English Reformation. Hartley has been awarded a fellowship by the Department of History.

- **Han Song** joins the Division from the University of Beijing, where she studied with Professor Zhu Xiaoyuan. She graduated in June 1999 with a B.A. in World History. Song is a research assistant in the Division.



Brandon Hartley, Han Song and Jonathan Reid.

Too Hot to Think

by Peter Dykema

"Too hot to think!" That was the challenge laid down by our Division's publicity flyers as we initiated the first Summer Lecture Series back in the summer of 1988. Could a series of historical talks really find an audience in Tucson in the sweltering heat?

I certainly was among the skeptics. Darleen Pryds, the Division's publicist at the time, and Professor Oberman first broached the topic to the graduate students at a Thursday seminar. Their hope was to convince churches and perhaps other community organizations to provide support for graduate students in the lean summer months. In return, the graduate students would offer a series of presentations. "No way. Won't happen." That was my gut reaction. No church would be willing to pay for the lectures and no more than a paltry few would ever show up.

I'm glad to say I was wrong on both counts. Over the years, a number of churches have accepted our challenge, stepping forward to host us and support our endeavors. And the anticipated empty rooms? They

have been filled by eager and engaged crowds, both enthusiastic and inquisitive. So successful have the Summer Lectures been that in the early 90's *The Tucson Weekly* regularly highlighted the series as one of its "Hot Picks," a list of the most enticing activities offered in the Old Pueblo.

Our most enduring support has come from St. Philip's in the Hills Episcopal Church. Every summer since 1989 members of the Division have given talks there, and every summer we have been amazed by the response. Throngs of 70 people and more have regularly crowded their facilities to hear talks on the Crusades, the Inquisition, Reformation thought, peasant religion, even one on medieval tales of journeys to the underworld entitled "Hell on \$6.66 a Day!"

The Summer Lecture Series has allowed members of the Division to work towards a most basic and necessary goal: the dissemination of knowledge to audiences outside the University. This summer Victoria Speder and I gave the lectures. The heartfelt welcome we have received and the keen interest we have encountered are evidence of the fascination history can instill. It's never too hot to think!



Along the "Silk Road"

by Jonathan Reid

The editors have dared much in asking me for a contribution: one does not lightly provide space for the ravings of a graduate student in the terminal stages of his degree!

One of the first afflictions that can set in while crossing the 'dissertation desert' is reality depravation. It is a sort of dehydration of the mind resulting from insufficient contact with students, colleagues, and members of one's community. Symptoms can include, alternately, a wild-eyed look of desperation as one strains to see hopeful signs in the long, solitary spaces ahead or a goofy, ecstatic visage as the afflicted contemplates a mirage of that golden Shangri-La of his heart's desire: THE JOB. I have seen them both on friends' faces and in the mirror. Fortunately, in 'trekking' along the Division's well-trodden 'silk road' to the promised land, there are ample oases for refreshment and for health-restoring reality-checks on one's progress: continued participation in seminar as well as opportunities to give lectures and conference papers elsewhere.

Over the past year, I profited particularly from the chances to present aspects of my research in Geneva (Switzerland), Sherbrooke (Canada), and St. Andrews (Scotland). These were tremendous growing experiences, for which I am very grateful to Francis Higman and the Institut d'Histoire de la Réforme in Geneva, William Kemp and Diane Desrosiers-Bonin at McGill University, as well as Andrew Pettegree and the St. Andrews Reformation Studies Institute. One of the great strengths of the Division is that collectively, its personnel, past and present, Professor Oberman leading the way, provide countless contacts among the international scholarly community, which yield such chances.

In the next few days, I will team up with Mike Bruening, as we present papers on our dissertations in St. Louis, Missouri, at our field's most important yearly gathering: the Sixteenth Century Studies Conference. Pious to say, yet still very true, the discerning responses of formal commentators and the audience provide vital feedback on how to shape or even re-cast one's work. Everyone will understand this respectable 'academic' aspect of these occasions.

Fewer may realize that they are quasi-beauty pageants. Eager graduate students and recent Ph.D.s must put on a good show. It is not just good pedagogical form, it's essential to getting a job. You want to have them saying: "A good scholar?"

"Why yes. What an exciting project!"

"Good teacher, speaker?"

"A real Ham! Has'em rolling in the aisles and learning something despite themselves."

It is hard knowing that a generation ago, 'terminal' graduate students in a good program like that of the Division, would have been whisked from the wilderness by Wildcats, Badgers, Golden Beavers, Aggies, Fighting Illini, or a Crimson Tide and taken to some pastoral, tree-lined campus, where they were encouraged to grow. So the myth goes. Today, there is a long, edgy line of folk at the end of the desert road, backed up at the gates to the promised land. *This* little reality check doesn't negate or demean the superlatives that are bound to fill the surrounding pages; it makes them all the more remarkable in that they tell a good part, *the* good part, if not the whole story of contemporary academic training. Look elsewhere for a body count.

I can't say more... am getting a little dizzy, but I see an oasis ahead. Gotta run, slick the hair, shine those shoes, polish that paper... and where did that red-rubber clown's nose go?

Visit us in cyberspace at
<http://w3.arizona.edu/~history/graduate/medref.html>