



# Desert Harvest

Newsletter of the Division for Late Medieval and Reformation Studies

Vol. 8, No. 2

College of Social and Behavioral Sciences

November 2000

## SPECIAL SYMPOSIUM ISSUE DIVISION GATHERS INTERNATIONAL SCHOLARS

### *From the desk of the Director*

In the medieval calendars October is known as “the Month of Wine” – for the Division it was this and far more. Not until I returned from Europe to the New World at the beginning of the fall was I briefed about a breathtaking international symposium organized to mark my 70th birthday. What evolved was a celebration of the Division in the circle of colleagues from here and abroad, including a rapidly growing number of alumni who have spread from Arizona to positions around the United States and Canada.

Whereas this issue of the *Desert Harvest* will highlight the many aspects of the festivities, one of the most lasting impressions was a theme pursued in the corridors. At the conclusion, seated in a large circle, we discussed the characteristics of our field and were surprised by the rare experience of a growing consensus, a discovery sparked off by a revealing sixteenth-century statement: “Where my library is, there is my Fatherland.” In sharp contrast to the medieval ideal of stability (*stabilitas loci*, staying in one place), in the early Middle Ages typical of the ‘pious monk’ and then transferred to the ‘good citizen,’ these words of Erasmus (†1536) clearly reflect the new virtue of a life dedicated to the pursuit of truth which exacted the high price of an unstable curriculum vitae: Erasmus trekked hundreds of miles from the Low Countries to France, Italy, England, Switzerland and Germany.

Far more than just the utterance of one exceptional humanist, these words point us to an intriguing characteristic of the period in European history which the Division regards as its natural habitat, 1400-1700. Erasmus’ Fatherland reflects an era of new mobility, both voluntary and involuntary, transforming the sense of stability from the security of location to the psychological inner orientation which we associate with equanimity and character balance. The ‘confession’ of Erasmus marks not only a revolution in the pursuit of happiness, but also highlights that higher education pertains to far more than the ranking of universities or the excellence of individual scholars: it seeks to establish citizenship in a country which transcends the roots of family, state and nation.



This Erasmian shift, accelerated in our day by a rapid, general upward and outward mobility, would have caused far more severe social disorientation had it not been tempered by the parallel spread of general education. It is this essential societal function which is embedded in the seemingly simple words which should be read as a battle cry: “Where my library is, there is my Fatherland.”

With warm regards,

*Herb A. Behrman*

THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA®



## From the Associate Director

The weekend of October 13-15 was a university instructor's dream. I am only gradually coming back down to earth. Unless an advanced graduate student is presenting a paper, we are financially unable to take students to professional conferences. From a pedagogical perspective, we could say that the international symposium at Hacienda del Sol in honor of Heiko A. Oberman on his 70th birthday was *bringing a major conference to our students*.

Attendance at meetings of historians significantly helped to shape me as a scholar. The Oberman Birthday Symposium may prove to have been a turning point for the Division's progeny. Over two days our students mingled with some of the world's leading Reformation researchers and theorists. They met them at the airport and took them back, gaining opportunities for private consultation. They dined with them. They heard them present papers on a range of relevant topics. In the discussions that closed each session, these luminaries, many Oberman's former students, interacted. Two of our present students not only listened but took part in the debate.

To be sure, the Division brings one or two renowned colleagues each year to the University – we await Professor Patrick Collinson of Cambridge University, Professor Irena Backus of the University of Geneva, and Dr. Tom Scott of Liverpool University this spring. But such intellectual riches as we all encountered at Hacienda del Sol will swell our minds for years to come.

A particular surprise – well, I confess to knowing in advance – was Dean Holly Smith's announcement of a campaign to endow a chair for future directors of the Division. On October 6, President Likins launched the University's drive to raise one billion dollars. We are proud to have our undertaking incorporated within the institution's larger campaign. An endowed chair requires a capital of two million dollars. To many of us, this is itself a very large sum, but only such a principal can yield enough for a senior academic's salary and small (yes, small) amenities. At some public universities in the United States, numerous history professors occupy endowed chairs. No such chairs have been founded in the Department of History at The University of Arizona.

A second major announcement, made by Ida Oberman on behalf of all four Oberman children, was that Heiko and Toetie Oberman are willing to donate the Oberman research library, in its field the largest in private hands in North America, to the Division and the University. Dean Smith responded enthusiastically on behalf of the University.

We in the Division humbly, gratefully acknowledge the visionary lead gift made by the Guilford Fund of the Fidelity Investments Charitable Gift Fund. This generous donation indeed starts us on our way. I ask readers of this newsletter to bear our worthy cause in mind as you plan your future. We welcome gifts of all sizes. (Checks should be made payable to The University of Arizona Foundation/ Heiko A. Oberman Chair.) This chair, together with the accompanying library, will both symbolize and secure our common educational values in the years to come.

I write this on the day after returning from the annual meetings of the Sixteenth Century Studies Conference and the Society for Reformation Research, held this year in Cleveland. I am gratified to report that the performance of past and present members of the Thursday-evening seminar was superb. Robert Bast, Cristian Berco, Michael Bruening, Peter Dykema, Aurelio Espinosa, Stephanie Fink, John Frymire, Nicole Kuroпка, Scott Manetsch, and Michael Milway presented excellent papers. John Tyler and Sigrun Haude chaired or commented at sessions. The Division shone.

With cordial regards,

*Susan C. Karant-Nunn*

Desert Harvest 

## Desert Harvest

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

The University of Arizona  
Douglass Building, Room 315  
P.O. Box 210028  
Tucson, Arizona 85721-0028  
(520) 621-1284

DIRECTOR:  
Professor Dr. Heiko A. Oberman

ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR:  
Professor Dr. Susan C. Karant-Nunn

ADMINISTRATIVE DIRECTOR:  
Luise Betterton

ADMINISTRATIVE SECRETARY:  
Sandra Swedeen

BOARD OF ADVISORS:  
Stanley Feldman, Chair  
Hermann Bleibtreu  
Richard Duffield  
Morris Martin  
Nancy O'Neill  
George Rosenberg  
Bazy Tankersley

DESERT HARVEST EDITOR:  
Professor Dr. Susan C. Karant-Nunn



Symposium Luncheon: (Left to right) Mrs. Margaret Modine, Hon. Ted B. Borek, Prof. Susan C. Karant-Nunn



# OBERMAN'S 70TH BIRTHDAY BANQUET

by Peter Dykema



In the evening of October 15, supporters of the Division for Late Medieval and Reformation Studies gathered to honor Professor Dr. Heiko A. Oberman, toasting the occasion of his 70th birthday along with colleagues, students and family members. Held at the close of a weekend symposium celebrating Oberman's work and influence, this "festivious" occasion marked a time of reflection and transition, and a renewed commitment to the

the palm truly does "grow under its own weight." This Oberman family motto can be applied to the current status of the Division: changes are afoot, healthy foundations have been laid, and new, vigorous growth is just around the corner. The establishment of an endowed chair has long been a goal of the Division and its supporters. Dean Holly Smith provided the first grand revelation at the symposium ban-



Gift of a *Festschrift*: (Left to right) Prof. Heiko A. Oberman, Prof. Andrew Gow, Prof. Robert Bast

*The establishment of an endowed chair has long been a goal of the Division and its supporters. Dean Holly Smith provided the first grand revelation at the symposium banquet, announcing that the campaign for the desired chair was now officially underway and already meeting with success. Of the two million dollars necessary, pledges and funds in excess of \$300,000 have been received.*

mission of the Division and its Director.

### *Palma sub pondere crescit*

As a palm frond bends downwards, space is opened for new leaves; thus

quet, announcing that the campaign for the desired chair, under the rubric of The University of Arizona's freshly launched Campaign Arizona, was now officially underway and already meet-

ing with success. Of the two million dollars necessary, pledges and funds in excess of \$300,000 have been received.

Dean Smith's announcement was followed by a word, literally, from Heiko's daughter, Dr. Ida Oberman. That word was *incunabula* (literally *infancy*; that is, books published before 1500, in the infancy of printing). Holding up an early printed book, Ida told us of her family's love for books and their dedication to the values of liberal education.

Acting upon that love and dedication, Professor Oberman will donate his personal library to The University of Arizona. Estimated to be the largest private library of late medieval and Reformation history in the Americas, the Oberman collection will greatly enhance the holdings of the University and ensure that young historians will have the necessary tools for their research.

### **Heiko's Harvest**

The evening continued with Professor Robert Bast and Professor Andrew Gow presenting a *Festschrift* to Heiko. *Continuity and Change: The Harvest of Late Medieval and Reformation History* is a volume of

*Continued to page 8*

### *The Knights of Ekeby*

It was a splendid evening, made all the more wonderful by the gracious presence of Toetie Oberman, roundly recognized as the mastermind and confidante beyond-the-scenes, all four of Heiko's and Toetie's children: Gerrit Willem, Ida, Hester and Raoul, spouses and grandchildren. The event was a real family affair as the Oberman family was honored and in turn honored us,

Heiko's colleagues, students and supporters. The fellowship of the evening was captured well in the refrain of 'The Ekeby Song,' sung by Heiko's children:

*We are the knights of Ekeby,  
you're welcome in our circle;  
here we tell of memories past,  
and make new memories as  
we raise a glass.*



## “What makes you tick as an historian?”

At the Feet of Visiting Scholars: Professor Brad Gregory, Stanford University

by Brandon Hartley

**S**ome people might like it if history were simpler. It surprises many that historians can argue vehemently over the past – after all, certain events happened and others did not, so we should be able to simply report the truth and move on. Unfortunately (or fortunately for those of us who enjoy a heated debate on the past), history rarely gives us a clear-cut picture. Consequently, we develop new ways of looking at history, a theory or a methodology, that helps us to narrow our focus, the types of documents we use, and the kinds of questions we ask. The interpretation scholars apply to their study influences the kind of history they produce.

Professor Brad Gregory, in his book *Salvation at Stake: Christian Martyrdom in Early Modern Europe*, does limit his investigation, but only in focusing on a single group of participants – martyrs – in the religious controversy of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Otherwise, his analysis is remarkably broad and comprehensive. Additionally, though, Gregory hopes to advance his own vision of how scholars should interpret the past. He argues that good history examines people of the past on their own terms – he aims to “plumb the living souls of those who prayed and prepared in prison before stepping to the stake or scaffold.” He strives to discover the passions they felt toward their religion, their allies, and those they despised, without imposing on them models and structures that they themselves would never have understood.

Gregory visited our Thursday-night soiree last semester,

and we had the rare opportunity to grill a former member of the Division for Late Medieval and Reformation Studies on his recently published work. He cuts quite a figure – at a respectable six feet, rarely do I find myself literally looking up at people, but I had no choice as he must stand nearly six and a half feet tall. Looking more like someone who would spend his free time slam-dunking basketballs than sifting through dusty archives, I was pleased to find that his enthusiasm for his topic matches his towering height.

mentioned this stint in Utah as a parallel to what he hoped to accomplish in his book.

When he had finished his introduction, we turned to critiquing his work and questioning the methods he used. This is actually a rare pleasure for budding scholars. One of the largest benefits of the seminar is the chance to sit with published historians and challenge them on the nature of their work. How they choose to assemble and interpret it (because we will be choosing our own methods soon) is perhaps as impor-

---

*He argues that good history examines people of the past on their own terms – he aims to “plumb the living souls of those who prayed and prepared in prison before stepping to the stake or scaffold.”*

---

He and I share a common link in our past in that we both received degrees from Utah State University. We swapped skiing and professor stories and found that we had the same tastes in our teachers as we did in our ski slopes. We could also identify with the culture shock of going to school in Utah. Logan, the city that houses the University, is a small town in a slightly larger urban corridor nestled in an absolutely beautiful valley. The town is also approximately 90% Mormon – even higher when one excludes the University population. We chatted about the shocks we experienced when we discovered that the area was so homogenous and how we only started to really fit in after we accepted Utah “on its own terms” and abandoned those preconceptions we had brought from the outside. As Gregory told us about the defining moments in his career as a scholar, he

tant as what the work itself says. The discussion grew surprisingly heated at times. To an extent, scholars hold their particular method of history as dear as a child. At times, we know much more about a wider variety of issues in the sixteenth century than did the average person alive at the time. Should we not apply modern conceptions of psychology, ritual, or class struggle to a period if it will enhance our understanding? Not surprisingly, this issue was not resolved that night. I love to read a work that immerses me in the past, that challenges me to understand a period as the people themselves might have understood it. However, I also know that I learned more about my own religious culture of the Southeast when I was forced to look at it two thousand miles away in Utah, and I noticed aspects of Logan and its deeply religious culture that no insider could, or would, see. \*



# PANTHEON OF INTERNATIONAL SCHOLARS

## Luminaries arrayed in Tucson to treat the Work of Heiko A. Oberman

**Dean**

**Holly Smith:**

“Let me end with one last quotation, this one from [a Harvard historian] who relates that he was bragging to a colleague from another university about the growth of Renaissance and Reformation studies at Harvard, to which the colleague retorted, ‘Yes, you may become the Arizona of the East.’”



*by Han Song*

Against a glittering panorama of dark mountains and sparkling city lights, scholars in late medieval and early modern European history from the West Coast, East Coast and across the Atlantic gathered with Professor Dr. Heiko A. Oberman's family members, friends

and students, past and present, at the Hacienda del Sol for the reception that opened a string of celebrations for the guest of honor's 70th birthday.

The evening's host, the Head of the History Department, Professor Richard Cosgrove, warmly welcomed the guests. He then introduced the Dean of the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences, Dr. Holly Smith, who tracked Oberman's "luminous path" from Harvard to Tübingen to Tucson. She listed his many achievements and contributions not only to his field but to the University as a whole: the establishment of the Division for Late Medieval and Reformation Studies; his devotion to training the next generation of Reformation scholars; the Division's outreach activities in the community including

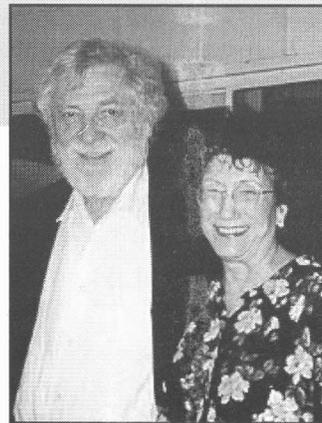
Annual Lectures and the Summer Lecture Series; and his generous donation of his renowned library to the University, a precious resource for the benefit of future scholars here and abroad.

Provost George Davis then spoke of his personal experiences with the guest of honor during Oberman's first days at the university. Oberman was fresh from a world of staunch German tradition, but his charm eased the enormous transition to this desert culture which he enriched with a bounty of historical expertise.

These few exciting hours set the tone for a weekend of warm, scholarly exchange, the fruits of which may be sampled in the following pages. \*



Mrs. Toetie Oberman, Prof. Giles Constable, Prof. Heiko A. Oberman



**Left:** Prof. Donald Weinstein, Prof. Helen Nader.  
**Below:** Prof. Christopher Ocker, Prof. E. Jane Dempsey Douglass, Ms. Marguerite Ragnow, Prof. Andrew Pettegree.





## SESSION I: SCHOLASTICISM by Scott Taylor

**Chair: Professor Alan Bernstein, The University of Arizona**

*The first session of the Symposium was a testament to the seminal work of Professor Dr. Heiko A. Oberman in scholasticism.*



**Professor Francis Oakley, President of Williams College,** related his sense of emancipation upon reading Oberman's *The Harvest of Medieval Theology* at a point of youthful restiveness with traditional periodization. Now with a similar eye toward those intersections of histo-

ry, philosophy and theology that Oberman has made foci of his own work, Oakley tackles Robert Boyle, seventeenth-century natural philosopher and 'father' of modern chemistry.

Approaching Boyle through his opus, *The Christian Virtuoso*, Oakley seeks to rescue Boyle from scholars who treat his references to God and miracle as vestigial *topoi* in a declension narrative of theology toward secularization, and from social contextualists who portray him as a scientifically-grounded latitudinarian whose objections to Aristotelianism and scholasticism were founded upon a concern for their subversive implications for the Church of England and the Restoration. Oakley treats Boyle's metaphysical ruminations as a serious attempt to come to terms with the relation between God and an ordered universe. He discovers in Boyle a certain seventeenth-century Ockhamist volitionism distinguishing between God's ordained power, evidenced in creation, and his absolute power, manifested in miracle. Boyle's voluntarism in a creation *ex nihilo* obviates both Platonic demiurge and Aristotelian open universe. For him, science holds no certainty, but only probability, since God is not bound by the order of his own creation. \*



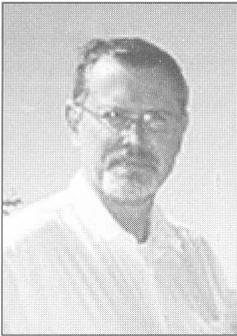
**Professor William J. Courtenay, University of Wisconsin, Madison,** echoed the theme in "Fruits of the Harvest," noting how some apples fall further from the tree than others, whether that tree be Ockham or Oberman.

Granting *Harvest* was an antidote to prior neo-Thomistic declension accounts, it is now necessary to reconfigure the fourteenth century, when 'via' referred not to a system of self-identification, but to specific solutions for specific problems. Thus, while Gregory of Rimini was critical of Ockham's epistemology and soteriology, he followed Ockham in matters of time and motion, the very questions of natural philosophy on which Burley departed. So, too, preconceptions of student-teacher relationships have proven unreliable. Oresme, once thought a pupil of Buridan, is found closer to Ockham who split with Buridan on issues of natural philosophy and propositional logic. And while Pierre d'Ailly agreed with Ockham's criticism of the Modistae, given Gerson's rapprochement with the *via antiqua*, is it really possible to trace a route through the chancellor to Biel? All these issues find a genesis in the seminal work of Oberman, demonstrating that a good Harvest produces not only present bounty, but the seeds of harvests to come. \*

## SESSION II: RELIGION *by Joshua Rosenthal*

**Chair: Professor John Van Engen, University of Notre Dame**

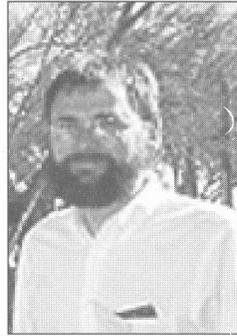
*The presentations challenged us to carefully examine the role of religion and its relationship to intolerance, injustice, and racism, paying tribute to Professor Oberman, not by parroting various points of his many works, but by paying close attention to the voices of the sources and challenging us to look at our modern selves in another light.*



**Dr. Wiebe Bergsma, of the Frisian Academy of Sciences,** began this session by sharing his findings concerning the Dutch territory of Drenthe. Bergsma has compiled a massive database of sixteenth-century religious records, which apparently includes information ranging from

parish membership to the ministers' culinary preferences. Bergsma spoke about the adoption of the Reformed faith in this formerly Roman Catholic land. He demonstrated that while this religious transformation "came from the top down" with much zeal, the former Roman Catholic people were less than enthusiastic about taking up membership in the new church. Bergsma showed that often parishes included fewer than four members, counting the pastor and his wife!

Bergsma was content to let his findings speak for themselves. The audience, on the other hand, was so enthralled that the question and answer period was characterized by lively exchange concerning the meaning of "low membership." In other words, why did the reformation 'succeed' despite such little popular support? Other members of the audience believed that the answer to this question might be found in the historical context of membership. They challenged the idea that membership accurately gauged popular support by pointing out that the very idea of 'membership' was unfamiliar to sixteenth-century Roman Catholics, who were baptized into the Church. They also pointed out that people might attend church without becoming a member in order to avoid being subject to church discipline. \*



**Professor Christopher Ocker, San Anselmo Theological Seminary,** spoke about fifteenth-century religious reform and social cohesion. He offered us a case study of Franciscan friars in Mainz, Germany. As these friars began a reform program, they skillfully maneuvered among

the interests of the emperor, bishop, and city council. Those sitting in church pews would have heard much about the goings on.

Ocker's point was that the religious climate was shaped and crafted by social and political events. Furthermore, the religious climate also reflected the social and political events around them. In short, the content of belief ought not to be examined apart from the matrix from which it springs, nor apart from the matrix into which it returns. Ocker argued that circumstances, such as competition and foreign politics, assisted in causing the reforms of these friars. The conclusion: the Reformation must be understood from a point of view that includes causes beyond spiritual regeneration.

Ocker went on to make a connection between the friars and the Jews. Both were distinct social groups that were at odds with the dominant interests of the city. This connection sparked considerable dialog during the question and answer period. Some of the audience agreed with Ocker, in that both groups were persecuted and experienced injustice. Others in the audience noted that while the friars were rarely murdered on account of their distinct interests and characteristics, the same cannot be said about the Jews. \*

## SESSION III: LUTHER by Andrew Thomas

Chair: Professor Susan C. Karant-Nunn, The University of Arizona

*"Why, man, he doth bestride the narrow world like a Colossus ..."* -Shakespeare, Julius Caesar (I.ii)

Two former students from Oberman's Tübingen days discussed the significance of his scholarship in Luther studies, and in the process it became quite clear that they found it difficult to distinguish between Luther and Oberman, and which of the two had the greatest impact on the Reformation.



**Professor Scott Hendrix, Princeton Theological Seminary,** in his presentation "*Et plus quam prophetam: Martin Luther in the Work of Heiko Oberman,*" described his experiences under Oberman's tutelage while at Tübingen and then charted Oberman's course of discovery of Luther the Prophet as well as Reformer. In Oberman's query into the historical Luther, Hendrix states that Oberman's perception of Luther evolved as did Luther himself from the flowering youth of a young Nominalist between the Middle Ages and the Reformation to the sobering days of a German prophet between the Reformation and the Last Day. Hendrix states that Oberman's most widely heeded prophetic warning had not been the recognition of the relationship between Luther and the Apocalypse, but rather recognition of the stormy relationship between Luther and the Jews. \*



**Professor Berndt Hamm, University of Erlangen,** in his presentation entitled "*Against the Devil and the Modern Age: Heiko A. Oberman's Image of Luther,*" admitted his fear that Oberman has been so successful at defining the contours of Luther's unique personality that perhaps we will forget what mentality Luther shared with his contemporaries. Hamm stated that Oberman could sympathize with Luther's struggle with the Devil because of Oberman's uncompromising attempt to reveal the historical Luther against the tide of centuries of Luther hagiography. Oberman's ability and willingness to come to grips with Luther's vitriolic statements towards Jews, peasants and other reformers has been a long battle. The result has been that Oberman has stripped the whitewash off Luther the Icon and has revealed another image to the world: Luther, a man of love and anger, and of flesh and blood. \*

### *Birthday Banquet* *Continued from page 3*

some 25 essays written for and dedicated to Heiko by his Arizona students and former students, and colleagues around the world. Oberman returned the favor with his announcement that he would step down as Editor-in-Chief of the two scholarly series he has long edited

with the Dutch publishing house, E.J. Brill, and turn over the editorial reins to Professors Bast and Gow.

In his response to the salutations and gifts offered by his colleagues, family and supporters, Oberman twice paraphrased MacArthur's famous words, reminding his audience that "old historians never die, they fade away." To all those pres-

ent, however, it was clear that in Heiko's case, the saying carried two meanings. The first is a message of humility. Our Professor reminded us that the writings and findings of each generation will be overturned by the next, and that such a process is necessary and right. The second meaning carried the implication that although Heiko is now a septuagenarian, his



## SESSION IV: CALVIN *by Brandon Hartley*

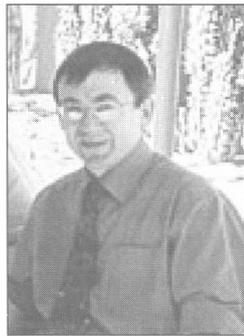
**Chair: Professor Donald Weinstein, The University of Arizona**

*One might find it strange that scholastic descendants would dispute or criticize the work of their Doctor Father, especially at an event held in his honor. In actuality, though, Oberman accepts criticism of his work as the highest praise. It means that what he wrote influenced sufficient numbers of people to warrant a careful study, and it also illustrates his success in training future scholars worthy of picking apart and analyzing fine detail in historical writing. Critics, after all, can be marvelous sources of inspiration.*



**Professor E. Jane Dempsey Douglass, Princeton Theological Seminary**, a student of Oberman's during his Harvard years, gave a summation of treatments of John Calvin, including a few light-hearted requests that Oberman hop to it and publish his much-anticipated

book on the Genevan reformer. More specifically, though, Douglass focused on the refugee element within Calvinism. This refers to an earlier claim by Oberman that the mentality of the refugee should not be underestimated when examining the work of Calvin. Calvinist Geneva in the sixteenth century can be interpreted as a land of self-perceived underdogs. They saw themselves as the righteous minority, standing up for their vision of religious truth and hounded by those who wished to destroy them. Douglass mentioned at one point that Calvin distanced himself from the majority even while in Geneva in an effort to reassert his religious fervor. He chided the wealthy of the Swiss town who had taken to dressing in the manner of rich Frenchmen, saying it was arrogance to dress so haughtily: "Christ was not a tailor." \*



**Professor Andrew Pettegree, University of St. Andrews**, who is currently working on an enormous cataloging project of every religious book printed in France from 1500-1600, was next up to the podium. Perhaps feeling a bit like the interloper at a private party, Pettegree requested

patience for his own work despite the fact that he was neither the student, nor the student of a student, of Oberman's. Pettegree sought to explain why the Reformation largely failed in France, especially since, as he demonstrated, Geneva and Eastern French printing turned out masses of religious works in support of the reformed church. The answer, he contended, was that Catholics in France, in contrast with Germany, matched the Huguenots word for word, image for image in the effort to pump out religious tracts. In France, the importance of the power of print was recognized quickly and effectively, and it enabled the Catholics to withstand the onslaught of the Calvinist church.\*

retirement will continue in increments: he's not finished yet!

Heiko's enthusiasm, energy and single-minded dedication to his craft have long since won him fame and respect among his colleagues. Although some of the tales surrounding him may prove apocryphal, and while his vim, vigor and vitality may have begun to fade (albeit only a bit),

Professor Oberman continues to hold a passionate fascination with the past and a profound sense of responsibility to bring the alien world of history to the eyes of the present. As was clear during Division student Victoria Speder's eloquent thanks on behalf of the student body currently under his mentoring, this message from their 'Dokter Vader' is received with great

seriousness and great heart.

In one of the final speeches of the evening, Professor Donald Weinstein, close friend and chair of the History Department at the time of Oberman's hiring, compared him to a whirlwind, saying that like any force of nature, Heiko could never be controlled or tamed, only watched and admired in amazement.\*

# SESSION V: LATE MIDDLE AGES AND REFORMATION

by James Blakeley

Chair: Professor James D. Tracy, University of Minnesota

*The symposium and celebration of Professor Heiko A. Oberman's 70th birthday manifested that same spirit of scholarly generosity that he demonstrates daily. It was a rare opportunity for those of us who are his graduate students to gather around, or as he would say "to sit at the feet" of so many distinguished scholars. Many of us met for the first time the historians whose books and articles line our shelves and crowd our desks.*

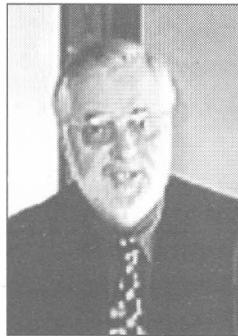


**Professor Nicolette Mout, Rijksuniversiteit Leiden,** lectured on the Dutch humanist Desiderius Erasmus († 1536). Erasmus was, like Luther, a critic of the Roman Church. Also like Luther, he wrote treatises that sharply criticized the Church and accused it of

straying from the path that Christ had intended it to follow. Unlike Luther, Erasmus never left the mother church – he remained to criticize the Church from within.

Mout went on to describe other issues that separated the two men and influenced their views of the church and justification. She defined the Latin terms *pia curiositas* (a pious search for God's truths marked by Christian humility) and *vana curiositas* (a vain search for knowledge). Mout led the audience to an understanding of these complex and nuanced terms as they relate to both men. For instance, Luther considered Erasmus' development of tools that would allow for a better interpretation of the Scriptures to border on *vana curiositas*.

According to Mout, Erasmus was a humanist with theological aspirations. He was influenced by aspects of both the *via antiqua* and the *via moderna*. Luther, on the other hand, was forward-looking. Moreover, he was a man with the apocalypse continually before his eyes. \*



**Professor Peter Blicke, Universität Bern,** presented a lecture entitled "*Tumultus rusticorum: An Artist's Nightmare.*" Blicke is well-known for his groundbreaking and influential work on the roots and results of the Peasants' War of 1525. In this address, he viewed the

Peasants' War from the perspective of several contemporary artists, including Albrecht Dürer. Using art as a window into a particular era is a difficult and sometimes dangerous undertaking for historians, but Blicke demonstrated how valuable visual images can be when used properly. He showed that art becomes an even more valuable source when the historical context surrounding its creation is taken into account. Blicke's presentation also reiterated how important it is for historians to understand and work with the original language of their sources. Moreover, without an understanding of the meaning of words as they were used in the sixteenth century, valuable evidence from this period can be misinterpreted or lost. \*



## Notes from the Field

Division students studying or doing research abroad have made it a point to come together each summer with Professor Oberman at Ekeby, the very house where he grew up in Holten, The Netherlands. This year, the ninth consecutive meeting, student Jonathan Reid sends us a personal account of what has come to be known as

# EKEBY SEMINAR 2000

by Jonathan Reid, Paris, France



Prof. Christoph Burger at Ekeby

**H**aving participated five times previously in the Ekeby Seminar, as it has come to be known, I can say that this year's was especially wonderful. Professor Christoph Burger, Free University of Amsterdam, gave a beautiful presentation. To use an old-

fashioned word, we were truly edified, both informed and made wiser: about Professor Oberman's career, his Tübingen years (which Professor Burger used to

help explain the context of his early development as well as a mirrored example of his career as a German teaching in The Netherlands), and by the implications of both of these stories, which set off how different are the scholarly worlds in which we students find ourselves.

Professor Oberman himself was in rare form, being so excited about his work and developments in the Division that it has been infectious for all the rest. Mrs. Oberman brought laughter, good stories, and a laudable 'civilizing' influence against scholarly 'barracks life' that used sometimes to set in. Each student gave a good-quality report, appropriate to his or her development. We also had individual meetings with Professor Oberman of the usual intense, honest, no-holds-barred type.

This dry-as-tinder report is true enough, but is incomplete. I have trouble finding the words to describe the intimate growth that occurs as we discuss our lives and careers during presentations, meetings and informal conversations. As one would expect, not all is rosy or uncomplicated. Some problems are baffling, others barely realized. My impression was and has been in the past (others should be consulted) that, though not finding easy solutions, we were all better for having sympathetic ears, some advice, renewed contacts, and a chance to think through problems out loud. Whatever these obstacles in life may be, from speed-bumps to roadblocks, I just hope everyone keeps pressing forward, knowing how privileged we are to be taking this path. \*

## Student News

*Congratulations to ...*

- \* **Robert Christman** for receiving an extension on his Fulbright Fellowship, allowing him to continue research on Erasmus Sarcerius in Leipzig, Germany.
- \* **Michael Crawford** who won a Fulbright Fellowship to do archival research for his dissertation in Seville, Spain.

*Please welcome new students...*

- \* **Joshua Rosenthal**, who has a B.A. in religion from Concordia University, Irvine, and two M.A.'s: one in religion from Concordia, and one in historical theology from Westminster Theological Seminary.
- \* **Andrew Thomas**, who has two B.A.'s in history and German from the University of Utah and an M.A. in early

modern history from Purdue University. \* Graduate student in English **Amy Martin** and undergraduate **Brad Mayhew** have also joined Professor Oberman's Thursday-evening seminars this semester.

### Conferences

- \* Past and present students of the Division delivered papers at the **Sixteenth Century Studies Conference** in Cleveland, 2-5 November 2000, including: **Robert Bast**, "Pastoral Identity and the Prophetic Mode"; **Cristian Berco**, "Masculinity in Flux: Violence, Desire and Intergenerational Homosexual Relationships in Early Modern Spain"; **Michael Bruening**, "The Fight for the Fathers in the French Reformation"; **Peter A. Dykema**, "Training Pastors in

Time of Crisis and Concord: Conrad Porta's *Pastorale Lutheri* (1582)"; **Aurelio Espinosa**, "Reformations, Turks, and the Imperial Campaign of 1529-1533: The Confessionalization of the Hispanic State"; **Stephanie L. Fink**, "Widowhood in Early Modern Castile"; **John Frymire**, "Preaching Catholic Reform and Counter-Reformation: Pulpits and Presses in Germany, 1525-1555"; **Brad Gregory**, "The Forgotten Writings of the Dutch Mennonite Martyrs"; **Nicole Kuropka**, "Melanchthon's Romans Commentaries and the Diets of Speyer (1529) and Augsburg (1530)"; **Scott Manetsch**, "Theodore Beza and the Art of Preaching"; and **Michael Milway**, "Priesterbruderschaften as Surrogate Homes for Retired Clergy."

## UA DIVISION FOR LATE MEDIEVAL AND REFORMATION STUDIES - GRADUATE UPDATES

**Robert Bast** (1993)

University of Tennessee  
Department of History

**Curtis Bostick** (1993)

Southern Utah University  
Department of History

**Pete Jankema** (1998)

University of Arizona  
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

**Nicole Kuropka** (M.A. 1997)

Fellow, Institut für Europäische Geschichte

**Marjory Lange** (1993, English major, History minor)

Western Oregon University  
Department of English

**Scott Manetsch** (1997)

Trinity Evangelical Divinity School  
Department of Church History

**Michael Milway** (1997)

University of Toronto  
Fellow, Centre for Reformation and  
Renaissance Studies

**Darleen Pryds** (Ph.D. University of Wisconsin,

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

**Erik Saak** (1993)

Fellow, Institut für Europäische Geschichte

**Jeff Tyler** (1995)

Hope College, Michigan  
Department of Religion

Please visit us on the Internet: [www.arizona.edu/~history/graduate/medref](http://www.arizona.edu/~history/graduate/medref)

THE UNIVERSITY OF  
**ARIZONA**®  
TUCSON ARIZONA

Late Medieval & Reformation Studies  
Douglass Building, Room 315  
PO Box 210028  
Tucson, Arizona 85721-0028

---

**NON-PROFIT ORG.**  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
TUCSON, ARIZONA  
PERMIT NO. 190

---