



Desert Harvest

THE DIVISION FOR LATE MEDIEVAL AND REFORMATION STUDIES

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Tribute to Luise Betterton at 25 Years in the Division

by Susan C. Karant-Nunn, Director

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

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Go to the banks of the great grey-green, greasy Limpopo River, all set about with fever-trees . . . "Rudyard Kipling, "The Elephant's Child," "Just So Stories."

I never expected to know anybody who came from the exotic land of Rudyard Kipling's creatures, yet I have worked with one for 15 years. We are celebrating the milestone of Luise Betterton's 25 years in the Division; without Luise's commitment, the Division would surely not thrive, and it might no longer exist. About 50 admirers, divided between donors and personal friends, came to honor Luise over lunch at the Hacienda del Sol Resort on April 8. When I broached the idea of such an event, she said, "No! Nobody would come to a 'Lunch with Luise'!" I am gloating over having been vindicated.

Few of us have known the details of her story. She was born Maria Luisa Paola Rosa Borra in Southern Rhodesia, today Zimbabwe. Her grandparents had immigrated from the Piedmont region of northern Italy. She grew up speaking Italian and English. She took a crash course in Afrikaans before going to South Africa but seldom needed to use it.

Luise's father died just before her first birthday. Her

mother designed especially wedding finery for the well-to-do. Luise recalls that, as a child, she went to an Anglican wedding every Saturday and a Jewish wedding every Sunday. She had a privileged upbringing, with plentiful servants.

She met her future husband Eric Betterton when she was 16-1/2¹. She went to a Dominican school and he to a Jesuit one. Luise followed him to the University of Natal in Durban, South Africa, where she majored in French and Psychology. She took courses in German. (She had learned Latin from the Dominican sisters.) Are you counting the languages? Luise and Eric were married in Salisbury, now Harare) in 1979. Eric took the Ph.D. at the University of Witwatersrand in Johannesburg, while Luise worked to support them. International sanctions against the government of Prime Minister Ian Smith and its practice of segregation meant that they might find it difficult to travel on a Rhodesian passport, so Luise took an Italian one and Eric a British one. The couple were opposed to *apartheid* and found it increasingly hard to live in either their home country or South Africa.

Luise worked for over seven years for Engelhart Industries and rose to the

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UA Division for Late Medieval and Reformation Studies • Alumni Placement

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James Blakeley (PhD 2006) St. Joseph's College, New York	Brad S. Gregory (MA 1989) University of Notre Dame	Tod Meinke (MA 2008) Data Architect, MAP Healthcare Management, Austin
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Victoria Christman (PhD 2005) Luther College, Iowa	Daniel Jones (MA 2011)	Hayley R. Rucker (MA 2012)
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Thomas A. Donlan (PhD 2011) Brophy College Preparatory, Phoenix, Arizona	Benjamin Kulas (MA 2005) Middlesex School, Concord, Massachusetts	Han Song (MA 2002) Brookside Capital, Boston
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Peter A. Dykema (PhD 1998) Arkansas Tech University	Marjory E. Lange (PhD minor, 1993) Western Oregon University	Joel Van Amberg (PhD 2004) Tusculum College, Tennessee
John Frymire (PhD 2001) University of Missouri	Scott M. Manetsch (PhD 1997) Trinity Evangelical Divinity School	Atilla Vékony (MA 1998) Wheatmark, Inc.

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