

# PROCLAMATION !

## UPCOMING AMRS EVENTS

**Dec. 1** - Dr. Ashely Powers will be speaking about how conversational French was taught to Englishmen in the Medieval. Join us in Merrick 202 at 12:10 pm!



## THE STAFF OF THE TRIDENT

**Student Editors:** Jordan Waterwash

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Special thanks to Prof. Powers, Prof. Neuman de Vegvar, and Prof. Livingston for allowing Trident contributors to interview them!

Want to write a story? Have ideas for the next issue?  
Send them to [jmwaterw@owu.edu](mailto:jmwaterw@owu.edu).

ANCIENT, MEDIEVAL, AND RENAISSANCE STUDIES

# THE TRIDENT

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## HISTORY OF THE BOOK: THE 1ST AMRS COURSE

By: Christopher Shanley

The first class taught in the AMRS department is an utterly fascinating one. The aim is simply this: to teach students about the history of books. This course focuses on books as physical objects as well as how the written word

has changed throughout history. Each student has picked one of the manuscript facsimiles that OWU has in the Rare Books department of the library to present on. The books covered range from the Codex Sinaiticus (one of four complete books of the Greek Bible

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written in the fourth century) to the Book of Kells (a complete Gospel Book from Ireland and a national treasure.) There are less famous books some students are working on, but all are fascinating windows into our past in relation to the book.

The course frequently brings in other lecturers, ranging from OWU's own Dr. McOsker to visiting scholars like Binghamton University's Dr. Shay Rabineau, an expert on modern Jewish history. The professors also arrange small events where the students get to experience historical book making techniques hands-on. We were all encouraged to write with brushes, quills, and reeds, recreating the way a scribe wrote nearly two millennia ago.

The readings in the class are varied, ranging from the physical act of creating papyrus to how the memories of Medieval monks worked. We even discussed how early printed books were shipped into London (mostly in baskets). There are a significant amount of readings, granted, but the majority of them are absolutely fascinating to anyone interested in books. To any freshmen and sophomores

interested in the AMRS department's first class, take History of the Book in 2018! You won't regret it.

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**Official Course Description:**

From papyrus scrolls to printed books, from Egypt to England, this course introduces students to the material forms of books and gives students the methods needed to read and understand handwritten books, documents, and scrolls from antiquity through the early modern era. It also covers the historical, cultural and social meanings of books. A range of exercises using the resources of rare book archives and digital collections provides hands-on learning. No prerequisites.

The class will not be offered next Spring, but be on the lookout in 2018!

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both his life and the lives of his fellow knights is the binding choice that will seal his fate. Like Achilles, Roland chooses to stand and fight despite the impossible odds.

The idea of facing your fate rather than circumventing it is the most central theme to both *The Iliad* and *The Song of Roland*. Two remarks showcase fate as the major theme in these works: Oliver's remark to Roland — "Charles will never again receive our service"—and Achilles' resigned answer to his horse, Roan Beauty, when the latter informs him of his impending death—"I know, well I know— I am destined to die here, far from my dear father, far from mother. But all the same I will never stop till I drive the Trojans to their bloody fill of war!" It is not only Roland and Achilles who have to reckon their fates with their actions; for the Franks, Saracens, Argives, and Trojans, the unavoidable end and the dread of its ceaseless approach is never entertained with as much concern as how the individual arrives at it.

Both poems come to

an end poignantly with the deaths of Achilles and Roland, but without any sense of finality. By *The Iliad*'s final chapter, the walls of Troy still stand and the Greeks have yet to reclaim Helen. Similarly in *The Song of Roland*, the remaining Franks predict future bouts of conflict with the Saracens. Though the stories are over, the epic worlds in which they lived survive as settings and backdrops for later poets. It is as if the poets themselves intended that the words they had sung would continue to be taken up, in one form or another, long after their own performances had ended.





Looking back, that summer, I know now that it was a turning point. Without the AMRS department at OWU, I might not have been able to grow further. I became a major after finishing the minor. I just couldn't stop. Every class I took, I engaged more and more with material, and like most students transitioning to upperclassmen, I became more confident and focused.

Soon the AMRS capstone was looming on the horizon. While it was daunting to think about, I was excited about it. I'd fallen in love with the Medieval saints after taking Saints and Society, and I was happy to be able to return to it in my own way. Working with Dr. Arnold, I not only finished the required research paper but also started working on a creative short story about St. Godelieve. This fictional story wasn't necessary to graduate, however, it allowed me to connect my two majors in a very personal way. Then in my final semester, I decided to take a directed reading continuing to learn about saints. While I could have taken just another typical class and finished a normal capstone to complete my major, the AMRS department allowed me to take con-

trol of my studies. I came a far way since freshman year, and the AMRS department gave me the freedom and support to keep growing.

Even after graduation, what I learned at OWU colors my world. I combed the Smithsonian Art Museum this summer for hours, finding five paintings of St. Katherine by her symbol, the wheel. I turn my head at every church with Gothic and Romanesque influences. I still read about saints, despite not being Catholic.

I became a better person by pursuing my passions. It's one thing to find an interesting major, but it's another to find a topic that pushes you out of your comfort zone to engage with the world. The AMRS department at OWU is a wonderful tool to help you grow and explore, but only if you engage with it. My mother's last desire was to keep exploring her interests. Every college student has that luxury, but only the individual can take advantage of that opportunity to learn what they love and understand what helps them grow.

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Christine Mendiola graduated from OWU in 2015.

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## CHARACTERS OF WAR: THE ILIAD AND THE SONG OF ROLAND

By: Matthew Pheneger

We'd expect literary works from differing cultures to mirror that in their writing, however, *The Iliad* and *The Song of Roland* are more similar than expected. In their most basic explanations, both texts retell deeds—both good and wicked—that were carried out by men who fought in wars. It is through the innovation of the poets that their distinct and fanciful characters took shape, each drawing on the prevailing attitudes of the times in which they were performed. In *The Iliad*, what was probably a case of raiding and plundering across the Hellespont by Bronze Age Greeks became the story of a

war that began because the most beautiful woman in the world was abducted, and the presiding king had a rage that could not be assuaged. In *The Song of Roland*, the historical defeat of a Carolingian rear-guard during an engagement with renegade Basques at Roncevaux Pass is transformed into an epic struggle between the Frankish forces of Western Christianity and the Saracen forces of Eastern Mohammedanism—the center of which is a lesson on how to fight and die well.

Neither poem shies away from depicting war as it is—brutal and bloody. Questioning the morality of war, however, is not essential to



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## VIKINGS AND ROYAL POWER ON THE DINGLE PENINSULA

By Colin McGarry

The southern tip of Ireland is made up of four peninsulas running out to the southwest of the island, and back in the Early Medieval period the two northernmost of these peninsulas—Dingle and Iveragh—were ruled over as a single petty kingdom known as the Corcu Duibne, where the kingship was exchanged between three royal families. Officially, the kingship would rotate between the three chieftains of the region, although the historical records tell us the families would instead raid and assassinate one another in hopes that they would be strong enough to hold power whenever the last king died. This power dynamic changed in the 9th century, with the start of the Viking Age, as the chieftains from Dingle—the Ó Fáilbhe—recognized the benefits of having the foreigners on their side, and gave an island with good, natural harbors to a small group of Viking settlers in exchange for their loyalty. Even though there were only around five households on the island, which could supply ten to twenty fighting men at any given time, this small commu-

nity was able to have a large impact on the political landscape of the area. The Vikings could effectively control trade, as any ship coming from the west of Ireland would have to pass the island to trade in the southern province of Munster which provides a strong link to the Viking towns, such as Waterford or Dublin. This alliance between Dingle and the Vikings also granted them relative safety from raids, but could also be used to have a ready supply of mercenaries from other Viking groups on the island, giving them a strong military advantage over other royal families. From this new position of power, the Ó Fáilbhe were able to monopolize royal power, having an almost unbroken claim to the Corcu Duibne kingship from the 9th century until the Norman Invasion.

The Ó Fáilbhe kings were based around the stone forts of Leacanabuaille and Cahergal near the coastline of Dingle. Leacanabuaille Stone Fort is fairly typical, matching



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either poem. What the Homeric and Medieval poets are more concerned with is the human response to an unquestioned reality; that is, how do different characters act in the face of confrontation, and what can readers learn from their example? Achilles and Charlemagne teach us that a faithful companion will not let one die in vain. Oliver and Nestor show us that the best way to tackle an obstacle is with wisdom's graces. Roland and Hector stand as a warning for brash actions; they not only affect you personally but those around you as well. If war is the centerpiece upon which both poems rely, the characters are the details that keep us engaged. The stories are told through their actions, and the wars are conduits through which they are driven to act.

Another running theme in both epics is the respective characters' commitment to some modus operandi. In *The Iliad*, the Achaeans and Argives view the Trojan War as an opportunity to win glory for themselves, and it is this preoccupation with glory and fame that leads to Achilles' refusal to fight until his honor is restored. Eventually Achilles will conclude that the personal honor accrued by the spoils of war is trivial when



compared to honoring a friend—in this case, Patroclus. Avenging the death of Patroclus becomes his new motivation for re-entering the conflict. By committing to this new goal, however, his death at Troy is sealed, as it had been foretold that Achilles had too choices—stay, fight, and win eternal glory at the price of a shortened life, or go home, live long and prosper, but die ignominiously. Like any good hero, he chose the former.

In a similar vein, Roland sees the rear-guard action as an opportunity to demonstrate his commitment to the feudal principles that guide the actions of the Twelve Peers, even if doing so means that he will put his comrades' lives in jeopardy. Like Achilles' refusal to fight for Patroclus, Roland's refusal to sound the horn and call for reinforcements that would have saved

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the standard design of the Irish Ringforts—enclosed agricultural settlements that acted as home for a single family. Leacanabuaile contains two structures built into one another, acting as the main houses of the site: a square structure with a door facing the entrance of the stone wall, whose rear wall opens to the door of a smaller (and probably earlier) circular house, and three smaller structures off to the sides of the house, likely storage sheds or animal pens. The most interesting feature of Leacanabuaile is the *souterrain*, a very narrow passageway that runs under the circular house and into the outer wall of the fort: a common feature in high status settlements, thought to be used for hiding if the family was attacked.

While Leacanabuaile is a fairly standard site, only



standing out because of its royal inhabitants, Cahergal is much more of an oddity. Visually, Cahergal is immediately set apart from other ringforts due to the immense height of the wall: almost 4 meters tall and built in multiple terraces, compared to the more fence-like walls of the average ringforts (for comparison, the wall of Leacanabuaile is only 1.5 meters tall), and it has a large, completely stone house located at the center of the enclosure (even the stone houses of Leacanabuaile, and other stone forts, used a wooden or thatched roof)—neither of which the Office of Public Works decided to fund enough to reconstruct in full. Archaeologically, the site is even stranger as it revealed no artifacts: The only objects found were stones used to construct the buildings. The current theory regarding Cahergal is that it was a strictly ceremonial site, used only for rituals such as the inauguration of kings, and would be kept spotless when not in use. The massive, terraced walls would act in the same way as the Classical amphitheater. People from the kingdom would sit on the terraces of the walls, like bleachers, to watch the ceremonies as they took place.

## SONNET 97

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

How like a winter hath my absence been  
 From thee, the pleasure of the fleeting year!  
 What freezings have I felt, what dark days seen!  
 What old December's bareness everywhere!  
 And yet this time remov'd was summer's time,  
 The teeming autumn, big with rich increase,  
 Bearing the wanton burthen of the prime,  
 Like widow'd wombs after their lords' decease:  
 Yet this abundant issue seem'd to me  
 But hope of orphans and unfather'd fruit;  
 For summer and his pleasures wait on thee,  
 And thou away, the very birds are mute;  
 Or if they sing, 'tis with so dull a cheer  
 That leaves look pale, dreading the winter's near.



## **ASHLEY POWERS: FROM MARKET- ING TO MEDIEVAL**

By: Jordan Waterwash

For any student, it can be difficult to imagine what life will be like after leaving college. Are there jobs available in the field I studied? How likely is it for me to get a job that relates to my degree? Am I forced to think linearly about my path in life?

Dr. Ashely Powers, member of the AMRS and MFL faculty, proves that there is no one path to success. Though she has a Ph.D. in Medieval French Literature, she studied French and Marketing as an undergraduate.

“Academia didn’t occur to me until I was working on my Masters,” she says. “I wanted to do International Business.”

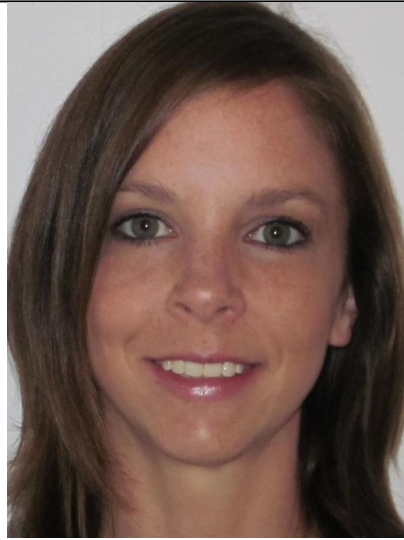
She worked in marketing in Detroit for four years before asking an old professor

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### **“I ALWAYS HAD AN INTEREST IN THE MIDDLE AGES.”**

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for advice on how to get back to France. She had travelled there as a young girl with her grandmother and had an itch to get back to the country.



“[My professor] recommended that I go back to school, to Bowling Green. At first I pushed the idea aside, and then after a while I decided to apply just to see what’d happen, and I got accepted.”

After that, Powers spent her first as a graduate student away in Tours, France, where she studied the French Renaissance author François Rabelais at the Université François Rabelais.

“That’s actually where I kind of got started, in the Renaissance, and I did a Masters thesis on Rabelais. But I always had an interest in the Middle Ages,” she says.

Powers didn’t officially work with Medieval literature until she began her Ph.D. However, once she got going in her track, she couldn’t get enough. Now, at Ohio Wes-

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leyan, she attends conferences regularly to keep up to date with French and the Middle Ages. In March, Powers will speak at a conference about how Englishmen in the Middle Ages taught other Englishmen how to speak French—including dialogues, key phrases, and curse words. Powers is also speaking at another conference in May, where she will do a presentation on the Medieval Trickster: “There’s this character in one of these poems, and it’s a very ambiguous character.” The character’s name, according to Powers, has multiple meanings, and no one has ever explored what each of those meanings represent in the context of the work. She hopes to find out what exactly this character represents.

As for AMRS students, Powers suggests getting out there as much as one can. For her, conferences in graduate school helped her to find her footing and reach out the Medieval community. She says, “If you just go to the classes, that’s fine, but try to reach out and get to other people. Try to get as much experience as you can.” The key take-away Powers got from her undergraduate education, was that her degree was not as influential as how she could apply it. It’s much more im-

portant to be able to apply what you’ve learned in college to any potential job rather than having all the information just sitting in your head with no practical uses. Part of having a liberal arts education is to expand on what is learned in the classroom and push oneself to find the meaning of one’s knowledge outside of the lectures.

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### **“TRY TO GET AS MUCH EXPERIENCE AS YOU CAN.”**

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Ultimately, what’s going to set you apart from the rest will be a willingness to show what you have learned in a variety of ways, something Powers has done exemplarily. For Powers, it was a fear of not taking opportunities that pushed her to continue her education in Medieval Literature: “It was definitely a risk, which is why I didn’t do it right away, and then finally I was like, ‘Well, I’m just going to do it, because if I don’t do it now, I’ll never have the opportunity to do it.’”

Dr. Powers will be speaking December 1st at 12:10 pm in Merrick! See the back of the issue for more details.

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## WINTER BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

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When icicles hang by the wall,  
 And Dick the shepherd blows his nail,  
 And Tom bears logs into the hall,  
 And milk comes frozen home in pail;  
 When blood is nipp'd, and ways be foul,  
 Then nightly sings the staring owl,  
     "Tu-whit, to-who!"—

A merry note,  
 While greasy Joan doth keel the pot.  
 When all aloud the wind doth blow,  
 And coughing drowns the parson's saw,  
 And birds sit brooding in the snow,  
 And Marian's nose looks red and raw;  
 When roasted crabs hiss in the bowl,  
 Then nightly sings the staring owl,  
     "Tu-whit, to-who!"—

A merry note,  
 While greasy Joan doth keel the pot.

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## MOTIVATED BY THE MEDIEVAL

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By: Christine Mendiola

When my mother knew she was dying, she wanted to go England one last time. She'd already been twice with my father, but this would be the first time us kids went along too. I don't know if my mother wanted to share a place she loved with her children, or if it was purely selfish, but the trip changed the world for me. It was the first time I saw pigeons on castles, walked through the grassy ruins of a monastery, and heard the echoes of a cathedral. I had already liked Medieval history, but this trip only cemented my passion.

Five years later, I started looking at colleges without my mother, but not without her impact. On a very short list of attributes, I wanted my college to have a Medieval program. Only for a minor, though, since I wanted to be an English major, but it was still very important to me. My mother had always encouraged me to follow my dreams, so practicality or job prospects rarely crossed my mind. Choosing Ohio Wesleyan was one of many decisions I would make while

pursuing my Medieval degree, as well as improving myself over the next few years.

After my mother's death, I became extremely shy and quiet, so much so that I was almost silent in classes freshman year. I knew that I wanted that to change, but at the time, I didn't know how to overcome my fears. Then, sophomore year I was able to return to England in the Travel-Learning course called Castles and Cathedrals. While it was amazing to better understand the new and old sights I saw, I was even more grateful to finally have a group of people I could open up to, who shared a similar interest. I really connected with my classmates and that gave me back some of the confidence I lost. The same summer I went to a Medieval weapons retreat. Again, while I didn't mean to meet new friends, I opened up to these strangers. That fall, I was more comfortable in classes because I was no longer afraid of sharing myself with others. What motivated me to open up was Medieval history, and for that, I'll be forever grateful.

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# THE PROFESSORS BEHIND HISTORY OF THE BOOK

By: Christopher Shanley

History of the Book (AMRS 300.1) is one of the first team taught classes at Ohio Wesleyan. It focuses on the physical aspects of books as well as the social and economic role of the written word from Babylonian cuneiform to our digitized style of writing. I have interviewed the two professors teaching the class, Professors Neuman de Vegvar and Livingston, about how it has been progressing two months in.

## How is the class going?

*Dr. Livingstone (L):* It is beyond our wildest expectations. We expected 6-8 people would be interested in the class [There are 16 people from many departments enrolled.]

*Dr. Neuman de Vegvar (NdV):* We received significantly more enthusiastic students than expected. Most courses have some students who are disinterested, merely taking the class for credit.

Everyone in this class is truly interested and passionate about the material.

## If you were teaching this class next semester, what would you do differently?

*L:* Nothing has flopped yet, the theming structure works very well!

*NdV:* I would look for more videos to employ, more audio-visual learning to the lessons. Possibly find newer readings to keep it lively [some of the readings are a little dusty.] The readings we have were decided by a committee of AMRS faculty, which we had to narrow down heavily. The first half of the course is devoted to the physical construction of the book, while the second half is devoted to the social aspect of the word.

## What do you enjoy most about this class?

*L:* It's great to work together, both fun and challenging. I love that I have no idea what to expect in terms of student

responses.

*NdV:* Each other's company. This is the most satisfying and fun class I've taught. All the students are really interested about this topic.

## What has been the biggest challenge so far?

*L:* To cover everything in enough detail so that students can understand the issues deeply.

*NdV:* Taking ideas from the organizing committee and trimming it down. There were many readings we wanted to include but couldn't for time's sake.

## What has been the most important book in your life?

*NdV:* For secondary sources,

the writings of Ian Hodder. Primary sources, Tolkien's Lord of the Rings series. Tolkien's work convinced me to become a Medievalist. It was just becoming available on this side of the pond when I was a young adult.

*L:* Secondary Sources, Frances Yates's Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition. Primary Sources, The Letters of Abelard and Heloise/The Autobiography of Red by Anne Carson.

## Anything else?

*L:* The course will hopefully be offered 2 years from now, in 2018, by Dr. Arnold and Dr. DeMarco.

