

PROCLAMATION !

UPCOMING AMRS EVENTS

March 23 - Dan Connolly (Professor, Alma College), Fine Arts' Jarvis Stewart Speaker will be speaking on the medieval labyrinth.

April 5 - Karen Mathew (Professor of Fine Arts, Binghamton University) will discuss Islamic ceramic plates found on medieval Italian church towers in a talk co-sponsored by the Fine Arts department and the Silk Roads Course connection.

TBA - AMRS End of the Year Celebration. Join us as term ends for amazing food, awards, and the riveting faculty-student croquet battle!

THE STAFF OF THE TRIDENT

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Want to write a story? Have ideas for the next issue?
Complaints? Send them to jdinovo@owu.edu



WHO RUNS THE WORLD? SHAKESPEARE'S GIRLS.

By Hannah Simpson

“It’s always fun to talk about Shakespeare,” quipped Bicks at the start of her lecture, “Incited Minds, Rethinking Shakespeare’s Girls.” I couldn’t agree more. Much like the title of her lecture indi-

cates, Bicks’ talk centered on stereotypes that surround adolescent girls and how the strong-willed (pun intended) females of Shakespeare’s plays defy them. After listing the qualities of the ideal Renaissance female

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(one who is chaste, silent, and obedient), Bicks laid the foundation for her discussion of Shakespeare's fourteen- and fifteen-year-old girls by listing stereotypes of young women prevalent in both an early modern as well as a contemporary context: adolescent girls are marked as hysterical, erratic, and in need of saving—Ophelia is remembered most for her stint as the drowning damsel, and Miranda from *The Tempest* has not been given enough credit for her “beating mind.”

Bicks pointed out the ways we are misreading these young women by drawing on humoral theory, the closest thing to psychology we have from Elizabethan times. Humoral theory is a model for the basic workings of the human body, and it places humans on a spectrum that ranges from extreme heat to extreme coldness. Females were thought to have inherently cold, moist bodies, while men were hot and dry. According to this theory, female hysteria can be traced back to a lack of adequate bodily heat, further bol-

stering the aforementioned frenzied, fitful stereotypes of Renaissance women and girls. However, Bicks presented evidence that opposes this prejudice. In *Microcosmographia*, Helkiah Crooke describes female puberty as “heat gather [ing]” strength. In other words, he saw enormous potential in the female body and mind. Using Crooke's analysis as a backdrop, Bicks went on to describe specific actions of Ophelia and Miranda, two Shakespearean girls oft dismissed as flighty females. Most notably, she pointed out that in the original quarto of *Hamlet*, the stage directions at the beginning of Act Four, Scene Five read “Enter Ophelia with a lute.” If these stage directions are followed faithfully, Ophelia has complete agency in this scene—she is controlling an instrument and performing before the court. Instead of acting as a female repository for male stories (by being “played” or “plucked” by the men in her life), Ophelia takes control of the scene by strumming her instrument according to her own rules.

As a Theatre/English double major with a minor in Women's and Gender Studies,

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Dr. Neuman de Vegvar also looks forward to the class. “It's always so much more interesting to see the broader contexts of whatever subject we study; and this interdisciplinary course will offer a great opportunity to see the development of the book, not only as an object, but also as a vehicle for the transmission of texts and images and a venue of cultural concepts, interactions and controversies. It's going to be an exciting journey!”

OFF-CAMPUS EVENT

March 10th at 7:30 pm:

Local young adult novelist, Lisa Klein, describes her re-fashioning of Ophelia's story from Shakespeare's play. Her talk “Reading Hamlet, Writing Ophelia” will be held at Hayes High School Library (289 Euclid Ave.).



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these characters and their unfortunate misreadings interest me a great deal. It is frustrating to sit in the theatre (or on my bed with Netflix open on my laptop) and watch Shakespearean girls portrayed as ditsy, passive vessels for male thoughts and actions (read: Helena Bonham Carter's Ophelia in the 1990 film version of *Hamlet*). Bicks' talk gives me hope that I'm not the only one who champions plucky, mindful interpretations of Shakespeare's females... after all, that's how they were written. How can we call a young woman like Desdemona meek or fragile when she “trumpet[s] to the world” her blatant defiance of tradition (letting her father choose her husband for her)? Can we really see a girl like Miranda, who interrupts and corrects Prospero, as a passive recipient of her father's art? A shy and sheepish interpretation of Olivia from *Twelfth Night* makes no sense—a wary girl would never be so bold as to say, “Tis not that time of moon with me to make one in so skipping a dialogue.” I could go on, but alas, I'll refrain... for now.

FIRST EVER AMRS INTERDISCIPLINARY COURSE

By Staff

Today we “scroll down” on our tablets to read course materials and think we are technologically advanced. But did you know that we are really just returning to the ancient form of the scroll?

The first interdisciplinary AMRS course, “The History of the Book,” (AMRS 300.1) will be offered next fall Co-taught by Dr. Carol Neuman de Vegvar (Fine Arts) and Dr. Sally Livingston (Comparative Literature), the course will explore such questions as “What is a book?” “What impact does a writing medium have upon human communications?” and “What is the relationship between text and image in a book?”

Students will learn about the material forms from papyrus scrolls to printed books and explore the way textual and visual literacies changed because of massive technological shifts in the production and dissemination of the book from ancient times

through the Renaissance.

Students will be able to do hands-on work in OWU’s rare book archives and digital collections, explore historical writing systems, learn how to read various medieval scripts and practice illumination technique, and debate the importance of the creation of the printing press.

The course has no prerequisites and can count towards the Division III (Humanities) distribution requirement. Students should speak with the relevant department chairs about the course counting toward related majors or minors.

Dr. Livingston is excited about teaching the course. “I’ve wanted a version of this class for a long time. What’s most exciting is that the AMRS faculty worked together to create the syllabus, and so it’s truly interdisciplinary in its scope. It enables us to see three periods of Antiquity, the Middle Ages, and the Renaissance as a continuum rather than

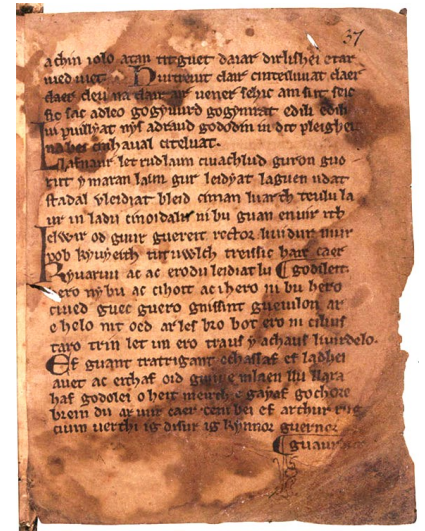
THE REAL KING ARTHUR

A LOOK AT THE HISTORICAL SOURCES.

By Colin McGarry

The question of who the historical King Arthur was has been debated ever since historians began taking a serious look at the Romano-British. While many historians will look at the medieval romances of a British king named Arthur, who holds court at Camelot and has adventures as far away as modern France, I find this method counterproductive, as the medieval romances are many centuries-- sometime even more than a millennia-- too late compared to the time when Arthur would have truly lived and often contradict the early historical sources we do have from closer to Arthur’s time.

If we are to look for a real Arthur, we should look at the sources closest in time to when Arthur might have lived. The earliest of these sources is the poem *Y Gododdin*, which follows the warriors of the British kingdom of



Gododdin at the Battle of Caertraeth. Next, the *Historia Brittonum*, a history of the British peoples written by the monk Nennius. After the *Historia Brittonum*, we already see the centuries of myth obscure history, as the eleventh century sources will often contradict the *Historia Brittonum*. Therefore, to find a King Arthur in history rather than legend, we must look at how Arthur is described in these sources and from those try to find a figure in history who fits.

First, let us look at *Y Gododdin*. Kenneth Jackson, a linguist specializing in Celtic languages, has dated the poem to not long after the Battle of

Catraeth which took place in the year 600. The poem honors the fallen warriors of the kingdom of Gododdin—a British kingdom on the modern border of England and Scotland—as they attack the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms of Bernicia and Deira, and are slain in the battle of Catraeth. Arthur is not among the warriors who join this battle, but is instead a comparison for the warrior Gwawrddur, who is described thusly:

“He fed black ravens on the
rampart of a fortress
Though he was no Arthur
Among the powerful ones in
battle
In the front rank, Gwawrddur
was a palisade”

This simple line tells us much about Arthur. First, that he was well known to the people of Gododdin, that Arthur needed no explanation or introduction, and it was a great honor to be compared to him. Also, Arthur bears no title, he is not described as King Arthur as sources do beginning in the twelfth century. This is Arthur’s first reference, as a famed warrior with connections to the British kingdoms of the Old North.

The *Historia Brittonum*

is the first reference to Arthur we see outside of the *Y Gododdin*; Antonia Gransden, former Reader at the University of Nottingham, dates the text to the early ninth century. The *Historia Brittonum* also gives us a much stronger picture of who the historical Arthur was. He is described as a ‘dux bellorum’, meaning the ‘leader of battle,’ who fought alongside the kings of the Britains, but was not one of them himself. *Historia Brittonum* also gives us a list of twelve battles which Arthur fought, spread across eight battlefields. However, these battlefields are known by their old names and so only four of the eight can be accurately placed today. The four known battle locations are all located in lower and central Scotland, reinforcing the idea that a historical Arthur would have been active in the Old North area around Gododdin. We do not have dates for any of these battles. All that we can gather about the date of Arthur from the *Historia Brittonum* is that some time has passed after the Romans left Britain, as there are already kings such as Vortigern who rise and fall in the aftermath of the Roman with-

please politically or even militarily. They even waged war upon other monasteries, leading their monks — and sometimes faithful peasants— into battle over land and resources. One particularly bloody victory of the monastery of Clonmacnoise against Durrow left over 200 of the defeated monks dead. Religious houses were even decided upon as places of battle between disputing families, showing perhaps a desire for neutral ground, but certainly not preserving a modern idea of the sanctity of holy sites.

A specific example of the battling cleric is the Scottish deacon William of North Berwick. William fought in the Battle of Otterburn in 1388. His weapon of choice was not the fists of our mascot, but rather a battleaxe, undoubtedly for slaying foes. Bishop Odo of Bayeux’s club could theoretically have been for self-defense, but an axe is not so ambiguous on the concept of self-defense. Instead of being chastised for his role in the battle, however, William was elevated to Archdeacon that same year, implying that either the church had no opinion on his actions or possibly wanted

to reward them.

Today we try to keep the church and the state separate. Christian leaders around the world call for an end to violence, but this is a relatively new tradition in the history of Christianity. So our beloved bishop is not a mere fantasy of some early Wesleyan. He is a continuation of a long tradition of clergymen acting in a military capacity. The next time someone asks you if a Battling Bishop is a bit hypocritical, you have three choices: tell them that the Christian clergy has a military past beyond the Crusades, help them separate their modern biases from historical knowledge, or brandish your club until they respect the Battling bishop.

¹Greenaway, George W. & Douglas, David C. *English Historical Documents 1042-1189*. London, 1959.

²Oakeshott, Ewart. *European Weapons and Armor*. Beinfeld Pub, 1980

³Koch, John T. *Celtic Culture: A Historical Encyclopedia*. ABC-CLIO, 2006



BATTLING BISHOPS: BASED IN TRUTH OR A CLEVER MASCOT?

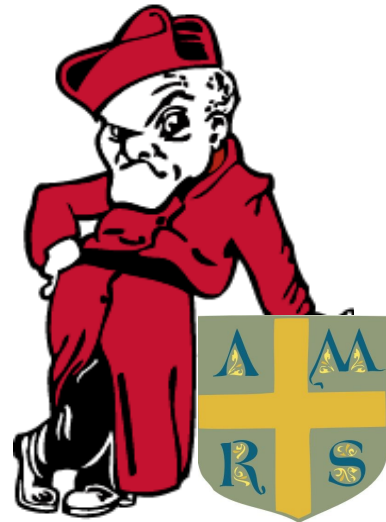
By Christopher Shanley

The Battling Bishop, OWU's beloved mascot, seems strange to many when they first encounter him. The idea of a holy man being willing to fight seems contradictory or hypocritical in our modern view of religion. But throughout the Middle Ages, clergymen fought in wars moderately frequently (their prowess at sports is, however, unknown).

The first example is an actual bishop: Odo of Bayeux. He was the half-brother of William the Conqueror, and one of the few people who we know was present at the Battle of Hastings in 1066. Odo is depicted on the Bayeux Tapestry (which shows the battle of Hastings) astride a horse, wearing armor and hefting a club. The inscription above him reads: "Here Bishop Odo, holding a

club, gives strength to the boys." There are debates about whether or not Odo physically participated in battle or was a sort of cheerleader¹ for the Norman forces². His weapon indicates that he fought in the battle, as William (the commander who would be expected to fight) is also depicted using a club.

Similarly surprising, contrary to our modern view of monks shoved away in a cloister copying Scriptures, monasteries had significant secular influence and responsibilities. Irish abbots, for example, frequently acted as secular lords.³ Many of them were associated with tribal kings whom they wished to



draw before the history's section on Arthur.

I also wish to mention the writings of another British monk, named Gildas, who writes a work titled *De Excidio et Conquestu Britanniae*. Dr. Karen George—a historian at Cambridge—states Gildas wrote between 510 and 530. Gildas is worth noting because there is no reference Arthur in his work, despite the fame that would accompany Arthur by the time the *Y Gododdin* was written. And so, from Gildas's work we can assume Arthur was not active until after 530.

With this, we now know who the real King Arthur was: a warlord or military commander, who was not a king (or at least not a British one), active in the region around what is southern Scotland or northern England sometime between 530 and 600. Luckily, there is an easy fit for this outline: an Irish prince named Artúr mac Aedan, whose story is recorded in the *Vita Columbae*, *Senchus Fer nAlban*, and the *Annals of Tigernach*. Artúr was one of the seven sons of Aedan mac Gabran, king of Dál Riata, which was a small kingdom in

north-eastern Ireland that expanded into western Scotland beginning in the fifth century. Artúr, not being heir to his father's throne, became a military commander of the Dál Riata, fighting against the Picts—and possibly the Anglo-Saxons—alongside allied British kingdoms in the Old North. Artúr mac Aedan would die in battle against a tribe of Picts called the Maeatae near the Antonine Wall in 596.

Artúr mac Aedan would be a perfect candidate for the Arthur mentioned in *Y Gododdin*, being active in the area around Gododdin and possibly fighting as their ally shortly before the poem was written. He also fits the description we see in *Historia Brittonum*, since he would have been a warlord or military commander, a 'dux bellorum', fighting in the areas where the battles of Arthur are thought to have taken place. And so, it seems most likely the Artúr mac Aedan was the Arthur behind the *Y Gododdin* and *Historia Brittonum* and through those sources became the inspiration for the legendary king of later stories and romances.

LARP OR MARRCA?

By Josephine DiNovo

Have you ever seen people on the grassy hill in front of Hayes wielding swords or quarterstaves? Do you stop to snicker at the “LARPers” whenever you spy them? Have you ever really thought about what this group does?

This group—often mistaken for role-players unafraid of the public—is MARRCA. MARRCA stands for Medieval and Renaissance Recreational Combat Association. This group does not reenact imagined battles, but instead learns the tactics of Western Martial Arts.

Christine Mendiola, a senior and retiring president of MARRCA, said, “I feel like LARPing is about the roleplaying experience, while western martial arts... is like studying actual historical tactics and skills. So it’s based in history versus based in imagination.”

Mendiola’s personal interest focuses on learning from the 14th and 15th century German texts the club owns and mastering those techniques. From there, she hopes to continue to study older texts

to learn about other techniques.

Based on their interests and drive, members can continue to research and learn more about Western Martial Arts. This research can involve looking into medieval texts and working with sometimes ambiguous descriptions to recreate fighting styles. Western Martial Arts can then become a blend of active practice and intense study.

MARRCA’s approach is not the only method of learning about Western Martial Arts—nor do members learn all of the techniques available in the wide range of history that the Medieval and Renaissance portion of MARRCA’s title covers. The types of Western Martial Arts are varied like the different types of Eastern Martial arts. Mendiola said,

“I want to keep the club going because it provided me that first step.” After joining MARRCA during her freshman year, Mendiola joined another training school—Polaris Fellowship of Weapons Studies—over her summer vacation. MARRCA is now a way for her to practice what she learned there as well as give other students the opportunity to explore their own Western Martial Arts interests.



“What I’ve found is most important about MARRCA is that it provides a community for people to explore this interest without the judgement that goes with carrying around a giant sword,” Mendiola said.

For anyone interested in learning about Western Martial

Arts, MARRCA meets from 4:00pm until 5:00pm on Tuesdays and Fridays. During the winter, their practices move from their outdoor location in front of Hayes to the Milligan Hub in Stuyvesant Hall.

Mendiola said,

“It’s college, try something. Experiment.”

