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CARA, Kazoo, and the Academy Too

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No doubt when you received your Fall 2005 *CARA Newsletter*—that is if you are one of the 108 subscribers—you moved rapidly through its 28 pages, so well-edited by Kristie Bixby, to find out *whassup*(?), especially for this Academy meeting. On p. 6 you thus received notice of this talk, which is the CARA program, and the subordinate clause describing it: “which hopefully will be a lighter presentation than some of those in the past.” The word “hopefully” carries a mighty burden. The exegete can squeeze the lemons to determine whether the hidden meaning is that past CARA Academy meetings were not “CARA-lite” and this one would be a variance from the old heavy standard. “Tastes great—less filling!” is one interpretation. The manifest meaning is that this presentation would in some undefined way move on towards Hollywood’s description of a “laugh-riot.” Perhaps the good news is that I have trotted out this paper in a form of rehearsal before some friends (who may actually still be friends): all have agreed that if this is my debut as a comedian, I should not under any circumstances give up my day job. I was furthermore encouraged not to take the whole hour, as scheduled. Those who invited me to offer this presentation did so at the last Academy meeting on the dulcet shores of Miami’s North Beach. They are innocent of all charges or at least unindictable—I suppose the brief statute of limitations now obtaining—but I have no choice but to press on with an op-ed piece on CARA, the Kalamazoo Congress, and the Academy as they have related to each other and how they might continue to thrive and interact. A card laid is a card played, after all. Along the way I

reserve the right to throw the odd whipped-cream pie or to launch an ironic aside. My guess is that there are—at least— some six dissertation topics or so in this tri-partite constellation of organizations that circumscribe most of the medievalists in North America. You will get hints of these larger possibilities for analysis and study here and there. Let me begin by a consideration of CARA which, like Amos Hart in the movie and musical *Chicago*, is a Mr. Cellophane: many medievalists see right through CARA—Centers and Regional Associations—not knowing it is there and not knowing its past and its potential.

As Brian S. Merrilees has written, “If inter-disciplinary programs are a commonplace in the universities of the 1990s [and now the new millennium], they were not so in the 1960’s. . . .”¹ Indeed, it is almost impossible to imagine and recreate that earlier decade, seen by many as a benchmark and a baseline for the aspirations of higher education when, all in all, those years have proven to be in experience a kind of rare and unparalleled moment of possibility. The 1960’s put a definable stamp on our common enterprise that is taken as a given, though at any time things could have gone differently. Prior to the 1960’s there seem to have been only two medieval institutes, the Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies at Toronto (PIMS) and the Medieval Institute at Notre Dame, which, according to the football program book for the 2002 Notre Dame vs. Purdue game, was the first in the United States. In the 1960’s everyone wanted to be in graduate school, everyone wanted to get a Ph.D.—and of course everyone did, alas—deans begged people to go to conferences so as to burn up end-of-year funds, and elected representatives in many a state house fell over themselves to please what they perceived as the public will. Celtic and Norse were considered in the U.S. to be essential for the National Defense, and Harvard received National Defense Education Act [NDEA] fellowships to support

the defense of the nation without so much as a nod to Sputnik. If Mark Twain can lay the blame for the Civil War on Walter Scott and his romances, then Sputnik and its circumnavigations had much to do with American higher ed.

Yet possibility is not reality, and good feeling is not a substitute for vision and direction. What Medieval Studies was and where it stood in the university were among two of the major questions that occupied that heady time. Lynn White Jr., Laurence Shook, and Jerome Taylor, for example, participated in a 1966 panel on “Methods of Organizing Medieval Studies Programs.”² As might be expected from the converted, these major figures never really asked about whether there should be Medieval Studies programs and how such things would serve the public good and the public interest. To his credit, though, Lynn White could open with the wry observation: “. . . I am amazed, delighted, and faintly appalled the way medieval programs, centers, institutes, etc. seem to be sprouting up all over North America. This business threatens to become a fad.” White went on to describe and justify the then UCLA method of organizing the field by *not organizing* courses or degrees, but rather by organizing colloquia and research efforts of various kinds and by serving as a lobbying group for intellectual pluralism, provocative discussion, and the development of facilities, particularly the library. By contrast Father Shook stressed the importance placed by PIMS on the training of professional medievalists “in conjunction with academic training in some pertinent discipline,” but this training included a heavy research emphasis that led to publication: “We believe that if a student works on the preparation of a text he ought to be able to get it published. So we try to arrange for the publication of excellent work done in the Institute.” Jerome Taylor, then at Chicago, described the work of his home Committee on Medieval Studies, which offered a *tertium quid*: “. . . [the

Committee of Medieval Studies] is the agency through which the University achieves *interdepartmental cooperation* for the training of future medievalists who wish to combine interdisciplinary breadth in the Middle Ages with specialized studies leading to the doctorate in a department or in one of our degree-granting interdepartmental committees.” Taylor, I think, caught the right note for most programs by describing Medieval Studies as “an agency”; less grandly, he is probably two removes from what a Medieval Studies program chief really is, namely, a rug merchant who has to cadge advantages for programs and personnel and who has to rely on line departments for scope and space. These three presentations, sometimes overlapping in details, sometimes contrasting, shared for sure a de-emphasis of undergraduate Medieval Studies in those glory days and an operational or practical difficulty in defining their relation to departments.

John Leyerle put an altogether different spin on the matter of Medieval Studies in his 1971 thinkpiece published through CARA.³ This brief paper is quite remarkable for its astonishing emphasis on the theory of the enterprise. The word “theory” not only appears in the title of the paper—“A Contribution to the Theory of Interdisciplinary Study”—the idea animates the argument for, as he says, “recent in appearance” and “empirical in foundation” the theory behind centers has “great intellectual force,” though it is “rarely stated.” Centers are supplements to specialized departments or logical extensions of them, returning to a medieval sense of the university. Subjects neglected by specialized departments have a place: astrology, alchemy, medieval law, medieval science, vernacular palaeography: perhaps in current terminology, the marginal can become the central or at least enter within the compass of the university. Stanley Kahrl offers a more practical thinkpiece in “Constructing an Interdisciplinary Major in Medieval

and Renaissance Studies,” which is his contribution to the Kleinhenz and Gentry volume on Medieval Studies,⁴ which readily becomes a key volume behind any subject overview such as this. I cannot do justice to Kahrl’s “how to” article, but I will point out that Kahrl had a special concern that only the tenured and the senior should take on the task of leading interdisciplinary programs lest departments work their awful magic in personnel hearings. Departments under siege or threat, real or imagined, can be unfriendly to anything other than their perceived core discipline.

My foregoing stress on these early discussions means to underline how variable and fluid ideas on Medieval Studies were “at the Creation” and, particularly in Leyerle’s presentation, how considered and theoretical they were. This considered view of Medieval Studies, which I have been describing, has ironically almost disappeared in the practical successes of various programs. Furthermore, what is now a clear direction was not so clear then.

The proliferation of Medieval Studies programs occurred outside of the Medieval Academy and, at more than one point, seemed to be adverse to it. The common interests of growing programs led to the formation of ACOMARS, or the Association of Centers of Medieval and Renaissance Studies, under the general direction of Francis Lee Utley, who headed the Ohio State Center. The acronym was almost unpronounceable, with less punch and style than UNCLE or THRUSH.⁵ ACOMARS issued a newsletter, *The Still Point*, that had a run of eight issues. One wag once observed that perhaps the case should be that the MAA become a member of ACOMARS, not the other way around. In a quiet, deep structural way, ACOMARS was telegraphing that the U.S. population was shifting westward, as were the Brooklyn Dodgers, the New York Giants, and

medievalists, and that the East Coast was not everything—something hard to imagine as quietly flows the Charles into the Atlantic outside our window here at the Sonesta. ACOMARS also disclosed a weakness in the Academy, namely, that the Academy had never demonstrated a strong commitment to involvement in teaching programs.. The Academy saw the potential difficulty of being outflanked with the result that President Joseph Strayer called for a meeting, held October 31–November 1, 1969, at Toronto, for all existing centers. The result was CARA, first chaired by John Leyerle (1969–72) and after him Stanley Kahrl and Elizabeth Kennan, later to become President of Mount Holyoke. Leyerle ran the first public CARA meeting at the Academy meeting in 1970, which has become a tradition at Academy meetings, and later a conference on marriage at UCLA to indicate CARA’s commitment to interdisciplinary approaches, which led to a *Viator* volume.⁶ The conference sought to be an exemplary meeting for scholarly interchange, not a collection of papers passing in the night at a given place, the fateful junction of many a session in many a conference program. Despite great reluctance by participants Leyerle got them to circulate papers in advance, to consider and refer to other papers being presented, and otherwise engage in a scholarly dialogue. It was, he has said, like “herding cats.”

The next great CARA meeting was 1975 at St. John’s University in Collegeville, hosted by Julian Plante, who was a CARA stalwart throughout his active career. It was at that meeting that the next generation of leadership in Medieval Studies got to meet each other for the first time. Rooms at the St. Germain Hotel in St. Cloud were \$7 per person a night for a double, and each guest received a chit for a free drink. The stunning Breuer church stood in the background, as the participants sipped wine on what had been the high altar of the now desanctified church, which

had become a reception hall. I recall that the Archangel Gabriel was looking greedily over my left shoulder at my Chablis, obviously unhappy that immateriality had deprived him of a treat. About a week later nearly a foot-and-a-half of snow fell. These memory hooks are incidental to the creation of a then new network of younger medievalists. One can recall that the 1960's had also given to American life a phrase that is for the ages: "consenting adults." Now there were consenting medievalists, clearly another academic generation, who sought to meet regularly—to do exactly what . . . ?

At the 1970 Academy meeting the role and function of CARA was a major topic, as it is now and will likely always be. In fact J. J. ("Jerry") Murphy, founder of the Medieval Association of the Pacific, invoked the Peggy Lee hit song, "Is that all there is?" to call for a 1973 meeting on the direction of CARA. One of the first CARA projects was Julian Plante's idea for a census of manuscripts in North America. The idea got off the ground, but stalled in the face of a lack of cooperation. Early discussion points were also summer institutes in the critical disciplines, several of which were mounted, and sub-committee activities regarding computers and the humanities. In the later 1970s David Staines, who was associate chair of CARA and then later two-term Chair, gave what is still the best answer to the CARA role and function question with his proposal to establish a series, Medieval Academy Reprints in Teaching [MART]. The 1960's bloom was pretty much gone, curricula that supported Medieval Studies were on the defensive, inflation was on the rise, and publishers sought to save the bottom line by making slow(er)-selling books in medieval studies expendable. Kennan had written the NEH in January of 1976 seeking a Chairman's Grant to survey the field and determine what needed to be done to solve the problem. Eventually, Staines received a \$15,000 three-year start-up grant from the Academy

to get MART rolling, but he had trouble convincing certain quarters of the Academy to accept the idea in principle not to mention the cash that would start up the series. The *jihad* was successful, perhaps more than anyone could have imagined. The University of Toronto Press [UTP] became the publisher of the series and with a CARA committee as advisors took polls of Academy members to determine which books should be reprinted. The UTP website lists some nearly 40 titles since 1978. CARA squared its debt with the Academy, and did much more: for the eight-month period ending August 2005 the series generated gross receipts of \$18,445, paid royalties to authors, supported administrative costs, and left a net balance of \$13,368, which is more than the Academy returns to CARA annually (which is about \$4,000). Vulgarities aside, MART saved key teaching texts from the pulping room. Penguin was going to pulp *Beroul's Tristan*, it has been said, when it heard of MART and stopped its plan. The warming effect of MART became flattery when the publishing world, having given up on a title and having given it to MART, asked for it back, as Columbia University Press has—or when the Renaissance Society of America launched a similar series, Renaissance Society of America Reprint Text Series. The accumulated MART titles have yielded sales of 200,000 books. MART has achieved its aim, succinctly put by the current UTP catalog: “These books are specially selected and designed to keep in print the very best medieval scholarship and translation[s], modestly priced for student use.” In fact MART has become the victim of its own success in that presses are increasing their take-backs so that MART has branched out to a new series of reprinted articles, the first of which is Carol Neel’s *Medieval Families*.

About this same time the question of teaching Medieval Studies became an area of contention. The Consortium for the Teaching of the Middle Ages [=TEAMS], which had been operating as a

subcommittee to develop education projects, and CARA came into conflict over areas of responsibility and procedures. There was no easy or immediate resolution of these difficulties. Throughout the 1980s TEAMS operated independently of CARA, maintaining a close relation with the Medieval Institute at Western Michigan University and its Medieval Institute Publications, and eventually evolving into a legally separate not-for-profit corporation chartered under the laws of the State of Michigan in 1996. My predecessor, Otto Grundler, worked hard to support TEAMS and yet to ensure a strong CARA. TEAMS volumes have become a most successful component of the MIP list. Happily, CARA and TEAMS have been working together in cooperation now for more than a decade. Otto's vision of harmony came to pass.

The other major CARA funding success was the Dumbarton Oaks /CARA Visiting Byzantinist Program run through Dumbarton Oaks [DO] and begun when Giles Constable was the Director there. Timing is everything, said George Burns, and Constable was the right man at the right time. The CARA sub-committee worked with him, but it was Constable who went down Massachusetts Avenue to the NEH as it began a new funding initiative for "General Programs." CARA was there *fastest* with the *mostest*: a new NEH funding initiative, no precedents to conjure with, a high-quality program, and wide impact. The three-year grant, extended on a no-cost basis to a fourth, was to sponsor four visits a year by distinguished Byzantinists especially at campuses throughout the nation that did not have a Byzantine Studies program in place. The program necessarily affected different host campuses differently, but the aim of town and gown talking about Byzantium was paramount. Over four years there were 31 separate visits and 59 public presentations; visitors lectured on- and off-campus, taught classes, and gave radio and newspaper interviews. DO created two travelling photographic exhibitions that were available to

host campuses. The total project cost was a very cheap \$90,390 with \$42,265 coming from the NEH. Later CARA attempted to replicate the Byzantinist program with a Slavacist program, this time using the Resource Center for Medieval Slavic Studies (Hilandar Project) at Ohio State as the base. The grant did not fly, as the tone of the General Programs changed. One NEH staffer offered a challenge by asking what the “polyester” factor would be among those who might attend, indicating that the “tweed” factor would not count. Clearly, General Programs now took the view that universities and colleges were doubtful venues to attract general audiences.

The stumbles of CARA are as important as the successes, for they demonstrate continued commitment to the subject, broadly conceived, and engagement with current and pressing problems. The Visiting Slavacist program should have been a success, but NEH changed. CARA attempted to influence the Educational Testing Service to offer an Advanced Placement exam in Medieval History to no effect. Several discussions about potentially glitzy media projects never made it to the proposal stage. In the CARA files there is an undated, unsigned proposal for ca. \$127,000 to survey the field of Medieval Studies and to establish desiderata and to suggest future directions. Internal evidence suggests that it was written after April 4, 1968, author unknown. Judson Allen proposed a program for “mid-career support for research faculty,” which did not move forward. Initiatives to work more closely with regional associations ran into various practical and logistical problems.

CARA now remains what it has always been: a network for centers, institutes, and a variety of other programs where chairs and directors can meet and consider matters of common interest. Most recently, Fordham’s Visiting Scholar program, e.g., became a shining model for Western

Michigan and its Visiting Scholar program. CARA meets three times a year: business in the Fall, academic program with the MAA in the Spring, and two sessions and a programmed lunch at Kalamazoo. At this luncheon meeting CARA also reaches out to foreign scholars, notably from Korea and Poland. The sessions have focused on job issues and on a survey of library resources around the world. CARA continues its service to the field by supporting summer programs, giving small grants to graduate students, sponsoring service and teaching awards, circulating information about visiting international scholars, tracking job placement, and maintaining a database of organizations. The record of involvement and activity continues much as it did in the past.

The emphasis on CARA's history and development comes not so much because this is a CARA session but rather because the organization tends to be like Mr. Cellophane. The main reason for this transparency goes back to its founding days as an organization of institutions, not individuals. If 108/109 is the approximate number—and generous at that—of programs, centers, and institutes worldwide, then the available number of representatives at a meeting is already quite limited and when sinking travel budgets are tossed into the mix, an attendance of 30–35 at a meeting is rather good. CARA welcomes individuals now, and potentially this new initiative will yield results.

CARA has carved out a space for itself in relation to the Academy and TEAMS. Like CARA, the Medieval Institute at Western Michigan has likewise found a place developed from an initial potentially adversarial relationship with the Academy. Because the Institute and its Congress have worked so well together for so long, it is hard to imagine a time when that positive relation

could not be. But a spirit of full and open disclosure requires the observation that early on, medieval institutes like ACOMARS—and indeed like the Medieval Association of the Pacific, as I learned earlier this month—saw itself as a “not Academy” or as a “contra Academy”) at the outset. The secret files of the Institute (I am kidding) give a version of the origins that appears in a kindler, gentler form on the Website. John Sommerfeldt’s “egalitarian strategy” for 1962 gave invitations to everyone in the field, and abstracts were solicited from anyone who wished to be considered. Sommerfeldt opened up conference programming to a broad range of individuals, including graduate students and those at the beginning of the tenure track. Compare this opening move to the current situation where conference programming has this openness as a given. The move certainly startled the field. In *The Book of Forty*, which is an anthology of reminiscences about the Congress given out free at last year’s 40th anniversary Congress and still available, Joel Rosenthal relates what might be called the “unintended effect” of the Sommerfeldt strategy: “I got on the program by virtue of returning the bottom half of a two-way postcard on which I scribbled an idea for a short talk. My wife and I had an argument over the ethics of proposing to read a paper that was as yet unwritten. Whether she was right or not, I got on the program, received about \$50 from Roosevelt University for my travel expenses, read a paper (which I eventually published), and enjoyed being involved in a fledgling rival to the lofty Medieval Academy. At that conference I met George Beech, a cleric made a pass at my wife, and somebody upchucked right in front of us in the cafeteria line. It was everything a young academic hoped for in the world of scholarly endeavor. I knew I had to come back.” And come back Rosenthal did, attending nearly all of the Congresses since then and joining with George Beech and Bernard Bachrach to found *Medieval Prosography*, now entering the 24th volume. Sommerfeldt gambit meant that your begats or your address was less important than if you had

an idea that you could intelligibly convey in 20 minutes or so. The general openness of this proceeding and its structure can reasonably be called the “Kalamazoo effect.” The transformation of conference planning spread rapidly. At SUNY-Binghamton, e.g., where through 1974 the annual conference consisted of six major papers by leading-edge scholars—and some over the edge—the Kalamazoo effect led to a change in 1975: all who could propose a paper on the conference theme of “Nature in the Middle Ages,” joined the Gang of Six for a rather full and well-attended program: my recollection was that there were more than 60 papers in addition to the six headliners. Likewise, the MAA programs took on the shape of major papers and concurrent sessions proposed to an organizing committee. My surmise is that Sommerfeldt came to the Kalamazoo effect because he sought to open up the field, not because he was a mighty prophet and a seer blest who foresaw that travel budgets would tighten up to support only participation in some way and not at all mere attendance. If we call Central Casting for a bean counter, and there are many, the accountant would find the statistical support necessary to consider this part of the egalitarian strategy, intended or not, to underline the growing attendance at Kalamazoo despite many a rough patch for colleges and universities.

The reaching out to individuals, indeed the creation of a market of and for medievalists, that Sommerfeldt and his colleagues effected, had its match in Otto Grundler’s equally brilliant move to invite affiliated organizations to meet at the Congress. The brilliance of the move is apparent in Walwood Hall around October 1 of each year when sessions sponsored by self-standing organizations come in by mail or FAX. Combined with special sessions, where generally *ad hoc* groups create a one-time only program for, say, a hot topic or an anniversary of one sort or another, organized sessions account for more than 90% of the academic program: roughly 70%

from organizations, 20% from ad-hoc special groups. When my colleagues on the Program Committee looked at General Sessions, where individuals send abstracts only from which the Committee arranges sessions, they found that they had plenty to do. There were over 300 individual abstracts presented to the Committee for the 2006 congress. When the ineligible or incomplete were eliminated, just about 50% made the cut. The practical, insider tip for anyone wishing to participate is clear: try to work through an organization.

“The Kalamazoo effect” also includes within its scope the birthing of organizations. The Institute has not had a strong handle on the number of organizations that have come into existence at or because of the Congress venue. We tried twice within the last five years to take a census of organizations, but we could not yet amplify the list beyond some 23. Perhaps it is all faulty record-keeping, but again only retrospection can tell you what records you should have kept. Ought the Institute chart groups that come and go as well? Ought the Institute record how many left-handed participants have registered and what their speaking time average might be? Left-handers want to know! Mad. Even more difficult is the total career tally of books, articles, research projects funded and unfunded, that owe their creation, inception, and fruition to the Kalamazoo Congress. When Amy Hollywood won the first Grundler Prize, the triumph was *dulce et decorum* because she indicated in her introduction how the Congress gave her opportunities to present her ideas to colleagues. Let me spotlight one thriving organization, the Early Book Society [EBS], founded in 1987 by Martha Driver and the late Sally Horrall. The society got going after several years of sessions on manuscripts and early printing history at the Kalamazoo Congress. EBS now has an annual journal, a twice-yearly newsletter, an annual program at Kalamazoo generally offering six sessions, and a biennale across the Atlantic: the

ninth such conference took place at the Queen's University, Belfast in July of 2005. Though I am not in the business, and medieval philosophy is not noticeably strong at WMU, I am pleased to sign off on the various sessions organized by those working in medieval philosophy. Informally, those in medieval philosophy have specifically thanked the Institute for the support of the subject.

But it is a Murphy's Law, the fifth of his nine I believe, that holds "If you try to please everybody, somebody is not going to like it." The law applies to those who are uncomfortable with the size of Kalamazoo, which hit a record attendance of 3,111 last year. Truth be told, Kalamazoo is really a series of small conferences, similar to Forrest Gump's box of chocolates, and one should feel free to pluck a truffle here or a nougat there, or even put the box aside for a snooze. The irony is that a fundamental strategy that is egalitarian in nature inspires in some a desire to exclude others. The argument goes that this session or that is not medieval, or that this subject or that is not central to the subject of Medieval Studies. Just last week, in the context of a scheduling difficulty, I and my colleagues were urged to exercise more control over sessions with the presumed result that more space on the program would be available for the group feeling squeezed. The group did not, of course, volunteer to reduce its own Congress participation. Since the beginning, the Congress Committee has chosen not to define chronological limits or field limits. It goes with what it gets to achieve in general sessions, at least, program balance. Except in freshman or sophomore survey courses the assignment of fixed dates is a disciplinary reflex of "the letter killeth." Though it could, the Committee has never on the other hand argued that the Middle Ages continues to this very day: on the silver screen, between hard or soft bookcovers, in Steuben Glass and its Excalibur letter opener, or on those

Belgian chocolates that sport Charlemagne's monogram "Karolus," and of course the university itself, that most perduring relic of medieval culture. For some the move to include medievalism as opposed to Medieval Studies is dilutive, for others medievalism and Medieval Studies are terms in a semantic exercise resulting in one definition that fits all.

Size furthermore has its advantages. The seventy vendors, mainly booksellers new and used, who create one of the basic attractions for the congress participants (medievalists are great book-buyers) would not come for 300 people. For some the book-selling is a major or dominant activity. A few years ago one candidate for a position said that he came to the Congress never to attend sessions but to buy books. He did not get the job he was seeking. An attendance of 300 would also eliminate the need for the squadron of buses that operate for four full days running, bringing people in from the airport at no direct cost to them. Nor would the Radisson Hotel be ready to offer so low a conference rate. The Radisson, by the way, saw our block of rooms fill up this year by mid-January, the earliest ever. The word is clearly out that the the Congress Committee has perpetrated the biggest real estate swindle since the Dutch bought Manhattan for \$24 worth of trinkets.

Another irony is the existence of an International Congress at a regional mid-western university. Here is the litmus test for each of us: if we go back in time to the early 60's to a mythical meeting where we all would sit down to plan a medieval congress, no holds barred, would the initial and subsequent events come to look like the 41st congress program book? Would the extraordinary place name "Kalamazoo" immediately disqualify Western Michigan from consideration, inspiring mirth as it first did? Or would the mythical committee take small, safe

steps, exercising great rigor over content and locating the congress at a safer, more respectable university of larger than regional reputation? If the mythical committee voted for the safe choice, how much would have been lost?

If the bullish '60's gave birth to Medieval Studies as we now know it, the (perceived) slide of universities in public esteem and in state budgets offers an uncertain future. Though it may be the least typical example across the 50 states, Michigan can tie CARA and Kazoo together. Michigan leads the nation—in unemployment—by about two full percentage points. The decline of the American automotive industry has eroded the state's economy with the result that higher education has suffered. WMU will soon receive only a 1.55% increase in its budget while the other three major institutions in the state will receive a whopping 2%. The mantra for the state leadership is “cutting taxes,” and plans for economic development of one sort or another are in short supply. Other states have similar problems, expressed in other ways. Certainly the great state of Florida, which successfully wooed Rick Emmerson to Tallahassee, seems to be expansive, and some private colleges and universities here and there may have it better than their public counterparts.

This juncture is where the Medieval Academy may, or perhaps must, come forward as the national representative of the subject. However important the annual Congress at WMU may be for the development of the subject among us, it is not appropriate for WMU, as a regional university, to represent the subject as such to the outside world. No campus anywhere can or should assume that role for all. CARA cannot assume that role either. CARA is a standing committee of the Academy, and even if such a structural objection can be dismissed (the

objection that a part should not represent the whole), CARA lacks any sort of regular infrastructure even to begin such a role and one would have to be created. Had the strong push of ACOMARS succeeded in the late 60's, giving medievalists and Medieval Studies an alternative history, the up-and-down budgets of individual campuses and the Wheel of Fortune that spins university administrations would have left their negative effects. Programs prominent then are not necessarily prominent now and, as a whole, only a handful of programs from that time have come through with few permanent scars.

The good news is that the Academy has begun to look towards its national responsibilities, having come quite a long way on this matter since its beginnings in the 1920's. William Courtenay and Luke Wenger give complementary narratives of earlier days, especially pre-CARA and pre-Kalamazoo. Their accounts are in the Gentry and Kleinhenz volume.⁷ Courtenay ends his narrative about 1930, concentrating on the development of the subject of Medieval Studies as a subject before he moves into a consideration of the Academy as an institution. Wenger more or less picks up the story from the 1930's to describe, particularly after World War II, an Academy that begins to look more familiar. Both give ample documentation for then—narratives such as to prompt a collection of these documents for publication. Particularly now in the 20-20 hindsight that we can all possess, one can see the missteps and the stumbles more clearly, but in that retrospection one ought to mark as well the remarkable successes and achievements that led to the founding of the Academy. Let me here focus on a few select moments in the history.

If CARA and Kalamazoo at one time or another chose to be the “not Academy,” one ought not to

forget that at one time the Academy was the “not MLA.” The founding members showed their own revolutionary tooth by seeking to attain their goals by re-directing the Modern Language Association. John Matthews Manly, the Chicago Chaucerian, gave a presidential address in 1920 in which he complained that the MLA failed to support cooperative research on closely related subjects. In the fashion of the times the complaint was a call to arms taken up by medieval Latinists who felt disenfranchised. A committee sallied forth, led by E. K. Rand and George R. Coffman, which considered an “Academy of Medieval-Latin Culture” with the aim to assist both teaching and research in Medieval Latin. C. H. Beeson’s famous *Primer* (1925) was a proximate result, by the way. When the MLA committee approach was losing steam, a new ACLS committee replaced it, and a new committee it had to be because the ACLS was new, too. The ACLS Chairman was Charles Homer Haskins. The medievalist conspiracy was working its magic to great effect in a short time. John Nicholas Brown, George Coffman, Ralph Adams Cram, Charles Homer Haskins, George Lyman Kittredge, E. K. Rand, J. S. P. Tatlock, Maurice De Wulf, and Francis Peabody Magoun, Jr., were the Academy Nine who incorporated the organization on December 23, 1925.

You will have caught that all nine were men and you would have surmised that this all-star team had an Eastern and Harvard bias. Two were not academics. John Nicholas Brown was early, middle, and late in his life a staunch supporter of Medieval Studies and the Academy with a start-up gift and continuing financial support throughout his life, whether with *ad hoc* gifts or support of the Endowment fund. Ralph Adams Cram, though a practicing architect, found time in his schedule to support the Academy and serve as its President (1933–36). Cram was ahead of the medieval curve on performance theory. As chairman of the Committee on Ceremony and

Insignia of the Fellows, Cram argued for “due observance of form, ceremony, and ritual.” He suggested that officers wear academic costume at the 1935 meeting, but the suggestion did not become a permanent sartorial feature. And for this failure we are grateful. There is, on the other hand, no reason to be grateful that non-academics would not now be part of an incorporation committee.

The pre- 60’s Academy had two features that inspired concern then and that have continued to be issues in some quarters in the post- 60’s. The Eastern bias is one of these. There is ample evidence that the founders made some effort to reach beyond the Northeast. The well-travelled Coffman, who had been at Grinnell and had moved on to Boston University seems a special example, but Paetow of Berkeley, Willard of Colorado, and Thompson of Chicago, were indeed active in the founding group. It was Thompson who tried to slow the selection of a headquarters city. Boston, New York, and Washington D.C. were up for discussion. A minority of one, he thought that New York City should have received more consideration. It is not now well-remembered that in 1945 the Director of the Metropolitan Museum of Art proposed that the Cloisters become the headquarters of the Academy. Once incorporated in Boston, the Academy fell under that state’s laws of incorporation, which some interpreted to mean that the election of the governing body had to take place in Massachusetts (though other meetings could be held elsewhere). I have no idea what the status of this requirement might be now. The clear advantage of incorporation was that the new entity would have no limit of the amount of property it could own. At the 40th anniversary of the Medieval Association of the Pacific, celebrated earlier this month, I was told by some veteran members that the UC Santa Barbara actually offered to receive the Academy on the Pacific shore. Having just learned of this proposed move, I have

been unable to track down details of various sorts and to confirm what my ears have heard. I am searching for documentation. In any event the Academy's rotating North American scene, somehow avoiding the problems that Lear had with his daughters, seems to be a workable solution to establish a North American identity and presence. The plan to meet with MAP on a regular basis is a powerful corrective. With CARA's attempt to meet outside of the region of the Academy meeting in a given year, there is something of continental coverage.

The second issue revolves around the Fellows of the Academy and the name of the Academy itself. As the MLA-ACLS committees moved in the direction of an independent organization, the question naturally arose as to what to call it. Evidently "society, association, and institute" were all considered to one degree or another. Coffman, Rand, and Brown favored "academy" with its ostensible "caché" inspired by European honorary societies and accordingly elided with the new organization's group of Honorary Fellows. The new organization was going to honor its own, all right, in the manner of Europe, and prescribe no duties. Baseball, football, hockey, and even rock and roll all have their halls of fame. New procedures for election have made for easier election. The lack of function has in turn meant that the Fellows as a group had no governance role. No one yet has asked the Fellows to act as a group, aside from by-laws requirements, but certainly individual fellows continue to support the mainline activities of the Academy.

There is still more to bring to the discussion table at this point. Perhaps another occasion can consider the pursuit of an endowment, which was part of the original Academy plan and which achieved indifferent results until the NEH Challenge Grant and campaign led by John Leyerle. The founders could not have envisioned the development of graduate education and the special

responsibilities that mentors and faculty have assumed. Here at last the Academy has stepped forward to assist beginning scholars with several programs. The Academy would appear to have reopened its original commitment to teaching, but the research projects of wide scope in the past mid-century have no present counterparts. *Speculum* remains as the original flagship program in the commitment to research. The original documents of incorporation states the purpose of the Academy:

to conduct, encourage, promote and support research, publication, and instruction in Mediaeval records, literature, languages, arts, archaeology, history, philosophy, science, life, and all other aspects of Mediaeval civilization by publications, by research, and by other means as may be desirable, and to hold property for such purposes.

These are not merely legal words, but rather a mandate for then and now. When it was “then,” the Academy stood alone in its historical context to come forward with a charter for the subject. It worked well enough for its time. In the present the Academy, having changed and adjusted, sometimes slowly to be sure, has continued its central role beyond that time. Having welcomed and accommodated Centers and Regional Associations and the Annual Congress at Western Michigan—remember the operative phrase above “by such other means as may be desirable”—the Academy has cooperating partners. Nikita Kruschchev would have been proud of this working troika.

The past is prologue, of course, and there are principles and procedures. Since CARA has no permanent staff and must rely on sweat equity and professional enthusiasm by and large, it generally needs to be a partner with an organization that offers staff and facilities. Its solo

standing before the NEH is nil when it comes to research and training grants, for NEH on its part needs to meet federal accounting requirements that CARA cannot administer. There is no CARA-NEH negotiated overhead rate [now]. The solicitation of private or foundation support has its elusive elements. As the fiscal agent for CARA the Academy would have to “front” for CARA in any proposed program, for it is the fiscal agent for CARA. The continuation of summer institutes, whether on the scale and scope of Nancy van Deusen’s 2001 effort at the Central European University [CEU] or on a more modest level as with the Newberry Library for 2002 should form part of any future grand plan. There are two areas where CARA can move forward more straightforwardly. The first is in the area of relations with the regional associations. Some of these associations are very successful, and links can only be positive. The 2004 MAP meeting is also the MAA meeting, e.g., and some thought to cooperative planning for the meeting would seem a natural. The second is the international area. CARA has a link with CEU and with Leeds now that the MAA sponsors a speaker there. MAA is playing the global card, and CARA should too.

With 40 of the 50 states announcing budgetary problems—and that was months ago, with dot.corns turning into not.coms, and present business practices carrying on the venerable old practices of the robber barons of the 19th century, the current times are hardly the 1960’s, and the progress of centers and institutes is now hard to mark. The record reads as a chapter in what one might call “the rise and fall of nations.” Economics and politics now make common cause against the university in so many places; the loss of public confidence in higher education is widespread, and with that loss comes the usual bad news for the humanities. The common response in American higher education is to go to the “business model” where students are

perceived as customers and universities maximize their earnings potential by keeping bookstore shelves well-stocked with sweatshirts and trinkets. Not all places suffer in the same measure or in the same degree, and there are places, private and public, that are actually doing better than ever. CARA has demonstrated resilience, if not relentlessness, in its more than three decades. This “true grit” and the demonstrable successes on the record augur well for the future.

NOTES

* I would like to thank Richard K. Emmerson, Executive Director of the Medieval Academy, and his helpful staff for allowing me to work through the CARA files held at the Academy Office.

1. Brian S. Merrilees, “Preface,” *The Centre and its Compass: Studies in Medieval Literature in Honor of John Leyerle*, ed. Robert A. Taylor, James F. Burke, Patricia J. Eberle, Ian Lancashire, Brian S. Merrilees, *Studies in Medieval Culture* 33 (Kalamazoo, 1993), p. x.

2. Regrettably, the documentation for this panel is no longer available to me.

3. I am grateful to Dr. Jacqueline Brown for tracking down the source in the CARA Report to the Council of the Medieval Academy at its 1972 meeting: “In October 1971 copies of the brochure *Medieval Programs and the Training of Students: A Discussion*, edited by John Leyerle and Thomas H. Ohlgren from tapes made at the open meeting of CARA at Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina, on April 17, 1971, were distributed to CARA members and others who asked for them. Some copies remain and can be obtained from Professor Ohlgren.”

4. Francis G. Gentry and Christopher Kleinhenz, eds., *Medieval Studies in North America, Past, Present, and Future*. Kalamazoo, Mich.: Medieval Institute Publications, 1982.

5. For those who do not remember, The Man from U.N.C.L.E. was a 1960s television show in which the good guys were those from the **United Network Command for Law Enforcement**, or UNCLE, and the bad guys were from the **Technological Hierarchy for the Rehabilitation of UnScientific Humanism**, or THRUSH.

6. *Viator* 4 (1973), 413–501.

7. *Medieval Studies in North America: Past, Present, and Future*, ed. Francis G. Gentry and Christopher Kleinhenz. Kalamazoo, Mich.: Medieval Institute Publications, 1982, pp. 5–40.