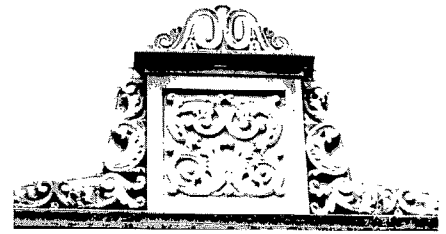


NEWS



of the History Department at Boston University

January 2000

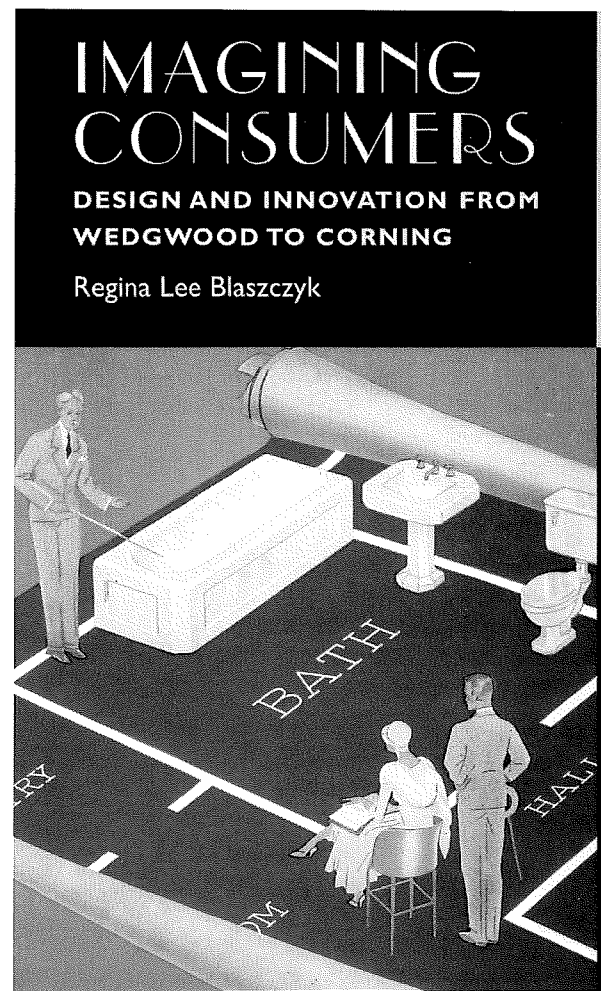
Regina Blaszczyk's book on American consumers and companies that marketed to them is published

In December the Johns Hopkins University Press published Professor Regina Blaszczyk's book *Imagining Consumers*. A study of technology, business management, and consumer relations, the work centers on the relation between producers and consumers in the glass and ceramics industries, arguing for a new interpretation of the role of producers. We present an excerpt from the Introduction:

Between the Civil War and World War II, the United States emerged as an industrial giant and a consumer society. Economic growth provided more Americans with ready-made clothing, brand-name foods, and imitation cut crystal. During Great Britain's eighteenth-century consumer revolution, only middling and wealthy sorts could enjoy luxuries like Chippendale chairs and Wedgwood vases. A century later, a significant percentage of the American population, including workers, experienced rising living standards that made earlier developments pale by comparison. Consumption for ordinary people was made in America, and the companies this book explores—firms providing commonplace items like Sears mail-order glassware and Woolworth pottery dishes—figured prominently in the process that marketing impresario Paul T. Cherington described in the 1930s as the “democratization of things.”

A complex dialogue between American tastes and business tactics undergirded the transformation to consumer society. Successful companies recognized that access to shoppers' practical and stylistic needs offered them a competitive advantage that could generate sizeable profits. Manufacturers collected information about consumers piecemeal, using all their wits to decipher demand—to determine what shoppers wanted, how much, and at what price. A company's survival rested on its ability to envision its target audiences and design products for them; it depended on the process of *imagining consumers*. The objective of customer satisfaction lay at the heart of this strategy.

Much in this argument is at odds with our understanding of a corporation's role in the evolution of consumerism. For decades, scholars have portrayed manufacturers and retailers as malignant manipulators, employing the tools of persuasion to mold women into passive shoppers and assembly-line workers into depoliticized automatons. Americans who have come of age since the 1950s—recalling repetitive TV commercials, sanitized shopping malls, and monotonous product designs—may believe that advertising shaped desire and created demand. But the coercion thesis misconstrued the American consumer revolution, which instead aimed to satisfy diversity. Historians have overlooked these facts primarily because they have been searching in the wrong places, accepting high-profile big businesses such as Procter & Gamble, Coca-Cola, and General Motors as the norm. During the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, more Americans could buy the new products pouring out of the nation's industrial heartland. Although consumers purchased such disposable goods as Heinz cat-



sup, Camel cigarettes, and Lux soap, they hardly designated such heavily advertised products as prized possessions. Those brand names alerted shoppers to quality and signified corporate rather than consumer identity. Instead, rich and poor invested a good deal of meaning in the durable goods that made houses into homes: Ubiquitous china closets, whatnot shelves, and buffet cabinets suggested that pottery and glassware mattered more than many other things. Courtly associations made these objects attractive to the socially ambitious; brilliant colors and interesting textures appealed to the artistic. These durable, yet fragile, artifacts also symbolized blood ties, anchored memories, and expressed private longings. Between social climbing and visual delight, Americans found a wide spectrum of reasons for treasuring pottery and glassware—all as individual as the consumers themselves. As Americans endowed these objects with great personal significance, potteries and glassworks fixed their eyes on the consumers. For the most part, those firms ignored the “managerial revolution” taking hold of the companies that made soap, cigarettes, sheeting, cereals, and canned goods, the large multidivisional corporations often described as the harbingers of modern marketing. Although professionally managed big businesses in the “core” economy sought to enlarge sales of standardized goods through direct consumer advertising, firms in the “periphery” concentrated on studying consumers and responding to their desires, rather than trying to build markets by creating new needs. The firms making household durables were entangled in a complex marketing web that encompassed enormously powerful retailers and incredibly demanding shoppers. Getting caught in a tug of war between supply and demand threatened their very well being. To stay in the game, producers had to remain flexible, which meant knowing how to switch from one style to another as fashions changed. The emerging systems of mass and bulk production, two manufacturing modes favored by big businesses, signaled a retreat away from flexibility. More fash-

ion-conscious firms, looking for production prototypes, had to rely on their roots in the Old World.

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In the nineteenth-century United States, potters and glassmakers emulated the example of Wedgwood & Bentley as they went about the tasks of designing, manufacturing, and marketing desirable products. The names of the master craftsman and his merchant colleague were revered by generations of practical men, who understood how much the partners contributed to the potter’s art. More important, these artisans embraced the Wedgwood-Bentley model of organization, design, production, and marketing, which had become standard practice in the Staffordshire potteries. When British practical men immigrated to the United States, they carried the tradition of imagining consumers to the North American shores.

If European tastes had varied, those in the United States ranged even farther, given the population mix and the land’s sheer size. Flexible specialization, which emphasized the reading of consumer desires and the creation of an endless flow of novel lines, perfectly suited the enormous and highly diversified market. The Wedgwood-Bentley batch production system that dominated many American potteries was emblematic of the *modus operandi* in dozens of other industries that produced household furnishings. Whether they made furniture, silver, rugs, textiles, or glassware, such manufacturers embraced flexible specialization, which emphasized responding to what the market wanted. As these producers discovered, few Americans blindly aped the consuming behavior of their economic betters. More often, consumers noted elite styles, smiled sweetly, and proceeded to shop for items that better suited their distinctive subcultures. Producers responded by adjusting the Wedgwood-Bentley system of fashion feedback, fine tuning it to work in a heterogeneous market. Focusing on the cultural dimensions of this “other side of industrialization”—on product design-and-development in the home-

furnishings factories that once dotted the landscape from Boston to Chicago—has consequential implications for understanding the clockwork that made the American consumer revolution tick.

Firms catering to the enormous mass market admitted that design-and-development was an interactive process that took place at the intersection of supply and demand.

Like their European predecessors, many potteries and glassworks remained tightly controlled family firms, passing managerial responsibility from generation to generation. With family tradition dictating commitment to communities and industries, owner-managers evinced little interest in horizontal consolidation or vertical integration, two growth tactics pursued by large national corporations. Instead, they played active roles in daily operations, often hiring practical men to help oversee particular aspects of batch production. Such concentration on factory matters left owner-managers with little time, energy, or interest for looking beyond the established way of doing things in an attempt to manipulate demand. Indeed, owner-managers concentrated on the most important task at hand: getting their audiences in focus. Although few took merchant partners like Bentley, most manufacturers relied heavily on feedback from *fashion intermediaries*, astute consumer liaisons whose jobs entailed studying markets, evaluating tastes, and making product recommendations. Identifying these fashion brokers as the primary agents of innovation turns the canon of design history inside out and upside down. Generations of connoisseurs have studied high-style craftsmen, self-appointed reformers, and high-profile “name” designers. Little attention has been paid to the evolution of household products between the decline of the craftsman and the ascendancy of the consultant industrial designer. Be-

tween 1865 and 1945, fashion intermediaries of various stripes—practical men, shopkeepers, salesmen, retail buyers, materials suppliers, art directors, show-room managers, color experts, home economists, advertising experts, and market researchers—assumed the major responsibility for the way things looked. Rather than impose their tastes, the most accomplished read the marketplace and cooperated with factory managers to design products for a spectrum of audiences. By contrast, the leading lights of reform, from the Aesthetic and Arts and Crafts movements on down to the “good design” campaigns of the Museum of Modern Art, attempted to foist consensus on a heterogenous portfolio of consumer products. Such efforts ignored the variability of tastes, the flexible production practices of the nation’s home-furnishing factories, and the democratic nature of the American consumer revolution.

Batch manufacturers helped to democratize consumption primarily by way of the mass merchandisers they served. Before the department store’s rise as the bourgeois consumption palace, other retailers extended the possibility of consumerism to an enormous proportion of the population. Chain stores like Great Atlantic & Pacific Tea Company and F. W. Woolworth Company targeted urban immigrants with lofty dreams of abundance and little cash to spare. The chain stores needed enormous quantities of inexpensive china and glass to give away as premiums or to sell for modest sums. Making carload after carload of this tableware for such retailers, factories and workshops advanced the American sense of shared “wealth.”

Gender also figured into corporate strategy. By the twentieth century, mass-market manufacturers understood their audiences as primarily female. Fashion intermediaries, who were often men, faced one of their greatest challenges in crossing gender boundaries in order to understand, interpret, and satisfy women’s material expectations. The most successful of them achieved this end, taking tips from shoppers on which designs would

sell. To be sure, the batch-production format did not penetrate all segments of the home-furnishings trade; newcomers to consumer products, unaware of these feedback loops, experimented with corporate elixirs like industrial design, credit sales, mass advertising, and market research. Consistently, however, these firms learned an important lesson: whether for reasons of price, utility, or style, women refused to buy items that they did not really want—no matter how much money producers had spent on enticement.

By no accident did clusters of batch producers dominate the industrial landscape at the moment when consumerism came to revolve around women and domesticity. These specialized manufacturers, much more than big businesses, ushered the transmogrification of a fragmented group of provision-seekers into a nation of highly differentiated consumers. Make no mistake: supply did not create demand in home furnishings, but demand determined supply. Whether china decorators or art directors, the most successful design innovators created practical goods that delighted the senses, rather than exotic items that seduced, tantalized, and disoriented. Artistic protagonists concerned with imposing “good taste” found few supporters in the home-furnishings trades, where many different tastes were the order of the day. Firms catering to the enormous mass market admitted that design-and-development was an interactive process that took place at the intersection of supply and demand, a process best facilitated by seasoned fashion intermediaries experienced in the task of imagining consumers. ♦



Visiting faculty member **Thomas Whalen** will deliver a talk on January 13 at the Massachusetts Historical Society on the 1952 Massachusetts Senate race between John F. Kennedy and Henry Cabot Lodge Jr.

In December Professor **Jill Lepore** delivered a lecture titled “A is for American” at the Bunting Institute at Radcliffe College as well as a lecture titled “Sequoyah and His Syllabary” at Harvard’s Center for International Affairs.

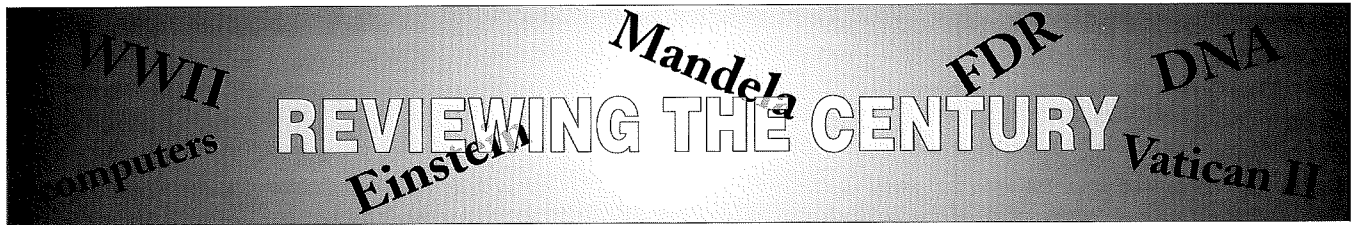
In October Professor **James Johnson** delivered the lecture “The Mask of Venice” at Texas Tech University in Lubbock, Texas. In December he presented the paper “Carnival Dreams and the Masks of Society: Balzac’s Splendeurs et misères in the Nineteenth Century” in the Modern French History Workshop at the University of Chicago.

In December a dozen faculty members and graduate students attended a demonstration of new mapmaking software organized by graduate student **Sarah Phillips**. Those interested in obtaining the program (there is no charge for use on university-owned computers) should contact Sarah.

Professor **William Keylor** delivered the keynote address to the annual conference of the Center for International and Strategic Studies at Yale University in December. The title of his address was “The Current State of International History: Problems and Prospects.” ♦

Update on Course Materials and the Web

In the December newsletter Professor Betty Anderson explained WebCT, one of the programs available to Boston University faculty to post course materials on the Web. Since then she, as well as Professor Barbara Diefendorf, has done work with the other available program, CourseInfo. Both instructors have found it easier to use than WebCT. Signing up is simple: Go to courseinfo.bu.edu and then click on “Request Course.” More information on the program is available at www.bu.edu/webcentral/answers (click on “Publishing,” then on “CourseInfo”).



In spite of the fact that historians spend much effort laying out the details and nuances of history and attempt to keep their students and readers from reducing history to catch-phrases (the gay nineties, the roaring twenties, the Gilded Age, the age of exploration, the Renaissance, the Industrial Age), the tendency to simplify is a strong one. So how will historians of, say, 2050 view the 20th century? What trends will they point out? What simplifications will they attempt? What people or events will have a lasting impact on the next century? What overarching themes will be obvious? And conversely, what lies ahead in the century barely begun?

On the assumption that in 2050 no one who hazards such predictions will be around the department to face jeering readers of the archived newsletters, we asked for reflections and guesses, and some dared to respond:

From Professor Clifford Backman:

The significant events of the century (listed in no particular order):

- World Wars I and II
- The Holocaust
- Vatican II
- Invention of the Pill, the computer chip, and the credit card
- The discovery and mapping of DNA
- Bob Dylan goes electric

Professor Backman predicts that the 20th century will be known as the "Age of Ideology."

From Professor Joseph Boskin:

The significant persons in 20th-century American humor:

- Charlie Chaplin
- Woody Allen
- Lenny Bruce

- Henny Youngman
- Richard Pryor
- Lily Tomlin
- Bill Cosby
- James Thurber

From Professor James McCann:

In many ways the 20th century has been distinct in the past (formerly present) millennium because it witnessed an unprecedented in human history expansion of scale made possible by technologies of communication and transportation, as well as scales of destruction unimaginable in earlier epochs. For Africa this has meant its domination by colonialism at the opening of the century, the often harsh realities of being in a world economy dominated by corporate capitalism at the century's end. Yet the triumph of a political solution to South Africa's apartheid has tempered these harsh realities.

For memorable African personalities who helped set the tone of the century we should look to:

- Nelson Mandela, who has personified the spirit of reconciliation and forgiveness that must lead the way for other global crises and violence wrought by our recent wayward century.
- The late Julius Nyerere, who set the terms for a humanitarian approach to the politics of nationalism and independence, and had the grace to admit when he was wrong.
- Haile Sellassie, the diminutive Ethiopian ruler who stood before the League of Nations in 1936 as a harbinger of the Second World War and then came back from exile for 33 more years. He led his country into a failed modernization, but finally after death has become an international icon through the music and theology of RasTafarianism. His haunting images as the victim of

Mussolini's aggression and as the deity Jah will be with us well into the next millennium.

- Abebe Bikila, the Ethiopian whose barefoot marathon victory through the streets of Rome in 1960 paved the way (so to speak) for non-American, non-European athletes to succeed on a global scale.

From Professor Jill Lepore:

Hmm, this may merely be a consequence of my narrow specialization, but I have a hard time getting my head around the 20th century. Now ask me about the most notable people of the 17th century, and I'll bore you to tears. But here are my brief, utterly uninformed musings. Important people?

- Hitler
- Ghandi
- Turing
- Gobachev
- MLK
- FDR
- Rachel Carson
- Einstein
- Mandela
- Salk
- Mao

I hope no one ever asks me to do this at a cocktail party.

How will the 20th century be remembered? The Age of the Automobile. Over soon, I hope.

From Professor Merle Goldman:

In the 20th century, China underwent one of the most massive and radical revolutions in world history. It was not just the Communist revolution, but also, in 1911, the end of the Confucian dynastic system, which had governed China for almost two millennia, followed by decades of warlordism and

finally the establishment of the People's Republic of China in 1949. Mao Zedong's revolution destroyed the private landholding system that had been in existence in China since 221 B.C., suppressed the large urban middle class, and decimated the intellectual class that had ruled China since the beginning of the Confucian era. With Mao's death in 1976 and the return of his Long March allies (who had been purged in the Cultural Revolution) to power under the leadership of Deng Xiaoping, China revived its pre-1949 history, but this time under a government that maintained a degree of order and encouraged economic modernization. China returned to private landholding and a market economy, re-established its entrepreneurial class, and opened up to the outside world. These policies produced a growth in GNP of 9% a year for almost twenty years. The World Bank has called this growth the fastest and longest not only in the 20th century but also in world history. China stands poised at the end of the century to fulfill its desire since its encounter with the West to become "rich and powerful" and once again become a world power. But it is not at all inevitable that this desire will be fulfilled. China's present leadership faces mammoth economic, social, and, most important, political crises which it appears unable to handle. Its Leninist party-state is obsolete and totally inadequate for dealing with its changing economy and social structure. In order to employ the 15 million new job-seekers who come into the labor market each year, the 150 million people coming from the farms into the cities in search of jobs, and about 60 million workers becoming unemployed because of the reform of state industry, and to feed, house, and take care of its one billion, three hundred million population, China's GNP has to grow at least at 8% a year. But in the last two years of the 20th century, China's growth has begun to slow to 6-7%, and protests of workers, farmers, pensioners, and ordinary citizens are going on all over the country. Therefore at the close of the century, China may be poised to become a great power, but there are many towering ob-

stacles in its way that may prevent it from achieving its 200-year-old dream of recapturing its glorious premodern status.

From Professor Houchang Chehabi:

I believe the 20th century will be remembered as the time women began challenging patriarchy and made a lot of headway in the quest for equality.

From department administrator James Dutton:

Others have discussed the 20th century as a time of unprecedented violence, and unfortunately there is no doubt of the validity of that observation. But I would point to two other developments I think are also significant: The first involves technology—not so much the marvels we see virtually every day (Dick Tracy's wrist radio has arrived), but a relatively new general acceptance of the idea that technology will inevitably lead to new achievements only vaguely imagined at present. The sort of technological breakthroughs that a very few visionaries contemplated early in the 20th century, everyman now has no trouble imagining—and more besides.

Another notable aspect of the century is an increasing emphasis on individual rights (the extreme expressed as "nobody is going to tell me what to do") with a decreasing acceptance of the common good or the welfare of others as goals worth a sacrifice. As the individual has taken center stage, the traditional authorities (parents, state, church) have moved to the periphery of influence, with consequences as yet unclear.

From Professor William Keylor:

In my view the 20th century will be remembered as the century of slaughter of the innocents: The two world wars, the Holocaust, Stalin's extermination campaigns against various groups, the Armenian, Cambodian, and Rwandan genocide (to name perhaps the most familiar instances of the phenomenon)

produced civilian deaths and casualties on an unprecedented scale. This was partly due to the application of technological innovations to mass killing (as with the Holocaust). But the killing fields of Cambodia and Rwanda revealed that preindustrial methods are sufficient to the task.

Philosophers and historians in the 21st century will, I predict, be preoccupied with explaining why so many millions of people were killed as a result of the deliberate policies of governments in the century that has just come to an end.

From Professor Richard Landes:

Secular millennialism had its disastrous successes (Communism, Nazism) and creative failures (Depression, Sixties). The forces of modernism (technological innovation, free-markets, human freedoms, secularism) and the forces of anti-modernism (community bonds and morality, religious commitments, conspiracy theory, technology in the service of order) have continued to clash over the past two centuries in what looks like ever-widening gyres. Post-modern exegetical exuberance has much to contribute to reducing the hostilities and increasing understanding between the two if it could find its way to becoming responsible, a way to leave behind the juvenile excitement of cultural terrorism. Historians have a major role to play in this process. It is up to us to remember the past in ways that are both useful and honest. The ultimate iconoclastic act: to remember the many complex and often contradictory narratives well (as any parent can tell you).

The World Wide Web will be to the 21st century what the printing press was to the 16th. First, it will be the occasion of a wave of apocalyptic religious movements, the most successful of which will be remembered as either new religions or great reforms. Second, it will be the occasion of a new intellectual matrix that at once draws on, addresses the concerns of, and sidesteps academia, bringing fresh and often common-sense intelligence from the

laity. The most powerful product of that latter dynamic in the 16th century was the extraordinary marriage of science and technology we call "modern science." What the next century holds in communications technology is at once dazzling and daunting, and given our service economy, our communitarian needs, and our interpersonal creativity, the most important innovations may be social. We need a PhD program in webmastering, to prepare people to create and maintain sites that are at once imaginative and innovative and, at the same time, responsible, honest, reliable. The best way to set standards is not by legislating but by meeting them.

2000-2033 will resemble some of the dynamics of 1000-1033 and 1500-1533: new conversations, new social and interactive paradigms, new forms of political organization, many launched either by apocalyptic beliefs or by the creative response to them. If we are lucky, the next century will hold the possibilities that the 11th did in terms of successful experimentation in new forms of sovereignty (urban and rural communes, new "textual" communities) and egalitarian religious expression (pilgrimage, apostolic spirituality). If the global millennium that is now dawning is to be one of civil society around the world, rather than one of an ever-greater and more rigid split between the haves above the social prime divider and the have-nots below, then we need to encourage such experiments in sovereignty on a wide variety of scales. And of course, they stand a better chance of success when the passion that drives them is informed by the lessons of history.

Whatever happens with Y2K, with globalization, with environmental degradation, the cultures where the elites and the commoners have the best, most fluid relations, where trust and cooperation are viable options between people below and above the prime divider—these will be the cultures that flourish in the new world of constant technologically and socially driven change. That was the lesson of the year 1000 where France, with her popular religious movements that embraced large

numbers of the elite as well, rapidly outpaced Germany with her high apocalyptic political theater and her imperial "conversions" of pagan tribes. That will be the lesson again, but this time writ large, writ globally.

In the Middle Ages, the first half of this last millennium, when the universities first came into being, "History" had no place in the curriculum. But in "modern" times, from the Renaissance throughout the second half of this millennium, the university has given "History" not only a place, but one of honor. In the next millennium, the university will begin to have departments of futurism. Any culture in which change is so fundamentally built-in can ill afford not to develop such a specialty. Again, historians can play a key role in producing a field at once imaginative and responsible.

The Chinese ideogram for crisis is a combination of danger and opportunity. Millennial moments, whether they are brought on by dates or by the dynamics of a culture which has hit the limits of its prevailing paradigmatic approaches to problems and their solutions, are moments of such crisis. And the best way to handle the dangers may well be to take advantage of the opportunities, rather than sitting on one's hands (crisis, after all, comes from the Greek "to decide," as in "the moment at which one can no longer procrastinate"). Y2K is only the first of a whole series of future global and local threats, future global and local projects produced by procrastination. How we handle it, what we learn from it, will just be the first in a series of CSATs, Civil Society Aptitude Tests, that will span the coming generations.

"Doom" does not mean what our colloquial usage suggests: it is not catastrophe but "judgment." Doomsday is Judgment Day, and our current usage suggests an archeology of bad conscience that any medievalist will tell you goes back over a thousand years. And while millennial moments have never proven to be the Last Judgment, they have always been a judgment. What will the next generations of historians have to say about how we handled ours? That's up to us. ♦

Medieval conference meets at Boston University

The annual meeting of the New England Medieval Conference took place at Boston University on December 4 and 5 under the aegis of the Institute for Medieval History. The theme of the meeting—"Prophets and Prophecy"—was certainly in line with current interest in the millennium, and the papers taken as a whole presented a remarkably coherent view of this aspect of medieval thought.

The subject of the first session was "History as Prophecy." Jay Rubens (University of New Mexico) spoke on disillusionment following the First Crusade by examining the psychological dilemma of feudal lords returning from this ostensibly transformative experience (part of whose original rationale was to redirect feudal violence towards a spiritual objective). Some of the returnees displayed a character altered for the better, while others returned even more disposed to violence. Nina Safran (Penn State) spoke of the Arab historian, Ibn Habib of Córdoba, who associated religious and social turmoil in ninth-century Islamic Spain with apocalyptic predictions of the end of Muslim rule there. Clifford Backman presented two competing claims to the scholarly and prophetic mantle of Roger Bacon advanced by Arnau de Vilanova and Peter John Olivi. History for these figures was a way of viewing the unwinding of prophecy, as interpreted by a distinctive succession of scholar-prophets.

The second theme was "Astrological Visions." Thomas Glick discussed "The Letter of Toledo," a much-traveled astrology-based prediction of the conversion of Muslims in the light of the distinctive Arab astronomical synthesis as it was received in the Latin West. Laura Smoller (University of Arkansas) spoke on Pierre d'Ailly's late "conversion" from hostility towards astrology to its defense, with an eye towards healing the great schism of Christendom. Ralph Drayton (University of Wiscon-

sin) examined the religious side of medieval medicine, a necessary corollary to the clerical status of most medieval Christian physicians. Religious considerations accounted for physicians' ambivalent posture regarding the use of astrology, talismans, and other arts associated with magic.

The third panel, on "Prophets," opened with Mark Abate's presentation on Roger Bacon's "apocalyptic science." Bacon held both philosophy and science to have been perfectly revealed, only to be lost with the fall of Adam. In order to defeat Antichrist, Adamic science had to be reconstructed. Franco Morando (Boston College) followed with an account of Bernardino of Siena's inflammatory popular sermons directed against three minority scapegoats: witches, sodomites, and Jews. Richard Landes began his discussion of two medieval female prophets with a useful distinction between the millennial perspective, which posits a radical transformation of society at some point in the future, and apocalypticism, as an imminent, disruptive transformation.

The final session, "Mass Religious Movements," presented an interesting counterpoint between "The Peace of God" (Fred Paxton, Connecticut College) and "The Religious Context of Peasant Insurrections" (Paul Freedman, Yale), the question in each case being whether these social phenomena fit the description of the session's ostensible subject. Paxton concluded that the Peace of God was a religious movement, but that it was not inspired or led by common people, who were involved or discouraged from participation depending on the objectives of specific leaders. Freedman, while recognizing that peasants phrased grievances in religious terms and apocalypticism added urgency to their demands, argued that the inevitability of peasant revolts stemmed from the nature of lordship itself.

The meeting was made possible by a generous grant from the Boston University Humanities Foundation.

*Thomas F. Glick
Professor of History*



Research Project

The Jerome Lyle Rappaport Biography Project is looking for students to become an active part of a historical research team looking at more than 50 years of Boston history, politics, and development. This project would be an excellent opportunity for all those interested in the history of cities, particularly Boston.

We have a database and library filled with information and documents relevant to our project. We need individuals who would be able to volunteer some time to assist us with reading and analyzing articles, public records, and personal files; expanding our project database; finding documents within libraries and government collections; transcribing interview tapes; and locating subjects of potential interviews.

All those interested in learning more about the project and becoming involved should contact Research Assistant Jenifer Kaminsky at 617-305-6482 or jbk@comic.com or Project Assistant Patrick Kennedy at 617-305-6483 or plk76@hotmail.com.

Undergraduate Publication

The Brownstone Journal has issued a call for essays 5-15 pages in length from Boston University undergraduate students on any topic in any discipline. Deadline: February 5 in STH 636, three copies plus another on floppy disk. Artwork is also accepted. For more information contact brownstonejournal@yahoo.com.

Senior Prize

In May the CAS/GRS Alumni Association will present a \$500 prize for writing excellence. Any senior may submit a pa-

per written anytime while at Boston University. Contact department administrator James Dutton (jtdutton@bu.edu) for details.

Graduate Financial Aid

Applications for 2000-01 departmental financial aid will be sent out in February. For assistance with locating outside funding sources, students may wish to consult the 1999-2000 edition of *Grants, Fellowships, and Prizes of Interest to Historians*, which is kept in department administrator James Dutton's office.

Graduate Student Workshops

"Learning the Ropes" Workshops for Graduate Students, presented by the American Studies Program, also open to graduate students in History:

- ✓ Monday, January 31, 1:00 to approximately 3:00 p.m., Introduction/Field Trip to the Massachusetts Historical Society, Presentation by Jennifer Tolpa of the MHS, Organized by Cheryl Boots, History/AMNESP.
- ✓ Thursday, February 10, 11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m., "Choosing, Defining, and Developing a Research Topic," Jill Lepore, History/AMNESP.
- ✓ Friday, March 24, 2:00-3:00 p.m., "Building a Career in Museum Work," Tom Denenberg, Wadsworth Athenaeum.
- ✓ Friday, March 31, 2:00-3:00 p.m., "Thinking About the Academic Job Market," Anita Patterson, English/AMNESP, and William Keylor, History.

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