

## University of Toronto Vagantes Application 2019

### A. Name of university:

University of Toronto

### B. Names of departments, institutes, and student organizations potentially involved:

**Departments, Programs:** Departments of Classics, English, French, German, History, History of Art, Italian Studies, Near and Middle Eastern Civilizations, Philosophy, Slavic Languages and Literatures, Spanish and Portuguese, Study of Religion; Programs in Book and Media Studies, Celtic Studies, Mediaeval Studies, Theology, (all programs at St. Michael's College, University of Toronto).

**Centres, Institutes, Colleges, Projects:** Centre for Comparative Literature, Centre for Medieval Studies, Centre for Renaissance and Reformation Studies, Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies; Massey College, St. Michael's College, Trinity College, University College, Victoria University; Decima, Dictionary of Old English, Documents of Early England Data Set (DEEDS), Henry Daniel Project, Iter, Records of Early English Drama (REED).

**Student Organizations:** the Late Antique/Early Medieval Working Group, the Medieval and Early Modern Mediterranean Working Group, Sources and Resources, Work in Medieval Studies (WIMS).

### C. Short statement of interest:

The University of Toronto houses the Centre for Medieval Studies (CMS), along with numerous other participating departments and institutions that work in unison to foster an interdisciplinary network of medieval interests and resources. The research activity of the Centre encompasses various major research projects, several publication series, numerous annual conferences, student-organized panels and events, and a very interactive community of scholars who have a wide range of interests. Since its foundation in 1963, the Centre has taken pride in training its students with the interdisciplinary tools for teaching and researching in medieval studies, with strong contributions in paleography, diplomatics, and vernacular languages, to name just a few. This is especially well-reflected in the program that CMS offers for Editing Medieval Texts in Latin and vernacular languages, which trains students to interpret and edit manuscripts to make them accessible to modern readers. Furthermore, in conjunction with Classics and Philosophy, CMS provides a collaborative program in Ancient and Medieval Philosophy, which fosters the study of Latin, Greek, and Arabic languages. Similarly, other projects, such as the Dictionary of Old English and the recent addition of Ge'ez courses, the first to be offered in North America, expand the knowledge of medieval linguistic traditions and broaden the academic and sociological perspectives of Toronto's graduate students. The caliber of academic excellence at CMS offers a perfect environment to host international graduate student initiatives like the Vagantes conference.

The vibrant research culture of CMS and the larger medieval community at U of T manifests itself in several colloquia, conferences, and student-led initiatives. For example, these include the annual Cologne-Toronto Graduate Student Colloquium, the Old English Colloquium, the Canada Chaucer Seminar, the Medieval Philosophy Colloquium, the Early Middle Ages Colloquium, the biennial colloquium for the Study of the Bible and Theology, and, for the first time this year, a colloquium on Medieval Ethiopia. In addition, for the past two years, CMS has played host to two international conferences: the 2015 biennial meeting of the Babel Working Group and the 2017 annual meeting of the Medieval Academy of America. The program for the 2017 MAA meeting can be found at <https://maa2017.com/program/>. These colloquia and conferences not only created opportunities for scholars to present their own research, but also provided occasions for the graduate students at U of

T to contribute to these international events. At the MAA 2017 meeting, forty graduate students volunteered in operating the conference in all logistical aspects: catering, tech support, chairing panels, and organizing social events. Some graduate students also organized and taught a three-day workshop on cataloguing, digitizing, and presenting uncatalogued manuscript fragments housed in our campus libraries. The ability of our graduate students to offer similar workshops at Vagantes presents a unique occasion for collaborative learning using our remarkable collection of manuscripts and textual resources.

U of T possesses an extensive system of libraries and collections that would benefit visiting graduate students. For example, the Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies Library and the Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library house some of the largest repositories of manuscripts in North America, both of which boast primary witnesses not only to Greek and Latin texts, but also to linguistic traditions outside of Western scholarship, such as Persian, Syriac, and Ge'ez. Additional libraries with outstanding rare books collections on campus include the E.J. Pratt Library, the Joseph M. Kelly Library, and the Robertson Davies Library at Massey College. These libraries are partnering with the medievalist community in Toronto to digitize their holdings, increasing the availability of their unique resources. These endeavors work to diversify the academic efforts of medievalists at U of T and offer new opportunities for visiting scholars. Furthermore, U of T's own Art Museum houses the Malcove Collection, which is comprised of more than 500 paintings, icons, manuscripts, and textiles from prehistory to the twentieth century and is closely connected to CMS.

In addition, U of T can provide adequate space to host a conference that is the size of the Vagantes community. A wide range of classroom buildings are available, in particular the large lecture halls and small seminar rooms of Victoria College and St. Michael's College, which often operate in conjunction with CMS. In addition to both colleges, our departmental space and the common room of PIMS are furnished with the necessary technological equipment and are available for hosting events. Furthermore, there are a number of dining facilities around campus that would provide for any catering needs. As seen in the organization of the MAA meeting, CMS graduate students are well-equipped to coordinate any logistics for a large-scale conference and they are very open to welcoming visiting colleagues to our campus.

U of T is located downtown in the thriving international city of Toronto, which offers a range of amenities and services for visitors. The Pearson International Airport, the Billy Bishop Airport, and an extensive metropolitan transit system provide easy access to all areas of the city for travelers. Toronto is also home to numerous museums and art galleries, many of which are within walking distance from campus. Notable among them are the Royal Ontario Museum and the Art Gallery of Ontario, both of which boast large Classical, Medieval, and pre-Modern collections, and the Aga Khan Museum that houses an extensive gallery of Islamic and Iranian art and history. Additionally, the Bata Shoe Museum offers a unique perspective on material culture with artifacts ranging from the Ptolemaic era to the late Italian Renaissance. Aside from cultural attractions, Toronto has a plethora of diverse cuisine options and hotel accommodations, with multiple restaurants, pubs, and entertainment venues that offer opportunities to host informal events in conjunction with the conference.

**D. The costs associated with hosting Vagantes have varied over the years, but on average have required an investment of about \$10,000. How does your institution plan to raise this sum? Please name the chief sources of funding you plan to rely upon to pay for the conference.**

We have already been in discussion with several departments who have expressed their support with specific and non-specific promises of funds, including the Centre for Medieval Studies (\$2000, with possible additional funding), the Department of Philosophy (\$1000), the Department of Art

(\$250), the Centre for Comparative Literature (\$200), the Centre for Renaissance and Reformation Studies (\$250), etc. We believe that we will be able to secure even more funding from various other departments and institutions on campus, with which we are already in contact. In addition, the University of Toronto has several sources of funding available for graduate student initiatives, including Milestones and Pathways (up to \$2,000), the Student Initiative Fund (up to \$3,000), the Arts and Science Dean's Student Initiatives Fund (up to \$1,000), the Jackman Humanities Institute for Working Groups (up to \$3,000), and Hart House Good Ideas Fund (up to \$1,000). For the funds to support student initiatives, we will be eligible to apply in the academic year preceding the conference, and we are strongly convinced that we will receive those funds.

Signatures and institutional affiliations of 5 graduate students who, by signing, will undertake the serious commitment of time to organize the conference if chosen. Please indicate (and provide an e-mail address for) one of the students who, if your university is chosen, will become the official host representative and immediately take up a three-year position on the Vagantes Board of Directors.

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*Jared Johnson*

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*Katherine Menendez*

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*Kari North*

Kari North, Department of History, University of Toronto.

*Matthew Orsag*

Matthew Orsag, Centre for Medieval Studies, University of Toronto.

*Lane Springer*

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Name of a faculty advisor who has agreed to be involved with Vagantes

Dr. Suzanne Conklin Akbari, Director of the Centre for Medieval Studies, Professor of English and Medieval Studies, University of Toronto.