

The Works in Medieval Studies Seminar Series proudly presents:

## “You Will Receive So Many Stab Wounds Here:” The Role of the Cathedral Chapter in the 1331 Girona Holy Week Riot .

**by Caroline Smith**



On Holy Thursday in Girona in 1331, a fight broke out between a group of armed clerics, throwing rocks at the gates of the Jewish quarter, and the royal officials whose job it was to guard the gates of the Jewish call. A number of skirmishes broke out at different points during the evening, with clerics throwing rocks at the officials, striking them with knives, and urging each other on to kill their opponents. But, the involved parties were not just younger clerics and students, but two canons of the cathedral chapter, prominent members of the diocesan ecclesiastical hierarchy. In his work on Holy Week riots in medieval Spain, David Nirenberg has described this kind of activity as “ritualized aggression” designed to reinforce Christian superiority, noting that participation by older clergy was not typical or necessarily acceptable. But the evidence from the Girona riots complicates this picture. In this situation, the cathedral community ultimately appears to have condoned the canons’ public displays of religious violence, at least tacitly. They testified on behalf of the two named canons in the resultant juridical inquiries, reframing the events to blame the Jews for bribing royal officials to leave the gates open and disobeying protocol by hanging around the open gates, and the officials for failing to do their duties. The chapter’s support for the accused canons suggests that participation in Holy Week violence was seemingly more acceptable than Nirenberg theorizes. This paper will explore the significance of the canons’ role in the riots and the chapter’s defense of its members, suggesting that recourse to sacred or religiously-motivated violence was not restricted to young, lower-status clergy, but could also serve as a tool for high-ranking members of the Girona cathedral chapter.

**Room 310, 3rd Floor, Lillian Massey Building  
3pm, Friday April 4, 2014**

The WIMS Friday afternoon seminar series provides a forum for Centre scholars to present works in progress. Contact Eb Joseph Daniels ([eb.daniels@mail.utoronto.ca](mailto:eb.daniels@mail.utoronto.ca)), Sarah Reeser ([sarah.reeser@mail.utoronto.ca](mailto:sarah.reeser@mail.utoronto.ca)), or Alex Bauer ([a.bauer@mail.utoronto.ca](mailto:a.bauer@mail.utoronto.ca)) to sign up today.