

Winner of the 2014 Graduate Prize

Karin Amundsen (USC), “Upon Uncertain Hope of Gain’: Alchemy and Empire in Tudor England”

Amundsen’s original and insightful analysis of the interrelatedness of two forms of Tudor thought – the alchemical and the imperial – prompts a rethinking of the intellectual and material underpinnings of England’s expansion. Offering a sophisticated and nuanced, yet admirably clear discussion of the role of alchemy in providing the language in which empire could be spoken, Amundsen draws on an impressive range of primary and secondary sources, moving with ease between the histories of Continental metallurgy, English currency, and maritime exploration. She offers a rare integration of material and intellectual histories, revealing both the implications and enacting of competing ideas and interpretations. Beautifully composed, Amundsen’s paper takes us on many different journeys, never losing sight of the very real consequences of the journeys taken by Englishmen abroad.

2014 Graduate Prize Committee members: Jordanna Bailkin, Amy Woodson-Bolton, and Lisa Cody

Honorable Mention – 2014 Graduate Prize

**Jamie Stoops (University of Arizona), “Pestilent Publications’:
Pornography and Class Relations in Victorian England”**

Stoops’ innovative examination of class and pornography in Victorian England brings a host of new players into the fray, vividly depicting consumers and producers of pornography of different classes and genders. In her compelling account, pornography becomes a site – and a much contested one – of class struggle, in which women took their place as active players in the trade. By focusing on middle-class consumers of pornography (and working-class producers and distributors), Stoops thwarts many of our expectations regarding the history of both sexuality and class to excellent effect.

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