Margaret Gaida Receives Mellon/ACLS

Margaret Gaida has received notice of her successful bid for a Mellon/ACLS Dissertation Completion Fellowship. Ms. Gaida is one of 66 recipients selected in the tenth annual competition for the award. Funded by a grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, the award provides support for research and writing in the last year of PhD dissertation writing to advanced graduate students in the humanities and related social sciences. The ACLS Fellowship provides a total award of up to $38,000, including a stipend plus additional funds for university fees and research support. In addition to the monetary support that the fellowship offers, Dissertation Completion Fellows are eligible to participate in a three-day seminar in the fall, preparing them for the academic job market. Ms. Gaida is currently completing her sixth year in the History of Science graduate program and plans to complete her dissertation in Spring 2017.

Ms. Gaida’s dissertation follows the historical trajectory of a single text, Alcabitius’ Introduction to Astrology, from its composition in Arabic in tenth-century Aleppo, to its translation into Latin and subsequent readership in medieval and Renaissance Europe, and finally to its transformation from manuscript to print in late fifteenth-century Venice. From this textual biography, the project develops a culturally-sensitive and situated account of the transmission of astrological knowledge from the Islamic world into the Latin West. A close study of a selection of the Introduction and its surviving manuscripts, commentaries, and printed versions reveals a diverse group of medieval readers. Studying these readers and their contexts reveals how astrology took shape in Europe by assimilating and adapting Islamic ideas.

Her work already has achieved an international presence as a contribution to a better understanding of the circulation of knowledge in the medieval and early modern Mediterranean. Ms. Gaida received the Lily Auchincloss Pre-Doctoral Rome Prize in April 2014, which supported her research during 2014-2015 at the American Academy in Rome. In addition, she was also named a 2014 Mediterranean Regional Research Fellow by the Council of American Overseas Research Centers (CAORC), which funded a research trip to Istanbul, Turkey, in fall 2015.