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UCSB Historians Receive Book Awards From College Art Association and American Historical Association

Anthony Barbieri-Low, an assistant professor of history at UC Santa Barbara, has received the prestigious Charles Rufus Morey Book Award from the College Art Association (CAA), and the James Henry Breasted Prize from the American Historical Association (AHA) for his book "Artisans in Imperial China" (University of Washington Press, 2007).

In addition, Carol Lansing, a professor of history at UCSB, has received the AHA's Howard R. Marraro Prize in Italian History for her book, "Passion and Order: Restraint of Grief in the Medieval Italian Communes" (Cornell University Press, 2007).

In "Artisans in Imperial China," Barbieri-Low, a specialist in early Chinese history, studies the social history of early Chinese artisans. Early China is best known for the dazzling terracotta figures, gilt-bronze lamps, and other material remnants of the past unearthed during archaeological excavations. Often, however, these artifacts are viewed without regard to the social context in which they were created. Barbieri-Low examines the position of artisans within early Chinese society and analyzes their social status, social mobility, and the role they played in the early Chinese economy. Further, he steps into their workshops to understand their training, their tools, and the workplace hazards they faced. Following their wares to the marketplace, he investigates some of the marketing techniques employed by

artisans and merchants, including such startlingly modern practices as family trademarks, rhyming jingles, and knockoffs of royal products.

An expert in the society, politics and culture of medieval Italy, Lansing examines the conscious effort among residents of these communes to change what was considered the appropriate public reaction to death. Driven by politics and understood in terms of gender, this shift threw into sharp relief connections among urban politics, gender expectations, and understandings of emotionality.

The Marraro Prize was established by Howard R. Marraro, a scholar of Italian culture, with bequests to the American Historical Association, the American Catholic Historical Association, and the Society for Italian Historical Studies. Every year, a committee that includes representatives from each association selects a single book in Italian history, Italian cultural history, or Italian American relations to receive the award.

The Breasted Prize is named for the pioneer in Egyptian and Near Eastern history who served as president of the AHA in 1928. It is awarded for the best book in English on any field of history prior to the year A.D 1000.

The Charles Rufus Morey Book Award is named in honor of one of the founding members of College Art Association and first teachers of art history in the United States.

Established in 1953, the annual award recognizes an especially distinguished book in the history of art, published in the English language.

The Breasted and Marraro prizes were presented at the American Historical Association's annual meeting in New York earlier last month, and the Morey Book Award will be presented at the College Art Association's annual conference in Los Angeles later this month.

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