

2013-2014 Hans Rosenberg Article Prize Laudatio

Jacob M. Baum, "From Incense to Idolatry: The Reformation of Olfaction in Late Medieval German Ritual," *Sixteenth Century Journal* 44 (2014): 323–44.

The Central European History Society (CEHS) is pleased to award the biennial Hans Rosenberg Article Prize to Dr. Jacob M. Baum for his "From Incense to Idolatry," published in the *Sixteenth Century Journal*.

The 2015 Rosenberg Prize recognizes the best English-language article or essay on central European history written by a permanent resident of North America and published in 2013 or 2014. Central European history is understood to include the history of Germany, Austria, and other German-speaking regions of Central European, from the medieval era to the present. The prize committee considered journal articles as well as individual essays from anthologies or collections.

Baum's article brings the history of the senses into the German Reformation, arguing that Catholics and Reformers alike understood olfaction in a hierarchy of sensory perception. They disagreed on the ability of olfaction to mediate between human and divine, however. Baum shows how this disagreement raises vital questions that go beyond the messages communicated by religious ritual to consider the importance of the sensory media used by ritual. Baum argues that we should see both traditional Christian ritual and Protestant rites as deeply embodied and shaped by a larger history of the senses. His work shows how historians can deploy a conceptually rich approach to sensory history by combining a thorough awareness of the senses in historical sources with current work by sensory anthropologists, various heirs of phenomenology, and theorists of everyday life.

The committee noted Baum's original and innovative use of a wide range of sources, from fifteenth-century church account books to liturgical and theological treatises, printed sermons, and material culture, to explore a field - the history of the senses - that is just starting to emerge in central European history. We hope this article will be read widely, both for the new perspectives it provides on late-medieval liturgy and Martin Luther, and as an example of the application of the history of the senses to social, cultural, and intellectual history.

The 2013-2014 Hans Rosenberg Article Prize Committee

Tara Zahra, University of Chicago

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