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ULRA Application Essay

Freshman year, in the Rare Books and Special Collections Room of Hesburgh Library, Dr. David Gura planted a seed that developed into my senior honors thesis. I was in a class on medieval German literature with Professor Claire Jones, and Dr. Gura volunteered to show us some of the collection's manuscripts. Having the chance to see and hold these great artifacts lit a fire in my soul. When I learned that so many manuscripts had hardly been studied, I was determined to contribute to filling the scholarly gap by writing a senior thesis on medieval theological manuscripts. As part of the preparation for my project, Dr. Gura assisted me in learning how to read manuscript hands, and he made the library's manuscripts available to me for reading practice. In December of 2015, I worked with Professor Jones to identify manuscripts in Germany which I could research for my project. She and I searched through two different online databases of manuscript catalogs and were in this manner able to locate a set of manuscripts with which to work.

I went to Munich under the sponsorship of the Nanovic Institute for European Studies and the Glynn Family Honors Program in January of 2016 and spent two months working in the Bavarian State Library's manuscript reading room with ten late-medieval German vernacular manuscripts. During this time, I transcribed over 500 pages of manuscript material for further study. Dr. Gura's work with me at Notre Dame had prepared me well for this—I knew how to read and handle manuscripts, as well as how to look for signs of use. Moreover, Dr. Gura had taught me broadly about the manuscript tradition, which allowed me access to more than just the textual aspects of the materials with which I worked.

During the ensuing semester, while studying at the University of Munich, I had the opportunity to return to this manuscript room and work even more with these manuscripts. At the same time, I looked in Notre Dame's online catalogs as well as in the online catalogs of the

Bavarian State Library and the libraries of the University of Munich for sources to use to understand the historical context of the manuscripts. Throughout my time abroad, I used many secondary sources, such as books from the university's main and subject libraries, multiple dissertations, online databases, and rare books, including an 18th-century printed edition of the cloister's chronicle. The librarians in Munich assisted me in finding these resources. I additionally accessed the Bavarian State Archives to look at the convent's other documents, which the Archives had digitized. Although I was almost 4500 miles from Notre Dame, I was also able to access many articles and books through Hesburgh Library's digital collections. I am very grateful for this opportunity which the Hesburgh Libraries presented—despite the distance, many resources which I could not find in Munich were at my disposal.

When I came back to Notre Dame to start my senior year, I downloaded digital copies of the manuscripts and the chronicle from the Bavarian State Library's website. These digital editions were instrumental in my research, as they allowed me to continue researching these manuscripts from afar. Early in the fall, Alan Krieger, the Theology and Philosophy subject librarian, presented to my theology honors thesis writing class on how to locate and use the library's vast array of resources. He helped me make sense of the various reading rooms and the library's many collections, and he explained the manner of requesting books for purchase, if they were not already in the library. This was crucial to my research—every time I could not find a book I needed in the catalog, I was able to request the book, and it was always available within a few days' time. Mr. Krieger's assistance in this matter was essential to my research. In February, I noticed something in one of my sources mentioning a new Tertiary Rule in the 16th century. Everywhere I looked, however, I could not find a scholarly edition of this Rule, nor much about it. I consulted Thomas Cashore, librarian at Moreau Seminary, who helped me find an article about the Rule. This article helped me to understand the historical context of the Rule's

implementation, and it pointed me to a source containing the rule in Latin and English translation. Mr. Cashore's help was instrumental in this process.

The Medieval Institute on the seventh floor of Hesburgh Library was essential to my research, as were the library's theology and reference collections. Not only did it provide a quiet place to study, but it also provided many resources. During the course of my research, I used many books from the Medieval Institute. These books helped me understand the general culture and the specific movements of the Middle Ages. I also used many books available in the theology collections, which helped me understand the theological doctrines expressed in the manuscripts I was reading. By means of the encyclopedias in the library's theology reference section and the general reference section, as well as through encyclopedias which I accessed digitally through Hesburgh Library's website, I was able to find many articles which I used in my paper.

The final edition of my thesis ended up using 95 sources, including unpublished manuscripts accessed both in person and digitally. Many of the other sources were articles or databases which I accessed online, both through Hesburgh Library's website and through my own searches. I used many published books as well, from the reference sections, the Medieval Institute, the theology collection, the online resources, and the Inter-Library Loan services. Throughout the entire process, Hesburgh Library's resources were essential to me—not only did the library provide books and articles in print and online, but it also provided well-trained librarians and curators who were willing to work with me and assist me in my research. I am extremely grateful for the resources and help afforded me by Hesburgh Library and their affiliates.