

# NOTES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

## MESSAGES

### MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF SMFS

The Society for Medieval Feminist Scholarship made a huge change this year when we moved our center of operations from the University of Oregon to Minot State University. We are all grateful for the efficiency and verve with which Gina Psaki and her colleagues at Oregon handled our communications and membership list and oversaw the publication of the *MFF* for so many years. Now we look forward to a new era, when these tasks will be in the capable hands of Michelle Sauer and her team of expert advisers at Minot State. If you have any questions about the mailing lists or your subscription to *MFF*, please contact Michelle at <michelle.sauer@minotstateu.edu>.

This was also an important year because it marked the inauguration of the Society for Medieval Feminist Scholarship First Book Prize. The call for Nominations elicited no fewer than sixteen books; these were read by a committee of four members of the SMFS who represented different fields of study. I was fortunate to serve as the chair of this committee, and to lead us in the difficult but happy task of deciding which first book in any area of medieval studies published in the past four years could be said to represent the best in feminist scholarship. The prize, which included an award of \$300 and a handsome plaque, was announced at the SMFS reception at the 2004 Medieval Congress at Kalamazoo. It was awarded to Jennifer Summit for her book *Lost Property: The Woman Writer and English Literary History, 1380-1589* (Chicago, 2000). Because we found the field so strong, we also extended Honorable Mention awards to two other books: Maud Burnett McInerney's *Eloquent Virgins from Thecla to Joan of Arc* (Palgrave, 2003) and Lisa Perfetti's *Women and Laughter in Medieval Comic Literature* (U Michigan, 2003).

As you will remember, the SMFS prize will alternate every other year between a published essay and a first book. Therefore, I would like to call your attention to the announcement of the Best Feminist Essay Prize later in the announcements section of this issue of the *MFF*. Please note that, unlike the Book Prize, this prize does not stipulate that the nominations must be the first published essay by a feminist medievalist scholar. We would like to receive nominations by February 1, 2005.

Looking ahead, I am pleased to welcome the following newly elected members

of the SMFS Advisory Board:

Kimberley LoPrete  
Nancy Bradley Warren  
Cathy Mooney  
Julia Smith  
Marla Segol

Congratulations! We look forward to your energy, help, and ideas in the years ahead.

Finally, I want to remind SMFS members about our annual banquet on Friday night of the Kalamazoo conference. This year, we are trying something a bit different: instead of a catered affair in a restaurant back room, we have reserved a long table at the popular Food Dance Cafe. Jen Gonyer-Donohue <jengd@u.washington.edu> is in charge of the arrangements and has negotiated a “prix fixe” menu for \$20 for faculty and otherwise fully employed members, and \$10 for graduate students. You will be hearing from her about reservations early in 2005. We are hoping to get a good graduate student turnout, but we also know that SMFS funds are limited and cannot cover all of the remaining cost of graduate student dinners. Therefore, I am inviting gainfully employed members of SMFS to make a contribution to the cause. If you would like to help please send a check to me and mark it for “SMFS graduate student dinner.” I cash your check right away, but keep a fund so that I can turn the money over to Jen as the date grows near. Remember: \$10 will support one student at our banquet! My address is:

Ann Matter  
University of Pennsylvania  
Department of Religious Studies  
Logan Hall  
249 South 36<sup>th</sup> Street  
University of Pennsylvania  
Philadelphia, PA 19104-6304

All the best to you for this academic year—see you at Kalamazoo.

*E. Ann Matter*

## MESSAGE FROM THE EDITOR

In this issue, we take a break from the special topic based on a roundtable or conference session and turn to an open topic format. The fun thing about editing an open issue is the element of suspense—one never knows what will come in and it is always interesting to see what does. The harder part of editing an open issue is writing an introduction for it, since by virtue of the format, there is no easy unifying theme beyond the concept of feminist medievalist work in progress. We thus offer up three presentations of current work on disparate topics—an eighth-century miniature showing an androgynous Christ figure, an analysis of the evil queen character (Eufeme) in Heldris de Cornuälle's *Le Roman de Silence*, and a misogynist conduct book appearing in a Middle English translation (Robert de Gretham's *Mirror*). The essays do seem to work together in interesting ways, however. Felice Lifshitz's essay explores how this image of a man/woman Christ, which has long mystified art historians, makes perfect sense when considered in its immediate context—a manuscript owned and used by a women's monastic community that had access to fifth-century texts discussing the masculo-feminine qualities of the divine. Lifshitz presents us with the possibility of virtuous women reading potentially dangerous texts in their own devout terms. Kristin Burr's essay is, in contrast, about the dangers of a woman without virtue. Eufeme, the evil queen who tries to have the cross-dressed (femino-masculine?) Silence killed for resisting Eufeme's sexual advances, suffers her ignominious fate because of a profound misunderstanding of the virtue of honor. Finally, Kathleen Blumreich's essay talks about a book that is meant to promote virtue in a woman reader of secular literature—the female addressee of Gretham's *Mirror* is urged to turn away from the dangerous (i.e. sinful) messages of romances and gestes (like Silence perhaps?) and to read instructive religious exempla and saints' lives instead. All three essays, albeit in different ways, deal with the muddy waters of female conduct and the texts used to propagate it. But Blumreich's comment that the dead prostitutes and lascivious holy men of the religious texts aren't that different from the sinful Eufemes of the secular tales brings us full circle to where Lifshitz begins in the eighth century—a lot depends on who is reading and how. And perhaps that is the best way to introduce a journal full of many things that are meant to be read. Enjoy!

Sara S. Poor

## MESSAGE FROM THE MANAGING EDITOR

First of all, let me reiterate how excited Minot State is to be hosting *MFF*. Everyone has plunged in with enthusiasm, and wants to make *MFF* as

successful as it can be. We appreciate the trust that the SMFS Advisory Board has shown in us, and look forward to an eventful five years.

I also appreciate the patience that most *MFF* subscribers, advertisers, and Board members have shown while we get things set up here. Things are getting to us from Oregon, and we're learning the new database software, but it will take time for us to get everything in place. A big thank you to Gina Psaki and Jan Emerson at UO for all of their continued assistance.

You will, of course, have noticed the changes in the *MFF* format (including the cool bookmark flap!). We feel that the new look will bring consistency and a contemporary spirit, and mark the transference, too. I really appreciate the thoughtfulness and tremendous effort that Wendy put into our redesign and refitting. She was incredibly conscientious, always keeping in mind the audience, the issues, and feminism, as well as keeping an eye out towards marketing and expansion.

Another big change is that Minot State has the capacity to accept credit card payments for subscriptions. We hope that this option will be convenient for our overseas members, and will also encourage new overseas memberships. A smaller change, but one that will bring consistency to our journal, is changing the issues from "Spring" and "Fall" to "Winter" and "Summer," an alteration we inaugurated with this issue. I believe that the designations "Winter" and "Summer" more accurately reflect the mail-out dates of January and July.

More changes will be coming up in the future as well, such as new regular columns, special features, and pertinent lists. The next issue will also contain a complete style sheet to bring consistency to article, roundtable, book review, and bibliography submissions. The marketing intern is developing brochures and other "advertisement" tools to help spread the word about SMFS and *MFF*, which Advisory Board members will be taking to various conferences and other professional activities.

I hope that you enjoy this issue, and also find it useful. We have included three interesting and original articles, each of which provides a unique perspective on current medieval feminist scholarship as well as offering a careful exploration of a concept. The bibliography was compiled by an intrepid member who took it upon herself to point out our lack of bibliographies in languages other than English. This has inspired me to suggest that the Advisory Board consider Subsidia proposals in other languages, too. Finally, you will notice that we are catching up on the backlog of book reviews. The new *MFF* format allows us to

include more written items, though we still have some reviews “in the bank.” If yours has not yet appeared, and you need it to for tenure, promotion, the job search, etc., please let Chris Africa or me know, and we will make sure it gets in the next issue.

As we continue to modify *MFF*, I welcome your comments, questions, and suggestions.

Please feel free to contact me at my personal e-mail

<michelle.sauer@minotstateu.edu>

or at the *MFF* address

<medieval.feminist@minotstateu.edu>

Michelle M. Sauer

#### MESSAGE FROM MSU'S FIRST ENGLISH INTERN

I'm a senior English Education major graduating from MSU this May. I've also attended North Central University in Minneapolis, graduating with an Associates Degree in Biblical Studies, and a Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) certificate. I'm also a high school volleyball coach here in Minot. This year at Minot State I'm the Sigma Tau Delta/English Club Vice President, and an intern (the first one!) here at *Medieval Feminist Forum*.

Last semester, spring 2004, I was excited to hear Dr. Sauer announce that Minot State University would be the new home of the *Medieval Feminist Forum*. Having always wanted to get into some area of publishing and having an interest in both feminine and medieval studies, I jumped at the opportunity to work as an intern for *MFF*, and I haven't been disappointed with my choice. This semester I've worked on getting our office set up, organizing back issues, entering subscription information into the data base, proofreading, and getting the 38<sup>th</sup> issue of *MFF* put together and mailed out. It has been a great experience to be the first *MFF* intern at MSU, as I've learned a little of the publishing world, been able to keep in touch with you, and had the chance to read your articles on medieval feminist issues. Thank you for this opportunity. I'm sure the next intern will have as good of an experience as I have.

Angie Madsen

#### MESSAGE FROM THE ART DIRECTOR

I am a senior Graphic Design student with a minor in German. I am an “older than average” student and a veteran of the Air Force. Designing this journal has been a wonderful experience that I will take with me into the professional

world of graphic design. I would like to extend my sincerest appreciation to those of you that gave me your time and patience. My goal for the journal was to make it reflect the medieval period and still feel contemporary. I know that *MFF* is informative and entertaining; I hope that you find it as aesthetically pleasing as I do. Thank you also, Dr. Sauer, for giving me the artistic freedom to make the choices that I felt best represented the needs of the *Medieval Feminist Forum*.

*Wendy R. Melvin*

#### MESSAGE FROM THE MARKETING INTERN

I'm a fifth year senior majoring in Marketing and Management, with minors in Economics and Information Systems Management, and will be graduating in May. As an "older than average" student who is switching careers, this internship represents an opportunity to gain experience. It is quite different than my occupation as a farmer/rancher, but Dr. Sauer has been quite helpful in the transition. As she has said, few Business majors take British Literature to fulfill their humanities requirement, but I enjoy her teaching style, and because of it, have found that I enjoy medieval literature, too.

The extent of my project is to define our readership and market to others who fit the profile. One of our goals is to expand the readership of this publication and make it even more successful. I hope to finish this project this semester, and to assist Dr. Sauer with promotion next semester. Also in the next semester, my goal is to write a business plan, which will provide continuity for the next intern. I wish to thank Dr. Sauer for her faith in me as a student, and for extending this opportunity.

*David Presser*

#### ANNOUNCEMENTS

CFP: *MFF* ISSUE #39 (SUMMER 2005).

SPECIAL TOPIC: THE ARCHIVE

Looking for short pieces (1500-3000 words) on the subject of the archive and medieval feminist scholarship. How is the study of manuscripts important for medieval feminist work? What kinds of issues do medieval feminists face when looking for archival evidence? Practical essays on the ins and outs of particular archives could also be of interest.

**Deadline for submission: February 18, 2005.**

Electronic submissions are preferred. E-mail submissions to <spoor@princeton.edu>. Paper or disk submissions to Sara S. Poor; Department of German; Princeton University; 203 East Pyne; Princeton, NJ 08544.

CFP: *MFF* ISSUE #40 (WINTER 2005).

SPECIAL TOPIC: FEMINISM & THE ACADEMY

Looking for short pieces (1500-3000 words) on the subject of "Feminist Scholarship and the Academy of Medieval Scholars." Does being a feminist hurt your career? Can one be a feminist medievalist?

**Deadline for submission: September 23, 2005.**

Electronic submissions are preferred. E-mail submissions to <amatter@ccat.sas.upenn.edu>. Paper or disk submissions to E. Ann Matter; Department of Religious Studies; University of Pennsylvania; Logan Hall; 249 South 36<sup>th</sup> Street; Philadelphia, PA 19104-6304.

ATTENTION ALL GRADUATE STUDENTS AND RECENT PHDs

SMFS is compiling a list of dissertations, both in progress and recently completed, which will be published annually in *Medieval Feminist Forum* and posted online. We hope that this list will provide a resource for graduate students and recent PhDs, not only for becoming acquainted with colleagues' projects, but also to facilitate interdisciplinary dialogue and future collaborations.

If your dissertation is on a medieval topic, and takes a feminist approach or deals with gender, women, or other related areas, please send your information in the following format to Jennifer Borland (Graduate Student Representative, SMFS Advisory Board) at <jborland@stanford.edu>. Please send by February 18, 2005 to be included in the Summer 2005 issue of *MFF*.

FORMAT FOR DISSERTATIONS IN PROGRESS:

Jennifer Borland

Art History, Stanford University

*Unstable Women: Transgression and Corporeal Experience in Twelfth-Century Visual Culture*

FORMAT FOR DISSERTATIONS RECENTLY COMPLETED

(no earlier than 2002, please):

Sarah Student  
English, Stanford University  
*Title of Dissertation*  
May 2004 [Date of Defense]

#### NEW MFF COLUMN

In order to celebrate achievement and encourage intellectual exchange, the SMFS plans to begin publicizing newly gained jobs and promotions. If you have recently got a new job, have changed institutions, or have received a promotion, please send your name, position, institution, and research interests to Myra Struckmeyer at <struckme@email.unc.edu>. We look forward to hearing from you.

#### SMFS PRIZE

The Society for Medieval Feminist Studies announces a new annual prize for feminist scholarship on the Middle Ages. The prize will alternate every other year between a published essay and a first book.

The 2005 prize, the inaugural Best Feminist Essay Prize, will be for the Best Article (but not necessarily the first article) that furthers the study of women and feminist values in Medieval Studies. The prize carries an award of \$300.

The SMFS Awards Committee solicits nominations for published essays in any area of medieval studies. Nominated essays should represent the best in feminist scholarship published in the past four years, that is, between 2001-2004. The prize, which includes an award of \$300, will be announced at the SMFS reception at the 2005 Medieval Congress at Kalamazoo. Self-nominations are acceptable.

We urge you to consider submitting or nominating articles for next year's prize. All nominations must be received by January 15, 2005. Please send one copy of the nominated essay along with a brief cover letter summarizing the essay's merits and contributions to:

E. Ann Matter  
Department of Religious Studies  
University of Pennsylvania  
Logan Hall, 249 South 36<sup>th</sup> Street  
Philadelphia, PA 19104-6304  
<amatter@ccat.sas.upenn.edu>

## BIBLIOGRAPHY QUERY

What types of bibliographies are you interested in seeing compiled/published?

Please send suggestions to Michelle Sauer, *MFF* Managing Editor

<medieval.feminist@minotstateu.edu>

<michelle.sauer@minotstateu.edu>

or to the Chief Bibliographer, Chris Africa at <chris-africa@uiowa.edu>.

## SMFS WEBSITE

The main SMFS website remains at the University of Oregon. Please visit it at <<http://smfs.uoregon.edu>>. Website information includes the names and terms of SMFS officers, advisory board members, and *MFF* editors; *MFF* subscription information and the advertising policy; a brief history of the founding of SMFS, and more. Send comments, corrections, and suggestions regarding the website to Gina Psaki at <[rpsaki@uoregon.edu](mailto:rpsaki@uoregon.edu)>. The official website will remain at the UO until the beginning of the 2005-2006 academic term.

Minot State has reserved a website space for *MFF*. Currently, the site contains a brief chronology of *MFF*/SMFS, the revised *MFF* advertising policy, and subscription forms. Please feel free to visit us at:

<<http://www.minotstateu.edu/mff>>.

## FEMINAE REMINDER—SUPPORT OUR SISTER FEMINIST PROJECTS

Visit *Feminae: Medieval Women and Gender Index*

<<http://www.haverford.edu/library/reference/mschaus/mfi/mfi.html>>

to find references to new journal articles, essays, and book reviews. *Feminae* currently covers the years 1992 to the present, and has over 10,000 records.

Every month, a new article or essay is featured as "title of the month."

Check this out at:

<[www.haverford.edu/library/reference/mschaus/mfi/month.html](http://www.haverford.edu/library/reference/mschaus/mfi/month.html)>

If you have any questions, comments, or suggestions, please send them to *Feminae* editor, Margaret Schaus <[mschaus@haverford.edu](mailto:mschaus@haverford.edu)>.

## KALAMAZOO 2005 INFORMATION

At the 40<sup>th</sup> Medieval Congress, SMFS will be sponsoring five sessions, as well as a number of other activities. Please consult your Congress program for

complete details, meeting rooms, and special events.

## BANQUET

The 2005 Kalamazoo SMFS Banquet will be held Friday night at Food Dance. The amount has remained unchanged at \$20.00 faculty/\$10.00 graduate students. Watch for announcements with more information on med-fem from this year's event coordinator, Jen Gonyer-Donohue <jengd@u.washington.edu>.

## SESSIONS

The 2005 sessions are:

### *I. Periodization, Chronology, and Women's History [roundtable]*

Organizer/Presider: Chris Africa, University of Iowa Libraries

Participants:

Anna Dronzek, Rhodes College  
Theresa Earenfight, Seattle University  
Liz Herbert McAvoy, University of Leicester (UK)  
Francine McGregor, Eastern Illinois University  
Nancy Jones, Independent Scholar  
Lynn Shutters, University of Georgia

### *II. Taking Women's Studies Seriously: Making a Claim for Women's Studies [roundtable]*

Organizer/Presider: Susannah Chewning, Union County College

Participants:

"Did Women's Studies Have a Renaissance? The Five Minutes Between Suspicion and Backlash"  
F. Regina Psaki, University of Oregon

"Can We or Can't We Call the Wife of Bath a Feminist?"  
Angel Weisl, Seton Hall University

"Pursuing Graduate Studies in the Field(s) of Women's Studies"  
Amanda Madden, The Medieval Institute, Western Michigan University

“Women’s Studies In and Out of the Classroom”  
Linda McMillin, Susquehanna University

“Mothers and Others in *Beowulf*: Skirting the Boundaries of  
Medieval and Women’s Studies”  
Alix Paschowiak, University of Massachusetts

“Voices of Assent from the Classroom: Reflective Assertions of  
Medieval Women’s Vitality”  
Mary Beth L. Davis, Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi

### *III. Conversing with the Minority: Relations among Christian, Jewish, and Muslim Women [roundtable]*

Organizer/Presider: Monica Green, Arizona State University

#### Participants:

“Spatial Relations: Mapping Interfaith Interaction through  
Topography and Material Culture”  
Patricia Skinner, University of Southampton (UK)

“Finding the Conversation in England”  
Charlotte Newman Goldy, Miami University of Ohio

“The Shared Experience of Jewish and Christian Women Interpreted  
from the Practical Literature on Women’s Healthcare”  
Carmen Caballero-Navas, Universidad de Granada (Spain)

“Porous Boundaries: Crisscrossing Networks between Jewish and  
Christian Women”  
Rosa Alvarez Perez, Bryant University

Comment: Elisheva Baumgarten, Bar Ilan University (Israel)

### *IV. Receptions of Heloise in History, Fiction, and Film*

Organizer/Presider: Lorraine K. Stock, University of Houston

Presenters:

“The Passion of (H)eloise: Alexander Pope’s *Epistle of Eloise to Abelard*”

June-Ann Greeley, Sacred Heart University

“Interpreting Heloise”

Sharan Newman, Independent Scholar

“‘A Roman Soul and a Heart of Fire’: Reading Heloise in the Early Modern Period”

Juanita Feros Ruys, University of Sydney (Australia)

“Sexing Heloise in *Stealing Heaven*”

Bonnie Wheeler, Southern Methodist University

*V. The Origins of the Beauty Myth*

Organizer: Natalie Grinnell, Wofford College

President: Miriam Shadis, Ohio University

Presenters:

“Rereading Beauty: Hrosvit of Gandersheim against Commodification of the Female Body”

Helene Scheck, SUNY-Albany

“The Necessary Evil: Economy of Beauty in Medieval Wales”

Gertrude A. Wright, University of Guelph (Canada)

“Noble by Birth: Virtuous Beauty among the German Dominicans”

Rebecca L. R. Garber, Independent Scholar

SMFS & MFF DIRECTORY (Winter 2004)

SMFS Officers:

President (2003-05):

E. Ann Matter <amatter@ccat.sas.upenn.edu>

Vice President (2003-05):

Monica Green <Monica.Green@asu.edu>

Secretary Treasurer (2003-05):

Nathalie Grinnell <grinnellns@wofford.edu>

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Michelle M. Sauer <michelle.sauer@minotstateu.edu>

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Anne Clark Bartlett (2006-2007) <abartlet@condor.depaul.edu>

Miriam Shadis (2007-2008) <shadis@ohio.edu>

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Myra Struckmeyer (2006) <struckme@email.unc.edu>