

## MESSAGE FROM THE EDITOR

Five years ago I participated on a panel hosted by *MFN* at Kalamazoo on the subject of feminist mentoring. At that time I had only taught for three years as a tenure-line faculty member. Mentoring students in medieval studies was a new activity for me—one, I realized with some dismay, I knew very little about. I found the accounts of the scholar/teachers on the panel heartening and the discussion wonderful as it grappled with questions about the particular demands and expectations of mentoring as a woman, at the end of a career or at the beginning, gay or straight, in medieval studies. The essays from that panel were published in *MFN* 22.

This issue of *MFF* takes up some similar issues, but the focus this time is on lives. Three scholars, all of whom will be familiar to many readers of *MFF*, talk about their careers as feminist scholars in medieval studies, and in a variety of institutional settings. In a narrative that tracks the career of marxist medievalist Margaret Schlauch as well as her own, Sheila Delany writes about her work as a marxist/feminist and the often dramatic job perils of political activism. Jane Chance, also from medieval English literature, writes about her own developing feminist consciousness and academic career, a personal trajectory that in many ways parallels the feminist transformations of the academy in the seventies, eighties, and nineties. Art historian Madeline Caviness reflects on the challenges of building an academic career in a time when dramatically fewer choices were open to women. The burning issue among her female friends in graduate school, as she describes it, was whether a woman could marry and also manage a professional career. In an essay that is biographical rather than autobiographical – and also takes up the question of marriage and career – Elizabeth Scala revisits the academic achievement of Chaucer editor Edith Rickert, attempting to untangle Rickert’s legacy and scholarly contributions from questions about her personal relationship with her co-editor John Matthews Manly. Scala’s essay, all about biographical gossip, offers a fascinating, if troubling, contrast to the personal narratives in this issue, for it points to the ways that gossip has survived Edith Rickert and still works to devalue her achievements. Yet in sleuthing Rickert’s rumored affair with Manly, and with her surprising result, Scala’s essay turns a spotlight on the very question of a woman’s achievement “compromised” by her connection to a powerful man, and performs an intervention by bringing the personal into view – an intervention shared as well by the autobiographical narratives in this issue. As Nancy Miller notes, cited in Chance’s essay, “feminist theory has always been built out from the personal: the witnessing ‘I’ of subjective experience.” Bringing the private into public view is a political act.

*MFF* 31 will continue to look at feminist legacies. Please note the call for papers in this issue.

I would like to thank Managing Editor Gina Psaki, President Ann Marie Rasmussen, and Associate Editors Ulrike Wiethaus, Mary Suydam, and E. Ann Matter.

*Sarah Stanbury*

#### **MESSAGE FROM THE MANAGING EDITOR**

I would like to take this opportunity to give my warm thanks to Chris Africa of the University of Iowa Libraries in Iowa City, IA for providing our ongoing bibliography. This is an invaluable contribution to the *MFF*, and requires enormous expertise as well as commitment. Members and subscribers frequently tell me how vital the bibliography is helping them keep current with the now-copious scholarship on feminist and gender studies in historical context. On behalf of all of us, thank you, Chris!

Monica Green's periodic annotated bibliography on women and medicine appears in this issue, and her expertise in both assembling this information and situating the various entries in the ongoing scholarly debate on the topic is greatly appreciated as well. Thank you, Monica.

A handful of you renewed your subscription at Kalamazoo, but due to a mishap all that paperwork went astray. The Society hasn't cashed those renewal checks, or renewed your subscription. If you remember renewing at Kalamazoo, please contact Jan Emerson at [mff@oregon.uoregon.edu](mailto:mff@oregon.uoregon.edu) to check on the status of your subscription. Many apologies!

A reminder: Jan Emerson of the CSWS Feminist Humanities Project keeps our *MFF* database; please contact her with any questions regarding the status of your subscription. It is she who answers the messages sent to [mff@oregon.uoregon.edu](mailto:mff@oregon.uoregon.edu). Our **old** E-mail address ([mfn@oregon.uoregon.edu](mailto:mfn@oregon.uoregon.edu)) will no longer forward mail to the new one, so please insert our new address into your e-mail address book. Thank you!

*Gina Psaki*