

## NOTES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

### MESSAGES

#### MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF SMFS

At the end of another busy year for the SMFS, I want to say farewell as President of the Advisory Board. We have made a successful transition from the University of Oregon to Minot State University. This is our second issue of *Medieval Feminist Forum* under the guidance of our new Managing Editor, Michelle Sauer. We have had a lot of compliments on the new look, and we have great plans for the next few issues.

The past two years have also seen the successful institution of the two SMFS publications prizes, the First Book Prize (awarded to Jennifer Summit in 2004) and the Essay Prize (awarded to Jane Chance in 2005). These prizes will alternate, so if you have a first book you would like to submit for the 2006 competition, keep your eye peeled for the announcement.

Finally, I would like to thank all of those wonderful women scholars who I was privileged to work with in the past two years, especially Monica Green, in whose capable hands I leave the leadership of SMFS. Monica's incisive vision and energy will be noticed by you all, so expect great things!

*E. Ann Matter*

#### MESSAGE FROM THE EDITOR

In the Call For Papers for this issue, I asked for pieces that would consider how the study of manuscripts is important for medieval feminist work and what kinds of issues medieval feminists face when looking for archival evidence. I was also interested in practical essays on the ins and outs of particular archives. Not surprisingly, the submissions received addressed both the theoretical and the practical questions. Because virtually all of the submissions had something interesting and useful to offer, and because there were more submissions than could fit into one issue, I decided in consultation with the editorial board to devote this issue to the more theoretical pieces and the next (under the general editorship of E. Ann Matter) to the practical pieces.

The more theoretically focused essays themselves broke down into two categories that correspond to disciplines. The first two essays represent historians' responses to my initial questions

while the third and fourth pieces show us two literary scholars' approaches to issues. The historians view the archives as potential windows (albeit somewhat distorted) onto medieval women's lives. Ruth Mazo Karras' uses her research on women living in quasi-marital relationships to show how reading several different kinds of documents can reveal tantalizing, if limited evidence of such relationships, particularly when there are children resulting from the unions. Yet the evidence available also points to just how much remains invisible and out of our reach simply because nothing extraordinary or extra legal happened. Justine Firnhaber-Baker's essay explores the value of a particular archive in France (*the fonds d'Armagnac*) for research on medieval secular women. Firnhaber-Baker uses this archive as an example of the potential for new research in the region, pointing to several other similar archives that have yet to be studied with an eye towards women's history.

The literary scholars, by contrast, see the archives as a lens through which medieval literature can be read more accurately. Holly Crocker's essay thus explores the importance of a text's mode of transmission in a particular manuscript. Her reading of the place of Chaucer's works in a particular manuscript compilation proves revealing about attitudes towards gender potentially held by the compilers. Christine Rose's essay looks at the importance of editing texts today in ways that are more sensitive to that medieval context. Indeed, her piece calls for feminists to re-edit all the important texts of the medieval English tradition.

Together these four essays address some of the most pressing concerns that feminists of these two disciplines identify in relation to medieval feminist studies in the archive. But if the healthy response we got to the CFP and the lively thread on this topic on medfem- in January are any indication, there is clearly much more to be said. These essays are thus offered as a beginning, an invitation to further discussion and debate.

Sara S. Poor

#### MESSAGE FROM THE MANAGING EDITOR

Greetings everyone. I apologize for this issue being a little late. After our big rush last winter with Issue 38, we thought we were all set to go. Then we discovered that the transition from the quarter system (U Oregon) to the semester system (MSU) didn't run quite so smoothly when the summer break was about to happen. Factor in travel time, summer research commitments, and student jobs, and this issue becomes mid-summer. Perhaps in the long run, however, this "delay" will end up being better for everyone involved. We've had more time to gather nominations and personal statements from our Advisory Board candidates, we've been able to proofread this is-

sue more thoroughly than before, we better reflect our name change to “Winter” and “Summer” issues, and, perhaps best of all, we will probably reach our audience (you!) at a time when your thoughts are turning back towards the start of the new academic year.

This issue is an exciting and interesting one, and is packed full of articles as well as an extensive bibliography. This has cut down the number of book reviews printed this time, but the research presented is valuable and timely. You’ll notice, too, that we are continuing to tinker with the new look. The cover has remained basically the same, although a few changes will be made to it eventually. We decided to try a new paper stock this time. It is thinner but better quality, and should eliminate some of the previous binding unsightliness. The grey tone also matches more effectively with the black covers. (I still swear that I did not choose that color!) We have also changed the font typeface to one that works better with all of the special characters required by our contributors. The subscription forms reflect the new pricing structure approved by the Board at Kalamazoo, and we have also added a page about the contributors to each issue.

Our website should be fully operational by the beginning of September. The Board approved several changes to the SMFS constitution, which was ratified by the members at the Business Meeting in Kalamazoo. One of these changes included the creation of a new position—Technical Information Specialist. We do have a candidate for this position, and her statement is included on your voting sheet.

Be sure to remember to vote for three Advisory Board members-at-large, as well as for one VP candidate and for the new position. Unlike previous MFF ballots, this one is a separate sheet included in your mailing envelope, along with advertising flyers. Please be sure to vote by clearly marking your choices and then mailing the form back to us. The Board is exploring alternative voting procedures, but due to numerous factors, right now electronic voting is not an option.

Thank you again, everyone, for supporting *MFF* and SMFS. We are looking forward to many inspiring years to come.

*Michelle M. Sauer*

#### **MESSAGE FROM MSU’S ENGLISH INTERN**

I am a Junior English major at MSU. I’ve been here for two years, having transferred from Medicine Hat College, back in my Canadian homeland. Next fall, I will begin the rest of my education at the University of Lethbridge, in Alberta. There, I will (one day!)

graduate with my BA in English and a second major in Women's Studies, and with time, I hope to further my education. I'm really enjoying learning about medieval literature, history, and feminisms, so watch for me in the future!

Doing an internship with the MFF has been an unforgettable experience. I was able to round myself in so many ways, and every event prepared me for something else. I learned a lot about myself—mentally and intellectually—and have grown even more excited about my decision to pursue an English degree. Much of the insight I gained couldn't be learned in a classroom; instead, I was able to see the work behind the lines in the publishing field. It was fascinating to follow the different stages the journal went through. This semester, I was quite busy with new subscriptions, publicity ventures, and research. I celebrated the release of MSU's first issue (#38), and was stuck with the bitter taste of envelope glue for days after they were mailed out (ick). It was really amazing to send off the first issue; there was certainly a sense of pride among all of us. I was also lucky enough to communicate with medievalists from all over the world—scholars, professors, readers, writers, editors, and students like myself. I loved hearing your ideas, and consider myself very fortunate to have been able to learn from all of you.

Thank you so much for the opportunity to work with the journal. I will never forget the experiences I had, and will certainly use them for my advantage in the future. Cheers!

Buffy Olson

#### MESSAGE FROM THE ART DIRECTOR

I am an Art major specializing in Graphic Design with a minor in marketing and a concentration in history. I have been part of Minot State University's Art Department for four years, and will graduate in May 2005. I gained my first experience working with the *Medieval Feminist Forum* as the graphic designer on MFF #38. It was the first issue of Minot State University's run of the *Medieval Feminist Forum*, complete with the new, revamped look. The revamp was a gutsy move, and I respect last year's art director, Wendy Melvin, on her choice.

As this issue's Art Director, my main goal was to address the design issues we received feedback about, and to make the overall design of the book even better. Given the already strong design, I did not see a need to radically change it, but rather hoped to fix minor design problems plaguing the last issue, and, hopefully, to set a precedent for balancing great design and readability in future issues.

Finally, I would like to thank Dr. Sauer for the opportunity, her

patience, and for the work experience over the past two semesters. I have learned a great deal during my time on this project—valuable information and experience that I hope to take with me into the world of Graphic Design.

*Iosefa [Joe] Faiai*

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

### **CFP: MFF ISSUE #41**

For MFF Issue #41 (Summer 2006), we seek submissions on the topic of “Medieval Feminism in an International Perspective.” We are particularly interested in debates about the “national character” of medieval scholarship and what the appropriate feminist response to such traditions could or should be. This issue will be co-edited by E. Ann Matter and Jen Gonyer-Donohue. Electronic submissions preferred, but not required. Please send 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  
P: (215) 898-8614  
F: 215-898-6568  
<amatter@ccat.sas.upenn.edu>

### **2005 GMS CONFERENCE REPORT**

This year, the GMS conference was held January 6-7 in Leeds, Yorkshire. The conference was organized by the staff and students of the Institute for Medieval Studies at the University of Leeds. The conference theme—Genders and Sexualities—attracted a broad range of papers from the disciplines of history, literary studies, manuscript studies, and art history. Sessions focused on topics such as secular and religious masculinities; gendered communities and domestic practices; gendered poetics; and the role of gender in cultural materialist and humanist contexts. The chronological range of the conference was also impressively broad; while many papers focused on the high or later medieval period, some also ranged into the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries to examine the boundaries between the Middle Ages and the Early Modern era, or, at the opposite end of the scale, investigated early medieval sources and texts. The keynote address, “One Sex, Two Genders/One Flesh, Two Sexes, Three Genders?,” delivered by Jacqueline Murray, challenged delegates to think about the applicability of the notion of

the third gender in medieval disciplines.

The conference this year incorporated a number of innovative features alongside the more traditional giving of papers. A roundtable discussion was held on Amy Hollywood's *Sensible Ecstasy: Mysticism, Sexual Difference and the Demands of History*, a text that complemented many of the discussions going on around the conference theme. Delegates were also able to challenge themselves in other ways in the highly successful medieval gender and sexuality pub quiz, which provided a controversial focus for the first evening of the conference. A miscount sadly resulted in the declaration of an erroneous result, which was rectified (with minimal gloating from the real winners) on the second day. Finally, the Kate Westoby Fund for postgraduate travel benefited from a raffle, with an excellent prize being generously provided by the academic publisher Boydell and Brewer.

A proposal for publishing the conference proceedings as a book is currently underway.

#### **ATTENTION ALL GRADUATE STUDENTS:**

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 **March 20, 2006** to be included in the **Summer 2006** 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 2003, please):

Sarah Student

English; Stanford University

*Title of Dissertation*

May 2004 [Date of Defense]

## SMFS PRIZES

CONGRATULATIONS to our "best medieval feminist article" winner, Jane Chance, for her article, "Classical Myth and Gender in the Letters of 'Abelard' and 'Heloise': Gloss, Glossed, Glossator." (In *Listening to Heloise: The Voice of a Twelfth-Century Woman*; Ed. Bonnie Wheeler; St. Martin's, 2000: 161-185). Jane received her official award (and \$300 prize!) at Kalamazoo. Honorable Mention went to George Ferzoco's, "The Massa Marittima Mural," *Toscana Studies* 1(2004): 71-105.

The Society for Medieval Feminist Scholarship again seeks nominations/submissions for its annual prize for feminist scholarship on the Middle Ages. The 2006 prize will be for the best first book 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 books published within the past four years, that is, between 2002-2005. The prize, which includes an award of \$300, will be announced at the SMFS reception at the 2006 Medieval Congress at Kalamazoo. Self-nominations are acceptable.

We urge you to consider submitting or nominating books for next year's prize. All nominations must be received by January 31, 2006. Please send one copy of the nominated book along with a brief cover letter summarizing its merits and contributions to:

Monica Green  
Department of History  
Arizona State University, Box 874302  
Tempe, AZ 85287-4302  
USA  
e-mail: <monica.green@asu.edu>

## SMFS WEBSITE

The official SMFS website will be housed at Minot State University beginning in September 2005. We have a skeleton website up now, but more will be added soon. Please feel free to send comments, corrections, and suggestions regarding the website to Michelle Sauer at <michelle.sauer@minotstateu.edu> or <medieval.feminist@minotstateu.edu>.

Be sure to visit us at <<http://www.minotstateu.edu/mff>>.

## ANNOUNCING...MFF/SMFS PRODUCTS!

As many of you saw at Kalamazoo, we will now have book bags and coffee mugs with the MFF/SMFS logo and assorted designs

available. When the website is fully functional, there will be pictures and order forms available. Prices TBA.

Now for something fun and different—SMFS would like to announce a t-shirt/sweatshirt design contest. Submit your ideas/entries to the Managing Editor. Designs will need to be clear enough to make a good transfer, and without too many details. Monochromatic designs preferred, as more colors drives the price up considerably. **Please send all design entries to the MFF office no later than December 1, 2005.**

## ERRATA

The Managing Editor wishes to correct an error found in Issue 38 (Winter 2004). The title of Kathleen Blumreich's article (pp. 38-46) should read as follows:

**"I ne sey no3t bis in despyt of wommen": Antifeminism in Robert de Gretham's *Mirror***

Our apologies for this oversight, and our thanks for Kathleen's understanding.

## PUBLISHING OPPORTUNITIES

### SPECIAL ISSUE: *JOURNAL OF WOMEN'S HISTORY*

The *Journal of Women's History* is soliciting articles for a special issue on domestic violence, guest edited by Megan McLaughlin and Elizabeth Pleck. They are seeking manuscripts from the broadest possible chronological, geographical, and methodological range, and from individuals residing around the world. For the purposes of this issue, domestic violence is very broadly defined to mean emotional, physical, and sexual violence occurring within the household, including (but not limited to) female infanticide, servant abuse, marital rape, etc. The editors are especially interested in:

- the relationship of domestic violence to notions of shame and honor
- the relationship of domestic violence to public and private space
- changing attributions of the causes of domestic violence
- changing representations of domestic violence in popular culture, in

- law and religion, in media of any type
- changing definitions of the boundary between acceptable and illegitimate domestic violence
- the relationship of domestic violence to discourses of power and difference
- community regulation of domestic violence
- changing understandings of woman as "victim"

The deadline for submissions is December 1, 2005. Please send four one-sided, double-spaced copies of your manuscript (no more than 10,000 words, including endnotes) to: *Journal of Women's History*, c/o Department of History, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 309 Gregory Hall, MC-466, 810 S. Wright St., Urbana, IL 61801, U.S.A. Mark the envelope "Attention: Megan McLaughlin and Elizabeth Pleck." For more details on our submission policy, see: <[http://www.press.jhu.edu/journals/journal\\_of\\_womens\\_history/guidelines.html](http://www.press.jhu.edu/journals/journal_of_womens_history/guidelines.html)>

### **CALL FOR CONTRIBUTORS: *FACTS ON FILE* *COMPANION TO PRE-1600 BRITISH POETRY***

Your friendly Managing Editor, Michelle M. Sauer, is looking for qualified individuals to write short entries on various topics related to poetry, poets, and specific poems of the British (including Welsh, Irish & Scottish) medieval and early modern eras. Contributors will receive full credit for their work.

If you are interested, please send an inquiry to: <pre1600poetry@yahoo.com>. Your e-mail should contain a brief overview of your qualifications and interests. Graduate students welcome to inquire.

If you prefer, you may send snail mail correspondence to: Michelle M. Sauer; Associate Professor of English & Gender Studies; Department of English; Minot State University; 500 University Avenue West; Minot, ND 58707. P: (701) 858-3895; F: 701-858-3894.

### ***SMFS & MFF DIRECTORY (Summer 2005)***

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