

NOTES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS



REPORT FROM THE PRESIDENT OF SMFS



I'd like to thank the many members of the Society for Medieval Feminist Scholarship who have made my new job easy thus far, including everyone who attended the sessions sponsored by *MFN* this year at Kalamazoo as well as the Business Meeting of the Society. I'd also like to thank those of you who responded to the questionnaire sent to all members by Jane Burns last fall. As I reported at Kalamazoo, those responses suggest abundant enthusiasm among members for several new undertakings. At this point, members of the Advisory Board have volunteered to coordinate further development in the following areas where members showed significant interest:

Sponsoring sessions at other conferences and establishing a "working relationship" with other Medieval Societies: *Ann Matter*.

Developing a support system or network among graduate students: *Jennifer Summit*.

Sponsoring our own conference: *Chris Africa* (who has volunteered, it should be noted, *not* to organize a conference, but to coordinate the efforts of those of you who expressed interest in such a project).

If you lost or did not receive a questionnaire, were too busy to respond at the time you did receive one, or are a new member of the Society, please feel free to contact any or all of these Board members to find out how you can participate. If you also expressed an interest in serving as a member of the *MFN* Advisory Board or as an officer of the Society, I have passed your name on to the nominating committee: Maggie Schleissner, Ann Matter, and Gina Psaki. Since many people indicated an interest in serving "at some future time," however, you should remember to feel free to nominate yourself (or another member of the Society) when you decide that the future has arrived.

Thanks again for all your past and ongoing support; I look forward to hearing from you and meeting more of you in the year ahead.

Elaine Tuttle Hansen



EDITORSHIP OF MFN



As of July 1, 1994, Ruth Karras, History, Temple University, will join the editorial board of *MFN*. The editors of the newsletter extend a warm welcome to her!

There are four editors of *MFN* who, as of July 1, 1993, rotate according to a process outlined in the Bylaws of the Society for Medieval Feminist Scholarship (see *MFN* 14, Fall 1992, for a copy of the Bylaws). Each year, one of the four rotates off and a new editor is elected from the membership of the Advisory Board. If you would like to participate in editing the *Newsletter* you must first be elected to the Advisory Board. (See Bylaws for procedures.)

A new editor of *MFN* spends three years learning the ropes and then in his or her fourth year takes on the major responsibility of becoming the general editor of *MFN* for a year. After publishing two issues of *MFN*, the general editor rotates off and cedes the general editorship to the next person in line. We look forward to the inclusion of new voices.

ELECTION OF ADVISORY BOARD MEMBERS



Two nominations have been submitted for the election of a replacement for Ruth Karras who will become an associate editor of *MFN* next year. Please vote for one:

Susan Aronstein, Univ. of Wyoming, English Dept.

Mary Suydam, Kenyon College, History Dept.

Please send your vote to Jane Burns as soon as possible. If you are interested in becoming a member of the Advisory Board in the future, please be sure that your nomination is sent to the Nominating Committee.

MFN NO. 18: CALL FOR CONTRIBUTIONS



The Fall issue of *MFN* will be devoted to Graduate Student Concerns. We seek short essays (3-5 pages) from graduate students and faculty alike that address the place of medieval feminist studies in the academy: the implications of feminist medieval studies for graduate student training, mentoring, the professionalization of the discipline, job search strategies, classroom dynamics, tenure and promotion, etc.

DEADLINE for receipt of submissions is *Sept. 1*, but early submissions are encouraged. Please call or write to E. Jane Burns (Women's Studies, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, NC 27599-3135; (919)962-3908). I would be happy to discuss "ideas in progress" or proposed topics before you actually set them to paper. I LOOK FORWARD TO HEARING FROM YOU!

NOTES ON ISSUE 16



Because of its placement in the issue, readers might overlook Sylvia Tomasch's essay, "Remembering Medieval Antisemitism"; it directly follows her bibliography.

The *MFN* editors would like to alert readers to two corrections in Esther Zago's essay "Reflections on Chaucer's 'The Prioress's Tale,'" p. 37: Edward I, not William, ascended the throne in 1272. p. 38: Copin, the Jew, was condemned by Henry III, not Richard III.

REPORT FROM KALAMAZOO: SESSIONS FOR 1995



The following sessions have been proposed by the Society for Medieval Feminist Scholarship for the International Medieval Congress in 1995. Watch for announcements from the Medieval Institute to see which sessions have been accepted.

"Medieval"/"Renaissance": Feminists Rethink Canonicity and Periodization.

Proposer: Jennifer Summit, English Dept., Johns Hopkins Univ. This session will explore the meanings of the terms "Medieval" and "Renaissance," as they apply to the study of medieval and early-modern women in current academic settings. Some questions to be addressed include: how does scholarship on women challenge us to rethink conventional historical and aesthetic categories (for example, "modernity")? What happens when medievalists and early-modernists come together to identify and discuss their goals, interests, and differences?

Negotiating Our Differences: Feminisms in Dialogue. Proposer: Anne Clark Bartlett, English Dept., DePaul Univ. This session solicits feminist scholars from a variety of disciplines, generations, and methods, in order to map out our critical common ground as well as our distinctive contributions. The goal of this session is to highlight the diversity of approaches and views that comprise feminist scholarship in the 1990s, and to explore our points of contact, conflict, and potential collaboration.

Rewriting Texts: The Hazards of Translating Medieval Women's Works. Proposer: Judith Laird, Southwest Texas State Univ. With the recent surge of interest in and acclaim for women writers from centuries past, translations of many previously overlooked texts are now in demand. But what challenges do the contemporary editing, translation, and marketing of medieval women's works raise for teachers and scholars? How does the circulation of translated texts among a new generation of readers require reexamination of the general processes, goals, and techniques of translation?

Dressing and Undressing Women: Cloth, Clothing, and Class in Medieval Culture. Proposer: E. Jane Burns, Women's Studies, Univ. of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. This session invites medievalists from a variety of disciplines—including, but not limited to art history, literature, history, and theology—to examine the relationships between women and clothing. How does the production or embellishment of cloth and clothing indicate or blur social class distinctions and gender identity? How does clothing function both to conceal and to reveal the female body?

GENDER AND MEDIEVAL STUDIES GROUP:
CONFERENCE ON GENDER AND COMMUNITY IN
THE MIDDLE AGES

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The Gender and Medieval Studies Group will hold its annual conference at Gregynog (University of Wales), January 3-4, 1995. All are welcome.

Papers of 30 minutes are sought, and offers of papers from historians would be particularly welcome. We would especially like to hear from anyone proposing either joint papers or a round-table discussion. Could all people who would like to give papers let us know as soon as possible. We will need a synopsis by August 31, 1994.

The GMS group especially welcomes postgraduates in medieval studies and has a small fund for subsidizing the travel of those who would otherwise be unable to attend. Postgraduates whose own universities or other grant-awarding bodies are unable to help them are invited to contact the conference organizers.

Details and costs of attendance will be circulated at a later date. A provisional program and registration form will be circulated at the beginning of October 1994.

All enquiries and offers of papers should be sent to:

Diane Watt
Department of English
Hugh Owen Building
Penglais
Aberystwyth
Dyfed SY23 3DY

Tel: 0970 622534

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CALL FOR CONTRIBUTIONS

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Regina Psaki invites submissions for a volume tentatively entitled *Boccaccio and Feminist Criticism*. Contributions may (e.g.) offer specific textual analyses of any Boccaccio work, or address metadisciplinary issues such as reception, the usefulness or difficulty of feminist analysis of Boccaccio, and the trajectory of Boccaccio criticism. Please address inquiries to: Regina Psaki, Romance Languages, University of Oregon, Eugene OR 97403.

CALL FOR PAPERS

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“Les femmes écrivains sous l’Ancien Régime: tentatives d’émancipation,”
Washington University in St. Louis, April 28-30, 1995. Suggestions de thèmes: Marie de Gournay; l’éducation des femmes; les salons et les académies; les femmes et le pouvoir; privé/public; les relations mère/fille; les genres para-autobiographiques; les voix

spirituelles, etc. Les communications peuvent être en français ou en anglais. Envoyer résumé de communication ou proposition de session à: Colette H. Winn, Washington University, Romance Languages and Literatures, Campus Box 1077, One Brookings Drive, St. Louis MO 63130-4899. Date limite: 1er décembre 1994.

CONFERENCE REPORT



The Gender and Medieval Studies Group held their annual conference on January 4 and 5 at the University of Leeds. The topic of the conference was "Sexualities in the Middle Ages," and papers presented ranged the entire spectrum from "The Holiest Vessel: Maternal Aspects of the Grail" to "Eneas' Outing."

The conference began with a round table discussion of *Feminist Approaches to the Body in Medieval Literature* (Linda Lomperis and Sarah Stanbury, eds., Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993), and of an article by Joan Cadden, "Medieval Scientific and Medical Views of Sexuality: Questions of Propriety" (*Medievalia et Humanistica*, New Series 14 (1986)). Opinions, of course, varied widely as to the relative merit of the various articles, and became quite impassioned when the discussion shifted to a comparison of the theoretical approaches of British and American medievalists.

There were nine papers presented over the two days, and two reports on work in progress. It is difficult to single out any particular papers for comment, but I found "Eneas' Outing," by Mark Chinca (Trinity College, Cambridge) both informative and entertaining. He argued for a queer reading of Heinrich von Veldeke's *Eneasroman* based on the fact that the text grounds all sex/gender systems in homosocial desire. Jane Gilbert (New Hall, Cambridge) gave a paper titled "Boys will be . . . What?" which explored the development of childish sexuality into normative adult heterosexuality in *Floire et Blancheflor*, *Aucassin et Nicolette*, and *Floris et Liriope*. In this paper the focus on the construction of the sexuality of children in medieval literature was particularly provocative. Anne Kettle (St. Andrew's) gave a vivid and amusing presentation on the fallen women—and men—of Lichfield as immortalized in decanal visitation records of the mid-fifteenth century.

This was that best of conferences, small, informal and lively. What it lacked in quantity it more than made up for in the quality of both papers and discussion of the papers. The friendly atmosphere fostered wide-ranging explorations of ideas and ideologies. What better way to start the New Year?

This year's conference was organized by Lesley Johnson and Ros Brown-Grant of the University of Leeds. It was agreed that next year the conference would be hosted by the University of Wales at Aberystwyth and organized by Diane Watt. The topic will be "Gender and Community."

Rosalynn Voaden, University of York

