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## Editorial

Misericordia International is closing another rewarding year with increased membership and expanding activities. We still need your assistance with library subscriptions and request our readers to inform their libraries of the unique contributions *The Profane Arts* makes to Medieval Studies programs.

One of the most rewarding trends of the year is that more students, as of now from three continents, are contacting Misericordia International for consultation on their theses. Word is spreading that our archives, while not complete, are of international note. Graduate students contact us by e-mail or snail-mail with requests for information on locating specific themes on misericords, for photographs that they cannot locate elsewhere and for help with sources of information. Students also appear at our doors with photographs or outlines and ask for advice on 'where do we go from here?' We have placed students in contact with other students who are working on similar projects and hope that this networking will facilitate their research. And our rewards are the notes of thanks in prefaces to completed theses!

We are opening our *Exemplum Corner* with a quotation and a pair of misericord illustrations. The articles by Moore and Erez include references to connections between exempli and choir stall carvings. We look forward to comments and further contributions.

The most time consuming task this year was the preparation and supervision of Misericordia International Colloquium III at Barcelona, Spain from June 3-6, 1997. We cannot acknowledge sufficiently the help of Wilfried Schouwink, of the Colegio Aleman of Barcelona, for his assistance in arranging the nitty gritty details that are so important to the smooth running of a colloquium. We made a dry run in April to make sure all roads were passable and our program was workable within the limits of our schedule. We also met with scholars from Spain to plan their contributions to the colloquium.

The Barcelona Cathedral, the Catalan Museum, the Pedralbes Monastery and the church of Saint Maria del Pi were most welcoming and provided us with meeting rooms and necessary audio-visual equipment. Since each session met in a different place we were privileged to see parts of medieval buildings not usually open to the public. We all enjoyed, for example, our session on the roof of the Barcelona Cathedral where we could look down at the gargoyles and the cloister capitals.

Our entertainment on the first evening of the conference was a medieval play, *Dulcitius*, performed entirely in Latin, by Wilfried Schouwink and his students from the Colegio Aleman. It was a fine summer night and the performance was held in a medieval courtyard at the north side of the cathedral. What could have been a dull student exercise was an exciting performance enjoyed by all — except perhaps the homeless man whose bedroom had become our stage for the evening. However, by 11 pm he had his spot back in perfect order.

Our journey to Catalan churches in the Pyrenees was perhaps a bit ambitious and we had to cut back our itinerary in order to return to Barcelona within the two day span. The many highlights of this trip included seeing the one remaining choir stall (generally locked up) in the Girona Cathedral — as well as the magnificent Creation Tapestry, lunch at the exquisitely restored town of Besalu, a peek at the capitals and altarpiece at Saint Joan des Abbadesses and night at the Seu d'Urgell Parador. The second day included time in the Seu arcaded streets and its museum, an excursion to Saint Sevi de Tavernoles, a rest stop at Cardona and an exhausted return to Barcelona. We had to omit the too distant church of Agramunte; the museum at Solsona is closed on Sunday afternoon.

By the time we returned to Barcelona friendships were cemented and everyone requested another Misericordia Colloquium.

Following Barcelona, several of us continued to the west and saw the choir stalls at Najera, Palencia, Burgos, León Cathedral and San Marcos, Astorga, Oviedo and Zamora, roughly in that order. We were assisted by Maria Dolores Teijeira Pablos, from the University of León, who saw to it that doors, if not necessarily lights, were open to us and who helped us identify some of the more abstruse

iconography on these stalls. Since there are such great difficulties working with the churches in Spain, we felt the studies that we made this year may not be possible in the future.

Tentatively, the next Misericordia Colloquium is scheduled for the summer of 1999 to be held in northern France and directed by representatives from the Universities of Amiens and Rouen. It may be held in a château and we may be housed in local farm-châteaux. All interested in participating please contact Misericordia International.

The Colloquium was not the only Misericordia activity during the first half of 1997. Together with *Les Stalles de Picardie* we held an Open House in June at Saint-Martin-aux-Bois to publicize the extraordinarily poor condition of those choir stalls. The Menestrels de Picardie, with Frédéric Billiet at Bassoon, were the performers at our concert. We plan another fund raising concert for the fall of 1997. All interested please contact *Misericordia International* or *Les Stalles de Picardie*; 58 rue du 11 novembre; Condé-Folie 80900, France.

We participated once more with *les journées du patrimoine*, the third weekend in September with talks on the choir stalls now at the Basilica of Saint-Denis. The Basilica is open to the public and this weekend is the only time of the year that visitors may have a guided visit of the choir stalls! Talks are offered every hour between 1 and 6 pm. Visitors also have the opportunity to see other parts of the Basilica and the crypt.

We are participating at the Medieval Conference at Plymouth, New Hampshire in April, 1998 with some insights gleaned from the Colloquium in Spain. If you can possibly attend that conference please contact MI or Plymouth State College directly.

We will participate at a colloquium on "Disputed Identities" at Exeter, England, March 3-4. Please contact Malcolm Jones, Sheffield University for further details.

We are sponsoring two sessions at the May, 1998 international conference at Kalamazoo, Michigan. Our session topics are: Hats and Headgear in Medieval Painting and Sculpture; and Furnishings

and Architecture in Medieval Painting and Sculpture. We will also have a business meeting and a dinner, so reserve those times — probably Friday evening — for these reunions. If you have suggestions for sessions for the 1999 (how far away that seems) Kalamazoo conference, please let us know so we can arrange to include them.

This issue of *The Profane Arts* focuses on medieval imagery in Northern Spain as a follow-up to our colloquium. We have worked diligently to get out the issue as soon as possible while the colloquium was fresh in everyone's memory. Those who rewrote their papers for publication and got them in on time are to be highly commended! This prevents the editors from going bananas.

Isabel Mateo Gómez starts off the issue with an overview of the most important themes on Spanish choir stalls. She later provides a note on a proverb illustrated on the Astorga choir stalls. Rosa Terés and Maria Dolores Teijeira Pablos prepared introductions to most of the choir stalls that we visited. They guided us through the choir stall sculptures, but, unfortunately, those fantastic sessions cannot be fully recorded on paper.

Andrés Rosende Valdes discusses the iconography of the three sets of Medieval Renaissance choir stalls remaining in Galicia and compares the iconography to sculptures on the corbels of the Royal Hospice at Compostello. Frédéric Billet identifies the music on the Spanish choir stalls with an eye — and an ear — molded by his incredible experience in this field. Elaine C. Block compares selected themes on the Barcelona choir stalls with the same themes on the choir stalls of Northern Europe. This special section of the issue closes with a short bibliography on choir stalls in Spain.

A few general articles follow the special section. Elizabeth B. Moore treats us to some observations culled from her recent Master's Thesis at the University of Missouri, on marital combat on English choir stalls. Ariela Erez describes the work of André Sulpice at the cathedral of Rodez, information which will be contained in her forthcoming thesis at Tel Aviv University. Yona Pinson provides us with new insights into Bruegel's painting *The Triumph of Death*. A note from John Cherry on a misericord in the British Museum invites responses from our readers!

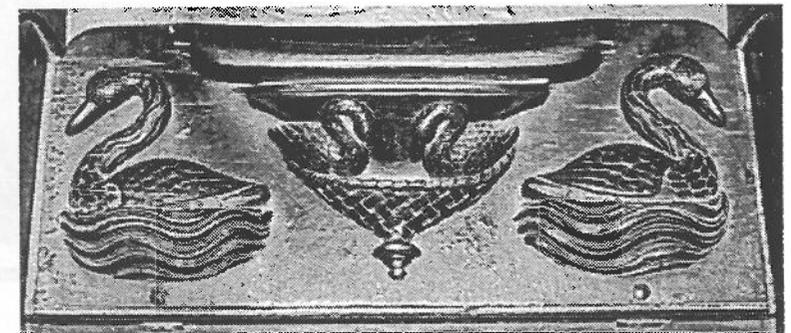
We are pleased to have a number of important reviews in this issue. We have included reviews on three outstanding recent publications: Ruth Mellinkoff's *Outcasts*, Christa Grössinger's *The World Upside Down* and Herman Dunien's study of the Dordrecht Choir Stalls. N. Lee Wood devotes her *Marginalia* column to a pair of books on medieval civilization. We hope our readers will contribute critical reviews for our next issue.

We include a note of thanks to several people who assisted with translations from Spanish into English and French: Anne-Cécile Jean, Monserrate LaMense and Sonja Schouwink. Wilfried Schouwink also provided on-the-spot translations during the colloquium sessions.

Please note, at the end of the issue, the subscription information for *Profane Arts* 1998. There is also a membership form for *Les Stalles de Picardie*. Unfortunately subscriptions run out yearly and renewal time comes all too fast. **Now is the time!** It is possible to subscribe for two years and one fine member has even subscribed well into the 21st century.

The Spring, 1998 issue of *The Profane Arts* will honor Charity Canon Willard.

We wish everyone of our members a profitable winter and a Very Happy New Year. Please send us your queries, information on forthcoming events, what you are up to these days and of course... articles for forthcoming issues of *The Profane Arts*.



Swans

Barcelona