
Editorial

Misericordia International began 1999 with its usual activities. In April we presented a paper on the game of Pannoy at Plymouth State College, New Hampshire and include a revised version in this issue. For the first time we actually asked members of the audience, mostly college students, to play this game. Two pairs of students sat on the floor facing each other, soles of shoes touching. The staff of the Medieval Forum were a bit perplexed when we asked for a stick about six feet long. We settled for a couple of broomsticks so that each pair of contestants could grasp the stick with both pairs of hands. We encouraged the contestants to pull with all their strength--but gently. Sure enough, the losers were propelled into the air, their feet still glued to the feet of the winners who remained seated on the floor. Until that point, we had no evidence that the game would actually "work".

In May we offered two sessions at the Medieval Forum at Kalamazoo. The themes were: *Images of Lust on Misericords and Profane Objects*, and *Pagan Images in Medieval Art*. Several of the papers presented will be published in the fall issue of *The Profane Arts*. Attendance at these sessions was better than ever, indicating that interest in Misericords is growing! We were introduced to the Association on Robin Hood, whose members were interested in the paper on the Green Man.

We look forward to participating at the Reinardus Colloquium in Poitiers in mid-August, and the Association to Preserve Religious Patrimony at Vendôme the end of September. Contact Misericordia International for further information about these events.

All members and friends of Misericordia are invited to participate in Patrimony weekend in France, September 18 and 19. On those days, many towns and cities in France open monuments normally closed to the public and offer special events in monuments that are normally open. Misericordia will participate in the celebrations at St.-Denis (near the St. Denis metro station a half hour from central Paris) and St.-Martin-aux-Bois (50 miles north of Paris not far from Compiègne). At the

Basilica St.-Denis, on Saturday and Sunday afternoons, there will be guided visits of the Gaillon choir stalls, normally excluded from regular guided tours of the Basilica. The Italian Renaissance in effect entered France through these choir stalls and the crossings of the Gothic with the Renaissance on these stalls is striking. At St. Martin guided visits to the Abbey church (reached through the archway from the only street in town), will be accompanied by an exposition of choir stalls in Picardy and a medieval concert in the late afternoon. The St. Martin celebrations are sponsored by the mayor of the town and the Association Stalles de Picardie.

Misericordia International has been invited to participate at other events on Patrimony Weekend but has not yet been able to organize more than two programs.

Perhaps the most exciting event of early 1999 focused on the continued work of GIRS (Groupe international de recherche sur les stalles), the research branch of Misericordia International which first met in November 1998. GIRS includes four senior members: Kristiane Lemé (Amiens); Frédéric Billiet (Rouen), Corinne Charles (Neuchâtel), Elaine C. Block (USA), and students working on dissertations in the field of choir stall iconography: Sylvie Bethmont (Paris), Marie-Eve Cortes (Toulouse), Ariela Erez (Tel Aviv), Michel Fol (St. Etienne), Carole Fournol (Paris), Monique Olivier (Nanterre), Marianne Pechereau (Poitiers), France Richemond (Limoges). The senior "stallologues" have been working together on various projects for several years. The students were brought together by Misericordia International after they contacted the organization through a number of sources. Several were referred by museums and churches, and others followed up on articles published by Misericordia or announcements on the Web.

The members of the group were very happy to find each other. For the most part, at their respective universities they were working in isolation and had few resources to review and check their work. We set up a schedule and are preparing a glossary on medieval choir stall iconography. We realized that words are missing or vague in one or more languages which identify parts of choir stalls. Without this lexicon, communication is difficult. We have therefore, perused architecture and furniture dictionaries, borrowed words, invented words, adopted words

from other languages. We thank especially Sylvie Bethmont who has twice lodged the entire group at the family house in Moret-sur-Loing and in her apartment in Paris, and Kristiane Lemé who organized and supervised the summer 99 meeting.

We also wish to mention our web site, organized and supervised by Brian Levy of Hull University. Announcements of Misericordia, of GIRS and of Les Stalles de Picardie appear here. We also have a bit of a puzzle - the misericord of the month. Try to figure out the site and the significance of the carving and send it to the web site or to Misericordia by e-mail. Several frustrated viewers have demanded the answer to the puzzling carvings before the month is up.

In this issue we start with an article on proverbs by Kristiane Lemé. She continues research contained in articles in previous issues by expounding specifically on two proverbs: two heads in one bonnet, and two dogs fight over one bone.

We welcome a new contributor, Paul Aangenendt from the Netherlands, an ophthalmologist with a passion for images of medieval spectacles. His photographs of dorsal panels from some German churches are fine additions to choir stall archives.

Chris Henige follows with research derived from his doctoral dissertation on the abbey church of St. Martin-aux-Bois. He indicates his view of the original position and sequence of the choir stalls. His interpretations may differ from those of Block and Lemé but there is plenty of room for differing hypotheses in this field.

Elaine C. Block presents a short summary of misericords which show a medieval game of strength, panno. This game mirrors social and political conflicts.

Kasue Kurasawa, from Tokyo, regales us with her views of the medieval headdress, the hennin, and its significance in literature and on misericords.

Recent discovery of another "fight for the pants in the family" is described in a note by Elaine C. Block.

We welcome the return of N. Lee Wood and her Marginalia column. Please send her books to review for future issues of *The Profane Arts*.

Our closing article, *Commanding Women; Demanding Women* by Nadia Margolis was presented at the meeting of the Mid-Hudson Medieval Club on September 27, 1997 in honor of Charity Cannon Willard. We deeply regret that this article was inadvertently omitted from the previous issue of *The Profane Arts* which honored Professor Willard. The articles to which she refers are all in the Fall-1998 issue.

A last sad announcement. Our conscientious publisher and dear friend, Donald Shelden, left this world in January, just days after he mailed out the last issue of *The Profane Arts*. We miss him deeply and offer condolences to his family. This issue is dedicated to Don.

Don's untimely death is the cause for the lateness of this issue. Chris Henige, our friend and colleague, has offered to oversee the layout and printing of *The Profane Arts* from now on. Members who wish to reach him and to offer any assistance or suggestions can contact him at Internet: cchenige@yahoo.com.

We eagerly await contributions for forthcoming issues: articles, notes, book reviews, reviews of art exhibits, and announcements of interest to our group. Please note the forms for joining Les Stalles de Picardie, Misericordia International, and the Misericordia Colloquium in Amiens August 31 to September 4.



Donald Gardiner Shelden
March 31, 1949 - January 17, 1999