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College/School: Arts and Sciences  
Project Title: Gender, Dance, and Piety in Medieval Sermons: A Manuscript Digitization and Graduate Education Project

Abstract:

How did religion across the Reformation era shape understandings of gender—especially perceptions about appropriate behavior for Christian women? This question drives my research and has also become an important research question for PhD student Lynneth Miller. My two current book projects (one in final stages and one for that I will begin this summer) analyzes evidence from medieval sermon manuscripts to discuss attitudes about women in the late medieval and early modern English church. Lynneth Miller’s dissertation project, an examination of shifting religious attitudes towards gender and dance in England 1300-1700, also requires extensive medieval sermon manuscript research. Hence this project is threefold: First, to spend Summer I ordering and purchasing medieval sermon manuscripts useful to both myself and Lynneth Miller from the British Library. We will both be in London in May to examine the relevant manuscripts and decide which are most important for our research. Second, to improve Lynneth Miller’s doctoral productivity by developing her medieval paleography skills (learning to read medieval handwriting) so that she will be well prepared for her own dissertation work. We will begin this process as Lynneth accompanies me to London in May to learn how to work in the British Library. Continued practice reading medieval sermon manuscripts throughout the summer will greatly hone her skills. Third, to spend Summer II digitizing the purchased manuscripts and condensing them into Adobe reader files. I have already benefitted greatly from digitized microfilms of medieval manuscripts, compressed into Adobe reader files, as they enable me to study the gendered nuances of fifteenth-century sermons much more quickly than
continuous trips to the British archives. I will hire PhD student Lynneth Miller to
digitize these manuscripts during Summer II (approximately 40 hours) through the
microfilm digitization machines already available in Jones Library. This will help
Lynneth Miller gain more expertise in working with medieval manuscripts as well as
further both her research and my own.