

## **“Female Authorship in Early Modern France: The Case of the Framed Narrative Collection”**

A paper proposal for the MATERIAL CULTURES Conference, Edinburgh, July 2010

This paper will address issues of readers, reading practices, and transmission as they are relevant to early modern French short story collections authored by women or featuring women storytellers within them. Many narrative texts of the period were either composed by (or are commonly attributed to) women authors, such as the anonymous *Evangeliles des quenouilles* (1470's), Jeanne Flore's *Comptes amoureux* (1531), Hélienne de Crenne's *Angoisses douloureuses* (1538), Marguerite de Navarre's *Heptaméron* (1540's), and the anonymous *Caquets de l'accouchée* (1622). In addition, many texts, including these attributed to women authors, along with others attributed to men authors (for example, Martial d'Auvergne's *Arrêts d'Amour* (1460's), Nicolas de Troyes's *Grand parangon des nouvelles nouvelles* (1535-1536), and Claude de Taillemont's *Discours des Champs faëz* (1553)), prominently feature women storytellers among the group of secondary narrators of the frame.

I will be investigating such questions as: do texts authored by women (or presumed to be such) have anything in common? What does the concept of female authorship mean in the early modern period? What were the material conditions of women authors at the time, and how did this affect their literary production? Why did so many women authors choose the genre of the framed narrative collection? Did this structure have something in particular to offer women authors; was it particularly conducive to their literary and cultural goals? What relationship did the depicted storytelling sessions bear to those which took place in actual *veillées* and *salons*, venues of literary exchange generally organized and administered by women? I will address these questions using a combined approach of literary analysis and cultural studies, thereby shedding light on the creation, dissemination, and reception of framed narrative collections of the French early modern period.