

WOMEN at the CENTER

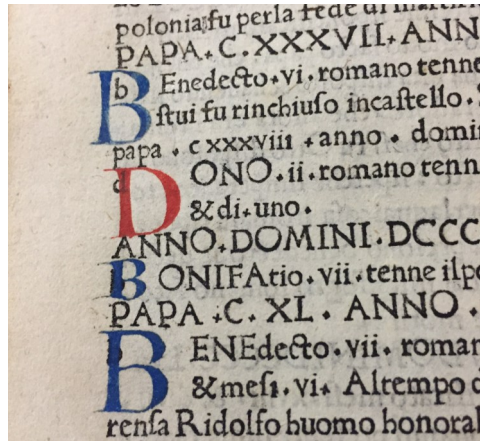
Sallie Bingham Center for Women's History and Culture
David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Duke University

Issue 29, Spring 2016

Women at Work: the Nuns of the Ripoli Press

Contributed by Naomi Nelson, Ph.D., Associate University Librarian and Director, Rubenstein Library.

There are many “firsts” in the Lisa Unger Baskin Collection, and this early work is one of the first books we know to be typeset by women. *Incominciano Le vite de Pontefici et imperadori Romani [Lives of the Popes and Roman Emperors]* was published by the press at the Convent of San Jacopo Di Ripoli in Florence in 1478. The Baskin Collection includes two copies. They are incunabula (cradle books), a term traditionally used to indicate works printed before 1501, when printing technology was still in its infancy.



Hand colored initials called “rubrication” in copy one.

Over the course of nine years (1476-1484), the Ripoli press issued around one hundred different titles, half of which were secular. The convent's diario (daybook) notes that the Dominican sisters received modest wages for their labor, which were contributed to a common fund to support the convent. The nuns work as typesetters was in keeping with the order's rules. The Dominican constitutions directed the nuns to copy manuscripts for religious use, and the new technology of typesetting accomplished the same end.

(Continued on page 3)

Inside this issue:

Women at Work: the Nuns of the Ripoli Press	I, 3
Profiles in Research: Donna J. Drucker	I, 2
Recent Acquisitions	2
Mary Lily Research Grant Recipients	3
Spring Instruction	3
Ayun Halliday's "East Village Inky" Joins Zine Collections	4

Profiles in Research: Donna J. Drucker

Mary Lily Research Grant recipient Donna J. Drucker recently published an article on “The Cervical Cap in the Feminist Women's Health Movement, 1976–1988,” based in part on her research using the records of the Feminist Women's Health Center (Atlanta, GA) at the Bingham Center. The following text is excerpted from the full-length piece from the blog “Notches: (re)marks on the history of sexuality.” Reprinted with permission.

The late 1970s and early 1980s was the historical peak of public and medical interest in the cervical cap in the United States. At the time, the cervical cap appeared to be an ideal alternative for women wary of the potentially damaging side effects of the Pill and IUD. Its brief prominence on the reproductive technology landscape illustrates an important moment in women's health history and the history of contraception. When medical and pharmaceutical companies rapidly increased production of hormonal birth control but slowed the production of barrier contraceptives, members of the women's health movement needed to man-

age trials of their favored medical device on their own. While the cervical cap never became popular among American women, the cap trials nonetheless show that women's desires for safe, inexpensive, reliable, easily reversible, and non-harmful forms of contraception continue to structure the activities and advocacy of the feminist women's health movement.

Women's health centers, inspired by a desire to improve access to non-hormonal birth control for their patients, became involved in trials to reclassify the cervical cap as a Class I or Class II device, making it easier for their

(Continued on page 2)

Recent Acquisitions

Ayun Halliday Papers

Creator of the long-running zine, "East Village Inky," and author of books including *The Big Rumpus* and *No Touch Monkey*.

Mary Lightfoot Tarleton Knollenberg Papers

Correspondence, diaries, and memoir of Knollenberg, a sculptor, as well as diaries and correspondence of her mother Mary Livingston Tarleton, also an artist. Donated by Ippy Patterson.

SWOOP Records

Strong Women Organizing Outrageous Projects (SWOOP) was founded in 1996 after Hurricane Fran to respond to the need for help with clean-up efforts, and continued to offer home repair and yardwork to people and families in need.

Celeste Wesson Papers

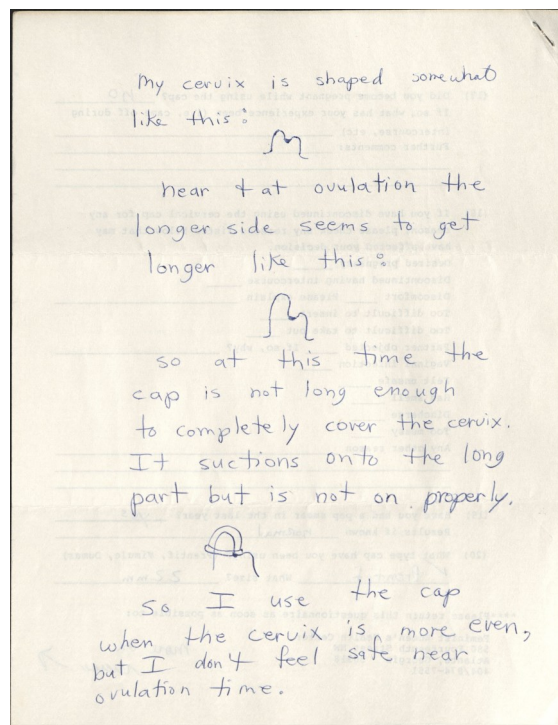
Duke alumna, co-founder of the Durham Women's Radio Collective broadcast on WDBS, and former senior editor of American Public Media's *Marketplace* programs.

Profiles in Research: Donna J. Drucker *continued from page 1*

patients to access. The Emma Goldman Clinic (EGC) in Iowa City, Iowa, and New Hampshire Women's Health Services in Concord, New Hampshire, were the two women's health centers to participate in the first trial, which the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development oversaw in 1980. The EGC supervised a small trial with one hundred women. It found that most women fit with the cap considered it a superior method to other women-controlled methods such as the pill and IUD, and to male-controlled methods, such as condoms and withdrawal.

Inspired by the success of [earlier trials] and patients' largely positive experiences, a larger group of women's health centers, including the Feminist Women's Health Center in Atlanta, decided to take the next step in the process of obtaining approval to distribute the cervical cap: completing an investigational device exemption (IDE), which allowed them to test the device on a larger sample of female volunteers. The cap received a mixture of positive and negative reviews, with one woman in the Atlanta study stating in January 1982 that "I feel real[ly] safe as far as the rest of my bodily health is concerned and also safe from pregnancy. I like it much better than the diaphragm." A second Atlanta woman asserted, "The cervical cap has been a godsend." A third was more hesitant: "If I did not feel a cramping [sic] I would like it very much." Yet another drew a picture of the way that the cap should ideally fit on her cervix.

The history of the cervical cap in the late twentieth-century U.S. illuminates ongoing legal, medical, and pharmaceutical tensions over women's health. This history shows that in the case of the cervical cap — and the morning-after pill in the 1990s — women's health advocates had to expand their reach in order to



**Patient drawing for cervical cap study,
Feminist Women's Health Center Records**

manage clinical trials and to found their own companies in order to increase reproductive options for their clients. That they had to throw their weight behind a problematic technology like the cervical cap only shows how far we have to go in designing and manufacturing contraception that addresses each individual's needs. That many American women's health centers in the twenty-first century have closed or are under near-constant threat of closure via lawmaking or anti-choice violence shows that access to basic reproductive health care remains at risk — and that we need to keep fighting for it.



Notchesblog.com

Donna J. Drucker is a guest professor in the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering at Technische Universität Darmstadt, Germany. She is the author of *The Classification of Sex: Alfred Kinsey and the Organization of Knowledge* (Pittsburgh, 2014) and *The Machines of Sex Research: Technology and the Politics of Identity, 1945–1985* (Springer, 2014). Read the post in full on "Notches: (re)marks on the history of sexuality," a blog devoted to promoting critical conversations about the history of sex and sexuality across theme, period and region.

Mary Lily Research Grant Recipients 2016-2017

Jason Ezell, Ph.D. candidate, American Studies, University of Maryland, "Queer Shoulders: The Poetics of Radical Faerie Cultural Formation in Appalachia."

Margaret Galvan, Ph.D. candidate, English, The Graduate Center, CUNY, "Burgeoning zine aesthetics in the 1980s through the censored Conference Diary from the controversial Barnard Sex Conference (1982)."

Kirsten Leng, assistant professor, Women, Gender, Sexuality Studies, University of Massachusetts Amherst, *Breaking Up the Truth with Laughter: A Critical History of Feminism, Comedy, and Humor*.

Linda Lumsden, associate professor, School of Journalism, University of Arizona, *The Ms. Makeover: The survival, evolution, and cultural significance of the venerable feminist magazine*.

Mary-Margaret Mahoney and Danielle Dumaine, Ph.D. candidates, history, University of Connecticut, for a documentary film, *Hunting W.I.T.C.H.: Feminist Archives and the Politics of Representation (1968-1979, and present)*.

Jason McBride, independent scholar, for the first comprehensive and authorized biography of Kathy Acker.



**W.I.T.C.H. logo drawing,
Robin Morgan Papers**

Kristen Proehl, assistant professor, English, SUNY-Brockport, *Queer Friendship in Young Adult Literature, 1850-Present*.

Yung-Hsing Wu, associate professor, English, University of Louisiana at Lafayette, *Closely, Consciously Reading Feminism*.

Research Grants: library.duke.edu/rubenstein/bingham/grants

Women at Work *continued from page 1*

The first copy in the Baskin Collection is decorated with hand-colored initials called rubrication. Copy two lacks the first six leaves and has not yet had the decorative initials added. It is untrimmed, and over the years comments have been added in several hands and inks. Most interesting is the extensive marginalia around the entry for the (most likely) fictional Pope Joan with its long manicule and notation "papa femina." If you run your fingers gently over the pages, you can feel the impressions made by the thousands of pieces of moveable type the nuns of Ripoli carefully set by hand.



Read More: library.duke.edu/rubenstein/bingham/lisa-unger-baskin

Spring Instruction

**Activism, Women,
and Danger**
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Archival Appraisal
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Library Science

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UNC Women's Studies

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Feminism**
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Women's Studies/
Sexuality Studies

LGBT History
UNC Women's Studies

**LGBTQ History and
Activism**
Documentary Studies

Love and Comics
Writing 101

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Ayun Halliday's "East Village Inky" Joins Our Zine Collections



Ayun Halliday, creator of the long-running zine "The East Village Inky," recently placed her papers at the Bingham Center. Halliday started writing her autobiographical zine in 1998 after the birth of her first child as a creative outlet for sharing illustrated stories about the ups and downs of parenting as a writer and artist in New York City. She is author of the books *The Big Rumpus*, *No Touch Monkey!*, and *The Zinesters Guide to NYC* among others, as well as being an actor and playwright. Her collection, which is currently being processed, includes correspondence with readers and fans of "Inky," and letters and zines from other writers. Halliday has been donating issues of "The East Village Inky" to the Bingham Center for many years. The personal letters from her broad readership document the wide appeal of her humorous writings and delightful drawings.

Ayun Halliday peers out from her table at the NYC Feminist Zinefest in February 2016 (Picture by Muffy Bolding)

Learn more about Ayun Halliday: <http://ayunhalliday.com>