

the hostess and with the old woman in the castle teach him to beware sexually alluring females and to reject the manipulative mother-figure; his belief in the magic of the green belt must be replaced by a more solid belief in himself and in his God. *Gawain*, like any good children's literature, speaks to the most profound of our experiences, yielding deeper insights as one continues to read at different ages. Yet without having a daughter as my incentive for learning about children's literature, I doubt that I would ever have seen *Gawain* from this perspective.

As I said earlier, I offer here no answer to the original question, "How has your viewpoint been affected by the fact that you write as a woman?" But pondering that question has led me to see traces of a parallel development between my own humanity—my psychological struggles, my transitions through various stages of personal history—and the *loci* of my interests in *Gawain*. I suspect that many of us can find the same tandem relationships between our lives and our teaching/research interests. Perhaps, if we are as honest about this with our students as feels comfortable, we can pass on to them the gift of using literature to help analyze and enhance our lives. As for myself, I wonder what aspect of *Gawain* I'll be investigating next.

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WOMEN IN THE VERNACULAR AND THE PERIODIZATION OF MEDIEVAL GERMAN LITERATURE

The appearance of women in Old High German (OHG) literature is, by traditional accounts, infrequent and sporadic. A fresh look at the approximately ninety extant OHG texts¹ calls for a more differentiated and discerning estimation of the importance of textual references to women in OHG, and, at least in passing here, their relationship to references in Latin texts of the period, while considering subsequent developments in Middle High German (MHG). Recent research on the role of women in the production and dissemination of primarily Latin texts of the period has demonstrated that women did participate actively and productively, as readers and authors, patrons and owners, both inspiring and producing written records.² It appears, however, that the data on the role of women in OHG literature available within and surrounding the vernacular texts has largely been ignored. A similar state of affairs was recently attributed to the field of Old English studies, although it appears that more has been done in that area to remedy a lack of interest in female characters and the representation of women by returning to primary literary and historical source materials.³

This paper addresses the following issues: (1) Women as characters in vernacular OHG texts, (2) Women as participants in the production and dissemination of OHG. Finally, (3) the roles of women will be traced with reference to traditional descriptions of the OHG and MHG periods. As the available data address these issues to varying degrees, I will approach them as they occur in my discussion of the individual texts. The question to be addressed is whether the commonly accepted OHG and MHG linguistic and literary constellations correspond in any way to the emerging and evolving roles of women as they are recorded in the relatively rarer non-Latin texts.

The essence of feminist medieval studies is seen by Judith M. Bennett⁴ as 'considering' and 'remembering' our past. Whether or not the first person plural possessive pronoun *our* is understood as generic or gender specific, the fact remains that, regarding the history of women in medieval Europe, there is, in spite of an inherent scarcity of reliable documentary evidence, especially in the period up to the year 1000,⁵ more than meets the uncritical eye. To translate into post-structuralist terms, we must be able and willing to reread and revise,⁶ and ultimately reconstruct the history of women.⁷

Relevant tangential issues include women's access to learning and culture,⁸ specifically the roles of women in education,⁹ the nature of texts confirmed as or likely to have been written by women, and the various facets of the representation of women in literature, be they biographical, sociological, or historical, or rhetorical. A consideration of these issues with respect to the production of literary texts by and about women leads to a more complete understanding of those texts and the roles women play in and around them. From a methodological point of view, the outlook may appear dim. The relatively few sources, combined with the insight that literature is at best an imperfect reflection of life,¹⁰ might make one hesitant to attempt a stab at 'cultural anthropology.' Historians claim to know about some 1,000 women from the year 1000 to 1500.¹¹ What story do the far fewer figures we can associate with Old High German (roughly 750-1050) have to tell?

Educated women were active in the German speaking world starting in the early missionary days.¹² Associated with Boniface were two English nuns, Lioba (d. 782) and Walburg (d. 779), with whom he exchanged letters. The nun Hucburc later wrote Walburg's Latin *Vita*.¹³ Within the walls of the over one hundred monasteries for women established in Saxony and Germany by the tenth century, texts were kept, copied, read, sent and received. Women taught, were instructed, and wrote letters. Manuscripts were donated by noblewomen founding and/or entering the convents. In addition, numerous reports of visits and inquiries on the part of women patrons survive.

Among the most productive sources for the roles of medieval women in education are the saints' lives. A recent collection of such *vitae* from the sixth and seventh centuries documents education and vibrant literary activity among women in early medieval Francia: women read and write, teach, sponsor, own, and donate texts.¹⁴ Less than a score of hagiographic sources alone provide records—some of which were authored by women—of women “assiduous in reading” (Aldegund, Abbess of Maubeuge, d. 684), being read to, writing letters to other women (Radegund, Eustadiola, Caesaria II), studying scriptures and other religious texts (Rusticula, Glodesind), teaching women, copying manuscripts.¹⁵

On a more abstract, pedagogical plane, these saints' lives themselves represented texts to be read, studied, used as models for instruction, admiration, and inspiration.¹⁶ A ninth-century retelling of Aldegund's life sums up the message for the intended audience: “imitate what you have read”, whereby the reader is encouraged to picture Aldegund herself “mediating on divine readings”.¹⁷ As her more contemporary anonymous seventh-century biographer—perhaps a nun—puts it: “And what she understood from her reading [scriptures] she performed in life.”¹⁸ These *vitae*, rich in miracles and other wonders, contain insights into the mindset of women who had access to the written word. It is clear that these texts were intended in part for women, and that it was assumed that they would be read, studied, and meditated upon.

The research of Rosamund McKitterick has revealed the continuation of a firmly established early medieval tradition through the ninth century and beyond. In fact, there are direct connections between nun scribes in Celles (and elsewhere in Northeastern Francia) and their German contemporaries in the area of the Lower Rhine river, in Cologne, supported in part by English nuns involved in missionary activity. A wide array of texts survive which document literary activity among women in Werden, Essen, Würzburg, and elsewhere.¹⁹

Thus it can be established that throughout the entire OHG period women were engaged in literary activity: reading, writing, sponsoring, owning, donating manuscripts. We now turn to the vernacular evidence within the OHG corpus of texts.

One OHG work, the *Liber evangelorum* of Otfrid of Weißenburg,²⁰ came about, according to the author's own account, in part due to the efforts of a ‘venerable woman, Judith’. This otherwise unknown figure had, like some fellow monks also mentioned by Otfrid, but with special emphasis, requested that a religious vernacular text be composed to replace vain and obscene writings to which unspecified members of the community had been exposed. Otfrid's OHG verse compilation of over 7,000 lines, based on the gospels, is his response to this request. No longer poem exists from the Carolingian period, in any language.²¹

Otfrid's dedicatory letter to Bishop Liutbert of Mainz thus provides evidence of a learned woman in conversation with other members of the monastery (Weißenburg, or Fulda) concerned with the moral well-being of the community in general and in particular with the role of religious and secular literature in the vernacular. We can postulate that other women were exposed to the texts considered to be damaging, and that other women were among the audience Otfrid had in mind while composing the work.

There is, in fact, evidence from the OHG period for both assumptions. Charlemagne proclaimed in a missive addressed to women's monastic communities that so-called *winnleodas*, vernacular 'love songs', were not to be written or sung.²² As no Latin equivalent is given in the capitulary, we may infer that the recipients were quite familiar with the meaning of the term. The same sentence provides evidence that women in monasteries were writing, singing (and reading) in the vernacular. The genre of the *winnleod* may be the very kind of text Otfrid and his supporters were referring to. As the texts I cite are at least fifty or sixty years apart, we may assume some longevity for this kind of song, or at least for vernacular texts considered to be offensive to the Church and the Court. Charlemagne decreed that unauthorized writings were to be burned,²³ a tradition which unfortunately survived on German soil.

We know from *neums* in the Heidelberg copy of Otfrid's gospel harmony that the text was recited, or sung, in public.²⁴ Readings at meals were common in monastic communities, and Otfrid's vernacular retelling of the life of Christ, with his commentaries, would certainly have suited any community with members present who might not be able to follow a Latin text as well as they could a German rendition. Otfrid's *Evangelienbuch* is preserved in no less than four manuscripts—one of which was later disassembled—and attests to the relative popularity of Otfrid's work. No other vernacular text survives from the OHG period in more than two copies.

A highly unusual OHG vernacular text allows us to expand further our view of Otfrid's work. Within the same Heidelberg manuscript of the *Liber evangelorum* we find a scratched gloss entry across the bottom of a page (folio 90r): *Kicila diu sconna min filu las*, 'Gisela the beautiful read me [i.e. the manuscript and/or the text] a lot.'²⁵ This hidden message seems to have been entered, or at least initiated, by a woman, Gisela. Just as the gloss is very difficult to read, so too is its exact meaning elusive. We do not know who Gisela was. Guesses range all along the social strata up to the empress Gisela, who was called 'the beautiful' and who is attested to have borrowed theological writings from the library at St. Gall.²⁶ The use of the metaphorical talking book suggests a learned hand. Whether 'reading' in this context means private study or recitation in front of a

group is impossible to determine. Both interpretations are plausible. One can easily envision a lector having access to the text to prepare for a public recital.

In any event, this ever-so brief entry attests to a literate woman, probably the hand who scratched the gloss, who read Otfrid's lengthy vernacular text repeatedly, and who wrote at least one sentence in OHG. Perhaps it is not too far-fetched to posit that the hand of the line was familiar with the tradition of the scratched gloss. To my knowledge no work has been done investigating the role of women in gloss transmission.

In sum, Otfrid's *Evangelienbuch*, a landmark of OHG, has provided a perhaps surprising number of clues and references to women participating in the production and dissemination of ninth-century vernacular literature. We have direct evidence that women read, discussed, wrote, and listened to religious and secular writings in German.

Two or three texts survive which may in fact be representatives of the kind of literature Charlemagne felt compelled to forbid and for which Otfrid's gospel poem was intended as an alternative. One is the so-called *St. Gall Ridicule Verse*:

*Liubene ersazte sine gruz
und kab sine tohter uz.
To cham aber Starzfidere,
prahte iho sine tohter widere.*

Liubene set out his brew
and gave his daughter away.
But then Starzfidere came,
brought him his daughter back.²⁷

These two rhyming couplets correspond in content to the Germanic tradition of the father giving his daughter away in a kind of engagement celebration, a festivity not unlike our wedding receptions, under the pretext that should the bride prove to be unacceptable she could be rejected. Reasons for returning the woman include infertility and not being a virgin.²⁸ Whereas the first reason for rejection might take months to become evident, the second case would be determined on the wedding night. It is thought that the poem was recited with the intention of insulting the father. In any event the daughter also ends up a victim, and can only look forward to her father's malice, and maybe even the torment of the entire community.

Supposing for a moment that the poem is the kind of literature Charlemagne deemed worthy of a ban, it becomes a matter of even more fanciful speculation to attempt to explain why members of religious communities might have recited

such doggerel. It could be thought to support those who have decided to forego the perils of matrimony for the blessings of religious servitude through the strategy of a negative example, as it exposes the potential danger of submitting to such a ceremony. Conversely, one who has chosen another path in life could feel a sense of relief. Were one to think this a far-fetched reading of the text, there is a fragmentary vernacular legal text from the eighth century which addresses the very matter: the *Lex Salica*, the Law of the Salisians. Unfortunately, only snippets of the indigenous legal code survive, but one heading does preserve a section: "70: Whoever takes a wife and does not want to keep her."²⁹ Later renditions of the legal code explain the penalties to be assessed under given circumstances. It is obvious that we are dealing with an issue worthy of mention in the vernacular at a very early stage of German, and we must assume that these mentions reflect the social and legal realities of acquiring a spouse. In case there be any doubt as to the role of the woman in this context, a proverb cited by Notker Labeo of St. Gall (d. 1022) will help clarify the parameters: "You cannot make two sons-in-law with one daughter."³⁰ That is to say, daughters are seen as negotiable assets with limited potential.

A shorter text from the period between OHG and MHG reads, in translation: "A hart whispered into the ear of a hind, 'Do you want to, yet, Hind?'"³¹ The text appears to be a kind of adolescent innuendo common in many cultures, but one also with a literary tradition of assigning sexual roles to animals in an ersatz function for human desires deemed taboo to address directly. Perhaps this kind of a text is more like the ones Charlemagne intended to eliminate from monasteries.

The Hart and Hind shows the male in the aggressive role, whereby the female is not even given a voice, and is thus reduced to a passive object of male sexual passion. The use of animal role players implies a stereotypical situation. The close connection between sexual activity and male-female relationships apparent in the *St. Gall Ridicule Verse* is thus repeated in the *Hart and Hind*.

The so-called *Paris Conversation Manual*, a list of useful phrases for a male Romance traveler in German speaking areas, is much more direct, as it provides the vernacular for the question to be put to a woman: "Do you want to screw?"³² Here the genre prescribes no answer for the woman, nor, however, comparable strategies for a woman traveler. The MHG courtly romances contain numerous episodes of men approaching women strangers with no intention of considering the women's wants. Perhaps more significantly, the OHG corpus relates male/female encounters among travelers, and these arguably very common occurrences became part of the later literary heritage.

One final example demonstrates the popularity of the biased male-female paradigm. One of two macaronic texts preserved in the Cambridge Songs

manuscript, recently edited by Jan M. Ziolkowski,³³ appears to be a love poem in the form of a strophic dialogue between a nun and a young suitor. Whether the nun submits to her interlocutor or returns to her heavenly groom Jesus remains a mystery, in part thanks to the efforts of an earlier reader, who erased much of the poem. It can be assumed that the poem's content led to the censorship, that a reader sensed a responsibility to protect certain individuals from reading the text. Given the likelihood that a literate audience could be found in a religious community, the topicality of the Cambridge love poem, be it didactic or scatological, becomes obvious. Thus the need for a morally uplifting text such as Otfrid's vernacular rendition of the gospels.

The topos of male attempting to seduce female, in the Cambridge poem a supposedly virtuous woman, emerges as operative in the scarce OHG canon. Literature must be understood in terms of its content and in terms of its intended usage, and is a reflection on more than one level of the social environment from which it emerged. It permits both direct and indirect insights into a time long gone.

The MHG era of courtly literature abounds with stories (courtly epics) and verses (*Minnesang*) of women subjected to male suitors. The OHG period contains a few brief but poignant precursors to the later tradition. Any notion of imported Romance material must therefore be supplemented by the insight that the Germans knew literary sexual love even before they were exposed to French courtly novels. I suggest that the history of women in vernacular German reveals constants which transcend traditional boundaries held to be valid by literary critics. Many of the criteria used in periodization are useful and accurate, but a focus on women in the vernacular realigns certain distinctions. A handful of Latin epics span the cultural gap between Old High and Middle High German. As a recent study shows, the women figures in the Latin works largely follow literary and cultural models,³⁴ making them less than satisfactory sources for insights into historical women—whether we know their names or not—and their roles in literary production. The mythological notions of women deities influencing the lives of mortals, perhaps Indo-Germanic heritage, are preserved in the Merseburger Charms.³⁵

To go now beyond the OHG period takes us into an area of some dispute among scholars: the MHG period, with a subdivision known as Early Middle High.³⁶ The periodization appears to be well founded, as there is a remarkable correlation between the linguistic description, largely based on the loss of distinguishing vowels in case morphemes, and the interruption of the transmission, and presumably, in the production of vernacular texts, roughly from the mid-eleventh to the mid-twelfth centuries. What emerges after circa 1170 is courtly literature, evidenced in both lyric (*Minnesang*) and prose (Arthurian romance).

For the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, Joachim Bumke³⁷ has outlined the various roles women played in the literary arena. They were sponsors, poets, copyists, listeners, readers, owners and donors of written literary works. On a more abstract but equally important plane, women were still involved in the foundation of convents, their development, and the education of the young women who participated in the various religious communities. Bumke further demonstrates that, in addition to the continuing roles played by women in religious communities, lay women outside the monastery, especially among nobility, assumed similar roles.³⁸ For many of these roles precursors can be identified; I have discussed some of the data from the OHG vernacular. It would far surpass the boundaries of this forum to elaborate on the details of the MHG textual evidence.³⁹ Bumke's remarks offer a reliable point of departure. Future study can hope to describe in detail the exact nature of the continuities provided by the evidence of women in and around OHG texts.

In addition to valuable comments made in saints' lives, monastery chronicles, letters, and other perhaps more strictly historical genres, the vernacular literature offers insightful data on the various roles women played in the production and dissemination of OHG and MHG literature. In re-examining the medieval era we find women who participated in the middle ages "as transmitters of information," "carriers of tradition," and "preservers of the past."⁴⁰

I posit a continuity in the roles of women in the production and dissemination of vernacular OHG and MHG literature, a set of constants which, like the history of the language itself,⁴¹ can be assumed, even in the absence of datable documents for certain periods. I have argued that at various levels the vernacular OHG literature itself provides convincing evidence of women engaged in vigorous and meaningful literary activity. The MHG literature which followed and Latin literature of the same period supports these findings. The history of women as it survives on parchment, and later on paper, is told in part—directly and by inference—in the German vernacular medium. The more we comb the extant literature for further clues, the better we will be able to re-tell the history of women in our culture. Paul Oscar Kristeller's assessment of the field of women's studies can be applied to early German vernacular writings: "The contribution of women to history, and especially to cultural and intellectual history, is a worthwhile subject that has not yet been adequately studied [...]."⁴² New approaches can stimulate interest in texts often overlooked or ignored. The women of the Middle Ages are not as silent⁴³ as once was supposed.

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¹Rudolf Schützechel, *Althochdeutsches Wörterbuch*, 5th ed. (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1995), 16-41, lists the texts; on women in OHG see Richard J. Schrader, *God's Handwork: Images of Women in Early Germanic Literature*, Contributions to Women's Studies 41 (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1983), 61-86.

²See Rosamund McKitterick, *Books, Scribes and Learning in the Frankish Kingdoms, 6th-9th Centuries*, Variorum Collected Studies Series 452. (Aldershot, Hampshire: Variorum, 1994); Susan Groag Bell, "Medieval Women Book Owners: Arbiters of Lay Piety and Ambassadors of Culture," in *Women and Power in the Middle Ages*, eds. Mary Eiler and Maryanne Kowaleski (Athens: Univ. of Georgia P., 1988), 149-187 [first in *Signs* 7 (1982): 742-68]; Peter Ketsch, *Frauen im Mittelalter*, Vol. 2, Geschichtsdidaktik, Studien, Materialien 19 (Düsseldorf: Schwann, 1984), passim, with translations of texts on medieval German literature, education of girls and women, nuns and convents. Earlier studies include Lina Eckenstein, *Woman under Monasticism: Chapters on Saint-Lore and Convent Life between 500 and 1500* (1896; rpt. New York: Russel & Russel, 1963) and Thompson (note 38).

³Helen Damico and Alexandra Hennessey Olsen, eds. *New Readings on Women in Old English Literature* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana UP, 1990), 2f., 7, and note 5, below; for an exception which treats the OHG period, albeit while paying much attention to Latin and Old Saxon texts, see Schrader (note 1). Schrader does discuss Otfrid's treatment of Mary and other religious women, which allows me to refer to Schrader's study instead of including them here. I hope to address the complex of the literary treatment of religious figures and women's other roles elsewhere. Albrecht Classen, "The Implications of Feminist Theory on the Study of Medieval German Literature. Also an Introduction," *Women as Protagonists and Poets in the German Middle Ages: An Anthology of Feminist Approaches to Middle High German Literature*, ed. A. C. Göppinger Arbeiten zur Germanistik 528 (Göppingen: Kümmerle, 1991), i-xxi, while supplying ample evidence of later (MHG) developments among women, leaves the impression that nothing has been done on OHG.

⁴"Our Colleagues, Ourselves," in *The Past and Future of Medieval Studies*, ed. John Van Engen, (Notre Dame: U of Notre Dame P., 1994), 245-258.

⁵See Georges Duby, *A History of Private Life*, 2 (Cambridge, MA: Belknap, 1988), x-xii.

⁶See Ruth Evans and Lesley Johnson, *Feminist Readings in Medieval English Literature: The Wife of Bath and her Sect* (London & New York: Routledge, 1994), 5.

⁷See Damico and Olsen (note 3), 11; also see Ann Marie Rasmussen, "Feminismus in der Mediävistik in Nordamerika," *Mitteilungen des Deutschen Germanistenverbandes* 39 (1992), 19-27, at 19, calling for "eine neue Sichtweise auf vertraute Dinge".

⁸John Van Engen (see note 4), 5.

⁹Werner Affeldt, ed. *Frauen in Spätantike und Frühmittelalter: Lebensbedingungen - Lebensnormen - Lebensformen: Beiträge zu einer internationalen Tagung am Fachbereich Geisteswissenschaften der Freien Universität Berlin. 18. bis 21. Februar 1987* (Sigmaringen: Thorbecke, 1990), 13.

¹⁰Edelgard E. Du Bruck, *New Images of Medieval Women: Essays toward a Cultural Anthropology*, Medieval Studies 1 (Lewiston, NY: Mellen, 1988), 2.

¹¹Marty Newman Williams and Anne Echols, *Between Pit and Pedestal* (Princeton, NJ: Wiener, 1994), ix.

¹²See Suzanne F. Wemple, *Women in Frankish Society: Marriage and the Cloister 500 to 900* (Philadelphia: U of Pennsylvania P., 1981), 305-310.

¹³See Edith Ennen, *Frauen im Mittelalter*, 2nd ed. (Munich: Beck, 1985), 76f.

¹⁴Jo Ann McNamara and John E. Halborg, eds., *Sainted Women of the Dark Ages* (Durham, N.C.: Duke UP, 1992).

¹⁵*Sainted Women*, 238; see Marie-Louise Portmann, *Die Darstellung der Frau in der Geschichtsschreibung des*

früheren Mittelalters, Baseler Beiträge zur Geschichtswissenschaft 69 (Basel/Stuttgart: Helbing & Lichtenhahn, 1958), who discusses fifty-five source texts, mostly *vitae*.

¹⁶*Sainted Women*, 2f., 11-13.

¹⁷*Sainted Women*, 1.

¹⁸*Sainted Women*, 251, cf. 235.

¹⁹Rosamund McKitterick, "Nuns' Scriptoria in England and Francia in the Eighth Century," *Francia* 19/1 (1989), 1-35, rpt. in R. M., *Books, Scribes and Learning in the Frankish Kingdoms* (note 2), VII, 1-35; *The Carolingians and the Written Word* (Cambridge: Cambridge U. P., 1989), 261-266; "Women and Literacy in the Early Middle Ages," *Books, Scribes and Learning*, XIII, 1-43, here especially 14-20; "Anglo-Saxon Missionaries in Germany [1989]," *Books, Scribes and Learning*, IV, 300f.; for Essen see also Gerhard Karpp, "Bemerkungen zu den mittelalterlichen Handschriften des adeligen Damenstifts in Essen (9.-19. Jahrhundert)," *Scriptorium* 45 (1991), 163-204.

²⁰*Otfrids Evangelienbuch*, ed. Ludwig Wolff, Altdeutsche Textbibliothek, 49, 6th ed. (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1975), 4,5-17; see Gisela Vollmann-Profe, *Kommentar zu Otfrids Evangelienbuch* (Bonn: Habelt, 1976), 24, 33, 36; J. Knight Bostock, *A Handbook on Old High German Literature*, 2nd ed. rev. K. C. King and D. R. McKillop (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1976), 193.

²¹Dieter Kartschoke, *Altdeutsche Bibeldichtung*, Sammlung Metzler 135 (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1975), 154.

²²See Herbert Grundmann, "Die Frauen und die Literatur im Mittelalter" [1936], *Ausgewählte Aufsätze*, 3, Schriften der Monumenta Germanicae Historica 25,3 (Stuttgart: Hiersemann, 1978), 73; Peter Dronke, *Women Writers of the Middle Ages: A Critical Study of Texts from Perpetua (d. 203) to Marguerite Perote (d. 1310)* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1984), 31; P. D. King, *Charlemagne's Translated Sources* (Lambrigg: King, 1987), 221.

²³See P. D. King (note 22), 218.

²⁴Bostock (note 20), 204; see Dennis H. Green, "Zur primären Rezeption von Otfrids Evangelienbuch," *Althochdeutsch*, eds. Rolf Bergmann, Heinrich Tiefenbach, Lothar Voetz, Germanische Bibliothek. Neue Folge. 3. Reihe: Untersuchungen (Heidelberg: Winter, 1987), 737-771, here 755f., 770f.

²⁵See Rudolf Schützeichel, Codex Pal. lat. 52: *Studien zur Heidelberger Otfridhandschrift, zum Kicila-Vers und zum Georgslied*, Abhandlungen der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Göttingen, Philologisch-historische Klasse, 3. Folge, Nr. 130 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1982), 55-59.

²⁶See Green (note 24), 750, note 51.

²⁷See Stefan Sonderegger, "St.Galler Spotverse," *Die deutsche Literatur des Mittelalters: Verfasserlexikon*, 2, ed. Kurt Ruh, 2nd ed. (Berlin & New York: de Gruyter, 1980), col. 1051-1053; Bostock (note 20), 211f.; Wolfgang Haubrichs, *Die Anfänge: Versuche volkssprachiger Schriftlichkeit im frühen Mittelalter (ca. 700-1050/60)*, *Geschichte der deutschen Literatur von den Anfängen bis zum Beginn der Neuzeit, I: Von den Anfängen zum hohen Mittelalter*, 2nd ed. (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1995), 73f.

²⁸Diane Owen Hughes, "From Brideprice to Dowry in Mediterranean Europe," *Journal of European History* 3 (1978), 262-296, here 268-76.

²⁹*Althochdeutsche Literatur. Mit Proben aus dem Altniederdeutschen*, ed. Horst Dieter Schlosser, Fischer Taschenbuch 6889, 2nd ed. (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1989), 282f.

³⁰*Älteste deutsche Dichtung und Prosa*, ed. Heinz Mettke (Frankfurt am Main: Röderberg, 1976), 262.

³¹See Bostock (note 20), 257; Haubrichs (note 27), 73: *Hirez runeta / hintun in daz ora: / wildu noh, hinta*.

³²Johannes A. Huisman, "Die Pariser Gespräche," *Rheinische Vierteljahresblätter* 33 (1969), 272-296, here 295.

³³*The Cambridge Songs (Carmina Cantabrigiensia)*, Garland Library of Medieval Literature 97A (Hamden, CT: Garland, 1994), 94-96, 260-262.

³⁴August Nitschke, "Brunhilde und Hiltgund: Beobachtungen zum Verhaltenswandel der Frauen im frühen Mittelalter," *Sprache und Recht im Mittelalter: Beiträge zur Kulturgeschichte des Mittelalters: Festschrift für Ruth Schmidt-Wiegand zum 60. Geburtstag*, ed. Karl Hauck (Berlin/New York: de Gruyter, 1980), 532-563.

³⁵See Nitschke (note 32), 539-547; the charms are printed in Schlosser (note 29), 254.

³⁶See Werner Schröder, "Kontinuität oder Diskontinuität in der Frühgeschichte der deutschen Literatur," *Zeitschrift für deutsches Altertum* 100 (1971), 195-213.

³⁷*Mäzene im Mittelalter* (München: Beck, 1979), 135, 231-243.

³⁸James Westfall Thompson, *The Literacy of the Laity in the Middle Ages*, University of California, Berkeley Publications in Education 9 (Berkeley: U of California P, 1939), rpt. Burt Franklin Research and Source Work Series 2 (New York: Burt Franklin, 1960); Bumke (note 37) 56, 66f., 242f., 318, n. 83.

³⁹See for example the contributions in Classen (note 1).

⁴⁰Elisabeth von Houts, "Women and the Writing of History in the Early Middle Ages: The Case of Abbess Matilda of Essen and Aethelweard," *Early Medieval Europe* 1 (1992), 53-68, here 54.

⁴¹See Stefan Sonderegger, *Grundzüge deutscher Sprachgeschichte: Diachronie des Sprachsystems 1, Einführung - Genealogie - Konstanten* (Berlin & New York: de Gruyter, 1979), esp. 219-319.

⁴²"Learned Women of Early Modern Italy: Humanists and University Scholars," *Beyond their Sex: Learned Women of the European Past*, ed. Patricia N. Labalme (New York: New York UP, 1980), 91-116, here 91.

⁴³See Duby (note 5), p. 89: 'a history of silences'; Christine Klapisch-Zuber, ed. *Silence of the Middle Ages*.

PASOLINI'S DECAMERON AND TEACHING THE MIDDLE AGES

Medievalism, in the classroom, is a two-edged sword. When teachers use later art, literature and film to liven up the Middle Ages for our students, we have to wonder, wincing, what misapprehensions we're planting, what clichés we're inadvertently reinforcing. Despite these risks, my courses on medieval culture usually do include film versions of works either medieval or medievalizing: *The Return of Martin Guerre*, *Sorceress*, *Excalibur*, *The Name of the Rose*, the accidentally hilarious *First Knight* and most often the *Decameron*. Looking critically at films as readings of their sources helps students to understand the poetics of borrowing, adaptation, and appropriation which governed literary activity in the Middle Ages. Moreover, using films to teach medieval literature adds a metadisciplinary gloss: films dramatize how much modern medievalists shape our discipline by our critical practice.

No longer seen solely as an independent entity requiring objective analysis, the Middle Ages is also an object of study that we construct on the basis of unstated critical and ideological assumptions. Even our most positivist analyses are more truly interpretations: we choose which texts to count and which to discount, which features to address and which to ignore, according to an interpretive and ideological agenda of which we may be only vaguely aware. That the Middle