3 For an excellent background discussion of the public/private theme, see the introduction in Mary Erler and Maryanne Kowaleski, eds., Women and Power in the Middle Ages (Univ. of Georgia Press, 1988).
4 Sarah Beckwith, "A Very Material Mysticism: The Medieval Mysticism of Margery Kempe," in David Aers, ed., Medieval Literature: Criticism, Ideology and History.
5 For a discussion of this issue as it pertains to the old French "women's song" see "Feminism and the Discipline of Old French studies: Une Belle Disjointure," E. Jane Burns, Sarah Kay, Roberta L. Krueger, Helen Solterer, forthcoming in R. Howard Bloch and Stephen G. Nichols, Jr., eds., The Discipline of the Discipline.

# RECENT BIBLIOGRAPHY IN MEDIEVAL FEMINIST STUDIES

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IN this issue we feature recent bibliography in history and in Anglo-Saxon studies. Many thanks to Chris Africa, Helen Bennett, Monica H. Green, Clare Lees, Gillian Overing and Margaret Schaus, for their contributions. We would also like to thank Mary McKay for her editorial assistance and Barbara Emmett, Judy Faulkner and Chris Ingersoll for help in producing this issue.

# RESEARCHING MEDIEVAL WOMEN

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*Margaret Schaus*

STUDENTS, whether in beginning survey courses or in advanced seminars, are interested in issues involving medieval women and are eager to incorporate these topics in their research projects. However, they often return to class crestfallen, angry, or at least with their enthusiasm considerably dampened because they have not been able to find much in the library on their topic. Whether they are interested in the coronation of queens or the female spirituality of St. Clare of Assisi, they usually find much more information on the male equivalent or viewpoint than on their chosen topic.

Students need to be taught how to do research and need to learn the history and current structure of their discipline's literature. Because they have not, in most cases, done in-depth reading in the field or developed the network of colleagues, conferences, and newsletters that comes gradually with scholarly training and practice, students are not able intuitively to understand and react to the special characteristics of a field, particularly one as problematic as medieval feminist studies.

The challenges posed by medieval feminist studies include its multidisciplinary nature, wide geographic and chronological coverage, the explosion of scholarly publishing in the last fifteen years, the availability and quality of primary sources, particularly in translation, and questions of interpretation, especially in reference to feminist theory. These are the issues I have introduced to Susan Mosher Stuard's students in the course "Women in Pre-Industrial Europe" when discussing research strategies and sources for their library papers.

The bibliography listed below is a much shortened and condensed version of the booklet I give to students during the library session. My discussion focuses on the types

begin with subject encyclopedias and dictionaries for background information and suggested sources, fill out their reading lists from more comprehensive bibliographies, and update their lists from periodical indexes, especially those that can be searched online.

They must keep in mind the reference sources for other disciplines, for geographic regions, and for time periods that may yield material relevant to their topics. Furthermore, they need to access the very latest information, since new conferences, books, and journal articles relevant to women and gender in the Middle Ages are constantly appearing. Students can use national bibliographic networks like RLIN and OCLC to find recently published monographs and translations. The Research-in-Progress Data Base (RIPD) on RLIN lists articles just published or accepted for publication as well as conference papers and work in progress. The citations are contributed by the Modern Language Association and the National Council for Research on Women. If you would like citations to your work included in RIPD, write for a Work-in-Progress Worksheet to:

Debra Schultz
National Council for Research on Women
Sara Delano Roosevelt Memorial House
47-49 E. 65th St.
New York, N Y 10021

All of these research techniques and reference sources need to be introduced and explained to students. If the librarian subject specialists at your institution offer library instruction in research, take your students for a presentation tailored specifically to their research topics. Examine the reference titles on the bibliography below, so that you know the kinds of sources available and the varying levels of scholarship. The amount and currency of material on medieval women's topics in reference sources varies enormously. Even recently published titles, like the Dictionary of the Middle Ages, give very little space to biographical or thematic articles relating to women and gender. Sources scheduled for publication in the next two or three years will incorporate much more of the new scholarship and will make researching medieval women an easier undertaking for students.

## SELECTED REFERENCE SOURCES FOR THE STUDY OF MEDIEVAL WOMEN

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THIS bibliography presents the basic reference sources needed for researching medieval women in history and related fields. Titles appear in order according to the most common research strategy, beginning with encyclopedias and dictionaries for background information, moving to bibliographies, and ending with annual and quarterly indexes. This approach generally produces the most effective and efficient literature search.

This list also includes a few bibliographies from recent monographs and collections of essays because they are very current and particularly thorough for their topics. The Simons bibliography on Renaissance women and the new bibliography on early modern social and economic history were added because they both include material dealing with the fifteenth century.