

REPORTS



FROM THE UK

Gender and Medieval Studies: Orality, Literacy, and Gender



The Gender and Medieval Studies Group (composed primarily of UK medievalists) held its annual conference at the University of Liverpool, January 4-5, on the theme of orality, literacy, and gender. Several papers dealt with the prophecies, religious visions, and pious practices of women in late medieval England and in medieval Iceland (Ruth Evans on Margery Kempe, Diane Watt on Elizabeth Barton, Andrew Hamer on *Laxdæla Saga*, Carolyn Larrington on *Rannveigar Leizla*. Access to preaching and to religious ceremonial were concerns of Alcuin Blamires' paper on thirteenth-century doctrinal commentaries and saints' lives and Joyce Hill's paper on the adaptation of the *Regularis concordia* for pre-Conquest Benedictine nuns, while Lesley Smith surveyed medieval visual representations of religious and secular women writing.

Group members also collaborated in a recording, *Voicing Medieval Women*, with passages read in the original from, among others, Julian of Norwich's *Revelation of Love*, Margery Kempe's *Book*, and the Middle English translation of Bridget of Sweden's *Liber celestis*. This two-volume tape recording will be distributed (together with a booklet of texts and translations) by The Chaucer Studio (inquiries to Dr. T. Burton, English Department, University of Adelaide, South Australia). It is hoped to add recordings of further works by, about, and for women at future conferences.

Jocelyn Wogan-Browne, University of Liverpool

REPORT FROM KALAMAZOO: SESSIONS FOR 1994



The following sessions, voted upon from a narrowed field of seven at the meeting of the Society for Medieval Feminist Scholarship, have been submitted to 1994 Kalamazoo conference organizers:

Castle, Court and Town: Art and Architecture of Lay Women in the Middle Ages.

Proposer: Susan L. Smith, Art History, Univ. of California, San Diego. Art and architecture for lay women, both aristocratic and bourgeois, and the role played by material culture more generally in lay women's lives: mirror covers, manuscripts, seals, jewelry; art historical, historical, literary, anthropological perspectives.

Constructing Women's Secrets in Medieval Culture. Proposer: Ann Marie Rasmussen, German, Duke University. Would draw on literature, medical history, social history, history of witchcraft, philosophy, to think about how literate medieval culture stages certain kinds of knowledge as secrets belonging to women.

"Medieval"/"Renaissance": Feminists Rethink Canonicity and Periodization.

Proposer: Jennifer Summit, English, Johns Hopkins University. How does scholarship

on women specifically challenge us to rethink the notions of canonicity and artistic or literary authority that underpin schemas of periodization?

Speculum Issue on Women. Proposer: Kathleen Biddick, History, University of Notre Dame. Responses to the upcoming issue of *Speculum* devoted to women and gender in the Middle Ages.

NOTES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS



CALL FOR PAPERS



Papers of 30 minutes are sought by the Gender and Medieval Studies Group at the School of English, University of Leeds, for a conference on "Sexualities in the Middle Ages," January 4-5, 1994. Offers of papers by historians would be particularly welcome. Organizers would also like to hear from anyone proposing either joint papers or a round-table discussion. Should a round-table session be devoted to discussing material distributed in advance? (For example, an extract from Carolyn Bynum's work and chapter 2 from Thomas Laqueur's *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud*, Harvard Univ. Press, 1990.) Let the organizers know what you think.

The GMS group especially welcomes postgraduates in medieval studies and has a small fund for subsidizing travel for those who would otherwise be unable to attend. Postgraduates whose own universities or other grant-awarding bodies are unable to help are invited to contact the organizers.

Interested presenters are asked to advise the GMS group *as soon as possible*. A synopsis must be provided by August 31. A provisional program and registration form will be circulated in October. Questions and offers of papers to: Ros Brown-Grant, French Department, Univ. of Leeds, Leeds, LS2 9JT (tel. 0532 333491; fax 0532 336017).

ÆSTEL



A new graduate-student-run journal, *Æstel*, based in Seattle, produced its first number in April. This first issue includes T.A. Shippey's 1991 MLA paper on recent writing in Old English (including Allen Frantzen's and Gillian Overing's), along with Overing's response. For information, write to *Æstel*, English Department, University of Washington, Seattle, WA 98195.

MFN NO. 16: CALL FOR CONTRIBUTIONS



MFN would like to solicit entries on multiculturalism in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance for the next issue of the newsletter. These may range from brief notes,