Images of Women in Medieval Literature: A Selected Bibliography

Susan Schibanoff

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IMAGES OF WOMEN IN MEDIEVAL LITERATURE: A SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

This bibliography focuses on images of women in medieval literature rather than on medieval women writers for several reasons. First, the study of literary images of women can provide a real sense of the climate in which the individual medieval female artist might have lived, a necessary first step in evaluating her contributions. Second, the problem of identifying the authorship of anonymous medieval literary works is a large one. It is becoming apparent, however, that there were probably more good medieval women writers than those few we currently identify—Marie of France, Eleanor of Aquitane, Margery Kempe, Christine de Pisan, the Pastons. Sections I and II include a sampling of material on classical literature to show that medieval authors in part derived their views of women from the early Christian theologians, whose own views were influenced by Ovid and other late Roman writers. Section III-D, on the other hand, suggests that another "literary" tradition—the popular one of folklore, proverbs and the like—also influenced medieval authors' presentations of women.

Section III-A notes several short but useful studies of general medieval conceptions of women; those by Erickson, Kaufman and Power (1975) are especially helpful. All of the works listed in III-A may be used to preface the study of individual authors and their images of women. Sections III-B and III-C include a selection of the recent scholarship on these individual authors and their literary attitudes toward women. My emphasis here on Italian, Spanish and French authors and on Chaucer reflects my own interests, but it also reflects the current state of research in the field of medieval literature. While no comprehensive examination of Chaucer's images of women exists yet, the study of this subject in the Latin and Romance traditions which form his major background is considerably more advanced than it is in the Germanic—Icelandic, Norse, Anglo-Saxon—literary traditions.

I have excluded technical or specialized studies of subject essential to a full appreciation of medieval literary images of women—for example, the ascetic Gregorian reform movement of the twelfth century and the corresponding reappearance of anti-feminist, anti-matrilineal literary themes and motifs; the major role of women in heretical movements; medieval pseudo-scientific ideas of female sexuality and carnality.

I. Classical and Medieval Studies


Harksen, Sybil, Women in the Middle Ages (New York, 1974). Valuable for its inclusion of images of women in the medieval visual arts.


III. Medieval Studies

A. General


B. Non-Chaucerian Literature


Dow, Blanche H., The Varying Attitude towards Women in French Literature of the Fifteenth Century (New York, 1936).


(continued on page 11)
C. Chaucer
Huppé, Bernard F., "Rape and Women's Sovereignty in the Wife of Bath's Tale," *Modern Language Notes* 63 (1948), 378-381.

D. Miscellaneous Para-literary Studies

E. Bibliography

Susan Schibanoff
University of New Hampshire

**PUBLICATIONS**


This is the latest in the Foundation's bibliography series and is an excellent compilation. The 28-page pamphlet is divided into Methods and theory, Early scholarship, Contemporary scholarship and Guides to further resources.

Meg Garrard, June Oliver and Martha Williams, *Women in Management*. Center for Social Work Research, University of Texas/Austin, 1976.

This anthology is the proceedings of the conference "Women and Men—Colleagues in Management?" held in May of 1975. It includes papers in three categories: the economic perspective, women's fear of success and the informal organization.


This 64-page pamphlet includes nearly 150 annotations of books and articles on women and the priesthood. The diocesan committee which compiled the bibliography had as its purpose the advancement of the cause of ordination of women; the entries have been selected with that in mind.


This report is the result of a one-year study of 30 history textbooks published by 18 different publishers used in the Lexington Public Schools. The report is a thorough one and gives a summary of the findings as well as complete results for each book. Another carefully documented indictment of sexist texts and publishing.