

own former collaborator, Christiane Klapisch-Zuber. Although these and many other fine studies are listed in Herlihy's bibliography, he has incorporated neither their factual findings nor their interpretive conclusions here. Instead, Herlihy offers up his own survey of women's work, taking as his central theme women's involvement in textile production from the *gynaecea* ("women's quarters") of late antiquity to the commercialized piece-work systems at the end of the Middle Ages. This work is intriguing and, to my knowledge, has never been surveyed before in such breadth. Herlihy gets into trouble, however, when he moves beyond this central focus on textiles into other aspects of women's work.

Relying on a cursory survey of secondary literature and his own, apparently random reading of hagiographical material, Herlihy pulls together a pastiche of anecdote and generalization. Discomfiting errors and questionable assertions work their way into the text, as do abstruse "reassessments" of certain contested historical problems. Naturally, one expects a few minor errors of detail in a work of synthesis which aims to cover more than a millenium of historical development, but Herlihy's effort often adds up to no more than the statement of banal verities at best and specious or ill-considered arguments at worst.

Readers familiar with Professor Herlihy's earlier work in statistical social history will turn to Chapter 6, a quantitative study of tax rolls for late thirteenth- and early fourteenth-century Paris, expecting that at least here Herlihy will take us onto firmer ground. Herlihy's many charts, graphs, and tables are indeed impressive, as is the fascinating array of female occupations that he documents. However, I had occasion to recheck Herlihy's work on one category of women workers—health-care providers, which is my own area of research—and found surprising errors in both his math and his interpretive categories. Herlihy refers indiscriminately to "lady doctors" when he actually means physicians, midwives, and other practitioners; he counts *nourrices* among health-care workers even though these are almost certainly wet-nurses with no specific medical duties; he refers to "guilds" of midwives in several French towns even though the source he cites for this information says nothing at all about such formal alliances of birth attendants. He counts thirteen female barbers in 1292 and 1313, which is correct for the earlier year but wrong for the later (there is only one in 1313). These are minor details in and of themselves, but they add up to a profound suspicion that this disappointing book was hastily and carelessly prepared. One can only hope that *Opera muliebria* will be quickly superseded by the kind of scholarly synthesis this field deserves.

Monica Green, History, Duke University

Bella Millet and Jocelyn Wogan-Browne. Medieval English Devotional Prose for Women: Selections from the Katherine Group and *Ancrene Wisse*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990. xliii + 219.

Katherina M. Wilson and Elizabeth M. Makowski. Wykked Wyves and the Woes of Marriage: Misogamous Literature from Juvenal to Chaucer. Albany, NY: State Univ. of New York Press, 1990. pp. ix + 206.

MILLET AND WOGAN-BROWNE undertake a desiderata of medieval feminist

studies: to provide "an edition which would make the Ancrene Wisse and the works associated with it more accessible both to students and to a wider audience" (v). In their handsomely-produced volume, Medieval English Prose for Women, they make available the complete texts with facing-page translations of three works from the "Katherine Group" of early Middle English (c. 1190-1230) devotional texts for women: Hali Meidhad, Seinte Margarete, and Sawles Warde, plus two sizeable sections (7 and 8) of the Ancrene Wisse. The material is so engaging that the reader wishes there were more of it, particularly since M. B. Salu's translation of the Ancrene Wisse (Ancrene Riwe, 1955) is out of print. As there is yet no complete critical edition with translation of the whole Ancrene Wisse, a difficult text to assign students not adept in Early Middle English, it would be a bonus to have more of the Wisse included in the present edition. Nonetheless, the didactic works the editors do include are compelling in their depiction of the stress on virginity, self-denial, and saintliness in the lives of late-medieval religious women, and they fill a real classroom need for exploration of this prose genre. The editorial apparatus consists of a brief introduction, notes on further reading, and some explanation of the texts and translations. A selective textual commentary (keyed to lines from the Middle English works rather than the translated sections), a selective Middle English glossary, and a list of proper names is appended, while the reader is referred to the editions listed in "Further Reading" for fuller comments and glosses.

Since this edition constitutes the only available anthology of any "Katherine Group" texts in translation, we should be delighted that now our students and colleagues not fluent in Middle English can encounter these previously inaccessible works written for medieval English recluses and religious women. Yet while applauding the effort of getting such important texts to a wider audience, as feminists and teachers we must also be disappointed by some unevenness in the result.

The texts of the translations are competent, close to the early Middle English original yet rendered in smooth Modern English; the early Middle English seems well-edited; the explanatory notes are helpful, as is the glossary for those with an interest in linguistic matters. Still, neither the dry introductory material nor the bibliography is entirely suitable for a book designed as a student edition. The editors and press may have been constrained by space requirements (note the cost!), but users of this edition are not, for example, given sufficient introductory material to make these works meaningful as documents written primarily for religious women; nor are they directed to enlightening current bibliographical references on devotional prose or medieval feminist studies as compensation for the thinness of the introduction. The bulk of citations in the "Further Reading" section are to editions and older works on general historical context. Linda Georgianna's The Solitary Self (1981) on the Ancrene Wisse is nowhere mentioned, nor is the work of Caroline Bynum. Elizabeth Robertson's Early English Devotional Prose for Women (1990) may have been in press concurrently with the Millet/Wogan-Browne edition, but surely Robertson's earlier article on the Wisse in Seeking the Woman in Late Medieval and Renaissance Writings (1989) was available to the editors. There is no focus in the streamlined, albeit informative, introduction on the issue of women as characters in the pieces or as the intended audience. Given the nature of the works in the anthology, this seems a serious oversight. The editors sidestep the question of what it might be to read or hear these narratives and treatises "as" women, or even "like" women, and do not rehearse in any depth how misogynous and misogynous literature informed the "Katherine Group" works and the Wisse. One wishes the introduction and reading list here more resembled the excellent (and also collaborative) anthology Three Medieval

Views of Women (1989) of Fiero, Pfeffer, and Allain [see MFN 11, 9-10] which focusses so intently on the role of women in medieval society through the three poems anthologized, and presents so full and up-to-date a bibliography, including feminist works. Feminists may despair over readings by Millett and Wogan-Browne such as their assessment of the appeal of the legend of St. Margaret: "... spectacle and action are not lacking ..., and stylistic lavishness and rhetorical skill make Seinte Margarete an entertaining as well as instructive legend, well-adapted for delivery to a general audience" (xxv). The death, rape, or torture of a beautiful woman has always been the stuff of patriarchal literature and entertainment, but one wishes this notion at least were recognized by the editors of this volume, and the possibility of a feminist reading allowed in the analysis of such a voyeuristic, male-gets-sexually-aroused-by-violence-to-virgin legend, while perhaps acknowledging its author's considerable skills as a cautionary preacher of virginity and virtue.

Delighted by the availability of this anthology published in such an admirable format of interleaved translation, and notwithstanding my reticence about its dated and narrow introductory apparatus (which one can always work around), I ordered the text for my graduate/advanced undergraduate class on medieval women last term, and encountered the principal fault of this book (and, to be sure, no fault of its editors): the prohibitive price. My own copy of this small book, bought with an instructor's discount, cost about \$36.00. When the books were finally—after numerous delays by O.U.P.—delivered, at least five weeks late for the term and after approximately three price-hikes from the publisher, the shelf-cost to students was over \$60.00! The bookstore blamed O.U.P. for the astronomical expense, and the press blamed the "pound/dollar exchange rate." Nevertheless, I was appalled at the publication in hardback of what was so specifically slated by its editors to be a student non-specialist edition, at so crippling a cost. Reluctant to require students to pay the outrageous purchase price, since this book was part of a course in which there were twelve required texts, I cancelled the order, and we made do with one copy on reserve in the library. The students, however, were so enamoured of the works included, which excited them to produce excellent papers and discussion of medieval women, that they genuinely mourned not having texts of their own. The press lost thirty-five sales, and lamentably, as of this writing, the edition has not been reissued in paperback, nor has the price been adjusted for the U.S. student market.

Happily, the second book considered here of interest to MFN readers is more uniformly successful. Wykked Wyves and the Woes of Marriage concisely and most engagingly chronicles the history of misogamous (anti-marriage) literature, from its classical manifestations in Juvenal's Sixth Satire to its medieval incarnations in the works of Abelard, Walter Map, Chaucer, and others. This collaborative venture of a historian (Makowski) and a literary scholar (Wilson) turns out to be a felicitous one, and the well-written and scholarly book is a must for feminist medievalists who wish to have in focus the larger framework of the history of ideas and the politics of distrust of women and marriage. These are not only evidenced in our own subject-areas and in the periods we study, but prove, alas, to continue to inform the contours of our culture. In fact, this book is well worth pairing in a review with the above edition of "Katherine Group" texts. So much of the classical and patristic background of misogamy (and misogyny) bleeds through to the arguments for virginity in those medieval texts, that the two books would work well together in a class.

Wilson and Makowski organize their material around historical records and the misogynous texts medievalists might frequently encounter and find cited—those written

for a secular, nonmonastic audience. They begin by defining misogamy as separate from misogyny, yet allow that the two ways of thinking can and do commingle and conflate in writings of the periods they consider. But misogamy is their focus and in fact they seek to redress the inadequate attention which scholars have paid to misogynous tracts:

because misogynous (anti-marriage) tracts in antiquity and throughout the Middle Ages were written almost exclusively by and for male readers, both literary critics and historians have dealt with them only incidentally—as subspecies of, or as corollaries to, the broader category of literary misogyny (1).

The authors carefully elucidate the difference between the two stances by noting that any treatise attempting to dissuade a man from marriage might be assumed to reject women, “the gender that symbolized the lower appetites,” and counsel a man to hate or distrust the snare of marriage (1). Yet, as the authors strikingly highlight, misogynous ideals “do not necessarily preclude the glorification of women, nor does the exaltation of marriage and childrearing necessarily entail the exaltation of women” (2). Celibate propaganda may also be misogynistic; yet some such works may indeed be “panegyrics of chaste womanhood” (2). Two rhetorically distinct branches of the misogynous topos are delineated by the authors: limited misogamy, an *vir sapiens ducit uxorem* (would the wise man marry?) “which advocated the celibate ideal of a select group,” and unlimited misogamy, an *vir ducit uxorem* (should a man marry?) “which promotes it for all” (3). This rhetorical dual grouping, found in Quintilian and Boethius, exists alongside a tripartite division of the topos, into ascetic, philosophic, and general misogynous works (3).

The introductory material presents and refines the definitions of these shades of the misogynous spectrum, and outlines the discussion which occupies the rest of the book. Each tightly organized chapter, with its succinct and lucid concluding section, probes both history and literature for the milieu which gave rise to misogynous works, and the result is an enlightening treatment of the three types of misogamy. According to the authors’ research, the status of women both in marriage law and in economic terms provides the key to the type of misogynous works as well as the abundance or relative absence of such works during an historical period. Wilson and Makowski neatly telegraph their conclusion in the introduction, and proceed in the rest of the book to elaborate most convincingly on this notion:

Both as propaganda and as entertainment, the topos of misogamy is the product and the reflection of a complex cultural matrix. Misogamy occurs in literature only when there is a certain level of civilization, order, urbanization in a society and when women attain a certain level of economic or legal independence (7).

Struggling societies, torn by famine or war, have no time for “marital casuistry;” a literature of marital dissuasions is “ludicrous” in societies where women are completely dependent upon men. Thus, say the authors,

the age of Trajan and Hadrian gave rise to Juvenal’s Sixth Satire; the Christian controversy regarding marriage and celibacy occurred not during the early years of the persecutions but in the fourth century of legitimization and expansion; the reemergence of works of misogamy in the Middle Ages is concurrent with the rise of civilization, order, urbanization, and learning in the twelfth century (7).

Demonstrating that the identification of anti-matrimonial with misogynistic literature is “unwarranted” (10), the authors posit as well “a link between the growing secularism and

careerism of the late Middle Ages and the reduction in women's social status and public options" (10), confining women more restrictively to the household. This restriction of women during the late Middle Ages coincided with a rediscovery of the classics (Juvenal), and the "deployment of ancient prejudices" of aggressive, lustful women may have been particularly relevant to such a society in transition (11), resulting in an array of misogamous literature.

"Classical Antecedents" (Chap. I) prefaces an analysis of Juvenal's Sixth Satire with an explanation of Roman marriage law and the status of Roman women, noting that "overtly misogynistic misogamy seems to surface at periods when the dichotomy between the legal inequality and de facto equality of women is quite pronounced and when there is some (often begrudged) improvement in the status of women—real or imagined" (7). Medievalists will find revisiting the Romans rewarding, and rereading Juvenal through the lens of Wilson and Makowski most profitable for the apprehension of what is to follow. A real talent of the two authors is the vivid paraphrasing and lively close reading of the texts they choose to discuss—they make you want to rush out and read virtually any work they turn their hand to analyzing.

Chapter II on "Ascetic Misogamy" chronicles the emergence of the Christian celibate and chaste ideal for both men and women, where marriage is a state inferior to that of chastity and abstinence. Paul, Tertullian, and Jerome are invoked as formulators of this ideal, with Jerome's attacks on marriage in Adversus Jovinianum—which the authors instructively compare to the argumentative method of Juvenal's Sixth Satire—as the focus of the chapter. "Philosophic Misogamy," Chapter III, describes the reemergence of anti-marriage literature in the twelfth century, against a background of the ecclesiastical reform movement and aristocratic "retrenchment" of the eleventh and twelfth centuries (63), when new marriage laws, heresies, and courtly love are factors in the return to classical models of satire of marriage. Philosophic misogamy attempts to dissuade an audience of elite young male scholars from the impediments of a wife and family, but not necessarily from the pleasures of the flesh, and pronounces marriage and philosophy mutually exclusive (106). Strong men are brought low by weak women, and the philosopher cannot afford such a descent from his Olympian heights. Among the writers considered in this chapter are Peter Abelard, Walter Map, John of Salisbury, and Peter of Blois, whose writings, say the authors, "mirror the 'official' policy of the Church" on celibacy as the road to corporate preferment (108).

The last chapter on "General Misogyny" traces the urbanization and secularization of medieval Europe from the mid-thirteenth century onward, where misogynous works of wit, humor, and satire replace the admonitions to perfection and celibacy of the earlier Middle Ages. Spiritual equality of the sexes, achieved through abstinence, is no longer mentioned (109), and the position of women seems to have declined, evidenced by a misogynistic reaction to the power achieved by women in the preceding centuries. The authors include a glimpse of certain "scientific" beliefs about the nature of women derived from Aristotle, and an informative discussion of canon law on marriage. This chapter highlights the popular misogynistic literature of the period that stridently argues for wifelessness, yet somehow manages to satirize husbands as well. Some of the Juvenalian ("urbane," "antiauthoritarian," "antiestablishment") late-medieval works of misogamy/misogyny—and here the traditions do seem to merge—considered are De Conjuge Non Ducenda, the Quinze Joies de Mariage, the Roman de la Rose, and Chaucer's Wife of Bath's "Prologue."

Despite their knowledge of misogynous works and how they are employed to satiric

and ironic ends by Chaucer in the Wife of Bath's "Prologue", the authors seem dated in their positing of a "Marriage Group" in the Canterbury Tales (which suits their argument nicely) and provide somewhat rusty bibliographic references to Chaucer studies. This is the weakest section of an otherwise robust book. Still, the reading of the Wife of Bath's "Prologue" is indeed enriched by the ample analysis of misogamous argumentation that has preceded this chapter. And, the authors' treatment of Chaucer's simultaneous ridiculing of celibate propaganda, while cataloguing the woes of marriage ("Dame Alice's prologue, however, is a dissuasio disguised as a persuasio" (152)) underscores the complexities of Chaucerian poetics and his concern for exposing patriarchal language. The works discussed in this chapter, in general, display a kind of exuberant, satiric secular misogamy where marriage is depicted as a painfully miserable state for men in which wicked wives have their way.

Reading Bram Dijkstra's odd but interesting Idols of Perversity: Fantasies of Feminine Evil in Fin-de-Siècle Culture (Oxford, 1986) at the same time as Wykked Wyves made me dizzy with the comparisons between the nineteenth-century "scientific," "medical," and literary authorities on the inherent evil and inferiorities of the female—whom Dijkstra quotes at length—and the nearly identical words of their various classical and medieval counterparts discussed in Wykked Wyves. It was a shame Dijkstra, whose disturbing abundance of literary and iconographic examples overwhelm the reader with the pervasiveness of misogyny in all aspects of fin-de-siècle culture, could not have had the Wilson/Makowski volume at hand as he wrote, to anchor his cultural analysis in the wider misogynous tradition and to discern where the particularly virulent strain of nineteenth-century misogyny arose. And this is indeed a value of Wykked Wyves for feminist studies: the authors have convincingly demonstrated that the politics of distrust and hatred of matrimony—and of the power of women—is in the very fabric of Western culture and continues to be reified out of political and economic necessity. As the authors remind us, "links between life and literature are clearly justified;" "the motifs that surfaced in a specific era did so neither randomly nor as artistic flourishes divorced from experience (163). Wykked Wyves is both learned and engagingly written. It needs to be on your bookshelf.

Christine M. Rose, English, Portland State University

NOTES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS



FUTURE ISSUES OF MFN



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