CONTENTS

~ ARTICLES

FIGHTER, PLAYER, HUNTER: QUEER WOMEN
AND FEMALE AGENTS ON SECULAR GOTHIC IVORIES
Emma Le Pouésard

WOMEN’S PUBLIC LANGUAGE IN THE
OLD ENGLISH APOLLONIUS OF TYRE
Sophia D’Ignazio

MALORY’S GWENYVERE AND HER LADIES
Molly A. Martin

READING THE BOOKS OF MARGERY KEMPE
AND ALICE PYETT: ATTACHMENT AND FEMINIST
RESTORATION IN MICHELLE PAYER’S WAKENHYRST
Laura Varnam

~ RETROSPECTIVES

LESBIANS LIKE ME
Judith M. Bennett

~ BOOK REVIEWS

STONE FIDELITY: MARRIAGE AND EMOTION IN MEDIEVAL TOMB SCULPTURE
Jessica Barker
Reviewed by Amy Danielle Juarez

WOMEN WARRIORS AND NATIONAL HEROES: GLOBAL HISTORIES
Boyd Cothran, Joan Judge, and Adrian Shubert, eds.
Reviewed by Misty Urban

WOMEN’S FRIENDSHIP IN MEDIEVAL LITERATURE
Karma Lochrie and Usha Vishnuvajjala, eds.
Reviewed by B. Skye Oliver
Apostate Nuns in the Later Middle Ages
Elizabeth Makowski
Reviewed by Morgan McMinn

A Life of Ill Repute: Public Prostitution in the Middle Ages
Maria Serena Mazzi
Joyce Myerson, translator
Reviewed by Amanda L. Scott

Female Authorship, Patronage, and Translation in Late Medieval France: From Christine de Pizan to Louise Labé
Anneliese Pollock Renck
Reviewed by Alani Hicks-Bartlett

Acts of Care: Recovering Women in Late Medieval Health
Sara Ritchey
Reviewed by Tanya Stabler Miller

The Basque Seroras: Local Religion, Gender, and Power in Northern Iberia, 1550–1800
Amanda L. Scott
Reviewed by Phyllis Zagano

Women, Food, and Diet in the Middle Ages: Balancing the Humors
Theresa Vaughan
Reviewed by Autumn Reinhardt-Simpson

Women Religious Crossing between the Cloister and the World: Nunneries in Europe and the Americas, ca. 1200–1700
Mercedes Pérez Vidal, ed.
Reviewed by Alexandra Verini

Women, Writing and Religion in England and Beyond, 650–1100
Diane Watt
Reviewed by Andrew Breeze

Medieval Intersections: Gender and Status in Europe in the Middle Ages
Katherine Weikert and Elena Woodacre, eds.
Reviewed by Ebba Struiztenbladh

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

Women’s Friendship in Medieval Literature uncovers and redefines female friendship from fourteenth-century Italian holy women to early modern alewives and their counterparts in mid-twentieth-century American lesbian bars. In the introduction, Karma Lochrie and Usha Vishnuvajjala articulate a common goal of the essays: to “[define] friendship as something more nuanced and complex” (2) than previous queer readings and modern models of friendship have allowed. Lochrie and Vishnuvajjala situate this work as an answer to the silence on female friendship in the medieval period, and they resist the tradition of relegating its study to discussions in queer readings—an oversight they argue erases difference in female friendship. By engaging diverse examples of female friendship with existing scholarship on masculine and queer female relationships, the contributors of this volume promote a celebration of diversity in friendship guided but not hindered by queer readings of female friendships in the past. Part 1 entices the reader to look more closely at familiar female figures, attuning our gaze to recognize the marginal narrative details that construct female friendship. Part 2 asks that the reader acknowledge female friendship as a conceptual space, gently guiding us from spiritual communities in part 1 to secular ones of fiction that offer more sympathetic depictions of women who are unfavorably characterized. Finally, part 3 demands that the reader use their new tools of investigation to perform the cross-temporal work of seeing the medieval in the modern: these five chapters invoke the concept of feminine spaces of part 2 and contribute their own creative (re)tellings of friendships between women, medieval and modern.

Part 1 situates friendship in terms of communal living and socially beneficial partnerships between women. These essays look at medieval women who are easiest for a modern scholar to see, study, and understand. Jennifer N. Brown discusses religious visionaries like Hildegard of Bingen and Catherine of Siena, whose stories reveal a network of mutual female support in spite of narrative foci on the men in their lives. Stella Wang considers fictional women in Marie de France’s corpus who blend spiritual love with secular relationships, yielding spiritual growth in laywomen audiences. Lay holy women in Italy share in this construction of spiritual friendship: Clare of Rimini, Umiliana de’ Cerchi, and Margaret of Cortona all rely on networks of women to pursue their masculinized paths to piety in Andrea Boffa’s essay. And
Alexandra Verini’s essay applies the Epicurean notion of friendship to the nuns at Syon Abbey and draws out evidence of women’s friendship in its perceived absence.

Part 2 reveals the existence of friendship through the traces of spaces where women convene and form bonds or partnerships in otherwise masculine texts. This section is narrow in scope—encompassing only late medieval English literary works by Chaucer, Gower, Malory, and the unknown writers of *Emaré* and the Stanzaic *Morte Arthur*—however, the contributors present a diversity of female friendships built upon mutual support and networking which become increasingly capacious in their models of friendship. Lydia Yaitsky Kertz’s essay introduces female friendship in *Emaré* as an intersectional alliance visually symbolized by embroidered silk that connects romance heroines across texts. Usha Vishnuvajjala’s essay examines spaces of emotional vulnerability, arguing that Gaynor is emotionally repressed rather than aloof and unfeeling; this reading presents a sympathetic queen who experiences emotional catharsis in the missing leaf of the surviving manuscript. In the last essay of this section, Melissa Ridley Elmes argues for a female-led shift in attitudes towards women that led to cultural translation in the works of Chaucer, Gower, and Malory; she argues the works of these authors bear traces of female friendship constructed from Epicurean ideals rather than Aristotelian friendship models, which softens the misogyny found in their source texts.

Part 3 presents five essays that push the boundaries of our conception of female friendship and offer stunning new ways to bridge the medieval and modern. Carissa M. Harris identifies modern lesbian bar culture with alewife poems like Dunbar’s *Tretis of the Tua Mariit Wemen and the Wedo* and argues they both carve out subversive feminine spaces as an antidote to misogyny. Karma Lochrie’s essay creates a medieval Bechdel Test by focusing on friendship as empathy. Her essay privileges “hosting without taking hostage” (194) and celebrates the communal, non-transactional, and supportive nature of female relationships in Chaucer’s *Canterbury Tales*.

Christine Chism’s essay turns us ever closer to a conception of female friendship as the very binding matter of humanity that manifests even in masculine discourse that seeks to erase, ignore, or belittle it. She argues that Christine de Pizan renders female friendship a material reality by rewriting history and writing for women. Laurie A. Finke brings us to modernity in her essay by exploring the spaces and rituals which create conditions of prosthetic friendship in fraternal orders and
then in Wiccan rituals. Finke underscores the limits of friendship in the context of the lone-witch image fed by social media. In the last essay, Clare A. Lees and Gillian R. Overing value modern-medieval storytelling to narrate the silence on female friendships. Engaging with male-authored medieval texts alongside modern female-authored stories, they imagine a conversation between Queen Iurminburg and Abbess Ælfthlæd, seventh-century women separated in the literary record but united by their shared connections.

In the afterword, Penelope Anderson writes that the volume seeks to “write various types of difference back into the story of friendship,” and *Women’s Friendship in Medieval Literature* accomplishes that goal (267). This collection offers both accessible and theoretically complex iterations of female friendship that appeal to a broad readership, and each successive chapter builds on and often responds to the previous one such that we might best conceive of this book as a well-marked map of female friendship in medieval literature. Remarking upon the multiplicity of female friendship, this collection closes with the observation that care and alliance-building—traits shared by most of the friendships explored in this book—are hallmarks of an equality that does not assimilate difference but rather embraces it—one that creates space for vulnerability and individuality and builds a transhistorical polity of women like those of *La cité des dames*.

*B. Skye Oliver*

*University of Arkansas*

https://doi.org/10.32773/ESAA7849


Elizabeth Makowski’s *Apostate Nuns* expands our understanding of the late medieval female apostate experience. Her work connects studies of apostasy with current trends in legal and gender history that inspect the female experience as both an actor of and acted upon by the law. Makowski acknowledges the limitations of her legal sources and uses scholarship on women’s spirituality, penitential practice, and disasters to situate and inform her analysis. She challenges the wayward