Women, Reading, and Piety in Late Medieval England

Women, Reading, and Piety in Late Medieval England traces networks of female book ownership and exchange which have so far been obscure, and shows how women were responsible for both owning and circulating devotional books. In seven narratives of individual women who lived between 1350 and 1550, Mary Erler illustrates the ways in which women read and the routes by which they passed books from hand to hand. These stories are prefaced by an overview of nuns’ reading and their surviving books, and are followed by a survey of women who owned the first printed books in England. An appendix lists a number of books not previously attributed to religious women’s ownership. Erler’s narratives also provide studies of female friendship, since they situate women’s reading in a context of family and social connections. The book uses bibliography to explore social and intellectual history.

This series of critical books seeks to cover the whole area of literature written in the major medieval languages – the main European vernaculars, and medieval Latin and Greek – during the period c. 1100–1500. Its chief aim is to publish and stimulate fresh scholarship and criticism on medieval literature, special emphasis being placed on understanding major works of poetry, prose, and drama in relation to the contemporary culture and learning which fostered them.

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Frontispiece. St. Anne teaching Mary to read, in “a domestic interior that also includes other students,” and illustrates women reading in groups. Roger S. Wieck, William M. Voelkle and K. Michelle Hearne (eds.), *The Hours of Henry VIII: A Renaissance Masterpiece by Jean Poyet* (New York, 2000). Pierpont Morgan Library ms H.8, f. 186v.
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MARY C. ERLER
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Abbreviations

BIHR Bulletin of the Institute for Historical Research
BJRL Bulletin of the John Rylands Library
BL British Library
BRUC Emden, A. B., *A Biographical Register of the University of Cambridge to 1500*, Cambridge, 1963
CCR Calendar of Close Rolls
CIPM Calendar of Inquisitions Post Mortem
CPL Calendar of Papal Letters
CPR Calendar of Patent Rolls
CUL Cambridge University Library
DNB Dictionary of National Biography
EETS Early English Text Society
EHR English Historical Review
ELH English Literary History
IMEP Index of Middle English Prose
IPMEP Index of Printed Middle English Prose
JBAA Journal of the British Archaeological Association
JBS Journal of British Studies
JEH Journal of Ecclesiastical History
JMH Journal of Medieval History
JRUL John Rylands University Library
KCC King’s College Cambridge
List of abbreviations

MED Middle English Dictionary
MLR Modern Language Review
NCC Norwich Consistory Court
NRO Norwich Record Office
NYPL New York Public Library
OED Old English Dictionary
PCC Prerogative Court of Canterbury
PRO Public Record Office
RES Review of English Studies
SPCK Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge
TBGAS Transactions of the Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society
TCBS Transactions of the Cambridge Bibliographical Society
TEAS Transactions of the Essex Archaeological Society
TLS Times Literary Supplement
TRHS Transactions of the Royal Historical Society
TRP Tudor Royal Proclamations
TWAS Transactions of the Worcestershire Archaeological Society
VCH Victoria County History

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