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978-0-521-87942-2 - Women Readers in the Middle Ages

D. H. Green

Frontmatter

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WOMEN READERS IN THE MIDDLE AGES

Throughout the Middle Ages, the number of female readers was far greater than is commonly assumed. D. H. Green shows that, after clerics and monks, religious women were the main bearers of written culture and its expansion. Moreover, laywomen played a vital part in the process whereby the expansion of literacy brought reading from religious institutions into homes, and increasingly from Latin into vernacular languages. This study assesses the various ways in which reading was practised between c.700 and 1500 and how these differed from what we mean by reading today. Focusing on Germany, France and England, it considers the different categories of women for whom reading is attested (laywomen, nuns, recluses, semi-religious women, heretics), as well as women's general engagement with literature as scribes, dedicatees, sponsors, and authors. This fascinating study opens up the world of the medieval woman reader to new generations of scholars and students.

D. H. GREEN is Professor Emeritus in the University of Cambridge and a Fellow of Trinity College.

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Contents

<i>List of illustrations</i>	page vii
<i>Preface</i>	ix
<i>List of abbreviations</i>	x
Introduction	I
PART I: READING IN THE MIDDLE AGES	
1 Literal reading	7
Reading to oneself	7
Reading to others	15
Reading involved in writing	23
Reading in Latin and the vernacular	30
2 Figurative reading	43
Mental reading	43
Reading pictures	51
Reading and memory	58
Ways of reading	68
PART II: WOMEN AND READING IN THE MIDDLE AGES	
3 Categories of women readers	83
Women's education	84
Laywomen	115
Nuns	129
Recluses	146
Semi-religious women	156
Heretics	166

Cambridge University Press
978-0-521-87942-2 - Women Readers in the Middle Ages
D. H. Green
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

vi

Contents

4	Women's engagement with literature	179
	Women as scribes	179
	Women as dedicatees	189
	Women as sponsors of literature	203
	Women as authors	217
	Conclusion	256
	<i>Bibliography</i>	258
	<i>Index</i>	288

Illustrations

- | | |
|--|-----------------|
| 1 Hildegard von Bingen writes her visions, <i>Liber divinorum operum</i> .
Lucca, Biblioteca Statale, Cod. 1942, fol. lv. (detail).
(Photograph courtesy of Warburg Institute, London) | <i>page</i> 100 |
| 2 Marie de France writes her <i>Fables</i> .
Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale (Arsenal), MS 3142, fol. 256r.
(detail) | 101 |
| 3 Marie de France peruses her completed book.
Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale (Arsenal), MS 3142, fol. 273r.
(detail) | 102 |
| 4 Princess Claude de France learns to read.
Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum, MS 159, fol. 14r. | 103 |
| 5 (a) A woman at her devotions. (b) Opposite: the Annunciation.
Baltimore, Walters Art Museum, MS 267, fols. 13v, 14r. | 104 |
| 6 Mary of Burgundy reads her Book of Hours.
Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, MS 1857, fol. 14v. | 106 |
| 7 Gerburg with Psalter.
West choir of Naumburg Cathedral. (Bildarchiv Foto Marburg) | 107 |
| 8 Berchta with Psalter.
West choir of Naumburg Cathedral. (Bildarchiv Foto Marburg) | 108 |
| 9 Tomb effigy of Eleanor of Aquitaine.
Fontevrault Abbey church of Notre Dame-de-Grand-Moûtier
(© AKG Images) | 109 |
| 10 Mary Magdalene reading. By Rogier van der Weyden.
London, National Gallery 654 | 110 |
| 11 The Holy Kinship. By Geertgen tot Sint Jans (after restoration).
Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum | 111 |

Cambridge University Press
 978-0-521-87942-2 - Women Readers in the Middle Ages
 D. H. Green
 Frontmatter
[More information](#)

viii

List of illustrations

- | | | |
|----|--|-----|
| 12 | Hedwig of Silesia (with Duke Ludwig of Liegnitz and Duchess Agnes).
Los Angeles, J. Paul Getty Museum, MS Ludwig XI 7
(83. MN. 126), fol. 12v. | 112 |
| 13 | Baudonivia composes her <i>Vita Radegundis</i> .
Poitiers, Bibliothèque François Mitterand, MS 250 (136), fol. 43v. | 113 |
| 14 | Bridget of Sweden receives and transmits her visions.
Berlin, Staatsbibliothek – Preußischer Kulturbesitz,
Handschriftenabteilung, Ms. theol. lat. 33, fol. 241 v
(© Bildarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Munich) | 114 |

Preface

In preparing this book I find myself indebted to many individuals. I must thank the staff of many libraries (above all the Cambridge University Library) for their unfailing patience and helpfulness. My College has supported my research visits to Germany and helped towards the expense of the illustrations included in this book. Aware, too, of the irony that, dealing with medieval literacy, I am myself computer-illiterate, I am grateful to Laura Pieters Cordy (with help from Hansa Chauhan) for her skill and forbearance in preparing this book.

For their critical comments and willingness to discuss my problems at all stages in the genesis of this book I am especially indebted to Michael Clanchy and Nigel Palmer. I also thank Jürgen Wolf for sending me an advance version of his *Buch und Text*.

Only my wife Sarah knows how great is my gratitude to her for encouragement in this project and so much else. To her this book is dedicated.

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[More information](#)*Abbreviations*

AASS	<i>Acta Sanctorum</i> , Antwerp 1643ff.
AfK	<i>Archiv für Kulturgeschichte</i>
AGB	<i>Archiv für Geschichte des Buchwesens</i>
AH	<i>Art History</i>
AHR	<i>American Historical Review</i>
ASE	<i>Anglo-Saxon England</i>
ASNSL	<i>Archiv für das Studium der neueren Sprachen und Literatur</i>
BMZ	G. F. Benecke, W. Müller and F. Zarncke, <i>Mittelhochdeutsches Wörterbuch</i> , Leipzig 1854–61
CCM	<i>Cahiers de Civilisation Médiévale</i>
CH	<i>Church History</i>
CJ	<i>Classical Journal</i>
CN	<i>Cultura Neolatina</i>
DVjs	<i>Deutsche Vierteljahrsschrift</i>
EME	<i>Early Medieval Europe</i>
Ep.	Epistola
FMS	<i>Frühmittelalterliche Studien</i>
FS	Festschrift
GRBS	<i>Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies</i>
GRM	<i>Germanisch-Romanische Monatschrift</i>
HLF	<i>Histoire Littéraire de la France</i>
HZ	<i>Historische Zeitschrift</i>
IASL	<i>Internationales Archiv für Sozialgeschichte der Literatur</i>
JMEMS	<i>Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies</i>
JML	<i>Journal of Medieval Latin</i>
JMRS	<i>Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies</i>
LDO	Hildegard von Bingen, <i>Liber divinorum operum</i>
LiLi	<i>Zeitschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Linguistik</i>
MÆ	<i>Medium Ævum</i>

List of abbreviations

xi

<i>MGH</i>	<i>Monumenta Germaniae Historica</i>
<i>AA</i>	<i>Auctores Antiquissimi</i>
<i>SRM</i>	<i>Scriptores rerum Merovingicarum</i>
<i>SS</i>	<i>Scriptores</i>
<i>MHG</i>	Middle High German
<i>MIÖG</i>	<i>Mitteilungen des Instituts für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung</i>
<i>MIJb</i>	<i>Mittellateinisches Jahrbuch</i>
<i>MLQ</i>	<i>Modern Language Quarterly</i>
<i>MM</i>	<i>Miscellanea Mediaevalia</i>
<i>MS</i>	<i>Mediaeval Studies</i>
<i>NML</i>	<i>New Medieval Literature</i>
<i>OGE</i>	<i>Ons Geestelijk Erf</i>
<i>PBB</i>	<i>Paul und Braunes Beiträge</i>
<i>PL</i>	J. P. Migne, <i>Patrologia Latina</i>
<i>RB</i>	<i>Revue Bénédictine</i>
<i>RMS</i>	<i>Reading Medieval Studies</i>
<i>SMV</i>	<i>Studi Mediolatini e Volgari</i>
<i>StPh</i>	<i>Studies in Philology</i>
<i>VfL</i>	K. Ruh (ed.), <i>Die deutsche Literatur des Mittelalters. Verfasserlexikon</i> , Berlin 1978ff.
<i>WI</i>	<i>Word and Image</i>
<i>WJbK</i>	<i>Wiener Jahrbuch für Kunstgeschichte</i>
<i>ZfdA</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für deutsches Altertum</i>
<i>ZfdPh</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für deutsche Philologie</i>
<i>ZHF</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für Historische Forschung</i>