

Abstracts in Alphabetical Order

Marie-Françoise ALAMICHEL, Université de Paris-Est Marne-la-Vallée
Les veuves au Moyen Âge : la voix masculine des femmes.

When one leaves aside the stereotyped heroines of medieval literary texts to focus on flesh and blood women, one is struck by their invisibility. Widows, however, do not pose the same problem as other women – probably because overnight they found themselves having to take on the duties and powers of men. Contrary to maidens and wives, they appear very often in non-literary documents. Apart from the great Christine de Pizan, not many widows of the Middle Ages have voiced their feelings. The primary sources at our disposal, because of their essentially administrative character, do not deal with emotions, with the state of mind of bereaved women. They only concern the settlement of the deceased's inheritance, the transfer of ownership of lands and other goods, the registration of complaints, (re)marriage contracts, etc. The socio-economic reality of widowhood was one of women having to face lives of hardship: poverty, loneliness and sickness for peasants, forced hasty remarriages for gentlewomen. The lot of many widows was thus one of poverty and increasing dependence, in spite of laws which gave them almost the same rights as men (in theory they could lead their own lives and manage their possessions in all independence), even in spite of the full rights widows

were granted over a large part of their late husbands' property, and of the husbands' obvious concern for the well-being of their surviving spouses.

Piero BOITANI, Università di Roma La Sapienza
Marie de France and the Breton Lay in England.

The 'anonymous' Marie de France is in fact a first-magnitude exponent of the so-called Channel Culture of the XIIth century. She created the *Lais*, the most distinctive and the most subtly influential of all her works, those without which the history of European literature would be different. The *Lais* are mostly original in two, if not three respects. They are short stories rather than romances; they take as their matter marginal, peripheral episodes; and they are, together with Chrétien's works and the *Ur-Tristan*, the first compositions with a 'modern' subject. The density, the tension, and the surprise-effect of the *Lais* depend on the combination of the first two features, while their fascination derives from the enchanted atmosphere – the sudden and continuous surfacing of the famous Breton marvels – that dominates every tale. A detailed examination of *Lanval* brings out the themes and qualities of Marie's narrative: *chiaroscuro*, quickness, and lightness. A comparison between Marie's *Lanval* and the English translation by Thomas Chestre, *Sir Launfal*, and then with *Sir Orfeo*, shows what happens to the Breton lay when it is transposed onto English soil in the XIVth century. Finally, the narrator of Chaucer's *Franklin's Tale* claims to be telling a Breton lay. The suspension of belief that dominates the central episode of the story shows that in this supreme fiction Chaucer understood what it meant to compose a tale in Marie's manner.

Aurélie BREMONT, Centre d'Études Médiévales Anglaises (Paris 4)

La voix de la femme celtique : murmure étouffé, chant merveilleux ou hurlement sinistre ?

Among the female voices of the past, those of Celtic women seem to be clamouring more than ever nowadays. The so-called 'revival' of ancient cults, the rehabilitation of the role of women in ancient Celtic society, and quests for the Divine Feminine are everywhere to be found. Is there any truth in these numerous theories and if not, where is truth to be found? By looking at the arguments used by champions of the Divine Feminine and confronting them with the writings of Dumézil and his followers who applied his work to Celtic studies, one may hope to hear the voices of women in the Celtic world a little more clearly. The place of women in Celtic society emerges not only through their political and religious roles, but also in the manner of their representation compared to their male counterparts in legends, literature and later traditions. Women were also pictured in the mythological world, through such illustrious characters as Eriu, Maedb, Macha, Guinevere, Morgan, and Vivian – female deities who enable us to see how these literary and mythological figures fit together to build an image of the great and fantastic Celtic Woman.

Anne DUGGAN, King's College London
On Finding the Voice of Eleanor of Aquitaine.

Although Eleanor of Aquitaine, duchess of Aquitaine and countess of Poitou *sui iuris* (1137-1204), queen of France (1137-52), duchess of Normandy and countess of Anjou (1152-54), and queen of England (1154-1204) held the office of an anointed queen for sixty-eight years – slightly longer than even Queen Victoria (1837-1901) – the recovery of her voice, that is the authentic record of her opinions or attitudes presents formidable obstacles. Contemporary Latin chroniclers and Occitan poets have little reliable to say about her, largely because for the greater part of her reign as Henry II's consort she was kept under guard as a consequence of her support for the rebellion of her sons against their father in 1173-74. Two sources, however, afford some insight: the more than 150 surviving charters and mandates issued by her authority and the two letters sent in 1162 to the pope and a cardinal. Three further letters, allegedly sent to Pope Celestine III in 1193, are dismissed as stylistic exercises written by Peter of Blois, Eleanor's secretary.

Isabelle FAURE, Université Paris-Sorbonne (Paris 4)
La reine Emma se présente : l'image d'une femme de pouvoir dans l'*Encomium Emmae Reginae* (c. 1041-1042).

Emma was the wife of two kings (Æthelred and Cnut) and mother of two kings (Harthacnut and Edward) of England. In the context of the first half of the XIth century, her life, status and power depended on the position of her male relatives, husbands or sons, as it did for any woman. Queen

Emma showed different faces, the same way as her 'career' as wife, mother and above all queen, went through several phases. The *Encomium Emmae Reginae* was written for and commanded by the queen, during a phase of glory for her family, as she was recovering some of her status as Queen of England when her son Harthacnut became king, between 1040 and 1042. Even if the *Encomium* is voluntarily flattering, it provides the voice of a woman who is trying to defend her legitimacy as wife, queen and mother through the politicised and somewhat biased account of the reign of her second family. Through it all, Emma expresses the difficulty of being a woman of power in the XIth century.

Sandra GORGIEVSKI, Université de Toulon

Lady Godiva : mythe et réalité d'une maîtresse femme.

Lady Godiva was remembered by medieval chroniclers for her piety and her legendary ride through the streets of Coventry in the XIIth century. She is presumed to have dared to ride naked in order to plead against the heavy taxations imposed by her husband, Leofric, Earl of Mercia. While she has attained near-mythical status from the medieval texts to their modern reinterpretations, her image has grown ambivalent, possibly mingling visual and mythical trends from different sources, the Celtic goddess Epona on her horse having become overlaid by the historical character of Godiva. The iconography of the legend becomes particularly rich in XIXth-century British painting, offering varied interpretations of the feminine icon from sacrifice to exhibitionism. She is then endowed with a voice on the screen in a 1950s movie, a swashbuckler which features her as both an icon of

devotion and a political, feminist figure. These contradictory visions ranging from diverse historical periods – from pre-Christian cult objects to the cinema – testify to the force of this feminine figure.

Wendy HARDING, Université de Toulouse-Le Mirail, CAS
'Ye wote ful lityl what sche felyth': The Crisis of Interpretation in *The Book of Margery Kempe*.

Margery Kempe's account of her mystical experience reveals a major fault line of late medieval society, where the authorities come into conflict. The new, highly personal strain of devotion she embraces confronts the clergy with the problem of controlling and channelling the powerful emotional expressions that result. The book documents Margery's quest for trustworthy and sympathetic spiritual counsellors, a search that is never quite resolved. Christ seems to represent the ideal confessor, speaking from and in the penitent's heart. Still, in order to confirm their authenticity, Margery must disclose her 'feelings' to clerical authorities, and the response to her revelations is ambivalent. To make interpretation more difficult, Margery frequently proclaims that inner experience is impossible to represent; she does not have the vocabulary to translate it for her judges. In *The Book of Margery Kempe* the fluctuation between feelings of doubt and conviction, dread and relief, exposes the interpretative difficulties that spiritual experience poses in the later Middle Ages.

Elizabeth KELLY, Université Paris-Sorbonne (Paris 4)
'The Mother Tongue and the Alien Woman: the Figure of Rowena in Lazamon 's *Brut*'.

It could be argued that in the centuries after the Norman Conquest, women's voices were instrumental in the survival and transmission of the English language during that period when French was the culturally dominant vernacular language in England. Due to intermarriage between Normans and Saxon women, English seems to have increasingly become the first language of the descendants of the Norman invaders, their 'mother tongue' in a literal sense. In Lazamon's *Brut*, an English translation of Wace's *Roman de Brut*, the figure of the Saxon woman Rowena is paradoxical because while she plays the role of a dangerous alien in the story, she speaks English, the language of the text, a language which Lazamon is seeking to promote, which was of course his mother tongue and most likely that of many of his readers. In translating the passages about Rowena, the English writer must find a way to bring out the otherness of this woman who is speaking the mother's tongue.

Ralf LÜTZELSCHWAB, Freie Universität Berlin
Sainte Catherine de Sienne et la politique de la papauté avignonnaise : les lettres aux cardinaux, le retour à Rome et l'éclatement du Grand Schisme (1377-1378).

Catherine of Siena (1347-80) is known especially through the *Vita* written by her confessor and spiritual guide, the Dominican Raymond of Capua. According to all the history books, this mystic and visionary, an illiterate woman of modest birth, somehow succeeded in influencing the decisions

taken in the papal court at Avignon – decisions culminating in the return of the Curia to Rome in 1376. But is this commonly held belief really true? In fact her letters, dictated to various secretaries, are the best witnesses we have. By analyzing her nine letters addressed to cardinals it is possible to show the kind of strategies she used in order to convince the powerful members of the Sacred College to follow her recommendations. In reality, the decision to return to Rome was closely aligned with the intentions of the princes of the Church themselves – only it suited them better, for political reasons, to present this not as a choice of their own but as a divine injunction made imperative by the exhortations of a saint. A study of the letters also raises the possibility that Catherine may have been subject to other influences, not only from the cardinals but also from members of her own religious family, since she was a Dominican tertiary.

Angela MAGUIN, Université de Montpellier 3

'All have clamoured in unison but spoken as individuals'. Pulcheria, Fifth-century Empress of the East and Hildegard of Bingen, Twelfth-century 'Sibyl of the Rhine'.

Though living in very different times and places, two remarkable women, Pulcheria and Hildegard, offer some interesting points of comparison. On becoming Empress in 414, Pulcheria (399-453), a devout Christian, took a vow of perpetual virginity, and with the collaboration of Bishop Atticus and the monk Proclus, she supported ecclesiastical orthodoxy during the Nestorian and Monophysitist controversies. Circumstances being then right for the establishment of the first Marian feasts in Constantinople, it has

been suggested that Pulcheria was taken by Proclus as a contemporary model of the Virgin Mary, in whose honour Pulcheria built churches, hospitals and pilgrim hostels. Pope Leo I also thanked her, after the Council of Chalcedon in 451, for her crucial role in containing heresies. Hildegard of Bingen (1098-1179) was given over, aged eight, to the care and education of a Benedictine nun at the abbey of Disibodenberg. She had had mystical visions since the age of three but hardly dared speak of them and only sought to obtain approval of them c. 1146-47 when, as abbess of the community, she wrote to Bernard of Clairvaux. With the help of the monk Volmar, her secretary and spiritual advisor, she describes these visions in *Scivias* (26 visions in 35 illustrations), which received the approval of Pope Eugenius III. Hildegard's output was prolific in many directions: a second visionary book, an encyclopaedia, a healer's handbook, a musical morality play, and over 70 liturgical songs (indeed, it is principally as a composer of vocal music that she has gained recognition in modern times). Known as the 'Sibyl of the Rhine', she became increasingly influential, daring to chastise even the Emperor Frederick Barbarossa and high-ranking ecclesiastical figures in letters which provide a precious insight into her life.

Sheryl SAVINA, Université de Paris-Sorbonne (Paris 4)

Egeria: An Early Woman Pilgrim to the Holy Land (381-384).

Egeria, also known as Ætheria, was a European woman who made a three-year pilgrimage to the Holy Land in the late fourth century and described her voyage in a long letter sent to a group of women back home. She also recounted in great

detail the liturgy of daily worship (with the principal feast days) as it was being developed in the Eastern Church in Jerusalem. The single known manuscript of her letter was copied in the eleventh century and rediscovered in Italy only in 1884. Since then the *Itinerarium Egeriae*, or *Egeria's Travels*, has been the object of innumerable scholarly studies focusing on her Latin style, her descriptions of the topography of Egypt and Palestine and the Judeo-Christian holy sites there, and her minute account of the Christian liturgy. Although the text is damaged and very incomplete, it is of major importance, as it is the earliest first-person descriptive narrative of such a pilgrimage and one of the earliest – if not the earliest – text written by a woman.

Table des Matières

Leo CARRUTHERS, Université Paris-Sorbonne (Paris 4)	
<i>Introduction</i>	1
Sheryl SAVINA, Université Paris-Sorbonne (Paris 4)	
<i>Egeria: An Early Woman Pilgrim to the Holy Land (381-384)</i>	15
Aurélie BREMONT, CÉMA Paris-Sorbonne (Paris 4)	
<i>La voix de la femme celtique : murmure étouffé, chant merveilleux ou hurlement sinistre ?</i>	37
Marie-Françoise ALAMICHEL, Université Paris-Est Marne-la-Vallée	
<i>Les veuves au Moyen Âge : la voix masculine des femmes</i>	57
Isabelle FAURE, Université Paris-Sorbonne (Paris 4)	
<i>La reine Emma se présente : l'image d'une femme de pouvoir dans l'Encomium Emmae Reginae (c. 1041-1042)</i>	87
Angela MAGUIN, Université de Montpellier 3	
<i>'All have clamoured in unison but spoken as individuals'. Pulcheria, fifth-century Empress of the East and Hildegard of Bingen, twelfth-century 'Sibyl of the Rhine'</i>	111
Anne DUGGAN, King's College London	
<i>On Finding the Voice of Eleanor of Aquitaine</i>	129
Elizabeth KELLY, Université Paris-Sorbonne (Paris 4)	
<i>The Mother Tongue and the Alien Woman: the Figure of Rowena in Lazamon's Brut</i>	159
Ralf LÜTZELSCHWAB, Freie Universität Berlin	
<i>Sainte Catherine de Sienne et la politique de la papauté avignonnaise : les lettres aux cardinaux, le retour à Rome et l'éclatement du Grand Schisme (1377-1378)</i>	179
Piero BOITANI, Università di Roma La Sapienza	
<i>Marie de France and the Breton Lay in England</i>	211

Wendy HARDING, Université de Toulouse-Le Mirail <i>'Ye wote ful lityl what sche felyth': The Crisis of Interpretation in The Book of Margery Kempe</i>	227
Sandra GORGIEVSKI, Université de Toulon <i>Lady Godiva : mythe et réalité d'une maîtresse femme</i>	243
Abstracts in Alphabetical Order	267
Table des Matières	277
Publications de l'AMAES	279