



The Trials and Joys of Marriage

edited by Eve Salisbury

DESCRIPTION:

The disparate texts in this anthology, produced in England between the late thirteenth and the early sixteenth centuries, challenge, and in some cases parody and satirize, the institution of marriage. In so doing, according to the Introduction, they allow us to interrogate the traditional assumptions that shape the idea of the medieval household. The trials of marriage seem to outweigh its joys at times and, as some of these texts suggest, maintaining a sense of humor in the face of what must have been great difficulty could have been no easy task. The texts bridge generic categories. Some are obscure, written by anonymous authors; others are familiar, written by the likes of John Lydgate, John Wyclif, and William Dunbar. Taken together they suggest that, despite the fact that marriage had become a sacrament in the twelfth century and was increasingly recognized by ecclesiastical and secular authorities as a valuable social institution, it was not always a stabilizing and orderly social force.

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CONTRIBUTORS BIOGRAPHIES:

Eve Salisbury is Professor of English at Western Michigan University. She specializes in medieval literature, with an emphasis on both Middle English and Latin.

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