

Medieval Woman's Song: Cross-Cultural Approaches (The Middle Ages Series)

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The number of surviving medieval secular poems attributed to named female authors is small, some of the best known being those of the trobairitz the female troubadours of southern France. However, there is a large body of poetry that constructs a particular textual femininity through the use of the female voice. Some of these poems are by men and a few by women (including the trobairitz); many are anonymous, and often the gender of the poet is unresolvable. A "woman's song" in this sense can be defined as a female-voice poem on the subject of love, typically characterized by simple language, sexual candor, and apparent artlessness.

The chapters in *Medieval Woman's Song* bring together scholars in a range of disciplines to examine how both men and women contributed to this art form. Without eschewing consideration of authorship, the collection deliberately overturns the long-standing scholarly practice of treating as separate and distinct entities female-voice lyrics composed by men and those composed by women. What is at stake here is less the voice of women themselves than its cultural and generic construction.



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