



## Woman Defamed and Woman Defended: An Anthology of Medieval Texts

*Alcuin Blamires (Editor) , Karen Pratt (Editor) , C.W. Marx (Editor) , Tertullian (Contributor) , John Chrysostom (Contributor) , Ambrose of Milan (Contributor) , Jerome (Contributor) , Augustine of Hippo (Contributor) , more... Gratian (Contributor) , Gottfried von Straßburg (Contributor) , Marbod of Rennes (Contributor) , Walter Map (Contributor) , Andreas Capellanus (Contributor) , Gautier le Leu (Contributor) , Jacques De Vitry (Contributor) , Jean de Meun (Contributor) , Giovanni Boccaccio (Contributor) , Jehan le Fèvre (Contributor) , Geoffrey Chaucer (Contributor) , Albertano of Brescia (Contributor) , John Gower (Contributor) , Christine de Pizan (Contributor) , Ovid (Contributor) , Juvenal (Contributor) , Aristotle (Contributor) , Galen (Contributor) , Isidore of Seville (Contributor) , Thomas Aquinas (Contributor) , Guido delle Colonne (Contributor) ...less*

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'... it is impossible / That any clerk wol speke good of wyves.' Behind the words of Chaucer's Wife of Bath lies a vast corpus of medieval misogynistic writings. These texts, which range from those of the Church Fathers to a rich array of vernacular literature, have had a profound influence on the status of women in the west. Yet, despite the recent surge of investigations into women's situation, no one book has sought to collect together the key voices of medieval antifeminism, let alone to present the voices sometimes raised, even at that epoch, in defence of women. The urgent need for a single and substantial sourcebook of these materials in modern translation is met for the first time in this volume, which includes an introduction, notes, and commentary. The accessibility of the better-known texts here (from Jerome to Walter Map; from Heloise and Abelard to Christine de Pizan and Chaucer) will be welcomed by those engaged in medieval and women's studies; the lesser-known writings concerning for instance the sexual 'double standard', and women and the priesthood, will provide unexpected discoveries for specialists and beginners alike. Indeed, a surprising range of early texts championing women - including material never previously available in translation - is here represented. All those concerned with women's studies and with medieval and later culture (European as well as English) will find *Woman Defamed and Woman Defended* fascinating to read as well as a useful resource.

## Woman Defamed and Woman Defended: An Anthology of Medieval Texts Details

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## **Elizabeth says**

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## **Sylwia says**

I read the book in search of materials for my MA Thesis and I have to say it was pretty helpful. There is not a lot of texts from the later Middle Ages, so if you're looking for that, you'll need to check some other sources. Other than that, the book was a very good read.

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## **Sarah (Gutierrez) Myers says**

Nice anthology of primary sources showcasing attitudes towards women in the middle ages. It would have been hilarious if unfortunately people hadn't actually believed some of this stuff. Or maybe only literate people read and believed that all women were unfaithful, untrustworthy blabbermouths and cheaters. (It'd be interesting to know if these ideas filtered down to the unlettered, as well.) Among the more unique ideas--as opposed to the oft-repeated accusation that no woman was concerned about faithfulness or virtue, but was always looking for another man to feed her insatiable sexual appetite-- was the idea that woman would become men after the resurrection because their imperfect natures could not be renewed as women. (Here Augustine came out swinging as women's defender, at least to the point of saying the feminine nature was also good and shared in the image of God, and so could share in the resurrection.) Mary, of course, figures largely in all defenses of women from the period, but other New Testament women whom Christ honored are also regularly appealed to.

I appreciated that the book also included texts written in defense of women, by authors other than Christine de Pizan (who, interesting though she is, is readily available in translation elsewhere).

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## **Amy says**

In fairness, I only read the introduction of this book and various chapters for a class I'm taking, but I found

that it provided a great overview of misogamy and the various pieces it included were highly interesting.

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### **Rachael says**

A bit dry, since it's almost entirely primary texts, but a fascinating look at the historical shifts in perspective on women's roles, attributes, failings, etc.

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### **Bri says**

Full disclosure: my enjoyment of this book was heavily influenced by the awesome annotations left by the previous owner.

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