

The Troubadour's Tale (Oxford Medieval Mysteries Book 5)

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The dazzling culture of the troubadours - the virtuosity of their songs, the subtlety of their exploration of love, and the glamorous international careers some troubadours enjoyed - fascinated contemporaries and had a lasting influence on European life and literature. Apart from the refined love songs for which the troubadours are renowned, the tradition includes political and satirical poetry, devotional lyrics and bawdy or zany poems. It is also in the troubadour song-books that the only substantial collection of medieval lyrics by women is preserved. This book offers a general introduction to the troubadours. Its sixteen newly-commissioned essays, written by leading scholars from Britain, the US, France, Italy and Spain, trace the historical development and setting of troubadour song, engage with the main trends in troubadour criticism, and examine the reception of troubadour poetry. Appendices offer an invaluable guide to the troubadours, to technical vocabulary, to research tools and to surviving manuscripts.

Insights into the lively and influential literary tradition of medieval French literature

What have a deaf nun, the mother of the first baby born to Europeans in North America, and a condemned heretic to do with one another? They are among the virtuous virgins, marvelous maidens, and fierce feminists of the Middle Ages who trail-blazed paths for women today. Without those first courageous souls who worked in fields dominated by men, women might not have the presence they currently do in professions such as education, the law, and literature. Focusing on women from Western Europe between c. 300 and 1500 CE in the medieval period and richly carpeted with detail, *A Medieval Woman's Companion* offers a wealth of information about real medieval women who are now considered vital for understanding the Middle Ages in a full and nuanced way. Short biographies of 20 medieval women illustrate how they have anticipated and shaped current concerns, including access to education; creative emotional outlets such as art, theater, romantic fiction, and music; marriage and marital rights; fertility, pregnancy, childbirth, contraception and gynecology; sex trafficking and sexual violence; the balance of work and family; faith; and disability. Their legacy abides until today in attitudes to contemporary women that have their roots in the medieval period. The final chapter suggests how 20th and 21st century feminist and gender theories can be applied to and complicated by medieval women's lives and writings. Doubly marginalized due to gender and the remoteness of the time period, medieval women's accomplishments are acknowledged and presented in a way that readers can appreciate and find inspiring. Ideal for high school and college classroom use in courses ranging from history and literature to women's and gender studies, an accompanying website with educational links, images, downloadable curriculum guide, and interactive blog will be made available at the time of publication.

Song and Self-Expression from the Troubadours to Guillaume de Machaut

Eros, Salvation, Vernacular Tradition

Musical Meaning in France, 1260-1330

The Oxford Guide to Literature in English Translation

Giving Voice to Love

Love and Death in Medieval French and Occitan Courtly Literature

Songs of the Women Troubadours

Money is the root of all evil... St Frideswide's Fair is a great annual event in Oxford, bringing together merchants and buyers from all over England and Wales, and from as far away as Flanders and France. Yet the earnings from the fair, granted to the Priory of St Frideswide centuries before, are resented by the town, and resentment can easily turn to violence. Under the unscrupulous Prior de Hungerford, even more trouble is brewing, and Nicholas Elyot is warned by intelligencer Alice Walsea that attendance at the fair may be used for something more sinister. When a merchant from Flanders is attacked and an English traitor is murdered, can Nicholas disentangle the crimes hidden under cover of the fair? A gripping medieval mystery and espionage thriller, ideal for readers of David Penny, Candace Robb and Michael Jecks.

This original and authoritative text reveals how chivalry was part of the problem of violence in medieval Europe, not merely its solution. The ideal was to internalize restraint in knights, but a close reading of chivalric literature shows chivalry also praised heroic violence by knights. This fascinating book lays bare the conflicts and paradoxes surrounding the concept of chivalry in medieval Europe.

Oxford, Spring 1354 When the series of accidents to the building of the chapel at Queen's College begins, they do not appear a cause for concern, but they grow more serious, and stonemasons are injured. Nicholas Elyot becomes involved after it is discovered that an intruder has reached the college by way of his garden. When Jordain Brinkylsworth's youngest student goes missing, it seems at first that his disappearance is unconnected, yet he is one of the 'poor boys' supported by Queen's. Surely this serious and studious boy cannot be responsible for the troubles? And then someone is killed.

This work offers an edition and translation of some 30 poems by the trobairitz, a remarkable group of women poets from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, who composed in the style and language of the troubadours. Introductory essays and notes by specialists in the field place the poems in literary, linguistic, historical, social and cultural contexts. English versions facing Occitan texts elucidate the original language and themes, while supplying poems that can be enjoyed by contemporary readers. The varied corpus includes love songs (cansos), debate poems (tensos), political satires (sirventes) and other lyrical sub-genres (including dawn-song, lament, ballad, chanson de mal mariee). To represent the range of female voices available in the lyric corpus of the troubadours, the editors have selected songs consistently attributed to historically documented women poets, as well as songs whose authorship is open to question. The latter may be presented by the manuscripts with or without a named woman poet, but all offer female speakers personae characteristic of troubadour poets in general.

The Bookseller's Tale

The Portuguese Affair

Tildy

A Study in Medieval Tradition

Simple Forms

The Sense of Sound

The Enterprise of England

It is the year of Our Lord's grace 1431, and the nuns of England's St. Frideswide sweetly chant their Paternosters behind gracious, trellised walls. But their quiet lives are shattered by the unwelcome visit of the hard-drinking, blaspheming dowager Lady Ermentrude, with her retinue of lusty maids and men, baying hounds, and even a pet monkey in tow. The lady demands wine, a feast, and her niece, the frail and saintly novice Thomasine. What she gets is her own strange and sudden death. Sister Frevisse, hosteler of the priory and amateur sleuth, fears murder. The most likely suspect is pious Thomasine . . . but Frevisse alone detects a clever web spun to entangle an innocent nun in the most unholy of passions—and the deadliest of deeds. In fifteenth-century Scotland, Gil Cunningham investigates the supposed reappearance of choirboy David Drummond, who vanished thirty years earlier and returned not much older than he left, and the recent disappearances of other singers.

A young girl's disappearance hints at a disturbing truth... When novice Emma Thorgold goes missing from Godstow Abbey in the summer of 1353, the hunt is on throughout the Oxfordshire countryside for any sign of where she could have gone. Bookseller Nicholas Elyot and scholar Jordain Brinkylsworth are anxious to help the girl, but her stepfather has other, more sinister intentions. Why is he so determined to shut her away for life? Or worse? And will she be found unharmed? A truly gripping historical mystery with twists and turns aplenty, perfect for fans of S. W. Perry, Graham Brack and Ellis Peters.

The Sense of Sound is a radical recontextualization of French song, 1260-1330. Situating musical sound against sonorities of the city, madness, charivari, and prayer, it argues that the effect of verbal confusion popular in music abounds with audible associations, and that there was meaning in what is often heard as nonsensical.

Doing Unto Others

The Path of Sexual Initiation

The Troubadour's Tale

Medieval Mysteries

Courtly Love

Shaping the Nation

This Rough Ocean

A devastating threat looms on the horizon... Facing the threat of King Philip's Enterprise of England - a Spanish invasion and annexation of the country - Sir Francis Walsingham's espionage service spreads a vast spy network across Europe. Young physician and code-breaker Christoval Alvarez is among those agents. After caring for hundreds of maimed and wounded soldiers returning from the fall of Sluys, Christoval is sent on two dangerous missions to Amsterdam, where, amongst the friendly Hollanders, treason and treachery lurks. Sailing home, Christoval's ship must play its part in a great sea battle in which the small and inexperienced English navy must confront the most powerful sea force in the world. A totally immersive and impactful historical espionage thriller, perfect for fans of Laura Shepherd-Robinson, Leonora Nattrass and S. G. MacLean.

The new medieval mystery from the author of The Servant's Tale. Sister Frevisse, the St. Frideswide nunnery's amateur sleuth, finds a black sheep in her family--her outlaw cousin Nicholas. He begs Frevisse to help him get pardoned for his crimes, but now a murder has occurred . . . and all fingers point to Nicholas.

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.

The death of a scholar, the birth of a detective... Oxford, Spring 1353. When young bookseller Nicholas Elyot discovers the body of William Farrington floating in the River Cherwell, all the signs point to suicide. Soon, however, Nicholas discovers evidence of murder. Who could have wanted to kill this promising student? As Nicholas and his close friend Jordain try to unravel what lies behind William's death, they

learn that he was innocently caught up in a criminal plot. When their investigations begin to involve town, university, and abbey, Nicholas takes a risky gamble – and puts his family in terrible danger in order to uncover the truth. A thrilling historical mystery full of twists and intrigue, perfect for fans of Ellis Peters, Paul Doherty and E. M. Powell.

A totally gripping historical crime thriller

The Stolen Voice

The Merchant's Tale

Essays on Medieval English Popular Literature

A scintillating historical adventure

How Soon Is Now?

The Stonemason's Tale

This guide highlights the place of translation in our culture, encouraging awareness of the process of translating and the choices involved, making the translator more 'visible'. Concentrating on major writers and works, it covers translations out of many languages, from Greek to Hungarian, Korean to Turkish. For some works (e.g. Virgil's Aeneid) which have been much translated, the discussion is historical and critical, showing how translation has evolved over the centuries and bringing out the differences between versions. Elsewhere, with less familiar literatures, the Guide examines the extent to which translation has done justice to the range of work available.

A biography of the saint as both mystic and man: "The single best book about Francis now available in English" (Commonweal). In this towering work, Andre Vauchez draws on the vast body of scholarship on Francis of Assisi, particularly the important research of recent decades, to create a complete and engaging portrait of the saint. He also explores how the memory of Francis was shaped by contemporaries who recollected him in their writings, and completes the book by setting "il Poverello" in the context of his time, bringing to light what was new, surprising, and even astonishing in the life and vision of this man. The first part of the book is a fascinating reconstruction of Francis's life and work. The second and third parts deal with the texts—hagiographies, chronicles, sermons, personal testimonies, etc.—of writers who recorded aspects of Francis's life and movement as they remembered them, and used those remembrances to construct a portrait of Francis relevant to their concerns. Finally, Vauchez explores those aspects of Francis's life, personality, and spiritual vision that were unique to him, including his experience of God, his approach to nature, his understanding and use of Scripture, and his impact on culture as well as culture's impact on him. "Considered one of the great spiritual leaders of humankind, Francis of Assisi was also a man of many faces and personas: ascetic, the founder of a religious order, a romantic hero, a mystic, a defender of the poor, a promoter of peace. But as Vauchez emphasizes—and this biography constantly reminds us—Francis was also a flesh-and-blood human being . . . A bracing, erudite account of a mystic's life." —Booklist

Challenging the way the Middle Ages have been treated in general histories of sexuality, *Sexuality in Medieval Europe* shows how views at the time were conflicted and complicated; there was no single medieval attitude towards sexuality any more than there is one modern attitude. Focusing on marital sexual activity, as well as behavior that was seen as transgressive, the chapters cover such topics as chastity, the role of the church, and non-reproductive activity. Combining an overview of research on the topic with original interpretations, Ruth Mazo Karras demonstrates that medieval culture developed sexual identities that were quite distinct from the identities we think of today, yet were still ancestral to our own. Using a wide collection of evidence from the late antique period until the fifteenth century, this fully revised third edition has been updated to include the latest scholarship throughout, including expanded coverage of Islamic and Jewish cultures and new ideas on how medieval sexual violence relates to the modern world. A new companion website supplements the text featuring an interactive timeline of key events, links to key primary sources, and references to further reading. *Sexuality in Medieval Europe* is essential reading for those who study medieval history and culture.

The lyrics of medieval "courtly love" songs are characteristically self-conscious. *Giving Voice to Love* investigates similar self-consciousness in the musical settings. Moments and examples where voice, melody, rhythm, form, and genre seem to comment on music itself tell us about musical responses to the courtly chanson tradition, and musical reflections on the complexity of self-expression.

The Outlaw's Tale

The Bestiary in the Medieval World

Verb Second in Medieval Romance

An Ela of Salisbury Medieval Mystery

Medieval Civilization 400 - 1500

A Guide to History, Lore, Places and Symbolism

Women's Lives in the European Middle Ages

This volume provides the first book-length study of the controversial topic of Verb Second and related properties in a range of

Medieval Romance varieties. It presents an examination and analysis of both qualitative and quantitative data from Old French, Occitan, Sicilian, Venetian, Spanish, and Sardinian, in order to assess whether these were indeed Verb Second languages. Sam Wolfe argues that V-to-C movement is a point of continuity across all the medieval varieties - unlike in the modern Romance languages - but that there are rich patterns of synchronic and diachronic variation in the medieval period that have not previously been observed and investigated. These include differences in the syntax-pragmatics mapping, the locus of verb movement, the behaviour of clitic pronouns, the syntax of subject positions, matrix/embedded asymmetries, and the null argument properties of the languages in question. The book outlines a detailed formal cartographic analysis of both the attested synchronic patterns and the diachronic evolution of Romance clausal structure. The findings have widespread implications for the understanding of both the key typological property of Verb Second and the development of Latin into the modern Romance languages.

The Black Death, the Peasants' Revolt, the Hundred Years War, the War of the Roses... A succession of dramatic social and political events reshaped England in the period 1360 to 1461. In his lucid and penetrating account of this formative period, Gerald Harriss illuminates a richly varied society, as chronicled in *The Canterbury Tales*, and examines its developing sense of national identity.

Death is only a stone's throw away. When a series of accidents begin to occur during the building of the chapel at Queen's College, they do not appear a cause for major concern. But they quickly grow more serious, and stonemasons are injured. Nicholas Elyot becomes involved after it is discovered that an intruder has reached the college by way of his garden. And when Jordain Brinkylsworth's youngest student goes missing, it seems at first that his disappearance is unconnected... Surely this serious and studious boy cannot be responsible for the troubles? But when a murder is committed, both Nicholas and Jordain must put their personal views aside to catch the killer, before they can strike again. A totally immersive historical thriller, and the final tale in the Oxford Medieval Mysteries, perfect for fans of C. J. Sansom, S. J. Parris and D. V. Bishop.

In this volume, medievalist Carolyn Dinshaw offers a powerful critique of modernist temporal regimes through a revelatory exploration of queer ways of being in time as well as the potential queerness of time itself.

An Introduction to Medieval French Literature

The Allegory of Love

Francis of Assisi

A historical adventure full of intrigue and suspense

Cathedral of Bones

Chivalry and Violence in Medieval Europe

Cross-Cultural Approaches

*Dante's Lyric Redemption offers a re-examination of two strongly interrelated aspects of the poet's work: the role and value he ascribes to earthly love and his relationship to the Romance lyric tradition of his time. It argues that an account of Dante's poetic journey that posits a stark division between earthly and divine love, and between the secular lyric poet and the Christian auctor, does little justice to his highly distinctive and often polemical handling of these categories. The book firstly contextualizes, traces, and accounts for Dante's intriguing commitment to love poetry, from the 'minor works' to the *Commedia*. It highlights his attempts, especially in his masterpiece, to overcome normative oppositions in formulating a uniquely redemptive vernacular poetics, one oriented towards the eternal while rooted in his affective, and indeed erotic, past. It then examines how this matter is at stake in Dante's treatment of three important lyric predecessors: Guittone d'Arezzo, Arnaut Daniel, and Folco of Marseilles. Through a detailed reading of Dante's engagement with these poets, the book illuminates his careful departure from a dualistic model of love and conversion and shows his erotic commitment to be at the heart of his claims to pre-eminence as a vernacular author.*

A treacherous journey, a band of desperate rogues, a shocking, hidden truth. When Nicholas Elyot and his friends set out to spend the Christmas season in the country, they are prepared for a hard journey in winter weather. They are also wary of violence on the road, for these are troubled times after the Great Pestilence, when bands of dispossessed and desolate men roam the countryside of England. It is not surprising, therefore, when troubadours hired to provide entertainment at Leighton Manor are attacked in Wychwood. Yet why should this insignificant group draw the attention of outlaws... what could they be searching for? Is one of the troubadours not quite what he seems? A thrilling addition to the pulse-pounding medieval mystery series, perfect for fans of C. J. Sansom, Edward Marston and Paul Doherty.

Salisbury, 1226 A young pregnant woman is found tangled in reeds in the river Avon, her identity a mystery. Grieving widow Ela Longespée is determined to succeed her husband as sheriff of Salisbury, and quickly takes charge of the investigation. She soon finds herself in the thick of a neighborhood scandal and a struggle to maintain her authority. With multiple suspects, can she identify the true killer? The Ela of Salisbury Medieval Mystery Series This series features a real historical figure—the formidable Ela Longespée. The young Countess of Salisbury was chosen to marry King Henry II's illegitimate son William. After her husband's untimely death, Ela served as High Sheriff of Wiltshire, castellan of Salisbury Castle, and ultimately founder and abbess of Lacock Abbey. The Ela of Salisbury Medieval Mystery series: Book 1: Cathedral of Bones Book 2: Breach of Faith Book 3: The Lost Child Book 4: Forest of Souls Book 5: The Bone Chess Set Book 6: Cloister of Whispers Coming 2022: Book 7: Palace of Thorns

It is December, 1648, and England faces one of the greatest crises in its history. Bands of renegade soldiers and broken men roam the countryside, looting, burning and raping. In Parliament, former allies are torn apart after six years of bloody conflict. Will there be peace instead of war, or a military take-over of the country? John Swynfen, a rising young MP and one of the leaders of the moderate party, is working for peace, but only if safeguards can be established to protect Parliament and control the powers of the king. Ranged against him and his friends are Oliver Cromwell and his son-in-law Henry Ireton, intent on seizing power by the sword and destroying not only the monarchy but the elected government. Within a few weeks, London is occupied by Cromwell's army, parliamentary government is in ruins, the king is executed. And John Swynfen is a prisoner. Anne Swynfen travels home from Westminster to Staffordshire with her young children through a desperate winter. There, uncertain whether she will ever see her husband again, she takes charge of the large estate, where starvation looms due to bad harvests, and violent danger threatens from outlaws and the armies of both sides. While she struggles against prejudice to do a man's job, John is shot, beaten, shackled, humiliated and tortured. Tempted by golden promises if he recants, threatened with death if he does not, he tries to cling to his sanity and his beliefs. When he finally escapes, he begins a terrible journey home across war-torn England to find his wife. This is a story about keeping faith - many kinds of faith - in the face of terror, anguish and despair.

A Medieval Woman's Companion

Retelling the Tale

A twisty historical crime thriller

The Huntsman's Tale

The Troubadours

The Encoding of Subjectivity in Medieval Narratives and Lyrics

Dante's Lyric Redemption

The hunt is on... To find a killer, to save the life of a friend. On hearing that his cousin is short-handed for the harvest, Nicholas Elyot takes a group of friends back to the family farm to help. But after a deer hunt in Wychwood ends in tragedy, suspicion is directed toward the huntsman, a boyhood friend of Nicholas. Yet the victim has made many other enemies, any one of whom could have shot the fatal arrow. Can Nicholas uncover the real killer before it is too late? A totally scintillating medieval whodunnit full of twists and suspense, perfect for fans of Edward Marston, E. M. Powell and Sarah Hawkswood.

Journey into twelve of the world's favorite medieval mysteries and cross the threshold into the world of the High Middle Ages. From Chaucer's "Canterbury Tales" to Umberto Eco's "Name of the Rose" to Dan Brown's bestselling "The Da Vinci Code," the medieval period continues to intrigue, inspire, entertain and fascinate many today. For the general reader and specialist alike, medieval expert, former Rosslyn Chapel museum exhibition curator and bestselling author Dr. Karen Ralls guides the reader through the key historical facts, legends and lore, affiliated places and major symbolism of each of these 12 popular medieval enigmas, providing a lively introductory portal which includes some of the lesser-known, sidelined or unacknowledged aspects of each of these enduring topics. The story of each subject comes alive as never before, providing a solid introduction for all readers as well as further suggested resources for teachers and researchers. Also included are photographs, a recommended reading section, maps, a list of the key major sites associated with each topic, and a full Bibliography. Topics covered include: King Arthur, Merlin and GlastonburyThe Grail Quest Mary MagdaleneThe real meaning of Black MadonnasThe Knights Templar, the Cathers, and Rosslyn ChapelMedieval Guides and TroubadoursHeresy and Heretics Let this book serve as your personal pilgrimage back to the High Middle Ages - a time of potent symbolism, occult knowledge, and spiritual quests.

The author investigates how subjectivity is encoded in the texts of a wide variety of medieval narratives and lyrics, including Chaucer's 'Trilus and Criseyde' and Ovid's 'Heroides'.

When Nicholas Elyot and his friends set out to spend the Christmas season in the country, they are prepared for a hard journey in winter weather. They are also wary of violence on the road, for these are troubled times after the Great Pestilence, when bands of dispossessed and desperate men roam the countryside of England. It is not surprising, therefore, when the troubadours hired to provide entertainment at Leighton Manor are attacked in Wychwood. Yet why should this insignificant group draw the attention of outlaws, who are searching for something? Is one of the troubadours not quite what he seems?

Book of Beasts

An Introduction

The Novice's Tale

An atmospheric historical crime adventure

Martyrs to Love

Sexuality in Medieval Europe

Medieval Texts, Amateur Readers, and the Queerness of Time

This one thousand year history of the civilization of western Europe has already been recognized in France as a scholarly contribution of the highest order and as a popular classic. Jacques Le Goff has written a book which will not only be read by generations of students and historians, but which will delight and inform all those interested in the history of medieval Europe. Part one, Historical Evolution , is a narrative account of the entire period, from the barbarian settlement of Roman Europe in the fifth, sixth and seventh centuries to the war-torn crises of Christian Europe in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Part two, Medieval Civilization , is analytical, concerned with the origins of early medieval ideas of culture and religion, the constraints of time and space in a pre-industrial world and the reconstruction of the lives and sensibilities of the people during this long period. Medieval Civilization combines the narrative and descriptive power characteristic of Anglo-Saxon scholarship with the sensitivity and insight of the French historical tradition.

A year after defeating the Spanish Armada, England retaliates. An expedition to Portugal sets out to destroy what remains of Spain's Atlantic fleet, drive the Spanish out of Portugal, put the claimant Dom Antonio of Aviz on the throne, and seize the Azores. But from the moment the English fleet, led by Sir Francis Drake and Sir John Norreys, reaches Plymouth, things start to go wrong. Christoval Alvarez, returning to Portugal for the first time after her escape to England, sent to carry out two missions by Sir Francis Walsingham, has a more important private plan in mind. Are any members of her family still alive? And what will become of the disaster-ridden expedition? An immersive and

exceptionally researched historical adventure, perfect for fans of S. W. Perry, Paul Doherty and C. J. Sansom.

Examines the association of love and death in medieval French and Occitan courtly literature using an approach informed by Lacanian psychoanalysis and Jacques Derrida. Offers new readings of canonical authors and texts, including Bernart de Ventadorn, Jaufre Rudel, Chrétien de Troyes, Thomas's Tristan, the Prose Lancelot, the Tristan en prose, La Mort le roi Artu, Marie de France, Le Chastelaine de Vergy, Le Castelain de Couci, and Le Roman de la Rose.

Based on the troubadour culture that rose in Provence during the High Middle Ages, this panoramic, absorbing novel beautifully creates an alternate version of the medieval world.

The Life and Afterlife of a Medieval Saint

Textual Subjectivity

A Song for Arbonne

Medieval Woman's Song

England 1360-1461

Simple Forms is a study of popular or folk literature in the medieval period. Focusing both on the vast body of oral literature that lies behind the written texts which have survived from the period and on the popular literature provided by literate authors for audiences of hearers or readers with varying degrees of literacy, Douglas Gray leads new readers to a productive understanding of the relationship between medieval popular culture and the culture of the learned. He argues that medieval society was stratified, in what seems to us a rigid way, but it was more flexible. Literary topics, themes, and forms moved; there was much borrowing, and a constant interaction. Popular tales, motifs, and ideas passed into learned or courtly forms and attitudes made their way into popular culture. All in all this seems to have been a fruitful symbiosis. The book's twelve chapters are principally organised by genre, covering popular romances, folktales, the German sage, legends, animal tales and fables, proverbs, riddles, satires, songs, and drama.

A comprehensive examination of the rituals and philosophies that created and sustained medieval troubadour culture • Debunks the myth of the platonic nature of courtly love, showing sexual similarities to the Tantric practices of India • Reveals how the roots of courtly love go back to the matriarchal cultures of neolithic times The widespread turmoil that shook Western Europe as it entered the new millennium with the year 1000 prompted a vast reevaluation of the chief tenets of society. Foremost among these was a new way of looking at love and the place of women in society. The Christian-inspired tradition that at best viewed women with contempt--and often with outright fear and loathing--was replaced by a new perspective, one in which women played a central role as the inspiration for all male action. For several hundred years courtly love, with its emphasis on adultery, carnal pleasures, and the power of the feminine, dominated European culture despite its flouting of conventional Christian morality. Medieval historians by and large have tended to regard courtly love as a sterile parlor game for the upper classes. To the contrary, Markale shows that the stakes were much higher: the roots of the ritual re-created here go all the way back to the great mother goddess. In addition, the platonic nature attributed to courtly relationships is based on a misunderstanding of courtly love; underneath the refined poetry of the troubadours' verses flourished a system of sexual initiation that rivaled Indian Tantra.