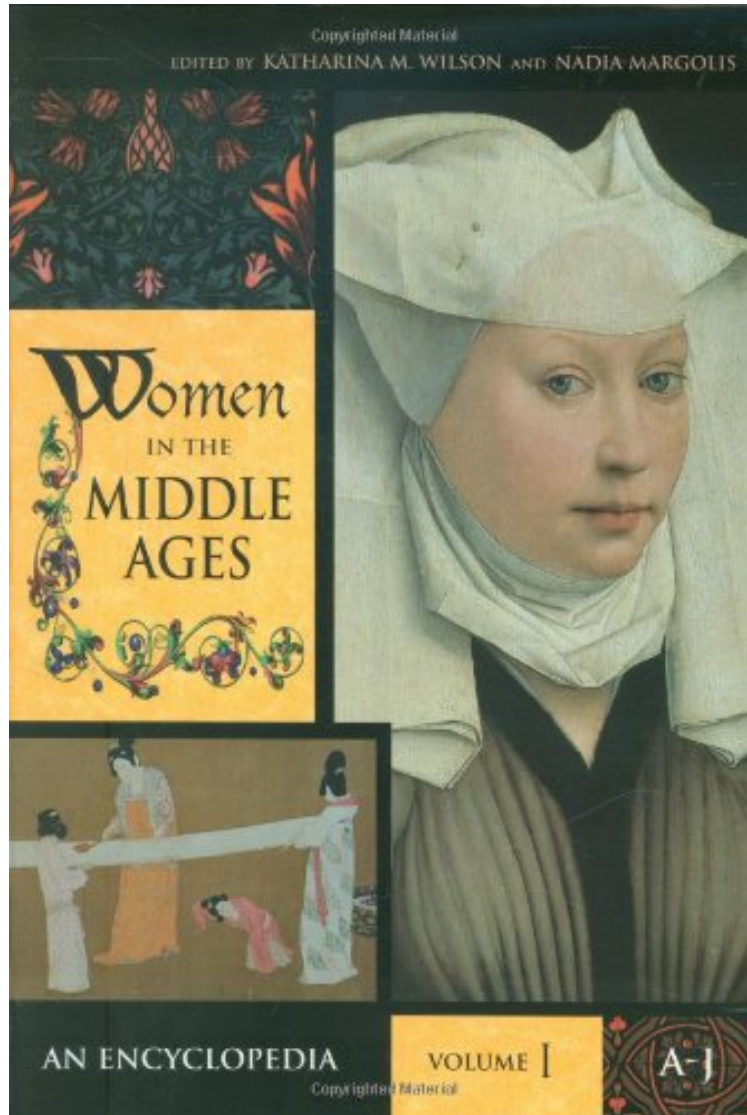


(Ebook pdf) Women in the Middle Ages [2 volumes]: An Encyclopedia

## Women in the Middle Ages [2 volumes]: An Encyclopedia

*From Greenwood*

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**From Greenwood : Women in the Middle Ages [2 volumes]: An Encyclopedia** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Women in the Middle Ages [2 volumes]: An Encyclopedia:

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Highly readable, enjoyable to peruse By American Gothic This two volume set surveys women of note during the medieval era (here roughly 300 AD to 1500). According to the editors it was not meant to be comprehensive, but has a considerable breadth and a good deal of depth, given the size limitations. Copious sources are cited, each entry has multiple primary and secondary sources. Each entry stands alone,

and those unfamiliar with the history of that time is quickly brought up to speed, which makes it an easy work to browse through. I'm finding it very worthwhile to simply open one of the books and start reading. In addition to women who are important in their own right (and not due to the reflected glory of their husbands, for example Philippa of Hainault has no entry, but Theodora does), there are numerous entries that are topical, for example prostitution, "humility topos", Syrian Christians, slavery and so on. To aid the read in identifying threads of similar nature, a useful topics list is presented. The women presented are predominantly (although far from entirely - the far east and the Aztecs are also represented) from western Europe, but in fairness this would seem to be due to the availability of sources. There are also numerous black and white illustrations. Although it may be a "women's studies" work it does not suffer from a parochial view, nor a "presentism" which all too often infects modern historical studies. By that I mean scholarly works which see the past with a 21st century lens, or as an excuse to manufacture modern day grievances. The authors stick to true history, attempting to understand what concepts meant in their contemporary times. Highly suitable for University libraries, larger public libraries, and smaller institutions that have a specialty in medieval studies or women's studies. It would be a great resource for term papers, and perhaps even the start of contemplating a thesis.

The experiences of women in the Middle Ages have been receiving growing amounts of attention, and we are only now beginning to appreciate the full extent of their contributions. Women significantly shaped medieval political, economic, and cultural life as rulers, religious leaders, wives, patrons, teachers, healers, merchants, warriors, and agricultural laborers. They also produced enduring works in historiography, literature, music, and the visual arts. Comprehensive in scope, meticulous in scholarship, and accessible in style to general readers and specialists alike, this encyclopedia offers full coverage of the myriad roles, experiences, and contributions of women in the medieval world. Written by leading scholars in a variety of fields, *Women in the Middle Ages* offers more than 300 alphabetically arranged entries that conclude with extensive bibliographies of both primary and secondary sources. Entries cover people and topics ranging from the third to the fifteenth centuries, and treat well-known figures, more recently discovered or re-evaluated figures, and much more. Medieval women in the principal stages of life, both mortal and spiritual, are also covered in entries on childhood, virginity, marriage, widowhood, penitentials, hagiography, and relics. This illustrated encyclopedia also includes a general bibliography, index, and guide to related topics.

From Booklist Current scholarship holds that the medieval period was a better time for women than the Renaissance. To demonstrate "women's multidimensional uniqueness" during the Middle Ages, more than 130 international contributors have helped create this encyclopedia, which spans the third to the fifteenth centuries. More than 300 entries are meant to provide "as broad a sampling as possible of medieval women's diverse culture." Entries are generally between 1 and 10 pages in length, and most are biographical, treating women from Eleanor of Aquitaine and Hildegard of Bingen to the less popularly known mystic Marguerite Porete and humanist Maddalena Scrovegni. Figures of legend, such as Morgan Le Fay and Pope Joan, are included, as are women such as troubadour Almuze de Castlenau, for whom very little documentation exists. Interspersed among the biographies are topical entries such as Dowry; Embroidery; Hagiography (female saints); and Music, women composers and musicians. Entries that extend the work outside the European sphere include Aztec warrior women; Fatimid Egypt, women in; and Murasaki, Shikibu. Each entry concludes with a bibliography of primary and secondary sources; some of these are extensive. Many of the contributors discuss the available records as well as the current scholarship on their subjects, and readers will learn as much about the challenges of research as about the women and topics represented here. A "Guide to Related Topics," repeated in both volumes, groups entries under broad categories. Volume 2 contains a short general bibliography. Black-and-white illustrations, though not numerous, are handsomely reproduced and enhance the text. Some similar ground is covered by the single-author *Encyclopedia of Women in the Middle Ages* (McFarland, 2001), but in this earlier title biographical entries are usually shorter, and topical entries place more emphasis on everyday life. The McFarland title also has extensive genealogical charts. More scholarly, though still very readable, *Women in the Middle Ages: An Encyclopedia* is recommended for academic and large public libraries. Mary Ellen Quinn Copyright American Library Association. All rights reserved "[A] stimulating survey of just how much is out there to explore." -Forum for Modern Language Studies "Women in the Middle Ages: An Encyclopedia is recommended for academic and large public libraries." -Booklist/Reference Books Bulletin "In coverage, depth, and scholarship, this set pulls far ahead of Jennifer Lawler's *Encyclopedia of Women in the Middle Ages*. This specialized but nicely done work is recommended for high school, public, and academic libraries." -Library Journal "While providing scholars with a springboard from which to launch possible future forays into the Middle Ages, this reference work will prove indispensable to lecturers when introducing, and students when encountering, medieval women's lives for the first time. This reader feels fortunate to own a copy." -The History "[T]his scholarly set is the most comprehensive guide to date to focus on women in the medieval world.... While these volumes may not exhaust every topic a student wishes to pursue, they provide excellent guidance to hundred of subjects. The set is highly recommended for academic and

medium-to-large public libraries."-Lawrence Looks at Books"The 300 entries in this encyclopedia cover women's experience in the European medieval world and elsewhere (including Byzantium, the Arabic world, and China) between the 2nd and 15th centuries. Designed to be both accessible and authoritative, it communicates the fruits of 30 years of scholarship on medieval women to students, specialists, and general readers....Recommended. General and academic collections."-Choice"[S]uch an encyclopedia is invaluable to me, expanding my understanding of medieval women, how they thought, how they maneuvered around obstacles and limitations imposed on them. 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This reader feels fortunate to own a copy.?-The History ?[T]his scholarly set is the most comprehensive guide to date to focus on women in the medieval world....While these volumes may not exhaust every topic a student wishes to pursue, they provide excellent guidance to hundreds of subjects. The set is highly recommended for academic and medium-to-large public libraries.?-Lawrence Looks at Books?The 300 entries in this encyclopedia cover women's experience in the European medieval world and elsewhere (including Byzantium, the Arabic world, and China) between the 2nd and 15th centuries. Designed to be both accessible and authoritative, it communicates the fruits of 30 years of scholarship on medieval women to students, specialists, and general readers....Recommended. General and academic collections.?-Choice?[S]uch an encyclopedia is invaluable to me, expanding my understanding of medieval women, how they thought, how they maneuvered around obstacles and limitations imposed on them. It can't help but expand the horizons of my medieval world, inspiring new steps for my choreography: characters, plots, subplots, political/economic intrigues, keys to mysteries, local color, cultural clashes and exchanges, and nuances of language.?-Solander?[A] "must" for libraries serving medieval studies and women's studies departments... the two volumes are beautifully presented and solidly bound and would make a smart addition to any reference shelf ... These volumes will surely promote access to this field of study... 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The generous, judiciously selected, and up-to-date bibliographies for each entry offer further direction for the more ambitious or

expert reader, while the lucid, accessible prose style makes the volume readable for a more general reader. It is admirable to find such consistency of style throughout the Encyclopedia's two volumes, especially given the fact that it boasts an impressive number of leading scholars with otherwise quite distinct prose styles....[t]his is the kind of important reference work that, because of its breadth and clarity, as well as its depth of scholarship, has a place not only in university libraries and on medievalists' bookshelves, but also in general reference libraries everywhere."-The Medieval "As a resource on medieval women, the Encyclopedia is valuable for a readership ranging from undergraduates in medieval studies and gender studies to more seasoned scholars in these fields. The generous, judiciously selected, and up-to-date bibliographies for each entry offer further direction for the more ambitious or expert reader, while the lucid, accessible prose style makes the volume readable for a more general reader. It is admirable to find such consistency of style throughout the Encyclopedia's two volumes, especially given the fact that it boasts an impressive number of leading scholars with otherwise quite distinct prose styles....[t]his is the kind of important reference work that, because of its breadth and clarity, as well as its depth of scholarship, has a place not only in university libraries and on medievalists' bookshelves, but also in general reference libraries everywhere."-The Medieval "An impressive work of reference and contribution to scholarship on the history of women. The Encyclopedia yields a wealth of information on topics as various as canon law, women composers, Japanese pillow books, Aztec warriors, embroidery, humanism, witches, virgins, and wives. It offers a valuable resource and constantly intriguing reading material."-Medium Aevum

About the Author  
KATHARINA M. WILSON is Professor of Comparative Literature at the University of Georgia. Her numerous publications include *Medieval Women Writers* (1984), *Women Writers of the Renaissance and Reformation* (1987), *Seventeenth-Century Women Writers* (1989), *Encyclopedia of Continental Women Writers* (1991), and *European Women Writers* (1997).  
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