

the of margery kempe

the of margery kempe is a compelling subject that delves into the life, experiences, and legacy of Margery Kempe, a medieval English Christian mystic renowned for her autobiography, often claimed as the first in the English language. This article explores the historical context surrounding Margery Kempe, the significance of her book, and the impact she made on religious and literary history. Readers will discover insights into her spiritual journey, personal revelations, and the unique role she played as a woman in medieval society. By examining the themes and controversies in her writing, the article provides a comprehensive understanding of why Margery Kempe's story remains influential today. Throughout, relevant keywords such as "Margery Kempe," "medieval mysticism," and "autobiography" appear naturally to enhance search engine optimization. Continue reading to uncover the multifaceted world of Margery Kempe, her struggles, visions, and the enduring relevance of her life and work.

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- Margery Kempe's Pilgrimages and Travels
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Historical Background of Margery Kempe

Margery Kempe was born in the late 14th century in the town of King's Lynn, England. Living during a time of significant religious and social upheaval, Kempe's life intersected with the closing years of the Middle Ages. She came from a relatively affluent merchant family, which provided her with unique access to the social and economic dynamics of her era. The of Margery Kempe is shaped by the context of medieval Christianity, where mysticism and religious devotion were both celebrated and scrutinized. Her experiences reflect the complexities of faith in a period often marked by strict religious orthodoxy and limited roles for women.

Margery Kempe's reputation grew due to her outspoken religious experiences and claims of direct communication with God. The broader historical setting includes the aftermath of the

Black Death, a rise in lay piety, and increasing tensions between established Church authorities and individual expressions of faith. All these elements influenced the formation of her unique spiritual identity and the reception of her autobiography.

The Book of Margery Kempe

The Book of Margery Kempe is regarded as one of the earliest autobiographies in the English language. Written in the 1430s, it chronicles Kempe's life, religious visions, and personal struggles, offering scholars an unprecedented window into medieval spirituality and daily life. The manuscript was rediscovered in the 20th century, sparking renewed academic interest in her narrative and its historical significance.

Margery Kempe dictated her book to scribes, as she was illiterate, relying on her vivid memory and oral storytelling skills. The text details her emotional experiences, including bouts of weeping, ecstasies, and confrontations with both secular and religious authorities. Her autobiography not only provides insight into her individual journey but also serves as a valuable record of medieval society, gender roles, and religious practices.

- Accounts of visions and spiritual experiences
- Descriptions of pilgrimages across Europe and the Holy Land
- Interactions with clergy and laypeople
- Reflections on marriage, motherhood, and personal suffering

Margery Kempe's Spiritual Life and Mysticism

Central to the life of Margery Kempe is her spiritual life, marked by profound mystical experiences. Kempe claimed to have direct conversations with Jesus Christ and other religious figures, which shaped her religious outlook and daily practices. Her intense devotion manifested through frequent public weeping, fervent prayer, and acts of penitence, which were often misunderstood or criticized by contemporaries.

Margery Kempe's mysticism aligns with broader medieval traditions, such as the writings of Julian of Norwich and other female visionaries. However, Kempe's experiences were highly personal, and her outward displays of emotion set her apart within her community. Her mystical revelations emphasized themes of divine love, compassion, and the importance of inner transformation.

Margery Kempe's Pilgrimages and Travels

One of the most remarkable aspects of Margery Kempe's life was her commitment to pilgrimage. Despite societal expectations for women, she journeyed to holy sites across Europe and the Middle East, including Jerusalem, Rome, Santiago de Compostela, and Canterbury. These travels were undertaken at great personal risk and expense, showcasing

her dedication to spiritual growth and religious expression.

During her pilgrimages, Kempe encountered diverse cultures, religious practices, and social challenges. Her travel accounts provide valuable documentation of medieval pilgrimage routes, customs, and the difficulties faced by women travelers. Through her journeys, Margery Kempe sought spiritual enlightenment and validation for her mystical experiences.

The Role of Women in Medieval Society

The life of Margery Kempe is inseparable from the broader context of gender roles in medieval England. Women were often confined to domestic responsibilities and had limited opportunities for independent religious or intellectual pursuits. Kempe challenged these norms by asserting her spiritual authority and engaging in public acts of devotion.

Her autobiography documents the skepticism and resistance she faced from both male clergy and laypeople. Margery Kempe's life raises important questions about the possibilities and limitations for women in medieval religious communities. By documenting her experiences, she paved the way for future generations of women to articulate their faith and challenge established boundaries.

- Social expectations of women's behavior
- Margery Kempe's defiance of conventional roles
- Impact on subsequent female mystics and writers

Legacy and Influence of Margery Kempe

Margery Kempe's legacy extends far beyond her lifetime. Her autobiography has become a cornerstone for scholars studying medieval spirituality, gender, and literature. The rediscovery of her manuscript in the 20th century brought new attention to the voices of women in history and highlighted the diversity of religious expression in the Middle Ages.

Modern interpretations of Margery Kempe's life and work emphasize her courage, resilience, and innovation. She influenced writers, theologians, and feminist scholars, prompting re-evaluations of medieval women's agency and spirituality. Today, Margery Kempe is celebrated as a pioneering figure whose story continues to inspire inquiry and debate.

Major Themes in Margery Kempe's Writings

The Book of Margery Kempe encompasses a wide range of themes that reflect her personal struggles and broader societal concerns. Her writing explores the tension between individual faith and institutional authority, the transformative power of suffering, and the pursuit of holiness in everyday life.

1. Spiritual transformation and conversion
2. Conflict with religious authorities
3. Expression of emotions as spiritual practice
4. Role of pilgrimage in spiritual development
5. Challenges of female autonomy

By addressing these themes, Margery Kempe's autobiography provides a multifaceted portrait of medieval religious life and the search for meaning amid adversity.

Controversies and Criticisms

Margery Kempe's life and writings have generated significant debate among scholars and readers. Her public displays of emotion, claims of divine visions, and defiance of social norms led to accusations of heresy and mental instability. Some contemporaries dismissed her as eccentric or attention-seeking, while others recognized the authenticity of her spiritual experiences.

Modern critics have examined the authenticity and reliability of her autobiography, questioning the accuracy of her recollections and the motivations behind her self-presentation. However, the *Book of Margery Kempe* remains a valuable source for understanding medieval perspectives on faith, gender, and personal identity. The controversies surrounding her legacy continue to enrich scholarly discussions and interpretations.

Conclusion

Margery Kempe's life and autobiography offer a unique window into the complexities of medieval spirituality, society, and gender roles. Her story is characterized by courage, devotion, and an enduring quest for divine connection. The *Book of Margery Kempe* continues to captivate scholars and readers, shedding light on the challenges and possibilities faced by women in history. Through her writings, Kempe invites ongoing exploration of faith, identity, and resilience in the face of adversity.

Q: What is the significance of the *Book of Margery Kempe* in medieval literature?

A: The *Book of Margery Kempe* is significant because her autobiography is considered the first known book written in English by a woman, offering rare insight into medieval spirituality, female experience, and the social dynamics of her time.

Q: What were Margery Kempe's main spiritual experiences?

A: Margery Kempe reported intense visions and conversations with Jesus, frequent weeping as a form of devotion, and mystical experiences that shaped her religious life and reputation.

Q: Why is Margery Kempe's autobiography considered unique?

A: Her autobiography is unique for its first-person perspective, emotional depth, and detailed account of a medieval woman's spiritual journey, including her pilgrimages and conflicts with authorities.

Q: How did Margery Kempe challenge the roles of women in medieval society?

A: Margery Kempe challenged traditional roles by asserting her spiritual authority, undertaking pilgrimages, and publicly expressing religious devotion, defying societal expectations for women.

Q: What are the major themes found in the Book of Margery Kempe?

A: Major themes include spiritual transformation, emotional expression in religion, conflict with church authorities, pilgrimage, and female autonomy.

Q: How did Margery Kempe's contemporaries view her?

A: Many contemporaries were skeptical of her claims and public displays, sometimes accusing her of heresy or instability, while some respected her spiritual commitment.

Q: What impact did Margery Kempe's travels have on her story?

A: Her pilgrimages expanded her spiritual outlook, exposed her to diverse cultures, and provided firsthand accounts of medieval religious practices, which enriched her autobiography.

Q: How has Margery Kempe's legacy influenced modern scholarship?

A: Margery Kempe's legacy has inspired studies on medieval women, spirituality,

mysticism, and autobiography, highlighting the importance of female voices in history.

Q: What controversies surround the of Margery Kempe?

A: Controversies include debates about the authenticity of her visions, reliability of her autobiography, and the motivations behind her public displays of emotion.

Q: Why is Margery Kempe's story still relevant today?

A: Her story remains relevant for its exploration of faith, resilience, and women's agency, providing valuable perspectives on personal identity and religious experience in history.

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The Book of Margery Kempe: A Journey into Medieval Mysticism and Literary History

Introduction:

Have you ever wondered about the life of a 14th-century English woman who dictated her own autobiography, detailing vivid mystical experiences and a life far from conventional? That woman was Margery Kempe, and her book, *The Book of Margery Kempe*, is a captivating and groundbreaking piece of medieval literature. This blog post will delve into the fascinating life of Margery Kempe, explore the significance of her autobiography, and analyze its impact on literary history and religious studies. We'll uncover what makes her story so unique, examining its historical context, literary style, and enduring relevance today. Prepare to be transported to a world of intense religious devotion, societal challenges, and surprisingly modern self-reflection.

The Life and Times of Margery Kempe (1373-c. 1438)

Margery Kempe's life was far from ordinary. Born into a relatively wealthy family in Lynn, England, her life was marked by intense religious experiences from a young age. These experiences, often characterized by visions, weeping, and ecstatic states, profoundly shaped her life and led her on a

pilgrimage across Europe. Her spiritual journey wasn't without its difficulties. She faced skepticism and criticism, not only from the established church but also from within her own family and community. The social and religious conventions of the time struggled to accommodate her outspoken piety and unconventional spiritual practices.

A Woman of Faith and Action

Margery Kempe's faith wasn't passive. It was a driving force in her life, leading her to undertake arduous pilgrimages to Jerusalem, Santiago de Compostela, and other sacred sites. Her travels weren't simply religious excursions; they allowed her to connect with others, preach her beliefs, and even offer spiritual guidance, though often in a rather disruptive and emotional manner. These experiences form a significant part of her narrative, providing a rich context to her spiritual development and the challenges she encountered.

The Book of Margery Kempe: A Unique Literary Achievement

The Book of Margery Kempe is unique for several reasons. Firstly, it is one of the earliest examples of an autobiography written in English. Prior to its composition, autobiographical works were primarily written by men, often members of the clergy. Margery Kempe's willingness to chronicle her own life, warts and all, makes it a truly remarkable achievement.

A First-Person Narrative of Unprecedented Intimacy

Secondly, the book's first-person narrative is remarkably intimate and raw. Margery doesn't shy away from revealing her doubts, fears, and struggles alongside her ecstatic moments. She describes her physical and emotional experiences with a degree of frankness rarely seen in medieval literature. This honesty and vulnerability contribute to the work's enduring power.

A Window into Medieval Mysticism

The book offers a fascinating window into medieval mysticism. Margery's descriptions of her visions and spiritual experiences provide valuable insight into the religious beliefs and practices of the time. Her account highlights the tension between individual spiritual experience and the established religious structures of the medieval church, highlighting the complex landscape of religious expression.

The Legacy and Influence of Margery Kempe

Margery Kempe's autobiography transcends its historical context. Its themes of spiritual seeking, personal struggles, and the challenges faced by women in a patriarchal society resonate deeply with modern readers. The book's influence can be seen in various fields, including religious studies, women's history, and literary criticism.

Enduring Relevance in Contemporary Studies

Today, scholars continue to examine *The Book of Margery Kempe* for its insights into medieval spirituality, gender studies, and the development of the English language. Its unique blend of religious ecstasy, personal revelation, and social commentary makes it a rich source for interdisciplinary study.

Conclusion

The Book of Margery Kempe remains a remarkable testament to the strength, resilience, and unwavering faith of a medieval woman. It's a groundbreaking work of autobiography that offers a vivid portrait of both a deeply personal spiritual journey and the broader socio-religious landscape of 14th-century England. Its enduring appeal lies in its honesty, its rawness, and its relevance to contemporary concerns regarding spirituality, gender, and the search for meaning in life. Margery Kempe's story continues to inspire and challenge readers centuries later.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

1. Is *The Book of Margery Kempe* a historically accurate account? While considered an autobiography, it's important to remember it was dictated and therefore reflects Margery's perspective and memory. Historians use it as a valuable primary source, but corroborating evidence from other sources is necessary for a complete understanding.
2. Was Margery Kempe considered a saint? While immensely devout, Margery Kempe was never officially canonized as a saint by the Catholic Church. However, her life and experiences have been the subject of much religious and theological study, and her piety continues to be a subject of interest for many faith traditions.
3. What is the significance of the weeping described in the book? Margery's weeping was a key part of her mystical experiences. It was viewed as a physical manifestation of intense spiritual emotion and a form of prayer, though its interpretation remains a subject of debate among scholars.

4. What makes *The Book of Margery Kempe* a significant contribution to English literature? It's one of the earliest examples of autobiography in English, written by a woman, and offers a unique first-person perspective on medieval life and spirituality, with a compelling and emotionally resonant narrative voice.

5. Where can I find a copy of *The Book of Margery Kempe*? Many editions are available, both in print and digitally. A quick search online through reputable booksellers will provide various options, including modern translations and scholarly editions with insightful commentaries.

the of margery kempe: The Book of Margery Kempe Margery Kempe, 1985 The story of the eventful and controversial life of Margery Kempe - wife, mother, businesswoman, pilgrim and visionary - is the earliest surviving autobiography in English. Here Kempe (c.1373-c.1440) recounts in vivid, unembarrassed detail the madness that followed the birth of the first of her fourteen children, the failure of her brewery business, her dramatic call to the spiritual life, her visions and uncontrollable tears, the struggle to convert her husband to a vow of chastity and her pilgrimages to Europe and the Holy Land. Margery Kempe could not read or write, and dictated her remarkable story late in life. It remains an extraordinary record of human faith and a portrait of a medieval woman of unforgettable character and courage.

the of margery kempe: The Book of Margery Kempe Lynn Staley, 1996-12-01 In this fresh, classroom-friendly volume, Margery Kempe, a married woman from fifteenth-century England, dictates her remarkable life story. Far from provincial, this extraordinary woman tells us about her business ventures in Lynn, her spiritual conversion and asceticism, and her travels all around Europe and the Holy Land while on pilgrimage. Kempe presents a splendidly detailed perspective of a woman from the rising middle class of the late Middle Ages, of a frequent pilgrim, and of a would-be saint gifted with spectacular crying. This edition, faithful to the original Middle English text but edited for accessibility to students, includes a gloss, notes, introduction, and a glossary, making *The Book of Margery Kempe* an excellent choice for any class interested in religion, gender, travel, or even daily life in late medieval Europe.

the of margery kempe: The Book of Margery Kempe Margery Kempe, John Skinner, 1998-05-18 The autobiography of English mystic Margery Kempe (ca. 1373 to ca. 1440), one of the most fascinating works in literary history, is available for the first time in a modern and lively translation.

the of margery kempe: Margery Kempe Robert Gluck, 2020-03-10 Lust, religious zeal, and heartache come together in this provocative novel about two infatuations, one between a man and his young lover in the late 20th century and another between a 15th-century woman and Jesus Christ. First published in 1994, Robert Glück's *Margery Kempe* is one of the most provocative, poignant, and inventive American novels of the last quarter century. The book tells two stories of romantic obsession. One, based on the first autobiography in English, the medieval *Book of Margery Kempe*, is about a fifteenth-century woman from East Anglia, a visionary, a troublemaker, a pilgrim to the Holy Land, and an aspiring saint, and her love affair with Jesus. It is complicated. The other is about the author's own love for an alluring and elusive young American, L. It is complicated. Between these two *Margery Kempe*, the novel, emerges as an unprecedented exploration of desire, devotion, abjection, and sexual obsession in the form of a novel like no other novel. Robert Glück's masterpiece bears comparison with the finest work of such writers as Kathy Acker and Chris Kraus. This edition includes an essay by Glück about the creation of the book titled *My Margery, Margery's Bob*.

the of margery kempe: Encountering The Book of Margery Kempe Laura Kalas, Laura Varnam, 2021-11-30 This innovative critical volume brings the study of Margery Kempe into the twenty-first century. Structured around four categories of 'encounter' - textual, internal, external and performative - the volume offers a capacious exploration of *The Book of Margery Kempe*,

characterised by multiple complementary and dissonant approaches. It employs a multiplicity of scholarly and critical lenses, including the intertextual history of medieval women's literary culture, medical humanities, history of science, digital humanities, literary criticism, oral history, the global Middle Ages, archival research and creative re-imagining. Revealing several new discoveries about Margery Kempe and her Book in its global contexts, and offering multiple ways of reading the Book in the modern world, it will be an essential companion for years to come.

the of margery kempe: The Book of Margery Kempe Margery Kempe, 2004 This volume presents the original text in a form accessible to modern readers, with on-page glossing and a glossary of common words. The text is also accompanied by on-page annotation and commentary setting Kempe's life in the social, political and spiritual context of her time.

the of margery kempe: A Companion to The Book of Margery Kempe John Arnold, Katherine J. Lewis, 2004 A collection of essays by twelve historians and literary critics who explore Margery Kempe, her Book, and her world.

the of margery kempe: Margery Kempe Anthony Bale, 2021-09-16 A fresh account of the medieval mystic, traveling pilgrim, and pioneering memoirist Margery Kempe. This is a new account of the medieval mystic and pilgrim Margery Kempe. Kempe, who had fourteen children, traveled all over Europe and recorded a series of unusual events and religious visions in her work *The Book of Margery Kempe*, which is often called the first autobiography in the English language. Anthony Bale charts Kempe's life and tells her story through the places, relationships, objects, and experiences that influenced her. Extensive quotations from Kempe's Book accompany generous illustrations, giving a fascinating insight into the life of a medieval woman. Margery Kempe is situated within the religious controversies of her time, and her religious visions and later years put in context. And lastly, Bale tells the extraordinary story of the rediscovery, in the 1930s, of the unique manuscript of her autobiography.

the of margery kempe: Margery Kempe's Dissenting Fictions Lynn Staley, 2010-11-01

the of margery kempe: The Book of Margery Kempe Margery Kempe, Liz Herbert McAvoy, 2003 Margery Kempe's text draws on her maternal, female body to illuminate her relationship to the divine. A unique narrative of sin, sex and salvation, *The Book of Margery Kempe* comprises a text which has continued to perplex and fascinate contemporary audiences since its discovery in the library of an English country house in 1934. Simultaneously exasperating, endearing, vulnerable and eccentric, Margery Kempe, mother of fourteen children and wife to a bemused John Kempe, provides us with an autobiographical account of her own singular brand of affective piety - excessive weeping, lack of bodily control, compulsive travelling, visionary meditations - and the growth of what she regarded as an individual and privileged mystical relationship with Christ. This new excerpted, thematically organised translation of the challenging text focuses on passages which will contextualise for the reader its author's reliance upon the experiences of her own maternal and sexualised body in an attempt to gain spiritual and literary authority. With detailed introduction and challenging interpretive essay, this volume uncovers in particular the importance of motherhood, sexuality and female orality to the inception and expression of Margery Kempe's singular mystical experiences and adds to contemporary debate regarding the agency of holy women during the later middle ages. LIZ HERBERT McAVOY is Lecturer in Medieval Language and Literature, University of Leicester.

the of margery kempe: Margery Kempe and Translations of the Flesh Karma Lochrie, 2012-07-24 Selected by Choice magazine as an Outstanding Academic Book for 1999 Karma Lochrie demonstrates that women were associated not with the body but rather with the flesh, that disruptive aspect of body and soul which Augustine claimed was fissured with the Fall of Man. It is within this framework that she reads *The Book of Margery Kempe*, demonstrating the ways in which Kempe exploited the gendered ideologies of flesh and text through her controversial practices of writing, her inappropriate-seeming laughter, and the most notorious aspect of her mysticism, her hysterical weeping expressions of religious desire. Lochrie challenges prevailing scholarly assumptions of Kempe's illiteracy, her role in the writing of her book, her misunderstanding of

mystical concepts, and the failure of her book to influence a reading community. In her work and her life, Kempe consistently crossed the barriers of those cultural taboos designed to exclude and silence her. Instead of viewing Kempe as marginal to the great mystical and literary traditions of the late Middle Ages, this study takes her seriously as a woman responding to the cultural constraints and exclusions of her time. Margery Kempe and *Translations of the Flesh* will be of interest to students and scholars of medieval studies, intellectual history, and feminist theory.

the of margery kempe: Margery Kempe Sandra J. McEntire, 2019-07-05 Originally published in 1992, Margery Kempe looks at one of the most appealing mystics and pilgrims of 15th-century England. The book looks at Margery Kempe, and her book *The Book of Margery Kempe*, thought to be the first vernacular autobiography in medieval Britain. Original essays in the book examines Kempe's spirituality, cultural context, and the autobiography itself, *The Book of Margery Kempe*. The essays in the book represent detail literary analysis on Kempe and the critical history of her words.

the of margery kempe: The Oldest Vocation Clarissa W. Atkinson, 1991 According to an old story, a woman concealed her sex and ruled as pope for a few years in the ninth century, but her downfall came when she went into labor in the streets of Rome. From this myth to the experiences of saints, nuns, and ordinary women, *The Oldest Vocation* brings to life both the richness and the troubling contradictions of Christian motherhood in medieval Europe.

the of margery kempe: The Cambridge Companion to Medieval English Literature 1100-1500 Larry Scanlon, 2009-06-18 A wide-ranging survey of the most important medieval authors and genres, designed for students of English.

the of margery kempe: Mystic and Pilgrim Clarissa W. Atkinson, 1983 A biography of the medieval English religious pilgrim Margery Kempe and a social and cultural history of her world.

the of margery kempe: The Book of Marvels and Travels Sir John Mandeville, 2012-09-13 In his *Book of Marvels and Travels*, Sir John Mandeville describes a journey from Europe to Jerusalem and on into Asia, and the many wonderful and monstrous peoples and practices in the East. A captivating blend of fact and fantasy, Mandeville's *Book* is newly translated in an edition that brings us closer to Mandeville's worldview.

the of margery kempe: Skirting Heresy Elizabeth MacDonald, 2014 It was perhaps England's darkest hour. It was a time when reading the Bible was against the law, and there was a death penalty in place to stop heresy; even Catholic priests were being burned alive. Margery Kempe was born into this world. She dared to follow her truth, and the calling she knew came from Jesus Christ himself. But she paid mightily for it, and she was repeatedly arrested, put on trial, even threatened with death. Kempe's only lifeline was her wit, determination, and a few influential friends who believed in her cause.

the of margery kempe: The Book of Margery Kempe Margery Kempe, 1940

the of margery kempe: Margery Kempe and the Lonely Reader Rebecca L. Krug, 2017-03-07 Since its rediscovery in 1934, the fifteenth-century *Book of Margery Kempe* has become a canonical text for students of medieval Christian mysticism and spirituality. Its author was a fifteenth-century English laywoman who, after the birth of her first child, experienced vivid religious visions and vowed to lead a deeply religious life while remaining part of the secular world. After twenty years, Kempe began to compose with the help of scribes a book of consolation, a type of devotional writing found in late medieval religious culture that taught readers how to find spiritual comfort and how to feel about one's spiritual life. In *Margery Kempe and the Lonely Reader*, Rebecca Krug shows how and why Kempe wrote her *Book*, arguing that in her engagement with written culture she discovered a desire to experience spiritual comfort and to interact with fellow believers who also sought to live lives of intense emotional engagement. An unlikely candidate for authorship in the late medieval period given her gender and lack of formal education, Kempe wrote her *Book* as a revisionary act. Krug shows how the *Book* reinterprets concepts from late medieval devotional writing (comfort, despair, shame, fear, and loneliness) in its search to create a spiritual community that reaches out to and includes Kempe, her friends, family, advisers, and potential readers. Krug offers a fresh analysis

of the Book as a written work and draws attention to the importance of reading, revision, and collaboration for understanding both Kempe's particular decision to write and the social conditions of late medieval women's authorship.

the of margery kempe: *How To Be a Medieval Woman* Margery Kempe, 2016-03-03 'And then he, completely astonished at her words, left off his lewdness, saying to her as many a man had done before, Either you are a truly good woman or else a truly wicked woman. ' Brave, outspoken and guaranteed to annoy people wherever she went - including exasperated fellow pilgrims in Jerusalem and her long-suffering husband - Margery Kempe was one of the most vivid and unforgettable voices of the Middle Ages. Whether travelling alone, getting herself arrested or having visions of marrying Jesus, Margery repeatedly defied feminine convention - and also managed to compose the first autobiography in English, despite being unable to read or write. One of 46 new books in the bestselling Little Black Classics series, to celebrate the first ever Penguin Classic in 1946. Each book gives readers a taste of the Classics' huge range and diversity, with works from around the world and across the centuries - including fables, decadence, heartbreak, tall tales, satire, ghosts, battles and elephants.

the of margery kempe: *Margery Kempe's Spiritual Medicine* Laura Kalas, 2020-03-06 The Book of Margery Kempe set in the context of medieval medical discourse.

the of margery kempe: *Margery Kempe and Her World* Anthony Goodman, 2002 Margery Kempe is one of the most extraordinary figures in English medieval history. Daughter of a mayor of King's Lynn, wife of a burgess and mother of fourteen children, she was also the author of the first surviving autobiography composed by an Englishwoman. The Book of Margery Kempe, dictated in the 1430s, survives in a single manuscript which was discovered in the 1930s. It is an uninhabited, exhibitionist outpouring of impassioned religious emotions. The Book comprises an account of the mystical intimations of a lady born into Lynn's stately but troubled elite. Visionary episodes are interlinked with equally dramatic accounts of mundane experiences, in Margery's home town, in other parts of England, and as far afield as Jerusalem, Rome and Brandenburg.--BOOK JACKET.

the of margery kempe: *Perilous Passages* Julie Chappell, 2015-12-04 This study will significantly further our interpretations of the unique autobiography of Margery Kempe, lay woman turned mystic and visionary. Following the manuscript from a Carthusian monastery through history, Chappell bridges the gaps in our understanding of the transmission of texts from the medieval past to the present.

the of margery kempe: *Margery Kempe* A.E. Goodman, 2014-07-10 Daughter of a mayor of King's Lynn, wife of a burgess there and mother of fourteen children, Margery Kempe (c. 1373-post 1438) was also a religious mystic and hysteric, who dictated her 'autobiography' to a scribe at the end of her life. In this history of her life, Anthony Goodman examines The Book, to reconstruct as much of her conventional biography as the materials allow. Including her spiritual experiences, but focusing most particularly on her day-to-day life, he builds an intriguing picture of bourgeois society in late medieval Lynn, and the wider world of late medieval towns in England and Europe more generally.

the of margery kempe: *The Book of Margery Kempe* Margery Kempe, 1961

the of margery kempe: *The Book of Margery Kempe* Margery Kempe, 1995 The Book of Margery Kempe is the story of a boisterous worldly mystic, that will appeal to modern women. Margery, the mother of fourteen, wife of a debt-ridden & lusty husband, & a hoarder of secret sin, brings the world of medieval women alive to contemporary readers. Her earthly & emotional autobiography, dictated to a priest near the end of her life & known as the first written in English, reveals a woman whose passions & vanities were turned from self-absorption to the service of her Lord. It records a brand of mysticism marked by pilgrimages, secret penances, near hangings as a heretic, uncontrollable tears inspired by the Holy Spirit, & a love of God so intense that the passion of Jesus reeled before Margery in much the same way as a film does for us today. The Book of Margery Kempe paints a vivid portrait of a unique medieval mystic-a woman more vibrantly & emotionally attached to God than to pious mortifications carried out in isolation.

the of margery kempe: Authority and the Female Body in the Writings of Julian of Norwich and Margery Kempe Liz Herbert McAvoy, 2004 The three archetypal representations of woman in the middle ages, as mother, as whore and as 'wise woman', are all clearly present in the writings of Julian of Norwich and Margery Kempe; in examining the ways in which both writers make use of these female categories, Dr. McAvoy establishes the extent of their success in resolving the tension between society's expectations of them and their own lived experiences as women and writers.--Jacket.

the of margery kempe: *A Medieval Woman's Companion* Susan Signe Morrison, 2015-11-30 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.

the of margery kempe: *The book of Margery Kempe* W. Butler-Bowden, 1940

the of margery kempe: *The Book of Margery Kempe* Marea Mitchell, 2005 The history of *The Book of Margery Kempe* from its first production in 1934 is also part of the history of English literary studies. Marea Mitchell traces some of the fascinating stories behind the proliferation of productions since then, including the involvement of Hope Emily Allen and other independent women scholars, popular receptions of the Book in World War II, and current productions that locate it as part of a medieval literary canon. Working from a cultural materialist perspective, Mitchell focuses on the materiality of the text itself and of the bodies of scholarship that have arisen around it.

the of margery kempe: *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval Women's Writing*

Carolyn Dinshaw, David Wallace, 2003-05-22 *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval Women's Writing* seeks to recover the lives and particular experiences of medieval women by concentrating on various kinds of texts: the texts they wrote themselves as well as texts that attempted to shape, limit, or expand their lives. The first section investigates the roles traditionally assigned to medieval women (as virgins, widows, and wives); it also considers female childhood and relations between women. The second section explores social spaces, including textuality itself: for every surviving medieval manuscript bespeaks collaborative effort. It considers women as authors, as anchoresses 'dead to the world', and as preachers and teachers in the world staking claims to authority without entering a pulpit. The final section considers the lives and writings of remarkable women, including Marie de France, Heloise, Joan of Arc, Julian of Norwich, Margery Kempe, and female lyricists and romancers whose names are lost, but whose texts survive.

the of margery kempe: *Margery Kempe of Lynn and Medieval England* Margaret Gallyon, 1995 The Christian mystics open our eyes to a world beyond this world, to the world of the spirit and

of God, of whom they had a direct knowledge and experience, obtained chiefly through prayer, meditation and contemplation. The purpose of this book is to introduce the general reader to the fifteenth century English mystic, Margery Kempe of Lynn in Norfolk, as seen against her religious, social and historical background, with chapters on her spiritual and devotional life, her home town of Lynn, her encounters with the clergy, her vow of chastity, her pilgrimages, her trials for heresy and her conformity to the customs, faith and doctrines of the church of her day. As a former teacher at King's Lynn High School, Margaret Gallyon acquired a considerable knowledge of the town of Lynn and the surrounding district. It was here too that she first became interested in Margery Kempe, one of Lynn's most fascinating medieval citizens.

the of margery kempe: *Revelations of Divine Love* Julian of Norwich, 2019-11-13 The fourteenth-century anchoress known as Julian of Norwich offered fervent prayers for a deeper understanding of Christ's passion. The holy woman's petitions were answered with a series of divine revelations that she called shewings. Her mystic visions revealed Christ's sufferings with extreme intensity, but they also confirmed God's constant love for humanity and infinite capacity for forgiveness. Julian of Norwich's *Revelations of Divine Love* have had a lasting influence on Christian thought. Written in immediate, compelling terms, her experiences remain among the most original and accessible expressions of medieval mysticism. This edition contains both the short text, which is mainly an account of the shewings and Julian's initial analysis of their meaning, and the long text, completed some 20 years later and offering daringly speculative interpretations.

the of margery kempe: *Revelations* Mary Sharratt, 2022-04-19 Bishop's Lynn, England, 1413. Forty-year-old Margery Kempe has barely survived giving birth to her fourteenth child. Fearing that another pregnancy might kill her, she makes a vow of celibacy, but she can't trust her husband to keep his end of the bargain. Desperate for counsel, she visits the famous anchoress Dame Julian of Norwich. Margery confesses that she has been haunted by visceral, sensual images of the divine which send her into helpless fits of weeping. Julian then shares a confession of her own: she has written a secret book about her mystical visions, *Revelations of Divine Love*. Julian entrusts this dangerous text to Margery, who sets off on the adventure of a lifetime to spread Julian's radical, female vision of the divine. As Margery blazes her pilgrim's trail across Europe and the Near East, she finds a unique, spiritual path for a woman of her time, not in a cloistered cell like Julian, but in the worldly bustle of life with all of its peril and wonder. -- Back cover.

the of margery kempe: *Margery Kempe and Translations of the Flesh* Karma Lochrie, 1991 Selected by *Choice* magazine as an Outstanding Academic Book for 1999 Karma Lochrie demonstrates that women were associated not with the body but rather with the flesh, that disruptive aspect of body and soul which Augustine claimed was fissured with the Fall of Man. It is within this framework that she reads *The Book of Margery Kempe*, demonstrating the ways in which Kempe exploited the gendered ideologies of flesh and text through her controversial practices of writing, her inappropriate-seeming laughter, and the most notorious aspect of her mysticism, her hysterical weeping expressions of religious desire. Lochrie challenges prevailing scholarly assumptions of Kempe's illiteracy, her role in the writing of her book, her misunderstanding of mystical concepts, and the failure of her book to influence a reading community. In her work and her life, Kempe consistently crossed the barriers of those cultural taboos designed to exclude and silence her. Instead of viewing Kempe as marginal to the great mystical and literary traditions of the late Middle Ages, this study takes her seriously as a woman responding to the cultural constraints and exclusions of her time. *Margery Kempe and Translations of the Flesh* will be of interest to students and scholars of medieval studies, intellectual history, and feminist theory.

the of margery kempe: *The Book of Margery Kempe* Margery Kempe, William Butler-Bowden, 1944

the of margery kempe: *The Lais of Marie De France* Marie France, 2011-10-27 Marie de France (fl. late twelfth century) is the earliest known French woman poet and her *lais* - stories in verse based on Breton tales of chivalry and romance - are among the finest of the genre. Recounting the trials and tribulations of lovers, the *lais* inhabit a powerfully realized world where very real

human protagonists act out their lives against fairy-tale elements of magical beings, potions and beasts. De France takes a subtle and complex view of courtly love, whether telling the story of the knight who betrays his fairy mistress or describing the noblewoman who embroiders her sad tale on the shroud for a nightingale killed by a jealous and suspicious husband.

the of margery kempe: Mystical Theology and Contemporary Spiritual Practice Christopher C. H. Cook, Julianne McLean, Peter Tyler, 2017-09-08 In Mystical Theology and Contemporary Spiritual Practice several leading scholars explore key themes within the Christian mystical tradition, contemporary and historical. The overall aim of the book is to demonstrate the relevance of mystical theology to contemporary spiritual practice. Attention is given to the works of Baron von Hugel, Vladimir Lossky, Margery Kempe, Ludwig Wittgenstein, Thomas Merton, and Francisco de Osuna, as well as to a wide range of spiritual practices, including pilgrimage, spiritual direction, contemplative prayer and the quotidian spirituality of the New Monasticism. Christian mystical theology is shown to be a living tradition, which has vibrant and creative new expressions in contemporary spiritual practice. It is argued that mystical theology affirms something both ordinary and extraordinary which is fundamental to the Christian experience of prayer.

the of margery kempe: *The Book of Margery Kempe* Margery Kempe, W. Butler-Bowdon, 1940

the of margery kempe: *The Book of Margery Kempe* Margery Kempe, John Skinner, 1999

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