

## Abstract: Unchaste Female Pilgrims in the Later Middle Ages: Literary Representations as Reflections of Urban Cultural Reality

Despite the principle of social equality present in pilgrimage, English and French literary depictions of unchaste female pilgrims in the Later Middle Ages (c. 1300-1400) reveal gender-biased attitudes. By shedding light on the background and function of these literary representations the article suggests that the *topos* reflects urban culture in which the public movement of female pilgrims posed a sexual threat to social order. The article first considers the function of the representations as defenders of social order. It then proceeds to analyse the gendered conceptions of space by giving preliminary consideration to the impact of prostitution.

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