



English in the Middle Ages

Tim William Machan

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What did people in England in the Middle Ages think about language? What was their view of English, French, and Latin, and how did this influence the way they communicated? This book uses these questions as a basis for a ground-breaking investigation into the use and status of the English language in medieval England. Professor Machan suggests that many linguistic, literary, and historical considerations of medieval statements on language have significantly failed to take into account the social and linguistic contexts of their production. In this volume he explores not only medieval ideas about language but also the discursive traditions which generated them. *English in the Middle Ages* draws upon a wide range of documentary evidence, including most notably the royal letters issued in 1258 prior to the Barons' War. The author also analyzes the language spoken by Chaucer's pilgrims, the conversations in 'Sir Gawain and the Green Knight', and many other chronicles, poems, and commentaries. The book concludes with a consideration of the post-medieval history of the status of English in law, literature, and education. The book will interest scholars from a range of disciplines - particularly linguistics, literature, and history - and is written in clear, non-technical language.

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