Marginalia
Vol. XIX Tenth Anniversary Conference:
Out of the Margins
19th-20th September 2014
COVER IMAGE: original calligraphy, copyright Simone Kotva
Acknowledgements

Editorial

Plenary

HELEN COOPER, Chaucer at the Edge: Middle English and the Rhetorical Tradition

Helen Cooper Prize

EKATERINA CHERNYAKOVA, Music in the Margins: Women Singing Mass in Tenth-Century Essen

Selected Papers

JASON BAXTER, ‘Margins toward the centre’: Bernard Silvestris’s (?) In martianum and the exegesis of Natura

CHARLOTTE E. COOPER, What is Medieval Paratext?

GIOVANNI GASBARRI, From Margins to Frames: Some Forms of Transmission of Visual Formulas in Byzantine Post-Iconoclastic Illuminated Books

A Marginal Note

ARABELLA MILBANK, Oderisi da Gubbio and the margins within margins of Dante’s Purgatorio
Acknowledgments

Heartfelt thanks to all those authors, editors, board and committee members who have contributed their scholarship, wisdom and critical acumen to the running of the Tenth Anniversary Conference and the creation of this special issue of MARGINALIA. Thanks are especially due to the AHRC, who funded the conference with a Student-Led Conference Grant, and, as always to the Cambridge University English Faculty, without which both this journal and the Medieval Reading Group would have remained very much in the margins.

Issue Editor Arabella Milbank Emmanuel College, Cambridge (Literature)
Design Editor Tony Harris Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge (Anglo-Saxon, Norse & Celtic)

Advisory Board

Dr. Ruth Ahnert Queen Mary, University of London (Literature)
Dr. Laura Ashe Worcester College, Oxford (Literature)
Dr. Joanna Bellis Pembroke College, Cambridge (Literature)
Dr. Elizabeth Boyle St Edmund’s College, Cambridge (Anglo-Saxon, Norse & Celtic)
Dr. Helen Brookman Exeter College, Oxford (Literature)
Dr. Aisling Byrne Merton College, Oxford (Literature)
Prof. Helen Cooper Magdalene College, Cambridge (Literature)
Dr. Richard Dance St. Catharine’s College, Cambridge (Anglo-Saxon, Norse & Celtic)
Dr. Catherine Eagleton Curator, Department of Coins & Medals, British Museum,
(History of Science)
Dr. Mary Flannery Queen Mary, University of London (Literature)
Dr. Kathryn A. Lowe University of Glasgow (Literature)
Dr. John Marenbon Trinity College, Cambridge (Philosophy)
Dr. Robert Mills King’s College London (Literature, Visual Culture & Theory)
Dr. Sophie Page University College London (History)
Dr. Anke Timmermann University of Glasgow (History and Philosophy of Science)
Dr. Katie Walter Ruhr-Universität Bochum, Germany (Literature)
Dr. James Wade Christ’s College, Cambridge (Literature)

Journal Committee

Brianne Dougher Magdalene College, Cambridge (Literature)
Marcel Elias Magdalen College, Cambridge (Literature)
Tony Harris Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge (Anglo-Saxon, Norse and Celtic)
Rosie Lintott Trinity College, Cambridge (Literature)
Arabella Milbank Emmanuel College, Cambridge (Literature)
Devani Singh Emmanuel College, Cambridge (Literature)
Shirley Zhang Magdalene College, Cambridge (Literature)
Editorial

I had the great pleasure of heading the committee that organised the hosting of Marginalia’s first ever conference in September 2014, which celebrated the tenth anniversary of the Medieval Reading Group at Cambridge and its online journal. This was a wonderful two-day event, concluding in a banquet with madrigals, which brought together international scholars from all levels to collaborate over two days in a joyful exploration of all kinds of margins. The papers gathered here represent that scope, which crossed many borders of era and discipline. What unites the essays here is the evidence that bringing the edges, physical and conceptual, to the centre of our focus holds academic reward—and that to examine the medieval margins is also to reframe our conception of what ‘marginal’ means. Professor Helen Cooper’s plenary lecture on Chaucer’s rhetoric illustrates this in its exploration of the borderland of medieval and renaissance scholarship, of vernacular and Latin literary traditions. The edginess of Chaucer’s vernacularity can push out our consciousness of his inscription in the fullest literary tradition, and a (shockingly!) still prevalent desire to push the middle ages to the margin of the Renaissance can impoverish a reading of Chaucer. She demonstrates, as does her entire career, how essential it is to work in the borderlands, as poets and as critics—for it is along these lines that interesting inversions of what is ‘central’ and what ‘marginal’ occur. The newly-instituted Helen Cooper Prize, which is testimony to Professor Cooper’s involvement in Marginalia from its inception, goes to the best postgraduate paper of the conference. Katya Chernyakova’s brilliant piece of scholarly detective work on the musical notation in the margins of the manuscripts of some northwestern German canonesses reveals their intimate, performer’s, knowledge of the music of the mass chants. She importantly extends our knowledge of the ecclesiastical role of these female religious: this presence on the edges of in fact places them indeed much nearer the ‘centre’ of sacramental life. Dr Jason Baxter gives theoretical ground to the porosity between text and exegesis, ‘centre’ and ‘margin’ in a twelfth-century commentary on the De Nuptiis. Paradoxically, the importance of the auctor, insofar as it is grounded in a platonically realist conception of truth-content, gives true value to exegesis as a veritable participation of this truth. The marginal commentator is engaged in an opening out of the rhythmically knotted complex of authorial intent, an activity not servile but richly imitative, in a way paralleled in Nature’s creative poesis as an unfolding of the divine intent. Charlotte Cooper’s article contributes to this theoretical conversation about the particularity of the medieval margin as she deconstructs the relevance of the print-based theoretical term ‘paratext’ in relation to the very differently constituted medieval text. With Dr Giovanni Gasbarri we find that the physical margins and frames of Byzantine texts can perform their own exegetical, typological and even rhetorical work. Finally, as a little ‘marginalia’ of my own to these efforts, and a tribute to the work of the conference, I offer a shorter note on the significance of Dante’s inclusion of a creator of manuscript marginalia amongst the figures of the proud in Purgatory.

Arabella Milbank

EMMANUEL COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE