

# THE NEW MIDDLE AGES

BONNIE WHEELER, *Series Editor*

*The New Middle Ages* is a series dedicated to transdisciplinary studies of medieval cultures, with particular emphasis on recuperating women's history and on feminist and gender analyses. This peer-reviewed series includes both scholarly monographs and essay collections.

PUBLISHED BY PALGRAVE:

*Women in the Medieval Islamic World:  
Power, Patronage, and Piety*  
edited by Gavin R. G. Hambly

*The Ethics of Nature in the Middle Ages:  
On Boccaccio's Poetaphysics*  
by Gregory B. Stone

*Presence and Presentation: Women in the  
Chinese Literati Tradition*  
by Sherry J. Mou

*The Lost Love Letters of Heloise and Abelard:  
Perceptions of Dialogue in Twelfth-Century  
France*  
by Constant J. Mews

*Understanding Scholastic Thought with Foucault*  
by Philipp W. Rosemann

*For Her Good Estate: The Life of Elizabeth  
de Burgh*  
by Frances A. Underhill

*Constructions of Widowhood and Virginity  
in the Middle Ages*  
edited by Cindy L. Carlson and Angela  
Jane Weisl

*Motherhood and Mothering in Anglo-Saxon  
England*  
by Mary Dockray-Miller

*Listening to Heloise:  
The Voice of a Twelfth-Century Woman*  
edited by Bonnie Wheeler

*The Postcolonial Middle Ages*  
edited by Jeffrey Jerome Cohen

*Chaucer's Pardoner and Gender Theory: Bodies  
of Discourse*  
by Robert S. Sturges

*Crossing the Bridge: Comparative Essays on  
Medieval European and Heian Japanese  
Women Writers*  
edited by Barbara Stevenson and  
Cynthia Ho

*Engaging Words: The Culture of Reading in  
the Later Middle Ages*  
by Laurel Amtower

*Robes and Honor: The Medieval World of  
Investiture*  
edited by Stewart Gordon

*Representing Rape in Medieval and Early  
Modern Literature*  
edited by Elizabeth Robertson and  
Christine M. Rose

*Same Sex Love and Desire Among Women  
in the Middle Ages*  
edited by Francesca Canadé Sautman  
and Pamela Sheingorn

*Sight and Embodiment in the Middle Ages:  
Ocular Desires*  
by Suzannah Biernoff

*Listen, Daughter: The Speculum Virginum  
and the Formation of Religious Women in  
the Middle Ages*  
edited by Constant J. Mews

*Science, the Singular, and the Question of  
Theology*  
by Richard A. Lee, Jr.

*Gender in Debate from the Early Middle  
Ages to the Renaissance*  
edited by Thelma S. Fenster and  
Clare A. Lees

*Malory's Morte Darthur: Remaking  
Arthurian Tradition*  
by Catherine Batt

*The Vernacular Spirit: Essays on Medieval  
Religious Literature*  
edited by Renate Blumenfeld-Kosinski,  
Duncan Robertson, and Nancy Warren

*Popular Piety and Art in the Late Middle Ages:  
Image Worship and Idolatry in England  
1350–1500*  
by Kathleen Kamberick

*Absent Narratives, Manuscript Textuality, and  
Literary Structure in Late Medieval England*  
by Elizabeth Scala

*Creating Community with Food and Drink in  
Merovingian Gaul*  
by Bonnie Effros

*Representations of Early Byzantine Empresses:  
Image and Empire*  
by Anne McClanan

*Encountering Medieval Textiles and Dress:  
Objects, Texts, Images*  
edited by Désirée G. Koslin and  
Janet Snyder

*Eleanor of Aquitaine: Lord and Lady*  
edited by Bonnie Wheeler and  
John Carmi Parsons

*Isabel La Católica, Queen of Castile: Critical  
Essays*  
edited by David A. Boruchoff

*Homeroeticism and Chivalry: Discourses of Male  
Same-Sex Desire in the Fourteenth Century*  
by Richard Zeikowitz

*Portraits of Medieval Women: Family, Marriage,  
and Politics in England 1225–1350*  
by Linda E. Mitchell

*Eloquent Virgins: From Thecla to Joan of Arc*  
by Maud Burnett McInerney

*The Persistence of Medievalism: Narrative  
Adventures in Contemporary Culture*  
by Angela Jane Weisl

*Capetian Women*  
edited by Kathleen Nolan

*Joan of Arc and Spirituality*  
edited by Ann W. Astell and Bonnie  
Wheeler

*The Texture of Society: Medieval Women in  
the Southern Low Countries*  
edited by Ellen E. Kittell and  
Mary A. Suydam

*Charlemagne's Mustache: And Other Cultural  
Clusters of a Dark Age*  
by Paul Edward Dutton

*Troubled Vision: Gender, Sexuality, and Sight  
in Medieval Text and Image*  
edited by Emma Campbell and  
Robert Mills

*Queering Medieval Genres*  
by Tison Pugh

*Sacred Place in Early Medieval Neoplatonism*  
by L. Michael Harrington

*The Middle Ages at Work*  
edited by Kellie Robertson and  
Michael Uebel

*Chaucer's Jobs*  
by David R. Carlson

*Medievalism and Orientalism: Three Essays on  
Literature, Architecture and Cultural Identity*  
by John M. Ganim

*Queer Love in the Middle Ages*  
by Anna Klosowska Roberts

*Performing Women: Sex, Gender and the  
Medieval Iberian Lyric*  
by Denise K. Filios

NECESSARY CONJUNCTIONS:  
THE SOCIAL SELF IN MEDIEVAL  
ENGLAND

*David Gary Shaw*

palgrave  
macmillan



NECESSARY CONJUNCTIONS

© David Gary Shaw, 2005.

Softcover reprint of the hardcover 1st edition 2005 978-1-4039-6689-6

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be used or reproduced in any manner whatsoever without written permission except in the case of brief quotations embodied in critical articles or reviews.

First published in 2005 by

PALGRAVE MACMILLAN™

175 Fifth Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10010 and

Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire, England RG21 6XS

Companies and representatives throughout the world.

PALGRAVE MACMILLAN is the global academic imprint of the Palgrave Macmillan division of St. Martin's Press, LLC and of Palgrave Macmillan Ltd. Macmillan® is a registered trademark in the United States, United Kingdom and other countries. Palgrave is a registered trademark in the European Union and other countries.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Shaw, David Gary.

Necessary conjunctions : the social self in medieval England /  
David Gary Shaw.

p. cm. — (The new Middle Ages)

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-1-349-73357-6

ISBN 978-1-137-06791-3 (eBook)

DOI 10.1007/978-1-137-06791-3

1. England—Social life and customs—1066–1485. 2. Community life—England—History—To 1500. 3. Group identity—England—History—To 1500. 4. Community—England—History—To 1500. 5. England—Social conditions—1066–1485. I. Title. II. New Middle Ages (Palgrave Macmillan (Firm))

DA185.S47 2005

307'.0942'0902—dc22

2004059352

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

Design by Newgen Imaging Systems (P) Ltd., Chennai, India.

First edition: March 2005

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Transferred to Digital Printing in 2010

*In Memory of  
Iva Beck Smith and David A. T. Peterson*



## CONTENTS

<i>List of Figures and Tables</i>	ix
<i>Preface</i>	xi
<i>Abbreviations</i>	xiii
1. Introduction: The Self in Social History	1
2. Master Values of Town Life	21
3. <i>E Pluribus Unum</i> : Peer Pressures	47
4. The Marriage of Self and Structure	69
5. Friends, Enemies, Patrons	93
6. Battles at the Boundary of the Self	121
7. Self-Possession	145
8. A World of Individuals	165
9. Conclusion: The Shape of the Social Self	197
<i>Notes</i>	207
<i>Bibliography</i>	259
<i>Index</i>	281





## LIST OF FIGURES AND TABLES

### **Figures**

4.1	Use of arbitration in lawsuits	74
4.2	Arbitration by sociopolitical group	83
4.3	Commons' arbitration partners	88
5.1	Basic network illustration	118

### **Tables**

4.1	Commons' use of arbitration	79
4.2	Middling and petty arbitration according to opponents' status	79
4.3	Shares of arbitration by sociopolitical status	82
4.4	Trespass arbitration by sociopolitical status	86
4.5	Commons' arbitration partners	87
5.1	Inner and outer circle of contacts by political grouping	101
5.2	Network density and intensity	119



## PREFACE

This book flows from my earlier work on urban communities and remains poised between the corporate and the personal, which it seeks to connect. It ends with biographies that are the result of social–historical engagements with ideas, structures, social networks and the permeable boundaries of the self. In its essence, one of my necessary conjunctions is that between the methods and manners of social history and those of cultural history. This methodological fusion is no less important than the engagement with self and society.

Unsurprisingly, this book owes much to social and cultural historians and social scientists around the world, whose works have greatly enriched me; their names are in the notes and bibliography, but the thanks are real. Certain individuals have been kind and tolerant in listening to me talk about my ideas and reading and commenting on what I had done. Moreover, some anonymous readers have come to be iconic professionals for me. Closer to home I have benefited from the work ethic of my Wesleyan University history department colleagues, who read the manuscript, sometimes as part of their responsibilities, and have offered advice, encouragement, reading suggestions, or a kind word, which is never hard to accept. Sharp readers they are and not easily pleased: I particularly thank Bruce Masters, Vijay Pinch, Phil Pomper, Rick Elphick, Vera Schwarcz, Nat Greene, and Ann Wightman. Outside readers who have improved the manuscript or my mind include Nancy Partner and Derek Neal at McGill University and Gabrielle Spiegel of the University of California at Los Angeles, as well as Bonnie Wheeler at Southern Methodist University. I must also thank my Wesleyan sociology colleague Robert Rosenthal, who very generously provided me with his extensive reading notes on social network theory, the use of which helped me to write Chapter Five. Needless to say, all errors are my responsibility.

The research for this book goes back many, many years, to moments long before it was conceived. I must therefore thank many librarians and archivists who often silently supported me by pretty consistent competence and kindness, at the Wells Town Hall, the Wells Cathedral Library, Lambeth

Palace Library, the Public Record Office (now the National Archives), the Somerset Records Office, the Bodleian Library, Balliol College Library, the Borthwick Institute of History at the University of York, Acadia University, Killam Library (Dalhousie University), McLennan Library at McGill University, the National Library of Scotland, Edinburgh University Library, and of course Wesleyan University's libraries, especially Olin. I thank David Perry for assistance with the relational database behind parts of chapters four and five, as well as the Ford Foundation which helped to fund his work several years ago. The preparation of the manuscript has been aided by my editors and the staff at Palgrave. I thank Bonnie Wheeler again, Melissa Nosal, the copy-editing team at Newgen, and William Fain. I also thank Elizabeth Jones for her help in completing the extensive references and Manolis Kaparakis and John Hammond for help with the figures and tables.

A book about small groups and the bonds that connect individuals is understandably haunted by many people, living and dead; the excellent little community of the Wesleyan History Department is one simulacrum of the medieval, as are my families, especially the Smiths of Nova Scotia, strange sources for past times perhaps, but effective and intriguing models.

Nearer and more conventionally, I must thank my near, most dear family. We are fairly undemonstrative even in private, so on the page I should leave it at this: I am constantly grateful for Sheila and Sarah, without whom this book would have been finished long ago, but much less happily.

## ABBREVIATIONS

AH	Wells, Wells Cathedral Library, Almshouse Document
<i>Cal. Pat. R.</i>	<i>Calendar of Patent Rolls</i> . Henry III–Henry VIII. 45 vols. HMSO, 1891–1916.
CB	Wells, Wells Town Hall, Convocation Book
<i>Chaucer</i>	Chaucer, Geoffrey. <i>Riverside Chaucer</i> . Ed. Larry Dean Benson. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, Co., 1987.
<i>Creation of a Community</i>	David Gary Shaw, <i>The Creation of a Community. The City of Wells in the Middle Ages</i> . Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993.
CS	Camden Society
EETS	Early English Text Society
LPL	London, Lambeth Palace Library
Mr Goodall's Book	Wells, Wells Town Hall, "Mr Goodall's Book"
RS	Rolls Series
Serel	Serel, Thomas. <i>Historical Notes on the Church of St Cuthbert in Wells, etc.</i> Wells: J.M. Atkins, 1875.
SMW	<i>Somerset Medieval Wills 1383–1500</i> . 3 volumes. Ed. F. W. Weaver. Somerset Record Society, 1901–05.
SRS	Somerset Record Society
WCaCH	Wells, Wells Cathedral Library, Wells Cathedral Charters
Wells Cath. Reg.	Wells, Wells Cathedral Library, Register
Wells City Ch.	Wells, Wells Town Hall, Wells City Charters