



**Subject Centre for
History, Classics
and Archaeology**

Art, the Bible and the Medieval Idea of the Family

Student Booklet

by M Tyler

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How to use this book

Firstly, please study this booklet carefully - and hang on to it!

This booklet contains all the information relevant to this particular course. You will be given something similar for all the courses you take in the History dept. You may find it useful in the longer term to file this booklet together with all the notes, essays and feedback forms that you will accumulate during the course. One good way of achieving this is to keep everything together in a single ring binder, one for each course you take. I still have files for my own undergraduate courses, and still refer to them regularly!

The booklet is divided into four sections. The **Introduction** (pp. 2-3) sets out the basic information about the course, its aims and objectives, basic key texts, some administrative information and methods of managing your time effectively to get the most out of the course. Section two gives a more detailed **Select Bibliography** (pp.3- 5) of selected texts relevant to the course. Section three sets out the **Weekly Seminar Topics** (pp. 6-12) and the work that you will need to prepare for each session. There will be specific reading to do in advance of each seminar, sometimes specific students or groups of students will be asked to read a text and prepare a short presentation intended to introduce the text to the rest of the group (more information on how to go about this is given in the Introduction). Finally section four deals with the subject of **Essays**, (p.13) and sets out some suggested titles. Everyone will be expected to write two essays during the course of the term.

Perhaps more than anything else, this course is intended to give you experience of the different ways in which history may be studied, the different resources and source materials that are available, and interesting questions which can be posed to challenge our assumptions about past society.

Introduction

This course has two basic aims. First, to introduce new undergraduates to the study of history at university level. Second, to explore ways in which cultural artefacts in general and visual imagery in particular can be used as an aid to the study of past societies. The focus of the idea of 'the family' in the middle ages as a specific case study will be used to explore these themes.

The narratives of Christian history offered the medieval believer a framework within which to understand and interpret the physical and spiritual worlds within which they lived, worked and worshiped. In the process of converting these narratives from written into visual forms, the commissioners, producers and consumers of Christian imagery drew extensively on a range of literary and iconographic 'types' rooted in contemporary theological understandings, as well as their own personal experiences of the world around them.

Preliminary Reading

In addition to the **Images of Salvation CD-ROM**, all students should make sure they have access to a copy of the following:

P.J.P. Goldberg: *Medieval England: A Social History 1250-1550*.

In addition, the following texts are highly recommended and students may wish to consider purchasing them.

Peter Fleming: *Family and Household in Medieval England*.

Richard Marks: *Image and Devotion in Late Medieval England*.

R.Beadle and P.King (eds.) *The York Mystery Plays: A Selection in Modern Spelling*.

The select bibliography lists many further works which are of relevance to the course from which students are encouraged to develop a personal reading programme which will reflect their own specific interests.

Images of Salvation CD ROM

Images of Salvation provides one hundred and eighty images illustrating biblical themes from Genesis to Revelation, together with background material explaining the doctrinal and art historical context. Each section contains a selection of

images from medieval stained glass, manuscript illumination and sculpture and includes summaries of the key points and relevant texts from the Bible and later commentators. Individual images are supplied with detailed commentary on important doctrinal and art historical elements. At all points in the CD-ROM it is possible to access an interactive reference section.

To make the best use of this resource spend time systematically browsing through its contents, which can be accessed in a number of ways. For our purposes, the arrangement of material in **Themes** brings together general notes and specific commentaries in the most useful manner. For a number of the weeks you will find that you are specifically required to study one or more particular themes as part of the key reading for the seminar. The **Topic** search facility is a powerful facility enabling you to interrogate the database in a number of ways.

The arrangement of the images with which the ROM is copiously illustrated facilitates the comparison of treatments of the same nominal subject in different settings by different artists, from different eras and different geographical areas. Get used to studying the images closely, and most importantly use the whole resource (and indeed the whole course!) to help formulate more and more questions -, what choices have been made by the artist, what assumptions are indicated, what prejudices (if any) are revealed, what might this tell us about the people that we are interested in?

Teaching Programme

The course will be taught by means of a weekly two-hour seminar, in which all students are expected to actively participate. Each week in advance of the seminar, students will be expected to read from a selection of materials from the prescribed bibliography and to prepare themselves for open discussion on the topics in hand. There is a good selection of reading available, with alternatives indicated where appropriate. The reading lists are not meant to be exhaustive, and the key texts listed above contain extensive bibliographies from which supplementary reading can be usefully identified.

Each student is required to prepare and submit TWO essays in the course of the term. For each essay students will receive a half-hour TUTORIAL. Essays are to be in the region of 1500 - 2000 words, and may be typed or hand written. Both are to be submitted by an agreed deadline negotiated in advance of the tutorial. (See note below)

The SEMINARS will be arranged as follows:

Week 1: Briefing.

Week 2: The Structures of Medieval Society, an introduction.

Week 3: Image and Consumer

Week 4: Case Study 1: Adam and Eve, models of marriage?.

Week 5: Case Study 2: Parents and Children

Week 6: Case Study 3. Noah, Abraham and Joseph. Issues of Youth and Age.

Week 7: Case Study 4. Mary Joseph and Jesus. The Perfect family?

Week 8: Field Visit. All Saints North St.

Week 9: Group Presentations.

Tutor Contact Details

For part of the week I am based at the Centre for Medieval Studies at Kings Manor in the centre of York. Just to complicate matters further, I also work at other universities and educational centres during the week. As I do not have a permanent base at Campus, communication requires a little more attention than would normally be the case. Non-urgent post should be directed via the History Departmental Office in Vanbrugh. I will normally be using e-mail to keep in contact with you all, and you should in any event seek to check your own e-mails on a daily basis. I may be contacted at [name@address.com].

Essays should normally be handed in via the History Departmental Office using the submission basket system (essays clearly marked up with tutor and student name to be placed in the basket on the counter during office hours, or in the basket in the vestibule next to the office outside office hours). Because of my weekly routine and its relative inflexibility I will have to be a little draconian about submission dates and deadlines. If you are having a particular problem with an essay please do let me know as soon as possible - I should be able to help. The problem I have however is that unless work is received by the planned deadlines, I cannot guarantee to get it marked and returned on schedule.

I can be contacted by phone at any reasonable hour on (01XXXX) XXXXXX or by text message on 07XXX XXXXXX and am always happy to discuss course details, essay problems or work issues. Please do not hesitate to contact me.

Weekly Check List

On a weekly basis, students should plan to incorporate the following elements into their schedules:

- 1) Core reading for next seminar set out in booklet.

- 2) Key reading for seminar papers.
- 3) Search / review of primary sources for material specific to weekly topic.
- 4) Search / review of secondary material.
- 5) Essay Planning / Writing Up.

On a daily basis, students should be planning at least 1 to 2 hours of reading time as a minimum!

Seminar Paper Check List

The presentation of Seminar papers is in part a preparation ultimately for the presentation of Conference and Research Papers to a wider academic audience and is in effect part of your professional development.

Each paper should be presented as a written text which is read to the group by the presenter. Each paper should be timed to last between 5 and 10 minutes (max) and should serve as a critical introduction to and overview of the designated text for the rest of the group and should lead straight into a discussion forum. If you are preparing a paper, you may like to think about incorporating the following elements (where applicable) into your presentation.

Checklist:

- 1) What is the text, where is it presented. (Not relevant when we are all working from the same text).
- 2) Who wrote it, who are they, what else have they done, what are their interests.
- 3) What is the argument of the piece overall. (The meaty bit)
- 4) What sources (primary and secondary) are being used.
- 5) What questions does the text raise, what are its implications for our study.

Points 1 and 2 above should take no more than a couple of minutes. Points 3 and 4 are the heart of the paper and should fill up 5 plus minutes. Point 5 is the culmination of the presentation and is in effect the measure of the success of the paper. A good seminar paper will both summarise the text and stimulate further discussion.

Please Note: Even if you are not scheduled to give a seminar paper in a particular week, you should still prepare thoroughly for discussion of the points raised by those who are giving papers. This will usually require at least a skim read of some of the articles or chapters on which papers are being read. Discussion and active engagement with the topic are critical elements of the seminar process, and in any case add significantly to the enjoyment of the course.

Select Bibliography

This bibliography is intended to help you develop a personal reading programme and is grouped accordingly. I have tried to steer you towards works by writers whose work is considered influential in general and also accessible and enjoyable (by me!), the grouping is also somewhat subjective. The list is by no means exhaustive, but the majority of these works contain further bibliographies which can be usefully 'mined' for additional material. **There is always pressure on key texts - so think ahead, think about alternatives, and never ever leave reading to the last minute!**

1) Exhibition Catalogues.

This may seem like an odd category to introduce at the start of a select bibliography. These two specific catalogues contain extensive collections of authored articles on a wide range of relevant topics. The catalogues contain articles which could usefully be listed under each of the subsequent headings of this bibliography. It is recommended that students take some time to browse through these on a regular basis.

Alexander and Binski (eds.) *Age of Chivalry: Art in Plantagenet England*.

Marks and Williamson (eds.) *Gothic: Art for England*.

2) General Works on Medieval Society

A.J.Pollard, *Late Medieval England 1399 - 1509*

Rosemary Horrox (ed.), *Fifteenth Century Attitudes: Perceptions of Society in Late Medieval England*.

R. Britnell (ed.), *Daily Life in the Late Middle Ages*

J. LeGoff (ed.), *The Medieval World*

Michael Clanchy, *From Memory to Written Record*.

Boris Ford (ed.), *The Cambridge Guide to the Arts in Britain: The Middle Ages*.

C.Dyer, *Standards of Living in the Middle Ages: Social Change in England c1200-1520*

3) Studies of Medieval Religion

J.Bossy, *Christianity in The West, 1400-1700*.

Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England 1400-1580*.

R.N.Swanson, *Religion and Devotion in Europe*

Miri Rubin, *Corpus Christi: The Eucharist in Late Medieval Culture*

4) Urban Society

K. Lilley, *Urban Life in the Middle Ages 1000- 1450*

Clark and Slack (eds), *Crisis and order in English Towns, 1500-1700: Essays in urban History*

Holt and Rosser (eds), *The English Medieval Town: A Reader in Urban History 1200-1540.*

S.Rees Jones (ed.), *The Government of Medieval York.*

P.J.P Goldberg, *Women Work and Lifecycle in a Medieval Economy: Women in York and Yorkshire c1300-1520*

5) General Art Historical Reference works.

R.Nelson and R Shiff, *Critical Terms For Art History.*

J.Berger, *Ways of Seeing*

Celia Chazelle, Pictures, Books and the illiterate: Pope Gregory I's letters' *Word and Image* 6

Lawrence Duggan, 'Was Art really the book of the illiterate?' *Word and Image* 5

6) Studies of the medieval family.

Peter Fleming, *Family and Household in Medieval England.*

Peter Laslett, *The world we have lost further explored.*

Goldberg and Riddy (eds.), *Youth in the Middle Ages.*

Philippe Aries, *Centuries of Childhood*

Cathy Itnyre, *Medieval Family Roles*

7) Gender based studies.

Alcuin Blamires, *The Case for Women in Medieval Culture*

David Herlihy, *Women Family and Society in Medieval Europe*

J. Wogan-Browne (ed.), *Medieval Women: Texts and Contexts in Late medieval Britain.*

See also chapters on women in Horrox, *Fifteenth Century Attitudes.*

8) Specific Art Historical Studies

Michael Camille, *Mirror in Parchment: The Luttrell Psalter and the Making of Medieval England.*

Michael Camille, *The Gothic Idol.*

K.Ashley and P. Scheingorn. *Interpreting Cultural Symbols*

L.Dresen-Coenders, *Saints and She Devils: Images of Women in the 15th and 16th Centuries*

Fyfe and Law (eds.), *Picturing Power: Visual Depiction and Social Relations.*

B.S.Levy (ed.), *The Bible in the Middle Ages: Its influence on Literature and Art.*

C.M.Kauffman, *Biblical Imagery in Medieval England 700-1550.*

9) Relevant studies of medieval literature and the literary arts.

R.Beadle, *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval English Theatre.*

Sarah Beckwith, *Signifying God: Social relation and symbolic act...*

David C. Fowler, *The Bible in Middle English Literature*

Chris Humphrey, *The Politics of Carnival*

J.A. Burrow, *Medieval Writers and their work.*

Weekly Seminar Topics

Week 2: The Structures of Medieval Society, an introduction

We will start this week by considering something of the nature of medieval society, its' basic structures and networks of social relationships. As the basis for our discussions, we will look at the first five chapters of Goldberg's *Medieval England*.

To get us started I would like brief presentations from pairs of students summarising the key points put forward by Goldberg in one of the chapters:

- 1) Gender and Hierarchy
- 2) Family and Household
- 3) Manor and Borough
- 4) Church and Parish
- 5) Guild and Fraternity

Discussion points:

- 1) Can we talk about a specifically 'medieval' form of society?
- 2) If so, what are its key defining features?

NOTES:

Week 3: Image and Consumer.

This week we are going to explore some of the issues surrounding our understanding of the place of imagery in medieval culture. The key reading this week will help us to open up the topic.

Key Reading:

For a general background to the session, all students should read:

Goldberg, *Medieval England* Chapters 16 'Devotion before the break with Rome' and 20 'Cultural Production'.

I would also like seminar papers please based on the following chapters / articles. What am really interested in having drawn out is the way in which each writer looks at different aspects of using visual imagery and comes up with radically different (I think) commentaries on the society they are considering as a result.

- 1) Michael Camille, *Mirror in parchment* Chapter 2 'The Lords Hall, Feasting Family and Fashion.'
- 2) Richard Marks, *Image and Devotion* Chapter 7 'Ritual and Devotion'
- 3) Margaret Aston, 'The Use Of Images' in Marks and Williamson *Gothic*.
- 4) Lawrence Duggan, 'Was Art really the book of the illiterate?' *Word and Image* 5
- 5) Celia Chazelle, 'Pictures, Books and the illiterate: Pope Gregory I's letters' *Word and Image* 6

The students introducing the Duggan and Chazelle articles will probably wish to collaborate as the two articles engage in something of a debate. The Camille paper is possibly the most challenging - an imaginative piece by one of the foremost art historians of his generation.

Discussion points:

Is the study of imagery really any use to the historian?

NOTES:

Week 4: Case Study I: Adam and Eve. Models of marriage?

An understanding of the formation of marriages in the medieval era is clearly essential if we are to take even the first tentative steps towards understanding the nature of the family. There are several ways of approaching the issue, and the specialist literature is extensive encompassing numerous differing perspectives. We are going to approach the topic in a somewhat unusual manner, by looking at the depiction of Adam and Eve, the first 'married couple'.

For the biblical foundation see:

Genesis 1:26 to 2:25. (IOS CD gives a link to the appropriate texts, together with notes on the translations used. Study these carefully).

For an introduction to the medieval idea of marriage see:

Peter Fleming, *Family and Household in Medieval England*, Chapter 1 'Marriage Making'

And revise Goldberg, 'Gender and Hierarchy' and 'Family and Household'

For an introduction to the role of women in Medieval Society see:

P.J.P Goldberg, 'Women' in Rosemary Horrox (ed.) *Fifteenth Century Attitudes*

Kowaleski and Bennett 'Crafts, Gilds and Women in the Middle Ages' in Bennett (ed.) *Sisters and Workers in the Middle Ages*'.

For a discussion of the treatment of women in literature see:

P.J.P. Goldberg 'Performing the word of God' in D.Wood (ed.) *Life and thought in the Northern Church c1100-c1700: Essays in honour of Claire Cross*. Studies in Church History Subsidia Volume: 12.

And

Alcuin Blamires *The Case For Women in Medieval Culture*, Chapter 4 'Eve and the privileges of women'.

In class we will look together at some dramatisations of the creation of Adam and Eve and the fall of mankind,

Seminar Papers:

This week based on the IOS CD, I would like a couple of hapless volunteers to prepare papers based on the content of the themes - 'Old Testament Women' and 'Fall of Humankind'

Discussion points:

Can the study of imagery and literary types help us to understand anything of the role of women in medieval society?

Do we understand the question of marriage in medieval society?

Notes:

Week 5: Case Study 2. Parents and children.

Well, I could cheerfully strangle mine - parents and children that is. Again, the literature here is extensive and resolves itself in one aspect into a debate as to whether the idea of 'childhood' is a modern (or early modern?) invention, with of course an interesting corollary for the notion of 'parenthood'.

IOS Study the themes: 'Massacre of the Innocents', 'Childhood of Jesus'

Key Reading:

Read selectively and critically from the following:

P.J.P. Goldberg and F.J.Riddy *Youth in the Middle Ages*. Introduction.

Philippe Aries, *Centuries of Childhood*.

L. de Mause (ed.) *The History of Childhood*.

C. Klapische-Zuber *Women, Family and Ritual in Renaissance Italy* Ch 5.

S. Shahar *Childhood in the Middle Ages*.

Papers please on the following:

- 1) Goldberg 'Girls growing up in medieval England' *History Today* 45 (1995).
- 2) A.Burton 'Looking forward from Aries? Pictorial and material evidence for the history of childhood and family life' in *Continuity and Change* 4 (1989) pp. 203-29.
- 3) M.J.Tucker 'The Child as beginning and end' in de Mause (ed.) *The History of Childhood*.
- 4) J.Swanson 'Childhood and child rearing in ad status sermons by later thirteenth century friars' *Journal of Medieval History* 16 (1990).

Discussion Points.

Aries has argued that there was essentially no medieval idea of childhood as a unique stage of life. Is this a sustainable argument?

Notes:

Week 6: Case Study 3: Noah, Abraham and Joseph. Issues of youth and age.

IOS - Study theme 'Typology' focusing in particular on 'Sacrifice of Isaac' and 'Noah and The Flood', 'Childhood of Jesus'.

Key Reading:

This week in addition to visual imagery, we will be considering some extracts from fifteenth-century dramatic texts, notably the Abraham and Isaac play from the York Corpus Christi cycle, and the Noah plays from York and Chester. I will circulate copies of the appropriate texts. I would like us to spend some time considering the texts and discussing the possible variations between the treatments of the same subject (assuming we can detect any).

Peter Fleming Family and Household in Medieval England Chapter 2: Family Life.

E.Clark 'The quest for security in Medieval England'

And

J.T.Rosenthal 'Retirement and the life cycle in C15 England'

Both in M.M.Sheehan (ed.) *Aging and the Aged in medieval Europe*.

S. Shahar, *Growing Old in the Middle Ages*.

J.T. Rosenthal, *Old Age in Medieval England*.

For a general introduction to the theatre of the middle ages see:

R.Beadle (ed.) *Cambridge Companion to Medieval English Drama*.

Discussion points:

- 1) Is it safe to suggest that there is a single unique treatment of the biblical episodes we are considering this week?
- 2) What was the status of the elderly in medieval society?

Notes:

Week 7: Case Study 4. Mary Joseph and Jesus. The Perfect family?

Once again we are approaching an area of debate from an unusual angle. One of the most interesting questions about medieval family forms is whether or not the nuclear family, within which most of us will have grown up, has always been the typical type of household. The literature once again is extensive and on the whole informative. Remember, we are not looking for answers, just a clearer understanding of the question and ways in which it might be answerable.

IOS - Study the themes 'Nativity', 'Childhood of Jesus'.

Key Reading:

On the cult of Mary generally see:

Marina Warner, *Alone of all her sex: The myth and cult of the Virgin Mary*.

Richard Marks, *Image and Devotion* Chapter 6. 'The proliferation of Marian imagery'.

Papers please on the following (very diverse) selection of writings:

- 1) Pamela Sheingorn, 'Appropriating the Holy Kinship' in Ashley and Sheingorn *Interpreting Cultural Symbols*.
- 2) Zvi Razi, 'The Myth of the Immutable English Family' in *Past and Present* 140 1993.
- 3) Peter Laslett, *The World We Have Lost: further explored* Ch. 4. 'Misbeliefs about our ancestors'.

Discussion points:

The key issue for us to grapple with here is whether or not there was a concept of the 'perfect family' actively present within the later middle ages, and if so does the depiction of the Holy Family help us to understand what that image might have been.

Notes:

Week 8: Field Visit. All Saints North St.

This remarkably well preserved church in the heart of York is well worth a visit at any time. It contains some of the best preserved examples of fifteenth century stained glass to be found anywhere in the country. The objective this week is to do a practical study of the church, with each group focusing on a particular window and preparing a study

Key Reading:

Barbara Wilson and Frances Mee, *The Medieval Parish Churches of York: The Pictorial Evidence* (See under All Sts North Street).

Paul Williamson, 'The Parish Church' in Marks and Williamson, *Gothic: Art for England 1400-1547*. pp.375-425.

E.A.Gee, 'The Painted Glass of All Saints Church, North Street, York' in *Archaeologia* CII (Check with me for availability)

P.J.Shaw, *An Old York Church: All Hallows in North Street* (printed in 1908 and hard to get hold of)

We will meet at All Saints, and spend our usual seminar slot examining the church and looking at its collection of stained glass. I hope you will take the opportunity to revisit the church again, and also visit more of the medieval churches of the city and the Minster. They are all well worth the effort!

I will be setting you the task of working in groups and focusing on a particular window - there are plenty to go at! Your objective is to prepare a presentation discussing the content of the window and its possible significance as evidence for the social historian for next week.

Week 9: Group Presentations.

Discussion points:

This is the week when you have the opportunity to draw the strands of the course together and think about the work that we have been doing both generally and in the specific context of All Saints North Street.

I have no strong plans for this week, and ideally would like to allow the group to determine the agenda for itself.

I am looking forward to this session!

Essay Programme

Students are required to prepare and submit two essays addressing titles from the following list OR exploring a title of the students own choice agreed with me in advance. I will ask you all to fill in an initial essay planning form, and to do some initial research for yourselves on the selection and identification of a suitable bibliography which I will have a look at before you get down to writing in earnest.

I will hijack some of our seminar time to talk about the process of essay writing, researching bibliographies, referencing conventions and so on. The essays are marked on a standardised scale used for all first year essays, and are assessed against specific criteria. At this stage you should be thinking about your writing as a practical skill developing exercise. Perhaps more than anything else you should be thinking about what kind of historian you are - what interests you, what type of literature engages your attention? This is an important part of your 'professional' development.

Dates for submission and subsequent Tutorials will be negotiated during the term.

Titles:

- 1) What were the principal features of religious life in the late medieval city?
- 2) How reliable is devotional imagery as evidence for the role of women in late medieval society?
- 3) Should we regard devotional imagery an expression of faith or of pride and material wealth?
- 4) What can biblical imagery tell us about the late medieval image of the ideal Christian community ?
- 5) What was the role of the Parish and its church in late medieval society ?
- 6) How far does the Aries thesis fit with the evidence of the depiction of children in medieval biblical imagery?

Essays should be in the region of 1500-2000 words, and may be hand written or typed, but should be fully referenced and include a bibliography of works referred to or directly cited.

Preparing for the Tutorial.

The Tutorial is an opportunity for a one to one, or occasionally one to two, discussion of the content and style of your essay. Essays will have been submitted in advance, giving me the opportunity to read through them, mark and comment on them both generally and in detail on specific points of content. The discussions usually last 30 minutes, which is not long! So please turn up on time, or let me know if there is a problem so we can make an alternative arrangement.

*Dr Michael H Tyler
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