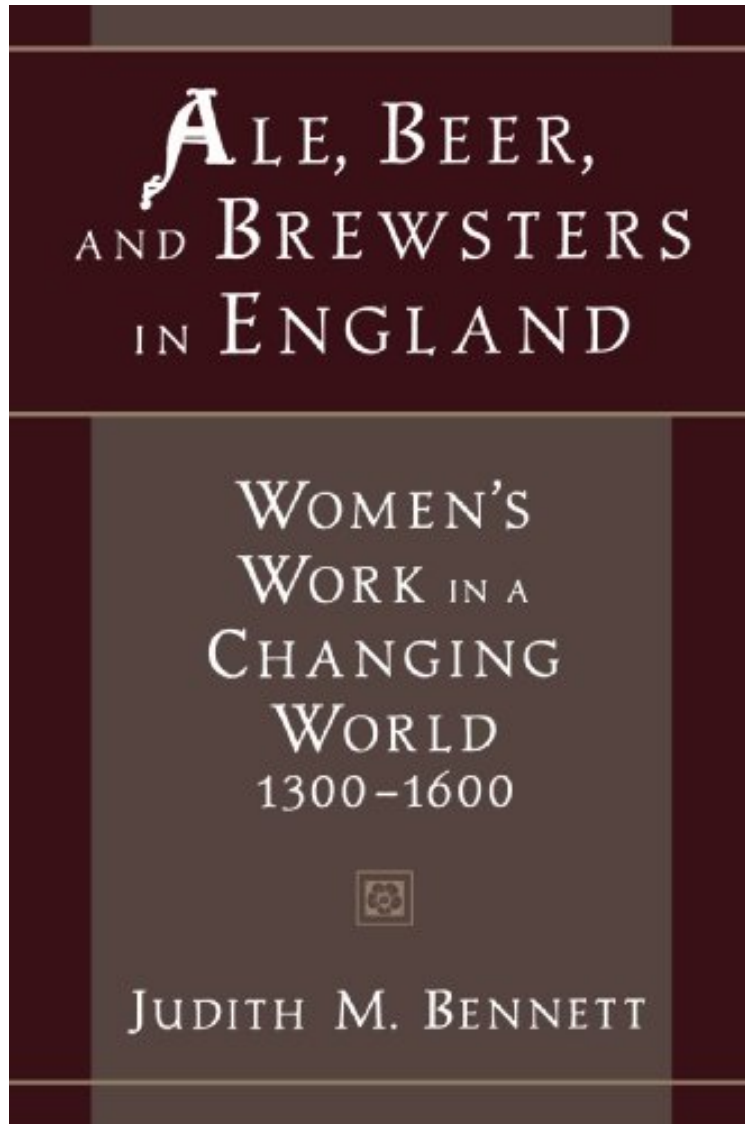


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Ale, Beer, and Brewsters in England: Women's Work in a Changing World

Judith M. Bennett

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Judith M. Bennett : Ale, Beer, and Brewsters in England: Women's Work in a Changing World before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Ale, Beer, and Brewsters in England: Women's Work in a Changing World:

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of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five StarsBy NishaGreat Condition and very informative. This was ordered for a college course13 of 14 people found the following review helpful. Chock full of informationBy RatI've been researching beer brewing and this book was a great look at the time when the business changed from a largely female run, household-based, business, to a guild-organized, male-dominated business. I had no idea how the Black Death contributed to this change. A fascinating book!

Women brewed and sold most of the ale consumed in medieval England, but after 1350, men slowly took over the trade. By 1600, most brewers in London were male, and men also dominated the trade in many towns and villages. This book asks how, when, and why brewing ceased to be women's work and instead became a job for men. Employing a wide variety of sources and methods, Bennett vividly describes how brewsters (that is, female brewers) gradually left the trade. She also offers a compelling account of the endurance of patriarchy during this time of dramatic change.

"This is a valuable work, not only because of its conclusions, but because of its tackling of the thorny problem of 'historicizing patriarchy.' Highly recommended."--CHOICE
"This lean, powerfully argued book merits attention both for its central theme and for its many insights into the development of brewing and the lives of those involved in the trade."--American Historical
"This important, scholarly book makes a major contribution to the study of medieval women and to the period's social and economic history."--Albion
"Richly documented and lucidly written...Should be required reading for labour and women's historians, as well as medievalists. Its clarity and anecdotal detail--to say nothing of the natural appeal of its subject matter--will also make it suitable for undergraduate instruction as well."--Labour/Le Travail
"Bennett's book can be read on two levels. Certainly it documents the course of yet another dance in which women never lead, to borrow her metaphor, but it is also an excellent...account of the metamorphosis of a medieval craft into an early modern industry over the course of more than three centuries."--The Medieval
"Bennett has written a wonderful book. Combining large questions and lively prose with an impressive archival base and an eclectic methodology, she takes on diverse tasks. The simplest is a variation on a classic social history--an examination of the experiences of one group (women) in one industry (brewing) in particular localities (Oxford and others)...Her reach also extends to one of the most imponderable tasks of all, to explain and account historically for the persistence of patriarchy...[This] is a brilliant and provocative book...Bennett has written a book the conceptual pertinence of which extends to all historians interested in gender and in power."--The Journal of Interdisciplinary History
"Bennett...fills an important gap in the history of women and the brewing industry by explaining how and why women lost primacy in brewing beer."--History: s of New Books
"There are issues in Bennett's book to be weighed by teachers of history: she is good at posing problems and asking questions. Her own engagement with the position of women today, and with her women students who ask questions about women's work, makes the book immediately of interest...Her clear articulation of her position as a feminist historian combined with her careful research make her arguments compelling. There is a message here for both feminist and medieval historians."--Journal of Social History, Carnegie-Mellon University
"Bennett's study is bold in its sweep, thoughtful in its analysis, and provocative in its argument. Its conclusions offer an important challenge to prevailing views of women's work, one that will reshape discussion of the subject for years to come."--Speculum: A Journal of Medieval Studies
"[H]ere is a nearly perfect example of a monograph, with a manageable subject, clear exposition of goals and thesis, thorough and careful use of sources, and argument placed in its historical and historiographic contexts. Plus, it is interesting and enjoyable to read."--Journal of Women's History
"...Bennett's book explores a fascinating topic with considerable style and skill. Her prose is clear and her arguments are logically constructed and neatly set out...Bennett's successful attempt to explore seriously and in detail the workings of patriarchy make this an important book for all scholars of past societies."--Journal of Modern History
"You don't have to be a beer drinker to appreciate the scope and scale of Dr. Bennett's book... extensive and illuminating...[T]he picture she has constructed of Brewsters is one that serves as an analogy to other industries initially dominated by women; these women, too, were marginalized over time until they abandoned the work to the men who were replacing them."--Sixteenth Century Journal
From the Back Cover
Women brewed and sold most of the ale drunk in medieval England, but after 1350, men slowly took over the trade. By 1600, most brewers in London - as well as in many towns and villages - were male, not female. Ale, Beer, and Brewsters in England investigates this transition, asking how, when, and why brewing ceased to be a women's trade and became a trade of men. Drawing on a wide variety of sources - such as literary and artistic materials, court records, accounts, and administrative orders - Judith Bennett vividly describes how brewsters (that is, female brewers) slowly left the trade. She tells a story of commercial growth, guild formation, changing technologies, innovative regulations, and finally, enduring ideas that linked brewsters with drunkenness and disorder. Examining this instance of seemingly dramatic change in women's status, Bennett argues that it included significant elements of continuity. Women might not have brewed in 1600 as often as they had in 1300, but they still worked predominantly in low-status, low-skilled, and poorly remunerated tasks. Using the experiences of brewsters to rewrite the history of women's work during the rise of capitalism, Ale, Beer, and Brewsters in England offers a telling story of the endurance of patriarchy in a time of

dramatic economic change. About the Author Judith M. Bennett is Professor Emerita of History and John R. Hubbard Chair in British History Emerita at University of Southern California. She has published extensively on the history of women, particularly women in the middle ages. Her books include *Women in the Medieval English Countryside* (Oxford, 1987) and *Sisters and Workers in the Middle Ages* (co-editor, 1989).