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Mark Amsler

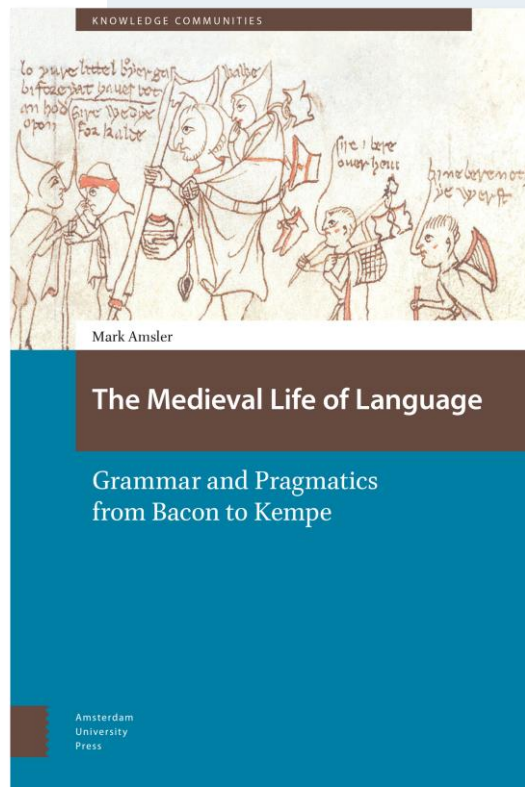
## The Medieval Life of Language

*Grammar and Pragmatics from Bacon to Kempe*

*The Medieval Life of Language: Grammar and Pragmatics from Bacon to Kempe* explores the complex history of medieval pragmatic theory and ideas and metapragmatic awareness across social discourses. Pragmatic thinking about language and communication is revealed in grammar, semiotics, philosophy, and literature. Part historical reconstruction, part social history, part language theory, Amsler supplements the usual materials for the history of medieval linguistics and discusses the pragmatic implications of grammatical treatises on the interjection, Bacon's sign theory, logic texts, Chaucer's poetry, inquisitors' accounts of heretic speech, and life-writing by William Thorpe and Margery Kempe. Medieval and contemporary pragmatic theory are contrasted in terms of their philosophical and linguistic orientations. Aspects of medieval pragmatic theory and practice, especially polysemy, equivocation, affective speech, and recontextualization, show how pragmatic discourse informed social controversies and attitudes toward sincere, vague, and heretical speech. Relying on Bakhtinian dialogism, critical discourse analysis, and conversation analysis, Amsler situates a key period in the history of linguistics within broader social and discursive fields of practice.

### BIOGRAPHY

Mark Amsler has taught medieval and comparative literature, linguistics, and writing at universities in the US and New Zealand. He is author of *Etymology and Grammatical Discourse*, *Affective Literacies*, and numerous essays on medieval literature, history of linguistics, English linguistics, and critical theory.



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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements

Abbreviations

Introduction: Where is Medieval Pragmatics?

- 1 Medieval Pragmatics: Philosophical and Grammatical Contexts  
Three Terms and a Theory  
Roger Bacon's Semiotics and Pragmatics  
Peter (of) John Olivi: Pragmatics and the Will to Speak
- 2 Interjections: Does Affect have Grammar?
- 3 *Allas* Context  
*Allas*: A Case for Context
- 4 Alisoun's Giggle, or the Miller Does Pragmatics  
Does a Giggle Mean?  
Impoliteness, Hedging, and Textual Pragmatics  
Polysemy, Bullseyes, Misfires, or How Narrative Escapes Intention  
Centrifugal Narrative Contracts
- 5 How Heretics Talk, According to Bernard Gui and William Thorpe  
Pragmatic Talk, Pragmatic Action  
Bernard Gui's Conversation Analysis and Institutional Discourse  
William Thorpe's Relationship Pragmatics
- 6 Margery Kempe's Strategic Vague Language  
Cooperate or Else  
Vaguing Pragmatics  
Kempe Comes to the Archbishop  
Kempe Tells a Tale

One More Thing

Bibliography

Index

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