

Fairy Tales from Before Fairy Tales

The Medieval Latin Past of Wonderful Lies

Jan M. Ziolkowski

Explores the links between tales preserved in Latin from the Middle Ages and classic fairy tales from the collections of the Brothers Grimm and Hans Christian Andersen

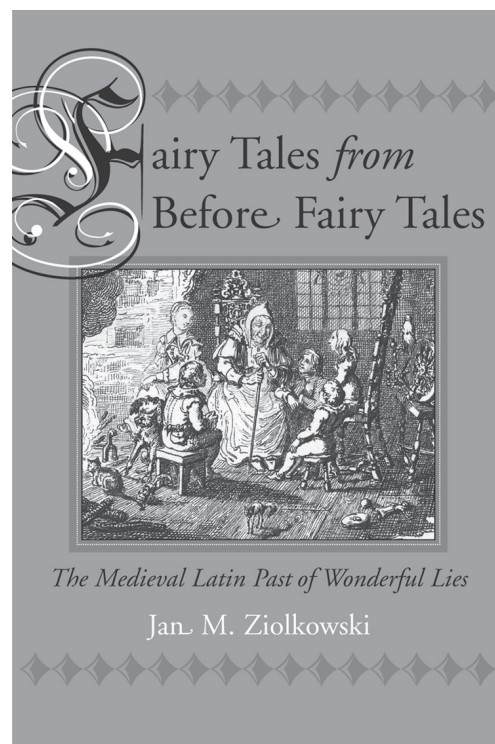
When did fairy tales begin? What qualifies as a fairy tale? Is a true fairy tale oral or literary? Or is a fairy tale determined not by style but by content? To answer these and other questions, Jan M. Ziolkowski not only provides a comprehensive overview of the theoretical debates about fairy tale origins but includes an extensive discussion of the relationship of the fairy tale to both the written and oral sources. Ziolkowski offers interpretations of a sampling of the tales in order to sketch the complex connections that existed in the Middle Ages between oral folktales and their written equivalents, the variety of uses to which the writers applied the stories, and the diverse relationships between the medieval texts and the expressions of the same tales in the “classic” fairy tale collections of the nineteenth century. In so doing, Ziolkowski explores stories that survive in both versions associated with, on the one hand, such standards of the nineteenth-century fairy tale as the Brothers Grimm, Hans Christian Andersen, and Carlo Collodi and, on the other, medieval Latin, demonstrating that the literary fairy tale owes a great debt to the Latin literature of the medieval period.

“A pioneer work. Ziolkowski is a lucid thinker, and his meticulous scholarship speaks for itself. This should be required reading for any serious folklorist, medievalist, or fairy-tale scholar.”

—**Jack Zipes**, Department of German, Scandinavian, & Dutch, University of Minnesota

“With energetic wit and erudition, Jan Ziolkowski works magic, bringing to life tales told in truly olden times and showing how they participated in shaping cultural stories that still arouse wonder today. He digs deep, serving as the ideal guide for an archaeological project that no student of fairy tales will want to miss.”

—**Maria Tatar**, John L. Loeb Professor of Germanic Languages and Literatures and Dean for the Humanities, Harvard University



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“Learned and lively, Ziolkowski’s book animates a distant medieval storytelling tradition and gives a persuasive account of the remarkable continuity in Europe’s folktale tradition. Its appendix is an absolute treasure-trove of hard-to-locate Latin sources that the author has seamlessly translated for English readers.”

—**Ruth B. Bottigheimer**, Department of Comparative Literary and Cultural Studies, Stony Brook University

Jan M. Ziolkowski is the Arthur Kingsley Porter Professor of Medieval Latin at Harvard University.

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