

It is clear that the *Memorial* often tells us more about Brother A and his priorities of what a holy woman should be than it tells us about Angela's own priorities. This dual focus makes the *Memorial* a fascinating source for anyone interested in the ways in which medieval men and women interacted within the constraints and opportunities of the *cura monialium*. The fact that Angela of Foligno is predominantly known to us today via a 'textual collaboration' with Brother A reminds us of one of the key features of Joan Scott's analytical category of gender, namely, that the study of gender must always be relational. Therein lies the difficulty, and therein lie the possibilities for even more future insights into the fascinating area of medieval spirituality.

Finally, the book also contains biographical descriptions and short primary source extracts concerning Angela's female contemporaries in Italy, Umiltà of Faenza, Margherita of Cortona, Vanna of Orvieto, and Chiara of Montefalco. An annotated bibliography of primary and secondary sources in English, Latin, and Italian will prove useful to students, and ensures that interested readers will be able to continue their research once they have concluded this short and stimulating introduction into the world of Angela of Foligno.

—Elizabeth Freeman, University of Tasmania

McClanan, Anne L. and Karen Rosoff Encarnación, eds. *The Material Culture of Sex, Procreation, and Marriage in Premodern Europe*. New York: Palgrave, 2002. Pp. xiv + 285, 34 black and white illustrations.

This collection of essays has an enormous geographical and temporal reach and has an equally broad thematic range. The term "premodern" is invoked increasingly to bridge the problematic demarcations of traditional periodization, particularly that distinguishing medieval from early modern. This volume not only crosses that divide, but also the one that has separated antiquity from the middle ages. Essays range from the late first century through to the post-reformation sixteenth century. The geographic sweep is equally broad, stretching from the Byzantine east through southern Europe, to northern Europe. Finally, the variety of sources examined demonstrates the richness and diversity contained in the term "material culture." Sources include Roman sarcophagi, medical instruments, rings and other jewelry, textiles, painting and other modes of artistic production, and clothing. Despite this diversity, the collection as a whole provides a useful entry into the world of material culture and the multidisciplinary approaches that can be brought to the study of medieval sex and gender.

The various essays in this volume are connected by a number of different themes. For example, the endurance of magic and the power of objects to protect people is central to Alicia Walker's examination of Byzantine marriage jewelry. She suggests that coexistence of pagan love magic and Christian belief may account for marriage rings which, while not explicitly countering pagan traditions, may have nevertheless reflected their cultural endurance. The magical qualities of mass-produced terracotta *dovizie* in fifteenth-century Florence are discussed by Adrain W. B. Randolph. Based on Donatello's lost

Dovizia, these copies may have functioned as household goddesses, ensuring the family's economic and procreative well-being. Geraldine A. Johnson similarly suggests that the multitude of reliefs of the Madonna and Child found in fifteenth-century Italy played a role in marital and procreative rituals. These images, intended to be "bedroom icons," may have been considered to be sympathetic magic to aid in the conception of beautiful children. A more insidious end for magic is discussed by Helmut Puff in his essay on the role of love magic in sixteenth-century Switzerland, and the role that gifts of clothing played in inducing the recipient to sodomy or in courting same-sex partners. These essays suggest that through the study of various material objects, historians can access the popular beliefs of premodern people.

Material culture was also a means by which morality, virtue, and appropriate gender behavior were inculcated. Janet Huskinson analyzes how the carving and re-carving of Roman sarcophagi moves from narrative to symbolic imagery and consequently promoted different qualities and virtues for women. In late medieval France, the production, use, and care of linen was linked to the social position of a given family. Veronica Sekules examines a variety of sources to demonstrate that linen was associated with order, faithfulness, comfort, and cleanliness and so was cared for by a good housewife. Symbolic acts could also challenge conventional gender roles and reinforce the social order. Paula M. Rieder explores the multivalent symbols surrounding churching, especially the priest's stole, the blessed bread, and the new mother's proximity to the altar and sanctuary. While on one level the ceremony reinforces churching as women's reentry into society and their submission to male authority, it could also be seen as a privilege, marking the new mother as a woman honored and singled out from men and patriarchal society. The interaction of religious symbols and social values is also at the center of Charlene Villaseñor Black's study of images of the Virgin Mary nursing the infant Jesus. In fifteenth-century Spain, the image of the lactating Mary was especially prevalent, reflecting the didactic literature's promotion of maternal breast-feeding. But, in the face of restrictions on the depiction of nudity that followed the Council of Trent, these images became less common. Instead of portraying the contemporary context of breast-feeding, artists began to depict the material culture of dry-feeding, including pacifiers, drinking cups, and other paraphernalia, in images of the Virgin and Child.

The body, especially women's bodies, was another site of inculcating sex and gender. Anne L. McClanan examines the material and textual record surrounding abortion and contraception in the early Byzantine period. The stark, violent instruments of the surgeon survive, rendered more violent yet when read against the medical texts that describe their use. These discussions demonstrate the continuity of pagan birth control practices, including surgical abortion, despite the shifts in moral context occasioned by Christianity. At the other end of the premodern period, in sixteenth-century German medical texts, Karen Rosoff Encarnación finds medical woodcuts, particularly of female reproductive organs, which were revealed by lifting a flap of covering paper, as a means of naturalizing sex. By lifting the flap, the viewer saw the body and its organs ordered and orderly. In this way, the image of the body

as death and decaying flesh was overshadowed. Similarly, Katherine Park's analysis of the "autopsy" of Clare of Montefalco, shows the body's organs as powerful and fertile. Shortly after her death in 1308, Clare's body was opened and her heart and viscera excised, revealing that the organs had produced relics of flesh. While it took over five hundred years for Clare to be canonized, her bodily relics, a crucifix and three little stones symbolizing the Trinity, are still preserved in the Church of St. Clare in Montefalco, the enduring material record of her sanctity.

If there is a weakness to the volume it is in what is not included. Northern Europe receives disproportionately less discussion and, in particular, there is no essay that illuminates the material context of gender in England. Temporally, as well, there is a sharp jump from the essays on antiquity and early Byzantium to the fourteenth century, leaving the eighth to fourteenth centuries basically neglected. Scholars of the early and high middle ages and those of northwestern Europe have also begun to use material culture to tease out hitherto elusive aspects of medieval sex and gender. Their absence leaves an otherwise fine volume unbalanced.

—Jacqueline Murray, University of Guelph

Mews, Constant, ed. *Listen, Daughter: The Speculum Virginum and the Formation of Religious Women in the Middle Ages*. New York: Palgrave, 2001. Pp. 306.

Jutta Seyfarth's critical edition of the *Speculum virginum*, published in the Corpus Christianorum series in 1990, bears rich fruit in this very useful collection of essays. An extended dialogue between a virgin of Christ, Theodora, and her spiritual advisor, Peregrinus, the *Speculum virginum* was most likely written in the first half of the twelfth century by a monk involved with the Benedictine reform movement centered around the German abbey of Hirsau. Thus, as Constant Mews points out in his introduction to *Listen, Daughter*, the *Speculum virginum* "was written in response to a quite new situation that was emerging within the monastic life, the recent foundation of large numbers of communities of religious women throughout Germany and France" (2). The relationship between religious men and women and the best way for male advisors to respond to the needs of the many women desirous of leading religious lives were central issues for the reformers of the twelfth century. As Heloise pointed out to Peter Abelard in her famous third letter (written sometime in the 1130s), there was no rule written specifically for women. *The Rule of Benedict*, which she and her nuns at the Paraclete followed "was clearly written for men alone" and, Heloise adds, "it can only be fully obeyed by men." Although Abelard challenged Heloise's claims about female weakness, he nevertheless provided her with a rule designed to meet the needs of her community.¹

At just about the same time that Abelard wrote his rule for Heloise and her sisters, then, an anonymous German monk composed the *Speculum virginum*. In it, a religious woman and her male teacher discuss the nature of the