

Texts and Traditions of Medieval Pastoral Care: Essays in Honour of Bella Millett. Edited by Cate Gunn and Catherine Innes-Parker. York: York Medieval Press, 2009. Pp. 216. ISBN: 9781903153291

BELLA MILLET, perhaps best known for the Early English Text Society edition of *Ancrene Wisse*, is the honoree for this interesting collection of essays centered on spiritual guidance. This group of essays celebrates the many aspects of Millett's influential work, and as such, it is a fitting tribute to her as a scholar and mentor who helped stimulate interest in early Middle English religious writing.

Texts and Traditions contains thirteen essays concerning the literature of England and Wales produced in English, Anglo-Norman or Latin. Millett's expertise as a manuscript and textual scholar, her work on female reading practice, and her insights into medieval female spirituality are reflected here. Topics ranging from the development of devotional texts for women to vernacular translations for the clergy make this a varied collection; it is still, however, satisfactorily focused on pastoral care. A number of genres under the heading of *pastoralia* are examined, including manuals of confession, guides to preaching, conduct books for anchorites, sermons, and devotional handbooks.

Several approaches to these medieval texts provide a clear way to navigate the book. One theme is the study of manuscripts and their contexts. Brian Golding ("Gerald of Wales, the *Gemma Ecclesiastica* and Pastoral Care"), Joseph Goering ("Pastoral Texts and Traditions; the Anonymous *Speculum Iuniorum* c. 1250"), Ralph Hanna ("Lambeth Palace Library MS 487: Some Problems of Early Thirteenth-Century Textual Transmission"), Elaine Treharne ("Scribal Connections in Late Anglo-Saxon England"), and Jocelyn Wogan-Browne ("Time to Read: Pastoral Care, Vernacular Access and the Case of Angier of Frideswide") focus their attentions on the texts themselves, their locations, and their textual communities. Treharne argues that a fuller understanding of the ways in which texts are produced, transmitted, and used comes from recognizing broad networks of ecclesiastical and scholarly influence and exchange. Understanding of intellectual, text-based hubs are more informative than identifying particular individual locations. In one textual instance, Hanna demonstrates how to make greater use of the material from the Lambeth Palace manuscript. Manuscripts might aim to be universal or to target particular groups. Goering argues his text reflects a syllabus of studies in theology and law considered appropriate for a pastor in the middle years of the thirteenth century. More specifically, Golding problematizes Gerald of Wales's pronounced purpose of addressing a Welsh audience. The Roman court of Innocent III seems equally important.

Wogan-Browne explains how Angier of Frideswide's meticulous articulation of structure serves the spiritual needs of his particular, mercantile audience.

Another focus is an explicitly female audience for some of these works. Alexandra Barratt ("Take a Book and Read': Advice for Religious Women") and C. Annette Grise ("Prayer, Meditation, and Women Readers in Late Medieval England: Teaching and Sharing Through Books") discuss women as readers and consumers of books. E. A. Jones examines texts written for solitaries ("Vae Soli': Solitaries and Pastoral Care"). Noting the frequency with which women were advised to read, Barratt explores the surprisingly wide variety of material women did in fact read. Grise traces the rise of interest in the female devotional voice fed by the influx of works by continental female visionaries. Jones argues that the idea of pastors simply trying to solve the questions posed to them by solitaries is too simplistic an understanding of these pastoral texts resulting from the Fourth Lateran Council. The communal pastor in his own life or as an author is not necessarily a foil to the solitary confessant.

Cate Gunn ("Reading Edmund of Abingdon's *Speculum* as Pastoral Literature") and Nicholas Watson ("Middle English Versions and Audiences of Edmund of Abingdon's *Speculum Religiosorum*") look at different aspects of the same text. Gunn sees the developmental history of the *Speculum* as a macrocosm of the evolution of pastoral literature in the Middle Ages, while Watson looks specifically at the role of the Middle English translation in the reform movements of the fourteenth century.

Mishtooni Bose ("Prophecy, Complaint, and Pastoral Care in the Fifteenth Century: Thomas Gascoigne's *Liber Veritatum*"), Catherine Innes-Parker ("Pastoral Concerns in the Middle English Adaptation of Bonaventure's *Lignum Vitae*"), and Robert Hasenfratz ("Terror and Pastoral Care in *Handlyng Synne*") examine the concerns of pastoral care in a changing context. All of these essays look at works in the environment of the spiritual and biblical intertextuality of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries: Innes-Parker explores the centrally important Franciscan tradition of meditation centered on imitating the life of Christ; Bose reads the use of prophecy of denunciation in the Old Testament mode; Hasenfratz rethinks Mannyng's motives in his choice of well-known exempla.

A number of interesting recurring themes weave through the essays. For example, several authors challenge received opinion about particular texts either explicitly or in the course of the argument. Joseph Goering and Elaine Treharne re-examine long held ideas of textual attribution. Another example of many is Hasenfratz's "Terror and Pastoral Care in *Handlyng Synne*." Twenty years ago it was not unusual to see Mannyng's text routinely praised for its lighthearted

look at medieval life; Mannyng was even described as having a “twinkle in his eye.” Hasenfratz’s careful study, however, sees *Handlyng Synne*’s penitential instruction as centered on creating a servile fear in believers that propels them to confession.

The contributors have created an interesting array of essays that pay homage to the work of Bella Millett and add new insights into the world of the literature of pastoral care.

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