

colloquial jolt to an otherwise graceful rendition. Erler's translation of Hoccleve is at once both more and less literal, often reproducing the rhymes of the original, but also occasionally adding and subtracting phrases where Hoccleve's text is difficult to mold into the rhythm of modern English (for example: "and made to weep" [49] is not in the original; "in fact, he just can't wait to go" [61] expands on the previous line, replacing a phrase meaning, as Erler's Glossary explains, "his heart is on fire"). But these are the accommodations required of translators who undertake the difficult task of making poetry of poetry, and they do not detract from the quality of the work here. Both Fenster's and Erler's translations read well, are reliable, and represent their originals to good effect.

On a larger scale, the composition of the book makes it worth even more than the sum of its not inconsiderable parts. The authors' Preface states that, "In publishing [Christine's and Hoccleve's] texts together here for the first time, it is hoped that readers of both may be served." That statement could be expanded to include Sewell. By gathering three versions of the same work and providing translations for readers who cannot manage the medieval languages, Fenster and Erler give us a case study in reception history, translating, intertextuality, and the evolution of a genre—defenses of women—as well. The changes made by Hoccleve and Sewell reveal a good deal about shifts in taste and literary preoccupations of their respective circles. Demonstrating Christine's influence is important as a reminder that her work must be considered in the context of other (male) poetry of the late Middle Ages, particularly in light of the popularity her work enjoyed in her own day. If her works are read in isolation, it is difficult to appreciate fully her success in presenting to a contemporary audience a rewriting of her literary forefathers and a challenge to the firmly entrenched, misogynistic ideas that were part of their legacy.

The high cost of Brill's volumes notwithstanding, this book should find a wide readership in and beyond the fields of Middle French, Middle English, and gender studies.

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THREE RECENT WORKS ON SPANISH WOMEN

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1. Giles, Mary E. The Book of Prayer of Sor María of Santo Domingo: A Study and Translation. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990. Pp. ix, 214.
2. Kagan, Richard L. Lucrecia's Dreams: Politics and Prophecy in Sixteenth-Century Spain. Berkeley, Los Angeles, Oxford: University of California Press, 1990. Pp. xiii, 229.
3. Surtz, Ronald E. The Guitar of God: Gender, Power, and Authority in the Visionary World of Mother Juana de la Cruz (1481-1534). Philadelphia: University of

Pennsylvania Press, 1990. Pp. xiv, 171.

The publication of these three volumes is evidence that interest in medieval and Renaissance Spanish women at last is moving to include spiritual women other than the celebrated St. Teresa of Avila. The visionary women who are the subject of the first two books were contemporaries in time and spirit; both, too, enjoyed the support of powerful men, among them Cardinal Cisneros and the king himself. Sor María of Santo Domingo and Mother Juana de la Cruz were born in the last decades of the fifteenth century when religious reform was under way in Spain. In the first decades of the sixteenth century, when their visionary experiences put them in the public's eye, spiritual movements emphasized interiorized Christianity, contemplative prayer, and the prophetic-mystical importance of women.

The one a Dominican tertiary, the other, Mother Juana de la Cruz, a Franciscan nun who served her convent as abbess for many years, the two women exercised profound influence on men and women, both religious and secular. Sor María's ecstatic representations and prophesies were transcribed by religious men who attended what were for the most part public events; around 1518 a volume of her contemplations along with an introduction written by an unidentified editor was published. This little book, discovered in Spanish in 1948, is now in English translation, together with a long preliminary study of the life, times, and spirituality of Sor María.

Mother Juana de la Cruz was famous for her ecstatic sermons, in which she retold episodes from the gospels and described heavenly pageants that celebrated the feasts of the liturgical years. Her sermons were transcribed by another nun and form what is called The Book of Consolation. Each of the five chapters in Surtz's book studies at least one sermon; in "The Guitar of God," the title of the third chapter, Mother Juana's image of herself as the instrument of God's will receives thorough analysis. There is enough of the original text (and English translation) in the study and the appendix to give a sense of the ecstatic's use of language.

By the time Lucrecia de Leon was born in 1568 the Inquisition had turned hostile toward women of visionary and ecstatic inclination. Unlike Sor María and Mother Juana, who were of peasant origin, Lucrecia was the daughter of a middle-class family in Madrid. No religious recluse, this beautiful, clever, and cosmopolitan young woman found fame in recounting her dreams to friends and family. Two prelates became so interested in Lucrecia's dreams that they transcribed them; her dream registers remain among the documents of the Inquisition in the national archives in Madrid. Unlike the visions of Sor María and Mother Juana, which were spiritual and religious, Lucrecia's dreams were intensely political, aimed primarily against the monarch Philip II. Eventually her attacks on Philip II through dreams landed Lucrecia in the prison of the Inquisition, where she gave birth to a child. Her dreams are a colorful portrait of Spanish society in the closing years of the sixteenth century.

Although Sor María and Mother Juana differ from Lucrecia in that their visions were ostensibly spiritual while hers were political, there is a significant common denominator: in lieu of institutionalized channels of authority, these women enjoyed empowerment through visions, ecstasies and dreams.

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