

realm;” and third, the “disruptive influences within the individual characters themselves” (101). Finally, Peter H. Goodrich discusses the transformations that Merlin has undergone—all of which stem from “his origins as mad, prophetic, and poetic ‘Alterior’ or Other—a possessed and semi-divine mind apart from normal modes of human consciousness” (154).

One of the virtues of *New Directions* is its chronological, generic, and new racial inclusiveness; it will a helpful teaching resource, particularly for teaching surveys of Arthurian literature that include Tennyson, modern novels, and film, and its bibliographies are thorough. On the other hand, the collection is not inclusive internationally, and it offers little on feminism or gender in medieval studies.

—Janet Knepper, Clarion University

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**Mazzoni, Cristina, ed. and John Cirignano, trans. *Angela of Foligno’s Memorial*. (Library of Medieval Women.) Woodbridge and Rochester: D. S. Brewer, 1999. Pp. xi + 132.**

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This contribution to the rapidly expanding Library of Medieval Women series continues that series’ dedication to producing short, cheap, and academically reliable introductions and translations to sources by and about medieval women. The book follows the standard path of this series: first introductory material, second an excerpted primary source translation, and third an interpretive essay, all within a brief compass of 132 pages.

Angela of Foligno was born in Umbria in 1248, not far from St. Francis’s center of Assisi, and she died in 1309. Over the years the Franciscans would play a large role in her life. Indeed, it is thanks to a Franciscan friar that we know so much about Angela today, since it was this anonymous friar (known only as Brother A) who acted as scribe for Angela’s *Memorial* and indeed encouraged Angela to recount her story in the first place. Angela was for many years a wife and mother, but the death of her family encouraged her in her quest for poverty, and she eventually joined the Third Order of Saint Francis. Having confessed to a Franciscan friar she then embarked on a series of spiritual steps that lasted several years. From Brother A’s perspective, the twentieth step was the most important, and he restructured the chronology of Angela’s spiritual journey in order to highlight this step. This restructuring makes it difficult for us to untangle the order of events in Angela’s life, and here the introductory essay provides useful biographical clarifications. In 1291 Angela was on her way to Assisi when she was visited by the Holy Spirit. When she arrived in Assisi she saw God with the eyes of her body and mind, and God spoke words of consolation to her. When this vision departed, Angela collapsed in pain and began shrieking at the withdrawal of the divine love. It was this physical shrieking and somatic spiritual expression that prompted Brother A’s interest. Embarrassed and frightened at this public scene which was dangerously close to the screams of the demonically possessed, Brother A (in his own words) “began to compel her, in every way that I could” to explain why she had screamed so frantically. Hence, Angela certainly did not initiate the textual

recording of her experiences, but once Brother A asked her she then conveyed many details of her spiritual visions. The *Memorial* is the record of these visions, filtered of course through the lens of the questions that Brother A chose to ask Angela in the first place. Cirignano's translation of the *Memorial* is clear and easy to read and perhaps has a less complex, and therefore more student-friendly, style than the alternative Classics of Western Spirituality translation (although, of course, the fact that Cirignano provides only extracts means that dedicated students will no doubt proceed to the full text of the Angeline complete works, both the *Memorial* and the *Instructions*, in the CWS series).

Mazzoni's interpretive essay has an explicit aim of identifying aspects in the *Memorial* that are significant for today's reader. This means that although the essay does isolate aspects of Angela's story that reflect wider trends from medieval female spirituality (embodiment, maternal imagery, the relationship between body and flesh, the spiritual meanings of food), each of these aspects tends to be dealt with fairly briefly in order to move to the more important goal of relating these themes to points from general feminist theological readings. Thus, the aim here seems to be to make the medieval world comprehensible within a modern feminist theological framework, rather than to confine Angela to a specifically medieval feminist theological framework. This has the advantage of helping students see how some medieval experiences were not so different from some modern ones but, on the other hand, it also presumes that readers will have some knowledge of or interest in modern feminist theology. This could be either a strength or a weakness, depending on the background of the reader.

In such a short book obviously things must be left out. More attention to the process of the *Memorial's* composition would have given a stronger reflection of the state of current scholarship on Angela. The introductory essay does refer to the important argument by Catherine Mooney on the interventionist role of Brother A the scribe, but the implications of this argument might have been explored in more detail, particularly in terms of the degree to which Brother A may or may not have altered Angela's words in order to present her spirituality in a more somatic manner. (This would be a most useful area to investigate, particularly given Amy Hollywood's influential arguments on this matter in other contexts.) Mazzoni does conclude with a thoughtful section on Angela's theology of un-saying and ineffability, where Angela repeatedly says that she cannot speak about God and the Word and announces that in fact, all she is doing is blaspheming. Mazzoni interprets this as a rhetorical strategy where oxymorons and claims to linguistic inadequacy are implemented precisely in order to suspend ineffability and express the inexpressible divine. Mazzoni suggests that Angela's linguistic transgressions are a means for her to overcome the structural anti-feminism of Christianity in general, but there may be more to it than this. Angela's repeated claims that she cannot adequately represent the divine powers may also be strategies for avoiding the narrative manipulation of Brother A. That is, they may be evidence to us today of the give and take, and push and pull, that no doubt took place between Brother A and Angela as the friar asked her questions that she did not necessarily want to answer.

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

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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.

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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