

owner of the book had a great-grandmother, Grace Mildmay who “wrote one of the earliest surviving English autobiographies by a woman” (p. 105), and Lucy Hill, who identified the Gospel Book as Margaret’s, “wrote several books in later life including a translation of the memoirs [of] Charlotte Arbaleste de Mornay, an important Huguenot woman” (p. 105).

The author’s admiration for both Margaret and her Gospel Book illuminates each page. Perhaps through her own work, Rushforth has managed to rescue Margaret’s Gospel Book yet again.

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END NOTES

1. See *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, ed. and trans. Dorothy Whitelock, with David C. Douglas and Susie I. Tucker (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers UP, 1961) pp. xvi, 146.
2. Richard Gameson, “The Gospels of St Margaret of Scotland: The Literacy of an Eleventh-Century Queen,” in *Women and the Book: Assessing the Visual Evidence*, ed. Lesley Smith and Jane H. M. Taylor (London: British Library, 1996), p. 161. Stephanie Hollis reaches the same conclusion as Rushforth in *Writing the Wilton Women: Goscelin’s Legend of Edith and Liber confortatorius* (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2004), pp. 333-334.



Troubled Vision: Gender, Sexuality, and Sight in Medieval Text and Image, ed. Emma Campbell and Robert Mills. (The New Middle Ages.) Palgrave, 2004. Pp. viii + 243.

The essays in *Troubled Vision* examine the intersections of gender, sexuality, and vision in medieval culture from the eleventh to the fifteenth centuries. Bringing together a range of theoretical approaches that address the troubling effects of vision on medieval texts and images, the book mediates between medieval and modern constructions of gender and sexuality. *Troubled Vision* focuses on four central themes: desire, looking, representation, and reading. Topics include the gender of the gaze, the visibility of queer desires, troubled representations of gender and sexuality, spectacle and reader response, and the visual troubling of modern critical categories. Campbell and Mills’s introduction to the volume provides a framework of “queer optics” through which a lack of clarity in vision, when dealing with the distinction between subject and object, creates slippages in normative views of sexuality and gender.

The three essays in the first section, “Troubled Desires,” present readings of queer desire in medieval culture. Diane Wolfthal’s “Picturing Same-Sex Desire: The Falconer and His Lover in Images by Petrus Christus and the Housebook Master,” offers a provocative and nuanced analysis of images that in some cases condemn same-sex desire, while in others suggest more ambiguous interpretations, allowing the viewer to create a space for the homoerotic. In “Visible and Invisible Bodies and Subjects in Peter Damian,” William Burgwinkle analyzes Damian’s *Liber gomorrhianus* in the context of metaphors of sight and seeing. While not yet a panoptic vision, Damian’s categorizations begin to make visible the homoerotic with a spectral *jouissance*. Francesca Nicholson’s “Seeing Women Troubadours with the ‘itz’ and the ‘isms’” is less satisfying for, while it seeks to correct an essentialist reading of *trobairitz* poetry by filtering it through a Lacanian lens, the essay’s rejection of the gendered voice of the *trobairitz* destabilizes the reader’s point of view and in so doing may undermine the uniqueness of a female-voiced poetics.

The theme of “Troubled Looks” unites the second section of the study. Simon Gaunt’s insightful

essay, “The Look of Love: The Gender of the Gaze in Troubadour Lyrics,” read in tandem with Nicholson’s, underscores the complexity of gender in troubadour lyric. Gaunt takes up the question of the gendered gaze as object of desire. He points up the central role of the homoerotic in troubadour lyric, one that creates a gaze that “confounds gender” (p. 91). In “Sacrificial Spectacle and Interpassive Vision in the Anglo-Norman Life of Saint Faith,” co-editor Emma Campbell uses Slavoj Žižek’s notion of “interpassivity” to explore how configurations of witnessing martyrdom elide and complicate a male-gendered gaze. Religious literature is also the subject of co-editor Robert Mills’s “Seeing Face to Face: Troubled Looks in the Katherine Group.” His readings of the gaze in these texts locates “identities that maneuver between stability and potentiality” (p. 132), disrupting notions of masculine and feminine.

“Troubled Representation” includes two essays on Italian poetry that offer strong echoes to the notion of desire previously treated. Cary Howie’s “Vision beyond Measure: the Threshold of Iacopone’s Bedroom” looks closely at visual relationships of eros and space, highlighting the sensory effects of hyperbolic vision

in Iacopone's aesthetic. In "Sex and the Medieval City: Viewing the Body Politic from Exile in Early Italian Verse," Catherine M. Keen reads exile poems of Dante, Pistoia, and others in terms of the "città-donna." The city as love object in poetic convention affords spaces for disruptive visual discourses when incorporated into exile poetry.

Part 4 focuses on "Troubled Readings" of courtly texts in the French and German traditions, interrogating the notion of the conflict between the reader's gaze and the text that challenges its biased vision. In "Reading Women Reading Women: Double Mirroring the *Dame* in *Der Ritter von Turn*," Anne Simon confronts text with their accompanying illustrations. The woodcuts are not neutral visualizations of the texts. Rather they provide a backdrop of multiple readings when read with the text, often bringing to the fore alternative interpretations of the text. Sylvia Huot's "Visualizing the Feminine in the *Roman de Perceforest*: The Episode of the 'Conte de la Rose'" contrasts differing visions of women's agency and place in terms of sexual desire as articulated in the conflict for dominance in pre-Arthurian Britain. The focus of her study, the "Conte de la Rose" episode

in the anonymous prose romance *Perceforest*, leads her to conclude that the text provides a nuanced reading, showing a woman-centered perspective that "alerts men to the necessity of regulating their own sexuality" (p. 205). "Too Many Women: Reading Freud, Derrida, and *Lancelot*" presents Miranda Griffin's analysis of confused/fused female figures in the prose *Lancelot*, noting that these scenes occur in places where the manuscript tradition becomes irreconcilable. The women—Armide, Helene and Guinevere—blur into an "unreadable mass of resemblances" (p. 209) creating a sort of "blind spot" in the text. Following Jacques Derrida's notion of resistance to a master narrative, Griffin posits that these varying traditions offer multiple and productive readings, provided we are willing to open our eyes to them.

The volume closes with an essay that responds to the complexities of gendered vision as articulated in the volume. Sarah Salih's "The Medieval Looks Back: A Response to Troubled Vision" attempts to reflect on the collection as a whole. Drawing on film theory, Salih engages the notion of how contemporary eyes/minds view the "medieval." She explores this concept through an analysis of illustrations from

a fifteenth-century edition of *Mandeville's Travels*. While Salih's comments on the gendering of the "monsters" and the homoerotic ambiguities in this illustration are thought-provoking, the essay seems less a response per se than another study dealing with vision, or in this case, the illustrator's envisioning Mandeville's text. Nonetheless Salih's argument reinforces a central notion of the collection, that our readings are also troubled by contemporary constructions of gender and sexuality.

As is often the case in collections of essays, few readers will be able to profit from the nuances of the arguments in each essay. However, the range of approaches fosters critical and interdisciplinary comparisons. Should readers take the time to read the entire collection, they will find a number of useful lenses through which to view their own field.

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