

second chapter she draws on her research from the edition to examine the transmission history of manuscript L, now London, BL Arundel MS 44 and what its provenance reveals about the identity of the treatise's author. Julie Hotchin, in chapter three, extends the work of Urban Küsters and her own research to explore the varied facets of the religious life for women in the houses founded by the monks of Hirsau, the monastery from which the *Speculum Virginum* is believed to have originated. Next, Kim Power explores the patristic sources used by Peregrinus to instruct Theodorus on the Virgin Mary, specifically Ambrose's *De institutione Virginis* and Paschasius Radbetus' view of the Assumption.

The auditory elements of the *Speculum Virginum* are examined in chapters five and six as Morgan Powell argues that it was composed with the intention of being read aloud by a male preacher to an audience of female religious. She notes that the text could have been used to instruct one listener or a large group of women. Caroline Jeffreys (chapter six) examines the *Epithalamium*, or *Bridal Song* that appears in the earliest manuscripts of the *Speculum Virginum*. Jeffreys deftly handles the material and provides the very useful musical settings for the songs at the end of her essay.

The remaining five essays take up the theme of the culture of female religious life and practice. Janice Pinder, in chapter seven, deals with the issue of enclosure by comparing the *Speculum Virginum* to the *De claustro animae* of Hugh of Fouilloy and the anonymous *De modo bene vivendi* by pointing out that the *Speculum Virginum*, in contrast to these two works' communal examples, presents a solitary mode of religious life. The *Speculum Virginum* is examined within the broader context of twelfth-century dialogue literature by Sabina Flanagan in the eighth essay where she relates the literary elements of the *Speculum Virginum* that were uncommon in contemporary religious works. Chapter nine, by Elisabeth Bos, takes up the extensive tradition of spiritual instruction in the twelfth century by considering the differences between teaching for men and women. Fiona Griffiths looks at the distinct shift from the bridal imagery in the

Speculum Virginum that assumes women as the instructed and the scholastic imagery in the *Hortus deliciarum* of Herrad of Hohenbourg that places women in the role of instructor. In the final chapter, Urban Küsters, in an essay translated by Adrian Anderson, discusses the Middle Dutch translation of the *Speculum Virginum* as *Spieghel der Maechden*. He argues that the *Speculum Virginum* provided women involved in the *Devotio moderna* with a sanctioned way to practise their religion without official attachment to an institutionalized religious order.

This book succeeds in its goal of furthering scholarly knowledge of the *Speculum Virginum* and twelfth-century female religious culture through its well organized and detailed selections that bring much needed attention to a significant medieval text. The *Speculum Virginum*'s importance for understanding how men perceived women's roles in medieval religious culture and how women, in turn, conceived of themselves is brought to the forefront through the different perspectives brought to bear on the text. This book will be most useful to those pursuing research on pastoral care of religious women, medieval pedagogy, spirituality in the Middle Ages, and monastic and religious reform. The volume provides an important addition to the scholarship on the twelfth-century spiritual treatise, its background and audience as well as the broader field of female religion, literacy, and education.

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BARBARA K. ALTMANN and DEBORAH L.
MCGRADY (eds), *Christine de Pizan:
A Casebook*. Pp. xiii + 296 (Routledge
Medieval Casebooks). New York and
London: Routledge, 2003. £65.00 (ISBN
0 415 93909 7).

ALTHOUGH it may seem hard to believe, there was a time when the works of Christine de Pizan were not widely read. These days, any survey of medieval literature that omits her

works would be considered conspicuous and unusual. At least to some degree, the awakening of interest in the writings of Christine is the result of a desire, which developed first during the early 1970s, to seek out women writers who might afford a different perspective on the familiar territory of medieval culture. The publication of a modern English translation of the *Livre de la cité des dames* in 1982 by Earl Jeffrey Richards was followed by something of an explosion of Christine studies, many of them deep and rewarding, but others seemingly driven by the desire to seek out medieval women whose lives might prove exemplary (or counter-exemplary) to modern women readers.

It is a virtue of the present volume that this reception history is sketched out, albeit briefly, in a Foreword written by Charity Cannon Willard, the ground-breaking scholar of late medieval French literature who has worked tirelessly for almost seven decades to bring Christine's works to a wider audience. A fuller Introduction by Altmann and McGrady follows which explains the rationale behind the volume's four sections ('Christine in Context', 'Building a Female Community', 'Christine's Writings', and 'Christine's Books') and summarizes the fifteen essays that follow, all of which were commissioned for this publication. Many of the names here will be familiar to readers of Christine scholarship, though a few scholars who have made major contributions in this area (such as, for example, Kevin Brownlee, Eric Hicks, and Maureen Quilligan) are unfortunately absent. Several of the essays are excellent, and all of them offer insight into current trends in the study of Christine's work, making this *Casebook* a very useful supplementary text in undergraduate or graduate courses that include Christine on the syllabus.

The first group of essays, which according to the editors focuses on 'historical approaches' to Christine's work, is perhaps the least sharply focused. The group begins strongly with an authoritative essay on 'Christine de Pizan and the Political Life in Late Medieval France' by Renate Blumenfeld-Kosinski, who has written widely on Christine's work and has recently completed a major study of reflections of the Great Schism in late medieval French literature. Lori Walters's essay on 'Christine de

Pizan as Translator and Voice of the Body Politic' begins promisingly with an overview of *translatio studii* and *translatio imperii* that provides a useful context for late medieval views of translation. However, since Christine tended to adapt earlier literary works rather than translate them (as opposed to other medieval writers such as Jean de Meun or Chaucer), Walters necessarily confines her discussion of translation in Christine's works to more figurative uses of the term. As a result, Charles V is described as 'the consummate human translator, who mirrors God the Father's function as divine translator' (31), while the autobiographical metamorphosis from female to male recounted in Christine's *Livre de la mutacion de Fortune* is 'her own personal *translatio*' (33). Like Blumenfeld-Kosinski's essay, Earl Jeffrey Richards's contribution provides a mature view of a topic the author knows well: in 'Somewhere between Destructive Glosses and Chaos: Christine de Pizan and Medieval Theology', however, Richards largely recycles arguments he has published elsewhere. The thesis maintained here – that Christine 'defined herself as a poet-theologian' in the terms laid out by Thomas Aquinas – is a bold one, perhaps useful more for the debate it might inspire than as an authoritative pronouncement concerning Christine's mastery of philosophy and theology. The final essay in this section, 'Memory's Architect' by Margarete Zimmermann, surveys Christine's use of ekphrasis (a topic which has received a good deal of attention ever since the publication of Sandra Hindman's perceptive study of the *Epistre Othea*) and explores how Christine's work reflects medieval theories of memory and practices of memorization. (The language of this essay is at times a bit obscure, perhaps a weakness of the essay's translator rather than of the author.)

Although the editors suggest that the second group of essays contains 'feminist readings' of Christine's writings, we seem to have hardly changed course from the first section, where the issue of gender was central to the argument of three of the four essays. (The exception is Blumenfeld-Kosinski, who concludes by asserting that there is 'probably not' a 'feminine style of writing history...but there

certainly is a Christinian style' (20.) Rosalind Brown-Grant's 'Christine de Pizan as a Defender of Women' provides a useful assessment of medieval misogyny and socially determined gender roles; like her book *Christine de Pizan and the Moral Defence of Women*, however, the essay is undercut by its unproblematic adoption of Richards's idiosyncratic view of Christine's reading of Aristotle found in the *Livre de l'advision Cristine*. One of the most original contributions in this volume is 'Christine's Treasure: Women's Honor and Household Economies in the *Livre des trois vertus*', in which Roberta Krueger persuasively demonstrates that this work's treatment of finance and the role of (prudent) women in the management of money marks a transitional moment in Christine's writings. Krueger argues that, with the *Livre des trois vertus*, moral allegory gives way to a focus on political theory, foreshadowing the '“self-fashioning” of Renaissance treatises on comportment' (112). Thelma Fenster's 'Who's a Heroine? The Example of Christine de Pizan' will be an extremely useful essay in the undergraduate classroom, because it foregrounds just those questions that students are most eager and ready to explore: What makes a woman heroic? What makes a 'good' woman? Fenster focuses particularly on the figure of the Sibyl, featured in several of Christine's allegories, showing how she functions as a model for feminine wisdom and prudence. The final essay in this section, Judith Kellogg's '*La Livre de la cité des dames*: Reconfiguring Knowledge and Reimagining Gendered Space', includes the most explicit integration of feminist theory with Christine's text. The Foucauldian intersection of space and body as domains of discipline and control provides the focal point of Kellogg's reading of the *Cité des dames* as 'a feminine body politic' (135) that is based on the simultaneous 'valorization of the female body' (139) and 'overturning of traditional images of male as head and intellect and of female as body and flesh' (141). Kellogg thus neatly skirts the energetically anti-essentialist readings of Christine produced over the last several years by Richards, which have exercised considerable control over contemporary

scholarship on Christine's views of the feminine and the female sex.

The volume's third section is perhaps the most cohesive of all, comprised of five studies of Christine's major works. Since the *Cité des dames* appears prominently in essays earlier in the volume, it does not appear in this section, which includes studies of Christine's *ballade* cycles (Tracy Adams); the *Querelle de la Rose* (Marilynn Desmond); the *Chemin de long estude* (Andrea Tarnowski), the *Advision Cristine* (Liliane Dulac and Christine Reno); and Christine's religious works (Maureen Boulton). Because of their tight focus, these essays are likely to be especially useful for classroom discussion. Three of them – Adams's 'Love as Metaphor in Christine de Pizan's *Ballade* Cycles', Desmond's 'The *Querelle de la Rose* and the Ethics of Reading', and Dulac and Reno's 'The *Livre de l'advision Cristine*' – are useful surveys of prior interpretations of the work at hand, rather than radically new readings of Christine's work. More innovative are the contributions of Tarnowski and Boulton: in 'The Lessons of Experience and the *Chemin de long estude*', Tarnowski provides an insightful reading of the least-frequently studied of Christine's allegories, using the author's more mature literary production to illuminate this less developed work without overshadowing it. Maureen Boulton brings to her study of Christine's religious writings an unparalleled mastery of medieval French devotional literature, which allows her to situate Christine's work within late medieval piety with great specificity and a sensitive touch.

The final section of Altmann and McGrady's volume is the shortest, comprised of only two essays. They make a fitting close, however, to the collection. James Laidlaw provides the reader with the fruits of his long study of Christine de Pizan in 'Christine and the Manuscript Tradition', a detailed account which will remain an invaluable resource to readers for years to come. The essay includes an Appendix listing not only presentation copies containing a collection of Christine's works, but also those including only a single one of her works, all produced by the scriptorium under her supervision, many of them written and/or corrected in her own

hand. Finally, Nadia Margolis's 'Modern Editions: Makers of the Christinian Corpus' surveys the reception history of Christine through the lens of editions of her works, ranging from the early printed editions of the fifteenth century to the on-line editions of the present. The volume ends with an ample bibliography (271–86) and a selective index. Barbara Altmann and Deborah McGrady, both of them known for their own writings on Christine de Pizan, have made a significant contribution to medieval scholarship with this carefully assembled volume. *Christine de Pizan: A Casebook* provides a retrospective view of the field and outlines the major areas of current investigation, ensuring that it will be of substantial use in the classroom for several years to come. Some of the essays included here, moreover, break fresh ground, pointing the way toward new directions in Christine studies.

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ROGER DALRYMPLE (ed.), *Middle English Literature: A Guide to Criticism*. Pp. xviii + 264 (Blackwell Guides to Criticism). Oxford and Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 2004. Hardbound £60.00 (ISBN 0 631 23289 3); paperbound £19.99 (0 631 23290 7).

ADDING to Blackwell's *Guides to Criticism Series*, Roger Dalrymple has completed the demanding task of providing a summary of medieval critical approaches. The book is divided into eight chapters that cover medieval authorship; textual form; genre; language, style, and rhetoric; allegory; literature and history; gender; and identity. Within each chapter, Dalrymple offers a brief history of the critical approach in terms of its application to medieval texts, and follows this discussion with excerpted essays which illustrate a few of the key ideas. While it would be impossible to represent all of the applications of, for instance, genre studies, Dalrymple selects essays which provide a summary view, here,

for instance, an extract from Paul Strohm's 'Middle English Narrative Genres' (1980) alongside Piero Boitani's 'The Religious Tradition' (1982). The other chapters proceed in this fashion, with the history of an approach followed by examples applied to selected medieval texts. Among these texts, poets and works of interest range from the *Ancrene Wisse* and the Gawain-poet, to the Paston Letters and John Gower's *Confessio Amantis*. With an emphasis both on literary theory and practice, a dual table of contents supports the bifocal nature of the work: table one organizes the material according to critical theme, and follows the layout of the chapters, while table two presents the contents according to medieval text and author.

Dalrymple offers readings that are suitable for an audience of 'undergraduates pursuing literary studies', according to *Guides* editor Michael O'Neill. Well explained definitions of, for example, Formalism, will be helpful for students learning to identify and develop their own critical approaches to medieval texts. Likewise the context behind the literary approach will help students learn what has already been done and, more importantly, involve them in the language of an academic discussion. Because of the broad nature of the book, the author has been very selective in his critical coverage and representation of medieval texts; however, he addresses this by supplying suggestions for further reading at the end of each chapter. Problems for undergraduates may arise from occasions when Dalrymple takes for granted a developed understanding of critical problems singular to medieval studies; this occurs when the commentary uniting his excerpted material does not fully explain his position. For instance, the beginning student may wish for further explanation as to why 'basing a critical case on authorial intention was to commit "the intentional fallacy" in W. K. Wimsatt and Monroe Beardsley's influential phrase' (3). Such ideas certainly bear more discussion in a classroom setting, and perhaps this is exactly what the author intends. The book seems more profitably used by instructors who will draw from it piecemeal, assigning specific readings which apply to particular texts.