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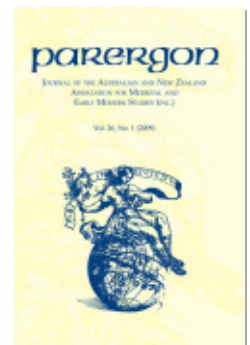
*Rhetoric of the Anchorhold: Space, Place and Body within the
Discourses of Enclosure* (review)

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Tuomas Heikkilä illustrates through the life of Johannes Hundebeke, how the brightest of the local canonists were intimately tied into the Roman network by being appointed to important curial positions, such as Auditor of the Rota, before returning to an Episcopal position.

A number of contributions examine the role of ecclesiastical law in the local society and its culture through a detailed study of local synodal decrees. Others look at the relationship of such law to theology and to church practice in the areas of liturgy and the sacraments. With the coming of Hus and his continuing following, many aspects of a continuing development and modification of Canon law were brought under stress, as is shown in several chapters.

There are one or two important essays on areas outside the main focus, such as Frederik Pedersen's analysis of the political imperatives that underlay the conversion of Southern Scandinavia, that offers some fascinating insights into the movement of missionaries from England and elsewhere. Sverrir Jakobsson's piece on the Peace of God in Iceland in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries shows how the church might become involved in the secular imposition of government in order to ensure its independence and the peace of the country.

From the point of view of those familiar only with English and the romance languages some of this is disappointingly inaccessible. Translation is a difficult and delicate art but one must hope that more can be done in the future to enable the sharing of this important knowledge and understanding of developments in a critical border area of medieval Europe. Indeed, an integrated study of Canon law throughout Europe in the period is much to be desired.

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McAvoy, Liz Herbert, ed., *Rhetoric of the Anchorhold: Space, Place and Body within the Discourses of Enclosure* (Religion and Culture in the Middle Ages), Cardiff, University of Wales Press, 2008; cloth; pp. xvi, 239; 2 b/w illustrations; R.R.P. £75.00; ISBN 9780708321300.

In recent years, the University of Wales has published excellent work in its Religion and Culture in the Middle Ages series. This volume is no exception. Arising from the Rhetoric and the Anchorhold conference held at Gregynog, Powys in 2005, it features twelve essays and an introduction. Pleasingly, the essays all illuminate the volume's overall theme, namely, the ways in which

the rhetoric of anchoritism did or did not reflect anchoritic life and, further, the ways in which anchoritic rhetoric travelled to and from the anchorhold and the wider world.

The first section is 'Public Performance: Rhetoric and Place'. Allison Clark analyses administrative documents produced by the Sienese commune in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. In recording the commune's almsgiving to hermits, the records provide useful information on the names and sexes of hermits and also where in Siena the hermits lived. As time passed, it seems that hermits were more inclined to live in groups rather than individually, although there remains the possibility that the rhetoric of the record-keeper was at work here, creating groups on the page which did not exist in reality.

Next, E. A. Jones provides an excellent and much-needed analysis of the rite of anchoritic enclosure in medieval England. Jones examines the extent to which the rite's focus on death and enclosure was reflected in anchoritic daily life, with the conclusion that the evidence is mixed.

Bella Millett wonders who the audiences of the *Ancrene Wisse* were, given that some sections of text in the early manuscripts refer to general lay audiences while other sections refer specifically to anchoresses. But the references to the general laity may have been rhetorical devices aimed at flattering the anchoresses, which prompts Millett's conclusion that the immediate audiences were anchoritic.

Cate Gunn also analyses the rhetorical elements of *Ancrene Wisse*, in this case finding similarities between the text and thirteenth-century sermons. This leads her to suggest that the differences between so-called pastoral spirituality and so-called contemplative spirituality may have been overstated.

In section two, the focus is on 'Private Performance: Rhetoric and Space'. Deviating from recent scholarship, Anna McHugh argues that it is time to pay less attention to *Ancrene Wisse*'s focus on the body and more attention to its focus on the soul. Images of enclosure in *Ancrene Wisse* actually refer to the soul. This is a liberating enclosure because, following the logic of the store-house of memory, enclosure both stores and makes retrievable the images of God, hence facilitating the dialogue with God that anchorites seek.

Michelle M. Sauer examines Middle English anchoritic texts and the physical remains of English anchorholds to argue that privacy (pure physical isolation) was discouraged but that solitude (with its links to exile, and its capacity to exist even in the presence of others) was encouraged within the medieval English anchoritic tradition. Privacy was passive and could lead to

acedia and temptation, whereas solitude was an active process of construction and something that the athletes for Christ of old would well have understood.

Liz Herbert McAvoy examines three lesser-known texts about medieval English anchorites, and notes that female anchorites were riskier for ecclesiastical authorities than were male anchorites. Authorities were not particularly interested in regulating the physical space of male anchorites, and the fourteenth-century *Speculum Inclusorum* assumed the best with respect to its male audience, but on the other hand our textual records of female anchorites show a cultural need to enclose women physically.

Next, Laura Saetveit Miles finds differences between Julian of Norwich and Bridget of Sweden. Julian's rhetoric of space held enclosure to be protective rather than restrictive; enclosure meant enclosure of all souls within an infinite God. But in Bridget's revelations the enclosed space was not shared with wider Christianity, no doubt because Bridget did not enjoy the real-life security of the anchorhold that Julian enjoyed.

Also studying Julian of Norwich, Fumiko Yoshikawa shows the power of linguistic analysis for our understanding of medieval spirituality. At a period when English was moving away from the use of the impersonal 'to think', Julian nonetheless used this construction. Yoshikawa finds that Julian wrote 'me thought' when she was interpreting a showing, and that she usually teamed this construction with a reference to a specific time. Yoshikawa concludes that Julian wanted to understand her revelations, but that she was conscious of the time-specific and provisional nature of her interpretations, something which might have implications for other mystical authors.

The third section is 'Bodily Performances: Rhetoric and Corporeality'. Anne Savage's discussion of feminine spirituality and the body provides examples from a very wide selection of texts, from the late antique period onwards. Robin Gilbank demonstrates that we can understand Aelred of Rievaulx's anchoritic text, *De Institutione Inclusarum*, more thoroughly once we appreciate Aelred's focus on Christ's incarnation. Aelred's earlier writings (e.g. *De Iesu Puero Duodenni*) placed Jesus' life at the centre of one's devotional activity and Aelred counselled the same thing in his anchoritic text.

Finally, Karl-Heinz Steinmetz examines the *latro* (thief, criminal) figure in eremitical tradition. An ambiguous figure, the *latro* crossed boundaries, just as monks, hermits and anchorites would do. It is argued that understanding the various meanings, good and bad, of the early Christian *latrones* helps us understand the later anchoritic texts and their rhetoric.

Prompted in large part by the Gregynog conferences and University of Wales' publications such as this one, the study of medieval anchoritism has recently gained a new lease of life and a much more critical focus on the relationships between textual theory and lived practice. Long may this continue.

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McDiarmid, John F., ed., *The Monarchical Republic of Early Modern England: Essays in Response to Patrick Collinson* (St Andrews Studies in Reformation History), Aldershot, Ashgate, 2007; hardcover; pp. xi, 308; R.R.P. £60.00; ISBN 9780754654346.

This collection of thirteen essays responds in different ways to an article published by Patrick Collinson in 1987, 'The Monarchical Republic of Elizabethan England'. As Collinson made clear in his original article, the term 'republic' and its connotations in meaning needed a precisely contextualised definition. Sir Thomas Smith's *De Republica Anglorum*, an Elizabethan text on English polity which Collinson interpreted, referred more to a commonwealth than to a republic in its modern meaning. Collinson's article applied Smith's theories to various organs of Elizabethan government, such as the Privy Council, and to various legislative expressions, including the Bond of Association.

Collinson identified in the machinery and priorities of Elizabethan government certain quasi-republican practices, including a sense that Elizabethan politicians, including Sir William Cecil, thought themselves capable of some governmental action independent of royal will. Also examining legislation from 1585 that was intended to ensure Protestant continuity in government should the Virgin Queen die, Collinson discerned political apparatus capable of ruling England (albeit temporarily) without a monarch.

The authors of the present collection clearly acknowledge this intellectual debt to Collinson. Indeed while articles within the collection may disagree with each other, they rarely disagree with Collinson. While Collinson's article took issue with the constitutional theories of Maurice Powicke, the current authors augment but largely follow what Collinson has already laid down. There are also at times strong Eltonian resonances, especially in Stephen Alford's chapter 'The Political Creed of William Cecil'.