

Mitgifte einbrachten. Dazu gab es Konversen aus dieser sozialen Schicht, die Brüder als Mönche im gleichen Konvent besessen haben. Die Konversen haben in der Regel auch aus der Umgebung des Klosters oder aus Orden gestammt, in denen die Klöster begütert waren. Die Motivationen der eingetretenen Konversen scheinen vielfältig gewesen zu sein. Neben äußerlichen Gründen, wie Armut und Krankheiten stand natürlich auch die echte Berufung. Bei den im höheren Alter Eintretenden scheint das Begräbnis im Kloster eine gewisse Rolle gespielt zu haben. Die Zahl der Konversen war nach Klöstern und Zeiträumen sehr verschieden. Das Verhältnis Mönche und Konversen wird mit zwei zu drei oder eins zu drei angegeben. Dabei wird vom Verfasser auch die Größe der Klostergebäude zur Interpretation der Konventsstärken herangezogen. Eine interessante These, die man im Rahmen der Cisterciensenforschung weiterverfolgen muss. Im Verlauf des 14. Jahrhunderts ging die Zahl der Konversen rasch zurück, doch wirkte sich dieser Rückgang nicht auf ihre Stellung in den Konventen aus. Das dritte Kapitel widmet sich den „Konversen als Arbeitskraft in der Klosterwirtschaft“. Ausgehend von den Grundsätzen der cisterciensischen Klosterwirtschaft waren Konversen nicht nur in allen Gebieten der Landwirtschaft, sondern auch in der Wirtschaftsführung und im Handel der Klöster eingesetzt. Sie waren dabei auch in den Stadthöfen beschäftigt und haben als Handwerker in allen Berufen gearbeitet. Der Verfasser zählt hier Bäcker, Weber, Schuhmacher, Gerber, Walker, Schmied, Wagner, aber auch das Baugewerbe auf. In den Klöstern traten sie darüber hinaus als Gastbrüder, als Schreiber und als Klostermeister, Schneider und Küchenmeister auf. Der Verfasser weist hier insbesondere auf die zahlreichen Erwähnungen in den Urkunden der einzelnen Abteien hin. Das vierte Kapitel befasst sich mit der Stellung der Konversen, die sich nach der Vorgabe des Ordens, der Situation der jeweiligen Klöster und der Bedeutung der Konversen als Arbeitskraft bezog. Eine besondere Rolle spielte das im fünften Kapitel vorgestellte „spirituelle Leben der Konversen“. Sie mussten gegenüber den Mönchen im Stundengebet weniger Zeit aufbringen, waren aber im spirituellen Leben dennoch eng an das Leben der Mönche und die entsprechenden religiösen Gebräuche angeschlossen. Daraus wird deutlich, dass Menschen aus allen Schichten im Kloster ein institutionelles Gefäß suchten, um im Gebet und Arbeit nach benediktinischer Sicht Gott zu dienen. Bernhard von Clairvaux hebt darauf ab, dass die Arbeit ein wichtiges Element der praktischen Spiritualität war. Diese stand bei der Rezitation der grundlegenden Gebete wie „Pater Noster“ und „Ave Maria“ unter Einbezug ihrer Arbeit in gewisser Weise gleichwertig neben den Gottesdiensten der Mönche. In den „Ergebnissen“ fasst

der Verfasser seine Ausführung nochmals zusammen und zeigt die Bedeutung der Konversen in den Cistercienserarbeiten der Eidgenossenschaft. Dabei dürften sich diese Ergebnisse auch auf andere Klöster des Ordens übertragen lassen. Die weitere Erforschung wird dieses tun müssen und dabei deutlich machen, ob diese Ergebnisse nur regionale Bedeutung haben oder über die hier untersuchte Region weit hinausgehen, was im Grundsatz anzunehmen ist. Im Anhang stellt der Verfasser die in den Quellen erwähnten Konversen in den untersuchten Abteien vor und schafft damit eine umfassende Quellenlage, auf die sich die Forschung der Zukunft berufen kann. Der Band schließt mit einem umfangreichen Quellen- und Literaturverzeichnis und wird durch ein ausführliches Register sehr gut erschlossen.

GEORG SCHROTT

Gerald Hirtner, Netzwerk der Tugendhaften. Neuzeitliche Totenroteln als historische Quelle. (Studien und Mitteilungen zur Geschichte des Benediktinerordens und seiner Zweige, 48. Ergänzungsband). Sankt Ottilien, EOS-Verlag 2014. 462 Seiten + zahlreiche Illustrationen, gebunden, 16,5 x 24 cm € 49,95 ISBN 978-3-8306-7678-2.

Bisher gab es zum frühneuzeitlichen Rotelwesen, einem „Arkanum der Geschichtswissenschaft“ (1) und „Stiefkind“ (2) der Forschung, nur eine Reihe von Aufsätzen meist bayerischer Autoren. Selbst die üppige „Quellenkunde der Habsburgermonarchie“ übersprang das Thema. Nun hat sich Gerald Hirtner in seiner Dissertation daran gemacht, diese Quellen- und Literaturgattung in einem weit gespannten monographischen Bogen zu untersuchen und damit eine empfindliche Forschungslücke zu schließen.

Hirtners Arbeit ist zugleich Bestandsaufnahme, Quellenkunde und ein Beitrag zur historischen Netzwerkforschung. Nach einem Überblick über den wissenschaftlichen Stand und der Beschreibung des Vorhabens charakterisiert der Autor die verschiedenen Formen mittelalterlicher und frühneuzeitlicher Roteln. Anschließend widmet er sich ausführlich seinem Quellen-Pool, nämlich der Rotelsammlung der Erzabtei Sankt Peter in Salzburg. Die Analyse der statistischen Verteilung beispielsweise nach der Diachronie, der geographischen Herkunft oder der Ordenszugehörigkeit lässt typische Charakteristika des Quellencorpus hervortreten. Weitere Arbeitsschritte beschäftigen sich mit Inhalten und Funktionen der Roteln. Aus dem Material greift er schließlich die Texte

benediktinischer Herkunft heraus, um an ihnen „Benediktinische Netzwerke in Salzburg“ (233ff.) zu untersuchen. Angehängt sind exemplarische Quelleneditionen und die Reproduktionen von Vignetten aus Roteldrucken. Ein Orts- und Personenregister erschließt die Arbeit.

Cistercienserklöster treten als Emittenten in der sanktpetrischen Sammlung in vergleichsweise geringem Ausmaß hervor. Im 17. Jahrhundert stehen 35 cisterciensische Roteln 1262 aus den Männerkonventen des Ordo Sancti Benedicti gegenüber (73), im gesamten 18. Jahrhundert stammten 49% der Roteln aus Benediktinerstiften, 25% von Augustiner-Chorherren und 12% von Benediktinerinnen. Nun erst folgen die Cistercienser und Prämonstratenser mit je 7 bzw. 6%. Das lässt sich nicht allein dadurch begründen, dass es weniger Cistercienser- als Benediktinerklöster gab. Eine wichtige Rolle spielte es beim Rotelaustausch, ob und wie lange Klöster miteinander verbrüdet waren. Denkbar ist aber natürlich auch, dass es ordensspezifische Kulturen der Selbstdarstellung in Netzwerken und Öffentlichkeiten gab, denen die vergleichende Ordensforschung aber bisher noch nicht auf der Spur ist.

Hirtner schließt die Forschungslücke, in die er vorstößt, nicht hermetisch dicht – er kann es nicht und will es nicht. Denn die Rotel-Forschung ist von einer Einzelperson weder fachlich noch quantitativ zu stemmen. Als *Desiderata* formuliert er eine „vollständige Bestandsaufnahme der Rotelsammlungen in Österreich“ (322) (und man möchte ergänzen: ebenso in den anderen Territorien). Vor allem fordert er eine interdisziplinäre Auswertung ein (323). Eine der vielen noch zu bewältigenden Einzelaufgaben wird exemplarisch hervorgehoben: die Ermittlung der Druckorte, distributionsgeschichtlich wichtig, aber schwer zu bestimmen, da Roteln keine *Impressa* besitzen. Der Autor schließt mit dem Hinweis, die Erstellung von Professbüchern sei eine „unabdingbare Voraussetzung für die prosopografische Erforschung der neuzeitlichen Klöster und Stifte“, und betont die Bedeutung, die die Roteln hierbei einnehmen würden (323). Neben diesen kurzen Andeutungen im abschließenden Ausblick böte sich eine ganze Reihe weiterer Impulse zur Anschlussforschung an. Beispielsweise wären es viele Roteln wert, von der neulateinischen Literaturgeschichte unter die Lupe genommen zu werden, sind unter den barocken Exemplaren doch einige Glanzstücke „spitzfindiger“ Rhetorik zu finden. Roteln liefern eine Fülle von Beiträgen zur „Geschichte des Todes“, bieten Kunsthistorikern in ihrem typographischen Schmuck mancherlei Erkenntnisse an und erlauben über einen Zeitraum von vielen Jahrzehnten einen Abgleich zwischen „Ideal und

Wirklichkeit“ – sprich der panegyrischen Rhetorik der Roteln und der realen Zustände in den Konventen.

CONSTANCE H. BERMAN

Virginia Blanton, Veronica O’Mara, and Patricia Stoop (eds.), *Nuns’ Literacies in Medieval Europe* [vol. 1]. The Hull Dialogue. Brepols, Turnhout 2013. XXXIV + 370 pages, 156 x 234 mm € 90 ISBN 978-2-503-53972-0.

Virginia Blanton, Veronica O’Mara, and Patricia Stoop (eds.), *Nuns’ Literacies in Medieval Europe* [vol. 2]. The Kansas City Dialogue. Brepols, Turnhout 2015. XLV + 415 pages, 156 x 234 mm € 100 ISBN 978-2-503-54922-4.

Historians of medieval and modern life alike have understood for some time that literacy comprises much more than the ability to sign one’s name. Feminist medievalists have come to understand that literacies can include vernacular as well as Latin expertise and that a variety of sources must be deployed to tease out evidence of various types of literacies. These two volumes provide a dramatic reassessment of the achievements in literacy of nuns in medieval western Europe that includes using, reading, understanding, composing, writing and copying of both Latin and vernacular texts and creating and illustrating the books and organizing the document collections that have preserved the evidence of that literacy, and of almost all else we can know about those nuns. These volumes so beautifully edited and presented by Virginia Blanton, Veronica O’Mara, and Patricia Stoop, in the Brepols series: *Medieval Women: Texts and Contexts*, provide a new understanding of the importance of medieval religious women’s literacies, of their highly-developed skills and abilities in those areas, and of their considerable access and contributions to medieval book culture. They confirm that women’s religious communities could be lively intellectual centers and that their access to and understanding of the written word extended beyond the vernacular to considerable expertise in Latin, rhetoric, grammar, and composition as well as to the book-making skills.

There is much of value here, including the introductions’ solid bibliographies of work that has gone before. Topics and dates range widely and are best described across the volumes and I am grateful to Virginia Blanton for providing me a table of contents for the third volume based on the Antwerp conference, which allows me to mention several new directions of continuations in that volume. The signal achievement of these volumes has been to bring less-known works to the

fore and to add to the accumulated scholarship which often continues to follow a trajectory of looking for the evidence of medieval nuns and their communities in untouched or neglected archival and library collections, establishing how often we can now determine that „anonymous“ was in fact a religious woman, combatting long-held assumptions that houses of nuns were few and far between and filled with defective or unwanted women without religious vocations, that nuns and abbesses were capable literate women, managers of property, who provided care for the poor and whose prayers for souls were valued in a variety of medieval regions, practices, and reforms, and as contemplative, mystical, spiritual beings.

I begin with the most difficult topic, England, for which the evidence is sparser than for the continent, or Scandinavia. In volume one, „Conceiving the Word(s): Habits of Literacy among earlier Anglo-Saxon Monastic Women“ (149-167), Lisa M. C. Weston argues that in the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms „the founding of monastic houses by and for high-status women . . . provided one of the most successful strategies for aligning and consolidating secular and religious power“ (149). „Substantial evidence reveals Anglo-Saxon monastic women as active and engaged readers of both sacred scripture and contemporary writers“ (150). As evidenced by the praise of Hild of Whitby by Bede, the correspondence of Aldhelm with Hildelith of Barking, both in the late seventh century, and letters exchanged with Boniface in the next generation, by such nuns as Leoba, Weston evokes „the habits of literacy that characterized life in women’s monastic communities during the first century or two of Christianity in Anglo-Saxon England“ (167).

In the next article, „The Literary Culture of the Anglo-Saxon Royal Nunneries: Romsey and London, British Library, MS Lansdowne 436.“ volume one (169-183), Stephanie Hollis asserts that „the paucity of Anglo-Saxon hagiography“ for religious women was the result of „non-survival of texts,“ rather than because of nuns’ not having produced them in the first place (169). She argues that later vitae of such saintly women as Edith of Wilton or Wulfhild of Barking, had drawn on pre-Conquest writings. She turns to the issue of whether the Lansdowne 436 legendary was the work of women, pointing to a tendency to attribute to the men in their service such volumes as this, which originated in the house of nuns of Romsey because of its *ex libris*; for Romsey this suggests a larger library there that disappeared at the Dissolution or earlier because of appropriations by individuals like the chaplain at Wilton attested elsewhere as having walked off

with a book. She suggests that „to offset the popular belief that the standard of educational attainment at medieval English monasteries was generally low,” a database of both lost manuscripts known to have belonged to nuns and anonymous manuscripts attributed by modern scholars to male communities might demonstrate more overlap than once thought (183). That is to argue forcefully that „anonymous“ might often have been a nun.

In volume two (289-306), Andrew Rabin discusses „Courtly Habits: Monastic Women’s Legal Literacy in Early Anglo-Saxon England,” in Anglo-Saxon Nunneries’ access to „the texts of the law“ (291). According to Rabin, „The absence of evidence for nuns’ legal literacy ... reflects the tendency of pre-Conquest lawmakers to discount female ecclesiastics as readers of legal texts, especially royal legislation“ (294-295). Rabin sees their treatment in the law as a „specially protected category of passive subject rather than as fully realized legal agents“ (295). But he also sees the necessity for religious women to deal in legal documents such as charters. As an example of this he discusses the disposition of charters for an abbey of religious women at Withington in Gloucestershire, an example in which a group of women do access legal agency through control of documents concerning land, primarily because the dispute involved the various female heirs of a woman founder. This dispute and its resolution, thus turned on female monastic reading of law as well as scripture history and grammar as outlined by Aldhem (305).

Marilyn Oliva looks at this in a different way in „Rendering Accounts: the Pragmatic Literacy of Nuns in Late Medieval England,” volume one (51-68), a solid contribution to our understanding of nun’s use of non-literary sources: „administrative documents, primarily nuns’ household accounts, but also, in a supplementary role, bailiffs’ accounts, and also rentals.” According to Oliva, „The mundane records indicate that many of the nuns for whom these sources survive wrote and kept their own household accounts, actively conferred with their bailiffs and reeves, and relied on their own written accounts to do so“ (52-53). Obviously, as she acknowledges, some of these records may have been written by male scribes hired for the purpose, but „Quotidian details“ suggest that daily and weekly tallies were the business of the nuns and that „evidence of the nuns’ active involvement in the composition of their accounts can be seen in their form and language“ (61). Oliva attributes this pragmatic literary skill to nuns’ learning on the job with help from superiors over the course of careers of office-holders within the community. The presentation of evidence for the

everyday pragmatic literacy of English nuns provides another angle from which to view these women religious, but also in the larger context of these volumes suggests yet other ways in which pragmatic writing skills identified as those of nuns might occasionally provide clues to our understanding of the larger problem of copying literary and liturgical sources.

Similarly, in volume two (307-325), Emilie Amt, „Making their Mark: the Spectrum of Literacy among Godstow’s Nuns, 1400-1550,“ surveys cartularies and documents of practice, traces of the conventual library and evidence from the Dissolution. Two fifteenth-century cartularies survive, one Latin and one Middle English translation of it. The first is dated to 1403/04 and is argued by Amt, very convincingly, to have been produced by the prioress of Godstow, Alice of Eaton, and not by a later Alice (of Henley) identified in error by earlier scholars (310-312). The second, is a translation made in the 1460s by a „poor brother,“ name omitted, who stated that he should make this translation, „for as much as women of religion, in reading books of Latin, are excused of great understanding“ (313). This is the passage cited by Eileen Power in 1922 as evidence of English convents’ „poverty of learning,“ but as Amt is quick to point out, the same author tells us that these nuns were, „for the most part in English books well learned“ (314).

The evidence of charters and cartularies thus shows nuns’ use of Latin, French for annotations, and English and their active engagement in managing their own affairs. More difficult to assess is the library, to which in addition to some English content in the English cartulary, and a fragment in the Latin cartulary of a French verse life of Ediva of Winchester, the community’s founder, only one other manuscript book, a Latin psalter, may be added. This was a mid-fourteenth century gift, which may provide some evidence as to devotional reading by the nuns. A third bit of evidence for the literacy of Godstow’s nuns is provided in the evidence of notes sent by ex-nuns to agents to collect their pension payments after the Dissolution. What Amt concludes is that familiarity with the written word varied considerably among the nuns of late medieval Godstow.

In volume one (185-206), Virginia Blanton takes up „The Devotional Reading of Nuns: Three Legendaries of Native Saints in Late Medieval England.” She begins with her assertion that „Little attention has focused on the legendaries associated with female communities: in fact, collections of saints’ lives have largely been ignored, perhaps because it is believed that they are too ubiquitous to provide much information about a particular reading community“ (185). Yet

as she argues, twenty-percent of the devotional readings to be identified with English nuns, is such saints' lives, as analyzed in Table Four (204-206) on their legends. Blanton analyzes one legendary in Latin, one in French and one in English. They are respectively British Library MS Lansdowne 436; British Library MS Additional 70513; and Cambridge University Library MS Additional 2604. One conclusion is that despite the various languages and original owners of these legendary manuscripts, they collectively suggest widespread concern among women religious readers about those whom Blanton describes as their „forbearers of English vowed religious“ (201).

In volume one (69-93), Veronica O'Mara presents the first of three articles on the problem of the paucity of „strict textual evidence used dispassionately“ (69) for late medieval England's nuns' literacies. As described in „The Late Medieval English Nun and her Scribal Activity: A Complicated Quest,” O'Mara sets out to avoid what might be called wishful thinking and ill-founded assertions about manuscripts produced by women and for not jumping to conclusions too easily in attempts to attribute the „anonymous“ manuscript to a late medieval English nun. As she describes it as being so much harder to find evidence for nuns' or laywomen's literacies and scribal activity in English „literary contexts“ than for the continent, I am reminded of a conversation long ago with the late Mary Martin McLaughlin, about organizing a conference session; as Mary put it, „this has to be very solid.“ It is that insistence, which O'Mara brings to her quest, which is so admirable, even if at the cost of sometimes opening up again what were once thought to be solid attributions. There is something like this as well in the article by Nils Dverstorp discussed below.

At the end of the article, O'Mara describes her method: „To adopt a taxonomic approach to nuns' scribal activity by looking out for what is added, what is marginal, so that eventually we may be able to speak in a more grounded way about what is at the centre and so contribute to other efforts in constructing the lives of such women“ (92-93). Some of O'Mara's arguments about women scribing their own texts (or not) are easily made. In looking at surviving English letter collections that often involved women, like the Paston letters, she finds that there is little positive evidence for women having written their letters themselves (72). She argues similarly that unlike for the continent, few surviving sermons for late medieval England have been found and only six sermons that were addressed to nuns. As for nuns' colophons, earlier studies had found only one, that by a scribe identifying herself as a nun from Nunnaminster. O'Mara adds here to that

census with her own discoveries in early sixteenth century manuscripts: of colophons, ownership inscriptions and notations that can be attributed to women. This is the first of a three-part study.

In volume two (123-147), O'Mara continues on „Nuns and Writing in Late Medieval England: The Quest Continues.“ Looking at the documents „of surrender“ of women's religious houses at the time of the Dissolution (1536-39) for evidence of nuns' handwriting, she reports them as disappointing -- almost entirely ambiguous results with nuns often only making a mark, for whatever reason. She then turns from the ownership inscriptions of the earlier article to look at whatever „unique material“ there may be in nuns' hands that was inserted in manuscripts, even when it is impossible to tell that an entire manuscript was scribed by a woman. Again, her findings are mixed, suggesting that others' conclusions have sometimes been overdrawn. She concludes that while her manuscript analysis provides indications of what English nuns might have read, it provides little about what they may have been writing. O'Mara promises to conclude her quest by looking at Syon, the English Birgittine abbey in „Scribal Engagement and the Late Medieval English Nuns: The Quest Concludes?“

There is much about the Birgittines, known for their sisters as well as brothers having great interests in literacy. Volume one has three articles on Birgittines in England and Sweden. Monica Hedlund, in „Nuns and Latin, with Special Reference to the Birgittines of Vadstena,“ volume one (97-118), begins with an overview of earlier religious women known for their intellectual power: the great abbesses of the twelfth century: Heloise, Hildegard and Herrad. While positing a change in access to learning for nuns after 1200 because they were shut out of the universities, there were still notable women, like the thirteenth-century Cistercian nuns at Helfta who are described as being influential among the later Birgittines for their mystical writing. It is, as Hedlund states it, „against a rather heterogeneous background that we have to see the question of how much Latin the Vadstena sisters knew“ (103). Their customary, the *Lucidarium*, states that they were to have their own psalters and to read and sing from the text and musical notations in choir, but it cannot always be assumed that they understood the Latin texts they sang, for along with evidence for systematic training in Latin there are also interlinear Swedish translations in some surviving manuscripts (103-107). Moreover, there is some evidence for scribal work by those nuns with a talent for it (109). She concludes that „all the evidence seems to confirm that at least a passive and practical understanding of Latin was the norm among the

Vadstena sisters, in all probability several of them had a rather good command of the language“ (113).

Also in volume one (239-251) is Jonas Carlquist's „The Birgittine Sisters at Vadstena Abbey: Their Learning and Literacy, with Particular Reference to Table Reading.“ Carlquist opines in his opening (but there is a confused citation here), that in England at Birgittine Syon abbey, „most nuns were not able to understand non-liturgical Latin, but that the minority who could was greater than has been previously thought“ (240). He tells us as well that at Vadstena, which had an impressive vernacular library for the nuns, „Latin knowledge seems at a first glance to be very much in the minority“ (240). He then turns to the manuscript that he has published, a composite volume for reading aloud to the nuns at table: „The table readings are usually connected to the daily readings in Latin in the church, probably with the aim of allowing the sisters to gain an awareness of the topics of the day and to get explanations of the more complicated aspects of their beliefs“ (243). The readings include quotations in Latin usually translated, except from the Bible, from Ambrose, Augustine, Bernard of Clairvaux, Birgitta, Gregory the Great, Jerome, Hugh of St-Victor and, and John Chrysostom. He tells us that „The fact that just a few Latin quotations in the table reading manuscript are not followed by a translation raises the question [as to] whether the nuns themselves understood the Latin passages . . . This suggests that the Latin competence among the nuns of Vadstena Abbey was mostly practical. The ordinary nun knew as much Latin as was needed for her daily duties“ (245). Still, „the education and textual world of Vadstena circa 1500 appears to have been rich“ (250).

In the next article, „Vadstena Abbey and Female Literacy in Late Medieval Sweden,“ volume one (253-274), Ingela Hedström, addresses earlier assumptions about the illiteracy of nuns at Vadstena in comparison to the brothers there. There was some sort of education within the convent that included the training of new sisters as is mentioned in a few examples. Hedström argues for a considerably literacy when she examines the *Regula*, to determine which offices in the convent required literacy by the incumbent. „Many of the positions in the convent or tasks that a sister could have performed required that the sister had to be able to read or write, or to have direct contact with books.“ The abbess had ceremonial functions that required reading and commenting on common readings and she had probably been elected because of her „intellectual and administrative capacities.“ The prioress and her assistants had duties that included reading

to sisters in the infirmary. A *lectrix* was in charge of table readings, probably a position that rotated among the nuns, *cantrices* too would have had to read from the choir books, the treasurer had to write down expenses and income. There were also sisters who copied, who proofread and who oversaw the translation from Latin into Swedish (255-257).

Hedström concludes that „at least half of the sisters were able to write and we know the names of many who did so at the end of the fifteenth century.“ Indeed, as she states, „It seems clear that the sisters mentioned in the *Diarium* [the chronology compiled by the brothers] were especially skilled and probably wrote manuscripts for use by the brethren“ (269). Indeed, „Perceiving the sisters as merely unlearned women copying texts translated into the vernacular does not do these nuns justice . . . Rather than looking at the extensive production of books in the vernacular as some form of regression, because the sisters did not know Latin, it could just as easily be interpreted as a rise in the number of sisters who could – and wanted to – read“ (271). Such interest in the vernacular, moreover, does not preclude some of them knowing Latin.

In volume two (109-122), Nils Dverstorp presents „Step by Step: The Process of Writing a Manuscript in the Female Convent of Vadstena,” with reference to manuscript Stockholm, Kungligabiblioteket, MS A 9, a book recognized to have been written by a nun at Vadstena sometime after 1450. His careful paleographic analysis of the manuscript, however, shows something new. That although at first it appears to have had multiple scribes, careful tracing of overlapping changes in letter forms suggests instead changes in the hand of a single scribe over time. What this means, of course, is that reported numbers of different scribes at a house of nuns like Vadstena may have been slightly over-counted. In fact if some scribes were very consistent in their hands over time, others may have had variations in their letter formation if they had stopped and started a manuscript over time. It is an interesting use of paleography.

More is to come on Birgittines. In volume three Ann M. Hutchison will discuss „Readings for the Nuns of Syon Abbey.” Eva Lindqvist Sandgren will consider „Reading and Pictorial Preferences in the Birgittine Prayer Book, Uppsala Universitetsbibliotek, MS C 12. Anne Mette Hansen will describe „Devotional Books for the Birgittine Abbey of Maribo“ a house founded in the fifteenth century in Danish Lolland. Mary C. Erler discusses „The Transmission of Images between Flemish and English Birgittine Houses.“

For northern climes, volume two (229-248) includes „What Icelandic Nuns Read: The convent of Reynistad’ur,“ by Swanhildur Óskarsdóttir. She discusses books that would have been included in libraries for house of nuns in northern Iceland and examines in detail Copenhagen, Arnamagnaeian Collection MS AM 764, a miscellany of texts compiled in the late fourteenth century, that would have been of interest to religious women and which was probably produced for Reynistad’ur. For Ireland, an article by Maeve Collan, „Líadain’s *Lament*, Darerca’s *Life* and Íte’s *Ísucán*: Evidence for Nuns’ Literacies in Early Ireland,“ volume two (209-228), discusses a tradition of Irish women poets for which there is only a late survival of written versions. That such texts as Líadain’s *Lament* and Íte’s *Ísucán* have internal claims that they are by women, but that such internal evidence has been ignored suggests an „androcentrism“ of both surviving texts and scholarship (226).

A third article in volume two considers Irish nuns transported to Spain. „Her Book-Lined Cell: Irish Nuns and the Development of Texts, Translation, and Literacy in Late Medieval Spain,“ by Andrea Knox, volume two (67-86), concerns not just migration to Spain after the Henrician Dissolution from the 1540s onward, but earlier Irish Dominican nuns active in Spain from the thirteenth century, particularly in providing education for girls. In this case, „It appears that none of the surviving texts and books was overseen by male members of the Dominican Order, with the result that they were not always as sanitized as Rome or the Inquisition would have liked“ (84). In this case the nuns’ enclosure protected them somewhat from investigation. Also concerning Spain in volume three will be Blanca Garí, „What did Catalan Nuns Read? Women’s Literacy in the Monasteries of Catalonia, Majorca and Valencia.“

In volume two (327-339), Darcy Donahue discusses „The Personal and the Political: Ana of San Bartolomé’s Version of the Discalced Carmelite Reform.“ According to Donahue, convent documentation, which came to include chronicles of the lives of exceptionally pious or leaned nuns, was a form of self-preservation and even advertising used to recruit new members and donors. „In the case of Spain, this is particularly true of the discalced Carmelite Order, founded by Teresa de Ávila in 1562“ (328). Donahue describes the topic of her article, the chronicler of the Carmelite Reform, Ana of San Bartolomé, Teresa’s nurse and secretary: „The daughter of affluent peasants, by her own account she acquired writing skills miraculously in one afternoon through copying the script of her mentor, Teresa of Avila; „ this was recorded in the canonization testimony (330).

Ana's *News on the Beginning of the Teresan Carmelites*, written in 1598 tells the story of her heroic mother figure, but also includes biographies of fifteen of the first discalced Carmelite nuns, thus comprising a history of the early order.

For Italy, there are two articles in volume two. Antonella Ambrosio points to account books and other archival documents as a potential source for women's literacy in Naples in „Literacy in Neapolitan Women's Convents: An Example of Female Handwriting in a Late Fifteenth-Century Accounts Ledger,“ volume two (89-108). Thus Ambrosio presents for Naples the types of practical literacy documents that Oliva in volume one presented for England. Ambrosio compares the nun's writing in figure 8 with that of a friar from Naples on figures 6 and 7. Although it appears that sometimes the nun may have unsuccessfully attempted to keep a straight horizontal line of writing across the account page, her less cursive hand appears appropriate for such accounts and relatively easily read. The layout is much like some of the accounts found for thirteenth-century Cistercian nuns in northern France, on which I have forthcoming work.

Again in volume two (171-189), Loretta Vandi argues for „The Visual Vernacular: The Construction of Communal Literacy at the Convent of Santa Maria in Pontetetto (Lucca).“ Here what she strives for is a description of the less polished illuminations in four early to mid twelfth century manuscripts surviving from that abbey of Santa Maria produced not long after the death of the founding Abbess Humbrina in 1124. It would have benefitted from some consultation of Jeffrey Hamburger's *Nuns as Artists: The Visual Culture of a Medieval Convent* (Berkeley-Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1996). There is an elaborate analogy here that is difficult to tease out, but which seems to be used to call the nuns' manuscript painting „the visual vernacular.“ What she seems to argue is that the more formal manuscript art associated with nearby monks and canons is related to the illustrations in these nuns' manuscripts in the same way that more literary Latin is related to vulgar Latin.

More on Italy is promised for volume three; Brian Richardson will contribute „Memorializing Living Female Saints in the Milanese Convent of Santa Marta in the Early Sixteenth Century,“ and Melissa Moreton discusses „Exchange and Alliance: the Sharing and Gifting of Books in Women's Houses in Late Medieval Florence.“

Articles on the Clarisses and Franciscan Tertiary Women may also concern Italy: The forthcoming volume three from the Antwerp conference will have

articles on mendicant women. They include Julie Ann Smith, „*Faciat eas litteras edoceri: Literacy and Learning in the Clarissan *formae vitae**,“ and Alison More, „Religious Order and Textual Identity: The Case of Franciscan Tertiary Women,“ that may concern Italy. Others on mendicants include „The Legacy of St. Margit: A Case-study of a Dominican Monastery in Hungary,“ by Hedvig Deák, „Sitting Between Two Sisters’: Reading Holy Writ in a Community of Tertiaries in Sint-Agnes, Amersfoort,“ by Sabrina Corbellini, and Almut Bretenbach and Stefan Matter’s „Image, Text, and the Sisters’ Minds: Franciscan Tertiaries Rewriting Stephan Fridolin’s *Schatzbehalter*.“

As for France and Germany, Flanders and the Netherlands, in volume two (3-26), Virginia Blanton and Helene Scheck take on the cross-channel connections in „Leoba and the Iconography of Learning in the Lives of Anglo-Saxon Women Religious, 660-780.“ Citing work by Felice Lifshitz and Jane Schulenburg, they argue that „References to women’s participation in religious culture, especially in intellectual culture, are most often preserved in saints’ lives,“ and that „presentations of Anglo-Saxon abbesses demonstrate a set of expectations about literacies.“ (6-8). They refer to self-referential texts by Leoba herself and reminiscences of the sisters at Tauberbischofsheim that were incorporated into the *Vita* written c. 836, half a century after Leoba’s death, by Rudolf of Fulda, concluding that the narrative demonstrated „the authority and agency of a learned female community“ (25-26).

The transfer of manuscripts is the topic of the opening article in volume one, by Helen Scheck „Reading Women at the Margins of Quedlinburg Codex 74“ (3-18). She discusses a manuscript of Jerome’s letters produced at Carolingian Chelles near Paris circa 800 that later found its way to the Ottonian royal women’s house of Quedlinburg. Scheck describes the manuscript „as a conduit for the transmission of women’s intellectual culture“ for nuns at Quedlinburg introduced their own notes and commentary (5). Indeed, Scheck argues that usage and notations and script styles show that the manuscript was „actively studied“ for five centuries (8). Scheck opines, „While the readers note moral guidance and presumably take it to heart, they do not respond to the explicit antifeminist statements.“ Not passive recipients, instead „women read themselves into the manuscript, responded to it, altered it, and destabilized [it]“ (17-18). For volume three Blanton and Scheck promise a return to the Anglo-Saxon to Carolingian connection in „Leoba’s Legacy: The Carolingian Transformation of an Iconography of Literacy.“

In volume one, Bruce L. Venarde makes a different claim for practical literacy in „Making History at Fontevraud: Abbess Petronilla of Chemillé and Practical Literacy“ (19-31). Here Venarde asserts quite rightly that literacy also encompasses the recognition of and use of the written world as a tool. Even if we cannot be sure that abbess Petronilla herself actually wrote or copied charters, letters, and other materials, what is clear is that Petronilla saw writing as an important component in her preservation of the memory of Robert of Arbrissel and of the many bequests that had been made to him and his foundations. This was not just a matter of having sought to obtain a *Vita* and possible canonization in her commissioning of first one, then another life, or of her insistence in adding four statutes to those given by Robert which confirmed that he had turned over rule of the foundation to women. As important as lives and rules was her insistence that bequests be recorded in written charters and then copied into the *Grand Cartulaire de Fontevraud* that was constructed over the course of the twelfth century (and recently published by Jean-Marc Bienvenu and others (Poitiers: 2000 and 2005). Petronilla is an excellent early example of this kind of use of literacy as a tool that gave women power, for they could use the written word to counter the brute strength of men and „custom.“

In volume one (33-50), Alison I. Beach discusses “‘Matild de Niphin’ and the Female Scribes of Twelfth-Century Zwiefalten.” Located in southwestern Germany in the region, the Hirsau reformed Benedictine abbey of Zwiefalten contained seventy monks, 130 lay-brothers, and sixty two *sanctimoniales* or holy women, who may have included both nuns and lay sisters (38-39). In the thirteenth century a scribe commented in Zwiefalten necrology that Matild of Niphin had copied many books earlier (33). In 1099 or 1100, a fire had destroyed much of Zwiefalten’s Library. They were replaced during the period from 1109-1140 by a large team of scribes, including five named ones, among them Matild (39-40). This was not a mixed-gender copying team, but what Beach describes as „two scribal workshops at Zwiefalten in the twelfth century: one staffed by women and the other by men.” It appears that it was the liturgical books that the women, and in particular Matild (probably the most prominent scribe), would copy; those liturgical books also have elaborate embroidered repairs to their parchments (42-47). According to Beach we can „responsibly imagine... not only the level of practical literacy required to produce the books, . . . but perhaps also a degree of literacy that allowed them [the nuns] to make use of the monastery’s extensive libraries for biblical study and other forms of devotion“ (50).

Alfred Thomas, in volume one (207-221), „Between Court and Cloister: Royal Patronage and Nuns’ Literacy in Medieval East-Central Europe,“ uses the arrival in England of Anne of Bohemia in late 1381 as the lead-in to his consideration of this „highly-educated young woman“ and the milieu in which she had been brought up, one in which tri-lingual literacy in Latin, German, and Czech was expected (207). This literacy among Bohemian royal princesses goes back to the founding of the bishopric of Prague in 973 and it extended through famous women of the Bohemian royal family. The most famous was the early thirteenth century Agnes of Bohemia (c. 1211-82) who was brought up in the Cistercian convent of Trebnitz and then at Praemonstratensian Dozan. A surviving book of Hours owned by Agnes, (New York: Pierpont Morgan Library, MS 739) attests to her reading competence in both Latin and German, and marginalia in German may possibly be by Agnes (212). Another book of hours (San Marino, CA, Huntington Library, HM 58285) that belonged to Anne of Bohemia’s maid of honor and cousin Margaret of Teschen has Czech and German as well as Latin prayers. That the three languages were all read (and probably spoken or sung) by elite women is confirmed here, but it is not yet clear that any of these books or the notes in them or their illustrations were scribed or painted by nuns or their royal patrons.

Images of women teaching each other are the topic of Karen Blough’s „Implications for Female Monastic Literacy in the Reliefs from St. Liudger’s at Werden,“ volume two (151-170). Blough argues for an eleventh-century date for the frieze containing reliefs of women gesturing as if conversing with one another, often holding books, by reference to the surviving gold front cover of the Gospel Book of Abbess Theophanu von Essen, illustrated here on Color Plate One, p. xv. As Blough contends these are women listening and commenting: „The iconography of the Werden reliefs clearly suggests such active learning on the part of monastic women“ (162). Moreover, Blough suggests that these are the canonesses of nearby Essen, „who for the monks of Werden were the highly visible, contemporary embodiments of a tradition of intellectual exchange among religious women extending back to the Early Christian period“ (164). Referring to the recent work of Katrinette Bodarwé on these religious women at Essen, for whom as many as sixty different hands have been identified, Blough suggests that the Werden reliefs reflect in particular the Essen community under abbess Theophanu, a granddaughter of Otto II, elected there in 1039 (168).

Two contributors who have been pioneers in work on nuns and their books are included here. They are Cynthia J. Cyrus, who provides in volume one (119-132) „Vernacular and Latinate Literacy in Viennese Women’s Convents,” and Anne Winston-Allen, in volume two (191-208) „Outside the Mainstream: Women as Readers, Scribes, and Illustrators of Books in Convents of the German–Speaking regions.” Their contributions here are continuations of much larger projects that have appeared earlier.

Cyrus, in repositioning the question from nuns’ literacies to „What did monastic literacy entail?” looks at seven Viennese women’s houses and surviving liturgical and non-liturgical manuscripts (120). She concludes that: „these Viennese manuscripts . . . reveal active processes of study and cogitation. But they reveal as well a bivalent literacy [that] . . . is not an ‘absence’ of scholastic achievement, with sole emphasis of Latin, nor is it merely the addition of a ‘new’ language as a singular measure of success. It is the mixture of the two languages ... and their [the nuns’] abilities to shift from one mode to another ... [that] serve as defining features of the literacy of these late medieval nuns“ (132).

Winston-Allen, rather than focusing on one place, takes us on an excursion beginning in the Cistercian house of nuns at Wienhausen in lower Saxony to look at a richly decorated „processional“ made by Sister Gertrud Bungen circa 1490 and there is a wonderful color image of this on page xxii. Then she turns to the cloister of Paradies near Soest in North-Rhine Westphalia, where nuns incorporated their own portraits into the initials of manuscripts they had copied. Then she moves to the Benedictine nuns of Engelberg in Switzerland, whose nuns made two unusual psalters, richly illuminated with images of the life of Christ, but images that elevated the role of the Virgin Mary with crowns such as those that late medieval nuns themselves might have worn. Winston-Allen cites the illuminated manuscripts’ survey „Repertorium of Manuscripts Illuminated by Women in Religious Communities of the Middle Ages.” <http://www.agfem-art.com> and a variety of other items found there, She eventually returns to the Lüneburg Cistercians of Medingen where she describes how „nuns at the end of the middle Ages were inventing new genres of texts and disseminating them to women outside the convent“ (205). In her view at Medingen and elsewhere in the late fifteenth century „The Reform had brought a new focus on the making of books“ (204). It is unfortunate that she could not cite the study by the late June Meacham, *Sacred Communities, Shared Devotions: Gender, Medieval Culture, and Monasticism in Late Medieval Germany*, ed. by Alison I. Beach,

Constance Berman, and Lisa Bitel (2014), for in *Sacred Communities*, we find out that those reformers coming to Wienhausen, Medingen, and elsewhere arrived with carts ready to carry away the incumbent abbesses, who were given no quarter. *Sacred Communities* thus problematizes the self-serving narratives of the male reformers that were introduced into the discussion at least as early as 1922. Those reformers introduced havoc into pious communities of religious women who had created solid relationships with neighboring secular communities and a wonderful tradition of decorative textile production. Winston-Allen's article is a fine one, but it has not yet gotten these insights into the „costs“ of reform that Mecham had uncovered.

The same issue of overlapping publication dates arises with the article by Eva Schlotheuber, in volume two (249-68), „Daily Life, *Amor Dei*, and the Politics of the Letters of the Benedictine Nuns at Lüne in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth centuries.“ This treatment, which concentrates on letters from the late fifteenth and early thirteenth century, better complements what we know of Mecham's work, mentioning, for instance that reformers deposed abbesses and prioresses. What remains unclear to me, but perhaps beyond the scope of this article is how much the great skills in scholarly Latin among these nuns that she discusses here (266) were skills already present at this abbey before the reform and not only during and after it. The main point, however, is that by the use of a scholarly Latin, which local clergy might not have available to them, the nuns could carry on a correspondence with churchmen at a higher level of authority and circumvent interference by locals in their affairs. Here literacy in Latin becomes a coded, nearly secret, and very empowering language, the language of power in many senses. „From this position, they achieved a special authority in speaking, which made them revered and sought-after correspondents for religious and lay people alike“ (267).

Wienhausen and Medingen were houses of Cistercian nuns among those Lüneburg communities, but so was Helfta as described by Ulrike Wiethaus in „Collaborative Literacy and the Spiritual Education of Nuns at Helfta,“ volume two (27-46). In her opening line, Wiethaus states that „In the thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries, the unincorporated Cistercian house Beatae Mariae Virginis at Helpede (known today as Helfta) in Saxony produced a remarkable collection of monastic women's writings.“ Recent work suggests that by the fourteenth century the distinction between „incorporated“ and „unincorporated“ Cistercian houses of nuns was less important. Wiethaus's important article

explains that „The manuscripts produced . . . include the synchronous practice of collaborative and individual authorship, the blending of Latin and vernacular text genres and conventions, and the skillful combination of oral and literate devotional practices. [Although] modern conventions of single authorship . . . have privileged the names of the three known Helfta authors: Gertrud von Helfta, Mechthild von Hackeborn, and Mechthild von Magdeburg . . . Helfta’s textual productive was collaborative anonymous authorship“ (34). The advantages of this anonymity in the production of mystical texts, as Wiethaus concludes, was „central to the emergence and dissemination of the ‚new mysticism‘ at Helfta, [where] contemplative pedagogy and training constituted the bedrock of mystical literacy“ (41).

Regina Dorothea Schiewer also discusses sermon collections of importance to Cistercian and other nuns in „Books in Texts -- Texts in Books: The *St. Georgener Predigten* as an Example of Nuns’ Literacy in Late Medieval German,“ volume one (223-237). Schiewer sees such sermon collections as essential to the cura monialium, which she characterizes as particularly burdensome to early thirteenth century Cistercians, but in the end she turns primarily to Dominican nuns in this study and she underlines those indications in this important sermon collection, *St. Georgener Predigten*, that it was composed for reading aloud as well as in private. The transmission was extensive probably because of the demands made on the reader, which reflect an impressive level of interest in theology and education of these monastic women. Especially noteworthy, however, is the production of many such sermon manuscripts by Reformed nuns of the late Middle Ages (237).

Tom Mertens, in volume one (133-146) provides „Praying in the Vernacular: Middle Dutch Imitative Forms of the Divine Office from the 1370s to 1520s.“ He asserts that the massive number of Middle Dutch prayer books has been so overwhelming as to inhibit research on them. So here he concentrates on a single specific form, the prayer books that offered simplified vernacular versions of the monastic office. These were associated, particularly in the diocese of Utrecht, with what might be called a „second religious women’s movement“ associated with houses of beguines, sisters of the Common Life, Augustinian canonesses and the like (134-35). Among the best known of these Middle Dutch vernacular forms derived from the Divine Office were *The Book of Hours of Geert Grote* (1340-1384), a liturgical *Psalter* begun by him, a *Lay Breviary*, and texts that coordinated texts for mass and office for the same days of the liturgical calendar.

In volume one (275-292), Wybren Scheepsma provides „Writing, Editing and Rearranging: Griet Essinchghes and her Version of the Sister Book of Diepenveen.“ This is a discussion of the book and the context for Sister Griet Essinchghes’ compilation of the Sister book (or collective biography) of Diepenveen and of the Windesheim convents of the *Devotio moderna*. In this movement it turns out that Diepenveen was an important community from which at least fifteen other reform communities derived (279). According to Scheepsma, „As an urban-based reform movement the *Devotio moderna* also took full advantage of the educational opportunities in towns . . . Education was highly valued by the devout . . . and convents such as Diepenveen provided instruction to girls“ (279-80). It was in such a situation that the Sister-books thrived and in which two surviving manuscripts of a sister-book for Diepenveen were produced. There, their development from a house of lay sisters into a house of nuns meant that the sisters had to learn Latin by creating a school so that they could perform the Office.

A rather spectacular series of findings has allowed Scheepsma to identify the author of the 1500-1534 manuscript. Griet may be linked to the family of an alderman of the Hanseatic town of Zolle (289). Her version of the Sister book, the second surviving manuscript, but with a missing version between the first and second, contains comprehensive details about some of her family members. She herself attests (in Scheepsma’s translation), that there were many more virtuous sisters that she had left out: „If I were to record the virtues of all the sisters, I dare say I would not accomplish it in a hundred years“ (292). The aim was to inspire virtue, but the accomplishment records as well, the literacy of these devout women.

Kees Schepers in volume two (269-87) describes „A Web of Texts: Sixteenth-Century Mystical Culture and the Arnhem Sint-Agnes Convent.“ His evidence is the manuscripts found to have survived after the Protestant authorities in 1580 forbade public Catholic worship. From that point the sisters of Sint-Agnes with no new novices admitted, saw their numbers decline rapidly from about a hundred in 1580 to only four in 1634 when the convent was closed (270). The surviving manuscripts that have been linked to Sint-Agnes attest to the influence of fourteenth-century mystics: Ruusbroec, Eckhart, Tauler and Henry Susa, with good copies of their works that have been used for recent editions. Other „original“ sixteenth-century mystical texts are also found in these manuscripts as well as copies made from sixteenth-century printed texts published by the

Carthusians of Cologne. As the author says, such a mystical community (on which there is much more here) is reminiscent of the earlier thirteenth-century nuns of Helfta (272-74).

Patricia Stoop in volume one (293-312) discusses „Nuns’ Literacy in Sixteenth-Century Convent Sermons from the Cistercian Abbey of Ter Kameren“ or la Cambre near Brussels. There nuns wrote down sermons delivered by an illustrious Franciscan priest, Johannes Mahusius in the 1560s, but the sermons themselves were preserved in copies not from Ter Kameren itself but from those derived from those at Ter Kameren copied for Benedictine nuns. Stoop quotes an entry from the last of a series of sermons that provides information about the copying and the redactor, Barbe Tasse, abbess (1563-93) – this is Stoop’s translation: „And it was for the annual Mass [for the dedication of the church] when the very honourable Father Jan Mahusius was delivering this sermon to our monastery of Ter Kameren. He gave me, the honourable Lady Abbess, and the whole convent, the Pater Noster for a new year . . .“ (303).

In volume two (47-66), in „From Reading to Writing: The Multiple Levels of Literacy of the Sister Scribes in the Brussels Convent of Jericho,“ Patricia Stoop begins with the assertion: „It is beyond doubt that many women religious in the Low Countries were literate and had access to books. Most Middle Dutch books from religious institutions in the Low Countries up to 1550 derive from female establishments (some two-thirds of about five hundred manuscripts“ (47). As it turns out, many of these came from the Augustinian convent in Brussels, Our Lady of the Rose Planted in Jericho. The community was the second-largest producer of manuscripts and third largest owner of them in the Low Countries (47-48). The work was done in a „writing chamber that between 1466 and 1490 had working space for five or six women scribes, working together in small teams (61). Account books record the expenses for writing books as well as the income from their sale. Stoop discusses the sisters’ education, their production of manuscripts and sisters writing down sermons that they heard. Some of these skilled sermon-writers later became office holders (66). Following on these two studies Stoop will provide for volume three an article co-authored with Lisanne Vroomen, „The *Reportationes* of Henricus Cool’s sermons by the Anonymous Nun from the Carthusian Convent of Sint-Anna-Ter-Woestijne near Bruges.“

Volume three will include several other pieces on nuns as readers. „Anonymous Then, Invisible Now: The Readers of *Sermon a dames religieuses*“ by Cate Gunn, and „Translation and Reform: *Le livre de l’Arbre de la Croix Jhesucrist* and the

Nuns of Montmartre,“ by Catherine Innes-Parker. There is also an article to come from Anne Jenny-Clark, „The Transmission of Books among Canonesses of the Collegiate of Sainte-Waudru in Mons: The Example of Marie de Hoves’s Books,“ and one by Sara S. Poor, „The Countess, the Abbess, and Their Books: Manuscript Circulation in a Fifteenth-Century German Family.“

The two volumes that have appeared so far are marvelous ones. They are consistently solid reassessments of nun’s literacies and the association of such women with both practical literacy and book culture. The third volume promises to be so as well. Together the series revolutionizes our thinking about nuns’ literacy; there will no longer be any excuse to cite Eileen Power on this. These volumes and the more than fifty articles included within all three, along with insightful introductions, full bibliographies and lists of manuscripts, useful indices, many illustrations and even some color plates, are impressive publications. More importantly is their major achievement in totally changing what we know about nuns’ literacies! Brilliant!

KATHRIN MÜLLER

Paul Geißendörfer (Hg.), Kirchen und Klöster der Zisterzienser. Das evangelische Erbe in ökumenischer Nachbarschaft in Deutschland, Österreich und der Schweiz. Lindenberg im Allgäu, Kunstverlag Josef Fink 2015. 320 Seiten + 210 Abbildungen, 16,8 x 24 cm € 24 ISBN 978-3-89870-820-3.

Der Titel „Kirchen und Klöster der Zisterzienser“ suggeriert zunächst, man hätte es hier mit einem weiteren jener Kompendien zu tun, die im Handbuch-Format einen großflächigen Überblick über die zahlreichen, aufgelösten oder noch existierenden, Klöster des Cistercienserordens zu geben suchen. Vielleicht sogar mit einer Art Neuauflage des von Peter Pfister herausgegebenen „Klosterführers aller Zisterzienserklöster im deutschsprachigen Raum“, der 1997 bezeichnenderweise im gleichen Format und ebenfalls unter Beteiligung des Josef Fink Verlags erschien, mittlerweile aber nur noch antiquarisch zu haben ist.

Der Untertitel offenbart jedoch, worum es bei dieser Sammlung vor allem geht: „Das evangelische Erbe in ökumenischer Nachbarschaft“. Der Herausgeber Paul Geißendörfer war evangelischer Gemeindepfarrer am ehemaligen Cistercienserkloster Heilsbronn in Franken. Auf seine Initiative hin wurde 1993 die „Gemeinschaft Evangelischer Zisterzienser-Erben in Deutschland“ ins Leben

gerufen, die seitdem zu jährlichen Treffen zusammenkommt. Auf der „Suche nach Spuren zisterziensischer Theologie und Frömmigkeit im Bereich der evangelischen Kirche“ sei die Gemeinschaft bestrebt, so Geißendörfer in seinem Vorwort, „das geistliche und kulturelle Erbe aus vorreformatorischer Zeit neu zu entdecken, die Kirchen und die noch vorhandenen Klostergebäude verstärkt für geistliches Leben in der evangelischen Kirche zu nutzen.“ (6)

Das vorliegende Buch stellt in erster Linie die in dieser Gemeinschaft vertretenen Klöster (Männer- und Frauenklöster) vor. Dadurch ist die Auswahl kleiner als beispielsweise im Klosterführer von Peter Pfister, was das Werk insgesamt überschaubarer macht. Durch den identischen Aufbau der Texte zu den einzelnen Klöstern sowie durch die ausgewogene und gut ausgewählte Bebilderung wird das Buch sehr übersichtlich und auch optisch ansprechend.

Auf der vorderen Umschlaginnenseite finden sich drei Karten (Deutschland, Österreich, Schweiz), in denen die behandelten Klöster eingezeichnet sind. Nach Inhaltsverzeichnis und mehreren Vorworten folgt zunächst ein „Kurzer Abriss der Geschichte des Zisterzienserordens von den Anfängen bis zur Gegenwart“ (Arnd Friedrich, 14–20), danach ein ebenso kurzer Überblick über die wichtigste Literatur (21–22). Den Hauptteil des Buches bilden, in alphabetischer Reihenfolge, die Texte zu den einzelnen Klöstern – zunächst (23–236) wie gesagt die „in der Gemeinschaft vertretenen evangelischen Kirchengemeinden, Klöster, Konvente und Kommunitäten an Zisterzienserkirchen in Deutschland“. Auch diese Texte sind sehr knapp gehalten – jedem Kloster kommen etwa zwei bis drei Seiten zu – und sind alle nach demselben Schema aufgebaut: Nach einem kurzen, manchmal nur stichpunktartigen Überblick über die „Geschichte“ folgt unter der Rubrik „Sehenswert“ eine Zusammenstellung der kunsthistorischen Besonderheiten und abschließend ein Abschnitt über das jeweilige Kloster „heute“. Abgerundet wird das Ganze mit einer Auswahl der wichtigsten Literatur. Ein graphisch abgesetzter Kasten zu jedem Kloster enthält aktuelle Informationen wie Adresse, Telefon, Email, Internet, Öffnungszeiten, Gottesdienstzeiten, Führungen.

Im Anschluss an die „Evangelischen Zisterzienser-Erben“ werden zusätzlich die verhältnismäßig wenigen heute noch „aktiven“ (oder gar erst in jüngerer Zeit gegründeten) Klöster des Cistercienserordens mit bestehenden Konventen in Deutschland (237–270), in Österreich/Südtirol (271–301) und in der Schweiz (303–315) behandelt. Auf den ersten Blick scheint diese Auswahl nicht unmittelbar nachvollziehbar: Während die evangelischen Beispiele in großer Zahl

aufgenommen wurden – ob sie nun „Konvente und Kommunitäten“ beherbergen oder lediglich als Gemeindekirchen dienen –, galt dieses Kriterium nicht für die katholischen Beispiele: Hätte man hier ebenso sämtliche als katholische Pfarrkirchen genutzte ehemalige Cistercienserkirchen aufgenommen, wäre die Auswahl wohl annähernd identisch mit jener in Pfisters Handbuch geworden. Stattdessen wirken die Seiten zu den heute noch in Betrieb befindlichen katholischen Klöstern hier eher wie ein kurzer Anhang.

Wer also eher an einem vollständigen Überblick ehemaliger Cistercienserklöster interessiert ist, sollte nach wie vor auf das Handbuch von Pfister zurückgreifen. Der Gewinn, den man aus dem neu erschienenen Buch zieht, liegt woanders – und zwar gerade in der Fokussierung auf das „Evangelische Erbe“. Der überwiegende Teil des Buches befasst sich mit den Klöstern, die entweder bereits im Zusammenhang mit der Reformation nach 1517 oder aber spätestens im Rahmen der Säkularisation 1803 aufgelöst wurden. Konsequenterweise haben die Einzeltexte einen Schwerpunkt in der Zeit nach der Auflösung des ursprünglichen, katholischen Cistercienserklosters. Dementsprechend war auch schon der kurze geschichtliche Abriss am Anfang des Buches unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Reformation bzw. dann der weiteren Geschichte der aufgelösten Klöster erfolgt. Viele davon waren nach der Reformation zu evangelischen Pfarrkirchen geworden, Klöster in Schulen oder Hospitäler umgewandelt. Einige Kirchen wurden zerstört und sind heute nur noch als Ruinen erlebbar.

In einigen wenigen Klöstern gab es tatsächlich eine gewisse Kontinuität, wie beispielsweise in Loccum, wo nach der Annahme des Augsburger Bekenntnisses durch den Konvent (um 1600) ein Predigerseminar entstand, das im Prinzip heute noch besteht (vgl. auch das Vorwort von D. Horst Hirschler, Abt zu Loccum, Landesbischof i. R., 12–13).

Mit diesem für die klassische, tendenziell eher „mittelalter-lastige“ Cistercienser-Literatur eher ungewöhnlichen Schwerpunkt bilden die Texte eine wichtige Ergänzung zum bisherigen Forschungsstand. Positiv zu vermerken ist an dieser Stelle die Auswahl der Autoren: In den meisten Fällen wurden die Texte von speziell mit dem jeweiligen Kloster verbundenen Fachleuten verfasst – häufig Konventmitglieder. Beispielsweise schrieb der Heiligenkreuzer P. Karl Wallner OCist den Text zu Heiligenkreuz, P. Pius Maurer OCist jenen zu Lilienfeld.

Aus der Perspektive der evangelischen Zisterzienser-Erben erklärt sich letztlich doch auch die Auswahl der in das Handbuch aufgenommenen Klöster. Die

zusätzliche Aufnahme der noch „lebendigen“ katholischen Klöster in den Katalog lässt sich in diesem Zusammenhang ebenso wie die Vorworte von mehreren Repräsentanten des Cistercienserordens als bewusste Betonung der Ökumene verstehen und demonstriert vor allem den Anspruch der Gemeinschaft, sich tatsächlich als „Erben“ der gelebten Tradition zu sehen. Ein wichtiges Anliegen ist es, aktiv den Kontakt mit dem Cistercienserorden zu suchen. Davon, dass dieses Bestreben durchaus beidseitig ist, zeugen gegenseitige Besuche und Sympathiebekundungen unterschiedlicher Art. So waren seit dem Jahr 2000 zu den cisterciensischen Generalkapiteln Vertreter der „Evangelischen Zisterzienser-Erben“ geladen, umgekehrt nimmt ein Vertreter des Generalabtes als Gast an den Jahrestreffen der Zisterzienser-Erben teil. Fr. Mauro-Giuseppe Lepori OCist, Generalabt des Cistercienserordens, betont in seinem Vorwort (10–11) die „freundschaftlichen Beziehungen“ beider Gemeinschaften. P. Kassian Lauterer OCist, Abt emer. von Wettingen Mehrerau (8–9), geht auf den Begriff des gemeinsamen „Erbes“ ein, das die heutigen Erben zu verantwortungsvollem Umgang verpflichtet. Er geht sogar so weit zu formulieren, dass die ehemaligen Klosterstätten „unverkennbar zisterziensischen Geist atmen und gerade dadurch evangelischem Stilempfinden entgegenkommen.“ Die „Gemeinschaft“ sieht er als „eine glückliche und ehrliche Form der Ökumene. Ohne jeden Versuch einer gegenseitigen Vereinnahmung dürfen sich evangelische und katholische Zisterzienser-Erben gemeinsam über das *Patrimonium Cisterciense* freuen und versuchen, es für Menschen von heute geistlich fruchtbar zu machen.“

JOACHIM WERZ

Sabine Klapp, Das Äbtissinnenamt in den unterelsässischen Frauenstiften vom 14. bis zum 16. Jahrhundert. Umkämpft, verhandelt, normiert. (Studien zur Germania Sacra. Neue Folge 3). Berlin/Boston, De Gruyter-Verlag 2012. X + 621 Seiten, in Leinen gebunden, 16,8 x 24,1 cm € 130 ISBN 978-3-11-029631-9 e-ISBN 978-3-11-029644-0.

Die Forschung zu süddeutschen Damenstiften steckt nach wie vor in den Kinderschuhen. Dies war der Grund, weshalb sich 2012 zum ersten Mal in Weingarten der Arbeitskreis zur Erforschung süddeutscher Damenstifte traf. Absicht und Forschungsinteresse ist es, das extreme Gefälle in der Stiftsforschung zwischen Süd- und Norddeutschland zu begradigen [Vgl. Dietmar Schiersner, Volker Trugenberger, Wolfgang Zimmermann (Hgg.), Adlige Damenstifte

Oberschwabens in der Frühen Neuzeit. Selbstverständnis, Spielräume, Alltag (Stuttgart 2011).]. Einen wichtigen und wertvollen Beitrag für dieses Vorhaben leistet die 2009 an der Universität Trier eingereichte Dissertation von Sabine Klapp. Knapps Arbeit analysiert die Äbtissinnen der vier unterelssässischen Frauenstifte Andlau, Hohenburg, Niedermünster und St. Stephan in Straßburg. Das Stift Andlau ist im Vergleich zu den anderen genannten Untersuchungsobjekten nicht dem Straßburger Bischof untergeordnet.

Sabine Klapp verfolgt im Wesentlichen zwei Forschungsinteressen: Zum einen sollen die bisher kaum beachteten, analysierten und kontextualisierten „Geschichte und Strukturen“ der verschiedenen Stifte untersucht werden, um so das Phänomen des „Kanonissinenstifts“ (3) zu erläutern. Sie stellt die Geschichte der einzelnen Stifte kompakt und anschaulich dar. Zum anderen will Klapp das Amt der Äbtissin und deren Handlungsspielraum und -kompetenz untersuchen. Dabei weitet sie den Blick auf die Bedeutung der Äbtissin in Politik, Gesellschaft, Kirche und klösterlicher Gemeinschaft. Die klösterliche Gemeinschaft selbst wird in Klapps Arbeit immer wieder auf die soziale Zusammensetzung der Konventualinnen hin untersucht. Ihre Untersuchung zielt dabei vor allem zentral auf eines ab: Die Strukturgeschichte soll mit praxisorientierten Ansätzen verbunden werden, um so „die Stiftsleiterinnen als handelnde Subjekte jenseits normativer und struktureller Vorgaben erfassen“ zu können (357).

Klapp strukturiert ihre Arbeit klar in zwei große, zentrale Kapitel: Das erste Hauptkapitel thematisiert den jeweiligen optionalen Handlungsspielraum der verschiedenen Äbtissinnen, der sich in den Beziehungsgeflechten zu Papst, Reich und Bischöfen niederschlägt. Für den zweiten großen Abschnitt schöpft Klapp aus einem reichen Fundus an akribisch erarbeiteten Quellen, wie beispielsweise den normativen Stiftsstatuten: Äbtissinnen und ihr jeweiliges kirchliches oder weltliches Gegenüber und Umfeld werden analysiert und in chronologischer Erzählstruktur erarbeitet. Aufschlussreich sind hier – wie in zahlreichen klösterlichen Untersuchungen – die verschiedenen Konflikte zwischen Kloster und Bistum, Kloster und weltlicher Obrigkeit, Äbtissinnen und Konvent. Klapp veranschaulicht durch die unterschiedlichen einzelnen Fallbeispiele ihre Thesen und ihre Untersuchung. Ihr gelingt es jedoch nicht die praxisnahen Ansätze in Gänze auszuschöpfen, was jedoch nicht die Qualität der Studie beeinträchtigt.

Wahl, Amtseinführung, Amtsverständnis und das sozial-politische Umfeld mit den verschiedensten Einflüssen werden in einem weiteren Schritt der Arbeit von Klapp thematisiert. Die meisten der Äbtissinnen waren darauf bedacht, den

Verwaltungsraum und die jeweiligen Güter zu erweitern und somit das Stift zu einer standesgemäßen Ausstattung und Lebensführung zu führen. Die Arbeit stellt in einem großen Abschnitt die Führungsperson der Äbtissin in das wechselseitige Beziehungsgeflecht des Konvents und erörtert dabei die Über- und Unterordnung, das Miteinander und Gegeneinander im klösterlichen Alltag.

Mit Blick auf das Reformationsgedenken 2017 und auf einen noch jungen Forschungszweig mit Interesse auf die evangelischen Klöster ist besonders die geschilderte Umbruchphase durch die Reformation von Interesse. Dabei fällt auf, dass sich die Geschlechterrollen und -aufgaben wandeln, was im Kontext der Gesamthematik der Dissertation eine wichtige Rolle spielt. Die Reformation, so die Autorin, habe zu einer Domestizierung aller Frauen geführt und deren Einflussbereich auf Haus und Haushalt beschränkt. Dieser Wandel nimmt auch Einfluss auf die Rolle führender Personen in einem Damenstift, so wie auf das Damenstift als Ganzes. Interessant ist, dass Klapp nachweisen kann, dass auch in den nun evangelischen Damenstiften, die durch die lutherische Lehre konvertiert wurden, Frauen als Äbtissinnen vorstanden. Sowohl die Zeit vor, während und nach der Reformation wird in einem ausführlichen prosopographischen Anhang ausführlich erörtert, was den wissenschaftlichen Wert der Arbeit enorm steigert und die Qualität der vorgelegten Arbeit unterstreicht. Das übersichtliche Register wie auch das umfassende Quellen- und Literaturverzeichnis machen die Arbeit transparent und ermöglichen den Einblick in weiterführende Studien.

Sabine Klapp ist es gelungen, eine fundierte und historisch bislang zurückgebliebene Forschungsarbeit zu präsentieren, die Ausgangspunkt für weitere Abhandlungen im Kontext der Damenstifte sein kann.

JOACHIM WERZ

Miriam Montag-Erlwein, Heilsbronn von der Gründung 1132 bis 1321. Das Beziehungsgeflecht eines Zisterzienserklosters im Spiegel seiner Quellenüberlieferung. (Studien zur Germania Sacra, Neue Folge 1). Berlin/Boston, De Gruyter-Verlag 2011. XIV + 666 Seiten, in Leinen gebunden, 17,1 x 24,1 cm € 150 ISBN 978-3-11-023513-5 e-ISBN 978-3-11-023514-2.

Die vorliegende Studie in der Reihe der „Studien zur Germania Sacra, Neue Folge“ ist eine Grundlagenarbeit für weitere Beschäftigungen mit dem Kloster

Heilsbronn, aber auch mit anderen süddeutschen Cistercienserklöstern und der Region Franken. Miriam Montag-Erlwein unternimmt in ihrer Dissertation ein nicht immer einfaches Unterfangen, das die Beziehungen zwischen Kloster und Welt untersucht. Sie wählt die 1132 gegründete Cisterce Heilsbronn als Exempel, da es eines der fränkischen Klöster ist, das sich als „lokale[s] Integrations- und Identifikationszentr[um]“ (1) versteht. Soziale Beziehungsgeflechte der Cisterce sollen dabei ausgewertet und analysiert werden. Ein Unterfangen, dessen Schwierigkeit für einen fast 200-jährigen Zeitraum nicht zu unterschätzen ist. Innovativ ist dabei, dass sie eine „multiperspektive Betrachtungsweise“ (2) einnimmt, indem sie zum einen die Wandlungs- und Transformationsprozesse der klösterlichen Gemeinschaft, zum anderen den „Kontext und die Interessen der in Verbindung zur Cisterce stehenden Personen bzw. Institutionen“ (2) untersucht. Montag-Erlwein fragt nach dem Beitrag Heilsbronns zur „Ausbildung und Ausgestaltung Frankens als Herrschaftsraum“ (4) und der fränkischen kulturellen Entwicklungsprozesse.

Die Arbeit stützt sich auf 384 erhaltene Urkunden aus den Jahren 1132 bis 1321, zahlreiche Annalen, die erhaltenen Nekrologien und die teilweise rekonstruierbare Klosterbibliothek. Es ist zu bedauern, dass die Autorin bewusst auf die Quellengattung der von 1338 bis 1374 erhaltenen Rechnungsbücher verzichtet. Rechnungsbücher zeigen oftmals aufschlussreich und informativ die Verflechtungen der Klöster untereinander auf und lassen in der Regel interessante Rückschlüsse auf das jeweilige Kloster zu.

Die Gliederung ist bemerkenswert: Montag-Erlwein untersucht in sechs Kapiteln die verschiedenen Beziehungsgeflechte der Cisterce: zum Papsttum als Schutzinstanz (13-62), zum Königtum (63-113), innerhalb des Cistercienserordens (114-148), zu den angrenzenden Bistümern Bamberg, Eichstätt und Würzburg und deren Bischöfen (149-264), zum Adel (265-475) und zu den um das Kloster liegenden Reichsstädten Nürnberg, Windesheim und Nördlingen (477-532). Im letzten Abschnitt thematisiert sie die Regionalisierung des Klosters (533-580) mit der Analyse nach Herkunft und Sozialstruktur der Mönche und Konversen, der Erörterung der Beziehungssituation zu Stiften und Klöstern der unmittelbaren Umgebung und der Frage nach der Bedeutung der dortigen Bibliothek. Das ausführliche Namens- und Ortsregister erleichtert den Zugang zur Arbeit und Recherchen.

Heilsbronn ist eine Tochtergründung von Ebrach. Dies ist im ersten Kapitel in der Studie von Wichtigkeit, da Ebrach als Mutterkloster intensivere und engere