

to welcome the creative individual's choice of anchoritism as an accepted vocation (P. L'Hermite-Leclercq, "Anchoritism in Medieval France," 130); there developed a "thin line, trodden by many anchoritic women between orthodoxy and heresy in the eyes of the authorities" (McAvoy, 19). The medieval church never succeeded, however, in achieving full control over anchoritic females.

There is inevitably a great deal of overlapping coverage in the nine articles as each provides a brief chronological history of anchoritic life in a specific region. Source materials vary widely and for some locations, most notably for Scotland, Wales, and Ireland, there is much less evidence available than for the other areas. The articles are similar in approach: each typically grounds anchoritism in early Christian ascetic traditions and surveys the surviving medieval literature that nourished the lifestyles of hermits and anchorites. Most of the articles commendably provide analytical summaries of surviving *vitae* of important regional saints whose lives and legends might be said to have constructed a written culture of anchoritism.

Among the most interesting aspects of the volume are discussions of how much historical credibility can be attached to the *vitae*, *rules*, and guidance books of anchoritic culture. Did their authors write to describe what actually existed or to foster a spiritual paradigm? Consensus seems to be that "the history of eremitism is . . . as much an *histoire des mentalités* as an *histoire des réalités*" (Anneke B. Mulder-Bakker, "Anchorites in the Low Countries," 24).

In sum, *Anchoritic Traditions of Medieval Europe* is a carefully executed, valuable, and needed gathering of research initiatives undertaken over the past fifty years by scholars whose work has been little absorbed into the academy's evolving vision of medieval religious culture.

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A Companion to Bernard of Clairvaux. Edited by **Brian Patrick McGuire**. Brill's Companions to the Christian Tradition. Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 2011. xviii + 405 pp. \$205.00 cloth.

With *A Companion to Bernard of Clairvaux*, Brill continues its excellent series with a worthwhile collection of essays examining Bernard and his works from a variety of angles. Brian Patrick McGuire has assembled an impressive panel of

Cistercian scholars from diverse traditions who present the controversial yet beloved saint from his or her own unique perspective—with an occasional mention of Bernard’s lasting impact on their own lives.

While each contributor adds to the extensive body of modern Bernardine scholarship, certain essays merit mention. McGuire begins the collection with a helpful overview of Bernard’s life and major works for those not familiar with the historical record. With the basics covered, Michael Casey presents an outstanding essay that moves from the facts to the implications of Bernard’s life, medium, and message. E. Rozanne Elder examines Bernard through the honest eyes of his contemporary, William of St. Thierry, revealing new insights into this complicated relationship. Bernard’s multifaceted relationship with Peter Abelard is the subject of Constant J. Mews’ helpful contribution. Another highlight in this *Companion* is Christopher Holdsworth’s explication of Bernard’s important epistolary corpus, a segment of the abbot’s writings that are worthy of further exploration. Closing out the book are two brief and personal articles from eminent Cistercian scholars, the late Chrysogonus Waddell and the respected John R. Sommerfeldt.

McGuire should be commended for his efforts. This work is a wonderful compilation for scholars who desire to deepen their knowledge of and appreciation for this important and complex medieval personality.

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The Temple Church in London: History, Architecture, Art. Edited

by **Robin Griffith-Jones** and **David Park**. Woodridge, U.K.:

Boydell, 2010. xx + 286 pp. \$70.00 cloth.

This collection of essays, occasioned by a conference on the Temple Church hosted by the Courtauld Institute in 2008, examines the establishment of the church; its medieval architecture, decoration, and monuments; and the rather sorry efforts to refurbish the church to its “original” state in succeeding centuries. The earlier essays deal with the founding (Helen Nicholson), design (Christopher Wilson and Virginia Jansen), and interior embellishments of the church (David Park and Philip Lankester). These essays will interest the architectural historian, the armorist, and students of church monuments. The essays by David Park and Philip J. Lankester especially require a specialist’s knowledge of the subject matter.