

rationale for the volume while the failures of editing undercut its utility. The medieval senses may yet reward more rethinking.

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Lay Intellectuals in the Carolingian World. Edited by Patrick Wormald and Janet L. Nelson. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007. xiii + 263 pp. £55/\$99 (hardback). ISBN 978 0 521 83453 7.

Patrick Wormald died in September, 2004. His great impact on the world of learning is made plain through the praise of his friends and colleagues in the present volume, as well as through the Wormaldian-inflected dynamism and force of their ideas. All aver that he inspired by word and deed.

According to Jinty Nelson, the volume's co-editor, Wormald conceived and organized for the Kalamazoo International Congress on Medieval Studies in 1999 and 2000 a series of panels on the theme of the lay intellectual in the early Middle Ages, and planned to publish the results in an edited collection. Thanks to the combined efforts of the contributors (and to the particular labour of Nelson) to carry through Wormald's vision, *Lay Intellectuals* is the belated realization of that plan. Although it was never his intention, of course, the essays in the collection serve as a fitting scholarly memorial for Wormald, and, together with another recent volume published in his memory (edited by Nelson, Stephen Baxter and others), they evince and ensure the lasting vitality of his legacy. As Nelson's brief proxy introduction to *Lay Intellectuals* explains (in lieu of the one Wormald himself intended to write), that legacy, as illustrated and advanced in the book's essays, is characterized by an interest in collaboration, collective action, and exchange; power, instruments of power, and processes of empowerment; conflict and accommodation; the privileges, responsibilities, and demands of knowledge; and above all, questions of agency. As Nelson puts it (and here, with respect to such agency, one notes the voice of her verbs), Wormald wished to convey that lay intellectuals in the early Middle Ages 'were imbued with Christian learning, worked with their minds as well as their spears or distaffs, were self-consciously committed to a moral project of social transformation, and sought and addressed a public'. In short, the Carolingian Renaissance, in Wormald's estimation, gave the laity a new 'ministry'.

Demonstrating the nature and extent of this lay *ministerium* is the theme that gives the essays in *Lay Intellectuals* both their distinctive focus and collective coherence. Thomas F.X. Noble begins the volume with an overview of this ministry in terms of 'secular sanctity', tracing the history

and contours of its development into an ethos for the Carolingian lay nobility. Examining a series of 'normative, prescriptive, aspirational' texts and ethical treatises, Noble argues that their purpose was the Christianization of the lay warrior aristocracy, seeking through the word to make their audience exemplars in deed, to turn the Carolingian reform ideology of the late eighth century into desirable, dignifying practice. The nine essays that follow largely test and refine Noble's observations through an examination of individual lay authors or works on or for specific lay figures, including Einhard, Nithard, Eberhard of Friuli, Dhuoda, Liutberga, Kings Charles the Bald, Alfred and Aethelstan, and Ealdorman Aethelweard. They conclude that the ethos of secular sanctity – of living a saintly life amid the profane realities and obligations of aristocratic society – had become internalized by some noblemen and women, both on the Continent and across the Channel, and redoubled and/or transformed by them in turn.

In addition to assembling and explicating textual evidence (most of which will be familiar to scholars of Carolingian Europe) to demonstrate such lay ministry, its obligations, and the esteem it merited, the essays in *Lay Intellectuals* frequently offer vivid details that bring the context for this emerging ministry into sharper focus. A sampling: that modern scholars estimate the number of counts in the Carolingian realm to have been around 600; that there are more than 900 extant Carolingian sermons; that Bishop Theodulf of Orléans understood sin and its absolution specifically in terms of a calculus of remembrance and forgetting between man and God; that in his collection of books Count Eberhard of Friuli possessed a compendium on physiognomy, on how to assess moral character by appearance; and that the noblewoman Dhuoda was the sole moral writer of the Carolingian period to stand on a parental platform.

These are just a handful of unexpected particulars mentioned in passing within essays that should rightly become gateways for future studies on the early medieval authors they treat. But it is the silences rather than such tidbits that are most surprising. In a book dedicated to investigating and elaborating the fraught moral ethos and habitus of the early medieval lay intellectual, there is curiously no mention of the role played by conscience – neither of acting on it nor of speaking it (*parrhesia*). Yet, as Abigail Firey has shown elsewhere, Carolingian texts in fact reveal a fairly well-developed discourse regarding conscience, the *sine qua non* of a self-conscious moral agency. Another conspicuous silence regards the ongoing historiographical debate over the extent to which the Carolingian laity can even be considered literate, a debate that potentially calls into question many of the book's claims. Thomas Noble gives the debate only capsule treatment, while Janet Nelson and then Richard Abels, in his conclusion to the volume, attempt to reframe it by recon-

sidering and redefining the type of knowledge lay authors wished to convey. Yet, while what they identify as a pragmatic *scientia* – a cultural ‘know-how’ – is examined by many of the authors of *Lay Intellectuals* in detail, comparatively little is ventured about the contexts and processes of its conveyance and apprehension. What were the ‘classrooms’ for this *scientia*? and what were their rules and decorum? Finally, several authors display a reluctance to theorize their material, or at least a reticence about doing so: the public/private dichotomy is repeatedly mentioned but rarely problematized (apart from several nods to a brief review essay by Nelson in 1990), while modern theorists such as Michel Foucault and Edward Said are either cited by way of a third party or referenced coyly. The exception here is Nelson, who directly engages the thought of Raymond Williams and Pierre Bourdieu; her conclusions are the more stimulating for it.

As a whole, *Lay Intellectuals* is an important, provocative book that raises as many questions as it answers – a parity that doubtless would have pleased Wormald. Its contributors would have had Wormald’s gratitude, and are deserving of ours.

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