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Flannery, Mary C., ed. *Emotion and Medieval Textual Media*. Early European Research, Vol. 13 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2018). ISBN: 9782593577814

This volume is capacious in its subject matter and its methodologies, but all the essays offer direct and close engagement with the media and forms through which emotions are expressed in medieval texts. Mary Flannery's introduction and Rita Copeland's Afterword neatly frame the collection: Flannery teases out the relationships between media, form, cognition, emotion and memory that guide the essays in this collection; and Copeland reviews their contribution to the developing methodologies of the history of emotions.

The title's phrase, 'medieval textual media' is perhaps slightly problematic. It risks blurring the two categories 'textual' and 'media', whereas in fact most of the essays focus on texts as conventionally understood, recorded on parchment or paper. Indeed, literary form and textual formalism is an important thread in this book, possibly even more so than the question of media. Most of the essays here pay close and even intense attention to language and form; many raise issues about textual variance, and several are concerned with the concepts of performance and transmission. The essays by Marleen Cré and Diana Denisson are particularly instructive on the relation between text and manuscript witness. While formalism — the very shape of language — is crucial in this collection, it is strongly mediated by historically informed discussion of manuscript circulation and textual mouvance. However, only some of the essays foreground the specifically medieval conditions of textual production and emotional performance.

For example, Charlotte Steenbrugge's essay on the Isaac and Abraham tradition shows powerfully how in performance, medieval English dramatic texts encouraged or invited a more 'open' emotional response than a number of European tellings of this story, a response that in many cases threatens to derail the conventional doctrinal arguments. Steenbrugge shows how emotional content — such as the dramatic appeals to Isaac's fear — can work *against* orthodox spirituality.

The majority of the essays naturalise the study of emotions. Marcel Elias argues that medieval romance texts used emotion words as a kind of experiment workshop for feeling, exploring 'interfaith empathy' in encounters between Christians and Saracens. Sarah Baccianti and Amy Brown confidently explore the descriptions of anger and affection in literary accounts of emotions and its bodily expression in narrative texts.

There are some interesting disciplinary contrasts here. Essays by Cré, Denisson, Steenbrugge and Sarah Brazil work in the area where medieval emotion finds perhaps its

most natural language, that of late medieval affective piety. By contrast, Daniel J. DiCenso must argue firmly against the dominant critical view that medieval plainchant is not designed to be an emotionally expressive medium. This essay demonstrates that the affective turn has not been taken up by all scholars of medieval culture.

There are strengths in all the essays here but the most sophisticated and challenging essays address questions of form and reception in ways that expand and develop the framing concept of 'textual media'.

Kimberly-Joy Knight's intriguing essay on the use of rune sticks as objects of textual exchange foregrounds the importance of 'commonplace material culture' in our consideration of emotion. Rune sticks carved with messages of love (a proposal of marriage is found on one such stick, pushed beneath the floorboards of the church in Lom in thirteenth-century Norway) bring us closer to real-time communication of emotions, the movement of bodies and gestures, and the way such sticks might also initiate new networks of giving, as a precursor to dowry and future gift exchanges (133).

Sarah Brazil tackles the use of metaphors, materiality and concrete language in portraying abstractions and emotions in the fifteenth-century *Doctrine of the Heart.* This ambitious and intriguing essay demonstrates how attention to the material environment by which thought processes are shaped can deepen our understanding of the way we figure emotions.

Seeta Chaganti's profoundly original essay is a *tour de force* that closes out the collection in an extremely satisfying way. Chaganti analyses the Middle English carol 'The Weder is Went' and its familiar burden, 'Luuely ter of loueli ey$_3$e', paying careful attention to the carol's formal elements (for example, chiasmus, repetition, the use of homonyms, and the relationship between stanza and burden) and tracing 'the kinesis of accumulation' (255) as the repetition of the burden, and its empathetic tears 'render time sensible through a materially rendered experience of filling and emptying' (256). In keeping with the theme of the volume, Chaganti pays due attention to the visual form of the poem on the manuscript page, but more unusually she offers a powerful challenge to modern formalist practice, by outlining what is truly distinctive — and unmodern — about the medieval capacity 'to interweave material and textual form in the reading process.'

Chaganti's essay demonstrates the stakes in the contemporary study of medieval emotion and texual media: the collection starts to develop a kind of communal model for emotional production, foregrounding the way scribes, audiences and readers work together,

either in a given moment, or across the early reception of these texts, to develop or modify forms of emotional expression and community feeling.

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