and the interaction between the authorial voice and that of the readership may open insights on the construction of feminine authorship. Merritt's examination of Haywood's fiction has made me wonder to what extent the authorial position Haywood advocates corresponds to fellow women spectators' aspirations and/or experience.

Nonetheless, Merritt's examination of women's authorial position as instrumental in molding and counteracting gender stereotyping in the eighteenth century is a great addition to the literature on women writers and female narrative voices.

Chelo de Andrés Martinez
University of Plymouth

Caritas Pirckheimer: A Journal of the Reformation Years, 1524-1528, translated with introduction, notes, and essay by Paul A. MacKenzie. (Library of Medieval Women.) D. S. Brewer, 2006. Pp. 189.

The Protestant Reformation of the sixteenth century has been the focus of much scholarly attention. However, study of its effects on religious women is fairly recent. Over the last two decades, significant attention has been focused on exploring the social, literary, and ideological contributions that women made to both sides of Christian reform. Paul A. MacKenzie's English translation of Caritas Pirckheimer's writings, published three years after his untimely death from leukemia, is both representative of this trend and necessary for its continuation. This is the first complete English edition of the writings of a woman who has attracted much recent attention (a detailed bibliography can be found in the Franciscan Women Database: franwomen.sbu.edu).

Caritas' *Journal* contains a personal account of the practical and ideological difficulties her community faced as a result of Christian reform. In Nürnberg, the secular authorities' acceptance of reformed principles caused difficulties for those in religious life. The few studies of female religious during this period cannot convey their problems as poignantly as the writings of one who experienced them as does Caritas' depiction of the difficulties of the Nürnberg Poor Clares during the period from 1524 to 1528. Instead of a literal rendering

of the *Journal*, MacKenzie's translation opts for conveying the abbess' experiences in appropriate, yet readable and emotionally expressive English. The reader can empathize with the frustrations Caritas experiences in dealing with both the financial and ideological hardships presented by the secular authorities and the disapproving, yet outwardly respectful tone in which they address the abbess.

Reform was seldom kind to religious women, but the situation in Nürnberg seems to have been particularly austere. After the secular authorities accepted the tenets of Christian reform, their vision of an ideal Christian society excluded remnants of the "Old Faith." A religious community such as the Observant Clares of Nürnberg represented the outdated model of Christian life: they had great reverence for the sacraments; they venerated the saints; they saw their religious vows as precluding marriage; and they felt they could receive spiritual guidance only from the male Franciscans. Instead of simply blind obedience, Caritas' writings defend the choice she and her sisters have made with reason and examples from the writings of Church Fathers. Juxtaposed with the boredom she describes when the secular authorities ordered the sisters to sit through long and incoherent sermons from Lutheran preachers, the sisters' determination to persist in their faith seems a clear choice.

Caritas repeatedly defends the sisters' freedom to control their own destinies. This is particularly evident in the matter of deciding whether to meet the council's demand that they leave religious life. Even in the case of Anna Schwarz, the one sister who chose to return to the world, Caritas made no attempt at coercion, instead leaving the matter to individual conscience. Despite the sisters' personal freedom, the greatest value of MacKenzie's edition is not as an early feminist tract. It is valuable for the surprisingly clear glimpse it provides of both the position and treatment of women in sixteenth-century Germany. The introductory essay gives the reader some idea of both the intellectual developments of the sixteenth century and women's place in the new intellectual climate. While detailing Caritas' achievements and correspondence with humanist writers, thinkers, and artists such as Sixtus Tucher, Albrecht Dürer, and Conrad Celtis, it portrays Caritas as representative rather than exceptional. The same tone is found in the writings, which convey Caritas as an educated and determined woman. It is

evident from her *Journal* that she had enough familiarity with the history, theology, and philosophy of her faith to engage in debates with Wenzel Linck and discussions with Philip Melanchthon.

In other aspects of society, women's role is less than clear. When there is some dispute over the sisters remaining in the convent, it is the mothers (whom Caritas refers to as "she-wolves") who first approach Caritas with demands concerning their daughters' religious lives, but the fathers who are able to make official demands. A primary text such as Caritas' *Journal* conveys the complexities of early modern familial webs in a way that would be impossible for even the most skilled secondary study.

MacKenzie's rendition of Caritas' history is compelling and highly readable. Through this work, modern students of the Reformation, particularly those interested in gendered or religious aspects, are given a window on the past. The importance of Caritas' work has long been recognized. There are at least two partial English translations and a number of German editions including Josef Pfanner's critical edition, *Die Denkwürdigkeiten der Äbtissin Caritas Prickheimer* (1962). MacKenzie's *A Journal of the Reformation Years* makes it possible for the English-speaking world to gain a more complete picture of Caritas and her community.

The work's primary value is the translation, though the edition also includes introductory and interpretive essays as well as an annotated bibliography. As would be expected from MacKenzie's other writings on similar subjects, the introductory essay does wonders for elucidating the political and social situation of sixteenth-century Germany. The same is true of the footnotes included throughout the edition. It is surprising to find that the sisters' Franciscan background is not treated as carefully as the social and political context. This omission undermines the significance of Franciscan life, both for Caritas as an individual and in relation to the ideological concerns of her community. As Franciscan life was important to Caritas, the same careful detail that is put into describing the Reformation context would help the reader to understand the sisters' desire to maintain, among other matters, a close link with the Franciscans (rather than simply Catholic priests) of Nürnberg. Neither does the interpretive essay that follows the text discuss the community as Franciscan.

The textual tradition is also neglected. The introduction

ends with a brief note about the manuscripts of the *Journal*, but it does not discuss their relation to this translation. It seems likely that this text is the translation of the German critical edition, but this is never stated explicitly. Both Pfanner's critical edition and a more recent translation (Frumentius Renner, 1982) contain detailed introductions to the manuscript tradition.

There is also some confusion in relation to authorship. Although the entire *Journal* was attributed to the abbess, it seems that Caritas was most likely only personally involved in writing the first 55 chapters. While a footnote refers to this, it is not emphasized, nor is any other critical convention of translation mentioned, though this does not seem to have been MacKenzie's aim. The annotated bibliography is a useful introduction to examining the life and historical circumstances of Caritas, the Poor Clares of Nürnberg, and the influence of the Reformation on women.

Despite its neglect of the Franciscan context, this book is an excellent resource for introducing students to the study of women in the Renaissance and Reformation. Women of this period are elusive creatures in the scholarly world, and MacKenzie's edition allows one, Caritas Pirckheimer, to tell her own story. Students and teachers of gender history, particularly the history of religious women will find that this is a valuable addition to any university classroom.

Alison More
St. Bonaventure University

Holly S. Hurlburt. *The Dogaressa of Venice, 1200-1500: Wife and Icon.* (The New Middle Ages Series.) Palgrave Macmillan, 2006. Pp. viii + 301 + illustrations.

Medieval women of the political elite are usually approached either as consorts of ruling men or, more rarely, as women who "ruled in their own right." In either case, a main responsibility of such women was to perpetuate a lineage. The late medieval republic of Venice, however, was ruled by a *doge*, an official elected for life, legally prevented from creating a dynasty. His wife—the *dogaressa* (plural, *dogaresse*)—thus held a position that seems anomalous compared to that of elite women elsewhere. Usually a member of one of Venice's patrician families, the dogaressa acquired her office