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Wort sint der dinge zeichen: Untersuchungen zum Sprachdenken der mittelhochdeutschen Spruchdichtung bis Frauenlob by Christoph Huber

Review by: Hubert Heinen

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CHRISTOPH HUBER, *Wort sint der dinge zeichen: Untersuchungen zum Sprachdenken der mittelhochdeutschen Spruchdichtung bis Frauenlob*. (Münchener Texte und Untersuchungen zur deutschen Literatur des Mittelalters, 64.) Zurich and Munich: Artemis, 1977. Pp. xii, 223. DM 52.

SOME FIFTY YEARS ago Helmut Kissling characterized Frauenlob as an early proponent of nominalism, as had Heinrich Lütcke before him. Although Arthur Hübner, in a review of Kissling's study, had tried to correct this misunderstanding of Frauenlob's philosophical orientation, and though numerous scholars, most prominently Helmuth Thomas and Karl Stackmann, have discussed his didactic strophes in a more appropriate manner, Lütcke's and Kissling's conclusions continue to influence literary and intellectual historians. If nothing else, this careful and thorough treatise by Christoph Huber should provide guidance for future generalists. The term *namen*, for example, does not mean "Platonic idea" for the MHG poets of the twelfth to fourteenth centuries, whose at times considerable familiarity with scholastic concepts is more practically oriented toward grammatical and logical differentiations and their ethical implications. Although there is no absolute consistency in terminology, the German terms used reflect Augustine's *De doctrina christiana* and other such works, and their use is strongly shaped by the trivium.

In most cases, rhetorical, dialectical, and grammatical categories are not important in and of themselves, but only as the means by which value hierarchies can be established. These are in turn not constant and systematic. Such words as *frouwe* and *minne* are defined again and again and assigned ethical functions, but the meanings and valence given them may differ from poet to poet, and other terms may replace them in their preeminence. The later poets are quite concerned with the expressive limitations of language, especially in their theological songs. Their concern is not an adumbration of modern poeto-linguistic scepticism, however, but rather a desire to avoid ambiguity and present revealed or otherwise accepted truth unequivocally.

Since Huber for the most part corroborates and clarifies the broader statements of earlier scholars and supports their rejection of the flights of fancy of yet earlier ones, his own contribution is marked less by originality than by intellectual rigor. His investigation is strongest where he is presenting commentaries on texts. Though at times he seems to lose sight of his overall topic, the apparent digressions are welcome. The chapters on the presentation of concepts of morality and on language-oriented reflections concerning love are of special interest to all medievalists.

HUBERT HEINEN
University of Texas, Austin

ANNE HUDSON, ed., *Selections from English Wycliffite Writings*. With Introduction, Notes and Glossary. London and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1978. Pp. xii, 234. \$22.95.

THIS volume makes available, even if in expensive form, a selection of English writings from the Lollard movement mostly dating between 1384, when Wyclif died, and 1414, when Oldcastle caused trouble to the authorities. Anne Hudson states "there is no positive evidence in favor of an origin after about 1425 for any of the texts" printed in this book even though sometimes the manuscript from which the