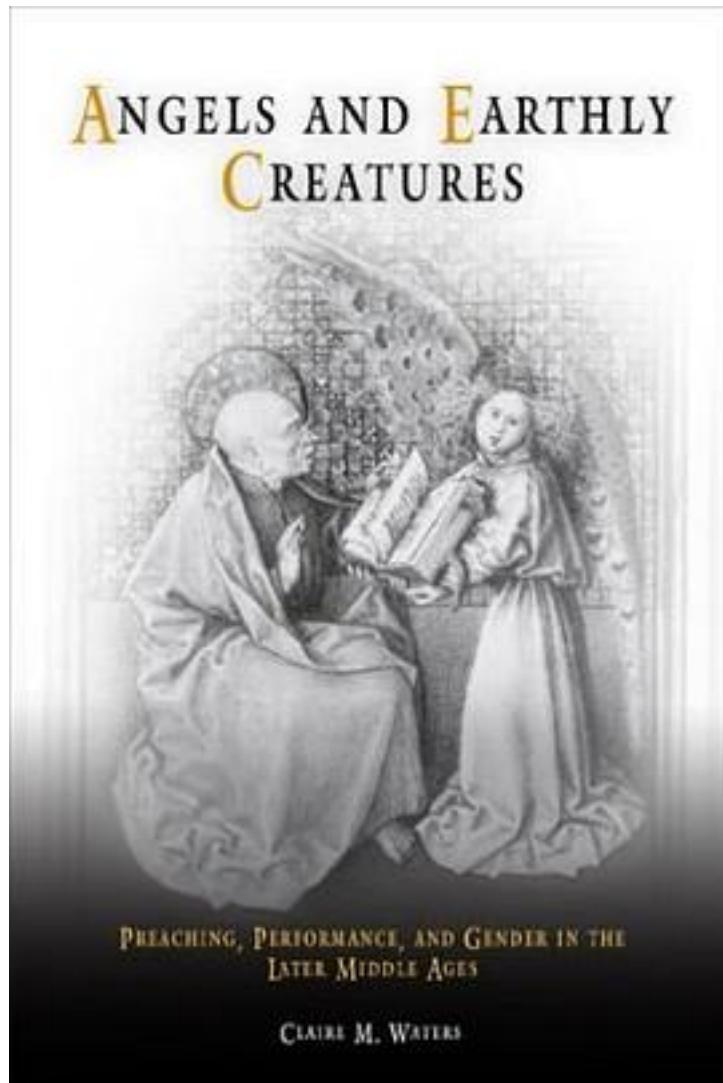


Angels and Earthly Creatures



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Angels and Earthly Creatures Preaching, Performance, and Gender in the Later Middle Ages Claire M. Waters "Waters's book is remarkable in the range of sources employed and the attention paid to each genre and work in its cultural context...Her book makes a significant new contribution to the growing field of sermon studies and should also be taken seriously by students of intellectual history who seek to understand the complex roles preachers and preaching played in the later Middle Ages."--Journal of Religion Texts by, for, and about preachers from the twelfth to the fourteenth centuries reveal an intense interest in the preacher's human nature and its intersection with his "angelic" role. Far from simply denigrating embodiment or excluding it from consideration, these works recognize its centrality to the office of preacher and the ways in which preachers, like Christ, needed humanness to make their performance of doctrine effective for their audiences. At the same time, the texts warned of the preacher's susceptibility to the fleshly failings of lust, vainglory, deception, and greed. Preaching's problematic juxtaposition of the earthly and the spiritual made images of women preachers, real and fictional, key to understanding and exploiting the power, as well as the dangers, of the feminized flesh. Addressing the underexamined bodies of the clergy in light of both medieval and modern discussions of female authority and the body of Christ in medieval culture, Angels and Earthly Creatures reinserts women into the history of preaching and brings together discourses that would have been intertwined in the Middle Ages but are often treated separately by scholars. The examination of handbooks for preachers as literary texts also demonstrates their extensive interaction with secular literary traditions, explored here with particular reference to Chaucer's Canterbury Tales. Through a close and insightful reading of a wide variety of texts and figures, including Hildegard of Bingen, Birgitta of Sweden, and Catherine of Siena, Waters offers an original examination of the preacher's unique role as an intermediary--standing between heaven and earth, between God and people, participating in and responsible to both sides of that divide. Claire M. Waters teaches English at the University of California, Davis. The Middle Ages Series 2003 | 296 pages | 6 x 9 ISBN 978-0-8122-3753-5 | Cloth | \$69.95s | GBP45.50 ISBN 978-0-8122-0403-2 | Ebook | \$69.95s | GBP45.50 World Rights | Literature, Religion, Women's/Gender Studies Short copy: Claire M. Waters offers an original examination of the preacher's unique role as an intermediary--standing between heaven and earth, between God and people, participating in and responsible to both sides of that divide.

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