

ordering of the *imperium christianum*, and has opened an invaluable window into the minds of Early Carolingian reformers as they attempted to develop a theological and eschatological blueprint for the Early Carolingian empire of Charlemagne and his successors.

James Francis LePree
City College of New York

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Partners in Spirit: Women, Men, and Religious Life in Germany, 1100–1500. Edited by **Fiona J. Griffiths and Julie Hotchin.**

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The twelve essays and afterword included in Fiona J. Griffiths and Julie Hotchin's *Partners in Spirit: Women, Men, and Religious Life in Germany, 1100–1500*, offer a fresh, welcome perspective on ways in which "ordinary" women and men (as opposed, for instance, to saints and mystics) interacted, cooperated, and collaborated in religious life. The essays persuasively demonstrate the diversity, as well as the nuanced nature, of relations between religious men and women. The contributors break new ground by focusing generally on what Griffiths and Hotchin describe as "routine sources" and "monastic documents of practice" (4). The authors' attention to the quotidian rather than the extraordinary sets this collection apart from much contemporary scholarship on medieval religion. The essays attend to a range of female religious institutions, addressing varying modes of pastoral care of women religious as options for types of religious life increased through the period under consideration; in addition to monastic communities of different orders, contributors consider informal religious communities and semi-religious forms of communal life. Countering the prevailing narrative that conditions of religious life for women tended to decline in periods of church reform, these essays provide many instances of productive interactions of women religious and clerics in such periods. The contributions also complicate the typical reading of power dynamics in relationships between religious men and women as being oriented primarily toward constraining or oppressing women. Here too the picture the essays provide is one that involves constructive interactions and companionship in addition to some forms of control.

Nancy Bradley Warren
Texas A&M University