Parody In The Middle Ages: The Latin Tradition

by Martha Bayless

Although some scholars have
Parody in the Middle Ages: The Latin Tradition surveys and analyzes Latin parodies of texts and documents—Biblical parody, drinker's masses, bawdy litanies, lives of saints such as Nemo (Nobody) and Invicem (One-Another), and nonsense texts—in Western Europe from the early Middle Ages to the Renaissance. This book also sketches in the background to the canonical works of Parody in the Middle Ages: The Latin Tradition surveys and analyzes Latin parodies of texts and documents—Biblical parody, drinker's masses, bawdy litanies, lives of saints such as Nemo (Nobody) and Invicem (One-A.
The notion of potentiality was central in Aristotelian philosophy, which scholastic thinkers heavily relied on. Nonetheless, the notion of a natural potentiality increasingly lost its explanatory relevance in the later middle ages, or so I will argue here with regard to Aquinas, Scotus and Ockham. While this notion plays a pivotal role in Aquinas’s account of contingency and natural teleology, Scotus and Ockham tried to account for these phenomena without appeal to natural potentialities of substances.
Latin in the Middle Ages is often viewed as an artificial language: one far removed from the languages spoken in everyday life. It is true that Latin was primarily used for learned purposes such as literature and official business. But this is not so very different from the situation in Antiquity. The Classical Latin that most students today learn, as preserved in the works of Virgil (b. 70, d. 19 BC) or Cicero (b. 106, d. 44 BC) was itself not the same as the everyday Latin spoken by the average Roman citizen. A copy of a poem by Hrabanus Maurus, written in Latin and arranged in an intricate layout that draws from an Antique tradition of arranging words and phrases within figures (BnF, Latin 11685, f. 5v). View images from this item (1). Usage terms Public Domain.