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AMALIE FÖßEL, *Die Ortlieber: Eine spiritualistische Ketzergruppe im 13. Jahrhundert.* (Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Studien und Texte, 7.) Hannover: Hahnsche Buchhandlung, 1993. Pp. xliv, 231.

The Ortliebians (*Ortlibarii, Ortolevi, Ortodeni, Ortoleni*) were one of the chief heretical sects in Germany during the thirteenth century. They supposedly were followers of Ortlieb of Strasbourg, whose identity remains elusive. According to Albert the Great, he was condemned by Pope Innocent III for holding that man must keep himself from all external things and follow the spirit within him.

The reports about the beliefs of his followers are more detailed. What were the characteristic features of the Ortliebian heresy? The exploration of that question is the chief concern of Amalie Fößel's book, which was submitted as a Ph.D. thesis to the University of Bayreuth in 1992 and which does not seem to have been shortened or revised for the present edition. For her study of the Ortliebians Fößel was allowed to peruse the yet unpublished critical edition of the so-called Anonymous of Passau treatise, which is being prepared by Alexander Patschovsky for the Monumenta Germaniae Historica.

The Anonymous of Passau treatise is a miscellaneous compilation of texts, such as the *Summa de Catharis* by Rainerius Sacconi, who for some time was considered to be responsible for the entire compilation, and the *Determinatio* by Albert the Great concerning the articles of the heresy found in the Ries (Swabia), an important source for views later associated with the heresy of the Free Spirit. It also contains, however, firsthand accounts and two treatises about the views of the Ortliebians, the so-called Ortliebian Treatises I and II. These are closely related in that both are derived from a common but unknown source and complement each other. Treatise I is shorter than Treatise II. Both are written in the *item dicunt* format, but neither derives its information about the sect from personal observation. Together they provide a consistent picture of the views attributed to the Ortliebians.

Since the study by Wilhelm Preger (1874) it has been recognized that the Anonymous of Passau treatise is the most important source for our knowledge of the ideas of the Ortliebians. However, its nature, its extremely complicated textual tradition, and its probable date of compilation were not unraveled until 1968 by Patschovsky. Patschovsky's conclusions have been generally accepted as accurate and constitute the basis of Fößel's study of the views of the Ortliebians.

The Anonymous of Passau treatise exists in two recensions. The shorter recension must have been compiled between 1260 and 1266, by an anonymous Dominican engaged in the inquisition in the diocese of Passau (Austria and part of Bavaria); the longer version originated some time after 1270–73. Its redactor is unknown. The treatise is aimed against the enemies of the church, in particular the Jews and heretics, among them the Ortliebians, "the third sect in Germany." Only copies of the longer recension contain both Ortliebian treatises. Some more guidance for readers not familiar with the A, B, W, and β versions of the treatise would have been helpful.

No doubt, the edition of the two Ortliebian treatises to which Fößel had access is far more accurate than the one published in 1613 by Jacob Gretser, which has been used until the present in studies about the Ortliebians. The text published by Gretser represents only one specific branch of the Anonymous of Passau tradition, known as the Pseudo-Reinerius treatise, a shortened version of the longer Anonymous of Passau recension. Any revisions in our picture of the thought of the Ortliebians, however, are not due to the use of this more accurate edition but rather to the fact that now, for the first time, Treatises I and II have been systematically explored in their entirety.

The main thesis of Fößel's monograph is that the Ortliebians were among the *moderni haeretici* of the thirteenth century, that is, they not only flourished (and died out) in the

thirteenth century, but they were also concerned with themes that, according to Fössel, were typical of the thirteenth century: the Trinity, the mystical interpretation of the articles of faith, and the eternity of the world.

Most prominent in the Ortliebian treatises is their Trinitarian speculation. According to Fössel, their ideas about the Trinity and their trinitarian organization distinguished the Ortliebians from other heretical sects. The Ortliebians proclaimed that they were sons of God (*filii dei*). In the older scholarly literature this belief has been mistaken for the belief in their own deification. The Ortliebians, however, did not believe that they were united with God but that they had become children of God by submitting themselves to the Word (*verbum praedicationis*). As children of God they were equivalent to the Father, to the Son, or to the Holy Spirit and in this way constituted earthly trinities (*trinitates in terris*). This trinitarian order manifested itself especially in praying and preaching. During prayers the "Father" stood in the middle, flanked by the "Son" and the "Holy Spirit" on the right and the left sides respectively. Furthermore, the Father and the Son played a crucial role in disseminating Ortliebian ideas outside the sect through preaching. New followers were incorporated as members of a terrestrial trinity. Depending on whether they had been converted by a Father or a Son, they became a Son or a Holy Spirit respectively.

Ortliebians were convinced that they were chosen. Not the Roman church, but their community was to be identified with the Ark of Noah, which survived the Flood and which, after a time of decline, was revived by Jesus Christ. Only those who belonged to the terrestrial trinities of the Ortliebians would be saved and would enter the kingdom of heaven. The Last Judgment would arrive when the pope and the emperor became Ortliebians.

These views had important implications for their attitude toward the sacraments. According to Treatise II, the Ortliebians "erred in all the sacraments." Moreover, they were anticlerical. They abolished, for instance, the sacraments of baptism and the eucharist. Penance, in their view, had become obsolete since life itself was penance. Only matrimony was considered good, though not the "acts of the flesh" (*opus carnale*) that were supposed to accompany marriage. Real life was bestowed only by spiritual generation through preaching. The Ortliebians did, however, confess to all the truths of faith. Yet these were understood in a mystical way. The consequence of the Ortliebians' ideas about spiritual perfection was ascetism rather than license.

Fössel believes that the Ortliebians were a sect in their own right. This point is brought out by comparing Ortliebian views with those of contemporaneous heretical sects. Her eagerness in providing context for the itemized views recorded in the Ortliebian treatises sometimes results in lengthy digressions that border on the irrelevant. One example is the section on the introduction of Aristotle's *libri naturales* and the discussion of the world's eternity at the University of Paris (pp. 180–214). The section does not shed further light on the thesis attributed to the Ortliebians that the world is eternal, that is, without beginning and not created. No scholastic at the University of Paris ever defended such a thesis, nor are there any indications that the Ortliebians ever used scholastic arguments in support of their view.

The merit of the book is that it provides a consistent and exhaustive picture of all there is to know about Ortlieb of Strasbourg, the Ortliebians, and their views. Given the nature of the records, especially when compared with the information available on the heretical sects of France and Italy, this is an admirable achievement. The conclusion that emerges from Fössel's book, although it is not made very explicit, is that all previous attempts in the scholarly literature to classify the Ortliebians as a German branch of the Amalricians, Waldensians, Free Spirits, or Cathars are inadequate. The Ortliebians were a sect who in their own fashion developed themes that were of common concern to various heretical groups in the thirteenth century.