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poezie s delšími veršovými útvary by bylo vhodné vyladit grafickou úpravu, aby to neodradilo další talentované překladatele antické literatury.

Bez ohledu na všechny zde zmíněné připomínky je třeba zdůraznit, že Ctiborův překlad Terentiovy *Tchýně* je úctyhodný počin, který si zaslouží pozornost svou živostí, moderností a ohledem na divadelnost a který svým přístupem jistě bude inspirovat následovníky k převodu dalších dosud nepřeložených římských her. Přejme mu, ať se brzy dočká také inscenace.

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Catherine Chêne, *Le Formicarius de Jean Nider OP († 1438). La société chrétienne au miroir de l'Observance*. Vol. 1: *Tradition, sources, enseignements*; Vol. 2: *Édition et traduction*.
Firenze, SISMEL – Edizioni del Galluzzo 2023 (Micrologus Library, 118), x + 702; v + 1173 pp.
ISBN 978-88-9290-282-4.

Catherine Chêne's critical edition of *Formicarius*, the major work of Dominican reformer Johannes Nider, is a milestone in studying late medieval religious thought. This two-volume publication, comprising a scholarly introduction and commentary (vol. 1) and a facing-page Latin–French edition (vol. 2), faithfully reconstructs the text and conceptually reappraises its historical function and intellectual legacy. The lack of a critical edition of *Formicarius* has long posed a significant gap in medieval studies, given the text's importance to research on heresy, inquisition, gender, and the historical construction of witchcraft.

Chêne's edition is grounded in an extensive and meticulous study of the *Formicarius'* manuscript tradition, which the author reconstructs as comprising two main families with several subgroups. The stemmatic analysis, spanning pp. 95–143 of volume 1, is central to her editorial work. Chêne identifies key witnesses within each branch and distinguishes between more conservative and contaminated transmissions. Her classification allows her not only to trace the diffusion of the text across observant circles in Germany and Lombardy but also to evaluate the textual variants in light of their doctrinal and institutional

contexts. Importantly, she integrates this stemmatic insight into the constitution of the Latin base text presented in volume 2, which is the first complete critical edition of the *Formicarius*. This edition replaces early modern prints and partial modern edition[1] with a rigorously established text, accompanied by a French translation, thus providing a definitive scholarly resource for future work on late medieval reform, demonology, and exempla literature. In addition to the critical textual apparatus, the edition includes brief commentaries that illuminate the historical context of the work and serve as a helpful guide for readers, allowing them to better understand the figures and events mentioned in the text.

The edition of the *Formicarius* itself is of exceptional scholarly value, and this high standard is matched by the introductory volume, in which Catherine Chêne describes, interprets, and contextualizes both the text itself and the intellectual and institutional role of its author. Nider's *Formicarius*, written between 1436 and 1437, is structured as a didactic dialogue. In five thematic books, the text explores moral conduct, ecclesiastical teaching, miracle accounts, heresy, and witchcraft. Chêne contextualises the work as both a reflection and an instrument of the Dominican Observant reform: a genre-defying mirror of Christian society in a period of profound religious and political instability, as well as of epistemological shifts in response to the emerging threats of demonology and witchcraft.

The dialogical form is an essential structural feature of the *Formicarius*. The text unfolds as a conversation between a *Theologus* (a theologian, implicitly representing Nider) and a figure named *Piger*. Though *piger* literally means "lazy", Chêne clarifies that the term functions not as a moral judgement, but as a pedagogical device. The *Piger* represents a young Dominican – someone whose sometimes naïve or stumbling questions allow the theologian to develop more complex responses. He bears his name after the biblical passage from the Book of Proverbs (6:6–8: "Go to the ant, you sluggard..."), which serves as the foundation for the work's entire allegorical structure. This rhetorical structure, rooted in medieval didactic and homiletic traditions, transforms the *Formicarius* into an instructional and performative dialogue, not a scholastic disputation. Chêne positions this format as central to the Dominican Observant strategy: by teaching through guided dialogue, Nider makes the theological interpretation of contemporary social dangers (heresy, magic, demonic temptation) more accessible and rhetorically persuasive.

[1] Johannes Nider, *Formicarius* [book II, chapter 4, and book V, chapters 3, 4, and 7], in: Martine Ostorero – Agostino Paravicini Bagliani – Katrin Utz Tremp – Catherine Chêne, *L'imaginaire du sabbat. Édition critique des textes les plus anciens (1430 c. - 1440 c.)*, Lausanne 1999, pp. 99–266.

In *Formicarius*, exempla, miracula and short narratives play a pivotal role as instruments of moral instruction and pastoral guidance. Jean Nider employs these illustrative stories to counter contemporary anxieties about the apparent absence of divine manifestations, compiling recent miracle accounts and models of sanctity drawn from his own experience or that of trustworthy informants. Catherine Chêne emphasizes that Nider continues the Dominican tradition of exemplary collections – such as the *Bonum universale de apibus* – while also asserting the truthfulness and immediacy of his sources. Far from being anecdotal embellishments, these exempla are carefully embedded within an allegorical framework based on the moralized properties of ants, which structure the entire work. Chêne further argues that the exempla serve not merely as illustrations but as an organizing principle that facilitates the transition between moral exhortation and theological reflection. By incorporating a wide range of exempla and short narratives that claimed authenticity into a theological and demonological treatise, Nider established a model for later authors who pursued a similar path. This approach was subsequently adopted by masters of demonology and witchcraft-theory, such as Heinrich Institoris.

In *Formicarius*, the metaphor of the anthill (*formicarium*) serves as an organising principle for pastoral teaching, spiritual reform, and societal critique, reinforcing the work's function as a practical manual for addressing the crises of late medieval Christendom. Catherine Chêne interprets the metaphor of the anthill as a central conceptual and structuring device that shapes the work's composition and moral purpose. She argues that Nider does not employ the image merely as a decorative allegory but constructs a sustained analogy between the order of the anthill and the structure of Christian society. Each of the five books corresponds to a specific function or behaviour observed in ants, drawn from medieval bestiaries and moral zoology, and these are symbolically mapped onto distinct social and spiritual domains.

Each of the five books of *Formicarius* is addressing a different facet of moral, religious, and social life through many didactic exempla and reformist reflection. Book I focuses on the deeds of good individuals (including women), offering moral instruction through exemplas illustrating virtues. Book II explores divine revelations, visions, and miracles, interpreting them within a Christian framework while warning against heresy and false prophecy. Book III examines the phenomenon of false and deceptive visions with a focus on heresy (including the Hussitism). Book IV concerns the "pursuit of perfection", it delves into the virtues of martyrs, saints and other holy people. Book V – arguably the most renowned section of the treatise – focuses on witchcraft and demonology. Throughout the work, Nider blends scholastic reasoning, observational detail,

and pastoral urgency, making the *Formicarius* both a theological treatise and a mirror of late medieval anxieties.

Chêne firmly situates the *Formicarius* within the Dominican – and more broadly mendicant – Observant reform movement. This movement, active across both the Dominican and Franciscan orders during the late fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, sought to renew spiritual life through stricter adherence to the founding rules, moral rigour, and enhanced pastoral care. Chêne demonstrates that many of Nider's exemplary narratives – especially those relating to heresy, witchcraft, and the devil's influence – reflect this broader ecclesiastical programme: a desire to diagnose and contain perceived threats to Christian orthodoxy through pastoral and legal means.

One of the most debated themes in scholarship on early witchcraft texts is the formation of the so-called Witches' Sabbath. Chêne's edition contributes to this discussion by carefully delineating what the *Formicarius* does – and, crucially, does not – present. While Nider's Book V contains numerous elements later associated with Sabbath narratives (e.g. night-time gatherings, profanation of the Eucharist, ritual gestures of allegiance to the devil, and sexual encounters with demons), these remain isolated episodes, not yet the developed concept of Sabbath. *Formicarius* is one of the texts that contributed to the early conceptual association between heresy and witchcraft by transposing elements of heresiological discourse – such as the idea of sectarian organization and ritual allegiance – onto the description of diabolical practices. Chêne traces this rhetorical migration between heresy descriptions and witchcraft in detail, showing how Nider applies heresiological tropes – such as the notion of sectarian affiliation, gestures of submission to the devil, and implicit abandonment of Christian faith – to the emerging discourse on witchcraft. In any case, Nider's portrayal of these pre-sabbatical assemblies anticipates motifs that would later become central to the elaboration of the Witches' Sabbath. Chêne underscores that while Nider does not yet present a fully developed doctrine of the Sabbath as it appears in later demonological treatises, he contributes significantly to its conceptual formation by linking scattered testimonies and shaping them into a coherent narrative frame.

Catherine Chêne interprets Nider's conceptualization of heresy, witchcraft, and the Sabbath in *Formicarius* as both a continuation of earlier traditions and a significant moment of transformation in late medieval demonology. She emphasizes that Nider's treatment of heresy reflects his pastoral and reformist aims, particularly in his polemics against Hussitism, which he viewed as one of major contemporary threats to Christian orthodoxy. In his handling of witchcraft, Chêne highlights Nider's incorporation of newer discourses, particularly the fusion of heresy and *maleficium*, and his use of anecdotal evidence to portray

witches as both morally and spiritually deviant. This blending contributes to the demonization of certain social groups through an association with infanticide, cannibalism, and animal transformations.

Catherine Chêne's *Formicarius* is a masterwork of scholarly editing and historical interpretation. It offers a critical edition of the Latin text of outstanding quality, a clear and readable French translation, and a densely argued introduction that reframes one of the most important transitional texts in the history of Western demonology. Chêne's *Formicarius* exemplifies the best of critical scholarship; it will remain the definitive edition of Nider's work for generations to come.

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Alena Sarkissian – Hallie Marshall – Eliška Kubartová (eds.), *Re-embodying and Rethinking Greek and Roman Drama in Modern Times.*
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To the great Italian director Luca Ronconi (1933–2015), known among other things for his numerous and significant productions of ancient theatrical works (such as Aeschylus' *Oresteia* in 1972, *Utopia* based on Aristophanes in 1976, *The Bacchae* by Euripides in 1977, *Medea* by Euripides in 1981, *Pluto* by Aristophanes in 1985, *The Frogs* by Aristophanes in 2002, *Prometheus Bound* by Aeschylus in 2002) is attributed the following statement:

> I cannot help but see many works of the past as signals from bright stars that are no longer there [...] and this is precisely their charm; the knowledge, the propulsion, the glow of things that correspond to a void, a nothingness.[1]

[1] "Non posso non vedere molte opere del passato come segnali provenienti da stelle luminose che non ci sono più [...] e proprio questo è il loro fascino; il sapere, la propulsione, il bagliore di cose a cui corrisponde un vuoto, un niente." Luca Ronconi,