



Liber florum celestis doctrine / The Flowers of Heavenly Teaching (Studies and Texts)

By John of Morigny

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This volume provides the first edition and systematic study of the *Liber florum celestis doctrine* by the Benedictine John of Morigny. Until recently this work was known only through a chronicle report of its burning at Paris in 1323, on the grounds that it revived a condemned ritual called the *Ars notoria*. However, it survives in three versions in more than twenty copies from across Europe, few of which indicate doubt as to its orthodoxy.

The *Liber florum* has at its core a Book of Prayers, written at the University of Orléans between 1301 and 1308, which models an angelic ascent to the court of heaven. The Book of Prayers promises infused knowledge of the liberal arts and other disciplines to operators who obtain the Virgin's license to use it. It also enables them to petition the Virgin for visionary dreams in which she may respond to specific questions.

After assuming a high-ranking position as provost of Morigny in 1308, John continued to elaborate his work. By 1315 he had added two versions of a Book of Figures, sending out new materials in instalments to a growing circle of followers, including secular priests as well as professional religious. He had also added a Book of Visions, which narrates his journey from sin to redemption as well as that of his sister, Bridget. Here he describes his first vision of the virgin Mary at Chartres, his later magical practices, his encounters with demons, and his ultimate rejection of magic arts under the Virgin's protection.

An intimate visionary collaboration between human and divine, the *Liber florum* will be of interest to all students of the middle ages, especially those interested in university learning, monasticism, liturgy, mysticism, visions, magic, and book history.

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Editorial Review

About the Author

Claire Fanger teaches in the department of Religion at Rice University, where she works on Latin Christianity in the later middle ages and on the history of magic, especially angel magic. She has published other interpretive work on John of Morigny including a book, *Rewriting Magic* (2015), and a number of articles. She has also written on medieval Latin philosophical epics by Alan of Lille and Bernard Silvestris, on the poet John Gower, and on figures in the nineteenth- and twentieth-century occult revival. She has edited two collections of essays on texts and manuscripts of magic in the middle ages: *Invoking Angels* (2012) and *Conjuring Spirits* (1998). Among her current projects is an English translation of John's *Flowers of Heavenly Teaching* (also with Nicholas Watson).

Nicholas Watson teaches medieval literature and the history of Christianity at Harvard University. He is the author of *Richard Rolle and the Invention of Authority* (1991). He edited *The Idea of the Vernacular: An Anthology of Middle English Literary Theory 1280-1520* (1999) with Jocelyn Wogan-Browne and others, and *The Writings of Julian of Norwich* (2006) with Jacqueline Jenkins. He is editor or co-editor of four other books, and author of some fifty articles on late medieval religious writing, mysticism, visions and visionaries, historical sociolinguistics, and literary theory. At present, he is in the process of completing a monograph, *Vernacular Theology Before the English Reformation: Balaam's Ass*, and an English translation of John of Morigny's work (also with Claire Fanger).

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