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PHILIPPA HOSKIN. *Robert Grosseteste and the 13th Century Diocese of Lincoln: An English Bishop's Pastoral Vision*. Later Medieval Europe, 19. Leiden: Brill, 2019. Pp. 260. \$112.00 (cloth).

Philippa Hoskin's new book on Robert Grosseteste allows the reader to enter into the dynamics of the diocese of Lincoln from a very particular angle. Grosseteste, one of the most significant bishops of medieval Europe, has been much studied by important scholars such as D. A. Callus, J. McEvoy, R. Southern, J. Goering and F. Mantello. This book is distinctive, however, in that Hoskin plugs the gap between the scholarly works of Robert Grosseteste and his practical actions within the diocese of Lincoln. In the book Hoskin attempts to establish a bridge between his intellectual mind and his practical deeds.

The book is divided into seven chapters covering different aspects of Grosseteste's activities, and at the same time offering scholars and general readers the almost unique opportunity of delving into the daily work and actions of an outstanding scholar and very significant member of the ecclesiastical establishment of the thirteenth century. Most importantly, this work allows an insight into how the bishop's intellectual work affected his episcopal practice, uniting two aspects of Grosseteste that have almost always been studied separately. The first chapter sets the scene by considering how bishops could manage the tension between papal ideals in terms of reforms on the one hand and the administrative reality of the diocese on the other – that is to say, which papal requests did the bishops implement, and which did they leave out? Here, in particular, Grosseteste provides an important case study for examining the relationship between the English bishops and the requirements of Lateran IV. Priests and clerics in general ought to have been men of learning, and Hoskin explains how Grosseteste was one of the first bishops to set out, in his statutes of 1239/40, some of the learning he believed the clergy should have. Chapter 2 reviews his

pastoral care within the diocese with a great emphasis upon theology, necessarily so because in his own words it excelled all other studies. As Hoskin explains, pastoral care was for Grosseteste “the art of arts”, (28 and 49) understood as the guide for saving a person’s soul. It should be grounded, he believed, in the proper use of authority and hierarchy and understood in light of his work on Pseudo-Dionysius. For Grosseteste the right way to exercise authority was the only way for the Church to win its spiritual battle. A particularly interesting chapter then deals with his attitude towards his central record keeping and his relationship with his archdeacons. It concludes that Grosseteste was focused upon parish-level business and on how his archdeacons operated: he was not interested in centralized administration, and he struggled against the separation of bishop and parish. The chapter provides a good account of the hierarchy within the diocese, based upon both primary and secondary sources, including a description of the role of archdeacons. It examines the tension between “allowing others to exercise authority and devolving authority to other members of the clergy.” (82) Chapter 4 is a natural expansion of chapter 3 and deals with the bishop’s direct intervention in the diocese and the use of the friars and their education in a pastoral context through preaching and teaching. Parochial visitations performed by bishops were the obvious extension of the practice of episcopal visitation, and Grosseteste’s own parochial visitations constituted a sort of preaching tour. Hoskin argues convincingly that Grosseteste was an innovator here not only on an English but on a European scale.

Chapter 5 considers Grosseteste’s attitudes to the rectors and vicars of the parishes in terms of their actions and the resources he felt they needed. In particular, it considers the ways in which his rejection, institution, and guidance of the clergy illustrate how his academic work played out in practice. Grosseteste divided members of the clergy into three categories: the good, the bad, and the inadequate. These were not merely judgements on innate characteristics but were linked to the practical and spiritual resources they had, and to

how they used them. Hoskin suggests that this division might have come from his reading and studying of St. Augustine's *Enchiridion*, a Christian guide for living a good life, as well as from the famous *De Civitate Dei*. In particular, Hoskin claims that Grosseteste's writing "sets out how, through studying the Scriptures and through personal practice of penance [...] the cleric who intended to be ordained priest would gain the spiritual maturity necessary for the cure of souls." (136) Chapter 6 considers Grosseteste's relations with members of the laity beyond parochial visitations, and the final chapter deals with the effects of Grosseteste's view of pastoral care on the administration of other bishops later in the century, especially in relation to important concepts such as justice and mercy.

The writing is precise and the language fluid and easy to follow, even if at times the narration of specific anecdotes or detailed examples tends to distract the reader from the main topic being studied and analyzed in the specific chapter. The only point on which I found myself in disagreement is the suggestion that Grosseteste was able to negotiate and compromise in relation to his pastoral care. In my view Grosseteste was not a man of negotiation nor a man of compromise, as demonstrated by his many quarrels with the cathedral chapter, his disagreements with lay authority, with kings and eventually his divergences even with the Pope. This disagreement aside, I think Philippa Hoskin's book, based on exemplary research of different aspects of Robert Grosseteste's life and works, offers a well-argued case linking the two most important aspects of Robert Grosseteste: his intellectual acumen in studying and writing and his practical abilities and skills in working within the diocese. Grosseteste comes across as a man of high intellect and wholly committed to the parishes and the diocese of Lincoln.

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