



Hrotsvit of Gandersheim (Library of Medieval Women)

Katharina M. Wilson

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Hrotsvit of Gandersheim (c.935 - c.975), almost certainly of noble Saxon parentage, was a canoness of the Saxon imperial abbey of Gandersheim, living and working there during its time of greatest material prosperity and cultural and intellectual pre-eminence. Her importance cannot be overestimated: she is the first poet of Saxony; the first known dramatist of Christianity (indeed the first known woman dramatist of any time); and a woman displaying erudition and wit in an essentially patriarchal age, a female author in a literary field dominated by men who insisted on re-evaluating and redrawing the literary depiction of women. Discovered in the late fifteenth century, her extraordinary oeuvre, written in medieval Latin, comprises a wide variety of genres: eight legends, six dramas, and two epics, organised into three books. The present volume contains a selection of Hrotsvit's works in English translation, together with an interpretative essay, critical introduction, and scholarly apparatus.

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