Short Notices

Applebaum, Robert, *Terrorism before the Letter: Mythography and Political Violence in England, Scotland, and France 1559–1642*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2015; hardback; pp. xi, 270; R.R.P. US$100.00, £55.00; ISBN 9780198745761.

This ambitious work has a great deal to offer scholars of early modern history as well as the study of terrorism. Robert Applebaum reconsiders acts of political violence from the mid-sixteenth to the mid-seventeenth century, within the framework of terrorism (p. 1). He does so, in part, to make the case for studying terrorism from historical perspectives, and for introducing such perspectives into 'critical terrorism studies' (p. 35). This is a significant departure from previous scholarship, which has considered themes of terrorism in contemporary literature, but so far avoided comprehensive examination of early modern terrorism (pp. 3, 25). *Terrorism before the Letter* makes a further claim for the value of cultural and literary history (p. 25).

Applebaum's starting point, the 1628 assassination of George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham, is a compelling one. It successfully supports his argument that terrorism is discernible in the early modern political realm and public imagination, well before the term was coined in the wake of the French Revolution (pp. 10–11). In this context, Buckingham's assassin could believe himself justified in committing such an act, and others could decry or support this violence, drawing upon the Bible, classical literature, and recent political events to bolster their arguments (pp. 3–4). Applebaum's analysis suggests new ways of understanding these culturally influential acts of violence, and the nebulous role that violence occupied within early modern consciousness.

Terrorism is notoriously difficult to define (pp. 6–7). Applebaum draws on Walter Laqueur's 'minimal definition' of terrorism, which specifies 'the systematic use of murder, injury, and destruction, or the threat of such acts, aimed at achieving political ends' (*No End to War: Terrorism in the Twenty-first Century*, Continuum, 2004). However, he also stresses the linkages between 'criminality and justifiability' and argues that perpetrators invariably justified their actions outside the legal framework (pp. 12, 18–19).

This work considers mid-sixteenth century England, Scotland, and France, up until the early 1640s. Applebaum argues that terrorist violence was particularly prevalent during this period, due to 'a complex of ideas, attitudes, mythical musings, and violent struggles' (p. 3). His thesis that there is a nascent 'line of descent' in terrorist violence, from the ancient world, to the early modern, to the modern day, is compelling. It suggests new directions for historians of violence when considering early instances of terror, and convincingly argues for a broader approach to critical terrorism studies (p. 28).

JANE FITZGERALD, *The University of Newcastle*

Cré, Marleen, Diana **Denissen**, and Denis **Renevey**, eds, *Late Medieval Devotional Compilations in England* (Medieval Church Studies, 41), Turnhout, Brepols, 2020; cloth; pp. xii, 464; 3 colour plates; R.R.P. €120.00; ISBN 9782303503574776.

This anthology discusses minor religious texts that have long been the wallflowers of medieval English literature: here they hold the floor. Part I offers Vincent Gillespie on the *Speculum Christiani*, Ralph Hanna on *The Three Arrows on Doomsday*, Ian Johnson on biblical texts as 'heterarchic' (randomly structured compilations), Annie Sutherland on *A Talkyng of the Love of God*, and Margaret Connolly on early readers of the *Pore Caitif* and the *Contemplations of the Dread and Love of God*.

Part II addresses manuscript transmission: Diana Denissen on the *Pore Caitif* and the *Contemplations* again, Sarah Macmillan on the ascetic treatises *Life of Soul* and *Book of Tribulation*, and Marleen Cré on four abbreviated and anomalous texts in Cambridge, University Library, MS Ii.6.40.

Part III relates compilation to devotional practice: Mami Kanno on an unusual, female-oriented, version of the *South English Legendaries* in Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Bodley 779, Nicole R. Rice on 'small-l lollard' (p. 449) versions in London, British Library, Additional MS 30897, of the *Pore Caitif* (again) and *Book to a Mother*, Sheri Smith on self-examination and confession in the Cistercian monk John Northewode's trilingual miscellany, and Brandon Alakas on the Brigittine Richard Whitford's final publication, *Dyuers Holy Instrucyons* (1541), as hints on survival for recusants.

Part IV discusses mystical texts in compilations. Denis Renevey examines Richard Rolle's devotion to the Holy Name and his influence (acknowledged and unacknowledged) on *The Chastising of God's Children* and *Disce mori*, Michael Sargent writes on the uses of 'affection', 'devotion', and 'feeling' in Walter Hilton's *The Scale of Perfection*, and that text's incorporation into compilations, and Naöe Kukita Yoshokawa studies the reworking of Mechtild's mystical revelations as collections of prayers in London, British Library, Harley MS 494.

In the last section, Laura Saetveit Miles focuses on a fifteenth-century multivocal miscellany, Cambridge, Trinity College, MS B.15.42, containing a neglected Marian text, *Meditaciones domini nostri*, and on the *Contemplations* (again); Anne Mouron on a short, illustrated poem, the (probably) Carthusian *Desert of Religion*; and A. S. Lazikani rereads *The Chastising* and its search for the absent/present bridegroom alongside three medieval wall paintings. The editors provide a deft summary of the contents in their introduction, and Nicholas Watson concludes by reconsidering the meanings of *compilatio(n)*.

ALEXANDRA BARRATT, *University of Waikato*

Elliott, Andrew B. R., *Medievalism, Politics and Mass Media: Appropriating the Middle Ages in the Twenty-First Century* (Medievalism, 10), Cambridge, D. S. Brewer, 2017; hardback; pp. 235; 7 colour illustrations; R.R.P. £30.00; ISBN 9781843844631.

Political medievalisms have been a hallmark of the twenty-first century, since at least George W. Bush's declaration of a 'Crusade on Terror' in the wake of the September 11 attacks. Andrew Elliott's book stands out in the scholarship on political medievalism for two key reasons: it is grounded in media and cultural studies—approaches that have the capacity to account meaningfully for the digital spaces in which much contemporary political medievalism takes place; and it treats both Western right-wing (including far-right) and Islamic medievalisms. The first of these provides foundations for an important reorientation of concern about 'misappropriation' of the past by far-right and extremist political actors that has characterized responses from many scholars in medieval studies in recent years. The second highlights the complexity of twenty-first-century global politics and the common cultural moves undertaken by groups that Samuel Huntington's influential 'clash of civilizations' theory of Western Christian and Islamic conflict positions as diametrically opposed.

Elliott acknowledges that modern political medievalisms often 'get things wrong', but a critical point of the book is that this is largely irrelevant because they have no 'historical intention at all' (p. 4). A meme featuring Donald Trump dressed as a crusader astride a charging horse makes no claims about historicity. Rather, Elliott argues, political medievalisms typically invoke 'popular memory' which looks sideways to other medievalisms rather than back to the past to create meaning. These are 'banal medievalisms', he argues, endemic and therefore largely unnoticed, linked to identity and heritage in indeterminate ways, and serve to mask deeply ideological moves behind their quotidian ordinariness (p. 17). The book is chiefly interested in this kind of medievalism and explores its effects and functions from mainstream to violent extremist political discourses. This orientation of attention away from assessments of historicity is both groundbreaking and crucial for medievalists because it demonstrates that attempts to 'correct' political medievalisms by reference to 'what the past was really like', are at best insufficient for any direct intervention in political discourse. This is not to suggest that Elliott implies historians should stop caring about historicity or facts: far from it. Nonetheless, education alone—whether in classrooms or through public engagement—cannot interrupt the process of re-mediation that generates banal political medievalisms.

HELEN YOUNG, *Deakin University*

Brayman Hackel, Heidi, and Ian Frederick **Moulton**, eds, *Teaching Early Modern English Literature from the Archives* (Options for Teaching), New York, Modern Language Association of America, 2015; paperback; pp. xii, 274; R.R.P. US$29.00; ISBN 9781603291569.

Teaching Early Modern English Literature from the Archives explores the value and difficulties of teaching from early modern texts—texts now largely available electronically. Students can easily access wide-ranging canonical and non-canonical texts outside of critical editions; educators, therefore, need to understand the evolving potentials and pitfalls of student research. This collection of essays will interest such educators for two reasons. First, its topics are diverse, ranging from archival work in palaeography to virtual representations of early modern playing spaces. Second, as W. Scott Howard, Peggy Keeran, and Jennifer Bowers note, 'knowledge of how and why [any archive] was created gives insight into what it holds' (p. 155), and such knowledge is on display. Creators, curators, and directors of projects such as the *Database of Early English Playbooks*, *English Broadside Ballad Archive*, and *Map of Early Modern London* contribute, revealing the processes and reasons behind these resources.

Books about online resources can lose currency as the online environment evolves. For example, 'Finding Archives Online' (pp. 239–62) is still an invaluable departure point for any early modern researcher, directing us to over 150 essential electronic catalogues, repositories, and learning tools (such as *The English Short Title Catalogue (ESTC)*, the British Library's *Treasures in Full*, or The National Archives' *A Practical Online* for palaeography). Unsurprisingly, some of its links have already changed or now fail to redirect users (for example, *Emory Women Writers Resource Project* or *English Handwriting: An Online Course*). Such links, though, can be easily googled and comprise only a small portion of this book's currency. This book will retain value because of its erudite and diverse contributors, whose essays will not only guide educators, but also archive the conceptual conundrums and practical experiences from a transitional period for educational and research technologies. Whether it's Lyn Tribble's anecdote about explaining physical card catalogues to a student trying to use an electronic catalogue as a general search engine, Arnold Sanders's experience of using 'cadaver books' (p. 49) so students can learn to handle books in low-risk situations, or Katherine Rowe's call for virtual representations of playing spaces for today's students (who are more familiar with novels' conventions) because 'Speech prefixes tell them who is talking [on stage], but they lose track of who is listening' (p. 65), this book is essential for all who facilitate early modern research, but who might not necessarily have trained in teaching and/or technology.

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Notes on Contributors

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