

Short Notices

Byng, Gabriel, *Church Building and Society in the Later Middle Ages* (Cambridge Studies in Medieval Life and Thought: Fourth Series, 107), Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2017; hardback; pp. xi, 324; R.R.P. £75.00; ISBN 9781107157095.

This well-researched volume on the administration, management, and financing of English parish church construction in the late medieval period takes a different perspective from that of previous scholars. Gabriel Byng does not seek to add to the literature about pious motivation. Rather, he examines the ‘nuts and bolts’ of church building—the financing of building projects, the management of projects via contracting committees and fabric wardens, and the complex nature of fundraising efforts.

It is refreshing to read a new perspective about the surge of parish church building in the late medieval period. Byng’s work concentrates on the political economy of the parish rather than individual piety or community cohesion. The integration of economic data such as prices for raw materials, labour costs, and wages, with churchwardens’ accounts and contracts indicates that these projects were often complex and multi-faceted. Project managers needed considerable financial acumen to manage church building in England at this time.

The volume is divided into six chapters. The first two chapters examine the financing of building projects; firstly, by parishioners, and secondly through patronage by ecclesiastical institutions or the gentry. Chapters 3 and 4 examine how the construction was organized. The key role of churchwardens in the parish has been examined by many scholars such as Beat Kümin in his 1996 book *The Shaping of a Community: The Rise and Reformation of the English Parish c. 1400–1560* (Ashgate, 1996). Byng confirms this role by adding that parishes with strong wardens, who were held in high regard and had the ability and wherewithal to access funds, could galvanize the community and push through projects. However, if the project grew too large or complex, temporary contracting committees or fabric wardens were employed.

The final chapter explores the role in organizing building construction by the clergy, gentry, or the aristocracy. In one example, Byng uses private fabric accounts kept by the lord of the manor, John Bolney, to analyse the construction of the parish church tower in Bolney, West Sussex, in 1536–37. These accounts clearly show that John Bolney shared financial and organizational responsibility with the parish. The churchwarden arranged lodgings for two masons and organized the contract for timberwork. Without these surviving accounts, it might well be assumed that the parish had no role in the tower construction.

This book is an excellent addition to the large corpus of material on the late medieval parish. It provides a holistic insight into the economic, social, and political complexities of parish church building.

JUDY BAILEY, *Barmera, South Australia*

Dermineur, Elise M., ed., *Women and Credit in Pre-Industrial Europe* (Early European Research, 12), Turnhout, Brepols, 2018; hardback; pp. xi, 364; R.R.P. €100.00; ISBN 9782503570525.

Elise Dermineur makes a strong case for a new work on the participation of women in credit exchanges and networks. She asserts that very little research has been undertaken in any European country or era, particularly between 1400 and 1800, which is the time span of this book. She makes the case that this period witnessed the transformation of the moral economy from one of solidarity and cooperation to one based on a more individualistic form of exchange. Scholarly research on the role of women in this transitional period is crucial.

Thirteen contributors draw on a variety of sources. These include notarial records, various court records that examine debt litigation, probate inventories, and private account books. There are even pawnbroker books that are exploited in Chapter 5 by Maria Agren, who examines the role of Swedish women in early modern credit networks, and in Chapter 12, where eighteenth-century Barcelonan women are the central focus of Montserrat Carbonell-Esteller.

It is energizing to read a range of authors who document women's credit and debit exchanges in a patriarchal society where there were often legal and customary constraints for women engaging in business activities. Richard Goddard examines the debts of English women in the records of the Staple courts from 1353 to 1532. He discovers evidence that although they are few in number (3 per cent of the total for these years), there are examples of women who extended credit to merchants, or members of the gentry. They were also quick to use the courts to settle debts. In 1517, one litigant, Beatrice Lavender, sued two wholesale merchants for not repaying their loans, only two months after they had failed to pay.

Apart from Goddard's chapter, there are five other chapters that document the English experience. These range from the examination of credit markets, and the use of attorneys in the fifteenth century, to debt cases involving women in the London Court of the Exchequer in eighteenth century England. The other seven chapters focus on late medieval and early modern European women. A recurrent theme in all chapters is the tension between legal frameworks and social customs. Despite constraints on their activities, women often worked around these restrictions, sometimes with the tacit approval of their communities.

This edited book brings a whole range of issues to the surface and provides a good basis for further research on the role of women in the networks of trade that flourished in late medieval and early modern Europe.

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Grasskamp, Anna, *Objects in Frames: Displaying Foreign Collectibles in Early Modern China and Europe*, Berlin, Dietrich Reimer, 2019; hardback; pp. 246; 81 colour, 12 b/w illustrations; R.R.P. €39.00; ISBN 9783496016243.

What does it mean to frame collectible objects, as opposed to paintings, or works on paper? How is the framing of objects culturally determined? Does framing always render context irrelevant? This ambitious book proposes a transcultural approach to these questions and focuses on a variety of compelling case studies from China and Europe. Rather than offer a solely empirical or comparative approach, the philosophical and sociological dimensions of framing are also probed, with the author also showing a keen eye for the nuances of cultural difference.

The concept of a frame has been much discussed regarding the two dimensional, but less attention has been paid to how three-dimensional objects have historically been framed and displayed. A great strength here is the focus on porcelain and coral fragments which were highly valued in the burgeoning court collections of the period. While the *Kunstammern* and curiosity cabinets of Europe are well-known, less attention has been given to correspondent Chinese systems of display. Indeed, Anna Grasskamp's book challenges the binary divisions of 'Europe' and 'Asia', 'Netherlandish', or 'Chinese', and instead allows for a more fluid and comparative approach to probe culturally defined systems of collecting and display.

Chapter 1 focuses on how 'foreign' goods, including Chinese porcelain, were framed and mounted in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century *Kunstammern*. Chapter 2 takes the same approach but in the Chinese context, considering how European astronomical instruments were reframed at Chinese courts. Chapters 3 and 4 focus on the framing of foreign and natural objects in European Renaissance and Chinese Ming Dynasty collections. These chapters, with their focus on refashioned coral, are especially strong, probing how coral was perceived in both cultures as transformative 'matter' and related to resurrections and metamorphoses with Christ and Ovid on the one hand, and Buddhist worship on the other.

Grasskamp rightfully points to the landmark publication of *Exhibiting Cultures* (Smithsonian Institute, 1991), and it is in this lineage that her book should be considered. The recent Getty publication of Samuel Quiccheberg's *Inscriptiones* of 1565 (Getty Publications, 2013), one of the first museological texts, will also heighten interest in the themes and issues raised here. Overall, there is a sense that it is important to tend to the lives of objects, especially in the early modern period, an era that is increasingly recognized as global not only for its trade routes but also the circulation of objects and related ideas.

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Krafl, Pavel O., and Lenka **Blechová**, eds, *Diplomatarium monasterii Glacensis canonicorum regularium sancti Augustini ab anno 1350 usque ad annum 1381* (Canonici regulares sancti Augustini, 2), Brno, Středoevropské centrum slovanských studií, 2018; hardback; pp. 172; ISBN 9788086735207.

This volume prints charters and other documents of the Augustinian priory of Mount St Mary in Glatz, Silesia, then part of Bohemia and now Kłodzko in Poland. The editors transcribe forty-nine Latin documents from its foundation in 1350 to the death of the founding prior in 1381, forty-one from the Kłodzko parish archive and the others from copies elsewhere. They also print a contemporary translation of one charter (no. 11) into Old Czech. A comprehensive apparatus in Latin gives details of manuscripts and seals, textual variants in surviving versions, persons and places named, and biblical and canonical citations. Concise, accurate and helpful Latin summaries preface the documents (though no. 17 is slightly confusing because ‘ecclesiam’ in the first line should be dative ‘ecclesiae’). The editing achieves a high standard, replacing incomplete and defective earlier editions. An introduction, in Czech and English, describes the documents, and an English epilogue points to the wider history of the house.

That history lies between the lines of the legal documents assembled here. The house’s later role as a cultural centre and node for the spread of the *devotio moderna* is invisible, but the deeds of confraternity with nearby Augustinian houses point to their role in ecclesiastical reform—a late blossoming for an order that peaked elsewhere in the twelfth century. The political context also points to a reforming role. The protagonists in the charters are the Emperor Charles IV, King of Bohemia, and Arnošt of Pardubitz, Archbishop of Prague. Both promoted church reform and both sought to consolidate their authority: Bohemia had regained Glatz from Poland in 1335, and the metropolitan see of Prague had separated from Mainz province in 1344. Arnošt and his brothers founded the house from his *mensa* and their own purchases to build up his diocese, with royal backing; his successor Jan Očko de Vlašim followed suit (nos. 30, 41, 43). Arnošt and Charles gave lands, revenues, churches, and jurisdictional privileges and protected the house from jealous clerical and lay neighbours, including two bailiffs who resented their reduction from imperial liegemen to monastic servants. But alongside lawsuits with some neighbours are endowments and support from others: the documents provide a window into local society. Students of papal diplomacy will note that Arnošt obtained a simple bull of confirmation (no. 18) for his foundation charter (no. 10), not the elaborate and obsolescent *privilegium commune*. In summary, this is a useful contribution to scholarship in this field.

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van Deusen, Nancy, *Folk Songs and Material Culture in Medieval Central Europe: Old Stones and New Music* (Studies in the History of Daily Life 800–1600, 6), Turnhout, Brepols, 2019; hardback; pp. xiii, 279; 23 b/w figures; R.R.P. €110.00; ISBN 9782503541327.

This is a remarkable and rewarding book, one that will hold interest for a broad range of readers, including medievalists, historical musicologists, and ethnomusicologists. Professor of Music and the Louis and Mildred Benezet Chair in the Humanities at Claremont Graduate University in California, Nancy van Deusen's publications span disciplines including historical musicology, music theory, and historical anthropology.

In this book, van Deusen challenges commonly perceived boundaries between disciplines, inviting the reader to engage with the discussion and move beyond limits of specialization. Hungarian folk song is the focus, with the book drawing on the author's long experience of research in Hungarian archives. Purpose and method are effectively introduced in the opening sentence of the author's preface:

The purpose of this book is to deal with the present through the attainments of the past, namely through a system of analysis using terms and concepts taken over from centuries of thinking and writing during Latin Antiquity, through what is now known as the European Middle Ages, enduring relatively unchanged well into the nineteenth century (p. xi).

The many illuminating discussions include examination of the term 'silva' as used by Chalcidius in his fourth-century translation into Latin of Plato's *Timaeus*, and the ways in which the term has been interpreted, demonstrating the fruitfulness of its re-examination; thorough consideration of the concept of type and how types are identified, relevant to the study on Hungarian folk song and more broadly; and her illumination of the musicological concept of form and its prominence since the mid-twentieth century in analysis, pedagogy, and writing about music.

Van Deusen draws insightfully on her many years of research in archives of central Europe, especially in Hungary, as well as on her extensive knowledge of medieval music, and medieval and more recent philosophy. Thoughtful narratives or 'vignettes' of personal experiences during her research in and around Budapest are interwoven and serve to illustrate points. Chapter topics include 'Herder and his Influence: A Background for Conceptualization', 'Historiography of Ideology: Conceptual Bases for the Collection of Folk Song', 'Old Stones, Useful Chunks: Working with Material', 'Methodology and the Question of "Types"', 'Transcription, Translation, Transmutation', and 'Nationalism and Folk Music'. A helpful glossary of mainly Latin terms is also provided.

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