

Short Notices

Bailey, Mark and Stephen **Rigby**, eds, *Town and Countryside in the Age of the Black Death: Essays in Honour of John Hatcher* (The Medieval Countryside, 12), Turnhout, Brepols, 2012; hardback; pp. xxxviii, 473; 58 b/w illustrations; R.R.P. €110.00; ISBN 9782503535173.

This collection of essays about the effects of the Black Death on medieval European demography is the result of a congress held in honour of the retirement of Professor John Hatcher. The essays take a 'Quantitative History' approach, which uses statistical data collection and analysis tools to create a sort of 'primary source' of information from which conclusions may be drawn. The collection, as outlined in the Introduction, attempts to answer two particular questions. One is why did the population in England show no signs of improvement in the two centuries after the plague, and the other is how different was the demographic structure of the late Middle Ages from that of the early modern period.

The first section of the volume deals directly with the medieval demographic system. This section contains three articles that approach their subject from the premise, prevalent not only in this collection but rather popular in demographic research generally, that two distinct demographic systems existed, one in the late Middle Ages and the other in the early modern period. Maryanne Kowaleski's article stands out within this section. Kowaleski suggests comparing statistical analysis results of partial medieval society data with results from the same type of society, namely settlements off the sea, in the modern period, from which much more data is available. There is much similarity in the demographic expressions of the two periods.

The second section of the collection deals with various relationships between landlords and farmers. The data discussed in the various articles does not come from censuses but rather from lists describing various population activities at the time: court rolls; reports of agricultural produce allowing changes in crop and livestock types and sizes to be observed; workers' salary levels, a rise in which points to lack of working hands; and produce planning affected by the understanding that risk taking must be reduced during crisis. These works of research, individually impressive, collectively point to a period of crisis and economic shrinkage.

The third section deals with trade and industry. Two of the articles in this section are focused in a specific, small location and the third tries to analyse a rather thin data set regarding fairs and markets. This section does examine

various aspects that can contribute to the bigger demographic picture but is lacking in scope and detail.

Despite the answers given to the two questions raised in the Introduction being partial and inconclusive, the strength of the collection is in its very existence. This collection makes an impressive attempt to deal with the problem of a lack of demographic data by diversifying the areas of research, leaving the reader both impressed with the data collection work and its analysis, and desiring tools to enhance further research. It is only disappointing that the collection does not include location indexes, demographic and other lists, and especially a table and chart index, which could aid readers and researchers more easily to locate needed data within such a hefty, detailed volume.

ANAT GUETA, *Multyeda, Israel*

Chrissis, Nikolaos G., *Crusading in Frankish Greece: A Study of Byzantine–Western Relations and Attitudes, 1204–1282* (Medieval Church Studies, 22), Turnhout, Brepols, 2013; hardback; pp. xlii, 338; 1 b/w table, 7 b/w line art; R.R.P. €90.00; ISBN 9782503534237.

The breakdown of Western-Byzantine relations in the thirteenth century was a complex and gradual unravelling driven by political and religious opportunism, and Crusader considerations. Nikolaos Chrissis demonstrates this well in his study of crusading in the Latin kingdoms in Greece in the period 1204 to 1282. This period is significant because it marks the rise and fall of Latin Constantinople and the Frankish Greek kingdom, which played an important distraction role for the crusading efforts in the Orient. Western forces that could have saved Jerusalem were diverted to defend the new territories in Greece, and Chrissis ably discusses the nuances of political motivations and practical limitations of Western rulers in relation to Jerusalem and Greece.

Of particular interest is the growing rhetoric of Rome against the Eastern Church during this time period. Chrissis shows that the earlier rhetoric of ‘recovery of the schismatic Greeks’ was gradually replaced by their portrayal as Eastern ‘heretics’ needing punishment. This shift was due to crusader politics and the need to validate the anti-Greek warfare, and Chrissis demonstrates these developments decade by decade, and papal bull by papal bull. His work is thorough and well documented.

Very little has been written about this important crusader front, so this work brings to light many important battles and political developments. The author paints a telling picture of the gradual broadening of crusader rhetoric and action to cover battles with the Cathars and the Greeks. He presents the motivations of various actors through their letters, and with well-nuanced discussion. The letters of those who opposed the crusades into

Greece are also discussed as they show that some understood these efforts as undermining the defence of Jerusalem. The changing allegiances of the Hungarian and Bulgarian kings are also explored, as is how this affected the final collapse of the Latin Greek kingdom. The issue of church union re-emerged when the military option failed, and reasons why union stalled are covered well. Chrissis also explores the impact of intra-Greek struggles and the papal-Hohenstaufen conflict, and how events from as far away as England ultimately sabotaged Latin imperial dreams.

As this is a doctoral thesis turned into a monograph it is not surprising that it is exceptionally well footnoted, and that the maps and bibliography are strong and useful. The author's conclusions are solid and provide good signposts to areas of future fruitful research. Highly recommended for all Crusade researchers.

JOHN D'ALTON, *Monash University*

Gatrall, Jefferson J. A. and Douglas **Greenfield**, eds, *Alter Icons: The Russian Icon and Modernity*, University Park, Pennsylvania State University Press, 2011; cloth; pp. 304; 16 colour, 24 b/w illustrations; R.R.P. US\$74.95; ISBN 9780271036779.

Icons can have profound political and social implications, and while the focus of the eleven chapters in this book is on the icon in modernity, there is enough material outlining the icon's journey from medieval to the early modern to be of interest to any scholar of historical trends over the past millennium. Icons have been a significant and enduring feature of European religion and art, and have played a significant role in communal resistance to the decline of the medieval worldview of 'magic and mysticism' (p. 2). The lessons learnt from analysis of the changing role of specifically Russian icons under modernity also apply to much earlier periods. Indeed, the significance of the Russian icon as a paradigm for all Russian medieval and early modern art makes this essential reading for any art historian.

Different chapters analyse icons and their theology and philosophy of the body, their role in political change, issues of communal identity and political power, and even cinema and icons in the USA. Possibly of most interest to the medieval scholar is Elena Boeck's excellent analysis of the compilation icon – a large tableaux-style panel consisting of multiple images of the Virgin Mary. Boeck traces this from the twelfth-century catalogues through to fifteenth-century Western European *Wunderkammern* imagery, and then to seventeenth-century Russian examples. The uniqueness of this iconographic style is in the plurality of images portrayed, and Boeck argues that this style itself 'became a bearer of meaning' (p. 32). She also discusses the reception of Western-style imagery, the resurgence of nationalism, and the impact on art

preferences in pre-revolutionary Russia. This is fascinating history that raises many questions and is relevant to similar West European research on icons, Protestantism, and nationalism.

Vera Shevzov's chapter on the icon's central place in defining right belief traverses a thousand years of history before settling on twentieth-century Russia. She makes some excellent points about the historic use of icons as a symbol of the Church's triumph over other religions and especially over a pluralist worldview. She notes that the icon's revelatory role stands against 'modernity's anthropological axioms' (p. 59). Hence the Triumph of Orthodoxy both sustains and is maintained by the living tradition of iconography. Her example of the Russian Church's use of the anathemas against iconoclasts in the 1870s is an excellent case study of understanding how communal identity is shaped by the theology of icons.

As many other reviewers have noted, this book is ground-breaking for its analysis of the traditional as well as innovative role of icons during a period where they were in danger of being eclipsed by the state apparatus. Icons were preserved both in Soviet museums and by 'Old Believers' for surprisingly similar reasons of nationalism and maintaining of a past. Overall this is a well-written book with a specialist focus and is most suited to an early modern art historian. All chapters have extensive endnotes and many use illustrations to good effect. After reading this work icons will never look the same.

JOHN D'ALTON, *Monash University*

George-Tvrtkovic, Rita, *A Christian Pilgrim in Medieval Iraq: Riccoldo da Montecroce's Encounter with Islam* (Medieval Voyaging, 1), Turnhout, Brepols, 2013; hardback; pp. xvii, 248; 6 b/w illustrations, 2 b/w line art; R.R.P. €80.00; ISBN 9782503532370.

Riccoldo da Montecroce's surprisingly positive view of Islam in the thirteenth century has been mostly ignored, yet his work evinces a complex assessment of Islam and reflects his real doubts about Christianity. Rita George-Tvrtkovic's book thus provides a unique perspective on medieval Christian–Muslim relations.

Research on Riccoldo's polemical *Contra legem* has overshadowed his more nuanced descriptions of Islam in George-Tvrtkovic's translations of his *Liber peregrinationis* and his five angst-filled letters *Epistolae ad ecclesiam triumphantem*. This book thus fills a critical gap in understanding medieval understandings of Islam. Any work such as the *Contra legem* which is heavily quoted by Nicolas of Cusa and translated into German by Martin Luther is important, but these latter documents are even more so in that they move past polemics into real engagement with the perceived strengths and weaknesses of Islam. Riccoldo was a Dominican missionary in the area of modern Iraq

and spent considerable time there travelling and studying Arabic and Islam. He accurately details various Islamic virtues and practices and notes that at some points Muslims are more godly than Christians. He freely admits as well his perplexity over Muslim military success, and cries out to the angels and Mary to explain how this can be so if Christianity is indeed the true faith. Riccoldi exclaims that he does not want to become a Saracen but his confusion and emotional turmoil permeate his work.

George-Tvrtkovic's book is a modified version of her doctoral thesis and is a thorough and insightful work. She translates Riccoldo's *Liber peregrinationis* and his letters into English and provides the first detailed analysis of Riccoldo's theology of Islam. She assesses his emotional and apologetic responses and provides valuable insights into the texts. Riccoldo is shown as one who tries seriously to grapple in Arabic with the Qur'an and its teachings, a refreshing departure from the bald statements in his *Contra legem*.

The author reflects on the meaning of Riccoldo's questions about Christianity, such as whether the Qur'an's statement that Jesus prays for Mohammed could possibly be correct. The Muslim reverence for the name of God is both highly respectful and challenging, and the lack of gossip among Muslims a contrast to Christians. George-Tvrtkovic also shows the limits to Riccoldo's understanding of Islam, noting his factual errors and longer-term negative rhetoric. Riccoldo's highly ambivalent description of Islam has not been well studied and this work is a well-written and engaging analysis.

JOHN D'ALTON, *Monash University*

Holmes, Peter, ed., *Caroline Casuistry: The Cases of Conscience of Fr Thomas Southwell, SJ* (Catholic Record Society: Records), Woodbridge and Rochester, Boydell, 2012; hardback; pp. 358; 1 b/w illustration; R.R.P £45.00; ISBN 9780902832275.

Former British Prime Minister Harold Macmillan described a politician's life as being poised between an indiscretion and a farce. How much harder though must it have been to be a Catholic in seventeenth-century England and to be poised, or rather caught, between conscience and the demands of an intrusive and quite deadly Protestant state.

This is the environment that gave rise to the casuistical exercises most probably compiled by Fr Thomas Southwell, an English Jesuit priest, and now edited and translated by Peter Holmes. Casuistry was training in how to engage with and navigate through complex cases involving the internal conscience of a Catholic with the external demands of the state, in order to find safety in Protestant England.

Holmes has previously edited a volume of Elizabethan casuistical exercises and he is therefore well placed to be able to judge the points of similarities

as well as the occasional but telling distinctions between the Elizabethan and Caroline cases. These are useful indications that the mindset of the Catholic minority in England was not monolithic but shifted according to external demands that impacted on the laity and the clergy.

Following the original divisions in the manuscript sources, Holmes has edited and translated cases divided into three groups: those generally relevant to the English situation; those for priests in particular; and those for penitents. Within these broader categories are a range of issues from witchcraft to what happens if a Catholic unexpectedly finds himself in the midst of Protestants spontaneously singing metrical psalms.

Holmes draws out major points of significance from these cases, including the anomalous situation of Catholics in England who lived in a state without bishops who could have ratified the outcomes of the Council of Trent and whose ecclesial framework thus was medieval and out of alignment with the continent. He also generally reconstructs Southwell's mostly common-sense approach to Catholic responses to Protestant power and the cases suggest the areas where Southwell could see room for compromise or where none was possible.

The text retains the Latin originals with translations and will be a valuable resource for study of Caroline Catholicism.

MARCUS K. HARMES, *The University of Southern Queensland*

LaCombe, Michael A., *Political Gastronomy: Food and Authority in the English Atlantic World* (Early American Studies), Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012; cloth; pp. 240; 18 illustrations; R.R.P. US\$39.95, £26.00; ISBN 9780812244182.

Food customs are central to many kinds of social negotiations. In this study, historian Michael A. LaCombe offers a detailed examination of the meaning of food in 'The New World', particularly the way food informed the early encounters between English settlers and the Algonquian Indians of the Atlantic Seaboard. In a careful and fascinating analysis, LaCombe demonstrates how different aspects of food, such as production (planting, gathering, hunting) and processing (cooking, dining, hospitality), encode social relationships, define social groupings, mark changes of status and role, and symbolise other elements of social structure in the uncertain early modern Atlantic world.

LaCombe argues that food lay at the heart of public assertions of legitimacy in this period, both in the Anglo-Indian encounters, and between the English settlers themselves. LaCombe connects the provision – over or under – of food to leadership, order, and legitimacy in the early English settlements of North America. Settlers needed to be dependent on leaders for food and defence otherwise authority would disintegrate, as is seen in the

examples of the settlement of Jamestown (which almost collapsed during the 'Starving Time'), and in Bermuda (where survivors of *The Sea Venture* shipwreck discovered a land of plenty and almost mutinied).

In the early encounters between Algonquian Indians and the English in North America, food was also symbolic of power. Despite their many differences in language, culture, and beliefs, English settlers and the Algonquians were able to communicate reciprocally using the symbolic language of food. Both sides conveyed and interpreted meanings of food, and manipulated these symbols. This is best seen in LaCombe's detailed analysis of the complexity of food exchanges. In this early modern Atlantic world, food was an important exchange item: prosperity in the harsh landscape was reliant on the ability to procure and provide food. Although there were clear differences in the way the English and Algonquians approached these exchanges, LaCombe argues that leaders on both sides understood that, when they participated in these exchanges, they were sending messages to their counterparts, although these messages could have conflicting meanings simultaneously, such as is demonstrated in LaCombe's analysis of the 'First Thanksgiving' (pp. 87–88).

Political Gastronomy is a fantastic addition to the growing interest in medieval and Renaissance studies of food, and to early American studies in general. The text is clearly written, and features a number of well-chosen reproductions from early modern maps, travel accounts (by Thomas Harriot, and the Drake MS), and other writings about food, which complement the in-text analysis. While there is no standard bibliography, detailed notes and an index are included.

MARINA GERZIC, *The University of Western Australia*

Losty, J. P. and Malini Roy, *Mughal India: Art, Culture and Empire*, London, British Library Publishing, 2012; paperback; pp. 256; 150 colour illustrations; R.R.P. £19.95; ISBN 9780712358712.

From the period 1526 to 1858, the Mughals ruled over the Indian subcontinent and produced an outstanding number of manuscripts and paintings, from portraits of young princes to calligraphic hangings. A selection of these are reproduced in *Mughal India: Art, Culture and Empire* where J. P. Losty and Malini Roy have lovingly assembled some of the best representations of Mughal art and manuscripts from the collection at the British Library and presented them as a visual statement of the prowess and artistic achievements of the once-great Mughal empire.

A comprehensive Introduction focuses on the history of key Mughal rulers to provide background to the commissioning of artworks and manuscripts. Chapter 1, 'The Emperor Akbar's Patronage', describes Emperor Akbar's

expansion of the imperial studio and discusses the possible influence of European prints on local artists whose own style was a mixture of Indian, European, and Iranian elements. A beautifully illustrated painting ascribed to Dharm Das (1595–96) and entitled ‘The Man Carried Away by the Simurgh’ is a wonderful example of the eclectic style.

Chapter 2, ‘Mughal Patronage in the Seventeenth Century’, focuses on Akbar’s eldest son Salim who favoured small-scale intricate works as opposed to the large paintings and manuscripts that were created under his father (p. 80). He appears to have been fond of paintings depicting moments in his life, using the medium as a way of presenting his living memoirs.

Throughout the text, narratives are attached to each piece of artwork and so provide for an exhaustive timeline of Mughal rule in India. Chapters 3 and 4 concentrate on the eventual decline of the artistic tradition that the Mughals became world renowned for: artists started focusing on simple, singular portraits rather than being commissioned for huge, impressive pieces and, despite occasional reinvigoration of the studio and artists, it succumbed to Europeanised naturalism and lost the individualistic lustre it once held.

Mughal India: Art, Culture and Empire presents a visual feast of Mughal rule as depicted in art and in manuscript and is one that is sure to delight both art and history lovers, if not for the representation of artistic skill then for the visual representation of an empire’s history.

SAMAYA BOROM, *The University of Melbourne*

Manion, Margaret M. and Charles **Zika**, *Celebrating Word and Image 1250–1600: Illuminated Manuscripts from the Kerry Stokes Collection*, West Perth, Australian Capital Equity, 2013; cloth; pp. 78; 87 colour illustrations; R.R.P. AU\$45.00; ISBN 9781922089595.

There are – unsurprisingly – relatively few medieval and early modern manuscripts in Australian public collections. The State Library of Victoria and the University of Sydney Library have the largest holdings, and there are important individual volumes in the National Gallery of Victoria, the State Library of South Australia, and the Art Gallery of Ballarat, among others.

The twelve manuscripts acquired for the Kerry Stokes Collection in 2005 and 2006 are an interesting and important addition to this body of rare material. Kerry Stokes’s remarkable collection of books, maps, objects, and art works relating to the European discovery and settlement of Australia is already well known and has been on display in a number of major exhibitions over recent years. Medieval and early modern manuscripts are a new area of collecting for him: he explains that it is ‘the beauty of this handmade art form that has attracted me’.

This volume serves as the catalogue for the first public exhibition of these manuscripts, held at the Western Australian monastic town of New Norcia between October 2013 and March 2014. It is also an attractive and scholarly work in its own right. The Introduction by Margaret Manion, Australia's leading manuscript researcher, gives an overview of medieval manuscripts aimed at a non-specialist audience and is accompanied by a glossary of specialist terms.

Eleven of the manuscripts cover a range of familiar types of books: a missal, a breviary, graduals, an antiphonal, a calendar, and three different books of hours, together with leaves from a Bible and from a *Summa de laudibus Mariae*. They date from the second half of the thirteenth century through to 1606. Manion's detailed catalogue entries for each manuscript are accompanied by a generous selection of colour images which reveal the extensive illuminations.

The exception is the *Schembart Buch* – a lavishly illustrated sixteenth-century record of the Shrovetide carnival at Nuremberg, which was last held in 1539. This is the earliest surviving account of this extravagant celebration, with depictions of the costumes and floats of the carnival parade. Charles Zika's accompanying essay brings out the significance of this fascinating manuscript.

These manuscripts from the Kerry Stokes Collection are a major addition to Australia's holdings, and the exhibition and its catalogue provide a beautifully produced and scholarly introduction to them. It is especially good to see these examples from a major private collection so well described and illustrated.

TOBY BURROWS, *The University of Western Australia*

Moreschini, Claudio, *Hermes Christianus: The Intermingling of Hermetic Piety and Christian Thought* (Cursor Mundi, 8), Turnhout, Brepols, 2012; hardback; pp. xii, 306; R.R.P. €80.00; ISBN 9782503529608.

From the time of the early Church until the beginning of the seventeenth century, Hermetic doctrine enjoyed some considerable renown as an authentic pre-Christian revelation, but never without controversy. For Lactantius, the teachings attributed to Hermes Trismegistus represented a prefiguring of many aspects of Christianity, and as such they could be used in the effort to convert educated pagans. For Augustine, however, Trismegistus was an idolater and demon-worshipper whose writings were to be shunned. On the whole, the view of Lactantius tended to prevail among Christian scholars throughout the Middle Ages and Renaissance.

Claudio Moreschini shows that the Latin work called *Asclepius*, an early translation of a Greek Hermetic text, was well known to medieval theologians and often quoted by them. Marsilio Ficino's later interest in Hermetism is

contextualised, then, by his familiarity with earlier Christian writers who drew on the *Asclepius* as well as on fragmentary quotations from Hermetic works by Lactantius and others. Ficino's Latin translation of fourteen treatises from the Greek *Corpus Hermeticum* in 1463, under the title of *Pimander*, was a natural sequel to his study of these writers and established the *Pimander* together with the *Asclepius* as the primary sources of *prisca sapientia* for the next hundred and fifty years.

This doctrinal amalgam of Christianity and Hermetism was further developed in the late sixteenth century by the French Catholic bishop François Foix-Candale during the wars of religion, but ultimately Catholic–Protestant enmity brought about the decline of religious interest in the *Corpus Hermeticum*. In 1615, the Huguenot scholar, Isaac Casaubon, presented a sophisticated philological argument denying the pre-Christian origin of the *Corpus Hermeticum*, as part of his much larger anti-Catholic polemic. Although the *Corpus* was not marginalised immediately, the Hermetic texts eventually became seen as late antique forgeries imitating Christian doctrines rather than as pagan anticipations of those doctrines from the time of Moses or even earlier.

Moreschini traces the career of Christian Hermetism over this long trajectory, including Byzantine and western European scholars within his scope. A weakness of his study, however, is the unevenness of the level at which it is pitched, shifting from synoptic overview to philological detail and back, without much attempt at smooth integration. This characteristic makes Moreschini's text somewhat disconcerting to read through from start to finish, even though the depth of his scholarship is evident and impressive throughout the book.

W. R. ALBURY, *The University of New England*

Paul, Nicholas L., *To Follow in their Footsteps: The Crusades and Family Memory in the High Middle Ages*, Ithaca, NY, Cornell University Press, 2012; cloth; pp. xiv, 336; 11 b/w illustrations; R.R.P. US\$55.00; ISBN 9780801450976.

Nicholas Paul's book, *To Follow in their Footsteps: The Crusades and Family Memory in the High Middle Ages* is an extension of his doctoral thesis. It provides a meticulous study of the lay nobility's motivations for crusading and is predominantly focused on the twelfth century. The principal focus of the book is on the ways in which memory and family influenced those who took the cross. While Crusades scholars have long recognised the role played by families in supporting and encouraging their kin to participate in a crusade, this work reveals the many ways and processes in which this was brought to fruition.

The book is divided into two sections, essentially theory and practice. The five thematic chapters of Section I consider a variety of evidential sources and their authors, authorial relationships with specific individuals, family groups, and objects, and events such as victory and death. Paul mines a wide selection of sources and the result is an extensive survey that demonstrates the multifaceted ways in which family histories commemorated and remembered their ancestors, and which in turn influenced contemporary crusaders. Section II provides two case studies that bring into play the findings disclosed in Section I.

Section I is the largest part of the book and demonstrates Paul's skill in textual selection, examination, and enquiry. His analysis and proposals provide new ways of understanding the first crusaders' and their families' motivations, specifically in relation to their ancestors and those who wrote of their deeds. It supplements the body of scholarship on memory and commemoration and thanks to the thematic approach, each chapter can, if required, be read as a stand-alone critical work. Section II's case studies of Henry II of England and Alfonso II of Aragon are interesting choices. Each is anomalous in relation to Paul's previous findings; nonetheless, Paul does not shy away from the anomalies, but addresses them judiciously. The strength of this section lies in the application of Section I's five themes to the ways in which the two rulers used family and memory to understand their crusading heritage.

Paul's book is an important contribution to crusading scholarship in that it expands the current scholarship on memory and commemoration. An added strength of this work lies in the variety of themes undertaken. This is a compelling work that opens the way for further scholarship and methodologies on many aspects of crusading, not least of all the ways in which texts and objects intersected with individuals and families to provide meaning and context to the early crusaders.

KATHRYN SMITHIES, *The University of Melbourne*

Rouse, Richard H. and Mary A. **Rouse**, *Bound Fast with Letters: Medieval Writers, Readers, and Texts*, Notre Dame, IN, University of Notre Dame Press, 2013; paperback; pp. 592; R.R.P. US\$89.00; ISBN 9780268040338.

This book, a collection of articles by Richard Rouse and Mary Rouse, reprints papers written between 1973 and 2010. Thus it forms a valuable companion to *Authentic Witnesses* (University of Notre Dame Press, 1991), when read together still covering but part of their expansive *oeuvre*; its contents, rich and varied, and like it comprehending almost every aspect of the manuscript book. Not just books and documents, but through them also – perhaps

its most aesthetic quality – the collection opens up scintillating scenes of medieval life as a whole. This is a very useful collection, a major contribution by which future explorers in the wilderness of medieval book culture might wish to be guided in their task.

The title, *Bound Fast with Letters*, is derived from Isidore of Seville's *Etymologiae*: 'The use of letters was invented for the sake of remembering things: lest they slip into oblivion, things are bound fast with letters'. The main text is comprised of eighteen papers, divided into four unequal parts, and the various parts embody major themes, ordered chronologically: 'Writing it Down: Practicalities and Imagery, 500–1220', 'Patrons and the Uses of Books, 1250–1400', 'Commercial Book Makers, French and Italian, 1290–1410', and 'Epilogue'. To this is prefixed a foreword by Robert Somerville, followed by the Rouses' own Introduction, a discursive survey of contents, round which is skilfully crafted a context for the whole. The apparatus includes two indexes: of manuscripts and documents cited, and of names and topics generally. The plates, all in black-and-white, are of uneven quality: for example, the image of Paris, Archives de l'assistance publique de Paris, fonds St-Jacques liasse 162 (fig. 16.1), whose rubric, though given in the notes, is hardly visible in the printed photograph. The in-text diagrams, genealogies, stemmata, and the like do not appear to be listed anywhere in the volume.

Of the eighteen papers collected here, all have been published elsewhere, but not always of joint authorship, nor always in the identical form. Some, like Chapter 2, 'Donatist Aids to Bible Study: North African Literary Production in the Fifth Century' are reprinted with a change of name; it was originally published as 'North African Literary Activity: A Cyprian Fragment, the Stichometric Lists and a Donatist Compendium'. Chapter 6, 'Manuscripts Belonging to Richard de Fournival', the earliest in date (1973), now includes a two-part 'Appendix: Addenda since 1973' made up of 'Additional Bibliography' and 'Additional Manuscripts'. The remainder appear to have been republished in their original forms.

The Rouses' collected works would provide further additional matter, articles, and reviews, to fill more than one fat volume. Would that such a thing be realized: a complete collection, in three volumes, akin to the Classical Papers of A. E. Housman. For the Middle Ages, this pair has done no less.

NICHOLAS A. SPARKS, *The University of Sydney*

Scase, Wendy, ed., *The Making of the Vernon Manuscript: The Production and Contexts of Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Eng. Poet. a. 1* (Texts and Transitions, 6), Turnhout, Brepols, 2013; hardback; pp. xl, 331; 41 colour, 62 b/w illustrations, 2 b/w tables; R.R.P. €110.00; ISBN 9782503530468.

Scase, Wendy, ed., *A Facsimile Edition of the Vernon Manuscript: Oxford, Bodleian Library MS. Eng. Poet. a. 1* (Bodleian Digital Texts, 3), Oxford, Bodleian Library, 2012; 1 DVD-ROM; R.R.P. £199.00; ISBN 9781851243334.

The Vernon Manuscript (Bodleian MS Eng. poet. a. 1) is a huge collection of Middle English literary and religious writings, amounting to more than 370 texts. They include most of the important works of the era, including *Piers Plowman*, the *Ancrene Riwe*, and the *Prick of Conscience*. It appears to have been made in the last decade of the fourteenth century, but its history is only known from c. 1677 when Colonel Vernon presented it to the Bodleian Library. There are still many questions about its origins and its making which cannot be answered definitively. Where was it made, by whom, and for what purpose? How were the texts selected and obtained? Who wrote and decorated it?

The essays in this volume attempt to address these questions in a systematic way. They look at the Vernon Manuscript as ‘a complex of processes’, not just as a literary and textual source. The contributors discuss the making of the manuscript from a variety of disciplinary perspectives: its codicology, palaeography and provenance, its scribes, its linguistic features, and its decoration and illustration. A particularly interesting contribution is Ryan Perry’s attempt to deduce the ‘editorial politics’ which may have guided the selection of texts for the volume, situating it in the context of the threat posed by the theologies of John Wyclif and the Lollards.

Wendy Scase draws together many of these findings in her discussion of the possible patronage which brought the manuscript into being. Her innovative and persuasive approach is to build up a profile of the ‘nexus of patronage and production’ required for such a large and complex undertaking, and to test this against the known possibilities. In the context of contemporary reservations about conspicuous displays of patronage, she suggests that the manuscript’s own silence about its origins should be seen as a response to the heretical views of the time. She identifies William Beauchamp – younger brother of Thomas Beauchamp, twelfth Earl of Warwick – as the most likely patron.

This collection of essays provides the most exhaustive and wide-ranging examination to date of this remarkable and significant manuscript. The contributors raise a series of stimulating questions for further investigation, and the volume provides an excellent model for similar analyses in the future of other ‘massy’ anthologies of vernacular Middle English literature.

This volume is closely linked to the digital edition of the Vernon Manuscript published by the Bodleian Library in 2012. Also edited by Wendy Scase, this DVD edition presents the manuscript in a full-colour facsimile with a hyperlinked transcription of the complete text. The images can be magnified up to 800 per cent, and the text is fully searchable. The accompanying materials include specialist essays on the contents, production, decoration, and language of the manuscript, as well as a detailed glossary. Easy to use, sophisticated, and scholarly, this digital edition brings the Vernon Manuscript within the reach of every researcher.

TOBY BURROWS, *The University of Western Australia*

Tsougarakis, Nickiphoros I., *The Latin Religious Orders in Medieval Greece, 1204–1500* (Medieval Church Studies, 18), Turnhout, Brepols, 2012; hardback; pp. xxiv, 394; 5 b/w illustrations, 7 b/w line art; R.R.P. €100.00; ISBN 9782503532295.

This book has two objectives. The first is to provide histories of various (non-military) religious orders in medieval Greece. Considering the variable survival of source material, the lack of evidence for many houses, and the disproportionate scholarly attention given to some orders over others, this aim has been met brilliantly. This book charts, as comprehensively as possible, the Cistercians, Benedictines, Franciscans, Dominicans, Italian *Crociferi*, Augustinian Friars, and a range of other orders in Greece and Crete. The author has a systematic approach to building a picture of when individual houses appeared and disappeared, and to providing commentary on their operation when sources allow. But this is not just a history of houses. Rather, Nickiphoros Tsougarakis fleshes out the particular objectives, operating principles, and successes and failures of each order.

The second of the book's objectives is 'to place the monastic colonization of Greece within the wider context' of Latin expansion into Greece (p. xix). It is in this that the order histories prove particularly illuminating, showing, for instance, that there are notable differences between monastic experiences in Frankish Greece and Venetian Crete. How each ethnic and cultural group brought orders in to suit their own purposes is extremely interesting, and how these orders navigated their various duties, responsibilities, and allegiances, reveals a great deal about the medieval colonial processes at work. Tsougarakis illustrates, for example, how the Franciscans and Dominicans played a greater missionary role than the Cistercians and Benedictines.

Many *Parergon* readers will be interested in the story of the Italian *Crociferi*, 'a little-known hospital-order' (pp. 213–32), whose relationship with the Venetian settlement again shows colonial processes at work in interesting ways. The presence of a confraternity-like *scuole*, associated with

this order, reveals an easily overlooked yet significant point of intersection between professed religious and the laity. This section also shows expressions of popular piety, social welfare, and identity, and explores relationships between colonial centres and peripheries.

Tsougarakis's study goes a considerable way towards rectifying any perception that the Latin religious in Greece were 'an insignificant side-effect of the Latin conquest' (p. 305). For anyone interested in the subject, this book will be the place to start for quite some time.

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Walker, Alison, Arthur **MacGregor**, and Michael **Hunter**, eds, *From Books to Bezoars: Sir Hans Sloane and his Collections*, London, British Library Publishing, 2012; cloth; pp. x, 310; 72 colour illustrations; R.R.P. AU\$89.95; ISBN 9780712358804.

Sir Hans Sloane (1660–1753) was 'arguably the greatest collector of the eighteenth century' (p. 9), itself a great age of collecting in Western Europe. His huge collections of objects, plants, books, manuscripts, and art works – estimated to amount to nearly 80,000 items – formed much of the basis for the British Museum and its subsequent offshoots, the Natural History Museum and the British Library. They are also represented in numerous other institutions, from the Wellcome Library to the Victoria and Albert Museum to the National Portrait Gallery. They focus especially on natural history, medicine, and science – as befitting a man who succeeded Isaac Newton as the President of the Royal Society. According to one contemporary obituary, this was 'perhaps the most magnificent ... collection upon earth' (p. 39).

This volume brings together nineteen papers from a conference held at the British Library in 2010. The contributions reflect the extraordinary breadth of Sloane's interests and activities, ranging across botany, medicine, and geology, the Netherlands, East Indies, and Jamaica, books, manuscripts, and pictures. They also cover Sloane's long life and career as a very successful physician, scientist, benefactor, and entrepreneur. Also included is the first publication of the earliest surviving life of Sloane, written by Thomas Birch.

Several themes stand out amid the richness of this almost overwhelming variety. A number of essays look at the ways in which Sloane's networks of contacts, and his extensive correspondence with them, enabled him to assemble such a massive 'collection of collections'. His ability to use 'the power of curious specimens as levers of ascent' (p. 21) in eighteenth-century society is reflected in the accounts of his life and career. Another prominent theme is how the global reach of eighteenth-century Britain is reflected in Sloane's collecting activities, not least in his own travels in Jamaica. Several of the contributors work to analyse and exploit the numerous catalogues which

Sloane himself compiled and commissioned. And several work to reconstruct how the collection was organised and displayed in Sloane's house in Chelsea, and to reconstruct now-dispersed elements of the collection, in an effort to see the collection as it was in Sloane's lifetime.

Sloane's motivations for collecting on such a gigantic scale remain enigmatic; he was reticent about his aims, and the man behind the collection remains elusive. But these essays combine to form the best account to date of his remarkable life and work, as well as identifying a number of important lines for future inquiry – not just into Sloane himself but also into other collectors on a similarly massive scale.

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