

## Short Notices

**Cervone**, Cristina Maria, *Poetics of the Incarnation: Middle English Writing and the Leap of Love* (Middle Ages), Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013; cloth; pp. 376; 11 illustrations; R.R.P. US\$69.95, £45.50; ISBN 9780812244519.

Recent interest in the emotions among scholars of Middle English has tended to put medieval and modern modes of thought side by side. At the cutting edge of interdisciplinarity and indeed often specifically scientifically driven investigations into the function and style of premodern literary texts, such studies are interested in the ways in which historically and disciplinarily distinct fields of inquiry can inform linguistic and discourse analysis.

‘Both cognitive scientists and medieval writers’, Cristina Maria Cervone declares in her study of language and form in fourteenth-century religious verse, ‘share an interest in the relationship of cognition to embodiment’ (p. 21). Cervone attempts to convince us of the veracity of this claim, and of the usefulness of her approach. The book anticipates much very recent work theorising emotions in literature, emphasising the importance of the literary archive in exploring questions of language’s expressive force. This is not, however, a book about the affective significance of religious writing on the Incarnation, but instead its intellectual power. Cervone’s study, rather than focusing on how various Middle English authors represented affective or empathetic identification with scenes of Christ’s Passion, investigates how they used poetic form to explore the scriptural metaphor of the Incarnation – the ‘Word made flesh’ – a figurative expression which holds both literal and symbolic meanings in suspense.

The ‘Incarnational poetics’ that Cervone’s study proposes is a ‘vernacular poetics of metaphor triggered by the issue of Incarnation’ (p. 7). Cervone’s literary samples range from William Langland and Julian of Norwich, to the Middle English ‘trewelove’ (‘four-leaf clover’) poems, and other poetic works incorporating botanical motifs (lilies, roses, trees, and so forth). Driven by an exploration of ‘how language conveys complex abstract thought, especially (but not exclusively) in metaphor’ (p. 22) in Chapter 1, and bolstered by her readings of recent studies in linguistics and the cognitive sciences, in Chapters 2 through 5, Cervone explores the metaphorical uses of language in a number of Middle English works. For medievalists, her examples are wide enough to be convincing, while her analysis is far-reaching enough to be of interest to literary scholars working on issues of language, affect,

embodiment, and cognition in both earlier and later periods of history. The study is, in some senses, specific to the English vernacular – a section on ‘pleyn’ English speaking in Cervone’s Introduction emphasises the specificity of her thesis’s application to Middle English poetic texts – but it speaks more openly to much larger questions about the nature of language and thought and the cognitive function of poetry; the ‘fundamental’ work of metaphor (as opposed to its often ‘ornamental’ status) in poetic form, and, by extension, all forms of discourse, medieval or modern.

STEPHANIE DOWNES, *ARC Centre of Excellence for the History of Emotions*  
*The University of Melbourne*

**Coolidge**, Grace E., ed., *The Formation of the Child in Early Modern Spain* (New Hispanisms: Cultural and Literary Studies), Farnham, Ashgate, 2014; hardback; pp. xiv, 305; 10 b/w illustrations; R.R.P. £75.00; ISBN 9781472428806.

*The Formation of the Child in Early Modern Spain* provides a valuable Spanish contribution to the growing literature on the history of the European child. Drawing together twelve historians, art historians, and literary scholars to explore how early modern Spain understood infancy and childhood, and more specifically the role of education, discipline, and parental and institutional care in these life stages, this collection clearly illustrates the particular investments that the Spanish placed in childhood as a developmental stage, along with the allowances that people were expected to make for childhood behaviours.

The book is separated into three parts. The first comprises four chapters that look at representations of childhood in literature and art: Rosilie Hernández examines Old Testament exemplars of ideal motherly behaviour; chapters by Carmen Marín Pina and Anne Cruz explore, respectively, mother–daughter and father–son relationships in novels; and Charlene Villaseñor Black considers paintings of the education of the Virgin Mary. All four authors carefully tease out the tensions between ideal forms of behaviour and the abilities of ordinary children to achieve them; tensions that often emerge within the works themselves.

Part II consists of four chapters that look at the childhoods of Spanish monarchs across the seventeenth century. Together, they provide a comprehensive discussion of the subject and particularly highlight the challenge, typically faced by royal children, of balancing the demands of exercising royal authority, with the practical limitations – physical, emotional, educational – of being a child. They demonstrate the distinctive care and concern provided both by parents and courts that saw such children as important to national security.

Part III looks at the positioning of children in society. Darcy Donahue explores a didactic dialogue that situates the child as the parent of the adult,

while in her contribution, editor Grace Coolidge places children as a key dimension of family lineage, with education seen as an investment in family, as much as individual, identity. Edward Behrend-Martinez and Valentina Tikoff investigate attitudes towards child abuse and the use of orphanage wards to care for children. They seek to balance constructions of caring with forms of discipline that overlap with cruelty and control of children.

A coherent collection, brought together by a strong Introduction, *Formation of the Child* provides a timely and interesting contribution to the field.

KATIE BARCLAY, *The University of Adelaide*

**Debby**, Nirit Ben-Aryeh, *The Cult of St Clare of Assisi in Early Modern Italy* (Visual Culture in Early Modernity), Farnham, Ashgate, 2014, hardback; pp. 192; 10 colour, 51 b/w illustrations; R.R.P. £60.00; ISBN 9781472420572.

In this richly illustrated study of the cult of St Clare of Assisi (1194–1253), Nirit Ben-Aryeh Debby analyses both images and textual material, especially sermons, to document the long history of representations of one of the earliest acolytes of St Francis and the founder of the order of the Poor Ladies, later known as the Poor Clares, or Clarissans.

According to Debby's narrative, after her death and prompt canonisation, Clare was initially remembered as a civic saint who had defended her convent from a band of roving Saracen mercenaries. The story featured in a hagiography by Thomas of Celano and was depicted in a panel painting of 1360 by Guido da Siena, which shows the saint with a monstrance of the Holy Eucharist, the dazzling sight of which caused the infidels to retreat in disarray. In the fourteenth century, however, Clare was all but forgotten. She was marginalised in the male Franciscan tradition and hardly appeared in visual depictions of the life of St Francis.

It was only when female saints such as Catherine of Siena and Birgitta of Sweden gained popular followings, and thanks to the efforts of the fifteenth-century preacher John of Capistrano and Clarissan nuns such as Battista Alfani, that St Clare returned to prominence. Thereafter, she became a prominent heroine of the Catholic Reformation, often depicted with the miracle-working Eucharist, as in Bernini's statue of her in St Peter's Square. In Assisi, the memory of Clare's victory over the Saracens was celebrated in sacred representations and sermons during the annual Festa del Voto, which began in 1624. Debby documents the ways in which each age constructed a different St Clare, using and discarding elements of a cult that ebbed and flowed over time. From civic heroine, pious abbess, and then miracle-working Eucharist saint, Clare emerged in modern times as the patron saint of television and the protector of cats.

Debby's engaging book will interest a wide range of scholars, since it skilfully blends art and social history with sermon and gender studies.

CAROLYN JAMES, *Monash University*

**de Boer, Sander**, *The Science of the Soul: The Commentary Tradition on Aristotle's 'De anima', c. 1260–c. 1360* (Ancient and Medieval Philosophy, 46), Leuven, Leuven University Press, 2013; cloth; pp. 352; R.R.P. €89.50; ISBN 9789058679307.

The history of scholastic philosophy is a discipline shaped by terms and concepts largely foreign to students of medieval history and literature. This book deals with the science of *anima*, conventionally translated as 'soul', but best understood as the source of vitality of the human body.

In the Latin West, a major challenge was presented by the discovery of Aristotle's *De anima* – known initially in the early thirteenth century through a translation by Gundissalinus of Avicenna's *De anima* – in which the soul was perceived as 'the first perfection of the natural body', and then through Aristotle's text, as commented on by Averroes, when it came to be explained as the form of the body. For Averroes, however, the vegetative and sensitive elements in the soul were forms of the body, whereas the intellect was a unique, immortal, divine substance (a cosmic intellect), in which individuals participated. Thomas Aquinas, by contrast, argued that there is only a single form to the individual soul, which cannot have multiple forms.

Because this study begins with Aquinas, the extent to which he distances himself from Avicenna's Neoplatonic interpretation of the soul is rather quickly glossed over. Rather, Sander de Boer is concerned with how fourteenth-century theories of the soul, which focused not on its essence, but on increased awareness of the multiplicity of its powers, evolved out of debate with the formative contribution of Aquinas in thinking about the unity of the human person. At a deeper level, the book deals with nothing less than the evolution of 'psychology' in the sense of a science of the soul, as a key part of philosophy. The presentation is highly technical. De Boer considers what Aquinas and a number of his immediate successors (Radulphus Brito, John of Jandun, and John Buridan) had to say about unity and multiplicity of the soul. Because moderns no longer think of *anima* as a concept in relation to plants or sensory experience, and think of soul as a religious rather than a scientific concept, such discussions can seem bizarre, unless we appreciate these thinkers were debating what were still pressing issues.

This is a technically impressive study of an ongoing philosophical debate, to which Thomas Aquinas made a major contribution but which continued to provoke discussion.

CONSTANT J. MEWS, *Monash University*

**Fuchs**, Barbara, *The Poetics of Piracy: Emulating Spain in English Literature* (Haney Foundation Series), Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013; cloth; pp. 200; 10 illustrations; R.R.P. US\$45.00, £29.50; ISBN 9780812244755.

Already a well-established, major contributor to the field of early modern Anglo-Spanish literary relations – particularly as these pertain to the discourses of nationhood and Empire – Barbara Fuchs, in her latest book, focuses on English translation and appropriation of Spanish Golden Age sources.

True to these interests, Fuchs aims to present ‘*imitatio* as a historically situated practice, coterminous with imperial competition and national self-definition’, her specific thesis being that the English ‘national canon’ emerged through ‘rivalry with Spain – a model emulated even as it was disavowed’ (pp. 4–5). As Fuchs intriguingly proposes, English writers developed a ‘pugnacious rhetorical apparatus’, which enabled them to ‘reframe their profound debt to Spanish sources’ through a ‘recurring metaphor of piracy’, not as a sign of inferiority or dependence but of forcefulness and valour; in this fashion, ‘translation’ was envisioned ‘as an act of successful looting ... a national victory’ (pp. 7, 10).

In the study’s five chapters, Fuchs thus traces this practice of literary appropriation and the discourse that enabled and celebrated it. Chapter 1, ‘Forcible Translation’, outlines the dual process whereby Spanish source literature was ‘Englished’ through an aggressive discourse of patriotic appropriation. As Fuchs argues, England, in the later sixteenth century and beyond, experienced a ‘sense of belatedness’ as to culture and literature, a sentiment often concerned with the language itself, and upon the urgency of ‘enriching’ its ‘copiousness’ (pp. 13–15).

Chapter 2 focuses on a Beaumont’s *Knight of the Burning Pestle* (1607), a Jacobean city comedy best known as a remarkably early – and parodic – appropriation of *Don Quixote* (1605). Fuchs makes the intriguing observation that ‘most of the earliest references to *Don Quixote* in England come from the theater’ (p. 42). Besides examining the process of ‘domesticating’ this canonical foreign text – the English emphasis on the local colour of ‘prentices’ and alehouses is also evident in Heywood’s parody of Spanish chivalric romance in *The Four Prentices of London* – Fuchs addresses the analogous critical tradition of emphasising the originality of adaptations and downplaying their debt to original works.

Chapter 3, ‘Plotting Spaniards, Spanish Plots’, explores Middleton’s *A Game at Chess*, which Fuchs aptly describes as ‘the most notorious anti-Spanish play of the period’, in order to examine the nature of the dramatist’s ‘engagement with Spain’ (p. 11).

These three initial chapters establish the foundations for the book’s ultimate consideration, in Chapters 4 and 5, of the lost *Cardenio* play and the

two recent creative reconstructions of it. Thus, while Chapter 4, 'Cardenio Lost and Found', examines the history of negotiating Shakespeare's and Fletcher's – and specifically the Bard's – unknown Spanish debt, the fifth and final chapter, 'Cardenios for Our Time', addresses the significance of the Stephen Greenblatt–Charles Mee version (2008) and that by Gregory Doran for the Royal Shakespeare Company (2011). In discussing the latter's 'hugely successful' production of the 'reimagined' text (p. 115), Fuchs highlights the continuation of a rather one-sided process of Anglo-Spanish literary relations, which she traces to sixteenth- and seventeenth-century English intellectual culture.

Carefully researched and well written, this study is of invaluable benefit to the scholarship of early modern England and Spain, and also an oddly exhilarating read, highly recommended to specialists in the field, to students, and other interested readers alike.

IVAN CAÑADAS, *Hallym University*

**Gillespie**, Vincent, and Anne **Hudson**, eds, *Probable Truth: Editing Medieval Texts from Britain in the Twenty-First Century* (Texts and Transitions, 5), Turnhout, Brepols, 2013; hardback; pp. xiv, 549; 9 b/w illustrations, 14 b/w tables; R.R.P. €135.00; ISBN 9782503536835.

This collection comprises papers given at a conference organised by the Early English Text Society in May 2010. The collection's thirty chapters, prefixed by a short Introduction, written by editors Vincent Gillespie and Anne Hudson, fall into seven groups, within which each piece is virtually independent of the others. To this is appended the usual scholarly appurtenances, and indices of manuscripts by repository and pressmark, and of names, topics, and texts generally. Generally speaking, each contribution is of a high standard and, with some exceptions, connected more or less closely with the common theme: editing texts from medieval Britain.

While it should come as no surprise that different parts of this collection reflect heterogeneity, marked by wide variety of content and of character, as is common to this form, this, and the tenuousness with which some of the contributions are connected with the main theme, present some difficulties. Certainly, the book does not claim to be a systematic study on the subject, as in the manner of a textbook, but its different parts form a series of isolated sketches, with each offering a only tiny view of this enormous field, and the result is somewhat disjointed.

Let us consider, too, the terms of the title and its intended scope. In passing over the fore-title, having come from a remark criticised by E. T. Donaldson, the subtitle proclaims, rather misleadingly, that the volume's main theme is editing texts from medieval Britain. But this is not really the case. Instead, the reader will find materials more wide-ranging by far, set

within broad chronological limits – from the oldest Anglo-Saxon texts to the latest Middle English (and beyond) – and wide geographical zones, from the north in Scotland to southern England, from Ireland via Wales to France. I found it difficult to see, however, on what grounds a paper on the *Oculus moralis* by Peter of Limoges is included. The collection cuts across broad language sub-families, Romance, Germanic, and Celtic branches, and ranges over long periods of time. Textually speaking, it admits a very ample spread, from prose to verse, including song, and hybrid texts, drawn from diverse sources, all traceable to a wide variety of local contexts, and circumstances of composition.

I note, in the front matter, some odd abbreviations; and at the end, no bibliography, a useful aid, which would have reduced both repetition and bulk.

NICHOLAS A. SPARKS, *The University of Sydney*

**Gulley**, Alison, *The Displacement of the Body in Ælfric's Virgin Martyr Lives*, Farnham, Ashgate, 2014; hardback; pp. 160; R.R.P. £60.00; ISBN 9781409442141.

Alison Gulley's well-presented volume assesses Ælfric's body of work on female virgin martyrs. These include Agnes, Agatha, Lucy, Eugenia, and the married saints Daria, Basilissa, and Cecilia. Gulley compares the Old English accounts from Ælfric's *Lives of the Saints* with their Latin sources, and concludes that the English works emphasised the spiritual nature of the saints' purity, rather than its physical aspect. Indeed, Gulley argues that Ælfric 'displaces' the physical body in his lives to emphasise the spiritual importance of the virgins' sacrifices. While this was certainly not a new concept in the Middle Ages, nor in Anglo-Saxon England, Gulley successfully argues for the important place of this discourse within Ælfric's body of work.

Chapter 1 introduces the topic, with Gulley focusing on the contextual background for Ælfric's work. Chapter 2 discusses the patristic background concerning the status of women within the Church and the concept of spiritual chastity. This section covers some familiar territory, such as the patristic interpretations of the writings of St Paul, but provides a necessary context for Gulley's broader argument. Gulley also looks briefly at the work of the earlier Anglo-Saxon hagiographer, Aldhelm, and refers to him throughout her discussion. Nevertheless, further comparison with Aldhelm's *de Virginitate* and reference to scholarship concerning this work would not have gone astray. The following five chapters go into detail concerning the works themselves, with Gulley comprehensively analysing each of the lives, quoting extensively from both the Old English and their Latin sources.

Gulley's topic is well defined and touches on relevant aspects of Anglo-Saxon history, including the Benedictine Reform, which she uses to frame her discussion of Ælfric's approach. This is a welcome addition to scholarship

concerning one of the most prolific Anglo-Saxon authors, and to scholarship concerning Old English hagiography. Gulley's work also makes a valuable contribution to our broader understanding of gender and the body in Anglo-Saxon England.

TAHLIA BIRNBAUM, *Australian Catholic University*

**Hopkins**, Lisa, *Renaissance Drama on the Edge*, Farnham, Ashgate, 2014; hardback; pp. 200; R.R.P. £60.00; ISBN 9781409438199.

Lisa Hopkins's latest monograph builds on her ground-breaking study, *Shakespeare on the Edge: Border-Crossing in the Tragedies and the Henriad* (Ashgate, 2005), in which she argued that early modern audiences imagined a profound connection between physical and spiritual edges. Her new book expands this notion of 'edges' beyond Shakespeare, by exploring 'not only geographical borders but also the intersection of the material and the spiritual' in early modern drama (p. 1).

The book is divided into three parts. The first, 'What is an Edge?', examines two extremes of the concept of edges. The first chapter analyses walls: the literal walls that surround a town, and those of a private household. Chapter 2 turns to depictions of the intangible divide between secular and spiritual power. Part I is thus focused on depictions of these edges, as defining an edge 'requires us to attend not only to what something is but also what it is *not*' (p. 3).

Part II examines the edges of nations. Chapter 3, 'Sex on the Edge', is a particularly interesting analysis of how marriage across international borders undermined the concept of 'distinct and securely separate nations' (p. 3). The other two chapters of Part II examine the moveable borders of France in Shakespeare, primarily as a metaphor for England's uncertain borders after the Jacobean succession.

Part III analyses other intangible edges. Chapter 6 focuses on the edge of Heaven, and discusses anomalous dramatic references that describe physical access to Heaven from Earth. Chapter 7 analyses the intersection between skin and jewels, and how they influenced each other. Finally, Chapter 8 considers the 'direct interface between the spiritual and material' that can be found in the dramatic use of historical ruins (p. 172).

Hopkins ends by reminding readers that edges 'permit two-way traffic', which for her underscores their contestability in early modern drama (p. 171). She masterfully argues her hypothesis, and convincingly demonstrates that edges were 'a place of power' that 'could always potentially be crossed' (p. 8). Hopkins does, however, assume a relatively advanced level of familiarity with early modern drama, which can make keeping up with the rapid transition between the various plays and playwrights difficult. Nevertheless, the book is

engagingly written, is expertly researched, and would be highly beneficial to those with a sound knowledge of early modern drama.

AIDAN NORRIE, *University of Otago*

**Johnson, Sarah E.**, *Staging Women and the Soul–Body Dynamic in Early Modern England* (Women and Gender in the Early Modern World), Farnham, Ashgate, 2014; hardback; pp. 198; 1 b/w illustration; R.R.P. £60.00; ISBN 9781472411228.

Sarah E. Johnson begins with a discussion on the questionable possibility that women have souls. This stands in opposition to Aristotelian doctrine, which moots that seed-producing males pass divine intellect down through the male line allowing males a soul. The more porous and unstable body is categorised as female. Johnson uses theatre as a medium to explore the soul–body dynamic between these two states as ‘theatre necessarily engages the interplay between material and immaterial more broadly, often drawing attention to the fluidity and tensions between the two’ (p. 20). This soul–body dichotomy informs early modern misogynistic representations of women. Johnson seeks to illustrate how disruptions to this binary functioned to collapse established boundaries of the divide. To explore how this dynamic was compromised, Johnson chooses four instances where the soul–body relationship and its gendered nature is represented: the puppeteer and the puppet; the tamer and the tamed; the ghost and the haunted; and the observer and the spectacle.

In Chapter 1, on the puppeteer and the puppet, Johnson focuses on Middleton’s *The Revenger’s Tragedy* and Jonson’s *Bartholomew Fair*. With strong supporting evidence, Johnson shows how the supposed male (puppeteer) dominance over female (puppet) is undermined as, in the former play, ‘not only does Gloriana, as silent material, hold potential to mock Vindice, but, in his arrogant pleasure in manipulating and mastering her remains, Vindice is oblivious to having entered his own dance of death’ (p. 53). In the latter, Johnson argues that the puppets show ‘the absurdity of considering women to be more fleshly than men are’, while demonstrating ‘the impossibility of fully controlling how the material signifies’ (p. 69).

The relationship of the tamer and the tamed is explored through a discussion of John Fletcher’s *The Tamer Tamed or, The Woman’s Prize*, and here an interrogation of the soul–body binary first reverses and then renders this relationship unstable. The chapter exploring ghost and haunted through *The Lady’s Tragedy*, attributed to Middleton, goes further, collapsing the soul–body dynamic and calling into question the political implications of this breakdown. Masques are examined in the relationship of observer and spectacle arguing, again, for a fault line that undermines the soul–body and male–female dichotomies through representations of the body on stage.

Overall, Johnson explores the early modern gendering of the soul–body dynamic while simultaneously showing how the binaries themselves were a site of negotiated disruption. This project is important to the fields of early modern feminist, religious, literature, and theatre studies, and also for the innovative readings that Johnson explores within the framework she has built so excellently.

BRÍD PHILLIPS, *The University of Western Australia*

**Knecht**, Robert J., *Hero or Tyrant? Henry III, King of France, 1574–89*, Farnham, Ashgate, 2014; hardback; pp. xiii, 356; 30 b/w illustrations; R.R.P. £75.00; ISBN 9781472429308.

For anyone, like me, who first learnt their French history from Alexandre Dumas, Henry III of France must remain an intriguing figure because of his appearance in *La Dame de Monsoreau* and *Les Quarante-Cinq*. Robert Knecht's recent monograph, however, provides a necessary antidote to Dumas. In his own time, Henry was vilified by his opponents, being portrayed as a tyrant whose assassination was justified, while later, as Knecht writes, 'A legend put out mainly in the nineteenth century, notably in the novels of Dumas, has portrayed Henry III as a pleasure-loving monarch, keen on masked balls, small dogs and the game of cup and ball'.

Knecht has already written extensively about this period, including a life of Catherine de' Medici, Henry's formidable mother. He offers a much more complex portrait of Henry than either of the two caricatures above, showing him as intelligent, fond of reading as much as of masques and dancing, and keen to fulfil his (as he saw it) God-given role as king, but possessing also a strong penitential streak and the capacity at times for foolish decisions. Henry's life was certainly eventful enough. The third of four brothers he succeeded to the throne after the successive deaths of his two elder brothers, Francis II and Charles IX. Before this, he had been elected as King of Poland and had travelled there for a short and unsuccessful reign, only to sneak away on the death of Charles IX. Back in France and now king, he sought above all peace for his kingdom, which was beset by religious conflict, and, though a devout Catholic, he was willing to offer limited toleration to the powerful Huguenot faction if it could bring peace. This toleration and his willingness to accept the Protestant Henry of Navarre as his successor brought on the opposition of many Catholics who were determined to extirpate heresy from the kingdom and who formed the Catholic League headed by the duc de Guise. In a disastrous move, Henry ordered the murder of Guise and his brother, a cardinal, thus alienating the pope and ultimately leading to his own murder at the hands of a Jacobin friar.

By Knecht's balanced and persuasive account, Henry tried very hard to be a good king in difficult times but 'Though he was both intelligent and

conscientious, he lacked both tact and vision'. Fittingly, Knecht ends with the words of the contemporary diarist L'Estoile: 'he would have been a very good prince if only he had encountered a good century.'

GRAHAM TULLOCH, *Flinders University*

**Knight**, Leah, *Reading Green in Early Modern England*, Farnham, Ashgate, 2014; hardback; pp. 180; 5 colour, 11 b/w illustrations; R.R.P. £60.00; ISBN 9781409446644.

Introducing *Reading Green*, Leah Knight points out that 'green' did not mean in the early modern period what it means today (that is, linked to protecting the natural environment), and that she intends to discover, or 'read', what it did then mean. Knight gathers a wealth of material into three parts, each covering physical and figurative aspects of early modern interpretations of green.

Part I considers the senses of sight and smell and their relationships with literary examples, looking first at the idea then current, that green was an 'optical restorative' (p. 18) – that is, could ease eye strain – and then discussing the fashionable use (later a sign of pedantic fustiness) of green-lensed spectacles by many, including Samuel Pepys. Only later is the idea's classical heritage mentioned. The place of smell in the early modern period is also investigated through, in one example, the use of the pomander not only as an object thought to hold disease at bay, but also as a literary term for a work intended for carrying about (such as Becon's *Pomander of Prayer*, or Whitney's *A Sweet Nosegay*).

In Part II, the dominant theme is trees, looked at through 'the myth of Orpheus as a mover and shaker of all things green' (p. 63), and, more literally, as a place where grafting took place, or words could be written. Rather than Aristotelian faculty psychology's belief that plants had souls, Knight argues that Renaissance herbalists and writers, such as Lodge and Spenser (*Shepherd's Calendar*) saw the mobility of trees (the Orphic myth) as central.

Part III is headed 'How Andrew Marvell read Gerard's Herbal'. In many self-referential words – off-putting to this reader – Knight presents what she would have written had she not discovered A. B. Grosart's earlier work on the topic.

Knight's interpretations are often disputable; for instance, that Wyatt's 'in a net I seek to hold the wind' (from 'Whoso list to hunt') is about the 'sighing or whispering wind' (p. 53), when it is more likely to refer to what is impossible. Above all, it is the insufficiently sifted modern critical material that prevents success. Use of the Early English Books Online collection for primary sources is laudable, but for at least some of Knight's texts there are also excellent editions which might have provided further insights.

JANET HADLEY WILLIAMS, *Australian National University*

**Lake**, Justin, ed., *Prologues to Ancient and Medieval History: A Reader* (Readings in Medieval Civilizations and Cultures), Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 2013; paperback; pp. 320; R.R.P. US\$37.95; ISBN 9781442605039.

The recording of history in written form underpins Western culture. Histories have offered a variety of functions over the centuries, including the preservation of great deeds, the maintenance of reputations – especially of great men – and models of behaviour to emulate or resist. Histories may look back, but their writers often express contemporary or future needs for the preservation of information. As Justin Lake notes, the historical prologue is the moment in which the author addresses the reader directly to state his purpose in writing. This collection of the opening words of historical texts, representing a span of about two thousand years, shows both the continuities and shifts in focus of early historians as events were recorded for posterity.

A short Introduction notes the patterns and common themes of the prologues. This is followed by eighty-eight prologues, organised into four chapters, which are sequenced chronologically. The first chapter covers antiquity up to the fifth century of the Common Era, about one thousand years in all. Histories written in Greek and Latin are included, as are early Christian works. The prologues are individual, reflecting their writers' intentions. For example, the first offering contains few words, but underpins Lake's claim that early Greek approaches to history developed from the works of logographers: 'Hecateus of Miletus speaks thusly: I write these things as they appear to me to be true. For it seems to me that the accounts (*logoi*) of the Greeks are many and absurd' (p. 1). By contrast, the opening words of Thucydides stretch over nine pages, highlighting the author's claim of the importance of the events to be described: 'Indeed this was the greatest movement yet known to history, not only of the Greeks, but of a large part of the barbarian world – I had almost said of mankind' (p. 3).

Not every writer is as well known as Thucydides, but Lake introduces each one with a paragraph or two, outlining what is known about their historical environment and their writings. While these introductory remarks are generally sufficient, there is the occasional allusion to scholarship – '[t]he purpose of the *History of the Lombards* remains the subject of much debate' (p. 107), for example – without offering any details on where to find further information. The reference material provided for the eight-page Introduction does extend to matters concerning individual prologues.

Subsequent chapters follow a similar pattern. Chapter 2 is devoted to the early medieval period (500–900), followed by the Central Middle Ages (900–1100), and the High and Late Middle Ages (1100–1400). Publication details, including the names of translators, are offered for each prologue. The chronological sequencing of each section is clear, but I wonder whether

a brief introduction to each period, noting the key characteristics of any changes to the style or content of the prologues, might have contributed to a greater awareness of the changing demands of historical writing.

The index refers the reader to particular prologues by number. I would have liked to see a bibliography, especially as there were no reference details in the body of the book, except for the publication details for the excerpts themselves. The subject matter and the overarching temporal spread, however, do commend this book as a suitable text for teaching. It provides a valuable overview of two thousand years of European interest in its own past.

R. NATASHA AMENDOLA, *Monash University*

**McDougall**, Sara, *Bigamy and Christian Identity in Late Medieval Champagne* (Middle Ages), Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012; cloth; pp. 240; R.R.P. US\$55.00, £36.00; ISBN 9780812243987.

Sara McDougall's study provocatively argues that the late medieval 'marriage crisis', as it manifested itself in northern France, resulted not from incestuous or clandestine marriage, as generally held, but instead from 'an epidemic of illegal marriages' (p. 3). She refers to such marriages as bigamous, that is, marriages in which at least one of the partners was still legally married to a living spouse. Although this sense is familiar to us, in fact, bigamy in the Middle Ages meant all remarriage, whether the previous spouse was living or dead. However, McDougall uses the term to stress the theological ambivalence embedded in canon law regarding all remarriage. Laypeople, in contrast with theologians, valued marriage highly, so highly that they were willing to risk prosecution for marrying bigamously.

Bigamy contravened the sacramental concept of marriage that had been enshrined in canon law and vigorously promulgated by the clergy since the twelfth century. But if this was acknowledged throughout Christendom, northern France, especially the diocese of Troyes, 'stands apart above all in the repeated subjection of male bigamists to public punishments and imprisonment' (p. 43). Many more men than women were prosecuted and their penalties were harsher than those for women, because, McDougall hypothesises, men were assumed by the Church to be the moral guardians of the household. McDougall makes her case by examining some one hundred cases from the registers.

The book makes its argument in five chapters, and there is also an appendix of selected cases from the registers. Following an Introduction, the first chapter surveys remarriage as a late medieval institution. 'Bigamous Husbands' and 'Abandoned Wives', Chapters 2 and 3, discuss some of the stories from the registers. Chapters 4 and 5, 'Why Commit Bigamy?'

and 'Why Prosecute Bigamy?', put the willingness to enter into an illegal marriage into context.

To summarise McDougall's conclusion, what she describes as 'bigamy' took place often in late medieval France, even though it was illegal. Men and women whose first marriages failed were willing to risk serious penalties and make new unions because the notion of sacramental marriage had been so thoroughly ingrained since the twelfth century that it formed a crucial part of Christian identity. Bigamists thus sought the sort of legitimate union that would guarantee their social acceptance. Our modern Western vision of marriage as a 'singular bond', even in a time of ever-increasing divorce rates, is 'in no small way ... our medieval, Christian heritage' (p. 142).

TRACY ADAMS, *The University of Auckland*

**MacKinnon**, Dolly, *Earls Colne's Early Modern Landscapes*, Farnham, Ashgate, 2014; hardback; pp. 358; 8 colour, 27 b/w illustrations; R.R.P. £70.00; ISBN 9780754639640.

In this book, Dolly MacKinnon takes advantage of the wide range of resources that have survived concerning the Essex village of Earls Colne. For this reviewer, one of the most appealing aspects of this research is the bringing together of such a range of material, which includes the surviving physical buildings, such as the church, monuments, and the works of antiquarians and artists, as well as evidence from manorial records, parish returns, and graffiti preserved within the parish church. The published diary of Ralph Josselin, the vicar of the village in the seventeenth century, and records from the Church Building Society are also explored, together with the remarkable archive provided by Alan Macfarlane and Sarah Harrison which is now online. MacKinnon's sifting through of this material provides us with unexpected traces of individual lives and changes in landholders from the de Veres, the Earls of Oxford, to the Harlakenden family and their descendants. The work benefits from the close reading of documents by historians such as Rhys Isaac that have uncovered the cultural histories buried in the humblest records.

I particularly enjoyed the second and third parts of this book, where the focus shifts to the inhabitants of the village, rather than the great landowning families. Part II focuses on the parish church of St Andrew's and its churchyard, investigating the hierarchical distribution of the pews, burial practices, and the impact of the Civil War, as expressed by the public petitions signed by men of the parish. The sad evidence of Margaret Williamson's suicide reminds us about the silences in the records of the Coroner's Court that reveal little about her tragedy. Another small story, but with big implications for trade and empire, is the trace of slavery and the black presence found in Essex in the eighteenth century. Maria Sambo, a literate free woman, married Warren Hull in 1737, and was later buried in the churchyard in 1766. Little

is recorded of her quiet life, but she, her husband, and her children became part of the Earls Colne landscape. Part III examines how different sites in the landscape were reinvented over time, including the Priory buildings, as well the expansion of the religious environment with the appearance of the Quakers, whose meeting house still exists in the village.

This is a rich study that brings together, in a synthetic way, the resources that a single village has created; resources which have allowed a sensitive scholar to uncover surprising evidence of change and development. MacKinnon's explorations of this environment, both through visits and research, enliven the text, reminding us too that this history is ongoing.

JUDITH COLLARD, *University of Otago*

**Martin**, Michael, *Literature and the Encounter with God in Post-Reformation England*, Farnham, Ashgate, 2014; hardback; pp. 230; 4 b/w illustrations; R.R.P. £60.00; ISBN 9781472432667.

Michael Martin's compelling study gives us phenomenological profiles of selected individuals who made attempts to 'reach' and encounter God in post-Reformation England. The book's five chapters discuss the religious lives and writings of John Dee, John Donne, Sir Kenelm Digby, Henry and Thomas Vaughan, and Jane Lead, who all subscribed to fluid religiosities that defied distinct labels.

In the post-Reformation seventeenth century, independent religious quests gave rise to new religious groups such as Ranters, Fifth Monarchists, Philadelphians, and many other antinomian groups. Such groups were not particularly concerned with *understanding* God through traditional theological studies, but rather with *knowing* God through personal and intuitive explorations.

The first chapter introduces us to the religious life of John Dee (1527–1609). Dee had a serious interest in medieval mysticism, but he stayed away from the doctrinal and theological debates of the Reformation and Counter-Reformation. Dee's theology 'attained a surprising mutability between Protestant and Catholic, orthodox and heterodox modes of religious inquiry', yet it would be misleading to compare it to the newly conceived Anglican *via media* (p. 27).

In Chapter 2, on John Donne (1572–1631), Martin argues that Donne's 'religious aesthetic is grounded in humility' (p. 48). Donne also stressed the communal aspect of religion and the significance of the Established Church. Yet his writings on religious ecstasies drew heavily on Catholic mysticism and vocabulary. Sir Kenelm Digby (1603–65) is the subject of Chapter 3. Martin describes his religious methodology as 'the technological and the Catholic' (p. 87). Digby was profoundly affected by his wife's death and devoted his life

to the science of palingenesis, which was always intermixed with the idea of resurrection.

The fourth chapter covers the Rosicrucian mysticism of Henry and Thomas Vaughan. Such mysticism proposed ‘that God can be discerned in nature’ via scientific study of the natural world ‘informed by scripture’ (p. 109). The last chapter focuses on Jane Lead (1624–1704) who led the evangelical Philadelphian Society. Lead’s writings were focused intensely on the Bible, especially ‘the Book of Revelation’s eschatological intensity’ (p. 155). Again, like the other figures studied in this book, Lead’s religious beliefs exhibit cross-confessional syncretism as evident by her support for the heretical (for Protestants) idea of Purgatory.

The heterogeneous religiosities of these subjects owe much to their individual characteristics and lives, but, as Martin concludes, they were also ‘informed by their cultural and historical moments’ (p. 185).

RAJIV THIND, *The University of Queensland*

**Matthews, David**, *Medievalism: A Critical History* (Medievalism, 6), Cambridge, D. S. Brewer, 2015; hardback; pp. 229; 13 b/w illustrations; R.R.P. £50.00; ISBN 9781843843924.

In his recent book on medievalism, David Matthews traces the history of medievalism from its first appearance in the sixteenth century down to modern times. He provides examples from literature, art, film, music, and from trends in architecture, identifying the grotesque and the romantic, and explaining the rise of medievalism both in England and in Germany. Matthews considers medievalism to be an influential field, but still in a minority form, especially beside medieval studies, with its rich tradition of scholarship. He shows great diversity in his choice of sources, ranging over nearly a hundred years of literature, architecture, and medievalist films.

Matthews divides his book, rather repetitively, into seven sections: ‘Taxonomies, how many Middle Ages?’; ‘Time, space, self, society: Welcome to the current Middle Ages – asynchronous medievalism’; ‘This way to the Middle Ages: the spaces of medievalism’; ‘On being medieval: medievalist selves and societies’; ‘History and discipline: Wemmick’s castle; the limits of medievalism’; ‘Realism in the crypt: the reach of medievalism’; and ‘Conclusion; Against a synthesis: medievalism, cultural studies, and antidisциплиnarity’. In his Afterword, Matthews describes a stage performance, at London’s Southbank Centre, of Lavinia Greenlaw’s ‘A Double Sorrow’, her version of Chaucer’s *Troilus and Criseyde*, ending his text with ‘As Troilus’s laughter echoed, there was some future in all of this, some future for the Middle Ages’.

Appendix I is based on sixty-seven responses to a Middle Ages survey, giving the ages, countries, employment, education, and periods chosen,

while Appendix II gives a very useful list of data and dates relating to religion, literature, and art, from 1534 to 1906. A bibliography follows and an index of names. There are a few illustrations, including a barely relevant picture of the interior of Sydney's Opera House, and six on Charles Dickens's Old Curiosity Shop – depicting Quilp and Nell and the grim sexton in the crypt – which are all very medieval.

Matthews notes *Studies in Medievalism*, started in 1970 by Leslie Workman, which has attracted eminent contributors and he sees the acceptance of medievalism at Kalamazoo in the 1970s and in Leeds in 1994 as a possible breakthrough for the field. But the lack of scholarship in the journal, with only modern authors, provides an obstacle to his contention, and he fails to stress the irony in the ten different Middle Ages described by Umberto Eco. The brilliant Scot, George Buchanan, is not mentioned, although author of the first history of Scotland and tutor to Mary Queen of Scots. Nor does Matthews mention the Inquisition, all too active in its operations, with its brutal variety of tortures to break the spirits, or bodies, of the most brilliant of men and women, which serves as a grim symbol of horror in the Middle Ages.

Even so, Matthew's studies of works by Walter Scott, Dante, Rosetti, John Ruskin, Jane Austen, Chaucer, Tennyson, Hilaire Belloc, Charlotte Bronte, Dan Brown, Norman Cantor, G. K. Chesterton, Charles Dickens, and many other authors from England, and Germany, attest to his very wide reading of primarily English literature, for which anyone reading his book should be grateful. As a major new work on medievalism, it deserves to be studied by students or scholars interested in this latest period of a medieval revival.

JOHN MARTYN, *The University of Melbourne*

**Mecham**, June L., *Sacred Communities, Shared Devotions: Gender, Material Culture, and Monasticism in Late Medieval Germany*, eds Alison I. Beach, Constance H. Berman, and Lisa M. Bitel, Turnhout, Brepols, 2014; hardback; pp. xviii, 307; 48 b/w illustrations, 1 map, 2 tables; R.R.P. €85.00; ISBN 9782503541341.

This important study of several late medieval communities of nuns living on the Lüneburg Heath in north-western Germany takes its place in an expanding field of studies and publications focused on the lives and religious culture of vowed religious women. Sadly, June Mecham left her text incomplete when she died from cancer in 2009. Three friends and colleagues, Alison Beach, Constance Berman, and Lisa Bitel, undertook to bring the book to publication in tribute to a life cut short.

The title *Sacred Communities, Shared Devotions* crisply states Mecham's central argument: common tastes in liturgy, art, and devotional reading among half a dozen convents created a shared culture which Mecham has

documented in the sources. A focus on the objects, texts, and surviving material structures leads Mecham to conclude that these played a larger role in creating networks among the communities than did the monastic traditions to which the six heath communities belonged.

This engaging exploration of the Lüneburg convents combines traditional historical methods with innovative ones like gender analysis and performance theory. Mecham's command of voluminous sources in several languages never overwhelms her task of discerning how visual art and material culture conveyed these women's religious and cultural experiences. The themes and tropes the nuns drew on to sustain their devotional lives confirm that these women firmly embraced the familiar hallmarks of late medieval spirituality. As several chapters reveal, bridal imagery and Marian iconography feature in devotional texts, liturgies, paintings, and embroideries.

Conceptually, the book relies on an argument first made by Caroline Walker Bynum over thirty years ago: late medieval women's view of their world was framed and filtered through their own bodily and social experiences. What is refreshing and instructive in Mecham's work is her insistence that conventual constraints and the absence of dramatic events in the historic record do not diminish the innate value of these sources. Instead, as she astutely argues in her chapter on responses to reform, readings rooted primarily in the contexts of the women's lives offer potentially richer, even more nuanced interpretations of the sources.

Unfortunately, the generally poor quality of reproductions prevents the reader from assessing Mecham's claims for the visual impact of the works in question. Too many of the black-and-white illustrations are either too small or too indistinct to permit close analysis by the reader. Nonetheless, this book shows how visual evidence can be used to broaden and deepen textual approaches to this period.

CLAIRE RENKIN, *Yarra Theological Union University of Divinity*

**Novikoff**, Alex J., *The Medieval Culture of Disputation: Pedagogy, Practice, and Performance* (Middle Ages), Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013; cloth; pp. 336; 15 b/w illustrations; R.R.P. US\$89.95, £58.50; ISBN 9780812245387.

Alex Novikoff's ambitious book seeks to survey a familiar theme, that of disputation, with particular attention to the period between the late eleventh and the thirteenth century. It aims more at cultural than intellectual history, with the emphasis on method rather than actual ideas. It appeared at the same time as Olga Weijers's *In Search of the Truth: A History of Disputation Techniques from Antiquity to Early Modern Times* (Brepols, 2013), a much more compendious and detailed survey of disputation than the present volume.

In many ways, its presentation of St Anselm as effectively responsible for re-introducing the Socratic ideal of disputation in the eleventh century reflects a traditional perspective on someone often perceived as foreshadowing 'the twelfth-century renaissance'. The risk of focusing on the scholastic method rather than the actual ideas of these teachers is that we miss the substance of what they are talking about. The author's contribution, however, is to argue that scholasticism deserves to be seen in the framework of cultural history, above all, as a method of teaching. Perhaps the canvas is so large that we never get into detail.

After chapters on the Socratic inheritance and St Anselm, there are overview chapters on 'Scholastic Practices of the Twelfth-Century Renaissance', 'Aristotle and the Logic of Debate', 'The Institutionalization of Disputation: Universities, Polyphony, and Preaching', and finally, 'Drama and Publicity in Jewish-Christian Disputations'.

The suggestion that disputation at the universities can be linked to emerging polyphony is a fascinating one, although difficult to be precise about. Philip the Chancellor, as both a distinguished teacher and a poet, whose texts were often set to music, provides a rich case study in the interaction between teaching and liturgy. Disputation is as much a performance, Novikoff argues, as liturgy. Yet one has to wonder whether the parallel with polyphony is not so much in disputation, as in the weaving together (or deliberate contrasting) of different theological perspectives within the genre of scholastic commentaries on a set text, like the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard. Is disputation the heart of scholasticism, or one aspect of its performance?

This book has the great merit of making a practice that can seem arid alive and important. It is an open question, however, whether such cultural history can be written without study of the core ideas that were being debated.

CONSTANT J. MEWS, *Monash University*

**Öztürkmen, Arzu, and Evelyn Birge Vitz**, eds, *Medieval and Early Modern Performance in the Eastern Mediterranean* (Late Medieval and Early Modern Studies, 20), Turnhout, Brepols, 2014; hardback; pp. xxxvi, 576; 80 b/w illustrations; R.R.P. €130.00; ISBN 9782503546919.

This volume is extensive in its subject and exceptional in its interdisciplinary value laying a multilayered foundation for further examination of the histories vibrantly represented here. For scholars of late medieval and early modern art history, performance, and religious studies there is much to support research and apply in practice from these lesser known regions of performance. The editors have attracted and arranged the thirty-three authors through sections extending the boundaries of verbal art, imperial performance, iconography through a theatrical lens, and notions of the 'ritual roots of performance'. Within this exemplary collection, there are contributions representing the

religious streams of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, as well as classical and pagan traditions, and the folkloric. All authors have framed the complexities of complicity with, and deviation from, dogmatic norms within religious, social, and politically influenced spheres.

Like their topics' narrators, the authors provide visually stimulating historical discourses and provoke contemporary associations. Historical examinations are lifted into the arena of practical use for performance makers, not solely for re-enactments, but as inspiration for new contemporary interpretations within a globalised culture of the arts. Koray Durak's examination of ninth-century ceremonial activities in the area of Lamis, for instance, particularly brings such modern implications to mind. Also among this fluid exchange is Masiud Hamdam's chapter drawing an association with *commedia dell'arte*. Anestis Vasilakeris presents how visual narration functions and Hrant Khachikyan highlights performance activity's presence in unlikely places beyond the theatrical space.

This volume continually redirects conceptions of the role of performance throughout the Eastern Mediterranean. While post-secular analysis often relocates Church ritual for a more generic gaze, Tivadar Palágyi confirms the anti-theatrical relationship in the Byzantine, quoting St John Chrysostom's view that 'This is not theatre here, and you are not sitting now in order to look at actors and to applaud them. There is spiritual learning here'. Audience relations with dramatic impact and theatrical solemnity continue to elicit a tentative, uncertain relationship with applause recalling this reverent, or restrictive past. David Rotman provides the intercultural antidote to the Byzantine Chrysostom through the performance of public sermons which played a key role in maintaining Jewish culture within pagan, Christian, or Muslim majority communities. Cem Behar returns sacral understanding of the dervish experience, insomuch as this can be known outside the Mevlevî order's continued performance of these rituals in private. This is further explored by Ehud R. Toledano, who reveals highly theatrical healing rituals.

This volume is highly recommended for its breadth, practical methodologies, and reference value.

JEWELL HOMAD JOHNSON, *The University of Sydney*

**Ruys**, Juanita Feros, John O. **Ward**, and Melanie **Heyworth**, eds, *The Classics in the Medieval and Renaissance Classroom: The Role of Ancient Texts in the Arts Curriculum as Revealed by Surviving Manuscripts and Early Printed Books* (Disputatio, 20), Turnhout, Brepols, 2013; hardback; pp. x, 420; 2 b/w illustrations; R.R.P. €100.00; ISBN 9782503527543.

This book is the result of a conference held at The University of Sydney in July 2006 on the use of classical literature in the medieval classroom. The volume has been dedicated to the late Virginia Brown, a conference attendee

who is recognised for her editorial, palaeographic, and teaching expertise. The quality of the research and the erudition of the essays are a fitting tribute. Contributors are well-recognised experts, including Rita Copeland, Robert Brown, Martin Comargo, and Birger Munk Olsen, to name but a few. The temporal scope of the book, from early medieval manuscripts to the introduction of printed texts, makes for a fascinating exploration of the potential changes in pedagogic techniques.

One of the remarkable characteristics of this collection is the depth of material on offer. Each essay comes with its own list of cited works, including manuscripts and archival documents, primary sources, and secondary studies. Several essays also include detailed appendices, including translations of primary source material, providing easy access to evidence. The inclusion of such material gives the reader excellent support for the various arguments regarding pedagogic styles in medieval and Renaissance education. The thoroughness of production is admirable and the contents of the book live up to the subtitle exceptionally well.

One of the key considerations underpinning this collection is the issue of canonicity. As Ralph Hexter has pointed out in *The Oxford Handbook of Medieval Latin Literature* (Oxford University Press, 2011), what is considered to be the classical canon was not consistent over the centuries. The essays here consider well-recognised classical authors, like Cicero and Aristotle, along with less familiar names. Several essays approach classical texts via the educational introductions and commentaries, so the classical Latin texts we might expect to find are muted, perhaps even distorted. This is one of the brilliant aspects of the collection: its engagement with the topic of medieval and Renaissance education, based on material evidence, grounds Latin literature into a clearly defined but 'other' social milieu.

The overwhelming characteristic of this collection is its thoroughness and detail. The provision of so much detail with each essay – including bibliographic details and primary source materials, sometimes in Latin – means that the reader is able to follow the arguments closely. This is especially important as so much of the original material pertaining to medieval education, dependent as it was on manuscripts, is largely inaccessible. Footnoting, too, is also very detailed. The index is thorough and a blessing so often missing from edited collections.

There is a lot of required knowledge for this book. It is certainly not designed for the undergraduate student, as much of the material is complex. Having said that, the inclusion of primary source material for most of the essays offers an ideal teaching model. This book marries the fields of literature and social history in a most productive manner.

R. NATASHA AMENDOLA, *Monash University*

**Ryle**, Stephen, ed., *Erasmus and the Renaissance Republic of Letters* (Disputatio, 24), Turnhout, Brepols, 2014; hardback; pp. xviii, 474; 5 b/w illustrations; R.R.P. €110.00; ISBN 9782503530307.

The first volume of P. S. Allen's edition of the letters of Erasmus, the *Opus Epistolarum Des. Erasmi Roterodami*, appeared in 1906. Although Allen died in 1933, before the series was completed, the remaining volumes of letters were seen through the press by his wife H. M. Allen and his colleague H. W. Garrod, with the last one, volume 11, appearing in 1947. Finally in 1958 an Index volume was published, completing this edition, which had already become a mainstay of Renaissance scholarship.

To celebrate the centenary of Allen's first volume, an international conference was held at Oxford in 2006 which brought together scholars from eight countries to discuss such matters as the editing and translation of Erasmus's letters, his relations with some important contemporaries (e.g., Ulrich von Hutten, Dirk Martens, Juan Luis Vives, Wolfgang Capito, Etienne Dolet, and Duke George of Saxony), and a number of more general issues relating to the Erasmian legacy (e.g., its use in the seventeenth century, by religious apologists in England and Justus Lipsius on the continent, and its misconstrual in early twentieth-century English literary criticism).

The present volume brings this material together under a title that takes advantage of the pun available in English, but in few if any other languages, whereby the same term may refer either to personal correspondence, in particular, or to literary works, in general. Hence, for the purposes of this volume, 'the republic of letters' consists both of an epistolary network centred on Erasmus and a broader community of published authors and their readers.

Apart from the Foreword and Preface, which are in English, the twenty-one chapters include thirteen in English, seven in French, and one in Italian. Usually, but not always, quotations in Latin and Greek are left untranslated. This feature of the collection demands a fair level of linguistic competence from any reader who might intend to go through the book from start to finish, but given the heterogeneous nature of the topics covered in the work, it seems likely that most readers would want to focus on one or a few specific chapters rather than attempting to take in the volume as a whole. Readers wishing to follow this selective approach will be helped by the general Index, which appears to be very comprehensive, and a second Index of references to the works of Erasmus.

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

**Toswell**, M. J., *The Anglo-Saxon Psalter* (Medieval Church Studies, 10), Turnhout, Brepols, 2014; hardback; pp. xvi, 458; 21 b/w illustrations; R.R.P. €100.00; ISBN 9782503545486.

This comprehensive study provides a much-needed resource on psalter manuscripts in Anglo-Saxon England. While M. J. Toswell herself comments that her book is more of a reference work than a thesis, the argument that comes across is certainly that these (frequently overlooked and certainly understudied) manuscripts were of central importance in Anglo-Saxon England.

Toswell organises her work thematically. The first chapter focuses on three known authors' approaches to the psalms: Bede, Alfred, and Ælfric. In Chapter 2, she speculates on the uses and production of psalter manuscripts, using three psalters as case studies: the Salisbury Psalter, the Paris Psalter, and the Achadeus Psalter. Toswell provides thorough introductions to these manuscripts, setting the benchmark for further studies of these works and other psalter manuscripts.

One of Toswell's most innovative contributions is Chapter 3, entitled 'The Psalms in the Material Culture'. Toswell articulates the crucial role the psalms played in many aspects of Anglo-Saxon life by looking at inclusions of psalm texts on material objects. This approach allows her to examine the ways the psalms infiltrated daily life and culture, for example, the inclusion of the psalms in certain charms to ward off cattle disease.

In Chapter 4, Toswell renames the glossed psalters as 'bilingual psalters', redefining their position within Anglo-Saxon history and scholarship. In this chapter, she focuses on the psalters of Stowe, Royal, Cambridge, Bosworth, and Paris. Toswell endeavours to emphasise aspects that have otherwise been overlooked, such as the fact that the much-ignored Stowe Psalter, is the only extant Anglo-Saxon psalter to be glossed throughout. She also draws attention to its place as the most complete extant psalter in Anglo-Saxon England, and emphasises the necessity for further study of the manuscript.

Chapters 5 and 6 look at evidence of the psalms in a range of Old English texts, including saints' lives, reinforcing Toswell's argument concerning the pervasiveness of the psalms in all aspects of Anglo-Saxon life and literature. Toswell challenges the scholarly presumption that they were viewed as static and untouchable, and explores how scribes reworked and reinterpreted the psalms in psalter manuscripts, and in other texts, such as poetry. She also reinforces her contention that the psalms have been generally overlooked in the history of the Bible in English literature.

Toswell's concluding chapter looks at the Anglo-Saxon elements in a group of Anglo-Norman psalters, to show that the Old English glossing tradition continued after the Norman invasion, and that psalter production continued to be an important element of monastic literary life.

Toswell's elegant study ranges from the minute details of various understudied manuscripts to more general interest sections on the psalms within the broader cultural context of Anglo-Saxon England. She touches on the entire history of Anglo-Saxon England, and successfully foregrounds the place of the psalms within Anglo-Saxon culture, both monastic and lay. This extensive volume provides an excellent introduction to a variety of psalter manuscripts, articulates various questions that require further investigation, and makes a valuable contribution to the study of Anglo-Saxon literature.

TAHLIA BIRNBAUM, *Australian Catholic University*

**von Güttner-Sporzyński**, Darius, *Poland, Holy War, and the Piast Monarchy, 1100–1230* (Europa Sacra, 14), Turnhout, Brepols, 2014; hardback; pp. xiv, 294; 7 b/w illustrations, 9 b/w line art; R.R.P. €80.00; ISBN 9782503547947.

In his recent monograph, Darius von Güttner-Sporzyński traces the evolution of the concept of holy war and its change into crusading, within the context of the reign of the Piast dynasty in Poland, from 1100, to the settlement of the Teutonic Order within the borders of Poland and Prussia, in 1226.

In the Middle Ages, the demarcation line between holy war and crusading rested on the difference between pacifist Christian theology and the rather more violent nature (and reality) of human existence. The idea of holy war incorporated the understanding that the use of force was not always automatically unacceptable, and what is more, in some cases it was ordained by God. Still, as von Güttner-Sporzyński observes, 'Before the thirteenth century, the difference between holy war and crusade is often blurred; it is certain, however, that whilst all crusades were holy wars, not all holy wars were crusades' (p. 1). For von Güttner-Sporzyński, the Christianisation of Pomerania by the Piasts during this period was an important factor in the change of concept.

The book is divided into seven chapters. The first two present the early history of Poland from 996, and the baptism of Mieszko I, to 1102, and the death of Władysław I Herman, in order to set the scene for an examination of the evolution of the concept of holy war in a Polish perspective. These two chapters also describe the introduction of Christianity into Poland, and that religion's substantial influence on the Piast realm and its culture. Chapter 3 discusses the dissemination of the idea of holy war among Polish elites of the early twelfth century, and examines "the right and just" wars waged by Bolesław III against the Pomeranians' as examples of holy wars and proto-crusades taking place at the same time. Chapter 4 lists the events of the civil war between Władysław II and his younger half-brothers before the Wendish Crusade and the circumstances of Polish involvement. Chapter 5 investigates the evidence of the involvement of the Poles in the Second Crusade and

their contribution to it of at least one powerful army. Chapter 6 explores Polish participation in Christian holy wars, and describes the autumn 1147 expedition led by Bolesław IV into Prussia, which has not previously been discussed in English-language historiography. Chapter 7 describes the missionary attempts of the Cistercian Order to convert Prussia in view of the fragmentation of the Piast patrimony.

This volume is a valuable study of the Piast dynasty and their holy wars.

MARIUSZ BĘCŁAWSKI, *Kozminski University*

**Yuval**, Israel Jacob, and Ram **Ben-Shalom**, eds, *Conflict and Religious Conversation in Latin Christendom: Studies in Honour of Ora Limor* (Cultural Encounters in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages, 17), Turnhout, Brepols, 2014; hardback; pp. viii, 316; R.R.P. €80.00; ISBN 9782503535142.

This volume provides both a worthy tribute to Ora Limor, a scholar deeply concerned with Jewish–Christian interaction across the centuries, and a significant set of essays exploring the complexity of mutual attitudes between Jews and Christians from the formation of the New Testament to the early modern period. The volume may serve to introduce readers to the sophistication of debate on these matters from scholars active within, as well as outside Israel. Too frequently, this is a topic that generates swift assertions, often from limited and selective use of certain familiar texts.

Many of the essays in this volume introduce new perspectives and voices, including an opening essay by the editors which looks at the creativity of medieval Jewish polemic against Christians. Paula Frederiksen offers a helpful overview of how Christian rhetoric against the Jews actually shaped social reality in the late antique period, while Miri Rubin examines how *Ecclesia* and *Synagoga* became so much more sharply defined in medieval art during the thirteenth century. The volume also offers more specific studies, such as Benjamin Kedar's contribution which considers whether Emicho of Flonheim perceived himself as King of the Last Days in the massacres of 1096 (warning that this may be a historiographical fancy). Other important scholars represented here include Harvey H. Hames on the debated 'conversion' account of Herman the Jew, in which he agrees with Jean-Claude Schmitt that it was a propaganda victory for the Premonstratensians, while conceding that it did draw on his own experience. Alexander Patchovsky reflects on the surprisingly detailed knowledge of Muslims, provided by Joachim of Fiore, as among those who could still potentially be saved, even if he saw them as enemies of Christendom. Sarit Shalev-Eyni considers Christian influences on Jewish memory of their saints, while Jeremy Cohen reflects on the subtleties of the anti-Christian polemic in *Shevet Yehuda* by Ibn Verga in the late fifteenth century. There is similar awareness of the complexity of Jewish attitudes in

papers by Nadia Zeldes on Hebrew books in fifteenth-century Sicily and by Ram Ben-Shalom on an anonymous Jewish account of Christian history from the early sixteenth century (edited in Hebrew in an Appendix). Two papers – Claude B. Stuczynski’s on Christian *converso* reflection on the ‘Mystical Body’ and Yosef Kaplan’s on Jewish–Calvinist debate in seventeenth-century Amsterdam – close a volume to be commended for its breadth and subtlety.

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