

## Reviews

**al-Musawi**, Muhsin J., *The Medieval Islamic Republic of Letters: Arabic Knowledge Construction*, Notre Dame, University of Notre Dame Press, 2015; paperback; pp. xiv, 449; 8 colour plates; R.R.P. US\$46.00; ISBN 9780268020446.

Muhsin al-Masawi's book provides an engaging exploration of Arabic letters in the 'post-classical' period, which covers the twelfth to eighteenth centuries. The book clearly demonstrates how the term 'Republic of Letters', most often associated with Enlightenment France and the city of Paris, can be equally applied to contemporary Arabic literary movements, stretching from North Africa to India, with the city of Cairo emerging as an important literary centre under the Mamluks (1250–1517). Al-Masawi directly challenges influential modernists of the twentieth century, such as Taha Ḥusayn (1889–1973), who dismiss the literary output of medieval Islamic and Muslim nation—states as 'ineffectual'.

Al-Masawi seeks to demonstrate the diversity and dynamism of literature in the post-classical era, a time when Mongol and Turkic forces achieved substantial victories in Central Asia, Iran, the Levant, and Egypt. Although the scholarly output of the late Ummayyad (first half of the eighth century) and Abbasid dynasties (750–1258 CE) has traditionally been viewed as the 'Golden Age' in Arabic literature, al-Masawi argues that the post-classical period was no less fruitful. The two most important factors contributing to this process, he writes, are related to people and place, in his words, 'human agency' and the 'sites and methods of conversation, discussion, compilation, and writing'. As an opening example, al-Masawi cites the now famous conversation conducted over thirty-five meetings between the Turco-Mongol conqueror, Tīmūr (Tamerlane; d. 1405), and the Tunisian scholar and jurist, Ibn Khaldūn (1332–1406), which took place outside Damascus in 1401. With the use of a translator, Tīmūr questioned Ibn Khaldūn on the intellectual life and resources of the Arab–Islamic world and Muslim Spain; Ibn Khaldūn himself wrote of these meetings as evidence of his social theory on the principle of 'group solidarity'. In this meeting, we have the most vivid proof of the process al-Masawi seeks to illustrate, namely a sustained and open conversation between diverse peoples with Arab–Islamic culture as the unifying medium.

Al-Masawi covers a wide variety of literary genres including rhetoric, encyclopaedism, epistolary writing, travel accounts, lexicography, Sufi poetry, and what he terms 'street poetry', exemplified in the writings

of Şafi al-Dīn Al-Ḥilli (second half of the thirteenth century), one of the leading poets of the post-classical era. Al-Ḥilli's poetry covers a wide range of themes including homoeroticism. In one poem, Al-Ḥilli bemoans the fact that a young boy is demanding money from him: 'I have a lover who acts as a brick builder [demanding money, not bricks] and I am the supplier of gold [not brick or clay] | whenever he turns around and sees me, he'll reiterate: give me.' Other popular poetic themes included *khamriyyah* (wine poetry), craftsmen's poetry, and erotica.

The poets themselves were equally diverse. Al-Masawi cites the great Persian poet, Al-Hafiz (1325/26–1389/90), a master of the *ghazal*, a poetic form used to express the pain of love and loss, along with female poets, such as Faṭimah al-Jamīliyah (sixteenth century), a prominent Sufi from Cairo, whose poems covered topics such as Sufism as a practice, education, and a girl's success in a craft.

The book's title is appropriate and what emerges is the importance of diversity in the post-classical Muslim world for the development of literature. This region was no longer, nor indeed had it ever been, a purely Arabic speaking environment. The amorphous Muslim empire was a 'massive conversation site' where the interlocutors included Arabs, Berbers, Mongols, Persians, Turks, and Indians. Al-Masawi describes this as a 'rattle of languages', prompting the prominent Tunisian lexicographer, Muḥammad b. al-Mukarram ibn Manzūr (d. 1311), to bemoan the 'decreasing interest in Arabic among the learned'. Particularly at the point of Ottoman triumphalism throughout the fourteenth century, Anatolian Oghuz became the 'dominant medium for translation'. Institutionalised by the Mongols as the official language, Persian too played an important part in this process. The Arabic poetic form, the *qaṣīdah* (formulaic ode), was 'vigorously pursued' by Persian authors who took leave from its Arabic origins and created poetry that was suited to local conditions.

Al-Masawi concludes by lamenting that while a process similar to the Enlightenment occurred in the Muslim world, the Arabic Republic of Letters did not endure as successfully. This 'seeming failure ... to survive in a sustainable manner', he argues, is tied to the fact that scholars were mostly state-sponsored and inevitably conformist, leading to a 'lack of a durably consolidated cultural capital'. Those reading al-Masawi's book may challenge this view, but the author's great contribution is getting this important debate started.

This book will be of great interest to those with an interest in literary history, whether in the Muslim world or elsewhere. Al-Masawi has provided a comprehensive and enlightening discussion of the vigorous 'literary conversation' that took place in the Muslim world from the twelfth to eighteenth centuries.

KATHERINE JACKA, *The University of Sydney*

**Andrés Fernández**, David, *Música y liturgia en la Catedral de Huesca en la Edad Media* (Cathedralis Oscensis, 1), Zaragoza, Comunter, 2015; paperback; pp. 213; 59 colour plates; R.R.P. €20.00; ISBN 9788415126942.

The processional book has been little studied in its medieval and early modern history, in spite of the fact that scholars have been studying processions for many years. Only recently have scholars begun to fill in this gap. The young Spanish scholar, David Andrés Fernández, is now recognised as the major authority on Spanish manuscript processional books. Here, he extends his earlier studies on Spanish processional books to two hitherto unstudied books from the Cathedral of Huesca, namely, Brussels, Bibliothèque Royale de Belgique, MS IV/473 (B-Br IV/473) (*olim* Zaragoza, Biblioteca Capitular, 30-119), and Barbastro (Huesca), Archivo Diocesano, caja 95 (E-BAR 95) (*olim* Zaragoza, Biblioteca Capitular, 30-115). The magisterial work of Michel Huglo on processional books that is well known to musicologists – (*Les Manuscrits du Processionnal*, 2 vols (Henle Verlag, 1999–2004)) – is extended here for Spanish processional books by Andrés Fernández. Trained as a palaeographer, musicologist, and historian, he is able to provide meanings and contexts for the two manuscripts that are the subject of this book.

While seemingly a simple book containing liturgical chant of the music to be sung in a procession, the processional has an interdisciplinary reach. Scholars from a number of different disciplines have long studied processions and their books from the perspectives of their own areas of interest. Art historians are interested in the decorative aspects for both their intrinsic and their symbolic meanings. Liturgical scholars can gain insights into practices from a regional, local, or monastic point of view. Historians of drama and performance have studied the procession and its books, and processions have been used as markers of religious/sacred space. Spanish documents contemporary with medieval and early modern processional books talk about the use of singers, dancers, and instrumentalists in processions thereby expanding the concept of a book containing a single line of music to its place as just one strand in a religio-performative moment.

This small book may be most properly described as a ‘handbook’, and as such joins a small number of other very useful books describing similar manuscripts of Spanish provenance. One should cite as examples studies of the manuscripts from the Biblioteca de la Real Colegiata de San Isidoro de León (Ana Suárez González, *III Los Codices VI-X.2* (Universidad de León, Secretariado de Publicaciones, 2001)) and the Cathedral of Burgo de Osma (Anna Muntada Torrellas, *Cantoriales del Monasterio de San Jerónimo de Espeja, Catedral de El Burgo de Osma: estudio y catálogo* (Cabildo S. I. Catedral de El Burgo de Osma, 2003)).

Even in this digital age, when so much manuscript material is accessible online, sources such as the ones discussed in this book are unlikely ever to be generally available. They come from churches, cathedrals, and archives in Spain that are very difficult to access. That said, they belong to a vibrant tradition of liturgical music in Spain, and can offer insights into provenance, musical and liturgical practices and contexts about which we still know very little. While one of these books is readily accessible to scholars (B-Br IV/473), the other (E-BAR 95) is not. Hence any information such as that provided here by Andrés Fernández is extremely valuable, and may provide clues to other manuscripts for which no information is available.

Andrés Fernández divides his book into three parts, dealing respectively with codicological description of each manuscript, the liturgico-musical repertory of each manuscript, and what he calls 'synthesis'. The first two of these sections are, by and large, technical, and the third is predominantly interpretative.

In the first two chapters, Andrés Fernández provides a clear discussion of the norms that he uses for his ensuing chapters. Thus, the reader can be clear about the bases for his technical discussions. While some of the materials that he cites are well known to English-speaking readers, others offer insights into ways in which French, German, and Spanish scholars approach the field of palaeography of musical sources, especially those from Spain.

Although we cannot ourselves look at these manuscripts, in the codicological section of the book it is as if the readers hold each manuscript in their hands, so detailed and alive is the discussion. Each element of the books is described in minute detail, with a plethora of photographic examples taken from the source itself. Particularly valuable are the pictures and explanations of abbreviations used and details of the musical notation.

Following the section on the technical aspects of the books, including decoration, binding, and dating, in addition to the aspects identified above, Andrés Fernández discusses the musical repertory of each of the books. Finally, in his section called 'Synthesis', he is able to place the contents of both of these books within a context of other possible Aragonese relatives.

This little book will be used as a basis for further research into similar manuscripts or as a possible teaching aid for high-level palaeographic study of Spanish musical sources of liturgical chant. Together with some of Andrés Fernández's earlier work it provides a benchmark against which new manuscripts and their contents can be assessed as they come to light.

JANE MORLET HARDIE, *The University of Sydney*

**Benay**, Erin E., and Lisa M. **Rafanelli**, *Faith, Gender and the Senses in Italian Renaissance and Baroque Art: Interpreting the 'Noli me tangere' and Doubting Thomas*, Farnham, Ashgate, 2015; hardback; pp. xvi, 282; 55 b/w illustrations, 6 colour plates; R.R.P. £70.00; ISBN 9781472444738.

The authors of this impressive volume have succeeded in providing a wide-ranging and insightful analysis of *Noli me tangere* and Doubting Thomas iconography in early modern Italian images, for the most part in painting and sculpture, with occasional references to illuminated manuscripts. While the iconographic study of Saints Mary Magdalene and Thomas is, of course, already well developed, Erin E. Benay and Lisa M. Rafanelli take a novel approach in focusing on the above-mentioned two episodes. These highlight the role touch, and the absence of touch, plays in the verification of Christ's bodily resurrection in the Bible, which informed later discussions of the nature of religious faith. In addition to theological issues, the authors explore the connections between the iconography of these episodes and broader contemporary discourses, including the status of touch in theoretical discussions of the senses, the status of women in society, and the use of religious imagery as political propaganda in public.

The topic is addressed for the most part chronologically. The first chapter provides a brief historical survey of images of Saints Mary Magdalene and Thomas – the *Noli me tangere* and Doubting Thomas episodes, in particular – from late antiquity through the Byzantine period, and up to the late medieval period. Visual analysis of key images is connected with influential Church writings on the saints. Chapter 2 discusses the use of *Noli me tangere* images in mendicant order settings during the late medieval and early Renaissance periods, while Chapter 3 focuses on the appearance of the Doubting Thomas in Franciscan settings, in particular, in the early Renaissance. Chapter 4 addresses the use of images of the Doubting Thomas in public contexts in Renaissance Tuscany, with particular reference to works by Paolo Uccello, Mariano del Buono, and Verrocchio, building on the scholarship of Andrew Butterfield and John Paoletti. Chapter 5 examines a series of small paintings of St Mary Magdalene and the *Noli me tangere* in Central and Northern Italy, apparently made for personal use, with close studies of works by Titian, Correggio, and Michelangelo (a lost cartoon of his recorded in copies). Chapter 6 looks at the period of the Counter-Reformation, addressing a series of images of the *Noli me tangere*, supplemented by other images of St Mary Magdalene, since the *Noli me tangere* became less common as a subject in this period. The authors account for this decline by arguing that the ambiguity of the *Noli me tangere* was antithetical to the Counter-Reformation desire for artistic and doctrinal clarity, among other causes. Key works depicting the

Doubting Thomas by Caravaggio, as well as others by Guercino and Mattia Preti, are also examined.

The majority of the artworks discussed are well known in the literature, with the notable exception of four glazed terracotta relief sculptures from Tuscan convents. As a result, the authors are at pains to point out where their analysis makes a novel contribution, which for this reviewer was less in providing compelling new insights into single images, and more in shaping a rich and coherent description of the varied and changing manifestations of these iconographies, something the authors achieve in spite of the challenging nature of their material. With only fragmentary knowledge of the patronage, original locations, and circumstances of commissions for many of the works discussed, it is often difficult for the authors to draw firm conclusions about specific intended and received meanings of individual images. Perhaps as a result, there is a tendency to tidy up the material, as it were. To give one example, a lost mural painting on the façade of the former Church of San Tommaso in Florence, which depicted the *Incredulity of Saint Thomas*, was described as a work of Uccello by early sources, has been said by some modern authors to be illustrated in the *Codex Rustici*, and has recently been associated with Medici patronage of the church. Benay and Rafanelli present the *Rustici* image as though it were certainly Uccello's invention, discuss the lost painting as though it were certainly a Medici commission, and – apparently following the tendency in the recent literature – date it to 1435 (without the qualification 'perhaps' or 'circa').

This book brings together a considerable body of research from the authors' PhD dissertations and subsequent articles. It highlights the relationship between two intriguing iconographic subjects, and interprets them in the light of a wide array of visual and documentary sources, to provide a convincing account of the range of readings that images of these episodes might have given rise to in early modern Italy. As such, it is a valuable reference for any scholar of art history of the Renaissance and Baroque periods.

HUGH HUDSON, *The University of Melbourne*

**Blumenfeld-Kosinski**, Renate, *The Strange Case of Ermine de Reims: A Medieval Woman between Demons and Saints* (Middle Ages), Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015; cloth; pp. 248; 10 b/w illustrations; R.R.P. US\$55.00, £36.00; ISBN 9780812247152.

In the medieval period, when the tangible existence of demons and spirits was taken for granted by people at all levels of society, the struggle to discern the intention of spirits was a constant source of anxiety. Whether spirits were sent by God to offer consolation and comfort, or by the Devil to deceive, tempt, and torment, was a crucial dilemma, particularly for female visionaries and mystics, because women were perceived to be especially fragile, gullible,

and vulnerable to demonic deception and possession. In this monograph, Renate Blumenfeld-Kosinski shows that for Ermine de Reims, an uneducated peasant woman lacking access to the appropriate vocabulary to articulate her visionary experiences, the intense spiritual relationship with her confessor, Jean le Graveur, was essential to the contemporary understanding and interpretation of her demonic torments and visionary experiences.

The horrific demonic assaults, self-inflicted suffering, and occasional, but consoling, divine visions of Ermine de Reims, during the last ten months of her life, were meticulously recorded by le Graveur, who sheltered Ermine in the spiritual community of his Augustinian priory in Reims after she was widowed in 1393. Blumenfeld-Kosinski's careful and thoughtful analysis of le Graveur's unique work, *The Visions of Ermine de Reims*, an abridged, translated version of which is provided as an appendix here, places Ermine's demonic torments within their historical and political context of late fourteenth-century France. By advocating Ermine as a heroine, le Graveur was attempting, in the vernacular, to promote the Augustinian order in Reims by advocating the first peasant saint in its history. When he submitted *Visions* to Jean Gerson, chancellor of the University of Paris, the descriptions of Ermine's suffering proved excessive and dangerous given the prevailing apocalyptic atmosphere accompanying the Great Schism, and so the work was translated into Latin. This ecclesiastical censorship and suppression explains why le Graveur's text virtually disappeared from view until it came to light again late in the twentieth century. Blumenfeld-Kosinski thus facilitates our understanding of a range of issues central to late medieval religious thought and life, from the political consequences of the Great Schism to devotional ideas and practices, the essence of female sainthood, and emerging notions of witchcraft and demonic possession during this transitional period.

Ermine de Reims and le Graveur lived during a time of political instability, violence, and disintegrating social fabric. Reims was close to the centre of the political, religious, and social crisis spawned by the Hundred Years' War, religious rupture, and pestilence. The hostilities associated with the Great Schism were of particular influence on Ermine's visions. Ermine was preoccupied by the controversial figure of Jean de Varennes, a charismatic hermit who had settled in a small sanctuary a few miles outside of Reims and attracted large crowds through his preaching. His eventual arrest and subsequent death in prison featured in her visions and discussions with le Graveur. Blumenfeld-Kosinski deftly shows how Ermine, despite her simplicity and lack of education, and unlike other thirteenth- and fourteenth-century holy women, at least as far as can be gleaned from the texts written by and about them, was deeply influenced and affected by the political life of her region.

Ermine de Reims was at the periphery of an era that saw a restructuring of the belief in and the purpose of supernatural forces. This was a period of transition when demonic visions, especially by women, were beginning to be seen as signs of witchcraft or demonic possession rather than symptoms of aspiring sainthood. The danger was particularly manifest in the sexual nature of some of Ermine's visions at a time when copulation with demons, which, although several decades before the publication of the *Malleus Maleficarum*, was being linked to witchcraft. We are thus given insight into the way the challenges to Ermine's faith focused on the central tenets of Christianity, as her battle with demons challenged orthodox dogma, and questioned religious practices, such as the Eucharist, the Resurrection, the existence of the soul, and the need for penance and good works. Indeed, in *Visions*, le Graveur had to struggle to interpret Ermine's battle with demons as evidence of her great strength of faith and his learned influence and teaching. It was le Graveur's task, then, to show Ermine's visions as tests of faith and not signs that she was in need of exorcism or indictment for sorcery.

Blumenfeld-Kosinki writes compellingly and with clarity, providing ample historical background to facilitate our understanding of Ermine's case. She intersperses the political, religious, and social background of late medieval France with detailed explanations of religious lives and saintly models, holy couples, religious education, and the evaluation of Ermine's visions by contemporary theologians. This case study of Ermine de Reims, together with careful use of background material, tells us a great deal about the importance of the discernment of spirits in this transitional period and contributes new insight into Nancy Caciola's thesis that the discernment of spirits was modulated by local mentalities, the self-interest of observers, and the constraints of power.

JUDITH BONZOL, *The University of Sydney*

**Bradshaw**, Brendan, *'And so began the Irish Nation': Nationality, National Consciousness and Nationalism in Pre-Modern Ireland*, Farnham, Ashgate, 2015; hardback; pp. xvii, 318; R.R.P. £75.00; ISBN 9781472442567.

Ireland, both the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland, is a place where histories of the medieval and early modern periods have continued to resonate in public and political consciousness. For Irish nationalists, heroic if doomed events such as the Kildare Rebellion, Nine Years War, and the Flight of the Earls, have been subjects of modern novels, plays, stories, and books; Protestant unionists and loyalists cling with grim determination to the treachery of the 1641 rebellion and the triumphs of the Williamite wars. The struggles for Irish independence in the twentieth century shaped many of the questions historians asked of the medieval and early modern period, particularly during the latter third of the twentieth century. One of the key



historians of early modern Ireland during this time is Brendan Bradshaw, who throughout his career has engaged with keen scholarly precision in debates over nationalism and Irish political and religious identity. *'And so began the Irish nation'* is at once a collection of his essays – many long out of print – and a sustained argument for continuing a search for the kernels of 'nationalist' thought and feeling in the early modern era rather than in the later eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

For historians of Ireland, Bradshaw is a familiar name. His highly influential and much-debated article, 'Nationalism and Historical Scholarship in Modern Ireland', appeared in 1989. In this widely cited article, he argued that the so-called 'value-free' history written from the 1930s in Ireland emphasised a detached, scientific view of history removed from present political reality and public engagement. He pleaded for a return to history that included the pain and horror of war and dispossession rather than airbrushing them out with dry historical platitudes. His arguments sparked a storm of controversy: articles were written, conferences organised, and reputations were under fire in what became known as the 'revisionist' debates. These storms have largely passed now, with a new generation of historians using the undercurrents of the 'revisionism' controversy as a backdrop to explorations of the messy ambiguities of premodern political and social thought and experiences.

In *'And so began the Irish nation'*, Bradshaw reprints important articles and then frames them with a lengthy new piece, 'Nationality, National Consciousness and Nationalism in Pre-modern Ireland'. This long piece both links the earlier articles and outlines a distillation of his long engagement with ideas on the origins of Irish nationalism. The depth and breadth of his long research career means that Bradshaw's work has a profound stature and authority. He argues that a sense of Irishness as patriotic and nationalist can be discerned particularly in those from Catholic Gaelic and Old English backgrounds from at least the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. He uses four very different writers as examples or case studies through which to prove his case: William Nugent, a sixteenth-century patriotic poet from a respected Old English family and rather reluctant rebel; Seathrún Céitinn (Geoffrey Keating) and his history of Ireland, *Foras ar Éirinn*; Patrick Darcy, a member of the Catholic Confederate in the 1640s who wrote *An Argument* to justify Irish legal sovereignty; and Dáibhí Ó Bruadair, 'the last of the great bardic poets' whose poetry expounded on loyalty to the Stuart kings, especially to the Catholic James II.

Bradshaw's basic argument, here and in the older articles in the collection, is that it was the Irish adherence to the ideology of Catholicism, combined with English crown policy towards 'subduing' Ireland that gave them a unifying framework in which a sense of nationalism or patria developed. The construction of Bradshaw's argument leaves little room for

counter point. What his precise analysis of these writers leaves untouched though includes any indication of how widespread or influential the ideas of these four writers were or how their expressions of patriotism fit within a wider European context. The recent work of Brendan Kane in *The Politics and Culture of Honour in Britain and Ireland, 1541–1641* (Cambridge University Press, 2010) is important on these points.

The other articles reprinted in *‘And so began the Irish nation’* are valuable research tools for historians of early modern Ireland and as such reprinting them in one accessible volume is welcome. For readers new to the field, it is worth pointing out that, like any volume collecting a scholar’s lifetime of work, the articles reflect research of their time, and in this field there has been much new work done since their publication. This is not a criticism of the project of collecting and reprinting such important articles; it is more a caveat that Bradshaw’s work here should in many cases be seen as important, provocative points from which to start rather than finish reading about early modern Irish identity, national consciousness, and nationhood. This in itself is testament to the influence of this scholar whose arguments continue to spark new thinking and new approaches.

DIANNE HALL, *Victoria University, Melbourne*

**Chiari**, Sophie, ed., *The Circulation of Knowledge in Early Modern English Literature*, Farnham, Ashgate, 2015; hardback; pp. 282; 5 b/w illustrations; R.R.P. £65.00; ISBN 9781472449153.

This collection of sixteen articles – adapted from the proceedings of a 2012 conference on transmission and transgression in early modern England held at Aix-Marseille University – aims to freshly engage with the issues of transmission, initiation, and transgression. While the articles individually offer many useful insights, their subject matter is too varied and the volume’s focus on an activist kind of ‘transgression’ too singular to produce a really coherent whole.

For this reviewer, the volume could have been more rewarding if it had addressed the issue of how knowledge could be transmitted and transformed in ways that *reinforced* contemporary social norms and worldviews. An example of this type of transformation would be how pre-Reformation literary anticlericalism, found for instance in the works of Dante, was turned into anti-Catholic, Protestant literature and entertainment in reformed England. Sophie Chiari and Roy Erikson mention such transmissions in their respective chapters, but do so only in passing.

In her Introduction, Chiari announces that the collection’s overall argument ‘is that, in the age of Shakespeare, ideas were digested, transformed and turned upside down’ (p. 8). There is an activist purpose in this transformation and inversion: the poems and drama are seen ‘as agents of

change' (p. 13). Such a reading of early modern texts, however, especially if it primarily reflects an investment in modern political concerns, runs the risk of being ahistorical. Gordon McMullan's remarks in the volume's Foreword seem problematic in this regard: *The Taming of a Shrew's* Fernando, we are told, uses tactics that reduce 'Kate to pious recitation of Biblical anti-feminism' (p. xvi). This observation obliges us to make two unlikely and ahistorical assumptions: one, a kind of feminism existed in 1594; and two, the biblical text, having foreseen this feminism, is being antithetical towards it.

The book's first chapter by Richard Wilson is perhaps the most accomplished and interesting of the collection. It traces Foucault's emergence, sinking, and eventual soaring in Shakespeare studies, when his writings could finally be pressed into service to buttress a radical Shakespeare who challenged authority through his art. While the chapter ends on an elegiac and subversive note, it subtly introduces and then dismisses Stephen Greenblatt's powerful statement that appears in *Shakespearean Negotiations*: 'Theatre is not set over against power, but is one of power's essential modes' (p. 25). It is also a good place to remind readers of Richard Helgerson's illuminating and *non-radical* conclusion about Shakespeare's plays, found in his momentous work, *Forms of Nationhood* (University of Chicago Press, 1992).

The rest of the chapters offer valuable insights but are frequently circumscribed by their need to adhere to a 'transgressive' agenda. In the second chapter, David Levin shows how Shakespeare transforms Aristotle's ideas of knowledge through his art, and 'is guilty of transgressions against Aristotle' (p. 45). In Chapter 3, Jonathan Pollock explores some intriguing echoes of Lucretius's poem *De rerum natura* in Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra* and *The Tempest*. In Chapter 5, Christophe Hausermann uses the apprentice–master trope in city comedies such as *A Shoemaker, A Gentleman* (1608) and *Eastward Ho!* (1605) to reflect on how knowledge was transmitted.

Chantal Schütz concludes in Chapter 6 that Middleton's *A Mad World, my Masters* draws on older tropes of the Mother and the Courtesan, from Pietro Aretino's *Ragionamenti* (1534) among others, to challenge 'the patriarchal social code' (p. 91). In Chapter 7, Claire Guéron's conclusion appears strained: in *Much Ado About Nothing*, she writes, 'every act of information-sharing involves both the foregrounding and the possible undermining of class and gender barriers' (p. 103). In Chapter 11, Noam Reisner concludes, predictably, that in the character of Vindice in *The Revenger's Tragedy* we 'witness the transformation of the idea of transgression itself' (p. 157). Laetitia Sansonetti proposes that *Venus and Adonis* downplays 'the moral teaching [concerning sexual proscription] that ... medieval predecessors had extracted from *Metamorphosis*' (p. 176).

In Chapter 14, Pierre Kapitaniak shows us how Middleton's *The Witch* subverts Reginald Scot's *The Discoverie of Witchcraft* and 'its sceptical context'

of witches (p. 192). James I had earlier lambasted Scot's views in his *Daemonologie*. Regardless of the nuance Kapitaniak provides, this particular transgression by Middleton, especially in its subversion of Scot's work, reads very much like *conformity* to the reigning monarch's worldview.

The short Afterword, 'Love's Transgression', is a delightful reflection by Ewan Fernie on *The Winter's Tale*, but the piece does not quite relate to the book's particular transgressive agenda. These reservations aside, readers should nevertheless find something of interest in this volume's diverse case studies.

RAJIV THIND, *The University of Queensland*

**Evergates**, Theodore, *Henry the Liberal: Count of Champagne, 1127–1181* (Middle Ages), Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016; cloth; pp. 392; 11 b/w illustrations; R.R.P. US\$75.00, £49.00; ISBN 9780812247909.

While travelling through Champagne in 1179, Walter Map – cleric, critic, and wit at the Plantagenet court – recorded his impressions of his host in Troyes, calling him 'the most generous of men, so much so that to many he seemed prodigal, for to all who asked, he gave' (p. 157). This was Henry 'the Liberal', Count of Champagne from 1152 to 1181. As Theodore Evergates notes, while this reputation was well deserved, it was not entirely altruistic. Henry's largesse to monasteries, rural tenants, and urban centres stimulated production and commerce, notably through the important Champagne fairs, which generated considerable extra revenue for the Count through tolls and taxes. Henry's ambition appears to have been to build a thriving, peaceful, and increasingly unified political entity from a collection of formerly separate feudal regions based on castles or other fortified sites. In this, as Evergates demonstrates, he succeeded.

Henry's father, Thibaut, elder brother of King Stephen of England, had combined the family's traditional estates in Blois–Chartres, to the west of Paris, with newly acquired lands further east. This created a powerful principality on either side of the royal domain, giving rise to tension with the Capetian monarch, Louis VI, and leading Thibaut to be described as 'within France second only to the king' (p. 3). Henry inherited only the eastern lands but he took to calling himself Count Palatine of Troyes to underscore his superior status based on a lordship extending over neighbouring regions. On this basis, Evergates claims persuasively that '[w]ithin a decade of his accession, Henry had reimagined Champagne as a territorial state'. Henry's relations with Louis VII were generally much better than had been the case between their fathers. Ties of loyalty and mutual respect forged during the expedition to the Holy Land on the Second Crusade (1147–49) endured through subsequent decades. These were reinforced by marital pacts: Henry

married Louis's daughter Marie (from the king's first marriage to Eleanor of Aquitaine), while in 1160, Louis took as his third wife Henry's sister, Adele, who became the mother of Philip Augustus. Despite the ensuing tangle of relationships which made Henry both son-in-law and brother-in-law to his sovereign and which were potentially in breach of canon law, family alliances underscored a soothing of political tensions.

Although the author includes a chapter on court culture in the midst of the dominant political narrative, surprisingly little space is given to several notable figures traditionally associated with Champagne and especially with the circle of Countess Marie. It is true that the idea of a literary court centred on Marie has little or no basis and has effectively been demolished, yet the possibility of connections with Chrétien de Troyes, in particular, is only briefly considered here and is just as quickly dismissed (p. 147). All the same, the cultural influence of new Cistercian foundations, the frequent presence of papal delegations and foreign merchants, and the personal interests of the Count contributed to an environment which encouraged intellectual enquiry and spread literacy and written materials more widely than was usual in the twelfth-century context, so that they became an 'integral part of life in Champagne' (p. 176).

Architecture, too, saw important developments, especially with the construction of a new comital residence and adjacent chapel of St-Étienne in Troyes, one of the first to be constructed in the new Gothic style. Though it cannot be proven that Henry stopped off in Sicily on his return from crusade, Evergates suggests that this is likely and argues that Henry may have taken the idea for a combined residential, administrative, and spiritual campus from the magnificent works being undertaken in mid-century by the Norman king Roger II at Palermo. The idea is a tantalising one, if difficult to verify.

Perhaps this account sounds a touch too idealised or even utopian, but it has to be acknowledged that no one could be better placed to write Henry's biography. Evergates has spent a scholarly career examining the development of Champagne and the lives of its ruling family (see my review of his earlier work on the region's aristocracy in *Parergon* 25.2, 2008). Here, he argues that Henry's principality set the scene for the new France of the thirteenth century – increasingly institutionalised, assertive, and unified – that has traditionally been held to emerge only with the accession of Philip II Augustus in 1180. Thirty years earlier, in the author's view, the developments to come were foreshadowed in the successful state-building measures undertaken in the prosperous, peaceful, and well-governed regions to the east of Paris under the liberal Count and his forward-looking regime.

LINDSAY DIGGELMANN, *The University of Auckland*

**Fanger**, Claire, *Rewriting Magic: An Exegesis of the Visionary Autobiography of a Fourteenth-Century French Monk* (Magic in History), University Park, Pennsylvania State University Press, 2015; hardback; pp. 232; 4 illustrations; R.R.P. US\$79.95; ISBN 9780271066509.

This monograph interrogates the *Liber florum celestis doctrine*, or *Flowers of Heavenly Teaching*, also sometimes called the *Liber visionum*, written by the fourteenth-century Benedictine monk, John of Morigny. This book is only now beginning to gain considerable attention from modern scholars, and Claire Fanger, along with Nicholas Watson, is one of the foremost experts on the text. John's work is a difficult source, being in parts visionary autobiography, prayer book, and collection of rituals. Its original purpose was to help the operator in the acquisition of knowledge (or rather the re-acquisition of the lost inheritance of Adamic knowledge), and in this goal, the *Liber florum* is influenced by more than one magical tradition that was condemned by medieval authorities, particularly the *ars notoria* of Solomon. While John was influenced by the *ars notoria*, he attempted in his work to destroy it by plundering what good it contained, like the Egyptian treasure, and rewriting it as solely an instrument of divine grace. Much of the *Liber florum* is taken up by the story of John's own conversion from his earlier dabbling in illicit magic, as God's grace transformed his understanding of the magical, liturgical, and sacramental traditions of his life, as well as the spiritual and visionary journey that lay behind his process of revising the text. Unknown authorities condemned the *Liber florum* in 1315, thinking that its figures were too close to demonic *nigromancia*. This condemnation led John to rewrite parts of the book, emphasising its divine inspiration. Despite this reworking, the book was again condemned and some copies were burned in 1323. John's book, however, lived on after its condemnation, and it was copied and used until the early sixteenth century.

Fanger's book is not so much a traditional scholarly overview of a text and its history – for that a reader should see the critical edition from the Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies Press – as 'a memoir of a journey' undertaken by a modern scholar in contact with an historical source. Fanger's attempt to understand John's text forced her to acknowledge differing levels of personal and institutional ignorance about how a source like the *Liber florum* should be read or understood. This modern struggle to understand mirrors, in a way, the central concerns of the text itself in its own original context. The *Liber florum* tells a story about the acquisition of knowledge by human beings. It is this story of two parallel struggles to know, one in the past and one in the present about the past, that forms the core of *Rewriting Magic*.

At the heart of Fanger's exegetical memoir is the following argument: in John of Morigny's *Flowers of Heavenly Teaching*, an individual experiences the acquisition of knowledge as a transformation of the self that is integrated with

the transformation of knowledge in the context of community. In this way, 'the experience of internal transformation ... is actually part of an external transformation that is tied to the entire community of the Christian faithful' (p. 8) on its way towards redemption. Regarding the mode of knowledge acquisition, Fanger invokes Asad's technologies of the self to help the reader resist the impulse to view John's rewriting of the *ars notoria* as an *ars magica*, promising amazing results with little work. It was a force multiplier in the course of regular learning, which facilitated the reform of the self that was necessary for knowledge to be accessed and retained.

*Rewriting Magic* reflects a more mature understanding of the *Liber florum* and its composition than some of Fanger's earlier work (*Conjuring Spirits*), and Fanger relates her evolving knowledge of the text with John's own process of revision. John's first version (the Old Compilation) was in fact quite distinctive in comparison to the *notae* of the *ars notoria*. One of the more interesting elements of the book is its detailed exploration of the apparent murkiness of what one might call the specific rationality for many of the magical practices John regards as belonging to the realm of possible human knowledge. The 'exceptive arts', which for John consisted of nigromancia, aeromancia, pyromancia, ciromancia, geomancia, and ydromancia, combined possible divine, demonic, and ambiguous causation in what Fanger terms 'conceptual gradations of illicit magic' (p. 116). This backdrop of varying grades is essential for an accurate understanding of John's engagement with the magical traditions that influenced him.

*Rewriting Magic* is in some respects an unusual book. It represents a refreshingly honest account of a scholar's attempt to overcome the problem of understanding and analysing a form of medieval religiosity that relied upon lived experience. Fanger attempts to bridge the aporia between medieval experience and its contemporary interpretation through a close attention to the experience of the modern scholar's encounter with the text.

MICHAEL D. BARBEZAT, *The University of Western Australia*

**Graney, Christopher M.**, *Setting Aside All Authority: Giovanni Battista Riccioli and the Science against Copernicus in the Age of Galileo*, Notre Dame, University of Notre Dame Press, 2015; paperback; pp. 288; R.R.P. US\$29.00; ISBN 9780268029883.

Christopher Graney's recent monograph is best described by one word: scientific. It is a book about knowledge, process, and context. If only more history was like this.

Graney's task is simple: to prove Galileo wrong. On the basis of the science/knowledge of the day, the weight of tradition, the arguments deployed, and the limits of the tools for observation at their disposal, Graney addresses in depth early modern arguments over the nature of the universe,

and revises the popular image of Galileo as a saint of modern science facing down blind religion with demonstrable truth. Rather than perpetuating this memorialisation context, which generally presents geo-centricism as a largely theologically based relic of superstitious antiquity and helio-centricism as an objectively clear pointer to modernity's clarity, Graney gets into the nitty-gritty of the science of the period. He produces a lucid refutation of the more facile narratives that dominate telling of this long-run scientific argument.

Graney reminds general readers, for instance, that there was in fact a two-sided argument, with scientific merit on both sides. He recognises and highlights how both sides cited Scripture, but points out this was merely secondary to their observations of the heavens and their mutual understandings of the physical nature of the universe learned from Aristotelian physics. Moreover, Graney allows the very human characteristics of the academic contestations to have their place, where personalities play a big role in much of the argumentative subtext, and where patronage plays its part in the forming of arguments and weighing of evidence. Graney's observation about Cardinal Bellarmine's doubt, for instance, is particularly astute.

At the core of Graney's study is a detailed analysis of Riccioli's *New Almagest*, and the science behind Riccioli's assessment that, on the balance of contemporary evidence, the earth was at the centre of the universe. Drawing particularly on the observations of Tycho Brahe, and his modified geo-centric model, Riccioli weighed 126 arguments between the geo-centrists and the helio-centrists. So too does Graney, revisiting each of them in turn. Helping to rescue Riccioli from the prejudice of suspiciously hagiographical scientific writing – which dismissed him on the basis of his conclusion and his clerical garb – Graney treats Riccioli's arguments with sensitivity to what was known then, as well as now. He comes to the surprising conclusion that Riccioli was on balance right and Galileo wrong, at least insofar as demonstrability and current science went.

In the end, there were arguments the geo-centrists offered which the helio-centrists could not answer without recourse to God. As Graney recognises, this was essentially because of wider scientific and technological limitations, but as limits they must nonetheless stand against Galileo's reasoning. Being proven right in the end is not the same as being right at the time; and if the working was wrong, then the conclusion was flawed. Moreover, as Graney points out, the question was not properly, scientifically settled for several centuries, even after the hypothesis had come to be more generally accepted.

Yet there is more. This wonderful book is not just a one-line show. Putting the wider European scientific endeavour of the period into a broader perspective than just the leading figures, Graney recaptures a world of thinkers and experimenters who observed the stars, shared data, and



tested hypotheses. His discussion of Jesuits dropping clay balls from towers, arguments about the motion of cannonballs fired at various directions from the equator, the clunky machines for measuring distances in the sky, and the problems with the optics of telescopes, all offer much-needed scientific rigor to the discussion of scientific phenomena and the history of science alike. This is scientific history at its best.

NICHOLAS D. BRODIE, *Hobart, Tasmania*

**Hannay**, Margaret P., Michael G. **Brennan**, and Mary Ellen **Lamb**, *The Ashgate Research Companion to The Sidneys, 1500–1700*, Farnham, Ashgate, 2015; hardback; 2 vols: vol. I, pp. xv, 340; 32 b/w illustrations; vol. II, pp. xlv, 351; 12 b/w illustrations; R.R.P. £180.00; ISBN 9781409450382 and 9781409450405.

The public careers, domestic lives, and historical sensibilities of the Sidney family of Penshurst during the Tudor and Stuart periods are richly documented by an unusual blend of literary works, private and official correspondence, estate papers, library lists, and personal miscellanea. Much has been lost, of course – during the Great Fire of London, in various shipwrecks, and as a result of other misadventures – but what remains make the Sidneys one of the best-documented English families of that time. As the editors of this wonderful research companion point out in their Introduction, the Sidneys are remarkable, not only for the political and cultural influence of the male members of the family, but also for the notable contributions of their womenfolk, many of whom were well educated and creative in their own right.

This two-volume guide presents forty-two essays by the leading experts in the field of Sidney studies. Volume I, subtitled ‘Lives’, opens with an analysis of the family’s links with other influential English dynasties, particularly the Dudleys and Herberts, with whom the Sidneys intermarried, a strategy that underpinned the steady rise in their fortunes, once Sir Henry Sidney established himself at court following his appointment as governor of the household of Henry VIII’s infant son, Edward. Biographical portraits of Sir Henry (1529–86) and his three brilliant children – Sir Philip (1554–86), Robert, First Earl of Leicester (1563–1626), and Mary Sidney Herbert, Countess of Pembroke (1561–1621) – feature among the twelve biographies that make up Part II of the first volume. A number of other essays are devoted to lesser-known family members and there is an admirable balance here between biographies of women and men. The remainder of Volume I, Parts III to V, explores the Sidneys’ political roles in Scotland, Wales, and on the Continent, along with their involvement in artistic patronage, ranging from the visual arts, music, court festivals, and architecture.

Volume II focuses on the literary output of the Sidneys, particularly on Sir Philip's *Arcadia* and his *Defence of Poesy*, the poetry of his brother, Robert, and the writings of Lady Mary Wroth and Mary Sidney Herbert. The devotional works of Sir Philip and Mary Sidney Herbert are also sensitively analysed by Anne Lake Prescott, Hannibal Hamlin, and Danielle Clarke.

As well as presenting the latest scholarship on the Sidney family's complex engagement with the political, artistic, and religious currents of the early modern centuries, the *Ashgate Companion* concludes with an essay on future directions for Sidney Studies. This is a timely and very welcome initiative, given the number of important editions of letters and literary works by members of the family published in the last decade. The publication by Oxford University Press of *The Correspondence of Sir Philip Sidney*, ed. Roger Kuin (2012) and the earlier, two-volume *Collected Works of Mary Sidney Herbert*, eds Margaret Hannah and others (1998), as well as the marital correspondence of Robert Sidney and Barbara Gamage, *Domestic Politics and Family Absence: The Correspondence (1588–1621) of Robert Sidney, First Earl of Leicester, and Barbara Gamage Sidney, Countess of Leicester*, eds Margaret Hannah and others (Routledge, 2005), have all been prepared with the highest scholarly rigour. It is now possible to study the tight interweaving of religion and politics in the lives of these individuals, their social and cultural networks, and the connections between their careers at the English court and their diplomatic and intellectual links with the rest of Europe. Combined with this new guide to current scholarship, the modern editions of writings by the Sidneys open up a wealth of opportunities for the next generation of scholars to build on the splendid work of the experts represented in these two volumes.

As Mary Ellen Lamb points out in her concluding essay, further study of the circulation of manuscript writings within the circle of Mary Wroth and of the dissemination of secular lyric poems by other members of the family in the form of songs are but two of the fruitful avenues of research for understanding the direct and indirect influence of the Sidneys on later writers. There is also a good chance that careful archival sleuthing will reveal writings by members of the family that are yet to be discovered.

CAROLYN JAMES, *Monash University*

**Ilić**, Mirko, and Steven **Heller**, *Presenting Shakespeare: 1,100 Posters from around the World*, New York, Princeton Architectural Press, 2015; hardback; pp. 320; 1,100 colour illustrations; R.R.P. US\$50.00, £30.00; ISBN 9781616892920.

Mirko Ilić and Steven Heller bring together here over a thousand posters created for international theatrical productions of William Shakespeare's plays. In a work dominated by images over text, Ilić and Heller present what they refer to as 'the first ever curated collection of international theatrical

posters of Shakespeare's work on stage' (p. 15). Ilić and Heller include only a partial selection of their exhaustive survey of posters (numbering over fifteen hundred items), edited from sources from around the globe, and including productions from countries such as Japan, South Africa, Colombia, India, Russia, and Australia. What remains is large and diverse collection of 1,100 posters produced over nearly two centuries, that are arguably 'historically significant, aesthetically desirable, [and] conceptually intelligent' (p. 21).

*Presenting Shakespeare* is divided into twenty-one sections, including a brief preface by famed director, Julie Taymor, an Introduction by Ilić and Heller, and nineteen chapters of posters. Each chapter begins with a short written summary of the posters selected, in which Ilić and Heller highlight notable posters and productions and offer other important curatorial insights. This is followed by reproductions of the posters, covering numerous pages.

In their Introduction, Ilić and Heller trace the history of how Shakespeare's plays have been advertised, from flags and banners, to eighteenth- and nineteenth-century playbills dominated by typography, and onto modern posters incorporating everything from photography to illustration. Ilić and Heller argue that the earliest forms of advertising for Shakespeare's work emerged in 1599: the Lord Chamberlain's Men raised a flag featuring the mythical character, Hercules, carrying a globe on his shoulders, to announce the opening of The Globe theatre in London. Flags of different colours were also flown over The Globe to advertise – to a population who were often unable to read and write – the type of play being performed: white for comedy, black for tragedy, and red for history.

The use of a simple 'visual gesture that represents a production' (p. 11) is by no means an exclusively early modern advertising trick, but is prevalent throughout the various posters found in Ilić and Heller's collection. Taymor notes in her preface that the posters chosen by Ilić and Heller offer 'emblematic clues [found] in Shakespeare's productions' (p. 11). For example, motifs are consistently repeated within designs for certain plays, such as daggers for *Macbeth*, crowns for the *History* plays, and skulls for *Hamlet*. While these are obvious examples of designers summarising a play's themes and intricacies in visual shorthand, not all the posters selected are solely representational or ridden with visual clichés; several posters obviously demonstrate how 'Shakespeare's imagery can be metaphorical' (p. 21) and allow for multiple artistic interpretations.

Some of Shakespeare's more popular plays, such as *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, are given their own separate chapters, while other production posters are grouped together into chapters titled by genre, for example, 'The Histories', and 'The Tragicomedies'. While obviously some plays are more popular than others and are subsequently adapted to stage more often, the running order of chapters in the contents page is somewhat

confusing: it randomly moves from major plays to genres with no suggestion of why this order has been chosen. Perhaps a better solution to organising such a large and diverse selection of posters would have been to sort items by genre and then by play. This certainly would have given more balance to a collection, which while diverse, is dominated by the more frequently produced plays. Additional critical analysis of particular posters, as well as detailed curatorial insights as to why some posters were chosen over others, would have further strengthened the collection.

*Presenting Shakespeare* contains neither an index, nor a bibliography. The absence of an index is especially frustrating for readers hoping to search for productions and posters by country or continent, or even by play (apart from those given their own chapter). While a list of abbreviations of various countries used throughout *Presenting Shakespeare* is given in the front matter, this invaluable addition is hidden among the copyright information; it ought to have been given its own page.

The major strength of *Presenting Shakespeare* is the huge variety of posters that demonstrate to the reader the diversity of the worldwide reception and production of Shakespeare's plays, and speak to Shakespeare's role as a global cultural phenomenon, from Renaissance England and through to the transformations and translations of his work in the twenty-first century.

MARINA GERZIĆ, *The University of Western Australia*

**Jervis**, Ben, Lee G. **Broderick**, and Idoia Grau **Sologestoa**, eds, *Objects, Environment, and Everyday Life in Medieval Europe* (Studies in the History of Daily Life (800–1600), 3), Turnhout, Brepols, 2016; hardback; pp. xii, 313; 65 b/w illustrations, 20 b/w tables; R.R.P. €90.00; ISBN 9782503555034.

Most of the thirteen essays in this collection were originally presented in a session of the 2012 Medieval Europe Research Congress in Helsinki, entitled 'Life in the City: Artefact and Environmental Based Approaches to Urban Europe'. There is 'a diverse chronological and geographical range' (p. 2), but it is worth noting that the collection leans very heavily towards artefacts and environmental evidence found in the British Isles or in Scandinavia.

Unlike the conference proceedings and specialised journals that they have largely replaced, collections of essays, particularly when published as volumes in thematic series, impose upon their editors the need to make a case for the unity of the collection; to give a convincing rationalisation for its structural subdivisions; to summarise the contribution to the discipline made by the essays, individually and collectively; and to gesture towards their larger implications and wider significances. In these circumstances, a

certain amount of hyperbole is inevitable, but technically considered, the Introduction provided by Ben Jervis and his co-editors is exemplary.

The essays included in *Objects, Environment, and Everyday Life in Medieval Europe* are highly detailed, specialist analyses, surprisingly readable for the most part, and, as far as a non-specialist can judge, of consistently high quality. To a greater or lesser extent, the contributors contrive, chiefly in their opening and closing paragraphs, to address one or more of the key themes or issues that the Introduction raises. The focus on urban sites and urban cultures which originally brought the contributors together at the 2012 Helsinki conference is not reflected in the title of this volume. But it is the fundamental unifying rationale of the collection as described in the Introduction, and this focus is pervasively reflected in the essays. A particular aim, heralded in the Introduction and developed in a variety of ways by a number of the contributors, is to challenge preconceived ideas of a 'hard rural/urban dichotomy', and to consider towns 'not as isolated settlements, but as integral parts of the system which was Medieval society, which influence their surroundings, but are also influenced by them' (p. 12).

No less important as a thematic focus is the study of 'Everyday Life' in medieval urban culture, which, the Introduction affirms, 'extends beyond the physical entity of the town' (p. 2). According to the Introduction, it is 'widely acknowledged' that artefacts and environmental evidence can contribute to our understanding of 'social relationships, identities, and processes of socio-cultural change'. But, the Introduction goes on to state, in relation to medieval towns, artefacts and environmental evidence are 'an underutilized resource' (p. 2). Maciej Trzeciński, however, in an essay notable for the carefulness and sophistication of its methodology, addresses the question of 'whether it is possible to reconstruct social relations on the basis of the surviving elements of material culture'. He describes this as a 'fundamental question within archaeology' (p. 114). He foregrounds the role of written sources, and regards interdisciplinary co-operation, particularly between archaeologists and historians, as a prerequisite for 'attempting to construct a coherent image of life in a Medieval town' (p. 133).

The Introduction also states that 'relationships between people and objects within the Medieval home' are, comparatively speaking, 'understudied' (p. 10). Janne Harjula, on the other hand, regards this relationship as 'having recently been given much attention in archaeological research', and adds that 'material culture and its engagement with personal religious devotion and magical practices have been of particular interest' (p. 212). Harjula's essay, like the three runically inscribed bowls on which he bases his admirably brief, readable, and scholarly investigation, offers 'valuable insight into the relationships between material culture and magical concepts, Christian devotion, and religious literacy education' (p. 228). Harjula assumes,

reasonably, that the three bowls were used in an urban domestic context, since they were excavated from the site of the medieval town of Turku, southwest Finland. Whether use of such vessels was available only within the physical confines of a medieval town, or was even a specifically urban cultural experience, lies outside the scope of his investigation.

Particularly stimulating is Mark A. Hall's essay, a lively combination of detailed investigation of gaming pieces of jet and its correlates, mostly found in Britain, with an examination of the wide-ranging European contexts in which archaeological evidence of board and dice games has been found. He engages, interestingly and informatively, with most of the themes and issues raised in the Introduction. Archaeologists, however, might think more highly of the essays in the final section, which includes two contributions showing the value of new techniques, an innovative application of soil micromorphology and a study of the development of dental calculus.

STEPHANIE HOLLIS, *The University of Auckland*

**Milstein**, Joanna, *The Gondi: Family Strategy and Survival in Early Modern France*, Farnham, Ashgate, 2014; hardback; pp. ix, 244; 9 b/w illustrations; R.R.P. £70.00; ISBN 9781409454731.

In this illuminating study, Joanna Milstein plots in meticulous detail the spectacular social and political ascent of the Gondi, a Florentine merchant-banking family, in sixteenth-century France. Migrating from Italy to Lyon, to where they, largely, also shifted their commercial activities, the Gondi were among an influx of Italian merchants and bankers to strike new roots in the urban centre, transforming Lyon into a dominant centre of European trade and banking.

The resultant monograph is an exhaustive examination of the complex of office, obligation, and patronage through which this foreign family's dramatic rise to eminence in the court of Catherine de' Medici and her sons, Charles IX and Henri III, was engineered, and which armoured them against the resentment their ascendancy and prominence provoked. In spite of their extraordinary economic power and considerable political and cultural influence in early modern France, the Gondi have remained underexplored by modern scholars. Milstein's study is a valuable corrective to this neglect. Drawing extensively on manuscript sources in French, Italian, and American archives, the author analyses the apparatus of Gondi service as the family percolated up the chain of power and influence in the Valois court.

The Introduction surveys succinctly the scholarly works in which the Gondi have received some treatment. The author emphasises the xenophobic backlash against these immigrant newcomers, which suffuses through the writings of sixteenth-century chroniclers and polemicists. Therein, Milstein finds embedded a deep-seated negativity and envy regarding the

inordinate wealth and power accumulated by these Florentine immigrants. The importance of these contemporary accounts for Milstein's discussion lies in the basis they form for much of the uncritical historical work previously undertaken on the Gondi.

The first chapter treats this unsavoury reputation of the Gondi, blackened further over time, in Milstein's view, by a wave of anti-Italianism. The author's aim is to interrogate the persistent correlation, forged by contemporaries and later historians, of the enhancement of Albert de Gondi's power, and that of the family overall, with the St Bartholomew's Day Massacre in 1572. Through a penetrating treatment of anti-Italian xenophobia and invective, anti-court rhetoric, and the perceived 'usurpation' (p. 55) of the French nobility by foreign newcomers, Milstein offers fresh insights into, and a reorientation away from, this misconception.

The indispensability of the Gondi's commercial and financial acumen, and the zenith of their might as bankers to the monarchy, particularly as the Crown's finances crumbled throughout the turbulent decades of the French wars of religion, are treated in Chapter 2. Through the mutual indispensability of the Gondi's financial services to the Crown and Catherine de' Medici's unstinting patronage of these fellow Florentines, Milstein underscores the volatile boundaries between the distinction and vilification of the Gondi, who, inevitably, shared in the unpopularity of the Italian queen.

In Chapter 3, Milstein unravels the labyrinthine channels of Gondi power and influence in the politics of the court and royal diplomacy. In their skilful and supple execution of overlapping roles – as diplomats, advisers, intelligencers, and procurers of ready cash and credit – the Gondi men cemented their indispensability to the Crown. With an observant, critical eye, the author, importantly, perceives the clannish solidarity that underscored these activities and the kin patronage that was its strategic outgrowth.

Chapter 4 magnifies the significant ecclesiastical dimensions of this multifaceted royal service, the apogee of which was the capture of the bishopric of Paris by Pierre de Gondi, persuaded to do so by Catherine. In a deftly crafted analysis of the strategic breadth of his religious capacity, Milstein charts the relationship between ecclesiastical institution and multi-generational family strategy. With an eagle eye fixed on present and subsequent generations, Pierre obtained lucrative benefices and a variety of Church positions for several relatives. The author argues that such positions were amassed when royal favour was at its peak, then distributed to the following generation of Gondi: a dynastic insurance policy for when the ardour of Crown patronage may have cooled.

In the splendid last chapter, Milstein examines the myriad arenas – such as religion and marriage, as well as royal, literary, and cultural patronage – through which the Gondi women contributed to the family's collective

arsenal of patronage power. Here, the author carefully elaborates a ‘dynamic of female solidarity’ (p. 209). Among the exemplary figures treated, Jeanne, the Prioress of the Dominican Royal Priory of St-Louis in Poissy, who, in her prestigious Church role, helped establish a small dynasty of Gondi Church women and built a mini empire of wealth acquisition. Especially notable was Marie-Catherine de Pierrevive, wife of Antoine de Gondi. It was through her personal relationship with Catherine de’ Medici that the Gondi first came to the French court, and were there able to curry favour in the royal households: an intriguing fertility ‘recipe’ given by Marie-Catherine to Catherine reputed to be the seed of the queen mother’s esteem for the family.

In concluding, Milstein argues that the Gondi family functioned as ‘perfectly orchestrated chess pieces’ (p. 219). The author, herself, has manoeuvred subtly through eclectic themes to construct a nuanced and stimulating study.

LISA DI CRESCENZO, *Monash University*

**O’Doherty**, Marianne, and Felicitas **Schmieder**, eds, *Travels and Mobilities in the Middle Ages: From the Atlantic to the Black Sea* (International Medieval Research, 21), Turnhout, Brepols, 2015; hardback; pp. xliii, 344; 20 b/w illustrations; R.R.P. €90.00; ISBN 9782503554495.

This collection of fourteen essays has its roots in the 2010 International Medieval Congress in Leeds. Marianne O’Doherty and Felicitas Schmieder have done an admirable job of framing the book in their Introduction, successfully linking chapters by an international field of established and emergent scholars on a range of topics on medieval and early modern travel and mobilities. The following essays are arranged into four parts that extend chronologically from the seventh to sixteenth centuries and geographically from China to the Americas. From the outset, the editors challenge the reader to put aside the modern myth of medieval immobility. Indeed, this collection’s essays reveal that relatively ordinary people regularly travelled long distances in the course of their studies, work, adventures, and pilgrimages. Contributions to this volume focus less on ‘exceptional travels’, like those of Marco Polo or Ibn Battuta, and more on cases of the everyday travel of mendicant friars, soldiers, students, and diplomats. In keeping with recent scholarly trends, a strong thread of cross-disciplinarity runs through this collection, particularly with regard to constructions of gender, identity, disability studies, and material culture.

Part I explores ‘Centres and Peripheries: Travellers to and on the Margins’. Essays by Johnny Grandjean Gøgsig Jacobsen and Sæbjørg Walaker Nordiede consider, respectively, the travels of mendicant friars and papal envoys in Scandinavia. Iona McCleery examines the journeys of Portuguese medical practitioners, Tomé Pires, Garcia de Orto, Diego Álvarez Chanca,



and Master Alfonso, to India, China, and the Americas, and concludes with several cautions about succumbing to binary oppositions (like 'home and abroad') and later nationalisms (like 'Italian') for identifying individuals in the early modern period. Irina Metzler's essay on the mobility of the disabled in the Middle Ages surveys examples wherein the physically impaired went, or had themselves transported, on pilgrimages in search of cures or spiritual solace.

John D. Hosler's essay, the first of Part II, 'Nobility of the Road: Travel and Status', sits less comfortably in this collection, asking why King Stephen of England did not join in the Second Crusade. Despite Stephen's clear intention to take the cross, domestic affairs intervened in his plans for long-distance travel. The following contributions by Hrovoje Kekez and Mary Fischer are more at home. They respectively explore the mobility of fifteenth-century Slavonian noble, Ivan Bubonić, and literary tropes on chivalric rites of passage for Prussian crusaders.

Fischer's discussion of gendered identity within the fourteenth-century German knightly class pre-empts the theme of Part III, 'Men and Women on the Move: Gendered Mobilities'. Stefanie Rütter's analysis of gendered discourse in the songs of highly mobile German mercenaries (*Landsknechtslieder*) of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries offers insight into alternative models of masculinity, often in direct conflict with the Church's teachings. Rütter deftly negotiates her subject material to the benefit of historical analysis: *Landsknechtslieder* were revived in Germany during the first half of the twentieth century for very different purposes of national identity. Zita Rohr's essay shifts the reader's attention to the exceptional case of Yolande of Aragon and her semi-nomadic life as co-regent and ruler of Angevin lands in the early fifteenth century. Drawing together recent French literature and new archival research on Yolande, Rohr's essay is valuable for its insights into the life of this influential late medieval woman. Zohr's claims about the peripatetic nature of her rule being influenced by the Spanish model seem, however, misplaced, given that many other rulers, such as John of Burgundy, in this period kept itinerant courts. The final essay by Maximilian Schuh rounds out Part III's focus on mobilities and gender by reassessing the nature of fifteenth-century wandering scholars, questioning twentieth-century goliardic stereotypes and providing a handful of case studies from Ingolstadt University in which book ownership serves as a signifier of their owner's gender and social status.

The final part, 'Migration and Return: Peoples and Objects on the Move', is particularly noteworthy for its case studies on migration in the Middle Ages. Zrinka Nikolić Jakus discusses the immigration of non-slave Slavs to the Gargano peninsula and other parts of southern Italy in the Early and High Middle Ages. Rafał Quirini-Popławski approaches the evacuation

of the Genoese colony of Pera (on the banks of the Golden Horn opposite Constantinople) in terms of material history, tracing the movement of objects back to Italy over the course of several decades. The final essay by Gemma L. Watson continues this focus on material culture by examining the travels of Portuguese herald, Roger Machado – who served four English kings from 1471 and deftly negotiated the English dynastic change in the early 1480s – from the perspective of his memorandum book.

As the editors note in their Introduction, a volume like this is bound to have gaps and imbalances, especially given the thirteen strands on travel and mobilities on the 2010 International Medieval Congress's programme. Yet, this collection makes a valuable contribution to medieval and early modern travel studies, turning away from exceptional travel literature, and instead presenting insightful new readings of everyday mobilities, taken from the more novel perspectives of gender studies, identity, and material culture.

JASON STOESSEL, *University of New England*

**Petrovskaia**, Natalia I., *Medieval Welsh Perceptions of the Orient* (Cursor Mundi, 21), Turnhout, Brepols, 2015; hardback; pp. xxxv, 241; 5 colour, 7 b/w illustrations, 4 b/w tables; R.R.P. €85.00; ISBN 9782503551555.

Originating from Natalia Petrovskaia's doctoral dissertation, this work delivers a fine exploration of the Western medieval construction of the Orient, exploring the nuances in the ways that medieval Anglo-Norman Wales conceived of itself in relation to the global East. This volume makes a significant contribution to medieval Welsh literary scholarship, ranging as it does over a diverse array of text types – prose narratives and 'romances', poetic and metrical narratives, historiography, geographic material (both in-text and mapped), and chronicles – within a strong context of the social, political, and religious orientation of Anglo-Norman Wales, in a period of great flux and movement of people around the time of the Third Crusade.

In Part I, 'Sources of Information', Petrovskaia contextualises medieval Welsh perceptions of the East using an array of Latin and vernacular historical, historiographical, geographical, and encyclopaedic material, drawn from a comparatively narrow time frame (covering the late twelfth to the early thirteenth century). The material is divided methodologically: the first chapter deals with traditional ways of conceptualising the world; the second with known interactions of the Welsh with the East; while the third looks at translated legendary Charlemagne material for its reflection of popular contemporary perceptions of the Orient.

An important component of this third part is Petrovskaia's masterful use of the medieval concept of *translatio studii et imperii*, providing a solidly based explication of the theory as lying at the heart of the Western medieval

learned and Christian worldview. She thereby ties *translatio studii et imperii* to her tripartite conception of the Orient, which she proposes as a means for understanding the medieval Western European view of the East. Petrovskaia's three Orientals overlap and interact within medieval Western European discourse.

The first of these is the 'historical Orient', the embodiment of the perceived historical progression of civilisation from the East to the West and represented by the best of eastern civilisation, classical learning, and notions of just empire: the Orient of Alexander and Troy. The second is the 'biblical Orient', a fundamentally discursive construct that resides outside of time, and yet is conceptually parallel and co-existent through time with the other Orientals. This is the Orient conceived of as lying alongside the contemporary world, mapped (and thereby given a kind of quasi tangibility) on medieval *mappae mundi*, just as the tower of Babel is represented on the ostensibly contemporary 'Corpus Map'. The third is the 'contemporary Orient', that part of the contemporary world in which contemporary anxieties were present and for which the Church Militant called into existence its series of crusades. This is the Orient of Saladin and the Islamic caliphates and sultanates who ruled the Middle East in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Indeed, the importance of *translatio* to the medieval Church Militant that underpinned the contemporary crusading Church is closely examined.

Part II then looks at select Welsh literary texts to assess the influence of twelfth- and thirteenth-century perceptions of the Orient on native literary production. Petrovskaia assesses the ways in which place-names in the legendary poetic Alexander material indicate a knowledge of eastern geography and an awareness of concepts of empire beyond the narrower confines of the traditional Arthurian empire of Geoffrey of Monmouth. This awareness maps onto the geographic anxieties/orientations in the concept of 'contemporary Orient' that is developed earlier in the book. She compares these place-names to those listed in *Culhwch ac Olwen* to reveal a similar awareness of eastern geography in that text. She raises the issue of the influence of the Alexander material on *Culhwch*. Petrovskaia also considers eastern and crusading references in the 'romances', *Peredur* and *Owain*, in particular noting that for *Owain*, the discussion is primarily around parallels between giants and Saracens, whereas in *Peredur* a sense of the Orient poses interesting possibilities for the Arthurian tradition, linking Arthur to the contemporary Orient, beyond his traditional territory of northern Europe.

Although new philology is not explored to any great extent, this study draws attention to it by recognising the presence of many of these texts in the manuscript contexts of the Welsh encyclopaedic literature of the fourteenth century. These are literary works that doubtless, due to this manuscript context, call for readings which acknowledge geographic information, for here the contexts of worldview, as represented through O/T *mappae*

*mundi*, the medieval ideas behind *translatio studii et imperii*, and the politics of the Church Militant can each be seen to come together with conceptual consistency of thought and purpose.

RODERICK McDONALD, *The University of Nottingham*

**Psellos**, Michael, *Psellos and the Patriarchs: Letters and Funeral Orations for Keroullarios, Leichoudes, and Xiphilinos* (Michael Psellos in Translation), trans. and ed. Anthony **Kaldellis** and Ioannis **Polemis**, Notre Dame, University of Notre Dame Press, 2015; paperback; pp. 256; R.R.P. US\$35.00; ISBN 9780268033286.

Byzantinists have long bemoaned the apathy of many medievalists towards the large corpus of Byzantine literature. Recently, however, the tide has been shifting. An abundance of new scholarly journals and social media feeds suggests that the number of academics and members of the general public fascinated by Byzantium is growing. The past ten years have seen a swell of new critical editions and translations of formerly obscure medieval Byzantine texts, particularly histories.

Little wonder, then, that the University of Notre Dame Press has initiated a multi-volume series of English translations of a wide spectrum of writings from the most prolific and popular medieval Byzantine author in modern circles, the eleventh-century courtier and philosopher, Michael Psellos (1018–c.1078). The present volume is the second in this series. Translators and editors, Anthony Kaldellis and Ioannis Polemis, have gathered together their previously published solo commentaries and translations of Psellos's encomiums and letters to three, mid-eleventh-century patriarchs.

At first glance, a selection of writings concerning Constantinopolitan churchmen might seem an odd choice for a publisher hoping to appeal to a wider readership. Yet, as the editors explain in their thoughtful and useful two-pronged Introduction, these speeches and letters add needed details to Psellos's long-popular *Chronographia*, a history composed at a key moment in Byzantium's history, when it was teetering on the edge of collapse. Far from run-of-the mill panegyrics, Psellos's authorial self pervades these texts, providing fascinating insights into both the author and the complex social networks and rivalries that shaped eleventh-century Byzantium.

Helpful introductions provided for each of the addressees allow the reader to better understand the vibrant, intellectual court culture that first united and then divided these men. Both editors also admirably examine these works' literary subtext, showing that they should be seen as essential aspects of Psellos's enduring public struggle to preserve his position in a constantly shifting and hazardous political landscape. The reader also comes away with a greater appreciation for the deep intertextual relationships of Psellos's texts with earlier Christian and classical literature. Regrettably, however, the

volume's bibliography is rather sparse and omits a number of essential, recent publications on Psellos: Stratis Papaioannou's study on Psellos's rhetoric, for instance, lauded in the Introduction, is missing.

Psellos's troubled relationship with Keroullarios offers the volume's longest and most stimulating section. What outwardly appears to be a flowery panegyric of the patriarch's Christian virtues, on closer inspection, offers instead a rebuke. Deftly and carefully subverting the genre of encomium for a contemporary audience that included Keroullarios's nephews, Psellos pounced upon the opportunity to both restore his relations with the patriarch's relatives, and gain the final word in the pair's frequent clashes. Ultimately, rigid inflexibility and arrogance when dealing with the emperor – sugar-coated by Psellos in the speech as religious zeal – led to Keroullarios's undoing and subsequent banishment. This theme of the incompatibility of the spiritual and secular realms interlocks each of the speeches. As Kaldellis points out, Psellos's admiration of Leichoudes, 'cannot be understood apart from his rejection of the inflexible, intransigent, and harsh types exemplified by Keroullarios' (p. 31).

The texts presented here also provide insight into the ammunition Psellos's rivals wielded against the shifty courtier: they openly used his love of pagan literature and philosophy to question Psellos's religious devotion. His fondness for non-religious literature and critical attitude towards monasticism and the Church's senior figures aroused the suspicions of even former friends like Xiphilinos. To refute the accusations, Psellos maintained that he drew on the glorious intellectual achievements of a pre-Christian past in order to discover in pagan philosophy a means to better understand his Christian faith. He further countered that a good theologian must also be a good philosopher. Some of Psellos's modern popularity may indeed be attributed to his embracing of classical literature and what is seen as his progressive rejection of the meddling of inflexible churchmen in state affairs.

Was Psellos an anomaly in a religious age? Or were his esoteric tastes and philosophic agenda reflective of a shifting cultural milieu? These questions continue to spark debate. One suspects that Psellos himself – a notorious narcissist – would be thrilled with these disputes, and his thriving popularity nearly a millennium after his demise. Of course more work needs to be done. The bulk of Psellos's one thousand or so theological and philosophical works remain untranslated in any language. The planned future volumes in this series will begin to fill this gap, and thus deservedly make more accessible the fascinating world and mind of Michael Psellos to a larger audience.

MICHAEL EDWARD STEWART, *The University of Queensland*

**Reid**, Lindsay Ann, *Ovidian Bibliofictions and the Tudor Book: Metamorphosing Classical Heroines in Late Medieval and Renaissance England* (Material Readings in Early Modern Culture), Farnham, Ashgate, 2014; hardback, pp. xi, 218; R.R.P. £95.00; ISBN 9781409457350.

The reception of Ovid's texts is a fruitful avenue for investigation. His *Metamorphoses* was the medieval 'go to' text for classical mythology, offering a framework for Lindsay Ann Reid's study of the development of English literary heroines: real English women were metamorphosed into literary figures inspired by Ovid's *Heroides*. Reid examines the development of this genre of English literature from the late fourteenth century, in the works of Chaucer, to the sixteenth century. An essential element to this process, Reid argues, is the idea of literary transmission as unstable, fragile, and prone to change through 'the ephemeral nature of the material text' (p. 2). Her sampling of 'bibliofictions', the literary allusion to physical, metaphysical, and metaphorical books, offers insight into the Tudor debating of gender as a sign of an elite rhetorical community.

Chapter 1 considers how Ovidian heroines from various texts were transformed leading up to the Tudor period and the introduction of printed books. From the time of Chaucer, debaters from both sides of the gender question could claim Ovid as their master, as his various *exempla* were interpreted to accommodate the users' own ends. The Tudor *querelle des femmes*, with its Ovidian *exempla* and counter-*exempla*, maintained a pattern of flexibility in representation, a characteristic largely unrecognised for material in printed books.

The third chapter focuses on the figure of Cressida and her development as an Ovidian-type heroine in English literature, as Reid explores ideas of fame and infamy and their ability to adhere to a single character. Cressida, a medieval figure partly based on the Ovidian Briseis, can be read *in bono* and *in malo*, offering various re-readings. This is highlighted in Shakespeare's *Troilus and Cressida*, in which the figure of Cressida, within an Ovidian frame of letter-writer, is not defined by any other characteristic. Her letter sent to Troilus is destroyed on stage, unread. The audience is invited to inscribe her, filling the unread page with their own reading of the character.

The notion that within English literature, literary letters were accepted as both false and true is the subject of the next chapter. While letters written in the female voice by men are clearly fictive, the boundaries between fiction and fact are blurred when the author is female. A Tudor example of this is the autobiographical reading into the letters of Isabella Whitney. As Reid notes about the biographical details of Whitney's life, '[a]ll of these so-called facts derive from seemingly autobiographical references in her texts' (p. 141, n. 50). Cross-gender writing presupposes a fictive element as the writer constructs a letter-writer, as is clearly the case with Ovid and his *Heroides*.

The Tudor period, argues Reid, provided a literary community, in which the potential materiality of real letters was part of the game in reading poetic letters, blurring the boundaries between fact and fiction.

The final chapter, “Our Sainted Legendarie”: The Anglo-Ovidian Heroines’, provides a fulfilling completion of the ideas presented in the earlier chapters. Through a process of engagement with Ovidian material through a vernacular lens and its adoption of bibliofictions, England produced its own series of heroines, blurring the boundaries of history and literature. Rosamond, mistress to Henry II, and Queens Matilda and Isabel are just some of the women whose lives are recreated by Drayton’s play with fact and fiction, creating a new community of literary correspondents. It highlighted for this reader the creative exuberance imparted through the study of Ovid’s poetry.

Overall, this is an excellent book with some fascinating insights. It is very detailed in its literary references and covers a lot of material. Along with an index, it contains an appendix of (largely sixteenth-century) Latin editions of Ovid in Tudor England. As Reid’s analysis of the reception of Ovid commenced at a much earlier date (the fourteenth century), I was surprised not to also find a catalogue of manuscripts of Ovidian material found in the United Kingdom. As a theme of the book was the development of ways of reading Ovid, I think the influence of educational treatments of Ovid (by and large maintained in manuscripts) might have been pertinent. Another minor issue was the identification of Andromeda with Hector’s wife, Adromache, bracketed in a poem by John Skelton (p. 19). It was not clear to me who had conflated the two characters, the sixteenth-century poet or the author of the text. This should not detract, however, from the quality of analysis elsewhere.

NATASHA AMENDOLA, *Monash University*

**Rohr**, Zita Eva, *Yolande of Aragon (1381–1442) Family and Power: The Reverse of the Tapestry (Queenship and Power)*, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2015; hardback; pp. 284; 1 map, 2 tables; R.R.P. AU\$129.95; ISBN 9781137499127.

Like many a reader, my introduction to Yolande of Aragon came about in all too common a way: as the queen of Louis II of Anjou, King of Sicily and Duke of Anjou. Even in the histories of Alfred Colville and, more recently, Marcelle-Renée Reynauld, one can recognise Yolande’s integral role in French royal and dynastic politics during the tumultuous early fifteenth century. Unlike previous histories, Zita Rohr’s welcome contribution foregrounds the duchess–queen. Given her focus on political networks, the author distances herself from earlier feminist historians, aligning more closely with Theresa Earenfight and others who emphasise the importance of contextualising

medieval women in relation to contemporary men and institutions that exercised various forms of power, à la Michel Foucault (p. 10).

Rohr's book is divided into five chapters, which are framed by an Introduction and brief Conclusion. The first chapter concerns the first twenty years of the Infanta's life in the Aragonese court of her Francophile parents, Joan I of Aragon and Violant of Bar. The first part of the chapter focuses on the politics of Yolande's marriage to Louis II of Anjou in 1400.

In moving from political history to the cultural milieu in which Yolande was raised, Rohr stumbles – unfortunately, since the task of this review has fallen to a music historian with an interest in political history – into a minefield, by basing her argument on an out-of-date hypothesis that the famous Codex Chantilly, a source of polyphonic songs with several strongly political texts, hailed from the court of Aragon. Rohr is not alone in succumbing to the pitfalls of this source: Malcolm Vale has accepted another earlier and equally out-of-date guess that it was from the court of Gaston Febus, Count of Foix.

Perhaps the most unfortunate aspect of Rohr's discussion is her misrepresentation of the views of musicologists like Maricarmen Gomez, who, in both print and personal communications, has affirmed that this manuscript cannot be from the court of Aragon or its environs, despite the fact that it contains several songs that can be linked to its personalities. Such is the methodological error of placing too great an emphasis upon the repertory of a manuscript while ignoring scribal and physical contingencies, not to mention Francesca Manzari's important discovery – reported in *Recercare*, 22 (2010) – that the line drawings in this manuscript are close to those by illuminators working in the court of Pope Boniface IX. On a slightly personal note, despite assertions to the contrary (p. 41), I have never stated that this manuscript was transported to France after its manufacture in Italy, most likely in Florence. The Machaut Ferrell-Voguë manuscript, which Lawrence Earp has revealed Violant of Bar borrowed from Gaston Febus, along with surviving sources from Barcelona and the very songs in Codex Chantilly, provide a better indication of musical interests of the Aragonese court of Joan and Violant.

Chapter 2 concerns the period of Yolande's marriage to Louis (1400–17) and is largely devoted to the well-known political intrigues rife between members of the French nobility, especially the assassination of Louis of Orleans and an increasingly ill and burdened Louis II in the last years of his life. French royal politics, rather than Yolande, is the dominant thread here. Only in Chapter 3 does the dowager-queen become the protagonist in shoring up support for her son-in-law, the dauphin, Charles VII, and her son, Louis III, in the years around Louis II's death. This includes the remarkable period from 1423 when Yolande was Louis III's viceroy. The following chapter centres upon Yolande's patronage of Joan of Arc as an instrument



in restoring the French crown to Charles VII. The final chapter focuses on Yolande's instrumentality in reforms in 1438–39 that saw the centralisation of military and fiscal power under the new king's offices.

Notwithstanding some of the specialist reservations given above, this book is amply researched, drawing upon much unpublished archival material. Rohr demonstrates a masterful control over the complex political networks around Yolande and its protagonists. The 'behind the tapestry' standpoint of Rohr's historical narrative is at times difficult to maintain against the background of major figures in the Anglo-French dynastic struggle. Nevertheless, this book succeeds in bringing a greater appreciation of this remarkable woman's contribution to France's eventual victory over England and its re-emergence as a powerful absolute monarchy in European politics after 1439.

JASON STOESEL, *University of New England*

**Sánchez-Pardo, José C., and Michael G. Shapland**, eds, *Churches and Social Power in Early Medieval Europe: Integrating Archaeological and Historical Approaches* (Studies in the Early Middle Ages, 42), Turnhout, Brepols, 2015; hardback; pp. xvi, 553; 120 b/w illustrations; R.R.P. €125.00; ISBN 9782503545554.

This well-organised and diverse volume considers the question of early medieval churches and social power. It is the result of a 2010 conference at University College London, with some additions to expand the geographical range of the work presented, though there is a clear bias towards the Iberian Peninsula, Gaul, and the British Isles. In line with my own areas of interest, I will focus here on the Germanic papers in the volume, predominantly those about the Anglo-Saxons.

Aleksandra McClain's excellent contribution, 'Patronage in Transition: Lordship, Churches, and Funerary Monuments in Anglo-Norman England', departs slightly from the majority of the volume with its focus on smaller, local churches rather than the larger minsters and cathedrals more usually associated with elite social power. McClain's premise is that local churches can provide insight into the operation of lower-level, elite lordship, while also, owing to their ubiquity across the landscape, providing an ideal context within which to study both religious and secular power. McClain sets out the material hierarchy of elite dominance in Anglo-Norman England that ranges from castles and cathedrals down to these local churches and their funerary monuments. This approach shows a more personal and localised basis of power against the backdrop of a constantly changing social sphere of the eleventh and twelfth centuries. She focuses on Yorkshire for the paper's case studies, and it would be fascinating to see the mapping and implications broadened for the rest of Anglo-Norman England. McClain has integrated archaeology and written sources to build a well-founded argument for

regional and local style robusticity even post-Conquest, and a disconnect between architectural style and ethnicity.

Christofer Zwanzig's chapter is not only refreshingly cross-cultural in its subject matter but also perhaps one of the most surprising pieces of work in the volume. Using a bold comparative approach, 'Heidenheim and Samos: Monastic Remembrance of the "Anglo-Saxon Mission" in Southern Germany and the "Mozarabic Resettlement" of Northern Spain Compared' charts the self-perception of monastic elites versus royal power in the two named case studies. Zwanzig shows that church buildings themselves played a role in reinforcing the ideology and 'memories of migration' (p. 288) for the ecclesiastical communities. From this comparison comes interesting insight into early medieval monastic elites and the way their migrations and monastic foundations played into the larger phenomenon of acculturation throughout the Church. However, Zwanzig's interpretation of extant architecture from the early medieval period as purely architectural and not part of the archaeological record leads him to conclude that there is little-to-no archaeology for the two sites. Those not familiar with the field of archaeology might find this conclusion, to what is otherwise a very intriguing paper, somewhat perplexing.

To conclude this overview, we have Michael Shapland's paper 'Palaces, Churches, and the Practice of Anglo-Saxon Kingship'. It is a very welcome addition to the volume but also to the discipline, as the study of Anglo-Saxon palaces is not only difficult, but often avoided. His emphasis on the centrality of buildings to Anglo-Saxon Christianity is vital to understanding the physicality of belief in the early medieval period. Shapland deftly presents the available archaeological and written evidence and shows that conversion and dynastic ambition should not be separated in this period. Shapland's call for us to change our preconceptions of 'palaces' in the Anglo-Saxon context is one that needs to be heeded. He astutely observes that in many cases, owing to the royal founding and governance of most ecclesiastical buildings, the Anglo-Saxons probably made little distinction between palaces and monasteries in the landscape; their function, grand architecture, and use by a still very mobile royal class supports this.

Overall, the central aim of the volume, archaeo-historical integration, is achieved only variably across all the included papers. However, the other aim of 'exploring the dynamics of power behind the establishment of churches across Western Europe' (p. 2) is certainly achieved with a consistently high level of scholarship. I would highly recommend this volume to anyone who is interested in early medieval Christianity or elite power in Western Europe.

SAMANTHA LEGGETT, *The University of Sydney*

**Schrock**, Chad D., *Consolation in Medieval Narrative: Augustinian Authority and Open Form* (New Middle Ages), Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2015; hardback; pp. xvi, 240; R.R.P. €74.99; ISBN 9781137453358.

The author's purpose is to discuss Augustinian narrative form in medieval consolatory writing, differentiating its linear trajectory with a climactic revelation and the Boethian paradigm of a Neoplatonic philosophical vision that transcends time and space. Relying on the classical and biblical traditions of consolation, Augustine envisaged a past definitively swept away, leaving a gap where past, present, and future all demand temporal consolation, without the closure of a vision of God.

Chad Schrock describes this post-historical narrative form, with climax and the need of consolation, as found in Augustine's *City of God* and *Confessions*, works of sacred and personal history. He highlights the account of Augustine's conversion, the importance of reading, and the difference between Boethian, transcendental closure and the more practical Augustinian model for consolatory narrative, which he studies in five disparate texts from the twelfth, fourteenth, and sixteenth centuries. The first is written in Latin and the others in English. They belong to the genres of sacred history, poetry, and dialogue, and contain elements of fiction and personal history.

Written to console a friend, Abelard's *Historia Calamitatum* (c. 1130), reflects twelfth-century awareness of the individual and Abelard's construction of self as a model of how to receive consolation. Schrock calls Abelard's comparisons between his self and authoritative figures from biblical, classical, and Christian history 'proportional consolation', intended to evoke comfort and peace for the reader. Abelard, however, finds the source of his calamity in the fact that he is unlike anyone he knows, and seeks consolation in the post-history of his suffering. Somewhat as an afterthought, Schrock mentions Abelard's correspondence with Heloise, which might have shed more light on his troubles and the personal perspective, as in the chapter on Augustine.

The long, complex *Piers Plowman* (B-text) combines personal and ecclesial narratives. Correspondences with Augustine's *City* are discernible. Schrock concludes that it dramatises the individual quest for Truth, the first-person narrator encountering the shape of his own story in the shape of sacred history, and is 'paradigmatically Augustinian' (p. 83).

The chapter on Augustine and Arthur, based on the *Stanzaic Morte*, a version of the end of the Vulgate Cycle, is an effective account of the final battles and catastrophe, with the Church's intervention in the secular politics and justice of Arthur's court. In an interesting, well-managed discussion of four significant episodes and the role of repetition and memory, Schrock puts less emphasis on the decline of Arthur's court than on what remains, a lay spiritual community of survivors, in elegiac melancholy (p. 105).

In Chaucer's *Knight's Tale*, Boethian and Augustinian ideas are explicitly juxtaposed and a story from ancient history offers Chaucer's contemporaries a consolatory narrative form of the type where, after a climactic break – Arcite's death – a post-history is created by decisive, imitative action to fill the gap. Chaucer's temporal orientation of the narrative thus makes Augustine his authority in the art of consolation.

The last example, Thomas More's *A Dialogue of Comfort against Tribulation* (c. 1534), written in prison, represents an elderly authoritative teacher conversing with a young mendicant, two Hungarian Christians together facing the threat of Turkish invasion, which would mean a radical break with the past. Philosophical consolation is inadequate; religious consolation is required: meditation leading to love of God for Himself and following the example of Christ. The parallel between Hungarian Christians and English Catholics of More's time is evident. His style resembles that of Augustine in its complex exegesis, scriptural references, digressions, leisurely tempo, and structure.

In a shortish conclusion, Schrock draws together the threads. He clarifies certain notions, particularly 'recursiveness', which is used especially in discussion of *Piers Plowman* and *The Knight's Tale* and is not included in the index. In Augustinian narrative, 'the open-ended recursiveness of figural forms builds interpretive revision into its final irresolution' (p. 155). As this shows, the exposition is complex, but the author concludes that the Augustinian figural narrative is 'a form beautifully apt for its consolatory function' (p. 155).

The discussion contains various critical terms, often qualified adjectivally, resulting in a somewhat verbose style. But, given the complicated interpretation of the individual works and the intellectual demands of the subject, this is perhaps inevitable. Useful, brief summaries help mark progress in the discussion (e.g., pp. 85, 129). Occasionally, an infelicitous repetition occurs: 'almost always almost is' (p. 59); 'do not tell the tragic stories they tell' (p. 155). The misspelling 'Mittalalters' appears in the notes and bibliography (pp. 169, 224). Overall the book is, however, well organised and presented.

GLYNNIS M. CROPP, *Massey University*

**Thibodeaux**, Jennifer D., *The Manly Priest: Clerical Celibacy, Masculinity, and Reform in England and Normandy, 1066–1300* (Middle Ages), Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015; cloth; pp. 240; R.R.P. US\$59.95, £39.00; ISBN 9780812247527.

A reviewer should doubtless resist the temptation to judge a book by its cover, but the dust-jacket of *The Manly Priest* provides an apt key to its contents. It comprises a reproduction from the Bayeux Tapestry where a tonsured man

in lay clothing appears to be aggressively, or at least assertively, touching the face of a veiled woman while a naked, squatting male figure mirrors the gesture of the cleric in the lower register. The book's title, *The Manly Priest*, mimics the form and stitching of the *titulus* of the tableau, 'Hic unus clericus et Aelgifu', which it replaces. The whole equivocal ensemble – does *clericus* here mean 'priest'?; what behaviour is he enacting?; what does it tell us about masculinity? – encapsulates many of the complexities of interpreting and integrating the different kinds of evidence marshalled in support of the author's thesis.

Professor Thibodeaux aims to demonstrate 'the complex system of gender ideology that affected the creation, negotiation, and acceptance of the celibate ideal', thus supplementing the received account that the drive towards clerical celibacy was based upon concerns about 'sacramental purity and the economic alienation of ecclesiastical property'. She goes further, however, in arguing that the project 'to reconceive the religious male body' eventually led to an attempt to 'control and regulate a full spectrum of behavior' (p. 11).

Who were the subjects of such regulation? 'Clerical' could refer to anyone who had been tonsured and admitted to any of the seven ecclesiastical grades. Monks could theoretically be called 'clerics' though the word is usually understood to refer to seculars. Members of the regular orders, whether monks or canons, are easy enough to categorise. So too are priests, as men ordained to the priesthood, but to complicate matters, some members of the regular orders were priests, though not all secular clerics were. Many clerics did not pursue a sacerdotal vocation but were essentially civil servants or Church officials. Finally, towards the bottom of the ecclesiastical pecking order – though high in terms of sacramental orders – were the rural parish priests who figure so largely in Chapters 5 and 6. Such considerations make statements about 'clerics' or even 'priests' subject to many qualifications.

The first chapter explores gendered language used by and about regulars in letters, chronicles, and hagiography. Thibodeaux notes that 'virile language commonly appears in descriptions of the battle against the flesh' and thus 'sexualised' the celibate body (p. 19). This struggle provided the foundation for other forms of manly action, such as maintaining the rights of the convent against encroachment. Monastic writers tended to advance this ideal for secular clerics, and even the laity more broadly, often denigrating markers of elite lay manliness. The results are sometimes counterintuitive; thus beards are labelled effeminate (p. 28); likewise, frequent heterosexual activity (p. 31).

Chapter 2 presents a useful chronological account of the laws against clerical marriage. Unfortunately, such provisions were often vague or inconsistent regarding the personnel to whom they applied. Generally, the minor orders were exempted, though, of course, the priesthood was not the

only major order. Sanctions against married clerics were also hard to enforce. But clerical marriage produced clerical sons who, it is argued in Chapter 3, were particularly marginalised, sometimes retrospectively, by such decrees. Thibodeaux's examination of lesser-known works, including those of Serlo of Bayeux and the Norman Anonymous, that attempted to turn the tables, are illuminating. However, why such written opposition seems to have waned by around the 1130s is not fully explained.

Chapters 5 and 6 are principally concerned with Normandy. Thibodeaux links the expansion of priestly manliness to the pastoral reforms of Lateran IV. Much use is made of Odo Rigaldus's sermons and visitation records to illustrate attempts to enforce stricter standards, though examples from Clerisy-la-Forêt in the concluding chapter show that success was only partial. A broadening of the evidence to include penitentials would have indicated that much earlier efforts had been made to curb drunkenness and other homosocial behaviours, even among the laity. It appears rather that distinguishing the priestly body from that of the layman was a matter of degree rather than kind even in the case of chastity, given the substantial periods of abstinence enjoined upon the married.

The conclusion offers some discussion of why these measures had such mixed results and finishes with a nod to the post-Reformation revival of marriage for priests linked to yet another version of priestly masculinity. While it can be said that Thibodeaux's book adds nuance to an already well-studied topic, its coverage, both geographically and chronologically is patchy, more attention being paid to Normandy in the thirteenth century than England (at any time).

Clearly, the evidence of Odo's visitations is too good to pass up but there is equally fascinating English material unused by Thibodeaux. William FitzStephen's *Life of Thomas Becket* (1170s) describes a meeting between the cleric Herbert of Bosham and Henry II at the height of the Becket affair. Henry sneeringly called Herbert 'son of a priest', which Herbert denied, since his father was ordained only after his birth, and implied that neither was Henry the son of a king since his father was merely a duke when he was born. Henry was not amused but one of his barons applauded Herbert's boldness by declaring 'I don't care whose son he is – I'd give half my land for him to be mine!' Sometimes such glimpses of real (or realistic) human interactions can be as telling as pages of official records.

SABINA FLANAGAN, *The University of Adelaide*

**Traub**, Valerie, *Thinking Sex with the Early Moderns* (Haney Foundation), Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015; cloth; pp. 512; 4 b/w illustrations; R.R.P. US\$59.95, £39.00; ISBN 9780812247299.

What is it that we study when we study sex? What do we seek to access when we search for sexual practices and what are the implications of such knowledge, both for us and for our predecessors? Is the significance of sex just its positioning within systems of meaning, or does sex matter by itself, for itself? Just as importantly, how do we know sex and how do we know when we know it? These are not new questions for queer studies scholars, who in trying to historicise current sexual identities have often found themselves struggling to signify bodily acts within systems where they were, at best, opaque. Valerie Traub's *Thinking Sex with the Early Moderns* is not a new history of early modern sex, although new analyses of early modern sex can be found within it; it is a methodological intervention on the question of what it is we know, or think we know, when we study sex, today and in the past.

The example that perhaps best acts as a starting point for these questions – although it appears half way through the book – is the character Martha Joyless in Richard Brome's play, *The Antipodes* (c. 1638). Martha Joyless is melancholic because, after three years, her marriage has not been consummated. She turns to a female friend and expresses her ignorance of how children are conceived, her only previous sexual experience having been with a fellow maid. She asks Barbara to provide her, or her husband, with practical sexual experience so that the couple has the requisite knowledge of sex to produce a child. Traub places Martha's sexual knowledge, and lack thereof, as a 'problem of pedagogy' (p. 105), with implications for how we know sex in the past. If Martha does not know sex, how can the historian know the sex that Martha does not know? How do we take seriously the ambiguities in understanding, the innocences, the lack of knowledge, and incorporate them into our methodological approach? How do we know what a people did not know and yet, like Martha's 'innocent' rendition of her previous sexual practices with a woman suggests, may nonetheless practice? And how does such a space of not knowing become a site of knowledge for historians?

Traub structures her book into three parts. The first section acts as a magnificent overview of the scholarship of the history of early modern sexuality, particularly Alan Bray's contribution, queer studies theorists, mostly of a literary bent, and lesbian historiography. It provides a key synopsis of this scholarship, its tensions, and how it has led us to the question of knowledge with which Traub seeks to engage. Part II seeks to provide a survey of the current state of knowledge on early modern sexuality, with key new research designed to ask new questions of how we know what we know, what we do not, and why not knowing might matter to history and theory.

It includes a wonderful discussion of the words that early moderns used to describe sex, with an emphasis on their multiple and opaque meanings. Sex was constructed through language as ambiguous, never quite known.

The final section, consisting of a chapter on Shakespeare's sonnets and another on contemporary lesbian theory, acts as an application of the questions raised by the first part of the book. Her choice to use a traditional historical literary analysis to engage in a popular scholarly debate (was Shakespeare queer?) and pair it with an argument of what history does for the sign of the lesbian, is designed to drive home the importance of interdisciplinary conversation between history and literary queer studies in producing sexual knowledge: we need both. Traub's concluding chapter takes her argument into the politics of the present and discussions of sex education. If the problematics of labelling sexualities and how to teach that to students has been discussed before, Traub asks teachers, policy-makers, and those informing their work, to think about what should be known and the political possibilities of ambiguity and unknowing to the pedagogy of sex.

*Thinking Sex with the Early Moderns* is a demanding book; it is designed to bring together domains of thought, to challenge practitioners in different fields to treat each other seriously, and to place questions of knowing at the heart of our methodological practices. It asks as many questions as it raises, with no firm answers, only an ambiguity that is appropriate to that she asks us to take seriously in the past. It is not for beginners; if the wonderful historiographical and theoretical surveys offer access to what is currently known in a way that could be helpful to a newcomer, the analytical framing and prose speaks to the depth of scholarly knowledge that went in to its making and requires a similar engagement from the reader. Despite this, pleasure is to be found in wrestling with Traub's ideas, her ambiguities, and her knowledge.

KATIE BARCLAY, *The University of Adelaide*

**Truitt**, E. R., *Medieval Robots: Mechanism, Magic, Nature, and Art* (Middle Ages), Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015; cloth; pp. 312; 36 colour illustrations; R.R.P. US\$55.00, £36.00; ISBN 9780812246971.

While recent scholarship on automata has dealt primarily with the ancient and early modern periods, E. R. Truitt's book bridges the chronological gap by discussing the perceptions, manufacture, and cultural implications of automata throughout the Middle Ages. According to the provided definition, medieval automata were 'self-moving or self-sustaining manufactured objects, and they mimicked natural forms' (p. 2). In her investigation of these 'medieval robots', Truitt treats three main themes: Western perceptions of foreign peoples and places; the liminal nature of automata; and the ways in



which automata called into question ‘the natural/artificial binary’ (pp. 3, 9). The book is laid out chronologically, while each chapter focuses on one or more of these themes.

Truitt’s study commences with the ninth century, which marks the appearance of the first automaton in the West, and ends in the late Middle Ages, a time when automata populated the various spaces of Western society, from royal court, to public square and church. In the intervening years, automata rarely made a material appearance in the Latin West and were primarily associated with foreign places, cultures, and knowledge. As a result, much of this book examines the absence of automata and how this absence generated a certain aura of mystery and even fear around them and their creators. In order to understand the Western perception of these absent objects, Truitt draws on a range of textual sources, such as travel narratives, natural philosophical treatises, and fictional literature. She acknowledges the challenges of relying on such diverse genres; however, she demonstrates an aptitude for working with a variety of sources and succeeds in placing them in dialogue with one another. The final product is an insightful and thoroughly researched vision of Western notions of automata throughout the Middle Ages, and promises to provide for a more nuanced understanding of them in other historical periods as well.

Truitt commences her investigation of the first theme – Western notions of foreign lands – in Chapter 1, which links automata to medieval geographical concepts. Within the Western imagination, faraway places represented the storehouses of marvels. In the late Middle Ages, artificial marvels in particular were believed to operate through either mechanical means or demonic forces, placing them in contrast to miracle-working objects driven by divine, supernatural forces. Since automata were counted among the marvels found at the Mongol, Islamic, and Byzantine courts, they represented non-Christian, wondrous, and possibly even dangerous knowledge derived from the esoteric arts and sciences. In fact, various anxieties entrenched in Western society found their expression in literary descriptions of automata. For instance, Chapter 3 analyses legends that weave stories of morally corrupt natural philosophers who produced mechanical prophetic heads. These narratives speak to concerns that arose in the thirteenth century surrounding intellectuals who studied foreign philosophical texts and risked venturing outside ‘the proper limits of human knowledge’ (p. 83).

In the second and fourth chapters, automata are identified as liminal figures and border guards. I found this theme particularly compelling, and an even deeper theoretical engagement with the notions of liminality and border patrolling would surely enrich Truitt’s line of argument. Automata are poised between animation and inanimation, as well as artifice and nature, thus, Truitt rightly asserts to their tendency to straddle binary oppositions. For

instance, in Chapter 4, preserved corpses are categorised as automata, in that they blur the dividing line between life and death by staving off decay through mechanical means. When serving as border guards, meanwhile, automata performed various functions, including monitoring physical thresholds and maintaining social boundaries by reinforcing courtly comportment or preventing the commingling of diverse social groups.

The last two chapters of the book examine the expanse of years between the late thirteenth century and the fifteenth century, when Western advances in mechanical engineering resulted in the multiplication of automata. Automata began to shed their foreign and occult associations, as they assumed an integral part of daily life in the Latin West. People became more familiar with these objects and they were perceived less as the products of philosophers or demonic powers and more as the creations of craftsmen.

The book regrettably lacks a concluding chapter or epilogue, which would have allowed the author to further tie the various thematic threads together or to reflect on the modern-day implications of her research. Overall, however, Truitt convincingly presents automata as conceptual mechanisms that medieval Western society employed for thinking about a range of social constructs and categories, as well as natural philosophy, foreign lands, and esoteric knowledge. Given the many diverse themes presented throughout the book, it will prove useful to scholars studying art history, intellectual history, history of philosophy, and history of science.

SHANNON EMILY GILMORE, *University of California, Santa Barbara*

**Waters**, Claire M., *Translating Clergie: Status, Education, and Salvation in Thirteenth-Century Vernacular Texts* (Middle Ages), Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016; cloth; pp. xv, 289; 6 b/w illustrations; R.R.P. US\$69.95, £45.50; ISBN 9780812247725.

With the increasing focus on the instruction of Christian doctrine for all medieval Christians, especially but not solely after Lateran IV (1215), how did papal decrees pertaining to theological doctrine translate into meaningful discourse with the Christian faithful? According to Claire M. Waters, put simply, one approach was through the appearance of vernacular texts that 'taught' pupils in their own language.

Waters's book, *Translating Clergie: Status, Education, and Salvation in Thirteenth-Century Vernacular Texts*, focuses on a series of Old French texts from a variety of genres. Through her chosen texts, Waters argues for the significance of the relationship between the teacher and pupil that she identifies through the descriptor 'status'. The status of educator was not static, however, but evolved as the need for teachers of Christian doctrine and orthopraxis increased. Thus, while the first educators were preachers, monks, and scholars, soon the pupil (novitiate, cleric, lowly educated parish priest,

jongleur) became the teacher. The topic of education and arguably the reason for the vernacular texts' popularity was the need for all Christians to achieve salvation. Death and the final judgement with its resulting consequences – Purgatory, Heaven, Hell – were universal and applicable to all Christians.

Waters has selected texts that have a strong extant manuscript tradition. Through her careful reading of them, she exemplifies well her thesis that the Old French texts under scrutiny should be understood as didactic texts, concerned with the education of all Christians on their salvific journey. On a minor note, I wonder if some background on the scholarship of medieval didacticism pertaining to popular texts might have added to Waters's contention; there are a number of scholars (Nora Scott, Daniel T. Kline, Roy J. Percy) who have promoted the idea that all medieval writing was didactic, even the most ribald of texts. This would not only help background her exposition of the fabliau, *Le Vilain qui conquist paradis par plait*, as a didactic text but also support the reading of a wider range of other popular genres through the paradigm of instruction.

The featured texts start with two translations of Honorius Agustodunensis's *Elucidarium* that had a limited audience within a clerical environment. This point of departure, however, reveals how doctrinal educators used an existing system of education to expand their reach into lay circles. The remaining chapters feature texts whose content would have been better known to the laity: the Gospel of Nicodemus; several fabliaux; and Marian miracles. Waters contends that edification was achieved through a process of dialogic didacticism, or teaching through dialogue. The featured dialogues are presented in a variety of forms, including authorial address, teacher–pupil discourse, or are embedded in the narrative; and the pupil was essentially every Christian, not just the characters in the tales.

The strength of this book lies in its judicious selection of texts, careful reading of the teacher–pupil relationship, and its historical and socio-religious contextualisation. Waters adds to the growing scholarship on authorial identity of popular texts. She justifiably notes that the authorship of the featured texts stemmed from a monastic and scholastic environment, hence the 'clergie' of the title. Such authors were ideally educated to produce didactic sources in the vernacular. The inclusion of a fabliau in a study of didacticism is striking in that the fabliau as a genre is rarely included in the corpus of instructive texts; they are better known for their humour. Yet, Waters's careful exposition of the fabliau about the peasant who argued his way into heaven reveals how one Paris university student at least, Rutebeuf, engaged humour to teach how all Christians could earn their place in heaven. Such an analysis not only opens the door for more popular texts to be examined for their didacticism but also leads to questions regarding the authorial identity of the many extant but anonymous, popular Old French

texts (and here I mean not an individual identity; rather, author background such as ex-university scholars). Furthermore, while *Translating Clergie* focuses on dialogic didacticism, there is also scope to examine in more detail the narrative content of many Old French popular texts to add to the growing scholarship on the range, extent, and purpose of medieval didacticism.

Waters's erudite work goes to the heart of lay education in medieval society. While her lesser premise argues for the significance and influence that French vernacular texts had on the development of ME texts, the central focus here is firmly on the argument that vernacular texts had a didactic purpose to educate the laity on matters pertaining to religious instruction: predominantly salvation. It is this premise, carefully argued, developed, and supported, that makes this book an interesting read and opens up questions regarding the purpose of many Old French popular texts.

KATHRYN SMITHIES, *The University of Melbourne*

**Woodacre**, Elena, and Carey **Fleiner**, eds, *Royal Mothers and their Ruling Children: Wielding Political Authority from Antiquity to the Early Modern Era* (Queenship and Power), Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2015; hardback; pp. 253; R.R.P. €84.99; ISBN 9781137513106.

This important collection continues the breakdown of the anachronistic stereotypes of historical women as only 'the virtuous mother, the wilful mistress, [or] the wicked stepmother' (p. 151). Significantly, the collection emphasises how royal mothers 'were expected to be guarantors of dynastic continuity, political stability, and the progenitors of future sovereigns' (p. 1). The book focuses on the acknowledged, but seldom analysed, fact that 'motherhood consolidated a royal woman's position not only during her husband's lifetime ... but crucially after his death, ensuring that her power, influence, and authority would remain' (p. 1).

The first section focuses on the ways that royal mothers could either secure or damage their offspring's succession. Diana Pelaz Flores demonstrates that Juana of Portugal's 'damaged reputation' undermined the succession of her daughter, Infanta Juana (p. 3). Germán Gamero Igea's study of Juana Enríquez demonstrates how the queen-lieutenant successfully secured the throne of Aragon for her son Ferdinand in spite of the more direct claims of her stepson, Carlos de Viana, and at the expense of her own political position. Sarah Betts's excellent chapter concludes the section by analysing how three Stuart mothers – Elizabeth Stuart, Queen of Bohemia, Henrietta Maria, and Princess Mary of Orange, mother to the future William III – dually assisted their husbands' attempts to regain their thrones and endeavoured to secure their children's successions.

Jitske Jasperse exploits underutilised sources – namely seals and coins – for her discussion of Judith of Thuringia and Bertha of Lorraine. While the

chapter is slow to set out its historical and geographical context, Jasperse convincingly demonstrates how the two women ‘joined forces with their sons’ (p. 96), and acted as regents and advisers during their sons’ minority and sometime imprisonment. Jasperse’s study reminds readers that ‘coins and seals ... are sources just as important as written ones’, and that these sources demonstrate that the sisters held authority ‘specified assuredly as motherly authority’ (p. 97).

An unexpected delight – which reinforces both the collection’s wide range and its broad appeal – is Hang Lin’s chapter on the regents of the Khitan Liao. The Liao dynasty (907–1125) produced four empresses, ‘all ambitious and wilful’, who ‘ruled the empire as de facto sovereigns with the authority of a regent for their husbands or sons’ (p. 106). These women, who all came from powerful families, ‘excelled not only in administrative conductions but also in military affairs’ (p. 118). Lin demonstrates how mothers and sons battled with each other for power, and how the Liao’s nomadic societal structure afforded ‘women an elevated position’ (p. 119). By expanding its horizons beyond Europe, this chapter reinforces the role sociocultural and socioeconomic contexts played in the level of political authority a woman could wield.

Empress Adelheid, wife of Otto the Great, is the subject of Penelope Nash’s chapter. Adelheid, at various points in her life, reigned as regent on behalf of her husband, son, and grandson. Importantly, Nash’s work confirms ‘that the contemporary chroniclers perceived the intersection and interaction of her ruling and motherhood roles as equally important’ (pp. 127–28). Carey Fleiner’s chapter reassesses one of the most (in)famous royal mothers: Agrippina the Younger. In an important reconsideration of this mother–son relationship, Fleiner asserts that Nero was not an innocent bystander in their tumultuous relationship, and demonstrates how reliant Nero was upon Agrippina, whether he wanted to admit it or not. Fleiner’s otherwise excellent analysis, unfortunately, does not extend to the contemporary accounts of the attempts on Agrippina’s life: without even alluding to their theatrical quality, Fleiner simply quotes the sources, despite the ridiculousness of the stories (p. 161).

Kathleen Wellman highlights the positive relationship that often existed between mothers and sons in her study of Louise of Savoy and Francis I of France. Wellman demonstrates not only that Louise was a ‘savvy diplomat’ who was of immense help to Francis, but also how Francis’s reliance on his mother ‘led to wider criticism that she emasculated him’ (p. 6).

The ‘rose-tinted reputation’ (p. 6) of Maria de Molina – the wife of Sancho IV of Castile – is the subject of important revision by Janice North. Maria, under North’s probing, is shown to be not ‘entirely selfless’ in her abdication: instead, she was concerned with ‘the advancement of her

family and the security of her dynasty' (p. 220). Estelle Paranque inverts North's approach, and instead attempts to show Catherine de' Medici as a 'positive influence and inspiration to her son Henri III to be a father to his people' (p. 6).

Elena Woodacre and Carey Fleiner have, with this collection, selected chapters that not only make significant individual contributions, but also fit well together. Separately and collectively, the chapters provide a clear sense of the similarities and differences that existed in the ways that royal women exercised power and authority across different monarchies throughout history. Readers are told that this volume is the first in a two-part collection, and if this work is any indication of what is to come, readers should be eager to see what Woodacre and Fleiner produce next.

AIDAN NORRIE, *University of Otago*