Reviews

Almagro Vidal, Clara, Jessica **Tearney-Pearce**, and Luke **Yarbrough**, eds, *Minorities in Contact in the Medieval Mediterranean* (Cultural Encounters in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages, 33), Turnhout, Brepols, 2020; hardback; pp. 388; 1 b/w illustration; R.R.P. €100.00; ISBN 9782503587936.

Discussions of 'minorities' and 'majorities' in studies of the medieval Mediterranean are commonplace. This excellent volume constitutes an important call to reflect on the assumptions underpinning the use of these terms. By examining instances when putative minorities have engaged with one another in a medieval Mediterranean context, this volume sets out to show that the designation of 'minority' can be 'dangerously simplistic' (p. 12) and that scholars should instead view the descriptor of minority status as relational, ever-changing, and multivalent, a goal which it admirably achieves. Relative minority status, so Clara Almagro Vidal, Jessica Tearney-Pearce, and Luke Yarbrough remind us in the 'Introduction', can be qualitative, in terms of access to authority, power, and wealth; or quantitative, relating to the proportion of the population represented. Further, a given demographic could be at once a qualitative majority and a quantitative minority, or vice versa. These theoretical considerations are carried over into the first chapter by Annliese Nef, who further problematizes the projection of essentializing categories like minority onto complex social dynamics by showing how minority and majority groups were constantly being reshaped and renegotiated in eleventh- and twelfth-century Sicily.

Several of the essays consider cross-confessional relations within *Dar al-Islam* (literally the 'abode of Islam'). Uriel Simonsohn's study of minority–majority marriage in the Classical Islamic Period reveals how we gain a better understanding of the dynamics of religious conversion by recognizing women's agency in religiously mixed households. Alexandra Cuffel also considers conversion, in this instance among Jews and Christians in Fatimid through to Mamluk Egypt, and identifies an ambivalence among the Muslim majority regarding conversion between non-Muslims. That such conversion was a reality, Cuffel argues, is reflected in the missionizing polemic exchanges of Egypt's Jews and Christians. Two further essays analyse Jewish-Christian polemic: Y. Zvi Stampfer reveals how theological late antique polemic surrounding Jeremiah 3.8 and the metaphor of God's divorce of the Jews continued to be developed among dhimmi minorities, while Barbara Roggema shows that the Arab Christians of the early Abbasid period perceived the Jews as a real and ongoing threat to Christendom.

Other chapters highlight instances of supposed minorities occupying positions of relative power. Juan Pedro Monferrer-Sala examines how an Armenian Muslim emir in Fatimid Egypt is positively represented in a Copto-Arabic Apocalypse. Minorities could also access power by occupying roles in state bureaucracy, as Antonia Bosanquet shows in her discussion of Ibn Qayyim's concerns about non-Muslim bureaucrats in Mamluk society. Luke Yarbrough and Alejandro García-Sanjuá also examine instances of minority officialdom. Yarbrough considers the figure of Ibn al-Ṣuqāʿī, a (probably) Melkite Chalcedonian Christian and official in Mamluk Syria who, Yarbrough argues, performed his own inclusion by writing—and including Christians in—his Arabic prosopography. García-Sanjuá analyses accounts of Jewish courtiers, namely the Banū Naghrīla, in Zirid Granada, positing that Arabic sources' representations of these Jewish viziers can be summarized in three ways: pragmatic; propagandistic; and dogmatic.

Three essays consider aspects of the Latin Christian presence in the medieval eastern Mediterranean. Jan Vandeburie explores the relationship between the Latin Church and Eastern Christian communities in the thirteenth century through an analysis of the ideas of Jacques de Vitry, revealing a desire for Christian unity and allies in the region. The pursuit of minority Christian alliance is also discussed in Tamar Boyadjian's study of an Armenian lament of the 1187 capture of Jerusalem, which constitutes an appeal for a combined Frankish and Armenian reconquest of the city. Turning to a spatial analysis of the twelfth-century Kingdom of Jerusalem, Bogdan Smarandache shows how existing interpretive models do not reflect the real complexity of settlement patterns in the region, arguing that there was no discernible segregation of Frankish and Muslim populations.

Further chapters examine minorities in Christian Iberia. Clara Almagro Vidal examines a judicial and economic encounter between a Christian, Muslim, and Jew in early fourteenth-century Castile to reveal the relative agency that minorities could exercise in this context. In Ana Echevarria's essay, judicial and economic encounters in Christian Castile are used to show how Jews and Muslims could pursue common advantages, while these subject minorities were increasingly seen as 'two sides of the same problem' (p. 346) in Christian law. A convergence of Jewish and Muslim interests can also be identified in a late medieval Portuguese context, Maria Filomena Lopes de Barros argues, while perceived interconfessional boundaries between Muslims, Jews, and Christians remained porous in everyday life.

John Tolan concludes the collection by reflecting on some of the persisting myths about relations between Christians, Jews, and Muslims in the medieval Mediterranean, firmly positioning this volume as a challenge to assumptions that distort and flatten the complexity of relative social dynamics in the medieval past.

This cogent collection will undoubtedly be of significant value to scholars and students of the medieval Mediterranean world and will substantially enrich syllabi concerning medieval interconfessional interactions.

Beth C. Spacey, *The University of Queensland*

Atkin, Tamara, and Laura **Estill**, eds, *Early British Drama in Manuscript* (British Manuscripts, 1), Turnhout, Brepols, 2019; hardback; pp. xvi, 376; 45 b/w illustrations, 10 b/w tables; R.R.P. €100.00; ISBN 9782503575469.

The twenty essays in this volume introduce or newly interpret evidence of authorship, transmission, and performance in playscripts copied in England or Scotland from the fifteenth to the seventeenth centuries, a period when printing had not wholly displaced handwritten texts. The authors explore records of performances before audiences who ranged from poor and illiterate to middle-class, scholarly, courtly, and regal. They show that scripts were preserved for entertainment, edification, and propaganda, and that the copyists were variously named or unnamed, amateur or professional, male or female. All the contributions advance understanding of early British drama, while a few radically revise received opinions.

Of the studies that explore the intentions of those who commissioned, transcribed, or preserved plays originating in the Middle Ages, essays by Pamela M. King, Alexandra F. Johnston and Gail McMurray Gibson are among the most innovatory. After describing Robert Croo's transcriptions of the Coventry 'Weavers' Pageant', the *Presentation of the Virgin* and *Christ's Debate with the Doctors*, King convincingly identifies the 'Richard' who copied a poem on the last folio of the longer of two Coventry Playbooks (CRO Acc. 11/2) as Richard Pixley, from a family closely associated with the guild. King goes on to conclude that playbooks were regarded by readers and performers alike as commodities to be shared complete or piecemeal across the country and replaced as they wore out. Johnston's pivotal study questions the consensus elaborated by Arthur Cawley and Martin Stevens (*The Towneley Plays*, Early English Text Society, 1994) that the Towneley plays emanate from Wakefield and that they form a cohesive cycle. Instead, she extends the late distinguished Malcolm Parkes's conclusion that the cycle's only surviving copy is a legal (as opposed to literary) record compiled between 1553 and 1558. Johnston specifies that the miscellany was probably authorized in 1559 by the Yorkshire knight Sir Thomas Gargrave for the Ecclesiastical Council of the North instituted under Elizabeth I. A perception of frequent adaptation of the Towneley and other cycles over time emerges from this research. Lastly, Gibson seeks to restrict the contentious term 'morality play' as a medieval genre to the plays preserved in the fifteenth century Macro manuscript, for example *The Castle of Perseverance*, *Mankind*, and *Wisdom*. Her account of this manuscript's intricate history incorporates new evidence from the Palgrave family papers (1782–1838) lodged in 2012 in the Norfolk Record Office.

Two essays, nevertheless, imply a warning against generalization. Based on jottings added to 'The Book of Brome' manuscript between 1499 and 1508, Joe Stadolnik develops Jessica Brantley's perception that the Brome *Abraham and Isaac* was copied not for performance, but for reading. Matthew Sergi examines MS Peniarth 399 as 'crucial evidence of the "continuity" of some fifteenth-century Chester play texts across the sixteenth century' (p. 72). Early copyists' objectives were clearly just as diverse as the texts they produced.

Most of this volume's contributions investigate the luxuriant handwritten undergrowth of printed Elizabethan and Jacobean drama. Prominent among these is Kara J. Northway's study of the witnessing to theatrical loans in Henslowe's Diary (written by Philip Henslowe 1592–1609). In an essay on present-day political implications, Kirsten Inglis and Mary Polito compare Thomas Goffe's play, *Baiazet / The Raging Turk* (Arbury Hall MS A415), transcribed from a live performance *c*. 1619 by ten Oxford notetakers, with the printed version published in 1631, when English hostility towards the Ottoman Empire had hardened. Jakub Boguszak's speculations about 'parts'—manuscript copies of their lines distributed to individual actors—draw examples from plays by Shakespeare, Jonson, Middleton, Rowley, Dekker, Tourneur, Webster, and Ford. In an essay that pioneers the application of computers to handwritten annotations in printed and manuscript texts, Rebecca Munson reports preliminary outcomes of her project, *Common Readers*. That early readers enjoyed *1 Henry IV* primarily as a comedy, and that readers of playscripts became more numerous and engaged after 1630, are among Munson's hypotheses (p. 358). Other topics include performance methods for comic and clowning roles in three manuscript Caroline plays, and the brave continuance of playwriting, private performance, and publication across the Cromwellian interregnum.

Modern productions of old plays frequently utilize opportunities for creative reinterpretation and invention. By contrast, the scholarly investigation of early texts and performances is an exacting task that strives, based on usually incomplete evidence, to reinsert plays into the contexts that produced them. It takes courage to modify cherished assumptions, and this collection's honesty in achieving just this deserves high praise.

In the tradition of the manuscripts the authors so perceptively discuss, *Early British Drama* is itself a 'fine book' which fully justifies its purchase price. The generous illustrations, including timelines, computer-generated charts, photographs of manuscript pages and bindings, an 'Index of Manuscripts' and a 'General Index', testify to the editors' care. Readers are empowered to check descriptions and to enjoy the manuscripts for themselves. A 'Works Cited' appended to each contribution facilitates further reading in what is a fascinating and continually developing field of scholarship.

Cheryl Taylor, *James Cook University*

Barber, Richard, *Magnificence and Princely Splendour in the Middle Ages*, Woodbridge, The Boydell Press, 2020; hardback; pp. 382; 104 colour, 8 b/w illustrations; R.R.P. £30.00; ISBN 9781783274710.

The first thing one notes about this volume is that it is beautifully presented, which is quite fitting for a book devoted to magnificence and splendour. Its quarto format and high-quality paper allow the numerous colour illustrations to be appreciated in vivid detail, but it is not a 'coffee-table book' intended mainly for decoration: the illustrations are essential, but they do not dominate the work.

Instead, the substance of the book is a discussion of princely display in Western Europe, supported by an extensive bibliography and aimed at the educated but non-specialist reader. It covers the period from, roughly, 500 to 1500 CE, and its thesis is that the rediscovery of Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* by Latin Christian scholars at the end of the thirteenth century gave prominence to the concept of magnificence as a virtue specifically of rulers. This focus on the princely virtue of magnificence, it is argued, was disseminated to European rulers and their advisors by the treatise *On the Government of Princes* (*De regimine principum*), written between 1281 and 1285 by Giles of Rome, a leading scholar at the University of Paris. Magnificence as presented by Giles, however, became primarily a quality of the person of the ruler, a matter of personal splendour, rather than a quality of the actions of a virtuous individual. As such, Barber notes, whereas Aristotle emphasized 'the correct spending of wealth in honour of the gods and for the benefit of the public […] Giles provides the theoretical justification for royal splendour, at the same time rechristening it as the virtue of magnificence' (p. 57).

Part 1 of the book sets out examples of early medieval princely splendour, dating from the time before Giles's treatise was written and disseminated, while Part 2 offers a much more detailed series of examples of royal and often ducal magnificence during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. The dukes of Burgundy in particular, ambitious to establish their domain as an independent kingdom, placed great weight on the propaganda value of magnificence and consciously sought to outshine (and more importantly, outspend) their *de jure* feudal lords, the kings of France, on public occasions. Such matters as the dress of the ruling family and its entourage, the works of art for which rulers provided patronage, their major ecclesiastical and secular architectural projects, and public festivals such as coronations, feasts and processions—all presented opportunities for lavish expenditures which were rationalized as virtuous expressions of magnificence rather than wasteful extravagance and vainglorious pride.

Part 3 is concerned with 'the management of magnificence' and provides information on the work done behind the scenes to devise, organize, and finance the displays that rulers considered themselves entitled by right and bound by duty to mount. Because of competitive spending on magnificence and the loss of face for a ruler when outdone by a rival, it was common for a substantial level of debt to be incurred in support of these expenditures. The nascent international banking houses often had to bear the risk of advancing massive loans for these purposes, and several of them collapsed when rulers defaulted on their debts in the absence of any mechanism for enforcing repayment. In other cases, foreign merchants were simply not paid for the luxury goods they supplied, but they at least had the option of blacklisting their debtors and refusing any further orders from them.

Often, then, magnificence was not all that it seemed, and as a medieval version of 'soft power' it also had its limitations in the world of international politics. After generations of being the envy of European ruling houses for its magnificent displays, the duchy of Burgundy rapidly fell to ruin in the 1470s when

its last duke, Charles the Bold, committed a series of major diplomatic and military blunders. These culminated in his death on the battlefield and the dissolution of his duchy, with some of its territory then coming under the direct rule of the French king and the rest going to the Holy Roman Empire.

This attractive and informative book amply makes the case that magnificence was a necessary, even if not sufficient, factor in the success of medieval ruling houses, but it does not demonstrate causal links between *On the Government of Princes* and the practice of magnificence in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, which the book's preface suggests is its 'central theme' (p. xiii). As Barber notes, 'Giles portrayed the princes as they may have wished to be seen' (p. 54), so it is difficult to say whether his treatise actually prompted changes in princely behaviour or whether it served primarily to codify and provide a vocabulary for developments arising out of other factors. This problem is not unique to the present volume, however, since it stands as a challenge for any work addressing the relationship between texts and actions.

Randall Albury, *University of New England*

Barclay, Katie, and Bronwyn **Reddan**, eds, *The Feeling Heart in Medieval and Early Modern Europe: Meaning, Embodiment, and Making* (Studies in Medieval and Early Modern Culture, 67), Berlin/Boston, De Gruyter, 2020; hardback; pp. 260; 19 illustrations; R.R.P. €86.95; ISBN 9781501517877.

As a field, the history of emotions has grown richly over the last ten years. Katie Barclay, who works with the Australian Research Council's Centre for the History of Emotions (CHE), has, along with Bronwyn Reddan, collected a wide-ranging and thoughtful collection on the heart as a site for and of emotion. Other contributors in *The Feeling Heart in Medieval and Early Modern Europe* also have connections to CHE, which financially supported the project in its introductory stages, while others approach the topic from different views again. The collection's perspectives in art and material history, and literary and manuscript studies, provide a range of critical reflection on the heart from approximately the years 1000 to 1800. *The Feeling Heart* grants new readers a plethora of directions in which to investigate further, while those familiar with the field might glean more specific insights into contexts, writers, or artists.

After an introduction from the editors, the book is divided into three parts, with four chapters in each part. The first part, 'Meaningful Hearts', opens with Patricia Simons's discussion of key images of the flaming heart, particularly those of Mary and Jesus in religious artworks, contextualizing the connections between amorous and pious love in medieval and early modern depictions. Chloé Vondenhoff focuses on hearts in *Yvain* and *Ívens saga*, identifying the Icelandic translation as an acculturation of the French tale and suggesting that the alterations surrounding the tale's various hearts demonstrate the new audience's different expectations about narrative and physiology. Carol J. Williams offers an analysis of troubadour songs and their approaches to the heart and to love, with a focus

on Dante's reflections on the form, and Arnault Daniel's songs as a counterpoint. The section closes with Reddan's evaluation of Charles Perrault's often neglected *Dialogue de l'amour et l'amitié*. These first chapters establish a broad history for the heart as a symbolic and physiological concept that spans from medical to artistic realms throughout western and northern parts of Europe.

The second part, 'Embodied Hearts', articulates the particular significance of the feeling heart in religious, amorous, and political contexts. Jean Bodel's *Les Congés* is the subject of Kathryn L. Smithies's chapter, wherein she untangles the significance of courage within the heart as both a salve against physical suffering and a representation of Bodel's eternal hope beyond death. Clare Davidson's chapter articulates the shared and distinct features of the heart as a physical organ and a metaphorical representation of one's emotional thoughts, making deft comparisons between Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde* and the Middle English carol 'For wele or woo'. The section then pivots from a religious to a more secular focus in its second half. Colin Yeo's chapter discusses how early modern poetry treats the heart as a grotesque and physical object, and thus '[shifts] away from established tropes of courtly love and Petrarchan poetics' (p. 140). Susan Broomhall's chapter on Catherine de' Medici's 'heart tombs' as remembrances of her husband and sons weaves together material culture, political history, and gendered identities, and is a rich conclusion to this section.

'Productive Hearts', the book's final part, also appears to be divided into two sections of two chapters. June-Ann Greeley and Eleonora Rai's chapters offer analyses of the significance of the heart to religious devotion. Greeley's work on St Anselm's prayers demonstrates an extensive comparison of his work to biblical text and to his contextual setting of personal devotion, while Rai outlines the significance of devotion to Mary's heart as part of the Jesuit tradition. In her chapter on eighteenth-century love tokens, Bridget Millmore offers a compelling discussion of the significance of history from below and articulates a thoughtful methodology for her work on these keepsakes and the emotions concealed therein. Elizabeth C. Macknight closes the book with a chapter tracing the various feeling hearts in an extended private archive, and how these can be interpreted through the physical remembrances of the archive's contents.

The Feeling Heart is generally well balanced despite its range, although the sections into which the chapters are organized are only one of many ways to approach the content of the book. Some readers will find the shifts in time, place, and topic dizzying, but others may find the variety a welcome change from chronological order. Regardless, this collection provides compelling insight into hearts as a key to interpreting emotion in Europe in the period. Furthermore, the interdisciplinary slant to the volume suggests promising new opportunities for collaboration in and beyond the history of emotions in interpreting those hearts.

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Besamusca, Bart, and Frank **Brandsma**, *The Arthur of the Low Countries: The Arthurian Legend in Dutch and Flemish Literature* (Arthurian Literature in the Middle Ages, X), Cardiff, University of Wales Press, 2021; eBook; pp. 256; R.R.P. £80.00; ISBN 9781786836830.

This book is the tenth volume in a series that is now three decades old; the first volume, *The Arthur of the Welsh*, was published in 1991. The series has grown to be a respected collection of Arthurian scholarship that steers the reader away from the hegemonic (for anglophone scholarship in particular) English tradition to the many lesser-known iterations, and their noteworthy textual variations. This particular volume expands considerably on previous accessible works in this topic: Roger Sherman Loomis's *Arthurian Literature in the Middle Ages* (Clarendon Press, 1959), W. H. Jackson and Silvia Ranawake's *The Arthur of the Germans* (University of Wales Press, 2000), and Leah Tether and Johnny MacFadyen's *Handbook of Arthurian Romance* (DeGruyter, 2017) each contained but a single chapter on the Arthurian tradition in the Low Countries. It is a truism to state that Arthurian traditions vary in response to the cultural conditions of their production. This series reveals the essential nature of such a statement, and despite their ostensibly common subject matter, these traditions all differ, and there are many reasons for this.

The volume opens with Bram Caers and Mike Kestemont describing the cultural and geographic contexts of the medieval Low Countries. Their exploration of the complicated history of this region is fundamental to understanding the place, relevance, and evolution of the Arthurian courtly ideal in this 'archipelago of local centres of political power, connected to each other through political alliances, marriages and intense cultural exchange (p. 8). They disentangle the complexities of linguistic frontiers between Romance and Germanic languages, exposing cultural and political implications essential for understanding the Arthurian tradition in these regions. Two chapters follow that discuss material aspects of the tradition in the Low Countries. Keith Busby and Martine Meuwese trace the politics of patronage, ownership, and production of francophone Arthurian literature, noting in particular the flourishing courtly milieu in the southern Netherlands and the influence of crusader discourse. They emphasize that these texts 'were not only read for pleasure, but also to promote a (sometimes political) message' (p. 41). Bart Besamusca then follows with an important chapter devoted to a baseline specification of the Middle Dutch manuscript corpus: dates and places of production, formats, scribal correctors, and text collections.

Next come several chapters on text and narrative. In Chapter 4, Thea Summerfield explores the appearance and place of Arthur in historiography: his role was modest in comparison to other traditions, and neither he nor his round table were as ennobled as they have appeared elsewhere. On the other hand, the fictive Arthurian tradition as it evolved in the Low Countries was remarkably wide. In many vernacular traditions, texts typically fall broadly into two categories: translations and clear adaptations of (usually) French texts, and indigenous

narratives that are constructed in the local vernacular and, while independent of the originating tradition, forming their own subset within the tradition. The next four chapters in this volume explore these categories and describe the extant medieval Arthurian literatures across this broad geographic zone. In Chapter 5, Marjolein Hogenbirk and David F. Johnson provide a detailed description of the translation and adaptation of four French verse romances which came to be the Middle Dutch *Wrake van Ragisel*, *Ferguut*, *Perchevael*, and *Torec*, and in Chapter 6 Simon Smith and Roel Zemel explore five 'indigenous' Middle Dutch Arthurian romances *Walewein*, *Moriaen*, *Ridder mettermouwen*, *Walewein ende Keye*, and *Lanceloet en het hert met de witte voet*. Frank Brandsma then follows in Chapter 7 with a detailed analysis of the translations and adaptations of French prose romances, including the *Lancelot* compilation. The textual analyses conclude in Chapter 8, with Jürgen Wolf's detailed description of Arthurian literature in the medieval Rhineland, the 'interference zone between the Romance and the German languages', where 'French, Middle Dutch and Middle High German Arthurian traditions intersect (p. 194). In his brief summary, Wolf flags the difficult issue of comparative and perhaps mutual influences between Middle High German, French, and Middle Dutch literatures. He observes that the literature of the Rhineland is particularly problematic in its likely multiple linguistic sources. The volume concludes with a survey by Geert van Iersel of the post-medieval Arthurian legacy in the Netherlands and Flanders, paying particular attention to modern cultural reflexes, including novels, comic strips, drama, film, radio, and television.

As with all of the other volumes published in '*The Arthur of the […]*' stable, this edition is exemplary in its laying out of the scope of the field, exposing critical issues and signposting future directions. As such, this is an important resource for scholars, whether for focusing on the specific languages or cultural groupings in the Low Countries, or for comparative purposes, where Middle Dutch reflexes often provide important *comparanda* for other non-English vernacular Arthurian traditions.

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Bintley, Michael D. J., *Settlements and Strongholds in Early Medieval England: Texts, Landscapes, and Material Culture* (Studies in the Early Middle Ages, 45), Turnhout, Brepols, 2020; hardback; pp. 231; 13 b/w illustrations; R.R.P €75.00; ISBN 9782503583846.

While not all scholars of the early medieval period will accept Michael Bintley's views, this book is an invaluable introduction to some new approaches to interpretation of the period between the departure of the Romans and the coming of the Normans in England, such as those of John Blair and Éamonn Ó Carragáin. In this book Bintley hopes to open further areas for future research. He is primarily interested in changing our understanding of the ways in which the authors of contemporary vernacular literary works presented the links between people and the places in which they lived.

The texts that survive from any period are important, but they have a particular place in any largely non-literate society, such as early medieval England. Before archaeological excavation in England revealed some of the material remains of the period after the departure of Rome, investigation into why and where literature and poetry were composed, and in what language and how they were disseminated, provided almost the sole insight on the ordering of a society both lay and religious where knowledge was spread by oral presentation. Well-known authors such as Gildas and Bede, who set out the myths of the communities' origins and their narratives of events, were the basis for classical historical analysis even when their attribution of the destruction of the communities to religious failure was abandoned. As Bintley shows, in the years since World War II this classical presentation has been modified as archaeologists have uncovered numerous sites of many different types from this period across England. Scholars since extended their vision to examine how space was structured and perceived by people from all parts of society and interdisciplinary studies soon followed, one of the earliest being Audrey Meaney's PhD thesis (University of Cambridge) in 1959 on *A Correlation of Literary and Archaeological Evidence for Anglo-Saxon Heathenism.*

Bintley's study introduces an analysis of the material settlements that interprets the physical remains in the light of widely accepted social practices that are held to bind society together, such as gift exchange, oath swearing, and ritual feasting. The spiritual understanding of landscape at the time is brought into the explanations of how towns were shaped for a strongly ecclesiastical purpose. He examines closely the role of the Church in the form and nature in which particular structures were created and interpreted as critical to their role. That the secular buildings were almost invariably wooden, while religious buildings were normally stone (and often of older, Roman stone reused), is presented as a critical cultural signifier. The apparently disorganized village layouts are seen as relating to different expectations of community interaction and integration from those that had preceded them. Bintley makes clear the different situations at different times such the slow regeneration of towns and the special approach to interurban space immediately after the departure of the Romans and the effect of the Viking invasions and the need for strongholds. Some of his arguments are still heavily dependent on interpretations of more recent texts, such as the Anglo-Saxon Chronicles, that create an image of a directing elite, starting in the eighth century, and getting more authoritative in the Alfredian ninth century—when pivotal change in the conceptualizing of the function of a town was occurring and the creation or recreation of governing institutions, and the development of philosophical arguments about the definition of the role of a king, the duty of the community, and the creation of bonds across social strata and secular and religious interests began to emerge. Bintley seems concerned to establish the continuities in social and settlement culture throughout the period and to show not only how a familiar legacy was developed, but also how there was a constant return to grief

about intellectual ignorance and the loss of skills. In his afterword he makes clear the ideas underlying his exposition of the relationship between textual traditions and material environment. Some of the arguments that are shortened here can be found in more detail in his earlier book *Trees in the Religions of Early Medieval England* (The Boydell Press, 2015).

Sybil Jack, *The University of Sydney*

Boeckeler, Erika Mary, *Playful Letters: A Study in Early Modern Alphabetics*, Iowa City, University of Iowa Press, 2017; paperback; pp. 308; 8 colour plates; R.R.P. US$75.00; ISBN 9781609384746.

Playful Letters offers a compelling reading of early modern alphabetics, navigating a diverse set of primers, prints, and images spanning from western Europe to Russia. Boeckeler's driving premise—that letters are material bodies with pluripotent histories—provides a persuasive framework for understanding how teachers, artists, and religious or political authorities could wield them.

The first chapter engages with French engraver Geofroy Tory, whose seminal work *Champ Fleury* (1529) anatomizes each letter as a body on a grid, reading each according to didactic humanist principles. Scholars interested in Jeffrey Masten's work on this subject in *Queer Philology* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016) can find a complementary but divergent reading on Fleury's naughty letter 'Q', which Boeckeler takes as a rule rather than an exception to the logic of the cross row. She contends that Q's oddness reflects similar idiosyncrasies across the Fleury alphabet, and that many letters have the potential for disrupting his apparent project of language standardization. This is precisely what renders these letters as 'playful' in Boeckeler's view.

From Fleury in France, we move to Peter Flötner's *Menschenalphabet* in Germany and I. Paulini's *Ovidian Alphabet* in Italy. In these and comparable examples, Boeckeler encourages readers to perform complementary but inverted practices: read printed text as a kind of image, and read images (for example, Flötner's human bodies posed as letters) as text. Chapter 3 follows this train of thought in using signatures and typography to interpret Albrecht Dürer's self-portrait by superimposition. The relationships between letters on Flötner's page, as well as the visual echoes across these alphabets and prints, are all extremely intriguing. In these two chapters more than most, however, Boeckeler shows a habit of stretching explanatory metaphors beyond their tension limits, which can at times obscure opportunities for clear conclusions.

Shakespeare's *Richard III* presents a prophesy in which a certain 'G' that is plucked from the cross row will disinherit a king. In her fourth chapter, Boeckeler closely reads the possible valences of this moment on stage, with varying levels of success. Her link between Richard's 'G' and the central 'G' of a cruciform cross row is an exciting one, while the assertions that either the two Gs in the written form of 'George' or Richard's 'G-shaped' body would affect readers or audiences is tenuous. The chapter resolves with the much more compelling

claim that *Titus Andronicus* centres the Roman alphabet as a site and preserver of imperial violence. Boeckeler's earlier reference to 'onomancy' (the magic of names) contributes to this to build a conclusion that speech act theory has long used as a founding premise: speech is an action.

The final chapter of *Playful Letters* offers a fascinating historical connection between this ostensibly western European history of alphabetics and complementary developments in Russia over the same period. Scholars of early modern letters as pedagogy in England, for example, will no doubt find the history of the premodern Cyrillic letter *Az* extremely compelling, with its simultaneous roles as first letter and first-person pronoun. Boeckeler guides the reader through the longstanding theological and philosophical resonances possible in an alphabet—*az-buka*—that literally means 'I am books' or, more pertinently to Boeckeler's premise: 'I am letters'. The Cyrillic alphabet's evolution and historic idiosyncrasies offer a divergent, but familiar, promise of the letter as a lens through which to make, see, and understand the self.

Playful Letters offers an excellent point of reference for a range of both touchstone texts and lesser-known works on the early modern Roman and Cyrillic alphabets. It offers a wealth of rigorous research and intriguing intertextual connections to inspire further inquiry on the use of letters. Some of its theoretical framing work—especially the notion of '*letterature*' as a term for period discourses on letters—ultimately proves an unnecessary accessory to the book's central premise. Much of that positioning work can fade from view when Boeckeler's strong close readings reaffirm persuasively that letters are bodies and that, for good and for ill, bodies, images, and words are imagined as legible.

Adam Hembree, *The University of Melbourne*

Chase, Martin, and Maryanne **Kowaleski**, eds, *Reading and Writing in Medieval England. Essays in Honor of Mary C. Erler*, Woodbridge, The Boydell Press, 2019; hardback; pp. 267; 21 colour, 6 b/w illustrations; R.R.P. £60.00; ISBN 9781783273553.

Mary C. Erler's work invites us to think differently about the enactment of culture in literate practices and communities. This collection of essays intersects explicitly with her interests and pays homage to her influence. Themes of literacy, and particularly women's literacy, the practice of devotion by lay and religious women, and the ownership and transfer of books, are prevalent. This is not to say the work is in any way repetitive. Far from it. Rather, this book is a crafted exploration of ways to do history, with exemplary essays in different styles. Each chapter in this book provides insight into ways of understanding the past and engaging with it through objects, imagery, and words.

Joyce Coleman's chapter on Criseyde and domestic reading explores female book ownership and communal reading by peeling back layers of interpretation. This rich reading of the text examines the textual, physical, and social contexts for

women's reading communities. It is stimulating, challenging, draws connections, and takes us beyond Chaucer's text to its implications and possibilities.

Whereas Coleman's chapter draws on historical imagination, postulation, exploration, and inference, Caroline M. Barron's chapter is meticulous in its thorough detail, its mapping of connections between women, and the implications of these connections for book ownership. Barron provides a detailed account of the life and relationships of London gentlewoman Beatrice Melreth, tracing her family relationships through book ownership and gifting. This study of Beatrice's networks and values documents the use and impact of books in the life of one lay woman.

Sheila Lindenbaum's chapter examines the degree of intellectual curiosity amongst Londoners by tracing encounters between Londoners and university graduates. This highly original essay offers insight into our own practices as historians: how do the questions we ask influence the answers we find? Notions of intellectual practice and status; the role of education for merchants; familiarity with classical learning; the public representation of learning; and the meaning of the term 'critical inquiry' are all explored. While Lindenbaum argues that literacy does not imply critical thinking, limited scholarly views of the nature of intellectual curiosity are unpicked and analysed.

Joel T. Rosenthal moves the book into the area of memory. His study of 'Proof of Age' hearings identifies a number of stock recollections employed by people giving evidence. He uses these to explore the ways in which social memory guides and controls. His discussion of men's memories of women's social agency is particularly apt in the context of this book. Rosenthal's chapter is both entertaining and challenging: how do we decide what to believe? What processes make certain memories 'real', even if they are not accurate?

The analysis of the Old Testament in the Queen Mary Psalter, undertaken by Kathryn A. Smith, is beautifully illustrated, bringing alive Smith's study. Her discussion of cross-genre intervisual references identifies secular resonances in sacred imagery. She untangles layers of meaning in the imagery, and further draws out her analysis to consider the rich artistic and readerly cultures in which this book was produced.

Michael Sargent's essay on affective reading at Syon Abbey explores the nexus of textual, material, and social culture at Syon. His description of 'completely embodied reading' (p. 136) is a fine example of the intersection of text with historical imagination. Medieval affective reading is skilfully linked to our own experiences of history today.

Heather Blatt takes us on a journey into reading practices and their gendered, cultural implications via a study of book accessories. Her understandings of bodies and books in late medieval culture open new ways of thinking about the roles of men and women, and the practice of reading. Her study of bookmarkers as manifesting and symbolizing ways of reading and narratives of relationships is masterful.

A thorough, detailed, and accessibly written account of the interrelations of the manuscripts of *Enska Visan* (*The English Verse*) is undertaken by Martin Chase. He leads us through family, social, and intellectual relationships, tracking the copying of this poem. With similarities to *Sir Orfeo*, it defies categorization in a traditional Icelandic genre. Chase concludes his lively account with an academic, and yet highly readable, edition of the text.

The collection of essays concludes with Alison Adair Alberts's study of John Foxe's *Book of Martyrs* as reframing mother martyrs in the Protestant tradition. Her textual analysis identifies a shift that recognizes suffering as an intersection of the domestic and the spiritual. Alberts's work invites us to rethink women as mothers and as spiritual beings. It contextualizes female reading culture in a way that invites conversation about changing understandings of religious texts, secular life, and spiritual controls and freedoms.

The book concludes with a bibliographical list of Erler's work. It is a well-crafted edition of thematically linked, yet very different, studies in history. By provoking questions and connections, it truly honours the scholar for whom it was created.

Mary-Rose McLaren, *Victoria University, Melbourne*

Cole, Michael W., *Sofonisba's Lesson: A Renaissance Artist and her Work*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2020; hardback; pp. 312; 25 b/w and 256 colour illustrations; R.R.P. US$60.00; ISBN 9780691198323.

Sofonisba Anguissola (*c.* 1535–1625) was the first Italian Renaissance woman artist to achieve international recognition. Considered by her contemporaries as a marvellously gifted painter after nature, Sofonisba's portraits, her specialization, were believed to come 'alive' (Vasari, 'Vita di Benvenuto Garofalo e di Girolamo da Carpi, pittori ferraresi, e d'altri Lombardi', in his *Le Vite de più eccellenti pittori, scultori et architettori*, 2 vols, Florence, Giunti, 1568, II, 561–62).

Michael Cole's *Sofonisba's Lesson* brilliantly brings this female artist to life, exploring her art within the context of the networks and relationships that formed her world. Sofonisba's paintings, Cole argues, are 'an expression of such relationships' (p. 11)—with her family, above all her father who educated her and promoted her accomplishments; with her teachers, including Michelangelo, who advised her; with members of the Habsburg royal household at Madrid, where she was a court lady for over fifteen years (1559–73); with her students and patrons, including her younger sisters and the queen of Spain; and finally, with her two husbands.

Cole describes these connections as 'pedagogical' (p. 11)—relationships based on some form of education. This is reflected in the book's chapter headings—'In the Presence of Her Father'; 'The Most Affectionate Disciple'; 'The Image of Learnedness'; 'The Image of Teaching; Spain'; and 'Painting and the Education of Daughters'. Thus, the central theme of the Cole's book is learning and teaching, arguing that Sofonisba was the first woman artist to both teach other

women and have a number of young male artists seek her out for painting advice throughout her life, such as Anton Van Dyck in 1624 (p. 150). The Flemish artist claimed that he learnt more from this elderly female painter than from the works of other major artists (p. 150). Sofonisba also developed new artistic genres—the independent self-portrait; the family portrait; and the *conversation piece* as exemplified by the first group portrait to feature only women, *The Chess Game* (1555). It depicts her three younger sisters involved in an intellectual pastime, as the family's maidservant looks on. Sofonisba's art, as Cole deftly demonstrates, represents women in the act of some learned activity, be it reading or learning to read, at the spinet or easel, or writing.

Sofonisba, however, was not a professional painter—she didn't receive commissions as such and was not remunerated for her artwork, which circulated in a court culture of diplomatic gift exchange. The artist hailed from a family of minor nobility from Cremona in northern Italy, and her father Amilcare took the unprecedented step of sending Sofonisba and her younger sister Lucia to learn painting from the Cremonese artist Bernardino Campi, and later Bernardino Gatti. Amilcare's motives may have been pecuniary (the Anguissola family had fallen on hard times), but Cole argues that he was an enlightened father responding to the growing cultural milieu that saw noblewomen's education include intellectual pursuits such as music, writing, and painting, even chess, as expounded in the conduct literature of the period. As such, Sofonisba's artistic training was part of a broader humanist education that was beginning to be advocated for girls during the Renaissance. As learned and talented women, Amilcare's five daughters were more likely to find appropriate connections in the upper echelons of society or at court. Indeed, the accomplished Sofonisba became a favourite of Isabel of Valois at the Spanish court, where she was employed as a lady-in-waiting to the young queen (with a pension), also teaching her and members of the royal household to draw and paint. She was to become governess to Isabel's two daughters after the queen's death in 1568.

Given her social position, Cole defines Sofonisba's artistic practice as that of an amateur, a new Renaissance type whereby learned (male) aristocrats took an interest in art and painting, itself now considered a noble intellectual pursuit, having recently been elevated to a liberal art. Thus, she painted for her own pleasure as well as for the delight of others.

For Cole, Sofonisba's lesson ultimately is that she was an example for other women artists to follow, opening a path to female self-actualization. As a role model, Sofonisba Anguissola demonstrated that through education and supported by strong family, social, and diplomatic networks, women could achieve success and international fame.

The book is liberally and lavishly illustrated, mostly in colour, with excellent details of the major works. One of the methodological problems in analysing Sofonisba's art is that there is no full scholarly consensus of her *oeuvre*. Cole redresses this by including the first complete catalogue of Sofonisba's works,

indicating the provenance of each painting or drawing, with a comprehensive bibliography identifying all modern attributions. It is divided into seven sections, of which the first four are the most significant: secure signed works; accepted attributions; contested attributions; and attributions accepted only by a few experts.

This reader would have welcomed more judicious copy-editing, as extra prepositions pop up occasionally. 'Hapsburg' [sic] is used throughout. An error referencing an illustration occurs on page 83 where (fig. 6) should read (fig. 14). These minor criticisms aside, *Sofonisba's Lesson* makes a significant and welcome contribution to our understanding of Sofonisba Anguissola's life and art, and to the expanding field of studies on early modern women artists, accessible to specialists and enthusiasts alike.

Adelina Modesti, *The University of Melbourne*

Coss, Peter, Chris **Dennis**, Melissa **Julian-Jones**, and Angelo **Silvestri**, eds, *Episcopal Power and Personality in Medieval Europe, 900–1480* (Medieval Church Studies, 42), Turnhout, Brepols, 2020; cloth; pp. vii, 303; 1 b/w illustration, 5 colour plates; R.R.P. €85.00; ISBN 9782503585000.

It is difficult to exaggerate the role of bishops in medieval Europe. They often had to navigate a delicate tightrope between the demands of the Church and the pressures of the state. But what is a bishop? These figures are hardly shadowy, and they were thought to hold power directly from God and functioned as divine representatives on earth, while their charisma reflected and influenced their communities of activity. They were leaders, politicians, warriors, and officials of the Church, sometimes functioning in all of these roles simultaneously. This volume assesses the medieval episcopate in terms of power and personality. It is a collection of fourteen essays that emerged from a 2015 conference that discussed these themes. The volume seeks to clarify issues around the interface between the personalities of bishops and how this shaped their office, suggests how the reader might best decipher traces of personality in the sources, and how one might untangle the barnacled traditions of hagiography, canonization, and chronicler accounts, all of which tend to add nuance, interpretation, and multiple agendas to the lives and work of these important figures. Naturally, there are silences and limitations in surviving accounts. The editors have drawn together an impressionistic tapestry of episcopal power and personality based on a wide range of sources including chronicles, hagiographical texts, liturgical manuscripts, architecture, and character sketches mined from a variety of historical narratives created between the tenth and fifteenth centuries.

What do we learn? Importantly, that bishops are best understood not in their cathedrals but in relation to society around them. Some of these prelates were failures, others wildly successful. But how does one measure success a millennium ago? Crucial here, as the authors underscore, are the relationships fostered and sustained with lay power. Some of the narratives reflect serious rivalries. Could bishops flourish if hostility prevailed between prince and prelate? It cannot be

gainsaid, the authors argue, that bishops were affected by political narratives that played out around them. True enough, but to what extent did the bishops shape those narratives? We read tales of conviction wherein negligent bishops allowed their sees to be overrun by greedy dogs and demonic heresies. What a predicament! Other prelates were warriors dressed in holy vestments, but if the incumbent appeared to lack the requisite masculine traits as required by warrior cultures (twelfth-century Poland for example) then he might be rejected. Sacred and secular expectations clashed. This imperilled the bishop's duty to govern the Church, exercise spiritual authority and maintain a modicum of control over the people in his province. With such momentous responsibilities, the historian is stymied to learn that the early twelfth-century episcopate of William II, Bishop of Troia (southern Italy), left no evidence at all to help determine his thinking about the cure of souls or his influence on religious practice and piety within his sphere of activity. Episcopal registers, wills, charters, correspondence, biographies, hagiographies, and chronicles are either non-existent or fail to shed any light.

Personalities and power are represented in the sources revealing glimpses of the episcopate on a broad canvas. An archpriest fled Bologna in disguise in 1239, only later to be made bishop. Monk-bishops embraced two religious worlds, as did prince-bishops. Some were scholars, others were saints, and still others were soldiers. Others were compelled by secular rulers to desecrate the bones of deceased saints, and we find tales depicting bishops behaving badly. Some of these are simply rhetorical devices, but others reflect the venality of some bishops who described themselves as sinners. Bishops used their clout to promote education and establish scholarships. A twelfth-century prelate of Trier often travelled in disguise. Others were unafraid to oppose Rome and we read of letters received from the sitting pontiff thrown to the ground when they did not support the mechanics of power desired by the bishop. There were battles wherein bishops were killed, and situations wherein reforms were introduced both for financial as well as religious reasons. Politics sometimes allowed a bishop to die without a confessor and the *viaticum*, while other circumstances attracted papal accolades for a bishop as the successful director opposing the 'siege engine of heresy'. Some bishops were famous, such as Thomas Becket and Robert Grosseteste; others are mainly faceless if not nameless. French bishops were a driving force behind the Peace of God movement and every bishop, theoretically, possessed episcopal weapons of intimidation. These ranged from warfare, to excommunication, to interdiction, to throwing a temper tantrum.

The book is divided into three chronologically structured sections dealing with the impacts of episcopal personalities, including considerations of constructing and consecrating bishops, and the commensurate political factors on the medieval episcopate. The volume is a study in considerations of authority, power, and control, and succeeds in bringing to life the world of bishops in the European Middle Ages.

Thomas A. Fudge, *University of New England*

de Boer, Dick E. H., and Luís Adão da **Fonseca**, eds, *Historiography and the Shaping of Regional Identity in Europe: Regions in Clio's Looking Glass* (Early European Research, 16), Turnhout, Brepols, 2020; hardback; pp. 301; 38 b/w illustrations; R.R.P. €85.00; ISBN 9782503590714.

This book emerges from the EuroCORECODE programme, which funded research, under the European Science Foundation, into the development of regional cohesion from the Middle Ages to the present. EuroCORECODE comprised three 'Collaborative Research Projects': CURE (investigating the history of regional cohesion); CULTSYMBOLS (saints' cults as a focus for regionality); and UNFAMILIARITY (exploring perceptions of otherness). Contributions to this miscellany come from all three, though primarily the first: the volume's editors were CURE's project leaders. The scheme's nature was such that scholars from a nation were funded by that nation. Therefore, if a state chose not to participate there would be no research (generally speaking) on its regions. Since countries that opted out included France, Germany, United Kingdom, Spain, and Italy, those parts of Europe are not represented (Catalonia excepted). While this detracts from the volume's comprehensiveness, it is welcome to see a study go beyond the usual suspects and consider places that might otherwise receive less attention.

As the foregoing perhaps suggests, the volume reflects strongly the institutional framework within which it arose. It opens with two chapters from the editors that introduce EuroCORECODE and the work's topic: regional history. The brief given to contributors was to describe how the historiography of their chosen region influenced its history. Then follow ten chapters, broken into two sets of five each. Part 1 deals with the medieval and early modern, as regional identity took shape; these manifest a close engagement with sources and chroniclers. Part 2 concerns nineteenth century attempts to enlist (pseudo-) historiography for nationalist purposes, with emphasis on the struggles of the day. The second section may be of less interest to *Parergon*'s subscribers, except insofar as the material that nationalist historiographers drew upon referred, by definition, to the times that preceded their own. The focus, however, is the nineteenth century. Unfortunately, the two most intrinsically fascinating chapters in this section (Michael Bregnsbo on Schleswig-Holstein and Ad Knotter on Dutch Limburg) have the most incidental connection to these earlier periods.

As large tracts of Europe are excluded from consideration, the contributions tend to cover broadly neighbouring districts: Bohemia, Silesia, and Upper Lusatia (and Transylvania); Guelders and Limburg; Schleswig-Holstein, Scandinavia, and Livonia. This potentially sets up resonances between chapters. Catalonia is the only wholly outlying region; it had been intended to pair Flocel Sabaté's chapter with one on Portugal, but the latter was omitted following the illness of one of the editors (Fonseca), who was to have co-authored it.

To my mind, the best chapter of the first section is Job Weststrate's on Guelders. It also features a useful conceptual overview of the whole volume, possibly because Weststrate had a postdoctoral position within the CURE project.

It is possible to lose sight of the work's broader objective, so his restatement of its aims is valuable. The first three chapters concern contiguous regions, whose politics and history are related, so these are well considered together. Jana Fantysová-Matějková examines the chronicles of Bohemian writers such as Cosmas of Prague, noting that their search for a 'better identity' (p. 86) led them to suppress or highlight different aspects of regional identity—linguistic, ethnic, or religious—as circumstances changed. Przemysław Wiszewski contends that in the Middle Ages the notion of 'Silesia' did not play a significant role in promoting regional cohesion. Lenka Bobková, Petr Hrachovec, and Jan Zdichynec explore how Upper Lusatian towns' chronicles reflected awareness of a common regionality. Cornelia Popa-Gorjanu argues that sixteenth-century accounts of Transylvania aimed at persuading outsiders it was worth defending from the Ottomans, who then threatened it.

The chapters in Part 2 constitute medievalism, aside from Bregnsbo's and Knotter's (already mentioned). Nils Holger Petersen (leader of the CULTSYMBOLS project) explores nationalists' embrace of two royal saints, Danish St Knut Lavard and Norwegian St Olav. Linda Kaljundi and Aivar Põldvee examine Estonian and Latvian deployment of their mythic past. Regional and imperial identities usually provide alternative outlets to national identity. Here, regional identity opposed imperial identity and bolstered nationalist aspirations. Like other contributors, they note that several conflicting regional identities may be superimposed on one territory: nationalist identity here confronted pro-German identity, with proponents of each making different uses of history. Flocel Sabaté argues that late-nineteenth-century constructions of Catalonia's medieval origins acquired a spurious dominance of the historiography that has taken time to dissipate.

This is a useful addition to the increasing interest in Europe's regionality. Each chapter is informative in itself, although the volume's broader aim occasionally disappears from view, perhaps reflecting the combination into a single whole of research done towards three separate projects.

Patrick Ball, *University of Tasmania*

DeGregorio, Scott, and Paul **Kershaw**, eds, *Cities, Saints, and Communities in Early Medieval Europe: Essays in Honour of Alan Thacker* (Studies in the Early Middle Ages, 46), Turnhout, Brepols, 2020; hardback; pp. 408, 8 b/w illustrations, 9 b/w tables; R.R.P. €100.00; ISBN 9782503565040.

Celebrating some four decades of the significant contribution of Alan Thacker to early medieval studies, editors Scott DeGregorio and Paul Kershaw have collated eighteen articles themed primarily around Thacker's most prominent interest, the English scholar Bede (*c.* 673–735). The articles, from a range of notable contributors, investigate questions of saintly cults, heresy, episcopal relations, biblical exegesis, and reception.

Kershaw's overview of Thacker's career and contributions, including a useful bibliography of his work, is followed by Mark Handley's exploration of the surviving epitaph of the Merovingian king, Childebert (d. *c.* 558) and its connection to the cult of the Spanish martyr, Vincent of Saragossa (d. *c.* 304). Tom Brown subsequently examines the cults of early medieval Ravenna, pointing to the surprisingly strong local identity projected by an 'international' city. Subsequently, Catherine Cubitt analyses the impact of the controversial Lateran Council of 649 and the martyrdom of Pope Martin (d. *c.* 655) on the construction of the Frankish *Life* of Bishop Eligius (d. *c.* 660). She argues for strong links between Rome and Francia and Anglo-Saxon actors associated with the revised mission to Canterbury in the 660s in a broader contest between Rome and Constantinople over Monotheletism.

Moving to Bede, the late Jennifer O'Reilly investigates Bede's relationship with Monotheletism, noting the paucity of his direct criticisms of the heresy. Focusing on his *Commentary on Mark*, she argues that Bede's exegesis reveals awareness of the rulings of both the Lateran Council of 649 and the Sixth Ecumenical Council of Constantinople of 680–81 and their rejection of Monothelitism. Faith Wallis follows on with the theme of heresy in her examination of Bede's *Commentary on Proverbs*. She notes his move away from the term *perfidia* ('treachery') as a defining characteristic of heresy, to that of a lack of *eruditi* and a failure in teaching. Peter Darby turns to Bede's defence against the charge of heresy in his *Letter to Plegwine* (*c.* 708). In examining Bede's use of Augustine of Hippo in the rhetorical structuring of his letter, he makes a strong case that, even in his early years, Bede presented himself as a commanding authority. Following on, Clare Stancliffe explores Bede's relationship with his diocesan bishop, Acca. Nuancing a revisionist trend that has reoriented Bede's close relationship with Acca, she argues that Bede's relationship with his diocesan bishop was one of both personal encouragement and personal challenges.

Moving to a wider context, the late Richard Sharpe examines a brief episode in the *Life of Bishop Wilfrid* concerning his short sojourn at the court of the king of Wessex, Caedwalla (d. *c.* 689), constructing a timeline for the chaotic 680s, where Wilfrid's shadowy role in Caedwalla's ruthless rise to power is given more context. Bede's complex relationship with the Irish is then explored by Barbara Yorke. In examining his approach to reporting miracles as they relate to saintly bishops in his *Ecclesiastical History*, she posits that Bede preferred the standards promoted by the Irish bishop Aidan of Lindisfarne (d. *c.* 651). Scott DeGregorio then returns to Bede's midlife crisis in the year 716, as framed by the departure and death of his beloved abbot, Ceolfrith. He links Bede's *Commentary on 1 Samuel* to a shift in thinking that was to dominate his later works, that of the damaging influence of the *rectores inertes*. Picking up on the theme of the importance of the *perfecti* as it relates to reform, Arthur Holder examines Bede's approach to 'divine vision'. While Bede emphasized the rarity of those who could see God in this world, the longing for a foretaste of heaven shaped his pastoral strategies for reforming the Church. Moving to Bede's role as an exegete, Julia Barrow

examines Bede's use of biblical parallels in his *Ecclesiastical History*, specifically concerning the monasteries headed by the abbesses Hild and Aebbe, and their connection to the 'wise and foolish virgins' in Matthew 25.

Moving to the Carolingian period and Frankish projections of authority into Istria on the Adriatic Sea *c.* 800, Paul Fouracre examines an episode involving local grievances against powerful Frankish interests, touching on Frankish ideals of authority and justice. Jinty Nelson investigates Bishop Hincmar of Reims's relationship with Bede. She proposes that Hincmar was far closer to Bede than the distant figures of Gregory the Great and Augustine of Hippo. Francesca Tinti subsequently explores the many reasons behind an English presence in Rome in the seventh to eleventh centuries, identifying continuities, particularly in the area of ecclesiastical politics and traditions relating to the claiming of the pallium. Finally, Éamonn Ó Carragáin investigates select Renaissance altarpieces in Venice. He concludes that they were designed to present humanistic concerns for the need to return to the early theological works of the church.

The celebration of Alan Thacker's stellar contributions to early medieval history has resulted in a stellar contribution. For this reader, there can be no higher praise than that commonly held: this book was so engrossing, I missed my train station.

Stephen J. Joyce, Monash University

Della Schiava, Fabio, ed., *Blondus Flavius, Roma Instaurata 1* (Edizione nazionale delle opere di Biondo Flavio, 7/1), Rome, Istituto Storico Italiano per il Medioevo, 2020; cloth; pp. cxxxvii, 166; R.R.P. €30.00; ISBN 9788898079995.

> Chaos of ruins! who shall trace the void, […] And say, 'here was, or is', where all is doubly night? (Lord Byron, *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, iv.80)

In 1445–46 the humanist Biondo Flavio quickly put together the work that has earned him the title 'the father of archaeology'. Honouring the repossession of the city of Rome by Pope Eugenius IV after his Florentine exile, *Roma instaurata* is famous for being the first systematic study of the city's *aedificia et loca* (§72), impelled by a desire for historical accuracy. Biondo had probably been collecting material for it for years and draws on an impressively wide range of ancient and medieval sources, sifted for their trustworthiness.

In Book 1 Biondo introduces the work with two topics which enable him to survey the city as a whole: the gates (§§1–27) and the seven hills (§§65–104). In the large central part (§§28–64) he takes us 'wandering' (§64) outside the ancient city walls to the eighth hill, the Gianicolo, and the Vatican. This part culminates in brief notes on the history of Old St Peter's, with Eugenius IV's embellishments and very necessary renovations highlighted (§§49–60), an emphasis in keeping with the redefinition of the city effected by the popes (see pp. xxxii–xxxiii).

The appearance of the first volume of this new edition of *Roma instaurata* is an event and there is no doubt that this edition will be the standard one for years to come. Though since the 1950s there have been three full or partial editions of *Roma instaurata*, most recently the French edition by Anne Raffarin (Les Belles Lettres, Paris, 2005–12) (see pp. cii–ciii), Della Schiava's is the first to be based on a thorough study of the manuscript tradition and changes the picture completely. Accordingly, the book's substantial introduction is largely devoted to the extensive *Nota al testo* (pp. lxvii–cxxxvii). In this the author catalogues all of the fifty-one extant manuscripts, and the printed editions, and presents the evidence which has enabled him to divide them into four families and to construct a stemma.

This section tells two stories. One is the overt one of the steps taken in constituting the text—the journey back to what is most likely to be the stage closest to Biondo's own version. Much of this is highly technical, but it is essential for understanding the apparatus criticus, which has an unusual aspect: readings are recorded in two distinct bands. The first contains variants either belonging to a family or to an important manuscript; the second variants from manuscript D (Sächsische Landesbibliothek, Dresden, MS F 66, Rome, 1461–73) alone. Manuscript D was put together by one of Biondo's sons and contains readings that may derive from Biondo himself (pp. cxxvi–cxxvii). This brings me to the second story, which is one of complex plural authorship, discussed by Della Schiava under the rubric 'fortuna' too (p. lx). Biondo's sons Girolamo and Gaspare worked to improve the text of *Roma instaurata*, both in manuscript and print. They did not mind diverging from the original text if they could produce a more correct one, an attitude shared by most editors of early modern printed texts. As scholarship advanced, Biondo's lapses, whatever caused them (see pp. xlvi–xlvii, cx), became more evident.

The briefer *Introduzione* (pp. xxv–lxvi), like the *Nota al testo*, pertains to the whole work. It economically presents balanced information on the circumstances in which the work arose, Biondo's method, his sources, and the work's *fortuna* up to the early sixteenth century. There is much that is new in these pages, the fruit of Della Schiava's preparatory researches; for example, the pages on Biondo's use of works by his humanist contemporaries Maffeo Vegio and Giovanni Tortelli (pp. xliii–xlvii). It has long been recognized that Tortelli in the entry *Rhoma* of his *Orthographia* used material from *Roma instaurata*, but there are other close similarities between the two works which remain to be properly studied. Since their treatment of the words 'Pallas' and 'Palladium' (*Roma instaurata* 1.76.217–25) is not only very close but also involves knowledge of Greek, Della Schiava suggests that in this case it was Biondo (whose Greek was poor) who used Tortelli (pp. xlv–xlvi).

In keeping with the style of the *Edizione nazionale*, the references to the sources are presented in a separate band of the apparatus, the other exegetical material in footnotes at the bottom of the page. This is more convenient than end notes but imposes limitations of space. There is much to comment on (textual

problems, the use of sources, the topographical subject matter) and the first main topic, the gates, is particularly thorny both for Biondo and his commentator, Rome's gates having disappeared or changed their names over the centuries. (Biondo was well aware of the difficulties (*Roma instaurata* 1.4), but not of the difference between the Servian and Aurelian walls.) Della Schiava succeeds in compressing a great deal of clear, useful, and up-to-date information into his notes. The volume also contains a bibliography and full indexes.

Frances Muecke, *The University of Sydney*

Epurescu-Pascovici, Ionut, ed., *Accounts and Accountability in Late Medieval Europe: Records, Procedures, and Socio-Political Impact* (Utrecht Studies in Medieval Literacy, 50), Turnhout, Brepols, 2020; hardback; pp. viii, 303; 5 b/w illustrations, 14 b/w tables; R.R.P. €80.00; ISBN 9782503588537.

It has become fashionable to publish collections of papers by different authors loosely linked to a topic that is important in many different historical areas and structures. This has the advantage of identifying practices that would be clarified by comparison. Accounting procedure is a topic which has only recently started to receive the attention it merits, and this volume illustrates the range of aspects that need further attention. Each chapter is dense and carefully expounded and must be read slowly if its full significance is to be appreciated. Unfortunately, however, the chapters lack a common approach, although some similar conclusions do emerge.

By the later Middle Ages, efficient accounts were critical to the imposition of royal power in any area. The ruler of any state in the Middle Ages could only control the use of its resources if there was appropriate material that established where and how such resources were raised, transferred, and expended. Without accurate fiscal accounts the development of effective resource organization, government control, and the relationship of offices in different parts of the administrative structure from the later Middle Ages onwards could not have been established. The ability to record the complicated management of the transfer of funds for a range of government purposes, so that the responsibility for their right employment could be proved, distinguished the powerful monarch from the ineffective. It reflected the degree to which the ruler was able to control the deputies below him or her—an issue critically examined, for instance, in Silvestri's chapter on Sicily. Internal maintenance of clear financial records, however, came faster in some places than others.

This volume would have benefited from a short introductory study that drew together the common features of the accounts in the places involved, the form they took for the political and economic problems they shared, and the ways in which the practices were developed and transferred across the Continent. The mixture of accounting practices used from one place and from one time to another illustrated in these chapters reflects the very various structures of government across Europe in dissimilar states and in different centuries. If they mostly shared a wish to have

the finances managed by officials who eliminated corruption and aimed to treat of all members involved in running the state fairly, the structures developed to achieve this varied considerably.

As it is, each chapter, all of which are based on recent significant research, has a distinct specific focus. They cover aspects of states geographically scattered across Europe, from England to Transylvania, and topics that vary from military needs (Roberto Biolzi) to ecclesiastical functions, with little to serve as a unifying approach. They make little reference to one another or to other papers relevant to the debate. It is hard to recommend the best order in which to read them. The basic form of the accounting records studied is probably most clearly seen in Ekaterina Nosova's examination of codicology. One or two of the chapters, particularly Esther Tello Hernández's chapter on Aragon, make some of the common elements in the enforcement of royal power clearer and so make a good starting point on management and on how the accounts were an instrument of power.

The skills necessary to creating and maintaining standard records, even the ability to use different scripts to different purposes, required a considerable level of training. Rulers were heavily dependent on the ethical attitudes, the skills and capacity, and the devotion of professional accounting officials, which is the focus of other chapters. The cultural expectations of the central administration and the relationship of this central administration to local social structures was vital, as is demonstrated in Alessandro Silvestri's chapter.

Each of the chapters has its own interest. My preference for Dean A. Irwin's chapter on the Jewish rolls in England is purely personal and I would encourage would-be readers to identify the aspect of government that most concerns them before they begin to read. The appropriate records for auditing the building of palaces and fortifications (Vittoria Bufanio) are different from those needed for army records. The involvement of judicial process in bringing the process to a just conclusion is the subject of other chapters. Armand Jamme's chapter on corruption in the administration of the Papal States and other papal resources casts light on some of the complexities of records whose purposes extended to the financial organization of the whole Church and many of its associated states and institutions. Aude Wirth-Jaillard, analysing the Savoyard records, shows how corruption at the level of trades and crafts fits into the problems of the state.

What all the chapters demonstrate is the considerable detail that careful historical analysis of formal records can reveal about the culture and social relationships that lie behind the government of a state in the Middle Ages.

Sybil Jack, *The University of Sydney*

Figenschow, Stefan, Richard **Holt**, and Miriam **Tveit**, eds, *Myths and Magic in the Medieval Far North: Realities and Representations of a Region on the Edge of Europe* (Acta Scandinavica, 10), Turnhout, Brepols, 2020; hardback; pp. 280; 1 b/w, 7 colour illustrations; R.R.P. €75.00; ISBN 9782503588230.

This study of the medieval Far North examines the northerly regions of Hálogaland and Finnmǫrk, and the northerly peoples: the Finns, the Sámi, and the Bjarmians, and their social, political, geographic, and cultural articulation and interconnectedness with Norway to the south. Here the alterity of the medieval Far North is re-oriented, looking instead southwards to Norway and beyond to centralizing European authority. Established at the University of Trømso in 2010, the *Creating the New North* research group is concerned with these regions and peoples between 500 and 1800, from the earlier eras of open interaction between different groups and cultures, to the later periods as it became subject to emerging southern powers and national states.

Miriam Tveit, in the volume's introductory chapter, discusses the ways in which the Far North has been marked as a place of alterity for its superstition, witchcraft, and mystery, and six chapters of the volume are grouped under the broad topics of myth, magic, and ritual. The remaining four chapters appear under the rubric of political consolidation, and they deal with the ways in which representation of the Far North has been configured in terms of wider national and international politics, both secular and religious.

In the first section of the book, 'Myth, Magic and Rituals in the Nordic World', are six markedly divergent chapters. Lars Ivar Hansen opens with a solid ethnographic examination of the construction and reception of Sámi/Norwegian differentiation in the anonymous twelfth-century *Historia Norvegie*, and this work is noteworthy for the use of the sociology of Zygmunt Baumann in grounding discussion of 'the Other'. Next, Eleanor Rosamund Barraclough looks to mythic geography, exploring divergent representations of the various lands of giants in Old Norse *fornaldarsögur*, as uninhabitable periphery to the habitable core of human life and settlement. She reveals the lack of a consistent typology, other than being, in one way or another, northerly, and speculates on both literary and folkloric importance of wilderness for delineating human existence. Third in the section, Petter Snekkestad takes a comparative approach to reading *Grímnismál*, challenging received views through admitting an alternative role of the Vanir, arising from his examination of the maritime '*Utrøst* Complex' of northern folklore. Marte Spangen then turns to archaeological evidence for Sámi culture, assessing medieval realities around 'stallo' houses, reindeer traps, and offering sites in the context of modern stereotypes. She sounds a timely warning about modernist assumptions that oral tradition preserves and reflects ancient practice, arguing instead that indigenous folklore is better understood as dynamic, contextual, and functioning within the present. Then follows a summary of research into the fourteenth-century northern witch-trial of Ragnild Tregagaas,

in which Rune Blix Hagen presents an account of the actual church court case and applies a comparative view of other like trials in Europe, revealing marked social differences. The final chapter in the section is devoted to Karoline Kjesrud's thorough re-assessment of ale as a cultural institution, in which she draws upon literary, linguistic, and runic/archaeological evidence to support her view that ale is best viewed not just as a drink, but in terms of ritualistic performance that asserts and reinforces social and institutional values and authority.

The second section of the book, 'Myths and Representations in the Political Consolidation of the North', opens with Yassin Nyang Karoliussen arguing for scholarship that avoids ethnic labelling for the northern regions of Hálogaland, Finnmǫrk, and Omð. Rather, a better understanding of both ethnicity and social conditions would be to embrace models of hybridization, and culture can be seen expressed through comparative symbolic activities. The examples she uses, such as grave mounds and courtyard sites, reveal there is no necessarily straightforward alignment of archaeology and culture for these northerly areas. Ben Allport's contribution is next, in which he examines the reconstruction of medieval identities, focusing particularly on southern mythographic perceptions of the northerly Háleygir people. He makes a sound case for according significant political and cultural significance in the Norse world to the residents of ninth- and tenth-century Hálogaland, notwithstanding the apparent hegemony of the Norwegian monarchs to the south. The marginalization of the North in Norway's foundation narrative is the subject of Richard Holt's chapter, in which he points to the lack of a counter-narrative. He emphasizes the importance of reading Adam of Bremen when considering Snorri's unifying national narrative *Heimskringla.* The final chapter is from Stefan Figenschow, comparing the popular rhetorical treatment of the Sámi and Bjarmian peoples of the far north against the pragmatic politics of the fourteenth-century Norwegian northwards expansion.

This volume marks an important step along the way to a strengthened understanding of the subtle nuances of a somewhat obscure history for the Far North and reveals the fundamental importance of interdisciplinarity for fields where evidence might be fragmentary.

Roderick McDonald, *Emu Forge, Sheffield, UK*

García Losquiño, Irene, Olof **Sundqvist**, and Declan **Taggart**, eds, *Making the Profane Sacred in the Viking Age: Essays in Honour of Stefan Brink* (Medieval Texts and Cultures of Northern Europe, 32), Turnhout, Brepols, 2020; hardback; pp. xii, 336; 23 b/w illustrations, 1 b/w table; R.R.P. €75.00; ISBN 9782503586045.

Dedicated to Professor Stefan Brink, this Festschrift presents a pleasingly coherent collection of essays concerned with themes from Brink's own interdisciplinary scholarship: studies grounded in philology, onomastics, archaeology, and mythology that have or are concerned with the connections between the landscape, religion, and culture.

This volume is organized into five sections which delve into the sacred/profane dichotomy within pre-Viking, Viking Age, and medieval Scandinavian society. Part I, 'Understanding Sacredness', provides a theoretical underpinning for the following chapters, through a close examination, and challenge of, accepted definitions of sacred words, places, and concepts. Part II, 'Sacredness and Space', focuses on significant Scandinavian cultic sites and builds detailed historical pictures of the sacred geography of their focus areas, combining archaeological, onomastic, folkloric, and legal evidence. Part III, 'The Sacred and the Text', considers literary and mythic landscapes, their evolution from a pre-Christian sacred into both a Christian sacred as well as a Christian profane, and the concept that different narratives of the same event or individual may exist simultaneously without being contradictory. Part IV, 'Sacredness across Contexts', takes a richly comparative approach to selected myths, legends, and individuals. And lastly, Part V, 'Afterlives of Sacredness', contains three essays which look at the modern development and appropriation of medieval sacred and profane landscapes.

Jan-Henrik Fallgren, Torun Zachrisson, Per Vikstrand, Anders Andrén, Tarrin Wills, and Stephen A. Mitchell all present important and original contributions to the study of ritual and sacred landscapes, while John McKinnell, Carolyne Larrington, Judy Quinn, and John Lindow provide highly stimulating essays on elements of Norse mythology. However, I personally found only four essays that addressed the volume's theme.

Opening the volume with an article essential to the overall theme, Margaret Clunies Ross considers the meaning of the Old Norse word *heilagr*, 'holy', examining its etymology, and briefly evaluating the history of the concept of the 'holy' within relevant scholarship. Despite the ubiquity of *heilagr* and its cognates in the later, Christian sources, often to translate the Latin *sacer* or *sanctus*, the actual incidence of the word in pre-Christian texts is surprisingly sparse, and Clunies Ross spends most of the article examining these instances to demonstrate that the term did not refer to an impersonal concept, but rather 'holy' was a quality which certain beings, objects, places, and rituals embodied.

Bo Gräslund's essay on the deep connections between swine (especially wild boars), the Vanir deities Freyr and Freyja, the Yngling dynasty, and the origins of the Swedish nation itself is wonderfully rich. He provides evidence from mythology, literature, and archaeology, detailing the etymological underpinnings of mythological beings and objects as well as providing an alternate etymology for the ethnonym *Svear*.

Through his excellent use of literary, archaeological, and mythological evidence, Terry Gunnell is able to grasp the echo of one fundamental shift in the pre-Christian religions of Scandinavia that occurred roughly five-odd centuries prior to the conversions to Christianity. His essay shows that these early medieval Scandinavians went from having important female deities that were often associated with natural, watery landscapes, with votive offerings and sacrifices being an integral part of their worship, to male deities that usurped their rituals, stories, and holy places.

And lastly, Bertil Nilsson's contribution is unusual compared to the rest of the volume, in that he concentrates on how a sacred place can lose its holiness. He details how churches and altars could have been violated, the legal repercussions, and both how and when either cleansing or reconsecration would have to be performed.

Questions of how the sacred is to be identified within the landscape, how it is altered by events and over time, how different layers of sacrality existed within the medieval landscape, and how what is sacred for one community is profane to another and vice versa, are engagingly discussed throughout all the contributions. The reader will find they are continually taking notes to further pursue threads into their own research. It is difficult to find fault with this volume; indeed, the editors are to be applauded for gathering such an esteemed groups of authors who have presented their research in such a clear and concise way. But given that Stefan Brink has been such a champion of early career researchers, perhaps additional submissions could have been sought from fewer tenured authors. This volume will almost certainly become one of those key works which will continue to stimulate and influence future researchers for many years to come within landscape studies and archaeology, for folklorists and those concerned with studies in religion, and indeed for anyone working in Scandinavian and early medieval studies more broadly.

Erica Steiner, *The University of Sydney*

Gerritsen, Anne, *The City of Blue and White: Chinese Porcelain and the Early Modern World*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2020; hardback; pp. xv, 332; 5 illustrations, 9 maps, 1 table; ISBN 9781108499958.

In her first chapter, Anne Gerritsen claims that this new monograph examines how Jingdezhen became 'the empire's premier site of ceramics production' and will offer 'a cultural history of the meanings and representations that shaped this history of this extraordinary city' (p. 6). Both are explored, and yet the work is also much more than that, so much so that it might not always satisfy the range of readers who are likely to engage with the text. Something of this tension is echoed in the work's title, in which the city is referenced, but not by name, and as much focus is placed upon the product made in Jingdezhen, referred to as 'Chinese porcelain'. But then, that is also part of Gerritsen's argument—that Jingdezhen ceramics came to dominate the world's view of what China produced in this domain.

Gerritsen's work reflects the wide-ranging lines of enquiry that she brings to the analysis, which contribute to the challenge of placing this work, a diversity of approaches that might be seen also in her dual appointments as Professor of History at the University of Warwick and Chair of Asian Art at Leiden University. She draws from detailed art historical work on specific pieces from Jingdezhen and indeed other contemporary sites of Chinese production, considers anthropological approaches to the life of the urban environment, offers spatial and visual analyses

of hierarchies of power, cultural history of material culture identities and representations, and studies local texts of the period outlining technical modes of production, and labour arrangements within kiln sites, but with an eye to the anxieties of local officials for control over mobile workforces, both skilled and unskilled, and who were concerned by the mobility of knowledge. Gerritsen brings to an English readership important attention to Chinese sources, visual and textual, in a work that charts a trajectory from the tenth to the eighteenth century.

Above all of this lies her push to better integrate the local and global in how we might do global history, to recognize where each has its place in explaining shifts and change, and to tell a story through the exchanges and interactions produced between people, things, and ideas. She argues for the need to rebalance the narrative of Jingdezhen's success as not simply a story of response to external demands and desire, but as one that recognizes the work of Imperial officials, internal political factors and labour policies, technological innovations such as the underglaze line-drawn and brush-painted decoration using cobalt that made the striking blue and white, the role of local environmental and natural resources, and regional and religious trading networks, all of which made Jingdezhen porcelain production not only possible and scalable to demand, but also available to desire, as exotic objects that could nonetheless make viable meaning as part of new assemblages in other cultures. It is ambitious stuff and there is a lot going on throughout to keep all these aspects in play and in their place in prosecuting the key arguments.

Sometimes, perhaps inevitably, that sense of the core arguments is hard to locate, and the work's structure does not always assist in foregrounding Gerritsen's narrative. While the not entirely clearly titled Chapter 1, 'The Shard Market of Jingdezhen', in essence does good work as an introduction, the other end of the work provide several different sorts of closing statements. Chapter 10, 'Local and Global in Jingdezhen's Long Seventeenth Century', commences with what feels like a return to overarching themes on the interaction of local and global, but also includes new analysis of how both production and market were shifting under new pressures (which were similarly both local and global) at this period. The epilogue, 'Fragments of a Global Past', moves us well past the end of the work's interest and into the modern.

In many places, I wanted and wondered about more. Alert to the questions she foregrounds here, I wondered about Gerritsen's analysis on the artefacts featured in the book's illustrations in order to make her history, and their trajectories to the varied global collections where they now reside, and the meanings they made and continue to make in these locations. A truly stimulating work, it will fruitfully serve as a thorough entry point into the very large and diverse scholarship surrounding porcelain and to Jingdezhen's central role in that history, and, more broadly, as a demonstration of a new and very fertile approach to global history.

Susan Broomhall, *Australian Catholic University*

Gerzić, Marina, and Aidan **Norrie**, eds, *Playfulness in Shakespearean Adaptations*, New York, Routledge, 2020; hardback; pp. 279; 15 illustrations; R.R.P. US$252.00; ISBN 9780367256463.

'Play' is the thing in Marina Gerzić and Aidan Norrie's *Playfulness in Shakespearean Adaptations*. The purpose of the collection is to highlight the importance of irreverence and play in the creation of 'new "Shakespeares"', as described in the book's abstract. From Victorian burlesque to contemporary graphic novels, this collection provides a range of material for the reader interested in Shakespearean adaptation of drama (his poems are not extensively addressed). The collection seems best suited to students or scholars new to examples of adaptation or those wanting to expand their knowledge of it.

The first section is entitled 'Page to Stage/Stage to Page'. Roberta Grandi opens with emphasizing the long history of playfully mocking Shakespearean genre and text through her exploration of three burlesques that adapt *King Lear*. Grandi's is unfortunately the only chapter that addresses historical representations as its main subject, although Gerzić's excellent chapter on children's editions of *Richard III* identifies the importance of early Shakespeare for children from Charles and Mary Lamb, Harrison S. Morris, Sir Arthur Thomas Quiller-Couch, and Henrietta Maria Bowdler. Gerzić argues that these and more contemporary editions demonstrate the flexible and complex ways of adapting even a violent Shakespearean play for young audiences and makes particular note of the effects of illustration in each edition. Chelsea L. Horne tackles Neil Gaiman's *The Sandman* comics that directly adapt Shakespeare as their subject. She deftly addresses the metatextual complexities of the adaptation process of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and the value of such an exercise. Between Grandi and Gerzić's chapters lies Miranda Fay Thomas's critique of Margaret Atwood's *Hag-Seed*. Thomas identifies how Atwood's novel 'advocates for accessible Shakespeare' (p. 48), even though the nature of her approach perhaps alienates those readers. Thomas also rightly questions the motivations of Hogarth Press for commissioning even a 'ludic' collection of Shakespearean adaptations (p. 51). This section closes with Sophie Shorland's romp through Terry Pratchett's *Wyrd Sisters* and its debts to Shakespeare. I must admit this chapter was a personal favourite, as Shorland provides an inspired and rich discussion of the implications of fantasy genres and audience in Pratchett's adaptation.

The next section provides invaluable information about two recent adaptation projects. The creation and success of the *Shakespeare Republic* web series is outlined by Sally McLean in the first chapter. As she heads up the project, McLean offers both a potted history of its genesis and a reflection on how her team's playfulness towards Shakespeare has created their best work. The second chapter discusses *richard III redux*, a faintly damning reimagining of questions concerning disability and representation in *Richard III* by playwrights Kaite O'Reilly and Phillip Zarrilli and actress Sara Beer. Their critique of previous stagings of Richard's disability extends to reflecting on the relationships between

the historical and Shakespearean Richards. They offer a sensitive and insightful discussion of how this can play out very negatively in casting and costuming practices. These chapters' different authorship, emphases, and insights are an excellent counterpoint to the remainder of the collection.

Sections III and IV consider televisual adaptations of Shakespeare and his context, with historical and neoliberal points of focus. For Ronan Hatfull, the Shakespearean origin stories of the film *Bill* (2015, made by the team at *Horrible Histories*), and to a lesser extent the television series *Will* (2017), demonstrate our cultural interests in playfully enforcing and undermining stereotypes of genius when imagining the past of an iconic figure like Shakespeare. Norrie's chapter works in a similar vein, but with relation to representing Elizabeth I. He notes that a range of films and television programmes frequently depict her fictional relationship with Shakespeare to enforce and undermine our cultural memory of her. In Section IV, Jennifer Clement discusses the cringe comedy *Hamlet 2* and the cruel irony of its irrational plot of eventual success despite the odds. In a discussion that is perhaps more about educational systems and their meritocracy than Shakespearean adaptation itself, Christian B. Long's chapter provides an excellent critique of how merit maps onto 'Shakesteen' films. Finally, Sonja Kleij's closing chapter discusses the adaptive power of the film *Gnomeo and Juliet* (2011) amongst its still-pressing concerns of patriarchy and intertextual limitations.

The range covered in this collection is extensive. An unfortunate outcome of this is the effect of a glut of introductions. The opening introduction feels a little too thorough in some of its efforts to be clear. Each of the book's sections also has its own introduction, and these feel heavy handed when reading the book cover to cover. However, on their own, these introductions give good overviews and would be useful for a student or scholar looking for something specific about adaptations. Overall, the collection offers thoughtful and wide-ranging new insights into the concepts of play and irreverence in Shakespearean adaptations for readers old and new.

Jennifer E. Nicholson, *The University of Sydney*

Guy, Ben, Georgia **Henley**, Owain Wyn **Jones**, and Rebecca **Thomas**, eds, *The Chronicles of Medieval Wales and the March: New Contexts, Studies, and Texts* (Medieval Texts and Cultures of Northern Europe, 31), Turnhout, Brepols, 2020; hardback; pp. xvi, 455; 6 b/w illustrations, 20 b/w tables; R.R.P. €80.00; ISBN 9782503583495.

Based on work undertaken by the Welsh Chronicles Research Group (founded in 2014 and hosted by Bangor University), editors Ben Guy, Georgia Henley, Owain Wyn Jones, and Rebecca Thomas have collated eleven articles as a culmination of the group collaboration, including five new editions and translations of select Welsh chronicles. The articles, from a range of impressive contributors, investigate questions of local and European contexts, reception and integrity, provenance and influences, as well as publishing editions of *O Oes Gwrtheyrn*, the *Cardiff*

Chronicle, the *Chronicle of Gregory of Caerwent*, *Blwydyn eiseu*, and *Brut Ieuan Brechfa*.

Part I, 'Synopses', begins with Huw Pryce's overview of chronicle writing in medieval Wales. Charting activity from the ninth to the sixteenth centuries, Pryce observes key movements in perspective: the shift from Latin to the vernacular; the continued importance of the 'master narrative' of the Welsh as dispossessed Britons; and the significance of monasticism in the chronicle tradition, particularly the Cistercians. Björn Weiler subsequently places Welsh chronicle writing within a European context. He argues that common tools and traditions connected Welsh chronicle writing to a 'trans-European framework', one where chroniclers were not just copyists but questioners and amenders of annalistic material. The notion of forging history from limited sources then segues into Ben Guy's discussion of forgery in the Welsh chronicle tradition. Noting the importance of these chronicles as historical sources, he charts the problems represented by 'romantic' emendations wrought by eighteenth- and nineteenth-century figures such as Iolo Morganwg and John Williams ab Ithel, and the evolution of robust modern frameworks for interpreting the chronicle tradition.

In Part II, 'Detailed Studies', Henry Gough-Cooper examines the three principal Welsh Latin annalistic chronicles: the Harleian (*c.* 1100), the Breviate (late thirteenth century), and the Cottonian (late thirteenth century). He argues that the Cottonian chronicle, much understudied, is critical to establishing traces of earlier chronicles from the tenth, eleventh, and twelfth centuries. Barry Lewis examines the genealogical tract *Bonedd y Saint*, and its relationship with the Cistercian abbey of Valle Crucis in north-east Wales. In relating a genealogical entry with a similar entry in the chronicle *Brenhinedd y Saesson*, he posits that all extant versions of the *Bonedd y Saint* come from a version copied at Valle Crucis in the second half of the thirteenth century from an older *clas* church located further west. David Stephenson returns to Valle Crucis to propose the abbey as the site for the continuation of the chronicle of *Brut y Tywysogyon* in the later thirteenth century and into the fourteenth century.

Part III, 'Editions', heralds the publication of five new editions and translations of select Welsh chronicles. Owyn Wyn Jones provides an edition of the *O Oes Gwrtheyrn*, the only chronicle to survive from medieval Gwynedd. He argues that it was composed in the second decade of the thirteenth century in the Cistercian monastery of Aberconwy and is a notable early example of the shift to the vernacular. Georgia Henley has produced a Latin edition of the early fourteenth-century *Cardiff Chronicle* and mapped its relationship with annals produced at Tewkesbury and Neath, providing an interesting map of transmission from the Welsh marches to south and north Wales. Joshua Byron Smith has constructed the first Latin edition of the *Chronicle of Gregory of Caerwent*, written down between 1237 and 1290 in a Benedictine abbey in Gloucester, and notable for its ambivalence to Edward's conquest of Wales. Rebecca Try has crafted an edition of a vernacular chronicle dated after 1321 (from older material), probably

from the Glamorgan area and termed by her as the *Blwydyn eiseu*. Ben Guy's contribution is a new edition of the vernacular chronicle *Brut Ieuan Brechfa*, written down by Ieuan Brechfa in the decades around 1500. He argues strongly against a tradition that perceives this chronicle as a figment of the imagination of Iolo Morganwg. A useful appendix listing the chronicles of medieval Wales and the March ends the volume.

Chronicles, and the Welsh chronicles in particular, are significant sources both of the past and of perceptions of that past. However, writing about chronicles can be awkward, as they often report on and exist in historical contexts that are unclear to the reader. Much useful material on context and transmission is 'hidden' in the editions themselves, and, perhaps, could have been drawn out into earlier discussions framing the Welsh chronicle tradition. Having said that, any project that produces new editions and translations is a worthy one. This volume is an important contribution to historical sources for Wales in the medieval period, and to dismantling negative perceptions of these sources.

Stephen J. Joyce, *Monash University*

Harty, Kevin J., ed., *Medieval Women on Film: Essays on Gender, Cinema and History*, Jefferson, McFarland & Company Inc., 2020; paperback; pp. 216; 26 b/w illustrations; R.R.P. US$39.95; ISBN 9781476668444.

Kevin J. Harty has been at the centre of medievalismist cinema studies since 1991 with the publication of his invaluable *Cinema Arthuriana: Essays on Arthurian Film* (Garland, 1991). His new collection—a compendium of fascinating and often innovative case studies on medieval women in world cinema—builds upon this work, centring gender in the discussion and broadening the scope beyond Arthuriana to encompass a multitude of cinematic medievalisms. The collection provides a sound basis for anyone interested in filmic medievalism (what Harty calls the 'reel Middle Ages') and/or in the intersection of medievalism and discourses of gender. Harty sets out to show 'just how multi-faceted medieval women's screen lives can be' (p. 3) and he succeeds, unpacking the long history of fictional and historical medieval women on film, in all their nuance.

Seven of the eleven case studies of the collection work to draw out the history of cinematic medievalismist impulse over time and to interrogate how these impulses have intersected with gendered discourses, doing so by examining multiple filmic representations of one medieval woman (fictional and historic). Amy Kaufman's chapter draws together existing scholarship and new and innovative analysis to create a genealogy of Guinevere on film, uncovering links between text and context, and unpicking elements of character, plot, costuming, dialogue, and music to produce an in-depth overview. The chapter is medievalism at its finest, outlining the revelatory potential and porous nature of both medievalism and film. Usha Vishnuvajjala's essay focuses on Morgan le Fay, exploring the Arthurian figure on film from 1949 to 2014 to map her evolution. The chapter triumphs in reflecting on broader cultural trends around the representation of medieval women

in cinema, invaluably doing so by focusing on a relatively underdeveloped area of study, Morgan le Fay on film. Valerie B. Johnson's chapter on Maid Marian in cinema is concerned with the concept of neomedievalism, namely the way filmic representations of Maid Marian 'pull […] the past into the present without concern for accuracy' (p. 69), and how modern preoccupations 'dictate Marian's behaviour, her story potential, her narrative role, and ultimately her value (p. 69). Johnson's overall thesis is striking, asserting that filmic representations of Maid Marian from the 1920s to the 2000s have been shaped by modern fiscal conservativism (what studios think audiences want to see), bound up in a misogynistic impulse to centre men's stories in cinema and in medievalism. Joan Tasker Grimbert's chapter explores the history of Isolde in world cinema between 1909 and 2006, probing five films (from the USA, France, Ireland, Germany, and Iceland) and dissecting each in relation to the topic of female agency. The chapter's strength comes from its innovative analysis of Isolde's self-determination on screen as a reflection of the medieval source material, rather than as an anachronistic product of modern feminism.

Alongside these essays that examine the afterlives of *fictional* medieval women in a series of films, the collection also performs this work regarding three *historical* women. Sandra Gorgievski performs analysis of the permeable nature of medievalism through an examination of Lady Godiva on film between 1911 to 2008, uncovering her shifting identity as erotic icon, dutiful wife, and feminist heroine. Fiona Tolhurst similarly examines the filmic history of Eleanor of Aquitaine (from the 1950s to the 2010s) as a reflection of fluctuating discourses around womanhood, and ultimately concludes that though diversely rendered, Eleanor has never been given the filmic treatment she deserves. Harty's own chapter, on the filmic afterlife of Joan of Arc, focuses on the notion of La Pucelle as an avatar for advancing multiple often contradictory agendas, providing a comprehensive history of Joan on film.

Four of the eleven chapters perform in-depth close analysis of a particular medievalist film and its engagement with gendered discourse. Andrew B. R. Elliot skilfully takes up the 1987 French film *La Passion Béatrice* to unpack filmic medievalismist impulse more broadly. Kristin L. Burr centres the English film *Stealing Heaven* (1988) and its representation of Heloise to discuss the complications bound up in adaptation and filmic medievalism while performing a close reading of the film's representation of women. Donald L. Hoffman examines *Die Nibelungen,* Fritz Lang's 1924 medievalist epic, focusing on the characters of Brunhild and Kriemhild to comment on the film's links to art history, Nazism, and German mythmaking. Joseph M. Sullivan's chapter, however, is perhaps the most interesting of these four essays. It takes a deep dive into the relatively unknown Norwegian film *Kristin Lavransdatter* (1992), putting forth a striking analysis of the film itself in tandem with issues that surrounded the film's production, regarding female scriptwriter and director Liv Ullman. In doing so, Sullivan manages to examine issues of female power, influence, desire, and agency onscreen and off.

Harty's collection draws its strength from the diversity and expansiveness of its independently interesting essays but also from its overall invaluable contribution to the study of the 'reel Middle Ages' and to the field of Medievalism Studies as a whole.

Ellie Crookes, *University of Wollongong*

Henley, Georgia, and Joshua Byron **Smith**, eds, *A Companion to Geoffrey of Monmouth* (Brill's Companions to European History, 22), Leiden/Boston, Brill, 2020; hardback; pp. xviii, 575; R.R.P. €189.00; ISBN 9789004405288.

Is it not strange that well into the digital age, by which time we should be experiencing the end of the printed book as we know it, we should see the production of, not just many hard-copy books, but so many large and expensive ones? The present, with over 500 pages and a hefty price tag, is one such. And like many of its bulk, this one is a multi-authored volume, with no fewer than twenty-five contributors, some of them graduate students, for whom it might be their first publication (once it might have been a journal article). Yet some of the most central names in recent Geoffrey of Monmouth studies, such as Julia Crick, Michael Reeve, and Neil Wright, are missing.

A 'Companion' such as this should do at least three things: it should describe its subject-matter in minute detail; it should summarize the past and current state of scholarship on it; and it should point to issues and questions for further research. This volume is divided into four parts: Part I offers four chapters on Geoffrey's sources (Welsh, classical and biblical, English, and the special case of the *Prophetiae Merlini*); Part II, named 'Contemporary Contexts', contains six chapters, mainly focused on the earliest reception of the *Gesta regum Britanniae*; Part III, 'Approaches', has four chapters exploring aspects of Geoffrey's book ('colonial preoccupations', gender, race, religion, and the Church), and Part IV, 'Reception', has no fewer than thirteen (mostly short) chapters, each a case-study of the work's reception in various areas of western Europe (and Byzantium!) from the twelfth century to the early 1500s. I can dispose of Part IV quickly as providing little advance on, and no replacement for, Julia Crick's survey of the dissemination of the *Gesta* which forms the fourth volume of *The Historia Regum Britannie* of Geoffrey of Monmouth (*Dissemination and Reception in the Later Middle Ages*, D. S. Brewer, 1991). The book under review has an excellent, full bibliography of Geoffrey of Monmouth studies (pp. 499–551) and good indexes. It is largely free from typos ('Geoffrey of Viterbo' and 'boarder country' in Chapter 24 are unfortunate exceptions).

Geoffrey Monmouth is an author who deserves a 'Companion' such as this, not because we know very much about him and his writings, but because he provokes so many difficult questions: what sort of a person was he; where was he born?; what was his ethnicity?; why did he write the *Gesta* (and what sort of work is it?; who were his audience?); was he a defender of the British against the Anglo-

Saxons or Anglo-Normans of his day?; and did he intend it to be read as real history (however propagandistic), or as light entertainment (whether romance or satire)? All of these questions are canvassed in the present book, but not one is answered definitively. There is agreement that the work is not—at least unambiguously—in favour of the British (certainly not the contemporary Welsh) against the English or Anglo-Normans. Instead, the focus is rather on the work's sources and on its Europe-wide reception. One cannot help gaining the impression that the best and most fundamental work on Geoffrey has been done and that there is little to add. We now have the best possible edition and account of its transmission; we have the best possible account of the copies and their distribution; and with Christopher Brooke and Valerie Flint (in this reviewer's estimation) we have the best accounts of the work's character and purpose. Where to go from here? This book contains little to help us, although Jaakko Tahkokallio in his intriguing chapter on the early manuscript dissemination suggests that much more codicological work is needed on the manuscripts.

Fiona Tolhurst's account of the prominent place and status of women in the *Gesta* (Chapter 12) is striking, but her view of the *Gesta* as a piece of 'feminism' amid the 'antifeminism' of the contemporaneous generality is surely the worst kind of anachronism, and it sheds no light on why it is so. Rather, I am struck by the similarity of so many of Geoffrey's women to those in the earliest courtly romances, written about the same time as the *Gesta*, or soon after. The issue is not addressed in Françoise Le Saux's chapter on Geoffrey and twelfth-century romance. It chimes with the message of the *Gesta*'s dedications and the provenance of its earliest manuscripts: great Anglo-Norman churchmen and princes, courts, and monasteries, much the same as for William of Malmesbury's *Gesta regum Anglorum*, only more so. In other words, the audience, both intended and actual, was the Anglo-Norman aristocracy. This explains why Geoffrey's book was 'secular'—in the twelfth-century, not modern sense—in being completely non-monastic, but not non-religious (as such, see Chapter 14 by Barry Lewis).

It is clear from his epilogue that Geoffrey was perfectly conscious of the works of Henry of Huntingdon and William of Malmesbury, and that he must have read them, and it has long been known that he borrowed (or twisted) elements from them. He must have been stung by William's sharp comment about King Arthur (*Gesta regum Anglorum* 8. 2): 'the hero of many wild tales even in our own day, but [who] assuredly deserves to be the subject of reliable history, rather than of false and dreaming fable'. His own *Gesta* is surely meant, as Flint proposed, to be a satirical version of the 'reliable history' which William desired.

Rod Thomson, *University of Tasmania*

Hodapp, William F., *The Figure of Minerva in Medieval Literature*, Cambridge, D. S. Brewer, 2019; hardcover; pp. xiii, 307; 5 b/w illustrations; R.R.P. £60.00; ISBN 9781843845393.

As scholarship continues to re-examine the ways ideas traversed the medieval world through literature, delving into the relationship between author and audience, William F. Hodapp's volume following the figure of Minerva from antiquity to the later Middle Ages offers critical perspectives on medieval authors' use of established imagery. Drawing on a wide range of texts from the classical world through to sixteenth-century England and Scotland, Hodapp proposes that the way medieval people engaged with antiquity in literature shows that both author and audience had an assumed understanding of classical figures. Intertextuality is central, and Hodapp asserts that 'poetics and reading practices [were] at the heart of medieval classicism' (p. 247).

The book consists of six chapters, each under the heading of a different tradition of Minerva representation which the author claims to have 'teased out' of the texts he surveys (p. 249): Minerva in antiquity, as goddess of wisdom, of liberal arts, as benefactor, idol, and as the ally of Venus. Throughout, Hodapp draws on classical texts, exploring their reception and transformation via medieval authors' works, offering in-depth readings of each, relying heavily on Ovid, and with an understandable emphasis on the English pieces, such as John Lydgate's works, wherein lies his expertise, and from which he derives some of his more interesting readings.

Framing the work is the first chapter, 'Roman Minerva and Elements of Medieval Classicism', in which the 'dynamic interaction between reading and writing' is broached (p. 12). Drawing on other media, such as the temple of Minerva in Assisi, the medieval familiarity with the classical world is elucidated. Amidst changing attitudes towards Europe's Roman past, medieval authors adapted their use of classical figures and ideas. As with Minerva and Pallas-Athena in antiquity, this synthesis of gods, ideas, cultures, and, to an extent, language, is addressed, and Minerva is seen as a unifying element. Considering passages from Geoffrey Chaucer, Thomas Aquinas, Geoffrey of Vinsauf, and Quintus Curtius Rufus, among others, Hodapp notes that authors in the medieval West, as well as their audience, developed historical, physical, and allegorical traditions that were independent of the Greek tradition, itself largely 'unavailable to the Latin West' (p. 43).

In the chapter 'Sapiential Tradition', Minerva as the representation of contemplative wisdom via love, presented in the Vulgate, is explored in terms of 'active redemption' and 'creative transformation' (p. 44). Hodapp investigates the relationship between love and wisdom, posing literary precedents in a survey of wide-ranging texts, including Boethius, Henry Suso, and Bernardus Silvestris, culminating in an analysis of works by John Lydgate and the sixteenth-century Gavin Douglas. The chapter 'Martianus Tradition'—Minerva as mistress of learning according to Martianus Capella—examines the medieval

idea of liberal arts from Cicero's *De oratore*, and how it was adapted by authors such as Cassiodorus, Augustine, and Isidore of Seville, to Christian clergy. The more secular John of Salisbury and Peter Abelard are presented in contrast, and questions are addressed about Minerva's relationships with other figures in the analyses of the English 'Court of Sapience', and the role of the poet in society in Skelton's 'Garland of Laurel'.

A similar strategy is used in the following chapters, tracing traditions of Minerva as benefactor and as idol, exposing questions about readership, polemic, didacticism, poetics, and style. Hodapp's analyses of the English works offer some fresh perspectives on the use of classical figures by medieval poets. The overarching theme in the synthesis of the figure of Minerva seems always to be her relationship to other figures and representations of virtues, especially love, elaborated in the last chapter, where her relationship to Venus, in the 'Ovidian Tradition', is examined.

Hodapp has taken a broad range of literature from an extensive timeframe, which, whilst commendable in scope, leaves the reader feeling that the surface has barely been broken. What is not always clear are the conclusions drawn about the medieval audience and their ability to recognize the features outlined. For example, Hodapp asserts that the use of names in literature alluding to figures and ideas shows an informed audience, which begs more evidence about the audience, education, and historical background that could have been drawn into this study to support Hodapp's not insignificant concepts beyond his statement, used not once but twice, that medieval writers 'did not compose in a cultural or literary vacuum' (p. 254).

It is not always easy to research across languages and disciplines, but Hodapp's bibliography shows great scope in both critical and primary sources. The book reads well, and Hodapp's analyses are involved, effectively summarizing works for his reader, but does he successfully show what medieval audiences would have been able to understand? The intertextual connections are the most convincing and should be a springboard for further studies into this important aspect of author-audience relationship. This book is a welcome addition to intertextual studies as well as classical elements and their reception in the medieval world.

Stephanie L. Hathaway, *University of Oxford*

Hofman, Rijcklof, Charles **Caspers**, Peter **Nissen**, Mathilde **van Duijk**, and Johan **Oosterman**, eds, *Inwardness, Individualization, and Religious Agency in the Late Medieval Low Countries: Studies in the* Devotio Moderna *and its Context* (Medieval Church Studies, 43), Turnhout, Brepols, 2020; hardback; pp. x, 230; 9 b/w, 6 colour illustrations, 5 b/w tables; R.R.P. €75.00; ISBN 9782503585390.

As someone who listened to Thomas à Kempis read at boarding school mealtimes, I found it interesting to discover more of his context in the Devotio Moderna movement in the Low Countries during the late medieval period. The chapters in

this book arise from a conference in Nijmegen in October 2016 and cover different aspects of the Devotio Moderna in the period and region described. There is no obvious overarching theme, though Hofman suggests the themes are 'an improved analysis of inwardness and private devotion in the late medieval Low Countries' and 'whether individualization really played a role in religious agency' (p. 17). The early chapters cover the theme of individualization and personhood in relation to the Devotio Moderna in the Low Countries in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, a region and period not previously studied in any depth according to Hofman. The discussion about the development of the Devotio Moderna is mostly confined to criticism of a work by R. W. Southern (*Western Society and the Church in the Middle Ages*, Penguin, 1970) rather than a useful brief outline of the movement.

Rob Faesen's chapter connects the ideas of the Devotio Moderna to earlier religious thought by discussing the emphasis put on the individual and relationality of religious belief by Abelard, William of Saint-Thierry, and John of Ruusbroec (whose use of the 'common life' was taken up by the Brethren of the Common Life in their development of the Devotio Moderna). He mentions Ignatius of Loyola's writings, which while later than those of Thomas à Kempis, convey a similar spirituality. In Chapter 5, Nigel F. Palmer provides us with possible ways to meditate on Christ's passion by several earlier authors, predominantly Henry Suso, Bonaventure, and Jordan of Quedlinburg, while noting the borrowings between these writers. The writings of Geert Grote and Thomas à Kempis are given a chapter each, appropriate for the founder of the movement and its best-known writer, though these chapters come before Palmer's. Margarita Logutova introduces Thomas à Kempis through his autobiographical writings, with some discussion of his spiritual writing, and Rijcklof Hofman provides outlines of Grote's life before discussing his theological writings for priests and beguines among others.

The final four chapters cover affective and material aspects of Devotio Moderna piety. Koen Goudriaan's presentation of the memorial practices emphasizes the continuation of earlier medieval practices of masses, intercessory prayers, and visits to the burial place by clergy paid by the family of the deceased. Goudriaan comments that unlike other aspects of the Devotio Moderna which prize individualization of religious activities, study of these rituals belongs 'to the community of the living and the dead' (p. 125). However, he mentions the great diversity in the objects documented in the Medieval Memoria Online (MeMO) database. Anne Bollman provides a rare example of a rulebook written by a woman, Salome Sticken (1369–1449), for her community of devout women. Sticken, a prioress for fifty-five years, spent her last years working on this text which encourages the women to contemplate the Passion at all times.

Thom Mertens and Dieuwke van der Poel, in their discussion of the place of song in Devotio Moderna, suggest that the singer must 'put oneself in the position of the soul (the "I" persona)' (p. 167). Affect is to be awoken by the songs and song

cycles composed for the followers of the Devotio Moderna, particularly of fear, love, and hope. The singer is encouraged to fully experience the song. A detailed description of a Middle Dutch song cycle provides examples of the intercessions prayed, with the possible emotions the singer might experience. Anna Dlabacová presents details of a particular series of incunabula (books printed before 1501), specifically the text of the *Devout Hours on the Life and Passion of Jesus Christ*, designed for lay readers. Dlabacová notes that the colour plates demonstrate the author's wish to emphasize the personalization of such books by their owners through colouration of the woodcut images, and the addition of prayers and the owners' details.

This book provides the reader with a specialized view of some aspects of the religious thought just prior to, and in the development of, the Devotio Moderna. While the issues of individualization, inwardness, and religious agency are covered in most chapters, there is a sense that some of the authors had to constrain their writing to meet these headings. In many of the chapters there are long quotes from the original texts, followed by English translations. While this allows the reader access to the exact text, it makes the book clunky, given there are also footnotes.

Eleanor Flynn, *University of Divinity*

Kopp, Vanina, and Elizabeth **Lapina**, eds, *Games and Visual Culture in the Middle Ages and Renaissance*, Turnhout, Brepols, 2020; hardback; pp. 356; 62 b/w, 25 colour illustrations, 2 b/w tables; R.R.P. €85.00; ISBN 9782503588728.

The authors of the collected essays in *Games and Visual Culture in the Middle Ages and Renaissance* acknowledge their debt to the theory of play conceptualized in Johan Huizinga's classic text *Homo Ludens* (1938; English translation Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1949). Huizinga examines the importance of play in human culture covering rules, play space, and its secretive ritualistic and holy elements.

By drawing on Huizinga's thesis, Vanina Kopp and Elizabeth Lapina edit a volume that takes an innovative wide-ranging look at game-playing. Games studied range from board games to sports, indoor and outdoor, and even an intriguing combination of different play types. The volume also encompasses 'a broad geographical area ranging from Scandinavia to the Iberian Peninsula' (p. 17). Following recent critical trends towards merging the ancient, medieval, and early modern periods into premodern studies, the editors consider the early modern period a continuation of rather than a division from the Middle Ages.

Katherine Forsyth and Mark A. Hall combine their research skills to examine medieval Celtic board-gaming. The combination of archaeological knowledge on board and game pieces and their rules with literary gaming references provide fresh new insights into Celtic texts. The essay reveals how board games, particularly the strategy games *hnefatafl* and *fidchell* (still played today), are central to Celtic literary plots. Playing pieces are used by characters as weapons and to describe atmospheric detail.

Paul Hardwick examines the wide variety of indoor and outdoor games depicted on the underside of medieval misericords in monastic and parish churches. What is fascinating about Hardwick's contribution is that the upturning of misericords in itself becomes a game of chance through discovering what game lies underneath. Drawing on Huizinga's notion of spatial play, Hardwick considers how unruly games of dice and wrestling depicted on the misericords impinge on the ecclesiastical setting to remind parishioners not to take the holy space for granted.

Akash Kumar studies Boccacio's fascination with chess in his early work *Filocolo* (1335–36) and the *Decameron* (1353). Illustrations in Boccacio's texts show women playing chess to promote courteous behaviour, where the suitor loses the chess game to win at love. More illuminating is the realization that the queen in chess is the most powerful piece on the board. While acknowledging that women fought on the medieval battlefield, Kumar could have considered the 'queen' chess piece as sublimating the beloved into the divine beauty who wields the power of life and death over the Lover in the popular medieval trope of courtly love.

The association between chess and love is explicitly examined by Daniel E. O'Sullivan in the late-fourteenth-century text *Les Eschéz d'amours*. The chess match between the young lover and the beloved becomes an allegorical courtship determined by the sequence of moves in which reason wins over sensuality. The dichotomous battle is also realized visually in the chess board's light and dark squares.

The most striking instance of challenging postmodern preconceptions of a familiar board game is found in Irvin Cemil Schick's essay on 'Snakes and Ladders'. It originated in South Asia, and Schick examines Indo-Muslim and Ottoman/Turkish 'Snakes and Ladders' boards from the nineteenth century. In these versions of 'Snakes and Ladders' or 'Chess of the Gnostics', the player embarks on the literal ups and downs of a spiritual journey towards God or God's love. Despite no evidence of 'Chess of the Gnostics' being known to Muslims before the eighteenth century, Schick argues convincingly that the game's mystical philosophy can be traced to the medieval Andalusian mystic Muḥyî al-Dîn Ibn 'Arabî.

Annemarieke Willemsen examines the impact of toys in children's lives in Italy, 1350–1550, through art, literature, and archaeological finds. Depictions of children playing become crucial cultural documents indicating a healthy male as the perfect child and an emphasis on protecting children from illness. Therefore, the prevalence of toys in Italian society becomes an indicator of how much children were valued and loved.

The mystery and competitiveness of medieval gaming are skilfully realized in Julie Mell's contribution on Viking's graffiti inside a grave in the Orkney Islands. In an exceptionally well-researched and analysed argument, Mell asserts that 'some thirty to sixty Norse speakers' were engaged in a multiplayer game of engraving their inscriptions as a kind of literal high score. Additionally, the

association of treasure and the undead with the grave indicates an exciting perilous adventure comparable to a twenty-first-century role-playing video game.

The volume accentuates the importance of games and game-playing in the premodern period and builds on previous work in more depth. *Games and Visual Culture in the Middle Ages and Renaissance* is invaluable to undergraduates and scholars interested in premodern games, literature, and visual culture.

Frank Swannack, *University of Salford*

Lampurlanés Farré, Isaac, *Excerptum de Talmud: Study and Edition of a Thirteenth-Century Latin Translation* (Contact and Transmission, 1), Turnhout, Brepols, 2020; hardback; pp. 302; 44 b/w tables; R.R.P. €85.00; ISBN 97820503586908.

The so-called 'trial of the Talmud' that took place in Paris in 1240 and the subsequent burning of many copies of the Talmud in the following year is not a comfortable subject. This volume—the first to appear in a new Brepols series 'Contact and Transmission'—devoted to intercultural encounters from late antiquity to the early modern period provides a study in a meticulously documented critical edition of a Latin summary of the Talmud, along with an English translation, by Isaac Lampurlanés Farré. This summary, the so-called *Excerptum de Talmud*, is itself based on the much larger *Extractiones de Talmud*, a sequentially organized collection of almost 1900 passages culled from the Talmud, critically edited by Ulisse Ceccini and Óscar de la Cruz Palma in 2018 within the Brepols series 'Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Mediaevalis' (CCCM, 29, Brepols, 2018). All of these authors are part of an energetic research team based at Barcelona, devoted to studying the Latin Talmud. This study, edition, and translation lives up to the high editorial standards already established by that team.

The first part of this volume contains three chapters that contextualize the summary that is edited and translated in its second part. The opening chapter describes the events that led up to the Paris trial of 1240. It started in 1238, when Nicholas Donin, a convert to Christianity from Judaism (who had himself been excommunicated by the Jewish community in Paris over a decade earlier) decided to take a list of thirty-five articles based on the Talmud to Pope Gregory IX. Lampurlanés Farré is more concerned to provide the basic facts in this process than to reflect on what might have provoked this extraordinary move. While Petrus Alphonsi and Peter the Venerable had quoted briefly from the Talmud a century earlier, the idea of pursuing a campaign against this text, held in such honour by Jewish communities, was completely original. With the formal end of the Albigensian Crusade in 1229, the idea of identifying the Talmud as a Jewish heresy that targeted Christianity provided justification for launching a vicious anti-Jewish campaign. One suspects that Odo of Châteauroux, appointed by William of Auvergne as Chancellor of the University of Paris in 1238, may have encouraged Donin to go to Rome and thus initiate an official ecclesiastical campaign against the Talmud. The trial that ensued, which involved rabbi Yehiel of Paris and Rabbi

Judah ben David of Melun, is recorded in a detailed Jewish account, as well as a briefer Christian narrative. This in turn led to mass burning (twenty-four cartloads, it is reported) of copies of the Talmud in 1241–42.

For reasons that are not fully explained in this volume, the death of Pope Gregory IX on 22 August 1141, followed by the very short papacy of Celestine IV and a vacancy of some eighteen months prior to the enthronement of Innocent IV on 25 June 1243, resulted in a relaxation of the anti-Jewish campaign. While there are no references to the Talmud in the proceedings of the 1245 Council of Lyons, Odo of Châteauroux was certainly involved in promoting a second phase in proceedings against the Talmud in the years immediately following the Council. One suspects that the resumption of the campaign against the Talmud provided an opportunity for a hard-line faction within the Church to re-assert ecclesiastical authority, at least in Paris—perhaps as a move against those Christians who were interested in learning from Jewish tradition. Lampurlanés Farré focuses more on the textual production of the massive *Extractiones de Talmud* in the years 1245 and 1248, in which Donin was certainly involved, as was Odo of Châteauroux, who was made a cardinal in 1244. Odo's involvement in the affair led to a second trial of the Talmud in Paris on 15 May 1248, in which masters of the University (including Albert the Great) were forced to accept the judgement imposed on the Jewish community.

The *Excerptum*, which survives in two important manuscripts, derives from a thematically organized version of the *Extractiones*, itself edited in an appendix. The *Excerptum* was produced sometime between 1245 and 1300. In claiming to summarize the Babylonian Talmud it reinforces the impression that Jewish rabbis were rabidly anti-Christian and lacked all reason in their devotion to the precepts of the Talmud. It quotes sentences like: 'Was not Jesus the Nazarene the son of Miriam a hair-dresser and eye-painter? She strayed from her husband'. Sentences like these and countless others contributed powerfully to perpetuating an image of Judaism as irrational and hostile to Christianity. These texts deserve to be read as providing uncomfortable evidence of the enduring character of the stereotypes projected onto Jews throughout the later medieval period. Its author is to be commended for tackling such a difficult topic.

Constant Mews, *Monash University*

Leonard, Amy E., and David M. **Whitford**, *Embodiment, Identity, and Gender in the Early Modern Age*, New York, Routledge, 2021; cloth; pp. 272; R.R.P. US$160.00; ISBN 9780367507350.

Merry Wiesner-Hanks, Distinguished Professor Emerita at the University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee's Department of History, has made ground-breaking contributions to scholarship in the fields of gender, religion, and global history in the early modern period. This collection of essays brings together the far-reaching and thought-provoking themes of Wiesner-Hanks's vast scholarship in eighteen chapters divided into three sections. The engaging and tightly structured

essays deftly engage with Wiesner-Hanks's scholarly output using a variety of methodologies to address the intersections of identity, gender, and the body in the early modern period. The volume begins with a foreword about Merry Wiesner-Hanks by Natalie Zemon Davis which thoughtfully and skilfully charts Wiesner-Hanks's career. The introduction then builds on Davis's contribution to craft a historiographical essay covering Wiesner-Hanks's scholarly interests.

The first section draws on the fields of legal, religious, and political history to historicize the body as a gendered site of negotiation. Joel F. Harrington's essay focuses on the ancient Germanic method of cruentation to accuse and convict murderers. Amy E. Leonard's essay on virginity, the 'forgotten stepchild' of sexuality (p. 31), uses Martin Luther's devaluing of both spiritual and physical virginity to frame virginity as a social construct. David Whitford's chapter shifts our focus to childbirth and Luther's interpretation of Genesis 3.16. After witnessing his wife in pain, Luther claimed that both men and women suffered during labour and, therefore, both bore the penalty handed down to Eve. Jodi Blinkoff's essay on the discalced Carmelites in Spain also addresses the sensory importance of the body and the important role of personal touch in religious communities. Marc Foster returns to Germany and examines women's sexuality and their agency in the face of patriarchal legal frameworks. Finally, Carole Levin's essay on James I and 'unruly women' (p. 71) examines how the law was used by and against elite women to control their bodies in early modern England.

The second section examines women who resisted and subverted religious change in German-speaking lands, with some exceptions. Marjorie Elizabeth Plummer's chapter reveals there was no uniform response to Reform; women reacted to change through the prism of their own personal and collective values balanced with external pressures, religious ritual, and financial circumstances. Sigrun Haude's essay builds on Plummer's analysis by examining the female experience of the Thirty Years War through the lens of monastic life. Elizabeth A. Lehfeldt's essay continues the theme of enclosed women to propose a new comparative reading of sources in Spain and England. Her analysis shows that nuns did not uniformly resist new orders; they resisted certain male agents who failed to appreciate the nuances of their community. John L. Thompson's chapter returns to Germany to interpret Anna Maria van Schurman's private poetry as a prelude to her radical spirituality later in life. Raymond A. Mentzer's chapter moves to the private space of the home to analyse how women in France and its borderlands continued to practise Catholic ritual and Reformed activities while their husbands were practitioners of the local dominant faith. Christine Kooi finds similarities in the Netherlands, where the Golden Age created restrictions and possibilities for Catholic women who proselytized to family members. Jeffrey R. Watt's essay on women in Calvinist Geneva takes women out of the house and into the tribunal, where gender affected not only who appeared before the religious courts, but also the nature of their punishment.

The final section examines the gendered elements of relocation on a global level. Nicholas Terpstra's chapter surveys how displacement became gendered as definitions of religious community, identity, and purity shifted. Timothy G. Fehler builds on Terpstra's contribution and uses quantitative analysis to reveal that men and women experienced exile differently. By contrast, the final three essays consider the possibilities of the global turn for gender history. Kathleen M. Comerford's essay begins by revealing that Jesuit training libraries contained very few resources on foreign languages and customs, and Jesuits were instead driven by a masculinizing culture of martyrdom. Ulrike Strasser takes up this latter argument and frames sea voyages as a formative site of masculinity and coming of age for Jesuit men. Finally, Allyson M. Poska's essay applies a gendered analysis to the Atlantic economy to reveal the centrality of women to the 'economic dynamism of the early modern Atlantic world' (p. 231).

The afterword by Susan Karant-Nunn reflects on how Wiesner-Hanks and her scholarship have shaped the academic careers of the contributors. Karant-Nunn finds synergies throughout the volume, from the concentration on German-speaking lands where Wiesner-Hanks began her career to Wiesner-Hanks's recent work in global history. Overall, the volume is a worthy companion to any reader of Wiesner-Hanks's vast bibliography. The diverse and academically rigorous contributions make this Festschrift indispensable for scholars of gender, identity, and the body.

Jessica O'Leary, *Australian Catholic University*

Lesser, Zachary, *Ghosts, Holes, Rips and Scrapes: Shakespeare in 1619, Bibliography in the Longue Durée*, Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2021; cloth; pp. 240; R.R.P. US$49.95; ISBN 9780812252941.

Until recently, book history, bibliography, and textual studies tended to be regarded as almost moribund backwaters of literary studies. In part owing to the material turn, these areas have suddenly become fashionable; indeed, some might see them as now some of the most influential and innovative fields in the discipline, perhaps along with approaches through queer theory, and critical race studies. This book by Zachary Lesser is a fine example of what we perhaps now need to call Revolutionary Bibliography (as opposed to the early twentieth century's New Bibliography).

Ghosts, Holes, Rips and Scrapes is perhaps slightly narrower in scope than Lesser's brilliant analysis of the anti-teleological effect of the discovery of the first quarto of *Hamlet* in the early nineteenth century in his *Hamlet after Q1: An Uncanny History of the Shakespearean Text* (University of Pennsylvannia Press, 2015). This new book focuses on the so-called Pavier quartos: a 1619 compilation of several plays by, and attributed to, Shakespeare. Lesser once again undoes a kind of teleological, bibliographical projection, by showing, with great ingenuity, that this collection of play quartos published in 1619 was a kind of bookseller/

publisher's anthology, rather than an anticipatory, or unauthorized, or random, collected works of Shakespeare. The true beauty of this book lies in the detail of Lesser's journey towards this conclusion. And Lesser's journey, which requires a painstaking examination of individual copies of these early modern books, is also an account of the journeys taken by individual volumes through time and use, in the manner that book history is beginning to enshrine as an especially productive scholarly mode of enquiry. As Lesser puts it, individual early modern books are palimpsests containing physical clues which 'derive from multiple historical moments overlaid onto a single transhistorical object' (p. 23).

To explain how this collection of plays was marketed as a collection, Lesser has to follow perhaps the most vital precept of the new book history: a book has to be examined as closely as possible in order to see it both as it is now, and as was constituted and reconstituted during its long life. As Lesser's title suggests, this set of deductions involves four physical characteristics: ghosts, holes, rips, and scrapes. Ghosts are the faint impressions left by the ink of one page on another page, which enables Lesser to determine plays that were once bound together but were later disbound or rearranged. Holes are left by the method usually used to hold the pages of smaller texts like plays, which were stitched together with needle and thread: the absence of such holes points to bound collections of plays already available for sale, as opposed to buyers collecting together individual (and generally stab-stitched) plays, and having them bound later into a collection. Rips and scrapes refer to a process of erasing, either by scraping off or cutting/ripping out and rewriting the original publication dates of the '1619' plays bound up into the collection.

All this close scrutiny and meticulous work enables Lesser to tell a very different story about a collection of plays that preceded the Shakespeare first folio, but that had a much more complex relationship to it than previous bibliographers realized. But in a much broader sense, Lesser demonstrates how this bibliographically inspired form of book history enriches our cultural understanding, often in unexpected ways.

This book is a perfect illustration of what Lesser sees as the humanism of historically informed bibliography. Lesser's book is also a compelling counter to the now prevalent idea that the reproduction of early modern books online, from the almost comprehensive Early English Books Online (EEBO) series through to the growing number of scans of Shakespeare quartos and folios, will circumvent the need to examine multiple individual copies of these books. The kind of close look required for this type of study necessitates the individual examination of dozens, if not hundreds, of examples, though this is also an enterprise requiring collaboration with rare book librarians and archivists. *Ghosts, Holes, Rips and Scrape*s is a model for this increasingly important work; it is a pleasure to read, and the appropriately high production values for the book, which is copiously illustrated in colour, enhance that pleasure.

Paul Salzman, *La Trobe University*

Lynn, Eleri, *Tudor Textiles*, New Haven, Yale University Press (in association with Historic Royal Palaces), 2020; hardback; pp. 208; 132 colour illustrations; R.R.P. US$50.00; ISBN 9780300244120.

When people think of the Tudors and textiles, most picture the sumptuous dress at the courts of Henry VIII and his daughter Elizabeth I, which made these monarchs living spectacles of wealth and power. In *Tudor Textiles*, Eleri Lynn pushes readers to look beyond the clothing worn by these monarchs and to examine how tapestries, carpets, arras, embroidered decorative objects, and furnishings were used in the courts, ceremonies, and pageantry of Tudor England. Lynn is well placed to write on such a topic, as she is curator of the Royal Ceremonial Dress Collection at Historic Royal Palaces and was formerly an assistant curator in the Department of Furniture, Textiles, and Fashion at the Victoria and Albert Museum. This study follows on from her 2017 book *Tudor Fashion*, which was also published by Yale University Press in association with Historic Royal Palaces.

Tudor Textiles begins with a chapter on the global story of Tudor textiles, which highlights the importance of woollen textiles to English industry and contextualizes the wider Tudor world, including overseas trade to the Americas and Asia. It also explains how many of these textiles were caught up in the politics of the period and helped to define English relationships with other European states such as Burgundy, the Low Countries, Scotland, Italy, and France. Chapter 2 is the largest chapter of the book and focuses on the significance of textiles that were made and displayed for each Tudor monarch, emphasizing the politics and magnificence particular to each reign. The meanings of textiles during the reign of Henry VII are framed by his wish to cement the Tudor dynasty at the English court after the Wars of the Roses. For his son, Henry VIII, Lynn's discussion revolves around the king's use of textiles to compete with other Renaissance princes, particularly at the Field of Cloth of Gold (1520) where tapestries, textiles, cloth-covered structures, and tents were an integral part of Henry's construction of kingship. The use and ownership of textiles by others at Henry's court, such as those tapestries hung at Hampton Court that were commissioned by Cardinal Thomas Wolsey, are also explored.

The use of textiles during reigns of Edward VI and Mary I are briefly examined considering the legacy of their father and Mary I's continental connections to Spain and the Low Countries through her mother and husband. In the discussion of Elizabeth I's reign, Lynn shifts focus from objects like tapestries and arras, many of which the queen had inherited from her father and sister and were reinterpreted for used in her more static court, to embroidered textiles. Sources of inspiration for surviving embroideries wrought by the Princesses Elizabeth and Mary, and their cousin Mary Queen of Scots, are analysed, as is the professionally embroidered Bacton Altar Cloth, which Lynn argues was a court woman's petticoat before it was used as an altar cloth.

Chapter 3 moves discussion to the interiors of the royal households. It provides a thorough overview of what decorated what Tudor palaces and at

what times. Themes explored in this chapter include the politics of Tudor private spaces, the function and importance of the Cloth of Estate in Tudor ceremonies, the bedchamber and birth rituals, wall and floor coverings, and intimate and sentimental textiles. Chapter 4 examines the production, maintenance, and movement of textiles between royal Tudor residences. Reading this chapter, one is struck by the sheer logistics of managing the wardrobe and transporting textiles, as well as commissioning such pieces from merchants and craftspeople. Finally, Chapter 5 examines the craftspeople who made textiles during the period, particularly those involved in the wool, silk, and linen industries. Techniques of production, such as dying, weaving, embroidery, and even the goldsmithing of thread of gold or silver, are also examined here, as is the production of carpets in the Islamic world that were beloved by the Tudor monarchs.

The audience for *Tudor Textiles* is non-specialist, and as such, the book has a highly accessible tone and a large number of colour illustrations throughout. It is a shame, then, that some images are not well integrated into Lynn's arguments and are quickly referenced without much analysis. The book also suffers from some repetition at times, as themes such as embroidery are revisited in various sections throughout the book, so the basics are often repeated. Overall, Lynn draws on a wide range of primary sources and secondary research from other scholars and the book shines the most when it presents new and exciting research into surviving pieces such as the Bacton Altar Cloth. Non-specialist readers will find the material they encounter very thorough and will leave with a better understanding of the role of textiles in the Tudor courts, and those who are specialists will still find this a useful guide to the major topics in this area of study. For both audiences, the glossary of textile terms provided by Lynn will prove to be extremely useful. I recommend *Tudor Textiles* for anyone who is interested in the visual and material culture of the Tudor period.

Sarah A. Bendall, *Australian Catholic University*

McVitty, Amanda E., *Treason and Masculinity in Medieval England: Gender, Law and Political Culture* (Gender in the Middle Ages, 16), Woodbridge, The Boydell Press, 2020; hardback; pp. 258; no illustrations; R.R.P. £70.00; ISBN 9781783275557.

In *Treason and Masculinity*, Amanda McVitty explores shifting notions of treason, and its cultural, social, and political implications, viewed through a gender lens. She traces changing understandings of treason from 1384 (an occasion of trial by combat) to 1424 (the execution of Sir John Mortimer). McVitty determines that treason exists on a continuum and shifts across this period in response to discourses of true and false manhood, chivalric values, and the need for kings to align their manly bodies with the social body and the body politic. In this context, the separation of the crown from Richard II and the attaching of it to the Lancastrian kings 'continued to be re-enacted through the rhetoric of treason

proceedings' (p. 209). These discourses of treason turned on questions of male honour and homosocial loyalties.

Central to McVitty's argument is the perception of the body politic as male. By adopting the lens of gender to examine treason trials, the nature of the body politic as male by default is highlighted. The male body becomes 'the discursive, conceptual and material nexus of conflicts over royal legitimacy, sovereign authority and loyal political subjecthood' (p. 207). Her argument is well structured, built upon several case studies of treason trials. She concludes that women were not perceived as having the political agency to commit treason, because they could not be identified with the male body politic.

McVitty untangles complex and complicated interconnections of word, action, and symbol. Through the lens of gender, she observes the ways that gendered processes produce privileges, opportunities, and roles from which women are excluded, and also underpin and reinforce power hierarchies between men. Chapter 1 focuses on the final years of Richard II's reign, and the interplay of perceptions of power, manhood, and the legal construction of treason as the material and affective division of the body politic. She looks specifically at trial by combat, and the actions leading up to and following the Merciless Parliament of 1388. Chapter 2 further unpacks ideas of masculine loyalty, homosocial bonds, and true and false speech. It undertakes a close analysis of the trials of the Earl of Arundel, the Duke of Gloucester, the Earl of Warwick, and Henry Bolingbroke and Thomas Mowbray, exploring the interaction of the personal and the public. Chapter 3 deals the deposition of Richard II, and the usurpation of the throne by Henry IV. It explores new definitions of treason, which present Richard II as inverting social and political order, and Henry as a 'true' man. McVitty understands the use of English by Henry as drawing associations between language, law, and national identity, and so identifying him as the saviour of the English nation. A close reading of the Epiphany Rising explores the role of the commons and the assertion of Henry as the king and sole authority. The role of Constance Despenser (and other women) is examined, with McVitty concluding that women were capable of 'domestic treason' but were not understood as having sufficient political agency to engage in treason against the king. Chapter 4 looks at the period 1400–1405 and the range of people accused of treason during this period, in response to Henry's vulnerability as king. This particularly interesting chapter analyses the intersection of gender and speech, the power of words, and words as deeds. Loyalty, the use of the vernacular, and gendered political identity are all understood as interacting to change the nature of treason. The stories of Maude de Vere and Geoffrey Story are examined closely. Chapter 5 introduces Lollardy and notions of heresy. A further shift in the definition of treason results in the middling urban classes becoming traitors through bill casting, and the copying and disseminating of Lollard texts. McVitty looks closely here at the trials of Benedict Wolman, Thomas Lucas, and John Wyghtlok. Chapter 6 returns to a discussion of treason amongst the political elite, focusing on the Percys and ideas

of public good, the connection of heresy and treason in the person of Sir John Oldcastle, and the case of Sir John Mortimer.

McVitty concludes by determining that the true man and the traitor are mutually constituted, and difficult to distinguish from each other. The negotiation of these binaries is a response to the impact of usurpation. She suggests that the instability of late medieval culture may be understood through the fragility of the trust, good lordship, obedience, and service that were enacted through words and bodily performance.

This is an excellent book: well-researched, well-documented, very detailed, and a pleasure to read. It offers a new way of interpreting law and treason in the late fourteenth and the fifteenth centuries. It is refreshing to have the interactions of gender and culture explored in the context of a space traditionally viewed as male, and to see the ways in which the assumption of maleness has shaped legal, political, and social norms then, and in our historical writing since.

Mary-Rose McLaren, *Victoria University, Melbourne*

Masten, Jeffrey, *Queer Philologies: Sex, Language, and Affect in Shakespeare's Time*, Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016; cloth; pp. 368; 51 b/w illustrations; R.R.P. US$65.00; ISBN 9780812247862.

Medieval and early modern scholars frequently reflect on their disciplinarity, yet only relatively recently have they begun to consider how various normative and powerful social systems have influenced the generation and fruition of their fields. Over the past two hundred years, these fields have operated under fairly homogenous and exclusive academic structures that value and uphold white, Eurocentric, and heteronormative systems of critical engagement and historical e/valuation. Contributing to a contemporary reckoning with just such an exclusionary pedigree, Jeffrey Masten considers the ways that exclusions have been enforced within philological considerations of early modern texts. In *Queer Philologies: Sex, Language, and Affect in Shakespeare's Time*, Masten explores the relationship between writing and sexuality, offering queer readings not only of particular philological practices and early modern modes of textual production, but, perhaps most notably, of letters themselves (the introductory material takes as a specific and convincing subject the letter Q). Masten argues that 'the study of sex and gender in historically distant cultures is necessarily a *philological* investigation' (p. 15), directly contributing to what he identifies as a re-emergence of scholastic engagement with premodern sexual identities. By coining the term 'queer philology', Masten necessarily aligns philology with 'sexual practices, the positioning of bodies and body parts, and "identities" that seem nonnormative, whether in their own time or, especially, from this historical distance' (p. 15), bringing welcome nuance to the established connection between language and identity. Masten's queer philology successfully attempts a self-reflection with the aim of highlighting how 'philology's manifold methods and rhetorics of

investigation are often themselves thoroughly implicated in the languages of sex, gender, and the body' (p. 18), and how often writing about language is itself inflected with and reliant upon language of heteronormative reproduction and familial systems. This work then, is of particular interest and use to scholars working on kinship systems, queer or otherwise.

In addition to focusing on 'the implication of philological modes of analysis in discourses of sex/gender' (p. 32), the introduction and first chapter focus on early modern standardization practices that were only in their infancy in seventeenth-century Europe, and the various ways that compositors and editors hid or even erased instances of queerness, in premodern acts of straightwashing. The monograph's final section 'advocates explicitly for a more active engagement of editorial practice with philologies of sex, sexuality, and gender', but not before Masten's presentation of three lexicons in the body of the work (focused friendship, boy-desire, and sodomy) that concentrate on 'discourses that have become integral to historical analyses of especially male same-sex relations in early modern England' (p. 32). In these sections, Masten takes as his focus several works by and concerning Shakespeare, Marlowe, and Kyd, among others. While many scholarly texts that operate under the 'queer theory' academic umbrella acknowledge and engage the importance of language in the construction—or more often, deconstruction—of identity, Masten moves beyond a fleeting or cursory concession, engaging the professional practices and scholastic enterprises that determine so completely contemporary conceptions of history and historical texts.

Since its release in 2016, *Queer Philologies* has been overwhelmingly well reviewed, with most writers acknowledging its important contribution to new efforts in 'doing' early modern queer theory. The work's broader impact on the field of early modern drama studies was recognized in 2018 when Masten received the Elizabeth Dietz Memorial Award (Rice University). In 2021, *Queer Philologies* reminds of the continuing need to examine the often subtle but manifold ways that marginal experiences are embedded in language technologies and systemic culture more broadly. In this way, and although Masten primarily focuses on sexual identities, his study of queer philologies also illuminates the various ways that white, Western assumptions about language and culture dictate critical engagement with premodern history at large. Towards the end of the book, Masten specifically turns his attention to the use of 'tupping' in *Othello* to explore the ways race and sexuality intersect. Masten address the same subject in his addition to *The Oxford Handbook of Shakespeare and Embodiment: Gender, Sexuality, Race* (Oxford University Press, 2016), edited by Valerie Traub. Earlier in the introduction to *Queer Philologies*, he affirms 'the need for a specifically *queer* philology attuned to sex/gender nonnormativity', but notes this does not exclude but instead calls more attention to the necessity of other forms of critique that challenge 'the reliance of comparative Indo-European philology on concepts of Aryan race/nation' (p. 20). The foregrounding of intersectional potential in philology reminds premodernist readers that there is still much work to do when

it comes to reflecting on why our fields look and operate in the ways that they do, and perhaps more importantly, the way we speak and write in and about them. Masten's compelling work uncovers the previously neglected queer origins and potential of philology in early modern writing, all the while providing a robust—and enjoyable—challenge to the status quo.

Caitlyn McLoughlin, *University of New South Wales*

Mattison, Andrew, *Solitude and Speechlessness: Renaissance Writing and Reading in Isolation*, Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 2019; cloth; pp. 260; 2 b/w illustrations; R.R.P. CA$77.00; ISBN 9781487504045.

Andrew Mattison's work of literary criticism takes as its leitmotif the concept of isolation—of author, of reader, and of text. It is a response to the concentration on collaboration and community that has dominated literary studies in recent decades. Applying this focus to a range of poetic sources in English dating from the sixteenth and (predominantly) the seventeenth centuries, Mattison interrogates the social and literary forces that act upon authors, readers, and indeed on texts themselves as material and immaterial forms. One of the most interesting aspects of this fruitful approach is its consideration of readers across time, as Mattison discusses the reception of early modern texts during the lifetimes of their authors and after them, both in the near future of the subsequent century and in our own distant present. His interest in interrogating his own role as a reader of past texts was, he writes, the starting point for the study: a specific interest in a 1902 letter by Hugo van Hofmannsthal addressed to Francis Bacon drew attention to the parallel 'between the condition of Renaissance writers addressing unknown and unpredictable readers, and that of modern readers confronting their necessarily partial knowledge of old texts' (p. 171). Mattison's inclusion of the role played in the life of a text by his own work as a scholar is indicative of the sensitive and reflective tone of the book.

Key themes in the book's six chapters are ambition, obscurity, melancholy, speechlessness, and solitude, which are placed into dialogue with each other through the poems analysed. New resonances within these experiences—and their literary deployment—are brought to light. Concepts that may have a negative association are problematized to draw out more complex uses by English authors in these centuries. For example, Mattison returns to the etymology of 'ambition'—to go from door to door, to wander—to argue that his poets consciously used this sense of the word to combat an inherited discomfort with the naked pursuit of personal fame (p. 21). In this way, ambition could be a positive virtue for the text itself, leaving the author to respectable poetic solitude: sent out by its author into the world as an orphan, the ambitious poem seeks connection with readers.

Similarly, Mattison evokes the concept of obscurity as both a liberating force for an author, allowing the privacy required for creative invention, and a unifying experience for the readers who overcome it. Obscurity builds connection and community by creating an 'in crowd' who understand the message. Authorial

anonymity or pseudonymity allows an orphan text to fulfil its ambitious purpose and even to identity the author through clues embedded for the intended reader(s) alone. Solitude provides the conditions for writing and for reading, so that withdrawal from society engenders its own form of conversation. This paradoxical approach makes for dense but very satisfying reading, exploring the interplay between Mattison's subject and his own authorial practice.

As a historian of book culture, I was particularly interested in the moments when Mattison addresses the question of materiality. Analysing Samuel Daniel's concern with his posthumous reception, Mattison notes another paradox, this time between manuscript and print: print is more widely disseminated but for this reason allows for a kind of privacy—a detachment from original context—that manuscript cannot (p. 44). The public nature of printing can allow a form of authorial withdrawal and silence even while it promotes the text's ambitious engagement with readers. This consideration of the materiality of textual reception is short-lived, however, as in a later section Mattison opines that text tells a fundamentally different 'history of the world' to that told by material culture, seemingly eliding the material nature of text (p. 172). While this book is clearly intended primarily for literary scholars and not book historians, it has much to offer both, and further consideration of the material aspect would have been enriching. Similarly, the specific type of isolation experienced by female early modern authors and by female readers across time, which is touched on briefly (pp. 38–44), warrants further discussion.

A minor criticism is the decision to use the term 'Renaissance' in the title and throughout the book, although most of the authors studied (for example, William Cavendish, Andrew Marvell, Abraham Cowley, Thomas Traherne, John Milton, and John Donne) lived in the seventeenth century. The Library of Congress Subject Headings classification cited in the book's fore-matter uses the term for the period 1450 to 1600. Use of a date-range in the title, or (if there is not an unspoken reason for its absence) the term 'early modern' would have been clearer.

In our current global experience of isolation, Mattison's book has special resonance. Among many achievements, it reminds us of the virtue of being ambitious readers, challenging ourselves to wander from familiar paths.

Anna Welch, *State Library Victoria*

Moore, Colette, and Chris C. **Palmer**, eds, *Teaching the History of the English Language* (Options for Teaching, 46), New York, Modern Language Association of America, 2019; hardcover; pp. x, 360. R.R.P. US$65.00; ISBN 9781603293839.

The one-semester History of the English Language (HEL) course is typically offered in an English department and often (if misleadingly) affiliated with the premodern curriculum. The thirty-eight contributors to this volume from the Modern Language Association's 'Options for Teaching' series address multiple, mostly US, pedagogical approaches. The volume continues earlier discussions

about teaching HEL (*Studies in Medieval and Renaissance Teaching*, 13.2 (2006), 14.1 (2007), 15.2 (2008), 18.1 (2011)). As reflective practitioners, the writers base their advice on their classroom experiences and challenges. With some exceptions, they present thoughtful, hands-on, sometimes transformative discussions of how to teach HEL with present-day students in various institutional contexts.

Essays are grouped into six topics focused on HEL pedagogy and curriculum: 'Issues and Definitions'; 'Considerations and Approaches for Historical Periods, Structuring a Course'; 'Unit Design and Teaching Strategies, Curricular Contexts, and Selected Resources'; and 'Assignments'. In US higher education, an HEL course is often situated in general education, or as part of an 'English language' or preservice English teaching requirement, or an historical linguistics course. The English language's long and increasingly global history problematizes each of these contexts. For these contributors, the challenge of teaching HEL with undergraduates is to bring the global historical arc of English and language change into the local classroom. Collectively, the essays make the case that an HEL course is not strictly a 'medieval' course, nor one which a medievalist should teach, nor one which is only about language in the past.

The consistent format of the essays (overview, specific unit ideas, example assignments or classroom activities) and their combination of the global and the local make the volume more coherent than it might otherwise be. Major linguistic questions are outlined in terms of language change (R. D. Fulk), variation (Elise E. Morse-Gagné; K. Aaron Smith and Susan Kim), standardization (Raymond Hickey), and internal/external historical approaches (Don Chapman; Joanna Kopaczyk and Marcin Krygier). Organizing course material with forward or reverse chronology is debated, but most writers prefer forward (inertia?). Some sidestep chronology by organizing a course around linguistic topics rather than historical periods. Reflecting on their successful or unsuccessful classroom experiences and assignments, most contributors stress that the principal course objective is to engage students with questions of language change and variation rather than mastery of historical and linguistic facts.

The strength of the collection is how it mixes curriculum contexts with the nuts and bolts of classroom practice. Annina Seiler explicitly challenges the forward chronology syllabus: 'I believe that reverse chronology better supports student development of problem-solving skills and effective learning strategies, […] focusing on global comprehension, or drawing on knowledge derived from Modern English' (p. 143). Others organize the course topically: core linguistics (Andrew J. Pantos and Wendolyn Weber), multilingualism (David Blackmore), history of the book (Sarah Noonan), prescriptivism (Anne Curzan), or local language ecology (Jennifer C. Stone). These syllabus plans provocatively connect the history of English with other literary, linguistic, and cultural questions and social activism.

Teaching units, assignments, and prerequisites are perennial challenges in HEL courses. John Newman succinctly rationalizes his course primer, which

prioritizes 'degrees of diachronic reach and diachronic contrast' (p. 206) to bring all students up to speed. Other contributors outline how to create effective HEL assignments using diaries, letters, and other primary source materials (Kimberly Emmons, William Claspy, and Melissa A. Hubbard), dictionaries (Stefan Dollinger), translation projects (Megan E. Hartman), and invented language tasks (Tara Williams). Corpus linguists discuss how to develop HEL assignments and activities with the *OED*, *DARE*, *Helsinki Corpus*, and other corpora. All essays in the volume are supported on the *MLA Commons* online forum with additional resources, lesson plans, and assignments. Although addressed to English literature, English education, or general education students, these assignments can be adapted for students in an historical or variation linguistics course.

The 'Curricular Contexts' section clearly reflects the US orientation of the volume. Writers discuss how HEL courses relate to both pre-university education (Common Core Standards in K–12 curriculum) and universities' distribution and general education requirements, preservice English teacher certification, TESOL student cohorts, and composition programmes. So, it is surprising that missing in this section, and throughout the volume, is how HEL contributes to an English literature major.

Teaching the History of the English Language comprehensively explores, mostly in US contexts, how teaching a HEL course deals with important questions about the English language, its status, origins, changes over time. The writers also address why some changes stick and others disappear. They seek to give students much needed opportunities to develop descriptive and analytic skills and to compare varieties of English which have been and are used around the world. The contributors' thoughtful pedagogical attention means that despite their US-oriented examples, their ideas and activities can be applied to teaching the history of the English language elsewhere in the world.

Mark Amsler, *The University of Auckland*

Nederman, Cary J., *The Bonds of Humanity: Cicero's Legacies in European Social and Political Thought, ca. 1100–ca. 1550*, University Park, PA, Pennsylvania State University Press, 2020; cloth; pp. xvii, 240; R.R.P. US$79.95; ISBN 9780271085005.

This survey of Cicero's legacy across the Middle Ages (*c.* 1100–*c.* 550) constitutes a considerable feat of primary source scholarship alone. *The Bonds of Humanity* plumbs the chief works of social and political thought that radiate out from the influence of Marcus Tullius Cicero's texts directly, or owe something to the spirit of Ciceronianism, or come 'via intermediary sources' like Saint Augustine (p. 87). 'Cicero's legacies of social and political thought' (such is the author's subtitle), drawn from eighteen medieval and early modern authors, form the subject matter; Cary Nederman's goal is nothing less than 'to illuminate how elements of […] thought were transformed, recombined, and otherwise adapted in order to suit a vast range of intellectual pursuits' (p. 11).

In this Herculean endeavour, akin to Charles B. Schmitt's earlier work (*Cicero Scepticus: A Study of the Influence of the* Academica *in the Renaissance*, Martinus Nijhoff, 1972) to trace the reception of Aristotle through the same period, Nederman has certainly succeeded. It is an act of recovery, with his introduction decrying a scholarly neglect of Cicero's contribution amid medieval historians. As stated in Chapter 2, that neglect 'to the Twelfth-Century Renaissance "in the realms of social and political thought […] requires considerable reconsideration and revision"' (p. 41). While the debt to Cicero in the earlier Renaissance, or even in Italian 'civic' humanism, is commonly acknowledged, Nederman is recognizing Cicero and his twelfth-century adherents here in an unparalleled work in this field that will long remain standard to it. Unparalleled because Cicero's influence upon European thought over these centuries has not received the same attention as that of Aristotle. But the nature of Nederman's project and his chosen methodology (classical reception studies) leave him open to criticisms on points where 'Ciceronian' concepts conform more to the times of these authors, or the needs of their audiences, or cleave more closely to the work of other vaunted ancients, than to Cicero.

Aware of a malleable potential to Cicero's thought, Nederman sets out the key background themes in his introduction—these themes, covering such topics as the origin of society, the uniting of wisdom with speech (eloquence), universal equality in humanity, natural reason leading to virtue, the divine (or natural) gift of 'right reason' (p. 20), and government building on natural association, course through the eight chapters like planetary bodies. The chronological ordering of the chapters means that Nederman pursues his quarry through a changing and ever more complicated world, so that the cloister of the twelfth century becomes the court of the fourteenth, enlarging into an age of conquest and imperial adventure abroad. Accordingly, the predictable effect is a diversity of fundamental political views.

Chapters 2 and 3, for example, cover twelfth-century thinkers such as Thierry of Chartres and John of Salisbury, and works like the *Moralium dogma philosophorum*, although innovation on points among the thinkers is limited. Reflections upon the 'good of the many' (p. 54) or 'duties' (p. 55), as arising from ends that are 'natural' to human association and to justice, are prolific in these writings. John of Salisbury's key works are arguably more systematic, and thus Chapter 3 contains a discussion of the 'body politic' as analogous to 'the human organism' (pp. 68–71), an interesting return to the age-old usage. Where such writers share an 'organic naturalism' (p. 68) with Cicero's own, there is a complementary dovetailing of concepts on both sides. Nederman quotes as precursor A. J. Carlyle, who pares Cicero's philosophical thought on society down to 'three related conceptions of natural law, natural equality, and the natural society of men in the State' (p. 3). While organic growth between law, equality, and society at the level of society and government is defended as *natural*, with Cicero and his followers '[p]olitics is not natural in and of itself' (p. 104), however. Likewise,

virtue is a latent attribute of humankind and society depends upon its 'cultivation' and that of 'the rational faculties' (p. 18) on the part of the individual (that is, not *naturally*); meanwhile, stages in history produce virtue in a phylogeny-like trend: Ptolemy of Lucca wrote that 'the Roman Republic was already […] fostering […] those virtues of patriotism, civil benevolence, and justice that prefigure the rule of Christ' (p. 95).

Following Chapter 4, a discernible shift occurs as later writers take Cicero's 'dedication to the life of action rather than that of contemplation' (p. 186) more in earnest. Thus, a propensity shared by 'politically active thinkers such as […] Marsiglio of Padua, Christine de Pizan and Bartolomé de Las Casas' is their 'advocacy' (p. 186) against, respectively, ecclesiastic power, corrupting courtiers, and imperialism (Chapter 7's authors advocate *for* Empire).

Which is where eloquence comes in. Surely the most identifiable legacy Cicero imparted to the medieval and Renaissance world, eloquence (personified by Cicero's famed figurehead: the eloquent 'primitive orator' at the dawn of society), is both Cicero's most unique contribution to political thought, as well as his most strident refutation of classical philosophy's preference for *via contemplativa*. For societies to exist at all, 'eloquent reason' (p. 99)—reason which speaks and convinces—stands as the single generative seed of the 'perfect community' (p. 114) that humans might cultivate and achieve together. Transitioning from pre-civility to civility (p. 115) forms a major step in that achievement, conferring duties but also rewards. Nederman has taken it upon himself to remind readers of Cicero's role in that regard.

Nathanael Lambert, *Soldiers Hill, Victoria*

Newstok, Scott, *How to Think Like Shakespeare: Lessons from a Renaissance Education*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2020; hardback; pp. 200; R.R.P. US$19.95; ISBN 9780691177083.

In *How to Think Like Shakespeare*, Scott Newstok 'explore[s] what seem to [him] to be the key aspects of thinking, and how to hone them' (p. ix). Overlaying those aspects onto what Newstok perceives as current deficiencies in education, *How to Think Like Shakespeare* playfully juxtaposes early modern and contemporary habits of thought by way of wide-ranging examples from texts, practices, or institutions. While works such as Mary Thomas Crane's *Shakespeare's Brain* (Princeton University Press, 2001) and Lyn Tribble's *Cognition in the Globe* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2011) direct their approaches to composition and theatrical practice through scholarship in cognition, *How to Think Like Shakespeare* has 'deliberately short' and consumable chapters that seem geared more towards a general readership. It nevertheless reads exceptionally learnedly. Each chapter titularly calls to mind Bacon-esque themes (such as 'Of Freedom' or 'Of Constraint') and surveys examples and comments from notable authors from antiquity onwards, many of whom must surely comprise the 'common stock' for which Newstok argues in 'Of Stock'. In such material, the sense of someone

who might keep a commonplace book emerges, as any given page might shift from Auden to Aristotle or provide snippets from Walt Whitman's manuscripts to Daniel Willingham's *Why Don't Students Like School?* (John Wiley & Sons, 2009). That is, imitation and exploration are *How to Think Like Shakespeare*'s strengths. It does not necessarily explain how Shakespeare thought or grapple with scholarship in cognition so much as it probes and demonstrates early modern habits of thought.

Its range of material should appeal to a wide audience. For instance, the chapter entitled 'Of Attention' draws variously on Epictetus, More, Bacon, Shakespeare, Donne, Cowper, Darwin, Thoreau, and C. S. Lewis (among others) to demonstrate the long-standing objections to distraction and the desire for sustained attention. I question, though, the range of audience to which the book *does* appeal: at times the light-hearted anecdotes have the potential to alienate the people who, if I understand correctly, are likely to benefit most from this book because they do not presently reinforce, share, or understand early modern habits of thought. For example, that same 'Of Attention' chapter begins with an anecdote in which Newstok 'mutter[s] an easy prediction' to his children who are watching distracted students exit their classes. The prediction is that everyone will stare at their phones. Predictably enough, one of the students 'meanders toward us, bumps into me, recalibrates her trajectory without looking up, and continues her Roomba-like text walking. My kids giggle' (p. 55), perhaps at the accuracy of their father's prediction or the behaviour of the student. While Newstok self-deprecatingly begins the next paragraph by admitting that he is 'no better than [his] students' and that he himself has been 'transfixed, zombie-like', he also finishes that same paragraph by turning his disapproval back towards teens who, 'consume a jaw-dropping nine hours of media a day—more time than they spend sleeping, much less conversing with adults' (p. 55). In anecdotes such as these, this book seems to ingratiate itself to those who are less likely to need a book geared towards a general readership. Certainly, the anecdote about being invited to speak 'as the token non-scientist—on a faculty panel about teaching and technology' (p. 70) would be familiar enough to many who work in the Humanities; one's PowerPoint failing before that presentation would be the typical naked-before-the-audience nightmare—until the anecdote's resolution happily binds all of those colleagues together over his low-tech back-up (a handout) and against a common enemy: 'When I finally stated my power-less point, I was heartened to find common cause with my colleagues from Physics and Computer Science. They're just as concerned as I am about evaporating attention spans and device-induced zombie-ism' (p. 71). The phrasing here, as above, seems to overstep a bit, seeming to suggest that our students (youth? people who do not have *appropriate* habits of thought?) are a mindless horde and that we (the *right* kind of educators?) are the survivalists on the side of what is apt. I am unsure that at times including oneself in that 'horde' will win over the rest of the horde. Certainly, many educators might nod sympathetically or easily agree that 'information-richness produces attention-

impoverishment' (p. 56), but perhaps if we presented such points in ways that do not zombify our students or toxify technologies of which we disapprove, those same students might converse more readily—or perhaps even read this important book and see its many merits.

How to Think Like Shakespeare is thought-provoking and enjoyable. It is the type of book that I would like to recommend to my university students to read for pleasure—precisely because it is brief and lively and could easily engender serious reflection about how we think. I wonder, though, if I would have enjoyed it or wanted to recommend it if I did not already agree with many of its premises.

Michael Cop, *University of Otago*

Ovenden, Richard, *Burning the Books: A History of Knowledge under Attack*, London, John Murray, 2020; hardcover; pp. 308; 16 b/w illustrations; R.R.P. £20.00; ISBN 9781529378757.

The title and subtitle of this book perhaps give a slightly misleading indication of its contents. It is indeed about the frequently deliberate destruction of books and other documents, sometimes involving fire but also military action, religiously inspired vandalism, and (at least in the author's view) 'underfunding, low prioritization and general disregard' (p. 36) in the case of the ancient library of Alexandria. It is not primarily a book about censorship, though of course censorship of knowledge materials and their deliberate destruction are often closely associated. But almost as much as it is about such deliberate destruction it is an account of efforts to prevent it happening. Richard Ovenden is the twenty-fifth Bodley's Librarian in succession to Thomas James at the beginning of the seventeenth century, and thus the director of the Bodleian Libraries at the University of Oxford. His pride in the preservation achievements over four centuries of the library system that he oversees is frequently in evidence, and the book is in part a celebration of the preservation activities of librarians and a plea that they be adequately funded to continue this role.

This relatively short history ranges from ancient Assyria to the present. Two chapters are likely to be of particular interest to readers of *Parergon.* Chapter 3, 'When Books were Dog Cheap', provides a powerful account of the losses when the monasteries of England were dissolved during the Reformation period. Ovenden states that 'in Britain alone, tens of thousands of books were burned or broken up and sold as scrap' (p. 54). Between seventy and eighty per cent of the contents of the pre-Reformation libraries of Britain and Ireland are reliably believed to have been lost. Ovenden's focus is on monasteries, but they were not the only target, and the destruction was not confined to Britain, though the apparently large-scale Continental Reformation period destruction receives only passing mention. He makes the valuable point that we are confronted not only with the total disappearance of works that once existed, but also with the loss of evidence of how widely works were disseminated, what was available where, and what was being read by whom.

Chapter 4, 'An Ark to Save Learning', is largely concerned with the circumstances surrounding the creation and early history of the Bodleian Library, which opened its door to readers in 1602. An apparently fairly impressive predecessor university library had been entirely dismantled by religious reformers in the 1550s, but thanks to the energy of the micromanaging Sir Thomas Bodley (1547–1613) the new library got off to a strong start. In a later chapter we learn that books looted by an English expedition in 1596 from the Bishop of Faro's library in Portugal were among its earliest acquisitions—the Vatican library benefited similarly a few decades later from the looting of a German Protestant prince's library holdings.

Other chapters deal with later destruction, but quite frequently mention the loss or timely rescue of medieval and early modern books and manuscripts. The extraordinary recent adventures and eventual survival of the celebrated Sarajevo Haggadah, a fourteenth-century Hebrew manuscript of Spanish origin, are described in a chapter entitled 'Sarajevo Mon Amour', largely devoted to the 1990s war in Bosnia. The final chapter, largely about present-day concerns, begins with an account of the officially mandated burning of John Milton's works in a University of Oxford quadrangle in 1660 following the Restoration, and the brave decision of the then Bodley's Librarian to hide works the poet had presented to the library.

This is a work for the general reader, and probably not vital professional reading for those for whom *Parergon* caters. But despite its librarian's viewpoint (and perhaps a sometimes-obtrusive tendency to boast about what the Bodleian has preserved and still holds!) it is a fascinating and very readable work full of interesting details and observations. In an age when, as the author reminds us, much information is held digitally by organizations dedicated to profit rather than preservation for the sake of scholarship and humanity, it deserves to be widely read.

John Kennedy, *Charles Sturt University*

Pinder, Janice, *The* Abbaye du Saint Esprit*: Spiritual Instruction for Laywomen, 1250–1500* (Medieval Women: Texts and Contexts, 21), Turnhout, Brepols, 2020; cloth; pp. x, 219; 1 b/w illustration, 2 b/w tables; R.R.P. €75.00; ISBN 9782503586816.

Vernacular writings for the spiritual instruction of women in late medieval Europe were not isolated phenomena. Ideas of spiritual direction took many forms. Janice Pinder argues that the *Abbaye du Saint Esprit* likely emerged in northern France or the southern Netherlands from a 'context of experimentation with new forms of religious life among the laity where features of beguinal life and prayer were familiar and viewed with approval' (p. 8). One should not misjudge the force and influence of female spirituality between the Atlantic and the deeper reaches of central Europe. One cannot read the *Abbaye* without thinking of related texts addressed to communities of women elsewhere. Around 1413 the Czech priest

Jan Hus composed a similar text, *Dcerka: O poznání cěsty pravé k spasení* (*The Daughter, or How to Know the Correct Way to Salvation*), for a Beguine-like community of women living together in Prague. Running to about 13,000 words and consisting of ten chapters, Hus focuses his spiritual instruction with the repeated declaration '*slyš, dcerko*' ('hear, O daughter'). This is not the place to compare those texts, but the analysis might be fruitful. The *Abbaye* also uses a similar device, employing the French *fille* to address the readership.

Following Bernard McGinn, Pinder suggests that vernacular theology was a result of conversations surpassing simplistic readings of Scripture, rote catechetical memorizations, or the hearing of formal sermons. We have lost the gist of those conversations, but texts like the *Abbaye* provide hints. Based on thirteen extant manuscripts and with plenty of discussion about those manuscripts, their history, modification, striking omissions, and additions, Pinder succeeds in demonstrating several things: there is no single edition of the text; the transmission history is complex; it endeavours to communicate to a lay audience the idea of the spiritual quest; and it relies upon a variety of sources to achieve that aim.

Importantly, Pinder understands the *Abbaye* as depicting a struggle between vices and virtues, a contest in which the daughters of the Holy Spirit oppose the daughters of the Devil. The context for this battle is the cloister. Allegorically, the holy spaces of the religious house are signposts for the pilgrim who must navigate the minefields of adversity created by the daughters of the Devil. The architecture of the convent parallels the cloister of the soul. Spiritual aid and instruction are encountered in cellars, chapter houses, chapels, dormitories, granaries, infirmaries, refectories, and in the stone walls, to say nothing of the foundations. Conscience is where the Holy Spirit desires to dwell. The ladies of truth, purity, humility, and poverty are active. The fortress against sin and temptation is buttressed by Lady Obedience and Lady Mercy, while Patience and Fortitude provide reinforcement. Truth is encountered by means of Lady Preaching in the refectory where souls are fed. Lady Contemplation fits out the dormitory, Prayer the chapel, Compassion the infirmary, Devotion the cellar, and Meditation the granary, while Lady Charity is abbess, Wisdom the prioress, Humility the sub-prioress. Lady Discretion is treasurer, while Lady Prayer is the choir-mistress supported by Lady Jubilation. Lady Penance works in the kitchen, Temperance serves food and drink in the refectory, and Sobriety reads at table, while the ladies Pity, Mercy, Fear, Honesty, Courtesy, Simplicity, Reason, Loyalty, Generosity, and Zeal perform other functions. The spiritual life attracts deadly enemies, namely the four daughters of the Devil—pride and presumption; murmuring and detraction; envy; and false judgement—who seek to thwart the progress of the female seeking spiritual maturity. The *Abbaye* shows women actively engaged and not passive recipients of spiritual instruction.

A major thematic thread in the *Abbaye* is the soul's ascent to God and the practices that enable and enhance that goal. The ethos of the Beguine is apparent throughout, and the world of the Beguine appears to constitute the social and

religious world of the *Abbaye*. The true Beguine is identified as one who 'weeps in prayer, sighs through devotion, languishes through meditation […and] burns in the fire of love' (pp. 56–57).

The *Abbaye* was reworked in the fifteenth century and occasionally became a customized version for particular readers (such as Margaret of York). While it functioned as a vehicle of spiritual guidance it avoided concrete prescriptions. Pinder appends to her impressive textual analysis sixty-three-pages of editions of the five discrete states of the French text including a translation of the earliest version.

Careful readers may wish to ponder the danger of inventing connections between texts, word associations that are frail, and assumptions about the nature of the influence of *La Religion dou cuer de l'abbaie dou saint Esprit*. These cautions aside, this is a splendid piece of scholarship that adds much to our understanding and appreciation of medieval spirituality and female participation therein.

Thomas A. Fudge, *University of New England*

Plumb, Oisín, Alexandra **Sanmark**, and Donna **Heddle**, eds, *What Is North? Imagining and Representing the North from Ancient Times to the Present Day* (The North Atlantic World: Land and Sea as Cultural Space, AD 400–1900, 1), Turnhout, Brepols, 2020; hardback; pp. 408; 18 b/w illustrations, 11 b/w tables; RRP €110.00; ISBN 9782503585024.

Though how Australians and New Zealanders historically have perceived 'the North' is certainly something worth studying, the focus of this book, as its series title indicates, is on northern Europe and the higher latitudes of North America. It contains a brief introduction and twenty very diverse essays, covering a time span from classical antiquity (and arguably prehistory, in the case of two essays focusing on perceptions of Maeshowe, Orkney—one by Jay Johnston of The University of Sydney) to the twenty-first century. The institutional affiliations of the authors extend to ten countries, with British and Scandinavian institutions predominating. Essay lengths vary considerably: those by Anna Heiða Pálsdóttir and Henning Howlid Wærp have approximately ten pages of text, while those by Jim Clarke and John W. Dyce extend to about twenty-five pages, excluding the 'Works Cited'. The use of a small (though fully legible) font size means, however, that all essays are relatively substantial studies.

A major theme of the book, fully reflected in its varied essays, is that what 'North' means can, and does, vary enormously. It can be geographically quite specific or be a more or less amorphous concept used to express remoteness, hostility, danger, opportunities for adventure, and so on. In a very readable essay that considers the idealized presentation of the Viking Age in the books for boys written by Shetland author Jessie Saxby (1842–1940), who set her novels in her own times, Lynn Powell observes: 'In fiction, the North is far more than a specific geographical place; it is also an imagined or emotional space, a direction rather than a location, a reflection of identity' (p. 276). Her fellow contributors would probably all be in broad agreement.

It seems appropriate here to focus on the essays most likely to relate to the scholarly interests of *Parergon* readers. Two have medieval Celtic subjects. In a somewhat densely written piece Oisín Plumb considers the significance of the voyages of Cormac Uí Liatháin in Adomnán's *Vita Sancti Columbae*. In the following essay Marged Haycock explores in some detail the 'Old North' as it appears in medieval Welsh literature, considering geographical location and political aspects.

At least five essays are likely to interest students of Old Norse. John Moffatt examines the Vínland sagas not from the usual historical or anthropological perspectives, but using modern rhetorical theory to argue, interestingly but somewhat tendentiously, that 'while Karlsefni and Guðríðr were unquestionably brave in venturing first to Greenland and later to Vinland, the wisdom they displayed in ultimately returning to Iceland is the greatest virtue' (p. 77). Eduardo Ramos perceptively explores the relationship between the eponymous central figure and the Icelandic landscape in *Grettis saga Ásmundarsonar.* Vittorio Mattioli examines *Grímnismál* in arguing for a modification to what has become the standard view of the Old Norse cosmos, and Agneta Ney looks at landscape terms and their use in Old Norse poetry. The runic inscriptions in Maeshowe and the mound's mentioned as 'Orkahaugr' in *Orkneyinga saga* are one of the major concerns of Ragnhild Ljosland's article.

There is not a great deal particularly relevant to the early modern period. Donna Heddle's study of maps and early literature relating to Orkney surveys both the medieval and the early modern periods. In discussing Sámi magic and rituals, Ellen Alm and Rune Blix Hagen consider the twelfth-century Latin *Historia Norwegie* as well as the early modern writers Olaus Magnus and Johannes Schefferus.

The essays in the second half of the book, broadly arranged in chronological order of the periods and works discussed, are, as an examination of the table of contents readily available online will reveal, largely devoted to a range of nineteenth century and later literary works. Some, such as Powell's essay mentioned earlier, are readily accessible; others, such as Jim Clarke's study of fantasy literature employing a 'corpus linguistics' approach, do call for a girding of the scholarly loins.

Scholarly interest in 'The North' appears to be a burgeoning field. Several other book length studies are mentioned in this book, and *Parergon* issue 37.2 (2020) carries Patrick Ball's review of another Brepols book, *Visions of North in Premodern Europe* (Brepols, 2018). Ball praises the way in which the chapters of that book 'each segue seamlessly into the next' (p. 216). Here variety and diversity are probably more prominent. Only students of 'The North' are likely to make a detailed study of all the chapters, but several chapters are well worth the attention of medievalists.

John Kennedy, *Charles Sturt University*

Pohl, Walter, and Veronika **Wieser**, eds, *Historiography and Identity*, I: *Ancient and Early Christian Narratives of Community*, (Cultural Encounters in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages, 24; Historiography and Identity, 1), Turnhout, Brepols, 2019; hardback; pp. vi, 322; R.R.P. €90.00; ISBN 9782503581576.

This volume, the first of a new sub-series, 'Historiography and Identity', within Brepols's well-established 'Cultural Encounters in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages' series, originates from the prolific Visions of Community (VISCOM) research cluster at the University of Vienna, led by Walter Pohl. The purpose of this planned six-volume series is to explore, through a collection of case studies, the interrelationship between historiographical sources and the complex evolution of political, religious, and ethnic identity within early medieval Europe, as well as aiming to develop critical methodologies for other researchers to apply to their own studies. This first volume looks primarily at the historians and historiography of the ancient world, in order to provide for a contextual and methodological foundation for forthcoming volumes that will concentrate on the medieval.

Introducing the series as a whole in the first chapter, Walter Pohl discusses the loaded terms 'identity', 'ethnicity', and 'national histories', and how these terms shift in meaning over time. In doing so, he obliquely refers to the turmoil of recent years between the Vienna, Toronto, and Oxford schools. But rather than spending time on his critics, Pohl is more interested in presenting the possibilities as well as the limitations of an identity-focused approach to medieval history and historiography which examines authorial identity, internal communal identity, and external communal labels and ethnicities. Where Pohl's chapter functions as an introduction to the series, Nino Luraghi's first contribution, 'Historiography and Community', while unfortunately not signposted as such, serves as an introduction to this volume. Luraghi provides a concise and useful overview of the development ancient Greek and Roman historiography, and how the early Christian historians, even though their conception of the world, and of the progression and purpose of history, had shifted radically, were still very much continuing in the same literary genre. The remainder of the volume contains nine historiographical case studies, which may be divided into two main foci: classical Greek and Latin historiography, and early Christian.

Hans-Joachim Gehrke looks at the relationship between the past and the present within literary sources prior to the flourishing of historiography as a literary genre, and how that framed collective identity in Ancient Greece. Nino Luraghi examines the role inscribed decrees played in the Athenian political memory of the fourth and third centuries BCE. Daniel Tober's essay on the historiography of Samos uses both ancient and early modern histories to show the development of that community's identity through episodes of crisis. And Andrew Feldherr departs from the approach of other contributors to this volume, focusing on the effect of historiography on the reader, rather than the author, through his analysis of the portrayal of pleasure in classical Latin historiography.

Scott Fitzgerald Johnson demonstrates how Eusebius departed from tradition through his use of bishops' lists rather than regnal lists as the chronological anchor of the *Chronicle*. Madeline McMahon examines Jerome's translation and continuation of Eusebius's *Chronicle*, detailing how Jerome both expanded the Christian history of Eusebius by including more Latin historians, while simultaneously delegitimizing a large section of Christian history by excluding Arianism. Veronika Wieser focuses on a lesser-known late antique work by Sulpicius Severus, the *Chronica*, written at the turn of the fourth/fifth centuries, and discusses the texts accessible to Sulpicius, and his preoccupation with apocalyptic Christian thought, to interpret the events of his own time. Peter Van Nuffelen explores the historiographical efflorescence of the first years of the fifth century in the eastern Empire and shines a light on the local diversity of early Christian identities. And Hans-Werner Goetz's contribution discusses the various layers of identity and self-identity Gregory of Tours displays within his sixth century *Historiae*.

It is unclear why, when the rest of the volume is presented chronologically, the editors chose to place Goetz's essay first among the case studies, rather than at the end. Indeed, Goetz's contribution likely would have been better placed within this series' forthcoming Volume II, which will examine post-Roman identities and texts, rather than here, where it seems somewhat ill-fitted. It is also a disappointment that more space was not given over to the many influential Latin pre-Christian historiographies.

Ethnicity and identity are such nebulous terms; they are difficult to pin down because of their continually shifting nature. The task of understanding an historical society's identity is made that much harder by the distance of time, and the potentially arbitrary survival of documents. More than ever, given the rise of ultra-nationalism globally, with its attendant misinformed appropriation of the medieval, especially the early medieval, our field needs robust scholarship that actively reframes debates around identity. It is to be hoped that this series will ultimately fulfil that promise, and this first volume makes a solid start towards such an end.

Erica Steiner, *The University of Sydney*

Richardson, Glenn, *Wolsey* (Routledge Historical Biographies), New York, Routledge, 2020; ebook; pp. 338; 5 b/w illustrations; R.R.P. AU$60.29; ISBN 9781003056263.

John Skelton's satirical poem directed against the rise of Thomas Wolsey, *Why Come Ye Nat to Court* (1521–22), asks: 'Why come ye nat to court? To which court?'(ll. 398–99). Surely the residence of the butcher's son from Ipswich could not be mistaken for that of the English king? Skelton's lines feature in Glenn Richardson's recent contribution to scholarship on the English cardinal who fell so spectacularly from grace, drawing attention to material display at the Tudor court and the inherent danger in seeking to rise above one's allotted station in life.

Richardson is well established as an historian of the Tudor court and Renaissance monarchy, having explored the 1520 diplomatic meeting between Henry VIII and Francis I in *The Field of Cloth of Gold* (Yale University Press, 2013) and analysed the reigns of Henry VIII, Francis I, and Charles V in *Renaissance Monarchy* (Bloomsbury Academic, 2002). This latest offering is an obvious successor to his study of the Field of the Cloth of Gold, across which Wolsey is omnipresent. Richardson acknowledges that Wolsey has endured as a popular and often polarizing figure for historical enquiry and literary representations. His historiographical survey deftly moves from George Cavendish's contemporary biography of Wolsey (1556–58) to recent scholarship, noting growing interest in Wolsey's role in foreign affairs. After an overview encompassing A. F. Pollard's biography *Wolsey* (Longmans, 1929), J. J. Scarisbrick's discussion of Wolsey within his biography *Henry VIII* (University of California Press, 1968), and Peter Gwyn's biography *The King's Cardinal: The Rise and Fall of Thomas Wolsey* (Barrie & Jenkins, 1990), Richardson confronts the inevitable question: why another book on Wolsey? He argues that the justification for this work lies in its dialogue between past research and contemporary thought and his own research on Wolsey's European diplomacy.

The book is structured chronologically, around three major themes: Wolsey's role in international affairs, with attention to his management of the relationship between Henry, Francis, and Charles; Wolsey's governmental, secular, and sacred activities within England; and his political, cultural, and educational patronage. Chapter 1 traces Wolsey's early life and career trajectory as Wolsey's ascent is connected to his support of war against France and his treatment of Henry as a young man and as a king. By chapter's close, Henry has gained experience on a European battlefield and Wolsey is Archbishop of York. Chapter 2 explores Wolsey's involvement in foreign affairs, celebrated in the 1520 meeting at the Field of the Cloth of Gold, by which time he was a cardinal and a papal legate *a latere*. On Wolsey's use of material display, Richardson discusses the arrival of Wolsey's cardinal's hat in a slightly different and credible light, drawing attention to Wolsey's rise and the associated elevation of Henry and England.

The third chapter concentrates on English events, with a focus on Wolsey in council and court. Tensions between the king, his nobles, and Wolsey are recognized as ongoing concerns, as Richardson outlines how Wolsey worked to limit opportunities for nobles to advise Henry. His speculative term 'the cardinal-courtier' suggests the problems and opportunities presented to Wolsey by proximity to the king. Chapter 4 assesses Wolsey as cardinal legate, concentrating on his working relationship with Rome and the English church. Richardson highlights Wolsey's belief in education as critical to the defence of orthodoxy. The fifth chapter examines Wolsey's cultural and educational patronage, his wealth, and his household. If the reader seeks to ask how one might think there were two royal courts in England, the answer is here.

Chapter 6 returns to Wolsey's peacekeeping efforts. As transitions from war to peace are charted, Richardson shows how easily one could lose the king's favour, hinting, too, that events on the European stage would be shaped by Henry's desire to annul his marriage with Katherine. The seventh chapter, wittily (and aptly) titled 'The Cardinal's Greatest Matter', turns to Wolsey and the annulment. Although on well-trodden ground, Richardson's connection of this event with Rome and the European conflicts adds further nuance to existing scholarship. The final chapter concerns Wolsey's fall, featuring a clear chronology of events and main players. The conclusion reconsiders the treason accusations against Wolsey, and his legacy. Rather than a bibliography, an annotated 'Suggestions for Further Reading' is included.

Richardson is in command of his myriad sources, ranging from letters to chronicles and material objects. He portrays Wolsey in a considered and sympathetic light. The book builds on existing scholarship, treating Wolsey as a significant player on the European diplomatic stage. It is also commendably attentive to material display and the relationship between Wolsey and his king. As a contribution to the dialogue between past research and contemporary thought, Wolsey is brought firmly into the twenty-first century, although more direct engagement with recent work on gender and masculinities would have been welcome. Overall, this is a highly readable and enjoyable account of Wolsey's life and a strong addition to the series. It is recommended to students of the Tudor court and sixteenth-century European diplomacy and as the first resource for readers seeking a current scholarly biography of Wolsey.

Sally Fisher, *The University of Western Australia*

Ross, Sarah C. E., and Rosalind **Smith**, eds, *Early Modern Women's Complaint: Gender, Form, and Politics* (Early Modern Literature in History), London, Palgrave Macmillan, 2020; hardback; pp. 370; 5 b/w illustrations; R.R.P. €99.00; ISBN 9783030429454.

Early Modern Women's Complaint: Gender, Form, and Politics is an exciting new collection of fifteen essays on early modern women's complaint which represents a welcome extension of current scholarship on early modern women's engagement with complaint, one of the most pervasive literary modes in English writing in print and manuscript over the years 1550–1700. Much scholarship to date has identified Ovid's *Heroides* as the *locus classicus* for early modern complaint, but Sarah C. E. Ross and Rosalind Smith, the editors of this collection, argue that the mode is far more capacious. The volume traces the genealogy of female complaint through sixteenth- and seventeenth-century religious, political, legal, and philosophical discourses, and its critical reception and recent representation in digital scholarly resources. For early modern writers, Ovid's verse epistles voiced by heroines addressing the heroes who raped, entrapped, and abandoned them, paired with some replies, thematized the potentials of women's writing to overturn the priorities of hegemonic discourses. Although a number of early

modern women writers, including Isabella Whitney, cite this tradition, Ovid's *Heroides* was a troublesome legacy owing to its licentious subject matter and its male-authored ventriloquy of women's complaint. As *Early Modern Women's Complaint* shows, the *Heroides* was just one element in early modern women's complaint.

The essays are organized in four chronologically ordered sections, followed by an afterword. Part I, 'Sixteenth Century', comprises four chapters. Susan M. Felch contends that Anne Lock deployed prophetic and penitential complaint to instruct her readers and thus advance Calvinist Reform over the 1540s to 1590s. Micheline White outlines Katherine Parr's evolving use of religious complaint to lament on behalf of her husband, Henry VIII, in *Psalms and Prayers* (1544), and later, writing as the dowager queen, to urge for Protestant reform in *Lamentation or Complaint of a Sinner* (1547). Tricia A. McElroy analyses the prevalence of female-voiced complaint in Scottish political propaganda of the 1560s and 1570s, when the ideal of wifely virtue was fraught following the downfall of Mary Queen of Scots in 1567. Lindsay Ann Reid examines Isabella Whitney's adaptation of autobiographical affect derived from Ovid's *Tristia* rather than his *Heroides* to articulate careerist poetic ambitions in *The Copy of a* Letter (1566–67) and *A Sweet Nosegay* (1573).

Part II, 'Seventeenth Century', includes four chapters. In the first, Emily Shortslef investigates Mary Cary's use of complaint to embrace anti-Stoic inconstancy in her closet drama, *The Tragedy of Mariam* (1613). Paul Salzman examines how Mary Wroth employs the 'dirty pain' (p. 142) generated by complaint to 'bridge between the personal and political' (p. 138) in her manuscript play *Love's Victory* and in the second part of her romance *Urania*. Danielle Clarke tracks the 'interpellation of complaint (p. 158) indebted to Du Bartas through the writing of Aemilia Lanyer, Anne, Lady Southwell, and Lucy Hutchinson. Sarah C. E. Ross challenges the association between Ovidian complaint and 'isolation, distortion, and deception' (p. 186), demonstrating how Mary Wroth, Hester Pulter, and John Milton use the Ovidian figure of Echo to construct female community within pastoral complaint.

Part III, 'Restoration', contains three chapters. Gillian Wright considers Aphra Behn's complaint 'Oenone to Paris', in John Dryden's collection *Ovid's Epistles, Translated by Several Hands* (1680), to redirect critical attention from Dryden's theorization of translation towards the ideological and political implications of Restoration complaint. Whereas Dryden expressed 'clear signs of unease with royal sexual self-indulgence' (p. 210), Behn 'dramatiz[ed] conflicts between power and sexuality' (p. 219). Susan Wiseman extends the discussion of complaint to North America with a fascinating account of how Mary Rowlandson's captivity narrative *The Sovereignty and Goodness of God* (1682) is 'deeply mulched with the matter of complaint' (p. 233), adapting 'experiential testimony and furious complaint' (p. 234) from the Book of Job and citing Deuteronomy to register 'a political dimension' (p. 236). Kate Lilley analyses the degree to which the

'intimate publics' (Lauren Berlant, cited on p. 250) and the 'febrile […] anxiety' (p. 256) of Anne Killigrew's decorous complaints reproduce the courtly libertine values against which she rails.

Part IV, 'Representing Complaint: New Digital Forms', presents two jointly written chapters reflecting on how to position early modern women's complaint in new digital resources that will shape future scholarship. Mary-Louise Coolahan and Erin McCarthy explain that transmission determined how the *RECIRC* (The Reception and Circulation of Early Modern Women's Writing, 1550–1700) team chose to digitally represent the irregularities of early modern attribution practices; that is, to distinguish confirmed authorship by a woman from implied authorship, for example. Collaborating developers of a searchable online database of early modern women's complaint, Jake Arthur and Rosalind Smith, describe the new classificatory system they designed to capture women's varied engagement as authors, transcribers, compilers, and translators.

In the afterword, Lynn Enterline argues persuasively that recognition of the extent and inventiveness of women's complaint must initiate a reassessment of male-authored impersonation of the female voice in 1590s complaint literature. This engaging collection makes an innovative contribution to research on early modern women's writing and early modern literary studies more broadly.

Diana Barnes, *University of New England*

Rubin, Miri, *Cities of Strangers: Making Lives in Medieval Europe*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2020; hardback; pp. 204; 5 b/w illustrations, 2 maps; R.R.P. $105.00; ISBN 9781108481236.

Every so often, as historians do more research and further revise and extend their opinions about the meaning of the material available on a subject, it becomes necessary for a new survey to be composed in order to present the latest interpretations of the particular subject studied to a wider audience. The history of medieval cities has reached that point, and Miri Rubin's present work provides a short, readable introduction to current approaches to a thousand years of life in European cities, which she sees as a coherent entity that came to an end around the Reformation when new developments emerged. In the way of such overviews, the footnotes are as vital as the text, since they provide the detailed evidence for the informative summaries that emerge from them.

In her magisterial survey of urban life across a continent before the Industrial Revolution, Rubin includes references to a wide range of cities which had been previously neglected but that have been the subject of intense recent study. Written with insight and charm, the exposition is attractive in itself and moves beyond the political management of the cities to open up a new understanding of the variety of life in different places and different periods. While cities remained primarily the centres of local, and in some places state-wide, administration, other more commercial functions also contributed to the existence of most cities. These generated demand for different goods and stimulated a wider and more complex

economic structure across the Continent as a whole. Rubin's focus, however, is not primarily on why the cities existed but on what sort of life they provided for their inhabitants.

The population inside any European city was rarely, if ever, homogenous, and part of the new historical approach investigates how distinctively different groups who settled in various cities lived together and interacted, what roles they played, and the ideas they promoted at different times. While the heritage varied with the place and nature of the city, Rubin draws their diversity into a consistent explanation of the wider urban development in the period and the importance of the growing urban role in the European economy. As she expresses it, after a brief but illuminating account of past urban historians, 'Cities emerge as processes, unfinished, never fixed, always in flux' (p. 22), and it is around this that she shapes her account of the way in which migration was critical to the growth of an urban economy.

As Rubin shows, a much clearer understanding has sprung from historians who persevered in examining the slight material that related to the widespread movement of interrelated groups of Jews into northern France and Germany in the period before the Black Death. They showed how the continuing links of one community to another formed what we might term an international connection of ideas and practices, even though the Jews's success and survival crucially depended on the protection of the local lords, and the relationships within different cities were often very unlike. She also shows how Jewish and Christian ideas and behaviour in many cities, despite Jewish persecution and extortion, were part of a symbiosis. The relationships were, however, never secure—the legislature varied from place to place in defining the imperfect position of Jews in their cities. The issues were even more complex where there were also Muslims. 'Fragile but enduring' (p. 58) is her key definition, a situation that was undermined in the fourteenth century when a focus on public blame for evident destruction and distress became essential. Religious debate on the common good shifted throughout Europe towards condemnation of Jewish ideas and practices, especially that of usury, with the determination that cities should be purified.

Rubin also analyses the position of women in cities from the novel viewpoint of identifying them as strangers, in the same way as Jews or Muslims were, and marking out sub-groups of some importance, such as black Africans, that have previously been largely ignored. All these mainly working women lived in cities mostly full of women like themselves, whose work was vital to the success of the city, where the legislators (which they were not) controlled their property, dress, and conduct, establishing highly hierarchical requirements. Their rights in the courts and elsewhere were clearly defined. Rubin's consideration of the expectations and aspiration of such urban women in religious, economic, and household areas shows them carving out their own space in ways that have previously been overlooked.

In her conclusion Rubin reflects on the frames of reference—the ideas evolved in language, law and religion—that gave birth to the societies they created and the values that they promoted.

Sybil Jack, *The University of Sydney*

Sarti, Cathleen, ed., *Women and Economic Power in Premodern Royal Courts*, Leeds, Arc Humanities Press, 2020; hardback; pp. 108; R.R.P. €69.00; ISBN 9781641892728.

Conceived from discussions amongst scholars at numerous academic conferences, *Women and Economic Power in Premodern Royal Courts* merges two novel approaches. The notion of analysing premodern royal courts as businesses; and the businesswomen behind them. What is remarkable about the volume is that despite being absent from historical records and subjected to patriarchal prejudice, the women studied here made themselves known through economic power. As editor Cathleen Sarti asserts in the introduction, the volume contests 'dominant narratives of women's dependence on their spouses' (p. 2). The essays collected as four chapters restore the imbalance of previously disregarded or understudied premodern records in order for the women of the royal courts to reassert their vital importance.

Chapter 1, by Michele Seah and Katia Wright, focuses on fourteenth- and fifteenth-century queenship. In particular, they tackle the ambiguity of noblewomen's inferior social status to men despite being allowed to be autonomous landowners through royal marriage. The major problem to researching economic medieval queenship is that the evidence found in the chancery and exchequer mainly focus on the crown's administration records. Seah and Wright discover the best sources detailing a queen's economic activity are found in their dowers. They also probe the importance of landownership through two illuminating case studies.

The first case study is a legal dispute between Margaret of France (Edward I's widow) and the four heiresses of one of her tenants. The intriguing picture emerging from the legal records is how the queen was active in managing the administration of the king's and her own estates.

In the second case study, Patent and Parliamentary Rolls provide the evidence for Margaret of Anjou's lands and estates. A careful examination of the records reveals how Margaret's considerable revenue supported the king's finances and enabled her habit of giving expensive gifts to her staff.

In Chapter 2, Charlotte Backerra and Cathérine Ludwig-Ockenfels examine the often-overlooked economic power of empresses and princess consorts of the Holy Roman Empire. An obstacle to their research is how records of empresses' financial activity were disregarded and even destroyed. Backerra and Ludwig-Ockenfels focus on Anna Maria Luisa de' Medici, the last of the grand ducal dynasty, specifically, her role in managing her personal finances as electress in the Holy Roman Empire, and as a widow committed to investing in the *memoria* of her late husband.

Laura Tompkins questions Alice Perrers's infamous reputation as Edward III of England's gold-digging mistress. Perrers's image as a 'greedy harlot' has endured historic infamy until the last fifty years has seen her character reappraised by critics (p. 63). Tompkins goes further by exploring the deeply rooted prejudices towards women with considerable economic power. What emerges from Tompkins's study is that Perrers used her political influence and power as the king's mistress to augment her personal wealth beyond Edward III's provision. Perrers comes across as a mafia-style businesswoman in a ruthless patriarchal world that ultimately condemned her.

Cathleen Sarti examines the anomalous Sigbrit Villoms, a 'foreign, non-noble woman', and the mother of the Danish king Christian II's mistress, who handled Danish monetary affairs and influenced political change (p 73). Through letters and legal documents, Sarti pieces together an incredible woman who managed the king's finances, helped her daughter the queen through five pregnancies (1517–23), and even taught new medical knowledge to Paracelsus.

The fascinating and well-researched articles in *Women and Economic Power in Premodern Royal Courts* present a clear picture of women's considerable economic skills in premodern royal courts. Kings, it would seem, were often more reliant on their queens and mistresses for financial advice than has been previously considered.

Another undervalued aspect of economic life that transpires from the contributions is the women's generosity. With the considerable financial resources available, the women of royal households placed high value on gift-giving to officials and servants and almsgiving to the poor. Medieval queens, princesses, empresses, and royal mistresses are shown to be a driving force of European economic power despite their low sociocultural positions and patriarchal attempts to erase their importance from history.

The volume's brevity implies a starting point for further research. As Elena Woodacre petitions in the 'Afterword', readers of this excellent collection will hopefully be inspired to examine the rich sources of under-studied documents to provide further details to the incomplete picture of life in medieval courts, and the empowered women who overcame their supposedly subservient status. Therefore, *Women and Economic Power in Premodern Royal Courts* is essential for undergraduates and scholars interested in premodern economic power, royal courts, and feminist theory and studies.

Frank Swannack, *University of Salford*

Sidhu, Nicole Nolan, *Indecent Exposure: Gender, Politics, and Obscene Comedy in Middle English Literature*, Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016; cloth; pp. 320; R.R.P. US$69.95, £45.50; ISBN 9780812248043.

Nicole Nolan Sidhu has written a compelling book that delivers what its title promises: an engaging and ground-breaking investigation which intersects the rhetoric of obscenity, gender, and political theory in Middle English literature. Examining the works of Geoffrey Chaucer, William Langland, and their 'fifteenth century heirs' (p. 13), this study seeks to illustrate 'the innovatory, philosophically complex character' (p. 13) of obscene comedy in this chapter of the history of Middle English literature.

Indecent Exposure is, however, a specialized work that avoids disciplinary segregation. It contextualizes and analyses notions and conceptions of obscenity across an array of disciplines (art, literature, history, philosophy, and political science) and against the background of previous significant works by authors such as Umberto Eco, Paul-Michel Foucault, Anthony Weir, James Jermain, Karma Lochrie, Natalie Zemon Davis, and James Scott. Though not evident at first glance, this broad interdisciplinary theoretical framework plays a key role in the book. It allows the identification of what Sidhu defines as the 'medieval discourse of obscenity comedy', on which those Middle English authors rely who are the object of her analysis. For them obscenity has 'a masking function' that makes their 'subversive work appear to be, on the surface, conformist and conventional' (p. 110). Previous scholarship on Middle English literature, with or without a feminist approach, has seemingly overlooked this awareness.

The book is presented in five chapters. The introduction that precedes them is a useful and interesting one. It prepares the audience for a specialized discussion of obscenity in Middle English literature by clarifying key related concepts and placing them in relation to different European literary genres (fabliaux, sermons, and hagiography). It also includes, through a comparative perspective, discussions on medieval and modern ideologies and practices of censorship. The term 'social media discourse' is a leitmotiv utilized throughout the book.

An intertextual reading and an interdisciplinary approach are applied to all chapters of *Indecent Exposure* and represent the meritoriousness of Sidhu's work. A case in point is the episode of Malyne's rape in Chaucer's *Reeve's Tale*. Sidhu's interpretation displays the contradictions and complexities of medieval gender ideologies, and is carefully presented against references to vernacular (romance and fabliaux) and Latin (*Pamphilus de amore*, Ovid's *Ars amatoria*, and others) analogues by using literary (identification of tropes, characters, and imagery) and historical (cross reference to statutes concerning rape and abduction) analysis.

The overall organization of the book is also worthy of mention. The chapters are arranged in chronological order and consistent cross-referencing creates a linear path that throughout the book is mostly followed in a clearly developed argument. Sidhu's analysis shows a complex interplay between permanence and

discontinuities in the political valence of obscene comedy in some of the most representative Middle English texts dating from the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

The first two chapters are devoted to Langland and Chaucer. These authors emerge as the 'initiators' of an influential Middle English literary practice of using the domesticity of obscene comedy, and its gender and sexuality constructions, to pose questions of established ideologies, social injustice, and political practices.

The third chapter focuses on John Lydgate, who, unlike his predecessors, uses obscene comedy to support the holders of power rather than to oppose them. The fourth chapter, which highlights the *Book of Margery Kempe*, is a core part of *Indecent Exposure*. Margery does not use gender as a vehicle to advocate for general issues of power relations, yet gender is the major concern of her attack on Church persecutions of Lollards. Furthermore, the *Book*'s promotion of a gender balance within marriage can only in part be associated with the model of a companionate marriage proposed by the English biblical drama. In this light, the Noah pageant, discussed in the fifth chapter, combines a 'patriarchal outlook with an interrogation of dominant gender norms' (p. 191).

Sidhu's analysis not only provides a way to revisit earlier notions of medieval obscenity and its uses by Middle English writers but also invites us to approach modern sexual taboos with new insights. While medieval obscenity, as a public discourse, reflects cultural changes, internet distribution of modern pornography provides misogynistic, racist and monotonous imagery, and relies on private consumption. Following the example of the medieval antecedent, *Indecent Exposure* shows that modern culture can bring obscenity into the public realm and reshape the politics of pornography.

In its entirety, the book is captivating and provides important insights and considerable analysis. Containing essential understandings of the political valence of medieval obscenity, the study's innovative approach is certain to delineate new research directions and will appeal to an engaged and cross-disciplinary audience with an interest in gender and media issues.

Francesca Battista, *Charles University, Prague*

Smelyansky, Eugene, ed., *The Intolerant Middle Ages: A Reader* (Readings in Medieval Civilizations and Cultures), Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 2020; paper; pp. xviii, 280; 12 b/w illustrations; ISBN 9781487524128.

This is the twenty-third in a series of 'readers' designed for undergraduate teaching. Each document is preceded by an introduction placing it in context and followed by a series of questions of a general nature—for example, 'What does this document tell us about sexual practices of the late medieval clergy and other members of the Church?' (p. 272). On the basis of the document in question—the confession of a transvestite prostitute—the most obvious answer would seem to be that the clergy held the teachings of their Church in utter contempt. This

conclusion points to the dangers of combining general questions with isolated documents.

There are seventy-seven documents divided into nine sections concerning various categories of people who have historically been awarded less than equal treatment by the dominant social group—Jews, Muslims, heretics, women, foreigners, slaves, homosexuals, transvestites, the diseased, and the disabled. The introduction begins by placing the blame for persecution squarely on Christianity, then refers briefly to Robert I. Moore's thesis of the persecuting society (*The Formation of a Persecuting Society: Authority and Deviance in Western Europe 950–1250*, Blackwell, 1987). Eugene Smelyansky rejects the misconception that medieval Europe was more intolerant than later periods or other societies, then in the next sentence claims that intolerance was its defining feature and has only gained in intensity since. Neither the author's perspective nor the documents he presents support the latter part of this assertion.

I cannot say that I find intolerance a useful concept with which to analyse patriarchy, or indeed racism or religious conflict. Grouping under the heading of intolerance miscellaneous texts dealing with a wide variety of people and situations suggests the problem is an absolute and atemporal moral failing rather than a power dynamic. Both may be true, but they are not equally relevant. Is the exclusion of lepers from common society really analogous to death penalties for adultery or rape? Surely one arises from a fear of contagion and the other from a desire both to control and to protect women.

'The volume also attempts to look beyond Western Europe […] by including sources from central and eastern Europe and the Mediterranean world' (p. xv). In fact, all the documents are from the Latin West, although a fair number of them concern relations with Muslims and Jews and a few are concerned with military expansion in what might be described as border areas. Einhard's account of Charlemagne's conquest of the Saxons is followed by that of a Saxon monk on the Christianization of his people. Einhard describes the Saxons as worshipping demons, that is, being pagans, but mainly concerns himself with the military side of things. The Saxon monk celebrates the conversion. Their accounts are complementary rather than contrasting and neither claims religious intolerance as the primary motivation of Charlemagne's military campaigns. The excerpt from Gerald of Wales on the Irish presents them as barbarous in their dress and hairstyles but never suggests they are subhuman, as the introduction claims (p. xvi).

The sources range from the third century to the end of the fifteenth. The thematic structure undermines any chronology, so while few would disagree with Moore that medieval society became more intolerant, the documents presented here cannot be used to support this conclusion. Smelyansky has endeavoured to present a range of texts, from the prescriptive (legal, theological) to the descriptive (confessions), predominantly intolerant, but also some tolerant. It is to the reader to decide which is which. This can be challenging without a general context.

The book is decorated with twelve woodcuts, nine of which are taken from two nineteenth-century books by the same person with no other source given. There is a two-page index which demonstrates that women, sex, prison, and the clergy get frequent mention. There is a four-and-a-half-page bibliography of sources. It is probably unfair to criticize a collection of this kind for its miscellaneous nature and thoroughly modern perspective. The book contains a large number of interesting documents and should prove convenient for teaching undergraduate courses on its particular thematic sections. It will be particularly useful for courses on gender and sexuality.

Lola Sharon Davidson, *University of Technology Sydney*

Smith, Thomas W., ed., *Authority and Power in the Medieval Church,* c. *1000*–c. *1500*, Turnhout, Brepols, 2020; hardback; pp. 412; 19 b/w illustrations, 2 b/w tables; R.R.P. €100.00; ISBN 9782503585291.

This is a superb and substantial collection. Thomas Smith has successfully marshalled twenty-two chapters in this interdisciplinary exploration of power and authority in the medieval Church, curating a varied yet coherent compilation. While some of the chapters are more explicitly linked to the book's central themes than others, the collection nonetheless succeeds in demonstrating how enormously variable Church power and authority was in form, justification, and expression over time and space. A key issue that emerges across the contributions concerns the Church's ability to move beyond claims to authority to act upon those claims, and how often those mechanisms of power were dependent upon local cooperation. The range of disciplines and approaches represented in this collection is commendable and highlights that much important research continues to be undertaken in what remains a vigorous field, and that many fruitful avenues of inquiry remain.

Part I explores ideas of papal authority. Ian Robinson examines how eleventh-century ecclesiasts drew on fifth- and ninth-century ideas of judicial supremacy in their own discussions of papal primacy. Benedict Wiedemann explores how letters from the papal curia of Innocent III drew upon different methods to legitimize the Pope's authority as regent of the Kingdom of Sicily during the minority of Frederick II, while Rebecca Rist addresses the question of whether the popes of the eleventh to thirteenth centuries were anti-Judaic or anti-Semitic. Laura Cleaver examines how the genealogical diagrams contained in four thirteenth-century English manuscripts portrayed papal power and authority through the positioning of depictions of popes and their contemporaries.

Part II looks to the authority of papal representatives. Smith uses the case study of thirteenth-century Languedoc to examine how the absence of local support could affect papal legates' ability to wield power, while Gábor Barabás outlines the varied fortunes of legates in thirteenth-century Hungary, from cooperation to incarceration. Philippa Mesiano uses the case of thirteenth-century papal nuncio Master Rostand Masson to consider how papal representatives exercised power

in their diplomatic destinations. Finally, Jean Dunbabin identifies how papal representatives could respond pragmatically to the local diplomatic landscape, by exploring a case of dual secular-ecclesial rulership in late thirteenth-century Sicily.

Part III considers relations between the papacy and the Eastern Churches. The chapter by the late Bernard Hamilton examines papal attitudes towards the separated Eastern Churches in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries and the papacy's prioritization of 'corporate' over 'individual' conversion. James Hill analyses the entanglement of papal power and its ability to achieve unity with and reform of the Byzantine and Armenian Churches respectively, while Mike Carr argues that the Avignon papacy did wield authority in its regulation of Latin trade with Muslims, as evidenced by trade licences.

Part IV examines the cultural history of ecclesiastical authority and power. Matthew Ross traces cultural life at the medieval curia through the examination of the papal chapel. Jan Vanderburie analyses the symbolism of the Oignies treasures associated with Jacques de Vitry, arguing that Jacques deliberately drew on specific imagery in his self-fashioning. Catherine Lawless uses two images from the Florentine Franciscan context to explore the relationship between the power of female mysticism and the authority of friars, the latter of which recognized the devotional power of the former and acted as mediators with the realm of male ecclesiastical power. Kirsty Day demonstrates how examples of royal and noble women associated with female Franciscan communities in Bohemia and the Polish duchies challenge the narrative of women religious as defiers of male ecclesiastical authority.

Part V discusses ecclesiastical communities. Nicholas Vincent considers how secular authorities exercised power over bishops, examining the conventions for the ordering of bishops in the witness lists of Henry II's charters. Maroula Perisanidi considers how Eustathios of Thessalonike offers an alternative model of spiritual and moral authority in his *Life* of the married priest Philotheos of Opsikion. Christine Meek explores the failed attempts to impose enclosure on the nuns of the abbey of Santa Giustina in Lucca in the early fourteenth century as a case study for understanding the difficulties in exercising authority, while Matthew Phillips analyses clerical *gravamina* and private petitions in early fourteenth-century England as an example of collective attempts to exercise power via the mechanisms of royal justice. Melanie Brunner argues that examining the institutional structure within which cardinals operated at the Avignonese curia reveals much about the power dynamics and political cultures therein. Helen Nicholson explores tensions between diocesan bishops and Templars and Hospitallers in Britain and Ireland arising from the Orders' privileges of exemption, and Karl Borchardt closes the collection with a study of the relationship between Hospitaller and Teutonic Order lordships and their neighbouring polities in Germany.

This review is a necessarily brief account of a rich collection that makes a useful contribution to the field of ecclesiastical history and is of considerable value to scholars and students of the medieval Latin Church.

Beth C. Spacey, *The University of Queensland*

Thomas, Kate H., *Late Anglo-Saxon Prayer in Practice: Before the Books of Hours* (Richard Rawlinson Centre Series for Anglo-Saxon Studies), Berlin, De Gruyter, 2020; hardback; pp. xii, 304; 25 b/w tables; R.R.P. €94.95; ISBN 9781580443616.

This codicological study is a revision of a thesis awarded a PhD in English and Related Literatures by the University of York in 2011. The early Middle Ages, Kate Thomas explains, inherited a complex tradition of private prayer intricately related to the monastic practice of chanting psalms and prayers at the times of the canonical hours. The foundational document for monastic reform in England, *Regularis Concordia* (*c*. 973), gave greater encouragement to nuns and monks to engage in private prayer than the *Regula Benedicti* had done. Thomas Bestul in 1986 identified thirty-nine manuscripts dated before 1100 that include private prayers or devotional works in Latin or in Old English.

Private prayer, as Thomas defines it, is not necessarily solitary or silent, nor deeply personal. She uses the term to cover all kinds of extracurricular prayer outside of the liturgies of the hours and the Mass. Central to her definition, then, is the absence of the authority of a presiding bishop, priest, or abbot—despite Katie Bugyis's monograph, *The Care of Nuns: The Ministries of Benedictine Women in England during the Central Middle Ages* (Oxford University Press, 2019), which highlights the continuing role of abbesses as confessors in England from the early medieval period into the central Middle Ages, Thomas seems surprisingly reluctant to recognize abbesses as figures of authority.

The fundamental purpose of her study is 'an exploration of the groups in which Anglo-Saxon monks and nuns copied and used their prayers, and of how they elaborated these over time' (p. 33). With the aid of 'subtle but significant codicological cues' she distinguishes four types of different groupings of prayers according to how they were conceived, copied, and used. The terms she uses are series, sequence, program, and office. A sequence chiefly differs from the simple grouping of prayers that constitutes a series by having a common theme. A program is a more complete, formalized act of worship, with rubrics and detailed descriptions of how, when, and why to use it. An office chiefly differs from a program in its extended length and closeness to its liturgical origins.

Each chapter illustrates the differences between these types of grouping by focusing on a different genre of prayer. Chapter 1 examines prayers to the Trinity and the saints. Chapter 2 considers the creation of personal rites for liturgical feasts and prayer for the canonical hours. Subsequent chapters examine prayer collections devoted to the Holy Cross, prayer rituals for use in protection and healing, and prayers of confession and contrition. Thomas's main sources are three eleventh-century codices with substantial collections of prayers for use in non-liturgical contexts: *Ælfwine's Prayerbook*, the *Portiforium of St Wulstan*, and the *Galba Prayerbook*.

Private prayer, particularly of a confessional nature, has long been recognized by cultural historians as an important site for the development of individualism

(or selfhood), and the conception of the inner life. Occasionally, Thomas signals her awareness of some of the broader dimensions of cultural significance that attach to her subject. But her commitment to close analysis, and her essentially taxonomic approach, to a high degree preclude 'a deeper understanding of how early medieval people sought to communicate with God' (p. 3), and generally fail to illuminate 'the thoughtful self-awareness of eleventh-century monks and nuns' (p. 279).

I am indebted to Kate Thomas for drawing attention to the extent and diversity of prayer collections in the late Anglo-Saxon period. The most innovative section of her monograph is her analysis of four remedies found in vernacular medical codices (*Lacnunga* and *Leechbook III*) as programmes of prayer in medical collections. These are clearly distinct from prayerbook collections in having been assembled for use by specialist medical practitioners (who may have been members of the laity rather than priests, monks, or nuns). But there are proximities, since a number of remedies in *Lacnunga* and *Leechbook III* instruct the practitioner and/or the patient (who is in some case identifiably a member of the laity) to pray, or to write prayer formulas, in Latin or Old English. Such collections therefore have the potential to tell us great deal about the extent of lay participation in literary culture. In my experience, however, it is generally more difficult than Thomas's four case studies suggest to determine whether the instructions are addressed to the practitioner or to the patient. Nor is it easy to determine, in most remedies, whether the practitioner and his/her patient were assumed to be members of the laity or members of a religious community. But I look forward with interest to the publication of Thomas's current research on religious practice in Anglo-Saxon medicine.

Stephanie Hollis, *The University of Auckland*

Tyerman, Christopher, *The World of the Crusades*, New Haven/London, Yale University Press, 2019; hardback; pp. 520; 160 colour illustrations, 14 maps, 4 b/w figures; R.R.P. US$35.00; ISBN 9780300217391.

Tyerman starts his new publication with the words: 'The medieval crusades are both well-known and much misunderstood' (p. xviii). An astute statement from the author of *God's War: A New History of the Crusades* (Harvard University Press, 2008), a massive 1000-plus-page work on the topic in question. Anyone familiar with that impressive tome will be wondering how Tyerman has managed to publish another book on the topic of the crusades, and possibly why. The answer is rather simple: *God's War* covered nearly every aspect of the crusades, but lacked the illustrations, graphs, and other titbits that make *The World of the Crusades* such a treat.

As for his opening statement, Tyerman surely tries his best to shed light once again upon the misunderstood world of the medieval crusades. The myth of the crusades as religious wars waged by the West against the Muslims occupying the Holy Land is scrupulously analysed and disputed. Similarly, the notions that there

were distinct racial or ideological forces, or that the battles were purely fought for religious reasons, are shown to be little than a modern fantasy.

In less than five hundred pages Tyerman discusses the four-hundred-year-long crusading period and covers all five crusades. Even with this 'limited' amount of space, he manages to do something extraordinary: Tyerman captures and explains the motivations of those involved, from the ones forced to participate, those who joined willingly, to those who arranged and financed the crusades. This is not limited to the Western perspective, as the circumstances, ideals, and tribulations of the east are also discussed. This feat of opening the medieval mind to the reader gives the work a surprising touch of humanity, something that is often lost in the fantasy and myths surrounding the wars.

This account of ideology, politics, religion, and finances surrounding the crusades is beautifully illustrated with eighteen maps and figures, one hundred and sixty illustrations, and many other extras. Tyerman has also added thirty-nine 'Crusades in Detail' insets throughout the work, wherein he further explores and elaborates on several aspects of the crusades. Examples of these insets are sections on weaponry, medicine, women in the crusades, food, and several noteworthy people who were involved. Without these, I would probably never have known about the interesting meal, held on 6 January 1378, where King Charles IV of France entertained Emperor Charles IV of Germany—a meal described as including 'three courses—each of ten dishes, followed by spice wine and a gathering of five tables of nobles plus another 800 "below the salt"' (p. 394).

While informative and wonderful to read, these insets can disrupt the flow of reading, as they are sometimes awkwardly placed in the middle of a sentence in the main text. Because of this, the book is not always easy to read, and the density of the information does little to alleviate this issue. However, this is the only true criticism of the work I can think of.

The book is excellently written and incredibly comprehensive. It is clear from the structure and careful pace of the book that Tyerman is an expert on the crusades—he guides the reader skilfully through the many complicating aspects of the topic without ever letting them become confusing. His mastery of the topic is such that while he aptly tells the story of the how and why, he also accomplishes the much greater goal of demonstrating that the crusades were not always as people have come to think of them. The illustrations, charts, maps, and artwork enhance and complete his account of the crusades, filling the gap that some may have experienced while reading his *God's War*. This book has set a new bar for works on the crusades and, without doubt, it is a high one.

Flora Guijt, *Gouda, The Netherlands*

van der Hut, Margreet, '*Een Huyshouding in 'T Kleyn.' Het poppenhuis van Petronella de la Court in het Centraal Museum Utrecht* (Karel van Mander Academy Reeks voor Visueel Erfgoed in Nederland, 3), Arnhem, Karel van Mander Academy, 2020; paperback; pp. 88; 72 colour illustrations, R.R.P. €19.95; ISBN 9789083103105.

Dollhouses have gained increasing attention in recent years as sites of wealthy women's expression in early modern Europe, especially in the Netherlands, where a number of houses from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries survive. Among these is that of Petronella de la Court, which has been housed since 1921 in the Centraal Museum in Utrecht. De la Court, who lived on the Singel in Amsterdam in the mid-seventeenth century, kept the dollhouse in her home along with an extensive collection of artworks, porcelain, and other curiosities that are known to us from the inventory made after her death in 1707. From this it can be seen how much the dollhouse was a reflection of the material culture with which she surrounded herself, and a reflection of her patronage of particular artists and craftspeople, many of whom produced miniature versions of their work for the house.

This brief but relatively detailed presentation brings together a description of each room with high quality colour photography. The work is most likely to suit visitor-goers at the museum who seek a record of and more information about what they have seen. The text, in Dutch (with a useful overview summary in English), does include references to the major Dutch works on this and other houses and the family, but does not seek to integrate dollhouses or their female collectors such as Petronella de la Court in the wider scholarship with which it could interact. It does not itemize the full range of 1600 items and individualized clothing of the house's twenty-eight dolls that a researcher might find valuable. Without a full listing, the treasures of such houses will remain largely hidden from view and further analysis.

Van der Hut does, however, emphasize a number of features that have not been given attention to date. She provides more detailed assessment of the dolls' clothing and shoes, including, for example, the husband, dressed in a Japanese-style house robe, who sits in his office complete with a range of business papers, a silver ink set and stamp with the initials AO of de la Court's own husband, brewer Adam Oortmans. The fashions of the dolls reflect not only the changing engagement of the seventeenth-century Dutch with Asia (seen too in the house's imitation Chinese porcelain), but also echo the different social and occupational status and regional origins of those frequenting the early modern house.

Another feature that van der Hut identifies is the interplay of the visual, material, and spatial within the house. She argues that the items and decorations in each room coordinate around particular themes. The chimney painting of the reception room that has been set up for a newly delivered mother, for example, shows Fortuna, echoing the precarity of early modern childbirth, while the ceiling medallion displays an engraving of Spring, celebrating new life. Van der Hut

proposes that five rooms explicitly explore the five senses—with the reception room hearing (where gentlemen play violoncello and violin); the Kunstkammer viewing (globes, artworks, porcelain, ivories); the reception room with baby and buxom wet-nurse representing touch; the kitchen taste; and the garden, complete with orange trees, smell.

This book should whet appetites to dive deeper into these houses, whose many features have barely been explored in scholarship. This house's exquisite miniature items, from the practical (spinning wheels and laundry lists) to the diverting (games, curiosity cabinets, globes, ivory reliefs, and beer barrels, stamped with the mark of De Swaen brewery that the couple owned), by some of the best craftspeople of their day, await much further, careful analysis. Van der Hut's work prompts us to look ever more closely at these constructed domestic worlds.

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Wiszewski, Przemysław, ed., *Memories in Multi-Ethnic Societies: Cohesion in Multi-Ethnic Societies in Europe from* c. *1000 to the Present, I* (Early European Research, 15), Turnhout, Brepols, 2020; hardback; pp. 424; 21 b/w illustrations; R.R.P. €110.00; ISBN 9782503588902.

In this volume's preface the editor asks: 'why have we focused on conflicts, while neglecting traces of mutual help, or at least of peaceful coexistence?' (p. 12). The essays in this book all, in some way, seek to answer that question and provide alternative windows into multi-ethnicity in Europe's past. This collection therefore offers a multifaceted examination of Europe's multi-ethnic histories and historiographies. It is arranged in three parts to look at deep histories and ethnic memories; the phenomenon of multi-ethnicism in political unities; and the role of ethnicity in forming nations and their historiographical narratives. A fourth part offers a final case study from relatively modern times and a much more richly documented context, wherein Joanna Wojdon explores similar themes to those that emerged earlier in the volume by looking at the 'Polonia' in the United States of America to chart the formation and cultivation of a distinct ethnic identity. It is worth noting that Polish history is particularly well represented in the volume, as is eastern and central Europe, the Iberian Peninsula, and the western Mediterranean.

A section of essays devoted to questions of retrospectivity forms the first part of the volume. Using Carolingian Italy as a case study, Aneta Pieniądz highlights the importance of examining borderland situations and seeing historical ethnicity in its place as an identifier, but not necessary the main identifier in use in any given context. Examining two medieval Hungarian texts within an extensive historiographical discussion, Dániel Bagi shows that, while representing multi-ethnicity differently, both texts nonetheless do affirm the fact of multi-ethnic history. Exploring 'the way that memory of ethnic groups was preserved or communicated in narrative and other written sources' (p. 74) in medieval Transylvania, Cosmin Popa-Gorjanu focuses on an attack upon the

cathedral in Alba Iulia in 1277 and the shifting ways in which that event was subsequently represented. Interested in the lines between religious confession and ethnicity in Czech humanist historiography, Jan Zdichynec points out that 'the Czech ethnic group gradually radicalized, often in confrontation with the neighbouring German element' (p. 108), but also demonstrates underlying themes of interest and threads of behaviour common to rival groups and confessions. Complementing this, Isabell Grifoll explores the situation in Aragon and the ideological positioning of Crown and Church to 'the problem of Islam' (p. 133) created by state expansion and demographic shifts. State-formation is similarly at the forefront of Przemysław Wiszewski's study of Silesian medieval historiography, whose analysis of pictorial manuscript evidence suggests that 'the regional past was intended to teach the value of the acceptance of diversity as one of the cultural foundations of Silesians' (p. 155). Finally, this first part concludes with Luís da Fonseca's examination of Portuguese encounters with indigenous peoples in the Atlantic, wherein he extends Schwartz's notion of 'implicit understandings' to posit the idea of 'implicit ethnography' (p. 174) as a lens through which to view such encounters.

Issues of imagined pasts, ethnic domination, and political unity are addressed in the essays comprising the volume's second part. Drawing on an investigation of chancery records, Paula Pinto Costa and Cristina Pimenta examine 'the communication policy of the court of King Joaõ I' (p. 185) respecting Muslim and Jewish communities in Portugal. Jurgita Šiaučiūnaitė-Verbickienė looks at legal and administrative sources to explore confessional and ethnic matters in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, revealing exclusionary trends. Dovile Troskovaite also focuses on Lithuania in a detailed case study of the Jewish Karaites and the eventual emergence of 'a fully finished historical narrative which corresponded to the needs and self-perception of the community' (p. 253). Andrzej Pleszcyński maintains the regional focus with an examination of major Polish texts up to 1569, focusing on representations of various ethnic groups and threads of aristocratic positioning that served to transcend cultural, linguistic, and confessional barriers. Concluding this part, Aleksandr Musin examines north-eastern Europe through archaeological evidence and medieval narrative, arguing that 'the imperial claims of Russia should be dated not to 1552, but to half a century earlier' (p. 313).

The three essays that make up the third part of the volume focus on the phenomena of ethnic exchange and identity formation. Lucino Gallinari makes interesting use of Catalonian archival sources to explore twists and turns in Sardinian political identity, revealing the significance of 'the Catalan layer' (p. 342) as a force in the island's longer cultural history. Flocel Sabaté follows this with an exploration of Catalan identity, arguing that culture was more important as a unifying force than 'a rooted ethnicity of the people' (p. 361). Tomáš Velička then closes the section with a foray into Bohemian royal towns, using statistical analysis of royal documents coupled with town archives to explore regional trends in the usage of various languages over time.

By opening a series with obvious contemporary cultural relevance, this volume reflects a welcome scholarly embrace of nuanced approaches to ethnicity in Europe's history, historiography, and historical politics.

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Zeldenrust, Lydia, *The Mélusine Romance in Medieval Europe: Translation, Circulation, and Material Contexts* (Studies in Medieval Romance, 23), Woodbridge, D. S. Brewer, 2020; hardback; pp. xii, 272; 28 b/w illustrations; R.R.P. £60.00; ISBN 9781843845218.

The popularity of the fascinating story of Mélusine, a beautiful lady of fairy nature married to a human knight, Raymondin, is well attested in medieval European versions of the romance. A condition of their otherwise happy and prosperous marriage is that Raymondin must not look for Mélusine on Saturdays, as once a week she must secretly change into a half-serpent. Also, most of their sons, who become knights, have from birth a monstrous deformity. Eventually Raymondin spies on his wife, sees her bathing in the shape of a half-serpent and betrays her secret. Thereupon Mélusine must, in serpent form, leave the human world. In a contemporary human context, the story thus has supernatural fairy elements, features of monstrosity and animal shape, and Christian faith and practice.

Lydia Zeldenrust's study focuses on the versions of the romance written or printed in western Europe in the period 1400–1600, in five different vernaculars: French, German, Castilian, Dutch, and English. A chapter is devoted to each, in chronological order. She has combined philological, literary, iconographical, and book-history approaches, examining the interplay of text and image, looking across languages and cultures to gain a European perspective on the mutations of Mélusine, and tracing the transition from manuscript to print. The aim is to show how the material of the story was shaped and reshaped, firstly by the French authors and then by successive translators and adapters, and how Mélusine's ambiguous character was represented visually by copyists, illuminators, printers, and woodcut artists. This holistic approach leads to new discoveries and valuable outcomes, revealing complex relations among the five branches.

The individual corpora vary in size, as the detailed 'Appendix of Manuscripts and Printed Editions' shows (pp. 234–47), the witnesses of the French and German versions by named authors greatly outnumbering the Castilian, Dutch, and English anonymous versions. Correspondingly, the French and German versions have received more scholarly attention, an imbalance which this study seeks to adjust.

A brief account of the versions indicating the range and density of the material examined will help readers discern the interconnexions. Two distinct French romances, Jean d'Arras's prose version, *Mélusine, ou La noble histoire de Lusignan* (*c.* 1393), and Coudrette's verse *Roman de Parthenay* (soon after 1401) serve as the foundation of the study. The first was widely known in manuscript and print, the second existed in manuscript only, but it was the source of Thüring von Ringoltingen's Middle High German *Melusine*, a prose translation, completed

in 1456. Its *editio princeps* (Basel: Bernhard Richel, 1473–74), containing sixty-seven woodcuts with Richel's iconography, influenced the entire tradition, more significantly than had previously been acknowledged. Two Castilian editions exist in print, with no known manuscript: *La Historia de la linda Melosina* (Toulouse: Parix and Cleblat, 1489; Seville: Cromberger, 1526). The Dutch *Meluzine* is known only in three printed editions produced in Antwerp (1491, 1510, 1602), based on the *editio princeps* of Jean d'Arras's version (Geneva: Adam Steinschaber, 1478), incorporating some episodes from the *Roman de Parthenay*, and woodcuts. It has therefore a hybrid form and the text stresses the concept of hybridity. The two Middle English versions, which are translations of the two French versions, have survived in single manuscripts (*c.* 1500). *Melusyne* is a prose translation of Jean d'Arras's version, with some textual reduction and spaces for illustrations which were not undertaken. The *Romans of Partenay or of Lusignan* is a close rendering of the French verse romance, in stanzas of rhyme royal, a metric form appreciated by English readers, with comments by the translator on the translation process.

Zeldenrust has selected significant characteristics and differences in order to highlight what is general and what is particular to each version. She aptly expresses her purpose: 'what this study makes clear is that each version is always different, even when it is reinterpretation of an already familiar story' (p. 220). Sub-headings and lucid summaries at the beginning and end of chapters explicitly guide readers through the discussion. Textual analysis concentrates on Mélusine and her mutations, and the destinies of her sons. Iconographical description, with accompanying black-and-white illustrations, complements this analysis. Certain questions recur: whether Mélusine retains something of her humanity after becoming a serpent, and whether her Christian devotion is compatible with the supernatural. Key episodes, such as the bathing scene and transformation and her escape from the castle, represent Mélusine as a hybrid, in accordance with the German iconography which became standard (pp. 41–49).

The book proves the value of studying a literary text in a multilingual context, with visual representation of the story, and of bridging medieval and early modern culture. There is in this very thoroughly researched study an excellent basis of scholarship for further exploration of the Mélusine tradition, particularly concerning the Dutch and English versions, as Zeldenrust signals.

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