

Short Notices

King, Andy, and Andrew M. **Spencer**, eds, *Edward I. New Interpretations*, York, York Medieval Press, 2020; hardback; pp. 203; R.R.P £60.00; ISBN 9781903153727.

The nine essays collected here offer fresh perspectives on Edward I and showcase emerging scholars' work after the retirement of the Michael Prestwich–J. R. Maddicott–D. A. Carpenter generation. They are not comprehensive—parliament and legislation appear tangentially, for example—but centre on five themes: the man; the administrative king; justice; interests in Gascony and Scotland; and the nobility. If for K. B. McFarlane Edward 'preferred masterfulness to the arts of political management', these studies suggest he practised both.

The administrative king and guarantor of justice predominate. Rod Billaud shows Edward closely involved in delivering justice before his accession in his princely apanages of Chester, Gascony, Ireland, and the Channel Islands. Richard Huscroft's study of his leading officials, Robert Burnell and Walter Langton, confirms that he valued methodical administration and would foster and reward talent. Caroline Burt argues, contra Richard Kaeuper, that Edward's direct involvement in justice, rather than structural issues in the legal system, underlay the growth in special oyer and terminer commissions under him. Kathleen Neal's analysis of Edward's 1286–89 correspondence from Gascony with the regent Edmund of Cornwall presents a king closely engaged in administration who chose words carefully to promote a shared understanding of monarchy based on justice, favour, counsel, dignity, and royal prerogative.

Louise Wilkinson portrays Edward the man, caught between political imperatives to marry off his daughters abroad (with Gascony in view) and at home, and genuine affection for them. Charles Farris illustrates Edward's strong Marian devotion, influenced by his father and his Dominican confessors.

On the nobility, Lars Kjoer uses the household accounts of Bogo de Clare, brother of the earl of Gloucester, to show how magnate hospitality complemented royal ritual and strengthened ties between Crown and nobility. Michael Brown argues that Edward's emphasis on royal rights and promises to English followers blinded him to the need to build support among the Scottish nobility after his conquests: overconfidence bred failure. Andy King questions historians' use of 'crisis' for the political conflict with the nobility in 1297: it concerned serious issues of royal rights and consent but was a temporary rift in an otherwise productive relationship, soon resolved without risk of civil war. King's paper will provoke debate (what, for example, might have happened without the truce with France that eased Edward's fiscal predicament?) but, like the others, is well argued and convincing.

PETER McDONALD, *Canberra, Australian Capital Territory*

Naum, Magdalena E., **Jetta Linaa**, and **Sergio Escribano-Ruiz**, *Material Exchanges in Medieval and Early Modern Europe: Archaeological Perspectives* (Studies in the History of Daily Life (AD 800–1600)), Turnhout, Brepols, 2021; hardback; pp. 264; 26 b/w illustrations, 17 colour plates, 2 b/w tables; R.R.P. €75.00; ISBN 9782503593999.

The aim of the series ‘Studies in the History of Daily Life (800–1600)’ is to inquire into how people lived in the past through the perspective of habitualized, routine, and repetitive behaviour. In this volume, the focus is firmly on the later centuries of the nominated period. The case studies are European—mainly northern European, with one case study each from the Basque Country and Asturias. Four of the case studies examine ceramics; the balance deal with early modern collectables—pilgrim badges, Venetian glass, male footwear, and a private fossil collection.

The case studies look at objects on the move—how they acquired new meanings, values, and roles as they circulated. The manipulation of objects in order to demonstrate social identity is a key consideration. Two features stand out in ‘the pursuit of travelling material things’ (p. 13). First, the ability of specific objects to convey social distinction and membership of tightly held elite networks of influence in particular contexts but not in others. Second, the fact that some of these objects circulated within networks of trade but are also found in contexts where exchange was based upon personal relationships and connections rather than purchase. These case studies demonstrate that objects cannot be taken for granted. As the title suggests, these studies focus on archaeological perspectives, and attention is paid to the archaeological evidence of deposition and provenance, as well as the textual and visual evidence for the trajectories, use, and display of the objects.

The editors declare in their introduction that they did not wish to ‘compel authors to align themselves around a specific theoretical concept’, and they explicitly eschew in-depth theoretical study and debate (p. 15). Instead, they asked their contributors to identify and trace material exchanges, exploring the impact of objects as they moved through different environments. The editors comment that this approach aligns with the theoretical framework of ‘relational constellations’ proposed by Astrid Van Oyen (p. 16). Curiously though, none of the authors of the individual studies cite Van Oyen. Instead, individual contributors give a nod to Alfred Gell’s notion of object agency, Arjun Appadurai’s concept of object biography, and Ian Hodder’s concept of entanglement.

The editorial freedom granted to contributors to forge their own theoretical path has advantages and drawbacks. Each of the theoretical frameworks nominated above has a distinctive take on object agency: Gell’s notion of primary and secondary agency is significantly different from the flatter ontology of Hodder’s theory of entanglement (human–thing dependence). An opportunity for the editors to explore these differences productively was perhaps missed. Nevertheless, this collection provides scholars new to the idea of object agency with a convenient opportunity to look at the application of different approaches

in a variety of contexts. There is real merit in demonstrating that there is flexibility in the archaeological analysis of how social life is constituted through material culture.

GEORGINA PITT, *The University of Western Australia*