Reviews

Bayless, Martha, Jonas **Lilequist**, and Lewis **Webb**, eds, *Gender and Status in Competition in Pre-Modern Societies* (Studies in the History of Daily Life (800–1600), 10), Turnhout, Brepols, 2021; hardback; pp. 340; 9 b/w, 6 colour illustrations, 1 b/w table; R.R.P. €85.00; ISBN 9782503596327.

Gender and Status in Competition in Pre-Modern Societies is a volume of essays investigating how gendered practices, performances and (re)presentations have been used for status competition in the premodern world. It aims to impress the omnipresence of status competition throughout history and across cultures, while contributing new research on the intersections between gender and status competition. A key feature, and perhaps the greatest strength of the volume in terms of sparking interest, is that the contributions span a vast temporal and geographical scope and are drawn from various research disciplines. Temporally, the studies span from, at the earliest, the fourth millennium BCE in Marta Ameri's essay 'Women, Seals, and Power in Prehistoric Iran and Central Asia', to, at the latest, the seventeenth century CE in Martin W. Huang's 'Status Competition, Mourning and Gender in Seventeenth Century China'. The geographical scope of the volume encompasses China, Iran, Arabia, Italy, France, Scandinavia, and Sweden. And they draw on archaeology, various forms of literature, iconography and art history, and legislation. This quality speaks to efforts to decolonise the field of medieval and early modern studies and, with several of the essays drawing on numerous evidence types, it also demonstrates an awareness of the benefits of cross-disciplinary research.

Rather than being designed as comparative studies, the contributions are structured around three identified subthemes of status competition: practices, performances, and (re)presentations—with each part having its own introductory and concluding remarks that summarise the individual findings and overarching implications of the essays comprising each section. This may be somewhat off-putting to readers, who will be surprised by the absence of a cumulative conclusion for the findings of the whole volume. It is left to readers to draw such broad summative connections themselves. However, this thematic structure emphasises the continuities that are observable across the essays in each section despite their differing contexts.

The prime audience of the volume is dependent on the purpose for reading. As a gender specialist I found the diversity of essays highly engaging and refreshing. For the most part, the contributions are accessible enough to appeal to a generalist audience, with most contributions including translations or explanations of subject-specific terms and concepts, but in some instances, like Lovisa Brannstedt's 'Coniunx et Sacerdos', there is an assumed familiarity with

some Latin concepts that might be unknown to those with a background in the premodern Middle East or Asia. However, such instances are rare, and the volume does well to appeal on a generalist as well as a specialist level. Every contribution presents intriguing and thought-provoking research on a particular topic that would be ideal for a general course on premodern status competition or gender, as well as offering a range of potential content for courses on literature, iconography, ritual practices, or the history of emotions. The volume uses its diverse content to effectively demonstrate the significant influence of gender on how humans have sought to gain advantage in numerous interpersonal contexts throughout time. Ultimately, it succeeds in its aim to advertise the fruitfulness of gender and status competition as a rich and growing area of research.

Cassandra Schilling, *Flinders University*

Brélaz, Cédric, and Els **Rose**, eds, *Civic Identity and Civic Participation in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages* (Cultural Encounters in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages, 37), Turnhout, Brepols, 2021; hardback; pp. 447; 10 b/w illustrations, 3 tables, 1 map; R.R.P. US$120.00; ISBN 9782503590103.

Exploring the evolution of civic identity and civic participation from the late classical period through to the early medieval period, editors Cédric Brélaz and Els Rose have collated some fourteen articles into a volume focusing on the evolving political identity of urban communities in a Roman and post-Roman landscape as impacted by profound political transition. Moving from imperial authority (and its attached offices) and conceptions of universal Roman citizenship (introduced in 212 CE) to the increasing emphasis on Christian bishops as political representatives and mediators of the urban landscape, the volume charts the transition of civic identity and participation in four parts: the imperial background (first to third centuries CE); an urban transition (fourth to seventh centuries CE); a period of political and religious reconfiguration (fourth to seventh centuries CE); and the early medieval city (sixth to eleventh centuries CE). Claudia Rapp provides a short postscript.

In the introduction to the volume, Brélaz and Rose chart the issues explored by the volume: how did cities (as political communities within a political community) adapt to a profound political transition often characterised by 'urban decline', and what role did these urban communities (as 'the people') play in this transition? Setting the scene in this teleological approach, Clifford Ando investigates Roman citizenship in the late classical period and its impact on the West in particular. Noting that the West was essentially urbanised by Rome, he argues that its civic culture was primarily imperial in nature, with imperial offices being of key importance in the urban landscape. Brélaz follows up with an examination of urban political expression in the East, where urbanisation predated the establishment of Roman authority. Countering arguments that urban identity was redundant after the introduction of universal Roman citizenship, Brélaz shows

that local identity and its political expression was still important within an imperial landscape that had set aside the Greek term 'democracy'.

Moving into late antiquity, Anthony Kaldellis continues the eastern focus with an examination of civic identity in Constantinople. Moving from conceptions of a 'fossilized' Roman citizenship dominated by imperial authority, he advocates against the concept of a 'manipulated mob' to one where citizens actively intervened in the urban political landscape and, moreover, had the right to intervene. Avshalom Laniado expands this investigation to the broader urban environment in the East. Working against the notion of a decline in municipal councils in the early Byzantine Empire, he argues that imperial authority and lay notables still dominated the political urban landscape, against a perception of acclamation as representing meaningful popular participation. Picking up on popular participation, Julio Cesar Magalhães de Oliveira investigates twentieth-century assumptions that acclamation was merely decorative in a North African context in the fourth and early fifth centuries. He examines case studies of expressions of popular will in civic forums such as the amphitheatre, as well as some ecclesiastical elections, to emphasise that the urban plebeians could and would bypass their town councils. Pierfrancesco Porena moves to a similar context in late antique Italy. In a context where provincial authority was increasingly under threat, he posits that the Diocletian reforms ushered in a split in Italian consciousness—as represented by an 'imperial' Milan and a 'traditional' Rome—to create a situation where civic identity trumped provincial authority before diminishing with the decline of the Italian cities themselves. Rounding off this late antique context, Michael Kulikowski moves the lens to a late Roman and early Visigothic Spain. He charts uncertainty in urban curial identity in the fourth century, a shift to urban military identity in the fifth century (as urban sites moved to higher ground), with civic identity being predominantly mediated by the bishop in the sixth century.

Exploring a rephrasing on citizenship in the late antique period, Ralph Matheson moves from a situation in the late classical period where Roman citizenship, provincial citizenship, and municipal citizenship often overlapped to the gradual dominance of more personal urban identifiers as represented by origin (as tribe/nation or home/town), as possibly initially popularised by the Roman army. Peter van Nuffelen then examines the Christian concept of justice as it relates to urban political expression and the importance of justice as an ethical perspective uniting the *plebs* in reciprocal relationships with their leaders to form a united people. The role of Christianity is further explored by Els Rose. Utilising a case study of the urban community of Arles and its bishop, Caesarius (r. 502–42 CE), she argues that urban identity took a decisive turn in the sixth century, when a Christian congregation replaced the civic community. Stefan Esders and Helmut Reimitz then return to the rephrasing of political urban identity in terms of origin by examining so-called 'barbarian law codes' in a Frankish context. They argue that the profound political transition in the West saw 'local Romanness' eventually replaced by urban identities defined by ethnicity.

Moving to expressions of civic identity in the early medieval period, Matthieu Tillier broadens the scope of the volume to include urban populations identifying with Islam. He argues that, in the seventh and eighth centuries, Islamic political identity, influenced by consensus, similarly emphasised tribal origins over urban origins, but a shift in the latter half of the eighth century saw a new emphasis on political centralisation. Marco Mostert reflects on urban culture in the early medieval West. Focusing on a Germanic context, Mostert identifies a shift in the tenth century in the political identity of episcopal towns identifying with Roman concepts of *civitas* and *urbs* to, perhaps monastic, ideals centred on community. Gianmarco de Angelis then explores elites and urban communities in an early medieval Italian context, as particularly informed by recorded tensions between central authority and local traditions. He posits a clear and vital urban identity strongly informing political discourse in this period. Claudia Rapp rounds off the volume by noting the variety of political continuities informed by the volume as providing a counterpoint to teleologies inspired by the 'fall of Rome'.

Despite the teleological shift from Roman to medieval and the continuities this microanalysis of urban political culture inspires, this volume is perhaps at its best when it disagrees with itself: uncertainty over whether the 'power of the people' or 'urban identity' were formally and politically effective in this period of transition creates a powerful tableau for reflection. A small criticism, common in an age dominated by secularism, is the sense that that other radical continuity, Christianity, was somehow not vitally active and invested in this transition, but rather informed by it. Still, this is a volume bringing together a wide variety of perspectives into a useful whole.

Stephen Joyce, *Monash University*

Brown, Jennifer N., and Nicole R. **Rice**, eds, *Manuscript Culture and Medieval Devotional Traditions: Essays in Honour of Michael G. Sargent* (York Manuscript and Early Print Studies, 1), Woodbridge, Boydell & Brewer, 2021; hardback; pp. xxv, 379; 15 b/w illustrations; R.R.P. £60.00; ISBN 9781903153963.

This Festschrift volume, in honour of Professor Michael G. Sargent, is the inaugural publication in a new series from the Boydell & Brewer imprint York Medieval Press, 'York Medieval and Early Print Studies', which expands on the focus of the 'Manuscript Culture in the British Isles' series to include, most fruitfully, printed books. It is fitting that this is the first volume of the new series, given the important influence of Sargent on generations of scholars in the field of medieval English literary and cultural studies, areas of inquiry that naturally transcend the artificial boundaries of handwritten and printed book production. Best known for his work on vernacular English devotional literature, particularly that by Nicholas Love and Walter Hilton, Sargent has made a major contribution as a critical textual editor, bringing access and prominence to manuscript sources through modern printed editions. His areas of interest are well represented in the fourteen contributions to

this volume, which cover diverse topics but are characterised by a unifying thread of gratitude to a generous colleague, teacher, and mentor, as well as by a focus on English devotional cultures, particularly those of the Carthusians and Brigittines. It will be of interest to specialists of medieval English literature and book history (naturally), but two essays in particular address questions of methodology and metaphysics with significance across the humanities.

The editors, Jennifer N. Brown and Nicole R. Rice, have wisely broken the essays into four thematic sections. The first section, 'Manuscript Transmission and Textual Adaptation', features essays that coalesce around issues of editorial and scribal practices, and the relationships between the two. Essays by Laura Saetveit Miles and E. Gordon Whatley interrogate dialogues between texts alongside that between texts and other media, including architecture and sculpture, while pieces by A. R. Bennett and Stephen Kelly explore the methodologies and metaphysics of textual criticism. The latter two essays stand out in the volume for their innovative and stimulating contributions that have relevance beyond the scope of medieval studies. Bennett's 'What Do the Numbers Mean? The Case for Corpus Studies' is a challenging read for those of us not accustomed to statistics and graphs, but it offers an important demonstration of the possibilities of aggregate data in the study of textual production and reception. Their point, illustrated graphically, that Chaucer was not 'the most prevalent author nor his work or the manuscripts in which it survives representative of the vast majority of the Middle English corpus' (p. 58) will give many readers pause to think about how modern academia approaches manuscript culture.

Similarly, Kelly's discussion of the metaphysical and ontological issues inherent in studying manuscript transmission is fizzing with exciting ideas and difficult questions. One of Michael Sargent's important contributions to textual editorship is his advocation of the rhizome: he posits that the traditional mode of constructing the stemma of a text gives a misleading sense of linearity, and that a more accurate metaphor is the rhizome, a concept borrowed from botany that indicates an interconnected root system in which influence flows horizontally as well as vertically. This can be best achieved, Sargent argues, in digital media, not printed textual editions. This is an appealing idea, one that seems to meet the needs of the postmodern, poststructuralist sense of culture as well as our technological shift into the digital, as Kelly notes. However, he questions whether in fact 'the metaphysics of the textual and digital realms are fundamentally at odds with one another' (p. 98), and what this might mean for a digital rhizomic model of textual editorship. These are questions fundamental to research and study broadly, not only of the medieval English literary world, and it is this quality that makes the essay important reading for all in the humanities.

The remaining sections of the book are, though excellent, less innovative methodologically and are directed more particularly to specialist readers. 'Translated Texts and Devotional Implications' examines the affective impact on devotional practice and interiority of translation between Latin and vernacular

languages. Essays by Ian Johnson, Ryan Perry and David J. Falls consider the function of devotional texts as behavioural guides with a performative aspect. Illustrative of this section as a whole, Johnson presents Latin, Middle English, and modern English versions of pseudo-Bonaventuran texts. Johnson illustrates the many decisions made by translators and their impacts, drawing out cultural contingencies that remake the 'experiential topography of the life of Christ with regard not only to the source but also to the imagining soulscape of each reader or hearer encountering it' (p. 131).

'Rhetorical Strategies and Spiritual Transformations' includes essays by C. Annette Grisé, Marleen Cré, and Fiona Somerset. This is a natural extension of the previous section in that the authors probe questions of translation and transmission, between Continental female devotional authors and English translations of the work (Grisé), between a scholar and a text (Cré), and between contemporary texts (Somerset). Finally, the fourth section, 'Texts and Contours of Religious Life', brings communal life and its textual culture to the fore. It offers contributions by Kevin Alban on Carmelite liturgy, Marlene Villalobos Hennessy on the literary culture of miracles and prophecy within the pre-Reformation English Carthusians, Jennifer N. Brown on the legislation governing the Brigittines at Syon Abbey, and Mary C. Erler also on Syon Abbey and its sponsorship of both manuscript and printed devotional texts.

Anna Welch, *State Library Victoria*

Brown, Pamela Allen, *The Diva's Gift to the Shakespearean Stage: Agency, Theatricality, and the Innamorata*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2021; hardback; pp. 320; 20 illustrations; R.R.P. £70.00; ISBN 9780198867838.

The Diva's Gift is a book with a mission: to highlight the artistry of Italy's *commedia dell'arte* actresses and to demonstrate their decisive impact on female roles scripted by Shakespeare and his contemporaries. Brown begins her study with the transformation wrought on the role of the female lover by women players, who began appearing in *commedia dell'arte* performances from the mid-1560s. Before this innovation, female roles performed by these professional troupes were lacklustre and acted by men. The repertory which evolved alongside the new presence of women was marked by 'a radical change': for the first time the lovers played unmasked (p. 8). Combined with Italian literary sources, the theatrical skills of the new actresses reinvented the woman in love, giving rise to a novel character type: the ardent *innamorata.* This 'theatergram of character' was distinguished by her articulateness, sensuality, and versatility, 'evok[ing] laughter, pathos, and wonder' (pp. 10–11). Brown presents this figure, embodied in 'the itinerant Italian diva', as having a far-reaching effect on the Shakespearean stage, where she 'spurr[ed] generic innovation, appropriation, and backlash' (pp. 20–21).

Border-crossing is a recurrent focus. Chapter 1, 'The *Innamorata* Ignites', maps visually the scope of the *comici*'s European travels: to Madrid, Vienna, Linz, and Prague, northwards to France and Antwerp, and across the Channel to

England. While mixed-gender troupes gained permanent footholds in Madrid and Paris, they 'never established a lucrative base in London', or in the Netherlands (p. 48). The reason was part anti-Catholic prejudice, part the strength of London's commercial playing companies, but also because 'the spectacle of women working as paid artisans in the public sphere' was disturbing to both Protestant nations (p. 22). In addition to the troupes' extensive touring, English ambassadors and travellers, including Philip Sidney, Ben Jonson, the clown Will Kempe, and actor-poet-spy Anthony Munday, acted as conduits for Italian playmaking back home. The Elizabethan and Stuart courts were beacons of Italophilia; Queen Elizabeth I read Tasso in the original, while Anne of Denmark owned a copy of actress Isabella Andreini's '"highly theatricalized" fictional' *Lettere* (Venice, 1607), marked with her armorial stamp (p. 99). Such evidence strongly supports Brown's claim that 'Shakespeare and his colleagues worked with an eye to a pan-European market' (p. 16).

Brown's method juxtaposes English playwrights' adaptive strategies with analysis of Continental drama in the context of the diva's 'combinatory' craft (p. 11). Chapter 2 argues that John Lyly's comedies and other works performed by Elizabethan children's companies exhibit 'rivalrous emulation' of charismatic foreign divas (p. 76). The following chapter enlists Bel-Imperia in Kyd's *Spanish Tragedy* and Shakespeare's Juliet to analyse the hybrid figure of 'specially talented boy actress' and 'tragic *virtuosa*' (pp. 95, 92). Brown argues that both *innamorate* are 'built on displays of skill': Juliet and Bel-Imperia 'flirt[ing] provocatively in dialogues replete with *concetti* and innuendo […] both […] star in shocking suicide scenes, stabbing themselves quickly and decisively' (p. 95). We are accustomed to reading for the racial dimension of female characterisation in *Antony and Cleopatra* and John Webster's *White Devil*; less familiar is Brown's interpretation of theatrical women such as Beatrice, Juliet, and Portia as 'racialized Italians' (p. 12). She argues forcefully that in both performance and critical traditions these roles 'have been purged of their alienness over time' (p. 15). Her chapter, 'Acting the Actress in Shakespearean Comedy', ends with a compelling discussion of *All's Well that Ends Well*'s Helena as a 'traveling player'. Shakespeare's portrayal of 'a social-climbing, anal-fistula-curing, pilgrimage-faking, bed-tricking Frenchwoman' is, she observes, 'not a profile [his audience] would instantly take to their bosoms' (pp. 162–63).

Brown's work is especially valuable in the stress she lays on Renaissance acting as a 'labor-intensive profession' (p. 242). Her book shows women *comice* as engaged not just in play-acting, but play*making*, using *lazzi* (linking comic bits) and *beffe* (tricks) as building-blocks, repurposing their often prodigious reading, and lacing their performances with playing *all'improviso*. These abilities led Tomaso Garzoni to extol Vittoria Piissimi as 'a compendium of the arts' and Vincenza Armani as 'plac[ing] the art of Comedy on a level with Oratory […] revealing herself as the most excellent Actor of our age' (p. 198). As Brown argues, when Shakespeare has Olivia ask Viola-as-Cesario 'Are you a comedian?',

or when Lyly makes Juno disparage Pandora as a 'shameless counterfet', they refract the zeitgeist of Italian theatrical eroticism and *anti*-theatricalism. Brown writes with vigour and flair: Thomas Nashe 'groused' at the quantity of writing from elsewhere praising Italian players (p. 197), and in her epilogue, 'Cleopatra's Sweat', Shakespeare's Egyptian queen '*swivels* magnificently among "shades of difference", lyrical visions, bawdy banter, and a suicide that transcends bounds of genre and species' (p. 247). Her study is highly attuned to the vulnerability and precariousness of performance. As she writes, reading about theatregrams like the bed-trick and the switched ring in *novelle* is one thing, 'but seeing [them] enacted onstage is an entirely different kind of experience—a kinetic, visceral spectacle produced by living bodies and voices, in a process that is collaborative, labour-intensive and risky' (p. 62).

To term the diva's gift 'forgotten' is not strictly accurate (pp. 1, 28). Brown pays generous tribute to her colleagues in the working group Theatre Without Borders, and elsewhere, whose studies on transnational theatre and female playing populate her substantial bibliography. The study encompasses an impressively wide range of archival sources, theatre histories, and comparatist criticism in English, Italian, and French. Its appendices document Italian testimonies of the divas' superlative skills from 1567 to 1589 (in Brown's translations), and provide a complete scenario, 'Isabella's Jealousy', one of a volume of skeleton plots used by the *comici* compiled by actor-manager Flaminio Scala. To date, Brown's book makes the most detailed, sustained, and persuasive case for the currency of the Italian actress on the Shakespearean stage, and for her invigorating impact on its drama.

Sophie Tomlinson, *The University of Auckland*

Buettner, Brigitte, *The Mineral and the Visual: Precious Stones in Medieval Secular Culture*, University Park, Pennsylvania State University Press, 2022; cloth; pp. xiv, 272; 35 colour, 55 b/w illustrations; R.R.P. US$99.95; ISBN 9780-271092508.

The appearance of precious stones in medieval art has long been a subject waiting to be explored. Medieval writing has been filled with references to the impact of jewellery and precious stones. Abbot Suger, for example, wrote of how, through contemplation of the precious stones found in the cross of Saint Eloy and other works, his mind was transported from the slime of the earth to higher matters in an anagogical fashion. This is in a text, familiar to many medievalists, written to explain and describe the work he commissioned at Saint-Denis near Paris in the twelfth century. In it he outlined how the various stones acted as an aid to this transportation. While Suger does not appear in this book, familiarity with such medieval texts reminds us of the significant social, political, and aesthetic impact minerals and gemstones had on a medieval audience, making this study long overdue.

Brigitte Buettner's focus is on precious stones in medieval secular culture, which means that she does not discuss reliquaries or other forms of religious visual culture. She divides the book into three sections: the first is on royalty and crowns, the second on lapidaries, which here join bestiaries and herbals as something art historians should become more familiar with, and in the final section, there is a more general discussion of the medieval geographic imagination, trade, and travel writing. In this last section she evokes Prester John, John Mandeville, and Marco Polo, as well as other figures both fictional and real.

Most medieval crowns have been destroyed. In her discussion Buettner focuses on three gem-encrusted crowns that have survived from the medieval period—one from the Holy Roman Empire, now in Vienna's Kunsthistorisches Museum (in the Schatzkammer); one from the kingdom of Castile, now in Toledo Cathedral; and one from the kingdom of Bohemia, now in St Vitus Cathedral in Prague. They date from the late tenth to twelfth centuries in the Vienna example, about 1256–75 for that in Toledo, and 1344–47 (reworked in the 1370s) for that in Prague. All are gem-encrusted and each quite distinct in style. The crown in Vienna is topped by an ornate arch from front to back, with a bejewelled cross surmounting the heavily decorated front panel; the Toledo crown is eight-sided, topped by miniaturised castles, with jewels and cameos on each side; while the Prague crown is circular in shape with fleur-de-lis finials overarched by a gold strip and decorated with pearls, sapphires, rubies, emeralds, and aquamarines. It also has embroidered cloth inset into it.

While the crown, a potent symbol of monarchy, is the subject of the first three chapters, tracing its origins in the West from the time of Constantine, Buettner shifts direction in the rest of the book. In Part 2 she examines lapidaries and the pursuit of knowledge and mastery over such stones, including colour and the sense of sight both vision-enhancing and reality-distorting. In addition, in Chapter 6 Buettner looks at the art of sigils, which include intaglios and cameos, as well as such naturally occurring stones as veined marbles, agates, and fossils. These 'figurative' stones were greatly admired but also enigmatic, potentially either legitimate or demonic. These areas of research provide rich material that deserves further exploration, given that lapidaries are deserving of as much attention as bestiaries have thus far received.

Invoking Prester John and Marco Polo, in the final three chapters Buettner explores the illustrated travel book. Other important works discussed include Friar Odoric of Pordenone's *Itinerarium* and *The Book of John de Mandeville*. Another work that is also mentioned at length is the fifteenth-century compilation, *Livre des merveilles* (Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, MS fr. 2810), made for John the Fearless, Duke of Burgundy, but given to Jean, duc de Berry, his uncle. Produced in the workshop of the Boucicaut Master, this large-format book contained 265 images and 297 folios, making it one of the most ambitious accounts of the world beyond the more familiar Europe and Holy Land. Precious gems feature in all these accounts, both factual and fantastical, as does an interest in

what appears in regions considered exotic by Europeans. In this section Buettner discusses trade routes, mining, and maps, the interests of merchants and princes in treasures and travel, with geography and art.

The three sections of this book deal with three quite different arenas, and possibly to three quite different audiences. Each could be a separate study, which is both frustrating and fascinating. The work opens new areas of research that expands our understanding of late medieval society. The focus on secular evidence also ties in with current work being done on inventories and other forms of material culture that are also proving fruitful for researchers. This book is stimulating, thought-provoking, and should be read by anyone interested in the role of precious stones in medieval secular culture.

Judith Collard, *The University of Melbourne*

Bullitta, Dario, and Natalie M. **Van Dreusen**, eds, *Sainthood, Scriptoria, and Secular Erudition in Medieval and Early Modern Scandinavia: Essays in Honour of Kirsten Wolf* (Acta Scandinavica, 13), Turnhout, Brepols, 2022; hardback, pp. 466, 14 b/w, 26 colour illustrations, 5 tables. R.R.P. €110.00; ISBN 9782503595481.

This volume is a Festschrift honouring its recipient on her sixtieth birthday in 2019. Kirsten Wolf is one of the most distinguished living scholars in the field of Old Norse–Icelandic studies, particularly though not exclusively known for her often-pioneering work on the explicitly Christian vernacular literature of the North, long largely neglected, not least the lives of saints. A glance at the volume's context pages, readily available online through Brepols's webpages, shows many other eminent scholars in the field honouring her with an essay contribution.

There are eighteen essays, with an introduction by the editors. In the first section, 'Pictorial and Sculptural Sainthood', Thomas A. Dubois provides an accessible discussion of how medieval audiences in many ways looked differently from modern people at religious sculptures. Numerous high quality colour plates illustrate the essay, which focuses on mainland Scandinavia—not, as the editors imply, Iceland (p. 34). In the section's second essay Marianne Kalinke sheds light on a somewhat mysterious Gotland church mural displaying the German emperor Henry II (973–1024).

In the second section, 'Medieval Sainthood', Ásdís Egilsdóttir focuses on the emotions associated with two narratives of the lives of Icelandic bishops, and Margaret Cormack discusses two Saint Cecilia miracle stories, providing texts and English translations. In the section's third essay, Jón Viðar Sigurðsson considers *Mikjáls saga* by Bergr Sokkason (*c.* 1270–1350), widening the discussion to explore issues relating to lordship, service, and friendship.

There are two essays in the section devoted to the sagas focusing on the controversial thirteenth-century Icelandic bishop Guðmundr the Good. In easily the volume's longest essay (thirty-eight pages in length) Gottskálk Jensson examines the evidence suggesting a now lost Latin original lies behind the so-

called D redaction of *Guðmundar saga*, strongly agreeing that Björn M. Ólsen was correct to postulate such a work in 1902. Shaun F. D. Hughes argues that though Icelandic folklore has a *flagð* or troll women figure called Selkolla, the Selkolla in *Guðmundar saga* B is an ecclesiastical construct not indebted to folklore.

Section 4 is devoted to 'Spiritual Readings'. Siân E. Grønlie explores how the theologically problematic Old Testament account of Abraham's ultimately aborted sacrifice of his son Isaac is treated in the Icelandic sources known collectively as *Stjórn.* Dario Bullitta provides a relatively detailed description and analysis of a manuscript of religious material, AM 624 4to, focusing particularly on 'the idiosyncrasies of the first codicological unit' (p. 213).

There are three essays in the section headed 'Skaldic Poetry'. Writing with a linguistic focus, Russell Poole explores possible Danish and East Norse features in the skaldic corpus. Margaret Clunies Ross and Martin Chase (whose research focus is devotional poetry from the decades leading up to the Reformation in Iceland) explore how skaldic poetry changed, in some respects degenerated, and in some respects quite skilfully adapted to changed circumstances in the period after what might be regarded as its golden age.

Two essays appear under the heading 'Secular Erudition'. Úlfar Bragason considers Sturla Þórðarson as simultaneously the author of *Íslendinga saga* in the *Sturlunga saga* compilation and as a participant in and observer of events he describes. For many students of Old Norse–Icelandic the next essay, by Todd Michelson-Ambelang, will be the most intriguing in the volume. He argues that in uttering one of the most famous lines in Icelandic literature, Guðrún Ósvífrsdóttir, telling her son Bolli in *Laxdæla saga* 'Þeim var ek verst er ek unna mest' ('Though I treated him worst I loved him best', pp. 326–27) is referring not to Kjartan Óláfsson, as most modern readers assume, but to Christ. The article is tendentious, perhaps a little tongue-in-cheek, but it has interesting observations on the female characters in the saga.

The final section, 'Postmedieval Sainthood', provides editions and discussions of four poems dealing with saintly women and women's moral behaviour. Þórunn Sigurðardóttir examines the seventeenth-century *Dyggðaspegill Helgu Aradóttur*; Margrét Eggertsdóttir the eighteenth-century *Verónikukvæði* (with an English translation by Margaret Cormack); Svanhildur Óskarsdóttir the possibly seventeenth-century *Maríudilla*; and Natalie M. Vam Deusen *Kvemdæmaþáttur*, possibly dating to 1806. The first three poems are particularly interesting in showing forms of piety associated with pre-Reformation Catholic times surviving much later in a Lutheran Iceland.

Festschrifts do not always enjoy a good reputation for the quality of the scholarship they present. This volume provides very scholarly essays likely to be of enduring worth, though most will be of more interest to the specialist engaged in advanced research than to the undergraduate studying Old Norse–Icelandic, or the 'general reader'.

John Kennedy, *Charles Sturt University*

Croix, Sarah, and Mads Vedel **Heilskov**, eds, *Materiality and Religious Practice in Medieval Denmark* (Acta Scandinavica, 12), Turnhout, Brepols, 2021; hardback; pp. 296; 11 b/w, 32 colour illustrations, R.R.P. €85.00; ISBN 9782503594163.

This is a handsome volume. Although using a font size smaller than is usual, this book is a pleasure to read: the paper quality is remarkable, and the manifold-coloured illustrations and photographs leap from the page. Happily, the book's contents live up to its materiality, which is as well, for materiality is the hub around which this work revolves: religious practice sustained through material entanglement, materiality as ritualistic and devotional focus, and materiality as embodiment of both faith and authority.

The introductory chapter is a well-wrought overview of recent research into the Nordic reflexes of medieval Western European Christianity. The key aspects of this field are laid out, with prominence given to the diversity of practice across the medieval West, despite central attempts at harmonisation of liturgy. Notwithstanding this diversity, the point is made that medival religious culture can be consistently characterised as performed ritual piety, in which devotional acts imbued material objects with sacred significance, where the worldly and the divine become fused through codified ritual movements, bodily enactment, and the translation of matter between places and vessels. Key to such an understanding of material practice is the agency of the practitioner, the interconnectedness of people with things, and the notion of potency (rather than agency) embodied in the object.

There are nine chapters in addition to the introductory chapter and an epilogue. Chapters 1–4 examine the research context and aspects of liturgy and materiality in medieval Scandinavia. Chapters 5 and 6 look at corporeality in the context of cults of saints, and Chapter 7 examines material tokens of personal devotion. There then follow two chapters dealing with the religious relevance of the materiality of memory, and the epilogue emphasises the necessity of interdisciplinarity in this field, and reflects on the overall enterprise.

In the first chapter, Morten Larsen synthesises and critically assesses the array of currents and 'turns' in Danish medieval religious scholarship, and explores their impact on and relevance to the study of materiality. Importantly, Larsen emphasises the recent trend in considering religion as centrally integrated in a community, rather than being treated as an isolated subsystem within society. Next, Bertil Nilsson focuses on Lund Cathedral, exploring the role and importance of material objects in rites of consecration of both church and cemetery, and revealing important theological conceptions in medieval Christianity in relation to how objects and matter were understood, including the important belief that objects can be possessed by evil powers, for which consecrative exorcism was necessary. Chapters 3 and 4, by Nils Holger Petersen and Martin Wangsgaard Jürgensen respectively, both consider different aspects of medieval Scandinavian liturgy. The former looks to the role that the gospel book plays in the Mass, as a venerated physical object, representative of and embodying Christ, while in the

latter of these two chapters, Jürgensen traces the use of material objects, such as friezes, figured sculpture, orders of procession, and church equipment like the chalice and censer, as performing and making manifest the liturgy, inter alia drawing on Hugh of Saint Victor's statement regarding the three essential and equal elements of church rites: words, motions, and objects.

The role and liturgical importance of relics and mimetic anthropomorphic figures come into view with the next two chapters, which look at particular examples from medieval Denmark of relics and physical anthropomorphic statuary imbued with sacred agency. In Chapter 5, Lena Liepe explores the afterlife of Pope Lucius's skull at Roskilde, emphasising the relic as *pignus*, a saint's pledge of enduring interest and care. In Chapter 6, Mads Vedel Heilskov examines the incorporation of living matter in objects of veneration, such as in a crucifix, so as to create an interface between the divine and physical worlds, thereby facilitating an interaction where the ontological boundaries become permeable. Importantly, both Liepe and Heilskov consider such anthropomorphic interfaces to be dialectic rather than simply representational. Next, in Chapter 7, Mette Højmark Søvsø and Maria Knudsen catalogue the wide array of small objects of personal devotion that appear in the Danish archaeological record, such as crosses, brooches, rings, and pilgrimage badges. These are all objects marking piety and personal religious engagement through the intermediary of a physical token. The chapters conclude with two contributions exploring materiality and memory: Laura Katrine Skinnerbach discusses the liturgical use of wax as both a presence and as a means for memorialising, and she is followed by Jakob Tue Christensen and Mikael Manøe Bjerregaard's chapter on materiality in Danish medieval funerals. Finally, an epilogue is delivered from the perspectives of both an archaeologist and an art historian, in which Mette Svart Kristiansen and Mercedes Pérez Vidal review key aspects and consider directions for future research. In all, this is a fine and useful collection of essays that adds subtlety to our knowledge of medieval Scandinavian religious sensibilities and practices.

Roderick McDonald, *Emu Forge*, *Sheffield*, *UK*

Dabiri, Ghazzal, ed., *Narrating Power and Authority in Late Antique and Medieval Hagiography across East and West* (Fabulae, 1), Turnhout, Brepols, 2021; hardback; pp. 217; 3 colour illustrations; R.R.P. €75.00; ISBN 9782503590653.

This miscellany inaugurates 'Fabulae', a new series from Brepols. As regards editing and physical appearance, the production values are good; the contributions are typically well written and readable. If the title is a mouthful, this is because the volume covers a lot of ground. It explores how hagiographic works show holiness interacting with authority, from late antiquity through the Middle Ages, from Western Europe to the Middle East. The work is weighted towards the earlier period and the East, with Islam and Zoroastrianism well represented. The collection derives from a conference, and in consequence the papers are reasonably

short, often treating specific moments or incidents. They offer scope for diverse methodological approaches and allow readers to contrast multiple case studies.

Editor Ghazzal Dabiri's introduction assesses the complex ways in which authority and saintliness interrelate. The work eschews the obvious one—martyrdom for speaking truth to power—in favour of more subtle intersections. It is structured into four parts, each consisting of three chapters. Section 1, 'Saints at the Courts of Rulers', is the most tightly defined. Its chapters each concern a text originating within, or embraced by, Melkite Christian communities under Islamic rulers. The contributors consider how political circumstances conditioned these Lives' accounts, or even how they influenced a single Life's recensions in different languages. The first two articles, by Petros Tsagkaropoulos and Damien Labadie, have the closest affinity of any two of the volume's chapters: in each, a Christian holy man is called on to defend himself, through argument and miracles, in front of a caliph. Maria Conterno discusses a legendary account of the friendship between Emperor Theodosius and Theophilus, Patriarch of Alexandria, in the contribution that most explicitly articulates the volume's unifying thread: authority meeting holiness.

Section 2, 'Authority at the Cross-Sections of Society', is more vaguely delineated. Rather than focus on a single Life, Federica Boldrini gives a succinct overview of female Italian mystics' *vitae*, detailing how such women's efforts to espouse the ascetic life undermined the authority of parents, spouses, and sumptuary laws. The other chapters concern Zoroastrianism. Carlo G. Cereti's article about dating two texts of Zoroaster's legendary biography bears no obvious relationship to the volume's stated theme; it does serve, however, to introduce Zoroastrianism, a subject possibly unfamiliar to some of the volume's readers. Dabiri's own contribution, one of the book's more nuanced, treats the complex use Sufi hagiographer 'Attār made of Zoroastrianism to reflect on spiritual authority. Sometimes in his works 'Attār had Islamic holy men embrace Zoroastrian practices, to startle readers and render them receptive to the religious message that followed; at other times, he cited exemplary lives of ordinary Zoroastrians to instruct the saints themselves.

'Mapping the Terrain of Power' addresses intersections of locality, authority, and holiness. Maïeul Rouquette argues forensically that the churches of Salamis and Tamasos deployed the fifth-century *Acts of Barnabas* and *Acts of Heracleides* to bolster their respective cases for primacy on Cyprus. Previous consensus has held that both lives were used to affirm the island's independence from the Patriarchate of Antioch; Rouquette cites them to support a different interpretation. Tenth-century Georgia reoriented itself from Iran towards Byzantium; in the process it stopped seeing itself as Christendom's northern edge and began envisaging itself as its eastward edge. Nikoloz Aleksidze explores the complexities associated with the shift of mindset. Jason Moralee's examination of the *Gesta martyrum romanorum*, a set of lives allegedly circulating in early Christian Rome, is the book's most theoretically dense chapter. While engaging productively

with secondary scholarship in other disciplines, the reliance on primary sources is minimal.

The final section, 'Negotiating Power and Authority', addresses miscellaneous topics. Sibel Kocaer addresses the *Saltuk-nāme*, a set of stories about Muslim hero Saltuk compiled by Ebū'l-hayr-i-Rūmī on the directions of Prince Cem. On the one hand, the compilation was used to further Cem's campaign to succeed his father as caliph; on the other, the tales themselves presented the holy warrior Saltuk, who operated in the borderland territory of Rumelia (the Balkans), as a role model for an audience part of which had probably only lately converted from Christianity. Fabrizio Petorella considers the Byzantine stylite Saint Daniel, whose prophecies asserted spiritual authority over two emperors. Jeremiah A. Lasquety-Reyes examines two occasions on which the Virgin Mary, in Jacobus de Voragine's *Legenda aurea*, relinquishes her power as queen of heaven and lets human petitioners bargain with her in unexpectedly familiar ways. In all, the collection adopts disparate perspectives on its chosen topic, crossing eras, lands, cultures, and religions, facilitating contrast and comparison. As such it is to be commended.

Patrick Ball, *Hobart, Tasmania*

DeVun, Leah, *The Shape of Sex: Nonbinary Gender from Genesis to the Renaissance*, New York, Columbia University Press, 2021; pp. iii, 315; 40 colour plates; R.R.P. US$35.00; ISBN 9780231195515.

In present day Australia and New Zealand, intersex children are frequently subject to unnecessary genital 'normalising' surgeries before they are capable of consent, often causing lifelong trauma. As various governmental inquiries and legal cases have shown, many surgical decisions to 'normalise' intersex children's bodies are often based on uninterrogated assumptions about gender. As Leah DeVun demonstrates in *The Shape of Sex*, medieval surgeons too practised normalising surgeries on the bodies of intersex people—historically called 'hermaphrodites' or 'androgynes'—to align their bodies with contemporary cultural gender norms. *The Shape of Sex* is a substantive and innovative contribution to ongoing conversations about gender, sex, and embodiment in medieval and early modern studies, as well as contemporary queer, trans, and intersex scholarship. DeVun's pivotal book reveals that the histories of ideas about intersex people 'are far from an obscure, outdated episode: they have ramifications in contemporary culture and politics, as well as in the survival of very real intersex and trans people' (p. 205).

DeVun focuses on the dynamically changing ideas about nonbinary sex/gender from early Christianity to the Renaissance, explored through analysis of Latin and vernacular works of theology, medicine and natural philosophy, as well as an impressive number of manuscript images (both in-text and colour plates). *The Shape of Sex* is necessarily focused on ideas about nonbinary sex/gender, for very little remains of the voices and experiences of medieval intersex people. DeVun is careful, however, to attend to the consequences of this archival silence,

and uses a range of methods from contemporary trans, intersex, and queer theory to emphasise how 'abstract' ideas necessarily impacted the lives of medieval nonbinary people, but also those who lived 'within' the binary. Employing this theoretical framework alongside extensive research allows DeVun to trace how the concept of the sex binary was constructed, rather than simply being 'natural, real, or immutable' (p. 10). DeVun argues, convincingly, that the ways in which medieval scholars responded to questions about femininity and masculinity inevitably constructed the boundaries of the 'human'.

The Shape of Sex explores these issues in eight chapters that progress chronologically, beginning with a survey chapter on early Christian representations of nonbinary sex/gender in the work of figures such as Saint Augustine. Two paradigms of nonbinary sex/gender emerged in this period, one which seemed positive, positioning Jesus as potentially androgynous, while the other conceptualised hermaphroditic individuals as monstrous. The monstrosity of the nonbinary body continued into the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, DeVun explains in Chapter 2, because hermaphroditism and monstrosity were used in representations of 'monstrous races', particularly of Islamic people during the Crusades. The following chapter continues this focus on monstrosity and is particularly innovative, for DeVun draws out the complex pictorial representations of Jewish people in English bestiaries as hermaphroditic hyenas, imagery intended to contribute to anti-Jewish sentiment fomenting in England at this time. Chapter 4 switches focus to consider Islamic and Christian receptions of ancient Greek ideas of sex and generation in natural philosophy, as well as ideas of nonbinary sex/gender in legal discourses.

The final chapters are arguably the crux of *The Shape of Sex.* In Chapter 5, DeVun explores medical and surgical approaches to hermaphroditism through the story of Berengaria Castelló, whose husband petitioned for divorce in a Catalonian court in 1331 on the grounds that she was unable to have sex. Subsequent surgical examinations suggested Berengaria 'was not a woman', yet no records remain to explain what Berengaria faced afterwards. DeVun offers possible conclusions through an analysis of the contemporary medical and surgical ideas about nonbinary sex, which illuminates how deeply intertwined medieval codes of masculinity and femininity were in surgical practices. Chapter 6 concludes the book with a rich study of the 'Jesus Hermaphrodite' in Renaissance alchemical treatises and illustrations, where DeVun demonstrates that for alchemical scholars 'the idea of nonbinary sex was nothing less than an escape from the corrupt nature of postlapsarian earth' (p. 164).

The Shape of Sex is a groundbreaking exploration of the central place that nonbinary sex/gender played in the formation of theological and scientific 'truths' about gender and humanity. It is an impressive piece of interdisciplinary scholarship, thus making it an ideal resource for undergraduate and postgraduate students of gender and queer studies, as well as medieval and early modern history. For medievalists and early modernists of any discipline, DeVun's findings

demonstrate that questions of gender were and always have been central to questions of humanity—not only did ideas about nonbinary sex/gender inform theology and science and shape the ways in which categories like 'male' and 'female' were constituted, but such ideas were also deployed as tools of exclusion for the enemies of Christendom. *The Shape of Sex* urges us to consider how gender/sex continues to be used as a boundary marker, with ongoing, significant consequences for nonbinary people today.

Paige Donaghy, *The University of Queensland*

Drimmer, Sonja, *The Art of Allusion: Illuminators and the Making of English Literature, 1403–1476* (Material Texts), Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2019; paperback; pp. 352; 97 b/w, 27 colour illustrations; R.R.P. US$39.95; ISBN 9780812224849.

We know very little about manuscript illuminators in fifteenth-century England. As Sonja Drimmer observes in her original, provocative book, nearly all are identified as anonymous, shadowy figures we classify according to artistic style. It doesn't help that art historians have traditionally been more interested in the aesthetic excellence of continental work than in the 'splendid vulgarity' (as manuscript curator Janet Backhouse put it) of English art. According to Drimmer, even when illumination is considered, it is often regarded as secondary to the text it illustrates or as mere adornment, an added extra to enhance prestige for an affluent patron.

In her study of vernacular English manuscripts of the fifteenth century, Drimmer turns these assumptions on their heads. The period saw the blossoming of a national vernacular literature by authors such as Geoffrey Chaucer, John Gower, and John Lydgate, with the concomitant proliferation of illuminated manuscripts of their work. Drimmer argues for a reevaluation of the agency of illuminators in the creation of this literature, seeing them as no less than essential players in the formation of English literary identity, which she calls both 'a visual and linguistic event' (p. 3). She prises illuminators away from subservience to the text on the page, breaking the text/image nexus, casting them as powerful, thinking operators engaged with the broader political culture, 'assembling, adapting, and combining image types from a range of sources' (p. 5).

The independence of illuminators is first examined through the visual construction of the poet as *auctor*. Up to the fifteenth century the manuscript book was considered to be the shared responsibility of the myriad practitioners who constructed the finished book—unlike today, the author did not hold a privileged, primary position. The illuminator was one of these practitioners, operating in loose collaboration but more or less independently. What was different about vernacular literature was that because the manuscripts were newly illustrated, there was no tradition of illustration, which compelled the artists to invent their own compositions.

Drimmer traces the development of the vernacular author portrait, a fascinating exercise at a time when the notion of the authorial identity itself

was fragile and in flux. She finds that Chaucer, Gower, and Lydgate are almost never depicted as authors in the act of writing, despite the traditional Evangelist portrait offering a clear precedent for depicting authorship of a work. For example, confused as to the status of Chaucer in relation to his works, the illuminator of the Ellesmere manuscript of *The Canterbury Tales* (San Marino, Huntingdon Library MS EL 26 C9, *c.* 1400–05) conflates identities, depicting Chaucer as a pilgrim, as narrator, and as author pointing at the adjacent text, not in the act of writing, but with a penner around his neck.

Illuminators' inability to represent the idea of the contemporary author is also evident in manuscripts of Gower's *Confessio Amantis*; of all the illuminated copies, only one shows him actually composing his work. Like Chaucer's, Gower's authorial identity is elusive.

The third author considered by Drimmer is Lydgate, whom she finds less evasive. Fifteen illuminations show him as a Benedictine monk, but in non-authorial guise, as the manuscripts under consideration are more concerned with paying homage to royal and religious patrons and sponsors, and it is they who appear in illuminations as the primary identities, whether this be Henry V or Saint Edmund. Even when there was no explicit sponsorship, such as in manuscripts of *The Siege of Thebes*, the author identity is still unstable. For example, in one manuscript Lydgate is depicted not as author but as a pilgrim monk mounted on a horse (London, British Library, Arundel MS 119, fol. 1^{r}, *c.* 1425–50)

While illuminators 'formalized equivocality as the English poet's defining feature' (p. 148), Drimmer also argues that they 'redrafted the terms in which poetry by Gower and Lydgate was to be read in the second half of the fifteenth century' (p. 148). In the book's most compelling chapters on history manuscripts, she argues that illuminators knowingly positioned the patrons of a manuscript of Lydgate's *Troy Book* in relation to current Lancastrian and Yorkist politics. This is followed by a remarkable analysis of the practice of representing historical subjects in medievalising or, as Drimmer prefers to express it, 'unmarked' dress and context. Time is collapsed, which allows for a form of secular typology. Not constrained by historical time, artists directly reference the court of Edward IV, with the result that 'the pictorial content of these books activated their political impact' (p. 207).

Drimmer's writing style is seductive, if a little prolix at times. Her argument is audacious, detailed, and well documented and illustrated. Issue could be taken with some claims, but her premise—that illuminators were powerful, knowing agents in the creation of the canon of English literature in the fifteenth century—is brilliantly original and the book is a significant achievement.

Hilary Maddocks, *The University of Melbourne*

Fugelso, Karl, ed., *Politics and Medievalism (Studies) II* (Studies in Medievalism, XXX), Cambridge, D. S. Brewer, 2021; hardback; pp. 256; 20 b/w illustrations; R.R.P. £65.00; ISBN 9781843845881.

The most recent volume in the Studies in Medievalism series, *Politics and Medievalism (Studies) II*, continues the theme of its predecessor (*Politics and Medievalism*, Studies in Medievalism XXIX, reviewed by Kevin J. Harty in *Parergon*, 38.1 (2021): 219–21), and investigates how and why the Middle Ages have been invoked by politicians, and the way in which politics have influenced the development medievalism and its study. This volume falls somewhere between a special journal issue and a book collection. The volume offers nine essays on the topic of 'Politics and Medievalism' and is followed by shorter 'open issue' section that includes four essays on medievalism across multiple genres.

The opening essay by Louise D'Arcens addresses how Tariq Ali's 2005 novel *A Sultan in Palermo*, set in twelfth-century Norman Sicily, presents a dynamic supranational community within and between the Mediterranean, Levantine, and Arabian regions. D'Arcens highlights how *A Sultan in Palermo*, published post-9/11, was written in a climate of increased suspicion of the Islamic world during a period of conflict between the East and West, and alludes to contemporary events, such as the US-led invasion of Iraq. D'Arcens shows how Ali's novel 'views the Middle Ages through a transnational and transcultural lens' (p. 3) and works to challenge Eurocentric views of the medieval.

Stephen Lahey's essay discusses Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk, Czechoslovakia's first president, and his admiration of Petr Chelčický (1390–1460), a Christian spiritual leader and author from medieval Bohemia. Masaryk believed that Chelčický was the one figure who came closest 'to embodying the Czech identity' (p. 1). Lahey traces how the influence of Chelčický over Masaryk's thinking and politics was reassessed during the shift from liberal nationalism, to Soviet nationalism, to, finally, post-Soviet years in Czechoslovakia.

Alexander L Kaufman's essay offers a survey of political memes in the first two decades of the twenty-first century, featuring the iconic heroic figure of Robin Hood, created, and used by the far right in the United States of America. Kaufman interrogates these memes, highlighting their attempts to criticise politicians such as Barack Obama and Hilary Clinton, through their warped representations of Robin Hood and his ideology. Robin Hood is recast from his former well-known role as saviour of the poor to someone with unscrupulous and sinister plans to introduce a corrupt political system that rewards the unworthy and benefits the few.

The reworking of iconic English figures and events are also discussed by Susan Aronstein and Laurie Finke, and John C. Ford, who offer two fascinating essays which focus on the intersection of medievalism, Brexit, and the myth of nations. These two essays highlight the link between medievalism and Brexit, demonstrating how allusions to past iconic English victories—both mythical (Saint George in Rory Mullarkey's 2017 play, *Saint George and the Dragon*) and historical (the Battle of Agincourt)—have shaped the idea of the British nation,

and are reworked to both critique and support Britain's campaign to leave the European Union.

Galit Noga-Banai's essay examines in depth the architecture of the memorial for German soldiers at El Alamein, Egypt, the site of the World War II battle in 1942: the British victory here led to the end of the Axis threat to Egypt. Noga-Banai argues that the memorial's form and content overtly reference medieval predecessors, and focuses in particular on the mosaic by Franz Grau and its Byzantine influences. The inclusion of saint-like figures in this mosaic, along with the medievalism-inspired design of the memorial, recasts visits to the space as a medieval pilgrimage that asks visitors to leaves aside the historical events of the battle, and instead emphasise the dead soldiers' roles as political martyrs, 'as victims' (p. 104), something which Noga-Banai argues reflects how German authorities dealt with post-war guilt.

Leticia Álvarez-Recio's chapter traces the ownership of extant copies of the first edition of Anthony Munday's *Palmedos* (1589), now preserved in the Bodleian, British, and Huntington libraries. Álvarez-Recio demonstrates how biases (both of academics and publishers) impact the reception and dissemination of literary works, and how the change in reception and dissemination of the book led in turn to the transition of *Palmedos* from 'a matter of leisure or book of conduct' to an 'object of scholarly inquiry and market speculation' (p. 108). Álvarez-Recio concludes that the 'most systematic analysis' (p. 127) of these texts was largely a result of the easy access to these works in well-known public institutions.

The study of how nationalism has become widespread in medievalism is an ongoing field of research, something which both Ethan Doyle White and Matthias D. Berger both examine in their essays in this collection. In his investigation into two modern England-based Pagan groups, Woden's Folk and Sovereign Mercia, White observes how the study of paganism and medievalism overlap and shows how the early Middle Ages can be appropriated to support radically different views by these pagan groups: for example, Woden's Folk's 'explicitly racialist' (p. 137) desire for an ethnically homogeneous white England' (p. 156), and Sovereign Mercia's focus on goal of establishing a sovereign Mercian state in the English Midlands. In highlighting the commonality of both groups' use of the early medieval English past, White concludes that both fringe groups express a desire to return to an imagined golden age of England's past.

Berger's chapter in turn discusses 'national medievalism' and the popularity of the series *Game of Thrones*, outlining parallels between the fictional states in *Game of Thrones* with modern countries (pp. 166–68). Berger concludes that the global popular interest in *Game of Thrones* is more often an interest in the national medieval past and offers 'a medievalist simulacrum' that 'speaks meaningfully to our current historical moment' (p. 170).

This focus on *Game of Thrones* leads into the 'open issue' section of the collection, which largely explores the intersection of medievalism and gender.

Both Shiloh Carroll and Karen A. Winstead offer critiques of toxic masculinity, the representation of trauma resulting from sexual violence, and the 'muscular medievalism' that the series relies on. Carroll offers a detailed analysis of the emasculation of the character Theon Greyjoy, a tool used to explain his trauma resulting from sexual violence, while Winstead draws on the parallels between medieval virgin-martyr legends and the women in George R. R. Martin's series who are pawns in the game of brutal sexualised violence that the men play.

S. C. Thompson offers a detailed analysis of Maria Dahvana Headley's *The Mere Wife* (2018), which retells *Beowulf* for a twentieth-century readership. Thompson shows how Headley subtly draws on the medieval (see, for example, p. 221), including how Headley's work relies on networks of relationships as well as a sense of duality amongst its characters. The contrasting matriarchal figures of Dana and Willa each has their own different maternal styles and relationships with their sons, and this is mirrored by Headley's decision to split *Beowulf*'s Grendel into two characters, namely Dana's and Willa's sons Gren and Dylan.

Scott Manning's fascinating essay on the Ringling Bros. Circus's spectacle about Joan of Arc's life concludes the collection. The anachronistic spectacles, a mix of medieval, Renaissance, and Victorian medievalism, were intended to entertain with their lavish display of pomp and ceremony, as well as convey piety and patriotism to the early twentieth-century American audiences.

The collection should be commended for its focus on global medievalism and for highlighting medievalism in lesser-known adaptations and texts, both literary and cultural. Overall, this timely collection will be of interest to those interested in how the medieval is invoked by and invokes the political (especially the focus on nationalism and extremism), medievalism in performance and popular culture (particularly in *Game of Thrones*, which is the focus of several of the essays), and medievalism in general.

Marina Gerzić, *The University of Western Australia*

Goetz, Hans-Werner, and Ian N. **Wood**, eds, *'Otherness' in the Middle Ages* (International Medieval Research, 25), Turnhout, Brepols, 2021; hardback; pp. 478; 25 b/w, 9 colour illustrations, 4 maps; R.R.P. € 125.00; ISBN 9782503594026.

This book is one of the most challenging and thought-provoking that I have read for a while. The volume has its genesis in the 'special strand' of 'Otherness' at the 2017 International Medieval Congress, Leeds, UK. The book contains the four keynote lectures (by Sylvia Huot, Nikolas Jaspert, Eduardo Manzano Morena, and Felicitas Schmieder), together with fourteen other papers from the conference 'special strand'. The papers range across different geographical areas (extending beyond Europe) and use a variety of primary sources. They are written by contributors from different disciplines, who bring a range of methodological approaches to their task. The book's challenge lies in both the concept of 'Otherness' and the breadth of the research presented.

The introduction is probably the heaviest of the chapters, as the editors work their way through the intellectual complexities and multiple layers of the concept. They draw attention to the varieties of 'Otherness' that existed in the Middle Ages. Different iterations of 'Otherness' were simultaneously possible because the 'Other' was such a flexible notion. A conclusion of 'Otherness' could be based upon a selection of a single characteristic as the appropriate standard or measure. A person could view a specific individual as 'Other' based on ethnicity, but not as 'Other' if applying the filter of religion or gender. An assessment of 'Otherness' was therefore not a rigid classification and could depend upon representation and stereotypes.

Some of the complexities of modern methodologies of 'Otherness' the editors discuss are recent tendencies to use the term 'Othering', which emphasises the ongoing process of construction of the 'Other'; and a focus on the 'indicators, criteria and reasons of demarcation' rather than simply an identification of 'Otherness' (p. 23). The editors also highlight the inherent relational basis of the concept: there can be no 'Other' without a 'Self'. The editors chose to provide a survey of the theoretical landscape but did not require their contributors to adopt and develop all the issues that they raised in their introduction—and indeed, it would have been difficult to cover everything within a standard chapter length. The individual chapters vary in the theoretical issues they address.

The subject matter and time period of the individual papers varies considerably. In many of the chapters, there is an attempt to counterbalance old historiographical emphases on difference in the construction of identity with a consideration of belonging as a means of articulating identity. 'Othering' and 'Saming' are considered in relation to established categories such as ethnicity, religion, gender, and the law. Individual chapters deal with 'Otherness' between religious communities and within them (for example, Martin Borýsek's analysis of internal encounters within distinct Jewish communities in seventeenth-century Corfu; Nick Koutrakou's chapter on Byzantine monks). Clemens Gantner's chapter, 'Between a Rock and a Hard Place?', considers the applicability of postcolonial theories to early medieval contexts in relation to political contestation in ninth-century southern Italy. Eduardo Manzano Moreno's chapter analyses how early Islam borrowed institutional tools inherited from the late antique world to classify, exclude, and assimilate 'Others' in complex and contradictory ways. Roland Scheel's chapter examines 'Otherness' as a mechanism used by Scandinavian communities to explain discordances between its historical past as revealed by the law codes referenced in the sagas and its thirteenth-century Christian values.

The types of source materials used by the contributors also range widely and include both documentary evidence and material culture. Individual chapters tend to focus on one form of evidence. Manuscripts and texts are well represented and diverse, including medieval histories, lineages, law codes, and retold Ovidian myths. There are chapters on mortuary culture and religious art and architecture.

This is not a comprehensive summary—I have picked out a few of the chapters to demonstrate just how widely this volume ranges.

I think that there are two ways to use this collection profitably. I read the introduction, then the individual chapters, then went back and reread the introduction. That gives an overview of the field, a sense of where the research is heading, the kinds of material which can be used, and the contexts where these methodologies might be fruitfully used. This approach might be particularly valuable to the planning of a consideration of 'Otherness' in a specific context, providing some productive insights into the layers and relationality of the concept. The second way is to concentrate on a particular aspect, whether that be type of source material analysed, a particular period or geographical area, or a specific kind of community, and read across the chapters that deal with that narrower focus. Both ways have merit. This is a versatile collection which deliberately poses more questions than it answers.

Georgina Pitt, *The University of Western Australia*

Goldie, Matthew Boyd, *Scribes of Space. Place in Middle English Literature and Late Medieval Science*, Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 2019; hardback; pp. 312; 11 b/w illustrations; R.R.P. US$58.95; ISBN 9781501734045.

As reviewers have noted, Matthew Boyd Goldie's *Scribes in Space* contributes to the growing discourse of critical readings of medieval scientific and literary texts, not as two separate discursive domains, but in dialogue with one another: a dialogue that is suggestive, allusive, reminiscent as often as it is directly marked in terminology and figure. This book stands alongside the work of Kellie Robinson, Alexander Grabovsky, and Allan Mitchell that has challenged and educated readers to 'think philosophy' when we 'read literature'.

Scribes of Space works on macro- and micro-levels, and part of its allure derives from Goldie's drawing out of trajectories from larger to smaller scales. Chapter 1, for example, conducts us through the homogeneous/heterogeneous local spaces of the Eadwine Psalter's diagram of Canterbury Cathedral; and then provides a revealing comparison between the labels identifying features on a small map of Incelmoor, West Riding, and a larger map of the same area while drawing our attention to the impact of the rationale behind such maps. Chapter 5 gives a very crisp account of thinking about motion, and how it was conceived, and the transition, via critiques of Aristotle (Thomas Bradwardine and the Merton School), to conceptualising impetus (Francis de Marchia and Jean Buridan) with its concomitant effects on the stability of *locus naturalis* and, thus, enabling the measurement and representation of speed (Nicole Oresme).

Since this book wants us to think about *how* medieval scribes (in the broadest sense) and their readers thought about space, Goldie offers us a pathway mainly through contemporary phenomenology and the history of cartography to support readers' own thinking about space. Not everyone will be sympathetic to such

a move, but it speaks to Goldie's determination to draw 'scientific' and 'non-scientific' texts into dialogue and his alertness to what is needed to do so. In effect, *Scribes of Space* sets out with two interrelated projects. First, to synthesise a theory of medieval space through medieval and contemporaneous theoretical and applied texts, chiefly philosophical and mechanical. Second, to reorient readings of medieval narrative away from a reliance on methodologies of the visual (such as cinematic metaphors) and narratology (such as proleptic and analeptic structure) and, instead, to spatialise narrative through a reading of rhetoric *as* spatial. Either one of these two would be ambitious: to combine them draws on the impressive reach of Goldie's scholarship—far more capacious than this review can attest—and the agility of his argument. The results, for the reader, are exhilarating and absorbing.

Goldie structures his book into pairs of chapters that work as informative, stand-alone accounts of texts, both natural philosophy and poetry/prose, but also offer compelling readings in conversation. Chapter 3, for instance, begins with psychologist James J. Gibson's study of 'the underlying physical and mental principles of how people see physical space', in order to focus on 'horizontal space' as abstracted in local maps, portolan charts, *mappae mundi*, zonal diagrams and granticular or grid maps. Horizontal space is measured by mechanical instruments, such as the astrolabe, that translate geometry into physical or empirical reality, defined by Ptolemy in his *Geographia* as *chōrographia* and *topographia*. It is Quintilian, in *Institutio oratoria*, who 'associates *topographia* with representation itself', and it is this trajectory that leads, in Chapter 4, to Goldie's readings of *The Book of Margery Kempe* and *The Book of Sir John Mandeville*, identifying 'a spatial overview' of horizontal and abstracted space. What emerges is a 'spatial hermeneutics' capturing 'exceptional moments' of charged meaning, however evanescent as this overview 'everts' or undoes itself (p. 75).

Chapter 6 takes up Nicole Oresme's theorising of motion (discussed in the preceding chapter) to scrutinise place and movement in the notoriously vague *House of Fame* through a focus on 'aspects of unmotivated motion and directionless movement' (p. 143). Where and what is it? Few readers of Chaucer's text would disagree with those questions. Goldie opens with a traditional close reading of Robert Henryson's *Orpheus and Eurydice* that hinges on the phrase 'wilsum way' to spatialise Orpheus's loss of direction, intention, being—misled by his desire for Eurydice, reduced to a self that 'stammeris' after affection. In Henryson's poem, as Goldie will go on to argue for the *House of Fame*, 'the structure of subjectivity is given in and through the structure of *place*' (p. 149, emphasis added), rather than the structure of narrative.

Chapter 7 traces out a skilful and economical digest of Nicole Oresme's theorising of propinquity in *Tractatus de configurationibus qualitatum et motuum*, stressing Oresme's extension of the theory of intension and remission of forms, crucially, into his understanding of affect. Chapter 8 takes Oresme's affectivity to reread Chaucer's *Legend of Good Women* as 'proximal literature' and to draw out

not only what natural philosophy has to say about the nearness of characters in the *legenda* but also the proximity of objects and the difference they make. In his 'Afterword', Goldie briefly considers the Pardoner, his tale and, to take spatiality to its furthest, the possibilities of ubiquity.

Reading these dialogues between natural philosophy or science and literary texts depends upon making meaning between these two discursive domains that, while it is nuanced, illuminating, engaging is—for me at least—only *apparently* seamless. This is not to be pernickety or snobbish here about disciplinary boundaries but rather to remember that language—as we understand it, guaranteed by convention rather than God—operates differently in those different domains. Natural philosophy, as Goldie reads these texts, theorises the experience of empirical reality, and often calls upon the imagination to provide exemplars, test cases, and articulate exceptions. The observer located in localised space is exactly that, an observer situated in a lived reality. But Troilus and Criseyde, for instance, and the 'double sorwe' Troilus will 'experience' are not that—however persuasive the rhetoric and emotional logics of Chaucer's great poem might be.

This is a timely reminder of the limits of historical scholarship and literary interpretation. When the science of digital analysis, for instance, takes us to the micro-level of extant manuscripts and we seem to know, as a colleague once put it, 'more about these manuscripts than the dudes who wrote them', it is sobering to be reminded of where we are standing. I applaud Goldie's offering us an intelligently selective version of phenomenology to enable our thinking about space and frame our thinking about medieval space. But, paradoxically, my final impression of this impressive book is not that of Nicole Oresme's propinquity, nearness, but rather a renewed sense of the sheer strangeness—the alterity—of medieval texts, both philosophical and literary.

Jenna Mead, *The University of Western Australia*

Gómez Muntané, Maricarmen, ed., *Santos y Reliquias: Sonido. Imagen. Liturgia. Textos.*, Madrid, Editorial Alpuerto, 2021; paperback; pp. 424; R.R.P. €30.00; ISBN 9788438105313.

This extraordinary collection of studies is by a group of twelve scholars, each of whom is a leader in their own field, most of whom have worked together in an environment of collaboration and mutual respect at the Universidad Autónoma de Barcelona (UAB) for many years. Initially conceived as a one-day symposium at the UAB but cancelled due to the Covid-19 pandemic, this book joins its two related predecessors as a paean to the humanities. Like the two earlier books, *La Sibila: Sonido. Imagen. Liturgia. Escena* (Editorial Alpuerto, 2015) and *El Juicio Final: Sonido. Imagen. Liturgia. Escena* (Editorial Alpuerto, 2017), this volume was conceived and edited by Maricarmen Gómez Muntané. (The two earlier books were reviewed in *Parergon*, 36.1 (2019), 200–02.) All three of the books in this series are 'interdisciplinary' by virtue of each of the contributors working within (or starting from) their primary discipline and producing a collection that speaks

to the humanities in the broadest sense. However, as this third book demonstrates, each of the authors, while starting within their primary discipline, moves beyond it. While, technically, the contributors can be identified simply as art historians, textual scholars, and musicologists, their material stretches boundaries to address issues of the veneration of saints, movement of relics, architectural history, liturgical and/or sacred space, music, images, iconography, and texts. Indeed, this book, whose subtitle 'Sounds, Images, Liturgy, Texts' suggests four separate but complementary strands, leads the reader into a much richer and more complex landscape in which in each chapter some, or all, of the strands are intertwined.

The scene is set in this collection by the thoughtful 'Prólogo' by Joan Francesc Mira, and the extensive and informed 'Introducción' by the editor Maricarmen Gómez. The twelve chapters range in time from 844 (Daniel Rico, 'Rabano Mauro: las reliquias romanas y sus inscripciones en verso') to 2017 (Germán Gan, 'La doncella de Orléans a escena. Observaciones sobre Jeanne d'Arc au bûcher, de Arthur Honegger (y otras músicas in honorem Ioannae Arcensis)'). Additionally, several authors follow both saints and relics from Cappadocia (Manual Castiñeiras, 'San Jorge, un santo transcultural del Mediterraneo: de Capadocia a Cataluña') to many areas of Spain and elsewhere (Isabel De Riquer, 'Pedro el Ceremonioso y Juan I en busca de reliquias: la cabeza de san Jorge y el cuerno del unicornio'; Anna Orriols 'Certificando el prodigio: narraciones visuales y textuales del traslado y posesión de reliquias en el Medioevo'; Joan Duran-Porta, 'La reutilización de objetos como contenedores de reliquias en el Medioevo'; and Carles Sánchez, 'Domingo de la Calzada y los santos constructores: un modelo de santidad al servicio de la apertura de la ruta jacobea').

It is as if each scholar, from the perspective of vast experience in their own discipline, has been able to draw together material and insights gathered over a career. Each chapter is characterised not only by a wealth of detail, but also by a broad interpretive view that in most cases transcends the conventional boundaries of each discipline.

As a result of this approach, it is impossible to fit each of the twelve chapters neatly into only one of the four strands of the subtitle. For example, the chapter by Maricarmen Gómez, 'Música y reliquias: de la capilla real de Francia a la capilla real de Aragón (1237–1437)', moves between music, liturgy, images, and texts. Eduardo Carrero, in 'San Lesmes, su capilla y su monasterio de San Juan, a las puertas de la ciudad de Burgos', takes us into the world of liturgy, images, and sacred space in his role of art/architectural historian. In her chapter 'Relicarios de representación antropomorfa de san Valero en Aragón: bustos y brazos de orfebrería', art historian Carmen Morte discusses images, relics, and liturgy as she sets the scene for David Andrés's discussion of San Valero of Zaragoza. Music, texts, and liturgy light up the work of both David Andrés in 'De los santos y sus cantos en los procesionales medievales hispanos: el caso de la seo cesaraugustana' and Joan Maria Martí in 'Las epístolas farcidas de san Esteban: una perspectiva'.

As was the case with the two earlier books in this series, the reader is carried into each scholar's world by extensive bibliographic material in the footnotes.

This has the effect of strengthening the reader's engagement with material that they may not have previously been familiar with. This book is a tour de force, a testament to the work of the editor and all the authors, a thoughtful and fitting climax to the trio of books that began with *La Sibila* and sits perfectly within the remit of the *Parergon* community.

Jane Morlet Hardie, *The University of Sydney*

Grau Sologestoa, Idoia, and Umberto **Albarella**, eds, *The Rural World in the Sixteenth Century: Exploring the Archaeology of Innovation in Europe* (Studies in the History of Daily Life (800–1600), 11), Turnhout, Brepols, 2021; hardback; pp. 225; 59 b/w, 17 colour illustrations, 23 b/w tables; R.R.P. €65.00; ISBN 9782503597058.

This collection emerges from the earlier work of both editors on archaeological approaches to the early modern rural world. Here, Idoia Grau Sologestoa and Umberto Albarella argue for the need for further study of the long sixteenth century, in particular. They note how this period is often termed by archaeologists as the 'early post-medieval', a terminology that does not encourage consideration of its own transformations, or recognition of continuities. This is a period that they suggest has also not been a focus of attention in part for practical reasons, because many sites of sixteenth-century activities are now covered by urban development, are still occupied, or have become afforested. This collection seeks to begin this conversation by gathering together a range of archaeologists and diverse archaeological approaches to consider agricultural and land use developments in regional studies across Europe.

The collection comprises archaeological studies and its approaches, although a number are complemented by familiar sources of historical study, such as archives, legal texts, chronicles, and observer accounts for their determinations of contemporary land usage. This is directed to particularly valuable effect in the chapter 'Landscape and Settlement Evolution during the Sixteenth Century: A Multidisciplinary Study of Two Mountain Areas (Eastern France)' by Valentin Chevassu, Emilie Gauthier, Pierre Nouvel, Vincent Bichet, Hervé Richard, and Isabelle Jouffroy-Bapicot that documents the intensification of exploitation of the French region of the Jura Mountains, for iron and glass production through to firewood exported to nearby towns.

Other chapters utilise a wide range of contemporary archaeological techniques such as archaeometallurgy, pollen counts, LiDAR site assessment, zooarchaeology of animal bones and teeth analysis, and plant morphology. These are used in fascinating studies in the final section on technological changes, where Catarina Karlsson ('Iron and Steel Implements: Increased Diversification during the Early Modern Era in Sweden') employs experimental archaeology to determine metal farm tool wear and tear. Riina Rammo's chapter 'Changes in Rural Textile Craft during the Sixteenth–Seventeenth Centuries in the Eastern Baltic Region (Estonian Example)', mostly considering extant clothing and textiles, also studies

an impression of weaving on the skin of a female body found in an Estonian peat bog, where the original plant fibres have long since disintegrated.

Collectively, the papers certainly demonstrate the dynamism of the sixteenth century. Transitions in land usage are well documented across the studies, with a marked increase in evacuation of villages leading to new manorial practices in southern Bohemia, in part a result of fewer peasant tenant fees available to landholders, as Ladislav Čapek argues in 'Changes in Rural Milieu and Land Use on Estates in Southern Bohemia during the Sixteenth Century'. However, economic forces worked hand in hand with other factors, including cultural developments. Many aristocratic holdings were enclosed to embrace popular hunting practices. Slow change, by contrast, is the key narrative of Jana Mazáčková and Petr Žaža's chapter 'Impact of Subsistence on Medieval and Early Modern Land Use in the Bohemian-Moravian Highlands', looking at settlement patterns through identification of deserted villages in the Bohemia-Moravian highlands and analysis of their economic hinterlands.

The following section explores developments in agriculture and animal husbandry. Tamsyn Fraser employs animal bones of livestock to analyse patterns of livestock 'improvement' in urban and regional areas and in relation to changes wrought by enclosure, in 'Livestock Improvement and Landscape Enclosure in Late and Post-Medieval Buckinghamshire, England'. Zooarchaeological evidence is also the source for the editors' contribution, examining biometric data for principal domestic animals in regions of England and the Basque country in 'Improvements in Animal Husbandry between the end of the Middle Ages and the Early Modern Era in England and the Basque Country: A Zooarchaeological Comparison)'. Both studies suggest that key aspects of 'modern' practices associated with the later 'Agricultural Revolution' of the eighteenth century commenced far earlier for England, but unevenly across Europe, as the comparison to Basque material suggests.

Not all papers are focused on discernible change within this century. Several argue that continuity, or developments over a long phase, better characterised the agricultural activities of their analyses. This is the case for particular produce types, such as the study of broad beans by Anna Maria Grasso, Silvia D'Aquino, Eligio Vacca, Marco Nicoli, Milena Primavera, and Girolamo Fiorentino in 'Innovation: Turning Something Old into Something New. Vicia faba var. major'. This chapter proposes that selective breeding from the twelfth century slowly brought about a new faba cultivar by the sixteenth century. Certain rural areas may have also maintained post-medieval practices longer than other regions. This appears the case for Rammo's study of textiles in Livonia, while Karlsson's analysis suggests a slow rate of technological developments for agricultural implements on Swedish farms at this period.

Overall, the volume does not aim to present tight coherence around a shared narrative across all the studies, which cover vastly different regions, local contexts, topics, and techniques. Instead, what this collection reveals are the possibilities of

archaeology to deliver findings on this relative new topic of consideration. This will be an important conversation to track, and as it develops and deepens with further robust data, one for historians to contribute to from their own expertise, in order for interdisciplinary analyses to emerge.

Susan Broomhall, *Australian Catholic University*

Lester-Makin, Alexandra, *The Lost Art of the Anglo-Saxon World: The Sacred and Secular Power of Embroidery* (Ancient Textile Series, 35), Oxford, Oxbow Books, 2019; paperback; pp. xi, 243; 94 b/w illustrations, 32 colour plates; R.R.P. £38.00; ISBN 9781789251449.

In this book, based on her doctoral research, Alexandra Lester-Makin analyses the entire known corpus of early medieval British and Irish embroidery, a task made no less daunting by the fact that this amounts to a total of forty-three pieces. These range from the famed and monumental Bayeux Tapestry to tiny scraps preserved in archaeological contexts, and those examples where the form of the embroidery can only be deduced from impressions in corroded metal. More substantial works discussed include the Maaseik embroideries, those associated with St Cuthbert's tomb in Durham Cathedral, and the Worcester fragments, as well as the relatively recent Llan-gors find.

The paucity of the extant record can be attributed to the inherent fragility of textiles. Lester-Makin's first chapter provides a detailed examination of the problems associated with her data set, and includes an informative discussion on the ways that different textile fibres are preserved in specific physical contexts. It becomes clear that these few extant embroideries represent remarkable survivals, whether because of the accidents of soil composition or other physical contexts, or by virtue of their association with saints or other important people.

Yet even some of the most apparently unprepossessing fragments can yield a wealth of information in the hands of an appropriately skilled and attentive investigator. One of this book's great strengths is its methodology. Lester-Makin is both an archaeologist and an embroiderer, having completed an apprenticeship with the Royal School of Needlework. Her book makes a compelling case for the benefits of experiential learning in the analysis of historical material culture; together with microscopy and high-resolution photography, her detailed examination of the embroideries is informed by her technical knowledge and by stitching experimental samples. As a result, she has been able to identify stitch techniques and reconstruct the order in which pieces have been worked, allowing her to revise and expand upon the work of previous scholars.

Lester-Makin's use of 'Object Biography Theory' proves it to be an effective tool for considering these early medieval embroideries. Importantly, her approach follows the work of Cornelius Holtorf in arguing that the biography of objects should not stop at their archaeological deposition but must also chronicle their life after rediscovery, including the ways that they have been interpreted, conserved, and displayed in subsequent eras. Lester-Makin makes the point that 'The

fragments that researchers see today are not what people saw—either literally or metaphorically—at the time they were made, used, recycled or deposited' (p. 27). The benefits of this theoretical approach are demonstrated by a detailed analysis of the Kempton embroidery, a small fragment of embroidery originally contained in a copper alloy box, which was rediscovered in a nineteenth-century excavation, now separated from its container, and stored under a Perspex screen in the British Museum.

Lester-Makin attempts to give an overview of her corpus based on her detailed analysis of the materials, techniques, colour, and preservation circumstances of each piece. As she admits, however, the sparseness of the record and the accidents of survival limit the reliability of the conclusions that can be drawn from this data. For example, the absence of a particular stitch type in the record for a given century should not be understood to mean that it was not practised in this period. The overview also highlights a problem with the title of the book—not all the embroideries that form its subject can reasonably be understood as 'Anglo-Saxon' (even aside from issues concerning the accuracy or appropriateness of that term). Including embroideries from Viking Age Dublin, ninth- or tenth-century Wales, and Iron Age Orkney undermines any sense of a distinctive cultural style. A stronger argument also needed to be made for the inclusion of the embroideries of the Oseberg ship burial in this discussion.

The physical data is, however, augmented by Lester-Makin's discussions in Chapters 4 and 5 of the role of embroidery in Anglo-Saxon society and the means of its production. Here she considers documentary records regarding early medieval embroidery and sites the extant examples within the wider field of Insular art, although this section also suffers from some slippage in scope. Much of her discussion of production methods is necessarily speculative, but it draws on visual evidence, extensive finds of archaeological tools, and on the author's and others' experience as textile makers to produce plausible hypotheses.

Overall, this book provides a valuable contribution to textile history and material culture scholarship. Lester-Makin successfully demonstrates that embroidery in early medieval Britain (and elsewhere) was a skilled and valued art form, worthy of serious study alongside other forms of cultural expression.

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Lovascio, Domenico, *John Fletcher's Rome: Questioning the Classics* (The Revels Plays Companion Library), Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2022; hardback; pp. xviii, 232; 5 b/w illustrations; R.R.P. £80.00; ISBN 9781526157386.

It is a critical commonplace to declare at the beginning of a scholarly monograph about John Fletcher that despite being the most influential playwright of his era, the vast canon of John Fletcher–Francis Beaumont–Philip Massinger plays still go unexplored. Even if Fletcher has begun to receive his due attention over the last two decades, Domenico Lovascio's monograph on the playwright's dramatic representations of the Ancient Roman world is a welcome intervention in the field. Lovascio reads together what will now be called Fletcher's 'Roman plays'—*Bonduca*, *Valentinian*, *The False One*, and *The Prophetess*—as a group for the first time, arguing that their quality of disorientation evinces the playwright's scepticism about the worthiness of Rome as an intellectual, political, and social model.

Importantly, Lovascio discusses the classical and early modern sources that inspired the plays, taking seriously Fletcher's intellectual life as a philosopher of history and political thinker, even if the plays are often ironic and irreverent. In Fletcher's Roman plays, there is 'a grim depiction of a history devoid of purpose and transcendent meaning' (p. 21), which Lovascio reads as an example of what Walter Benjamin theorised as *Trauerspiel*, or mourning play. The pessimistic portrayal of Rome was, as Lovascio establishes in Chapter 1, partly the result of the classical sources on which Fletcher based his plays. Unlike many of his contemporaries who depicted Ancient Rome—most notably Shakespeare—Fletcher did not rely on sources about the Republic such as Plutarch, Virgil, and Ovid, the kinds of writers that were part of a grammar school curriculum. Rather, Fletcher adapted writings about Rome's Imperial era written during late antiquity, which he coupled with contemporary vernacular translations of ancient texts by Continental writers. These later historians tended to be more pessimistic about the Roman Empire, which led to Fletcher's portrayal of Rome as 'a corrupted political reality facing irreversible decay' (p. 17).

In Chapter 2, Lovascio demonstrates how Fletcher's plays undermine the English Renaissance's myth of Ancient Rome as cultural exemplar. Fletcher's Roman plays are questioning why the English Renaissance relied on the Roman Empire as a social, political, and philosophical model if Rome was destined to destroy itself. Rather than the Rome of *superbia* and *virtus*, Fletcher's Roman world is one that lacks commendable political leadership and has been abandoned by the gods who are meant to protect the Roman citizens. Lovascio shows how Fletcher relies on a metaphor of disintegration and decay—particularly of the bodies of dead Roman emperors—to represent Rome as cruel and corrupt and, furthermore, that the Empire itself is also destined to dissolve. The only means Roman men possess to prove their *virtus* is on the battlefield, which is part of Fletcher's valorisation of the military more generally. But as Lovascio

explains, even this is inadequate to save the Empire from the general violence and opportunism that will lead to its downfall.

Having dealt with the sources that Fletcher adapted in his Roman plays and his pessimistic depiction of the Empire, its leaders, and male subjects, in Chapter 3, Lovascio turns to Fletcher's depiction of women. He argues that Fletcher conveys the female exemplum par excellence of the era—Lucretia's suicide after being raped by Sextus Tarquinius—as an inadequate ideal. Lovascio compares Fletcher's representation of Roman women to non-Roman women (most notably, Bonduca and Cleopatra), and then to the women of the Fletcher canon more broadly. He finds that Fletcher is critical of Roman women's reputation for 'excessive passivity' (p. 128), as they do not display the kinds of 'masculine' wit and fortitude as the plays' non-Roman women and Fletcher's female characters at large (Maria in *The Tamer Tamed* perhaps being the most famous example). Rather, Roman exempla for early modern women are, for Fletcher, 'undependable and impractical' (p. 128) and should not be followed.

In the final chapter, Lovascio discusses Fletcher's intertextual relationship with Shakespeare's Roman plays, *Julius Caesar*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, and *Coriolanus* (*Titus Andronicus*, curiously, goes unmentioned). Lovascio explores how Fletcher 'often puts Shakespeare's Roman plays on the same level as the accounts of the classical historians' (p. 135), which has the effect of giving characters a sense of themselves within a historical context and of future events. Lovascio suggests that Fletcher saw Shakespeare's plays as alternative exempla, ones more fruitful than the Ancient Roman models. Throughout the chapter, Lovascio notes how Fletcher's plays are generally full of linguistic imitation of Shakespeare's Roman plays. He suggests the possibility that Fletcher was tasked with editing *Antony and Cleopatra* and *Julius Caesar* for the preparation of the First Folio. This is an interesting and original hypothesis that I hope can be proven in subsequent studies.

Ultimately, Lovascio demonstrates how Fletcher's plays were taking part and contributing to broader cultural discourses about history, gender, education, stoicism, and misplaced nostalgia. *John Fletcher's Rome* is a valuable contribution to the field of classical reception studies, but more importantly, it offers up future possibilities for literary readings of the veritable terra incognita that is the wider Fletcher canon.

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Maurey, Yossi, *Liturgy and Sequences of the Sainte-Chapelle: Music, Relics, and Sacral Kingship in Thirteenth-Century France* (Cultural Encounters in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages, 35), Turnhout, Brepols, 2021; hardback; pp. 252; 4 colour illustrations, 21 musical examples, 27 b/w tables; R.R.P. €80.00; ISBN 9782503591056.

Sequences and rhymed offices, the two great plainchant genres that reached their apogee in the late Middle Ages, remain underappreciated. They were consigned to

history by the Council of Trent. To be fair, though, having a 'cultural encounter' with the latter genre (also known as versified office or *historia*) is particularly challenging, for it unfolds across the full twenty-four-hour cycle of canonical hours. Far shorter, and as appealing as many a popular hymn, is the paired-versicle sequence that was sung at Mass following the Gradual. Their tunefulness is borne out by the few sequences that the Council permitted to remain in use, the best-known being Thomas of Celano's *Dies irae* and Jacopone da Todi's *Stabat mater*.

Yossi Maurey's handsomely produced monograph is devoted to the sequences specially composed for two feast days that were of defining importance to Sainte-Chapelle, the exquisite royal chapel on Île-de-la-Cité, purpose-built to house Louis IX's collection of relics. Most notable among the relics in its treasury were those associated with the Passion of Christ: the Crown of Thorns and pieces of the True Cross. Although the Feast of the Crown of Thorns (11 August) and the Feast of the Reception of Relics (30 September), celebrating its translation to Paris, were not unique to Sainte-Chapelle, only there were these feast days celebrated as *annuale*. And, accordingly, they were provided with elaborate liturgy befitting top-rank feast days with octave. It fell to liturgists to activate the full political potential of Sainte-Chapelle's relics, 'to weave them into a narrative that foregrounded and idealized France, Paris, the French king, and the Passion of Christ' (p. 16). Whereas at neighbouring Notre Dame cathedral the liturgy in service of its Marian programme employed elaborate polyphonic music (florid organum and discant in up to four parts), at Sainte-Chapelle the locus of liturgical poetico-musical creativity was plainchant, syllabic settings of metrically rhymed poetry, crafted such that every word of text was clearly intelligible. The melodies themselves, however, were mostly borrowed. Maurey's coverage of this characteristic, the predominance of *contrafacta* among the sequences under study, is of particular interest.

His study starts with a crisp introduction covering the historical and political significance of the relics; the interconnectedness of liturgy, architecture, and music at Sainte-Chapelle; manuscript affiliation and repertoire transmission; and the technique of contrafacture. He then proceeds to a detailed explication of the ten sequences apportioned to each of the two feast days (Parts 1 and 2). His presentation is a model of lucidity. With one's visual imagination stirred by readily available illustrations of this famous sacral space, the reader who is prepared to sing will have everything at hand needed to appreciate the beauty of this music and the richness of its poetic imagery—textual exegesis, translations, music in modern notation, and comparative tables juxtaposing original and newly composed texts of the fifteen *contrafacta*. For reasons of space, one *contrafactum* by way of example must suffice: *Verbum bonum et iocundum* (the fifth sequence in the Crown of Thorns), which is set to the melody of *Verbum bonum et suave* (Marian sequence for the Annunciation and the Assumption). Maurey explains: 'the Crown *Verbum bonum* hinges on a word associated not with the moment of Christ's conception but with a moment associated with the final period of His life,

the Passion [not 'Hail Mother' but 'Hail Crown']. […] If Mary is the intercessor between the praying community and Christ, it is the Crown which serves that role in *Verbum bonum et iocundum,* mediating between Christ, the Franks, and the Kingdom of France along with its kings and queens' (pp. 74–76). The Marian sequence in question was ubiquitous, belonging to a complex of popular, widely disseminated sequences. Any listener attentive to the Crown sequence would have experienced recollection of the original Marian text simultaneously with its reinterpretation, the Crown text. As Maurey puts it: 'The sequences, then, are rife with hidden polyphonies harmonizing more than their apparent constituent parts in ways that bring to the fore the confluence of melodies, allusions, allegories, and meanings' (p. 17).

It is indeed remarkable that given all the feasts added to the Church calendar during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, none, not even Corpus Christi, made a greater contribution to the repertoire of sequences than did these two feast days, as celebrated at Sainte-Chapelle. Remarkable though they are as a group, they were but part of a number of Mass and Office complexes, and they are therefore related to other poetic and narrative texts specially composed at Saint-Chapelle, for example, the readings at Matins. Maurey provides examples of these texts in two of his book's eight appendices, namely, a critical edition and translation of the *Historia susceptionis coronae spinae* (Appendix 7) and the Lessons for the Reception of Relics (Appendix 8).

By tackling a manageable number of liturgically delimited sequences Maurey has succeeded in providing an excellent introduction and fascinating insight into a musical genre which, for all its undoubted aesthetic appeal, is by no means easy to take the full measure of. In so doing he has shown just how persuasive a tool in prosecuting political objectives could be the artistic fusion of liturgy and music.

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The Nibelungenlied: with the Klage, ed. and trans. by William **Whobrey**, Indianapolis, Hackett, 2018; paperback; pp. 312; R.R.P. US$16.00; ISBN 9781624666759.

What do *The Lord of the Rings* and *Game of Thrones* have in common? Both echo the *Nibelungenlied*, a thirteenth-century heroic epic written in Middle High German. Falling in and out of obscurity until the eighteenth century, the poem partially inspired Richard Wagner's *Der Ring des Nibelungen* (Ring Cycle), fully propelled Fritz Lang's two-part silent film of 1924 *Die Nibelungen*, and was later misused by the Nazis for propaganda. This is a poem that has suffered the weight of parody and fascist appropriations—it can be difficult to read it on its own terms.

To peer through these layers of reception is to find a poem of emotional range, one that is far less reliant upon magical elements or grandiose settings than other contemporaneous works. There is secular appeal in the character studies, with brute strength and warring factions matched by clever dialogue and deliberations. Love oscillates with deception; romance is superseded by revenge

and bloody slaughter. This is the story of the downfall of a mighty clan, a powerful exploration of extremes.

Why this new translation, given several extant English versions? William Whobrey set himself three goals to distinguish his translation from the rest. First, to provide a contemporary prose rendition of the medieval verse, without the use of anachronistic language. Second, to include and be informed by scholarship on the transmission of the poem in multiple manuscripts, and the related difficulties of translating. Third, to present the *Nibelungenlied* as a three-part epic by including (for the first time in English) the *Klage* (Lament), an epilogue that is contemporaneous with the poem but not always published with it.

The excellent introduction details the original thirteenth-century manuscripts, and the historical events and figures that were likely sources: the fifth-century Burgundians, Norse sagas, Theodoricus of Ravenna, Attila and the Huns. The tenuous connection to history is shown to be a moot point, because the *Nibelungenlied* exceeds any single origin. It remains of interest *because* it is a palimpsest, with historical figures and heroic archetypes, facts, and literary invention, all coalesced through oral transmission and layered into a complex poem.

At its core is the romance of Siegfried and Kriemhild, whose union leads to the wholescale destruction of the Burgundians. The pair have their foils in Kriemhild's brother King Gunther, his queen, Brunhild, and the mighty soldier Hagen. With the arrival of the hero Siegfried at court rivalries and jealousies warp decorum, and power struggles emerge from all angles. Sparks fly when Kriemhild and Brunhild argue, hapless Gunther cannot keep his court in order, there is the sinister plotting of Hagen, and spoiler alert: everyone will die.

Magical elements are the exceptions rather than the norm. Siegfried's enviable strengths include his cloak of invisibility and aura of invincibility. After killing a dragon and bathing in its blood, Siegfried's skin becomes impenetrable, like armour, excepting one spot between his shoulders where a leaf fell. This weakness is later exploited by Hagen, who murders him with a simple stab in the back. The dragon is one of only two supernatural characters in the poem, the other a group of mermaids who advise Hagen and foretell his own demise.

There are tender and memorable registers of emotion. Siegfried blushes when he first meets Kriemhild. The smallest gestures matter: 'Did he press her fair hand gently as a sign of love? I couldn't say. But I don't think it didn't happen either' (p. 26). The women are as powerful and resilient as the men. Kriemhild spends thirteen years grieving for Siegfried before she avenges his murder. Widowed, she marries King Etzel of the Huns. She then strategises to bring the Burgundians and Huns into an epic battle, all so that she can kill Hagen and avenge her husband's death. Along the way, both clans are destroyed.

As is to be expected for a medieval epic, there is a strong investment in dress and courtly manners. Many lines are devoted to how refined the Burgundians are, with jewels that gleam and garments that rustle and impress. There are detailed

references to clothes worn for appearances at court, and extensive preparations of wardrobes for travel.

But make no mistake, this is a poem about bodily fluids and violence as much as sartorial power. The battle scenes are horrific: wounds gush, tears course, and blood runs in rivulets. The violence is delivered in gory detail, when 'Siegfried's hands caused rivers of blood to flow from bright helmets' (p. 19), or 'faces were stained with blood, and pale hands beat at breasts' (p. 215), and the 'three highborn kings, covered in blood, grime and rust' (p. 168). At the end of particularly lengthy battle, there is a hint of resignation: 'What more can I say? At least twelve hundred men fought each other, surging back and forth. The foreigners cooled their inner fire with the wounds they slashed. No one could separate the two sides. Blood could be seen flowing from deadly wounds inflicted left and right' (p. 171).

It is with some sense of relief that the action concludes, with the *Klage* as a lament for the dead. This vivid new translation is highly recommended to those already familiar with the poem, or those encountering it for the first time.

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Titone, Fabrizio, ed., *Disciplined Dissent in Western Europe, 1200–1600: Political Action between Submission and Defiance* (Late Medieval and Early Modern Studies, 29), Turnhout, Brepols, 2022; hardback. pp. 356; 1 b/w map; R.R.P. €95.00; ISBN 9782503598284.

This book, edited by Fabrizio Titone, comprises twelve essays, each examining acts of 'disciplined dissent' in medieval and early modern Western Europe. Titone defines this form of protest as gradual and peaceful, where 'those who dissent might intercept and use the cultural repertoire' to legitimise their claims and to appear less threatening to authorities (p. 7). The essays in this collection cover a rich variety of subject matter and source material, demonstrating that disciplined dissent was an effective method of protest and regularly employed by the less powerful to achieve their means. Titone's opening essay covers several fascinating case studies examining how non-elites in fifteenth-century Sicilian communities sought political recognition through non-violent means, opting to use channels of governments and legal concepts such as the *utilitas rei publicae* to check abuses of power (pp. 13–15). In fifteenth-century Catania, for example, the artisans and *populares* collaborated to prevent export fraud in their communities, positioning themselves as trustworthy subjects working in the service of the king and gaining political representation in the process.

Vincent Challet, meanwhile, explores how French peasants were granted legal rights to self-defence during the Hundred Years War. Challet observes that by the Middle Ages, the French monarchy had prohibited unauthorised assemblies of armed civilians, fearful of the threat posed by a militarised peasantry (pp. 253–54). However, the real presence of violence in local communities gave sufficient reason for French peasants to arm themselves against potential incursions. Such was the case with a siege conducted by villagers from Cournonterral, in southern

France (pp. 247–48). The assembly had previously conducted a successful and coordinated assault against English pillagers, before engaging another attack against what they assumed to be another enemy force. In a case of mistaken identity, the assailants were mercenaries of the Duke of Berry, operating on behalf of the king. The villagers were pardoned after it was ruled that the peasants were entitled to self-defence.

And Martin Ingram examines how married Englishwomen between 1400 to 1600 might seek recourse against violent husbands. Ingram notes that for the most part, medieval and early modern women had limited legal or social resources to protect them from spousal abuse (pp. 307–09). The household was the basic unit of government, and wives were subject to their husbands in the same way that citizens were subject to the authority of the ruling monarch. As such, it was legally permissible for husbands to discipline their wives (p. 308). Strict gender roles often meant that abused women were isolated in their households, preventing them from seeking legal intervention. But Ingram argues that the proximity between houses, and the hubbub of activity in communities, gave wives occasion to draw their injuries to the attention of domestic servants, neighbours, local magistrates, family, the clergy, and medical professionals. Visible marks and bruises were a tell-tale sign of domestic violence, but her cries might also attract community assistance and arouse public sympathy. Ingram argues this method of dissent played on the 'permeability of the domestic space' and helped gather crucial witnesses in the event of legal action (p. 320).

Ingram notes that the involvement of the clergy was particularly effective in this regard. While many of the arguments in favour of patriarchal rule and domestic violence were taken from the Bible, Ingram contends that by the end of the sixteenth century there existed a growing number of sympathetic clergymen who inverted points of scripture to condemn spousal abuse (p. 318). In the *Christian Oeconomie* (London, 1609), for example, William Perkins employed the 'one flesh' argument to denounce abusive husbands. The rich variety of material cited throughout the essay offers readers a fascinating glimpse into how abused wives harnessed community support in domestic disputes.

A real strength to this collection of essays is its breadth, and this recommends it as a resource for readers unfamiliar with the topic, as well as more established scholars of disciplined dissent. Titone observes that much of the scholarship covering dissent in the medieval and early modern world focuses on violent and dramatic episodes of rebellion (pp. 8–9). But the case studies included in *Disciplined Dissent* reveal how peaceful forms of protest were as varied as they were popular. Titone affirms that gradual and non-violent modes of defiance therefore offer scholars an opportunity to consider 'more fully the protagonists, causes, and effects of socio-political changes' (p. 9). Similarly, Ingram argues that while political violence ordinarily takes centre stage, the 'micropolitics' of the domestic sphere opens pathways for historians to explore how disciplined dissent was performed in the home (p. 334). While some of Titone's contribution is

similar to that published in *Disciplined Dissent: Strategies of Non-Confrontational Protest in Europe from the Twelfth to the Early Sixteenth Century* (Viella, 2016), also edited by Titone, its new contributions nonetheless recommend the book to historians of the discipline.

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Turcq, Pascasius Justus, *On Gambling*, trans. by William M. Barton (Lysa Neo-Latin Texts, 1), Gent, Lysa Publishers, 2022; paperback; cloth; pp. 284; R.R.P. €39.00; ISBN 9789464447668.

William M. Barton's translation of the only known work by Pascasius Justus Turcq ('Pascasius') inaugurates Lysa Publishers' series 'Neo-Latin Texts'. Lysa Publishers, a new arrival on the early modern scene, may interest Australia and New Zealand Association of Medieval and Early Modern Studies members. The work, cited regularly in the early modern period, then forgotten, resurfaced around thirty years ago. German and French editions have since appeared; Barton's is the first one in English. His translation accompanies the Latin original. Despite a few potentially misleading proofreading errors, the volume's presentation is of a high standard. The translation is highly readable, something especially commendable considering the Latin's acknowledged tortuousness. It is a measure of Barton's introduction that it accounts for this inelegance: Pascasius imitated the style and vocabulary of Roman author Cornelius Celsus. The introduction is admirable. It covers the author's life and book, in the context of contemporary history, early modern science and humanist studies, and subsequent research on gambling and addiction. The footnotes and bibliography are accordingly wide-ranging.

Why study Pascasius? *On Gambling* was—as its author himself proclaimed—the first clinical account of addiction: 'It [pathological gambling] is a serious and long-term disease of the mind' (p. 103). Hitherto, problem gambling had been regarded from a moral standpoint only. Till lately, addiction studies were understood to have commenced with eighteenth-century work on alcoholism; Pascasius's re-emergence displaces its beginnings from the Enlightenment to the Renaissance. It means, further, that addiction scholarship opened with an investigation of gambling, the only formally recognised non-substance-abuse addiction. This makes the work significant. Scholars of early modern science and medicine should find it informative. Barton's translation might profitably be read alongside the substantial survey by Marc Valleur and Louise Nadeau that precedes an (abridged) French translation of Pascasius and situates his work within the history of addiction studies (*Pascasius, ou comment comprendre les addictions*, Presses de l'Université de Montréal, 2014).

Equally, it is a resource for those who study gambling. *On Gambling* comprises two books. In Book 1, Pascasius mounts the case for gambling as a disease. Contrary to popular opinion, greed is not responsible: gamblers are spendthrifts; misers fear hazarding money. Rather, gamblers naively imagine they can master fortune; Pascasius believes, following Galen, that their optimism and

impulsiveness reflects a warm humoral temperament. Thus physiology, not vice, predisposes people to excessive gambling. In Book 2 he outlines his cure: to counter this warmth one must engineer coldness. Gamblers dismayed by their losses often vow to renounce their activities: they do so because sadness chills them, momentarily offsetting their natural heat. Once their depression lifts, though, they warm again and relapse. Pascasius offers arguments gamblers can memorise and repeat to keep cool: it is folly to think one will win at games determined randomly; besides, seeking to prosper through one's companions' losses offends nature.

If this parallels certain modern clinical approaches, the book remains nevertheless of its time. Its rhetorical structure imitates Melanchthon. Classical authors are cited throughout: Aristotle, Galen, and Hippocrates, also Cicero, Terence, Ovid, and Virgil; the work's motto is the Delphic maxim 'Follow God', while Aeneas is held up as a role-model—the hero who subdued his desires, directed by reason and the gods. This humoral, humanist emphasis means *On Gambling* has the potential to yield insights into contemporary thinking about youth, manhood, and so on.

While Pascasius's clinical approach was unique, his outlook can be contrasted with other sixteenth-century works on gambling. One would be Gerolamo Cardano's *Liber de ludo alea*, written about the same time. Cardano, Pascasius's contemporary at the University of Pavia and, like him, a physician and inveterate gambler, outlined an early form of probability calculus that gamesters might use to help them win at games of chance. He aimed, in short, to master chance; Pascasius held that the mistaken belief that this was possible underlay pathological gambling. Conversely, Sir John Harington's *Treatise on Playe* of the 1590s, which, like Pascasius, denied that greed inspired immoderate gambling, attributed the problem to pride instead: gamblers hoped to impress onlookers with their liberality and magnificence. Harington's was an ethnographic interpretation (and proposed solution), taking excess gambling to be the mark of a disordered society, whereas Pascasius treated it as the mark of a disordered individual. These different diagnoses, each in its way astute, represent responses to 'social' gambling, on the one hand, and pathological gambling on the other.

As Rebecca Lemon's *Addiction and Devotion in Early Modern England* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2018) demonstrates, interest in addiction need not be confined to scientific research. *On Gambling* encompasses not only medicine but humanism, gambling, vice, and other topics. Thanks are due to Barton for providing an accessible, conscientiously edited version of this groundbreaking text.

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Twomey, Carolyn, and Daniel **Anlezark**, eds, *Meanings of Water in Early Medieval England* (Studies in the Early Middle Ages, 47), Turnhout, Brepols, 2021; hardback; pp. 289; 16 b/w, 2 colour illustrations; R.R.P. €80.00; ISBN 9782503588889.

As an island, Britain has an abundance of water, so it was always likely to play a role in the social, intellectual, and spiritual life of its early inhabitants. The essays in this volume prove that water was indeed important in this regard, but the way it was described and explained by Old English writers varied enormously, reflecting an assortment of cultural meditations on water: native, biblical, and classical. *Meanings of Water in Early Medieval England* is best understood in the light of ecocritical studies, a burgeoning field that seeks to examine the history of literary reflections on the environment and nature from a variety of different viewpoints, a fact reflected in the range of essays on show.

Meanings of Water has no subsections, which occasions few problems, as the essays flow logically from one to the other, to extend the watery metaphor. Della Hooke sets the scene in her article, which considers some of the oldest evidence for the significance of water. She concludes that wells, springs, and other aqueous spaces held a mystical significance for people both before and after conversion to Christianity, with the rise of early monasticism having been tied to these spaces. Indeed, many of the remaining articles reflect on the religious symbolism of water we first encounter in Hooke's article. There were also attempts to place water in an intellectual/scientific context by drawing on classical learning, which Old English writers had to reconcile with water's biblical portrayal. For example, as John Gallagher shows, the scholars working within the Canterbury school synthesised classical, Irish, and biblical texts to create a unique understanding of the hydrological cycle in relation to the origin of rain in Genesis. And Daniel Anlezark discusses several Old English texts whose authors display knowledge of fluid dynamics and the scientific properties of water as represented in certain metaphors that connect water with wisdom.

However, water was also sometimes portrayed as an element to be feared, especially the open sea, which could easily drown a person; it was also the domain of mythical sea creatures. Thus, Elizabeth A. Alexander's article explores visual depictions of the biblical figure Jonah, who is swallowed by a *ketos* known from Greek myth. As Alexander explains, the *ketos*, which was also identified with hell, made the sea a place of terror for medieval audiences. Michael Bintley's article also explores the terror caused by the sea in the poem *Andreas*, in which travel on the churning sea becomes a metaphor for the soul's pilgrimage through life. Despite the risks, sea voyages in early England were necessary, and much faster than overland travel. Simon Trafford's article surveys the evidence for knowledge of swimming in Anglo-Saxon England, the most famous instance of which is Beowulf's poetic swimming episode. Finally, Rebecca Shores discusses the miscellaneous nautical noises that would have abounded, from the wildlife to the rhythm-keeping shouts or *celeuma* of sailors that were part of a sensory experience of water.

This is a very interesting book that centres on a topic that literally surrounded the inhabitants of early England as it does today, while river systems and fenlands would have covered a much greater area at the time. It contributes to a growing number of spatial or ecocritical studies in medieval Europe, but the format, an edited volume, allows for a much broader scope for analysis. The introduction is long, but the editors skilfully use the space to thread each chapter together by highlighting their shared continuity—I suspect deliberately—to mimic a flowing current. The chapters on art were particularly engaging, fully acknowledging my bias as an art historian, especially given the very tactile nature of water and the history of teaching through images than runs through European culture. A companion volume on the same subject in Old Norse, which has a much larger body of evidence documenting early Icelanders' relationship with water, surely awaits.

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Wittig, Claudia, *Learning to be Noble in the Middle Ages: Moral Education in North-Western Europe* (Disputatio, 33), Turnhout, Brepols, 2022; hardback; pp. 295, 4 b/w, 5 colour illustrations; R.R.P. €85.00; ISBN 9782503595009.

Doctoral theses do not always translate smoothly and elegantly to the monograph form. However, this latest publication from the Brepols series 'Disputatio' offers a valuable lesson in how early career scholars might tame the labour of years of meticulous research to produce a scholarly yet very readable survey of a vast subject area focusing upon questions of morality in the High Middle Ages. Claudia Wittig's 2017 thesis, 'Instructing and Constructing Nobility: Moral-Didactic Poetry in Twelfth- and Thirteenth Century Germany and England' (Syddansk Universitet) opens the door for a wider and deeper exploration of how important morality and moral virtue were to both the aspirational (courtiers and lesser nobles) and the power elite (kings, queens, princes, and princesses) and how both were taught, observed, and absorbed essential lessons for the fulfilment of their duties of rank and gender, and indeed the fulfilment of their respective agendas and ambitions.

It was never enough to be merely born into the aristocracy. Noble and princely youngsters—male and female both—required meticulous training if they were to fulfil the expectations of their rank and their families, and contribute to the collective success and survival of their respective dynasties. Nobles of more modest rank, members of the clergy, and the offspring of the aspirational emerging middle class who sought to get ahead and rise through the ranks also needed to learn how to be 'noble', and this involved understanding questions of morality and its practice in public and private life. This was particularly the case when it came to the highly competitive and sometimes overheated political ecosystem of the medieval princely court, a space and subject Wittig tackles with particular skill in Chapter 3, 'The Courtly Cosmos'. But before digging into this

complex arena of networking, preferment, advancement, and prosperity, Wittig lays down the foundations of her study with an introduction detailing important considerations such as the nature of nobility and morality; sociocultural shifts in the High Middle Ages; learned discourses of virtues and values in the West; moral discourses in vernacular languages; and a survey of research into medieval aristocratic ethics. Wittig nails her colours firmly to the mast by clearly stating the contribution her book aims to make to the field of 'the teaching and learning ideals, norms, and [these] values and the role of moral education in aristocratic society in the high medieval period' (p. 34). Wittig's light, yet scholarly, touch is evidenced by the choice of quotes she uses in her acknowledgements to introduce the genesis of her study; Cicero (*De officiis*) on the one hand and Terry Pratchett (*Unseen Academicals*, Doubleday, 2009) on the other. It is an interesting choice with which to commence and compare—the words of the Roman statesman and pre-eminent master of Latin prose so essential to medieval and early modern philosophical thought written in the last year of his life set against the modern musings of the late twenty-first century satirist and comic fantasy novelist as he sought to navigate the devastating effects of the Alzheimer's disease that was slowly but surely extinguishing the light of his busy intellect. Both were engaged in fierce struggle, and both offer reflections upon good and evil, moral duty, and moral superiority. Using these reflections as a starting point, Wittig professes her own interest in questions of morality, with her work as an historian deepening her understanding of 'how long humans have pondered the question of what was "right" and what was "wrong" and how a person could reliably tell one from the other' (p. 11).

From her illuminating introduction, Wittig moves smoothly to a discussion of the teaching of morality from the education of a noble child through to the idea that the acquisition of nobility and virtue was a process of lifelong learning. She takes account of the role played by didactic communities made up of lay and clerical elites who 'participated in the culture of the morality of the courts in various ways', underscoring that the 'teaching and learning of morals was a communal enterprise' in the service of 'a variety of purposes for the elites' (p. 69).

Chapter 4 delves more deeply into what made up these 'Communities of Values', with Chapter 5 tackling the all-important subject of the organisation of knowledge with an emphasis upon the importance of poetry and prose works and the structuring of knowledge. Wittig's excellent study wraps up with a brief, but thoughtful, conclusion, emphasising that 'the access to knowledge also became a marker of belonging', with knowledge of values and the establishment of codes of conduct creating 'social capital that helped stabilize the power of groups who could access it' (p. 247).

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