Reviews

Bolòs, Jordi, *The Historical Landscape of Catalonia: Landscape History of a Mediterranean Country in the Middle Ages* (The Medieval Countryside, 23), Turnhout, Brepols, 2023; hardback; pp. 469; 77 b/w illustrations; RRP €110.00, ISBN 9782503603056.

This book is a welcome addition to the happily increasing number of books integrating often-neglected Spain into medieval Europe.

Even though Spain was largely occupied by Muslims in the Middle Ages from the eighth to nearly the end of the fifteenth century, churches still existed and new ones were built. Recall that the Muslims invaded rather than conquered and a (rather variable) *modus vivendi* was established. As in other regions and times—for example, the Ottoman Empire—while Christians had to pay a poll tax, they were not harshly persecuted. In Catalunya, the occupation lasted until the middle of the twelfth century.

Jordi Bolòs has a beautifully organised 'Introduction' that clearly spells out the various categories he considers: not only villages, towns, and cities, but also landscapes, roads, pasturelands, and boundaries, to name but a few. The book then falls into two parts. First, there is a detailed gazetteer of Catalonian villages (pp. 38–163), but the remainder is principally concerned with the effects of varying developments such as cities, mills, fields, and roads, and is much less detailed (pp. 164–362). Of course, all these features interact, and a study such as this does need to consider the interplay between disciplines, notably history, geography, archaeology, and the analysis of toponyms (p. 355). Much of the documentation from published archival sources of great antiquity is amazing, though the author usually does not give page references. However, while there is copious local Catalonian material, there are historical lacunae caused by the dearth of extant Arabic sources, and this has made the author's work more difficult. To what extent further archaeological research will help to fill such lacunae is presently unclear. The book concludes with three indexes and a huge bibliography.

Life and death were very much bound up in churches. They were very often the centre, indeed the nucleus, of villages. However, they were sometimes only used for funerary purposes, and in that case such a church might well be outside the village; inside the village would be one for all the usual services. Churches were not just for the conservation of souls, but also for storing produce. It was common for there to be an area around the church where, for example, grain was stored. The influence of the Church impacted in another way; monasteries often became the foci of villages.

During the Middle Ages struggles between Church and State are obvious at a very local level. As villages developed it became apparent that there were different

types of villages: simple clusters of houses, or open villages; ecclesiastical ones centred on a church; and castral ones that were very often fortified or circumvallated. The latter might well develop because local lords began to use their power and influence in corralling villagers into their domains, disregarding the eternal pains that the Church might impose on them for thwarting the wills of its bishops.

Over time the purpose and location of a village might change. While this sometimes led to the development of fortified villages, at others it resulted in their abandonment—for example, when military threats had retreated. On the other hand, there were plenty of tiny hamlets scattered through the countryside and their number even increased over time (Chapter 6).

The latter part of the book contains more varied considerations of human modifications and impacts on the landscape, but the discussion is sparser and somewhat unsatisfying compared with the detail presented on villages. Bolòs first considers towns, especially new ones created in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, often because of the improved economy, though sometimes they were created by a lord; and then cities. Not only do people, politics, and policies change over time, but so too does the topography, especially the built or cultivated landscape. Many settlements were centred on roads, rather than on a church, while others had several foci. Now, too, market squares have begun to become prominent.

Water always played an important part, especially for survival. Water from rivers and streams was diverted into ditches, sometimes very extensive, but much smaller amounts accumulating directly from rain were corralled into coombes: dry, flat valleys. On the other hand, roads, often from Roman times, or even before, continued to have an effect.

Above I have presented rather general considerations, but Bolòs gives very detailed descriptions of numerous settlements. These are very often accompanied by clear maps, which are a great boon and generally most helpful, but occasionally they are hard to correlate with the text. The detailed descriptions reflect a lifetime of studying, and visiting, the whole of Catalunya (extending into what is now Andorra and parts of France). Bolòs is also very cognisant of the vast variety of work that has been done by other workers on specific sites. The book is notably illuminated by archaeology (much of it recent) as well as documented history and geography, and the contributions from toponyms should not be forgotten. The translation, presumably from Catalan, by Mariona Sabaté Carrové, is in general excellent, with only a handful of infelicities. The style is straightforward and, while there are many technical terms (explained in the text and also in the ‘Glossary’), it is mercifully free of sociological jargon.

The book is so detailed, and the number of sites discussed is so enormous, that one has to step back in order to get a more general picture. Readers will have to do their own work to create a general framework for understanding the development of the historic landscape of Catalonia, especially if they wish to give more consideration to the Muslim flow and ebb. Nonetheless, this book is

extremely elegant in every sense and provides a splendid template for looking at other regions and their development in historical times and earlier.

John N. Crossley, *Monash University*

Brett, Caroline, Paul **Russell**, and Fiona **Edmonds**, eds, *Multi-Disciplinary Approaches to Medieval Brittany, 450–1200: Connections and Disconnections* (Medieval Texts and Cultures of Northern Europe, 36), Turnhout, Brepols, 2023; pp. xii, 447; 7 b/w, 13 colour illustrations, 2 b/w tables, 17 b/w maps, 3 colour maps; RRP €60.00; ISBN 9782503601106.

Based on papers from a 2017 conference funded by the Leverhulme Trust ('Brittany and the Atlantic Archipelago: Contact, Myth and History 450–1200', Cambridge, December 2017), editors Caroline Brett, Paul Russell, and Fiona Edmonds have collated twelve articles into a volume focusing on the evolving cultural and political identity of medieval Brittany 450–1200. Countering notions of Brittany as 'remote' and being either set to one side or homogenised within Celtic or Frankish cultures, this volume explores a more active conception of Brittany as a hybrid society.

An 'Introduction' by the editors, highlighting the problematic coverage of source materials within the examined chronology, is followed by two chapters examining the vexed issue of a Brittany forged in a late antique / early medieval 'migration period'. Patrick Galliou discusses the limited evidence for two commonly held migration phases: the first, a late-Roman migration in the third and fourth centuries organised against Saxon pirates; the second, a post-Roman migration in the late fifth and/or early sixth centuries from Britain. John Hines follows up the second phase by examining the limited evidence in an English and Breton context, pointing to complex interrelationships outside the dichotomies of 'Frankish' and 'Celtic'. Both authors view the evolution of Breton identity as being dynamic and situated rather than necessarily wedded to British or Celtic culture. Isabelle Cattedu and Joseph Le Gall investigate the archaeological evidence for Brittany as a unique culture. They chart the visibility of a Breton culture beginning in the seventh and eighth centuries and peaking in the eighth and ninth centuries before a rupture in the tenth century. In hand with this teleology is a shift in cultural expression between western, central, and eastern Brittany with varying and distinct cultural connections to Ireland, England, and France. Magali Coumert follows up with an analysis of the literary evidence. Noting that most of Brittany's surviving literary culture does not begin until the ninth century, she identifies the shift from Briton to Breton as being precisely at this point, with Brittany itself as a fluid space with little political and religious cohesion. Coumert notes that this is a different path to that taken by the Britons in Galicia, where rapid integration took place from as early as the late sixth century.

Political connections between Brittany and English kings in the late ninth and early tenth centuries are explored by Joelle Quaghebeur. Tracing the exile of Breton counts to Wessex during periods of political instability, Quaghebeur

notes a decline in Carolingian influence from the late ninth century as connections with Alfred the Great, Edward the Elder, and Athelstan become more prominent. Katharine Keats-Rohan then explores the political connections remembered at the monastic community of Mont-Saint-Michel from 960 to 1033. While formally a Neustrian community, its proximity to Brittany meant that this community could act as a conduit for Carolingian reform. Keats-Rohan explores surviving memorialising and liturgical texts to detail increasing Carolingian influence beginning with Cluniac reforms under Hugh of Rouen in the second half of the tenth century through to those of William of Volpiano in the early eleventh century. This notion of a 'Carolingian Brittany' versus a 'Celtic Brittany' is then explored by Joseph-Claude Poulin through an examination of ninth-century Breton hagiography. The nominally close stylistic ties of these Lives with hagiography from Britain and Ireland are reassessed as being more Continental than previously supposed. Karen Jankulak revisits this ninth-century corpus to explore memories of cross-channel connection. Here, she re-emphasises the memories of the connection between South Wales and Brittany between the eighth and twelfth centuries. Twelfth-century Welsh hagiographies subsequently form the focus of Ben Guy's exploration of attempts to explain the origins of Brittany. Here, Guy argues that genealogy was a factor in connecting significant South Welsh figures to a Roman pedigree, with Brittany founded on a British emigration legitimated by imperial authority.

Moving to onomastics as an indicator of identity, Oliver Padel investigates linguistic connections between Brittany, Wales, and Cornwall via place-name elements in use before 1100. He argues that Brittany differed from Wales and Cornwall in several respects, implying that a distinct culture was formed at an earlier stage. Paul Russell subsequently explores personal name patterns within a similar milieu with the addition of Francia. Overall, Russell charts a shift from culturally different Breton names (in the context of Welsh and Cornish influences) to a more Frankish influence, but with patronymy lasting longer in Brittany than in other parts of France.

The volume succeeds in establishing the culture of medieval Brittany within a more complex setting than traditionally supposed. The notable addition of the English to the mix counters notions of a purely Celtic or Carolingian Brittany. Indeed, Breton culture appears to 'peak' at the precise point where connections with Wessex are at their height. A subsequent 'decline' in Breton culture appears to relate to the increasing influence of Frankish culture. The important question of what made or makes Breton culture distinctive is, however, less clear in this volume, as is its origin. While the volume affirms that a distinctive Breton culture evolved very early in the history of Brittany, it does not attempt to conjecture how this unique culture came to be or to describe what it is, whether archaic, evolved, or, indeed, hybrid. Perhaps a conclusion to the study may have contributed to these questions. Still, it is a valuable volume where multiple disciplines come together to say the same thing. A rarity, certainly in early medieval studies.

Stephen J. Joyce, *Monash University*

Broomhall, Susan, and Carolyn **James**, *Elite Women and the Italian Wars, 1494–1559* (Elements in the Renaissance), Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2024; paperback; pp. 78; RRP US$22.00; ISBN 9781009415958.

Susan Broomhall and Carolyn James offer an accessible yet scholarly introduction to the political activity of royal and princely women of the Habsburg, French, and Italian ruling families during the 1494–1559 Italian Wars. This short book extends our understanding of early modern war beyond the military by considering the cultural politics of persuasion used by men and women to maintain support. It highlights elite women's involvement in, and valuable contributions to, the Italian Wars. It also addresses the lack of studies on masculinity and femininity in the Wars, by using gender as a 'lens through which to analyse the Italian Wars' (p. 10).

Broomhall and James use gender research theories and methodologies to underpin this text, building on works on women's involvement in dynastic politics and the gender dynamics of dynastic power structures. Their approach uses several case studies of individual women to represent the opportunities open to elite women in the Italian Wars. They make good use of primary material, especially letters and art. They prioritise elite women's voices by drawing on sources produced or commissioned by them, such as Marguerite de Navarre's written works, Louise de Savoy's journal, and Habsburg and Italian women's letters. Broomhall and James examine the rhetoric used in these letters, contrasting the written ideas of female subordination with the agency these women demonstrate in practice. Their strongest use of visual sources draws on the 'political image-making' of Isabella d'Este, considering her use of art to assert her sole authority and to gain diplomatic advantage.

This book demonstrates that elite women played active and significant roles in the dynastic conflict between the Habsburgs and Valois. Broomhall and James argue that their contributions in diplomacy, projecting images of royal power, and administration were important and necessary contributions to their dynasties' war efforts. They emphasise that these contributions were performed within acceptable contemporary gender norms, as elite women worked as proxies for male relatives. Practically, these women were not greatly constrained by theoretical restrictions of gender ideologies.

This book is divided into three sections that consider women in turn from the Habsburg, Valois, and Italian princely dynasties. Section 1, 'Managing War', demonstrates that Habsburg women contributed to the empire's military efforts financially, diplomatically, and aesthetically. Their personal ambitions were subsumed by the dynasty, and their loyalty was both recognised and assumed. A case study of Mary of Hungary, the widowed sister of Emperor Charles V, shows her to have been capable of managing Hungary on behalf of her brother Ferdinand with 'self-sacrificing willingness' (p. 22), but also highlights Mary's agency in pushing back against patriarchal control.

Section 2, 'Staging War', considers the 'personal intimacy' of Marguerite de Navarre, Claude de France, Louise de Savoy, and the duchesse d'Étampes with the monarch in France. Broomhall and James argue that their bodies and their personal connections to the king, François I, were used to assert his masculinity and power. They focus on Marguerite's literary efforts within the context of the violence of the Wars, representing male honour as related to sexual conquest.

In Section 3, 'Surviving War', women in the Italian princely houses of Gonzaga and Este are examined as consorts and sisters who balanced sometimes conflicting loyalties to natal and marital kin. Their families' reliance on them to support their dynasties gave these women opportunities for political involvement, in which they demonstrated their financial, diplomatic, and administrative competence. Fascinatingly illustrative case studies examine Clara Gonzaga's efforts to advise and support her brother Francesco, and his wife Isabella d'Este's self-fashioning as a competent ruler of Mantua on his behalf when Francesco was imprisoned during the Wars.

At just seventy-eight pages in length, this book can only offer a brief overview without being comprehensive, although its readability, and the richness of the examples offered, leave the reader wanting more. Nonetheless, Broomhall and James bring in a good level of detail by focusing in on case studies. This book is useful as an introductory scholarly text for a student or non-specialist audience, especially with its inclusion of a useful summary at the end of each section. Despite its brevity, this book is grounded in solid scholarship throughout, being fully referenced with footnotes valuable for signposting a reader to further material. It is difficult to keep track of key players; family trees and maps would be advantageous. The individuals chosen for the case studies also fit the introductory nature of the book, as they are usually the most obvious examples, and on whom there is much existing primary and secondary material. The spread across the countries or dynasties allows for the contextualisation of these women's actions, although the structure of the book separates them by country.

Broomhall and James make strong use of visual sources, especially in Section 3 where they underscore the value of images commissioned by these women as functioning alongside their other actions to fashion themselves as capable rulers or supporters of their dynasties. Overall, this is an important volume in demonstrating how royal and princely women were active and capable within the bounds of contemporary gender expectations. It makes an important contribution to our understanding of women's activities within the context of dynastic politics and early modern war, showing how they worked not only for peace but also to make the waging of the Italian Wars possible.

Emily Chambers, *Murdoch University*

Clark, Stephanie, Janet Schrunk **Ericksen**, and Shannon **Godlove**, eds, *Sources of Knowledge in Old English and Anglo-Latin Literature: Studies in Honour of Charles D. Wright* (Studies in Old English Literature, 2), Turnhout, Brepols, 2023; hardback; pp. 460; 2 b/w, 3 colour illustrations, 8 b/w tables; RRP €120.00; ISBN 9782503604428.

The identification of sources has been integral to Old English and Anglo-Latin studies since the nineteenth century and has flourished since the 1980s, with the appearance of new projects and tools for research: notably the complementary source projects Fontes Anglo-Saxonici and Sources of Old English and Anglo-Latin Literary Culture (SOEALLC, formerly SASLC). In addition, scholars can now search digital corpora based on modern editions of classical, patristic, and medieval texts. Where texts or variant versions of texts remain unedited, there is steadily increasing public access to digitised manuscript images from libraries worldwide. Yet, as scholarship advances, new questions and problems emerge, and much work remains for establishing the connections and cultural contexts behind pre-Conquest English writers' work. Charles Wright has been at the forefront of such scholarship and has produced many exemplary studies demonstrating his deep reflection on the theoretical issues surrounding source studies, and his industry and meticulousness in seeking out the sources for Old English and Anglo-Latin texts in the forms that reached the English: often florilegia and miscellanies distilling and mixing primary sources in collections of commentary, apocrypha, and sapiential literature, or more broadly the 'lore' of intellectual communities sharing such written sources. His work has demonstrated the extensive influence of Irish and Hiberno-Latin texts on vernacular English sermons.

In this volume, colleagues and former students offer a range of source studies that provide a window into the diversity and vitality of the field. Thomas N. Hall's 'Reflections on Charles D. Wright's Career' begins the book with an incisive analysis of the honorand's research, to which is appended a list of his ninety-nine publications between 1982 and 2022, along with the seventeen dissertations he directed. The chapters that follow are organised under three headings: 'Networks of Knowledge', 'Translation and Transformation of Knowledge', and 'Bodies of Knowledge'.

In the first section, Brandon W. Hawkes argues that the *Virtutes apostolorum* formed one of Ælfric's sources for his 'Letter to Sigeweard' and the *Catholic Homilies*, alongside the well-known Cotton-Corpus Legendary. He employs network theory and ideas from media studies to account for the kinds of connections between Ælfric's writings and such sources. Ælfric's fluidity in his employment of sources is also explored by Samantha Zacher in 'Ælfric's *Leitwortstil*: Repetition and Autoreferentiality as Adaptive Techniques in the Old English Esther'. Zacher sets out the problems of establishing *which* version of the Esther narrative Ælfric employed and explores how he independently developed his source(s) to portray Esther as an exemplar of queenly leadership.

In 'Reading Lyric I of the Old English *Advent Lyrics* as Form-of-Life', Johanna Kramer draws on the idea of *forma vitae*, as developed by Giorgio Agamben, as well as intertextuality (as defined by Julia Kristeva) and contextuality in lyric poetry as developed by Ardis Butterfield to trace the imagery and symbolism of walls in Advent Lyric I. She argues that a likely source is Metrical Psalm CXVII.21 from the Paris Psalter, although the motif of the wall in both texts may have come via earlier exegetical sources.

Joshua Byron discusses the Middle Welsh poem *Kadeir Kerrituen* in the fourteenth-century manuscript 'The Book of Taliesin'. He argues that the poem's reference to 'Bede's books' is not to *De natura rerum*, as usually thought, but to Bede's historical works—and perhaps ironically, since Bede does not say much about early British history. Byron's survey of Bede in the British imagination is wide-ranging.

Christopher A. Jones discusses one of Alcuin's pupils in 'Source Study and the Inconclusive Result: The Case of Candidus Witto's *De passione Domini*'. Candidus's commentary accompanying his harmonised account of the Passion draws on a range of sources difficult to identify precisely because he avoids direct quotation. Nevertheless, a shared background or 'network' is revealed that includes a striking amount of Hiberno-Latin exegesis.

Thomas N. Hall opens the book's second section with 'Christ as Doorkeeper in *Genesis A*', providing a wide-ranging study of biblical and other passages that underlie the tradition that it was Christ who locked the door of the ark before the Flood. Hall identifies certain Ordinals of Christ that include reference to the ark, one of which was written in Canterbury by Archbishop Theodore, who derived this detail from Greek and Syriac sources.

Jill Fitzgerald discusses the surviving English accounts of Judith as they appear in Aldhelm's *De virginitate* and *De octo principalibus vitiis*, the Old English poem *Judith*, and Ælfric's homily on Judith. The Old English poet's recasting of Judith from widow to virgin has its roots in Aldhelm's focus on the heroine's performance of an intellectual ideal of chastity. Ælfric, in contrast, emphasises widowhood and ideals of abstinence that are a hallmark of the Benedictine reform movement.

In 'Bede, Cuthbert, and Cuthwine: *Conlectores* at Monkwearmouth-Jarrow', Frederick Biggs demonstrates—in a meticulous and wide-ranging survey—how 'crux busting' a single word in a text can provide deep insight into a community of 'fellow readers' or *conlectores*. Stephen Pelle identifies a new source for Byrhtferth's 'homily' on Easter embedded in his *Enchiridion*, showing that in addition to Gregory's twenty-second gospel homily, his known source, Byrhtferth also drew on a Homily on Exodus by Jerome. Thomas D. Hill examines some of the 'digressions' of *Andreas*, showing how the *Andreas*-poet's departures from his putative Latin source (a translation of the Greek *Praxeis*) are based upon biblical lore and involve 'narrativization of a Christian metaphor' such as the poet's expansion upon Christ's skill as a mariner. Paul A. K. Soewers explores

the synthesis of sources in John Scotus Eriugena's works on salvation, with their distinctive Irish worldview, in particular Eriugena's development of the ideas of Maximus the Confessor. Soewers further traces philosophical and literary lines of thought about universalism, freedom, and individualism as far as Dostoevsky, demonstrating how modern responses to the thought of Maximus and Eriugena are conditioned by rather different ideas of the self.

In the final section 'Bodies of Knowledge', Renée R. Trilling focuses on the *Old English Herbarium* to discuss the movement of plants and other materials from their Mediterranean homes to early medieval England, concurrent with the importation and translation of medical texts. Understanding of how source texts were adapted in translation is enhanced by examination of the routes and cultural contexts through which imports arrived. Rebeca Brackmann considers the frequent and sizeable citations from Bald's *Leechbook* in William Somner's *Dictionarium Saxonico-Latino-Anglicum* (1659). Somner's inclusion of these entries reveals his deep concern with the health of the 'body politic', and Brackmann notes particularly the 'somatic-political trope in early modern England: describing an unjust regime as "glutted paunch"' (p. 363). Amity Reading considers the multifarious ways in which blindness appears as a signifier in a single poem in 'Modblind and Unlæd: Disability, Intersectionality, and Typology in the Old English *Andreas*'. Jill Hamilton Clements discusses the devouring mouth of Hell described in *Christ III*. She identifies as the poet's source Caesarius of Arles's *Sermo* 206, which describes a zoomorphic Hellmouth that consumes the souls of the damned, then forgotten by God.

The placement of 'works cited' at the end of each chapter is the prescribed format for this book series, but it works particularly well in this volume, where for most of the essays the substantial lists of manuscript and primary sources consulted bear graphic testimony to the depth of research that underpins source study. The editors' introductory overview of contents and the well-constructed 'General Index' serve to enhance a fine collection of contributions that significantly advance understanding not only of Old English and Anglo-Latin literature but also the discipline of source studies.

Greg Waite, *University of Otago*

Dryburgh, Paul, and Sarah **Rees Jones**, eds, *The Church and Northern English Society in the Fourteenth Century: The Archbishops of York and their Records*, York, York Medieval Press, 2024; hardback; pp. 372; 3 b/w, 3 colour illustrations, 1 map; RRP £75.00; ISBN 9781914049156.

This volume arises from The Northern Way: The Archbishops of York and the North of England, 1304–1405, a research project at the University of York, UK. Funded by the UK Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC), the project has published online the administrative archives of the archbishops of York between 1304 and 1405. In addition to almost twenty-five thousand images of the archbishops' registers, the project website—<https://archbishopsregisters.

york.ac.uk/>—provides links to related material in The National Archives and, crucially, comprehensive indexing by personal and place names and by themes. The indexes enable researchers to search and collate large volumes of data across the century. The papers in this collection aim to illustrate the potential for such research, not just for ecclesiastical history narrowly defined but for broader political, social, and economic topics.

Sarah Rees Jones opens the volume with an authoritative survey of the records and their role in diocesan administration. After an excellent account of diocesan structures and personnel, she provides a statistical analysis of the registers by section type, date, and place which traces shifting patterns in the records, notably: a decline in volume and comprehensiveness; a move from recording public acts to personal rights; and an almost complete delegation of the archbishops' routine duties—though not of control—as the century progressed. Rees Jones supplements this broad analysis with a case study of a matrimonial lawsuit. I have only one suggestion to add: might the decline in registration of institutions to benefices reflect reliance on the more ephemeral *matricula* as a working record of who held what?

Building on this platform, the other contributors use the database to pursue different lines of inquiry. Paul Dryburgh's article on archbishops and the national government traces not only the archbishops' personal roles as chancellors and royal officials, but also the role of clerks who moved between the diocesan and royal administrations, especially the influential network from the south of the diocese identified by historians T. F. Tout and John Grassi. The new search capability enables him to expand their work and to provide detailed portraits of several royal and episcopal clerks. The late Mark Ormrod revises the established view of the politics of Archbishop Melton (1317–40). Rather than being a 'moderate', Melton showed strong personal loyalty to Edward II, to the point of supporting claims that Edward survived his imprisonment at Berkeley; his later loyalty to Edward III was political rather than personal and depended on the new king's calculated leniency. Jenny McHugh returns to the prosopography of the diocese's ecclesiastical and royal administrators, charting their influence in Edward III's Berwick-based administration of his Scottish lands and Edward Balliol's Scottish chancery. Rosemary Hayes exploits the database to map clerical taxation in the North across the century: its organisation, personnel, and efficiency. Jonathan Mackman uses the registers to probe beyond the bland generality of significations for excommunication in The National Archives: behind a signification against Rufford abbey over a tithe suit lay the influence of the abbey's opponent, the royal and episcopal clerk William Thorntoft.

Turning from realm to Church, Katherine Harvey analyses reconciliations of churches and churchyards for the shedding of blood and semen, showing that the archbishops often delegated the task to suffragans, sometimes even to priests, but kept control of it to assert their sacral authority. Stefania Merlo Perring explores the data on the archbishops' palaces and manors and on their use of them to structure

their spiritual and secular authority. John Lee similarly draws on the information scattered throughout the registers on the archbishops' parks to analyse their role as recreational and economic assets, opening out onto economic and social history. John Jenkins studies pilgrimage in diocesan records: clerical pilgrimage, both self-initiated and imposed as penance, and the diocese's attempts to regulate popular pilgrimage. He adds valuable insights into the shifting status of the 'political' cult of Thomas of Lancaster.

Marianne Wilson's chapter considers the registers as a source for gender history. Some 7.5 per cent of entries refer to women, and Wilson identifies the scope for female agency, albeit limited and concentrated among women of means, in a male-dominated institution. Following Elizabeth Gemmill's work on Norwich diocese, Wilson highlights the fifty-two lay women, mostly widows, who presented to benefices, and the female religious who not only presented but appropriated; she could have strengthened that point by noting that the appropriator became the parish's rector or *persona* (the root of 'parson'). She also documents the roles of high-status women as employers of chaplains, as testators (making 13 per cent of all wills), as founders of chantries, and as vowesses whose recognised status bolstered their social and economic independence. Helen Watt concludes the volume with a study of Joan of Leeds, a nun of Clementhorpe who absconded after faking her death, took up with a man, and became a media and stage celebrity in the 2020s. Beyond the colourful story, Watt uses the registers to illuminate the pastoral care and visitation of nuns and the handling of apostates, including Archbishop Melton's surprisingly merciful response when persuaded that Joan had not freely entered the convent.

Watt ends with thoughts on the value of 'slow history' in the archives and the potential for technological enhancement, which aptly sums up the value of both The Northern Way project and this volume. A collection of essays such as this cannot be comprehensive, but it does succeed in its aim of showcasing and encouraging further use of the wealth of material now made available. The one drawback, compared with traditional print publication, is the need for palaeographical skills to read digital images, but the ease and speed of access and the capabilities of the online index compensate for it. The implications of this model for the future publication of records lie beyond the scope of this volume but merit further discussion.

Peter McDonald, *Australian National University*

Edge, Joanne, *Onomantic Divination in Late Medieval Britain: Questioning Life, Predicting Death*, York, York Medieval Press, 2024; cloth; pp. 282; 17 b/w illustrations; RRP £75.00; ISBN 9781914049248.

There is a contradiction at the heart of this study. The use of soothsaying was forbidden to Christians because of its demonic overtones, yet despite this many of the texts were in the possession of monks and clerics. This is just one element explored in this study. Joanne Edge looks at sixty-five manuscripts from the

twelfth to the sixteenth centuries, as well as examining the ancient Greek and earlier medieval origins of this phenomenon. She also explores the Reformation aftermath. These manuscripts were owned by a large cross-section of society including doctors, aristocrats and gentry, scholars, and monks.

At its simplest, onomancy is divination by the conversion of the letters of a personal name into numbers. As a practice, it has been found in ancient and early medieval cultures including Greek, Arabic, Hebrew, Ethiopian, and Syriac. Although the focus of this study is the Latin West, the influences of these other cultures can be found in manuscripts and printed books. The desire to answer the 'big' questions around life and death has been of universal concern throughout history. Questions about the time of death or the sex of an unborn child or the outcome of events were all asked of this form of prediction. The most popular type was the 'Sphere of Life or Death', which consisted of a usually circular figure with a text accompaniment. It was used to predict the outcome of an event, giving a yes or no answer. The letters of an individual's name were assigned numbers, then the converted letters would be added to the lunar day and weekday, which was then divided by about thirty, after which the 'Sphere of Life or Death' was consulted. There were many variations of the 'Sphere of Life and Death' and its text accompaniment. Another popular form was called the 'Victorious and Vanquished'—it compares two values to determine a winner and consists generally of four tables that would need to be consulted. Versions of the latter can be found in the Eadwine Psalter (Cambridge, Trinity College, MS R. 17. 1) and Matthew Paris's illustrated *Sortes* collection (Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Ashmole 304). The latter also contained geomancy texts. An excellent facsimile of this work exists, with accompanying text by Allegra Iafrate (*Le Moine et le hasard: Bodleian Library, MS Ashmole 304*, Classiques Garnier, 2016), who has written extensively on this manuscript; these works, however, seem to be unknown to the author. Another manuscript, although an inferior fourteenth-century copy, was based on Paris's manuscript. This is Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Digby 46, which provides the image on the cover of Edge's book.

The book is divided into ten chapters. The first five focus on contextualising onomancy—for example, the first chapter discusses divination and its association with natural magic, and the second chapter places onomancy within the wider context of late medieval culture by exploring medieval ideas about names, numbers, and circular diagrams, across antiquity and the medieval timeframe. Chapter 3 looks at the antique and early medieval roots of this practice, while Chapter 4 focuses on the surviving manuscript corpus. It is Chapter 5 that really engages with the debates about the licit and illicit nature of divination, exploring the condemnation of magic by such writers as Augustine of Hippo and Thomas Aquinas. This is at the core of the discussion, contrasting condemnation with actual practice, although as Edge points out this is hampered by the absence of court records.

The subsequent chapters are divided into four categories: medical practitioners, the nobility, universities, and monasteries. Edge is particularly convincing in her linking of these manuscripts with medieval medical practice, as well as discussing their ownership by such physicians as Robert Marshall, who attended Edward IV. In the eighth chapter, on universities, the 'Sphere of Life and Death' texts often appear with astronomy and arithmetic, as well as being used to predict the future. Among aristocratic usages, duelling and other fights to the death are of particular importance. In the chapter on monasteries, I wanted more details. Given the importance of manuscripts created by figures such as Matthew Paris, I would have liked more thought about the miscellanies onomancy often appeared in and a fuller discussion of ritual magic. Edge's focus on deathbed rituals needed to be more fleshed out. The final chapter serves as an epilogue, examining the period between 1500 and 1700. In addition, there are two useful appendices listing transcriptions and editions of the 'Sphere of Life and Death' texts and of manuscripts of British provenance containing onomantic texts.

This is a generally useful volume exploring the area of onomancy. I was disappointed that monasticism and the role of diagrams were not more fully addressed, particularly as the latter has received so much attention in recent years. These are areas that will no doubt provide further study for Joanne Edge in future work.

Judith Collard, *The University of Melbourne*

Frost, D. H., *Sacrament an Alter / The Sacrament of the Altar: A Critical Edition with Translation*, Exeter, University of Exeter Press, 2023; hardback; pp. 336; RRP £80.00; ISBN 9781804130308.

The sixteenth-century English bishop Nicholas Ridley claimed that the Catholic Church rested on two 'massy posts and mighty pillars'—the Mass and papal primacy. The first is the core burden of the *Sacrament an Alter*. The text is a Cornish patristic catena drawn from the Greek and Latin Fathers of the early church, privileging Augustine and Chrysostom, extracted from John Foxe's monumental *Actes and Monuments* (1563), and preserved in the Tregear Manuscript (London, British Library, Add MS 46397). The *Sacrament an Alter* is the thirteenth 'homily' attached to a series of Bishop Edmund Bonner's homilies translated into Cornish by John Tregear. As a Counter-Reformation text, the *Sacrament an Alter* offers an alternative to the dominant Protestant narrative that had been endorsed by the Tudor government. The text is important but challenging. It requires acquaintance with ecclesiastical history, patristic theology, and linguistic facility including classical languages and Celtic. Palaeographical competence is also necessary, because parts of the manuscript have been damaged by wear and mice. In this volume, Daveth Frost has produced an edition that represents a strong addition to our knowledge of Reformation-era England.

The valuable seventy-page 'Introduction' includes discussion of the manuscript, palaeography, scribes, printing, authorship, sources, a 1554 Oxford

disputation and Foxe's account, the roles of John Tregear and Thomas Stephyn (who compiled the *Sacrament an Alter*), links with Glasney College which was dissolved in 1548, the contribution of Marian priests, Foxe's use of sources, and the journey of the manuscript from Cornwall to Wales. This is followed by an edition (pp. 77–145) comprising four parts: the uncorrected diplomatic Cornish text, a corrected, edited version of the text, source material from Foxe, and an idiomatic modern English translation of the Cornish and Latin originals. This is followed by a commentary focusing on structure and theology (pp. 147–221), 'notes on the text and language of SA' (pp. 221–89), two appendices, a useful glossary of all words found in the *Sacrament an Alter* (pp. 297–318), a bibliography (pp. 319–46), and a short index (pp. 347–55). One might only desire a map of sixteenth-century Cornwall marking the important locations for the neophyte.

The edition provides a means of understanding the *Sacrament an Alter* for those who read Cornish but are repulsed by its theology, but also for those who appreciate the theology but cannot read Cornish. The *Sacrament an Alter* is consistent with Marian texts noted for profuse biblical and patristic references. The role and value of language is accentuated. Cranmer complained he failed to understand why the men of Cornwall resisted the use of unfamiliar English but insisted on liturgical Latin which most did not understand. The *Sacrament an Alter* relies upon arguments advanced during the 1554 eucharistic debate at Oxford involving Thomas Cranmer, Hugh Latimer, Nicholas Ridley, Hugh Weston, Dean of Windsor, William Chedsey, Archdeacon of Middlesex, John Young, canon of Ely, and others.

In the hands of John Tregear, vicar of St Allen in Pydar, and Thomas Stephyn, vicar of Newlyn East (parish priests in rural western Cornwall with Anglican papal loyalties), what emerges from Oxford is an example of how Foxe's 'carefully constructed polemic could be deconstructed, reconstructed and reused for completely different purposes' (p. 65). Foxe marshalled a powerful catena to defend Protestant eucharistic theology, but the *Sacrament an Alter* utilises the same prooftexts to support Catholic doctrine. Frost notes that cross-confessional readings of Scripture and the Fathers were common, the Elizabethan Settlement was not smooth and never settled anything, and Foxe was not averse to raiding research repositories, removing materials or vandalising records, to enlarge his collection of sources. His history excluded objectionable material and omitted evidence that detracted from his heroes, though this does not lessen his impact on Protestant historiography and mythology.

The *Sacrament an Alter* reveals how traditional religious affection was deeply damaged and badly stung by novelty and reform. Weston argues that since God works through visible signs and sacraments it is unwise to denigrate or reject those media. Chedsey draws upon Hilary of Poitiers to strengthen the connection between the Eucharist and Incarnation. Cranmer is rattled by the arguments of Young and exposed as using Scripture selectively by imposing his own judgement over what the Bible can be allowed to say. Ridley admits Christ's body is in

the sacrament and the consecration truly converts bread into the flesh of Christ. Latimer accepts a qualified sense of the Mass as sacrifice and concedes the table is an altar. In the face of patristic evidence and withering argument from Weston, Latimer confesses he is out of his depth and agrees early church witness is beyond his capability to refute. No wonder Foxe was uncomfortable with aspects of the 1554 eucharistic discussions.

The text of the *Sacrament an Alter* reached its final form sometime after 1576. Cornish Catholic continuity was certainly compromised during the Elizabethan period, but the survival of the *Sacrament an Alter* bears witness to a significant aspect of what became the Anglican communion. The *Sacrament an Alter* was never printed and thus had limited dissemination. One would like to know more about the influence of the text and in what ways it was intended for strategic deployment.

Frost points out that some reconstruction of the text is impossible (recall the mice!)—some words are obsolete, the Cornish paraphrase occasionally distorts the English—and that the *Sacrament an Alter* was a dangerous manuscript. It is clear that Stephyn periodically departed from the 1554 text and is independent of Foxe. The *Sacrament an Alter* provides irrefutable evidence that the plain reading of texts is an illusion aimed at defending a priori theological assumptions. The commitment and labour of love undergirding this volume are impressive and important. It opens up another front in understanding the limitations of the English Reformation, what Christopher Haigh describes as a 'premature birth, a difficult labour and a sickly child' (*The Historical Journal*, 33.2 (1990), pp. 449–59). It is a testament to the continuing strength of the Catholic tradition in Tudor England and demonstrates how priests of the old religion survived in the face of a new ecclesiastical order.

Thomas A. Fudge, *University of New England*

Gameson, Richard, Andrew **Beeby**, Flavia **Fiorillo**, Catherine **Nicholson**, Paola **Ricciardi**, and Suzanne **Reynolds**, *The Pigments of British Medieval Illuminators: A Scientific and Cultural Study*, London, Archetype Publications, 2023; paperback; pp. 490; colour illustrations; RRP £85.00; ISBN 9781909492967.

At least two pigments used by medieval manuscript illuminators are well known: the deep ultramarine blue derived from the mineral lapis lazuli, obtainable only from Afghanistan (ultramarine meaning 'over the sea'); and thinly beaten gold leaf, which glimmered and glowed under flickering candlelight. But as we learn in this pioneering study, a surprisingly complex range of pigments was used with considerable skill by British medieval manuscript illuminators throughout the period *c*. 600 to *c*. 1485.

A colour could be made using several different methods. For example, reds were principally produced in three ways. Minium or red lead (made by heating white lead) and the earth-derived red ochre were common until the late tenth

century, when vermilion (obtained from the mineral cinnabar or synthesised from mercury and sulphur) became readily available. While red rubrics and initials were subsequently coloured only with vermilion, both minium and vermilion continued to be used to paint miniatures. Throughout the medieval period, greens were obtained mainly from verdigris, made through the chemical reaction of copper with vinegar or urine. Still, they could also be made with vergaut, which describes the many shades resulting from a mix of blue and yellow: a combination of either indigo or orpiment or, from the fifteenth century, indigo and lead-tin yellow.

Sometimes the shade and appearance of the paint indicate the origin of the pigment, but this cannot always be determined by sight. For instance, to ascertain whether a blue was made from lapis lazuli, the mineral azurite or a mixture of both generally requires examination with scientific instrumentation.

The intended audience for this multidisciplinary study is art historians, historians, scientists, librarians, and conservators. It has been produced by 'Team Pigment', a group of scientists and historians based at the universities of Durham and Northumbria. The scope of their scientific survey of British illuminators' pigments is ambitious—pigments from more than three hundred British manuscripts from the seventh to the fifteenth centuries have been identified through non-invasive scientific techniques. Some volumes are famous, such as the first in the study, the sixth-century Gospels of Saint Augustine of Canterbury (Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 286). Others, less well known, have been selected to gain a complete representation of medieval pigments.

The authors note their debt to the MINIARE team led by Stella Panayotova at The Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge—in particular, the important 2016–17 exhibition 'Colour: The Art and Science of Illuminated Manuscripts' and its associated publications. Around thirty British manuscripts previously analysed by the MINIARE team have been included in the current volume, and this collaboration is generously acknowledged.

The scientific techniques for the identification of pigments are discussed in the first chapter. These include fibre-optic reflectance spectroscopy, Ramen spectroscopy, multispectral and hyperspectral imaging, X-ray fluorescence spectroscopy, and microscopy. The different pigments, dyes, and inks employed by artists are listed along with an explanation of how they can be scientifically identified. The sheer variety of pigments is impressive, although some were used only occasionally by illuminators. For instance, blue shades included indigo, lapis lazuli (ultramarine), Egyptian blue, azurite, blue bice, and smalt, all produced using different processes.

The following five chapters discuss the three hundred manuscripts chronologically, from the beginnings of Christianity in Britain in the sixth century to the aftermath of the Black Death in the late fifteenth century. Each chapter outlines the historical, political, and social background in relation to the use and availability of manuscripts and pigments used in that period. A conclusion sums up the findings of each chapter, followed by a list of manuscripts and

pigments identified in each. Detailed illustrations, tables, and graphs support the text throughout. Of particular use is the overall conclusion, 'The Chronology of Colour', which charts the prevalence of pigments over the period.

The appendices reproduce relevant contemporary documents that discuss or mention pigments, such as recipe collections and royal household accounts.

This very impressive, painstakingly researched study shows that empirical scientific data has a great deal to contribute to more discursive analysis, such as art history. Identification of an artist's preferred pigments may either support or challenge an attribution based entirely on visual analysis of style. Manuscripts can also be more securely located. To give one example, no fewer than four of the eight pigments used in the unique Gawain manuscript (London, British Library, Cotton MS Nero A X/2, *c*. 1400) are rarely used in other manuscripts, supporting the hypothesis that it was produced outside a major centre.

One of the great achievements of this excellent book is the clarity with which very detailed, complex material has been explained and made accessible to the range of intended readers. The result is a perfect marriage of science and interpretive historical analysis that will remain a most valuable resource for years to come.

Hilary Maddocks, *The University of Melbourne*

Hindle, Steve, *The Social Topography of a Rural Community: Scenes of Labouring Life in Seventeenth Century England*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2023; hardback; pp. 472; 8 figures, 24 colour maps; 19 tables; RRP £100.00; ISBN 9780192868466.

The driving focus of Steve Hindle's study of the village Chilvers Coton is to reclaim the seventeenth-century village labouring life of men, women, and children in a now-lost part of north-eastern Warwickshire. It is an intimate account of a rural community's social topography. Hindle reconstitutes and reanimates parts of those lives through an analysis of all households in a survey appraised by jurors over several days. The survey reveals the elite through to the labouring poor. Also accompanying us on this journey are vignettes taken from the writings of Mary Ann Evans, better known as George Eliot, the area's most famous literary inhabitant. It is this rich combination of unique sources and the manorial configurations of place that enables such a painstaking reconstitution to be attempted. Yet for every clear view of those Hindle reveals to the reader, inevitably others remain beyond sight and obscured despite his research entreaties. While a colour-reconstituted church seating plan links places with pews and people, regrettably, the final resting places of conformists and Nonconformists who died in the village are not discussed, nor are the place and field names, especially any that might be derived from labouring families or trades.

Hindle's study required over a decade in the archives. Each narrative he provides is born of painstaking labour, reading both with and against the grain, a practice that he notes has largely gone out of fashion. This is one in a line of

microhistories born from the foundational reconstitution studies of Essex villages by the historical anthropologist Alan Macfarlane for Earls Colne, and the social, cultural, and economic historian Keith Wrightson for Terling. Hindle aims to revitalise this history by using 'samples rather than rehearsing the data' and he makes 'no apology for the conviction that the more specific the evidential detail which it discusses, the more universal the historical experience to which it speaks' (p. 29). This is indeed the case. The book, divided into three parts, comprises sixteen chapters, with thirteen of those using 'a narrative strategy' where selected households (pp. 15–16), are considered 'emblematic of the wider pattern of social, economic, and spatial relations within and beyond the parish' (p. 17). The book is amply illustrated. The survey of Chilvers Coton households reveals how they 'were enmeshed in wider networks', and demonstrates the 'penetration of the local by the global'; for example, imported Turkish silk to local ribbon making and more (p. 16).

Hindle's narrative use of time, place, space, and the reality of generations of people reveals insights about life, love, lust, loss, and labour. The archives and material culture of the past are put to effective use. The culture of labouring life is unpacked in the intimate yet intermittent survival of wills and inventories for trades, as are the sounds and silences of those trade endeavours. For example, the business acumen of Frances Rason, a widow, is evident in the distribution of her meticulously calculated bequests, resulting in a matriarchal thread that was quickly undone within a few short years after her death. Here we encounter not just the financial reality of family enterprises, but also the emotional loss and rapid changes in circumstances. More broadly, it shows that hereditary transmissions of individual freehold property could easily be eroded, as calculated accumulations gathered freeholds back into the hands of the manorial lord. A widow's plight could range from being well provided for, to being remarried or becoming a resident of the workhouse.

Hindle marks that point between a historian's position regarding whether to include or exclude archives or aspects of history. He calls out his decisions throughout his text, so we are party to the working of a historian in action. So often historians are silent about the values that underpin their works. As with any focused village/community study, historians step into the footprints of those who have trod in the same or similar steps. Studies such as these are transgenerational endeavours. For example, Hindle poignantly references his regret (p. ix) that Tom Arkell, who had suggested the project to Hindle—based on Arkell's own hearth tax and probate transcriptions—did not live to see its completion. Hindle 'did not get the chance to walk the streets of Coton Town with him one last time', and 'I hear Tom's thoughtful whisper in my ear "the jurors. Steve, the jurors!"' (p. ix). Here the historian's various roles, emotions, choices, and decisions are placed in the forefront of his study. These studies are never solitary endeavours. Rather they are like relay races where the batons are passed from one runner to the next in the field.

Money, employment, marriage, and families formed the motivations for migratory population influxes into the area over time. The lure of livery company apprenticeships in London saw the exodus of young boys. The life of servants, a large proportion coming from outside of the parish, hints at the migratory and short-term reality of employment. The case and conditions of the immigrant miners used to open up and expand new coal fields also point to the possible friction between residents and incoming labour. The vibrant life of litigation was actively pursued through the various court jurisdictions ranging from the 'Star Chamber to chancery, from the equity side of the exchequer to the Lichfield consistory court' (p. 409). Litigants were united in their attempts to retain chattels and/or portions of that place.

The permeability of the parish is discussed through the actuality of links stretching from the global back to the parochial. This work of the men and women of this region is both intimate and industrial as Hindle provides insights to drive home his point. For example, the Reverend John Rennie, born in the colonies, arrived in Chilvers Coton from the hot and steamy environs of Savannah, Georgia, to take up his incumbency in the village. Never managing to forge an effective relationship with the parish, Rennie's arrival and cultural background hint at different mentalities. Educated in the American colonies, Rennie was a clergyman to the enslaved on the Beth Adam Plantation in Savannah, but he was banished in 1777 due to his loyalty to the Crown. The veins of empire are always within reach and traceable in the leafy lost parishes of England, and yet the parish's views on slavery are beyond our grasp.

Let us hope Hindle's freshly ploughed furrow does nourish a new crop of microhistories.

Dolly MacKinnon, *The University of Melbourne*

Lyon-Whaley, Susannah, ed., *Floral Culture and the Tudor and Stuart Courts* (Early Modern Court Studies), Amsterdam, Amsterdam University Press, 2024; hardback; pp. 360; RRP €129.00; ISBN 9789463722490.

Even though studies of the monarchy have remained popular across various academic fields for decades, new and exciting scholarship continues to proliferate. The past decade in particular has seen an increasing number of new interpretations that both develop and challenge existing literature and perspectives in royal and court studies. Susannah Lyon-Whaley's recent volume, *Floral Culture and the Tudor and Stuart Courts*, is an engaging and innovative example of this work.

The second publication in the Amsterdam University Press series Early Modern Court Studies, this collection certainly fulfils their objective to encourage rigorous, fresh, and cross-disciplinary examination of court culture in early modern Europe. Featuring twelve chapters from distinguished academics drawing on a range of source material and research areas, this interdisciplinary collection engages with themes of culture, royal power, natural history, global trade, and

colonial expansion through a fruitful and often overlooked lens: flowers and floral culture.

While the study of floral culture, gardens, and the natural world has remained a significant component of art history, architectural history, the history of medicine, and the history of fashion, visual, and material cultures, Lyon-Whaley's volume represents the first dedicated collection to position these themes specifically concerning early modern court culture. Lyon-Whaley's introductory chapter effectively outlines the importance of this endeavour, clearly articulating the relevance of flowers (both real and representational) to political power, royal authority, cross-cultural exchange, and colonisation. The essays that follow are broken up into four thematic sections, addressing key aspects of floral culture in the early modern English courts from the beginning of Henry Tudor's reign in 1485 until the death of Queen Anne in 1714. Although further examination of the floral culture surrounding the Tudor and Stuart monarchs who do not feature in this collection is required to provide a more comprehensive and complete analysis of these themes, these chapters cover a considerable number of key figures and topics from throughout this period and thus offer an engaging introduction to this subject.

The first section, 'Flowering Spaces', introduces flowers as an integral part of court spaces, from royal gardens and palace interiors to wider aristocratic circles. Paula Henderson begins by tracing the development of English gardens and interest in plants, from the practical to the aesthetic, throughout early modern English history. Eleri Lynn's essay provides an in-depth analysis of floral imagery on interior textiles in Tudor royal palaces, illustrating how monarchs used these textiles simultaneously as decorations and symbols to display their wealth, power, and majesty. Maria Hayward adds to this with an examination of aristocratic interactions with flowers and plants outside of the royal sphere, uncovering wider cultures of plant knowledge and botanical enthusiasm.

The second section, 'Flowers and the Body', considers how flowers manifest in fashion, medicine, and food. Susan North expertly navigates the development of floral embellishments and their interpretations in the garments and jewels of Tudor and Stuart elites, considering their decorative, dynastic, and symbolic purposes. Erin Griffey builds on this through an insightful analysis of the floral iconography surrounding Henrietta Maria, focusing on portrayals of her fertile and maternal body in portraits, prints, and recipes as queen consort, mother, and widow. Lyon-Whaley concludes this topic with an assessment of the use of flowers in recipes and dining rooms in the Restoration period, highlighting their importance as part of the 'politics of abundance' in reasserting royal identity and promoting the monarchy.

The third section, 'Performing Flowers', addresses the role of flowers in performative court spaces. Bonnie Lander Johnson examines the floral imagery in Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* as a reflection of Elizabeth I and Elizabethan court culture, positioning Elizabeth's lifelong interest in flowers

alongside the Anglo-Spanish naval conflicts over access to treasured flowers and cloth dyes as key influences on her royal image. This is followed by Susan M. Cogan's detailed study of the increasing popularity of flowers as signifiers of loyalty and power in Elizabethan New Year's gift exchanges. Diana Dethloff's essay provides a thorough analysis of painted flowers in seventeenth-century English portraits, discussing the painters themselves, their expertise and collaboration, and the rise of non-professional flower painting as an expression of aristocratic horticultural interests.

The final section, 'Global Flowers', extends this material by situating English floral culture within the broader European context. Elizabeth Hyde's essay undertakes an in-depth comparison of the use of flowers and floral symbolism in the English and French courts as emblems of monarchical power, considering the development of transnational networks of knowledge and trade. Amy Lim and Renske Ek add to this through their thoughtful analysis of William III's and Mary II's floral culture, arguing that real and decorative flowers played an important role in displays of their economic, political, and colonial power in both the English and Dutch contexts. Finally, Beverly Lemire examines the influence of global trade and imperial ambitions on English floral culture from 1560 to 1700, discussing the impact of gender and misogyny on the development of English interest in floriated Asian goods. A strong conclusion to this volume, these three essays provide a compelling argument for the benefits of the transnational analysis of floral culture. This highlights the significant potential for further comparative studies beyond the French and Dutch monarchies in future scholarship.

Throughout this well-structured volume, Lyon-Whaley effectively achieves her aim of reviving the scattered interest in flowers to demonstrate their consistent and integral role in Tudor and Stuart court culture. The chapters work together to provide a thorough overview of English floral culture and its ties to political power, broader interests in natural history, cross-cultural exchange, and the development of global trade and colonialism. This effort is strengthened by the incorporation of rich and widely varied source material (including portraits, jewellery, embroidery, state records, herbal guides, recipes, and poetry), as well as a significant number of colour images, which is particularly appropriate for this aesthetically oriented topic. Overall, this volume's fresh approach to early modern court studies represents a useful and exciting addition to extant scholarship across a variety of disciplines.

Tyler Horton, *The University of Queensland*

Nicosia, Marissa, *Imagining Time in the English Chronicle Play: Historical Futures, 1590–1660*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2023; hardback; pp. 199; 16 illustrations; RRP £65.00; ISBN 9780198872658.

It is tempting to resort to a bad pun and say that this is a timely book; chronicle plays have been a neglected genre and deserve the kind of careful, historicised attention Marissa Nicosia gives them. This study is also an excellent example

of careful, wide-ranging, historically informed analysis that moves deftly from a canonical play like *Richard III* to an almost unknown play like Rowley's *When You See Me, You Know Me*, to obscure mid-seventeenth-century pamphlet prognostications. At the heart of Nicosia's study is the fascinating idea that the chronicle play stages 'speculative futures'. That is, while this genre may have been seen as rooted in a view of the past, Nicosia argues that throughout the seventeenth century, they were a kind of speculation machine (not her term) which allows for ideas about possible futures to be explored. This is especially significant in a period of dramatic political and social change, so Nicosia traces these ideas from the end of the sixteenth century through to the Restoration. Nicosia connects the 'traditional' chronicle play with the play pamphlets that became a popular genre during the Interregnum, when the theatres were closed.

These works were, as Nicosia argues, inherently political and in many respects revolutionary—not just because many of them were engaged with an actual revolution. Nicosia links this to changes in ideas of time: time as duration, and time as a historical construct and projection. In her first chapter, Nicosia explores almanacs as markers of early modern ideas about the relationship between past, present, and future. Almanacs were extremely popular, and combined charts of past events with astrologically informed predictions of future events. In relation to chronicle plays like *Henry IV* and *Sir John Oldcastle*, the use of almanacs on stage underlines the way these plays are a kind of palimpsest of past and present (they are set *then* but relate to *now*), as well as offering some sense of possible futures. In particular, Nicosia aligns the almanac's commonly featured chart of monarchs through time with the chronicle plays' staging of a layered view of succession and rule, in the past, the present, and in a possible future. Nicosia also notes how almanacs 'dramatize acts of marking, recording, and managing time' (p. 31). In particular, Nicosia explores the relationship between the tables of monarchs and their reigns, and the way the chronicle plays examined history and possible ways in which history might impact upon present and future.

In the second chapter, Nicosia turns to *When You See Me, You Know Me* and *Henry VIII*, as examples of chronicle plays that are set in periods much closer to the time of performance, and which once again 'connect the recent past to futures that might be through the trope of prolepsis' (p. 63). Nicosia's third chapter focuses on John Ford's *Perkin Warbeck*, a play about a famous or perhaps infamous pretender to the throne, and on *Richard III*. In these instances, the chronicle play becomes a way of imagining potential futures, even if audiences know that they did not actually occur. While Nicosia does not spell this out, I think in this chapter, in particular, her detailed and subtle argument speaks to the tradition of modern historiography aligned with the idea of oppositional thought processes that anticipated the advent of the Civil War (or we might here more accurately use the alternative term English Revolution). Nicosia explains that 'these two plays dramatize the tenuous nature of the establishment of the Tudor dynasty' (p. 88).

Chapters 4 and 5 move into the Civil War period to examine the still somewhat neglected genres of play pamphlets, newsbooks, and prognostications. While some attention has been paid to these works, Nicosia casts new light on their importance as she analyses them through her lens of historical speculation and political time (and times). There are also significant connections between these works and the burgeoning of news in various forms during the Civil War period, when control of the press was relaxed, and newsbooks, satires, and, as Nicosia explains earlier in her study, even news in almanacs, were published in ever-increasing quantities and forms. Chapter 5 is especially interesting in its consideration of retrospective accounts of the Civil War, and particularly of Charles I's execution. Nicosia's analysis of the obscure *Famous Tragedy of Charles I* (1649) focuses on a kind of anticipatory commemoration of a key event in the Civil War, and one which both anticipates the possible restoration of Charles II and the monarchy and considers a different future without a monarchy. Nicosia contrasts this pre-Restoration play with *Cromwell's Conspiracy*, a rewriting of *The Famous Tragedy of Charles I* in 1660, in the context of what Nicosia terms the Restoration paean.

Nicosia concludes her study with a brief, cogent account of Mike Bartlett's 2014 play *King Charles III: A Future History*, noting in particular how its resonances shifted during the writing and production of her book, as England did indeed move from Elizabeth II to Charles III and an imagined future transpired.

Overall, this is a carefully argued and meticulously researched book. The high production values of Oxford University Press are matched by Nicosia's attention to detail and judicious use of unusual primary sources alongside more obvious choices. This kind of wide-ranging approach to seventeenth-century writing is exemplary, and an excellent example of how the new generation of early modern literary scholars is transforming the discipline, at a time when one can only hope that that discipline can survive the current vicissitudes attacking humanities departments, and move forward into a brighter future that, like the chronicle plays, it is incumbent upon us to imagine.

Paul Salzman, *La Trobe University*

O'Donoghue, Heather, and Eleanor **Parker**, eds, *The Cambridge History of Old Norse-Icelandic Literature*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2024; cloth; pp. xiii, 634; RRP US$175.00; ISBN 9781108486811.

Most people who are aware that medieval Iceland produced a famed body of literature probably think mainly of the 'Family Sagas' (the *Íslendingasögur*), the poems of the Edda, and perhaps the sagas of the Norwegian kings memorably recounted in Snorri Sturluson's *Heimskringla.* These works are not neglected in this new volume: there are three chapters on the *Íslendingasögur*—a magisterial survey by Margaret Clunies Ross and two on specialised topics—along with two chapters on Eddic poems and consideration of *Heimskringla* in Erin Michelle Goeres's chapter on the 'Kings' Sagas'. But this is a volume of twenty-six chapters, all about twenty pages in length. The effect is to place the well-known works

in the context of the full gamut of Old Norse-Icelandic literary production, not minimising their importance but showing that in the Middle Ages, they coexisted with and were influenced by many other kinds of literary composition.

The work describes itself as a history, but as the editors indicate (pp. 3–4), one cannot convincingly organise the literary corpus in chronological order by date of composition—the usually anonymous sagas and Eddic poems can provoke widely differing speculations as to their dates of composition. Instead, the guiding organisational principle here, broadly speaking, is to arrange genres in terms of the chronological periods in which their subject matter is set. There are six parts. The first, 'Contexts', outlines the history of medieval Iceland to 1400, and discusses manuscripts, poetic language, the burgeoning application of theoretical approach to the literature, its modern reception, and the possible role of archaeology in understanding medieval mindsets (with a focus on Viking Age Scandinavian archaeology rather than Iceland). The second part, 'The Distant Past', covers and considers the Eddic poems and the *Fornaldarsögur* dealing with times before Iceland was settled. Part 3, 'The Saga Age', covers approximately 870–1030, and Part 4, 'The New Christian World', considers saints' Lives, Icelandic bishops' sagas, and other explicitly Christian material. Here Christopher Abram also explores skalds' varying responses to the professional and personal challenge of conversion to the new religion. Part 5 moves on to considering works set outside Iceland—the sagas of the kings, the *riddarasögur* (courtly romances), and what Judith Jesch identifies as the 'Diaspora Sagas', set mainly in Greenland, Vinland, and the Faeroe and Orkney Islands. The inclusion in Part 5 of Matthew Driscoll's informative chapter on the *rímur* is surprising, as these long narrative poems from the later Middle Ages and beyond are a distinctively Icelandic genre. Part 6, 'Compilations', considers the Prose Edda and *Sturlunga saga*, a saga compilation dealing mainly with events in Iceland in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. The final chapter in this section, 'Learned Literature', by Guðrún Nordal, suggests that saga literature would not have been possible without the more learned literature, going further into presenting a case than most other essays but contributing to a major theme of the volume. The book's final chapter, lying outside the division into parts, is an insightful and very entertaining overview by William Ian Miller of how law functioned in Icelandic society during the Commonwealth period that ended in the 1260s.

The twenty-seven contributors to the volume include many of the most distinguished scholars in the Old Norse-Icelandic field during recent decades. Their articles impressively succeed in giving concise, non-tendentious overviews of their stated subjects, with frequent references to an impressive amount of recent relevant scholarship. Though contributors seem to have been fairly free to take the approach they preferred, some focusing far more than others on discussing individually relevant literary compositions, all the chapters are lucidly written and should be accessible to non-specialists. English translations are provided of texts in Old Norse-Icelandic.

The work invites comparison with *A Companion to Old Norse-Icelandic Literature and Culture*, edited by Rory McTurk (Blackwell, 2005). Like the work now under consideration, that volume of twenty-nine essays sought to survey the broad spectrum of medieval Icelandic literary composition (and the more limited contributions of medieval Norway). Six contributors appear in both volumes, always with different essays, and only Diana Whaley, writing on only 'Skaldic Poetry' for the 2005 volume and 'Court Poetry' for the 2024 volume, has a similar subject in both volumes. However, references are used quite sparingly in the earlier volume, whereas they are ubiquitous, detailed, and generally bibliographic in the newer work, making its essays a particularly valuable resource for researchers. McTurk's volume remains very valuable, despite its age, but Heather O'Donoghue, Eleanor Parker, and their contributors have provided accounts of diverse subjects and up-to-date surveys of scholarship that make their book indispensable for any collection supporting teaching and research in the Old Norse-Icelandic field.

John Kennedy, *Charles Sturt University*

Petrocchi, Alessandra, and Joshua **Brown**, eds, *Language and Cross-Cultural Exchanges in Renaissance Italy* (Late Medieval and Early Modern Studies, 30), Turnhout, Brepols, 2023; hardback; pp. 433; 6 b/w illustrations, 8 b/w tables; RRP €115.00; ISBN 9782503601816.

This collection, edited by Alessandra Petrocchi and Joshua Brown, considers language and cultural exchange in Renaissance Italy. Petrocchi and Brown note that recent scholarly interest in 'multilingualism and networks of knowledge has coincided with the global turn in Renaissance history' (p. 12). Their study, which centralises the themes of language contact, the vernacular and multilingualism in the 'contact zone' of Italy, is, therefore, a natural progression of, and valuable contribution to, this scholarly trend, specifically to the fields of linguistics, cultural exchange, and Renaissance globalism (p. 13). The collection is divided into three parts. Part 1 focuses on the complexities and nuances of Italian vernaculars to demonstrate how Italian society was characterised by a rich variety of languages, dialects, cultures, and peoples. This section is a well-grounded precursor to its subsequent parts, which focus on Italian language contact and influence with Western Europe (Part 2), and 'Encounters with the East' (Part 3). This structure provides a complete picture of the nature of multilingualism and language exchange on the Italian peninsula and across Renaissance Europe. Together, the essays in each section deploy a range of interdisciplinary and comparative approaches that work in harmony to 'shed light on knowledge transfer across cultures and cross-fertilization of ideas' between 1300 and 1600 (p. 16).

Brian Richardson's opening essay examines multilingualism within the commercial practices of printing. On the Italian peninsula, the printing trade was characterised by high mobility and multiculturalism. The preparation and manufacturing of printed works were therefore influenced by a wide variety of Italian vernaculars and dialects. Richardson demonstrates how this directly

impacted authors, editors, printers, and their texts. For example, when the vernacular of the author and editor differed, the final text was often influenced by the editor's own 'linguistic habits' (p. 38). Richardson notes how prestigious Renaissance authors lamented non-Tuscan publishers for corrupting their texts with local vernaculars. Richardson's essay ties neatly with Andrea Rizzi's chapter on the 'trustworthiness' of Renaissance translators and editors. Rizzi explores strategies of trust-signalling by printing organisations through an analysis of prefaces, dedications, and/or any rhetoric that directly authenticated a text's trustworthiness to the reader. Optimistic language, second-person pronouns, and Latin origins were deployed as part of an affective process that persuaded readers to purchase a text. Moreover, translations of ancient texts relied on a mutuality or duality of trustworthiness. Renaissance readers sought texts where the reliability of the ancient author was matched by the credibility of the early modern translator. Richardson's and Rizzi's essays highlight concerns amongst Renaissance readers with accuracy and truth—something we, in the age of fake news, can sympathise with. Both pieces also provide important insights into the interplay between the Reformation and languages in print media. Richardson, for example, tracks the fluctuation of Latin texts during the Counter-Reformation. Religious scholars may find these conclusions useful.

Looking beyond the Italian peninsula, Megan Tiddeman explores Anglo-Italian language contact in fifteenth-century Southampton, a key port in medieval trade. The influence of Italian vernaculars (specifically Genoese and Venetian) on English mercantile language is evidenced by 'loanwords' or Italianisms which appeared in texts such as the Southampton Port Books (p. 276). The word 'cassel', for example, is identified as a loanword that refers to a chest for carrying merchandise (p. 283). Tiddeman examines the etymology of common and rare loanwords to illustrate how they reflected 'language contact in action' (p. 292). This chapter firmly establishes the influence of Italian language and culture across English society and beyond the educated elite.

Turning to the East, the interplay between Ethiopian and Italian culture and language is explored by Samantha Kelly. Italy held significant religious and diplomatic importance to the Ethiopians. Italian-Ethiopian communication was, however, largely conducted in Arabic, which, Kelly asserts, confirms the 'practical multilingualism' of Renaissance society and travelling diplomatic actors. Kelly finds the Gə'əz language played a significant role in the religious turmoil of the early modern period. The ancient origins of Ethiopian Christianity appealed to reformers who sought early Christian texts to consolidate notions of an apostolic church. Equally, the translation of Gə'əz texts was used by the Roman church to defend papal authority and Catholic ritual. Kelly asserts diplomatic and religious interactions between Italy and Ethiopia were not only significant throughout the Renaissance, but well into the Seicento.

The essays in this collection successfully assert that multilingualism and multiculturalism were embedded in Renaissance society on the Italian peninsula

and beyond. The breadth of approaches taken by the collection's authors work coherently to demonstrate how Italian vernaculars and other global languages shaped, and were shaped by, a range of Renaissance activities including trade, religion, diplomacy, and the production and consumption of literature. They illustrate that multilingualism and cross-cultural exchange permeated all levels of early modern society and were not just the preserve of an educated, cultural elite. Finally, this collection neatly intersects with other areas of early modern inquiry (such as diplomacy) by situating language and communication as a transcultural phenomenon. This reaffirms the notion that Renaissance Europe was an encompassing intellectual and cultural space. For these reasons, this book is not only recommended to historians of linguistics and cross-cultural relations but also to scholars of diplomacy, religion, emotions, and mercantilism.

Grace Waye-Harris, *The University of Adelaide*

Poggio Bracciolini, *Eulogies: Six Laments for Dead Friends*, edited and translated by Jeroen **De Keyser** and Hester **Schadee** (LYNX. Lysa Neo-Latin Texts, 3), Ghent, Lysa, 2023; cloth; pp. 300; RRP €49.00; ISBN 9789464753103.

De mortuis nil nisi bonum. Poggio Bracciolini followed this rule in his 'eulogies' (the right word). They were written over thirty years for close friends and other figures of his time. The first, for the renowned canon lawyer Francesco Zabarella, written and delivered at the Council of Constance in 1417, and heavily Ciceronian in style, is something of an outlier. The other five, of which four are 'fictitious speeches', are dated between 1437 and 1445. Two are for important men of the church: Niccolò Albergati, Cardinal of the Holy Cross, papal ambassador in England and France and representative of the Pope at the Council of Basel; and Giuliano Cesarini, Cardinal of the Holy Angel, for six years president of the Council of Basel, and, in the end, a crusading legate in Bohemia. The remaining three are for friends connected to Poggio from his youth by their common humanistic pursuits: Lorenzo de' Medici the Elder, friend and patron; Niccolò Niccoli, the book collector who seconded his book-hunting; and Leonardo Bruni, Chancellor of Florence and leading humanist.

It is easy to agree with the authors that their work is justified by the importance and fame of the author and his subjects. As well as on the concerns of the humanist movement, the eulogies 'provide an extremely valuable insider perspective on the political and ecclesiastical affairs of Poggio's day' (p. 7). Yet it is perhaps not 'astounding' that up to now there has been no properly edited text or a translation into any language. The same may be said of many other significant works of Latin humanism. Bruni's letters were not translated until 2014.

This meticulously researched and beautifully produced book consists of three equally valuable parts—introduction, edited text, and facing English translation—and is rounded off by a rich bibliography and *indices codicum*, *locorum*, and *nominum*. As I read the eulogies, I found myself continually going back to the

helpful biographies of Poggio and his subjects that make up the first section of the 'Introduction'. They are followed by 'Genesis and Genre', 'Praising the Dead' (sections of which benefit from the extensive work of J. M. McManamon on funeral oratory and panegyrical literature from the Italian Renaissance; for example, *Funeral Oratory and the Cultural Ideals of Italian Humanism* (University of North Carolina Press, 1989)), 'Poggio and the Church Councils', and 'Textual Transmission'. The Latin text has an *apparatus criticus*, which enables the reader to see the numerous places where the editor has been able to correct and improve the text as transmitted in the printed editions, and an *apparatus fontium* of classical and Christian authors. Footnotes to the text and translations provide essential brief explanations or comments on particular points. The Latin text and the translation are a pleasure to read, and I noticed very few slips—I think *contempto patrio censu* (pp. 192, 57–58) is more likely to mean 'spurned his father's wealth' than 'spurned his father's judgement'.

Poggio's eulogies were read and widely disseminated in his own time. There is a huge number of MSS (listed pp. 82–93), not all of which contain all six eulogies. They did not all appear together in the printed editions, either (pp. 94–97). Initially, the editors argue, Poggio thought of disseminating them in the collections of his *Epistolae familiares*. Indeed, the *laudatio* of Lorenzo de' Medici presents itself as a letter to Carlo Marsuppini. Between the first (1438) and second (1444) redactions of the *Epistolae familiares* it appears that Poggio got the idea of a collection of his orations, which was eventually established as a septet after the election of Nicholas V in 1447, when a speech of congratulations to the new pope made a seventh. It is this 'presumed final redaction' of the six funeral orations that the editors aim to reconstruct from manuscripts that contain them all (p. 98).

Why read the eulogies today? In their 'Introduction', the authors give excellent guidance on *how* to read them, pointing to Poggio's pioneering role in the genre (for example, his efforts to distinguish his orations from the scholastic funerary sermon by his biographical approach and concern with historicity) and establishing general principles and tracing their operation in the individual cases. As to *why*, one can invoke the usefulness of historical and biographical information, but the value of the eulogies is to be found elsewhere too. As Laurent Pernot argues (*Epideictic Rhetoric: Questioning the Stakes of Ancient Praise*, University of Texas Press, 2015, pp. 98–99), this sort of oratory operates on two levels, and on its general level, it reflects a society's best aspirations back to itself, explaining and justifying them. Therefore, Poggio's eulogies give us insight into the cherished values of the humanists of the first half of the fifteenth century, a very influential and self-conscious social group.

Frances Muecke, *The University of Sydney*

Pohl, Walter, and Daniel **Mahoney**, eds, *Historiography and Identity IV: Writing History across Medieval Eurasia* (Cultural Encounters in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages, 30), Turnhout, Brepols, 2021; hardback; pp. x, 377; 6 b/w illustrations; RRP €100.00; ISBN 9782503586588.

In a sense, this volume focuses on Europe by way of select Eurasian comparisons. As Walter Pohl notes in his 'Introduction', 'we hope to change the views of European historiography', clarify what is distinctively European, and explore 'hitherto ignored undercurrents beneath familiar European patterns' (p. 2). Europe is a frequent reference point throughout, even as the contributing chapters broadly move from East to West.

The first of the substantive research chapters, by Q. Edward Wang, posits 'four general characteristics' (p. 26) common to post-Roman and post-Han imperial histories: a change in recording, an ethnographic and geographic focus, an engagement with temporality, and an evident practical purpose behind the composition. Of interest is Wang's comments about the way that nationalist histories prompted the emergence of reactionary private histories, which leads neatly into Randolph B. Ford's study that draws on Procopius's *Wars* and Fang Xuanling's *Jinshu*. Ford's concern is to 'consider the ways in which the ethnological discourse of the classical era is employed in representations of foreign political actors' (p. 46). Intriguingly, Ford concludes that 'only in China's case did this involve establishing a stark demarcation between a barbarian Other and an imperial self' (p. 75).

Bernhard Scheid's focus is on the 'mytho-geneological' (p. 84) nature of Japanese court historiography. He argues that common to such texts is the way 'their origin stories served as a kind of constitution of the entire court' (p. 95), effectively providing a crucial 'genealogical link between the protagonists in these origin legends and the present social order' (p. 96). In an interesting pairing with this, Sarah Bowen Savant's chapter focuses on 'processes of erasure' and 'arts for forgetting' (p. 103) in Iranian historiography. Savant posits a series of 'techniques as ways of preventing recollection' (p. 105) that was operative in Iranian historical writing, challenging future researchers to approach this literature aware of these processes and their effects. Michael Cook's chapter also focuses on Iran. He examines competition between Iranian and Islamic historiographical narratives and suggests that over time there was 'a drastic transformation of the landscape' (p. 131) of historical writing whereby extreme positions softened as serious political threats diminished. Turning to Arabia, Daniel Mahoney focuses on al-Hamadānī's *al-Iklīl*, similarly addressing issues of identity. He argues that al-Hamadānī 'was able to conjure diverse memories of South Arabia's past in order to form a collective identity for its inhabitants' (p. 141).

Highlighting the interplay between local and broader historiographical frames is Scott Fitzgerald Johnson's examination of Syriac and Greek Byzantine chronicles. Scott suggests that such chronicles 'contribute to the construction of the identity of the author or the community they represent' (p. 158) in ways

that should encourage researchers to look beyond 'the concept of a strictly imperial Byzantium' (p. 179). Complementing this, Emmanuel C. Bourbouhakis's study of the *Bibliotheke* and *Excerpta* reveals a Byzantine turn towards 'the re-reading of the immense historiographic tradition' (p. 215). This, he argues, was 'not a narrowly academic exercise', but rather 'pivotal to the perception of their own place in history' (p. 198). Similarly, Yannis Stouraitis focuses on the role of history in the maintenance of a Byzantine imperial identity at a time when ethnographically minded national narratives were on the rise in Western Europe. Stouraitis argues that the *Scriptores* served the twin purpose of underlining 'a certain image of historical continuity' (p. 221) while also fostering a usefully malleable 'historical consciousness' (p. 221).

Turning further west, Simon Maclean takes a fascinating look at the emergence of the Lotharingians. He argues 'that early coinings of the term "Lotharingians" make most sense as strategic manoeuvres within the fluid context of a specifically post-Carolingian politics' (p. 252), turning our attention to the advantages of seeing ethnographical markers with more ambiguity in order to see historical politics with greater clarity. Bringing the case studies to a close is Matthias M. Tischler's chapter focused on *compendia* from the Rioja region of the Iberian peninsula. Tischler aims to show how contextualising such texts helps refine our understanding of intercultural exchange and representations.

Walter Pohl then brings the volume to a close with a survey chapter. Concluding that 'a bottom-up development of comparative perspectives has proven most productive' (p. 307), he revisits the findings of the preceding chapters and stitches together a broader picture to offer some interesting comparative perspectives that emerge from this worthwhile volume.

Nicholas D. Brodie, *Jane Franklin Hall*, *Hobart*

Powrie, Sarah, and Gur **Zak**, eds, *Textual Communities, Textual Selves: Essays in Dialogue with Brian Stock* (Papers in Mediaeval Studies, 37), Turnhout, Brepols, 2023; hardback; pp. 292; RRP €96.00; ISBN 9780888448378.

Anyone with even a cursory interest in the history of literacy and reading has likely heard the name Brian Stock. His prolific scholarly output has proven enormously influential in various fields, and editors Sarah Powrie and Gur Zak have collated here a fittingly eclectic group of essays from high-profile scholars engaging with his work.

The collection is divided conveniently into four distinct sections, each focusing on a different stage of Stock's prolific scholarly output. The first of these, with contributions from Seth Lerer, Paul Saenger, and Sarah Spence, builds upon Stock's *Augustine the Reader: Meditation, Self-Knowledge, and the Ethics of Interpretation* (Harvard University Press, 1996), which influentially established Augustine of Hippo as the founder of a far-reaching theory of reading as a mode of interiority and reflection. The second, meanwhile, concerns itself primarily

with Stock's earlier works, *The Implications of Literacy: Written Language and Models of Interpretation in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries* (Princeton University Press, 1983) and *Listening for the Text: On the Uses of the Past* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990). John Magee, Constant J. Mews, and Marcia L. Colish each utilise Stock's influential paradigm of 'textual communities' in their considerations of the interplay between authoritative sources and textual interpretation. Willemien Otten and Sarah Powrie venture even further back to Stock's very first monograph, *Myth and Science in the Twelfth Century: A Study of Bernard Silvester* (Princeton University Press, 1972), and provide two beautifully complementary essays concerning conceptions of nature in the early Middle Ages. Finally, Gur Zak, Jane Tylus, and Catherine Conybeare draw on Stock's *After Augustine: The Meditative Reader and the Text* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001) and round out the collection with ruminations upon Augustine's influence beyond the medieval world and into the Renaissance and modern era. This non-chronological approach to Stock's bibliography may seem odd at first, but is ultimately justified in that the sections constitute a thematic journey for the reader, beginning with Augustine himself before venturing on to the writers from the Middle Ages and through to modernity.

The great strength of this volume is the assurance with which it strikes the difficult balance between looking forward and looking back. Collections such as this one sometimes fall into the trap of dwelling too deeply on the previous work of the scholar in whose tribute they are published, without advancing much original thought of their own. Thankfully, here, that is most certainly not the case. The contributions present in *Textual Communities* rightly praise and draw extensively from Stock's impressive bibliography, but more importantly, they also build upon it in varied, inventive, and exciting ways. Lerer's essay, for example, convincingly places Stock alongside Peter Brown as one of the twentieth century's most important scholars of the intellectual history of late antiquity. Brown's emphasis on the corporeal stands in contrast to Stock's preoccupation with the interior self, but in unpacking this contrast Lerer thoughtfully articulates how these distinct but complementary conceptions might serve as foundational twin pillars for future research into late-antique textual communities. Meanwhile, Saenger's palaeographical contribution casts an even more innovative eye to the future, building upon Stock's analysis of descriptions of reading in Augustine's *oeuvre*. Saenger argues that the use of visual terms (for example, *videre; inspicere*) in such descriptions indicates a development from orality to reading as an interior practice linked to the mind's eye, something that is mirrored in manuscripts of the period and 'correlates to a paleographically altered presentation of text on the Christian page' (p. 69). The essay ends on an impressively interdisciplinary note, suggesting that contributions from cognitive psychology and the neurosciences might shed further light upon the cognitive effects of such change, a testament to the fact that foundational work such as Stock's remains ripe for innovative scholarly expansion.

Many of the essays are also adept at demonstrating that Stock's theories might be applied to various historical authors and contexts. Mews's contribution is especially noteworthy here, engaging with Stock's paradigm of 'textual communities' and examining the transmission of the popular seventh-century treatise *The Twelve Abuses of the Age.* The treatise was originally intended as part of an ethical project aimed at establishing social cohesion in Ireland, listing a series of moral misdemeanours. Mews observes, however, that by the end of the twelfth century, the text had been adapted by a French Augustinian canon, Hugh of Fouilloy, in order to target purely clerical abuses and encourage reform. It is a masterful display of historical detective work that attests effectively to the mutability of the text and its potential to be appropriated via interpretation for different purposes and audiences.

Of course, this volume will be especially pertinent to readers with an admiration for Professor Stock, or an academic interest in his theories and scholarship. However, there is much of value here for those with broader interests as well. Otten's and Powrie's contributions, for example, will delight anyone with an interest in medieval conceptions of nature, while Zak's and Tylus's are sure to be attractive to scholars of the Renaissance. This reader was especially enamoured with Tylus's quite moving consideration of how Renaissance writers 'say goodbye' to their readers, their own works, and themselves (p. 217). This essay's insight into Catherine of Siena is especially piercing, and Tylus sensitively demonstrates how Catherine's final letter to her confessor has self-consoling properties rooted in its anticipation of a 'generous reader' (p. 220).

Textual Communities itself is likely to find generous readers by virtue of its own merits. Unfortunately, it is not possible to praise each essay individually in a review of this length, but Powrie and Zak have assembled here a formidable textual community of their own, and each author really does contribute something thoughtful and unique to the overarching discussions present in the volume. Final and special mention must be made of the two lovely tributes that bookend the collection. Aviad Kleinberg and Natalie Zemon Davis reflect upon their own relationships with Stock himself with both wit and sincerity. What emerges is a portrait of Stock as both a brilliant scholar and a generous human being; in Kleinberg's words, 'like the Dark Knight, a silent protector of the academic community' (p. 19). It is heartening that someone so thoroughly decent should inspire a collection so thoroughly impressive as this.

Mitchell Thompson, *The University of Adelaide*

Pugh, Tison, *Bad Chaucer: The Great Poet's Greatest Mistakes in the 'Canterbury Tales'*, Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Press, 2024; hardback; pp. 261; RRP US$30.00; ISBN 9780472133444.

Even mighty Jove, the adage tells us, nods. So too Geoffrey Chaucer, who in Tison Pugh's intriguing, thoroughly unorthodox, reading of the *Canterbury Tales* can be said to have nodded, and nodded, and nodded. Chaucer's reputation has fallen and

risen since his death, but Pugh's thesis is not that the so-called Father of English poetry is any less of a major writer because of his 'badness', but that a close study of his narrative and other missteps in the *Canterbury Tales* reveals a great deal about the complexities that make his poetry so important. Chaucer was a real person; his readers should not expect to find perfection in his work. Doing so will ultimately only lead to disappointment.

Pugh notes, for instance, that the *Knight's Tale* is an example of what happens to a narrative when genres collide within a story—in this case, epic and romance, which present decidedly different narrative arcs. A generic infelicity also informs the *Miller's Tale*, where the stock *senex amans* character, John the carpenter, is treated with sympathy. More troubling is the *Reeve's Tale*, which attempts to balance sexual violence with humour. The *Cook's Tale* represents a real narrative stumbling block. Is its conclusion absent or simply confused? 'In the end, the most frustrating aspect of the *Cook's Tale* as evidence of Chaucer's badness emerges in the likelihood that it points instead to a lost masterpiece testifying further to his [Chaucer's] genius' (p. 49).

While the *Man of Law's Tale* has an ending, that ending misfires, since we cannot be sure if Constance's saga is a satire on prosperity or on overdependence upon divine providence. The Wife of Bath fares no better given the contradictions between her portrait in the *General Prologue* and the tale that she tells, in which women cannot ultimately win. The *Friar's Tale* may be an exemplum, but it is one whose point or message is incoherent, thanks either to the Friar or to Chaucer himself. The *Summoner's Tale*, populated as it is with dead children, cannot quite pull off its comedic response to the Friar. A similar muddle occurs in the *Clerk's Tale*, which lacks a coherent theme and is, therefore, unable to establish any kind of convincing theodicy to explain what lessons are to be learned from the suffering of an overly patient wife at the hands of her overly cruel husband.

Unresolved narrative entanglements also undercut the *Merchant's Tale*, so much so that its point is impossible to pin down. The *Squire's Tale* is purposefully bad, and readers can, therefore, revel in its rhetorical failures. The Franklin, in contrast, tells a better tale, but it too eventually concludes unsatisfactorily because it cannot reconcile the conflicting demands of *fin' amour* and courtly love. In the *Physician's Tale*, women live in a world where they are suffocated by misogyny and murdered by their fathers. In the *Pardoner's Tale*, the presence of the Old Man vexes. He distracts from a sound sermon told by the most unscrupulous of storytellers. The *Shipman's Tale* presents Chaucer as a punster, but, unfortunately, not all his puns hit the mark.

More troubling is the *Prioress's Tale*. It is unclear just how much antisemitism a reader is supposed to tolerate. Soft readings of the tale argue that Chaucer's readers should tolerate, or at least try to explain away, a great deal of antisemitism; harder readings counter that readers should never tolerate, or try to explain away, even a hint of antisemitism, Chaucerian or otherwise. Pugh's solution is to suggest that the most honest reading of the Prioress and her troubling tale requires us

to acknowledge that Chaucer has written an antisemitic tale while writing in a decidedly antisemitic age. Less problematic is the *Tale of Sir Thopas*. It is hilarious to read but excruciating to listen to—which might just be Chaucer's point. The *Tale of Melibee* is problematic for other reasons. With its overuse of maxims and questionable allegories, it is not quite clear if the tale is meant to be intentionally bad art, or if it is simply Chaucer really nodding. The *Monk's Tale* is not so much bad as it is boring. In the *Nun's Priest's Tale,* misogyny is once again front and centre, and Pugh argues that, here and elsewhere, 'Chaucer can insult women while ingratiating himself to them as well, which is hardly a feat worth crowing about' (p. 190). In the *Second Nun's Tale*, the narrator's inscrutability undermines whatever potential her tale may have held. The *Canon Yeoman's Tale* adopts a textbook tone that ends up undermining its rhetorical effectiveness. Likewise, the *Manciple's Tale* promises readers some form of 'sentence' or 'solaas' but leaves only contradictions behind.

Pugh characterises the *Parson's Tale* as meekly heretical and ultimately a 'narrativeless narrative' (p. 219). The sermon that the Parson preaches reflects a kind of cafeteria-style Christian exhortation that picks and chooses which theological points it wants to emphasise and which it wants to ignore or gloss over. Finally, Chaucer's perplexing Canterbury retraction lays the groundwork for Pugh's approach in his study. While Chaucer may have, tongue firmly or not so firmly planted in his cheek, apologised for what he has written, Pugh argues that Chaucerian badness is not a fault, but a virtue: the 'faults and lapses, misjudgments and misfires [of all artists] deserve not merely to be discussed and analyzed but also to be recognized as part of their very greatness' (p. 229). *Bad Chaucer* is not a condemnation of the great man but a paean to his uniqueness as a writer. In this important and thought-provoking study, Pugh has given us an important new way of looking at Chaucer, warts and all.

Kevin J. Harty, *La Salle University, Philadelphia*