

Reviews

Ali, Samer M., *Arabic Literary Salons in the Islamic Middle Ages: Poetry, Public Performance, and the Presentation of the Past* (Poetics of Orality and Literacy), Notre Dame, University of Notre Dame Press, 2010; paperback; pp. 312; R.R.P. US\$32.00; ISBN 9780268020323.

Within the increasing movement in late classical and medieval studies to focus on orality and its role in textual, cultural, and historical development, Samer Ali's volume on medieval Arabic literary salons, the *mujasala*, is a welcome addition. Showing evidence of its origins as a PhD thesis, this book is nonetheless a useful study of the practices and impact of the oral performance of literature in the Abbasid caliphate. The author uses textual examples to illustrate his study on the social significance of the practitioners in these salons, including that of women and children in the community, their impact as social institutions, and the formation and transmission of an Arabo-Islamic cultural memory. A familiarity with Abbasid history and geography is implemented throughout, making this book accessible to the wider, and Western, medieval scholarly community.

The book begins with a survey of the historical influences, or predecessors, of the *mujalasat*, relating the Greek *symposion* to its development. Setting the space for literary performance, the forms that the *mujalasat* took are traced to both salons and gardens, and its geographical reaches from ninth-century 'Iraq' to Andalusia and North Africa. Ali's choice of secondary literature to buttress the historical and cultural framework for non-Arabists is kept within the scope for medieval scholars with the references to George Makdisi's work on medieval Arabic culture and societies of learning and patronage. The nature of the texts performed is also addressed, with emphasis on the great variety of literature used. Ali also notes the accessibility of paper and the consequent proliferation of texts in the Arab World, facilitating this performance culture. A large number of historical texts were performed, and Ali makes convincing points on the perception of truth and authenticity, the literal and the figurative, in the interplay between history and fiction, as well as the differing approaches to recording history.

The study encompasses the impact of the *mujalasat* on the audience and performers. Ali looks at the motivations for the performers to be appreciated and credible, gaining social status and influence. The preparation for performance was social in nature, but carried the responsibility of transmitting

differing versions of histories, with the influence of well-known performers lending importance and credibility to the material and the performer. Ali examines the interpretation and reinterpretation of the material according to the audience, and how the poet's integrity was appraised by his consistency in verbal structure, humour, and adjustment of the text. In this way, the author shows how the individual held the power to reframe tradition and cultural history by adapting literary canon, and how the *mujalasad* became the venue for 'receiving, adjusting, and re-presenting inherited knowledge' (p. 116).

The relationship of the concept of *adab* and those values of the influential practice of Sufism to literary reception and performance is discussed skilfully. The role that Sufi values played in performance, as well as on medieval Arabic culture, is expounded, with the example of the poems of Ibn al-Jahm. Here Ali provides a contextual reading of *Rusafiyya*, the story about the transformation of a character from bumpkin to courtier, illustrating the complex impact of performance poetry on the suppression of glory and ego in Sufi *futuwa*, or chivalric behaviour.

Though there is demonstrated intimate knowledge of primary texts, and even appendices presenting the poems in Arabic, from the opening sentence this book seems to attempt to address a wider, non-medieval audience. The giant Sequoia trees of the North American continent are referred to in setting the timeframe of the Islamic Middle Ages, and, though these trees are more than 1000 years older than the author gives them credit for, these redwoods have no relation to, or influence on, Arabic literary society. Almost as disparate are the references to nineteenth-century romanticism and orientalism, such as Edgar Allen Poe's *The Thousand-and-Second Tale of Scheherazade*, and twentieth-century American events and political thought, such as the ineffective digression relating the murder of the Abbasid caliph al-Mutawakkil to the assassinations of John F. Kennedy, Martin Luther King, and Malcolm X. The vast changes that occurred in Western cultures between the Middle Ages and the nineteenth century, which were not reflected in the Arab World, should not be left so much to the reader's imagination.

Ali offers a good appraisal of Arabic literature in the humanities, and makes a case for *adab* to be part of Middle Eastern studies in universities. Whilst the author should be given credit for his attempts to illustrate to some degree a 'fear of the foreign', and to link his work to the present, the value of his impressive study on the reception and performance of texts should not be diminished for more focused scholarship. The volume is well indexed, but would benefit from a glossary, as some complex terms that are integral to Ali's study, such as *adab* or *mujalasad*, take fluid definitions for the purpose of his discussions, and would be good to reference, with etymologies, in one

place. The listing of primary texts apart from the main bibliography would also be appreciated by many scholars of medieval and Arabic literature.

This volume takes a much-needed step towards the understanding and accessibility of medieval Arabic literary culture for medieval scholars in all fields.

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Boehrer, Bruce Thomas, *Animal Characters: Nonhuman Beings in Early Modern Literature* (Haney Foundation), Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010; cloth; pp. 256; 8 b/w illustrations; R.R.P. US\$49.95, £32.50; ISBN 9780812242492.

Even when speaking for themselves, animals in literature represent human understanding – of humans themselves, of their relationship with nature, of their moral concerns. Taken together, qualities ascribed to animals amount to literary characters that can tell us, as Bruce Boehrer demonstrates, about paradigmatic shifts of representation of human character, the most important of which is marked by the Cartesian delimitation of what it means to be human. Descartes's inward focus on the human ability to think as the distinguishing characteristic of humanity marks the beginning of what would result in the flourishing of the novel as a genre. But with the breakdown of the Cartesian worldview came a crisis of defining the boundaries of humanity and with that, a crisis of literary character.

Boehrer argues that the study of animals offers a useful perspective from which to study both the development of literary character and its crisis. His chosen method is 'a set of interrelated zooliterary histories' (p. 3), the aim of which is 'to sketch in a bit of western literary history by studying the development of concepts of literary character from the standpoint of interspecies relations' (p. 27). *Animal Characters* is a book of metamorphoses – transformations of animal representations that show us both the transient nature of models used to describe nature and some surprising continuities.

An animal inseparably connected with the tradition of chivalry, the horse is a fitting marker of the rise and fall of the heroic literary character of romance. Reading the works of Pulci, Boiardo, Ariosto, Tasso, Shakespeare, and Milton, Boehrer contrasts the end-stage of courtly romance tradition in which the horse embodied the potential for human-like representation in a heroic setting (Baiardo of Ariosto's *Orlando furioso*) with the works of

Shakespeare and Milton where the horse is no longer given a recognizable character.

Although parrots were known in the West during the Middle Ages, it was not until the fifteenth century that they became relatively common – and with that their appearance and ability to mimic voices underwent a transformation from wonderment to a focus on annoyingly repetitive parroting. In tandem, as Boehrer observes, their etymological and symbolic association with the papacy moved during the Reformation to an emphasis on the repetitive, mindless performance of Catholic liturgy.

In the third chapter, Boehrer brings us to a world where the torture, burning, and killing of cats was viewed as entertainment or could be used to ward off evil. Boehrer shows how Protestantism, far from abandoning the practice, translated it to attack Catholicism: cats were tortured and burned all the same, but rather than warding off evil they represented the backwardness and corruption of the Catholic Church.

When encountering the turkey, explorers classified the exotic looking bird, in terms of the familiar, as a variety of peacock. The ensuing species transference resulted in the turkey inheriting the peacock's characteristics (regality, delicacy, but also vanity and pride) – until the discovery of its culinary qualities and the rapid spread of consumption among the middle classes resulted in the devolution of the turkey to a common festive food, and a marker not of exotic tastes but of gluttony.

The 'Vulgar sheepe' of English literature that Boehrer explores are an essential, metaphor-clad element of bucolic descriptions, as well as an important commodity that can be bought, sold, and stolen – and suffer from mildew rot. Yet urbanization, contingent on enclosure and opening land to sheep, created an environment in which bucolic themes were idealized, and 'real' sheep were no longer described.

Boehrer's treatment of transformations from exotic to quotidian is lucid and engaging, and his intimate portrayals of animal characters in their literary contexts are convincing. The effect of the book, however, is weakened by several factors. The near-absence of the Middle Ages is understandable given Boehrer's chronological scope (1400–1700), but a substantial reference to the considerable medieval discourse on human and animal characteristics, especially in moral contexts, would help bridge the gap of the nearly two millennia that separate Theophrastus and Descartes. In the Introduction, Boehrer refers to a very simple argument, yet the realization feels heavy-handed. A single paragraph, for example, moves from Marx to Bentham, Kant through Derrida, Descartes, Deleuze, and Guatari, and ends with Agamben (pp. 4–5), and is filled with loaded sentences open to a number

of interpretations without a clear sense of the author's understanding or direction. Moreover, the seeming parallel between the lack of distinction between animals and humans in the pre-Cartesian world, and the postmodern desire to break down that division again, is only hinted at, which adds to the impression of disjointedness and unnecessary convolution, not entirely due to the 'limitations of the scholarly idiom' (p. 27). Despite some problems the book does reward a close reading and offers a unique perspective and a wealth of fascinating material.

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Boyarin, Adrienne Williams, *Miracles of the Virgin in Medieval England: Law and Jewishness in Marian Legends*, Woodbridge, D. S. Brewer, 2010; hardback; pp. 230; R.R.P. £50.00; ISBN 9781843842408.

The Miracles of the Virgin are short accounts of the Virgin Mary's miraculous intercessory powers. They first appeared in the early Middle Ages and enjoyed great popularity throughout Europe, usually collected into large compendia. Surprisingly, this stimulating book is the first to examine Marian miracles in a specifically English literary and cultural context.

However, as Professor Boyarin indicates, a discussion of Marian miracles in medieval England is not unproblematic. The huge compilations of Marian miracles so prevalent on the continent, such as Gautier de Coinci's thirteenth-century *Miracles de Sainte Vierge*, are virtually non-existent in England. This is despite the fact that the genre is usually accepted to be an English invention, one of the expressions of an intense interest in Marian devotion and liturgy in England in the early Middle Ages. After an early proliferation of compilations of English Marian miracle texts in the twelfth century – by monastics Anselm the Younger, Dominic of Evesham, and William of Malmesbury, and the earliest known vernacular collection, Adgar's Anglo-Norman *Le Gracial* – it seems that not much else appears until the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries.

This apparent hiatus, which is peculiar to England, is often attributed to the wholesale destruction of Marian miracle texts that allegedly occurred during the Reformation. Boyarin takes issue with this assumption, arguing that there is no lost corpus. Not only were Miracles of the Virgin an important genre throughout the Middle Ages in England but they survived the Reformation more or less intact. The main reason for this, according to Boyarin, was the miscellaneous nature of their appearance. English Marian miracles, of which 171 survive in Middle English, are found scattered in

sermons, miscellanies, and legend cycles rather than in dedicated collections, and so escaped the zeal of the reformers. Indeed, she argues that English Marian miracles are characterized by their miscellaneous nature and exemplarity, and as a result are porous and adaptable, able to absorb and expose shifting social and religious contexts.

Why this miscellaneous nature might be the case in England and nowhere else Boyarin attributes to the particular cultural and historical conditions relating to the expulsion of the Jews from England in 1290 and the growth of the English judicial system throughout the thirteenth century. Miri Rubin and others have noted that English Miracles of the Virgin are marked by a pronounced anti-Semitism. The hermeneutical, or imagined, Jew is a familiar trope in English Marian miracles throughout the period, both pre- and post-expulsion, appearing in narratives such as the Jewish Boy of Bourges, the Blood on the Penitent Woman's Hand, or the popular Theophilus legend. In all these tales, the Virgin acts as an intercessor to effect a miraculous cure, or rescue from the misguided or evil-doing of Jews, and often converts the Jew in the process.

In the Jewish Boy of Bourges, the Virgin saves a Jewish boy cast into flames by his father as punishment for taking Christian communion. While the father perishes in the same fire, both the boy and his mother are converted. In the Theophilus legend, Theophilus contracts his soul to the devil with the help of a Jewish sorcerer and then successfully prays for Mary's help to undo the written contract. Boyarin argues that in medieval culture Jews, as keepers of records and accounts, were identified with writing and documents. Similarly Mary, as the bearer of the Word, was seen to have dominion over legalities, embodied in legal documents such as charters. Occupying 'a liminal space between Judaism and Christianity', Mary is well positioned to both intercede against Jews and convert them.

One of Boyarin's main points is that the Mary that emerges from these English miracles is not always the familiar gentle and benevolent Virgin of mercy but a stern judge, a fierce and learned advocate able to battle demons and penetrate hell. She is both Mary *mediatrix* and Mary *legislatrix*.

Some may find Boyarin's ideas contentious, but she is always cautious in her claims and is careful not to generalize. Her arguments are often original and she has many pertinent points to make about medieval constructions of the Virgin as well as the relationship between Mary, Jews and legality. She also makes a contribution to scholarship on the important late fifteenth-century illustrated Carthusian miscellany held in the British Library, MS Additional 37049, with her suggestion that three of the Marian miracles in the text relate

to illustrations elsewhere in the manuscript, thus arguing for an interactive, non-sequential mode of devotional reading.

One of Boyarin's aims is to make known understudied English Marian miracles and to this end she has included in the appendices some previously unpublished texts as well as a useful index of all the Miracles of the Virgin discussed in her book.

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Boyce, James J., *Carmelite Liturgy and Spiritual Identity: The Choir Books of Kraków* (Medieval Church Studies 16), Turnhout, Brepols, 2008; hardback; pp. xv, 524; 18 b/w illustrations, 30 tables; R.R.P. €90.00; ISBN 9782503517148.

This is a monumental volume on a recondite and apparently narrow subject: the unique collection of twenty-six manuscript choir books dating from the late fourteenth to the nineteenth centuries belonging to the Carmelite convent in Krakow, all but one of which are still in their original home. But while I suspect that the book as a whole will not find more than a select audience of musicologists and liturgists, there is much here that would reward the attention of a wider audience of medievalists.

Of the four medieval orders of friars, the Carmelites are the least well known and the least researched. Their order has always suffered from the lack of a charismatic founder and from having a legendary rather than historical version of its origins, and since the early modern period it has been overshadowed by its more glamorous reformed and discalced offshoot. And Poland, although undoubtedly part of the Western Church, is peripheral for most Anglo-Saxon medievalists, whose gaze is so often focused on England and France.

James J. Boyce allows for this widespread ignorance by devoting much of his first chapter to an up-to-date account of the Carmelite order, its obscure and rather exotic early thirteenth-century origins in the Holy Land, its rules, and its liturgy. Only then does he move on to an account of the convent at Krakow, founded in 1397 from Prague and the first Carmelite foundation in Lesser Poland. Chapter 2 is devoted to the 'distinctive and uniform' Carmelite liturgy. This had originated in the rite of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem, itself imported into the Latin Kingdom from France, was codified in the ordinal compiled by the German Carmelite, Sibert de Beka, and promulgated in 1312.

Chapter 3 examines in great detail the contents, organization, and relationships of the Krakow convent's six medieval choir books (specifically antiphonaries), three of which originated in Prague. Boyce shows how the Carmelites remained independent from the local diocesan tradition, celebrating such distinctive feasts as the Commemoration of the Resurrection on the Sunday before Advent. Other specifically Carmelite observances were associated with the Holy Land (e.g., the feast of the Patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob), with the Virgin Mary (e.g., the early adoption of the feast of the Conception, which for some time functioned as the order's patronal festival, and of the feast of Our Lady of the Snows), and with members of the extended Holy Family (e.g., the feast of the Three Marys). Many of these feasts had distinctive chants, seventeen examples of which Boyce describes in detail. Those who wish to know more about the manuscripts themselves can find dimensions and complete lists of contents in the Appendix, though there is no systematic information provided on script, decorative schemes, or bindings.

Chapter 4 traverses even more unfamiliar territory: the various adaptations, as evidenced in the later Krakow choir books, which the Carmelite liturgy underwent in response to the reforms of the Council of Trent. The Council imposed the Roman rite on the whole church, with a few exceptions. These included the Carmelites, who were allowed to revise their distinctive rite and submit it for papal approval. But the Carmelite friars were relatively few in number and had to continue to write their revised choir books rather than resort to printing. Consequently the Krakow convent, like other Carmelite houses, continued to produce manuscript antiphonals and graduals into the eighteenth century, while some of the medieval manuscripts were adapted so that they could continue in use. Other post-Tridentine developments included the addition to the sanctorale of Polish, Swedish, and Carmelite saints, along with their offices.

A brief final chapter summarizes the previous chapters and discusses the significance of the Krakow collection as a whole. Underlying the vast array of information that the author has marshalled is a theory about the role of the liturgy, alongside the distinctive white habit that is often represented in the choir books, in defining 'a sense of corporate identity', especially important when that identity is otherwise blurred or problematic, as was that of the medieval Carmelites.

The book contains a generous allowance of thirteen black and white figures, mainly reproductions from the manuscripts. It is not always easy, however, to make out relevant details and one regrets the absence of any

colour illustrations, the more so because the author's occasional references to the 'sheer beauty and exquisite details' of the 1644 manuscript and its 110 historiated initials make one eager to know (and see) more. Unfortunately, even in this age of digitisation, readers are likely to yearn in vain.

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Boyle, Jen E., *Anamorphosis in Early Modern Literature: Mediation and Affect* (Literary and Scientific Cultures of Early Modernity), Farnham, Ashgate, 2010; hardback; pp. 176; 18 b/w illustrations; R.R.P. £50.00; ISBN 9781409400691.

Jen E. Boyle examines 'the "double" action of the anamorphic experience' (p. 4) in early modern literature and techno-science. Her brief review of Jacques Lacan's interpretation of Hans Holbein's *The Ambassadors* emphasizes her preoccupation with a double perspective. What Boyle touches upon in her monograph but fails to state explicitly is that the viewer's gaze is mediated by the Lacanian stain, represented by the flattened skull. The stain is important because the main portrait and the skull are incompatible. It represents an intermediary third perspective over which the main portrait has mastery.

However, Chapter 1 defines anamorphosis as Epicurean interplay between a living and imagined experience. Boyle then examines the Camera Obscura, and what Jean Leurechon terms the hole through which images are projected. Boyle recognizes that the hole 'serves as a kind of anamorphic "skull" or shadow', but does not make the connection with the Lacanian stain (p. 31). The chapter continues with an analysis of Lucy Hutchinson's translation of Lucretius's *De rerum natura*. Boyle finds 'anamorphic energy' in the 'binary forms' of Hutchinson's poetic explanation of *simulacra* (p. 37). Gendered bodies are half-remembered metaphoric objects that continually change shape and form. Continuing the body theme, Boyle examines the two frontispieces that were created for Thomas Hobbes's *Leviathan*, noticing in the fair copy an anamorphic image. The crucial difference from the actual frontispiece is that the faces on the monarch's body peer out at the viewer. They represent Lucretius's *simulacra* that reproduce the monarch's symbolic power.

The image of Charles I that is displayed in the *Eikon Basilike* begins Chapter 2. These celebrity-like portraits are criticized in John Milton's *Eikonoklastes*. Boyle connects Milton's concerns over the idolatrous worship of the king's image with how a monarch's power is redistributed throughout his kingdom. Her discussion leads to the anamorphic representation of landscape and

perspective in *Paradise Lost*. The Garden of Eden is analysed in conjunction with how seventeenth-century gardens are mapped and cultivated. Boyle then argues how the intervention of Galileo's telescope in the epic poem mediates between Satan's shield and the hills of Fiesole in which neither perspective is privileged.

The next chapter focuses on Margaret Cavendish's *Observations Upon Experimental Philosophy* and *The Blazing World*. Boyle argues that both works in their own ways create a double perception. In *Observations*, Cavendish creates fictional alternatives to established scientific theories that Boyle defines as 'anamorphic allegories and embodiments' (p. 82). *The Blazing World* provides a similar reading by combining 'experimental science with allegorical romance' to create a science fiction utopia (p. 88).

Chapter 4 returns to *Paradise Lost* particularly 'Eve's double role as empiricist and alchemist' in the Garden of Eden (p. 99). Interestingly, when Michael is showing Adam the results of the Fall, Eve's role is restricted to her deceptive imaginings of the garden that are 'now the disembodied stain of Hobbes's phantasms and geometrical motion' (p. 99). Boyle's implicit recognition of an anamorphic stain could have led to further discussion. Instead, the chapter turns to the equally fascinating topic of narrative and virtual reality and its connection to Milton's allegory concerning the characters Satan, Sin, and Death.

Chapter 4 reads Daniel Defoe's books *Robinson Crusoe* and *A Journal of the Plague Year* in terms of space that is 'resistant to domination and control' (p. 118). Robinson Crusoe's discovery of a footprint, and then Friday, challenges his presumed mastery of the island, and how it should be mapped. With *A Journal of the Plague Year*, Boyle analyses the relationship between contained space and bodies both living and dead. The narrator's scientific tables of how the plague has affected the contained poor areas indicate the restrictions imposed by privileged space.

The last chapter continues the analysis of *A Journal of the Plague Year* by using mirror neurons as a literary tool. Boyle argues persuasively that mirror neurons do not represent scientific progress, but update 'past theories of mediation' (p. 140). In Defoe's book, the phantasms seen by the poor people, affected either physically or mentally by the plague, are reproduced indefinitely. In the same way that mirror neurons recognize that images are both real and virtual, Boyle affirms that the ghostly apparitions represent the living dead.

Boyle's rigorously intellectual and well-researched work will appeal to readers interested in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century literature

and techno-science. It is also a perfect example of a monograph that every humanities PhD student should study.

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Brett, Martin and Kathleen G. **Cushing**, eds, *Readers, Texts and Compilers in the Earlier Middle Ages: Studies in Medieval Canon Law in Honour of Linda Fowler-Magerl* (Church, Faith and Culture in the Medieval West), Farnham, Ashgate, 2009; hardback; pp. xviii, 205; 6 b/w plates; R.R.P. £65.00; ISBN 9780754662358.

Dr Linda Fowler-Magerl, the honorand of this volume, has reinvigorated the study of pre-Gratian medieval canon law in a manner similar to Anders Winroth's path-breaking findings on the authorship of the *Decretum* of 'Gratian'. Fowler-Magerl's work on judicial procedure literature, sources, and transmission of pre-Gratian canonical collections (most notably in her 1998 *Kanones* CD-ROM database), and the compilation, acquisition, and transmission of such texts is obligatory reading for any serious incursion into these fields. The twelve contributors to this volume, among the foremost established and emerging scholars in the field of medieval canon law, have appropriately honoured their dedicatee in the level of scholarship and insight that pervades this *festschrift*.

Roger Reynolds's chapter considers the inclusion of the *Notitia Galliarum*, a popular and widely disseminated text compiled in the late fourth or early fifth century, in a Salzburg liturgico-canonical collection of the ninth century. Noteworthy for Reynolds is the modification of the text of the *Notitia* in this latter collection to reflect a preoccupation with changing ecclesiological and political circumstances in Gaul. Implicit also is the significant inter-relationship between canonical and liturgical collections of this early medieval period.

Abigail Firey draws on her recent monograph (*A Contrite Heart*, Leiden, 2009) to posit a relationship of a different sort, between penitential theology and jurisprudence. Firey analyses the influence of Christian thought on law in the late eighth- and early ninth-century Carolingian period. It is Firey's contention that jurists' awareness of innocence and guilt as a matter buried invisibly in the human heart resulted in the 'domain of penitential activity' being brought 'ever nearer to the domain of judicial activity' (p. 29), especially in a time that coincided with Carolingian imperial expansion and the ongoing threat of counter-insurgency.

Greta Austin compares two of the most important canonical collections of the eleventh century, the *Decretum* of Burchard of Worms and Ivo of Chartres's *Decretum*, on the issue of 'authority', specifically what makes law binding. Austin's important study challenges traditional orthodoxies of the eleventh-century 'Gregorian reform movement' as privileging church over secular authority, since neither canonist 'looked to the Roman Church as definitively shaping orthodoxy' (p. 57). Her observations are noteworthy in the broader sweep of legal history, since one of the 'hallmarks of the Western legal interpretation is this concern for authority' (p. 58). Christof Rolker also challenges such accepted views of the Gregorian reform, disputing the claim that the *Collection in Seventy-Four Titles* of the late eleventh century was the 'first manual of [Gregorian] reform' (p. 59). Rather, Rolker argues, that collection was consistent with a 'monastic reform' agenda.

Several contributions point to the dangers of ignoring interstitial sources that defy strict categorization. Kathleen Cushing's chapter on the phenomenon of the 'intermediate collection', that is non-extant compilations 'whose existence can be posited as a link between other collections' (p. 73), offers a re-assessment of one such collection: the so-called *Collectio canonum Barberiniana* of the early eleventh century. For Cushing, the study of the transmission and use of that text 'offers a window' (p. 81) on canonistic activity in central Italy in the early twelfth century.

Uta-Renate Blumenthal examines another intermediate source, the *Liber Terraconensis* of the late eleventh century, to consider whether a 'friendship network' existed in the regions surrounding Poitiers and Bordeaux in the same way that Ian Robinson had observed in south Germany. She finds similar reformist tendencies, and hence support for Pope Gregory VII, in both regions.

Martin Brett analyses 'additions', namely 'external interpolations, supplementary texts' (p. 137), that were added to manuscripts containing the works attributed to Ivo of Chartres. Brett's survey indicates, among other things, that these texts were 'more widely read, and more carefully revised over time, than is at once apparent from a bare catalogue, and continued to be so well after the middle of the twelfth century' (p. 152).

Robert Somerville also uses an addition, specifically a group of anonymous decrees inserted into a twelfth-century manuscript containing the *Panormia* attributed to Ivo of Chartres. This 'textual nugget' (p. 106) duplicates some of the canons from the Council of Pisa in 1135 and, Somerville suggests, with other evidence, points to a re-thinking of the influence of that Council on Church policy on slave trading and local conditions.

The remaining chapters deal with twelfth-century texts. Anders Winroth finds further support for his two-recension theory of Gratian's *Decretum* (respectively, after 1139 and before 1150) in the contrasting treatment of marital consent in the two versions. Informing these differing views, he notes that the earlier Gratian I demonstrated 'deeply felt pastoral concerns' while the later Gratian II was merely a 'professional jurist' (p. 121).

Bruce Brasington examines the use of texts from the *Decretum* and the Bible in a mid-twelfth-century treatise on legal procedure, called the *Ordo 'Pro utraque parte'*, which specifically dealt with the means for establishing the veracity of oral testimony by witnesses. Further, its 'lack of overtly canonistic specialisation' (p. 133) made this *ordo iudiciorum* treatise equally serviceable in secular courts. This situation of flux between secular and ecclesiastical jurisdictions came to an end in the thirteenth century with the emergence of ecclesiastical courts as 'established institutions' (p. 184), James Brundage argues. His chapter on behavioural rules, or etiquette, governing advocates from the thirteenth century onwards emphasizes the continuity in such practices to the present day.

Peter Landau offers a revisionist thesis on the origin of law teaching in England. Traditional theories linking Master Vacarius and his Roman law textbook to Oxford in the early to mid-twelfth century have been discredited by Richard Southern. But, meticulously piecing together Southern's evidence with more recent studies, Landau suggests instead that Vacarius taught law at Lincoln in the 1170s and 1180s, and it was his students who went on to teach at Oxford post-1190.

This is an important collection of studies that forays deeply into and beyond the researches initiated by Linda Folwer-Magerl, thus continuing the recent renaissance in medieval canon law studies.

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Coolidge, Grace E., *Guardianship, Gender, and the Nobility in Early Modern Spain* (Women and Gender in the Early Modern World), Farnham, Ashgate, 2010; hardback; pp. 184; R.R.P. £60.00; ISBN 9781409400530.

In early modern Spain, disease, war, voyaging, and confrontations with the law often resulted in the death of the male head of noble families. A power vacuum was left when death occurred before children were old enough to inherit titles and estates. Understanding the threat this posed to the rights of

their children, and the status and wealth of their families, fathers took care to name guardians for their children in their wills. From 1350 to 1750, more than 80 per cent of noblemen chose their wives to fulfil this role.

While appointing one's wife to be the guardian of her own children may seem the natural choice, in early modern Spain this was at odds with the concept that wives should be enclosed within households under the protection and authority of men. Guardianship involved being active in the public sphere and this went against the ideal. Moreover, the *Siete Partidas*, the legal code, suggested that women were not up to the task, as not only were they 'naturally greedy and avaricious' and on a par with 'the dumb, deaf and mentally deficient' (p. 1), there was a likelihood they could neglect or harm their children. As women were considered to be naturally lustful, it was feared that if mothers remarried, their love for a new husband would overpower all other affections and responsibilities – to the detriment of the children under their guardianship.

In *Guardianship, Gender, and the Nobility in Early Modern Spain*, Grace Coolidge investigates this dichotomy between social practice and legal tradition. In doing so, she shows that noblemen chose wives as guardians for their children in the knowledge that they were able 'emergency carriers of wealth, figures who could hold the family together until its future could be secured' (p. 95). Her evidence is taken primarily from wills, dowry and marriage contracts, lawsuits, genealogies, and letters from the family archives of nine noble families in the Osuna, Frías, and Astorga collections in the National Historic Archives in Toledo. The cases include women who were *tutores*, guardians of girls under the age of twelve and boys under the age of fourteen, and *curadores*, guardians of children aged between twelve and twenty-five – the age of majority.

In the first chapter, the legal position of women and the legal aspects of guardianship are explained. While a widower automatically retained legal guardianship of his children, a widow did not. Yet, when women were appointed guardians, they were able to actively participate in business matters, which meant that they were held legally liable for their economic decisions. It was generally a failure to administer, maintain, or even increase assets that caused the court to remove the rights of guardianship, but as Coolidge states in Chapter 2, such women were 'privileged and worked all their lives to retain and improve their status within the established system' (p. 53). It was thus logical that their husbands should trust them with the task.

The 'hard work, worry, and responsibility' (p. 65) associated with guardianship, changed emphasis during the period covered by this book. In the fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries, guardians often had to fight

small-scale wars over boundaries and jurisdictions. After the expulsion of the last Muslim ruler of Granada in 1492, such 'battles' were more likely to take place in the courtroom as the nobility consolidated their possessions and set about managing their estates. In Chapters 3 and 4, Coolidge shows that while guardianship, especially of an heir, had its advantages, women guardians faced myriad challenges, especially as estates under guardianship were vulnerable to legal challenges from relatives and rival families. One of their most important duties was to ensure that children made marriages that secured the future status and prosperity of their family – no easy task in a family without a male head. The fact that many women were successful suggests that they had the education, economic experience, and social mettle required to operate in the public sphere.

This was just as well, for in Chapter 5 we learn that guardians had to be skilled litigators, especially if they had inherited debts or were responsible for non-inheriting children. Coolidge shows that some women who faced long-term debt were skilful in maintaining estates, consolidating assets to provide dowries, and brokering marriages for their children. In doing so, they were pursuing a 'multigenerational strategy' (p. 135) to maintain the prestige and influence that were crucial to their families' on-going status and survival.

Guardianship was not permanent. Coolidge concludes her study by examining what happened to women once their daughters had married and their sons had taken over the running of their estates. Having lost both the responsibilities and power associated with guardianship, some entered convents or secluded themselves in their homes. Others, however, continued to actively promote their families' interests and mentor younger family members – a role they were well qualified to fulfil.

Although this study of women as guardians focuses on a limited number of noble families, it does reveal that the patriarchy of early modern Spain was a complex system in which gender roles were not 'set in stone'. There was room for manoeuvre, particularly when the future of a noble family was in jeopardy. The book is well referenced, includes an extensive and useful bibliography, and can be recommended to those interested in issues of gender in early modern Europe, as well as to those working in Iberian history.

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Copeland, Rita and Ineke **Sluiter**, eds, *Medieval Grammar and Rhetoric: Language Arts and Literary Theory, AD 300–1475*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2010; hardback; pp. 992; R.R.P. US\$ 175.00, £95.00; ISBN 9780198183419.

The classical definition of *grammatica* was ‘the art of interpreting the poets and other writers and the principles for speaking and writing correctly’. Its purpose was to allow students to speak and write with great eloquence, but *grammatica* was only the beginning of literacy. Any study of Latin learning and its effects on other cultures and linguistic communities must also include a treatment of rhetoric. Ancient rhetoric supplied a vast range of formal rules, strategies, and techniques for oral argument that were initially designed for the courtroom but eventually permeated into all manner of public discourse. By the antique period it was already being translated into a practice for *litteratura* (written discourse). The tradition of the *grammaticus* remained relatively unchanged from the antique period until c. 1100, but a change ensued in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries that saw ancient methods truncated to concise, easily manageable units of pedagogy and versified for easier memorization.

In this volume, editors Rita Copeland and Ineke Sluiter have supplied selections from over fifty medieval treatises and commentaries on rhetoric and grammar in English translation, many of which have never been translated before. After a clearly written and coherent General Introduction, the editors structure the volume by first dividing it into six sections reflecting the applications, developments, and sub-traditions of these language arts, particularly post-1100, and then by ordering the texts chronologically. Each section has its own Introduction outlining the historical context of the texts, and the similarities and differences between them. Each text is also presented with further introductory headnotes and details of either the original Latin edition that has been translated or the translation they are reprinting. Although the volume considers developmental and sub-traditional aspects in the history of grammar, certain specializations are not traced, particularly the *ars dictaminis* (letter writing) and the *ars praedicandi* (preaching), the incorporation of grammar into philosophical discourse which sought to develop the belief that language mirrored the reality of the physical world (referred to as speculative (or ‘mirror’) grammar), and the development of dialectic which was classified with grammar and rhetoric as part of the *trivium*.

Part I, ‘Arts of language, 300–950’, begins with excerpts from the oldest extant verse grammar, that of Terentianus Maurus’s *De Litteris* and *De Syllabis*.

Unfortunately, and somewhat unhelpfully, the early monuments of grammar and rhetoric – Aelius Donatus, Victorinus, Martianus Capella, Priscian, and Boethius – are then rather hastily covered. The arrangement of material in this section requires readers new to the field of ancient and medieval grammatical and rhetorical studies to connect far too many theoretical and technical dots. On occasion, the reader must juggle numerous pages and texts at once in order to capture a clear understanding of a matter, doctrine, or practice. The Introduction to the part offers a neat historical summary, but is certainly not substantial enough to cover this issue. Part II, ‘Dossiers on the ablative absolute and etymology’, is a different matter as it charts the developments of both from the third to the fourteenth centuries. The introductions to each are crisp and informative, and the excerpts are well linked to produce a more coherent teaching; one wonders why single subject units were not also used to organize Part I.

That said, the editors appear to be on surer footing as the book progresses and the periods become more constricted. Part III, ‘Sciences and curricula of language in the twelfth century’, presents ten samples beginning with commentaries on Priscian’s *Institutiones*. It includes excerpts from William of Conches’s major work, *Philosophia Mundi*, and his tract on grammar appended to this work, generous samples from Rupert of Deutz, Thierry of Chartres, and Dominicus Gundissalinus, and ends with Alexander Neckam’s list of textbooks for students of the liberal arts found in his *Sacerdos ad Altare* (c. 1210). Because of the narrowing of the period, the excerpts form a much more coherent narrative of developments in the teaching of grammar and rhetoric across this century, particularly the disentanglement of grammar from logic and the elevation of grammar to an art of knowledge revealed through a deep understanding of syntax and its principles of agreement.

Part IV, ‘Pedagogies of grammar and rhetoric, 1150–1280’, traces the movement towards greater student access to the grammars of Priscian and Donatus, particularly for those pupils coming to Latin from a strong vernacular education. In this regard, the verse grammars – the *Doctrinale* of Alexander of Villa Dei (1199) and the *Graecismus* of Eberhard of Béthune – were paradigmatic, accounting for the idea that Latin was a second language to most students. Their verse format made them easier to memorize.

Part V, ‘Professional, civic, and scholastic approaches to the language arts, c. 1225–c. 1272’, narrows the chronological field even further. As Copeland and Sluiter claim, ‘By comparison with the scholarly institutions of the twelfth century, the world of the thirteenth century is one of specialization’ (p. 684). Given that the thirteenth century is well represented by the editors in previous parts, it is clear they place great emphasis on the excerpts of

treatises included here. Brief extracts from Vincent de Beauvais's *Speculum doctrinale* (1260) and Aquinas's preface to his *Expositio* of Aristotle's *Posterior Analytics* (1270) are represented but again in too small a sample for the doctrines to become clear and the texts to have any genuine impact on the novice reader. The particular focus here is on Brunetto Latini's *Rettorica* (c. 1260): Latini produced the earliest vernacularized text of a Ciceronian work, the *De inventione*, and inspired other grammarians to do the same with ancient rhetorical works.

Part VI, 'Reception of the traditions, the language and poetics in the later Middle Ages, ca. 1369–ca. 1475', samples five texts that demonstrate the diffusion and to a great extent the continuity with the ancient past of grammatical and rhetorical theory in later teaching. The editors' emphasis here is on English vernacular writing – particularly excerpts from John Gower's *Confessio amantis* (1386–90), which treats the ethical dimensions of rhetoric as a 'practical science', and John Lydgate's *Fall of Princes* (1431–39), in which he forges a link between rhetorical persuasion and poetry.

The book is supported by a detailed Bibliography, a full glossary of Latin terms and names, and a comprehensive index. My reservations with Parts I and V aside, this is a most welcome collection. The structure of the book generally works well, but readers might have been better served by two volumes, with the first dedicated to Part I. That said, there are always limitations for editors of such a work and Copeland and Sluiter have handled this monumental task with great editorial skill and are to be applauded for their efforts.

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Courouau, J.-F., P. Gardy, and J. Koopmans, eds, *Autour des quenouilles: la parole des femmes (1450–1600)* (Texte, Codex & Contexte 10), Turnhout, Brepols, 2010, hardback; pp. vi, 164; R.R.P. €41.00; ISBN 9782503533568.

In the late fifteenth century, there appeared a number of texts that tell of women meeting to engage in a common women's occupation, usually spinning. As they gather around their distaffs they converse about subjects of interest to women: *la parole des femmes autour des quenouilles*. Even in the earliest of these texts the distaff was a central symbol of women's occupation. The most important text, and the one central to in this book, is the *Evangiles des quenouilles*, which recounts a series of six meetings, from Monday through Saturday, in which six elderly women (hence potentially women

of accumulated wisdom) in turn bring up a subject of discussion as they work. Their subjects cover a range of women's beliefs, superstitions, taboos, popular sayings and proverbs, ruses, remedies against the hazards of life, and ways of getting something desired. Although it is implied that these items of faith and trust are invested with the authority of the Gospels to the women, the attitude towards women in this and other texts is derisive.

The purpose of this book is to draw attention to a tradition hardly recognized or explored in histories of literature. As the editors point out in their Introduction, there is nearly always a male in the texts who is editing the women's conversations, so that there are always questions of perspective: Who is speaking? And what is the nature of the public to which the conversations are directed? Although these questions are raised in the Introduction, they are never discussed; the book stays on the periphery of its subject and does not explore it. It claims to bring together a number of versions of meetings of women in different languages of Western Europe, but in fact the range and number is limited to a few Romance languages – French, Spanish, and Occitan. No German or Scandinavian text is mentioned.

The account (in the Introduction) of the genesis of the book helps to explain its fundamental weaknesses. The articles derive from an international colloquium in Toulouse that adopted a format rare in France or, indeed, anywhere else: 'au lieu de demander aux participants de venir lire un article quasiment fini, tous ont été priés de présenter un projet d'article, qui a été envoyé à tous les participants ... pour que l'on puisse faire ensuite, ensemble, non pas un volume d'actes, mais un livre d'une conception équilibrée' (p. 4). But what is a 'conception équilibrée'? Is it one in which there is little divergence of interpretation? A reading of the contents does not suggest that the contributors have been guided by a balanced overall concept. On the contrary, this unusual approach turned out to be unfortunate for this project, since all the contributors, having much the same familiarity with their core material, write essentially to one another rather than to a wider academic public. They assume an audience as familiar with their texts as they are and do not make an effort to instruct it about the content and tenor of the texts they deal with. The only essay that gives some account of the contents of the *Évangiles des quenouilles*, Madeleine Jeay's, is relegated to the final position in the book. It should surely have been the first.

Of the ten articles in the book, seven are in French, three in English. One of those in English deals with an English translation of the *Évangiles* that was printed by Caxton. More interesting and informative about Caxton's methods and history of publication than about the translation itself, it reinforces one's impression of the skirting of central issues associated with

the texts of women's discourses. Another of the articles – a piece on the Spanish *Corbacho*, written in English by a Spanish speaker – contains numerous awkward expressions and errors that checking by a native speaker would have caught. That these errors remain suggests that the editors did not check, again pointing to a weakness in their overall project.

In general the articles talk around the subject indicated in the book's title rather than about it. Only two of the essays on the *Evangiles* directly discuss its content; the others deal with peripheral matters like regionalisms in its language and its onomastics. The *quenouilles* and the nature of the women's conversations as they spin are lost sight of early in the book and are not caught sight of again until the final essay by Madeleine Jeay.

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Cressy, David, *Dangerous Talk: Scandalous, Seditious, and Treasonable Speech in Pre-Modern England*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2010; cloth; pp. xiii, 374; R.R.P. £25.00; ISBN 9780199564804.

Sir Thomas Smith's 'fourth sorte who do not rule' – the vast majority of the population in early modern England – have left relatively few traces in the historical records. Many historians have acknowledged their existence cursorily, working into their studies a few examples of lower-order insubordinate speech. There have, however, been fewer suggestions of how representative such instances of speech were or what, if any, penalty followed. In this study, Professor Cressy explores these issues as part of his wider project, tracing the gradual emergence of what we now call 'freedom of speech', a phrase of very different meaning in the sixteenth century, as he investigates transgressive statements, and, where possible, their repercussions, across five centuries, with a particular focus on the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries.

David Cressy has made many significant contributions to understanding the culture of 'pre-modern England', and this study is an important addition to his work. Religious admonitions against 'evil speaking, lying and slandering' are familiar enough, but as Cressy reiterates, the most dangerous words were always those against magistrates and monarchs, in part because commoners had no right to discuss affairs of state. Of course, they often did pass comments on their betters and rulers, and with the increased reach of printed broadsheets, the practice increased further. Cressy's interest in disruptive words goes beyond that focus to include scolding and quarrels across the social spectrum from villagers to academics and gentry, in developing his

argument that ‘unruly tongues’ were a social threat at all levels. This study offers striking examples of abusive exchanges and also illustrates graphically the complex interactions of the categories of seditious words and treasonous speech.

Treasonable remarks were always at the most dangerous end of the spectrum of spoken words, and shifting attitudes to whether words alone constituted treason is a major theme of this work. The usual penalties for treason were the most gruesome form that rulers could devise, and it is when Cressy turns to this topic that the more serious implications of the study emerge. For many different reasons, seditious utterances were often reported to magistrates and other authorities, but there are fewer details of what punishment, if any, followed. Presumably local patronage was one reason for intermittent penalties. More significantly, from his extensive work in the records, Cressy provides persuasive evidence of how informed many of those whose place was ‘to be ruled’ were about royal and political matters, particularly from the sixteenth century. This may have owed more to the religious changes successive Tudor monarchs introduced than Cressy acknowledges, the result of which was a heightened consciousness of monarchs and their significance, particularly at the parish church level.

In 1534, during the reign of Henry VIII, as Cressy remarks, treason law was extended to encompass words as well as deeds, but there was always some unease about that. Seventeenth-century lawyers much preferred to rely on deeds rather than words to prove treasonable intent. There was some (entirely predictable) seditious muttering against the accession of a foreign king from 1603, and against subsequent Stuart monarchs. Cressy also addresses Catholic dissent in the seventeenth century; he had previously paid curiously little attention to the Elizabethan Catholics who suffered the full rigour of a traitor’s death, despite, for many, their attempts not to challenge the queen’s authority. In the next reign, the trials of the lawyer Edward Floyd, who rejoiced in the Protestant defeat at White Mountain and sneered at the fortunes of the Stuart family embroiled in the disaster, led to a debate in the Commons which offered a superb demonstration of just how inchoate, but brutal, remained the official stance on scandalous talk.

In the reign of Charles I, the case of Hugh Pyne in 1627 provides an impressive example of a significant clarification of the law. Pyne undoubtedly spoke critically of the new king but after lengthy proceedings the judges ruled that although ‘evil’ words might indicate a possible treasonous purpose, words alone were not treason. And by the end of that politically troubled century, Cressy argues, the English could speak freely, providing they avoided blasphemy or slander.

The study concludes with a brief review of the fortunes of free speech from Hanoverian to modern England, the current freedom to speak critically of monarchs and magistrates, and the different verbal taboos today. But, above all, what Cressy offers in his sweeping survey of the changing fortunes of 'dangerous talk' from early modern to modern times is much enriched access to dissident talk across the population before the advent of modern forms of media, and an intriguing insight into the changing fortunes of what is tolerable and intolerable language. It is a worthy addition to the publications that have already ensured Cressy's impressive reputation.

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Cruickshank, Frances, *Verses and Poetics in George Herbert and John Donne*, Farnham, Ashgate, 2010; hardback; pp. 146; 1 b/w illustration; R.R.P. £50.00; ISBN 9781409404804.

Frances Cruickshank's monograph is a significant literary achievement for several reasons. It is firstly an important contribution to literary criticism of early modern poetry; although its focus is the poetry of John Donne and George Herbert, the arguments are relevant and applicable to scholarly work on their contemporaries. Secondly, the book is a carefully argued interrogation of our modes of literary criticism. Specifically, it questions some of the assumptions and practices of new historicism and, while not denying the gains that have been made from these approaches, argues the need for a reinvigorated focus on the poetics of verse. The book is thus a thoughtful and persuasive voice entering into debates and discourses on literary theory and critical approaches. The third dimension of the book's value is that it is beautifully and poetically written; it is the product of a unique scholarly mind giving words and ideas prolonged and deep thought. Every sentence has been carefully crafted, resulting in a monograph that is simply a joy to read.

The book's introduction 'Poetry versus Materialism' signals its argument that the verse of Donne and Herbert was significant as a laden and privileged mode of religious discourse, one with an articulate self-consciousness about the processes and frustrations of religious verse. Cruickshank questions the way in which developments in new historicism and cultural materialism risk developing untenable binary oppositions between poetry and materialism. She argues that, given that the human experience of life is 'a chaotic mix of the material and the immaterial' (p. 2), we should approach early modern poetry in more nuanced and complex ways. Her work aims for a confluence

of historicism and formalism, following the work of Richard Strier and others. Such an approach is essential for the early modern period given that 'poetry in this period is both material and imaginary, equally culture is material and imagined' (p. 2). Thus she situates her book and argument amidst the current challenges to the monopoly of historicism posed by the re-emergence of aestheticism.

Divided into four sections, the book firstly explores 'The Soul in Paraphrase: Writing and Reading the Religious Lyric', investigating the unique challenges that early modern religious verse poses. How do we approach verse that was imagined and crafted as an intense mode of communication with the divine, while simultaneously a rigorous self-examination and questioning of personal motives implicated in that process? In what ways did the poetics of form, the process of art-making, facilitate or undermine authentic religious feeling? 'In poetry, conflict arose between the sincerity or "hart-depth" of religious feeling and the potential insincerity of the rhetorical vehicle' (p. 19). Cruickshank draws from the work of Henry Peyre, Lionel Trilling, and Stanley Fish in tracing the critical history of this issue. As she observes, the poets write poetry about the inadequacy of poetry, while pointing to the resonant absence of the poetry they would like to have been able to offer their god. The poets move towards liminal spaces between the earthly and the divine, at least gesturing towards what they cannot accomplish.

The second section, 'Taking Figures: Metaphor and Theology in Religious Poetics', reiterates the centrality of metaphor to religious thought and thus to religious poetry: 'In early modern thought, Christian allegory, analogy and image were not special but habitual' (p. 41). The author argues that metaphor needs to be recognized as a process in which the material world is transformed by the immaterial 'which in turn realizes or memorializes a moment otherwise lost' (p. 43). Drawing from earlier work on metaphor, by Max Black and others, Cruickshank argues that metaphors in the hands of the devout imagination become potent vehicles of knowledge.

Section three, 'Green Matter and the Figure of the Garden', explores the importance of the figure of the garden and organic imagery in the work of Donne and Herbert. God is figured, in many of their poems, as a gardener, an idea with a long theological history. The poets ask Him to tend to the space of their souls and poetry, to make both fruitful. As Cruickshank observes, in their poetry we find 'the horticultural self': 'The devotional self, which is also essentially the literary self, is constructed as a green space that is by nature outlandish and overrun, and requires the deforesting intrusion of the divine gardener and "landlord" to prune and discipline an imaginative wilderness into fruitful subjection and the offering of praise' (p. 92). In this regard, the

chapter would have benefitted from an engagement with Maryanne Cline Horowitz's *Seeds of Virtue and Knowledge* (Princeton University Press, 1998) which explores the extensive tradition of organic imagery as metaphors of intellectual and spiritual growth.

The fourth section, 'The Poetics of the Eucharist: Poetry that Matters', examines the central importance of the Eucharist as an idea where the material and the immaterial collide in theology and religious poetry. Cruickshank argues that through metaphors and figures, poetry cultivates matter and that the poetry of Herbert and Donne involved a transformation in the turning of matter to sacrament. She brings the historical contexts of contemporary debates on the status of the Eucharist to bear on her argument that in this poetry 'there is no contest between the material and the literary, but a fruitful conjunction' (p. 112).

Overall the book is intelligent, articulate, and dense with ideas. It is one that will reward re-reading and will be of interest not only to scholars of Donne and Herbert but to a wide range of readers in early modern literature and those engaged with questions of how we approach poetry. Cruickshank's is an innovative, original, and poetic new voice in the field and her first monograph deserves a wide readership.

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Cummings, Brian and James **Simpson**, eds, *Cultural Reformations: Medieval and Renaissance in Literary History* (Oxford 21st Century Approaches to Literature), Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2010; hardback; pp. 704; 6 b/w illustrations; R.R.P. £85.00; ISBN 9780199212484.

This volume is the second in the "Oxford 21st Century Approaches to Literature" series. Like the first (Paul Strohm's *Middle English*) *Cultural Reformations* contains essays written by established literary historians (e.g., Greenblatt on Thomas More) and newer voices, and aims at further breaking down periodization. The editors encouraged contributors to examine works either side of 1500 and suggest that ongoing squabbles about terms ('medieval', 'Early Modern', 'Renaissance') are 'always half arguing about [modernity] anyway' (p. 8).

The fruit of a 2008 Harvard conference is thus a timely contribution to debates about chronologies, histories, and modes pre/post-Reformation. Like *Middle English*, *Cultural Reformations* is divided into sections and papers

grouped under dynamic, one- or two-word headings that seemingly encapsulate a concept (and also reflect current disciplinary fashions: no colons here!). While emblematic and engaging – e.g. ‘Anachronism’, ‘Conscience’, ‘Idleness’, ‘Persona’ – these do not always best reflect content, nor is it always clear what the link is between an essay’s title and its location in the volume.

In a collection of thirty-two essays, some groupings and papers will inevitably work better than others (and it is not possible to do all justice here). The section entitled ‘Labour’, for example, contains three essays which employ differing interpretations of the term and whose connections are not immediately obvious. Whereas the sections on ‘Histories’ and ‘Spatialities’ include essays whose conclusions may be extrapolated and more widely applied, those investigating ‘Communities’ and ‘Doctrines’ are more circumscribed. They seem even to be relegated to a lesser status in the volume’s structure, bookended by ‘larger’ – perhaps more ‘prestigious’ – historiographical or literary questions.

A number of essays are particularly enjoyable: Margreta de Grazia’s lucid ‘Anachronism’ rehabilitates Lorenzo Valla’s *De falso credita et ementita Constantini donatione declamatio* (1440), for example, debunking key contemporary scholarship to show that ‘It is not the forger’s anachronisms that incense Valla, but his barbarisms’ (p. 22). De Grazia reveals how the concept of anachronism has become a litmus test for some scholars, who identify the Renaissance ability to ‘detect’ it as proof of an emerging sense of historical differentiation. Jesse Lander’s subsequent essay on historiography neatly picks up where De Grazia leaves off.

Jennifer Summit, like a number of other contributors, unpacks a concept traditionally seen as signifying the divide between medieval and early modern: in this case, a perceived medieval preference for the *vita contemplativa* and the Renaissance focus on the *vita activa*. A number of scholars have argued that the latter is due to the rise of science as a discipline, but Summit takes Francis Bacon and Walter Hilton as evidence of how the two ideals were significantly more porous than neat divisions made for the benefit of chronology or discipline might suggest.

Andrew Hadfield’s essay on travel is also exemplary in its careful unpacking of the rapid developments in travel and changes in religious experience pre- and post-Reformation. Margery Kempe, he demonstrates, uses her travel experiences (of images or places) as a ‘means of perceiving her spiritual life’, while William Lithgow ‘sets himself at odds with external signs’ and locates his spirituality ‘within himself’ (p. 143). While wary and hypercritical of the popery of Rome, Lithgow is nevertheless open to religious plurality when he

reaches Jerusalem, and seems to accept ‘a wider range of forms of devotion outside Europe than he would inside it’ (p. 146).

Hadfield is not alone in examining Kempe’s work, and one of the features of this volume is that while contributors theoretically have a very broad period of English literature and myriad writers to investigate, many discuss not only the same authors but also the same works. Chaucer (particularly his Nun’s Priest’s Tale) and More put in the most frequent appearances, but Kempe and Marvell (particularly ‘Upon Appleton House’) are not far behind. In some ways, this implicitly connects the essays and could have served as a narrative thread joining sometimes very different pieces. Yet I felt this potential was not exploited: few works refer to others in the volume, and the end result of the references to Chaucer and More, for example, was to limit the collection’s range (though the volume is served by a comprehensive index). With a 300-year period to choose from – and a very long piece of string on either side – it seemed a shame that the same conversation should be had without addressing fellow contributors’ conclusions.

My primary reservation is that the collection’s terms of reference are not extended as far as they could have been (one of the editors’ aims), and that key figures are metonyms for a shadowy whole. Brian Cummings’s closing essay, which takes medieval and Renaissance receptions of Augustine’s *Confessions* as a way into a history of reading, is on the other hand an example of what can be achieved. What *Cultural Reformations* does exceptionally is to show how scholars traditionally classified as ‘medievalists’ or ‘early modernists’ will ideally move effortlessly across what are too often thought of as boundaries, discrete or distinct periods. The best essays in this volume draw pre- and post-Reformation English literatures much closer together (e.g. Seth Lerer’s ‘Literary Histories’), and the early modernists’ contributions are particularly adept and provoking.

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Dunbabin, Jean, *The French in the Kingdom of Sicily, 1266–1305*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2011; cloth; pp. xviii, 312; 6 tables; R.R.P. US\$99.00, £60.00; ISBN 9780521198783.

In the mid-1260s, Charles d’Anjou, youngest brother of the French king Louis IX, defeated the descendants of the Emperor Frederick II and laid claim to their southern Italian kingdom. In this detailed and considered study, Jean Dunbabin sets out to explore the impact the presence of Angevin

rule in the Regno had upon northern France. The book draws to a close in 1305, after which: 'southern influences on France ... dwindled to the almost unnoticeable' (p. 2). By exploring the cultural, social, administrative, intellectual, and military impact of four decades of French involvement in southern Italian affairs, Dunbabin consciously seeks to question a view she identifies with historians such as Robert Bartlett: the idea that French influences were dominant in this period, with Capetian France setting a pattern that was imitated across Europe. Dunbabin is largely successful in demonstrating that, prior to the French defeat at Courtrai, southern Italy played a role in the development of Capetian government, as well as in northern France's intellectual and cultural life.

The book is divided into four parts preceded by an Introduction. In Part I, 'Means of communication', Dunbabin surveys the nature of the links that bound northern France to southern Italy. The three chapters that comprise this section of the book consider the practicalities of travel and moving money, as well as the diplomatic links between the royal courts. The second part, 'Indirect channels of communication', consists of one chapter. It begins by exploring the role Angevin lands north of the Alps played in the diffusion of southern Italian culture and ideas. In Dunbabin's view the role was, based on the available evidence, minimal. The chapter moves on to explore the part played in the transmission of ideas by those who passed through the Regno, such as Philippe III, and those who were temporary visitors, such as the counts of Vaudémont.

In Part III, 'Settlers in the Regno', Dunbabin offers a detailed study of those individuals and families who established themselves in southern Italy for a prolonged period. This part begins with Robert II d'Artois and the Dampierre family, and moves on to consider less important aristocrats. Rich in detail, these five chapters end by assessing why the French were committed to involvement in the south, and exploring the nature of their lives in the Regno.

In its final part, 'Cultural and political impacts', the book offers eight varied chapters that explore the impact of French experience in the Regno on everything from royal ideology and administration, to literature and medicine. The book ends with a clear conclusion, preceded by a short epilogue. The latter focuses on physical structures in northern France, such as the gardens at Hesdin and the hospital at Tonnerre, which would have perpetuated the memory of involvement in the Angevin kingdom.

Amongst the many excellent features worth highlighting is the book's discussion of the role of Robert II d'Artois. This reflects a profound knowledge of the sources, both printed and archival. By demonstrating that many of

the innovations in Capetian administration – ranging from enregistering documents to new forms of taxation and the development of popular assemblies – had clear links to the Regno via Robert, Dunbabin convincingly challenges traditional assumptions about the evolution of government during Philippe IV's reign.

At the same time, certain aspects of the book might have benefitted from further development. The discussion in Chapter 14 of the importance of Robert's sumptuary laws in the development of French practices would be more convincing if discussion of Philippe III's own legislation in this area was not relegated to an appendix. In discussing ties between the royal courts, Dunbabin all too quickly passes over a potentially significant aspect of Capetian–Angevin diplomatic relations: Philippe III's candidature for the position of western emperor in 1273 (not 1272, cf. p. 191). Nor is her argument that the origins of the wording of the false bull *Scire te volumus* lie in diplomatic exchanges involving Philippe of Chieti entirely convincing as it stands.

There are also gaps in the book's exploration of cultural links. Discussion of the impact of French translations of Frederick II's *De arte venandi cum avibus* is, for example, extremely limited. There is, notably, no discussion of Andrew of Hungary's lengthy composition describing Charles d'Anjou's initial victory (ed. by G. Waitz in *MGH Scriptores*, 26, pp. 559–80). This work, dedicated to Charles's nephew Pierre d'Alençon, was almost certainly intended to justify the Angevin conquest to a northern French audience, and its relationship with the writing of history in France is therefore worth exploration. Connections between the chronicle of Géraud de Frachet and southern Italian influences are similarly overlooked. At least one manuscript of the chronicle now in France was copied in Italy and in the keeping of Charles d'Anjou's physician, Jean de Nesles.

Nevertheless, despite some omissions, this remains an extremely important work. It is a model of comparative history, and offers historians of late medieval France important new ways of thinking about the reigns of the later Capetians.

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Fossier, Robert, *The Axe and the Oath: Ordinary Life in the Middle Ages*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2010; cloth; pp. 400; R.R.P. US\$35.00, £24.95; ISBN 9781400836147.

In the preface to *The Axe and the Oath: Ordinary Life in the Middle Ages*, Robert Fossier states his aim as the examination of the ordinary life of the ‘human beast’ (p. x) in medieval Europe – ‘no economic exposé will be found here, no chart of technical achievement, no class struggle: just a poor everyday man’ (p. xii). This is perhaps as clear a description of what is to be found within this book as can be made. Fossier draws upon over four decades of experience in the social history of medieval France to produce what is an immensely wide-ranging, eclectic and engaging study of human life from conception to burial. Spanning a continent and a millennium, Fossier touches upon everything from the weather, attitudes towards animals, and perceptions of social order, to memory, and notions of good and evil. The scope is breathtaking. It was inevitable that it should fail in some respect.

The Axe and the Oath begins with the ‘human beast’. Chapter 1 blends biological imperative with theological world-view. Fossier delineates the physiological being of ‘medieval man’: the way in which it was viewed according to popular theology, and the threats to its well-being such as leprosy and the Black Death. In fact, much of Fossier’s focus throughout this book is upon the physical and material constitution of his subjects, perhaps inevitable given the author’s social–historical background. Fossier does not ignore intellectual and psychological aspects of medieval people – Chapters 6 and 7 treat of ‘knowledge’ and ‘the soul’ – yet it is undeniable that the weight of emphasis in the book falls upon the body of man and its material environment.

My use of the word ‘man’ is no accident. Perhaps a result of infelicitous translation, the all-too-frequent reference to ‘man’ throughout the book becomes grating. In Chapter 2, ‘The Ages of Life’, Fossier does to some extent mollify an impression of sexism. While reasonably pointing out that, so far as the majority of written records are concerned, ‘women were mute’, Fossier does what he can to ‘trace female “counterpowers”’ (p. 82). Yet one cannot help feeling that, while when explicitly speaking of women Fossier is laudably even-handed, the reference to ‘man’ throughout the book indicates more than a quirk of translation – Fossier’s focus does indeed fall predominantly upon medieval *men*.

Chapter 3, concerned with medieval ‘Nature’, combines elements of environmental science and climatology with medieval notions of the four elements and folk-superstitions. This is a fine example of the way in which

Fossier's eclectic approach can, at its best, effortlessly blend and explicate streams of historical investigation that too rarely meet in a cohesive way. However, Chapter 4, on 'Animals', is less satisfactory. Here Fossier's generalizing grows too vague, and even at times descends into platitude and opinion. While the sweeping scope of Fossier's topic doomed him to some degree of generality, a greater deployment of vignettes, statistics, and other such concrete examples would have enhanced both meaning and reader enjoyment.

In Part II, entitled 'Man in Himself', Fossier turns to less tangible aspects of medieval life, specifically: social organization, knowledge, written and artistic expression, and matters of the soul. This social historian admits feeling 'ill at ease' in addressing such 'mental "superstructures"' (p. 221), and the second half of the book is both less engaging in tone and more provocative in assertion than much of Part I.

Fossier concludes his book with: 'In truth, I am not quite sure whom I am addressing. ... Simplistic for the erudite, confusing for the student, obscure for the non-initiate? I don't know; I felt like saying all this, and that is enough' (p. 384). Here is an author well aware of his work's limitations, yet refreshingly unapologetic. I have to agree with Fossier; the ideal readership for this book is indeed obscure. Elsewhere the author warns that much of his material is drawn from northern France of the twelfth to fourteenth centuries (p. xii); and that the resulting 'neglect of chronological or geographical nuances' is sure to irritate the specialist (p. xii). Perhaps Fossier should have contented himself with delineating the ordinary life of the medieval Frenchman? Occasionally, too, an error slips in – ergot, for instance, was *not* eradicated by the introduction of 'nitrate fertilizers' (p. 19). A final irritant was the complete lack of footnotes or endnotes, bibliography, or any guide to further reading, and (particularly annoying for a reviewer) – no index.

Reservations aside, the engaging, almost chatty tone of his writing, Fossier's frequent comparisons between medieval and contemporary times, and his cheerful exposure of common myths about the period do much to make up for academic irritation. Fossier's generalizations cut both ways – they offer at their best a panoramic view of lost times, places, and mentalities, or less positively, threaten to become so non-specific as to be almost meaningless.

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Hammons, Pamela S., *Gender, Sexuality, and Material Objects in English Renaissance Verse* (Women and Gender in the Early Modern World), Farnham, Ashgate, 2010; hardback; pp. xiii, 223; 11 b/w illustrations; RRP £55.00; ISBN 9780754668992.

In this carefully researched study, Pamela Hammons sets out to ‘establish a sound basis for comparing men and women’s verse’ in early modern England, and ‘to illuminate the widest possible range of configurations available between human and non-human subject and object’ expressed in such poetry (pp. 5, 8). She identifies the ‘lyric form’ as particularly fertile ground, since it ‘typically represents the first-person ... perspective of its poetic speaker and foregrounds his or her emotions’, exposing ways in which ‘poets imagined mutual influences between and confluences of people and things’ (pp. 11–12). As Hammons observes, for instance, ‘Love tokens’ could ‘blur boundaries between people (for example, lovers) and between people and things’ (p. 13).

Hammons finds, in turn, that ‘women’s poetry ... reveals women’s creative tactics ... for asserting agency in relation to material items ranging from personal property ... to real estate’, exposing ‘how women imagined their multiple, complex interactions with the material world’ (p. 24). Further, she traces gender differences, as women, ‘across differences of social rank, wealth and life stage ... tend to assert more complete control over small moveables and to use them as vehicles for expressing a greater range of forms of personal agency ... than they do via ... poetic depictions of real property’ (p. 28).

In analysing poetry by men – including Robert Herrick’s *Hesperides* (1648) and ‘the Carkanet’, and anonymous verse ‘in the Bod. MS. Rawlinson poet, 211’ – Hammons underlines male anxieties produced ‘precisely because of the conventionality of objectifying the female beloved’, whereby ‘the gift’ and the gift-giving ‘male speaker’, may, in turn, ‘collapse into each other’, the ‘male lover’ transfigured into ‘a passive, possessed object’ (pp. 41–43).

More extensive and fascinating, however, are her findings concerning women’s poetry. Thus, in Chapter 5, which examines ‘sixteenth- and seventeenth-century English women’s verse about real property’, Hammons finds an important difference from ‘male contemporary poets’ penchant for openly, sometimes boldly, figuring themselves possessively in relation to property regardless of their actual riches or rank’; indeed, paradoxically, ‘the stronger a woman poet’s personal investment in power (because of her rank, wealth, social prestige and connections, or proximity to estate ownership), the weaker her representation of her relationship to property and her claims

for poetic prominence appear to be', a phenomenon which Hammons interprets as a tactic by female poets – 'especially' propertied 'widows', who recognized the threat that they posed 'patriarchy' – sought 'to downplay property ownership in their verse' (pp. 117–18).

Passing to another genre, however, in her Chapter 6 discussion of Mary Cavendish's *The Blazing World* (1666), 'a prose utopia' (p. 136), Hammons notes how fantasy sheds light on female aspirations, as manifested 'in the striking contrast' between Cavendish's representation of 'estates directly associated with herself', where she stresses the position of 'her husband, William Cavendish, Duke of Newcastle', and 'downplays ... her own personal power', and her celebration of 'the Empress', who is defined both by 'impossibly great wealth' and by 'independence from her husband as political agent' (pp. 136–38). In turn, Hammons discusses other works by Cavendish, where such implicit desires are manifested in the 'revising' of 'country house conventions and queering gender roles' to 'encode ... her desire as a subject of property' (p. 139).

Thus, discussing Cavendish's poem, 'A Dialogue Between a Bountifull Knight and a Castle Ruin'd in Warr', Hammons carefully examines the role that such 'queering of gender', represented by 'the Knight's tears' (figuring Cavendish's husband), and by the 'feminiz[ing]' of 'the castle itself' – the latter, figuring 'Bolsover', a war-ravaged property, ironically already restored and settled upon Mary Cavendish at the time of the poem's writing, and of its revisions in the 1660s (pp. 144–48). Hammons fascinatingly argues that it is precisely through such 'queering of gender' that Cavendish implicitly asserts her economic agency, so that '[a]s the Knight flickers unstably between masculinity and femininity, we can glimpse a cross-dressed ... Margaret in disguise, through which she marks queerly and covertly her place in poetic tradition and her possessive relation to Bolsover' (p. 155).

The eighth and final chapter highlights a different aspect of the sexualization of property – and of female objectification – in early modern verse. Though commonplace enough in male-authored poetry, Lucy Hutchinson treats it in a very distinct manner in 'To the Gardin at Owthorpe', dedicated to her late husband, puts 'him on the same plane as house, land and political domain', and, hence, 'despite her many poetic strategies for depicting [him] as master of the house from beyond the grave ... reveals her ability to conceptualize herself as a subject of property' (pp. 179–81).

In conclusion, Hammons's study successfully reveals ways in which early modern English poetry, despite thematic and stylistic overlap, presents a definite and defining gender divide. This divide illustrates the patriarchal perspectives and anxieties regarding female agency evident in poetry by male

authors, as well as the tactics of women poets to give voice to independent, subjective identities, and economic agency, or female aspiration to such male-dominated positions of material ownership.

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Hayward, Paul Antony, ed. and trans., *The Winchcombe and Coventry Chronicles: Hitherto Unnoticed Witnesses to the Work of John of Worcester* (Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies 373), 2 vols, Tempe, AZ, Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2010; hardback; pp. xxxiii, 750; 3 b/w illustrations, 6 colour plates; R.R.P. US\$140.00, £106.00; ISBN 9780866984218.

The two volumes reveal major chronicles from Winchcombe Abbey, from Coventry Cathedral, and from John of Worcester – his *Chronica Chronicarum* and its abbreviated *Chronicula* – that are important for English historians. Added to these for their shared items are the *Annales Prioratus de Wigornia*, from Worcester, and the C-text of *Annales Cambriae*. In each case, an English version faces the Latin original, and in all four cases (excluding John of Worcester) their commentaries are added separately.

After a preface, and a list of tables and plates, an unusual bibliography is included, with letters for abbreviations and for any scholarly work in it. The books under CBMLC (Corpus of British Medieval Library Catalogues, with seventeen volumes) and EEA (English Episcopal Acta, with twenty-nine volumes), would be better listed separately, and while abbreviations like AD, AM, ASC, BC, BL, CC, CSL, EETS, MGH, MS, OMT, SH, SU, and UL might appear on an early page – although there is no need for those like AD and BC – a normal list of books and articles at the end of Volume II would be more helpful for readers.

For the rest of the first volume, there are six chapters, covering pages 11–196. The first is ‘towards a better understanding of annalistic chronicles’ (pp. 11–61), the second, ‘John of Worcester and the common root’ (pp. 63–98), the third, ‘the Winchcombe chronicle’ (pp. 99–146), the fourth, ‘the Coventry chronicle’ (pp. 147–68), the fifth, ‘Other descendants of the common root’ (pp. 169–82), and finally, ‘Editorial policies’ (pp. 183–89). Six excellent colour photographs follow (pp. 191–96), showing an Easter table from John of Worcester’s *Chronica chronicarum*, three pages from the Winchcombe chronicle (Cotton Tiberius), the opening page from the

Coventry chronicle, and the annals for 1185–1188, on a folio of the Coventry chronicle. The opening page appears on the books' covers.

This is a major and original work on two very interesting chronicles, copied at Winchcombe Abbey and Coventry Cathedral late in the twelfth century, covering nearly 800 pages, yet free of any other discernible faults. Its scholarship and detective work are most impressive. Besides proving their links with the *Chronica Chronicarum* of John of Worcester – one of the major sources for historians working on England around 1100 – Paul Hayward has shown how informative these two chronicles are concerning the royal families, the cathedrals and churches, and the various regions of England.

Both texts have been transcribed, edited, and translated into English for the first time, with the Latin facing the English throughout the last 500 or so pages, a great help for scholars extracting historical information from the chronicles. The left-hand margin shows the years, from Christ's conception in 1 to 1180, for the Winchcombe chronicle, all of them rubricated, and the right-hand margin shows the first seven letters in the alphabet, dominical letters, with an uncial script. On the first folio of the Winchcombe chronicle, they read 'fdecba fgedcabgfecdbadefdbcbde'. These were used, Hayward points out, to help the cantor to work out the cycle of Sunday services and the cycle of the feasts with fixed dates, taking into account any leap years. For the reckoning of Easter, Columban's letter to Pope Gregory the Great is of interest, although the Pope's reply has not survived, as is the Easter cycle in the *Etymologiae* of Isidore of Seville, taught by Gregory's closest friend, Leander, Archbishop of Seville.

Several other annals and chronicles are discussed by Hayward, some echoing items in the Winchcombe and Coventry chronicles, some seen as having very little in common. For the Church in North Africa and the East, for 444 to 566, the chronicle of Victor of Tonnena, in North Africa, added to the chronicle of Saint Prosper of Aquitaine, might have been included, especially for its wider coverage of the major events for that period. They appear in my *Arians & Vandals of the 4th–6th centuries* (Cambridge Scholars, 2008).

The presentation of the two volumes is impressive, to the credit of the British Library Board. The white titles stand out well on the green background, and on each front cover, the illuminated folio from the beginning of the Coventry chronicle has been printed, with an ornate capital D at the top of it, reading *Dominus noster Ihesus Christus Filius Dei conceptus*, on Friday 25 March, ending with his birth on Sunday 25 December during the night (*nocte*), rather than Hayward's 'in the early hours'. The books are made to last,

being strongly bound, 'smyth-sewn and printed on acid-free paper'. They are a worthy addition to previous works on chronicles and annals.

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Houston, Chloë, ed., *New Worlds Reflected: Travel and Utopia in the Early Modern Period*, Farnham, Ashgate, 2010; hardback; pp. ix, 262; R.R.P. £65.00; ISBN 9780754666479.

This collection explores the relationship between travel and utopia, how constructions of idealized societies are related to the condition of their being located elsewhere. Since utopias always embody, in some way, a critique and reflection of the author's existing society, their construction necessitates a degree of distance between 'here' and 'elsewhere'. To contemplate a 'no-place' implies a mental, if not a physical, journey, a venturing forth to find new perspectives and points of view. In the early modern period imaginative journeys and conceived alternative societies interacted, often tragically and violently, with hard realities. With European exploration in the New World, imaginative constructions collided with alien societies and geographies, resulting in paradigmatic intellectual shifts and challenges to political, religious, and social traditions.

The volume is predicated on the assumption that, from Thomas More's *Utopia* (1516) onwards, fictional utopias were indebted to contemporary travel narratives: actual and imaginary journeys of distance and time interacted with mental shifts and intellectual change. The relationship between literary utopias and travel narratives was reciprocal. Travel discourses drew on constructions of utopias in the search for vocabularies and structures that could articulate encounters with the new and the wondrous. The focus of the volume is the rich space of exchange between these two types of writing, thus the essay collection contributes to developments and dialogues in the fields of both utopian and travel literature.

As editor Chloë Houston observes, a utopia is a 'no-place' so it is impossible to travel there, yet at the same time the utopian location 'exists at a distance from the present time and place' thus 'utopia simultaneously depends on the idea of travel for its own existence and refutes the possibility that it can be reached through physical journey' (p. 1). More's 'presentation of *Utopia* as a travel narrative draws attention to the ambiguities and uncertainties of real travel writing' (p. 2). The 'inherent untrustworthiness of travel writing itself' bound it closely to constructions of utopias, which, Houston suggests, may be considered as a form of travel writing (p. 5). Houston and Andrew Hadfield,

who provides a useful afterword, observe that travel writing is self-reflexive in nature, always commenting on the here and now, as well as elsewhere.

The volume is divided into three thematic parts: (1) utopia and knowledge, (2) utopian communities and piracy, and (3) utopia and the state, with three essays in each section. The volume presents a diversity of subjects and approaches: some examine fictional worlds in utopian texts, while other contributions consider the worlds presented in travel writing. In the first section, David Harris Sack's article explores aspects of Richard Hakluyt's perspectives on the spiritual dimension of England's quest for empire. From the time of Columbus, for instance, apocalyptic hopes became connected with voyages of discovery, and new geographical knowledge was seen by Hakluyt as analogous to the rebuilding of Solomon's Temple.

William Poole then explores the origins of science fiction with Johannes Kepler's *Somnium* (1634) and Francis Godwin's *The Man in the Moone* (1638), which describe imaginary voyages and fictional locations. Line Cottegnies examines the literary and historical contexts of Margaret Cavendish's *The BlazingWorld* (1666), such as millenarianism and the impact of Francis Bacon's *New Atlantis* (1627). Cottegnies sees Cavendish's text as responding to and critiquing the Baconian ideal.

The second section explores how physical journeys and experiences in the New World interacted with utopian ideals in travellers' accounts. Kevin P. McDonald's contribution examines the tragic gap between the promotion of Madagascar as a utopian colonial location and the harsh realities for the English colonists in the seventeenth century. Claire Jowitt then explores how piracy was reframed rhetorically as standard mercantile behaviour in the discourses of empire in Hakluyt's *The Famous Voyage of Sir Francis Drake* (1577).

Analisa DeGrave's study of Palmares is a particularly intriguing essay about a little-known settlement of escaped slaves ('quilombo') in colonial Brazil. The political and intellectual challenge that the community represented to colonizing Europeans was enormous. European constructions of paradise in the New World were predicated not only on the continuation of hierarchical social structures but on the immense suffering of the slave trade. Slaves were commodities to be traded and exploited; the runaways rejected their categorization as property and asserted their status as subjects, establishing their own new society that, in seventeenth-century accounts by the Dutch and Portuguese officials, was constructed as both a threat and an object of admiration.

The third section of the volume explores ideas of utopia and travel in relation to state-building and social reform. Houston explores ideas of utopia and education in the ideas of Bacon, which inspired those in Samuel

Hartlib's circle who promoted various agendas of improved knowledge and social reform. Rosanna Cox looks at ideas of utopianism and republicanism in the Interregnum and Daniel Carey's contribution examines Henry Neville's controversial *The Isle of Pines* (1668). The volume overall is a valuable contribution to critical dialogues on utopias and the vibrant field of travel writing, and will be of interest to scholars from a wide range of disciplines.

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Hüe, Denis, ed., *Lectures de Charles d'Orléans: Les Ballades* (Didact Français), Rennes, Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2010; paperback; pp. 208; 6 b/w illustrations; R.R.P. €15.00; ISBN 9782753511873.

The decision to make the ballades of Charles d'Orléans required reading for the prestigious *agrégation de lettres modernes* in 2010/11 provides a clear indication of the poet's return to the forefront of literary–critical debate in France and throughout the international academic community. It has also provided the occasion for the publication of this stimulating book of essays. Denis Hüe's collection brings together contributions from eminent medievalists and younger researchers alike. It provides a valuable sense of the current state of Aurelian studies and will be warmly welcomed by all those with an interest in the poet's work.

In his Introduction, Hüe warns against the temptation to read Charles's verse autobiographically, suggesting that scholars should instead analyse the poetry in its material, literary, and social contexts. The collection is divided into sections which address these contexts individually. The first, 'Le Texte et ses étapes', includes three contributions which focus on different aspects of the Duke's personal manuscript, Bibliothèque nationale MS fr. 25458. In a revised version of a previously published essay, Mary-Jo Arn considers this codex alongside the contemporaneously produced book of Charles's English work, British Library MS Harley 682. Arn's central argument remains unchanged: similarities between these two manuscripts, she asserts, prove the Duke's close involvement in the production of both books of poetry. Nevertheless, important additions such as the suggestion that political motives may lie behind the Duke's self-presentation in his English verse will make this the definitive version of her essay.

Christopher Lucken turns his attention to the structural function of the death of the lady in the first of Charles's ballade cycles. Although it is generally assumed that the poet intended to record a real fatality in these verses,

Lucken reminds us that the death of the love object was a commonplace in late medieval lyric compilations and we are invited to view the deployment of the mourning ballades in MS fr. 25458 as a particularly innovative response to this convention. Gérard Gros's examination of the position of two of the political ballades in the same manuscript completes this section, casting new light on the Duke's pacifism and his self-conception as a public figure.

The next section, 'Thématiques et intertextes', opens with an essay by Catherine Attwood which explores Charles's use of the popular late medieval trope of the *prison amoureuse*. This is a figure that, Attwood argues, permeates the Duke's writing even in the *Retenue d'Amours*, a poem which is typically thought to have been written before his capture at Agincourt. There follow contributions by Jean-François Kosta-Théfaine and Jean-Claude Mühlethaler, which Hüe has usefully juxtaposed. For while Kosta-Théfaine's exploration of the permutations of *douleur* in Charles's verse neatly rehearses several classic interpretations of the Duke's text – Starobinski's celebrated essay features prominently – Mühlethaler's exploration of the poet's deployment of his bed – a particularly loaded sign in late medieval literature – is emblematic of a new approach to the writer which stresses his wittiness and his capacity to engage in increasingly masterful forms of literary play.

The final section, 'Socialité de la poésie', highlights an aspect of the poet's writing that has often been overlooked by critics, who have typically viewed the Duke as an isolated figure. Estelle Doudet demonstrates that while Charles's decision to record his ballades to Jean de Bourbon without their responses indicates a desire to highlight an important stage in his self-construction as a writer, the texts exchanged with Philippe de Bourgogne provide an excellent example of the duke's ability to use poetry to further his immediate political aims.

Jane H. M. Taylor focuses on the ballades associated with the so-called *concours de Blois* and addresses differences between the presentation of these poems and the contemporaneous *rondeaux* in Charles's personal manuscript. Claudio Galderisi likewise outlines differences between the poet's attitude towards these two *formes fixes* in the later years of his career. Finally, a previously published essay by Karen Newman explores the intellectual background to Charles's work and offers readings of selected ballades intended to demonstrate the poet's capacity for sustained theological reflection. The volume is completed by an anthology of late medieval accounts of the ballade form and a well-organized and up-to-date bibliography.

Hüe is in particular to be commended for bringing together the work of both French and Anglo-American critics here, a task which is facilitated by his fluid translations of Arn's and Newman's essays. While the contributions to this volume differ greatly in style and approach, the resulting collection

is both stronger and more engaging for this inclusiveness. The renaissance of Charles d'Orléans studies is now well under way. It is to be hoped that subsequent work on the poet will be shaped by the same spirit of cross-cultural collaboration that has brought us Hübner's *Lectures*.

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Iversen, Gunilla, *Laus angelica: Poetry in the Medieval Mass* (Medieval Church Studies 5), ed. Jane Flynn, Turnhout, Brepols, 2010; hardback; pp. xx, 317; 44 b/w, 6 colour illustrations, 2 b/w tables, 1 b/w line art; R.R.P. €90.00; ISBN 9782503531335.

Attempting to empathize with the minds of people in the past and especially to understand what spiritual and intellectual preoccupations drove them to study and to create ideas, is a task that requires patience and perseverance as well as sources that at first sight do not seem promising. This book, first published in French in 2001, is finally available in English for a wider audience. It is a fascinating introduction to a complex source – the liturgical works preserved in monasteries and diocesan archives all over Europe. The function of the liturgy and the ways in which it was modified and adapted in different dioceses and over a 400-year period to meet the needs of clergy and laity casts a different light on the emotional life of people in the High Middle Ages. Singing, as a key element in the coming together of oral and aural religious conviction, is highlighted as part of the union of human and angelic communities: earthly singers singing with the heavenly choirs were a route to spiritual satisfaction.

Gunilla Iversen writes with the confidence of an unchallenged expert in a field that many regard as peripheral to medieval spirituality, and she succeeds in showing just how critical a study of that field is to a fuller understanding of the topic. Iversen is one of a select group, mostly from Swedish institutions, who have worked painstakingly through the thousands of surviving special compositions or tropes and sequences, the texts and music that, from the time of Charlemagne to the thirteenth century, expanded and embellished the Ordinary of the Mass in dioceses all over Europe. These poems, and their musical settings, existed to explicate the Old and New Testament texts in the Mass of the Day and to reflect on the purpose of the feast.

The Bible was the main source of inspiration for the Latin poetry and its musical interpretation. These songs were symbolic, the human reflection of the continuous angelic hymns of praise offered to God in Heaven. The

liturgy was not only a means of devotion but also a means of interpreting the hidden meaning of the *sacra pagina*. It was literally a Feast, a spiritual as opposed to a bodily one. The poetic tropes and sequences written in the period before 1300, for the most part by anonymous and forgotten religious, were a crucial way in which in an oral age the fullness of spiritual life was interpreted and expressed through music together with verbal and bodily expression. Contemporary commentators argued that song at the beginning of the Mass aroused ardent fervour, just as it did before a battle. The tunes were likened to types of secular song: the Gradual like an *estampie*, the Alleluia a *cantus coronatus*. Sequences later in the Mass were songs of victory, songs of exultation.

In the later Middle Ages these interpretative poems which had been added to the basic Mass structure fell into disfavour. Reformation historians have largely neglected the significance of this aspect of the abolition of the liturgy with its processions and symbolism which was the final destruction of a whole way of spiritual life, a destruction completed by the Council of Trent.

Iversen, however, argues cogently that both music and text should be a source investigated by those interested in literature, ideas, philosophy, and theology in the High Middle Ages. She engagingly develops this thesis with a number of significant examples from different areas and different periods that illustrate her case. She also shows how the associated ceremonies led to the adaptation of the architecture of some churches to fit the practices of rite and rhythm, and the dramatic presentation of the events and people associated with the feast.

One or two of the writers of poems such as these can be identified. The most prominent is Hildegard of Bingen who represented herself as writing merely as a recipient of divine inspiration that she perceived only in her soul. She inextricably intertwined words and music in the sequences, hymns, antiphons, and responsories she wrote for her convent to perform. In this, there is a sufficient sweep to make her overriding vision clear.

In all these works, the rich Latin vocabulary of words invoking song, the fine nuances of which are largely lost on us, underlines the critical focus of daily spiritual life for these hundreds of years. It is to be hoped that younger scholars will continue the enquiries that Iversen and her colleagues have opened up.

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Jansen, Katherine L., Joanna **Drell**, and Frances **Andrews**, eds, *Medieval Italy: Texts in Translation* (Middle Ages), Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009; cloth; pp. 624; 36 illustrations; R.R.P. US\$69.95, £45.50; ISBN 9780812241648.

This collection of Italian texts in translation positions itself as an undergraduate resource, and is a superb collection of documents arranged chronologically, thematically, and geographically. It is the most recent broad-ranging text of its type since Trevor Dean's excellent *Towns of Italy in the Later Middle Ages* (Manchester University Press, 2000) and the editors consciously acknowledge their project as a response and an extension to this work.

Medieval Italy builds on Dean's work because of its satisfying geographical reach. It is not a collection of texts on Renaissance Florentine (or Milanese or Venetian) elites masquerading as documents about medieval Italians in general: Salerno, Eboli, Palermo, and Corleone are here, for example. If anything, I was surprised that although Florence continues to be well represented, medieval Venice – one of the most important and interesting cities in the region – hardly gets a look-in.

Each thematic section is introduced by the editors and each text by its translator/s. These commentaries are careful and considered, encouraging new readers towards a deeper reading. The index is well suited to students (although proper names cause some problems) and extensive cross-referencing breaks down arbitrary classifications. One of the work's great strengths is that it pushes no particular barrow: it is not designed for social historians or historians of ideas, but is a universal collection of general interest and use.

Naturally any instructors reading the work will have a list of go-to teaching texts they feel have been neglected. And why should Venice and Milan draw the short straw? Documents by and about women remain problematic, although the section on spirituality (particularly texts on the Florentine *beata* Umiliana de' Cerchi) would pique a more engaged student's interest. I felt a general lack of literary texts too which, in their evocative and almost tangible expression, further approach that elusive 'sense of the past'. Perhaps this literary dearth is because the editors' selection 'has been guided by and reflects the work of Anglophone researchers' (p. xxi): are there problems of scholarly 'impermeability' in the field more generally?

Medieval Italians nevertheless leap out from these pages and force us to encounter them. Giovanni Villani describes the bread baked 'day and night' by men and women in a communal bakery set up in Florence during a famine; made 'without sifting or removing the chaff,' it is 'very rough and painful to see and to eat' (p. 23) and is distributed by food tickets. In a quietly comic everyday drama, Ubaldo of Gubbio goes to remonstrate with council workers

and they throw him ‘violently into the liquid cement being prepared’. The saint, ‘totally drenched ... humbly silent and with great patience, as if nothing had happened’, returned home (p. 43)! Luca da Panzano enumerates the deaths of his wife and children in usual summary account book fashion, but writes movingly that his wife’s death grieves him ‘as much as if I had died myself’ (p. 454). An Umbrian witch’s incantations animate the heart of a stolid legal transcript: ‘Worm, wormy creature that takes heart and soul, that takes the lungs, that takes the liver, that takes me in the nose, that takes me in the head, that takes me in the feet, that takes every good; Saint Susanna, to the outside send it out; Saint Julitta, to the outside cast it out; Saint Bruna, return to the arse, to the outside cast it out, from one to another, until none remains’ (p. 205). Franco Sacchetti questions in acid tones whether Lucca’s ‘Volto Santo’, a revered wooden crucifix made in Christ’s image, is all it claims: ‘With all due respect, Christ’s was the most beautiful and best proportioned body that ever was, and did not have frighteningly crossed eyes’ (p. 387).

Some help might be appreciated by the undergraduate student confronted with terms such as *popolo* or ‘magnate’ (weasel words ever and insufficiently glossed). Opicino de Canistris’s wonderful ‘circular’ life – a cryptic spiritual autobiography – would have benefited from an accompanying illustration. And I was baffled by the attempt to render in English the untranslatable ‘Cosa fatta capo ha’, a phrase Dante and Villani employ as the heart of the crucial Buondelmonti affair (p. 127). Why not leave it in its terse but rhythmic Italian, and explain in a note?

These comments aside, the collection’s closing texts, Daniel Bornstein’s translations of Cortona church inventories, are beautifully placed and function as a metaphor for the entire work: it is a summation of the very ‘stuff’ of medieval Italian life. Bornstein’s liturgical apparatus is not a higgledy-piggledy jumble, but a collection set out with an overarching organizational logic. The translations are mostly very clear, the documents well chosen and contextualized, and each chapter is accompanied by a bibliography of key critical works. I did wonder if future editions could be profitably made available online by institutional subscription: much of the work can already be read at Google Books and students may well prefer such access. Regardless, *Medieval Italy* is almost a one-stop undergraduate teaching shop, and instructors will want a copy for the office, a copy for the reserve library, and multiple copies for the undergraduate stacks.

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Jones, Robert W., *Bloodied Banners: Martial Display on the Medieval Battlefield*, Woodbridge, Boydell, 2010; hardback; pp. 228; 14 b/w illustrations, 9 colour plates; R.R.P. £50.00; ISBN 9781843835615.

Robert Jones has produced an engagingly readable and clear account of the role of military display on the medieval battlefield. It will be useful for undergraduates and for more specialized audiences from a variety of fields, including literature and art history, not just military history.

The structure is straightforward. The first seven chapters individually explore heraldic display, badges, armour, swords, and audible display – such as war cries and the use of musical instruments – and examine their particular roles. These include very practical requirements such as the need to identify friend from foe, or how useful armour was as protection in relation to its symbolic and psychological roles. The penultimate chapter examines religious symbolism on the battlefield and its broader theological and secular contexts. It briefly touches on the Church's accommodation of the warrior and his role in society, transforming him into a symbol of spiritual struggle. The final chapter contains a discussion of the debates around the idea of a 'military revolution' in warfare, first proposed by Michael Roberts in his 1955 paper 'The Military Revolution, 1560–1660.'

It is in this final chapter that Jones argues most forcefully for his project. Just as the castle has been reconsidered in terms of its social and domestic roles, as well as its military architecture, this work makes the case for a similar reconsideration for military display. Jones argues cogently for such display as being 'a fundamental part of military warfare, serving as an outward expression of its motivations and drives', as an integral part of military culture and its exploration, and an important avenue for historical research. The usefulness of this avenue of research is demonstrated by the manner in which such an examination can bring nuances to the debates about the identification of moments of change in warfare, and the outlining of the distinction between the development of methods of warfare and the broader cultures out of which these changes emerge. Change and continuity coexist in this approach.

One of the real pleasures of this work is the use made by Jones of contemporary textual and visual records. The book opens with the ignominious death of Sir John Chandos in 1396 in battle. After grandly challenging the French army, Chandos dismounted and advanced towards them, skidding and tripping over his elaborate robes, and was then killed by a squire's lance thrust. Jones uses this account to explore both contemporary prejudices about such seeming vainglory, as well as possible explanations

for such elaborate dress. Presumably Chandos, an experienced military commander, had not been regarded as a buffoon before this incident.

Jones's use of such vivid anecdotes adds substantially to making his book so accessible. They include the discovery of William Marshall, after a tournament, with his head on a smith's anvil having his helmet cut to pieces because it was too battered to remove and the description of Frankish knights leaving a battle in the First Crusade, looking like porcupines because their armour was covered with arrows. His knowledge of military accoutrements means that he convincingly challenges the oft-repeated interpretation of Bishop Odo's *baculus* in the Bayeux Tapestry as reflecting ecclesiastical prohibitions of clerics spilling blood, arguing instead that it was an early equivalent of a field marshal's baton.

Jones's discussion of the practicalities of battle seems grounded in common sense. He discusses the role of war cries, drums, and trumpets in the field as means to penetrate the numbing effect of armour-enclosed headgear, and to communicate, galvanize or terrify the enemy, as well as discussing the chilling effect of an enemy's silence. He talks of the impact of armour on sight, hearing, and mobility.

It is only when he steps out of the medieval arena that Jones is less convincing. I found the parallels he draws with the natural world or his cross-cultural comparisons with such groups as the Wola warriors of Papua New Guinea too superficial. What such comparisons do demonstrate is his openness to challenging the inevitably Eurocentric nature of his field by seeking equivalent examples elsewhere. These comparisons, however, seem shallow when compared to the depth of his knowledge of the medieval sources. These are minor quibbles. It is clear that these anthropological, sociological, and psychological studies have helped him rethink this medieval material. Jones's work is grounded in a nuanced reading of cultural signs, and this is lacking in these comparative passages.

This is a masterful and fresh appraisal of this rich and fascinating field. The book acts as a useful overview of this material. It has certainly highlighted for me the importance of an element of the culture of the Middle Ages that is often overlooked and yet is so central to the visual and literary culture of the period, as well as to its political history.

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Jorgensen, Alice, ed., *Reading the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: Language, Literature, History* (Studies in the Early Middle Ages 23), Turnhout, Brepols, 2010; hardback; pp. xvi, 344; 1 b/w illustration; R.R.P. €60; ISBN 9782503523941.

This volume of essays from a conference held at the Centre for Medieval Studies, University of York, in 2004 is a worthy addition to Brepols' 'Studies in the Early Middle Ages' series. As the informative introduction by editor Alice Jorgensen notes, this is the first multi-disciplinary essay collection focused on the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, a text characterized by its multiplicity, making this a worthwhile and long overdue work. The volume is divided into three parts which reflects its title: 'The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle as Literature', 'The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle as History', and 'The Language of the Chronicle'. A sense of unity is provided by a focus on two key questions: what are we reading and how are we reading it?

The literature section begins with an essay by Thomas A. Bredehoft in which he argues that the annal for 1067 in *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* manuscript D includes a previously unrecognized thirty-five-line poem about the marriage of Margaret of Wessex to Malcolm III of Scotland in 1070. This surprising oversight (if Bredehoft's position is accepted) is due to previous editors and readers not recognizing late Old English verse. The full poem, translation and notes are provided in an appendix to the essay. Susan Irvine then discusses 'The Production of the Peterborough Chronicle', also known as manuscript E, by focusing on the sources for the First Continuation annals of 1122 to 1131. The Peterborough Chronicle up to 1131 is also the focus of Malasree Home's contribution, who convincingly argues that the interpolations were made to look contemporary. Then follows an excellent contribution by Jacqueline Stodnick, 'Sentence to Story: Reading the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle as Formulary' in which she demonstrates that later annalists continued to use the style established in the earlier entries. Her essay concentrates on the short annals, those which often appear the most factual, but which are shown to have repetitive language and style. Jorgensen closes the literature section with a contribution on the bilingual F manuscript and the portrayal of the English in its Æthelredian section.

Barbara Yorke's 'The Representation of Early West Saxon History in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*' is the first of five history essays. In a stimulating and somewhat controversial essay she argues that a core of annals were kept in Wessex before the commencement of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* in the late ninth century, but these core annals were edited to compose the current work by those close to King Alfred. Yorke also suggests that the long entry for 755

– the Cynewulf and Sigebert episode – was composed by the author of the annal for 855 and was intended to reflect views on good and bad leadership.

This is followed by a short comparison by Anton Scharer of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* with the earlier *Royal Frankish Annals*. In ‘Marking Boundaries: Charters and the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle’, Scott Thompson Smith contends that for the years 900–46 the text functioned as a charter for the expanding kingdom of Wessex through the mention of place-names and landscape markers, a suggestion that is likely to generate much debate.

Ryan Lavelle’s essay concentrates on kingship and the geographies of royal power. He argues that the battles listed in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* point to the location of royal estates, and a useful list of battles and the pre-conquest holders of the estate recorded in *Domesday Book* is provided at the end of his essay. The history section concludes with a contribution by Alex Woolf on the reports of Scotland in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, who notes that the annal for 920 ‘is the first near contemporary use of the *Scott*-term for the northern kingdom’ (p. 227), a good example of the potential usefulness of the *Chronicle* for affairs outside of England.

The language section of the book is short, with only two essays. In the first of these, Jayne Carroll compares place-names in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* with those on mint signatures, arguing that the latter are often more useful for historical and linguistic purposes, especially as those composing the *Chronicle* were often quite conservative in their orthographic practices. Useful tables of mint-names recorded and not recorded in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* are given in an appendix. Sara M. Pons-Sanz ends the volume with ‘Norse-Derived Vocabulary in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle’ which investigates the incorporation of Old Norse words, most of which are in the legal, nautical, and martial semantic fields, into Old English.

It is somewhat surprising that there are no essays from scholars working on Anglo-Saxon archaeology, but this is a minor complaint when other major disciplines are represented. This volume is highly recommended for anyone working on Anglo-Saxon history and literature from the ninth century and later.

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Kiefer, Frederick, ed., *Masculinities and Femininities in the Middle Ages and Renaissance* (Arizona Studies in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance 23), Turnhout, Brepols, 2009; hardback; pp. x, 209; 1 b/w illustration; R.R.P. €55.00; ISBN 9782503529974.

This collection of essays developed from a combined meeting of the Rocky Mountain Medieval and Renaissance Association and the Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies in Tempe, Arizona. The underlying premise is that gender identities are inherently unstable, thus demanding that we look at their historical constructions not as clearly defined entities, but as variations, as masculinities and femininities.

Frederick Kiefer has brought together an interesting array of scholars and topics. His introduction, while providing a background to the continuing importance of studying the idea of gender in the past and its implications for modern scholars and teachers, does not engage at all with any of the other material in the book. A closer engagement with the other essays might have prompted a better organized structure, connecting themes and ideas.

The opening essay by Tracy Adams is focused on masculinity, specifically that of men who do not marry: medieval clerics of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. The Gregorian reform prompted a major re-visioning of masculinity for clerics as celibacy became mandatory. Analysing several texts from this period, Adams suggests that an Augustinian model was adopted – ‘Make me chaste, but not yet’ – in which love was not extinguished but became a pathway toward wisdom. In this essay, the relation between men and women (or the lack of one) defined what it was to be a masculine.

Masculinity as defined between men within a more martial context is the topic of the following essay, ‘Shoulder Companions and Shoulders in *Beowulf*’ by Victor Scherb. The shoulder is presented as a juncture of symbolic power which represents the connection between men together on the battle field, but can also represent the severance of connection, as arms are pulled from bodies, or as men kneel at the shoulder of, or carry upon their shoulders, their dead companions. Scherb demonstrates that the use of ‘shoulder’ designates the companionate relationship between men in early English literature.

Literature as a source remains the theme as Albrecht Classen argues it is perhaps the best ‘mirror[s] of medieval mentality’ particularly in relation to gender relations (p. 44). He analyses the Middle High German *maeren*, demonstrating how they challenge patriarchal perspectives, especially in relation to an institution most tied to male/female relationships – marriage. He suggests that traditional misogyny was under attack from both male and female writers and thinkers.

The fourth essay returns to the topic of what it is to be a man, using the animal imagery associated with literary representations of Richard the Lionheart. Lyn Shutters skilfully unpacks the ambiguous representations of the king, showing that the connection of a man to an animal can either reinforce positive attributes, or undermine them. Perhaps this essay could have been followed with the final one of the collection, 'Sleeping with the Menagerie' by Paul N. Hartle. It provides a different view on human relations with animals, less on how artists depict a person through animal associations but more about the individual's relationship with animals. It provides a wide historical sweep of the eroticized character of relations with animals in English Renaissance literature.

Megan Moore uses the genre of romance to look at the role of grief as it defines characters and propels progress within the narrative. She contrasts the battle wounds of men, which are permanent reminders of past battle success, to the impermanent scars written on the grief-stricken bodies of heroines. Although marking their grief, these images of female self-mutilation are shown to be a site of sexual allurement for knights who aspire to fill the void. Far from the ugliness of self-mutilation inciting revulsion, the stories highlight the sexual allure provided by the impermanent marks of female grief.

The subject of Judith Bryce's essay is Ginevra de' Benci whose portrait appears on the cover of the book. Bryce opens with quotes highlighting the ambiguity of the term 'subject' in relation to women, as women can be considered both subjects of male exchange or the subjects of their own discourse. The essay explores how Ginevra in some way embodies both elements of female subjectivity: she was the topic of male discourse and painting but also wrote poetry and possibly commissioned work, like the portrait, as a means of controlling her public persona.

Female authority and self-expression is also the subject of the next essay as Ryan Singh Paul discusses the discourse of sight when both patron and artist are female. He compares Aemilia Lanyer's poetic deconstruction of Christ's body with the more common male representation of the female body as a sequence of body parts. Not only does Lanyer create an all-female environment for worship in Stuart England, Paul suggests that she 'displaces men from the position of chosen followers of Christ' (pp. 160–61), thus elevating herself, as well as her patron, as special individuals uniquely able to 'see' Jesus.

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Long, Kathleen P., ed., *Gender and Scientific Discourse in Early Modern Culture* (Literary and Scientific Cultures of Early Modernity), Farnham, Ashgate, 2010; hardback; pp. 330; 23 b/w illustrations; R.R.P. £65.00; ISBN 9780754669715.

Kathleen Long has produced an edited collection of essays that work together to present some innovative and challenging conceptions of gender in the early modern world. The collection focuses primarily on the practices of alchemy and obstetrics which may, at first glance, seem an ill-fitting pair. In fact, this juxtaposition of the esoteric alchemical pursuit of perfection and one of the most traditional and fundamental roles in the female domain aptly reflects the notions of gender which are at the heart of the book.

While still contributing to the more traditional discussions of the different roles and levels of women's participation in these two pursuits (alchemy and obstetrics), the chapters in this collection which focus on alchemy explore the understandings of gender in the alchemical world. What emerges from the chapters by Simon, Ekorong, and Long is a view of an alchemical and Kabbalistic sub-culture in which the traditional understandings of the early modern gender divides collapse. Their work suggests that many alchemical writers – among them Pico della Mirandola, Paracelsus, John Dee, Guillaume Postel, and Michael Maier – present an alternative understanding of gender. According to these contributors, the alchemical allegory of the hermaphrodite led many alchemists to a different understanding of the source and purpose of gender division. Based on the understanding that each human being has aspects of both genders within them, these alchemists seem to have believed that bringing the genders into balance was an integral part of the pursuit of perfection. These principles were then expressed as an aspiration to return to the original hermaphroditic state of Adam prior to the creation of Eve or as an aspiration to angelic androgyny.

This alchemical equality of genders is linked by many contributors with the alchemical symbol of the hermaphroditic rebus. The rebus's dual form is read, in this collection, as a demonstration of the equal influence and expression of both genders that are brought into balance in a true alchemical merging, suggesting the alchemical view of women was more egalitarian than the traditional Aristotelian view. Heitsch, for example, demonstrates this in her comparison of the traditional characterization of the feminine as inferior with Marie de Gournay's emphasis on the significance of the role of mother. De Gournay highlights the similarities between gestation and alchemical transmutation, as do several of the authors discussed by Bayer.

The gender-equalizing view of feminine work is also linked to a newly recognized participation of women in alchemical practice and scholarship in the chapters by Ray, Bayer, Archer, Heitsch, Sheridan and Read. These chapters explore examples of female alchemical practitioners, whose contributions to alchemical work included the wealth of practical learning obtained through the production of cosmetics and housework, household medicines, and midwifery. The last two chapters, by Sheridan and Read, focus in particular on the declining influence of the midwife and demonstrate the effect that traditional gender roles were having on women in early modern society. Their assessment of this dynamic suggests that the degradation of professional midwifery did not reflect a decline in opinions of women so much as the desire of the male surgeons and physicians to assert dominance over the whole medical field. This situation stands in stark contrast to the experiences of female alchemists discussed in other chapters.

What these essays have in common is the re-evaluation of alchemical texts and images that are usually treated as a bizarre production of those on the fringes of society. Yet, by analysing these sources in a broader context, comparing them with anatomical or travel literature (as in the chapters by Long and Teuton), the contributors demonstrate that alchemical works had very real contemporary meanings and complex relationships with more traditional texts. Teuton and Pinet argue convincingly that alchemy's popularity can be attributed, in part, to its ability to help European society cope with the fear of feminized monsters purported to exist on the periphery of the known world, witches, and, later, the extreme otherness of the New World.

In undertaking this work, the authors and the editor have taken the rehabilitation work begun by Allen Debus and others to the next stage in what is a brilliant and exciting demonstration of the value of studying alchemical texts. The implications of the rediscovery of this sub-culture seem, to me, to be indicative of an early modern understanding of gender that was far more diverse and vibrant than the all-pervasive Aristotelian, Eve-versus-Mary conception of the feminine has allowed us to imagine. This predicament is reflected in the immense effort expended in recovering the soft whispers of women's voices over the last fifty years of scholarship. In many ways one might suggest it has taken a breaking down of our self-imposed gender divides to find this gem of dissent buried within what appeared for centuries as a male-dominated field.

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Loutchitsky, Svetlana and Marie-Christine **Varol**, eds, *Homo Legens: Styles et pratiques de lecture: Analyses comparées des traditions orales et écrites au Moyen Âge/ Styles and Practices of Reading: Comparative Analyses of Oral and Written Traditions in the Middle Ages* (Utrecht Studies in Medieval Literacy 26), Turnhout, Brepols, 2010; hardback; pp. vi, 230; 4 b/w tables; R.R.P. €60.00; ISBN 9782503534091.

The product of an interdisciplinary project on the study of written and oral communication in medieval texts, *Homo Legens* comprises six articles by scholars from various backgrounds. Each article investigates the interrelation between oral and written traditions by analysing selected texts ranging from the Levant, Anatolia, and Byzantium, to Iberia, and covering an early to late medieval timeframe.

The Introduction explains how this interdisciplinary project brought researchers together to study groups of analogous texts from various genres. Orality in texts is identified as posing a crucial problem for a number of social sciences, especially medieval studies, and particularly in relation to the rediscovery by historians of oral cultures. This challenges nineteenth-century historians' perception of written texts as being more reliable. An overview of the evolution of oral and written theory, and the differing approaches to the study and understanding of these concepts is summarized, revealing the most important aspect of this project to be the study of transitions between oral and written tradition.

The methodology put forward for these studies is the understanding of history, of reading, the reception of texts, and the history of oral and memory culture. These studies approach this in two principal ways: the analysis of the practice of reading, of various modes of reading, and the connections between oral and written tradition; and in critical evaluation of narrative texts, rhetorical elements, literary elements, and elements pointing to intertextuality. These studies address the importance of following the continuity as well as the discontinuity of traditions to show how relations between oral and written merge in texts that are a valuable source of information for scholars.

The first article by Tivdar Palágyi, as if following in the tradition of the debate between Delbouille and Rychner on the nature of oral and written composition, compares two historical texts that were the subject of linguistic simplification in the thirteenth century in an attempt to render them more accessible to the public. This thorough investigation analyses the Byzantine Greek *Alexiade* of Anna Comnena, making a linguistic and stylistic study of its transformation and translation into vernacular Greek, divesting it of what was

perceived as antiquated literary expression. Alongside Anna Comnena, three historical texts of William of Tyre as translated from Latin into Old French are analysed and compared. Palagyi presents well-selected textual examples throughout, and draws on his intimate knowledge of the texts, styles, affectations, and linguistic peculiarities to investigate the question of whether the vernacular necessarily signifies orality, and the nature of oral sources, such as conversations, in historical texts. An understanding is achieved of orality not strongly in terms of the circumstances of composition, but rather as referencing a literary tradition, and as a valuable tool for presenting a text to the public.

The imaginary dialogues between Christians and Muslims, fictional stories of what transpired in the camps during the First Crusade, are the subject of the article by Svetlana Loutchitsky. Loutchitsky considers the interaction of oral and written tradition as presented in textual examples from transpositions of these Latin chronicles into Old French texts, the chroniclers' commentaries, and indications of orality in dialogues, monologues, and the use of first-person present tense, asking whether the *chansons* emulate the chronicles, or vice versa.

Marie-Christine Varol presents the Judeo-Spanish literary tradition of Alexander and glossed proverbs. In limbo between religious and secular, these texts attest to an absence of continuity in transmission due to the several historical crises that affected this geo-ethnic population in the Middle Ages. Varol reveals the identity of a cultural group as well as the connection between oral and written tradition over time.

Sophia Menache's article investigates chroniclers and their perception of history, looking at how orality and literary tradition have been addressed in history and in scholarship. Using as examples the *Chronica Majora* of Matthew Paris and the *History of Florence* by Giovanni Villani, Menache challenges assertions that orality and literacy were mutually exclusive, positing that oral dialogues and addresses in these texts are not only for the transmission of historical facts, but for the benefit of the audience, and can be a valuable source of attitudes in medieval society.

Marta López Izquierdo's article investigates linguistic traces of orality in the fifteenth-century Castilian play *La Celestina*. Izquierdo analyses three forms of orality: vocalization, dialogues and the choice of register, to show how the authors were able to use linguistic features to arrive at a new style and conception of the written text.

The crossroads of medieval Anatolia is the setting of the late medieval Turkish texts that are investigated for signs of orality by Arzu Öztürkmen, who shows how orality would emerge as the most dominant form of

communication in this area. Different genres of historical texts are presented to show the relationship between text and performance.

This book brings together several studies of texts in an attempt to suggest a basis for the study of orality and its interrelation with written tradition. The studies are thorough and well researched, and, though the analysis is confined to specific texts, the volume should provide a useful set of approaches to research into the practices of reading, writing, and the transmission and reception of texts in the Middle Ages on a broader cultural platform.

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Madero, Marta, *Tabula Picta: Painting and Writing in Medieval Law*, Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009; cloth; pp.160; R.R.P. US\$45.00, £29.50; ISBN 9780812241860.

You paint an image on a piece of wood. Somebody else owns the piece of wood. Who owns the work of art? This intriguing question underlies Marta Madero's work. First published in French as *Tabula picta: la peinture et l'écriture dans le droit médiéval* in 2004, it has now been translated into English.

The person who owns the piece of wood takes it away, and refuses to give it back to you. You turn to the law. The question that the lawyer asks, after establishing your capacity to pay, is when and where the work was painted. This is in order to establish the fundamental point: what is the governing law?

Law is in one sense a social construct, because its formulation and codification have been arrived at by human societies. It is not, however, relative in the sense that different people or groups within one state might construct and believe in different systems of law. There can be only one law in force within a sovereign state, or that state is by definition in a state of civil war. Where judges interpret the law differently, those differences must be appealed to a higher court, until one or the other is struck down. The decision in *Mabo (Mabo v Queensland (No. 2))*, 1992, for example, operated by identifying within common law the capacity for the recognition of a form of property that might be called native title, and not by changing the law.

This high degree of positivism distinguishes law from other academic disciplines and practices. Philosophy may ask what the law should be, sociology may ask what people think it is, and politics what they would like it to be, but none of these enquiries will be of any relevance in a court of law.

Assuming that you painted the panel in 2011, in Australia, the lawyer will ask you about the existence of contract. They will enquire as to whether

you painted it as part of your job, or if there was any other agreement, and if not how you came to be working on someone else's wood. They will ask to see the details of any contract or agreement. Maybe they will turn to the Commonwealth *Copyright Act 1968*. This legislation makes distinctions between intellectual property and the various physical forms in which it may be embodied, and also provides for works of complex generation, such as sound recordings and film.

The lawyer will advise you on how and where legal action may be commenced, and alternative forms of resolution. By law, they are bound to provide you with a disclosure of costs, and an assessment of the likelihood of success.

Assume, on the other hand, that you painted the panel in 1100 in Paris, France. All of the lawyers from that time are dead. So you purchase Marta Madero's book, in order to understand what you may do.

For all its merits, Madero's book does not provide an overview of the legal system in medieval Europe. It does not explain what courts existed, how they were accessed, how they operated, or how their judgments were enforced. For a reader who is already a specialist in law, that may be no problem. It is more remarkable that Madero does not explain what laws were in force. These are alluded to generally as 'Roman law' and 'the legal *corpus* compiled in Byzantium by order of Emperor Justinian'. Madero does not explain much more about where these laws come from or what they said.

Perhaps it is confusion on Madero's part that accounts for the statement that the *Corpus Iuris Civilis* came from various sources, including what may be regarded originally as commentary. Once compiled, that commentary stopped being commentary, and took on the status of codified law. Madero explicitly states that she is not particularly interested in any actual laws and what they say. Instead, her source material is commentary which was subsequent to the compilation of the corpus, and which remains just that.

As a result, by reading her book you will learn about what some people think about Roman law and how it applies to the painted panel, and not directly about the law itself. Were these commentators selected to represent particular communities, or places, or times, you could at least gauge something about societal or maybe even legal attitudes in those places and times. This is not the case. These commentators seem selected at random, so as to highlight what Madero describes as a 'universe of strange and surprising thoughts'.

Madero's work is intentionally polemical. In his introduction, Roger Chartier contrasts it to the 'bor[ing] ... formalism of legal studies' which privilege 'actual judicial proceedings'. By leaving out the law itself, to say

nothing of actual judicial proceedings, Madero opens herself up to other criticism. One is that there is nothing particularly strange or surprising about medieval ideas that distinguish intellectual from tangible property. They can be found readily in contemporary law, were Madero to look. Another is that Madero loses the essence of law, which is its positivism, and replaces it with relativism, which still fails to describe the position of any particular time or place. A third is that the painter of a medieval panel, seeking practical advice on the law and how to proceed, will find opinion, hearsay, and 'expert' evidence from the commentators of dubious probative value, none of which will be of any assistance.

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Martin, Catherine Gimelli, *Milton Among the Puritans: The Case for Historical Revisionism*, Farnham, Ashgate, 2010; hardback; pp. xviii, 360; 4 b/w illustrations; R.R.P. £60.00; ISBN 9781409408567.

This is an impressively researched and persuasive call for a significant re-think of not only Milton's religious identity, but also the religious culture of seventeenth-century England. Catherine Gimelli Martin's detailed Introduction sets out the complexity of locating Milton and his poetic and prose works within recognizably Puritan patterns of thought or theological outlook. While in the later seventeenth century Milton was primarily remembered for his anti-monarchical and 'seditious' writings, within his own lifetime, Martin says, his religious beliefs and the political views concomitant with them were often at odds with a Puritan outlook. Anti-prelatical but Arminian in terms of his soteriology, Milton was also less inclined to look for signs of election than were many of his Puritan contemporaries, and was confident of the expansive scope of God's Grace.

In drawing out these points, Martin aligns her revisionist thinking with the recent revisionist accounts of the Civil Wars, especially those of Richard Cust, which have had limited impact on the study of Milton. Most of all, Martin seeks to liberate Milton scholarship from aged, but still influential Whig interpretations of Milton and his context, and from Christopher Hill's argument that Milton, as both a poet and a heretic, was informed by his association with a radical Puritan underground movement. In fact Martin's book is a sustained attack upon the well-established 'Puritan Revolution' thesis concerning Milton and his period that Hill especially developed and expounded over many books.

Martin takes particular issue with Hill's writings, finding in them inaccurate readings of the poetry and a fundamental unwillingness to acknowledge the 'darkness' of seventeenth-century Puritan eschatological despair, while promoting ideas of the social progression inherent in Puritanism. Martin concurs with recent reassessments of the entire religious culture of the mid-seventeenth century, particularly ideas offered by Blair Worden, Nicholas Tyacke, and Anthony Milton. These have comprehensively dismantled a general picture of the socially progressive aspect of Puritanism and in particular the association between Milton and Puritan movements.

Against these traditional accounts of a Puritan-minded Milton, Martin calls to mind his high degree of aesthetic sensitivity and the almost total absence of dominating Puritan views in his family, which contained a mixture of Catholic and moderate Protestant relatives, while Milton's father was a composer of worldly madrigals.

One achievement of this book is to reveal Milton's dynamic intellectual progression. An implication of the Whig interpretation and Hill's later imaginings of a proto-Marxist radical movement in the seventeenth century has been to freeze Milton's intellectual development, forever fixing him as being of the Puritans. Instead Martin places him within a milieu in which dynamic intellectual journeys were possible, often towards religious rationalism. Milton was not fixed in intellectual stasis but capable of intellectual movement and the reassessment of ideas.

Most significant to Martin's historical revisionism is the context within which she reads Milton's major poetic and prose works. The 'Puritan Revolution' thesis tends to regard Milton as a product of the revolutionary period of the 1640s and 1650s. Yet, as Martin points out, Milton's works are a product of the Restoration period after 1660, and a major achievement of this study is to reorient the scholarly approach to these writings in this direction. Her analysis of *Paradise Lost* is especially central to this intention. Throughout this analysis, she summons up the vision of Milton the humanist rather than Milton the Puritan, drawing especial attention to the multiple secular resources he drew on in writing *Paradise Lost*, resources which Martin locates within the intellectual milieu of Restoration England.

Similarly, Martin builds a case for dismantling the traditional association between *Samson Agonistes* and the plight of post-Restoration dissenters. Concurring with Barbara Lewalski that Milton lacked the apocalyptic 'temper' that would have meant his poem was a fruit of 'Bible republicanism' (p. 280), Martin argues against any tendency to view *Samson Agonistes* as a tragedy about dissenters.

Martin has produced a robust and cogent affront to long-established orthodoxies concerning Milton as poet, philosopher, and political writer and in terms of his theology. Her title makes clear her intention to situate Milton *among* the Puritans, but not *of* them. She in fact liberates the man and his works from many decades of scholarship and she has single-handedly confounded many received assumptions about the context and the writer.

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Maxwell, Robert A., ed., *Representing History, 900–1300: Art, Music, History*, University Park, PA, Pennsylvania State University Press, 2010; hardback; pp. x, 278; 60 b/w illustrations; R.R.P. US\$79.95; ISBN 9780271036366.

This ambitious collection emerged from a two-day conference held at the University of Philadelphia in 2006. The conference brought together an impressive group of scholars from North America and Britain, including Patrick Geary, Susan Reynolds, and Lawrence Nees, and a wide range of materials were examined. As the editor Robert Maxwell points out, chronicles were not the only medieval source that reflected on the past: ‘Cultural production in its many forms, including rites, sounds, and objects, responded to history – and the past’s distance from the present – in myriad ways’.

One insight to be gained from this collection, and one that Gabrielle Spiegel points out in her provocative Introduction, is that medieval thinking about the past is not contained solely in medieval histories. While this might seem obvious, medieval people no more restricted their ideas to neat genre categories than we do. Historical, religious, political, and aesthetic concerns overlap in the works discussed, demonstrating, for example, how the past can be used to consolidate the present, indeed sometimes being rewritten to reflect some later agenda. Such manipulations occur in a variety of venues, including chartularies, hagiographies, and genealogies. Lindy Grant, for example, looks at the choir and transept clerestory windows at Chartres cathedral associated with Blanche of Castile. The windows contain donor portraits and heraldic devices together with scriptural history and genealogy. Grant argues that the visual linking of the kings of France with the kings of Judah probably had a political agenda that may have been very clear at the time of the windows’ commissioning, but is harder for us to decode today.

The book consists of fifteen essays, including the Introduction. For the latter, Maxwell has taken the unusual step of inviting Spiegel to write this rather than doing it himself. Maxwell, who has written on illustrated chartularies, amongst other things, is not represented, which I find disappointing. Spiegel, who presented the closing remarks at the original conference, acts independently of the editor and interrogates the articles as much as she provides a summary, challenging the writers' arguments, albeit gently. Her essay also discusses how historiography has moved away from measuring the trustworthiness of medieval histories as sources to embracing a wider range of questions, reflecting the impact of the 'linguistic turn'. She identifies the variety of materials drawn upon in this collection as inheriting this expanded discourse, embracing the changing approaches to studying medieval understandings of the past.

While there are several articles on charters and chronicles, probably the most striking feature of this book is the space given to music and liturgy, often overlooked in such general collections. Essays by Margot Fassler and Susan Boynton focus on liturgy, while Ardis Butterfield in 'Music, Memory and Authenticity: Representing Sound in History' raises some important questions about music history. She points out that music historians generally write histories about music, but not of music. The very transient nature of sound as opposed to that of writing, defies its capture as historical artefact, particularly for those pieces that have no notation and where re-created performance is generally speculative. Cynthia Hahn also writes about performance as part of her larger discussion of the relic collection and treasury at Quedlinburg. Here, she examines the role played by ceremonies, together with the foundation's collections and their setting, to evoke an imperial past and a contemporary relevance in the medieval period.

There are several excellent art historical pieces that demonstrate how art historians have been making such interdisciplinary connections for many years. Joan Holladay writes on English royal genealogical rolls, much discussed in the last ten years. She makes a useful point about the role such charts play in inscribing time on to space, and reiterates how genealogies too are liable to manipulation.

For me, the most thought-provoking is Christine Verzar's essay which examines history and myth in the texts and images about Matilda of Canossa, pointing out the quite different interpretations that can be drawn by historians and art historians 'as a result of their verbal or visual sources'. She examines Matilda's use of donations of art and her use of pre-existing artefacts to stress her family's Roman heritage and political legitimacy. Lawrence Nees provides a fascinating study of the 'tomb of Hincmar', challenging this identification

as mistaken, exploring the previous understandings of this work as well as a new interpretation.

There is a lot of very interesting material here, including Geary's essay 'From Charter to Cartulary: From Archival Practice to History', although in many ways the meaning of 'history' seems to be begging for further interrogation; does it consist of anything that evokes the past? Memory is another word that frequently recurs here, and the intersection between memory and history is a fascinating question that could have been explored further.

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Menon, Madhavi, ed., *Shakesqueer: A Queer Companion to the Complete Works of Shakespeare*, Durham, NC, Duke University Press, 2011; paperback; pp. 512; 18 illustrations; R.R.P. US\$27.95; ISBN 9780822348450.

In the Acknowledgments to *Shakesqueer*, the editor, Madhavi Menon calls this book a labour of love. I believed her. The love shows not only in the quality of the idea itself, but also in the way the book has been put together, which is a recipe for success. Take forty-eight smart and interesting thinkers working in the field of queer theory – some of them Shakespeareans and early modernists, some not – that is one for each of the forty-five works by Shakespeare, plus three for the *Sonnets*. Get them to write – more or less reluctantly – their observations on the individual work of William Shakespeare allocated to them. Precede their musings with an Introduction which defines things that the reader is likely to have been thinking about, but did not dare to ask: what is 'queer criticism', how it is distinct not only from gay and lesbian criticism, gender studies, theory of the other, and deconstruction theory, but also from twentieth-century queer theory, even the way our expertise and academic jobs are defined? Then, in a deliciously hip anachronistic move, apply the notion of queerness to Shakespeare's opus in order to uphold the idea of its continuing relevance. By rearranging the pixels on the icon of Shakespeare, turn him into an altogether different, modern, fresh, re-thought kind of icon; yet an icon nevertheless. Or, as the Bard himself puts it: one must be cruel only to be kind.

'Privilege', argues Menon in the Introduction, 'is not all that it appears to be, and being canonized ... deprives the text of agency ... If canonizing Shakespeare protects our idea of ourselves, then not engaging the canonical Shakespeare allows that protection to continue unimpeded', and this is not

a good thing. But any shaking of Shakespeare must also shake queer theory and rethink two main assumptions: ‘that queerness has a historical start date [which Menon argues is the nineteenth century]; and that queerness is a synonym for embodied homosexuality [which Menon argues is a post nineteenth-century phenomenon]’ (pp. 2–4). Rather, the question proposed as being at the heart of this project is: ‘Can Shakespeare be regarded as a queer theorist, or is he always the object on which queer theory acts in a one-sided relationship?’ It is proof of its impeccable academic credentials that the book also acknowledges the fundamental problem with this question: that ‘Shakespeare ... lies beyond the pale of acceptable chronology, so to extend queerness to him is to play fast and loose with academic credibility’ (p. 5). In response to this, Menon proposes queer theory that is ‘a hybrid, an amalgamation of several different theories and texts that thwarts our desire to pin down its essence’. In essence, then, this is a theory which explores itself and its relationship with the unusual, weird, unorthodox, unexpected, surprising, and, above all, self-interrogating types of self-expression, then applies the result to the works of William Shakespeare.

It was good to see in the volume the likes of Bruce Smith, Lee Edelman, Stephen Bruhm, Ellis Hanson, Stephen Guy-Bray, Kathryn Schwarz, Alan Sinfield, and others associated with a study of sexuality and otherness, both in and out of the field of the Renaissance Studies (though Stephen Orgel is conspicuous by his absence), as well as some unfamiliar names. As it is impossible to discuss all forty-eight contributions in a review, I offer here a small and personal selection. Bruce Smith’s ‘The Latin Lovers in the *Taming of the Shrew*’ is a light-hearted and highly incisive piece on the relationship between the vagaries of (Latin) grammar and generation of sexual meaning (no pun intended here): it is characteristically informative and pleasurable. Lee Edelman’s ‘Hamlet’s wounded name’ is also an exploration of language, but written in a denser, Derrida-esque style. Edelman casts Hamlet as a ‘personification of too-muchness beyond the grasp of philosophy’s reason’. Heather Love’s ‘Milk’, a piece on Macbeth, examines ‘ambition ... [as] a form of desire that produces situations of “over-proximity”’, and proposes, in relation to Lady Macbeth, ‘a form of reading that is not merely close, but too close, claustrophobic, even abject’. Although it is not explicitly stated as an aim, this is also the self-reflective purpose of Jason Edwards’s piece of autobiographic ficto-criticism on Coriolanus, “‘Tell me Not Wherein I Seem Unnatural’: Queer Meditations on Coriolanus in the Time of War’. It was refreshing to read the contemplation of *Coriolanus* imbued with discussions of war-lust and the orifices of the human body by this theorist who is not, in his day job, an early modernist.

I have already recommended this book to my students, and I would recommend it to everyone, from Shakespearean and/or queer scholars to intelligent general readers. Despite its lofty goals, I did not feel that the book broke significant new ground; but it will no doubt be useful as a companion to individual works by Shakespeare and multidisciplinary research alike, and even – unlike most scholarly compilations – as bedtime reading.

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Monson, Craig A., *Nuns Behaving Badly: Tales of Music, Magic, Art and Arson in the Convents of Italy*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 2010; cloth; pp. xvi, 241; 25 b/w illustrations; R.R.P. US\$ 35.00; ISBN 9780226534619.

The 1990s saw a groundswell of musicological interest in the artistic and cultural pursuits of women in religious life. A particularly happy hunting ground was the world of Italian convents where, contrary to received opinion, it was not unusual to find lively up-to-date musical fare, some of it decidedly secular in tone, being cultivated by accomplished nun-musicians. This is perhaps not surprising given the high proportion of the female population that lived behind convent walls: in Bologna c. 1630, for example, 14 per cent of the population, while it was 75 per cent of genteel women in mid-seventeenth-century Milan. For women consigned to life in a convent by their families, music making (and singing in particular) enlivened their otherwise mundane lives. It also brought pleasure to members of the public who attended services in convent churches where the sound of nuns singing the liturgy, out of sight, could be enjoyed by all. Entertaining the public, unintentional though it might have been, also had the potential to bring individual women artists and their convents into conflict with the Church hierarchy.

Matters to do with discipline in monastic houses were handled by the Sacred Congregation of Bishops and Regulars (est. 1572), a slow-grinding bureaucracy for which no detail was too trivial. Its reports, deliberations, and adjudications are a treasure-trove for the scholar with a keen eye and the stamina to trawl through the hundreds of thousands of documents kept in the Congregation's Secret Vatican Archives. Craig Monson is just the man, a self-confessed *topo d'archivio* (archive mouse). His well-received earlier monographs – *Crannied Walls: Women, Religion, and the Arts in Early Modern Europe* (1992) and *Disembodied Voices: Music and Culture in an Early Modern*

Italian Convent (1995) – delved into these documents and brought to light stories of women artists, their accomplishments, rivalries, and travails with the Church hierarchy that coloured their cloistered lives.

Nuns Behaving Badly gathers together five of the more unlikely tales Monson came across during the course of his research for these books. He has many more madcap stories in store that entertained his colleagues, and he provides tasters of another seven towards the end of his book. What sets these five, unrelated tales apart is the sheer wealth of descriptive detail, dialogue, and first-hand accounts that Monson has been able to uncover, sufficient to sustain a narrative thread that stretches over years and sometimes over decades. ‘Each tale relates a singular response to the cloistered life and all touch off major crises’, as Monson puts it. ‘They disrupt the convent status quo’, he continues, ‘provoking aftershocks that might continue for generations. They reveal the incapacities of hierarchically imposed systems of external oversight and control. Given these realities, they sometimes even destroy their communities’.

In Monson’s telling, the stories also make for a rollicking good read. At times droll (‘taken to visit the convent at age three, a careless nun had dropped her out of an upstairs window’), at times pathetic (‘She had experienced carnival first hand in the streets, not the *parlatorio*. And of course she had been to the opera four times. The very same things that had made her a criminal may now have contributed to her role as something of a celebrity’), the tone is light and there is a journalistic delight in revealing the quirky turn of events. Indeed, a couple of the tales would not be out of place in Boccaccio’s *Decameron*. Imagine, if you will, a Carmelite couple eloping hand-in-hand from their ramshackle convent, mother prioress in a swoon, and the uproar that ensues when the bedraggled pair barge in, unwelcome, on an unsuspecting Benedictine nunnery.

Although Rome imposed a strict prohibition on forcing girls into convents against their will and obliged local bishops to interview potential postulants in order satisfy themselves that the girls were entering of their own volition, wealthy, well-connected families seem to have had little difficulty in ensuring that their daughters’ virtue was protected in the way they desired – *aut virum aut murum oportet mulierem habere* (a husband or a wall) – usually won the day.

Monson concludes his book with an account of the treatment recently meted out by the Church hierarchy to a number of women in St Louis, Missouri, who had themselves ordained as priests. The analogy he sees between these ‘unruly’ women and those in *Nuns Behaving Badly* strikes me as somewhat strained. However entertaining Monson’s book (and it certainly is a virtuoso piece of archival sleuthing) the social phenomenon it deals with

leaves one rightly sympathetic to the many unfortunate women, not possessed of a religious vocation, whose lives were idled away behind convent walls.

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Newth, Michael A. H., ed. and trans., *Fierabras and Floripas: A French Epic Allegory*, New York, Italica Press, 2010; paperback; pp. xxxviii, 256; 17 b/w illustrations; R.R.P. US\$20.00; ISBN 9781599101576.

This book offers us translations of two separate old French *chansons de geste*, which can reasonably be read as a single tale: *La destruction de Rome* and *Fierabras*. The former tells of the destruction of Rome by a Muslim army from Spain led by the emir Balan and his son Fierabras, during which the population is massacred and holy relics are captured. The attack was in reprisal for a Christian slaughter of Muslim merchants and report of a greater threat posed by the pope. The Muslims return to Spain before Charlemagne is able to arrive from France to defend the city. The latter tells of the fortunes of Charlemagne and his knights who have pursued Balan to Spain. The suspenseful but unsurprising turns of events between the Christian and Muslim armies, ending with the defeat of the Muslims, the execution of Balan, and the conquest of the Iberian peninsula are rendered particularly interesting, however, by the behaviour of Fierabras and his sister Floripas. Fierabras is defeated in single combat by Oliver, converts to Christianity and is baptised, and is granted half of Spain as his kingdom. Floripas falls in love with Gui of Burgundy, betrays her father, aids Christian knights in difficult moments, likewise receiving baptism and marrying Gui, and reigns with him over the other half of Spain.

The greatest merit of this book is surely to make these two epics available to a wider audience in a very accomplished and readable verse translation, which succeeds in conveying much of the sense of oral performance that their medieval audiences would have enjoyed. In order to achieve this effect, Michael Newth has necessarily taken some liberties (cf. pp. xxx–xxx), so that this cannot be regarded as a literal translation, but it joins a respectable series of similar translations by him. While he includes a selection of excerpts from the original Old French version as an appendix, such translations are only serviceable to specialist scholars and students when accompanied by the complete facing text.

The bulk of the Introduction proposes an historical and interpretative approach to the poems. Newth claims that they were probably composed

under the influence of Abbot Suger and originally performed at the annual market of Lendit at the abbey of Saint Denis. The abbey claimed to possess several of the relics depicted in the poems, Saint Denis is regularly mentioned and Suger supported a political programme which appealed to Charlemagne in order to establish France's exemplary role as defender of Christendom and of Rome. Newth arranges the two poems, as a single whole, into four parts reflecting a spiritual progression, notably of Fierabras, which he considers implicit in them and which raises the poems from an adventure story to a moral epic: vanity, submission, desires, and deserts.

At several points, the translator seems to be at pains to demonstrate that a medieval poem can also be 'relevant' to modern readers, and this relevance seems to lie partly in its alleged moral and religious message. While allowing that a medieval audience could have made associations based on names or other details in the narrative with religious models and thereby indeed perceived a higher meaning in such entertainment, Newth's suggestions here seem overdrawn, and there is nothing in the poems' prefaces to support them. We need to distinguish between medieval hermeneutics and modern relevance. The relics, for instance, do assume some importance in the story, but they do not inspire any spiritual contemplation by the characters; they function only as booty, as a source of healing and protection, and as the object of simple piety.

The other significant difficulty with this text lies with its composition. This edition would be more useful to scholars with a discussion of the manuscripts, the relationship between the various dialect versions, and evidence as to why we should consider the poems to have been originally composed in the Picard dialect while the remaining versions are seen as subsidiary. Newth seems to assume that these poems have passed through three stages of composition, although sufficient proof of this is not provided, nor are objections to his position acknowledged; in fact, some of his views contradict those of many scholars (Stimming, cited on p. xxv, is not included in the bibliography).

Newth cites the author's claim in his preface to have rediscovered a text of the poem preserved at Saint Denis, apparently in support of his position, although such appeals represent a literary *topos* and need not be taken literally. Even if the present poems do include older material, they also constitute a re-working of such material, because they include themes and assume circumstances that did not obtain in earlier centuries. Suger was abbot of Saint Denis from 1122–1151, yet these poems have been dated to c. 1190, or later. Unfortunately, there is no discussion of how the hypothetical versions of this poem would stand in relation to one another, nor how a poem

composed at the end of the twelfth century could have been influenced by Suger. We should also bear in mind that most of the almost one hundred surviving *chansons de geste* are associated in some degree with Charlemagne, but are not all to be associated with Saint Denis. Why, then, should *these* be?

Finally, a discussion of the genre and its narrative techniques, of themes in the poems such as feudal relations, rebellious attitudes of nobles towards their monarchs, and of the misrepresentation of Muslims, for example, as worshippers of Roman idols and of Mohammed, and an attempt to contextualize such depictions within the complex interactions between Christian Europe and the Islamic world in this period, would have enriched this introduction (cf. e.g. Joan M. Ferrante, trans., *Guillaume d'Orange: Four Twelfth-Century Epics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1974), Introduction). And why would Floripas have snow-white skin and golden hair?

Michael Newth deserves full credit for a skilful translation. The introductory material, however, would benefit from a more balanced and comprehensive discussion.

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Rodríguez-Velasco, Jesús D., *Order and Chivalry: Knighthood and Citizenship in Late Medieval Castile* (Middle Ages), Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010; cloth; pp. 304; R.R.P. US\$65.00, £42.50; ISBN 9780812242126.

The considerable question of how a social class is created is comprehensively addressed in Jesús Rodríguez-Velasco's latest publication on chivalry and society in medieval Castile and León. His background as a scholar of Alfonso X's transformation of Hispanic law and legal discourse enables him to examine another facet of chivalry's implications for the developing European urban class.

He uses the framework of the 'poetics of *ordo*', the *estado* social model and its dialogue, for this study of the transformation of a Castilian social class and the justification of legal and monarchical sovereignty. He puts forward convincing models of how the Castilian bourgeois reinvented discourse on chivalry, affecting economics, political theology, morality, and vocabulary. The broader implications of this investigation are discussed, including how the themes of chivalry were articulated in literature, the socio-political benefits of chivalry, the dialogue on chivalry between monarch and nobility, and how Castilian and European society and culture developed with these foundations.

In his Introduction, Rodríguez-Velasco defines knighthood and chivalry more articulately than many earlier works on chivalry, touching on the political strategy and creation of knighthood that ‘sets a structure that buttresses the civic values of a peaceful society’ (p. 2). Throughout he demonstrates his sound background knowledge of historical documents and chronicles, and draws on a detailed understanding of how the Castilian monarchy, especially Alfonso XI, incorporated chivalry into political and juridical discourse and configured it as a means to translate theological hierarchy into law.

Rodríguez-Velasco frames his investigation with those visible *topoi* of chivalry: rituals; the fraternity, or *Hermandad*, constituting chivalric orders instituted by the urban bourgeois; confraternity and regulation; the creation of the Order of the Sash, the *Orden de la Banda*, by Alfonso XI; and the discourse on royal power and sovereignty. The implications connecting this poetics of chivalric order is related to the construction of modern political and urban social structure in such a way that an arc from medieval to modern can be clearly understood.

The most inspiring part of this book is its central chapter, Chapter 5: ‘Rewriting the Order’. This is where Rodríguez-Velasco’s research on Castilian regal power and its discourse is really exploited. With textual examples and the compilation of a table, Rodríguez-Velasco outlines the differences in the versions of the *Book of the Sash*, which was rewritten over several centuries. Poems and legal texts that refer to this document are discussed, and historical nuances of the Castilian court are illuminated to demonstrate the commerce and unity of the urban knightly class, and their desire for independence from the monarch. The complex relations of power are outlined to support Rodríguez-Velasco’s assertion that the *Book of the Sash* was an instrument comprising regulations in retrospect of the time it was written, as a power-tool for the monarch in an attempt to retain his sovereignty.

As the particulars of the Order of the Sash are investigated, Rodríguez-Velasco points out the practical effects of the developing society on the *Book*, and vice-versa. Alfonso XI’s attempts to hold on to the power of the monarch over knightly society are explained, and illustrated by the examples of Don Juan Manuel’s *Libro del cavallero et del escudero*, by the transformation of the details of investiture, and the relationship of the king to the order. The author illustrates the process by which the order was rewritten, and how it must then be understood as a process by which the ennobling of a knight was established, and thus political and royal communication of power laid down as law.

Stylistic variations in the different versions of the *Book's* texts are explained and supported by historical events and literature. Within this comparative framework, Rodríguez-Velasco convincingly challenges the view held by historians such as Maurice Keen, on the military and political function of the tournament, the rules of which are outlined in the *Book*, and posits that it was mainly a cultural device to demonstrate the relationship of groups or individuals with power. Similarly, Rodríguez-Velasco refers to passages in the *Gran Crónica de Alfonso XI* and in the *Cantar de mio Cid* that demonstrate the function of knights' accoutrements as symbols of vassalage and royal power seen at a tournament, or at court when contrasted to their appearance in a more practical military use.

Besides presenting a valuable study of the formation and identity of Castilian society, Rodríguez-Velasco's book expands the study of chivalry into the areas of social historiography, law, and cultural identity. Though its focus is the monarchy of Castile and León, this volume will benefit scholars of medieval literature, chivalry, and history in a broader European context as well as those whose focus includes the development of modern society in Spain and its colonial regions.

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Shalev-Eyni, Sarit, *Jews Among Christians: Hebrew Book Illumination from Lake Constance* (Studies in Medieval and Early Renaissance Art History 41), Turnhout, Brepols/Harvey Miller, 2010; cloth; pp. xii, 227; 109 b/w illustrations; R.R.P. €110.00; ISBN 9781905375097.

Sarit Shalev-Eyni's book adds a fine piece of new scholarship to the growing corpus of work on the medieval Hebrew book. Shalev-Eyni focuses on a group of six related Ashkenazic manuscripts that, she argues, were all illuminated in the same secular urban workshop in the Lake Constance region of Switzerland, most of which were probably copied by the same scribe.

Chapter 1 presents an overview of the six manuscripts that are at the heart of this book. This is particularly informative for the non-specialist reader because of the clear explanations about the ritual function of each manuscript and manuscript production practices in medieval Jewish communities. Chapter 2 gives a brief overview of Hebrew book illumination practices and the relationship of illuminations to textual structure. Shalev-Eyni's previously published work explores aspects of 'illustration as interpretation' (p. 29) and her discussion here gives the reader insight into the process whereby

Christian iconography was adapted to suit a Jewish context in the decorative programmes of medieval Ashkenazic illuminated manuscripts.

Chapter 3, 'A Jewish-Christian Dialogue', deepens this line of enquiry to explore how Jewish-Christian interactions are reflected more broadly by the artwork and production of the manuscripts in the Lake Constance Hebrew group. Like others before her, Shalev-Eyni draws on the exegetical literature of the *Midrash* to explain how motifs from Christian art have been adapted and reinterpreted from a Jewish perspective. However, her approach to this reinterpretation process is not to view it as only polemical. Instead, Shalev-Eyni gives us a wider view of the cultural and historical circumstances that, paradoxically, allowed images in commissioned illuminated books to reflect the religious and cultural tensions that existed between Jews and Christians, yet be produced cooperatively by a Jewish scribe working side-by-side with Christian artists in a secular atelier. Importantly, Shalev-Eyni has identified the process whereby illuminated books produced for Jewish consumption sometimes deliberately reverse notions of 'model' and 'anti-model' (see Michael Camille, *Image on the Edge: The Margins of Medieval Art* (Reaktion, 1992)), exchanging the central or marginal location of motifs from that where they are normally found in Latin illuminated manuscripts.

Chapter 4 convincingly argues the common production provenance of this Hebrew manuscript group and the Gradual of St Katharinenthal, demonstrating 'the close affinity between the Hebrew Lake Constance group and the Gradual' (p. 125), through careful, detailed analysis of shared style and motifs.

Chapter 5 explores the role the scribe, Hayyim, assumed in the production of the six Hebrew manuscripts. Here, Shalev-Eyni shows an impressive synthesis of codicological, palaeographical, and art historical expertise in her careful analysis of discernible aspects of scribal production in these manuscripts and how these overlap that of the artwork production. Her hypothesis, that the Jewish scribe cooperated closely with the illuminators in the secular urban workshop that decorated these six manuscripts, possibly even working alongside them, is compelling. Chapter 6 rounds off this study with a discussion of social, cultural, and historical elements that reflect, and are reflected by, this group of Hebrew manuscripts, including the role of the Jewish community in local politics, interaction between Jews and Christians in economic affairs, and the likely contact between the Jewish patrons commissioning this group of books and Christian society.

This book is well referenced and the Appendix contains a useful catalogue with descriptions of textual contents, colophon, codicology, known history, decoration programme, and bibliography for each of the six manuscripts.

While the text is fully illustrated with 109 reproductions, it is a pity that the publisher did not include at least a few colour illustrations. Colour pictures would be particularly useful in Chapter 4, since the detailed discussion of shared stylistic and production features between the 'Hebrew Lake group' and the Gradual of St Katharinenthal includes descriptions of colour schemes that must be imagined in monochrome images rather than seen.

Jews among Christians affords new insights into Jewish–Christian interactions during the first half of the fourteenth century. These are gained through Shalev-Eyni's convincing argument concerning collaboration between the commissioning scribe and the workshop that produced the illuminations, and the interpreted illustrations they contain. Because of long-standing scholarly debate about the extent of participation by Christians in the decoration of illuminated Hebrew manuscripts, this study is particularly significant for the new evidence it presents about the artwork production process for medieval Hebrew books. This book will be of interest to scholars working with medieval Latin/Christian and Jewish manuscript sources, as well as those interested in social and cultural interaction between Jews and Christians in Europe during the late Middle Ages.

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Smith, Geoffrey, *Royalist Agents, Conspirators and Spies: Their Role in the British Civil Wars, 1640–1660*, Farnham, Ashgate, 2010; hardback; pp. 296; 3 b/w maps; R.R.P. £60.00; ISBN 9780754666936.

The British Civil Wars have been the subject of countless studies, but until the 1970s a bias existed towards parliamentarians and the New Model Army. In recent years there has been a rebalancing to ensure that royalists are given as much prominence in the scholarly literature. Smith's latest book, *Royalist Agents*, is an important contribution to this growing interest in royalism during the Civil Wars and the Interregnum period. Smith's approach is distinguished from earlier studies by its emphasis on royalist supporters below the ranks of royal ministers, privy councillors, generals, and courtiers. The aim of his study is to understand how the royalist war effort was directed, and how important the activities of royalist agents were to the survival and ultimate success of the King's party in 1660.

The book is divided into ten chapters and follows a sensible chronological structure. The study begins with the army plots of 1641, which marked the first venture of Charles I's supporters into secret meetings and conspiracies, and ends with the restoration of Charles II in 1660. Smith adopts a practical

approach to the material by focusing on a select number of prominent agents with long-serving careers, for whom good primary sources survive.

The narrative is sophisticated and well-structured, making it easy to follow the details of the many plots, factions, and eventful careers of individual agents. Each chapter delivers a helpful balance between contextualization of the broader military, political, and diplomatic issues confronting royalists, and thrilling accounts of the changing fortunes and roles of particular agents.

Royalist Agents also fills in some gaps in the largely unexplored area of early modern intelligence gathering and espionage. Smith successfully demonstrates that diplomatic missions to foreign princes, political coups, and conspiracies became increasingly important as attempts at either political or military victory failed. The responsibility of keeping lines of communication open, and for passing on royalist policies was left to plotters, spies, envoys, couriers, intelligencers, and journalists. Smith joins the likes of Alan Marshall in demonstrating the availability of sources and the possibilities of study in this area of early modern British history.

Smith identifies a number of shortcomings in the royalist camp that help to shed light on the nature of the Civil Wars. He points out that the Commonwealth and Protectorate regimes were more powerful and better resourced than the exiled royal court. The royalist leadership was factional, unstable, and constantly short of money. Royalist agents also typically served the interests of their individual patrons or factions, and sometimes changed their allegiances to the Protectorate. Importantly, royalist agents lacked a powerful and enthusiastic figure to coordinate and direct their activities. Smith rightly cautions against comparing Secretary of State, Sir Edward Nicholas, too unfavourably with the reputations of Cromwell's secretary John Thurloe, or Elizabeth I's ruthless spymaster Sir Francis Walsingham. Nicholas was director of intelligence under highly unusual and challenging conditions. Smith's admiration for the relentless efforts of royalist agents in the face of so many hardships and frequent defeats is apparent throughout the book, and makes for a compelling read.

Smith concludes persuasively that, although the various plots and insurrections planned by royalists had failed, the tireless activism of royalist agents had been significant for the survival of royalism. The irrepressible activities of royalist agents had helped to ensure that the Commonwealth and Protectorate were never able to feel secure, and that traditional monarchist loyalties did not disappear.

Less convincing or clear is Smith's claim that the status of royalist agents was transformed by the defeat of the King's army in the first English Civil War. Smith argues that royalist agents, whether envoys in Copenhagen or

journalists in Oxford, saw themselves as legally accredited envoys of their rightful ruler, Charles I. He further claims that these agents were accepted, or at least tolerated, by the parliamentary authorities. Following the end of the Civil War royalist agents became rebels, attempting by secret and underground means to overthrow an established regime. For Smith this marked a change of status from the 'open and legitimate phases' of the agents' activities to their 'underground and exiled' careers (p. 239). This distinction is too sharp and contradicts Smith's earlier statement that during the first English Civil War couriers travelling between Oxford and London could be executed if caught, and that any attempt to undermine London's loyalty to Parliament was viewed very seriously by parliamentarians. These comments suggest that the activities of royalist agents prior to Charles I's execution were still very dangerous and secretive.

Overall, Smith's study has much to offer scholars working on royalism, the British Civil Wars, and seventeenth-century intelligence gathering and plotting. The book also presents a lively and enjoyable read for the non-specialist.

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Sturges, Robert S., ed., *Law and Sovereignty in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance* (Arizona Studies in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance 28), Turnhout, Brepols, 2011; hardback; pp. xviii, 302; 13 b/w illustrations; R.R.P. €70.00; ISBN 9782503533094.

It is hard not to like a volume that devotes an entire chapter to a couple quarrelling over which one of them farted. This reviewer, for one, did not realise the antiquity of the legal principle that 'he who smelt it, dealt it' (p. 100). Apparently, though, this was a concept familiar to the author of the fifteenth-century French farce, *The Fart*, printed in full in this volume. This farce, translated by Sharon King, highlights the broad range of contexts where discourses about law and sovereignty may be found. Yet the contributions to this volume do not generally touch on the singular topic of 'law and sovereignty' – with a few notable exceptions – but rather address the twin topics of 'law' and 'sovereignty'. It does not really fulfil the jacket's claim to 'constitute a valuable overview of the history of medieval and Renaissance law and sovereignty in several disciplines'. It does not pose a coherent overview of a developing sense of 'sovereignty', nor does every contribution provide a definitive sense of how pre-modern sovereignty was conceived, constructed

and/or projected. Scholars looking for this will be disappointed. *Law and Sovereignty* rather explores these themes within certain medieval and early modern European contexts. Like much research of the period itself, it is a patchwork of aligned concepts and subjects, drawn from a variety of sources, and demanding a range of methodologies. It is perhaps more interesting for this than if it had fulfilled its claim.

A number of the chapters explore these themes within literature, or use literature to explore contemporary conceptions and practices. For instance, Albrecht Classen's analysis of thirteenth-century Tristan romances highlights how fictionalized political contexts provide parameters of behaviour for their actors and limit the narrative outcome of those same fictions. At the centre of Erika Hess's exploration of the argument between Nature and Nurture, found in thirteenth-century Arthurian romance, is the character of 'Silence', some cross-dressing, and a literary warning for contemporary readers against sovereigns breaking natural rights generally, or the right of female inheritance specifically. In another Arthurian analysis, Lee Manion argues for a 'fluid sort of sovereignty' (p. 79), but also raises the role of documentary evidence in medieval claims of sovereignty generally.

Some chapters touch on very particular historical discussions of sovereignty. Catherine Loomis highlights the role that poetry written upon the death of Elizabeth I and the accession of James I had in facilitating and explaining what may have been an otherwise difficult succession. Spanish conceptions of sovereignty are the subject of Aurelio Espinosa's chapter where several perceptions of sovereignty 'from below' are presented, and the chapter provides interesting nuance and detail to the narrative of the Habsburg rise in the sixteenth century. Also Iberian, Harald Braun's re-analysis of the Spanish Jesuit Juan de Mariana's 1599 *De rege* – 'denounced as a radical theory of popular sovereignty' (p. 47) – achieves a fascinating de-legalization of that text. Braun argues effectively that this text was not focused on sovereignty as such, but rather on political prudence.

A similar attempt to reconfigure a text is provided by Torrance Kirby, who revisits the English theologian Richard Hooker's 'theory of sovereignty' and argues against what has been seen as an irreconcilable logic inherent in Hooker's conception. The interdisciplinary nature of the volume is furthered by Adrienne Williams Boyarin's art-historical analysis of 'symbolic and historical instances of feminine legal authority' (p. 258), which draws on a number of texts and illustrations.

Detailed document studies, with important methodological implications, are a particular treat in this book. Retha Warnicke's detailed analysis of a particular diplomatic exchange between the Scottish embassy and Elizabeth

I's Court in 1583, as reported by the Spanish ambassador, highlights the problems with using early modern diplomatic reports uncritically. Any researcher who uses these sources should read this chapter. Similarly, Andrew Rabin's revisionist examination of the 'Fonthill letter' of the early tenth century raises the profile of written documents as legal instruments of that time. It also contributes to the theme of the volume by providing a theoretical construction of tenth-century interaction between disputants and royal authority through the lens of such documents.

In this reviewer's favourite chapter, Martina Saltamacchia argues that the act of constructing the Cathedral of Milan was an expression of popularly held sovereignty by the people of that city. Not only is the chapter a fascinating study of communal 'ownership' of the cathedral and its construction, it is also a brilliant exposition on the processes of decision-making, building, and contributing towards the building of the cathedral. Finally, in an excellent piece of primary source analysis and contextualization, any future biographer of Geoffrey Chaucer needs to read Green's revisiting of the quitclaim between Chaucer and Cecily Champaign. It would also be of great interest to those interested in quitclaims generally.

This is a remarkably wide-ranging and for the most part stimulating collection of essays.

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Vaught, Jennifer C., ed., *Rhetorics of Bodily Disease and Health in Medieval and Early Modern England* (Literary and Scientific Cultures of Early Modernity), Farnham, Ashgate, 2010; hardback; pp. 260; 11 b/w illustrations; R.R.P. £55.00; ISBN 9780754669487.

Beginning as an idea emerging out of a Special Session at Kalamazoo in 2008, the resulting collection of ten essays, brought together by Jennifer Vaught, is one that is broad in scope and thought provoking in its depth. Building on existing scholarship, the essays demonstrate how many forms of language are used to make sense of disease and health in relation to both the body and the cosmos. Part of the text's originality can be found in its coverage of both disease *and* health from antiquity to the mid-eighteenth century, which allows for greater comparison and critical analysis between and within topics, and over time periods.

The essays draw primarily on the works of Shakespeare, Chaucer, Dante, Spenser, Donne, and Milton, supplemented by the theories of the Church

Fathers, and using historical documents such as the plague bills of mortality, and medical guides. Covering a wide range of topics and genres within literature, medicine, religion, and science, the volume's contributors explore rhetorical devices including pun, metaphor, allegory, and symbol to illustrate that speech had the 'power to infect and heal but also to provide religious, moral, literary, and physiological rationales for the mysterious fragility of the human spirit, psyche, and body' (p. 9). As each essay demonstrates, the body (and at times specific limbs, organs, or orifices and their relationship to language) becomes the site from which to draw those answers.

The first three essays explore theoretical ideas of the divinely perfect or disfigured body as a text. Lisi Oliver and Maria Mahoney examine works on physical anatomy by St Ambrose (*Hexaameron*) and Hrabanus Maurus (*De Universo Libri*). They argue that Ambrose saw the body as a fortress, protecting the Christian soul against the assault of Satan and Paganism, while Hrabanus, writing much later, uses allegory and metaphor as his vehicle to further religious ideas at a time of religious upheaval. James C. Nohrnberg explores cantos XXIX–XXX of Dante's *Inferno* to conclude that greed and frivolous consumption result in society's physical, spiritual, and moral disfigurement as evidenced by leprosy, dropsy, and rabies. Fraudulence and its disfigurement also feature in Laila Abdalla's essay on the 'Linguistic Corporeality in Chaucer's Pardoner'. Here, the Pardoner's body as text is an excellent example of how 'corporeal incontinence' serves to highlight the falseness of the Pardoner's words and his lack of spiritual integrity (p. 84).

Delving into the 'Imaginative Discourses of Sexuality, Delightful and Dangerous', the authors of the next two essays explore the sexualized rhetoric of Spenser and Shakespeare, demonstrating that healthy bodies can also be used didactically. William A. Oram's analysis of Spenser's *Epithalamion* highlights its stance that sex was good for the individual and therefore delightful, as long as it did not become debased and dangerous. Emma Lees takes an original, and gendered, approach in her discussion of the 'Rhetorics of Reticence and (Dis)ease in *King Lear*'. By refusing to agree with the play's traditional link between female bodies and chaos, she instead argues that Shakespeare's 'metaphorical vaginas' are a means to 'resisting the silencing and sexual oppression of women' (p. 14). Both essays in this section confirm that in the early modern period there was a tendency to 'respond ambivalently to the sexualized dimensions of healthy bodies' (p. 12).

Immersing the reader into the field of early modern science and statistics, Richelle Munkhoff uses the previously neglected London Bills of Mortality to demonstrate how new scientific methods of collecting data clashed with traditional methods of using woman searchers. She argues for more attention

to be given to these women who have been sidelined in favour of the apparent objectivity of scientific fact. Using early modern ideas of the cosmos and the humours, Rebecca Torato explores how the anger and cursing of Queen Margaret in Shakespeare's *Henry VI* and *Richard III* led people to imagine such behaviour caused the ill health of the nation.

The final three essays examine how both authors and their readers made sense of society's problems through the use of satire and invective. William Spates argues that, while the rhetoric of disease is powerful, it has little impact on the macrocosm which has the ultimate power. Judith Anderson argues that St Paul's theories of sin and rational will influenced the works of Donne, Spenser, and Milton, promoting the idea that diseases were justified by feelings of guilt. Stephen Pender observes that some early modern thinkers believed a person's control of their passions was the answer to health and disease of mind or body. Using a wide range of works including Sir Thomas Elyot and Francis Bacon, Pender shows how authors used various forms of language to overcome an excessive emotive state.

Completing this interesting collection is a substantial bibliography that will benefit both academics and students from a wide range of disciplines.

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Warren, Nancy Bradley, *The Embodied Word: Female Spiritualities, Contested Orthodoxies, and English Religious Cultures, 1350–1700* (ReFormations: Medieval and Early Modern), Notre Dame, University of Notre Dame Press, 2010; paperback; pp. 352; R.R.P. US\$32.00; ISBN 9780268044206.

This is a splendid book: highly readable, engrossingly narrated, and altogether compelling. Nancy Warren acknowledges a debt to David Wallace's work on female spirituality and historical periodization, and at the heart of her study is 'a desire to reconsider the binaries of medieval and early modern, Catholic and Protestant, domestic and foreign, orthodox and heterodox, that have obscured important aspects of English religious cultures' (p. 8). Warren demonstrates the sustained importance of medieval female spirituality for both Catholics and Protestants in the post-Reformation period. The temporal and confessional continuities she establishes arise from the devotional centrality of identification with the bodies of Christ and the Virgin. Female spirituality rooted in the body, she shows, forms a basis for connectedness with society and community, as well as with the English body politic, and

with the church conceived as the mystical body of Christ. This is not an overtly contentious study, but Warren makes it clear that she differs from those who, like David Aers, regard identification with Christ's Passion as a form of victimization or acceptance of passivity: 'Experiencing Christ's, and others', sufferings through textual encounters with them informs theological and political visions (or, better, revisions) committed to *performance* and to action rather than to stasis or passivity' (p. 46).

Chapter 1 explicates incarnational paradigms in the lives and writings of three medieval holy women (St Birgitta of Sweden, St Catherine of Siena, and Julian of Norwich), and explores the influence of these in the poetry of a seventeenth-century Protestant, Aemilia Lanyer. Chapter 2 traces the legacy of Julian of Norwich in the writings of Mary Gascoigne (a representative example of the English Benedictine nuns at Cambrai and Paris, who played a crucial role in the preservation of Julian's texts), and in the spiritual autobiography of a Protestant gentry woman named Grace Mildmay (1552–1620). That early modern women devoted to preserving the 'old religion' were attached to medieval women's writings and spirituality may not seem surprising, but, as Warren intimates, there have been few sustained studies of these continuities (the most notable being Christine Peters's *Patterns of Piety*, from which Warren's study diverges markedly). More surprising is the significance of medieval affective and contemplative piety for Protestant women like Mildmay, who belonged to 'a religious tradition that is so often understood as defining itself in opposition to such forms of devotion' (p. 13). In this chapter, too, Warren shows that there is a political dimension to the incarnational piety whose continuity she traces: 'Mildmay's engagement with the spirituality of the past informs her visions of the constitution of the body that is the church and her attitudes to the body that is the English nation' (p. 14).

Chapter 3 argues strongly for 'the importance of Spain as a nation and of women as spiritual subjects in forging distinctive forms of early modern Englishness strongly aligned with medieval religious culture' (p. 14). Like the Benedictine nuns of Cambrai and Paris, the English Brigittine community of Syon, which finally settled in Spanish-controlled Lisbon, was engaged in developing a form of oppositional nationalism, influenced by St Birgitta. The Lisbon Brigittines had connections with Luisa de Carvajal y Mendoza who entered England in 1605 to advance the Catholic cause. Luisa, Warren argues, was likewise influenced by St Birgitta, and played an important part in promulgating an oppositional model of English Catholic identity in the seventeenth century. Many have argued that women helped to preserve English Catholicism in domestic settings. The Syon nuns and Luisa, Warren

points out, show women taking on public and explicitly political roles, despite being confined to domestic or monastic enclosure.

Further temporal and confessional continuities are identified in Chapter 4, which compares the (auto)biographical writings of Margery Kempe with two seventeenth-century Englishwomen, Anna Trapnel (a Baptist and Fifth Monarchist) and Elizabeth Cary (a Catholic convert whose biography was written by her daughter, who was a nun at Cambrai). The final chapter examines the politico-cultural uses of medieval history and medieval female spirituality in texts written by men in the service of competing orthodoxies, between 1570 and 1700. A particular focus is the significance of St Birgitta's appearance in Catholic and Protestant texts that circulated in times of political crisis. Warren concludes with a study of Pomfret's *Life of the pro-Royalist but anti-Catholic Christian Cavendish*, which reveals 'not only that it is impossible to escape the legacies of the medieval past by rejecting them, but also that the unresolved traumas of the past never cease to reemerge to unsettle present invocations of it' (p. 240).

My summary cannot hope to do justice to Warren's many-stranded and intricately interconnected study. I congratulate her on her exemplary presentation of a rich and complex argument. Scholars concerned with issues of historical periodization and disciplinary organization, as well as specialists in English religious cultures of the period 1350 to 1700, will want to think about Warren's arguments and in some way make them their own.

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Whyman, Susan E., *The Pen and the People: English Letter Writers 1660–1800*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2009; hardback; pp. xi, 348; 34 b/w illustrations; R.R.P. £30.00; ISBN 9780199532245.

Susan E. Whyman's book is the outcome of a ten-year study which examines in detail the letters, literacy, and letter-writing habits of English people below the social level of gentry in the long eighteenth century. Starting with the discovery of extensive and largely untapped family archives, Whyman devised a qualitative methodology for their analysis and a cultural category 'epistolary literacy', which allows her to explore a broad array of practical, intellectual, familial, and spiritual concerns without losing the coherence of her study. Epistolary literacy encompasses 'material and intellectual aspects of ... correspondence' including 'layout, spelling, and grammar ...

content, originality, and literary techniques' (p. 9), features which allow for comparison of competencies.

The book is in three parts, with six substantial chapters. Each section draws on case studies of individuals and their families, bringing to vivid and nuanced life the story of their letter-writing and its impact. Whyman bases her analysis around three general questions: 'why were these letters written, for what purposes were they used, and what kind of impact did they have on the lives of writers and their families?' (p. 10).

Part I, 'Creating a culture of letters', gives the background conditions for epistolary literacy with chapters on acquiring literacy (sometimes in the absence of formal schooling), and on the rise and reorganization of the Royal Mail, and various ways around it (carriers, personal delivery, franking by members of Parliament etc.).

Part II, 'Creating a culture of literacy', includes a chapter on farmers and artisans in northern England, which is perhaps the true revelation of the book. When the wheelwright (later mill owner) Jedediah Strutt and his sweetheart Elizabeth, a housekeeper, corresponded during their courtship 'their letters were studded with references to Shakespeare, Milton, Swift, and the Bible' (p. 97). Chapter 4 looks at the 'middling sort' – mainly the mercantile class – with an emphasis on the interrelationships of business, religion, gender, and class.

Part III, 'From Letters to Literature', takes us through to the end of the century, and across the divide between personal letters and literary critique. Chapter 5 covers the relationship of letter writing to the epistolary novel and an extended case study of Jane Johnson, wife of an Anglican cleric: 'She read both print and manuscript materials for both instruction and entertainment. Sources were not limited to those advocated by the established church ... Ironically she strove for salvation and right conduct by reading and copying extracts from worldly texts' (p. 188). The final chapter looks at the reading and writing habits of Jane's children and their acquaintance, as they extend their letter writing into literary production and critique.

Whyman both clarifies and problematizes areas of literary life among the upper working class and 'middling sort' of the long eighteenth century. Her work requires re-evaluation of what is meant by such apparently straightforward terms as literacy, education, and correspondence. Her contributions to discussions of class formation and consciousness, the role of gender in religious writing, and self-fashioning of individuals through their writings also provide new directions for thought. Her discussion of reading, books, and access over the course of the period covers elements of intensive and extensive reading styles, knowledge of classics, moral and religious

analysis of secular as well as religious works, and the rise of literary critique, both private and public.

In her Introduction, Whyman suggests that the most important finding of the study is ‘the discovery of thousands of manuscript letters written by people below the rank of gentry in archives and local record offices’ (p. 6). The four appendices, which include her selection criteria and a select list of sources for the study, bear out the size of the archive. Her criteria for the core case studies were ‘a substantial unbroken series of letters that spanned at least two consecutive generations’ (pp. 233–34) with additional materials available on the families. Of the fifteen core families discussed in the book, all had relatives based in London and at least one member travelled or lived abroad. The appendices also cover families, individuals, and letters with details of geographical location, letter types, relationships between individuals, principal subjects, and the uses of the letters.

This work opens up a previously hidden archive (literally and figuratively) of letters and the experiences they record. Whyman’s use of the Access to Archives Database (A2A) also suggests that the increasing accessibility of collections through use of online listings is likely to bring further exciting developments. In the end, though, it is the voices and stories of the eighteenth-century letter writers which were the revelation here.

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Withington, Phil, *Society in Early Modern England: The Vernacular Origins of Some Powerful Ideas*, Cambridge, Polity, 2010; paperback; pp. 248; R.R.P. A\$34.95, £16.99; ISBN 9780745641300.

The early modern period is one that sits, sometimes uncomfortably, between the medieval and the modern. As a category of periodization it is often ill-defined, its key dates, and even turning points, still debated amongst historians. In his new study, Dr Withington acknowledges this ambiguity and attempts a redefinition of the early modern period. He does not attempt to define the period from a twenty-first-century perspective but, rather, tries to illustrate how early modern people would have viewed their own period and their own modernity.

To achieve this, Withington dives into a linguistic study of the period. Relying heavily on the *English Short Title Catalogue* (ESTC), Withington chooses a number of keywords (‘modern’, ‘society’, ‘commonwealth’, and ‘company’) to analyse and track throughout the early modern period. He

analyses the appearance of his keywords in the titles of the vernacular texts of the ESTC to show the ways in which these words define the early modern period. Withington acknowledges the limitations of this approach, which ignores non-printed sources and relies on the cataloguing efficiency of the ESTC. It does, however, serve as an invaluable starting point in what is a new approach to defining this period.

The first section of Withington's book jumps between exploring the twentieth- and the nineteenth-century usages of 'Early Modern'. He focuses on the period between William Johnson's 1869 lecture *Early Modern Europe* and John U. Nef's emphatic and deliberate use of 'Early Modern' in his 1942 article in the *Economic History Review*. Withington sees these two events as turning points in our modern usage of 'Early Modern'. He argues that Johnson's use of the term reflected the Victorians' desire to make sense of their own time in relation to the relatively recent past. Withington demonstrates that 'Early Modern' was never initially meant as a label of periodization but, rather, as a way of understanding the relationship between the present and the past. Nef's influential study argued that England experienced an early Industrial Revolution in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, a period he refers to as 'Early Modern'. Like Johnson, Nef understands this period as being fundamentally different from the medieval and a necessary precursor to our own, modern, society. Withington shows us that 'Early Modern' came to redefine our way of looking at modernity. The modern is shown not to have evolved from the Industrial Revolution but to have set down roots some four centuries earlier. Most importantly, Withington reminds us that this period was not seen as a stagnant phase, filling in time between the medieval and the modern but was actively defined as a time of rapid historical change.

After a comprehensive historiography, Withington moves on to the second part of his study: a close linguistic analysis of 'modern' and 'society' as the terms appeared in vernacular titles from the ESTC. Withington tracks these two words from the 1570s to the 1700s and finds that their evolution follows an almost identical trajectory. Both words, when analysed as a percentage of all printed vernacular texts, rise in usage significantly throughout this period. Withington demonstrates that early modern people embraced the term 'modern' in the 1570s and not, as has been suggested elsewhere, in the 1660s. 'Society' is integrated in a similar fashion. Both words took on new meanings in this period that separated them from their previous associations. 'Modern' came to be understood as 'new' when compared to a previous era. 'Society' became actively defined as a group who had formed a voluntary association. These redefinitions created a new way for early modern people to define their own times.

Withington takes the same approach to his analysis of ‘commonwealth’ and ‘company’. ‘Commonwealth’ rose in a similar pattern to ‘modern’ and ‘society’ but, not surprisingly, suffered a severe downturn after 1660. He particularly focuses on the links between ‘company’ and ‘society’ and the way in which these two words helped to form an early modern consciousness. He sees this collective agency as central to the formation of modern society. The many associations, societies, and companies that formed during the early modern period were pivotal in creating capital, industry, knowledge, technology, and power – in other words, the basis of modern society.

Withington helps us to view the early modern period in a similar way to those who lived through it. He presents the reader with an interpretation of the early modern world that forces us to re-evaluate our preconceptions and to think about this period in terms not just of its history, but also of its language. Withington breathes new life into an often ill-defined historical period and changes the way in which we view ‘Early Modern’.

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