Short Notices

Burton, Janet and Karen **Stöber**, eds, *The Regular Canons in the Medieval British Isles* (Medieval Church Studies, 19), Turnhout, Brepols, 2011; hardback; pp. xviii, 514; 48 b/w illustrations, 3 b/w tables, 6 b/w line art; R.R.P. €130.00; ISBN 9782503532486.

This is an impressive volume of essays about regular canons in the medieval British Isles, deriving from a conference on the same subject held in 2007. Geographically speaking, canons could be found throughout the whole of medieval Britain, including Scotland, Wales, and Ireland. Unlike the Benedictines or the Cistercians, apparently, canons never wrote monastic history and consequently, they have been pushed to the margins of historical and scholarly interest.

Nevertheless, scholars from various disciplines have found the regular canons' daily contacts with the secular, impious world a productive area of research. Although canons lived in monasteries, their pastoral responsibilities saw them administering to parishes and churches, and doing work in charitable institutions like hospitals and pilgrims' hostels. Such daily routines enabled them to bridge the gap between the clergy and the lay people.

The twenty-two contributions of which this volume comprises are divided into four thematic sections. The first, 'Origins, Organization, and Regional Developments', contains eight essays and covers the provenance of different groups of canons found in England, Scotland, Wales, and Ireland. The section aims at determining how canons stood for religious renewal and reform and how they nurtured religious faith locally, sometimes by adapting often already abandoned sites of earlier religious cults. Part II, 'Community Life', contains five essays that focus on the manner of life of the canons including matters like eating, working, building and pursuing careers, or managing education. The five essays of Part III, 'Social Contexts', discuss the social roles the regular canons played in lay communities due to their involvement in pastoral care, burials, patronage, and even politics. The final section, 'Cultural Contexts', comprising four essays, addresses the role that the regular canons played in the cultural life of medieval Britain, especially in the spheres of literature, art, and architecture.

Space prevents me from discussing each of the contributions in detail, but James G. Clarke's 'The Augustinians, History, and Literature in Late Medieval

England' (pp. 403–16), from Part IV, is worthy of special mention. Clark observes that the regular canons' contributions to the cultural and intellectual life of the period have long been undervalued. He argues, however, that the learned culture of the canons is 'neither as sporadic nor as exclusively early as has been claimed' (p. 405). Instead, scholars of the Augustinian tradition were treated like *avant garde* intellectuals and contributed a great deal to European culture, developing and disseminating, for example, new scholarly values in the *studia litterarum* and principles of pastoral and personal theology, and initiating the resurgence of the old universities like Bologna. Additionally, they pioneered the same atmosphere of scholarly renewal and reinvention throughout the whole of England.

To conclude, this is an important collection of essays dealing with the medieval canons of Britain and their cultural and intellectual legacy. The papers extensively reference textual sources and are supplemented by long and detailed footnotes.

<div align="right">

Mariusz Bęcławski
University of Warsaw

</div>

Díaz de Durana, José Ramón, *Anonymous Noblemen: The Generalization of Hidalgo Status in the Basque Country (1250–1525)* (Medieval Countryside, 10), Turnhout, Brepols, 2011; hardback; pp. xiv, 277; 10 b/w tables, 10 b/w line art; R.R.P. €85.00; ISBN 9782503532448.

As José Ramón Díaz de Durana discusses in this intricate study of the spread of the Basque petty nobility, this area boasted '[t]he highest concentration of *hidalgos* in Castile, and probably, indeed, in the whole of Europe' with almost the entire coastal population claiming *hidalgo* status. Studies so far, however, have tended to concentrate on 'aristocracy and noble groups … beyond the merely local' (p. 20) with the exception perhaps of the 'bottom-up approach' of Peter R. Coss to 'the emergence of the [English] knightly class' (pp. 7–9). *Anonymous Noblemen*, by contrast, focuses on the paradox of an *underclass* of noblemen, a lesser nobility poorly recognized.

Coastal Guipúzcoa and Vizcaya, with near-universal *hidalguía*, were far removed from the frontier, while in the North-Central Basque province of Álava the number of *hidalgos* was a still significant, yet more modest 25 per cent (p. 46). Attempting to explain generalized *hidalguía*, the author notes that 'in 1326 Alfonso XI extended tax exemptions to all settlers in towns (except peasants on royal lands) in recognition of the expense incurred in the construction of the town walls of Tolosa' (p. 57). Consider the importance of frontier politics: town walls were needed because a war was being deployed as part of the *Reconquista* to end in Granada in 1492.

Fascinatingly, Díaz de Durana argues in Chapter 6 that *hidalgos* were integrally engaged in the creation of the three distinct Provinces through social conflict. As he earlier explained, 'The *hidalgos* were a heterogeneous group that included the barons of Álava, the *Parientes Mayores* ['heads of clans … entitled to the entirety of the family's inheritance' (p. 74, n. 10)] of Vizcaya and Guipúzcoa, [and] the lesser rural *hidalgos* of the different territories' (p. 72).

Conflict between the *Hermandades* – armed peasant 'brotherhoods' – and the *Parientes Mayores*, whom they defeated at the king's behest in the 1450s, reached its climax when 'Enrique IV ordered that the razing of … their fortified towers (*casas-torre*) … be completed' (pp. 120–21). Worse followed, as the *Parientes* were sent to fight near Granada, for four years at their own expense, after which they were to show obedience to the king and to the *Hermandades*, and to swear to abide by the latter's ordinance books.

Importantly, like peasant brotherhoods, *hidalgos* achieved much through joint negotiation; the *hidalgos* of Álava ceded much of the actual province of Álava to the commoners in 1332 in exchange for the assurances of Alfonso XI that he would safeguard their privileges, such as the 'right of pursuit over peasants fleeing their holdings' (pp. 50–51).

This study offers the historian – or, indeed, the literary scholar interested in Spanish literature and culture – a wealth of material, which may take years to be fully realized.

Ivan Cañadas
Department of English
Hallym University, South Korea

Garipzanov, Ildar H., ed., *Historical Narratives and Christian Identity on a European Periphery: Early History Writing in Northern, East-Central, and Eastern Europe (c. 1070–1200)* (Medieval Texts and Cultures of Northern Europe, 26), Turnhout, Brepols, 2011; hardback; pp. xiii, 292; R.R.P. €90.00; ISBN 9782503533674.

Ildar Garipzanov's fascinating volume represents a bold attempt to bridge what he refers to as the 'historiographic split' between Scandinavian and Slavic studies and to offer a more comprehensive overview of historical narratives from across the north-European periphery than hitherto has been attempted. The chapters originated as papers presented at a joint workshop, funded by the Norwegian Research Council, which was held in Kiev in 2008. They deal with the earliest layer of historical accounts of Christianity in Northern, East-Central, and Eastern Europe covering the period *c.* 1070–1200. Noteworthy

is the inclusion of works in Old Church Slavonic from Kievan Rus¢: two studies of the *Primary Chronicle* and a third on early history writing in Novgorod, the urban centre connecting Kievan Rus¢ with Scandinavia.

The methodology employed focuses primarily on the literary means by which classical and biblical models, historical narratives, and hagiographic works shaped the sense of Christian identity in various milieux. Contributions take the form of case studies of histories, chronicles, and annals, their common ground being that they all treat Christian literature from their region during the initial period after official conversion. As Garipzanov remarks, irrespective of the languages used (Latin, Old Norse, Old Church Slavonic) 'clerical authors were writing local pasts into the established Christian master-narrative and presenting their regions, "nations", and ruling dynasties as immanent elements of the City of God' (p. 2).

Noting that most of the historical accounts were penned at least a century after the events recounted (more than two centuries later, in the case of Cosmas of Prague's) Garipzanov posits two stages in the development of historical narratives. The first is a dynamic process in which reconfiguration of the past – the preceding 'pagan' period – is either ignored or relegated to insignificance. In contrast, the second stage (post-1170) adopts a more conciliatory, accommodating approach to the pre-Christian past. While the majority of the papers fall into the first stage, a number of them – the Hungarian Anonymous Notary, for example – reveal evidence of the beginnings of this literary shift into stage two.

In a volume of very variegated historical material a thorough index is essential if one is to explore Garipzanov's contention that at a conceptual level there exist many areas of commonality in these early narratives. Brepols have provided just such an index. It incorporates *personalia*, places, and texts, and provides detailed references to such important abstractions and concepts as 'identity/ies', 'Christian', 'past', and 'power'.

Robert Curry
Medieval and Early Modern Centre
The University of Sydney

Hilken, Charles, *Memory and Community in Southern Medieval Italy: The History, Chapter Book, and Necrology of Santa Maria del Gualdo Mazzocca* (Studies and Texts, 157), Toronto, Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 2008; hardback; pp. xii, 320; R.R.P. CA$79.95; ISBN 9780888441577.

Charles Hilken's *Memory and Community in Medieval Southern Italy* is an edition and study of the necrology of Santa Maria del Gualdo Mazzocca (Biblioteca

Apostolica Vaticana, Vaticanus latinus 5949, fols 232ʳ–248ᵛ), but also takes into consideration the chapter book in which it is found and offers a history of the monastery and its culture of commemoration.

John of Tufara's (d. 1170) original community in rural Puglia was to become a priory and important Benedictine abbey. Nevertheless, it was removed from the grand historical narrative that caught up the region, a favoured stronghold of the Hohenstaufens. It grew conventionally from acquisitions and donations, incorporated other institutions, and declined in part thanks to successive waves of plague – and a catastrophic earthquake in 1456.

Hilken takes the thirteenth-century chapter book, with its Rule of St Benedict, lessons, martyrology, and necrology, as a study of the monks' daily rituals for intercession and commemoration. The necrology was actively used for 300 years and is of key historical significance, listing monks from the 1156 foundation to its final period *c.* 1497. While it has been intensely studied by others, Hilken's thorough study of it offers new critical apparatus that are widely useful. The community's holdings are detailed, for example, and the manuscript's capitular lessons are compared with coeval exemplars for affinities.

Santa Maria's establishment and growth are also examined, with descriptions of moveable goods oriented especially towards sheep farming (p. 23). There are tantalizing glimpses of possible interactions with southern Italy's Muslim colonies: a recipe for soap that may have originated at Lucera (p. 97); and perhaps the disappearance of Rivo Mortuo's Christian community after Muslim resettlement (p. 172). The monastery's intellectual range is indicated by the text's numerous vibrant and often zoomorphic illuminations, completed by one Sipontinus (pp. 107–08 – if only more reproductions were possible!).

The biographical register is of great interest: it lists the necrology's names and their biographies, thus permitting a reconstruction of whom the monks remembered and a network of associations that could have united them. The necrology's repetition of *fratres nostri* throughout suggests the community's broad definition of itself and its interactions. This aspect of the study is most persuasive, although its conclusions are not always explicit. The work is thus useful for Hilken's exemplary palaeography, and for studies of monastic acquisition and organization of land in rural southern Italy, but primarily for its study of commemoration.

Kathleen Olive
Writing and Society Research Centre
University of Western Sydney

Hirsch, Brett D. and Christopher **Wortham**, *'This Earthly Stage': World and Stage in Late Medieval and Early Modern England* (Cursor Mundi, 13), Turnhout, Brepols, 2011; hardback; pp. xi, 297; 20 b/w illustrations, 3 b/w tables; R.R.P. €70.00; ISBN 9782503532264.

Essays in this handsomely produced collection are mainly gathered from the 2006 conference of the Perth Medieval and Renaissance Group (PMRG), 'a forum for multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary scholarship in Western Australia'. Despite the apparently local provenance, there are distinguished essays by well-known international scholars such as Michael Best (Canada) who writes on 'The Electronic Re-creation of Shakespeare', Heather Dubrow (USA) on songs in Shakespeare's drama, Clayton Mackenzie (Hong Kong) on *Edward II*, and Laurence Wright (South Africa) on 'Irony and Transcendence on the Renaissance Stage'. Alan Brissenden, the most senior historian of Australian theatrical perfromances of Shakespeare, entertainingly records several different Australian versions of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, demonstrating the cultural and geographical transportability of the play. The heavy emphasis on Shakespeare is evident also in a study of botanical metaphors in *Titus Andronicus* by Victoria Bladen, revealing references to plague in *Troilus and Cressida* by Darryl Chalk, and a study of the ways in which Shakespeare constructs kings from his sources by Mary-Rose McLaren. However, other essays are more wide ranging, with studies of Marlowe's early tragedies (Lucy Potter), *Arden of Faversham* (Heather Kerr), the image of the owl in early English culture (Brett Hirsch), and the rituals of death in both private drama and public performance in the very early sixteenth century (John Tillotson). Breaking out of the early modern and Shakespearean moulds is a lively account by Steve Chinna of Howard Barker's adaptation, *Gertrude (the Cry)*, which is informed by Chinna's own experience of directing the play.

R. S. White
School of Humanities
The University of Western Australia

Jeffreys, Elizabeth, trans., *Four Byzantine Novels* (Translated Texts for Byzantinists, 1), Liverpool, Liverpool University Press, 2012; hardback; pp. xi, 488; R.R.P. £75.00; ISBN 9781846318252.

This wonderful book presents for the first time to a modern readership four important yet seldom known novels, dating back to twelfth-century Constantinople: Theodore Prodromos's *Rhodanthe and Dosikles*, Eumathios Makrembolites's *Hysmine and Hysminias*, Constantine Manasses's *Aristandros*

and Kallithea, and Niketas Eugenianos's *Drosilla and Charikles*. Until very recently, these texts have been largely overlooked, and Elizabeth Jeffreys's much-needed edition and study is a landmark contribution that will make them available to a wider audience and have a lasting impact on literary scholarship.

This beautifully edited volume does important work in filling in some of the missing links in understanding between late Antique and Early Renaissance prose fiction writing, between the work of Heliodorus or Achilles Tatius and that of Cervantes or Rabelais. Jeffreys's excellent translation and helpful footnoting bring the old texts back to life not only for the Byzantine Studies specialist, but also for scholars in related disciplines (such as Romance Literatures, and Medieval and Early Modern Studies), and indeed to anyone with a serious interest in the history and development of narrative genres.

For all four novels, Jeffreys notes the influence of post-classical rhetoric in the constitution of narrative strategy and of fictional writing. This essential feature was passed on to Renaissance authors such as Cervantes, but has to date received very little critical attention. Equally important features are pastiche and *digression*, both of which betray a conscious effort to expand basic narrative plots (love and adventure, separation and reunion) into multi-layered, atomized, non-linear narratives. It is easy to see why these texts would have fascinated Baroque Europe, a culture obsessed with the production of meaning and reader engagement through textual commentary and interpretation. In a manner that is consistent with these formal concerns, erotic vicissitude is often appropriated for ideological comment, and the frequent use of fantasy and fantastic elements (such as the retelling of mythical legends, or the description of dreams) becomes a crafty narrative device for plot development and narrative denouement.

That these texts have been allowed to remain largely ignored for centuries is a sad reminder of just how narrow the limits of the modern literary canon can be, and further proof of their damaging effect on a fabulous literary legacy. We have much to thank Professor Jeffreys for, but still much more is left to do. This essential volume is both a small joyous triumph and a great step forward in the right direction.

Carles Gutiérrez-Sanfeliu
School of Languages and Comparative Cultural Studies
The University of Queensland

Minnis, Alastair and Rosalynn **Voaden**, eds, *Medieval Holy Women in the Christian Tradition, c. 1100–c. 1500* (Brepols Collected Essays in European Culture, 1), Turnhout, Brepols, 2010; hardback; pp. xi, 748; 3 b/w illustrations, 7 b/w line art; R.R.P. €125.00; ISBN 9782503531809.

A truly epic work on the historiography of medieval *mulieres sanctae*, this long-anticipated volume has certainly been worth the wait. The editors of the volume, Alastair Minnis and Rosalynn Voaden, both of whom are notable authorities on medieval writing, skilfully bring together an impressive array of prominent researchers whose work will already be well known to many who have an interest in female spirituality and religious literature in Western Europe 1100–1500. The essays in the volume are arranged to cover details about the larger context of the political, social, economic, and religious culture of a geographical region as well as the individual holy women themselves. As such, five thematic introductory essays begin the volume, followed by twenty-two essays arranged geographically into seven 'Parts': the British Isles, France, the German Territories, the Iberian Peninsula, Italy, the Low Countries, and Scandinavia. Each geographic area is covered by a survey that is then followed by essays on individual women.

Dylan Elliot provides the first of the introductory essays on the female body and spirituality, followed by Alastair Minnis on the varying religious roles permitted to women in Western Europe during the medieval period. John Coakley then adds a discussion of women's voices and the pervasiveness of male clerical authors, John van Engen follows with an essay on the known extant sister books, and Peter Biller concludes the introductory section with a detailed exposition of women's involvement with heretical groups across Europe such as the Lollards, Cathars, and Waldensians. The surveys, each followed by essays on individual holy women, that comprise the remaining chapters of the volume offer valuable insights into the geopolitical position of holy women across a range of regional contexts.

The volume will most certainly become a staple for undergraduate teaching in the area as well being a useful resource for scholars, especially in regard to the detailed information provided about primary source material and the extensive bibliographies that follow each chapter. Although there has been some criticism of the long gestation of this volume, the quality of the individual essays and the artful way in which the volume is organized far outweigh the fact that some of the research is a year or two older than it could have been.

Claire McIlroy
Centre for Medieval and Early Modern Studies
The University of Western Australia

Mostert, Marco, *A Bibliography of Works on Medieval Communication* (Utrecht Studies in Medieval Literacy, 2), Turnhout, Brepols, 2012; hardback; pp. xiv, 658; R.R.P. €115.00; ISBN 9782503544779.

This extremely careful, important, and useful volume is the third, and presumably the last, printed list of books and articles on medieval communication by Marco Mostert. It contains 6,843 titles and ample advice on how to use its contents. The author's primary research interest, however, seems to be orality and literacy, the volume revealing a strangely literal notion of communication as the transfer of unadulterated, unspun, ordinary factual information and messages, or 'literature', in writing, speech, or in non-verbal communication. As such, there is a strange absence of interest in 'persuasion' or 'rhetoric' (see pp. 572–73 for such references to 'rhetoric' as exist, and on p. 565 those interested in 'persuasion' are told to look up 'learning', a topic which is extensively treated, pp. 261–87, but displays little interest in the teaching of Graeco-Roman rhetoric or any of the related medieval arts of persuasion). These are two of the five parts of classical rhetorical theory, but there is little other interest in rhetoric or persuasion as affecting or constituting communication in Mostert's book.

There are sections devoted to 'memory' (pp. 237–60, as part of a chapter that deals with oral tradition and notions of the past in oral societies), and 'gesture' (pp. 133–38, as part of section on 'Forms of Non-Verbal Communication' and see 'Performance' pp. 426–29). The section entitled 'Forms of Oral Communication: Parliamentary Rhetoric' contains a single item and there are seven titles in the section entitled 'Forms of Oral Communication: Battlefield Language'. Consequently, references to the works of Margareta Fredborg, myself, Jorie Woods, and Martin Camargo, among others in this field, are rare or absent, though one or two titles that would fall into the area of 'persuasive communication' do creep in (see in particular p. 619 for the works of T. Haye). The author needs a close acquaintance with the massive Tübingen *Historisches Wörterbuch der Rhetorik* (1992 and subsequently), however, editor Gert Ueding does not appear in Mostert's 'Index of Modern Authors and Editors'.

Mostert does raise the question of 'persuasion': 'people may influence one another's hearts and minds' and without this influence, 'no durable society is feasible'. This influence, though, is part of 'the exchange of information' (p. 4). 'Propaganda', 'spin' (Anthony Pratkanis and Elliot Aronson's *Age of Propaganda: The Everyday Use and Abuse of Persuasion*, rev. edn (Freeman, 2001), ought to be featured somewhere in Mostert's book), 'rhetoric', and 'persuasion' needed headings and more references.

Nevertheless, all scholars who concern themselves with 'communications' – however they choose to define the term and its connotations – are advised to secure and comb through Mostert's volume, which is particularly rich in Germanic items. Indeed, consideration of Mostert's collection should sharpen readers' ideas about what communication is, and what rhetoric/persuasion is. In this regard, George A. Kennedy's *Comparative Rhetoric: An Historical and Cross-Cultural Introduction* (Oxford University Press, 1998) errs in the opposite direction to Mostert, including perspectives more appropriate to 'communication' than to 'rhetoric'.

Finally, an addition for the keen: Slavica Rankovic, ed., with I. B. Budal, Leidulf Melve, and Else Mundal, *Modes of Authorship in the Middle Ages* (Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 2012). And a couple of corrections: p. 19 'On*e* began to wonder …' and p. 26: 'it may also be due to the fact that no longer *can* much new information be unearthed …'.

<div style="text-align: right">

John O. Ward
Medieval and Early Modern Centre
The University of Sydney

</div>

Nathan, Geoffrey and Lynda **Garland**, eds, *Basileia: Essays on Imperium and Culture in Honour of E. M. and M. J. Jeffreys* (*Byzantina Australiensia*, 17), Brisbane, Australian Association for Byzantine Studies, 2011; paperback; pp. 266; 50 illustrations; R.R.P. in Aust AU\$44.00, elsewhere AU\$57.00; ISBN 9781876503300.

Basileia represents a collection of studies that first began as a series of papers delivered at the 2008 Australian Association for Byzantine Studies, held in honour of the contributions of Elizabeth Jeffreys and Michael Jeffreys to Australian Byzantine studies. Under a general theme of '*Imperium* and Culture', editors Geoffrey Nathan and Lynda Garland have collated some nineteen essays that examine the evolving imperial and cultural forms of Byzantium from the fifth century through to the sixteenth century. The editors have brought together some of the finest academics in the field of Byzantine studies, and this, in turn, is represented in the quality of the contributions.

The first two studies are, of course, by Elizabeth and Michael Jeffreys. Following a general theme of *imperium* and its relationship with its literature, the role of imperial patronage and the poems of Manganeios Prodomos are examined. Following this, Andrew Stone, Roger Scott, and Penelope Buckley examine the role of imperial panegyric, chronicles, and imperial traditions. Justinian looms large in the studies of Sarah Gador-Whyte, Ross Burns, and Brain Croke where Justinian's wars are officially chronicled by a

critically veiled Procopius, Justinian's military strategies are compared and distinguished from those of Diocletian, and the use of Justinian's virtue of sleeplessness is used to define vigilance in imperial rule. Geoffrey Nathan and Lynda Garland examine the *minutiae* of *imperium*. Nathan examines the role of dedicatory images to communicate aristocratic ideals in politically fluid times, while Garland looks at Agathias's cycle of poems and the imperial and domestic significance of inscriptions and epigrams.

The Church, of course, receives its due share: Amelia Brown examines the struggle between western and eastern ecclesiastical authorities in fourth- and fifth-century Greece and its political impact on early Byzantine *imperium*; Pauline Allen compares Synesius of Cyrene and Augustine of Hippo and their episcopal approaches to crisis; Bronwen Neil looks at imperial benefactions to the fifth-century Roman church and the emphasis on the civic ideals of episcopal authority; Erica Gielen examines the influence of the monk Joseph the Philosopher on a Byzantine renaissance under emperor Andronicus II.

The attitudes and representations of Byzantine *imperium* and culture in the West are also examined. Andrew Gillett looks at communications between Byzantium and the sixth-century Frankish dynasty of the Merovingians. Penelope Nash considers Byzantine influence on the West's architecture and art in the late eighth and tenth centuries. This theme is further explored by Robert Mihajlovski who looks at the church buildings in the medieval Macedonian town of Prilep, and by Nigel Westbrook who examines a rare sixteenth-century drawing of Byzantine buildings in Constantinople.

This volume of *Byzantina Australiensia* honours the contributions Elizabeth and Michael Jeffreys have made to Australia Byzantine studies with quality contributions. The depth and variety of the thematic offerings is a joy and there will be something here for any scholar of *romanitas*.

<div style="text-align: right">

Stephen Joyce
The Centre for Studies in Religion and Theology
Monash University

</div>

Robinson, Carol L. and Pamela **Clements**, eds, *Neomedievalism in the Media: Essays on Film, Television and Electronic Games*, Lewiston, NY, Mellen, 2012; pp. 464; hardback; R.R.P. US$169.95, £109.95; ISBN 9780773426627.

This edited volume was produced in association with the Medieval Electronic Multimedia Organization (MEMO), a body that was founded in 2002 at the International Congress on Medieval Studies at Western Michigan University. Carol L. Robinson's Introduction ruminates upon the meanings

of medievalism and divides the phenomenon into 'modernist medievalism' (describing fictions that explicitly juxtapose the stresses of modern life with the simpler mode of life in the Middle Ages), 'postmodernist medievalism' (describing fictions that are fragmentary and attempt fidelity to medieval rather than modern values), and 'neomedievalism' (covering narratives that feature the medieval and 'purport to merge (or even replace) reality as much as possible') (p. 7).

In addition to Robinson's Introduction, the book contains fifteen essays, a Preface by Richard Utz, and an Epilogue by Terry Jones (the medievalist and member of the Monty Python comedy team). Although the studies are all interesting to some degree, the audience at which this book is aimed remains shadowy. This review considers a small selection of the essays, covering a range of popular cultural media.

'The Use of Nature: Representing Religion in Medieval Film' by Christopher Roman examines three films – Ingmar Bergman's *The Seventh Seal*, Franco Zeffirelli's *Brother Sun, Sister Moon*, and the less well-known *Anchoress*, directed by Chris Newby – based on the life of the historical anchoress Christine Carpenter, who was walled into a church in Surrey in 1329. Roman's conclusion is that the 'heroes of each film are Othered by the institutions of the Church' (p. 77), which is important, as neo-medievalism invokes the medieval aesthetic while maintaining the expectations of individualistic modernity.

Jennifer de Winter's 'Neomedieval Anime and Japanese Essence' is significant as it engages with the idea that the term 'medieval' is applicable in cultures other than European. De Winter's argument is that Japanese anime artists favour European and Chinese medieval settings. She asserts that this is because 'the medieval on those two continents existed in an idealized time: Europe with chivalry, kingdoms, and romance, and China with a high court culture that was linked to military and social power in a way quite different from Japan's' (p. 94).

Several essays deal with neo-medievalism in the context of television, and the new research area of online communities and computer games is also discussed. Lauryn Mayer's 'The New Scriptoria: Neomedievalism and Online Communities' examines two communities, *The Frilond Campaign* and *The Dragon's Inn*, both collaborative text-based communities that generate neo-medieval narratives. Clay Kinchen Smith's 'The Name of the Game: Misuses of Neomedievalism in Computerized Role-Playing Games' investigates games such as *Maple Story*, *Everquest*, and *World of Warcraft*, with an eye to the replication of negative stereotypes of race and class (themes that are also central to KellyAnn Fitzpatrick's article on the game *Magic Online*).

The range of popular cultural forms investigated in this volume is extensive, and some of the scholarship is very good. The presentation of the text, however, is old fashioned and amateurish, with occasional incorrect hyphenation and other infelicities that are probably indications of a lack of professional production editing. This collection is nevertheless recommended to all who are interested in the intersections between medieval and current popular culture, particularly those scholars and students working on computer games and online environments, chiefly because there is very little scholarship on those topics and the essays in *Neomedievalism in the Media* are respectable contributions to an emergent field.

<div align="right">

Carole M. Cusack
The University of Sydney

</div>

Saunders, Corinne, *Magic and the Supernatural in Medieval English Romance* (Studies in Medieval Romance), Cambridge, D. S. Brewer, 2010; hardback; pp. 312; R.R.P. £50.00; ISBN 9781843842217.

Magic and the supernatural are two themes which intimately intertwine within romance writing of the medieval period, so much so that Corinne Saunders is able to take the reader on a learned journey from the Middle Ages and its folk beliefs and practices, to demonic intervention found in adaptations of *Of Arthour and of Merlin* (*c.* 1250–1300) with an eye to new imaginings found in the Renaissance period.

Saunders's initial chapters offer a keen analysis of magic, supernatural, and ritual by introducing related classical and biblical notions and examining how these cultural constructs moved forward through time to become part of the popular vernacular, and in turn, part of romance writing. For example, Saunders describes how the evolution of the *daimon* found within the religions and cultures of Mesopotamia, Egypt, and Persia transforms into the *demons* found within Judeo-Christian beliefs, and then starts to transform the thematic context of writing about spirits. Saunders writes of St Augustine's discussions with Apuleius on demons in *De Deo Socatis*, and the marked shift that occurs from paganism to a more Christian perspective.

A key highlight of the book is Saunders's ability to illustrate the shift between long-held beliefs and new cultural practices – not just in terms of folk practices but also in legal thinking and laws – and show how these shifts affected romance writing. The prohibition against magic and the supernatural in the early Middle Ages goes some way towards explaining the deep public fascination with it, especially in terms of the legal engagement with it in the secular courts. Moving away from prohibition of 'dark magic' to quiet

imaginings of a gentler supernatural ideal, 'white' magic or 'natural magic' is explored as a theme that allowed for greater romantic creative development. Nature became a recurring theme and the humanist tendencies of healing, as espoused in *Valentine and Orson* for instance, allowed for greater interaction between magic and love. A particularly interesting chapter is 'Black Magic: The Practice of "Nigromancy"' which details the use of dark magic as an exotic escapism. *Partonope of Blois* is read closely and leads into a discussion of shape shifting and enchantment. Romance links both to the ability of the practitioner to create and shape his or her own destiny – a notion that has survived into contemporary romance literature.

Saunders successfully illustrates how magic and supernatural themes within the romance discourse allowed for an engagement with religious and popular notions of realism and fantasy – the genre allows for the interplay between what was accepted and what was not – and the seen and unseen aspects of medieval life.

Samaya L. S Chanthaphavong
The University of Melbourne

Sextus Amarcius, *Satires*, trans. Ronald E. **Pepin**, and *Eupolemius*, ed. and trans. Jan M. **Ziolkowski** (Dumbarton Oaks Medieval Library, 9), Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press, 2011; cloth; pp. 448; R.R.P. US$29.95, £19.95, €21.00; ISBN 9780674060029.

This volume is a fine addition to the Loeb Classical Library-like volumes that are now appearing in this and the I Tatti Renaissance Library series. It will introduce to the curious reader two quite bizarre works (by authors who use pseudonyms for their own names, and survive in very few manuscripts) that are unlikely to provide anything but the most puzzled reactions from contemporary readers. These late eleventh-century works are a combination of precocious Latinity, rhetorical excess, profound acquaintance with Roman and biblical *sententiae* and *exempla*, and an urge to provide informed school-works and widespread criticism of what are construed to be the vices of the age, secular and ecclesiastical. It is difficult to discern in them any useful reference to the actual moral and political shortcomings of the time (though Amarcius's attack on the morals of the clergy may well reflect contemporary senses of the need for reform), but as indices to the Latinate abilities of the best scholars of the day, they are unrivalled.

Both authors (or the one author if you follow some views) are German, possibly monastic, and as familiar with classical works such as the *Satires* of Horace or the allegories of Prudentius as a modern professor of the Classics. The works are written in polished Latin hexameters and Amarcius in his *Satires*

launches a savage attack upon the religious views of Jews (the second work is far kinder here). Foreshadowing as he does such odd works as Abelard's *Carmen (Poem) to his son Astralabe*, and Bernard of Cluny's *De contemptu mundi* ('On Contempt for the World'), Amarcius's *Satires* run from the tediously unbelievable tirade to the ferociously bitter and display prejudices of all sorts (the place of women, sex, Jews, and so forth). He has an interesting comment on kingship and its role and at best provides a kind of moral crusade of grand scope and universal relevance.

The second work is a Latin epic recasting salvation history from the fall of Lucifer to the resurrection of Christ and in this regard foreshadows such works as Alan of Lille's *Anticlaudianus* and Milton's *Paradise Lost*. It is full of coined names based on Greek elements and, at the end, advises the reader to break the (literal) bones of the work and taste the improving (allegorical) marrow. In this sense both works represent a German 'Renaissance' before the twelfth-century French Renaissance much discussed by Charles Homer Haskins and others.

The volume can be recommended to students of medieval Latin literature and morality, biblical and classical ideas in the post-classical period, neo-latinists, and Latin reading groups that want a tough assignment with interesting vocabulary and some gems (such as the reference to greasing palms (p. 160)). It contains an excellent and informative Introduction (especially if the reader does not actually want to read the works themselves), a very good English translation (which only now and then seems to require more explanation than is provided), and, at the end, notes and (most but not all) references/allusions together with a short bibliography for further reading. The translators are to be congratulated for burning the midnight oil so effectively on such rare and difficult texts.

John O. Ward
Medieval and Early Modern Centre
The University of Sydney

Teuscher, Simon, *Lords' Rights and Peasant Stories: Writing and the Formation of Tradition in the Later Middle Ages* (Middle Ages), trans. Philip Grace, Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011; hardback; pp. 320; R.R.P. US$69.95, £45.50; ISBN 9780812243680.

This work is a highly specialized, perhaps confronting study of oral and customary law traditions outside of, and not originally influenced by, *jus commune*, or Roman and canon law.

In existence since the eleventh century, *Weistümer* are written forms of law that influence and inform social practices. Jacob Grimm, who published

this collection of late medieval records of local law in the mid-nineteenth century, and others assumed that *Weistümer* were simply the written record, as recounted by villagers before their lord or his representatives, of oral traditions or customary law. Teuscher's examination of the late medieval processes of writing down laws uncovers the dynamic changes in the practices by which unwritten laws were established, recorded, and implemented. He dismisses the original historical assumption that *Weistümer* show a transition of oral, customary laws to written forms of law and instead demonstrates that these should be viewed as separate, overlapping processes, not as one stage superseded by the other.

Concise definition of terms and the use of relevant maps would have made this work more easily accessible to those unfamiliar with the political, social, and economic experiences of people in the areas under study. The diversity of the source materials is extensive and covers non-German speaking areas: they are drawn from an area bounded by the foothills of the Alps in the south, the mountain ranges of the Jura in the north, Lake Geneva in the west, and the vicinity of Zürich in the east. Such a large area, now a single nation-state, is used to underscore the main concern of this work, which is to introduce directions for inquiry that have emerged from a focus on regional examples.

Teuscher's study shows that *Weistümer* do not represent a large number of isolated, small lordships, but resulted from compilation and amalgamation. Combining *Weistümer* with deposition records indicates that villagers did not exist in microcosms but in a world that was encompassed by the administrations of centralized authorities. The depositions underline the importance of re-considering the actual nature and status of lords and peasants, as lords rarely dealt directly with witness depositions concerning common regulations. Officeholders, who were often of the same social status as the deponent, undertook this activity: in one document an individual is described as a peasant, while the same individual can be an officeholder in another.

The previous historical perceptions of what categorized lordship and lord-peasant relationships needs to accommodate much larger and over-arching jurisdictions, for instance, the consolidation by the counts of Savoy or by the canons of the Grossmünster of Zürich. Teuscher's research shows *Weistümer*, as an aspect of lordship, was one of many available options but did not provide a defining statement of either law or of custom.

Sally Parkin
Kentucky, New South Wales