

Short Notices

Bailey, Amanda, *Of Bondage: Debt, Property, and Personhood in Early Modern England*, Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013; cloth; pp. 232; 1 b/w illustration; R.R.P. US\$55.00; ISBN 9780812245165.

There is a trend among some scholars to stress the ‘relevance’ of their material by sometimes drawing very long bows between their content of many centuries ago and recent events. So it is with Amanda Bailey’s text on financial bondage in early modern England, which she begins with reference to the credit crunch of the early twenty-first century.

What then follows, however, is a succinct (at 148 pages) analysis of the intersection of the legal history of debts and financial bondage with the content and themes of particular plays, including for obvious reasons *The Merchant of Venice*, but also less familiar works *Timon of Athens*, *Michaelmas Term*, and *The Custom of the Country*. As Bailey points out, many dramatists including Middleton, Tourneur, Jonson, and Dekker found themselves in jail for debt at various points in their careers and a Renaissance-era theatre company, whose members were bound to it, represented a form of legal bond. Bailey deftly weaves together legal and economic history with readings of the particular plays and positions a written bond as a crucial aspect of an economy with uncertain coinage. Her focus is the possibility of forfeiture on a bond and the implications of this in a society where the human body could then become property.

Although a vast literature has developed around *The Merchant of Venice*, Bailey aims to re-orient a particular understanding of the play originally proposed by Walter Cohen that stressed Shylock’s irrationality in demanding flesh. She instead repositions the demand as one that was fiscally rational, given that flesh and money were ‘comparable forms of property’ (p. 52). She similarly advances an original reading of *Timon*, stressing that it should be seen as a ‘botched’ revenge tragedy. This point on revenge is particularly important to Bailey, who stresses that bonds were more than statements of debt and often became a form of payback. The legal-themed *Michaelmas Term* and the Lisbon-set *Custom of the Country* both allow Bailey to consider types of bondage against historical actualities, including the fact of Lisbon having been the centre of trade in human beings.

Readers will find new light shed on the very familiar *Merchant of Venice*, but the value of this text is also in the assessment of the obscure works and

Bailey's detailed evaluation of the historical economic background to their themes of property, debt, and ownership.

MARCUS K. HARMES, *The University of Southern Queensland*

Baker, John, Stuart **Brookes**, and Andrew **Reynolds**, eds, *Landscapes of Defence in Early Medieval Europe* (Studies in the Early Middle Ages, 28), Turnhout, Brepols, 2013; hardback; pp. xviii, 384; 65 b/w illustrations; R.R.P. €100.00; ISBN 9782503529561.

This is a well-produced volume of thirteen papers following a conference at University College, London, in 2007 supported by the British Academy, which in turn arose from *Beyond the Burghal Hidage*, a three-year project sponsored by the Leverhulme Fund. Participants and contributors sought to consider defensive networks (rather than just individual strongholds) during England's Viking Age (especially the times of Alfred the Great) and to compare and contrast them with contemporary defensive networks in early medieval mainland Europe using the interdisciplinary approaches offered by landscape and placename evidence and analysis.

Though the main thrust of the collection of papers is Anglo-Saxon England, the editors stress that the book will interest students in various fields of early medieval European history. The papers provide bridges connecting those working on Southern Europe (Spain) and Northern Europe (Scandinavia), as well as Eastern Europe and the Low Countries. Italy and most of France are not covered. Quite apart from their interest to students of systems of defence and fortification, the papers will be relevant therefore to historians generally, and more specifically to archaeologists, historical geographers, experts on place names, and the like.

The papers fall into three categories. The first covers the objectives of the *Beyond the Burghal Hidage* project and its attempt to draw together all fields relevant to the study of Anglo-Saxon defences including archaeology (Andrew Reynolds), mapping (Stuart Brookes), and vocabulary (John Baker).

The next section consists of five papers that consider various topics of Anglo-Saxon defence: the manuscript sources for West Saxon fortifications (Barbara Yorke); Wallingford in Oxfordshire – a case history (Neil Christie, with Oliver Creighton and Matt Edgeworth); the function of the Anglo-Saxon Burh (Gareth Williams); suburban settlements in late Anglo-Saxon England (Andrew Gate); and the costs and development of civil defence 878–1066 (Richard Abels).

The final section, also of five essays, looks at the *ringwallburgen* in Holland (Letty Ten Harkel), Frankish and Slavic fortifications in Germany (Peter Ettel), fortifications in Eastern Scandinavia (Charlotte Hedenstierna-Johnson, Lena Holmquist, and Michael Olausson), defensive sites in Northwest Spain (Juan

Antonio Quirós Castillo), and the evolution of defences in the County of Castille in the tenth century (Julio Escalona).

The book is a most worthy addition to the series of Studies in the Early Middle Ages edited under the auspices of the Centre for Medieval Studies at the University of York.

ROGER VELLA BONAVIDA, *The University of Western Australia*

Dekker, Rudolph, *Family, Culture and Society in the Diary of Constantijn Huygens Jr, Secretary to Stadholder-King William of Orange* (Egodocuments and History Series, 5), Leiden, Brill, 2013; hardback; pp. ix, 195; 37 illustrations; R.R.P. €98,00; ISBN 9789004250949.

Rudolph Dekker's book on the diary of Constantijn Huygens Jr offers its reader an accessible and enjoyable introduction to Dutch and English court life in the late seventeenth century. It will appeal to interested laypersons, and will serve well as a prescribed text for undergraduate students or as a point of reference for further reading for postgraduates and researchers.

Dekker's thematic approach means the book is ideally suited to the former purpose, allowing lecturers and tutors to introduce their students to particular aspects of seventeenth-century society without overwhelming them. Individual chapters exploring Huygens's observations on the Glorious Revolution of 1688 (Chapter 3), gossip and sex (Chapter 10), and raising children (Chapter 12), for example, are ideally suited as introductions to their respective topics, and are generally adequately supported by references to secondary literature. In the few instances where these references appear to be lacking, numerous citations of primary sources in Huygens's own library provide compensatory material for more advanced readers. It is these citations that position the book as an effective launching pad for further research. Nevertheless, Dekker's contextual glosses on topics such as the increasing importance of engravings versus state portraits, pamphlet and newspaper culture, and changes in marriage customs (pp. 84, 104–05, and 122–23, respectively) could have been better supported by references to secondary material.

It is obvious that Dekker has acquired an intimate familiarity with Huygens's diary over the years, and while individual chapters tackle discrete themes, Dekker does a splendid job of weaving a continuous thread throughout the book. Late seventeenth-century courtly interests in art, astronomy, time, and the less salubrious topics of gossip and the occult, for example, are superbly illustrated through the vignettes that he compiles from myriad entries in Huygens's diary. As Dekker notes, the manner in which Huygens wrote the diary itself is also indicative of self-management and mnemonic practices of the time, and offers its own insights into what it was like to manage one's affairs as a high-ranking court official under William of Orange.

This book is to be recommended to university libraries, lecturers, and tutors of early modern studies, and certainly to anyone with a professional or personal interest in this period of European history.

CHRISTIAN THORSTEN CALLISEN, *Brisbane, Queensland*

Gerber, Chad Tyler, *The Spirit of Augustine's Early Theology: Contextualizing Augustine's Pneumatology* (Ashgate Studies in Philosophy & Theology in Late Antiquity), Farnham, Ashgate, 2012; hardback; pp. 234; R.R.P. £50.00; ISBN 9781409424376.

Augustine's theology prior to his becoming Bishop of Hippo has a much more optimistic, philosophical character than his later writings which were directed against various heresies. He tends to be remembered more for his teaching about original sin and grace mediated through Christ than for what he has to say about the Holy Spirit. Chad Gerber has produced an excellent corrective to such assumptions by focusing on his earlier writings, with particular attention to the neglected topic of his pneumatology.

Gerber does well to situate Augustine's Trinitarian thought within the context not just of Nicene doctrine, but also the philosophical context of Neo-Platonism. Just as he understands the emanation of the Son from the Father to be as that of *Intellectus* from *Principium*, so he understands the Holy Spirit as akin to the *Psyche* or Soul of Plotinus, emerging from these two principles, informing and giving life to the created world. This is an excellent study of how Augustine's Trinitarian theology (prior to his famous discussion in the *De trinitate*) was shaped by Neo-Platonist philosophy. By examining various early writings, notably the *De quantitate animae* and the *De moribus ecclesiae catholicae* (contrasted with the way of life of the Manichaeans), Gerber considers how central the Holy Spirit is to Augustine's understanding of the world, understood both as the reason and the love by which creation is underpinned. In this early phase, Augustine was not concerned with issues of the will and its corruption through original sin, as he was in his writings directed against followers of Pelagius, or even in the *Confessions*; reason (*ratio*) was both human and divine, offering a degree of optimism to his perspective not found in later years.

In a final chapter, Gerber reflects on the writings from Thagaste (389–91) in which Augustine is principally concerned to refute the Manichaeans, exploring in depth themes of the goodness of creation, governed by reason and love. The Spirit emanates from the Father and the Son, but is that through which all things exist.

This monograph does not explore in detail how Augustine's early thought differed from that of Ambrose, by whom he was much influenced. Nonetheless, it reminds us of core themes in Augustine's theology, prior

to the focus on human weakness and need for grace by which he is often remembered.

CONSTANT J. MEWS, *Monash University*

Grady, Frank and Andrew **Galloway**, eds, *Answerable Style: The Idea of the Literary in Medieval England* (Interventions: New Studies in Medieval Culture), Columbus, Ohio State University Press, 2013; cloth; pp. 341; R.R.P. US\$74.95; ISBN 9780814212073.

This collection of thirteen essays derives from a conference on 'Form after Historicism', that was organised in honour of Professor Anne Middleton who is known for her work tackling the issues of literary criticism intertwined with interacting traditions and linguistic spheres.

The essays focus on 'reanimated ways' of approaching aesthetics. A new trend is emerging in which what have previously been taken for granted as 'distinctly literary forms' have been called into question, demanding a major reorientation of some of the familiar approaches (such as historicism, theory, and gender studies). However, until recently, scholars engaging with this new critical shift have not shown any interest in the forms of the literature of the Middle Ages. This collection provides a remedy to that omission.

The essays are divided thematically into two broad categories – 'The Literary between Latin and Vernacular' and 'Literarity in the Vernacular Sphere' – a division that mirrors the two basic medieval literary situations on which the volume is based. In general, the first category's essays take as their starting point the fundamental relationship between Latin and vernacular literary texts, from which they trace a broad amalgam of forms and conditions of the medieval literary. The essays of the second section describe literary developments outside of the Latin sphere, especially, the relationships between English, Italian, and French, following the assumption that these languages shaped medieval forms and ideas of literary genre and 'literariness'. Throughout the collection as a whole, the late fourteenth-century poetry of Chaucer, Langland, and Gower feature heavily.

A number of essays are particularly worth noticing. Rita Copeland's contribution looks at school definitions and guides for 'literature', to arrive at a fresh definition of the 'contact zone' between learned, clerical culture, and vernacular English poetry. Through the Western canonical vision of 'the literary', Copeland is able to reconstruct the 'picture of the role of the *Ars poetica* in the medieval classroom' (p. 26). Wendy Scase's essay proceeds from a similar assumption. However, she exceeds the 'classroom' environment and ventures into describing 'a vernacular citational style' applied by Langland's followers: 'The *Piers*-tradition poets also use grammar-school texts as a point of reference, explicitly acknowledging or drawing on school texts' (p. 38). In his contribution, Lee Paterson looks at Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde* to

redefine the concept of 'tragedy'. Paterson refutes the poem's supposed Boethian origin and assigns the influence for the Chaucerian tragedy to Dante: 'Chaucer could have derived this non-Boethian and much more capacious understanding of tragedy from many sources, but he almost certainly learned it from Dante' (p. 248).

To conclude, this is a valuable book for those wishing to decipher the intricacies of aesthetics in the medieval literature. The collection offers to them vital critical and historical reference points from which to answer questions that currently preoccupy literary studies.

MARIUSZ BĘCŁAWSKI, *The University of Warsaw*

Hallett, Nicky, *The Senses in Religious Communities, 1600–1800: Early Modern 'Convents of Pleasure'* (Women and Gender in the Early Modern World), Farnham, Ashgate, 2013; hardback; pp. 262; R.R.P. £55.00; ISBN 9781409449461.

In her book, Nicky Hallett offers an ambitious and highly engaging account of the sensory experiences of an early modern religious community for women. Hallett does an excellent job of presenting a unique and under-studied set of archival materials, that of the English Discalced Carmelite communities of Lierre and Antwerp. By drawing upon a large range of sources, including early modern debates about the senses in theology and philosophy, and modern discussions of the senses in philosophy, history, and anthropology, Hallett is able to explore both how the senses were understood and felt in early modern convents of contemplation.

Her study is divided thematically into chapters which each consider how the five senses of touch, taste, hearing, smell, and sight were mediated in the writings of the English Carmelite sisters. The strongest aspect of Hallett's study is her ability throughout to draw particular connections between developments in early modern scientific notions of sensual perception, such as those found in Descartes, and the notion, so characteristic of the mysticism of Teresa of Ávila, founder of the Discalced Order for women, that mystical union occurs beyond the senses, so that the contemplative must be wary of them.

Hallett's book also provides a careful study of the way the Carmelite sisters employed various techniques in order to authenticate their sensory and mystical experiences against male scepticism about female ecstatic writing. However, Hallett spends very little time directly reflecting on attendant issues regarding the gendered nature of the sisters' writing, or the responses produced by male religious authorities. Although Hallett briefly touches upon this issue in her Introduction, and returns to it again in her Conclusion, it is surprisingly absent from the actual analysis of her sources. What little discussion there is, occurs in the footnotes, often as an aside. Other ideas

flagged by Hallett in her Introduction for consideration, such as her interest in Antwerp as a sensory space, similarly go unexplored.

Ultimately, this book is of great interest to sensory historians and scholars of early modern women's religious experience alike. Specialists in mysticism, and Teresa of Ávila especially, will also appreciate Hallett's study for its admirable portrayal of a relatively unknown community who mediate their often self-written sensory reflections in the language of Teresian spirituality.

SAMUEL K. C. BAUDINETTE, *Monash University*

Krinis, Ehud, *God's Chosen People: Judah Halevi's 'Kuzari' and the Shī'ī Imām Doctrine* (Cultural Encounters in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages, 7), Turnhout, Brepols, 2014; hardback; pp. x, 352; R.R.P. €85.00; ISBN 9782503543963.

Originally published in 2012 in Hebrew, this is a difficult and highly technical book aimed at specialists in the field of Judeo-Arabic and Islamic studies. It aims to show that Judah Halevi's *Kuzari* owes much more to Shi'ite texts than has been usually accepted. There are several aspects of the book that make it important for students of religion in general and Jewish Studies in particular. It is not just that we must recognise the major influence of early Islam on rabbinical traditions – if only for polemical purposes, at a period of history when there is great tension within Islam (as well as specifically radical political ideologies within Muslim doctrines) – but also that dynamic and creative thinkers like Halevi borrow from the non-Jewish world around them in a witty and richly speculative way. We must, therefore, also recognise that we have to see the development of contemporary Jewish thought throughout the history of the *Galut* (exile and dispersion) as a continuing process, albeit in some ages more disruptive of previous traditions than in others. The myth of absolute interpretative and spiritual continuity in orthodox circles of Judaism is precisely that, something based more on wishful thinking (or assertion) than historical fact.

It seems, in the *Kuzari*, that the King can make an objective and strategic choice between the three authorities brought before him: the Pagan Philosopher representing a high form of classical monotheism; the Rabbi who stands as living proof the Law and the promise that is able to mediate between humanity and God through the Chosen People; the Christian with his supposedly historical figure of Jesus as Christ the Messiah and ultimate Prophet; and the Muslim as the final avatar of ancient Hebrew thought transmuted into a militant inheritor of ancient ideas and institutions. But the dialogic argument was created in Andalusia under Muslim domination, written in Arabic, and imbued with Shi'ite and some Ismaili principles. Despite the rationalisations of the politico-military configuration of Christendom and Islam that the Kazar ruler seeks to play off one another to the best advantage

of his state and people, Judah Halevi presents each of the antagonistic figures in a complexity that transcends these geopolitical considerations; and thus directs the conclusion of the argument to favour Judaism in its post-Temple rabbinical form, while the author shows how original to biblical and Talmudic tradition are some of Halevi's ideas derived from Christian and Muslim sources.

NORMAN SIMMS, *Waikato University*

Lines, David A. and Sabrina **Ebbersmeyer**, eds, *Rethinking Virtue, Reforming Society: New Directions in Renaissance Ethics, c. 1350–c. 1650* (Cursor Mundi, 3), Turnhout, Brepols, 2013; cloth; pp. ix, 351; R.R.P. €80.00; ISBN 9782503525242.

Taking the period of the Renaissance in a broad sense, roughly from the time of Petrarch to that of the neo-Stoics and the flourishing Jesuit colleges, this collection of essays emphasises the diversity of early modern ethical discourse prior to the Cartesian break with classical philosophy. Alongside an ongoing interest in Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*, with new translations of and commentaries on this work appearing regularly, the Renaissance era also saw the revival of Platonic doctrines of the best life, the rehabilitation of Epicurean ethical views, and finally the development of new forms of Christian Stoicism.

Rethinking Virtue, Reforming Society provides an introductory survey of this diversification of theoretical content in comparison with the late Middle Ages. It also gives much needed attention to the proliferation of new locations, literary genres, and languages in which ethical matters were regularly treated – no longer predominantly in university settings and the *studia* of religious orders but increasingly in courts and academies; nor predominantly in Latin commentaries on ancient texts but now in vernacular dialogues, novellas, essays, biographies, and even commonplace books.

The various chapters in this collection frequently cross-reference one another but otherwise are written in such a way that they can be read in isolation. An approach of this kind leads to some repetition of content and documentation, as the same background information appears in several different places and each chapter has its own independent bibliography that sometimes overlaps in part with other bibliographies, but overall the inconvenience to the reader is minor. Equally minor are a number of slips that are unlikely to mislead specialists but could easily confuse those new to the field, such as the conflation of civic humanism with princely humanism in the book's Introduction.

The contributors include authors from Finland, Germany, and Italy, as well as from the UK and the US, but all chapters are in English. Thus the collection provides Anglophone readers with a good sample of continental

scholarship alongside the more readily accessible British and American variety. The book concludes with a brief epilogue, which foreshadows the changes in ethical discourse that were to take place in the second half of the seventeenth century. It also has a useful index, something that is to be commended since this kind of scholarly apparatus is not always included in multi-authored volumes.

W. R. ALBURY, *The University of New England*

Major, Philip, ed., *Thomas Killigrew and the Seventeenth-Century English Stage: New Perspectives* (Studies in Performance and Early Modern Drama), Farnham, Ashgate, 2013; hardback; pp. 236; 10 b/w illustrations; R.R.P. £60.00; ISBN 9781409466680.

In his Introduction to this collected volume of eight chapters, editor Philip Major suggests that while a 'major anniversary often provides the stimulus for a renewed focus on an early modern literary figure, neglected or otherwise ... there are even more compelling reasons than the 2012 quarter-centenary of his birth to justify a reassessment of the life and work of Thomas Killigrew' (p. 1). Indeed, Major identifies several reasons for this 'reassessment', including his lasting legacy as 'a strangely elusive figure'. Accordingly, he recognises the 'strong suspicion is that – hitherto – we have failed ... adequately to take his measure' (p. 1).

Major and his fellow authors, Eleanor Collins, Victoria Bancroft, David Roberts, Karen Britland, Marcus Nevitt, J. P. Vander Motten, and Geoffrey Smith, have recognised a distinct lack of literature dedicated to this intriguing Restoration figure, noting that the most recent detailed study of Killigrew's plays is William T. Reich's edition of *Claricilla* in 1980 and the most recent biography of Killigrew was first published in 1930 by Alfred Harbage. So the question remains: Why does so little exist about this influential figure?

Major asserts that '[o]ne explanatory factor for the comparative dearth of scholarship on Killigrew [a royalist and an 'underhanded and unscrupulous businessman' during the English Revolution] is the self-evident imbalance within the historiography of seventeenth-century British studies in favour of parliamentarians, revolutionaries and sectaries'. Killigrew's 'unfashionableness' (p. 2) sealed his fate and he remains a Restoration figure to whom relatively little attention has been paid.

This collection is thus successful in its attempt to contribute to and update the discussion on Killigrew. It provides chapters which range from explorations of his plays, including *The Prisoners*, *Claricilla*, *The Parson's Wedding*, *Thomaso*, *The Rover*, and *The Pilgrim*, to discussions on his 'undoubted influence on English culture as a courtier, exile, playwright [and] Restoration theatre manager', favourite of the King, and beneficiary of court patronage,

as well as Killigrew's 'reputation as one of the most colourful characters of the mid-seventeenth century' (p. 1).

Major and his fellow authors revitalise the discussion on Killigrew, closing (if only by a few more centimetres) the door on Killigrew's (negative) legacy and opening the door for more exciting research into the more important topic of his influences on Restoration theatre.

PATRICIA ALESSI, *The University of Western Australia*

Mazzola, Elizabeth, *Learning and Literacy in Female Hands, 1520–1698* (Women and Gender in the Early Modern World), Farnham, Ashgate, 2013; hardback; pp. 154; 8 b/w illustrations; R.R.P. £55.00; ISBN 9781409453758.

Elizabeth Mazzola's new book deals with women's writings, mainly letters, in England during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. These writings were made, both metaphorically and practically, in the women's study rooms, a continuation of their study room activities as girls and young adults. The women considered by Mazzola were not common folk – they were girls who would grow into the women who occupied the highest echelons of English society, including Queen Elizabeth I. These women wielded significant influence within their families, and in the cases of Elizabeth I and Mary Queen of Scots, actual political power.

While ostensibly dealing with the interactions between young women and their (usually male) tutors or teachers, during a time when education was already common among high-status women, the book actually deals with the expansion of literacy which occurred across Europe from the early sixteenth century onwards. This expansion was a result of the development of the printing industry. From 1520 onwards, printed books were highly desirable goods; they provided a respectable livelihood for their purveyors, and an attraction to many clients, some of whom had not owned libraries before. In many houses, children were taught to read and write, and writing exercises, both Latin and vernacular, became an element in the education of both boys and girls.

Mazzola weaves in her book a fascinating, multi-faceted tapestry, demonstrating the importance, the power, and effectiveness of the letters written by these women, although all writers, without exception, described their work as mere scribbling. They all, without exception, apologise for their poor skill in the art of writing, point to their spelling errors, and refer to their own work as rough, disjointed, and inarticulate. However, while distracting male attention with their own worthiness and ability as writers, they in fact passed messages, that stayed unclear or hidden to male readers. Using a female language, writing 'invisible to men' akin to the Spanish fan language or embroidery of codes in Europe, these women used their education to invade

male territory, using a skill traditionally dominated by men – writing letters to manage their affairs.

To this very elaborate tapestry, the author introduces more elements, such as espionage scams, court politics, and murder conspiracies. She discusses the usage of male secretaries, who wrote for women such as Queen Elizabeth, bringing to light the questions of trust, and the benefit gained to the writer by knowing the woman's thoughts and secrets intimately. The female skill of developing 'secret' messages is also used in that context, the secretary often oblivious to true nature of the message dictated to him.

Mazzola presents female writing as a thriving ecosystem. She points, among other things, to a common female language, and the belief of women that they could communicate outside the male sphere, manipulate the world of men, and use writing as a tool to manage their lives in a world perceived as completely masculine.

ANAT GUETA, *Avshalom Institute, Israel*

Netherton, Robin and Gale R. **Owen-Crocker**, eds, *Medieval Clothing and Textiles* (Medieval Clothing and Textiles, 9), Woodbridge and Rochester, Boydell, 2013; hardback; pp. 182; 18 b/w illustrations, 9 tables; R.R.P. £35.00; ISBN 9781843838562.

This is the ninth volume in a series devoted to current research in the field of medieval clothing and textiles. The varied approaches demonstrated by the seven contributing authors show the breadth of the subject matter and the ongoing development of discourse across a variety of fields.

The first two articles are both centred on Italian manuscript material. Antonietta Amati Canta draws on extant legal documents, dating from 971 to 1397, to establish definitions for women's dress. The information is presented in prose and tabulated, both useful in different ways. Lucia Sinisi focuses on one legal document from the same region of Bari in her examination of the garments illustrated in the *cartula* of *morgincap*. This document is unique among notarial manuscripts as it has a pictorial representation of the bride and bridegroom. Placing the document in context along with discussion of the different elements shown in the illustration begins to build a picture of the customs around wedding gifts, dress, social position, and symbolism.

In his contribution, Mark Zumbuhl queries the validity of defining clothing as currency, referring to evidence in Irish legal documents. Indeed, through a discussion of the situations in which garments are used as payment and compensation, Zumbuhl concludes that while the value of clothing was recognised in law it was rarely used as currency.

A Cistercian monastery wardrobe account book and information it can provide on monastery production is the focus of John Oldland's article. Oldland contextualises the production of woollen cloth and clothing at Beaulieu

and provides definitions within the text. He also tabulates data, effectively demonstrating consumption and comparative aspects of the research. Eva Andersson examines documentary evidence for the consumption of various types of fabrics and dress across Europe and Scandinavia between 1200 and 1500. Highlighted is the range of woollen cloth identified by country of origin, plant fibre and silk cloth, along with a variety of furs and leather, presented in graphs.

Incorporation of particular idiosyncratic decoration of garments is the focus of John Block Friedman's article. He uses a range of images and documentary sources to illustrate his discussion on the response to the fashion for dagged clothing in England and France and clearly illustrates the outrage of early moralists to the extremes of fashion.

Susan James's contribution is the only one to focus on furnishing textiles. Examining sixteenth-century English domestic painted cloths, she highlights the dearth of research on these once ubiquitous textiles. Through the examination of a range of evidence, including extant fabric, James discusses the production, context, and dispersion of these items.

The field of textiles and clothing research is vast, and the articles in this collection demonstrate how it relates and contributes to a wider academic discourse. The strength of this volume lies in how the articles draw together disparate scholars' work, presenting vignettes of research for wider consumption.

TRACEY WEDGE, *Invercargill, New Zealand*

Salloum, Habeeb, Muna Salloum, and Leila Salloum Elias, *Scheherazade's Feasts: Foods of the Medieval Arab World*, Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013; cloth; pp. 256; R.R.P. US\$34.95, £23.00; ISBN 9780812244779.

Medieval Arabia had a flourishing gastronomical culture, within which, it is said, culture revolved around food and likewise, food revolved around culture. *Scheherazade's Feast* is a collection of the best recipes representing medieval Arabia, which have been adapted lovingly for the modern cook.

In their Introduction authors Habeeb Salloum, Muna Salloum, and Leila Salloum Elias describe how from the seventh to thirteenth centuries Arabian gastronomy stretched from China in the east to the Iberian Peninsula in the west. It was during this time that recipe books and literature that referenced cuisine was cultivated, mainly through the then literary and cuisine epicentres of Baghdad and Aleppo, Cairo, Cordoba, and al-Andalus. Salloum, Salloum, and Elias do well to introduce the complexities of food culture during this period and illustrate how conceptions of honour and esteem were tied closely to the ritual of preparing and eating food.

The book is filled with such recipes as appetisers like green olive spread, seared eggplant with walnuts, and cold roasted chicken with almonds and pomegranate seeds. A vegetarian section includes such ideas as spiced chickpea patties, while dessert offers sugared lettuce, Muhammad's wedding cookies, and a seven-layer ricotta cake. Each recipe features its own individual introduction taken directly from the original Arabian cookbook, and details on substitutions that the authors have made to help the modern cook source ingredients.

Scheherazade's Feast: Foods of the Medieval Arab World is an fascinating glimpse into how medieval Arabians ate, and the recipes are as relevant today as they were in the medieval period. Salloum, Salloum, and Elias have managed to preserve the best of Arabian cuisine for generations to come.

SAMAYA BOROM, *The University of Melbourne*

Salonen, Kirsi, Kurt Villads Jensen, and Torstein Jorgensen, eds, *Medieval Christianity in the North: New Studies* (Acta Scandinavica, 1), Turnhout, Brepols, 2013; hardback; pp. xii, 276; 15 b/w illustrations, 6 b/w line art; R.R.P. €75.00; ISBN 9782503540481.

This selection of ten multidisciplinary papers aims to present a response to the commonplace belief that the peoples of pre-Christian Scandinavia were little more than uncivilised savages. Through the discussion and analysis of the introduction of new European and Christian ideas and their incorporation into Nordic cultures, and demonstrating how, in turn, Nordic cultures influenced a new and unique northern Christianity from pagan times through to the Reformation, the volume successfully demonstrates that this stereotype is far from true.

The first half of the book focuses on conversion and its consequences, and the essays in it cover a wide range of current scholarly research. It starts with Else Mundal's article on the survival of pagan deities and mythological figures after Christianisation, concentrating mainly on Norway and Iceland. It continues through to Stefan Brink's discussion of the phases of conversion. Lars Bisgaard's paper on the use of beer and wine in baptisms and the Eucharist will appeal to readers with an interest in the evolution of unique regional Christian practices.

The second half is dedicated to the consolidation of the Christian religion and its ecclesiastical structures. Notable chapters include Claes Gejrot's argument that the canonisation of St Birgitta demonstrates a Swedish influence on the rest of Europe, and Kirsi Salonen's paper that discusses how the traditional Scandinavian idea of marriage as an economic arrangement influenced its role as a religious institution in the north.

Naturally, the volume cannot cover all aspects of Christianity in the Nordic region, and equally a short notice cannot cover all of the chapters

and research included within it. All articles included in the book are worth reading by anyone with an interest in Scandinavian history from the Viking era through to the Reformation, and equally by readers interested in the more general process of Christianisation and the history of European Christianity. The contributions definitely succeed in their intention to present Scandinavia as an area that was as Christian as any other region in Europe. At the same time, they also show that the region possessed uniquely Nordic characteristics after its adoption of the Christian religion.

JANE-ANNE DENISON, *The University of the Highlands and Islands*

Stedman, Gesa, *Cultural Exchange in Seventeenth-Century France and England*, Farnham, Ashgate, 2013; hardback; pp. 306; 22 b/w illustrations; R.R.P. £70.00; ISBN 9780754669388.

Gesa Stedman's most recent monograph does not attempt to discuss the influence of English culture on the French population; rather it focuses predominantly on the impact of French culture in England.

The introductory chapter considers ideas of cultural exchange with reference to existing academic theories. This provides useful definitions that clearly set out where Stedman's theories sit within current scholarship. Through the examination of a broad range of factors that constitute cultural exchange, Stedman offers examples of actual exchanges to underscore his thinking. These exchanges are discussed using well-documented instances, the first of which was the arrival of Henrietta Maria in England. The impact on English mores of French cultural practices prior to the Restoration is considered at length in the second chapter, which centres on the French queen consort.

The following chapter discusses aspects of cultural exchange that were visible in the fashionable garden and park design, music and dance, food and drink, shopping, and the book trade. Here we see French culture in England highlighted through the engagement of elite society in wider French cultural practices. Also addressed is the impact of Charles II's relationship with his French mistresses on the perception of French culture by the English. Fashion provides the exemplar for the demonstration of exchange in Chapter 4, supported by the transmission of French cultural practices through drama. Certainly, the examples cited illustrate Stedman's points well, as do the images included within the book. The many sources Stedman uses demonstrate the rich material available when considering cultural exchange and the vast nature of the topic. The final chapter re-examines Stedman's arguments.

Those with an interest in material culture and transmission of design will draw something from this book. The ongoing debate of the cultural exchange between France and England certainly has plenty to offer. While Stedman's examination of the impact of royalty and the elite on the transmission and

adoption of French cultural practices by the English is thorough and engaging it is only part of the picture of an exchange that happened on many other levels.

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Wood, Sarah, *Conscience and the Composition of 'Piers Plowman'* (Oxford English Monographs), Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2012; hardback; pp. xii, 187; R.R.P. £68.00; ISBN 9780199653768.

The Introductory chapter in this interpretation of *Piers Plowman* lays out the book's argument with admirable clarity. Sarah Wood deftly unravels several strands in the influential critical interpretation of Conscience, concluding that attempts to make one continuous interpretation of this important figure throughout the poem fail because Conscience assumes different forms. Like Kate Crassons (*Claims of Poverty*, 2010), who systematically resists efforts to accept allegorical figures like Patience as 'unerring', and instead demonstrates their instability, Wood invites us to move away from established modes of reading Conscience as a character, or a personification of scholastic thought and, instead of tracing the role of Conscience diachronically within each version, to consider his development over the A, B, and C versions. Her thesis is that the key to our understanding of Conscience and his role within *Piers Plowman* is form.

Each chapter reads Conscience in the context of such aspects of form as debate, invective, slander, complaint, penitential texts, the medieval sermon, and anti-fraternal satire. Examples are aptly chosen, and the discussion is tightly argued. This attention to form insists that the poem is read as a work of literature, not history, but set firmly within its contemporary context, an approach that this reader finds wholly satisfying. While Wood builds with a keen critical intelligence on the scholarship of others, the interpretation of Conscience in his various emanations is all her own, illuminating and convincing. Arguably the most inspiring part of the book comes in Chapter 6 and the Conclusion. Here, Wood demonstrates what she has been arguing towards: that to make sense of apparent inconsistencies within the poem, it should be read across all the versions, starting with A and ending with C. Tracing the development in Conscience by this means demonstrates 'a series of stages in the compositional and argumentative process of the poem' (p. 161). It is an approach that can be applied to other figures in the poem, as Wood herself suggests – and it leaves me itching to get back to the text to begin reading it all over again.

This slim volume is a great read – though not for the faint-hearted. It contains an extensive bibliography and a useful index. One small quibble: I was looking out for some interaction with Lawrence Warner's book, *The Lost History of 'Piers Plowman'* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010). Perhaps

the timing of publication precluded this; but I think the two books would have some interesting synergies.

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Yocum, Demetrio S., *Petrarch's Humanist Writing and Carthusian Monasticism: The Secret Language of the Self* (Medieval Church Studies, 26), Turnhout, Brepols, 2013; hardback; pp. xviii, 308; 30 b/w illustrations; R.R.P. €85.00; ISBN 9782503544199.

A recipient of the 2011 Aldo and Jeanne Scaglione Publication Award for a Manuscript in Italian Literary Studies, Demetrio Yocum presents Petrarch's writings, including personal correspondence and journal entries, to argue for Petrarch's intimate relationship with the Carthusian order, and to make a case for Carthusianism's intellectual and spiritual influence on Petrarch's humanism, and how this humanism in turn shaped the Renaissance.

The swift rise in the number of charterhouses in the fourteenth century reflects how the Carthusian order had become more open, and had attracted patrons, artists, scholars, and intellectuals such as Petrarch who were opposed to scholastic ideals. Yocum shows how Petrarch's life mirrored that of Carthusian charterhouses. Petrarch's brother was a member of the community at the Charterhouse Montrieux, and his letters show that he not only visited his brother, he also formed lasting relationships with members of the order. The solitude of the order was paramount in Petrarch's life, and his three religious treatises demonstrate the ascetic quality of his theological and intellectual approach to be Carthusian in nature, encompassing solitude, silence, and grace.

Three chapters address Carthusian practices in turn, and relate them to Petrarch's life and writings: solitude and silence, the work of the community, mainly in making and preserving books, and silent reading and writing. Yocum shows how Petrarch's writings reveal his criticism of urban life and his wish to revive classical ideals. Petrarch's own use of private retreats, the *cubiculum*, and his solitary reading practices reflect his adoption of Carthusian monasticism, and its influence on the evolution of private space in the medieval house. Another chapter deals with what Yocum calls the 'laicization' of the Carthusian liturgy, relating Petrarch's Augustinian theological stance, as well as his clerical status and how he used it to achieve independence from authority.

Yocum brings in additional accounts of Guibert de Nogent and Peter the Venerable to show how profound a role Carthusian austerity and solitude played in the reform of Christian theology, and how popular Petrarch's writings about it were within the order. He asserts that monasticism produced humanism, presenting as a link Petrarch's dialogue between 'Sorrow' and 'Reason'. However, because Petrarch is seen as the first humanist and anti-

scholastic intellectual, it is difficult to prove that humanist approaches to spirituality and literature were not influenced by the Carthusian monasticism that played such a prominent role in his life. But Yocum handles this confidently, showing an intimate knowledge of the material.

The book has an informative bibliography and index, and textual examples are presented in original with in-text translations throughout, providing smooth and enjoyable reading. Yocum's work addresses Petrarch in a valuable way, addressing ideas of medieval personal space and identity in the context of humanist intellectual and spiritual movements that influenced Renaissance thought and culture.

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