

## Reviews

**Andriolo**, Azzurra Elena, and Suzanne **Reynolds**, *A Catalogue of Western Book Illumination in the Fitzwilliam Museum and the Cambridge Colleges, Part Five, Volume One: Books Printed in Italy before 1501* (Illuminated Manuscripts and Incunabula in Cambridge, 5.1), London, Harvey Miller, 2017; hardback; pp. 288; 330 colour illustrations; R.R.P. €175.00; ISBN 9781909400856.

Since 2003 the Cambridge Illuminations Research Project has issued six volumes of a five-part catalogue of Western illuminated manuscripts and incunabula (books printed before 1501) held in the collections of the Fitzwilliam Museum and Cambridge colleges. The first four parts include illuminated manuscripts (only the volumes on later manuscripts from France and the British Isles await publication) while the fifth part, of which this catalogue of Italian books is the first of two planned volumes, comprises illuminated and decorated incunabula.

The decision to include incunabula in the catalogues follows the now accepted view that manuscript and print were not regarded as separate, distinct genres in the early modern period but were simply different ways of achieving the same end—the book. Incunabula, like manuscripts, were often illustrated and decorated by hand. Of the 2000 incunabula in the Fitzwilliam and Cambridge colleges, 420 are hand decorated to some extent, including the 156 Italian books catalogued in this volume.

The authors of this beautifully presented and thoughtfully conceived catalogue aim to ‘erode artificial barriers between those working on illumination in manuscripts and in printed books’ (p. 7). Following previous volumes in the series on manuscript illumination, each book is regarded as a unique object and decoration is broadly defined to include almost anything added by hand, such as miniatures, drawings, historiated initials and illuminated borders, marginalia, woodcuts with contemporary added colour (but not unadorned woodcuts), and flourished initials. Also included are books with pasted-in illustrations as well as those with nineteenth-century decoration.

One artificial barrier that remains, probably for good reason, is the modern bibliographic distinction between incunabula and sixteenth-century books. While the other catalogues in the series include illuminated manuscripts from the sixteenth century, this one draws a line at 1501. The huge number of books printed in the first decades of the sixteenth century likely meant that too many would have qualified for inclusion. In addition, while incunabula editions have been well described, many from the sixteenth-century are still incompletely recorded.

It is unusual to catalogue incunabula according to illustration and the authors have organized their material somewhat unconventionally. Books printed and

illuminated in Italy are listed according to place of publication rather than place of decoration. Those illuminated outside Italy are then listed according to place of illumination. As the authors note, this method of organization reveals that while most incunabula printed in Italian cities (half in Venice) were also illuminated in Italy, a fifth were sent elsewhere to be decorated: Germany and Austria (nos 113–21), the Netherlands (nos 122–32), France and Flanders (nos 133–44) and England (nos 145–49). Furthermore, the geography and reach of the book trade is highlighted, as well as particular aspects of patronage. The observation is also made that some printers seemed to prefer particular illuminators or styles and that printing ‘generated standardisation not only in the format of texts, but also in the illustration and ornamentation applied to them’ (p. 10).

The entry for each book includes a description of the ornamentation, decoration or illumination and copy-specific information such as provenance and inscriptions, followed by a commentary. Not included is information common to the particular edition, such as collation and location of other copies, as this can be readily found in the standard bibliographic sources. All 156 entries are accompanied by excellent photographs that include, where relevant, remarkable original bindings.

This approach of treating the incunabula as unique objects has brought to light some wonderful books hitherto hidden away in the Cambridge colleges. Some of these have never been published, such as Newnham College Incunable 3 (no. 85), an imprint of *De claris mulieribus* printed in Ferrara by Laurentius de Rubeis de Valentia in 1497 and decorated with 172 historiated, hand-coloured woodcuts, the design of which is attributed to the Master of the Pico Pliny. Others of note include Trinity College VI.18.52—Macrobius’s *Expositio in Somnium Scipionis*, printed in Venice by Jenson in 1472 and illuminated by the Master of the Pico Pliny (no. 30)—; and also Trinity College Grylls 3.290—Hyginus, *Poetica astronomica*, printed and decorated in north-eastern Italy with spirited drawings of the constellations (no. 84). The circle of the celebrated illuminator Attavanti is represented by a copy of Ovid printed in Venice in 1474 and illuminated in Florence for members of the Medici family (no. 37, St John’s College Ii.1.7).

While the foremost aim of the volume is to describe illumination and decoration, the detailed indexes of printers, binders, types of books, authors, and provenance will be relevant to anyone interested in the fifteenth-century book. Overall, this superlative catalogue is just as good as its predecessors in the series. It sets a new standard for describing decoration in early printed books and provides fertile ground for further research.

HILARY MADDOCKS, *University of Melbourne*

**Austin**, Nicholas, SJ, *Aquinas on Virtue: A Causal Reading*, Washington, DC, Georgetown University Press, 2017; paperback; pp. xxiv, 233; R.R.P. US\$34.95; ISBN 9781626164734.

The moral theology of Thomas Aquinas continues to be of value to modern philosophical and ethical thought. Nicholas Austin substantiates this throughout *Aquinas on Virtue*, demonstrating the way in which Aquinas's thought can be fruitfully applied to contemporary theological ethics. In this work, Austin provides an exposition and reconstruction of Aquinas's thought from both his early and later works, using this as a foundation from which to construct an original and cogent causal virtue theory. Austin argues that virtue theory, which accounts for 'the nature, genesis and role of virtue', offers a more holistic and less hierarchical approach than virtue ethics, which tends to determine ethics based solely on virtue (p. xvi). Austin's approach mirrors that of Aquinas, whose virtue theory is seen to be embedded within a dynamic and holistic vision of the Christian moral life.

This work is divided into three parts. The author begins by elaborating on Aquinas's definition of virtue. Here he acknowledges Aquinas's adoption of the Aristotelian schema of the 'four causes'—namely, the material, formal, efficient, and final causes—in defining virtue. Austin notes Aquinas's inclusion of Peter Lombard's Augustinian definition of virtue, arguing that it retained relevance to Aquinas because it embraces all four Aristotelian causes (p. 61). Austin supports the argument that Aquinas should not be read as either Aristotelian or Augustinian, but rather that his conception should be understood as a unique synthesis of the two spheres of thought given the clear influence of both in shaping his approach to understanding virtue. Although Aquinas does give preference to a theological reading, his approach is highly conversant with philosophy. This inclusive attitude is mirrored in his method towards defining virtue, wherein he offers an extended treatment of Aquinas's conception of virtue as a habit.

Aquinas's understanding of causation is further explored in the second section, wherein Austin establishes its continued relevance to contemporary theological ethics. Here the author argues that although Aquinas's conception of causation was founded on a metaphysical relationship between virtue and its causes, which would not be supported by modern scholarship, it retains its applicability within modern ethics as a methodological principle.

The last section, which encompasses over half of the book, is dedicated to the application of causal analysis as a methodological tool through which to further comprehend the nature, origin, and role of specific virtues. Austin concludes by offering a reassessment of the often-cited relationship between grace and virtue. In discussing infused versus acquired virtue, he argues that moral virtue 'is indeterminate between infusion and acquisition; it can either be acquired by human action or infused through grace or both' (p. 205). This re-examination offers an original contribution to theological ethics and demonstrates the value of Austin's causal approach; however, it is Austin's methodological contribution that holds the most potential in recasting academic approaches to Aquinas's thought.

One of the strengths of this work is the author's ability to address the two divergent, yet interconnected, spheres of medieval and contemporary moral theology without inadvertently doing any injustice to either or convoluting his lines of argument—a risk explicitly noted in his introduction (p. xxi). The author artfully avoids this, creating a symbiotic relationship between the two spheres of thought that clearly distinguish between medieval and modern ideas (for an example, see his discussion on the evolution of the term 'habit', pp. 23–32). By incorporating striking modern exemplars and discussions of the contemporary applications of Aquinas's virtue theory, Austin succeeds in providing a holistic causal analysis of virtue that is conversant with the concerns of contemporary society. This dialogue also functions to elucidate the abstracted threads of theoretical discussion, making this work accessible to specialist and non-specialist scholars alike (for an example, see his tantalizing discussion of a virtuous Nazi, pp. 158–64). The author makes a conscious effort to engage non-specialist audiences, providing references to relevant sections of Aquinas's works beneath each chapter title to encourage an objective reading of his argument against the primary texts.

This is a nicely presented and well-edited book, with only two spelling errors to be noted (pp. 64, 102.) This book would benefit from a conclusion detailing Austin's causal approach and the ways in which it differs from that of Aquinas. Overall, however, it presents an original and insightful contribution to the fields of Thomism and theological ethics.

ZHIVANNAH COLE, *University of Auckland*

**Barber**, Charles, and Stratis **Papaioannou**, eds, *Michael Psellos on Literature and Art: A Byzantine Perspective on Aesthetics* (Michael Psellos in Translation), Notre Dame, University of Notre Dame Press, 2017; paperback; pp. 446; R.R.P. US\$40.00; ISBN 978026810048.

Born as Konstantinos Psellos in Constantinople in 1018, the polymath Michael Psellos has been described by one noted Byzantinist as 'the most amazing figure in Byzantine history' (Anthony Kaldellis, *Hellenism in Byzantium: The Transformations of Greek Identity and the Reception of the Classical Tradition*, Cambridge University Press, 2007, p. 191). While some might quibble with this designation, the burgeoning market for new translations of a wide range of Psellos's writings underscores his current popularity. Building upon two earlier volumes on Psellos that focused primarily on his orations and letters, this third volume from the University of Notre Dame Press offers English translations and commentaries from a collaboration of scholars on a wide array of his writings on literary theory, visual ethics, and art criticism. For the sake of brevity, I highlight below only some of the sections that I found noteworthy in this fascinating collection.

The art of Middle Byzantine rhetoric comes to life in the hands of a master. The book opens with two Psellian treatises on rhetoric, the first a letter to an unknown student, the second a synopsis of grammar in the form of a poem to the

future emperor Michael VII Doukas (r. 1071–77). In these lessons Psellos displays his virtuosity as a teacher and master of what he described lovingly as ‘sweet-speaking’ (p. 65).

Elegant prose for Psellos was often a matter of individual style. The next selection of texts focuses on Psellos’s views on various literary genres and ancient authorities—pagan and Christian. Rather than relying upon divine intervention or regurgitating the classics, he insisted that inspiration must come from within. He praised the Church Father Gregory of Nazianzos (329–90) for his ability to employ simple vocabulary to craft his own masterful rhetorical style, declaring ‘Without emulating the ancients he opened up each and every stream from a source from within himself’ (p. 126). For Psellos, there was no single pathway to high rhetoric, advising his student that ‘Words, my son, lie scattered about just like (one might say) unarranged stones’ (p. 128). It was up to individuals to arrange the collected material as they saw fit to craft their own mosaic of ‘perfect composition’ (p. 133). Text and author were for Psellos often distinct identities; chameleon-like, the author needed to adapt his persona to the edicts of his chosen rhetorical form. Psellos recommends ‘to argue either side of a dispute, both because we can hold opposite opinions about the same matter, and because the good are somewhat similar to the bad’ (p. 81).

How securely Psellos remained tethered to the religious norms of his day remains controversial. We often find him skulking through delicate theological territory. Although Psellos describes theology as ‘The Science beyond physics [...] the first science’ (p. 233), he proudly displays his mastery of Aristotelian logic, Platonic metaphysics, and Neoplatonic visual aesthetics. While Plato stands above all other classical authors, Gregory’s writings earn Psellos’s highest praise, offering an exemplum of a Christian rhetor and philosopher, an idealized image of an educated man steeped in both Christian and non-Christian learning. As the editors suggest, it is likely that Psellos hoped his contemporaries would see Gregory as a double of himself. While some (e.g. Kaldellis, *Hellenism*, p. 231) contend that Psellos’s praise of Gregory functioned largely as a smokescreen, deployed to protect his Byzantine Hellenism from Christian hardliners within Constantinople, the editors counter that the complex tenor of his work does not support such an interpretation. On this point, Stratis Papaioannou asserts that, while Psellos’s models are predominantly non-Christian, we should not see some ‘sort of anti-Christian pagan world-view in Psellos’ (p. 101).

Psellos rooted his visual aesthetic in Christian and Neoplatonist teachings. The study closes by exploring Psellos’s response to Byzantine icons. Although he was aware of the difficulty for humans to grasp the perfection found in the divine world, Psellos suggests that images crafted by the hands of men could capture wisps of the heavenly realm. When describing his experience upon viewing an icon of the Virgin Mary, he wrote: ‘I do not therefore write about what I have beheld, but what I have experienced. For it seems that having completely exchanged its nature, it was transformed into divine-like beauty and surpassed visual perception

[...]. For she is divided between heaven and earth so that she might have both' (pp. 377–78).

Instead of rejecting the material world as many Christian ascetics of his age had done, we find in these texts Psellos embracing the compatibility of the mundane and heavenly realms. Moreover, Papaioannou contends that by emphasizing the intimate interactions between the reader and the author's literary language, Psellos offers 'a postmodern view before postmodernism' (p. 119). Certainly, as this volume makes plain, Byzantine thinkers like Michael Psellos must be included if we are to appreciate the intellectual history of the Middle Ages.

MICHAEL EDWARD STEWART, *University of Queensland*

**Bildhauer, Bettina, and Chris Jones**, *The Middle Ages in the Modern World: Twenty-First Century Perspectives* (Proceedings of the British Academy, 208), Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2017; hardback; pp. xx, 346; 21 b/w, 16 colour illustrations; R.R.P. US\$135.00, £85.00; ISBN 9780197266144.

*The Middle Ages in the Modern World: Twenty-First Century Perspectives* offers a fascinating array of international and multidisciplinary reflections on medievalism. The introduction by Bettina Bildhauer and Chris Jones presents a broad history of the continuing evolution of the idea of 'the Middle Ages' from the fourteenth century to the present day. The collection is then divided into three themed sections, with various genres and areas, such as film, literature, politics, and Byzantinism, discussed across all the sections. One of the major strengths of this wide-ranging collection is its diversity of voices and of subject matter, with topics ranging from how Old Norse sagas are used as evidence by climate change deniers, to the way that Lady Gaga employs medieval iconography in her music videos.

Part I of the collection looks at medievalism in politics and histories. Bruce Holsinger's chapter traces the origin of the idea of the 'medieval Warm Period' to a naïve reading of *Landnámabók*, highlighting the afterlife of the idea of the 'Warm Period' in political discourse regarding climate change in order to argue for a more engaged relationship between natural sciences and the humanities. Eamon Byers, Stephen Kelly, and Kath Stevenson examine the connection between cultural nationalism and the figures of Cú Chulainn and Saint Patrick in their chapter, showing how these figures were used to give legitimacy to political affiliations during the Troubles in Northern Ireland. Patrick Geary argues that nineteenth-century scholars such as Alexandre Herculano, Jules Michelet, and Felix Dahn served as proto-celebrities, whose writings reflect a time when medieval origin myths were used to bolster European nations. Andrew Lynch's chapter analyses the attitudes towards and representation of the Middle Ages in a selection of children's histories from the eighteenth and nineteenth century, arguing that these works often feature the beginning of the British nation, war, and religion as 'the chief signifiers of the Middle Ages' (p. 90).

Part II of the collection looks at practising medievalism. Celebrated German author Felicitas Hoppe reflects on her experience in adapting Hartmann von Aue's verse romance *Iwein* into the young-adult novel genre, highlighting the importance of female characters Laudine and Lunette, both in von Aue's original and in her adaptation. Museum curator James Robinson's chapter draws on his experience of curating the *Treasures of Heaven* exhibition at the British Museum to outline the parallels between the medieval cult of saints and contemporary celebrity culture. Composer and musician Graham Coatman's chapter analyses the way that medieval music is used by British composers such as Benjamin Britten, Peter Maxwell Davies, and Judith Weir, arguing for their role as examples of a broader trend of medievalism in twentieth- and twenty-first-century avant-garde music. Archivist Fani Gargova demonstrates that 'the political dimension of medievalism [...] can only be understood through an investigation of archival material' (p. 152), examining previously unknown photographs that prove the sustained contact of three early twentieth-century Byzantine scholars. Chris Jones's chapter provides a rich overview of medievalism in recent British and Irish poetry, highlighting the renewed turn to the medieval in contemporary verse, and offering insightful reflections of his own involvement with two projects: the translation of Seamus Heaney's versions of Robert Henryson's *Fables* into a digital app; and the creation of poetic riddles capable of being published on Twitter. The joint chapter between Tommaso di Carpegna Falconieri and Lila Yawn focuses on the medieval revival festival Calendimaggio held in Assisi, and Pasolini's left-wing medievalist *Trilogy of Life*, and provides insight not only into the nostalgia for, and a selective re-evocation of, the medieval past, but also the importance of medievalism in Italian culture and politics.

Part III of the collection centres on medievalism in literature and culture. Elizabeth Robertson shows how William Wordsworth was deeply influenced by Geoffrey Chaucer, demonstrating that Wordsworth must have been familiar with Chaucer's meditations on a daisy in his *Prologue to the Legend of Good Women*. Conor McCarthy's chapter examines translations by Ciaran Carson of two medieval texts, Dante's *Inferno* and the Irish epic *Táin Bó Cúailnge*, analysing Carson's use of language and its relation to time, in particular its reflection of the political climate of the Troubles. Bettina Bildhauer persuasively argues for Quentin Tarantino's film *Inglorious Basterds* as an adaptation of the medieval epic poem *Song of the Nibelungs*, concluding that through this medieval intertext, the film both participates in, and adapts, the association between the medieval and violence in contemporary culture. Carolyn Dinshaw's chapter examines the Green Man, a decorative motif that features the representation of a face surrounded by, or made from, leaves, showing how the human/non-human hybrid resonates as a symbol for queer world-making in twentieth- and twenty-first-century contexts. Roland Betancourt delves into Byzantinism in Anglo-American culture, arguing that Byzantinism is used to 'produce pockets of resistance and momentary states of emancipation' (p. 338).

*The Middle Ages in the Modern World* is complemented with numerous images and tables, in both black and white and colour. This marvellous collection will appeal to those with an interest in the Middle Ages, as well as anyone interested in medievalism and its proliferation in popular culture and history.

MARINA GERZIĆ, *The University of Western Australia*

**Birkett, Tom, and Kirsty March-Lyons**, eds, *Translating Early Medieval Poetry: Transformation, Reception, Interpretation* (Medievalism, 11), Cambridge, D. S. Brewer, 2017; hardback; pp. 250; R.R.P. £60.00; ISBN 9781843844730.

Arising from a conference, ‘From *Eald* to New: Translating Early Modern Poetry for the 21st Century’, held at University College Cork in June 2014, the essays in this volume deal mainly with translation, very broadly defined, from Old English, Old and Middle Irish, and Old Norse. Sixteen contributors are listed, the majority from Ireland and the United Kingdom.

The editors’ introduction strikes an encouragingly positive note, reflected in some of the other essays: they affirm that ‘something of a renaissance has been taking place in the reception and remediation of poetry from the early medieval period’ (p. 2). In a wide-ranging essay discussing relevant scholarship and the studies included in the volume, they indicate that the book’s primary focus is on twenty-first-century responses to the medieval poetry rather than the history of past responses (pp. 6–7).

Five essays focus on Old English. Chris Jones raises questions about what should be considered to belong to the corpus of Old English poetry and discusses its use by modern poets, whose approach to the material is often rather free. Hugh Magennis mainly discusses the translations from Old English by Edwin Morgan, who translated into both Standard English and Scots. Inna Matyushina, focusing on ‘The Wanderer’ and the translation into Russian of Vladimir Tikhomirov, suggests that in some ways a better translation of Old English is possible into that language than into Modern English, especially if the English translator tries to imitate Old English metres and vocabulary. M. J. Toswell discusses Jorge Luis Borges’s interest in Old English and his translation work, a subject Toswell considers relatively neglected. The final, somewhat provocative essay in this part of the volume, Rory McTurk’s ‘“Let *Beowulf* now be a book from Ireland”: What Would Henryson or Tolkien Say?’, takes a somewhat negative view of Seamus Heaney’s bestselling *Beowulf* translation and, somewhat surprisingly in the present context, his translation of *The Testament of Cresseid* by the late fifteenth-century Scottish poet Robert Henryson. Perhaps tongue in cheek, McTurk calls for a translation of *Beowulf* into Irish.

The next three essays deal with translation from medieval Irish. Elizabeth Boyce argues for a need to widen the range of such poetry available in English translation: the translators’ well-established focus on nature and lyric poetry gives a misleading impression of the corpus. Lahney Preston-Matto translates



*Aislinge Meic Conglinne*, the language of which suggests a date around 1100, into English, discussing the society that produced the work and the challenges facing the translator. She claims to translate for a general audience and American undergraduates. Tadhg Ó Síocháin presents a translation into Modern Irish of the eleventh-century poem known as *Find and the Phantoms*. Commenting on his translation technique, he argues for the use of some archaic and dialect words as a way of vitalizing Modern Irish. The Middle Irish text is also provided, along with a reprint of an 1886 English translation.

Four essays consider translation from the Old Norse. Hannah Burrows lists and discusses reworking and translations of stanzas from *Hervarar saga ok Heiðreks* often known as *The Waking of Angantýr*. Many of the works discussed date to the eighteenth century, though the twenty-first century has seen a revival of interest in the text. Carolyne Larrington provides a very lively discussion of her translation of the *Poetic Edda*, both the first version published in 1996 and the revised edition of 2014. She outlines many changes, some of them stemming from a realization that the likely audience for the 2014 version would be undergraduates studying the poems in translation, rather than general readers. Heather O'Donoghue presents an interesting case that, without explicitly acknowledging it, Thomas Hardy was strongly influenced by the story of Brynhildr in writing *The Return of the Native*. Turning to television, Gareth Lloyd Evans shows that Michael Hirst's popular series *Vikings* makes considerable and sensitive use of Eddic poetry, both in the original Norse and in translation.

A short 'Afterword' by Bernard O'Donoghue reflects on the translation process and on the contributions to the volume, and there is a bibliography and index. It will probably be evident that the editors of the volume have by no means kept their contributors on a tight rein, and this is a diverse volume with many varying viewpoints on what constitutes translation and how it should be accomplished. The essays are without exception well written, sometimes indeed entertaining as well as scholarly, and any reader interested in early Western European poetry and its translation will find much of interest.

JOHN KENNEDY, *Charles Sturt University*

**Blumenfeld-Kosinski**, Renate, and Earl Jeffrey **Richards**, trans, *Christine de Pizan: Othea's Letter to Hector* (The Other Voice in Early Modern Europe: The Toronto Series, 57), Toronto, Iter Press and Tempe, Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2017; paperback; pp. 182; R.R.P. US\$34.95; ISBN 9780866985772.

Based on Gabriella Parussa's critical edition of the *Epistre Othea* (Droz, 1999), this English translation by two eminent scholars makes accessible Christine de Pizan's early, but very complex, work, written c. 1399. She combined classical mythology and Christian doctrine in a kind of *miroir des princes* advocating the principles of enlightened Christian chivalry. She invented Othea, the goddess of Prudence, who instructs Hector, the young Trojan hero. The work is dedicated to

Louis, Duke of Orleans (1377–1407), considered another Hector according to the topos of the Trojan origins of the French monarchy and the *translatio imperii*. In the much-troubled state of France at that time, the author's political intention and the authority with which a woman speaks are significant features.

The work has one hundred chapters, each in three parts, as in biblical exegesis: Text, Gloss, and Allegory. The texts are imperatives in four lines of verse, each figuring a classical personage; the glosses narrate the story with a brief moral statement; the allegories bring out the higher truth and Christian sense of the example, the author's authority reinforced with citations from classical sources, the Bible, and Patristic writing. Furthermore, the first forty-four chapters are organized in the format of religious instruction, going from the Four Cardinal Virtues to the Ten Commandments. The rhetorical topos of *sapientia et fortitudo*, wisdom and military strength or valour, associated with Minerva and Pallas, is the overall organizing principle.

In manuscripts she supervised, Christine de Pizan added illuminations, which provide a fourth visual layer of meaning and a contemporary element. Textual explanations of the illustrations follow the Prologue and allegories 5 to 10 (pp. 33, 45–72). The book cover reproduces one illustration: Othea handing her letter to Hector (Paris, BnF, fr. 606, fol. 1<sup>v</sup>).

Renate Blumenfeld-Kosinski and Earl Jeffrey Richards have elucidated Christine de Pizan's erudition, which she had derived from the cultural environment of the bilingual royal court and her father's learning. This erudition enabled her to move easily from pagan classical thought to the Christian tradition from, for example, Aristotle to Saint Augustine (Chapter 94, p. 125). She herself stressed that the true meaning is hidden under the story and fiction, and must be uncovered. Images of the kernel and the juice of the fruit (chapters 49 and 82), and the mention that 'because all these things have a figural meaning, one can understand them in many different ways' (Chapter 76, Gloss, p. 109) impress on readers the need to reflect on the meaning and to interpret the thought. Through careful research the translators have identified Christine's sources, giving references in various collections and particularly affinities with contemporary vernacular writing. The critical material comprises an excellent introduction, footnotes to the text, and an annotated index of proper names and places, together with an appendix of Cheryl Lemman's findings on sources for the allegories. This evidence shows convincingly Christine's knowledge of Latin, ending a long debate.

The translation is clear and concise, capturing the appropriate tones of the French version. The narrative glosses make pleasant reading, for example, the drama of Pyramus and Thisbe (Chapter 38), or the moving tale of Ceyx and Alcyone (Chapter 79). Close comparison of the translation with the French text revealed a few flaws: in Chapter 3, verse 7, '*ton lignage*' has been construed as 'his lineage' (p. 40); in Chapter 4, Allegory, lines 4 and 6, 'you' should be 'your' (p. 43); in Chapter 17, Gloss, line 4, '*il plaisoit*' has become 'it displeased' (p. 56). Some discrepancies are not explained, such as the elimination of the concluding

quotations from the Book of Proverbs in Chapter 1 (p. 38) and that from Aristotle in Chapter 17 (p. 56). The first omission is puzzling, as in the Index the only occurrence of Solomon is given as in Chapter 1, where he is not mentioned, but he figures in Chapter 4, Gloss (p. 43) and Chapter 70, Gloss (p. 103). Chapter 70, Allegory, also lacks the second-to-last sentence, which might have been considered redundant. These are small oversights in a generally very consistent translation.

One rectification is necessary. Contrary to the statement in the appendix (p. 146), the substantive *felicité* is attested in the medieval French translations of Boethius's *Consolatio Philosophiae*—*Boeces: De Consolacion* (1320–30), Renaut de Louhans's *Le Roman de Fortune et de Felicité* (1336/37), and *Le Livre de Boece de Consolacion* (1350–60), as Parussa noted (pp. 488–89). In fact, this usage must have helped embed the term in the French language.

This translation supersedes that of Jane Chance (Newburyport, 1990) and fits well into the same series as Geri L. Smith's *The Book of the Mutability of Fortune* (Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2017). Enriched by the scholarship of Blumenfeld-Kosinski and Richards, the *Epistre* is now destined in its new English version for an extensive twenty-first-century readership.

GLYNNIS M. CROPP, *Massey University*

**Brink, Stefan, and Lisa Collinson**, eds, *Theorizing Old Norse Myth* (Acta Scandinavica, 7), Turnhout, Brepols, 2017; hardback; pp. viii, 264; 7 b/w illustrations; R.R.P. €80.00; ISBN 9782503553030.

This volume brings together ten chapters derived from the 'Myth and Theory in the Old Norse World' conference held at the University of Aberdeen in October 2009: a conference that sought to examine theoretical and methodological foundations of, and medieval sources for, Old Norse myth. The chapters are book-ended with summary introduction and commentary by, respectively, Stefan Brink and John McKinnell, and in both of these contributions divergent approaches to defining and understanding the role and social relevance of Nordic myth are embraced, expressing a clear effort to encompass a plurality of views and ideas. McKinnell's contribution in particular is noteworthy.

Robert E. Segal's opening chapter maps both the history of, and shortfalls in, scholarship over recent centuries, exposing an array of divergent inflections and approaches to the study of myth and ritual, which involved such approaches as religious, myth-ritualist, performative, anthropological, literary, structuralist, and cognitive. Segal's chapter frames the volume as a whole, and many of the subsequent contributions can be seen to take their place in this wider theoretical scheme.

The contributions by Karen Bek-Petersen, Margaret Clunies Ross, Jens Peter Schjødt, and Pernille Hermann each place particular emphasis on the importance of understanding theoretical orientation: Bek-Petersen advocates for inclusivity, cooperation, and comparison between different disciplines and theories, and in a similar vein Schjødt argues (perhaps unfashionably) for the re-introduction of

the comparative method, although with greater sophistication in dealing with source criticism. Hermann explores the literary embedding and transmission of myth as cultural memory, while Clunies Ross's contribution investigates the importance of recognizing the cognitive role of Norse myth: the gods, rather than being omnipotent, served to 'encode fundamental human activities and interests' (p. 50), with literary reflexes of myth thereby considered as indicative of systemic cognitive meanings.

There are also a number of contributions that apply themselves to more specific topics. Sebastian Cöllen looks closely at the role and function of the god Heimdallr, revealed through his philological analysis of the poem *Hyndluljóð*, and Terry Gunnell considers the relative importance of Óðinn and Þórr in pre-Christian Iceland, warning against accepting Snorri's idea of a unified Old Nordic religion, and pointing out that beliefs and practices doubtless varied by area, class, society, and time. John Lindow also undertakes a philological analysis, in this case of Snorri's Eddic listing of the ranks of male and female gods, noting compelling parallels between the roles and numbers of 'subsidiary' gods and the ranks of Christian apostles and saints, possibly as a means for grafting a pre-Christian natural religion onto the ancestry of Christian Iceland.

Stefan Brink's contribution deals in the sensitive 'hot potato' of Swedish nationalism and the role of Old Uppsala in both myth and reality, using place-name philology in the reconstruction of pre-Christian Swedish mythology, and along the way rehabilitating the texts of both Snorri and Adam of Bremen. In the penultimate chapter of the volume Rudolf Simek provides an extensive survey of references to *álfar* (elves) in Old Norse literature, noting their distribution, identifying their varying roles and functions in literature, and comparing them with the *álfar* of contemporaneous Danish and Saxon folk religion. He concludes that they cannot be considered a consistent type of mythic character: their attributes and roles vary considerably, from supernatural and invisible to sinister spirits to explicitly negative demonic creatures, and their different manifestations perhaps indicate local variation in folk belief and myth.

John McKinnell's summing up is a more important part of the volume than at first might have been expected, and it is worth noting the part it plays in the overall scheme of the book. As well as reiterating the diverse contents of the volume, McKinnell takes the opportunity to reflect on each contribution and in places he poses views counter to those of the author, thereby inviting readers to think back on the earlier chapters, and ponder again the arguments made. He also applauds the fact that the scholars in this collection do not always agree. This is a fine model for an academic volume to present: seldom do such collections incorporate a discussant such as this, and the volume thereby frames itself as part of an ongoing debate in a field that does not rest. Unfortunately, a small number of proofreading and typographical errors have crept in, but not enough to undermine the impact of this material.

RODERICK McDONALD, *Katoomba, NSW*

**Carpenter**, Sarah, Pamela M. **King**, Meg **Twycross**, and Greg **Walker**, eds, *The Best Part of Our Play. Essays Presented to John J. McGavin. Part Two* (Medieval English Theatre, 38), Cambridge, D. S. Brewer, 2017; paperback; pp. 183; R.R.P. £25.00; ISBN 9781843844518.

Lively and engaging, this collection of essays is the second half of an affectionate tribute to John McGavin, presented at the 2015 Medieval English Theatre Meeting (METH) in Southampton. Written by McGavin's friends, colleagues, and former students, the essays 'celebrat[e] the breadth and influence of John's interests' (p. 1). Each essay is in its own right a valued contribution to the field of medieval drama. But the high esteem in which McGavin is clearly held within that field, and the sense of the close METH community which binds the individual essays, are infectious. The reader is immediately drawn in, making the volume a delight to read.

The various papers (eleven in total and including the late David Mills's last article) are loosely linked by being generally concerned with issues of performance, ceremonial and spectatorship. The first two—by Eila Williamson and Alice Hunt—also have a decidedly Scottish flavour, referencing McGavin's long interest and expertise in the field of Scottish medieval and early modern drama. Williamson's is an analysis of the funeral of Walter Scott, Earl of Buccleuch, seeking 'insight into what the onlookers would have seen and what message the participants in the procession, or "actors", intended to communicate through their performance' (p. 3). Hunt explores the coronation of James VI of Scotland (later James I of England), focusing on the 'coronation ritual [as] a complex, and necessary, act of representation—in short, a valuable kind of theatre' (p. 24).

From Scotland, the focus shifts to Wales. Sue Niebrzydowski 'examines the cultural appropriation and adaptation of Chaucer's version of Troilus and Creseyde [...] in an anonymous, late sixteenth-century, Welsh-language play, *Troelus a Chresyd*' (p. 38). She convincingly argues that 'the very existence of this play is testimony to a continued interest in medieval English literature, and to dramatic performance in early modern Wales' (p. 39). David N. Klausner explores with wit and vigour the Abergavenny Crucifixion play, which greatly upset the fourteenth-century Bishop of Hereford. But, as Klausner points out, it 'suggest[s] that plays in some form were a significant part of the life of Abergavenny, its parish and its priory' (p. 66).

Of the remaining essays, two prove—for this reviewer at least—particularly fecund: Elisabeth Dutton's on the St John's College *Narcissus*, and Pamela King's on the soundscape of medieval outdoor performance. Dutton compares the little-known *Narcissus* play with Filippo Lippi's 1442 *Annunciation* painting—a slightly unusual approach, but one which leads into a rewarding 'study of staging, of spectatorship, and indeed of staging spectatorship' (p. 68). King considers the importance of sound of all kinds—'vocal art, audience noise, and the "political in produced noise"' (p. 131)—to medieval performance, suggesting in conclusion that 'a consideration of the materiality of early dramatic performance could fruitfully

re-orientate itself away from its near transfixion with visual effects and turn up the sound' (p. 141).

Also of interest for its unusual subject matter is Clare Egan's 'tackl[ing of] an unexpected form of performance, the publication of libels, using the rich but underexplored resource of reports of Star Chamber cases from Devon' (p. 1). Contributions from Charlotte Steenbrugge (on audience address in medieval sermons and morality plays and the differences between the two genres), Nadia Thérèse van Pelt (on spectatorship, metatheatricality, and cognitive theory), Mishtooni Bose (on the medieval 'drama of performed thought' (p. 125)), and David Mills (on the 1550 play *Abraham sacrificant*) round out a volume that is a forceful and thought-provoking meeting of complementary minds.

ELEANOR BLOOMFIELD, *University of Auckland*

**Champion, Matthew S.**, *The Fullness of Time: Temporalities of the Fifteenth-Century Low Countries*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 2017; hardback; pp. 304; 5 colour, 32 b/w illustrations; R.R.P. US\$55.00; ISBN 9780226514796.

Matthew Champion's *The Fullness of Time* explores how particular temporalities constituted a varied and polyphonous experience of time in the fifteenth-century Low Countries—an experience, he explains, as for St Augustine, himself, and his historical subjects, that was numinous but essential to the unfolding of one's existence. Champion is interested in how time was kept, described, experienced, and produced, and more specifically how temporality could be rendered meaningful through sound, ritual, and image.

Champion begins this task by setting out how various temporal 'tracks' intersected in the course of the civic life of fifteenth-century Leuven. Everyday life was understood, he argues, as bound up in a larger process of different intersecting temporal narratives—such that the rhythms of economic activity, religious hours, and calendrical calculation all interpenetrated each other. In this world of polyphonous temporality, bell-ringing washed across the cityscape signifying a broad range of temporalities: to signal the hours of the breviary, midday, the closing of city gates at dusk, the outbreak of natural disaster, and the regulation of the working day (p. 39).

However, the remainder of this work focuses on the implications of a distinctly Augustinian sense of the in-breaking of eternity upon everyday life. *Kairotic*, mythic, time could break into the *chronos* of time's flow so that secular time in this context could be rendered meaningful and appropriate. Champion explores in chapters 3 and 4 how the experience of time, specifically the intersection of eternity with the temporal, was integral to the 'temporal structures of particular emotional narratives that are supposed to evolve, for example, over the course of a year, or a week, or a day' (p. 90). Champion argues that emotional narrative was mapped onto the liturgical calendar as much as onto the daily ebb and flow of the mass, the offices, and the secular rhythms of the day. Although the mass

involved temporal narration of salvific history, liturgical time was also structured by the history of salvation and as such afforded instances of emotional expression that took a far longer view than our modern experience might allow. The eternal, ongoing act of salvation broke into the secular variously, depending on how liturgical time mapped onto each particular moment. Although far exceeding the scope of the work, analysis of the continuity and discontinuity of this sense of 'higher times' with earlier liturgical cultures would have been well received.

Champion does note the presence of different temporalities from the outset, but it is clear that in his analysis it is liturgical time that renders all these different temporal 'tracks' coherent. The in-breaking of the eternal, in Champion's approach, provides the structure for the everyday. This is the case for the calendrical calculation and gospel harmonies (Chapter 5). In a complex way, by ordering time the subject could appreciate it from a bird's eye view that approximated the view from God's eternity. 'This entailed a temporal experience of reading the book, where the single time of the liturgy was marked by entering and correlating multiple episodic frames' (p. 141). In the devotional text, then, myriad lines of times and narrative were brought together into one moment. Just as one might survey episodic scenes from Christ's life at once via their representation in a single work of art, 'the reader might be drawn above the page to contemplate the arrangement of textual time as a human approximation of the divine intellectual vision of time' (p. 143). This is an Augustinian sense of memory essential to the *visio Dei* and it is intriguing to consider further what influence Augustine may have had directly or indirectly on this particular sense of time's fullness—as well as how the absorption of Aristotle's corpus may have mutated this sense. Finally, Champion describes how medieval visualizations of time were liminal sites where eternity and the particulars of secular time could meet (Chapter 6). By surveying history all at once, 'the devout reader might hope to be translated beyond the framing text into a vision of eternity with Christ and his saints' (p. 176).

Champion's focus is primarily on how the liturgical intersected with the secular in the fifteenth-century Low Countries, but his work bears far broader implications for the analysis of medieval Augustinianisms, and provides a fundamental analysis for study into the shift towards a secularized, mechanical sense of time.

LUKE TUCKER, *The University of Sydney*

**Clunies Ross**, Margaret, ed., *The Pre-Christian Religions of the North: Research and Reception, Volume I: From the Middle Ages to c. 1830* (The Pre-Christian Religions in the North), Turnhout, Brepols, 2018; hardback; pp. xxxiv, 637; 37 b/w, 24 colour illustrations; R.R.P. €130.00; ISBN 9782503568799.

This large edited book consists of thirty-seven chapters and three introductions, and covers a broad range of historical and cultural receptions of pre-Christian Scandinavian myths and legends from the Christian Middle Ages to the nineteenth

century. It is an immensely learned and useful resource, though not best suited to being read *in toto*, but rather to dip into to look for information on specific topics, geographical regions, or eras. More than sixty illustrations magnify the impact of the scholarship considerably. Editor Margaret Clunies Ross's introduction situates the large-scale research project, initially conceived by Jónas Kristjánsson (1924–2014), and later led by Bergur Thorgeirsson, which will result in two other sets of published outputs (four volumes of *Histories and Structures* and two of *Sources*, textual and archaeological) apart from the two-volume set of which this volume is the first. The reflexive nature of the project is clear. Clunies Ross notes that 'it is now recognized, more perhaps than it was in former times, that research itself is subject to changes in cultural values and assumptions, and that research is itself a kind of reception, just as artistic creativity is' (p. xxv).

*The Pre-Christian Religions of the North* is organized in eight parts, beginning with 'Looking In: The Non-Scandinavian Perspective'. This section includes: Henrik Janson's discussion of classical authors who offered perspectives on the remote north; Philip A. Shaw's assessment of relevant Anglo-Saxon sources; a contribution by Thomas DuBois and Bernhard Maier on Finno-Ugrian views and Celtic-Scandinavia interactions respectively; another by Vladimir J. Petrukhin and Tatjana Jackson on early Russian reception of Nordic culture; and Jan Retsö's reflection on Arab authors including the famous Ibn Fadlan's account of a Rus funeral in 922 CE on the Volga; it also includes an introduction by Clunies Ross. The second part, 'The View from Inside: Medieval Scandinavian Reception', has eight chapters introduced by the editor, and alongside the fifth part—'The Romantics' (which also has eight chapters but no introduction)—, constitutes the most detailed and varied investigation. Poetry, language, saga literature, pre-Christian beliefs and practices, and history are covered in Part 2, whereas Part 5 takes more of a geographical approach to sundry Romantic movements (Icelandic, English, Swedish, German, and so on). The exception is Julia Zernack's 'The International Reception of a Seminal Work: *Baldrs Draumar*', a fascinating study of one medieval manuscript that generated multiple modern translations and inspired artists including Philippe Friedrich von Hetsch, Henry Fuseli and William Blake. Part 3, 'The Humanist Reception', has two chapters: Mats Malm's 'The Humanist Reception in Scandinavia' and Annette Lassen's 'Icelandic Humanism'. The fourth part, 'From Humanism to the Romantics', has five contributions tracing the reception of Norse mythology and religion from the mid-seventeenth to the mid-eighteenth centuries.

The final three parts examine the period from approximately 1750 to 1830, and cover 'The Reception in Drama and the Visual Arts from c. 1750', 'Enabling Philology', and 'The Early Grundtvig'. The standard of contributing authors is high (including the introductions, Clunies Ross has written ten entries, Annette Lassen and Julia Zernack have four each, and Mats Malm and Bo Grandien three each, making five authors responsible for just over half the forty chapters. The remaining nineteen entries are handled by a further seventeen authors). It



is difficult to single out particular chapters for praise as the effect is cumulative, and the methodological skirmishes (and occasional conflicts) between scholars are of as much interest as the medieval sources and their later reception history. There is no doubt that *The Pre-Christian Religions of the North* is a substantial scholarly achievement, situated as it is in a research project that promises eight hefty volumes that trace an academic field from its inception to the present and will provide a springboard for many further projects. It is an exciting study indeed. Margaret Clunies Ross and her team of authors deserve praise, and the book merits a wide readership. It is warmly recommended.

CAROLE M. CUSACK, *The University of Sydney*

**Cohen, Mark R.**, *Maimonides and the Merchants: Jewish Law and Society in the Medieval Islamic World* (Jewish Culture and Contexts), Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2017; cloth; pp. 248; R.R.P. US\$65.00, £56.00; ISBN 9780812249149

To the Jew, God-given laws are not subject to revision. It is in regard to this that Jewish laws, laboured over by generations of rabbis and inscribed in codes and elsewhere, are regarded as immutable. Society may change but the laws that define it, and must be obeyed, will not. The paradox that arises from this is how laws developed for one form of society can be applied to another that is fundamentally different. Mark R. Cohen in this book investigates how immutable laws designed for an essentially agricultural society were nonetheless modified to suit a twelfth-century mercantile society heavily involved in long distant commerce. It was a problem that the Geonim had been facing since the Islamic conquest of the area three centuries before and which was threatening to split Jewish practice from Jewish law as the society came to depend on trade rather than farming. The rabbis had been developing piecemeal arguments to accommodate the merchants' needs for some time but it needed someone like Maimonides, a major philosopher believed to tower over other thinkers, widely admired for his originality in regard to faith, Judaism and mysticism, who was accepted as an authority for many centuries, to produce an integrated position. Although he was writing in a Sephardi culture, Maimonides's work on Jewish law was vital to Jews of all persuasions and has been subject to much recent analysis from Leo Strauss onwards.

In doing this, Cohen tacitly rejects the arguments of those who see Maimonides as a great philosopher in the wider tradition of European thought, not merely a Jew writing for Jews. He accepts the idea that Maimonides was a specifically Jewish thinker who hid his real objectives under careful language. Since the law was unchangeable it was critical to persuade the Jews that what was proposed changed nothing. Cohen carefully examines the way in which agency, contracts, partnerships, and punishments were explained in Maimonides's *Mishneh Torah* (c. 1178). This was Maimonides' massive codification of Jewish law, or Halakha, in which he reorganized in fourteen volumes all the post-biblical

rulings from midrashim to Talmuds and the writing of the Geonim so that, he claimed, people would not need to go back to the original sources.

Cohen begins from the fact that some of the difficulties Maimonides faced were common throughout the long period when the Jews lived in states run by those who had different religions and different concepts of law. At all times and places, maintaining the authority of Jewish courts within a state that had its own powerful legal system presented considerable problems, particularly if there was major divergence between the rules of the various laws. Cohen argues, in opposition to many legal historians who accept Maimonides' own claim to have adhered to the precise content of his sources in this codification, that he was able to introduce subtle modifications. These, Cohen explains, made the law more suitable for commerce and more acceptable to merchants who needed to believe that they were observing Jewish law but who had to operate in an environment that was dominated by Islam, where they were sometimes in partnership with Muslims, were often dealing with them in other contexts, and might find themselves in Islamic courts.

The accepted Jewish rule that 'the law of the state was the law' was not in itself sufficient to cover all contingencies or to justify acceptance of legal relationships that varied from the older Jewish law. Cohen suggests that Maimonides used various forms of interpretation, especially analogy but also allegory and metaphor, to present contemporary realities as related to and reflecting familiar Halakhic rules. Cohen also uses his exhaustive knowledge of the material in the Geniza archives to examine evidence for ways in which mercantile practice was implemented. His account provides a fascinating insight into the operation and interaction of the courts and their role in the control of mercantile life in a period when long overseas trips could take years and involve a high degree of uncertainty. What he makes apparent is the extent to which personal trust and commitment were crucial to the successful operation of businesses in the period. A partnership in which trust had broken down could not continue successfully.

An interesting interpolation is his discussion of the position of wives in such structures—their legal position and their conjugal rights. The Talmud required nightly congress where the man's work was not physically exhausting, and the man could not absent himself for long periods without the permission of his spouse, which provided wives with some authority.

This is a work that offers many important insights into the complexity of various aspects of the multi-ethnic world of medieval Islamic society as well as reflections on the interaction of law and society in a wider context. Although its primary purpose is confined to Maimonides, the book provides reflections on the interaction of law and society that apply more widely.

SYBIL M. JACK, *The University of Sydney*

**DiCenso**, Daniel J., and Rebecca **Maloy**, eds, *Chant, Liturgy, and the Inheritance of Rome: Essays in Honour of Joseph Dyer* (Henry Bradshaw Society Subsidia, 8), Woodbridge, The Boydell Press, 2017; hardback; pp. 596; 2 colour, 28 b/w illustrations; R.R.P. £60.00; ISBN 9781907497346.

In the often rather rarified world of liturgical scholarship, there are relatively few scholars who have generated such a wide circle of admirers as Joe Dyer. This impressive volume provides a tribute to his influence, framed around the history of medieval liturgy both within and beyond Rome. Part of the fascination of this topic is the remarkable diversity of surviving traditions of chant and musical practice. Joe Dyer is known for his prolific production of scholarly articles on the development of Roman liturgy, but always with attention to the spatial environment in which liturgy develops. All the studies in this volume are marked by rigorous attention to what manuscripts can teach us, not just about medieval chant, but the context in which liturgy was performed, whether within or outside Rome, in particular in the early medieval period.

The largest number of contributions is grouped together under the rubric 'Medieval Rome and Ancient Rites'. Charles M. Atkinson studies the survival of the *Missa graeca*, preserved with remarkably consistency in the Latin West at the abbey of Saint-Denis, between the ninth and twelfth centuries. Charles B. McLendon focuses on the architectural and political significance of Old St Peter's. It is salutary to be reminded that the first Pope firmly attested as being buried there was Leo I in the fifth century, helping to promote his vision of papal primacy in the Latin West. Also from a firmly historical perspective, John F. Romano considers the key role of archdeacons as ecclesiastical managers, acting on behalf of their bishop, and in Rome on behalf of the Pope himself. Their liturgical role helped cement their authority. Edward Nowacki offers a study of how the earliest antiphons of the Roman Office were crafted out of biblical texts, most likely in the seventh century, when we can first discern moves to impose standardized liturgical practices on a variety of religious communities. Thomas Kelly pursues similar themes in respect to the Paschal Vigil, in particular at the Lateran, the true ecclesiastical centre of the Church in Rome, not St Peter's, located outside the city precincts. In this context, the essay of Catherine Carver is exemplary on demonstrating how much the role of sound, in particular the ringing of bells, was central to urban experience in Rome. More relevant to the wider diffusion of Roman influence is a study by David Ganz of the *Missale Gallicarum Vetus*, shedding light on pre-Carolingian liturgical practice. Emma Hornsby offers insights from Beneventan experience in relation to the Easter Vigil. Luisa Nardini provides a more specialist survey of prosulas, adapted (like antiphons) from Scripture, but set to familiar melodies.

There is a similar range of perspective in four papers about the influence of Roman liturgy. Susan Rankin documents the gradual move towards standardizing the singing of the Psalter in the eighth century, reinforced by Charlemagne and his advisors. Barbara Haggh-Huglo documents how all the post-Carolingian offices

in a Cambrai manuscript incorporate modes in sequential order rather than non-sequentially as in the oldest liturgical offices. Daniel J. DiCenso explores different versions of Charlemagne's *Admonitio generalis* to demonstrate the range of ways in which it was interpreted. An essay by James Borders on a twelfth-century pontifical shows how both oral and textual sources may shape its formation.

A final group of papers deals with subsequent liturgical developments. Some are more thematic, such as that of Susan Boynton, who shows how a manuscript of Cluny, copied *c.* 1200, transmits a distinctly Cluniac vision of history, presenting its abbey as foreshadowing the heavenly Jerusalem. Christopher Page offers a more personally felt reflection on how chant created arias 'from the grand opera of Scripture history that we call the liturgy' (p. 440). Others are more technical, like William Mahrt on the role of melodic tropes in shaping chant. David Hiley considers how chants influenced by the eleventh-century Hirsau reform may not be as original as those of Hermann of Reichenau, but are still worthy of respect. More as a coda to the volume are two papers on thirteenth-century Paris. One is by Rebecca Baltzer on the magnificence of liturgical practice at the royal chapel in Paris, the Sainte-Chapelle—effectively 'a giant reliquary' (p. 508) recalling Christ's passion, which responded to the more established traditions at the cathedral of Notre-Dame. Mary E. Wolinski explores the rich surviving record of the confraternity of St James in the various Parisian churches serving pilgrims and devotees of the saint, sometimes with chants originally sung at Compostela, but transmitted through Cluniac tradition. For students of medieval liturgy, especially relating to the continent, this is an important volume.

CONSTANT J. MEWS, *Monash University*

**Dolan, Loretta A.**, *Nurture and Neglect: Childhood in Sixteenth-Century Northern England*, Abingdon, Routledge, 2017, hardback; pp. 254; R.R.P. £110.00; ISBN 9781472470188.

Loretta Dolan's project is structured by two correctives to research into pre-industrial childhood, outlined in her introduction. In the more straightforward of the two, she addresses the bias towards southern sources in claims for 'national trends' by working with records from the dioceses of Chester, Durham, and York. In the other, she contends that Philippe Ariès's claim that the Middle Ages lacked a concept of 'childhood' does not equate to a lack of care or affection for the young; consequently, the presence or absence of affection in primary texts should not be conflated anachronistically with practices expressing nurture, or, in its absence, neglect.

The first chapter describes her sources and details the challenges of interpreting the rich incidental information about children that they contain. The second surveys notions of nurture and neglect gleaned from conduct literature, Church teachings, and community practices, as well as evidence of their audiences. In the next four chapters, Dolan works through child marriage; opportunities for education according to social status and gender; apprenticeship; and parental

deprivation. The cases she discusses and the patterns that they reveal are compelling. Her analysis of child marriages in particular addresses an absence in existing scholarship and illuminates the intersections between economic concerns, community dynamics, social conventions, and family life. This is also true of her chapter on parental deprivation, in which she determinedly expands on existing compartmentalized treatments of parentless children, rewarding the reader with an evocative sense of the diverse situations in which such children found themselves.

Dolan's analysis sketches a world where even very young children could be found in many contexts outside the nuclear family, from better-known situations such as apprenticeship, wardship, service, and formal education through to child marriages, informal learning spaces, impoverished children lodged with socially marginalized adults, or begging and drifting in the company of non-related adults. The lack of choice children had in these arrangements emerges as a prominent theme—physical discipline was routinely implemented; married children knew that their value to adult family members took precedence over their own wishes; children without family or community connections could be compelled into criminal activity by opportunistic adults; failure to achieve in education or comply with the demands of a master could result in immediate suffering and impede future prosperity. Dolan recognizes the pervasive authoritarian subordination of children, but her interpretation of individual cases sits awkwardly with her stated desire to connect with lived experience and promote children's voices (pp. 14–15).

When Dolan describes the violence inflicted on apprentice Thomas Lincoln with a variety of hard objects, she claims that if his master 'had used reasonable weapons like the rod, then, it is likely that the boy would have accepted his punishment as being justified even if he probably did not like it' (p. 55). The processes through which a child internalizes a belief that he or she deserves to be hurt are, presumably, the same now as then. Current thinking about child development does not support Dolan's assertion. She states that students who were compelled to take part in ritualized humiliation 'participated in the government of the school by playing a part in the disciplinary procedures' (p. 132), without accounting for the punitive alternatives they might have faced for refusing. Her caution when interpreting references to emotions leads her to conjecture that a girl who may have shaped testimony to emancipate herself from a forced marriage perhaps engages in a 'ploy' (p. 101). This term seems unnecessarily judgemental, given Dolan's insistence that in cases of child marriage, 'almost without exception, all people appearing in the court for annulment [...] did not consent and were forced or intimidated into saying their marriage vows by parents or kin' (p. 99). Similarly problematic is her euphemistic description of sexual relations between young female servants and men including the master as 'unwanted attention' or 'attention foisted upon female servants' (p. 162). In each of these examples, there is a failure to appreciate the degree to which children may have experienced themselves quite simply as trapped. Although certain practices were coded as nurture, this does not mean that children experienced them as such: the more salient point might be that they complied with whatever helped them to survive.

The dissonance of these interpretations with the goal of hearing past children's voices nonetheless provides a useful opportunity for revisiting the question of anachronism and childhood. Are there psycho-biological developmental processes that are consistent across time? If the near-extinction of children's agency would be considered traumatic today, is it possible or even desirable for this viewpoint to inform an investigation of pre-industrial childhood? Would such consideration necessarily obscure contemporary frameworks, or could it perhaps shed light on how past societies responded to certain basic human needs? While Dolan does not consider these possibilities, her painstaking and illuminating study opens the way for further dialogue on these important questions.

MELISSA RAINE, *University of Melbourne*

**Driscoll**, Matthew, **Silvia Hufnagel**, **Philip Lavender**, and **Beeke Stegman**, eds, *The Legendary Legacy: Transmission and Reception of the 'Fornaldarsögur Norðurlanda'* (The Viking Collection. Studies in Northern Civilization, 24), Copenhagen, University Press of Southern Denmark, 2018; hardback; pp. 457; 19 b/w illustrations; R.R.P. DKK398.00; ISBN 9788740831030.

The *fornaldarsögur Norðurlanda* ('ancient sagas of the Northern lands'), commonly referred to as the 'legendary' sagas, form a genre distinct from other saga types due to their geographic setting (not Iceland) and the fact that their narrative time is set in a distant (if mythic) past notionally prior to the time of Icelandic settlement. This genre is, however, at best problematic, for thematically these sagas often share interests and topics with the other main genres: *Íslendingasögur* (sagas of the Icelanders), *riddarasögur* (chivalric sagas), *fornsögur suðurlanda* (romances), and *konungasögur* (kings' sagas). Indeed, Viðar Hreinsson's contribution in this collection deals explicitly with taxonomic problems of the genre, arguing that the classification itself, unlike all other genres, is 'not based on any literary criteria' (p. 72). Hans Jacob Orning also examines methodologies for understanding generic qualities of saga literature, and how to negotiate a relationship with historiography (both in content and manuscript collation). He argues that sagas, in their associated manuscript totality, need to be read as integral (i.e. across genres) 'utterances formulated in concrete historical contexts' (p. 115).

The *fornaldarsögur* are poor cousins in academic terms, with much less publication, translation, and scholarship in comparison to other genres, a characteristic that Alaric Hall suggests is due to the historical ideology of the Icelandic nationalist literary program favouring the *Íslendingasögur* for their idealization of an independent Icelandic past. As a corrective, this volume represents a milestone in the ongoing field of *fornaldarsögur* study. It results from a 2014 conference convened as part of a project funded by the Velux Foundation, 'Stories for all time: The Icelandic *fornaldarsögur*', whose aim was to survey the entire transmission history of the genre.

There are thirteen contributions in this collection, in addition to the introduction by the principal investigator of the project, Matthew Driscoll. The approach taken in each varies markedly. Each contributes important developments to the field, and the volume encompasses a wide array of Norse material that falls under such a 'faulty' generic classification. The works examine aspects of the field through the long context of evolving critical approaches, including historical source criticism, materiality, textuality, the sociology of literature, and material philology. The array of texts investigated in this volume is broad: it includes medieval, post-medieval, and modern saga manuscripts, folk-tales, poetry and *rímur*, modern literary reflexes, and the long arc of translations and re-tellings from Saxo Grammaticus through to the current century. Annette Lassen provides a catalogue and reviews *fornaldarsögur* translations and re-tellings in Danish, of which there are surprisingly few. She also offers the welcome news of a complete Danish translation currently in preparation.

Post-medieval re-workings and modern reflexes of Norse texts are a particularly strong thread among the contributions. Aðalheiður Guðmundsdóttir reviews reflexes in later Icelandic poetry and Massimiliano Bampi examines the eighteenth-century *Starkaðar saga gamla* in the context of its antecedents. T. A. Shippey discusses *fornaldarsögur* influences in an array of modern science fiction and fantasy writers such as J. R. R. Tolkien, Poul Andersen, and Harry Harrison. Alaric Hall argues for a nuanced reading of post-GFC Icelandic fiction, drawing upon a kind of dystopian *fornaldarsögur* medievalism, in contradistinction to the more common literary, nationalist, golden age medievalism of a pre-GFC context, which tended to draw upon *Íslendingasögur* and Eddic themes.

The survival of Icelandic manuscripts is largely due to the work of prominent seventeenth- and eighteenth-century collectors, and a vibrant Icelandic manuscript culture that survived into the last century. *Fornaldarsögur* were popular in this tradition, and a number of contributions look closely at the collection and continued production of manuscripts in the modern period. Beeke Stegmann examines Arni Magnusson's method for dismantling and re-ordering composite manuscripts of multiple sagas, and Ralph O'Connor explores the historiographic contradictions and disagreements among post-Reformation manuscript editors, particularly anxious about how to treat fabulous episodes. Silvia Hufnagel catalogues and analyses the collection and scribal activities of a particularly highly productive eighteenth- and nineteenth-century family from Western Iceland. Shaun Hughes's contribution falls also under this sub-group, tracing the life of a manuscript that now resides in Harvard Library, through a tale of desire and frustration that would do Mills and Boon proud.

Finally, two contributions provide close analyses of particular narratives. Philip Lavender examines the generic uncertainties in respect of the sagas and *rímur* associated with the character Illugi, and Andrew Wawn provides a close philological and literary analysis of the little-known saga and *rímur* of *Jasons bjarti*.

In all, this is an eclectic collection of works doing justice to the diversity of the topic, and it is a much-needed development in the study of this important but not-so-widely studied field.

RODERICK McDONALD, *Katoomba, NSW*

**Egeler, Matthias**, *Islands in the West: Classical Myth and the Medieval Norse and Irish Geographical Imagination* (Medieval Voyaging, 4), Turnhout, Brepols, 2017; hardback; pp. xii, 357; 33 b/w illustrations, 4 b/w tables; R.R.P. €100.00; ISBN 9782503569383.

The history of an idea is a difficult thing to capture. Concepts can shift and be reworked as they are handed down through generations and across cultures. It is problematic to clearly identify whether an idea has been borrowed, deliberately transmitted, appropriated, or is simply the result of some form of parallel evolution. A more recent, and exhaustive, history of a particular construct—the fabled ‘Islands in the West’—can be found in Matthias Egeler’s monograph, which charts the ‘entanglement’ of different legends of a transmarine paradise across Irish, Norse, Mediterranean, and Near East examples. It is not so much a search for origins but an attempt to catalogue the similarities and differences in each version, without ascribing cultural meaning, motive, or purpose.

It is an approach that seems to have a great deal of promise at the start of *Islands of the West*. The text goes backwards in time, first analysing the more recent (i.e. early and high medieval) examples of paradisiacal islands, before exploring examples further back in the historical record. Chapter 1, ‘North-Western Europe: Scandinavia, Ireland and the Land of the Living’, is a thorough exploration of Irish and Norse cycles such as *The Voyage of Bran* and the *Book of Settlements*, as well as other less prominent myths that depict a realm that is variously described as a ‘Land of Women’, ‘Wine-Land’, ‘Land of the White-Men’, and so on. It focuses particularly on how each depiction uses tropes of gender, power (including fertility and land), and immortality in different ways. The problems with considering the Christian context of the transfer of these pagan tropes to written format is noted, as well as how ideas of monastic isolation may have shaped a Hiberno-Norse desire for a distant idealized realm.

What comes across in the first chapter is perhaps the issue of grouping all these different transmarine realms as a productive form of analysis. Egeler almost overwhelms the reader with the sheer depth and breadth of the material studied, so that it is difficult to take a step back and adopt a critical look. This essential difficulty with cross-cultural analysis—making a definitive judgement—is compounded by the problems of evidence that *Islands of the West* explores in its subsequent chapters. Chapter 2, ‘The Classical Mediterranean: Rome, Greece and the Islands of the Blessed’, is probably the least convincing of the chapters. In part this is because Egeler starts to use evidence from Etruscan funerary images, combined with allegorical depictions of the Roman and Greek afterlife. The lack of detailed understanding of Etruscan rites and language makes the parallels



Egeler is attempting to establish—a clear, overarching Mediterranean association between the afterlife and a sea voyage for deceased souls—stretched at best, and a lot seems to depend on whether Etruscan depictions of sea creatures on funerary displays are a core motif or a flourish, or exactly whether the Garden of the Hesperides counts as transmarine and is therefore a useful part of the analysis.

Chapter 3 is brief and largely consists of examining and refuting existing theories that seek to connect the Irish and Norse concepts of ‘Islands in the West’ right back to biblical and Mesopotamian understandings of the Flood, with their depictions of a flood hero who is translocated to a distant land, and associations with some form of powerful fruit (the apple of the Garden of Eden, for example). Egeler rightly observes that making this link requires a total inversion in the various mythic tropes, with the Near East mythos typically involving some kind of submerged world and temptation by women. This is at odds with the Greek and Roman sources that are posited as mediators between a Near East origin and an Irish ‘end point’, which makes tracking the cultural transfer problematic. However, Egeler does not appreciate how his refutation of existing theories in many ways weakens his argument—calling out others for making tenuous connections and grabbing together a heap of sources in the hope of providing a typography highlights the way he is doing many of the same things throughout his own thesis.

In Chapter 4, which essentially functions as a conclusion, Egeler notes that there is no clear academic consensus on how to interpret and define cross-cultural interactions. What Egeler attempts to do at this point is to set out a framework in so far as his analysis of the Islands of the West concept works, identifying four different types of cultural contact ranging from quotation through influence, adaptation, and borrowing. This framework is useful, but underlines how much further work is needed to add rigour to cross-cultural analysis. A final appendix speculates on the cultural power of these myths and their localization in place names into the present.

Overall the work is useful, but in some ways reads like a first draft: Egeler’s *Islands in the West* has its most value when it simply identifies the parts of each transmarine realm and notes how they evolved in their own cultural context over time. It is at its most powerful when it pays attention to the localization of these myths: learning that a conflict over an Icelandic valley identified as one of these mythical realms killed sixteen Norse settlers in c. 900 underscores the importance of culture, which is something that no historical analysis can really explain.

DAVID JAMES GRIFFITHS, *Canberra, ACT*

**Goodman, Anthony, *Joan, the Fair Maid of Kent: A Fourteenth-Century Princess and Her World*, Woodbridge, Boydell Press, 2017; hardback; pp. 270; 8 b/w illustrations; R.R.P. £25.00; ISBN 9781783271764.**

In *Joan, the Fair Maid of Kent*, we have another historical female personage who has, up until recently, been paid scant attention by scholars; an unsurprising

occurrence given the past marginalization of female authority figures in medieval studies. Joan was a king's mother, her son being Richard II (r. 1377–1399). She was not, however, a crowned queen consort, since her husband, Edward the Black Prince, eldest son of Edward III (r. 1327–1377), predeceased his father. What evidence and scholarship exists in relation to Joan indicates that she figured as a person of some note at the royal court and lived through some tumultuous events including the 1381 rebellion. There was also more than a whiff of scandal surrounding her two unconventional marriages; the first to a young and initially poor and obscure knight, Sir Thomas Holand, and her second marriage to her cousin, the Black Prince, neither of which was an arranged marriage as was the custom of the day. There was also a bigamous marriage made with William Montague, heir to the Earl of Salisbury, while she was secretly married to Holand. All of which make compelling reasons why a study of Joan's life and the circumstances she lived in should be of interest, not only to gender scholars but also to political historians interested in late Plantagenet politics.

This biography of Joan is the late Professor Anthony Goodman's last published work and was prepared for publication by his widow, Jackie Goodman. Professor Goodman observed that the destruction of Joan's tomb during the Reformation, leaving no physical monuments to remind us of her, may explain the paucity of study of her life. As such, this book, together with another recently published biography of Joan by Penny Lawne (Amberley Publishing, 2016), present a welcome opportunity for both the medieval scholar and the uninitiated public to acquaint themselves with a remarkable medieval princess. It is arranged chronologically and traces the princess's life from birth to death, generally dividing the chapters according to domestic periods in her life including her time with Holand, the period spent as Princess of Wales and Aquitaine, and as the king's mother.

Despite the lack of substantial primary sources directly related to Joan of Kent, Goodman is able to draw upon a broad range of peripheral sources to fill out the context and background of her life, the people among whom she lived, and the society in which she dwelt. In many of the chapters there is a significant amount of space devoted to exploring the political and social contexts of Joan's world. In common with many biographies, there is a certain amount of conjecture applied where sources fail, but far from detracting from the book, it serves as testament to Goodman's considerable experience in creating for his readers a sense of history, relevance, and the timeless appeal of this fourteenth-century noblewoman.

Goodman presents Joan as a new medieval woman who, while conforming in most ways to the expectations and conventions of the time, found a way to exercise a degree of independence. For him, her life represents the opening of possibilities for women as a result of gradually changing attitudes towards their gender that were beginning to surface in such things as rules for Christian living. The considerable focus on the domestic aspects of Joan's story may well be to the liking of those more interested in attributing romantic motivations to her life

story. Yet it does not do complete justice to a woman who surely was aware of her worth, not only in aesthetic but also in social terms. There are also hints of more complicated facets to Joan's personality and character. Her close association with the likes of Sir Lewis Clifford, a known Lollard knight who was 'notorious for his unorthodox religious devotion' (p. 126), and her defence, in 1377–78, of John Wycliff, the leader of the Lollard movement, point at the very least to an interest in unorthodox religious views. This aspect of Joan's life deserves more extensive discussion than Goodman's casual dismissal of her actions as favours for her kinsman, John of Gaunt.

Nonetheless, this book is an important contribution towards a further redressing of a gender imbalance in studies of medieval public figures. Lay readers will revel in the love stories implicitly referred to in discussions of the lady's marriages. Yet scholars too, both of medieval and gender studies, will rejoice in the illumination of the life of an almost-queen, one that was multi-faceted and not in the least one-dimensional. Barring her marital lives, that Joan otherwise appears to have led a conventional life should not diminish our interest in her. On the contrary, this book presents many aspects in her life that point to additional possibilities of future rewarding scholarship.

MICHELE SEAH, *University of Newcastle*

**Jones, Chris, Christopher Thomson, Maree Shiota, Elisabeth Rolston, Thandi Parker, and Jennifer Middendorf, eds, *The Canterbury Roll – A Digital Edition*, December 2017, <<http://www.canterbury.ac.nz/canterburyroll>>, Christchurch, Canterbury University Press; ISBN 9781988503073.**

Dr Chris Jones has been a dynamic figure in New Zealand for several years. Based at the University of Canterbury, he has done much to draw our attention to collections and resources to be found among the holdings at Canterbury and in other universities in New Zealand, editing a book on the *Treasures of the University of Canterbury Library* (Canterbury University Press, 2011) and guest-editing a special issue of *Parergon* on pre-modern items in New Zealand collections in 2015. In this work, he has turned his attention to one of the treasures of the Canterbury collection, in this case the Canterbury Roll, now listed as MS 1, and once known as the 'Maude' Roll. He has recruited a team to help him including both undergraduate and postgraduate students, as well as Professor Haida Liang and Dr Natasha Hodgson from Nottingham Trent University, and Dr Christopher Thomson from Canterbury, who have helped with the digitization of the manuscript and the design of the website.

The work demonstrates how the manuscript's digital presence can be a useful teaching tool. Jones lists the various *fora* where he and his collaborators have presented the work. These include public lectures, a radio interview, and a symposium. He also includes details for those undergraduates and postgraduates who might want to get involved. Corrections sent in by academics and others

outside Canterbury have been made available, as is a PDF file of the 1919 study of the manuscript by Arnold Wall, then Professor of English at Canterbury University College. The long process of production also suits the format that this manuscript now inhabits, as manuscripts, like websites, were often adapted to changing circumstances.

It is an exemplary collection that comes complete with a substantial bibliography both on the manuscript itself and on the discussion of genealogies in recent scholarship. While not exhaustive, it does provide much that is required for advanced study. Most important for this research is the evidence of the digitized manuscript itself. The only qualm that I have about the information available is that not all of the material record is provided, such as how many membranes (separate sections of parchment) make up the roll and, given the details provided, what is on each membrane. Also, to be really picky, did the compilers of the roll use good quality parchment for the patrons, which would perhaps indicate more about the original audience? Margaret Manion, Vera F. Vines, and Christopher de Hamel, in their *Medieval and Renaissance Manuscripts in New Zealand Collections* (Thames and Hudson, 1981), indicate that there were six membranes. As often seems to be the case, there are inconsistencies between the length and width of the measurements in this book and on the website. This is in part because medieval material is rarely neatly packaged into tidy units as we modern scholars would like. There is, however, a sizeable difference in the lengths provided in the two texts. A minor niggle: it is customary in manuscript studies to list the order of measurement by length and width rather than the reverse. One of the advantages of this type of web publication is that any changes or corrections that the editor and his team might want to make are easily done, if the criticisms are seen as useful.

In terms of its value as history, the Canterbury Roll does demonstrate a particularly complicated and fascinating time in English history, the so-called War of the Roses. It was produced between about 1429 and 1485 and both the Lancastrian and Yorkist arguments are included. It is possible that the roll might have been produced for patrons who were aligned to one group or another, or simply wanted to understand what was happening. The romantic tale of the Maude family, itself owning the roll from its creation, as laid out in Wall's account, is not terribly helpful as people from Yorkshire were not necessarily more supportive of the Dukes of York than others, as support for the duchy had less to do with geography than with familial allegiances. It tells us more about family stories than about historical facts, although these can also be useful in fleshing out the myths families construct about their places of origin and why they came to New Zealand.

This is an excellent resource and a demonstration of the kinds of helpful documentation that digitization can provide. It does provide a model for other universities and libraries that have such medieval material that would otherwise not be accessible to the non-professional audience, who might find themselves excluded from examining the work. It is even a challenge to others. I would

love to see similar work being done in Wellington for example, where there is a fascinating Boethius music manuscript in the Alexander Turnbull Library.

JUDITH COLLARD, *University of Otago*

**Jordan**, William Chester, and Jenna Rebecca **Phillips**, eds, *The Capetian Century, 1214–1314* (Cultural Encounters in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages, 22), Turnhout, Brepols, 2017; hardback; pp. xvi, 362; 27 b/w, 5 colour illustrations, 1 map; R. R. P. €100.00; ISBN 9782503567181.

This collection originates in a conference held at Princeton in 2014 to mark two anniversaries in French history: the famous Battle of Bouvines and the death, a century later, of King Philip IV. As William Chester Jordan explains, the intention of the volume's four sections is 'fleshing out' the existing narrative alongside further 'interrogation' of what has been labelled by some the *âge d'or capétien* (pp. xi–xii).

The first section, 'Royal Patronage and Expressions of Kingship', begins with William Courtenay's useful overview of royal relations with the University of Paris. M. Cecilia Gaposchkin subsequently offers a masterclass in the use of what can appear unpromising source material. Her analysis of moralized Bibles produced in royal circles provides convincing insights into Capetian conceptions of kingship in the 1220s–30s, a period lacking 'mirrors for princes' literature. Gaposchkin establishes these Bibles 'promoted an ideal of Augustinian kingship, specific to the challenges of the early part of the thirteenth century, and informed by ecclesiastical priorities' (p. 77). Her contribution sits alongside Anne Lester's significant re-evaluation of the continuing importance of the Cistercian order to the Capetian dynasty, and Sean Field's equally illuminating exploration of the parallel development of the office of king's confessor and the role of inquisitor.

Xavier Héлары's examination of the reasons why French nobles chose to participate in the military campaigns of the later Capetians, which opens 'Power and its Representation', is notable for being one of few essays in the volume that takes us beyond the royal court and its immediate Parisian environs. Héлары's conclusions generally convince, although his view that the nobility lost its taste for holy war remains open to debate. Brigitte Bedos-Rezak's analysis of William of Auvergne's understanding of seals provides a valuable new perspective on the thought of an under-studied mid-century figure. It rewards perseverance by those otherwise put off by the trappings of postmodernism. By contrast, Hagar Barak's potentially interesting examination of 'The Managerial Revolution of the Thirteenth Century' is marred by its handling of the sources, particularly the baronial complaint of 1246. The latter was directed at ecclesiastical interference specifically; it should not be read as an indication of baronial resentment of lawyers and bureaucrats in general (p. 146).

Julien Théry-Astruc's analysis of William de Nogaret's key role in the recasting of French kingship in religious terms forms a magisterial centrepiece to the book's third section. In an expanded translation of his 2012 article,

Théry-Astruc convincingly argues that the Bernard Saisset affair of 1301 was a ‘breakthrough’ moment (p. 242) that shaped both the attack on Boniface VIII and the trial of the Templars. Elizabeth Brown’s own assessment of Philip IV’s ministers similarly reflects a mastery of the sources. Like Élisabeth Lalou on Robert Fawtier’s contribution to the history of Philip’s reign, Brown’s reflections on the mid-twentieth-century giants of Capetian historiography underlines that ‘[t]hey wrote the works that shape the questions we investigate and that structure the dimensions and nature of the quest in which we are engaged’ (p. 185). This draws our attention to one of this volume’s lacunae: it does not take the opportunity to reflect more deeply on what Jordan labels the ‘grand narrative’ (p. xi) that is the legacy of historians such as Fawtier and Joseph Strayer.

In the final section, ‘Crusaders and Crusading Orders’, Jochen Burgtorf offers an intriguing reconstruction of the genealogy of a crusading family that originated in the Auvergne, providing a second perspective from beyond the court. However, like Helen Nicholson’s overview of the fate of the Templars post-trial, this essay seems, at best, tangential to the volume’s theme. Paul Crawford’s meticulous and thoroughly convincing re-evaluation of Renaud of Châtillon would, however, definitely be more at home in a collection of essays on twelfth-century crusading. The latter’s notional readership should feel short-changed; they have missed out on a stimulating read.

Despite the occasional misstep, true of any collection, Jordan’s hope that this volume will offer new insights into established lines of enquiry is certainly fulfilled. The topics covered are, without doubt, important ones. That they continue to hold our attention is testimony to the genius of Strayer, Fawtier, and the other masters—including the late John Baldwin—who continue to shape our approach to the period. Yet, what is not explored is equally interesting. Neither architecture, chronicles, nor literature (vernacular or otherwise) feature greatly in the sources employed. There is no consideration of Capetian queenship, to pick just one example. With the exception of Hélyar, there is notably little reflection on how the growth of royal authority was received—and indeed perceived—by those beyond Paris. The king and his government remain the loudest voice in the choir. Quieter voices have certainly been revealed in recent decades, not least by Jordan himself. But this Capetian century is not their century; it remains the king’s.

CHRIS JONES, *University of Canterbury*

**Lambert**, Peter, and Björn Weiler, eds, *How the Past was Used: Historical Cultures, c. 750–2000*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2017; hardback; pp. 330; 11 b/w illustrations; R.R.P. £90.00; ISBN 9780197266120.

The pessimistic view of the manipulation of history might well be called the 1984 approach—that the story is re-written on a daily basis to create the image necessary for the moment. Editors Pater Lambert and Björn Weiler do not see changes as being as rapid as in this approach, but their introduction (p. 28) describes history as fragile, fraught, and fragmented. And this valuable volume, the result of many

years of discussion and conferences, brings together for comparison some of the distinctive approaches of various cultures to the formation and maintenance of their past. In many places, the concept of historical truth—as several of the contributors stress—was constructed in a way that was quite dissimilar to present-day academic belief. Dimitri Kastritsis, in analysing Ottoman narratives of the late fifteenth century, concludes that ‘historical memory was intimately intertwined with legends and apocalyptic expectations’ (p. 139). It was also, as Peter Lambert shows in his study of the way the Third Reich was used in the interwar period, a place where current debates that could not be directly treated, could be maintained as a form of historical fiction.

Two chapters that consider alternative forms of establishing history in the minds of the people are critical to the collection. Matthew Phillips underlines the way in which ‘traditional’ practices—in this case Thailand’s royal barge processions that had been central from at least the sixteenth century—were revived and regenerated in the Cold War period to fulfil a present-day purpose of endorsing the legitimacy of the existing government of the state and Thai identity. This overturned the Thai past created in the interwar period. Richard Rathbone’s skilful unravelling of the significance of the yam festival in the ancient state of Ashante (now in Ghana) makes clear the historic manner in which it embodies ‘particular and partisan’ (p. 287) aspects of the former empire of Ghana, its culture and its institutions. It shows a re-statement of the past quite different from the usual employment of a literary record.

Also different were many approaches in India, internally diverse with its many languages and religions. Allison Busch’s account of the neglected Hindi vernacular poetry of the early modern period—a genre that cannot be usefully classified in modern divisions as either literature or history but as the work of poet-historians—shows us the construction of a past that established normative emotions and the rules of honour, creating a community standard with real-life consequences. History was essential to that present.

These distinctive pivots of memory which come from less familiar places give the chapters that re-examine forms of written presentation better known to Westerners a new viewpoint. The familiar trope that audience participation, which is central to an active performance, is absent from a narrative written and perhaps read aloud to groups of people, is examined afresh by Haki Antonsson in his chapter on the Norse sagas. Björn Weiler presents, through a careful examination of Matthew Paris’s *Lives of the Two Offas*, a new approach to the major type of narrative sources of medieval European history, the monastic chronicle. Not only is their purpose moral and ethical, it is also concerned with contemporary relevance to the institution promoting them.

How history was legally defined and used in Spain in the beginning of the seventeenth century is revealed in a lawsuit examined by Richard Kagan. The position of the royal chronicler, Herrera, under attack for defaming the ancestor of a prominent aristocrat, uncovers exactly what was at issue, which was truth, the public good, and a guide to action.

Western historians have found the approach of Chinese professional historians and scholars writing since late antiquity problematic: their work was employed to shape particular ideas of cycles amongst parts at least of the population, so that the bad history could be jettisoned or absorbed into an undisputed cyclical framework. Professor Barrett's approach to this constructed continuity shows how the changes of Marxism have nevertheless left the idea of correct succession alive.

The authors, in their conclusion, look to future developments in the re-examination of the use of the past in a search for understanding of areas previously whitewashed or ignored, such as the role of women and the ways in which culture was transferred from one place to another. We can only hope that such promising research is undertaken and that it sheds light on the structure of society in different parts of the world's divided past.

SYBIL M. JACK, *The University of Sydney*

**Lewis, Rhodri**, *Hamlet and the Vision of Darkness*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2017; hardback; pp. 392; 11 b/w illustrations; R.R.P. US\$39.95, £32.95; ISBN 9780691166841.

In this monograph on *Hamlet*, we are treated to a new and startling perspective on a familiar subject. Rhodri Lewis begins with a nod to Maria de Grazia's insistence that in the field of *Hamlet* studies it is necessary that we start again and rethink the approaches that have shaped so much of the critical body to date. Lewis supports his ground-breaking theories with a critical approach that is both thorough and systematic. His conclusions are provocative but there is a considerable weight of research behind each statement, which gives his readers food for thought and an opportunity for fruitful counter-argument. In this spirit, Lewis advocates exploring the 'formal, cultural, intellectual, and historical' (p. 6) aspects surrounding the play in order to do it justice.

The first two chapters on humanism and hunting set up an argument based on the premise that Shakespeare 'came to find humanist philosophy deficient in the face of human experience as he observed it' (p. 26). Lewis deftly demonstrates the importance of the hunt in *Hamlet*, arguing that it serves as a tool for Shakespeare to demonstrate the shortcomings of humankind. Cicero exemplified the negativity associated with *astutia* and *calliditas* by means of hunting metaphors, which Shakespeare utilized and expanded to suggest that cunning and self-interest are the stock-in-trade of human affairs. By discussing these ideas, Lewis is able to demonstrate that Hamlet is, therefore, a character who is alienated not only from the world around him but also from himself.

The next three chapters focus on Hamlet as historian, as poet, and as philosopher. In Chapter 3 Lewis harnesses the recent critical turn to memory and its importance to illustrate how remembering can be linked to the discourse of reason. As the latter is synonymous with the morally responsible human agent, Lewis shows how we can reconsider Hamlet's thoughts on the memory of his father. Lewis concludes that Hamlet is not impeded by excess of remembrance



when it comes to enacting revenge, but rather he does not remember his father as he and the Ghost think he should. The memory of his father does not ever have enough force to motivate revenge, explaining his hesitation. In this paradigm, Hamlet, Fortinbras, and Laertes, while supposedly honouring memories of their dead fathers, are in reality remembering themselves and their own interests. Turning to poetry, Lewis asserts that Shakespeare uses *Hamlet* as a vehicle to illustrate the inadequacies of neoclassical poetics current in the early modern period. He demonstrates that Hamlet's discussions on *The Mousetrap* serve to underscore the character's lack of emotional investment in Old Hamlet's demise. Within this chapter Lewis is at pains to demonstrate that *Hamlet* is not concerned with creating an illusion of reality; rather, through the inset of *The Murder of Gonzago*, we are shown a world that is used to understanding its experience through different sorts of fiction.

In Chapter 5, Lewis argues that Hamlet is not the philosopher and critical thinker that many academic writers believe him to be. Instead Lewis posits that Hamlet is a 'thinker of unrelenting superficiality, confusion, and pious self-deceit' (p. 238). With regard to that most iconic Shakespearean soliloquy, 'to be or not to be', Lewis asserts that the diversity of interpretations is predicated on its jumbled confusion of superficial humanism. Lewis points out that this soliloquy is, in fact, a *quaestio*, a subject of contention in a rhetorical debate that in philosophical terms should be connected to a real-world problem. Lewis effectively argues that, although Hamlet regards himself as a philosopher, his thoughts are 'the ill-arranged and ill-digested harvest of his bookish education' (p. 277). The question of providence comes under scrutiny as Lewis adroitly reveals it as a tool for Hamlet to hide his lack of concern over the murder of Polonius. Lewis concludes that, '[f]or Shakespeare, fortune and fate are different manifestations of the same phenomenon: the human need to believe that the apparent randomness of things and events is shaped by some kind of pattern or meaning, and, concomitantly, the tendency to diminish or deny the function of human agency in making things the way they are' (p. 303).

Any disquiet felt by a reader of this work may be not because the statements are provocative and outrageous, but more because of an outrage felt in response to a perceived undermining of dearly held notions of Shakespeare's humanist leanings. Lewis closes his work by defending himself against those critics who might think he is indeed describing *Hamlet* as a work of nihilism, asserting that he is rather demonstrating 'the extraordinary pains that Shakespeare took to represent the cultural world of humanism as fundamentally indifferent to things as they really are' (p. 309). His argument certainly convinced this reader.

BRÍD PHILLIPS, *The University of Western Australia*

**Loud**, Graham A., and **Martial Staub**, eds, *The Making of Medieval History*, Woodbridge and Rochester, York Medieval Press/Boydell Press, 2017; paperback; pp. 256; 30 b/w illustrations, R.R.P. £25.00; ISBN 9781903153703.

Editors Graham A. Loud and Martial Staub have excelled themselves in producing a collection of articles that is in many ways more than the sum of its parts. The eleven essays included in the collection range from the arcane to the thematic, grouped in five parts examining the categorization of the medieval period, identity, nationalism, land and frontiers, and religious history. As the introduction by the editors states, ‘if we do not study the Middle Ages, and try to understand and explain it in as unbiased a way we can, then we leave the field open to those who abuse and exploit the past to justify modern injustice’ (p. 3).

More specifically, the collection seeks to explore the issues and particulars of historiography: to take stock, if only partially, of the oppositional framing of medieval history—as compared to the modern era, with the stereotypical pairs of religious versus rational, feudal versus capitalist, and so on—and the changes in historiography that have led to current thinking in medieval history. All too often popular medievalism finds the roots of modern institutions such as liberal democracy or market forces in the emerging merchant class, struggles between the Church and kings, and the Magna Carta, but this collection is a timely reminder that teleological history is an intellectual dead end.

The first part of the collection, entitled ‘Imagining/Inventing the Middle Ages’, consists of two essays, by Dame Janet Nelson and Professor Emeritus Ian Wood. It is probably at this point in the collection where its ambitions are at its strongest. Nelson’s piece is an overview of changes in the techniques of history over the past few decades, and how new understandings of economic history, better appreciation of climatic evidence, and evidence of other physical impacts such as plague, has led to rethinking of medieval history and a particular focus on cross-disciplinary projects such as the studies of diaspora populations and the transfer of ideas. Nelson also details an example of how rethinking inside the discipline has changed her own practice in researching and teaching Charlemagne and Carolingian history—there is a solid undercurrent exhorting other historians to be just as reflective about the ways in which they *do* history. And Professor Wood’s essay adds to this by exploring how retellings of the late antique and early medieval past were appropriated across a broad variety of historical and literary contexts in Western Europe around the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

The next part, ‘Constructing a European Identity’, is equally successful. The two contributions, by Patrick Geary and Michael Borgolte, explore the changing nature of ethnic identities, with Geary providing a sound overview on the transformation from the Roman populace, with its division between citizens and barbarians, into a Europe of nations, and how this has been seen by historians over the last two centuries. Borgolte shows how twentieth-century historiography, and recent ‘global’ European histories, are complicated by communities of religion

and permeated by a divide in thinking between historians resident in Eastern Europe and those in Germany and the West.

The third section of the collection is the most arcane: three essays, by Bastian Schlüter, Joep Leerssen, and Bernhard Junsen, each explore elements of the Carolingian and Holy Roman legacy, from the use of Staufer imagery in museum and ceremonial contexts to the ideological basis of the imagery generated through the restoration of medieval buildings in the nineteenth century, and the contrasting illustrated depictions of Charlemagne in school textbooks in France and Germany. Each of these articles relies on close interpretation of material evidence: the intersection of imagery and architecture, the use of wood engravings, or the collectible picture cards presented with chocolates. Some of the arguments boil down to observations on whether Charlemagne is portrayed with a moustache (in German depictions) or a beard (in French). While not explicitly addressed in the essays, analysing and interpreting imagery, architecture, and space are specialized fields of history. The third section therefore calls to mind the difficulties involved in the production of historical analysis.

The fourth section on ‘Land and Frontiers’ again explores nationalism from a perspective of creating and making places across European history, with a particular focus on the differences that emerge between Slavic and Germanic notions of the past. The final section considers the inevitable gulf between modern and medieval in our conceptions of religious life, and raises—but does not answer—the question of whether any recent history of the era can truly approach the period on its own terms.

Overall, the collection sets up much promise in its introduction, aiming ultimately to explore ‘the unsettled relationship between the Middle Ages and our present’ (p. 10). By examining the changes in historiography and in technique, *The Making of Medieval History* acts as a primer for further discussions about the role, place, and limitations of medieval history, and should be required reading for undergraduates. It raises more questions than it answers: which is probably the hallmark of any good collection.

DAVID JAMES GRIFFITHS, *Canberra, ACT*

**Matus**, Zachary A., *Franciscans and the Elixir of Life: Religion and Science in the Later Middle Ages* (The Middle Ages Series), Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2017; hardback; pp. 216; 2 b/w illustrations; R.R.P. US\$59.95, £50.00; ISBN 9780812249217.

Recognition that medieval alchemy was more than just a dream of transmuting metals has resulted in an upsurge of academic interest in the subject in recent years, with new information being discovered and published in multiple-language specialist literature. This, by putting alchemy in a wider intellectual, social, philosophical, technological, religious, and experimental context, has revised ideas about its position in the development of science and philosophy and its role in medieval culture. Zachary Matus, in this work that is a revision of his doctoral

thesis, considers one aspect of the medieval attitude to alchemy—its relationship to the material world—, through the works of three particular Franciscans. Roger Bacon and John of Rupescissa are the focus of many other studies, although his third friar—Vitalis of Furno—has been less frequently considered.

The recent historical research on alchemy is divided into conflicting historiographical approaches depending on the background of the historian. Matus belongs to the mainly Catholic group, which sees the Church and theology as the key factor in comprehending the philosophers' understanding of the topic. He is also concerned to demonstrate how the particular religious morality of the Franciscans ties into their 'scientific' ideas. He seeks to show how these friars' thinking about the nature and role of God in the world explains their overall incorporation of ideas about the matter that God created: how it can be manipulated, and its potential for regeneration in a period where they, like many philosophers, were expecting the imminent arrival of the apocalypse. The specificity of Matus's approach can be determined by comparing his views on the interplay of philosophy, theology, and alchemy in Bacon and Rupescissa with those of Athanasios Rinotas.

The friars were concerned with medicine, hoping to produce a panacea for all ills. They drew on different approaches for their analysis, mainly from the Islamic treatises they had available. Matus, however, is not concerned with the practical details of their work and the medicinal products they created but with the way in which the quintessence, the elixir of life, in philosophical reasoning related to the essential goodness of creation.

In many ways, and although there are some vital insights, for the non-specialist this is a frustrating book. Indeed, Matus has chosen not to provide a chronological introductory setting, as a context against which his interpretation of these three individuals' approaches can be estimated. Instead, each idea is housed in its own partial account, which is chronologically confusing and often repetitive. It is not assisted by his preference for technical language and unfamiliar, newly defined terms such as 'subjunctive science', which is a method of looking at rituals.

In providing a setting for his chosen friars, Matus has to refer to their relationship with other Franciscans, in particular to Joachim of Fiore, Peter John Olivi, and Nicholas of Lyra, although Alexander Minorita and Peter Auriol are apparently ignored. Given the complexities of the internal divisions of the Order, this does not always clarify the issue at hand since there is no overall account of the intellectual development of Franciscan thought.

Matus offers no explanation of what he chooses to include or omit, so that his omission of some aspects of thought normally seen as fundamental to the ideas of one of his subjects seems surprising. In discussing ritual as a formative part of Bacon's philosophy, for instance, Matus does not discuss the function of music in Bacon's thought, although this has usually been seen as critical to his concept of the Mass and the liturgy, and their function as part of human penitence.

This is a work for specialists which forms part of a substantial recent output of publications on abstruse aspects of the subject. It cannot be recommended for general reading, particularly as it is poorly proofread and badly indexed, but it raises some interesting questions about considerations of magic and necromancy that the author will doubtless develop later.

SYBIL M. JACK, *The University of Sydney*

**McDermott**, Ryan, *Tropologies: Ethics and Invention in England, c. 1350–1600*, Notre Dame, University of Notre Dame Press, 2016; paperback; pp. 446; 8 b/w illustrations; R.R.P. US\$45.00; ISBN 9780268035402.

This fascinating book investigates the use of the tropological mode of reading in a range of texts, mostly from the late medieval period. Tropology is that mode of exegetical reading that seeks to transform Christian doctrine into the practices of the reader's own life, as distinguished from allegorical reading—which seeks to explicate doctrine—and anagogical reading—which seeks the final fulfilment of doctrine in the union of the soul with God. As Ryan McDermott puts it, tropology 'is a practice by which readers are led by the hand [...] from history through doctrine (the allegorical sense) to action, converting the perverted will in the process, and lighting the path to the future consummation of the good (the anagogical sense)' (p. 3). As the author makes clear, tropology is an everyday, non-academic mode of reading that translates reading into ethical practice and is therefore process-based and unending. He also notes that, as he uses the term, it extends far beyond exegetical discourse and into 'a range of interpretive and inventive practices that concern the conversion of words into works' (p. 21). Because tropology is centrally concerned with this conversion of words into works, he argues, it is never simply interpretative, but also always inventive and productive of new literature. Challenging periodization, McDermott shows considerable continuity between medieval and early modern engagements with tropology.

After a short introduction, McDermott's book begins by using William Langland's *Piers Plowman* as the basis for his chapter explicating 'Tropological Theory'. As he points out, tropology is ideal for thinking about what medieval literature does with Scripture, acting as a mode of invention as it carries out the biblical injunction to turn words into works of love in the world. Literature, in fact, becomes itself a form of tropological action as it actively reworks Scripture into a new form. Chapter 2, 'How to Invent History', turns to the poem *Patience* and the *Glossa ordinaria* to discuss tropology in terms of ethics. Here McDermott argues that *Patience* demonstrates how the literal and the allegorical are complementary to one another rather than opposed, and, in *Patience*'s interweaving of the two, readers can see how the literal always already contains the allegorical within it.

Chapters 3 and 4 both focus on *Piers Plowman* again. In Chapter 3, McDermott suggests that rhetorical readings have obscured the ways in which invention can operate tropologically. Whereas traditional rhetorical theory views

imitation and invention as practices of rivalry, tropological imitation or invention is non-competitive, seeking rather to fulfil the promise of the scriptural source rather than to replace or challenge it. In Chapter 4, McDermott focuses on the middle part of *Piers Plowman* to show how this section develops a tropological commentary on Scripture that characterizes the virtuous life as one lived in a constant cycling through the sacraments of penance and Eucharist. This chapter focuses on the concept of penitential satisfaction as the means by which failure can be redeemed; tropological intention, McDermott argues, is the means by which Protestant writers can continue to engage with satisfaction even after the elimination of penance.

Chapter 5, ‘Topology Reformed’, moves us into Reformation territory to highlight how, in spite of the general assumption that Reformation means a turn to the literal at the expense of spiritual exegesis, tropological readings assume a definite prominence in this period—some in continuation of older traditions, and some breaking with traditional theological readings of Scripture. Examining writings by Calvin, Luther, More, Tyndale, Erasmus, Udall, Bucer, and the Protestant near-martyr John Careless, McDermott shows how his focus on topology can uncover previously unnoticed continuities between Protestant and more traditional modes of religious exegesis. Chapter 6 focuses on the discourse of optics and mirrors in the York Doomsday Pageant, an annual event held up until 1569. McDermott points out that the York play reverses the perspective so that its spectators find themselves the ones under Christ’s gaze as he comes to judge the living and the dead, and uses this insight to argue that, in the York play, the Eucharist becomes a kind of mirror that challenges a works-based system of salvation.

A brief conclusion ends this very effective book by shedding light on how tropological readings crop up in internet scriptural chat boards as an illustration of topology’s nature as an ongoing practice of vernacular exegesis. I recommend this book highly, especially to those interested in historical continuities between the medieval and early modern periods, and to those interested in alternatives to rhetorical methods of thinking about the link between words and actions.

JENNIFER CLEMENT, *The University of Queensland*

**Mulder-Bakker, Anneke B.**, *The Dedicated Spiritual Life of Upper Rhine Noble Women: A Study and Translation of a Fourteenth-Century Spiritual Biography of Gertrude Rickeldey of Ortenberg and Heilke of Staufenberg* (Sanctimoniales, 2), Turnhout, Brepols, 2017; hardback; pp. xiv, 271; 1 b/w illustration; R.R.P. €80.00; ISBN 9782503574318.

The major part of this book consists of a biography of Lady Gertrude Rickeldey of Ortenburg written by an anonymous woman who knew her. The original was written in Middle High German and it is here translated into English. The biography emphasizes the saintliness of Gertrude’s life, and seems to have been intended as an exemplar that other religiously inclined people might be guided or

influenced by. The main content of the biography deals with Gertrude's spiritual development from early widowhood, which occurred in 1301, up until close to her death in 1335. This is a considerable time span and an important focus of the biography is the different spiritual stages that Gertrude went through during this period.

The book also features a lengthy introduction by Anneke Mulder-Bakker. It serves the useful purpose of setting the book in its place and time. For example, it is made clear what the aspirations and customs of the German upper-class were, and how religious values and practices were at that time spreading among lay people, especially among lay women. It also provides an overview of the circumstances of Gertrude's life, which are present but a little hard to pick out of the biography.

A number of books were written by their contemporaries about medieval people regarded as holy or saintly. In accordance with the traditions of this writing, the author repeatedly emphasizes that Gertrude was humble, willing to take advice from others, especially with regard to moderating her own self-discipline and austerity, often serene (especially in the latter part of her life), conventional in belief, caring for the poor, and averse to interpersonal disputes of any kind. Such characteristics were those commonly looked for in the later Middle Ages to discern the nature of the spirit; that is, to determine whether an individual really did have some personal contact with God or a saint, rather than being misled by a devil or simply deceived in some human way. It was, for example, the approach of Wendy Love Anderson in *The Discernment of Spirits: Assessing Visions and Visionaries in the Late Middle Ages* (Mohr Siebeck, 2011).

During virtually the whole period of Gertrude's widowhood and religious life, she lived together with a companion, Heilke of Stauffenberg. Heilke moderated some of Gertrude's more extreme religious impulses, ensured she ate enough to keep reasonable health, and perhaps kept her in the world. 'Had Gertrude not had Heilke, she would have often been mocked and she might even have lost her mind' (p. 131). Although the biography is centred on Gertrude as the chief religious figure, Heilke is frequently mentioned as protecting and grounding her, often employing a good deal of wisdom in the process. This makes the book rather unusual. It was quite normal, indeed expected, that very spiritually oriented medieval people should be advised by those whose foothold in everyday reality was less tenuous than theirs, but we do not often hear much about the advisor's point of view or how they went about the task. In part this is because many of them were bound by the rules of the confessional. But here Heilke is a character in her own right, and though this reader at least was left thinking hers was often a thankless task, it was enlightening and rewarding to read of the intelligence and devotion she brought to it.

I conclude with an observation which is far from original. I, like others so far as I can tell (Mulder-Bakker, Heilke, the original biographer), had difficulty in coming to grips with the central theme of Gertrude's life. This life was largely

interior but she apparently manages to find considerable, often seemingly rapturous, reward from her spiritual experiences. As an academic psychologist, I find it difficult to understand not only the central, spiritual theme of the book, but also its psychological milieu. For example, externally there is little to observe in her life other than a gradual increase of personal austerity, yet Gertrude seems to have followed a discernible spiritual path that others in her time seem also to have travelled (pp. 239–43). In our own day, it is generally thought good to have self-esteem. In Gertrude's, religiously oriented people held exactly the opposite view. In the final analysis then I found the book valuable because it describes a psychological world that to me is often quite alien.

SIMON KEMP, *University of Canterbury*

**Nawrocki**, François, *L'Amiral Claude d'Annebault, conseiller favori de François I<sup>er</sup>* (Bibliothèque d'histoire de la Renaissance, 7), Paris, Classiques Garnier, 2015; paperback; pp. 763; 12 b/w illustrations; R.R.P. €67.00; ISBN 9782812431678.

How did an individual rise from a relatively little-known Norman family to manage the government of the French kingdom for the last four years of François I's reign? François Nawrocki, building upon the work of his doctoral thesis, sets out to uncover the network of resources that Claude d'Annebault drew upon to sustain a lengthy career at the heart of French power. Not much has been written on this rather forgotten figure, perhaps partly because uncovering his life's work requires reconstruction of sources widely distributed across European archives, and much of his own correspondence is no longer extant.

The courtly service system of this period depended on personal relations with a monarch and allowed for the development of forms of friendship and intimacy forged by proximity and shared purpose (that is, the king's). Despite the use of the term in the work's title, Nawrocki warns that 'favourite' suggests a royal capriciousness to courtly appointments that does not reflect the reciprocal nature of this service relationship.

D'Annebault's military prowess guided much of his political trajectory, right through to his recall to Henri II's service just before his death in 1552. His career coincided with the intensive military focus of a French court heavily invested in the Italian Wars, which pitted successive monarchs against Charles V. Even its failures aided d'Annebault's rise. The disastrous losses of the French elite at Pavia in 1525, for example, created early access to power for a crop of counsellors in the orbit of Anne de Montmorency, d'Annebault among them. Administrative, diplomatic, and military roles first in Normandy and then in Piedmont during the 1530s solidified his reputation as a capable and reliable official, eventually rising to leading status alongside Montmorency and Philippe de Chabot, and membership of the elite French order of St Michael. Montmorency's exile, then Cabot's death in 1543, left d'Annebault the most powerful male counsellor to serve François I, a



position he maintained until 1547, working alongside François de Tournon and the king's mistress, Anne de Pisseleu.

By the end of his reign, François I had vested in d'Annebault more power than in any other councillor. Nawrocki attempts to provide some measure of the personal qualities of the man whom the king apparently trusted so deeply and for so long. He cites contemporary accounts that speak to d'Annebault's intelligence, but Nawrocki's own investigation of his education, epistolary expression, and literary commitment suggests functionality rather than deep intellectual engagement of the kind displayed by Guillaume du Bellay or Montmorency. His Catholic religious practices were traditional, with little evidence that he mobilized his position to advance his beliefs, as his son would later do more explicitly in alignment with the Guise family. While he promoted family members and developed his own domains during his time at the height of power, neither contemporary nor historical reports suggest a reputation for the naked ambition that other favourites of the king evidently displayed. Indeed, d'Annebault mobilized his own financial resources to serve the king, although it was an investment returned with interest.

Nawrocki argues in conclusion that d'Annebault's example demonstrates the series of networks and resources that sustained the royal system of service. Royal favour, he maintains, was a collective enterprise (p. 685) that entailed not only d'Annebault but a wide range of family members, friends, supporters, and retainers. And as such, when d'Annebault fell from grace at the commencement of Henri II's reign, and his personnel moved to make new alliances in the Guise network, their actions also brought about the possibility of his own re-entry back into royal favour soon after.

After seven hundred pages of biography, it still seems challenging to quite put a finger on d'Annebault's precise qualities. He was perhaps, to some extent, the right man at the right time. Clearly, he and François I hit it off at a personal level and d'Annebault appears to have shared the king's interests in war, weaponry, hunting, and the basic elements of the intellectual trends of the day without being overly learned. His methods of sustaining power through a network of supporters and enablers were certainly conventional for the period. By all contemporary accounts, d'Annebault was largely diplomatic and thoughtful, but not notably exceptional. In contrast to the king's other councillors of the era, d'Annebault's own political convictions and dynastic ambitions are hard to discern and track. He really did seem to serve the king's interests first and foremost—just as François I concluded in recommending d'Annebault to his son on his deathbed. And therein may lie his exceptionality.

SUSAN BROOMHALL, *The University of Western Australia*

**Orning**, Hans Jacob, *The Reality of the Fantastic: The Magical, Political and Social Universe of Late Medieval Saga Manuscripts* (The Viking Collection. Studies in Northern Civilization, 23), Copenhagen, University Press of Southern Denmark, 2017; cloth; pp. 387; R.R.P. DKK375.00; ISBN 9788776749354.

Hans Jacob Orning's *Reality of the Fantastic* is an important contribution to a burgeoning field of study that is now coming to grips with late-medieval Icelandic manuscript production and literary culture. Orning is particularly concerned with contextualizing the production, reproduction, and social circumstance of the 'fantastic' genres of *fornaldarsögur* (legendary sagas), *riddarasögur* (chivalric sagas), and *fornsögur suðrlanda* (romances). He approaches this task with a particular focus on the legendary *Örvar-Odds saga* through (i) an exploration of its place in the AM 343a 4to manuscript where it is one among fifteen (nine being *fornaldarsögur*), (ii) a synchronic analysis of two contemporaneous manuscript testaments to this saga (AM 343a 4to and AM 471 4to), and (iii) a diachronic analysis of saga variants in manuscripts Holm perg 7 4to and AM 343a 4to.

Orning orients his work around the centre/periphery approach of Russian scholar Alexey Eremenko, but expands it and challenges its simplicity. He argues that although *fornaldarsögur*, at the surface, are to be read as non-realistic, this genre and the 'fantastic' sagas more generally can be interrogated for the conditions of their production: they are nuanced mediations that negotiate interactions between centre and periphery. Orning identifies three levels at which this binary plays out. The surface level explores the function of magic and the supernatural (vis-à-vis the 'real' world), where popular beliefs are peripheral, and where socially reinforced belief systems, such as Christianity, are central. Orning argues that the two are not exclusive, instead impinging upon each other, revealed through narrative. The second level at which the centre/periphery dichotomy functions is the political, a discursive space where courtly society stands in opposition to the wild and the monstrous. This binary is well-known from chivalric text scholarship, but it is not clear-cut: the monstrous can be socially constructive and, whether in the wild or at court, agents are 'in a political sphere [...] part of the same culture' (p. 53), while the civilizing hero role actually serves to mask the interdependence of the courtly centre and the wild periphery. The third level is the social, wherein a normative bias in this literature places idealized society at the centre. Orning identifies tensions in this binary arising from the ideology of *rex iustus* and subject obedience (in the context of thirteenth-century Norway), counter to reciprocity in the friendship/patronage paradigm of the Icelandic kin-based ideal. Orning notes the presence of (Norwegian) courtly and monarchical manuscripts in the same milieu and geography as AM 343a 4to and argues that 'the two [social] ideals interact, collide and supplement one another' (p. 57).

Having established these three levels of the binary, Orning then moves to three modes of reading: different ways that sagas can be read as sources for contemporary ideas about magic, politics, and society. Moreover, for the scholar,

sagas can be read as stories, as structures, and as dynamics, and here Orning's approach is multifaceted, resistive, and exemplary for future saga studies. The first of these three modes examines the discrete sagas as idealizing narrative, while the second approach favours manuscript collocations as heterogenous blocks rather than a linearity, a chance gathering, or a window on taste. The third takes saga textuality as polyphonous, with dynamic undercurrents and counter-voicing embracing the divergence of texts.

Orning reads his manuscripts against these theoretical orientations and reaches conclusions about the importance of, and limitations to, the different ways of reading medieval texts. He looks at *Örvar-Odds saga* in multiple contexts: as part of the AM 343a 4to manuscript collection, as one of the so-called 'Hrafinista sagas', through his tripartite lenses of magic, politics, and society, and by examining the sagas as stories, structures, and indicators of social dynamics. In both his synchronic and diachronic analyses he identifies variance that can be attributed to historical contexts and social and political circumstances of production. He concludes with a summation of his broad contextualization of AM 343a 4to, starting at the base unit level of the individual sagas, and then pulling back successively to the manuscript as a whole. Next he considers the manuscript and its textual community, thence the politics of fifteenth-century Iceland, finally contextualizing this material against the broader 'Free State' versus Norwegian unification geo-political discourse.

Orning's work is bold and original, and importantly sets a standard for historical contextualization of saga scholarship, successfully marrying New Philology with close readings of individual and related sagas in their production contexts, while exercising caution with methodological limitations.

RODERICK McDONALD, *Katoomba, NSW*

**Orth, Myra D.**, *Renaissance Manuscripts. The Sixteenth Century (A Survey of Manuscripts Illuminated in France, 4)*, London, Harvey Miller, 2015; 2 vols; hardback; pp. 339 and 382; 55 colour, 321 b/w illustrations; R.R.P. €250.00; ISBN 9781872501307.

These volumes represent a lifetime's contribution and dedication to the field of sixteenth-century manuscript illumination studies by their author. Myra D. Orth, who passed away in 2002, was a specialist in the French book arts whose doctoral research focused on the 1520 Hours Workshop, now known as the group around Antwerp-trained Noël Bellemare.

At the time of her death, Orth had completed much of the catalogue and text, but in the subsequent years Joanna Fronska and Mary Rowse have supplied additional research, and Dierdre Jackson and Julie Hrischeva editorial support. Orth's work displays her immense depth of knowledge for the period roughly contiguous with the reign of François I. Analysis of production in this period occupies the vast majority of the introduction, although the catalogue's scope covers manuscript illumination up to 1570. The introduction does not discuss

developments that took place in these later periods after the 1540s, nor explain why 1570, rather than the end of Charles IX's reign, forms the latter bookend.

Orth argues that manuscript illumination warrants a significant place in the history of French art and seeks better collaboration between print and manuscript research. She emphasizes though that manuscripts were not simply pre-print works, with clear evidence that some authors actively preferred circulation by manuscript long after the arrival of print—a point now well acknowledged in the field of scribal studies. Moreover, the coming of the illustrated print book made luxury manuscripts the commissions of a courtly and ecclesiastical elite. As leaders of fashion, these clients demanded works that displayed arts at their height, and evidence of their engagement with authors demonstrates interests for new texts, and for interpretation of the new intellectual movements of the age through commissioned translations of classical and humanist texts. Sixteenth-century illuminations, therefore, combined native visual traditions with adoption of Italian art and literature, due to increased French interactions during the Italian Wars, as well as Flemish influences stemming from other figural art forms such as stained glass and tapestry.

In the first volume, Orth also includes analysis of frames and borders, charting the artistic shift from tabernacle borders common in books of hours through to strap-work borders by the 1540s. She canvasses scholarly treatments of borders, of their interaction with the main image, their scope of artistic freedom and as an important intellectual apparatus to the text they accompanied. This is followed by a series of images discussed further in Volume 2's catalogue entries: thirty-three full-page colour plates of key illuminations, and 270 monochrome images. Thirty-three black and white comparative illustrations are added, with the numbers of the catalogue entries to which they relate. A further section to Volume 1 includes short biographies, firstly of artists and scribes, then of authors and translators, and of patrons, dedicatees, and first owners of the manuscripts. Each is appended with available documentation and relevant literature. Finally, six full-page family trees are presented.

Volume 2 is substantially concerned with the catalogue proper, including just four black and white illustrations. Here one hundred manuscripts are carefully presented, grouped by name of artists and in approximate chronological order. The examples represent both outstanding artistic merit and the nature of the subjects of interest at this era. As might be expected given Orth's own expertise, a substantial number, twenty-one, concern the Bellemare group. The catalogue documents bindings, descriptions of miniatures with the text that they introduce, frames and borders, text decorations and any decorated initials, manuscripts' collation, some samples of the text content, knowledge of a print publication, then descriptions of the script, page layout, and any irregularities or missing leaves. A further detailed commentary showcases Orth's enormous knowledge, discussing the commission, author, date, and character of each text. She considers the sources of miniatures and offers stylistic comparisons, highlighting specific examples and any unusual

iconography, as well as providing a list of contemporary copies or closely related texts, information regarding provenance, and study of the work's binding. The references listed here are those Orth noted herself, thus including works up to 2002. Later in the volume there is an additional list of newer scholarship but it would be far better to integrate this with the relevant catalogue entries in any future iteration of this publication.

The Catalogue precedes a detailed glossary of terms, and several indices—of iconography, types of books (allegorical, historical, liturgical, etc.), provenance, and of the manuscripts. It includes a further list of the illustrations included in Volume 1. As this description of the contents will make clear, it would be well nigh on impossible to use the information in one volume effectively without the other.

Sadly, there is no subject index to the two volumes. In a reprint, such an index would go some way towards making this extraordinary, detailed research available to scholars interested in tangential questions. This would assist in fulfilling Orth's vision to integrate manuscript illumination analysis more fully into the wider culture and history of the period.

Since 2002, more and more major collections are providing online access to full-colour, high-resolution imagery of their manuscript holdings. This is very welcome, but it in no way obviates the needs for publications such as these that bring together and cross-reference a whole corpus of works spread globally and still hard to discover. Orth's work will be a vital resource not only for manuscript and book history studies, but also to literary, artistic, and historical scholars of the sixteenth century.

SUSAN BROOMHALL, *The University of Western Australia*

**Rose**, Susan, *The Wealth of England: The Medieval Wool Trade and Its Political Importance 1100–1600*, Oxbow Books, 2017; hardback; pp. 304; b/w and colour illustrations; R.R.P. £40.00; ISBN 9781785707360.

Susan Rose has recently published a number of nicely illustrated books, initially on the wine trade and the history of Calais, intended to bring together various aspects of English trade and the sea during the Middle Ages and early modern period. This is a further work in what is effectively a series. Her coverage in all these books can be described as comprehensive and thematic.

In *The Wealth of England*, Rose relies heavily on surviving monastic material to cover the management of sheep farming, including the types of sheep involved, and the size and location of the flocks. She goes on to the role of the Crown and the ways in which it exploited the dependence of other countries on English wool as well as taxes on the product. She concludes with a survey of the behaviour of merchants and clothiers at different periods and the reasons why, towards the end, the English wool trade was in decline.

Rose does not, however, attempt to assess the relative importance of the trade of one of the smaller more peripheral countries of Europe compared to that of the wealthier, more sophisticated states, nor does she attempt to set the trade in wool

into the overall English trade in all goods. This is a pity, as to appreciate fully the total wealth of any country it would be necessary to consider how each item of both outgoing and incoming product contributed to the well-being of the land. And yet, to judge the individual importance of one source of state finance, the whole structure of the taxation department including customs and excise would need to be evaluated. This would be a massive research undertaking and Rose understandably confines herself to the one or two contemporary attempts made by royal servants to calculate crown resources.

Rose leaves unresolved the reasons why English wool was so highly regarded, avoiding commitment in the long-running debate about the early existence of distinctive sheep breeds despite the increasing evidence that material from archaeology and parchment are making available. In order to link the production of wool to its final use she seeks to draw together aspects of the subject that have elsewhere been treated separately by researchers. Her strength lies in the recounting of specific examples that illuminate the way in which the business was carried on. In some cases these descriptions, such as that of the experiences of the Johnsons in the 1540s, could have usefully been extended, as they reveal all too well the pitfalls of the dealer's life.

Rose confines herself fairly narrowly to trade, treating the manufacturing of cloth in England as a side issue, so that the percentage of the wool produced that was employed locally at any given period remains unclear. The possible level of owling in the period is not discussed. Unfortunately, she does not repeat in the present book material she used in her history of Calais about the structure and role of the merchants of the Staple, which would improve the current reader's understanding of the political and military role of the institutions involved in managing the English wool trade. She focuses on the long-term official bodies such as the staplers, who claimed a monopoly over the trade, largely ignoring other major players such as the Italian traders who came to Southampton with private royal grants. This means that the role of the local ports in the trading patterns is not examined.

The overall result, while she develops some interesting details, is somewhat unbalanced. For instance, she refers in various places to the problems of exchange without fully clarifying what these were and how the system worked. As she fully acknowledges, she has drawn much of her material from the work of T. H. Lloyd, but she restricts herself narrowly to the trade in wool and cloth with the Low Countries, Flanders, and Northern Italy and its possible political leverage, ignoring the significance of other work Lloyd published such as the parallel negotiations of the English crown with the Hanse.

In her final chapter Rose tackles the question of whether the wool trade made England rich. She examines this under four headings, including the position of the Crown and English society, and makes it plain that there are too many aspects, including the conflict between the export of wool and the manufacture of cloth, for a single simple answer to be possible. Nevertheless, she concludes with

the remarkable claim that it allowed ‘commercial and enterprising attitudes to become too deeply embedded in all ranks of society to disappear’ (p. 204). This is a suggestion that other historians may wish to reexamine as its implications for the economic development of Western civilization are considerable.

SYBIL M. JACK, *The University of Sydney*

**Stanković, Vlada, ed.,** *The Balkans and the Byzantine World before and after the Captures of Constantinople, 1204 and 1453* (Byzantium: A European Empire and Its Legacy), Lanham, MD, Lexington Books, 2016; hardback; pp. 248; R.R.P. US\$85.00; £54.95; ISBN 9781498513258.

This volume faces the difficult task of exploring southeastern Europe during the period contiguous to the Fourth Crusade, and that when the Ottoman Empire replaced the Byzantine one—with Constantinople becoming Istanbul—, while the contributors are cognizant of a contemporary Balkan region and its devastations. Vlada Stanković notes that the volume’s final form is due to the formidable Institute for Advanced Study at Princeton, the nearer Serbian and Cypriot institutions, and a similar project that he headed on ‘Christian Culture in the Balkans in the Middle Ages: Byzantine Empire, the Serbs and the Bulgarians, 9th–15th Century’ (p. xiv). Organized in three parts, the contributions illuminate variously the object of the volume, with Part 1 dedicated to ‘In a World without a Center: Remaining Byzantine’, Part 2 to ‘The Peripheries: In the Shadow of Constantinople and its Influence’, and Part 3 to ‘Aftermath: Between Two Empires, Between Two Eras’. With thirteen chapters, the specific considerations within this broad range grapple with what Stanković introduces as life ‘In the Balkans “without” Constantinople: Questions of Center and Periphery’ (pp. xi–xviii). In fact, Jelena Mrgić’s contribution, ‘The Center of the Periphery: The Land of Bosnia in the Heart of Bosnia’, begins by clarifying that the “center-periphery” model was introduced to historical research from economic studies during the second half of the last century, and it provided a new approach to this phenomenon’ in what, Mrgić suggests, confronts ‘the basic problem of how to compensate the overall lack of evidence and to make the picture more complete’ (p. 165). The geographical emphasis throughout these considerations confirm the weight of the region’s essential historical, and Byzantine, aspect. Jelena Erdeljan’s study of ‘Studonica and the Life Giving Tree’ investigates what she says is ‘the defining element [...] of the Holy Wood of the Life Giving Cross through which earthly and heavenly paradise are (re)united into one’ (p. 81). Alicia Simpson’s ‘Byzantium’s Retreating Balkan Frontiers’ introduces characters and incidents in a difficult Serbian history, long before the Ottoman Empire and an Islamic component, detailing the events leading up to a ‘change of leadership in Constantinople, [which] was crucial to the delicate balance of power in the western Balkans foremost because it marked the end of the Byzantine-Hungarian alliance’ (p. 16). In Vlada Stanković’s chapter on ‘Rethinking the Position of Serbia within Byzantine *Oikoumene* in the Thirteenth Century’, the author’s consideration of the Crusaders’ capture of Constantinople

in 1204 saw the region strengthened through an ‘all-encompassing hierarchical system of mutually connected relatives [and] prevented a total political upturn in the region’ (p. 91). Popes and imperial families feature in Stanković’s view of the crusade’s aftermath from the perspective of a Serbian historiography ‘marred by [a] narrow “national” approach to the set of complex problems from the Middle Ages’ (p. 91). Unexpected topics help bring Byzantium to life. Dušan Popović contributes ‘Discontinuity and Continuity of Byzantine Literary Tradition after the Crusaders’ Capture of Constantinople: The Case of “Original” Byzantine Romances’, and offers comparisons with medieval Greek romances since the Hellenic period. He argues for ‘the persistence and continuity of certain narrative techniques’ as ‘the strength of a typically Byzantine tradition of education and culture’ (p. 240). Popović also notes how romance texts created a *Byzantine Iliad* in ‘an original and creative way adapted to the taste and expectations of the Byzantine audience’ (p. 27). This is not a history well-known beyond its research specialists, thus the volume is of value to scholars in this particular field as well as interdisciplinary studies.

JEWELL HOMAD JOHNSON, *The University of Sydney*

**Thomson**, Rodney M., Emily **Dolmans**, and Emily A. **Winkler**, eds, *Discovering William of Malmesbury*, Woodbridge, Boydell Press, 2017; hardback; pp. 244; R.R.P. £70.00; ISBN 9781783271368.

Over the past forty years, Rodney Thomson has established himself as the authority on the life and works of William of Malmesbury. It is reassuring then for scholars of England’s foremost twelfth-century historian to find Thomson’s name attached to a project such as *Discovering William of Malmesbury*. What is perhaps even more reassuring is that this edited volume of eighteen chapters gives ample evidence that interest in William of Malmesbury remains strong among a new generation of scholars, and that the future study of his legacy is in good hands.

The contributions to this volume display the impressive breadth of scholarship on William and his works currently being undertaken—from William’s conceptualization of history and his place in the historiography of twelfth-century England, through to his portrayal of the Jews, his perception of the Britons, and his understanding of kingship. However, considering that there are eighteen individual contributions and the book is only 224 pages in length, it is of note that each study is brief. This is not in itself problematic, and the tight focus and contained argument of each chapter is a credit to both the editors and the authors. Yet, with so many contributions, the reader may reasonably expect to be guided by the thematic division of chapters that has become the norm of edited volumes. However, this is lacking. The net effect is to create the impression of a compilation of independent studies, rather than an integrated collection in which the contributions are in conversation. But this is a small criticism. It is an excellent book, to be thoroughly recommended.



William gives scholars not only a glimpse of history as a record of events, but in the very process of writing provides a lens through which to understand the social, political, and cultural milieu in which he lived and operated. It is a duality that editors Emily Dolmans and Emily A. Winkler highlight in their introduction, asserting the aim of the volume is ‘to present an image of William as subject and object’ (p. 3). They thus identify two thematic concerns to the studies in the volume. First, ‘William the man’ (pp. 5–7), the ambitious historian and scholar, more interested in learning than the pursuit of direct political agency. Second, ‘William’s works’ (pp. 8–10), writings that catered to a wide range of audiences, to his own thirst for knowledge and its preservation, incorporating elements of historiography, hagiography, and philosophy. This proposed demarcation of the man and his works is not quite as clear as the introduction implies (our knowledge of William’s life comes entirely from his own writings), yet it does hold broadly true of the studies that follow.

Granted the breadth and number of contributions to *Discovering William of Malmesbury*, we must content ourselves with an overview of a few especially noteworthy chapters of each type. In Chapter 2 Anne E. Bailey assesses the utility of notions of genre in *Gesta Pontificum Anglorum*, examining the blend of historical and hagiographical characteristics of the work. Bailey’s study can be applied across all of William’s works (and even more broadly across twelfth-century English histories) for, as she notes, history mixes with hagiography throughout William’s entire corpus, though it is simply more evident in *Gesta Pontificum Anglorum*. Bailey ably demonstrates William’s skilled synthesis of multiple sources to augment his narratives, both historical and hagiographical, and that in the resultant biographies William himself consciously shifted between history and hagiography. Suggesting that William’s intent was to relate ‘heritage’ rather than ‘history’ (p. 25), Bailey concludes that William was deliberate in constructing narratives that preserved regional traditions.

In Chapter 4, John Gillingham looks at William’s portrayals of William II and Henry I, arguing that William preserves a far more nuanced view of both kings than that offered by his contemporaries and successors. Moreover, Gillingham proposes that modern scholarship tends to accept William’s portrayal of both men at face value, suggesting that a close reading of *Gesta Regum Anglorum* reveals a portrait of William II that is not wholly unsympathetic, and one of Henry I that is not wholly untarnished. Ryan Kemp picks up on the theme of kingship in Chapter 6, examining the relationships between kings, bishops, and saints as represented across William’s writings. Kemp draws attention to William’s partnering of great kings with powerful clerical advisers in his narratives, arguing that William partook of a tradition that saw clerical oversight as essential for secular governance, whether as a partner to good king, or a reprimand to a bad one. It is a theme also examined by Alheydis Plassman in Chapter 12, in a comparative study of the models of right kingship provided by William of Malmesbury and Otto of Freising. Plassman demonstrates that in the ‘rules of rise and fall’ (p. 151),

William and Otto create analogous models of historical discourse, though their intent and methodologies differed.

With thirteen other contributions as varied as those highlighted here, *Discovering William of Malmesbury* is a rewarding book for scholars of twelfth-century England. The book lives up to its title, the innovative approaches to William's life and works it contains proposing new discoveries, even for those already familiar with William's legacy.

MATTHEW FIRTH, *University of New England*

**Tracy**, Larissa, ed., *Flaying in the Pre-Modern World: Practice and Representation*, Cambridge, D. S. Brewer, 2017; hardback; pp. 424; 51 b/w illustrations; R.R.P. £60.00; ISBN 9781843844525.

This edited collection of fourteen essays represents the most comprehensive study yet undertaken of literary and artistic representations of flaying in the medieval world. It is to be commended for its thoroughly interdisciplinary approach as well as the subtlety with which the contributors approach a potentially difficult and confronting topic.

The aim of the volume is twofold. Firstly, it seeks to illuminate the historical and cultural milieu which informed both the practice and portrayal of flaying in the pre-modern world, with studies devoted to flaying as a function of juridical procedure or medical practice, and others dedicated to its use as a motif of literature and art. Secondly, as positioned in Larissa Tracy's introduction, it intends to redress an anachronistic medievalism portraying flaying as a common and normalized act of torture or punishment within medieval societies. As Tracy highlights, 'chronicles and legal texts make scant reference to [flaying] as an *actual* practice' (p. 7) and, where references can be found to excoriation as legally sanctioned or as an historical event, it is used exclusively in a punitive context, never as an act of torture. As such, the portion of this volume dedicated to studies of the *practice* of flaying is comparatively small (five chapters) and, of these, only one is dedicated to a 'full' flaying. Indeed, this first section of the volume challenges the reader to consider what actually constitutes 'flaying' as a concept—flagellation, flogging, scalping, and medical intervention sit alongside full excoriation in these discussions. *Flaying in the Pre-Modern World* reserves its greatest part to *representations* of flaying, with studies covering the imagery of the skinned body in hagiography, art, literature, and medical texts.

The contributions to *Flaying in the Pre-Modern World* are diverse and the volume is rich in variation; each chapter presents unique case-studies and sources in which both the circumstance and form of flaying differs. While each offers valuable insights, we will only be able to note a few chapters of especial interest here. Jack Hartnell opens the volume, and Part 1 ('Flaying in Practice'), with his assessment of images of the flayed body and descriptions of skin removal in medical texts. Here the skin was not to be flayed whole from the body, but rather punctured in the aid of healing, or perhaps some small portion removed to

facilitate amputation, cut away infection, or the like. While Hartnell notes that the image of the flayed body is not uncommon within medical texts, it was intended not as a guide, but as a tool for students to understand what lay beneath the skin. It is with the tools of flaying that Hartnell mainly concerns himself, examining their representations within medieval medical texts. He argues that the image of the knife penetrating or removing the skin occupied the same conceptual space in medieval thought, whether it was as an act of healing or an act of violence.

Hartnell's descriptions of the pictures he discusses, just as those descriptions provided by other contributors, are expertly rendered. Moreover, these are accompanied by black and white images throughout the book, and the reader is thereby guided to conceptualize the full impact and symbolism of the illustrations. It is unfortunate, however, that a volume which in large part addresses art history has elected not to provide any colour images in its pages.

Turning then to Part 2, 'Representations of Flaying,' there are a number of noteworthy inclusions. Chapters 6 to 9 deal with imagery of flaying and flagellation in hagiography and passion literature, with attention primarily given to St Bartholomew and the flagellated Christ. William Sayers's fascinating contribution at Chapter 10 looks to Irish accounts of flaying across literary traditions, contrasting the excoriation of St Bartholomew with Irish legal texts, and the epic *Destruction of Da Derga's Hostel*. Noting that flaying is a rare motif in Irish literature, Sayers finds its explicit description only to be located in Hiberno-Latin hagiography, with the act not accounted as appropriate in either legal or epic tradition. In Chapter 12, Michael Livingston examines the motif of 'flayed beards' in late medieval (primarily Arthurian) literature, a topos in which the beard of a defeated enemy is incorporated into the 'beard cloak' of the victor. The implication here, Livingston argues, is a loss of identity and masculinity associated with the loss of the beard—it is an act intended to shame. Tracy's own contribution to the volume, Chapter 13, similarly looks at flaying as a vehicle for the inscription of, or loss of, identity. Contrasting continental and Norse romances, Tracy argues that in the Norse tradition, flaying does not equate to shame or brutal justice as in other romance traditions, but rather that the scars identify the victim's heroism.

*Flaying in the Pre-Modern World* is to be thoroughly recommended. While its interest to those who focus on the body within medieval history is clear, the contributions to this volume range through topics related to personal identity, national identity, gender theory, medical practice, art history, literary history, and monstrosity. This commendable interdisciplinary approach that Tracy has encouraged within the collection makes it a valuable read to the broadest possible audience.

MATTHEW FIRTH, *University of New England*

**Yates**, Julian, *Of Sheep, Oranges, and Yeast: A Multispecies Impression* (Posthumanities, 40), Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 2017; paperback; pp. 368; 18 b/w illustrations; R.R.P. US\$30.00; ISBN 9781517900670.

This absorbing monograph creatively brings together animal and plant studies in a framework that considers eco-theory and bio-politics. Its overarching function is to create new avenues for both historians and literary scholars to think about human existence in parallel with, rather than superior to, other forms of life. The book opens with a consideration of memory and pain—the stimulus of the physical bound up with the emotional. The impression is exemplified through a Shakespearean character, Jack Cade, and his encounter with parchment and the sheep whose skin offered up this surface. In a reordering of surfaces, the parchment becomes a point of convergence between matter and metaphor. What unfolds over the course of the next few chapters is a stimulating philosophical narrative on the semiotics of material culture and the variety of ways of being and also of writing. Julian Yates's method 'consists of a type of a tracing or unfolding of tropes as they move between and among registers, discourses, and disciplines' (p. 13). Yates states that his aim is to erase 'ontological differences between animal, plant, fungal, microbial, viral, mineral or chemical actors' (p. 12). He achieves his aim by tracing points of contact between the differently configured groups. The choice of sheep, oranges, and yeast is arbitrary, but the point is that they are three differently scaled actors from different biological kingdoms (animal, plant, and fungus).

Part 1, 'Sheep', devotes itself to unfolding the biopolitical quotient of the sheep in relation to Jack Cade's memory of its skin. Yates attempts to inhabit 'the point of contact and separation between sheep and not-sheep humans' (p. 40). As he considers the idea of sheepiness he uses different tropes to uncover meaning. For example, one trope concerns Dolly the cloned sheep whose legacy includes making humans realize that at a cellular level our bodies are more flexible than we think. Chapter 1 ends with a question, 'What is pastoral?', which concludes a discussion through time that has rendered both sheep and human more 'sheepy'. The next chapter rewrites the pastoral in a manner that folds both humans and sheep together in unexpected ways. The shepherd can be seen as the go-between—the person who marks the connection and the boundary—writing the human through and by its un/likeness to sheep.

While the first two chapters examine a series of anthropo-zoo-genetic figures or tropes that derived from a cohistory of sheep, Part 2 aims 'to inquire into the texture of [...] vegetal substrate and explore how our discourses are marked by forms of vegetal being, calibrated by vegetal temporality' (p. 139). Yates begins with the escape from prison in 1597 of John Arden and John Gerard—and the small piles of orange peel that remained in the prison chamber. Here, oranges gain importance as an agent of escape through the invisibility of the juice in written missives. With the invisible writing transformed by heat, writing appears

as vegetal growth. The notion of economics is linked to oranges in Chapter 4 with the humorous account of the inadequacies of a global economy. This is relayed through the notion that, while Norway cannot grow oranges but does manufacture refrigerators, this logic does not lead to an even global economy. Through a succession of logical steps, Yates relates an orange-focused economy to Sir John Peyton's (lieutenant of the Tower of London) efforts, mentioned in a previous chapter, to construct the warder with a liking for oranges as an impecunious, gold-wanting, Catholic sympathizer.

Part 3, 'Yeast', shifts to the barely visible world of this fascinating fungus and considers bread in conjunction with the yeast that bubbles through it. Yates creatively links yeast to his overarching discussion by noting that 'Bread anchors our notions of collectivity' (p. 227). Yates muses on why writers are fascinated with bread, returning to John Gerard who figured in the discussion on oranges in the Tower of London. Gerard describes in detail the bread he received there. The quality and abundance of the bread provided to the prisoners actually allowed Gerard to use his own money for oranges. The regularity of the bread's appearance reflects the commonality of the loaf in society and its role in security of the Commonwealth.

The book's conclusion returns to Jack and attempts to conjoin all the subjects considered throughout the book. Yates relates his project to the idea of a Renaissance painting of a supper that has lamb, bread, wine, and oranges. He dislocates the dining table, siding perhaps with the lamb, the bread, and the orange, offering the reader a blank canvas in which regimes of description are altered and blurred. This is an innovative work that stretches previous ideas on discipline boundaries, allowing scholars from many different fields to share this book as a point of contact in much the same ways that Yates bridged the world of material culture with historical and literary studies.

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