Reviews

Al Kalak, Matteo, *The Heresy of the Brothers, a Heterodox Community in Sixteenth-Century Italy* (Europa Sacra, 28), Turnhout, Brepols, 2022; hardback; pp. 221; 12 b/w, 8 colour illustrations, 3 b/w tables; RRP £75.00; ISBN 9782503593296.

This arresting book makes clear why heresy matters. Too often, the term itself is despised or confined to the Middle Ages. Matteo Al Kalak avoids the latter and significantly contributes to the former. Focusing on the period between the 1540s and the 1560s, and drawing upon the records of the Modena Inquisition, the reader is drawn into a vibrant narrative around shadowy figures and remarkable occurrences that are exceptional in many regards. About thirty figures and leaders were known as the 'Brothers' who lived lives, practised faith, and embraced religion along the perilous boundary of heresy. Heresy-hunting had not died out in the medieval past but remained active in the advent of Reformation movements and ideas. The surprising encroachment of Martin Luther, John Calvin, and 'Anabaptist' ideas and practices genuinely frightened the Latin Church, and there were calculated efforts to curb the advance of these serious challenges. Various inquisitorial initiatives led the way. This current work is a revised English edition of the author's earlier book *L'eresia dei Fratelli: Una comunità eterodossa nella Modena del Cinquecento* (Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 2011), though the revision constitutes a new book.

The 'Brothers' found their roots in humanism. Intellectuals in the important Po Valley city of Modena opened their *Accademia* to Erasmian thought, religious reforms, toleration, and Reformation radicalism. Luther found an Italian audience, heretical ideas 'steeped in Anabaptist elements', and Calvinist stripping of sacramental significance gained way amongst the heretics of Modena. It was not long before the alarm sounded. Heresy had reared its head, shamelessly, and thrived in taverns, among shoemakers and painters and in private dwellings. Inquisitorial records reveal a dense network of iniquity in public places in the daytime and houses at night. What do the records reveal? A collection of forbidden books, attics filled with men reading these writings, secret notebooks with names of suspects, tolerant bishops locked up in the notorious Castel Sant'Angelo, men unafraid to conceal their dissent: 'To hell with the mass and those who said it!' (p. 46). Under the cover of darkness, the 'Brothers' safeguarded secret liturgical rituals. In some respects, they resembled medieval dissenters like Waldensians, Lollards, and radical Hussites who had no qualms about questioning the sacerdotal system of the Western Church. Numerous women supported the 'Brothers'.

It comes as no surprise to find Modena characterised as *nuova Praga* (p. 14), where Modena is likened to Prague as a centre where 'everyone argues about

faith, free will, purgatory, the Eucharist, predestination, etc.' (p. 111). One can hardly overlook similarities with fourth-century Constantinople, which Gregory of Nyssa characterised as an entire city filled with religious controversy, arguing, philosophising, and theologising at the bakery and in the public bath. Modena was literally awash with forbidden books (see pp. 36, 37, 47, 93–109, 154, 155, 159, 168, 170, 187, 188). A battle for orthodoxy soon broke out. And who could dismiss the anxiety of the Church? The heretical 'Brothers' were cutting too close to the bone. Infant baptism was no different to 'washing a donkey's head' (p. 118). Eucharistic real presence was nonsense because 'Christ was not in that shitty host' (p. 121). Scornful, irreverent gestures were occasionally glimpsed in churches (p. 119). Heretics stood while the faithful genuflected. Dissenters wore hats at processions of the Most Blessed Sacrament (p. 122). Vestments were dismissed as a 'clown's outfit' (p. 128). Defectors from clerical orders likened ordination to having one's 'arse anointed' with useless oil (p. 129). Iconoclasm was rampant. Clergy were mocked with offensive admonitions like 'Go off and wipe your arse with these images' (p. 136). The pope was denounced as 'Satan' (p. 140). All of this helps to construct the unedifying human profile of the heretic.

What Al Kalak coaxes from the riches of the Modena inquisitorial records is evidence that heresy was passed down from one generation to another (one thinks of Jacques Fournier's registers from his Cathar inquiries), the gravity of the sin of heresy, how the 'Brothers' were embedded in the fabric of shearers, velvet makers, weavers, cobblers, wool merchants, notaries, school teachers, and wine exporters. They did not establish doctrinal unanimity. Calvinist and Zwinglian influences are evident, along with Anabaptism, anti-Trinitarianism, and preference for justification by faith (pp. 164, 112). Like Michael Servetus at the same time, some of the 'Brothers' became double-heretics, denounced by Catholics and Protestants (p. 169).

Once determined, inquisitors set their sights on the heretics of Modena, and what followed were forty trials involving one hundred and twenty accused (pp. 57–62). Some were sent to the stake; others banished, still others were sentenced to perpetual imprisonment, while others still were committed to relatively mild penance. It is worth noting that *carcere perpetuo* was hardly that! Bishops Giovanni Morone and Egidio Foscarari tried to shield the 'Brothers' by holding informal trials, issuing light sentences, keeping the heretics away from notaries (who might record inconvenient details) and reconciling the more amendable to the faith. We have already seen that these bishops wound up in prison. The former was rumoured to be a closet Lutheran; the latter was suspected of being weak on the essential truths of Christianity. The longevity of the Modena heretics must be attributed to the protection afforded by these two bishops, who ruled for forty-two years (1529–71). A programme of deterrence was attempted: one criminal would be killed at night and burned at the stake the following day as a warning to other heretics (p. 90). Church authorities worried about vernacular Bibles. An urge to purge guided the heresy-hunters. Forbidden books were seized and either burned

or thrown into canals (p. 108). These measures failed. In the nineteenth century, an extensive library from the time of the 'Brothers' was found walled up. It contained the works of Luther and Calvin.

The word 'British' is consistently misspelled throughout (pp. 7, 8, 99, 102, 141). The book features twenty colour and black-and-white illustrations, along with one map and three useful tables. Four important transcribed and translated documents enhance the scholarly value of the book (pp. 178–91).

The vision embraced by the 'Brothers' failed. This is consistent with the history of heresy. Matteo Al Kalak has provided us with a compelling narrative that complements our understanding of early modern religious dissent and sheds new light on the nature and scope of the European reformations.

Thomas A. Fudge, *University of New England*

Armstrong, Abigail S., *The Materiality of Medieval Administration in Northern England* (Utrecht Studies in Medieval Literacy, 59), Turnhout, Brepols, 2024; hardback; pp. xxv, 325; 33 b/w, 5 colour illustrations, 9 b/w tables, 3 b/w maps; RRP €95.00; ISBN 9782503607436.

Manorial records from the management of landholdings in medieval England include such documents as financial accounts, surveys, land valors, and accounts of arrears, to name a few. Those of us who work with these sources might be more accustomed to thinking primarily about their contents with little consideration given to how they were produced, stored, or what materials they were written on. Abigail Armstrong's *The Materiality of Medieval Administration in Northern England* takes us on a fascinating journey of a different kind, an examination of the documents themselves as artefacts and as objects of study. The book focuses on the extant financial accounts from the late medieval period relating to the administration of the landholdings of the bishopric of Durham and the Percy earls of Northumberland, chiefly those from the fourteenth century up to the mid-sixteenth century.

Material studies of manuscripts is an area of research that has gained traction on the European continent, judging from the recent research output of German and French scholars and the establishment of research centres on the materiality of government records at German universities. This book helps to fill the lacuna in studies of English manorial accounts, which have been sadly neglected in comparison, although the author makes no specific claim to achieving a broad understanding of late medieval English manorial records. The book aims instead for a more modest objective, to shed new light on 'the documentary and record-keeping practices of manorial accounting in England from the fourteenth to sixteenth centuries' (p. 19). It does so by building on P. D. A. Harvey's seminal body of work on the English medieval manorial landscape, *Manors and Maps in Rural England, from the Tenth Century to the Seventeenth* (Routledge, 2010), and applying extensive codicological methodology to the primary source material at hand. Form or shape, format, structure, and layout are the focus of this study, all of

which are useful for increasing our understanding of the practices adopted by the administrative machinery of the bishops of Durham and the Percy family.

The structure of the book essentially parallels the 'life-cycle' of manorial documents, that is, drafting, auditing, finalising, and storing. Chapter 1 sets the scene by laying out how written records in England developed, with a specific focus on manorial accounts. This provides the reader with the basic framework within which to place the chapters that follow. It usefully contextualises the production of estate records for the reader by discussing the relationship between developments in estate administration and the production of documents based on the landowners' needs. It also introduces the bishopric of Durham and the Percy earls of Northumberland, giving the reader a concise outline of how their landholdings were administered and what documents from their archives were consulted for this research. Chapters 2 and 3 examine the composition of the documents, their shape and what material was used. How and why decisions were made as to how to compose and bind the different types of accounts, as well as whether the officials and clerks doing so chose paper or parchment, are key points explored here. Chapters 4 to 6 shift the focus to how the documents were produced and used, discussing the various stages of production, the all-important audit process that led to final versions, and the methods of storage employed for possible future consultation of the documents.

The results of this intricate study speak for themselves. The book is well-researched and impressive in detail, with evidence of meticulous and widespread archival work. The codicological methods employed have yielded detailed findings, with the analyses and discussions being supported by helpful illustrations and diagrams. Armstrong's findings occasionally upend older ideas about medieval written documents. A case in point is the use of parchment versus paper for the composition of accounts. The traditional understanding of paper as 'an ephemeral and disposable material' (p. 151) compared with parchment might lead one to expect that paper was used only for draft versions of accounts and other records. Parchment was deemed much more robust, and thus it might be expected that it would be the material of choice for protection and lengthy storage. Yet Armstrong demonstrates that this was not always the case, and there are many examples of paper being used for final versions of accounts intended to be kept and used in the longer term. As an aside, there are parts of this book that this reader found particularly relevant and illuminating, such as the section in Chapter 6 on how to locate information within accounts. Location aids were vital for helping future officials and clerks find what they needed within the records. Present-day scholars who mine these sources for their own research purposes will find those aids similarly helpful.

Armstrong employs specialist language throughout that can be challenging to follow and understand, even while it is admittedly necessary to do so. The chapter on parchment and paper, for instance, discusses attributes and specifications that are technical in scope and language and run the risk of being dry for the reader.

Moreover, while the author has striven to write simply, even when using technical jargon, there are enough grammatical and other mistakes throughout the book to make the reader wish that at least one further round of copy-editing had been allowed. An appendix listing the corpus of extant documents consulted would also have been useful, even if some of them are not publicly available.

The rather niche area of research that this book encompasses possibly means that the general reader will find the subject matter of less interest than will researchers who use manorial records as primary source material. Researchers in manuscript studies, codicology, estate administration, and medieval accounts, among others, will, however, benefit from the findings of this book. There is no doubt in my mind that this topic is a worthwhile one and that the book fills an important historiographical gap in the literature. For this reader, the author has admirably succeeded in achieving the book's aims and objectives.

Michele Seah, *University of Newcastle*

August, Hannah, *Playbooks and their Readers in Early Modern England*, New York, Routledge, 2022; hardback; pp. 286; 17 b/w illustrations; RRP £145.00; ISBN 9781003199748.

Hannah August's *Playbooks and their Readers in Early Modern England* argues for a wide early modern playbook readership by analysing the prefatory paratexts in playbooks as sold and the subsequent commonplace book extracts from and marginal annotations in the playbooks. With an eye more towards the end users of the playtexts than on the producers, August has examined how over five hundred extant printed playbooks (single-play, quarto editions of plays that had been professionally performed in London between 1584 and 1660) position themselves towards readers and how readers subsequently received those texts.

Playbooks and their Readers in Early Modern England is a book of halves. The first half focuses on preliminary paratexts such as title pages, commendatory verses, epistles to the reader, and the like. After establishing that both the material qualities of playbooks and their second-hand afterlives made playbooks widely accessible, Chapter 1 ('Who Read Plays?') demonstrates that stationers produced playbooks with large and diverse readerships in mind: the highly literate and less confidently so; women and men; social elites and those less privileged. August argues that the stationers' obvious economic motivations map onto the burgeoning desire for upward social mobility; by favourably reading, understanding, and judging plays to align with the potential views of their social betters, those in lower socio-economic positions could strive for social betterment. In Chapter 2 ('Why Read Plays?'), August sets aside the question of whether playbooks should be considered theatrical or literary in favour of more fruitfully exploring how preliminary paratexts may have variously shaped readers' motivations for consuming texts that clearly originated in live performance (as often noted on title pages with the playwright's name and 'as played by' or the like). Using Heywood's preferred Latin motto (Horace's *Aut prodesse solent aut delectare*)

to dichotomously classify motivations (profit and pleasure), August argues that paratextual material raises readers' expectations for moral, linguistic, and physiological profit and intellectual, cachinnatory, and erotic pleasure.

The second half of the monograph focuses on two types of evidence for how readers used the playbooks. Chapter 3 ('How Were Plays Read? Part One: Extractive Reading') explores how the extraction of material from playbooks into three commonplace books (Edward Pudsey's, William Drummond's, and Abraham Wright's) was potentially influenced by the generic, thematic, or authorial emphases of the paratexts. Pudsey, for example, headed his commonplace entries with information gleaned from playbooks' title pages (authorial attribution which could act as stylistic or generic classifiers), whereas Drummond's interest was often in the pruriently misogynistic (often from comedies) and Wright's in literary self-improvement and linguistic profit. That is, the chapter highlights readers' varied interests and gleanings, as does Chapter 4, 'How Were Plays Read? Part Two: Using, Marking, and Annotating'. This chapter shifts back towards printed playbooks themselves and three different ways of marginally annotating them: using the playbook as a material object—a possession and a source of paper and imitable type; engaging the texts' and paratexts' cultural and historical discourses, such as misogyny; and considering the dramatic characteristics of the text, concluding that 'for most readers, printed playbooks were just that—printed books, not repositories of performance' (p. 207).

Because of that conclusion, because of August's focus on readers, and because of the impressively wide primary research conducted for the argument, I would perhaps like to see *Playbooks* address more fully the recursive nature of reading itself, where inferences are continually being made, discarded, or revised, where text is read and re-read. If playbooks were read closely (the proposed 'New Critical' approach that *Playbooks* ultimately suggests) or perhaps even only scanned for premarked commonplacing extraction, then the linear consumptive experience of plays as productions (which August discusses in her conclusion with regards to potential oral readings) should presumably shift in reading. *Playbooks* teasingly provides traces of that (possibly irrecoverable?) non-linear process that readers take. For example, in discussing Pudsey's reading habits, August concludes that he did not seem to read the prefatory paratext before the plays (pp. 134–35) because the epistolary extracts available in Pudsey's commonplace book (from *The White Devil*) follow the dramatic extracts rather than precede them. In that discussion, August does note that 'Readers did not always read books in the order they might have been expected to, and paratexts may therefore not have been as effective at influencing readers' judgement as their writers hoped' (p. 135). I found myself curious about the interplay between presented order and reading order and therefore, between readers' inked remnants and the 'inscrutable unmarked pages' (p. 233) upon which *Playbooks* speculates in its conclusion.

These curiosities should not deter readers from taking up this exceptionally valuable work, whose strength is its impressive inclusivity. This inclusivity in

part derives from the breadth of playbook evidence included and its egalitarian approach to that evidence. In a time when the humanities' death is frequently heralded, one of the book's key arguments—that stationers were 'aiming at market area rather than market depth, heaping external paratextual elements one on top of another, hoping that one or other of them will catch the eye of a potential play-buyer, regardless of his social standing and level of education' (p. 50) — demonstrates the value of humanities research in general. By providing a broad snapshot of readers and interests in the period, *Playbooks* champions all readers and the texts that they read. Responses to Edward Sharpham sit comfortably with responses to William Shakespeare: playbooks as spaces for improving literacy sit comfortably with playbooks as sources for improving one's own literary output. *Playbooks and their Readers in Early Modern England* could have leaned more fully (and less fruitfully) into the economics of this endeavour; instead, while it acknowledges that economic concerns of a smaller portion of society are the driver behind playbooks' textual production, it strives to understand the broader spectrum of society and its diverse needs and experiences.

Michael Cop, *University of Otago*

Barton, Thomas W., Marie A. **Kelleher**, and Antonio M. **Zaldívar**, eds, *Constructing Iberian Identities, 1000–1700* (Cursor Mundi, 42), Turnhout, Brepols, 2022; hardback; pp. 244; 4 colour illustrations; RRP €80.00; ISBN 9782503596303.

Happily, this unfortunately titled book is not about racial profiling but rather about how people in Spain (and occasionally Portugal) were viewed, mainly by themselves and especially during the Arab conquest (*c*. 700–1492). Accommodation (particularly *convivencia*, literally 'living together') and antagonism amongst adherents to the three religions of the book (Christians, Jews, and Muslims) had a tremendous influence on Spanish history during that period.

Archdeacon Ferrán Martínez has been much discussed in the literature, mainly as the fomenter of anti-Jewish riots. The chapter by Maya Soifer Irish zips back and forth in time, though the main thrust is in his interest in securing land for a Christian hospital.

Jesús Ángel Solórzano Telechea's chapter shows how a few large ports on the northern Spanish coast rose to dominate international trade while the other smaller ones had to rely on fishing and local commerce.

Denis Menjot's fine contribution deals with just one session of the Cortes in Madrigal, northwest of Ávila, in 1438. Nevertheless, it sheds much light on the checks and balances in place between the king and the nobles and shows how the ordinary people could be protected, especially from corrupt nobles.

Travis Bruce provides a lovely chapter about Ali ben Mujāhid, who had spent much of his youth as a diplomatic hostage in Pisa, yet succeeded to power in Dénia, near Valencia, in 1030/1. He had been reared as a Christian in Pisa, yet

ruled as a Muslim. Ali used his Janus powers to maintain good relations with both Christian and Muslim polities.

Francesca Trivellato gives a fascinating insight into the machinations of bills of exchange and some of the principal actors, particularly Cleirac and Villani. She also shows how, in one particular area, mythical stories were used to discredit Jewish financiers and make them scapegoats.

Bryan Givens writes on *Encubertismo* during the reigns of the later Spanish Habsburgs—the Spanish version of *The Last Emperor*, whereby the 'Ultimate Ruler' would accede to the throne, if not already on it. He reflects on the gradual decline of the Spanish monarchy from the grand days of Charles V to the end of the Habsburgs.

Antonio M. Zaldívar documents the historiography of the shift from Latin to Castilian/Romance in medieval Spain. While presenting basically three different theories, he comes to no conclusion other than the need for more study to understand the shift.

Xavier Gil has written a masterly and excellent chapter on the way that Spaniards reported their views of themselves. He accentuates how, while the Spaniards viewed themselves as being busy with heroic deeds, they left relatively few records of these. Nevertheless, by the end of the sixteenth century, they had developed more accurate recording of history, though still 'at the service of religion' (p. 151).

Richard L. Kagan's analysis of why, in 1614, Pedro de Valencia did not complete his history of Chile takes us into the conflict between one's own researches and the will of one's sponsors, something of much relevance today. His clearly and simply structured analysis is a joy to read, as well as a lesson.

The chapter by Francisco García-Serrano breaks the bounds of what is usually regarded as medieval Europe by looking at Spain's early interaction with points East. He extends our understanding of *convivencia*, the accommodation between Christians, Jews, and Muslims, to the wider context, going beyond the eastern coast of the Mediterranean as far as China. He stresses the role of the mendicant orders, especially the Franciscans and Dominicans, and ends by calling for 'a revision of the crucial role' they played (p. 192). There is much more work to be done.

Medievalists have increasingly looked more closely at what information is available from less well-documented parts of society, notably women. Roser Salicrú i Lluch has been looking into the testimonies of Arab captives from North Africa, recorded in Spain in the fifteenth century, that reveal material about their places back home. While only briefly touching on a few individual reports, her article makes us hunger for more. Happily, that is promised in note 40 on page 204.

At the age of fifteen, Catherine of Aragon was married to Henry VIII's brother for just months, then a widow for seven years, before her twenty-four years as Henry's devoted queen. Theresa Earenfight catalogues her itinerant youth,

where she was 'both an observer and a consumer of an array of cultural influences' (p. 211). While the article is at times reminiscent of a travel agent's itinerary, it leaves the reader longing for more details of her interactions with these 'cultural influences'.

There is an 'Afterword' by Teofilo F. Ruiz, who has long been at UCLA, that is, in part, a eulogy for a 2018 conference there, but, more importantly, a grateful acknowledgment of the impetus of Sir John Elliott, the great British historian of the Golden Age, who died between the conference and the publication. There is also another dedication by the editors, buried on page 17.

This curious book is about two-thirds of the proceedings of that conference. The remaining proceedings may be found in Volume 40 of *Pedralbes, Revista d'història moderna* (2020). The book's physical production is lovely, but editing, and especially copy-editing, would have improved its intellectual content. At times, I found it difficult even to conjecture the original Spanish from which some articles were translated.

Nevertheless, this volume contains some gems. Three might (complementarily) be described as taxonomic, and although taxonomy has had a bad name, it remains an essential base for understanding trends and areas. These encourage further research, while articles like García-Serrano's open up our understanding of Spain and its relations with the Middle East. We still need to be more understanding of our neighbours, of whatever culture we may be. And more aware of medieval Spain and its place in Western Europe and the world.

John N. Crossley, *Monash University*

Byrne, Philippa, and Caitlin **Ellis**, eds, *Maritime Exchange and the Making of Norman Worlds* (Transcultural Medieval Studies, 3), Turnhout, Brepols, 2023; hardback; pp. x, 230; 17 b/w, 12 colour illustrations, 3 b/w, 3 colour maps; RRP €75.00; ISBN 9782503602172.

Despite their descent from seafaring Vikings, and despite ample evidence to the contrary, the Normans as a group have tended to be less associated with maritime activity. This volume aims to shift that perception, in ways that challenge our very understanding of what and whom the term 'Normans' might encompass. Typical of edited collections, it can have the feel of a group of loosely related studies whose connection to the central theme of 'maritime exchange' is in some cases tenuous. Yet this is, in part, a deliberate strategy: as the editors propose, 'let us consider Norman variety' (p. 4). The introduction argues for a transcultural methodology, here involving a focus on 'local […] small-scale mechanisms of exchange' (p. 5) and not seeking to impose unity or consistency across the examples explored. The benefit of such an approach is to provide a corrective to the tendency to see 'the Normans' as a unified, homogenous group. While such a view has been widely challenged in recent decades, it remains powerful, and essays such as those offered here remind us of the need to question our basic assumptions. The volume thus

complements several recent innovative collections with similar aims, such as those relating to Norman borders and frontiers.

The opening chapters deal with architectural themes. Mark Bowden and Allan Brodie present an archaeological study of Pevensey Castle, notable as the landing place of the Conqueror and his forces in 1066. Although focusing on architectural and topographical changes at the site, it also sets out a case for Norman aspirations to echo classical Roman expressions of power through their building programme. Furthermore, it makes useful observations about the likelihood of sea transport for Norman forces along the English coast after the initial landing. Andrew Blackler asserts that the 'great tower', which emerged as an element of castle design in the West from the tenth century, had its origins in Byzantine models that themselves represented continuity from the late antique period. A likely conduit for this proposed East–West transfer of design was the presence of Normans in military service in the East or travelling for pilgrimage or diplomacy.

Two chapters consider Scandinavian cultural connections with Normandy and England. Carolyn Cargile examines key passages in Orderic Vitalis's *Historia ecclesiastica* relating to Tostig Godwinson's rebellion against his brother Harold, which ended in defeat at Stamford Bridge a few weeks before the Battle of Hastings. Orderic's version differs from other sources in describing Tostig as travelling to Norway to seek an alliance with its king, Harald Hardrada. Cargile identifies narrative similarities in Norwegian sagas and suggests that this indicates textual transmission across the North Sea at a time when earlier scholars have argued for its disappearance. Daniel Talbot uses Stephen of Whitby's foundation narrative of St Mary's Abbey in York to show how such texts could manipulate the past to deal with present concerns. In Talbot's view, Stephen's text chooses to foreground the monastery's links to Norman power as part of a dispute with the Archbishop of York. In an act of deliberate cultural forgetting, Stephen downplays the site's pre-Norman history and its connections to the important Scandinavian figure St Olaf.

Later chapters demonstrate just how far Norman influence stretched. Norman intervention in Ireland receives attention in Claire Collins's essay on John de Courcy, 'Prince of Ulster'. Using military skill, religious patronage, and diplomatic astuteness (including a marriage to Affreca, princess of the Isle of Man), de Courcy established an 'Irish Sea network' (p. 141) with strong cultural and political links to northern England and southern Scotland. Mahir Shaab Abdusalam examines a letter of 1137 from the Fatimid Caliph Al-Hafiz to Roger II, Norman king of Sicily, and includes the first English translation of this fascinating item of correspondence. The analysis shows a generally cordial relationship between the two regimes, in which religious differences did not preclude expanding commercial and diplomatic ties. Alexandra Vukovich's essay takes us to medieval Rus and the central Eurasian steppes, tracing cultural and economic exchange through assessment of coinage discovered across this vast area. It is well known that 'northmen' had their part to play in this story during the

Viking era, but Vukovich emphasises ideas of fluidity, interaction, and competition among various actors, including Byzantine and Islamic powers. In doing so, she seeks to downplay the idea of emerging 'states' and to see the region instead as one of overlapping economic interests among a variety of peoples on the move.

David Bates, among the most eminent scholars of Norman affairs, provides an 'Epilogue' reflecting on the new perspectives offered by the disparate collection. A key point is that focusing on connections by sea rather than land, an under-explored aspect of the Norman experience in Bates's view (despite his own work and that of others before him on the possibility of a cross-Channel 'empire') helps to place their stories alongside and within broader histories of diaspora and migration. So much work has been done on 'the Normans' as a distinct group that there is a risk of seeing them as a self-contained entity, easily delineated in time and place. While Norman figures are naturally central to many of these essays, in others they are tangential. Ironically, it is this very marginalisation that helps us to understand more clearly their place in the wider currents of medieval European society: as one group among many, difficult to define and circumscribe despite their often-cited pride in their collective achievement. In that sense, the volume makes an important contribution to our perspective on 'Norman worlds'.

Lindsay Diggelmann, *The University of Auckland*

Carroll, Shiloh, *The Medieval Worlds of Neil Gaiman: From Beowulf to Sleeping Beauty*, Iowa, University of Iowa Press, 2023; e-book; pp. 222; 6 b/w illustrations; RRP US$27.50; ISBN 9781609389147.

The Medieval Worlds of Neil Gaiman: From Beowulf to Sleeping Beauty by Shiloh Carroll provides the first monograph-length work exploring the influence of the medieval in Neil Gaiman's massive body of work. In this volume, Carroll highlights Gaiman's debt to and use of everything that has preceded him—from mythology and fairy tales to history and sociology (p. 169), in particular, from the medieval period. One of the strengths of Carroll's book is the breadth and variety of works she cites and analyses: from Gaiman's novels, short stories, and graphic novels to television and film adaptations of his work, so the reader really gets a sense of his eclectic, playful oeuvre. Helpfully, Carroll defines medievalism early on in her introduction as 'any postmedieval-period interpretation of the medieval period or medieval culture' (p. 5) and argues that Gaiman follows in the tradition of eminent medievalist writers such as J. R. R. Tolkien and Walter Scott (p. 4) in gathering inspiration from the medieval and adapting and reworking it. Carroll's book contains an introduction, eleven chapters, and an epilogue, each examining how Gaiman reuses, transforms, and modernises the medieval in his works. One frustration with the book's layout was the use of endnotes, which disrupts the reading flow (especially in the e-book version I accessed). Footnotes would have provided a more seamless experience for readers.

Chapters 1 to 4 examine Gaiman's magnus opus, the graphic novel series *The Sandman* (1989–) (recently adapted as a streaming series), including the spin-off

four-part comic series *The Books of Magic* (1990–91) set in the same DC comics universe as *The Sandman* (featuring the character Timothy Hunter, a twelve-year-old magical apprentice), arguing that it is heavily inspired by medieval texts. In Chapter 1, Carroll draws parallels between Morpheus (the eponymous 'Sandman') and the Everyman character from medieval morality plays, suggesting that both embark on an allegorical journey in which they must face their 'own faults, sins, and virtues' (p. 10) and inevitable death. In Chapter 2, Carroll investigates how Gaiman reuses the narrative structure of dream vision texts such as the poem *Pearl* in *The Sandman*. In Chapter 3, Carroll looks in depth at Morpheus's journey to the underworld: this storyline demonstrates how texts such as Dante's *Inferno* and Milton's *Paradise Lost* form the foundation of Gaiman's examination of the afterlife and of the nature of evil. Chapter 4 examines the influences on *The Books of Magic*: Carroll argues that it echoes the medievalism of *The Sandman* and includes 'many of the same themes and motifs' (p. 47). Carroll demonstrates how *The Books of Magic* draws on medieval texts such as dream visions, Arthuriana (a fourteen-year-old Tim encounters Merlin), as well as fairy tales ('Faerie' is its own separate realm in the Sandman universe and is also featured as a location in *Stardust*), to root Tim's adventure 'in medieval mythology' (p. 48).

Chapter 5 analyses the cult-classic novel *Good Omens*, co-written by Gaiman and Terry Pratchett (1990), and its streaming series adaptation (2019). Carroll examines how Gaiman (and Pratchett) draw upon and play with numerous sources, upending readers' expectations of the biblical Revelation, Arthurian legend, and medieval women's hagiography. For example, the nuns of the Chattering Order of Saint Beryl are Satanists and 'they take vows to talk incessantly about whatever's on their minds rather than of silence' (pp. 64–65), and the *Good Omens* streaming series adds a scene (absent from the book) set in mythical Arthurian England, where Aziraphale and Crowley are dressed in a mishmash of anachronistic armour, evoking the playful medievalist feel of much of Gaiman's work.

Chapters 6 and 7 examine Gaiman's love of fairy tales, including his reworkings of *Cinderella* (*The Sleeper and the Spindle*, 2012) and *Snow White* (*Snow, Glass, Apples*, 1994), and the novel (1997) and the film adaptation of *Stardust* (2007), which is heavily influenced by both the romance and fairy-tale genre. Carroll demonstrates Gaiman's subversion of 'harmful fairy-tale tropes or traditions' (p. 104) in these works—for example, the conventional gender roles are queered in *Cinderella*; Snow White is a vampire; and in *Stardust*, Tristan takes the heroine Yvaine captive, rather than rescuing her (leading to Yvaine having to save herself), and the couple ends up not living 'happily ever after', but instead happily for a while (although the film adaptation unhelpfully 'corrects' this).

Chapters 8 to 11 look in depth at Gaiman's fascination with mythology and stories from the North. In Chapter 8, Carroll examines how Gaiman retells the stories from the medieval Icelandic Eddas in his book *Norse Mythology*. Chapter 9 provides a thorough analysis of Gaiman's fascination with reimagining Norse myths, focusing on his bestselling, award-winning novel (2001) (and its streaming

series adaptation, 2017–21), *American Gods*. The novel centres on 'Norse mythology and the structure of the Eddas as they lead up to Ragnarök' (p. 124). Carroll shows how Gaiman, in *American Gods*, draws on mythologies from around the world and throughout history, as well as 'the American immigrant experience' (p. 124). Carroll argues that Gaiman's novel suggests that in America there are 'no truly native peoples or gods, only imported ones, and they all eventually die out' (p. 124). Carroll argues that in *American Gods*, Gaiman balances medievalism with 'purposeful antimedievalism' (p. 123), rejecting romanticised medievalist views that the Middle Ages 'were realer and more stable than modernity' (p. 124), and instead pulling mythology into the modern gritty era; for example, the character Wednesday is an 'American version of Odin in an inherently non magical world' (p. 125), relying more on cunning than any sort of godlike power.

Chapters 10 and 11 focus on Gaiman's fascination with the Old English poem *Beowulf*, which he has adapted, appropriated, and reimagined multiple times, including the animated film adaptation (directed by Robert Zemeckis, 2007), co-written by Gaiman, as well as short-form retellings by Gaiman: the narrative poem 'Bay Wolf' (1998) and novella 'The Monarch of the Glen' (2004, set in the *American Gods* universe). Carroll argues that the medievalism in Zemeckis's *Beowulf* is twofold: the film depicts a medieval-coded world that superficially claims authenticity while also deconstructing and reassembling the poem, searching for a new story within in a way that modernises it (pp. 140–41). Carroll argues that both 'Bay Wolf' and 'The Monarch of the Glen' are like most medievalist texts in that they draw from and reference medieval literature while addressing modern concerns (p. 154). However, they also 'broaden, generalise, and mythologise *Beowulf*' (p. 154), using its structure and its monsters to explore contemporary issues: not simply retelling *Beowulf* but appropriating it.

An in-depth knowledge of Gaiman's works is not required to appreciate this volume: Carroll provides plot and character summaries as needed, and a summary of his wide-ranging authorial history in the introduction. However, this book will particularly appeal to fans of Gaiman's work, as well as those interested in adaptation studies and medievalism more broadly.

Marina Gerzić, *The University of Western Australia*

Czarnowus, Anna, and Janet M. **Wilson**, eds, *New Zealand Medievalism: Reframing the Medieval*, New York, Routledge, 2024; hardback; pp. 236; 2 b/w illustrations; RRP AU$244.00; ISBN 9781032262574236.

This unique and insightful book is a lovely survey of all things medievalistic to be found in New Zealand, a much-needed work that hopefully inspires more scholarly attention in the future. As co-editors Anna Czarnowus and Janet M. Wilson note, New Zealand's 'encounter with the European past began in the colonial era; images and concepts of the medieval were imported, largely from Britain, at a time when nation-building drew extensively on the Victorian heritage' (p. 1). The essays merge together smoothly to recognise the ways that the studies

of European medieval works have infiltrated and dominated studies in originally non-European contact zones. Medievalism studies thus becomes an analysis of post-colonialising scholarship of medieval studies that both recognises the fact that Indigenous societies lived during the very same period as the European Middle Ages and (hopefully) avoids a Eurocentric analysis of those different cultures of the same time but different spaces. Acknowledging and then moving beyond the imperialist Eurocentricism that founded medieval studies in New Zealand, the book demonstrates how medievalism has appeared and developed inconsistently—both within and beyond the classroom and library—to result in a highly complex and complicated European medievalism, some of which has been enriched by Polynesian culture.

There are four parts to the book. The first cleverly serves as a sort of grounding, providing an orientation that establishes medieval and medievalism scholarship and pedagogy that is both emanating from and thriving within New Zealand. Wilson, Stephen Knight, Rebecca Hayward, and Madi Williams recognise New Zealand's unique tailoring of medieval studies at its universities, as well as its more global scholarly contributions to medieval studies, and together form a solid base upon which the other three parts may build.

In the first chapter, Janet M. Wilson provides a history of medieval studies in New Zealand academies that both demonstrates the numerous connections that the scholarship has to European medieval studies while also emphasising New Zealand's 'more interdisciplinary and cross-disciplinary' approaches that engage with post-medieval perspectives ranging from indigenous to post-colonial histories (p. 23). Recognising the impact that medievalism has upon medieval studies, Wilson traces the evolution of medieval studies from the 1850s to today, particularly in terms of philology, racial consciousness, geopolitics, and nationalism. Throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, New Zealand academics firmly held ties to philology and history that were clearly Eurocentric. However, New Zealand medievalists also periodically investigated 'cultural and linguistic paradigms of Pacific and Polynesian cultures' (p. 36) as well.

The second chapter, by Knight, continues the discussion of medieval studies tied to New Zealand by examining the lives and works of George Russell (1923–2006), Bernard Martin (1929–2004), and Grahame Johnston (1929–1976). All three were trained at the Victoria University of Wellington and then left New Zealand to work in Australia. Knight explains that these three scholars 'were faced by distance and its challenges, and always sought proximity, to their research, to their students, to their communities, however imagined' (p. 60). They were popular men who were linked together by their 'intellect, wide curiosity, and geniality'; they were 'major scholarly intellectuals, potential giants of the profession' who did not have sufficient support in their Australian academic setting (p. 47).

The third chapter, by Hayward, discusses the relationship between New Zealander P. S. Ardern and two generations of students of medieval studies,

including J. A. W. Bennett, who then went on to distinguish himself as a Professor of Medieval and Renaissance English at Cambridge University. Ardern was not as well published as he might have been; however, Bennett called Ardern 'probably the most precise, acute and self-effacing scholar that has come out of—and returned to—New Zealand', and Rebecca Hayward argues that Bennett never forgot the influence of Ardern, much less 'his origins and went to considerable trouble to maintain his connections with New Zealand intellectual life' (pp. 71–72). One such impact Ardern seems to have made upon his students, including Bennett, is the recognition of the importance 'of acknowledging Māori culture and language' (p. 74). It is this movement beyond medieval studies in order to 'apply the tools he knew to the language and histories of Māori and other Pacific languages, and to show an interest in New Zealand lexicography and new trends of social realism in New Zealand literature, shows that his intellectual curiosity led him towards the concerns of medievalism' (p. 76).

In the fourth chapter, Williams seamlessly moves the reader from the expansion from imperialist influences of European medieval studies upon New Zealand heritage to Māori influences upon those imperialist influences. Williams crosses time and space in order to connect the disconnected, globalising through map analyses. The chapter places New Zealand medievalism studies into the larger context of globalisation of the Middle Ages by showing parallels between the Māori and European medieval worlds in terms of genealogy, place, and space. It argues and demonstrates that 'conceptions of time and space' (including cosmology, symbolism, and mythology) 'are more similar in *te ao Māori* and medieval Europe than in the post-Enlightenment European world that Māori came into contact with from the eighteenth century' (p. 93).

The second part initiates the move away from medieval scholarship to studies of samples of New Zealand medievalism by examining the ways that medieval manuscripts have been collected, shared, and taught.

First, Victoria Condie describes the efforts of A. H. Reed, who strove to make connections between the medieval manuscripts he collected and contemporary times (in the twentieth century). He would destroy manuscripts in order to share as many pieces of 'the medieval' with as many people as possible. Condie argues, however, that such a collection, 'in becoming ahistorical and asynchronous […] allows for a dialogue between past and present' (p. 101). In such a light, the 'past can be understood as coexistent with the modern' as 'a sideways relationship, the off-modern, which suggests the unexplored, the shadowy, the tangential, and the anticipatory' (p. 102). I get the strong impression that, while Reed's collection may appear to be an attempt to give something back to future generations, it also appears to be an attempt to reclaim parts of the past, as parts, fragmented and therefore vague.

In the next chapter, Simone Celine Marshall offers an alternative to the informal learning experiences offered by A. H. Reed: instead of destroying manuscripts, she teaches them to create new manuscripts that are mimetic of the

medieval. Dunedin Public Library not only holds the Reed Collection, but also several other smaller collections of medieval manuscripts. Marshall discusses a new curriculum that takes advantage of this large collection in order to engage students, as well as the general public. She argues that 'there are new ways to teach medieval literature that are engaging' and that these new approaches have 'resulted in important new research' that further extends learning outcomes (p. 116). Teaching skills such as cutting and writing with a quill, making and working with ink, paint, and glue, learning to appreciate the challenges of gilding a manuscript, and learning the process of bookbinding—'folding and cutting quires, stitching quires together, and attaching covers'—does indeed demonstrate a wide range of learning experiences! (While the process of making vellum was not a part of the curriculum, one student did explore this learning experience and has shared it with others.) The conclusion is that such experience 'generates new research topics and discoveries and is an excellent means for attracting cohorts of non-traditional students, from young children through to the elderly' (p. 128).

The third section moves from pedagogy toward creativity, contemporary art (music, film, and architecture) imitating or inspired by medieval art.

Jonathan Le Cocq describes New Zealand's medievalist music revival of the 1970s and 1980s, and how that revival has continued to sporadically exist into today. In describing this phenomenon, Le Cocq points out that 'little of what is discussed has any historical connection with music as it might have been experienced in the Middle Ages' (p. 133). Nevertheless, this movement represents a 'rediscovery of largely forgotten or abandoned repertoire' and such a recreation involved 'using historical instruments, practices, and techniques' (p. 134). Le Cocq provides a useful list of 'ingredients' needed for such a revitalisation. He then eloquently explores the line between musical medieval studies and musical medievalism as it happened, globally. Le Cocq concludes that this 'period of discovery and active engagement' was an 'interesting cultural moment' and 'part of a broader pattern of enquiry into' New Zealand's musical identity, 'a likely source of as yet unrealized potential' (p. 146). Indeed, one might fantasise about some sort of Māori influence upon recreated medieval European music—and I would certainly love to hear that.

How can we not examine New Zealand medievalism without examining Peter Jackson's cinematic adaptations of *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy and *The Hobbit*? Jackson's desire to film the works of Tolkien was also a desire to promote New Zealand tourism. Anna Czarnowus brilliantly connects to the discussions of New Zealand imperialist Eurocentric medievalism and how it has come to connect with, disconnect from, and even ultimately exploit (re-exploit?) and marginalise Māori culture. Arguing that, while New Zealand has proven to be 'a perfect location' for setting J. R. R. Tolkien's medievalist works, 'the employment of Māori actors and extras now looks inappropriate in the present cultural climate' and that the film productions 'came at the cost of some exploitation of the landscape and its Indigenous inhabitants' (p. 151). The use of Māori people and the New Zealand

setting is possibly tied to a nostalgia for a pre-colonialised past that is viewed as 'primitive' and closely tied to nature, and where the Māori are used to represent the savage, the evil in the films, just as they were viewed by white settlers in the past. 'Adapting Tolkien for the screen in New Zealand', Czarnowus concludes, 'led to a peculiar cultural recolonization of the former settler colony' (p. 161).

This discussion of Māori exploitation and marginalisation is continued by Alexandra Barratt, who examines the imposition of European medieval architecture—particularly stained-glass windows—and the values that architecture symbolises upon New Zealand landscapes. Beginning in 1844 with Saint Peter's Cathedral (Hamilton), a 'Gothic Revival' of 'ecclesiastical architecture' exploded during the nineteenth century and into the early twentieth century, including the Christchurch cathedral that was so badly damaged by an earthquake in 2011 (p. 168). These Gothic buildings became an imposition of European medievalism upon Māori landscapes, dominating one set of cultural values over another. 'Nothing shrieks "medieval" more loudly than a stained glass window', Barratt observes (p. 169), and while enthusiasm for medievalist architecture waned, 'Stained glass windows', he concludes, 'are not so easily discarded on a whim—especially when set in concrete' (p. 180).

Each of these three sections of the book builds up to the fourth and final section, which is focused on political medievalism.

In the tenth chapter, Ellie Crookes describes Havelock North, a community that strove to model itself as a medieval European village that celebrates the qualities of 'Merrie England'. This intended utopia (and apparent cult) turns medievalism into an act of white imperialism, as it displaces the Māori culture that originally occupied these lands. New Zealand was originally promoted to colonists as a place for building utopian settings, including a setting that could be 'closer to nature and socially more cohesive and fulfilling than life in 19th-century England', one that could allow for the adoption of a life as lived during the European Middle Ages, as understood by Victorians (p. 185). Havelock North, which was founded in the early twentieth century, is such a settlement of colonial medievalism. The mission of Havelock North reminds me of the mission of the Amish who settled in the United States, as both groups formed in a response against industrialisation; however, while the Amish communities are primarily settled into eighteenth-century life, the people of Havelock North 'conceived of themselves and their community *as* medieval' in identity, via medieval-style printing and bookbinding, 'magical rites and rituals said to connect them on an astral plane to medieval figures' (p. 185). Their uniquely medieval and Anglocentric arts and crafts movement was tied to 'occult and/or spiritualistic esoteric societies', such as (and particularly) The Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn and The Order of the Table Round (p. 190). The Order of the Table Round was not only Eurocentric, but 'undoubtedly influenced by another medievalist trend of the era: the chivalric gentleman's/boy's club' (p. 193). Indeed, Crookes concludes that this community

appears to be, ultimately, a nest for white supremacy as it strives to push Māori culture, if not the Māori, out of existence.

The last chapter almost seems to serve as the culmination of all the previous chapters, a sort of conclusion to what it means to bring medieval studies and medievalism to a non-European settlement, to New Zealand. Brenton Tarrant, a twenty-eight-year-old from Australia, came to Christchurch, New Zealand, and murdered fifty-one Muslim people and injured another fifty at the Al-Noor mosque and the Linwood Islamic Centre on 15 March 2019. Louise D'Arcens carefully and insightfully interprets this massacre as part of the larger, global landscape of right-wing medievalism. 'At the heart of this chapter', she writes, 'are the questions of what it means for this appalling act to have taken place in New Zealand, and its relationship to the phenomenon of medievalism, understood here to mean the long afterlife of the Middle Ages, in which they have been subjected to a wide range of cultural and ideological interpretations and adaptations, including extremist uptakes' (p. 202). I do not at all think that she is claiming that all acts and symbols of medievalism are evil, and indeed there is nothing concretely medieval about a post-industrial mass shooting. However, D'Arcens argues that 'despite the ultra-modernity of its platform, for the gunman, the shooting was embedded in a deeper history of ethno-religious conflict, of which it was the most recent expression', that is based upon two facts: 'the historical narrative into which Tarrant inserted himself is fundamentally medievalist', and his 'violent act is part of a longer practice of using the period to service aggressive exclusionary ideologies ranging from nationalism to neo-fascism' (p. 203).

While this event is clearly 'medievalism at its devastating worst' (p. 212), D'Arcens concludes that the Christchurch massacre also seems applicable to the entire book, on more subtle levels. Like this horrible event, each chapter of the book 'epitomizes the contradictions of contemporary medievalism in former colonial environments' (p. 212). While several of the book chapters demonstrate medievalism at its inspiring, globalising, and diversifying best—demonstrating that not all practices of medievalism culminate in such a tragic end—together, these chapters point to the potential of such an end. This book is both a celebration of the moulding fires of medievalism and a caution against getting burned.

Carol L. Robinson, *Kent State University at Trumbull*

de Beer, Susanna, *The Renaissance Battle for Rome: Competing Claims to an Idealized Past in Humanist Latin Poetry* (Classical Presences), Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2024; cloth, pp. xi, 262; 10 b/w illustrations, 18 colour plates; RRP £76.00; ISBN 9780198878902.

Mary Shelley in *The Last Man* has her character Lionel Verney call Rome 'sovereign mistress of the imagination', an apt epigraph for this book, which is about the idea of Rome, or, as the author might prefer, the image of Rome. This book's timeframe (1350–1600) embraces a corpus of texts which begins with Petrarch (1304–1374) and includes, among others, Aurelio Lippo Brandolini

(1454?–1497), Giovanni Michele Nagonio (*c*. 1450–*c*. 1510), Cristoforo Landino (1424–1498), Conrad Celtis (1459–1508), Ulrich von Hutten (1488–1523), Joachim Du Bellay (*c*. 1522–1560), and George Buchanan (1506–1582). Some of these poets are better known than others. While Joachim Du Bellay has generated an enormous bibliography, Brandolini's collection of poems dedicated to Pope Sixtus IV still has to be read in manuscript form, and only excerpts of Nagonio's panegyrical epyllia have been edited and translated.

A lot happened in this time: in the early fifteenth century the papacy returned to Rome from Avignon, and the popes began to rebuild the city; at the end of the century, the Italian Wars ravaged Italy, and in 1527, the Holy Roman Emperor, Charles V, presided over the Sack of Rome. In the meantime, the Protestant movements had taken off, leading to the European wars of religion. Susanna de Beer keeps these upheavals in mind, but her main focus is elsewhere. She aims to use the lens of humanist Latin poetry to explore cultural and intellectual history. Hence, her 'battle for Rome' is a rhetorical war of ideas. From her unpacking of the multiple facets of the image of Rome, a rather complex argument emerges in which ambivalences and oppositions, and images and counter-images are deployed to fill out the notion of a battle: past versus present, insider versus outsider, linear time versus circular time, decline versus revival, Rome on the Tiber versus 'Rome' elsewhere. The humanist poets' writings on Rome provide the starting points for the teasing out of these patterns of thought ('the battle dynamic also generated a very elaborate and complex set of rhetorical and literary strategies', p. 211). Still, the book also seeks to give these poets a privileged position in relation to them, as 'gatekeepers', 'spin doctors', and inheritors of the Roman legacy.

The 'Introduction' ('Forging Privileged Links to an Idealized Past') lays out the premises and goals of the book and, importantly, its affinities with classical reception studies, imagology (the study, often in comparative literature, of typical characterisations of groups or nations), and heritage studies. From imagology too comes the notion of 'pairs of an image and its complete opposite, the so-called counter-image' (p. 11), a dominant analysis tool in the book. Explicating through allusion the link between the humanists' poetical expressions and images and those of their ancient forebears is also fundamental to the book's method. The four main chapters are each built around a theme, itself divided into a constellation of related ideas: 'A New Golden Age: Rome Reclaims her Ancient Past', 'Weaponized Images of Roman Virtue and Vice', 'The Symbolic Resonances of Rome's Cityscape', 'The Humanist Poets as "New Romans"'.

To give an idea of how this works, Chapter 1 has four sections, taking off from Petrarch's aim 'to bring back the imperial, moral, physical, and literary legacy of Rome to Rome' in one go (p. 25): 'The Name Rome', 'Petrarch's Rhetoric of Return and Renewal', 'Papal Rome Reborn', and 'Literary Rome and the Cultural Hegemony of Italy'. In these de Beer ranges over Petrarch's poetical debate with Jean d'Hesdin concerning the proper place of the papal Curia, Celio Calcagnini's *Epigram for Raphael* (1520) and the search for Rome in Rome, the corpse and

rebirth of Rome in Janus Vitalis's paired poems *Ancient Rome* and *Rome Restored* (printed 1553, but he was already writing in the time of Raphael and Pope Leo X), quoting briefly from Du Bellay's *Tomb of old Rome* (Du Bellay was a close reader of Vitalis). She then returns to the Golden Age evoked at the accession of Pope Leo X by the antiquarian poet Andrea Fulvio (the arts are revived from a long sleep), linking this to Petrarch's prophecy of an awakening from the sleep of oblivion, a *renovatio studii* with a *renovatio Romae* (*Africa*, IX. 453–57).

The author is aware that her study is complex (and difficult to summarise), but she makes every effort to present the analysis clearly. For example, often, the footnotes contain lapidary summaries of the topics relevant to a poetic extract under discussion. We encounter this first in a footnote to a snippet from Petrarch's metrical Epistle to Pope Benedict XII (1. 2. 15–19) in which an unrecognisable personification of Rome identifies herself by proclaiming 'Roma vocor'. The footnote lists 'ROME PERSONIFIED. THE NAME ROME. ROME UNRECOGNIZABLE' (p. 24, n. 1). Attractively illustrated and wearing its learning lightly, this book provides a 'metaperspective' on the poetical exploitation of images of Rome that will be of interest to all scholars of Renaissance Rome.

In most cases humanist Latin poetry has not benefited from the long tradition of study devoted to classical Latin poetry, so a few corrections and suggestions may be in order: on p. 38 I would translate the last line of Calcagnani's epigram as 'searching is typical of a great man, finding of God' not 'finding of the greatest God'; on p. 61 in the Battista Spagnoli poem *vestigia* (literally 'footprints') seems to mean 'feet', as kings bowing before the popes' 'vestiges' seems unlikely; on p. 115 n. 63 in the von Hutten poem there is no need to change *vendit* to *venit* if *ipsam* does not displace the usual *ipsaque* ('she herself is for sale' rather than 'she even sells herself'); on p. 151 in the Enea Silvia Piccolomini poem, for *iudicium* read *indicium*; on p. 153 in the Paolo Spinoso poem, the couplet beginning with *Hei mihi* is difficult and different versions of the text are found, but I would translate 'Alas! That the hill which had subjected the whole world is a place of punishment for the guilty who have deserved it' (a reference to the courts in the medieval Palazzo dei Senatori on the Capitoline).

FRANCES MUECKE, *The University of Sydney*

De Temmerman, Koen, Julie **Van Pelt**, and Klazina **Staat**, eds, *Constructing Saints in Greek and Latin Hagiography: Heroes and Heroines in Late Antique and Medieval Narrative* (Fabulae, 2), Turnhout, Brepols, 2023; hardback; pp. 182; 1 b/w illustration; RRP €70.00; ISBN 9782503602820.

This slim volume originated from papers delivered at a conference held at Ghent University in 2016, and presents a wide of chapters held together by their focus on narrative strategies and techniques in hagiography used to construct (or reconstruct) saints, using the term hero(ine) 'as a concept referring quite simply to the main character in a story', but also in the sense of 'an extraordinary character'

(p. 19). In line with many other recent scholars, the authors take a wide view of what constitutes hagiography, including not just acts and passions of the martyrs and saints' Lives, but also *apophthegmata patrum* and what are here called 'edifying stories', and collections of posthumous miracles.

Some of the authors have recourse to twentieth-century narratological critics (Mikhail Bakhtin, Roland Barthes, Algirdas Julien Greimas), but their chapters are refreshingly light on theoretical jargon, and for these scholars, the hagiographers whose texts they analyse have control over their narratives, with very few readings going against the grain of the text. Overall, the writings covered are seen as rhetorical, persuasive narration, with the authors usually seen as being successful in achieving their aims.

Following Koen De Temmerman's introduction, which sets out the parameters and aims of the collection with admirable clarity, Stephanos Efthymiadis looks at 'Saints and Secondary Heroes in Byzantine Hagiography', a systematic review covering a very wide range of writings over several centuries. Next, Sabine Fialon, in the only French-language chapter in the collection, looks at a range of martyrs' Acts and Passions from northern Africa from the second to the sixth century to examine the influence of ancient eulogy (*laudationes funebres*, encomia, panegyrics, and 'l'éloge civique' (*civica laus*)). Fialon also shows how authors draw on the model of the Stoic sage, and even of the epic hero. Close textual analysis underpins a very useful look at how hagiographers modify prior rhetorical paradigms to suit new Christian virtues.

Anne Alwis's chapter looks at how hagiographers have revised earlier texts to highlight the rhetorical and logical skills of two female martyrs, in the anonymous metaphrasis of Tatiana (seventh–eleventh century) and the *Passion of Ia* from by Makarios (thirteenth–fourteenth century). Alwis implies that these revisers had singular intent, going into detail on Makarios's probable political motives, but leaves it up to the reader to decide between a number of hypotheses about the reason why they chose female martyrs to express their views.

In a tour de force, Piet Gerbrandt's chapter on the late ninth-century *Metrum de vita S. Galli* by Notker Balbulus and others analyses how the complex narrative of the prosimetric text 'may be interpreted as the expression of literature's impotence to fully match the adventures and accomplishments of so great a hero as St Gallus' (p. 105). Although the authors are seen to be controlling the narrative, by their techniques and multitude of voices, they are shown as undermining its effectiveness.

'Money and Sainthood', Christian Høgel's contribution, looks at Greek Lives of doctor saints to show how hagiographers portrayed these physicians (who as professionals were always paid for their services) as *anargyroi* (moneyless): 'a new type of miracle was invented—the non-payment' (p. 154). This is a useful addition to studies of new Christian ethics on the social spending of money.

Finally, Virginia Burrus provides a chapter looking at all hagiographical narratives dealing with Saint Constanti(n)a, who is baldly described as 'fictional'.

Burrus, unlike others in this volume, engages with notions of the interplay of texts from the point of view of a reader to whom all texts are available; for instance, reading an earlier text in the light of a later one. One text, *On the Feast of Constantia*, does not derive directly from an earlier Life; faced with the question of an 'original' text, 'But what if there is no "original"? Not, for example, a Life and its condensed version, but a mesh of intertextuality—epitomes all the way down and across' (p. 167). This is a thought-provoking paper, and goes beyond the construction of the heroine *in* a narrative, to creating one beyond any one text.

This kaleidoscopic collection will be of interest to anyone interested in the field of hagiography, and adds to a growing number of studies treating its texts as narratives rather than simply mining them for historical facts or as a window on ancient society. Its diversity of approaches and wide variety of narrative types show how large and fertile a field there is for future study. It is furnished with good bibliographies and a useful index featuring concepts as well as names; the volume is handsome and contains very few typos.

Bruce McClintock, *Perth, Western Australia*

Faulkner, Amy, and Francis **Leneghan**, eds, *The Age of Alfred: Rethinking English Literary Culture c. 850–950* (Studies in Old English Literature, 3), Turnhout, Brepols, 2024; hardback; pp. 598; 17 b/w, 3 colour illustrations; RRP €140.00; ISBN 9782503606651.

The Age of Alfred: Rethinking English Literary Culture is an edited collection that brings together essays originally planned for a 2020 symposium at the University of Oxford and later redesigned as a series of online workshops due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The volume consists of twenty-two contributions, including the 'Introduction' and 'Afterword', which take a variety of approaches to the period 850 to 950 and its literary developments. In the collection, the editors seek to continue the current scholarly trend of looking beyond questions of Alfredian authorship to examine other 'threads of connection' (p. 21) between texts created during this period. Without discarding the significance of Alfred, the volume opens fruitful new avenues of study into a fascinating period of early English literary history.

Following Amy Faulkner and Francis Leneghan's 'Introduction', which highlights key issues associated with Alfred and the 'royal corpus' of texts linked to him, the collection is divided thematically into four sections. Section 1 groups together essays that offer context for the literary culture of the period. Christine Rauer examines Mercian literary developments, and Robert Gallagher the composition and transmission of Latin texts in the late ninth century. Taking a more explicitly theoretical approach, Georgina Pitt utilises assemblage theory to analyse the Alfred Jewel's 'agency, its "thing-power"' (p. 105) and links this with the creation and transmission of Alfredian ideology. Nicole Guenther Discenza discusses Alfredian texts' consistent interest in geography, while also noting their divergent treatment of the Jews.

Essays in the second section use methodologies of textual criticism, source study and stylistic analysis to examine the reuse of Latin materials to create vernacular works. Greg Waite and Daniel Anlezark both challenge previously held assumptions, Waite about the transmission of the Old English *Bede* and Anlezark about Alfred's authorship of the Old English *Pastoral Care*. Close engagement with the Old English text and its sources is the focus of the remaining essays in this section: Susan Irvine examines the concept of style in the neglected Old English *Dialogues*; Karmen Lenz highlights the important relationship between melodic refrains and the poetic text of the Old English *Boethius*; Adrian Papahagi emphasises the distinctiveness of the Old English *Boethius* in comparison with an Old High German counterpart; and Leslie Lockett utilises manuscript sources to argue that the translator of the Old English *Soliloquies* was likely influenced by their knowledge of the commentary tradition for Boethius's *De consolatione philosophiae*.

Section 3 draws together contributions focused on vernacular theology and philosophy. Erica Weaver argues that alterations from the source in the Old English *Boethius* point to a broader interest in 'cultivating mental discipline' (p. 342), while Michael Treschow places the *Boethius* in conversation with the *Soliloquies* to examine their shared contemplation of the divine. M. J. Toswell offers a comprehensive overview of key issues related to the ninth-century psalter in early medieval England. Emily Butler examines the significance of the vernacular introductions that accompany the Old English *Prose Psalms*. Richard North's chapter suggests that in the poem *Andreas*, the representation of Christ as the ship's captain is also potentially 'a version of Alfred himself' (p. 429).

The final section of the volume focuses on recurring political and legal themes. Omar Khalaf examines how the translator of the Old English *Orosius* makes changes to the source material to position Julius Caesar to resemble Alfred. Three essays in this section then consider the somewhat neglected reign of Alfred's son Edward the Elder. Emily Kesling discusses the significance of scribal activity (potentially taking place at Nunnaminster in the tenth century) in developing and transmitting the narrative of the Alfredian translation programme. Courtnay Konshuh considers the possibility that MS A of *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* was compiled during Edward's reign. The final two essays in this section focus on Alfred's laws, with Stefan Jurasinski examining the *domboc* and its interpretation after Alfred, and Katherine O'Brien O'Keeffe unpacking the meaning of the hapax *folcleasung* in Alfred 32. The collection finishes with an 'Afterword' from Malcolm Godden, which questions why, in the middle of the ninth century, there seems to have been a shift in taste from vernacular verse to prose. This places texts discussed throughout the volume into a wider context of shifting attitudes to writing and private reading.

A key strength of this collection is its variety, as it draws together a range of sources and emphasises the value of approaching material through different methodologies. In addition, by challenging traditional understandings of the

corpus, it highlights the importance of less-studied works and places these in a valuable conversation with the more 'canonical' Alfredian texts. When reading sequentially through the chapters, the different perspectives that individual contributions take on Alfred's involvement in the translation and transmission of texts can occasionally be jarring, yet this is also a helpful reminder to the reader that the authorship question remains unresolved. As well as being a valuable resource as a collection, scholarship on individual texts is also advanced, with particular attention paid to the Old English *Boethius* and *Soliloquies*. This collection will be useful for students, as it provides a helpful introduction to the ongoing discussions about Alfred and the texts associated with him, while also pointing to a wider corpus of connected works that students might be less familiar with. Overall, this volume emphasises the dynamism and ambition of an important period of early English literary history. It is an excellent reminder that there is still much to understand when it comes to the creation, production, and transmission of texts from 850 to 950, and a challenge to continue searching for connections between these works beyond their potential Alfredian associations.

Emma Knowles, *Australian Catholic University*

Firth, Matthew, *Early English Queens, 850–1000: Potestas Reginae* (Lives of Royal Women), New York, Routledge, 2024; hardback; pp. xx, 299; 7 b/w illustrations; RRP US$142.50; ISBN 9780367760922.

This book discusses pre-Norman English queenship between 850 and 1000. Matthew Firth argues that 'the evolution of pre-Norman English queenship is a continuum' (p. 2). Firth argues further that changes to queenship began before the period under study. The women's individual circumstances, therefore, mattered. He suggests throughout that attitudes to queenship were incremental and inconsistent, with a key determinant of the level of authority held being the woman's relationship with the king. Many studies on female rule and queenship in medieval and early modern Europe have made a similar point. Firth's contribution is significant because this study defines a queen as someone who was not only intimately related to the king but also 'who was empowered to exercise royal *potestas*' (p. 5).

Firth uses the scarce sources well. They include surviving charters that the women witnessed, wills, contemporary chronicles, hagiographies, and later medieval historians' writings to analyse the lives of fourteen women who were concubines, queen consorts, and consecrated queens to Wessex kings, who, during this period, gradually came to govern most of England. Various titles were used to describe these women in the surviving documents, including 'queen', but also 'wife' or 'concubine'. Some of the kings repudiated their concubines to take another, often because they bore no children. Firth often had to provide reasoned guesses when gaps in the sources made it impossible to provide answers to questions, and he does so with a method that analyses various possible options based on the specific historical context. For this reason, the book is a good

methodological example of how history is written when sources are few and gaps need to be filled.

Because of such gaps, Firth is only able to provide substantial biographies of three out of the fourteen women under study: Æthelflaed (Chapter 1), Eadgifu (Chapter 2), and Ælfthryth (Chapter 3). The women's histories are respectively used to elucidate the book's three key themes: the development of institutional queenship, life cycles of queenship and what Firth calls 'queenly afterlives'. All the other women under study are referred to as required when what we know of their story is relevant to Firth's narrative. The author's intention, therefore, was to write a 'biography of English queenship itself over 150 years' (p. 3).

The three chapters on the individual queens all have the same structure. The sources for the protagonist are described and discussed, followed by a section on youth, family, and marriage, their key activities, and a discussion of the key theme the protagonist's life elucidates. Æthelflaed, known as 'Lady of the Mercians', was the daughter of Alfred the Great, who married Æthelred of Mercia. She then co-ruled the kingdom with her brother, Edgar the Elder, after the death of her spouse and then ruled on her own until her own death. Firth argues that later historians granted her the title 'queen' because of the character and exercise of rule, while contemporaries' title of 'Lady' testified to her nobility alone. Both groups viewed her positively. Eadgifu, who was Æthelflaed's sister-in-law, was the queen consort to Edgar the Elder. She was the queen mother of kings and the queen grandmother of kings. Her life included periods of exile from the court followed by a return to favour, then exile, and another return to court. The key lesson drawn was that a queen's authority sometimes was stronger as she aged. This phenomenon usually occurred when the relationship was that of a mother to a king or a grandmother to a king. Ælfthryth was one of only two of the queens under study who were formally consecrated as queens. This illustrates the development of the queenly continuum. Other women who were not consecrated were referred to as queens in the charters they witnessed and in other sources. Ælfthryth's consecration did not prevent various rumours from circulating suggesting that she had been complicit in the murder of her husband, King Edward the Martyr. Firth uses her story to analyse how easily a queen's reputation could be besmirched.

The next chapter analyses how a woman could become a queen and what her role, duties, sources of wealth, and sources of influence were. In effect, these were procreation, cultivating allies, intercession and mediation, religious patronage, wealth, and the extent of her ability to exercise queenly power. The last chapter examines later historiography until the later Middle Ages. The familiar tropes about consorts and female rulers that are often negative and occasionally positive emerge here and are expertly analysed. However, I am surprised that the author waited until the 'Conclusion' to introduce new information to compare English queenship with Ottonian women in East Francia. This analysis demonstrated the similarities in how queens acted and were represented across tenth-century Europe. It might have been better placed in the previous chapter to add to Firth's

argument about queenly afterlives or, if not there, as a relevant discussion in the 'Introduction'.

Nonetheless, this is an excellent book. It provides new methodological approaches to the study of histories with limited surviving sources and adds much to the growing research on female rule and representations of female power in medieval and early modern Europe.

Natalie Tomas, *Australian Catholic University and Monash University*

Green, Michaël, and Ineke **Huysman**, eds, *Private Life and Privacy in the Early Modern Low Countries* (Early European Research, 19), Turnhout, Brepols, 2023; hardback; pp. 316; 52 b/w, 24 colour illustrations; RRP €100.00; ISBN 9782503604442.

Private Life and Privacy in the Early Modern Low Countries, edited by Michaël Green and Ineke Huysman, is a collection of eleven essays that explore privacy and private life with the intent to add nuance to the study of early modern privacy, which is an exciting and, as evidenced by this volume, rapidly developing field. The editors stress that privacy should not be considered in the modern sense; in the early modern period, privacy, they argue, should be conceptualised as a threshold, changing depending on time and circumstance (pp. 22–23). The essays examine expressions of privacy and private life through the analysis of textual, architectural, and illustrated sources, which affords the volume a broad scope, inclusive of individual notions of privacy and an expansive sense of how space was conceived and manipulated to create privacy, especially within and outside the home. Its examination of these themes serves as a novel entry in the Early European Research series and adds a new dimension to the series's themes.

The essays are not grouped thematically but fall largely into two broad categories: examinations of textual sources, such as 'egodocuments' (p. 15) and correspondence, and explorations of architecture and personal space, such as Michael Green's examination of personal writings and Frank Schmidt's analysis of the use of space within the home of Amsterdam's elite. All of the essays contribute well to the overall theme, offering differing examples of how privacy manifested in the early modern Low Countries. To achieve this, many of the essays employ a modified and expanded version of Mette Birkedal Bruun's 'heuristic zones' (pp. 17–18); this provides a useful tool to examine how privacy was manifested and can be conceptualised within a variety of different spheres, which facilitates a unified methodological approach.

Personal space is a prominent theme throughout, which is exemplified by Ad Leerintveld's analysis of Constantijn Huygens's 'Dagh-werk' ('Day's Work'), a poem that provides intimate insight into the author's thoughts and view of his marriage. Leerintveld contends that it also illuminates Huygens's view of the home as a retreat from the wider world. The theme of privacy through architectural design is subsequently extended in Heidi de Mare's essay, which examines Simon Stevin's 1649 architectural treatise *Onderschchyet vande Oirdeningh der Steden*

(*On the Layout of Towns*). De Mare argues that Stevin's division of the house, which was predicated on his views of dignity and household order, was designed to keep inhabitants both safe and comfortable and was rendered possible through his division of the house into zones for specific occupants and activities.

Freek Schmidt's essay examines the increasingly segmented nature of the homes of the Amsterdam elite and argues that this was to accommodate greater levels of privacy through the dedication of space for specific uses. In another essay that examines themes of space and connection, Hannah de Lange analyses Benjamin Furly's library and its subsequent auctioning. De Lange uses Furly's book collection to trace his personal and professional networks. Most strikingly, however, de Lange shows that the auction catalogue reveals details about the contents of Furly's private spaces, which enables a deeper analysis of his life. In a final essay devoted to space and privacy, Sanne Maekelberg explores privacy in the houses and estates of the nobility, considering the estates of Charles de Croy as case studies. Maekelberg finds that the renovation of space to create privacy was vital in creating a sanctuary for de Croy at court.

An analysis of 'egodocuments' and correspondence comprises the second large grouping of essays. Michaël Green examines four such documents, including almanacs, diaries, and a poem, analysing how they exhibit aspects of privacy aided by the altered version of Birkedal Bruun's 'heuristic zones', arguing that the private information contained in these documents pertains to the mind, body, and home. Judith Brouwer's essay analyses letters captured from Dutch ships by the English navy, looking at how notions of privacy are reflected therein and how the relationship between the writer and receiver of a letter alters thresholds of privacy. Similarly, Fayrouz Gomaa and Ineke Huysman analyse how the thresholds of privacy in letters sent by Willem IV of Orange-Nassau differ between those sent to his wife and mother. The authors utilise heuristic zones to show that some aspects of the letters dictated greater privacy than others and thus can be employed to quantify the closeness of the recipients to the writer.

In his essay, Jørgum Wadum examines how paintings could evoke a sense of privacy, stressing that paintings often hung in private spaces, making them inherently restricted viewing, but, importantly, that certain types of painting were often more private than others, such as classically themed paintings or 'homescapes', which invited feelings of intimacy from the viewer. Tirtsah Levie Bernfeld's essay delves into notions of privacy in the community of Portuguese Jews in Amsterdam. Levie Bernfeld examines wills and the community's administrative records, the sources revealing a closely guarded community that set its boundaries carefully, aiming to keep internal transgressions private, partly out of fear that any transgressions would further ostracise them in their new country.

Private Life and Privacy in the Early Modern Low Countries offers a well-rounded examination of how historians can find expressions of privacy in the early modern Low Countries. Throughout the volume, space becomes increasingly pertinent as the contributors emphasise how the division of space, particularly

within the home, provided a catalyst for the development of notions of privacy. Moreover, the volume presents several methodological approaches that will support further study into privacy, including the use of adapted heuristic circles employed by Green, Brouwer, de Lange, Schmidt, and Gomaa and Huysman, and Gomaa and Huysman's use of artificial intelligence to help sort through and compile databases of primary sources based on keywords and phrases which can then analysed by the historian. As a result, this volume offers a series of useful and insightful examinations of privacy in the Low Countries, demonstrating how new approaches and tools can be employed to further study privacy and private spaces in the early modern period.

John Chinn, *The University of Queensland*

Heil, Uta, ed., *From Sun-Day to the Lord's Day: The Cultural History of Sunday in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle* Ages (Cultural Encounters in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages, 39), Turnhout, Brepols, 2023; hardback; pp. 528; 8 b/w illustrations, 2 b/w tables, 1 map; RRP €125.00; ISBN 9782503598260.

Where did our seven-day week with its increasingly eroded day of worship and rest come from? The eighteen essays in this collection attempt to answer this question by tracing the history of Sunday observance from the fourth to the eighth centuries. Most of the papers were presented at a conference held in Vienna in 2019. All are in English, except for one late entry in German, which is provided with an English abstract, dealing with a recently discovered inscription from Asia Minor preserving a complete text of a late antique imperial constitution on the observance of Sunday. There are two strands to the promotion of Sunday observance, secular (imperial and later royal) and ecclesiastical. Both powers seemed equally dedicated to it, but its development and enforcement were a very patchy and gradual affair.

The seven-day week, with its days each allocated to a planetary deity, was introduced to Rome during the reign of Augustus in the first century CE and had become standard throughout the Roman Empire by the second century. The planetary week began with 'the day of Saturn', which was considered unlucky for undertaking important business. In 321, Constantine decreed that all governors and inhabitants of cities, including all professional groups, should rest on the 'day of the Sun'. The only judicial activities that were permitted on that day were the release from paternal authority and the freeing of slaves. Clearly, there is nothing specifically Christian about this proclamation, and for its interpretation as such, we must rely on ecclesiastical commentators. Previously, Thursday, that is to say 'the day of Jupiter', had been a day of rest from judicial activity, and indeed, it continued for several centuries to be observed as a day of rest in southern Gaul. In addition, the Romans had many festival days. Slaves were included in the general freedom from work on these days. Absent, however, from Constantine's proclamation is anything about what is to be done on the new day of rest. Fritz

Mitthof argues that there were in fact, a series of Sunday decrees by Constantine and that these were intended to enlist the support of Christians in Constantine's war against Licinius. The term 'day of the Lord' gradually replaced 'day of the Sun' in Romance languages.

So much for the Christianisation of pagan holidays. But what about the Jewish Sabbath? It would be a mistake to see Sunday as a Christianisation of the Jewish Sabbath, since early Christians were entirely hostile to the Judaic ritual holiday. One immediate mark of difference was the new interpretation of Sunday as the first day of the week, in contrast to the Jewish Sabbath as the seventh day. A very considerable quantity of ecclesiastical commentary was devoted to this reinterpreted numbering, with a strong emphasis on Sunday as a day of rejoicing in commemoration of the resurrection of the Lord. For this reason, both fasting and kneeling to pray were forbidden on Sundays. The clergy were also left with the task of filling with religious ceremonies the potential vacuum of Constantine's new day of rest.

Little has come down to us about Sunday observance in the Eastern Roman Empire, possibly because the Church there was too preoccupied with theological debates, heresies, and schisms to address a relatively uncontroversial topic. However, in the recently converted Germanic kingdoms of the Western Roman Empire, Sunday observance became a lively area of competition between the ecclesiastical powers and the ever-warring rulers over who had the right to impose penalties for non-observance. The two faces of Sunday observance were the prohibition of work and the obligation to attend religious services, neither of which was necessarily welcomed by the laity. To modern eyes, the punishments could appear extreme. In the eighth century *Lex Baiuvariorum*, travelling on a wagon drawn by oxen led to the loss of the animal, whereas fieldwork was punished with flogging, loss of a third of one's possessions, and for slaves with loss of the right hand.

As is usual, our sources are biased towards those produced by the clergy, and to a lesser extent, secular rulers. In both cases, these tell us what those in power thought people should be doing and were potentially failing to do. However, several of the essays address the question of what people may actually have been doing on Sunday. Constantine initiated Sunday as a day of rest, but he clearly didn't think it applied to him. There is no diurnal rhythm to his official tasks as emperor. More in line with expectations, none of the synods of late antiquity issued an official proclamation dated to a Sunday. Rather, the clergy devoted Sunday to competitive preaching and liturgical performances. Tombstones and epigraphic evidence from Palestine show an increasing acceptance of the holiness of the Christian Sunday from the fourth to the seventh centuries. Dated business records from Egypt from the sixth to the eighth centuries show a low on Sundays and a high on Mondays, suggesting an avoidance of public but not private business on the Lord's Day. This pattern largely continued after the Muslim conquest in 639.

This is a highly learned and very technical book intended for a specialist academic audience. There is necessarily a certain amount of overlap in the main ecclesiastical sources, as they are treated by different authors in relation to different aspects of the topic. At the same time, the sheer range of approaches that have been brought to bear would render the various chapters of interest to different specialists, ranging from those concerned with liturgical history to biblical commentary to church–state relations. It is difficult to imagine a more comprehensive history of the development of the Christian Sunday. A very impressive achievement.

Lola Sharon Davidson, *Sydney, New South Wales*

Knight, Stephen, *Nature and Medieval Literature*, Cardiff, University of Wales Press, 2024; cloth; pp. xiii, 312; RRP £80.00; ISBN 9781837721023.

Stephen Knight is indefatigable. The author of more than thirty books, he has produced groundbreaking, readable studies of Chaucer, King Arthur, Merlin, Robin Hood, crime fiction, and Australiana, among other topics. This current volume returns particularly to his interest in medieval literature across more than five centuries, in multiple genres, and from several national and linguistic traditions. Written largely during the COVID-19 pandemic lockdowns, with the aid of any scholar's unsung heroic companions—colleagues in 'Interlibrary Loans'—Knight has arranged this current study into seven chapters, each of which is devoted to medieval texts that he has often taught and with which he is, as a result, more than familiar. Each chapter discusses a broad corpus of medieval texts reflecting previous scholarship and noting where Knight does and does not agree with what others have written about these texts. And each text is examined—often for the first time—in terms of its relations to nature.

Chapter 1 discusses the uses of nature in medieval Welsh literature, using both well-known texts such as *Culhwch ac Olwen* and the *Mabinogi* and a series of shorter, oft-neglected texts. In the earliest surviving Welsh texts, nature is readily found but just as readily criticised for being different from human society. The natural contrasts and compares with the human in both positive and negative ways. Medieval Welsh literary fascination with nature is varied and always imaginative, and medieval Welsh literature explores a world of animals interwoven with the world of people around them and closely tied to a complex, multifaceted approach to the religion that underlies the entire world of nature.

Chapter 2 compares three interrelated medieval texts: Chrétien de Troye's *Perceval*, *Peredur,* and *Sir Perceval of Galles*. Knight offers close readings of these texts, looking at their common narrative pattern: a rustic turns knight, the now-hero ventures alone into the world, and the central character eventually rights the wrongs that he has caused. But this pattern sees nature simply as a background against which the hero is observed. The texts examined in Chapter 1 are more fully engaged with nature than those in Chapter 2. Here, the knight enters the natural world as simply a step in his martial, social, and even Christian development as a hero.

Chapter 3 discusses Chaucer's use of nature in his major works. Knight points out that previous scholarship has certainly noted the presence of nature in Chaucer's works, but that such scholarship has not fully engaged with a more important issue: the uses to which the poet puts nature in *The Book of the Duchess*, *The Parlement of Fowles*, *Troilus and Criseyde,* and *The Canterbury Tales*. Knight's lengthy, in-depth discussions of the last work bring a fresh perspective on how we might read both the portraits of the tellers and the tales they tell. Tellers whose portraits more fully engage with nature not surprisingly tell tales that similarly more fully engage with nature.

Chapter 4 discusses the works of Robert Henryson and William Dunbar. Both freely and often engage with nature, but Henryson stands alone. His underrated *The Morall Fabillis* in terms of the corpus of medieval nature-oriented literature 'must be seen as an absolutely major contribution to the literature of the period' (p. 175). Dunbar turns nature into a revelatory literary device. In contrast, for Henryson, the natural and human worlds are complementarily, mutually, and even allegorically interrelated. An animal may be as interesting as a human, but a human is socially and spiritually superior to an animal. For Henryson, moral fables become moral Christian allegories.

Chapter 5 discusses no fewer than twenty medieval romances, including *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* and works by Thomas Malory. Given romance's popularity as a literary genre in the Middle Ages, it is not surprising that the texts discussed offer a wide variety of responses to the natural world. In medieval romance, the world of the natural, and even of the supernatural, confronts a growing world reflecting urban development—the medieval romance thus remains consistently and closely attuned to the realities and the mysteries of the natural world.

In Chapter 6, Knight turns to one of his greatest and most long-standing interests—the intersection of nature with the myth of Robin Hood from the earliest ballads through several centuries of literature, with a nod to film thrown in for good measure. Knight's discussion here could easily serve as an introduction to Robin Hood for anyone wanting to study the development of the myth of the multifaceted English outlaw. Nature always plays a central role in the Hoodian myth because nature provides the context in which Robin Hood acts. No other outlaw tradition, Knight convincingly argues, is so consistently linked to the myth of nature as that of Robin Hood and his merry men.

Knight's study concludes with a discussion of the uses of nature in the corpus of medieval English lyrics. These lyrics engage nature itself, nature as seen in texts about May-time and love, nature as a spiritual force, nature as a negative in a human context, nature as ironic, and nature as vulgar. The influence of these lyrics is far-reaching—so much that followed, from Donne to Auden, is rooted in these lyrics—and so much of other medieval literature is reflective of the varied and rich responses to nature found in these shorter, but nonetheless interesting, and at times complex, literary texts.

I first met Stephen Knight a quarter of a century ago at a conference on Robin Hood held in Nottingham. I have always found him to be an engaging, quick-witted, and supportive colleague whose successive publications have quickly become must-read resources. *Nature and Medieval Literature* is the latest such work. The range of texts discussed is amazing; the insights offered fascinating. I began this review by pointing out that Stephen Knight is an indefatigable scholar and literary critic, and for that, we all remain in his debt. *Nature and Medieval Literature* marks a major contribution to our understanding of the role nature plays in medieval literature, and, as such, it can rightly be read as a foundational text for future ecocritical studies of the medieval.

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

Lamb, Mary Ellen, Garth **Bond**, and Steven W. **May**, eds, *The Poems of William Herbert, Third Earl of Pembroke*, New York, Iter Press, 2024; paperback; pp. lxx, 288; 7 colour plates; RRP US$61.95; ISBN 9781649591005.

In the seventeenth century, every educated person wrote poetry (and indeed many people who had little education). Poetry was a form of currency, mostly in an unprofessional context, used as a means of social exchange, as friends wrote poems to, for, and about friends; to, for, and about lovers, both real and imagined. They also wrote poems about politics and power in a period when rhetoric remained a formidable weapon. The subject of this edition, William Herbert, was a significant figure in the early seventeenth-century political world, though he has until now not been seen as having any real significance in the poetic world. William Herbert came from a family that had a high profile both from a political and a literary perspective: his uncle was Philip Sidney, and his mother, Mary Sidney, was a significant translator who continued Philip's psalm translations and translated Robert Garnier's play *Marc Antoine* in 1590. William held a series of important political positions under King James I and was a significant literary patron. Most people would recognise him as, along with his brother Philip, one of the 'incomparable pair of brethren' to whom Shakespeare's first folio was dedicated.

It is hard to know exactly how many poems Herbert wrote. As the editors note, poetry ascribed to Herbert circulated throughout the seventeenth century in various manuscript compilations. This was also a time when print anthologies mimicked the popular manuscript miscellanies that contained poems by writers ranging from highly visible to obscure. A good example of this is a 1660 volume, edited by the famous John Donne's rather infamous son John Donne, titled *Poems Written by the Right Honorable William earl of Pembroke, lord steward of his Majesties household*. Donne printed a number of poems involved in an exchange between Herbert and his friend Benjamin Rudyerd (Rudyerd was also a close friend of Ben Jonson). But Donne also printed a considerable number of poems he ascribes to Herbert that were written by other people. The editors of this volume

decided to include three categories of poems ascribed to Herbert: those definitely by him (there are only eight of these), those probably by him (in a kind of sliding scale, and there are nineteen of these), and a further seventeen that might be by him, though attribution of them is quite uncertain. This policy means that the edition does not just introduce readers to Herbert's poetry, but also reflects an approach to editing described by scholars like Jerome McGann and Don McKenzie as 'social', reflecting the way that poetry circulated in this period in a way that meant it was in a state of flux, as it was reinscribed, rewritten, and reattributed according to the taste of compilers and readers.

So, this edition of 'Herbert' poems allows us to retrace poetry as it circulated and recirculated. This could, of course, be done with the poetry of a considerable number of writers from the period who are yet to receive sustained editorial attention. Still, apart from his cultural prominence and the quality of some of his poems, Herbert's final claim on our attention is his relationship with his first cousin, Mary Wroth. Herbert wrote poetry, but Mary Wroth was a poet. Wroth also wrote a large prose romance and a pastoral play. She and Herbert had a long sexual relationship, which resulted in two illegitimate children and in Herbert's thinly disguised representation as a character in Wroth's writing. This extended to Wroth giving a Herbert poem ('Had I loved but at that rate') to Amphilanthus, Herbert's avatar in the continuation of Wroth's *Urania*. Wroth is now part of the early modern literary canon, and this edition of Herbert's poetry adds considerably to the context for Wroth's literary endeavours.

The edition itself is a magnificent achievement. The poems can be read in clear and fairly uncluttered versions with basic explanatory glosses at the foot of the page, but they are surrounded by a wealth of contextual material. This includes detailed information on the variant versions and how they circulated, with the editors specifically committed to the idea that the way poetry is copied, changed, and placed in proximity to different poems is a form of interpretation. This historicist approach is continued with considerable detail on the personal, political, and social contexts for the poems, and also musical contexts, given that there are five musical settings extant, one by John Dowland, and four by Henry Lawes. As a whole, therefore, the volume is not just a representation of Herbert's poems, but a kind of test case for an entire early modern literary environment. This is, overall, an exemplary edition, and while its affordances are perhaps only possible because of Herbert's relatively small *oeuvre*, even when we include dubious attributions, it stands as a model for imaginative editorial principles applied to early modern writing.

Paul Salzman, *La Trobe University*

Mazalová, Lucie, *Eschatology in the Work of Jan Hus*, translated by Nicholas **Orsillo** (Europa Sacra, 27), Turnhout, Brepols, 2021; hardback; pp. 251; 3 colour illustrations; RRP £78.00; ISBN 9782503593050.

Jan Hus appears in this book as an eschatological figure whose ideas were lived. Eschatology becomes a key to understanding Hus. These were claims advanced by Lucie Mazalová in her 2015 Czech-language book with the same title. An anglophone readership can now consider her thoughtful elaboration of this essential theme in this translation by Nicholas Orsillo. Notably, the Czech version is one hundred pages longer than the English text. This is left unexplained. Nevertheless, this is an important work that advances scholarship about several themes pertaining to eschatological thinking in the Middle Ages. It also focuses the spotlight on what was occurring in Bohemia during the compelling Hussite age.

Mazalová charts new territory in this study, but her conclusions generally concur with those advanced by Amedeo Molnár and Jana Nechutová in the period 1954–1996. Their work is reliable. The present book is divided into six chapters. Mazalová addresses the manner in which Hus's eschatology developed, the idea of Antichrist in his sermons, his letters, his systematic theological writings and those of other Czech thinkers, including Jan Milíč of Kroměříž, Matěj of Janov, Jakoubek of Stříbro, and also John Wyclif. Each figure played crucial roles in religious thought and practice in Bohemia between around 1370 and the 1420s. Chapter 5 discusses Purgatory in Hus's well-known sermon *Dixit Martha ad Iesum* (1411), followed by a short concluding chapter. The latter draws attention to several key ideas. First, pervasive threats in Hus's sermons tend to outweigh positive motivation as a stimulus for good behaviour in the face of the end of the world. Second, Matěj's emphasis on the soteriological role of the Eucharist as an eschatological factor. Third, Hus was neither an apocalyptic nor a millenarian. Fourth, the close connection between morality and eschatology in Hus's theology. Fifth, reform is fundamentally connected to eschatology. The read is energetic, though I felt the chapter on the sermon *Dixit Martha* lacked the appeal of other chapters.

The main takeaways are worthy of acceptance and should attract additional research and application. These include the value of Hus's sermons, the idea that eschatological factors appeared more present to 'heretics' (p. 48), suggestions that Joachite influence in Bohemia cannot be proven but Saint Bernard of Clairvaux's can, the question of Milíč's influence on Hus, the priority of schism being a more important factor than the plague (relying on the work of Peter Segl), and how establishing direct and singular influences on Hus are notoriously difficult. Importantly, Mazalová develops her thesis that moral reform was the principal stimulus for Hus (a point so well established it is de rigueur) and cites Václav Novotný: 'Practical morality dominates over speculative functions' (p. 88). Hus relies upon Scripture in this regard, a matter he elaborates on in his Sentences commentary: Everything necessary for salvation is outlined in the Scriptures. Whoever is ignorant can learn there what they lack: 'Whoever has been smitten

by the devil and is wounded in sin, will find there medicinal foods which, through penance, will restore one to salvation' (p. 88).

Importantly, Mazalová draws the distinction between Antichrist as an external opponent and the possibility of an internal threat; the antithesis of Christ. The heretic, then, may be Antichrist. Hus and Matěj considered this likely. This is especially sobering for Hus, since he would end his life under the vexing condemnation of that very judgement. In the context of the papal schism that roiled Western Christendom for forty years, Hus finds ammunition supporting fears about the eschatological turmoil confronting the Church. His language is revealing: 'Church of Antichrist, ministers of Antichrist, sons of Antichrist, degenerate, apostasy, demonic monks, perverted converts, Sadducee presbyters, heretical clerics', and so on (pp. 119–21). Ultimately, Hus identifies corrupt priests with Antichrist, whom he characterises as wicked, dangerous, 'babbling comedians, croaking frogs, and chirping crickets' (pp. 136, 156). The passionate commitment of the Prague preacher gradually produced a martyr's complex, which eventually morphed into a death wish. In consequence, Hus increasingly challenged others to embrace the example of Christ and endure the ultimate cost of discipleship. By 1413, Hus was prepared to identify those who opposed him as Antichrist and sought to exclude them from the pulpit.

Traditionally, many scholars have privileged the influence of Wyclif rather than the native Czech tradition. Mazalová is frank in her admission that while direct links are difficult to establish, it is striking that many similarities between Hus and his predecessors Milíč and Matěj are evident. The latter suggested the gradual abandonment of daily communion signalled the advent of Antichrist and the gloom of eschatological anxiety (p. 174). Mazalová considers the influence of Wyclif but astutely observes that Hus always modified his English counterpart to suit the situation in Bohemia. Likewise, whenever the ghost of Johann Loserth begins to emerge once more from the past, it is helpful to understand that 'shared vocabulary is most frequently the result of using the same biblical passages as sources' (p. 179). One finds common elements in Milíč, Matěj, Hus, and Jakoubek. Refreshingly, Mazalová concludes that Wyclif was not a major influence on Hus's eschatology (p. 182).

One of the book's many strengths is the serious engagement with Hus's work and the many references thereto. Some readers may be frustrated by substantial untranslated Latin passages (pp. 101–03, 104, 106–07, 108–11, 112, 114–19, 123–25, 128–29, 131, 135, 138, 144–45, 152–53, 192, 198–99, 203–04, 208–09, 215–17). Happily, the Czech quotations have been rendered into English. Curiously, Mazalová utilised the Herbert B. Workman and R. Martin Pope English-language edition (Hodder and Stoughton, 1904) of Hus's letters rather than the later edition by Matthew Spinka (Princeton University Press, 2017). On six occasions, Mazalová felt obligated to modify the Workman and Pope translations (pp. 140–42, 147, 152). Mazalová is a meticulous and scrupulous scholar. She has produced an important study in a major language on an important topic focused on a largely

overlooked area of inquiry. It can be recommended to those interested in religious history and theology.

Thomas A. Fudge, *University of New England*

Mulieri, Alessandro, Serena **Masolini**, and Jenny **Pelletier**, eds, *Marsilius of Padua: Between History, Politics and Philosophy* (Disputatio, 36), Turnhout, Brepols, 2023; hardback; pp. 440; RRP €115.00; ISBN 9782503601335.

Alessandro Mulieri's 'Introduction' to this volume notes the ambiguating contexts for Marsilius of Padua's work, and then situates the contributions to this stimulating collection. It is divided into three parts: sources, contemporaries, and usage.

Part I largely focuses on Aristotle and Augustine; with scope being sacrificed to cohesion. Roberto Lambertini outlines Marsilius's astute reading of Aristotle, showing that oddities of citation can be explained by his access to a little-known version of the Moerbeke translation. Marco Toste (Chapter 3) surveys the Aristotelian commentary central to Marsilius's Parisian environment, emphasising that of Peter of Auvergne, used by Marsilius to qualify Aristotle and to accentuate collective prudence. Chapters 1 and 3 should be read together. Gert-Jan Van der Voorde (Chapter 2) begins with the question of whether or not Marsilius was influenced by or used Augustine. The issue is misconstrued; it is not a matter of choosing between valid options, but of whether putative 'influence' is redundant or euphemistic of unsubstantiated assertion (see also Serena Massolini on p. 323). Nevertheless, the comparative discussion of Christ's Roman trial succinctly reveals Marsilius's adaptive incisiveness. Whereas for Augustine it had an eschatological significance in marking culpability for the Crucifixion, for Marsilius the trial was decisive proof of Christ's sanctioning the supremacy of secular authority. Iacopo Costa (Chapter 4) provides a lucid elaboration of that epitomised Erastianism, and Mulieri (Chapter 5) returns to collective prudence, giving timely attention to its centrality in Marsilius's creative extrapolation from Aristotle.

In Part II, Juhana Toivanen (Chapter 6) helpfully explores the emotions in both *Defensor pacis* and *Minor*. In the process, however, a considerably later psychological concept gets erratically attributed to Marsilius, reorganising, if distorting, his diffuse vocabulary of virtues, dispositions, and passions. Ferdinand Deanini (Chapter 7) highlights a systematic revision of Aristotle and a major riposte to Aquinas: the tensions between the good life of the Marsilian *civis* and of the *perfectus* rejecting worldly advantage. Marsilius's deft exploitation of the political implications of the poverty controversy, albeit a little simplified (pp. 179, 184), is shown to cohere with his reading of the Trial of Christ. Shifting context, Gianluca Briguglia (Chapter 8) discusses Marsilius as a Ghibelline. Accepting his involvement with a Ghibelline alliance and commitment to the imperial cause, even concluding that Marsilius was a philosopher of Ghibellinism (p. 208), he nevertheless undermines the explanatory power of the concept. Firm distinctions

between Guelph and Ghibelline, republican or princely government, become insecure, Marsilius as imperial or republican theorist close to chimerical. If categorising Marsilius as a philosopher of Ghibellinism thus becomes confusing or incoherent, accepting him as a defender of peace enters the cloudy region of motherhood statements and the antagonisms they can disguise. Thus Charles Briggs (Chapter 9) thoughtfully outlines the mutual hostilities between the Dominicans and Marsilius and what superficially seems to have been common ground: peace-loving disapproval of faction and the imperative to balance secular and ecclesiastical authority. He remarks in conclusion that had Marsilius not been so hostile to the papacy, the Dominicans might have found him unexceptional (p. 245): indeed, had he written something completely different. An insightful essay by Jacob Langeloh (Chapter 10) demolishes the contention that *Defensor pacis* is fundamentally eschatological. The target is George Garnett's thesis in *Marsilius of Padua and 'the Truth of History'* (Oxford University Press, 2006), its crucial omissions (where's Antichrist?) and mistranslations. Instead, he highlights contingency in Marsilius's narrative of tyrannous ecclesiastical corruption, a precondition for his work's imperative force. Chapter 11 (by David Dusenbury) is anomalous. Largely reprinted from Dusenbury's informative book *The Innocence of Pontius Pilate: How the Roman Trial of Jesus Shaped History* (Hurst, 2021), it is inadequately integrated. Contrary to Van de Voorde, Marsilius's reading is held to agree with Augustine's. The *topos* of a great refusal central to the trial is, however, correctly taken in Marsilius's case to be the divine refusal to constrain secular authority.

Part III is a rather attenuated miscellany, optimistically deemed 'The Marsilian Moment'. Masolini analyses the citation of Marsilius in anti-Venetian polemic, principally by Campanella and Bellarmine. She illustrates an often-neglected aspect of usage, negative and emblematic exploitation of a name in the creation of politico-religious doxographies, often achieving wider cultural significance. Cary Nederman (in Chapter 14) conjures interestingly with the name in a more academic way. Against the grain of earlier chapters, he suggests that Marsilius breaks with Aristotelian political science, but instead can be partially aligned with contemporary rational choice theory, currently fashionable in United States political science. The result may tell us more about the applicability of a largely mathematically reductive modelling of politics than Marsilius; but it does capitalise on philosopher Alan Gewirth's insight that for Marsilius the civic good life is closer to *homo economicus* than for Aristotle. It also underlines an important crux: the tension between Marsilius's hyperbolic announcement of Aristotle's inadequacy given the great cause of *intranquilitas* confronting Christendom, and his elaboration of Aristotle's remarks on the political functions of a priesthood, the pathology of which isolates that cause. Frank Godthardt (in Chapter 15) exemplifies the exploitation of Marsilius in Nazi Germany. There were several, seemingly opportunistic attempts to reposition *Defensor pacis* as foreshadowing the Third Reich, but Richard Scholtz, a convinced National Socialist and major

Marsilian scholar, resisted such ideological appropriation, despite recognising Marsilius's 'generic' applicability (Nederman's apt term, p. 401). Finally, Gregorio Piaia delightfully discloses the ghostly presence of Marsilius in *The Name of the Rose*, and convincingly explains why Umberto Eco relied on a superannuated vision of him as an impassioned democrat; the image facilitated an encoded commentary on Eco's own disappointed commitments in the post-1968 violence of the *anni di piombo.*

The work is well produced, with few infelicities: 'disinterested' is misused (pp. 192, 398, 400); 'syllogism' (p. 260) should be 'enthymeme'; 'the masses' as a collective noun (pp. 9, 78, 133) and 'trans-historical' (pp. 131, 133) are both distracting. For the question 'begged' (p. 127), read 'raised'. A proper conceptual index would have been preferable to an inconsistent computer-generated word list, and to the almost obligatory requirement that essays are dutifully summarised. These were the only parts of this book that were wearing. In conversation, Cary Nederman once predicted I would eventually return to Marsilius. I was doubtful, but he was right. On reading this volume, I wished he'd been more so.

Conal Condren, *The University of New South Wales*

Schwarz, Brigide, *Careers and Opportunities at the Roman Curia, 1300–1500: A Socio-Economic History of Papal Administration*, translated and edited by Wolfgang P. **Müller** (Europa Sacra, 29), Turnhout, Brepols, 2024; hardback; pp. 337; 9 b/w illustrations, 8 b/w tables, 1 b/w map; RRP €90.00; ISBN 9782503595382.

Wolfgang Müller presents ten essays that Brigide Schwarz selected from her prolific output before her death in 2019. They concentrate on two themes—the curial benefice market and its links to the provinces, and the evolution of curial offices—in which Schwarz explores the sociohistorical dynamics underlying administrative history. They centre on the fifteenth century, which lacks the synthesis provided by Bernard Guillemain for the Avignon period, but range into the thirteenth and fourteenth.

Chapter 1 surveys the benefice market and illustrates the links between curia and provinces through a detailed analysis of Zurich and Worms. Clerical clientele at the curia formed pools of benefices which they kept in their circle through exploiting papal rules about vacancies in the curia, exchanges of benefices, and resignation in favour of a third party, while local clergy, for their part, exploited curial connections. Papal provisions diluted local elites' control of patronage and expanded graduate opportunities until concordats with rulers restricted them after 1450. Chapter 2 details Nicholas of Cusa's use of patron–client relationships to advance his career and then to extend his influence as a cardinal: not even an avowed reformist could avoid such entanglements, which contemporaries did not see as inherently wrong. Using the mountaineering metaphor of a 'rope team', Chapter 3 analyses a patronage network from Hanover which, between 1410 and 1460, leveraged an early opening at the curia and later the Council

of Basle to develop a benefice market across northern Germany and Livonia. The relationship was symbiotic: the curia offered graduates better opportunities than local patronage, but it needed local collaboration to ensure papal provisions worked. The relationship faded as the benefice market collapsed after 1450, and curial service seemed remote and unrewarding. Chapter 4 works out in detail, from papal and local sources, the career of Nanker, bishop of Kraków (1320–26) and Wrocław (1326–41), supplementing chronicle accounts and clarifying his reliance on royal and papal favour. Chapter 5 illustrates the value of the Vatican archives for regional historians with a fine-grained study of clerical dynasties and patronage patterns, clerical and lay, in Saxony from the late fourteenth to the mid-fifteenth centuries. Schwarz argues convincingly that historians need to use both papal and local sources to understand variations across time and place and avoid misleading generalisations. The chapter concludes with a study of the so-called exemption from metropolitan jurisdiction of the see of Meissen in 1399, arguing that it amounted to less than historians have thought.

Turning from the periphery to the curia, Chapter 6 traces the venality (sale/purchase) of offices in the Age of Absolutism to the medieval concept of the benefice. The distinction between entitlements (*beneficia*) and duties (*officia*) allowed the payment of substitutes to do the work, while canonical prohibitions against simony brought papal powers of dispensation into play to enable the sale of office. Curial positions became part of the benefice market, and the practice spread to secular government: fifteenth-century popes and monarchs needed the income.

The survey of the Roman curia from the Great Schism to the reform councils (1378–1447) in Chapter 7 synthesises Schwarz's themes. Sharp declines in revenue for the competing papal lineages undercut reform ambitions because the popes had to indulge curialists' exploitation of their positions. The bureaucratic efficiency of the Avignon era declined: networks of personal dependency undermined hierarchy; offices became quasi-benefices with permanent officials employing substitutes, undermining discipline and competence; staff guilds became powerful, facilitating the sale of offices. After the Schism, Martin V and Eugenius IV could neither reverse these trends nor retrench excess staff after the merger of the three rival curias, because they needed to consolidate support. The curia increasingly became segmented into competing patronage networks until the concordats with lay rulers stifled the benefice market. The popes then became dependent on their prerogatives of grace and were dragged into Italian politics.

The remaining chapters treat aspects of the curia in detail. Chapter 8 tracks changes in the organisation, duties, recruitment, and pay of the papal couriers from 1200 to 1470. Chapter 9 documents the career of Leon Battista Alberti in the papal chancery, establishing the chronology of his progression from secretary to the regent of chancery to abbreviator, scribe, and finally reader in the *audientia litterarum contradictarum*. His literary, artistic, architectural, and political interests remain offstage as Schwarz reconstructs the structures and social dynamics of his

curial work environment, including its growing venality. Chapter 10 traces the position of Vice-Chancellor at the curia from modest origins in 1216 to one of the most powerful and prestigious posts, thanks to its role in processing petitions for benefices, until eclipsed by venality after 1471. A coda urges scholars to look beyond the chancery to other curial offices, attend to the story behind the formulaic documents it produced, and follow the links between the curia and local society. The *Repertorium Germanicum*, to which Schwarz made a distinguished contribution, provides an invaluable tool for this.

These studies, though only a sample, are a fitting memorial to a distinguished scholar. Based on detailed knowledge of papal and local records and prosopography, they mostly target a specialist audience. But Schwarz's work, especially the overviews in Chapters 1 and 7, deserves a wider readership. The emphasis on integrating central and local perspectives and on attention to context and personal connection corrects the tendency to read off history from theory and from chroniclers' narratives. Some might object that Schwarz's approach, taken neat, has the opposite limitation: the fifteenth-century councils, for example, appear only as they impinged on the benefice market. A rounded portrait of the era will indeed encompass the contest of both ideas and patronage. But that is no criticism of Schwarz's meticulous scholarship in her chosen field, and we should be grateful for her contribution to the broader picture. Despite some infelicities, such as the repeated translation of *Dom* ('cathedral') as 'dome', anglophone readers are in Müller's debt for making it available.

Peter McDonald, *Australian National University*

Sulovsky, Vedran, *Making the Holy Roman Empire Holy: Frederick Barbarossa, Saint Charlemagne and the 'sacrum imperium'*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2024; hardback, pp. 384; 1 table, 58 b/w illustrations, RRP US$130.00; ISBN 9781009203487.

This is an erudite study that I would recommend to anyone involved in studying this complex field. The author explores a range of areas from German historiography, diplomatics, religious history, and art history. This is a dense work aimed at the specialist rather than the casual reader. Vedran Sulovsky reveals a mastery of a breadth of texts, mainly in German, that is impressive. In this book, he explores the reign of Frederick Barbarossa (1152–1190) and the *sacrum imperium* through primary sources and artworks, particularly in Aachen.

In the 'Introduction', Sulovsky sets out masterfully the historiography of this field, beginning with Friedrich Heer's 1952 tripartite theory of the sacralisation of the Empire that suggested that Frederick Barbarossa, together with Rainald of Dassel, introduced *sacrum imperium* as the title of the Holy Roman Empire. Together, they also translated the Three Kings from Milan to Cologne and made Charlemagne a saint. While this idea has held sway since the mid-twentieth century, this vision now requires revision, which the author aims to do in this book. He does this meticulously. Heer's approach was grounded in the work of

Percy E. Schramm and Ernst H. Kantorowicz, who, with Howard Bloch, continue to be consulted by those interested in medieval European kingship. Sulovsky investigates the nineteenth- and early twentieth-century historiography, noting the importance of the growth of German nationalism in understanding the place given to Frederick Barbarossa and the *sacrum imperium*. The significant role of politics and its impact on the interpretation of German history even today is something that is explored here and is certainly one of the important contributions he makes in this English-language study. It is something he acknowledges, briefly referring to his own experiences.

Sulovsky divides the book into two halves. In the first two chapters, covering the period between 1125 and 1190, he looks at the use of the phrase *sacrum imperium* in documents from the imperial chancery referring to matters of state. In this, he has been very thorough, exhaustively examining a significant number of charters and other documents to explore the variants of this text. He traces its usage through Italian and German sources, finding, for example, the significant impact of Italian courtiers in the shaping of the language around the conception of the Holy Roman Empire. The push began earlier than perhaps generally understood.

While the first half of this book focuses particularly on the written language of Empire, in the second half Sulovsky examines the material evidence, mostly based in Aachen. This combination is both revelatory and ambitious. There is no question that his knowledge of the latter is impressive, but as an art historian, I do have a few reservations. These may have more to do with possible publishing restrictions than the desires of the author. For example, I would have liked to have seen reproductions of some of the comparative images included. Such is the breadth and amount of material covered, a case might even be made for the splitting of the book into two separate volumes, although this would probably weaken the arguments presented here.

The third and fourth chapters concern the cult of Charlemagne from his death, including the writings about him and his canonisation in 1165 under Frederick Barbarossa. While this is no longer recognised by the Catholic Church, the ceremony and art produced in the twelfth century were used as an assertion of imperial ideology, linking concepts of ‘holy kingship’ with the body of Charlemagne. Similar moves occurred in other countries, such as the English canonisation of Edward the Confessor. The next two chapters examine monuments found in Aachen that reinforce the message of ‘Empire’ embodied in the figure of Charlemagne and, through him, the status of Frederick Barbarossa. As part of this, the role of Frederick and Beatrix of Burgundy, his wife, as donors of religious art is discussed. The enrichment of the church at Aachen is examined, including the reliquary, which was designed to house the saint’s right arm, and the magnificent *Barbarossaleuchter*, the wheel-shaped crown chandelier installed under Charlemagne’s mosaic dome. These culminated in the reliquary shrine or *Karlsschrein*, the ultimate statement of the imperial message inherent in the *Marienkirche.* Sulovsky draws on chronicles, charters, and liturgical texts

to date these works, as well as reinterpreting them and recreating now missing elements, looking in exacting detail at features that may have been overlooked by previous scholars. The church at Aachen became, under Frederick Barbarossa, the embodiment of the new vision of the Holy Roman Empire, as well as reflecting the continuation of the papal–imperial alliance first established under Charlemagne.

Sulovsky has produced a work that is breathtaking in its range, its erudition and the reimagining of this important moment in the history of the Holy Roman Empire. Its significance in the understanding of modern German historiography is another rich element in this study. The connection between visual culture and historical interpretation is another highlight of this work. This book is stimulating, thought-provoking, and should be read by anyone interested in this period in German history.

Judith Collard, *The University of Melbourne*