

England in Europe: English Royal Women and Literary Patronage, c.1000–c.1150.
Elizabeth M. Tyler.

Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2017. xx + 436 pp. \$95.

This book offers a compelling analysis of the role royal women in England played in the composition of literary texts in the (long) eleventh century. Many of them came from a Continental background, mostly western France and the Low Countries, and Tyler is extremely good in her detailed study of the cross-fertilization that took place between England and Continental Europe in terms of the exchange of literary styles, motives, and ideas. A central theme of the book concerns the tension between the (Latin) classical heritage and vernacular multilingualism. Latin authors with various mother tongues—French, English, or Dutch/Flemish—composed their poems and histories in Latin even though a significant smaller corpus consists of Old English, Old Norse, and, after 1066, Anglo-Norman vernaculars. Tyler argues convincingly that the classical Roman stories acted as templates to provide role models and explanatory frameworks for recent and past events in England. The Roman storytelling tradition underlies all work discussed here and its Europe-wide heritage explains why cross-maritime exchange of ideas was so common.

The multilingual context does account for individualistic absorption of literary themes and motives, which the authors interweave with the classical training they received in their various home countries. Amongst the literary genres of the literature discussed historical writing stands out. Tyler explains to her readers very well the variety of ways in which the literary rules of history writing were being exploited, subverted, and adapted to specific circumstances and political times. Some queens as patrons focused on the past of their male paternal line (Edith, Edith-Matilda), some on their husband (Emma), some on the reign of their son(s) (Emma), and some on the potential lives for children they did not have (Edith and Adeliza). Tyler is also very good on queens as mothers (Edith-Matilda and Margaret) and daughters (the Empress) revealing the responsibility they felt to pass on traditions. How they used their position as queen (or high-status woman) and exploited their wealth to attract writers and exchange ideas with them is a major strand of this important study.

The chapter on the *Encomium* is a very good example of why only a scholar like Tyler, versed in Latin and vernacular traditions of historical writing, is uniquely placed to deal with the subversive nature of the text. The *Encomium* is a unique text in that its author invents a plausible story of the past to suit his patron, Queen Emma, while confessing time and again to his audience that he is acutely aware of the lies he is telling. In chronological order Tyler discusses queen consorts, starting with Queen Emma, wife of Æthelred (d. 1014) and of Cnut (d. 1035), and finishing with Queen Adeliza (d. ca. 1151). There is an excellent section on Empress Matilda (d. 1167), who receives attention as the only royal woman who strove to become queen in her own right rather than queen consort. Apart from queens, Tyler pays ample attention to princesses, such as Saint Edith, or other

high-status women lay and monastic. Amongst the latter are singled out the poetess Muriel, nun of Wilton, and the anonymous nuns who contributed their poetry to the mortuary rolls that circulated in England and Normandy. The linear chronological layout of the book has the advantage that specific political circumstances of the queens and other high-status women involved in literary patronage can be explained. In particular, it allows for in-depth discussion of the impact of dynastic change and conquest by Danish and Norman forces in eleventh-century England. This is an impressive study that I recommend in the strongest possible terms. A real delight to read.

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Lyric Tactics: Poetry, Genre, and Practice in Later Medieval England.

Ingrid Nelson.

The Middle Ages Series. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2017. 214 pp. \$59.95.

Ingrid Nelson deftly sketches the place of the medieval English lyric in literary history and theory. She notes that there has been no full-length book on the subject since Rosemary Woolf's in 1968. Moreover, many recent accounts of lyric neglect the medieval English phase. On the other hand, she hails Carleton Brown, R. L. Greene, and Rossell Hope Robbins, and more recently Julia Boffey, Jessica Brantley, Ardis Butterfield, Nicolette Zeeman, and others who have moved beyond formalism to consider lyric in terms of performance, manuscript matrix, and historical poetics.

A new book about medieval English lyric is sure to be warmly welcomed. This book is particularly interesting because of all that has happened since 1968 in literary theory. It is not that Woolf did not have her own set of theoretical issues to handle, but that a greater degree of confidence in a particular scholarly method was possible then, a confidence that enabled scholars to go about the business at hand a bit more briskly. Now the clouds of literary theory are massed on the horizon of every project. That is a good thing, but it does have implications for economy and focus.

Nelson proceeds skillfully, in part by means of elision. Her thoughtfulness about the theory of genre in general and lyric genre in particular is visible everywhere but adduced lightly—de Man (on lyric and anthropomorphism) gets no mention here; Derrida appears fleetingly (on voice); Foucault is briefly discussed but displaced by the more pragmatic Michel de Certeau; Bruno Latour seems to be important to her case, but is left out of the bibliography. Her book is about practice and tactics and she is herself appropriately tactical in her approach to material that might otherwise undermine her project. She wants to retain the name of lyric for these poems for example, but this is a problematic aim insofar as many generic, transhistorical studies of lyric omit the medieval English contenders while including their famous Continental counterparts. Her