

and myself, which appeared in a 2010 special issue of the *Journal of the History of Sexuality*. Jennifer N. Brown's "Body, Gender, and Nation in the Lives of Edward the Confessor" illustrates the deliberate focus on women's perspectives in the French version, which differ considerably from Aelred's Latin source (also without reference to Russell's claim about Clemence's authorship). Where the first three essays focus primarily on the life of Edward, the next two consider *Vie de St Catherine*. Diane Auslander's essay, "Clemence and Catherine: The *Life of St Catherine* in Its Norman and Anglo-Norman Context," summarizes ground not directly related to her thesis, which makes her contention that the life offers a critique of Henry II less than persuasive. Donna Alfano Bussell's provocative essay, "Cicero, Aelred and Guernes: The Politics of Love in Clemence of Barking's *Catherine*," demonstrates Clemence's ingenuity in using the conventions of hagiography and of romance to justify Barking's needs. In "The Authority of Diversity: Communal Patronage in *Le Gracial*," Emma Bérat argues that Abbess Matilda commissioned the translation of the miracles of the Virgin as part of her pastoral duty, a position that needs careful qualification, given that *Le Gracial's* author claims his translation is for both men and women who do not read Latin.

The third section, "Barking Abbey and the Later Middle Ages," is the least cohesive, opening with Alexandra Barratt's "Keeping Body and Soul Together: *The Charge to the Barking Cellaress*," which argues compellingly that the cellaress's record book "should be added to our meager store of writings by later medieval English women, particularly by nuns" (235). Jill Stevenson's "Rhythmic Liturgy, Embodiment and Female Authority in Barking's Easter Plays" uses cognitive theory to posit that the Barking nuns wrote vitae and drama designed to excite devotion in a mixed audience of religious and laity. Anne Bagnall Yardley's "Liturgy as the Site of Creative Engagement: Contributions of the Nuns of Barking" ends the third section by surveying the breadth of liturgical texts Barking produced to illustrate the nuns' creativity over time. The volume concludes with an afterward by Jocelyn Wogan-Browne, whose name is repeatedly invoked by the contributors for her scholarship on women and literary culture. "Barking and the Historiography of Female Community" draws together many of the volume's strands of inquiry: the political and social realities of English convents; women's Latinity and vernacularity; and nuns' literary patronage, even as she encourages future research on conventual life that can help rewrite the historical and literary record.

Altogether, this is a valuable and engaging book, but the index disappoints. Despite having great sympathy for those who index collections of essays, I am troubled by: personal names spelled multiple ways (Eadburg, Eadburga, and Eadburh), misspellings of names (Wulfere and Wulfild); and the random alphabetization of persons by first name or by regional identifier ("Saint-Bertin, Goselin of" as compared to "Hugh of St Victor"). More aggravating is that medieval texts are indexed by title, but works by a number of authors (e.g., Bede, Matthew Paris, Goscelin of Saint-Bertin) are listed after their names. Works by Aldhelm appear both ways: *De virginitate* follows his name, but *Prosa de Virginitate* is ordered by title. These inconsistencies render the index less helpful to readers of a collection that will no doubt have a great impact on the field of medieval religious women's communities.

Virginia Blanton, University of Missouri–Kansas City

CAROLINE DUNN. *Stolen Women in Medieval England: Rape, Abduction, and Adultery, 1100–1500*. Cambridge Series in Medieval Life and Thought, fourth series. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012. Pp. 272. \$99.00 (cloth).
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In the context of medieval common law, *raptus* existed as a broad category encompassing a multitude of criminal (or quasi-criminal) acts, including rape, ravishment, elopement, adultery,

political kidnapping, and even marital desertion. Given the scope of the term, it should come as no surprise that historians have continually misunderstood the nature of the act in studies of both legislation and law in practice, labeling men like Chaucer and Malory as rapists when it is now clear that their actions were, in fact, much less deviant. The process of extricating rape from abduction, in particular, owes much to the formative work of a cadre of scholars: J. B. Post, E. B. Ives, Sue Sheridan Walker, Morris S. Arnold, Emma Hawkes, and Henry Ansgar Kelly, among others. Caroline Dunn's new book acts as the testing ground, providing the necessary body of evidence to transform the theories of these earlier scholars into solid fact.

Dunn sets out to present a comprehensive study of *raptus* in its many forms. Chapter 1 addresses legal prescription. Dunn explains how the conflation of rape and abduction derives from Roman law's valorization of the father's consent over the woman's. However, the interpretation varied according to the emperor: while Constantine objected primarily to elopement, Justinian broadened the designation to punish also sexual assault premised on the woman's consent. Reception into English law saw similar shifts in definition as the term metamorphosed in response to contemporary anxieties over changing ideals (such as consent in marriage) or current events (chiefly, high-profile elopements). Dunn's close attention to language, above all the use of lexical doublets (such as, *raptus et abduxit*), is particularly instructive in determining when the English were speaking of ravishment as opposed to rape. In doing so, Dunn sheds some desperately needed light on the commonly misunderstood Statutes of Westminster, explaining that, in fact, they had little to do with rape. Rather, the purpose of the statutes was to criminalize elopement and thus compensate a father for lost income when his headstrong daughter initiated an undesirable marriage against her father's will. The subsequent five chapters address *raptus* in its distinct manifestations: rape, forced marriage, elopement, adultery, and political kidnappings. In her analysis, Dunn contributes a number of fresh insights. For example, she argues that when a husband sued his wife's lover for ravishment, his singular motivation was to document her adulterous behavior, thus preventing any future claim to dower. She also revises perceptions of the value of out-of-court settlements for rape, reminding her readers that, much like the Anglo-Saxon injury tariffs, compensation for damages was popularly understood as a more fitting resolution than the death penalty.

In several respects, *Stolen Women* falls short of the mark. Dunn's research overlaps with that of countless others (especially Gwen Seabourne's 2012 *Imprisoning Medieval Women: The Non-judicial Confinement and Abduction of Women in England, c. 1170–1509*). Not only does she fail repeatedly to acknowledge the creative insights of other scholars, but in doing so she makes it difficult to trace exactly what is innovative about her own work. The project is overly ambitious. Dunn explains that her work is significant because it is comprehensive; however, her choice of sources makes it abundantly clear that ravishment was always her primary interest. If rape had been her focus, she would have examined rape appeals in coroners' rolls, which are much more detailed and informative than anything the gaol delivery rolls might offer. A comprehensive study of rape would examine also the church courts, because as James Brundage has made clear, they too had jurisdiction over *raptus*, but their understanding of the crime seemed to necessitate both rape and abduction. Similarly, anyone seriously interested in coerced marriage would examine as well the evidence of the church courts (who had jurisdiction over marriage)—in particular, suits for annulment on the grounds of coercion. As a result, she offers nothing new on either subject; she also misses the fact that many of the women she talks about who appear as victims in the king's courts materialize as plaintiffs in suits for divorce in the ecclesiastical setting. Perhaps the most flagrant error, though, is Dunn's failure to comprehend the full import of her work. Chapter 2's discussion of conviction rates for medieval rape relies on a comparative analysis of the statistical findings of studies by other scholars; however, if, as she asserts, many previous historians have misconstrued ravishment for rape again and again, how are their statistics at all meaningful? Dunn astutely recognizes that cases of wife theft "camouflage unexpected tales of marital fluidity" (152),

but she does not explore the full ramifications of this crossover. Marriage in the Middle Ages was a means to transfer property: as such, the two are integrally related subjects. Nevertheless, somehow property is a minor consideration in Dunn's work. Consequently, her study often glosses over the impetus for abduction and/or prosecution. For example, when a husband sued his wife's lover for abduction, did he want his wife returned, or was he chiefly concerned about her dowry and the goods she took with her? Finally, Dunn makes a number of wildly unsupported claims that chip away at the credibility of her work. Among others, it is hard to imagine how any editor permitted the following statement on spousal homicide to see its way into print: "Most frequently, the murdered spouse was the husband and the murder weapon of choice was poison" (138). Dunn turns to the popularity of the trope in literature to substantiate her point. Since when did legal historians start turning to literature for crime rates?

Dunn's handling of statute law with respect to rape and ravishment is far superior to any other work on the subject; as well, her efforts at charting changes in the interpretation of *raptus* over time will be greatly appreciated. If only that high quality of insight was sustained throughout the rest of the book.

Sara M. Butler; Loyola University New Orleans

JAMES EPSTEIN. *Scandal of Colonial Rule: Power and Subversion in the British Atlantic during the Age of Revolution*. Critical Perspectives on Empire series. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012. Pp. 314. \$32.99 (paperback).
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James Epstein examines the nature of British imperialism at the beginning of its final phase of expansion in the Caribbean together with the impact of this expansion on metropolitan perceptions of self. The platform for the analysis is the first decade of British rule (or rather misrule) in Trinidad, taken from the Spanish in 1797, particularly the trial and near disgrace of its first governor when he returned to London six years later. In 279 pages of text, the book offers competing narratives of Governor Picton's vicious regime and private life as represented by his supporters on the one hand and his opponents on the other—among the latter being a radical writer who visited and was quickly expelled from the island in 1803. The trial arose from Picton's practice of ignoring due process and his use of torture, especially in the case of a young free colored woman, though this is only the first example of the destructive force of colonial rule that fills these pages. Moving gradually from London to Trinidad, the seven chapters explore the implications of the case, the failed search for alternatives to slave labor that abolitionists hoped to put into place, and, in a final chapter, a close analysis of an official documentary account of the island's 1805 slave conspiracy—accompanied inevitably by more violence. Underpinning and linking these various narratives is the author's major preoccupation, which is to explore how brutal events in a new colony challenged British conceptions of justice, free labor, race, and the rights of the individual. This is a story of the emergence of a new and harsher imperialism, yet it is also a story of imperial anxieties as much as authority. Finely argued, thoroughly researched, and beautifully written, this is a truly entertaining read.

The book nicely illustrates the limitations of the postcolonial approach to explaining the past by first raising and then sidestepping some fascinating questions. As the above suggests, the author displays a deep knowledge of British political culture and overseas imperialism in his chosen period. Moreover, he sets his analysis in a global context, writing with great assurance and insight about the roles of the British elite, the radical underworld, and colonial subjects (including slaves) in Asia as well as in the Caribbean in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth