of a song (and of the music, if musical notes are also considered to be text); performance is an act in which both the song and the singer participate; identity is a property of the singer in the first place. Unfortunately, the introductory chapter of the volume does not sort out the intricacies of these concepts, nor does it note their quite different standings. In vain one looks for a basic discussion of them, but even definitions are lacking. The concepts are simply taken for granted and illustrated by examples that are not always appropriate. Identity, for example, is connected with groups, whereas in the essays that follow the introduction it appears time and again that songs also play a very important role in the formation of individual identities. And if local songbooks are connected with local identities, at least a qualification is necessary: if many people who claim a certain local identity are nevertheless unaware of the existence of a particular local songbook, the songbook belongs to a subclass of that local identity at best. In the introduction, intertextuality is mostly confined to contrafact, therefore leaving aside many other interesting types of intertextuality and also the possibility of musical intertextuality.

The extent to which the individual essays pay tribute to the three key concepts varies greatly. Intertextuality is discussed in a few essays only, and performance in a few more. Identity, on the other hand, is discussed in all contributions; in some, the word occurs so often that it gets irritating. Despite this criticism, however, one can say that the individual contributions are of high quality, well written, and on interesting topics with a lot of detail. The book is carefully edited and nicely produced. Most often song texts are cited in translation in the main text, with the original text in a footnote. There are many illustrations, some of them in full color. As a final remark, there are, regrettably, no indexes, neither of personal names nor of titles or subjects. Despite these few critical remarks on secondary matters, the book is worthy to be read or purchased as a very useful introduction to the wonderland of song and song culture in the early modern period.

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Postcards on Parchment: The Social Lives of Medieval Books. Kathryn M. Rudy. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2015. x + 360 pp. $85.

In this richly illustrated study, Kathryn Rudy seeks to "identify a new category of late medieval object: the parchment painting" (5). These devotional paintings, she argues, need to be distinguished from single-leaf illuminations that were specifically designed to be inserted into books. Their iconographies and execution—the former often unusual and the latter frequently crude by illumination standards—indicate that they were originally produced as single sheets by amateur artists and that they circulated

in various ways before ending up between the covers of a book. Rudy explores the multiple lives and meanings that these "postcards" could have had, and how they fulfilled a need for devotional images, especially within religious communities.

Part 1 describes the historical backdrop to parchment paintings, situating them between panel painting and manuscript illumination. Four case studies are the subject of the chapters in part 2, "The Parchment Painting as Gift." In chapter 3, beginning with a group of Saint Barbara images from Brabant, Rudy shows that although both men and women made gifts of parchment paintings, it was women in religious houses in particular who used them "to form and maintain bonds with other nuns and lay people" (76). The subsequent case studies consider the production and reception of Marian parchment paintings, a group of postcards made in South Holland that served to personalize books, and the imagery of the "clockface," a way of writing text around a circular design that Rudy argues would have appealed because of its flexibility, ease of copying, and also for its reference to the new invention of the mechanical clock.

In part 3, "The Many Functions of the Parchment Painting," Rudy analyzes multiple examples according to categories such as iconography, function, and form. Paintings of individual saints inserted into prayer books are the subject of chapter 7, and albums of parchment paintings are analyzed in chapter 8. The latter focuses in on the *Grandes Heures* of Philip the Bold, to which first the duke and then his grandson Philip the Good added prayers and pilgrimage souvenirs, making it a "precious scrapbook" (176). Rudy rejects the "recent fashion for 'pilgrims' images' among scholars [as] a way of explaining some of the apparent mobility of images" (198), preferring instead to emphasize the images' multivalency, a feature that allowed them to be adapted to a variety of contexts, although her suggestion that "votaries . . . sometimes had to forge text-image relations in unorthodox ways or forgo them altogether" in adding images to books seems to contradict the argument somewhat (198). The painted word—such as the holy name of Christ (IHS)—is the subject of chapter 9, and Rudy suggests that it was scribes rather than painters who made such designs since they did not require "extensive artistic training" (208). This chapter also considers metric relics—measured or to-scale representations of Christ's body and his wounds that met people's needs to understand and share in his suffering. Further desire for proximity to Christ is discussed in chapter 10, "The Parchment Painting as Ersatz Eucharist," which considers "Eucharistic proxies" such as "altar furnishings made of parchment . . . and small paintings with sacrificial themes" (225). Chapter 11 discusses how parchment paintings "serve[d] as proxies of large public or semi-public altarpieces that are constructed with a recognisable aesthetic" (246) that would have allowed owners of a parchment painting to connect the image to a particular place. The final two chapters continue to discuss how parchment paintings served people's spiritual needs, first as texts and images offering indulgences and, second, as objects on which oaths could be sworn. In conclusion, part 4 looks at the limitations of parchment paintings, especially in the later fifteenth century as printing became "the most cost-effective way" to produce "autonomous images" (308).

This is an impressive study that revisits some famous manuscripts and brings to light a plethora of less well-known codices. It also offers a new way of thinking about the materiality of medieval books and how they acquired their present forms. If the prose is sometimes a little repetitive in emphasizing the contexts and functions of parchment paintings, it is nevertheless a fascinating analysis of the intersecting lives of books, texts, images, paintings, readers, and communities.

Elizabeth L'Estrange, *University of Birmingham*

The Painted Book in Renaissance Italy 1450–1600. Jonathan J. G. Alexander. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2016. xi + 444 pp. $75.

Jonathan Alexander has been for many years an eminent scholar of manuscript illumination. His book *Medieval Illuminators and Their Methods of Work* (1992) is still an indispensable tool for teachers and students of medieval manuscripts. Alexander has also played a leading role in promoting Italian Renaissance illumination among anglophone audiences with a series of important publications and a landmark exhibition, *The Painted Page: Italian Renaissance Book Illumination 1450–1550* (1994). Alexander's lavishly illustrated *The Painted Book in Renaissance Italy* is the first comprehensive survey to be published on the subject. In the first four chapters (Tuscany, Central and Southern Italy, Northeast Italy, Northwest Italy), Alexander takes us on a journey to look at the production and consumption of luxury manuscripts in every important cultural and political center across the peninsula in the period 1450–1500. This represents a challenging task, since illuminators often traveled around and important patrons often purchased manuscripts produced elsewhere. However, Alexander successfully meets the challenge by focusing on the most relevant aspects of scholarship for each city, and by weaving themes such as patronage and stylistic development into the main geographical and chronological narrative.

The journey starts in Florence with the beginnings of *all'antica* border decoration, humanist script, and linear perspective. For Naples and Ferrara, Alexander focuses on the commissions of the ruling families, highlighting patterns of artistic collaboration. Venice and Padua are pertinently discussed under the same heading, starting with Squarcione and his most influential pupil, Mantegna, to show how the Paduan antiquarian style flourished in Venice under the auspices of enlightened patrons such as Lodovico Trevisan. For Milan, Alexander shows how the courtly style favored by the Visconti evolved under the patronage of the Sforza, assimilating innovations from Florence and Padua. In between the main centers, Alexander takes us to places where production or acquisition of manuscripts was then less significant, and also to places like Cremona, which despite not being a main political center was important for manuscript production. In chapter 5, Alexander revisits the most important cities to show