

bulk of a lush, essentially self-regulating vernacular literature. In other words, *Lives* of Christ have acquired for many the status of the ‘myopic dead-centre’ which Michael Camille once opposed to the vigour of the margins. Johnson is unabashedly sceptical about all of this. His agenda is to rehabilitate the *Lives* by demonstrating their technical and historical interest. The subject of translation is primary here, for the obvious reason that the main texts are themselves translations. But translation was not, as Johnson explains, a simple matter in either execution or consumption. It entailed grave responsibilities, knowledge of much more than the base text and ability to empathise with the varied requirements of readers. Moreover, translation into Middle English was not, as many have seen it, a matter of ‘Latin-vernacular competition and displacement’ (p. 37), but rather a complementary process roundly beneficial to religion. It was also rooted in a theory of its own operation, detectable, for example, in the ‘scholarly technicalities of excision, transposition, rephrasing and insertion’ (p. 64). The detail of Johnson’s argument is largely devoted to clarifying this relationship between translation and late medieval devotional intelligence, and showing how it produced subtle and useful texts. He sets the subject up by explaining – disarmingly to this reviewer’s mind, and certainly not without humour – both the anachronism of the premises of much recent academic criticism and the intrinsic value of the *Lives* for medieval readers. Of course, the critique of scholarship is necessary to make the main subject seem worthwhile, but it is more than simple deck-clearance: it embodies an approach to Middle English texts which prioritises historical value over what Johnson considers academic ‘cults’ (p. 30). The heavy work of buttressing the arguments is naturally achieved by case studies; a number of shorter ones in chapter ii, and extended studies in chapters iii and iv of Love’s *Mirror* and the *Speculum devotorum*, both Pseudo-Bonaventuran texts charitably produced by Carthusians in the first half of the fifteenth century to feed the hunger of non-Latinate readers. These were chosen for their richness (the close readings are clever and revealing), and also because they suggest paths for future research. Such seeding is an aspect of all good scholarship, and a further reason to recommend this clear-headed, important book.

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Les Officialités dans l'Europe médiévale et moderne. Des tribunaux pour une société chrétienne. Actes du colloque international organisé par le Centre d'études et de recherche en histoire culturelle (CERHiC-EA2616) (Troyes, 27–29 mai 2010). Edited by Véronique Beaulande-Barraud and Martine Charageat. (Ecclesia Militans, 2.) Pp. 340 incl. 12 ills and 6 tables. Turnhout: Brepols, 2014. €75 (paper). 978 2 503 55149 4

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Officialities formed a complex system of justice in Europe between the twelfth and eighteenth centuries, and their tribunals have provided fertile ground for historians of law intent on determining their institutional organisation and procedures. A number of the sixteen essays in this collection concentrate on these areas of research, but the majority assume a less familiar perspective, in order to shed new light on the tribunals’ personnel and activities, and especially on the experiences of the diocesan

clergy and laity who appeared before the courts as petitioners, witnesses or defendants. The collection offers a mix of recent scholarship and summaries of scholarly findings in recent decades; amongst the latter, Martin Ingram provides a masterly sketch of church courts in Tudor England, the scholarship on which has benefited hugely from his own work as well as that of others such as Ralph Houlbrooke. The religious changes of the period provide a rewarding framework, as not only did the church courts survive the initial schism under Henry VIII, they were also used to enforce versions of Protestantism and a restored Catholicism over four reigns. Kevin Saule distils the conclusions of his recent doctoral dissertation in his interesting essay on the courts of Beauvais diocese in southern France, which can be usefully compared to Tudor institutes; in seventeenth-century Beauvais, the courts also acted as promoters of reform objectives, in this case, of the Catholic Reformation, so that officials increasingly imposed their sanctions as pedagogical imperatives to improvement rather than as punitive measures. Furthermore, the vigour with which they did so tantalisingly suggests that in France, as in England, the courts did not decline in importance before the eighteenth century. Indeed, Saule proves that they did not cease to exist in France even during the tumultuous Wars of Religion in the preceding century, which is an important corrective to the common assumption that they did. It would therefore be valuable to read an essay in this volume which would test its plausibility more thoroughly. However, only two of the sixteen contributions reach much beyond 1500, and even then do not focus on the following hundred years, while the eight essays on France focus on the north. These are fairly minor quibbles, for this is, of course, not a volume dedicated to French officialities, or even to the early modern period, but to describing the current 'state of play' in research on Europe generally between the twelfth and seventeenth centuries.

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La 'Maison des pauvres maîtres' de Robert de Sorbon. Les débuts de la Sorbonne (1254–1274). By Denis Gabriel. (Bibliothèque d'Histoire Médiévale, 11.) Pp. 316. Paris: Classiques Garnier, 2014. €39 (paper). 978 2 8124 3089 3; 978 2 8124 3090 9; 2107 1853
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It has been a half-century since the last major work on the Collège de la Sorbonne appeared, namely Palémon Glorieux's *Aux Origines de la Sorbonne*. Since then there have been numerous articles on Robert de Sorbon or his college by Richard Rouse, André Tuilier, Nicole Bériou, Astrik Gabriel and Nathalie Gorochov, but not another book-length study of the early years of the college until now. After an introduction that discusses the sources, particularly the cartulary and the biography of Robert, Gabriel's book is divided into three parts. The first part, on biographical details, covers the origin, education and ecclesiastical formation of Robert up to 1250. The author accepts the view that Robert received his early education at the cathedral school at Reims, although he grants the less-likely possibility that Robert was initially trained at the Premonstratensian canonry at Dyonne. He also accepts Glorieux's dating of Robert's theological studies at Paris (c. 1221–