

which in turn generates and structures new, heterogeneous unities at the inferior levels of reality (chapter 4). Ficino also reinterprets Neoplatonically the medieval concept of *aliquid* to describe how the soul, as the condition of possibility of multiplicity, alterity, and non-being, can represent to itself the different modalities of not-being (images, dreams, shadows) when they still consist of a “quasi something” (chapter 5). He proposes a new solution to the tension, central in Neoplatonic philosophy, between the soul’s dependence on God and its autonomous capacity to generate multiplicity (chapter 6), and reelaborates the Neoplatonic doctrine of the *ochēma* to address the problem of the destiny of the soul after death and its cognitive function on earth (chapter 7).

In sum, this book convincingly presents Ficino as a coherent philosopher, characterized by an extraordinary understanding of the Neoplatonic tradition and an unlimited capacity to propose new, yet fundamentally Neoplatonic, solutions to important metaphysical problems. The author explains in detail in what way Ficino’s philosophical choices justify his belief in the efficacy of theurgy, astrology, and demonology. She also underlines how limited Ficino’s interest in Christian theological dogmas and apologetic topoi is in these discussions, as is his engagement with medieval reasoning: chapter 3 argues that Ficino’s mode of reasoning in the *Platonic Theology* should not be dismissed just because it does not follow a rigorous method of deduction and demonstration. Ficino consciously moves away from such a method and develops instead a natural dialectic, which is intrinsically linked to a conception of religion as a natural and innate instinct shared by all humankind. In fact, Ficino’s reasoning follows the conceptual method used by Proclus to explain various types of discourses according to their different function, and presents important affinities with Cicero’s topics, a form of dialectical reasoning based on commonly held opinions rather than on demonstration. Ficino’s aim, Mariani Zini argues, is to delimit what it is possible to believe rather than trying to deduce or demonstrate necessary theological or philosophical dogmas. Despite some flaws (numerous typographical errors and occasionally sloppy footnotes) and a few missed opportunities to link Ficino’s thought to its immediate cultural context (particularly in chapters 3 and 7), this important book helps understand how Renaissance humanists radically changed philosophy.

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Codex und Material. Patrizia Carmassi and Gia Toussaint, eds.
Wolfenbütteler Mittelalter-Studien 34. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2018. 336 pp. €88.

The lectures published in this volume were discussed during the workshop “Codex und Material – Jenseits von Text und Bild,” which took place in October 2015 at the Herzog August Bibliothek. Already in their introduction, the editors—who are also

authors of two scholarly essays contained therein—succeed in giving contours to medieval books' diverse materiality at a high level of reflection. Starting from various individual observations, they clarify the complexity of their design, with its impressive aesthetics, symbolism, and haptics. They discuss current research questions in medieval studies, including the history of possession and use and the reconstruction and interpretation of collection contexts.

The international and interdisciplinary group of authors examines individual book types and the variability of their external appearances. The spectrum ranges from simple utility manuscripts, to scrolls, to splendid bindings at a high level of artistic design. Among the elements examined are forms of layout and the structuring of text content. A sustainable use of materials, from today's perspective, can be seen in the binding design or composition of small-format and thus handy utility volumes. Parchment, paper, or textiles were removed from their original purpose during bookbinding and reused in other contexts. Thus, parts of parchment manuscripts, whose contents were considered obsolete after following church reforms, could be given other functions. A few years ago, restorers discovered that nuns had used fragmented strips of parchment to reinforce the seams when making ornaments of medieval Christ figures. Textile and textuality combined to form a new unity, but as individual components they also continue in their individual effects. This insight is summed up perfectly in the photo selected by the editors for the cover of the book presented here.

The use of valuable color pigments, golden inks, or more inexpensive derivatives to develop a book's splendor offer opportunities for expert analysis and technological investigations that broaden the object of research even further. From a cultural-historical perspective, optically enhanced splendid specimens indicate important functions in the course of the religious service. Intensities of individual use of devotional books can be determined using clever trace analysis, which aims at wear and tear through the comprehension of pages or the kissing of images of saints. Saliva residue on fingers and lips led to darkened areas in the books, which document a focus on certain contents when viewed in real time using modern technical procedures.

When dealing with historical books, the relation between texts and images in the reception process is a frequently discussed question, which is addressed here with interesting and varied observations. Existing texts could subsequently be supplemented with pictures because believers pasted original pilgrim signs into books as material objects of their religious practice. In addition, the convention of relating them as painted "props of devotion" (271) to textual content can be established. The skillfully interrelated themes in this book are rounded off further by the optical opening of described pages into a three-dimensional reality through correspondingly structured illuminations. This can be documented through illustrations designed by experienced artists in Italy.

All illustrations in the essays presented here are in black and white for reasons of cost. One part of the panel contains a representative selection of noteworthy details in color. Nevertheless, when browsing through a publication on the materiality of medieval

books, it is permissible to imagine the visual appeal that consistently colored illustrations would have had. A multi-page index of all the manuscripts mentioned in the articles from internationally renowned libraries documents the breadth of the database used here. Anyone interested in the materiality of the medieval book and questions from the field of book archaeology should take a closer look at this volume.

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Book of Beasts: The Bestiary in the Medieval World. Elizabeth Morrison, ed.
With Larisa Grollemond. Los Angeles, CA: J. Paul Getty Museum, 2019. xiv +
340 pp. \$60.

This large and beautifully illustrated album was created as a catalogue to the J. Paul Getty Museum exhibition. Articles by seventeen scholars, representing multifarious aspects of bestiary scholarship, follow the introduction and an exemplary section of bestiary entries with colorful illustrations. A total of twenty-seven writers contributed to the volume that includes a catalogue and appendixes. Only some can be mentioned here.

Sarah Kay presents a brief overview of the Greek *Physiologus*, with its descriptive and allegorical entries, didactic function, and Latin translations, discussing later additions of encyclopedic works, such as Isidore of Seville's *Etymologies* and the *Dicta Chrysostomi*, as well as the *Physiologus of Theobaldus*, which expand and modify the bestiaries. Xenia Muratova discusses tradition and modification in pictorial interpretations of illuminated manuscripts following textual modifications. Examples from the Aberdeen and Ashmole bestiaries, illustrating theological, moral, and didactic meanings of animals, exegetic iconography, and mythological influences, demonstrate tradition and invention. Elizabeth Morrison examines the flexible relationships between text and image. She discusses theories regarding connections between bestiary manuscripts and examines iconographic consistencies alongside textual recensions.

Ilya Dines investigates a group of miscellanies to ascertain the function of bestiaries included in them. Noting that the original *Physiologus*, geared to a monastic audience, was didactic, she questions the purpose of bestiaries that included encyclopedic knowledge intended for highly educated readers. Susan Crane concentrates on a superbly illustrated bestiary (Bodleian MS 764) that expands the texts with images in which "animals are given imaginative and social roles alongside, or instead of religious significance" (78). Vernacular translations, beginning with the *Physiologus* and reworked in medieval French bestiaries, are discussed by Emma Campbell. Latin and vernacular bestiaries for late thirteenth-century French and Flemish courtly audiences are analyzed by