local level, by curtailing theft, which he seems to have equated (and uniquely so) with disloyalty. Foot is sympathetic to Æthelstan's efforts as a lawmaker, which she believes indicate a sincere and sustained interest in the well-being of his people, although she acknowledges Patrick Wormald's verdict that the king's lawmaking had only a "spasmodic impact" (144). Perhaps more significant in practical terms was the Grately code's "first full, official statement of the judicial procedure of the ordeal" (147), which, Foot argues, was just one manifestation of the increased sacralization of royal law in this period.

While Foot sheds light on some of the darker corners of Æthelstan's world in the first half of the book, in the second she pulls together the evidence for his prowess in battle, his remarkable piety, and his deployment of imperial imagery in the written instruments of his government, including coins, charters, and law codes. A chapter in this section titled "Death" is somewhat misleading; although it begins by discussing the king's death, it is a detailed exploration of Æthelstan's relic collection. These later chapters thus hint at the difficulty of organizing such disparate material thematically.

Given the tremendous gaps in our knowledge of most tenth-century Anglo-Saxon kings, successful biographies require as much imagination as erudition. While Professor Foot's interpretations are individually subject to debate, her portrait as a whole is based on a reasoned and imaginative consideration of the sources. If I have one criticism, it is that there is quite a bit of overlap from one chapter to another. In the end, however, this book has something to offer everyone, even if it will always be easier to celebrate Æthelstan's "public glories" than "his private, more personal triumphs" (226).

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Richard Gorski, ed. *Roles of the Sea in Medieval England*. Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2012. Pp. 204. $90.00 (cloth). Sebastian I. Sobecki, ed. *The Sea and Englishness in the Middle Ages: Maritime Narratives, Identity and Culture*. Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2011. Pp. 262. $90.00 (cloth).
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Medieval historians have been slow in interpreting the maritime history of the British Isles. Until recently, they ventured little beyond editing documents or making vague noises about the role played by water routes in particular events such as the *adventu* of the Anglo-Saxons or transportation during the Hundred Years' Wars. Thus *Roles of the Sea in Medieval England* and *The Sea and Englishness in the Middle Ages* are welcome additions.

Richard Gorski's *Roles of the Sea in Medieval England* is a superb group of studies covering the thirteenth to fifteenth centuries. The first two essays set the tone with Gorski's "Roles of the Sea" and Richard Unger's "Changes in Ship Design and Construction." Gorski gives a widely ranging introduction to the topic with particular attention to the topic of shipping. Unger presents a "state of the theme" on a matter of which he is an acknowledged expert. The following essays fall into two general groups: ports and shipping. Susan Rose's "Value of the Cinque Ports to the Crown" and Craig Lambert's "Contribution of the Cinque Ports to the Wars of Edward II and Edward III" tackle the question of whether those ports remained indispensible to the Crown or were merely antiquarian curiosities. Both essays show that the Cinque Ports were important, although their contributions varied and changed with the passage of time. Tim Bowly's "Herring of Sligo and Salmon of Bann" examines the passage of goods from one port to a specific region, in this instance from the port of Bristol to Ireland. The relatively low commercial value of Irish exports such as hides meant that merchants with fewer financial resources could participate in the trade; by the end of the medieval period, it seems that much of the trade was in Irish ships. Other essays examine specific times

or people. David Simpkins's "England's Admirals" looks at the men who directed the royal fleet in an important twenty-year period, 1369–89. He quashes the idea that the office was always a way of rewarding royal favorites because the increasing complexity (and cost) of naval warfare could not support such luxuries. Another cliché to be discarded is that naval warfare was a pure drain on the royal finances, and in "Cost-Benefit Analysis of a Fourteenth-Century Naval Campaign," Tony Moore shows how a triumphant campaign could be profitable. The notion that crime doesn't pay is investigated in Marcus Pitcaithly's "Piracy and Anglo-Hanseatic Relations." Ideas of the jolly buccaneer plundering bloated merchant ships are discarded in view of the grimmer reality of state-sponsored mayhem with one side's heroic privateers being another's criminal pirates. Finally, the entire collection comes to a fitting crescendo with Ian Friel's "How Much Did the Sea Matter in Medieval England." The answer, not surprisingly, is "quite a bit."

A less easy task confronts Sebastian Sobecki's *The Sea and Englishness in the Middle Ages*. The chronological range is long, from the Anglo-Saxon period to the nineteenth century, and the topic is nebulous since the contributors look at the intellectual and literary place of the sea. The essays fall into three chronological groups: the Anglo-Saxon period, the late Middle Ages, and the nineteenth century Old English revival. Following Sobecki's introductory essay, "Edgar's Archipelago," the next three essays look at the place of the sea in Old English literature and how it was imagined. Winfried Rudolf's "Spirtual Islescape of the Anglo-Saxons" studies the idea of the island in the ocean as a reference to the soul's isolation. Catherine Clark's "Imagining Tidal Spaces in Early Medieval Britain" examines the idea of boundaries within the context of coastal features. Fabienne Michelet's "Nautical Travels in the Old English *Exodus*, the Old English *Andreas*, and Accounts of the *adventus Saxonum*" demonstrates how devotional works, and especially the Bible, shaped the manner in which voyages were presented in Old English works. The late medieval section begins with Judith Weiss's "East Anglia and the Sea in Narratives of the *Vie de St Edmund* and *Waldef*. The *St Edmund* was written by someone knowledgeable about the sea and *Waldef* by someone who was not—the former showed the sea as the means by which both danger (in this case, Vikings) and salvation (the Church) traveled, and the latter merely used the sea as a "plot device." A most informative essay is Alfred Hiatt's "Maps, England, and the Sea" in which he gives a useful survey of crucial developments in cartography during the later medieval period, although the question of how much it was reflected in English conceptions of the sea remained unresolved. The sea was the great meeting ground for the peoples of medieval Europe, and Jonathan Hsy examines the topic of language contact in "Overseas Travel and Language Contact in *The Book of Margery Kemp*." He shows that the *lingua franca* of the sea was geographically divided, with a Romance derivative speech prevalent south of the English Channel and a Germanic *patois* used in the North Sea and in the Hanseatic zone. The collection concludes with two essays examining aspects of the Old English revival of the nineteenth century. Joanne Parker argues, in "Saxons, Vikings, and the Sea in the Formation of an Anglo-British Identity in the Nineteenth-Century," that the Old English revival was due, in part, to the need to explain and justify imperial policy, where mistranslations could be as useful as revisionist history. Chris Jones examines the now largely forgotten critic and author Stopford Brooke's contribution to the place of Old English in the national curriculum through anthologies and imitation of Old English verse. Finally, the epilogue is given by David Wallace in "Afterword: Sea, Island, Mud."

Covering somewhat similar territory in different ways, *Roles of the Sea in Medieval England* and *The Sea and Englishness in the Middle Ages* are important contributions to medieval maritime history. The contributors to both collections of essays engage with themes that range from the well documented to the conjectural and are to be congratulated for opening new vistas.

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