

that to use the ‘stemmatic method’ (p. lviii) to establish the relationship between the citing authorities illustrates the point: by treating citing authorities as manuscripts, the assumption is that they stick as literally to the text that they cite as the copyist intends to do with the manuscript that he copies. Yet it is obvious from this edition itself that none of the citing authorities actually is such a slavish copyist. For example, in the discussion of Theodoret of Cyr, differences with Rufinus are suggested to derive from Gelasius, whilst Theodoret is well-known to rhetorically elaborate his sources. If the Anonymus of Cyzicus is repeatedly said to re-order and rework the material from Gelasius and his sources, the fact that he re-orders four documents that we find in Socrates is adduced as an argument that these documents must come from Gelasius – tacitly assuming that the Anonymus could not have re-ordered them himself (p. xlix). Editorial confidence is also visible in another way in which this edition deviates from common practice: when there are two or more witnesses to a fragment, the editors produce a composite text, that is, they combine elements from the different witnesses. In other editions of ancient fragmentary historians, such fragments are numbered a, b, c with the texts printed separately, allowing the reader to form his own judgement. The choice made here relies on the assumption that the relationship between the different citing authorities can be established without any doubt. Yet the transmission is too complex for that. For example, the Anonymus of Cyzicus circulated under the name of Gelasius of Caesarea at the time of Photius, which renders it possible that passages ascribed to Gelasius of Caesarea and identical to the Anonymus of Cyzicus derive in fact directly from the Anonymus (for example, F5 and F6). Many of the witnesses to Gelasius are also known to have used directly other supposed witnesses to Gelasius (BHG 185 and 1279 are cases in point), which renders cross-fertilisation between sources highly likely. The decision to deviate from standard practice in classical philology has an important consequence. The unsuspecting reader may not realise that a traditional edition of the fragments would count maybe 20 pages instead of the 255 pages in this edition – with the editors suggesting that they have been able to reconstruct most of Gelasius (p. lxxxiii). The methodological choices in this edition derive from its intention to prove that F. Winkelmann’s reconstruction (*Untersuchungen zur Kirchengeschichte des Gelasios von Kaisareia*, Berlin 1966) is correct. His reconstruction is undoubtedly a possible one, but recent scholarship has suggested alternatives (P. Blaudeau, *Alexandrie et Constantinople*, Rome 2006, 500; J. Reidy, ‘The heirs of Eusebius’, unpubl. dissertation, St Louis 2015) that this edition would have done well to discuss.

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Devotional literature and practice in medieval England. Readers, reading, and reception.

Edited by Kathryn Vulić, Susan Uselmann and C. Annette Grisé. Pp. vi + 284. Turnhout: Brepols, 2016. €80. 978 2 503 53029 1

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This edited volume explores English literary and religious cultures through nine test cases, each written by a different author and engaging with questions of

readership, gender and devotion. The chapters are subtly divided into three thematic units.

The first unit, 'Representation', begins with Anna Lewis's chapter on Lollardy and biblical reading. This study constitutes a prolonged gloss on Lollards' engagement with 2 Corinthians iii.6b, 'for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life'. By appropriating this verse and the terminology used by their adversaries, Lollards promulgated a view of Scriptures that was intrinsically tied to chaste living, while rejecting scholastic elaborations. This was not done wholeheartedly. Lollard disapproval of 'modern' glosses contrasted with their reliance on Lyra, thus supporting a more nuanced view of the movement than suggested by Lewis (as indeed adopted by Schirmer at p. 93).

The following chapter – Kathryn Vulić's study of the *Speculum vitae* – challenges the lay-clerical dichotomy in medieval devotion. The laity was inducted in the tools of the clerical elite, as '[e]ach new expository passage contains mini-lessons in rhetoric, semantics, and performativity, all without being called such' (p. 81). Lay men and women were shown how to parse sacred texts, relying on a deep sensitivity to language. The treatise argues that full efficacy is achieved only when words are properly understood, further questioning the common view of lay passivity.

Continuing to break down dichotomies, Elizabeth Schirmer's exploration of *Dives and pauper* places this extended commentary on the Ten Commandments in a post-Lollard reality. Circumnavigating the Lollard controversy, the two interlocutors avoid the ways in which the controversy 'has narrowed the discursive field of vernacular religious education' (p. 97). It is the multiplicity of reading that was at risk. And, much like Vulić's study of the *Speculum vitae*, Schirmer sees the work as an induction into the art of reading: of texts, of signs and of oneself, as would be performed by God in the final judgement.

Karmen Lenz's chapter on the Office for St Cuthbert opens the second section, 'Practice'. With post-Conquest Latin monastic liturgy, we move into a different time and language, audience and setting. The study of one chant reveals the inherent intertextuality of the liturgy, demonstrating how it equates Cuthbert with Christ. This was reinforced by the musical and performative dimensions. The effect of the liturgy was therefore to collapse the ages, merging biblical times with ecclesiastical history (as well as the performers' present), while Cuthbert's mirroring of Christ's light was reflected in the twilight hour of the Office.

C. Annette Gris e's exploration of early sixteenth-century books produced by the nuns of Syon Abbey provides an interesting (and mostly implicit) link between female and lay devotion. It shows how these books were part of a wider, pan-European movement, which celebrated lay and female return to a simplified devotion.

The exploration of monastic and lay reading cultures is also central to Susan Uselmann's study of Nicholas Love's *Mirror*. It locates the work not only within the anxiety regarding vernacular theology in the wake of Arundel's Constitutions, but also as part of the transformation and laicisation of devotional reading. Originating with scholastic and monastic techniques of fragmented and affective reading, Uselmann traces how this was adapted to the 'simple' reader by removing its original multiplicity in favour of a uniformity of reading, structured by the liturgical year. The new devotion facilitated a shared sense of community in

the Abbeys of Syon and Barking, but could also be extended to the creation of a more virtual community of lay believers at large.

Shifting attention to the production of books, Christina M. Carlson opens the last section, 'Modelling', with a study of the *Life* of St Radegund printed by Pynson. Without explicit information on the writing, printing or reading of the work, Carlson nevertheless follows its anomaly – an English *Life* of a sixth-century Frankish queen – through the juxtaposition of Tudor courtly culture, devotion and commerce. The work had a clear appeal to Margaret Beaufort, Henry VII's powerful mother and Pynson's author and patron. It also tapped into Tudor legitimisation by providing an elaborate wedding scene (lacking or criticised in the Latin sources), mirroring depictions of Tudor weddings. This short article targets its title's first two components – printing, propaganda and profit – while more exploration into print-run, prices and concrete readership is needed to substantiate the third.

The Lady Margaret is also the subject of the following chapter, Stephanie Morley's exploration of her translation of *The mirroure of golde*. Embedded within gender and feminist studies, this chapter seeks to rehabilitate the validity of this short work. In tandem with several other chapters, this highly conservative work is presented as part of a move 'from the cell to the manor house' (p. 221), hinting that the Lady Margaret promulgated the scholastic art of memory to wider audiences. The work eludes clear gender assignation, as is evident in the duality of motherhood: celebrated as the monarch's mother in the prologue, while embedding anti-feminist rhetoric in discussions of conception and the womb.

In the last chapter Catherine Innes-Parker looks at a composite manuscript for a female reader (Bodleian Library, Oxford, MS Holkham Misc. 41). Its two devotional prose treatises present two differing (if not opposing) forms of gender modelling: one, translated from the Latin, preserves its origins by retaining masculine tone and male role models throughout; the other, composed for and by an enclosed sister, contrasts negative male models with a surprising array of biblical female sinners and outcasts, presented as positive role models. The former is instructive; the latter demonstrates that 'unworthiness or sin is not a barrier to union with Christ' (p. 259). Innes-Parker demonstrates how this unlikely couple could function together.

As a whole, the book presents a complex view of late medieval England. Gender is a key facet of its analyses given that 'texts with which medieval women were most closely associated belong to the category of devotional literature' (p. 218). The volume, however, does not 'combat periodization' (p. 268) by looking at devotion between 1100 and 1536. Only one chapter explores the earlier period, and none the years 1150 to 1350. Looking at the volume through the prism of the long fifteenth century (c. 1370–c. 1530) presents a fascinating narrative, briefly explored at pp. 270–1: a time when the Lollard controversy concurred with the rise of lay (and often female) devotion and literacy, and the gradual transformation of book production.

This volume presents an enviable editorial coherency. An elaborate introduction and insightful afterword are accompanied by linking between essays in substantial footnotes, as well as by the authors themselves. The volume lives up to

the promise of showing the greyscales, continuities and complexities of parallel cultures, traditionally presented as oppositional, be they masculine and feminine, lay and clerical, heterodox and orthodox, or Latin and vernacular. Grounded in concrete examples, it reminds us of the fascinating complexities of late medieval English devotional culture.

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EYAL POLEG

English Gothic misericord carvings. History from the bottom up. By Betsy Chunko-Dominguez. (Art and Material Culture in Medieval and Renaissance Europe, 9.) Pp. xii + 187 incl. frontispiece, 85 colour and black-and-white ills and 1 table. Leiden–Boston: Brill, 2017. €112. 978 90 04 34118 0; 2212 4187

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The fabulous panoply of scenes carved into the misericords that once supported the bottoms of medieval monks and canons across England is ripe for an important new treatment, and in Betsy Chunko-Dominguez it has found a suitably erudite and appreciative investigator. She opens her book by arguing, rightly, that it is a fool's errand to seek a single 'correct' meaning for every carving but also disputes with scholars who have emphasised incoherence or contradiction between margin and centre, or between the pious and the lewd. Seemingly incongruous iconographies, she argues, in fact operated at different levels within the one Christian interpretative hierarchy, a riddling challenge as much for cotemporaries as for modern historians. Sexual imagery, say, was neither simply subversive nor funny but just as richly allusive and complex as an episode from a saint's life. Her book largely positions religion – or, rather, the religious – as the dominant force within the interpretive field. Thus, 'husband beating' is an injunction to celibacy; deformed human bodies, a warning of spiritual corruption; hell, a didactic tool. Some of these interpretations will be familiar to readers but they provide the grit that proves the rich multi-valency of misericord carvings, and Chunko-Dominguez's short text is exceptionally wide-ranging and comprehensively cited. In fact, her weaker arguments come when she departs from her focus on contemporary hermeneutics and tries to uncover authorial intention. The first is when she contends that carvings of busy-bee agricultural workers were the 'conscious choice' of the carver in the face of accusations of rural laziness (p. 94). She makes a similar argument about carvings of carvers being examples of 'artisanal self-awareness' (p. 147). Actually, I would argue, the inverse is more plausible – this was the divinely-ordered society of estates satire, dictated by the seignorial interests of the patron, in which the peasant laboured as he ought, eschewing the alarming social flux of the long fifteenth century. As such, it would fit more neatly into her reader- or meaning-focussed approach. The second is when she describes Reynard the Fox carvings as the work of anticlerical carvers slipped under the nose of presumably rather dim-witted canons, and thus 'socially recuperative' (p. 142). This veers towards the centre/margin distinction critiqued in chapter i (p. 30). The book begins with its focus squarely on 'interpretive