

that his analysis can be used to determine which parts of historic instrument examples are authentic and which are replacements, based on the zinc content of the brass.

This review needs to bring up a few criticisms. The volume originated as a dissertation, as revealed by the “CD attached to this thesis” (158). Although some sections of the volume demonstrate the work of professional editors in converting the dissertation into a book, others are cumbersome, clunky, and error-ridden. There are many abrupt and disjunct shifts within paragraphs to unrelated topics and literally hundreds of errors—typos, misspellings, inconsistent font sizes, and grammatically incomplete sentences (25). The work could have been shortened, tightened, and made into a more useful and coherent volume by omitting the information that is either not new or irrelevant. Nevertheless, there are gems to be found in the work; it brings together a lot of good information, introduces valuable new ideas, and points to important directions for future research.

D. Linda Pearce, *Mount Allison University /  
Indiana University Bloomington*

*Renaissance Suppliants: Poetry, Antiquity, Reconciliation.* Leah Whittington.  
Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016. xviii + 240 pp. \$90.

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Leah Whittington’s impressive book explores the persistence, asymmetry, and fragility of rituals of supplication from classical antiquity through the Renaissance. Whittington presents supplication as a reciprocal but asymmetric ritual, inherently unstable due to the inevitable individuality of each participant, who under the pressures of a particular situation may react unpredictably to “the paradox of the suppliant’s powerful powerlessness” (18). Drawing on a broad range of texts, Whittington moves fluently across generic, temporal, and linguistic boundaries. Her first chapter, focused primarily on Greek works and drawing on methods from the social sciences as well as literary criticism, lays out the conceptual framework for the remainder of the book. Four further chapters, on Virgil, Petrarch, Shakespeare, and Milton, each situate a canonical work or pair of works at the intersections of classical and vernacular intertexts, traditional and contemporary social practices, historical documents, and visual artifacts. A brief review cannot do justice to the richness of each chapter’s interventions; scholars of each author and genre treated, as well as comparatists working across multiple disciplines, will find much to reward their attention to the entire book. Whittington offers persuasive new insights into familiar works and tells a complex story whose principal strands are deeply intertwined.

One strand juxtaposes the persistent potency—or at least potential—of supplication with explorations of its contingency. An excellent chapter on the *Aeneid* locates Virgil’s poem at a moment of sociopolitical transition, as the act of supplication—

shameful in a republic—becomes a potent yet problematic weapon in the new political theater of empire. Whittington shows that Virgil destabilizes the fragile functionality of supplication as represented in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. The *Aeneid*'s narrative voice gradually prises open a gap between the narrator's sympathies and his hero, forcing the reader into the "conflicting moral and emotional positions" (49) that supplication entails. Arguing that even Virgil's patrons will experience vicariously the humiliation of pleading for the clemency that becomes a hallmark of imperial *Romanitas*, Whittington extends pessimistic readings of the *Aeneid* in an intriguing new direction.

The political configurations into which supplication aligns the selves it shapes form a second strand of Whittington's argument. The political implications of supplication made so clear in the chapter on Virgil become especially prominent in Shakespeare and Milton, as supplication becomes a tool of constraint exercised by the supposedly powerless suppliant on the supposedly all-powerful ruler. Supplication's potential to collapse as well as impose or acknowledge hierarchy reaches its apex in a compelling reading of *Paradise Lost*, as Whittington shows Milton's political—and theological—egalitarianism to be imagined and enacted by rituals of supplication and response. Here Whittington extends both recent feminist readings of Eve and the ongoing recuperation of Milton's uses of classical literature.

A third strand argues that the psychic fissures of supplication generate new poetic strategies. In the *Africa* and *Canzoniere*, Petrarch blurs the boundaries between suppliant's and respondent's experiences, enabling him to dramatize the divisions and delusions of the enamored self and so producing his quintessentially Renaissance poetics of interiority. In one of her strongest readings, Whittington argues that *Coriolanus* single-mindedly drives toward Volumnia's supplication of Coriolanus in order to explore both the gradual erosion of selfhood and the abrupt and catastrophic "loss of autonomy" (149) that interpellation into predetermined rituals of supplication can inflict on an individual, whether petitioner or recipient. Rendering supplication as tragedy, *Coriolanus* classicizes its treatment of supplication and its dramatic poetics alike: an argument with important implications for recent scholarship on Greek drama in the English Renaissance. The equality that accepted supplications create is mirrored in subtle linguistic shifts that Whittington traces throughout *Paradise Lost*.

Whittington's book, often beautifully written, teems with insights small and large, into the workings of Virgil's narrative voice or Milton's use of the classical tradition, into the erosion of agency and individual autonomy that interpellation into a prescribed ritual can produce even as that ritual succeeds in the short term. Throughout, Whittington carefully attends to supplication as a ritual with a literary prehistory and an extra-textual reality; she explores her authors' references to their predecessors and responses to their cultural moments with sensitivity and finesse. *Renaissance Suppliants* provides substantial new insights into individual canonical works. More important, it explores the ways in which authors have returned to the depiction of a particular ritual to ask

how literary interrogations of supplication can yet perpetuate the narratives and affective structures that continue to provide our social and emotional safety nets in moments of crisis.

Sarah Van der Laan, *Indiana University Bloomington*

*Fiction and Figuration in High and Late Medieval Literature*. Marianne Pade, Anders Cullhed, Anders Hallengren, and Brian Møller Jensen, eds. *Analecta Romana Instituti Danici, Supplementa 47*. Rome: Edizioni Quasar, 2016. 122 pp. €32.

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Defining the movement of the line between fiction and history feels more fraught, but also more necessary, in the current climate. The international group of scholars who contribute to this volume consider fiction theory central to our understanding of medieval literary culture; their arguments about fictional representation across multiple genres and languages proceed from this premise. Walter Haug claimed in 1985 that Chrétien de Troyes articulated the concept, if not the term, for fiction in the twelfth century. Dennis Green responded in 2002 that until the twelfth century, people wrote what they believed to be true; only after that did they purposefully write fiction. Several essays in this book engage directly with Green, especially with the following definition, quoted more than once: “Fiction is a category of literary text which, although it may also include events that were held to have actually taken place, gives an account of events that could not conceivably have taken place and/or that, although possible, did not take place, and which, in doing so, invites the intended audience to be willing to make-believe what would otherwise be regarded as untrue” (32).

A slim proceedings volume that retains the energy and intimacy of a small conference, this collection is lightly edited, retaining both spontaneity and some unevenness. Because of the wide range of approaches and applications, a full introduction or preface to the volume would have been welcome. The essay closest to serving this purpose is the long meditation on fictionality scholarship by Jan Ziolkowski, “Fiction in the Long Twelfth Century and Beyond,” an overview of the last fifty years of fictionality theory useful for new students of romance and other fictional genres. If we require an explicit author’s statement of intent, he says lightly, then of course we can’t date fiction before the twelfth century, although there are scraps of what we might consider fiction preceding that point. Ziolkowski’s necessarily surface references stretch from Plato to Dan Brown, with special attention to the ninth to twelfth centuries. He observes that the term *fictionality* and narrative theory generally are much more common in German than in English: in particular, anglophone scholars who discuss fictionality tend not to take the medieval period into account.