

Karen Hodder and Brendan O'Connell, eds. *Transmission and Generation in Medieval and Renaissance Literature: Essays in Honour of John Scattergood*. Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2012. 156 pp. €55. ISBN: 978 1-84682-338-1.

This collection began as a study day centered on age and youth in medieval and early modern literature to honor John Scattergood's retirement from Trinity College Dublin. The same theme serves as an umbrella for the essays in this volume, which together form the second *Festschrift* in honor of John Scattergood published by Four Courts Press. As the title suggests and the introduction acknowledges, the collection reimagines the theme of age and youth focusing more on relationships and tensions between generations — old and new, young and old, past and present — as seen in the literal and intellectual transmission of power, religious practice, information, history, and texts. If the theme seems broadly defined and the categories somewhat tangential, it is and they are. The true unifying structure of this collection, as with the earlier *Festschrift*, *Studies in Late Medieval and Early Renaissance Texts*, edited by Anne Marie D'Arcy and Alan J. Fletcher (2005), is John Scattergood. Over half of the contributors to this volume are former students of Scattergood and his influence looms large, as is appropriate for a tribute. Perhaps because of the loose thematic structure, the editors opt to present the essays roughly in chronological order based on the texts being discussed.

The volume begins with Francis Leneghan's work on the Scyld Scefing section in *Beowulf*. Leneghan argues for the originality of the episode, normally read as a familiar component. The broader thematic issue is how do we attend to moments when the amalgamation of history and narrative become so successful that they alter subsequent accounts? Leneghan answers the question with his

work: by carefully teasing out and tracing the narratives found in such moments. Questions of historical transmission continue with Erik Kooper's analysis of chronicle accounts of the reigns of Henry I, Stephen, and Henry II. Kooper provides concise timelines for the reigns of the twelfth-century monarchs while pointing out the divergent aims of the chronicle writers. In doing so, Kooper calls for more comparative analysis of the various histories to understand the motives behind the narratives.

The two subsequent chapters focus on literary dialogues. Brendan O'Connell points out that Richard FitzNigel's *Dialogus de Scaccario* (ca. 1176/77) uses the popular literary format, here between teacher and student, to argue for a correlation between the legitimacy of succession in terms of rule and knowledge. O'Connell emphasizes FitzNigel's resistance to the closed nature of the medieval debate poem genre, a topic continued in Darragh Greene's chapter on *The Parlement of the Three Ages*. The dream vision debate between Youthe, Medill Elde, and Elde explicitly embraces the thematic structure of the volume. Greene contends that the allegorical nature of the characters result in a failure of communication across the generations, which in turn produces an unresolved text.

Moving away from literature, Niamh Pattwell focuses on the financial accounts of Isabelle of France (ca. 1295–1358) during the last year of her life as detailed in British Library MS Cotton Galba E XIV. Pattwell's excellent and nuanced reading of Isabelle's household accounts produce a historically grounded narrative of Isabelle's later years that differ greatly from the popular tales of hardship and imprisonment.

Clídhna Carney returns to discourses between age and youth with a reading of Chaucer's "Franklin's Tale." Within this common medieval set-up, one seen earlier in the volume, Carney points out that virtue and vice are often a matter of viewpoint: what is called spendthrift in youth may be considered generosity in age. While social status might influence virtue and ethical development, Carney's interpretation suggests that even distinguishing between deeds done for private gain or public good can prove problematic. The difficulty of reading motivation and instruction is further taken up in Frances McCormack's work on Sir John Clanvowe's *The Two Ways*. Frustrations with Clanvowe's tract stem, in part, from what scholars read as his refusal to promote the tenets of Lollardy. McCormack ultimately traces Clanvowe's faith in his argument for choosing personal salvation over the institutional church.

The volume ends with three chapters that focus on the reception and use of earlier works, thereby returning to the topic of transmission. Eiléan Ní Chuilleanáin reads Shakespeare's rendering of the murder of the princes in the tower in Shakespeare's *Richard III* as a response to the critique of sanctuary in Thomas More's *History of Richard III*. Moving from literary to material transmission, John J. Thompson hypothesizes a cultural history and mapping — including Welsh and Irish readers from the seventeenth century — for Trinity College Dublin MS 505, a fifteenth-century manuscript on English history. In the closing essay, Karen Hodder pushes the chronological boundary of the volume by moving into the

nineteenth-century with an analysis of Wordsworth's admiration for medieval poetry as evidenced by the romantic poet's translation, or modernization, of Chaucer's works.

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