

details. These, Duffy shows, were frequently crossed out, erased or changed by later owners, particularly when the Reformation made dangerous any relics of Catholic 'superstitions'.

In examining the life of prayer and the meditation to which it presumably gave rise, Duffy considers how far the individual felt personally the apparent sentiments of the prayers in the books, such as the psalms. He examines the additional materials that owners added to their copies to assess what their personal preoccupations might be, concentrating on one or two representative examples rather than producing statistics that would necessarily be of doubtful validity. Some of the additional prayers are effectively charms or sympathetic magic. As time passed, he shows, the books' contents became somewhat standardised with a heavy emphasis on the moral and didactic. They also included a greater percentage of vernacular material. He judges the English version to be particularly distinct in the amount of supernaturalism that they contain, material that he thinks Continental bishops were able to exclude from editions in their dioceses. The Reformation, however, altered the acceptable form of prayers and although the Books of Hours did not vanish overnight, the editions in the first half of Elizabeth's reign were evidently not in demand as their approach seemed alien to Protestant ideas of Christian prayer.

Perhaps the most interesting chapter is the one in which he turns his attention to the annotations that Sir Thomas More made in the Book of Hours that he took to the Tower with him and clearly used while he was there. While More was a powerful religious thinker, Duffy shows that others in their own books expressed similar sentiments and that these sentiments are as much communal as they are individual.

This is a brilliant book with lavish illustrations that in themselves are worth the price.

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Evans, Ruth, Helen Fulton, and David Matthews (eds.), *Medieval Cultural Studies: Essays in Honour of Stephen Knight*, Cardiff, University of Wales Press, 2006; hardback; pp. 286; R.R.P. £55.00; ISBN 0708319580.

This tribute to Stephen Knight by scholars with whom he has worked makes clear the breadth of his experience and influence. It features chapters by many of the leading lights of medieval and medievalism studies in Sydney, Melbourne,

Wales, Scotland, England and the United States. The chapters canvas a wide range of subjects, clustered under the overarching theme of the application of cultural studies to the medieval. The chapters are grouped into sections, some more cohesive than others.

‘Defining the Field: Medieval Cultural Studies’ features very thorough analyses of the development and state of medieval cultural studies by David Matthews, who describes the scholars and movements involved, and by Thomas Hahn, who takes Robin Hood as a case study in cultural studies to give an account of the rise of medievalism. Also in this section, possibly slightly less well-placed, is an excellent chapter by Larry Scanlon, tracing the antecedents of modern pornography in medieval fabliaux and penitentials. Scanlon’s insightful links between this modern genre and a range of medieval texts spanning an entire millennium are an important lesson in the enduring relevance of medieval studies to modern culture.

The next section is devoted to Robin Hood. An interesting paper by W. M. Ormrod investigates the authority accorded to written instruments and formal seals in the Robin Hood tales. Helen Cooper considers the provenance of *A Tale of Robin Hood*, emphasising its unusual aligning of Robin on the side of episcopal authority. Martha W. Driver examines the role of the rousing speech in Robin Hood literature from medieval text to modern spoof movie, noting the establishment of common referents and modes of expression. Thomas H. Ohlgren’s chapter is about ‘oppositional ideology’ in the poems *Robin Hood and the Monk* and *Robin Hood and the Potter*. In each case he puts a compelling argument for empathy on the part of the manuscript compiler with the themes in the poems. It would have been interesting to see the argument for each expanded, although there was probably not space for that in this collection.

A tidy segue to the next section, on Chaucer, is provided by Helen Phillips’s chapter comparing ‘The Friar’s Tale’ with the Robin Hood tradition to demonstrate early familiarity with Robin Hood literature. Helen Fulton’s chapter on the London street Cheapside gives a satisfying grounding in the material world: her discussion is concerned with the physical and social space defined by Cheapside and its literary and historical uses. Another broadening of perspective is offered by Henry Ansgar Kelly, who considers non-Christian communities in Chaucer’s time, particularly in the context of crusading and Chaucer’s Knight. His conclusion that ‘the religion of their opponents was ... of secondary importance compared to the kind of fight they could put up’ is salutary – and not irrelevant to events of the last few years. Stephanie Trigg’s treatment of the ‘lewed people’ in ‘The

Pardoner's Tale' is characteristically thorough and insightful. She questions the accepted reading of the Pardoner's differentiation between his accustomed 'lewed' audience on the one hand and the pilgrims on the other, with the resultant humour of his confusion of the two at the tale's conclusion, arguing for a much more nuanced reading, where the distinction is not so clear-cut and the role of the 'consumer' is played with.

'The Cultural Politics of Romance' includes Sheila Delaney on the Yiddish romance *Bovo de-Antona*, Ruth Evans on *Sir Orfeo* and Diane Speed on the various versions of *Otuel*. Delaney emphasises Bovo's Jewishness, Evans focuses on the motif of sovereignty, and Speed explores how a narrative motif can be modified to reflect a particular attitude to chivalry.

The final section, 'Cultural Politics/The Politics of Culture', is a rather mixed collection. Margaret Clunies Ross's 'The Cultural Politics of the Skaldic Ekphrasis Poem in Medieval Norway and Iceland' proposes that the genre died out in Norway with the move from small polities based on gift exchange to larger centralised kingdoms, where the magnificence of gifts was not central to the polities' survival. The small quantity of later, Icelandic ekphrasis was able to continue because Iceland's lack of 'official aristocracy' left room for a 'big man' mentality where gift exchange could still influence socio-political standing. Geraldine Barnes's 'Medieval Murder – Modern Crime Fiction' is a masterfully written and incisively conceived account of the similarities between some medieval literature and modern crime fiction. Barnes recognises and relates with deadly precision parallel passages from the two genres, demonstrating how little, in some respects, the art of fiction has altered over hundreds of years. In 'Explaining the "Mysteries": Medieval Theatre and Modern Fictions', Margaret Rogerson analyses the historical authenticity of Barry Unsworth's *Morality Play* and Geraldine McCaughrean's *A Little Lower than the Angels* before evaluating the contribution that such modern mystery stories can make to the study of medieval mystery plays and their performance, concluding that they 'are licensed to speculate on such matters to the extent of risking anachronism, and our consciousness of these anachronisms can send us back to question our own verities as we seek to explain the medieval mysteries': surely a valuable contribution.

The book is completed by a bibliography of Stephen Knight's scholarly works, a serviceable index and a *Tabula Gratulatoria* displaying yet more of the important names in medieval studies, many of them Australian.

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