

Reviews

Théâtre et spectacles hier et aujourd'hui: Moyen Age et Renaissance. Actes du 115e Congrès National des Sociétés Savantes. Avignon, 1990. Editions du Comité des Travaux Historiques et Scientifiques Paris, 1991. 319 pp. 8 plates. 200 FF.

The eighteen papers read at the congress which is the subject of this volume cover a wide range, particularly as regards their subjects. (Some of these are so long that they would not disgrace an eighteenth century monograph: summary rather than reproduction will be advisable for a short review.) The emphasis is on areas other than the straight theatre, and the papers are published in five groups. All papers are reproduced in French.

Under the heading *Bilan et perspectives de recherche*, Élisabeth Lalou and Madeleine Lazard offer assessments of the present state of research in the theatre, respectively, of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance (the former adds *spectacles publics* to her remit). Lalou provides much bibliographical information in footnotes, while regretting that there is still no good global bibliography for the drama of the Middle Ages, that periodicals devoted to the subject (e.g. *Pluteus* and *Tréteaux*) never seem to be viable and that research on French theatre is much less thriving than that devoted to English sources. In current research, the spectacle side seems to be making the running (as the balance of the volume suggests), though Lalou points to a number of published theses which have orientated research in new directions (Aubailly, H. Rey-Flaud, Accarie) which really remain within the area of theatre in a broad sense. The terminology and thrust of the discussion of the origins question seem curiously dated, and the important book by Richard Axton, which challenges many of the post-Chambers orthodoxies on the origins of mediaeval theatre, is referred to only in the discussion of learned theatre (p.25). After the nevertheless very useful account of research orientation and the full bibliographical information of this article, the second, on the Renaissance, disappoints: Madeleine Lazard gives little up-dating on current research publications and confines herself largely to a

description of sixteenth-century theatre and its evolution, a little in the manner of a manual for students, without really marking out the directions which research is taking. It is a useful synthesis for those who need one, but does little to help such a person, let alone a specialist, to take things further.

The first of three papers grouped under the heading *La Représentation théâtrale* is a fascinating codicological study by Élisabeth Lalou of surviving theatrical *rolets*, individual parts (whence *rôles*) written out on narrow strips of parchment or paper for use - and often return after the show was 'down' - by actors. The definition of the *rolet* is that it should include only one part and the cues given by interlocutors; it is curious that, having used a quotation from the *Pyramus and Thisbe* play within *A Midsummer Night's Dream* as an epigraph, Lalou should have ignored Quince's very relevant rebuke to Flute in Act III, sc. 1: 'you speak all your part at once, cues and all'. Lalou's observations (p.57) on the complex relationship between the *rolet* and the main text are particularly interesting, and the bibliography of existing specimens, followed by an edition of six of them, most useful. Guy Paoli next discusses, in partly sociological terms, the relationship between the theatre and the tavern in mediaeval Arrasian drama. The tavern is an excellent setting for the standard preoccupation of the Arras playwrights with money; but it may be going too far to link, as Paoli does, Bodel's choice of Nicolas miracle with this: is it not likely that previous scholarship is right to point to the thematic link with the preaching of the Fourth Crusade? Not only does the tavern enter the theatre (even liturgical theatre), but Paoli returns favourably to Marie Unguréanu's suggestion that such plays may have been performed in taverns, as is certainly the case elsewhere and later (see also the paper by Marjoke de Roos). He provides some persuasive arguments in this cause. Finally in this section Bernard Mosse draws attention to the affinities between fourteenth-century painting and theatre, making his criterion the degree to which a painting has Aristotelian unity, which he sees as dramatic, as distinct from multiplicity of time, space and action, which is seen as essentially narrative in character. This criterion is then tested on a number of artists (the Isaac Master, Giotto, Matteo Giovanetti), torn between the two principles and sometimes evolving from one to the other over time. The mastery of perspective in the early 15th century tips the scales definitively in

the direction of drama, as Mossé argues from a brief analysis of ideas in Alberti's seminal *Della pittura*.

The third section, *Genres et oeuvres*, contains five papers. Philippe Bernard discusses the sources and likely reception of Philippe de Mézière's 1372 liturgical drama of the *Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary in the Temple*, showing his dependence on the *Pseudo-Augustinian Sermon* and an unidentified *Ordo Prophetarum* for certain elements. More importantly, Philippe is shown to use the Greek apocryphal Gospel of St James for the basic subject, rather than its Latin derivatives, the Pseudo-Matthew Gospel (though this *is* used for the song of Anna) and the texts depending on it, including the *Golden Legend*. This demonstration is then applied to certain other short texts sometimes ascribed to Philippe, using comparison with his better-known *Songe du Vieil Pelerin* and *Épître au roi Richard*, to show which may safely be taken as his. The apocryphal and other texts in question are usefully tabulated (pp.102-06), but (though it does not affect his main thesis) Bernard is surely wrong to say that all the Latin texts descend from the Pseudo-Matthew: it is clear that the *De Nativitate Mariae* has direct links with the Greek apocryphal Gospel of St James, with which it generally agrees closely against Pseudo-Matthew. Further, the detail in Philippe's play that the Virgin (as a young child) goes up the Temple steps without aid is explicitly in the *Golden Legend*, and implicitly in Pseudo-Matthew, but not in the Greek text. The paper ends with a fascinating reconstruction of the possible causes, involving theological reservations at the highest level in the papal court at Avignon in 1372, for the revision of the play for 1385, which largely removed traces of Philippe's personal touch.

Bernadette Rey-Flaud next traces Molière's debt to the mediaeval farce in a number of his plays. She shows how moralists and scholars of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries condemned the farce by lumping it together with crude clowning on trestles, with the result that the label of *farceur* (often related to alleged plagiarism from Italian *Commedia dell'arte*) became one of the most convenient, if misconceived, forms of attack on Molière. Rey-Flaud stresses, after Lanson and others, the importance of the personality of the actor of farce in defining the genre's *esthétique*; she insists on the role of *ruse* as the organising principle of farce, an autonomous and implacable machine which ensures that not

only is the deceiver deceived - the most usual situation - but that both duper and dupe are often swept away in a common discomfiture. (It would here be apposite, though not original, to point here to the paradoxical similarities between farce and tragedy.) Having given a useful account of the impact of Italian performers on indigenous French farce traditions from the sixteenth century onwards, and the tantalising titles of lost *divertissements* acted by Molière's company in the years following his return to Paris and which imply the continuing influence of the mediaeval tradition, Rey-Flaud analyses *La Jalousie du Barbouillé*, *Le Médecin Volant*, *Le Médecin malgré lui* and *George Dandin* to show how, in spite of Italian-style situations in both the 'doctor' plays in particular, the mediaeval farce and the *fabliau* cast a longer shadow than the Italian theatrical fashion. One may feel that Rey-Flaud takes the tragic potential of the last of these plays too seriously, but this is a stylish and thought-provoking article.

With Catherine Ingrassia we leave the theatre proper for the dance: the *Moresque*, first attested in the fifteenth century and the earliest *danse-spectacle* for which good information is available; it was in common use at the entries of royal or noble personalities into towns (cf. also p.199, n.50), as well as at Carnival-time. Well illustrated with reproductions of woodcuts, the paper draws attention to recurring features: expensive costumes with bells, the presence of a dominating woman, holding a ring, a fruit or other circular object, and of *fous* among the dancers, the characteristic stamping dance-steps. Some forms involve swords; in Spain, there is a division of the dancers into Christians and Turks. It continues into the sixteenth century (on p.136, l.3, read 'XVIe' for 'XVe'). Ingrassia points to the similar dances in Provence and, of course, England, with our Morris Dances; the latter are curiously said to be confined to the North of England. More fundamentally, in spite of a brief nod in the direction of popular origins, the author puts her material in a somewhat misleading perspective: the phenomena described are not things that develop in the late Middle Ages and the Renaissance, but are deeply rooted in mediaeval and pre-mediaeval dances and games, as R. Axton shows (see especially pp.35-36, 148-49 of his *European Drama of the Early Middle Ages*, London, etc. (Hutchinson), 1974). The relationship of the *fou* and the, often somewhat earthy, lady of the *moresque* with the theme of madness and with Dame Douche in Adam de la Halle's *Jeu de la*

Feuillee (pun on *Folie*, as has been suggested?), and of both with ancient games and dances, would repay much more detailed study, as would the roots of the sword and Turks-versus-Christians dances described here.

Emmanuèle Ruegger, in her paper 'De Grâce-Dieu à Circé: le Ballet de Cour au XVI^e siècle et son livret', discusses the development of the *intermède*, uniting poetry, music and dance, in court entertainment, mainly in the post-mediaeval period. She starts with Olivier de la Marche's account of the 'Banquet du Faisan' at the court of Burgundy in 1454; 'Grâce-Dieu' introduces allegorical figures of Virtues who intervene in a mythological action dealing with Jason in order to propound the theme of Crusade, which was the reason for the feast. The mixture of Christian allegory and mythology is the most interesting feature here; dance (a *moresque*) is added in the *intermède de la Baleine* in the marriage celebrations of Charles the Bold and Margaret of York in 1468; after that, the end of the ducal house of Burgundy causes a break in the tradition, which the author then studies, in the context of *entrées royales*, in the sixteenth century. The evolution of the increasingly baroque spectacles offered on such occasions, and especially the transformation wrought in the reign of François I^{er} by the neo-platonic abolition of the Aristotelian and scholastic distinction between the symbol and what it represents, are the guiding themes for the interpretation of the inventions of later masters of ceremonies, including literary giants such as Scève and Ronsard.

The final paper in this section is that of Maria José Palla, who starts from the figures of the Witch and the Go-between in the theatre of the early sixteenth-century Portuguese playwright Gil Vicente. It is not clear what the author means when she says (p.166) that she knows of no earlier literary examples of these types: it may be the case (cf. p.170) that she refers only to Portuguese literature, for it would be easy to point, *mut. mut.* to examples from the French Middle Ages (people like Thessala in *Cligés*, the Breton enchantress and Escanor's mother in *Escanor*, some aspects of Guibourc and, also from the epics, male magicians such as Maugis, Fousifie and Fouchier; for go-betweens, Richeut and Auberee). The analysis shows, certainly, an unusual feature: most of Gil's women considered here combine sorcery and pimping, as does one male character. It would be interesting to

have some detailed support for Palla's statement that a Picard devil raised by Genebra Pereira is 'issu, selon nous, du théâtre médiéval français'. There are certainly overtones of the *fabliaux* in some side-lines of these entremetteuses, such as needlework as a means of getting into people's houses.

The fourth section is headed *Jeux et Spectacles Publics*, and contains four papers. The first is an excellent study by Christian de Mérindol of the Entrée Royale as both theatre and politics. After a most useful and voluminous bibliography (pp.179-80), with special reference to the writings of Élie Konigson, a careful repertory is provided of what is known about specific occasions from 1355 onwards, including a number of occasions neglected hitherto. The discussion adds important correctives and additions to Konigson's work, particularly for the earlier period (before 1484). The themes treated at each occasion are then analysed to show the development of royal self-image and the attitudes expressed towards the monarch by the town concerned. The meaning of thematic material is closely explored, and there is much new material on offer, for instance a taxonomy and hierarchy of colours (pp.196-97). One theme given particular emphasis is the special relationship of the king and Heaven, which de Mérindol traces back to the hitherto ignored entry of Isabeau de Bavière into Paris, 1389, though the circumstances of the Hundred Years War make it disappear again until 1461, or possibly 1437. The article allows the reader to follow the growth or decline in importance of each item in the displays, and conclusions are drawn about the shifting relationship between the monarch and the towns. The rigorous chronological order in each discussion is most helpful in this respect, as is the prudent and careful commentary of the author. The second part of the paper (from p.200) is equally fascinating: the organisation of such events: one is for example intrigued to learn that questionnaires on the king's wishes were submitted to him on occasion; or he might vet the proposals. There are details of the people who planned and directed the spectacles, the physical settings, the iconography. This most informative and fascinating article ends with further bibliographical information, classified for each known *entrée*.

Marjoke de Roos examines the role of women in carnival drama of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries under the title of 'Misogynie et Matriarcat'. In the context of the 'world upside-down' atmosphere

of Carnival, the themes of women wearing the trousers in the household, lying, cuckolding their husbands and attracting the censure of men predominate. In the surviving *Fastnachtspiele*, many from Nuremberg, we have street theatre by young men who take the performances also into pubs; de Roos thinks there was no attempt to hide the real sex of the actor, and the structures are simple, allowing for improvisation. De Roos examines a number of texts, in which women are represented not only as quarrelsome and bossy but as refusing to have sex with their husbands, thus driving the latter to other women (yet they are also accused of insatiability: one certainly recognizes here many of the often contradictory claims of mediaeval anti-feminism). The whole is in the context of Lent, of course, during which sexual relations were forbidden. There are portrayals of women who can outfight devils and turn out to be witches, and references are made to the famous infatuation of Aristotle. Inversion of the sexes is the overriding theme (the illustrative woodcuts on pp.221 and 223 are inverted!); but de Roos draws the conclusion that the very excesses of the plays are a lesson in conformity for normal life.

The translation of an unusual Swedish fragment of a play in the genre of disputes of *Carnival against Lent* (*Julens och Fastans tråta*) opens the contribution of Leif Sondergaard. It is from a manuscript dated 1457, and may be somewhat older. One in a long line of debates, battles, carnival plays and *fabliaux* between 1200 and 1700, the Swedish example replaces Carnival by Christmas, which may be more justifiable than it seems at first sight if the period between Christmas and Carnival is seen as coming between two seasons of fasting, Advent and Lent. The Christmas/Carnival period is inaugurated by the *festum stultorum*, in which, as in Carnival, the world is turned upside-down. It is significant too that in a *fabliau* from the end of the thirteenth century, *La bataille de Caresme et de Charnage*, the latter is supported by Noël in a successful struggle against *Caresme*. The Swedish play is compared with other texts from different countries and periods, and, interestingly, with Bruegel's painting on this subject of 1559, which itself stands in a line of paintings going back to Bosch's version of around 1500. Standing in the *Psychomachia* tradition, the genre is at first ambivalent about the struggle between asceticism and *joie de vivre*, which is the frame of reference Sondergaard with reservations adopts, after considering others. Some early texts, of

widely different provenance, end inconclusively; others see the struggle in a feudal context, and show Carnival winning, because he is a generous feudal lord, or at least escaping from custody at Easter; others, probably including the Swedish fragment, give the victory to Lent, and this is always the case in texts after 1500, so that the moralising tendency seems to impose itself, especially with the Reformation. It is perhaps open to question whether, with Sondergaard, we should see this as a deliberately adopted politico-religious means of control by the authorities.

For her paper, Katrin Kröll exploits the very rich archival records of the Strasbourg *Conseil des XXI* relating to decisions on applications for the right to perform at the international fairs in that town between 1539 and 1618, coupled with the notes of a Montpellier medical student, Thomas Platter, on *commedia dell'arte* in Avignon in 1599, to examine trends in fairground entertainment. The Italians in Avignon, forced by rents to abandon a *jeu de paume*, gave open-air performances on trestles before as many as 1000 people, in which acting, singing and dancing, conjuring and imitations of bird-song co-existed with the sale of fly-sheets, cornplasters and tooth-powder. There is a precise description of the *lazzi* which were interpolated into the plays.

Kröll draws inferences for the development of fairground spectacles in Europe as a whole from this account, affirming the likelihood of influence from such performances on the beginnings of professional theatre; she then points to the dismissive attitude of theatre historians to such spectacles as a reaction to a perceived threat to the dignity of the subject, and proposes to lift the veil on fairground performances by analysing the hitherto neglected, but plentiful and informative Strasbourg records. Of 400 or so artists who made applications, she has followed some 30 in archives relating to other venues, so confirming the reliability of the Strasbourg material. With the support of very clear diagrams and of individual case-histories, Kröll succeeds in tracing the rising popularity of such entertainments and the changing tastes of the public over the period: it is interesting that, in spite of opposition from both Catholic and Protestant clerics, the Council was increasingly favourable to the players (naturally enough, given both the rents for the pitches and the increased attractiveness of fairs which brought prosperity to the town). Perhaps unexpectedly, the proportion of drama, dancing and acrobatics is reduced as time

goes on (though on a much increased numerical basis) in favour of new attractions like waxworks and automatons. Sociologically, the surprising feature is the 'respectability' of many of the performers, who do not at all fit the stereotype of 'strolling players', but travel with the merchants and sometimes have the status of householders and bourgeois in Strasbourg, part-time entertainers with other professions and enjoying social respect. Kröll suggests that the church's attitude to the theatre and actors in Molière's time is a reversion to pre-sixteenth century attitudes; but it might be tentatively objected that Strasbourg, for reasons of its location and history, may be a somewhat special case and that Molière and his like were full-time professional actors performing rather different material. It is true that Kröll's analysis points to topical comment and satire at Strasbourg, which would not necessarily have been popular with the authorities either. In any case, readers will await the publication of the author's full research with impatience.

The final section of the volume is entitled *Tournois, Pas d'armes et Joutes*. It opens with a comparative study of the fate of the tournament in northern France, the Low Countries and England in the period 1280-1400 by Malcolm Vale. After providing a most useful note detailing the archival deposits available, and the specialised secondary literature, he begins with the paradox that the '*conflictus gallicus*' becomes more important outside France than within that country in the fourteenth century. Vale analyses the underlying reasons: the attitude of the French monarchy beginning with Louis IX's two-year ban on tournaments, 1260-62, in mourning for the loss of the Holy Land, and continuing for reasons of military necessity into the Valois period; the cost of such occasions, which results in a movement towards the richest courts, such as those of Burgundy and England. English knights, encouraged by Edwardian policy, became particularly famed for their skills. In France, the *mêlée* with two teams (*dedans v. dehors*) fighting on horseback with real weapons (cf. e.g. *Parthonopeu de Blois*) become increasingly rarer, and more and more circumscribed by safety measures, between 1280 and 1350. Vale argues his case convincingly from close examination of such sources as household accounts and the records of replacements of dead horses. The attraction of such events to rich bourgeois is another reason for loss of favour among the nobility, who increasingly make their own combats exclusive, theatrical events

with Arthurian literary overtones (see also the papers on *Pas d'armes*). Pressures on manpower such as the 100 Years War and the Black Death, as well as expense, lead to the gradual replacement of the *tournoi* by the joust, where, as a result of improvements in armour and the use of blunted weapons, controlled one-to-one combats allow a concentration on skill and technique.

The title of Armand Strubel's paper, *Le Pas d'armes: le tournoi entre le romanesque et le théâtral*, picks up some of the themes of Vale's paper, where the retreat of the nobility from events involving bourgeois into expensive and spectacular combats with literary overtones is evoked (p. 267). The *pas d'armes* develops in the fifteenth century, particularly in the entourages of the princes of Burgundy and Anjou. It typically involves a challenge in literary form in which the *entrepreneur* undertakes to defend a named place of passage (*le pas*) against all comers over a certain period with a choice of weapons. All is done according to a detailed ritual, and winners and losers are carefully identified by qualified judges, on the basis of skill in the joust. Strubel examines the types of poetic and prose records which preserve these literary joustings for posterity (and the exemplary aspect is as clear as in Froissart); the most prominent recorder is Olivier de la Marche, of the Burgundian court, whose name recurs frequently in this section. The *mise en scène* and the ceremonial of several of the most famous examples (*l'Arbre de Charlemagne*, *la Fontaine des pleurs*, *la Joyeuse Garde* are typical titles) are described from the sources, together with the great importance attached to the technical finer points of the combats - one is reminded of a cricket commentary. The combination of great care and lavishness in the preparation with an element of the unexpected (the whole ritual depended on someone of noble birth to take up the challenge) is very close to the spirit of the *roman courtois*, as are the emblems borrowed from narrative literature and the fiction underpinning the original challenge. To represent the theatre, however, there are even more important elements: the construction of the effectively multiple set and of *échafauds* for spectators; the role of the *entrepreneur*, which may be likened to that of the *meneur de jeu* in a *mystère* (a word constantly used by Olivier de la Marche) - though it may be objected that the *meneur de jeu* does not normally play the main part. This is, concludes Strubel (p. 283), a striking example of 'la

théâtralisation de l'existence, surtout dans les milieux aristocratiques. La noblesse se donne en spectacle [...] une osmose entre le quotidien et la fiction [...] l'imaginaire est pris au sérieux et mis en actes.'

Jean-Pierre Jourdain, who also deals with the *pas d'armes* under the subtitle 'Aspects d'un théâtre de chevalerie' makes much of the recurring use of the word *mystère* by Olivier de la Marche mentioned also by Strubel. The use of the *pas* as a passage which cannot be passed through without a fight, an exercise which absorbs other forms of combat and gives them a meaning going beyond the fight itself explains the use of *mystère* in the context of 'une des créations les plus fécondes de la pensée symbolique au XVe siècle' (p.285). The explanation of this symbolism which follows is not of the clearest, and matters are not helped by a tendency to use the word *mystère* in both its normal and its theatrical meanings indifferently and without notice. Much obscure analysis sits oddly alongside the startlingly obvious. There are some useful factual points in places (see e.g. pp.301-03), but, as far as the highly abstract and complex symbolic interpretation goes, the problem for this reviewer is that Jourdain does not draw his explanation from the texts recording the events so much as from what seems to be a pre-conceived grid of symbolic patterning, the appropriateness of which is not established. It also leads to rather forced exegesis *pour les besoins de la cause*: thus, (in the context of a basic contrast established between *la ligne* and *le cercle*) we are told (p.287) that the barrier down the middle of the lists 'est encore une image de la ligne, [et] rend manifeste le seuil; sa fonction est aussi strictement matérielle, en ce qu'elle sépare et oppose les adversaires et représente le seuil périlleux du combat [...] Le franchissement du seuil suggère l'idée d'un passage dangereux'; but the barrier in the lists is precisely *not* to be *franchie* in reality. At the end of this article, the reader may feel that the intellectual framework imposed on the material is not so much enlightening as unnecessarily complicating.

The final paper, by Carlos Guillherme Riley and Ana Maria S.A. Rodrigues, relates the fictional account of a judicial combat in Paris by Alvaro Gonçalves Coutinho to the historical reality of the career in France of this Portuguese nobleman and soldier of fortune. The fictional work, little known outside Portugal, though a source for Luis de Camoes in his *Os Lusíades*, is a short narrative

text of chivalric inspiration called *Os Doze de Inglaterra*, an anonymous work not earlier than the end of the fifteenth century. It tells of a Portuguese intervention in the struggle for the control of Flanders between the Valois and the Duke of Burgundy: straight from a judicial combat against twelve English knights, Alvaro is in time to defend the duchess of Burgundy, Isabella, wife of Philippe le Bon and Infanta of Portugal, in a victorious combat to establish her hierarchical equality with the King of France. He thus frees Flanders for ever from its subjection to the French throne. The text is interesting in the context of the development of chivalric combat discussed in the previous articles. Here there is a joust, first with horse and lance, then on foot, with swords; but there is very little of the usually automatic and loving description of armour, horses or preceding ceremonial, or even of the details of the fight, which is very much in the mould of the ordeal rather than the pageantry generally popular at this period. The topos of the liberating knight is used in a political cause: the drive towards autonomy by Burgundy and the prestige of the knight and that of the royal house of Portugal. The article then relates this largely fictional account to the reality of which it is a distorted reflection: the fact that French and Portuguese troops were on opposite sides both on the Peninsular front of the 100 Years War in the late fourteenth century and in Northern France in the fifteenth, in the latter case largely as soldiers of fortune. The real Alvaro was among these and served the house of Burgundy well, with lasting advantage to his commercial interests, since he became Chamberlain to the Duke, and Portuguese merchants were, at his request, granted a ducal privilege within Flanders. We are in danger of finishing the book a long way from drama, but the authors return at any rate to literature with their view of the *Doze de Inglaterra* as the *enromancement* of historical facts, as the composite expression of the participation of the Portuguese in the second phase of the 100 Years War, in which the professional soldier becomes a paradigmatic knight errant, like those, one may add, who come to the dramatic *Pas d'armes* which have formed the greater part of this last section.

The book is a valuable collection of papers on aspects of literary history related to drama, sometimes perhaps a little tenuously, but almost always informatively and usefully. There is much here which may be new to readers, unless they are experts in all the fields covered. One regrets the absence of an index and the

number of printing errors, but the mixture is unusual enough, and rich enough, to warrant a full description, and a warm welcome from mediaevalists.

Wolfgang van Emden
University of Reading

**Crises et Réformes dans l'Eglise de la Réforme
Gregorienne à la Préréforme: Actes du 115e Congrès
National des Sociétés Savantes.** Comité des Travaux
Historiques et Scientifiques. Paris: Editions de CTHS.
1991. 399pp. 250F. ISBN 2-7355-0226-0

This book brings together 25 papers presented at the 115th session of the 'Congrès national des sociétés savantes'. Many different subjects are dealt with although there is a bias towards coverage of the host city, Avignon and matters relating to the Great Schism. The result is something of a 'lucky dip'. As with many other books of conference proceedings, several articles outline interesting research, but fail to provide a wider context or draw significant conclusions. As a consequence readers retreat to material relating to their own specialist field and the point of bringing together a wide range of scholarship is largely lost.

The good news is that some articles here will be of interest to every medievalist. Sandor Csernus writes about the Conciliarist and Gallican ideas debated at the court of Sigismund I of Hungary in a way which gives this often neglected kingdom its rightful influential position in medieval Christendom. Michel Tanase triumphs over a paucity of sources to present a study of Cistercian foundations in Transylvania which must surely stimulate further research in this area.

More established areas of ecclesiastical history are also well represented, mainly in the form of detailed case studies. One of the best of these is Annette Pales-Gobilliard's account of penances imposed by the Inquisitor Bernard Gui on Languedocian heretics of the early fourteenth century. Although recent research has rightly stressed the differing natures of the Inquisition in each part of Europe, the picture here is of a monstrous machine: easily

circumvented once, but difficult to avoid in the long run since it reached into almost every aspect of personal and public life. Repeated clashes with its officials could lead to poverty, imprisonment and quite often death. The Inquisition's most potent weapon was not the stake, but the way it foreshadowed more modern totalitarian regimes. It obsessively recorded the movements of people in the outside world, while allowing many of those taken into its custody simply to disappear.

The regionalism of the Inquisition reflected the regionalism of the Church as a whole. The focus on Avignon begs the question of how different the Southern French church was from its northern counterparts. A few authors explore this. Michel Mousnier points out the powerful and ultimately oppressive role of the Cistercians in the economic backwater of rural Gascony. In contrast Pierre Jugie shows how far the South had been integrated into the French patronage machine by the fourteenth century. Clerics move easily from advising urban elites or the local nobility to the royal court and finally become cardinals in Avignon. To a large extent the crises and reforms in the medieval church represent the differing attempts of central authority to exert power over established regional practice.

Although few broader questions are addressed the range of subjects and periods covered does allow such nebulous concepts as the 'spirit of the age' to be glimpsed. Robert Favreau's account of the long and ultimately futile struggle against non-residence among the chapters of the Poitiers diocese helps to explain why Jean Michel, the subject of a study by Jean-Michel Matz, was so revered. Although as Bishop of Angers in the 1440s Michel only performed duties regarded as routine by any conscientious reforming prelate of the thirteenth century, in his own time he was regarded as an almost miraculous exception.

Andrew Roach
University of Glasgow

Les Chartes des Evêques d'Arras (1093-1203). Edited by **Benoît-Michel Tock.** Collection de Documents Inédits sur l'Histoire de France, vol. 20. Paris: Comité des Travaux Historiques et Scientifiques. 1991. lxii + 420 pp.

This is a collection of 319 acts of the bishops of Arras, encompassing the Flemish period of the diocese, from the time of its creation by Urban II until it passed into the royal domain. Between 1093 and 1203 there were eight bishops, although one of them moved to Cambrai before issuing any charters. The texts are fully reproduced, including two false acts, except for twenty-three known to have existed but now lost and five promulgated by the bishops in association with other personages of greater importance. All are fully annotated and the edition is furnished with very thorough indices.

The diocese was founded when Urban II detached it from its neighbour at Cambrai with the intention of establishing a centre for Gregorian reform in northern France. The move was supported by the Count of Flanders, since it represented a reduction in imperial influence in the region. Three of the bishops of this period (Lambert, 1093-1114; Alvisé, 1131-47; Pierre I, 1184-1203) were men with extensive contacts among the secular and religious leaders of the north and they were consequently able to pursue the aims of the reform papacy with some vigour. Indeed, the most prominent of them all, Bishop Alvisé, enjoyed the support of Louis VI, Suger and St. Bernard, was a leading opponent of Peter Abelard, and participated in the Second Crusade, during which he died in September, 1147. For these reasons alone the publication of these acts is of capital importance, especially as narrative sources for the history of these bishops during this period are almost totally lacking.

However, this collection is not only of interest for the history of the bishops and their administration, since the affairs of the diocese touched on a wide range of activities in an area whose fertile agricultural lands and growing industrial and commercial towns were profoundly affected by the economic expansion of the twelfth century. In all, eighty-nine institutions or individuals received episcopal charters during this time, ranging from Philip of Alsace, Count of Flanders, and large abbeys like Saint-Pierre at Gand, to small leper houses such as those at Hénin and Méaulens.

Individual charters therefore reveal some fascinating glimpses of life in the diocese. One such example is that of the grant of Honestasia, wife of Pierre d'Aoste, of the tithes of Pys (Somme) to the Hospitaller house at Haute-Avesnes in 1195-6. Here, despite the efforts of the reformers, can be seen the ties which bound such houses to the local community, for, at the same time, the house agreed to receive Honestasia's three sons, two of whom are described as *pueri*, and Elisabeth, her sister-in-law, into the Order. Moreover, either she or her husband would also be received when they were widowed, bringing with them all their movable property.

As the use of charter evidence becomes increasingly important for the reconstruction of medieval social life, collections of this kind will be put to ever greater use. This excellent edition will be of lasting value.

Malcolm Barber
University of Reading

Susan Stakel, *False Roses: Structures of Duality and Deceit in Jean de Meun's Roman de la Rose*, Stanford: Anma Libri, 1991, 142pp. (Stanford French and Italian Studies, 69). ISBN 0-915838-85-0.

The labyrinthine complexity of Jean de Meun's continuation of Guillaume de Lorris's *Roman de la Rose* has over recent years prompted a steady flow of divergent critical studies, each seeking to establish the poem's unity and meaning (for reliable guides to some of these studies, see Karl A. Ott, *Der Rosenroman*, Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, Darmstadt 1980 and Maxwell Luria, *A Reader's Guide to the Roman de la Rose*, Archon Books, Hamden 1982, neither of which is listed in the bibliography). Susan Stakel proposes to demonstrate the unity of the *Rose* not by analysing characters or episodes as such, but by working outwards from a detailed examination of one particular group of *semes* (i.e. the smallest signifying units of language) which call attention to themselves by the sheer frequency of their occurrence, namely, those belonging to the conceptual field of deceit / treachery / falsity. Chapter I (pp.6-45) defines the terms involved and their

complex interrelationship, demonstrating convincingly that the language of duality and deceit is so pervasive in the poem that it contaminates other semantic fields with which in principle it should have no connection (e.g. a reference to outward apparel becomes the equivalent of employing a synonym of deceit, words such as 'fiancer', 'jurer', 'tenir couvent', 'vérité', 'loyauté' come to signify their opposite, so conditioned has the reader become to accept the constant gap between appearance and reality). Chapter II (pp.46-82) argues the case for the centrality of Faux Semblant, whose role has hitherto been seen by some critics to be digressive or of merely marginal interest. Faux Semblant, in whose discourse the semantic field of deceit attains its greatest density and significance, is seen by Stakel to be a paradigmatic figure whose flawed value system is reflected also in the discourses of Amor, Raison, Ami, La Vieille and Nature (there is a constant gap between the claims they make for themselves and what they are and are able to do). The final chapter, Chapter III (pp.83-118) examines the antithetical structure of Jean's allegory, the use of irony as an ideal vehicle for the description of polarities, and some of the central images (distorting mirrors, optical glasses), concluding that Jean's 'poetics of antithesis' confronts the reader with the inconsistencies and contradictions of a post-lapsarian world in which nothing is what it seems. The language of poetry thus becomes the instrument of knowledge of both self and the world.

To the Bibliography (pp.122-37) should be added the two works mentioned above, and also (for the *Querelle de la Rose*, p.133) J.L. Baird and J.R. Kane, *La Querelle de la Rose: Letters and Documents*, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 1978). The Index (pp.138-42) curiously lists the names only of some of the critics mentioned in the text or the notes. Proof-reading has been efficient, though there are still a few slips (e.g. p.2, n.2, read Félix; p.3, l.16, read éducation; p.9, n.5, 2nd last line, read *der*; p.56, n.13, read *doctor amoris*; p.106, n.50, read *le langage*; p.108, n.57, read *Nathaniel*; p.125, last line, read *Di Stefano, Giuseppe*). If there is one general criticism to be made, it is that the book is in parts very densely written and (like Jean's text) puts excessive demands on the reader (the transitions between the various sub-sections of Chapter III in particular would benefit by being expanded). That

said, Stakel's monograph clearly makes a substantial and perceptive contribution to the continuing debate on the *Rose*.

Angus J. Kennedy
University of Glasgow

Malcolm Barber, *The Two Cities: Medieval Europe 1050-1320*. Routledge, London, 1992, 581 pp. Published price £40.00 Hb. ISBN 0 415 06780 4

To be able to synthesise into a highly stimulating and readable account the wealth of material found in the chronicles of the time and the volume of literature which has appeared over many years for the period 1050 to 1320 is no mean feat. Malcolm Barber's 'weighty tome' of nearly 600 pages not only achieves this but, at the same time, provides illuminating insights. His declared purpose is to introduce the world of the High Middle Ages, that is, medieval Europe between the mid-eleventh and early fourteenth centuries, to non-specialists and to those medievalists who have not previously encountered the period in real detail. In so doing, he provides a sensitive, challenging and thought-provoking volume which will become a standard guide. All levels of interest will wish to delve here for, as Barber develops his ideas chapter by chapter, his information and insights are always refreshing and illuminating.

The model Barber has used for the book provides him not only with a form and structure but also a title. Otto of Freising's *The Two Cities* was a universal history, written in the mid-1140's by a high-ranking German Cistercian who was subsequently promoted to the Bavarian bishopric from which he took his name. Otto's two cities were the earthly Babylon and the heavenly Jerusalem: representing on the one hand the material world of temptation and sin and, on the other, the aspiration towards higher, more spiritual matters. The tension inherent between these two cities provided, argues Barber, that creative conflict so fundamental to the culture of the medieval world.

Otto of Freising divided his *Two Cities* into eight books, the first six taking his readers from Adam to 1085, the seventh dealing with 'contemporary history' from 1085 to 1146 and the eighth and last

bringing history to a conclusion with the Last Judgement. Dr Barber's book, in contrast, has four main sections: social and economic structure; the Church; political change and medieval perceptions of the world. His breadth of erudition and his success in imposing a degree of coherence on the whole are impressive. Necessary narrative chapters are interspersed with analytical and questioning probes supported by judicious quotations which are sure to make readers eager to explore for themselves the actual sources. Dr Barber modestly claims that here are the fruits of his teaching over the past twenty five years. Would that all such twenty five years were so productive!

Although the range is wide, the main emphasis of the book naturally reflects his own interests: aspects of French history, the crusades, heresy, the Mediterranean world and the history of art and of ideas. Otto of Freising's eighth and final book deals with the Last Judgement whilst Barber's final section and epilogue explain the progress of the contemporary enemies of Christendom - the growth of heresy and the resurgence of Islam. He highlights the sincerely-held belief of many in the thirteenth century - that the defeated Saracens ought not to be punished for their ignorance, but rather, brought to see the truth of Christianity. All would then be able to face the judgement of the Final Days.

The Two Cities is a handsome book with a wealth of invaluable tables, figures and maps with lists of rulers, comprehensive, clear and accessible. An original useful element for students new to this period are lists which set out the pattern of feasts and festivals in the medieval year and the lay-out of the horarium of the medieval day.

Basic bibliographies guide the reader thematically through all four parts and through each section. His style here is breezy and amusing as he suggests reading lists which are judiciously indicative rather than comprehensively overwhelming. His selection of his favourite older books which he hopes all aspiring medievalists will read allows him to avoid an over-concentration and over-dependence on the most recent interpretations. An invaluable alphabetical bibliography follows of all works cited and there is a most comprehensive triple index of persons, places and subjects which is a lesson for other historians.

A second edition of this book should soon appear. It is to be hoped that means will have been found to reduce the price

somewhat to allow its purchase by those undergraduate students and others it sets out to attract. I have no doubt that this is a book destined to remain firmly on the essential reading lists of teachers and students alike, a testimony to the fact that Dr Barber will have achieved his stated aim of making the High Middle Ages more accessible to us all. Should there be any aspects not fully covered - Barbarossa, for example, as Otto of Freising's nephew might have expected a lengthier treatment -perhaps this will inspire others to follow in his footsteps. Indeed, this is a work from which many a serious postgraduate student will get the seed-corn for a rewarding research topic.

Brenda M. Bolton,
Queen Mary & Westfield College, London

Editorial Note.

A paperback edition was published by Routledge in 1993 (ISBN 0-415-09682 -0pbk) at £12.99