REVIEWS

Mark S. Hagger, *The Fortunes of a Norman Family: The De Verduns in England, Ireland and Wales 1066-1316*, Cornwall, Four Courts Press, 2001 288pp. ISBN 1-85182-596-7 £37.50

A sure-footed narrative of this family's fortunes is combined with a sturdy analysis of demesne, tenants, households and marriages. The Verduns by 1274 had lands worth about £900 (about 40% of this in Ireland) putting them in the second eleven of the aristocracy. Those who witnessed their charters generally held lands from them, and the Verduns sometimes held exceptional franchise rights over lands and men. The Verduns started in ducal service (Bertram III was seneschal of Ireland during the reign of Henry II and Hagger even suggests that Bertram I may have been connected with the making of Domesday) but by 1300 their attitude to the monarch was hostile.

Central to the work is a study of some fifty-odd *acta*, yet we learn very little of where these *acta* were made and whether local circumstances of charter production affected their content. Similarly Hagger's blanket counting of charter attestations to analyse the relationships of the Verduns to other royal curialists is probably too crude an approach. The author's explanations for the change in the family's affiliation (financial crisis and monarchial incursions) is problematic. In France financial weakness helped the monarchy suck the aristocracy into the state's power networks. Maybe the Verduns were less important to the monarchy in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Squeezed between the counts of Chester and Leicester, the Verduns could not construct a great aristocratic affinity in the Midlands, the lands in Wales were too limited and Ireland too underdeveloped. But this brings us to the book's main value. The works of Crouch, Carpenter and Coss have done much to transform our image of the aristocracy, but the Verduns built no affinity, bastard feudalism did not arrive early, and even their honorial structures were weak. The book is a reminder that not every important aristocratic medieval family fits comfortably into the models of modern scholarship.

Vincent Moss *University of Reading*

Marianne J. Ailes, *The Song of Roland – on Absolutes and Relative Values. Studies in Medieval Literature*, Volume 20, Lewiston, Queenstown, Lampeter: Edwin Mellen Press, 2002, pp.v +177. ISBN 0 7734 7229 0. £39.95

What a pleasure it is to welcome a book on the *Chanson de Roland* which is not only written in clear and elegant English but is also firmly anchored in the Christian tradition and therefore able to explain with authority the background and the ethos of the poem. Marianne Ailes seems to have read and assimilated everything relevant in the vast range of literature which has been inspired by the *Chanson de Roland*, as her frequent references to the work of other scholars show. She is also totally at home with the Old French text, and every one of her observations is firmly based on the actual text. As a result she brings out the explicitly Christian message of the writer, whether it be Turold or someone else, and sets it clearly in the context of the early twelfth century. She is also able to demonstrate that the values of the poet are not necessarily the same as the values of the twentieth or twenty-first century Christians who now read the book and who sometimes find it hard to reconcile the militant and aggressive faith of their predecessors with their own much more pacific beliefs. She divides the book into chapters on Ethics in Practice, The Tragedy of Waste, The Justice of God and Love. One of the most valuable insights offered by the book, which is full of them, is her analysis of the way the author operates simultaneously on several levels, the human, the divine and the ethical. Her ability to see and to explain that the characters have to be viewed both as personifications of a particular standpoint and as human beings responding to difficult situations is especially helpful. It would have been interesting if she had developed the chapter on Love where her treatment of the death of Aude is a little brief. Students would probably have found some further remarks on the background to twelfth-century marriage helpful. Similarly her remarks on the friendship of Roland and Oliver, firmly scotching any idea of a homosexual relationship between them, could have been expanded, although she has, of course, written on this topic elsewhere. The bibliography is extremely useful and the proof-reading almost perfect. I found two errors (p.iv tern for term and note 164 Perre for Pierre) and two places where the computer had introduced a different font (p.99 and note 221). This is a book which no Roland scholar (and

therefore no one interested in the *chansons de geste*) will be able to neglect and for which students of the future will be extremely grateful.

Peter Noble *University of Reading*

John V. Tolan (ed) ***Medieval Christian Perceptions of Islam.*** Routledge: New York and London, paperback edition, 2000. ISBN 0 415 92892 3. Pp.xxi, 1-414. £18.99.

John V. Tolan, ***Saracens. Islam in the Medieval European Imagination.*** Columbia University Press: New York, 2002. ISBN 0 231 12333 7. Pp.xxiii, 1-372. £17.00.

In 1993 the American historian John Tolan published a distinguished monograph entitled *Petrus Alfonsi and his medieval readers*. Petrus Alfonsi was a twelfth-century Spanish Jewish convert to Christianity who wrote a treatise in Latin to defend his new-found faith against the beliefs of Islam and Judaism. So Professor Tolan is excellently placed to edit a collection of fifteen items on medieval Christian perceptions of Islam, actually extending into the sixteenth century, and to produce a formidable general work entitled *Saracens* on how Islam was imagined and interpreted by medieval Christians. I will consider the collection first. As its bibliography reveals, there is already a considerable body of modern work on the subject, but taken as a whole, Professor Tolan has made a shrewd and helpful choice which is valuable for students, scholars, and general readers. The thousand-year time span is generous, and the great variety of response and invective is well represented. Medieval Christians were not, we discover, mentally equipped to be objective about Islam as a new religion, because it could not be fitted into the divine plan for the post-Pentecostal world of the true Church. So Islam had to be demonised, paganised, or treated as a wilful Christian heresy, even after the famous twelfth-century translation of the Koran into Latin, commissioned by Peter the Venerable, abbot of Cluny. Professor Tolan's ably chosen authors expound and interpret an interesting variety of texts drawn from Armenia, Byzantium, and Syria in the east to Islamic and Christian Spain in the west, with several players from Latin Christendom as well. The ultimate aim of such polemic was the overthrow of Islam by divine will and human means, such as violence represented by the crusades or

persuasion through missionary activity and sermons. It is fascinating to learn in chapter 15 that the young Shah Ismail Safari of Persia, who came to power in 1501, raised Christian hopes, in the style of Prester John and the Mongol Khans, of destroying Sunni Islam dominated at that time by Ottoman Turkey and Mamluk Egypt.

Saracens is an admirably written text which instructs the reader as to how the medieval Christian attitudes to Islam were constructed and spread about. As the collection also shows, it was a miserable tale of misunderstanding and misrepresentation. But Professor Tolan is careful to demonstrate time and again that, given the medieval Christian perception of salvation history, there was no alternative to demonising Islam, except for conversion to it. The Christian authors had several models such as Saints Jerome and Isidore on pagans, Jews, and heretics, as the author shows. Whilst concentrating mainly upon the texts from Spain and the Latin west, Professor Tolan does not neglect Byzantium and the east. A great strength of the work is the perceptive analysis and comparison of long and often repetitive texts about Islam in general and Muhammad in particular over a long time span. All this is intelligently put into the context of crusading, scholastic method, the missionary strategy of the friars, and the careers of certain individuals, the most impressive of whom is probably Ramon Llull. By an oversight, the works of Kenneth Baxter Wolf are ascribed in the bibliography (p.352) to J.M. Wallace-Hadrill.

Benjamin Arnold *University of Reading*

Richard T. Harper and Denys Pringle, in collaboration with Anthony Grey and Robert Will, *Belmont Castle. The Excavation of a Crusader Stronghold in the Kingdom of Jerusalem*. British Academy Monographs in Archaeology no.10. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000. 261 pp. ISBN 0 19 727009 3. £60.00.

Although this book contains information on subjects as diverse as the domestication of animals in the Neolithic era and the economic and social significance of pipe smoking in the Ottoman Empire in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the chief purpose is to present the results of the excavation of the twelfth-century crusader castle of Belmont. The work

for this took place between 1986 and 1989. The site is a conical hill about 750 metres above the road between Jaffa and Jerusalem. Originally a fortified manor in the hands of a secular lord, it was obtained by the Hospitallers in about 1150 and held by them until August 1187, when the area was lost to Saladin in the aftermath of his victory at Hattin. It is not an easy place to excavate, not only because of the serious destruction caused by warfare and vandalism since the village there was abandoned in the 1940s, but also because of compaction against the bedrock which has mitigated against neat stratification on a site which has been used since the seventh millenium BC.

Nevertheless, a very significant picture of Hospitaller occupation emerges, even though there is little documentary evidence to complement it. By 1187 the Hospitallers had developed the original fortified house into a concentric castle with two rings of walls. The inner ward appears to have been used as a monastic enclosure, while the other staff and animals occupied the extensive range of buildings found between the walls on the south-eastern side. However, while the fortifications were no insubstantial, this was on *Crac des Chevaliers*, for there is no evidence of any towers along the outer *enceinte*. In fact, its primary purpose was as an administrative centre of the order's estates in an area which encompassed the infirmary at Aqua Bella (itself converted from a fortified house) and the church and pilgrimage centre at Abu Ghosh. Wheat, barley, vegetables and grapes were all important products, and the covered wine-press in the north-east corner testifies to the processing capability of the complex. Exploitation of the natural springs for irrigation of the terraces and for supplying the linked cisterns beneath the inner ward, greatly enhanced the productive capabilities of the estates. Quantities of pottery, glass and metalwork were discovered, all of which are expertly illustrated and classified here, but for the crusader historian the most significant remains are faunal rather than ceramic. In an area most suitable for goats it appears that the Hospitallers chose to produce relatively more cattle, pigs and sheep, suggesting, as Paul Croft says, that cultural preferences overrode energetic efficiency. What these cultural preferences were is an intriguing question, but it is probably that they reflect the prevailing Hospitaller interest in produce over cash revenue, itself partly determined by the order's need to supply its great 'palace of the sick' in Jerusalem. The Hospitaller Rule required meats, syrups and clothing for patients and dependants, and it seems certain that these estates helped supply those needs.

In a wider context the book is a fundamental contribution to the increasingly positive picture of Frankish rural life in the twelfth century which has recently been painted by historians, historical geographers and archaeologists. Clearly this was an area with an appreciable population, both Christian and Muslim, and its new crusader lords were determined to make the most of its potential by reviving the apparently stagnant rural economy which they found when they arrived. The apparent care taken to re-use a sixth-century mosaic in the floor of the north range of the castle suggests more attention to the arts of peace than to the exigencies of war.

Malcolm Barber *University of Reading*

Hippolyte Delehaye, *The Legends of the Saints*, trans. Donald Attwater, with a new introduction by Thomas O'Loughlin and a memoir of the author by Paul Peeters, (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1998) xxxiv + 252pp. ISBN 1 85182370 0. pb.£19.95

This is a re-issue of Delehaye's classic introductory work on the lives of saints (1905), using the 1958 printing of the English translation. The new introduction not only argues the values of reprinting a book first published nearly 100 years ago, but also sets that first publication within its contexts. The book remains a useful introduction to the academic study of a significant genre and is also a significant monument in the history of medievalism. The memoir of Delehaye's life will probably interest only a minority of readers. The publication would have benefited from an updated bibliography; the only bibliographical details, apart from a bibliography of Delehaye's writings, are found in the footnotes. Even so, it is good that this standard work is made available to a new generation of students.

M.J. Ailes *University of Oxford*

Julian Haseldine (ed), *Friendship in Medieval Europe* (Stroud: Sutton Publishing, 1999), xxiii + 297pp. ISBN 0 7509 1720 2.

This wide-ranging book is based on papers given at a conference, set in context by the opening essay by the editor, which serves as an

introduction to the medieval concept of friendship as a relationship with formal, social, political and ethical dimensions, a definition of friendship which is at once wider and deeper than in modern times. The present studies are here set in the wider context of recent sociological approaches. The individual articles are divided into three groups. The first on 'the foundations of Christian friendship' has three studies, by Jane McEvoy, Eoin Cassidy and Caroline White, which include relatively early material and examine the coming together in late antiquity and the early Middle Ages of Christian and classical, therefore pagan, concepts of friendship. In this section the article by Cassidy, 'He who has friends can have no friend: classical and Christian perspectives on the limits to friendship', stands out for the clarity of its analysis of this synthesis. The second, and longest, section of the book looks at 'studies of friendship and friendship networks in the early and Central Middle Ages'. Here it is refreshing to find a wide range of sources being used by the different contributors: charters (Julia Barrow, 'Friends and Friendship in Anglo-Saxon Charters); letters (Hans-Werner Goetz, 'Beatus Homo qui invenit amicum: the Concept of friendship in Early Medieval Letters of the Anglo-Saxon tradition of the Continent (Boniface, Alcuin), Yoko Hirata, 'John of Salisbury, Gerard Pucelle and *Amicitia*); poetry (Gabriela Signori, 'Muriel and the Others...or poems as pledges of friendship); contemporary historiographical and hagiographical writings (Gerd Althoff, 'Friendship and political Order', Peter Hatlie, 'Friendship and the Byzantine Iconoclast Age', Margaret Mullet 'Friendship in Byzantium: Genre, Topos and Network). Mark Williams, 'Rather of Verona and the Rhetoric of Well-ordered Friendship as Exemplified in the *Praeloquia*' although dealing with a relatively early text, is a suitable conclusion to this section; Williams shows that in the *Praeloquia* we find a different attitude to friendship, a more positive one, that might be discerned looking only at his letters, thus stressing the importance of not restricting studies of friendship to one kind of source material. This discernible ambivalence in attitude to friendship also looks forward to the third section, on 'transformations and discontinuities' which focuses on later medieval and Renaissance material. The three essays, by distinguished scholars, take very different approaches. McGuire takes Jean Gerson as an illustration of a loss of faith in the place of friendship in the life of a Christian, which, he argues, is a significant development in the later Middle Ages, although in the space available he can only support this with one other example, a negative attitude to friendship in one of Alain

Chartier's poems. Peter Burke takes a wider view of 'humanism and friendship in sixteenth-century Europe', and gives more positive perspective on the early modern view. Hyatte examines a number of texts, both Latin and vernacular, from fifteenth-century Italy, texts which present marriage and friendship in complementary terms. All three of these critics analyse their material with consideration for the whole question of the synthesis of classical, and therefore pagan, and Christian material in humanistic writings, a theme which also gives some additional cohesion to the book.

In bringing together literary, epistolary and historiographical material this collection of studies brings a truly interdisciplinary approach to its subject. The majority of the articles deal with sources in Latin and it would further enrich our understanding of the subject to bring vernacular and Latin material together, as Hyatte does. That this book exists is testimony to the greater seriousness with which historians are now approaching a subject which would once have been considered the province of literary specialists. As such, as well as for the value of the individual studies, this is a welcome addition to our bookshelves.

M.J. Ailes *University of Oxford*

***Crusader Syria in the thirteenth century: The Rothelin continuation of the History of William of Tyre with part of the Eracles or Acre text*, trans. Janet Shirley**, Crusade Texts in Translation 5 (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1999) 156pp, ISBN 1 84014 606 0.

The latest in a very useful series, this publication brings together two of the continuations of William of Tyre's chronicle, the 'Rothelin' continuation and the part of the 'Eracles' which deals with the same period (1239-61). The introduction is brief. Few details are given of the manuscripts and complex manuscript tradition; readers are referred to J. Folda's excellent inventory (*Scriptorium* 27, 1973, 90-95). The summaries of the Eracles and the more disparate Rothelin continuation are very clear and are accompanied by a good assessment of the reliability and usefulness of the texts. The introduction also includes a useful plan of Jerusalem and two maps, one of the Holy Land and one of Egypt, Arabia and the southern part of Palestine. The bibliography is useful but with one noticeable omission, M.R. Morgan's edition of the

Continuation as found in the Lyons manuscript (*La continuation de Guillaume de Tyr(1184-1197)*, ed. Margaret Ruth Morgan, Paris, 1982). The introductory note to the translations is limited to an explanation of a few details, such as the use of the words 'Griffon' and 'poulain' rather than to the approach taken. The translation itself, based on the published texts in the *Recueil des historiens des croisades: Historiens occidentaux* (vol. 2, 1859, pp. 413-45 and 489-639), is competent, rendered into an English style which is often clearer and smoother than the original French, particularly for the Rothelin continuation. There are, as there are bound to be in a work of this length, a few contentious translations. It seems, for example unnecessary to change the tense of '*les moustoient et devisoient*' (Rothelin, chapter 12, 1st sentence, p.29) to the present tense, and the changed word order of the same sentence alters the meaning. However such slips are rare and this is a useful addition to the corpus of texts now available in translation.

M.J. Ailes *University of Oxford*

Herman Pleij, *Dreaming of Cockaigne: Medieval Fantasies of the Perfect Life*. (tr. Diane Webb) 544pp, Columbia, 2001. ISBN 023 111702 7. £23.50.

The Land of Cockaigne is perhaps the most famous medieval dream, a land of plentiful food, temperate weather, and eternal youth. This earthly paradise offered an appealing alternative both to the realities of daily life, and to fearful imaginings of the afterlife. Herman Pleij is not the first modern author to bring to life the land of Cockaigne; Hilario Franco Junior (1998), and D. Richter (1994) have already given students of late medieval society insights into its dreams. However, Pleij's account is greatly enhanced by the breadth of his approach, which is informed by an understanding of contemporary art, history and folklore, and sets the fantasies of Cockaigne against the very real pressures of life in medieval Europe and beyond.

Cockaigne is most commonly characterised by a plentiful supply of food, and indeed ready prepared food that actively pursued the hungry, including cooked fish that leap from the water. Pleij explores this image in some depth, and argues that the centrality of food in the dream of Cockaigne was the product not of medieval famine, but of envy, where

luxury foodstuffs were in short supply and available only to the few. Yet fear of starvation was real and current: community feasts and family celebrations helped to fulfil the fantasies, but the permanent supply and availability of food and drink was always uncertain. Cockaigne was not simply a product of the imagination, but rather a reflection of the realities of life in medieval Europe. The earthly paradise that it represented was replete with medieval attractions, and served to censure contemporary vice and immorality. The spirit-inspired paradise of the dreamland reflected contemporary apocalypticism and images of the new Jerusalem, as well as the heresy of the Free Spirit. The rich detail of Pleij's presentation reminds the reader that the world turned upside down in Cockaigne made sense only in the context of the reality that it parodied, practical, religious, and political. Pleij's study offers a valuable insight into not only the dreamworld of the middle ages, but also the society and culture that produced it.

Helen Parish *University of Reading*

Henry Kamen, *Who's Who in Europe, 1450-1750* (London and New York: Routledge, 2000; paperback edition, 2002), x + 321pp, £26.95. ISBN 0 415 14727 1 (Hbk), £8.99. ISBN 0 415 14728 X (Pbk)

This book, affectionately referred to by the editor as 'Kamen's One Thousand' (p.ix), is a quick reference guide to the leading European figures in the realms of politics, religion, warfare, art, literature and music during the period from the mid-fifteenth to the mid-eighteenth century. Newly published in paperback, its reasonable price makes the volume a useful and realistic purchase for undergraduate students of late medieval and early modern European history, and perhaps even a handy desktop companion for academics removed from more weighty tomes of reference and scholarly resource. Although rather slim and with understandable gaps (which are readily admitted in the preface), the guide covers all of Europe, provides a wide range of succinct, helpful and short entries on figures such as Bach, Cromwell, Erasmus, Peter the Great and Molière, and includes a substantial number of women among its subjects:

the letter-writer, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu; the catholic educationalist, Mary Ward; and the Genoese mystic, Caterine Fieschi Adorno.

James Daybell *University of Reading*

Diana Greenway and Leslie Watkiss, editors and translators, The Book of the Foundation of Walden Monastery, Oxford Medieval Texts, Oxford, 1999, lxxiii + 219 pp. ISBN 0-19-820330-6.

This is a most welcome addition to the corpus of Oxford Medieval Texts. Although parts of 'The Book of the Foundation of Walden Monastery' were printed in Dugdale's *Monasticon* (first published in 1655), and an English translation of the whole appeared in instalments in the *Essex Review* between 1936 and 1938, this edition publishes the full Latin text for the first time, along with a parallel English translation. The Walden 'Book' belongs to an important group of twelfth-century English local chronicles, including the Battle Chronicle, which are mostly focused on the affairs of their originating monasteries, in this case the Benedictine priory of Walden (Essex), which became an abbey in 1190. It survives now in two later sixteenth-century copies, but was originally compiled between 1190, when abbatial status was achieved, and either 1200 or 1203, when the prime mover in that success and first abbot, Reginald, died. Its purpose was very specific: to give an account of a) the founder, Geoffrey de Mandeville, 1st earl of Essex, and his successors; b) the means by which the house became an abbey; and c) the early heads of the monastery. Another implicit purpose was, as Diana Greenway points out, 'to chart the accumulation of Walden's endowments, in order to justify its status as an abbey and to strengthen its case against Geoffrey fitz Peter'. Founded on the Mandeville estates, it became embroiled in the difficult and complicated succession to the Mandeville inheritance following the death of William de Mandeville, 3rd earl of Essex, in 1189. In the ensuing dispute Walden backed ultimately the wrong side and, although it was able to achieve abbatial status in 1190 when that side was temporarily victorious, it suffered grievously at the hands of the eventual winner, Geoffrey fitz Peter, the 4th earl, who, though becoming thereby its patron, proceeded vengefully to depoil and persecute the newly raised

abbey whose status he clearly resented. In recounting its experiences at this time the Walden 'Book' illustrates graphically how precarious the state of a small or medium-sized monastery might become if it fell into the hands of a hostile patron who was also politically powerful.

The work is of special interest in connection with Reading, since the firm establishment of Walden on fully Benedictine lines and its eventual elevation to abbatial status (which even fitz Peter's enmity was unable to overturn) were due very largely to the second prior and first abbot, Reginald, who was a former abbot of the great royal abbey at Reading. Deposed as abbot of Reading in 1158, for reasons that are not entirely clear but which evidently included the hostility of Henry II, he was in 1165 sent by the king and the bishop of London to be prior of Walden in succession to its first prior, William, who had died late in 1164. The 'Book of Walden' tells us that Reginald came to Walden with two monks, one of whom, Diana Greenway plausibly argues, might have been the author of the present work. Her further suggestion, that the two monks, and therefore the author, may have come from Reading, is intriguing but incapable of proof, since we have no other evidence that Reginald had been permitted to remove two monks with him from Reading. Nevertheless, the suggestion raises the possibility that this work may be indirect testimony to a tradition of history writing at Reading which is otherwise known only from the twelfth-century Reading library list and from a few scanty sets of annals.

The present translation, faithful and eminently readable, is the work essentially of Leslie Watkiss, who has also contributed the section on the author's style to the Introduction. The rest of the Introduction, the three very useful appendices and the historical notes throughout have been provided by Diana Greenway. In particular, appendix 2 edits the first fourteen charters in the founders' section of the unpublished Walden cartulary (British Library, ms Harley 3697), providing a valuable annexe to the accounts of acquisitions in the 'Book', while appendix 3 lists and discusses the main endowments acquired by the priory/abbey before 1227. This edition fills a need that has long been felt, and supplies both a scholarly account of the text for the specialist and a readily accessible version for the general reader.

Brian Kemp *University of Reading*

Neil Thomas,*Diu Crône and the Medieval Arthurian Cycle.* (Arthurian Studies, 50.) Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell & Brewer Ltd., 2002. Pp. vii + 152, 160 ISSN 0261–9814. £35.00.

During the last two decades there has been considerable interest in Heinrich von dem Türlin's post-classical Arthurian romance *Diu Crône* amongst German-speaking colleagues. However, within anglophone Arthurian studies this has been a relatively neglected text. Neil Thomas's monograph is the first longer study of *Diu Crône* in English since Lewis Jillings's pioneering book (1980). Thomas offers a persuasive reading of the romance, taking issue with Jillings's identification of a deeper satirical level embedded in the text that undermines the representation and values of chivalry. Thomas sees in *Diu Crône* 'a compelling foundation myth, namely, the story of the redemption of Camelot from an initial condition of factionalism, sexual betrayal and diminished morale under an inexperienced king to one of law, order and security under the aegis of one supremely resourceful knight in the unflinching service of his liege lord' (p. 109). To substantiate his thesis he focuses on: Heinrich's presentation of the Grail quest in contradistinction to the asceticism of the Old French Prose *Lancelot* on the one hand and the liberal ideology of Wolfram von Eschenbach's *Parzival* on the other, the rewriting of Lancelot's adulterous affair with Guinevere in the triangular relationship of Arthur, Guinevere and Gasozein, the rehabilitation of Gawein's reputation in his monogamous marriage with Amurfina, the significance of Gawein's association with Fortuna and the nature of his particular profile as the Grail winner.

There can be few Arthurian scholars working on the German romances who are so well versed in the Old French sources as Thomas is. He successfully reveals the manipulation of these texts in the service of Heinrich's own highly individualistic conception of the evolution of the Arthurian world. Thomas is furthermore very well read in the relevant secondary literature. He draws widely and comfortably on the scholarship of the entire twentieth century, even on occasion reaching back into the late nineteenth century to substantiate his interpretation of *Diu Crône*. Thomas handles both the lengthy text of Heinrich's romance (some 30,000 lines) and the extensive body of secondary material skilfully, managing to compress a good deal of information into a relatively short book (essentially 110 pages) without either obscuring the thrust and coherence of his argument or overwhelming his reader.

This study of *Diu Crône* is elegant in its execution. Thomas delights in the usage of a vocabulary that is refined (if on occasion somewhat precious, e.g. 'deuteroganist', 'eirenic', 'inamorata') and in the well-turned phrase. In this pre-eminently intertextual study, it is fitting that he should preface his chapters with quotations drawn from a range of texts that cast an oblique light on his interpretation of *Diu Crône*. He has included plot summaries of the analogues (*Der Mantel*, the *First Continuation*, *De Ortu Walwanii, Nepotis Arturi*, the Vulgate Lancelot-Grail cycle, *Wigalois*, *Perlesvaus*, *Les Merveilles de Rigomer*, the *Suite du Merlin*, the *Livre d'Artus*, the Didot *Perceval*) as an appendix for those readers who do not share his encyclopaedic knowledge and provided a useful index. All quotations from the text are translated into English. Thomas's monograph is a very welcome addition to *Diu Crône* scholarship, particularly within the English-speaking world. It provides both a lucid interpretation of the romance and a succinct account of its place in the evolution of continental Arthurian literary history, while also alerting the reader to some of the current debate about this text.

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