

The catalogue entries themselves follow more or less the same format as Kidd's volume, and are prepared with comparable skill and scholarly rigor. The manuscripts described are from the College Library, Christ Church Archives, and Allestree Library. Hanna and Rundle have created a fantastic volume, bringing to the fore an important collection. The utmost level of detail is observed in all aspects of codicology and paleography, which are often of the highest interest for readers of manuscript catalogues. The authors should be commended on their consistency of terms and method in both of these fields, especially paleography. The paleographical descriptions follow closely the terminology and methods of M. B. Parkes, which, despite their lack of objectivity and pan-European context for script (areas in which the systems of G. I. Lieftinck, Albert Derolez, and J. P. Gumbert excel), still allow the reader to have a clear mental picture of the scripts mentioned. The profusion of color figures and plates is astounding and extremely helpful, especially if the reader does not use Parkes's paleographical terms. For example, the script of MS 138 (300) is described as "secretary," a script that essentially does not exist outside of the Parkesian terminology (see Derolez, *The Palaeography of Gothic Manuscript Books* [2003], 161–62). An objective paleographical classification, based on the plate on p. 301, would term the same script as "cursiva," but note the occasional appearance of Anglicana *r* and *s*. In fact, the Flemish and French influences are particularly visible in the final spiky round *s* (in which the second stroke resembles a 3) used throughout (e.g., col. a, line 10, "uniuersitas," and line 30, "uolentes") which displace the round Anglicana *s* at the end of the word (e.g., col. a, line 26, "seminantes"). Each entry includes its own color plate, allowing for the comparison of object and paleographical description (an upgrade from the black-and-white of Kidd's volume).

Manuscripts of note are numerous, but to mention a few favorites of the reviewer (due to their rarity, subject matter, and artifactual interest): an Epistolary of Cardinal Wolsey (MS 101), a copy of the *Aeneid* dated Ferrara 1456, (MS 113) and a likely companion volume of the *Eclogues* and *Georgics* (MS 114), a Wycliffite Bible (MS 145), Gower's *Confessio amantis* (MS 148), Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* bound with Lydgate's poems (MS 152), and, among the Italian manuscripts, a copy of Ovid's *Heroides* (MS 507) that belonged to S. G. Owen (editor of the *Tristia*, *Ibis*, *Epistulae ex Ponto*, and *Haliutica fragmenta*, OCT, 1915), and a *Tristia* of Sir Thomas Phillipps (MS 508) with dense glossing.

Hanna and Rundle have produced a remarkable catalogue founded on strong, authoritative, and reliable scholarship. Every library should own a copy.

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DUNCAN HARDY, *Associative Political Culture in the Holy Roman Empire: Upper Germany, 1346–1521*. (Oxford Historical Monographs.) Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2018. Pp. xiii, 302; 2 maps. \$100. ISBN: 978-0-1988-2725-2. doi:10.1086/708211

In this ambitious study, a revised version of his 2015 Oxford doctoral thesis, Duncan Hardy aims to "re-conceptualize the Holy Roman Empire between the mid-fourteenth and early sixteenth centuries" (2), a notoriously elusive period whose fundamental political structures have traditionally been understood through the lens of two grand narratives: one locating early traces of something resembling the state and the other a cohesive sense of "German identity" in the long fifteenth century. Hardy's is one of several refreshing new studies (including works like Jonathan Lyon's *Princely Brothers and Sisters* [2012]) that propose new models for understanding the political history of the Holy Roman Empire without resorting to those familiar teleologies of statehood and identity. In *Associative Political Culture*, Hardy offers a highly persuasive critique of the explanations given by canonical figures in the tradition of German *Verfassungsgeschichte*, replacing Otto Brunner's and Peter Moraw's understanding of state centralization and princely territorialization with a model of association between

elites, an approach that can be traced back to the early legal pluralism of Otto von Gierke. Hardy's alternative proposes that the ubiquitous and diverse forms of personal and collective association so prevalent in the archival records of the empire—short- or long-term alliances, treaties, leagues, groupings, and other overlapping networks of political actors—are hardly evidence of a weak state or relevant only for the narrower geographical focus of traditional German *Landesgeschichte*. In fact, Hardy argues, it is precisely these “quasi-horizontal” (10) associations among elites and their entangled networks that constitute the distinctive political culture of the empire in the later Middle Ages. Hardy's framework thus draws on the influential cultural approach to premodern political ritual developed by Barbara Stollberg-Rilinger and Gerd Althoff: the empire was built on active relationships, not passive institutions.

Hardy's study is bounded chronologically by the election of Charles IV in 1346 and the Diet of Worms in 1521 under Charles V, and among the vast regions of the empire, Hardy concentrates on Upper Germany, a collective term that he uses to refer to the Upper Rhine and Swabia, which roughly comprises the Rhine Palatinate in the north, Lake Constance in the south, and a number of historically important political centers like Mainz, Speyer, Basel, Strasbourg, Augsburg, Esslingen, and Reutlingen (15–17). His sources are many and varied, ranging from illustrations and woodcuts to seals, cartularies, and unpublished legal documents from a number of archives in Austria, France, Germany, and Switzerland. Hardy's treatment and incorporation of diplomatic material from these archives and the countless *Urkundenbücher* edited and published from the eighteenth through twentieth centuries is to be commended, and his approach to this material should serve as a model for how to harness detailed diplomatic sources without losing sight of big ideas.

After an impressively brief yet precise historiographical introduction to earlier characterizations of the late medieval empire, Hardy presents his case for “associative” as an interpretive category in three overarching sections of four chapters each. The first and most foundational, “Shared and Interconnective Structures and Practices,” outlines the basic material mechanisms that political actors had at their disposal to relate to one another. Chief among these techniques of association (chap. 1, “Documentary Culture and Ritual”) were the culture of document production among elites and the authentication offered by highly stylized and symbolic seals, the ritualized distribution of these *Siegelurkunden* (Fig. 1), and the staging of oaths. Moreover, the details of these legal agreements reveal that in this culture of “quasi-horizontal” associations, actors avoided territorial courts in favor of dispute resolution via mediation or arbitration, and “establishing the terms of [any future] arbitration” was a central element of the association (49). Arbitration and mediation, in other words, were not strictly independent structures “used” by associative networks; their formation was itself part of the associative culture. In chapter 3, “Feuding and Warfare,” Hardy turns to “seal-authenticated declarations of enmity” and the shared language of honor and reputation used across the entire spectrum of political actors in the Upper Rhine, showing how alliances and associations created at times complicated networks of mutual obligation. Chapter 4, “Lordship and Administration,” argues that “since the important conceptual and juridical discourses about the Empire were not backed up by a stable and administratively consolidated monarchy, Upper German elites took the initiative in conducting political life through the widespread, customary, and interconnective practices and institutions which worked for and made sense to them” (89). Interconnected lordship is especially well illustrated through Hardy's discussion of credit networks (77–82).

In part 2, “Associations and Associative Political Culture,” Hardy turns his attention to larger-scale alliances and leagues to propose that the culture of association outlined in part 1 also extends to networks like the league of Swabian cities in its various guises, as well as the “negotatory summits called ‘diets’ or ‘councils (*Tage, Räte*)” (172).

The broad valences of associative politics offered in the first two sections then lead to four case studies in part 3, the most original of which can be found in chapter 9, “The ‘Town War,’ c. 1376–1389.” Here Hardy reconstructs an alternative account of the conflict caused by

Charles IV when he increased urban taxes to persuade princely electors to favor his son Wenceslas as king of the Romans, arguing that the war was not two-sided but involved dense and competing networks based on the type of alliances discussed earlier. Hardy's treatment ends with interpretations of the diplomatic prowess of Sigismund of Luxembourg, the Burgundian Wars under Frederick III, and the transitional period of *Reichsreform* under Maximilian I.

Geographically, Hardy's relatively limited focus is both a strength and a weakness, which he himself acknowledges (14–17). *Associative Political Culture*, however, with a handful of exceptions, references almost exclusively French, German, and English scholarship. The very diversity and apparent fragmentation that are so distinctive of the late medieval empire are reflected also in its multilingual historiography, and one can only hope that future studies following Hardy's subtle approach might, for example, integrate the rich body of Czech scholarship on the period. The book has been excellently produced by Oxford University Press, and spelling or formatting errors are rare and trivial (for example, *Staatschriften* for *Staatsschriften* on p. xii).

While Hardy's study is at times densely written and aligned more with traditional political history than he might suggest in his introduction, this is an important book that deserves wide readership among medievalists and early modernists, and it would even be of interest more broadly to historians of political thought.

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CARISSA M. HARRIS, *Obscene Pedagogies: Transgressive Talk and Sexual Education in Late Medieval Britain*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2018. Pp. 306. \$42.95. ISBN: 978-1-5017-3040-5. doi:10.1086/708287

How relevant are medieval texts to contemporary debates concerning sexual ethics and education? Carissa Harris's book provides its readers with a clear answer: very relevant indeed. Over five blistering chapters, Harris demonstrates how both familiar and lesser-known medieval English and Scottish texts harness obscenity in order to teach lessons about gender, sex, and power. As she shows, obscenity's inherently provocative nature renders it a potent pedagogical tool that can "rivet in order to educate" (25). Harris's book focuses primarily on sexual obscenity rather than scatological or eschatological obscenity. While she is not primarily concerned with race in her study, Harris makes powerful use of a black feminist framework in order to position medieval texts as a jumping-off point from which to consider the "long legacy of struggle against sexual violence, connections to lived experience, and the merging of intellectual work and activism" (4). Uniting the history of the book with literary criticism, Harris uncovers the myriad ways that later medieval texts use obscenity to engage with the very same issues of sexual violence, pleasure, disappointment, and negotiation with which we continue to grapple today.

Chapter 1 begins in the well-trodden terrain of Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, and examines what Harris terms the "felawe masculinity" of *fabliaux* recounted by "laymen from the mercantile-artisan classes" (35), particularly those told by Chaucer's Miller, Reeve, and Cook. Harris demonstrates how the narrators and characters of these tales participate in "[c]ommunal obscene storytelling" that "felawes" use to "dehumanize women, to bond intimately with one another, to compete viciously with one another, and to authorize violence against women and aggression against other men" (30). While such narratives employ and endorse these uses of obscenity, individual manuscripts such as London, British Library, Additional MS 35286 exhibit signs of resistance to this sort of obscene storytelling: erasures and corrections suggestive of "readers repelling the 'force' of rape with the equal, opposite 'force' of resistance to rape's gratuitously explicit representation for comic purposes" (66). Chapter 2 turns to Middle Scots