

and difficulty of the text has been lost in the mind of the ideology critic, who no longer experiences that text as itself historically conditioned and vulnerable to criticism.

It is regrettable that, if Goodheart is correct in his estimation of the intellectual integrity of contemporary postmodern thought, those who could best profit from his book will never be willing to read it.

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Medieval Latin: An Introduction and Bibliographical Guide

F.A.C. MANTELLO and A.G. RIGG, eds.

Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press 1996, 774 p.

This is not the sort of book that most readers of *Symposium* will want to run right out and buy, but its publication certainly marks a major event for contemporary medieval studies. Initially modeled on Martin McGuire's 1964 *Introduction to Medieval Latin Studies: A Syllabus and Bibliographical Guide*, which was revised by Hermgild Dressler in 1977, *Medieval Latin* is intended primarily for students who are just beginning their graduate studies in the area. The seventy-odd essays here compiled 'have therefore been written as introductions for nonspecialists' (8), and they are for the most part accessible to readers with little previous knowledge of the area. Whereas the McGuire-Dressler text had been intended more as a bibliographical and research guide than a general and comprehensive introduction to the field, the present work, while retaining and supplementing those features of its predecessor, departs from that plan in both its form and its content. Whereas both editions of McGuire-Dressler had been published as photocopied typescripts (the first edition had been a mere 152 pages in length; the second added another 250+ pages), *Medieval Latin* is a polished publication that has obviously profited from superb editing and copyediting skills on the part of all those involved. But more importantly, this book is not the product of one or two authors, or even of a group of editors, but is instead the fruit of a remarkable collaboration by scholars from eight different countries.

The book is divided into three Parts. In Part One the editors provide informative introductory comments followed by an outstanding overview of 'General Reference and Research Tools,' including an annotated list not only

of the expected standard lexica and lexicographical works but also of currently available 'Computer Resources' (they even include a 'very selective' list of addresses of electronic discussion groups). Part Two contains eight essays on 'Medieval Latin Philology' and another thirty-eight essays on 'Varieties of Medieval Latinity.' Part Three contains twenty-seven essays dealing with 'Varieties of Medieval Latin Literature.' The scope of these essays and bibliographies — several pieces are in fact in the form of bibliographical essays — is staggering, and the Contents pages are irresistibly seductive: it's simply impossible to look through them without feeling compelled to turn to one essay after another. Fortunately, this kind of book lends itself well to that kind of approach. There's no need here to begin at page 1 and read straight through to page 732 (the last page of text proper). In fact, such an approach would ruin all the fun — and there's great fun to be found here.

Turning, for example, to Charles Burnet's essay on 'Astrology,' a non-specialist like myself already finds a delightfully informative discussion in the first paragraph (369):

Although the Latin terms for "astrology" (*astrologia*) and "astronomy" (*astronomia*) were often interchanged in the Middle Ages, medieval authors commonly distinguished the subject matter of the two sciences. Astronomy was the mathematical science that measured the position and the movements of the celestial bodies. Astrology was more akin to a physical science; it predicated that public and personal events on earth, as well as human characters and dispositions, were caused, influenced, or indicated (the usual term is *significata*) by the movements of the fixed stars and planets. Western astrology as we know it probably arose in Ptolemaic Egypt in the second century B.C.; it became popular in Hellenistic Greece and Rome, where it found support in Aristotelian and Stoic world systems. Claudius Ptolemaeus (second century A.D.) in his *Apotelesmatika* (also known as the *Tetrabiblos* or *Quadripartitum* from the fact that it contains four books) helped to establish astrology on a philosophical base, dealing with general astrology and nativities. Ptolemy understood that the character of a person and the course of his life could be inferred from the configuration of the heavens when that life "started" (i.e. at birth or, better, at conception). But other Greek astrologers — in particular, Dorotheus of Sidon (first century A.D.) — considered that

a horoscope could be cast for the beginning of *any* activity and hence established "catarchic" astrology (from Greek *katarchein*, "to begin").

The esoterically inclined lay person might also be surprised to read, in Michela Pereira's contribution on 'Chemistry and Alchemy,' that 'Alchemy reached the Latin West about the middle of the twelfth century through translations from the Arabic. Islamic alchemy had inherited the Hellenistic tradition, adding to it ideas probably derived from the Chinese Taoist search for a medicine of immortality.' (411)

The more standard subjects of Latin philology are also expertly introduced, with essays such as A.G. Rigg's on 'Orthography and Pronunciation,' 'Morphology and Syntax,' and 'Metrics,' Terence O. Tunberg's on 'Prose Styles and *Cursus*' and 'Humanistic Latin,' and Richard Sharpe's on 'Vocabulary, Word Formation, and Lexicography.' 'Manuscript Production' is also covered, with a brief but highly informative essay by R.H. Rouse, who offers a succinct and useful account of familiar Latin terms that many of us outside of medieval studies have been able to keep straight (465-6):

Manuscript books are constructed of quires or *quaterni* made of parchment (*pergamenus*) or paper (*papirus*). Each *quaternus* is composed of a number of *folia*. The bifolia, while the manuscript is unbound, are tied together by a *sc(h)edula* (*scidula*) or thin parchment tie. Each *folium* has two *paginae*, a recto and a verso. The written space of each *pagina* or double-page opening is laid out or designed with the help of a *registrum* or template (?), on the basis of which the writer makes a number of pricks or *punctae* with a *punctorium*, at the top and bottom of the page and in the outer margins, to serve as the guide marks for the *regula* or ruler with which the writer rules the written space using a lead point or *plumbum*. The text is written in ink (*incaustum*) with a quill (*penna*). The titles, chapter headings, or colophon are called *rubicae* ("rubrics") because they traditionally are written in red ink. The writer of the manuscript is the *scriptor* and its painter is the *illuminator*. In the commercial world of the thirteenth century and later, the contractor is the *librarius*, and the person who rents manuscripts in quires, termed *pecie* or pieces, is the *stationarius* or stationer because he occupies a *statio* or official position at the university. The binder or

ligator often earns the majority of his income from some other function in the book trade, as, for example, *librarius* or *pergamenarius* (parchment seller). Most of these terms vary slightly in their orthography depending upon where they are recorded — i.e., *testus* (Italian) for *textus* — because of the influence on the Latin language of the developing regional vernaculars.

The passages I have quoted above are typical of *Medieval Latin* as a whole. The essays are consistently informative, concise, and thoroughly researched and documented, and there is frequent cross-reference among the various entries. The scholarly contribution of this book is immense, and despite its announced student audience, it will doubtless prove invaluable also to scholars in the field. And for those of us who have been waiting for a non-specialist's introduction to the rapidly growing field of medieval studies, this is definitely a book to treasure.

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The Gift of Beauty: The Good As Art

STEPHEN DAVID ROSS

Albany, New York: The State University of New York Press, 1996, ix + 348 pp. \$24.95

Stephen Ross' *The Gift of Beauty* intricately weaves together the themes of interruption, motion, giving, and the good. Through a thoughtful reading of Western philosophy, Ross explores the meaning of 'the good' and shows how this good can be given as a gift. The good, as Ross explains, is *always more than* and *beyond* the bounds of any one, established, restricted economy. Ross undertakes the difficult process of living in a 'restricted' economy and, at the same time, describing the good as being beyond the sort of binary oppositions we might find in such an economy. The good exceeds all limits and measures, is given everywhere, and can be seen as an intermediate motion of interruption. The good interrupts all restricted economies, all measures, exclusions, limits and structures. Traces of this interrupting good, given as gifts, are to be found in every restricted economy (p. 297). In fact, such restricted economies presuppose, yet cannot capture, the good that always "wanders off in difference" (p. 283).