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by Judas Maccabeus; in individual terms, its qualities are maintained by experience and practice from youth, and the refinement of martial skills in a state of perpetual battle-readiness. Tournaments, very unusually for an ecclesiastical author, are regarded positively as beneficial to this process, but exposure to the gentler side of courtly life has an effeminizing effect on the knight and should be avoided. Rothe has little positive to say about the real knights of his day, whom he regards as brutish elitists who immiserate the poor and oppress the defenceless to fund their lavish lifestyles. His knightly ideal, however, is pragmatic rather than idealistic. He notes repeatedly that underhand and devious tactics, if the cause is just, are perfectly legitimate and quite to be recommended in overcoming superior opponents: not in the slightest, as they were for most of his contemporaries, a cause for shame.

Rothe digested a remarkable range of literary works to produce the *Ritterspiegel*, and quotes from them extensively. Classical authors predominate, notably Cicero, Seneca, and Vegetius, but more modern texts are also represented: not just Bernard's *De laude novae militiae*, which one might expect, but the *De clastro animae* of Hugh of Fouilloy, Bonaventura's *Soliloquium*, and a letter by Peter of Blois, the source of a passage in the *Ritterspiegel* of unusual and distinctive stylistic quality. The language of the work is not easy, and the presentation of a diplomatic edition alongside a clear translation is surely the way to make the text accessible, without resorting to heavy editorial intervention or linguistic normalization. The commentary provides additional assistance with difficult vocabulary from the standard handbooks, and very helpfully presents the Latin texts of all identified quotations in full, with accompanying translations into German. The commentary, however, is not what it could be. The reader who looks for assistance with the obtuse verbal phrase in lines 3403–04, for example ('Waz had der mensche uf erdin mere, daz en hirobir hergetzcit?'), will learn only that the sentence is indeed 'schwer zu verstehen'. Interpretative and contextual comments are not provided evenly, and are somewhat conspicuous by their absence in the later sections. Most striking, however, is the huge number of questions which the commentary contains. While some simply formulate possible interpretations in relation to genuinely ambiguous expressions, others substitute for philological spadework that has been left undone. The introduction of just sixteen pages is similarly undercooked. The observations on the language (pp. 6–9) are not evaluated, and are thus of little use to the non-specialist in Thuringian dialect forms; the single extant manuscript required a more attentive description, and certainly a better attempt to identify the watermark.

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Women and Marriage in German Medieval Romance. By D. H. GREEN. (Cambridge Studies in Medieval Literature, 74) Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 2009. ix+261 pp. £50. ISBN 978-0-521-51335-7.

The problem of medieval misogyny and the alternatives to it that are proposed in Middle High German courtly romance form the focus of this study. The first part of the book begins with an overview of attitudes to women and marriage

in the Middle Ages, from the precedents set by the Old and New Testaments to the medieval exegesis of these texts. The second chapter discusses the 'feminization' of the twelfth century, characteristics of which include a rise in the veneration of Mary, a stress on certain supposedly 'feminine' attributes of Christ, and repeated references to the increasingly feminized behaviour of men during the twelfth century. A key aspect of D. H. Green's exposition is the distinction between effeminate (negative) and feminized (positive) forms of behaviour, the latter coinciding roughly with what earlier scholars, influenced by Norbert Elias, might have called 'civilized' behaviour. Part II provides close readings of Hartmann von Aue's *Erec*, Gottfried von Straßburg's *Tristan*, and Wolfram von Eschenbach's *Parzival*, with much reference to the French forerunners of these works as well as to other German versions; each work is analysed under the rubrics of its presentation of patriarchal society, anti-feminine attitudes, and questions and revisions of those attitudes of patriarchal society that arise in these texts.

During the twelfth century clerical attitudes to women and marriage began to be more liberal than there is evidence for from earlier periods; women were often presented in a positive light, if only as a counter to the negative aspects of male society that the clerics wished to criticize. The Church stressed the importance of mutual affection and the consent of both parties to the marriage; this went against prevailing patriarchal attitudes in aristocratic society, in which the woman was, in essence, a political pawn, with marriage being an affair decided by men on the basis of political considerations (there were, one should note, exceptions to this norm, though they were not very frequent).

The vernacular texts that Green examines present, on the surface, a conventional, patriarchal, and often anti-feminine view of women and marriage; they also, however, in Green's reading subvert this view in one way or another, by showing women acting independently and in more moral fashion than men; by depicting men as flawed, and more so than women; and by presenting marriages of mutual love and consent with equal participation and agency of both partners as the ideal to be striven for. Thus the status of women and the concept of marriage (ideally, according to these texts, a union of love rather than political expediency) become a subject of discourse, and all of Green's authors, most particularly Wolfram, present critiques of the status quo and some sort of utopian alternative, however unrealistic this might have seemed in the contemporary context.

Green's work is for the most part very convincing. There are some potential problems: the portrayal of love and marriage in *Tristan*, for example, ignores completely the magical agency that produces the love, which, if one includes it in the interpretation, could potentially complicate the more positive view of love relationships that Green believes the work expounds. In his presentation of *Parzival* Green argues that the narrator's occasional sexist outbursts may be read as a means of aligning himself with male members of his audience, only to show subsequently that they (and thus the narrator too) are in a morally and ethically dubious situation, to say the least. This is fine; but Green also argues that women would have been a major, perhaps the primary, audience of the work, and it

is hard to see women not having at the very least an instinctively negative reaction to some examples of the narrator's rather coarsely misogynist sense of humour: would they also have interpreted it as subtly as does Green, seeing the narrator as presenting himself for critique through his alignment with the norm, thus being able to appreciate the author's message without condoning the narrator's point of view? Green also, to my mind, understates the independence of Condwiramurs, Parzival's wife, in Wolfram's work: while she does indeed appear to recede from the picture and become a stereotypical voiceless wife after her marriage, she also rules her kingdom well (there is no evidence to the contrary) for many years in her husband's absence, and thus, like Orgeluse, could be seen as presenting an alternative to the patriarchal ideal of the submissive woman even when married.

These are, however, relatively minor issues. This is an important work of synthesis, and it is sure to be of great interest not just to medieval Germanists, but more widely to students of gender relations in the central Middle Ages.

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Adieu Divine Comtesse: Luise Gottsched, Charlotte Sophie Gräfin Bentinck und Johann Christoph Gottsched in ihren Briefen. Ed. by KATHERINE GOODMAN. Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann. 2009. 182 pp. €58. ISBN 978-3-8260-4098-6.

The Gottscheds have been studied with more seriousness in recent years. Most notably, we are being treated to a twenty-five-volume historical-critical edition of the Gottscheds' letters, thanks to the efforts of a team at the Sächsische Akademie der Wissenschaften in Leipzig (Johann Christoph Gottsched, *Briefwechsel: Unter Einschluß des Briefwechsels von Luise Adelgunde Victorie Gottsched*, ed. by Detlef Döring and others, 25 vols (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2007–)). Katherine Goodman's new edition of the Gottscheds' correspondence with Charlotte Sophie Gräfin Bentinck appears to be independent of this (there is only a brief mention of Döring in the acknowledgements and the Leipzig edition is not listed in the bibliography) but forms a worthy project in its own right.

Goodman's volume illuminates the fascinating friendship between the famous scholarly couple and the eccentric Countess, who met the Gottscheds while residing in Leipzig for a year in 1754–55 and kept in touch with them subsequently. Bentinck lived a colourful, itinerant life, moving in aristocratic and courtly circles in Europe and becoming embroiled in various familial, financial, and political skirmishes. She struck up a friendship with the Gottscheds which seems to have been based to some extent on shared intellectual and literary interests, although in time the Gottscheds would become very involved in Bentinck's sometimes rather delicate affairs (Luise helped to manage the Countess's finances, for example, and passed letters between the Countess and her fellow schemers at considerable personal risk). The letters make intriguing reading in that they shed new light on the Gottscheds, and particularly on Luise. They give a very immediate sense of this remarkable woman's verve, intelligence, and wit—in contrast to the better-known