

The editors claim that “*Early Modern Debts* throws new light on the beginnings of an epoch characterized by debt of a ubiquity and magnitude unknown to any other society in history, an era of borrowed time” (15). I am not convinced that the book really talks about the “beginnings of an epoch,” but it is surely interesting—and very much appreciated—that it describes several kinds of credit relations, the contexts in which they took place, and their importance in the everyday lives of individuals belonging to a diverse social milieu.

The wide geographical and chronological openness of the book is perhaps one of its most interesting features. I enjoyed reading about the variety of credit systems as well as discovering the diverse meanings and logics of credit. On a few occasions, the essays tended to digress from the core theme of the book, which could be rather confusing. However, the authors often managed to provide vivid descriptions of individuals and their lives in the early modern period, illustrating the central role played by credit and debt relations. From this point of view, the persistent link between archival documentation and literature is certainly an added value.

To sum up, this edited volume is an important contribution that should be read by all economic historians of financial markets, as it offers an interesting view of cultural aspects that are often overlooked by the literature on the topic.

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Good Tidings Made Visible: Re-enactments of the Nativity from the Middle Ages to the Present. Lenke Kovács and Francesc Massip, eds.
Problemata Literaria 90. Kassel: Edition Reichenberger, 2020. xii + 312 pp. €43.

Good Tidings Made Visible aptly opens with an extract from the Gospel of Luke in which the angel appears to the shepherds and songs of praise are offered to God. This musical example is one of many interdisciplinary performances and spectacles considered in the collection. As Peter Cocozzella puts it in the book’s preface: “The scholars assembled within the precincts of this book challenge us to probe into the matrix of drama or, as the case may be, into the wellspring of a communal celebration born of the Christian liturgy and kindred expressions of devotional practice” (1). The broad generic scope is one of many enriching aspects of *Good Tidings* that make this collection especially useful for a range of readers, students as well as specialist scholars in the field of medieval performance.

The book is divided into three sections, each with three essays. In the first section, “Foretelling and Announcing the Advent of the Messiah,” the focus is on different representations of rejoicing at the birth of Jesus. In the book’s second section, singing, dancing, and laughing at the Christ Child are explored from a range of geographic locations, from the German-speaking territories to Valencia. Affect is at the heart of

this section, which is especially timely in light of recent performance scholarship on affect theory. In the book's third and final section, the essays explore performances during the Christmas season and the feast of Corpus Christi, beginning in 1223 with Saint Francis of Assisi and continuing to contemporary Italy. In this way, the book's timespan includes both contemporary and medieval performances, and allows the reader to pick and choose essays and sections that are especially relevant to them.

While the collection is organized thematically, there is a geographic grouping logic at work, as exemplified in the first section, which focuses on the Iberian Peninsula. The first essay, by Eduardo Carrero, focuses on why a new cloister was constructed in Burgos, Spain; in the next essay, Francesc Massip studies how the Christmas story coincides with the winter solstice, enabling an integration of both in the figure of the Christianized Sibyl. The third and final essay of this section, by Juan F. Alcina Rovira and Diana Gorostidi Pi, further studies the *Oratio Litteralis*, a Latin sermon performed by a small group of students on Christmas Eve at the Monastery of Sant Mateu del Mestrat (Valencia, ca. 1513).

The focus shifts thematically and geographically in the second section, titled "Rejoicing at the Birth of the Christ-Child." Lenke Kovács takes readers to the German-speaking territories, where the manger from the Gospel of Luke turns into a cradle, a change that Kovács shows engages the faithful "not only spiritually but also physically in the act of adoration" (111). This is a fascinating study of the ways that the clergy tried to control the affective responses of the worshipers, who displayed their devotion in increasingly physical ways, such as cradling and rocking. In the fifth essay, Jaume Lloret I Esquerdo presents a Nativity puppet play and provides interesting insights into how the Council of Trent's expulsion of the mystery plays from inside church buildings may have encouraged a flourishing and independent form of puppetry. Italy is the context for the section's last essay, focusing on Renato Morelli's decades-long rich research into Christmas carols in Northern Italy from the Counter-Reformation to today.

The book's final section offers examples from a range of geographic locations: Italy, Spain, England, and Mexico, from Claudio Bernardi's consideration of living nativities (tableau vivant in which actual people and animals are used) in Italy to Vicente Chacón-Carmona's chapter on earlier Castilian and English nativities. As Bernardi reflects: "In the living Nativity it is the entire community that stages itself" (211), an observation suitable to Beatriz Aracil's consideration of the Mexican *Pastorela* (shepherd's play), a performance still very much alive.

The essays are meticulously researched and rely on an array of primary sources—sculptures, architecture, texts, musical notes, and descriptions. The focus on the Nativity makes this rich book both manageable and approachable for scholars and students alike.

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