

strongest parts of the book, especially in the section about diets and bodies, which reveals connections between the English aversion toward settling in the frigid Arctic, their distaste for Inuit foods, and their anxieties about maintaining health and temperance in unfamiliar places (175). These connections expose geohumoral, environmental, and political anxieties that shaped English aspirations for empire, forcing them to turn south to more temperate climates. Additionally, Winchcombe is very effective at incorporating other European influences on English representations of Indigenous people, emphasizing how English authors, like Eden in his translation of Martyr's *Decades*, were often reliant on Spanish, Portuguese, and French imagery (116). This reliance reinforces the argument that cultural encounters occurred within a broader European context, rather than isolated national ones.

Occasionally, some of the implications of the analysis could be more explicit. For instance, to what extent did the presumed incivility and alterity of Indigenous peoples govern the extent of their inclusion or exclusion from the English imperial system? As anti-Spanish sentiment increased in the late sixteenth century, did the English outlook on Indigenous territorial possession change, thus altering the legal status of Indigenous people? Greater engagement with the historiography of law in the early English empire may have helped to further contextualize the implications of their changing ideological positions. Nonetheless, Winchcombe lucidly demonstrates that sixteenth-century English colonial ventures laid the groundwork for seventeenth-century colonial projects through their efforts to understand, define, and commercialize the Americas. Winchcombe has succeeded in helping free sixteenth-century colonization and empire-building efforts from their old status as false starts, and she has instead found in them important foundations.

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ANN E. ZIMO, TIFFANY D. VANN SPRECHER, KATHRYN REYERSON, and DEBRA BLUMENTHAL, eds.
Rethinking Medieval Margins and Marginality. Studies in Medieval History and Culture.
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As Ann Zimo, Tiffany Sprecher, Kathryn Reyerson, and Debra Blumenthal note in their introduction to *Rethinking Medieval Margins and Marginality*, margins and marginality are well-established research topics in medieval studies at least since the 1960s and 1970s. Nevertheless, too often, certain spaces and different groups of people are quickly understood as marginal, based rather on stereotypes and assumptions than on well-grounded research results. The thirteen contributions to this volume explore a variety of forms of marginality and marginalization under the headings “Race,” “Geography,” “Gender,” “Law,” and “Body.” One particular strength of this volume is that not a single contribution treats its topic in a one-dimensional way. Although none of the contributors deliberately uses the term *intersectional*, almost all scrutinize different sets and intersections of categories of difference, which renders the division of the contributions into five parts under these headings rather negligible. Lori De Lucia takes a closer look at the late medieval slave trade route between Borno (in today's Nigeria) and Palermo (Sicily), and examines “the trans-Mediterranean construction of the archetype of an inherently enslavable black African” (11). She emphasizes the role and importance of mainly Muslim West African actors in the trans-regional slave trade, whose ideas and images of *pagan* and *black* and therefore enslavable Africans were gratefully adopted by European slave traders.

Sierra Lomuto undertakes a postcolonial reading of European travelogues from the thirteenth century dealing with the first encounters with Mongols. In opposition to established understandings of these texts, she tries to demonstrate that “these early writings . . . racialized their subjects and consistently expressed orientalist attitudes within a context of *medieval*, not modern geopolitics” (28). The main hermeneutical problem with Lomuto’s interpretations of these travelogues is her frame of expectation. For example, she criticizes John of Plano Carpini because he at no point in his text conveys “a neutral attitude toward their [the Mongols’] religious and cultural practices” (35); she criticizes William of Rubruck as “his interest in learning the [Mongol] language does not reflect a moment of benign cross-cultural exchange” (37). Given the historical circumstances of their missions and what their commissioners and readers expected from these travelers and their reports, how could one expect these men to express such modern attitudes? Whether the perspectives of these travelers could appropriately be understood as orientalist and colonial is still up for debate.

Jeremy DeAngelo emphasizes early medieval Anglo-Saxons’ sense of peripherality and convincingly argues that Anglo-Saxon missionary efforts on the European mainland “derived from recently inculcated feelings of cultural inferiority rather than superiority” (49).

Chapters 4 and 5 are dedicated to Arthurian materials. Meg Roland uses Thomas Malory’s *Le Morte d’Arthur* from the fifteenth century to illustrate the marginalization of the port town of Sandwich in modern Arthurian scholarship and cultural geography. She argues that this gateway town to international trade and travel obviously does not fit into current ideas and images of wild, romantic, and, in that sense, medieval Arthurian landscapes. Nahir I. Otaño Gracia uses Guillem de Torroella’s *La Faula* from the fourteenth century not only to exemplify the pan-European transmission of Arthuriana, but also how this specific text claims Catalans and the Catalan crown to be a superior chivalric European enclave on the alleged periphery of Europe and chivalric culture.

A perfect example of how useful rethinking marginality can be for historical studies is Lisa Wolverton’s “Why Kings?” She argues that medievalist scholarship has rendered medieval European communities not ruled by kings as “atypical” (94) which she understands itself as a form of historiographical marginalization. She argues that medievalists should rather focus on the constitution of each unique political community to fully understand the diversity of medieval European polities.

Kevin Mummey carefully analyses notary protocols from late fourteenth-century Mallorca and discusses the role of women—widows, wives, and even single women—as buyers and sellers of slaves, concluding that “women were a motive force behind the slave system and the society that resulted from it” (121).

Roisin Cossar shows how medievalist scholarship has for too long accepted the portrayal of clerics’ concubines as marginal and ostracized. Visitation and episcopal court records from late medieval Italy, for example, reveal that sometimes these concubines were well-respected members of a community.

Tanya Stabler Miller discusses the interesting case of Robert of Sorbon (d. 1274) who praised and even embraced “beguine marginality” as a role model for the students at his school in Paris and promoted “pastoral networks between Sorbonne scholars and lay religious women” (157).

Zimo argues that Frankish legal sources from the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem do indeed marginalize Muslims living in these territories. But a look into contemporary Arab sources reveals that the relationships between the Franks of Outremer and their Muslim neighbors were far more complex, especially as the balance shifted toward the Muslim side in the thirteenth century and had elite Muslims acting and existing “at the very center of Frankish power” (181).

Reyerson discusses the status of pirates and illustrates that the label “pirate” was often a question of perspective. She uses letters of marque as an important source that “muddies the question of the marginality of pirates” (194) and shows how—within the frame of

marques—piratical violence could be understood as a judicial action and therefore even as a quite respectable form of violence.

The last two contributions to this volume challenge long-established notions of the poor and the sick in medieval society. Caley McCarthy convincingly shows how the sick, the wounded poor, and abandoned infants who lived and died at the Hospital of Saint-Esprit in late medieval Marseille were not at all marginalized within Massiliote society, but that this institution and its inhabitants “were integral to and integrated into the municipality’s civic and religious spheres” (220). Samantha Katz Seal uses the fourteenth-century Middle English devotional poem *Prik of Conscience* to show how the carnal impact of original sin could be understood as an egalitarian force as it impaired and disabled (terms she discusses very carefully) every human.

All contributions live up to the aim of this volume to add more nuance to our understandings of medieval margins and marginality and prove that, as Ruth Mazo Karras cautions, “marginal status cannot simply be treated as given” (*Common Women: Prostitution and Sexuality in Medieval England* [1996], 7).

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