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Christian Knudsen contributed the essay, A History of the Abbey of Bury St Edmunds 1257-1301: Simon of Luton and John of Northwold

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knowledge of their archaeological context, the style of the items can often be related to datable images on coins or in carvings on rune stones and churches. Pedersen also mentions, at the very end of her contribution, a possibility that should be more generally considered: that both crosses and Thor's hammers were amulets reflecting "a general need for personal reassurance, assistance, and protection" (222) rather than alignment with a particular culture or social status. I would also note that the lattice of ropes described by Sindbæk and illustrated on p. 186 resembles that found on the Lisbjerg altar on p. 213.

Jón Viðar Sigurðsson's "afterthoughts" turn to written sources and discuss the implications of known contacts between Anglo-Saxon and Norwegian kings in the ninth and tenth centuries. Readers unfamiliar with the period may need to be reminded that neither Norway nor any of the other "countries" discussed in this volume existed in its present form in the Middle Ages; for Norway, in particular, the northern area around Trondheim, for which the nearest Christian community would have been in England, should be contrasted with the more Denmark-oriented area around present-day Oslo.

The overall tendency in the volume is to reexamine objects and motifs traditionally classified as "Christian" or "pagan," and their contexts, primarily as indications of social, rather than religious, networks or identities. In their summations, both Garpizanov and Sigurðsson favor "top-down" models of conversion. It must be remembered, however, that our sources—whether written or archaeological—are biased towards the upper classes. Ordinary people rarely appear in chronicles, well-furnished burials, or runic commemorations. Sindbæk's reminder of the primacy of archaeological evidence should be taken seriously. This important work is not for undergraduates; scholars of the period will find that each chapter requires—and repays—the reader's close attention.

MARGARET CORMACK, College of Charleston

ANTONIA GRANSDEN, *A History of the Abbey of Bury St Edmunds 1257–1301: Simon of Luton and John of Northwold*. (Studies in the History of Medieval Religion 42.) Woodbridge, UK, and Rochester, NY: Boydell Press, 2015. Pp. xxxv, 349; 4 black-and-white figures, 18 black-and-white and color plates, and 7 maps. \$99. ISBN: 978-1-78327-026-2.
doi:10.1086/687890

Antonia Gransden concludes her two-part history of the Abbey of Bury St. Edmunds in this rich, meticulously researched volume, which covers the turbulent decades of the second half of the thirteenth century. Taken together, these volumes represent one of the most substantial and welcome contributions to English monastic history in decades. However, the appeal of this book will extend beyond monastic historians. As one of the wealthiest and most privileged English Benedictine abbeys during the Middle Ages, Bury St. Edmunds was also closely connected to both the royal government and the political and social upheavals of its day. As such, there is much in this volume that will appeal to political, economic, and ecclesiastical historians as well.

As in the first volume, Gransden frames her history with the tenures of the abbots of the period—in this instance, Simon of Luton (1257–79) and John of Northwood (1279–1301). The book consists of twenty-four chapters organized into five parts with two appendices. The organization is primarily thematic, with the first three parts focusing on administrative and economic history, while the last two sections discuss the quality of religious, intellectual, and cultural life in the abbey. Gransden makes good use of the substantial surviving abbey records, which include over forty registers, as well as the detailed thirteenth-century chronicle of Bury St. Edmunds—just one of several sources that Gransden herself has contributed to edited printed editions.

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The first twelve chapters (parts 1 and 2) explore the various challenges facing the abbey's leadership during the latter thirteenth century. St. Edmunds frequently found itself on the defensive to protect its traditional privileges, exemptions, and liberties from local nobility, rival religious orders, townsfolk—and perhaps, most frequently, the king. For example, during Simon of Luton's tenure, the abbey became embroiled in a conflict with the Franciscans when the latter attempted to found a new house within the spiritual immunity of St. Edmund's Liberty. Several years of expensive litigation followed, which pitted the abbey at various points against the king and pope as well as many of the townsfolk (chapter 2). More serious was the precarious position the abbey found itself in during the Second Baron's War, which saw England briefly ruled by a parliament led by Simon de Montfort. While Gransden demonstrates that there was plenty of probaronial sympathy among the monks (including the author of the Chronicle), these beliefs found little practical application since royal favor was central to the success and survival of the abbey (chapter 3).

Gransden allocates a significant portion of her book to analyzing the abbey's relationship with Edward I (chapters 7–10), which was often frayed over issues of taxation and jurisdiction. Particular attention is paid to the impact of Edward's *Quo Warrento* campaign, which challenged all landowners to defend “by which right do you hold your estates,” (chapter 7) and the abbey's right to mint coins (chapter 8). Interestingly, however, Gransden differentiates the relationship the abbey had with the royal government (chapter 9) and the more personal relationship with Edward as an individual (chapter 10). The latter, Gransden argues, was a relatively positive one. Edward often stayed at St. Edmunds and held the veneration of the abbey's patron saint in high esteem. In chapter 11, Gransden turns to the relationship the abbey had with various powerful families. Beginning with a short list of pensioners appearing in a thirteenth-century register, Gransden manages to trace a complex web of familial relationships that linked the abbey to powerful protectors.

Part 3 (chapters 13–19) covers the economic history of the abbey during the same time period. Here, Gransden returns to some of the themes that she touched upon in the first half of her book but in much more detail: for example, the ongoing problem of debt, which Gransden notes arose from a variety of sources, including obtaining papal confirmations of elections, litigation to preserve liberties, and seemingly endless demands for money from kings and popes (chapter 13); the economic reform efforts of both abbots (chapters 14–15); the impact of taxation from royal or religious authorities (chapter 16); and the efforts to clarify the division of income between the convent and abbot. The specifics of such a division were particularly important during times of vacancy, when the king assumed custody of the abbatial portion (chapter 19). The last five chapters of Gransden's book concern the intellectual and cultural life of the abbey, including religious reforms, building programs, and almsgiving during both abbacies (chapters 20–21). In particular, Gransden demonstrates her expertise with a careful and thorough discussion of the production, sources, and authorship of the Bury chronicles (chapters 22–23).

Gransden's book also includes sixteen plates of illustrations and photographs (several of which are in color). They include images of the Bury Chronicle, the remains of the Charnel chapel (constructed during John's abbacy) and St. Saviour's Hospital. The second appendix is worthy of particular note and examines the dietary regime of the Bury monks in comparison to the monks of Westminster Abbey—a similarly large and wealthy abbey. The appendix offers a significant contribution to the growing body of research on the changing monastic expectations of diet and pittance during the later medieval period and builds upon the work of her former mentor, Barbara Harvey. The section even includes several recipes used by the monks. While technically a microhistory, Gransden's book is situated firmly in the social, economic, and political landscape of thirteenth-century England and offers scholars plenty of comparative analysis. Minor critiques would include the overall organization of chapters, which range considerably in size and scope. Signposting for non-

specialists is also largely absent. Nevertheless, these issues hardly detract from the overall value of the work.

CHRISTIAN KNUDSEN, Sheridan College

LAURA F. HODGES, *Chaucer and Array: Patterns of Costume and Fabric Rhetoric in the "Canterbury Tales," "Troilus and Criseyde" and Other Works*. (Chaucer Studies 42.) Cambridge, UK, and Rochester, NY: D. S. Brewer, 2014. Pp. xi, 232; 11 black-and-white figures and 8 color plates. \$99. ISBN: 978-1-84384-368-9.
doi:10.1086/688001

Laura F. Hodges's new book, *Chaucer and Array: Patterns of Costume and Fabric Rhetoric in the "Canterbury Tales," "Troilus and Criseyde" and Other Works*, is her third book exploring Chaucer's use of clothing imagery in his literary works, and in many ways it is her strongest to date. I say this from my distinct point of view as a literary scholar, and more precisely, as a critic who is interested in the various ways that late-medieval English poetry engages the objects and practices of medieval material culture, and especially those cultural objects that might be considered decorative, such as clothing. In her previous books, *Chaucer and Costume: The Secular Pilgrims in the General Prologue* (Brewer, 2000) and *Chaucer and Clothing: Clerical and Academic Costume in the General Prologue to the Canterbury Tales* (Brewer, 2005), Hodges largely kept her analysis to Chaucer's (admittedly, considerable) clothing references in his "General Prologue." Valuable as these studies may be—and I would argue that they are extremely valuable, especially from the perspective of costume history—their focus on the "General Prologue," where Chaucer famously describes twenty-nine "sondry folk" one after the other, necessarily means that these books retain and often reproduce a kind of categorizing descriptive impulse, with much more time spent unpacking historical research about specific clothing items or terms than in analyzing how those items or terms constitute or effect literary meaning in their particular text. This is less a criticism than it is a point about Hodges's apparent methodological priorities: as her first two books demonstrate, her work as a clothing historian often outweighs her work as a literary critic.

In her new book these two critical perspectives are a little more balanced, with Hodges's historical research being put more often into the service of literary readings. Her chapters deal with select Chaucerian texts, mostly romances or fabliaux; the "Knight's Tale," *Troilus and Criseyde*, the "Clerk's Tale," the "Miller's Tale," and the "Tale of Sir Thopas" receive the most treatment, although the shorter works and translations are also discussed, many of them in the conclusion. While her earlier books seemed structured to demonstrate just how much Chaucer knew about contemporary clothing and cloth terms—more than any other medieval English poet, a point she reiterates in this book as well (181)—her new book focuses on the potential effect his sartorial images and language have on his audience. As laid out in her introduction, Hodges's argument asserts that most of Chaucer's energies with regard to descriptions of clothing work toward either upholding or upending audience expectations. Most dramatically interesting, of course, are the examples of Chaucer reversing his audiences expectations—according to Hodges, he "frequently startles his well-read audience" in this way (3)—but it is in the dynamic between his uses of traditional and nontraditional clothing descriptions that larger patterns of poetic and rhetorical usage can be seen.

There is nothing revolutionary in this argument, since it fits quite comfortably with general critical understandings of Chaucer as a poet who often uses genre, and for that matter poetic form and language, precisely in this way—as sometimes heightening and sometimes blurring the distinctions between culturally learned categories. To say that is