

NORRIS J. LACY, ed., *Medieval Arthurian Literature: A Guide to Recent Research*. Garland Reference Library of the Humanities, vol. 1955. New York: Garland, 1996. Pp. xii, 471. ISBN: 0-8153-2160-0. \$73.

Norris Lacy has attempted what few other scholars would—a compiled discussion of scholarship done on the Arthurian canon. To make this project manageable, he limits the scope of his discussion to recent and influential works and enlists some of the most prolific scholars in the field to help him. Lacy and his colleagues set out to ‘present to scholars and students the current state of scholarship in [their] fields’ (x). Each chapter focuses on medieval vernacular literature in Western Europe within roughly the last twenty-five years while the book as a whole aims at including countries and literary works that are often excluded or overlooked in the popular Arthurian canon.

Lacy and nine other medieval scholars have compiled a preface and nine chapters, eight of which discuss countries and/or geographic areas in which original and translated medieval works on King Arthur were produced, plus a final chapter on translation. The chapters are in random order so as not to privilege any one country over another. Each section then breaks down into an annotated discussion of the area under consideration, followed by a bibliography of works considered by the authors to be ‘important contributions that ought to be known by anyone dealing with the literature in question’ (xi). The preface and final chapter, both written by Lacy, attempt to fill in any remaining gaps.

The contributions this study makes to the field are apparent. The book provides a global picture of the field as it stands today, while attempting to expand the focus and the knowledge of scholars in the field. Further, there are insights in the discussions that could only come from scholars who know and enjoy their fields. For example, in his discussion of French literature, Keith Busby notes that ‘Scholarship of this period on both prose and verse romance generally reflects the influence of notions of *mouvance* as developed by Paul Zumthor, according to which the medieval text is fundamentally unstable, moving in both space and time. The practical consequence of this is that no two versions of the same text are identical and indeed frequently exhibit major differences’ (134-5).

There are drawbacks to the book. Lacy’s premise/introduction is sparse, offering little direction and assistance. A section on methodology or layout would make this a useful guide. The discussions in many of the chapters seem haphazard and are occasionally hard to follow; perhaps additional subject subtitles would help the reader to follow the various topics better. Further breakdown of the bibliographies, most easily accomplished by separating out works done on major authors into separate sub-sections, would also add to the ease and efficiency with which one might use this resource. Finally, the book’s bibliographies noticeably lack on-line and WWW sources. Some scholarly internet projects would be worth noting in this guide. ‘The Camelot

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Project' and 'ArthurNet,' for example, are two convenient and useful on-line sources for medieval scholars.

All-in-all, Lacy's *Medieval Arthurian Literature: A Guide to Recent Research* is a valuable tool for scholars well-versed in their area of Arthurian scholarship.

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