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the Norman period. Royal administration, its variations, and changing emphases are examined from the period of Frederick II through the fifteenth century. While this is a fine survey with well-chosen specific historical illustrations, given the vastness of the theme the authors rightly emphasize the need to work from their bibliographic citations.

The final case study is entitled "La formazione degli stati territoriali nelle aree tra Elba/Saale e Oder: Meissen/Sassonia, Brandenburgo e Meclemburgo," by Thomas Klein (pp. 445–94). Klein is able to treat political, military, diplomatic, and financial policies in surprising detail in a broad study of three eastern areas that covers the tenth through much of the sixteenth century.

Cinzio Violante, in his concluding reflections (pp. 495–503), offers his own original contribution. He surveys succinctly the history of "the principle of territoriality" and its application, both ecclesiastical and lay, from the fifth through the thirteenth centuries. Nor is he unaware that while this is the period in which he believes such a study should begin, it immediately precedes that selected for the conference from which the selections in this book derive.

The articles in this volume differ greatly in length, significance, and breadth. The principle underlying the order of the chapters is not apparent. The lack of an index in a work of this sort is understandable and does not present a serious problem. Despite some variation, the overall quality of the contributions is high, and many will prove essential to scholars with a variety of historical interests.

WILLIAM M. BOWSKY, University of California, Davis

JOHN DAGENAIS, *The Ethics of Reading in a Manuscript Culture: Glossing the "Libro de buen amor."* Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1994. Pp. xxiii, 278. \$39.50.

This is one of those rare "big" books that comes along in a field only once in a very long while, and it compels the reviewer to begin with a recitation of several platitudes, alas. The first is the cliché about a review of this length being unable to do the work anything resembling justice—in this case one is particularly daunted at the idea of giving even a satisfactory résumé of its basic thesis. This prompts the second truism, usually saved for the end but here delivered up front: this is a book that should be required reading for "everyone"—and in this case the everyone is certainly everyone who constitutes the target audience of this journal, that is, medievalists of all disciplines, not just literary scholars, and from all cultural areas, not just Hispanic studies, the field from which both the author and the principal exemplary text emerge. In this, the principal title of the book, "The Ethics of Reading in a Manuscript Culture," should be privileged absolutely—and the subtitle, while accurate, can be ignored: even if one has never heard of the *Libro de buen amor*, this is a book of enormous interest.

In this recitation of familiar (if often abused) tunes, I add one more that is rarely sung in public but pervasive nevertheless in an academy whose standards for publications and tenure have helped produce a body of scholarship, especially (but not exclusively) among younger scholars, of ever smaller range and ambition. Big books, these days, are rarely written as first books because they require the courage to go against the grain of our institutions' requirements for "success," among them a book of some sort (any sort) in the first five years of one's career (so we mostly get slightly rehashed dissertations, that is, monographs) and, a more subtle requirement but perhaps even more damaging, a degree of specialization mostly (in literary studies) bounded by a single language and a single period of time, sometimes even a single author. It is rarely noted that these tacit definitions of respectability (and thus hirability and tenurability) in "scholarship" would have astonished and confounded the greatest scholars of our profession one or two generations ago.

In such a context one must particularly appreciate the appearance of a first book that certainly took far more than the first five years to write and that is at polar opposites from the limited range of vision of any dissertation or monograph. Dagenais has taken on one of the largest and most challenging topics imaginable, the ethical problem of the complex constitution of medieval texts—by their medieval readers as well as by ourselves (and other past and future readers). One of the relatively simple statements one can make about the thrust of this book is his own, that it is a “reorientation of the way we approach medieval literature, a shift away from a view that privileges the author and/or text (and carries with it the implicit model of the printed book and all the baggage of the academic study of literary canons) to one that privileges the individual reader and the multitude of medieval literary activities, such as commentary and copying, that mirror reading” (p. xvii). Sounds easy and even old-fashioned in some way (since he goes on to note that “at the heart” of such a new “reading” would be a return to the reading of actual manuscripts and codices rather than printed books that purport to reproduce them for us), but it is far from that.

In part this book ends up mounting one more powerful argument for what is now routinely called the “new philology,” particularly the aspect of it that is a strong critique, most influentially set out by Bernard Cerquiglini in his *Eloge de la variante*, of the Lachmannian model of text editing and all that lies behind it, most of all of the fundamental concept of the medieval text that lies behind the notion that a modern printed version of the text can and should provide a “prelapsarian” text. As Dagenais puts it: “When people from print culture look at a medieval manuscript, we cannot help seeing a fallen text. . . . From the beginning academic medievalism has taken as its mission the restoration of coherence, sense, to these texts, which appear to us to lie just beyond the horizon of modern European linguistic and cultural understanding. Our heart goes out to these injured children of another, less sophisticated age, so damaged through the hazards of scribal transmission and the inexorable workings of time. It is a noble mission. But it is a misguided one. Medieval textuality functioned, one way or another, in this fallen state . . .” (p. 111). But Dagenais has a crucial, second theoretical turn, which not only strongly modifies the first but is what sets his work apart, he insists, from the bulk of the “new philological” movement (my own sense is that he protests too much in his attempt to distance himself, but I will leave that quibble aside here). That crucial turn is to insist on the centrality of the reader’s role, the ways in which what survive as texts from that period can be better understood in terms of the dynamics of orality, thus, in sum, the highly personalized and participatory nature of “meaning.”

The powerful insight that the text is “modified by its audience” (I might put it even more strongly and say that it is nothing without its audience) is rooted in the sort of appreciation of the oral tradition that is more likely to come from a medievalist who has worked in the Hispanic literary tradition than those who are trained in other linguistic/geographic areas in which the abundance of surviving written texts has helped to mask the radical difference between the variant-based literary culture of what we can at first divvy up as the preprint and the postprint eras. But one of the main lessons of Dagenais’s painstakingly detailed arguments—for which he cleverly uses the most famous single-author Hispanic text, one that is normally seen as “really” a written text (that is, it may have been “influenced” by the oral tradition, but ontologically they are two different things)—is that the ethical structure of all production of texts in the medieval period is one that intimately includes and involves the reader, often in his function of scribe. And this is a fairly radical vision, no more widely accepted among Hispanists than among any other community of medievalists, although it is amply congruent with the (equally radical) notions of textuality of the revered master of the field, Menéndez Pidal.

The point is not literally always to work with each individual manuscript; that would be

a reductive and in the end impossibly limiting precept. Rather, as I would interpret it, the point is for us always to function, always to read, with a thorough and active appreciation of the really quite radical ideological—ethical—differences between the notion of “text” where meaning resides in the “text” itself (New Criticism) or in the “author” (pre-New Criticism) and that which is best understood by a contemplation of the performance model of the oral tradition, particularly those aspects of it that understand how the “audience” not only modifies the text but determines its fundamental parameters of meaning. Moreover, this model involves a crucial shift in our understanding of the ethical relationship between a reader—in the end, any reader, including the scholar—and the “text.” Here the model that emerges is the intimate and personal one rather than the “objective” one most of us were taught to respect and carry out, and in this it resonates strongly of the models of memorialistic structure so finely exposed by Mary Carruthers in *The Book of Memory*.

But if the memorialistic culture is, indeed, largely a thing of the past and in the end knowable only somewhat “objectively,” what Dagenais’s book suggests is that at least one crucial part of the medieval culture of reading, inseparable from any notion of authorship or textuality, that ethical insistence on the highly personal relationship that makes a text a part of one’s life and vision by necessarily reading it in such terms, need not remain a historical relic, a part of the “prelapsarian” universe. At stake in this book is not only our understanding of just what it is we are reading when we read medieval texts—that is, the ethics of the social structure that produced them in the first place—but our perception of what our own involvement with such texts might or could be. The ethics, in other words, of the medievalist.

MARÍA ROSA MENOCA, Yale University

GILBERT DAGRON, PIERRE RICHÉ, and ANDRÉ VAUCHEZ, eds., *Histoire du christianisme des origines à nos jours*, 4: *Evêques, moines et empereurs (610–1054)*. N.p.: Desclée, 1993. Pp. 1049; black-and-white illustrations, maps, chronological tables. F 420.

Like a fine French meal, this book comes in course after course, sends you away from the table very full, and remains in your memory for a long time. But then your memory begins to systematize recollection. You recall that some courses were better than others, that some dishes were quite new to you and you had nothing to compare them with, and that some offerings were quite familiar and, perhaps, did not measure up to earlier encounters with them.

This stout tome is one in a projected fourteen-volume set that will cover Christianity from apostolic times to the present. It ranges widely over church history, religious history, and cultural history. This is a strength. An even greater strength is its unparalleled geographical breadth. The book opens with a long, beautifully written, unflinching interesting, and often quite original section on Byzantium by Gilbert Dagron. The section on Greek Christianity concludes with a brief but useful treatment of southern Italy and Sicily by André Jacob and Jean-Marie Martin. Following this are sections by Gérard Troupeau on Christianity in Islamic lands organized by the major religious groupings—Orthodox, Monophysite, Nestorian, and Monothelite—and by the major geographical regions—Mesopotamia, Syria-Palestine, Egypt. Much of this material was relatively unfamiliar to me; and while I found it interesting and informative, I cannot competently pass judgment on it. The same is true for the next sections by Jean-Marie Mahé and Bernadette Martin-Hisard treating, respectively, Armenia and Georgia. The next substantial section, by Pierre Riché, covers the West. It is competent, readable, and, as a survey, as good as anything now on the shelf. But it struck me as a little tired, a little dated. Riché, not surprisingly,