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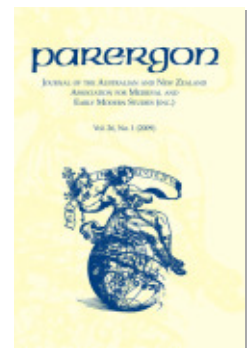
*The Deposition of Richard II: "The Record and Process of the  
Renunciation and Deposition of Richard II" (1399) (review)*

Marcus Harmes

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sensitive and considered assessment of some examples of ‘secondary’ poetic effects may not contribute much to Bredehoft’s argument, but it is worth reading.

On the question of late Old English verse, Bredehoft really shines. His metrical formalism is applied here too, and it contributes to his argument that late Old English poetry is not a ‘debased’ variant of classical Old English poetry, but rather a slightly different form of verse. His dismissal of the rather bizarre concept of ‘rhythmical prose’ is masterful and deserving of much more respect than it is likely to receive. His argument from metrical evidence that this is clearly poetry, constructed under the rules of late rather than classical Old English poetry, is well supported by the physical evidence from manuscripts, on which he has published before and which he reviews here.

The argument that Middle English poetry, particularly Layamon’s *Brut*, has a direct line of descent from classical through late Old English poetry is solid. Less convincing is the argument for direct borrowings from late Old English material into the *Brut*. Bredehoft provides a valuable opportunity for those who read Anglo-Saxon poetry to think outside the square that tends to confine ideas about Old English metre. We should be grateful.

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**Carlson**, David R., ed., *The Deposition of Richard II: “The Record and Process of the Renunciation and Deposition of Richard II” (1399)* (Toronto Medieval Latin Texts 29), Toronto, Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 2007; paperback; pp. vii, 104; R.R.P. C\$12.95; ISBN 9780888444790.

This is a scrupulously prepared edition of a manuscript source from 1399 and therefore one contemporary with the events it describes, the deposition of King Richard II by Henry Bolingbroke, who subsequently claimed the throne as Henry IV. This edition is a product of a long-standing series of edited medieval texts which present the text in the original language (in this case late-medieval Latin) with glossed comments.

The manuscript source emerges from constitutional conflict which followed the period of Richard’s personal rule, beginning in 1389, and the period of Richard’s ‘tyranny’ from 1397-9, which saw the banishment of Henry Bolingbroke.

A useful introduction by the editor David Carlson sets the narrative of the events in 1399 in their full context, starting with the political crises of 1386 when a 'Commission of Government' imposed parliamentary supervision on King Richard. While narrating the events over fifteen years – from Richard's conflict with the Commission to his forced abdication – Carlson also points to those events where 'causality and chronology become murky' (p. 2). By this he means especially the chronology of Richard's negotiations with royal justices over the possibility of charging members of the Commission *tanquam proditores* (as if they had committed treason).

The events of Richard's reign were narrated and received commentary in contemporary and later chronicles, including those of Adam Usk and Henry Knighton. But as Carlson points out, the document of 1399, while having a title that implies its contents is a narrative or a chronicle, should more properly be considered a record of 'parliamentary process-enactment' (p. 6).

This distinction is important to understanding the content and style of the work. As a record of contemporary parliamentary process rather than a monastic chronicle, the work could have been intended for oral delivery, albeit from a written source. Carlson's rigorous and detailed orthographic study makes clear the rhythmic pattern to the text. Carlson's commentary also demonstrates the literary qualities of a text that emerged from a literary milieu which included both Chaucer and Gower.

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**Holt**, Mack P., ed., *Adaptations of Calvinism in Reformation Europe: Essays in Honour of Brian G. Armstrong* (St Andrews Studies in Reformation History), Aldershot, Ashgate, 2007; hardback; pp. 266; 1 b/w illustration; R.R.P. £60.00; ISBN 9780754651499.

This is a wide-ranging study of the spread of Calvinist ecclesiology and doctrine throughout northern Europe in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Attention is given to the adaptations of Calvinism to the religious and constitutional circumstances in Geneva, France, the Netherlands and the British Isles. It comprises thirteen articles discussing Calvinism in these different centres of reformed practice.