Fashioning Change

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“Fashioning Change discovers a late medieval world in which garments could express fortune’s instability, aesthetic turmoil, and spiritual crisis. Fashion was good to think. In lucid and compelling detail, Andrea Denny-Brown reveals just how and why the dress of ecclesiastics, dandies, wives, and kings figured mutability as an inescapable worldly condition.”

—Susan Crane, professor of English and Comparative Literature, Columbia University, and author of The Performance of Self: Ritual, Clothing, and Identity during the Hundred Years War

“It is rare to find a book that casts its nets widely while meticulously analyzing the texts it discusses. This book does both. Denny-Brown provides insight into philosophical texts, cultural symbolics in textual and visual art, religious and theological texts and practices, Middle English poetry, and national identity, which taken together makes the book an invaluable index to medieval—not just Middle English—notions about fashion, philosophical approaches to change, gender dynamics, and aesthetics.”

—Maura Nolan, University of California, Berkeley

“Denny-Brown draws on texts of many genres as well as historical information to show that fashion—and the promise of fortune that accompanied it—had great appeal for men and women in the Middle Ages. The fashionable consumption of the clergy, of ‘foppish’ men whose style and habits associated them with gambling, and headstrong bourgeois wives with money (‘archwyves’), all provoked concern, censure, and satire. This is a fascinating study packed with information.”

—Sarah-Grace Heller, The Ohio State University