

ties between an individual house and a great family would last. Berman dedicates an entire chapter (6) to the most famous patron of female Cistercians in France, Blanche of Castile. Blanche founded two nunneries, namely Maubuisson (1236) and Lys (1248), both of which went on to be very successful. The remaining two chapters then take a closer economic look at Saint-Antoine-des-Champs, one of the “most successful houses of Cistercian nuns in the ecclesiastical province of Sens” (150) and nunneries in Champagne. The nuns of Saint-Antoine were well educated and, as in the other cases, their community was wealthy enough to sustain 120 nuns (188), an impressive number for the time.

Part 3 consists of only one short chapter of twelve pages and three appendices. The former compares the economics of Cistercian nunneries with those of Fontevraud and the Paraclete. “Overall, the comparison . . . suggests little differences” as “Cistercian nuns managed their properties in ways that were not so different from those of earlier communities of nuns” (231).

Berman’s knowledgeable discussion of nunneries as economic entities with strong ties to the world is without a doubt the great strength of the study. Establishing these institutions as independent and their nuns as versed and expert managers stands in sharp contrast to the marginalizing and misogynistic image portrayed by twelfth- and thirteenth-century Cistercian narratives. However, some of Berman’s more general observations are less novel than the author seems to suggest. Female patrons of high and even late medieval nunneries were commonplace in Europe, within and without the Cistercian order, and many of these women acted independently from male control. Nor is the notion of nuns and abbesses as able managers of a diverse portfolio of assets per se new. Rather, this idea has been a staple in European scholarship on medieval monasticism, which has a tradition of emphasizing administrative sources over narratives; see, for example, the works of Franz J. Felten and Gabriela Signori, along with the encyclopedic *Helvetia sacra* as a whole. These and other works would have provided great material for comparisons on a European scale. And while there certainly remain remnants of the aforementioned misogynistic conceptions in contemporary Cistercian studies, the field has become much more balanced in recent decades. The works of Alexis Grélois on French Cistercian nunneries testify to this. However, Berman pays them little notice (Grélois is cited only once, p. 22). Such omissions seem to serve the purpose of making some of the study’s observations appear more innovative than they really are. This seems an unnecessary twist, as the monograph would not have lost any of its unquestionable value and merit if recent scholarship had been referenced more holistically.

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KATHLEEN BICKFORD BERZOCK, ed., *Caravans of Gold, Fragments in Time: Art, Culture, and Exchange Across Medieval Saharan Africa*. Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, for the Mary and Leigh Block Museum of Art, Northwestern University, 2019. Pp. 312; many color and black-and-white figures. \$65. ISBN: 978-0-6911-8268-1. Table of contents available online at <https://press.princeton.edu/titles/14202.html>  
doi:10.1086/710979

This is a glorious book: thoughtfully organized, powerfully researched, lavishly illustrated, and handsomely produced. It was published on the occasion of the eponymous exhibition organized by the Block Museum of Art, Northwestern University, which traveled to the Aga Khan Museum in Toronto and the National Museum of African Art at the Smithsonian (the latter iteration was online due to the global coronavirus pandemic). Though it documents the exhibition by illustrating and contextualizing its contents, the book is not structured like a typical catalogue. Instead of echoing the design of the show and providing individual entries for specific objects, its format is more properly an edited volume, relying on long-form essays

*Speculum* 95/4 (October 2020)

to convey the show's major themes and scholarly contributions. This is a wise choice for a topic that is so much greater than the sum of its parts: these expansive essays take the exquisite exhibition as a point of departure but extend far beyond the show itself, and will soon prove requisite reading for anyone attentive to the global turn in medieval studies.

Those looking for a résumé of the show will not be disappointed, as the book begins with a beautiful essay by its curator (and editor of the volume), Kathleen Bickford Berzock. She traces the contours of the exhibition and emphasizes an "archaeological imagination," inviting readers to glimpse the towering achievements of medieval Saharan Africa through excavated fragments. These seemingly modest remnants can fire the imagination in unexpected ways: for example, one of the exhibition's most striking artifacts is a shard of celadon-glazed porcelain, no more than a few centimeters in length, manufactured in the Jiangxi province of China and found at a medieval archaeological site in Mali. The poetics of this fragment are not silenced by its juxtaposition with artworks that survive intact (including significant loans of sculptures from African museums); instead the dialogues created in the exhibition and preserved in the book reflect the multi-layered richness of Saharan visual culture. The book's focus on West Africa is likewise enhanced rather than diminished by a thematic emphasis on networks that tied great empires like Mali to distant trading partners in the Mediterranean and beyond. What emerges from the evocative landscapes of the medieval Sahara is a complex mosaic of ethnic, linguistic, and political groups shaped by the long arc of history. Taken together, they reflect the enduring strength of Africa's indigenous traditions, the defining changes that arrived with Islam, the disruptive legacy of colonization, and the challenges of the postcolonial era.

The book is divided into four sections. "Groundwork" begins with Berzock's introduction but also includes stirring reflections by a contemporary poet (Chris Abani), introductions to Arab sources for medieval West Africa (Robert Launay) and the physical evidence for gold production there (Ralph A. Austen), and comments on the ongoing work of protecting and preserving cultural property in the three nations that lent generously to the show: Mali (Mamadi Dembélé), Morocco (Ahmed Ettahiri and Youssef Khiara), and Nigeria (Yousuf Abdallah Usman). "Sites" presents the unique culture of the Sahara itself, past and present (Cynthia Becker), along with essays on the famed urban centers of its fringes: Sijilmasa (Ronald A. Messier and Abdallah Fili), Essouk-Tadmekka (Sam Nixon), and Gao (Mamadou Cissé); it also highlights smaller settlements that thrived in the Inland Niger Delta (Dembélé) and the Central Sahel (Detlef Gronenborn). "Matter in Motion" evaluates the role of trade routes that not only exported gold and ivory but also imported materials—notably copper alloys—that were then used to produce luxurious goods in Africa (Sarah M. Guérin); mines the evidence of dinars in assessing the history of Islamic empires (Messier); attests to the production of gold in Tadmekka (Gianluca Pastorelli, Marc Walton, and Nixon) and glass beads at Igbo Olokun in the great city of Ile-Ife (Abidemi Babatunde Babalola), and probes the West African intellectual tradition that produced books on jurisprudence, Arabic grammar, poetry, and ethics (Mauro Nobili). "Reverberations" closes the book by addressing the post-medieval reception of medieval Africa, which can be glimpsed in the Mamluk and English vessels collected by the Akan people (Raymond Silverman), the musical traditions that Gnawa buskers in Morocco invoke to define a diasporic identity (Becker), and the contemporary patterns of migration that echo medieval trans-Saharan routes but respond directly to current political and economic realities (Galya Ben-Arieh). Taken together, these essays establish powerful themes and key sources for scholarship on medieval West Africa, prompting readers to see the Sahara as a rich crossroads that connected rather than divided its diverse peoples.

The authors of this volume deserve ample praise for their mastery of the topics at hand. Equally impressive is their manifest commitment to opening this field to outsiders, producing essays that are challenging and yet accessible, focused on the Sahara but mindful of a global perspective. For readers whose focus lies in other regions, this book represents a precious opportunity to extend the horizons of medieval studies and add terms to our shared lexicon.

It is high time to start using the indigenous *Amizigh* (plural: *Imazighen*) in place of the Greek- and Arabic-derived *Berber*; it is also past time to integrate West Africa more fully in discussions of the Middle Ages. Because it emphasizes trade routes and connectivity, the book gives readers frequent reminders of economic systems that once encompassed not only Cairo and Mecca but also Paris and London. Perhaps this may seem unsurprising. Nevertheless, it was breathtaking for this newcomer to medieval African art history to glimpse Europe and the Mediterranean from a distance, with cities like Sijilmasa at the center of the world, not the periphery. If we are ever to unlearn the distorted narratives of the nineteenth century and replace them with an inclusive, expansive view of the Middle Ages, Europeanists in particular must commit to the hard work of discarding colonialist models that were widely accepted not so very long ago. Thankfully, we now have the advantage of doing so with this splendid book as an inspiration and a guide.

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GLENN D. BURGER, *Conduct Becoming: Good Wives and Husbands in the Later Middle Ages*. (The Middle Ages Series.) Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2018. Pp. 262; 3 black-and-white figures. \$65. ISBN: 978-0-8122-4960-6.  
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Unlike some such puns, the play on words in the title of Glenn Burger's *Conduct Becoming* is genuinely illuminating. His subject is not just the textual regulation of "becoming" (that is, "fitting," "decorous") behavior in the ideal medieval wife, but the ways in which such regulation helped usher in new social attitudes and ultimately new affective forms of behavior—"becoming," in other words, in the sense of "inchoate," or "emergent." In stark contrast to the frequently evoked image of an authoritarian, misogynistic, and sexually repressive society (think of James Brundage's witty flow chart for the management of medieval cohabitation), Burger presents us with a fascinating portrait of the way "new understandings of marriage gave increased importance to the development of marital affection" (16). An older critical preoccupation with antifeminist caricature is completely set aside (significantly, Francis Lee Utley's *Crooked Rib* does not even appear in Burger's bibliography) and is here replaced by a far more nuanced contribution to the history of emotions. In the late medieval conduct books that Burger analyzes, we are shown how "I care for you" might morph into "I care about you," and "a kind of affection that looks much more like what the modern term signifies" (195) begins to emerge. In many ways this is a daring and iconoclastic project (a welcome corrective to the "enormous condescension" with which posterity has all too often treated medieval domestic life), and it is supported with meticulous close readings of some important texts.

The first chapter deals with a number of vernacular *Journées chrétiennes*, spiritual guides for secular women—most, of course, in French (*Comment la personne se doit ordener*, *Li Riule de no vie*, *La Maniere de bien vivre*, etc.). These texts, Burger argues, conferred a spiritual agency on women living the mixed life that was analogous to that accorded to men. He illustrates this by setting his *Journées* alongside a set of Latin "Instructions for a Devout and Literate Layman," written in England, in order to show how "women (as laypeople) are being treated with men in similar ways by these clerical authors and share with laymen a common set of literate practices" (60–61). Literacy, here, acts as a great leveler: the *Journées* "implicitly assert that the good wife is not different in kind from the good husband, just as they assert that the good layperson is not essentially different from the cleric" (61). Furthermore, Burger sees two monastic traditions—an idealized communalism and the practice of affective meditation—flowing out of the cloister and into the domestic sphere, laying the groundwork for the transformation of marital relationships that is his main topic. The principal subject of the second chapter is a far better known text, the *Livre du chevalier de la Tour Landry*, and as we move from the

*Speculum* 95/4 (October 2020)