

The book is generally clearly written, although densely conceived, and the highly compressed arguments require careful unpacking. The author's cogent chapter summaries are a significant help in keeping track of how the multiple strands of her thought contribute to the central project. There is a sustained reading of the history of philosophical ethics, especially phenomenological developments since Hegel, and the analytical/linguistic work of Quine and Davidson. Her negotiations with postmodern foundations center on Levinas, Lacan, Derrida, Deleuze and Guattari. Wyschogrod's bold attempt to construct heroic postmodern ethics offers much to those studying the ethical and hagiographical strains of medieval narratives of courts and chronicles, religious orders, and pulpit.

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SHORT NOTICES



Paterson, Linda M. *The World of the Troubadours: Medieval Occitan Society, c. 1100 - c. 1300*. Cambridge: University Press, 1993. Pp. xii + 367.

New and old historicists alike will delight in this treasure trove of information about medieval Occitania, a veritable encyclopedia of the "realities and particularities of medieval Occitan life" (8). The data is gathered in a well-ordered manner, making access easy for the researcher. Under eleven general headings appear sub-headings and, when the need seems reasonable, even further sub-sub-headings of pithy paragraphs. Every chapter provides a useful summary of what comes before.

Paterson attacks some of the obvious issues: feudalism, knights and chivalry (10-89), and towns (152-85), other pertinent questions: courts (90-119), peasants (120-50), religion (312-43), and finally, subjects which have only recently demanded the attention of societal historians: medicine (186-219), women (200-79), children (280-311), and the Jewish communities of Occitania (175-82; 192-95).

Her style is lucid, her arguments carefully-reasoned and her general attitude cautious: she frequently makes apologetic statements like: "It is not easy to know . . ." (115); "And yet this is not the whole picture" (194). She readily acknowledges the complexities of scholarly contradictions: "Toulouse has been considered alternatively as one of the most brilliant centres of troubadour patronage, or as virtually without significance" (93). She is quick to admit that distance and paucity of documentation should cause scholars to eschew facile and hasty explanations: "Our knowledge of medical teaching and teachers before 1250 is fragmentary" (195). She is aware that text is often context and not infrequently draws upon the troubadour literature as her source, making no excuses for the characteristic circularity of much of the Duby type of social research (63, 88, 100, 183, 218, 254). She builds her case on the basis of objective review of materials, and only once argues, as she does concerning Ariés' comments on children, in refutation (280-86).

No doubt some scholars will point to misrepresentations and bibliographical lacunae. Some will even accuse Paterson of falling prey to the lure of intriguing trivia: "In Montpellier consuls wore a striking but simple costume of red robe and black cap"

(168). But most will stand in awe of her learning, and certainly all will have to agree that her hard work will hereafter make their own research that much easier.

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