

Guillaume de Guitaut, a nobleman and rumored lover of the king's cousin Louis de Bourbon, was soon to be awarded the cordon bleu. Drawing on impressive archival research, Hammond dedicates a chapter to each member of this unlikely pair. We learn that at his trial Chausson was accused of singing "impious songs" (for which he had his tongue cut out before his burning), and Hammond speculates that he may even be the author of the four-line text. As he shows, several other contemporary songs refer to Chausson and his trial, which suggests a special interest in his death among the songsters of the Pont Neuf. Though the divergent fates of Chausson and Guitaut highlight the privileges accorded to the powerful in the early modern period, for Hammond the song also encapsulates the unique collision of social classes characteristic of aural culture in the streets of Paris.

Focused on just a handful of dates, names, and lines of text, Hammond's slim volume nevertheless demonstrates the potential of his approach to "recovering and rediscovering the past" (5). At times, it is also a moving read: Hammond's clear prose conjures the sights and sounds of the terrible punishments meted out to Chausson and other unfortunates accused of various misdeeds (including Claude Le Petit, a poet who wrote of Chausson and suffered the same fate for his own impious works). Though the book contains no music notation, Hammond and his team have recorded several of the songs on parisiainsoundscapes.org so that readers may listen along. Hearing for the first time—or rehearing in a new way—the songs of the condemned, the ordinary, and the historically forgotten is one of the many pleasures of this fine book. I recommend it to all interested in sound, song, and aural culture in the late Renaissance.

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Black Metaphors: How Modern Racism Emerged from Medieval Race-Thinking.
Cord J. Whitaker.

The Middle Ages Series. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2019. 256 pp.
\$49.95.

The central claim of this book is that race is a mirage of difference that shimmers with instability, if only we could see that its organizing terms—black against white, sinful against pure—are actually interpenetrating concepts. Not dependent on phenotypical difference, the structures of thought that comprise race are shaped first and foremost by language. Whitaker argues that medieval literature and rhetorical practice are responsible for catalyzing race thinking, laying its foundation centuries before scientific racism emerged. They do so by building on Aristotle in understanding contrariety—the clash of opposing terms—to be the animating principle of the material world and the very basis of rhetoric. And yet, if medieval writers create the frame for race, its appearance

in their works is sometimes “strikingly dissimilar” (99) from modern race, born of their awareness that the clash of terms that instates race are dynamically linked, capable at every moment of collapsing into one another. Today, by contrast, we inhabit an era of racial mirage, believing, erroneously, that identities like white or black are objective facts rather than effects of language.

If the links between race and rhetoric are not new to critical race studies, what makes Whitaker’s argument so compelling is not only its premodern focus but the erudition and skill it displays in its readings. Most chapters couple analysis of the intricacies of rhetorical tropes—enthymeme, irony, and antithesis—with their appearance in a range of literary genres—romance, fabliaux, dream vision—where they shape representations of difference. In a fascinating early chapter, Whitaker shows how medieval grammars break with classical sources in asserting the role of strife within metaphor. Where Cicero valued similitude as the anchor of metaphor, medieval guides position *ironia* and *contraria* at its heart, thereby unleashing a “dynamic binarism” (65) for medieval culture. In a related vein, chapter 6 considers the prevalence of the rhetorical device of enthymeme—propositions that omit a premise that a reader then needs to supply—in medieval literature to argue for its role in manipulating a reader’s views about outside groups. Where Mandeville’s *Travels* sometimes uses enthymemes to set the “monstrous” races apart “from the text’s assumed human norm” (168), Whitaker also considers moments where this device works to defamiliarize practices of Latin Christendom by tracing their uncanny similarities to foreign customs.

Whitaker’s book builds upon, while also modifying, the conclusions of premodern critical race studies to date by reclaiming the polysemy of medieval texts. Rather than assert categorically that medieval romances regard blackness as sinfulness or perceive Christian identity as white, he works to recover the “plasticity” (33) of the black metaphors that appear in medieval literature in forms such as dark-skinned people, dark-souled Christians, or figures adorned with black objects. He argues in his first chapter, for instance, that the late medieval romance *King of Tars* identifies blackness as the color of all Christians, even those who may possess fair skin or have been converted. Both the sultan of this romance and the black bride of *Song of Songs* discussed here oscillate between internal and external states of whiteness and blackness, like all humans awaiting salvation. Attention to textual subtleties drives his fourth chapter, too, which considers how context shapes the meanings of a sign like blackness. Contrasting a spiritual text like *Handlyng Synne* to a secular text like the *Three Kings of Cologne*, Whitaker demonstrates that the didactic goal of the former promotes the internalizing of blackness as a tool of spiritual growth, while the Magi story projects blackness outward to unify Christians.

If Whitaker’s focus on the instability of black metaphors envisions new directions for premodern race studies, he also works to expand the canon of texts included in premodern race studies. To that end, he devotes a chapter to Chaucer’s “Miller’s Tale,” which he positions in relation to propositional logic and its tendency to define contrariety as essential to making meaning. He observes how medieval grammarians link interpretive

richness to figures like irony and antiphrasis which compress oppositions into a single phrase or word, much as physiognomies and the pseudo-Aristotelian *De Coloribus* regard blackness in relation to whiteness as an “epistemic tool” (84) that sharpens perspective. Chaucer seizes on this interpretive potential in making Alison an emblem of contrariety; she is at once shrewd adulteress and victimized wife, white but also black. Her oscillation between these identities offers a lesson in interpretive ambiguity, one enshrined at the tale’s end when she evades the moral closure of punishment.

As this overview makes evident, Whitaker’s book masterfully traces the links between rhetorical innovations and human categories of identity. His readings are detailed and subtle, attentive to the implications of context and genre in explicating a moment when race was in its formative stages. His text is indispensable to those working in the field of critical race studies. Insofar as the “racial shimmer” he identifies with medieval texts also embraces the earliest accounts of transatlantic slavery, Renaissance critics, too, will want to read this book carefully.

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Sanctity and Female Authorship: Birgitta of Sweden and Catherine of Siena.

Maria H. Oen and Unn Falkeid, eds.

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xviii + 246 pp. \$140.

If essay collections sometimes offer readers a worthwhile but rather jumbled buffet of ideas, *Sanctity and Female Authorship* furnishes us a coherent analytical meal in the form of a sustained juxtaposition of two influential Trecento women: Birgitta of Sweden (d. 1373; canonized 1391) and Catherine of Siena (d. 1380; canonized 1461). Each of the nine chapters explores a discrete facet of this sustained experiment in comparison and contrast. In addition to their own chapters, the coeditors Maria Oen and Unn Falkeid also offer a pithy introduction that surveys all the essays, and André Vauchez provides an epilogue that revisits and expands upon many of the essential points raised throughout the volume. Between these helpful bookends, the contributors remain focused on the volume’s central concerns and many of them also make direct and illuminating reference to other contributors’ essays.

The international group of scholars assembled here variously represent the disciplines of art history, history, literary criticism, and historical archaeology; their essays center on a similarly wide range of topics. In the category of literary contextualization we have F. Thomas Luongo’s examination of the “textual communities” surrounding and promoting Birgitta and Catherine; Roger Anderson’s consideration of their reception and function in two sets of roughly contemporary sermons; and Silvia Nocentini’s