William Calin*, The Lily and the Thistle: The French Tradition and the Older Literature of Scotland.* Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2014, 432 pp.

This study examines the French impact on medieval and Renaissance Scottish literature. Progressing from the notion that "although less pervasive in Scotland, and with Scottish writers coming under a strong English influence, French remained a powerful focus for all literature in the vernacular" (3), Calin explains that his study was intended, in part, to form a sequel to his 1994 book entitled *French Tradition and the Literature of Medieval England*. Calin aligns *The Lily and the Thistle* with critical works of scholars including Janet M. Smith (Scottish literature) and R.D.S. Jack (Italian literature). Focusing on extant written texts, Calin suggests that much of traditional, medieval, and early modern Scottish culture that scholars have traditionally thought to be either native to Scotland or to have originated from England, in fact, has extraordinarily international (and French) roots. By examining Scottish works against an international backdrop, Calin underscores why French literary genres and ways of expression were popular in the Scotland of the eras under evaluation.

Part One of *The Lily and the Thistle* presents medieval narrative texts in the high courtly mode (Chaucerian texts). Preferring to call such narratives "tales of love," Calin explores in five chapters a range of primary texts including *The Kingis Quair* (King James I), *The Testament of Cresseid* (Robert Henryson), *The Palice of Honour* (Gavin Douglas), *The Goldyn Targe*, and *The Thrissill and the Rois* (William Dunbar), and *The Court of Venus* (John Rolland). These texts can be described as courtly narratives that treat both love and the psychology of lovers (13). Part Two presents comical, didactic, and satirical texts. Calin examines in five chapters a variety of texts including Henryson's *Morall Fabillis*, Dunbar's *Tretis of the Tua Mariit Wemen and the Wedo*, three texts by David Lyndsay including *Ane Satyre of the Thrie Estaitis*, *The Testament of the Papyngo*, and *Squyer Meldrum*, and *The Freiris of Berwik* (a "fabliau") and *King Hart*. In this section, Calin endeavors to de-compartmentalize modes of clerical provenance (83). Part Three presents "verse romances" many of which come either from the Arthurian tradition or are inspired by it. Calin devotes five chapters to romances including *Fergus*, *Lancelot of the Laik*, *Golagros and Gawane*, *The Taill of Rauf Coilyear*, and *Eger and Grime*. Lastly, Part Four explores "soundings" of the Scottish Renaissance characterized by an interest in "belles lettres," Greco-Roman myths, and themes of love, of life, and of man's unique destiny (221). In four chapters, Calin examines poetry by Mary Queen of Scots, King James VI, William Alexander's *The Monarchchick Tragedies*, and the work of William Drummond of Hawthornden. The book's Conclusion reinforces the thesis that one should not be surprised that French literature impacted the medieval

and Renaissance literature of Scotland. This book offers a thought-provoking perspective on the influence of French literature on a part of Europe that has largely remained overlooked.

The Lily and the Thistle thus assesses diverse medieval narrative texts in several genres including the high courtly mode (analogous to the French "dits amoureux"), comic, didactic, and satirical texts, and also the Scottish romance. Calin's investigation lends particular focus toward texts originally created in French including *Roman de Fergus* of the Arthurian tradition, as well as to the lyrics of Mary Queen of Scots and relatively obscure writers from the French and Scottish literary canons. His book describes waves of French influence over several centuries by undertaking a diachronic study that embraces both the medieval and the Renaissance periods. Calin's emphasis on French literary works that either parallel or inspired works of the Scottish literary tradition creates an interesting view on the ways in which Scottish writers of the medieval and Renaissance periods adapted literary styles for their local audiences. In doing so, he ascribes the Scottish poets to the European tradition of writers whose works focused on important topics of the era including love, morality, and the passage of time. More significantly, perhaps, Calin shows how these Scottish writers participated in *translatio studii*, or the "transmission of culture." In his examination of *The Kingis Quair*, attributed to King James I, for example, through the "translation" of the theme of love, Calin shows how the "themes, motifs, and doctrine in the *Quair* follow closely upon those found in the French love allegories of the time" (16).

Some of the most intriguing pages of this book are devoted to the poetic writings of Mary Queen of Scots. Calin does not stray from a literary focus on Mary's small corpus of French poetry that he aligns with the French women's writings of a number of poets including Christine de Pizan and Louise Labé (230). In Calin's opinion, "Mary Queen of Scots, if not a great poet, is a very good one" (234). He openly denounces the claims of some scholars who have posited that Mary was not actually the author of her "Casket Sonnets" (235). Calin's inward-looking perspective restricts explanations that extend beyond the literary context. This viewpoint, however, is not of itself problematic. Nevertheless, such a viewpoint could impede the work of the historian who might question the authenticity of Mary's "Casket Sonnets."

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