networks which recent research has revealed about authors who reached a far wider public.

This book is a ‘good read’, cogently and unpretentiously written, with a conceptual structure which accommodates much impressive analysis of specific passages. Critten adds considerable nuance to established literary-critical positions, and frequently offers fresh insights which no student of Middle English literature should ignore.

Yale University

ALASTAIR MINNIS


In this enjoyable volume Kathryn McKinley seeks to examine the *House of Fame* and its sources, arguing in particular that a greater prominence be given to Boccaccio’s *Amorosa visione (AV)*. This early dream-vision is written in *terza rima*, under the influence of Dante, and divided into a modest ‘half-Comedy’ of fifty ‘cantos’, kissing the steps of the great poem but not emulating it. Chaucerians, she rightly points out, have been quick to dismiss the *AV* as having offered the English poet no more than a passing detail here and there. McKinley re-examines the *AV* and suggests that its rich and insistent recourse to ekphrasis, its flawed and *un*authoritative guide-figure, and its complex representation of Fame, all provided Chaucer with an opportunity to reflect upon those key concerns of the *House of Fame*: poetics, literary self-representation, and the aleatory nature of one’s literary future. One of the core polemics of the book is that in the *AV* Boccaccio was resisting Dante, offering an alternative to the sublime, divine poem, in something more earthly and human. Boccaccio, then, in such a reading, becomes a very important point of reference for a Chaucer coming under the influence of Italian poetics. It is through Boccaccio that Chaucer’s poetry is not burned up like Semele in response to the genius of Dante.

After a detailed summary of the *AV* in chapter 1, ‘Boccaccio’s narrative arts: text, ekphrasis, image’, and some brief remarks on the manuscript tradition and its second redaction written late in Boccaccio’s life, McKinley looks at some of the wider visual contexts in which to consider the poem, especially large-scale fresco cycles that were in demand in Italy in the fourteenth century. This serves to focus attention on Boccaccio’s acute interest in the visual, in ekphrasis, in the life of artists, discernible in the *AV*, the *Teseida*, and the *Decameron*. The rest of the book might be described as a close-reading of the *House of Fame*, with its Books 1 and 2 being analysed in chapters 2 and 3, and the long final book
of the poem given over to two chapters, 4 and 5. The generous space for such a reading makes for an unhurried journey through the poem, and the opportunity to become acquainted or reacquainted with Chaucer’s extraordinary dream-vision is one to be relished. Many of the parallels and echoes between the AV and the HF are based around catalogues of names and are not quite as clear-cut as to constitute a firm source; naturally, these echoes sound a bit different every time one revisits them. The kind of reworking Chaucer does with Boccaccio is often not conducive to definitive statements about sources.

A few typos do creep in but none is misleading. One curious moment of inattention in the book (p. 120) leads McKinley to suggest that Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS Chig. L. V. 176 (a celebrated manuscript in the hand of Boccaccio, compiling a number of works by Dante and Petrarch) was in fact sent to Petrarch ‘some time … after 1351’, citing a passage in Martin Eisner’s 2013 monograph, though this is not what Eisner argues. The construction of this manuscript is very complex, and it is certainly in some sort of ideological dialogue with Petrarch, but it was never sent to him.

Kathryn McKinley in this book ensures that work on Boccaccio remains crucial to understanding what Italy meant to Chaucer.

University of York

K. P. CLARKE


The Wycliffite Bible (WB), the first comprehensive translation of the Latin Vulgate into English, was completed in the 1390s in Oxford, by a team of translators sympathetic to the views of the theologian John Wyclif (d. 1384). WB survives in an earlier literal and later more idiomatic version (EV and LV respectively). It is a major document in the history of the English Church and a superb example of the challenge and achievement of Middle English translation. Nevertheless, since a monumental Victorian edition based on 170 then-known copies, WB has received little serious scholarly attention. Elizabeth Solopova’s research is changing all that.

WB circulated widely, despite efforts at censorship in the early fifteenth century. Two hundred and fifty-odd copies have now been identified, most of these partial bibles rather than pandects. Solopova describes the sixty-four copies now in Oxford, eight of these complete bibles, explaining that none seems to have been in Oxford during the Middle Ages. They are instead ‘an arbitrary selection that gives a representative view of the whole corpus’ (p. 2). Her catalogue includes collections of extracts designed for personal use and an