can never be known with certainty, the spirit Zephir even more explicitly lacks any bodily identity at all, taking on a bewildering array of shapes at will.

The conclusion, finally, reflects on the motif of metamorphosis through a reading of Machaut’s *Fonteinn amoureuse*, with its famous treatment of the kaleidoscopic figure of Morpheus. In all, this book is much to be welcomed and contains much of interest for advanced student readers as well as seasoned scholars. It belongs on the shelf of any university library.

S.H.


This very interesting book examines what might at first seem like well-trodden ground. Milena Mikhaïlova-Makarius traces the figure of the ‘phantasm’ in courtly love poetry, with particular attention to the mythological exempla of Narcissus, Pygmalion, and Pyramus and Thisbe. Beginning with detailed studies of the twelfth-century *Lai de Narcisse* and *Pyrame et Thisbé*, she proceeds to offer close readings of a series of loosely related texts: the *Roman de la Rose* (principally that of Guillaume de Lorris, but with some consideration of Jean de Meun as well), Jean Renart’s *Lai de l’Ombre*, Robert de Blois’s *Floris et Lyriopé*, and Guillaume de Machaut’s *Voir dit*, with additional attention to Galeran de Bretagne and the *dits* of Jean Froissart. The final chapter traces the use of similar motifs and constructions in the modern German novel *Gradiva*, as a way of demonstrating the enduring qualities of these dimensions of medieval love psychology and literary subjectivity. Along the way she considers the ways in which the inaccessible – or non-existent? – object of desire is figured through the systematic use of doubling, reflections, projection onto substitute objects of stone or water, artistic representation, and sheer fantasy. As she shows, each author in turn constructs novel or unexpected configurations of these motifs. In this way, each anew seeks ways of allowing the lover to bridge the gap between fantasy and reality, and establish contact with an actual, living ‘other’ who nonetheless corresponds to the original imaginary object; or alternatively, brings out the fatal obstacles in such a process, which may become identified with homoeroticism, incest, idolatry, and self-delusion.

At their basis, these ideas are familiar ones to scholars of courtly literature. But that is not to say that Mikhaïlova-Makarius fails to make any new contribution to our understanding of medieval love poetry in general, or of these texts and authors in particular. Her close readings show the complexity and interest of
texts that, while certainly known to medievalists, have received very little focused analysis, while also demonstrating the continuity between these somewhat neglected works, and those more firmly established in today’s medieval canon. Her analyses allow for an extended meditation on medieval conceptions of the self, on a depiction of amorous desire as attraction to a doubling of the self, and on the paradoxes and pitfalls inherent in any attempt to ‘aimer le même dans l’autre’ (p. 261). How can the phantasmatic lady of courtly lyric be transplanted into the ‘real-world’ interactions of courtly narrative, without either losing her idealized qualities, or being transformed into a magical, fairy-like being? That this enigma lies at the heart of so many courtly narratives may come as no real surprise, but it is fascinating to see, in detail, the kaleidoscopically shifting ways that a series of poets choose to explore it.

In keeping with her focus on Narcissus and the power of vision, Mikhaïlova-Makarius provides some background about medieval theories of optics and of the relationship between sight and cognition. Drawing on the work of Giorgio Agamben, she briefly traces the fundamental points of such thinkers as Plato, Aristotle, and Averroes, as received and interpreted by medieval writers from Augustine to Andreas Capellanus. While this is sketched in only a few pages, Mikhaïlova-Makarius does not fail to remind the reader, where appropriate, of the scientific and philosophical context for the concepts that she finds in her canon of texts. In short, this book will be extremely welcome in both the teaching and the study of medieval courtly love narrative.

S.H.


For most literary scholars of fifteenth-century France, René d’Anjou is a faintly absurd figure: a devotee of a chivalry already outdated, promoter of colourful, heavily romanticized chivalric tournaments and *pas d’armes*, a jolly folk-hero to Provence and the South. But this is to ignore the political René: the vigorous Duke of Anjou, the claimant to the thrones of Naples and Jerusalem – and it is this more serious, more political René that Margolis highlights in this important corrective to French and English stereotypes (Italian historians, as he shows, have been much more judicious). Margolis’s approach is via ‘cultural politics’: that is, the contention that René was an important actor in quattrocento Italy, and that one important element in his political arsenal was his own abundant cultural activity, and his energetic cultural networks. This involves, of course,