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, Mikhailova-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, Mikhailova-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literary scholars of fifteenth-century France, René d’Anjou is a faintly absurd figure: a devotee of a chivalry already outdated, promoter of colourful, heavily romanticized chivalric tournaments and pas d’armes, a jolly folk-hero to Provence and the South.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,
as a preliminary, exploration not only of René’s activities, but also of the woeful complexities of Italian city-state politics – and this Margolis provides, in chapter 1, with as much clarity as the non-specialist could hope for, and with particular, and interesting, reference to René’s *Ordre du Croissant* – again often dismissed as an absurd anachronism, but here shown to be a vital tool in the king’s diplomatic activities. Chapter 2 addresses the poet and humanist Janus Pannonius and his *Carmen pro Pacanda Italia* – a panegyric of René which, Margolis shows, is ‘a work wrapped up in the intricate politics of the Angevin network’ (p. 72). Chapter 3 turns to a topic more particularly germane to the readers of this journal: ‘Art, politics and patronage: illuminating the Renaissance book’. Margolis explores two illuminated manuscripts: a *Life of Saint Maurice* (Arsenal MS 940); Guarino’s translation of Strabo (Albi, Médiathèque Pierre-Amalric, MS 77); both, he argues, are products of a cultural network centred in Padua and stretching across Italy, and which is evidence of René’s own political reach. A final chapter explores the effectiveness of the cultural networks fostered by René: how far were they politically useful, indeed even militarily useful to him during his Lombardy campaign of 1453–4, and John of Calabria’s Naples campaign of 1458–64? Margolis’s answer is categoric: René’s lack of urgency, his misreadings of fifteenth-century Italian politics, his and John of Calabria’s mishandling of the *Ordre du Croissant* (and hence the network it should have provided), and his oddly incompetent Italian diplomacy were, ultimately, to bring an end to Angevin power, although not influence, in Italy. Margolis finishes with what seems an interesting political analysis of another artefact, Luca della Robbia’s *Stemma of René d’Anjou*, now in the V&A in London, emblematic of René’s position in Italy, but also of his failure. This is a book which brings out a very different René from the nostalgic dreamer whose image was promoted by, say, a Huizinga: René is, ultimately, a failure, but those courtly pretensions are intended not simply for decorative purposes, but for political ones: it is an image which, as scholars of chivalric society at the end of the Middle Ages, we need to absorb.

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In this book Jane Taylor traces the history of fifteenth-century and sixteenth-century printed editions of Arthurian romance. For comparison, she also discusses the early print history of selected non-Arthurian texts: primarily the *Amadis*