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William Marshal as his "go-to" text when a particular point requires illustration.

In addition, his citation of one of his own unpublished papers dealing with

"Late Antiquity" is not helpful.

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Kosto's great erudition and skill in extracting cases from such a vast corpus of information has led him, on occasion, to flirt with a quantitative approach. In fact, he provides six lists of various length, some of which, on occasion, he seems to imply have value as quantitative evidence. However, Kosto understands implicitly that this information constitutes a fuzzy set, although he does not use the term, and as a result these lists have no statistical value as data for quantitative analysis. Because he provides no database of statistically significant information, it is inherently difficult to sustain arguments for change over time. His argument is not helped, for example, by a substantial focus on minor variations on a theme, such as "conditional hostageship." The chronological imbalance of the sources—i.e. the relatively few narrative texts available for the early Middle Ages as compared to the later Middle Ages makes arguments for large-scale change problematic. This gap in the evidence is even more noticeable when the documentary base is examined. Additionally, Kosto rarely examines the partis pris of the authors of narrative sources. On the whole he seems to treat most all sources, even Froissart, as plain text.

In general, as the information collected by Kosto makes abundantly clear, hostageship is an important chapter in the history of medieval warfare, and this is especially the case in regard to understanding the fundamental connection between diplomacy and military conflict. However, Kosto's exploration of hostageship in contexts such as legal history, social history, and symbolism, rather than giving the phenomenon what this reviewer sees as its proper military focus, continues an all-too-lengthy tradition among medievalists to avoid the study of military history. It must be remembered that in the medieval world the greater part of surplus human and material resources was dedicated to preparation for war, war, and the aftermath of war. As a result, the avoidance by medievalists of what seems to many to be an exceptionally unpleasant subject distorts our understanding of the Middle Ages, hostageship included.

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Shakespeare and the Apocalypse: Visions of Doom from Early Modern Tragedy to Popular Culture. By R. M. Christofides. London: Continuum, 2012. Pp. xii, 216. \$110.00.

R. M. Christofides opens his book with a dark narration about his own personal fears regarding the apocalypse. Using this unorthodox introduction, he begins his wide-reaching study of literary apocalypses by identifying the central paradox of the apocalypse—it is always on the horizon, but it never actually arrives. Using this statement as a critical springboard, Christofides claims that Shakespeare's tragedies stage that notion of a forever in the future apocalypse in a variety of ways. The introduction identifies three central claims—first, that it will analyze the role of the apocalypse in Shakespeare's "elite quartet" of tragedies; second, that it will approach that analysis from a post-structuralist perspective in order to draw a parallel between the structure of Shakespeare's tragedies and the structure of language; and third, that it will critically mine pre-Reformation imagery, specifically the Doom paintings to

which Shakespeare's characters allude.

In his first chapter, "The Reechy Painting and the Old Church Window," Christofides expands on these three claims, though he devotes an inordinate amount of page space to his post-structuralist methodology while spending relatively little time on the Doom iconography, a trend that will continue through the later chapters. He does offer a brief history of the Doom images, including the reasons for their destruction by post-Reformation iconoclasts and a rather convincing argument for why some of these images—or at least more than still exist today—would have been extant for a young country playwright in the 16th century (12). Most of this chapter is spent setting up the post-structuralist theoretical framework for the rest of the book. It should be noted that one of Christofides' strengths is his willingness to explain complex theory for a novice audience. He breaks down his use of Saussure and Derrida, describing exactly how he intends to use the latter's theory of dissemination and the transcendental signified in order to link theory to dramatic plot and apocalyptic narrative. Christofides suggests that the transcendental signified operates like an apocalyptic event—containing the ability to dispel equivocation but never actually arriving. As such, he argues that "language is structured like an apocalyptic narrative and that, in turn, Shakespeare's tragedies are structured like a language" (2).

The second chapter, "Hamlet and the Living Dead," moves along two distinct lines of inquiry—one focused on post-structuralism and another focused on iconography. The post-structuralist argument centers on the lack of an authentic Lacanian "Name-of-the-Father" figure throughout the play and the dangers such a lack causes to the plot. Christofides carefully charts the failures of the "Name-of-the-Father" contenders—Claudius for blurring the lines of familial structure, and the ghost for operating from a spatially inappropriate location. The ghost, as he notes, speaks from beneath the stage at points in Hamlet. For Christofides, this situates the ghost as an imposter, as "the ghost is only a logocentric imitation, an untrustworthy Shape-of-the-Father materialized from an unknown supernatural source, a cellar-dweller in the wrong place to play the exalted role of trusted father" (36). Drawing on

Lacan's reading of the play, he suggests that Claudius' failure as the "Name-of-the-Father" was due to a complication of the Oedipus complex. Claudius is in the place where Old Hamlet should be, leaving Hamlet in a place where "he cannot kill the original father who, in the Oedipal triangle, he really wants to kill," thus making Hamlet incapable of attaining the phallus (37). Christofides ties all of this "Name-of-the-Father" chaos to his overall argument by pointing out how the blurring of the father role creates the kind of equivocation seen in apocalyptic notions of language—there are many "fathers but not fathers."

The second, and more compelling, claim of the *Hamlet* chapter is Christofides' reading of the grave-digger scene through an analysis of the *memento mori* image of The Three Living and the Three Dead. Christofides notes that, by the time Hamlet and Horatio approach, "Goodman Delver's sidekick has already exited and this leaves three living on stage to contemplate three exhumed skulls....Hamlet then confronts the skull of Yorick the court jester with black humour, replicating the moral message of the *vanitas*" (58). Christofides argues that this encounter, in a graveyard setting he describes as "the graveyard of the Apocalypse where buried bones fly up from below" (57), serves to change Hamlet's personality and the action of the play.

In his third chapter "Masochistic Damnation in Othello," Christofides again spends more time on theory than on Doom imagery, and again explores two significant arguments—Iago as the anti-Logos and Othello's social and dialogic duality. While his minimal focus on pre-Reformation Dooms was disappointing, both of the post-structural arguments Christofides makes are convincing. Christofides places Iago as the anti-Logos who "thrives in the absence of a transcendental signified...an absence that allows the demonic ensign, in the tradition of the Vice, to deal deceit linguistically until the trumpets blast" (85). In a thorough close-reading, Christofides demonstrates the ways in which Iago utilizes gesture (66), unfinished sentences and inflection (67), repetition (88) and ultimately silence (83) in order to manipulate Othello to the point of apocalyptic doom. He positions Iago as a character aware of the fallen state of language and willing to use his skills of equivocation to cause havoc.

Conversely, Christofides argues that Othello exists almost like a trace between two signifiers, embodying two distinct narratives in one person. He argues that Othello is both the insider military leader and the outsider from beyond Venice whose skills "underline the absence of warlike qualities in Venice" (71). He argues that it is this sense of duality that Iago manipulates and that it comes to its apocalyptic conclusion in the final scene where Othello, by taking his own life, delivers a "self-punishment he both delivers on behalf of the state and receives as an enemy of the state" (68).

Christofides' fourth chapter, "Macbeth and the Angels of Doom," drifts further away from the stated goals of his book, devoting an exceptionally large amount of space to the post-structural analysis and leaving relatively little room for the apocalyptic iconography. Most of this chapter focuses on the various manifestations of equivocation in Macbeth, particularly highlighting the witches' use of amphibology to mislead Macbeth. Christofides breaks the chapter into sub-categories, focusing on "Imperfect Man," "Imperfect Time," and "Imperfect Speakers."

In "Imperfect Man," Christofides highlights the ways in which characters, particularly Macbeth and Lady Macbeth, equivocate over their perception of the meaning of the term "Man." Essentially, he argues that "Man" is a loose signifier, and Macbeth and his wife are infusing it with different significations. In "Imperfect Time" Christofides returns to the age-old problem of time travel and intent, questioning whether Macbeth kills Duncan "as a consequence of the witches' prophecies" or whether those prophecies "simply direct Macbeth to an action they already know will pass" (121). Finally, in "Imperfect Speakers" Christofides completes his analysis of equivocation and amphibology in Macbeth by suggesting that Malcolm's ruse of labeling himself with a litany of vices was inherently dangerous, even with his immediate disavowal of those very vices. Christofides notes that, even though Malcolm labels those vices as "just a fiction," they contain the trace of the signifiers uttered, infusing Malcolm with the potential to be "a Macbeth in embryo" (135). Christofides is at his strongest in his discussion of this scene, offering a number of provocative ideas, including his suggestion that Macduff occupies "the same position in relation to Malcolm as Lady Macbeth does in relation to Macbeth" (136).

Christofides does return to his stated focus on apocalyptic imagery in his *Macbeth* chapter, if only briefly. He describes Macbeth as catching sight of Judgment Day in his soliloquy in 1.7 before killing the King. He does an admirable job of bringing together the various references to bells, blasts and horns ringing through that night and connecting them to the apocalyptic tradition. This was a case where Christofides could have done with a more linear style of organization. He had already discussed the Porter of Hell Gate in an earlier chapter to make a point about equivocation—that reading would have had more of an impact in this chapter, particularly following his readings of three different kinds of equivocation operating throughout the play.

The fifth chapter, "The Promised End of King Lear," attempts to paint the pre-Christian landscape of King Lear as an apocalyptic wasteland. Christofides suggests that Lear's act of describing himself as a "dragon" and the subsequent dragon references that run throughout the play connect him to the Leviathan, using as support a narrative of St. George slaying the poisonous, plague-ridden dragon, an image commonly found in Doom paintings, including the extant one at St. Peter and St. Paul Church, Pickering, Yorkshire (156).

Christofides goes on to draw a parallel between Cordelia's silence in the profession of love and that of Jesus in the court of King Herod. In fairness, he offers a wonderful textual analysis of Shakespeare's use of the word "bond" and its implication on Cordelia's statement that she loves her father "According to my bond, no more no less" (172-73), but his attempts to connect Cordelia to a Christ-figure by means of her redemption of her father "the satanic dragon" (177-78) just do not seem to be supported as strongly as some of his earlier apocalyptic parallels.

This chapter overall felt weaker than the previous three. While his claim that all apocalyptically themed discourse, including direct Christian versions, "can only be represented as an apocalypse with a small 'a'" due to their inaccessibility was intriguing (181), his reading of the final scene, particularly

his discussion of the inverted Pietà of Lear holding a deceased Cordelia (182), appeared rushed—he seemed more concerned with establishing it as an ending point to the progression of apocalyptic imagery before he had fully

explicated its effects on our understanding of King Lear.

Christofides brings his work to a close in the amusingly titled conclusion chapter "The End." Abandoning the specific focus of the earlier chapters, here Christofides moves across a litany of topics, from the impact of "messianic dramaturgy"—the name he has offered for the suggestion and subsequent withholding of the Apocalypse (199)—on other genres, particularly romances, which do feature the supernatural force seen in the comedies, but also feature characters—such as Leontes in *The Winter's Tale*—perfectly willing to ignore those forces. He re-emphasizes his argument that due to the very nature of the Apocalypse to be always on the horizon but never arriving, the entire field of narrative eschatology is dependent on that very nature of the apocalypse (197).

A few publication/stylistic elements should be noted about this text. The picture quality was remarkably poor for a text that leans so heavily on an iconographic approach—this is clearly out of Christofides' control and it does not detract from his excellent analysis of those images, but it does make working through the book a bit more difficult. It also seemed as if the scope for this project was a little too large for so limited a space, but this is also a potential strength of the book, as it is not difficult to envision numerous projects sprouting forth from the foundation Christofides plants here.

Finally, I would be remiss if I didn't mention Christofides' clear effort to make his text engaging. He seamlessly weaves scholarship and theory with popular culture examples. It was not uncommon to see Derrida side by side with G. Wilson Knight, the *Terminator* films and Mario, the Nintendo video game character. Incorporating such a disparate collection of sources and examples is a difficult line to walk while maintaining a serious focus, and Christofides walks it exceptionally well.

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Scott O'Neil

To Repair the Ruins: Reading Milton. Edited by Mary C. Fenton and Louis Schwartz. Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 2012. Pp. xi, 427, Figs. 29. \$58.00. Satan's Poetry: Fallenness and Poetic Tradition in Paradise Lost. By Danielle A. St. Hilaire. Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 2012. Pp. x, 246. \$58.00.

The first of these two books invites the reader to sample a series of controversial essays; the second advances a daring but perhaps unprovable thesis that poetic theory and the fall of humankind coalesce into a single theme in *Paradise Lost*, making Satan the center of the poem and the source of poetry itself.

The essays in To Repair the Ruins (all of which were originally presented at the 2009 biennial Milton conference in Murfreesboro, Tennessee) run the gamut from traditional scholarship to bizarre speculation. In "Lord Monboddo, Close Reading, and 'Density of Sense' in Paradise Lost," John Leonard resurrects the œuvre of a long-forgotten eighteenth-century critic who had some interesting things to say about Milton's metrics and prosody. In particular, as Leonard observes, Monboddo reminds us that "Milton combines Latinate dignity with English colloquial ease." Milton's "'poetical style,' Monboddo concludes, 'is, in many passages, by far the most sublime we have in English: yet it has less froth or bombast than any modern composition of the kind that I know'" (35). In "Milton's Pagan Counterpoetic: Eros and Inspiration in Elegy 5," William Shullenberger contrasts the "fresh poetics of erotic naturalism" (41) of the Latin poem with the rejection of this tradition in Milton's Nativity ode, composed in the same year (1629). Shullenberger goes on to suggest that Milton's repudiation of the first poem closed off this "humanistic visionary mode" for several hundred years, "until the revivification of Elegy 5's poetics by the major poets of English romanticism" (41). His explication of the two poems is masterful in its control of significant detail and intellectual background, but I fail to see a "Reformed [emphasis mine] biblical narrative and poetic system" (76) in the Nativity Ode. In "Milton's Empyreal Conceit," Gardner Campbell identifies a concept of "imagination of imagination itself" (79) in the phrase. "Empyreall conceit' refers to the intensity of poetic imagination that is one of Milton's greatest talents, perhaps the one that it was death to hide, certainly the one that could bring all heaven before his eyes, and ours" (107). In "Reading, Recognition, Learning, and Love in Paradise Regained," Ryan Netzley outlines the ambiguous functions of reading for Milton. According to some, "instead of discovery, reading produces recognition, the rethinking of familiar concepts" (123). We "re-cognize" what we already know. Jesus himself is ambivalent about the value of reading, particularly in ancient Greek and Roman texts, while Satan turns the "reading" process into a calculated misreading: "Interpretive [perhaps mis-interpretive] reconceptualization is Satan's activity" (130). "The poem itself does not offer a justification for reading" (142), since reading forges a path for understanding, and "this yearning for a recognizable, explicit program is what the poem so consistently defies" (143). The one point that is not taken up here is, if reading is unnecessary, why should readers read the poem itself?

## Personalia: Articles

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## Personalia: Book Reviews

BACHRACH, BERNARD S., has taught at the University of Minnesota since 1967, is a fellow of the Medieval Academy of America, founder of the Journal of Medieval Military History, and co-founder of the journal Medieval Prosopography and of The Haskins Society. He just published Charlemagne's Early Campaigns (768-777): A Diplomatic and Military Analysis (Brill, 2013), and is working on a study of medieval climate change in regard to its environmental and economic impact.

MATTESON, TRAVIS, is a PhD student at SUNY University at Buffalo. His academic research interests include 20<sup>th</sup>-century and contemporary poetry and poetics, media study, and film. Recent research projects include a reading of Ezra Pound's Vorticism through the lens of ether theory, and a study in non-human mediation in Stan Brakhage's films.

McGREGOR, MICHAEL, is the Director of the MFA in Creative Writing program at Portland State University, where he teaches nonfiction writing. His essays, articles and short stories have appeared in a wide variety of publications, earning awards from the Illinois Arts Council, Oregon Literary Arts and *Image* literary journal. He has just completed a biography of Thomas Merton's longtime friend Robert Lax.

MULRYAN, JOHN, recently retired, is Professor Emeritus at St. Bonaventure University. His translation of Vincenzo Cartari's sixteenth-century Italian treatise, "Images of the Gods of the Ancients," has been recently published by the Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies (ACMRS).

O'NEIL, SCOTT, earned his MA from St. Bonaventure University in 2011 and is now a second year PhD student at the University of Rochester. His research is currently focused on the stage fool and Renaissance pedagogy. This is his first contribution to *Cithara*.

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