

objects, such as the Jewish tefillin and mezuzah. One of the most insightful observations of the book is Bamford's comparison of the evocative power of texts in such spiritual objects with the modern use of medieval manuscripts and early books as "authentic" objects in displays and museum settings (131). For both medieval manuscript culture and for modern medievalism, appreciation of the presence of a text has never been exclusively a function of reading.

This is an ambitious book that makes a meaningful intervention in a number of ongoing scholarly conversations. While the complex individual readings in each chapter will primarily hold the attention of specialists familiar with the relevant critical bibliographies, what will be of broadest interest is the theorization of fragmentation itself as a concept that has always defined manuscript use in the past and that is still central to manuscript study today. The book could reach out a little more to related scholarship to make this point even clearer. There are, for example, multiple research projects dedicated to manuscript fragments that would offer productive interlocutors for this research, such as the University of Bergen project "From Manuscript Fragments to Book History" (https://www.uib.no/rg/manuscript_fragments), the "Fragmentarium" project (<https://fragmentarium.ms>) at the University of Fribourg, and Mauro Perani's "Italian Genizah" project at the University of Bologna. Such connections would be especially relevant in the conclusion, which is a thoughtful and elegant meditation on the broader implication of fragmentation. Here, Bamford initiates an important discussion about the place of physical manuscripts in our present age of digitization, in which the meaning and function of texts and textual objects are—as they did upon the rise of printing—rapidly evolving in tandem with new technology. As this book shows us, in our brave new world of searching and screens, the fragment might acquire new life, not only as a metonym or token or talisman, but also as a witness of the unique value of living practice and human experience in the measured labor of writing and reading.

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Lumières épicuriennes au XVII^e siècle: La Mothe Le Vayer, Molière et La Fontaine, lecteurs et continuateurs de Lucrèce. Bruno Roche.

Libre pensée et littérature clandestine 75. Paris: Honoré Champion, 2020. 444 pp. €65.

Bruno Roche sets himself the slippery task of tracing camouflaged Lucretian thought in three authors not traditionally associated with his strain of Epicureanism. Though not the first to study the reception of Lucretius in the seventeenth century, Roche innovates in his method and corpus. Because Cartesian dualism was challenging Epicurean materialism and Lucretius's anti-religious fervor sat ill with the Catholic renewal of post-Reformation France, sympathizers would have wanted to disguise their appreciation

of his ideas. Direct citations of Lucretius therefore being few, Roche looks for mediated yet concrete proof of influence: the images and philosophemes that carried Epicurean thought through Lucretius's sixteenth-century readers into his seventeenth-century audience. Roche's approach draws attention to the process of transmutation itself and the ways that each author transformed Lucretius's ideas instead of merely citing them. Applied more broadly, this method could uncover heretofore-unrecognized Lucretian influence in many other seventeenth-century writers.

While insisting that his particular corpus matters less than how heterodox ideas gained such widespread popularity without losing their subversive character, his selection is nonetheless pointed. Willfully refusing the categories established by René Pintard that separate La Mothe Le Vayer (erudite libertine) from Molière and La Fontaine (major authors), Roche positions La Mothe Le Vayer as overlooked conduit of Lucretian thought and elevates him from minor skeptic to "essential and paradoxical" (30–31) source of the Epicureanism found in the dramatist and the fabulist.

This carefully documented, well-organized volume is divided into five parts, each with two chapters. While the parts group thematically related Lucretian ideas, each chapter traces one idea from its expression in Lucretius, through its transmutation in La Mothe Le Vayer, to its literary expression in Molière and La Fontaine. Part 2, chapter 2, which dives directly into the major authors' works, is the only exception to this pattern. In part 1 Roche finds echoes of Lucretius's *De rerum natura*, book 2, in the themes of retreat from the world (whether spatial or mental) and pursuit of pleasure (necessarily physical) found in the corpus. Part 2, devoted to corporality, claims in chapter 1 that a Lucretian defense of adventitious knowledge undergirds the prevalent plot device of misreading physical evidence. For Roche, these errors should be understood in terms of applying faulty opinions (usually love or fear) to otherwise infallible sensory perceptions. Against the backdrop of the Descartes-Gassendi epistemological debate, chapter 2 explores explicitly anti-Cartesian stances in *Les Précieuses ridicules*, *Les femmes savants*, and several fables.

The spiritual ills of love and fear of death occupy part 3. La Mothe Le Vayer tempers Lucretius's advocacy for free pursuit of carnal pleasure and disregard of marriage. La Fontaine is able to make light of marital infidelity and spousal jealousy by echoing the more moderate injunction to enjoy the sexual privileges of matrimony without attaching illusory notions such as honor and virtue to a state that could never be monogamous. Molière's engagement with the Lucretian ideal is more nuanced—even ambiguous—yet decidedly present. Regarding fear of death, the seventeenth-century authors confront more than they adopt a purely Epicurean indifference to the end of life. La Fontaine and Molière, in particular, opt for a strategy of diversion as more effective than philosophy in facing the grave. Part 4 documents how La Mothe Le Vayer, Molière, and La Fontaine imitate Lucretius's own defense strategies to combat accusations of atheism (considered a logical consequence of philosophical skepticism) and immorality (its supposed synonym). Part 5 finds Epicurean anti-providentialism

throughout the corpus, noting that La Mothe Le Vayer, Molière, and La Fontaine all couch critiques of Christian theology in their treatment of Jupiter.

Original argumentation, insightful close readings, and fluid prose make this book an excellent read. The admirable audacity of Roche's project is also its primary difficulty. As what may once have been explicit references to Lucretius seep subtly into his readers' texts, they sometimes become so diffuse as to be indistinguishable from ideas gleaned from other sources. Roche certainly proves the presence and compatibility of many Lucretian ideas in his seventeenth-century readers. His tracing of their provenance is quite convincing, if necessarily inconclusive in some instances.

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Punishment and Penitential Practices in Medieval German Writing.

Sarah Bowden and Annette Volting, eds.

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This valuable anthology of ten essays brings to studies of correctional practices a welcome perspective: that of scholars of literature. As Sarah Bowden describes the project in the introduction, "we consider the representation of lived experience in literary texts, and how literary depictions intersect with such lived experience" (3). These essays supply what is usually missing from the normative medieval sources that prescribed penances or punishments, described transgressions, or recorded judgments in courts or other *fora*: they provide a view of how penitential and punitive practices were understood, manipulated, developed, and suffered. These literary scholars also apply critical approaches, many drawn from the work of Michel Foucault, relating to the inscription of pain on the body, the sexual dimensions of such inscription, and the poetics of the penitential self—aspects less frequently addressed by historians of law or pastoral care. The contributors are to be commended for their attention to the work of historians who have investigated penance and punishment; rarely should the reader wonder if segregation of disciplines has produced unfortunate oversights.

Even so, there is a pronounced orientation to fellow scholars of medieval German vernacular literature. Few of the essays provide any introduction or contextualizing (not even dates) for the specific works they analyze. The assumption is that readers will be quite familiar with medieval texts such as Rudolf von Ems's (1220–54) *Alexander*, Wolfram von Eschenbach's (ca. 1180–1220) *Parzival*, Oswald von Wolkenstein's (1376–1445) *Beichtlied*, Claus Spaun's *Fünfzig Gulden Minnelohn* and Hans Rosenplüt's *Spiegel und Igel* (both from the mid- to late fifteenth century), Johannes Pauli's (ca. 1455–ca. 1530) *Schimpf und Ernst* and Georg Wickram's