

the Dublin Parliament of December 1394. In chapter 4 “Richard and the Ó Néill Kings of Tyrone,” McGettigan begins with background on the Ó Néill family. In the middle section of the chapter he covers Richard’s interactions with both the elderly semiretired Niall Mór and his son Niall Óg Ó Néill; in the final section briefly he covers the aftermath of the expedition in both the Leinster mountains and Ulster. In the fifth chapter “Richard’s Second Expedition to Ireland, June–July 1399,” McGettigan provides a narrative of the second, short, ill-fated trip. Whereas Richard had previously had the best of Art MacMurchadha Caomhánach, the Irish king this time had the best of Richard. With the English running low on supplies, Art MacMurchadha Caomhánach offered a parley; his meeting with Thomas Despenser, earl of Gloucester, was recorded by Creton, who noted that Richard did not appreciate Art MacMurchadha’s request for a full pardon. Luckily for the Irish king, Richard received word in early July that Henry Bolingbroke had landed in England. Unfortunately, Richard waited too long in Ireland, stymied by a shortage of shipping, and lost his kingdom on his return. The final section of the chapter briefly covers the last years of Art MacMurchadha Caomhánach (d. 1417) and Niall Óg Ó Néill (d. 1403). The final chapter, “Now for Our Irish Wars,” provides a brief summary of the book, emphasizing the ability of the Irish kings (especially Art MacMurchadha Caomhánach).

McGettigan points out in multiple places how the gains of Richard’s first, more successful, expedition were falling apart even before the English king left Ireland. While Richard had more than eighty kings submit to him, they knew his time in Ireland was temporary and so did not uphold their end of the agreements. Richard’s second expedition started off much less successful than did his first (defeats in Leinster and supply problems) and was then cut short. Ultimately, Richard’s time in Ireland had little influence on Ireland, especially when compared to the outsized influence it had on Richard’s own life. Despite making a huge contribution to Richard’s undoing as king, his expeditions to Ireland had little lasting impact on Ireland. This is the closest McGettigan comes to presenting an argument, but it is not the main focus of the work. He is more concerned with covering who did what when.

This book is a great starting place for those wanting to know more about a few of the more notable fourteenth-century kings in Ireland. Although Richard II’s name comes first in the title, the stars of the work are the Irish kings, perhaps because their reigns were more successful than were the English king’s. McGettigan provides a good grounding in basic background and the story of Richard’s encounter with these kings, but he does not provide much sophisticated analysis or a particularly strong argument. He does, however, achieve his purpose of shedding light on forgotten kings. The book is also well footnoted for a book aimed at nonspecialists. In addition, the book includes twenty-six full-color plates, including images of Irish daggers and spurs, which also make the book more accessible to a nonspecialist audience. Overall, McGettigan has crafted an easy-to-read narrative, albeit one that could have benefited from a more prominent argument.

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HOLLIE L. S. MORGAN. *Beds and Chambers in Late Medieval England: Readings, Representations and Realities*. Woodbridge: York Medieval Press, 2017. Pp. 254. \$99.00 (cloth).
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The flaunting of royal authority that led English rebels in 1381 to liberate criminals from their prisons, burn judicial documents, loot the Savoy Palace, and behead the archbishop of

Canterbury is well known. What is perhaps less well known is one seemingly minor but meaningful incident during the storming of the Tower of London: rebels defiantly broke into the royal chamber, and depending on which chronicle you read, they either broke the bed belonging to the princess of Wales, or “lay and sat on the king’s bed while joking” (99). Why should the rebels’ actions in the royal bedchamber be worthy of mention in a list of otherwise much more grievous and provocative offenses? Because, as Hollie Morgan contends in *Beds and Chambers in Late Medieval England: Readings, Representations and Realities*, beds are closely associated with the people who sleep in them. Violating the king’s bed is a symbolic violation of the king himself.

Morgan’s beautifully produced study of beds and chambers helps the reader to understand how their symbolism shaped relationships in late medieval England. An intensely private space, the chamber permitted its inhabitants to shed their public faces and be honest and sincere in a way that was simply not possible in the outside world. Meetings in the chamber thus provide an opportunity for candid conversations and negotiations between equals. Morgan makes creative use of this concept to further our understanding of medieval domesticity, private devotion, contractual dealings, and power relationships within marriage.

In chapter 1 Morgan sets the scene, providing a material history of the bed and the chamber in order to acquaint her readers with the relevant vocabulary and an appropriate mental imagery. Making plentiful use of probate inventories, Morgan explains what constituted a medieval bed (including numerous useful illustrations), how class defined one’s sleeping arrangements and level of comfort, and what other items regularly furnished a chamber. In chapter 2 she focuses on the chamber as a locus for prayer, advancing the argument that the bed is central to “medieval society’s understanding of a personal relationship with God” (11). Fear of the vulnerable state of the sleeper, susceptible to both physical and spiritual harm, prompted prayers of thanksgiving before and after sleep. Over time, supplication evolved into a broader sense of the chamber as private chapel, heightened by religious iconography on coverlets, curtains, walls, and ceilings as meditation aids. As a physical symbol of one’s soul, the bed took on a greater significance in late medieval society, with the bedding of the dead and the living temporarily lining church walls and Corpus Christi processional routes.

The openness of the chamber leveled the playing field, allowing individuals to meet as equals, regardless of rank or gender. In chapter 3, Morgan examines the chamber as a place of negotiation, judgment, and counsel. The pinnacle of this chapter is an analysis of the king’s chambers, his marriage bed a place of peace and reconciliation, as well as a representation of the king’s authority and lineage. In chapter 4, she explores the lighter side of the chamber, highlighting its role in group and individual leisure activities among the elite. The chamber was the ideal location for playing chess or cards, reading books, and listening to music. For husband and wife, bed erased the marital hierarchy that dominated public life. In chapter 5, Morgan explains how women were empowered by the openness of the chamber to speak freely with their husbands. Morgan continues this theme in chapter 6, in which she argues that the medieval English saw beds and chambers gendered female. In large part, this comes from the fact that beds belonged to women—they were part of a woman’s trousseau or paraphernalia. Chambers also became female-only spaces during childbirth and a woman’s lying-in. While the femininity of such a key domestic space led to the usual male anxiety, it did benefit women in one significant means: women could sleep late. When a man did so, he was metaphorically castrated (178).

As a scan of Morgan’s bibliography confirms, few scholars have thought to study beds and chambers in history. Such an imaginative topic has been approached in an equally creative manner. Morgan uses a broad array of texts, from probate records to Arthurian literature, from artwork to artefact. In doing so, she makes a noteworthy contribution to the growing field of domesticity studies, very much in the vein of M. Kowaleski and P. J. P. Goldberg’s *Medieval Domesticity: Home, Housing and Household in Medieval England* (2008). For scholars

of mysticism, she also helps to normalize the bed as place of worship. Not only is the bed the ideal location to receive visions from God, but it also permits the supplicant to approach God with humility. My only complaint about the book has to do with Morgan's failure to address the deathbed. Admittedly, in her preface and acknowledgments, she addresses this omission: "[t]his book is about late medieval life; death will just have to wait" (x). Nevertheless, given the anxiety that death produced in the late medieval English and their general preoccupation with the deathbed, a final chapter on this subject would have rounded the book out quite nicely.

Morgan's *Beds and Chambers in Late Medieval England* is a delightful read that will be appreciated by scholars and students in a wide variety of fields.

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LYNDA PAYNE. *The Best Surgeon in England: Percivall Pott, 1713–88*. American University Studies, Series 9, Vol. 205. New York: Peter Lang, 2017. Pp. 236. \$94.95 (cloth). doi: 10.1017/jbr.2017.199

With this relatively short biography, *The Best Surgeon in England: Percivall Pott, 1713–88*, Lynda Payne has followed up her well-received 2007 study of early modern English surgery, *With Words and Knives: Learning Medical Dispassion in Early Modern England*. Although Percivall Pott is the man whom contemporaries claimed to have been “the best surgeon in England,” compared to the brothers John and William Hunter or various Enlightenment physicians, he is hardly a household name today, even in academic circles. Payne, however, demonstrates how Pott established himself as a leading London figure and created a legacy, both of men he had trained and of surgical practices and findings, which enabled him, like the Hunter brothers, to claim the respectability and scientific status that physicians had long sought to deny “mere” surgeons.

Payne's biography centers on these questions of professional identity and competition, offering Pott as a case study of how “surgeons present and position themselves in the competitive world of medical men and women, what did it entail to become known as an authority in surgery, and how was knowledge structured and restructured to create a professional identity” (1–2). In less than 150 pages of text (supported by another 53 of endnotes and an impressive bibliography), and after an initial chapter in which she outlines his career “climbing the ladder” and analyzes the biography by his son-in-law, James Earle, which has been the main source of knowledge about Pott until now, Payne considers a series of themes.

In the second chapter, Payne considers the skills that Pott identified and taught successive cohorts as being essential to the surgeon, including ways of behaving and thinking, as well as practical expertise. In the next two chapters Payne then looks in turn at his treatment of first acute injuries (and what they tell us about accidents and other dangers in Georgian London) and then chronic conditions, where his experimentation led him to have more conditions named after him in his lifetime than did any other surgeon, but also caused an unpleasant priority dispute with the Hunters.

Their dispute probably took part of its animus from the tensions between those like Pott, who based their authority and teaching practice largely on their hospital positions (in his case, as a surgeon at St. Bartholomew's), and those like the Hunters, who opened private anatomy schools. Both benefited from the rapidly growing demand for direct surgical experience in London from would-be medical practitioners from all over England, and increasingly