the book makes some judicious points about the dangers of scholarly overgeneralization.

Although the various regional analyses cover some familiar ground, particularly the English experience as studied by Simon Lloyd and Christopher Tyerman, the juxtapositions are constantly illuminating. There are also many well-crafted and measured individual argument sequences: for example, on the language of Gregory IX's crusade bull *Rachel suum videns*; on Gregory's close attachment to John of Brienne, the Latin emperor in Constantinople; and on the dangers of assuming that dynastic crusade traditions and ties of lordship applied equally to all those who joined the crusade. The author is somewhat less convincing, however, when attacking the notion that those on the Barons' Crusade were giving expression to a shared and unifying sense of Christian identity. Lower states that our understanding of crusaders' ideas must usually be extrapolated from a close analysis of their actions. But this sensible observation is then taken too far methodologically through the setting up of a rigid correlation between thought and deed: thus, because different people in different places responded to the crusade appeal in different ways, it is argued, their shared Christian identity could not have been a factor informing their behavior. This is a valid hypothesis, and a timely one given the countervailing thrust of much recent research into crusaders' motivations and ideals, but its full exploration would require the sort of cultural-historical investigation into understandings of identity that the author seldom attempts (though some helpful remarks on the crusade lyrics attributed to Thibaut of Champagne point to what may be possible). Similarly, Lower is perhaps too hasty in his insistence that, because the crusaders showed a frequent disregard for papal instructions, they could not have been not motivated by any awareness of their shared Christian identity. This seems to foreground just one possible indicator to the exclusion of many others. These quibbles aside, however, this is a polished and well-crafted study, containing many thoughtful insights. It not only advances our understanding of this one crusade but also provides pointers for the comparative study of other crusading expeditions.

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LAWRENCE V. MOTT. *Sea Power in the Medieval Mediterranean: The Catalan-Aragonese Fleet in the War of the Sicilian Vespers*. Foreword by JAMES C. BRADFORD and GENE A. SMITH. (New Perspectives on Maritime History and Nautical Archaeology.) Gainesville: University Press of Florida. 2003. Pp. xi, 337. $59.95.

The last quarter of the thirteenth century witnessed a remarkable struggle for control of the western Mediterranean by two states with extensive agendas for empire building. Frenchman Charles of Anjou, brother of Louis IX and uncle of his successor, Philip III, plotted to seize control of Sicily and much of southern Italy. Beyond that, Charles obtained the title of King of Jerusalem and planned to attack the Byzantine Empire. He possessed extensive naval resources, was supported by France and the papacy, and appeared destined to become a major figure in the Mediterranean. However, the emerging state of Aragon-Catalonia under its new king, Pedro III, had recently completed the conquest of the Balearic Islands, received tribute from Tunis, and formed a marriage alliance with the Hohenstaufen family that had controlled southern Italy and Sicily. The result was a conflict, sometimes called the War of the Sicilian Vespers (derived from its most famous incident) waged from 1282 to 1295, outlasting the lives of the initial royal contenders. A stunning series of victories by the upstart Aragon-Catalonia created the opportunity for a large increase in Catalan influence on the great inland sea. Lawrence V. Mott's study seeks to explain exactly how this happened by dissecting the nature of the Catalan-Sicilian fleet and examining the significant role played by its great Calabrian admiral, Roger of Lauria.

Mott first introduces the sources he has exploited, both the chronicles (especially the contemporary Bernat Desclot and next-generation writer Ramón Muntaner) as well as the appropriate archival materials. The resultant work is institutional and fiscal as well as political in its approach, and articulates an effective thesis. It is Mott's fiscal and tax research that underpins, informs, and drives his case, and the documents have been employed in a creative manner. After discussion of the office of admiral as it evolved in the Muslim world, in Norman and Hohenstaufen Sicily, and in thirteenth-century Castile, the author examines the use made of this office by Charles of Anjou and Pedro III, respectively. Both drew initially on the model established by Frederick II in Sicily, and prior historians have assumed that neither leader added significantly to the powers of the admiralty. While Pedro began with the Sicilian model, after his death in 1285 Alfonso III enhanced the admiral's economic power substantially, giving Admiral Roger complete control of collecting the taxes assigned to support the fleet, along with import-export levies for the Mediterranean ports, and the control of arsenals. Roger retained these powers between 1287 and 1295, drawing on them to construct the biggest empire in the western Mediterranean. A good intelligence system and total control of naval planning permitted Roger to time his strikes alternatively against different segments of the Angevin fleets, so that Charles's large numerical naval resources could never be mustered against the Catalan-Sicilian fleets at one time and place. The result was an exceptional string of victories that thoroughly cowed the Angevin navy and kept it in port at Marseilles and Naples.

The actual fleet constructed by Roger was itself a masterpiece, a combination of Sicilian sailors along with skilled Catalan crossbowmen and Aragonese mercenaries, known as the *almugavars*. The design of his ships gave these warriors an edge in ship-to-ship combat that puts one in mind of Roman tactics in similar waters against the Carthaginians in the First Punic War.

With the Angevin fleet constrained in port, Roger modified his naval forces to pursue a program of raids and land conquest, using his forces like marines. These forces included light and heavy cavalry and utilized ships with large ramps aft to disgorge themselves onto the beachheads. Using such tactics, Roger established the fortress of Jerba in Tunisia, captured several castles in Calabria, and seized territory on the Adriatic coast. Thus, the Catalan-Sicilian fleet could interdict the trade of Genoa and Venice. When Aragon was temporarily required to give up Sicily in 1295 due to the changing political and diplomatic situation, the powerful combined fleet of Catalan and Sicilian forces was dissolved, and Roger was deprived of his fiscal and administrative independence. The great age was over.

Mott's thesis is persuasive and well documented. It offers real insight into the foundation of Aragonese dominance while displaying Roger of Lauria's remarkable skill in achieving a naval force unparalleled until the sixteenth century. While the author's organizational structure leads to a certain amount of repetition, good diagrams, maps, and graphs provide much clarification. Readers will also welcome the ample notes and extensive bibliography.

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BRIAN PATRICK MCGUIRE. *Jean Gerson and the Last Medieval Reformation*. University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press. 2005. Pp. xvi, 441. Cloth $85.00, paper $30.00.

The past forty years have seen a renewed interest in the life and thought of Jean Gerson (1363–1429). This renewal of scholarly interest has resulted not only in new discoveries and editions of his works but also in a series of monographs related to specific aspects of his life and thought: ecclesiology, spirituality, spiritual direction, reform ideology, political theory, and speculative, pastoral, and mystical theology. What remained a desideratum was a new and comprehensive biography that would incorporate all the above aspects into a relatively coherent whole. In the case of Gerson, there has been no such biography since that of James L. Connolly, published in 1928. The present work by Brian Patrick McGuire attempts to produce an updated biography and does so very successfully.

In a preface that enunciates his goals and methodology, McGuire makes clear that his intent is to produce an essentially "life and times" work based on a close reading of Gerson's works, following in the tradition of R. W. Southern's first biographical work on Anselm of Canterbury and Peter Brown's life of Augustine. Accordingly in his treatment of Gerson's life, he shies away from a primarily thematic approach and also strives to avoid scholarly polemics. He accomplishes all this in a series of ten chapters divided chronologically according to the major periods and transitions in Gerson's life. The eleventh and last chapter deals with the legacy of Gerson. Each chapter is provided with copious and informative footnotes. The book also contains a detailed chronology of the major events in Gerson's life together with the writings associated with these events. Finally, there is an excellent bibliography of both primary and secondary sources.

McGuire's biography covers reasonably well the entire scope and diversity of Gerson's interests in and involvement with the major institutions of his day, namely the University of Paris, the church, and the French crown, especially as to their interaction with one another in attempts to resolve the many problems presented by the Great Western Schism. McGuire also gives considerable attention to Gerson's extensive pastoral interests in terms of clerical education, preaching, confessional techniques, spiritual direction (especially of women), and the moral formation of the young. In treating all these aspects of Gerson's life and thought, McGuire's primary goal is to enter more deeply into the interior dimensions of his life, especially in terms of the personal tensions, conflicts, and crises that his involvement with institutions and persons generated.

Although there were many aspects of Gerson's life and thought wherein such internal tensions, conflicts, and crises arose, limitations of space in this review permit the mention of only two. The first relates to the nature of theological education at the University of Paris. Early in his tenure as chancellor of the University of Paris, Gerson became greatly concerned about the overemphasis upon speculative theology and the consequent neglect of moral and mystical theology. Reflecting a common late medieval concern, Gerson deplored the predominance of the intellectual aspects of theological training over the moral and affective dimensions. For Gerson, theology was not only a body of knowledge to be mastered but also something to be experienced and lived. Gerson's doubts about the direction of theological education at Paris and its pastoral consequences were so serious that they resulted in a self-imposed exile in Bruges that lasted over fifteen months. During this period he collected his thoughts on this subject and drew up extensive proposals for the reformation of theological education at Paris.

Another major area of personal tension and conflict in Gerson's life relates to the issue of affective personal relationships, especially as they pertained to men, women, and the young. In this area McGuire concentrates heavily on the issue of friendship, both natural and spiritual, and Gerson's at times cautious attitude toward both. While McGuire generally avoids the pitfalls of psychohistory in dealing with Gerson's views on the affective dimension of personal relationships, he does at times make assertions that transcend the textual evidence. In fairness to him, however, it should be noted that he frequently qualifies his assertions as probable and conjectural. By the time of his last chapter, McGuire arrives at an essentially positive judgment of Gerson on the whole matter of personal relationships and even seems to have undergone something of a scholarly conversion when he complains about "the