The very narrow local focus of this history may endear it to its Pistoian audience but will disappoint the general reader elsewhere. Rauty does not contrast Pistoia's development with other Tuscan or northern Italian cities, nor does he adequately set it in a unique historical context. The preliminary observations on Pistoia's physical setting, for example, are not invoked throughout to explain or illuminate the town's development. Merchants appear in the eleventh century, but the reader is left wondering where they traded and with whom (perhaps Pistoian commerce was only between town and countryside, but a later mention of the importance of a trans-Appenine road [p. 369] suggests otherwise). The city's relationship with Lucca also seems to merit more systematic attention since at various points Pistoia fell under Lucca's secular or ecclesiastical jurisdiction. The influence of geography, in fact, could have provided an overarching theme to give the volume a unity of its own, despite its difficult chronological definition. But the work's concentration on the narration of events and description of conditions within Pistoia means that it rarely inquires into the forces which shaped the city's history.

This is simply to say that Rauty's useful volume does not surmount the constraints of its genre. Within those constraints, Rauty does an admirable job. His volume does provide an updated narrative history of the city and an excellent introduction to the early-medieval sources of Pistoia. It includes a good bibliography; the listing of printed primary sources is especially helpful. *Storia di Pistoia,* 1, is thus an excellent reference work although not a compelling history.

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VICENTE REYNAL, *El lenguaje erótico medieval a través del Arcipreste de Hita.* (Colección Nova Scholar.) Madrid: Editorial Playor, 1988. Paper. Pp. 137. Distributed by Ediciones Humanitas, P.O. Box 505, Humacao, PR 00661.

A number of recent pieces on the *Libro de buen amor* explicitly point out what one has more than once overheard: that Juan Ruiz's remarkable work has not received the kind of sophisticated critical attention one might expect. In a 1989 *Speculum* review (64:393–95) of Marina Brownlee's 1985 book (*The Status of the Reading Subject in the "Libro de buen amor"*), Billy Thompson emphasizes, perhaps a bit harshly, the discrepancy between the exceptional literary qualities of the *Libro* and "the vacuous and purely textual or bibliographic enterprise that has taken over our field to the point at which interpretation is discouraged and the issue of a text's merit is considered frivolous." At the outset of her 1988 article "Vegetal-Genital Onomastics in the *Libro de buen amor*" (*Romance Philology* 42:1–29) Louise Vasvari laments essentially the same problem, that of a body of criticism of the work in great measure unappreciative of its literariness. The theoretical work that has overturned the anachronistic nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century views of the Middle Ages as a "monolithic age of faith and piety" has not made significant inroads in this area: "Unfortunately," Vasvari notes, "much Hispanic scholarship remains unaffected by this impelling challenge to traditional concepts of literary creation. Within *LBA* scholarship some of the most significant contributions even of recent date have been marred by interpretations based on quasi-hagiographic concern with the historical identity of the author and with the purported moral purpose of his work." Although these two critics find the state of affairs in Hispanic scholarship particularly lamentable, it is all too often the case that medieval literature in general is, indeed, all too often dealt with as if it belonged to an altogether different ontological category from other literature — even

works such as the *Libro*, flagrantly highly literary by even the most contemporary standards (and thus, among other things, overtly metaliterary and conspicuously multidimensional and/or ambiguous in terms of "meaning").

In such a critical context it is illuminating to glance at Reynal's book, published in the Nova Scholar series (which specializes in doctoral dissertations and monographs, in Spanish, that would be difficult to fit into major series at other presses). Consisting of twenty-three minichapters (few longer than three or four pages) devoted to a full range of topics, such as "dualidad de propósito," "variedad del vocabulario erótico," "el banquete del amor," "eros y thanatos," and so forth, a scattering of critical notes, and a very rudimentary "select" bibliography (selected according to mysterious criteria), this latest book on what is perhaps the single most critically productive work of medieval Spain gives the distinct impression of being the scarcely modified notes and outline for a monographic course on the *Libro*. And although it is unclear (and unstated within the book) what the intended purpose and audience might be — it is neither really scholarly nor really introductory — one of the principal merits of the work is (no doubt inadvertently) that it does reflect a kind of intermediate critical posture vis-à-vis Juan Ruiz: the kind of pseudoreconciliation between the strongly positivist tradition and some semblance of poststructuralist grounding that one imagines is doled out to many a graduate student.

Thus Reynal is, on the one hand, interested in reconstructing "la verdad de los hechos" (and throughout the study a like reflexive, often quite detailed positivism abounds) and, on the other, he flirts with bits of theory here and there (mostly Bakhtin, the theorist most in vogue among Hispano-medievalists) and is reasonably well acquainted with previous work by a handful of critics, like Vasvari, who have dealt with the same material, that of the text's eroticism, in a fashion that recognizes the text's complex literariness. Likewise, one will find a confusing coming and going between statements about the fictive constructs of the text and the clever plays that allow the author to tease the reader with erotic allusions, on the one hand, and, on the other, the kind of statements about the historical authorial figure, the Archpriest in the service of the church and its morality, and so forth, that have bedeviled criticism of the *Libro* for so long. And Reynal avoids few of the clichéd traps of periodization and gross characterizations: the Archpriest stands between the sacred and prudish love of the medievals and the more human one of the Renaissance, slowly emerging from the shadows. . . .

It is difficult to know, finally, whether the fact that this sort of work continues to be written and published — and, further, that it undoubtedly reflects what is being taught about medieval literature in general and the *Libro* specifically — is to be taken as a positive or a negative indication of the state of affairs. It is discouraging, certainly, to note the great and continuing power of the constructs of the medieval period and its literature that make it, explicitly, a rather primitive Other, a literature that is not quite yet Literature. But this book also reflects at least the strong possibility of something potentially far more positive in the offing, for even the cursory and at times superficial readings of less hidebound critics indicate that, perhaps, significant changes are in the process of taking place. And while this little handbook has in and of itself little originality or critical insight on this remarkable subject and text, I suspect that more than one of the graduate students reading it will easily shrug off the clichés of the Archpriest as Catholic naturalist and New Spanish Man and even more easily follow the leads, here and there, that suggest that this complex text is still to be dealt with on its own terms — terms highly literary and "modern" — the work of an author who patently delighted in the pleasant treacheries of a language that is at once obscene

and sacred not because he had to toe the priest's line of the fourteenth century but because that is the nature of literature itself.

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John J. Robinson, *Born in Blood: The Lost Secrets of Freemasonry.* New York: M. Evans, 1989. Pp. xix, 376. $18.95.

It is no secret, of course, that Freemasons have long claimed descent from the Knights Templar. Indeed, American Shriners have insured that the memory of Jacques de Molay, the order's last grand master, will live on in the youth group that bears his name. Still, as Peter Partner has fully demonstrated in *The Murdered Magicians* (1981), most Masonic claims to Templar origins rest on little more than unsubstantiated myth as filtered through centuries of Rosicrucianism.

John J. Robinson, a self-described "amateur American historian," has devoted this book to a wide-ranging exploration of the extent to which these claims may have an unexpectedly factual basis. He concludes that they do, arguing that Templars found refuge in England and especially Scotland after the dissolution of their order; that they quickly formed an international secret society for their own self-protection; and that it was this group, known to chroniclers only as the shadowy "Great Society," that lay behind the Peasants' Revolt of 1381 — and especially its violent attacks on the Hospitallers, the order to which Pope Clement V had assigned all confiscated Templar goods.

Some years ago, when Lynn White, jr., attempted only half in jest to demonstrate the debt of thirteenth-century European mendicants to the Brahmanic monks of India, his case rested on suggestive parallels, not concrete proofs. As he asked his audience teasingly, "How many parallels does it take to make a causal possibility, and how many possibilities, a probability?" Robinson finds himself confronted by the same evidentiary challenge. Although he discerns many similarities between Templars and Masons, and even though he believes that Templar antecedents best explain the secrets lying behind a wide range of Masonic ceremonies, symbols, and terminology (the precise meaning of which has been lost to the Masons themselves), ultimately he can provide no direct proof. Like White, he is forced to rely on a series of suggestive possibilities that may or may not persuade readers of the truth of his case. But also like White, Robinson has clearly relished the challenge he faced, and it is above all that researcher's delight that gives this book its greatest interest.

Charles T. Wood, Dartmouth College

Barbara H. Rosenwein, *To Be the Neighbor of Saint Peter: The Social Meaning of Cluny's Property, 909–1049.* Ithaca, N.Y., and London: Cornell University Press, 1989. Pp. xviii, 258; frontispiece, 5 maps, 27 tables, 4 black-and-white illustrations. $32.50.

Rosenwein's earlier book — *Rhinoceros Bound: Cluny in the Tenth Century* — attempted to depict the motivations of donors to the great Burgundian monastery during its first century. One criticism leveled at this study decried any such attempt in the absence of detailed knowledge regarding precisely who these donors were. In the work reviewed here the author faces this reproach head-on, providing a reassessment of the social meaning of Cluny's landholdings in light of information gleaned from more than three thousand charters involving land transactions that occurred during the tenures of the monastery's first five abbots. The transactions themselves varied;