

strategies and Richard Spear and Philip Sohm's groundbreaking *Painting for Profit* (2010), discussions of the economies of practice and the need for speed read like a collection of anecdotes rather than a considered analysis of the issue.

While a translation of the 2010 volume with an epilogue might have been preferred, this would not have prevented the inclusion of a few glaring inaccuracies, such as defining *vaghezza* as "vagueness"; this concept is well defined in historical dictionaries such as the TLIO and GDLI and elucidated in relation to beauty and allure in four chapters by Stuart Lingo (2008, Federico Barocci). It seems ironic that Suthor's virtuosity inevitably leads to criticism of her lack of diligence, much like the *bravura* artists she treats—but what else can explain how Titian's Europa "looks back beseechingly" as "she searches for her companions" yet, in the same paragraph, her eyes "ecstatically roll back in her head" (176)?

These criticisms aside, I learned a great deal from *Bravura*, enjoyed the author's in-depth descriptions of paintings, and found myself entertained by the many anecdotes quoted. Her skill at integrating theory and practice is commendable and provides a service to the theorists and biographers who were artists themselves, reminding those who would study paintings in isolation from the ideas valued by their makers that they do so at serious peril.

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Framing the Church: The Social and Artistic Power of Buttresses in French Gothic Architecture. Maile S. Hutterer.

University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2020. xiv + 208 pp. \$99.95.

In the history of architecture, the development of flying buttresses was not only structurally revolutionary; it was visually transformative, dramatically reshaping church exteriors across France and far beyond. While scholarship on the subject has focused primarily on issues of structure and chronology, in this book Maile S. Hutterer explores buttressing systems (defined to include piers, flyers, and decorations) as aesthetic, social, and iconographic entities. As her title suggests, Hutterer brings to her study a specific interpretive lens: the idea that buttressing systems acted as churches' frames or margins, especially as conceptualized by Michael Camille in *Image on the Edge: The Margins of Medieval Art* (1992).

In the first of four chapters, Hutterer examines the visual significance of buttressing systems. She looks for evidence that their aesthetic qualities were prioritized and finds it in builders insisting on using ornamental openwork flyers despite known structural risks, and deploying flyers as decorative motifs. She then turns to representations of buttressing systems in other media. Here Hutterer introduces Camille, and the idea of the

buttressing system as a locus of ambiguity, marginality, and conflict. The notion is thought provoking, but Hutterer does not fully support it here with persuasive case studies and does not engage as deeply as she might have with her theoretical device (her bibliography contains only a fraction of the literature on framing and marginality). She shows buttress piers participating in the ornamental vocabulary of microarchitecture, and of pictorial frames in manuscripts. But as to their valence, she mainly finds that, as vertical members, buttress piers articulated space and conveyed hierarchy, which is what one might expect, especially in features that acted much as columns and canopies did in similar contexts.

In chapter 2, Hutterer moves from fictive space to the ground occupied by the buttress piers, and to the bishops, cathedral canons, and lay seigniors who vied to control it. The use of buttress interstices, whether exploited as external shops or incorporated into churches as chantry chapels, is a fascinating topic, and Hutterer rightly describes the conflictual environment in which obtrusive buttressing systems were built. Here, too, however, she pushes her interpretive device too far. In Reims, for instance, she cites a conflict resolution between the chapter and its treasurer regarding a strip of land alongside the expanding cathedral. She argues that the contract illustrates the “complicated dichotomy of internality and externality—of church and extrachurch,” because in this “semipermeable” area the treasurer ceded all rights to the future church interior but retained “some jurisdiction” outside (61). The original Latin document, however, simply describes an unambiguous fair-price sale of property, with stipulations regarding doors, windows, and water run-off.

Hutterer’s third chapter takes on monumental buttress-sculpture programs, which featured groups of figures identifiable as angels, church authorities, and saints. She makes the persuasive argument that these angelic and authoritative hosts were multivalent representations intended to convey ideas of procession, ritual, and the living church—all of which ultimately served to define and reinforce the sacredness of church space. Here, Hutterer’s emphasis on framing, internality, and externality gains traction, supported by texts that underscored the hierarchy of sacred space within the church, and the increasing distinctions between consecrated ground and the secular world outside.

In chapter 4, Hutterer’s interpretive approach fully comes into its own. She suggests that buttress piers had defensive resonances, noting their affinities with fortified encintes, and conflations of the two in contemporary texts. She then turns to the gargoyles that inhabited the flyers. She agrees with Camille’s understanding of gargoyles as apotropaic and proposes a further kinship between gargoyles and flyers. Like gargoyles, she argues, flying buttresses were architectural grotesques: hybrid forms that took familiar building elements and reassembled them in new, unsettling ways: an intriguing idea that could be developed further. She concludes that, like Camille’s marginal creatures, these strange architectural features were simultaneously subversive and protective.

Although she over-reads some evidence, Hutterer contributes to scholarship a valuable first in-depth study of flying buttresses, and one that takes the subject in important

new directions by investigating buttressing systems in a broader social context. The book is elegantly written, offers compelling insights, and provides a stimulating opening for a continued conversation about flying buttresses as bearers of meaning.

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Gardens of Love and the Limits of Morality in Early Netherlandish Art.

Andrea Pearson.

Brill's Studies in Intellectual History 296. Leiden: Brill, 2019. xxii + 356 pp. €165.

Setting the tone and theme for the book in her introduction, "The Erotics of Virtue," Pearson begins with a hybrid triptych consisting of quotations from two early fifteenth-century writers, of very different stripes, and an image, itself a triptych: Hieronymus Bosch's *Garden of Earthly Delights*. The quotations, one from Pierre D'Ailly, one of the most restless, political, and inventive ecclesiastical intellectuals of the late Middle Ages, and the other from Thomas à Kempis, the embodiment of the *Devotio Moderna* and the least worldly of late medieval theologians, both concern the contrast between earthly and spiritual pleasures, just as the painting frames the earthly garden of bodily pleasure with images of salvation on the left and damnation on the right.

Pearson proposes that the way all three sources entangle imagery of bodies, gardens, sin, and salvation is fundamental to understanding the embodied landscape of late medieval and early modern Christian morality. The interpretative variability of the complex elements that make up the allegorical "Gardens of Love" at the heart of the book's analytical project is what Pearson identifies as the challenge; the constant slippage between carnal eroticism and spiritual union with the divine means that not only medieval and early modern people had to grapple with ambiguity, but so too do twenty-first-century scholars attempting to situate the often bizarre and disturbing variety of literary and visual images produced in aid of ostensibly spiritual ambitions.

The book is organized into six chapters and an epilogue, which Pearson tells us will "demonstrate that visual topographies were a vital means for critiquing and negotiating bodily morality in the early modern Netherlands" (23). This rather dry statement of purpose belies a veritable avalanche of visual and textual evidence that Pearson addresses, ranging from well-known works such as the Bosch triptych to rather rough woodcuts from little-discussed incunabula editions and a type of altarpiece, unique to the Netherlands, known as a *besloten hofjes* (enclosed garden), which combines panel-painted wings with a densely packed assemblage of painted sculptural objects in the central space. Furthermore, Pearson engages with a wide range of current scholarship from perspectives as diverse as ecocriticism, disability studies, and intersectional gender critique. In a nutshell, there is little room in this abundantly illustrated and quick-paced study for the humdrum.