In a brief fifth chapter, Drechsler assembles an institutional archaeology, arguing for a placement of the Helgafell group and related manuscripts in three workshops in the Breiðafjörður region of western Iceland and tracing some of the patronage history behind manuscript commissions there, which pulls together several strands from the previous chapters into a convincing narrative history of collaboration and the movement of people and ideas. A conclusion on travel, commerce, and manuscript production reinforces the movement of book production influences over time from France, first directly, then through Norway and, at further remove, England, up to the arrival of the Black Death in Iceland at the dawn of the fifteenth century (1402), at which point production ceased. Back matter is extensive, including a well-organized bibliography and multiple, helpful indices for the vast amount of material consulted in the study.

Illuminated Manuscript Production in Medieval Iceland is a rare combination: an extensive, thorough revision of a dissertation published in a format befitting its contents that not only adds to our understanding of a significant group of Old Norse manuscripts but also provides a model for further research in the Icelandic context and beyond. Truly multidisciplinary, the book will contribute particularly to readers’ understanding of the art-historical stakes of transmission and production in the medieval North.

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Sarah Fourcade’s approach to the literary production of the late medieval period is that of an historian – she is less interested in the literary works themselves than what they tell us about the authors and audiences of the period. She proposes to show how the military class that was the nobility turned into a cultured and literate society, a group seeking to promote its class and members by means of the written word. This volume represents research that led to her doctorate in history (13; she now teaches at the Université Paris-Est Créteil) and retains some of that dissertation feel, from its lay-out and presentation of information.

Using examples drawn from across medieval France, Fourcade begins with the question of education. That of noble children involved not only military skills for the males, domestic skills for the females, but also a certain degree of literacy. Proof lies in the educational materials prepared for children of the period, from elementary readers (*abécédaires*), to works that cover religious and moral training or history. These materials could be acquired by wealthy families; some individuals composed works for family members (71). Fourcade’s careful examination of multiple codices allows her to identify loci of acquisition: books are purchased in the city (144) though the majority of noble families lived in a rural milieu (46). Volumes were borrowed and shared, given and received.

The documentation shows that families transmitted books across generations; Fourcade suggests that women bequeathed prayer books more often than men (87), men were more likely to convey entire libraries to their offspring (89). Looking at seventeen distinct family groups, Fourcade recognizes “the omnipresence of books in the middle and upper nobility” (103).