criticism through publicity and a search for consent. The various manifestations of opinion, according to Nadrigny, deeply preoccupied Toulouse’s urban authorities to such an extent that information gathering and publicity seeking and consultation was at the heart of their techniques of government. Dialogue also characterized the nature of their interaction with the outside world, in particular also with a royal authority that was not to be criticized but was brought into the dialogue through the city’s right of request.

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Few scholars have done as much to illuminate the cultures, institutions, and imaginations of the medieval child as Nicholas Orme. In a series of wide-ranging books and articles, he has shown the ways that Latin and vernacular instruction bore on the idioms of medieval drama; how the habits of the nursery dovetailed with those of the chapel to create a lullaby language both secular and sacred; and how the idea of the medieval book itself, together with its habits of illumination, inflected the literate imagination of the medieval child. He has provided a new impetus for studying the worlds of medieval children and has helped challenge the consensus (promulgated by Philippe Ariès in his widely influential *Centuries of Childhood*) that “childhood” itself was an invention of modernity.

This breadth of learning is only evanescently apparent in *Fleas, Flies, and Friars*, a small assembly of medieval children’s verse apparently intended for a popular, modern readership. Originally published in England in 2011, this book aspires to present a taste of what was written for, read by, and possibly taught to “children and teenagers” in Britain from the thirteenth to the fifteenth century. Rather than selecting poems that have a feel or sensibility towards children, or that look like modern nursery rhymes or fantasy, Orme seeks those verses “that can be shown to have been composed, copied, used by, or aimed at” young medieval readers. He includes not only short lyrics, but selections from longer poems and, in addition, a few lengthy pieces of late-medieval narrative. The bulk of this poetry is thus designed to illustrate such characteristic features of children’s literature as instruction in good behavior, language, and belief.

For whom has this book been published? Professor Orme concludes his introduction with an address that may seem curiously off-tone for a reader of the early twenty-first century: “I hope, dear reader, that you will gain from this selection an idea of the poetry written for children, or said and sung by them at the very beginning of the history of children’s literature in Britain. . . . A medieval childhood could indeed be cut short by disease or distressed by poverty, but while children were alive they shared in a rich culture of songs, sayings, rudenesses, riddles, tales, and (at the higher levels of society) works of instruction as well” (6). Is this a book, then, for the modern child, dear-readered into delectation for the “rudenesses” of medieval children? Is it a book for adults, charmed by its editorial commonplaces and clichés into the comfort that, just like today, boys will be boys and girls will be girls?

Even though it has been published in America by a major university press, it cannot be a book for scholars. For example, the section titled “Love, Sex, and Marriage” opens with this lyric (36):

| Underneath a louver  |
| Plucked I a plover;   |
| Go to Joan Glover    |

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And say that I love her
By the light of the moon;
See that it be so done.
Flowers in my arbour, they grow green;
Unless my lady love me well, my dog will die for spleen.

Other than the note that the word “louver” means “the smoke-hole in the roof of a hall without a chimney,” the prefatory remarks that “here boys are shown anxiously trying to press their suits with girls,” and the note that the poem comes from the Winchester Anthology, the reader would have no idea that this poem is a bit of metrical English, written out as prose, and embedded in a longer Latin prose piece. In fact, the final couplet of this text as Orme presents it is separated from the previous English lines by several additional lines of Latin, and may not even be part of the same thought.

Is it overly pedantic to say that this fascinating bit of medieval English may not be a freestanding poem at all (let alone a popular or representative one), but rather that it offers a distinctive example of macaronic writing in a highly diverse, late-medieval compilation that may be representative of many things but from which it may be a stretch to say, as Orme does, that it “reflects the interest of children in the doings of their elders and the more practical desire of teenagers to find partners”?

This example stands for much in this volume: a clear desire for a senior scholar to share his joy of medieval literary culture with a popular readership; but, at the same time, a glossing over of historical and verbal texture in favor of making something old look like something new, something challenging look benign. For this little poem may be far more obscene than it is playful. The Winchester Manuscript was being added to well into the later sixteenth century, by which time the word “plover” had become a recorded synonym for prostitute. Who knows what jejune elbow-shoving the phrase “pluck a plover” could have generated in its time?

My carping over this collection may be too much akin to taking a howitzer to a flea. This is a charming assembly of texts. That they may be unrepresentative of what Professor Orme presents them to be, or that they may be framed in editorial directives redolent of an Edwardian novel, may be of little concern to someone willing to spend $14.95 for an afternoon of deftly modernized medieval rhymes.

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The Minor Clergy of Exeter Cathedral: Biographies, 1250–1548, published by the Devon and Cornwall Record Society, is a revised and expanded edition of The Minor Clergy of Exeter Cathedral 1300–1548, published by the University of Exeter in 1980. The work under review would have been more appropriately titled a second edition of this earlier book. Both books strive to provide researchers with biographical data on men known to have been minor clergy—that is, vicars choral, secondaries, choristers, and annuellars (chantry priests)—at Exeter Cathedral in the late Middle Ages and early sixteenth century. The chief difference between the two books, at least in terms of organization, is that the entries in the earlier work are grouped chronologically according to clergy type whereas those in the latter are grouped alphabetically by the surnames of the members of the clergy. The author states that this new book “takes the form of a biographical dictionary, reconstructing the careers of each person in so far as this is possible” (vii).

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