

respectively to: Arabic and arabicized terms, Ibero-Romance terms and their etyma, Syriac and Aramaic terms, Persian terms, Sanskrit terms, scientific nomenclature, common names and technical terms, Arabic indexing, and authors and books.

In sum, the two volumes cover, in over 1350 pages, not only the previously unedited text of the *Talkhīs* – in itself a commendable enterprise – but also an in-depth study of Marwān Ibn Janāḥ's cultural and linguistic milieu, the fortune of his work among later medical writers, a detailed discussion of the state of the relevant scholarship, and a detailed commentary on each entry. The commentary reveals how the authors have evidently striven to make this paramount work in medical terminology accessible to the non-specialist: it provides clear references and the book's introduction elucidates the main issues related to the text. One cannot but applaud those responsible and commend their work heartily to the scholarly community across disciplinary boundaries.

Università di Padova

NICOLA CARPENTIERI 

Legions of Pigs in the Early Medieval West. By Jamie Kreiner. New Haven and London: Yale University Press. 2020. xi + 340 pp., 48 b/w + 32 colour illus. \$40. ISBN 9780300246292.

'After all, humans are not the only species to have histories' (p. 3). If environmental history was first born in the study of modern and contemporary times, such approaches and methods are now fully entering the field of medieval studies. Jamie Kreiner's *Legions of Pigs* offers a brilliant and innovative demonstration of the effectiveness of these new paradigms, which many historians have discovered through Philippe Descola's book *Beyond Nature and Culture* (2005; English translation 2013). Kreiner places the focus of her enquiry on the relationships and interactions between humans and animals by considering these agents on an equal footing as two interdependent components within biotopes. For the first time the focus of a medieval history monograph is plainly on ecology, in addition to geography or other environmental sciences, in order to analyse the relationship of humans with animals in the use of natural resources.

Kreiner's systematic study of the human–pig encounter is supported by a panoramic view of medieval ideas on nature and a careful analysis of written sources, visual sources, archaeological sources, and the results

of palaeosciences. This state of the art of specialized and often dispersed studies is particularly valuable, all the more so as it is deployed in an ambitious and stimulating chronological (from imperial Roman times to the twelfth century) and spatial (from Egypt to Greenland) framework. In the early medieval west, pigs were not only 'walking larders' (p. 78) able to capitalize on savage resources by transforming them into meat and fat. Kreiner builds up an empathetic picture of pigs as social, enterprising and intelligent, adaptable and versatile, easy to feed and prolific animals. They are a real partner of humans in processes that behavioural biology now defines as co-evolution or co-domestication, which Kreiner believes imply a form of cooperation between humans and pigs (p. 120).

Chapter 1 provides a multifaceted portrait of this 'Singular and Plural Beast' (p. 15). While dietary constraints determined the scale of farming, reserving herding for areas with abundant woodland resources, the need for abundant water was an important constraint. At this point, the analysis would have benefited from systematically considering the social characteristics of the holders (lords and peasants) and the still enigmatic discrepancy between herd-breeding situations and the perhaps chronologically more recent peasant ideal of the 'family' pig, whose presence made the difference from misery and destitution for poor peasants.

According to Kreiner, the place of the pig in western society had a formative influence not only on the social order and the life of medieval communities, but also on cosmology and the Christian view of the physical world, 'from the Mud to the Cosmos' (Chapter 2, p. 44). In contrast to a static conception of Christian creation, 'it was not so radical', according to Kreiner, 'to suggest that the nonhuman world was not only complex, but also kinetic and contingent' (p. 61). Although the pig ultimately occupies a very modest place in the theological corpus (p. 77), Kreiner has managed to draw up a fresh synthesis of the vision and metaphorical uses of the animal world in western Christian literature. However, as Paolo Squatriti points out in his book review, 'not everyone will agree that the literate or their texts were environmentally aware as Kreiner makes them out to have been, nor that peasants' "traditional Ecological Knowledge" had deep taproots in Christian cosmology' (*The Medieval Review*, 2021).

In Chapter 3, 'Salvaged Lands' (p. 78), Kreiner considers the place of pig farming in the natural environment as a form of resource extraction, 'a salvage accumulation' to use the term coined by the American anthropologist Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing (*The Mushroom at the End of the World*, 2015) to study the relationships between human and non-human agents and the role of the matsutake fungus as a

vehicle for resource extraction in damaged environments. Tsing uses the term in the context of a critique of capitalist appropriation of 'wild' resources; Kreiner turns it into an entirely different concept, stripped of its political dimension. This way of approaching the complex dynamics of the living world allows us to identify the originality of the pig in relation to other livestock and how it has enabled humans to capitalize on wild resources. Kreiner sheds light on the ecological dynamics of animal husbandry and consumption by means of archaeological case studies such as the Merovingian site of Develier-Courtételle, the city of Garama in the Lybian Sahara from the first to the sixth century CE, the villa of Faragula in northern Apulia from the fourth to the eighth century CE, and the city of Tours around 600. These are supplemented with a focused analysis of Carolingian estate records that provide plenty of data about seigneurial and peasant animal husbandry and its importance in the 'manorial' economy, above all of monasteries.

Chapter 4 ('Partnerships', p. 120) studies inter-species relationships, starting with the figure of the pig herder and the place of animal husbandry in farming (p. 121). The forest transhumance made necessary by the search for wild fruits explains the proximity of the pig herders to their animals, especially as the flocks had to be closely supervised to prevent them from digging, and in so doing, from denuding and destroying roots. Pigs also emerged as an important partner in food consumption with a variety of uses (p. 133) and tastes (p. 145) depending on social positions and strata. 'Pigs were not a luxury animal per se', like other farm animals consumed for their meat: animal youth was a prominent factor of distinction in the elite's diet.

Because 'Christians eat pork, and Muslims and Jews do not' (p. 159), Chapter 5 studies the Christianization of pigs, considering the animal as 'an obviously meaningful boundary between the monotheistic traditions' (p. 159). The Romans were already considered by their Hebrew or Arab neighbours and adversaries as pork eaters. This already ancient Romanity sheds a different light on the food cultures of Antiquity and the early Middle Ages defined by Massimo Montanari (*La fame e l'abbondanza*, 1993) as opposing the Roman triad of bread, wine, and oil to the Barbarian triad of meat, beer, and animal fats. Moreover, the pig was considered a dirty, greedy, and lustful animal, even a demonic beast. The excellent taste of meat from an animal that fed on dung and rubbish was seen as a miracle from God. The pig stood on a shifting boundary between domestic and wild animals, an ambiguity whose cultural and religious importance is perhaps underestimated here. If the creature that devours the vine, assimilated to Israel, in the Judeo-Christian tradition of the Psalms (Psalm 79) is a wild beast (a boar of the forest), its cousinhood with the domestic pig

is reflected in Carolingian illustrated manuscripts. In the richest of them that were produced in the 820s in Saint-Germain-des-Prés (Stuttgart Psalter) and Reims (Utrecht Psalter), the representation of Creation invariably places the pig among the *bestia* opposed to the *pecora* (Utrecht, Psalm 148, 10, fol. 82v). None of the scenes evoking animal husbandry classifies the pig as one of the animals given by God to humans to dominate them (Stuttgart, fol. xx). This duality is beautifully illustrated by the 'pig' which is depicted in the 'Salzburg St Peter's Calendar' (818 CE) between the month of November, when it is hunted with a spear, and the month of December, when a peasant, holding it by one hind leg, is about to slit its throat with a large knife (p. 25, Fig. 17).

These examples probably illustrate one of the weaknesses of environmental studies focusing on the relationship between humans and a specific non-human agent such as the pig (or the chestnut tree) in an environment where exchanges and interactions were always complex and multi-species. Large-scale pig husbandry was not a ubiquitous ecological reality in the early medieval west. There are indications that large landowners preferred an activity that had the advantage of providing meat and fat that could be easily preserved for several years by salting or smoking. In Francia, the breeding and preservation of pork played an essential role in the supply of protein to the Carolingian court and military suite. The royal warehouses of the northern French estates recorded in the *Brevium exempla* mention pork bellies from the previous and the present year, sausages, lard, fat, and cheese. Similar conservation imperatives probably explain the preference of monastic landlords for spelt over wheat and other naked cereals on their arable land. In the estates described in the mid-ninth century in the polyptych of Hincmar of Reims, the seigniorial *sylva* was measured, as elsewhere in the land inventories, according to the number of pigs that could be driven there for mast feeding (*ad saginandum*). Wherever the ninth-century text makes it possible to assess the share of the lord and the peasants in farming, pigs were reared by the lord, whereas the tenants only paid dues and/or seigniorial tithes on sheep flocks. In the overall sum of the polyptych, all the pigs delivered by tenants came from a single estate located near the wooded heights of the pre-Ardennes ridges. The monks owned three large woods with a total of 1300 pigs. Pigs are rare in the rest of Saint-Remi's properties.

In a broader view, large-scale pig husbandry should probably be associated with areas and social systems where livestock prevailed over cereals. Where fields and vineyards dominated the landscape, wandering pigs were feared competitors for farmers, able to ruin crops in a matter of hours. The damage caused by pigs to the environment

could also lead to irreversible degradation, as Kreiner argues in relation to Iceland, where their share of livestock and food consumption became negligible in the eleventh century (p. 204).

The breadth and depth of this original book is inexhaustible. Kreiner is constantly concerned to contextualize the sources she uses, to specify the general ideological substrates, partly disproving the idea that for ecohistory, ‘thinking big mean[s] thinking small’ (p. 1).

Université libre de Bruxelles (ULB)

JEAN-PIERRE DEVROEY 

The Fragmentary Latin Histories of Late Antiquity (AD 300–620): Edition, Translation and Commentary. By Lieve Van Hoof and Peter Van Nuffelen. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 2020. x + 332 pp. £89.99. ISBN 978 1 108 42027 3.

In Book 14 of his *Annals*, Tacitus describes Nero’s elaborate attempt to kill his mother, Agrippina the Younger, via the mechanism of a collapsing boat. Tacitus relates how an acquaintance of hers named Crepereius Gallus was crushed when a heavy roof was dropped as part of the plot, killing the poor man instantly. This episode constitutes Crepereius Gallus’ entire contribution to recorded history, introduced and dispatched within a single Latin sentence. Yet, this fleeting reference provides more testimony for him than we possess for most people who lived and died in the ancient world. He therefore remains something of an ‘in-betweener’, not particularly influential or celebrated, but not entirely anonymous either. Lieve Van Hoof and Peter Van Nuffelen’s extremely learned new volume provides an excellent guide to the late antique Latin histories and historians who fall into the same category. Unlike more successful texts, only very limited fragments of these writings, or often mere testimonia, have survived, but countless other less fortunate works of ancient historiography must have perished without leaving even the minutest trace. The in-between nature of the texts is also central to two of the volume’s most important arguments: first, that while these histories enjoyed some circulation, for most of them this was probably very limited and largely confined to the author’s immediate circle; and second, given this relative lack of success, we should challenge scholarship which seeks to locate a significant presence and influence of these lost works in those which do survive, or even to identify them with particular extant anonymous texts. The book’s methodology is