quired. Even though both internal and international slave market existed in Bohemia, only some of the unfree people can be considered chattel-slaves according to the author. Petráček thinks that the living conditions of unfree and free peasants might often not have been very different.

In chapter 4, the author discusses the role of "donated people" in the economy of the Bohemian monarchy in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. He believes that the sovereign's apparatus fundamentally depended on unfree labor and that the whole system had its roots already in the "pre-state" period, for which however no written sources are available and which had consolidated back in the tenth century. Petráček justifiably rejects the concept of the so-called "service organization" as an independent and crucial pillar of the ducal economy of Central European monarchies, as it was defined by Polish and Czech scholars in the 1960s. He states that like in the Carolingian and Ottonian empires, (service) unfree labor was primarily organized by means of manors. Donated people cease to occur in deeds from the second half of the twelfth century; over a short period, they apparently merged with free peasants into the category of tenants. However, the author does not link the end of "slavery" to a humanistic influence of ecclesiastical institutions (which commonly made use of unfree labor) but to the formation of new "feudal" economy, which fully asserted itself in the Czech lands in the thirteenth century. Petráček says that the economy of the Piast state functioned on similar principles, surviving into the thirteenth century there. It is precisely in Poland that the author most often looks for stones that might fill in the gaps in Bohemian evidence. An English reader can newly make a comparison with the situation in Hungary, as presented in Cameron Sutt's *Slavery in Árpád-era Hungary in a Comparative Context* (2015), published in the same series but focusing more on the social position of unfree people than on their economic role.

For many decades now, Central European medieval studies have been moving between two extremes: did the new monarchies follow their own specific paths in their initial stage, or did they predominantly adapt Western ready-made patterns? Although we do not get a direct answer to this question in Petráček's book, I believe we can regard its translation into English as an important contribution to the integration of West and Central-European discourses.

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Jan Erik Rekdal and Charles Doherty, eds., *Kings and Warriors in Early North-West Europe*. Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2016. Pp. 480; 10 black-and-white figures and 5 tables. €50. ISBN: 978-1-84682-501-9.

This thought-provoking range of papers analyzes the representation of warriors and kings in Insular and Scandinavian societies throughout the Middle Ages. There are eight chapters spread across 480 pages, which gives each of the authors plenty of space to develop their analyses. Common themes in the book are the development of government and the influence of Christianity, but there is considerable variety in each contribution.

The contents are roughly divided according to geographic areas. The first three papers focus on Insular society. Marged Haycock probes the corpus of Welsh poetry for perceptions of violence and warfare from 600 to 1300. The exploration is done thematically, looking at the benefits of war, the representation of battle and its outcomes, attempts to suppress war, and the pervasiveness of military concepts in literature. Charles Doherty's paper opens with Dumézil's interpretation of the functions of king and warrior in Indo-European society

and asks how this might apply to Irish Christian society. Emphasis is placed on the debates at the turn of the eighth century on the nature of government and society and these are linked with increasing militarization in society and the Christianization of kingship. Jan Erik Rekdal pursues complementary themes by analyzing the Irish Christian interpretations of the warrior ethos, and how death in war and peace was commemorated. The different but interrelated natures of these papers are reflected in their approaches to interpreting one of the most striking early Irish images of the warrior on fol. 200r of the Book of Kells.

The papers of Ralph O'Connor and Morgan Davies compare literature from Celtic-speaking and Germanic-speaking cultures. O'Connor explores the portrayal of warriors as wild and socially dysfunctional, whether as frenzied or shape shifters, using three case studies from Ireland and Iceland. He critiques the notion that these features can simply be interpreted as reflecting an Indo-European inheritance. Examining the differences between literary representations of frenzied warriors, O'Connor suggests that motifs were consciously being played with. Davies compares Beowulf and Táin bó Cúailnge for their different representations of time. Temporality is shown to be a key feature of the Beowulf narrative, but the Táin is more concerned with movement through space. The differences are ascribed to different narrative traditions, although this argument does risk slipping into overarching generalizations. One might challenge whether in general, characters in Irish sagas are resigned to cultural mandates (after all, some of the most famous figures challenge societal expectations) or that reflection on temporality in early Irish literature is lacking (for example, "The Lament of the Old Woman of Beare" or "The Book of Invasions"). Nevertheless, this is an engaging and important analysis.

The last three papers of the volume focus on Old Norse literature. Ian Beuermann looks at the overlapping spheres of kings and warriors in three sagas which are dated to c. 1200. In the texts, warriors act as instructors or makers of kings with different results. These negotiations of the roles of warrior and king are interpreted in the context of Sverrir's reign and the wider Scandinavian diaspora. Jon Gunnar Jørgensen explores the medieval literature surrounding the saint-king Óláfr Haraldsson and presents a convincing case on the changing representations of the saint over time. In the years after Óláfr's death, poems depict the ruler as less blood thirsty and more pious. Stefka Eriksen adopts a broad definition of the medieval warrior and explores the portrayal of men who fight in fourteenth century Icelandic Family Sagas, Legendary Sagas, and Romance Sagas. The different thematic preoccupations of each genre are shown to validate the modern categorizations of medieval Icelandic literature. A strong theme in Eriksen's paper is the analysis of the inner ethical discourse and dilemmas of fighting men and how that might reflect the audience's need to negotiate their own identity in relation to society.

The medieval king and warrior was often equated with masculine military strength and power. The lack of engagement with theoretical literature about medieval masculinity in this book is therefore surprising. The medieval constructs of masculine identity pushed men to display their status and compete with male rivals in what could be a zero-sum game, as explained, for example, by Jo Ann McNamara ("The Herrenfrage: The Restructuring of the Gender System, 1050–1150," in *Medieval Masculinities*, ed. Clare A. Lees [1994], 3–29, at 22). The papers in the volume observe that the characterization of kings and warriors overlapped considerably in the early Middle Ages, but as time passed the physical dangers of royal competition were increasingly delegated to a fighting class, allowing the roles of warrior and ruler to become more distinct. Nowadays, competing politicians send people to war with little physical danger to themselves. It is predominantly lower-class male recruits who are required to carry the expectations of socially constructed masculinity in war: to be strong, fearless, unquestioning of higher powers, and to suppress emotion; despite the trauma and long-term psychological damage that may result. The familiarity of representations of warriors and leaders may give this book broad appeal. It is an engaging set of case studies which

provides insight not only into the roles of kings and warriors, but also more broadly on literature and religion in northwestern Europe in the Middle Ages.

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The field of narratology has served for decades as a major interdisciplinary interface between the formal study of privileged "literature" (novels, poems, drama) and the sociological and anthropological study of "culture," as this is recorded in official narratives (medical histories, court records, bureaucratic protocols) and in unofficial ones (folktales, jokes, anecdotes). Narratology provides helpful models for understanding the common and divergent structural features of stories in all these categories, and hence for understanding how the dominant configurations of these structural features inform the configurations of a social world. It is therefore fitting that E. L. Risden should apply the methods of narratology to the canon of medieval literature, both because of the interdisciplinary nature of the field of medieval studies and because of the predisciplinary nature of medieval writing, which routinely transgresses the categorical divisions outlined above. Indeed, insofar as the methods of narratology are rooted in the taxonomies of comparative folklore pioneered by Vladimir Propp, the application of narratological methods to medieval texts is in fact a highly traditionalist gesture, positioning the critic so that she (or, in this case, he) must either engage with and challenge the more conservative tendencies of both medieval studies and narratology or, conversely, celebrate them.

In this book, Risden first describes and then applies his own narratological concept of "subversion," which plays across three senses of this word. In the first, subversion occurs when some sort of readerly or critical expectation is not met, which expectation may originate either in the plot of the work itself ("Many of us love mystery novels; mysteries hinge on subversions, each twist and clue subverting the narrative" [17]), in the conventions of the text's genre ("Among the most-traveled of narrative subversions, Shakespeare's *Hamlet* famously suspends the progress of the ostensible plot" [26]), in the cultural assumptions of the text's milieu ("Exile subverts the 'proper' course of life" [63]), or in the critic's own account of shared human experience ("medieval narrative subversions . . . pinpoint the problems of human loneliness" [37]). In its second sense, subversion is a "sub-version," which is to say a subordinate version of the text's primary plot, such as for example an implied alternative sequence of events or a subplot. In the third sense, subversions may be translations, interpretations, or even rereadings of texts wherein their elements appear to the reader to have shifted. Risden's account of the interrelationship between these senses of subversion could use elaboration, as it is not always clear why it is helpful to use the single term "subversion" to describe them all, but the basic sense in all cases appears to be that subversion is the name for the mechanisms whereby narrative works innovate in relation to the tradition that contextualizes their innovations, whether these innovations are introduced to the text in the moment of its composition or to the context of reception by the processes of circulation.

Certainly, innovation in literature is a vast subject, and so it is perhaps no wonder that Risden finds purchase for his analysis in an extremely broad range of works in this compact volume. After providing a general account of subversion in chapter 1, Risden turns to *Oedipus Rex*, *Hamlet*, and *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* in chapter 2, *Beowulf* in chapter 3, Old English exile poems in chapter 4, Icelandic sagas in chapter 5, grail legends in chapter 6, *Piers Plowman* and Dante's *Commedia* in chapter 7, Malory's *Morte* in chapter 8, *Troilus and Cressida* in chapter 9, and Gavin Douglas's *Eneados* in the postscript, not counting local consider-