unappealingly religious. Not enough of the essays confront this challenge. The one that does is quite good: Nicholas Watson teaches the poem as a kind of “secular theology,” arguing that the value of the poem is “an exercise in the experience of pastness” (84). Only two other essays, by Brandolino and Prendergast, are aware of the challenge, and they solve it, rather less helpfully, by translating medieval Christianity into something else: Piers is a social and cultural figure; or the poem is about interpretation.

The largest obstacles to teaching Piers may not be internal to the poem but may rather have to do with our institutions, with falling enrollments in English courses, and the decreasing number of tenured positions in medieval literature. Of these obstacles, the essays seem largely unaware: they assume a stable, traditional, and homogeneous audience of trained medievalists teaching English majors in required courses. None of the essays, with the exception of Watson’s eloquent meditation, takes up the vital question of why one would be teaching Piers Plowman now, let alone the question of the future of this already under-taught poem in a shrinking field. Indeed, David Lawton’s opening essay on literariness sets a tone that is both scholarly and backward-looking. If this poem is to have a future in the academy, it needs teachers now, and that means coming up with practical solutions along the lines of Crassons’s service-learning. Some sustained attempts to imagine the needs of instructors would have made this collection feel more current, even if the essays did not directly examine the crises I mention. For a model, Goodmann could have looked at another volume in this series, Approaches to Teaching Chaucer’s “Canterbury Tales,” edited by Peter Travis and Frank Grady (2014), which is far more audience-oriented: Travis and Grady describe the results of a survey of Chaucerians and include essays for instructors of general education courses, diverse student bodies, and high-school students. Goodmann could have delivered on the opening claim “to support and encourage instructors—nonspecialists and specialists alike” (xiv) by including more essays explicitly directed to a variety of instructors, institutions, and courses. Asking for a book about teaching to address our institutional constraints is perhaps unconventional, but if Piers Plowman has taught me anything, it is that questions about learning cannot be answered without attention to the social and economic conditions under which we live.

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The delight in the pursuit for the King Arthur, if he existed, is often found in the search itself. Academics, History Channel viewers, and hikers on Glastonbury Tor all have a favorite candidate, and few can be shaken from their positions. Nicholas Higham patiently and painstakingly analyzes all the possible evidence using his tremendous insight and profound knowledge of the pan-historical nature of the Arthurian legends. With a highly engaging prose style and delightful pacing, Higham walks the curious reader through the “foreign” Arthurs in part 1 and the “British” Arthur in part 2. Ultimately, Higham invites the readers to draw their own conclusions. The book is an absolute must-have for anyone studying the origins of how King Arthur’s story began.
The book is further organized into two sections of four chapters each. In the first chapter, Higham rigorously and systematically assesses the candidacy of L. Artorius Castus, a Roman soldier who had command of a military force with a British contingent. In a fluent and fluid discussion of Roman history in Dalmatia and the eastern Roman Empire, Higham assembles, translates, and analyzes two monuments erected to Artorius. Ultimately, Higham concludes that beyond the name Artorius, there is no good reason to think Lucius Artorius Castus was the origin of the Arthur legend.

In chapter 2, Higham unpacks C. Scott Littleton and Ann C. Thomas's assertion that the Eurasian legend of Arthur was introduced to Britain during the Roman period by the Sarmatians around the year AD 175 ("The Sarmatian Connection: New Light on the Origin of the Arthurian and Holy Grail Legends," Journal of American Folklore 91, no. 359 [January–March 1978]: 513–527). While Higham gives us meticulous historical accounts of the Sarmatians and their cultural intersections with Rome, ultimately, he concludes that Littleton's theory is based on a complex web of suppositions that fails the historical test.

Chapter 3 explores Joël Grisward's theory that there is a connection between the tales of the early Celts in the Iranian-speaking lands of the Ossetians (the Narts) and the Arthurian legends ("Le Motif de l’Épée Jetée au Lac: la mort d’Artur et la mort de Batradz," Romania 90, no. 360 [1969]: 473–514). Higham gives a superb summary of Nart sagas and how the stories from beyond the Roman frontier of the Danube might have links to the stories of Arthur. While there are some tantalizing parallels—the hero as target of divine anger, the sword in the lake, a sacred drinking vessel, and a potential origin of the Avalon legend—Higham understands these narrative motifs as parallels in a common hero's journey and not causal.

In chapter 4, Higham builds on the L. Artorius Castus, Sarmatian, and Eurasian theories and explores Graham Anderson's theory, put forward in his book King Arthur in Antiquity (2004), that King Arthur had a “Greek connection.” Higham argues that the case for a Greek Arthur might be linked to classical astronomy, specifically Arcturus and Ursa Major. Higham believes there may be a connection between the medieval King Arthur in Geoffrey of Monmouth's thirteenth-century History of the Kings of Britain. There were figures in Greek mythology whose names closely resemble the Old Welsh name Arthur, but that may be as far as we can take the argument.

In part 2 Higham deals with what academics refer to as the “matter of Britain,” the legendary material associated with Great Britain and Brittany, along with their kings and heroes. In chapter 5, he explores the Gallic legend of Ri thighamus. Modern historian Geoffrey Ashe, in his book The Discovery of King Arthur (1985), has argued that Ri thighamus led a British army against the Goths in the late fifth century. Higham also looks at the sixth-century historian Gildas and his de excidio Britannie and logically unpacks the problems in Gildas's chronology (along with the inescapable truth that Gildas nowhere names any military leader “Arthur”). The chapter also includes Welsh legends Marwnad Cynddylan and Y Gododdin, but Higham sets both aside as unreliable and misleading in the search for King Arthur.

In the sixth chapter, Higham explores the rise of the ancillary characters in the Arthurian legend, focusing on those characters that are more recognizable to a popular audience: Merlin and Guinevere. Higham also explains how the infusion of Christianity into early medieval Britain brought about organic changes to the texts of Nennius's ninth-century Historia Brittonum. Higham points out that the battles Nennius lists cannot be confirmed as having taken place and indeed may have been based on a preexisting Welsh praise poem. It is likely the Historia Brittonum's purpose was to serve as political propaganda for the Welsh king Merfyn to be recognized as king of all the Britons.

The “matter of Britain” continues in chapter 7, where Higham collates the stories that give Geoffrey of Monmouth his source material for the twelfth-century History of the Kings of Britain. Higham hypothesizes that these Welsh stories, Nennius, Gildas, and the anonymous Welsh legends that circulated, were of increasing interest to the Celtic intelligentsia. There was a cultural drive in the High Middle Ages to link Welsh history to the classical world of Greece.
and Rome. That was likely why Monmouth reconstructed his Arthur as a descendant of Brutus and made him part of the imperial past.

The final chapter explores the narrative need to find a single Arthur that extended beyond the classical and medieval periods. There is an imperative to find a king narratively pliable enough to fit into whatever an era considers a good leader. Higham looks at Malory’s fifteenth-century *Le Morte d’Arthur*, John Rastell’s sixteenth century *Pastyme of People*, and other Arthurs, such as those depicted in the novels of Walter Scott and the poetry of Alfred, Lord Tennyson. Higham concludes the chapter by saying that there is no “real” King Arthur. Yet therein lies his fascination and his value. He is a figure of smoke and highland mist.

*King Arthur: The Making of the Legend* is the peak of what historical research should be: detailed, engaged with the pan-historical scholarly conversation on the matter, and with a level of research that should serve as an example to all other historians. The thirty-two color plates, seven maps, and complete bibliography make the book a comprehensive and impressive resource for the scholar and amateur historian alike. If the book has one flaw, it is that Higham proved his argument too well. There are multiple potential King Arthurs and no “once and future king” who can claim that identity.

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In this loosely argued book, Sarah Hogan shows how “early English fictions of alterity demonstrate a range of subjective and class responses to the lived experience of emergent capitalism” (10). As Hogan’s own italics suggest, *range* is the operative word here. Under the rubric of “utopian,” Hogan groups together works that are disparate in origin, intended audience, and even the language in which they were written, among them More’s Latin *Utopia* (1516), Spenser’s *A View of the Present State of Ireland* (1596), Aemelia Lanyer’s “The Description of Cooke-ham” (1611), and Milton’s *Areopagitica* (1644). Of course, Hogan’s book is not the first on utopian literature to reflect the genre’s own breadth, and she may be right to avoid too strictly limiting utopianism, which, quoting Ruth Levitas’s *The Concept of Utopia* (1990), she defines at one point as a “desire for a better way of living” (151). But the differences among a Latin dialogue intended for a European humanist audience, a colonialist tract, a country-house poem, and a pamphlet about printing regulations are worthy of more extended notice than Hogan gives them. At points the commensurability of all these texts seems forced.

The organizing principle of the book is Marxist theory, in particular as it pertains to the “primitive accumulation” stage of capitalism. Citing a host of Marxist critics and theorists, Hogan wants to free Marxism from the stigma of a “supersessionary vision of progress” and demonstrate instead its awareness of the “uneven transition from feudalism to capitalism” (34). In practice her emphasis on this unevenness leads to overly schematic and yet still unclear readings of texts. In Book I of *Utopia*, for instance, the dialogue at Cardinal Morton’s table figures as a revival of the “late feudal form” of estates satire (43), a formulation that may possess some truth but does not include any acknowledgement of this revival being embedded in a larger discussion of the favorite Renaissance humanist topos of advising the prince. Moreover, in what sense are the voices of the friar and lawyer at Morton’s table “socially