A thorough, detailed, and accessibly written account of the interrelations of the manuscripts of *Enska Visan* (*The English Verse*) is undertaken by Martin Chase. He leads us through family, social, and intellectual relationships, tracking the copying of this poem. With similarities to *Sir Orfeo*, it defies categorization in a traditional Icelandic genre. Chase concludes his lively account with an academic, and yet highly readable, edition of the text.

The collection of essays concludes with Alison Adair Alberts's study of John Foxe's *Book of Martyrs* as reframing mother martyrs in the Protestant tradition. Her textual analysis identifies a shift that recognizes suffering as an intersection of the domestic and the spiritual. Alberts's work invites us to rethink women as mothers and as spiritual beings. It contextualizes female reading culture in a way that invites conversation about changing understandings of religious texts, secular life, and spiritual controls and freedoms.

The book concludes with a bibliographical list of Erler's work. It is a well-crafted edition of thematically linked, yet very different, studies in history. By provoking questions and connections, it truly honours the scholar for whom it was created.

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Cole, Michael W., *Sofonisba's Lesson: A Renaissance Artist and her Work*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2020; hardback; pp. 312; 25 b/w and 256 colour illustrations; R.R.P. US$60.00; ISBN 9780691198323.

Sofonisba Anguissola (*c.* 1535–1625) was the first Italian Renaissance woman artist to achieve international recognition. Considered by her contemporaries as a marvellously gifted painter after nature, Sofonisba's portraits, her specialization, were believed to come 'alive' (Vasari, 'Vita di Benvenuto Garofalo e di Girolamo da Carpi, pittori ferraresi, e d'altri Lombardi', in his *Le Vite de più eccellenti pittori, scultori et architettori*, 2 vols, Florence, Giunti, 1568, II, 561–62).

Michael Cole's *Sofonisba's Lesson* brilliantly brings this female artist to life, exploring her art within the context of the networks and relationships that formed her world. Sofonisba's paintings, Cole argues, are 'an expression of such relationships' (p. 11)—with her family, above all her father who educated her and promoted her accomplishments; with her teachers, including Michelangelo, who advised her; with members of the Habsburg royal household at Madrid, where she was a court lady for over fifteen years (1559–73); with her students and patrons, including her younger sisters and the queen of Spain; and finally, with her two husbands.

Cole describes these connections as 'pedagogical' (p. 11)—relationships based on some form of education. This is reflected in the book's chapter headings—'In the Presence of Her Father'; 'The Most Affectionate Disciple'; 'The Image of Learnedness'; 'The Image of Teaching; Spain'; and 'Painting and the Education of Daughters'. Thus, the central theme of the Cole's book is learning and teaching, arguing that Sofonisba was the first woman artist to both teach other

women and have a number of young male artists seek her out for painting advice throughout her life, such as Anton Van Dyck in 1624 (p. 150). The Flemish artist claimed that he learnt more from this elderly female painter than from the works of other major artists (p. 150). Sofonisba also developed new artistic genres—the independent self-portrait; the family portrait; and the *conversation piece* as exemplified by the first group portrait to feature only women, *The Chess Game* (1555). It depicts her three younger sisters involved in an intellectual pastime, as the family's maidservant looks on. Sofonisba's art, as Cole deftly demonstrates, represents women in the act of some learned activity, be it reading or learning to read, at the spinet or easel, or writing.

Sofonisba, however, was not a professional painter—she didn't receive commissions as such and was not remunerated for her artwork, which circulated in a court culture of diplomatic gift exchange. The artist hailed from a family of minor nobility from Cremona in northern Italy, and her father Amilcare took the unprecedented step of sending Sofonisba and her younger sister Lucia to learn painting from the Cremonese artist Bernardino Campi, and later Bernardino Gatti. Amilcare's motives may have been pecuniary (the Anguissola family had fallen on hard times), but Cole argues that he was an enlightened father responding to the growing cultural milieu that saw noblewomen's education include intellectual pursuits such as music, writing, and painting, even chess, as expounded in the conduct literature of the period. As such, Sofonisba's artistic training was part of a broader humanist education that was beginning to be advocated for girls during the Renaissance. As learned and talented women, Amilcare's five daughters were more likely to find appropriate connections in the upper echelons of society or at court. Indeed, the accomplished Sofonisba became a favourite of Isabel of Valois at the Spanish court, where she was employed as a lady-in-waiting to the young queen (with a pension), also teaching her and members of the royal household to draw and paint. She was to become governess to Isabel's two daughters after the queen's death in 1568.

Given her social position, Cole defines Sofonisba's artistic practice as that of an amateur, a new Renaissance type whereby learned (male) aristocrats took an interest in art and painting, itself now considered a noble intellectual pursuit, having recently been elevated to a liberal art. Thus, she painted for her own pleasure as well as for the delight of others.

For Cole, Sofonisba's lesson ultimately is that she was an example for other women artists to follow, opening a path to female self-actualization. As a role model, Sofonisba Anguissola demonstrated that through education and supported by strong family, social, and diplomatic networks, women could achieve success and international fame.

The book is liberally and lavishly illustrated, mostly in colour, with excellent details of the major works. One of the methodological problems in analysing Sofonisba's art is that there is no full scholarly consensus of her *oeuvre*. Cole redresses this by including the first complete catalogue of Sofonisba's works,

indicating the provenance of each painting or drawing, with a comprehensive bibliography identifying all modern attributions. It is divided into seven sections, of which the first four are the most significant: secure signed works; accepted attributions; contested attributions; and attributions accepted only by a few experts.

This reader would have welcomed more judicious copy-editing, as extra prepositions pop up occasionally. 'Hapsburg' [sic] is used throughout. An error referencing an illustration occurs on page 83 where (fig. 6) should read (fig. 14). These minor criticisms aside, *Sofonisba's Lesson* makes a significant and welcome contribution to our understanding of Sofonisba Anguissola's life and art, and to the expanding field of studies on early modern women artists, accessible to specialists and enthusiasts alike.

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Coss, Peter, Chris **Dennis**, Melissa **Julian-Jones**, and Angelo **Silvestri**, eds, *Episcopal Power and Personality in Medieval Europe, 900–1480* (Medieval Church Studies, 42), Turnhout, Brepols, 2020; cloth; pp. vii, 303; 1 b/w illustration, 5 colour plates; R.R.P. €85.00; ISBN 9782503585000.

It is difficult to exaggerate the role of bishops in medieval Europe. They often had to navigate a delicate tightrope between the demands of the Church and the pressures of the state. But what is a bishop? These figures are hardly shadowy, and they were thought to hold power directly from God and functioned as divine representatives on earth, while their charisma reflected and influenced their communities of activity. They were leaders, politicians, warriors, and officials of the Church, sometimes functioning in all of these roles simultaneously. This volume assesses the medieval episcopate in terms of power and personality. It is a collection of fourteen essays that emerged from a 2015 conference that discussed these themes. The volume seeks to clarify issues around the interface between the personalities of bishops and how this shaped their office, suggests how the reader might best decipher traces of personality in the sources, and how one might untangle the barnacled traditions of hagiography, canonization, and chronicler accounts, all of which tend to add nuance, interpretation, and multiple agendas to the lives and work of these important figures. Naturally, there are silences and limitations in surviving accounts. The editors have drawn together an impressionistic tapestry of episcopal power and personality based on a wide range of sources including chronicles, hagiographical texts, liturgical manuscripts, architecture, and character sketches mined from a variety of historical narratives created between the tenth and fifteenth centuries.

What do we learn? Importantly, that bishops are best understood not in their cathedrals but in relation to society around them. Some of these prelates were failures, others wildly successful. But how does one measure success a millennium ago? Crucial here, as the authors underscore, are the relationships fostered and sustained with lay power. Some of the narratives reflect serious rivalries. Could bishops flourish if hostility prevailed between prince and prelate? It cannot be