

work extremely convenient and also whets the appetite for the feast of material that lies just ahead. Every chapter is a feast: deep and serious scholarship well-seasoned with Primiano's utter delight in his subject matter, garnished with sprinklings of open humor.

Don't skip Primiano's detailed acknowledgments, for the extent and seriousness of his collaborative approach and his active solicitation of peer review at every step. Also included are some useful bibliographic tidbits about the origins of many of the papers or their crucial concepts. Make sure to read the extensive notes, with their astounding multidisciplinary bibliography, making this a valuable reference in itself. There is also a list of further reading, consisting mostly of more recent pieces from 1997 to 2017.

This collected volume is an immense contribution to scholars of religion and folklife, irrespective of their disciplinary backgrounds. Anyone with more than a passing interest in religion and spirituality and their myriad expressions in the everyday lives of believers will find this book indispensable, both as a reference work and as a superb tool for honing thoughts and theories.

This book is also a work of relevance to anyone interested in conducting ethnographic research and publication in any inquiry. Speaking as a folklorist and ethnographer, I can attest that Primiano's ethnographic writing is exemplary, both for focused articles and for much broader and more encyclopedic studies, providing impeccable models for long-term trustworthy fieldwork and collaboratively created, nuanced, thick description. Iterative without being merely repetitive, these pieces illustrate the development and maturation of an ever-deepening comprehension gleaned over the course of more than two decades of annotation, interviewing, filming, photographing, participant observation, and direct discussion of findings with community members.

It is wonderful to have these excellent papers bound together in a single volume. Students and scholars of folklore and religious studies owe a debt of gratitude to the editor and colleagues who brought this volume to press, and to the author who originated it.

The Wife of Bath in Afterlife: Ballads to Blake.

By Betsy Bowden. (Bethlehem, PA: Lehigh University Press, 2017. Pp. vii + 391, list of illustrations, list of abbreviations, introduction, conclusion, appendixes, works cited, index, about the author.)

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Seemingly written with ease, *The Wife of Bath in Afterlife: Ballads to Blake* introduces, defines, elucidates, compares, summarizes, contrasts, explores, and examines one of the most enthralling literary characters—the Wife of Bath—of the celebrated medieval writer Geoffrey Chaucer. For all who have a yearning for and an eagerness to learn insightful details about the Wife of Bath via motivational methodologies perfect for in-depth instruction, close study, vibrant discussion, and self-betterment, this book engages scholarship beyond the norms of standard medievalism.

The Wife of Bath is a vital female character whose “afterlife” will likely reverberate throughout the twenty-first century and beyond. What makes this particular work stand out among other Wife of Bath tomes is that it adds frequently overlooked, undervalued, overrated, and discarded considerations of the long eighteenth century (namely, 1660–1810) that promote clearer understandings, fascinating revelations, and marvelous approaches to grasping the extensive essence of Chaucer's indelible character.

The book's 14 chapters treat the immensity of the Wife of Bath through ballads, commentary, modernizations, plays, translations, illustrations, paintings, “audiovisual oneness,” and much more (p. 275). Each chapter is informative, detailed, stimulating, and perhaps even eye-opening for many readers. The chapters are heavy with specific in-text sources and citations, pictorial ballads, and drawings, as well as proverbs and explanatory notes.

The book explores both the verbal art of language and the visual art of illustrations from Chaucer's time to the present day. One notable example of verbal art comes from the poet and bookseller Andrew Jackson (1695–1778), who

“modernized . . . the Wife of Bath [through] proverbs, phallic imagery, and much verve and zest to address the audience of women” (p. 83). Although Bowden admits that “nothing is known about Jackson’s private life,” she finds that “his public-sphere participation is comparatively well documented” and that Jackson “was well regarded among ‘dealers in old books, and black letter’” (p. 79).

One of the better examples of visual art comes from the English poet, painter, and printmaker William Blake (1757–1827), who was frequently overlooked or certainly underestimated by his peers of the British Romantic era. The copperplate engraving (ca. 1820–1823) of his painting *Canterbury Pilgrims* shows the Wife of Bath riding “not only spraddle-legged but also—in conspicuous contrast to the Prioress—sidesaddle to the off (right-hand side)” (p. 276). According to Bowden, Blake “knew enough about horseback riding and more than enough about mirror-image reversal” to correct the errors of an engraving that “did not take into account mirror-image reversal” (p. 285).

The Wife of Bath in Afterlife is a must-read not only for all serious-minded Chaucerian scholars but also for avid readers who earnestly endeavor to enhance their knowledge about the Wife of Bath and to broaden their capacity for learning. This book is ideal for college/university programs in the liberal arts, public libraries nationwide, academic libraries, and personal-home libraries that aim to contain well-written, thought-provoking books of scholarship.

The Spirit of Soul Food: Race, Faith, and Food Justice. By Christopher Carter. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2021. Pp. ix + 179, preface, notes, works cited, a note on the recording, index.)

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Christopher Carter makes several compelling arguments in *The Spirit of Soul Food: Race, Faith, and Food Justice*. One is that soul food is more than just a cuisine used for daily con-

sumption and nourishment; rather, it serves to preserve all aspects of the African American/African diaspora from the colonial period to present-day United States. Carter bolsters this argument by framing soul food through its origins in West Africa and by examining the connections between food, culture, celebration, and the social activities of African Americans. Moreover, Carter identifies how colonial African American foodways in the United States have maintained their contemporary relevance.

Carter’s argument for the colonial influence on the definition of African American contemporary foodways aligns with similar arguments made in Anne Bower’s *African American Foodways: Explorations of History and Culture* (Bower, ed., University of Illinois Press, 2007). Both Carter and Bower call for a deeper examination of the dynamics behind African American foodways. According to Carter, “a decolonized understanding of our culinary and agricultural knowledge equips us to develop a more nuanced understanding of the development and importance of Black foodways and what we need to unlearn” (p. 58). Bower echoes this point, identifying in her book the importance of examining how the cultivation of commodities like sugar and rice in the New World led to the enslavement of West Africans.

As suggested by the book’s title, a second central argument in *The Spirit of Soul Food* is the significance of soulfulness and spirituality. According to Carter, all Christians should examine “food justice as an essential aspect of Christian social justice practice” (p. 3). Issues of food cultivation and distribution are inextricably linked to issues of social justice.

Carter’s usage of foodways to explore the African/African American diaspora and the food identity of the United States is both ingenious and stimulating. His book provides much food for thought for academics examining several related topics, including the development of African American foodways and Southern cuisine; the White European influence on narratives surrounding African American foodways and cuisine; and the role Christians played to promote the accurate narrative of Black ingenuity in cultivation, despite how White colonial