

norris lacy and geoffrey ashe with debra n. mancoff, *The Arthurian Handbook*. Second Edition. New York: Garland, 1997. Pp. xliii, 409. isbn: 0-8153-2082-5. \$66. isbn: 0-8153-2081-7. \$22.95.

The original edition of *The Arthurian Handbook* contained a wealth of basic information about the Arthurian legends. What was most impressive was the ability of the book's authors, Norris Lacy and Geoffrey Ashe, to summarize the Arthurian tradition from its origins to the twentieth century in a manner that was readable and reliable.

The second edition of the *Handbook* has enhanced the survey of Arthuriana primarily by the revision of the chapter on 'Arthur in the Arts.' For the revision, the original authors enlisted the help of Debra Mancoff, herself the author of two books on Arthurian art. The art historian's touch is seen not only in the reorganization of this chapter and the addition of detail but also in the increased number of illustrations. This alone makes the second edition more attractive to anyone interested in the entire scope of the Arthurian tradition. The one unfortunate element of this revision is that all of the illustrations have been reproduced in black and white—almost certainly not an authorial decision but a publisher's economic decision. Nevertheless, it is good to have some classic scenes from medieval romances represented, such as Lancelot Riding in the Cart and the first kiss between Lancelot and Guinevere. Likewise, some classics of modern illustration, Aubrey Beardsley's depiction of Tristram drinking the love potion and Crane's representation of Galahad being presented to Arthur, for example, have also been added to the second edition. Of course, everyone will be able to name illustrators or artists or individual works that are not represented—Howard Pyle, N. C. Wyeth, Eleanor Fortescue-Brickdale, and George Frederick Watts's *Sir Galahad* spring to mind. There will necessarily be omissions in a handbook: it is the nature of the beast. Selection—or rather omission—is one of the most difficult tasks the authors of such a work face; and although everyone will have some favorite that has been omitted, the authors of this book have selected judiciously and presented many of the images one would like to see in such a volume.

Other enhancements to the volume are as welcome as the additional illustrations. Particularly useful for students will be the genealogies. Providing Arthur's genealogy according to three different sources—Geoffrey of Monmouth, Malory, and the French Vulgate *Merlin*—helps to underscore the variety of versions of the Arthurian story and is a useful reminder to students seeking the one true account of Arthur's life that there is no such thing. Also of use to the student are some of the 'boxes and sidebars' (a distinction that is not entirely clear) that the editors have added to the text. It is helpful to have brief summary definitions of terms like chivalry and courtly love, though one would like to have seen more of topics such as these and less of the brief comments on incidents from the legend such as Arthur's departure for Avalon or his pulling of the sword from the stone. More interesting than these brief summaries of one version of the story is the long box on the Grail. Running for three and a half pages, it give brief quotations from eleven different sources and demonstrates a wide variety of approaches from Chrétien to Monty Python.

One other feature of the second edition that is worth noting is the updating and expansion of the bibliography. There are important additions to every subcategory; and while the bibliography is still highly selective, it, like the text and illustrations, has been improved in this version.

Compiling a handbook on a topic as vast and multi-faceted as the Arthurian legends is a task as difficult as those given to Culhwch by Ysbaddaden. Lacy, Ashe, and Mancoff have managed the task and made it look easier than it is. In revising the original edition, the authors have wisely chosen to enhance rather than change. The result is that it is even more useful, especially for students, than the first edition.

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