In this section, Martin Dubois reviews publications on Arnold, Edward FitzGerald, Hopkins, William Morris, the Rossettis, women poets, working-class poets, poetry from 1830 to 1880 and work by Gregory Tate. Gregory Tate reviews publications on the Brownings, Michael Field, Swinburne, Tennyson and poetry from 1880 to 1900.

The most wide-ranging study of Victorian poetry published in 2009 was Jason R. Rudy’s *Electric Meters: Victorian Physiological Poetics*. Rudy’s book manages to be both comprehensive and detailed in its analysis of Victorian poetry’s engagement with two related areas of Victorian science: physiology and electricity. All Victorian poets, Rudy suggests, have a view on physiology, either celebrating or denying the role of the body in the composition and reading of poetry, and these writers consistently approach this issue through the trope of electricity. Chapter 1 of *Electric Meters* examines the work of Mary Robinson and Felicia Hemans, arguing that these Romantic poetesses remain aloof from embodied experience. Subsequent chapters consider what Rudy calls ‘Victorian poetry’s turn to the body’ (p. 21). Chapter 2 looks at Tennyson’s fascination with physical sensation in the first half of his career and suggests that electrical metaphors, and particularly that of the telegraph, were vital to his portrayal of sensation. Chapter 3 builds on recent critical interest in Spasmodic poetry to identify this short-lived movement of the 1850s as the epitome of Victorian physiological verse, while Chapter 4 shows how poets such as Coventry Patmore and, to a lesser extent, Hopkins reacted against Spasmodism, developing prosodic systems that emphasized the disembodied nature of metre and poetry. Chapter 5 argues that theories of electromagnetism and evolution enabled a renewed focus on the body in the later nineteenth century, a trend evident in the work of Swinburne and Mathilde Blind. In his conclusion Rudy suggests that even Victorian spiritualism, and the poetry that it inspired, made use of physical and electrical conceits, thus affirming his contention that physiology was a central concern of all strands of Victorian poetry.

Monique R. Morgan’s book *Narrative Means, Lyric Ends: Temporality in the Nineteenth-Century British Long Poem* considers nineteenth-century lyric and narrative poetry not as separate genres, but as
distinct modes that co-exist within individual poems. As is suggested by the title, this book differentiates lyric and narrative in terms of their relation to time, through their ‘respective simultaneity and temporal progression’ (p. 12). This idea threatens to make for a rather narrow definition, particularly of lyric, but Morgan’s application of it to specific long poems is surprisingly fruitful. The introduction to the book provides a slightly rushed but nonetheless informative account of recent theoretical and critical perspectives on narrative and lyric. After this, Morgan moves on to case studies of nineteenth-century poetry, and in her first chapter she argues that the multiple narratives of Byron’s Don Juan are presented through an essentially atemporal, static lyric voice. The second chapter of the book focuses on The Prelude, examining how Wordsworth attempts to sustain the simultaneity of lyric across a long poem by assimilating his succession of lyric passages into a narrative structure. Morgan’s next two chapters move forward to consider Victorian poetry, specifically that of the Brownings. Chapter 3 argues that Elizabeth Barrett Browning juxtaposes lyric and narrative in Aurora Leigh in order to interrogate the gendered connotations of these poetic modes and to explore the limitations of narrative authority, while Chapter 4 suggests that Robert Browning ‘achieves a seamless blend’ (p. 155) of narrative and lyric in his use of the dramatic monologue form in The Ring and the Book. In her postscript, Morgan offers readings of two Victorian poems which she claims to do not conform to her view of nineteenth-century poetry as a mixture of lyric and narrative: Tennyson’s Idylls of the King and George Meredith’s Modern Love.

In The Age of Eclecticism: Literature and Culture in Britain, 1815-1885, Christine Bolus-Reichert claims that historical, philosophical, and artistic eclecticism is a crucial but often neglected aspect of nineteenth-century culture. Bolus-Reichert’s book has Victorian poetry, with its eclectic range of forms and concerns, at its heart. The first three chapters of The Age of Eclecticism map out three contexts for the eclecticism of Victorian Britain: Chapter 1 deals with the presence of eclectic discourses in nineteenth-century art and architecture; Chapter 2 with the eclectic and synthetic philosophical system of Victor Cousin; and Chapter 3 with the celebrations and criticisms of eclecticism found in earlier nineteenth-century writers, including Coleridge, Carlyle and Macaulay. The rest of the book attends to
Victorian writers’ responses to the perceived eclecticism of the age. In Chapter 4 Bolus-Reichert considers Tennyson’s *The Princess*, and the critical debates surrounding it, arguing that this poetic ‘medley’ embraces the heterogeneity of modern culture by amalgamating diverse poetic styles and intellectual viewpoints. This strategy was not uncontroversial, and Chapter 5 focuses on Charles Kingsley’s condemnation of unthinking ‘naïve eclecticism’ (p. 167) in his novel *Hypatia*. Chapter 6 returns to poetry, suggesting that the scholarly, speculative character of Arnold’s verse prefigures the ‘volitional eclecticism’ (p. 191) of his criticism, his desire to find and synthesize the ‘best’ of different cultures and literatures. Chapter 7 examines two novels, Hardy’s *A Laodicean* and Pater’s *Marius the Epicurean*, arguing that both texts present cultural and intellectual eclecticism as a means of individual self-development. In the afterword that concludes the book, Bolus-Reichert brings her rehabilitation of eclecticism forward to the present day as she insists that the concept retains great significance in relation to debates about globalization and multiculturalism.

Another 2009 publication of interest to scholars of Victorian poetry is John Holmes’s study of poetic responses to Darwinism, *Darwin’s Bards: British and American Poetry in the Age of Evolution*. This is an ambitious and expansive book, covering poets from across the twentieth century as well as Victorian authors. Organized thematically rather than chronologically, *Darwin’s Bards* contains few chapters solely dedicated to Victorian poetry, but Victorian poets’ examinations of evolution often form the starting-point of Holmes’s discussions. In his first chapter Holmes makes the case for a ‘Darwinian tradition in modern English and American poetry’, originating in the poetry of George Meredith and Thomas Hardy and representing ‘an important and powerful counterweight to modernism’ (p. 25). Meredith and Hardy are key figures for Holmes, but in Chapter 2 he considers the work of other Victorian poets. Mathilde Blind, Swinburne and Tennyson, he argues, participated in a ‘non-Darwinian revolution’ (p. 37) that pervaded late Victorian culture, responding to the troubling implications of Darwin’s theories by writing poems that drew on older, teleological models of evolution. Chapter 3 of *Darwin’s Bards* explores the impact of Darwinism on poets’ views about God, and Holmes here gives an
astute reading of Browning’s ‘Caliban upon Setebos’. Subsequent chapters consider the presence of Darwinian ideas about death, the natural world, animals and sexuality in the work of a number of poets, including Meredith, Hardy, and Constance Naden, the author of the 1887 sequence ‘Evolutional Erotics’. The final chapter of Holmes’s book neatly brings together the strands of his argument through nuanced readings of two mid-Victorian responses to Darwin: Meredith’s ‘Ode to the Spirit of Earth in Autumn’ and Tennyson’s ‘Lucretius’.

A different perspective on Victorian poetry is to be found in The Blackwell Companion to the Bible in English Literature, edited by Rebecca Lemon, Emma Mason, Jonathan Roberts and Christopher Rowland, which contains several essays on Victorian poets. Kevin Mills’s piece on the Brownings (pp. 482-95) shows that Browning and EBB adopted very different viewpoints towards contemporary debates about the bible, with the former being far more willing than the latter to engage with the conclusions of the Higher Criticism. Kirstie Blair’s fine essay on Tennyson (pp. 496-511) notes that he too was interested in contemporary biblical scholarship, but the main thrust of Blair’s argument is that Tennyson employs biblical quotations in his poetry primarily for their sentimental and affective force. A discriminating outline of Christina Rossetti’s relationship to the Bible is provided by Elizabeth Ludlow in her contribution to the volume (pp. 551-62), which adduces the major influences on Rossetti’s approach to biblical interpretation. And Paul S. Fiddes offers an engaging introduction to biblical inspirations for Hopkins’s poetry in his essay (pp. 563-76), even if the decision to confine biblical reference to two Anglican translations is curious given Hopkins’s linguistic range and confessional sensitivities.

There are several poetry-centred contributions in Mariaconcetta Constantini, Francesco Marroni and Anna Enrichetta Soccio’s collection Letter(s): Functions and Forms of Letter-Writing in Victorian Art and Literature, including John Woolford’s essay on ‘Textual Materiality in the Victorian Verse-Letter (pp. 21-38). Alongside brief discussions of Patmore and Browning, Woolford gives consideration to the way in which epistolary convention in Clough’s Amours de Voyage provides an index to its characters’ varying attitudes to social communication. Biancamaria Rizzardi Perutelli’s essay in the same volume, ‘The

Mike Sanders’s *The Poetry of Chartism: Aesthetics, Politics, History* is a major achievement. Sanders mounts a vigorous case for the importance of poetry to the political destiny of Chartist movement; he no less forcefully argues that Chartist poetry should not be thought marginal or alternative to more canonical verse, but rather alters our perception of the nature of Victorian poetry generally. As Sanders observes in a chapter summarizing previous scholarship on the subject, there has been something of a resurgence of interest in Chartist poetry in recent years. What distinguishes this study from most previous work, however, is its concern with the stylistic and formal aspects of the poems it examines. The aesthetic is not suspect in Sanders’s account; on the contrary, he is interested in ‘the political effect of poetic affect’ (p. 13). Three absorbing chapters focus on the poetry column of the *Northern Star*, the leading Chartist newspaper, arguing for the importance of poetry in shaping contemporary appraisals of the 1839 Newport uprising; for its influence on developments in Chartist political and economic analysis during the mass strikes of 1842; and on Chartist perspectives on the European revolutions of 1848. A final chapter takes a different approach, focusing on a single poet, Gerald Massey, and enlisting Walter Benjamin’s reflections on messianism to probe the relation between past, present and future in Massey’s work. There is an appendix giving a complete publication record of the *Northern Star*’s poetry column.

Sanders’s concern with temporality and religious belief in Chartist poetry also finds reflection in Pamela K. Gilbert’s ‘History and its Ends in Chartist Epic’ (*VLC* 37[2009] 27-42). Noting the traffic with eschatological discourse of long poems by Thomas Cooper and Ernest Jones, Gilbert considers how they attempt to correlate particular and universal temporal orders. Other publications on working-class poetry this year include Kirstie Blair’s “‘He Sings Alone’: Hybrid Forms and the Victorian Working-Class
Poet’ (VLC 37[2009] 523-541). Blair adopts the concept of ‘hybridity’ to explore the relationship of working-class poets to the literary canon. She finds that borrowings and appropriations from high poetic culture, rather than diluting political and social radicalism, may constitute both an assertion of literary right and a highlighting of working-class poetry’s exclusion from the established literary tradition. In ‘From Langham Place to Lancashire: Poetry, Community, and the Victoria Press’s Offering to Lancashire’ (VP 47[2009] 517-32), Julie M. Wise traces the political and social implications of a gift book with unexpected ambitions, being an anthology of poems published in 1862 in support of cotton workers then suffering under the trade embargo caused by the American civil war. Florence Boos offers a brief but compelling introduction to Janet Hamilton’s ‘A Plea for the Doric’ in a forum on ‘Key Victorian Texts’ in Victorian Review (VR 35[2009] 41-5).

The bicentenary of the birth of Edward FitzGerald received early celebration in a Victorian Poetry special issue in 2008, but is marked in the year itself by the publication of Daniel Karlin’s new edition of the Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám. There are editorial dilemmas aplenty for any modern editor of the poem, for FitzGerald was an inveterate reviser of his texts: four versions of the Rubáiyát alone were published during his lifetime. Christopher Decker, in his 1997 critical edition, reprints all four; Karlin prefers the first 1859 text, although he includes a lengthy section detailing later revisions. Something of the fullness of Karlin’s attention to FitzGerald’s alterations can be known from the fact that although the poem occupies less than forty pages, the edition as a whole stretches to well over 200. As well as editorial notes, there is a brief account of the publication history of the Rubáiyát, a chronology of FitzGerald’s life, and a selection of early critical responses to the poem. The edition also reprints Tennyson’s ‘To E. FitzGerald’. Karlin’s superb introduction steers a careful course through the tangle of attribution this work of compound authorship represents, combining attention to Persian contexts and the circumstances of FitzGerald’s own life with close attention to the formal and stylistic properties of the poem itself. The edition will surely be the standard reading text for many years to come.
Perhaps the most important of the year’s publications, in terms of its effect on the future direction of Victorian poetry studies, was Michael Field, the Poet: Published and Manuscript Materials, edited by Marion Thain and Ana Parejo Vadillo. Bringing together a wide range of writings by the two women who worked under the name ‘Michael Field’, this single-volume edition is a product of the growing scholarly interest in this important fin de siècle writer, and it will surely be a spur to further work on the poet. The volume opens with an economical introduction that positions the work of Katharine Bradley and Edith Cooper within the contexts of late nineteenth-century feminism and aestheticism. There follows a generous selection from their poetry across their career, which reveals the brilliant sensuousness of Michael Field’s verse, as well as its rich engagement with classical literature and with painting and sculpture. The volume also includes extracts from the journal, Works and Days, which Bradley and Cooper kept for 26 years between 1888 and 1914, and from their correspondence. These prose writings display a rich vein of humour; they also shed light on Bradley and Cooper’s relations with figures as diverse as Ruskin, Browning and the artists Charles Ricketts and Charles Shannon. The volume concludes with a brief but nonetheless revealing selection of contemporary reviews of Field’s work. This book is a work of great editorial skill, bringing together a wide range of material in one accessible volume, and it will make a major contribution to future work on Michael Field and on late-Victorian poetry more broadly.

Patricia Rigg’s Julia Augusta Webster: Victorian Aestheticism and the Woman Writer is a notable contribution to the study of Webster’s life and poetry. The biographical insights culled from Rigg’s extensive archival research would by themselves have significance, but the particular merit of her book lies in the sensitivity with which she brings such insights to bear upon the poems. Rigg’s approach is chronological, beginning with lesser-known early work, in which she sees the seed of Webster’s later aestheticism, and ending with the sonnet-sequence written in the period before Webster’s death, and published posthumously. On the way, there are apt considerations of the relation of Webster’s labours on behalf of the suffrage movement to her poetic commitments as well as of her work on the London
School Board. There is extensive discussion of Webster’s journalism, especially her articles and reviews for the *Examiner*. The thoroughness with which Rigg documents Webster’s diverse literary activities cannot be faulted, even if—perhaps as a consequence of her biographical slant—the book’s local arguments are never fully combined into an overarching thesis. If there is a thesis underlying Rigg’s study, it might be that the aestheticist thread to Webster’s thought is present from the beginning, but this is a line of reasoning which comes and goes depending on the chapter. Given the comprehensiveness of her treatment, Rigg might have allowed herself to stake out a rather larger claim for Webster’s importance than the muted, page-long outline of Webster’s legacy on which her study ends. The book’s value for comprehending Webster’s achievement is, however, undoubted.

In *Women Writers and the Dark Side of Late-Victorian Aestheticism*, T.D. Olverson argues for the distinctiveness of literary renderings of ancient Greek myth and culture by a number of Victorian women writers. This is one of a number of recent studies—Yopie Prins’s *Victorian Sappho* (1999) is another—to have paid attention to the engagement of Victorian women with Hellenism. Webster’s sustained engagement with ancient Greek literature began with her 1866 translation of Aeschylus’s *Prometheus Bound*. The first chapter of Olverson’s book considers the translation alongside Webster’s later poetry, in which the women of Greek mythology, especially Medea and Circe, are strong presences. Chapter 2 finds that Amy Levy enlists the Medea myth, and the story of Xantippe, the wife of Socrates, to offer poetic opposition to the marginalization of women in Victorian society. Emily Pfeiffer, a subsequent chapter argues, concerned with some of the same myths and stories in her poetry, has a similar ambition in mind: the subversion of male power. In Chapter 4, Olverson turns to Michael Field, contending that Hellenism is a crucial means to exploring homoerotic desire in Bradley and Cooper’s poetry. The maenads and Dionysiac religion have a particular importance in their reimagining of sexual and gender identity. Finally, Chapter 5 discusses the importance of Medea for a range of *fin-de-siècle* writers, chiefly Mona Caird and Vernon Lee. In each of these chapters, Olverson reveals the way adaptations and
appropriations of Greek literature and myth serve as a commentary on Victorian social and political life. The attention to Pfeiffer—as Olverson notes, a poet still too little-studied—is particularly welcome.

In terms of other work on women poets, Kathryn Ledbetter’s *British Victorian Women’s Periodicals: Beauty, Civilization, and Poetry*, which considers a raft of lesser-known women poets alongside more familiar names, is covered in section 4. Clare Broome Saunders’s wide-ranging *Women Writers and Nineteenth-Century Medievalism* has a large concern with Victorian poetry, discussing, amongst others, EBB and Augusta Webster. It is covered in section 1. Kate Flint’s ‘The “hour of pink twilight”: Lesbian Poetics and Queer Encounters on the Fin-de-siècle Street’ (VS 51[2009] 687-712), also covered in section 1, is mostly concerned with short fiction, but has some astute commentary on urban encounter in Amy Levy’s poetry. Amy Levy is also the subject of Linda K. Hughes’s ‘Discoursing of Xantippe: Amy Levy, Classical Scholarship, and Print Culture’ (PQ 88[2009] 259-81). Hughes discusses Levy’s classical turn in ‘Xantippe’, finding that it allowed her to navigate between a variety of discourses, including classical scholarship, higher criticism and print culture. Rob Breton attempts to broaden critical debate around George Eliot’s poetic writing in ‘The Thrill of the Trill: Political and Aesthetic Discourse in George Eliot’s Armgarth’ (VR 35[2009] 116-31), finding that Armgarth reflects not only a concern with gender, but can also be read in light of anxieties about sensationalist popular theatre, revealing the ambivalences in Eliot’s attitude to social reform.

Other 2009 articles cover a broad range of subjects within Victorian poetry. Discussing a number of writers, including Tennyson, EBB and Michael Field, Anna Barton’s article ‘Boz, Ba and Derry Down Derry: Names and Pseudonyms in Victorian Literature’ (LitComp 6[2009] 799-809) gives a fascinating account of these authors’ interest in the complex signification of names, a preoccupation which ‘corresponds directly with concerns about authorial identity’ in Victorian culture (p. 806). Sue Edney’s excellent article on William Barnes, “‘Times be Badish Vor the Poor”': William Barnes and his Dialect of Disturbance in the Dorset “Eclogues’” (English 58[2009] 206-29), makes a striking claim for the social alertness of Barnes’s poetry, even while acknowledging his wariness of political radicalism. Barnes’s
personal encounters with agricultural upheaval are sensitively brought alongside the poetry. T.L. Burton and K.K. Ruthen discuss the potential for broadening critical interest in Barnes and dialect poetry in ‘Dialect Poetry, William Barnes, and the Literary Canon’ (ELH 76[2009] 309-42), giving particular scrutiny to the possibilities offered by sound recording. Their call for the recognition of the importance of dialectology in Victorian culture is well made. Francis O’Gorman’s ‘Poetry in the Age of New Sound Technology: Mallarmé to Tennyson’ (CVE 69[2009] 41-58) considers poetic responses to the invention of the electric telegraph and advances in sound technology in the work of Barnes, Tennyson, Swinburne and others. O’Gorman relates this to a concern with preserving the voices of the dead.

William Morris’s poem Sigurd the Volsung provides the focus for Simon Dentith’s adroit reflections on epic and the pre-modern in ‘Morris, “The Great Story of the North”, and the Barbaric Past’ (JVC 14[2009] 238-54). Dentith explores the poem’s complex relation to Morris’s desire for modern social transformation by considering its archaizing manner and portrayal of violence. Megan Ward defends Morris’s ‘The Defence of Guenevere’ from the charge of escapism in ‘William Morris’s Conditional Moment’ (RaVoN 53[2009]), suggesting that because moments in time are primarily experienced through the senses in the poem, they have an immediacy which disturbs the expectation of progressive historical narrative. Lewis Carroll’s nonsense poem The Hunting of the Snark is the subject of Jed Mayer’s ‘The Vivisection of the Snark’ (VP 47[2009] 429-48). Mayer sets Carroll’s poem in the context of opposition to vivisection in the 1870s, observing how it troubles the division between human and non-human subjects and poses a satiric challenge to claims of scientific authority.

A monograph entirely devoted to Matthew Arnold’s poetry is something of a rarity these days. Antony H. Harrison’s The Cultural Production of Matthew Arnold makes an appeal for a renewal of interest in Arnold’s poetic oeuvre by focusing attention on its social and cultural contexts. Harrison finds the political engagements of Arnold’s poetry underwhelming, and contends that in this lies their importance. The opening chapter expresses frustration with the obscurity of the contact had by several poems with civil disturbance and political radicalism in the 1840s, but finds that the medievalism of
*Tristram and Iseult* turns this obscurity into an ideological stratagem, distracting attention from the tumult of contemporary events. In his second chapter, Harrison attempts to read broad cultural significance into Arnold’s encounters with Keats and the Spasmodics. Chapter 3 considers the way Arnold draws on the sensibilian tradition of Hemans and Landon even as the values propagated in his prose writings contributed to its decline. Arnold’s ambivalent representation of the gypsy figure in ‘The Scholar-Gipsy’ and other poems at once reflects broader social pressures and displaces them, a final chapter argues. It is refreshing to see that Harrison has cast a wide net over Arnold’s poetic corpus, considering poems such as ‘Revolutions’ alongside better-known works. His conclusion that the seeming political and social detachment of Arnold’s poems is itself ideological does not break new ground, but the argument is forcefully put, and given that Arnold’s poetic star has undergone so steep a decline in recent decades, efforts at restoration are very much to be welcomed. That only one article on Arnold’s poetry was published in 2009 indicates the scale of the challenge. Bringing to prominence a traditionally marginal figure, the third part of Arnold’s reworking of the Tristram and Iseult legend, focusing on the ‘second’ Iseult (of Brittany rather than Ireland), is cognizant of the potential for domestic life to turn sour, suggests Ingrid Ranum in ‘A Woman’s Castle is Her Home: Matthew Arnold’s *Tristram and Iseult* as Domestic Fairy Tale’ (*VP* 47[2009] 403-28).

Scholars of the Brownings were well-served with new editions this year. *Florentine Friends*, edited by Sandra Donaldson and Philip Kelley, comprises letters written by Browning and EBB to their close friend Isabella Blagden between 1850 and 1861. Although some of these letters have already been published by the same editors and publisher in *The Brownings’ Correspondence* series, and although the remainder will appear in that series in the future, it is hard to disagree with the editors’ opinion that collecting the Brownings’ letters to ‘dearest Isa’ in a single place enables readers to gain a greater sense of ‘the immediacy of their friendship’ (p. xii). Given the intimacy and duration of that friendship, this volume is also welcome for the wealth of biographical information it provides about Isa Blagden, especially the editors’ exhaustive (and apparently conclusive) research into her paternity. And while the
letters themselves contain little of the Brownings’ views on their own work or on poetry in general, they do shed significant light on other topics, such as the depth of EBB’s engagement with Italian politics in the two years before her death. There is also a fascinating appendix reproducing the photographs of the major players in Italian affairs that EBB collected in 1860-61.

It is also important to note the appearance, over recent years, of new volumes of The Brownings’ Correspondence. Volume 15, edited by Kelley with Scott Lewis and Edward Hagan and published in 2005, spans the eventful years 1848 and 1849. The letters feature numerous analyses (mostly by EBB) of the 1848 revolution in France as well as first-hand accounts of political developments in Florence, the poets’ new home. On a more personal level, the volume also takes in the events of March 1849, which saw both the birth of Pen Browning and the death of Robert Browning’s mother. Volume 16, produced by the same editorial team and published in 2007, covers September 1849 to January 1851, a period in which professional matters once again became more prominent in the Brownings’ lives. There are references here to the publications of Christmas-Eve and Easter-Day and Sonnets from the Portuguese, and to the question of who should replace Wordsworth as Poet Laureate after his death in 1850. EBB was seen as a likely candidate by many commentators, but she welcomes the appointment of Tennyson in a letter from December 1850. The letters in these volumes will be of inherent interest to scholars of Victorian poetry, and their appeal is heightened by the usual high production standards of this series. Volumes 17 and 18 of the series, published in 2010, will be discussed next year.

Jane Stabler, in ‘Romantic and Victorian Conversations: Elizabeth Barrett and Robert Browning in Dialogue with Byron and Shelley’ (in Lau, ed., Fellow Romantics, pp. 231-53), offers a rare comparative reading of the Brownings’ work, arguing that their responses to Byron and Shelley in their early writings enable them to fashion ‘an imaginative androgyny that questions rigid gender identities’ (p. 232). Turning to publications specifically on EBB, Heather Shippen Cianciola, in ““Mine Earthly Heart Should Dare”: Elizabeth Barrett’s Devotional Poetry’ (C&L 58[2009] 367-400), claims that the 1838 volume The Seraphim and Other Poems presents a radical critique of contemporary religious writing and of women
writers’ place in the devotional tradition. Some of Cianciola’s argumentative leaps are a little forced, but this remains an impressively thorough analysis of EBB’s devotional concerns. In a rich and complex essay – “‘Our deep, dear silence’: Marriage and Lyricism in the Sonnets from the Portuguese’ (VLC 37[2009] 85-102) – Rhian Williams argues that EBB’s courtship sonnet sequence uses the trope of silence to deconstruct the unified lyrical subject and to fashion a lyricism that is ‘neither male or female, but vigorously conjugal’ (p. 89). There are also chapters on EBB in Eric Eisner’s Nineteenth-Century Poetry and Literary Celebrity and in Claire Knowles’s Sensibility and Female Poetic Tradition, 1780-1860, both discussed in the Romantic poetry section.

This year saw the publication of Volume 15 of Oxford University Press’s The Poetical Works of Robert Browning, edited by Stefan Hawlin and Michael Meredith. Bringing together Browning’s last two collections of poetry, Parleyings with Certain People of Importance in their Day (1887) and Asolando (1889), this impressive edition will hopefully stimulate new interest in these underappreciated late works. Both texts represented a return to the past for Browning: Parleyings comprises seven addresses to figures whose work had interested the poet in his youth, while Asolando contains many short poems that recall Browning’s lyrical verses of the 1840s and 50s. Hawlin and Meredith’s introductions to the two collections and to each individual poem are excellent, combining detailed accounts of the immediate (often biographical) impulse that lay behind composition with insightful discussions of Browning’s views on art, politics and theology in his final years. However, it is a pity that the editors do not always draw attention to the numerous moments in which these works reaffirm or rework ideas or images from Browning’s earlier poems. Overall, though, this edition attains the impressive standard set by previous volumes in this series. The text of Parleyings and Asolando is both rigorously edited and very readable, and the poems themselves, complex and varied, deserve to be read and studied more widely.

Evgenia Sifaki studies another late Browning work in her article ‘Masculinity, Heroism, and the Empire: Robert Browning’s “Clive” and Other Victorian Re-Constructions of the Story of Robert Clive’ (VLC 37[2009] 141-56). Sifaki positions Browning’s ‘dramatic idyll’ in the context of other nineteenth-century
narratives about Clive, claiming that the poem challenges received Victorian notions about ostensibly heroic concepts of masculinity and imperialism.

Paul Mariani’s new biography of Hopkins, *Gerard Manley Hopkins: A Life*, arrived too late for inclusion in last year’s *YWES*. Mariani is already the author of a noted commentary on Hopkins, and his immersion in Hopkins’s poetry is evinced on every page of this biography, to the extent that his own prose is laced with words or phrases taken (mostly unattributed) from his subject’s work. These borrowings, part of an attempt to cultivate a lyrical prose style, provide one of several of Mariani’s innovations in biographical method. Another is the decision to write most of his book in the present tense. The result is curious, a narrative which is certainly fast-paced, but which rarely moves to interpret the details it has accumulated. If there is a central thread running through the book, it is Mariani’s sympathy with Jesuit life and spirituality. Given that a marked suspicion of the Jesuits is sometimes thought to be the chief fault of the standard biography of Hopkins, Norman White’s *Hopkins: A Literary Biography* (1992), this might have stood Mariani in good stead. As it is, the perspective is skewed too far the other way: that only fifty pages are devoted to the period before Hopkins’s conversion, compared to nearly 400 pages on his life as a Roman Catholic, is a major imbalance, obscuring the fact that almost half the poet’s years were spent as an Anglican. The lack of discussion of Hopkins’s homoeroticism, sceptical or otherwise, also has to be counted a serious flaw.

Brian Willems’s monograph *Hopkins and Heidegger* proposes that poet and philosopher might be brought into productive contact, even if there is no possibility of direct influence (Heidegger was born in the year Hopkins died and had no discernible interest in Victorian poetry). At the core of Willems’s book is his attempt to relate Hopkins’s notion of ‘inscape’ to the enigmatic concept Heidegger termed *Ereignis*, in which case he enlists a myriad assortment of modern philosophers and cultural theorists. The argument is difficult to summarize, especially given the absence of a conclusion, but a persistent theme is that for both Hopkins and Heidegger the particular quality of the poetic resides in its potential for revealing the true nature of being, something which other kinds of linguistic exchange tend to
conceal. Each of the four chapters takes a single poem as a basis for forays into philosophical debate, returning to analyse the poem in their light. What value the book holds for interpreting Heideggerian philosophy is hard to judge, but, for all that it shows a wide familiarity with criticism of the poet’s work, Willems’s study does not add significantly to the terrain already mapped out in Roger Ebbatson’s *Heidegger’s Bicycle: Interfering with Victorian Texts* (2006), which offers more cogent reflections on Hopkins in relation to modern German cultural theory and philosophy.

One 2009 number of the bilingual Revue LISA/LISA e-journal is a Festschrift in honour of French scholar René Gallet, who has published extensively on Hopkins, and includes a number of new articles on the poet, as well as reprinting one of Gallet’s own pieces. Joseph Feeney’s ‘Is Hopkins’ “The Windhover” about Christ? A Negative Response, with a Whimsical Postscript’ (La Revue LISA 7:iii[2009] 94-9) makes a provocative case for the absence of reference to Christ in Hopkins’s best-known sonnet, observing that Hopkins only added his dedication of the poem to Christ several years after it had been written. Gildas Lemardelé’s ‘La mer et l’insistance paradoxale dans quelques poèmes de G. M. Hopkins’ (La Revue LISA 7:iii[2009] 101-8) surveys the various significances with which Hopkins imbues the sea, finding analogies between it and God’s nature in the poems. Catherine Phillips’s “Nothing is so beautiful”: Hopkins’s Spring’ (La Revue LISA 7:iii[2009] 109-19) explores Marian contexts for Hopkins’s passion for the season of spring, giving consideration to how this traditional association functions in a number of his poems, and its convergence with his artistic and scientific interests. Cary H. Plotkin’s ‘Hopkins the Darwinian: a Contextual Unriddling’ (La Revue LISA 7:iii[2009] 476-89) finds a puzzle in the equanimity of Hopkins’s brief responses to Darwin’s theories in his letters, concluding that the absence of a doctrinal pronouncement from Rome on evolution in Hopkins’s lifetime allowed for considerable variation in the attitudes of individual Catholics to evolutionary theory. Maureen Moran’s ‘Hopkins and Victorian Responses to Suffering’ (La Revue LISA 7:iii[2009] 570-81) contends that Hopkins’s response to physical torment, especially that leading to martyrdom, mixes Catholic and Protestant influences. The manner in which martyrdom is tied to the cause of the English nation in The Wreck of the Deutschland, she finds, is an attempt to appropriate a familiar trope of Protestant martyrlogical discourse.

Of the other articles published on Hopkins this year, perhaps the most important is Pamela Coren’s ‘Gerard Manley Hopkins, Plainsong and the Performance of Poetry’ (RES 60[2009] 271-94). Coren relates Hopkins’s interest in plainsong, a rhythmically fluid form of liturgical music, to his approach to prosody. Her view of sprung rhythm as essentially a pure stress rhythm is contentious, but the approach to this oldest of debates through Hopkins’s musical interests is innovative and insightful.
Also notable is Simon Humphries’s critique of editorial conventions in respect of the poem he prefers to call ‘Hark, Hearer, Hear What I Do’, but which is usually (and erroneously, Humphries argues) titled ‘Epithalamion’ (ANQ 22[2009] 27-33). Elsewhere, Alan C. Christensen offers a Lacanian interpretation of nautical journeys in Hopkins and Tennyson in ‘Navigating in Perilous Seas of Language: In Memoriam’ and “The Wreck of the Deutschland” (VP 47[2009] 379-402), suggesting a metaphorical relation to the linguistic practice of the poets. Particular attention is given to moments when language appears in both poems to be forced beyond its capacities, as in the vision of Christ experienced by the tall nun in Hopkins’s poem. Francis O’Gorman’s note, ‘Gerard Manley Hopkins and George MacDonald on Immortality’ (N&Q 56[2009] 399-400), raises the possibility of an echo in one of Hopkins’s late poems of MacDonald’s novel *At the Back of the North Wind*.

Several of this year’s articles on the Rossettis are concerned with sound. Angela Leighton is finely attuned to the verbal music in the poetry of Christina and Dante Gabriel in ‘On “the hearing ear”: Some Sonnets of the Rossettis’ (VP 47[2009]: 505-16). Listening with the ear rather than the mind, she suggests, might allow for new kinds of thinking in poetry to take place. Ernest Fontana considers the potential a number of Dante Gabriel’s poems offer for dramatic vocalization in ‘Exercitive Speech Acts in the Poetry of Dante Gabriel Rossetti’ (VP 47[2009] 449-58), proposing that this interest in questions of voice is especially prominent when Rossetti writes in a sceptical or transgressive mode. In ‘Listening: Dante Gabriel Rossetti and the Persistence of Song’ (VS 51[2009] 409-21), Elizabeth Helsinger traces the ways in which Rossetti’s thinking about musical song shapes his approach to sound in poetry, giving close and sensitive attention to the song poems he included in an 1870 collection.

Of the other articles on Dante Gabriel Rossetti, Andrea Henderson’s ‘The “Gold Bar of Heaven”: Framing and Objectivity in D.G. Rossetti’s Poetry and Painting’ (ELH 76[2009] 911-30) contends that Rossetti’s aspiration to represent ideal female beauty in both art and poetry is coupled with an awareness of the inescapable subjectivity of his own imaginings. Brian Donnelly considers the commoditization of female desire in Dante Gabriel’s poetry and painting in ‘The Consuming Aesthetic of

As one might expect, the Rossettis feature prominently in Julia Straub’s monograph A Victorian Muse: The Afterlife of Dante’s Beatrice in Nineteenth-Century Literature. Their father Gabriele’s allegorical theorization of Beatrice provides the point of departure for a chapter considering Dante’s importance for the Rossetti family. The encounters with the Commedia had by the Rossetti children, Straub finds, variously acknowledge and resist their father’s interpretation. A subsequent chapter is focused more narrowly on Christina’s sonnet-sequence Monna Innamorata and Dante Gabriel’s poetry
and painting, especially his 1861 anthology of translations, *Early Italian Poets*. As well as chapters on George Eliot and Walter Pater (discussed in section 1), Straub also devotes a chapter to discussing the possibility that Arthur Henry Hallam is consciously attributed with some of Beatrice’s qualities in Tennyson’s *In Memoriam*.

2009 saw the centenary of the death of Swinburne, an anniversary that was marked by relatively few publications. Jonathan Bate’s essay in the *Times Literary Supplement*, ‘Libidinous Laureate of Satyrs’ (*TLS* [10 July 2009] 14-15), focuses (unsurprisingly, given its title) on the salacious aspects of Swinburne’s work and life, but is also a serious and forcefully-argued vindication of Swinburne’s poetry, celebrating both its radical exploration of sexual feeling and its metrical brilliance. Another article discussed the editing of Swinburne’s poetry, drawing attention in the process to the continuing need for an authoritative critical edition of his work. Lakshmi Krishnan’s ‘Editing Swinburne’s Border Ballads’ (*MLR* 104[2009] 333-52) delves deep into the British Library’s Swinburne manuscripts, using the ballad ‘Burd Margaret’ to illustrate the numerous editorial questions that surround Swinburne’s verse. Swinburne was also represented by a special issue of *Victorian Poetry* in 2009. After an introduction by Rikky Rooksby and Terry L. Meyers (*VP* 47[2009] 611-18) which offers a survey of developments in Swinburne criticism over the last forty years, the volume opens with Jerome McGann’s article on ‘Wagner, Baudelaire, Swinburne: Poetry in the Condition of Music’ (*VP* 47[2009] 619-32), a stimulating account of the influence of Wagner’s theories of music, as mediated by Baudelaire, on the sound and the prosody of Swinburne’s poetry. Baudelaire also features in Tony W. Garland’s contribution, ‘Brothers in Paradox: Swinburne, Baudelaire, and the Paradox of Sin’ (*VP* 47[2009] 633-45). Garland makes some thought-provoking points about Baudelaire and Swinburne’s simultaneous attraction to and repulsion from the concept of sin, but his article gives no really new insight into the artistic connection between the two poets.

In ‘A Theory of Poetry: Swinburne’s “A Dark Month”’ (*VP* 47[2009] 661-73), Yisrael Levin claims that the often-maligned ‘A Dark Month’ can shed important light on Swinburne’s conception of poetry in
his later career. Employing detailed close readings, Levin traces Swinburne’s development, over the course of the poem, of a non-representational and subjective poetics encapsulated in the figure of the child. In ‘Intimations and Imitations of Immortality: Swinburne’s “By the North Sea” and “Poeta Loquitur”’ (VP 47[2009] 675-90), Andrew Fippinger gives a new perspective on Swinburne’s fascination with the sea through a sensitive study of these two poems, reading the latter as a self-parody of the former. Julia F. Saville’s article on ‘Cosmopolitan Republican Swinburne, the Immersive Poet as Public Moralist’ (VP 47[2009] 691-713) posits that the sensual means of Swinburne’s verse often serve political or moral ends. The examples that Saville takes from Swinburne’s poetry do not always add a great deal to her argument, but this remains an intriguing and suggestive piece. Katie Paterson’s contribution, “‘Much Regrafted Pain’: Schopenhauerian Love and the Fecundity of Pain in Atalanta in Calydon’ (VP 47[2009] 715-31), studies Atalanta through the lens of Schopenhauer, interpreting the destructive effects of love in Swinburne’s drama as evidence of a pessimistic worldview that pervades the text. Catherine Maxwell’s piece on ‘Swinburne and Thackeray’s The Newcomes’ (VP 47[2009] 733-46) details the ways in which Thackeray’s novel was important to Swinburne. Maxwell traces the similarities between Ethel Newcome and Swinburne’s beloved cousin Mary Gordon, as well as examining how the relationships depicted in Thackeray’s book influenced some of Swinburne’s writing about love and sexuality.

Two of the contributions explore the links between classicism and sex in Swinburne’s verse. Jason Boulet’s essay “‘Will he rise and recover [?]’: Catullus, Castration, and Censorship in Swinburne’s “Dolores’” (VP 47[2009] 747-58) gives a formidably detailed and well-researched account of the ways in which Swinburne borrows from Catullus in order to challenge Victorian conventions of literary and sexual propriety. T.D. Olverson, in ‘Libidinous Laureates and Lyrical Maenads: Michael Field, Swinburne and Erotic Hellenism’ (VP 47[2009] 759-76), concentrates on female sexuality. Olverson studies Swinburne’s dramatic poems Atalanta in Calydon and Erechtheus together with Michael Field’s play Callirrhoë, arguing that Field builds on Swinburne’s example to fashion a more active and more radically
feminist conception of women’s sexuality. The issue ends with two pieces that focus on the textual dimensions of Swinburne’s work. T.A.J. Burnett offers ‘Some Reflections on the Text of Swinburne’s Unfinished Novel, the so-called “Lesbia Brandon”’ (VP 47[2009] 777-86), undertaking a careful assessment of the manuscripts of the novel and making a case for a new edition of this important text. Benjamin F. Fisher, in ‘Swinburne’s “A Nympholept” in the Making’ (VP 47[2009] 787-800), studies the manuscripts of ‘A Nympholept’ in order to reconstruct the development of Swinburne’s ideas as he composed and revised the poem. Although Fisher is at times too assertive in his interpretations, this article is an illuminating analysis of Swinburne’s method of composition. Another contribution to the issue is the late Margot K. Louis’s ‘Erotic Figuration in Swinburne’s Tristram of Lyonesse, Canto 2: The Vanishing Knight and the Drift of Butterflies’ (VP 47[2009] 647-59). This article presents a nuanced analysis of a single passage of Swinburne’s poetry, beautifully explicating the ways in which he questions phallocentric models of sexuality through his evocation of female sexual pleasure.

Louis is also the author of the posthumously published Persephone Rises, 1860-1927: Mythography, Gender, and the Creation of a New Spirituality. This wide-ranging and illuminating book adopts a historicist approach to mythography, exploring the various ways in which British and American writers appropriated the figure of Persephone or Proserpine in response to changing historical circumstances. Swinburne, unsurprisingly, is at the heart of the book; for Louis, Swinburne’s focus on Proserpine’s role as the queen of the dead is evidence of the growing influence of philosophical pessimism on nineteenth-century culture. At the same time, Louis also considers how Victorian women poets foregrounded the gender issues, inherent in the Persephone myth, which were largely ignored by male poets. Discussing the work of Jean Ingelow, Dora Greenwell, Mathilde Blind and Katharine Bradley (one half of ‘Michael Field’), Louis studies these writers’ representation of Persephone in poems that explore questions of female agency, sexual experience and the mother-daughter relationship. After an introduction which examines nineteenth-century theorizations of myth, the first chapter of Louis’s book traces the development of the Persephone story from ancient Greece to the Romantic period. The
second chapter focuses on the work of Ingelow and Greenwell, while the third concentrates on Swinburne and on those writers, including Tennyson, George Meredith, Robert Bridges and Edith Wharton, who responded to the issues raised in his Proserpine poems. Chapter 4 considers Persephone’s role as a symbol of fertility in the novels of Willa Cather and Thomas Hardy, and Chapter 5 looks at the presence of the goddess, and the enduring influence of Swinburne, in Modernist writing, particularly that of H.D., William Carlos Williams and D.H. Lawrence.

This year also brought the bicentenary of Tennyson’s birth, and, as a result, Tennysonians were treated to a vast range of publications. Perhaps the most significant of these was *Tennyson Among the Poets: Bicentenary Essays*, edited by Robert Douglas-Fairhurst and Seamus Perry, a substantial collection that examines the relations of influence and exchange between Tennyson and other writers. After a short ‘Prefatory Note’ by Christopher Ricks, the volume opens with Douglas-Fairhurst’s incisive introduction, which sets the scene for the following essays by examining Tennyson’s own mixed feelings about living ‘among the poets’, surrounded by the writings of his more or less distinguished forbears and contemporaries. The first essay in the volume, ‘Tennyson’s Dying Fall’ by Peter McDonald, undertakes detailed close readings of a number of poems, arguing that the ‘dying fall’ of Tennyson’s metrical cadences, and indeed the presence of the word ‘fall’ itself, is crucial to understanding the emotional nuances of his verse. Dinah Birch, in ‘Tennyson’s Retrospective View’, offers a new take on the question of Tennyson’s interest in the past, examining his engagements with history, myth and legend and arguing that those engagements influenced and anticipated the work of writers as diverse as A.E. Housman and T.S. Eliot. In ‘Tennyson’s Limitations’, one of the most original essays in the volume, Christopher Decker considers those Tennyson poems, such as ‘Morte d’Arthur’ or ‘Ulysses’, that retell or build on the narratives of other writers, arguing that the ‘intertextual manoeuvres’ of these poems reveal Tennyson’s writing to be ‘imaginatively open to other texts’ (p. 58).

Another impressive piece, Aidan Day’s ‘Tennyson’s Grotesque’, makes a perhaps counterintuitive but thoroughly convincing case for Tennyson as a writer of chaos and grotesque.
According to Day, ‘Tennyson’s exquisitely finished poetic manner’ both hides and exposes ‘a dissonance, an incoherence which contradicts and is unassimilated to the finish of the style’ (p. 78). In ‘Tennyson, Browning, Virgil’, Daniel Karlin succeeds in shedding light on Tennyson’s relations both with classical and with contemporary poets. Karlin presents a detailed analysis of the different ways in which Tennyson and Browning, in ‘To Virgil’ and ‘Pan and Luna’ respectively, respond to the writing and the figure of Virgil. A.A. Markley, in ‘Tennyson and the Voice of Ovid’s Heroines’, gives another perspective on Tennyson’s engagement with the Latin poets, arguing that Ovid’s *Heroides* should be viewed as ‘an influence on the development of the dramatic monologue in the nineteenth century’ (p. 117) and on Tennyson’s monologues in particular. Subsequent essays focus on Tennyson’s responses to the English poetic tradition. Eric Griffiths’s piece ‘On Lines and Grooves from Shakespeare to Tennyson’ studies Tennyson’s view of Shakespeare, and his understanding of metre, through an examination of the typographical practices of various nineteenth-century editions of Shakespeare’s works. N.K. Sugimura’s nuanced and well-argued essay ‘Epic Sensibilities: “Old Man” Milton and the Making of Tennyson’s *Idylls of the King*’ examines the ways in which Milton’s writing, particularly *Paradise Lost*, influenced Tennyson’s conception of epic and the composition of his Arthurian poem. In another excellent piece, ‘The Wheels of Being: Tennyson and Shelley’, Michael O’Neill presents the book’s most sustained discussion of Tennyson’s engagement with Romanticism, arguing that ‘the paths travelled by much of his greatest work take their point of departure from Shelley’ (p. 198).

The next two essays focus on Tennyson’s relations with his contemporaries. In “Brother-Poets”: Tennyson and Browning’, Donald S. Hair provides a neat summary of Tennyson and Browning’s personal relationship, their respective conceptions of poetry, and their often divergent opinions on a range of subjects. Marion Shaw’s piece ‘Friendship, Poetry, and Insurrection: The Kemble Letters’ draws on an unpublished archive of letters to Tennyson’s university friend John Mitchell Kemble to examine the Cambridge Apostles’ involvement in the 1830 insurrection in Spain, and its influence on Tennyson. Matthew Bevis, in ‘Tennyson’s Humour’, studies an often-ignored aspect of Tennyson’s work, exploring
Tennyson’s sense of humour and concluding, for example, that the numerous parodists of Tennyson take their cue from the poet himself, ‘teasing out the smile that lay buried yet implicit in his printed page’ (p. 238). Richard Cronin touches on similar issues in ‘Edward Lear and Tennyson’s Nonsense’. Cronin draws some illuminating comparisons between the preoccupations of Tennyson and Lear, and argues that Lear, in his rewritings of Tennyson, ‘does not so much make a nonsense of’ Tennyson’s verse ‘as release a nonsensicality already implicit in it’ (p. 263). In ““Men my brothers, men the workers”: Tennyson and the Victorian Working-Class Poet’, Kirstie Blair offers a reciprocal account of Tennyson’s relationship to working-class writers, examining such writers’ engagements with Tennyson’s work as well as Tennyson’s own (very mixed) opinions about their poetry. Linda K. Hughes’s piece ““Frater Ave”? Tennyson and Swinburne’ looks at Tennyson’s complicated personal and poetic links to the poet many Victorians saw as his natural successor. Hughes argues, convincingly, that the ‘oppositional gestures’ found in the two poets’ writings are more than counterbalanced by the ‘kindred practices’ which unite them (p. 299).

The rest of the volume concentrates on Tennyson’s influence, positive or negative, on subsequent writers. In ‘After Tennyson: The Presence of the Poet, 1892-1918’, Samantha Matthews maps out a range of responses to Tennyson and his work in the quarter-century after his death, taking in forms such as tribute verses, biographies and critical commentaries. Angela Leighton’s piece ‘Tennyson, by Ear’ begins and ends with Virginia Woolf, exploring the novelist’s ambivalent reactions to the sounds and rhythms of Tennyson. In between, Leighton digresses to consider the links between Tennyson’s poetry and that of Christina Rossetti, suggesting that the unique acoustics of Tennyson’s verse can be heard throughout Victorian and Modernist writing. In ‘Hardy’s Tennyson’, Helen Small convincingly makes the case that Hardy’s response to Tennyson’s poetry was one of ‘respect’, rather than the ‘resistance’ identified by many critics (p. 363). Small demonstrates her argument through a consideration of the annotations in Hardy’s copy of Tennyson, and through a nuanced close reading of Hardy’s elegy ‘The Going’. John Morton’s piece on ‘T.S. Eliot and Tennyson’ does a fine job of assessing Eliot’s views on Tennyson. Morton takes in both Eliot’s early criticisms and his later appreciations of his
predecessor, as well as examining the substantial allusions to Tennyson in *Murder in the Cathedral* and the drafts of *The Waste Land*. After this, John Fuller’s essay on ‘Tennyson and Auden’ provides another example of a twentieth-century poet whose stated ambivalence about the Victorian laureate was accompanied by a persistent engagement with Tennyson’s language and rhythms. Fuller’s essay is impressive in its close attention to the intricacies of the Tennysonian echoes found in Auden’s verse. The volume is rounded off in fine fashion by Seamus Perry: ‘Betjeman’s Tennyson’ is a suitably exuberant piece which demonstrates how Betjeman’s intense regard for Tennyson’s writing worked itself into his own poetry. All in all, it would be difficult to imagine a more comprehensive assessment of Tennyson’s position in the poetic canon than this book.

Tennyson’s significance for other cultural forms was also considered this year. Jim Cheshire’s edited volume *Tennyson Transformed: Alfred Lord Tennyson and Visual Culture* explores the ways in which the poet’s image and work pervaded Victorian visual art. The book accompanies the exhibition, also called ‘Tennyson Transformed’, that Cheshire curated at The Collection, Lincoln, and, without wanting to be unjust to the informative essays that form the first half of the book, it is fair to say that the main attraction of the volume is the beautifully-presented catalogue of the exhibition. Cheshire’s introduction to the book provides fascinating contextual information about the world of Victorian art and illustration. The book’s first chapter, by Julia Thomas, presents a survey of Victorian illustrations of Tennyson’s work, while Chapter 2, by Colin Ford, focuses on the poet’s association with photographer Julia Margaret Cameron. In the third chapter, Leonee Ormond looks at responses to Tennyson’s verse by Victorian painters, particularly the Pre-Raphaelites. Chapters 4 and 5 turn to portraits of Tennyson, with Ben Stoker discussing the various informal sketches that were made by the poets’ acquaintances, and John Lord focusing on the sculptures of Tennyson that were produced when his fame was at its height, both before and after his death. The exhibition catalogue that closes the book is a treasure-trove: it includes illustrations of Tennyson’s poems and drawings, as well as portraits and sculptures of the poet himself, neatly demonstrating his centrality to the development of Victorian ideas of visual culture.
There was also, of course, the 2009 edition of the *Tennyson Research Bulletin*. Observing the unevenness in the poem’s early critical reputation, Gregory Tate’s “A fit person to be Poet Laureate”: Tennyson, *In Memoriam*, and the Laureateship (TRB 9[2009] 233-47) questions whether the success of *In Memoriam* was as significant a factor in Tennyson’s appointment as Poet Laureate as has been claimed. A detailed look at the chronology, Tate finds, suggests otherwise. Erik Gray’s informative note, ‘The Title of *In Memoriam*’ (TRB 9[2009] 248-51), discusses the occasional tendency of editors and, to a lesser extent, critics to mis-title the elegy as *In Memoriam A.H.H.*, and elucidates the textual history that has led to such confusion. James Williams, in ‘Tennyson’s Once and Future King’ (TRB 9[2009] 252-69), offers a sensitive analysis of ideas of the apocalypse in *Idylls of the King*. Tennyson’s deployment of apocalyptic thinking and imagery, Williams argues, sheds new light on his conception of time, both past and future, in the *Idylls*: an apt subject for the poet’s bicentenary year. In an article that neatly complements Williams’s, ‘Tennyson, Morris and the Guinevere Complex’ (TRB 9[2009] 270-79), Eleonora Sasso compares early poems about Guinevere by Tennyson and William Morris in order to argue that, early in their careers, both poets used the queen as a powerful multivalent symbol of sensual desire, natural beauty and the irretrievable past.

The ‘Tennyson at Two Hundred’ special issue of *Victorian Poetry* was the other main publication marking Tennyson’s bicentenary. The issue was edited by Herbert F. Tucker, who introduces the essays with a short but erudite piece that studies Tennyson’s own writing about dates and anniversaries (VP 47[2009] 1-6). After this, the first article in the issue is Richard Maxwell’s ‘Unnumbered Polypi’ (VP 47[2009] 7-23), an informative and enjoyable exploration of the literary and biological contexts that float around the fifteen lines of ‘The Kraken’. This is followed by an intriguing essay by Linda H. Peterson, ‘Tennyson and the Ladies’ (VP 47[2009] 25-43), which seeks to rehabilitate the oft-maligned ‘lady poems’ of 1830 and 1832 by arguing for their ‘participation in a contemporary debate over the “characteristics of women”’ (p. 25). Next comes Erik Gray’s ‘Getting It Wrong in “The Lady of Shalott”’ (VP 47[2009] 45-59), which subtly analyses the function of error, and particularly of deliberate or
‘conscious error’ (p. 48), as an aspect of artistic creativity in the 1832 and 1842 versions of ‘The Lady of Shalott’, and also in ‘Lancelot and Elaine’. Gregory Tate’s ‘Tennyson and the Embodied Mind’ (VP 47[2009] 61-80) explores Tennyson’s concern with the physical nature of mental processes against the background of Victorian psychological theory. There is an insightful reading of ‘Ulysses’, with Tate finding ambivalence in Tennyson’s presentation of the human will’s capacity to escape material conditions. In ‘Tennyson and Zeno: Three Infinities’ (VP 47[2009] 81-99), W. David Shaw offers readings of a range of poems, particularly ‘Ulysses’ and In Memoriam, in order to demonstrate that Tennyson gestures towards three types of infinity in his verse: ‘physical infinities of space and time’, ‘recursive images of a mindscape’ and ‘an Absolute that is unlimited or boundless’ (p. 89). James Nohrnberg’s ‘Eight Reflections of Tennyson’s “Ulysses”’ (VP 47[2009] 101-50) is a suitably epic consideration of the various explorers, literary and historical, that may have influenced Tennyson’s poem of anticipated and deferred adventure, particularly James Cook, Columbus and Dante’s Ulysses.

In D. B. Ruderman’s impressive essay ‘The Breathing Space of Ballad: Tennyson’s Stillborn Poetics’ (VP 47[2009] 151-71), the author begins by giving a sensitive reading of the brief elegy that Tennyson wrote for his stillborn son in 1851, before proceeding to consider the ways in which stillbirth operates as a metaphor for literary production and reception in Tennyson’s writing. Irene Hsiao, in her article ‘Calculating Loss in Tennyson’s In Memoriam’ (VP 47[2009] 173-96), succeeds impressively in giving a fresh interpretation of Tennyson’s elegy, as she examines the significance of tropes of counting, calculation and measurement to the psychological and metaphysical concerns of the poem. Timothy Peltason’s ‘What the Laureate Did Next: Maud’ (VP 47[2009] 197-219) challenges readings that see Maud as a sort of anti-laureate piece, arguing instead that Tennyson uses this poem to negotiate between the private and public aspects of poetry, linking ‘the voiced reflections of an isolated and idiosyncratic sensibility’ to communal and national concerns (p. 208). Another essay on Maud, Anne C. McCarthy’s “‘Who knows if he be dead?’: Maud, Signification, and the Madhouse Canto’ (VP 47[2009]
221-39), draws on theoretical and historical perspectives to argue that this pivotal section of the poem can be read as ‘a speculative fiction concerning the unknowability of death’ (p. 223).

As the issue goes on, the focus shifts to Idylls of the King. Ingrid Ranum, in ‘An Adventure in Modern Marriage: Domestic Development in Tennyson’s Geraint and Enid and The Marriage of Geraint’ (VP 47[2009] 241-57), argues that these two idylls are deeply concerned with the question of how contemporary gender roles should fit into the institution of marriage. Similarly, Robert L. Patten’s ‘The Contemporaneity of The Last Tournament’ (VP 47[2009] 259-83) suggests that this Arthurian idyll is heavily invested in nineteenth-century preoccupations. Patten adduces a number of contemporary contexts for the poem, ranging from debates about evolution and religion to the Franco-Prussian war.

Other articles shed light on often-neglected contexts for Tennyson’s work. Dennis Taylor, in ‘Tennyson’s Catholic Years: A Point of Contact’ (VP 47[2009] 285-312), argues for the importance of Catholic theology to Tennyson’s poetry, particularly ‘The Holy Grail’, and explores the poet’s links to Catholicism through friends such as Aubrey de Vere, Sir John Simeon and Wilfrid Ward. Anna Barton, in ‘Delirious Bulldogs and Nasty Crockery: Tennyson as Nonsense Poet’ (VP 47[2009] 313-30) considers Tennyson’s friendship with Edward Lear. In a similar manner to Richard Cronin’s essay, discussed above, Barton’s piece argues for an inherent nonsensicality in Tennyson’s writing, traceable in the sonic exuberance of his verse and in his love of exotic place-names. The final essay in the issue, William H. Pritchard’s ‘Epistolary Tennyson: The Art of Suspension’ (VP 47[2009] 331-47) studies a specific subset of Tennyson’s oeuvre, his ‘verse epistles’, in order to argue for the existence of ‘a more “social” Tennyson, conveyed in a poetic voice from whose register urbanity and humor were not excluded’ (p. 331).

Tennyson continued to be represented in Victorian Poetry throughout the year. In “Of happy men that have the power to die”: Tennyson’s “Tithonus”’ (VP 47[2009] 355-78), Henry Weinfeld uses this particular dramatic monologue as a means of exploring a range of contexts and approaches that help to illuminate Tennyson’s views on mortality and immortality. Allison Adler Kroll’s ‘Tennyson and the Metaphysics of Material Culture: The Early Poems’ (VP 47[2009] 461-80) offers an original take on
Tennyson’s ‘passion for the past’, arguing that his early writing participates in concerns about the preservation of the material objects of cultural history, concerns which led to the birth of the heritage industry. Stefanie Markovits’s essay ‘Giving Voice to the Crimean War: Tennyson’s “Charge” and Maud’s Battle-song’ (VP 47[2009] 481-503) presents a detailed account of the ways in which the form and language of Maud and “The Charge of the Light Brigade” reflect Tennyson’s ‘ambivalence’ and ‘bewilderment’ (p. 487) about the Crimean War, a bewilderment that was felt throughout Victorian Britain.

Elsewhere, Molly Clark Hillard’s article ““A Perfect Form in Perfect Rest”: Spellbinding Narratives and Tennyson’s “Day Dream”” (Narrative 17[2009] 312-33) studies a poem which, the author argues, has been ‘virtually absent from criticism’ (p. 313). Hillard argues persuasively that Tennyson’s sleeping beauty poem is an important example of the consideration of temporality that informs so much of his poetry. In ‘Hengist’s Brood: Tennyson and the Anglo-Saxons’ (RES 60[2009] 460-74), Damian Love offers an indirect and rather narrow reading of Tennyson’s interest in Old English, and of the role of the Saxons in Idylls of the King, through a study of the poet’s Old English vocabulary, particularly his use of the word ‘mere’ to refer to the sea. M. Wynn Thomas examines Tennyson’s transatlantic reach in ‘Whitman, Tennyson, and the Poetry of Old Age’ (in Burt and Halpern, eds., Something Understood, pp. 161-82). Through an analysis of the two poets’ differing but complementary representations of old age, Thomas concludes that Tennyson was as important to Whitman at the end of his career as he was at its start.

There is also a chapter on Tennyson in Sally Bushell’s Text as Process: Creative Composition in Wordsworth, Tennyson, and Dickinson. This book is an exercise in genetic criticism, and the Tennyson chapter concentrates on the manuscripts and composition history of Idylls of the King. Bushell argues, fairly uncontroversially, that Tennyson was a “‘reproductive’ writer’ (p. 120), a poet whose method of composition involved recording and re-organizing preformed phrases and ideas.