

As a possible textbook for history courses, Woodruff's book has some limitations. It would be too advanced for most high school students, and it is not comprehensive enough to serve as a single text in a college-level course. For teachers who like to use a combination of original sources, films, and readings devoted to special topics, however, Woodruff's work could be very useful in providing the general historical background that students need.

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**Lester K. Little & Barbara H. Rosenwein, eds. *Debating the Middle Ages: Issues and Readings*. Williston, VT: Blackwell Publishers, 1998. Pp. xi, 396. Cloth, \$64.95; ISBN 1-57718-007-0.**

This excellent book would be very useful for students in upper-division as well as graduate courses in medieval history. Graduate students preparing for comprehensive examinations will find in this volume an indispensable guide to the latest historiography. Unfortunately, the price places this book beyond the budget of most students. Each university library, however, should have multiple copies for the use of students. The editors, two distinguished medievalists, begin by stating that "the Middle Ages aren't what they used to be." They then trace the development of the term "Middle Ages" in their brief, but informative introduction. Many changes have taken place in medieval historiography over the past thirty years. Rather than offer a brief sampling of each new trend, the editors wisely decided to explore in depth four areas that have been marked by intense investigation and discussion. The book is thus divided into four parts, each with a succinct introduction: the fate of Rome's western provinces, feudalism and its alternative, gender, and religion and society. A number of sources have been translated for the first time from German, French, and Italian.

In Part I (chapters 1-6), the editors look at four areas of debate concerning Rome's western provinces that have emerged in the recent work of historians: ethnogenesis of the new peoples, accommodation between Rome and the new peoples, archaeology and history, and conversion of the new peoples. Walter Pohl synthesizes the main findings of scholars on ethnogenesis and notes that ethnic definitions were especially fluid in times of migration. The debate between Walter Goffart and Chris Wickham regarding Roman/barbarian relations covers two chapters. Richard Hodges and David Whitehouse examine the archaeological evidence in the light of the Pirenne thesis. Part I concludes with a section on the conversion of the new peoples to Christianity. Ian N. Wood deals with Gregory of Tours as a reliable source in relation to Clovis, while Alexander Murray explores examples of the mutual borrowing of Christianity and pre-Christian magic.

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Part II (chapters 7-12) introduces students to the lively debate regarding feudalism. Pierre Bonnassie conducts a regional study in Catalonia that in many ways confirms the findings of Georges Duby for Macconnais. By 1980 there tended to be a consensus about feudalism among many historians that the feudal world created in the decades around the year 1000 was powerfully touched by the relations of dependency and lordship implicit in the term. A decade later, Dominique Barthelemy challenged the prevailing view and emphasized the essential continuity for the period from the ninth to the early twelfth centuries. Another debate challenged the very use of the term, and Elizabeth A.R. Brown fired the first shot. Frederic Cheyette has shown that one way to avoid the debate is to talk instead about medieval institutions and cultural forms. Other new studies (Monique Bourin and Robert Durand, plus Gerd Althoff) have found a sense of community on the local level.

Part III (chapters 13-17) on gender begins with an article by Janet Nelson on two early medieval queens as exemplars of Merovingian women. Pauline Stafford implies that historians would be better off not trying to find female golden ages or their opposites. Some historians like Christine Klapisch-Zuber stress outside forces shaping women. Other feminist historians such as Caroline Walker Bynum and Susan Mosher Stuard argue that a full history must include the ways women have been constructive of their society across gender.

Part IV dealing with religion and society concludes this excellent volume. The great French historian of theology, Marie-Dominique Chenu, examines the evangelical awakening in the twelfth century. In discussing saints, Sofia Boesch Gajano rejects the historiographical negation of the miracle, involving as that does its "elite theological ghettoization." Another major area of research is the monastic cult of the dead, and Dominique Iogna-Prat says that for the Cluniacs the cult of the dead was the keystone of their theology. R.I. Moore looks at literacy and the making of heresy, and Jean-Claude Schmitt covers the final topic on liturgy and doctrine, noting that the religion of the Middle Ages was above all participation in rituals and "even more generally participation in an entire social organization."

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**Henrietta Leyser.** *Medieval Women: A Social History of Women in England 450-1500.* New York: St. Martin's Press, 1995. Pp. vii, 337. Paper, \$17.95; ISBN 0-312-21279-8.

In the past decade, works investigating the contribution and place of women during the medieval period have exploded in number. Particularly important to this development has been the prominence of several individuals, such as Julian of Norwich, Hildegard von Bingen, and Margery Kempe. Henrietta Leyser's work,