

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,

Medieval Women: A Social History of Women in England 450-1500, combines analysis of such women with discussion of their more numerous, yet unnamed, contemporaries. The text is divided into four sections: Part One. The Anglo-Saxons: Studies in Evidence; Part Two. The Eleventh Century; Part Three. The High and Later Middle Ages: Family Roles; and Part Four. Culture and Spirituality.

Part One deals with the pre-Norman period, looking at archaeology, hagiography, law codes, and vernacular literature. This section, particularly the initial chapter on archaeology, is compelling. It looks mainly at burial practices among women of different classes and is a wonderful way to grab students' interest at the outset. The mark of an outstanding text is that once it grabs your attention it does not let go—this work is certainly up to that task.

Part Two looks at the Norman invasion and its impact on the women of the eleventh century. Describing the necessary marital practice of joining Norman knights and Anglo-Saxon women as a means of healing the political rift, *Medieval Women* presents an in-depth picture of life for women of many classes. This section contains much information on the family trees of royal England before and after the invasion. It is a beautifully detailed description, but the wealth of names that are unfamiliar (and frankly confusing) to the undergraduate make this book a better choice for the graduate student, or perhaps senior-level undergrads.

Part Three will probably hold the most charm for the student. This section addresses sex, marriage, family, and the work environment—incredibly useful data to anyone researching medieval women. Everyday tasks, dilemmas, and choices lay before the reader. Leyser is a master at utilizing primary material to illustrate her points, and it is included on almost every page. It is, however, frustrating when a situation is laid out, and the reader is then informed that we do not know the outcome. But this type of problem is common for medievalists and does not lessen the impact of the book.

The final section looks at spirituality, including female monasticism (including hermetic monasticism) and lay piety. Some myths are dispelled here (such as the nature of the anchoress) and some perhaps unsettling information is provided (such as the intensity and sensuality of the “bride of Christ” concept).

Medieval Women proved hard to put down. It is skillfully written and extensively researched, a perfect tool for a graduate or upper-level class on the medieval period. There is so much telling material here that it should not be restricted to use in a course about women. Any course that deals with the Middle Ages would be greatly enhanced by its use, likely providing for enhanced discussion that would otherwise never have come to the fore. The final fifty pages are excerpts from primary works discussed in the book. It is unusual for an author to go to such lengths, but Leyser's rationale is “to give the reader some idea of the range of primary material used” and “to whet his or her appetite for further reading of the sources.” It is a stroke

of brilliance. She includes roughly one excerpt per chapter, from a source that has been central to that chapter. It is a perfect way to further engage students in the topic.

The only distraction is the liberal reference to misogyny. As in many books on women, particularly medieval women, this term seems overused. Most readers will not have to be told that medieval society was misogynist—it is evident. This terminology seems to be a calling card or rallying point for some, but it is a small criticism. The work does not feel biased, and the revelations about women that emerge should actually provide tools to break down any lasting barriers associated with studying women's history. Leyser has written a fascinating account that students and teachers alike will love.

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Michael Broers. *Europe Under Napoleon, 1799-1815.* London and New York: Arnold, 1996. Pp. xii, 291. Cloth, \$49.95; ISBN 0-340-66265-4. Paper, \$19.95; ISBN 0-340-66264-6.

Do we need yet another book on Napoleon? Michael Broers answers, not exactly. According to Broers, what we need, and indeed what he has given us, is a sophisticated historical analysis of the impact of Napoleonic rule on conquered Europe from the point of view of the ruled. So, if you are looking for a book primarily on Napoleon the man and ruler, or one on France under Napoleon, you will need to look elsewhere.

Drawing his inspiration from his now deceased mentor Richard Cobb, Broers examines the Napoleonic era from the perspective of those who endured it: soldiers, peasants, local officials, collaborators, and resisters. Unlike Cobb, however, who tended to eschew generalizations, Broers uses his chronological development of Napoleonic rule in Europe to advance several generalizations about Napoleonic rule and its effects.

Most importantly, Broers insists that Napoleon was rooted in the secular, rational world of the Enlightenment and Revolution. The last of the Enlightened Despots, Napoleon sought to extend and apply Enlightenment values to the areas he conquered. He imposed modern, rational bureaucratic practices and, in the Concordat with the Pope, limited papal influence and dissolved the popular religious orders. Enlightenment and Revolutionary influences can also be seen in Napoleon's attempts to abolish seigneurialism and to export the Napoleonic Civil Code.

Unfortunately for France, most of the local populations despised and resisted Napoleon's conquest and administration. While French administrators frequently saw the people in the regions they conquered, including much of the west and south of France, as savages or "bumpkins" and religious fanatics, the local populations viewed