

A Student's Guide to History is a versatile tool for diverse levels of history students. A history instructor can use this book as a supplement in a college course or use it for independent lessons over the writing process. I would also suggest using the text in middle and high schools. Students at the secondary level would benefit from learning the fundamental writing skills taught in the text and I would highly recommend this text in an Advanced Placement United States History course to facilitate with DBQs and Free Response essays. All professors and history teachers should own a copy to complement their instruction. This text is a complete handbook for all students and when applied can make a history student a success.

University of Oklahoma

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Ambrosio Bembo. *The Travels and Journal of Ambrosio Bembo.* Edited by Anthony Welch and translated by Clara Bargellini. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007. Pp. 470. Paper, \$24.95; ISBN 978-0-520-24939-4.

The Travels and Journal of Ambrosio Bembo is a seventeenth-century travelogue that offers contemporary readers an uncommon glimpse into the culture and civilization of Western Asia and India over three hundred years ago. Born in 1652 to a distinguished Venetian family, Ambrosio Bembo served in the Venetian navy and took part in several wars before completing his term of service. With military life behind him, Bembo left Venice in 1671 at the age of nineteen to follow the route of Pietro della Valle, another celebrated seventeenth-century traveler from Venice. Bembo's nearly four-year journey took him from Italy to Cyprus and across the Ottoman Empire, down the Tigris River to Baghdad and the Persian Gulf, and onto the western coast of India by sea, going as far south as Portuguese Goa. His return journey followed much the same route, apart from veering further east and traveling through seventeenth-century Iran.

Bembo composed an account of his observations from notes and memories after his return and thus the reader can rely only upon the personal veracity and accuracy of the author. Nonetheless, the 2007 edition of Bembo's journal is the first English-language translation and, thanks to the work of translator Clara Bargellini and editor Anthony Welch, is a highly readable, albeit lengthy, primary source book in history. The voluminous footnotes, which appear at the bottom of nearly every page, add considerable information and clarity to the often obscure terms and references used by Bembo.

For teachers of world or Middle Eastern history, the book has considerable value if used wisely and is most definitely worth reading. This reviewer, who teaches world history at the university level, is inclined to believe that the book, owing to its length and specialized subject matter, is likely too advanced for high school history students and possibly even for college freshmen. The use of excerpts from the book, if the

proper copyright regulations are adhered to, would be much more engaging and manageable for such students. The book would, however, be a fine and interesting addition to a topical course on the Middle East or Western Asia.

A further aspect of this book's value as a scholarly work would be in its contribution to the emerging field of Indian Ocean World studies, particularly with Bembo's account of the Portuguese trading posts in western India. This reviewer, who specializes in East African history, was fascinated by the book's insight into the Portuguese presence in this part of the world in the seventeenth century. In this regard, the book has genuine research value. The same can be said for scholars of Western Asia.

Finally, for anyone who teaches world history in this period, regardless of the classroom level, the book is a must read for its value in offering lecture-worthy insights, illustrations, and anecdotal material. As the back cover points out, this is the "most important new European travel account of seventeenth-century western Asia to be published in the last hundred years." It would behoove any teacher of recent world history to add the book to a summer reading list along with a fresh highlighter pen.

Longwood University

Phillip A. Cantrell

Helen M. Jewell. *Women in Dark Age and Early Medieval Europe, c. 500-1200.* New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006. Pp. 192. Paper, \$29.95; ISBN 0-333-91259-4.

Jewell has presented us with a fine example of her scholarship in *Women in Dark Age and Early Medieval Europe, c. 500-1200*. The book covers the historiographic evidence on the status of women and the minutiae of their lives based upon settlement archaeology, ethnographic data, administrative records such as wills and land grants, as well as the infrequent documentary evidence of the period. Her book adds considerably to the field by the wide geographic scope of its coverage as well as by the combination of forms of evidence she incorporates. In the Introduction, Jewell provides the reader with a summary of other research on the topic and its relative strengths and weaknesses.

Jewell, whose previous works include a volume on medieval women in England, a volume on education in medieval England, and other assorted pieces on insular medieval history, has traversed the continent as well as the isles to provide a comprehensive overview of a topic that has needed a book like this. In providing research on the lives of women, Jewell also provides a deeper look at economic factors in family and clan life of the time, by explaining how dowry and other economic exchanges relating to family and marriage worked. And by traversing a large time period and various cultures, she helps to break down the assumptions of how monolithic these customs were and show their variances.