

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.

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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.

Jewell has presented us with a very good book for entry into the topic of women during this period. However, although this book covers the general swath of knowledge about the status of women at the time, this is not a generalist's book. The book presumes a knowledge of the major people, historical trends, cultural differences, and practices of the times covered in the book. And the book covers the period from late antiquity until the high middle ages, so it assumes a knowledge of quite different periods in European history. Thus, those who already have a background in history will find this book most useful.

Teachers of European history or women's studies will find this useful for providing information on the types of work that women performed or were allowed to perform. Upper-level undergrads in history and related fields (medieval literature, classics, and religious studies) might find this a useful though slightly challenging read as well.

One of the greatest strengths is Jewell's interdisciplinary nature of her research and vision: The book covers social, economic, political, and religious history. The book is divided into sections based upon spheres of life that women inhabited in order to better probe the contributions of women in rural, urban, political/landholding life, and religion.

If there is any flaw, it is a small one: The least effective section of the book is the last chapter, where Jewell presents case studies of exceptional women in the early middle ages. This section seems least effective because the previous chapters have all assumed a detailed knowledge of these exceptional women and others. Perhaps one way to use this book in a classroom would be to read these studies of individual women first—in order to orient new students to the women and their roles in the early middle ages—and then follow these case studies up with the rest of the book.

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Andrea Janelle Dickens

Tristram Hunt. *Building Jerusalem: The Rise and Fall of the Victorian City*. New York: Metropolitan Books/Henry Holt and Co., 2006. Pp. 608. Paper, \$20.00; ISBN 0-8050-8259-X.

Works profiling Britain's post-industrial past are abundant, given the nation's standing as the world's first industrial and urban society. Accordingly, present-day authors face a massive challenge in conferring new information on Britain's development during the nineteenth century. Such a challenge thus confronts Tristram Hunt, author of *Building Jerusalem: The Rise and Fall of the Victorian City*.

Opening with "The New Hades," *Building Jerusalem* probes the horrendous state of city living following the onset of industrialization, and in the following ten chapters (including an epilogue) it bravely accounts for British endeavors to establish a new, improved urban vision. Emphasizing numerous social and environmental problems,