Renaissance and Reformation
Renaissance et Réforme

Wickham, Chris. Medieval Europe

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See table of contents

Explore this journal

Cite this review

Nevertheless, this edition gives the English readers a clear glimpse of the life of a fascinating woman in her own words. The edited volume is an excellent addition to scholarship on the history of early modern monastic women. This edition will be of great interest to scholars of religion, gender, and the body in Post-Tridentine Catholic culture.

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Wickham, Chris.
Medieval Europe.
New Haven: Yale University Press, 2016. Pp. xv, 335 + 32 ill., 7 maps. ISBN 978-0-300-29734-4 (hardcover) US$35.

Scholarly interpretations of the European Middle Ages often tend towards grand narratives that search for distinct breaking points—becoming preoccupied with periodization—or for the origins of nations and national identities. Chris Wickham, Chichele Professor of Medieval History at Oxford, here offers a broad, large-scale interpretation of medieval Europe that eschews both the search for origins and the impulse to demarcate chronological boundaries. Instead, he has written an account that ultimately argues for both structural continuity and change leading up to the highly politically-engaged nature of the late Middle Ages. This widespread engagement is what marks the end of the period, not "crisis, or anxiety, or the Renaissance, or a sense that the continent was, somehow, waiting for the Reformation and European global conquest" (257).

Wickham's previous work has primarily concentrated on medieval Italy up to the end of the thirteenth century. His broader syntheses of European medieval history have also been influential; his *Framing the Early Middle Ages* (2005) won a number of prestigious awards, including the Wolfson History Prize, the Deutscher Memorial Prize, and the AHA's James Henry Breasted Prize. *Medieval Europe* is an extension of this synthesizing scholarship into the high and late Middle Ages. At the broadest level, Wickham aims to account for the changes taking place in the roughly thousand-year span that saw the transition from the dominance of the Roman empire to the recognizable

outlines of most modern European states. Unlike many narratives of the Middle Ages, Wickham's does not proceed with the intent to arrive at an explanation of Europe at the beginning of the sixteenth century, or to identify the seeds of modernity. Rather, he traces developments emerging from various elements at the end of the fifth century: in particular, large-scale structural shifts to public power, political systems, uses of text and literacy, and patterns of regional power and identity, placing them in the context of a medieval period seen as vibrant and engaging in its own right.

Each chapter takes a key moment of change as its main topic. These turning points serve to structure not only the book but also Wickham's interpretation of the medieval period. Moving from the fall of Rome through to the development of state structures, the impact of the Black Death, and the increased engagement with the public sphere in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, he highlights religious, political, and demographic change. As he has written elsewhere on the earlier half of the period, this book tends to emphasize the period from roughly 1000 to1500; chapters proceed chronologically with some overlap, addressing the strength of local or cellular politics, the economic and demographic boom of the high medieval period, the creeping intrusiveness of the state, the sack in 1204 of Constantinople and Byzantium's drift away from the Latin west, the extension of literacy to new sectors of medieval society, the Black Death and its consequent economic and political upheavals, and the expansion of the role of the public in late medieval politics. Taken together, the chapters present a coherent, nuanced argument that sees the power of states building on the strength of local politics and taking advantage of expanding literacy in order to tax and communicate. These states found themselves in conversation with their peoples, who had also taken advantage of the personal ties and networks at the heart of these cellular politics and, perhaps even more so, of the communication and communities made possible by increased literacy. It is this conversation between polity and public that is the engagement that Wickham sees as nearly omnipresent across medieval Europe by the final century of the period.

Neither a textbook nor a popular history, this volume may struggle to find its readership. Wickham does not present a comprehensive survey useful for general classroom use, nor does he offer an unambiguous narrative of the period. This is a scholarly argument on a large scale: nuanced, recognizing variability and uncertainty in its sources, and therefore likely unsatisfying to

many. Historians of the medieval period and beyond, however, should benefit from Wickham's particular vision of the Middle Ages as a series of major turning points knit together by structural forces. His assessment of the respective roles played by various elements in this tapestry is thought provoking, and in this era of ever more finely tuned areas of scholarly specialization, the return to interpretive history on the scale of centuries and continents is refreshing. To take just one example, scholars of literacy in the medieval west will be interested to see here the very central and crucial role assigned it by Wickham. As much as political, religious, or economic developments, the many uses of the written word were fundamental in shaping history across Europe.

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Yver, Jacques.
Le Printemps d'Yver.
Édition critique de Marie-Ange Maignan, en collaboration avec Marie Madeleine Fontaine. Textes Littéraires Français, 632. Genève : Droz, 2015. 756 p. ISBN 978-2-600-01808-1 (broché) 65,40 €

L'édition du *Printemps d'Yver* vient combler une lacune importante pour tout chercheur, ou lecteur curieux, intéressé par les romans français de la Renaissance. Souvent cité, plus rarement lu aujourd'hui, *Le Printemps d'Yver* fut publié une trentaine de fois entre le moment de sa publication (1572) et 1600 : cette œuvre unique, la seule de Jacques Yver, parue très peu de temps après sa mort, s'inspire du récit cadre boccacien, pour raconter les cinq journées de « devisants » réunis dans un château poitevin. *Le Printemps d'Yver* mêle en effet des récits et des poèmes plaisants sur des sujets médiévaux (l'Angleterre de Guillaume le Conquérant par exemple) ou historiquement bien plus proches, tels que les Guerres d'Italie jusqu'à la troisième guerre de religion de 1568–1570. Cette matière contemporaine fait que l'Histoire se mêle harmonieusement à la variété des histoires racontées, sur des sujets traditionnellement romanesques (l'amour, la fidélité ou la Fortune) ou plus moraux (la guerre, la mort). Riche de plusieurs glossaires, dont un portant sur les expressions proverbiales, cette édition critique reprend en fait une thèse de doctorat soutenue en 1980 par