

*Whose Middle Ages? Teachable Moments for an Ill-Used Past.* Andrew Albin, Mary C. Erler, Thomas O'Donnell, Nicholas L. Paul, and Nina Rowe, eds. New York: Fordham University Press, 2019. xi + 308 pp. \$70.

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*Whose Middle Ages?* presents readers with a series of short pedagogical introductions to medieval studies and brief studies on contemporary uses of the Middle Ages. Both types of contributions here help to articulate the political role that the Middle Ages play in our field and in our world today.

One of the greatest challenges in teaching and thinking through the uses of the Middle Ages in the present is that academic studies on the matter are often nonexistent. This is particularly true of studies on the nefarious, amorphous, and meandering appearances of the medieval across far-right rhetoric. Unlike studies on medieval-inflected games or television shows, the uses of medieval iconography and tropes by the far right are often deeply ephemeral and slippery. This makes volumes such as this all the more necessary and highlights the need for more concerted studies on these matters.

Much has changed since this volume first came out in 2019: an endless pandemic, an insurrection, another polarizing election (along with the Big Lie of voter fraud), an ongoing collective reckoning in the face of enduring anti-Black violence, and the mainstreaming of conspiracy theories. From the vantage point of 2022, certain essays stand out. For example, Magda Teter's contribution on blood libel serves as a pressing introduction to this troubling and persistent lie, which places into relief the endurance of this medieval rhetoric. Similarly, William Diebold on the Nazi Middle Ages, Maggie Williams on Celtic Crosses and whiteness, and Adam Bishop on the hashtag #DeusVult are particularly useful contributions.

Such work is complemented by other essays that discuss the complex reception of the Middle Ages, such as Cord Whitaker's concise study of the Middle Ages in the Harlem Renaissance and Helen Young's study on the whitewashing of the Middle Ages in popular culture. Other essays in the volume seek to shatter the novice's preconceptions and stereotypes of the medieval world, such as Sarah Guérin's chapter on trans-Saharan ivory trade, or the various contributions dedicated to questions of racial diversity, immigration, gender, and sexuality.

Much of this latter work summarizes broader conversations across medieval studies. In this respect, the present volume is unable to capture the rich, nuanced, and thriving work done across the field to diversify the Middle Ages. In many ways, that is still a book we need, one that reprints and collects the various works by scholars of color across medieval studies that have radically corrected academic misconceptions of the Middle Ages, demonstrating that many present phenomena are not just abuses of the Middle Ages, but uses of the medieval that have emerged from scholarship's own complicities with whiteness, colonialism, and erasure. For one of the most exceptional, recent

publications in this area, see the special issue of *Literature Compass*, edited by Dorothy Kim, *Critical Race and the Middle Ages*. Additional bibliography can be found both in the volume under review and, especially, in Jonathan Hsy and Julie Orlemanski, "Race and Medieval Studies: A Partial Bibliography." This is an active area of research and publishing, so any recommendation is partial and fragmentary, but these will serve as useful wayfinding recommendations. A planned special issue of *Speculum* dedicated to "Race, Race-Thinking, and Identity," edited by François-Xavier Fauvelle, Nahir Otaño Gracia, and Cord J. Whitaker, will surely have an important impact on this conversation.

Similarly, the extensive work done in medieval trans studies is essentially absent, though now we can boast several edited volumes and monographs on the subject with far more work forthcoming. The book's added coda, entitled "This Book as a Teachable Moment," notes the critique of the volume's underrepresentation of scholars of color. This is an important and necessary caveat that rightfully leads readers to further resources that can more accurately capture the current state of the field.

As an instructor, I would recommend this book as a tool for unsettling student's expectations and broadening the conversations we have in our survey courses. Together with the ongoing work of scholars of color, as well as queer and trans scholars, this book can help us to move past all the detrimental stereotypes and misconceptions of the Middle Ages and produce a radically inclusive and more historically accurate discipline.

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*Booksellers and Printers in Provincial France 1470–1600*. Malcolm Walsby.  
Library of the Written Word 87; The Handpress World 87. Leiden: Brill, 2020. x + 902 pp. €165.

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This ambitious and long-awaited project, recipient of the Roland H. Bainton Prize from the Sixteenth Century Society and Conference, ought to be an indispensable resource for scholars working on the book in early modern France. Here, Walsby marshals more than twenty years of research to build the most thorough resource on the French provincial book world currently available. The problem he seeks to address is deeply familiar to researchers working on the French book trade outside of Paris and Lyon: a focus on these print centers leads to exclusion of provincial printers and booksellers, outside of scattered sources in municipal archives and articles in small, local journals. Indeed, a similar issue holds for bibliography and book history writ large, where the majority of both reference works and original scholarship focuses on the lower-hanging fruit of printers and booksellers documented on surviving imprints, and work done in