

determine acceptable positions or deliberate silences on the part of English representatives in conciliar debates. Of course, as Russell acknowledges, an argument for English enthusiasm is difficult to prove, given the scarcity of records or explicit commentary. At the very least, however, Russell convincingly argues that the English were willing and concerned participants in the project.

Russell's subject is of course vast, and so a judicious selection of focal points is essential. Even so, one wonders if his treatment of the very significant English involvement in the prosecutions of Wycliffite and Hussite positions and personages at Constance and Basel—even aside from their significance for the history of religious reform, which is not his subject—is perhaps cursory. Additionally, at certain points in the book, the English seem to be inexplicably missing, while at others extrapolation from the English context to conciliar practice seems to leave out the rest of Europe. Again, one should not expect an exhaustive study of conciliarist interest in all parts of Latin Christendom; but even so, there are points where arguments for situating the councils within a more widespread context of collective government in Europe seem to rest on evidence from England alone, so slightly more could be done to show that England was representative. These points of criticism aside, Russell's monograph is a remarkable contribution, providing a generous and reliable resource for scholars of conciliarism, and important correctives to previous assessments. *Conciliarism and Heresy* will stand out as an influential study for years to come.

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MICHAEL STAUNTON. *The Historians of Angevin England*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017. Pp. 402. \$100.00 (cloth).
 doi: 10.1017/jbr.2018.16

The late twelfth and early thirteenth century has long been recognized as the golden age of medieval English historiography, and in his new book Michael Staunton sets out to understand the purpose and mentalities of nine historians who made this age of history writing so important. Although he acknowledges that other histories were written, Staunton argues that the works of the nine historians he discusses best reveal the literary brilliance of the period and contemporary attitudes toward history writing. These attitudes were, for Staunton, shaped by the very dynamism of the period. These historians lived in an exciting time in English history that inspired them to write about their own times rather than ancient or earlier medieval history. As a result, as Staunton clearly reveals, their historical works provide important insights into ideas about kingship, family ties, government, the Crusades, and heretics and Jews, as well as offering a narrative of the various Angevin kings who dominated the era.

The book is organized into two main sections of eighteen chapters, including an introduction and conclusion. In the first part Staunton introduces the nine historians who wrote about English history at the end of the twelfth and beginning of the thirteenth century and outlines the character of history writing during that time. Staunton begins this section by exploring what these historians wrote about and what motivated them to do so, arguing that the exciting nature of the times and individuals living then as well as literary changes caused these writers to focus on their own period. It was, however, the historians themselves who were essential in writing about the era, and the main focus of part one is on those writers. Four of the historians—Roger of Howden, Ralph of Diceto, William of Newburgh, and Gerald of Wales—are

the subject of individual chapters (three through six), and the other five—Gervase of Canterbury, Ralph of Coggeshall, Richard of Devize, Walter Map, and Richard de Templo—are grouped together in chapters seven and eight. Staunton provides useful and important intellectual biographies of these authors, examining their influences, motivations, interpretations, and works of history in these chapters. While each of these historians was committed to writing about their own modern era, Staunton demonstrates how their works varied in intent and focus. Roger of Howden, for example, was a well-placed figure in Angevin society whose works reflected a quasi-official account of events. Gervase of Canterbury, on the other hand, while well informed, focused more closely on affairs of his monastery at Canterbury and its relations with the archbishop. Staunton demonstrates similar subtle differences in the works of the other historians he examines and explains, as well, how the histories were shaped by the sources used by these scholars. The sources used often included oral accounts and copies of letters and other documents as well as the Bible and the writings of Bede and the church fathers and ancient Roman writers. Once again, Staunton shows, that the choices made by individual writers would shape the histories they wrote; William of Newburgh's emphasis on Sallust made his account different from that of Richard of Devize, who drew from Juvenal.

In part two, Staunton discusses the main themes of historiography considered by the historians examined in part one, at times comparing how the different writers approached individual events or personalities and at other times comparing these writers to broader literary and intellectual traditions. Part two begins with three chapters on the most important and dynamic figure of the period, Henry II, who, as Staunton notes, fascinated these historians even if they all did not approve of him. The histories of Henry offer commentary on kingship, Henry's rise and fall, and the rebellion of his sons, and they draw analogies from ancient and biblical history in order to explain contemporary affairs better. The next three chapters address the most dramatic developments of the late twelfth century, the fall of Jerusalem to Saladin, the Third Crusade, and the role of Richard I and the English in the crusade. Staunton examines both the broader tradition of writing about crusades in medieval Europe and the perspectives of the Angevin historians. As with the chapters on Henry, Staunton explores some of the themes raised in the first section such as the role of the divine in human affairs and the problem that the good do not always seem to be rewarded nor the bad punished in this life. The final chapters address Angevin government, outsiders such as Jews and heretics, and England's neighbors. It is the chapter on the outsider that perhaps is the weakest of the book and illustrates a possible drawback with Staunton's tight focus on the historians. His comments on attitudes toward Jews and heretics do not engage fully with recent work on these topics nor does Staunton consider the hagiography of William of Norwich, the first of the ritual murder texts compiled in England.

Despite these minor reservations, Staunton's book is an effective and engaging study of the Angevin historians and their times. Staunton successfully demonstrates the importance of these writers and clearly elaborates their approaches and understanding of the craft of history and in so doing provides a means to understand Angevin history better.

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