

**William Chester Jordan and Jenna Rebecca Phillips, eds., *The Capetian Century, 1214–1314. Cultural Encounters in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages* 22. (Turnhout: Brepols, 2017). Print, 362 pp., €100.00, ISBN: 9782503567181.**



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*Review*

It cannot be denied that the history of France between 1214 (the battle of Bouvines) and 1314 (Philip the Fair's death) is an overanalysed topic. This collection by some of the foremost historians on the subject will not change one's mind. At times, *The Capetian Century* feels like a who's who in the field of Capetian studies, yet the selection of contributors is undeniably slanted toward the institutionalist disciples of Joseph Strayer, rather than presenting a balanced view of the scholarship. Indeed, both William Chester Jordan's introduction and Elizabeth Brown's essay focus as much on Strayer and his students as they do on the history of Capetian France. It is also clear from the limited depth of many of the chapters that they were adapted directly from papers presented at The Capetian Century conference held at Princeton in 2014. The resulting work, therefore, is more of a survey that contributes little new to the field and is unnecessarily constrained by chronological bookends.

The book itself is well-crafted, both aesthetically and organisationally. Jordan initiates the study by assessing the basic institutional historiography of thirteenth century France, making an argument that two things are still needed: 'fleshing out where details are unclear and where apparent contradictions remain and [...] further interrogation more generally' (pp. xi–xii). The four sections of the book — Royal Patronage and Expressions of Kingship, Power and its Representation, Philip the Fair and his Ministers, and Crusaders and Crusading Orders — then attempt to address these needs. Each chapter includes citation information on the first page for easy referencing and a bibliography at the end, with short-form footnotes

throughout. Illustrations also support several of the chapters. The collection concludes with a comprehensive index that aggregates material from all fourteen chapters.

Part I is the most traditional of the sections, with three contributors being Jordan's students and all relying heavily on archival material. William Courtenay begins by focusing on the relationship that developed over the thirteenth century between the monarchy and the University of Paris, using the *Chartularium Universitatis Parisiensis* as his basis. Anne Lester, meanwhile, looks at the special arrangement between the Capetians and the Cistercians, which has largely been underemphasised in comparison to mendicant orders. Similarly, Sean Field explores the convergence in the mid-thirteenth century of the role of royal confessor with that of papal inquisitor. Concluding this section, Cecilia Gaposchkin examines representations of kingship and crusading in four moralised bibles, full-colour images from which illustrate her arguments. The exploration of under-examined topics makes this section possibly the most original in the volume.

An article by Xavier Hélyary opens Part II, arguing that an increasingly chivalric environment in thirteenth century France persuaded the nobility to support the king's military efforts and that the French defeat at the battle of Courtrai in 1302 ended this trend. A short piece by Hagar Barak follows in which she argues, borrowing largely from John Baldwin, that the Capetians became progressively less reliant on the upper nobility from the reign of Louis IX onwards. By far the most complex chapter in the book is Brigitte Bedos-Rezak's study of the theory of consent in late medieval France. Her breadth of terms — many undefined — and the complex sentences she employs render her arguments incomprehensible to all but the most learned scholars. Thus, this section presents a mixture of new research, old conclusions, and topics that will likely only interest specific audiences.

The prolific Elizabeth Brown begins Part III with an essay ostensibly focused on Philip the Fair's chief ministers, Guillaume de Nogaret and Enguerran de Marigny, but what she actually produces is a self-reflective discussion of the historiography of research into Philip himself. Julian Théry-Astruc follows with a discussion regarding how Nogaret appropriated papal prerogatives for use by the French king. His chapter is the most thoroughly cited in the book and may also be the most original. In contrast, Élisabeth Lalou's chapter is essentially a survey of Robert Fawtier's collection of primary- and secondary-source documents known as the *Corpus philippicum*, which has been housed at the Sorbonne since the historian's death in 1966 and has been used by myriad researchers of the reign of Philip the Fair. Part III is certainly the most homogeneous section in the book and the translations into English of Théry-Astruc and Lalou's articles greatly increase the value of the collection to non-French readers.

The final part is the least related to the book's premise. Jochen Burgtorf begins by comparing the literature surrounding the Montaigu family in an attempt to address apparent contradictions in their history and restore their place among the canon of important crusading families. Similarly, Paul Crawford investigates why the family of Renaud de Châtillon has been largely dismissed as knightly upstarts when, in reality, they were well-connected both before and after their members journeyed to the Holy Land. Concluding the book with more of an amalgamation of previous research than an original work in itself, Helen Nicholson's study of the Templars explores the lingering issue of what happened to the surviving knights after 1307. Despite the nonthematic nature of this section, the unique subject matter makes it by far the most illuminating.

It is unfortunate that chapters by Alexis Charansonnet and the late John Baldwin, two historians who also spoke at the conference, were not included in this

collection. The absence of Charansonnet's discussion on the Anglo-French rivalry leaves a void in the final product, while Baldwin's discussion on the consequences of the battle of Bouvines would have introduced this study well. In the end, Jordan's hopes for this volume remain unfulfilled. Little has been clarified and further interrogation has revealed nothing groundbreaking. The result is a book that collects articles on niche topics that may guide researchers toward useful resources but does not advance the field of Capetian history in any new direction.

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