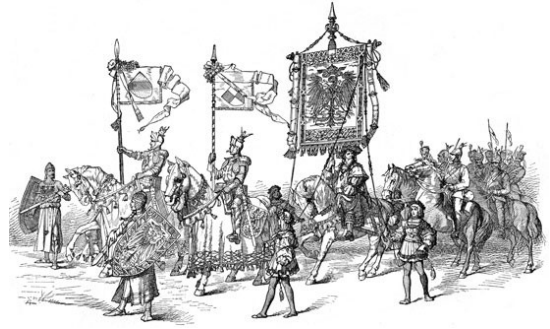


The Medievalist's Reading List



Last updated March 2nd, 2010

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By Manigarm the Scythian

We all love to learn about medieval history, but sorting through the thousands of books and articles out there can be daunting. Drawing on a background in medieval studies and archaeology, I've compiled the following reading list, categorized by topic, to help get you started. I've included the title and author of each work and listed books alphabetically in each category.

Be aware, that no list of five books or ten or fifteen or even twenty books are ever really going to 'cover' the Middle Ages. Academic courses of medieval history have 40 books or more that are considered basic material for all medievalists, and then there are the individual lists developed for specialized fields that can reach 100 works or more. This is just a start and there are certainly great medieval books out there that I have left out.

Enjoy!

For further reading, you can also check out my [Medieval Archer's Reading List](#).

(Note: It is my intent that this reading list be considered a living document. If you have read a book or article that you feel is an important contribution to learning about the Middle Ages and I have not included it here, feel free to submit the title and author (and a short description, if you like) for inclusion in the reading list at prolegomenon@gmail.com).

Primary Foundational Material

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Primary materials involve books and texts written or published during the Middle Ages. These works are a vital part to understanding the ways in which people viewed the medieval world and are an important point of reference when reading about historical events.

Arthurian Romances, Chrétien de Troyes

Beowulf, Unknown – (Note: Both Seamus Heaney and Howell Chickering offer facing-page translations if you are interested in dual-language comparisons).

Canterbury Tales, Geoffrey Chaucer

Chroniques, Jean Froissart (c.1337-1410)

Historia Regum Britanniae, Geoffrey of Monmouth

Legend of the Purgatory of St. Patrick (L'Espurgatoire Saint Patriz), Marie de France

Morte D'arthur, Sir Thomas Malory

Parzival, Wolfram von Eschenbach

Piers Plowman, William Langland

Roman de la Rose, Guillaume de Lorris/Jean de Meun

Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, Unknown

Tale of Genji, Murasaki Shikibu

The Decameron, Giovanni Boccaccio

The Divine Comedy, Dante Alighieri

The Edda, Snorri Sturluson

The Mabinogion by Unknown

The Nibelungenlied, Unknown

The Song of Roland, Unknown

Tristan and Isolde, Gottfried von Strassburg

Two Lives Of Charlemagne, Einhard and Notker The Stammerer

King Alfred's Reading List

Of course, you could always read the five books King Alfred (849 – 899) thought were essential for all people in his time:

Confessions, **City of God**, and **Soliloquies**, Augustine of Hippo

Ecclesiastical History of the English People, Venerable Bede

History Against the Pagans, Orosius

Regula Pastoralis and **Dialogues**, Gregory the Great

The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle

General Medieval History

General Medieval History

If you are interested in following the current trends in modern medieval scholarship, I recommend checking out the public lecture series occasioned by the annual Bernardo Lecture at the Center for Medieval and Early Renaissance Studies (CEMERS).

Daily Life in the World of Charlemagne, Pierre Riche

Feudal Society, Marc Bloch

Fiefs and Vassals: The Medieval Evidence Reinterpreted, Susan Reynolds

Framing the Early Middle Ages: Europe and the Mediterranean, 400–800, Chris Wickham

Holy Feast, Holy Fast: The Religious Significance of Food to Medieval Women and Fragmentation and Redemption, Caroline Walker Bynum

In the Wake of the Plague, Norman Cantor

Making of Europe, Christopher Dawson

Medieval Civilization 400-1500 & The Birth of Europe, Jacques Le Goff

Medieval Trade in the Mediterranean World, Robert Lopez

Religious Movements of the Middle Ages, Herbert Grundmann

Standards of Living in the Later Middle Ages, Christopher Dyer

The Birth of the Western Economy, Robert Latouche

The Civilization of the Middle Ages, Norman Cantor

The Historians Craft, Marc Bloch.

The Making of Europe, Robert Bartlett

The Making of the Middle Ages, R.W. Southern

The Middle Ages, 395-1500, Joseph Strayer

The Pursuit of the Millenium: Revolutionary Millenarians and Mystical Anarchists of the Middle Ages, Norman Cohn

The Rise of Western Christendom, Peter Brown

The Waning of the Middle Ages, John Huizinga

The History of Medieval Scholarship

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There is some debate among academic circles as to how outdated historical books should be read (such as the works of C.S. Lewis or Henri Pirenne) because the majority of their theories and concepts have been either disproven or revised by modern scholarship. However, medieval scholars tend to recommend reading such books regardless, if for no other reason than to learn about the history of medieval scholarship and to understand why certain theories are no longer accepted. I have included well known, but outdated, medieval history texts in this section of the reading list but I have noted the caveat in the entry.

Inventing the Middle Ages, Norman Cantor – Inventing the Middle Ages is about modern medieval scholars. Cantor outlines a number of strong opinions regarding some of his colleagues, peers, and

predecessors but his account is subjective. This book was not meant as an introduction to the Middle Ages but does serve as a good starting point in understanding academic medievalists as a group.

Mohammed and Charlemagne, Henri Pirenne – This is another well-known book typically read in order to understand why the main thesis is longer accepted. The "Pirenne thesis" has been widely discredited in academia. (Note: If you aren't familiar with the Pirenne thesis, Henri Pirenne suggested that the reason the Dark Ages were called dark is because wars started by Muslim conquests stopped trade in the Mediterranean. However, since then, researchers have realized that the Dark Ages weren't as dark as once thought, and there is very little evidence that trade decreased during this period. The most famous refutation of the Pirenne thesis is **Mohammed, Charlemagne, and the Origins of Europe** by Richard Hodges, but there are a great number of other articles and books that argue against Pirenne's discourse as well.)

The Allegory of Love or **The Discarded Image**, C.S. Lewis – The Discarded Image is a classic but it is also quite outdated. Medieval scholars no longer agree with Lewis' theories, however, both **The Discarded Image** and **The Allegory of Love** are still very important works that had a great influence on medieval theory in their day. Now, the majority of students who read these books do so in order to understand why modern scholarship disagrees with them.

Art Art

Art and Architecture in Medieval France: Medieval Architecture, Sculpture, Stained Glass, Manuscripts, the Art of the Church Treasures, Whitney S. Stoddard

Art of the Middle Ages, Janetta Rebo Benton

Early Medieval Architecture, Roger Stalley

Early Medieval Art, Lawrence Nees

Early Medieval Art 300-1150: Sources and Documents, Caecilia Davis-Weyer

Gothic Art, 1140-c. 1450: Sources and Documents, Teresa G. Frisch

Gothic Art: Glorious Visions, Michael Camille

Image on the Edge: The Margins of Medieval Art, Michael Camille

Medieval Art, Marilyn Stokstad

Medieval Art, Veronica Sekules

Medieval Art: Painting, Sculpture, Architecture 4th-14th Century, James Snyder

Romanesque Art, Andreas Petzold

Snyder's Medieval Art, Henry Luttikhuisen

The Gothic Image: Religious Art in France of the Thirteenth Century, Emile Male

Chaucer

Chaucer

A Preface to Chaucer, D.W. Robertson

Chaucer, Donald Howard

Chaucer and the Subject of History, Lee Patterson

Chaucer and Medieval Estates Satire, Jill Mann

Chaucer's Sexual Poetics, Carolyn Dinshaw

Chaucerian Polity, David Wallace

Speaking of Chaucer, E. Talbot Donaldson

Social Chaucer and **Hochon's Arrow**, Paul Strohm

The Mythographic Chaucer: The Fabulation of Sexual Politics, Jane Chance

Cooking and Food

Cooking and Food

A Proper Newe Booke of Cokerye, Anne Ahmed (ed.)

Anglo-Saxon Food & Drink, Ann Hagen

Annals of the Caliphs' Kitchens: Ibn Sayyar al-Warraq's Tenth-century Baghdadi Cookbook, Nawal Nasrallah

Boke of Keruynge, Peter Brears (ed.)

Chiquart's "On Cookery", Terence Scully (trans.)

Concordance of English Recipes: Thirteenth through Fifteenth Centuries, Constance B. Hieatt, Terry Nutter, Johnna H. Holloway

Cooking & Dining in Medieval England, Peter Brears

Cooking in Europe, 1250-1650, Ken Albala

Curry on English, Constance B. Hieatt (ed.), Sharon Butler (ed.)

Early French Cookery: Sources, History, Original Recipes and Modern Adaptations, D. Eleanor Scully, Terrence Scully

Eating Right in the Renaissance, Ken Albala

Fast and Feast: Food in Medieval Society, Bridget Ann Henisch

Food and Eating in Medieval Europe, Martha Carlin (ed.) and Joel T. Rosenthal (ed.)

Food in the Middle Ages: A Book of Essays, Melitta Weiss Adamson (ed.)

Food Through the Ages: From Stuffed Dormice to Pineapple Hedgehogs, Anna Selby

La Varenne's Cookery, François Pierre De La Varenne, Terence Scully (Trans.)

Libellus De Arte Coquinaria: An Early Northern Cookery Book, Vincent F. Cuenca (trans.),
Rudolf Grewe (ed.), Constance B. Hieatt (ed.)

Living and Dining in Medieval Paris, Nicole Crossley-Holland

Medieval Cuisine of the Islamic World: A Concise History with 174 Recipes, Lilia Zaouali

Out of the East: Spices and the Medieval Imagination, Paul Freedman

Pleyn Delit: Medieval Cookery for Modern Cooks, Constance B. Hieatt

Medieval Herbals: The Illustrative Traditions, Minta Collins

Spices And Comfits: Collected Papers on Medieval Food, Johanna Maria Van Winter

Take a Thousand Eggs or More: A Collection of 15th Century Recipes, Cindy Renfrow

The Art of Cookery in the Middle Ages (Studies in Anglo-Saxon History), Terence Scully

The Book of Sent Soví, Joan Santanach (ed.) and Robin Vogelzang (trans.)

The Good Housewife's Jewel (Southover Press Historic Cookery & Housekeeping), Thomas
Dawson

The Neapolitan Recipe Collection: Cuoco Napoletano, Terence Scully (trans.)

The Medieval Cook, Bridget Ann Henisch

The Medieval Cookbook, Maggie Black

The Medieval Kitchen: Recipes from France and Italy, Odile Redon

The Opera of Bartolomeo Scappi, Terence Scully (trans.)

The Spice Route: A History, John Keay

The Taste of Conquest: The Rise and Fall of the Three Great Cities of Spice, Michael Krondl

The Viandier of Taillevent, Terence Scully (trans.)

The Vivendier: A Fifteenth-Century French Cookery Manuscript, Terence Scully (trans.)

Two Fifteenth Century Cookery Books 1430-1450, Faulke Watling (ed.), Thomas Austin (ed.)

Court Court

Art of Courtly Love, Andreas Cappellanus

Courtly Culture, Joachim Bumke

Crusades

Crusades

Arab Historians Of The Crusades, Francesco Gabrieli

Chronicles Of The Crusades, Joinville and Villehardouin

Jerusalem Delivered, Torquato Tasso (Renaissance epic based on the Middle Ages)

Orlando Furioso, Ludovico Ariosto (Renaissance epic based on the Middle Ages)

The Crusades: A History, Jonathan Riley-Smith

The Crusades Through Arab Eyes, Amin Maalouf

The Fourth Crusade, Donald E. Queller

(See also: Thomas F. Madden)

Eastern Empires and the Middle East

Eastern Empires and the Middle East

A History of the Byzantine State and Society, Warren Treadgold

Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam, Omar Khayyam (c1048 - 1122)

Education

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The Seven Liberal Arts in the Middle Ages, David L Wagner

Literature and Folklore

Literature and Folklore

Arabic Role in Medieval Literary History: A Forgotten Heritage, Maria Rosa Menocal

Dreaming Of Cockaigne: Medieval Fantasies Of The Perfect Life, Herman Pleij

European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages, Ernst Robert Curtis

From Memory To Written Record: England 1066 – 1307, M.T. Clanchy

Hunting in Middle English Literature, Anne Rooney

Writing and Rebellion: England in 1381, Steven Justice

Politics and Economics

Politics and Economics

A History of Business in Medieval Europe, Edwin S. Hunt and James M. Murray

Early Growth of the European Economy, George Duby

Medieval Political Thought, Walter Ullmann

On the Medieval Origins of the Modern State, Joseph Strayer

Origins of the European Economy, Michael McCormick:

The Commercial Revolution of the Middle Ages, 950-1350, Robert S. Lopez

The King's Two Bodies, Ernst Kantorowitz

The Medieval Machine: The Industrial Revolution of the Middle Ages, Jean Gimpel

Religion and The Church

Religion and The Church

Augustine of Hippo, Peter Brown

Confessions, St. Augustine of Hippo

De clade Lindisfarnensis monasterii (On the Destruction of the Monastery of Lindisfarne),
Alcuin of York

Ecclesiastical History of the English People, Venerable Bede

Medieval Heresy, Malcolm Lambert

Monologion and Proslogion, Anselm of Canterbury

Summa Theologica and Summa contra Gentiles, Thomas Aquinas

The City of God Against the Pagans, Augustine of Hippo

The Consolation of Philosophy, Boethius

The Augsburg Confession

The Division of Nature, Johannes Scotus Eriugena

The Early Humiliati, Frances Andrews

The Story of Abelard's Adversities, J.T. Muckle

Social History

Social History

Europe's Inner Demons, Norman Cohn

Law, Sex and Christian Society in Medieval Europe, James A. Brundage

Sex, Dissidence and Damnation: Minority Groups in the Middle Ages, Jeffrey Richards

The Formation of a Persecuting Society, R.I. Moore

The Goodman of Paris (Le Ménagier de Paris), Eileen Power (trans.)

The Great Household in Late Medieval England, C. M. Woolgar

The Merchant of Prato: Daily Life in a Medieval Italian City, Iris Origo

Women in the Middle Ages or Life in A Medieval Village, Frances and Joseph Gies (Note – These books have been subject to number of negative reviews over the last several years. If you are interested further in the subject of gender in medieval scholarship, I recommend reading Medieval Women by Eileen Power.)

Thought and Philosophy

Thought and Philosophy

A World Lit Only by Fire: The Medieval Mind and the Renaissance, William Manchester

Early Medieval Philosophy, John Marenbon

The Beginnings of Western Science, David C. Lindberg

The Evolution of Medieval Thought, David Knowles

War and Conflict in the Middle Ages

War and Conflict in the Middle Ages

A Distant Mirror: The Calamitous 14th Century, Barbara W. Tuchman

Armies and Warfare in the Middle Ages: The English Experience, Michael Prestwich

Early Carolingian Warfare, Bernard S. Bachrach

War Cruel and Sharp: English Strategy Under Edward III, Clifford J. Rogers

War in the Middle Ages, Philippe Contamine

Specialty or Area-Specific

Specialty or Area-Specific

Montaillou, the Promised Land of Error, Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie - Southern France in the 14th century, the Cathars and their persecution, and the trials of heretics.

Rome Profile of a City, 312-1308, Richard Krautheimer - Focuses on the art, architecture, and ideology of Rome primarily from the point of view of Christian antiquity.

Biography

Biography

Alfred, Warrior King, John Peddie

Averroes: A Rationalist in Islam, Roger Arnaldez

Charlemagne: The Formation of a European Identity, Rosamond McKitterick

Charlemagne: The Great Adventure, Derek Wilson

Cnut, Emperor of the North, M.J. Trow

Dante: A Life, R.W.B Lewis

Eleanor: April Queen of Aquitaine, Douglas Boyd

Eleanor of Aquitaine, Courtly Love, and the Troubadours, Ffiona Swabey

Francis of Assisi, Adrian House

Francis of Assisi and His World, Mark Galli

Harun al-Rashid: And the World of the Thousand and One Nights, André Clot

Heloise and Abelard: A Twelfth Century Love Story, James Burge

Henry I, C. Warren Hollister

Henry II, W.L Warren

Ghengis Khan and the Making of the Modern World, Jack Weatherford

Key Figures in Medieval Europe: An Encyclopedia, Richard K. Emmerson

Mistress of the Monarchy: The Life of Katherine Swynford, Duchess of Lancaster, Alison Weir

Saint Francis of Assisi, G.K. Chesterton

Saladin: Hero of Islam, Geoffrey Hindley

Saladin: In His Time, P.H. Newby

Tamerlane: Sword of Islam, Conqueror of the World, Justin Marozzi

The Emperor Charlemagne, Russell Chamberlin

The First Scientist: A Life of Roger Bacon, Brian Clegg

The Greatest Traitor: The Life of Sir Roger Mortimer, 1st Earl of March, Ruler of England 1327-1330, Ian Mortimer

The Medici: Godfathers of the Renaissance, Paul Strathern

The Perfect King: The Life of Edward III, Ian Mortimer

Thomas Becket, Frank Barlow

Queen Eleanor, Independent Spirit of the Medieval World: A Biography of Eleanor of Aquitaine, Polly Schoyer Brooks

Writing Medieval Biography, 750-1250: Essays in Honour of Professor Frank Barlow, David Bates, Julia C. Crick, Sarah Hamilton, Frank Barlow

