

CLARE DOWNHAM. *Medieval Ireland*. Cambridge Medieval Textbooks. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018. Pp. 410. \$99.99 (cloth).
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Clare Downham's *Medieval Ireland*, a new contribution to the Cambridge Medieval Textbooks series, presents a fast-paced but comprehensive and careful introduction to Ireland in the Middle Ages. In this textbook, Downham sets out to correct concepts of the "backward (ness)" or "purity" (depending on one's perspective) of medieval Ireland by establishing the point that, although Ireland may have escaped colonization by the Roman Empire, it was still a rapidly developing society with international connections even in the late antique period (9). Downham does not set out to replace the previous landmark works on this topic; rather she makes frequent reference to them. Thomas Charles-Edwards' expansive *Early Christian Ireland*, for instance, remains the gold standard in the field. But this, of course, is not Downham's intent, as she seeks to make the content of previous more in-depth treatments (in addition to far-ranging topical research) more accessible to nonspecialists while also reshaping some of the widely held popular narratives about Ireland and its past. Significantly, too, *Medieval Ireland* covers the entire medieval period, while the periodization of most other studies belongs to either the early or late Middle Ages, rarely both.

In this regard, Downham's most significant contribution in this text is to move decisively away from all "invasionist" models of the country's history. In her introduction, she states that she seeks to tell the "history of the island of Ireland rather than ... of an ethnic group" (2). This approach immediately removes the tendency to deal with the arrival of the Vikings, or even the English, as a disruption to the proper progression of things. This is a value judgment that Downham refuses to make in her text, making her approach infinitely more suitable for use in the classroom. Further, Downham's analysis in general privileges native development over foreign-initiated change; attributing, for instance, changes in ecclesiastical culture in the Viking Age to trends of political centralization that may have been aided by, but were no sole effect of, Viking raids.

Similarly, the book is organized into two main sections: the early Middle Ages (500–1100) and the late Middle Ages (1100–1500), with an introductory treatment of the fifth century in the book's first chapter. This brings the treatment into accord with other standard texts on the European Middle Ages, rather than hanging the periodization on the arrival of Henry II in 1171, as has long been conventional. This choice aligns with Downham's general approach in the text: to present Ireland as a European country participating in the international Christian culture of the period, rather than an insular enclave defined by colonization. Each section deals with the subjects of land use and economy, society, politics, religion, and the arts in parallel structure to create unity and cohesion between the two treatments. One potential drawback of this organizational structure, however, is that it may be at odds with academic courses following a more straightforwardly temporal progression.

In the half of the book devoted to the early medieval period, Downham provides a comprehensive exploration of the major themes and developments while stressing the overall dynamism of the time. Complicated subjects, such as the development of the provincial power blocks, are deeply condensed, and those interested in examining the complexities of such topics will need to look elsewhere. For example, the career of Brian Boru receives approximately one paragraph (104–5) plus occasional mentions. I might add, though, that one need look no further than the footnotes for such suggestions, which are by no means intrusively detailed yet still provide adequate context and direction. Downham has written prolifically on Ireland's Viking Age in her previous scholarship, and here we find a treatment of the subject that is not only expert, but also fully integrated with the general narrative. For instance, the activities of the Viking kings at major centers like Dublin, as well as developments in the

Hiberno-Scandinavian presence in general, are explored alongside and at comparable length with that of the political development of the native tribes and kingships (107–12).

I initially had concerns that Downham's "non-invasionist" approach might result in a somewhat apologetic stance regarding the English invasion, but I was happy to discover the treatment to be well-balanced. This portion of the text does not shy away from the more exploitative and oppressively colonial nature of the English presence in Ireland, while also accounting for the economic growth that resulted from increased governmental structures in town centers. I also found the rather in-depth discussion of the varied evolution of social identity among the English in Ireland to be very informative. The topic of cultural exchange (rather than domination versus resurgence) was examined with more nuance than typically occurs in textbook treatments, with Downham remarking, "the whole of Ireland might be deemed a 'contact zone' where cultural exchange went in both directions" (219).

This is a tremendously useful textbook for courses that seek to introduce students without previous background to the subject of Ireland in the medieval period, especially those doing so within the scope of a single semester. In fact, I am now personally adopting the book for use in my own such courses. That said, the text is accessible enough to also appeal to the general reader, with an engaging prose style and a clear organizational structure. Therefore, Downham clearly accomplishes all that she set out to do, and her text makes a significant contribution to the field by helping to introduce new students, inside or outside academia, to the important, compelling, and all-too-frequently ignored history of medieval Ireland.

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LAURIE ELLINGHAUSEN. *Pirates, Traitors, and Apostates: Renegade Identities in Early Modern English Writing*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2018. Pp. 280. \$55 (cloth).
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Combining close readings of adventure drama with a judicious use of contextual materials, Laurie Ellinghausen productively expands upon the "Mediterranean turn" in English studies over the past two decades. In this tightly focused book, she challenges the enduring conception of piracy as a betrayal of the nation to show instead how fully England was implicated in the renegades it produced.

Ellinghausen turns to humoral theory, historical accounts, ballads, and other contextual materials to complicate our understanding of a key set of plays and the historical actors they represent. Her focus is on the intimate connections between renegades and the England that they ostensibly disavow. England's lack of class mobility, she argues, often pushed ambitious or desperate men beyond its borders. More importantly, these renegades' singular exploits across the Mediterranean and beyond often paradoxically served as exempla for imperial actors who would formalize and systematize their achievements.

Ellinghausen usefully notes the connection between *renegado*—the traitor to his country or religion—and the older form *runagate*, which simply designated a wanderer or roving person. This double meaning links perceptions of the renegade, who largely operated outside England, with domestic challenges to authority by "masterless men" and other figures of dislocation. By recovering the disorder within as well as beyond the nation, Ellinghausen broaches the possibility of a public that might have found much to admire in the renegade. Indeed, the probable reception of pirate tales is an important part of her argument.