

ranging from Spain to Prussia and the Holy Land. Offering a comprehensive account of these actions is, of course, a daunting prospect; fortunately, by laying out his thematic organization, Tyerman evades the anticipated fate of being mired in the chronology. *How to Plan a Crusade* is a well-constructed synthesis of the current slate of primary sources and secondary accounts of the era that is also quite appealing to the desire for well-crafted narrative flow.

A significant theme running throughout the book is the intellectual sophistication of the various Crusading participants. Tyerman supports the idea that these expeditions, while based on principles of faith, were also informed by practical considerations. For example, satisfying religious imperatives may be good and well, but in the end participants took up the cross for more prosaic considerations, including pay, profit, and the prospect of future colonization. And contrary to the balance of the historiographic accounting, Crusades were more successful expressions of the medieval European social will than generally allowed. Only at the end, when it comes to establishing a strategic vision for conquering the Holy Land or fulfilling other supporting objectives, does the Crusading vision unravel. By evaluating the incongruities between religious faith and secular rationality, Tyerman observes the inherent paradox that lay at the core of the enterprise.

By reconceptualizing the place Crusades occupied in the medieval imagination, Tyerman transforms their memory and history into a more fluid example of the Occidentalization of the Mediterranean world. In this context it is the encounter itself, rather than its result, that is revealed as the more significant force. Tyerman acknowledges the Crusades were a violent experience that frequently failed to achieve their stated objectives. When viewed through the cultural lens of its participants and contemporaries, they also are revealed as an idealistic, sophisticated, and even rational expression of faith. Ultimately, Tyerman restores the Crusades to a central place in the medieval imagination. By expressing the rationality at the heart of the concept and showing how Crusades were critical expressions of Western European and Latin Christian expansionist will, Tyerman makes a significant and evocative contribution to the field.

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*Aqua curanda est: Le acque e il loro utilizzo nei territori di Friburgo in Brisgovia e Catania dal XIII al XVI secolo.* Marco Leonardi.

Aquae: Studi e testi sulle terme 9. Florence: Olschki, 2017. vi + 298 pp. €35.

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Few topics offer more ground for interdisciplinarity than water. The reason is as obvious as its implications are crucial: fresh water is the most critical resource for human communities, and as such it has accompanied and influenced human civilization from its very cradle. This consideration is strikingly clear when we focus on the geographic char-

acteristics of urban settlements, which are both the primary evidence and the prime mover of civilization and whose development is inextricably shaped by (and, in turn, inextricably shapes) the hydrographic structure of a territory.

Given this premise, it is no surprise that Marco Leonardi in his book addresses the issue of water management in late medieval and Renaissance Europe from an essentially urban viewpoint. In doing so, he merges the study of social and cultural structures with that of geographic and environmental settings, in an ambitious attempt to perform a critical comparison of two emblematic case studies: the German city of Freiburg im Breisgau and Catania, on the eastern coast of Sicily. The reason for this peculiar choice is rooted in the author's academic and scholarly path: he is both a researcher in medieval history at the University of Catania and a longtime collaborator with the Albert-Ludwigs University in Freiburg. It was this fortunate circumstance that granted him access to the Stadtarchiv in Freiburg and to a number of analogous institutes in Catania (the Civica and A. Ursino libraries, the State Archive, and the Historical Diocesan Archive), where he discovered and studied the many documentary sources on which this book draws. A selection of these documents is featured in the appendix at the end of the volume (225–29), along with an interesting glossary of the most significant water-related technical terms used in southwestern Germany and in eastern Sicily during the late medieval and Renaissance periods (239–45).

The interdisciplinarity of this book shines through in its four chapters, all addressing various complementary aspects of the human-water relationship. Chapter 1 provides a detailed etymological reconstruction of the toponyms in Catania and in Freiburg whose origins can be traced back to terms and practices related to water. The hydrogeological and climatic history of southwestern Germany and eastern Sicily is the subject of chapter 2, which evaluates how the considerable environmental differences between these two areas of Europe affected their hydrographic structure. Still, as chapter 3 explains, human intervention played no lesser a role in this result: throughout the centuries, the water from the main streams in the Freiburg and Catania areas (the Dreisam and the Amenano Rivers, respectively) was channeled through aqueducts and canals into the urban fabric and to the nearby lands, where it was used for a variety of (often conflicting) purposes such as grinding mills, fishing, irrigation, fountains, wells, and public hygiene. Not surprisingly, this heterogeneous use entailed the development of an intricate web of regulations and laws, as quarrels and disputes among the inhabitants (and between the inhabitants and the political and religious authorities) to claim control over this resource were far from infrequent. In fact, as chapter 4 remarks, the use of water was the common denominator of virtually “all the trades and professions which formed the microcosm of the late medieval and early Renaissance city” (159). From the tanner to the miller, from farmers to butchers, from the craftsmen's shops to thermal baths and brothels, water linked the many social strata of the population, unanimously affected by the availability of this vital resource and by the many potential threats it posed (just think of the devastating effects of droughts and floods on public health and civic stability).

It is by focusing on the evolution of urban areas throughout the centuries that we realize how mutually pervasive the interaction between man and water is. So pervasive, in fact, that it touches every aspect of human endeavor. Leonardi's interdisciplinary effort, performed on two different yet surprisingly similar contexts such as Catania and Freiburg, has been described as a rare and virtuous example of "total history" (v), and rightfully so. It offers a vivid and precious picture of the many geographic, environmental, and cultural factors that shaped the intricate relationship between urban societies and water in Europe from the thirteenth to the sixteenth centuries.

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*La crescita economica dell'Occidente medievale: Un tema storico non ancora esaurito.* Centro Italiano di Studi di Storia e d'Arte di Pistoia.

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Is it still possible to debate for the distant centuries of medieval Europe a theme that permeates our daily lives and that has bounced back into the news in recent years? Is economic growth still a topic worthy of historical discussion? And, most importantly, does medieval economic growth deserve a more accurate analysis and explanation than previously offered in several theories, making use of recent ideas and interpretations? The answer, of course, is yes, it is possible; and it has been successfully done, as the twenty-fifth biennial meeting organized by the Centro Italiano di Studi di Storia e d'Arte in Pistoia in May 2015 illustrated: the economic growth of medieval Europe is precisely a historical theme that still has something to contribute, and that has been highlighted in all its possible aspects by the twenty-two contributors to this volume, who are among the most renowned historians of this period (David Abulafia, Mathieu Arnoux, Marc Boone, Elisabeth Crouzet-Pavan, Laurent Feller, Amedeo Feniello, Franco Franceschi, Giampaolo Francesconi, Antoni Furió, Alberto Grohmann, Antonio Iacobini, Paulino Iradiel, Patrizia Mainoni, François Menant, Alessandra Molinari, Roberta Mucciarelli, Paolo Nanni, Enrica Neri Lusanna, Paola Orecchioni, Luciano Palermo, Gabriella Piccinni, Chris Wickham).

As Franco Franceschi points out in his dense introductory essay, from Adam Smith onward the quest for a theory of growth involved both economists and historians for a long period, but a clear-cut definition is still difficult to achieve. In historical terms the concept of growth has proved easier to discuss in the context of the impact and the origins of industrialization than in the medieval economic world, with the added difficulty in quantifying phenomena for those centuries. It is firmly established that growth took place in the decades between the end of the tenth century and the beginning of the eleventh, and that this dynamism came to an end toward the late thirteenth century or the early fourteenth (well before, it seems, the Black Death, which acted as a catalyst for a crisis