MEDIEVAL POLITIES AND MODERN MENTALITIES

This is a collection of influential and challenging essays by British medievalist Timothy Reuter, a perceptive and original thinker with extraordinary range who was equally at home in the Anglophone or German scholarly worlds. The book addresses three interconnected themes in the study of the history of the early and high Middle Ages. Firstly, historiography, the development of the modern study of the medieval past. How do our contemporary and inherited preconceptions and preoccupations determine our view of history? Secondly, the importance of symbolic action and communication in the politics and polities of the Middle Ages. Finally, the need to avoid anachronism in our consideration of medieval politics. Throwing new light both on modern mentalities and on the values and conduct of medieval people themselves, and containing articles never previously available in English, this book is essential reading for any serious student of medieval Europe.

Timothy Reuter was formerly Professor of Medieval History at the University of Southampton. He published and translated numerous books and articles on medieval history and was the editor of the third volume of The New Cambridge Medieval History (Cambridge, 1999).

Reuter died in October 2002 before he could finish preparing these essays for publication; the necessary footnoting, translating and editing have been carried out by Janet L. Nelson.

MEDIEVAL POLITIES AND MODERN MENTALITIES

TIMOTHY REUTER

EDITED BY JANET L. NELSON

CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

www.cambridge.org

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Editor's note

Tim Reuter had been planning to publish a collection of his papers with Cambridge University Press, but died, on 14 October 2002, before he could complete it. The material included is almost entirely as Tim planned it. Only one paper (on the recent historiography of medieval political ritual) has been impossible to retrieve, and perhaps was never written. In its place, an unpublished paper on medieval ethnicity has been included. Of the twenty-two papers, eleven are reprinted here as originally published (they have been scanned, and a few minor additions and corrections put in). Seven (and these include the longest) have been translated from Tim's German. Four have been edited from Tim's unpublished texts. More than half of the book, therefore, consists of work hitherto unavailable to an English-speaking readership. Where additional material has been added to the notes, or notes supplied, this has been made clear by the use of square brackets. Tim intended to add a section of 'Addenda, corrigenda and responses to criticism', and that has proved impossible to reconstruct. Otherwise, the present volume is as near as possible to what he intended.

In preparing Tim's work for the Press, I have incurred some debts of gratitude. First and foremost, I owe Tim's widow Georgina Reuter warm thanks for her friendship and support throughout the project, and for much practical help in retrieving material from Tim's computer. Second, I am very grateful to those friends and colleagues of Tim's (and mine) – Stuart Airlie, David Ganz, Patrick Geary and John Gillingham – who between them read through my translations of Tim's German, suggested changes that were invariably improvements and sometimes corrections, and, in John's case, also gave much counsel and aid during the project's final stages; and also to Sarah Hamilton for making it possible to reference chapter 9 properly, and to Susan Reynolds for casting her sharp eyes over two of the scanned chapters. Third, my thanks go to Alice Rio for preparing the Index. Fourth, I want to thank Simon Whitmore at Cambridge University Press, who has provided unfailing help and encouragement throughout.

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Lastly, I want to thank those many historians in the UK (especially the Bucknell Group and also Henrietta Leyser), Germany (especially Martina and Wilfried Hartmann) and further afield, who admired Tim's work as a scholar and appreciated him as a man: their enthusiasm for the project has helped carry it to completion. In the end, it has been a labour of love.

Janet L. Nelson

Acknowledgements

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Abbreviations

AHR	*American Historical Review*
ASE	*Anglo-Saxon England*
DA	*Deutsches Archiv*
EHR	*English Historical Review*
EME	*Early Medieval Europe*
FMS	*Frühmittelalterliche Studien*
HJ	*Historisches Jahrbuch*
HZ	*Historische Zeitschrift*
JEcclesH	*Journal of Ecclesiastical History*
JL	P. Jaffé ed., *Regesta pontificum Romanorum*, 2nd edn S. Loewenfeld *et al.*, 2 vols. (Leipzig, 1885–8)
JMH	*Journal of Medieval History*
LM	*Lexikon des Mittelalters*
MGH	*Monumenta Germaniae Historica*
AA	*Auctores antiquissimi*
Capit.	*Capitularia regum Francorum*
Conc.	*Concilia*
Const.	*Constitutiones et acta publica imperatorum et regum*
D	*Diplomata*
DD	*Diplomata regum et imperatorum; Die Urkunden der deutschen Könige und Kaiser*
Epp.	*Epistulae*
Epp. DK	*Epistulae der deutschen Kaiserzeit*
Epp. sel.	*Epistulae selectae*
Lib. de lite	*Libelli de lite imperatorum et pontificum saeculis XI et XII conscripti*
SRG	*Scriptores rerum Germanicarum in usum scholarum separatim editi*
SRM	*Scriptores rerum Merovingicarum*
SS	*Scriptores*

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SSDM	*Scriptores des deutsches Mittelalters*
MIÖG	*Mitteilungen des Instituts für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung*
NCMH	*The New Cambridge Medieval History*
P&P	*Past and Present*
PBA	*Proceedings of the British Academy*
PL	J.-P. Migne ed., *Patrologia Latina*
QFIAB	*Quellen und Forschungen aus italienischen Archiven und Bibliotheken*
Quellen	*Quellen der deutschen Kaiserzeit*
Settimane Spoleto	*Settimane di Studio del Centro italiano di Studi sull'alto medievo, Spoleto*
TRHS	*Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*
ZfRG, KA	*Zeitschrift der Savigny-Stiftung für Rechtsgeschichte, kanonistische Abteilung*
ZRG, GA	*Zeitschrift der Savigny-Stiftung für Rechtsgeschichte, germanistische Abteilung*
ZRG, RA	*Zeitschrift der Savigny-Stiftung für Rechtsgeschichte, römanistische Abteilung*

Editor's introduction

Grant that medieval history has any usefulness, and you see that this book
is not just very useful but urgently needed. Compared with the amount
available in English on medieval France, Italy and even Spain, relatively little
exists on Germany, though it is an area that is beginning to receive increasing
attention in the teaching of medieval history at postgraduate as well as
undergraduate levels in the English-speaking world. Medieval Germany's
size and diversity, its economic and political importance, and its cultural
productivity, merit study for their own sake. The distinctiveness of medieval
Germany suggests that studying it could have relevance for explanations
of Germany's history in Europe in modern as well as medieval times. The
sheer depth and volume of German historiography on medieval Germany,
and German historians' tradition of reflecting deeply on methodology,
means that here 'general issues of interpretation and understanding' can be
addressed particularly effectively.[1]

Yet there are obstacles. The study of the Middle Ages not only in the
United Kingdom but also in North America has been skewed in favour
of France, and to a lesser extent Italy, particularly since the First World
War, for reasons that have a great deal to do with twentieth-century history
and nothing to do with historical understanding. What Tim Reuter called
Anglolexia, meaning inability to speak or read any language other than
English, is becoming a form of cultural impairment increasingly widespread
in Anglophone countries. Like other disabilities, this one is unfortunate,
hard to live with and resistant to cure. Though German is essential for
studying German history of any period intensively at postgraduate level,
it is taught in increasingly few UK schools these days. History is at risk of
becoming a subject for Anglolexics only – and this at a time when European

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[1] Quotations in this Introduction, unless otherwise attributed, are from Tim Reuter's draft synopsis
of the present collection.

union is a reality, and closer educational contacts within Europe an urgently sought goal.

In his inaugural lecture to the Chair of Medieval History at the University of Southampton,[2] Tim Reuter began, teasingly, with the claim only to want to establish that medieval history 'is socially and politically innocuous' – and then went on to show that because 'even we harmless medieval historians' are 'tribes [that] fit into the world they inhabit', they can't 'simply get innocently on with' what they do. They reflect those worlds, past and present. They reflect, first and foremost, the national states that existed when state-financed professional history began to be taught and learned, that is, in the nineteenth century; and they reflect the national identities and agendas which still powerfully shape (though they don't entirely constitute) academic environments. If the earlier medievalist sub-tribe, that is, historians working on the period before c. 1000, are less prone than central and later medievalists to confine their operations within national frameworks, more inclined to study whatever they study as 'variants of a generic European society', that is not the result of some particular virtue: it reflects partly the smaller quantity of information they have to work with, but mostly the fact that they are rather less exposed to the pressures of national Grand Narratives. In any case, that intra-tribal difference is only a matter of degree. All medievalists work, inevitably, within a national culture.

What gives Tim's work its special character is the fact that it escapes the usual confines. It deals with both earlier and central medieval history; and it was produced, successively, then up to a point simultaneously, from within two national cultures. Tim claimed no credit for having spent twelve years of his career in Germany. Yet it was the result, of course, of a deliberate decision (to apply for a job at the Monumenta Germaniae Historica in Munich), and its consequences, though intellectually entirely positive, were not, especially initially, entirely comfortable in personal terms. Though Tim's father was of German birth, Tim himself was an Englishman, brought up speaking only English, and wholly educated in the English system. Tim was thirty-six when he moved to Munich. He was a good enough linguist to know when he got German not quite right; and he was a sensitive enough tribesman to know when he got cultural wires just slightly crossed. In other words, moving to the job at the MGH took courage not wholly dissimilar to that of the anthropologist setting up house in a village in another culture.

[2] Chapter 1, below.

The decision to straddle conventional historical fields – German and English; secular and ecclesiastical; legal, political and social – had been made already in Tim's choice of supervisor, Karl Leyser at Magdalen College, Oxford, and of doctoral topic, 'The Papal Schism, the Empire and the West, 1159–69'. That brief but critical period in Europe's history turned out to be a window of huge intellectual opportunity for Tim, enabling him to range thereafter from law to ritual, from high politics and high culture to group-identities and low life, embracing a world of Christendom-wide dimensions and social depth. An insistence on the strangeness of that world, and the long effort therefore required to perceive its workings, was among many lessons Tim learned from Karl Leyser. A year in Vienna in 1969–70 ('in the field' as it were) to gain familiarity with the German language and hence with German scholarship was the supervisor's wise suggestion. Return to England, and resuming everyday contact with that supervisor, allowed Tim to share for good Leyser's oblique vantage-point on German history, 'in but not of' the German academic tradition.[3] Like Leyser too, Tim's natural preference was for writing articles rather than books. Leyser's influence and insights can be found, explicitly and implicitly, in every chapter of the present collection. It can be seen, too, in the very fact of Tim's coverage of an unusually lengthy span of European history, for Leyser moved apparently effortlessly between the earlier and central Middle Ages.

Tim's first major piece of book-production, the collection of papers mostly by German historians which he edited and largely translated, was *The Medieval Nobility: Studies on the Ruling Classes of France and Germany from the Sixth to the Twelfth Century* (1979). It was at about the time of the move to Germany four years later that Tim began to work seriously on the Carolingian period, and to do the groundwork for *Germany in the Early Middle Ages, 800–1056* (1991). Translating from Latin, and meticulously annotating, the *Annales Fuldenses*, the *Annals of Fulda* (1992), helped convince him that in a territorial, political, sense, Germany was a ninth-century creation. His ongoing work on the post-Carolingian period, from the tenth to the twelfth century, made him equally convinced of the importance of kings in creating a common German identity. But in Tim's view, to impute policies and purposiveness to medieval rulers was to risk anachronism. Compared with modern rulers, 'the constraints on medieval politicians and polities were more extensive, the expectations lower, and

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[3] For an evocative sketch of Leyser's work and influence, see T. Reuter, 'Karl Leyser the Historian', in vol. II of Karl Leyser's collected papers, edited by T. Reuter, *Communications and Power in Medieval Europe* (London, 1994), pp. ix–xvi. Reuter also edited *Warriors and Churchmen in the High Middle Ages: Festschrift for Karl Leyser* (London, 1992).

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the objectives not shaped by the same calculus of means and ends'. It is not just because Otto I, say, has left no personal record that we must always reckon with the context – in terms of entourage, institutions, ideas about honour – in which he operated and which allowed him action as well as constraining his agency (chapter 15).

Though German history was always Tim's main research focus, few of his papers are concerned with Germany alone. His early career at the University of Exeter had reinforced his interest in comparative history, and he decided to offer a Special Subject in contemporary British history (the Wilson Government in the 1960s) as well as courses in medieval Europe. The Exeter years were a time of important professional and personal development.[4] Tim became as passionate about teaching as he was about research. He was alerted to the disabling effects of Anglolexia on History students' learning. He took on the task, and assumed the role, of translator of modern German historiography on the Middle Ages. *The Medieval Nobility* was followed by translations of a best-selling handbook by the leading German medievalist (and President of the MGH during Tim's Munich years) Horst Fuhrmann,[5] and of a major reinterpretation of the medieval Church in the age of reform by the doyen of German ecclesiastical historians, Gerd Tellenbach.[6] At Munich, Tim may have been, or felt himself, an outsider as a Briton; yet vis-à-vis his British compatriots he became something of an outsider as an honorary German, able to interpret and criticise British medieval scholarship for German readers through the dozens of reviews of Anglophone historiography he published in the MGH annual *Deutsches Archiv*. Translation, hence bridging historiographical worlds, was an important part of the way Tim perceived his own distinctive contribution to the discipline.[7]

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[4] He met and married Georgina. He was active in the Association of University Teachers at national as well as local level, and also active in the Labour Party whose recent history he taught with academic detachment. As a medieval historian, he found like-minded colleagues, among them Frank Barlow whose work on Thomas Becket (the book was published in 1986) had many links with Tim's own dissertation topic and sustained his long-standing interest (chapter 10), and John Critchley whose *Feudalism* (1973) was a pioneering exercise in comparison. Important too was Tim's role in the conference on St Boniface of Crediton held at Exeter in 1980, and the publication of its proceedings later in the same year, edited by Tim. Here his paper on 'St Boniface and Europe' linked the Anglo-Saxon saint's mission with a wider and longer Continental history.

[5] H. Fuhrmann, *Deutschland im hohen Mittelalter* (1978), trans. T. Reuter as *Germany in the High Middle Ages c. 1050–1200* (Cambridge, 1986).

[6] G. Tellenbach, *Die westliche Kirche vom 10. bis zum frühen 12. Jahrhundert* (Göttingen, 1988), trans. T. Reuter, The *Church in Western Europe from the Tenth to the Early Twelfth Century* (Cambridge, 1993).

[7] In this respect Tim differed from Karl Leyser, who, as Tim pointed out in 'Karl Leyser the Historian', p. xv, 'showed little inclination to act as a missionary or other kind of intermediary between two

Comparison was for Tim a natural take on the medieval past: his deep interest in exploring the medieval origins of the German 'special way' necessarily involved looking at other ways (see chapter 20). Tim's departure for Munich in 1981 came very soon after the co-creation of a group – an intermittent symposium – of early medieval historians interested in comparative history, and committed to argumentative give-and-take.[8] Tim was part of that group for the rest of his life; and connecting the Exeter years with the Munich years and what came after was Tim's concern with the comparing of societies and of kingdoms. From this arose his lively appreciation of the distinct flavours of national historiographies, and the differing national trajectories that had produced or influenced these contingent developments. Tim perceived no less clearly that the down-side of this diversity was lack of contact or communication between exponents of different historiographical traditions, and he was struck by the absence of much discussion of this subject in print. A major purpose of the present collection as he originally designed it c. 2000 was to confront the problem head-on, and, in the light of that engagement, provoke historians to produce more discriminating accounts of what European histories share and what divides them. To put it in Tim's own terms, his readers must decide whether to 'fall back on a kind of nationalist nominalism', or regard the products of these different histories, in the end, as 'local variants of a generic European society'. Tim thought we should open our minds to the second of those possibilities by becoming more critically conscious of our own tenacious preconceptions, and more reflective about alternative views and conceptual frameworks. These concerns are uppermost in the historiographical and methodological essays in Part I, but they are equally evident, if not always explicit, in virtually every paper in Parts II and III. This, above all, gives the book its coherence, force and timeliness. The juxtaposition of the work of 'German' Tim and 'English' Tim in these pages brings its own revelations of difference, of connexion and of complementarity.

Comparative state-formation was just one of the major themes that preoccupied Tim in the last decade of his career. A second was the symbolic language of political action. Here Tim saw himself as developing the work of Karl Leyser, Gerd Althoff and Geoff Koziol. But his own approach was

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historiographical worlds; he preferred rather to make his own way'. Tim said important things about *his* own way in his Inaugural Lecture at Southampton (chapter 1, below). For an appreciation of his role as intermediary, see W. Hartmann's evocative memoir in *Deutsches Archiv* 58 (2002), pp. 891–2.

[8] See J. L. Nelson, 'European History', in A. Deyermond ed., *A Century of Medieval Studies*, The British Academy Centenary volumes (Oxford, 2007), ch. 4, n. 110.

distinctive in its cross-cultural comparative range (see chapter 8), and in its combination of a very thorough grasp of medieval canon law and liturgy (Tim as an undergraduate had been a student of Walter Ullmann)[9] with a feel for politics (Tim, lifelong, and wherever he found himself, was a keen and committed follower of the contemporary political scene). Texts, their production-contexts and transmission-histories, fascinated Tim. He had worked for decades on an edition of the letter-collection of Wibald of Stablo, a crucial source for his original doctoral subject; and some of his later papers suggest an enthusiastic re-engagement with that task (chapters 20–2).[10] Tim was delighted by the invitation, not long after his return to England, to join the board of Oxford Medieval Texts, and he brought rare expertise to editorial work. He was equally fascinated by the expression of ideas and values in non-verbal ways, and by the interplay of communication and power (see especially chapters 7–10). Like Ullmann, Tim not only took seriously the idea of an exchange of political ideas between Church and state, but saw the relevance there of signs and symbols. He became, not just an ecclesiastical historian, nor a political historian, but a cultural historian. In this he followed a trend, but he also, increasingly in the Southampton years, became an international leader and shaper of the turn of the trend. Again, this is an intellectual trajectory to be followed in every chapter of this book, just as the professional themes of the Exeter years recurred and extended in the Southampton years.[11]

The interplay of communication and power was central to the history of the Church. Episcopal power supplied a lasting foundation, on which was built, eventually with the co-operation of bishops themselves, the rapid growth of papal government in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. A third evolving theme in Tim's later work was the study of episcopal power across the *longue durée*. It emerges only fitfully in the present collection,[12] for Tim intended this to be the subject of a large-scale project. In 2002, Tim was

9 T. Reuter and G. Silagi, *Wortkonkordanz zum Decretum Gratiani*, Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Hilfsmittel 10/i–v (Munich, 1990), 5 vols., and also available on the web as an electronic database, would have amazed and delighted Walter Ullmann.

10 Tim's friend and former MGH colleague Martina Hartmann is currently completing the Wibald edition.

11 Once based again in England, Tim soon became involved in the profession at national level: for instance, he was elected to the Council of the Royal Historical Society in 1999, and joined the Advisory Editorial Board of the *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* in 2000.

12 It is touched on, though, in many chapters, notably 5, 10, 18 and 21. See also *'Filii matris nostrae pugnant adversum nos*: Bonds and Tensions between German Prelates and their *Milites* in the High Middle Ages', in G. Picasso ed., *Chiesa e mondo feudale nei secoli X–XII*, Miscellanea del centro di studi medievali 14 (Milan, 1995), pp. 247–76; 'Property Transactions and Social Relations between Rulers, Bishops and Nobles in Early Eleventh-century Saxony: The Evidence of the *Vita Meinwerci*', in W. Davies and P. Fouracre eds., *Property and Power in the Early Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 1995), pp. 165–99; 'Gifts and Simony', in E. Cohen and M. de Jong eds., *Medieval Transformations: Texts,*

already ill but his doctors foresaw, with luck, a further five years of active life
for him. Completion of the project seemed feasible, and he applied for and
was awarded funding from the British Academy. Tim died three months
later, at the age of fifty-five. He himself would have hoped that the project
could be taken forward by other hands. It seems likelier to be attempted
by a team than a lone scholar. For as well as being among the outstanding
medieval historians of his generation, Tim combined knowledge, skills and
interests in a unique and irreplaceable way. His loss is cruel. Fortunately
for his discipline, nationally and internationally, he left behind a body of
work whose scale and significance is becoming increasingly recognised and
appreciated. It will endure. What Tim himself intended in the present
volume was 'not a bog-standard collection of reprinted scholarly articles,
of interest only to immediate specialists on the topics they deal with',
but a book that might reach 'the intelligent general public' as well as an
academic market because it addressed 'general issues of interpretation and
understanding'. Let this book, then, be useful, interesting and thought-
provoking to new generations of scholars, students and general readers. Let
it promote European thinking, learning and language-acquisition. Let it be
part of Tim's monument.

Power, Gifts in Context (Leiden, 2000), pp. 57–68; and 'Ein Europa der Bischöfe: das Zeitalter Bischof
Burchards von Worms', in W. Hartmann ed., *Burchard von Worms* (Stuttgart, 2000), pp. 1–28.