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décret de Gratien, les sources suggérant l'hostilité envers les vagabonds qui seraient aptes au travail ou envers les pauvres infâmes sont nombreuses. Le second excursus constitue presque un article à part entière, et se concentre sur les principes et les modalités de la domination des *potentes* sur les *pauperes*. Ce volume est passionnant. On est tenté de le comparer aux travaux effectués dans les années soixante-dix sous la direction de Michel Mollat, mais son propos est plus limité – il faut accepter l'absence presque totale du monde rural et la très forte surreprésentation du Moyen Âge tardif – et les problématiques différentes, même si ça et là le lecteur peut avoir des impressions de déjà-vu. Surtout, l'accent mis dans les contributions sur les représentations de la pauvreté lui donne une vraie cohérence.

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Martin KAUFHOLD, *Wendepunkte des Mittelalters. Von der Kaiserkrönung Karls des Großen bis zur Entdeckung Amerikas, Ostfildern* (Jan Thorbecke) 2004, 221 p., ISBN 3-7995-0144-4, EUR 24,90.

This is an attractive book in several respects. It looks good, it feels good, and it is enlivened by 29 plates in colour, a number of which were new to the reviewer. It is also an old-fashioned book, for each of its 31 short chapters tells a story about persons and events, and about the changes which they brought about or caused to be brought about in Europe of the Middle Ages. These are the »turning points« of the title. M. Kaufhold raises his hat to the Annales School of historical research and writing, but he makes no excuse for his approach in this book. In the spirit of Lawrence Stone's essay on narrative he believes (p. 9) that drama can have an enlivening effect on historical writing, and that historians of each generation should spend a little time reconsidering the classics of their chosen subject. Hopefully, many students of history, including those whose undergraduate days lie far behind them, will agree with him.

The 31 turning points are the author's personal choice, so there is no arguing about that. The principal figures are well known. Charlemagne, Urban II and the First Crusade, Abelard and Heloise, Francis of Assisi, Frederick II of Hohenstaufen, Marco Polo, Joan of Arc, Gutenberg and Christopher Columbus are represented, and many more besides. Events include Becket's murder, the battle of Crecy, introduction of the Florin, the Black Death. Areas of human activity are politics, religion, law, arts and crafts, economy, technology and travel. But there are chapters on less well known persons and events. Every history has its pre-history, and so 1066 and all that, so well known to Anglo-Saxon readers, was preceded, according to the story, by the Treaty of St Clair-sur-Epte in 911 when, following a military defeat, the heathen Vikings and Norsemen started to change into christian Normans. We can read here what followed from that. The chapter on the cathedral of Lund (anno 1103) in Sweden addresses the related question of how the Scandinavian countries were christianized. Not by missionaries sent to them from elsewhere, but by the Nordic peoples' own inclinations and efforts. Christianisation was a home grown process of assimilation. The chapters, averaging uniformly about 7 pages in length, open with a title and a summary containing the essential point(s) which the author intends to make. The summary is followed by a shorter or longer table of dates which place the main event, the turning point of the book's title, within a chronology of related events. A presentation of the main event together with its pre-history is followed by analysis and the author's interpretation of its significance. Nice touches to the narrative lie in details. Why, we may ask, were there medieval kingdoms of France and of England but no medieval kingdom of Germany? Because the »national uncertainty« (»nationale Unbestimmtheit«, p. 28) of the rulers of Germany in the Middle Ages was occasioned by the crowning of Otto the Great in 962 as King of the Romans (*Rex Romanorum*), and from then on by harking back to Italy and

imperial glory. Occasional remarks and reminders link a topic to an earlier one without there being an explicit system of cross reference. The effect is not only to inform but to provoke the reader to reflection and thought. The book ends with a section which lists primary sources for each chapter, and some selected secondary literature up to 2003.

This is a book for those who enjoy a good story, especially when much of it is true. With a little imagination on the reader's part, how near some of it appears to our own time. Kaufholds' language is temperate enough when he retells the story of a 40 years old teacher who seduces his 16 years old pupil. This is not from yesterday's tabloid headline, but the tragic life of Peter Abelard a thousand years ago. Conversely, a cardinal declares himself unworthy to be elected pope. Not some medieval prelate prostrating himself before the altar, but pope Benedict XVI on the eve of his election in 2005. And may readers not compare the travels of pope John Paul II in the 20<sup>th</sup> century to those of Leo IX (p. 32) in the 11<sup>th</sup>?

The book's origins lie in lectures which the author gave at Heidelberg and Augsburg, and one of its strengths is reflected in this. There is a feeling which hearing a good lecture radiates when the speaker sensibly follows the recipe: »tell them what you are going to tell them, tell it, and then tell them what you have told them«. Apropos: writing on the Black Death, Kaufhold points out that, besides the huge loss of human life that it caused, there was also a parallel loss of orally transmitted knowledge (p. 165), in an age where writing was limited to only small sections of society and their interests. The style is descriptive, factual, sober, and almost detached, but not wholly. An engaging feature is the way in which the author presents the principal actors, their motives and their emotions. An example, touched on above, is the story of Heloise and Abelard who in their own writings provide us with literary evidence for the psychological dimension in social life. Again using a little imagination, one is tempted to compare the characters of Heloise and Joan of Arc, their strengths of opinion, despite or because of their different stations in life. Who could fail to be moved with sympathy for Joan on seeing Fauquembergue's crude but contemporary pen drawing on p. 191?

A point which invites criticism, however, is the author's use and then gradual weakening of his own chosen term »turning point«. Becket's murder is not a turning point but rather a »milestone« (»Wegmarke«, p. 86). However, the introduction of the Florin in the year 1252 had all the criteria of a »real« turning point (»wirkliche Wende«, p. 124). But, increasingly, the concept of a turning point becomes dissolved (»zunehmend aufgelöst«, p. 197), when faced with the immensity of the Renaissance. Historians, clearly, have a problem with the idea of a turning point. In view of the many subjects which have a place in the book, including church art and architecture, it is regrettable that there was no place for Western music. Guido and Pérotin are absent, although the influence of their discoveries and creations, especially Guido's notation, is increasing throughout the modern world. But there is hope. The author indicated that the list of topics was not closed. A subsequent edition will be an opportunity to include them and their music, and to correct some misprints on p. 9, 86 and 91 (*Constitutions*), 198 and 202. It is also to be hoped that a register of names and places will be included. This book is recommended not only to interested lay persons, but to History undergraduates who may be encouraged to explore the primary sources as a first essential step towards their own original researches.

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