

Loïc Cazaux, Moyen Âge. Occident, Byzance et Orient du V^e au XV^e siècle, Paris (Éditions Autrement) 2024, 192 p., ill. (Atlas des Guerres), ISBN 978-2-7467-5413-3, EUR 29,90.

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Published in the *Atlas des Guerres* series, this volume by Loïc Cazaux, a specialist in medieval French military history, and Guillaume Balavoine, a cartographer, is an outstanding addition to the relatively small corpus of historical atlases that focus on the military history of the pre-modern West and the broader Mediterranean world. The stated intention of the authors is to aid readers in developing an understanding of the key role played by developments in medieval Europe in shaping the modern world. However, Cazaux and Balavoine properly conclude that it is not possible to address the development of medieval Europe in a vacuum, and so consistently treat affairs in the Latin West in conjunction with those in the Byzantine Empire, the Caliphate, and the successor states of the Caliphate in Africa and Western Asia.

In the traditional French manner, the volume is divided into an early (*haut*) medieval period from the fifth to the tenth century, a high (*central*) period from the tenth to the thirteenth century, and the late (*bas*) Middle Ages covering the fourteenth to the fifteenth century. Each section includes scores of exceptionally well executed color maps, figures, genealogical tables, and depictions of the deployment of troops in important battles. The maps, themselves, include straight-forward presentations of the political boundaries of large and small states, the defenses of important cities, and detailed representations of marching routes taken by armies as well as sailing routes of armies transported by sea.

The brief discussions accompanying the maps, figures, and images are a mix of historical narratives and explanations of specific points. The two-page coverage of the late Roman Empire and the emergence of the new kingdoms in the western provinces, for example, includes three narrative sections that treat in turn »The Roman Empire Confronted by the Barbarians«, »Negotiations and Installation of the Barbarians in the Empire«, and »The Foundation of Germanic Kingdoms in Western Europe«. The crusading movement, which is treated in several sections, includes both brief narratives of specific campaigns, such as the First Crusade (1095-1099), and thematic treatments of topics such as »The Organization of the Latin Armies of the East«.

Cazaux does not address directly the numerous scholarly controversies regarding many aspects of warfare in the Latin, Byzantine, and Muslim worlds, and, indeed, such interventions would have been out of place in a volume of this type. However, his choice of subject matter and presentation of maps does indicate



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Cazaux's acceptance of the general model of gradual transition from the later Roman Empire to post-Roman successor states as contrasted with the clash of civilizations/Dark Ages model still clung to by a minority of specialists. Similarly, Cazaux presents, properly in my view, an understanding that warfare in the medieval period was dominated by sieges. Two useful appendices provide the dates of key battles and sieges and definitions of key terms. The volume is rounded out with a short bibliography of scholarly works, most of which are in French.

In sum, this volume is very successful in illuminating the cartographic context of warfare in the medieval world as well as in its broader Mediterranean and West Asian context. It will be of undoubted use in French classrooms, and potentially in university classrooms in the Anglophone world, if only to provide instructors with a wealth of images to illustrate their lectures. If there is one criticism to be levied, the very small size of the print, which undoubtedly was chosen by the press to lower the cost of the volume, makes it challenging for middle-aged consumers, such as myself, to read.



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