

persuasively treats the dispute between the poem's allegorical competitors as governed by a principle of royal "arbitration" (57) rather than a trial by force. By analyzing royal "arbitration" as a process oriented towards "compromise" (56), Ormrod helps us better understand the dream-vision's trajectory towards an adjudication in which each member of the process receives judgment and compensation, rather than one being declared the winner (no pun intended).

In the third chapter, Ormrod is especially successful in steering the poem's dating into the 1360s, while also convincing in its presentation of Wynnere and Wastoure as conducting an internal debate within "Landed Society" (61), rather than a conflict between commercial and landed interests. Offering an excellent survey of recent criticism of the "middle class" (62) appearing suddenly in the fourteenth century, Ormrod argues against Wynnere being seen as a "merchant" (64) embodying the *nouveau riche*. After surveying the turbulent economic situation throughout the 1350s, Ormrod suggests that the poet reveals a "conservatism" (70) derived from a conviction that landed powers could contribute significantly to negotiating the social and economic chaos of the post-plague era. Ormrod shows that the poet could easily be placed later than 1353, examining records that reveal various efforts to deal with economic instability throughout the later 1350s and early 1360s. Ormrod is especially convincing in linking the poem's discussion of concerns about clothing and class to the sumptuary legislation of 1363.

In the fourth chapter, Ormrod explores the considerable interest among scholars in "Edward III's household management and war finances" (83). Building on both his critique of arguments seeing Wynnere as representative of the "bourgeois elite" (84) and his suggestion that the poem is best seen as post-dating the era of English peace (with France, at least) inaugurated in 1360, Ormrod suggests that the poem's debate is focused more largely on broader issues of government than merely on wartime spending (though Ormrod allows that the poem is dealing with concerns about a sudden return of war concerns throughout the 1360s).

In the fifth chapter, Ormrod situates *Wynnere and Wastoure* within the broader context of both complaint poetry and alliterative verse, while also offering some intriguing speculation that the poem's author may have been a person from "one of the great households operating in England during the 1350s and 1360s" (122) who was keenly interested in providing "articulation of current political topics of debate" for a courtly audience (128).

In a final, brief chapter, Ormrod reflects on the way that the poem's topicality may have "limited its appeal" (133). Ormrod also offers an intriguing suggestion that the "severe turbulence" (135) of the Northern economy in the 1430s and 1440 may explain Robert Thornton's having been drawn to this work: this editor may have been especially sympathetic to another member of the "gentry" (134) dealing with a socioeconomically disrupted realm.

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PHILIP REID. *The Merchant Ship in the British Atlantic, 1600–1800: Continuity and Innovation in a Key Technology*. Technology and Change in History. Leiden: Brill. Pp. 308. \$153.00 (cloth).

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In *The Merchant Ship in the British Atlantic*, Philip Reid offers a useful overview of one of the most complex but ubiquitous technologies of the early modern period, one that had an

enormous importance for trade and global connections across those centuries, and yet has rarely before been considered with this level of depth and detail. After surveying the social, political, and economic characteristics of the British Atlantic and their influence on merchant shipping in the first chapter, then introducing the general features and most common types of merchant ship in the second, Reid devotes two chapters to the process of shipbuilding and questions of ship design. These are followed by a pair of chapters dealing with the merchants who owned or freighted these ships and the mariners who sailed them, before moving on to the practicalities of operating a ship during this period.

Reid's primary question is how each of these dimensions influenced the technological development of merchant ships, and he concludes with some broader reflections on this subject. Drawing on diverse historical evidence and experimental archaeology, he challenges the widespread assumption in previous scholarship that this technology was essentially static throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. While there was substantial continuity in the mechanical designs and operational techniques of commercial shipping, there were numerous adaptations or "microinventions" (18–19), dynamic and cumulative developments with significant results for the material dimensions and economic impact of merchant shipping. One of the book's particular strengths is Reid's emphasis on the continuous, highly skilled efforts required not only to sail merchant ships, but to maintain them in a serviceable condition—and how this need made each ship a potential laboratory for technological change. Indeed, part of Reid's thesis is that maritime communities were more innovative and less resistant to new ideas than previously thought: "ships carried the materials and tools needed to make not only repairs but modifications to their rigs, [and] masters and crews could and did experiment with adjustments while underway. The technology of the wooden sailing ship lent itself well to improvisation" (221).

Such changes are not easy to trace, propagated as they were in diffuse, uncoordinated, and often international trajectories by skilled shipwrights and seafarers who usually did not record, let alone explain, their practices, but Reid identifies some significant examples such as adjustments to hull shape and sail plan. At the same time, like all technologies, any one ship entails "a set of compromises" (23), such as between speed and cargo capacity; it is also constrained by external limitations, including the available materials, the natural environment and conditions of a voyage, and the capabilities of the ship's crew, each of which might have had a greater impact than specific nuances in ship design. Reid argues that developments in this technology are best understood in these terms and as part of risk-management strategies adopted by merchants and sailors to mitigate the dangers they faced and to maximize the chances of a profitable voyage. As a result, while there was considerable variety in how merchant ships were built and operated, they followed "identifiable general parameters" (133) and were for the most part versatile and adaptable: "Specialized vessels were the exception rather than the rule" (41).

*The Merchant Ship in the British Atlantic* is aimed at a broad readership, and Reid does a good job of explaining its highly technical subject, with printed illustrations from contemporary sources used to good effect in the second chapter's tour through different kinds of merchant ships, though including some diagrams in the other chapters might have helped to elucidate some of the more complex points of ship mechanics. However, because of the focus on technology, the broader social and cultural dimensions of early modern shipping are touched on only briefly. The chapters on merchants and seafarers, for example, deal more with questions of insurance, commodities and cargoes, the dangers of sea travel, and the use of nautical equipment and armaments than they do with daily life aboard such ships or the cultural associations and meanings that these ships possessed for their owners and those who traveled on them. These aspects are, perhaps, less directly connected to Reid's primary questions, but could nevertheless add extra layers to our understanding of this technology and its significance for early modern society. Notwithstanding this point, *The Merchant*

*Ship in the British Atlantic* will be an essential guide for anyone interested in shipping, trade, or the maritime world in the early modern period.

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MIRI RUBIN. *Cities of Strangers: Making Lives in Medieval Europe*. The Wiles Lectures. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020. Pp. 189. \$24.99 (cloth).  
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In *Cities of Strangers: Making Lives in Medieval Europe*, Miri Rubin speaks beautifully and thoughtfully to the myriad challenges that define and complicate practices of belonging and exclusion both in the medieval past and in our own day. With characteristic erudition, Rubin has crafted a book of medieval history that sustains a dialogue with contemporary questions and offers an elegant synthesis of past practices. First presented as the Wiles Lectures in 2017, the book is a set of interlocking essays engaged with how to think about the definition and reception of strangers in medieval towns and cities. The goal is not to formulate a new conception of the city as a space, or form, or institution, but to understand the fluid interactions and decisions that defined the experience of living within ever changing communities, which grew and contracted through migration, diaspora, devastations of disease, religious persecution, and political change.

Mirroring the lectures, the book unfolds over four succinct chapters. In the first, “Cities and Their Strangers,” Rubin lays out the conceptual framing of the book, and her definition of cities as “assemblages” that encompassed humans, materials, animals, together in shared spaces (22). Urban statutes offer some of the most useful sources for understanding how communities constituted themselves in idealized and programmatic ways, belying who was included and excluded from the benefits and franchises of community and who was given the power to govern. This is not to say that urban life always conformed to its laws and norms, but such ideals are telling. The stranger sat at the limits of the law, often excluded, suspect, and defined as different, at least for a time; the stranger also defined salient aspects of the civic core, of those included within.

In the subsequent chapters Rubin explores case studies of key categories and groups that were excluded and included differently at various moments. Chapter 2, “Strangers into Neighbors,” is a careful exploration of the ways cities extended fundamental aspects of legal belonging to strangers in the form of franchise and citizenship. The thirteenth century marked the period of the greatest urban growth and concomitant proliferation of urban statutes that legislated pathways to belonging. In Perugia, for example, the statutes of 1279 outlined what was required of its citizens: “continuous residence, property ownership, hearth and family, a good reputation, and service to no other lord or city” (39). Rubin traces parallel stipulations throughout southern France, Burgundy, northern Italy, Iberia, and the German lands. As conditionally free spaces, cities governed themselves with relative autonomy and thus are wonderful case studies for how social groups functioned in the later Middle Ages. Beginning in the early fourteenth century, when faced with economic constriction, famine, and then cycles of plague, many municipalities closed in on themselves. Guided by the directive voices of preachers, the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries brought increased religious persecution, successive inquisitions, intolerance of difference, more rigid definitions of deviance, and stricter controls over gendered behavior.