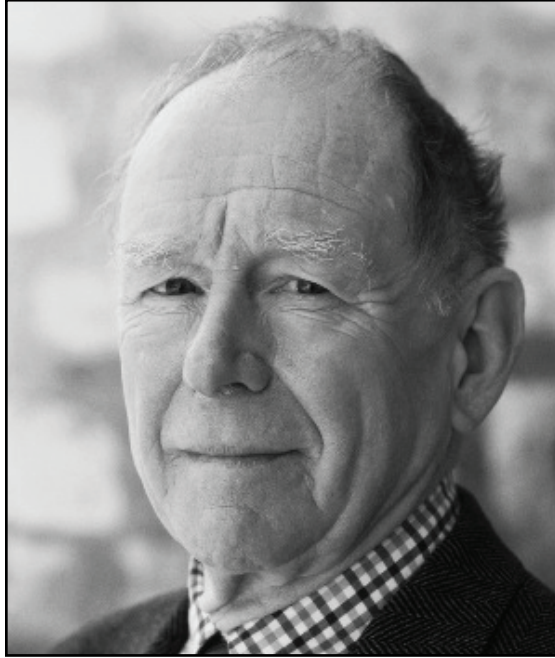

JOHN W. BALDWIN



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JOHN W. BALDWIN has left an enduring mark on his field, for he was the preeminent historian of high medieval France of his generation. This fact France recognized when he was elected to the Institut de France as one of the forty Corresponding Members of the Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres, was named a chevalier of the Légion d'honneur, and received the Ordre des Arts et des Lettres. A Foreign Member of the Royal Danish Academy, Corresponding Fellow of the British Academy, and Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, he was elected to the APS in 2004. As a graduate student, Baldwin went to France with a Fulbright fellowship. There, he found his life's partner and his life's work. He held a Guggenheim Memorial Fellowship as well as awards from the APS, the National Endowment for the Humanities, and the American Council of Learned Societies. He was President of the Medieval Academy of America (1996–7), from which he had earlier won the Charles Homer Haskins Medal (1990).

With his customary modesty, Baldwin often protested that his work was limited because it focused on only a few generations either side of 1200 in the general area of Paris. Yet few historians have done as much as he, in 11 books and many articles, to illuminate so great a turning point in European civilization. From this time and place emerged radically new forms of education (universities) and thought (scholasticism and Europe's recovery of Aristotle), not to mention Gothic architecture, polyphonic music, and new kinds of vernacular literature.

The son of a Westinghouse electrical engineer, Baldwin was born in Chicago but came of age in New Jersey and Maryland. Raised in an evangelical household, he obtained his B.A. from Wheaton College, Illinois, in 1950. After an M.A. at the University of Pennsylvania, he received his Ph.D. in 1956 under the guidance of Sidney Painter at Johns Hopkins University. While a graduate student, as he told me once, he visited Ezra Pound during the poet's incarceration at St. Elizabeth's psychiatric hospital in Washington, D.C. The previously mentioned Fulbright fellowship took him to Paris and Gabriel Le Bras' seminar in canon law, where he met the accomplished Danish medievalist Jenny Jochens. From their marriage issued four exceptional children, raised bilingually in Danish and English, and accomplished in the fields of modern European history (Peter Baldwin, UCLA); biology (Ian T. Baldwin, Director, Max Planck Institute for Chemical Ecology); information technology (Christopher Baldwin); and, incipiently, comparative literature. Their gifted daughter, Birgit Baldwin, was completing a dissertation in that field at Yale when she was killed by a drunk driver in 1988, a tragedy that cast a lasting shadow over the lives of her family and friends.

John Baldwin began his academic career in 1956 as an Assistant Professor of History at the University of Michigan. He returned to Johns Hopkins as an Associate Professor of History in 1961 and soon rose to full professor (1966). For colleagues young and old, Baldwin became a living link to the teaching and intellectual tradition of a great generation of Hopkins historians, and particularly to the distinguished medievalists Painter and Frederick Lane. Baldwin, the Charles Homer Haskins Professor of History, retired in 2001, and until his death, he and Jenny split their residence between the great house on Roland Park Avenue in Baltimore, and Paris. Their French apartment became a wonderful place of encounter for French medievalists and visiting foreign colleagues. There, John reveled in what was surely his ideal life as a deeply respected Parisian intellectual who regularly attended and contributed to seminars at the city's great institutions of higher learning, particularly the Académie, even as Jenny provided unique expertise and support to rising French scholars of medieval Scandinavia.

His scholarly oeuvre spanned the genres of modern medieval history, as his investigations crossed the types of evidence that illuminate the society, culture, and institutions of medieval France. In an age of increasing specialization, his books and articles combine erudition of the most rigorous sort with innovative approaches to medieval literature, society, and theology. His mastery of traditional scholarship was equally on display in major works, such as his *editio princeps* of King Philip II Augustus' Registers, and in more unassuming ones, such as his publication of a record of properties that illuminates the career of one of the king's key officers.¹ But he also spent a sabbatical year mastering Old French under the tutelage of David Hult, then his Hopkins colleague in French, to peer into the world of early vernacular literature and see behind the ecclesiastical screen of the Latin sources in which he had hitherto specialized. In his last years, Baldwin began to immerse himself in yet another new kind of evidence from the young field of medieval archaeology: the material culture emerging from ongoing excavations in the Paris region.

Baldwin's first book marked his intellectual independence from his mentors by plunging into canon law and unpublished Parisian manuscripts of theology and much else; *The Medieval Theories of the Just Price: Romanists, Canonists, and Theologians in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries* appeared in the *APS Transactions* (449, part 4,

1 For the Registers, see below; and John W. Baldwin, ed., *Le Livre de terres et de revenus de Pierre du Thillay fondateur de l'Hôtel-Dieu de Gonesse, bailli de Caen de 1205 à 1224: ses terres en Île-de-France et en Basse-Normandie* (Paris: Société parisienne d'histoire et d'archéologie normandes, 2003).

1959). These initial investigations set the stage for an important monograph—*Masters, Princes, and Merchants: The Social Views of Peter the Chanter and His Circle* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970). During his dissertation research, Baldwin had discovered a rich and largely unknown vein of manuscript evidence about schoolmen, courtiers, and merchants in the works of moral theology written by the chanter of Notre Dame of Paris and his circle. This clear and rigorous book shed precious new light on the culture and civilization of northern Europe's burgeoning metropolis during the crucial generations of Paris' growth. Thanks to their abundant transcriptions from the unpublished manuscripts, the voluminous footnotes required a separate volume.

Two short books concluded this phase of Baldwin's work. A concise panoramic textbook, *The Scholastic Culture of the Middle Ages, 1000-1300* (Lexington, Mass.: Heath, 1971; reprinted 1997) sketches the broad historical background and key personalities in the rise of scholastic thought in contemporary Paris and Bologna. With Richard Goldthwaite, he also edited a volume featuring papers written by visiting lecturers at Johns Hopkins and precipitated by the political ferment that swept American college campuses in 1969 and 1970: *Universities in Politics: Case Studies from the Late Middle Ages and Early Modern Period* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1972). Baldwin's introduction dispassionately assessed the failures that the early universities brought upon themselves, as well as their subordination to political power.

His next major publications established Baldwin as the leading authority on one of France's greatest kings, Philip Augustus, whose transformative reign propelled 12th-century France from one among many feudal principalities into the most powerful and influential state in medieval Europe. The deeply learned *The Government of Philip Augustus: Foundations of French Royal Power in the Middle Ages* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986) changed our understanding of Philip's reign through its meticulous analysis of the primary evidence, published and especially unpublished, and revealed how royal governance was transformed—some would say created—in the new light of the changing personnel that Baldwin was able to discern in Philip's entourage, and in the types of documents their activities generated. Philip's defeats on the Third Crusade and elsewhere ushered in those big changes of the decisive decade from 1190 to 1204. These innovations created the basis for the stunning turnaround of the early 13th century, when Philip had become powerful enough to conquer wealthy Normandy from the mighty Angevin kings of England, defeat the great Anglo-German invasion at Bouvines, and move France to the center stage of European history. The foundations of this admirable

monograph were shared with the world in Baldwin's critical edition of the archival registers of Philip Augustus' acts, published in the *Recueil des historiens de la France*, the prestigious national collection of primary sources that has been appearing since the 18th century; as the distinguished medievalist and general editor of the collection noted, Baldwin published here "the most important archival source to have survived" from this period.² Baldwin began the long work on this monumental publication in 1972 thanks to a grant from the APS. His death will deprive the authors of the long-anticipated introductory volume of his inimitable command and insight into all aspects of the reign of Philip Augustus and its sources.

After distinguished and fundamental contributions to two completely different subdisciplines of medieval studies, that is, intellectual history and that of royal institutions, most historians would have been content to rest on their laurels. But not John Baldwin. He decided to undertake an in-depth study of the vernacular language and literature of France to address for his realm of predilection new questions of the sort that Jenny Jochens was considering in her two pioneering studies on women and how they were imagined in Old Norse society and literature.³

The book investigates five different ways of describing sex and sexuality around 1200. Three were learned traditions of Latin high culture: Baldwin's old friend Peter the Chanter and the Augustinian theological tradition; scientific and medical writings stemming from the school of Salerno and deriving, ultimately, from the works of Galen; and André the Chaplain's treatise on love, of Ovidian inspiration if scholastic in form. Two more strands developed in Old French: the Romance tradition of Jean Renart of *Roman de la Rose* fame, and Marie de France; and the earthy vision of the *Fabliaux* launched by the *trouvère* Jean Bodel. With firmness and insight, Baldwin navigated the shoals emerging from the linguistic turn and post-modernist approaches to literary texts and took us to a new understanding of medieval French society and its mentalities.

Baldwin's immersion in Old French language and literature gave him the tools for his next endeavor, equally inspired by Jochens' investigations of literary depictions and reality in Old Norse: *Aristocratic Life in Medieval France: The Romances of Jean Renart and Gerbert de Montreuil, 1190-1230* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press,

2 *Les registres de Philippe Auguste*, avec le concours de Françoise Gasparri, Michel Nortier et Elisabeth Laloude, Paris, Imprimerie nationale, 1992, 607 pp in 4°.

3 Jenny Jochens, *Women in Old Norse Society* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995), and *Old Norse Images of Women* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996).

2000). Here he locates two great writers of vernacular romance very precisely in their early 13th-century historical context. By this contextualizing, Baldwin illuminates what they tell us about the French aristocratic audiences for whom they wrote, and whose values centered on chivalric prowess, largess and hospitality, women and love, living grandly with wealth, and their own approach to religion, each interpreted contrapuntally against the visions of the Latin-writing clergy that has hitherto dominated our understanding.

Published initially in French and only later in English, Baldwin's penultimate book, *Paris 1200* (Paris: Aubier, 2006; Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2010), is a kind of love-offering to his adopted city and its inhabitants. Synthesizing a half-century of deep research and thinking, it paints an unforgettable image of the birth of a great city and European metropolis; its medieval inhabitants, from burghers to kings and professors; and its "pleasures and its pains" in the crucial decades on either side of 1200.

In his last book, *Knights, Lords and Ladies: In Search of Aristocrats in the Paris Region, 1180-1220* (University of Pennsylvania Press, in press), Baldwin breaks further new ground. He seeks once again to reach beyond the ecclesiastically dominated sources to uncover the life patterns, experiences, and social structures of the capital's elite by analyzing quantitatively 1,700 transactions between aristocrats and churches; studying the royal archives' records of aristocratic landed resources *not* shared with the church; incorporating his innovative mastery of the vernacular literature; and, once again, expanding his analytical tool kit to exploit two wonderful new kinds of source materials—the seals whose self-portrayals authenticated aristocrats' legal transactions and still adorn the clerestories of the choir of Chartres cathedral and, as I know from our conversations, the new archaeological evidence emerging from recent excavations of the selfsame aristocrats' living spaces, food, and latrines.

So, from start to finish, John Baldwin remained tethered in the exceptionally creative time and place that was Paris 1200. Yet in so doing, he deployed a rare originality of mind and intellectual daring tempered by rigor. He reminds one of someone studying a precious, many-faceted object, constantly turning it around and viewing it from new angles with new instruments, and constantly seeing new perspectives. Each new approach discovered some novel connection, some pregnant resonance that Baldwin's deep erudition and unique genius developed into an insightful new contribution to our knowledge of medieval civilization and its descendants.

Is it possible that thanks to John Baldwin's patient, searching, highly original investigations, the 20 years on either side of 1200 in contemporary Europe's most dynamic creative center not only emerge among the most productive in the history of European civilization but also must now rank as the best known for the entire Middle Ages? That would be no small achievement for a truly distinguished scholar and teacher, who led a life of grace in modesty, loyal affection, and gentle austerity.

Elected 2004

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