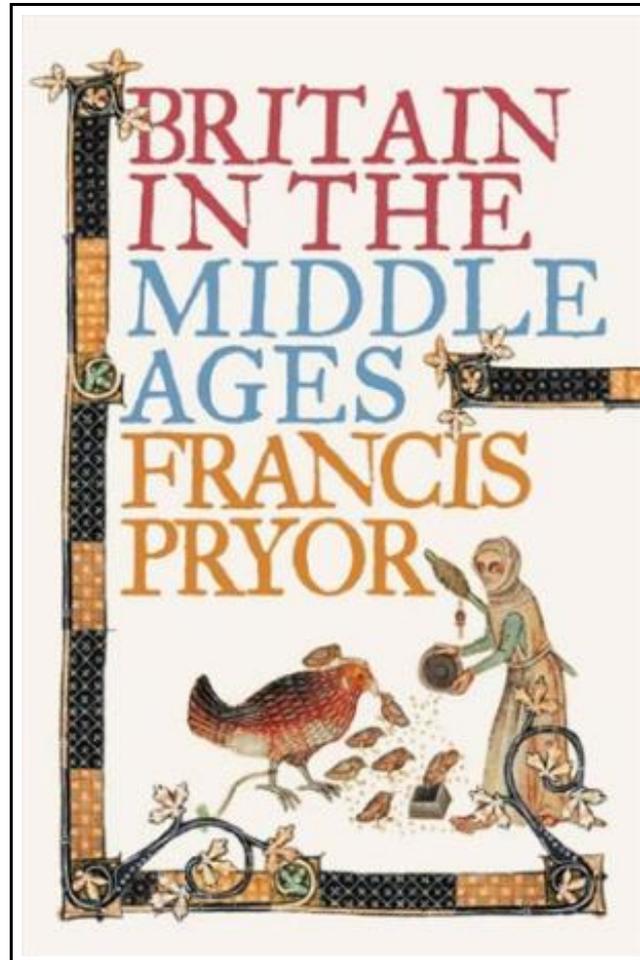


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Reviews

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BRITAIN IN THE MIDDLE AGES: AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL HISTORY



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HarperCollins Publishers. Paperback. Book Condition: new. BRAND NEW, Britain in the Middle Ages: An Archaeological History, Francis Pryor, As in 'Britain B.C.' and 'Britain A.D.' (also accompanied by Channel 4 series), eminent archaeologist Francis Pryor challenges familiar historical views of the Middle Ages by examining fresh evidence from the ground. The term 'Middle Ages' suggests a time between two other ages: a period when nothing much happened. In his radical reassessment, Francis Pryor shows that this is very far from the truth, and that the Middle Ages (approximately 800-1550) were actually the time when the modern world was born. This was when Britain moved from Late Antiquity into a world we can recognize as more or less familiar: roads and parishes became fixed; familiar institutions, such as the church and local government, came into being; industry became truly industrial; and international trade was now a routine process. Archaeology shows that the Middle Ages were far from static. Based on everyday, often humdrum evidence, it demonstrates that the later agricultural and industrial revolutions were not that unexpected, given what we now know of the later medieval period. Similarly, the explosion of British maritime power in the late 1700s had roots in the 15th century. The book stresses continuous development at the expense of 'revolution', though the Black Death (1348), which killed a third of the population, did have a profound effect in loosening the grip of the feudal system. Labour became scarce and workers gained power; land became more available and the move to modern farming began. The Middle Ages can now be seen in a fresh light as an era of great inventiveness, as the author examines such topics as 'upward mobility'; the power of the Church; the role of the Guilds as precursors of trade unions; the transport infrastructure...



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