

Citation metadata

Author: Charlotte C. Wells
Date: Summer 2002
From: Albion(Vol. 34, Issue 2)
Publisher: North American Conference on British Studies
Document Type: Book review
Length: 805 words

Main content

Article Preview :

Keechang Kim. *Aliens in Medieval Law: the Origins of Modern Citizenship*. (Cambridge Studies in English Legal History.) New York: Cambridge University Press. 2000. Pp. xii, 250. \$64.95. ISBN: 0-521-80085-4.

Keechang Kim's innovative view of the law of alien status in medieval and early modern England criticizes F. W. Maitland and others who thought legal distinctions between natives and foreigners started with the loss of Normandy and subsequent seizures of Norman property. He shows they did not, dismissing most of the cases used as evidence by earlier historians. Kim addresses the situations of foreign merchants trading in England, foreign clergy appointed to English benefices, and seizures of land belonging to foreign individuals and institutions, demonstrating that in each case different treatment for foreigners did not appear until after 1400. Seeming distinctions really resulted from the working of feudal or early common law. Those earlier historians held that foreigners could not inherit land in medieval England simply because they were foreign. Kim disagrees, pointing out that in feudal law any dispute about inheritance of a fief allowed its lord to seize the land and its revenues until the heir could prove his claim. As the jury system developed, the easiest way to...

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Wells, Charlotte C. "Aliens in Medieval Law: the Origins of Modern Citizenship. (Reviews of Books)." *Albion*, vol. 34, no. 2, 2002, p. 271+. Accessed 6 Nov. 2020.

Gale Document Number: GALE|A93827448

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