

The content is published under a Creative Commons Attribution Non-Commercial 4.0 License.

Unreviewed Mixed Matters Article:

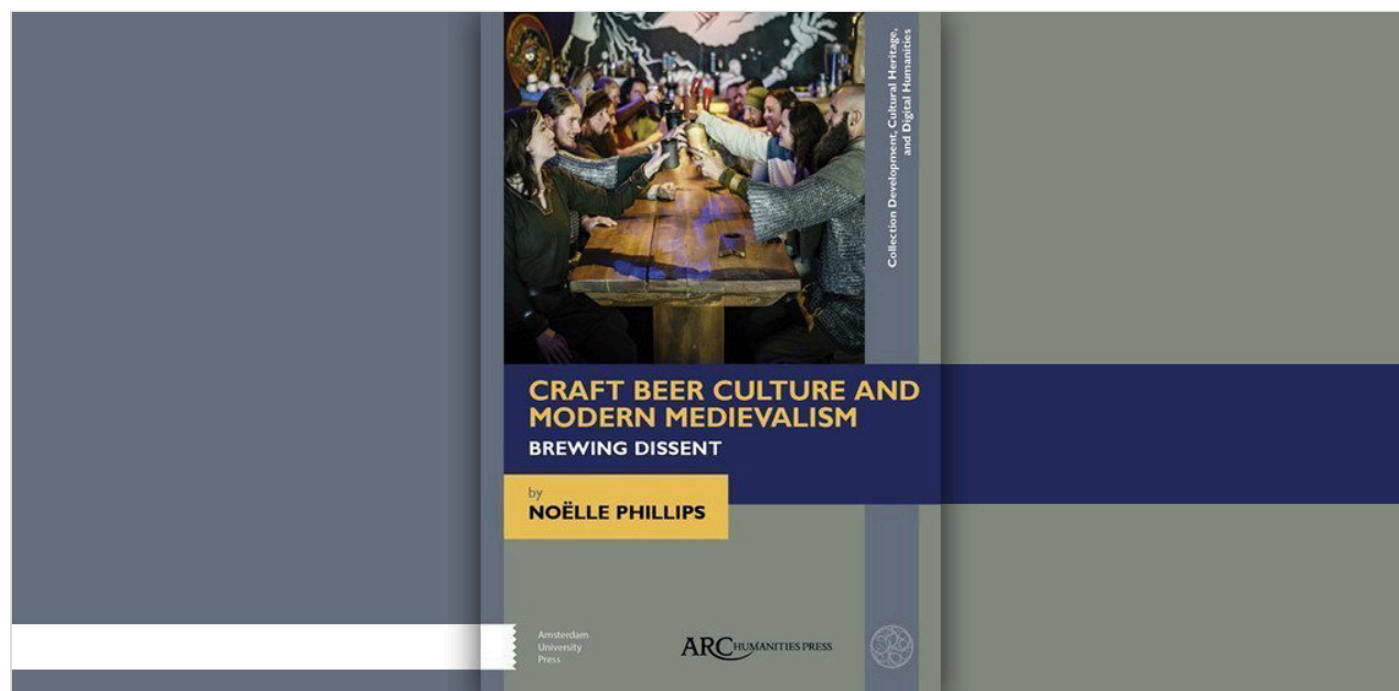
Book Review: Craft Beer Culture and Modern Medievalism: Brewing Dissent by Noëlle Phillips

Persistent Identifier: <https://exarc.net/ark:/88735/10550>

[EXARC Journal Issue 2021/1](#) | Publication Date: 2021-02-25

Author(s): Susan Verberg¹ ✉

¹ Independent researcher, 680 Sheffield Road, Ithaca NY 14850, USA.



In *Craft Beer Culture and Modern Medievalism: Brewing Dissent*, Noëlle Phillips takes a critical look at the people and legends of craft beer and the ways in which medievalism and masculinity have shaped the industry of craft beer brewing. Craft beer may seem to be a rather flippant choice for an analytical scholarly study, but it is a movement deeply infused with modern assumptions.



I was very happy to see Noëlle Phillips give voice to this sentiment, to critically discuss and raise awareness to the strengths and weaknesses of modern medievalism, here within the culture of craft beer.

Since the 1970's, the craft brewing industry has grown in popularity, forming a strong counterculture movement to corporate brewing conglomerates, with mixed consequences. The desire for the local, the non-corporate and the pre-modern soon had craft beer marketing looking at our medieval past to appeal to our collective desire for a lost sense of community.

Another aspect is the drive for individualism among craft beer consumers, sharpened by the fact that the craft beer demographic is strikingly homogenous in its white maleness. The modern consumer, however, wants to be one of a kind rather than one of the guys. Against the backdrop of craft brewing, the book also discusses white as well as militant

medievalism, making it a valuable resource for those playing and working at living history and recreation sites, which are often places of interest for these subcultures. Our best defence against cultural misappropriation is knowledge, and Noelle Phillips's discussions, skilfully interspersed with personalizing quotations, give valuable insights for those working with the general public.

The renewed interest of the general public in all things medieval indicates how effective the use of neo-medievalism is in the modern craft beer industry and beyond – whether truly medieval or not. The modern recreation of historic beverages often seems influenced more by popular assumptions than by historically based scholarship. Our assumptions and eagerness for contemporary recreations of historical beers tend to conflate local cultures to create a cherry-picked composite, a kind of imaginary “Medieval Culture.” Beer historians and craft beer revivalists interested in truthful recreations should be acutely aware of the phenomenon of imaginary popular medievalism. It is the responsibility of the historically minded recreationists to brew based on historically validated techniques and ingredients, not assumptions, and to educate the general public accurately through our recreations and demonstrations.

I was very happy to see Noëlle Phillips give voice to this sentiment, to critically discuss and raise awareness to the strengths and weaknesses of modern medievalism, here within the culture of craft beer. I raise my mug in honour of her eye-opening book. Cheers!

Note: Together with fellow editors John Geck and Rosemary O'Neill, Noëlle Phillips is already working on a follow-up collection of essays, titled *Beer and Brewing in Medieval Culture and Contemporary Medievalisms* (expected to publish by the end of 2021) to be included in Palgrave's The New Middle Ages series.

Book information:

Noëlle Phillips. 2019. *Craft Beer Culture and Modern Medievalism: Brewing Dissent*. Series: Collection Development, Cultural Heritage, and Digital Humanities. Leeds, UK: Arc Humanities Press. <https://arc-humanities.org/products/c-67114-110116-58-7815>

Chapter 1: Introduction: Medievalism and Craft Beer

Chapter 2: Reading Beer in the Middle Ages

Chapter 3: Resistance and Revolution: Craft Beer vs Corporate Giants

Chapter 4: Monastic Medievalism

Chapter 5: Militant Medievalism: Norsemen, Mythology, and Masculinity

Chapter 6: Pale Ales and White Knights: Craft Brewing, Whiteness, and Medievalism

Chapter 7: Conclusion: The Alchemy of Alcohol

🔖 Keywords [book](#)
[review](#)
[brewing](#)

🔗 Share This Page

[f](#) [X](#) [in](#)

| Corresponding Author

Susan Verberg

Independent researcher

680 Sheffield Road

Ithaca NY 14850

USA

[E-mail Contact](#)