

Both the “they” and the “truth” here are multivalent concepts that Romalis revisits continually in the book. Molly’s “truth” often clashes with and informs truths uttered by family, acquaintances, scholars, and, as Romalis reveals, the unofficial-yet-popular “truth” about folkmusic in the United States during the 1940s and 1950s. Each of the “theys” putting forth the different and conflicting truths in the book are both part of, and outside of, the “truth” Molly believed and proclaimed during her life. It is through this book that we realize the complex ways that all of these truths weave together to form a whole life—that of Aunt Molly Jackson—with many facets: wife, activist, sister, folksinger, mid-wife, union organizer, and folkloristic “informant.”

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Alain Boureau. **The Lord’s First Night: The Myth of the Droit de Cuissage**. Translated by Lydia G. Cochrane. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998. Originally published as *Le droit de cuissage: La fabrication d’un mythe (XIII<sup>e</sup> - XX<sup>e</sup> siècle)*, Éditions Albin Michel S.A., 1995. Pp. x + 300, notes, glossary, bibliography, index. \$55.00 cloth, \$19.00 paper.

Katie Lyn Peebles  
Indiana University, Bloomington

Alain Boureau explains the background and meaning of the *droit de cuissage* (the alleged right of the feudal lord in the Middle Ages to visit a bride on her wedding night). Boureau is specifically concerned with the history and historiography of the *droit de cuissage* in France and does not recognize its existence in any systematic manner elsewhere. Boureau envisages this study, focused on one issue in medieval French history, as part of a larger concern with the development of the idea of the individual’s possession of and rights to his or her own body and with issues of social *de cuissage* as a historical phenomenon and debunks alleged instances. This negation is possible because he defines the alleged right as systematic in feudal French society; therefore rape, even when perpetrated by a lord against a dependent, is too generalized to qualify. Boureau finds that references to this right were either made deliberately for political purposes, or as

a result of confusion with other feudal conditions of marriage such as a tax (*maritagium, regards*).

However, simply because the right did not exist historically does not mean that it did not exist historiographically. Boureau insists upon the validity of the legend of the right as a historical fact that has been important to the study of history from its first known recording in 1247. He emphasizes that while credence should not be given to the historical legend, neither should it be dismissed out of hand as a political construct of the nineteenth century. He pays specific attention to its manifestations in the late Middle Ages, the seventeenth to eighteenth centuries (pre-Revolution), and the nineteenth century, in historical and literary documents.

Boureau's concern for the details of the social context is excellent, and his ability to demonstrate a coherent structure through these details is particularly strong when dealing with medieval records and a vituperative nineteenth-century debate, although he skims over early modern literature, which would seem to be an important connector in what he calls the making of a myth. The English translation is fluid and pleasant to read, but it lacks the French cultural resonance that Boureau invokes several times. The book is easy to use as a reference. While the index is limited to proper names, there are also two appendices (a seventeenth-century literary extract and a rebuttal to a modern scholar); a bibliography organized chronologically, which is useful in showing the overall development of the idea; and a comprehensive glossary of all the non-English terms with cross-references between similar terms.

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Stephen Aron. **How the West Was Lost: The Transformation of Kentucky from Daniel Boone to Henry Clay.** Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996. Pp. xi + 285, notes, and index. \$29.95 cloth.

Gregory Hansen  
Florida Folklife Program

Rather than fitting Kentucky's state history into a grand master narrative of national history, *How the West Was Lost* establishes a