

## THE MEDIEVALIST — REVIEWS AND ENDORSEMENTS

### From TWITTER:

Lisa Fagin Davis  
Executive Director, Medieval Academy of America @lisafdavis

“Just finished reading Phil Adamo’s new novel *The Medievalist* and I LOVED it! On the one hand it includes many of my favorite things like the Voynich manuscript, the Spanish Forger, Beinicke Library, Sterling Memorial Library and lots more medieval-y treats. In fact, it is without doubt the best work of Voynich fiction that I have ever read, and I’ve read a lot so you can take my word for it!

“It also engages, in a very serious and honest way, with the 19th-c. colonialist and supremacist histories of medieval studies and modern dangers of white supremacists’ appropriations of medieval symbols and narratives. It packs a real punch, is well-plotted and well-written, and is a lot of fun.”

### From KIRKUS REVIEWS:

In this novel, two medieval scholars are asked to spy on their professor—who may have nefarious ties to a White supremacist group.

When Molly Isaacson first talks to Quinton Quick—they are both studying medieval history at Yale—the exchange doesn’t go so well. Molly unabashedly expresses her astonishment over Quinton’s race: “You’re a medievalist? But you’re Black!” Despite the rocky start, they quickly become good friends, both students under the intellectually impressive and controversial professor Abe Kantorowicz, who has garnered a reputation for breaking bread with Nazis and fascists, if only to criticize them. Molly and Quinton are suddenly approached by a humorously mysterious figure—despite the gravity of the story’s themes, Adamo often shoots for lightsome, if glib, comedy—FBI agent Nathaniel Mapp. With a “conspiratorial air,” Mapp asks the two students to surveil Kantorowicz, who he believes is working furtively with a White supremacist group. The author makes it tantalizingly unclear if Mapp’s suspicions are correct. Shortly after, Kantorowicz asks Molly and Quinton to assist him with an “archaeological experiment” to find a symbol that replaces the swastika as a unifying symbol of bigoted groups, a supposedly academic exercise in historical lucidity. Adamo intelligently combines the topical and the esoteric— at the heart of the novel is the alt-right’s appropriation of medieval symbols to brand their hateful cause. But this virtue doubles as a vice—the book flirts with an excessive academicism. Part of it reads like a classroom lecture while other sections are in fact precisely that. In addition, the author can’t resist drawing some facile and didactic conclusions about the nature of racism. Nevertheless, the story is refreshingly eccentric, and while it sometimes seems in danger of taking itself too seriously, the author’s comic impulses chasten that urge. This is an engrossing tale, a delightfully peculiar blend of intellectual and criminal investigation.

An engaging and humorous historical approach to contemporary racism.

**From AMAZON.COM:**

Kit(Kathryn)

*5.0 out of 5 stars* **Enlightening, excellent read**

“Wonderful characters and writing. I thoroughly enjoyed it and really loved the actual medieval history. I stopped, off and on throughout, looking up things that I wasn't already familiar with, going down rabbit holes sometimes for several hours. The information about white supremacists using medieval symbols is disturbing and disgusting. Of course, they have been trying to rewrite history to suit themselves for (probably) as long as they have been around and I'm so glad this book helps to shed light on some of the many ways that has been being done. Excellent all around!”

Michael J. O'Krent

*5.0 out of 5 stars* **Mastery at connecting present to past**

“I love reading a book that's hard to put down.

From the beginning, Adamo establishes rich, engaging characters into a mystery that keeps you curious as to where the story is going. As a self-proclaimed "history-buff" I loved the way he connected what is paramount in today's news to the exciting past of the medieval period. This book is a fun journey with an eye-opening conclusion. I encourage everyone to buy the book and enjoy the ride!”

Randall Davidson

*5.0 out of 5 stars* **Suspenseful to the last page.**

I am not a history buff but I love a good story. I do not like thriller novels but this story pulled me in and kept me on the edge of my seat. I don't like long books but this book was a fast read; the chapters are short.

**From FACEBOOK:**

Brent Horwart

In an interesting coincidence, I spent two days this weekend at the Renaissance Festival and the next two finishing Phil Adamo's new book *The Medievalist*. I really enjoyed it. It's Umberto Eco meets spy-novel. A winking portrait of grad school life. A skewering of Neo-nazis, both their stupidity and nefarious plots. All underpinned by extremely important and timely questions about how historians respond when white supremacists co-opt symbols from the past to serve their agenda. Pick it up (ideally from a local bookstore)!

Phil Adamo

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