

his discussion of the choice of monastic superiors.¹ Despite these difficulties, Heale's treatment here is wide-ranging, detailed, and measured. His discussion is supported by evidence with more than adequate referencing and bibliography to enable a point or idea to be followed up without overwhelming the text with notes.

Although new studies of monasticism in the later Middle Ages by James Clark and others in England have begun to redress the balance, the role, importance, and contributions of monasticism in the later Middle Ages is still under-appreciated. This book fills very successfully a gap in the existing scholarship, for there has not hitherto been such an overview as it provides either for England or the Continent.

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Krijn Pansters and Abraham Plunkett-Latimer, eds, *Shaping Stability: The Normation and Formation of Religious Life in the Middle Ages, Disciplina monastica*, 11 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2016), pp. 285, 3 colour illustrations, €110. ISBN: 978-2-503-56695-5.

'Jeder Anfang ist schwer' — Any beginning is difficult. This proverb remains (almost always) true even if transferred from the personal to the institutional sphere. Monastic orders faced severe problems when replacing the charisma of the founder and/or the first generation of brethren with proper institutional structures. Most of the essays of the volume edited by E. Krijn Pansters and Abraham Plunkett-Latimer evolved from papers read at the International Medieval Congress in Leeds in 2012 trying 'to trace and compare both the norms and the various institutional forms documented in them' (p. 24) and treating two main questions: 1. What are the conditions of production and use of the primary normative documents of medieval religious communities? 2. What are the religious norms and structures promoted or reflected in these sources? In his highly readable Introduction which is far more than the usual summary of the articles which follow, Krijn Pansters describes the different normative sources in

¹ Martin Heale, 'Mitres and Arms: Aspects of the Self-Representation of the Monastic Superior in Late Medieval England', in *Self-Representation of Medieval Religious Communities: The British Isles in Context*, ed. by Anne Müller and Karen Stöber (Berlin: LIT, 2009); 'Monastic Attitudes to Abbatial Magnificence in Late Medieval England', in *The Prelate in England and Europe 1300–1560*, ed. by Martin Heale (York: York Medieval Press, 2014), pp. 261–76; Martin Heale, "Not a Thing for a Stranger to Enter upon": The Selection of Monastic Superiors in Late Medieval and Early Tudor England', in *Monasteries and Society in the Middle Ages*, ed. by Janet Burton and Karen Stöber (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2008), pp. 51–68.

their historical and functional context and judges their originality ('Normation in Formation: The Regulation of Religious Life and the Shape of Stability', pp. 13–47). His remarks give insight into the various resulting forms and norms of religious communal living in the Middle Ages. In all their brevity they belong to the best short descriptions of the irritating complexity of monastic rules, customs, and constitutions one can currently find.

The volume with its thirteen articles is written from five perspectives as analytical categories of the material object of medieval religious observance: 1. spirituality; 2. communality; 3. validity; 4. rationality; 5. historicity. The following remarks focus only on those articles which are especially accomplished. Abraham Plunkett-Latimer ('A Form of Lay Brother Spirituality in the Twelfth Century Cistercian and Carthusian Customaries', pp. 89–99) uncovers specific aspects of the spiritual experiences of lay brothers, exemplified by the prescriptions for the 'Friday Discipline'; weekly beatings independent of any transgressions. The *Usus conversorum* as well as the *Consuetudines* of Prior Guigo of La Grande Chartreuse, both texts written in the 1120s, recommend that the lay brothers 'take the discipline' on Fridays. 'Taking the discipline' meant flogging: flogging for the atonement of one's own sins and flogging as an act of penance. Interestingly though, this practice seems to have been considered appropriate for lay brothers only. Plunkett-Latimer investigates what twelfth-century customary writers understood by this practice and he tries to give the appropriate answers linking thus 'the discipline' to eremitic reform traditions of the eleventh century, seeing in it a means for the illiterate lay brothers to participate in the spiritual life of their abbeys. This particular monastic group showed itself to be not only ascetic but also an imitator of Christ. It is therefore not true — many scholars still say — that because lay brothers were unable to read or to say Mass they played no role within the monasteries' walls. On the contrary they are far more than marginalized figures. By their asceticism and mortification they lived out biblical texts *hic et nunc* gaining access to the truths of faith through a literal embodying of Christ's life.

Philip C. Adamo, who recently published a remarkable history of the Caulite Monastic Order (Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 2014), unravels the mystery of a text having caused lots of problems to lots of scholars: a list of 135 seemingly unrelated words or expressions ('*Usquemodo, aliquomodo, quoquomodo: An Early Cistercian Pronunciation Guide*', pp. 119–36). Adamo identifies this text as a reference tool for performative readings at meals as well as in liturgical, legislative, and contemplative contexts. It is an example of monastic regulations, in this case regulations concerning proper pronunciation. It is far more than just a list of adverbs (not least because it also includes adjectives,

conjunctions, past participles, and conjugated verbs). The words are grouped together according to shared sounds not shared meanings, showing therefore how important performative aspects of reading were in monastic contexts: 'Mispronunciation created disharmony' (p. 126).

It is the jewel in the crown: the Cistercian General Chapters' statutes, which are easily accessible in editions prepared by Dom Martène (1717) and Trilhe/Canivez (1933–41). However, both editions contain numerous faults and are far from having the amount of trustworthiness most scholars have been inclined to concede to them. In Canivez's case Alexis Grémois, the author of one of the most remarkable articles in the collection, speaks with good reason of 'an inconsistent pot-pourri', giving a 'false appearance of completeness and unity' (p. 206) ('Tradition and Transmission: What Is the Significance of the Cistercian General Chapters' Statutes? (Twelfth to Fourteenth Centuries)', pp. 205–16). And he is completely right when he says that 'a complete and definitive collection of the general chapter appears as a Cistercian Grail, always yearned for, sometimes approached, but never truly possessed' (p. 207). His own article can be seen as kind of *prolegomenon* for a new edition with all the difficulties this endeavour might entail. We all know the *statuta* are far from making up a uniform collection. The manuscript tradition gives insight into a process during which annual statutes were entered into codifications (either official or local). This proves that annual collections were not meant to be kept by every monastery, but were seen rather as provisional documents completing the existing codification. *Statuta* offer 'Cistercian rules in the making' (p. 215).

Based on normative texts Coralie Zermatten describes the Carmelite order's evolution, its reforms and shifting congregations up to the sixteenth century when the separation into two distinct branches took place ('Reform Endeavors and the Development of Congregations: Regulating Diversity within the Carmelite Order', pp. 245–62). In 1247 the Carmelites were transformed from an eremitic into a mendicant order. But Zermatten is right to underline that by this change the Carmelites did not intend to adopt mendicancy in the economic sense of the word, 'but rather to implement some of the Dominicans' confraternal qualities' (p. 251). Extremely useful is the Appendix in which the medieval constitutions (manuscripts and editions) of the Carmelite order are listed (pp. 258–60).

The great majority of the articles are instructive and well written. From time to time, however, one cannot avoid the impression of having already read the same arguments by the same authors in other contexts. This leads to the conclusion that *Shaping Stability* is less a product of brand new research offering insight into complex and not yet resolved problems of medieval monastic history (albeit there are articles which do exactly that) than a description of different *status quo*.

But it is most welcome to have this kind of *mise au point* in an easily accessible volume of collected essays.

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Gillian R. Evans, *The I. B. Tauris History of Monasticism: The Western Tradition* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2016), pp. xviii, 297, £40. ISBN: 978-1-84885-376-8.

The Western Tradition arrives with a loud fanfare, advertised on its dust-jacket as the ‘first general history of monasticism in the West since 1900’. In her conclusion, the author, Professor *emerita* of Medieval Theology and Intellectual History at Cambridge, suggests that such a history is necessary because monastic life has been embedded in a cultural and intellectual climate of assumptions which cannot now be taken for granted. So how far has she succeeded in explaining Western monasticism?

Alarm bells begin to ring when one looks at the structure and content of the ‘modern’ section — about one third of the book. It is dominated by thirty-two pages on ‘Reformation and Dissolution’: and although there is discussion of Luther, Calvin, Jesuits, and Jansenists, there is nothing on the Council of Trent and a few lines only here on religious orders in the New World. A great deal of this chapter is devoted to England and it concludes, none too relevantly, with the poet (and Anglican priest) George Herbert’s thoughts on the parson’s life. There are a mere five pages on ‘Enlightenment and Suppression’. Eleven pages on ‘Nineteenth-Century Experiments’ are all about England — the Oratory, English Jesuits, and Anglican religious movements for women and men. Endnotes reveal that the information in ‘Modern Western Monasticism’ (ten pages) is largely drawn from internet sites run by modern religious orders and groups.

The five chapters on early and medieval monasticism are also problematic. While the notes reveal a sprinkling of recent and relevant articles, far too many of the major names in monastic history and the advances they have made over the last few decades are missing. An exhaustive list is not possible within the compass of this review, but to take a few examples, Antony is discussed without reference to the work of Rubenson; Cassian without Ramsey, Stewart, or Casiday; Cluny without mention of Rosenwein or Iogna-Prat; the Cistercians without the advances made by Berman; Ireland without allusion to Hughes or Etchingham. There is no real engagement with female monasticism in this section of the book: (some) women are present, but women are not granted a story of their own. Many significant events and figures in monastic history are conspicuous by their