

REVIEWS

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BLANTON Virginia; O'MARA Veronica; STOOP Patricia (eds.), 2017. *Nun's Literacies in Medieval Europe: The Antwerp Dialogue*, Turnhout, Brepols

This work is the third and final volume resulting from the three scientific meetings dedicated to the subject and from the project *Nun's Literacies in Medieval Europe*. The first was held at the University of Hull in 2011, and the results were published in 2013; the second at the University of Missouri-Kansas City in 2012, published in 2015; and the third meeting, which took place at the University of Antwerp in 2013, corresponds to the present book published in 2017.

The three volumes are independent, but also complementary, as they revolve around a common theme: the culture and education of medieval European nuns, understood from a broad perspective. The term '*literacy*' is key to this research, which aims to analyse and study the process of literacy, learning to read and write, as well as possible readings and writings of these nuns, in order to try to better understand the mentality and lifestyle of this group in medieval Europe. The project, which is the origin of the three works, investigates the sources, rescuing information about the books that the nunneries possessed, the languages in which they could read, copy, write, translate, etc. The volume under review, *The Antwerp Dialogue*, closes this project with nineteen articles focusing on the last period of the Middle Ages, from the 13th to the 16th century, addressing linguistic areas and cultures not studied in the other two volumes, such as Catalan, Danish, French and Hungarian territories, although it also includes works on Dutch and German-speaking areas.

The three editors, Virginia Blanton, professor of gender studies at the University of Missouri-Kansas City; Veronica O'Mara, professor of medieval English literature at the University of Hull; and Patricia Stoop, professor of Dutch literature at the University of Antwerp, introduce the volume by summarising the aims and results of the entire project, with an emphasis on three words: *nuns*, *literacy* and *medieval*, and their significance and potential as a framework for research. Thus, the nineteen articles in this volume, divided into four sections, are concerned with the formal practices of education –oral, written, reading and visual skills, knowledge of different languages– of all cloistered or semi-cloistered religious women: nuns and also lay sisters, living in community in the Middle Ages.

The first section is made up of six articles (Sheck/Blanton; Smith; More; Hutchison; Corbellini; Stoop/Vroomen) and has the title *Rules and Learning*. In this section we find works that deal with the education and culture of nuns based on informal texts, rules and restrictions, or reading and writing guides. The works devoted to the Tertiary order are particularly noteworthy, such as those by Alison More, who reviews the readings and copies made by the Franciscan Tertiaries, or Sabrina Corbellini, who focuses on the Sint-Agnes community in Amersfoort. In summary, the

section emphasises the importance of translations from Latin into vernacular languages for the nuns' complete understanding.

The section *Literacy and Visualization* features five essays (Garí; Lindqvist-Sandgren; Mette Hansen; O'Mara; Richardson) that focus on how nuns put their acquired skills into practice. We find studies of convents in northeastern Spain, such as the one by Blanca Garí, who analyses what the nuns of female monasteries in Catalonia, Valencia and Mallorca read or could read; essays focused on Sweden, Denmark and England; or the essay by Brian Richardson, focused on the Augustinian convent of Santa Marta in Milan in the late 15th and early 16th century, where he emphasises the work of copying books and the production of manuscripts by Augustinian nuns.

The third section is entitled *Translating and Rewriting* and it includes four essays (Deák; Gun; Innes-Parker; Breitenbach/Matter). This section focuses on the importance of mother tongues, translation and rewriting by nuns. Of particular note is Viktória-Hedvig Deák's *Legenda Beatae Margaritae*, a study of the translation of the legend of Saint Margaret of Hungary, and Catherine Innes-Parker's essay on the 15th-century French prose translations of *Le livre de l'arbre de la croix Jhesucrist* by the nuns of Montmartre in Paris.

Finally, the fourth section, *Exchange and Networks*, features four articles (Jenny-Clark; Poor; Erler; Moreton) and deals with the importance of the European phenomenon of the circulation and exchange of books between convents, their purchase and sale, copies bequeathed in wills, etc. The articles focus on particular cases and on the information provided by the books and volumes that belonged to these nuns. It is worth noting the study carried out by Melissa Moreton on the exchange of books in Florence at the end of the 15th century, headed by a papal ordinance of 1594 which prohibited the exchange or gift of books between nuns in the monastery of Santa Brigida del Paradiso, a fact which proves that this must have been an important activity.

The volume includes illustrations of the documents consulted, and features a comprehensive bibliography and several particularly complete indexes: an index of manuscripts, archive documents and incunabula; an index of texts and convents, and an index of names. This is undoubtedly a reference work for research into everything that encompasses the study of the education and cultural background of medieval European religious women. The emphasis of this volume on the study of the translation techniques used and their importance for the education of nuns makes it particularly interesting, although the *Nuns' Literacies in Medieval Europe* project is certainly not closed. There are still areas and languages of Europe to be explored, and the fifty-three essays that make up the publication of the results of the three scientific meetings on the subject are only a sample of the research work that can be carried out in the future.

LLUCIA MÀRQUEZ TESTA

COLESANTI, Gemma Teresa; GARÍ, Blanca; JORNET-BENITO, Núria (eds.), 2017. *Clarisas y dominicas. Modelos de implantación, filiación, promoción y devoción en la Península Ibérica, Cerdeña, Nápoles y Sicilia, Firenze, Firenze University Press*

This book covers a subject that is very much alive at present. By way of introduction, we could say that the present book is a compendium of articles framed within the study of medieval feminine spirituality, but above all it deals with the analysis of the religious landscape marked by the communities of Poor Clares and Dominican nuns. The fact of highlighting the role played by women in the new mendicant currents of the late Middle Ages places the volume at the centre of current discussions. This is no coincidence, as this interest probably has to do with the socio-political transformations of recent times, in which women are progressively recovering their rightful role.

A large number of authors contribute to this work. The eighteen articles that comprise it, written in Catalan, Spanish, Italian, Portuguese and English, are the result of the projects *Paisajes espirituales* (<http://www.ub.edu/proyectopaisajes/index.php>) and *Claustra* <http://www.ub.edu/claustra/eng>. The three editors: G.-T Colesanti (CNR-Roma), Blanca Garí and Nuria Jornet (Universitat de Barcelona) have worked mainly in the field of women's history, spirituality, mysticism and female monasticism, as well as the history of writing and memory.

The spatial framework of this volume is undoubtedly broad, as it includes all the kingdoms of the Iberian Peninsula as well as those of Sardinia, Naples and Sicily, territories linked at different periods, and to different degrees, to the Crown of Aragon. This broad framework allows the reader to have a global vision of the phenomenon in Western and Mediterranean Europe. As for the chronological framework, it is also broad, as it ranges from the 12th to the 16th century.

The works included in this volume are grouped into four blocks according to the territorial areas of the study: "Sardinia, Naples and Sicily: Foundations and Spiritual Promotion" (Bertini, Colesanti, Di Cerbo, Meloni, Pala, Paone, Russo, Santoro, Sardina, Schirru and Sitzia), "Castile, Extremadura, Andalusia and Navarre: From *mulieres religiosae* to foundation and the reformation" (Álvarez Rodríguez, Dulcka, García de la Borbolla, García Valverde, Graña Cid, Lora Serrano, Miura Andrades, Pavón Benito and Pérez González), "Galicia and Portugal: Artistic promotion, *cura monialum* and spaces of influence" (Andrade, Cendón Fernández, Fraga Sampedro, Inglés Fontes, Silva Santos and Sampedro) and "Catalonia and the Kingdom of Mallorca: Landscapes, Networks, Devotions and Practices" (Costa Badia, Garí, Jornet-Benito, Nieto-Isabel, Rodríguez-Parada, Sancho i Planas and Soler-Sala). Underlying the whole of this structure are five cross-cutting themes or lines of research: firstly, the effort to explore understudied areas in female monastic topography; secondly, the understanding of foundational dynamics and the role of groups of *mulieres religiosae*; thirdly, the dynamics of urban implantation and the processes of

interaction that create the monastic landscape; fourthly, the importance of female sponsorship in foundational models and cultural promotion; and finally, the analysis of devotional practices and the material culture of women's monasteries in a functional, spatial and performative context.

The content of the book is interdisciplinary, and the phenomenon is approached from the perspective of disciplines such as history, art history, geography and archaeology, among others. This involves investigating aspects such as the founding of the nunneries, the profile of their promoters and patrons, the social strata of the nuns, as well as the way in which the nunneries interact with the environment in which they are embedded, the devotional practices carried out in them, the devotional objects (and their contextualisation through the exploration of their space and use), etc... Secondly, throughout the book there is a discussion of female spirituality. The vindication of the role of women in the Middle Ages, which until recently had been overlooked by historiography, is a relevant aspect of this volume. Their roles, whether as founders, benefactors or nuns, show women's capacity for social, political and spiritual action in its various facets. Finally, it is also worth mentioning the use of numerous unpublished sources, especially in the articles that deal with the current Italian territories that belonged to the Crown of Aragon.

As a final assessment of the work as a whole, it is worth highlighting the effort to study the spaces of female spirituality from various points of view and to vindicate the role of women in the Middle Ages. For all these reasons, the present volume is highly recommended reading, as it brings new themes and perspectives to research in general and to the study of female spirituality in particular. Undoubtedly, this book is a stimulus for research.

KILIAN MOLINERO SEBASTIÁN

ALIGHIERI, Dante, 2018. *Comedia*, traducción, prólogo y comentarios de José María Micó, Barcelona, Acantilado

"A mitad del camino de la vida, / me hallé perdido en una selva oscura / porque me extravié del buen camino". At the age of thirty-five, Dante Alighieri undertook the elaboration of what is today considered one of the great classics of world literature, his *Comedy*. At just over thirty-five, the professor of literature, translator, poet and musician José María Micó has undertaken "the translation" (in capital letters) of the *Comedy*.

Last December 2018, after four years of arduous and intense work, Micó presented us with a new (and long-awaited) translation into Spanish of what, in his own words, was "un éxito sin

precedentes en el ámbito de la lengua vulgar” [an unprecedented success in the vernacular].¹ But just as the *Comedy* is not just any literary work, this new version is not just any translation either. Innovative from beginning to end, its title already gives us a glimpse of its great originality: as Micó explains, Dante’s *Comedy* was never *Divine*. In fact, we owe this addition to Giovanni Boccaccio who, “replying to Statius’ enthusiasm for Virgil’s *Aeneid*, did not hesitate to define Dante’s creation as ‘divine’, and the adjective ended up being incorporated into the title, with full honours”.² Finally, it was consolidated in 1555 with the Venetian printing by Gabriele Giolito. A second innovation concerns its rhyme: distancing himself from translators such as Ángel Crespo (into Spanish), or Josep Maria de Sagarra (into Catalan), who decided to adapt the work with its original rhyme, Micó has opted not to maintain its consonant chained rhyme: “because it is one thing to have the *rima generatrice* in the hands of the author, and quite another to bind the translator to it and put it before the respect for the original meaning, the readability of the story and its stylistic nuances”. However, he has chosen to keep his famous hendecasyllabic tercets, which allow the syntax and strophic arrangement of the poem to be respected. In this way, Micó manages to preserve its most literal meaning and, at the same time, to adapt it linguistically so that the contemporary reader can perceive a poet of the past as a contemporary poet. Although, as Micó rightly points out, “if that reader likes the translation, the merit belongs to Dante”.

Another of the most notable new features is the presence of introductory notes to each canto (extremely useful for those who wish to grasp the main essence of the canto), as well as the absence of footnotes, since, argues Micó, “the translation must resolve any doubts on its own”. But what is undoubtedly a first is the incorporation, at the end of the book, of infographics on the Dantesque universe, as well as a chronology of Dante’s life and work and a reasoned index that greatly assists the reader (and even more so for those who are venturing into the Dantesque universe for the first time) when it comes to finding out more details about the people, works and places quoted.

Micó states that Dante “wrote a poem that does not speak to us of knowledge, but of living, of mortal life and eternal life, through an autobiographical fiction that was intended to reach an ecumenical dimension, and succeeded in doing so”.³ Thus, just as one of Dante’s main objectives as an author was to speak of his own experience and, therefore, that of his contemporaries, in the same way, Micó has chosen to follow in the footsteps of the master and produce a translation that is, at the same time, faithful to Dante, and close to the reader of the 21st century. Likewise, he has also sought to be more accessible to a reader accustomed to new technologies. Without abandoning the bookish format so characteristic of the classics, Micó, together with Acantilado, have opted for a portable format, creating a compact edition with sheets so thin that the 14,233 hendecasyllables of the work can be integrated into a single volume that is practical and easy to use.

¹ See “Nota sobre el texto y la traducción”, *Comedia*.

² See “Prólogo. Un título proteico”, *Comedia*.

³ See “Prólogo. El argumento de la obra”, *Comedia*.

As can (and should) be expected of any good author, one of Dante's main longings was to be recognised, to become a classic, and, consequently, to go down in history. Thanks to extraordinary translations such as the one we have in our hands today, this longing can (and will) continue to be satisfied, at least in the Spanish language and, more specifically, in a "Dantesque Castilian".

However, although the classics enjoy the privilege of timelessness, each era requires its own translations. With this edition, Micó more than succeeds in fulfilling his mission, since he manages to endow it with exceptional quality. We should not forget that Micó's research field was not, initially, Italian literature, since his training revolved around Hispanic philology, as his splendid works on Góngora, Cervantes, Quevedo and so many others evince. However, he describes how, thanks to Góngora, he arrived to Ariosto, and thus also managed to reach and discover Dante.

But as Micó states, "it is very easy to get lost in the intricate jungle of manuscripts"⁴ and it is even more difficult to stay up to date, both with the bibliographical and ecdotic novelties of the text, and with the latest advances in the study of the Dantesque manuscripts. The debate surrounding the criteria of edition is one of the most heated issues in Dantesque studies. However, for this new translation, Micó has carried out an extraordinary preliminary study: "I have studied the original text in rigorously philological terms, and I have checked the interpretations that other manuscripts make of the most significant passages, both through the internet and by personally reviewing some codices, particularly the illuminated ones, and not only for the pleasure of merely contemplating the imposing Dantesque iconography [...] but because the relationship between text and miniatures is a field of study of great interest".⁵ With this new edition, Micó shows that the translation activity is nothing more than a pragmatic task that has to be adapted and adjusted to the demands of each particular case.

To quote the words of Javier Cercas: "There is no novelist who has not experienced at some point the presumptuous sensation that reality is demanding a novel from him, that it is not he who is looking for a novel, but a novel that is looking for him".⁶ We dare to affirm that, in the case of Micó, it has been the *Comedy* itself that has sought him out in order to keep on prevailing over time.

In short, we find ourselves before a unique and unrepeatable edition that manages to reach readers of all ages and, by maintaining the original essence of the *Comedy*, succeeds in moving them and making them think. Therefore, everyone will see in this work an echo, a resonance of part of their own essence. Consequently, we can classify this translation as a universal that will undoubtedly remain a classic.

⁴ See "Nota sobre el texto y la traducción", *Comedia*.

⁵ See *ibidem*.

⁶ See "Prólogo. Epílogo de una novela", *Anatomía de un instante*.

We cannot conclude without mentioning the recent interview with Micó in *Letra Global*,⁷ in which he notes that what most captivated him about Dante was his will, born of a youthful desire, never abandoned, to write a great work. He also admires Dante's reflective thinking and effort to compose this work which, above all things, he owed to himself. It is fair to say that, in the same way, what has captivated us most about Micó has been his youthful desire, also never abandoned, to write an extraordinary translation which, above all, he owed to himself. Because, as he rightly states in his verses: "De todas las penumbras en que he estado, / ésta es la más profunda. / Por encima de mí duran los sueños".⁸

CRISTINA MONTORO VERDUGO

COOMANS, Thomas, 2018. *Life Inside the Cloister. Understanding Monastic Architecture*, Leuven, Leuven University Press, (KADOC studies on religion, culture and society; 21)

This work corresponds to number 21 of the collection «*KADOC studies on religion, culture and society*», produced by the *Katholieke Universiteit Leuven*, which publishes monographs on recent interdisciplinary research results.

The author, Thomas Coomans, is a Belgian archaeologist and art historian, specialising in the history of architecture, and more specifically in religious architecture, and a professor at the Department of Architecture of the *Katholieke Universiteit Leuven*.

Life Inside the Cloister. Understanding Monastic Architecture, focuses on the study of monasteries in the western world from their creation to the present day, covering 1500 years of the history of this institution. It is a long-term study that analyses monastic architecture, both in terms of the construction typology of the various buildings and the evolution of their uses until the most recent centuries, in which the desacralisation of society has led these constructions to take on new functions for which they were not intended. The work is structured into an introduction, four sections comprising a total of 26 chapters, a conclusion and appendices. The central sections are arranged chronologically, following the evolution of monastic buildings.

In the introduction, the author sets out the aims of the work: firstly, to understand monastic architecture as a process of spatial and temporal organisation adapted to regular life, secondly, to understand the evolution of monasteries in a western society that has been exculturated from Catholicism, and thirdly, to analyse the elements that make a monastery a sacred space.

⁷ Link to the interview: https://cronicaglobal.elespanol.com/letra-global/la-charla/jose-maria-mico-dante-encima-shakespeare_211926_102.html

⁸ See *Primera estación* [antology], Málaga, Centro Cultural Generación del 27, 2009.

The first section of the work –chapters 1 to 5– entitled *Origins. Organising Sacred Space and Time*, addresses the origins of monasticism and monastic architecture, giving importance to the main and essential spaces of the monastery: the cell, the cloister and the church, which are also related to the monastic rule and community life.

The second section *Building Types. Identities and Reformations*, comprises chapters 6 to 14. They examine the different architectural typologies of monasteries and religious institutions of common life: the abbey, the charterhouse, the castle, the mendicant convent, the beguinage, the *Hôtel-Dieu* or hospital, the school, the palace and the house-monastery.

The third section *Characters. Embodying the Sacred*, comprises chapters 15 to 20 and focuses on those characteristics that impact to a greater or lesser extent on monasteries, addressing issues as diverse as: place and stability, enclosure and gender, liturgy and identity, death and memory, scale and growth, and style.

The fourth and final section of the central part of the work, *Afterlife. Adoptive Reuse and Heritagisation*, –chapters 21 to 26– analyses the future of monastic buildings once they have ceased to serve the functions for which they were designed and built, either by destruction or ruin, or by being converted to other uses, such as agricultural (farms or industries), residential, military (barracks or arsenals), correctional (prisons), judicial (courts), educational or cultural uses.

The final section is a summary of what has been discussed previously and describes the religious tradition and the religious architectural heritage as a cultural legacy. The work also includes an extensive bibliography, webography and filmography, and toponymic and anthroponymic indexes. The abundant graphic material such as photographs and plans of monastic buildings, present throughout the monograph, is a necessary contribution to a work dealing with the history of art and architecture.

In short, this monograph on monastic architecture is of great interest due to its clear and concise way of dealing with the different topics, combined with a correct structuring that makes the work a long-term chronological overview of the origin, evolution, decadence and repurposing of monastic buildings in the Western context, with special emphasis on the importance of interdisciplinarity and long-term studies, so necessary in order to understand the reality of monastic architecture in a more comprehensive way.

ALBERTO-JESÚS MARTÍNEZ BÉDMAR

CORRAL, Esther (ed.), 2018. *Voces de mujeres en la Edad Media. Entre realidad y ficción*, Berlin – Boston, De Gruyter

<https://www.degruyter.com/viewbooktoc/product/502881?rskey=I6cA5T>

This work stems from the eponymous project *Voces de Mujeres en la Edad Media. Entre realidad y ficción* initiated in 2014 with the aim of investigating the female reality in the Middle Ages, searching for it in the female voices present in historical and literary sources.

The study of women in the Middle Ages is a very relevant field in current medieval historiography, which has long produced outstanding works, but which still has much to offer us. This project is committed to a multidisciplinary approach to the subject in history and literature, starting from the written work and the study of the women who promoted it, wrote it or appeared as characters. As a result of this project, an international congress was held in 2017 in Santiago de Compostela under the title “A presenza feminina na escritura: voces de mulleres medievais na Idade Media”. This book, directed by the project’s principal investigator, Esther Corral, is a compilation of the studies presented at this scientific meeting.

However, the work does not follow the structure of the meeting, and it is organized in three blocks plus a complementary one. The blocks do not follow a chronological order, but rather a thematic order. This option, which at first sight may seem risky, ends up being the right one, as it deals with a set of articles of great contextual diversity, but with specific themes and ideas that are thus structured in a comprehensible and useful way.

The first section, “Feminidad histórica” [“Historical Femaleness”], consists of two parts. The first one, “Mujeres con poder” [“Women in Power”], (Souto Cabo; Recuero Astray; del Val Valdivieso; Cendón Fernández; Pelaz Flores; Ruiz Domingo) deals with peninsular women in the context of writing, presenting those who were promoters and analysing their role and presence in the documentation. Among the studies included in this first part, the work by Del Val Valdivieso on Queen Isabella and writing as a legitimising tool is particularly interesting. The second part of the first block is entitled “Mujeres en la documentación medieval” [“Women in medieval texts”] (García Fernández; Barco Cebrián; Cadaveira López; Redondo Blasco; Comas Via; Casas Perpinyà) and deals with key aspects for understanding women in literature, such as, for example, silences in the documents, and the presence of the so-called “echoing views”, those female views portrayed only through the filter of male authorship, which is the main topic of Cecilia Redondo Blasco’s contribution.

The second major thematic block “Authorial Femaleness” analyses medieval women authors, both secular and religious, and both the most unknown and the most recognised. It is also subdivided into two parts. The first part is entitled “Own Voices” (Maura Barillari; Caraffi; Ojea Fernández,

Pereira Domínguez; Medina Granda; González de la Higuera Garrido) and the second part is entitled “Religious and Mystic Women” (Cirlot Valenzuela; Rucquoi; Víñez Sánchez; Sancho Fibla; Cuadrada Majó). Both parts feature female figures who, in rebellion against social norms, play a subversive role in the public space, educate and, in the case of those portrayed in the first part, do so with political intentionality and at the same time they reflect on female identity and their role in writing.

The third block “Textual Femeness” also comprises two sections entitled “Lyric Fiction”. (Piccat; Videira Lopes; de Santiago Gómez; Baião Roque; Cunha; Morán Cabanas; Frateschi Vieira; Muiña) and “Other Literary Fictions” (Lee; Gutiérrez García; García García, Santos Carretero; González Doreste, Plaza Picón; Lojendio-Quintero, Mendoza-Ramos; Rodríguez Mesa). Both deal with female characters in literature, mostly written by male authors, although the work presents us with interesting exceptions such as those of *Susana* or *Lucrecia*, studied by González Doreste and Plaza Picón and by Mendoza-Ramos and Lojendio-Quintero, respectively. The male voices in the different studies present satirical portraits, victims of love and, in general, female characters who act and depend on men. Gutiérrez García’s work on fairies is therefore of great interest, as he analyses figures of “subversive” women, with an active role and possessing “bookish knowledge”, playing negative roles in opposition to other illiterate “fairies” with a passive role and submissive to men.

Finally, the fourth block, “Feminine Space in Written and Bookish Culture” (Varela Rodríguez; Mestres Navas; Pérez Pérez) is made up of three studies that allow us to approach the female reading spaces. It is worth noting in this block Cristina Pérez-Pérez’s contribution *El libro en la corte* [The Book in the Court], which, linking the binomial woman and book, shows us a solid relationship between the two in late medieval representations.

In short, the work is an important and welcome contribution to the study of women in the Middle Ages which, available in physical and digital (Open Access) format, highlights the potential of literature as a tool for understanding the construction of an identity. At the same time, the different contributions allow experts to delve deeper into topics such as silences, echoes, transgression and subversion in medieval literature.

XAVIER DUCH LATORRE

SENNHAUSER, Hans Rudolf, COURVOISIER, Hans Rudolf, 2018. *Das Basler Münster: Die frühen Kathedralen und der Heinrichsdom, Ausgrabungen 1966, 1973/74*. Amb la col·laboració de HIBBER, Alfred; KÜHNE, Eckart; PETER, Werner. Ostfildern, Jan Thorbecke Verlag

The circumstances of this publication are remarkable. As the subtitle says, this work is largely based on the excavations of 1966 and 1973-74. The latter were directed by the art historian and archaeologist Hans Rudolf Sennhauser. Due to multiple obligations, Sennhauser was unable to evaluate the documentation of the excavations. The documentation and the findings had to wait more than 50 years for processing and were only passed on to a foundation personally set up by Sennhauser in 2009. But it was only after the city of Basel went to court in Aargau that the Sennhauser Foundation acknowledged Basel's ownership. With the pressure of the year 2019 and the arrival of the festivities connected with the thousandth anniversary of the direct predecessor of today's cathedral, the *Heinrichsdom*, this publication finally came about.

The hardcover binding with its 454 pages and almost 4 kg lets readers understand that they have a massive publication in their hands. The publication is richly illustrated and, apart from presenting the findings of the excavations, there is a lot of additional research related to the construction of the cathedral in order to place the results in context.

In the foreground, therefore, are questions about the architectural history of the early construction phases of the cathedral and the sacred topography. Thus, the existence of a pre-Carolingian church becomes evident. The form of the cathedral of Bishop Hatto (753-836), a contemporary and trusted confidant of Charlemagne, as well as the *Münster* consecrated in 1019 in the presence of Emperor Henry II by Bishop Adalbero II are discussed and reconstructed.

The publication is divided into two parts. The first 242 pages, including the bibliography, make up the actual monograph. After an introductory section, this first part is generally structured chronologically. In the introduction, the reader can understand the main areas of excavation from 1899 to 1988 (pp. 20-21), as well as the interpretation of the different mortars by dating (p. 23). It is precisely here that advances in science make it possible to date parts with greater precision, such as, for example, some of the walls of the crypt and the central naves, which were dated in 1966 during the Carolingian construction phase and which we now know with certainty that, because of the different types of mortar, they cannot be dated in the same way.

Two different teams worked on the excavations in the 1970s. One worked on the Roman and pre-Carolingian finds. Andres Fuger-Gunti presented the results in 1979 in a monograph. His findings have also been available in digital form since 2011. However, the publication in question here summarises and clarifies some aspects of these phases (pp. 26- 42). The third chapter then raises the question of whether there was a previous building at the location of the *Haitomünster* (p. 43).

This question is also clarified later in chapter 6, which deals with the external crypt. Late Roman and early medieval aspects are discussed in relation to the bishop's see and where to locate it in this period (chapter 4, pp. 45-46). Finally, the book also discusses the Carolingian construction "...*fundavit ab imo Haito* ..." (chapter 5, pp. 47 – 775).

To highlight just one aspect of how successfully contemporary sources are combined with the results of excavations: Haito of Swabia, educated on the island of Reichenau, succeeded Abbot Waldo both as bishop of the city of Basel and as abbot of the Reichenau Abbey. It is thanks to his correspondence with Abbot Gozbert of St. Gallen that we have the famous plan created in Reichenau. In the literature, the two round tower façades (*Zweiturmfassaden*) are referred to as typical of the High Romanesque period, usually with reference to examples from Normandy and the Upper Rhine region. As in the plan of St. Gallen, Basel Cathedral already had two round towers on the west façade since its construction under Bishop Haito, i.e. already in the Carolingian period and not since the 11th century. Reichenau-Mittelzell also had two western towers from the 10th century, but they were square in plan. As the work says : "The discussion on beginnings is open" (p. 65).

After dealing with the crypt, the lateral annexes and other issues such as the barrier between the choir of the canons and the lay part, among others, this chapter ends with a reconstruction of the cathedral. It seems that it was a cathedral that could compete with the episcopal churches of the time (Lausanne, Coira, Geneva) and was only surpassed by Konstanz (pp. 73-76). The considerations of a possible geometrical system, drawn and written by H. R. Courvoisier, which is based on the Carolingian foot measurement of 29.7 cm, complement the analysis.

The archaeological findings show that the outer crypt (chapter 6, pp. 79-99), cannot be compared with either Haito's or Enric's cathedral. It is more recent than the Carolingian cathedral and is older than today's Münster, so it was built between the two phases.

After a chapter examining Furger's interpretations of the excavations in the chapel of St. Nicholas (*Niklauskapelle*) and in the crypt (chapter 7, pp. 93-99), the author discusses the Ottonian cathedral (chapter 8, pp. 101-190).

The enthusiasm of the Ottonian bishops for construction is well known. Adalbero II joins this trend by emerging as the builder of this cathedral. He is also the first bishop of Basel whom we know to have been buried in the cathedral. Accordingly, and to give just one example, the publication assigns in a very well-reasoned way the prominent tombs to those bishops known to be buried in the cathedral. Again the visual comparisons with the cathedrals of this time, namely Lausanne and Geneva, are pertinent (p. 189).

The main conclusion of the central chapter of the book can be summarised as follows: the current *Münster* is still based on the construction and consecration of 1019. There was no new construction around 1200. The cathedral of 1019 had large dimensions, comparable to those of Bamberg, for example, another cathedral consecrated in the presence of Henry II. It was therefore consecrated in 1019, redecorated around 1200 and restored after the earthquake of 1356. Understanding the late Romanesque cathedral as a remodelled version of the predecessor church easily explains and resolves aspects that were previously difficult to interpret.

Compared to the Cathedral of Strasbourg or to the slightly more recent Cathedral of Freiburg, the Cathedral of Basel remains rooted in tradition and in 1200 does not adopt the innovations of French Gothic. It is therefore the last stage of German Romanesque before the assumption of French Gothic, remaining in the tradition of the Empire church.

Chapter nine is devoted to the fire and the restoration phase, i.e. the late Romanesque phase of the cathedral (pp. 191-198). The last two chapters before the summary are devoted to the altars (chapter 10, pp. 199-202) and to the tombs (chapter 11, pp. 203-211). Particularly in these chapters, it is especially noticeable that the cooperation of maps and text has been successful and various peripheral topics such as Queen Anne's tomb are treated concisely.

The conclusions, appropriately called *Rückschau – Zusammenschau* (chapter 12, pp. 215-228) are precisely that, a synopsis (*Zusammenschau*), but also a review (*Rückschau*). A review of how the results were interpreted directly after the excavation and how the results are viewed today. And a synopsis because it coherently summarises the various topics discussed in the previous chapters, starting with the location of the church in the urban landscape of late antiquity and continuing chronologically.

The second part consists of the catalogue and a large section with reconstruction attempts, comparison tables, etc. divided into sections A to H.

A large section (pp. 243-336) of the second part of the book is the catalogue of item numbers, concordance tables, etc. Each card, among other details, contains the square where it is located, the stage at which it was excavated and the pages where it is mentioned within the publication. This allows a fairly agile navigation within the work if you are interested in a specific detail.

Part of sections A-H are removable but most of them, except for the large plans, are inside the book. This includes all the photos of the excavations (B) and the plans of the various periods in 1:300 scale (C), the black and white reconstruction plans (D), the plans of the excavations in 1:50 scale (E) and the details of the excavations of the West Scale, the crypt, the transept (*Vierungskrypta*) and the East Crypt (F).

The first eleven folding maps (A.1-11; Scale 1:100) are large-format overview plans of all the excavations in the cathedral. Each map deals with the finds of a particular period. So there are plans that visually highlight the period treated, for example, the Carolingian finds. It is an extremely useful tool for following the text and understanding the ideas put forward. There are plans which, apart from containing the position numbers, contain the height dimensions. They are all very precise and go down to the level of the stone itself. Three other plans complement this overview (A.12-14). Two are representations of side views of the finds and the third gives an isometric view of the *Heinrichsmünster*. However, the pull-out plans are, in most cases, used as an additional tool. A schematic representation of the southern views can be found in the publication (p. 51), as well as a more detailed enlarged version as a fold-out map (A. 12). Also in foldable form are most of the profile plans (except G1-2) and the comparison tables (H. 1-6). These comparison tables are of great use to art historians, especially for teaching purposes.

It can be said to be a completely successful publication. Both the quality of the drawings and the format are outstanding. The only criticism that can be made is that at the end, since the work is divided into two parts, it could have been divided into two volumes, which would have been more practical for the reader in many ways. It is also almost impossible not to damage the cover of the plans, since when they are pulled out the weight of the book itself damages it. Folding plans like this will cause nightmares to librarians.

It is also hard to understand why the part of Eckart Kühne (p. 385-388), where he discusses possible reconstructions of the Ottonian cathedral, is in the second part of the book amidst the plans. I guess it makes it easier to read, but it breaks the organisation and the general outline.

Leaving aside this technical criticism, the work can be considered a reference on how to deal with archaeological materials from ancient excavations and place them in current scientific trends. At many points it is also clear that Sannhauser is an art historian, since he deals in great detail with aspects that are only peripherally related to the excavations. But it is precisely these passages that give the publication its special character. In particular, the entire comparative part makes this publication interesting not only for medieval archaeologists, but also for historians of art and architecture.

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SUREDA I JUBANY, Marc (dir), 2018. *Oliba Episcopus: mil·lenari d'Oliba, bisbe de Vic: exposició al Museu Episcopal de Vic del 27 d'octubre de 2018 al 10 de febrer de 2019*. Vic, Museu Episcopal de Vic-Editorial Work

The Episcopal Museum of Vic, coinciding with the millennium of Oliba's ordination as bishop of Vic, coordinated an exhibition under the name of "Oliba episcopus", which remained open to the public from 27 October 2018 until 10 February 2019. Likewise, under the direction of Marc Sureda i Jubany, curator of the Museum, a book was produced as a result of the work of a remarkable research team with nine articles and a catalogue of the works on display.

The book is divided into two main sections: the first contains a series of studies on the politico-religious position of the bishops around the year 1000, on the ordination of the then Abbot Oliba as bishop, and on his prominent role in the Catalan feudal panorama; the second section consists of the catalogue of the works in the exhibition "Oliba episcopus" at the Episcopal Museum of Vic.

According to the editor himself, Marc Sureda, this book is conceived as a commemoration of Oliba's ordination and is a perfect opportunity to evoke the historical unity of Catalonia, while presenting, through studies and material evidence, the past of Bishop Oliba, promoting his figure as a bishop towards the abbot glorified by the Catalan historiography of Romanticism (19th century).

The first section of the work includes nine studies devoted to specific aspects of the life and work of Bishop Oliba, based on material objects, most of which were displayed in the exhibition. The first study (D. Abadías Aurín) contextualises feudalism and the figure of the bishop as a nexus of political, cultural and religious cohesion in the territories of Western Europe. The second (D. Méhu) aims to explain the process of ordination of a bishop on the basis of some manuscripts preserved in Catalonia, dating from the first half of the 11th century, and could serve as an introduction to the following study, that authored by R. Ordeig y Mata, which focuses on the time when the then Abbot Oliba was appointed and ordained bishop of Vic, emphasising the political situation that made his appointment possible at the end of 1018. The fourth article (R. Baró Cabrera) highlights his training as an intellectual and his cultural activity, which was mainly carried out after his consecration as bishop, but which is manifested in the impetus given to the monasteries of Ripoll and Cuixà as cultural centres. The fifth article (M. Sureda y Jubany) deals with the construction policy undertaken by Oliba during his tenure as bishop. The sixth article (F. Español Bertran) analyses Oliba's patronage as bishop, based on the inventories of Ripoll and the few liturgical objects that have come down to us today. This chapter is complemented by the following article (M. Castiñeiras), which deals especially with the decorations of the Bibles of Ripoll and Roda, analysing the miniatures and their pedagogical purpose for a society in which the majority was illiterate, and highlighting the cultural importance of the *scriptorium* of Ripoll in Oliba's time.

The eighth article (M. S. Gros i Pujol) analyses some eleventh-century manuscripts, detailing their origin, motifs and purpose. Finally, the ninth and last article (SM Cingolani) deals with the process of recovering the historical figure of Oliba as abbot-bishop, which took place in the second half of the 19th century, with the exaltation of him as *Founding Father of Catalonia*, highlighting the cultural and national interests of the intellectuals of the time.

The second large block of the book is the catalogue, the result of the scientific direction of Marc Sureda with the collaboration of the historian Daniel Duran i Duelt. The catalogue contains information on the seventy-eight objects exhibited in the “Oliba episcopus” exhibition, thanks to the exhaustive research of thirty-three scholars who have a profound knowledge of both Oliba’s character and his milieu. Each object on display has an entry specifying its name, typology, period and/or origin, size and the place where it is currently found, with summary information resulting from the research, a high-resolution photograph and a bibliography specific to the object. The book closes with a translation of the contents into English.

In sum, this is a book that provides a renewed image of Bishop Oliba with the help of material evidence of the period, which come both from Oliba’s environment and from his European context. It is an important and indispensable work for an introduction to the world of the bishop of Vic, to get to know his work and to be able to contemplate the material evidence that can broaden the understanding of the complexity of the medieval period and of ‘Oliba’s milieu. The work, as Marc Sureda states, not only seeks to contribute new historiographical knowledge about the figure of the bishop-abbot and his world, but it also aims to represent a starting point to promote a necessary global revision of his figure and work more appropriate to the contemporary perspective.

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