

experience of imperceptible forms, noetic and divine'. In all this, imagination is a key element which Betancourt argues has been neglected by art historians.

This book is not an easy read, but it demonstrates most clearly that in every century of the empire anonymous teachers, readers, scribes and more famous individuals like Photios, Psellos and Metocheites engaged with the ancient Greek inheritance, commented on what they read, and criticised Aristotle and Plato as well as a host of lesser philosophers and medical experts like Galen. Not only did these Byzantine intellectuals preserve the classics by copying their texts, but they also puzzled over their contradictions, modified their conclusions with their own evidence and enormously enriched them. They also aimed to teach the uneducated how to appreciate their icons. In Betancourt's detailed examination, their medieval theories of Sight, Touch and Imagination are given brilliant exposition.

KING'S COLLEGE,
LONDON

JUDITH HERRIN

Le fortune di un patriarca. Grado altomedievale e il 'testament' di Fortunato II. By Yuri A. Marano. (Altomedioevo, 10.) Pp. 243 incl. 11 ill. Rome: Viella, 2022. €28 (paper). 978 88 3313 897 8

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The protagonists of this book are three: the patriarch Fortunatus; his seat, Grado; and the document drafted by the former, the so-called 'testament'. Fortunatus acted in the period immediately following the Frankish conquest of Italy, and more precisely in the years when Charlemagne sought to expand his dominion over the Adriatic before coming to an agreement with Byzantium with the Peace of Aachen of 812. The duchy of Venice, of which Grado was a part, was situated between the two empires for a long time, before being formally drawn into (though increasingly autonomous) the Byzantine political arena.

Fortunatus is one of the leading figures of the period. He sided with the Franks from the outset, with the primary purpose of trying to maintain the unity of his diocese, which was threatened by the claims of Aquileia (the ancient see from which Grado had seceded) and by the possibility of losing control over the peninsula of Istria. During his long pontificate (802–24), Fortunatus spent many years in exile in France, because of his difficult relationship with the Venetian dukes, the brothers Obelerius and Beatus, who oscillated several times between the Franks and Byzantium. Despite Fortunatus' long-standing loyalty to the Franks, towards the end of his career, in 821, he sought political support from the Croatian Liudewit, *dux Pannoniae inferioris*, who resisted Frankish hegemony. The patriarch was summoned to the court of Ludwig the Pious, accused of supplying the duke with artisans and masonry workers to strengthen his defences in Pannonia. After taking refuge in Constantinople, in 824 he travelled to the Frankish court with the ambassadors of Michael II. This journey marked his political end: as Marano notes, after the Peace of Aachen it was no longer possible for Fortunatus to play on the rivalry between the two empires. In Aquisgrana, no one defended the patriarch, who was referred to the pope, probably Eugenius I. It was on that occasion

that he drafted his 'testament'; Fortunatus never reached Rome, however, because he died, probably in 825.

Despite Marano's skill in describing Fortunatus' life, many contradictions remain in his biography. Some choices are incomprehensible to our eyes; we cannot always understand whether they really depended on a desire to protect his diocese, or whether the apparent political fluctuations are indicative of purely personal safeguarding (we know that he was accused of misconduct).

Fortunato's biography is followed, in Marano's book, by a very effective description of the settlement of Grado (a *castrum*), which arose on the edge of the lagoon in the sixth and seventh centuries, at the initiative of the Byzantine authorities, similar in this to other African and Balkan settlements. Grado presented an exceptional concentration of churches in a small space: St Euphemia, St Mary of Grace, the baptistery and many others. Marano defines this settlement – according to the definition used by Myrto Veikou for Epirus – as a 'third space', neither urban nor rural, in between town and country. The traditional name for these settlements was the 'islands of refuge'. However they certainly did not come into being because of the supposed flight of the people, guided by the bishops, in the face of the barbarians occupying northern Italy (or the Balkans): they were stable settlements, with productive and commercial activities and the presence of Byzantine officials. Early Venice too may fall into this typology, and Comacchio (a settlement located near the Po Delta) as well. Grado was born out of new settlement choices, which tended to exploit the geographical potential of a marginal area.

In the final part of the book, Marano publishes the text of the 'testament', accompanied by an Italian translation and an excellent archaeological commentary. Actually, this text is anything but a testament. It is a lengthy defence of Fortunatus' work, where are listed all the donations made by him to the various churches of the diocese, with the aim of exalting his reputation as patriarch, donor and intermediary with heaven. The text reveals the great wealth of the Church of Grado, listing restorations of churches, construction of altars, ambones, gold and silver enclosures; donations of precious liturgical furnishings, such as fabrics, curtains, chandeliers; precious fabrics (as purple) from Constantinople; mentioning coins for purchases, donations to churches, gifts for the clergy. Relics are covered with fabrics, and so are altars, fences, gates; Fortunatus focuses on the celebration and exaltation of relics and their worship, central to the affirmation of the prestige of Grado and the patriarch himself. At the end there is an inventory of what he leaves in the storehouses: leather goods, ermine, iron, grain, wine, oil, gold, silver.

The wealth of the Church of Grado is very impressive. However, as Marano underlines, the settlement of Grado had no major manufacturing activities (although there is evidence of the existence of a glassworks), nor is there any evidence in the archaeological or written sources of Grado's strong commercial activity in the eighth and ninth centuries. Grado was a centre that attracted wealth – for example, from Charlemagne – both because of the prestige of the patriarchate and because it had been an important pawn contested by the two empires. Most of the precious objects listed in the 'testament' are not therefore evidence of major commercial trade: they were acquired by Fortunatus through his relationships and not through trade. Marano affirms, very convincingly, that the exchanges

of gifts (objects, artefacts) were the means by which the patriarch acted in the Adriatic politics of the period.

Marano's book is very rich and covers very diverse topics. It represents a successful experiment in the intersection of written and archaeological sources, which also fits within the debate – always the focus of scholarly interest – on the development of Mediterranean trade in the late eighth and early ninth centuries.

CA' FOSCARI,
VENICE

STEFANO GASPARRI

The Catholic Church and European state formation, AD 1000–1500. By Jørgen Møller and Jonathan Stavnskær Doucette. Pp. xiv + 223 incl. 30 figs and 12 tables. Oxford–New York: Oxford University Press, 2022. £65. 978 0 19 285711 8
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This is an interesting and original book authored by two political scientists. Its terminology and modes of argumentation are not those familiar to historians but the work's basic thesis is at least plausible and perhaps even persuasive. For me, it was challenging to contend with 'difference-in-difference design', 'linear probability models', 'indicator variable analysis' and 'exclusion restrictions', to mention just a few unfamiliar terms. Nevertheless, to come straight to the surprising point, here is the basic argument: 'without the Catholic Church, modern representative government and the modern multistate system in which it occurs is well-nigh inconceivable' (p. 179).

Only sixteen towns had autonomous councils in 1100 but 136 had them in 1200. The failure of state authority in the post-Carolingian world cannot alone explain this fact. The Catholic Church played a decisive, if sometimes unanticipated, role in effecting the widespread change to practices of self-government, representation and consent. The authors offer a summary of the rise and spread of church reform beginning with Cluny and going right through the Gregorian reform and the Investiture Controversy. The authors have constructed a data set of 680 European towns from roughly 1000 to 1800. They present their data in charts, tables and maps. The sample includes 199 episcopal towns and 481 non-episcopal towns. Of the towns 186 had gained self-governance between 1100 and 1300. Of sixty-two transitions that took place to 1150, fifty occurred in episcopal towns with sixty-eight of ninety-three by 1200. An interesting set of data shows that towns within 100km of one of the 270 Cluniac houses were most likely to transition. Cluny, of course, stood for freedom from lay control. That was also one of the key dimensions of the Church-State struggle of the high Middle Ages. Reform popes encouraged townsfolk to reject non-reformed clergy, which was a significant impulse to urban transition. The torrent of litigation unleashed by the Investiture Controversy brought Roman law to the surface in unprecedented ways. From Roman private law ideas of representation and consent spread widely. The Church also modelled representation and consent in its councils, chapter meetings and in the organisation of the Dominican order. Clerical and lay elites came from many of the same families and shared values and outlooks.

The Investiture Controversy seriously weakened the idea of empire with its hegemonic implications in much of Europe. In the tenth century Germany was