

time, geographically, as noted above), with the whole being prefaced by a very useful article by Alexis Grélois (pp. 325–36) exploring the general mechanics by which Cistercian filiations came into existence and their impact upon the general harmony of the order.

By comparison, the book's fourth part, comprised of a single article by Jean-Francois Leroux-Dhuys (pp. 409–25), which examines Cistercian responses to the end of their religious life following the French Revolution, feels somewhat tacked on as an afterthought. (Indeed, it is unclear why Samuel Mourin's article was not included in this section, thereby at least giving the whole more substance.) This fourth section is followed by a useful bibliography and index (divided into both people and places), as well as by abstracts in French, German and English, the last of which could have benefitted from being proof-read by a native speaker. This, and the point about the brevity of the fourth section, are but minor quibbles, however (as is the initial observation that the book, printed on thick, glossy paper, is extremely heavy – nearly 2kg in weight – and thus somewhat uncomfortable to handle). These points aside, the editors have produced a valuable and engaging book that largely achieves what it aims to do, such that those with an interest in the history of Morimond, or of the Cistercian Order more generally, will find much here to sink their teeth into.

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*Le Manuscrit franciscain retrouvé.* Edited by Nicole Bériou, Jacques Dalarun and Dominique Poirel. Pp. 389 incl. 54 colour and black-and-white figs, 9 tables and 14 colour plates. Paris: CNRS Éditions, 2021. €39 (paper). 978 2 271 13750 0

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Jacques Dalarun's indefatigable quest for the oldest account of the life of St Francis of Assisi made significant progress in his *Vers une Résolution de la question franciscaine: la légenda ombrienne de Thomas de Celano* (Paris 2007), a text assigned to the period when Elias of Cortona was the minister general (1232–9). About the same time he discovered a breviary in the Vatican Library (MS reg. lat. 1738), whose readings for the office of St Francis had been partially scraped, rendering them almost illegible. Dalarun reveals that on 15 September 2014 he received a message from Sean Field, who alerted him to the presence of a manuscript for sale on the website *Les Enluminures*. This text contained a life of St Francis, including at times the readings of the breviaries in the Vatican Library and the *Umbrian legend*. The importance of this text was underlined by Laura Light. Dalarun examined the contents of the manuscript and concluded that it contained a re-working of Thomas of Celano's *Vita prima sancti Francisci*. His findings were communicated to Isabelle Le Masne de Chermont, director of the Department of Manuscripts at the Bibliothèque nationale de France, and the decision to purchase the volume was taken by the president of the library, Bruno Racine. This precious manuscript is now MS 3245 in the Bibliothèque nationale.

The manuscript contains a copy of the *Vita brevior*. It is of small dimensions, measuring 120x82 mm. It was bound without a cover and it has 122 folios of low quality parchment, with some damaged folios. The manuscript was copied in the vicinity of Assisi in the early 1230s for the use of a friar, probably one assigned to the ministry of preaching, and it reflects the order's commitment to evangelical poverty. The recovery of this manuscript is one of the most important finds in the last century and it necessitates the reopening of the debate about the canon of Franciscan hagiography; the same applies to the critical edition of St Francis's writings. About 60 per cent of the *Vita brevior* consists of new materials. It is an abbreviation of the *Vita prima sancti Francisci* and it includes the author's letter of dedication to Brother Elias of Cortona as minister-general. The letter conveys the author's gratitude to Elias and confirms Thomas of Celano as the author, revealing that Elias was one of the sources of the *Vita prima sancti Francisci*. Thomas of Celano discloses that the *Vita prima sancti Francisci* had earned him some criticism on account of its length. The *Vita brevior* is, nevertheless, notably longer than many of the biographies of St Francis, such as the *Legenda trium sociorum*. For instance, it mentions the canonisation of St Anthony on 30 May 1232 (no. 25) and the death of John Parenti, the former minister general-*donec advixit* (no. 55). It was probably written before 1236, when Elias dispatched visitors to the provinces. Salimbene de Adam provides specific allegations against the divisive conduct of these officials, whose behaviour redounded to the discredit of the increasingly embattled minister general. The manner of these visitations led to calls for a general chapter to be summoned in Rome in 1239.

Dalarun got to work with his customary zeal, expertise and resolve. Without delay he prepared a critical edition of the text which was published in *Analecta Bollandiana* in 2015 and it was followed by a spate of translations such as his 'Thomas de Celano: La vie de notre bienheureux père François', *Études franciscaines* viii (2015). Further translations followed in the principal languages of Western Europe. The Bibliothèque nationale, the Institute of Research and the History and the History of Texts of the CNRS agreed to conduct a thorough examination of this manuscript from a codicological and scientific manner. The fruits of this investigation are published in *Le Manuscrit franciscain retrouvé*, a treasure-trove of information which sheds light on the manuscript carried by an Umbrian friar across the Alps. The preface, by Isabelle le Masne de Chermont, is followed by three sections. First, 'Où, Quand, Comment ? Les Coordonnées du Codex'; secondly, 'Quoi ? L'Écheveau des Textes' and thirdly, 'Qui, Pourquoi ? Un Témoin des Origines Franciscaines ?' The first section has three studies; the second has thirteen; and the third has five. These contributions are followed by a thorough examination of the diverse contents of *Le Manuscrit franciscain retrouvé* by a team of paleographers, codicologists, historians and scientists. The manuscript contains notes for a commentary on the Pauline epistles, sermons, a moral florilegium, a commentary on the *Pater noster*, notes and extracts, a sermon on the purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary and the book of Job. A sample of the stimulating studies is the analysis of the hands conducted by Denis Muzerelle, who detects twelve in the manuscript (pp. 49–53). Hand B contains the borrowings from Anthony of Padua. Hand D reproduces extracts from St Francis's *Regula bullata* and *Admonitions*. Hand H covers the *Vita brevior*. The witness to early Franciscan texts comes from Riccardo Saccenti's *Étudier la théologie à Paris les*

*notes du f.68v* who connects the text with the *Moralium dogma philosophorum* and Jean de la Rochelle's *Tractatus de divisione multiplici potentiarum animae*. Two authors, Amandine Postec and Carlo Delcorno, highlight the presence of borrowings from the writings of St Anthony of Padua. Folio 16, line 12 begins with a citation to *Beatus Antonius ordinis minorum fratrum*. Six extracts from his sermons have been identified between folios 16r and 17v. St Anthony's influence has been located on other folios. This manuscript is an early manifestation of the dissemination of St Anthony's writings from northern Italy and Umbria. This rich collection of studies will be warmly welcomed by Franciscan scholars and students of medieval hagiography. It is a pity that there is no index to the volume.

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*Marriage litigation in the Western Church, 1215–1517*. By Wolfgang P. Müller. Pp. viii + 270 incl. 3 figs, 3 tables and 1 map. Cambridge–New York: Cambridge University Press, 2021. £75. 978 1 108 84542 7

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Having read Charles Donahue Jr's extensive 672-page *magnum opus*, *Law, marriage, and society in the later Middle Ages: arguments about marriage in five courts* (Cambridge 2007), I was initially unsure why Wolfgang P. Müller's recent study on marriage litigation was necessary. What new would this relatively slight book (217 pages without appendices, bibliographies etc.) bring to the much-researched field?

My preliminary doubts were unjustified. Building on five decades of research, Müller's compact book provides the reader with a novel take on the marriage-related activities of Western medieval ecclesiastical jurisdictions.

Starting with the claim (p. vii) that medieval 'ecclesiastical judges resorted to the *ordo* [*iudiciarius* or the Romano-canonical process] only by way of exception' when dealing with the laity, Müller criticises current research for failing to include all jurisdictions and matrimonial cases in the analysis of litigation patterns. This omission he himself has remedied. He analyses all marriage-related ecclesiastical court cases, litigation proper, disciplinary or 'penitential' alike, regardless whether initiated by parties or by ecclesiastical officials based on rumours.

The book introduces three threads (pp. 3–9). According to Müller, certain German ecclesiastical courts heard annually even up to a hundred times more cases than some Italian or Aragonese ones. Moreover, he argues that the relative share of what he calls 'judicial' and 'penitential' marriage cases varied considerably. In Italy, the latter hardly existed, while they abounded north of the Alps. Variations of marriage customs constitute the third factor: Southern Europeans contracted marriage in front of notaries documenting the union, while the rest of Europe did not follow similar practices. The lack of 'certification' in Central Europe and the practice of deciding child support cases in church courts in the German lands contributed to different litigation patterns.

After the introduction, the book is divided into two parts. Müller has chosen to juxtapose Central Europe with Southern Europe, calling the former the 'North' *vis-à-vis* the 'South'. As the Nordic countries are often overlooked in medieval