

from Savonarolan Florence to the communities of the Modern Devotion—that contrast with the headier earlier reform, and the more individualistic piety that gave expression both to a further “deepening” of the faith and to a slow demise of the erstwhile supports of a unified Christian society.

Within this larger narrative, Madigan is also at pains to “synthesize the important new scholarly developments in the field of medieval Christianity in the four decades since the publication of Southern’s book” (xix)—an important aspect of the book’s value as a textbook. I note here Madigan’s take on two of those developments. One concerns the place of women: he draws on the extensive feminist-inspired work by scholars both to recover women as historical subjects, and to recognize their place throughout the narrative of medieval history (rather than only in a special chapter or addendum), devoting considerable space to women’s involvement in monastic and other religious movements and including several women (Perpetua of Carthage, Hildegard of Bingen, Clare of Assisi, and so on) among the illustrative biographical sketches that punctuate the book. The other development concerns so-called “popular religion”: Madigan acquaints the reader with the important scholarly discussion sparked by some French historians (for example, Jean Delumeau) who see western medieval Christianity as a religion of the elites in contrast to the “folkloristic,” essentially non-Christian, religion of the common people. Although Madigan clearly stands against such views, he takes popular religion seriously, emphasizing the importance of Christian symbol and ritual “professed assent” at all levels of medieval society (citing in particular the work of John van Engen) and takes care not to restrict his attention to elites.

All in all, Madigan presents a solid, nuanced, and enlightening narrative of medieval western European Christianity, which will well repay a serious reader’s diligence in encountering it.

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***The Formation of Christian Europe: The Carolingians, Baptism and the Imperium Christianum.*** By Owen M. Phelan. New York: Oxford University Press, 2014. viii + 312 pp. \$105.00 cloth.

In the present study under review, Owen M. Phelan argues that Charlemagne’s Christian empire (the *imperium christianum*), constituted a society “whose most basic organizing principle was the *sacramentum* of baptism” (10),

essentially a sacramental nexus incorporating religious, social, legal, and political relationships within a firm theological framework. Since Phelan uses the term *sacramentum* for baptism, he logically attempts to trace the nuances of the term employed by Roman classical writers, the writings of the Christian writers living during the Roman Empire as well as culling information from early medieval church fathers, who served as a bridge between the authors of Antiquity, and the Early Carolingian writers.

Phelan, utilizing Roman secular writers such as Varro, Cicero, Caesar, Tacitus, Livy, and Suetonius, describes how they used the term *sacramentum* in various ways to unify society theologically, socially, legally, culturally, and militarily. He particularly signals out Tacitus's use of *sacramentum* as a military oath, which Phelan sees as binding soldiers together in a community, sharing a common cause, setting boundaries for personal relationships (loyalty to a single commander in the republican period or to the emperor during period of the Roman Empire). Phelan then turns to early Christian writers such as Tertullian, Cyprian, and Augustine who inherited the ideas of *sacramentum* from classical authors, but enhanced the nuances of the term by contributing a theological element. Phelan notes that Tertullian, for instance, in his writing *Adversus Marcionem* (Against Marcion), categorizes "baptism and the eucharist as *sacramenta* because they were at a most fundamental level pacts made with God, signs of the total allegiance to God which ordered the entire Christian community" (18–19).

Phelan continues to see this important development in the writings of later Church fathers such as Gregory of Tours, Isidore of Seville, and the Venerable Bede. Thus, for example, Phelan points out that Isidore of Seville in his *Etymologies*, used the word *sacramentum* as an organizing principal for communal relationships binding together legal and civil components in a contextual framework, drawn from Roman secular and ecclesiastical sources. But Isidore, as Phelan correctly points out, was not unaware of the application of secular *sacramenta* to theological rites such as baptism. According to Phelan, "for Isidore, baptism's theological significance was grounded in a legal understanding of testimony" (27).

Phelan continues with a discussion of the early Carolingian reformers as they attempted to utilize the centralizing tendencies of the *sacramentum* of baptism and structure a vision of a unified *imperium christianum* by absorbing and redefining earlier ideas of *sacramenta*, integrating them within an all embracing theological context, centrally focused on the *sacramentum* of baptism. To support this, Phelan turns to Charlemagne's edicts and letters as well as church councils, particularly the synod of Frankfort held in 794 and the writings of Alcuin of York, who placed great emphasis on baptism in his letters and liturgical writings, particularly his treatise *promo paganus*.

Most interesting to this reviewer was Phelan's emphasis on Alcuin's *Liber de virtutibus et vitiis* (Book on Virtues and Vices), written about 800 and addressed to Count Wido of the Brittany March, which not only reflects Alcuin's blueprint for the theological centrality of the *imperium christianum*, but is also highly representative of Alcuin's attempt to model the *sacramentum* of baptism on previous social, political, and legal notions of *sacramenta*, yet embraced and redefined them, integrating them into a firm theological network. Phelan then proceeds to demonstrate how later Carolingian writers had internalized these Alcuinian ideas. He cites especially the *Liber manualis* (Manual of Spirituality) of the aristocratic laywoman Dhuoda, circa 843, and Bishop Jonas of Orleans's, *De institutione laicali* (Instructions for Laymen) circa 828. Phelan points out in their treatises the importance of baptism as a principle of organization for the *imperium christianum* as well as bringing social, legal, and political relationships under the aegis of theology.

Yet, Phelan insists that the idea of the societal, organizational potential of the *sacramentum* of baptism, textually transmitted not only through the aforementioned manuals, but also documents such as Charlemagne's encyclical letter of 811–812, sermons, and prayerbooks, “testifies to Carolingian interest in the *sacramentum* of baptism as theologically coherent, conceptually simple, consistently applied, publicly available and politically constitutive” (93).

Finally, Phelan, carefully analyzing Notker the Stammerer's *Gesta Karoli magni imperatoris* (Deeds of the Emperor Charlemagne), written during the reign of Charles the Fat (839–888), suggests that the coordinating potential of the *sacramentum* of baptism failed to save the empire from dissolution because both Carolingians and outsiders “failed to coordinate properly the complementary theological, political, and social dimensions of baptism” (265). However, Phelan ends on a positive note when he discusses the binding potential of baptism for the future Christian communities of the emerging countries of western Europe.

In examining Phelan's study, certain defects become apparent. The author fails to mention the close affinity between the Benedictine monastic oath and the Carolingian oath of baptism, while recent studies on Carolingian “*specula*” indicate the importance of monastic ideals as a model of unification for the Carolingian *imperium christianum*, an issue that deserves to be properly investigated in future scholarship. It should also be mentioned that a proper *sigla* is lacking from the book, and inconsistencies occur in primary source citations (see 236–237). The author also uses the outdated *Patrologia Latina* version of Jonas of Orleans's *De institutione laicali*, although Odile Dubreucq's recent critical edition in the series *Sources chrétiennes* has been available since 2012.

Despite some minor flaws, Owen Phelan has made an invaluable contribution to early Carolingian studies. He has convincingly argued the case for baptism as one of the most significant components in the proper

ordering of the *imperium christianum*, and has opened an invaluable window into the minds of Early Carolingian reformers as they attempted to develop a theological and eschatological blueprint for the Early Carolingian empire of Charlemagne and his successors.

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***Partners in Spirit: Women, Men, and Religious Life in Germany, 1100–1500.*** Edited by **Fiona J. Griffiths and Julie Hotchin.**

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The twelve essays and afterword included in Fiona J. Griffiths and Julie Hotchin's *Partners in Spirit: Women, Men, and Religious Life in Germany, 1100–1500*, offer a fresh, welcome perspective on ways in which "ordinary" women and men (as opposed, for instance, to saints and mystics) interacted, cooperated, and collaborated in religious life. The essays persuasively demonstrate the diversity, as well as the nuanced nature, of relations between religious men and women. The contributors break new ground by focusing generally on what Griffiths and Hotchin describe as "routine sources" and "monastic documents of practice" (4). The authors' attention to the quotidian rather than the extraordinary sets this collection apart from much contemporary scholarship on medieval religion. The essays attend to a range of female religious institutions, addressing varying modes of pastoral care of women religious as options for types of religious life increased through the period under consideration; in addition to monastic communities of different orders, contributors consider informal religious communities and semi-religious forms of communal life. Countering the prevailing narrative that conditions of religious life for women tended to decline in periods of church reform, these essays provide many instances of productive interactions of women religious and clerics in such periods. The contributions also complicate the typical reading of power dynamics in relationships between religious men and women as being oriented primarily toward constraining or oppressing women. Here too the picture the essays provide is one that involves constructive interactions and companionship in addition to some forms of control.

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