

Jochen Johrendt, Der Investiturstreit, Darmstadt (Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft) 2018, 168 S., 6 s/w Abb. (Geschichte kompakt), ISBN 978-3-534-15577-4, EUR 19,95.

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Since Augustin Fliche's three-volume magnum opus, »La Réforme grégorienne« (Louvain, Paris, 1924–1937), historians have been pondering just what to call a remarkable reform era in 11th-century Europe. Johrendt (Bergische Universität Wuppertal), though recognizing that even German scholars have questioned their traditional appellation as too narrow in scope, still chose to stay with *Investiturstreit* because of its familiarity¹. Such a title is also in keeping with this volume's series, »Geschichte kompakt«, which provides handbooks designed for students in university courses. »Geschichte kompakt« has published volumes on traditional topics in medieval political history, though recently adding a growing list of social, economic, and cultural history handbooks². The series' editors expect its authors to accomplish the daunting task of providing both a narrative as well as an analytical history of a topic along with a basic bibliography and »Auf einen Blick« comprehension questions at the close of each

¹ He mentions his Doktorvater Rudolf Schieffer's use of the term »der sogenannte Investiturstreit«, in Schieffer's Habilitationsschrift: Rudolf Schieffer, *Die Entstehung des päpstlichen Investiturstreits für den deutschen König*, Stuttgart 1981 (Schriften der Monumenta Germaniae Historica, 28); but he could have also cited fellow Schieffer student Claudia Zey's article »Der sogenannte Investiturstreit«, in: Stefan Weinfurher (ed.), *Macht und Ordnungsvorstellungen im hohen Mittelalter. Werkstattbericht*, Neuried 1998, p. 8–105. Zey herself returned to traditional form, however, in her own recent textbook: [Claudia Zey, *Der Investiturstreit*, Munich 2017 \(C. H. Beck Wissen, 2852\)](#). Schieffer most recently adjusted his terminology in: [Rudolf Schieffer, *Papst Gregor VII. Kirchenreform und Investiturstreit*, Munich 2010 \(Beck'sche Reihe, 1492\)](#). Gerd Tellenbach's classic work *Libertas. Kirche und Weltordnung im Zeitalter des Investiturstreits*, Stuttgart 1936 (Forschungen zur Kirchen- und Geistesgeschichte, 7) was translated into English by R. F. Bennett as *Church, State and Christian Society at the Time of the Investiture Contest*, Oxford 1940 (Studies in Mediaeval History, 3); reprint 1948; reprint Toronto 1991 (The Medieval Academy Reprints for Teaching, 27).

² Series medieval titles are: *Merowinger und Karolinger; Karl der Große; Ottonen und Salier; Interregnum; Papsttum und Kaisertum im Mittelalter; Die deutschen Könige im Mittelalter; Wahl und Krönung; Investiturstreit; Die Kreuzzüge; Das Heilige Römische Reich im Spätmittelalter; Das Byzantinische Reich; Die mittelalterliche Stadt; Europäische Wirtschaftsgeschichte. Vom Mittelalter bis heute; Die mittelalterliche Hanse; Klöster und Orden im Mittelalter; Ketzerei und Inquisition im Mittelalter; Krankheit und Heilkunde im Mittelalter; Frauen und Männer in der Gesellschaft des Mittelalters.*



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chapter – all combined within about only 130–160 pages. Johrendt understandably approached his demanding assignment based on his own scholarly research on the reformed papacy.

Given this production context, it also follows suit that he opted for an updated Tellenbach thesis as the framing thesis of the handbook. Since lay investiture is too narrow a concept for the totality of the reform movement under study, Tellenbach's vision of an ideological »Ringem um die rechte Ordnung der Welt« between *regnum* and *sacerdotium* provides the core understanding of the whole reform movement itself. The Investiture Contest was thus the most profound outcome of the reform movement but not its source nor even its essence. Wisely avoiding the older historiographical language of a *Reichskirchensystem*³, Johrendt locates the issue of lay investiture not merely in the hands of German monarchs and their bishops, but also more broadly in the realities created by centuries of collaboration between clergy and aristocratic lay patrons of missionary outreach, church/monastery building, and church/monastery endowment. In sum, the landlord of church property in the German kingdom was quite often the noble family which had donated land for such pious purposes. Indeed, even the German episcopate itself endowed *Eigenkirchen* as in the case of the suffrage bishoprics of the Salzburg archbishop. The socio-economic impact of unravelling lay and ecclesiastical assets, ultimately demanded by the reform papacy, would inevitably prove as painful and disruptive as a realignment of relations between *regnum* and *sacerdotium*.

Indeed, temporal princes did not dispute but rather actively supported the drive for a clergy purified from the sin of sexual incontinence and the heresies of simony and nicolaitism, as the role of Cluny abbey makes clear⁴. But once the moral reform of the clergy merged with an increasingly independent-minded papal reform movement, the result was a radical new vision of the church as purified from its traditional collegial-episcopal organization in favor of a hierarchical papal church. Thus, the Investiture Contest emerged as the inevitable consequence of an activist papacy and episcopacy in need of moral reform necessitated by imperial patronage of the church. As Johrendt concludes, »Der Investiturstreit erweist sich somit als eine Verknüpfung zahlreicher Konflikte«, (p. 11). And when these charged threads of conflict suddenly tightened into the knot of lay investiture, more profoundly in the German Empire than anywhere else in Christendom, »the world convulsed« according to Gregorian partisan Bonizo of Sutri.

³ Such a notion was first challenged by Timothy Reuter, The »imperial church system« of the Ottonian and Salian rulers. A reconsideration, in: *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 22 (1982), p. 347–374, which was subsequently accepted by Rudolf Schieffer, *Der geschichtliche Ort der ottonisch-salischen Reichskirchenpolitik*, Opladen, Wiesbaden 1998 (Vorträge der Nordrhein-Westfälischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, G 352).

⁴ See also H. E. J. Cowdrey, *The Cluniacs and the Gregorian Reform*, Oxford 1970.



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Johrendt does a worthy job in his opening two chapters of providing a larger historical context for all this convulsing. Brief overviews of socio-economic and demographic change along with even briefer landscaping of religious structures and communities across Europe (including Jews and Muslims) set the scene. Yet surprisingly absent here is any discussion of either early medieval sacral kingship or a papacy previously buffeted by and often subjected to both external powers (Byzantine, Lombard, Carolingian, Saracen, and Norman, and Ottonian rulers) and internal battles among Roman aristocratic dynasties. Instead, the reform papacy simply emerges from a lengthy *saeculum obscurum* in which popes ruled merely as local secular potentates (*Adelspapsttum*). Students deserve a fuller context for the 10th–11th centuries of reform controversies⁵.

The following three chapters trace in succinct detail the course of the Investiture Contest itself. The reforming popes Nicholas II, Leo IX, and Gregory VII foreground the papacy's evolving agenda, with a specific focus on its challenges to imperial prerogatives in Rome. It jars a bit therefore, when the next chapter begins with a retrospective look at Henry III's own papal reforms in Rome via the Synod of Sutri followed by the anxious minority of Henry IV which enabled the reform papacy to redefine its relationship with the German emperors. Indeed, the decision to segregate material on the reform papacy into a separate chapter from that of Henry III's imperial reform efforts and his son's minority does generate an artificial bifurcation of *sacerdotium* and *regnum*.

The third chapter then enjoins the contest between Henry IV and Gregory VII specifically over imperial investiture of bishops, with Canossa serving as a pivotal though not determinative crescendo. The wandering search for an acceptable compromise during Henry V's equally troubled majority then concludes the chapter with the Concordat of Worms in 1122.

As if to temper Tellenbach's thesis which blames the reform papacy for disruption of the German kingdom, and to acknowledge the cultural meaning of the Investiture Contest in modern Germany, Johrendt includes a two-page historiographical admonition to readers that they not view this 11th-century conflict through the 19th-century lens of the *Kulturkampf* and Bismarck's politicization of history in his (in)famous declaration that there would never be a second Canossa. In addition, the topic of reform is broadened by the welcome inclusion of parallel clerical reform partnerships and then investiture conflicts in England, France, and Norman Italy⁶.

Unfortunately, however, these brief comparative histories are served up as alternatives that do not inform an understanding

⁵ For this see: Uta-Renate Blumenthal, *Der Investiturstreit*, Stuttgart 1982 (Urban-Taschenbücher, 335); translated into English, as *The Investiture Controversy. Church and Monarchy from the Ninth to the Twelfth Century*, Philadelphia, PA 1988 (Middle Ages Series).

⁶ See also H. E. J. Cowdrey, *The Age of Abbot Desiderius. Montecassino, the Papacy, and the Normans in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries*, Oxford 1983.



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of the German kingdom's investiture conflict. This approach is peculiar, since Ivo of Chartres' proposed compromise solution succeeded in England and France and proved influential in the Concordat of Worms as well. Since Tellenbach in his later years broadened his own analysis of church reform and Investiture Conflict from a papal-imperial into a European-wide perspective, it would be a positive to see contemporary German historiography (and thereby university teaching) broaden its study of reforms over clerical celibacy, simony, nicolaitism, and lay investiture in this comparative manner⁷.

The volume is at its analytical best in the final chapter (»Ergebnisse und Folgen des Investiturstreits«). While mostly offering a Tellenbach-infused presentation of the conflict's legacy as intellectual history, due attention is also given here to the following additional legacies: the growth of canon law as a method of argumentation eventually generating Gratian's »Decretum«; the strengthening of political traditions of consensual decision-making and electoral kingship in the German kingdom (without the »feudalization of the imperial church« as once asserted in older scholarship); the rise of anti-popes and schism in the Latin church with double elections of popes as well as emperors; and the reform papacy's leadership role in the Great Schism with the Eastern Orthodox Church as well as in the launching of the crusading movement. Here readers will find a very useful historiographical integration of the Investiture Contest with the larger themes of European history during the Central Middle Ages. The volume then ends quite abruptly with no concluding comment, which leaves the reader on the doorstep of the First Crusade.

There are a few analytical insights that would also have broadened the volume's vision beyond the Tellenbach thesis. The several »Studi Gregoriani« occasional series volumes have made it quite clear that the reform era which generated the Investiture Contest was not merely an ideological conflict among society's elites but was also a response to a popular desire for reform emanating from below. Furthermore, Gregory VII has become increasingly understood as a continuator of Leo IX's reforms rather than an innovator (beyond the force of his own uncompromising and serenely confident personality).

Finally, a substantial case study or two – taken from Liège, Worms, Cologne, Augsburg, or Ravenna for example – would have added to the reader's understanding of the Investiture Contest at the diocesan level. The bishops above all were at the very nexus between temporal and spiritual power, and they deserve as much attention as the ideological arguments made about them. Indeed, it was they who had to literally embody whatever compromise was

⁷ Gerd Tellenbach, *Die westliche Kirche vom 10. bis zum frühen 12. Jahrhundert*, Göttingen 1988 (*Die Kirche in ihrer Geschichte*, 2); translated into English by Timothy Reuter, as *The Church in Western Europe from the Tenth to the Early Twelfth Century*, Cambridge, New York, NY 1993 (*Cambridge Medieval Textbooks*).



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reached to end the conflict⁸. In this context it is an oversight worth mentioning that Robert Benson's standard work, »The Bishop-Elect: A Study in Medieval Ecclesiastical Office« (Princeton 1968) remains neglected here⁹.

Given their different emphases, professors should consider coupling this volume with the other recent handbook on the Investiture Contest by Claudia Zey (see footnote 1), which Johrendt includes in his bibliography. And since this slim volume is logically more historiographical than historical in terms of access to primary sources, professors should also consider adding the collections by Maureen C. Miller¹⁰ and Ian Stuart Robinson¹¹.

⁸ As just one example: Ursula Lewald, Köln im Investiturstreit, in: Josef Fleckenstein (ed.), Investiturstreit und Reichsverfassung, Sigmaringen 1973 (Vorträge und Forschungen, 17), p. 373–393.

⁹ English-language canon law scholarship that should be in any essential bibliography for the Investiture Contest includes the collected articles of Uta-Renate Blumenthal in: Papal Reform and Canon Law in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries, Brookfield, Vermont 1998 (Variorum Collected Studies Series, 618); and Kathleen G. Cushing, Papacy and Law in the Gregorian Revolution. The Canonistic Work of Anselm of Lucca, Oxford 1998.

¹⁰ Maureen C. Miller (ed.), Power and the Holy in the Age of the Investiture Conflict. A Brief History with Documents, Boston, New York, NY 2005.

¹¹ Ian Stuart Robinson, Authority and Resistance in the Investiture Contest. The Polemical Literature of the Late Eleventh Century, Manchester 1978.



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