

**Olivier Delouis, Maria Mossakowska-Gaubert, Annick Peters-Custot (dir.), Les mobilités monastiques en Orient et en Occident de l'Antiquité tardive au Moyen Âge (IV<sup>e</sup>–XV<sup>e</sup> siècle), Rome (École française de Rome) 2019, 580 p., nombr. ill., cartes, plans, facsim. (Collection de l'École française de Rome, 558), ISBN 978-2-7283-1388-4, EUR 49,00.**

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This volume is the result of two conferences held in Rome and Vienne (France) in 2014 and 2016, respectively. It is also the third volume of a research program concerning the daily life of monks and nuns in the East and West, from the 4<sup>th</sup> century onward<sup>1</sup>. There are slight differences between the first two and the third: most importantly, while the former stopped around the 10<sup>th</sup> century, the latter extends to the fifteenth, and Annick Peters-Custot joined Olivier Delouis and Maria Mossakowska-Gaubert as co-editor. Like the preceding volumes, one of its greatest accomplishments is the bringing together of archaeologists and historians to discuss one topic in relation to both Eastern and Western monasticism (see especially the significant points made in the conclusion written by the three co-editors, p. 553–557), with more attention devoted this time to the West, especially Italy and the later Middle Ages. The articles (written in French, Italian, English, and German with summaries in two languages, always including English) are of an overall high caliber, with varying lengths; some are even small treatises on a given issue, such as the article by Claire Fauchon-Claudon on the monastic gate-keeper and the circulation of monks in the 5<sup>th</sup>- and 6<sup>th</sup>-century East (Egypt excluded).

The topic of this volume is monastic mobility. The goal was not to look at the movement of monks from a normative point of view, as something forbidden and combatted, as was too often done in the past, but rather as a very common phenomenon, »presque banal« (introduction by Delouis, Mossakowska-Gaubert and Peters-Custot, p. 2). Normative sources are still considered by some authors but in relation to other primary sources, as done for example by Florence Jullien, on the survival of the miaphysites in 6<sup>th</sup>- and 7<sup>th</sup>-century Syria, and Élisabeth Lusset, on the runaway religious visiting the Curia to obtain pardon in the 15<sup>th</sup> and early 16<sup>th</sup> century.

<sup>1</sup> Olivier Delouis, Maria Mossakowska-Gaubert (éd.), *La vie quotidienne des moines en Orient et en Occident (IV<sup>e</sup>–X<sup>e</sup> siècle). Vol. I. L'état des sources*, Le Caire, Athènes 2015 (Bibliothèque d'étude, 163); id. (éd.), *La vie quotidienne des moines en Orient et en Occident IV<sup>e</sup>–X<sup>e</sup> siècle. Vol. 2. Questions transversales*, Le Caire, Athènes 2019 (Bibliothèque d'étude, 170).



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Monasticism was born and developed through movement as was well illustrated by Daniel Caner's famous »Wandering, Begging Monks«<sup>2</sup>. It would be a mistake to imagine that this movement stopped with the increasing monastic regulations of the 6<sup>th</sup> century both in the East and in the West. Even though the focus of the two conferences had been precisely the exploration of the apparent paradox between the expected monastic *stabilitas loci* and the reality of monks' mobility (conclusion, p. 353), the three co-editors explain in their introduction that monastic mobility should not be considered a »paradox« (p. 4). Rather, any monk's travel can be seen either negatively or positively, a *vagatio* or a *peregrinatio* (introduction, p. 7). The history of the eastern and western fluctuation in how monastic travel was viewed and the study of the wide variety of causes for and modes of travel, as well as destinations, makes this volume a great read.

Movement is interpreted in a broad sense, being taken to include the exchange of letters (Alain Delattre on the epistolary dossier of the monk Frange in Egypt in the early 8<sup>th</sup> century) and of texts (Jean-Baptiste Renault on the circulation of monks and texts between St Victor of Marseille and its dependencies in the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> centuries), or the under-studied translations of Latin *vitae* to Greek (Anna Lampadaridi). It would have been useful, however, to see more discussions between the authors to highlight better recurrent themes, such as the correlation between an increase in monks' travel for valid reasons and the multiplication of regulations to limit monastic mobility. This can be observed especially in the West by the later Middle Ages with monks going to university or moving between the houses of their order.

It is also striking how little space is devoted to female monasticism; the two exceptions in twenty-three articles are the discussions by Katerina Nikolaou of »Women's journeys in the middle of the Byzantine era« and Francesco Panarelli's complex discussion of the reconfiguration of the penitent nuns of Accon after their migration to Southern Italy. Moreover, servants and lay brothers are rarely mentioned even though one cannot help but wonder if they were the ones in motion rather than the monks, for example in the transhumance in the Pyrenees between the 5<sup>th</sup> and the 9<sup>th</sup> centuries (Jordina Sales-Carbonnell and Martha Sancho i Planas) or the maneuvering of boats to and from the arid but holy island of Patmos from the 11<sup>th</sup> to the 13<sup>th</sup> century (Maria Gerolymatou, but see p. 227–228).

The book is structured around five main themes: mobility linked with monastic institutions, material contingencies, devotions, cultural networks, and territories. This said, some articles could have been placed in another category, so it is important to read the summaries at the end of the volume if you are interested in a



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<sup>2</sup> Daniel Caner, *Wandering, Begging Monks. Spiritual Authority and the Promotion of Monasticism in Late Antiquity*, Berkeley, CA 2002 (The Transformation of the Classical Heritage).

specific theme. The first section discusses monastic motion from an institutional point of view, such as the gathering of thousands of monks (and nuns?) in Egypt in the 4<sup>th</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> century (Mossakowska-Gaubert), abbots visiting other communities, often ones over which they exercised or wanted to exercise some power in 11<sup>th</sup>- to 13<sup>th</sup>-century Europe (Guido Cariboni), the ethnic identity of the monks from the Imperial Abbey of Farfa up to the 1500s (Andreas Rehberg), and the quite early institutionalization of monks' movement within the Vallombrosian family (Francesco Salvestrini).

The second section, which concerns more specifically the *realia* of monastic mobility, features archaeologists as well as historians specializing in the institutional and economic aspects of medieval monasticism. Mariarosaria Salerno discusses, for instance, the movements of abbots and monks of Southern Italy in order to manage the estates and commercial interests of their abbeys in the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries, touching also on transhumance.

The third and fourth sections discuss mobility in relation to devotion and cultural networks. It includes, for example, the (occasionally tongue-in-cheek) discussion of the movements of stylites in the Christian East, especially in the Vita of Symeon Stylites the Younger (Georgia Frank). These two sections contain as well the expected topics of the Irish *peregrini*, the pilgrim monks, and the monks in search of education, but they are explored from less common perspectives than the ones we are used to in monastic history: the foundations of various monasteries by Irish monks in 11<sup>th</sup>- to 13<sup>th</sup>-century Germany and Austria (Diarmuid Ó Riain); the different destinations in the Holy Land privileged by eastern monastic versus western/eastern lay pilgrims in the 8<sup>th</sup> to the 11<sup>th</sup> century (Max Ritter); the monks sent to other monastic communities for educational purposes in the broad sense of the term (including moral renewal) in 11<sup>th</sup>- and 12<sup>th</sup>-century Europe, especially in France (Micol Long); and the movement of Umiliati to universities in the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> centuries (Pietro Silanos).

The fifth and last section is entitled »Mobility and Territories«. Particularly interesting is the discussion of monks who served as bridges between two distinct cultures through their travels, linking Monte Cassino to St Catherine's monastery on Mount Sinai around 1000 (Ariana D'Ottone-Rambach) or both sides of the Pyrenees from the 9<sup>th</sup> through the 12<sup>th</sup> century (Florian Gallon).

The perspective adopted by the authors is not exclusively monastic, and the roles played by bishops and secular leaders in the control of monks' mobility are also often discussed, for instance in Delouis and Peters-Custot's study of the pilgrimage to Rome by Byzantine monks from Greece and Southern Italy between the 8<sup>th</sup> and the 11<sup>th</sup> centuries (see especially p. 311–316). For scholars, this rich volume will be key in contextualizing the unceasing and ever-changing mobility of monks.



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