

**Sean Field, Marco Guida, Dominique Poirel (dir.), L'épaisseur du temps. Mélanges offerts à Jacques Dalarun, Turnhout (Brepols) 2021, 725 p., 3 ill. en coul., ISBN 978-2-503-59592-4, EUR 125,00.**

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**Constant J. Mews, Victoria**

At over 700 pages, this volume richly demonstrates the wide-ranging impact of Jacques Dalarun on the study of medieval religious culture, in particular relating to those charismatic individuals who shaped the Franciscan Order. As befits a scholar famous for uncovering hitherto lost or previously unidentified texts, many of the contributions to this volume follow in his footsteps. They all show how philological expertise can so often interact profoundly with historical analysis. The three editors are to be congratulated for bringing together a distinguished range of Anglophone, Francophone and Italian scholars, all of whom have interacted in one way or another with Dalarun's work. A review like this can do no more than signal the wide range of interests covered in the volume. While the late François Dolbeau offers an exemplary study and edition of a previously unknown sermon of St. Augustine on the Feast of the Assumption, many other studies relate to religious life in the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries, although a number deal with the later medieval and early modern periods. All demonstrate a consistent theme of Dalarun's research, that manuscripts, whatever their age, can often tell a story that connects people and places across time.

A common theme in many of these papers relates to the capacity of hagiographic writing to articulate depth of feeling about the great mysteries of life as well as frustration with the strictures of religious convention. Thus, Armelle Le Huërou and Jean-Yves Tilliette give close attention to what Baudri of Bourgueil has to say about despair and penitence, while Pascale Bourgain offers something of her (remarkable) attempt to translate Abelard's great hymnal for the Paraclete. As one might expect from a volume in Dalarun's honour, there is a concentration of papers on Franciscan tradition. Felice Accrocca reflects on the dilemmas faced by St. Francis in governing the Order. François Bougard writes about the long history of the theme of an ordeal by fire, picked up by Bonaventure in relation to the saint's visit to Egypt. Luciano Bertazzo explores connections of St. Anthony of Padua to France, a paper nicely complemented by an offering of Antonio Rigon on the *Vita prima* of that saint. Marco Guida, one of the editors of the volume, writes about two important witnesses to the canonization proceedings of Clare of Assisi. There are two related papers about children in this period, by Alfonso Marini speaking about Caesarius of Heisterbach and Marco Bartoli on Salimbene's account of children inspired by the Holy Spirit. In a similar vein are papers by Fortunato Iozzelli on reflections by Peter John Olivi, and Alvaro Cacciotti. The offering by Bill Jordan is more strictly historical



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in character, dealing with issues of Muslim converts to Christianity on which he has written in his recent monograph, »The Apple of his Eye«.

There are also many papers relating the legacy of Franciscan spirituality in the 14<sup>th</sup> century and its relationship to society. Thus, Elisabeth Lalou reflects on old age in the royal court around 1300, while Michael Cusato explains the hostility generated within the Franciscan movement by the building of the Basilica at Assisi, showing how it regenerated reflections on Holy Poverty, originally developed in the 1230s. Arnold of Villanova is another such witness to Franciscan values, as Robert Lerner describes. Their impact on both Dante and Petrarch are shown in papers by Carlo Ossola and Étienne Anheim respectively. In this section, we are also introduced to a range of other texts, some by known figures, like Bartholomew of Pisa (by William Short and Mary Beth Ingham), others who are more obscure in their provenance. Thus, Valerio Cappelletto writes about mysterious dream inspired reflection on prophetic texts, Carlo Delcorno about a sermon of Angelo da Porta Sole, a Dominican of Perugia, and Annie Dufour and Anne-Françoise Leurquin-Labie about Philippe de Chantemilan, a 15<sup>th</sup>-century lay-woman from the Bourbonnais.

A particularly rich study co-authored by François Delmas-Goyon, Antonio Montefusco and Sylvain Piron, documents the fascinating survival into the 14<sup>th</sup> century of the memories of brother Leon in the so-called »Little MS«, now in the Bodleian Library. There are also papers by Lino Leonardi on a Bolognese Life of St. Petronius, Patrick Boucheron on Alberti (about whether beauty can save the world), and Donatella Frioli on the torments of Simon of Trento (reputedly murdered by Jews). Two papers in this section are more historical in character, Cécile Caby on the process of electing superiors within religious orders and Anne-Marie Eddé on Franciscans and Mamelukes in Jerusalem in the late 15<sup>th</sup> century.

A number of papers in the final section offer expositions of little-known texts. Thus, Sean Field writes about memories of Isabelle of France in the later 16<sup>th</sup> century, Timothy Johnson about a catechism for indigenous peoples in 16<sup>th</sup>-century Mexico, Sanjay Subrahmanyam about a French traveler in 17<sup>th</sup>-century India, Luigi Pellegrini on Franciscan manuscripts at the library of St. Bonaventure (where Dalarun was a frequent visitor). There are also impressive essays by Robert Godding about how the early Bollandists created the genre of the hagiographic dossier, and in a different vein by Dominique Poirel about what text editors frequently call »contamination«, when a manuscript is influenced by more than one witness. Poirel argues in the same vein as Dalarun and others in this volume, that texts deserve to be respected for the story they tell rather than assessed as falling away from some ideal purity. A brilliant contribution from Louis Holtz in Latin, »De hodierno statu latinae linguae«, defends the continuing importance of Latin. An epilogue by Martine Pagan provides the transcript of a conversation with Dalarun about a

Mittelalter – Moyen Âge (500–1500)

DOI:  
[10.11588/frrec.2022.4.92101](https://doi.org/10.11588/frrec.2022.4.92101)

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novel that he has written, perhaps unknown to many medievalists:  
»Mon plus lointain souvenir est un rêve« (2019).

This is a richly documented volume, that draws on a wide range of manuscripts from across the centuries. The editors are to be congratulated for producing a thick book that not only befits the figure in whose honour it has been assembled, but provides a rich mine of texts deserving further exploration.

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