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Relics, Apocalypse, and the Deceits of History: Ademar of Chabannes, 989- 1034 by Richard Landes

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ing, and even the symposion get scant mention. On metrics, consider Anderson's statement (p. 97) that "Pindar's metrics . . . have now been perceived," citing a "recent" 1963 study (by non-metricians). This remark would stagger the combatants in this minefield (see, for example, R. Pretagostini's "La metrica greca e la metrica di M. L. West" [1986]). Mastering so many disciplines clearly poses a challenge.

The second main issue raised by this study is its focus, which may reflect a traditional prejudice against the fourth and later centuries. Evidence for music and musicians is here the richest. The great age of the musical star and of musical theater begins; citizens cease learning to play instruments; music triumphs over text. All this remains to be explored.

In terms of presentation, the intended audience is unclear, as many elementary points are explained alongside highly technical materials, and Anderson often fails to cite references. "The *Iliad*'s poet mentions no professional singers, although recent scholarship has rightly noted traces of their presence" (p. 24). Who? Where? The least attractive feature of this book is its frequent sniping at other scholars for minor errors, which seems unworthy of one of Anderson's authority. But despite these questions and issues, Anderson's volume is the work of a master in the field of ancient musicology.

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MEDIEVAL

RICHARD GAMESON. *The Role of Art in the Late Anglo-Saxon Church*. (Oxford Historical Monographs.) New York: Oxford University Press. 1995. Pp. xiii, 312. \$65.00.

The ambitious purpose of Richard Gameson's book is to explore the role of the visual arts in the English church from *ca.* 870 to *ca.* 1100. He does this by presenting a series of detailed studies that deal primarily with manuscripts.

The first two chapters tackle text-image relationships including physical correlations between text and image, modes and effect of illustration, and the use of inscriptions. Chapter three discusses how the shape or nature of the object being created determined the precise forms of the adorning art. In chapter four, which looks at the repetition of motifs, the persistent use of foliate motifs is explained by the human desire to employ fashionable decorative forms. Repeated imagery is interpreted as guaranteeing the authenticity of a visualization, while differing the presentations of the same subject highlighted multiple, layered meanings. These basic ideas, familiar to art historical studies, are often overlooked in broader discussions of the function of images, and it is welcome to see them stated here.

Chapter five deals with pictorial narrative, indicating that Anglo-Saxon artists often had to encapsulate both

the essence of the narrative and its significance in a single image and that most pictorial narratives were meant to accompany texts or inscriptions, presupposing a literate guide. Chapter six considers the techniques of Anglo-Saxon pictorial composition. Gameson concludes that the figure contained the iconographical essence; settings remained relatively unimportant; and the preference for two-dimensionality lent figural art a transcendental quality, conveying timeless significance.

Chapter seven concentrates on non-figural manuscript ornament. While acknowledging the structural necessity of frames and initials, Gameson stresses their purely decorative role as a lavish rendering of glory to God and as something pleasing to the human eye. The final chapter attempts to place the study of late Anglo-Saxon art in the broader context of the historical environment. It briefly discusses the relationships between the English religious and lay worlds, then concludes with a few observations about the relationship between man and the divine. Included are an extensive bibliography and separate indexes of art objects, manuscripts, and people and places. These allow the reader to employ this as a reference book.

Gameson's book is a stated attempt to dispel the view that art history is not history. Its consequent appearance in a history series is perhaps the reason for what this reviewer, an art historian, sees as the book's shortcoming: the points might have been better made with less text and more visual support. The rather archaeological bent of much of the discussion tends to obscure the observations under a welter of detail, while the lack of adequate illustrations (thirty-two are far too few) leaves the general reader unable to determine the validity of much of the argument. Ultimately, the presentation does little to capture the beauty of Anglo-Saxon art, thereby negating one of the very principles of Gameson's approach.

But these reservations should not be seen as a negation of this very valuable book. The author exhibits a thorough familiarity with Anglo-Saxon manuscripts, basing his observations on a daunting number of references. The years of labor and looking that went into its creation are obvious, and it is impressive both for its syntheses and originality. Gameson provides a study that any scholar already familiar with Anglo-Saxon culture will find well worth the effort of reading.

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RICHARD LANDES. *Relics, Apocalypse, and the Deceits of History: Ademar of Chabannes, 989-1034*. (Harvard Historical Studies, number 117.) Cambridge: Harvard University Press. 1995. Pp. xii, 404. \$55.00.

Richard Landes's impressive new book may well be the best in a spate of recent studies forcing reassessment of the central Middle Ages. Politically unstable and violent, the period witnessed increasing interest in

relic cults, heterodox religious movements, popular religious enthusiasm, and, Landes argues, heightened apocalyptic expectations centered around the year 1000. Landes's emphasis on the hopes and fears of the "millennial generation" challenges a substantial portion of modern scholarship debunking the notion of the "terrors of the year 1000." The turbulent life of the monk, Ademar of Chabannes, provides Landes with the key to deciphering apocalyptic responses to the period's turmoil. Ademar, best known for his *Historia*, an important source for the period albeit with a complex textual tradition, was also a prolific and diligent copyist of his own works and the works of others. His handwriting survives on more than one thousand folios distributed among some two dozen codexes. Ademar often revisited his *Historia* and copy work, adding and changing details. In the 1920s, Louis Saltet demonstrated, in a series of articles whose insights were ignored until Landes deftly mined and contextualized them, that much of Ademar's literary legacy amounted to a monumental—and highly successful—effort to rewrite history.

Landes's Ademar was driven to deception by the disappointments and reversals of his own life. When he failed to become abbot of his monastery in Angoulême, he used his talents to help the monks of Saint-Martial in Limoges boost the claim that Martial was one of Christ's original apostles. Ademar's moment of glory as impresario of Martial's cult evaporated on August 3, 1029, when Ademar's liturgical and hagiographical innovation was publicly unmasked as a fraud. Landes suggests that, stung by humiliation and unbearable disgrace, Ademar withdrew from the company of men and drew closer to his God and his beloved St. Martial. He also turned to mythomania, the solitary task of retouching the history of his times and of falsifying the history of the debacle surrounding the apostolicity of Martial. Before abandoning Aquitaine for Jerusalem, where he died in 1034, Ademar gave his books to the monks at Limoges. A generation later, the books and the myths Ademar deftly wove into them became the stuff of history; until the twentieth century, Ademar enjoyed the last laugh over his tormentors.

Ademar's legacy is not worthless. Read by Landes with skill and sensitivity, even its deceptions yield nuggets of information. One find underscores the degree of apocalyptic fervor that punctuated Ademar's world. As the end time drew nearer the desire in some quarters to have a saint—Martial—who was on intimate terms with Christ became acute. For others, a liturgy embracing a false apostle—again, Martial—would only anger Christ and therefore had to be denounced. Although Ademar clung tenaciously to the apostolicity of Martial and falsified history to provide support for the fiction, he remained an Augustinian when it came to the Apocalypse. His repeated anti-apocalyptic challenges to expectations of an imminent end indirectly provide evidence of widespread expectations clustered around the millennium.

By embedding Ademar's fictions in the social, political, and religious history of the Aquitanian monk's time, Landes has embedded detailed paleographical and complex literary analysis in what he acknowledges may strike the reader as "excessive conjecture" (p. 21). But no one since the eleventh century, it seems fair to say, knows Ademar better. If, in his attempt "to connect the dots" (p. 20), Landes appears sometimes to go astray (as when he asserts Ademar's madness, his ambition to become abbot and subsequent destructive disappointment, his all-too-twentieth-century notion of the historian's craft, and his unease at covering up a poisoning apparently perpetrated by his patron's wife), the reader should nevertheless follow along. The dots do connect and in the end limn a sophisticated and fascinating portrait of Ademar and his haunted millennial generation.

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BARBARA ABOU-EL-HAJ. *The Medieval Cult of Saints: Formations and Transformations*. New York: Cambridge University Press. 1994. Pp. xviii, 456. \$90.00.

Barbara Abou-El-Haj examines pictorial hagiographies as historical commentaries that reflect contemporary disputes. These drawings were designed to be "read" as ideological strategies in local controversies, e.g., consolidating disputes between monasteries and their seignorial patrons. El-Haj focus on the eleventh and twelfth centuries, since this period ushers in the construction of major pilgrimage centers and the attendant art and architecture of that movement. These pictorial hagiographies illustrate the rapid expansion of cult centers and cult renewal.

Her book is divided into three parts. Parts one and two, the argument and the historical narrative, contain 134 pages, while part three, the bulk of the book's 456 pages, comprises five appendixes, notes, bibliography, and 137 pages of illustrations. The thesis is stated in the first two chapters. Chapter one reviews selected aspects of the cult of the saints as a major force in ecclesiastical life from the fourth through the twelfth centuries. She singles out the role of the relic in the growth of pilgrimage and urbanism and examines how the erection of new pilgrimage churches on the sites of their smaller, older predecessors caused resentment amongst the locals, who often bore a disproportionate burden for such building programs. While Abou-El-Haj is correct to note the importance of the ninth-century merchants as a stimulus to the growth of the trade in relics, they were by no means the "first long-distance travelers to shrines." Sites had been visited for centuries. The Spanish nun Etheria visited the holy land and wrote of her visit *Ad Loca Sancta* in the late fourth century. Chapter two is a compilation and description of core scenes of pictorial hagiographies. These core scenes present the saintly founders of religious houses as traditional protectors of monastic privilege, both economic and social, from the