

convincingly the advantage of more recent approaches to this period and, most important, offers insightful suggestions for future research. For anyone interested in the formation of the high Middle Ages, and consequently of later European history, this volume is an invaluable summary of recent scholarship.

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Foundation documents from St Mary's Abbey, York, 1085–1137. Edited by Richard Sharpe (with Janet Burton, Michael Gullick and Nicholas Karn). (Surtees Society, CCXXVII.) Pp. xiv + 473 incl. frontispiece, 6 tables, 3 maps and 1 plate. Woodbridge–Rochester, NY: Boydell Press (for the Surtees Society), 2022. £50. 978 0 85444 984 9
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At his untimely death in 2020, the late and much lamented Richard Sharpe left not only a published legacy dwarfing that of most his contemporaries, but an unpublished *Nachlass* of daunting magnitude. Thanks to David Crouch and his rescue party, some at least of this rich seam is now exposed to view. More will follow, not least from two major research projects (Gerald of Wales, and Rufus/Henry 1) for which Sharpe's admirers have secured ongoing support. Meanwhile, here we have a definitive study of the earliest materials for one of England's greatest, yet until now somewhat neglected Benedictine houses: the abbey of St Mary at York. This focus is all the more appropriate as Sharpe himself grew up and was schooled in the abbey's curtilage. As Michael Gullick explains, our principal source is a manuscript acquired by the British Library in 1914 (MS Add. 38816): a late sixteenth-century collection of scraps, preserving twelfth-century copies of three forged or heavily interpolated royal charters (of Rufus, Henry 1 and Henry 2) together with a foundation history attributed to St Mary's first abbot, and a confraternity list. For the foundation itself there seem to have been three chief movers: Abbot Stephen, originally a monk at Whitby, Count Alan of Brittany and King William 1. To these we might add the Venerable Bede, who died more than three centuries before Abbot Stephen, yet who supplied an account of northern monastic revival crucial to what occurred after 1066 not only at York, but at Whitby and Lastingham: locations *via* which the community of St Mary's migrated before coming to rest in its permanent site, north-west of York's city walls. What exactly went wrong at Whitby: internal bickering, hostile interference from lay patrons or fear of sea-borne attack? Why did Stephen's community then move from Lastingham to York: local piety, penance for the Conqueror's 'Harrying of the North' or deliberate royal usurpation of a site uncomfortably associated with the suppressed earldom of Northumbria? In what precise circumstance was the abbey's endowment acquired and augmented? All of these remain questions lacking any sure answer. Even so, in a bravura exercise in stratigraphy, Sharpe himself identifies the two hundred or so individual grants listed in the three royal charters of *inseximus*, in seventy-four cases tracing them to surviving charters, here edited from cartulary and other copies. As was his way, Sharpe's approach involves breaking down the bigger picture into a series of individual

pixels. The use of forgeries here, to access truths, is uniquely accomplished, indeed little short of miraculous. Places and persons are for the first time fully identified (greatly improving upon Farrer's *Early Yorkshire charters*). In the process, light is shed not only on the disparity between charters and foundation history, but on the circumstances in which Domesday Book records details in 1086 still in a state of flux. Nicholas Karn's edition and translation of Abbot Stephen's narrative, like Janet Burton's of the confraternity list, are likewise immensely useful. Even so, questions remain. The most pressing concern the circumstances and motivation for forgery at St Mary's. When were the royal charters first concocted or interpolated? What was so lacking in whatever title deeds the abbey possessed as to induce the monks to 'improve' or 'reinvent' so many of their early documents? And when did this programme end: in the twelfth century, or long afterwards? Here, the survival of a long but distinctly peculiar confirmation in the name of Richard I, first recorded in 1308, and the fact that in 1257 a spurious writ of Henry I was for the first time presented for royal confirmation, suggest an extended programme of forgery, long after the 1150s. Into the 1350s, the confirmation by Henry II was still being revised and 'improved'. As late as 1405, indeed, not noticed here, we find St Mary's turning up at the royal Exchequer with what were claimed to be eleventh-century evidences, including one (a charter of Rumfrey of Lincoln, first recited in the Memoranda Roll for the year 6 Henry IV) that greatly extends our knowledge of a transaction known to Sharpe only from its summary in the forged confirmation charter of Henry I (p. 154 no. 58).¹ If we turn to Janet Burton's confraternity list, and adopt a similarly stratigraphic approach, once again assuming that position indicates date, either earlier or later, then by the reign of Henry I St Mary's already considered itself part of an unofficial congregation uniting York, Evesham, Whitby and Colchester. Since all four houses were amongst England's more notorious entrepôts of forgery, how might this affect our wider understanding? Indeed, now that the individual pixels are listed, how should our larger picture be retouched, reassessed or rehung? Here, on the macro rather than the micro scale, clearer guidance may one day emerge. Nor is everything entirely as Sharpe might have wished it to be, even in pixelated miniature. Translations are useful but not always perfect: i.e. pp. 390–1 line 4 (where a comma missing between 'erat' and 'monachus' allows the monk rather than the place to be identified, as 'under the sole power of the King'), pp. 396–7 final lines (where the king is misleadingly described as sealing

¹ 'Omnibus sancte matris ecclesie filiis, Rompharus de Lincolnia salutem. Nouerit uniuersitas uestra me dedisse et hac presenti mea carta confirmasse pro anima regis Willelmi domini mei et mea et pro animabus omnium parentum meorum et omnium fidelium defunctorum Deo et sancte Marie Eboraci et monachis ibidem Deo seruientibus in puram et perpetuam elemosinam totam terram meam extra Lincoln' que uocatur Inlond cum omnibus pertin(entiis) suis, et terram meam que uocatur Salnecroft et a Salnecroft usque ad diuisas de Gretewelle cum prato adiacente et cum tota pastura inter Salnecroft et Gretewelle usque ad medium cursum aque que uocatur Wythum, liberam et quietam ab omni terreno seruicio, et quicumque huius mee donacionis transgressor fuerit omnipotentis Dei malediccionem et meam incurrat. Teste Pagano Painel et Auty et Redwy ciuibus de Lincoln' et Ioelus et Romphare Winepic': The National Archives, London, E 368/177 m.65d.

his own charter) or pp. 406–7 line 2 (where ‘divine religion’ should not be described as ‘great’, but we are referred ‘especially’ [‘maxime’] to the light such religion casts). ‘Linleii’ (pp. 414, 420–1) is more likely Benedictine Lonlay (Orne, cant. Domfront) than Sempringhamite Bullington. And what pleasure Sharpe would have derived from a philological muddle over the word ‘werpire’ (pp. 400–1), here clearly, as in Ducange’s ‘guerpire’, ‘to release or set aside’. Linguist, list-maker, historian, Sharpe was uniquely well-qualified. We may never see his like again. In the meantime, we should be grateful to Crouch and his team for making so good and useful a book from what might otherwise have been a mere ‘if only’.

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Prayer books and piety in late medieval and early modern Europe. Edited by Maria Crăciun, Volker Leppin, Katalin Luffy and Ulrich A. Wien. (Refo500 Academic Studies, 94.) Pp. 407 incl. 92 colour ills, 2 colour plates and 3 tables. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2023. €150. 978 3 525 57345 7; 2198 3089

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This volume documents an international conference that took place in Cluj-Napoca in 2018. The original reason and the starting point for the conference was an illustrated prayer book from the late medieval period (Cluj-Napoca University Library, MS 683). It seems to have originated at the end of the fifteenth or at the beginning of the sixteenth century in Augsburg (Katalin Luffy / Regina Cermann). However, the various contributions address the phenomenon of prayer literature from a much broader geographical and chronological perspective.

A short introduction by Maria Crăciun is followed by a detailed study on the origins of the manuscript (Luffy). Afterwards, Cermann convincingly shows that the prayer book from Augsburg is not the result of the buyer’s individual ideas but has been prepared in advance as a professional product (p. 41). This result is particularly interesting in comparison to another manuscript from Cluj-Napoca University Library (MS 684): Adrian Papahagi demonstrates that this Flemish Book of Hours ‘was probably intended for a client from Saint-Omer’ (p. 88) and designed according to his wishes. Despite such differences, he rightly points out that books of hours in general were ‘late medieval best-sellers’ (p. 79).

It should already be clear that the volume is obviously guided by the concern to start with the surviving artefacts themselves. This includes further studies on the Brukenthal Breviary (Ittu), the history of Andreas Moldner’s hymnal in Kronstadt (Ulrich A. Wien) or on illustrations of Elizabeth of Hungary in Flemish books of hours (Kata Ágnes Szűcs). The authors already mentioned and their respective papers in German or English contribute a lot to the history of prayerbooks from the late medieval times up to the early modern period. Particularly noteworthy are the many beautiful illustrations, which are very helpful for understanding those studies. However, after dealing with the manuscripts themselves, the need for more far-reaching theses arises.