

***The Social World of the Abbey of Cava c. 1020-1300* By Graham Loud. Studies in the History of Medieval Religion LI. Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2021. xxxiii + 417 pp. \$115.00 hardcover; \$29.95 e-book.**

Located in the hills outside of the southern Italian city of Salerno, the abbey of Santissima Trinità di Cava dei Tirreni was one of the wealthiest Italian monasteries during the central Middle Ages. Owning lands across southern Italy, the monastic community of Cava formed important connections with the region's changing aristocracy and new Norman rulers. For Graham Loud, the true importance of the abbey is the 15,000 Latin charters preserved within its monastic archive. With only a small number of documents published mainly in the twelve-volume series *Codex Diplomaticus Cavensis*, the vast majority of these texts remain unpublished and understudied. Drawing on extensive archival research in Cava's library, Loud utilizes these documents to compose a much needed history of the abbey as well as examine social and economic changes within Norman Campania.

The first three chapters detail the history of the abbey from its foundation circa 1020 as a cave hermitage until the end of the thirteenth century, when the monastic community experienced significant political pressures and economic insecurity. The fate of Cava was deeply connected to the stability and success of Norman power within southern Italy. With the transition from Lombard rule to Norman control beginning with Robert Guiscard's conquest of Salerno in 1076, the new Norman rulers and aristocracy would enrich the monastery; these gifts would become the foundation of the monastery's wealth lasting until the early modern period. Central to building this monastic lordship was the purchase of agricultural lands and urban property, which Loud chronicles in great detail from his extensive use of charter materials. As Norman rule shifted to Sicily, the connections between the abbey and the Sicilian kings became increasingly fraught. By the second half the thirteenth century, political rule in the region was less secure, and the abbey faced serious predations by crown officials. Cava had lost control over its more distant lands and had largely stopped purchasing lands, leasing out property to create stable income during uncertain times. In reconstructing this monastic history, Loud had to contend with the serious problem of forged documents and argued that these mostly practical forgeries were produced between 1246 and 1286, a period of serious challenges for the monastery.

In the second half of the volume, Loud examines the web of socio-economic connections that encircled the abbey. Cava had benefactors of diverse backgrounds, who hoped through their gifts to achieve salvation, build alliances, and create social insurance for the childless. Loud devotes significant attention to families, who maintained long-term connections with the monastic community, such as local aristocrats like Gloriosus, who first gave to Cava in 1093. As his Lombard family struggled in the decades following Norman rule, Gloriosus's descendants sold property to the community, and other relatives disputed the legality of these sales. Loud's ability to trace their family strategies across decades and generations in such a rich archive is quite impressive and allows him to discuss with complexity and nuance how such a powerful landowner engaged with its neighbors. An important part of Cava's network of connections was the system of peasant labor used to exploit the abbey's lands. The majority of Cava's lands were leased in small plots to peasant farmers, who increasingly paid their rent in cash and had a

contractual relationship with the monks after 1230. Loud explores how the terminology of free and unfree was quite complex within the Cava documents and is refreshingly frank about the limitations of the archive for understanding the situation on the ground.

The city of Salerno connected Cava to the wider economy through its marketplaces and port access. By the thirteenth century, the abbey had significant commercial properties and interests within Salerno and the surrounding region including a bathhouse, a stone quarry, fisheries, water mills, dovecotes for edible pigeons, and revenue from the city markets. Within the city, the abbey was an important landlord to the city's Jewish population, whose rents were collected by Sciamar, a Jewish administrator. These Jewish tenants were not involved in the business of money lending. Some were skilled artisans working with gold and silk. By the end of the thirteenth century, Salerno's Jews were under increasing pressure from the mendicant orders to convert to Christianity. While the majority of Cava's income came from rents paid in kind, the majority of this produce was sold in regional markets rather than ending up on the monks' table. For Loud, the abbey of Cava's economy was dynamic and sophisticated.

The focus of Loud's research is the extensive monastic charter collection, but there is also one surviving hagiographical text, *The Lives of the First Four Abbots of Cava*, which Loud uses to understand the early history of the abbey. One important moment in the history of Cava is the dispute between Abbot Peter and a powerful local lord Roger of S. Severino, which Loud traces in both the surviving charters and the vita of Abbot Peter. The hagiographical text described how with the help of the Archangel Michael the abbot collapsed a house that killed Roger's baby son. Eventually, this display of power led to a reconciliation between the two men. This conflict between Abbot Peter and Roger of S. Severino clearly posed a serious challenge to Cava's monastic lordship. Loud passes quickly over the story of the collapsed house and dead son, but this brief discussion could have been strengthened by drawing on the scholarship about dispute resolution within a medieval monastic context. This precise, detailed, and nuanced book makes important contributions to scholarship about Norman Italy and medieval monasticism, adding considerably to our understanding of the Abbey of Cava.

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***A Companion to the English Dominican Province from Its Beginnings to the Reformation.* Edited by Eleanor J. Giraud and J. Cornelia Linde. Brill's Companions to the Christian Tradition 97. Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 2021. xii + 431 pp. \$195.00 cloth.**

This multidisciplinary collection of essays on the English Dominican Province—which, prior to the creation of independent provinces for Scotland (in 1481) and Ireland (in 1536) encompassed England, Wales, Scotland, and Ireland—is a welcome addition to scholarship on the mendicant orders. While the tireless endeavors of Michael Robson and Richard Copley have greatly enhanced our knowledge of the Franciscans and Carmelites in medieval Britain and Ireland, the Dominicans have received much less