

into production, suggests a mercenary and cavalier contempt for both our profession and their readers. The book is littered with typos, misspellings, missing spaces, and strange constructions: italics are deployed or not deployed seemingly at random, and foreign names and terms are not consistently transliterated. In sum, *Christians and Muslims in the Middle Ages: From Muhammad to Dante*, will be of no interest to specialists, and should not be used by scholars who are unfamiliar with the field. It should not be assigned to graduate or undergraduate courses, not only because of the exorbitant price but for all of the reasons enumerated above. Nor can I think of any reason why any library should acquire it, given that whatever literary merits it may possess do not compensate for its deep and numerous deficiencies. This is the reason why it is crucial for publishers to adhere to a rigorous process of review. By evidently not doing so in this case, the publisher has deprived the author of what could have been an opportunity to gain valuable feedback prior to publication, which could have resulted in a study that would have better served both the author and his readers.

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***Damnation and Salvation in Old Norse Literature.* By Haki Antonsson. Studies in Old Norse Literature 3. Rochester, N.Y.: D. S. Brewer, 2018. xiv + 259 pp. \$99.00 hardcover.**

In *Heimskringla*, Snorri Sturluson tells about the gruesome end of the Norwegian King Haraldr Gille Magnússon, who was murdered in 1136 by the pretender and his half brother, Sigurðr Slembidekan Magnússon. Haraldr's tumultuous reign had included the blinding of his nephew, and his life ended as he lay in a drunken stupor in the arms of a woman who was not his wife. All that suggests he was not an exemplary Christian, so the modern reader is startled when Snorri observes that Haraldr was generally considered a saint. Why? He was famous for his ostentatious piety and observation of the Christian holy days. As Haki Antonsson demonstrates in his important book *Damnation and Salvation in Old Norse Literature*, medieval Scandinavians had their own ideas about what condemned a person and what saved them. Antonsson asks the question, "what did people in Scandinavia believe was a sign of either their salvation or damnation?" This is joined by the question, "how was this expressed in literature?" His search for an answer ranges through many texts well-known and obscure, secular and ecclesiastical. There are seven thematic chapters: "Confession and Penance;" "Life's Journey towards Salvation;" "Betrayal;" "Outlaws and Marginal Figures;" "Salvation, Damnation and the Visible World;" "The Hours of Death;" and "Last Things and Judgement Day." The subthemes are varied: prophecy; dreams; near-death experiences; art; and, of course, changing ideas in theology.

Although his narrative concerns primarily the golden age of saga writing in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, the investigation frequently strays farther, especially when discussing the two great royal missionaries Óláfr Tryggvason and Óláfr Haraldsson, better known as Saint Olaf. Popular perception of their careers and deaths differed. While both men converted to Christianity as adults, Saint Olaf was always

considered a “real” Christian whose career led to salvation for him while his death as a martyr immediately elevated him to sainthood. Even though Óláfr’s death is read today politically rather than religiously, for a medieval audience the image of martyrdom is dominant. Óláfr Tryggvason, however, required literary rehabilitation, which is discussed over several chapters. Óláfr’s religious fervor alienated many of his subjects and, encouraged by Jarl Hakon of Hlaðr, there was a confrontation at the Battle of Svölðr (999). Óláfr was defeated and apparently died when he jumped/fell into the sea. In “Life’s Journey towards Salvation,” there is examined the possibility of survival suggested by the king’s poet, Hallfroðr *vandraeðaskáld* (“troublesome poet”), who refers to a popular belief that the king had survived. Not everyone agreed and two generations later, Adam of Bremen, in his *History of the Church of Hamburg-Bremen*, claimed that Óláfr had committed suicide and was little better than a heathen. Icelandic writers began his rehabilitation in the twelfth century starting with Ari *inn froði* Þorgilsson’s *Íslendingabók*, where Óláfr’s intervention was crucial for the conversion of the Icelanders to Christianity. Ari is convinced that the king died in battle. Norwegian writers followed, and Theodoricus Monachus’s *Historia de Antiquitate Regum Norwagiensium* comments that stories circulated about Óláfr’s survival and exile for the salvation of his soul. There can be added the perplexing authority of prophecy and dreams. The so-called “Gautr episode”—supposedly composed by Gunnlagr Leifsson in about 1200 and surviving in *Óláfs saga Tryggvasson en mesta*—claims that Gautr, a mid-eleventh-century Norwegian pilgrim to the Holy Land, became lost and was on the point of death. As he slept by a river, he dreamt of a man who told him about a boat and his arrival at a beautiful city. He awoke and, walking toward the city, saw a stone house with the man in his dreams who identified himself as Óláfr Tryggvason. So in little more than a decade, the king went from possible battle survivor to a divine intermediary. The chapter “Salvation, Damnation and the Visible World” describes later appearances of the king in occult variations, such as Óláfr’s offer of a self-lighting candle in *Bárdar saga Snæfellsáss*. The motif of a well-known person who is believed dead, but actually lives, is common throughout European literature, but one who can dispense physical aid via dreams is rare.

There are, of course, questions and problems with seeing spiritual belief as the predominant literary structural element. Many of the texts are concerned with events that took place centuries earlier, and some of Antonsson’s arguments beg the question, “does the literature reflect a long-standing historical tradition, or is it solely the creation of the latest composer/redactor?” Rarely is the evidence fairly clear, as in the order given by King Sverrir Sigurðarson (d. March 9, 1202) that the face on his corpse be uncovered in the belief that any sign of damnation would be visible on it. As Antonsson notes, since *Sverris saga* was written by Abbot Karl Jónsson of Þingeyvar, probably about the year 1210, this can be assumed to be accurate.

The theme of salvation and damnation was geographically wide, both physically and spiritually. In addition to the supposed stone hermitage of Olaf Tryggvason near the Red Sea, there were the appearances of the martyred Archbishop Thomas à Beckett of Canterbury. Spiritually he was a warning in *Þorgils saga Skarða*, while physically his tomb at Canterbury was a way station for Hrafn during his pilgrimage in *Hrafn saga Sveinbjarnarson*. Beckett is even used as a measure of comparison with the Icelandic Bishop Guðmundr Arason (d. 1237) in *Rannveigarleðsla* (“Rannveig’s Vision”). One of the most intriguing episodes outside Scandinavia ends the book, the Battle of Clontarf in *Brennu-Njáls Saga*. The mix of personal feud, battle glory, and Christian imagery bring together many of Antonsson’s themes. The narrative ends

abruptly in the last chapter “Last Things and Judgement Day,” and this reader would have liked a more extensive summary.

Antonsson writes with a light touch and his arguments are easy to follow. Throughout *Damnation and Salvation in Old Norse Literature*, the reader is helped with summaries and translations of cited texts together with pertinent parallels. *Damnation and Salvation in Old Norse Literature* is a significant study of an important topic and a noteworthy contribution to Old Norse literary studies.

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***The Congregation of Tiron: Monastic Contributions to Trade and Communication in Twelfth-Century France and Britain.* By Ruth Harwood Cline. Spirituality and Monasticism, East and West. Leeds: Arc Humanities Press, 2019. xiii + 210 pp. \$105.00 cloth.**

Although the abbey of Tiron and its founder, Bernard of Tiron, were well known among their medieval contemporaries, modern analysis of their place in twelfth-century ecclesiastical reform has been glaringly absent. In *The Congregation of Tiron: Monastic Contributions to Trade and Communication in Twelfth-Century France and Britain*, Ruth Harwood Cline seeks to fill this void, arguing that the discussion of twelfth-century reform needs to be “rebalance[d]” (xii) and interpretations “nuanced” (2). Cline analyzes and plots Tiron’s expansion throughout France and the British Isles to show both their success as a monastic order and engagement with the economy.

Consisting of seven chapters, discussion begins with the emergence of Tiron within the context of twelfth-century monastic revitalization. The following chapter takes up “Tironensian Identity” in an attempt to outline what made the monks of Tiron distinct. Chapters 3 and 4 examine the contributions of arguably the two most important figures to the expansion of Tiron: Bernard of Tiron and William of Poitiers. While Bernard is recognized for his preaching and role in reform, his successor, William, is less so. As a consequence, chapter 4 restores to view a critical participant in the success of Tiron. After establishing the impact of these founding fathers, Cline digs into how the abbey expanded throughout France and the British Isles in chapters 5 and 6. Central to her argument is that the Tironensians were directly involved in trade. Indeed, her analysis suggests that acquisition of particular properties was directed by Tiron’s interest in participation in the burgeoning economy. These chapters are replete with tables and maps cataloging Tiron’s expansion. The book concludes with a chapter on the later history of Tiron that goes up to 1792 when Tiron was disbanded—a result of the suppression of religion during the French Revolution.

The source base for Tiron is rich. The vita of Bernard of Tiron (*Vita Beati Bernardi Tironensis*) and the charters from Tiron are used to illustrate Cline’s points. The “cartulary” of Tiron was actually assembled and organized by a nineteenth-century scholar, Lucien Merlet, and was printed in 1883. Charters from Winchester and the Scottish houses of Tiron are also mined for information. The charters provide the raw material for the tables and maps that depict Tiron’s expansion. But these rich and engaging