

stabilization that characterized the second half of the sixteenth century, the empire became more exclusive, forced conversions were recognized as valid, and in general career paths previously open to converts only became dominated or at least widely populated by born Muslims.

Graf's *The Sultan's Renegades* is an important addition to recent research on the topic and is the first to focus on converts' assimilation into the imperial structures. Its publication stresses the relative dearth of similar studies focusing on the Western Mediterranean in the period. *The Sultan's Renegades* will be of great interest for scholars of the Ottoman Empire, Mediterranean studies, religion and conversion, cross-confessional encounter, and cultural intermediaries.

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doi:10.1017/rqx.2018.67

*Liturgical Life and Latin Learning at Paradies bei Soest, 1300–1425: Inscription and Illumination in the Choir Books of a North German Dominican Convent.* Jeffrey F. Hamburger, Eva Schlotheuber, Susan Marti, and Margot Fassler. 2 vols. Münster: Aschendorff Verlag, 2016. xiv + 782 pp.; x + 634 pp. €178.

From the late twelfth to the early fifteenth century, nuns at the Dominican convent of Paradies, near the Westphalian town of Soest, created liturgical choirbooks filled with potent visual images, poetry, and music, both traditional and original—all intricately linked. The surviving manuscripts and fragments testify to a thriving community of literate Latin-speaking sisters—a socially equalizing and elevating community that developed within two or three generations after the convent's founding from a small group of socially and educationally heterogeneous women, most of them illiterate. The manuscripts open a window on the nuns' intellectual, artistic, and spiritual lives as interwoven with their liturgical practices, creating a context and offering a case study for understanding the thinking and expression of women for a period sorely lacking in firsthand documentation on such questions. The authors stress that late medieval female monasticism must be understood as a part of the larger social fabric, and "in this, as in so much else, the material from Paradies might be considered paradigmatic" (1:769). However, these books offer not only a cultural paradigm, but also a witness to a specific spiritual world; the books' collective authorship is examined "based, not on generalizations regarding life in a Dominican convent of the later Middle Ages, but on the particularities presented by the physical evidence" (1:171). The books from Paradies present a rare opportunity to understand collaboration along with individual contributions in a known monastic setting.

*Liturgical Life and Latin Learning at Paradies bei Soest, 1300–1425* mirrors the meaningful materiality of the nuns' practices in a massive two-volume study (1,440

pages). The international, interdisciplinary team of scholars (a historian, two art historians, and a musicologist) describes a gradual, manuscript D 11, in words that could apply to their own work: “The manuscript’s most striking feature is its sheer ambition, which testifies to a high order of planning and collaboration” (1:775), also by four specialized authors (two for initials and decoration, two more for text and musical notation). The multifaceted investigation contrasts with the attitude of nineteenth-century court librarians, apparently overloaded with old manuscripts, who saved the books only because of the quality of their illuminations, which were of interest to the Dusseldorf Academy of Arts. After decades in storage, though their scholarly value remained in the shadows, the manuscripts’ painted images began to bring them to light, rescuing them from the fate of being sold to parchment dealers, as many “completely worthless antiphonals in the state library” (1:109) were in 1857; the proceeds of those sales helped finance restoration and preservation of the retained books. Details in the artwork now advance scholarly analysis. For example, in the gradual D 10a, the coat of arms on a sleeping soldier within the historiated initial *R* (*Resurrexi*) links the art with north Flanders, France, or the Hennegau, not with Westphalia, suggesting that this book may have been provided at the founding of the convent rather than one that was created there (1:110).

Studies of highly decorated manuscripts often focus on liturgy and religion, or art or music, but rarely attempt to incorporate all three; music’s inclusion in *Liturgical Life and Latin Learning* allows a holistic interpretation of the contents of the Paradies choirbooks. Part 3 focuses on one musical genre, the sequence. Actively composed from the ninth through the fifteenth centuries, sequences played a fluid yet integral and enduring role in the liturgy, glossing and enriching the important texts and themes of seasonal commemorations. Their accented Latin poetry and balanced formal structure engage memory and experience exegetically; their tradition of sometimes setting related texts to similar or shared tunes triggers intertextual associations. The Paradies sequences demonstrate the intertwining of liturgy, tradition, memory, poetry, music, art, meaning, and experience particular to Paradies as well as linking the convent’s traditions to common Dominican and Catholic practices. One example: the nuns of Paradies celebrated Ascension with a processional through the cloisters into the church; representing the original disciples who witnessed Christ’s ascension from earth to heaven, they probably ascended to the nuns’ choir in a gallery looking down upon the visitors attending worship for this joyous observance: “The nuns’ participation in the historic event commemorated was underscored by the iconography [in the gradual D 11] for the feast: a small group of Dominican women gazes upwards at the ascending Jesus from the golden vine that descends from the initial depicting the Ascension” (1:233).

*Liturgical Life and Latin Learning* could easily have been a dozen monographs; combining studies of music with religious, social, and institutional history required the expertise of each author and produced the integrated study that this rare collection of

manuscripts, both liturgical and archival, allows. Their combined power lends authority and depth to each of the six parts of volume 1: “The Foundation and Growth of the Monastery,” “The Extant Manuscripts from Paradies,” “The Sequences of Paradies Bei Soest,” “The Shape of the Liturgy in the Gradual D 11,” “The Cult of the Saints at Paradies bei Soest,” and “The Art of Inscription in the Gradual D 11.” Each of these parts develops its topic through several subsections; each major part can stand on its own. The book’s stunning visual appeal emulates the aesthetic embraced by the nuns; illustrations, including maps, photographs, figures, and, most abundantly, details from the manuscripts, elucidate the text.

Numerous appendixes in volume 2 support the historical and source narrative in volume 1; they describe, analyze, and transcribe portions of the convent’s manuscripts. The bulk of the volume comprises four hundred full-color, full-page facsimiles from the convent’s extant sources that invite readers to see for themselves how the nuns elaborated on and interpreted the liturgy. Each appendix represents an important aspect of the Paradies manuscripts, allowing scholars to search and interpret according to their own questions and topics. Appendixes include the convent’s founding documents, its library catalogue (complete with color facsimiles), descriptions of the liturgical books for the convent, tables of sequences in Paradies manuscripts and concordances, transcriptions of melodic incipits and complete melodies of selected sequences, a fragmentary office for John the Baptist and the cult of the Baptist, sources of inscriptions, and facsimiles of initials and descriptions (complete digital facsimiles are available at <http://digital.ub.uni-duesseldorf.de/nav/classification/157332>; search for manuscripts within the digital collection individually—e.g., “MS-D-11—Graduale”).

Beyond documenting and listing, these appendixes add depth and specificity. For instance, in addition to dates and seminal events, the edition of the original history of the convent also describes the people who contributed resources, support, and help in overcoming obstacles. Even the footnotes to the original Latin text of the legend expand the story of the convent and the people who enabled it to flourish: regarding Sister Aleidis de Rathus and her daughter, who donated property to the convent, a footnote elaborates: “The family obviously remained connected to the convent since a nun by the name of Elisabeth Rathus wrote the gradual D 12” (2:6n11).

Understanding of education, social contributions, and creativity fostered for and by cloistered women has grown substantially in the past few decades. *Liturgical Life and Latin Learning* represents an ideal in its depth, breadth, and completeness. Scholars will applaud the vision that propelled the book and plumb its contents for details and concepts that will support and instigate a more complete understanding of premodern life.

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doi:10.1017/rqx.2018.68