

A Cloister on Trial: Religious Culture and Everyday Life in Late Medieval Hungary. Gabriella Erdélyi.

Catholic Christendom, 1300–1700. Farnham: Ashgate, 2015. xiv + 262 pp. \$124.95.

A rewritten and updated version of Gabriella Erdélyi's doctoral thesis published in Hungarian in 2005, this book is a welcome and valuable addition to the scholarship on the dynamics of local religion in late medieval and early modern Europe. The author's discovery of a volume with trial documents related to a cloister in the small western Hungarian market town of Körmend resulted in the reconstruction of events that were "extraordinary, but not unique" (4) for the time, along with a detailed and multifaceted investigation into their historical and political contexts.

In 1517 the Augustinian friars of Körmend were charged with misconduct and liturgical negligence, and expelled from their cloister, which was then taken over by Observant Franciscans. The Augustinians, claiming to be victims of a political conflict, appealed to Rome against their banishment. The pope ordered an inquest into the matter, and a trial was held in the town a year later with the participation of high-profile clerics and a large number of witnesses. As a result, the friary remained in the hands of the Franciscans, the pope following the recommendation of the clerics acting as judges at the trial. The central questions that remain, however, are whether the removal of the Augustinians was a forceful dispossession (*spolium*) or a move to restore the religious and communal life of the local monastic institution (cloister reform, *reformatio*), and whether the driving forces behind religious change were the church authorities or the lay population of Körmend, which included the local landlord.

After presenting in detail the story of the trial and the involvement (on several levels) of the leading hierarch of the Hungarian church and papal legate, the study continues with an investigation of the trial texts. Through a close reading and analysis of the homogenized, Latin interrogation records, Erdélyi looks at the roles and performances of the participants, attempting to reconstruct the witnesses' voices and the dialogues during the questionings. The testimonies and the narratives therein depict the complex relationship between the townspeople and the Augustinian cloister residents. The latter's highly questionable behavior prompted reactions of the former, ranging from indignation to direct confrontation and from reprimands to contacting the friars' superiors. On the other hand, there was plenty of informal socialization both in the cloister and in taverns, as well as participation in the church services offered by the friars, which was, however, in turn perceived as problematic, given their rather low moral standing in the eyes of the town's inhabitants. Examining the laypeople's appropriation and "consumption of the sacred" (125) in the context of a religious culture with strong sacramental and penitential traits, Gabriella Erdélyi discusses the expectations and increasing frustrations of the laity with regard to the Augustinians' liturgical services, situating the townspeople's relationship with the friars in a local religious constellation that also comprised a number of secular clerics attached to Körmend's

two churches. The friars' perceived "spiritual advantage" (138) vis-à-vis these clerics seems to have consisted in the supposed merits connected with almsgiving, the importance attributed by the laity to the daily ceremonies and votive masses celebrated in the friary, and the mendicants' role in funeral and postmortal ceremonies.

The book succeeds well in its aim to provide a balanced account of the ways in which church authorities and the local community (and the landlord) participated in the reformatory transformations affecting a monastic institution. The integrated, multi-level methodological approach chosen by Erdélyi yields valuable insights into the complex sociocultural and political processes at work in Kőrmend, including pertinent observations on and discussions of a wide range of themes such as the anthropology of time perception across social strata, morality, or ritual and community. That the author's use of concepts such as "the spiritual market" or "the economy of the sacred" could have done with a somewhat broader theoretical reflection is a relatively marginal issue in the greater scheme of things and should not in the least diminish the book's considerable merits. Gabriella Erdélyi's "detective work" (8) is nothing short of impeccable, and her arguments and analyses are elegantly presented and compelling.

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Soldiers of Christ: The Knights Templar and the Knights Hospitaller in Medieval Ireland. Martin Browne and Colmán Ó Clabaigh, eds.

Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2016. xv + 250 pp. \$74.50.

This beautifully produced volume contains the major papers of a very successful conference on the two largest medieval military orders, the Knights Hospitaller and the Knights Templar, in Ireland. This was held in the idyllic Benedictine school and community at Glenstal Abbey in County Limerick in September 2014. The overwhelming impression given by this book is of the central importance of these two orders to so many aspects of the life of medieval Ireland. This point cannot be emphasized enough as many people in the twenty-first century are still largely unaware of this.

These orders appeared in the early twelfth century soon after the First Crusade (1095–1199) when Western Christendom came into conflict with a resurgent Muslim power as well as other peoples in the East. The men who joined these orders sought to combine a military service with monastic observance, two of the major planks that defined medieval feudal society. In Ireland they appeared with the Anglo-Norman settlers at the end of the twelfth century, and they were granted extensive privileges as well as large land grants to support their work in the Middle East. As they were closely tied in with the royal administration of the Anglo-Irish lordship, the prior of Kilmainham in Dublin, who was the superior of the Irish Hospitallers, regularly played an influential role in the governance of Ireland by the English Crown.