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Episcopal Culture in Late Anglo-Saxon England. By **Mary Frances Giandrea.** Anglo-Saxon Studies 7. Woodbridge, U.K.: Boydell, 2007. xvi + 249 pp. \$85.00 cloth.

What do we know about the life and work of a typical Anglo-Saxon bishop in the century and a half before the Norman invasion? Not much, according to Mary Frances Giandrea. In telling us this, she is telling early medieval historians nothing new. But she relates what we do know, and why we don't know what we don't know, in a prose style more engaging than what one might expect from a book whose opening pages offer so many caveats.

Giandrea aims to “present as wide-ranging a picture of the [post-Conquest] episcopal Church as possible” (4). By “episcopal Church,” she means the ecclesial culture that late Anglo-Saxon bishops knew and shaped. Included under this rubric are the bishop's daily life with his canons in the cathedral and its precincts, his efforts to administer pastoral care within his diocese, and his role as owner of vast landed wealth and aspirant for more. But Giandrea's use of the term “episcopal Church” includes more than ecclesial life narrowly conceived. For if by “Erastian” one means a church much occupied with secular concerns, then the late Anglo-Saxon church was more Erastian than the worst caricatures drawn by early Tractarians of bishops in the Hanoverian age.

Although not succinctly stated in any one place, Giandrea's driving thesis seems to be that the late Anglo-Saxon episcopacy has not received its due—and that for a number of reasons, among the chief of which is this: modern historians like Frank Barlow, Henry Loyn, and Emma Mason have accepted too uncritically later Anglo-Norman depictions of the later Anglo-Saxon bishops. Such depictions stem more from the ideological axes that post-Conquest authors like William of Malmesbury, Orderic Vitalis, and Henry of Huntingdon had to grind than from any fair-minded attempt to understand the Anglo-Saxon episcopacy in context (ch. 1). As one who has himself been seduced by the allure of narrative sources, even when they may not suit the task at hand, this reviewer appreciates Giandrea's attempts to do the harder work of sifting through the evidence offered by more prosaic sources, including various liturgies, wills, charters, writs, and the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*.

While the introduction and first chapter constitute a sort of *via negativa*, reminding us of what we don't know and sources we can't trust, chapters two through six offer a more palpable sense of the subject at hand. The author begins with the relations with—and service to—the king, reminding us that conventional distinctions between a bishop's sacred duty and his

secular business meant nothing in the Anglo-Saxon context. Bishops here can be found administering justice, shaping law codes, promulgating more robust notions of sacral kingship, going on diplomatic missions, and fully participating in the life of the *witan* or council of royal advisers who helped prepare for war (ch. 2). In discussing cathedral culture and pastoral care (chs. 3 and 4), Giandrea again defends late Anglo-Saxon churchmen in general—and bishops in particular—against the charge that they were “beer-guzzling idiots” (96), presenting them instead as effective pastors and administrators of a pastoral network. Overseeing their cathedrals’ *scriptoria*, these bishops increasingly ordered the production of books in English, be they original compositions of homilies or translations of patristic authors. Whereas to some this fact signals the defective quality of Latin scholarship in the late Anglo-Saxon church, for Giandrea it reveals rather an episcopacy and church eager above all else to meet the pastoral needs of the diocese. Of course, the production of books, the running of a cathedral, and hobnobbing in the *witan* required the bishop to cut a figure of importance—and wealth. As the Anglo-Saxon age drew to a close, the sources for that wealth were drying up. Its richest source during the early Anglo-Saxon period had been kings themselves, and while kings remained the bishops’ greatest benefactors up until the Norman Conquest, royal largesse diminished considerably in the tenth and eleventh centuries (ch. 5). Still, such wealth and power as the bishop held—spiritual as well as temporal—bound the aristocratic families of his diocese closely to him, and he to them, as he depended on them to discharge the see’s military obligation to the king (ch. 6).

In a final brief epilogue, the author usefully reminds us again of her thesis: that ecclesial reform, for which Norman churchmen traditionally have received credit, was already under way before the Conquest; and that even if William quickly replaced the Anglo-Saxon episcopacy with Normans—and every Anglo-Saxon cathedral with a Norman one—the traditions of the late Anglo-Saxon church proved resilient, surviving for some time among the laity and lower clergy.

Giandrea defends her thesis well, though perhaps too zealously in places. For example, in chapter 2 she emphasizes the ease with which bishops consorted with kings at court and helped infuse kingship with a divine aura, yet in chapter 6 she professes surprise that kings permitted bishops to amass so much power when the latter’s loyalty “lay with another king altogether” (190). It is as if Giandrea wants her bishops to be paragons of spiritual independence as well as useful to their kings. Yet one is hard-pressed to find in this book much evidence of such divided loyalty. Or again, eager to defend Anglo-Saxon bishops against the charge of presiding over a general decline of Latinity, a phenomenon evidenced by increased production of ecclesiastical texts in the vernacular and matched by no like trend on the

Continent, Giandrea asserts that the Anglo-Saxon churches were never out of touch with churches on the Continent (94). Such a response, though, seems a *non sequitur* to the question of whether the Church's standards of the Latinity in England were up to those on the Continent.

In all, however, Giandrea has given us a useful book of immense learning and of great value to those interested in the late Anglo-Saxon church. The specialized nature of the evidence considered renders the book valuable to Anglo-Saxonists and early medievalists, but perhaps less accessible to the more general student of church history.

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Religious and Laity in Western Europe, 1000–1400. Edited by
Emilia Jamrozik and Janet Burton. Europa Sacra 2. Turnhout:
Brepols, 2006. xiv + 401 pp. €75.00 cloth.

The idea for this volume came from a conference at the University of Leicester in 2003, and the editors have collected here nineteen essays from scholars in the United States, Europe, and Australia. The overarching questions raised by these studies center on the nature, strategy, or motivation of lay patronage of religious houses. The sources range from standard monastic sources, cartularies, foundation charters, and the like to royal chronicles, Cathedral registers, wills, sermons, miracle stories and canonization records, and diplomatic texts. Geographically, these studies include Britain, France, Luxembourg, Denmark, and the Low Countries. The book succeeds in offering English readers a comprehensive view of the complex and evolving ways in which the laity interacted with their religious contemporaries.

Organized into three sections, the first and largest section, "Patrons and Benefactors: Power, Fashion and Mutual Expectations," looks at the relationships that existed between the laity and their religious foundations. The editors rightly point out that this is a much-studied field, and as a result the articles presented here do not break a lot of new ground. Many articles in this section focus on the royal or aristocratic relationships with religious institutions. Marjorie Chibnall's lead article discusses how Henry II's patronage of religious houses helped stabilize his own territory. Janet Burton, on Roger de Mowbray, and Belle Tuten, on the castellan families near Fontevraud, both explore the various reasons or motives for religious patronage. For Burton, the chief reason was politics and the changing