East-West cooperation, resulted in a volume edited by Dietmar Winkler and Li Tang. To some extent, the collection, as the cover claims, includes some "cutting edge" research: many articles introduce recent finds (Central-Asian grave stones, the Luoyang stele discovered in 2006), new interpretations of older finds (notably the Xian Fu stele in at least five different contributions), and attempts to wider contextual interpretations of specific episodes. However, despite the merits of some of these articles, the volume as a whole is disappointing. This is partly due to the near absence of editing, leaving the reader with the abundant use of the term "Nestorian" despite the editors' rejection of it, and conflicting interpretations of various issues (for example, who was Alopen who was instrumental in formalizing Christianity in China in the seventh century?). More importantly, the volume fails to systematically address the larger issues at stake: what kind of Christianity emerged in Central Asia and China; how was it related to Syriac Christianity in the Middle East (knowledge of which is lacking in many of the articles); and how can this field proceed in view of the admittedly restricted number of primary sources? It is a missed opportunity that the strengths of the individual scholars have not been put toward some collective thinking about these matters.

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Sex, Gender, and Episcopal Authority in an Age of Reform, 1000–1122. By **Megan McLaughlin**. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010. x + 278 pp. $95.00 cloth.

As McLaughlin demonstrates in this impressive study, brides, mothers, and fathers were frequent topics in the writings of churchmen during the ecclesiastical reform movement of the eleventh and early twelfth centuries. Seeking to reform social institutions, clerics frequently wrote about marriage, condemning promiscuity, and praising chaste purity. And in even more emotional language, they defended a metaphorical marriage to the archetype of brides and mothers, the Church herself. Reformers claimed the Church was being prostituted when a simoniac bought and sold church offices; that the Church was being raped when one bishop ousted another; that an antipope was guilty of incest. Clerics used sexualized and gendered language in reforming the private life of families and the public life of the Church: they often had sexuality, gender, and kinship on their minds.

McLaughlin's close study of polemical writing, theological treatises, canon law, and iconography should make her book appealing to historians of medieval Christianity; she pays careful attention to differences between regions, over decades, among political parties. Although many of the reformers she cites are familiar figures—Humbert, Peter Damian, Gregory VII—she considers some of their rarely used writing, located through effective use of recent digital indexing. The theoretical issue that shapes her study—the interplay between religious metaphor and social reality—should draw a larger readership. Without explicitly entering the conversation about the link between image and reality, McLaughlin clearly shows that discourse about the Bride of Christ, Mother of the Faithful, both shaped and reflected social norms.

McLaughlin divides her book into three sections—on brides, mothers, and fathers—with two chapters in each, one on what reformers said about actual practices, and the other on their metaphorical discourse about the Church, whom they considered the supernatural prototype for human brides and mothers.

The section on brides is particularly informative. Attempting to reform the sexual behavior of the faithful, churchmen commented extensively on the conditions of betrothal, the need for consent, and the dower as well as on violations of the marital codes in divorce, incest, concubinage, and other sexual relationships outside of marriage (including sex between men). McLaughlin notes that actual women were rarely the focus of attention, as if the clerical writers were avoiding thinking about real women, discussing instead rules and the "purity" of the marital union. But when the clerics turned to the Bride of Christ, "her mystical marriage was described in far greater detail than any earthly marriage, and often in highly erotic terms" (49). In part this was simply effective polemics: simony and clerical marriage sounded worse if, in addition to being against church law, they defiled the Church's chastity. But the rhetoric also shows how seriously the reformers took the metaphor: men married the Church, betrayed her, even violated her. (Women did not, at least not in the polemics of these reformers.)

McLaughlin fittingly entitled the lead chapter for her second section "The Ambiguities of Motherhood." The reformers talked about mothers—their love, the devotion owed them, their vulnerability, the anguish they could cause or suffer—but the churchmen said little about the legalities of motherhood. In part this was because maternal authority was derivative, an extension of paternal authority (which did concern the reformers). But basically the churchmen seemed to have little interest in human motherhood. What concerned them was the Mother of the Faithful, especially the Church of Rome, the Mother of All, but also the cathedral churches and their archbishops, the mothers of their individual dioceses. Reformers praised the devotion of some of the Church's sons, and they lashed out at others. (Again women, in this case "daughters," are rarely mentioned.) To dissent from Rome, to challenge the authority of

archbishops—Peter Damian and Gregory VII were particularly adamant about this—was to abandon and even persecute one's own mother.

McLaughlin's third section—on fathers—is not just an attempt to introduce gender balance into her study. Although God was, of course, the ultimate father, McLaughlin notes a pronounced change in the discussion of metaphorical fathers that began in the second half of the eleventh century, especially among reformers allied with Rome: increasingly "the father" these reformers put at center stage was the Bishop of Rome, the Father of All. Their use of this imagery was so pronounced that the Father of All began to eclipse the Mother of All in the metaphorical discourse. McLaughlin points out that a more compelling case could be made for obedience to fathers than to mothers, about whom secular law had little to say: paternal authority had clear support, in law and custom, among secular as well as religious. She does not say as much as some feminist scholars might about how the gendered language upheld patriarchy, though she provides plenty of material for them to use if they wish.

McLaughlin's chapter on the social reality of fatherhood closely parallels her earlier chapters on earthly brides and mothers; she details what church reformers said about the rights and duties of fathers who headed earthly families. But the chapter on metaphorical fathers introduces new issues that McLaughlin might explore further. Unlike the Mother of the Faithful and the Bride of Christ, Fathers in the Spirit were not just metaphorical: they were also earthly men. By considering bishops to be fathers, the reformers promoted obedience to actual men; in calling the Church a Mother and a Bride of Christ, the reformers did not similarly encourage obedience to real women.

McLaughlin's conclusions are persuasive, and she provides a wealth of information about brides, mothers, and fathers, earthly and metaphorical. Her book gives deeper meaning to the terms "Bride of Christ," "Mother of the Faithful," and "Fathers in the Spirit."

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Medieval Religious Rationalities: A Weberian Analysis. By **D. L. d'Avray**. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010. x + 198 pp. $85.00 cloth, $29.99 paper.

Those who might be put off by the subtitle the author instructs: "Do not expect a 'rise of Western rationality' essay, nor discussion of whether the 'Protestant