

of “social control” (30) are also not fully fleshed out and somewhat at odds with the poetic evocation of vespers as a multisensory experience in chapter 3.

Overall, this is an important book that offers a bold new interpretation of the *Primary Chronicle* and will appeal broadly to liturgists, medievalists, students, and specialists alike.

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***Mobile Saints: Relic Circulation, Devotion, and Conflict in the Central Middle Ages.* By Kate M. Craig. Studies in Medieval History and Culture. London: Routledge, 2021. xiii + 207 pp. \$128.00 cloth; \$44.05 e-book.**

Craig’s *Mobile Saints*, the latest volume in the Routledge series Studies in Medieval History and Culture, focuses on the movement of saints’ relics from their permanent resting places, usually in rural monastic churches in northern France and the Low Countries in the central Middle Ages, during the period of roughly 950–1150. Unlike the use of cathedral relics in the civic processional culture of the late Middle Ages, which gives the impression of a timeless and changeless communal activity, central medieval relic journeys involved “fluidity, experimentation, and often conflict” (184), because they took place only occasionally, followed no fixed itinerary, and brought holy objects into unfamiliar social and geographical contexts. The custodians of relics and shrines undertook these ad hoc excursions for various reasons and with a range of intentions that were sometimes recorded by hagiographers and chroniclers. Craig consults dozens of references to relic movements and records of miracles performed on the road, as well as the four customaries written in Cluniac monasteries before 1100. But the study’s main sources are the hagiographical records produced after eight relic journeys that occurred from the mid-eleventh to the mid-twelfth century and centered on the monasteries of St.-Winnoc, Lobbes, Elnone, the priories Corbeny and Gigny, and Laon cathedral. These texts have been examined before in relation to the logistics of travel, the socio-economic and legal conditions of the time, and the Peace of God movement. Craig’s concern is not the justification and purpose of these journeys but the often unexpected outcome and effects of removing relics from the restricted and curated space of altar and chapel.

After a substantial introduction which addresses the historiography and sources, the book’s six chapters are divided into three thematic parts, the first, “Departures,” focuses on the afterlife of Carolingian era texts describing relic movements in a period in which stability was the norm. Craig shows how the description of an act written in one set of circumstances may under new circumstances shape the way later acts are perceived. Records of forced transfers of relics that had occurred in the era of Viking raids provided narrative strategies and rhetorical imagery for central medieval hagiographers who wrote about contemporary movements of relics that were not forced and in which the adversaries who sometimes appeared were not heathens but other Christians and rival religious communities. Because of the complex relation between

image and reality that appears in these hagiographic texts, it is useful to balance their testimony with that of monastic customaries, which show that relics carried in phylacteries or more elaborate reliquaries were often a feature of intramural liturgical processions, though the forms of such rituals were “flexible and versatile” (55).

The second thematic part, “En Route,” concerns the effects of relic journeys upon the travelers, both the relics themselves and those who accompanied them, and upon other ecclesiastical groups and laypeople. Moving relics offered a means of projecting numinous power into new surroundings, but it was risky too, because presence elsewhere meant absence at home, and because leaving the controlled environment of altar and shrine meant exposing the relic to uncertainty, competition, and even hostility or ridicule on the road. Removal of the holy object from its stable setting put new pressure on the reliquary and those bearing it to frame and represent the relic in a clearly recognizable, yet dignified, manner, and to manage the saint’s interaction with whomever the party encountered on its journey. A great merit of the book is Craig’s attunement to the indirect ways that the sources reveal aspects of reality such as the actions and thoughts of laypeople. Because the saint’s reputation mattered so much to the custodians of relics, hagiographers had incentive to depict laypeople as agents only insofar as their activity and words supported the goals of the relics’ custodians. Enthusiasm for the presence of a saint may at times have been widespread, but “collective lay desire for relics was used as a narrative device” (142) even when it had to be invented. Craig outlines circumstantial reasons for thinking that the report of the early twelfth-century chronicler Hariulf that the laypeople of St.-Riquier had prevented the departure of the relics from Centule was not so much a spontaneous popular outburst against the shame their patron saint would incur by begging as an orchestrated dramatic moment in the widely announced and prearranged ritual departure of the relics (140). Such a presentation of what should have happened contributed to Hariulf’s explicit critique of the ruinous spending and absenteeism of Abbot Gervin II, who aspired to become bishop of Amiens.

The third thematic part, “Afterlives,” considers how movements of relics transformed the physical reality of geography into the cultural product of landscape. Modern scholarship has unduly emphasized the use of relic processions as a means of asserting claims to property or engaging in conflicts with powerful outsiders. Craig shows how the image of an anarchic and lawless tenth century, which was magnified by eleventh- and twelfth-century hagiographers and advocates of reform, has encouraged some scholars to view relic movement as little more than a defensive tactic in land disputes. Craig argues that pursuing conflict and asserting economic claims were just two aspects, and not always the first or most important ones, of a wider set of relations that linked monastic communities and their saints to people, villages, and other foundations in the region. Thanks both to the placement of commemorative markers on the ground and the texts written by hagiographers, sites where miracles had occurred along the itinerary of relic movements became places of memory and power in landscapes that reflected the spiritual, material, and social lives and experiences of their inhabitants. This fine study of central medieval relic movements is a most welcome addition to the field.

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