

Alexandria in the fourth century. Later accounts trace Ethiopian traditions back to the eunuch converted by the deacon Philip (Acts viii.26–40), and even to King Solomon and the queen of Sheba, as recounted in the *Kəbrä Nəgäšt* (*Glory of kings*). The section ends with a passage from Zār'a Ya'əqob's *Book of the Trinity*, written in a prose highly evocative of the liturgy, and a prayer amulet, composed in much the same style.

This is a hugely fascinating book that deserves to be warmly welcomed. The texts open doors on to very different ways of envisaging Christianity (different both from familiar Greek East/Latin West modes, and among themselves), understanding of which is greatly enhanced by the introductions to each section and their suggested further reading.

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*Papal jurisprudence, 385–1234. Social origins and medieval reception of canon law.*

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In this companion to *Papal jurisprudence* c. 400, David d'Avray addresses four questions among many: Why did bishops write to Rome? To what extent did letters of 'the first decretal age' (c. 400–600) already function as law, not theology? How did these shape canon law after 1050? How was canon law post-1200 ('the second decretal age') similar to the 'first age' as it responded to changing 'social systems' (chapter i and p. 240)?

Chapter i considers 'uncertainties' prompting bishops' letters to Rome. These came from 'Christian mobility' and 'variety of religious practice' (p. 31). Bishops were unsure about theology, notably Pelagius on grace (chs iv, ix), and 'practical issues' like varying rituals (ch. v), the status of clerics and monks (ch. vii) and heretical ordinations (ch. viii).

Were letters, 'decretals' after 400, counsel or positive law? The latter may well have been the case, as illustrated by Innocent I's decretal on communion for the lapsed at the point of death (p. 94). While some early canonical collections did include theology, material 'not simply legal' but 'true-false', the *Dionysiana*, the dominate model for later compilations, transmitted decretals as legal rulings, 'lawful-unlawful' (chapter xi).

Early decretals became 'more symbolic as the gap between them and the social practices widened' (p. 16). The author also categorises their reception by later canonical collections, for example the *Hispana*, *Hibernesis* and *Vetus Gallica* (chs xii–xiv). Some compilations were 'legal', derived from the *Dionysiana*; others a 'hybrid of law and theology'; a few contained 'much material that is neither obviously papal nor legal' (pp. 148–9).

The collections of Pseudo-Isidore provided the 'medium for the large-scale diffusion' of 'first age' jurisprudence. With their decretals, spurious and genuine, also came theological speculation which diminished the 'expectation of canon law as a system distinct from other forms of religious writing' (pp. 164–5).

Canon law in the tenth and eleventh centuries, prior to the 'papal turn' after 1050, receives far less attention (chapter xiv). A short entry on Burchard of

Worms's *Decretum* labels it as 'inclusive.' However, Burchard compiled comparatively little papal jurisprudence alongside conciliar and patristic texts (pp. 166–7).

The 'reform movement' receives more consideration. Eleventh-century readers undoubtedly struggled to make sense of the ancient decretals, for the Church on 'the cusp of the second decretal age' differed profoundly (p. 169). Clerical marriage and celibacy had been more easily regulated in an essentially urban church; medieval rural parishes with married priests could not have been more different (pp. 171–2, 175–8). The same was true with episcopal election (pp. 178–80). From such 'uncertainties' came questions that prompted the second 'papal turn'. Yet not all decretals likely seemed strange. Prohibitions of simony probably made sense to readers living in an emerging money economy (pp. 174–5).

Only one 'reform' collection receives much attention: the *Collection in 74 titles*. The author considers its reception of decretals on episcopal election and penance. Interestingly, there is no reflection on bk 1, 'On the primacy of the Roman Church', filled with excerpts from 'first age' jurisprudence, notably Gregory the Great. Ivo of Chartres's *Decretum* is only mentioned in passing. Perhaps consideration of decretals in Alger of Liège's *Liber de misericordia et iustitia* also would have been useful in order to examine the influence of 'first age' jurisprudence immediately before Gratian's *Decretum*.

Chapters xiv–xv consider Gratian's *Decretum* and its *Glossa ordinaria*, both the initial version by Johannes Teutonicus and the revision by Bartholomaeus Brixiensis. All were products of an 'intellectually creative age' that 'developed methodological tools for turning the texts of the past into synthesis' (p. 188). This set canon law on a path diverging from theology (p. 190). While not ignoring the influence of Roman law, d'Avray maintains it cannot entirely explain why the *Liber Extra* of 1234 retained little theology (pp. 192–7). Moreover, there was nothing 'inevitable' about the divergence, for moral theology at the end of the twelfth century was 'not so far from canon law'. If circumstances had been different, this 'practical theology', for example in the writings of Peter the Chanter, might have been preferable to Roman law. Nevertheless, theology and canon law did part ways by the early thirteenth century, as illustrated by the second edition of *Glossa ordinaria*, which largely drew upon canonists and civilians for its commentary (p. 198).

Key to canon law's emergence as a 'distinct genre' (p. 200) was Bernard of Pavia. The author of the *Compilatio prima* of recent papal decretals 'played a role quite like that of Dionysius Exiguus 700 years earlier' (p. 199). It provided the form for the subsequent study and professional use of decretals both ancient and new (pp. 199–200). The final chapters (xvi–xix) then explore connections between 400 and 1200 by returning to 'uncertainties' similar to those that had prompted the early decretals: clerical marriage (*bigamia*), clerical status and the choosing of bishops. Each case study reveals how 'first age' decretals were used and recent, 'second age' letters, dealt with similar, 'complex situations' (p. 240).

This is a useful and provocative study, one enhanced by extensive appendices translating decretals and commentaries. It argues persuasively for the continuity of papal jurisprudence in canon law, thus freeing us from the 'apartheid of periodization' (p. 19). Any scholar interested in medieval canon law will find this an essential work.