
Book Reviews

Demacopoulos, George E. *Colonizing Christianity: Greek and Latin Religious Identity in the Era of the Fourth Crusade*. Series: Orthodox Christianity and Contemporary Thought. (New York, NY: Fordham University Press, 2019). Pp. 272.

The field of crusade studies needs more books like this one: well-written, accessible to students, stimulating to experts, and moving the field in new directions. George Demacopoulos's new book takes on a question with particular punch in the academy at the moment: to what extent are current debates about race, colonization, and imperialism relevant to medieval studies? While Demacopoulos's work does not touch directly on the question of race (as defined in modern terms), his book is an argument for the relevance of contemporary theory for understanding power, discourse, and difference in the medieval world.

Colonizing Christianity tackles this question by turning to a subject that at first glance might not seem ideal: the Fourth Crusade. Unlike many other crusades, the Fourth Crusade was not directed against Muslims, and the eventual target of the crusade was itself an imperial power. As Demacopoulos points out, the Byzantine Empire was hardly overawed by "western" power or culture; the Romans (as the Byzantines called themselves) perceived themselves to be intellectually and culturally superior to the Franks who conquered their capital. The subject proves to be a fruitful one in part because the accidental nature of the crusade (it had been intended to attack Egypt, not Constantinople) meant that the crusade radically shifted relations between Latins and Greeks, and demanded new discourses on both sides. The book is made up of six concise case studies of texts associated with the crusade or its aftermath: Robert of Clari's *Conquest of Constantinople*; Gunther of Pairis's *Hystoria Constantinopolitana*; the letters of Pope Innocent III; the canonical rulings of Demetrios Chromatianos, archbishop of Ohrid; George Akropolites's *History*; and the *Chronicle of Morea* (using the Greek verse version of ms. Havniensis 57). These choices are carefully balanced: the first three represent Latin voices, Demetrios Chromatianos speaks to Byzantine resistance, and Akropolites and the *Chronicle of Morea* offer the perspective of those in the middle, Greek and Latin Christians who lived under Frankish rule in the aftermath of the crusade.

Demacopoulos tests a few different modern theoretical frameworks on the Fourth Crusade, finding Edward Said's concept of Orientalism the most useful. Robert de Clari

contrasts the “Greeks” as effeminate, duplicitous, and cowardly in opposition to the manly, forthright, and martial Franks. Gunther of Pairis’s *Hystoria* goes one step further, eroticizing the Greek monk who assists Gunther in his theft of precious relics, a depiction Demacopoulos sees as part of a western image of an eroticized, decadent Orient. His arguments add to a growing body of literature testing, challenging, and adapting Said’s argument for western medieval perspectives on “the other.” Demacopoulos also turns to Homi Bhaba’s concepts of ambivalence and hybridity. While Innocent III’s discourse about the Greeks was profoundly ambivalent—they were both Christians and enemies of God, both victims of illegitimate crusader violence and sinful targets of God’s righteous wrath—Demacopoulos finds a more profound ambivalence in the pope’s insistence on the importance of papal authority. While the power of the office of the pope was grounded in theological and exegetical precepts, each complaint by Innocent about Greek non-compliance paradoxically highlighted the fragile and contested nature of papal claims.

A central theme running through the book is how differences between Latin and Greek Christians were categorized. For Robert de Clari and Gunther of Pairis, the differences are entirely moral; the Franks are simply better than the Greeks, and issues of doctrinal belief, religious practice, or institutional authority played no role in how each subordinated the “colonized” to the “colonizer.” Demacopoulos notes that even when Robert uses the “law of Rome” as a distinction between the two groups, he does so without reference to any of the issues that normally mark the differences between the two churches. Unsurprisingly, it is the churchmen like Innocent III and Demetrios Chromatianos who did evoke theological distinctions as central markers. For Chromatianos, those differences needed to be drawn with a thick pen. Evoking Robert Young’s work on race theory, Demacopoulos uses the dichotomies of Latin/Greek and catholic/heretic in place of the modern categories of European/African or Asian. In many ways, the fear of hybridity here is a recapitulation of Mary Douglas’s work on purity and pollution; in a world in which the political boundaries between communities had become blurred, intermarriage and shared sacraments became threats to the integrity of the community.

Demacopoulos’s book works best as a thought piece; it asks the reader to think in larger terms than most academic publications, and certainly more than most books in the field of crusade studies, which is among the most traditionalist of historical subfields. He wears both his scholarly and theoretical learning lightly, and the book does not demand deep background in either subject. This is not the book to turn to for a narrative of the Fourth Crusade, or an in-depth explanation of the place of theory in medieval studies. The focus is on the questions, not on scholarship. The questions that Demacopoulos asks are in some senses not new; the field of crusades studies has been pondering the question of whether the crusades were a colonial venture for over a half-century. More recently, the direction of scholarship has turned against that approach, but what is new and valuable here is the bringing together of colonial and postcolonial theory and the Fourth Crusade in such an accessible manner. As with any work that tries to present a historical argument to a broad audience, specialists may lament the absence of detailed engagement with the

larger conversation about the crusades as colonialism or other topics, but this is misplaced; the argument of the book is heuristic, not aiming to deepen our understanding of the period or its dynamics. The book opens a needed conversation, and the extent to which medieval depictions of the “other” are orientalist remains a fascinating and open question. I am less convinced by the utility of some of the other theoretical models used, but even in those cases, the book encourages the reader to reconsider categories, conceptual frameworks, and tools in a way that improves the field as a whole.

CHRISTOPHER H. MACÉVITT

W. Mark Ormrod, Bart Lambert, and Jonathan Mackman. *Immigrant England, 1300–1550*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2019. xi + 300 pp. ISBN 9781526109149. \$29.95.

Immigrant England, 1300–1550 provides an insightful and highly readable account of the circumstances and experiences of first generation immigrants in late medieval England. Scholars have long recognized how immigration has shaped modern Britain and recent decades have witnessed a growing awareness among early modern specialists of immigration’s long and consequential pre-modern history. This book provides the first synthetic overview of immigration in medieval England and brings the period’s experiences into meaningful conversation with existing work on more recent periods.

The book has three main objectives. The first is to assess the size and geographical origin of the immigrant population and to document its distribution throughout the country. Much of the analysis in this portion of the book derives from the authors’ deep dive into the alien subsidies, the records of a special tax levied on immigrants between 1440 and 1487. The records do not provide a truly comprehensive register of all immigrants in the period, but they come reasonably close. Immigrants from continental Europe and Scotland paid the tax with few exceptions. Some Irish immigrants also paid but the basis for inclusion or exclusion was not as consistent as for other nationalities and the resulting data are not as conclusive. The only significant lacuna in the evidence involves Welsh migrants, whose status as Crown subjects made them exempt from most iterations of the tax.

Using the subsidy evidence and a few reasonable assumptions, the authors find that England had roughly 30,000 first generation immigrants at any given point in time in the second half of the fifteenth century, constituting between 1 and 2 percent of the total population. Not surprisingly, towns had higher proportions of immigrants than villages, with the immigrant population in some towns approaching ten percent of all inhabitants. London was a particularly attractive destination, but a few other towns, notably Bristol and Southampton, also drew significant numbers. What is most surprising about the subsidy evidence is not the prominence of towns as destinations but rather the extensive immigrant penetration of the countryside. The wide dispersion of the immigrant population in the countryside is particularly striking, with many villages serving as home to