

tage, number 33.) Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press. 2002. Pp. xiv, 325. \$65.00.

Constructions of orthodox behavior and practice continue to receive attention from scholars of early Christian history. Daniel Caner offers an exceptional contribution to contemporary research in this area with his study of a form of early Christian monasticism relatively overshadowed in scholarly discourse. Wandering monks, who were prominent during the period 260–451 in the regions of Asia Minor, Syria, and Egypt, maintained a certain esteem within the urban Christian populace due to their material renunciation and charismatic utterance. Given this fact, the actions taken by the Council of Chalcedon (451 C.E.) to marginalize the practice of wandering monks and to endorse the more novel, sequestered form of monasticism require explanation. Caner assembles and evaluates the sociopolitical factors that prompted the emergence of wandering monasticism and documents how these factors so changed that the practice was later officially denounced. In the process, he addresses a nexus of issues pertaining to the nature of early Christian piety, and he elucidates the complexity of power relations among competing monastic groups and between church officials vying for their political support.

In the opening chapters of his work, Caner treats source material from within the monastic tradition. Consideration of the apparent tension—as it is depicted in traditional sources of the Egyptian desert milieu from the fourth and fifth centuries, such as the *Apophthegmata Patrum*—between several forms of monastic practice appears first. The stories of wandering monks and an assessment of the actual practice of desert wandering reveal that, while there was some accommodation for wandering monks, by the fifth century preference was given to the more sedentary model of monasticism that espoused manual labor, sustenance, and communal stability. This discussion is followed by an examination of the evidence for wandering monks in the towns and villages of Syria, Palestine, and Mesopotamia in the third century, with particular attention to the apostolic paradigm for ascetic wandering in *The Acts of Thomas* and the manual for ascetic wanderers in the Pseudo-Clementine *Letters to Virgins*. Both works affirm a tendency to privilege sequestered monastic practice. Reconsideration of the evolution of the “covenanters” of Aphrahat’s sixth *Demonstration* during the fourth and fifth centuries in light of this evidence emphasizes the interdependence of this group and the local Christian community.

In chapters three and four, Caner shifts the focus toward evidence for specific efforts to marginalize wandering monasticism. The Messalian controversy of the late fourth and early fifth centuries elucidates further the disparity between church officials and monks over the practice. Caner argues that through their staunch assertion of doctrinal differences, church

officials deflected the real, pressing threat posed by the spiritual perfectionism of the Messalian movement: namely, their own inability to live in accordance with strict Gospel principles. Application of this theory is illustrated through a reconstructed depiction of the fifth-century wandering monk, Alexander the Sleepless. Alexander’s career furthers the claim that the practice of wandering monasticism was only problematic for the local episcopate and other church leaders when it left the seclusion of the deserts and invaded urban Christian life.

Chapter five bears this out through an exploration of the practice in the late Roman urban environment. Here, Caner exposes the desire for wealthy urban Christians to receive spiritual gifts in their homes from wandering monks as especially vexing to the bishop, John Chrysostom, and the monk, Nilus of Ancyra, and unearths central questions about the nature of monastic patronage. Such questions were answered officially in the Council of Chalcedon, the focus of chapter six, for, as evident in the case of Dalmatius and of Eutyches, by this time the monks’ economic interests had become intertwined with those of their new episcopal patrons.

Caner’s argument is sound and convincing. Furthermore, his work is strengthened by a keen ability for precision and detail as well as a willingness to engage earlier and contemporary historians of early Christianity.

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CARL I. HAMMER. *A Large-Scale Slave Society of the Early Middle Ages: Slaves and Their Families in Early Medieval Bavaria*. Burlington, Vt.: Ashgate. 2002. Pp. xiv, 148. \$64.95.

Carl I. Hammer, who has previously published some valuable articles on the peasant society and family in early medieval Bavaria, provides an overall picture of the “slaves” (or rather the “unfree”) within the Bavarian seigneurial system. This is in fact the first comprehensive study on this topic since Philippe Dollinger’s famous work, *L’Évolution des classes rurales en Bavière, depuis la fin de l’époque carolingienne jusqu’au milieu du XIII^e siècle* (1949). His starting point, however, is Marc Bloch’s theory of a development from slaves to tenants. Hammer rightly warns us that slavery is a multifaceted phenomenon.

After an introduction to the historical and social background and the geographical setting, the author first deals with terminology (*servi*) and status designations by emphasizing the fundamental legal difference between free and unfree. Social reality, however, actually shows a lot of differentiations, although it is difficult to define exactly terms such as *barschalken* or *coloni*. In a long chapter on “Institutional Ecology and General Conditions of Slavery,” Hammer deals with the seigneurial organization—the bipartite manor system apparently was not introduced to Bavaria until the

Carolingian annexation after 788—and with the labor services of the dependent people. An essential component is the section on marriage and family, with valuable insights and an interesting “exchange theory” (named “seigneurial life-circle” by Hammer) between tenancies and demesnes according to the age of the dependents. (I do not believe that legitimate marriage was restricted to tenants, and some legal processes, including the status of the children, may be seen here too schematically.) The fact that “slaves” could themselves have “slaves” is significant (and probably not only a consequence of this “life-circle”). Although dependents were generally treated as property and objects, as Hammer rightly emphasizes, it was not impossible for them to possess property of their own. A short passage on “material conditions,” particularly pertaining to the house and mainly based on excavations in Kirchheim, closes this chapter.

The next chapter, on sources of slaves, mentions birth (as a primary source), inheritance, punishment, force (this aspect may be underestimated), trade, and warfare, whereas exchange and sale as a further source, strictly speaking, did not alter the state of the dependent. This is followed by short chapters on manumission and freedmen, “ultimate slaves” (in higher offices), and, finally, a quantitative analysis. Early medieval Bavaria, Hammer concludes, was decisively dependent on slavery, most of the slaves being tenants, which was a permanent condition lacking any vestige of honor.

This is a valuable book—the English translations of the primary texts in its second part will be very helpful for students—offering valuable insight into a society about which we still know relatively little. It is praiseworthy that Hammer’s argumentation relies strictly on evidence, which is not always the case in the work of social historians. Nevertheless, it is just this method that causes some problems, because the sources do not answer our questions sufficiently. Consequently one may doubt whether Hammer is right when he extends theories instead of “facts.” I am hesitant to accept that Bavaria really was a “large-scale slave society”—other early medieval regions were not—where the majority (possibly sixty-five percent or even more) of the seigneurial population was unfree. One problem is that Hammer tends to equate “slave” with “dependent” and to subsume all kinds of serfs under this term, thus neglecting the differences between *servi casati* and *servi non casati*, between free and unfree tenants (and hides) that were regarded as being important in those times. Also, “services” differed in a way that (as we know from Alamannic evidence) “servile services” could threaten (free) people doing servile work with being perceived as (or becoming) unfree. All in all, social mobility exceeded the “life-circle.” Another problem arises where (Bavarian) sources remain silent. To cite only one example: “slave” and *servi* are ambiguous terms, and it is therefore necessary to analyze first how their meanings might have changed and then how their social positions altered. For such an evalu-

ation, some remarks on the possible changes of the position of “slaves” are missing; they are decisive for the question of whether “slave” really remains the adequate term for (a variety) of serfs in the seigneurial system. Therefore I do not share Hammer’s conclusion (although his view is nowadays widespread) that the end of slavery did not occur until the eleventh century because until then slaves did not have hereditary rights. We know from many sources that they did indeed, if they were tenants, and I see no reason why this should have been different in Bavaria. Thus there remain further questions and the challenge to integrate regional observations into a larger perspective. There is, however, no doubt that Hammer’s results and arguments represent an important step in the right direction.

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EDWARD GRANT. *God and Reason in the Middle Ages*. New York: Cambridge University Press. 2001. Pp. ix, 397. Cloth \$64.95, paper \$22.95.

In this study, Edward Grant, a distinguished historian of medieval science, demonstrates the dedication of medieval scholars to rational methods of analysis. He maintains that the Age of Reason that culminated in the eighteenth century began in the Middle Ages. Grant recognizes the irrationality of the Middle Ages, reminding us of the irrationalities of our own era.

In six substantial chapters, Grant’s aim is especially to explain the function of reason in medieval intellectual life as it developed within the university. As he sees it, reason “played its most significant role in preparing the way for the establishment of a deep-rooted scientific temperament that was an indispensable prerequisite for the emergence of modern science” (p. 3). Grant describes his study as “an effort to provide evidential support for [Carl] Becker’s perceptive insights” (p. 7): namely, that the eighteenth century was an age of faith as well as of reason, and that the thirteenth century was an age of reason as well as of faith. In the universities, reason was used to question and to try to understand the physical world and even the revealed truths of Christianity.

Grant reminds us how serious scholastics were about “critical thinking.” Medieval students spent their first year learning logic by means of lectures and exercises, and their subsequent courses applied and reinforced their logical exercises. However sterile and impractical logic may have become, Grant is right to consider the scholastics’ high regard for logic as evidence of their commitment to reason. Medieval students learned how to make their arguments logical.

On natural philosophy, Grant emphasizes the rationalist, a priori side of Aristotle’s philosophy. Whatever Aristotle’s empiricism may have involved, by the Middle Ages the habits of direct observation and measurement became less important than the theoretical dependence on experience as the foundation of