

4-2007

(Review) Struggle for Empire: Kingship and Conflict under Louis the German, 817-76

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Recommended Citation

Paxton, FS. "Struggle For Empire: Kingship And Conflict Under Louis The German, 817-876." *Speculum-A Journal Of Medieval Studies* 82.2 (n.d.): 439-441. Web.

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Keywords

Carolingian, Louis, German, Middle Ages

Comments

Initially published in *Speculum*, 2007, p399-441.

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DOI: 10.1017/S0038713400009623

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/S0038713400009623>

(largely digested from the biblical commentaries of antiquity and the Carolingian period), with respect to the Gloss on Lamentations Andréé also describes a category of what he calls “middle glosses”; these are longer than the usual interlinear gloss (a word or couple of phrases), shorter than the usual marginal gloss (several sentences), and can be found sometimes in the margin and sometimes between the lines in the manuscript witnesses. The Ciceronian *loci rhetorici* are generally found among these middle glosses, and Andréé has printed them separately in his edition.

In his introduction Andréé has done an excellent job of describing in some detail Gilbert’s adaptation of Paschasius, as well as his use of the rhetorical categories drawn from Cicero. Also in his introduction Andréé provides a review of the literature and a particularly useful and comprehensive examination of the known facts of Gilbert’s life (concluding that the present text was composed most likely between 1110 and 1120, and most certainly by 1125), along with very detailed physical descriptions, both codicological and paleographical, of the manuscripts he has chosen for his edition—the earliest being a German manuscript from Reichenberg bei Goslar dated 1131. He discerns among them two recensions, an earlier and a later: the later is represented by some three hundred variations shared by five of the twenty-two collated manuscripts. Generally these variations represent attempts at *lectiones faciliores* that sometimes result in unintelligible readings. The later Continental manuscripts seem to follow this second recension, while the first recension survives somewhat longer among the English manuscripts (a pattern also reflected in the manuscript families of the Gloss on Daniel). The prothemes also sort themselves out into two groups, an earlier and a later, but both are found in manuscripts of the first recension. This difference seems to be largely the work of one scribe: in one of the manuscripts, the scribe, confronted with a blank page, explains that since he has the space, he will add some additional glosses relevant to the text at hand. These were then picked up in the second group. Andréé argues for and produces an edition of the first recension without the “additional” prothemes, but he provides an edition of these prothemes, along with a complete list of the variations constituting the second recension, in appendices. The edition itself has been painstakingly done, recording in the critical apparatus unique variations from all the manuscripts. In addition, Andréé is to be commended for producing a translation that is quite readable and most useful for drawing a larger readership into the study of the Gloss.

Students of the study of the Bible in the Middle Ages will welcome this significant addition to our knowledge of the Gloss and will look forward to Andréé’s critical edition of the balance of the Gloss on Lamentations.

MARK ZIER, San Francisco

ERIC J. GOLDBERG, *Struggle for Empire: Kingship and Conflict under Louis the German, 817–876*. (Conjunctions of Religion and Power in the Medieval Past.) Ithaca, N.Y., and London: Cornell University Press, 2006. Pp. xxiii, 385; black-and-white figures, genealogical tables, and maps. \$47.50.

This book is part of an ongoing project among Carolingianists to understand the later ninth century on its own terms rather than those set by historians looking for the origins of Germany and France or tracing the inevitable fall of the Frankish empire. Carolingian rulers did not know that by the year 888 death and the failure to produce legitimate heirs would so reduce their bloodlines that the Frankish nobles would turn elsewhere for the *Königsnähe* (nearness to the king) that enhanced and authorized their own power. Thus they never gave up the dream of reconstituting Charlemagne’s empire. Eric Goldberg’s detailed and nuanced account of the life and reign of Louis the German nicely illustrates that fact, conveying both the success and the tragedy of the dynasty. The Carolingians held

on to power for three generations after Charlemagne, but their power, like his (and that of every other noble lineage in Europe), was always hard won and never very secure. They constantly faced enemies from without and within, even within their own families. The contradictory nature of their lives as Christian warlords could also take a heavy psychological toll. Two years before he died, Louis had a vision of his father, thirty-four years after his death, tormented by flames and begging for aid. Although he marshaled the prayers of his whole kingdom in response, Louis must have wondered what lay in store for himself. His devotion to religion seems real enough, but even his admirers described him as shrewd, cunning, or ruthless, and no one has ever thought to dub him Louis the Pious II.

The narrative is divided into three parts. Part 1 covers the period from Louis's birth (ca. 810) to the Treaty of Verdun in 843. Goldberg skillfully uses books that the young Louis owned (and even wrote in) to get at his interests, education, and budding spirituality, and he vividly portrays what it must have been like to train for war and Christian kingship at Aachen in the early ninth century. At a disadvantage vis-à-vis his considerably older brothers, Louis began building a power base in Bavaria as soon as he came of age, with a court at Regensburg, "a city that possessed all the benefits of a civilized urban capital with deep Roman roots" (p. 51). Here as elsewhere, Goldberg uses royal diplomas with great success to show precisely how Louis built a network of supporters among the Bavarian magnates.

Part 2 covers the years 844–52, during which Louis established control over the disparate provinces of East Francia. He consolidated his power on the home front, in typical Carolingian fashion, through "active personal rule, cooperation with the nobles, and an alliance with the Church" (p. 147). At the same time he developed his military forces and tactics against the Slavs along his eastern borders, achieving at least some success in getting them to submit to his tributary lordship. By the end of the period he had created something that neither his father nor grandfather had: "an effective system of kingship and government east of the Rhine" (p. 187). There is not enough room here to do justice to the rich and detailed picture Goldberg creates of the various tools Louis used to achieve his goals. Besides campaigning in the East and forging alliances with churchmen like Raban, the abbot of Fulda and later archbishop of Mainz, they included careful staging of royal ceremonies; regularly presiding over judicial and legislative assemblies; patronizing vernacular literature, which helped endear him to his Frankish and Saxon followers; and fostering an aura of feminine sanctity around his wife Emma and their three daughters, keeping the girls out of the reach of aspiring nobles and perhaps even himself from fathering illegitimate children once his queen had passed her childbearing years.

Part 3 covers the last twenty-four years of Louis's life, when he concentrated on capturing the Frankish heartlands west of the Rhine and gaining the imperial crown. While Goldberg stresses Louis's at least temporarily successful *Drang nach Westen*, the discussions here as elsewhere on diplomacy and warfare in Bohemia, Moravia, and the so-called Eastland between the Danube and the River Drava are particularly enlightening. Louis had the usual trouble keeping his sons happy while he held on to power but succeeded well enough so that for the last five years of his life he could turn his attention to Italy and the final prize. Predictably, though, favoring his eldest son led the other two to resist his plans to invade Italy and allowed his half brother Charles to beat him to the punch. He died, seven months after his queen, with his hopes still unfulfilled.

This is a beautifully designed book, both in concept and in execution. The author uses a wide variety of sources—charters as well as chronicles, along with seals and clothing, books and paintings, and architectural and archaeological remains—to great effect. The good-quality black-and-white illustrations are well integrated with the text, and the maps, genealogies, and index are comprehensive and accurate. Goldberg is certainly right that "dynastic conflict was at the heart of ninth-century Carolingian politics" (p. 7), but the

same could be said for the whole of the Middle Ages. To the degree that that is true, his book deserves a readership beyond the students and scholars of the later Carolingian age for whom it is sure to be indispensable for a long time to come.

FREDERICK S. PAXTON, Connecticut College

ELIZABETH GONZALEZ, *Un prince en son hôtel: Les serviteurs des ducs d'Orléans au XVe siècle*. (Histoire Ancienne et Médiévale, 74.) Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 2004. Paper. Pp. 393 plus CD-ROM in back cover pocket; black-and-white figures, tables, 15 graphs, and 3 maps. €38.

The House of Valois-Orléans has been ill served by the stewards of its documents. The death at thirty-five of Louis I and the long English captivity of his son Charles following Agincourt may account in part for this apparent lack of interest. In 1775 the archives of the *Chambre des comptes de Blois* were moved to Paris, where they were consolidated with those of the *Chambre des comptes de Paris*, a mistake that has had far-reaching consequences, for at the time of the Revolution those records were sold. The British Library was interested in acquiring papers that related to Charles's English captivity (1415–40); others found their way into the *Bibliothèque nationale* and the *Archives nationales*; and many were lost. Some were published through the years, but compared with the papers of other noble French households, the records are far from complete. Nor have the English produced any account of the papers held on that side of the Channel, though many are available in Rymer's *Foedera*.

In the absence of the basic historical work that would make the material accessible to the scholarly community, historians have depended on the early work of men such as René de Maulde-La-Clavière and later Pierre Champion. Steeped in romanticism, these and other scholars offered us Louis d'Orléans as a spendthrift womanizer, his wife, Valentina Visconti, as a beautiful, sensitive lady, noble in spirit, who dies of grief at the loss of her dashing husband, and their son Charles as the politically ineffectual Romantic poet, preoccupied with love. With her study of the *serviteurs* of the *hôtels* of the three fifteenth-century *ducs d'Orléans*, Elizabeth Gonzalez hopes to remedy the present state of *des oubliés de l'histoire* (Louis I, brother of Charles VI; his son Charles; and his son Louis II, later Louis XII) by laying the groundwork for new, serious, and much more extensive work on the House of Orléans. While it is true that "l'histoire des ducs d'Orléans au XVe siècle reste à écrire," what she offers is a richly detailed but very readable foundation for such a history, a study that begins with the questions, what was an *hôtel* at the end of the Middle Ages, and how did it work?

Gonzalez's analysis of the institution is both horizontal and vertical, divided into three parts beginning with "Une institution singulière: L'hôtel." In it she evaluates previous definitions of an *hôtel* in its various aspects, domestic, diplomatic, administrative, etc., and looks at the various terms for members of the *hôtel*: *officier*, *serviteur*, *gens*, etc. She traces the rise and fall of the *hôtel d'Orléans* from its creation in the late fourteenth century by and for Louis I, through the difficult years of Charles's long life, to its end when Louis XII ascended the throne in 1498. She also deals with the question of the powers of three noblewomen: did women take over the powers of their husbands when the duke or prince was killed (Louis I) or taken captive (Charles) or underage (Louis II)? Finally, she discusses the management and disbursement system of the institution.

Part 2, "La vie du groupe," is in many ways the heart of the book. Gonzalez chooses four offices to discuss in detail: *de chambellan*, *d'écuyer d'écurie*, *de maître d'hôtel*, and *de valet de chambre*, explaining in what they consist and how they relate to one another. In the third part of her study ("L'hôtel, un instrument de pouvoir?"), she looks at the mutual