



PROJECT MUSE®

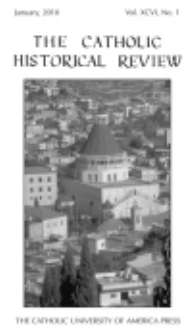
Saint Louis (review)

James M. Powell

The Catholic Historical Review, Volume 96, Number 1, January 2010,
pp. 111-113 (Review)

Published by The Catholic University of America Press

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1353/cat.0.0621>



➔ *For additional information about this article*

<https://muse.jhu.edu/article/369521>

Christendom—principally Italy, the Empire, France, England, and Iberia—but he also wrote to the distant kings of Denmark, Hungary, and Bulgaria. A sizable proportion of the correspondence referred to routine matters such as protecting and confirming the possessions of individual churches, resolving disputed elections, and performing other ecclesiastical formalities. Major issues involved defending Stephen Langton's election to the see of Canterbury against King John's opposition, urging Philip Augustus to receive Queen Ingeborg back as his legitimate spouse, and enacting measures against the spread of the Albigensian heresy in Languedoc. The pope also treated social concerns such as the definition of marriage and legitimacy of birth, the repression of tournaments and usury, and the regulation of the Jews and the nascent university at Paris, but he could also attend to small details such as protecting a poor widow's dowry against the maneuvers of a powerful abbess or reinstating a priest to his sacerdotal functions after he had lost a finger on his left hand.

Rainer Murauer and Andrea Sommerlechner have sought to reproduce as accurate a transcription as possible of the registers' text. In rare cases when a recipient's copy has been located they have collated the two versions. Their introduction does not leave unexplored any analytical tools such as paleography and codicology. The contextual apparatus is truly monumental: all proper names of persons and places have been identified; cross references to other papal letters and to the collections of canon law abound; allusions to theological treatises composed at Paris have been uncovered. The footnotes read like bibliographic and historical monographs on the disparate subjects of each letter. In confirming the properties of individual churches each obscure hamlet or villa is identified in areas as distant from each other as St. Andrews, Scotland; Reading, England; Sens, France; and Geronrod, East Saxony. The modern editors are certainly better informed about the possessions of these churches than the clerics of Innocent's chancery who merely copied documents that were presented to them. Five indices provide comprehensive access to the materials of the volume. Thanks to the meticulous industry of the Austrian Historical Academy in Rome, we shall soon have a complete edition of Innocent's registers that will rival those that have been produced by the *Ecole Française de Rome* for the popes of the thirteenth century. The chief remaining lacuna in this period is Innocent's successor Honorius III (1216–27).

Johns Hopkins University

JOHN W. BALDWIN

Saint Louis. By Jacques Le Goff; translated by Gareth Evan Gollrad. (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press. 2009. Pp. xxxii, 948. \$75.00. ISBN 978-0-268-03381-1.)

Jacques Le Goff has given us a very personal account of St. Louis and has entered intimately into his life. Although he never completely abandons his

role as a critical historian, he embraces Louis not merely as a great king but also as a person and, from that perspective, as a saint. For, while he begins and ends his massive volume with the question "Did Saint Louis exist?", his book is his response to that question, and it is positive. Moreover, he leaves no real doubt that he regards Louis as the greatest of French kings and one who has much to offer to contemporary French citizens. His St. Louis is a multifaceted personality with a profound sense of his role as king and a deep commitment to peace and justice. Early on, Le Goff makes it clear that he does not put Louis's leadership of the crusade as the central feature of his book, leaving that chiefly to others, particularly to Jean Richard and William Chester Jordan, the works of both of whom he admires.

Le Goff divides his volume into three parts. The first is devoted to the place of Louis in the royal family of his age and his emergence as king under the tutelage of his mother, Blanche of Castile. It emphasizes the strength of this youthful figure. Part 2 presents the sources that have given us St. Louis, beginning with a discussion of administrative sources and moving on to hagiography, the making of the legends surrounding his identity, and discussing Joinville's biography. He leaves no doubt about his own reliance on Joinville's account. The final section is, in many ways, a lengthy conclusion, probing the questions of Louis's use of language and gestures, his rulership, and his religion. This is balanced by chapters on conflict and criticisms, and his sainthood.

One issue that recurs in this volume is Louis's strong sense of the role of kingship and his willingness to oppose the hierarchy and the papacy when he believed that ecclesiastical policies encroached on his rights. In this, he was very much in the mold of his grandfather, Philip Augustus, and a model for his successors, especially Philip the Fair. Le Goff discusses his relationship with Pope Innocent IV in a number of places, but the result is not entirely satisfactory. In fact, he seems rather ambivalent, as he tries to balance Louis's undoubted loyalty to the Church and the papacy with his disagreements with the pope on specific issues. This question is especially evident in the manner in which he deals with Emperor Frederick II. While Le Goff recognizes Louis's efforts to resolve the conflicts between the emperor and the pope, he misses an opportunity to broaden his picture of Louis himself. There is no question that Louis tried to mediate, but the matter goes deeper. Louis had a much better understanding of the problems faced by a king in the early-thirteenth century than did the pope, for he shared many of the same goals and issues. His commitment to peace and justice mirrors the fundamental theme of Frederick's Constitutions of Melfi. Unfortunately, Le Goff seems to become too enmeshed in the picture of Frederick presented by Ernst Kantorowicz's biography and the essay of Antonio Marongiu on the Kingdom of Sicily as the first modern state. The valuable biography by David Abulafia is not mentioned; also missing is an appreciation of the degree to which the problems confronting Frederick both in Germany and Italy were similar to those that faced the Capetians. If Louis was a feudal king to a greater degree than

Frederick, it was because differences have received more emphasis than similarities. But behind those differences, there was a shared concept of rulership that motivated Frederick as well. Moreover, both men may well have been influenced by similar forms of piety to a greater degree than has been understood until recently. Frederick certainly had problems with the Dominicans over the Moslems of Lucera, but he seems to have been closer to the Franciscans. Moreover, he was buried in a Cistercian habit.

The Louis that exists in these pages is real in two senses. The first is Louis the king and saint, presented here in a fully believable manner. There is no question but that the *vita* of Joinville has served Le Goff well in this respect. Louis lives and walks through these pages. What Le Goff has given us is more than a biography; it is a work of literature. The second Louis also lives. This is the king who embodies much that is part of the French nation. With St. Jeanne d'Arc, he lives as a symbol. LeGoff has given us glimpses of this Louis, who loves the French language and gives insights into the meaning of being French. The two are not exclusive. In fact, they embrace one another. Little did Philip the Fair realize in his efforts to secure canonization or Pope Boniface VIII in pronouncing him a saint how much they were defining the France of the future.

Given the length of this book, many will be intimidated and will not take up its challenge. That is a pity, for Le Goff has much to offer here. There is no chapter that does not contain information and ideas that deserve to be discussed further.

Syracuse University (Emeritus)

JAMES M. POWELL

Schools and Schooling in Late Medieval Germany: Regensburg, 1250-1500.

By David L. Sheffler. [Education and Society in the Middle Ages and Renaissance, Vol. 13.] (Leiden and Boston: Brill. 2008. Pp. xvi, 417. \$186.00. ISBN 978-9-004-16664-6.)

This is a very detailed study that brings to light from archives, manuscripts, and printed sources everything there is to know about education in late medieval Regensburg. Chapter 1 reviews the scholarship on German schooling in the late Middle Ages; it is a useful chapter for nonspecialists unfamiliar with a topic on which much recent work has been done. Chapter 2 analyzes Regensburg's schools in detail. Sheffler finds that Regensburg had ecclesiastical schools (collegiate schools, the cathedral school, and schools of the mendicant orders) and private masters, but no municipal school. The education that they provided seems to have been competent and extensive. He teases out indirectly from the documents a little information about the education of girls and women. And he notes that the Jewish community, some 500 to 600 strong, must have had a large elementary school, although documentation is lacking.