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Review of Three Eleventh Century Anglo-Latin
Saints' Lives: Vita S. Birini, Vita Et Miracula S.
Kenelmi, Vita S. Rumwoldi, edited by R.C. Love

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his work (and to some extent Peter Damian himself) on others. He has approached this task by taking up sequentially several aspects of Peter's career. First is his impact on monastic life at Monte Cassino, to which he came in 1064 at the invitation of Abbot Desiderius and where he was long remembered, being mentioned in several of the monastery's manuscripts. Next comes his impact on the struggle over lay investiture. Freund examines the use made of his subject's thought and words by five of the other participants in the controversy and finds many echoes of his views in their works. He then looks at Peter Damian in the context of collections of canon law. Although it can be safely assumed that Peter was never able to fulfill the request of Hildebrand that he himself assemble a collection of canons, his work influenced other collectors, such as Anselm of Lucca and Bonizo of Sutri. However, Gratian, whose *Concordia discordantium canonum* became the basic text of canon law, made no direct use of any of Peter's work, whatever influence there may have been on the *Decretum* was at most second hand. The book then moves to two shorter chapters, the first devoted to the impact he had on contemporary monastic reform, the second to his reputation in the early Italian Renaissance. Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio all made reference to Peter Damian's life and thought, preserving his memory and enhancing his reputation.

The method of analysis used in this book requires skill, learning, and patience. Although some of the writers studied cited Peter by name, most of them did not. The author is obliged to assess influence by comparison of similar words and ideas. This is not always easy, particularly when so many of them were in common circulation at the time. The author is understandably cautious in many cases, concluding that the balance of probabilities favors ascribing this or that phrase or notion to his subject, but noting that the ascription cannot be certain. Still, there are enough relatively certain ascriptions to justify the effort entailed.

The book concludes with a scholarly edition of the *Vita Petri Damiani* written by John of Lodi, a work previously available only in early printed versions. The author's introduction traces the manuscript tradition and describes what is known about the medieval compiler. It also contains a thorough "word register" of John's *vita*. All in all, this is a useful though narrowly focused work, one that contributes to understanding an important moment in the history of the Western church as well as one of its most interesting participants.

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Three Eleventh-Century Anglo-Latin Saints' Lives: Vita S. Birni, Vita et Miracula S. Kenelmi, Vita S. Rumwoldi. Edited and translated by ROSALIND C. LOVE. Oxford Medieval Texts. New York: Oxford University Press, 1996. cxc + 149 pp. \$79.00.

Praefatio ad lectorem. The heading is correct; there really is a 190-page introduction, paginated by Roman numerals. In this volume the editor has

collected three *vitae*, those of Saints Birinus, Kenelm, and Rumwold, which she dates to the eleventh century. Since many *vitae* survive, the editor has to justify her choices, which she does not via their literary merits but rather the extent of their subjects' cults. This appears to be the right choice, since the *vitae* do not contain any new tropes and cannot be said to have altered the course of subsequent Anglo-Latin hagiography. They do, however, witness to the persistence of motifs which date back to the early Anglo-Saxon period. The editor also relates the works to the places of the cult, and she is careful not to push her evidence too far.

Although Love makes it clear that hagiography is not biography, she includes what historical information does survive, and that is not much. Birinus appears in the pages of Bede (*Historia Ecclesiastica*, III 7), occupying but two paragraphs in a modern edition. His *vita* provides no new information but does add two biblically inspired miracles. As for Kenelm, "It is difficult securely to establish the identity of the saint from any surviving documentary evidence independent of the legend (just) recounted" (p. lxxxix). Since Rumwold lived for only three days, biography would be superfluous.

This series presents critical editions, so Love spends much of the long introduction on manuscripts and Latinity. The section on Kenelm offers a valuable interpretation of the *vita's* structure and its relation to an earlier *vita*. Love suggests that Goscelin of St. Augustine's in Canterbury (died around 1107) composed this work, the other two are anonymous. The valuable appendix includes the earlier work on Kenelm as well as other texts relating to these saints.

If this book has a shortcoming (aside from the price), it is Love's grim approach to the material. She points out the "pompous and verbose rhetorical style" (p. li) of the *vita S. Birini*, but the work is a magnificent technical display that takes very spare biographical material (one page of Bede) and turns it into a twenty-four-page, highly entertaining account. Ironically, Love recognizes that, not by her technical evaluation but by her superb translation which well conveys the style of the original. As for the *vita S. Rumwoldi*, even the most credulous medieval believer must have laughed (or at least smiled) at the newborn babe's wearing out his tiny body with constant preaching and exhortations to his family, but Love just passes over that. This is a useful book for the specialist in medieval English church history and hagiography.

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Monks and Laymen in Byzantium, 843–1118 By ROSEMARY MORRIS. Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1995. xxii + 330 pp.

Rosemary Morris's *Monks and Laymen in Byzantium, 843–1118* is another in a series of brilliant monographs that are appearing on Byzantine church history. Like most monographs, however, these are by definition not surveys and focus