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John Hine Mundy, *Studies in the Ecclesiastical and Social History of Toulouse in the Age of the Cathars. Church, Faith and Culture in the Medieval West*. Burlington, VT, and Aldershot, U.K.: Ashgate, 2006. 258 pp. Appendices, maps, and index. \$99.95 U.S./£ 52.50 U.K. (hb). ISBN 0754653161.

Review by Joshua C. Birk, Eastern Illinois University.

The volume is a collection of previously published essays which Mundy assembled shortly before his death in 2004. They have been extensively edited, reworked, and reorganized in an effort to correct mistakes in the originals and incorporate more recent scholarship. The introduction, drawn from Mundy's memoirs, focuses on his experiences in the archives of Toulouse in 1946-47, while the bulk of the text consists of three chapters, each with its own appendices.

The essays focus on Toulouse and its surroundings in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. This time span covers both the rise of the Cathar movement and its subsequent repression, but heresy itself is not the focal point of the collection. Instead, Mundy explores the operations of various ecclesiastical and social institutions within the city. Throughout his career Mundy has argued against the notion that the rise in Catharism was a result of corruption, weakness, or greed on the part of the clergy in and around Toulouse. These essays depict an active and vibrant parish clergy, deeply engaged in the community of their parishioners.

The first chapter of the volume contains a history of the parishes of Toulouse. Mundy builds on the work of Canon Etienne Delaruelle, Janine Povill, and Pierre Géard, who undertook similar projects from the inception of the city into the twelfth century, but extends his own work into the mid-thirteenth century. Mundy argues that the development and organization of parish churches throughout the region were relatively uniform, and occurred at an earlier date than had previously been asserted. He places particular focus on the conflict and competition between the parish churches in and around the city of Toulouse. During the Gregorian reform the Cluniac monastery of Moissac came to dominate the city. In the late eleventh and twelfth centuries local churchmen, who formed alliances with the military religious orders and the Cistercians, increasingly contested Cluniac dominance. The terrain for this battle was over the right to administer marriages, baptisms, and most especially burials, along with the accompanying testaments, and the fees associated with the administration of such sacraments. For many priests, some of whom did not have the ability to collect tithes, these were essential to the survival of their parish.

Along with this ecclesiastical competition, the growth of heresy and the corresponding reduction in the desire for Catholic sacraments increased the financial difficulties of the parish priests. Mundy, however, avoids discussion of whether or not the competition for such fees or the pursuit of material wealth caused a spiritual dissatisfaction. The financial difficulties caused by the heretics ensured that the majority of parish priests were firm allies of the Albigensian crusades. The parish clergy reaped substantial rewards from the crusades in the form of legal mandates compelling the laity to obtain sacraments and pay the accompanying fees for such services. The parish clergy effectively monopolized such practices and demanded, according to some citizens, exorbitant rates for the sacraments. The balance of power shifted in the mid-thirteenth century, when, faced with the rising challenge of the mendicant orders, civic authority was able to restrict the power of the parish clergy.

In the second chapter Mundy reconstructs the history of the hospitals, leper houses, and confraternities of Toulouse using records of donations to such institutions. He ascribes the foundations of these institutions to three periods: one following the Gregorian reforms, one preceding the Albigensian crusade, and one following the conclusion of the crusade. Citing the high number of charitable foundations in the late-eleventh and early-twelfth centuries, Mundy argues that the church was beset by heretics and in decay, but experiencing one of its greatest periods of charitable donation.

Mundy shows the ways in which these donations shaped not just the religious but also the social and economic fabric of urban society. The donations were not simply charitable giving; they also served as an important safety-net for the laity, creating a system of pensions, old age care, and guarantees of burial funds. Managing these assets proved to be a financial boon to the frequently cash-strapped clergy of Toulouse. While Mundy provides a wealth of information about the social elite of Toulouse and about the charitable institutions themselves, he acknowledges that he has little information on the poor and how this gift-giving would have affected them.

The third chapter of the book addresses the relationship between the inhabitants of the city of Toulouse and those in the nearby countryside. Mundy acknowledges the friction between those two groups, but only in passing, preferring to explore the “similarity in objective and intention” which drew the two factions together (p. 113). Using wills and financial records Mundy illustrates that, unsurprisingly, urban elite in Toulouse were financially invested in the countryside, but also that wealthy citizens from nearby towns were similarly invested in urban assets.

Mundy asserts that the city, towns, and countryside shared a tradition of intellectual exchange that paralleled their economic connections. He illustrates the way in which the city of Toulouse served as an intellectual hub from which ecclesiastical, notarial, legal, and medicinal developments projected into the countryside. However, the intellectual exchange seems distinctly one-sided when compared to the economic relationship Mundy describes. Urban practices were emulated in the surrounding areas, but were there no innovations in the countryside that found their way to the city?

Throughout the volume, Mundy does little to contextualize his work in any wider framework. He makes the occasional reference to the pattern of emergence of well-defined urban parishes in eleventh-century northern France and developments in charitable donations in Italy or Provence that were similar to those in Toulouse. However, he does little to substantiate such observations or to fully integrate them into his own work. His concern rests in the exploration of Toulouse in particular, rather than placing it within a larger context.

As with all of Mundy’s work, the appendices, which contain extensive lists of parish churches and charitable institutions of Toulouse and all of their officers, are invaluable for students and scholars working in the region. The book concludes with eight chapters of “notes,” which are brief articles—also with appendices, averaging about ten pages in length—detailing very specific aspects of life in and around Toulouse.

Ashgate advertises this volume as the conclusion of the work Mundy began in *The Repression of Catharism in Toulouse: The Royal Diploma of 1279* (1985); *Men and Women at Toulouse in the Age of the Cathars* (1990); and *Society and Government at Toulouse in the Age of the Cathars* (1997). While the essays stand on their own, extensive knowledge and frequent reference to Mundy’s book-length works are required fully to appreciate this work. The volume makes terse, off-hand references to detailed arguments Mundy has introduced in his previous scholarship—arguments that are essential to understanding the import and limitations of the essays in this volume. Mundy’s thematic and intellectual focus tie the articles together, but at times the organization of the collection interferes with their cohesiveness. For instance, it remains unclear why chapter eight, “Thirteenth-Century Religious Foundations,” which was originally presented in the footnotes of “Charity and Social Work,” (the article

which is now chapter two), has not only been severed from the original essay, but also separated from it by a hundred-odd interposing pages.

John Hine Mundy dedicated a lifetime of scholarship to the history of Toulouse and produced series texts that described the network of economic, social, and religious connections within the city in unequalled detail. His books are indispensable to both students and scholars interested in the development of southern France in the High Middle Ages. This collection in no way supplants his previous work, but for those interested in Toulouse it is a welcome addition to his other texts. In addition, the essays provide a wealth of analysis and evidence to those interested in the development of charitable institutions and urban churches throughout medieval Europe.

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