

---

H-France Review Vol. 22 (February 2023), No.30

Guyon, Catherine, Yves Krumenacker, and Bruno Maes, eds. *Une piété lotharingienne. Foi publique, foi intériorisée (XIIIe-XVIIIe siècles)*. Paris: Classiques Garnier, 2022. 357pp. Notes, references, illustrations, figures, and indexes. €73.00. (hb). ISBN 9782406122173; €32.00. (pb). ISBN 9782406122166.

Review by Ronnie Po-Chia Hsia, Pennsylvania State University.

In the introduction, two of the editors (Guyon and Maes) added a question mark to the title of this book: *Une piété lotharingienne?* Philippe Martin, who wrote the conclusion to this volume of fourteen essays, also questions the existence of a unique type of Lotharingian Catholic piety. First, a clarification of terms. Lotharingia is the territory that medievalists refer to as *media Francia*, the middle territories between *Francia* and *Germania* in the tripartite division of Charlemagne's empire in the year 843. It stretches from the north in the Low Countries through Luxembourg, Lorraine, Franche-Comté, and Savoy to Lombardy. Linguistically, Dutch, Flemish, French, Italian, and several German dialects were spoken by the inhabitants of this in-between zone. Split into smaller states and independent cities shortly after the 843 division, these lands were subjected to the political pulls of a steadily expanding French Kingdom to the West and a vast but disunited Holy Roman Empire to the East. Several of these territories would pass between the rule of different dynasties; the provinces of the Low Countries, the Duchy of Lorraine, and Franche-Comté came variously under Burgundian, French, Spanish, and Austrian rule, in addition to their local princes. To give some semblance of unity, the editors invoke two terms introduced by historians to refer to this region, "*l'axe lotharingien*" (Michel Parisse) and "*la dorsale catholique*" (René Taveneaux). Both historians were natives of this realm, and both specialized in religious history (Parisse for medieval and Taveneaux for early modern).

While these two concepts may have been the inspiration for the conference that led to this volume, one should note that Philippe Martin, in the conclusion, emphatically rejects the notion that the dominant forms of Catholic piety that the papers address (Christocentric and Marian devotion, cult of saints, etc.) were unique to this Lotharingian space. If there were a dominant theme that characterized this region, it would be political fragmentation in the interstices between Franco-Imperial rivalry. This is most evident in the articles by Özkan Bardakçi and Claude Grimmer, the first on two princes of Lorraine in the seventeenth century--Philippe Emmanuel and Charles V--thwarted by the French crown, who turned their military services to the Habsburg imperial house in the holy war against the Ottomans in eastern Europe, and the second on Charles of Gonzaga, Duke of Nevers, who founded the town of Charleville in 1606 as a bulwark against France, before abandoning his urban project.

Among the rest of the contributions, nine study the religious history of this region in the early modern centuries and three concentrate on the Middle Ages. The reader can best approach these contributions by subject. Ghislain Tranié focuses on the figure of the nun after the Tridentine reforms and highlights the synergistic juxtaposition of cloistered religious (and saintly) women in the midst of the urban centers of Lorraine. Among the labors of male religious orders, the Jesuits strongly promoted pilgrimages and published many handbooks for would-be pilgrims, as Bruno Maes shows. Christocentric devotion is the subject of three essays. Anne Adrian and Magali Briat-Philippe co-authored a study of sculptural representations of the burial of Christ, an artistic genre found in the arc Lorraine, Burgundy, and Savoy. The Shroud of Turin, transported from Champagne to Lombardy, is studied by Paolo Cozzo and Nicolas Sarzeaud. While Cozzo focuses on the Shroud's significance in enhancing Piedmontese political identity, Sarzeaud singles out Margaret of Austria as the single most important patron in spreading this cult in the Netherlands. The daughter of Emperor Maximilian I and aunt of Emperor Charles V, Margaret retired as a widow to the court in Mechelin in the Low Countries after the death of her husband, Duke Philibert of Savoy, embodying the strong dynastic link between these two sub-regions of the "*dorsale catholique*."

For three devotional cults that originated in the Middle Ages, a strong cohesion for this region is not apparent. In 1170 in Liège, an independent ecclesiastical principality, the first report of a bleeding host appeared. François Wallerich links the emergence of this cult to the Cathar heresy, although similar reports of eucharistic miracles were absent in the Languedoc, where Catharism was strong, but this cult would spread eastwards to Germanic lands, where stories often spread to the detriment of Jewish communities. The second example was the cult of Saint Nicolas of Myre. Protector of merchants, the sick, children, and travelers, this saint's cult appeared during the eleventh century in Lotharingia. The widespread popularity of St. Nick (from Spain to Russia) points again to the non-specificity of another Catholic devotion, far from unique to Lotharingia. The third cult, devoted to Saint Agathe, a fifth-century saint purportedly martyred in 251 in Catania, Sicily, had nothing to do with Lotharingia, except for its spread during the thirteenth century, transmitted by Italian merchants, as argued by Frédéric Tixier, whose reception was strengthened by Agathe's inclusion among the 10,000 virgins martyred with Saint Ursula, a saintly cult that radiated from Cologne.

The final four essays under review address Marian devotion. Nicolas Balzamo analyzes extant legends of Marian sanctuaries in the Lotharingian realm and divides them into three categories according to stories of their origins: sanctuaries that received a Marian image from afar, those founded on the spot of accidental discovery of miraculous Marian apparitions, and shrines in commemoration of iconoclastic acts against Marian images. The vast majority founded in the late Middle Ages and the early modern period, these Marian shrines, and the stories of their origins, again do not endow Lotharingia with a specific piety. While this general pattern is also observed by Martin in his Conclusion, exceptions may be made when an individual Marian shrine was founded due to a set of specific political circumstances. The best example may be the Our Lady of Luxembourg (OLL), the subject of a fine essay by Isabelle Bernard-Lesceux, a cult established and promoted in the later seventeenth century by the Jesuits, who promoted OLL as the patron and protector of the Duchy of Luxembourg during a period of war, famine, and destruction that stretched from the Thirty Years War to the Wars of Louis XIV. Jean-François Ryon gives another example, Our Lady the Liberator, a cult developed during the 1640s drawing inspiration from the oath of King Louis XIII of France, who wrested Franche-Comté in 1638 from Spanish rule. In a related article, Ryon and Sylvie de Vesvrotte give the reader a longue

---

durée view of Marian representation in the Franche-Comté from the Council of Trent to the French Revolution.

In a succinct, thoughtful, and helpful conclusion Philippe Martin draws together the major themes of these quite divergent essays and decisively argues for what is and what is not useful in using the concept of “une piété lotharingienne.” In finishing my own review, I would like to expand on two of his major themes and add a third element in helping to define a Lotharingian space. The two themes enounced by Martin are the significance of princes and wars. Several of the essays already signal in this direction. The ducal house of Lorraine was of paramount importance. While a Francophone dynasty, Lorraine was politically loyal to the Holy Roman Empire and the Habsburgs and maintained an ambivalent relationship with the French Crown. A cadet branch of the ducal family, the House of Guise, became the major proponent of a militant Catholicism during the French Wars of Religion. Even after the conversion of the Huguenot Henri de Navarre to Catholicism and his enthronement as Henri IV, Lorraine still led a militant pro-Spanish Catholic opposition.

For most of the seventeenth century, before the subjugation of Lorraine by the Bourbons, Lorraine developed in contrempts to France. When the Jesuits were temporarily expelled from the lands of the French king, they were welcomed in Lorraine, where they established a university in Pont-à-Mousson. The strong Counter-Reformation identity of this Lotharingian realm, as many of the essays argue, is intrinsically tied to its political liminality. While liminal in the sense of in-betweenness (France and Empire), this axis was crucial to the Spanish Habsburgs. As Geoffrey Parker has demonstrated, “the Spanish Road” linked Spanish Milan through Savoy, Franche-Comté, to Lorraine and the Spanish Netherlands. It was the lifeline of the Army of Flanders, in Spain’s futile eighty-year attempt to stamp out the Dutch revolt. This region also witnessed the most important military movements in the Franco-Hispanic struggle for hegemony in the second half of the seventeenth century. The Treaty of the Pyrenees in 1675, an acknowledgement by Spain of its defeat, came in the wake of the French conquests of Lorraine and the Franche-Comté.

A third theme is mentioned in passing in these essays but deserves greater attention if our interest is in what makes this realm distinctive in general and not just Catholic piety. Trade. During the High Middle Ages, the two most economically developed regions in Europe were the southern Low Countries (today Flanders) and north-central Italy (Lombardy and Tuscany). Important as the sea-link might have been to connecting the Mediterranean to the North Sea, it was the trans-Alpine land route through Savoy, Franche-Comté, and Lorraine to the lands of the Meuse and Rhine that pumped the blood of enterprise into the economic heart of Western Europe.

#### LIST OF ESSAYS

Catherine Guyon and Bruno Maes, “Introduction: Une piété lotharingienne?”

Ghislain Tranié, “La religieuse, figure de la culture catholique dans la Lorraine des XVIe-XVIIe siècles”

---

Özkan Bardakçi, “De la ‘Longue Guerre de Hongrie’ à la ‘Petite guerre’ de Hongrie Philippe Emmanuel de Lorraine, duc de Mercœur, et Charles V de Lorraine, deux figures de l’esprit de croisade’ dans les confins de la Chrétienté”

Claude Grimmer, “La fondation de Charleville en la souveraineté d’Arches. Fer de lance d’une Europe chrétienne (1606-1626)”

Bruno Maes, “Forger l’homme dévot. Les livrets de pèlerinage des Pays-Bas catholiques et de la France du Nord au XVIIe siècle”

François Wallerich, “Les hosties miraculeuses des Flandres à l’Italie du Nord. Des témoins de l’essor précoce de la dévotion eucharistique dans l’espace lotharingien? (vers 1170-vers 1270)”

Anne Adrian and Magali Briat-Philippe, “La mise au tombeau du Christ. Perspectives croisées, de la Lorraine à la Savoie”

Paolo Cozzo, “Les cultes de la Passion comme vecteurs d’identités politiques dans le Piémont de l’époque modern. Le cas de l’ancien marquisat de Saluces”

Nicolas Sarzeaud, “Marguerite d’Autriche et la diffusion du culte du Saint-Suaire dans la première moitié du XVIe siècle”

Catherine Guyon, “Saint Nicolas, un saint lotharingien au Moyen Âge?”

Frédéric Tixier, “Sainte Agathe de Catane à la conquête de la Lorraine. De la dévotion aux représentations (Moyen Âge-époque modern)”

Nicolas Balzamo, “Les legends de foundation des sanctuaires mariaux de l’espace lotharingien. Analyse comparée”

Isabelle Bernard-Lesceux, “Notre-Dame de Luxembourg, naissance et diffusion. XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles”

Jean-François Ryon, “Notre-Dame Libératrice, une réponse au vœu de Louis XIII?”

Sylvie de Vesvrotte and Jean-François Ryon, “Les représentations mariales en Franche-Comté du concile de Trente à la Révolution”

Philippe Martin, “Conclusions”

Ronnie Po-Chia Hsia  
Pennsylvania State University  
[rxh46@psu.edu](mailto:rxh46@psu.edu)

Copyright © 2023 by the Society for French Historical Studies, all rights reserved. The Society for French Historical Studies permits the electronic distribution of individual reviews for nonprofit educational purposes, provided that full and accurate credit is given to the author, the date of publication, and the location of the review on the H-France website. The Society for

---

French Historical Studies reserves the right to withdraw the license for edistribution/republication of individual reviews at any time and for any specific case. Neither bulk redistribution/republication in electronic form of more than five percent of the contents of H-France Review nor republication of any amount in print form will be permitted without permission. For any other proposed uses, contact the Editor-in-Chief of H-France. The views posted on H-France Review are not necessarily the views of the Society for French Historical Studies.

ISSN 1553-9172