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Janet T. Marquardt, *From Martyr to Monument: The Abbey of Cluny as Cultural Patrimony*. Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2007. xix + 286 pp. Maps, figures, notes bibliography, and index. ISBN 9-781847-182128 (cl).

Review by Matt Matsuda, Rutgers University.

For a work that focuses with an almost antiquarian precision upon a singular subject—the art, archaeology, and appropriations of the Abbey of Cluny—Janet Marquardt's *From Martyr to Monument* covers a surprising amount of historical ground. In every sense of the word, this is a classic scholarly monograph, uniquely targeted on a delimited subject and shaped by mastery of close architectural readings and examinations of provincial politics. Conceptually, however, the range of the work is broad, as one might infer from chapters that read their subject in terms of “an ending and a beginning” and a sequence of “anticipations,” “interventions,” and “resurrections.”

Marquardt's perspective is to begin her narrative of the Abbey, logically, at a point of origin. What frames her approach, however, is that this does not mean an excursus directly upon the Abbey's medieval foundations, but to the moment when its “beginning” was marked by its destruction. Like many studies in French history built around 1789, the logic of this is not a discussion of moments when buildings were built, but rather when they markedly “came into” history. For Cluny, this moment is the French Revolution and, in effect, it is the Revolution that shapes the narrative and moves the Abbey from edifice to materialized martyr and finally to monument. Nearly a hundred illustrations—documents, postcards, renderings, commemorative photos, keepsakes, diagrams, and views—trace this chronicle, decorating the volume and keeping the reader's attention closely trained on the portals, environs, work-teams, and celebrations of the Abbey, creating a dense and finely detailed world of regional history and art-historical exegesis.

Though visual interpretation is a major part of the presentation, it is the overlapping historical narratives that are nested throughout the analysis that makes them more than a series of illustrations. As Marquardt notes, “[I]f one were only to conserve the ruin at Cluny, it would remain heritage. It was by giving into the need to restore some portions of the abbey structures, as well as create a discourse about its original purpose and contemporary relevance, that it became part of national patrimony” (p. 5). This interrogation of “purpose and relevance” is what motivates the argument, and here is where Marquardt is at her most daring and creative. Whereas one could easily imagine building up a case for the significance of the Abbey based on historical antecedents, perhaps the most intriguing aspect of the author's analysis is her underscoring of Cluny's unremarkable nature. Though in retrospect an obvious candidate for national re-dedication coming out of medieval, Catholic and revolutionary dechristianization struggles, Marquardt points out what was in many ways the singular emptiness of the cathedral's symbolism. “Everything about Cluny went against the currents of popular Catholicism in the nineteenth century. Cluny was neither a rural backwater, offering a pure and childish peasant spiritualism, nor an urbanized ‘religious resort’ like Lourdes had become.” As a result of having been a seat of “ecclesiastical power” rather than popular faith, Cluny's legacy was built without relics, saints, miracles and as such “was unable to gain a foothold in the pilgrimage economy” (p. 7).

Throughout, Marquardt's narrative understates—and thus challenges—narratives of the Abbey's destruction as a project of Revolutionary violence, vandalism, anticlericalism, and dramatic tragedy. By

unfolding the chronicle of the Abbey's downfall across the early nineteenth century, she points out that the demolition responded as much to provincial decisions and town and village rivalries for status and resources as nation-shaking revolutionary fervor, as much neglect and abandon as iconoclasm. Hers is a critical examination of the multiple layers of historical interpretation. If the legacy of Cluny lay for Catholics in attacks on the faith by mobs and Jacobins, the author's perspective gives as much insight to remembering "that the monks themselves had certainly not clung to their medieval past; they were the first to demolish old buildings in the ongoing spirit of renovation and expansion" (p. 12).

The basic argument, then, is not history as willful destruction by agents of change, but as inexorable shifts in perspective driven by cycles of generations. "Cluny could not become an historical monument until...the ruins were poignant, romantic, and powerless" (p. 28). Throughout the early nineteenth century this change is traced through repair work to the Abbey in the 1820s and meditations on Hugo, Chateaubriand, Lamartine and others who, following research developed by Stéphane Gerson, paralleled regional government revaluations of provinces and medieval sites as ideal pasts, upholding ruins as personifications, domestications, and picturesque-formations for a "national" style for French architecture and materially embodied histories.

From the highest levels of government, figures like François Guizot shaped the policies of a Commission of Historic Monuments and ideologically lobbied the July Monarchy to legitimate itself as a government built on national pride as reinvested in rural and Catholic heritage. In the 1860s, Victor Duruy, Napoleon III's education minister, would pick up the pedagogical intent of such patrimony projects by trying to build education centers and local colleges in sites like the Abbey grounds, drawing out the Cluniac chivalric and paternalistic world of feudalism and serfdom, and replacing it with a progressive educational institution built on the petit-bourgeoisie of the village. By the 1880s, Jules Ferry picked up a similar thread (pp. 65-68) by appropriating former ecclesiastical sites in the name of compulsory public education, while the Church continued to defend its sacred and pedagogical prerogatives.

Multiple contesting narratives thus began to coalesce around the Cluny example, reinvesting the Abbey grounds with "the Romantic trajectory of an institution being formed out of early France, growing through the work of saintly agents, faltering in the forecasting of royal manners...and then culminating in the event of the Revolution." As noted above, though the conventional wisdom of the later nineteenth century held that the structure had been demolished somewhere near to 1789, in fact major demolition took place in the 1820s, with constant recycling and re-adaptation of the Abbey grounds by monks and villagers.

Here Marquardt draws on a rich cache of archival materials, multiple printed histories and governmental and regional reports to demonstrate not only the continuing divisions of purpose, but also the gradual accommodations and deliberate combinations of sacred and profane elements. Extensively detailed tourist guides extolled the ideal Medievalism and "perfection of the Romanesque" in praising the ruin, while alternatively attacking the 1898 Cluny jubilee as a scandal, "raking in funds for the Pope's coffers in Rome" (p. 92). A *Millenaire* commemorative book for the site in 1910, richly illustrated with postcards and ephemera, is in many ways a capstone moment of overlapping and collaborative challenges as Cluny is celebrated by church as well as by what might be regarded historical reenactors. As such, "the processions of genuine clergy are hard to distinguish from images of the costumed participants" (p. 126), placing the Abbey squarely within a historiographic narrative evacuated of origins and authenticity and steeped in commemoration, anachronism, and festivities that "seem to have a Hollywood quality about them": dignified prelates, knights in armor and medieval processions, Byzantine imperial costumes, everyday suits, boaters, fedoras, flowers and feathers of Orientalist fantasy. Perhaps literary critic Albert Thibaudet put it best in remarking, "The Cluny of today is not Cluny; it is the absence of Cluny..." (p. 142).

Into that absence came what in many ways would be a defining intervention—not that of struggles in the French provinces or the rivalries of local governments or anticlerical, national, and Catholic parties, but of archaeologists and art historians, particularly following the lead of German erudites Wilhelm Vöge and Adolph Goldschmidt (p. 160). Along the way, studies of Cluny as medieval structure and as region developed into historical and art-historical interventions attracting a host of globe-spanning characters, most notably the American Kenneth Conant, who used his position at Harvard to both engage with a trans-Atlantic project of historical restoration, while building a solid scholarly reputation for himself on the ruins of ancient France. Conant, who enlisted in the First World War, approached France and Europe with a sort of aesthetic enthusiasm, “thus both avoiding conscription into the infantry and fulfilling his desire to help defend the countries of his favorite artistic sites” (p. 155). During the interwar period, Conant greatly benefited from French “directors of propaganda (who) never stopped hoping that ‘educated Americans saw France as part of their own cultural patrimony’” (p. 167).

Working with excavation crews through the late 1920s and early 1930s, Conant put together detailed architectural renderings and meticulously assembled sculptural finds, working through the layers of successive Cluny implantations. Marquardt follows this by putting across an ethnographic study of Conant’s elite class orientation in the midst of his diggers and workingmen, his relations with the town as he digs up local gardens and squares, and the personal and financial negotiations faced repairing numerous damaged properties, broken pipes, culverts, and other elements of the existing town (p. 197).

Here, the analysis stays close to Conant’s experiences and the conceptual presentation is not as sustained as in earlier chapters. A somewhat more discursive approach might help, for the argument focuses here on a man who experienced French history largely in terms of his station as a member of an international elite and as an intellectual authority. It develops thus also as an exercise in how that authority comes to bear in the speculative science of history as reconstructed from fragments, a theme rather underplayed. The centerpiece of this is Conant’s unearthing of sarcophagi, his deductions about the identities of the tombs, and—though lacking solid proof—the re-marking of the graves with new texts. The relationship of knowledge to expertise and authority is worth underscoring as it plays such a large role in the constitution of heritage and patrimony questions.

This becomes particularly significant as the Second World War adds another, unexpected dimension to these stories as the Cluny region becomes a home of the *maquis*—the French resistance movement. By 1949, the Church became a rallying point of a reunited France after the Occupation and journalists collapsed histories by noting such set-pieces of commemoration as “the façade of Pope Gelasius fronting the eighteenth-century conventual buildings on the marketplace damaged in the bombardments of 1944” (p. 227). How selection and authority work together were ultimately best articulated by François Mitterand, the state secretary for information, who declared “Cluny knew the splendor, the distress, the state of being forgotten and soon her resurrection as people from all countries met to honor her; for [Cluny] did not belong to any one person but to all the world”—evidence of the Republic’s already appropriative projects of commemoration and fixation on patrimony (p. 229). Thus by 1949, according to Marquardt, the medieval social orders were replicated by the “ruling class of the mid-twentieth century, politicians and academics; clerics...sharing their pride at administrative accomplishments; left and right movements of resistance tied to national pride” (p. 231).

The main ideas of *Martyr to Monument* are thus laid out: after the Revolution, religious past and republican nationalism struggled for resolution both in politics and in historical memory, and Cluny became a marker. Medieval monasticism as ideal and nostalgia rose with the nineteenth century and was staged in multiple incarnations from festival to nationalist jubilee to patriotic patrimony and world heritage of civilization in the aftermath of the Second World War. Importantly, town leaders benefited from what tourism they could, yet also labored to promote and distinguish their communities from being merely identified with monuments, once again exercising the tension between fixed presentation of heritage and the evolving and transformative vitality of localities (p. 260).

These mixed tales become salient in relief by returning briefly to Conant, and the manner in which his rigorously detailed art-historical studies and architectural documents became passé. Conant's comparative studies of stylistic elements faded as "Marxist analyses of contextual factors strengthened in academic popularity" (p. 247). Perhaps a stronger conceptual sense of Conant's motivations would help here too. Though the stories focus closely on Conant, a sense of his sentimental life is distant and the narratives remain manifestly professional in orientation. Small mention is made of Conant's wife Marie and their two sons, and Conant's personal motivations seem to derive from a more familiar sociocultural lineage approach—a tracing of intellectual interests in medievalism from Henry Adams and German art historians down through Conant.

In the last chapter, something of a historiographical framework then assembles notable and familiar musings on memory-theory, Reinhart Koselleck, Jacques LeGoff, David Harvey, Paul Ricoeur, Jan and Aleida Assman, Herman Lebovics, Pierre Birnbaum. Most of these works might have been developed more in the running analyses throughout the discussions, easing what is a rather pronounced divide between the monographical details in the chapters and the framing historiographical analyses at the beginning and end of the book.

By the conclusion, Conant will remain the central figure, having "inherited a utopian nostalgia from Male and Porter, and the idea of monks as "pious intellectuals" tied to an earnest belief in a pre-Raphaelite aesthetic of ideal spiritual creation. "One can admire the single-minded conviction, the nearly religious belief, of Conant's vision for Cluny. It could have come straight off Henry Adam's page—the imaginative journey back in time, peopled with reassuringly pious and ingenious medieval figures" (p. 199). The whole project of Cluny has been, in many senses, part of this ingenious history, struggling to reinvent itself for changing historiographies. Marquardt has traced that well.

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