Brief und Kommunikation im Wandel: Medien, Autoren und Kontexte in den Debatten des Investiturstreits, edited by Florian Hartmann, Cologne, Weimar and Vienna: Böhlau Verlag, 2016, 401 pp., Papsttum im mittelalterlichen Europa, vol. 5

Leidulf Melve published an important and excellent book over ten years ago and dealt with a material issue: namely the role of writings and documents recorded during the great controversy between secular and ecclesiastical authority in the eleventh century (*Inventing the Public Sphere: The Public Debate during the Investiture Contest (c. 1030–1122)*, 2 vols, Leiden and Boston, MA, 2007). The researcher thoroughly analysed various treatises and writings, many of which were published in the MGH series Libelli de lite imperatorum et pontificum. The book under review is essentially a complementary research of material partly omitted by Melve, though it should be emphasized that the Norwegian historian has written extensively about output of both the pope's and the emperor's chancellery, the correspondence between the parties of the dispute, as well as numerous letters of the proponents and opponents of the Holy See's activities. We should remember, however, that in the eleventh century great ecclesiastical reform letters often resembled developed treatises, full of arguments which — regardless of the addressee — were in fact addressed to a wide circle of recipients.

We should start from questions related to the title of the book. The studies collected herein are intended to relate to social communication at the time of the investiture contest, whereas in fact many of the included authors deal with sources from a period much earlier than Gregory VII's pontificate. The reform of the Church began at the turn of the millennium and popes had naturally been deeply involved in this since the pontificate of Leon IX; however 'investiture contest' is a very precise term which relates to particular activities and events. The issue of Henry IV's excommunication and subsequent humiliation in Canossa dominated German historiography of the eleventh century, but a synonymous definition of the so called Gregorian reform as '*Investiturstreit*' is cause for confusion; many national historiographies have ceased to use the two terms interchangeably. We need to revise the perception of the causal and temporal relationship between the ban on investiture and the struggle between the empire and the papacy. This prohibition, which came into force as late as 1077–80 (not earlier!), was the consequence of fundamental conflict between both powers (*prophetisches Sacerdotium* and *heilsgeschichtliches Regnum*), not the reason of this contest. The Church dealt with the problem as late as 1077, when papal legate Hugo from Die announced the ban on investiture for France during the synod in Autun and next year in Poitiers. In autumn of 1078 a general decree was published in Rome against acceptance of investiture by secular authorities, and the Lenten synod of 1080 repeated the ban and extended it to those granting investiture. This is why as far as Gregory VII's pontificate is concerned, the term *Investiturstreit* should not be used at all. It is not simply a terminological discussion; we should take into account a very important

problem: the real goals of papal reforms. If we do not answer this question, the research presented in this book may not bring a satisfying answer. Until recently, the historiography has opted for the opinion that Gregory VII's primary intent was to deprive secular authorities of influence on the Church. According to this view, the policy of the Holy See in the second half of the elevent century aimed mainly at *libertas ecclesiæ* — but it is accepted that this term did not equate to the exclusion of secular influence but rather included secular rulers in the reform. The reformers did not want strictly to separate the ecclesiastical and secular realms but to re-define the Holy See's position. Contrary to Simony and Nicolaism, opposed by many of Gregory VII's predecessors, the idea of the ban on investiture by rulers emerged gradually only during his pontificate.

The collective monograph presented is an output of the conference and vivid discussion which took place in Bonn in 2014. It contains sixteen detailed chapters and two texts by Florian Hartmann: one introducing the subject of research and the other summarizing studies contained in the book. In the first of these ('Kommunikation im Wandel: Medien, Autoren und Kontexte in den Debatten des Investiturstreits: Eine Einführung', pp. 9–21) the historian emphasized a point clear to most medievalists, namely that the elevnth century was a turning point in the history of the western middle ages and more broadly, western civilization. He mentioned several elements which were most significantly symptomatic of this, such as the Gregorian reforms of the Church, contentions over investiture, the struggle between *regnum* and *sacerdotium*, and political turmoil in the Reich. Hartmann is clearly aware that the issue of investiture has already been relativized especially by German historiography, not as the reason for contention but its consequence, yet the *Investiturfrage* (p. 10) is clearly a symbol of changes in the eleventh century for him. I cannot agree with such an approach; we might as well consider the Crusades, the first large-scale and independent European initiative of the Holy See, as symbols of the Gregorian reform. Looking through the prism of the consequences of great change may obscure the picture of causation and circumstance. The author also mentions numerous research areas in which scholars have had only marginal interest, especially given the context of events and phenomena which dominated the epoch, such as Canossa. These areas include the means and tools of the communication by the parties to present their demands, the range of information distribution, innovative propaganda methods, and, last but not least, the transferral of the debate conducted within the closed circle of those directly involved, to the public arena. In other words, we should re-analyse letters, treatises, hagiographies, chronicles in order to answer the question of who was the intended audience of the content of these texts. Obviously written propaganda and journalism were some of the forms of effective social communication and they were mastered thanks to increased mobility, a manifestation of which was the participation of local hierarchs from the mid-eleventh century in Roman synods and a demand for personal receipt of pallium by archbishops and, at the same

time, legations and the forwarding of information at local synods. Among numerous types of polemical writings which came out of the epoch of the Gregorian revolution, letters, both those ostensibly 'private', addressed to individual recipients, and the public *epistolæ vagantes*, play an important role.

In the summary ('Kommunikation im Wandel: Ergebnisse, Ausblick und Desiderate', pp. 381–91) Hartmann mentions three large arenas in which we may place the research contained in the book: communication and dialogue, tradition and novelty, and arguments, authorities and addressees. Post-conference works have clearly not exhausted the problem, and I do not refer only to specific texts and their authors but to whole research areas. So the author puts forward several interesting research proposals: for example, how we should study the influence of written demands on the recipients of these letters and their circle of co-workers. How do we detect the real recipient of a given letter — in other words, whether it was addressed to particular person or was in fact a form of open letter to the public? What was the impact of different written forms, such as letters and collections of canon law, on each other? Finally, the most difficult questions: what goal was achieved through these means of argument? What were the initial goals of their authors? And in what way were the appropriate arguments, examples and rhetorical devices supposed to affect recipients?

Both Hartmann's texts present in a clear and coherent way a very interesting research problem: letters and their role in the development of public and social communication. But the content of the book is more varied than simply this; other forms of writing, not only letters, are the subject of inquiry. On one hand, this adds value — thanks to these studies we get a wider picture of the public debate at a time of great change surrounding the Church and western European civilization; on the other, it raises a material weakness, because by including other forms of written message in the debate — including codification of canon law — we lose track of the specifics of the sources, which is the authors' central interest. The authorities referred to by medieval authors play a specific role in hagiographic works, a different role in the study of canon law, and another one still in letters — and we should take into account a fundamental difference between private letters and those addressed to a wider circles of recipients.

Another article which handles the subject is a precursor to the recent 'revisionist' research on investiture. It is written by the author of the seminal book on this conflict, Rudolf Schieffer (*Die Entstehung des päpstlichen Investiturverbots für den deutschen König*, Stuttgart, 1981). Schieffer has clearly summarized and recapitulated the research regarding this problem within the last 150 years, showing particular interest in the development of research, and the impact of this on medieval historiography in general ('Deutungen des Investiturstreits', pp. 23–41). But most valuable in the book under review are the dissertations on the kind of sources named in its title: letters, and the means and forms of communication. Thomas Wetzstein ('Von der Unmöglichkeit zu kommunizieren: Briefe, Boten

und Kommunikation im Investiturstreit', pp. 43–68) rightly states that the eleventh century was crucial for development of social communication, since it was at this time that ways of communication and the contexts in which communication was carried out solidified. He has chosen a mixed form of social communication as the subject of his research; specifically, oral transmission of written communications. He emphasizes that a large part of the communication of messages of the period has been lost to modern researchers, since messengers and legates complemented the written messages of their masters with the delivery of an oral message. Oliver Münsch focuses on another aspect of impacting public opinion, the dissemination of rumours, which — when written down — had a far greater range of audiences and reached distant circles of recipients ('Gerüchte und ihre Verbreitung: Beobachtungen zur Propaganda im Investiturstreit', pp. 69–90). As far as methodological issues are concerned, Christian Heinrich's discussion regarding a new definition of the *libelli de lite* type, that is, polemical writings, is worth mentioning (pp. 91–102).

Many of the studies focus on specific authors or their chancelleries. We have here comparative studies regarding Henry IV's letter formulae and those of his successor Henry V — in contrast to his father, who often addressed his letters to individual recipients, Henry V treated his correspondence as public and addressed it to all his subjects (Gerhard Lubich, pp. 129–45) — alongside research on strategies of communication with both sides of the dispute by Bishop Hezilon of Hildesheim (Matthias Schrör, pp. 147–55), and an attempt to describe the relations of the archbishops of Canterbury with English kings (Roland Zingg, pp. 157–74). Nicolangelo D'Acunto's research relating to the form and types of arguments used in the extensive correspondence of Peter Damiani ('Brieftradition und Argumentationsformen in den Briefen Petrus Damianis', pp. 261–70) deserves particular attention. The Italian scholar has hitherto dealt only with selected communication 'tricks' used by the prior of Fonte Avellana, not exhausting the subject, so it is worthwhile to complement his line of reasoning with several commentaries. The reformer left 180 letters, of which only a small part is the private correspondence addressed to individual recipients and concerning specific matters. The majority of it consists of epistolary treatises and hagiographies, letters, *consuetudines*, and such like, which even where they had an addressee, were in fact addressed to large groups of recipients (monks, nuns, reformers, Church hierarchs and the lay public), and played either a polemic or pastoral role. A good example of the problems with the identification of recipients surfaces with the first preserved letter of Peter Damiani, *Contra Iudæos* written circa 1400. It is an extensive work, partly a treatise and partly a dispute, addressed to a certain Honestus to provide him with arguments in the case that he should have to debate with Jews. Many researchers believe that Honestus is a fictional person, and the real audience and recipients of the letter were clergymen, who would at some point have encountered and confronted Jewish debaters. In fact, Damiani probably addressed his letter to yet another set of recipients, since he wanted to introduce himself to the nar-

row circle of church reformers through a display of his theological skills, skills of reasoning, use of arguments, knowledge of Bible and the writings of the Fathers of the Church. This renders the subject of the treatise unimportant, the main point being the presentation of the great skills of a youthful author.

The final group of contributions relate to the various arguments used by parties to the conflicts. For example, Anja-Lisa Schroll describes how memory about bishop Kadalus's schism was used in the period of a subsequent schism, both by the followers of Gregory VII and the anti-Pope Wibert (pp. 295–318). Klaus Herbers shows the way in which reformers made use of the ninth century papal authority, including Nicholas I (pp. 319–34). Lotte Kéry analyses collections of canon created at the time of Church reform and attempts to answer who was the audience, whose instruments were they, and were all of them ultimately tools of the Holy See (pp. 335–80).

Contrary to the title, the chapters contained in this book do not relate exclusively to the debate connected with investiture; they also deal with much earlier phenomena. But their common feature is describing the process which in English is defined by the term *epistolary turn*. The uniqueness of 'the long eleventh century' and its significance in forming the modern civilization of the West is also demonstrated in the studies which were presented in Bonn. The problem which remains to be researched and analysed is to what extent letters created in the period of interest in were 'real' writings; to what extent, how quickly and why did they become a stylistic and content model for other authors, and to what extent they were initially created as a voice and pattern to be used in public debate, both with respect to their content, ways of argument and style. The letters of the aforementioned Peter Damiani are an excellent example of such ambiguous epistolary activity. 'Epistolary turn' of the eleventh century may be better understood only in a wider context of the historical development of these types of sources, and the methodology of research which has been done on them. This is why important supplementary reading for the book under review should be the studies, predominantly methodological, contained in the book *Medieval Letters: Between Fiction and Document*, edited by Christian Høgel and Elisabetta Bartoli (Turnhout, 2015).

It is obvious that letters, both private and open, as well as collections of these, played an important role in the first public debate of medieval Europe. Those involved in this dispute learned how to use arguments in the public area and how to win over the public opinion. Heated, sometimes dramatic conflict created, thanks to the use of reasoned and often legal arguments, the intellectual climate of the twelfth-century Renaissance. The studies which have been gathered in this book bring us one step closer to understanding the phenomenon of the fundamental societal changes of the eleventh century.

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