

BOOK REVIEWS

CHRISTOPHE GRELLARD and FRÉDÉRIQUE LACHAUD, eds. *A Companion to John of Salisbury* (Leiden: Brill, 2014).

The *A Companion to John of Salisbury*, edited by professors Christophe Grellard and Frédérique Lachaud, is a collective work involving over ten specialists, who had either previously touched upon or had mainly focused their scientific writings on the life and works of John of Salisbury. The list of contributors includes names such as David Bloch, Clare Monagle, Cary J. Nederman, the two chief editors, and many others. *A Companion to John of Salisbury* was published in 2014 by Brill Publishing House and it aims at offering a global perspective upon the twelfth century philosopher and bureaucrat.

Despite having a wide range of contributors, the *Companion* maintains a sense of cohesion throughout its contents. From a structural point of view, it is split into four parts and twelve chapters of varying length. There is a constant back and forth motion from John of Salisbury's life, with its impact upon his writing, to his works. The first and the third parts are focused on John as a historical figure. They trace the context in which John was educated and moulded at the court of Henry II, trying to account for certain ideas or traits which can be found in John's work. The second and fourth parts focus on John's work, both his main philosophical treatises, the *Metalogicon* and the *Policraticus*, and on his less popular works, the *Entheticus*, the *Historia Pontificalis*, the lives of Anselm and Thomas Becket, and the *Letters*. Each work is analysed both on its own and in relation to the others. John's writings are also placed in connection with his life and their history after John's death is analysed as well.

The first part of the *Companion*, "Historical Context", focuses on John of Salisbury's biography. The three chapters that compose this first part follow John's evolution in chronological order, from his school years to his time as Becket's secretary, and ending with his years as Bishop of Chartres. His relations to the archbishop Thomas Becket and to King Henry II stand out from the system of John's connections. These two main figures mark John's permanent oscillation between the lay and the clerical context.

The second part of the *Companion*, “John of Salisbury as a Writer”, revolves around John’s style of writing. It compiled of three chapters that trace John’s sources and the manner in which he chose to tackle certain subjects.

The third part, “John of Salisbury and the Intellectual World of the 12th Century”, returns to John’s biography, in an attempt to identify the sources of John’s preoccupation for his main topics, but also his knowledge of those subjects. This is the most extensive part of the *Companion*, comprising five chapters and over one hundred pages. The subjects considered include law, politics, science, ethics, and theology.

The fourth and last part of the *Companion*, “John of Salisbury and His Readers”, is the shortest, made up of only one chapter. It traces the “afterlife” of the *Policraticus*, in the centuries following John’s death. One can see in this chapter how the ideas of the treatise outlive the knowledge about its authorship, serving as an inspiration for the political thinkers of the Renaissance, in terms of ideas, as well as also in terms of style.

The *Companion to John of Salisbury* gives an accurate insight on John of Salisbury and his writings. It details John’s life, his knowledge on the subjects he handled in his works, as well as on the main topics of these works, their sources, and their legacy. However, the *Companion* can by no means be considered an exhaustive analysis of John of Salisbury’s work. It remains to be completed by the authors’ individual works on the subject, but it also leaves space for further perspectives to be developed.

To conclude, *A Companion to John of Salisbury* represents a consistent and accurate approach to John of Salisbury and his work. It offers competent insight from the experts on this subject, some of whom have been involved in the translation (completed or ongoing) of John’s works into different languages. At the same time, the *Companion* is not self-sufficient, leaving room for previous and future articles and books on the topic, giving a serious starting point to those interested in John of Salisbury, but permitting them to develop their own perspective of it.

OANA-CORINA FILIP
oana_corina13@yahoo.com

MARCIA L. COLISH, *Faith, Fiction and Force in Medieval Baptismal Debates* (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2014).

In the history of the Latin church, the sacrament of baptism, described as the *vitae spiritualis ianua* (the gateway to the spiritual life) according to the first article of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (Città del Vaticano, 1992), is undoubtedly one of the defining elements of Christianity and one of the fundamental episodes within Christian life. Despite having long been a central part of the traditional Christian