

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 12<sup>th</sup> 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.

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

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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

practices, several aspects of baptismal theology were in fact much debated, lacking doctrinal consensus.

The recently published contribution of Marcia Colish succeeds in illuminating three such controversial features of the Catholic baptismal debate. As implied in the title itself, the volume is of great use in understanding the medieval debates on baptism by desire, fictive baptism and forced baptism. The author's thorough examination of these three baptismal questions which are at the core of the volume aims at nuancing the alleged long-standing consensus of the Catholic church on these matters, by arguing that the medieval western church was far from sharing a common understanding of these three areas of baptismal thought and practice. The well balanced volume is divided into three chapters, each one corresponding to one of the three baptismal questions, which are all treated from a chronological perspective. The study concludes with an afterword, a rich bibliography and a practical index.

One first element that draws our attention is the chosen timeframe established by the author of the study. Colish ends the investigation not at the end of the medieval period, as one would be tempted to infer from the title, but at the early fourteenth century. The author motivates this methodological choice by stating that she mainly follows "what was added to the debates". However, given that the inquiry is limited in particular to only those texts available in print, as stated in the preface, it should be emphasised that the chosen *ante quem* does not imply that anything of note had happened within the baptismal debates in the period that followed the early fourteenth century. This would be impossible to determine as long as there are still unedited manuscripts that might contain relevant texts for these debates, such as the questions on baptism treated in the commentaries on Book IV of the *Sentences*, commentaries which continued to be composed as late as the 16<sup>th</sup> century. In other words, the temporal limit of the volume does not determine the actual ending point of the transformations of these debates, which could still vary. There are in fact many questions left open, as Colish acknowledges, particularly due to the unavailability of critical editions. One such case is that of William of Ware's commentary on the *Sentences*, of which only fragments have been edited, making it unclear what his position was on the controversial issue of the date when ritual baptism was instituted by Christ.

In the first section of the volume, dealing with baptism by desire, Colish starts the investigation at the patristic period, which is followed by a time gap (between the 5<sup>th</sup> and the late 11<sup>th</sup> century) when the topic seems not to have been discussed, with two exceptions which are not overlooked: Bede and an anonymous Carolingian. The question regarding the baptism by desire is whether a convert with a true desire of being baptised genuinely receives the baptism if the administration of the sacrament is ritually inaccessible, a situation which was first formulated and defended by Ambrose of Milan in *De obitu Valentiniani*, one of the most important sources for the medieval discussions of the topic.

In fact, the gradual multiplication of various types of baptisms, some of which were inherited from the patristic texts while others represented new terminological refinements (e.g. Alain of Lille's distinction between *baptismus fluminis*, *sanguinis* and *flaminis*), provoked a diversity of approaches in assessing their status and importance. Colish shows that the lack of unanimity in the discussions was a result of the various distinctions brought into the debate. One of the much debated topics was the ability of each of the three forms of baptism to impart the baptismal character. While, for instance, William of Auxerre insisted on reducing the importance of baptism by blood in contrast with the two other forms of baptism, his younger contemporary, Alexander of Hales, attempts at rehabilitating the same type of baptism, and later we see that Scotus simply dismisses the topic of baptism by desire and focuses on arguing for the universal necessity of ritual baptism. Concerning the debate around the baptism by desire, Colish points to its "virtual disappearance from the scholastic agenda at the end of the thirteenth century".

The second chapter of the volume addresses the history of fictive baptism, i.e. the question of whether baptism emulated by children's play or actors interpreting a role on stage can be held valid if it involves a genuine baptismal intention. Colish also examines two other related hypothetical situations that raise the issue of re-baptising: the fictive or valid status of the baptism performed by heretics or schismatics and the baptism received by unfaithful candidates who enter the font. As was also the case with baptism by desire, in the 12<sup>th</sup> century the doctrine of fictive baptism was revived while receiving a more refined conceptual apparatus, built around the idea of the sacramental character and the distinction between *sacramentum* and *res sacramenti*. One distinct and original treatment of this distinction belongs to Thomas Aquinas, who discusses it from the point of view of causation (i.e. the Holy Spirit as the first cause of baptism, Christ's passion as the efficient cause of baptism).

The third chapter explores the issue of forced baptism and the question of the validity of the baptism of the unwilling candidates forced into the font. The issue of the forced baptism of Jews is indeed a well documented topic and is taken under examination in the last section of the volume. However, given that the major attempts of forced baptism date from the late fourteenth century, such as the policy in Iberia which is briefly mentioned in the afterword, a treatment of this subject does not fall within the time span of the volume.

One of the strong points of this volume is the fact that the author constructs a broad picture and a comprehensive survey of the development of baptismal debates, taking a large range of sources into account, including Anglo-Saxon and Carolingian exegetes, chroniclers, theologians, canonists, lay and ecclesiastical authorities. Naturally, the author acknowledges the fact that she does not treat all authors who wrote about the three debated baptismal questions, which is otherwise an impossible task for the given number of pages. Thus, the author intends to paint a

picture of “the major changes” that occurred within the rich Catholic doctrine of baptism, an image which obviously does not fully meet the actual transfer of knowledge assured by those lesser known authors who maintained and transmitted the tradition through their writings.

Nonetheless, the author still pays special attention to connecting the doctrines of later authors with the elements they had inherited from previous writers. For instance, the arguments of Alexander of Hales for the parity of all three forms of baptism (by blood, by desire and ritual baptism) are much indebted to Bernard of Clairvaux’s and Peter Lombard’s treatments. Parenthetically, as one may expect from a scholar with previous research background on the influential *Sentences* composed by Lombard, one of the strong points of Colish’s analysis are the subchapters devoted to Peter Lombard’s support of the baptism by desire and fictive baptism. Moreover, Bonaventure inherits much of the stance shared by the three aforementioned authors regarding the issues related both to baptism by blood and baptism by desire, while he is in turn followed by his Franciscan successors (Richard of Mediavilla, William of Ware *et alii*).

From the standpoint of intellectual history, the high quality of the volume is assured by the broad picture constructed by employing a large range of primary sources. Despite not exploring new manuscript material or editing previously unedited texts, the author manages to compose a synthetic volume, paying considerable attention to the historical context of the discussions. Colish’s substantial research testifies to the complexity of the baptismal question which has long received a multitude of divergent treatments, often unfairly concealed by the more recent teachings of the Catholic church, which claim that the church has always admitted only one position on all three of the baptismal questions.

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CATHERINE KÖNIG-PRALONG, *Médiévisme philosophique et raison modern: de Pierre Bayle à Ernest Renan* (Paris: J. Vrin, 2016).

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Presenting the evolution of reception levels in a certain period in the history of thinking involves a critical attitude in evaluating the field’s possibilities of development. This is the subject covered in Catherine König-Pralong’s recent book, *Médiévisme philosophique et raison moderne*, ed. J. Vrin, Paris, 2016. The author narrates a history of the discovery of medieval philosophy as an academic discipline in the 16<sup>th</sup>–19<sup>th</sup> century. Such approaches were not completely absent from the field of medieval studies even before the book of the distinguished professor from Fribourg (see for example the important collection of studies on this topic published in 1989, compiled by R. Imbach and A. Maierù ). So far, they have led to the idea that