H-Net Reviews
in the Humanities & Social Sciences

Dominique Iogna-Prat. *Order and Exclusion: Cluny and Christendom Face Heresy, Judaism, and Islam, 1000-1150.* London and Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2002. ix + 407 pp. $59.95 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-8014-3708-3.

Reviewed by Dawn M. Hayes (Department of Social Science, Borough of Manhattan Community College, City University of New York)
Published on H-Catholic (July, 2003)

The Formation of a Persecuting Microcosm: Cluny and Intolerance in the Medieval World

The Formation of a Persecuting Microcosm: Cluny and Intolerance in the Medieval World

In 1987, the historian Robert Ian Moore published *The Formation of a Persecuting Society: Power and Deviance in Western Europe, 950-1250*, arguing the well-known thesis that, although persecution has been a part of practically all early western societies, it was in the eleventh and twelfth centuries that violence became institutionalized in Europe. Moore's focus is medieval people who were marginalized for their religious beliefs (for example, Jews and heretics) and sickness (such as lepers), and he argues that western society has retained a persecuting mentality since the Middle Ages. The book currently under review, *Order and Exclusion: Cluny and Christendom Face Heresy, Judaism, and Islam, 1000-1150*, has been inspired by this argument. Dominique Iogna-Prat, Director of Research at the French National Research Center (Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique), uses his book to build on Moore's thesis. Unlike Moore, however, Iogna-Prat takes a microhistorical approach to the phenomenon of social and religious exclusion, examining its evolution in the Cluniac Order, particularly through the writings of Cluny's well-known ninth abbot, Peter the Venerable. In a wide-reaching and diverse book, Iogna-Prat argues that Cluny is especially appropriate for a microhistorical analysis since, in reality, it was a small-scale model of the universal Church itself.

Order and Exclusion was first published in 1998 under the title *Ordonner et exclure: Cluny et la soci=t= chr=tienne face = l'h=r=sie, au judasme et = l'islam, 1000-1150.* It is the first of Iogna-Prat's books to be translated into English and Graham Robert Edwards has done a superb job of translating the French; the prose reads easily and is accessible to non-specialist audiences. Barbara H. Rosenwein, the series editor, has written a short foreword that places the book in its historiographical context, stating simply Iogna-Prat's thesis that "the power, prestige and pretensions of the Cluniacs … represented a decisive moment in the history of intolerance" (p. ix). The author's introduction outlines the book's tripartite structure. Part 1, "The Monks and the World Order," investigates the ordering of Christian society and how the Cluniac monks began to identify themselves with that order. Chapter 1 surveys the history of Christian social order and comments on the divisive effects of the Gregorian Reform on relationships between clergy and laity. Chapter 2 discusses in detail the historical development of the Cluniac Order in the eleventh and twelfth centuries and how its monks came to actively identify themselves as the leaders of the new religious and social order achieved in western Europe.

Part 1, therefore, is dominated by the theme of inclusion–the inclusive relationships fostered by the Cluniac Order as well as by the greater Church. Part 2, "Christian Society: Peter the Venerable's *Contra Petrobrusianos* and Its Background," investigates the phenomenon of exclusion as revealed by the writings of one of Cluny's most famous abbots. Iogna-Prat turns his attention to Peter's theological treatise and examines how, in his refutation of these heretics, Peter offers a "sociology of Christianity." Here the author follows the leads provided by scholars such as Marc Bloch, Marie-Dominique Chenu and Georges Duby. (Duby is one of two people to whom the book is dedicated.) With this discussion the author is attempting to bridge the gap that in historical investigation has traditionally separated theology and social history. His argument is one of emerging ideological coherence: "Taken together, Peter the Venerable's sermons, letters, treatises, and accounts of miracles amount to a coherent system of thought in which the same themes occur and recur" (p. 103). This holistic approach to Christian society meant the exclusion of those who did not share the same beliefs, such as the Petrobrusians. Chapters 3 and 4 offer background on the heretical

sect and discuss the genre of Peter's treatise, while chapters 5 through 7 detail his response to the Petrobrusians' rejection of infant baptism, physical sacred space, veneration of the cross, transubstantiation, and prayers for the dead. Peter's refutation of these challenges reveals "a sociology of Christendom in the feudal age, "a worldview that identifies intimately Church and society" (p. 255).

In Part 3, "Christian Universality: Peter the Venerable's *Adversus Iudeos* and *Contra sectam Sarracenorum* and Their Background," Iogna-Prat takes up the question of Peter's views of Jews (chapter 10) and Muslims (chapter 11), which were deeply rooted in his reading of Jewish and Muslim texts, some of which he had translated. Peter found both religions problematic since they did not accept the key beliefs of Christianity. In the abbot's view, the deviant beliefs of these minority communities threatened the social and religious order established by the majority. The foundation of Christian society was the belief in and repetition of the sacrifice of Christ, in whose body all the members of society were joined. Those who did not accept this, such as Jews and Muslims, destabilized society. Their potential to unravel the religio-social synthesis led Peter to view them as either inhuman or demonic.

This is an interesting and well-written book, which I very much enjoyed. The argument is certainly convincing. Scores of people were marginalized in the central Middle Ages as western Europeans began to order their world. Various religious, social, economic, cultural, and political changes came together to make for a more cohesive society and one of the terrible and paradoxical results of this new cohesion was exclusion. Iogna-Prat has written a book that grounds eleventh- and twelfth-century Christianity in its historical context, forcing believer and non-believer alike to confront the religion's medieval past, warts and all. This is an attempt by the author to free readers from an "'imagined past,' built up out of prefabricated concepts and schemes of interpretation [that] pervade our approach to today's questions of identity" (p. 5). The greater goal of this book is to foster tolerance in the present; it asks Catholics and non-Catholics to reflect on and come to terms with troubling aspects of the religion's long history. I do not know whether examinations of the less palatable events and currents of Jewish and Muslim history are being initiated and sustained. However, I earnestly hope–especially after the dramatic events of September 2001–that they are, since works such as these could serve as catalysts for change, helping to realize the "modest ambition" of this ambitious study.

If there is additional discussion of this review, you may access it through the list discussion logs at:
http://h-net.msu.edu/cgi-bin/logbrowse.pl.

Citation: Dawn M. Hayes. Review of Iogna-Prat, Dominique, *Order and Exclusion: Cluny and Christendom Face Heresy, Judaism, and Islam, 1000-1150*. H-Catholic, H-Net Reviews. July, 2003.
URL: http://www.h-net.org/reviews/showrev.php?id=7957

Copyright © 2003 by H-Net, all rights reserved. H-Net permits the redistribution and reprinting of this work for nonprofit, educational purposes, with full and accurate attribution to the author, web location, date of publication, originating list, and H-Net: Humanities & Social Sciences Online. For any other proposed use, contact the Reviews editorial staff at hbooks@mail.h-net.msu.edu.