Review of *The Medieval Church and Canonry of S. Clemente in Rome*, by Joan Barclay Lloyd

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are mentioned in inquisition records of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries as evidence of the heretical sentiments of the men who recited them. According to Aurell the inquisition transcripts offer confirmation that sirventes were learned and widely diffused among the bourgeoisie and minor nobility. More evidence of this type would be welcome to prove the author’s contention.

La vielle et l’epée is an extremely ambitious and informative work on a complex and unruly subject. By definitively fixing the cultural milieus and political affinities of the poets of the thirteenth century, and endowing the entire production with a pattern of evolution, Aurell’s study makes an important contribution to our understanding and appreciation of the thirteenth-century sirventes.

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San Clemente is well known to medievalists because of its fabulous apse mosaic, and the church building figures in most accounts of the so-called “renovatio Romae” of the first half of the twelfth century. To this familiar picture Joan Barclay Lloyd adds something entirely new: a description of the adjoining residential buildings, with a careful archaeological analysis of their fabric and a reconstruction of the first four phases of their history, here dated ca. 1100–ca. 1280. She also provides a brief survey of canonical establishments in Rome in the same period (chap. 15), an account of the different rules for canons observed or propagated at that time, and a brief description of the liturgy of the canons of the Lateran cathedral drawn from the Ordo officiorum of Prior Bernard, before 1145 (chap. 16). All of this puts San Clemente, sponsored by a cardinal priest and normally discussed in terms of papal policies and practice, in a provocative new light.

The book is divided into two major parts, on the church (pp. 31–130) and the canonry (pp. 131–225). These are preceded by a brief discussion of the site and a description of the various masonries encountered in both buildings, the latter being the author’s chief means of distinguishing phases of construction and establishing their sequence. The main sections are organized on the model of Richard Krautheimer’s Corpus basilicarum Christianarum Romae, partly in deference to a revered mentor and partly because the present book is meant to be the first in a comprehensive publication of all of Rome’s medieval monasteries (and, apparently, canonries), which will complement the Corpus basilicarum though having different chronological limits. Barclay Lloyd’s work lives up to Krautheimer’s exacting standards, and the projected series will be indispensable, as his is, for historical and art historical research.

The format, proceeding from “Description” to “Literary Evidence,” “Graphic Evidence,” “Archaeological Evidence,” “Analysis and Reconstruction,” and “Historical Position,” has the defects of its virtues. The virtues are methodological: focusing on different categories of evidence in their turn, one exposes contradictions as well as parallels, preserves (as far as possible) purity of observation, and avoids (as far as possible) the imposition of assumptions derived from other categories of evidence or past scholarship. The defects are rhetorical: as several kinds of evidence illuminate the same architectural feature, the format is inescapably repetitive; this makes consecutive reading tedious if observations are consistent, confusing if they are not. Thus, while literary evidence indicates that the spoliate capitals in the basilica’s colonnades “could have been Ionic, Corinthian, or Composite” (p. 77), graphic evidence “makes it likely that the medieval
basilica . . . had mostly Ionic capitals” (p. 88); the reconstruction speculates that “many were Ionic, of ancient or medieval manufacture, but some may have been cut-down Corinthian capitals” (p. 120). Generally, the author brings her discreetly focused observations to more satisfying syntheses. This is especially true of her treatment of the canonry, in which the archaeological assessment yields an image indecipherable as initially described, but elegantly resolved into simple, coherent, and historically plausible patterns.

In the multistoried, roughly L-shaped residence on the north side of the basilica (since 1677 the home of a congregation of Irish Dominicans) Barclay Lloyd identifies eight kinds of premodern masonry datable between the Roman period (before 300 C.E.) and the sixteenth century (table 2). From this and other clues she deduces four phases of medieval construction: the first, attributed to the cardinal Anastasius who also sponsored the new basilica (ca. 1100–1125), in which a two-story block (Wing B), roughly 11 X 15 m., was built parallel to the church and abutting a one-story room (Wing A), approximately 9.6 X 7 m.; the second, tentatively attributed to Cardinal Bernard (1145–58), in which Wing A was extended northward, creating the building’s present L shape, and raised with a second story; the third, dated to the first half of the thirteenth century, in which a towerlike Wing C was added to the west side of Wing A; the fourth, dated ca. 1260–ca. 1280, in which Wing B was enlarged, including the construction of a single room (10.9 X 19.7 m.) as its third story. This room was painted with a simulated order (white or yellow columns on a red ground, with an acanthus frieze); it was clearly grand and, one would think, accessible to some kind of public.

Unfortunately it is impossible to know the function of the separate rooms (although Barclay Lloyd offers reasonable speculations, p. 222), but it is clear that in all of its phases this residence was more like a medieval house or palace than a monastery. Most striking is the lack of direct communication with the church. The conclusion that the building was a canonry is based largely on a bull of 1250, addressed to the chapter of San Clemente and specifying the distribution of prebends (pp. 144–45). This may prove that canons lived somewhere at San Clemente, but it does not confirm the location. Maps made before 1587, when a new road destroyed buildings on the south side of the basilica, show what could have been residential structures there (pp. 9–10, 82–85, figs. 11, 12); canons might have lived in them. The titular cardinal may also have had quarters at San Clemente; it is easy to imagine a thirteenth-century cardinal in the grand hall of Wing B. These possibilities constitute unknittable loose ends; tugging them may strain the author’s hypothesis but does not unravel it.

The architectural history of the church was already well known, and Barclay Lloyd’s review does not make dramatic additions or changes. Perhaps most important is her observation, already published in the Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians (45 [1986], 220–22), that an inscription once on the altar of St. Clement (lost, but transcribed in a fifteenth-century manuscript in Brussels) mentioning indulgences granted by Pope Gelasius (II) provides a terminus ante quem for the consecration of the altar, and consequently for the building, of January 1119 (pp. 67–70, 121). This has negative implications for a substantial body of interpretative scholarship that has sought to explain San Clemente on the traditional supposition of a date around 1128 (e.g., Mary Stroll, in Storia e civiltà 4 [1988], 3–17, who explicates the apse mosaic with reference to the papal schism of 1130–38). But the one lost inscription is countered by another, which credited a certain Petrus with taking “care of the work” after the death of the basilica’s principal sponsor, the cardinal priest Anastasius, in 1125 (pp. 61–62). Barclay Lloyd’s solution is to assign to Petrus the atrium, gatehouse, and projecting porch (prothyron), which are constructed in a masonry different from that of the basilica (p. 122).

Without questioning the received opinion that church building and decoration in twelfth-century Rome were engendered by Monte Cassino and the Gregorian Reform (a
formulation which I think should be questioned; cf. Art Bulletin 72 [1990], 136–38, Barclay Lloyd modifies it gently by pointing out the diversity of Roman church architecture and its features, which cannot be traced to, or explained by, an early Christian revival (chap. 9). Similarly she demonstrates the importance of canonries in the writing of Hildebrand (chap. 16) without noting a potential challenge to the prevalent assumption that the Roman reform in church architecture was Benedictine in origin and spirit (cf. Richard Krautheimer, Rome: Profile of a City, 312–1308 [1980], pp. 179–80). It was not the purpose of the book to entertain such broad issues, much less to rewrite the institutional context of the Roman reform. But the author has provided invaluable material for anyone who might seek to do so.

The volume is very well illustrated, with five fold-out sheets of plans and sections scaled 1:200, based on a new survey by the architect J. M. Blake; four pages of plans to smaller scale; five isometric reconstructions; and numerous photographs. The text is marred by typographical errors, most too trivial to notice; but the printing of “(28)” for “(29)” on page 185 (l. 3) makes an already difficult section harder to follow, and the author of figure 87, correctly named I. M. Knapp on page 97, is “T. M. Krapp” in the caption. Otherwise, the book maintains the high level of factual accuracy required of a standard reference work, which it surely will be. Every research library with resources for medieval Italy will have to have it.

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Annalisa Belloni has made significant contributions to the study of twelfth-century quaestiones during the past decade. In 1980 she published a monograph-length article on the manuscript tradition of Pillius de Medicina’s Quaestiones in which she edited seven of his quaestiones (it appeared in the same series as the present volume). Although she promised a complete edition of Pillius at that time, she turned her attention to fifteenth-century jurists at the University of Padua, producing a useful prosopographical study in 1986, again in the Ius Commune series. In this book she returns to twelfth-century quaestiones and offers us what amounts to a prolegomena for her projected edition of Pillius’s Quaestiones.

Belloni has written a study of the manuscripts that preserve the quaestiones written by Roman lawyers. With this volume she furnishes the materials for the exploration of this genre in Roman law that Gérard Fransen has provided for canonistic quaestiones. These sources are not easy to use. Quaestiones arose from teaching. The earliest statutes of the University of Bologna dictated that each professor had the duty to dispute questions of law. The statute codified what had been long-standing practice. Jurists had disputed questions of law publicly since the twelfth century, and the results, often in summary form, were recorded by students or compiled by the jurists. Because many twelfth-century quaestiones were “reports” rather than formally composed works, their textual transmission can be complex and difficult.

Belloni’s investigation begins with an examination of the oldest collections of quaestiones, contained in London, British Library, Royal 11.B.xiv; Carpentras, Bibliothèque Inguimbertine, 170; Vatican City, Ottob. lat. 1492; Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, lat. 4603; and Grenoble, Bibliothèque municipale, 391.1. These manuscripts preserve collections of quaestiones of the four twelfth-century “doctores iuris,” Bulgarus, Martinus, Iacobus, and Hugo. The Grenoble manuscript also contains a canonistic collection that