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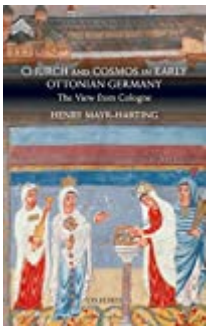

Henry Mayr-Harting. *Church and Cosmos in Early Ottonian Germany: The View from Cologne.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007. xx + 308 pp. Illustrations. $110.00 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-19-921071-8.

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Manuscript Glosses and Education in Early Medieval Germany

Henry Mayr-Harting's stated goal in this book is to recreate, at least partially, the "thought world" of the churchmen affiliated with Cologne cathedral in the third quarter of the tenth century. During this period, Bruno, the youngest brother of the German emperor Otto I, was both archbishop of Cologne (953-65) and duke of Lotharingia. Because of his family connections, Bruno played a central role at the imperial court while also leading many of the military campaigns intended to subdue Lotharingia for the Ottonians. Soon after Bruno's death, his successor as archbishop commissioned a Cologne churchman named Ruotger to write a biography of Bruno that emphasized, besides his political and military exploits, his education and knowledge of the liberal arts. It is this intellectual component of Bruno's career and Ruotger's *Life of Bruno* that Mayr-Harting aims to contextualize by analyzing the glosses written into manuscripts of classical and early Christian texts located at Cologne during the tenth century. Mayr-Harting argues that, although it is impossible to prove whether either Bruno or Ruotger wrote any of these marginal notations, the glosses can nevertheless provide insight into the intellectual interests of the community of churchmen at Cologne.

The book is divided into eight chapters of widely varying lengths. The first is an extended introduction designed to provide readers with all the necessary background for the work's main argument. It includes brief overviews of Ottonian politics and the Ottonian church, of Ruotger's *Life of Bruno*, and of Bruno's career, including what we know about his education and intellectual pursuits. For the reader familiar with the Ottonian period, much of the material in this chapter may seem to be treated too cursorily, as Mayr-Harting quickly jumps from topic to topic. For the reader unfamiliar with the period, this introduction may be difficult to follow, since it assumes previous knowledge of the arguments of many prominent scholars in the field of Ottonian history.

Chapter 2 is a very short description of the book's methodology. Mayr-Harting explains how he intends to read manuscript glosses alongside Ruotger's biography

of Bruno in order to understand the Cologne "thought world" of the tenth century. As he readily admits, this is not a straightforward process. Because Cologne was not a major educational center in the mid tenth century, the evidence is not as rich for the archbishopric as it is for some of the most important monastic centers of learning of the same period. Mayr-Harting must therefore focus on a relatively limited number of glossed manuscripts. In addition, he must rely heavily on the *Life of Bruno* because it is the only significant literary work known to have been written at Cologne during the decades he is analyzing.

The next five chapters contain the central argument of the work. In each, Mayr-Harting analyzes the glosses written into Cologne manuscripts containing particular classical and early Christian texts. Chapter 3 focuses on works by Augustine and Gregory the Great and suggests that Ruotger, as he wrote his biography of Bruno, was influenced in significant ways by the thought of both these authors. Here we can see Mayr-Harting's main argument clearly. He convincingly shows how the glosses in the manuscripts are linked to passages in Augustine's and Gregory's works that Ruotger seems to have used in crafting his *Life of Bruno*. Mayr-Harting thus argues, for example, that Gregory the Great's model of the ideal bishop is present in many aspects of Ruotger's description of Bruno. In chapter 4, the key text is the *Psychomachia*, a work by the late antique Christian Latin poet Prudentius (b. 348). Mayr-Harting demonstrates that this work deeply affected Bruno during his early education and also helped to shape Ruotger's biography of the archbishop. Chapters 5, 6, and 7 then examine liberal arts manuscripts known to have been at Cologne in the tenth century, especially those manuscripts containing the works of Priscian (chapter 5), Boethius (chapter 6) and Martianus Capella (chapter 7). Mayr-Harting's analysis of Boethius' *Arithmetic* is particularly interesting, as he argues that Boethius' discussion of mathematical unities was especially appealing in the Ottonian period because it was a time when political disunity was the norm.

There follows a very brief conclusion to chapters 3-7 and then chapter 8, which is essentially just an edition of the glosses contained in a Cologne manuscript of Boethius' *Arithmetic*. The main set of conclusions thus precedes the last chapter of the book, and this rather odd fact calls attention to the disjointed organization of the work as a whole. Both chapters 3 and 7 are immediately followed by appendices providing the texts of marginalia in important Cologne manuscripts. One might therefore expect the edition of the Boethius glosses to be an appendix to chapter 6, yet this is not the case; it forms a separate chapter at the end of the book. That this somewhat disorganized way of structuring the book was not originally intended is evidenced by the fact that, in the section entitled "Conclusion to Chapters 3-7," the headers of all the pages read "Conclusion to Chapters 1-6." In the book's layout, chapters 2-7 seem to provide a consistent narrative, while chapters 1 and 8 are not essential to the argument.

Though the middle chapters of the book do have a certain coherence, they are not without flaws. As Mayr-Harting openly admits, all of his evidence must be subjected to very detailed examination in order to justify its inclusion in his argument. He must provide extensive codicological and paleographical analysis throughout these main chapters because he must demonstrate, first, that each manuscript had unquestionably been produced in the tenth century if not earlier; second, that Bruno, Ruotger and other Cologne churchmen would have had access to each manuscript during the 950s and 960s; and, finally, that the glosses in each manuscript could have been read by, or perhaps even written by, members of the Cologne church community in the Ottonian period. Only by first proving these three points about his evidence can he reasonably argue that these manuscript glosses formed part of the Cologne "thought world." However, commenting on all of these issues necessitates lengthy digressions that do not directly concern the central question of how Cologne churchmen used the texts and glosses. Moreover, even when Mayr-Harting justifies using a particular set of manuscript glosses, many of these glosses are just brief phrases that provide only a very vague sense of the "thought world" in which they were written and read. Thus, when Mayr-Harting attempts in his conclusion to chapters 3-7 to suggest that these glosses provide evidence for the Ottonian "ruler ethic," he seems to be pushing his limited evidence too far.

Despite these shortcomings, the argument at the heart of this book is a fascinating one. When Mayr-Harting is able to show clear connections between Ruotger's *Life of Bruno* and the manuscript glosses, his reader does indeed gain a vivid sense of the intellectual atmosphere at Cologne in the 950s and 960s. At a basic level, this means that the reader learns which classical and early Christian texts were being read by the Cologne church community during this period. More significantly, it also means that the reader can see how these texts were being read one thousand years ago– which passages piqued the interest of Cologne church-

men and how these men thought those passages ought to be understood. Mayr-Harting thus uses his skills as a paleographer and codicologist to make a series of important arguments, and anyone interested in thinking about early medieval manuscripts in innovative ways will find in this book a wealth of information. While the Cologne "thought world" that Mayr-Harting places at the center of the book is not always as apparent as his reader might like, even the occasional tantalizing glimpse of this world offers extraordinary insights into the intellectual culture of the Ottonian period.