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*The Trauma of Monastic Reform: Community and Conflict in
Twelfth-Century Germany* by Alison I. Beach (review)

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extremely attentive observer, she carefully calibrates the sequence that a visitor would experience moving from the *ricetto* to the library itself, and to the never built rare manuscript room intended as the termination of the library. In just a few pages, she manages to illustrate the effect of different materials and calculated apertures to admit light along with the details of the architectural elements. For the architecture as well as for the sculpture, additional and more detailed illustrations would facilitate following the careful descriptions. Since the author often refers to details, showing them at a reasonable size would have been desirable. Nonetheless, the book is a solid study of an unusual but important aspect of Michelangelo's art; it is particularly useful as an introductory text.

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Alison I. Beach, *The Trauma of Monastic Reform: Community and Conflict in Twelfth-Century Germany* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2017) x + 190 pp.

There is always the temptation when studying movements across multiple historical time periods to err towards a reductionistic understanding in order to tell the movement's story more cleanly and compactly. For example, within monastic historical studies, it used to be convenient and somewhat common for scholars to oversimplify the beginnings of monasticism by saying that anchoritic monasticism began in the fourth century with Anthony of Egypt and that coenobitic monasticism was the creation of Pachomius. Yet, this is far from the truth. In fact, the origins of monasticism are shrouded, to some extent, in a historical fog, only to be reconstructed in bits and pieces, differing radically by location and time. What might be true for monastic history in Egypt is not necessarily the same story for monasticism on the island of Lérins, for example. Thus, what makes Alison Beach's *The Trauma of Monastic Reform* such a delightful volume is that it deals mostly with one community (Petershausen in Swabia) in a limited period. This allows her to explore in depth (thanks to the Petershausen Chronicle) a community *qua* community and, only secondarily, to see how this community may have looked and acted like other communities. This is local monastic history at its best.

Beach concludes by writing that "No matter what the normative sources have to say about the separation between the cloister and the world, the reality of monastic life in the central Middle Ages was much more complex, as recent scholarship has suggested" (138). She reaches this conclusion after meticulously studying the history of Petershausen, primarily in the community's relationship to its patrons and its detractors (both episcopal and imperial). This provides for an interesting history, all dutifully recorded in the community's chronicle. Not only does Beach highlight the community's history, but she also situates the community squarely in its geographical, larger historical, and cultural milieu.

The book contains six chapters, covering the nature of "monastic reform as cultural trauma;" the Hirsau reform of the monastery beginning in 1085 and its traumatic consequences to members of the community; the presence of "bearded" lay brothers in its implications; an examination of Petershausen as a double monastery of both men and women and the challenges this posed for the

community; how Petershausen itself became an “agent of reform” to other local monasteries; and Petershausen’s often difficult relationship to her patrons (v). The consistent thread throughout the book that holds the narrative together is the extant Chronicle, which has its own fascinating history.

The Chronicle was begun around 1136 (though it contains reports of events dating back to the eleventh century) and was updated continuously for about thirty years by the same anonymous monk. Thankfully, it survived the devastating fire of 1159 at Petershausen. The text only survives in a single twelfth-century copy, now in the University of Heidelberg Library. One of the most interesting features of the manuscript is how the author decided to record the names of the community’s members. Beach writes, “Not long after the fire, the chronicler gathered twenty-five parchment sheets, and using red ink, drew two arcade-topped columns on each folio. Within each of these columns—four across the open manuscript—he began to write names: the names of Petershausen’s monks in the first column of each verso, and the names of the community’s lay brothers in the second. In the first column of each recto, he wrote the names of the monks and priests from other monasteries, and in the second, the names of the community’s patrons, and also of its religious women” (39). What this accomplishes, according to Beach, is the creation of an imagined community across time and place. This then becomes the true Petershausen monastic community, one that is not limited to who lives in the community at any given moment but, rather, a community that includes those monks and nuns from the past alongside the non-monastic benefactors of the community. Moreover, this way of recording names gives Beach the opportunity to tell the community’s history not just by way of events but by way of individuals. Thus, her book truly feels like a history of real people, not just an abstracted community.

This book is a welcome addition to the growing literature of medieval monasticism that is attempting to paint a more nuanced portrait of the men and women who chose to become monks and nuns in the thousands of monastic communities of medieval Europe. It is also a fascinating insight into the ways in which a community, certainly not unlike others, interacted with its patrons and became victims, if you will, of the schemes of others. Being a medieval monk was likely traumatic for many reasons, and Beach does an excellent job of distilling some of those. This book, coupled with Beach’s forthcoming translation of the Petershausen Chronicle, enriches our understanding of monasticism in the central Middle Ages in invaluable ways.

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Glenn D. Burger, *Conduct Becoming: Good Wives and Husbands in the Later Middle Ages* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania 2018) 262 pp.

Conduct Becoming analyzes conduct literature of the later Middle Ages to explore the developing concept of the “good wife.” This new model of wifedom accommodates secular daily reality and asserts the value of the affective bond in marriage. Glenn Burger argues that texts written for women offer a model of feminine virtue defined not by virginity but by contribution to the domestic household and the larger social order it reflects. He explores the