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Aurell, Martin and Angeles Garcia de la Borbolla, eds.. *La imagen del obispo hispano en la Edad Media, Series: Coleccion Historica*. Pamplona: EUNSA, Pp. 300. ISBN: 84-313-2201-2.

Reviewed by:

Pierre Alain Mariaux

pierre-alain.mariaux@unine.ch

University of Neuchatel

For the last fifteen years or so, the medieval bishop has become the subject of numerous studies, monographs, and colloquia. The book under review is another stone to this patiently built-up monument that such a key-figure of medieval society deserves. It unites eight papers, written in equal parts in Spanish and in French, that were read at a conference in May 2001 at the Universidad de Navarra. The volume closes with a useful, though incomplete, bibliography--general studies on bishops are lacking--which gathers the references common to all papers, and a generous index of names that facilitates the location.

The contributors' papers show perfectly that the theme is as polymorphic and rich as are the sources with which they are dealing, be they hagiographic, historiographic, diplomatic, liturgical, judicial, epigraphical or iconographical documents. Though the conference (and consequently the book) was in particular devoted to the bishop's image in the Middle Ages, only one contribution deals specifically with the actual image of Spanish bishops in the Middle Ages, namely Henriët's, to which I shall turn later. If it is true that medieval realities are perceived through images, as both editors seem to agree in the prologue as well as in the conclusion, the word image thus clearly is the central and problematical concept that call for a liminal definition.

As the co-editor Garcia de la Borbolla asserts in her prologue, "el termino imagen puede ser definido como la materializacion intelectual de un concepto o un idea" (11: The word image may be defined as the intellectual materialization of a concept or an idea). It would mean that the image is the fruit of an intellectual operation, more properly of a translation from one medium into another, a process which may casually imply a material change. Image then is the product of imagination and precisely remains where memory, souvenir, and tradition converge. Though partial, this definition is technically correct except that it is as polyvalent as imagination can be and consequently fruitless. Indeed, the attentive reader will soon recognize the limitations of such a definition, since any translation is a restrictive operation that

not only occurs in the process of materialization itself, but also before that, i.e. in the act of naming episcopal qualities. At two different times within the book both well known Pauline bishops' portraits are quoted or alluded to. Titus (Ti 1,7- 9) and Timothy (1 Tim 3,3) thus function as a program according to which episcopal figures are informed and consequently are to be analyzed, if we follow Garcia de la Borbolla. This is what could be called a prejudice.

When it comes to images, so Martin Aurell in his conclusion (252), two kinds of discourses are enacted in the process, one active and one passive. On the one hand, the bishop stages (or at least, aims to stage) himself in words or in images produced for or even by him. On the other hand, he is set as a study object under the acute consideration of his contemporaries. Both discourses, however, eventuate in the display of polyvalent images--Aurell here speaks of diverse visions--that evolve according to three eminently episcopal qualities or attributes: sainthood, knowledge, and power. Though it is not explicit as such, these qualities seem to imprint a general order into which the contributions follow each other in the book. And this contributes to an obsessive impression, namely that of a disparate compendium composed without any guiding thread except perhaps the fact that they actually all deal with bishops, more precisely Spanish bishops. This very fact proclaims once again the great versatility, even the futility of the concept. Image is at the same time too narrow and too loose a concept to be fertile. And one quickly comes to the conclusion that there is not one single image, but rather a profusion of images. All contributors do concur on the fact that the figure of the medieval Spanish bishop, just like that of any other bishop in the Middle Ages, is multi-purpose.

He sometimes is a *defensor civitatis* or a *patronus* according to late antique standards, being of use to civic cults in Visigothic Spain (S. Castellanos) as well as in the 13th century (A. Garcia de la Borbolla), in this last case fighting against heresies in order to defend a definite ecclesiology. But he also is a *sacerdos* for whom a proper liturgy is little-by-little put in place during the second half of the 10th century. The phenomenon can be spotted at the same time in images and in texts as E. Palazzo rightly shows here (and elsewhere in his *L'evêque et son image*, published in 1999). Some bishops of the 13th century act as royal chroniclers under the command of the dynasty of Leon-Castilla (M. A. Rodriguez de la Pena). Lucas of Tuy, Rodrigo Jimenez de Rada or Juan de Osma, who depict themselves as bellicose bishops, glorify the sovereign for whom they write and support the ideology of the Reconquista. The tragic fate of Pedro de Anduque, bishop of Pamplona, who tried to reconcile conflicting factions in Toulouse at the beginning of the 12th century, illustrates his role of prelate as pacifier, though in doing so he was also serving his own interests (M. Soria). The bishop may be a forger producing false charters so as to ensure symbolic pretensions. Pelayo of Oviedo does so to obtain the pallium and transform his bishopric into a metropolitan see (T. Deswarte). At the end of the volume, S. Coussemaeker delivers a fascinating inquiry into Juan Serrano's supposed poisoning in the early 15th century. She explains in her study the profound rivalry between two bishops and how it reveals more than a men's quarrel. The episode has to be understood against the background of a rivalry between bishoprics, between partisans and detractors of Pope Benedict XIII, between different factions active inside the royal council.

As long as Spanish examples only are concerned, the reader agrees with Garcia de la Borbolla in saying that the eight studies "contribuyen a una renovacion del estudio de la figura del obispo" (12). Her analysis is assuredly right when she asserts that all authors reject the traditional forms of ecclesiastical history and propose instead a global medieval history. But the term 'renewal' she uses mainly applies to Spain. Precisely, the bringing into discussion of examples that are rarely seen or studied is one of the great qualities of this book. Nonetheless, I must confess that the volume on the whole is not really original, perhaps with the notable exception of P. Henriët's contribution. In his visual exegesis, he considers the image as a scene that is invested by the bishop. Looking at three different illustrations dating from the 10th to the 13th centuries, he shows how this investing progressively indicates a change in the staging, hence the perception of his role, from allegory to history.

The main result to which this volume brings its reader has decisive consequences on medieval studies at large. When it comes to images in the Middle Ages, it is mostly the voices of historians that we hear. The art historian's voice remains desperately mute.

