

ESSAYS ON LAY AND ECCLESIASTICAL COMMUNITIES IN AND AROUND THE MEDIEVAL URBAN PARISH

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COORD.



A PREFACE TO RESEARCH IN MEDIEVAL STUDIES II

Following its first meeting in November 2020, the *Research in Medieval Studies* seminar series kept its aim of being a space for debate and discussion of research topics in the History of the Middle Ages, in a broad sense and chronology, allowing for the observation and comparison of evolution lines and trends in different geographical areas of Europe. The theme chosen for the second meeting was *Urban Parish Communities in Medieval Europe, 1049-1545*, and aimed to reflect on various dimensions of the life of urban populations, connected to each other by relationships of familiarity, sociability, solidarity and labour, as well as by the relationship linking them to the same parish church. The period between the Church Reformation, from the eleventh to the thirteenth century, and the beginnings of the Council of Trent in the mid-sixteenth century provided the motto for gathering research on (and around) the medieval city, the ecclesiastical presence in the urban world, and the more or less organic way in which parish communities were structured, creating bonds of cooperation or conflict, and dynamics of inclusion and exclusion.

Thus, in December 2021, we held our second meeting, this time at the University of Coimbra, with a view to reflecting upon the medieval parish in Western Europe. For this meeting, religious and social history approaches converged, brought together by researchers from different European universities, covering from the Iberian Peninsula to the North of the Roman-German Empire, through French, Flemish, Italian, and Transylvanian territories. These investigations

were discussed in person during the event and then submitted for publication. Every chapter in this book was then subjected to double-blind peer review, resulting in the final selection of the works to be published. The process was time-consuming, but we believe it strengthened this book in that it gave it accuracy and a deeper, more specialized and international criticism.

The book you are about to read results from the effort of many people. Firstly, the authors of the chapters and the epilogue, who patiently entrusted us with their work; then, the experts who make up the Scientific Committee, who were responsible for the peer-review process, carried out *pro bono* and to a tight deadline; and finally, those responsible for the Editorial Committee and the Coordination of the Coimbra University Press, the publishers of this work. As the organizing committee of *Research in Medieval Studies*, we would like to express our deepest gratitude to all those who made it possible to publish this second outcome of RiMS, which will give it greater impact and reach. We would also like to thank our respective research centres – CHSC at the University of Coimbra, IEM at the NOVA University of Lisbon, and CITCEM at the University of Porto – for their support in organizing the event and completing this work.

We believe – and hope – that, in the future, it will be difficult to imagine an international scientific meeting held with mandatory distancing rules, permanent use of sanitary masks, rules and limitations for bars and restaurants. These were just some of the constraints of a meeting held during the COVID-19 health crisis, as was the case. It is fair to say, however, that this did not deter the participants from travelling and joining us, nor did it make scientific discussion which followed any less prolific and fruitful. The medieval parish in Western Christendom was the setting for various questions and issues raised about secular and ecclesiastical populations uniting and organising around an invisible but indelible web around their church.

This book tells us about it. We hope you enjoy it.

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