

## Medieval Religious Rationalities

Inspired by the social theories of Max Weber, David d'Avray asks in what senses medieval religion was rational and, in doing so, proposes a new approach to the study of the medieval past. Applying ideas developed in his companion volume on *Rationalities in History*, he explores how values, instrumental calculation, legal formality and substantive rationality interact and the ways in which medieval beliefs were strengthened by their mutual connections, by experience and by mental images. He sheds new light on key themes and figures in medieval religion ranging from conversion, miracles and the ideas of Bernard of Clairvaux to Trinitarianism, papal government and Francis of Assisi's charismatic authority. This book shows how values and instrumental calculation affect each other in practice and demonstrates the ways in which the application of social theory can be used to generate fresh empirical research as well as new interpretative insights.

D. L. D'AVRAY is Professor of History at University College, London. A fellow of the British Academy since 2005, d'Avray has published widely on his research interests in medieval history.

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*A Weberian Analysis*

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D. L. d'Avray



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## Preface and acknowledgements

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This book is a sequel to its sister volume *Rationalities in History*, though either can be read without the other. Anyone who does look at both will see that a common structure informs them. This is because they were shaped by the same Weberian questionnaire. While the sister volume attempts on a small scale to do with a few ideal-types what Weber did for analytical world history, the present volume applies the same ideal-types to Western medieval 'establishment' religion. The aim is not to prove general laws or pass value judgements: ideal-types do not work like that. They generate empirical investigations into forms of thought and practice which otherwise easily remain amorphous in our conception of the period.

To begin my acknowledgements with institutions, I must thank the British Academy for the Research Readership during which I began this project long ago, the Alexander von Humboldt Stiftung for research visits to Munich funded by its programme for former fellows, and my UCL department for letting me teach unusual courses. As for individuals, the whole book is indebted to Bonnie Blackburn, Richard Kieckhefer and Julia Walworth. Patrick Zutshi, Peter Clarke and Barbara Bombi advised me on papal government. Claudia Maertl and Markus Wesche provided bibliography on Pius II, and John Bell on legal formality. This book and the sister volume have both been shaped by discussions in the Bloomsbury Sacred Law Group and above all with UCL students on the 'History and Sociology of Rationality' course, whom I cannot thank enough for their ideas and stimulation. John Sabapathy taught them with me and read the whole book, to its great profit. The publishers' anonymous readers were nearly always right, and have earned my gratitude. The staff of Cambridge University Press were more than helpful throughout.

## Abbreviations

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BAV	Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana
BL	British Library
Bnf	Bibliothèque nationale de France
PL	<i>Patrologia Latina</i> , ed. J.-P. Migne, 221 vols. (Paris, 1844–64)