

the bishop's commissaries to grant semi-public airing to the most serious of accusations, best dealt with elsewhere 'in camera'. They also note that the recorded punishments (most often public whipping, omitted from publication in the 1920s) are outnumbered by a wealth of accusations where no further procedure was specified, save for recommendations that certain cases be carried forwards, outcome unknown. As with the text and introduction more generally, it is hard to imagine an edition and translation better done. A reader might perhaps regret the absence of supplementary prosopographical details (for instance of clergy mentioned by name both here and in the episcopal registers). We might query the claim (p. xxxii) that the visitation worked to no initial 'fixed' list of questions' equivalent to the 'articles' of the eyre. On the contrary, there seems to be a regularity of responses to particular themes (church fabric including books, clerical and parochial morals) underpinning the occasional outbursts of more specific indignation. For the rest, contextualisation, indexing and general arrangement are exemplary: a labour now triumphantly fulfilled, furnishing materials for all future investigations of the later medieval Church, English, Welsh and European.

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*Love spells and lost treasure. Service magic in England from the later Middle Ages to the early modern era.* By Tabitha Stanmore. Pp. xiv + 307 incl. 1 ill. and 8 tables.

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This outstanding book represents in more than one way a breakthrough in the history of English magic. The first major contribution, which provides a foundation for others, is that Stanmore expands the source base considerably, drawing on both manuscript material and published but previously unexploited records. Making use mainly but not exclusively of judicial evidence, she has assembled a database of 555 instances of magic use in England from the fourteenth to the seventeenth century. On the basis of this expanded range of sources she is able to give meaningful statistical analysis of the evidence for magical practice. She is appropriately cautious in this quantitative approach, noting those cases in which the number of relevant records is too small to allow confident conclusions, but because she has a significant range of materials to work with she is able to tell us much more about magic than earlier study had revealed.

The book deals specifically with 'service magic', a term that Stanmore takes from Ronald Hutton: she deals with magic done in the service of others, not specifically in the magician's own interest. She argues that service magic was a commonplace, everyday practice, a commodity alongside others, condemned by churchmen but generally accepted by most people as either a useful service or a necessary evil (somewhat like prostitution), except when it was harmful or when the practitioners turned out to be fraudulent. Magicians were largely 'central social outsiders', set apart from their neighbours yet providing services that were deemed useful. Ecclesiastical authorities were their earliest consistent critics, while civic authorities were mainly concerned with disturbances to the peace, but in the course of the sixteenth century secular authorities viewed magic with increasing suspicion, as it

became less clearly distinct from witchcraft. This cluster of arguments is not radically new, but Stanmore gives a far richer and more nuanced picture of just how service magic functioned.

Part I deals with 'popular society', where the forms of magic found most often were healing (118 cases), detection of theft and recovery of lost goods (96 cases) and divination (45 cases), followed by love magic (29 cases), treasure hunting (25 cases) and other or unspecified forms of magic. Overall, 63 per cent of the magicians in the database were male, but the balance shifted depending on the purposes and sometimes also the methods used: 55 per cent of those engaged in healing magic were female, while 78 per cent of those who offered their services for goods recovery were male. Slightly more men than women practiced love magic. The homiletic stereotype of the foolish woman purveyor of magic is thus not borne out by the evidence. Perhaps less surprisingly (to me, if not to Stanmore) is that a plurality of the male practitioners were associated with the Church (whether priests or chaplains, friars, sometimes churchwardens), followed by medical professionals. Magicians generally performed healing magic for lower fees, but harmful magic for higher fees, presumably because of the price they would pay if caught. It was not uncommon for clients to give partial payment in anticipation of results – an arrangement consistent with the balance of trust and caution for which Stanmore finds ample evidence.

Part II focuses on the social elite, meaning the aristocracy and (when magic posed a political threat) royalty. The number of known cases in this category is smaller, and thus Stanmore turns toward more qualitative interpretation. Still, the inclusion of both late medieval and early modern cases allows her to establish meaningful patterns that would not otherwise be clear. To take just one example, we can see the dynamics at work in the case of Eleanor Cobham more clearly when we see a broader pattern of magicians in these cases being well educated and providing services other than magic (p. 225), and multiple magicians being employed for the convergence of their services (p. 228).

Stanmore is innovative in her exploration of the topography of magic, particularly for London: in many cases she was able to identify where the magicians lived, where their clients lived, and even where the magic was practised. As a result, she is able to show, for example, that the practice of magic did not net enough for life at a high standard, and magicians tended to live in cheaper districts. The situation in Westminster was distinctive: many of the elite lived there seasonally, but the relatively stable 'tertiary services' there, and the somewhat lax regulation of their activities, provided a favourable environment for service magicians.

One point that Stanmore makes in more than one form is most forcefully stated with reference to magic in a political context (p. 182, and see also pp. 198, 208): charges of magic at court are sometimes viewed largely as pretexts for attacking opponents. Of course, Stanmore agrees, political motives enter into these cases: a noblewoman who uses magic to help her conceive a child does so with at least partly political motives. But the hope of conception – and both the trust in magic and the apprehensions it arouses – are no less real on that account. As Stanmore says, 'smears are only successful if the rumour is deemed plausible'. This is a point worth repeating at many points in the history of magic and also

in the history of heresy. Prosecution could obviously serve as a political weapon, but it was effective only because the alleged offences were taken seriously.

At several points Stanmore turns to literary sources such as early modern drama. These sections of the book might seem to be essentially sidebars supplementing the real evidence taken mainly from court records. Yet the discussion of literary sources is really not a digression; it helps give a lively sense of how magic was perceived, reflecting and contributing to popular notions of magic and magicians, distinguishing for example between sympathetic treatment of real magicians and pillorying of magical frauds.

The value of the book is only enhanced by the questions it raises for further reflection and research. Three issues seem salient. First, one might explore further the relationship between service magic and self-interested magic. Stanmore mentions in passing that seventy-one of her 120 London magicians were acting in a service capacity, while the rest may have been pursuing their own ends (p. 115). What differences were there in the circumstances that brought magicians in these two categories to the attention of authorities? How far would the same techniques be applied either for oneself or for others? Secondly, Stanmore makes only occasional reference to continental material, leaving comparison for future work. The work of Heide Dienst would serve as a useful starting point for the examination of everyday service magic in Austria, and the cases of Riccola di Puccio and Matteuccia di Francesco, among others, provide a wealth of relevant material. Inquisitors and often also secular judges on the continent, going well beyond the particular accusations brought before them, tended to give a fuller sense of how service magicians operated than the English material typically affords. Third, while Stanmore sees a growing assimilation of service magic to witchcraft around 1560, it would be useful to explore how far those tried as witches (in England and on the continent) seem actually to have been practising service magic.

The strengths of this book are manifest; the weaknesses are less evident. It is perhaps worth noting that the Latin texts Stanmore cites are at times garbled (for example, 'qui a te vocat' for 'quia christus te vocat' on p. 41), although one minor error ('operator' for 'operatur' on p. 60 n. 74) might perhaps be blamed on an unchecked autocorrection. Errors in the handling of Latin are, alas, all too common now in the profession.

While her work is groundbreaking and her conclusions are valuable, Stanmore does have an unfortunate tendency to pick needless quarrels. For example, she says she queries Keith Thomas's suggestion 'that cunning magic is not grounded in theory' (p. 250), but her discussion of Thomas (p. 20) does not make at all clear what sort of grounding 'in theory' she might expect, or how his treatment falls short of her expectations. She quibbles oddly about Michael Bailey's reference to the 'era of the witch hunts' (p. 16), even though he uses quotation marks, signalling that he does not (as she suggests) take the phrase as the proper lens for viewing other magic. She complains that Owen Davies bases a conclusion on 'only two data points' (p. 23), but one of the two is actually a cluster of data points, and a more generous reading of Davies would acknowledge that he gives a wide range of data on material of various types. And she takes me to task more than once (pp. 188, 249) for saying 'it is misleading to portray the situation at

court as different from that elsewhere'. But this is simply a misquotation, silently omitting key words from my text. What I in fact said, as a qualification to the main thrust of my chapter, was that magic at court was not different *in principle* from magic elsewhere, allowing for the differences in tendency and context for which Stanmore herself argues. In other words, she has manufactured a difference of opinion by quoting me inaccurately.

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*A murderous midsummer. The Western Rising of 1549.* By Mark Stoyle. Pp. xxiv + 363 incl. 16 colour ills and 7 maps. New Haven–London: Yale University Press, 2022. £25. 978 0 300 26632 0

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This gripping account of a central event in the history of the English Reformation begins, characteristically, not with grand narratives of politics or theology, but outside the village church in Sampford Courtenay, Devon, where in June of 1549, a vicar argued with two of his parishioners over the newly imposed Book of Common Prayer. This argument struck a flame in the tinderbox of a community already primed for resistance. Within a week it had escalated into a widespread protest, and within a month into a violent conflict between rebels and the crown, a conflict in which the state would ultimately triumph, but only just, and which left Devon and Cornwall strewn with the corpses of up to 4,000 men. The author describes himself as ‘a proud West Country man’ who has ‘a particular affinity with the local men and women who were unfortunate enough to find themselves caught up in “the commotion”’ (p. 6), and this comes through on every page of an account profoundly grounded in the human tragedy of the Rising. Though he demonstrates its significance to a broader national story, persuasively showing just how close the rebels came to military success, Stoyle keeps our attention focused at all times on the local communities affected by the conflict. Rejecting class as the primary driver of the rising, he instead centres the committed piety of those affronted by the high-handed and poorly explained imposition of the Book of Common Prayer, rebuking historians who, in his view, have been misled by the propaganda of the time into seeing the rebels as ‘blood-crazed class warriors’ (p. 294). Instead, he presents them as ordinary people deeply attached to their local communities and customs, who sought merely to protect their long held religious traditions, and who very nearly succeeded.

The book is divided into three sections. The first, ‘The Background’, chronicles with admirable precision the contours, divisions, and tensions of West Country society in the reign of Henry VIII, and the ways competing gentry families rose and fell through the shifting religious situation of the period. It treats with particular care and insightfulness the emerging tensions between a comparatively traditionalist cathedral chapter in Exeter and its evangelical bishops. This section moreover sets up the Cornish ‘commotion’ (p. 71) of April 1548 as the key predecessor for the Western Rising of the following year. Stoyle frames this uprising in squarely religious terms, arguing that the killing of William Body, Thomas Cromwell’s agent in stripping local churches of religious imagery, was not ‘fueled by popular antagonism towards this one man’ but was rather ‘the