

founders and parishioners, subsequently providing officers, notably churchwardens and vestry members, and munificent benefactors from the foundation into the twenty-first century. It illustrates the continuing strength of Anglican lay engagement in what from the seventeenth to the twentieth centuries was often considered the heart of wealthy radical Dissent and Nonconformity.

This is an important and accessible collection of essays throwing considerably new light on the Church of England in the north-west amidst the challenges of radical dissent from the sixteenth to the twentieth centuries, and of nonjurors and Jacobites in the eighteenth century, and of industrialisation and modernity from the late eighteenth century.

LONDON

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*Repräsentation und Reenactment. Spätmittelalterliche Frömmigkeit verstehen.* By Volker Leppin. Pp. x+272 incl. 24 ills. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2021. €24 (paper). 978 3 16 160077 7

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The prolific church historian Volker Leppin is best known for his insightful examinations of connections and continuities between late medieval and Reformation Christianity, a venerated tradition at his former institution, the University of Tübingen. In this recent work, however, the focus is exclusively on the experience of fourteenth- and fifteenth-century piety. Adopting this sense of the term ‘reenactment’ from the historian John Brewer, he is most interested in recovering the sights, sounds, smells and especially emotions of lived Christianity during this period, thereby hoping to come closer to (*annähren*) this lost world. It is a formidable mission, given the restrictions of the primary sources available, yet he unquestionably makes excellent use of what is available.

Before starting this journey, however, there are two prerequisites. First, the modern reader must agree to take religion as a phenomenon seriously. Empirically experienced reality, Leppin stresses, is just one part of a much larger reality and the potential for transcendence cannot be dismissed. He is careful not to accuse other scholars of blatant functionalism, but the kind of ‘knowing’ he seeks is more the *erkennen* of subjectivity than the *wissen* of the schools. Second, we must be open to different ways of sensing and remembering. Subjectivity itself, in other words, can vary considerably over time and place, a foundational premise of the history of emotions. Leppin never abandons his scholarly framework, but the subsequent examination – perhaps appropriately, given the topic – resembles a series of engaging sermons more than the orderly dissection and analysis typical of most German historical monographs.

Each of the book’s six body chapters is concerned with different representations and reenactments of ‘the holy’ and the path to salvation. Chapter i describes how various paintings, rituals and stories brought the experience of salvation closer to ordinary Christians. These various soteriological reenactments, Leppin argues, created an *Affektraum*, a space or possibility for knowing the Christian faith in a subjective way. Chapter ii moves the focus from the secondary personages of church history to Christ himself, specifically the passion and crucifixion. This is well-trodden ground, but Leppin adds some illustrative examples of intertextual play

with the Bible, especially in such devotional works as *The golden legend*. The hunger for more direct experience of the Saviour's life led not only to visual and verbal reenactments, but such important developments as the apostolic movements of the early fourteenth century and the later *Devotio moderna*—inspiration for Thomas a Kempis's wildly popular *Imitatio Christi*. Chapter iii discusses the experienced holiness of objects (for example, relics such as Veronica's cloth) and places (obviously churches and shrines), while chapter iv focuses on 'seeing, smelling, and tasting', particularly all the experiences related to the eucharist. Chapter v addresses the transformative effect of words, especially in sermons and rites—a sprawling overview that still manages to say something worthwhile about the *lectio divina*, the mystical sermons of Meister Eckhart, the linguistic theories of William of Ockham and the various effects of the pulpit itself. Finally, in his last chapter, Leppin considers the impact of several women mystics, ranging from the officially sanctioned Hildegard of Bingen and Catherina of Siena to such controversial figures as Marguerite Porete (burned for heresy) and beguines in general.

The book as a whole is an unquestionable success. Given the scope of the topic, there are of course omissions (such as the passion plays and their nourishment of anti-semitism) as well as frequent repetitions (as one would expect in sermons/lectures). Leppin's efforts to avoid a Reformation perspective are admirable, but there might have been some discussion of how the means of such reenactments (both objects and words) might just as easily have led to the idolatry condemned by Protestant and Catholic reformers alike as the intended orthodox experiences. My only substantive disappointment with the book, however, is the very limited engagement with historians of the senses and emotions, particularly outside this period and outside Germany. Leppin has many insights of his own, yet the book nevertheless could have been strengthened by fuller consideration of the research from the past twenty years. My hope is that this gifted scholar will continue with this topic into the Reformation era and thus have an opportunity to benefit from some of this scholarship.

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*Evesham Abbey and local society in the late Middle Ages. The abbot's household account, 1456–7 and the priors' registers, 1520–40.* Edited by David Cox. (Worcestershire Historical Society New Series, 30.) Pp. 229 incl. frontispiece and 9 ills. Bristol: 4word Ltd (for Worcestershire Historical Society), 2021. £16 (paper). 0141 4577

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The institutional development of England's major monasteries in the later Middle Ages was marked, perhaps above all, by the independence of their superiors. From the thirteenth century the separation of their sources of income and their administration was fixed and they set course for a public lordship and a prelacy which brought them closer to the political nation. At best, it offered these ancient abbeys an anchorhold in the sea of troubles that stretched from the Black Death to the break with Rome; but often its effects tended to the worst, causing the head and their house to collide and divide. One lordly abbot of Westminster