

Heale shows that expenditure on monks' living quarters and on abbey churches – to solicit lay support – won monks' approval, if not made to the detriment of a house's economy, and when abbots lived lavishly their brethren might bask in reflected glory. Moderation was everything, and this Aristotelian concept had overtaken earlier ideals of austerity and otherworldliness. Similarly bishops' wills, however businesslike, are conspicuous for their lack of legacies to the poor.

Yet a second theme is that prelates were not as powerful as they appeared. Those of the highest rank, cardinals, were very few in late medieval England, but at the court of Francis I there were twenty-five, whose promotion was a matter of importance, to their families especially. Yet once advanced they were key figures neither in royal government nor at the Curia, but were valued by the French king as members of diplomatic delegations and to add pomp and dignity to solemn occasions. Cédric Michon's contribution suggests that cardinals were essentially more decorative than useful. In England bishops' helplessness was vividly demonstrated by the crown's treatment of alien priories; it seized their property during times of Anglo-French warfare from 1295, and commandeered their patronage rights. Parliament joined in the harassment of these houses, though neither the dates 1378 or 1414 were as pivotal as Thompson supposes. Bishops, led by Wykeham of Winchester, circled these beleaguered houses, snapping them up to endow new foundations, and thus taking advantage of a situation brought about by their own helplessness. The archives of New College, Oxford, are very illuminating on this process. Meanwhile, Lollard writers, whose starting point was that prelates are not mentioned in the Vulgate, were assembling criticisms of the church leaders of their day, contrasting them with the ideals of the Early Church, and preparing the mental ground for revolutionary change.

There is much food for thought in this handsome volume, and the learned footnotes constitute a valuable resource in themselves.

UNIVERSITY OF NOTTINGHAM

ALISON K. MCHARDY

Meilensteine der Reformation. Schlüsseldokumente der frühen Wirksamkeit Martin Luthers.

Edited by Irene Dingel and Henning P. Jürgens. Pp. 296 + 34 colour plates.

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With the five-hundredth anniversary of the posting (however one wishes to conceive of that) of the *Ninety-Five Theses* fast approaching in 2017, there are a vast number of works sliding off printing presses on the dawn of the Reformation and Martin Luther. Many good, some certainly not so good. This is one of the good ones. Dingel and Jürgens (director and her associate, respectively, of the religious history section of the Leibniz Institute at Mainz) have brought us a number of excellent volumes recently and this is no exception. This is a thoughtful collection of essays by serious scholars helping to contextualise and explain some of the most important early works of Martin Luther. Most of these 'milestone' or 'key' documents get two essays. They examine, in chronological order: Luther's lectures on the Psalms, the emergence of the Reformation's essential kernel or core message in the lectures on Romans, the copy of the Old Testament that he used in his study, the *Ninety-Five Theses*, his sermon on Indulgences and Grace written

soon after the *Theses*, 1520's 'On the Freedom of a Christian', Luther's appearance at the Diet of Worms, Luther's 1522 German Bible. I truly appreciate that they have also included his 1524 treatise on education among his 'milestone' treatises. The book ends with essays on Luther's early hymnody and his revision of the mass in German. These are thoughtful essays that experts as well as more general readers will find interesting and profitable.

BAYLOR UNIVERSITY,
TEXAS

DAVID M. WHITFORD

Unser Martin. Martin Luther aus der Sicht katholischer Sympathisanten. By Franz Posset. (Reformationsgeschichtliche Studien und Texte, 161.) Pp. 177 incl. 11 ills. Münster: Aschendorff, 2015. €32. 978 3 402 10526 9; 0171 3469
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Franz Posset introduces 'Catholic sympathisers' of Luther among the clergy and religious of the diocese of Augsburg in the 1520s. He thereby directs our attention to those members of the humanist movement who felt united with Luther in reformist and pastoral concern but unlike him never formally broke with the Roman Church. Especially in the diocese of Augsburg, headed by the reform-minded bishop Christoph von Stadion, this attitude was not rare. Based on the available older literature, Posset portrays four prestigious 'Catholic' friends of Luther. Perhaps the most famous is the Eichstätt and Augsburg canon Bernhard Adelman von Adelmansfelden (1459–1523) who secretly forwarded the *Obelisci* of his Eichstätt co-canon Johann Eck to Luther and therefore was included by Eck in the papal bull *Exsurge Domine*. Only due to mediation by the duke of Bavaria was he spared excommunication, although he was widely known as a supporter of the Reformation. Another supporter of Luther was the prominent scholar of Hebrew Caspar Amman (c. 1450–1524), who since 1485 had served as prior of the convent of the Austin Friars at Lauingen and in 1523 published the first direct translation of the Psalms from Hebrew into German without attracting, however, the attention of the Wittenberg friar. The Augsburg Benedictine monk and polymath Vitus Bild (1481–1529) brought together a rich collection of Reformation pamphlets, but since the mid-1520s had dissociated himself from the more radical supporters of the Reformation. Caspar Haslach (c. 1485–1540 /41), town preacher of Dillingen and later on rector of Bernbeuren, had to answer to the ecclesiastical authorities because of his evangelical sermons in 1522 and seems to have formally renounced Luther while secretly holding on to his former beliefs. All four men collected and read Luther's writings and sought personal or epistolary contact with him, all shared the ideal of 'evangelical preaching', and for all of them the Wittenberg Reformer was 'our Martin'. Posset has brought back to life the multifarious milieu of the humanist and reform-minded followers of Luther in the 1520s. It is, however, not true that this milieu is being maliciously concealed by Protestant researchers in the present 'post-ecumenical age' as Posset, himself a Catholic, insinuates. Whether it makes sense to speak of 'Catholic' sympathisers of Luther as early as in the 1520s seems questionable: Posset himself complains about the frequent 'confusion of tongues'. Problematic also is Posset's