Magic and masculinity. Ritual magic and gender in the early modern era. By Frances Timbers. Pp. xii+217 incl. 10 ills. London–New York: I. B. Tauris, 2014. £20. 978 1 78076 403 0

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Francis Timbers's book makes a useful contribution to understanding the gendered meanings to be found in the practices and materials of early modern ritual magic. Chapters explore a range of magical lives, including the famed partnership of John Dee and Edward Kelley, the Civil War astrologer-occultist William Lilly, the seventeenth-century Christian mystic clergyman John Pordage, and the eccentric treasure-hunter Goodwin Wharton and his enigmatic partner in magical escapades, Mary Parish. These lives are used to explore issues such as manhood, honour, passivity, sex, gender subversion and metaphor. There is a lot of familiar material, and at one level the book serves as a lively, general introduction to ritual magic and English magicians in the period. The book is rather too brief, though, when it comes to wrestling with some major issues regarding the gender politics of the period. Some big generalisations are made in the twopage conclusion, such as that 'female magicians tended to blur the boundaries associated with magic, just as they blurred the boundaries of their own bodies' (p. 155). Not enough material is presented to support such assertions, but the value of Timbers's book is in signposting issues and in illustrating in what ways there is much more work to be done. As such it is a welcome addition to recent historiography.

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Ideas of liberty in early modern Europe. From Machiavelli to Milton. By Hilary Gatti. Pp. ix +215. Princeton-Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2015. £30.95. 978 o 691 16383 3

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The concept of liberty has been so dissected in the last half century that one could easily believe its original vigour lost. Gatti's work puts those fears to rest. By returning to the texts of the 'long sixteenth century', Gatti seeks to represent the rich vitality of thought that produced the tradition of liberty inherited by the Enlightenment era, and by us today. Gatti highlights those texts often left out of a discussion of liberty, especially those addressing religious questions, demonstrating her breadth of reading and impressive familiarity with the sources. This volume is a rich treasure-trove of insights and illuminating 'case studies'. It is in the organisation and justification of these case studies, however, that the book falls a little short. Gatti perhaps goes too far in seeking to avoid overcategorising the concept of liberty, giving her reader many striking impressions, but few concrete conclusions to take away. This, however, appears to have been her intention, as she gives her book the rather modest and nebulous aim of showing that the sixteenth century resulted in 'a number of startling new claims for liberty', and nothing more than this. Though Gatti's text lacks a decisive conclusion about the expressions of liberty that she recovers, Ideas of



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liberty in early modern Europe is certainly a fascinating read that will not fail to inform and inspire.

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The Ashgate research companion to the Counter-Reformation. Edited by Alexandra Bamji, Geert H. Janssen and Mary Laven. Pp. xix + 488 incl. 3 maps and 21 ills. Farnham–Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2013. £85. 978 1 4094 2373 7 [EH (67) 2016; doi:10.1017/S0022046916000026

'Counter-Reformation' has always been an ideologically loaded, hotly debated term - but it is hard to imagine early modern history without it, and it has become more catholic in the past two decades or so. The study of lay experience has come to the fore, counterbalancing the previous emphasis on clerical and institutional history, and a move towards interdisciplinarity has widened and refreshed the church historian's remit. This companion promises an up-to-date appreciation of these developments. The first of its four sections, 'Conflict, Coexistence and Conversion', is perhaps the most consciously revisionist, especially in its essays on Tridentine Catholicism and the Inquisition (by Simon Ditchfield and Nicholas S. Davidson respectively) and Catholic mission as a centrifugal, global phenomenon (Tara Alberts and Karin Vélez contribute essays on Catholic missions to Asia and the Americas). The diaspora of Catholic exiles, neglected in comparison to the Protestant equivalent, is discussed by Geert H. Jansssen, while Andrew Pettegree's essay on Catholic pamphleteering argues that the dissemination of popular print was as crucial to the Counter-Reformation as to the Reformation itself. Articles on confessionalisation (by Ute Lotz-Heumann) and religious coexistence (by Keith P. Luria) address how Catholics responded to the permanent division of Christendom after the advent of Protestantism. The essays in the second section, 'Catholic Lives and Devotional Identities', take their bearings from a question articulated in Judith Pollmann's essay: 'What did it mean to be a Catholic in early modern Europe?' Alexandra Bamji traces the Catholic life cycle, while Nicholas Terpstra and Simone Laqua O'Donnell offer complementary perspectives on the role of Catholicism within communities. In an essay on sanctity, Clare Copeland discusses the interplay between unofficial cults and the canonisation process. Wietse de Boer sets out a positive reassessment of one of the Counter-Reformation's most controversial features, the use of sensual stimulation in worship, while Alexandra Walsham addresses changes and continuities in sacred space. The third section, 'Ideas and Cultural Practices', brings together essays on intellectual culture and science (by Michael Edwards and Nick Wilding) with considerations of music, drama, the visual arts and material culture (by Noel O'Regan, Paul Shore, Andrea Lepage and Silvia Evangelisti respectively). A final section offers chronological and geographical contextualisation: John H. Arnold gives a medievalist's perspective on Catholic reformation, Karen Melvin writes on the globalisation of reform - a key theme overall - while Mary Laven assesses the legacies of the Counter-Reformation. Essays are uniformly strong in themselves, the best managing to combine convincingly individual points of view with the required up-to-date appreciation of secondary