works in addition to the grace of Christ, but the efficacy of works was often preached at local levels, and it was anathema to Wycliffe.

Professor Hornbeck's book is extremely important in many ways. It is the best book to date on lollardy. Next, its methodological treatment of the lollards can be profitably extended to the study of other religious movements, both dissenting and (to some extent) orthodox. Further, it is exceptionally readable for such a detailed monograph. Although its theological precision and ready use of Latin and Middle English texts make it difficult for a general audience, every scholar interested in the history of heresy and, indeed, of Christianity in general will find it a treasure. It is an ideal combination of precise scholarship, sophisticated understanding of issues, open-minded investigation, and sharp awareness of how the subject relates to wider issues in both theology and historiography.

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A Sudden Terror: The Plot to Murder the Pope in Renaissance Rome. By **Anthony F. D'Elia** Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2009. 237 pp. $24.95 cloth.

The painting by Melozzo da Forlì of Pope Sixtus IV appointing the humanist Bartolomeo Platina prefect of the Vatican Library is one of the iconic masterworks of the Renaissance in Rome. Here Church leader and scholar, patron and client, are bound together to propel the Church and its capital into the new age. Rather than opening with this set piece, however, Anthony D'Elia uses it to close his story of fifteenth-century popes and humanists; or rather, of humanists versus one pope, Paul II.

D'Elia, an Italian historian at Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario, has taken a moment in 1468, during which a conspiracy against Pope Paul's life is disclosed to the pontiff, as a point around which he develops both backstories and the sad consequences that followed. The backstories unfold as D'Elia sketches elements of papal history from the end of the Schism in 1417 to Paul's reign (1464–1471). Over the papacy loomed the French and imperial rulers whose rivalries and designs on religious authority within their kingdoms, such as French Gallicanism, kept the Church off balance. Even more immediately threatening was young Mehmet II, the Turkish sultan who conquered the last remnant of the Eastern Roman Empire in 1453. Paul's predecessor Pius II died in Ancona vainly awaiting the crusading fleet and

army that would hurl the infidel back. Instead, much of Italy shuddered as the conqueror of Second Rome set his sights on the original. The era's pontiffs also lived with the pressure from inside and outside the Church's ranks to relinquish its monarchical position in favor of conciliarism, administration of the Church by a council. Finally, several of Paul's forerunners had uncovered plots to murder or overthrow them, a reminder that conspiracies and conspirators were very real indeed.

In 1468, Paul II identified a group of humanist scholars at work in the Vatican as the conspirators about whom he had been informed. They form the spool around which D'Elia wraps the threads previously prepared. Members of this group, among whom Platina is the most prominent, shared not only academic interests, but positions on conciliarism, interests in Islam, and an attraction to the generous Mehmet and aversion to the less liberal Paul, who had fired many Vatican scholar-bureaucrats. In his chapter on the "Pagan Renaissance," D'Elia emphasizes the humanists' interests in Hellenistic/Roman philosophies—especially Epicureanism and Stoicism—and their homoerotic expressions in letters and poetry. D'Elia not unreasonably concludes that their non-Christian pursuits gave rise to suspicions of antipathy for Christian morality and the Church and active sodomy among these "effeminate intellectuals" (184).

D'Elia cannot conclude that there was a plot, let alone that Platina, Callimachus, Pomponio Leto, and the other humanists were part of it. He does, however, shed light on the year spent in prison by the suspected conspirators. Platina and the warden of the Castel Sant'Angelo, in which the men were held, carried on a correspondence that Platina preserved. D'Elia blends this with the humanist's letters for clemency and support, and other writings to provide insights into the consolation of Platina's philosophy. Despite the dangers of over-reliance on such rhetorical instruments, D'Elia finds that the classical authors so dear to the scholars in their liberty have little that soothes when the need is greatest.

Whoever knows Michelozzo's painting or Platina's *History of the Popes*—especially his scathing portrait of Paul—also knows that the humanist's fate was far better than that of Boethius. D'Elia retains a judgmental balance that one hopes for in a historian. When discussing the horrors suffered by the "effeminate intellectuals" in the bowels of Castel Sant'Angelo, he notes that the tortures and incarceration meted out in Rome were no worse than those encountered in secular settings; and in some ways the papacy had a cleaner system than most. Nevertheless, he cannot condone the treatment the suspects endured. D'Elia's narrative relegates its scholarly apparatus to endnotes, and as for moderns, only Jacob Burckhardt makes an appearance in the text. While this makes it an easy, entertaining, and enlightening read for the non-specialist, it is something of a disappointment for the well-informed reader. Indeed, the series of well-constructed and written discussions of, for example,

Mehmet's interests in Italy, the humanists' homoeroticism, or Platina's philosophical prison correspondence wind around a historical point of no real significance. Nothing came of the plot even if there was one, and all of the imprisoned "conspirators" were released. Humanism as a movement was unaffected, and the papacy itself would provide ample patronage to atone for its momentary vindictiveness. While D'Elia does shed light on this particular group of Roman humanists, how widely can this be spread? Finally, a few minor errors erupt here and there: early Christians did not "seek refuge" in the catacombs (6), and St. Peter's is a basilica not a cathedral (185).

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The Search for Salvation: Lay Faith in Scotland, 1480–1560. By **Audrey-Beth Fitch**. Edited by **Elizabeth Ewan.** Edinburgh: John Donald, 2009. xvii + 206 pp. £25.00 cloth.

This important book fills a major gap in late medieval Scottish history and adds color and detail to our knowledge of pre-Reformation piety throughout Europe. It is a major triumph that the book, only three-quarters finished at the time of Audrey-Beth Fitch's sudden and untimely death, has been published at all. The sensitive editing by Elizabethan Ewan and the assistance of many of Beth's friends have made this possible and thereby brought into printed form the fruits of Beth's fascinating research. The visual aspect of lay faith in Scotland between the end of the fifteenth and the middle of the sixteenth century is portrayed in twenty-five black and white plates. A glimpse has been given of the color that would have abounded in the reproductions on the dust jacket from the Arbuthnott Prayer Book showing Mary as Queen of Heaven on the front cover and Jesus, the Holy Blood, and the Eucharist on the back. A short and useful glossary will help students to cope with the technical and specific terms that abound in late medieval religion.

The broad contours of the landscape of lay faith in medieval Europe are already familiar and apply equally to the kingdom of Scotland since it remained part of Christendom and adhered to the Catholic Church down to 1560. As well as sharing the common heritage of north European piety, the specific religious influences of Scotland's trading partners can be detected; for example, the cult of the Holy Blood arrived in Scotland thanks to the strong links with Bruges. However, there are some distinctly Scottish