

light on the scribal activities of the Vadstena nuns. Mathilde van Dijk's diachronic study examines how depictions of female leaders of the *Devotio Moderna* found in a fifteenth-century 'collection of the lives of exemplary sisters' (p. 243) from Diepenveen contrast with examples from the thirteenth-century women's movement found in biographies. She concludes that, in contrast to the focus on 'interior lives' found in the earlier material, the later material 'concentrate[s] on practices and sayings' (p. 261). In her essay on the seventeenth-century Brussels Visitandine nuns, Ping-Yuan Wang challenges the 'close correlation between gender and genre' (p. 267), arguing that the study of female spiritual authority should move outside of the *ex gratia* / *ex officio* distinction to take into account not only the exceptional, but also the mundane, here exemplified by communal circular letters. In the final essay in the collection, Caroline Giron-Panel examines a unique form of eighteenth-century female religious vocation fostered in the hospitals (*ospedali*) of the Venetian Republic, namely as musicians who played both 'to the glory of God' (p. 291) and for 'the glory of the Republic' (p. 292).

These essays are arranged chronologically, moving from the twelfth through eighteenth centuries. This arrangement is intended to demonstrate a shift over time in which female spiritual authority came to be 'defined within the context of collective communal devotion rather than as one striving primarily for an individual spiritual perfection' (p. 8). This shift was the result of 'the various restrictions [placed] upon religious women from 1300 onwards' (p. 8) that limited their ability to act as individuals. While some of the authors present strong arguments in support of this thesis (for example, Duval, Wang), many do not address the issue directly and one contributor explicitly disagrees (Mulder-Bakker: 'I do not see much change for the worse after 1300' [p. 161]). Even though I remain unconvinced that the temporal shift articulated by the editors is fully demonstrated here, the collection remains a valuable addition to the study of pre-modern female spirituality and authority.

The strength of the volume rests in the range of places, times and methods represented. Both individually and as a collective whole, the essays in this collection will be of interest to a broad spectrum of graduate students and scholars interested in the history of women and the means and methods by which they exercised spiritual authority and leadership within western Christianity.

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Wading lambs and swimming elephants. The Bible for the laity and theologians in the late medieval and early modern era. By Wim François and August Den Hollander. (Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium, 257.) Pp. xv + 412 incl. 58 figs. Leuven–Paris–Walpole, MA: Peeters, 2012. £84 (paper). 978 90 429 2755 1

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This is the third collection of essays to emanate from the *Biblia Sacra* Research Group, following August den Hollander and Mathijs Lamberigts (eds), *Lay Bibles in Europe* (2006) and Wim François and August den Hollander (eds), *Infant milk*

or hardy nourishment (2009), both of which have also been published in the *Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium* series. This volume, *Wading lambs and swimming elephants*, takes its quirky title from a metaphor used by Gregory the Great in his *Moralia in Job*: the Bible, he argued, was accessible to the unlearned and learned alike, like a stream shallow enough to allow lambs to wade in it, but also sufficiently deep for elephants to swim in it. The essays which make up this volume undoubtedly demonstrate the great versatility of the Bible in the medieval and early modern periods. There are fourteen articles in all – a dozen in English, and one each in French and German – presented in chronological order. As is customary, I should begin by saying that a review of this length cannot do justice to the diversity of the contributions to this volume. In the remainder of this review, I will simply seek to draw out some of the most salient themes.

Several of the articles are concerned with aspects of the production of editions of the Bible. For instance, Mart van Duijn examines the Delft Bible of 1477, the first Bible printed in the Low Countries, and considers its relationship with the manuscript tradition of the *Herne Bible*, which peaked in the 1460s. Youri Desplenter's contribution similarly sits at the intersection of manuscript and print culture. This article looks at a fifteenth-century manuscript which contains a translation of the Book of Psalms, which was subsequently printed as part of a Dutch vernacular Old Testament by Willem Vorsterman in 1528; this challenges the traditional view which had seen Vorsterman's text as drawing mainly on Jacob van Liesvelt's translation of the 'Lutheran' Bible of 1526.

Victoria Christman looks at the circumstances surrounding the publication of Francisco de Enzinas's Spanish New Testament in 1543. Though he had not obtained permission from the authorities to make a translation into the vernacular as was required, astoundingly Enzinas travelled to Emperor Charles v, and presented the Bible to him in person; he was subsequently imprisoned, and narrowly escaped death. Fearghus Ó Fearghail's chapter deals with the first translation of the New Testament into Irish by a team of half a dozen scholars working in the last decades of the sixteenth century. It was, in the words of the author of its preface, 'a work which generations had hoped for' (p. 359). This might be considered at least a bit of publishing puff, and clearly much of the initial impetus (and funding) in fact came from England; it was certainly a different reception to Enzinas's work. Also concerned with issues of translation is Gergely Juhász's article which considers the 'translation strategy' deployed by the Protestant Bible translator George Joye (d.1553): his ultimate aim, in line with the principle of *sola scriptura*, was to provide a translation which reflected the polysemy of the original text, without requiring any further glosses or annotations.

Biblical interpretation is a feature of several more articles. Amos Edelheit's chapter has at its core the only known manuscript discussing the Penitential Psalms, produced in 1499 by the Dominican theologian Giovanni Caroli (d.1503). Edelheit provides a close reading of Psalm vi, which he compares with the treatment of the same Psalm by the renowned Giovanni Pico della Mirandola (d.1494). Wim François uses Jacobus Jansonius' (d.1625) digression on John xii.39–40, which might be understood as implying that God was the source of evil, as a means of shedding light on patterns of Augustinian exegesis at Louvain in

the early seventeenth century. The impact of the Reformation is inevitably reflected in many of the articles. Kathleen Crowther surveys interpretations of the story of Adam and Eve from across sixteenth-century Germany, highlighting both the continuities and discontinuities with previous traditions, and also their variety in the Lutheran context. In similar fashion, Jussi Koivisto provides a detailed examination of Luther's reading of the serpent possessed by the Devil in Genesis iii, an idea which enjoyed considerable currency in early and medieval Christianity.

Many of the articles are at least as concerned with the Bible's readers as with those who produced, translated or interpreted it. Van Duijn, in the chapter already cited, surveys twenty extant copies of the Delft Bible in an effort to understand the intentions of the publishers. In a particularly impressive study, Sabrina Corbellini examines about 200 manuscripts of vernacular biblical material from late medieval Italy, especially Tuscany, to consider how the Bible was approached, used and understood by its lay readers. Els Agten, by contrast, uses a book entitled *Bononia*, published in 1556, as a means of appraising humanist attitudes towards vernacular Bible-reading in the Low Countries. Readers would also approach the Bible through its visual elements, and this is also reflected in this collection (not least in the almost sixty illustrations which it contains). Maria Dieters's article looks at the copy of a Luther Bible owned by an embroiderer of silk and pearl, Hans Plock, who added a series of glosses and pictures, thereby furnishing a very striking example of the way in which a reader might engage with, and personalise the text. Liesbet Kusters traces the transformation of iconography associated with the Haemorrhissa (Woman with an Issue of Blood), discussed in Mark v.21–34, across the medieval and early modern periods, reflecting the changing attitudes to the woman, and particularly her growing individuality. James Clifton looks at Dutch illustrations of the Annunciation to the Shepherds (Luke ii.8–14) produced around 1600: not only was enthusiasm for this scene perhaps related to broader artistic trends, but Clifton argues that its interpretation – and particularly the emphasis on peace – was related to the political context, and above all the Eighty Years War which was then being waged. Taken together, this set of essays sheds further fascinating light on the centrality of the Bible to medieval and early modern European culture, and the many ways in which individuals and groups, educated or not, interacted with the text. Readers will, without doubt, find many issues of interest here.

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The prelate in England and Europe, 1300–1560. Edited by Martin Heale. Pp. xiii + 321 incl. 20 figs and 1 table. Woodbridge: Boydell (for York Medieval Press), 2014. £60. 978 1 903153 58 1

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This interesting and very enterprising volume presents considerable difficulties to the reviewer: it is interdisciplinary and transcends conventional scholarly boundaries of geography and chronology. Listing its twelve papers would consume much of the word-limit for this review. The introduction makes the case for studying bishops and the heads of greater monasteries together, but the contents are divided between six papers on bishops and five on abbots. Only Anne Hudson, ('Lollard views on prelates'), treats the regulars and seculars together, though