

1562 the Spanish bishops presented a memorandum to the papal legates who oversaw proceedings that suggested: “a unified breviary and missal ‘used in all churches’ *with a separate proper of saints for each diocese*” (346, emphasis added). Although this initiative did not get anywhere at the Council, the promulgation of its decrees within Spain and its overseas empire did explicitly allow for the continued celebration of existing local cults.

In his lucid discussion of the shape of the Tridentine mass, Lang notes that although it stood in continuity with the rites used by the papal curia in the thirteenth century and even, in parts, with the earlier papal Stational Mass of *Ordo Romanus I*, it also embraced, indeed gave priority to, the so-called low Mass, which, as its Latin name, *Missa lecta*, suggests, was spoken rather than sung by the celebrant. This emphasis on the low Mass better suited the liturgy in places that lacked the liturgical infrastructure—singers and assistants—for celebration of high Mass, which of course included not only the extra-European missionary lands but also the “other Indies” in the rural backwaters of the Old World. This final chapter also includes an excellent discussion of the architectural, spatial, and sonic contexts within which the authoritative contribution of Carlo Borromeo, Cardinal-archbishop of Milan, whose influence was global in scope, rightly receives the lion’s share of the author’s attention. In conclusion, I believe that this volume represents a major achievement.

Simon Ditchfield
University of York

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***The Medieval Hospital: Literary Culture and Community in England, 1350–1550.* By Nicole R. Rice. ReFormations: Medieval and Early Modern. Notre Dame, IA: University of Notre Dame Press, 2023. vii, 405 pp. \$95 hardcover; \$75 epub.**

The Medieval Hospital offers a literary history of three English hospitals—St Leonard’s in York, St Bartholomew’s in London and St Mark’s in Bristol—which, Rice contends, present “unique yet neglected sources for late medieval English literary and cultural history” (1). Rice convincingly argues that hospital staff and residents adopted an Augustinian approach to lay reading and devotional practice that fostered literary production. Manuscripts and early printed books were used by these three hospitals to define, reinvent, and justify their existence during reform movements and the English reformations. The book presents a lucid and intelligent argument that builds on the methods and findings of such recent scholarship as Adam J. Davis’s *The Medieval Economy of Salvation: Charity, Commerce, and the Rise of the Hospital* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2019) and Sethina Watson’s *On Hospitals: Welfare, Law, and Christianity in Western Europe, 400–1320* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2020).

Chapter 1 explores St Leonard’s sponsorship of the Purification of the Virgin pageant as part of York’s Corpus Christi cycle. The original text of the play does not survive; what does survive is the *ordo paginarum*, a cast list from 1415, and a revised text

that was entered into the York Register in 1567—after the Labourers and Masons became the pageant producers in 1477. Rice uses the *ordo paginarum* cast list to suggest that female characters featured more prominently in the early version of the pageant. This increased presence of the likes of Mary and her midwife in the pageant aligns with the intense Marian devotion of late-medieval hospitals. The author makes a compelling case through the pageant documents and civic records, but some readers might be skeptical of how much is inferred from such a meagre source as the *ordo paginarum*.

In chapter 2, Rice argues that three texts associated with St Bartholomew's—*The Book of the Foundation of St. Bartholomew's Church*, John Mirfield's *Florarium Bartholomei*, and his *Breviarium Bartholomei*—supported and promoted the hospital's policy of admitting “pregnant women seeking a safe place to give birth and rest until their own purification forty days later” (63). One of the central discussions is the treatments to “restore” virginity in the *Breviarium*, an encyclopaedic work of which the purification treatments form one small part. Mirfield copied the treatments without the “misogynist,” moralizing comments of his sources (80), hence displaying an impartial attitude that aligns with the other texts explored in this chapter. Still, aside from the fact that they were clearly labeled and placed at the end of the gynecological section on f. 153^r of the Oxford, Pembroke College MS 2 copy, there is little to suggest that these particular treatments for restoring virginity were favored above others in a manuscript that is more than 350 folios in length. This small qualification aside, the chapter presents a fascinating discussion of the place of women—from virgins to mothers—and purity in hospital communities.

Chapter 3 examines the career of John Shirley, a fifteenth-century scribe who produced texts during his retirement at St Bartholomew's. Rice focuses particularly on Shirley's final production: Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Ashmole 59, a codex containing works from Lydgate alongside devotional texts and a handful of medical recipes. The miscellany or anthology, as Rice suggests, was carefully curated to meet the needs of Shirley's neighbors in the hospital. Chapter 4 introduces other scribes of St Bartholomew's such as John Cok, as well as John Colman, a master of St Mark's hospital from 1517 to 1539. These scribes often produced meditative works, such as Richard Rolle's *Form of Living* and *Emendatio vitae*. Rice does some excellent detective work to reconstruct the textual communities of the hospitals and show how these works encouraged the laity to engage in devotional practices that were influenced by the Augustinians. It is here where the book's argument really comes together. These chapters prove beyond doubt that hospitals went beyond convalescence and palliative care to become devotional centers of textual production.

At this point, a reader may feel as if Rice's discussion of English medieval hospitals is overly positive. As Carole Rawcliffe and others have shown, a significant number of English hospitals were mismanaged and underfunded in the later Middle Ages. Rice acknowledges this crisis of maladministration, explaining that the three hospitals under investigation along with numerous other small institutions were praised for their quality of care (203–204). Nonetheless, in chapter 5 Rice acknowledges the criticism that such institutions faced. Neglected texts like Robert Copland's *Hye Way to the Spyttell House* (c. 1536) are used to contend that debates surrounding religious practice, endowment, and poverty were incorporated into critiques of hospitals in the sixteenth century. This discussion is continued in the final chapter, which provides an overview of the ways in which the hospitals adapted to religious and political change or perished. The epilogue outlines changes in liturgical practice at St Mark's after its refoundation as a civic chapel in 1540. This final section ties together the threads of the work,

emphasizing the innovative ways in which hospitals reinvented themselves during the English reformations.

The Medieval Hospital is a very welcome study of the textual communities formed around hospitals, which—in keeping with the spirit of Notre Dame’s ReFormations series—crosses the border of medieval and early modern studies. Rice’s thesis that hospitals formed literary communities to encourage lay devotion is insightful and proven with stimulating examples. The work will not only find an audience among scholars of medieval hospitals, but also book historians and those with an interest in devotional practices. It is impressive how much Rice is able to reconstruct from a limited source base. Indeed, this monograph is a good advertisement for the virtues of book history and the ways in which analysis of codices can fill in gaps left by fragmented archives.

Patrick Outhwaite
University of Groningen
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***The Mystical Presence of Christ: The Exceptional and the Ordinary in Late Medieval Religion.* By Richard Kieckhefer. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2022. xvii + 362 pp. \$54.95, hardcover**

Publication of the latest book by one of our most eminent late medieval historians is a welcome event for all scholars of religion. Following a long career toiling in the field, Richard Kieckhefer probably knows better than anyone else the vast literature on both mysticism and popular piety during this period. Yet somehow, he tells us, these two topics have almost always been treated separately. What this book seeks to do, as advertised in the subtitle, is to describe and analyze the conjunction of the two, particularly among a number of Dominican nuns, some of them mystics or even saints. The result, drawing on Kieckhefer’s close readings of so-called “sister books” (*Schwesterbücher*) and spiritual “autobiographies,” is a thoughtful and innovative insight into how common devotion shaped various “Christophanies” (visions of Christ), and vice versa, namely the social consequences of such exceptional experiences.

Direct sensual experiences of Christ’s presence, of course, go back to the very beginning, most notably Saul’s encounter on the road to Damascus. Kieckhefer’s focus, however, is not on the *longue durée* of this spiritual phenomenon, but rather why and how such exceptional visions became so influential in the lives of religious women (chiefly in Germany) during the twelfth to fourteenth centuries. As countless Christian theologians (and many contemporary historians) can attest, writing about mysticism is extraordinarily difficult. Kieckhefer’s solution is to scrutinize and convey these visionaries’ experiences as much as possible in their own (inadequate) words. The book is filled with a panoply of examples (including a few better known figures, such as Margery Kempe and Catherine of Siena) and arranged into sequential themes: the humanity of Christ (despite most frequently referring to him as “God”) and the subjectivity of the visionaries (but favoring a historical perspective rather than a psychological one), followed by a series of chapters analyzing the devotional contexts of such