

Overall, *Convent Autobiography* is a major contribution to criticism on early modern Catholicism, and it belongs on the bookshelves of scholars interested in autobiography, the convents abroad, cloistered writing, and monastic history. Van Hynning's intrepid detective work and ground-breaking treatment of autobiography will open up valuable new terrain for anyone specializing in history, literary studies, religious studies, and women's studies.

Wayne State University

Jaime Goodrich

Liam Peter Temple, *Mysticism in Early Modern England*, Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2019, pp. x + 221, £60.00, ISBN: 9781783273935

Liam Temple's book is the first systematic history of early modern English mysticism, a tradition that Temple shows was remarkably 'ecumenical', insofar as many strands of mysticism both Catholic and Protestant can be traced back to the Benedictine monk Augustine Baker (1575–1641). Baker is a central figure in Temple's narrative, as the conduit via whom the medieval mystical tradition reached the seventeenth century. However, as the author makes clear in his introduction, mysticism was not ultimately a success in early modern England, and it is a central argument of the book that Baker's self-conscious construction of a 'mystical tradition' served to separate mysticism from conventional theology and hastened its demise as a significant force within English Christianity (p. 1). Temple's important book sheds light on seventeenth-century church history from an unexplored angle, revealing surprising areas of unity between apparently disparate groups and traditions. The book also shows that English Catholic exiles such as Baker and William Fitch (in religion: Benet of Canfield, 1562–1610) played a key role in delivering the mystical tradition to English Protestants, including the dissenters; an insight the importance of which surely reaches beyond the history of mysticism.

The mystical writings and practices of Augustine Baker are the subject of Temple's first chapter (pp. 19–44); he then goes on to deal with the rise of mysticism among radical Protestants in the period 1625–55, focussing particularly on the Presbyterian Francis Rous and the Familist John Everard (pp. 45–76). The third chapter turns to mysticism's detractors, especially the Royalist Anglican scholar Meric Casaubon's attack on mysticism as 'pagano-papism' (pp. 77–108), while Chapter 4 analyses the post-Restoration print battle between the Benedictine monk and advocate of mysticism Serenus Cressy and the latitudinarian Church of England bishop Edward Stillingfleet (pp. 109–38). The book concludes with a consideration of the brief flowering of Philadelphianism (a mystical movement

founded around the visionary Jane Leade) at the close of the seventeenth century, arguing that the failure of the Philadelphians embodied the marginalisation of mysticism itself (pp. 139–70).

Temple shows that Augustine Baker was accepted as a ‘godly Papist’ by Protestant writers as diverse as the dissenter Richard Baxter, the Quaker Robert Barclay and the Anglican Edward Stephens (p. 19). In his life as well as in his writings, Baker maintained fruitful contacts with Protestants, such as the antiquary Robert Cotton, from whom Baker obtained many medieval works of mysticism (p. 26). However, it was in his role as confessor to the English Benedictine nuns at Cambrai that Baker both created a canon of mystical works and empowered a generation of nuns to potentially subvert authority. So great was Baker’s influence that Benedictine nuns were still being discouraged from reading his writings as late as the nineteenth century (p. 44). While Baker and his disciples fell under suspicion from the Catholic hierarchy, seventeenth-century English Protestants (especially those of a more radical persuasion) eagerly devoured translated works of Catholic mystics within a ‘devotional and spiritual cross-confessional milieu’ (p. 47). In reaction to the popularity of mystical challenges to authority, anti-mystical writers turned to medical language and the accusation of bringing in pre-Christian ideas in an attempt to discredit the mystics (pp. 77–80).

Central to the latter part of Temple’s book is the figure of Hugh (in religion Serenus) Cressy (1605–74), a convert to Catholicism who abandoned what he saw as a dying Church of England in the late 1640s and became both a Benedictine monk and a convent chaplain, following in the footsteps of Baker. However, it was Cressy’s return to England in 1660 as chaplain to Queen Henrietta Maria at Somerset House that catapulted him to prominence as a controversialist. Cressy, as a Catholic priest at the royal court, became a ‘proxy’ for Protestant anxieties about Catholics close to the royal family (p. 123). Anything that Cressy wrote therefore attracted special attention, and this was why his decision to write about mysticism resulted in a major print controversy.

Although Cressy attempted to differentiate a ‘legitimate’ Catholic mysticism from the antinomian enthusiasm of sectaries in his edition of Baker’s *Sancta Sophia* (1657), Temple argues that Cressy was not really successful in doing so. Cressy’s edition of Julian of Norwich’s *Revelations of Divine Love* (1670) drew particular criticism from Edward Stillingfleet, who deployed misogynistic tropes to attack Cressy as, in effect, a credulous dupe of the writings of ignorant women (p. 131). Stillingfleet managed not only to link Catholic mysticism with the mystical sectaries of the Interregnum, but also turned the very word ‘mystic’ itself into a pejorative. Temple argues that, while Cressy preserved the valuable works of Augustine Baker, he also damaged

the reputation of mysticism by elevating it to prominence as a source of discord between Catholics and latitudinarian churchmen like Stillingfleet (pp. 137–8).

Temple's book is well-written and lucidly argued. However, the book's title could lead the reader to expect that Temple explores the role and status of mysticism in sixteenth-century England; a more accurate title might have been *Mysticism in Seventeenth-Century England*, since Temple begins his discussion with Baker and says little about the fate of mysticism in sixteenth-century England. The latter is surely a subject that requires a study in its own right, but it is perhaps a shame that the author does not set his study in context by providing even a brief explanation of what happened to English mysticism in the interval between the Reformation and 1605. Nevertheless, *Mysticism in Early Modern England* is a ground-breaking book that is of interest not only to scholars of the history of mysticism, since Liam Temple's major achievement is to challenge assumptions about the insularity of the Catholic and Protestant mystical traditions. He therefore makes an important contribution to the historiography of the English Reformation, causing us to question fundamental assumptions about apparently polarised confessional identities.

Francis Young

Cara Delay, *Irish Women and the Creation of Modern Catholicism, 1850–1950*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2019, pp. x + 253, £80.00, ISBN: 978-1-5261-3639-8

Recent scholarship on Roman Catholicism in Ireland throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries has demonstrated the value in considering the subject from multiple, intersecting perspectives. Religion and faith were linked in important ways to issues of identity, class, gender, personal spirituality, sexuality, spatial experience, and social mobility. As scholars such as Lisa Godson, Caroline McGee, and Ann Wilson have demonstrated through their research, material objects were often central to the construction and expression of personal and group confessional identity for Catholics, while work by Sarah Roddy, Patrick Doyle, and Ciaran O'Neill has examined the extent to which class and money intersected with religion, and with the experience of being an Irish Catholic at home or abroad during the second half of the nineteenth century. Lindsey Earner-Byrne, Emilie Pine, Katherine O'Donnell, and Catherine Corless have considered the impact of the Church on the lives of the poor, and the role of