

his own charter) or pp. 406–7 line 2 (where ‘divine religion’ should not be described as ‘great’, but we are referred ‘especially’ [‘maxime’] to the light such religion casts). ‘Linleii’ (pp. 414, 420–1) is more likely Benedictine Lonlay (Orne, cant. Domfront) than Sempringhamite Bullington. And what pleasure Sharpe would have derived from a philological muddle over the word ‘werpire’ (pp. 400–1), here clearly, as in Ducange’s ‘guerpire’, ‘to release or set aside’. Linguist, list-maker, historian, Sharpe was uniquely well-qualified. We may never see his like again. In the meantime, we should be grateful to Crouch and his team for making so good and useful a book from what might otherwise have been a mere ‘if only’.

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*Prayer books and piety in late medieval and early modern Europe.* Edited by Maria Crăciun, Volker Leppin, Katalin Luffy and Ulrich A. Wien. (Refo500 Academic Studies, 94.) Pp. 407 incl. 92 colour ills, 2 colour plates and 3 tables. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2023. €150. 978 3 525 57345 7; 2198 3089

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This volume documents an international conference that took place in Cluj-Napoca in 2018. The original reason and the starting point for the conference was an illustrated prayer book from the late medieval period (Cluj-Napoca University Library, MS 683). It seems to have originated at the end of the fifteenth or at the beginning of the sixteenth century in Augsburg (Katalin Luffy / Regina Cermann). However, the various contributions address the phenomenon of prayer literature from a much broader geographical and chronological perspective.

A short introduction by Maria Crăciun is followed by a detailed study on the origins of the manuscript (Luffy). Afterwards, Cermann convincingly shows that the prayer book from Augsburg is not the result of the buyer’s individual ideas but has been prepared in advance as a professional product (p. 41). This result is particularly interesting in comparison to another manuscript from Cluj-Napoca University Library (MS 684): Adrian Papahagi demonstrates that this Flemish Book of Hours ‘was probably intended for a client from Saint-Omer’ (p. 88) and designed according to his wishes. Despite such differences, he rightly points out that books of hours in general were ‘late medieval best-sellers’ (p. 79).

It should already be clear that the volume is obviously guided by the concern to start with the surviving artefacts themselves. This includes further studies on the Brukenthal Breviary (Ittu), the history of Andreas Moldner’s hymnal in Kronstadt (Ulrich A. Wien) or on illustrations of Elizabeth of Hungary in Flemish books of hours (Kata Ágnes Szűcs). The authors already mentioned and their respective papers in German or English contribute a lot to the history of prayerbooks from the late medieval times up to the early modern period. Particularly noteworthy are the many beautiful illustrations, which are very helpful for understanding those studies. However, after dealing with the manuscripts themselves, the need for more far-reaching theses arises.

Those 'inter and transdisciplinary' (Crăciun, p. 7) approaches, as Crăciun already points out in her introduction, demonstrate clearly how prayer books are part of 'a complex culture of prayer which prevailed in the later Middle Ages' (p. 11). Urbanisation, increased literacy and not least 'the revolution in communication brought about by printing' (p. 11) all had their impact on prayer books. Books of hours were written for lay people who tried to imitate the monastic life (Ittu, p. 96) in their structure but also served as 'diplomatic gifts' (Szűcs, p. 13). Prayer books belonged to two worlds, so to speak: imitating clerical culture they still belonged to the sphere of laity; although they focus on visible and audible actions, they still exhort inner participation in those events.

Volker Leppin shows in his study how the polarities of the late medieval period led to a certain dynamic. At the beginning of the sixteenth century the *Hortulus animae* (p. 131) was famous and offered various prayers to its readers (p. 137). In the late medieval logic of quantification, the promises of indulgences seemed to increase to infinity. Leppin convincingly demonstrates how those enormous numbers ultimately leave precisely this quantification behind (p. 141). What is decisive is not the consistency of those numbers and how they add up. What seems to be more important for readers is the extensive promise of salvation, to which they are able to contribute through their prayer life, at least to a certain extent (p. 144). This leads to the crucial point: a comparatively small effort required an even greater inner contribution. The *Hortulus animae* thus not only belongs to the late medieval world of quantified piety, but also deepens its sacramental dimension through strategies of internalisation (p. 147). The soul can only derive maximum benefit through prayer if it shows maximum inner commitment (p. 145).

The conference organiser (Maria Crăciun) has undertaken a comprehensive study of the relationship between Scripture and image in the churches shaped by the Wittenberg Reformation. Hers is by far the largest contribution to the book (pp. 265–320). She rightly points out that although Martin Luther initially had a great deal of confidence in private bible-reading, his scepticism was growing by 1525 (p. 268). To her, Luther seems to have been part of a great consensus in the reformers camp: 'the laity needed guidance in order to understand the bible' (p. 268). In this context, she quite rightly points to the importance of catechisms, clerical mediation and the selection of specific core passages ('Kernstellen'). This fits in with the semi-literate population in Transylvania: on the altars and epitaphs in question, biblical passages are either added later or, in the case of new examples, the biblical verses are merely illustrated (p. 284). In this way, people who could hardly read would know the verses through the catechism and would thus recognise them more easily. The images in the church interiors functioned as 'a visual catechism devised for the benefit of a moderate literate society' (p. 314).

The book concludes in exemplary fashion. First Kathrin Chlench-Priber emphasises the continuities between the Reformation and the late medieval period. Obviously prayer books were still used in Lutheran territories, despite the Reformer's polemics against them. They are an important source for every study concerned with piety in those centuries (p. 342). At the same time, the dimension of personal reading of both the Bible and the prayer books must not be overstated. Its influence on the average Christian in the sixteenth century was limited (p. 340).

The closing statement by the Australian scholar Christopher Ocker attempts to provide a comprehensive interpretation of the ‘tension between external form and inner experience’, which he considers to be ‘biological’ (p. 347). Unfortunately, his conclusion does not fully take into account the varying results of this book. His frequent mentioning of important theologians does not allow for a productive outcome in this conclusion, which remains conceptually very vague (p. 351). It would certainly have opened up an interesting discussion if, in addition to the two conclusions, a theologian had also summed up the conference. However, Ocker’s proposal to take the broader, especially interreligious history of Transylvania from prayer literature into account would certainly be worthwhile.

Overall, this is a stimulating book that combines a variety of excellent studies on the manuscripts with papers more focused on addressing the history of piety in general. The trans- and interdisciplinary contributions, as well as the conclusions clearly showed that this approach is promising. It is certainly a stimulating read for all scholars interested in late medieval piety and questions of continuity or discontinuity with early modern Europe, especially but not exclusively in Transylvania.

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*The aesthetics of melancholia. Medical and spiritual diseases in medieval Iberia.* By Luis F. López González. (Studies in Medieval Literature and Culture.) Pp. xii + 259 incl. 20 ills. Oxford–New York: Oxford University Press, 2022. £65.978 0 19 285922 8

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‘Melancholia – and its aesthetic representation’, argues the Hispanist Luis F. López González, ‘stands as one of the greatest legacies of the Iberian Middle Ages to the baroque imaginary; one that contributed to the notion of the “melancholy Spaniard”’ (p. 233). To reach this conclusion González aims to demonstrate that there existed in thirteenth-century Iberia a fertile tradition in literature depicting melancholia, one described well before the Renaissance and fifteenth- and sixteenth-century ‘melancholy’ figures (artists, writers and favourites) such as Albrecht Dürer, Lucas Cranach the Elder, Teresa of Avila, Timothie Bright, Robert Burton and Samuel Butler. González endeavours to show how melancholia, within this Iberian tradition, may relate to madness or insanity (madness in part but also rabies/hydrophobia), to lovesickness or, more precisely, love melancholy, and to acedia, the melancholy of the monastic. González hopes to make clear how each of these variants of melancholia are to be seen in his thirteenth-century authors, the Castilians King Alfonso x in his *Cantigas de Santa Maria*, Juan Manuel in his *El Conde Lucanor* and *Exemplo 47* and Juan Ruíz in his *El libro de buen amor*. There is as well an illustrative selection of images taken from the manuscripts of Alfonso’s *Cantigas de Santa Maria* that are designed to highlight González’s three themes. The secondary aim of this book, states González, is, ‘to demonstrate the role that melancholia and melancholic discourses played in the ideological shift from a theocentric to a humanistic worldview in literature’. This book will be attractive to Hispanists, medievalists, literary historians and historians of the traditions of melancholia alike. For those concerned with the history of