

ignoring the Donatists' rebaptisms a thousand years earlier that made the practice a capital crime in the first place.

Despite its flaws, the book should help move Reformation studies away from an approach that tacks the radicals on as an appendix to the main event, and toward their fuller integration into the mainstream. One way the authors seek to do this is to show how the radical Reformation influenced modern thought, a theme Biagioni has recently explored more fully in *The Radical Reformation and the Making of Modern Europe* (2017).

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*The Ten Commandments in Medieval and Early Modern Culture.*

Youri Desplenter, Jürgen Pieters, and Walter Melion, eds.

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While the public display and endorsement of the Ten Commandments has elicited considerable, often bitter controversy in contemporary America, developments surrounding the Decalogue ran to different effect in medieval and early modern Europe. The focus of this cohesive and well-edited collection of essays is the promotion of the Commandments and the advance of the notion of their constructive moral effect. The increasing prominence of the Ten Commandments occurred across a broad range of cultural forms and was such that their citation became commonplace. They were thought to articulate in firm and precise fashion God's eternal law. Artists, poets, and theologians promoted knowledge and observance of the Commandments as critical for the ethical and spiritual well-being of the Christian community. Gradually, if firmly, the seven deadly sins gave way to the Ten Commandments as the guide for proper human conduct. The steady rise in the status of the Decalogue, particularly in the vernacular literature, attested to evolving notions of sin and virtue.

The eleven essays contained in this volume seek to situate the Commandments within the overall cultural context of medieval and early modern society. They center on textual and visual manifestations, and are roughly organized in two distinct yet related groups. Lesley Smith introduces the first section and, in some ways, the entire collection, with her essay on the Commandments in medieval schools. She argues that Peter Lombard's twelfth-century Scholastic discussion of the Decalogue was the standard to which generations of commentators responded. The Commandments were incorporated into school curricula, figured in confessors' manuals, and became part of pastoral sermons. The three essays that follow survey the Commandments and poetry. Luca Gili turns to Dante's *Divine Comedy* and asks a straightforward question:

Why did the Florentine poet choose to construct the *Inferno* around the seven deadly sins rather than the Ten Commandments? The answer, Gili argues, has much to do with theological views that Dante shared with Thomas Aquinas. Charlotte Cooper draws attention to the Ten Alternative Commandments of Christine de Pizan. Here, the use of visual evidence is particularly effective. In the final essay of this section, Gregory Haake fastens upon the first commandment and, more especially, the phrase, “you shall not make yourself an idol.” The lyric love poems of Petrarch, Scève, and Ronsard present ample opportunity to explore the issues.

Robert Bast’s nicely synthetic essay on theological training and pastoral care opens the second section of this collection, with its emphasis on didactic texts. Bast concentrates on Strasbourg and its late medieval tradition of the study and pastoral employ of the Ten Commandments, culminating in their unhesitating promotion by the sixteenth-century Reformer Martin Bucer. Greti Dinkova-Bruun then returns the discussion to earlier developments, through scrutiny of a thirteenth-century text by Richard of Wetheringsett. The focal point was the fourth commandment and the respect due to parents; the text also pointedly rebuked municipal authorities who neglected their obligations to the communities that they led. Youri Desplenter, one of the volume’s editors, analyzes two mid-fourteenth-century treatises by the lay brother Jan van Leeuwen. These were among the earliest writings on the Decalogue in Dutch and were explicitly pitched to a lay audience.

The chapters that follow move the focus eastward into Central Europe. Lucie Doležalová examines mnemonic Latin verses by three medieval Bohemian poets, who drew fascinating connections between the Ten Commandments and the ten plagues visited upon Egypt. Krzysztof Bracha explicates a fifteenth-century manuscript sermon on the Decalogue, a popular homiletic genre in late medieval Poland. Henk van den Belt explores the woodcuts that accompanied explanations of the Commandments in Luther’s catechism. Illustrations, he argues, were particular to the Lutheran world; they did not appear in Reformed catechisms. Finally, Waldemar Kowalski assesses the treatment of the Commandments in several Catholic catechisms from the diocese of Kraków.

Altogether, the essays encompass a diverse range of approaches to and multifaceted understandings of the Decalogue. How did the shift from deadly sins to divine commandments occur? What were the religious and social implications? Were there changing emphases from one linguistic area and confessional tradition to another? The exploration of these and related queries makes for a lively and informative contribution to the history of the Ten Commandments.

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