

the events of the revolt as part of a wider strategy of asking their subjects to forget those very events: but he needs to reflect more on the inevitability of this paradox, and the cultural tensions that it produced. For an example from the northern provinces, one could point to the coverage of the various Protestant uses of the past. Historical thought within the Reformation was always ambiguous, since reformers insisted simultaneously on the newness and ancientness of their creed. More thought about this would have enriched the account of appeals to relatively recent events in the construction of different reformed identities. In the end, though, these conceptual criticisms come from a reviewer hoping for deeper insights into human understanding of time (his current interest). For those wanting insights into the use of the Dutch revolt in the century after it occurred, this is an important contribution.

BANGOR UNIVERSITY

TONY CLAYDON

*Inferior office? A history of deacons in the Church of England.* By Francis Young. Pp. xxxviii + 180 incl. 6 tables. Cambridge: James Clarke, 2015. £25 (paper). 978 0 227 17488 3  
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In his brief history of deacons in the Church of England, Young seeks to show that a small but important group of men (and, much later, women) remained deacons for a variety of reasons, even though the evidence is scanty. These included failure to find a benefice and a secure income, lack of adequate education, or a career in a form of ministry that did not include the need to celebrate the eucharist, as with Oxford and Cambridge Fellows or schoolmasters. At one point there was even a deacon-schoolmaster training college, St Mark's in Chelsea, established in 1841. Many more spent much longer than the customary year – or sometimes even less – before they were ordained priest, probably for similar reasons. The author builds up his case using the limited evidence available. His main source is the multi-volume Cambridge Alumni Database which contains data for Cambridge graduates from 1560 to 1758. This reveals whether they went into the Anglican ministry, with dates of ordinations: rather than go through the whole alphabet he makes a detailed study of the letter A, and publishes the results in an appendix and an analysis in chapters i and ii. After a brief general history of the diaconate which draws on the ground-breaking work of John Collins, Young moves into a more detailed account of the Reformation period including the theology of the ordinal, as well as the various well-known deacons of the period, some of whom, such as Cuthbert Symson, suffered persecution and martyrdom. The survey continues through to the present day with particular emphasis placed on the theologies of diaconate that emerged in the mid-nineteenth century, as well as the efforts that were made to revive the diaconate as a form of ministry focused on work among the poor. Finally, he analyses the most recent work done during the brief period when women could be ordained deacon but not priest, as well as more recent reports. A brief conclusion outlines alternative futures, either with the abolition of the diaconate or with a restored distinctive diaconate. Although there are many idiosyncracies (including citing Richard Hooker from

a 1723 edition by page number), and some errors (for example that a perpetual curate was a form of incumbent [p. 23]), this is a useful account of the history of a neglected office.

UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

MARK CHAPMAN

*Supernatural and secular power in early modern England*. Edited by Marcus Harmes and Victoria Bladen. Pp. xi + 237 incl. 1 fig. Farnham–Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2015. £70. 978 1 4724 2940 7

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The editors' thin attempt in their introduction to assert the coherence of this volume resolves itself into a series of platitudes about the beliefs of 'early moderns' (or 'the inhabitants of early modernity'), and quickly takes refuge in a series of thumbnail sketches of the nine articles that follow. Of the nine authors only four seriously engage with 'the intersections between the differentiated yet interrelated realms of the supernatural ... and the secular' and, in general, the writers scarcely consider each other's arguments, let alone engage with the 'current dialogue' concerning the 'porous boundary between the secular and the supernatural in early modern England'. Three of the four essays that would merit inclusion in a book with a focus on pervasive intersection are rewarding and challenging (Parry, Kapitaniak and Devine), but even with these there are problems. Reginald Scot's venomous anti-Catholicism does not mean that he was a Calvinist, as Kapitaniak and the editors suggest; indeed, his opponents among the Kent radical Protestants insisted that he was not. Nor was he a JP. Neither Parry nor Devine, having located the origins of the 1563 Witchcraft Statute in the war against Catholic conspiracy, consider why, if this was the case, the legislation does not appear to have been subsequently employed for that purpose. Parry and Kapitaniak never resolve their disagreement on the roles played by Dr Dee and Scot in the factional politics of the Elizabethan court. The other five essays – four on literary works and one (most interesting) on sex with the devil – vary in quality. Some are poorly written, some seem to add little to current discussion – and may even be unaware of it; some make uncritical use of sources to sustain their conclusions. All of these criticisms are true of the weak essay by Marcus Harmes on 'The devil and the bishop'. While this piece is focused, through a study of dispossession, on the ostensible topic of the collection, the writing is tortured; much of the argument has already been published in Harmes's 2013 book; and errors abound – Hatton was Sir Christopher; not Sir Robert; Bancroft's preference for an absolute prohibition of Puritan forms of dispossession is certain, not probable; Alice Goodridge's fury was unleashed by a boy's inadvertent fart, but her victim was Thomas Darling, not Will Somers.

LADY MARGARET HALL,  
OXFORD

CLIVE HOLMES