



One steps back from this wealth of data and analysis with a strong sense of the dynamism and forward movement that currently marks the study of these two minorities. This volume brings together strenuous and convincing efforts to respond to the difficulties of studying the inner as well as outer histories of two groups largely known through the documents of their persecutors. Its findings provide ample proof that the documentation produced by persecutors can, when applying the proper cautions, shed substantial light on those individuals and groups who ran afoul of the ever more stringent orthodoxy of Counter-Reformation Spain. That certain early modern Spaniards showed considerable ingenuity—as well as courage—in coming up with their own answers to the mysteries of the spirit in the face of such strong opposition provides eloquent, if partial, proof of a more pluralistic, if problematic, sphere of belief than the one found in most histories of Spain.

James S. Amelang, *Universidad Autónoma de Madrid*  
doi:10.1017/rqx.2023.505

*The Texture of Images: The Relic Book in Late-Medieval Religiosity and Early Modern Aesthetics.* Livia Cárdenas.

Trans. Kathleen Anne Simon. Library of the Written Word 85; The Handpress World 66. Leiden: Brill, 2021. xxvi + 548 pp. €159.

---

The genre of relic books seems to fit into the religiosity of the late Middle Ages in a way that has not been examined in much depth by English-speaking scholars. Livia Cárdenas, by way of translation by Kathleen Anne Simon, successfully fills this historiographic gap in a most successful way. The value of the book to scholars is evident both in what it presents and in what can be done with it in the future.

The structure of the book is simple yet effective. In the introduction, the author defines what is specifically meant by the term *relic books* and begins to present previous scholarship on this group of texts. From there, the book is divided into two parts. The first examines the relic books by describing the contents for each in great detail. Each of the seven chapters takes one of the books as its focus. For example, chapter 1 centers on the Nuremberg Relic Book, while the Würzburg Relic Book is the subject of chapter 3, and so on. Part 2 starts the process of applying art historical theory to the texts and address their mediality. By far one of the most useful parts of the book is the first appendix, which provides a full catalogue of the relic books that are extant. This section can very much serve as the gateway to further study of the texts and their historical context.

The greatest value of Cárdenas's work is that it introduces the relic books to a wider audience. The presentations of each text in part 1 are detailed and specific. Wonderfully replicated images accompany the written descriptions. The reproductions not only are almost essential for guiding the argument and informing the reader but also provide

access to the manuscripts to those who might not be otherwise able to get a firsthand look at them. This strength is heightened by the author's acknowledgment of the bias involved in the selection of the texts; the audience at all times knows where they stand. The written explanations of the texts are also of great value to the reader, particularly one unfamiliar with the genre.

The author uses comparison to texts presented in the previous chapters when considering a new one. This helps to distinguish the features of each text, but there seems to be an unacknowledged argument inherent in the comparison. This is not necessarily a fault in the analysis if a solid and well-laid-out method of comparison is present. Unfortunately, this begs the question as to whether the comparison is simply descriptive or if it also verges on the analytical. There is blurring at times between the two. In addition to laying the primary sources bare for what would seem like a fresh audience, Cárdenas outlines the scholarly tradition concerning the relic books. Much of the historiographic record is in German and somewhat dated. In describing and filling the gap in the literature and bringing the scholarship up to date with her own work, the author gives the audience the chance to also catch up and presumably use past research as a jumping-off point for further study.

The potential for further study is perhaps the most important addition to the field that the book makes. There are several topics the author mentions or alludes to that others might be able to take to a fuller conclusion, including the above-mentioned comparison between various relic books. In addition, Cárdenas hints at the purpose for the composition and commissioning of the books. In chapter 1, she mentions civic competition and in chapter 4 the relationship between the *Devotio Moderna* and specific relic books. It is not this author's aim to complete these arguments, but the book certainly leaves others with a firm foundation to do so and to further explore the historical context of the manuscripts. Yet, by providing descriptions and images of the relic books, laying out the historiographic tradition surrounding them, and creating a platform for further study of this important and impressive genre, Cárdenas gives scholars much of value in this monograph.

Nikolas O. Hoel, *Northeastern Illinois University*  
doi:10.1017/rqx.2023.513

*Verteidigung der Wahrheit: Leonhard Hutter (1563–1616) als Universitätslehrer und Kontroverstheologe.* Lars Röser-Israel.

Arbeiten zur Kirchengeschichte 149. Berlin: De Gruyter, 2021. xii + 434 pp. \$118.99.

---

The Lutheran theologian Leonhard Hutter (1563–1616) was already praised by his contemporaries as one of the most important theologians of the seventeenth century. Balthasar Meisner, professor of theology at the University of Wittenberg, wrote on