

participation in real estate, an area that Decker argues “provided opportunities” (154) to both groups. The final Chapter Seven discusses changes that occurred in the fourteenth century with regard to credit in Jewish communities and how they were reflected in the legal documentation. With the exception of Decker’s arguments about the detrimental effects of the Black Death, which she compellingly argued led to an uptick in widows’ management of their husbands’ estates after they died, it was difficult to know how Jewish women’s participation in the credit market differed from earlier times. In addition, Decker could have more overtly linked a number of repeated arguments in this chapter to materials and claims that were advanced earlier in the book.

Decker’s approach diverges from recent interpretations of Iberian women from different faiths as similar, a result of scholars’ sometimes naïve understanding of *convivencia*, the cohabitation between different communities. This is certainly borne out by the book’s evidence and engaging analysis. The book’s primary strength is its demonstration of household management (business transactions, including participation in the credit market and the buying and selling of real estate) as a crucial form of women’s work in this period—a focus that could have been better communicated with a revised book title. Decker’s study will persuasively complement scholarship on women’s work in medieval Catalunya, such as Montserrat Cabré i Pairet’s research on cosmetics and women healers, or Linda A. McMillin’s investigations of nuns’ management of economic assets at Sant Pere de les Puel·les. More broadly still, it will enhance research on women’s work in nonmodern Iberia that has been carried out since the 1980s by, for instance, Cristina Segura Graïño and Ángela Muñoz Fernández. And finally, the book affirms what are by now two commonplaces of women’s work in nonmodern places and times: the frequent familial nature of their labor, and their recurrent multiprofessionalism. On another note, a lingering doubt has to do with why Muslims and *moriscos* appeared only sporadically and did not receive more thorough attention in the book. This question aside, Decker’s study makes an important contribution to the study of women’s home life and work in nonmodern Catalunya and should be read widely.

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***Women, Dance and Parish Religion in England, 1300–1640: Negotiating the Steps of Faith.* By Lynne Miller Renberg. *Gender in the Middle Ages*, 19. Woodbridge, UK: The Boydell Press, 2022. xi + 254 pp. \$85.00 cloth.**

Historical scholarship on dance faces numerous obstacles, not least of which is the necessity of an interdisciplinary approach that accommodates the varied roles of this important cultural practice. In this volume, Professor Lynne Miller Renberg addresses the methodological need for interdisciplinarity by integrating dance studies, religious studies, gender studies, and parish studies, situating her examination of dance geographically within England and chronologically between the fourteenth and seventeenth centuries. What Renberg offers is a deep dive into sermon literature and preaching as an

avenue for better understanding the church's attitude toward dance and dancers during a period of cultural foment and religious reformations. The compiled sermons are tremendously interesting for how they reflect clerical concerns around dance; notably, the focus is not on uncovering the "real" dances or dance practices taking place in English parishes among laity, but rather the role of dance as a "discursive rhetorical construct" (11) within the context of parish preaching. Consequently, Renberg shows the concerns of clerics and preachers were often "more about perceived problems and concerns than problematic practices. Sermons against dance may inadvertently reveal certain realities of dance performance, but they do not accurately represent the reality of parish community and practice" (191).

Renberg's central argument rests on the treatment of dance as an *adiaphora* by premodern and early modern preachers in England (a matter on which several perspectives could be legitimately taken; 4), which enabled dance to be differently associated with ideas around theology and gender over time. As Renberg argues, "the potential holiness allowed to both dance and women shifted between 1300 and 1600" (6), with gender becoming more deeply connected to dance as a sacrilegious practice over hundreds of years: essentially, dance is at first potentially, but not unequivocally, problematic, primarily tied to ideas around sacrilege and the protection of sacred time and space. Over time dance becomes linked to the gendered, sexualized, and therefore sacrilegious bodies of women dancers. *Women, Dance and Parish Religion* represents a new and welcome contribution within dance historical research, bringing to light a textual archive never before mined for what it tells us about premodern and early modern attitudes toward dance, gender, and religion.

The book takes shape chronologically through an introduction, conclusion, and six chapters. The introduction constructs the theoretical frameworks employed within the body of the book around gender and its performance, parish religion and audiences, and reformations. Chapter 1 focuses on the background offered by religious studies and history, detailing Renberg's approach to religion across many centuries, the lay audiences for sermons, and the tension between continuity and change in relation to dance and gender. Chapters 2 and 3 form a pair, beginning with the exemplum of the carolers of Kölbigk in Chapter 2 and the emphasis of the church on protecting sacred spaces from sacrilege. Chapter 3 continues the theme of sacrilege but focused on sacred time, the keeping of the sabbath, and an understudied link between witchcraft, women, and dance. Chapters 4 and 5 treat the biblical story of Salome first from a premodern then an early modern perspective to show how Salome's body becomes increasingly sexualized as she dances through time. Chapter 6 narrows in on the early modern context and on the performance of gender through dance, with an emphasis on the feminization and sexualization of dance practices. Renberg introduces masculinity and effeminacy in relation to dance and dancers in this chapter. A short conclusion ties the themes of the book together and highlights the patterns emerging from the corpus of texts under consideration, while looking ahead to observe how dance as a "mechanism of misogyny" (4 and 192) continues into the twenty-first century.

One challenging aspect of Renberg's study is how sermons show both continuity and change in terms of how dance was treated by the church; as she writes, "despite dramatic theological differences and a massive chronological span, considering the years between 1200 and 1600 in toto is an exercise that highlights more commonalities than differences" (49). This tension arises repeatedly throughout the book. For instance, one of the major interventions Renberg makes is to assert the increasingly gendered identity of dance as a sexual transgression, leading to a survey of early modern sermons

that uniformly identify (dancing) women as the source of all sin and evil. Moreover, Renberg notes that the ambiguous nature of dance in premodern sermons becomes far less ambiguous and far more negative in the early modern context, with rare exceptions tied to the dancing of the biblical David. Overall, Renberg convincingly argues her thesis that “attempts at eliminating sacrilegious behavior and reforming the church led to growing concern about both dancing and female bodies” (9). The sermons and other archival and historical texts Renberg draws upon unquestionably reveal this shift taking place against the landscape of relatively continuous church reform and a desire to protect the true faith, sacred time, sacred spaces, and, indeed, male bodies.

In addition to sermons, other texts appear in meaningful ways, including court cases, vernacular literature like conduct books, and parish records. Usefully, Renberg includes a list of early modern sermon authors taken from the Oxford Dictionary of National Biography (195–205), a timeline for the period under question (207–210), and an extensive subdivided bibliography. A wealth of material is found between these pages, and one senses Renberg is holding back from citing even more than she already does. Although included, the index falls short in length and depth with several absent key terms, likely the fault of the indexer and not the author. Finally, the cover design is lovely and makes a reader want to see images associated with narratives in the book—depictions exist in English sources of Salome dancing, for instance, which could have been included in Chapter 4 or 5. This absence, too, is likely due to limitations placed on the author by the publisher.

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The Thirty Pieces of Silver: Coin Relics in Medieval and Modern Europe. By Lucia Travaini. Religion and Money in the Middle Ages. Abingdon, UK: Routledge, 2022. xxi + 286 pp, 76 b/w ills. \$170.00 cloth, \$37.06 eBook.

A betrayal most infamous: Judas, as told in Matthew 26:14–15, agrees to deliver Christ to the high priests in exchange for thirty silver coins. Lucia Travaini’s informative study of Judas’s Thirty Pieces traces this relic tradition from its twelfth-century origins through its early modern critique, winding it through concurrent histories of Holy Land pilgrimage, late medieval devotion to the *arma Christi*, medieval and early modern anti-Semitism, and peer practices of coin relics. Simultaneously, Travaini carefully crafts a parallel narrative of early modern antiquarianism, especially numismatics, and its engagement with such relic cults. *The Thirty Pieces of Silver*, translated here from its Italian edition by Andrew D. R. Colvin, details the trajectories of this relic tradition across centuries of historical change and rupture, bridging the medieval and early modern into a transdisciplinary history of religion, ritual, and numismatics.

The story of the Thirty Pieces dates, in the West, to the ca. 1190 *Pantheon* of Godfrey of Viterbo and, in the East, to the *Book of the Bee*, written ca. 1222 in Syriac by Solomon of Akhlat, bishop of Basra; both presumably stem from an earlier, now lost work. Godfrey’s Latin version became popularized in the vernacular beginning in the