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Audrey-Beth Fitch, The Search for Salvation: Lay Faith in Scotland, 1480-1560

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the postplague land market in two of the bishop of Winchester's bailiwicks in Somerset and Hampshire. Despite differing patterns in transfer of land from bailiwick to bailiwick, the predominant tendency was "polarization" of landholding: the larger holding often expanded, while the cottage was prone to alienation. The keys to a family's success in engrossing land were lengthy residence in a village, wealth, and longtime participation in the market. Mullan cautions, however, against a facile equating of polarized landholding with polarized wealth. Greater mobility and the lure of higher wages may have made alienation the better option than landholding for a cottager. For Peter L. Larson (chap. 12), halmote rolls for Durham Cathedral Priory's estate allow reassessment of the conceptual value of "village community" in light of the sociopolitical reordering unleashed by the Black Death. The estate's preplague norm—a relatively loosely regulated and smoothly functioning preplague village community—had adequate cohesion to weather the Black Death. Community crumbled in the mid-1360s: violence became more frequent and severe, while cooperation in communal obligations flagged. Failure to forge a new sense of community doomed some villages to chronic tension and disorder. The more usual pattern, however, was, by the mid-1380s, ascent to dominance in a village by an oligarchic group of families, owing to a burgeoning market in land and short-term leasing.

Implicit throughout these essays and explicit in the editor's conclusion (chap. 13) is the case for local and regional analyses. From the perspective of evidence, intensive local study of any available source, such as tithe, remains the best path to narrowing the gulf in knowledge. From the perspective of perfecting an overarching narrative for late medieval agrarian life, the grounds for local analysis likewise are compelling. While the collection is rooted in northern England—Durham Cathedral Priory figures in several essays—analyses elsewhere in England and on the continent foster fruitful comparisons and uncover the mutually transformative interplay of local, regional, and international economies. The editors encourage an agenda for research that is collective and provisional in the best sense. Whether a scholar defines region by agrarian practice, topography, soil, institutions, a market's purview, specialized production, density of population, or availability of a compelling source, each new study enjoins reassessment and perhaps refashioning of the main story.

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AUDREY-BETH FITCH. *The Search for Salvation: Lay Faith in Scotland, 1480–1560*. Edinburgh: Tuckwell Press, 2009. Pp. 336. \$41.95 (cloth).

There is an inevitable sadness to reviewing this book. Audrey-Beth Fitch, who completed her PhD at the University of Glasgow in 1997 and went on to teach at California University of Pennsylvania, spent several years revising her thesis for publication, but her efforts were cut short by her untimely death in 2005. The task of editing this work into its final form was then undertaken by Elizabeth Ewan of the University of Guelph, who was an early supporter of Fitch's scholarly work and has done a great deal to promote Scottish studies in North America.

While the time span covered by this book might be seen by some as the long eve of the Reformation, Fitch was firm in her (healthy) refusal to read history backward, noting early on that while her work is written "with an awareness of the later, Protestant, period, [it] primarily seeks to ask questions of the evidence based upon the spiritual concerns, expectations and understanding of Scots living in the period under study" and stresses "continuity rather than disjunction" (2). After her introduction, Fitch sought to explore those concerns, expectations and understandings through chapters on judgment, heaven and hell, purgatory,

God the Father, the Virgin Mary, and finally Jesus. Fitch drew extensively on literary sources such as the works of William Dunbar, Robert Henryson, and Sir David Lyndsay, as well as artistic and architectural sources (the book is enhanced by many of her own photographs of kirks and their decorations), wills, and other manuscript sources related to the foundation of collegiate kirks, which were often intended to offer masses for departed benefactors. As was the case with Eamon Duffy in England, Fitch found late medieval Scots to be firm believers in the path to salvation mapped out by traditional Christianity. In contrast to claims recently made by Andrew Pettegree and others, Fitch was convinced that visual imagery could be clearly understood by the average layperson, and she saw such imagery as both reflective of, and contributing to, lay views of the afterlife. She also credited the laity with some theological sophistication as well, wrapping up her book's conclusion with the claim that reform appealed to the laity not as a result of criticisms of abuse in Catholicism but rather because the reformers "appeared to offer a better means of attaining the spiritual worthiness necessary for acceptance into heaven. The Reformation was merely the next stage in the laity's search for salvation" (189). This is a very strong (and striking) claim about the Scottish Reformation, although Fitch did not argue the point, given that she treated the Reformation as being beyond her remit.

Given the circumstances under which this book was brought to publication, it seems churlish to criticize it, but such is the reviewer's task. The major weaknesses here are the book's organization and the huge question it leaves mostly unanswered: what was particularly distinctive about late medieval Scots Christianity as opposed to, say, English, French, Flemish, or German Christianity? With regards to the first problem, while the chapter titles suggest a rather neat and tidy structure, the material within the various chapters tends to wander a great deal and in some cases seems to have little to do with the ostensible subject of the chapter in question. So, for example, chapter 4, titled "God: 'Supreme Judge' and 'Fader of Goddis and Men,'" contains lots of material on preaching and on arrangements for prayers for the dead, with no explanation of why this relates particularly to God the Father. Likewise, at least twelve pages in the chapter titled "Jesus: 'The Passioun of Christ'" are devoted to a discussion of the provisions laymen and women made in setting up collegiate kirks. Why were such foundations particularly related to God the son? The chapter offers no explanation. This approach also leads to a lot of repetition of material from chapter to chapter. The second problem can be seen in statements such as "Scots believed that merits gained through saintly suffering could be applied to sinners in Purgatory" (89). Well, yes, but how did this set Scots apart from other European Christians? While the religiosity of late medieval Scots has been a neglected subject, a study devoted to "lay faith in Scotland" in the pre-Reformation era needs to uncover some things that were distinctly Scottish, or else it is simply one more brick in the already well-constructed wall of studies of late medieval Christianity.

Thankfully, there are a few exceptions to this tendency here. Fitch noted that heaven was presented to believers as a place where there would be, among other delights, beautiful music—so the decorations in Rosslyn Chapel depicted angels playing bagpipes (43). Walter Kennedy described Adam after the fall as "put to the horn, exilit fra goddis face" (48). Likewise, hell, in William Dunbar's "Dance of the Sevin Deidly Synnis," includes Highlanders, whose "chattering and croaking loudly in Gaelic" is too much even for the Devil (56). Such passages, which situate the Scottish view of eternity in the context of the legal language and cultural divisions of late medieval Scotland, offer a tantalizing glimpse of what this study could have become had its author had more time.

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