Barrin's *Vénus dans le cloître*. Chapter 6, "Male Appropriations of the Nun's Persona in Guilleragues's *Lettres portugaises* and Diderot's *La Religieuse*," announces in its title the two French works that will be discussed along with an analysis of nun's persona of women involuntarily monarchized. Both writings discuss women's sexuality within the conventual space and as a narrative technique; the male authors choose to use first person narration for their main female characters.

The last chapter, "Tombs," covers historical events referring to the conventual life, such as the revolutionary decree of 1790 that abolished monasticism and expelled nuns from their convents, the reopening of the convents under Napoleon's rule, and the women's communities in the prerevolutionary era. The literary analysis refers to the nineteenth-century works and the examples are illustrated by Chateaubriand's *René* (1802) and Claire de Duras's *Ourika* (1824), while at the end of the study there are references to twentieth-century works such as Karen Armstrong's *Through the Narrow Gate* and *The Spiral Staircase*, and also Toni Morrison's *Paradise*, but these last works offer only the recollection of the prerevolutionary past because "once the cloister door has been forced open, things can never return to their former state. Yet the conventional space persists, whether as a real enclosure for women (some of whom still have memories of their own convent education) or as a compelling image of the female solitude and solitary" (40).

In the end, *Imagining Women's Conventual Spaces in France, 1600–1800* succeeded in accomplishing the main goals addressed by Wosbinsky in the introduction—it offers answers to issues concerning the conventual space as a public, private, and sacred place, along with a scholarly and detailed analysis through literature, architecture, history, and religious thought.

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**The German Reformation and the Peasants' War: A Brief History with Documents.**


REVIEWED BY: Marvin L. Anderson

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This new title in the Bedford Series in History and Culture by Michael G. Baylor, professor of history at Lehigh University, is a fitting addition to a series noted for its publications of historical documents whose seminal importance warrants a fresh interpretive historical reintroduction. With his lucid translations of Thomas Müntzer and substantive publications on Müntzer and numerous other radical reformers, Bedford's choice of Baylor to compile and edit this volume is not only obvious, but timely.

The overarching contribution of Baylor's volume, implicit in its title, is the analytical framing and *fusing* of the German Reformation and German Peasants' War as two differentiated yet undeniably interrelated historical events. It offers a compelling and welcome rejoinder to the conventional and, in many ways, contrived and ideologically dated lines of demarcation that have long severed the German Reformation from the Peasants' War—at our own interpretive and conceptual expense as historians and historical theologians. Who knows—maybe the confessional and academic aversion toward contextualizing these two distinct historical phenomena as interdependent instead of discontinuous has only further obscured our view on that most contentious of human relationships, replete in our daily news broadcasts: the fraught relationship between religion and politics.
In addition to some of the dated yet classic translations of primary sources that Baylor has chosen to include and reprint in this handy volume, including some of his own, Baylor deftly translates for lay readers and undergraduate students alike the complex social, economic, religious, and political context by way of his brief summaries and historical background behind each document. Baylor provides a useful and comprehensive overview in his introduction, aptly entitled "Germany's Dual Rebellions." His introduction not only helps set the historical stage for the reader, but equips it with the requisite props, preps, and cast of characters integral to this turbulent two-act drama. First and foremost, Baylor restores the full script to the story line for the North American audience (including many of our own students) that is largely oblivious to the fact that "in the mid-1520s, the German Peasants' War, [was] the largest peasant insurrection in European history and the most massive popular rebellion prior to the French Revolution," permanently shaking the social and political foundations of central Europe. Baylor is intent on helping students critically reexamine and understand these two key events not in isolation, but in the same historical and religious context.

In discussing the precipitating factors for the Peasants' War, Baylor rightly notes that as "the ideals of the early Reformation were taken up in various places and fused with existing economic grievances and political complaints," secular issues also surfaced in the heat of intense religious debate and sweeping ecclesiastical upheaval in the Holy Roman Empire from 1500 to 1526. Out of this veritable cauldron, "disturbances of various kinds broke out. The causation of the great insurrection of the Peasants' War, then," in Baylor's own words, "is to be found in the convergence of old sociopolitical tensions with new Reformation ideals" (16).

In narrating the central dramatic role of the lead actors in Germany's dual rebellions as well as in the peasants' bitter defeat in the aftermath of the failed insurgency, Baylor features Luther's and Müntzer's most relevant writings. Baylor also includes many of the supporting cast whose historical credits on the same stage may not seem nearly as significant as Luther's and Müntzer's, or may not even be familiar to students, i.e., the lesser-known authors and extant historical documents of various kinds of social, economic, and religious grievances. Probably the best known is *The Twelve Articles of Upper Swabian Peasants* compiled by Sebastian Lotzer and Christoph Schappeler in March 1525. *The Twelve Articles* became the most widely influential political program of the Peasants' War. Baylor points out that it was printed and then reprinted at least twenty-five times during the insurrection; peasants in virtually every area where the rebellion took place used it or modified it as the basis of their demands. In particular, *The Twelve Articles* epitomized commoners' grievances that combined secular complaints and religious concerns. Citing passages from scripture in order to legitimize their demands, this document shows the direct and formative influence of the Reformation and subsequently "provides a key test for the relationship of the German Reformation and the Peasants' War" (21).

Furthermore, as Robert Scrihner and others have convincingly shown, the ideological import of visual media during the Reformation and Peasants' War can no longer be overlooked. Significantly enough, this book allows the reader to look at how this public indignation and outrage were seen and depicted; some of the book's historical documents include illustrations or the title pages of key tracts. Such contemporary images only accentuate the caliber of editorial acumen and historical breadth that is seamlessly woven into this concise yet coherent tapestry of early modern historical documents.