

The Kings Two Bodies A Study In Mediaeval Political Theology Ernst H Kantorowicz

"A sophisticated and persuasive late-modernist political analysis that consistently draws the reader into the narratives of the author and those of the people of violence in Northern Ireland to whom he talked. . . . Simply put, this book is a feast for the intellect"—Thomas M. Wilson, *American Anthropologist* "One of the best books to have been written on Northern Ireland. . . . A highly imagination and significant book. *Formations of Violence* is an important addition to the literature on political violence."—David E. Schmitt, *American Political Science Review* This book provides a bridge between Shakespeare studies and classical social theory, opening up readings of Shakespeare to a new audience outside of literary studies and the humanities. Shakespeare has long been known as a "great thinker" and this book reads his plays through the lens of an anthropologist, revealing new connections between Shakespeare's plays and the lives we now lead. Close readings of a selection of frequently studied plays—*Hamlet*, *The Winter's Tale*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Julius Caesar*, and *King Lear*—engage with the texts in detail while connecting them with some of the biggest questions we all ask ourselves, about love, friendship, ritual, language, human interactions, and the world around us. The plays are examined through various social theories including performance theory, cognitive theory, semiotics, exchange theory, and structuralism. The book concludes with a consideration of how "the new astronomy" of his day and developments in optics changed the very idea of "perspective," and shaped Shakespeare's approach to embedding social theory in his dramatic texts. This accessible and engaging book will appeal to those approaching Shakespeare from outside literary studies but will also be valuable to literature students approaching Shakespeare for the first time, or looking for a new angle on the plays.

This collection of essays deals with the rituals of kingship and royalty in India, Africa and Europe from the social anthropological and ethno-historical points of view. It discusses the dialectical entanglements of rituals conducted for and by kings (including, 'little kings' and 'jungle kings') with the wider social, political, cultural, historical, religious and economic contexts in which they were embedded. Part I begins with a triangular comparison of kingship among the Shilluks of East Africa, the Gajapatis of eastern India and kings in Renaissance France. The essay entitled the 'King's Three Bodies' makes use of Ernst H. Kantorowicz's classical study, *The King's Two Bodies* in medieval political theology and extends it, not only in terms of the numbers of bodies that are found to be significant, but also theoretically. Another significant essay in this part looks at the unexpected but significant theoretical impact of social anthropological studies of acephalous, segmentary lineage societies in Africa on Indian historiography. The second part of this volume consists of three chapters dealing with the royal patronage of tribal and Hindu goddesses in Eastern India, while the third part presents studies on sleeping (and dreaming) kings and on the power of dead kings, a discussion of A.M. Hocart's dictum that the first kings must have been dead kings. Please note: Taylor & Francis does not sell or distribute the Hardback in India, Pakistan, Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka.

With this sweeping reinterpretation of early cultural encounters between the English and American natives, Joyce E. Chaplin thoroughly alters our historical view of the origins of English presumptions of racial superiority, and of the role science and technology played in shaping these notions. By placing the history of science and medicine at the very center of the story of early English colonization, Chaplin shows how contemporary European theories of nature and science dramatically influenced relations between the English and Indians within the formation of the British Empire. In Chaplin's account of the earliest contacts, we find the English--impressed by the Indians' way with food, tools, and

iron--inclined to consider Indians as partners in the conquest and control of nature. Only when it came to the Indians' bodies, so susceptible to disease, were the English confident in their superiority. Chaplin traces the way in which this tentative notion of racial inferiority hardened and expanded to include the Indians' once admirable mental and technical capacities. Here we see how the English, beginning from a sense of bodily superiority, moved little by little toward the idea of their mastery over nature, America, and the Indians--and how this progression is inextricably linked to the impetus and rationale for empire.

In the medieval period, the monarch was seen as the embodiment of the community of his kingdom, the body politic. And while we've long since shed that view, it nonetheless continues to influence our understanding of contemporary politics. This book offers thirteen case studies from premodern and contemporary Europe that demonstrate the process through which political corporations--bodies politic--were and continue to be constructed and challenged. Drawing on history, archaeology, literary criticism, and art history, the contributors survey a wide geographical and chronological spectrum to offer a panoramic view of these dynamic political entities.

"The king is dead. Long live the king!" In early modern Europe, the king's body was literally sovereign—and the right to rule was immediately transferrable to the next monarch in line upon the king's death. In *The Royal Remains*, Eric L. Santner argues that the "carnal" dimension of the structures and dynamics of sovereignty hasn't disappeared from politics. Instead, it migrated to a new location—the life of the people—where something royal continues to linger in the way we obsessively track and measure the vicissitudes of our flesh. Santner demonstrates the ways in which democratic societies have continued many of the rituals and practices associated with kingship in displaced, distorted, and usually, unrecognizable forms. He proposes that those strange mental activities Freud first lumped under the category of the unconscious—which often manifest themselves in peculiar physical ways—are really the uncanny second life of these "royal remains," now animated in the body politic of modern neurotic subjects. Pairing Freud with Kafka, Carl Schmitt with Hugo von Hofmannsthal, and Ernst Kantorowicz with Rainer Maria Rilke, Santner generates brilliant readings of multiple texts and traditions of thought en route to reconsidering the sovereign imaginary. Ultimately, *The Royal Remains* locates much of modernity—from biopolitical controversies to modernist literary experiments—in this transition from subjecthood to secular citizenship. This major new work will make a bold and original contribution to discussions of politics, psychoanalysis, and modern art and literature.

This is the first complete biography of Ernst Kantorowicz (1895–1963), an influential German-American medieval historian whose colorful life intersected with many of the great events and thinkers of his time. Born into a wealthy Prussian-Jewish family, he fought in World War I—earning an Iron Cross and an Iron Crescent—before being sent home following an affair with a general's mistress. Though he was an ardent German nationalist during the Weimar period, after the Nazis came to power he bravely spoke out against the regime before an overflowing crowd in Frankfurt. He narrowly avoided arrest after Kristallnacht, fleeing to England and then the United States, where he joined the faculty at Berkeley, only to be fired in 1950 for refusing to sign an anticommunist "loyalty oath." From there, he "fell up the ladder" to Princeton's Institute for Advanced Study, where he wrote his masterwork, *The King's Two Bodies*. Drawing on many new sources, including numerous interviews and unpublished letters, Robert E. Lerner tells the story of a major intellectual whose life and times were as fascinating as his work.

Few historians trace grand themes across many centuries and places, but Ernst Kantorowicz's great work on the symbolic powers of kingship is a fine example of what can happen when they do. *The King's Two Bodies* is at once a superb example of the critical

thinking skill of evaluation – assessing huge quantities of evidence, both written and visual, and drawing sound comparative conclusions from it – and of creative thinking; the work connects art history, literature, legal records and historical documents together in innovative and revealing ways across more than 800 years of history. Kantorowicz's key conclusions (that history is at root about ideas, that these ideas power institutions, and that both are commonly expressed and understood through symbols) have had a profound impact on several different disciplines, and even underpin many works of popular fiction – not least The DaVinci Code. And they were all made possible by fresh evaluation of evidence that other historians had ignored, or could not see the significance of.

First published in 1957, Ernst Kantorowicz's THE KING'S TWO BODIES traces the "King's two bodies", the body politic and the body natural, back to the Middle Ages. By placing the concept in its proper setting of medieval thought and political theory, Kantorowicz demonstrates how the early-modern Western monarchies gradually began to develop a "political theology".
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These essays, which deal with a range of theological topics, reflect the changes in Peterson's thought leading up to and resulting from his conversion from Protestantism to Roman Catholicism.

From the civil rights movement to Black Lives Matter, issues of race, representation, and violence inform this interrogation of art and its necessity in times of crisis.

This sweeping book explores the profound shift in the way European kings and queens were regarded by their subjects between the Reformation and the Enlightenment. Once viewed as godlike beings, by 1715 monarchs had come to represent the human, visible side of the rational state. The author offers new insights into the relations between kings and their subjects and the interplay between monarchy and religion.

Originally published in 1957, this classic work has guided generations of scholars through the arcane mysteries of medieval political theology. Throughout history, the notion of two bodies has permitted the post mortem continuity of monarch and monarchy, as epitomized by the statement, "The king is dead. Long live the king." In The King's Two Bodies, Ernst Kantorowicz

traces the historical problem posed by the "King's two bodies"--the body natural and the body politic--back to the Middle Ages and demonstrates, by placing the concept in its proper setting of medieval thought and political theory, how the early-modern Western monarchies gradually began to develop a "political theology." The king's natural body has physical attributes, suffers, and dies, naturally, as do all humans; but the king's other body, the spiritual body, transcends the earthly and serves as a symbol of his office as majesty with the divine right to rule. The notion of the two bodies allowed for the continuity of monarchy even when the monarch died, as summed up in the formulation "The king is dead. Long live the king." Bringing together liturgical works, images, and polemical material, *The King's Two Bodies* explores the long Christian past behind this "political theology." It provides a subtle history of how commonwealths developed symbolic means for establishing their sovereignty and, with such means, began to establish early forms of the nation-state. Kantorowicz fled Nazi Germany in 1938, after refusing to sign a Nazi loyalty oath, and settled in the United States. While teaching at the University of California, Berkeley, he once again refused to sign an oath of allegiance, this one designed to identify Communist Party sympathizers. He was dismissed as a result of the controversy and moved to the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton, where he remained for the rest of his life, and where he wrote *The King's Two Bodies*. Featuring a new introduction, *The King's Two Bodies* is a subtle history of how commonwealths developed symbolic means for establishing their sovereignty and, with such means, began to establish early forms of the nation-state.

Stefan George (1868–1933) was one of the most important and influential poets to have written in German. His work, in its originality and impact, easily ranks with that of Goethe, Holderlin, or Rilke. Yet George's reach extended far beyond the sphere of literature. Particularly during his last three decades, George gathered around himself a group of men who subscribed to his homoerotic and idiosyncratic vision of life and sought to transform that vision into reality. George considered his circle to be the embodiment and defender of the "real" but "secret" Germany, opposed to the false values of contemporary bourgeois society. Some of his disciples, friends, and admirers were themselves historians, philosophers, and poets. Their works profoundly affected the intellectual and cultural attitudes of Germany's elite during the critical postwar years of the Weimar Republic. Essentially conservative in temperament and outlook, George and his circle occupy a central, but problematic, place in the rise of proto-fascism in Germany. Their own surrogate state offered a miniature model of a future German state: enthusiastic followers submitting themselves without question to the figure and will of a charismatic leader believed to be in possession of mysterious, even quasi-divine, powers. When he died several months after the Nazi takeover, George was one of the most famous and revered figures in Germany. Today the importance of George and his circle has largely been forgotten. In this, the first full biography of George to appear in any language, Robert E. Norton traces the poet's life and rise to fame.

Eric Santner offers a radically new interpretation of Marx's labor theory of value as one concerned with the afterlife of political theology in secular modernity. What Marx characterized as the dual character of the labor embodied in the

commodity, he argues, is the doctrine of the King's Two Bodies transferred from the political theology of sovereignty to the realm of political economy. This genealogy, leading from the fetishism of the royal body to the fetishism of the commodity, also suggests a new understanding of the irrational core at the center of economic busyness today, its 24/7 pace. The frenetic negotiations of our busy-bodies continue and translate into the doxology of everyday life the liturgical labor that once sustained the sovereign's glory. Maintaining that an effective critique of capitalist political economy must engage this liturgical dimension, Santner proposes a counter-activity, which he calls "paradoxological." With commentaries by Bonnie Honig, Peter Gordon, and Hent de Vries, an introduction by Kevis Goodman, and a response from Santner, this important new book by a leading cultural theorist and scholar of German literature, cinema, and history will interest readers of political theory, literature and literary theory, and religious studies.

Critiques recent representations of the Renaissance, particularly those presented in new historical and cultural materialist criticism. Examines the function of the late medieval/early modern opposition in recent historical interpretations of Renaissance texts, concluding that the new historicists do not succeed in acknowledging the otherness of the Renaissance. Explores Shakespeare's versions of the dialectic between the king's body natural and body politic, and addresses the issue of historical change. Rolls received a Phd from the National University Ireland, Galway, in 1998.

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We live in a world of breaking news, where at almost any moment our everyday routine can be interrupted by a faraway event. Events are central to the way that individuals and societies experience life. Even life's inevitable moments—birth, death, love, and war—are almost always a surprise. Inspired by the cataclysmic events of September 11, Robin Wagner-Pacifi presents here a tour de force, an analysis of how events erupt and take off from the ground of ongoing, everyday life, and how they then move across time and landscape. *What Is an Event?* ranges across several disciplines, systematically analyzing the ways that events emerge, take shape, gain momentum, flow, and even get bogged down. As an exploration of how events are constructed out of ruptures, it provides a mechanism for understanding eventful forms and flows, from the micro-level of individual life events to the macro-level of historical revolutions, contemporary terrorist attacks, and financial crises. Wagner-Pacifi takes a close look at a number of cases, both real and imagined, through the reports, personal narratives, paintings, iconic images, political posters, sculptures, and novels they generate and through which they live on. What is ultimately at stake for individuals and societies in events, Wagner-Pacifi argues, are identities, loyalties, social relationships, and our very experiences of time and space. *What Is an Event?* provides a way for us all—as social and political beings living through events, and as analysts reflecting upon them—to better understand what is at stake in the formations and flows of the events that mark and shape our lives.

In this strikingly original work, Paul W. Kahn rethinks the meaning of political theology. In a text innovative in both form and substance, he describes an American political theology as a secular inquiry into ultimate meanings sustaining our faith in the popular sovereign. Kahn works out his view through an engagement with Carl Schmitt's 1922 classic, *Political Theology: Four Chapters on the Concept of Sovereignty*. He forces an engagement with Schmitt's four chapters, offering a new version of each that is responsive to the American political imaginary. The result is a contemporary political theology. As in Schmitt's work, sovereignty remains central, yet Kahn shows how popular sovereignty creates an ethos of sacrifice in the modern state. Turning to law, Kahn demonstrates how the line between exception and judicial decision is not as sharp as Schmitt led us to believe. He reminds readers that American political life begins with the revolutionary willingness to sacrifice and that both sacrifice and law continue to ground the American political imagination. Kahn offers a political theology that has at its center the practice of freedom realized in political decisions, legal judgments, and finally in philosophical inquiry itself.

For the past fifty years anxiety over naturalism has driven debates in social theory. One side sees social science as another kind of natural science, while the other rejects the possibility of objective and explanatory knowledge.

Interpretation and Social Knowledge suggests a different route, offering a way forward for an antinaturalist sociology that overcomes the opposition between interpretation and explanation and uses theory to build concrete, historically specific causal explanations of social phenomena.

"Inspired by existential thought, but using ethnographic methods, Michael Jackson explores a variety of contemporary topics, including 9/11, episodes from the war in Sierra Leone and its aftermath, the marginalization of indigenous Australians, the application of new technologies, mundane forms of ritualization, the magical use of language, the sociality of violence, the prose of suffering, and the discourse of human rights. Throughout this compelling work, Jackson demonstrates that existentialism, far from being a philosophy of individual being, enables us to explore issues of social existence and coexistence in new ways, and to theorise events as the sites of a dynamic interplay between the finite possibilities of the situations in which human beings find themselves and the capacities they possess for creating viable forms of social life."--BOOK JACKET.

'Peter Bratsis breaks new ground, forcing us to think of the connections between big structures and our most intimate inner lives. A fascinating and erudite book.' -Frances Fox Piven, CUNY Nearly four centuries ago, liberal political thought asserted that the state was the product of a distant, pre-historical, social contract. Social science has done little to overcome this fiction. Even the most radical of theories have tended to remain silent on the question of the production of the state, preferring instead to focus on the determinations and functions of state actions. Bratsis argues that the causes of the state are to be found within everyday life.

Building upon insights from social, political, and anthropological theories, his book shows how the repetitions and habits of our daily lives lead to our nationalization and the perception of certain interests and institutions as 'public.' Bratsis shows that only by seeking the state's everyday, material causes can we free ourselves from the pitfalls of viewing the state as natural, inevitable, and independent from social relations.

Political Theology II is Carl Schmitt's last book. Part polemic, part self-vindication for his involvement in the National Socialist German Workers' Party (NSDAP), this is Schmitt's most theological reflection on Christianity and its concept of sovereignty following the Second Vatican Council. At a time of increasing visibility of religion in public debates and a realization that Schmitt is the major and most controversial political theorist of the twentieth century, this last book sets a new agenda for political theology today. The crisis at the beginning of the twenty-first century led to an increased interest in the study of crises in an age of extremes - an age upon which Carl Schmitt left his indelible watermark. In Political Theology II, first published in 1970, a long journey comes to an end which began in 1923 with Political Theology. This translation makes available for the first time to the English-speaking world Schmitt's understanding of Political Theology and what it implies theologically and politically.

This work explores how colonial India imagined human and divine figures to battle the nature and locus of sovereignty.

In the ruthless arena of King Henry VIII's court, only one man dares to gamble his life to win the king's favor and ascend to the heights of political power England in the 1520s is a heartbeat from disaster. If the king dies without a male heir, the country could be destroyed by civil war. Henry VIII wants to annul his marriage of twenty years, and marry Anne Boleyn. The pope and most of Europe opposes him. The quest for the king's freedom destroys his adviser, the brilliant Cardinal Wolsey, and leaves a power vacuum. Into this impasse steps Thomas Cromwell. Cromwell is a wholly original man, a charmer and a bully, both idealist and opportunist, astute in reading people and a demon of energy: he is also a consummate politician, hardened by his personal losses, implacable in his ambition. But Henry is volatile: one day tender, one day murderous. Cromwell helps him break the opposition, but what will be the price of his triumph? In inimitable style, Hilary Mantel presents a picture of a half-made society on the cusp of change, where individuals fight or embrace their fate with passion and courage. With a vast array of characters, overflowing with incident, the novel re-creates an era when the personal and political are separated by a hairbreadth, where success brings unlimited power but a single failure means death.

Known as the 'stupor mundi' – the wonder of the world – Holy Roman Emperor Frederick the Second led one of those extraordinary lives that was full of unimaginable drama and achievement. Born in 1194, Frederick was the son of emperor Henry II and Constance, Queen of Sicily, who, at the age of forty, allegedly gave birth to him in a public square so no one could doubt he was her son. He was crowned King of Sicily at the age of four; Pope Innocent III was his guardian; the future Pope Honorius III was his tutor. Once he came of age, the charismatic and ambitious Frederick fought for control over the lands he considered his birth right to become King of the Germans, King of Jerusalem and Holy Roman Emperor; his vast empire straddling Christendom and the Holy Land. Hailed as a Messiah and a tyrant in equal measure, Frederick led crusades but was excommunicated four

times. He was as much a patron of the arts as a warrior: he spoke six languages and, unusually, welcomed Christian, Jewish and Muslim scholars to his court. Dante saluted his contribution to Sicilian literature and language, yet still consigned him to hell in his *Inferno*. First published in 1927, Ernst Kantorowicz's biography of this dynamic man was a bestseller in its time and one of the first examples of popular narrative history writing. This edition, with a new introduction by bestselling author Dan Jones, brings that life to a new audience.

From acclaimed historian Barbara Stollberg-Rilinger, an incomparable introduction to this momentous period in the history of Europe The Holy Roman Empire emerged in the Middle Ages as a loosely integrated union of German states and city-states under the supreme rule of an emperor, and would endure until its dissolution in 1806 during the Napoleonic Wars. Barbara Stollberg-Rilinger provides a concise history of the empire, presenting an interpretation of its unique political culture and remarkably durable institutions. In a narrative spanning three turbulent centuries, Stollberg-Rilinger shows how it was a political body unlike any other, bound together by personal loyalty and reciprocity, tradition and shared purpose, and constantly reenacted by solemn rituals. Originally published in 1957, this classic work has guided generations of scholars through the arcane mysteries of medieval political theology. Throughout history, the notion of two bodies has permitted the post mortem continuity of monarch and monarchy, as epitomized by the statement, "The king is dead. Long live the king." In *The King's Two Bodies*, Ernst Kantorowicz traces the historical dilemma posed by the "King's two bodies"--the body natural and the body politic--back to the Middle Ages. The king's natural body has physical attributes, suffers, and dies, as do all humans; however the king's spiritual body transcends the earth and serves as a symbol of his office as majesty with the divine right to rule. Bringing together liturgical works, images, and polemical material, Kantorowicz demonstrates how early modern Western monarchies gradually began to develop a political theology. Featuring a new introduction and preface, *The King's Two Bodies* is a subtle history of how commonwealths developed symbolic means for establishing their sovereignty and, with such means, began to establish early forms of the nation-state.

"Isaac Reed's *Power in Modernity* aims to be a major contribution to social theory. It is a bold and innovative theoretical reimagining of power. Drawing on an eclectic range of ideas from across the humanities and social sciences, Reed rethinks the fundamentals of sociological theorizing of power-upsetting canonical traditions and remaking them with insights from poststructuralism, postcolonial theory, and critical race studies. First, Reed conceptualizes power as having three aspects: relational, discursive, and performative. He explores these aspects in relation to three different kinds of social actors-rector, agent, and other-and their connections. In essence, Reed brings power in the actions of individuals into relation with a wide range of institutional circumstances of power while neatly finessing the outmoded agency/structure binary. The result is a framework for the analysis of power that allows us to see both its sometimes fragile and precarious character, as well as its more typical stability and durability. We also get a window onto the episodic performances of power and how they institutionalize or unravel social orders. *Power in Modernity* is sure to be of interest to political sociologists and social theorists especially, and it will serve sociologists and other social scientists well who are interested in how power operates across many different social situations"--

At the height of the Middle Ages, a peculiar system of perpetual exile—or abjuration—flourished in western Europe. It was a judicial form of exile, not political or religious, and it was meted out to felons for crimes deserving of severe corporal punishment or death. From England to

France explores the lives of these men and women who were condemned to abjure the English realm, and draws on their unique experiences to shed light on a medieval legal tradition until now very poorly understood. William Chester Jordan weaves a breathtaking historical tapestry, examining the judicial and administrative processes that led to the abjuration of more than seventy-five thousand English subjects, and recounting the astonishing journeys of the exiles themselves. Some were innocents caught up in tragic circumstances, but many were hardened criminals. Almost every English exile departed from the port of Dover, many bound for the same French village, a place called Wissant. Jordan vividly describes what happened when the felons got there, and tells the stories of the few who managed to return to England, either illegally or through pardons. *From England to France* provides new insights into a fundamental pillar of medieval English law and shows how it collapsed amid the bloodshed of the Hundred Years' War.

The Maverick coven holds a meeting pointedly for it's two youngest and strangest members. Twin vampires that are adults trapped inside boyish bodies. Tristen and Lukas are to be formally melded into the family frame by way of an induction ceremony, one such event that Maliki believes will harm the family and put him in the line of danger. Maliki plots with one of his lovers as to how to handle the problem without either of them being fingered as the culprit. Together the couple decide to trick a local band of nameless rouge vampires into attacking on the night of the party and kill the twins before they can upset the balance. Jaquelin knows about the induction and has spoken to Jak about the twins becoming more instrumental to the family. Jak tells her that such will not be the case and they will remain mostly hidden from the outside world as they have been for their entire lives within the clan. Thinking the treatment unfair for the two vampires, she disobeys Jak and takes the twins into the town of Harding so that at least once in their lives they may taste freedom. During the visit Tristen breaks away on the streets and meets another vampire that calls himself Vincent Summerset and tells Tristen that he, the small weak undead, is his master and he wishes to serve him again. Before he can explain the vampire flees as he hears Luke and Jaquelin returning only leaving Tristen with a brass pin.

Winner of the 2012 Man Booker Prize Winner of the 2012 Costa Book of the Year Award The sequel to Hilary Mantel's 2009 Man Booker Prize winner and New York Times bestseller, *Wolf Hall* delves into the heart of Tudor history with the downfall of Anne Boleyn Though he battled for seven years to marry her, Henry is disenchanted with Anne Boleyn. She has failed to give him a son and her sharp intelligence and audacious will alienate his old friends and the noble families of England. When the discarded Katherine dies in exile from the court, Anne stands starkly exposed, the focus of gossip and malice. At a word from Henry, Thomas Cromwell is ready to bring her down. Over three terrifying weeks, Anne is ensnared in a web of conspiracy, while the demure Jane Seymour stands waiting her turn for the poisoned wedding ring. But Anne and her powerful family will not yield without a ferocious struggle. Hilary Mantel's *Bring Up the Bodies* follows the dramatic trial of the queen and her suitors for adultery and treason. To defeat the Boleyns, Cromwell must ally with his natural enemies, the papist aristocracy. What price will he pay for Anne's head? *Bring Up the Bodies* is one of The New York Times' 10 Best Books of 2012, one of Publishers Weekly's Top 10 Best Books of 2012 and one of The Washington Post's 10 Best Books of 2012

Discusses the social and economic conditions in which feudalism developed to offer an understanding of the processes at work in medieval Europe.

Conrad Leyser examines the formation of the Christian ascetic tradition in the western Roman Empire during the period of the barbarian invasions, c.400-600. In an aggressively competitive political context, one of the most articulate claims to power was made, paradoxically, by men who had renounced 'the world', committing themselves to a life of spiritual discipline in the hope of gaining entry to an otherworldly

kingdom. Often dismissed as mere fanaticism or open hypocrisy, the language of ascetic authority, Conrad Leyser shows, was both carefully honed and well understood in the late Roman and early medieval Mediterranean. Dr Leyser charts the development of this new moral rhetoric by abbots, teachers, and bishops from the time of Augustine of Hippo to that of St Benedict and Gregory the Great.

The aim of this book is to explore the body in various historical contexts and to take it as a point of departure for broader historiographical projects. The chapters in the volume present the ways in which the body constitutes a valuable and productive object of historical analysis, especially as a lens through which to trace histories of social, political, and cultural phenomena and processes. More specifically, the authors use the body as a tool for critical re-examination of particular histories of human experience, and of societal and cultural practices, thus contributing to the burgeoning area of body history in terms of both specific case studies as well as historiography in general.

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