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Review Essay: Tom Scott, *Thomas Muntzer: Theology and Revolution in the German Reformation*

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by humanists, the mock encomium would also become a favorite form in the repertoire of later humanists, and Alberti's revival of the form is again a mark of his importance as a literary tastemaker. Because Alberti's satires became available in printed editions only in the nineteenth century, we may never be able to assess explicitly the influence of Alberti on other writers of Menippean satires, such as Pontano, Erasmus, Rabelais, and Calcagnini (who also wrote a handful of apologues), but given the fairly extensive manuscript transmission some of them enjoyed, and Ariosto's use of the satire entitled "The Dream," we can assume a certain measure of influence on later writers. Many of the *Intercenales* seem quite close in sensibility to Erasmus's *Colloquies* (one of them, "The Shipwreck," shares a common title). Marsh's edition will no doubt prove fruitful for future scholars of Renaissance satire.

But there is material of interest here for other scholars as well. Intellectual historians will find an interesting blend of both stoical and cynical moral positions taken in many of the satires, and early anticipation, perhaps, of the more troubling strains of skepticism that emerged in the later Quattrocento. Alberti's dialectic of *fortuna* and *virtù* ("The Deceased"), with which readers of the *Momus* are already familiar, may interest political historians in its anticipation of Machiavelli. Book 10 in particular will be of interest to this last group. Though Marsh sees Alberti as being conservative in his remarks about revolution ("The Temple"), I sensed a deeper ambivalence in the author, and Alberti's comments on tyrants in the allegorical fable "The Lake" make clear his sentiments about despotism in the fifteenth century. *Dinner Pieces* also contains materials that will interest art historians, such as the allegorical program described in "Paintings."

This handsome and relatively inexpensive volume is not without its tiresome moments—no fault of the translator—but it will prove valuable for years to come.

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Tom Scott, *Thomas Muntzer: Theology and Revolution in the German Reformation*, Macmillan, 1989, xix, 203 pp., ill., biblio., index, \$29.95.

Thomas Muntzer has long been an important figure in the research of Marxist historians and those interested in early modern revolutionary movements. In recent years, numerous studies have appeared examining different aspects of the reformer's career. Interest was also evident in the years 1989 and 1990, which commemorated the approximate 500-year anniversary of the reformer's birth.

Interpretations vary on Muntzer's impact on the Peasants' War and how his theology developed and influenced the motives of his followers. He is often seen primarily either as an antagonist to Luther or as an insightful social revolutionary. This lack of consensus stems in part from a tendency to examine Muntzer in light of modern political and social movements. These examinations have led to interpretations that perhaps too readily see him in terms of recent ideologies.

Scott's study is not designed to weigh these controversies but is "intended as an introduction to Muntzer's life and work" (xviii). In an all-too-brief narrative, Scott recounts the major events of the reformer's life and presents the basics of his thought. Scott continually downplays Muntzer's contribution to the various movements of the lower classes with which he was identified. Scott concludes that Thomas Muntzer was important as a "legend," meaning "the links between Muntzer's theological revolution and the mass of the peasants' aspirations and demands were fitful, fragile and fortuitous" (174-75). Muntzer, therefore, owes his fame to later interpreters, who could say what they liked "secure in the knowledge that their mentor could not gainsay them from the grave" (175).

Scott's thesis is interesting but requires more evidence and better argumentation than he presents in this short study. To say Muntzer has been interpreted too broadly invites an examination of the various schools of thought relating to him. Scott's study only hints at such an inquiry. Also, a more extensive recounting of the man's actions and beliefs is necessary to adequately substantiate the claim that Muntzer was not as important as he has often been portrayed. Furthermore, Scott's work is muted by a cumbersome structure that includes over-lengthy and occasional run-on sentences.

Scott's introduction will please few. His treatment is too brief for novices because a more extensive knowledge of the topic's background and context is necessary to understand Muntzer properly. Scholars will find the study equally inadequate because it is too superficial. A close treatment would have been more helpful. Scott's study adds little to the older but still valuable works of Eric Gritsch and Walter Elliger on Muntzer; it also suffers in comparison to the recently published *Thomas Muentzer: A Destroyer of the Godless* by Abraham Friesen. Friesen's work remains the most comprehensive, stimulating, and valuable to come out at roughly the 500th anniversary of Muntzer's birth.

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Walter Liedtke, *The Royal Horse and Rider: Painting, Sculpture, and Horsemanship, 1500-1800*, Abaris, 1989, 336 pp., over 300 b & w and 34 color illus., biblio., \$65.00.