

Thiery

Polluting the Sacred

Violence, Faith and the 'Civilizing' of Parishioners in Late Medieval England

The influence of Christianity on 'the history of violence' is often exemplified by famous instances of interfaith conflict, like 'The Crusades'. However, as religions develop, they usually marginalize violence against fellow believers long before they ever, if at all, question violence against 'others'. Through an investigation of spiritual and legal sources, this book details how Christian teachings about charity, sin and purity problematized late medieval parishioners' use of violence, and how parishioners actually tried to reconcile these teachings with cultural norms that often honored violent conduct. By illuminating the impact of lessons concerning the sinfulness of violence and piety of self-restraint, this book provides a fresh perspective on the important role of religion in the 'civilizing process' of European history.

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181,50 €

169,63 € (zzgl. MwSt.)

Lieferfrist: bis zu 10 Tage

Artikelnummer: 9789004173873

Medium: Buch

ISBN: 978-90-04-17387-3

Verlag: Brill

Erscheinungstermin: 16.03.2009

Sprache(n): Englisch

Auflage: Erscheinungsjahr 2009

Serie: Later Medieval Europe

Produktform: Gebunden

Gewicht: 488 g

Seiten: 196

Format (B x H): 160 x 240 mm

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24.07.2024 | 05:22 Uhr

