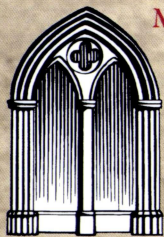


THE COURTLY AND COMMERCIAL ART OF THE WYCLIFFITE BIBLE

In 1409, Archbishop Thomas Arundel banned the Wycliffite Bible, along with the heresy attributed to Oxford theologian John Wyclif for which it was named. Containing the first complete translation of the Bible into English, the Wycliffite Bible is nonetheless the most numerous extant work in Middle English by a wide margin.

Nearly half the existing copies of the Wycliffite Bible are illuminated. This book offers the first sustained, critical examination of the decoration of Wycliffite Bibles. This study has found that many copies were decorated by the most prominent border and initial artists of their eras. Many more were modelled on these styles. Such highly regarded artists had little to gain from producing volumes that might lead them to trial as heretics and ultimately to the stake.

This unprecedented study contributes to recent revisionist criticism and troubles long-standing assumptions about Wycliffism and the Wycliffite Bible. It contends that the manuscript record simply does not support a stark interpretation of the Wycliffite Bible as a marginalized text. Rather, this study reveals a prolific and vibrant textual exchange within the book culture of late medieval England.



Medieval Church Studies is a series of monographs and, sometimes, collections devoted to the history of the Western Church from, approximately, the Carolingian reform to the Council of Trent. It builds on Brepols' longstanding interest in editions of texts and primary sources, and presents studies that are founded on a traditional close analysis of primary sources but which confront current research issues and adopt contemporary methodological approaches.