Gary K. Waite. *David Joris and Dutch Anabaptism, 1524-1543*. Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1990, Pp. 235 + x.

Originally presented as the author's doctoral dissertation at the University of Waterloo, this revised version represents both in style and substance an impressive first scholarly effort. Waite's stated purpose is to assess the place of David Joris (1501-1556) within the Anabaptist movement in the Low Countries prior to his move to Basel in 1544. Waite argues that between 1536 and 1544 Joris was the most significant leader of non-violent Anabaptism in both south and north Holland. By 1544 Joris' role had begun to decline as a result of a literary dispute with Menno Simons and Simons' vociferous opposition.

The first two chapters put Joris in context by providing a concise overview of early Reform and Anabaptist movements in the Netherlands. An ever-present backdrop to the Joris story is the twofold influence of Melchior Hoffman and the Munsterite revolution represented by Bernhardt Rothmann. Especially valuable is Waite's analysis of the socio-economic context of early Dutch Anabaptism. He shows that Holland Melchiorites were "overwhelmingly" from the artisan estate; even the leaders in Friesland and Amsterdam came from the higher-ranked crafts. In response to the economic crises of the 1520s and 1530s, a wave of out-of-work artisans migrated to Amsterdam finding there "not only 'religious salvation,' but economic salvation as well" (pp. 29f, 26).

In the next two chapters Waite covers highlights in Joris' thought and career up to 1539. We learn that as a glasspainter in Delft Joris encountered the writings of the *Theologia Deutsch*, Karlstadt and Luther. By 1531 he was "caught up in the eschatological excitement which was sweeping the Low Countries in the early 1530s and was at the very least a Melchiorite in sympathy and ideology well before his baptism in 1534" (p. 59).

Waite's fourth chapter, covering Joris' life from 1534 to 1539, offers insightful detail on Joris' personality, including his platonic friendship with a female follower, Anneken Jans. Waite suggests that this relationship served to inspire Joris' early visions and the ascetic self-denial during which he ate so little that he became dangerously weak. Especially interesting is the discussion of Joris' methods of avoiding detection and escaping persecution with the help of a wide network of friends (pp. 76f).

The next four chapters offer thematic discussions of social and theological aspects of Joris' career which show his importance to Dutch Anabaptism. Among the more significant conclusions that Waite offers is the insight that on numerous issues Joris tried to mediate between the dualistic apocalypticism of Melchior Hoffman and the concrete realized eschatology of Bernhardt Rothmann. On the issue of restitution, for example, Joris' "internalized" the crusade, calling for renewal of the inner man and political pacifism (pp. 100-103). On the basis of 177

Anabaptist leaders identified from the studies of Karel Vos and Albert Mellink, Waite shows that Davidites had “the largest number of active leaders of any single group” of Anabaptists. Joris had moved to the forefront as a result of his efforts as mediator at the 1536 conference of Anabaptist leaders in Bocholt, Westphalia (pp. 114, 118).

Chapter 8 provides a social analysis of Davidite supporters and leaders from 1536 to 1544. Waite claims to have identified 219 “known” Davidites (although the table on page 147 lists only 153), whom he analyses in terms of locality, gender and occupation. Unfortunately, Waite supplies no documentation, archival or secondary, for these statistics. How were these Davidite supporters known? This failure is especially surprising in view of Waite’s earlier mention of his sources when discussing the social background of Dutch Anabaptists from 1531 to 1535 (Chapter 2) and of Anabaptist leaders generally (Chapter 6). One can only assume he again derived the names from Vos and Mellink.

In the last two chapters Waite returns to biography, discussing Joris’ transition from Anabaptist to Spiritualist in Antwerp from 1539 to 1544, and finally his last years in Basel from 1544 to 1556. Waite suggests that Joris’ move towards Spiritualism was encouraged by “his failure to win the allegiance of the Oldenburg Munsterites and the breakdown of dialogue with the Strasbourg Melchiorites,” and may also have been inspired by the works of Sebastian Franck and Caspar Schwenckfeld (pp. 165, 168). In his later years Joris abandoned all expectations of an earthly fulfillment of Christ’s return. He also became more positive in his view of princes and nobility, humanists and scholars, and played down his own role as the third David.

There is much to commend in Waite’s study of Joris. He has achieved what Roland Bainton did not: a clear picture of Joris’ contribution to Dutch Anabaptism. He has clarified the precise social basis for Joris’ appeal in the Low Countries, something Claus-Peter Clasen’s *Anabaptism: A Social History* (1972) never attempted, thereby revising Clasen’s estimation that Anabaptism was numerically insignificant. Waite has also probed the dynamics of Joris’ complex personality, and shown the nuances and developments of his theology.

Some criticisms can be made. Waite’s *use of sources* reflects a substantial reliance on Samme Zijlstra’s secondary studies (including a frequently-cited article on “David Joris” not included in the bibliography). Waite relies on Zijlstra on matters of detail, and expresses agreement with him on major points of interpretation (pp. 113, 118, 124 n. 24). The reader is left wondering how much Waite’s book advances our knowledge of Joris’ life and significance beyond Zijlstra’s studies. On the key issue of Joris’ prominent role within Dutch Anabaptism, for example, Waite offers statistical evidence in further support of Zijlstra’s thesis.

Further, *the image of Joris* that Waite’s interpretation leaves with the reader is somewhat surprising in view of his implication that modern scholarship needs to move beyond the image of Joris as at best a “deranged narcissist” (p. 1). This is

precisely the picture that Waite's own interpretation suggests. We are told that apparently "Joris' emotional anguish led to physical convulsions," which he controlled with some kind of medication; that Joris nurtured a relationship "in which the prophet held almost cultic sway over his followers;" that he saw himself as a prophet "in the lineage of Jesus Christ himself," claiming direct revelation from God, and refused to engage in rational discussion of his claims (pp. 80f, 134, 157). "Deranged narcissist" sounds like a pretty accurate description.

Finally, the book lacks a conclusion. This means we are left with no clear statement of how Waite views the significance of his own work. The threads of the chapters, three of which appeared in abbreviated form as articles, are never pulled together, nor are we told how Waite believes his interpretation has significantly advanced and revised our understanding of Joris.

The text of *David Joris* is supplemented with two maps, nine tables, and eleven illustrations, mostly from the *Wonder Book* (1543 and 1551 editions), all very attractively produced. There is a name and subject index which unfortunately omits secondary authors, and has no entries for David or Dirkgen Joris or their parents. Clearly, however, Waite's book deserves to be read by all scholars interested in the Radical Reformation field.

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Christopher Dyer. *Standards of Living in the Later Middle Ages. Social Change in England, c. 1200-1520*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989.

To anyone working with the records for wages, prices and productivity from medieval continental Europe, the sheer volume of English evidence is a perpetual source of envy, incomplete though it may be. Inevitably during the last 30 years with the increasing interest in social and economic history inspired by the *Annales* school this has encouraged the production of a huge number of works devoted to various aspects of English life and society and to the economic factors which influenced them. We have studies of diet (one of Dyer's own chosen fields), housing, clothing, and so on. In an attempt to reconstruct peasant life we have a daunting number of studies of individual villages or groups of estates. It was high time that somebody tried to pull all this together into a form more digestible for students and scholars alike. This Dyer has undertaken to do, at least in one area, and we must all be grateful to him. This is not, for the most part, a work of original scholarship nor does it claim to be: it was commissioned for a series of textbooks designed to provide introductions to various reasonably precise topics. The conclusions are not new but some of the nuances are; and the coverage of secondary material is prodigious. Scholars and students will ignore it at their peril.