more than a means of acquiring quick cash and avoiding larger complicated issues.

ANDREW A CHIBI, University of Leicester

Gary K. Waite. *Heresy, Magic, and Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe*. Houndsmills and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003. Pp. vii, 284.

Waite offers an elegant synthesis of recent work on heresy, magic, and witchcraft, while pursuing a persuasive argument about their connections. The antecedents of the witch-hunt, as others have recognized, were evident in the medieval persecutions of Jews, lepers, and heretics, each accused of demonic conspiracies against Christianity. However, elites often dismissed as peasant credulity folkloric notions of witchcraft until the violent factionalism that accompanied the Reformation lent them credibility. Waite explains why the regions of most intense religious strife were also centres of European witch-hunting. The vilification of one's religious opponents, in an atmosphere of apocalyptic frenzy, legitimized the unleashing of communal tensions in a process that was self-perpetuating until religious pluralism finally reversed it. The only weakness in this otherwise excellent book is the author's repeated and reductive assertion that accusations of heresy and witchcraft were often a psychological projection of religious doubt.

JOHN SAINSBURY, Brock University

Derek Beales. *Prosperity and Plunder: European Catholic Monasteries in the Age of Revolution, 1650–1815*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003. Pp. xviii, 395.

The enormous importance of religious orders and houses in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries is obvious throughout Renaissance and Reformation studies, but their continuing importance and vitality thereafter is a much less familiar topic. However, as Derek Beales argues in this learned, elegantly written, and beautifully produced book, monasteries (including the houses of friars and Jesuits) continued to make a rich contribution to the culture of Catholic Europe until, and in many cases beyond, the end of the eighteenth century, and their widespread neglect is "a grave distortion of history." He redresses this neglect in a sympathetic but not uncritical series of surveys of the monasteries of German-speaking Europe, France, Spain and Portugal, and Italy, followed by accounts of the suppression of the Jesuits, the reforms of *ancien régime* France and Josephine Austria, and the widespread suppressions of Napoleonic Europe, and by a valuable bibliographical essay. By continuing the stories of the religious houses which survived the sixteenth century and providing thought-provoking analogies