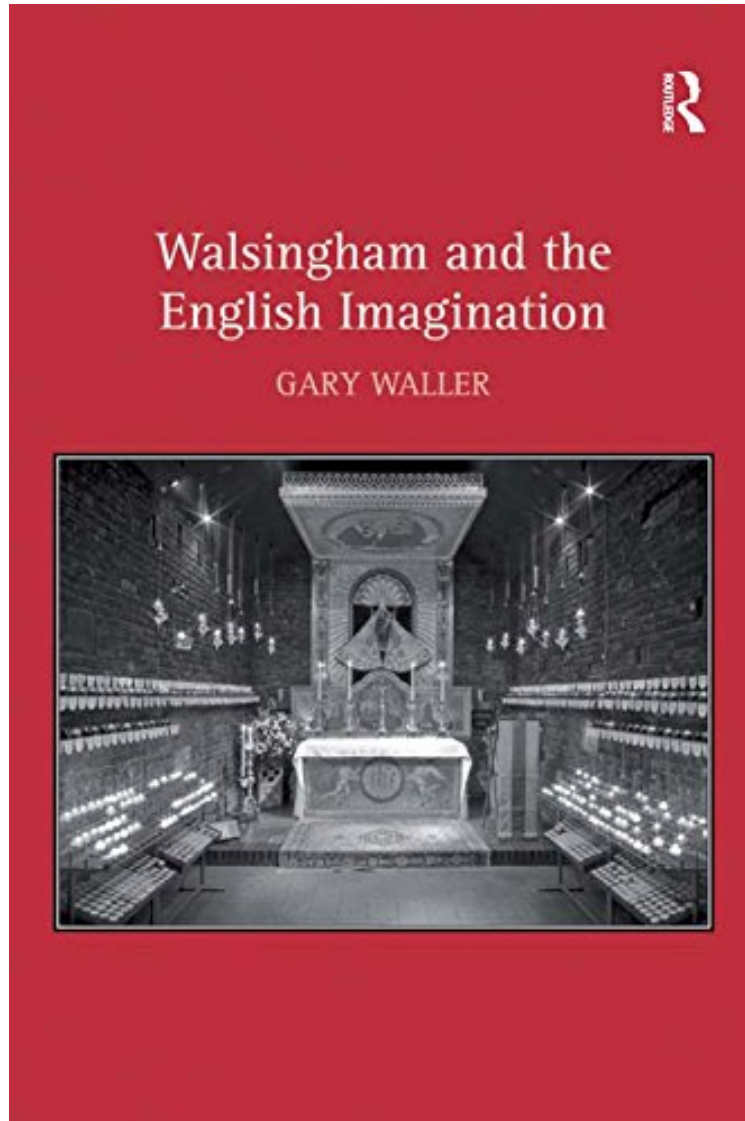


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Walsingham and the English Imagination

Gary Waller

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Gary Waller : Walsingham and the English Imagination before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Walsingham and the English Imagination:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Imagining a shrine to MaryBy RadegundAn excellent scholarly book, thorough and well written, [about an English shrine to Mary in the late Medieval period, its destruction in the English Reformation, its restoration, separately, by Anglicans and Roman Catholics, in the early 20th century, and its growing influence.] Good on both theoretical matters and documentation. The English imagination has naturally been much of the foundation for the extension of the cult to a number of other countries. The only drawback for me was that there was far more emphasis on, and validation of, the views of conventional psychoanalytic theory, with its inherent

sexism, than I found helpful or worthwhile, and minimal critique of psychoanalytic theory or its application.

Drawing on history, art history, literary criticism and theory, gender studies, theology and psychoanalysis, this interdisciplinary study analyzes the cultural significance of the Shrine of our Lady of Walsingham, medieval England's most significant pilgrimage site devoted to the Virgin Mary, which was revived in the twentieth century, and in 2006 voted Britain's favorite religious site. Covering Walsingham's origins, destruction, and transformations from the Middle Ages to the present, Gary Waller pursues his investigation not through a standard history but by analyzing the "invented traditions" and varied re-creations of Walsingham by the "English imagination"- poems, fiction, songs, ballads, musical compositions and folk legends, solemn devotional writings and hostile satire which Walsingham has inspired, by Protestants, Catholics, and religious skeptics alike. They include, in early modern England, Erasmus, Raleigh, Sidney, and Shakespeare; then, during Walsingham's long "protestantization" from the sixteenth through nineteenth centuries, ballad revivals, archeological investigations, and writings by Agnes Strickland, Edmund Waterton, and Hopkins; and in the modern period, writers like Eliot, Charles Williams, Robert Lowell, and A.N. Wilson. The concluding chapter uses contemporary feminist theology to view Walsingham not just as a symbol of nostalgia but a place inviting spiritual change through its potential sexual and gender transformation.

A Yankee Book Peddler UK Core Title for 2011 'Many of the stories are fascinating and it is interesting to see which authors have been chosen. There is a great exploration of the writings of Erasmus, and considerable interest in the Pynson Ballad and the N-Town plays.' *New Directions* '... Walsingham and the English Imagination is clearly written; the scholarship is meticulous; Waller's insights are accessible and thought-provoking. This work should prove valuable for scholars of English literature, the history of religion, folk traditions, to name but a few.' *Renaissance Quarterly* 'Waller succeeds in his goal of straddling history and cultural studies that allows him to stay open to the phenomena of medieval spirituality and belief, while at the same time he maintains a questioning but reflective nature that takes the reader to deeper levels of textual, cultural, and historical understanding.' *Sixteenth Century Journal* '... this is an important book that needs to be read.' *Anglican and Episcopal History* '[The book contains] riches in the sections on the Renaissance and modern periods.' *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 'Much in this book is fascinating... The strength of this book lies in Waller's interpretations of texts that con-structed the Shrine of Walsingham in the English imagination, starting with the Pynson ballad and Erasmus's semi-fictional account.' *Medieval Feminist Forum* About the Author Gary Waller, Professor of Literature, Cultural Studies and Theatre, Purchase College, SUNY, has written many studies of early modern literature. He is currently exploring interconnections among history, psychoanalysis, and theology.