



Peasant Fires: The Drummer of Niklashausen

Richard Wunderli

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"Wunderli... has lucidly reconstructed a controversial conflict in 15th-century south-central Germany.... this engaging narrative takes off from Hans Behem—the peasant who claimed to see the Virgin and gained followers until crushed by the established church—to explore larger forces at work in Germany on the eve of the Reformation... Wunderli also attempts to sort out the violent conflict that ensued and Hans's subsequent trial. His scrupulousness and sensitivity make for a small but valuable book." —Publishers Weekly

"Fascinating and well written, this is highly recommended for academic and larger public libraries."—Library Journal

"Richard Wunderli... deftly tells the story in Peasant Fires, finding in it a foreshadowing of peasant uprisings in the 16th century."—New York Times Book Review

"... a stimulating read... an engaging synthesis."—Central European History

In 1476, an illiterate German street musician had a vision of the Virgin Mary and began to preach a radical social message that attracted thousands of followers—and antagonized the church. The drummer was burned at the stake. This swiftly moving narrative of his rise and fall paints a vivid portrait of 15th-century German society as it raises important questions about the craft of history.

"A gem of a book.... It has a plot, good guys and bad buys, it opens up a 'strange' world, and it is exceptionally well written." —Thomas W. Robisheaux

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