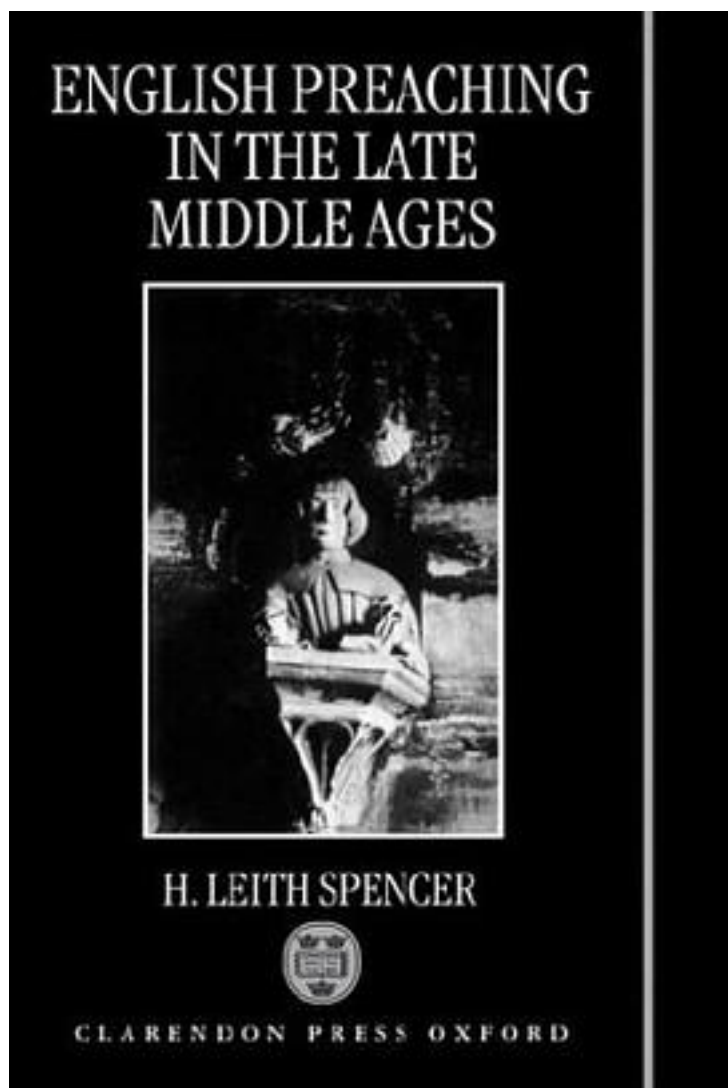


English Preaching in the Late Middle Ages



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This book is a major interdisciplinary study of English sermons written in the late fourteenth and the fifteenth centuries - a body of texts currently attracting much attention both for their own interest, and for their value in helping us to understand an important historical period marked by rapid social and religious change. Relating the texts to their historical and cultural context, the author focuses on material recorded in English, showing how the use of the vernacular to explore ideas hitherto expressed in Latin anticipated the better-known developments of the sixteenth century. Conservatives distrusted the sermonizers as popularizers of theology, and Dr Spencer pays close attention to the ways in which these writers' freedom of expression was curbed by the Church's increasingly repressive attitude to reform. Drawing on the most up-to-date research, this detailed and original book uncovers - through an analysis of its sermons - the pluralism of the medieval English church which anti-heretical legislation and Reformed propaganda sought to deny.

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