In her acknowledgements, Rudy keenly reveals her tallied minutes of work, word-counts of notes, and number of institutions visited in the making of this book. Were one to overlook this interesting declaration, her study speaks for itself as a product of enormous effort and remarkable expertise. One of Rudy’s greatest victories in this volume is the amount of material considered; her arguments about the ‘mania’ for indulgences in the late-medieval Netherlands, and their parcels of rubric, prayer, and image, are generously supported by examples.

The volume is manageably divided into four parts. The first, Rubrics and Indulgences, provides a thorough introduction to the topic that is neither too deep for a beginner in her subject, nor too pedestrian for the initiated. Rubrics are here discussed beyond their navigational function as red text which signals a new section to the reader. In the context of late-medieval prayer books and books of hours, they provide the votary with a ‘choreography’, directing the mental and physical stance to be taken during prayer, where it should be done, and to whom one should point both their gaze and their words. Rubrics also present indulgences—time remitted from Purgatory—and other rewards to be gained for correctly performing the prayer. Moreover, they (almost defensively)

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*Rubrics, Images and Indulgences in Late Medieval Netherlandish Manuscripts* (Leiden/Boston, Brill, 2017, xxii, 308 pp., illus., Library of the Written Word, 55; The Manuscript World, 8; ISBN 9789004326958, €150/$180).
authenticate their indulgences with origin myths, papal authorizations (real or bogus), and even exempla to demonstrate the prayer’s efficacy.

What a rubric could not do, however, was inform the votary how long he or she would be stuck in Purgatory. The Second Coming was, for fifteenth-century Christians, taking longer than hoped; faced with the anxiety of unknowable, yet potentially astronomical sentences in Purgatory, the remissions gained through indulgences grew by magnitudes, and likewise did their popularity among both lay and religious. Rudy identifies two prerequisites for the form and adoption of these enormous indulgences: the emerging pre-capitalist debit-credit banking system, and images which ‘ripened the space for prayer’ (p. 50) and encouraged personal interaction with the subject. Rubrics in turn expanded with justifications of these enormous rewards, and specific images were called upon to fulfill their promise.

Part 2, Christological Images and Prayers, identifies some of the most popular groups of indulgence, prayer, and image which, keeping with the emphatic devotional tastes of the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, ruminate on the human suffering of Christ. The arma Christi, Christ’s wounds, face, and body parts, and supposed measurements of these, inspired physical association with His Passion, qualifying and quantifying His pain. Rudy argues that imitative performance of these prayers, devotion to their related images, and strong desire for indulgences surrounding them fuelled and was fuelled by the visions of mystic saints who modelled their spiritual efficacy. Meanwhile, the promulgation of these indulgence-prayer-image packages was driven by relic collection and clever marketing by the institutions which owned them.

Chief among these popular Christological prayers was the Adoro te, said to be written by Gregory the Great, which was accompanied by a heavily indulgenced image of the Mass of St Gregory. The image itself expanded over the studied era to include not only the visionary pope at the altar on which Jesus reveals his wounded flesh, but also a growing number of instruments, witnesses, and most importantly, supposedly papal-authorized layers of indulgences. The image, as Rudy demonstrates, was barely based on the vision-story of St Gregory described by Paul the Deacon and recounted in the Golden Legend, but instead reflected the details of the rubric that accompanied it. In addition to the broad array of venerable subjects pictured in the Mass, and the hefty indulgence for interacting with it while speaking the prayer, the Mass of St Gregory owed some of its status to the unfiltered view of an ‘idealized Mass’ in a time where Eucharistic devotion had reached an all-time high among the lay faithful who could only witness the celebration from behind a rood screen. While the rubric and image were both increasingly packed with churchmen as authorities and witnesses, laypeople brought their personal prayer books