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Italian Reform and English Reformations, c. 1535-c. 1585
(review)

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Italian Reform and English Reformations, c. 1535–c. 1585. By Anne Overell. [Catholic Christendom, 1300–1700.] (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing. 2008. Pp. xiv, 250. \$114.95. ISBN 978-0-754-65579-4.)

Following an introductory overview, the first chapter in the body of Anne Overell's book sets forth a cast of Englishmen such as Cardinal Reginald Pole who traveled to Italy for learning in the 1520s and 1530s, and of Italian religious reformers in the 1530s and 1540s. The next four chapters discuss aspects of "the most important point of intersection" "between England and Italian reformers," the reign of King Edward VI (p. 41). Overell starts with the Edwardian career of Bernardino Ochino, a "star" who in some ways "outshone [Peter Martyr] Vermigli" at the time (p. 42), although he had less influence than Vermigli with Archbishop Thomas Cranmer or at court. Then Overell turns to Edward Courtenay's translation of *Il Beneficio di Cristo* and to the reception of Italian influence by other Edwardian Englishmen, especially the group of Cambridge humanists centering on John Cheke who had gained important court positions. All of this makes Overell's point that the relatively well-known English career of Vermigli had a "political and social context provided by [an] Anglo-Italian network in England" (p. 105); in chapter 5, the account of Vermigli's own mixed experience, of isolation at Oxford but great influence with Cranmer, completes the picture of the role of Italians and Italophiles in Edward's reign, in so many ways "the defining moment" (p. 205) of the English Reformation.

The next two chapters are on the Marian years, first the experience of Edwardian courtiers whose turn it now was to go into exile, and who chose to sojourn in the Veneto for mixed reasons that Overell explores. Then she discusses Pole, who during his years in Italy had in effect become an Italian reformer, albeit one who stayed within the Roman Church, and whose leadership of the Marian Church can be seen as a second wave of Italian reform influence on England, different from the Edwardian wave but with origins in the same milieu in Italy decades before. Overell also describes Pier Paolo Vergerio's vilification of Pole as a Nicodemite who concealed his real views to win a cardinal's hat.

The penultimate chapter deals with a nonevent: the fact that Vermigli and other Italian reformers were not invited back to England by Elizabeth, for reasons including the queen's flirtation with the Lutherans. Finally, Overell reviews a spate of translated Italian reform works printed in England in the 1570s and 1580s. Certain texts, including the *Beneficio di Cristo* and the story of the repentant apostate Spiera, along with certain major characters, Ochino, Vermigli, Pole, and Vergerio, figure recurrently throughout Overell's chapters.

As she says, the book is "not primarily a history of . . . theology," but instead of the "cooperation" and "interaction" of groups of English and Italians who carried reform ideas back and forth between the two countries (p. 105).

Overell conducts her narrative expertly, tracing the interactions of numerous figures over several decades without confusion or repetitiousness. The book is readable and vivid; one wishes for illustrations, presumably impossible because of cost. Overell is entirely capable of analyzing theological distinctions when appropriate, as in her discussion of the *Beneficio di Cristo*. The style is racy at times but never out of control, and the absence of all but a very few (and very minor) typographical errors is refreshing.

Italian reform was, of course, only one of the lines of thought from mainland Europe that shaped the English Reformation. Torrance Kirby's *The Zurich Connection and Tudor Political Theology* (Boston, 2007) deals with another of these lines, in a very different way. We need more books that in one way or another "encourage Tudor historians never to neglect the view across the Channel," as Diarmaid MacCulloch comments on the back cover of Overell's book. She has done a superb and timely job, marshaling a complex body of material in an enlightening and stimulating work.

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Adbortatio ad concordiam. By Isidoro da Chiari. Edited, translated, and annotated by Marco Cavarzere. [Temi e testi, Vol. 63.] (Rome: Edizioni di storia e letteratura. 2008. Pp. lii, 117. €25,00. ISBN 978-8-884-98489-0.)

In 1537 the papal commission led by Cardinal Gasparo Contarini produced the *Consilium de emendanda ecclesia*, in which the "serious ills" of the Church and the abuses of the Roman curia were outlined. Martin Luther's introduction to a pirated edition of the leaked report, which was supposed to prepare the way for a general council and the healing of religious divisions in Christendom, was gleeful and sarcastic: "The pope is trailing his poor council around like a cat with kittens . . . so now they have invented a new stratagem, and that is this booklet which so beguilingly proclaims the reformation of the whole Church. If this lie meets with belief, no council will henceforth be necessary." In spite of these comments, there were a number of men on the Catholic side during the 1530s who thought that some conciliation with Luther, Philip Melancthon, and the mainstream of German reformers was still possible. One of these men was the Benedictine Isidoro (Taddeo Cucchi) da Chiari who dedicated his *Adbortatio ad concordiam* to Contarini. Adriano Prosperi has described this work as "tra i più singolari della cultura del Cinquecento italiano" (p. vi), and it has been considered by Silvana Seidel Menchi as a notable Italian expression of Erasmian piety. In this first modern edition of the text, the editor and translator, Marco Cavarzere, has made available a text that embodies many of the hopes and contradictions of the "moderate" reformers led by Contarini, and that helps to throw light on the failure of the project of conciliation by c. 1542.

As Cavarzere suggests, Isidoro da Chiari's irenic and Erasmian humanist outlook, which is evident throughout the *Adbortatio*, was probably shaped