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Mayer, Thomas F. (ed.). Reforming Reformation

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[Aller au sommaire du numéro](#)

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**Mayer, Thomas F. (ed.).**

***Reforming Reformation.***

Farnham, UK and Burlington VT: Ashgate, 2012. Pp. xiv, 251 + 14 ill. ISBN 978-1-4094-5154-9 (hardcover) \$119.95.

The new collection edited by Thomas F. Mayer, entitled *Reforming Reformation*, has a deceptively brief title. Mayer could have added a colon followed by any of these words: concepts, contingency, intentions, historiography, people, process. They reflect the volume's chief preoccupations and articulate a method of historical investigation that is becoming more common, even though it is full of conflict and sometimes remains open-ended. In his framework for the volume, Mayer describes the event that prompted this expanded collection of talks and set such energetic objectives. In October 2010, Augustana College hosted a conference bearing the name "Reforming Reformation" to debate the larger questions and broader implications of identifying the process of reformation and describing its results. As Mayer indicates, the conference offered a forum for discussions about methodology, geographic comparisons, and that continual bugbear, the terminology of reformation. The fruits of these debates appear in ten essays that explore issues of social, theological, artistic, and literary change under the umbrella of "reformation" chiefly in England, Germany, Italy, and Spain.

In the quest to examine the plurality of reformations and compare their receptions, several essays helpfully review the historiographies of reform. John Frymire offers a detailed analysis of the development of German Catholic history, historians, and historiography in an effort to explain why the field has been marginalized for so long. His conclusions reveal a great deal about Rome's continued place in the traditional understanding of the Holy Roman Empire's evolution as well as the doing of history through the nineteenth century. Peter Marshall's study explores the traditional belief that the English reformation was an isolated and insular case, appropriately separate from the discussions of confessionalization that have occupied continental historians since the 1980s. In keeping with the volume's emphasis on deconstructed process, Marshall identifies a fissiparous achievement in England that he calls "a case-study in failed, partial, state-confessionalization" (55). Initially, this theme of confessionalization fascinated historians as a way to bind ecclesiastical and secular strategies together, but amid these essays it offers a way of describing the piecemeal

process of reformation and seeing characteristics and intentions across the decades and territories.

Set beside this focus on historians' mediation of the past, Lu Ann Homza examines Clifford Geertz's concept of "local knowledge" and the use of individuality, conversation, and history as support for decision-making in the careers of the Spanish inquisitor Alonso de Salazar Frías and the *converso* preacher Francisco Ortiz. Both men employed local knowledge gleaned from their own experience, which they combined with the traditional authorities of institutional instructions, ancient texts, and scriptural exegesis. In their approaches and choices, Homza sees historical sensitivity and the acknowledgement of society's ability to create "tradition," the last of which was an important aspect of the reforming perspective. Jodi Bilinkoff offers a similar investigation of the Carmelite friar John of the Cross and his earliest biographers. Bypassing the early modern tendency to create a monolithic identity through biography that bleeds into hagiography, Bilinkoff seeks out the points of tension and anxiety in six texts created in the century after John's death. Just as Homza used moments of conflict to illuminate early modern practice and mentalities, Bilinkoff uses reconstituted descriptions of reform to reflect moments of struggle and drama that were usually downplayed in the smoothing narratives of reform. Both studies emphasize the complexity of multivalent reform movements that demand careful investigation in order to contextualize the contemporary understandings of reform.

A similar style of close reading that prompts conversations about reform is evident in the contributions of Ronald Thiemann and Abigail Brundin. Both scholars work to overturn repeated claims about the non-sacramental nature of Protestant reform and the weakness of post-Tridentine Italian literature respectively. Following on from this, Brad S. Gregory examines both the rejection of Lutheran and Calvinist models of reform by radical Protestants and modern historians' normative readings of these rejections. Marcia B. Hall discusses Catholic efforts to reform painting in the period after Trent and the relatively narrow spectrum of painters embraced by historians. In the same vein as Thiemann, Brundin, and Gregory, Hall overturns the perception of a top-down universal approach, instead finding a great diversity of artistic style and only sporadic interest in enforcing artistic censorship.

The latter conclusion neatly encapsulates this volume's message: the progress of reform was dependent on the goals and personalities of the individuals

involved, and often shows diversity where many reformers argued for unity implemented by a central authority. Rather than suggesting chaos in the past, this volume revises and strengthens our perspective by more clearly delineating how those visions coexist in the historical record.

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**Mayer, Thomas F.**

*The Roman Inquisition: A Papal Bureaucracy and its Laws in the Age of Galileo.*

Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013. Pp. 385. ISBN 978-0-8122-4473-1 (hardcover) \$79.95.

Recent decades have witnessed an increase in studies dealing with the Roman Inquisition, spurred on by the opening of the Archive of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith in 1998, with contributions by John Tedeschi, Paul Grendler, Andrea Del Col, Adriano Prosperi, Christopher Black, and many others. Thomas F. Mayer, one of the first English-speaking scholars to mine the files of the Congregation, has made a valuable addition to this endeavour. His book is not about the specific cases of the Inquisition or its targets, but rather about the cardinals and professional staff who conducted its business and the rules of procedure they followed. Chronologically, his focus is not on the relatively well-studied decades following the reorganization of the Inquisition at Rome by Pope Paul III (1534–49) in 1542, but on the lesser-known period from the last decade of the sixteenth century to the middle of the seventeenth—the pontificates of Clement VIII (1592–1605), Paul V (1605–21), and Urban VIII (1623–44). Because the majority of trial dossiers and sentences have been lost, Mayer concentrates on the registers of the decrees of the Inquisition. Beginning about 1573, the Inquisition kept regular records of its decrees and the decisions made in its proceedings. These were supposed to be entered into carefully kept, comprehensive volumes; however, not everything discussed got recorded, and gaps frequently appeared in the documentation. Be that as it may, the decree registers enable Mayer to track the personnel of the Congregation over time