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**Creasman, Allyson F. Censorship and Civic Order in
Reformation Germany, 1517–1648: “Printed Poison and Evil
Talk”**

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Creasman, Allyson F.

Censorship and Civic Order in Reformation Germany, 1517–1648: “Printed Poison and Evil Talk.”

St. Andrews Studies in Reformation History. Farnham, Surrey and Burlington, VT: Ashgate Press, 2012. Pp. x, 282. ISBN 978-1-4094-1001-0 (hardcover) £75.

This volume contains five thematically linked essays (of which two have appeared elsewhere) focusing on the long Reformation in Augsburg, a favourite subject of urban Reformation studies for as long as the genre has existed. The author displays extensive background in both legal and historical studies, and her careful reading of judicial instruments—especially of so-called *Urgichten*—will likely be of interest to the small but active group of early modern south Germanists working in English.

Of interest to a wide audience will be the thematic investigation of censorship which links case descriptions of socio-cultural dynamics in key moments in Augsburg’s past, from the early Reformation in the 1520s, through the confessional settlement after 1555, to disputes over calendar reforms in the 1580s, to the endemic crises of the Thirty Years’ War. A sharp conceptual essay reevaluates dominant frameworks for censorship studies in advance of these descriptions. Here, the author contends that the topics of established censorship studies have been too narrowly construed, with overemphasis on print and elite textual production, as well as on the putative effects of censorship on the “development” of fully modern thought. In censorship studies, it seems, the ghosts of the progressivist fallacy, perhaps in concert with an ongoing moral commitment to the post-/cold war ideals of “freedom of thought,” “open society,” etc., have continued to influence scholarly agendas. Against this tendency the author advocates consideration of equivalent censorship in areas that have been otherwise well covered by early modernists in recent decades: oral and visual communications. Such consideration leads to the conclusion—unsurprisingly, perhaps—that such general censorship increased over the course of the long Reformation. Yet, she also demonstrates exactly who or what was responsible for such intensification. Here, her choice of bi-confessional Augsburg is particularly productive, since it allows movement beyond the long shadow cast by confessional historiographies—some of them quite liberal in other respects—over this subject. In sum: neither Augsburg’s Catholics nor its Protestants appear to have been notably prone, actively or passively, to censorship. Similarly,

the author challenges the strong statist conception of confessionalization (à la Schilling-Reinhard), and opts instead for a weaker “culturalist” one (à la T. Kaufmann).

The implications for her analysis of censorship are significant since, having broadened from the outset the range of activities one might consider subject to censorship, she proceeds to disperse agency in censorship to include not just the magistrates and ruling class but the whole of society. Rather than seeing censorship as a control by one party of another party’s communication, the author concludes that it was culturally “intrinsic” to the society under study. Indeed, she suggests that, notwithstanding increases to clerical and magisterial power in Augsburg over the course of the period in question, censorship was actually an expression of communal consensus rather than an exertion of state power. Thus, she maintains, historians should recognize the extent to which early modern Germans pursued needs and wants framed in terms of “freedoms” that were ascribed to the whole community, even while they did not value, or could not even recognize, individual claims expressed in such terms. The question of whether this difference marks a significant distinction between early and high modern culture is a controversial one. And the author wisely does not address such debates in German historiography directly. Still, one wonders if it is time to consider such questions in a frame extending beyond the limits of the German-speaking lands, especially given recent debates over the relative merits of individual freedom-based and social-justice-based academic research ethics.

In any case, this is a thought-provoking volume. One wonders, however, whether this, its greatest charm, is also its most significant defect? While the prevailing mode is theoretically rich and highly allusive, it doesn’t tend towards coherence. Individual essays appear to be responding to diverse scholarly debates, perhaps representing the various times in which they were first conceived, or composed, or both. Thus, for example, concluding assertions to the effect that early modern intensifications of censorship cannot be explained by means of now-dubious narratives of state formation may, given strong argumentative tendencies elsewhere, strike readers as rather abrupt *volte face*. One wonders, indeed, whether the author had the opportunity to rework thoroughly the original doctoral dissertation from which this book evolved (to be fair: regular disruptions to the scholarly process are a reality of contemporary academic life). There are some signs that she did not. For example, even a simple copy

edit should have caught the misspelling of the name of fellow early modern Germanist Marc Forster (here as “Foyster”) in both the notes and bibliography.

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Deitz, Luc, Timothy Kircher, and Jonathan Reid, eds.

Neo-Latin and the Humanities: Essays in Honour of Charles E. Fantazzi.

Toronto: Centre for Reformation and Renaissance Studies, 2014. Pp. 289. ISBN 978-0-7727-2158-7 (paperback) \$34.95.

In February 2011, several scholars gathered to honour Charles Fantazzi with a colloquium on the occasion of his retirement that year as Thomas Harriot Distinguished Visiting Professor of Classics and Great Books at East Carolina University. Most of the eleven essays in this volume derive from the papers delivered at that event. The rest have been contributed by colleagues working in areas of interest to Professor Fantazzi, whose significant accomplishments and contributions in the field of neo-Latin studies are evident in the long list of publications, which precedes the essays, and in the concluding *laudatio*, which was delivered at the colloquium by Luc Deitz.

Timothy Kircher in “The Fruits of Neo-Latin Learning: An Introductory Note” provides an overview of the collection, which moves chronologically from the Middle Ages to the late sixteenth century and covers mainland Europe, Ireland, and New Spain. James Hankins in “Charles Fantazzi and the Study of Neo-Latin Literature” sets out the history and current state of neo-Latin studies and the seminal role Professor Fantazzi has played in its emergence as an important scholarly discipline. Ronald Witt in “The Rolls of the Dead and the Intellectual Revival of the Twelfth Century in Francia and Italy” discusses the practice in twelfth-century France of announcing the deaths of prominent individuals by means of notices, which were carried by messengers to monasteries and churches. Poetry, prose, and prayers were added to these rolls, which provide a record of Latin literacy among French clerics. Timothy Kircher in “Wrestling with Ulysses: Humanist Translations of Homeric Epic Around 1440” concretizes the debate over humanistic translation theory and practice in the early Quattrocento by means of a comparative analysis of four passages from the ninth book of Homer’s *Iliad* that were translated into Latin by Leonardo Bruni