

Renaissance and Reformation
Renaissance et Réforme



Crankshaw, David, and George Gross, eds. Reformation Reputations: The Power of the Individual in English Reformation History.

Mary Morrissey

Volume 43, numéro 4, automne 2020

Spaces of Power of the Spanish Nobility (1480–1715)
Les espaces de pouvoir de la noblesse espagnole (1480–1715)

URI : <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1076856ar>
DOI : <https://doi.org/10.33137/rr.v43i4.36413>

[Aller au sommaire du numéro](#)

Éditeur(s)

Iter Press

ISSN

0034-429X (imprimé)
2293-7374 (numérique)

[Découvrir la revue](#)

Citer ce compte rendu

Morrissey, M. (2020). Compte rendu de [Crankshaw, David, and George Gross, eds. *Reformation Reputations: The Power of the Individual in English Reformation History*.] *Renaissance and Reformation / Renaissance et Réforme*, 43(4), 297–299. <https://doi.org/10.33137/rr.v43i4.36413>

Crankshaw, David, and George Gross, eds.

Reformation Reputations: The Power of the Individual in English Reformation History.

London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2021. Pp. xxvii, 474. ISBN 978-3-030-55433-0 (hardcover) €114.39.

The year 2017 saw the first Reformation quinquennial, and the editors of this book were right to think that the retrospection this occasioned would prompt consideration of how the reputations of men and women on both sides of the Reformation debates were made and marred in their own time and since. David Crankshaw and George Gross begin with a full and thoughtful introduction about the problems that writing about reputations raises. They point out that the Reformation generation had lost “the inherited heroes and heroines” (45) of the late medieval period, partly because the saints of the *Golden Legend* and the heroes of chivalric romances had been the target of humanist ridicule. They argue that “the English Reformation burst upon a society many of whose leading members were probably experiencing less a crisis of religion than a crisis of trust” (47). It took a long time to establish new heroes and heroines: detailed research on the publication history of biographies reveals how few were available before the end of the sixteenth century.

William Sheils shows how Reformation reputations were contested into the twentieth century. He explores how politics and confessional allegiances marked printed responses to the canonization of Thomas More and John Fisher in 1935. Both men were reputed to have withstood state intrusion on the individual conscience, but “More the layman and the lawyer could appeal to a wider range of Christian, and indeed non-Christian, opinion as an exemplary figure” than could Fisher the Catholic priest. Ashley Null looks at the reputation of Thomas Cranmer as a patristic scholar by tracing the evolution of his thinking on the real presence through Cranmer’s writings and those of his secretary Pierre Alexandre. Arguing that “at the heart of Tudor Protestantism was not right doctrine, but right desire” (195), Null shows how Cranmer’s view of the real presence was, no less than his solifidianism, a reflection of his concern for “the ‘mixed-life’ piety of his upbringing” (208). Rachel Basch looks at Cranmer’s wife, Margaret, along with two other women (Anne Hooper and Elizabeth Coverdale) whose reputations have suffered from neglect. Basch demonstrates that their choice of husband was a statement of

reformed convictions no less than their husband's decision to marry: all three were "related to continental reformers, through either blood or marriage" (228). Hooper and Coverdale were noblewomen who chose religious exile independently of their families before meeting their husbands. Examining their lives allows us to insist on "their own Reformation reputations." Susan Wabuda considers a better-known Protestant woman: Anne Askew's reputation has been "fashioned and refashioned" by editors since John Bale and John Foxe. Since the 1980s, feminist scholars like Elaine V. Beilin brought renewed interest in her as a writer, and this prompted discussion of Bale and Foxe's presentation of Askew and her works.

David J. Crankshaw's essay on Matthew Parker and Felicity Heal's on John Whitgift demonstrate how the reputations of both men were shaped by their responses to the Puritan movement. Both archbishops found themselves accused of behaving like "popes" (303, 339) by their Puritan opponents, and some subsequent biographers demurred on the men's virtues as churchmen as a result. Parker is remembered as an antiquary and preserver of manuscripts more than as the "*sacra anchora*" (305) who steadied Elizabeth's church in its early years. Whitgift (Calvinist and conformist) was often "excoriated as a manifestation of a narrow-minded Anglican authoritarianism" (345), while his role in the Lambeth Articles remains the subject of debate.

Elizabeth Evenden-Kenyon's essay on Anthony Munday reminds us that reputations are made and often sustained when the evidence on which they are based is ambiguous; Munday's religious allegiances are hard to read, quite probably because of the strategies that Munday used to keep them opaque. Victor Houlston considers another man whose contemporary reputation was ambiguous: Robert Persons (or "Parsons" to his detractors) was a man of extraordinary energy and personal charm, but his involvement in schemes for regime change in Elizabethan England has left him with a reputation as both a "villain and hero of the English Catholic Reformation" (421). Peter Lake and Michael Questier give careful consideration to the timing and contexts of John Gerard's memories of his mission in England. Writing in 1609, probably in response to the "re-launch" of the appellant's campaign to limit the role of the Jesuits in the English Church, Gerard does not refute charges that the appellants made. He offers "a re-description, a re-assignment" using the language of emotion to show "the self-evident spiritual potency, and spectacular evangelical success, of the society of Jesus" (413).

Each of the essays in this volume offers new understandings of the men and women who shaped England's religious politics in the sixteenth century. The volume as a whole is a timely reminder of the historical significance of "the power of individual agency" (47).

MARY MORRISSEY

University of Reading

<https://doi.org/10.33137/rr.v43i4.36413>

Cranston, Jodi.

Green Worlds of Renaissance Venice.

University Park, PA: Penn State University Press, 2019. Pp. 228 + 80 ill. ISBN 978-0-271-08202-8 (hardcover) US\$89.95.

Jodi Cranston's *Green Worlds of Renaissance Venice* situates pastoral art of the early sixteenth century—primarily painting, drawing, engraving, and small-scale sculpture—within the broader "greening" of Venice between around 1500 and 1550. Cranston sees this phase of intense attention to the pastoral mode in the visual arts in parallel to the establishment of urban and suburban pleasure gardens on lagoon islands, the depiction of Venice in religious and political painting as a floating Arcadia, and the ephemeral transformation of the densely built city into a fantasy green world through festivity and theatrical spectacle. The book synthesizes the production of actual and imaginary green places into an ambitious new conceptualization of the Venetian pastoral mode, which in turn informed the development of the pastoral arts elsewhere in Italy and Europe by the later sixteenth century. Cranston approaches the pastoral art of Venice, and indeed the unique *Mundus alter* status of the city itself, through the powerful conceptual framework of the green world as a second world or heterotopia, building on the scholarship of Northrop Frye, Harry Berger Jr., and Michel Foucault.

Because the undertaking of this study is to define the pastoral in relation to the unique geographical identity of Venice and its mythologized "ideology of place" (97), it leaves largely aside the cultural, ecological, economic, and political interdependencies between the island capital and its *terraferma* possessions, apart from some attention to Padua. This is a major departure from previous