

Renaissance and Reformation
Renaissance et Réforme



Carter, Karen E. Creating Catholics: Catechism and Primary Education in Early Modern France

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Volume 35, Number 1, Winter 2012

URI: <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1105894ar>

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.33137/rr.v35i1.19082>

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Publisher(s)

Iter Press

ISSN

0034-429X (print)

2293-7374 (digital)

[Explore this journal](#)

Cite this review

Spohnholz, J. (2012). Review of [Carter, Karen E. Creating Catholics: Catechism and Primary Education in Early Modern France]. *Renaissance and Reformation / Renaissance et Réforme*, 35(1), 189–191. <https://doi.org/10.33137/rr.v35i1.19082>

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culture and reveal the authors' conscious and unconscious beliefs. This cultural commentary is set against a narrative structure that is deconstructed etymologically in order to show a rich under-layer of meaning and conflict that draws on age-old themes like death and gender relations.

Readers might find the volume's subtitle, *Imagining Histories in the Italian Renaissance*, to be a more apt description of Ascoli's work. The nine essays collected here span a full career that brims over with skill, detail, and imagination worthy of the authors whom Ascoli studies.

JENNIFER MARA DESILVA, *Ball State University*

Carter, Karen E.

Creating Catholics: Catechism and Primary Education in Early Modern France.

Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2011. Pp. xiii, 314. ISBN 978-0-268-02304-1 (paperback) n.p.

Cahiers de Doléances as sources to understand the Catholic Reformation? Historians have studied these lists of grievances written on the eve of the French Revolution for all sorts of reasons, but Karen Carter's use of them suggests the imaginative and unconventional nature of her book overall. Indeed, *Creating Catholics* offers a re-conceptualization of the periodization of early modern Europe that pulls the 1780s much closer to the 1560s and highlights just how long the changes inspired at the Council of Trent took to come to fruition.

On the face of it, *Creating Catholics* fits nicely within a body of scholarship on the Protestant and Catholic Reformations that seeks to measure the extent and nature of the impact of early modern religious changes, in this case on rural residents of France. If historians in recent years have presented the Catholic Reformation as failed, limited, or at least frustrated in the villages, Carter's book suggests that they need to widen their scope. To do this, Carter takes one facet of the Catholic Reformation, religious education, and examines it over three centuries — thus extending her research into periods traditionally covered by scholars of the Enlightenment and Revolution. Evidence suggests, she argues, that by the end of the eighteenth century, catechism and schoolteachers helped

create obedient and committed French Catholics in the countryside. Thus in the debate among Catholic Reformation historians using this *longue durée* approach, Carter's argument generally supports Louis Chatellier's argument about the creation of a "Catholic society" (though she does not invoke his name).

Carter divides her book into two parts. The first examines the most important tool of early modern religious education, catechisms, and takes the reader to the mid-seventeenth century, by which time the basic format and goals of the catechisms were fairly stable. These documents largely aimed at rote memorization of simplified Catholic teachings, a method that bishops remained devoted to despite evidence of its limited success. In part 2, she deals with the question of the success and failure of this method explicitly. Her subject thus moves from a national study of catechisms in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries to educational practice in hundreds of village parishes by examining school visitation records in the dioceses of Auxerre, Châlons-sur-Marne, and Reims over the subsequent 150 years. It is here that the *cahiers* too become relevant because, as she argues, the petitions of grievance do not show the large scale desacralization of French rural society, but rather the extent to which ordinary people largely had access to religious education as imagined by Catholic reformers, believed that it was beneficial, and wanted even more resources to support it.

It is in part 2 that the greatest contributions of Carter's book come. First, she shows how important the ritual of first communion became as a way of demonstrating competency in religious education. Second, she also makes clear that as adults, most people forgot their childhood lessons and made little effort to rectify this situation, though that in no way undermined their sense of their importance. What parents wanted was not a deep internalization of Catholic doctrines, but for their children to learn to become good Catholics in the sense that they went to church regularly, obeyed their priest, and behaved civilly with their neighbors. Third, though episcopal authorities repeatedly issued injunctions to keep boys and girls separate, in practice most education remained coeducational, largely as a result of social pressures from parents and economic incentives facing the schoolteachers. Finally, it becomes quite clear that the Catholic Reformation was hardly monolithic, but meant different things to people who played different roles within it, which Carter reveals by taking the perspective of the bishops, priests, and schoolmasters.

Throughout, Carter balances between her insistence that the Catholic Reformation was not a top-down process and an organizational structure that is largely top down. The Catholic Reformation, and the religious education that was its centrepiece, was not simply an act of state but the result of collaboration and negotiations between bishops, priests, teachers, and villagers. This said, the book starts with the educational goals of Tridentine reformers and argues for the successful implementation of these goals in the villages. I found myself imagining a second book that complements this one by beginning not with the *Catechism of the Council of Trent*, but with village parents. From the perspective of the bishops, the education Carter studies looks partially successful — even after 200 years. From the perspective of parents, welcoming schoolmasters into their towns to train their children to be good Catholics (in the more practical sense), Carter's optimism seems perhaps even more justified.

In sum, Karen Carter's *Creating Catholics* offers much more than its title might imply, and will be of interest to readers interested in topics ranging from the Reformation to the French Revolution, and from the history of childhood and education to the history of state building. It makes a fine contribution to early modern European history overall.

JESSE SPOHNHOLZ, *Washington State University*

Dauvois, Nathalie.

La vocation lyrique. La poétique du recueil lyrique en France à la Renaissance et le modèle des Carmina d'Horace.

Paris: Éditions Classiques Garnier, 2010. 263 p. ISBN 978-2-8124-0104-6 (broché) 39,55 €

Nathalie Dauvois est déjà connue comme experte du lyrisme de la Renaissance, ayant publié des livres à ce sujet en 2000 (*Le sujet lyrique à la Renaissance*, Presses Universitaires de France) et en 2007 (*La Renaissance de l'Ode : L'ode française au tournant des années 1550*, Honoré Champion). Elle livre ici une étude du lyrisme fondée sur une définition générique bornée par une forme poétique particulière. En effet, qui dit poésie lyrique à la Renaissance dit ode, et plus précisément un recueil d'odes imitant le modèle antique. C'est Horace