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Reeves, Ryan M. English Evangelicals and Tudor Obedience,  
c.1527–1570

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The presence of Giulia in the Spanish court of Naples was not as invisible and discreet as her lifestyle might suggest. When Charles V formally entered the city in December 1535 after the battle of Tunis, Ercole Gonzaga asked her to greet Charles on behalf of her entire family. Nevertheless, she did not get along well with Pedro of Toledo, the viceroy of Naples, primarily on account of her connections with Maria d'Avalos of Aragon, marchioness del Vasto, whom Giulia affectionately nicknamed "the Dragon" (*la Draga*). When the Inquisition raised a repressive wave in Naples between 1552 and 1553, Giulia understood immediately with great political acuteness that the fury against her was stoked by the vice-royal court (172–73).

Dying before the Valdesian circle experienced the most intransigent side of the Inquisition, Giulia avoided being investigated and sentenced. Her friend Carneseccchi was not as fortunate. Giulia believed that any accusation could be defended with the help of her aristocratic connections, but she was merely deluding herself. Her naïveté shows in her use of very simple coded language in her correspondence and in the fact that she did not destroy Carneseccchi's letters. In 1567, only one year after her death, the Inquisition seized her letters and used them to prove Carneseccchi's guilt.

This new volume on Giulia Gonzaga examines the networks she created around herself; in so doing, it sheds new light on a chapter of Italian history when great intellectual and religious fervour was about to fall victim to the most severe orthodoxy.

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**Reeves, Ryan M.**

***English Evangelicals and Tudor Obedience, c.1527–1570.***

Studies in the History of Christian Traditions 167. Leiden: Brill, 2013. Pp. 212 and ix. ISBN 978-9-0042-5011-6 (hardcover) \$128.

The good news is that historical orthodoxy on the question of evangelical obedience and resistance theology in the Tudor period has mostly abandoned the old idea that a Luther-influenced (Tyndale reformulated) supremacy doctrine (of the 1530s) gave way to Calvinist radicalism in the 1550s. However, a

dichotomy now exists in the secondary literature between those who emphasize the *confessional* nature of English evangelical thinking and those who emphasize Anglican *via media* as distinctive. Too rapid change, from the heights of Henrician supremacy to the lows of Marian counter-reform, left Elizabethan evangelicalism confused and divided: obey the queen, obey the Bible, or become a Nicodemite. To test these theories and formulate a better one, Reeves examines a truly impressive range of sources (primary and secondary), exhibiting both sober and thoughtful scholarship. What stands out the most, however, is the fact that he reads the primary sources—from Simon Fish to John Knox—in the context of their day rather than as source material for later radicalism. He then highlights the connections to contemporary continental writings in order to test the extent of Anglican distinctiveness, which complements current research trends in historical theology that posit closer links between English evangelicalism and Zurich.

The key to understanding English evangelical obedience theology, for Reeves, is through its initial appropriation of both Luther's teaching on the fourth commandment and the Zurich understanding of Psalm 82. This supports a general theme (examined over five chapters) that obedience to the monarch—tyrant or no—was, throughout the period, in fact closely linked to the gospel, correcting the idea that these were opposed alternatives: to obey the monarch was to obey the gospel message. Reeves acknowledges that, of course, at times English obedience theology had to be carefully nuanced to account for distinctive elements in England's political establishment. The individual chapters (approaching the period chronologically) are pithy, interesting, and easy to read, and Reeves gives his readers much to think about. Each chapter begins with a review of uncovered weaknesses in current historical thinking and an explanation of Reeves's intended corrections. What emerges overall is a picture of a dynamic and ongoing evolution of English evangelical political doctrine.

Initially, evangelicals identified with Henrician supremacy theory as an accurate understanding of biblical texts (supported by both Lutheran and Zwinglian writings), only to be subsequently disappointed by the king's dampening enthusiasm for reform in the 1540s (the subject of chapter 2). Obedience was not an issue, however; supremacy was still a useful theory and, if evil (that is, non-scriptural) royal demands were made, it was consistent with Scripture to ignore them provided that subsequent punishments were not resisted. In this way, suffering for the gospel *proved* obedience to the monarch. The idea was

that, through suffering for non-compliance, God would intervene and change the royal heart. Under Edward (chapter 3), obedience theology had to adapt to the king's minority status. Any and all examples of biblical boy-kings were trotted out and examined, and, running parallel with Bullinger and Calvin, a doctrine of "limited obedience" emerged—distinguishing between the king (to whom obedience was due) and lesser magistrates who could be resisted *via* the political system itself. For example, John Hooper's Ordinal protest of 1550 was thus neither anti-supremacy nor evidence of an emergent theory of disobedience. Tudor commentators have uncritically followed Cranmer's biased reports rather than critically examine Hooper's own words and actions.

The reign of Mary raised unique issues for evangelical theorists, and resistance or disobedience theory developed as an acknowledged deviation to long-accepted biblical exegesis. The result was an interesting dichotomy between an evolutionary majority position (e.g., John Ponet's) which increasingly focused on the duty of lesser magistrates to influence and advise the monarch, and innovative minority resistance theories which either blew up perceived non-scriptural conditions (like Knox's objection to female rulers) or which overturned traditional interpretations (like Goodman's reinterpretation of Romans 13). These non-traditional interpretations were subsequently dismissed by Elizabethan ministers as too radical but, in light of the queen's dithering on the question of reform, new themes emerged. Theorists either re-incorporated an earlier anti-Catholic rhetoric or raised new questions over ineffective and mindless obedience which threatened to stall the reform process altogether. One very interesting theory, John Aylmer's, posited England as a monarchical Republic, fostering the idea (as did Laurence Humphrey) that MPs might increasingly take on a leadership role in reform matters. This too was opposed by the queen and was overtaken by events in the late 1560s. The English Reformation is a constant source of interesting material and speculation, and this excellent book highlights both the need for further investigation and the solid connections between English and continental evangelicalism.

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