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Review of Vittoria Colonna and the Spiritual Poetics of the Italian Reformation

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demonstrate, through a complicated interpretative labyrinth, that it would not have been possible for Erasmus to conceptualise *Iulius exclusus*, although one or several manuscripts written in his hand were circulating in 1516. The *Julius-Dialog*, as Fabisch prefers to call it, was conceived in Paris at the beginning of 1511 at the time of the convocation of the Council of Pisa, and in the circle of the Parisian humanists Fausto Andrelini, Jean Lemaire de Belges, Pierre Gringore and Guillaume Budé (pp. 420–7, 481–5). This first draft, under the title *Iulii Genius*, was very quickly tucked away in a drawer. In the summer of 1514 the original manuscript found its way to Erasmus in London, who copied it out in complete secrecy. Erasmus left England in August 1514 and the manuscript was again forgotten for two years, but his secretary, Thomas Lupset, discovered it and took it to Rome, where he showed it around. This manuscript fell into the hands of Ulrich von Hutten, who prepared it for the press in Speyer. Through von Hutten, Bonifatius Amerbach obtained the manuscript and then passed it on to Beatus Rhenanus, who worked on it further. The reader is at liberty to accept this detective story, but other arguments are more problematic. I find for example pages dedicated to ‘der Pariser Bibelhumanismus und Julius II’ (pp. 178–83) unconvincing, because it cannot be proved that Lefèvre met Erasmus in 1511, while Guillaume Budé’s *De asse* cannot be central to the argument because it is not a biblical work. While *Bibelhumanismus* is a part of the subtitle of the book, we cannot be satisfied with that material, which too quickly asserts in conclusion, that the *Julius-Dialog* is the ‘Ausdruck des Bibelhumanistischen Protestes gegen das Renaissancepapsttum’ (pp. 479–87). In conclusion, ‘sic Petrus triplicem argumenti coronam non uidi, necnon undique ueritatis gemmis et probationis auro lucentem pallam, tametsi Iulius per triplicem coronam suam iurauit’. Peter Fabisch does not convince that Erasmus was not the author of the dialogue. One thus looks forward even more eagerly to the publication in 2010 of the critical edition of *Iulius exclusus* prepared by Silvana Seidel Menchi for the Amsterdam edition of *Erasmii Opera Omnia*.

GENEVA

MAX ENGAMMARE

Vittoria Colonna and the spiritual poetics of the Italian Reformation. By Abigail Brundin.

Catholic Christendom, 1300–1700.) Pp. xvi + 218. Aldershot–Burlington, VT:

Ashgate, 2008. £55. 978 0 7546 4049 3

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In this learned and thoughtful assessment of the works of Vittoria Colonna, Abigail Brundin undertakes two interrelated tasks; first to reestablish the literary achievements of this prominent exponent of Petrarchism and, second, to show how Colonna’s poetry and prose works manifest the interests of reform-minded Italians of the sixteenth century. In both areas Brundin overturns earlier views of Colonna as a passive figure in relationship to her male colleagues. Colonna, in Brundin’s assessment, creatively used the forms of Petrarchan sonnets ‘to embody a reformed religious programme’ (p. 11). Her careful analysis of Colonna’s spiritual sonnets, in particular those collections dedicated to Michelangelo Buonarroti and Marguerite de Navarre, in the context of her relationships with prominent individuals committed to reform such as Reginald Pole, Marcantonio Flaminio and Bernardino

Ochino, reveal the pervasive presence of a theology that was Christocentric and representative of a belief in salvation by faith. Equally remarkable is the theology found in Colonna's prose works focusing on role of the Virgin Mary. Here Brundin makes the argument that these represent a 'reformed Mariology' that presents Mary as a powerful model of discipleship and as a useable example for women of Colonna's own day. However, Colonna presents Mary not simply as intercessor in keeping with medieval piety but as one who in a certain respect is the cause of salvation as the bearer of Christ. In this she exceeds the honour given to Mary by medieval Christianity. The apparent inconsistency between a reformed Mariology and a Mary who stands as a mediatrix in the economy of salvation might be explored further as an example of the unresolved tensions in sixteenth-century theology, at least before the Council of Trent. This learned and thought-provoking study of Colonna will be of great value both to students of early modern literature and to those who seek a deeper understanding of the complex and paradoxical attitudes of sixteenth-century reformers.

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Martin Luther. Confessor of the faith. By Robert Kolb. (Christian Theology in Context.) Pp. vi + 215. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009. £50 (cloth), £16.99 (paper). 978 0 19 920893 7; 978 0 19 920894 4
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Books about Martin Luther abound, but good ones such as this one do not. For Luther's biography, one has the exhaustive work of Brecht or the challenging work of Oberman. For Luther's theology there are works by Ebeling, Althaus and Lohse. But Kolb succeeds here, within the very strict confines of the Oxford series *Christian Theology in Context*, in sketching both the core of Luther's life experience and the central aspects of his theology. The first chapter provides an overview of the different ways in which history and historians have assessed Luther's life and work. A second gives a handy overview of Luther's life and career to 1519. Kolb then tackles some central themes in Luther research: his relation to medieval theology (throughout Kolb demonstrates Luther's dependence on and distance from late medieval nominalism), the development of his law/Gospel hermeneutic and his emergence as a church reformer. Theological categories, always set within historical contexts, dominate the remainder of the book, with chapters on anthropology, Christology (justification and atonement), Word and sacraments, ecclesiology and ethics. Written in a succinct style and reflecting not only the latest contributions to Luther studies but also the classics of the past fifty years, Kolb pours a career of studying Reformation themes (especially using Luther's neglected Genesis lectures) into this small book. For the less experienced reader, one would have wished that the publisher had allowed for a time line and a glossary of critical theological terms and historical persons. Nevertheless, this volume offers a splendid overview of Luther for all those interested in Reformation thought.

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