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### Eire, Carlos M. N. Reformations: The Early Modern World, 1450–1650

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as a complementary knowledge system, and the book may have benefitted from some engagement with Angus Fletcher's work on the concept of "partial belief." But to indicate ways in which the book's framework might be applied elsewhere is less to offer criticism than to identify the remarkable strength of the argument and its overall utility. This is a thorough, imaginative, and timely study that suggests multiple possibilities for further inquiry, and we in the field are extremely fortunate to have it.

DAN BREEN

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**Eire, Carlos M. N.**

***Reformations: The Early Modern World, 1450–1650.***

New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2016. Pp. xviii, 893 + ill. ISBN 978-0-300-11192-7 (hardcover) US\$40.

Carlos Eire is a seasoned historian of the Reformation whose early works on iconoclasm and on death have been standards of the Reformation reading list for decades. In recent years, he has adopted the posture of the outsider, an interpreter out of step with the dominant historiographical consensus, and quite unapologetically so. This makes his nearly one thousand page contribution to the current anniversary-driven *Reformationsindustrie* all the more interesting. Where does a self-proclaimed iconoclast really fit among the historians of various orientations and ideologies who are shuffling to make space for themselves on a very crowded path?

Some historians fall out of step because they are running ahead of the crowd, while others do so because they are dragging their feet. Eire may be closer to the latter. For all the bulk of his book, its framing of the Reformation works quite unambiguously with categories of "Protestant" vs "Catholic" that are fixed, distinct, and traditional. To achieve this, Calvinism and Radicalism define much of what is described as generic "Protestantism," while "Catholicism" is viewed through the Tridentine telescope, though sometimes from the wrong end, so that much of fifteenth-century Catholicism becomes a miniaturized version of its seventeenth-century successor. The varieties within Protestantism are duly acknowledged though less often internalized. The strongly lay elements

that connect fifteenth century Catholicism with its many sixteenth-century offshoots across the ecclesiastical spectrum are minimized. The fact that the more centralized, catechized, and clericalized Tridentine church was as radical a departure from late medieval Catholicism as some forms of Lutheranism and Anglicanism also tends to fall out of view.

We get instead a radical break that highlights all the familiar fissures of an older partisan and parochial historiography. As he engages in disputes with un-named "Protestant historians," Eire seems to be in dialogue more often with the denominational titans of his graduate school days in the 1960s and 1970s, like Lewis Spitz and A. G. Dickens, than with those historians of the past two decades who have revolutionized the field. When it comes time to sum up approaches in the conclusion, he reaches back to Karl Holl of the 1920s to provide the cautionary tale of errors to avoid, and then throws Max Weber in for good measure. All very good to remember, of course, though these men are stuffed with a bit too much straw in the process. For Eire, Protestantism writ large is about the "desacralization" of the world: Protestants reject efforts to seek the spiritual in the material world, they limit the supernatural to heaven and to the past, they reject those miracles or forms of clerical life that seek the supernatural in the natural, and they firmly segregate the living and dead in ways that eliminate post-mortem spirituality and reduce the clergy to teachers. Catholicism responds to these subtractions by multiplying its cults of saints, miracles, and the dead in ways that speak more directly to the common people. Protestantism's fragmentation of Christendom privatizes religion and reduces it to an ever-smaller social, cultural, and political sphere that guarantees its eventual insignificance. In a short survey, such broad-brush dichotomized characterizations may have a purpose. In a text of almost one thousand pages written by a major historian at an Ivy League university and published by its press, they are harder to understand, much less defend, particularly when the book is aimed, as Eire claims, at "beginners and non-specialists."

One consequence of situating the interpretation within the field of Reformation studies as it existed fifty or one hundred years ago, is that the far more nuanced anthropological and sociological approaches of recent decades fail to make it into the narrative or the analysis. Eire insists from the beginning that religion cannot be isolated from human experience. It must be understood as a means of interacting with the world, and as constantly shaped by the environment in which it develops. So far, so good, though this has

not been seriously challenged for a few decades. The narrative then follows a familiar four-part division—Medieval Church, Protestant Rebellions, Catholic Response, Age of Orthodoxy—that demands, and gets, a Hegelian thesis-antithesis-synthesis approach. This in turn imposes a quite traditional chapter-by-chapter theological and institutional review of the life-and-times of all the major reformers and cities.

Other big-book historians of the Reformation like Euan Cameron and Diarmaid MacCulloch have long since taken that same conviction about religion's cultural and social centrality to frame more nuanced approaches that disrupt the older four-stage Hegelian paradigm, and that do far more lasting damage to the smug Protestant triumphalism and clerical Catholic parochialism of earlier generations. They are careful to highlight the many continuities and commonalities across Christian confessions and give fuller play to the embodiment of religion in ritual, in politics, and in social relations. In the process, they also give more credit to newer histories of gender, of youth, of emotion, of the senses, and of popular culture. Such approaches show greater respect for all readers, whether beginners or specialists, and greater appreciation for the rich dynamism of an important field.

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**Farge, James K., éd.**

*Religion, Reformation, and Repression in the Reign of Francis I : Documents from the Parlement of Paris, 1515–1547.*

2 vols. Studies and Texts 196. Toronto : Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 2015. 760 et 768 p. ISBN 978-0-88844-196-6 (relié) \$ 200.

Comblés ! Tous les spécialistes du XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle français, et plus spécifiquement ceux qui travaillent sur l'histoire de la Réforme, de l'évangélisme et du catholicisme dans la première moitié de ce siècle, ne peuvent qu'être ravis à l'annonce de la publication du dernier ouvrage de James K. Farge. Travail absolument monumental et extrêmement riche, ce livre est consacré à la manière dont le Parlement de Paris traite des « questions de religion » (xiii) sous le règne de François I<sup>er</sup>. Il s'agit en effet d'explicitier le travail quotidien