

Each chapter is followed by notes and an annotated bibliography appears at the end, but there is no full alphabetical bibliography.

Inevitably in such a complex study some mistakes creep in: on page 43 the emperor Henry VII dies in 1314 while on page 51 he correctly dies in 1313. Innocent VI was still pope in 1350 when King John the Good visited Avignon and therefore he did not meet Innocent's "successor" there (115). The poet Eustache Deschamps is rebaptized Gilles Deschamps on page 261.

All in all, *Avignon and its Papacy* is an impressive achievement, a lively and accessible study that will undoubtedly become the standard work on the Avignon papacy.

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Reformations: The Early Modern World, 1450–1650. By **Carlos M.N. Eire**. New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2016. xx + 893 pp. \$40.00 cloth.

As we approach the magic year of 2017, the 500th anniversary of the Lutheran Reformation, we are entering a season of academic blockbusters. Publishers, eager to capitalize on popular interest this anniversary will generate, have commissioned leading scholars in the field to produce a series of high profile studies ranging from Andrew Pettegree's examination of Luther and the media revolution to Lyndal Roper's long awaited biography of the Wittenberg monk. On this side of the Atlantic, Yale's Carlos Eire has produced an even more ambitious work. His new volume, *Reformations*, offers the general reader an extensive but well-paced tour through the early modern world. Eire constructs his narrative following two presuppositions. The first is the centrality of religion. Religion, as Eire understands it, was a broad phenomenon that affected a wide range of human activity, and as such functioned as the "efficient cause" of Europe's great transformation in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The second is his use of the plural. Following many historians today, Eire maintains that it is important to see the religious changes of this period as a chain of interlocking Reformations. No single reform movement of the era can be understood in isolation. With these two principles as his starting point, Eire divides his study into four major sections. He starts with the Renaissance and the late medieval church. He then moves on to the Protestants working from Luther to Calvin before concluding with a discussion of England, Scotland, Wales, and Ireland.

Seamlessly, he switches over to the Catholics, tracing reforms undertaken by the Roman church in the sixteenth century and their consequences in the seventeenth. In his concluding section, the longest of the four, Eire considers the outcomes of this momentous period. From witch hunts and wars of religion to the rise of skepticism, he offers a judicious appraisal of the Reformation era.

One may reasonably ask what is distinctive about Eire's volume, for it certainly will not be the only overview of early modern Christianity to appear during this busy season. As opposed to Diarmaid MacCulloch, whose *The Reformation* (London: Allen Lane, 2003) is perhaps the best point of comparison, Eire begins his study somewhat earlier chronologically. Though he covers familiar terrain by considering the crisis of the Great Schism, the challenge of conciliarism, and the threat of the Hussites, he pays greater attention to the development of humanism in Italy and beyond than many have done in the past. In this section, he effectively weaves together two narratives that have often been examined separately—the Renaissance and early stirrings of Catholic reform. Then there are topics such as the Jesuits where Eire's distinctive approach is clearly visible. His treatment of the Society of Jesus is more visceral than that of John O'Malley whose *First Jesuits* emphasized continuity with the past and focused on the ideals and objectives of Jesuit ministry. Eire, in contrast, introduces us to members of the Society such as the complex Juan Eusebio Nieremberg, who, on the one hand, as professor in Madrid pushed the boundaries of science, while on the other, fanned the flames of hell with his best-selling devotional texts, with their lurid descriptions of Satan and the torments of the nether world. Of greater substance is Eire's conclusion where he offers a more general assessment of the entire period. Though *Reformations* is in no way reductionist, Eire keeps at least one eye on the emergence of modernity, a concept that he understands as "a socio-political cultural environment that developed gradually, haltingly, always piecemeal, and never as the result of a single factor or set of events" (xvii). In his conclusion he argues that Protestants fostered a culture of desacralization, while, in reaction, Catholics most often responded with a hypersacralized view of the world. This tension was a chief contributor to the fragmentation of Christian Europe and the slow ebb of religion in public life, allowing room for the rise of materialism and secularism.

Eire states explicitly that he intended *Reformations* for a general audience, and as such it should have a broad readership. Anyone who has read his prize-winning memoir *Waiting for Snow in Havana* knows his gifts as a writer. He has a keen eye for the insightful story or anecdote and even handles more complicated historiographical issues in an engaging manner. The severed head of Nikolaus Krell, a crypto-Calvinist and advisor to a

Lutheran elector of Saxony, introduces a discussion of confessionalism while the adventures of Jesuit missionaries in Quebec foreground an assessment of Catholic expansion in New France. Despite its length, the text reads quickly, and though Eire keeps notes to a minimum, he does include an extensive bibliography, thematically arranged (nearly 150 separate headings). A final comment on geography: as the title suggests, Eire does provide coverage of the early modern world. Not surprisingly, his coverage is strongest with the Catholics, as he tracks their missions to the New World, Asia, and to a lesser extent Africa. His analysis of Europe, though, is more traditional. He focuses primarily on western Europe and the Mediterranean. Generally, he devotes little notice to Scandinavia or eastern Europe. Poland/Lithuania, geographically the largest polity in early modern Europe and confessionally its most diverse, receives only a few pages, despite the fact that its cosmopolitan Protestant, Catholic, and Antitrinitarian reformers busily crisscrossed the continent. Europe's Orthodox communities receive little mention. The Ottoman borderlands in southeastern Europe, a region that played host to enterprising Franciscan and Jesuit missionaries, merit some attention as well. Still, these are minor criticisms, for coverage must necessarily be selective for any author who writes such an ambitious overview of Christianity in the early modern world. We are in Eire's debt for providing us with such an insightful guide to this critical and transformative period of the past.

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John Calvin's Institutes of the Christian Religion: A Biography. By **Bruce Gordon.** Lives of Great Religious Books. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2016. xviii + 277 pp. \$27.95 cloth.

Premier historian Bruce Gordon has written a highly interesting and strikingly engaging "life" of one of the great theological classics, John Calvin's *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. Through its Latin and French editions from 1536 to 1560, Calvin's work became "a book for the church and for many churches spread across Europe" (xii).

Over the past five-hundred years, the *Institutes* "never disappeared," though "it often sat on shelves for long periods of time" (xiv). This "biography" of the *Institutes* traces its origin and development during Calvin's life and after his death through its appropriation in the following centuries and in as varied places as the United States, The Netherlands, and today in South Africa and