

## Renaissance and Reformation Renaissance et Réforme



### Marshall, Peter. Heretics and Believers: A History of the English Reformation

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bucolique et explique que soient ajoutés des poèmes de Théognis, de Théocrite, de Phocylide, et même la traduction par Maxime Planude des fameux *Distiques* de Caton.

Ces préfaces, très brièvement certes, permettent de comprendre ce qui pouvait principalement retenir le lecteur cultivé. L'*Organon* d'Aristote sert à distinguer le vrai du faux, à discerner les contradictions, bref à penser plus justement et, ainsi, à progresser dans les sciences. Aristophane, par la qualité de sa langue, est irremplaçable pour l'apprentissage du grec. Si Musée est imprimé avant Aristote, c'est parce qu'il constitue une sorte de prélude à la publication de l'œuvre du philosophe, Musée étant le premier des sages (il est en effet vu, à l'époque, comme le maître d'Orphée).

Le travail d'Alde consiste ainsi à rendre toute sa place à la culture grecque car, dit-il dans sa préface à Hérodote, « la Grèce est la mère de toutes les vertus et la nourrice des sciences ».

Une traduction particulièrement claire et agréable est servie par une annotation précise qui éclaire toutes les allusions et s'efforce également de montrer la reprise des thèmes par des renvois d'une préface à l'autre. Un index des noms vient clore un très bel ouvrage tant pour ce qui est de la qualité intellectuelle des textes qui s'y trouvent que pour l'élégance générale de la présentation. Une excellente introduction replace les préfaces dans le contexte et met en lumière le caractère important de ces textes qui associent sans cesse le lecteur au travail de l'imprimeur et au discours que celui-ci adresse au dédicataire.

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**Marshall, Peter.**

*Heretics and Believers: A History of the English Reformation.*

New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2017. Pp. xxix, 652 + 22 ill. ISBN 978-0-300-17062-7 (hardcover) US\$40.

To make the familiar new again is daunting, but that is exactly what readers get with Peter Marshall's massive and delightful reframing of England's hotly contested Reformation. This is a book that will delight general audiences, but it may also prove of interest to scholars who work in and around the century

of history Marshall covers. For in this hefty tome, he not only explains how Protestantism came, went, and came again to dominate the English church, he offers an intriguing new take on the processes and legacies of the Reformation for England's Christian faithful.

The first four chapters sketch out what Marshall calls "Reformations before Reformation," laying out the doctrine, institutions, characters, and crises of England's late medieval Christian culture. Here, he marvellously evokes the popular piety of pilgrimage to many shrines, great and small, alongside the sympathetic reception Erasmus's *Novum Instrumentum* received from the English church leadership. At the same time, he unfolds how personal outrage and public sensation followed Richard Hunne's case along with other sharp criticisms of an out-of-touch institutional church. The Lollards assume a critical place here: although a small heretical community, he argues that their persistence reveals how late medieval English men and women held deep and sometimes deeply unconventional religious convictions. It is this sincere and non-conforming piety that was unleashed, Marshall suggests, when Protestantism found its first welcome in the country.

That becomes evident in the second part of *Heretics and Believers* as Marshall chronicles the thirty years from the arrival of early Lutheran texts through the Exeter Conspiracy of 1538. Here, his deep understanding of the sources and scholarship makes a dizzying array of individuals and ideas snap into distinct focus. Thomas More, as an author, a controversialist, and a powerful political figure, dominates much of the narrative here. Marshall shows how his dogged fight against heresy set the tone for a growing divide. Matters escalated from condemnation and book-burning to bitter denunciations of opponents as heretics. Marshall points to this language of division, voiced by both Protestants and Catholics against their rivals, embodying the crisis of Henrician Christianity. Here, the magisterial reformation is less a political masterstroke and more an unleashing of factional disputes which alternately erupts in rebellion or simmers in local unrest.

The twenty years beginning in 1538 serve for Marshall as a cautionary tale against any complacency about the smooth unfolding of England's Reformation and Catholic Reformation. Much of this part emphasizes how horrified authorities—acting for Henry, Edward, and Mary in turn—failed to silence dissident voices on doctrine, church discipline, and other ecclesiastical matters. In their turn, church leaders Cranmer and Pole sought to enforce

uniformity, only to fail even with their natural allies. Marshall documents an explosion of evangelical voices on the burgeoning London publishing scene, under Edward, contrasting it with outraged conservative countryfolk rallied against the Prayer Book. Mary's church struggled with Protestant dissidents and unsatisfied Catholics. Not all mid-Tudor subjects were so troublesome: the universities smoothly conformed to Catholic restoration and many subjects found old religious habits easy to restore. However, the new formulation that the only good subjects were utterly compliant on the matter of religion sat uneasily with both Protestants and Catholics.

In the final section, Marshall assesses Elizabeth's reign to about 1590. His argument hammers home the dilemma for reformers who had early rallied around the queen as their religion's hope of righteous restoration. So many disparate visions, he argues, proved impossible to reconcile. Without reconciliation, complaints erupted, testing the complacency of a triumphal Protestant England. Marshall ably illustrates this discomfiting situation with a wealth of examples drawn from his extensive research, such as when he writes of Edward Dering preaching a stern rebuke to the queen in 1570. Dering railed against the failings of the English church and, by extension, the monarch herself. Personal religious engagement became political critique for the Elizabethans. The litany of complaints only grew by 1590, according to Marshall, undermining the official fiction of religious uniformity. At least in this, he argues, England paralleled almost all of the other Christian states of Europe, wracked by wars and doctrinal disputes.

*Heretics and Believers* is a smart, sweeping account of a century of English religious reformations, warts and all. It is a pleasure to read: the lucid, polished prose offers a wealth of ecclesiastical figures, royal officials, and disruptive subjects. There are some regrets: the book is peopled by clergymen, controversialists, officials, and a bevy of outspoken believers. There is no sense of a comfortable Tudor Christian here—an absence that is deliberate. Academics will miss both direct engagement with scholarly debates and a bibliography, although the notes give evidence of Marshall's mastery of the field. Given the already daunting scope of this project, however, to ask for more would be manifestly unfair.

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