(p. 210) through the Church Fathers, official works and ecclesiastical histories. This book establishes Cervini at the centre of this process and is a valuable addition to the history of sixteenth-century printing. Sachet establishes an understated yet credible approach to printing from the Roman Curia in a field dominated now, as it was then, by the Reformers.

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Pope Paul III and the cultural politics of reform, 1534–1549. By Bryan Cussen. (Renaissance History, Art and Culture.) Pp. 207. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2020. €89. 978 94 6372 252 0

Between popes, inquisitors and princes. How the first Jesuits negotiated religious crisis in early modern Italy. By Jessica M. Dalton. (St Andrews Studies in Reformation History.) Pp. xii + 218. Leiden–Boston: Brill, 2020. €121. 978 90 04 41382 5; 2468 4317

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Recently increasing attention has been paid to early modern Italy, in particular to the dramatic religious turning point that resulting from the Council of Trent and the birth of the Roman Inquisition. The Reformation provoked continuous claims for reform which had a profound impact on social and political frameworks. This is the subject of the books under review. Both books rely on archival sources in order to give new insights in a very complex historiographical trend and both are in some respects successful.

Cussen, who teaches at Monash, considers Pope Paul III Farnese, elected in 1534, and his strategy for the Italian context and the Renaissance papacy: 'this book explores the cultural context and contemporaneous events that shaped Paul III and his engagement with reform' (p. 27). His research is based on contemporary letters and orations at the Roman court. The main foundation of Farnese's policy was prestige for his family and reform of the Church. Farnese's career was initially based on 'the love and intimacy' that existed between Pope Alexander VI and Giulia Farnese, Alessandro's sister (p. 48). Cussen highlights the evidence for Farnese's humanistic claim for reform for honour and tradition. Electing Farnese the cardinals chose a very elderly candidate, which reflected the politics of procrastination while Charles V and the king of France competed for power in Italy and Luther moved towards his break with Rome.

Cussen's book moves from Farnese's humanistic formation to his rise as a cardinal and then his election as pope. The first part breaks down the political context of humanism, drawing attention to its classical heritage, especially Homer and Cicero. The second one presents new perspectives on expectations of reform from the point of view of such prelates as the pessimistic Jacopo Sadoleto and Gasparo Contarini. Cussen pinpoints the reason for failure: 'they could only conceive of pathways to an idealised past' (p. 87). The continuity with the past clearly emerges, even though significant changes surface. In chapter iv the famous *Consilium de emendanda ecclesia* is examined as the outcome of a commission, nominated by the pope in 1535: the commission, of which Contarini, Sadoleto and Carafa, among others, were members, wrote a manifesto that was inadequate for several reasons (the commissioners received pension from the Datary, all held dioceses without residing there

… those are some of the contradictions in claiming reforms [p. 121]). The *Consilium* made a diagnosis, but action was the pope's responsibility. Cussen here offers a new and stimulating interpretation, at odds with the main historiographical trends: in several fields Paul III was successful, for example in military and urban reform; more difficult were theological and ecclesiastical matters. Paul III disappointed: he summoned the Council of Trent with the aim of 'peace between Christian princes, unity in the Church, and defeat of the infidel'; 'reform had slipped down the agenda' (p. 163). In this book Paul III is revealed as following a coherent pursuit of honour for himself and for the Church of Rome as well in his claim for reforms.

In the context of Counter-Reformation Italy, the study of the Jesuits is crucial because their experience and activities reinforced and shaped the Catholic Church and its identity for centuries. In particular Dalton explores the Jesuit privilege to absolve heretics (conceded by Julius III in 1551) in a new light. She examines 'the factors and events that changed the priorities of the Society, Roman Inquisition and papacy, shaping their roles and relationships during a transformative period for the Catholic Church' (p. 34). Thus, her arguments affect the recent attempt by Jesuit historians to apply the concept of confessionalisation to Italy. According to her, this model is not applicable to Italy.

The choice of the title *Between popes, inquisitors and princes* suggests the attention devoted to the intersection of influences and the need of for compromise between the various parties. The book, organised chronologically from 1540 to 1605, builds upon a great deal of archival research, predominantly in Italian and Vatican archives, including the Archivum Romanum Societatis Iesu. Scholars suggested that the privilege of absolving heretics was conceded to support the inquisitors, but Dalton goes further, focusing on the paradigm of Jesuit obedience. It is clear that penitent heretics preferred to avoid inquisitors because of a very negative perception of inquisitorial methods, relying instead on the Society's pastoral image, but it is evident that the Jesuits acted 'pragmatically and independently' (p. 88). Behind the myth of obedience, there is more, such as the ability to conquer new spaces; two documents dated to 1564 highlight a strategy to protect Jesuit independence (pp. 90–1). Despite the appearance of obedience (negotiated or not), the Jesuits transformed Church and Society, the pope notwithstanding. Dalton puts forward a well-researched and convincing argument that Jesuit strategy was based on the prospect of a inner politics to control people that fits into a much broader picture of continued religious activity. During Pius V's pontificate, the Jesuits 'role against heresy changed' (p. 123) and in 1587 the privilege was revoked even if some Jesuits ignored that. Sixtus V tried to centralise pastoral processes, but with incomplete success. Maybe the focus on the moral and pastoral outcomes should have included an examination of the consequences of political patronage. Even the Jesuits need to be studied without prejudices.

Cussen underlines how culture, politics and religion are so intertwined and mixed, while Dalton focuses upon the Jesuits, leaving their context very much in the background.

These books discuss some important and remarkable issues. In recent years, several English scholars have devoted considerable attention to Italian history, focusing on the watershed that is the Counter-Reformation. The debate on

'Catholic Reformation' and 'Counter reform' has never stopped. Jedin's distinction is still alive, but recently new terms have been proposed or adopted. Recently, following Massimo Firpo and Gigliola Fragnito, among others, Elena Bonora underlined the risks of those labels and of overlooking some key advances in the study of the long Counter-Reformation. According to Bonora, they may neglect the impact of some Catholic policies on the Italian state. Through a highly selective reading, these books contribute to the historiographical debate, although many readers may find much to disagree with, on issues of religious and political dissidence, for instance.

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The dissolution of the monasteries in England and Wales. By Hugh Willmott. (Studies in the Archaeology of Medieval Europe.) Pp. xiv + 205 incl. 98 figs and 3 tables. Sheffield–Bristol: Equinox Publishing, 2020. £85. 978 1 78179 954 3

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The most important development in Reformation studies in the past twenty years has been the material turn. From the publication of David Gaimster and Roberta Gilchrist's collection, *Archaeology of Reformation* (Oxford 2003), the call to read more closely the record of sites and standing buildings has amplified, inspiring new investigations not only of landscapes and developed environments but also of fabric fragments fashioned from, or in response to the sixteenth-century changes in religion. This book provides an overview of what this approach might bring to an understanding of the central drama of the early Reformation in England and Wales, the dissolution of some eight hundred monastic and mendicant communities in the four years from the spring of 1536. Hugh Willmott grounds his survey in the archaeology and architectural history generated since the 1990s but he adds value with case studies of his own, such as the parish church of St Matthew, Morley (Derbyshire), where fabric from the Premonstratensian abbey of Dale was reborn, and Thornton (Lincolnshire), among the front rank of Augustinian foundations in England which still marks the landscape with its late fourteenth-century gatehouse. His evidence gives further encouragement to the view that the dissolution was not what the king or Thomas Cromwell determined it should be – when at last they arrived at a decided position – but rather was shaped and re-shaped by those it touched directly in the years that followed. It also urges that the physical environment of the later Tudor period be considered in the same way as the confessional climate, as a scene where profound change wrestled with a powerful undertow of continuity.

Willmott's general title is a misnomer because his book is not an account of the course of the dissolution but of the collateral of the monasteries in the century after the last of them was closed. His first two chapters sketch the critical background to the subject and signal the principal coordinates of Henry's Reformation but do not retouch the familiar picture either of the process or its purpose. Willmott's contribution begins with a close study of the stripping of the sites of their material assets, both the raw resources of stone, timber and lead and the dressed and decorated components whose artistry, if not their original purpose, was transferable. In fact, Willmott emphasises, this was no asset-strip.