

praefectus urbi, creating a new picture of Gregory. Here lies a complete Gregory, one who uses his entire training and entire theology in his interactions with kings, bishops, emperors, and laity. The unified Gregory is D.'s major contribution in this book, and should not be understated. Earlier scholarship, as he notes in the introduction and at points throughout the book, prioritized Gregory either as a theologian or as an administrator and diplomat. Gregory, D. argues, is both, and it is Gregory's ascetic-pastoral theology that directs all of his administrative, episcopal, and diplomatic activities during his pontificate.

The argument is convincing, and D. supports his claim in the third section through a careful rereading of Gregory. However, D. misses a good anchor for Gregory's novel asceticism in the classical traditions of Cicero and Seneca, authors that Gregory almost certainly read. The form of Roman Stoicism advocated by Cicero and Seneca viewed asceticism (admittedly, a milder expression of asceticism than Gregory's) as a pre- and co-condition of functioning as a proper Roman civil authority. Gregory, the former *praefectus urbi*, followed a similar approach to ascetic service as his classical predecessors. This unexplored link would bolster D.'s argument.

D.'s research is a welcome addition to scholarship on papal authority and politics in general, and Gregory I in particular. Moreover, the detailed scholarship (situated in endnotes, allowing the narrative a more natural flow) makes this volume suitable for advanced readers (scholars and graduate students), while the readable prose and clear narrative structure allow educated non-specialists to follow the argument. This volume may be useful for advanced undergraduates, but only if they have a suitable amount of basic historical information. D. has created an important piece of scholarship that charts a new course in our understanding of Gregory the Great.

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Martin Luther: Visionary Reformer. By Scott H. Hendrix. New Haven, CT: Yale University, 2015. Pp. xxiv + 341. \$26.25.

In the nearly five hundred years since a young theologian and professor named Martin Luther penned Ninety-five Theses for academic debate, he has been the subject of thousands of books, some celebrating him as a hero who dared to confront a corrupt and authoritarian church more interested in furthering its own wealth and power than the spiritual well-being of the faithful, and others condemning him as the rebel whose actions fragmented the Catholic Church and led to centuries of animosity and conflict. As Hendrix notes in the preface to his biography of Luther, "histories of the reformation say a lot about what Luther did but very little about who he was" (x). In this substantial monograph, H. shifts the emphasis to Luther himself.

H. divides his biography into two parts, with chapters focusing on Luther's life before and after he explicitly assumed the role of reformer of the church. Drawing extensively on Luther's own writings and a broad swath of primary documents and

scholarly secondary sources, H. presents an even-handed and engaging narrative of Luther's life and theological development. He is particularly masterful in setting Luther within the context of his time, geographically and with respect to the people who moved in and out of his orbit, including colleagues, such as Philip Melanchthon and Nicholas von Amsdorf; opponents, such as John Eck and Cardinal Thomas Cajetan; and supporters, such as Duke Frederick the Wise and his successors. H. develops a nuanced portrait of Luther as a complex person of many roles, emphasizing him as a scholar facing ever-increasing tasks and demands, some profound, some trivial, but all requiring his commitment of time and intellect.

We will likely never know why the young Luther departed from the path set for him by his father, relinquishing the study of the law for the seemingly humble life of an Augustinian friar, but his apparently sudden decision tells us something critically important about a young man who willed himself to act and dared to defy expectations. H. adroitly separates Luther from the mythical portrayal of him "as a troubled monk who quivered in his sandals while occasionally reading a theology book" (39–40). Yet, his depiction of Luther as a "skillful young scholar" and "conscientious Augustinian friar" sometimes fails to accentuate the intensity of a man driven by questions and doubts and fearless in his quest for God. While noting that Luther's pivotal "reformation discovery" of justification by faith "cannot be determined with exactitude" (52), but likely occurred in the course of writing and delivering his lectures on Paul's Letter to the Romans, his comment that Luther "was unable to tweet its time and location" (52) diminishes the complexity and importance of the scholarly debate.

H. brings to the biography a deep understanding of the historiography on the Reformation and Luther himself. His perspective is clear but not intrusive. In a few instances, ancillary points distract from the main foci of a particular chapter. For example, the discussion of Philip Melanchthon's marriage, while interesting in its own right, takes the reader away from the intricate discussion of the publication of the papal bull against Luther and the events that followed.

Some topics merit more substantive discussion. For example, H. observes that while Luther was not a mystical theologian, there are mystical elements in his theology, a point that calls out for further development. The implications of Luther's belief that both boys and girls become literate so that they could read the Scriptures for themselves might also have been expanded upon and perhaps connected more directly to Luther's own family life. Nonetheless, these are minor criticisms of a biography that largely succeeds in its aim of developing a complex and multidimensional portrayal of Luther within the culture of his time.

H. astutely selects texts from Luther's works to illustrate and highlight specific themes and episodes in his life. At the end of the biography, a reader may wish that H. had shared more of the insights drawn from his decades of study and teaching about Luther. It is these insights that bring the elusive Luther from the pages of history to life. For example, when H. writes, "The man left the monastery, but the monastery never left the man" (176), he points us to a significant and thought-provoking aspect of the reformer. Indeed, it is Luther's complexities and contradictions that will

continue to draw people to study and write about him long after the 500th anniversary of the Ninety-five Theses is past.

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Luther der Ketzer: Rom und die Reformation. By Volker Reinhardt. Munich: C. H. Beck, 2016. Pp. 352. €19.95.

Caveat emptor! A red paper ribbon wraps itself around the dust jacket of this book, proclaiming: “GEHEIMAKTE LUTHER Vatikanische Quellen decken auf, was in der Reformation wirklich geschah C. H. BECK.” Beck, the publisher, has engaged in sensationalist, misleading advertising. Reinhardt never professes to reveal a secret dossier on Luther to explain “what really happened in the Reformation.” This expert on the Renaissance papacy, a historian at the University of Fribourg in Switzerland, does use “Vatican sources,” however. These sources, “almost completely untapped” (13), are reports of the nuncios of the Holy See active in Germany particularly in the 1520s and 1530s. “These dispatches,” R. writes, “are on the one hand reports about events in plain view and behind the scenes and on the other documents of a virtuoso self-portrayal” (146). Too often neglected, the reports are far from secret. They were published in scholarly editions in Germany in the 19th and 20th centuries.

The *Nuntiaturberichte* alongside the Weimar edition of Martin Luther’s works underpin the signal contribution of R.’s book. Most Reformation studies approach religious division from one side, Protestant or Catholic. Reinhardt, however, offers what he calls “an equitable ‘*Simultanerzählung*’” that explains how Luther understood Rome and vice versa. He seeks not to salvage the reputation of the Renaissance papacy but “to reconstruct a complex historical process in a comprehensive way.” Viewing Luther from Rome’s vantage point does not put him in a dubious light, for “the historical dimension of his impact first appropriately emerges when the capacities of the opposition are also adequately appreciated” (previous quotations are from p. 16). What emerges is a story of escalating, mutual rejection.

Luther remains the book’s center of gravity. The five chapters set out a chronology of representations: Luther the monk (1483–1517), the critic (1517–1520), the barbarian (1521–1523), the forgotten man (1523–1534), and the heretic (1534–1546). Of course, Luther was suspected and accused of heresy long before 1534. Relating Girolamo Aleandro’s report to Rome in 1516 on the volatile situation in Germany, R. refers to the Germans as “the unruly barbarians” (56) already in the first chapter on Luther as monk. Unfortunately, R. does not document this claim. In the second chapter, Luther emerges as a barbarian. Pope Leo X (1513–1521) commissioned Silvestro Mazzolini, known as Prierias, with the task of rebutting Luther’s Ninety-five Theses. R. summarizes Prierias’s view without quoting him: “the typical heretic is at the same time the typical barbarian” (88). In his *Responsio* (1518), Prierias underlines the false and heretical nature of Luther’s Theses. He imagines Luther to be a biting dog and