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Susan Wabuda. *Preaching during the English Reformation.* New York and Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002. xix + 203 pp. $55.00 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-521-45395-0.

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Deftly written and filled with fascinating detail, Susan Wabuda's elegant and expert book provides a structuring framework for her respected articles on English preaching. It introduces readers to the ways that preaching illustrates larger matters in the study of the English Reformation. The introduction traces the terrain of English Reformation studies over the last two decades and orients preaching as a subject between the most significant interpretive theses of the last quarter-century. These positions include those of A. G. Dickens and G. R. Elton (stressing the English Reformation as a welcomed religious event), Christopher Haigh (skeptical of its religious importance and meaning), and Eamon Duffy (demonstrating forcefully that it was not eagerly accepted, at least in the countryside). Wabuda's gift is her creation of a convincing picture of English preaching by applying the most reasonable aspects of each argument to her evidence.

The first three chapters of Wabuda's volume present a macro-perspective on the effect of Reformation developments on preaching in church services. The first chapter concerns preaching in England before the Reformation. Here Wabuda shows that preaching was far more common as a component of worship in England, and consequently far more important than it typically was on the Continent–owing not least to the activities of England's mendicants. Numerous types of sermons were available for the delectation of the faithful. Listening to preaching or endowing chantries was thus already among the repertoire of good works cultivated within Old Church piety. Hence, English parishes took their preaching seriously, as witnessed by efforts by Erasmus, Colet, and Fisher (traced in the second chapter) to define the role and ideal of the preacher. The availability of Bibles to a larger group of the laity meant a challenge to the "new" preachers educated for the task of reforming England's churches; nonetheless, insistence on the public quality of preaching (over the private quality of reading) kept homiletical activity firmly in the hands of the clerical elite. This official control over preaching (necessary due to its expansion as a political activity under Thomas Cromwell) never succeeded fully in filling the gap left by the dissolution of the mendicant houses, a major concern of the third chapter, which traces the effects of their closure and the ultimately inefficient attempt to fill gaps left once their activities ceased. Taken together, these three chapters suggest a mid-point between wild enthusiasm for the innovations of the Reformation and near indifference to them, a typically English attitude to faith that can be traced in the active transformations of traditional pious practices like devotion to the Sacred Name of Jesus (the focus of the final chapter). This devotion was intimately associated with preaching and led to widespread endowment of chantries. It had already been popular in the late-fifteenth century, but it could be taken up both by moderate Protestants (because of its Christocentrism) and Catholics of many stripes. In its evolution through the Reformation, then, it shows the nostalgic ways that the English Reformation transformed the piety and preaching of the Old Church into devotions that were simultaneously familiar and reformulated for the new teachings.

Wabuda's prose is elegant and often moving, but her argumentation never reiterates itself. Neither does it insist heavily on its own wider significance; the book ends in a somewhat open-ended way. If I have not misunderstood, Wabuda is suggesting that the English Reformation, as seen from the perspective of preaching, could be characterized as a movement that drew heavily upon inspiration of reform strands in Catholicism (both humanism and the mendicant orders) and late-medieval developments (intensification of popular piety). It advanced successfully (albeit more slowly than Elton or Dickens considered) precisely because it reworked and reframed elements of the preaching tradition in a way consistent with later medieval intensification of Catholic piety. It provided subtle and familiar alternatives (if not always fully sufficient ones) to the piety and practice it attempted to eradicate. Wabuda's Reformation is thus highly sympathetic to Anglicanism's relationship to the

Old Church; hers is a Reformation of subtle changes rather than extreme swings. Her focus suggests that despite unfortunate episodes like the dissolution of the monasteries and more extreme moments of (Protestant) religious sentiment under Edward VI, the general direction of moderate reform and its slow but constant reception remained constant. Wabuda's argument has a distinctly ex post facto quality, however, that is hard to reconcile with religious extremism (admittedly rarer in England) or the vehemence of strong proponents or opponents of Reformation–which appear to be more related to politics than religious sentiment. One can imagine the argument more easily extended to Elizabethan than Marian England. Nonetheless, I found Wabuda's argument extremely persuasive as a synthetic explanation for the progress of the early English Reformation, and it offers obvious points of comparison to the continental Reformation (especially in German-speaking lands). Moreover, the volume is not merely of interest to specialists. The brevity of the book, the absence of jargon, and the high readability of Wabuda's prose should make it easily accessible to lay audiences and advanced undergraduates as well.

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