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Review Essay: R. Po-chia Hsia, *Social Discipline in the Reformation: Central Europe, 1550-1750*

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Jones remains conscious of the generative circumstances that inform the works she studies, and she never loses sight of the intertextual exchange in which these collections of poems were produced. She is careful to credit those recent critics on whose interpretations she draws: Peggy Kamuf, François Rigolot, Julia Kristeva, and Karine Berriot. And she adeptly maps out distinct areas in which her arguments depart from major critics for whom gender distinctions are not critical: George Diller and Robert Griffin. *The Currency of Eros* is an indispensable addition to the rich fabric of critical texts devoted to the development of lyric poetry by men and women of the European Renaissance. In her analysis of common currents encouraging the development of lyric poetry by women in England, France, and Italy, Ann Rosalind Jones makes a unique contribution to Renaissance studies and to the issues of gender so central to the series in which this volume appears.

Deborah N. Losse
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R. Po-chia Hsia, *Social Discipline in the Reformation: Central Europe, 1550-1750*, Routledge, 1989, 218 pp., biblio., index, \$44.00.

R. Po-chia Hsia, in *Social Discipline in the Reformation: Central Europe, 1550-1750*, has produced a concise, clearly written synthesis of much complex and interesting research, with which nonspecialists will be unfamiliar, on a neglected period of the history of German-speaking central Europe. He focuses on interrelationships between the extension of the authority of princely courts through the use of bureaucracies of jurists employing standardized law on the one hand and the three major religious reformation movements on the other. He proposes that regardless of the differences among the religious groups their similar imposition of doctrine and organization ("confessionalization") created obedient subjects (through "social disciplining") and enhanced centralized power.

Hsia's approach is comparative, not only with reference to the Lutheran, Calvinist, and Catholic reformations but also to the size and type of political units. He clarifies carefully the geographical scope of the research cited. Throughout, we are shown something of the dialectical relationship between the development of the various religious traditions and the exercise of authority. He also discusses cultural developments, popular religion, and marginal groups.

The main defect of this fine book is Hsia's failure to scrutinize some of his conceptual terms. The progressive process of state-building that begins in the sixteenth century is probably more deeply embedded in German historiography than anywhere else, and Hsia's unexamined use of the concept of "state" and of "political modernization" may obscure important developments. He sets his discussion of human agency in the structural context of a unilinear (as suggested by his unexamined use of the concept "early modern") development of the state. But such an organizational model often causes Hsia to undervalue or miss entirely the ways a patrimonial structure of political authority, involving networks of personal relations between central figures and local elites, perhaps played a more significant role than did bureaucratic imposition in the development of the state. Moreover, while law and church uniformity can be vehicles of class power, norms of justice and religion often found popular support as limits on the exercise of authority. Hsia presents much information to illustrate these relationships, but his quick resort to the concept of "state" buries many fruitful insights. Also, material resources for elite action must have varied considerably throughout this period, but we get little sense of such variations. This lack of attention to potential constraints on the rulers' actions is sometimes accompanied by a lack of clarity about important political relationships, such as that between ruler and estates in Bavaria.

Hsia's concluding bibliographic essay is a clear and useful guide to the literature on which he bases his book. In general, Hsia does what one should expect in this type of study: he provides a stimulating summary of what has been done and numerous suggestions about opportunities for further research. Those who teach and investigate this period should be grateful.

J. B. Owens
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David M. Dean and Norman L. Jones, eds., *The Parliaments of Elizabethan England*, Basil Blackwell, 1990, 226 pp., \$45.00.

The usual incoherence of festschrifts is happily avoided in *The Parliaments of Elizabethan England*, a splendid complement of eight essays on Elizabethan parliaments. David M. Dean and Norman L. Jones have adroitly coordinated the creation of a single volume that successfully