Susan Wabuda. *Preaching During the English Reformation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003. Pp. 226.

Dr Wabuda's book is a significant contribution to the renewed scholarly interest in the early Reformation in England. Her focus is on the years up to 1553, and she emphasizes the decades between 1520 and 1540 in particular. Wabuda devotes equal attention to Catholic as well as evangelical preaching, underscoring for us that the period was one of flux, and that the field of preaching during these years was not dominated by evangelicals alone. To those familiar with the current work on this period, this should come as no surprise. Still, in its concern with the continuing debate about the character of the English Reformation(s), this monograph offers an important perspective.

What may prove surprising to readers is the extent of the continuities between late medieval piety and the piety of the first generations of English Protestants, in particular the pervasiveness of the monogram IHS throughout the period and beyond—even among those whose Protestantism would presumably have led to its disuse. This finding serves to remind us, as Dr Wabuda states, of the pragmatic and “adaptable” character of the English Reformation; or, as the late G. R. Elton once wrote, “England, as is notorious, wore her Reformation with a difference.”

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K.J. Kesselring. *Mercy and Authority in the Tudor State*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003. Pp. 252.

The many theories about the nature of Tudor justice have never dealt sufficiently with what appears to be an anomaly. Forms of capital punishment were varied and cruel; incarceration was itself tantamount to a death sentence; and, people found themselves facing a plethora of new and bewildering laws year after year. Yet the Tudors have been celebrated as the very models of clemency by contemporary commentators. Kesselring has solved this puzzle in a timely and entertaining fashion by attending closely to primary sources and avoiding anachronistic moral judgements. She focuses the reader's attention on mercy and justice as princely virtues and as political tools. By examining patronage networks and propaganda, benefit of clergy, rebellions and the expansion of royal authority into peripheral lands, she demonstrates that retribution, justice and mercy were uniquely geared toward individual circumstances and she skilfully highlights the many forms and uses of pardons, showing us that justice was also often about rehabilitation of the offender too. Attending to the contemporary concern about gender issues, Kesselring explores the female specific defence of “benefit of the belly” and includes statistics of male and female offences and imprisonment. All told, this useful book considers the practice of granting of pardons as evidence of the monarch's saving grace and social conscience but also on occasion as little