

book “highlight[s women’s] resilience, not their oppression” (4). Other themes identified in the introduction and developed throughout include how to evaluate various types of sources, and changing understandings of holiness.

Wojciechowski does not conceal the tensions within the overarching story she tells. Rather, she is explicit, for example, about the ambiguous, even contradictory effects of the Reformation on women’s lives. Similarly, she engages in the fraught discussion of how to evaluate mission work that was sometimes oppressive and sometimes liberating for both missionaries and their audiences. Students will benefit from being invited into these debates rather than merely being given conclusions. The author’s engagement in them renders her more visible to her readers than Walker or Ahlstrom or Nelson was to me. And it requires her to be more direct about her interpretive thesis than they were. A small change in the book’s title would make that thesis evident from the outset. “Women ARE the Christian Story” would signal Wojciechowski’s contention that without women, there would be no past story, and that women are vital to there being a future story.

L. DeAne Lagerquist
St. Olaf College, Retired

WOMEN REFORMERS OF EARLY MODERN EUROPE: PROFILES, TEXTS, AND CONTEXTS, edited by Kirsi I. Stjerna, Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2022. 395 pages. \$45.00.

Far too often the story of the Protestant Reformation is focused on the actions and theology of men. Just about anyone could tell you Luther and Calvin were major reformers. A more attentive student of the Reformation would be able to tell you about other men who shaped religious thought and policy throughout the sixteenth century. However, I have found it is uncommon that women are brought up at all. Perhaps Luther’s wife, Katharina von Bora, is mentioned, just as a reminder that women were there, but there is often little acknowledgment that women took part in this major societal and religious shift. *Women Reformers of Early Modern Europe*, however, brings the stories of women center stage. As the introduction states: “Women were an integral part of the tumultuous landscape of the sixteenth-century European reformations. Women

exercised their voice and agency in creative ways in their own social locations. Whether receiving, defending, transmitting, applying—or even rejecting—reformation teaching in early modern Europe, women participants provide an enthralling perspective on the larger story’s many twists and turns” (xix).

Women Reformers of Early Modern Europe is an excellent resource regarding women’s activities during the Protestant Reformation. The book is edited by Kirsi I. Stjerna, who is a professor of Lutheran history and theology at Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary. In addition, there are more than thirty contributors, including both international and interdisciplinary scholars, who bring their particular interests and knowledge to a variety of topics. The book consists of eight sections that include from two to six chapters each. The sections are: Women Theologians and the Printed Word; German Women Leading the Reforms; English Women for the Protestant Faith; French and Italian Women for the Protestant Faith; Dutch, Swiss, and Anabaptist Women for the Reformations; Protestant Women and Their Bible; Protestant Teachings and Women’s Agency; and finally, Women Negotiating the Reformations in Different Contexts and Spaces.

As is apparent from the list of sections, the women featured in this book represent a wide variety of experiences. There were theologians, printers, hymnwriters, biblical interpreters, writers, those who ministered to others, and even some who were persecuted for their beliefs. Most of the biographical chapters include a section called “In Her Own Voice,” which includes primary-source documents written by the featured woman. I found this to be a helpful addition to each chapter, and it is a good reminder that women were writers and scholars who were actively influencing their world. Not all chapters are biographical—some feature themes, such as Marriage in Protestant Europe or Working Women in Poor Relief, which cover larger issues for women during the era; these are equally important for the larger study of women in the sixteenth century.

Since about the 1970s, there has been an increased interest in women’s history, so this is certainly not the first or only book on women in the Reformation. However, I found it to be a particularly useful resource written and arranged by talented scholars. Some of the women featured in the book may be familiar to you, such as Katharina Schütz Zell, Marguerite of Navarre, or Jane Grey, but other women featured will likely be new; these stories expand our understanding of what it was like to be a woman during the sixteenth century and help us gain a more inclusive picture of the Reformation.

I highly recommend this book to anyone interested in early modern European history, Reformation history, or women's history. In the final analysis, the book does an excellent job of bringing women front and center; it provides high-quality scholarship on a variety of people and topics related to Reformation studies, and I found the inclusion of primary-source documents written by the women featured in the book to be a highly useful addition.

Jennifer Hornyak Wojciechowski
Luther Seminary