

of David Stanley SJ (*A Modern Scriptural Introduction to the Spiritual Exercise*) to see how that might be done.

Finally, like the monks of old, having bit off, chewed, munched, ruminated, burped and regurgitated this book according to the method it proposes, I came away with the sense that sometimes less really can be more—feeling something like a touch of spiritual indigestion. Rich fare is on offer, but it needs to be consumed in small portions.

A Companion to Catholicism and Recusancy in Britain and Ireland: From Reform to Emancipation. Edited by Robert E. Scully SJ, with Angela Ellis. Leiden: Brill, 2022. Pp xxviii + 664. Price €263.94 (hbk). ISBN 978-90-04-15161-1.

The Jesuit Mission in Early Modern Ireland, 1560–1760. Edited by Mary Ann Lyons and Brian Mac Cuarta SJ. Dublin: Four Courts, 2022. Pp. 222. Price €55.00 (hbk). ISBN 978-1-80151-025-7.

Reviewed by: SALVADOR RYAN, *St Patrick's Pontifical University, Maynooth*

On 11–13 July 2023, the fourth biennial Early Modern British and Irish Catholicism conference, jointly organized by Durham University and the University of Notre Dame, convened to discuss the theme ‘Popery, Politics and Prayer.’ Cognisant that 2020 (when it could not meet on account of COVID) marked the 450th anniversary of the papal bull *Regnans in Excelsis*, which excommunicated Queen Elizabeth I, the conference set out to consider ‘the relationships between politics and Catholicism in the widest possible framework, including through political debates and differences between English, Irish, Scottish and Welsh Catholics, as well as the global Church.’ The timing of the conference, its opening and closing bookending the historically significant date of 12 July, cannot have been lost on its participants. Popery, politics, and prayer, indeed.

Major conferences on early modern Catholicism, such as this very fine example at Durham, are a welcome indication of the vitality of the field, not only of early modern Catholicism in general, but of early modern Catholicism in the Atlantic Archipelago in particular. A recent roundtable discussion on the History of British and Irish Catholicism: Past, Present and Future, which recently featured in the Cambridge journal *British Catholic History*, 36:3 (2023), outlined the considerable progress that has been made in recent scholarship, as well as the many avenues yet to be explored. The first two volumes of the forthcoming five-volume *Oxford History of British and Irish Catholicism*, to be published in late 2023, offer a further invaluable resource to scholars of early modern Catholicism in these islands.

Meanwhile, the two volumes reviewed here, both published in 2022, comprise substantial contributions to the already burgeoning field. The first, edited by Robert E. Scully SJ, with Angela Ellis, and published by Brill, can be considered a landmark publication, drawing together the fruits of research on early modern British and Irish Catholicism, and ensures that the experience of Welsh Catholics, say, can be considered side-by-side with their Scottish and Irish counterparts. This marks a move away from the

more atomized methodology of earlier studies, what John Morrill calls the ‘siloeed histories’ of England and Wales, Ireland and Scotland, and it is an approach that is also found in the forthcoming *Oxford History*.

The volume of 19 essays is divided into three (albeit unequal) parts, namely The Community and its Place in the National and International Scene (11 essays); Opposition Within and Without (two essays); and Catholic Recusant Culture (six essays). Contributors include Thomas McCoog SJ, who writes on the Jesuits and other Male Religious Orders in Britain and Ireland; Colleen M. Seguin, whose topic is Catholic Laywomen: Activist Piety, Agency and Strategic Resistance; Anne Dillon, who writes on Martyrdom and the Catholic Community; and Lisa McClain, who explores Underground Devotions and the challenges of practising an illegal faith. There are essays on Scottish and English Catholic material culture by Peter Davidson and David W. Walker, and Janet Graffius respectively (although these are, curiously, to be found in different sections), an essay on Recusant Literary Culture in England and Wales by Victor Houlston, and a chapter on the Catholic Enlightenment in Britain and Ireland by Jonathan Wright. Meanwhile overviews of Catholicism in Ireland, Scotland and Wales respectively are provided by John McCafferty, Jane Stevenson, and Hannah Thomas. Caroline Bowden’s chapter on Recusant Women Religious in a National and International Context is also an indication of the flowering of this area of study in recent years, exemplified by other important scholarly contributions such as that of Bronagh Ann McShane, who isn’t a contributor to this volume, but whose 2022 study *Irish Women in Religious Orders, 1530–1700: Suppression, Migration and Reintegration*, published by Boydell and Brewer, was shortlisted for the Royal Historical Society 2023 Whitfield Book Prize. Opening with an historical overview, c. 1530–1829 by William J. Sheils, Brill’s *Companion to Catholicism and Recusancy in Britain and Ireland* will be essential reading for historians of early modern Catholicism.

Narrower in focus, but no less groundbreaking, is the Four Courts Press volume *The Jesuit Mission in Early Modern Ireland, 1560–1760*, edited by Mary Ann Lyons and Brian Mac Cuarta SJ. Building on the work of scholars such as Thomas McCoog SJ, whose *The Society of Jesus in Ireland, Scotland, and England, 1589–1597* appeared in 2017, and his *Pre-suppression Jesuit Activity in the British Isles and Ireland*, published in 2019, and utilizing recently published significant scholarly resources such as *The Jesuit Irish Mission: A Calendar of Correspondence, 1566–1752*, edited by Vera Moynes and published in 2017, this volume of 11 essays on various aspects of the Jesuit Mission in Ireland is likewise testament to the scholarly advances that have been achieved in recent years. Each essay is a treasure trove of detail on Irish Jesuit history. Thomas McCoog co-authors (with Alexander G. DeWitt SJ) the opening essay on the correspondence of William Good; Colm Lennon explores the mission of the Jesuits in urban Ireland, c. 1598–1650; Bernadette Cunningham writes on popular preaching and the Jesuit Mission; Brian Jackson on the Jesuits and religious controversy, and Brian MacCuarta on the Jesuits and conversions. Some essays are particularly welcome owing to the freshness of their topics; for instance, Raymond Gillespie writes on the insufficiently studied history of the Jesuits and music in early modern Ireland, and Alma O’Donnell contributes a fascinating essay on Jesuit involvement in exorcisms in 17th-century Ireland. There are also contributions by Jason Harris (on the Latin style of the Irish *Litterae Annuae*), Mary Ann Lyons (on women and Jesuit ministry), Martin Foerster (on Jesuit

schooling in Ireland, 1660–1690), and Liam Chambers (on the Irish Jesuit College in Poitiers, 1674–1782).

These volumes, among other recent studies, are further testament to the renaissance in the study of early modern Catholicism which is evident for some years now. They deserve a place on the shelves of all institutional libraries, and in the personal libraries of all serious scholars in this field of study.

The Bible in the Early Irish Church, A.D. 550 to 850. By Martin McNamara with assistance from Michael T. Martin. Commentaria Vol. 13. Leiden: Brill, 2022. Pp. xiv + 339. Price €164.82 (hbk). ISBN 978-90-04-51213-9.

Reviewed by: NEIL XAVIER O'DONOGHUE, *St Patrick's Pontifical University, Maynooth*

Martin McNamara is the acknowledged expert on the early Irish Church's relationship to the Bible and this book is a distillation of a lifetime of study. It aims to summarize this relationship from 550 to 850 A.D. Over the last century the identification of Irish Biblical works has grown greatly. McNamara gathers together material on such Irish and 'Irish-affiliated' works, dealing with both well-known and lesser-known texts and also indicating many avenues for future study. Against those who claim that 'the early Irish Church did not produce Bible commentaries,' this study proposes that, in fact, there were many such texts that were present in 'monasteries, school and classrooms of Continental Europe' (p. 1).

McNamara starts his work by introducing readers to the early Irish Bible scholars who can be identified today (both those working in Ireland itself and those based in Continental Europe). This is particularly helpful as there is as yet no useful catalogue of such authors, as exists for other British and European areas. The period saw many different examples of exegesis or treatment of biblical texts with various names, including, including '*Expositio*, *Commentarius* (or *Commentarium*), *Tractatus*, *Ennaratio*, *Glossa*, *Eclogiae*, or *Pauca*' (p. 32). As literacy accompanied the Christianization of Ireland, it is of little surprise that the texts of the Bible became widely influential in the composition of both Latin and vernacular texts in the Irish context.

Given the place of monasticism in the early Irish Church, there is a clear early emphasis on different manners of interpreting the Psalms. McNamara outlines how Irish authors sometimes interpreted the Psalms 'to bring out the meaning of the original text' (p. 93). Other examples follow the Antiochene tradition that sees the prophecy of Christ being limited to four Psalms (Pss. 2, 8, 44 and 109 according to the Vulgate numbering). Other authors understand the Psalms as prophesying the life of Christ and yet others understand them as having a Davidic interpretation that principally deals with King David as the recognized author of the Psalms. He gives special attention to the oldest Irish Psalter, the early seventh-century *Cathach* manuscript ascribed to St Columcille/Columba and currently in the Royal Irish Academy. Other chapters are dedicated to Apponius's Commentary on the *Canticle of Canticles* and Josephus Scottus's *Abbreviatio commentarii Hieronymi in Isaiam*. Chapter nine on the background to Irish Gospel Texts is a