Thomas M. McCoog*"And touching our Society": Fashioning Jesuit Identity in Early Modern England*

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Jesuit studies have never been short of great scholars, but Thomas M. McCoog, S.J., has now built up a body of work that is starting to rival that of the meticulous John Hungerford Pollen, S.J. It is characteristic of the contrasts between the two periods that while Pollen edited and translated a mass of texts, many of them on the English martyrs, McCoog has ferreted through the archives in Rome and set the development of the Society of Jesus in England within the larger context of European politics. He lists with justifiable pride his two impressive histories of *The Society of Jesus in Ireland, Scotland and England*, which now cover the entire period from 1541 to 1597, but his collection of essays on individual priests of the Society (Edmund Campion, Robert Persons, James Bosgrave, William Crichton, Robert Southwell) is just as important. Some of these appeared in the second edition of *The Reckoned Expense* (2007), now an indispensable volume because it remains the most reliable source of recent information on Campion in Oxford, Prague, and Ireland.

This new collection of essays will also become a mainstay of scholars working in this field, even when the expected work by others on Campion and Persons has finally been published. Ten of the thirteen essays have appeared in a variety of journals, but all have been extensively revised; my dog-eared photocopies of two invaluable articles, "The English Jesuit Mission and the French Match" and "Sparrows on a Rooftop" can now be replaced by the revised versions in this elegantly produced volume. The essay on the importance of the marriage negotiations is now equipped with an extensive array of footnotes that refer to all the recent work on this, like that of Natalie Mears, Susan Doran, Blair Worden, and Peter Lake, and open lively conversations with the reader. McCoog's interest here has always been in the way the negotiations in England influenced the perceptions in Rome, making a Jesuit mission seem more likely to succeed. Contemporary historians, John Stow and William Camden, were more concerned with the (ultimately futile) attempt to win public support, and the way that led to the mutilation of John Stubbe and the execution of Edmund Campion. There is now no question that it was an issue that profoundly affected the lives of everyone in England between 1579 and 1582, from courtiers like Philip Sidney and Philip Howard to lawyers like Stubbe, who lost his hand because of it on 3 November 1579, and to London crowds who stubbornly "bent their brows" when the authorities attempted to harangue them into submission.

There are three important and previously unpublished essays. The first is on "Edmund Campion in Bohemia," the second on "The Mystery of James Bosgrave" and the third on "Religion, Politics and Society in Elizabethan England." There is no shortage of material on the third of these topics, where almost every issue, including Jesuit involvement, is contested. McCoog, following the direction taken by John Bossy, Peter Lake, and Michael Questier, questions the wisdom of Campion's sermon on the feast of Sts. Peter and Paul, 1580, in the house of Lord Paget; yet the rebellion in Ireland, stirred up under a papal banner by Dr. Nicholas Sander, particularly when Viscount Baltinglass joined it on 19 July, and the consequent fear of a rising by Catholics in England, was more damaging, and finally made the mission impossible. The first two essays, however, deal with issues that have received too little attention, but are of central importance. The Bohemian essay allows McCoog to explore in detail the critical issue of Campion's delay in departing from Prague. With all the resources of the Jesuit Roman Archives for the Austrian and German provinces, McCoog is able to show that the summons had reached Vienna by mid-January 1580, whereas Campion did not leave before the end of February, stayed in Munich till at least 7 March, and did not arrive in Rome till 10 April. Such precision is all the more necessary because our main source, Robert Persons, seems unable to remember a single date correctly. McCoog moves here with characteristic caution, but the flurry of letters he records from the rector in Prague, the provincial in Vienna, and the general in Rome suggests not just reluctance, but some kind of crisis during which Campion's immediate superiors, together with the duke of Bavaria and Prince Ferdinand, look as if they are trying to protect Campion.

"The Mystery of James Bosgrave" tackles a story that includes espionage, is full of puzzles and contradictions, and throws light onto a little explored Polish connection. The chance meeting with John Rogers (son of the Protestant martyr) in Elsinore, in August 1580, led to espionage by Rogers as he travelled to Braunschweig, and infiltrated the Jesuit house posing as a friend of Bosgrave. The sudden reprieve of Bosgrave on the day intended for his execution, apparently at the same time as Campion, Sherwin, and Briant, remains intriguing. The Privy Council subsequently attempted to portray this as evidence that Bosgrave had agreed with them about the papal bull, and McCoog is inclined to believe this story, contrasting it with the hagiographical account of the Polish province. Yet, at the trial in Westminster Hall where Campion rushed to Bosgrave's defence, the crown accused Bosgrave of having given the same answers on the papal power of deposition and on Dr. Sander as all the other defendants. The two official versions do not tally, and it looks as if the version in *A Particular Declaration* (1582) was invented to discredit him when he was

not in a position to refute it. McCoog is skeptical about the role of the Polish king, Stephen Báthory, whose letter of 29 January 1583 is recorded, even though he admits that Báthory knew and liked Bosgrave. There is, however, an earlier letter, of 27 April 1581, in *Monumenta Poloniae Vaticana* from Caligari, the papal nuncio, to the cardinal of Como, which shows that Báthory made an intervention with the English queen in early 1581 “for the captive Jesuit” (a warrant of 24 December 1580 for the torture of Bosgrave is extant). These letters reveal that Báthory was able subtly to hint that trade relations would be damaged by capital charges for religion, and to point to the freedom enjoyed by English merchants in Poland, a freedom that could easily be rescinded.

An essay that should be compulsory for all those interested in the social mores of early modern England is that on “Jesuit attire on the English mission.” Jesuit apparel in England fascinated contemporaries: at Campion’s trial the queen’s counsel tried to deride Campion’s “velvet Venetians,” and Campion was forced to point out that he was not being tried on a statute of apparel. On the morning of his execution, the lieutenant of the Tower hunted in vain for a buff jerkin for Campion to wear on his last journey. The instructions themselves, given in full and translated, make for fascinating reading. “Our men” must avoid dinners because the custom after dinner is to have detailed conversations, in which they will find it difficult to conceal their identity. On the other hand, they must dress like noblemen so that they can deal with “persons of importance” (x).

This collection will be as indispensable as the second edition of *The Reckoned Expense*, or the collection of essential (sometimes secret) archival material in *Recusancy and Conformity in Early Modern England: Manuscript and Printed Sources in Translation* edited by McCoog with Ginevra Crosignani and Michael Questier. The detailed archival research and generous footnotes encourage the reader to debate, disagree or develop even further the detailed, cautious, sometime skeptical, but always scholarly, investigations.

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