Teresa Bela, Clarinda Calma, Jolanta Rzegocka, eds.

Publishing Subversive Texts in Elizabethan England and the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, Leiden: Brill, 2016. Pp. xvi + 300. Hb, \$144.

Drawn from a conference held in Kraków, Poland in 2014, *Publishing Subversive Texts* is a timely essay collection. Its title alone emphasises the current scholarly need to, if not reposition, at least consider early modern English Catholicism in relation to mainland Europe rather than just to a repressive national regime. Indeed, as the editors point out in a brief preface, English and Scottish Jesuits attended the first of the Society's colleges to be founded in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.

Although purporting to be an introduction, the book actually jumps straight into the fray. Justyna Kiliańczyk-Zięba provides a diverting essay on Polish state bibliographies, pointing out the frequently neglected fact that the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth was fully part of the early modern European economic and cultural system.

The first group of essays is clustered round the theme of "English Recusant Presence in the Print Culture of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth." Mirosława Hanusiewicz-Lavallee opens proceedings, arguing that after the Council of Trent, English Catholic works of controversial theology and martyrology had a significant impact on the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. In particular, she ventures that the area's Jesuits used the English Catholic experience to warn against the dangers of tolerating Protestants and to mobilize the indigenous Catholic conscience. Next, Martin Murphy examines the activities of the Scottish Jesuit Robert Abercromby (1536–1613), who became the novice master of the Society's first Polish recruits. Jolanta Rzegocka follows with a consideration of English topics in the plays performed at Jesuit schools in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. She suggests these performances were designed to give moral guidance as opposed to drawing lessons from the persecution. A chapter by Magdalena Komorowska examines the University of Kraków's resistance to the Jesuits in the seventeenth century before Clarinda Calma closes the section with an overview of the Jesuit press founded at Vilnius, again with the intention of strengthening Catholic orthodoxy in a religiously heterodox environment.

The second section is grouped under the theme of "Subversive Publishing during the Elizabethan Settlement." Acknowledging that writing and publishing were key to the early Jesuit mission to England, Thomas M. McCoog, S.J., places this in the wider context, saying it would have been a surprise to the order's superiors "because of the Society's lack of interest if not aversion" to

this sort of approach. He notes that translations of Jesuit works circulated in England before any actual member of the Society, though Edmund Campion (1540–81) and Robert Persons (1546–1610) quickly and famously embraced William Allen's (1532–94) printing strategy. Hannah Thomas outlines the Jesuit missionary library of the Cwm in Wales, finding this remote location well connected to European reading trends; controversial works as well as Jesuit spirituality and asceticism made up the largest parts of the collection. Alexandra Walsham's stimulating chapter also records these European interconnections, describing translations of Luis de Granada (1505–88) as best sellers amongst England's Catholics and Protestants. Even English Jesuits were willing to exploit the works of this Spanish Dominican in their missionary endeavors. Victor Houliston takes as a case study *Leicester's Commonwealth*, unpicking the contributions made by Robert Persons, and finding the Jesuit able to adapt his writing styles for different circumstances, before the section closes with Teresa Bałuk-Ulewicz on an English Protestant adaptation of a Polish Catholic Reformation work.

The final grouping concentrates on "Crossing National Borders of Censorship" and opens with another example of Gerard Kilroy's ground-breaking work on Edmund Campion, S.J. Taking the famous Jesuit's *Rationes decem*, Kilroy's chapter is an excellent investigation into the writing, printing, and after-life of a book published on a secret press but with a far from secret and quiet intent. Next, Earle Havens explores lay Catholic book ownership in England, finding a number of the collectors plugged into developments in the European heartlands of the Catholic Reformation. Havens judges that several of the Catholic book collectors he profiles had little investment in texts written as part of the English Mission. One wonders whether they were the intended audience: were the mission books written for already convinced Catholics or as tools of conversion? The final essay, by Marcin Polkowski, looks at Richard Verstegan (c.1550–1640) and raises an interesting point that, whereas "clandestine literature" is already an established research field in central and eastern Europe, such an approach is generally lacking as far as early modern England is concerned.

Aside from some irritating slips, e.g. James I is described as acceding to the throne in 1604 (34) rather than 1603, Thomas More (1478–1535) is repeatedly but wrongly described as the "Henrician protomartyr" of the English Reformation (245, 248, 259), there are a couple of issues not so much with the book's content but more its structure. The book's title does a disservice to the content, making it seem narrower than it actually is: a significant number of the contributors focus outside of the Elizabethan time period, or deal with Britain as opposed to England. Though nobody expects contributions to be of exactly

the same length, it also seems strange to include chapters ranging from ten to twenty pages alongside, at its longest, one of nearly fifty pages in length. Consecutive chapters, e.g. those by McCoog and Thomas even directly contradict each other.

None of this is necessarily problematic but, significantly, the book lacks a proper introduction that could have explained this unevenness and explored these contradictions, bringing the essays together, giving the reader something to take away with him, comparing the English and Polish-Lithuanian experience rather than leaving them as parallel events in separate chapters. As it is, much of the material contained within *Publishing Subversive Texts* is timely, necessary and stimulating, though how it hangs together as a collection is a question that is left unanswered.

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