serving as regular confessors. Roman superiors frequently denounced English Jesuits, dressed in lay attire, serving as tutors and guides for Catholic gentlemen on the Grand Tour. Rome could not disapprove of the Society's role as record keepers of English Catholic history and culture. A visit to the collections of Stonyhurst College demonstrates the province's success. Corens concentrates here on the labor of love of Christopher Grene, S.J., in the collection and organization of martyrological material. In 1664, Martin Grene, Christopher's Jesuit brother and author of an English *apologia* for the Society, commented on the dangers inherent in the collection of such material in England so that "the greatest part is lost, and no memory remains of any galland actions since only in the verball relations which some of our old men can make" (176). As we know from the letters of the eighteenth-century English Jesuit John Thorpe, other documentation was destroyed at the suppression of the Society. Historians, editors, and martyrologists, with one eye on the contemporaneous political situation in England, preferred to pass over quietly the practices of their antecedents. Corens has discovered important and fascinating Jesuit censors' reports on Henry More's *Historia missionis Anglicanae* (St. Omer, 1660). One censor questioned the timing of the publication, and feared that it would anger royalists who were finally achieving success with the restoration of the English monarchy. Another recommended that More cut out Henry Garnet's self-defense before his execution. One wishes that the author had explored the published text to see if the Jesuit had altered his history to satisfy the censors and to endorse the formulation of a new narrative.

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M. Anne Overell

Nicodemites: Faith and Concealment between Italy and Tudor England. Leiden:

Brill, 2019. Pp. xiii + 280. Hb, \$150.00.

Dr. Overell's book is made up in large part of a re-working of a series of articles and books published by her since 1978 which deal with religious Reformers mainly in Italy and England in the middle years of the sixteenth century. Her work is thoughtful, well-researched, and a pleasure to read. After the introductory preliminaries, there follow two chapters on Cardinal Reginald Pole and his henchman in Italy, Michael Throckmorton, people who were reasonably straightforward English Catholics, and on a relation of Pole's, Edward

Courtenay, who as an adult was a rather complicated Catholic. The bulk of the book discusses the careers and publications of people who stood on the other side of the religious divide and were Italians, although often in exile: Pietro Vanni; Francesco Spiera; Peter Martyr; Celio Secondo Curione; Orazione Curione; Sebastien Castellio; Giacomo Aconcio; Bernardino Ochino; and that tragic figure, Francesco Pucci. The book concludes with some discussion of Catholics in Elizabethan England.

What unites these people, according to the author, is that they were, or could be called, “nicodemites.” The second edition of the *Oxford English Dictionary* (1989) describes this word (or its variants) as “rare” and “obsolete”; but in historical literature it is nowadays far from either. Its recent currency perhaps started with Carlo Ginzburg’s *Il nicodemismo* (Turin: Einaudi, 1970), which discussed many of Anne Overell’s Italian Reformers, and others in Germany and France. I myself have been credited with being the first, in 1982, to describe Elizabethan Catholics in this way (Ginevra Crosignani, Thomas M. McCoog, S.J., and Michael Questier, eds., *Recusancy and Conformity in Early Modern England* [Toronto: PIMS, 2010], xiv), although I was merely drawing an introductory comparison between Ginzburg’s account of Italian Reformers’ use of concealment and that of Catholics in England at roughly the same time. Ginzburg was criticized in 1989 for using the word in too restricted a sense (Carlos Eire, “Calvin and Nicodemism,” *Sixteenth Century Journal* 10 [1979]: 46–69), but perhaps in the light of modern over-use, we might learn something from him. When Elizabeth I is described as a “nicodemite” (186) because of her conformity under Mary, one wonders what real force the word can have.

Dr. Overell is generally, it must be said, sensitive in her application of the term, by dint of her lengthy explanations of what she means in every case, but the word is used to cover such a multitude of sins, and requires such frequent glossing, that it seems reasonable to ask why it is being used at all. Her handling of the case of Pole is careful and scholarly, although “Nicodemite” is not the first word that springs to mind when one thinks of someone who sacrificed so much, even his mother’s life, in order to profess his obedience to the papacy. The same sort of criticism applies to Overell’s rather brief discussion of occasional conformity of Catholics under Elizabeth. She is right to see the importance of the casuist texts of the Catholic leaders, the Jesuit Robert Persons and Cardinal William Allen, and other teachers in the seminary at Douai-Rheims, as showing that concealment was something which was to some degree allowed by the Catholic leadership. This in itself makes it different from the “nicodemism” of the Italian Reformers, which was of course roundly condemned by John Calvin. These casuist documents were written to guide priests in particular, and to help the laity through the medium of the

confessional. Hence by allowing concealment to avoid persecution the casuists were encouraging a strengthening of the bond between Catholic laity and missionary priests as a first priority; this was a response intended to undermine the “nicodemism” of Catholics rather than encourage it, as Alban Langdale the old Marian priest did. It is true that Langdale (or Clitherow according to some) used the example of Nicodemus to justify occasional conformity, but the chief biblical example generally used by him and others (and indeed by Ginzburg’s people) was Naaman the Syrian, so perhaps we should call Langdale and the Catholic conformists, naamanites. Naaman was an apt case for Catholics since the Elizabethan regime demanded rejection of Catholic ritual and doctrine in the name of civil obedience. Nicodemus was himself, in any case, probably not a “nicodemite,” according to some readings of the fourth Gospel. Thus, Cardinal William Allen in *A true sincere and modest defence* of 1584, ed. Robert M. Kingdon (Cornell UP, 1965), 262 uses Nicodemus as an example of religious resistance to justify the way in which seminary priests might grow their hair and beards and wear laymen’s clothes to avoid capture in England. This is significant because Allen does this in a piece of apologetic writing directed most publicly against William Cecil’s own propaganda, and in a work Allen had translated into Latin for consumption by European Catholics and the Roman authorities. He uses the example of Nicodemus alongside others from Scripture and church history: David’s feigned madness, Christ’s escape from the Jews, and the use of the catacombs by the church fathers (Peter Holmes, *Resistance and Compromise: The Political Thought of the Elizabethan Catholics* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982], 118).

William Allen therefore uses the example of Nicodemus in a heroic rather than a disreputable light and not just in unpublished manuscripts, but in a manifesto of the English missionary movement. It may also be that Allen is speaking in addition to Alban Langdale and his like, to appropriate the Nicodemite text, but also to reconcile and reunite the Catholic movement, both recusant and occasional conformist. All this was a response to persecution: concealment was forced onto Catholics, priests and laity alike. It is perhaps permissible to use Ginzburg’s “nicodemites” analogically when discussing the English Catholics, but it is merely an analogy. The point of comparative history is not just to find similarities, but also to expose differences.

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