Book Review Essays

David J. Crankshaw and George W. C. Gross, eds., *Reformation Reputations: The Power of the Individual in English Reformation History*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2021. Pp. xxvii + 474. Hb, \$139.99. eBook, \$109.00.

Angela Andreani, *Meredith Hanmer and the Elizabethan Church: A Clergyman's Career in 16th-Century England and Ireland*. New York: Routledge, 2021. Pp. xii + 237. Routledge Studies in Renaissance and Early Modern Worlds of Knowledge. Hb, \$160.00. eBook, \$44.05.

Andy Warhol allegedly predicted that in the future everyone would be world-famous for fifteen minutes. He made no comment, however, about life after the parking meter had expired. The master of ceremonies at papal coronations thrice reminded the pope: “Pater Sancte, sic transit gloria mundi!” (Worldly glory passes away, Holy Father). The proud boast of Ozymandias “Look on my Works, ye Mighty, and despair!” sounds hollow as time and winds eroded his legacy. Fame rises and falls. Some refuse to admit that their time has passed and insist that their glory persists. They paraphrase Norma Desmond in “Sunset Boulevard”: they are “big, it’s the pictures that got small.” Others reinvent themselves, resort to “Dancing with the Stars,” or reality tv—anything that will keep them in the proverbial public eye. Still others can do nothing as their lives collapse under the weight of charges of harassment and predation. Fortunately, the reputations discussed in the first book are not as transient; the subject of the second, after years as a fringe player, has received star billing.

The editors of *Reformation Reputations* convened the 2017–18 program of the postgraduate seminar at the Institute of Historical Research (University of London) on “The Religious History of Britain 1500–1800.” As the academic world celebrated the five-hundredth anniversary of Martin Luther’s 95 Theses, the editors encouraged speakers at the seminar to focus on persons influential in England’s reformation: “What, in other words, could be said about the lives, and especially the after-lives, of selected figures” (viii). Not all wishes are

granted as some presenters preferred other topics. Consequently, the editors commissioned four chapters to fill in the gaps. The editorial question “what were, and are, the Reformation reputations of their chosen figures, all men and women of undisputed significance, if of uneven scholarly coverage?” (4) pervades as various authors over several centuries fashioned, fabricated, and fabulated historical figures for numerous reasons. Each article and the splendid introduction are first-rate. A few of the usual suspects appear: William Shiels examines the reaction to the canonization of Sir Thomas More and John, Cardinal Fisher in 1935 amidst the rise of fascism that linked their opposition to Henry VIII with clerical resistance to Nazism. The Anglican *Church Times* proclaimed “Rome has done the whole world a service in canonizing at this time two men who gave their lives in the resistance to a doctrine of secular nationalism, which, if once generally admitted, would shackle both the minds and the souls of men in chains of steel” (172). This trajectory would result in Robert Bolt’s “A Man for All Seasons” (1961) that heralded More as a champion of conscience and ignored his role as a persecutor of heretics as stressed in the Hilary Mantel “Thomas Cromwell” novels. It is interesting to note that Oxford celebrated More’s canonization whereas Cambridge ignored Fisher’s.

Ashley Null, David J. Crankshaw, and Felicity Heal, reconsider archbishops Thomas Cranmer, Matthew Parker, and John Whitgift. Null makes the case that “Early English evangelicals were as much late medieval Catholics as they were early modern heralds of a new religious era” (191), especially in Cranmer’s case because of his interest in the eucharistic theology of Cyril of Alexandria. Parker’s reputation, Crankshaw acknowledges, has been battered through the centuries, and subsequently Parker “as the post-Marian founder of the Church of England [...] is in danger of comparative neglect” (317) Crankshaw’s chapter corrects that. Felicity Heal redeems Elizabeth’s last archbishop of Canterbury, John Whitgift, from an infamy based on his pursuit of Thomas Cartwright and other hot Protestants. Oscar Wilde once quipped: “There is only one thing in life worse than being talked about, and that is not being talked about.” And Whitgift has been ignored: his last biography was written in 1718.

Women are not overlooked in the collection. Susan Wabuda reexamines Anne Askew, burned at the stake for heresy by King Henry VIII in 1546, and immortalized in Foxe’s *Actes and Monuments*. Askew’s reputation, according to Wabuda, “has been transformed time and again until the present day, when she is recognized as a cultural figure in Tudor history second only to a queen in importance” (255). In an especially intriguing contribution, Rachel Basch considers Margaret Cranmer, Anne Hooper, and Elizabeth Coverdale: “Wed to leaders of the English Church, bishops’ wives were the most visible and scrutinized of all clerical wives and came closer than any other women—bar Elizabeth I

as supreme governor—to the pinnacle of the Church's polity. Intimately connected to the reform cause, their marriages bound them to, but also helped to shape, the development of the Church of England in the sixteenth century" (223). Bash persuasively argues that these usually neglected wives of Tudor clergyman should be considered "agents of change" in themselves and not simply as spouses. "Clerical marriage," as the author makes clear, "was a conscious public move which challenged accepted standards and forced communities to make decisions about wider evangelical teachings" (227).

The final three chapters are of more interest to students of Jesuit history.

The reputation of Anthony Munday despite being the subject of periodic efforts at rehabilitation (the most recent being Donna Hamilton's *Anthony Munday and the Catholics, 1560–1633* [Farnham: Ashgate, 2005]), "has been trashed and rehashed over the centuries" (364). For students of early modern English Catholicism, he remains a despised figure best known for involvement in the capture of the Jesuit Edmund Campion. Munday wrote *A Breefe discourse of the taking of Edmund Campion* (London, [1581]), and *A Discoverie of Edmund Campion, and His Confederates* (London, 1582). Munday testified against Campion, whom he had never met, repudiated pamphlets defending him (*A breefe Aunswer made unto two Seditious Pamphlets* [London, 1582]), and eventually assisted Richard Topcliffe, the most bloodthirsty pursuer of Elizabethan Catholics. A subsequent publication, *The English Romaine Lyfe* (London, 1582) detailed his travels to Rome; the discontent that led to the establishment of the English College, "a den of conspirators and spies" (380); the conspiratorial activities of some Elizabethan Catholics in 1579. If the good that men do is interred with their bones, Munday's will not occupy much space.

The inclusion of an article on the Jesuit John Gerard is a welcome surprise. His tales of aliases and disguises, card games, falconry, and an unforgettable escape from the Tower of London are exciting accounts of heroics and deer-ing-do, all told with the dash of the Scarlet Pimpernel. No wonder Philip Caraman, the twentieth-century Jesuit editor of Gerard's autobiography, recommended to Fred Zinnemann in 1962 that he film it: the director preferred Bolt's "A Man for All Seasons" (395). Peter Lake and Michael Questier argue, "Ultimately, and in essence, these are spiritual adventure stories, tales of the victory of divine grace over the forces of heresy and oppression, sin and the devil. [. . .] The heroic entity in this story was the Society of Jesus" (395). Gerard's and William Weston's autobiographies were intended to demonstrate to Roman authorities the success of Jesuits in countering persistent complaints from some secular clergy that the Society of Jesus not only strove for total domination of the mission, including the misuse of funds, the spiritual exploitation of susceptible women, and the preference for the elites—and

thus was born the necessity of an episcopacy to control the Jesuits—but also was the fundamental cause of the continued persecution of Catholics because of its intrigues. If Gerard's memoir was the exposition of a thriving mission, the repudiation of anti-Jesuit critiques, and a confirmation that the successful mission needed no bishop, why was it never published in Latin or English? The avoidance of specific names suggests a wider dissemination; Lake and Questier do not know why neither it nor Weston's memoir was published in the early sixteenth century.

Victor Houlston tackles the generally Machiavellian reputation of the versatile Jesuit, Robert Persons. Everything about him is controversial from his campaign against the Elizabethan settlement, his quest for a Catholic successor to Elizabeth, his proposals for the true reformation of the re-established Roman Church to the spelling of his name. His opponents prefer Parsons; his supporters, Persons. Persons was named superior of the founding Jesuit mission in 1580 and remained in charge until his death in 1610. After Persons's return to the continent in 1581, he worked on all fronts for the forceful restoration of Catholicism to England. Even his most fervent advocates must acknowledge that. Houlston correctly remarks that the "Persons looked for a revitalized, resolved community suffused with Counter-Reformation ardour, in which ecclesiastical structures played only a subsidiary part. Many seculars longed for a restoration of the ancient hierarchies and privileges, where priests knew their place and people observed it. The situation was complicated by the dynamics of the mission: Jesuits were relatively free agents, responsible only to their superior; secular priests tended to be tied into the local networks of Catholic gentry" (432). I would, however, attend the last clause with its implication that Jesuits were independent of these networks. During his lifetime and in subsequent historiography, Persons was contrasted with Campion, a Jesuit version of the heroic Sydney Carton, and most associated "with the 'Black Legend' of the Jesuits: equivocation, casuistry, moral slipperiness, seduction of the susceptible, sedition, rebellion, attempts to overturn the Protestant settlement in Church and State, and a determination to subject England to Spanish and papal tyranny" (433). I must admit that I am an admirer of Persons; I too wonder, as John Bossy once asked, would the mission have survived if Persons and not Campion had been captured and executed?

Some are born to fame; others have it thrust upon them. Bit players, fringe performers can suddenly find themselves on center stage because a playwright transforms minor characters into leads. Rosencrantz and Guildenstern remained unknown outside the Shakespearean world until Tom Stoppard's play in 1966. Meredith Hanmer has found his Stoppard. After a series of relevant

articles over the past decade, Andreani has produced the first monograph on this Elizabethan clergyman.

Born in North Shropshire circa 1545 with Oxford degrees (BA 1568, MA 1572, DD 1582), Meredith Hanmer held chaplaincies and benefices during his years at Oxford. Later, circa 1581, was appointed vicar first of St. Leonard's, Shoreditch, and then of St. Mary's, Islington. As a churchman, he was at best prickly. According to Andreani, behind a respectable facade, "laid an abusive vicar, a swindler who tricked lower-rank colleagues and quarrelled incessantly with parishioners [. . .]. [He] was allegedly a thief and demonstrably someone who took advantage of his learning and position to deceive poor people" (1). His pursuit of money knew no limits. Why then is he the subject of a monograph? The author explains that "he had connections with several important figures of early modern politics and culture, from Edmund Campion to Edmund Spenser, Lord Burghley and the Earl of Ormond" (1). Famous by association? Moreover, and this is may be more important, there is an abundance of material on him. On the basis of this evidence, Andreani contends that Hanmer "deserves a place of his own in early modern Britain" (2).

At Oxford, Hanmer translated the Greek histories of early Christianity by Eusebius of Cesarea, Socrates of Constantinople, and Evagrius Scholasticus of Syria: *The auncient ecclesiasticall histories of the first six hundred yeares after Christ* (London, 1577), that remained the only work in English on the period for over a century. Hanmer's coverage of the era must, Andreani cogently argues, was not casual but motivated by contemporaneous ecclesiastical and theological concerns, specifically historical continuity and the nature of the true church. Bishop John Jewel in his "Challenge Sermon" (1559) taunted Roman Catholics. If Catholic theologians could prove that they could find in the early church specific practices and doctrines dismissed by reformers, Jewel himself would abandon Protestantism for Catholicism. Unable to pick up the gauntlet for a personal debate without risking their lives, theologians exiled in Leuven rebutted in a series of weighty tomes. This famous "battle of the books" continued through the 1560s. Hanmer explored ecclesiastical history to demonstrate that Protestant reforms had in fact removed the grime of papist accretions to restore the church's pristine beauty.

As significant as Hanmer's treatise might have been, his fame principally rests on his association with Edmund Campion. The two were at Oxford at the same time, but at different colleges. They may have met; Hanmer may have been one of the discoverers of Campion's *Rationes decem* surreptitiously distributed in the Church of St. Mary the Virgin in June 1581. The premature but fortunate release of Campion's "Letter to the Privy Council," in the autumn of 1580, a belated rejoinder to Jewel's sermon, and made the author notorious. Hanmer

refuted Campion's letter in *The great bragge and challenge of M. Champion a Jesuite* (London, 1581). In the pamphlet, he bequeathed the name by which the letter is now almost universally known, the "Brag," and introduced the biblical image of locusts as a metaphor for the Society of Jesus.

Andreani carefully compares Hanmer's rejoinder with that of William Charke, a more forward Protestant minister, quicker off the mark with his refutation. Hanmer extended his more graphic assault to the Society of Jesus itself, a novelty founded by a maimed soldier, presumptuous enough to abuse the name of Jesus, and a dedicated advocate of papal authority. Hanmer continued his attack in *The Iesuites Banner* (London, 1581). Robert Persons retaliated first with *A brief censure uppon two bookes written in answeare to M. Edmonde Campions offer of disputation* (Doway [vere London], 1581), and then *A defence of the Censure, gyven upon two bookes of William Charke and Meredith Hanmer, mynysters, whiche they wrote against M. Edmond Campian ... and against his offer of disputation* (n.p. [Rouen], 1582). To his chagrin, despite his contributions to Campion's defamation, Hanmer was overlooked as the government named participants for the staged disputations in the Tower of London, an omission that Robert Persons hammered home in his dismissal of Hanmer's pamphlets (121).

Hanmer moved to Ireland with his wife and family circa 1591 after the alleged removal and sale of brasses in his Shoreditch parish to pay for the journey. There he held more glittering posts: treasurer of Waterford Cathedral; vicar-choral of Christ Church Cathedral, Dublin; army preacher during the Nine Years War (1594–1603); and warden of the College of Blessed Mary of Youghal (1600). He died in Dublin in 1604.

Planted in Ireland to bolster the established church, Hanmer returned to historical studies. Ironically his chronicle of Ireland with its marginalization of Rome's role in the island's Catholicism, would be packaged with the histories of Campion and Edmund Spencer in Sir James Ware's edition, *The Historie of Ireland* (Dublin, 1633). Henry FitzSimon, an Irishman at Oxford in the mid-1580s, became a Catholic after disputations with the English Jesuit Thomas Derbyshire in Paris in 1587. FitzSimon entered the Jesuits in 1592 and returned to Ireland in late 1597. Lord Deputy Thomas Butler, earl of Ormond, invited FitzSimon, known as a very competent preacher, to a public disputation with Protestant clergymen in 1598. He accepted; they refused for numerous reasons. Captured in late 1599 and imprisoned in Dublin Castle, FitzSimon challenged his cousin Luke Challoner, a fellow of Trinity College, Dublin, to debate. Perhaps because his conversion resulted from a theological disputation, FitzSimon believed in the effectiveness of debate in matters of faith. Challoner declined, so FitzSimon twitted Hanmer, a fellow prisoner in Dublin

Castle for drunkenness and not for religion. (Jesuit sources are clear about this even if Andreani prefers “allegedly” [195].) After twenty years, Hanmer was offered what had eluded him in 1581: a disputation with a Jesuit. Yet, despite public goading, Hanmer resisted. The debate was not held. FitzSimon was exiled in April/May 1604; Hanmer died around the same time.

The author graciously describes Hanmer as a “middle-ranking divine of the Church of England” (1). I am not sure that he merits such a high position in the ecclesiastical hierarchy: I doubt that he would be included in any future edition of *Reformation Reputations*. Nonetheless he does merit the careful attention given him by the author if only for his historical treatises and his intersection with two Jesuits. I do however have one petty complaint: in two footnotes, I am referred to as “S.J. T.M. McCoog” (84n6; 87n24). *Sic transit gloria mundi!*

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