

this rich topic, and the political and religious uncertainty that it engendered, from nearly every conceivable angle. Tackling the religio-political angle, Kewes overturns the scholarly assumption that English Puritans favoured James VI, while Peter Lake and Michael Questier look at the succession crisis in terms of the Archpriest controversy, with the late great Patrick Collinson investigating the opinion on the succession of Richard Bancroft as bishop of London. Looking at the court, no book about the Elizabethan *fin de siècle* would be complete without an examination of the brash rebellion of the earl of Essex, and Alexandra Gajda reveals that the pretext of a ‘popish plot’ was real enough to him. Essex’s rival Robert Cecil is the subject of Alexander Courtney’s study, which forensically analyses his secret correspondence with James VI in the crucial years 1601–3 in order to uncover its role in facilitating James’s accession. Shifting from the court to the wider public, the next section includes contributions from Arnold Hunt, who examines the way in which sermons fitted into the ‘news culture’ of late Elizabethan England; from Richard Dutton, who persuasively argues that versions of *Hamlet* were ‘deeply informed by succession anxieties’ (p. 175); and from Richard A. McCabe, whose careful reading of poems by Spenser, James VI himself, and others, reveals the ‘poetics of continuity’ (p. 207). The final four essays look at ‘Britain and beyond’: Susan Doran shows how James’s Scottish birth and untrustworthy reputation repeatedly stoked the succession question in the 1590s, while also convincingly portraying the succession as a force that ‘fostered senses of national identity’ (p. 230); R. Malcolm Smuts illustrates that the issue of ‘Britain’ was an important factor in the thought of the historian Sir John Hayward; Rory Rapple throws light on the often neglected Irish role in the succession issue, focusing on the parts played by Hugh O’Neill and the earl of Essex in Tyrone’s Rebellion; and Thomas McCoog offers the continental perspective, in a fascinating and broad political examination. By concentrating on one historical topic and a relatively short time period, Doran and Kewes have produced a remarkably cohesive yet considerably varied volume: this is what most such volumes claim to achieve but all too often with unwieldy results. Each essay here, though, addresses the topic from a particular perspective, but then also speaks in some way to (at least one of) the book’s themes: historical contingency, religious/national prejudice, the interplay of high politics and public opinion. Moreover, the book is good value, with each of its contributions offering insightful and original historical/literary analysis. It is an admirable achievement and an enjoyable read.

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Imitatio Christi. The poetics of piety in early modern England. By Nandra Perry. Pp. viii + 280 incl. 3 figs. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2014. \$32 (paper). 978 0 268 03841 0

JEH (67) 2016; doi:10.1017/S0022046916000415

Perry’s ambitious book traces the religious dimensions of the literary practice of imitation in the later sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, as well as the literary implications of the religious imitation of Christ. Arguably the most popular devotional text of the late Middle Ages, the *Imitatio Christi* (usually attributed to Thomas à Kempis) remained popular through the Reformation, though often revised to

suit particular pieties. Perry asks what the imitation of Christ, variously understood in the period, might have to do with humanist ideas about imitation. Her provocative answer is that practices of imitation in the period always have a religious dimension; embedded in debates about literary *imitatio* are larger theological questions about ‘the role of natural human signs in the supernatural processes of salvation and sanctification’ (p. 4). The book focuses its inquiry into the complex issues adduced in the introduction through the works and legacy of Sir Philip Sidney.

The book begins with Thomas Rogers, who translated the *Imitatio Christi* as part of a relatively conservative Protestant project to reform late medieval works of piety. Perry argues that Rogers’s devotional translations and adaptations have much to teach us about moderate Protestant thought concerning practices of imitation. She claims that Rogers reframes his original by emphasising the devotee’s interaction with the Word in Scripture. One might offer a minor caveat: Rogers’s translation relies heavily on Sebastian Castellio’s Protestantising Latin revision of the *Imitatio Christi*; some of Rogers’s reorientations simply follow Castellio. The chapter then compares Rogers’s work on pious imitation with Sidney’s *Defence of poesy* and with Greville’s literary work, especially *Mustapha*. Both writers, she argues, reimagine the body of Christ as a community sustained by good rhetoric and good practices of interpretation, but vulnerable – keenly so in Greville – to the perils of the flesh, self-love and sin.

The next chapter addresses Elizabeth Cary’s closet drama *Mariam* and the *Life* of Elizabeth Cary, written by Cary’s daughter. For Perry, both texts present the sacrifices required of one who would imitate Christ by putting eloquence in the service of charity or properly directed desire. Perry suggests that *Mariam*’s trajectory – from outspoken wife to passive martyr – signifies a movement from a Foxean paradigm of fiery speech to a Catholic paradigm of comparative passivity; heroic self-subjugation in *Mariam* and the *Life* produce the Sidnean ideal of the speaking picture. The chapter’s close puts the manuscript of the *Life* in the context of struggles among English exiles affiliated with the Cambray convent over appropriate devotional practices for the convent’s women.

The third chapter focuses on Charles I’s notorious use of Pamela’s prayer from Sidney’s revised *Arcadia* in the *Eikon Basilike*. Perry asks why a prayer from a well-known text, one popular in the Caroline court, would be included in Charles’s book, and turns to a detailed study of the theological poetics implicit in another of the book’s prayers, taken from Lewis Bayly’s *The practice of pietie*. Perry suggests that Sidney’s and Bayly’s texts, and the prayers that they contain, invite the body to function as a site and sign of divine intervention even as they also work to chastise the flesh. They stake out a middle ground, she argues, between iconoclasm and iconophilia, one too easily obscured if we fail to take the *Eikon Basilike* on its own terms (rather than John Milton’s).

The final chapter gives Milton his due. Perry contextualises *Eikonoklastes* with the writings of Puritans such as William Prynne and Henry Burton. Milton is for Perry both a part of the Sidnean legacy and its endpoint, as he seeks to free Protestant *imitatio* from the tyrannous desires of bodies political and natural. Turning to *Paradise regained*, Perry argues that Milton’s *imitatio Christi* is finally a radically interiorised one.

If the goal of Protestant *imitatio* is, as Perry argues, ever closer approximation to the Word, there may be some slight tension with the goals of secular *imitatio* in which some distance between contemporary imitation and classical precedent often (if not always) drives literary creativity. The book occasionally posits the English Church as negotiating a *via media* between Rome and Geneva. Yet recent scholarship has challenged the notion of a *via media* in the Elizabethan and early Jacobean Churches, and historians like Ethan Shagan have argued that the rhetoric of moderation was itself a sharp polemical weapon. Still, these quibbles are minor. This is a mature book, and a richly suggestive one. It is about nothing less than post-Reformation signification practices, and as such has much to offer early modern studies.

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Calvinism and the making of the European mind. Edited by Gijbert Van den Brink and Harrio M Höpfl. (Studies in Reformed Theology, 27.) Pp. viii + 266. Leiden–Boston: Brill, 2014. €55 (paper). 978 90 04 27983 4; 1571 4799
JEH (67) 2016; doi:10.1017/S0022046916000506

The five-hundredth anniversary of the birth of John Calvin was marked by a series of conferences and associated publications, of which the present volume is the latest example. This very helpful study of the relationship between Reformed theological tradition and ‘the European mind’ gathers together material from Dutch, German, Swiss and North American contributors, many of them prominent scholars in their fields. The essays are grouped into two sections. The first four chapters consider Calvinism’s transformative spirituality, and address such themes as Calvin’s spirituality, the ecclesiological and social goals of Dutch Calvinists, German Reformed ecclesiology in the sixteenth century, and the Dutch Reformed and religious toleration. Chapters v–ix consider Calvinism and the rise of modern culture, addressing such themes as Calvinists and the study of nature, the development of the doctrines of predestination and free will, links between predestination and political liberty, Calvinist views of the current financial crisis, and Calvinist contributions to modern European economics. The quality of scholarship is very high throughout this wide-ranging collection of essays. While the volume does a good job of illustrating the variety of perspectives within the Reformed tradition, it could have done much more to define ‘the European mind’. The term requires considerable qualification for the sixteenth century and even greater qualification today. Nevertheless this is a fine collection of essays on the implications of Reformed thought, and will be welcomed by historians working in a range of fields.

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