

Book Reviews

Freddy Cristóbal Domínguez, *Radicals in Exile: English Catholic Books during the Reign of Philip II*, University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2020, pp. xii + 264, \$99.95, ISBN: 978-0-271-08601-9

The study of early modern English Catholics has seen a major transformation in the last decades. One of the factors contributing to this change is a greater awareness of their transnational dimension: their displacement confronted them with the need to interact with people, powers, and cultures in a variety of European countries, as Katy Gibbons and Liesbeth Corens, among others, have demonstrated. Furthermore, this wider geographical dimension has brought to the fore the interconnectedness of these Catholics in constant mobility across networks spanning from Britain and Ireland throughout the continent.

It is from this perspective that Freddy Cristóbal Domínguez studies the production of religious and political polemics by English Catholics in exile in Spanish Habsburg territories between the 1570s and 1598 — the latter part of the monarch's reign — in his book *Radicals in Exile: English Catholic Books during the Reign of Philip II*. The transnational character of their activities was, in Domínguez's view, the logical result of exile and the subsequent 'rejection of geographical fixity in favor of mobility' (p. 12). Thus, based on the notion that they 'did not obey modern or early modern political boundaries' (p. 13), this book sets out to analyse their textual production and to revisit some clichéd notions about those who, in the early modern period, were accused of being 'Spaniolized' because of their alleged involvement in pro-Spanish political discourses.

Building on Albert Loomie's work on English Catholic relations with the Spanish Court, Domínguez redefines the notion of 'Spanish Elizabethans' to include everyone who 'played a role in Spanish political culture, believed that Spain and England would have an entwined future, and became an abettor and promoter of the Habsburg regime' (p. 8). These approaches allow for a fuller understanding of the fluidity in the production and dissemination of English Catholics' works (both in manuscript and in print). If something becomes clear through *Radicals in Exile*, it is that the Spanish Elizabethans' writings are inextricably shaped both by their mobility and by the collective nature of their enterprise: 'These books were collaborative efforts among many authors, editors, and translators' (p. 10).

Domínguez combines his historiographical approach with a close reading and digesting of the texts of the Spanish Elizabethans and their

contemporaries, given context by examination of primary and secondary sources. Using the notion of ‘public sphere’ and ‘public opinion’, Domínguez shows that the Spanish Elizabethans’ communication strategy — shaping public opinion — was as vital as their religious and political message. He thereby situates their works in a dimension that transcends the clandestine and underground. Throughout its three parts, *Radicals in Exile* guides readers through the English exiles’ attempts to persuade Philip to support their anti-Elizabethan discourse, the royal embrace of their rhetorical strategies, as well as the English Catholics’ careful navigation of the complicated waters of Spanish politics.

The first part, ‘History in Action’, sheds light on the publication history of *De origine ac progressu schismatis Anglicani*, from Nicholas Sander’s original to the 1585 and 1586 editions — attributed to Edward Rishton in the printed edition, though actually a product of the Allen-Persons tandem, according to Domínguez — until Pedro de Ribadeneyra adapted it into Spanish under the title *Historia ecclesiastica del scisma de Inglaterra* in 1588. Noticing significant changes in tone among these versions, Domínguez makes a fine analysis of the discursive techniques and the measured ideological and propagandistic interests behind these versions, identifying a process of ‘Hispaniolization’ in connection with the political and religious context, in particular against the background of the Armada campaign.

The second part of the book, ‘The King’s Men’, focuses on the Spanish Elizabethans’ book production in the early 1590s, in the aftermath of the Armada and Elizabeth I’s 1591 proclamation against priests, coinciding with the foundation of two English colleges in Spain. Under these circumstances, the need for mutual support became more imperative, and consequently ‘Spanish Elizabethans became integral to Iberian politics’ (p. 94). Domínguez traces the symbiotic relations between English Catholic authors — whose works also publicized Philip II as a good Christian king — and Philip II — who appropriated the English situation for his own political purposes — through the increasing number of texts opposing Elizabeth I and her policies. These cover a wide range of genres and strategies: martyrdom accounts that show the exemplarity and holiness of English Catholics; pamphlets describing the royal visit to the colleges to publicize the king’s support for the English mission; polemics (e.g., the *Responsio*), funded by Philip, reacting against Elizabeth’s proclamation; historiographical projects contesting Protestant glorifications of the queen (his focus here is Herrera’s *Historia de lo sucedido en Escocia*). Domínguez’s meticulous reading of these texts goes deep into the political and religious nuances of their messages. He finds them rarely univocal, which was often the result of adaptations to suit disparate purposes, as well as of the attempt to navigate some areas of conflicting interests

between the English Catholics and the Spanish monarch (e.g.: the advocacy for reforms in Spain did not sit well with Philip II).

The third part, '(Habsburg) England and Spain reformed', brings us to the last years of Philip II's reign. For this period, Domínguez examines Robert Persons's works *A Conference about the Next Succession to the Crown of England* (published in 1594/5 under the alias 'R. Doleman') and *A Memorial for the Reformation of England* (written in 1596 and circulated only in manuscript for almost a century) as tools of political action, though with new polemical and discursive strategies. In each of these, Persons envisions England's future from a different perspective. The former, subscribing to Philip's enthusiasm for 'genealogical polemics' (p.153), argues for the Spanish line in the succession to the English Crown, although, as Domínguez adroitly argues, Persons tweaked and adapted the text of the *Conference* with different messages for Spanish and English audiences. In *A Memorial*, Persons projects the restoration of Catholicism in England in all its religious and political complexities, while attempting to avoid possible loopholes. Domínguez reads these works side by side with Spanish texts to show how the latter moulded Persons's rhetoric and his presentation of Church/state interrelations.

Domínguez's volume fills a long-standing gap in the study of English Catholics on the Continent, the study of the Spanish Elizabethans' involvement in print and manuscript culture as part of their public politicking in the Habsburg territories. He does so in a learned style, interspersing lighter expressions which help readers follow an intricate history of intrigues and machinations, and comprehend subtle political and religious disquisitions. A similar purpose seems to underlie the book's structure. Distinct 'Conclusions' are set apart for every section of the book, and for most of the chapters, in addition to a final one for the whole book. Useful as it might be, this practice can seem somewhat mechanical in repetition. Its erudition and impressive bibliography notwithstanding, the book could also have benefitted from a consideration of transcultural studies, such as Anne Cruz's essay on the *Vulnerata*.

But none of this takes away from the value of the book. *Radicals in Exile* is essential reading for those interested not only in the English Catholics' liaison with Philip II against Elizabethan political and religious strategies, but also in English Catholics' immersion in local print culture, and their high degree of adaptability: to the political agendas in times of change, to the local traditions, to the readers' expectations, and, ultimately to their mission.

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