

assumed that the converts mentioned in these sources must have been converted Jews. Jordan carefully tracks down and puts together the records of the crown's financial outlays and legal and administrative measures for these immigrant converts. This painstaking detective work provides a fascinating study that will be of great interest to historians of the crusade and of the French crown.

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*Word of God, words of men. Translations, inspirations, transmissions of the Bible in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in the Renaissance.* Edited by Joanna Pietrzak-Thébault. (Refo500 Academic Studies, 43.) Pp. 384 incl. 38 figs, 7 tables and 3 charts. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2019. €110. 978 3 525 55277 3; 2198 308

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The sixteenth century was a golden age of biblical scholarship across Europe, including in the Kingdom of Poland and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, which from 1569 formed the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. Such is the conclusion which emerges from the pages of this handsome and well illustrated volume. It contains fourteen chapters, most of them detailed studies of translations of the Bible and related problems. The ambition of the two authors of the first section was to present the wider historical context. The second and largest part of the book concentrates on questions of editing, printing, illustrating and dedicating. The third, 'Intersections', contains three articles which testify to extensive international and even inter-religious connections. It is worth paying particular attention to the chapter by Joanna Kulwicka-Kamińska on relations between literature translated for the Muslim Tatars of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and translations of the Bible. The following section, 'Vistas', might be read as 'Varia'. It contains comparisons between Lutheran, Calvinist and Catholic translations, reflections on biblical exegesis and a study of the preacher and biblical translator Konstantinas Sirvydas (Konstanty Szyrwid). The volume ends with a fifth section, 'In Verse and in Music', which consists of a single article on the melodies of Mikołaj Gomółka for Jan Kochanowski's Polish translation of the Psalter.

The book's title ambitiously announces studies on translations of the Bible in both the Kingdom of Poland and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. The partners in the evolving Polish-Lithuanian union differed in many respects. While one can agree with the editor that from the mid-sixteenth century (1543) Polish could be perceived as a 'national language' (p. 7), it needs to be underlined that in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania the Ruthenian language dominated in official documents until the end of the seventeenth century. In her preface Joanna Pietrzak-Thébault whets the reader's appetite, writing 'We shall also pay attention to Franciszek Skoryna, the Catholic translator of the Bible into the language defined as the Belarusian variant of the Old Church Slavonic, or as old Belarusian' (p. 9). Unfortunately, the book lacks close attention to Franciszek Skaryna vel Skoryna. Only in one other place is he mentioned – as the patron of the Belarusian Library and Museum in London, the location of the manuscript *Tafsir*, dating from 1725 (p. 254). I am also intrigued to learn that the language developed from Old Church Slavonic for the liturgical requirements of the

Orthodox Church in the Grand Duchy ‘thanks to the work of Skaryna, published in 1529, had become a foundation, as well as a prototype of the Belarusian literary language’ (p. 9). Which work did Skaryna publish in 1529? According to the latest findings, in 1529 Skaryna went to Poznań, where his brother Iwan, a Vilnan fur trader, had died, in an unsuccessful attempt to recover money invested in his brother’s business. Skaryna ended up spending several months in Poznań – in prison. The question is all the more important because it concerns one of the most important intellectual figures of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, whose translating, printing, editing and original writing contributed enormously to its cultural heritage. It was in 1517–19 that Skaryna (born before 1490 in Polatsk, died after 1540 in Prague) published in the Bohemian capital his translations into the Ruthenian (old Belarusian) language of the Psalter and twenty-two books of the Bible, for which he provided an introduction and commentary. He later moved to Vilna (Vilnius) where he established the first printing press in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. Here he published his *Little travel book* around 1522 and his last book – *The Apostle* – in March 1525. So the absence in such a collection of a chapter – or even an extended paragraph – devoted to Skaryna is astonishing. Nevertheless, the editor has brought together leading researchers on the Bible in sixteenth-century Poland-Lithuania, who have contributed interesting detailed findings to international scholarship.

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*Nicodemism and the English Calvin, 1544–1584*. By Kenneth J. Woo. (Church History and Religious Culture, 78.) Pp. xiv + 251 incl. 2 ills. Leiden–Boston: Brill, 2019. €116. 978 90 04 40838 8

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Kenneth Woo displays fine historical and theological skills here, focusing on John Calvin’s *Quatre Sermons de M. Jehan Calvin traictans des matières fort utile pour nostre temps, avec briefve exposition du Pseaume lxxxvii* (Geneva: Robert Estienne, 1552) – their purposes for Calvin and the way in which five separate English translations were appropriated by their translators to express their own convictions in sixteenth-century English contexts. Woo convincingly shows how Calvin’s anti-Nicodemite polemic ‘could be adapted for completely different audiences’ (p. 3). Their translations of Calvin in their environments had ‘little to do with Nicodemism’ (p. 4).

Calvin published these sermons to oppose the behaviour of French evangelicals whom he called ‘Nicodemites’, imitators of the biblical Nicodemus, who came to Jesus ‘by night’ (John iii). These French Protestants sought to hide their personal convictions by participating in the Roman mass to avoid being apprehended and punished. Woo offers a close contextual analysis of Calvin’s work, with its distinctive content and form, as well as its reception history. In the only sermons that Calvin personally prepared for publication, Woo shows that Calvin’s agenda went beyond Nicodemism itself and that he had a variety of intentions with his work which targeted multiple groups simultaneously (pp. 16–17).