

and also reveal the work of deacons in education—university colleges and schools—and as chaplains and church administrators. The move into the nineteenth century raises more questions regarding shortage of clergy, particularly connected with the need to cater for lower social classes, possibly by the controversial proposal of lowering educational standards required of deacons. Tensions also emerged between deacons and lay readers. The idea that deacons are important intermediaries between the clergy and the laity is a significant theme throughout. Debates about just what deacons could and could not do—regarding baptism, communion, marriage and funerals—have been common ever since the sixteenth century. Fortunately, their place in missionary activity has never really been questioned, hence they have been more widely accepted in the New World than in the old.

The latter part of the work is based heavily—perhaps too theoretically as we become immersed in the complexities of the debate—on discussing key works and reports given to General Synod, notably Mary Tanner's *Deacons in the Ministry* (1988), *Diakonia* by John Collins (1990), *For Such a Time as This* (2001), and *The Mission and Ministry of the Whole Church* (2007). Also important, although not flagged as much as it might have been given the ecumenical aspects of debate over the diaconate, is the work of Deacon Christine Hall together with the Anglo-Nordic Diaconal Research Project that produced two valuable collections of essays entitled *The Ministry of the Deacon* at the turn of the last century. The significance of Vatican II, however, in freeing thinking about the subject is fully acknowledged. The book is completed with a careful exposition of the arguments for and against 'distinctive' deacons, openly acknowledging that this might entail accepting the label of an 'inferior' ministry. Francis Young stands clearly on the side of his deacons and is to be congratulated for producing such a handy, concise account of this neglected branch of the ministry—a branch that many think the Church has yet fully to exploit.

*University of Kent*

Andrew Foster

Tadhg Ó hAnnracháin, *Catholic Europe 1592-1648. Centre and Peripheries*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015, pp. 270, £60, ISBN: 9780199272723

Recent scholarship stresses the local idiosyncrasies of early modern Catholicism, which developed very different characteristics in different

contexts. Tadhg Ó hAnnracháin's book shows clearly how these traditional and often very self-assured Catholicisms across Europe collided with the Tridentine vision of the faith the Papacy sought to establish as the new orthodoxy in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. The book's central aim is the analysis and comparison of the dynamics between the Roman centre and the diverse Catholic communities on its peripheries. It succeeds spectacularly not only in showing the discrepancies between the Tridentine ideal and the situation in these localities but also how contingent on local circumstances the success of the reforming programme was.

The period of study was one in which several factors combined to revive and embolden the drive for reform. When Clement VIII was elected in 1592, the memory of the 'compromises, inadequacies, and provisionality' of Trent had grown faint and its decrees had developed an almost 'mythical' status (p.3). Furthermore, many previous revisions to the structures of the church and the institutions and orders that had been founded to drive renewal had matured to a point where they could finally operate efficiently. By the late sixteenth century, the Church finally felt poised to implement the previous generation's plan for renewal.

The book examines the progress of this endeavour in six chapters. Substantial introductory and concluding chapters frame four that explore seven peripheral contexts. The second chapter focusses on the 'Western Margins' of Ireland, Britain and the Netherlands while the sizeable third chapter provides an illuminating comparison of the East-Central European periphery of the Poland-Lithuanian Commonwealth, the Habsburg's Austrian Hereditary Lands, the Czech Crownlands and the kingdom of Hungary. This is followed by a chapter examining the Vatican's attempts at organizing military resistance to the Ottomans and a last thematic chapter that provides many fascinating original insights into the missionizing project in the Northern Balkans.

The contexts in which reformers began to operate were characterized by significantly different power relations. In Ireland, Britain and the Netherlands, Catholics faced hostile Protestant governments, while in Poland, Austria, or Bohemia, even zealous Catholic rulers initially struggled to implement Catholic homogeneity in their multi-confessional realms. The situation in the Ottoman controlled parts of Hungary and the northern Balkans, obviously, necessitated adjustment to the realities of Muslim rule.

The multifarious frictions arising from the often unconcealed opposition of local Catholic institutions and communities and the varying degrees of success of certain missionary approaches and orders are especially interesting. In England, the Jesuits became a major force while their impact was rather marginal in Ireland, where the Franciscans retained a strong influence, or the Netherlands, where the

Vicars Apostolic in charge of the *Missio Hollandica* kept the Society at bay. In Poland, the Catholic nobility were highly suspicious of the Jesuits and instead promoted the mendicant orders (p.86), while the Discalced Carmelites had such a hard time gaining a foothold that the Capuchins were not established until the late seventeenth century (p.93f.). In the Balkans, the Bosnian Franciscans proved positively hostile to Jesuit interlopers and agitated against them both at the local level and by denouncing them to the Ottoman authorities. The laity, too, could be rather suspicious of newcomers. In a memorable episode, Jesuits encountered a wary Serbian Catholic community who suspected that the missionaries were in fact Protestants attempting to infuse the parish with heresy. On the other hand, encounters with Protestants and Muslims were not necessarily hostile. When Ottoman authorities in the Hungarian border regions learned of a Jesuit father's skills in casting out demons, they requested him to exorcise two Turks (p.186). Similarly surprising was the willingness among Slavonian Protestant villagers to convert as long as they were given an educated priest (p.193).

Another important insight provided in chapters four and five is that the Vatican's enthusiasm for missionary work and Tridentine (re-) education remained lukewarm when compared to the ample diplomatic and financial resources invested in the military mobilization against the enemies of the faith. Papal diplomats developed contacts as far as Ukraine, Moscow and Persia to destabilize Ottoman rule, tried to entice Catholic potentates to join or intensify the fight against the Turks and mediated disputes between the parties. Ultimately, however, papal agitation was only effective when it aligned with political interests. After the Habsburg-Ottoman Peace of Zsitvatorök of 1606, which Ó hAnnracháin convincingly places alongside the Edict of Nantes or the Peace of Westphalia for its long-term regional effects, the Vatican's attempts at anti-Ottoman campaigning fell on deaf ears. Compared to the military struggle, the less heroic, long-term missionizing project received rather cursory attention. Apart from limited financial subsidies, the Catholic centre was often unaware of, or ignored, the specific demands on the periphery, and the personnel chosen for missionary work were rarely the ablest or best educated men available.

Although the narrative is dominated by men, Ó hAnnracháin tries to include the experiences of women. These, too, were strongly contingent on contexts, but by and large, female Catholics seem to have occupied more prominent roles in peripheral Catholicism than in its more central regions. The Dutch *kloppen*, lay women who fulfilled especially crucial catechetical duties in the underground church, are quite well known, but Ó hAnnracháin points to other aspects of Catholic devotion in which women wielded influence, for example in their patronage of the Cult of the Infant of Prague.

In its entirety, the book provides a meticulous exposition of the extremely variegated dynamics that the program of Catholic renewal developed in each of these contexts. In how far this need for adaptation was a defining feature of the periphery is less clear – Catholic reformers in the Holy Roman Empire, for example, were similarly forced to modify their tactics in different territories – but Ó hAnnracháin’s comparative view from the margins brings the need for negotiation and compromise, and the frequent clashes between the traditional and the post-Tridentine phenotypes of the faith, into especially sharp focus.

*University of Birmingham*

Nikolas Funke

Alban Hood, *From Repatriation to Revival: Continuity and Change in the English Benedictine Congregation, 1795-1850*, Farnborough: St Michaels Abbey Press, 2015, pp. 270, £24.99, ISBN: 9780907077664

The Early Modern Papacy had a habit of being ‘experimental’ when it came to the question of England. It is now widely accepted amongst the canon of British Catholic historiography that the Papal-Habsburg policies from *Regnans in Excelsis* (1570) to the *Pax Hispanica* (1603) did little to assist ‘native’ Catholics in establishing tolerance in the broad ecclesial framework that was the Elizabethan Settlement. The great English Catholic Diaspora soon built colleges and networks that would ensure the survival of the English Catholic secular priest throughout the hardest times for beleaguered English Catholic communities. The religious orders could fall back on their European networks in maintaining continuity and could appeal to a clientage networks that were often already well established. Several plans for the conversion of England, both initiatives of the Papacy and parts of the clergy, came and went. By the seventeenth century, the bull *Plantata* (1633) provided the English Benedictine Congregation (EBC) with formal re-foundation, corporate and financial autonomy and, subject to the re-conversion of England, the cathedral priories it had possessed before the Reformation.

Dom Alban Hood is a monk of the monastic community of St Edmund, now in Douai Abbey in Upper Woolhampton. He is Prior of the monastery as well as Choir Master, Novice Master, Vocations Director and the co-editor of *The Douai Magazine*. Hood’s *From Repatriation to Revival* is a work of considerable scholarship and great significance. The work covers a period of the EBC’s history which has long been neglected, a period of perceived decline ‘out of time, out of place’ where monastic communities sat between a part-fanciful understanding of the EBC’s medieval antecedents (partly encouraged