

early printing presses. Each of the three main strands of the Franciscan tradition, the Observants, the Capuchins and the Conventuals, is well represented.

ST EDMUND'S COLLEGE,
CAMBRIDGE

MICHAEL ROBSON

Magic, science, and religion in early modern Europe. By Mark A. Waddell. (New Approaches in the History of Science and Medicine.) Pp. x + 220 incl. 36 figs. Cambridge–New York: Cambridge University Press, 2021. £19.99 (paper). 978 1 108 44165 0

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To write an accessible and scholarly overview of religion, science and magic in early modern Europe is a daunting project. It involves two central tasks: to introduce readers to a collection of beliefs that are deeply unfamiliar and therefore require an effort of imagination to grasp; and to synthesise the various currents of pre-modern thought into a readable text without sacrificing too much nuance in the process. Mark A. Waddell succeeds admirably in the first task. He demonstrates persuasively that many of the preoccupations of early modern divines, natural philosophers and magicians involved recurring human questions, several of which are still pertinent today. His account of a world shaped by unseen forces, and the various attempts to understand and harness these forces, is presented with a vivid awareness of the common experience of early modern people and ourselves. He is, perhaps, less successful in the second task. Some of the discussion in the book—for instance, on the experimental approach to the supernatural developed by the English philosopher and churchman Joseph Glanvill—would gain depth from reference to more recent scholarship. The account of witchcraft sails close to some popular but problematic ideas about the subject: that venerable village healers and midwives were commonly accused of the crime, for example. None the less, this book will provide readers with a first step into a complex and rather beautiful world of lost ideas.

UNIVERSITY OF WORCESTER

DARREN OLDRIDGE

Public opinion in early modern Scotland, c.1560–1707. By Karin Bowie. (Cambridge Studies in Early Modern British History.) Pp. viii + 294. Cambridge–New York: Cambridge University Press, 2020. £75. 978 1 108 84347 8

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Fifteen years ago, Karin Bowie published an important book entitled *Scottish public opinion and the Anglo-Scottish union, 1699–1707*. Bowie's second book proposes to show how 'public opinion' emerged across the century-and-a-half preceding the Union. So what is 'public opinion'? Bowie quotes the introduction to a 2018 edited collection, which defines public opinion as 'the formation, communication, and measurement of citizens' attitudes toward public affairs' (p. 2). A significant further elaboration comes from Bowie's previous book, where she described public opinion as the 'constructed artefacts of a political process' (p. 3). As Bowie notes, the business of attempting to 'measure' opinion is almost impossible

without modern devices such as polling. Unlike elected representatives in modern democracies, the rulers of early modern societies were often disinclined to consult what Bowie calls the 'governed people' and would have questioned whether doing so was valid. This raises the question of who seeks to stake a claim to represent 'public opinion' at any given time and what motivates them to do so.

The first four chapters cover the century or so before 1689 and are each structured around a different artefact: protestations, petitions, oaths and a rather nebulous form, 'public communications'. The latter is described as material intended to make 'persuasive arguments' (p. 183), including circular letters, sermons and Gaelic poetry. Much of the material discussed in the first four chapters is not unknown to historians. The print output associated with the Reformation crisis and the Marian civil wars is a good example; a rich scholarship that is perhaps not as fully represented here as it might have been (see the work of Patricia Bawcutt, Amy Blakeway, Theo van Heijnsbergen, Steven May and Allan Bryson, Mark Loughlin, and Roger Mason's work on Buchanan) has revealed the effervescent and exciting, if also vituperative and divisive, nature of public debate in post-Reformation Scotland.

A key figure not discussed in the book is Robert Sempill, who wrote in support of the 'king's party' headed, until his assassination in 1570, by the queen's half-brother, James Stewart, earl of Moray. The latter was almost certainly Sempill's patron. The relevant chapter briefly discusses a fascinating female *persona* of self-proclaimed humble origins, who was deployed by a male author (Sempill) to voice the grievances of the people. Other scholars have noted the juxtaposition with a real woman, Queen Mary, who was subjected to searing public attacks, as were certain male politicians like William Maitland of Lethington. Libelling of this kind might be considered, if not an entirely novel, then at least a distinctive feature of the politics of this period. In what ways was 'public opinion' being constructed in gendered terms and did this change over time? Some of Sempill's work is known only because William Cecil kept the copy sent to him from Edinburgh by his agents. Did interventions by Elizabeth I's government into Scottish politics and the use of English presses by Scottish political figures have any bearing on the nature of public debate?

Like the later Presbyterian writers surveyed in the book, Sempill was a polemicist trying to construct a contested opinion as the will of the nation. This is key to what might be regarded as the climacteric of the book: the clause in the 1689 Claim of Right that deemed 'prelacy' to be 'contrary to the inclinations of the generality of the people'. The final two chapters endeavour to show that it was the events of 1689 that enabled 'national opinion' to become 'an intrinsic part of Scottish political culture' (p. 238). The emphasis in the conclusion is on the extent to which 'the language and standing of public opinion' had changed by 1707 (p. 239). Whereas earlier generations had created characters as abstract representations of public opinion, post-Revolution politicians and writers 'made claims about the actual sentiments of the nation and inclinations of the people' (p. 240).

Historians of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries would aver that politicians, including kings, were well aware of, and concerned about, the opinions of the people long before 1689. Sixteenth-century historians know the view of the proposed alliance between Mary Stewart and Edward VI of England given by a Scottish statesman and recalled some years later by an English ambassador: 'Our people do not like of it ... And though the whole nobility of the realm would

consent, yet our common people, and the stones in the street, would rise and rebel against it.' An anonymous journal from the reign of James VI, written by an Edinburgh inhabitant sympathetic to the Presbyterian position, is riddled with references to the 'murmuringis' of 'the pepill'. In my own attempt to consider Covenanter ambivalence about the political role of 'the people', I quoted words purported to have been spoken before parliament in 1641 by Scotland's principal statesman, Archibald Campbell, marquis of Argyll: 'I would speake somewhat, what I am backed on to speake by the Commonalty.' What I am about to say matters, asserts Argyll, because I am claiming to voice the opinions of the people.

It is no coincidence that two of these three examples come from Presbyterians. Over the decades leading up to the 1637 Prayer Book crisis, Presbyterians mastered creative strategies for constructing their partisan view of the world in universalist rhetoric. When the Covenanters transitioned from an oppositional movement into a legitimate government, however, creative engagement of the people in politics was circumscribed. Covenanter government now claimed an exclusive right to speak for the nation. Petitions and protestations became associated in the later 1640s with the splintering of opinion as fissures opened up over how to interpret the National Covenant under circumstances nobody had even imagined a decade earlier. The destruction of the Covenanter regime by the English New Model Army and the subsequent restoration of what became a highly authoritarian monarchic regime further curtailed expressions of opinion. As Clare Jackson's work has shown, artefacts of opinion not sanctioned by the government were deliberately bracketed with the excesses of Covenanter extremists. It is telling that protestations, petitions and 'persuasive publications' in the four decades from the Cromwellian invasion to the 1689 Revolution together take up comparatively little of the analysis. Oaths get more attention. They were used after 1660 as part of a wider attempt to control public opinion and, while not entirely successful, their deployment further suggests disruptions to its emergence across the seventeenth century.

After 1689 a revolutionary regime with a fragile grip on power, attempting to govern a bitterly divided polity while under threat, on one side, from people who wanted to restore the Covenant and, on the other, from those who continued to believe that James VII & II was the legitimate king of Britain, sought to reclaim modes of communication through which they could assert that they alone expressed the 'inclinations of the people'. This book shows that 'public opinion' was more than 'Presbyterian opinion writ large', but it is clear that the writings and doings of Presbyterians contributed something very distinctive to Scottish public culture before the Union.

UNIVERSITY OF YORK

LAURA A. M. STEWART

Synopsis purioris theologiae/Synopsis of a purer theology. Latin text and English translation, III: Disputations 43–52. Edited by Harm Goris (trans. Riemer A. Faber). (Studies in Medieval and Reformation Traditions, 222; Texts and Sources, 9.) Pp. xiv + 716. Leiden–Boston: Brill, 2020. €126. 978 90 32996 6; 1573 4188 JEH (73) 2022; doi:10.1017/S002204692200015X

What does it mean both to study and do theology within the contours of the Reformed tradition? To speak in a Reformed voice? For many it means moving