

*The Works of Walter Quin: An Irishman at the Stuart Courts.* John Flood, ed. Literature of Early Modern Ireland. Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2014. 292 pp. €55.

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In this substantial and accessible new edition in the Literature of Early Modern Ireland series at Four Courts Press, John Flood introduces us to the fascinating but hitherto barely known figure of Walter Quin (ca. 1575–1640). Quin turns out to be a writer of great contrasts and connections: a young Dubliner who traveled across Europe to study at the Jesuit university in Ingolstadt in the early 1590s, but who would soon embed himself into that bastion of Calvinism, St. Andrews University in Scotland; an obscure Irishman whose poetry about the English succession caught the eye of King James VI of Scotland and caused him to be appointed tutor to Prince Henry; and a dubious newcomer to Scotland and unwary critic of the Cecils who would nonetheless remain comfortably in the pay of the Stuart kings for his lifetime.

As a well-published Irish author, Quin is relatively unusual. There is Richard Stanihurst, of course, translator of part of the *Aeneid* (1582), and Richard Nugent, whose sonnet sequence *Cynthia* was printed in 1604. But Quin's work is more diverse and distinct, strongly allied to the cause of the Stuart kings as it is. His very Irishness can be subjugated to declarations of British, or even English, mutuality in his writings: his very first publication, a Latin poem to a Catholic bishop for a university collection at Ingolstadt, declares him to be an "Englishman" ("Angli"), and his later publications show him identifying with the "British." (This also suggests that translating Quin's "cornamusa" as "bagpipe" in the Italian comic poem for *Coryats Crudities* [1611], while appealing, may be off the mark.) Writing in English, Latin, Italian, and French, his work was published in print and manuscript in Scotland, London, and on the Continent. That wide corpus, ably collected here by Flood, encompasses panegyric, historical, and political writing, as well as a host of figural poetry, usually dedicated to the Stuart kings and princes. He also wrote an elegy on the death of Prince Henry, a "nuptial song" on the marriage of Prince Charles and Henrietta Maria, and a biographical compilation about Henrietta Maria's father, Henri IV.

Despite his prolific work rate and royal links, the historical record does not leave enough for us to identify the author with any certainty. Title pages, college registers, and the odd letter or intelligence report are the main sources for his life. More useful for teasing out Quin's complex identity, perhaps, is the evidence of his social and literary network: that concatenation of writers and courtiers to whom he was bound through commendatory poems (in both directions) and collaborative labors. These include Thomas Coryat, Joshua Sylvester, William Alexander, John Stradling, John Dunbar, and Thomas Herbert, and at another remove, Ben Jonson, William Drummond, and even Stanihurst. If his choices of genre can look obscure and unpromising to modern eyes, they attest to Quin's imbrication in the literary and political world of the Stuart courts. Pattern poetry — anagrams and acrostics — seem to have been a particular love, and Quin's political commitments are expressed as confidently through reworkings of what

he calls “the happy augury of [James’s] name” as they are through descriptions of royal virtues. If the conceits and metaphors are absolutely standard, the interest of collections such as the *Anagrammata* (1595) or *Sertum Poeticum* (1600) lies in their multilingual mechanisms of amplification and variation.

The explicatory notes to the edition are short but useful, a starting point more than a programmatic apparatus, which is all to the good. Defenses of the modernized spelling and provision of English translations are well made, but the inconsistent treatment of paratexts left me wanting more. Quin seems so much a writer of the paratextual and the multitextual, as when he compiles a florilegium modeled on the *Politicorum sive Civilis Doctrinae* (1589) of Justus Lipsius, or obliquely challenges the *Conference about the next succession to the crowne of England* (1594/95). As Flood’s subtitle implies, Quin’s Irishness is particularly noteworthy: the edition as a whole makes a strong case for a reevaluation of the language and politics of national identity among the early modern Irish diasporic community and will be welcomed by scholars of both early modern Ireland and Stuart literary culture.

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