New Blackfriars

DOI:10.1111/nbfr.12031

Reviews

THE SIXTH SCOTTISH UNIVERSITY: THE SCOTS COLLEGES ABROAD 1575 TO 1799 by Tom McInally, History of Science and Medicine Library 24, Scientific and Learned Cultures and Their Institutions 3, *Brill*, Leiden and Boston, 2012, pp xii + 226, £75.00 hbk

By the last decade of the sixteenth century there were five universities in Scotland: three papal foundations, St Andrews (1413, founded by the Antipope Benedict XIII); Glasgow (1451, by Nicholas V, who ended the schism); King's College Aberdeen (1495, by Alexander VI *aka* Rodrigo Borgia); and two post-Reformation foundations, Edinburgh (1583, by King James VI at the request of the town council) and Marischal College Aberdeen (1593, by George Keith, 5th Earl Marischal of Scotland, allegedly to counteract lingering Catholic sympathies at King's). (The two Aberdeen colleges merged in 1860.) By the late sixteenth century, obviously, it was impossible for known Catholics to attend any of these institutions. As the title of his book indicates, Tom McInally, Honorary Fellow at the Research Institute for Irish and Scottish Studies, University of Aberdeen, makes the original and even rather audacious claim that the colleges abroad for Scots Catholics may be regarded as in effect a sixth university.

Individual colleges have been studied: Valladolid by Maurice Taylor (1971); Rome in the quadricentennial volume edited by Raymond McCluskey (2000); and Paris by Brian M. Halloran (2003); while Mark Dilworth, the last Abbot of Fort Augustus as it turned out, researched the Scottish monasteries in Germany (*The Scots in Franconia,* 1974). Dr McInally estimates that about two thousand students passed through the colleges (Douai and Madrid as well as the three just mentioned) during the two centuries between the proscription of Catholicism and the relaxation of the penal laws. While a substantial minority was destined for ordination there were always some alumni who returned home to manage their family estates or even to follow other careers, with due discretion, since the anti-Catholic laws in Scotland were never so harshly observed as in England. Many others simply settled abroad, often in seaports with longstanding commercial links with Scotland.

Dr McInally describes the kind of education provided in the Catholic colleges, sketching the daily life of the students, summarizing the curricula, and placing the ethos in the context of the Catholic Enlightenment (chapter 3). He offers an analysis of the background and family connections of the students (chapter 4). He recapitulates the little we know about the activities of the clergy who returned as missionaries to Scotland (chapter 5).

There is an odd account of the only known Dominican missionary in the North East Lowlands. While Dr McInally cites *The Innes Review*, particularly Margaret Sanderson's 'Catholic Recusancy in Scotland in the sixteenth century' (volume 21, 1970), an important work, he never mentions 'Dominicans and Scotland in the Seventeenth Century' (volume 23, 1972), in which Anthony Ross OP asks whether Patrick Primrose OP (1614–71) might have belonged to the Primrose/Rosebery family, a fact documented by myself in 'Patrick Primrose: A Dominican in Seventeenth-century Scotland' (*New Blackfriars* September 2002).

© 2013 The Author. New Blackfriars © 2013 The Dominican Council. Published by John Wiley & Sons Ltd. 2013, 9600 Garsington Road, Oxford OX4 2DQ, UK, and 350 Main Street, Malden MA 02148, USA

https://doi.org/10.1111/nbfr.12031_1 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Christened Patrick he remained so in the Order, *pace* McInally (p. 154 and p. 190). According to McInally, he was stirred into recruiting young Scots to join the Order by his friend the secular priest 'William Ballentine of Elgin' (p. 43 and p. 187). Ballentine, however, as the Marchioness of Huntly's domestic chaplain, though he received a Catholic funeral in the already ruinous cathedral at Elgin, abandoned since 1560, was born in North Berwick, son of the local minister. As regards Primrose, the sheriff of Aberdeen was instructed by the Privy Council on 4 March 1672 to demolish 'the superstitious monument erected upon the grave of the deceast Mr Patrick Primrose', located in the pre-Reformation cemetery a few miles west of Huntly.

Some of the students who became priests never returned home but had successful ecclesiastical careers on the Continent. McInally does not turn up many completely forgotten high flyers; but by placing the most remarkable of the already well-known graduates in the context of their exile he casts fresh light on their achievements. George Strachan (c1572–c1640), a pioneering orientalist, and Alexander Geddes (1737–1802), among the earliest biblical critics, are of course not so famous as the architects James Smith (c1645–1731), responsible for the Kirk of the Canongate, Edinburgh, still quite a Catholic-looking church, and the even more prolific James Gibbs (1682–1754), creator of St Martin-in-the-Fields and the Radcliffe Camera, along with much more — how many admirers of these buildings are aware that the architects were Scots Catholics educated abroad? The most notable of the Scots Benedictines was the physicist Andreas Gordon (1712–1751), largely forgotten as McInally says, yet who made a 'substantial and groundbreaking' contribution to the science of electricity. Nor was it only that the colleges collectively produced a surprisingly large number of remarkable men, given their status as exiles and origins in a repressed and impoverished minority, they could also prove hospitable on occasion to a non-Catholic scholar, at least if he had no religious beliefs of his own: David Hume worked at the Scots College in Paris from 1763 to 1765, studying the papers of King James VII/II for the sixth volume of *The History of England* (but then the *Treatise* was written during the years in the 1730s that he frequented the Jesuit library at La Flèche).

In short, Dr McInally offers a persuasive account of how much the exiled students in the Scots Catholic colleges, for all their marginality to their native country, contributed to the wider history of European culture.

FERGUS KERR OP

DIVINE ILLUMINATION: THE HISTORY AND FUTURE OF AUGUSTINE'S THEORY OF KNOWLEDGE by Lydia Schumacher, *Wiley-Blackwell*, Oxford, 2011, pp xiii + 250, £75, hbk

This book is an original contribution to the debate on the meaning and role of divine illumination in Augustine's thought and in the later tradition. It has a clear narrative involving three 'discoveries': (i) that Augustine provided an intrinsicist rather than extrinsicist account of divine illumination (chapter 1); (ii) that Bonaventure was not the great medieval exponent of Augustine that historians have thought him to be (chapter 4), for that honour falls to Aquinas (chapter 5); and (iii) that the later Franciscan (Scotus *et al.*) rejection of Bonaventure's teaching on divine illumination did not mark a journey into the Aristotelian fold, but lay the basis for the modern distinction between reason and faith as 'mutually exclusive extremes' (chapter 6). In chapter 3, Schumacher shows how originating with Alexander of Hales, the Franciscan tradition was influenced by Avicenna's metaphysics, which possesses a notion of abstraction quite distinct from that of Aristotle and Thomas, the latter being 'more compatible' with Augustine's view of

© 2013 The Author
New Blackfriars © 2013 The Dominican Council
https://doi.org/10.1111/nbfr.12031_1 Published online by Cambridge University Press