

who followed Zwingli to provide valuable insight into the life of the Reformed Church in sixteenth-century Zurich.

TRINITY COLLEGE,
DUBLIN

GRAEME MURDOCK

Women during the English reformations. Renegotiating gender and religious identity. Edited by Julie A. Chappell and Kaley A. Kramer. Pp. ix + 200. New York–Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014. £57.50. 978 1 137 47473 5
JEH (67) 2016; doi:10.1017/S0022046915001840

The religious reformations in England, as Julie Chappell argues in the introduction to this volume, ‘required individual and collective renegotiation of both gender and religious identities for women’. As women’s options were ‘dissolving’ (like the monasteries), women sought to ‘erase, rewrite, or reimagine their religious and gender identity [*sic*]’ (p. 4). Thus, Chappell positions this collection as contributing to scholarship exploring the ways by which early-modern women sought to do this. Most of the volume’s essays seek, with varying success, to do this: Janice Liedl’s piece on Margaret Pole considers the relationship between women’s traditional ability to claim to distance themselves from public life and the Henrician redefinition of treason; Rebecca Giselsbrech’s discussion of correspondence between English women and Heinrich Bullinger provides insight into both their and his attitudes towards women as ‘partners in reshaping a “true” Christian community’ (p. 60); contributing to scholarship regarding post-Reformation female recusancy, Lisa McClain’s essay provides an interesting view of Elizabeth Cary’s movement from prioritising ‘gendered concerns’ to ‘openly privileg[ing] Catholicism over gender’ (p. 73); in a fascinating discussion, Amanda Capern establishes the apocalyptic, Puritan author Eleanor Davies as an early, revolutionary example of a woman’s assertion of her religio-political voice; and Sharon Arnould’s sensitive study considers the Protestant Elizabeth Delaval’s conflation of her lost potential for happiness as a woman and her failure to honour her religious obligation to (women’s) submission and obedience. Other pieces in the volume are, however, less directed towards the volume’s purpose: for example, Valerie Schutte makes an interesting argument for the value of considering royal women’s influence through book dedications, but it is unclear whether this contributes to the problem set by Chappell; while excellent, William Robison’s historical look at film portrayals of Tudor royal women (in which he argues that they fail to engage with those women’s religious priorities) does not address this volume’s purpose; and finally, the context-heavy chapter by Kramer, which seeks to position Sophia Lee’s *The recess* (1783–5) as an Enlightenment-period reminder of English of its Catholic past – a ‘nexus’ between historiography and hagiography – is difficult to comprehend, particularly as a part of this collection. As a whole, the volume’s ambitious purpose serves to undermine essays that rarely fully realise it. This inherent instability (a collision between content and purpose) is evident from the volume’s introduction, in which, while ironically seeking to provide a view into what should be read as early modern women’s agency – their own self-refashioning – Chappell robs

some important early modern women of exactly that agency through a terrible oversimplification of their particular histories: for example, according to Chappell, both Lady Jane Grey (whose execution is also misdated in ch. iii) and Mary Queen of Scots were killed because of their faiths and bloodlines (p. 6), and Margaret Clitherow was executed for recusancy (p. 3). *Women during the English reformations*, therefore, while containing some fascinating insights piece-to-piece, could have benefited from both a stronger editorial eye and a more modestly-stated purpose, in better conformity to the volume's actual substance.

HENDERSON STATE UNIVERSITY,
 ARKADELPHIA,
 ARKANSAS

MEGAN L. HICKERSON

Christianities in the early modern Celtic world. Edited by Tadhg Ó hAnnracháin and Robert Armstrong. Pp. xiii + 254. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014. £60. 978 1 137 30634 0
 JEH (67) 2016; doi:10.1017/S0022046915002286

This volume is the second to be produced by the fine Insular Christianities project run by the two editors and funded by the Irish Research Council. One of the key issues raised by that project and addressed directly by many of the essays in this book, and implicitly by all of them, is the consideration of whether or not it is possible to regard the Christianities of the early modern Celtic world as distinctive. The editors are quick to acknowledge that the term 'Celtic' carries considerable baggage, especially when associated with 'Christianity' and the manner in which that double name has been employed in recent years. In his introduction Tadhg Ó hAnnracháin is at pains to distance the enterprise from the modern, romantic vision of Celtic Christianity. He concentrates instead upon those factors that might link communities in Ireland, Wales, Cornwall and Gaelic-speaking Scotland and highlights the experiences that they shared as well as linguistic and geographical similarities and connections. He has placed the Christianities of the title firmly within an understanding of negotiated and permeable religious identities that were not confined to the early modern Celtic world. The changes during the three centuries prior to 1800 are examined because that period witnessed substantial upheavals in religion and politics. The Celtic world and its Anglophone neighbours moved from the position in 1500 when they shared a common Church located within multiple kingdoms and political units to the existence at the start of the nineteenth century of the centralised political unit of the United Kingdom that was host to a variety of Churches and religious allegiances. As the centre of gravity had shifted away from language zones, the Anglicisation of constitutional, administrative and legal institutions had been completed. Within these early modern centuries, rather than being a restricted study of the 'Church', the volume's examination of the diversity of the religious landscape has a wide-reaching significance for many aspects of British, Irish and European history.

The book modifies many of the easy assumptions that have been made about this complex period, often arising from particular national histories and perspectives.