England was much like the rest of England can become a bit wearing over some 230 pages of closely written, narrow-margined text.

That is not to say that there is not much of interest here. The detailed account of Alessandro Gavazzi's lecture tours (pp. 114-119), for example, or the success of the Catholic-Conservative political alliance in an 1861 by-election in normally Liberal Tynemouth are both illuminating. The tensions and shifting alliances between Anglicans and Dissenters, who responded in different ways in different parts of the region to different manifestations of anti-Catholic feeling, are well treated. Some of the newspapers quoted had a particularly good turn of phrase, even by the very high standards of the era: the *Shields Gazette*'s description of Puseyites being 'startled from their medieval dream by the bellow of a real Vatican bull' (p. 38) is particularly choice. The (unindexed) cheering of Mazzini by Tyneside Protestants is suggestive, and should have been linked to relatively recent scholarship on the Italian patriot, just as the discussion of Garibaldi would have been enhanced by knowledge of Lucy Riall's work. Instead this is very much local history, and will be of interest largely to those concerned with the politics and religion of the northeast, or to those seeking easy examples of regional anti-popery. There is nothing wrong with this, but local studies are most useful when properly embedded in a wider context. This is just about achieved at the level of England, but not beyond. Nor has Bush been well-served by his publisher. The book is marred by careless editing, which leaves intact such baffling phrase as 'The political campaign against the Maynooth Grant was evidence of the way in which Catholic concessions to the "Protestant Constitution" could cause a sustained anti-Catholic backlash' (p. 71), or the criticism of another scholar, who was writing about Manchester, for not noticing similar events in 'other Tyneside towns' (p. 76). There are numerous repetitions. Beyond correcting Cooter, it adds little to our understanding of mid-Victorian religion or religious prejudice. *"Papists" and Prejudice* is a worthy and interesting, but not particularly revealing, example of high quality local history.

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Ciaran O'Neill, *Catholics of Consequence: Transnational Education, Social Mobility and the Irish Catholic Elite 1850-1900*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014, pp. xi + 248, £65.00, ISBN: 978-0-19-870771- 4

This is a scholarly study of the Irish Catholic elite in the second half of the nineteenth century. The focus is on the children of wealthy Irish

https://doi.org/10.1017/bch.2015.10 Published online by Cambridge University Press

families and the private education they received in Ireland, England or on the Continent. O'Neill provides an excellent overview of the various Catholic schools that enabled a Catholic elite to compete on relatively equal terms with the dominant Protestant elite at home or abroad. Employing a prosopographical approach he shows how some children from the more affluent areas of Ireland were able to benefit from a transnational education. O'Neill contends that this transnational aspect provides an important alternative to studies of Irish history which are limited to an 'island story'. Similarly, while some historians of Ireland focus on change and conflict, O'Neill's approach is more concerned with continuity and with the fluid nature of identities. This avoids a reductive reading of the past, but it can also gloss over issues which require further interrogation. While O'Neill suggests that the Irish Catholic elite was 'highly integrated into the governing structure of Ireland at all levels' (p.6) he minimises the cost of such integration to the individual and to Irish society. It is not clear how the tensions between Englishness and Irishness were experienced by boys during their school days or in adult life. In is interesting that, with some notable exceptions, few of the English-educated Irish boys went into politics and one wonders if this is connected with some confusion over identity and belonging. Although we are told much about the classical education provided at the Catholic public schools in England, there is no discussion of the teaching of history in these schools and whether it was comparable to that taught at schools such as Eton and Winchester. The religious affiliation of the boys seems to be secondary to their class position and it would be interesting to know how important their faith was to them.

Whilst the subjective nature of the children's schooling is not explored in any detail, O'Neill should be credited for the extensive data he has collected and collated relating to the geographical origins of the children, the extent of family wealth and the careers they enjoyed as adults. Much of the research was originally undertaken for a PhD thesis and there are numerous tables and maps, however, the analysis of the data is integrated into a sophisticated discussion of the historical context and the relevant secondary literature. For those who are not familiar with Irish history in the nineteenth century, the number of Catholic families owning estates over 750 acres comes as a surprise, as does the large number of boys who joined the officer class of the British army.

So far I have only discussed the education of Catholic boys at elite schools, but one chapter in the book is devoted to the educational experience of girls of the same background. The contribution of women to the Irish Catholic elite is vital and this chapter is interesting in that it makes use of a wide range of source material including a number of literary sources. The prosopographical data is not as extensive as that for boys and O'Neill acknowledges the problem of

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'reinforcing patriarchy by engaging in an unfair gendered analysis' (p.162). There are, indeed, some problems with trying to apply the same methodology to girls, especially when it comes to careers. At a time when it was considered unsuitable for middle and upper class girls to undertake paid work, there is relatively little to be said about female careers, but more research could be undertaken into the unpaid work of both single and married women outside the home, which might include positions of influence in local government and philanthropy. As O'Neill notes, a significant number of girls opted for the religious life, possibly as a response to limited marital opportunities. However, it is possible to see such vocations as a positive choice and recognise that the religious sisters who taught in these convent schools may have inspired some of their pupils to opt for the single life and active service. O'Neill suggests that the main function of these schools was to create 'young ladies' and enhance the marriage opportunities of their pupils, however, when it comes to education there may well be a conflict between the desires and aspirations of parents, teachers and children. This study focuses principally on the wishes of parents, but these could be confounded by the children's response to the education on offer, while the motivation of teachers may have differed from that of parents.

Despite these reservations I consider O'Neill's book to be a fine study of a complex issue—the formation of a religious elite within a national and transnational context. The Introduction provides an excellent discussion of the methodology and historical literature and there is a wealth of empirical information to support the arguments made. There are two or three typos/spelling mistakes but it is a well-produced volume with good illustrations.

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T. A. Birrell, *Aspects of Book Culture in Early Modern England*, Variorum Collected Studies Series, Farnham: Ashgate, 2013, pp. xii + 296, £85.00, ISBN: 9781409455691

Over the last twenty years, two of the biggest growth areas in early modern scholarship have been Catholic studies and the history of the book. Many of the young Turks working in these areas may not realise how much they owe to a modest man who forged his scholarly career outside the Anglo-American nexus, at the Catholic University of Nijmegen. T. A. Birrell—'Tom' to his associates—resourcefully blended old-school bibliography with a newer emphasis on the reception of texts, particularly with regard to the history of reading, book collecting

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