

her execution, Santangeli examines the context for her quasi-mythic status through the impact of her death on Europe. Santangeli relates the sources which were available to Con and also how Con emphasised how Mary died for her faith, to which she had always been committed, in order to fulfil the conditions of martyrdom. Chapter ix continues to contextualise Con's work by concentrating on his defence of the Stuart succession, illustrating the Counter-Reformation hopes for a Catholic Stuart ruler that continued throughout Con's life.

Part III describes the literary inspiration and style of *Vita Mariae Stuartae*. Chapter x justifies the description of Con's work as Mary's 'first biography', describing the texts that were available at the time of its writing. This includes their shortcomings as full histories or biographies but also includes their influence. Chapter xi provides a brief explanation of Con's Latin style in a manner suitable for the Latin-less reader (the category to which this reviewer belongs). Overall, Santangeli is complimentary. Chapter xii follows naturally on to discuss Con's use of speeches. The literary device of non-verbatim speeches is used, according to Santangeli, to the greatest effect and he justifies their inclusion as not merely an effective tool but as representing the 'virtues we know Mary possessed' (p. 137).

After a brief note on the materiality and similarities of the two 1624 publications of *Vita Mariae Stuartae*, in Rome and in Würzburg, Part IV commences Santangeli's parallel Latin transcription and English translation. For the quality of the translation I cannot speak. However, the transcription reads very well. It is engaging, accessible and concise. It is also continually aided by comprehensive footnotes which act as a detailed commentary and useful signposting. Furthermore, even the dedicatory preface of Con's *Vita Mariae Stuartae* is more fully understood given the context of Con's patrons, influences and motivations provided by Santangeli's previous chapters. Santangeli continues to leave no stone unturned with the appendices, which provide further background and comparative works which speak to Con's text. This encompassing and thorough approach of translation combined with contextual positioning, ensures that this book will have a broad appeal. This is an attractive and rich volume that fulfils its aim to be more than just a translation of a biography of a famous, and infamous, queen.

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How the secularization of religious houses transformed the libraries of Europe, 16th–19th centuries. Edited by Christina Dondi, Dorit Raines and Richard Sharpe. (Bibliologia, 63.) Pp. 719 incl. colour frontispiece, 20 colour and black-and-white ills and 5 tables. Turnhout: Brepols, 2022. £85 (paper). 978 2 503 59392 0

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This substantial book, weighing 2.4 kilos, publishes the papers given at a conference held in Oxford in 2012. Its distinctive feature is that it concerns both the impact of the sixteenth-century Reformation on the libraries of religious houses and that of the secularisations of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Of the thirty-five contributions, a few cover both periods, but the majority of them

deal with the later period. The volume consists of seven parts, with overlapping subject-matter, as will be clear from the summary below. A purely geographical arrangement might have been less opaque. Perhaps this was avoided because geographical coverage is incomplete, something for which it would be unfair to blame either the editors or the authors.

The first and longest part of the book seeks to provide a 'territorial and temporal map of the dissolved collections', beginning with Fiorenzo Landi on the economic effects of the dissolutions. This is the only contribution with a wide geographical scope, apart from the perceptive introduction. It is followed by the late Richard Sharpe's fine overview of the effect of the Reformation in England and Rudolf Gamper on German-speaking Switzerland, 1525–30 and 1840–50. Jeffrey Garrett discusses the expropriation of monastic libraries in German-speaking Europe, 1773–1817, and Javier Antón Pelayo the secularisation of Catalan religious libraries, 1767–1836. Two essays labelled 'case studies' follow (although in fact most of the contributions to the volume are 'case studies'): Luis Cabral on Portugal, and especially Porto, and Maria Luisa Lopez Vidriero on Seville and Madrid. The section concludes with Pedro Rueda Ramírez's account of the three phases of secularisation of religious houses in Latin America.

Part II, 'State Policy towards Book Collections', contains three substantial essays about Italy: Dorit Raines on Venice in the years 1768 to 1819, Vincenzo Trombetta on Naples, 1767–1815, and Marie-Pierre Laffitte on confiscations in Italian monasteries under Napoleon. This is followed by a section on sequestration, re-distribution and the foundation of public libraries, beginning with the city libraries of the Netherlands, notably the city library of Amsterdam, founded in 1578 (Jos Biemans). There are three papers on Italy: Tuscany in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century (Emmanuelle Chapron), the Vatican library and the dispersal of religious libraries, 1798–1814 (Andreina Rita) and the dispersal of the monastic libraries of Rome, 1849 and 1873 (Marina Venier). Attention then moves to Eastern Europe, with Marek Derwich discussing the fate of books from the monasteries of Poland and Silesia in the late eighteenth and nineteenth century, and Oleh Dukh those from the Catholic and Uniate houses in Russia from the late eighteenth to the twentieth century.

Part IV focuses on the book trade, with Dominique Varry's account of the antiquarian trade in France after the Revolution, Marino Zorzi on the market in nineteenth-century Venice, Bettina Wagner on sales of 'duplicates' by the Munich Court Library in the nineteenth century and Richard Linenthal on the nineteenth-century English trade with particular reference to early printed fragments. The next section is headed 'Migration of Books, Access to New Publics' and contains three essays: Bart op de Beeck, 'Jesuit libraries in the Southern Netherlands and their dispersal after 1773'; Antonella Barzazi, 'Before Napoleon: change and continuity in Italian religious book collections'; and William P. Stoneman, 'North-American collection building'. In part VI, on the destruction of books and the spoils of war, Tuomas Heikkilä discusses the Swedish realm during the Reformation and Martin Germann books from monasteries in Zurich from the Reformation to the nineteenth century.

The final section ('Tools for Research') concerns four current projects: the digital version of Neil Ker's *Medieval libraries of Great Britain* (James Willoughby);

material evidence in incunabula and other information concerning provenance, applied principally to the holdings of the Bodleian Library (Cristina Dondi); the *Ricerca sull'Inchiesta della Congregazione dell'Indice* and its database called 'Le biblioteche degli ordini regolari in Italia al fine del secolo XVI' (Giovanna Granata); and, much the longest contribution in the volume, on the incunabula of S. Giorgio Maggiore, OSB, Venice (Cristina Dondi, Lavinia Prosdocimi and Dorit Raines). There are indices of persons and places, and a helpful chronological table at pp. 19–23.

As is often the case with collaborative ventures, and especially those with many contributors, great variety is evident in the papers. A few mainly summarise the existing state of knowledge in their chosen fields, but much more numerous are those which present the results of new research. This means that the volume is a rich resource concerning different parts of Europe. But it is more than the sum of its parts, and it is likely to be regarded as a major work of reference concerning monastic libraries. It also documents great variety in the fate of the libraries covered. At one extreme is the destruction or dismemberment of the books, at the other their preservation to become the basis of new libraries.

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The dark Bible. Cultures of interpretation in early modern England. By Alison Knight.

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The Protestant Reformation brought with it the conviction that the Bible was, in William Tyndale's phrase, 'that light [which] destroyeth darkness' (p. 2). But next steps were not so easy. When it came to the thorny issue of biblical interpretation, as exegesis was practised to interpret Scripture's meaning, Calvin acknowledged that 'dayly in reading we light upon many darke places' (*Institutes* 3.2.4; Norton translation, 1561).

Knight's meticulously researched and highly interesting book provides 'an exploration of early modern Protestant encounters with the "dark places" of the Bible; it seeks to reconstruct Protestant grappling with a Bible that could be confusing, ambiguous and contrary' (p. 3). The words of Scripture were subjected to 'lexically intensive approaches' which sought to 'unlock every possible meaning, and as confessional conflict planted stakes around those possible meanings, Protestant audiences were exposed to myriad textual, linguistic, and hermeneutic puzzles' (p. 3).

Early modern studies have recognised the pervasiveness of Bible-reading. This was helped by the production of 'cheap and portable Bibles' (p. 4) in this time. Also, the Bible influenced early modern cultures – such as through writers such as Shakespeare, George Herbert, John Donne and John Milton. This meant that the Bible was pervasive. It formed, as Christopher Hill put it, the 'idiom in which men expressed themselves' and as Knight adds: 'an idiom that adapted itself to every aspect of early modern life' (p. 5).