

*Beyond devotion. Religious and literary communities in the 16th and 17th century Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. Texts and contexts.* Edited by Łukasz Cybulski and Kristina Rutkowska. (Refo 500 Academic Studies, 91.) Pp. 300. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 2022. €140. 978 3 525 55295 7; 2198 3089  
*JEH* (75) 2024; doi:10.1017/S0022046923001380

These studies of religious literature written and published in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and the duchy/kingdom of Prussia from the mid-sixteenth century until the early eighteenth century offer much to specialists. Given the price charged for this handsome hardback volume, sales will doubtless be limited and most readers will download particular chapters *via* university libraries. The editors have made correspondingly little effort to tie the collection together in the introduction, which slightly exceeds a page in length, and would have been better styled a preface. ‘The aim has been not only to confront different types of texts and experiences, but also to situate this heritage in social and confessional context’ (p. 8), but no such confrontations and contextualisations are attempted in the introduction. The editors declare their ‘will to overcome the frontiers and strains of the modern world that push us towards exploring separateness instead of the realities of deep mutual dependency’ (p. 7), but there is a substantial gap between what is preached and what is practised. This book deals with Catholics of the Latin rite and Protestants of various hues, who wrote in Polish and/or Lithuanian. The crossing of these boundaries is welcome, but the Commonwealth was far more diverse than this, even if its Jews, Muslims and Karaites are implicitly reserved to separate studies. For a brief explanation of the socio-cultural and religious landscape, the reader must turn to Mirosława Hanusiewicz-Lavallee’s chapter, which substitutes for an introduction to the volume. No other chapter deals with Eastern Christendom (whether Orthodox, Uniate or Armenian); nor is any attention paid to Courland and Livonia. Moreover, the authors are all affiliated in Vilnius, Warsaw or Lublin; there are no contributions from Ukrainian, Belarusian or Latvian literary scholars, or from further afield. The editors should have acknowledged these limitations, rather than exempting themselves ‘to some extent from the obligation of modesty’ (p. 7).

The eleven chapters cover a range of genres, of which poetry and sermons are the best represented. Underpinning them all, however, is the Bible. In most cases, this is the Bible in Polish – in Protestant and Catholic translations. However, Gina Kavaliūnaitė’s chapter provides a ground-breaking account of the genesis of the first New Testament to be published in Lithuanian – in Königsberg in 1701, dedicated to Frederick I, king in Prussia. A fuller explanation of the situation and significance of the Lithuanian-speaking population in the northern reaches of the duchy (later kingdom) of Prussia (also known as *Lithuania minor*) would have been welcome. The first translation of the Bible into Lithuanian, undertaken by Samuel Bogusław Chyliński in mid seventeenth-century England, was not printed because of disagreements among the leaders of the Lithuanian Reformed Church, while a rival translation of the New Testament was probably lost to fire. Kavaliūnaitė reviews the evidence to establish the contributions of the translators and editors. The attempt to produce a text accessible to the speakers of different dialects of Lithuanian was not, however, wholly successful. It was not only Protestant Churches that needed Holy Scripture in Lithuanian: the Jesuits used a copy of this New Testament,

overpainting the dedication to Frederick I with their IHS monogram, and later Catholic translators drew on it.

Mirosława Hanusiewicz-Lavallee argues that during the century and a half after 1550, from a modest body of vernacular songs functioning at the liturgical peripheries, religious poetry in Polish came to encompass a rich variety of genres, capable of subtly expressing individual spiritual experiences. Poetry, less susceptible to censorship, could cross confessional boundaries more easily than prose. The Evangelical emphasis on simplicity and sincerity also profoundly affected authors who remained in or converted to the Catholic Church. In turn, the medieval inheritance of meditation upon the Passion helped to develop the tradition of singing in Polish, integrated with liturgy. As the seventeenth century progressed, the trend towards more elaborate emblems and classical models went hand in hand with the advance of baroque Catholicism. The author concentrates on religious poetry in Polish, but in discussing the significance of the vernacular, she offers analogous reflections on the languages of Orthodox religious poetry – Church Slavonic, Middle Ruthenian and, later, Polish. The influence of the Bible on poetry is well demonstrated by Jan Kochanowski, illuminated here by Radosław Rustak. Nevertheless, this confessionally ambivalent and classically learned poet found it hard not to adorn biblical texts. While adapting the Psalter, the poet admitted to a correspondent that he was torn between the ‘goddesses’ ‘Necessitas’ and ‘Poetica’. While Kochanowski is the most famous poet of the Polish Renaissance, Waclaw Potocki – a convert to Catholicism from Anti-Trinitarianism – often takes pride of place for the Baroque. Even his ‘secular’ work was suffused with biblical and theological themes and allegories. Agnieszka Czechowicz’s fine chapter concentrates on Potocki’s Passion poem, *Nowy zaciąg pod chorągiew starą triumfującego Jezusa* [New recruitment under the old banner of triumphant Jesus], revealing great depth of biblical exegesis and synthesis. Łukasz Cybulski discusses questions raised by the creation, preservation and editing of manuscripts, in this case one created by the little-known Dominican Tomasz Nargielewicz (about whose life and vocation the author tells us no more). This comprised a collection of religious verse, most of which was translation into Polish of Latin prayers used in Dominican services, and a collection of twenty-seven novellas and three romances set in classical Rome.

Wiesław Pawlak conducts a reconnaissance of how the Tridentine imperative to preach regularly and effectively was implemented in Poland-Lithuania, *via* regulations issued by synods, as well as in published collections of sermons. Among the best-known of these were those of the Jesuit Jakub Wujek – who is still better known as the author of the classic translation of the Bible into Polish. Kristina Rutkovska compares the multifaceted image of Mary in Wujek’s sermons, written in Polish and translated into Lithuanian, and in the sermons of his fellow Jesuit, Konstanty Szyrwid (Konstantinas Sirvydas), written in Lithuanian and translated into Polish. Szyrwid’s exceptional contribution to the development of the Lithuanian language and religious culture is the subject of Rutkovska’s second chapter. This analyses Szyrwid’s postil *Punktai sakymų* [Gospel points] in the context of the pastoral needs of the rural population in the early seventeenth century. In both chapters she underlines Szyrwid’s emphasis on Mary’s voluntary submission to God – a point of clear polemical purpose. Paweł Stępień highlights

the long-term influence – into the early eighteenth century – of Wujek’s Polish-language *Postilla catholica*, published in 1573 in response to the proliferation of ‘heretical’ writings in Polish, and of the texts of the Lutheran Samuel Dambrowski, especially his *Postylla chrześcijańska* [Christian postil] of 1620–1. It transpires that Dambrowski’s reflections on the Passion of Christ owed much to Wujek’s *Passion* of 1582.

Marta Wojtkowska-Maksymik tackles the question ‘Can devotion be taught?’ by focusing on the Cracovian Calvinist publisher Maciej Wirzbięta’s *Elementaria institutio Latini sermonis et pietatis christianae* (1575). This primer for learning Latin and Polish also taught prayers and good and pious conduct. Historians may well find Dainora Pociūtė’s chapter the most valuable in the volume. She begins in 1583 with the public apostasy from the anti-Trinitarian Polish Brethren and conversion to Catholicism of the physician Gaspar Wilkowski. Having analysed the polemic in print between Gaspar and his anti-Trinitarian father Balcer, Pociūtė explores the circle of exiled Italian ‘heretic physicians’ who exercised a monopoly of medical practice at the court of King Stephen Báthory. Because the root of the problem (lamented by papal nuncios) was the Jesuits’ neglect of medical education, Wilkowski’s conversion was all the more welcome to them. He found well-remunerated employment with the most prominent Catholic convert in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania: Mikołaj Radziwiłł ‘the Orphan’. To sum up, *Beyond devotion* offers early modern scholars of religion and literature eleven valuable chapters, but they are not welded into a coherent whole.

TADEUSZ MANTEUFFEL INSTITUTE OF HISTORY,  
POLISH ACADEMY OF SCIENCES,  
WARSAW

WIOLETTA PAWLKOWSKA

*The Jesuit mission in early modern Ireland, 1560–1760*. Edited by Mary Ann Lyons and Brian Mac Cuarta. Pp. 269 incl. 5 ills. Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2022. £50. 978 1 80151 025 7

*JEH* (75) 2024; doi:10.1017/S0022046923001513

Most of the research in this interesting new collection is based entirely or in part on the epistolary archives of the Irish Jesuit mission, which comprise the Society’s *ex officio* correspondence (*The Jesuit Irish mission: a calendar of correspondence, 1566–1752*, ed. V. Moynes, Dublin 2017) and the annual letters sent to the superior general in Rome (*Irish Jesuit annual letters, 1604–1674*, ed. V. Moynes, Dublin 2019). These archival series reflect aspects of the Jesuit ministry in Ireland, such as the interactions of the missionaries with local communities, and Jesuit culture and institutions. In the introduction to this book, the editors Mary Ann Lyons and Brian Mac Cuarta outline the scholarly context behind the conception of this collection, which stands as the latest instalment of an ambitious archival and publication project, aiming to represent a gateway onto further research.

The two essays opening the collection examine the second and the third Irish Jesuit missions respectively. Through the correspondence of William Good, Alexander G. DeWitt and Thomas M. McCoog explore the challenges and dangers connected with establishing schools and making the mission grow in the difficult context of the mid- to late 1560s. Starting from Good’s fragmentary