

consent, yet our common people, and the stones in the street, would rise and rebel against it.' An anonymous journal from the reign of James VI, written by an Edinburgh inhabitant sympathetic to the Presbyterian position, is riddled with references to the 'murmuringis' of 'the pepill'. In my own attempt to consider Covenanter ambivalence about the political role of 'the people', I quoted words purported to have been spoken before parliament in 1641 by Scotland's principal statesman, Archibald Campbell, marquis of Argyll: 'I would speake somewhat, what I am backed on to speake by the Commonalty.' What I am about to say matters, asserts Argyll, because I am claiming to voice the opinions of the people.

It is no coincidence that two of these three examples come from Presbyterians. Over the decades leading up to the 1637 Prayer Book crisis, Presbyterians mastered creative strategies for constructing their partisan view of the world in universalist rhetoric. When the Covenanters transitioned from an oppositional movement into a legitimate government, however, creative engagement of the people in politics was circumscribed. Covenanter government now claimed an exclusive right to speak for the nation. Petitions and protestations became associated in the later 1640s with the splintering of opinion as fissures opened up over how to interpret the National Covenant under circumstances nobody had even imagined a decade earlier. The destruction of the Covenanter regime by the English New Model Army and the subsequent restoration of what became a highly authoritarian monarchic regime further curtailed expressions of opinion. As Clare Jackson's work has shown, artefacts of opinion not sanctioned by the government were deliberately bracketed with the excesses of Covenanter extremists. It is telling that protestations, petitions and 'persuasive publications' in the four decades from the Cromwellian invasion to the 1689 Revolution together take up comparatively little of the analysis. Oaths get more attention. They were used after 1660 as part of a wider attempt to control public opinion and, while not entirely successful, their deployment further suggests disruptions to its emergence across the seventeenth century.

After 1689 a revolutionary regime with a fragile grip on power, attempting to govern a bitterly divided polity while under threat, on one side, from people who wanted to restore the Covenant and, on the other, from those who continued to believe that James VII & II was the legitimate king of Britain, sought to reclaim modes of communication through which they could assert that they alone expressed the 'inclinations of the people'. This book shows that 'public opinion' was more than 'Presbyterian opinion writ large', but it is clear that the writings and doings of Presbyterians contributed something very distinctive to Scottish public culture before the Union.

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Synopsis purioris theologiae/Synopsis of a purer theology. Latin text and English translation, III: Disputations 43–52. Edited by Harm Goris (trans. Riemer A. Faber). (Studies in Medieval and Reformation Traditions, 222; Texts and Sources, 9.) Pp. xiv + 716. Leiden–Boston: Brill, 2020. €126. 978 90 32996 6; 1573 4188 JEH (73) 2022; doi:10.1017/S002204692200015X

What does it mean both to study and do theology within the contours of the Reformed tradition? To speak in a Reformed voice? For many it means moving

from Calvin to Dort-inspired acronyms to Schleiermacher to Barth with little discrimination and, at times, antagonistic comparison. So one person's assessment of the magnitude of Schleiermacher's *Glaubenslehre*: 'nothing on such a scale, and so systematic, had appeared in Protestantism since John Calvin's *Institutes of the Christian Religion* nearly three centuries earlier' (Keith Clements, *Friedrich Schleiermacher: pioneer of modern theology*, London 1987, 7). Never mind Johann Heidegger's *Medulla theologiae christianae* or Wilhelmus à Brakel's more experiential *Logikē latreia, dat is Redelyke Godtsdienst*. The point is this: assessments of Reformed theology often bypass Reformed orthodoxy/scholasticism under the pretext that the period and its authors are cold, arid, polemical, predestinarian, Aristotelian and dogmatic (in the most pejorative sense). It is easier to bypass, of course, than to read. For those desiring to undertake such a task, reading itself is difficult, especially since most of the source material – both dogmatic handbooks and biblical commentary – remains tucked away in Latin. Even so, there has been a renewed interest in Reformed orthodoxy in the last several decades, thanks in no small part to the Herculean efforts of Richard Muller and the late Willem van Asselt. Embodying the spirit of this renewal, members of the Classic Reformed Theology Research Group in the Netherlands – which originated in 1982 – embarked on a long project (2010–20) to produce a bilingual and annotated edition of the *Synopsis purioris theologiae* (1625), a standard theological textbook at Leiden after the Synod of Dordrecht.

The volume under review is the last in the translated series, and it covers *loci* related to Church and last things. But it is neither the translation (which is both faithful and readable) nor the annotations (which are meticulous and instructive) that I want to focus upon. It is the importance of the *Synopsis* as such for thinking 'Reformed'. This is not to say that the *Synopsis* is exclusively, pristinely or exhaustively Reformed. It does not corner the market, as it were. But it is tenuous, I would suggest, to think 'Reformed' without texts like the *Synopsis*. Why? Because such texts disabuse contemporary historians and, more so, theologians of persistent myths by highlighting the following. First, the *Synopsis* showcases the breadth of theology in the Reformed tradition, as opposed to reducing 'Reformed' to a predestinarian or covenantal system *tout court*. If the Reformed orthodox are studied at all, such engagement usually falls within the domains of the doctrine of God or soteriology. But what of – in keeping with the volume under review – the sacraments? church discipline? catholicity at work in the exposition of doctrine? These are significant vistas for historical and theological reflection, which the *Synopsis* aids in exploring and retrieving. Second, it reveals that Reformed scholasticism is rigorously exegetical and doctrinally precise, as opposed to exegetically dubious and dogmatically speculative. As Andreas Beck and Dolf te Velde note in their thorough introduction (eighty-three pages), 'biblical references function not just to "prove" a given position, but first and foremost the contents of doctrinal discussion are occasioned and fueled by what Scripture reveals about the topic in different contexts and relations' (p. 54). Third, and finally, the *Synopsis* helps one chart out the boundary markers of 'Reformed'. One often wonders what the slogan *reformata, semper reformanda* means when, at times, it floats free from any traditionally 'Reformed' standard. Untethered, the slogan's content is filled in by those

brandishing it. This is not to say that the Reformed tradition should continue its theological discourse in the present by simply regurgitating the past. Reformed theology did not reach its *terminus* in the seventeenth century, and dogmatics must be uttered afresh in new contexts. Nevertheless, the Reformed tradition is genuinely beholden to a tradition of theological discourse. The *Synopsis* presents one vector in this tradition, and its use in the seventeenth, nineteenth (for example, Bavinck) and twentieth (for example, Barth) centuries showcases ‘that it was recognized ... as a reliable, representative, and accessible statement of Reformed theology’ (p. 90). What is more, the *Synopsis* unfolds the very principle of *semper reformanda* as its authors engage – innovatively at times – with and within the theological currents of the early seventeenth century. The *Synopsis*, therefore, serves as a window into both the conservation and discovery of the ‘Reformed’ theological voice.

Overall, a debt of gratitude is owed to the individuals who have brought the *Synopsis* to the English-speaking world. Critical translation is often a thankless, though necessary, task. For students of Reformed theology – new and old – the complete three-volume work will prove handy for (re)discovering the warp and woof of the Reformed tradition, even though the price tag will require it to stay on the library shelves for most. If one picks up the third volume in particular, the extended introduction to the historical and theological contexts – the author; the origin of the disputation cycle; the definition, in fact, of a disputation cycle; the various editions published; reception history; etc. – will orient the reader to the entire *Synopsis*. The first volume contains a brief orientation, but the third volume contains the authoritative introduction, and so it alone will be useful for those matters.

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MISSOURI

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The Holy Land and the early modern reinvention of Catholicism. By Megan C. Armstrong.

Pp. xiv + 399 incl. 1 fig and 3 maps. Cambridge–New York: Cambridge University Press, 2021. £90. 978 1 108 83247 2

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Megan Armstrong’s latest book represents a new addition to the field of studies on Catholicism in the Holy Land during the early modern period. Structured in six chapters, the book covers a long period, from the early fifteenth century to the early eighteenth century. The avowed aim of this study is to demonstrate the development of Catholicism in this area and the problems that it experienced during two crucial centuries of change and conflict.

The first chapter examines the context in which the Custody of the Holy Land had been founded and how it operated *vis-à-vis* the Catholics and the Ottomans. This chapter also begins to explain how and to what extent the Custody acted as a shared gateway between the western and the eastern world. The second chapter illustrates how the Custody was embroiled in the harsh disputes which unfolded between the Catholic Latin communities and the Greek Orthodox communities over the control of altars in the Holy Places. It also assesses how and to