

Kaplan, Benjamin, e.a. (eds.), ***Catholic Communities in Protestant States: Britain and the Netherlands c.1570-1720*** (Studies in Early Modern European History; Manchester, New York: Manchester University Press, 2009, xiv + 274 blz., ISBN 978 0 7190 7906 1).

Despite their many similarities, Catholic communities in the early modern England and United Provinces had not yet been systematically compared. With this remarkable volume, proceedings of the sixteenth *Britain and the Netherlands* conference, this gap has been filled. The editors have planned a balanced comparison which takes into account the most important aspects of what can be called 'minority Catholicism' (Christine Kooi) in both countries: relationship between laity and clergy, coexistence with the Reformed majority, role of women, international connections. In his opening, Willem Frijhoff provides a historiographical survey and drafts a research agenda. He stresses the limitations of the historiography until the 1990s: it was national, adopted an ecclesiastical point of view and conveyed a sense of victimisation. The transformations of religious history in the last decades command, according to Frijhoff, a triple shift: attention to transnational dimensions, comparison of national developments and reconstitution of survival strategies for religious minorities.

The other chapters of the book use these reflexions as – sometimes explicit – starting points. The first chapters (respectively by Charles Parker and Michael Mullett) analyse the relationship between laypeople and clerics. It was conditioned by similar problems: in both cases, due to the Reformation, the Catholic diocesan structure had disappeared and the Catholic Church became a Mission; due to the absence of revenues for priests, they were dependent on patronage by the elites, particularly in England, where many priests lived in gentry homes. There were differences as well: in England, the number of priests was much higher,

which led to the formation of a 'clerical proletariat', whereas in the Netherlands, in some areas, such as the Eastern and Northern provinces, there was a shortage of priests. Both authors stress the active role played by the laity – Charles Parker proposes the concept of 'collaborative confessionalisation' to describe the implementation of the Catholic Reformation in the United Provinces.

Other contributions address the relationship between laypeople and clergy, namely those by Joke Spaans and Mary Rowlands, centered on the role of women in both Missions. Joke Spaans shows how important a role lay women could play in the Netherlands: 'spiritual virgins', which led a semireligious life, took care of priests, copied devotional books, taught catechism; the wealthier supported the recruitment of boys for the ministry by donations. Social and family networks connected them to priests. Although England did not have any 'spiritual virgins', women were able to play similar roles: some women belonging to the gentry harboured priests, working women kept alehouses where Masses took place; from the late seventeenth century on, with the growing toleration enjoyed by Catholics, women kept little schools while other worked as housekeepers for priests.

Two other chapters also provide insight into the role of women and the relationship between laity and clergy, although their main focus is on the transnational dimensions of English and Dutch Catholicism: Paul Arblaster and Claire Walker highlight the centrality of the Southern Netherlands for both countries, due, according to Arblaster, to their attractiveness as a Tridentine model and to their willingness to support religious refugees. For Dutch Catholicism, the Spanish Netherlands provided training institutions and cheap editions, whereas for England, they also harboured exiled religious houses; in both cases, lay families took refuge in the Southern Netherlands – some of them, belonging to the aristocracy, received help from the archdukes in the early seventeenth century. Claire Walker's

chapter is particularly interesting as it shows the diverse purposes of the exiled religious houses: education facilities provided spiritual grounding for both future clerics and nuns and lay people, whereas monasteries represented a point of contact between the religious exiles and their co-religionists as well as protestants in England, since they received visitors and were part of the British Grand Tour. Transnational connections were therefore a key element to the survival strategies of Dutch and English Catholics.

These survival strategies and transnational connections are examined from a different angle by Xander van Eck and Richard Williams in their chapters on art history. Xander van Eck shows the differences between Utrecht and Haarlem, where paintings of an international level for the clandestine churches emerged from the 1620s on, and Amsterdam, where the best altarpieces were imported from Antwerp by regular priests. Richard Williams points out that Catholic religious art was more limited in scope in England, due to the lesser degree of toleration enjoyed by Catholics there, and that more modest forms of imagery, such as prints, pictures on silk or medals, were for the most part smuggled from the Southern Netherlands.

Whereas all of these chapters are focused on the workings of the Catholic communities, the remaining contributions analyse their interactions with other denominations. Benjamin Kaplan and William Sheils analyse the important question of confessional coexistence. Benjamin Kaplan examines whether Dutch society became more confessionally segregated from the second half of the seventeenth century on through the question of mixed marriages. Whereas quantitative data is hardly available for the seventeenth century, studies and archive research show significant difference between the provinces for the eighteenth century, as it seems that mixed marriages were very rare in Holland, reputed for its tolerance. As Kaplan himself admits, the evidence is questionable for big cities such as Amsterdam, where social control proved

much less efficient than in the countryside, so that mixed marriages might have been more common. However, as Kaplan rightly points out, integration and segregation were not mutually exclusive. William Sheils also insists on regional differences in his chapter: while pragmatism and cordial interconfessional relations characterized rural settings, urban settings seem to have been more prone to demonstrations of anti-Catholic popular feeling in periods of tensions, such as the Restoration. An interesting element is the emergence of a denominational lifestyle in the eighteenth century, which seems to be similar to the Dutch case.

Judith Pollmann and Alexandra Walsham also study interconfessional relationships through the question of the possession of church space. Judith Pollmann argues that it remained the focus of Catholic anger because Dutch Catholics were not excluded from their former churches: decades after the Reformation, there were reports of Catholics praying in their former parish churches; Catholics were also buried in the churches, together with Protestants. Judith Pollmann shows that this last fact was a source of resentment, since they had a physical and spiritual stake in the churches, while their rituals could only be partly performed. Likewise, the multiconfessional character of funerals was a sign of 'ecumenicity of everyday life' (a concept coined by Willem Frijhoff, which several authors refer to) and a frustrating compromise. In England, as pointed out by Alexandra Walsham, there were similar features: constraints on rituals as well as 'popish superstitions' in churches, so that Catholics and Protestants competed to define the meaning of shared sacred spaces. Catholics in both countries also reinvested ruins of chapels and wells in the countryside, which were used by the clergy as a polemic tool against Protestants.

Two further chapters analyse the specific cases of Ireland and the Generality Lands – two territories with a Catholic majority subjected to a Protestant government. Charles de Mooij illustrates how Catholics in the Generality Lands

were second-class citizens – they were banned from office – yet self-confident. This situation led to deep tensions: Protestants doubted whether Catholics were loyal subjects, whereas many Catholics had still sympathies for the king of Spain after the Peace of Westphalia. This link between Catholicism and political opposition also existed in Ireland, as shown by Ute Lotz-Heumann – although it was complicated by the question of ethnicity.

Altogether, the reader is provided with a fine collection of essays – whose remarkable cohesion is enhanced by Benjamin Kaplan's and Judith Pollmann's conclusion. Three themes emerge: the creativity of Dutch and English Catholics; the important role of laypeople; the complex coexistence. Catholics confronted with restraints on rituals and in some areas with a limited access to priests and sacraments were able to find alternative ways of worshipping, from wells and ruins to mental devotion and silk pictures. 'Translating Trent' (Alexandra Walsham) happened in several ways. As for the important role played by laypeople, it is striking and reaches from the area of patronage and funding to those of poor relief and catechism; several authors also stress the specific involvement of women. Finally, the complex coexistence is characterized by its different levels: a possibly growing segregation in the family did not exclude integration in the social sphere, and political conflicts did not foresake amicable contacts. It would be interesting to compare this type of coexistence with cases of confessional parity. On all these topics, the books provides interesting and stimulating contributions, many of which take into account comparison with the other country.

However, on some issues, the essays remain short of conceptualisation: while some authors – such as Charles Parker and Ute Lotz-Heumann – refer to the concept of confessionalisation and others, namely Willem Frijhoff, criticize it, most do not address it; yet the collection suggests a different model of confessionalisation, possibly specific to religious minorities, in which the State

was absent. Further reflexion on this important question would be needed. Another concept that is absent is that of toleration: whereas recent research has criticised it, especially for the Netherlands, a reflexion on its pertinence would have been useful, in order to further comparison. But these are minor problems, and one can only wish that this important volume stimulates new research on Catholic minorities.

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Timmermans, Bart, *Patronen van patronage in het zeventiende-eeuwse Antwerpen*.

Een elite als actor binnen een kunstwereld

(Oorspronkelijk dissertatie Leuven 2006, *Studies stadsgeschiedenis* 3; Amsterdam: Aksant, 2008, 427 blz., ISBN 978 90 5260 247 9).

De titel van dit boek is een getrouwe samenvatting van wat de auteur beoogt: hij is op zoek naar patronen in de kunstpatronage in de stad Antwerpen tussen 1585-1700. Timmermans voert zijn onderzoek uit vanuit een empirisch-analytisch perspectief. Hij heeft oog voor gegevens uit velerlei hoeken; zijn studie ligt op het snijvlak van kunst-, economische, politieke en culturele geschiedenis. De toon waarop hij zijn resultaten naar voren brengt is prettig: hij voert de lezer op een helder gestructureerde tocht stap voor stap langs het door hem bijeengebrachte, omvangrijke materiaal, zijn hypothesen en conclusies zijn altijd goed onderbouwd en steeds helder geformuleerd.

Kunstpatronaat in de zestiende en zeventiende eeuw is per definitie een zaak van de elite. In het eerste deel van zijn boek verkent Timmermans de samenstelling en de aard van die elite en de transformaties die daarbinnen plaatsvonden in de decennia na de 'Gouden Eeuw' van Antwerpen (ca. 1500-1565). In het door de auteur besproken