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**Renaissance and Reformation**  
**Renaissance et Réforme**



**Muller, Aislinn. The Excommunication of Elizabeth I: Faith, Politics, and Resistance in Post-Reformation England, 1570–1603**

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Volume 44, Number 2, Spring 2021

URI: <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1082722ar>

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.33137/rr.v44i2.37551>

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Publisher(s)

Iter Press

ISSN

0034-429X (print)

2293-7374 (digital)

[Explore this journal](#)

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Cite this review

Murray, P. (2021). Review of [Muller, Aislinn. The Excommunication of Elizabeth I: Faith, Politics, and Resistance in Post-Reformation England, 1570–1603]. *Renaissance and Reformation / Renaissance et Réforme*, 44(2), 261–263. <https://doi.org/10.33137/rr.v44i2.37551>

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long reform period underscores chapter 5's argument that "diocesan reform was but a smaller part of the Catholic Church's global goal in the early modern period" (278). Barbarigo's struggle to banish ignorance from his diocese, so that theological orthodoxy and moral understanding could flourish, was the local reflection of Catholic missionary activities further afield. Barbarigo's Venetian background focused his attention on the Ottoman Empire and the Greek Christians in the *stato da mare*. In addition to his own efforts to guide and protect converts in Padua, the seminary sheltered priests expelled from their Eastern European dioceses and educated missionaries. The press that Barbarigo founded was modelled on the Roman Polyglot Press and printed works for use in missionary training and to distribute to potential converts. Ludovico Marracci's Latin translation of the Qu'ran (1698) is one example.

In sum, this is an excellent primer on Catholic reform and its historiography. Not only does McNamara's book introduce an important seventeenth-century figure to English-speaking audiences, but it models best practices of working with large amounts of varied and sometimes incomplete historical data. This study also shows Italy at the ecclesiastical centre looking outward and valuing the reform of its own people as much as its close neighbours and newly encountered peoples. Celeste McNamara's essential study has shown how one individual can reflect the priorities and prejudices of an entire class and period.

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<https://doi.org/10.33137/rr.v44i2.37550>

**Muller, Aislinn.**

*The Excommunication of Elizabeth I: Faith, Politics, and Resistance in Post-Reformation England, 1570–1603.*

Leiden: Brill, 2020. Pp. x, 242 + 5 ill. ISBN 978-90-04-42599-6 (hardcover) €125.

History, we are often told, is recursive. In 1570, a long period of English social, cultural, and religious individuation ended in a decisive break from a European organization deemed, to varying degrees, interfering, overbearing, and tyrannical. On 25 February, Elizabeth I, the reigning monarch and leader

of the nascent Church of England, was decisively excommunicated from the Catholic Church. As Aislinn Muller observes in her fascinating study of this decisive event, the repercussions were far-reaching and profound. Despite England having been a Protestant nation for more than a decade, the papal bull *Regnans in Excelsis* issued by Pius V meant the queen was “deprived [...] of her sovereignty in England and Ireland.” Moreover, any subjects who believed themselves followers of Catholicism were “released [...] from any loyalty they owed to her, and ordered not to obey her laws or commandments.” Finally, “if her subjects continued in their obedience, they too would face excommunication” (1).

Such a sweeping political act—permeating not just the grander debates of God, monarch, and ruler but also the everyday acts of individual conscience—was merely one strand of a wider strategy of European Counter-Reformation. According to Muller, Elizabeth’s aristocratic counterpart Prince Henri of Navarre was also excommunicated for perceived anti-Catholic leanings (2–3). The Council of Trent of 1563 formalized a theological response to the proliferating doctrines of Calvinism. Support for the persecution of groups such as the Huguenots was also prevalent. However, Pius’s decision would have an especially large impact on the vexed polity ruled by Elizabeth, an entity that encompassed not just the English Protestant state but a doggedly Catholic and increasingly querulous Ireland.

In this regard, Muller’s study is a timely intervention in the historiography of the period. Since the publication of John Kerrigan’s seminal *Archipelagic English: Literature, History, and Politics 1603–1707* (2008), which threw a spotlight on the multivalent interchanges between early modern England, Scotland, Ireland, and Wales, scholars have been alert to how political, social, religious, and personal events commingled in the nascent multi-nation state of Britain. Studies such as Melissa Caldwell’s *Skepticism and Belief in Early Modern England* (2016) and Alison Shell and David Loewenstein’s *Early Modern Literature and England’s Long Reformation* (2020) explore the ways in which complex systems of thought were appropriated, modulated, and altered to serve wider political rhetoric.

Continuing this alertness to the symbiosis between pulpit and politics, Muller’s book begins by establishing the background to excommunication and the political realities of the act (16–28). While anti-Protestant sentiment prevailed in Spain, Italy, and France, insurrection also persisted closer to home,

meaning any decisive break with Rome would inevitably create intra-national tensions. Miller's study "considers how [the excommunication] provoked a wide range of nonviolent and violent forms of subversion" (10). More broadly it "expands the ways in which we conceive of religious and political resistance in early modern England" (10). Within such conflicting events undoubtedly lay the seeds of the radicalism of the turbulent seventeenth century. Muller's sensitive survey of popular literature contemporaneous to the excommunication portrays a picture characterized by competing emotions, with both nationalist confidence and anxiety often coexisting uneasily. Furthermore, both apparently contrasting emotions were often in symbiosis: "While communication about the bull could inspire acts of resistance," Muller observes, "[t]he murmuring and unrest [...] indicate that people in England found the excommunication deeply unsettling" (56).

An important chapter, "Humour, History, and Anxiety in Printed Responses to *Regnans in Excelsis*," explores the media's response to the excommunication of the monarch. Here, the author surveys over one hundred extant texts printed between 1570 and 1603 to show how a narrative of papal impotence in the face of English virility was expounded. "Ballads, confessional polemics, sermons, poems, and other works," Muller observes, "criticised the papal bull as a blustering but ultimately ineffective usurpation of power by the pope" (88). Latterly, the book goes on to consider how the *Regnans Excelsis* influenced the ongoing issues of foreign and domestic policy for figures such as Walsingham and Cecil. In Anglo-Irish relations, the text of the bull would resound for generations, featuring in correspondence well into the Jacobean and Cromwellian eras (173–76).

As Britain and Europe react to another turbulent divorce, this study offers a timely reminder of the far-reaching and consequential effects of splits in a cross-national polity. *The Excommunication of Elizabeth I<sup>st</sup>* presents an arresting narrative of queried legitimacy, reactive politics, and subversion that informs of the wider tumults of the revolutionary age and stands as an object lesson in maintaining cordial relations.

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<https://doi.org/10.33137/rr.v44i2.37551>