

https://dspace.org/

The Missionary Position : Catholics writing the history of the English Reformation

Houliston, Victor

2010-09
University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg
https://hdl.handle.net/10539/49217
Houliston, Victor. (2010). The Missionary Position : Catholics writing the history of the English Reformation. [Inaugural lecture, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg]. WIReDSpace. https://hdl.handle.net/10539/49217

Downloaded from a DSpace repository. https://dspace.org/

The Missionary Position :

Catholics writing the history of the English Reformation

Victor Houliston, Professor of English Literature : Inaugural Lecture 30 September 2010

Missionaries have had a bad press of late. Their endeavours seem to be inescapably compromised by association with imperialism. It is difficult to read the following stanza from a mission hymn without imagining Kipling and a missionary striding forth together, faces shining, to bring Christianity and Anglo-Saxon civilization to India and Africa:

> March we forth in the strength of God with the banner of Christ unfurl'd,
> That the light of the glorious Gospel of truth may shine throughout the world.
> Fight we the fight with sorrow and sin, to set their captives free,
> That the earth may be filled with the glory of God as the waters cover the sea.

There is of course a lot more to be said both for Kipling and the Victorian missionary than they are often given credit for. Isabel Hofmeyr's *The Portable Bunyan* gives a fascinating and deeply considered account of the presence of *The Pilgrim's Progress* in missionary efforts in Africa. My own father was the first South African missionary to China. Forty years after he had left, he walked once more down a street in Kunming to be greeted rapturously by a man running out of a house: 'Pastor Hu! Pastor Hu!' But this is neither the time nor the place to undertake an apologia. I would rather draw your attention to a situation where England was, if not the dark continent, the benighted island, cut off from the light of Christendom, ruled by a Machiavellian oligarchy in the name of an ageing unmarried and possibly virgin queen. My intention is not only to offer some reflections on the nature of English Catholic historiography of the Reformation era, but also to consider the application of literary criticism and theology to the study of history, since my research career has taken place in the borderland between these three disciplines.

The rise and growth of *De origine ac progressu schismatis Anglicani*

The story I have to tell is of the rise, growth and proliferation of an historical work written by Elizabethan Catholic missionaries and called, in English, *The Rise and Growth of the English Schism*. It involves a cast, if not of thousands, of at least a Professor of Canon Law, a priest imprisoned in the Tower of London, the founder of the seminary at Douai, the superior of the Jesuit mission to England, a world-renowned Spanish Jesuit, two Italians, several Frenchmen and a German.

There is also an array of printers spread throughout Western Europe, as well as the greatest apologist of the Church of England at the time of the Glorious Revolution. The story thus spans well over a century, but it begins in Louvain with Nicholas Sander, a distinguished canon lawyer who had left New College, Oxford, at the start of Elizabeth's reign and attended the Council of Trent with a Polish Cardinal. After publishing, in Louvain, his most influential work, *De visibili monarchia*, in 1572, he set off for Rome to advise Pope Pius V – the one who had excommunicated Elizabeth – on English affairs. By 1579 he was ready to embark on an expedition, led by the Irish chieftain James Fitzmaurice Fitzgerald, designed to unite the Irish against their English overlords and ignite a Catholic uprising in England itself.

The Fitzgerald rebellion was snuffed out within three years, mainly because of the disaster at Smerwick where Lord Grey of Wilton, observed with admiration by 'Elizabeth's arse-licking poet', Edmund Spenser, treacherously massacred a company of Italian reinforcements. Sander kept up his end manfully but eventually succumbed to illness, surrounded by a few diehards and the Bishop of Killaloe. He left behind the manuscript of his account of the English Reformation, *De origine ac progressu schismatis Anglicani*, on which he had been working through the 1570s. This he had entrusted to his friends in Madrid or Rome, and it obtained some currency among English exiles in France and the Netherlands. It was then taken up by Edward Rishton, a missionary priest who had been kept in the Tower of London but in 1585 was allowed to take ship with twenty-two others to go into exile, on pain of death for treason should he ever return. One day in Paris, he tells us, he fell into conversation with a certain Jodocus Skaenhert – the mystery man from Cologne – who shared his interest in ecclesiastical history. Skaenhert promised to pay the printing expenses if Rishton would edit a copy of Sander's manuscript. Rishton complied, rewriting the whole of Sander's account of Elizabeth's reign.

Rishton died soon after making his contribution to the rise and growth, and the baton now passed to the formidable pair, William Allen and Robert Persons: the founder of the Douai seminary and the Jesuit superior. Allen was based in Rheims, where Rishton's version was actually published, although the imprint claims to be from Skaenhert's supposedly native Cologne. It begins to seem as though Skaenhert was in fact Allen himself. Whatever the case, Allen fell seriously ill and retired to a nearby spa town. Persons immediately abandoned his collaboration with the celebrated general Alessandro Farnese in the Netherlands and rushed to Allen's bedside. Together they took the road to Rome, Allen to advance the English Catholic interests at the papal court, Persons to take his final vows. He was in a state of near nervous collapse after several years of over-excitement. His missionary partner Campion had been brutally executed and several invasion plans had foundered. Still, he had enough energy to

collaborate with Allen on revising *De schismate Anglicano*. Their revision chiefly involved multiple interpolations concerning relevant international developments; they also appended the 'Tower Diary', a chronological list of sufferings of priests in the Tower.

The 1586 edition was the basis of frequent reprintings, translations and adaptations over the next two years and can be seen as preparing public opinion in Catholic Europe for the enterprise of the Spanish Armada. The most significant of the adaptations was by Pedro de Ribadeneyra, a leading Jesuit political thinker and public figure whom Persons had met in Rome. Ribadeneyra was now in semi-retirement in Loranca, a small town near Toledo in the La Mancha area of central Spain. He was, nevertheless, in correspondence with the Jesuit General, Claudio Acquaviva, and he undertook to prepare a version that would help to form an 'English party' in Spain. Drake's raid on Cadiz in April 1587 spurred him on, the work was finished within weeks, and the printers in Antwerp, Madrid, Valencia and Barcelona began pulling off copies in time for the sailing of the fleet in July 1588. Ribadeneyra even wrote a stirring exhortation to the captains and soldiers of the army of invasion, which was originally designed to be printed as part of the work, entitled in Spanish *Historia ecclesiastica del scisma del reyno de Inglaterra, recogida de diuersos y grauos autores* (Antwerp, 1588).

The failure of the Armada prompted Ribadeneyra to deep and prolonged reflection on the ways of God but Spanish interest in the condition of Catholics in England had certainly been aroused. Among several works on this theme, published in Spain in the 1590s, was Ribadeneyra's continuation, *Segunda parte de la Historia Ecclesiastica del scisma de Inglaterra* (Lisbon, etc. 1593). He now focused on the injustice of the response of Elizabeth's government to the invasion attempt. Some sixteen years after its first publication, the *Segunda Parte* was itself translated into Latin and incorporated into a new edition of *De schismate Anglicano*, issuing from Cologne in 1610 – thus completing a curious circle.

1610 was the year of Persons's death, but he appears to have had nothing to do with that year's version. He had, however, provided Ribadeneyra with much of the material for the *Segunda Parte*. Moreover, he had made several other attempts, during the intervening years, to write the story of the English Mission, including a life of Campion. All of these remained incomplete and unpublished. Yet again, he began an ambitious project of compiling a monumental ecclesiastical history of the church in England from the time of Henry VIII. He entitled it *Certamen Ecclesiae Anglicanae* ('The Struggle of the English Church'), but only reached as far as the reign of Edward VI. Into the manuscript he copied most of the first half of *De schismate Anglicano*, so it is possible to see the *Certamen* as a massive expansion of Sander's original compact work, with a significantly altered title. The four folios of the incomplete *Certamen* were left stranded in Rome and

eventually, after many adventures, found their way into the archives of Stonyhurst College in Lancashire, where they are imprisoned in a dusty tower. But a French translation of *De schismate Anglicano* (*Histoire du Schisme d'Angleterre*, trans. Francois de Maucroix, Paris, 1676) goaded Gilbert Burnet, then in exile from the England of James II and attached to the court of William of Orange, to write his *History of the Reformation of the Church of England* to affirm the genuinely reforming character of Henry's break from Rome (*The History of the Reformation of the Church of England: The First Part, of the Progress made in it during the Reign of K. Henry the VIII*, London, 1679).

Here then are the materials for a fascinating 'biography of the book'. My interest, though, is in the three distinctive 'takes' on the English schism, woven into the work by the three main contributors, Sander, Persons and Ribadeneyra. The world of this book could scarcely contain three such great spirits, and so it is perhaps not surprising that none of the versions reached satisfactory completion. Yet even in failure, this sixteenth century collaboration in writing the history of the Reformation in England has been a success of a kind, and historians over the past century have treated it with increasing respect as a source. We are invited, then, to reflect on the elastic nature of historiography. Susan Gillman has recently written of 'historians whose histories are unfinished, provisional, open to change, and who insist on the responsibility of actors in the present to act on behalf of the past which they have yet to redeem' (*TLS* 4 June 2010: 3–4, 7). What, then, can the literary critic do to act on behalf of the past?

Three Voices on the English Schism

Let us imagine a widow holding up the blood-stained nightshirt of her murdered husband for her son to take revenge. This is the bold analogy that Girolamo Pollini used in his preface to his Italian translation of *De schismate Anglicano* – which he called, rather extravagantly to our ears, *L'Historia Ecclesiastica della Rivoluzion d'Inghilterra* (1591, 1594). The image draws on a long tradition of representing Anglia as a sorrowing figure bereft of the comfort of Catholic Christendom. The bloody persecution of the English martyrs – More, Fisher, Campion and the rest – called out for a continental vendetta against the Elizabethan regime. All of the writers we are concerned with told their stories in hope of intervention by the Catholic powers of Europe, and each version of *De schismate Anglicano* is oriented to the anticipated happy ending. They share a view of Elizabeth's government as illegitimate, bloodthirsty and hypocritical. What shapes each version differently is the combination of political circumstances of composition over the period 1572 to 1610. More than this, each writer brings a particular quality of mind to the enterprise, and it is this diversity that I wish to analyse here.

Nicholas Sander was a canon lawyer by training. His approach to the schism was also conditioned by his experience at the Council of Trent and his subsequent involvement in a long drawn out debate over the credentials of the Church of England. This was known as the Jewell-Harding controversy after the chief disputants on either side. At St Paul's Cross John Jewell, Bishop of Salisbury, had famously challenged Catholics to show one place in scripture that supported such dogmas and practices as transubstantiation, prayers to the saints and auricular confession. Sander's most influential contribution to this debate was his hefty *De visibilia monarchia ecclesiae* (Louvain, 1571), which argued that the church needed a single head. He was not unsympathetic to some of the Reformers' concerns. But the unity of Christendom under the Holy Father was for Sander the *sine qua non* of spiritual survival.

The Henrician 'reformation' thus presents Sander with a spectacle of national calamity. He is concerned to prove the break with Rome to be purely a matter of personal expediency to satisfy Henry's lust for Anne Boleyn. There is no moral or legal justification for the divorce and no religious dimension to the secession: heretics might support the new dispensation but this is not a religious movement, except insofar as immoral behaviour figures heretical belief. Sander's indignation reaches its most intense when he launches into a diatribe against Henry for inventing his new church entirely from within himself, not even from any of the known heresies. The man who was not even worthy of being the foot of the church declared himself the head. Sander as a lawyer is skilled in marshalling evidence to discredit the new church politically, morally and theologically, using a lively forensic style. He then shows the predictable effects of severing the connection with Rome: the Protestant King Edward VI and Queen Elizabeth I struggle to establish their right to rule, they find themselves at odds with the highest and the holiest in the land, they put themselves at the mercy of the venal and the base, and their governments decline into injustice and disrepute. Elizabeth's reign becomes enmeshed, inevitably, in the political chaos in Scotland, leading to the Northern rebellion of 1569 and its bloody suppression. The momentum of the Third Book of *De schismate Anglicano* drives towards implosion of the regime. By foreign rescue of the faithful or internal uprising the collapse of the Protestant oligarchy is imminent, by the necessary inner logic of the schism.

When Sander joined Fitzgerald's expedition, then, it was in full confidence that he was collaborating with the forces of history. In the years immediately following, Persons and Allen also participated in a series of plans for invasions from the Netherlands, with the support of the Guises, the king of Spain and the papacy, but these came to nothing and they devoted themselves more fully to the propaganda war. When Persons declared, in a letter to Mary Queen of Scots in October 1584, that they were abandoning the military option in favour of a longer yet

more dependable spiritual process, this did not in fact signal the end of their involvement in belligerent proposals, but they paid increasing attention to the strengthening of Catholic resolve on both sides of the channel. And so Sander's history of the schism was shoved into the front line, along with several other powerful books prepared for battle. Persons's phenomenally successful *Book of Resolution* (Rouen, 1582, revised and expanded edition 1585), a call to the true and zealous service of God, steered clear of controversy but urged a level of commitment that might be intensified into armed warfare. At the same time he was directing an earnest, highly-focused missionary programme from his base at Rouen. Meanwhile Allen, based at Rheims, penned his *True, Sincere and Modest Defence of English Catholiques that Suffer for their Faith* (1584). This was a rebuttal of William Cecil's explanation of the persecution of Catholics in his book entitled *The Execution of Justice in England* (1584). Then there was the curious case of *Leicester's Commonwealth* (1584), a wholesale attack on the condition of England. No one has ever been able to say for certain whether or not Persons wrote this himself, although it was popularly dubbed 'Persons' Greencoat'. He certainly had a hand in its distribution. All these works were published in 1584 and 1585. So when Allen, if it was indeed he, approached Rishton in the latter year to revise *De schismate Anglicano* the case was altered. This was not to be history as controversy so much as a form of political activism. It was intended not so much to convince as to enroll and recruit. Rishton thus dramatizes the state of persecution by giving a climactic account of how, when he and several other priests were being shipped off into exile, Jasper Heywood (John Donne's uncle) heroically demanded that the boat should be turned round so that their flight should not lend credence to the charge of treason under which they were being condemned.

The more extensive revision of the work, undertaken by Allen and Persons in 1586 can also be seen as fighting with the pen, especially given the excitement of the Armada preparations. This would certainly account for a major insertion on Leicester's expedition to the Netherlands to aid the Dutch rebels. But there is a more fundamental shift to the bias of the history. It begins to take on a more annalistic character, in contrast with Sander's more unified, forensic, analytical scheme. There are many annual interpolations describing contemporaneous developments on the continent, relevant to the English situation but marking the passing of the years on a grander scale. Even more significant is the introduction of a missionary pattern that shapes the narrative. The old monastic order comes to an end with the hanging of Abbot Whiting, the legendary 'last abbot of Glastonbury', on Glastonbury Tor in Persons's native Somersetshire. At almost exactly the same time, Ignatius Loyola founded the Company of Jesus, which by the 1580s was spearheading the missionary thrust into Britain (1586 edn, pp. 198–202). Implicitly the revised

history looks forward to Jesuit triumph, not quite a restoration of the *status quo ante*, but a reversal of the schism nevertheless.

The trajectory of the revised *De schismate Anglicano* proved premature with the loss of the Armada. But when in the 1590s Persons continued the process of expanding the work and placing it alongside other materials illustrating the long struggle – the *certamen* – of the English Church, he still believed that he would see restoration in his lifetime, either by conquest or succession. We might suggest, accordingly, that he was compiling a history of sixteenth-century English Catholicism for the instruction and comfort of the generation that would follow, under a new Catholic prince in a post-Tridentine ecclesiastical dispensation. The work would rival Foxe's *Book of Martyrs* in size and scope, but it would not be a polemical counterblast so much as a foundational work of Reformation-era Catholic national identity.

Pedro de Ribadeneyra was even more shaken by the Armada catastrophe, but he was less interested in English religious culture than in rescuing England from her unlucky Protestant entrapment. He had been in England himself, in the last months of Mary's reign. He had watched in horror as the work of Pole and his administration was undone by what he would only describe as Elizabeth's treachery. Now he undertook to tell the story of the schism in Spanish to rouse the spirit of that Catholic nation, under its most Catholic king, to come to the aid of the suffering English. In adapting the *De schismate Anglicano*, therefore, he dropped some of the constitutional and local detail and concentrated on the shaming of Queen Katherine of Aragon and the enduring disgrace of the schism itself to the name of Christendom. His descriptions of the perseverance of the martyrs and confessors and the resolution of the lay Catholics are marked by hagiographical fervour, and he urges the English missionaries on, through fortitude and perseverance, to certain victory. However quixotic this may seem with hindsight, there is no mistaking the chivalric appeal of the writing.

A curious fact about Ribadeneyra's work is that several editions were published even after the loss of the Armada. His interpretation of the English schism survived, for a short while, God's apparent failure to endorse that view, at sea. The strength of public feeling on behalf of the persecuted recusants was sustained. Indeed, plans for further Armadas continued to be pursued for the next ten years. Nevertheless, Ribadeneyra was severely discountenanced by the disappointment. He adressed the theological and pastoral issues in his *Treatise of Tribulation* (*Tratado de la Tribulacion*), reaching the conclusion that God was seeking to bring the Spanish people to repentance. This perspective informs his continuation of the history of the English schism in the *Segunda Parte* as he notes how persecution has strengthened and refined the English faithful. What begins as history, after a roughly annalistic model, dissolves into polemic as an

extended argument is proffered against the charges levelled at the Jesuits and seminarians in the royal Proclamation of 1591. This in turn modulates into a celebration of the world-wide Jesuit mission, with a report on the visit of Christian Japanese princes to Europe.

Collapse of the Grand Narrative

Whether it be the forensic demonstration of the canon lawyer, the bibliographical assault of the activist, the monument of the chronicler or the fervour of the Counter-Reformation in full flood, we are presented, here, with the breakdown or collapse of all three historiographical projects: Sander's was left incomplete and its lawyerly logic failed to translate into history; that is, events refused to obey the laws he set down. Persons's revision of *De schismate Anglicano* concluded with what was little more than a tabulation of events in the Tower. His whale-like *Certamen* was beached on the Jacobean succession. Ribadeneyra brought his history, with a drum roll, to a climax, after which the *Segunda Parte* seemed rather lame. What are we to make of this spectacle of successive narrative disintegration? It is tempting to suggest that the resolution of history into its raw data, with *De schismate Anglicano* terminating in a random series of appendices and the *Certamen* bulging into a palimpsest, is apt, because it holds a mirror up to the chaos into which the schism itself was held to be inevitably declining. But this is ultimately implausible, either as a view of authorial intention or as an ideological current. We might turn to genre for an alternative explanation. Sander's original was to some extent modelled on medieval tragedy, with each monarch's reign conforming to a pattern of fate. But Elizabeth was still, enfuriatingly, alive, in 1585, in 1586 and 1593, and when she did eventually succumb in 1603, though it was not too late to write her tragedy, there was no succeeding Catholic prince whose faithful subjects might draw comfort from her dismal story. In any case, Persons had more urgent problems to attend to – such as convincing James I that he had been on his side all along.

Since Elizabeth's reign was constantly changing shape, and since historiography thrives on a relatively stable retrospective, it should not surprise us that these works struggle to keep their form. The underlying question is: how did these Catholic historians respond to the challenge posed by events to their providentialist assumptions? Each of them is prone to dwell on supernatural signs of God's displeasure with the schismatic regime, and his favour towards the faithful. Why, then did He not intervene when Fitzgerald got to Ireland, when Sidonia sailed into the Solent, and when Elizabeth's death ended the Tudor dynasty? Why, at least, did James Stuart, who had every educational advantage, not reconsider Catholic truth? We have seen how Ribadeneyra struggled experientially and theologically with this problem, and offered the solution

that God was chastising His people. But for the English writers it may be possible to see a reinvention of Providence at another level, in the turn that the language of Catholic polemic was taking. This is the point where the literary critic feels he may have something to offer.

The belief that history is the unveiling of God's purposes on earth implies a confident correlation of politics and religion, the temporal and the spiritual. Temporal power was there to serve the spiritual. Pastoral work might prepare the hearts of the people for political change, and political change might facilitate priestly functions. But soldiers and princes and generals would do the fighting, if the kingdom of heaven was being inhibited by the secular power, and Providence would concur. Here is a clear delimitation of roles, a definition of terms – semiotic order. But what happens when the secular power redefines spiritual functions as acts of treason? Elizabeth's government made it treason for a priest to celebrate mass, and an act of political disloyalty to stay away from Protestant divine service. Whatever we think of the Marian policy of burning heretics, especially after Eamon Duffy's recent controversial exposition *Fires of Faith* (2009), there was at least no mistaking of categories: heresy is a crime against the people defined as church. The Elizabethan policy shifted religious activity into the category of secular politics. Some would identify this as tyranny; for our purposes, the point is that it causes linguistic confusion. It introduces an ambiguity into the discourse of ecclesiastical polity.

For Catholic writers – even if they were activists – this new, oppressive ambiguity offered another way of seeing Providence as promoting God's earthly kingdom under a cover of indirection, in disguise. If the state was not going to yield at once to Catholic truth, at least the Catholic church could be protected by the God-given resources of language.

After the Armada it would have been pointless for Allen and Persons to deny that they favoured papal conquest of England. Allen even wrote a book intended to be distributed by the victorious troops, his *Admonition to the Nobility and People of England and Ireland concerning the present warres made for the execution of his Holines Sentence, by the highe and mightie Kinge Catholike of Spaine* (Antwerp, 1588). This made it perfectly clear where he stood in the war, and Persons was at least partly responsible for Ribadeneyra's exhortation to the Spanish army. But whatever they or their colleagues did *qua* priests and *qua* missionaries, and whatever they wrote for publication *rebus sic stantibus*, i.e. while Elizabeth was sovereign, was technically free of treason in any generally accepted sense of the term. The apparent exception, Allen's *Admonition*, was printed for a context where Elizabeth's legitimacy had been formally challenged by foreign invasion authorised by the Pope. The clerics could always evade charges of disloyalty. As it was put in the 1610 translation of Ribadeneyra's *Segunda parte*:

> Hoc illud bellum est, quod pauculi, & vt videtur infirmi Sacerdotes contra peccatum, haeresin, & infernum gerunt, cum tanta turbatione Reginae ac suorum ministrorum, vt perterrifacti & exanimati vndique media conquirant, ijs vt resistere possint: quibus non repertis, ad tormenta confugiunt, ac suis supplicijs eos se coercere posse confidunt. (p. 125) *This, then, is that 'war' which a few, and (as you can see) weak priests waged against sin, heresy and hell – a 'war' that caused such a consternation for the Queen and her ministers, that so frightened them totally out of their wits, that they sought everywhere for ways to resist the priests. When they couldn't find any, they resorted to torments, and put their trust in harsh punishments to bring them under control.*

The English authorities would say, and historians down the ages have echoed them, that this was disingenuous. It smacked of casuistry and equivocation. It was, in other words, Jesuitical and Machiavellian.

Ribadeneyra is best known in the English-speaking world as the author of the counter-Machiavellian *Princeps Christianus adversus Nicolaum Machiavellum, caterosque huius temporis Politicos* (Mainz, 1603), dedicated to Sigismund III, King of Sweden and Poland. Where Machiavelli's justification of duplicity depended on the practical separation of the ethical and political, the Jesuit casuistical defence of equivocation depended on blurring the linguistic boundary between politics and religion. As subject of the queen a priest would say one thing publicly; as priest before God he meant another privately, but he would use the same form of words for both. Persons, so far from being apologetic about equivocation – which by the time Shakespeare wrote *Macbeth* had become infernal – robustly defended it as a form of Providence. God provides an escape route, he explained, even for an unfaithful wife whose behaviour, if openly confessed to her husband, would do irreparable harm. Jesus h/Himself equivocated by playing one part before man and another in the eyes of God, and spoke in parables: 'he that hath ears, let him hear'. In the Elizabethan context, this gnomic gospel expression meant that the true meaning of any equivocation was for the ears of God and His people only. An equivocating Jesuit would deny before the magistrate that he was a priest, with the mental reservation (for God only to hear) that he was not a priest *of such a kind* as the magistrate had any right to know about, or *in the sense that you mean it, i.e. a traitor*. It is crucial that this mental reservation, or hidden redefinition of the word, should consist of a silent clause that was grammatically congruent with the sentence as spoken aloud.

Can we see this emergent Catholic historiography as a variant form of equivocation, then? It is cast in a language that speaks one thing to secular humanity and another to God. This

will not satisfy the practising modern historian, whose empiricist confidence, somewhat shaken by postmodern skepticism, has been restored by appeal to the scholarly community. Neo-historicism effectively appropriates St Augustine's dictum: *Securus iudicat orbis terrarum*: no private judgement survives in the crucible of learned debate. Historiography is subject to the bar of common understanding, embracing believer and unbeliever. So there seems to be no place for history inscribed with a second level of meaning for a special audience. But there is a philosophy of history that would accommodate this notion of equivocal history, a history that speaks with forked tongue. It was articulated by Martin D'Arcy, long-serving Master of Campion Hall and described in a recent number of the *Times Literary Supplement* as the foremost Catholic intellectual of the mid-twentieth century.

D'Arcy's *The Sense of History: Secular and Sacred* (1959) renounces the great providentialist schemes of history, as well as the analogous Hegelian and Marxist grand narratives. History is too complex, he argues, for human action on a large scale to fulfil God's purposes. God is not working his purpose out in history. There is no triumphal sense in which the earth will be filled with the glory of God as the waters cover the sea. But as a Jesuit he works AMDG (*ad maiorum Dei gloriam*), and so he also rejects any theology that would separate the divine entirely from human secular endeavour, thus rendering secular history spiritually indecipherable. Such a view he attributes to Karl Barthes. Instead he posits a theology of collaboration or 'incorporation' which allows for partial, sporadic and intermittent manifestation of the kingdom of God on earth. This is how D'Arcy expresses it:

> Opposition . . . is not the same as contradiction, nor does it lead to a stalemate. It is the secret of development and of fertility. Vital functions degenerate if they do not meet resistance, as the wings of a bird need the resistance of the air for their exercise. Such an explanation helps us to understand how some of the resistances in history, the struggles, in which the good is checked, thwarted and for a long period victimized, may help to define the process wherein the kingdom of God is being established. (pp. 275–76).

Such a process strikes us as something more than Wordsworth's 'little, nameless, unremembered acts / Of kindness and of love' and something less even than Chesterton's heavenly chariot 'hurtling down the ages, the dull heresies sprawling and prostrate, the wild truth reeling but erect'.

Where does this leave our Elizabethan Catholic historians with their failed projects? We cannot project onto them a modern understanding of providence shaped by Newman and

Teilhard de Chardin. Nor can we unequivocally identify their cause with the victimized good. But we can try to recognize their story-telling as a significant rhetorical adjustment to the pressures of profound historical change. Their histories lose their purchase on events; even as they write, the narrative foreshadowing parts company with the course of history. The historian is unable to script the outcome, nor can he speak the future into being by discerning the providential path ahead. He is forced back, then, into reliance on language somehow to fuse these separating levels of reality and embrace the complexity of things. Paradoxically, he has to use irony and equivocation, both of which depend on disguising distinctions while preserving them, to affirm his story, the secret story of the Kingdom. In reading these histories, then, we are invited to duplicate the double vision. We could say, of the Henrician reformation, that it presented itself to the canon lawyer as purely expedient, and therefore monstrous: a compelling story could be told about it that continued to trouble Anglicans for centuries. We could say, of the Elizabethan regime, that it presented itself to the missionary as a scandal to Christendom, transforming true religion and piety into acts of treason: a plausible story could be told about it that absolved the priests of all disloyalty. We could say, of the Spanish Armada, that it presented itself to the reflective Jesuit philosopher as the cutting edge of the Catholic Reformation, a powerful movement of the Spirit to renovate and repair divided Christendom: a story could be told about it that demanded a major rethink about the ways of God in history.

What is implied, finally, in that phrase 'a story could be told'? Are we in a postmodern world of competing stories, each one as flawed and conjectural as the next? In one sense, this is a truism, in another it reminds us that we are in a humane world of deep reflection on the past, on past ways of seeing; conscious not only that historiography is rhetorical, but that rhetoric brings us more authentically into living relationship with the past. But not every story that can be woven around the data has equal validity. The same ethical and linguistic constraints that apply to equivocation, perhaps even the same aesthetic constraints that limit irony, apply also to historiography. This is to say no more than that history writing, like reading, is a moral act.

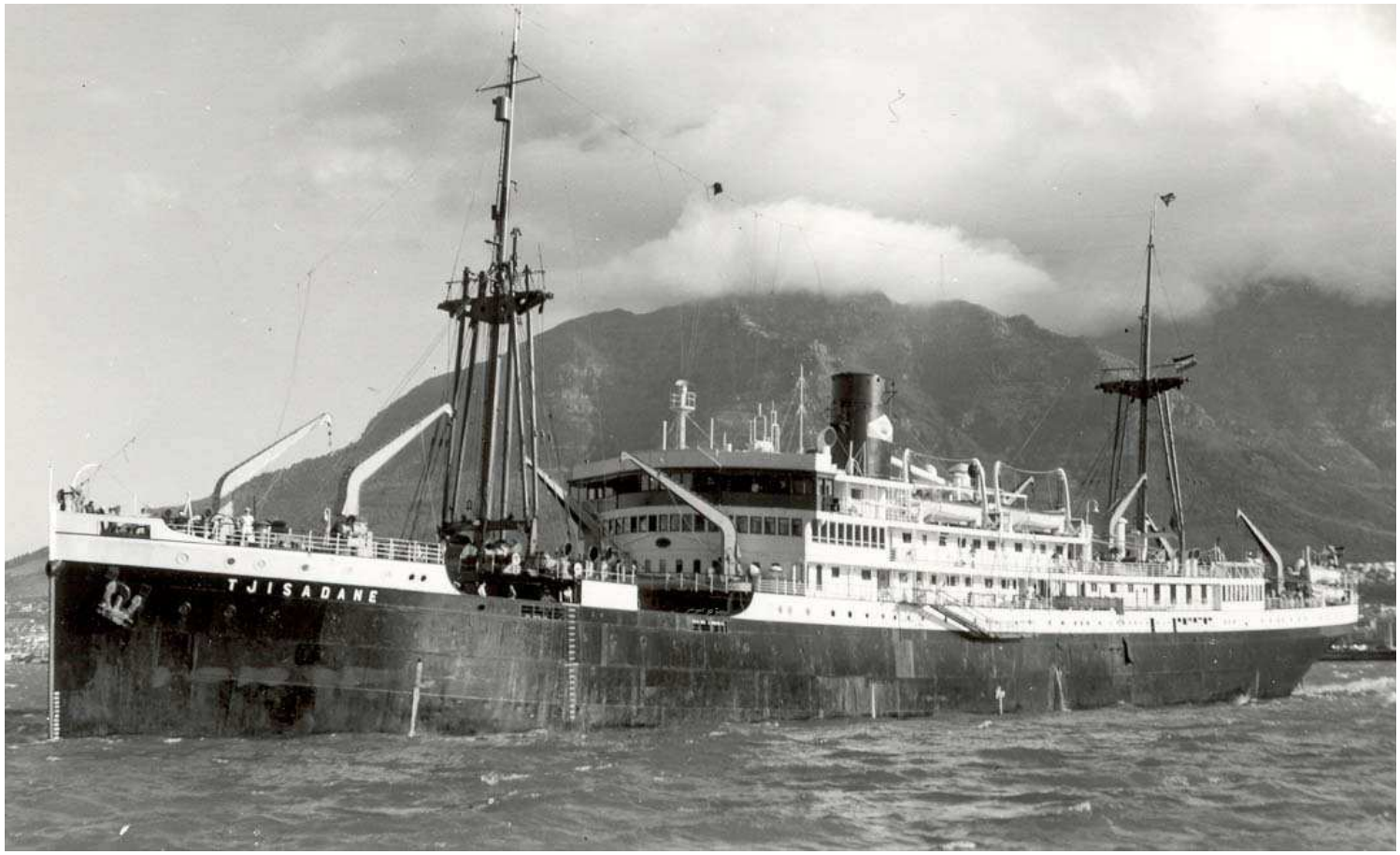
Many of us – historians all, concerned with *Words in Time*, to borrow the title of my predecessor Geoffrey Hughes's best-selling study – are seeking to re-animate silenced voices from the past. Why were these voices silenced? We could name any number of reasons, from the purely accidental to the menacingly ideological. But like good loose forwards on the rugby field, we try to get first to the point of breakdown, to that moment where the words pass into obscurity, and there we begin to reconstruct our histories, histories which it has now become fashionable to call counterfactual. This does not mean that they are fictions, denying the facts, but that they are resurrections of lost perspectives, resisting the course that history, which after

all is written by the winners, seems to have taken. *Force majeure* has flattened these perspectives, but they do not die, they simply go underground, buried beneath the language of the conqueror until we come along and turn the language inside out. The missionary position – that is, the viewpoint of the Catholic missionaries – was written out of history, or preserved in distorted form in the elegant but narrow confines of the old English Catholic culture represented by Brideshead, but now it asks to be read again, not with credulity, not with suspicion, not even with a magnifying glass, but with bifocals.

Initial tributes to predecessors

In my opening informal remarks I paid tribute to A. C. Partridge, whose lecture notes, typescripts of studies, etc. have recently been donated to the department, to Guy Butler (who passed on to me a research project that led to my interest in the early Jesuits), A. G. Woodward (who appointed me to the staff of the department and encouraged my research interests), Merle Williams, James Ogude and Isabel Hofmeyr.

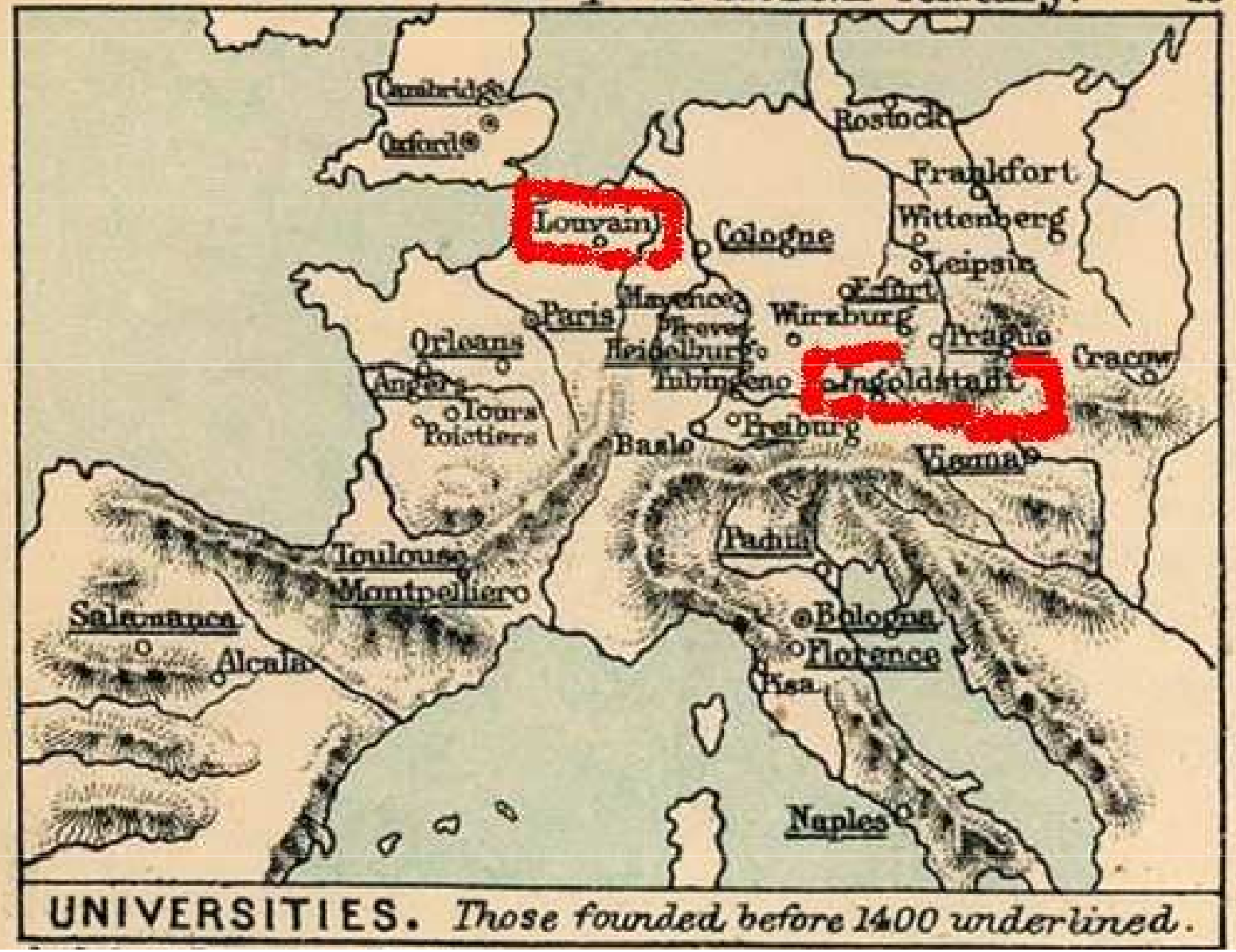
The Missionary Position



The missionary pose



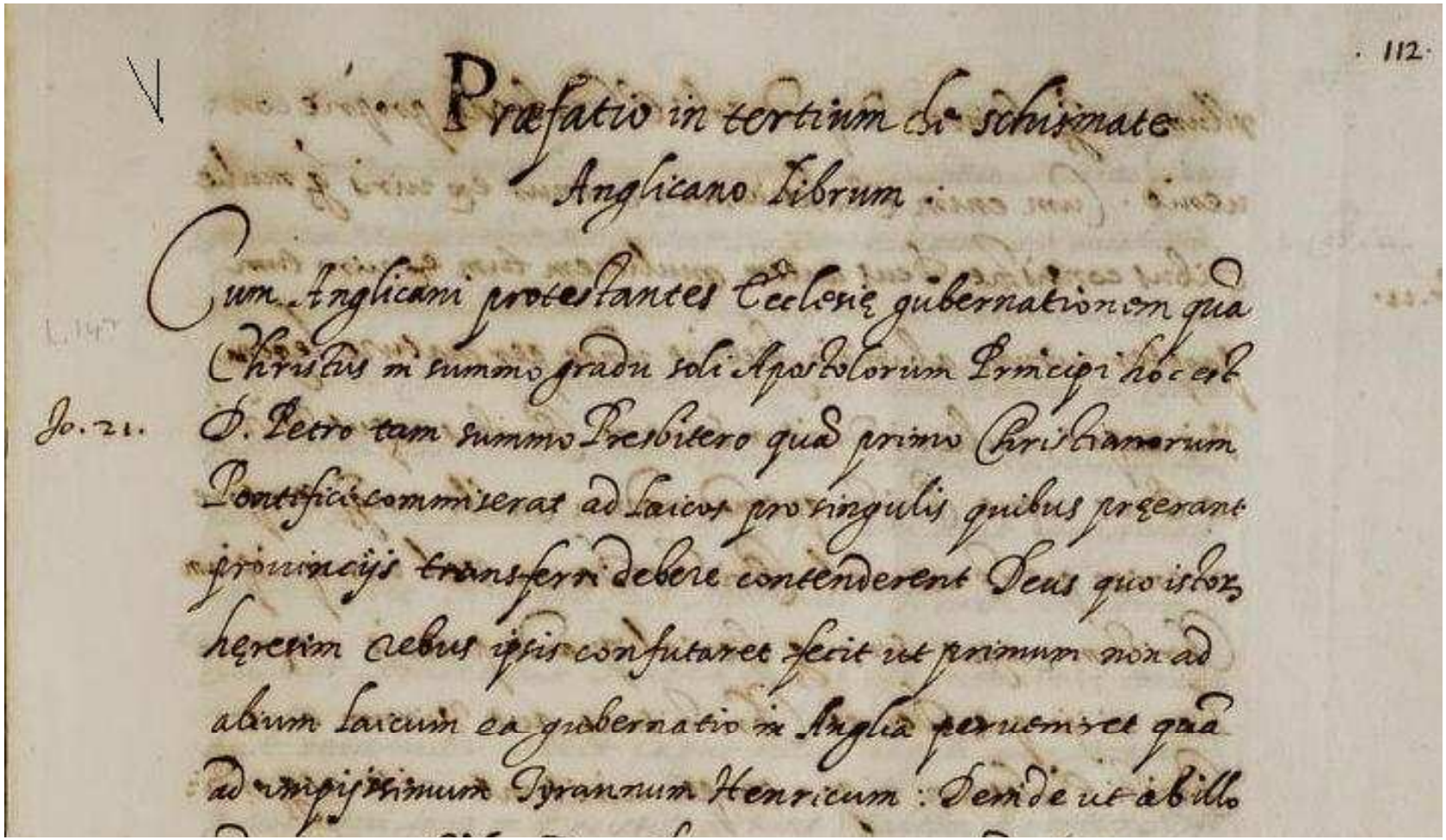
Universities of Europe in the XVI Century.



The Sander/Fitzgerald Expedition



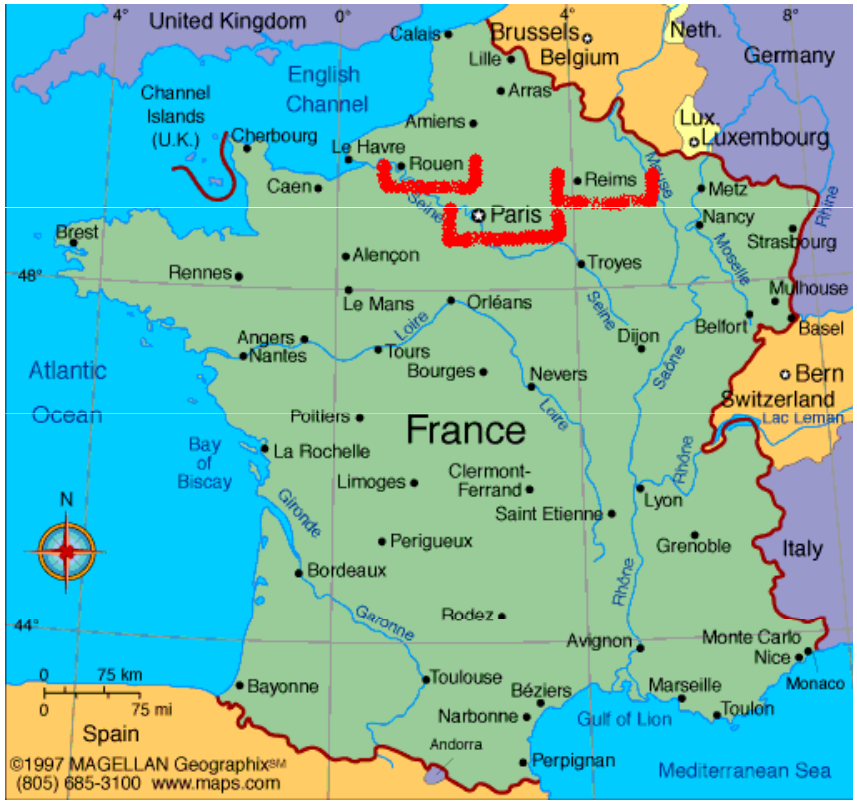
De schismate Anglicano



Præfatio in tertium de schismate Anglicano librum.

Cum Anglicani protestantes Ecclesiæ gubernationem quam Christus in summo gradu soli Apostolorum Principi hoc est
Jo. 21. D. Petro tam summo Presbitero quam primo Christianorum Pontifici commiserat ad laicos pro singulis quibus præerant provincijs transferri debere contenderent Deus quo istorum hæresim rebus ipsis confutaret fecit ut primum non ad alium laicum ea gubernatio in Anglia perveniret quam ad impijssimum Tyrannum Henricum: Deinde ut ab illo

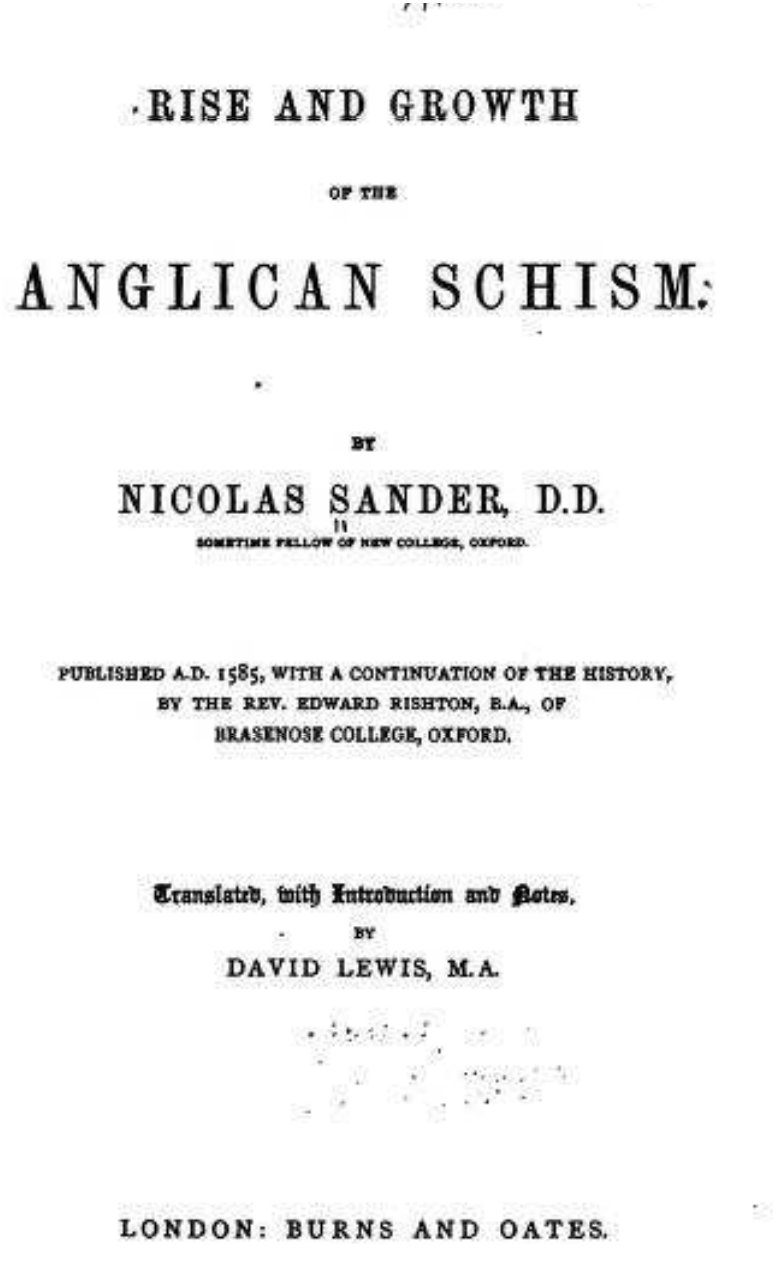
Revision of the Manuscript



- Rishton flees to Rheims
- Meets Skaernhert in Paris
- His version published in Rheims
- Allen based in Rheims
- Persons based in Rouen

Edward Rishton (1585)

David Lewis's 1877 English translation of the Latin text as published in Rheims in 1585



RISE AND GROWTH

OF THE

ANGLICAN SCHISM:

BY

NICOLAS SANDER, D.D.

SOMETIME FELLOW OF NEW COLLEGE, OXFORD.

PUBLISHED A.D. 1585, WITH A CONTINUATION OF THE HISTORY,
BY THE REV. EDWARD RISHTON, B.A., OF
BRASENOSE COLLEGE, OXFORD.

Translated, with Introduction and Notes,

BY

DAVID LEWIS, M.A.

LONDON: BURNS AND OATES.

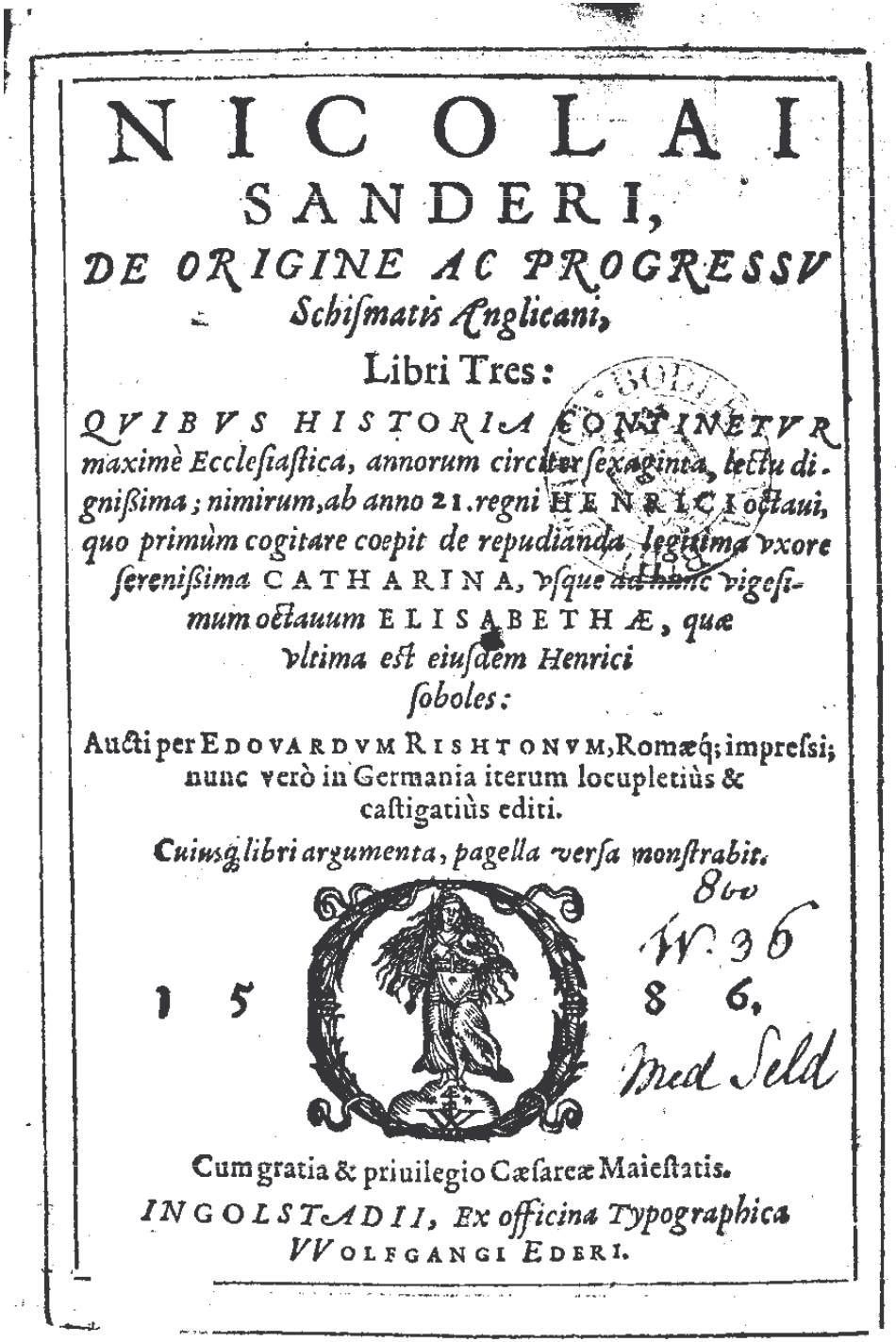
Persons and Allen





Allen and Persons (1586)

The text as published in Rome and Ingolstad in 1586



NICOLAI
SANDERI,
DE ORIGINE AC PROGRESSV
Schismatis Anglicani,
Libri Tres:

QVIBVS HISTORIA CONTINETVR maximè Ecclesiastica, annorum circiter sexaginta, lectu dignissima; nimirum, ab anno 21. regni HENRICI octaui, quo primùm cogitare coepit de repudianda legitima vxore serenissima CATHARINA, vsque ad hunc vigesimum octauum ELISABETHÆ, quæ vltima est eiusdem Henrici soboles:

Aucti per EDOVARDVM RISHTONVM, Romæq; impressi; nunc verò in Germania iterum locupletiùs & castigatiùs editi.

Cuiusq; libri argumenta, pagella versa monstrabit.

1 5

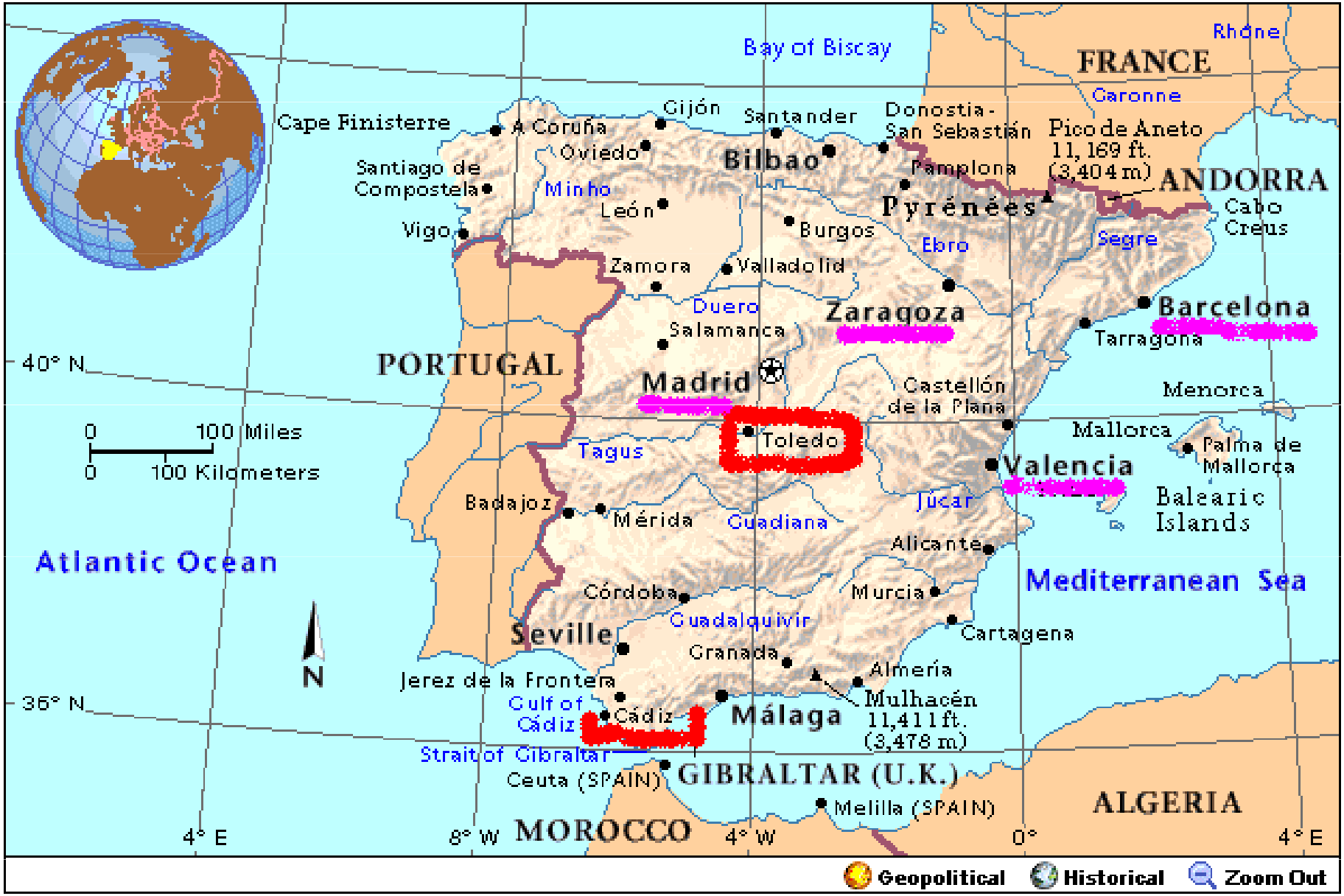
8vo
W. 36
8 6.
Med Seld

Cum gratia & priuilegio Cæsareæ Maiestatis.

INGOLSTADII, Ex officina Typographica VVOLFGANGI EDERI.

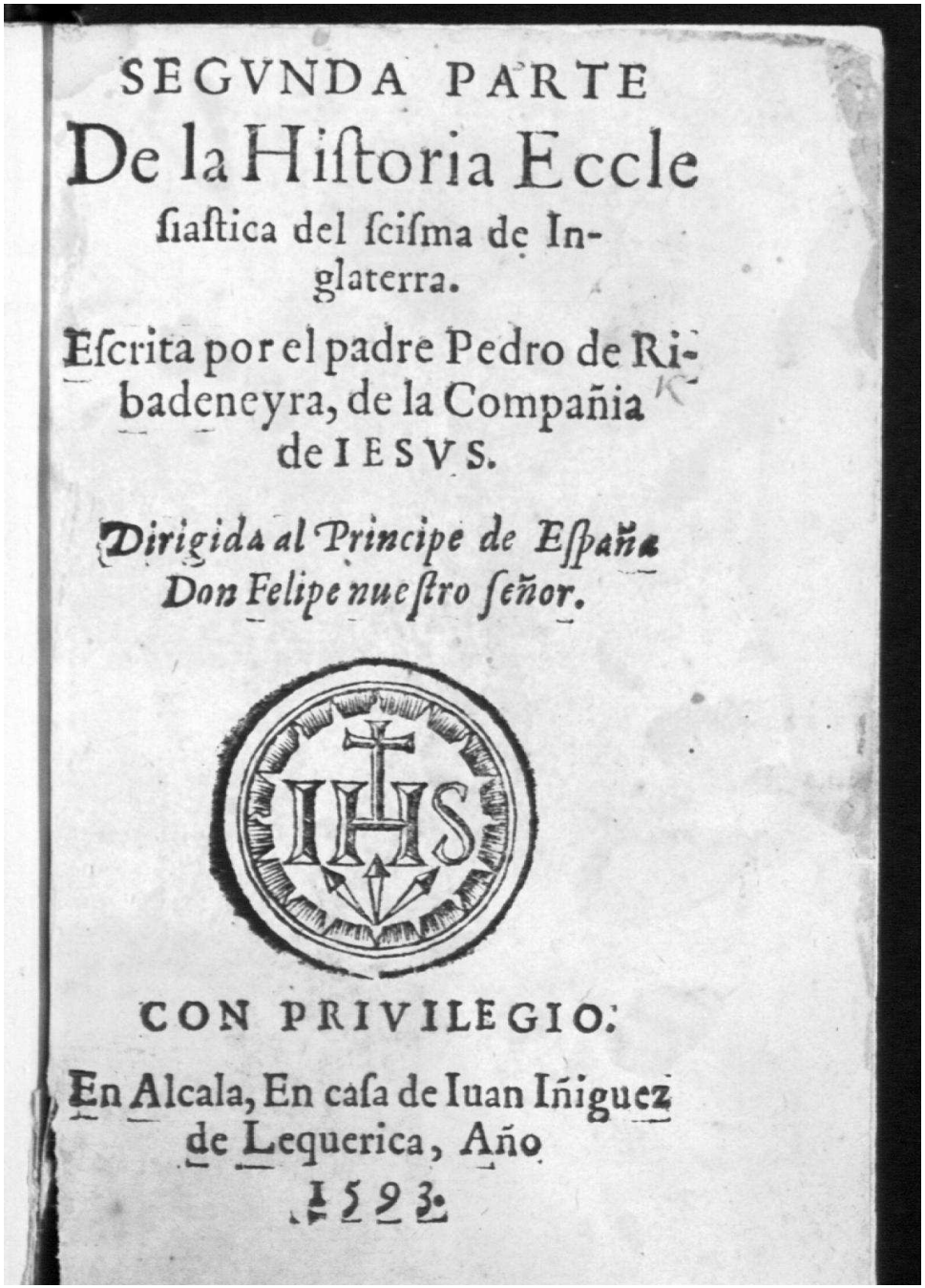
Pedro de Ribadeneyra




Bay of Biscay
FRANCE
Rhône
Garonne
Cape Finisterre
A Coruña
Cijón
Santander
Donostia-
San Sebastián
Pico de Aneto
11,169 ft.
(3,404 m)
ANDORRA
Oviedo
Bilbao
Pamplona
Santiago de
Compostela
Minho
León
Pyrénées
Cabo
Creus
Vigo
Burgos
Ebro
Segre
Zamora
Valladolid
Duero
Zaragoza
Barcelona
Salamanca
Tarragona
40° N
PORTUGAL
Madrid
Castellón
de la Plana
Menorca
0
100 Miles
0
100 Kilometers
Toledo
Mallorca
Palma de
Mallorca
Tagus
Valencia
Badajoz
Mérida
Guadiana
Júcar
Balearic
Islands
Alicante
Atlantic Ocean
Mediterranean Sea
Córdoba
Murcia
N
Guadalquivir
Seville
Cartagena
Granada
Almería
Jerez de la Frontera
Mulhacén
11,411 ft.
(3,478 m)
36° N
Gulf of
Cádiz
Cádiz
Málaga
Strait of Gibraltar
Ceuta (SPAIN)
GIBRALTAR (U.K.)
Melilla (SPAIN)
ALGERIA
4° E
8° W
MOROCCO
4° W
0°
4° E
Geopolitical
Historical
Zoom Out

Pedro de Ribadeneyra (1593)

The *Segunda Parte*, a sequel to Ribadeneyra's adaptation of *De schismate Anglicano*



SEGVNDA PARTE
De la Hiſtoria Eccle
ſiaſtica del ſciſma de In-
glaterra.

Eſcrita por el padre Pedro de Ri-
badeneyra, de la Compañia
de IESVS.

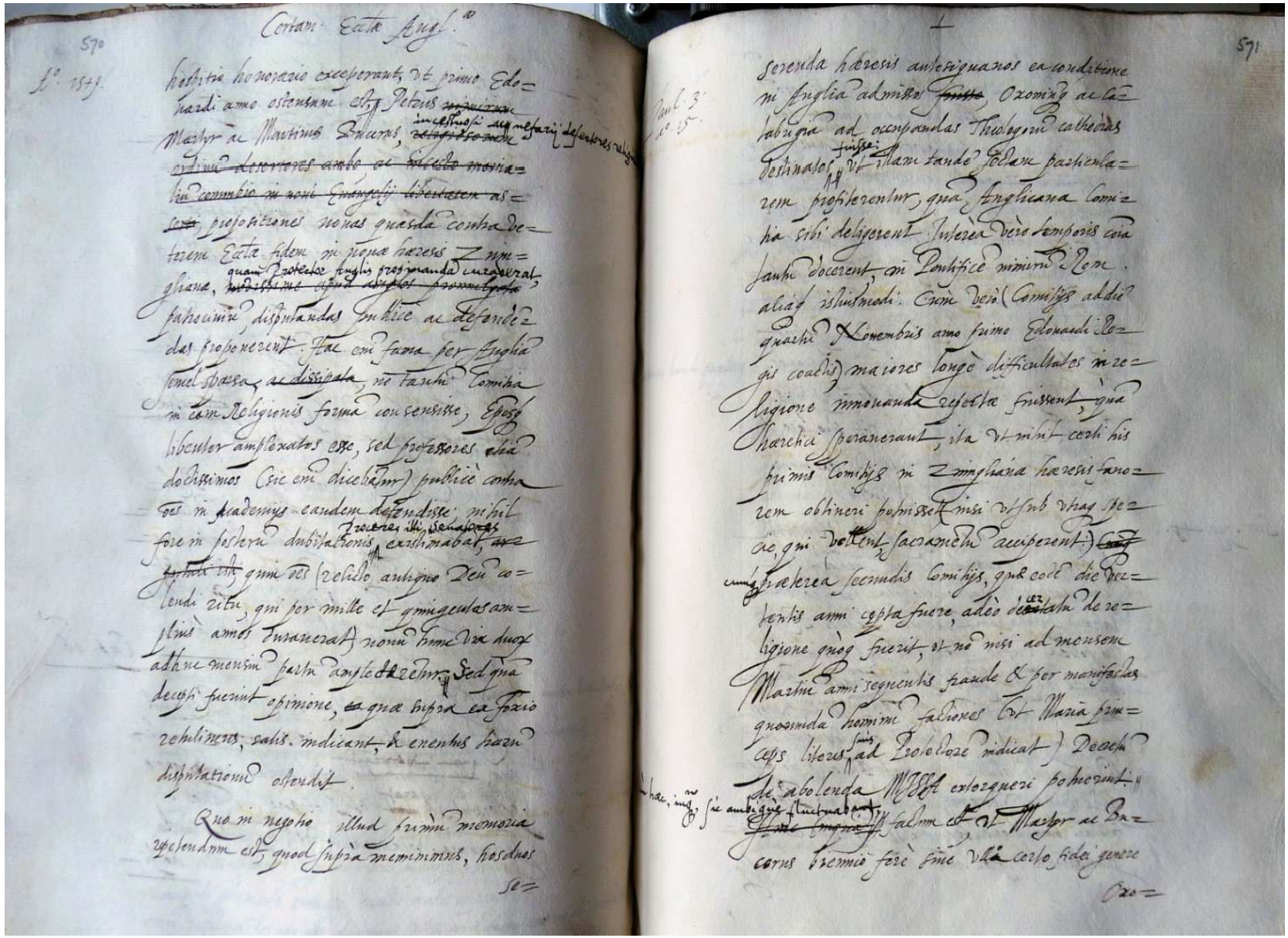
Dirigida al Principe de Eſpaña
Don Felipe nueſtro ſeñor.

IHS

CON PRIVILEGIO.

En Alcala, En caſa de Iuan Iñiguez
de Lequerica, Año
1593.

Certamen ecclesiae Anglicanae



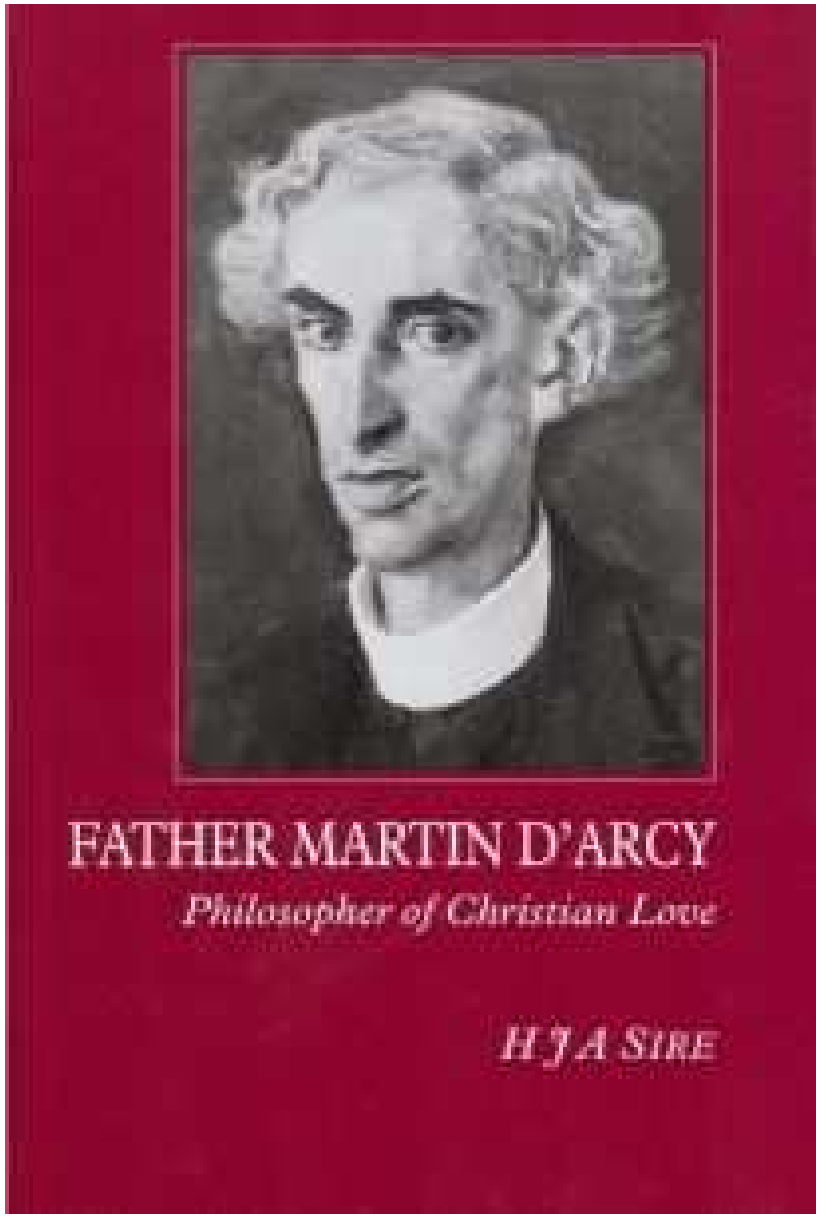
Stonyhurst, Lancs



Persons's hand



as preserved at Stonyhurst College, Lancashire


FATHER MARTIN D'ARCY
Philosopher of Christian Love
H J A SIRE