

## Renaissance and Reformation Renaissance et Réforme



### Domínguez, Freddy Cristóbal. Radicals in Exile: English Catholic Books during the Reign of Philip II

Anne J. Cruz

Volume 45, Number 1, Winter 2022

URI: <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1094230ar>

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.33137/rr.v45i1.39125>

[See table of contents](#)

Publisher(s)

Iter Press

ISSN

0034-429X (print)

2293-7374 (digital)

[Explore this journal](#)

Cite this review

Cruz, A. (2022). Review of [Domínguez, Freddy Cristóbal. Radicals in Exile: English Catholic Books during the Reign of Philip II]. *Renaissance and Reformation / Renaissance et Réforme*, 45(1), 204–206.  
<https://doi.org/10.33137/rr.v45i1.39125>

© Anne J. Cruz, 2022



This document is protected by copyright law. Use of the services of Érudit (including reproduction) is subject to its terms and conditions, which can be viewed online.

<https://apropos.erudit.org/en/users/policy-on-use/>

érudit

This article is disseminated and preserved by Érudit.

Érudit is a non-profit inter-university consortium of the Université de Montréal, Université Laval, and the Université du Québec à Montréal. Its mission is to promote and disseminate research.

<https://www.erudit.org/en/>

**Domínguez, Freddy Cristóbal.**

***Radicals in Exile: English Catholic Books during the Reign of Philip II.***

University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2020. Pp. xi, 250. ISBN 978-0-271-08601-9 (hardcover) US\$99.95.

The ongoing strife between sixteenth-century Spain and England manifested itself in numerous ways long before Philip II's so-called invincible armada. Beginning with Henry VIII's break with Rome, Freddy Domínguez's comprehensive study analyzes the political and social impact of the English Catholic literature written to motivate Spain's conquest of England. Divided into three parts, the book begins with "History in Action," tracing the polemics that followed the first Catholic history of the religious schism, *De schismate Anglicano* by the English priest Nicholas Sander. Together with his other anti-Elizabethan writings, Sander's controversial text, which intended to render the English queen illegitimate, continued to wield immense influence after his death in 1581 in later editions revised, expanded, and reissued by other exiled priests on the Continent.

Domínguez interweaves the text's own involved editing history and its fluctuating narrative promoting Spanish interests with the many writings of Jesuits who supported the Jesuit enterprise of reinstalling Catholicism in England. The modifications undergone by Sander's text and the various emphases placed on specific incidents by different editors afford him a rare opportunity to examine various Catholic perspectives on the complex historical events that took place from Henry VIII's reign to Philip's armada. Historical texts like Sander's *De schismate* and the Spanish Jesuit Pedro de Ribadeneyra's *Historia ecclesiastica del scisma de Inglaterra*, were closely aligned with the popular Spanish devotional literature that encouraged good Christian behaviour. Heavily influenced by Spanish spirituality, the English Jesuit Robert Persons united the two notions in his *A Christian directorie*.

Persons belonged to the group of Catholics protected by Philip II. In Part II, "The King's Men," Domínguez reviews the Jesuit seminaries that harboured English priests, especially St. Alban's English College in Valladolid. He extends his analysis of English-Spanish conflicts to the intensified tensions with France, a fertile ground for anti-Protestant literature. Print also facilitated anti-Spanish literature, which attacked Philip not only for religious but also for political reasons, criticizing his expansionist ambitions. Yet, as Domínguez

points out, in the early 1590s, Philip launched his own print campaign against the English queen and took interest in Persons's pseudonymous treatise, *Responsio ad edictum*, which contested Elizabeth's edict against Catholics and expanded Sander's earlier *De schismate*. In its stronger defence of the king's policy towards England, however, Persons's text upheld Spanish interventionism on theological grounds while depicting Elizabeth as plotting to destroy European unity.

The view of the good king and evil queen was disseminated by another English exile, Thomas Stapleton, whose pseudonymous *Apologia pro Rege Catholico Philippo II* appeared in Flanders. Advertised in one of Persons's pamphlets, the *Apologia* demonized Elizabeth, linking her to Islam. Such polemics were nevertheless often site-specific, as the Netherlands was undergoing a civil war. In contrast, the recusant Robert Southwell intended to appease Elizabeth in his *An Humble Supplication to her Maiestie* by attempting to convince her subjects of the conspiracies against the Catholic community, while spurring other appeals for more criticism of her government. Domínguez underscores the ambiguities of the polemics carried out in print, noting that Philip was careful in his plans to overtly publicize Spain's greatness. His official court historian, Antonio de Herrera, defended Philip's Portuguese takeover in 1580 in his *Cinco libros de la historia de Portugal*, whose historiographical method combined the search for truth with political ideology in its defence of Philip's rule.

Philip's great concern was to demonstrate his role as a Catholic monarch. In 1593, Ribadeneyra published a second book, *Segunda parte de la historia ecclesiastica del scisma de Inglaterra*, that minimized the complex politics of government and muted his praise for Philip. Although aimed against Elizabeth, it included a translation of her edict against Catholics, giving her an unwanted voice in Spanish. Its warnings to the king and the reformist attitude of its companion volume, *Tratado de la tribulación*, displeased Philip, who ordered it withdrawn from circulation until Elizabeth's edict was deleted. Yet, despite their providentialism, books such as Ribadeneyra's revealed the English Catholics' frustration over Philip's lack of action.

In Part III, "(Habsburg) England and Spain Reformed," Domínguez emphasizes the strategies deployed by these writings, including two books and other texts by Persons, aimed at the public in order to influence the king. Persons took part in the attempts to justify Spanish claims to the English throne as the main author of a book that appeared in various iterations in English, Spanish,

and Latin. Intended for public consumption, it examined Philip's rights by means of genealogical arguments. Domínguez skillfully analyzes Persons's use of his previous *Conference* to argue to English readers that Philip, even when considered a Habsburg foreigner, would make a good ruler and they would benefit under imperial rule. Domínguez not only explains the *Conference's* various arguments in favour of Philip's claim and the English challenges against it, but also Philip's and Persons's complex involvement in papal politics.

The battles among English Catholics spurred Persons to write *Memorial for the Reformation of England*, intended to make palatable a possible invasion of England and aiming at détente between Catholic factions. Domínguez analyzes the text as Persons's call for the restoration of a Church led by bishops in a culture of temperance and sanctity. He references a Spanish text that unmistakably influenced Persons. Juan de Mariana's Latin history of Spain, *Historia de rebus Hispaniae*, supported episcopal authority over secular government while insisting that ecclesiastical riches should alleviate secular expenses such as war. Persons's *Memorial* reveals its dependence in its claim that ecclesiastical authority would ensure royal power along with the state's stability, yet it also insisted on checks and balances.

Of the many authors exhaustively examined in this dense but fascinating study, Robert Persons clearly stands out as the one radical whose works encapsulate the interconnected opinions, shifting argumentation, and equivocal strategies shared among the extended community of exiled Jesuits. In reviewing their multifarious writings, Freddy Domínguez's important book expands our knowledge of English and Spanish Catholic print culture beyond immediate confessional considerations to illuminate instead the tangled polemics of secular rule and spiritual authority.

ANNE J. CRUZ

University of Miami

<https://doi.org/10.33137/rr.v45i1.39125>