of “compromise and negotiation.” Lucy Munro’s chapter on gender and genre in Fletcher and Massinger’s *The Double Marriage* argues that Martia, the character with the chief capacity for amoral political disruption, is an Amazon whose piracy is punished beyond her deserts.

The volume’s final three chapters consider the “afterlife” of Renaissance piracy. Mark Netzloff argues that, whereas Drake became a myth to the Victorians, he was a spectral figure in the creative writing of his own time. Only minor writers associated with the urban mercantile classes, who saw Drake as a model for their maritime ventures, dealt with his commercial piracy. Claire Jowitt’s chapter focussing on the discontinuous ways in which the Elizabethan and Jacobean states treated pirates examines the political inconsistencies and arbitrary justice involved in their executions. Gerald MacLean surveys war-mongering poetry following American Independence to challenge the USA’s claim to be historically exceptional. Easy expectations about conquering the corsairs are paralleled to today’s imperial illusions, Maclean finding in a poem by a Boston-born lawyer, David Humphreys, militaristic “disinformation.”

A strong point in this miscellaneous volume is that its chapters refer to one another. Although well documented and amply annotated, it is at times held together by little more than simple anti-imperialism. Its exposition and argumentation are uneven, and the editing might have been much stronger given the typographical and grammatical errors.

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Michael S. Springer

Restoring Christ’s Church: John a Lasco and the Forma ac ratio

St. Andrews studies in Reformation history. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007. Pp. ix, 177.

In recent years there has been a quiet resurgence of interest in the Polish nobleman and reformer Jan Łaski or John a Lasco (1499–1560). Lasco has emerged from the shadows and now must be considered with Calvin and Bullinger as one of the three major figures of the Reformed tradition. Indeed it can be argued that in the latter stages of his career he was even more influential than Calvin himself in shaping the contours of the Reformed church on an international level. Lasco was certainly the most well travelled of the three. He never lived more than five years in a single place as his career took him from London to Vilnius with many stops in between. From a privileged background of power and wealth, Lasco was accustomed to lead, and

wherever he went, he quickly commanded respect and authority. In London not only did he assume leadership of the Stranger Church, he also involved himself in the internal affairs of the English church and became in Diarmaid MacCulloch's assessment the kingdom's first Puritan. In East Frisia, he was superintendent of the duchy's church and from Emden exerted a significant influence on the development of the Reformed movement in the Low Countries. Towards the end of his life he returned to his homeland where he essentially founded the Calvinist church of Little Poland and Lithuania.

Ironically, it is this very significance that has made Lasco such a difficult target of study. Of all the major Protestant reformers, scholarship on the Polish churchman is the most fragmented and disjointed. Though there are a number of fine studies on Lasco including the volume under review, no single work has adequately captured the range and impact of his activities, for there are few scholars who have both the command of the sources and the necessary languages to assess adequately his multi-faceted career. Oskar Bartel's edited biography, though deficient at points, may still offer the best overview while a fine new monograph by Henning Jürgens that primarily examines the reformer's activities in East Frisia is particularly impressive for the author's work with the scattered Lasco correspondence. The most recent contribution to this growing field is Michael Springer's revised dissertation, *Restoring Christ's Church*. Though modest in scope, Springer's study serves as an excellent introduction to Lasco while capturing a critical aspect of the reformer's work.

Springer's thesis is relatively simple. Instead of examining a specific interlude of Lasco's career such as his years in London or later in Germany, Springer focuses on what he has rightly identified as his most important work, the *Forma ac ratio*. Phil Benedict has recently argued that it was the *Forma ac ratio* and Calvin's *Institutes* that were the most important documents in defining the Reformed church. Springer picks up on this observation and devotes his monograph to a close analysis of this critical text. What was the *Forma ac ratio*, and why was it so significant? When Lasco was compelled to leave East Frisia, he accepted a call to organize the Stranger Church in London. In the mid-sixteenth century an estimated five to six thousand foreigners were living in London, nearly eight percent of the city's entire population. Many of these were religious exiles, and Lasco was charged with their spiritual care. Over the protest of Nicholas Ridley, the Bishop of London, the Stranger Church remained an independent ecclesiastical body. Lasco's task was to organize its worship and administration. It was from this daunting assignment that the massive *Forma ac ratio* ultimately emerged.

After his introductory chapters that give necessary background to the genesis and development of the *Forma ac ratio*, Springer settles down to a close reading of the text. He begins by discussing ecclesiastical administration. Lasco developed a system that was something of a hybrid between Geneva and Wittenberg. While he believed that the church should be supervised by a superintendent, a type of Reformed bishop, he also established a monthly assembly of ministers that functioned in a manner similar to Geneva's Company of Pastors. In like fashion his view of the church's public ministry of preaching and the administration of the sacraments brought together elements from a range of Protestant sources. Most distinctive, though, was his understanding and implementation of church discipline that quickly became a hallmark of the Reformed tradition. In a concluding chapter Springer ties a number of themes together as he evaluates the impact of the *Forma ac ratio* on a broad range of Reformed communities across Europe.

Restoring Christ's Church is a succinct and accessible introduction to the Polish reformer. Avoiding a more parochial assessment of Lasco in London, Springer consistently seeks to locate the cosmopolitan churchman in a European context. Springer is also correct in his broader appraisal of Lasco's significance in the Reformed movement. Lasco is best understood not as a theologian but as an organizer and administrator. Here his innovations were in many ways as important as Calvin's theological insights. I do, however, have a few small quibbles with this fine monograph. Springer tends to underestimate the impact of Erasmus on Lasco's thought. Lasco himself noted that it was during a stay with Erasmus that he began to understand the nature of faith, and his own theology was marked by a simple Biblicism that is clearly an expression of Erasmian ideas. Missing from the bibliography is George Williams' important article on Erasmianism in Poland which examines in significant detail the impact of the older humanist on the young Pole. In my estimation Springer also does not adequately capture Lasco's aspirations for his Polish homeland. As Calvin longed for the reformation of France, so in analogous fashion Lasco dreamed of a strong and united Protestant church in Poland. The 1555 *Forma ac ratio* was actually dedicated to King Sigismund II Augustus, and throughout his entire career Lasco corresponded with leaders of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. Still, these are minor criticisms of a book that effectively introduces the important contributions of Poland's peripatetic reformer.

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