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## Brief Notices

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## BRIEF NOTICES

Payton, Leland, and Crystal Payton. *Mystery of the Irish Wilderness: Land and Legend of Father John Joseph Hogan's Lost Irish Colony in the Ozark Wilderness*. (Springfield, MO: Lens and Pen Press. 2008. Pp. vi, 128. \$18.95 paperback. ISBN 978-0-967-39254-7.)

In our modern world, it is hard to imagine the thrill experienced by many young Catholic boys in the early-nineteenth century as they devoured the stories of faithful priests taking the sacraments and faith of the Church to distant lands recounted in the *Annals of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith*. Yet, such was the case for young John Joseph Hogan growing up in rural Ireland in the early-nineteenth century. It was the images of these missionary priests that inspired Hogan, who had immigrated to St. Louis during the years of the Potato Famine in Ireland, when still a young priest to embark on a missionary career himself by ministering to small groups of isolated Catholic immigrants in the rural Missouri of the late-antebellum period. Hogan's labors in Missouri were recognized and rewarded by the Holy See. He was appointed first bishop of the newly formed See of St. Joseph's in 1868.

Although this work is not a scholarly analysis of Catholic missionary work in the nineteenth century, its value to historians is the Paytons' adroit use of material from the writings of Hogan that they discovered in the archives of the Archdiocese of St. Louis and the Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph. These first-person journals and notes record the ingenuity and dedication of a young Catholic priest forced to deal creatively with virulent anti-Catholic prejudice in addition to the numerous trials and travails of frontier travel. The book is also beautifully adorned with color pictures of the locations and sites visited by the missionary priest.

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JOHN MACK

Wells, Kim, and Malcolm Wells. *Camino Footsteps: Reflections on a Journey to Santiago de Compostela*. (Fremantle, Australia: Fremantle Press. 2008. Pp. 168. \$35.00. ISBN 978-1-921-36125-8.)

For anyone who has made the *camino*, this little volume, with its numerous photos of Spanish landscape and historical and religious monuments, is bound to inspire pleasant memories. It is also likely to remind anyone who has walked the 798 kilometers from St. Jean Pied-de-Port, in the French Pyrenees, to Santiago de Compostela, in northwestern Spain, that the experience of the *camino* means many things to many people. To the authors of this book, it meant a two-week bus trip in the middle of what is usually a four-week walk and nights in pleasant little hotels rather than the usually more

rustic and austere pilgrim shelters (*refugios* or *albergues*) that mark the ancient way. Nevertheless, the book will provide not only happy memories for veterans of the experience but also a broad introduction for those unfamiliar with the phenomenon and a helpful orientation for those who may be planning for this pilgrimage.

In addition to numerous anecdotes about their own experiences, Kim and Malcolm Wells provide some brief, uncritical historical notes and commentary on the history of the *camino* and on various sites and monuments along the way. Although there are no references or index, there are a few maps and numerous pages of helpful hints with regard to climate, packing, photography, the pilgrim passport, first aid, and so forth. As the authors note, people embark on the *camino* for many different reasons; some do so for exercise, some for adventure, and some for religious purposes. The authors are not hesitant to draw attention to the Christian origins and continuing religious attraction of the *camino* experience for many, but they make few significant spiritual or theological reflections on that experience and history. Moreover, they repeatedly misrepresent the Catholic understanding of the sacramental forgiveness of sins and the effects of plenary indulgences, describing the latter as “a full remission of sins” (pp. 13, 149).

For these authors and for many others, the *camino* remains a unique and public outward expression of an inward spiritual journey. Through photos and text, the authors have provided an attractive introduction to this experience, which continues to draw thousands from around the world, each year, to follow in the footsteps of so many others for well over a millennium, toward the shrine of St. James the Apostle in Galicia. JAMES F. GARNEAU (*Mount Olive College*)

Wright, J. Robert. *A Companion to Bede: A Reader's Commentary on The Ecclesiastical History of the English People*. (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co. 2008. \$25.00. ISBN 978-0-802-86309-6.)

The best way to describe this book is probably in the author's own words. J. Robert Wright explains in the introduction that “[t]he purpose of this *Companion* is to assist readers to follow Bede with understanding and insight,” and that “[t]hese notes are not designed for the academic researcher, but for the intelligent and enquiring reader who may desire an extended picture that goes beneath the surface” (p. 5). This is what he set out to produce and this is exactly what he has achieved, with skill and elegance. After a short but informative introduction to Bede's life and intellectual legacy, the rest of the book is taken up with a commentary on the *Ecclesiastical History*, chapter by chapter; although sometimes two or three chapters that do not require more detailed discussion are run together. It is not a formal commentary, picking out particular words and phrases for detailed explication, but an explana-

tory discussion of the overall contents of each chapter, with special attention to wider contexts or additional information that a general reader may need to make sense of the text. As the author stresses, the book is best read in tandem with the *Ecclesiastical History* itself. It ends with a chronology and a short list of recommendations for further reading, again aimed at the kind of readership Wright envisages. He is perhaps too modest, in that many students will also find this a helpful companion when reading Bede's masterpiece. ROGER COLLINS (*University of Edinburgh*)