

Reviews

Patricia Crawford and Laura Gowing (eds), *Women's Worlds in Seventeenth-Century England: A Sourcebook*, London, Routledge, 1999, pp. xviii + 314, pb. £15.99, ISBN: 0415156386

Women's Worlds is a wonderful read and an invaluable teaching tool that fills a gap. Past anthologies about early-modern women have relied on printed (largely prescriptive) material, but *Women's Worlds* is filled with extracts from surviving manuscripts, diaries, letters and court records. A few printed sources have been used, such as extracts from Hannah Wolley's *The Compleat Servant Maid* (1677) and Mary Astell's *Some Reflections Upon Marriage* (1706), but on the whole this is a volume drawing women out of the archives. The selected extracts are complemented by nice illustrations, many from the Pepys Ballads.

The book is divided into 10 sections – Bodies, Religion, Beliefs and Spirituality; Work; Poverty and Property; Sexual Experiences; Marriage; Maternity; Relationships; Politics and Protests; Mental Worlds – each with several subsections and overlaps in material that defy the standard subject boundaries. For example, the chapter on Religion does not privilege theology and denomination, but rather non-denominational female piety and a range of popular beliefs including witchcraft.

It is difficult to summarise a book as rich as this, but four strong themes emerge. First, the religious *mentalité* of early-modern women. Women's piety and faith shaped their world view and offered empowerment through co-option of the divine and transcendence of self. Religion also offered the mental apparatus for interpreting female bodily experience and providing emotional equanimity when faced with death. Women's belief in the continuity of life and afterlife enabled them to establish perpetual connection with children who died ('O it is not a small mercy to enjoy the life of children ... [b]lessed is my good God ... all must in time perish'), something perhaps wrongly identified by Lawrence Stone some time ago as emotional detachment.

The second theme to appear strongly is early-modern womanhood as an 'embodied' experience. Crawford and Gowing argue that '[i]n early modern thought, minds and bodies were intimately related'. An extract from Ann Bathurst's meditations reveals her expressing her religious faith through bodily (and highly sexualised) metaphors – her body enters the body of Christ and *vice versa* and her soul 'quicken' like a pregnancy.

Such expressions of female religious devotion leave the reader with an impression of femininity that may be in dialogue with, but also rivals, the prescribed femininity of sermons and conduct books. This book addresses the gap between discursive constructions of 'woman' and women's lived experience, raising important questions about the cultural construction of gender. For example, the Hippocratic/Galenic medical constructions of female biology were 'a source of profound misogyny', but the recipe books here provide us with positive attempts by women to assert female control over menstruation, reproduction, childbirth and lactation.

The third theme is women's powerful sense of political and work identity. While wealthy women had informal access to high politics, less wealthy women became involved in direct political action. Crawford and Gowing point out that according to the law, women were born free and that this led to a strong sense of citizenship with all the political rights and duties that that implied. As an example they give us Catherine Mills of Beckenham in Kent, who was hauled before the assizes in 1605 for telling James I that as a Scot he had no birthright to the English crown. The chapter on Work gives us Anne Laverenst's advertisement of her unlicensed gynaecological practice in London, the determined trading of the unlicensed linen draper, Elizabeth Wheeler, as well as the woman who described herself in court as 'a butterwoman by profession'. However, the overwhelming impression gained from the sources is of the precariousness of most women's economic lives. 'Getting a living' in the chapter on Work shades almost imperceptibly into "making shift" in the sections on Poverty, just as Margaret Atkinson's domestic service turned almost accidentally into prostitution.

A fourth theme is women's relationships. Friendships between women were based on 'proximity, functionality and reciprocity', but what this sometimes translated into was enmity and conflict. Letters of literate women demonstrate the depth of their friendships, but illiterate women can only be viewed through court depositions when they traded insults like 'mistress turd pie'. The class contrast is stark and dictated by availability of sources. However, it is sensitivity to problems such as this that raises further the value of this intrinsically interesting sourcebook. In chapter introductions and prefaces to extracts Crawford and Gowing provide a marvellous commentary on the nature and deployment of historical evidence.

University of Hull

Amanda Capern

Allen G. Debus, *Chemistry and Medical Debate: van Helmont to Boerhaave*, Nantucket, MA, Science History Publications, 2001, pp. xvii + 277, \$52.00, ISBN: 0 88135 292 6

Herbert Butterfield rang the bell that called the wits together, to tell the world that there had in the seventeenth century been a Scientific Revolution, equal at least in importance to the Renaissance and Reformation. But fifty years ago, when Allen Debus took up the history of science, method (as in Francis Bacon, Galileo and Descartes) seemed the key, and astronomy the paradigm science where the revolution began. Copernicus and Newton marked the beginning and end of this turbulent time; and other sciences subsequently had found, or would find, their Kepler and Newton. At first as a lonely figure, Debus challenged this reductive perception (where science

is either physics or stamp-collecting) by looking at medicine and chemistry: and it is a sign of how successful he has been in broadening our vision that his latest book seems uncontroversial – medicine and chemistry have become mainstream again when we look at the seventeenth century, as they clearly were: for every astronomical publication, there were dozens of medical ones, and health is always momentous. The bibliography occupying pp. 239–65 of this book will be extremely valuable for anyone seeking primary or secondary sources.

Nevertheless, there would be few households where the names Jean Baptiste van Helmont and Hermann Boerhaave would be instantly recognised, and the book is therefore necessary. Alchemy was an important part of chemistry (perhaps better distanced from us by using the old spelling, chymistry) as we now know from scholarship on Robert Boyle and Newton; and it had entered medicine with the work of Paracelsus in the early sixteenth century, amid great controversy. By the seventeenth century, the recognition that desperate diseases require desperate remedies had led to mercury, antimony and other metallic preparations entering the pharmacopoeia. Chemistry became the handmaid of medicine, and was to be based in medical schools until the mid nineteenth century.

Debus sketches some of the controversies involving Helmont, notably that to do with weapon salve: pouring medicines over the weapon which had caused a wound, rather than down the patient's gullet, seemed to work – but landed Helmont in an Inquisition gaol. Chemical views of digestion, which posed the problem of why we don't digest our own guts, were opposed by mechanists, who saw the whole process as food-grinding. There were those (and the view persisted down into the twentieth century) who saw chemists as essentially artisans rather than natural philosophers; and Debus introduces us to a large cast, some famous and some now obscure, who entered into medical controversies sometimes almost as violently expressed as theological ones. His story ends with Boerhaave and the ascendancy of the Leiden medical school where his reputation as chemist, doctor, botanist and Newtonian seemed thoroughly modern; but Debus shows how continuous his thinking was with that going back over a century. It is perhaps a pity that Debus is so calm and judicious, unlike many of his protagonists: A. J. Balfour remarked that if philosophy was worth anything, there was no reason why it should be made dull. This examination of a long seventeenth century is not dull and should be widely read, but could be more fun: we do not doubt the importance of chemistry in medicine, but nor did our ancestors and they were happy to play with words and ideas. Just as Coleridge went to Humphrey Davy's lectures to improve his stock of metaphors, so those working on seventeenth-century literature will find here some fascinating background material presented with deep scholarship. Do read it.

University of Durham

David Knight

Bernhard Klein, *Maps and the Writing of Space in Early Modern England and Ireland*, Basingstoke/London, Palgrave, 2000, pp. 235, hb. £45, ISBN: 0 333779 339

In recent years, early modern literary studies have received a new and challenging impulse through the integration of spatial theories inaugurated most forcefully by

French philosophers such as Gaston Bachelard, Michel Foucault and Henri Lefebvre, and introduced to the Anglo-Saxon academy by Fredric Jameson and Edward Soja, among others. The new spatial theory has impacted very fruitfully upon early modern literary studies. In the analysis of Renaissance poetry, prose and drama there has been a gradually sharpening focus upon the writing of social and geographical space, beginning with Turner's *The Politics of Landscape* (1979), continuing via Wayne's *Penshurst* (1984), Mullaney's much cited *The Place of the Stage* (1988), Helgerson's *Forms of Nationhood* (1992), Gillies' *Shakespeare and the Geography of Difference* (1994), and culminating with recent work such as Mikalachki's *The Legacy of Boadicea* (1998), or Sullivan's *The Drama of Landscape* (1998).¹ It is in this context that a newly published study *Maps and the Writing of Space in Early Modern England and Ireland*, by the Dortmund Renaissance scholar Bernhard Klein, is to be placed as an exciting and original contribution to early modern spatial studies.

Since Lefebvre, spatial theory has started with the premise that space is not a container in which objects are situated, but rather that it is moulded out of the relationships between objects, and of operations undertaken by social actors – that space is dynamic, both productive of and a product of social relationships. A similar premise guides Klein's research: maps are not to be understood 'merely as containers of geographical data but as pictorial sites of cultural and political conflict' (114); maps do not describe the spaces of which they are the two-dimensional reduced-scale images, but rather, construct, and thereby contribute to the production of those spaces. As complex semiotic ensembles, they are the result, like any other signifying artefacts, of paradigmatic processes of selection and syntagmatic processes of combination. As constructions of space, they are also implicated in political and social programmes seeking to mould, influence and control space, and thus are anything but objective representations of their physical, topographical referents. Within this theoretical framework, Klein sets out to elaborate an archaeology of cartographic representation in the context of early modern England and Ireland. His central thesis is that the development of cartography was intimately entangled with the emergence of English national identity in the modern age. This notion is explored in a dazzling display of erudition in which not only maps, atlases and estate surveys themselves, but also texts as diverse as treaties on the business of surveying and map-making, contemporary travel documents, dramas, prose and poetry are examined by the author to constitute a convincing account of the ways in which the mapping of the early modern nation was instrumental in the rising consciousness of national selfhood.

It is hardly surprising, for a critic concerned to scrutinize early modern configurations of discursive and physical space, that Klein's study is organized in rigorously geometrical patterns reminiscent of the triadic theoretical concepts elaborated by Lefebvre, to which, moreover, the author explicitly refers (49).² Klein's exploration of the mental and material renegotiation of lived space into a symbolic representation and the hugely influential semantic transfer of organic into functional space is structured according to a triptych devoted to numbers, images and texts respectively. This ternary structure unfolds in three sections focused first upon 'measurement', which describes the practice of cosmography gradually being superseded by that of surveying; then upon 'cartographies', in which the visualization of space is shown to have been driven by the fostering of map consciousness; and finally on 'narratives', where Klein demonstrates how cartographic images were supplemented by texts narrativizing the images of nationhood to be found on early maps.

These three parts in turn each contain three chapters which move respectively from a broader context of early modern spatial and cartographic discourses, to the practical application of such discourses in the elaboration of notions of English national identity, and finally to their implementation in occupied Ireland for purposes of surveillance and subjection of the Irish people and their country.

In the first part of the study, the author tracks the increasing elision, in cosmological discourses of the sixteenth century, of an explicitly social notion of space, under the pressure of an ascendant discourse of geometrical measurement. The mapping impulse is increasingly symptomatic of a masculist, rationalist and instrumentalizing attitude towards geographical space. Klein then moves on to a more local domain, examining practices of estate surveying as expounded by commentators such as Norden, Rathborne or Digges, and their contribution to the advancing commodification of agrarian space through enclosures. The new estate maps drawn up according to geometrical methods by surveyors effectively dramatized an ongoing marginalization of the tenants and their perspective as the immediate users of the land. Finally, the author relates measurement to the colonization of Ireland, and the use of surveying as a tool of military planning and control. Surveying, in this context, was conceived as a means of imposing order upon the wild landscape, and by extension, upon its wild inhabitants, the recalcitrant Irish rebels, attitudes Klein finds exemplified in literary texts by Hooker, Davies and Spenser. Here the structures of surveillance intrinsic to survey methods come to the fore, also reminding us of cartography and geography's disciplinary links with the military.

The second part of Klein's book describes the rise of what he terms 'map-consciousness' (81), in which the map became enough a part of everyday epistemologies to encode the perception of physical space in cartographic terms. This novel 'map-consciousness' was a crucial component in the role played by cartographic discourse in the national imagination, and in particular in its expression of a desire to gain a unified, totalizing and thus controlling view of space. However, there were some contemporaries who saw maps as a dangerous illusion, or as an abstraction of real geographical space, or regretted the erasure of internal differentiation in the new maps and the resulting impression that the land of England and Wales was the same everywhere – an inevitable result of the filtering and standardizing processes upon which cartography depends, as the author suggests in the two opening sections of this part, devoted to miscellaneous early modern voices from contemporaries such as John Dee or Samuel Daniel through to dramatic personae such as King Lear. Unsurprisingly, such homogenization of regional difference exactly corresponded to and bore out discourses of national unity, exemplified in the work of map makers such as Christopher Saxton or John Speed. This homogenizing impulse, claims Klein in the third section of 'cartographies', ideally served English colonial ambitions in the Irish context. In maps of colonial Ireland such as the military maps of John Bartlett or the plantation surveys of Thomas Raven the author detects an increasingly controlling discourse of integration which assimilated Ireland, within Jacobean discourses of the unification of Great Britain, to a 'British' identity – one in which the Hibernian component was registered as a subjected anomaly with little transgressive force for political disturbance of the mainland core.

The third part of the study concentrates upon the ways in which visual images of Britain were dynamized to offer narratives of national supremacy. The influence of chorographies in retrieving local histories was enormous, but such regional historical

narratives tended to fragment the global view of the country made accessible by the work of cartographers such as Saxton and Speed. Here a conflict between the 'itineraries' and 'maps' (the formulation is de Certeau's) becomes evident. Klein traces this conflict through a reading of the respective topoi of national identity evinced in the dynamic geographies of Spenser's *Faerie Queen* as opposed to the static, paradigmatic national space of Drayton's *Poly-Olbion*. The same tension can be found in the ambivalent function of apocryphal English accounts of Irish cannibalism, which on the one hand symbolize the resistance, both social and geographical, encountered by English colonizers; and on the other, served, as an index of barbarism, to legitimize the civilizing mission of English settlement of Ireland. In one particularly extreme figure, English narratives of Irish cannibalism had the native inhabitants achieving their own self-annihilation through anthropophagy, thus erasing their own presence from the land and allowing the inauguration of a narrative of colonial occupation – in a classic gesture still operating, for instance, in Australia until the beginning of the 1990s in the legal doctrine of *terra nullis*.

Klein's *Maps and the Writing of Space in Early Modern England and Ireland* is a highly polished piece of interdisciplinary scholarship made all the more exciting by the sheer pace of the argumentation. For a very compact monograph, Klein's study surveys an astonishingly wide range of documentation, whence the speed at which the author moves. The writing is elegant and witty, but never falters in its consistently high level of conceptualization. Klein's research is clearly indebted to much post-structuralist and new-historicist theory, but in pleasing contrast to much contemporary literary criticism, is not weighed down by long-winded theoretical polemics. Rather, the study evinces again and again a minute attention to the working of texts, both cartographic and literary, in their representation and organization of geographical and social realities. Klein's readings are a salutary example, for today's students, of a well-balanced conjunction of theoretical coherence and innovation, historical contextualization and a fine sense of the creative workings of literary texts. For all those interested in the area of early modern cultural and literary studies, this book is to be warmly recommended.

Lüneburg

Russell West

Notes

- 1 James Turner, *The Politics of Landscape: Rural Scenery and Society in English Poetry 1630–1660* (Oxford, Blackwell, 1979); Don E. Wayne, *Penshurst: The Semiotics of Place and the Poetics of History* (London, Methuen, 1984); Steven Mullaney, *The Place of the Stage: License, Play and Power in Renaissance England* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1988); Richard Helgerson, *Forms of Nationhood: The Elizabethan Writing of England* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1992); John Gillies, *Shakespeare and the Geography of Difference* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1994); Jodi Mikalachki, *The Legacy of Boadicea: Gender and Nation in Early Modern England* (London, Routledge, 1998); Garrett A. Sullivan, *The Drama of Landscape: Land, Property and Social Relations on the Early Modern Stage* (Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1998).
- 2 See Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. D. Nicolson-Smith (Oxford, Blackwell, 1991), 33, 38–9; *La Production de l'espace* (Paris, Editions Anthropos, 1974), 42–3, 48–9.

Nabil Matar, *Islam in Britain 1558–1685*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1998, pp. xi + 226, hb. £37.50, ISBN: 0521162336

This is an uncommonly interesting monograph. Professor Matar has performed a remarkable act of scholarly retrieval as evidenced by his arresting title. Until this pioneer work, the intellectual, commercial, cultural and religious impact of Islam on Britain, between the accession of Elizabeth I to the death of Charles II, was relegated to footnotes.

The story he tells is full of interest, abounds in arresting detail and constantly surprises. In five carefully crafted chapters he explores the conversion of Britons to Islam and Muslims to Christianity; how the phenomenon of ‘turning Turk’ was represented on stage, from the pulpit and in literature; the intellectual fascination with the Arab-Islamic legacy, not least as *prisca sapientia* [primal wisdom]; how the Muslim and Jew were fantasized in the developing eschatological literature. Commercial and diplomatic links with the Ottoman world are also examined.

These developments are evidence of the fascination and fear generated by the Ottoman Empire and its North African regencies on British society. Istanbul was the biggest city in Europe, the centre of a multi-ethnic empire, admired for its religious tolerance, and offering unrivalled possibilities of social mobility to converts. It was also a formidable military power still in its expansionist phase: in the seventeenth century, it conquered Rhodes and Crete and threatened Vienna. At this period Turk and Muslim were synonyms.

What comes as a surprise was the relative impunity with which British coastal towns were raided and shipping threatened by Turkish men-of-war. In the early 1580s Queen Elizabeth was urged by the East Levant Company representative in Istanbul to protect her subjects from future captivity in the Ottoman domains which in the previous 20 years had already cost four thousand pounds to redeem. In 1625 60 men, women and children were carried away from one Cornish town. By 1630 families of some 3,000 Englishmen held in captivity in Algiers were petitioning the King for help.

Commercial links with the Ottomans were of increasing importance. In the late seventeenth century they probably accounted for a quarter of British trade. The Ottomans were also part of European balance of power, with British monarchs looking to them as a counterweight to the Spanish and Catholic powers. In commercial and diplomatic treaties with the Ottomans British monarchs, while seeking to effect the return of captives, had to concede that some of their subjects had converted to Islam and thereby renounced allegiance to England by becoming subjects to the Sultan. This was the context for the comments on these ‘renegades’ which began to feature in drama and sermon.

This was but one side of the picture. In the 1630s chairs in Arabic were established at Oxford and Cambridge, in 1649 an English translation of the Qur’an was published, scholars at Westminster School begin to contribute essays in Arabic. From Archbishop to Lord Protector, the Qur’an became a text widely consulted and quoted. Arabic became an adjunct to a complete university education, the hallmark of an enlightened Englishman.

In 1637 the Church of England established a process of penance and readmission for those who had converted to Islam while in captivity. Islam itself was often recruited as a rhetorical weapon in intra-Christian debates: a robust Ottoman religious Orthodoxy was commended by Anglicans impatient of the acids of dissent;

Islam's lack of a priesthood was commended by Puritans in the teeth of an oppressive Anglican hierarchy!

One of the most entertaining sections in the book is the debate which surrounded the introduction in the mid-seventeenth century of the first coffee-house. Within a decade, the drinking of coffee had become so popular as to threaten ... traditional ale! Known as the 'Mahometan berry' the debates around coffee touched on a range of issues, not least the question as to whether or not it enfeebled or heightened the sexual appetite! Was this a nefarious Muslim plot to undermine the fibre of the Christian Englishman? Coffee was seen, at the very least, as a species of Ottoman and Islamic cultural hegemony.

This is a ground-breaking study and a splendid read. It will be of interest to those working in many disciplines: history, theology, religious studies, English literature and cultural studies. It will be an invaluable source from which student and specialist alike will happily quarry for many years.

University of Leeds

Philip Lewis

Michelle O'Callaghan, *'The Shepherds Nation': Jacobean Spenserians and Early Stuart Political Culture*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 2000, pp. vii + 272, hb. £40, ISBN 019818638X

Be they literary or historical. Jacobean studies have a tendency to congregate around either the beginning of James Stuart's reign in England or the end of it. It's a moot point whether the sound and fury at these junctions deserves this attention to the detriment of the rest of the reign, but the tumultuous 1620s with the drift towards war certainly are important years.

Taking attention away from that period in British (and not just English) political history takes a significant degree of resolve, if only because any title that looks at the mid-Jacobean period runs the risk of an audience reception along the lines of *yes, but what are the long-term implications?* Which is to say that traditionally – *pace* the Overbury murder case and the death of Shakespeare – not much is perceived to have really *happened* from 1613 to 1619.

In large part this is due to the fact that literary scholars like the early Jacobean period because there's plenty of good drama happening from 1603 to 1613 and Donne wrote some great poetry. Historians like it because the success or failure of the Union of the Crowns is controversial. However, it is not desirable to tie Jacobean studies too closely to Elizabethan studies – what some call 'Jacobethanism' – because so much of the political and cultural life of Britain and Ireland underwent a fundamental change as a result of the accession of James VI to the English crown.

By writing a book about a group of poets who identified themselves as an intellectual community independent from the dominant political order in the mid-Jacobean period, Michelle O'Callaghan has admirably faced up to the challenge of enlightening a little-studied period of both history and literature. It is a kind of study that emanates more from English faculties than from history departments. While books on exclusively political history relating to the Jacobean period take up a healthy amount of shelf space in bookshops with recent works from, for example, Tom Cogswell,

Julia Merritt, Theodore Rabb and Victor Treadwell, cultural studies of this period are scarce, especially since Kevin Sharpe's work tends to favour the Caroline period.

Early Stuart cultural studies have a strong tendency to centre on the court masques which, while enlightening, cannot paint a true picture of Jacobean culture as the vast majority were written for the monarch and they were performed in front of a select group only. In this arena, therefore, O'Callaghan's book is especially welcome.

Looking at the works of Christopher Brooke, William Browne and George Wither, O'Callaghan manages to avoid the old chestnut of court vs. country while illustrating clearly one of the oft-held but little explained truisms of Jacobean studies, that it is nigh on impossible to separate political and literary studies in this period. She shows how, for example, Brooke could be an MP and a poet and think nothing of using his poetry to extend Commons debates.

An awareness of poets talking politics yields considerable insights into Jacobean society and culture, so much so that it is shameful that it hasn't been done before in any detail. Gatherings of the Jacobean cognoscenti in places like the Mermaid tavern presage Restoration coffee house culture and fill the reader with curiosity as to the extent of such unofficial patronage networks, while O'Callaghan also wisely steers clear of the *which alehouses did Shakespeare frequent?* territory so beloved of the less scholarly studies.

As for minor worries, O'Callaghan does have a tendency to slip into use of the future tense, which can read awkwardly to say the least, and some chapters repeat already cited information. My only major gripe would be that O'Callaghan at times lingers too long within the microcosm, understandable for a work deriving from a doctoral thesis, whereas zooming out and contextualising the people that she studies within the wider political community would pay enormous dividends. However, since I hear that she is writing just such a book at present this is ground that we will see covered soon.

The Shepherd's Nation is enormously welcome as it gives historians a rich vein to enlighten the Jacobean dark age while it also challenges literary scholars to pay attention to lesser known poets, to those whose canon might appear less poetically worthy but whose impact on politics and society was to have profound and lasting repercussions throughout the remainder of the seventeenth century.

London

Tristan Marshall

Harold Skulsky, *Milton and the Death of Man: Humanism on Trial in Paradise Lost*, London, Associated University Presses, Newark, University of Delaware Press, 2000, pp. 262, hb. £35, ISBN: 00874137195

The dramatic gestures of the courtroom, rather than a more predictable academic mode of delivery, provides the stylistic momentum for Harold Skulsky's testing and often intriguing interrogation of the intellectual framework and achievements (both moral and aesthetic) of Milton's *Paradise Lost*. The central thesis of this study is that the poem's inconsistency, and ultimate failure, as an exercise in rational 'humanistic theodicy' lies at the very heart of its success as a work of art. Casting Milton as the human advocate of an omnipotent but problematically remote client, Skulsky also

implicitly exploits the logical rigour and moral potency of *Paradise Lost* as a means of demolishing the ‘body of inchoate theories and sentiments that goes by the name of “humanism”’ (dustjacket). Seeking to blend literary criticism with philosophical analysis, he also places particular emphasis upon the power of expressive and persuasive strategies of rhetoric as a means of shaping and (no less importantly) warping the logic of ideas. Rhetoric for Milton, it is implied, was not necessarily regarded as a route towards absolute and divine truth but rather as the only means left to the isolated and faltering poet of making some sense of a fallen and fragmented world. The book is cogently divided into four large chapters. In the first, it is explained why the metaphor of pleading God’s case is so apt and meaningful for a study of *Paradise Lost*; and why epic narrative is especially amenable to a legalistic dissection of its moral purpose. In the second (and perhaps most informative) chapter, Skulsky offers an enlightening and admirably concise survey of the evolution of concepts of freewill in Western thought, via the writings of Aristotle, Plotinus, Augustine, Aquinas, Valla, Pomponazzi, Erasmus, Molina, and others. The third chapter explains how Milton utilized his account of both the Creation and the Fall as a means of interrogating the efficacy of God’s ways. At the same time, it is emphasised that the Creation, although engendered by a traditionally male God, was essentially a powerfully maternal act – a perspective which ultimately allows Eve’s maternity in the ‘Dialogue of Reconciliation’ to parallel God’s original creativity. The fourth and concluding chapter explores the disturbing concept of God’s hatred and reminds the reader of Milton’s commitment to the idea of epic as ‘tragedy writ large’. How, after all, in a court of law, does a loving God, or rather His hapless attorney, justify to the attentive jurors/readers His creation of that neatly antithetical Heaven, more commonly known as Hell?

Milton and the Death of Man bristles with promising perspectives and informative observations. It is no less impressive on the level of specific textual criticism. In passing Skulsky usefully reminds us, for example, how Milton’s habitual identification of light with wisdom exploits the traditional biblical authority of their association in the Apocrypha (p. 122); and how on a linguistic level Satan compulsively dresses up ‘banality’ as ‘paradoxical insight’ to challenge his listeners (p. 176). On a broader level, the exploration of the (justifiable and necessary) hatred for evil of a loving God in chapter four provides a genuinely intriguing and absorbing interpretation of Milton’s handling of absolute authority in *Paradise Lost*. In short, Skulsky’s study has much to offer both the academic and general reader. Its style is light yet sharp and it renders complex intellectual and philosophical ideas in readily accessible ways. And yet, at least for this reader, one major problem still remains. The conceptualizing of a literary interrogation of *Paradise Lost* within a courtroom at first seems to offer an original and potentially productive framework. But as the book progresses, so the insistently legalistic dressing-up of language begins to grate. It is perhaps both amusing and striking to open the first sentence of the first chapter with the phrase: ‘Given a self-imposed assignment of defending the Judge of the Universe against impeachment on the charge of grossly abusing the power of his office, Milton could have done worse than follow the recipe in a standard Roman textbook for advocates ...’ (p. 13). But as Skulsky concludes his final defence of the validity of his own critical perspectives with the resounding reminder: ‘Only the jury can decide it, acting in concert. The jury is still out’ (p. 227), it is with some relief that the juror/reader, although undoubtedly informed and challenged by *Milton and the Death of Man*, may finally stumble out of Skulsky’s by now heavily claustrophobic courtroom into some fresher

air where his ideas may be silently mulled over. The juror/reader may then also be allowed the mental space to ponder a question of fundamental importance to Skulsky's thesis: 'Is it really an omnipotent God – or rather the isolated, blind, and bereft poet – who is self-consciously placed on trial in *Paradise Lost*?' The jury may still be out on that question as well.

University of Leeds

Michael G. Brennan

Kenneth Parker (ed.), *Early Modern Tales of Orient: A Critical Anthology*, London, Routledge, 1999, pp. ix + 290, pb., £16.99, ISBN: 041547573

Reports by English and Scottish travellers to the Muslim 'Orient' increased greatly in number and popularity following the establishment in 1581 of the Turkey (from 1592, Levant) Company. Commercial agents gained incentives and opportunities to explore interior trade routes and to vie with French and Dutch rivals in the major trading factories; a regular diplomatic presence was established in Istanbul for the winning of trade concessions and the ransoming of unfortunate Englishmen who fell foul of Ottoman officials. In the wake of merchants and envoys followed secretaries, preachers, professional and gentlemen travellers, and adventurers. Texts from each category of author are represented in this anthology. Although all of these accounts have been previously published, more than half are available in full only in the original seventeenth-century editions. Ten date from the period 1590 to 1636, and illustrate a good range of the attitudes, prejudices, knowledge and experiences of early British travellers in the Muslim east. It forms a lively, varied and well-presented collection.

First is the wretched tale (1590) of Edward Webbe, taken prisoner initially by the Crimean Tatars in Muscovy, next by the Ottomans in Alexandria and forcibly employed for several years as a master gunner, and then released but apprehended again, while on his way home, by the Spanish Inquisition. Of a different order of appreciation are the next two extracts detailing the impressive and highly-structured ceremonies in Istanbul for the sultan's reception of the English ambassadors Harborne (1583) and Barton (1593) and the costly presents sent by Elizabeth I on both occasions. Seasoned globe-trotters are represented by extracts from the travelogues of John Cartwright, Fynes Morrison and William Lithgow, the reflections of a gentleman traveller by Sir Henry Blount, and the interests of the Christian preacher by William Biddulph's notes on the various religious groups in and around Aleppo. Further afield, the record of the adventures in Iran of the would-be diplomat and relentless self-publicist Anthony Sherley (1590s) appear to show the court of Shah Abbas revolving around the Englishman and his attempts to set up an Anglo-Iranian alliance. By contrast, Thomas Herbert's detailed observations on travel, architecture and society in Iran in the 1620s are much more measured and informative. The anthology concludes with an extract from a much later text, illustrating yet another experience of Orient – notes of mainly medical matters written in the 1690s by John Fryer based on his ten years as a doctor with the East India Company in Iran and India during the 1670s.

The emphasis in this collection is on travellers and the impact of their often emotive and sensational accounts on the mind of the curious and susceptible reader.

Journalistic accounts were inevitably more popular than scholarly ones, and although Parker notes the parallel increase in the latter during the seventeenth century these are not his concern here. His introduction discusses various themes and constraints of which the critical reader must beware. Perhaps most obvious was the writer's urge to tell a good tale in the interests of self-promotion for financial gain and/or social prestige. Attempts to understand the Other, veracity even, were not necessarily high priorities. More subtle, however, the wealth, the depth of civilisation, and the obvious military success of the Muslim world was deeply disturbing to Christian travellers, in Parker's term 'dis-orienting'. There was indeed no question of Europeans 'seeking to colonize' and dominate in the Mediterranean and Persian Gulf as across the Atlantic; nor have these early reports much to do with later 'orientalist' writings as defined by Said.

The chief purpose of this critical anthology is to show cultural studies students how such travellers' tales should be read, making the elementary but clearly still necessary point that such reports are as much subjective as objective, as revealing about the mindset of their authors as about Muslim societies. It is a pity therefore that in his editorial apparatus Parker unwittingly demonstrates how culturally bound many of us still remain. The bibliography includes a number of articles on early modern approaches to Islam and Arabic studies but no good general history of the Ottoman empire, of which there are several easily available. Use of even the standard introductory text, Inalcik's *The Ottoman Empire: The Classical Age* would have eliminated a number of inaccuracies in the otherwise helpful footnotes: e.g. a *kadi* is much more than a 'civil judge' (fn. 7, p. 53); *diwan* does not mean in Ottoman 'senior Treasury official' (fn. 4, p. 59); *sheh* is a corruption of sheykh and signifies much more than 'ancient man' (fn. 14, p. 104). On p. 154 there is a footnote to explain Capuchin but not one to explain Hadji; the Whitehall Gate and the Royal Exchange each merit glosses, but there is no corresponding comment on those parts of Topkapi palace to which these are compared (p. 56, fn. 5 & 6). The OED is not the first place to look for an explanation of Ottoman or Persian terms. An Ottoman-based chronology would have produced a more accurate and meaningful list of key dates and events (pp. 233–47). Granted, Parker's focus is upon the cultural perspectives of his chosen writers, but the unfortunate impression given between the lines of this otherwise fascinating anthology is that it is still thought acceptable to comment on non-European societies in history largely without recourse to specialist studies.

University of Durham

Christine Woodhead

Angus Stroud, *Stuart England*, London, Routledge, 1999, pp. 220, pb. £14.00, ISBN: 0415206537

Designed primarily for the bright secondary school pupil, or the mainstream sixth-former, there is much that is sound and indeed laudable about Angus Stroud's new textbook on English society and politics under the House of Stuart. In combining a wide range of primary and secondary sources with a solid interpretative text, and in providing students with a clear and concise introductory essay – outlining the differences between the major schools of historical thought – this study bridges the

difficult gap between the worlds of the exam primer and the university study guide, while succeeding largely in its stated aim as a useful educational tool.

The sections on the personal rule of King Charles I, the outbreak of civil war across the British Isles, and the quest for settlement under successive republican administrations, are particularly strong and serve as models of clarity. The author is well versed in recent academic debates and revisions, and draws upon the scholarship of John Morrill, Conrad Russell and Kevin Sharpe to good effect, while paying warm tribute to the earlier contributions of Christopher Hill. His conclusions about the middle years of the century are framed by carefully chosen extracts from the writings of Ralph Verney, Lucy Hutchinson, Richard Baxter and Edmund Ludlow, in order to encourage his readership to evaluate the nature of the contemporary evidence placed before them and to help familiarise them with the problems inherent in drawing lasting conclusions from disparate, and often heavily ideologically charged, sources.

Given the validity of his approach to the early and mid-Stuart periods, it is unfortunate that events after the Restoration of 1660 are afforded far less prominent treatment, and that the convulsions occasioned by the Popish Plot, the Exclusion Crisis and the fall of King James II are shoe-horned into barely a quarter of the total text. There is, therefore, little room for a thorough evaluation of the ministries of Clarendon, Arlington and Danby, while the mercurial figure of Shaftesbury appears only as a shadowy presence in the councils of state and the Revolution of 1688/9 is relegated to a sorry, and almost apologetic, summary. In this, the author may simply be following the prevalent fashion in historiography, concentrating all of his efforts on the disputed barricades of the 'English Revolution' while banishing the uncomfortable realities of radical constitutional reform and durable economic growth, from the 1680s onwards, to the outer-most periphery of his vision. A more surprising omission, given the book's title, is its premature conclusion after the accession of William and Mary, thus totally ignoring the consolidation of political stability and the achievements of the Revolution Settlement under Queen Anne, a woman who was surely no less Stuart than any of her immediate predecessors. Despite its many virtues, such flaws and imbalances in the text cannot fail to impair the overall effectiveness of the work, and one feels that had both author and publisher limited the scope of the book to the first half of the seventeenth century its authority and usefulness would have been both more clearly defined and greatly magnified.

University of Lancaster

John Callow

M. S. Zook, *Radical Whigs and Conspiratorial Politics in Late Stuart England*, University Park, Penn State University Press, 1999, pp. x + 234, hb. \$37.50, ISBN 0271018569

The radical Whigs of late Stuart England have attracted considerable scholarly interest in recent years: the 'great thinkers', such as John Locke and Algernon Sidney, have been set in their appropriate intellectual and political milieu; the activities and agendas of the London-based radicals and of Whig plotters and conspirators have been examined in detail; and a lively debate has arisen over what impact the radicals may or may not have had on the Glorious Revolution of 1688–89. Melinda Zook's

book is hardly a breakthrough study, therefore, but it is a useful complement to existing scholarship, its main value being the intellectual biographies it offers of five important, though in recent years relatively neglected Whig polemicists: Thomas Hunt, Samuel Johnson, Robert Ferguson, William Atwood, and James Tyrrell. For Zook, radical Whigs can be distinguished from other Whig exclusionists 'by their willingness to use and justify violence to obtain their ends' (p. xiii). In her first chapter she identifies 94 such London-based radicals – lords, gentlemen, lawyers, merchants, preachers, booksellers, soldiers and artisans – who intermingled, shared services, joined Whig clubs, and otherwise worked together to promote a Whig agenda: namely, the exclusion of the Catholic heir from the throne, by forcible resistance if necessary. Yet despite her professed belief that 'liberalism was not forged in the philosopher's study but in noisy London taverns and coffeehouses, street corners and rented rooms, to be defended on the scaffold and the battlefield' (dustjacket), the bulk of her book is an exposition of the writings of her five main figures and a few other authors. She starts with a useful examination of the natural law arguments of 'Post-script' Hunt and 'Julian' Johnson of 1682, though over the course of the 1680s, she argues, natural law discourse became less typical, with Whigs instead coming increasingly to favour the language of ancient constitutionalism. Subsequent chapters trace the ancient constitutionalist arguments of Atwood (plus William Petyt, Henry Care, and Edward Cooke), Robert Ferguson and the Rye House Plot, the making of Whig martyrs and Monmouth's manifesto (another Ferguson product), and the radicals' response to 1688.

Zook's larger claim is that the ideas of the radical Whigs, and particularly of Robert Ferguson, were central to the Glorious Revolution and had a powerful influence on the settlement of 1689. It is this aspect of the book that will prove most controversial, and her case, as presented, will strike many as unconvincing. Some radical Whigs, including Ferguson himself (as Zook is aware) turned to Jacobitism in the early 1690s out of disillusionment with the revolutionary settlement. Zook's account also shows that the Rye House plotters and Monmouth rebels had a reforming agenda that was much more radical than anything realised at the Glorious Revolution. It cannot even be said that William of Orange's invasion manifesto of October 1688 represented the views of the radical Whigs; indeed, as Lois Schwoerer has shown, William and his advisors rejected such a manifesto that had been drafted by the radical Whig conspirator, John Wildman, in favour of one drawn up the Earl of Danby, a Tory. One might also question Zook's definition of radical. Some who were philosophically radical steered clear of violence; the commonwealthsman, Henry Neville, might be a case in point. On the other hand, moderates and even Tories were willing to embrace forcible resistance in 1688. Thus Gilbert Burnet, who Zook agrees should be seen as a moderate Whig, came over with William's invasion fleet and wrote in defence of the subjects' right to resist. Danby, of course, led a resistance movement in York on the Prince's behalf. Yet although readers might disagree with the broader conceptual and interpretative framework of the book, they will find much useful information about the lives and ideas of a handful of Whig polemicists who form the focus of study, and come away with an enriched understanding of what is rapidly emerging in modern historiography as the most fascinating decade of the seventeenth century.