Reviews

Anon., *Thomas of Woodstock, or Richard the Second, Part One*, ed. Peter Corbin and Douglas Sedge, The Revels Plays, Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2002, pp. xvi + 230, hb. £45, ISBN: 0719015634; **John Ford**, *Love's Sacrifice*, ed. A. T. Moore, The Revels Plays, Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2002, pp. xxviii + 323, hb. £45, ISBN: 071901557X; **Janet Clare** (ed.), *Drama of the English Republic 1649–60*, The Revels Plays Companion Library, Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2002, pp. xiv + 311, hb. £45, ISBN: 0719044820

Thomas of Woodstock survives only in an anonymous, untitled, and rather damaged manuscript in the British Library. It has been edited eight times under seven slightly different titles – which creates problems for the compilers and users of library catalogues. It is a vigorous account of the corrupt reign of Richard II prior to the point at which Shakespeare's play begins; and, as the subtitle in this Revels edition suggests, it is possible that Shakespeare designed his own play as a sequel, or at least as a response, to *Woodstock*. (He seems also to have recalled material from *Woodstock* for the encounter between Hamlet and Osric, and for Lear's division of his kingdom). The play's language is plain, forceful, and idiomatic, its dramaturgy inventive, and its politics challenging: this is a play in which chronicles are consulted on stage, and a character is arrested for whistling treason. The Revels editors suggest that 'Shakespeare is perhaps the one known dramatist in the 1590s whose dramatic style most closely resembles that of *Thomas of Woodstock*' (p. 4), but disappointingly they do not offer any analysis of the play's language to support or qualify this view. In recent years the computer-aided analysis of dramatic language has generated many fascinating, if not always conclusive, results, and one might have looked for more detail at this point. The play dates from the first half of the 1590s, and the editors' introduction helpfully explores the sensitive political issues which, at that point in Elizabeth's reign, found echoes in incidents from the reign of Richard II. The manuscript itself, however, appears to date from the first decade of the reign of James I, and the editors argue that the indications of censorship which can be observed throughout the manuscript are Jacobean rather than Elizabethan interventions. The play is, therefore, doubly interesting for anyone seeking to explore the ways in which drama engaged with contemporary political sensitivities.

The collation and commentary allow one to see that this putative Jacobean censor objected to lines celebrating the victories of the Black Prince (presumably because they might reflect upon the unwarlike James), and many passages on rebellion, the relations of subjects and sovereigns, and royal irresponsibility. A few details need attention in any reprint. In the line 'The planting and good husbandry hath nourishèd' (I. iii. 156) the last word is surely wrongly accented, and should be a disyllable, as is suggested by the manuscript spelling 'norisht'. Similarly in 'Than all the doting heads that late controllèd us' (III.i.46), 'controlled' should also be two syllables not three (it is spelt 'contrould' in the manuscript). On p. 114 Hibbard's edition of *Hamlet* is part of the Oxford Shakespeare, not the Cambridge series. Turned apostrophes abound. But generally this is a sound edition of a remarkable play.

John Ford's *Love's Sacrifice* (printed in 1633, but perhaps written in the period 1626–31) has been overshadowed by his more popular play *'Tis Pity She's A Whore*, but this new edition by A. T. Moore brings it back into the canon of available scholarly texts. Moore is clearly an enthusiast for the play, and his 100-page introduction not only provides the usual information about date and sources (which may include the tragic story of Carlo Gesualdo), but also offers a scene-by-scene account of how it might have been staged in the indoor Phoenix theatre. The helpful commentary includes very thorough glossing and the extensive – sometimes excessive – citation of parallel passages. The play itself is not, I think, a neglected masterpiece, but its exploration of the tensions between idealized love, sexual desire, and aristocratic honour deserves staging in a sympathetic venue such as the Swan at Stratford, while the complex and surprising way in which Bianca responds to the adulterous invitation from Fernando should be pondered by students of sexual mores in Renaissance drama.

It has been clear for a good while that, despite the persistent caricatures to the contrary, drama continued to be written and (to a limited extent) staged during the English Republic. Janet Clare's volume gathers texts of several items from this still under-explored period. The first is a thoughtful, anonymous classical play, *The Tragedy of that Famous Roman Orator Marcus Tullius Cicero*, whose political stance has been differently interpreted by those scholars who have worked through the play in the unattractive double-columned quarto from 1651. This is followed by James Shirley's masque *Cupid and Death*, presented in front of the Portuguese ambassador in 1653, and three items by Davenant: *The Siege of Rhodes* (1656). Both *Cicero* and the trio of short masque-like plays by Davenant provide ample material for anyone reflecting upon ideas of nationhood and nascent empire during the Republic. Janet Clare's introduction ranges far beyond the plays which she actually prints, and gives the reader a *tour d'horizon* of the various uses of drama during this decade. Though much of this material will be familiar to readers of Dale Randall's *Winter Fruit: English Drama 1642–1660* (1995) and Nigel Smith's *Literature and Revolution in England 1640–1660* (1994), it is a convenient summary, and draws attention particularly to the use of a dramatic or quasi-dramatic form for satirical political pamphlets. It would be good to have some of this fugitive and not easily accessible material collected as a sequel to the present volume.

Drama of the English Republic suffers, however, from some errors in the texts. In *Cicero* 'found' should be 'sound' (I. ii. 122) and 'founded' should be 'sounded' (III. xii. 5, making Clare's explanatory note redundant). At I. ii 46 Clare destroys the metre by printing 'Thinking the vital thread of his father spun' instead of

following the contraction 'of's' which the quarto prints. At III. vi. 17–18 the dramatist writes that women were formed

> Of strange and various matters, whence they did
> Derive their as strange qualities and conditions

but Clare deletes 'as', for no good reason. The word 'his' has dropped out of the line at III. xii. 19 ('one bears *his* aged father'). At III. xii. 23 'Bare' is emended to 'Bore', though 'Bare' is a standard form of the past tense throughout the early modern period. In *Siege* 'from' has dropped out of the line at I. 78 (''Tis scarce a month since *from* thy nuptial rites | Thou camest'). At *Siege* V. 228–9 the removal of terminal punctuation from the line changes the sense. Clare's text reads:

> Some wounds he has; none dangerous but yours
> Ianthe cured, his own he quickly cures.

But the original places a semi-colon at the end of the first line, making it clear that what Villerius is saying to Ianthe is: 'He is indeed wounded, but none of his wounds is as dangerous as your own wound; and when you are healed, he will soon be healed too.' This is a useful collection, but needed rather more care in creating and checking the texts.

All three volumes, despite occasional errors in two of them, form very welcome additions to a valuable series.

University of Leeds **Paul Hammond**

John Evelyn, Elysium Britannicum *or The Royal Gardens*, ed. John E. Ingram, Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001, pp. vii + 492, hb. £52.50/$75, ISBN: 081223563

The manuscript of *Elysium Britannicum* has long been a ghostly presence on the scene of seventeenth-century studies. As the lifetime accumulation of Evelyn's knowledge and speculation about gardens and gardening, it was over forty years in compilation, and its ever-growing length, diversity and confusion defeated Evelyn's attempts to order it and bring it to the press. As early as 1659, leading horticulturalists were writing to Heads of Houses at Oxford to ask them to put pressure on Evelyn to finish his 'Magnificent Worke' that would 'delight and gratify his Nation' and raise the garden arts to a new distinction. For years the Royal Society hoped to be able to publish it under their patronage. But Evelyn found his project all-absorbing, and it grew ever more ambitious as the plant sciences developed in the later decades of the century. Some sections of his immense manuscript were published as separate works, including *Kalendarium Hortense* (1664), and the treatises that were added to later editions of *Sylva*, entitled *Terra: A Philosophical Discourse of Earth*, and *Pomona: Concerning Fruit Trees*. The delightful *Acetaria: A discourse of Sallets* (1699), with its philosophy of vegetarianism, was also a side-shoot of the elysian scheme. After Evelyn's death in 1706, the manuscript remained in the family papers, then was deposited at Christ Church, Oxford, and was finally acquired by the British Library in 1995. Now the

transcription by John Ingram makes *Elysium Britannicum* widely accessible for the first time.

What a tremendous addition this book makes to the cultural history of the Restoration period. Encyclopaedic in scope, it is a register of one of the most fertile and curious minds of the age. Evelyn stands somewhere between Francis Bacon and Thomas Browne, dedicated to the advancement of learning and experimental philosophy, but also spellbound by the glories of antiquity and easily transported by extravagant speculation. His aim in *Elysium Britannicum* was to furnish a history of the arts of the garden, and elaborate a design for an ideal garden that would incorporate all the refinements that his imagination could invent. Like all good seventeenth-century treatises, it begins in Paradise, where God first planted a garden. All subsequent gardening is an attempt 'to recover that by Art and Industrie, which was before produced Spontaneously', and recollections of Paradise pervade Evelyn's hortulan thoughts, as the very title of his work indicates. A garden is the 'place of all terrestriall enjoyments the most resembling Heaven, and the best representation of our lost felicitie'; it also prefigures the Earthly Paradise that will be regained at the end of time, and Christ, the agent of that restoration, who once appeared in the guise of a gardener, and who ascended from the Mount of Olives, is glimpsed from time to time in the thickets of Evelyn's text. Groves, grottoes and elevated places induce a 'sacred and sollomne' mood, and 'best compose the mind for devotion and profoundest contemplation'.

Before the spiritual benefits may be experienced, however, the garden must first be made. Evelyn requires of the true gardener a multiplicity of talents, similar to what Vitruvius desired in an architect or Cicero in an orator. He needs a knowledge of geometry, optics, astrology and medicine; he must understand the rules of perspective and be able to draw. Poetry, history and mythology should inspire him; the mechanical sciences should direct his hand. Only liberally-educated gentlemen should apply themselves to gardening on the scale that Evelyn envisages, which is truly princely, and only to be realised by a munificent patron – hence the 'royal gardens' of the subtitle. Evelyn had developed his own garden at Sayes Court at Deptford on the edge of London, but in his ideal scheme he looks for a garden of some seventy acres, in a setting that will include hills and precipices as well as parterres and fields, with woods and groves and running waters. There must be room for extensive water-works, a music room, an isolated library, aviaries and an orangery, not to mention 'a large and goodly Circus ressembling some Amphitheatre'. Temples do not feature, but there will be a modern innovation, a laboratory.

The Baconian side of Evelyn is much in evidence in the early section of *Elysium Britannicum*. He becomes preoccupied with the causes of vegetable growth, attempting to engage with contemporary theories of the atomic and corpuscular nature of matter, on which he imagines a 'Universall Principle' of life to operate. He is way out of his depth in these speculations, but he has a glimmering notion of primitive genetics when he suggest that the seeds of plants, those 'particular receptacles' of the life force, have 'Characters engraven on them, by which they produce us those varieties'. He believes that the life force rains down from the celestial constellations: 'This Fire, or Spirituall Sulphur, being darted by the uncessant influences of the starrs, as the proper vehicle of the universall Spirit, insinuating it self through all the parts of matter actuates and produces every creature and by

introducing into each individual its own forme . . . assumes the bodyes which we behold in so many varieties.' Such hermetical notions give way to more conventional Baconian procedures as he enquires into the character of the different winds and their effects on growth, and of the nature and composition of air. Evelyn's concern with the improvements that may be made to soil to promote greater fertility is entirely Baconian, as is his broad interest in husbandry and in the improvement of species by grafting. Yet, hedging his bets between the ancients and the moderns, he remarks that contemporary experiments in soil enhancement need to be supplemented by the opinions of Varro, Columella, Palladius, Theophrastus, Pliny,and 'the most accomplished of all the best of Gardeners and Poets, Virgil.' The experience of the generations of antiquity is too profound to be ignored.

As Evelyn reflects on the limitations on gardening in England imposed by the climate, he is moved to consider experiments that would be worthy of the members of Solomon's House in the *New Atlantis*. 'Here is the place to try severall conclusions; and experiment how one may temper even the heavens as well as the Earth by Art: Seeing we find our greatest impediments to proceede from the cold & the over much raine which in these Septentrion climates marrs most of our labours . . . Here therefore let us exercise what we know concerning the redubbling of the sun beames, prolonging of Autumne, praeoccupating the Spring, preventing and moderating the severity of Winter, reversing the violence of the winds, to make such choice even of Plants, as may warme & prepare both the soile and the aire for others, & lastly to study what imbitions and waters are to be compounded for them.' His concern with 'our Philosophico-medicall Garden', where 'new & rare experiments for enfranchising strage plants & civilizing the wild and rude, for the easier knowledge of Physical Simples' may be carried out also implies a Baconian programme of improving health, combatting disease and extending life.

Baconian too is Evelyn's desire to illustrate acoustical phenomena in his ideal garden. In practice this meant introducing echo chambers natural or artificial. The ancients were fascinated by echoes, which were a feature of pastoral poetry, and a desideratum in their finest gardens; they even imagined a Nymph who was the presiding genius of this art. Evelyn recalls the Olympian Portico or Heptaphonos near Athens that returned a sevenfold echo, and the bridge at Syracuse 'which is sayd to repeate a song consisting of ten Heroick verses, or a whole lesson playd on the Lute exactly answering to every shade and softest relish.' Such delights should be part of the pleasures of a garden, and Evelyn offers 'by an innocent magick and without supersition to raise up that vocal and fugitive Nymph, and to consult her oracles at pleasure.' This exercise in 'echosophy' was a learned form of pleasure, suitable for a virtuoso's garden, since geometry, mathematics and knowledge of acoustics were required. It was also the subject of numerous experiments suggested by Bacon in his *Sylva Sylvarum* (Century III), as he attempted to investigate the nature and properties of sound, and find ways of transmitting sounds over great distances. Baconian natural histories, such as Robert Plot's *Oxfordshire* and *Staffordshire*, devoted a fair amount of space to the phenomenon of echoes, directing the reader to locations notable for their sound effects, and analysing how these effects were achieved. Evelyn elevated accident to design, and introduced Echo-places into his garden, with instructions about how to create them, mixing science with art, and arousing philosophical curiosity in the visitor. He mentions

here that he has just received a letter from Thomas Browne that characteristically complicates his project by suggesting that Whispering-places also be introduced as an additional hortulan amenity.

Browne and Evelyn were kindred spirits. It was to Browne that Evelyn wrote a notable letter in 1660 outlining his desire to form 'a society of the *Paradisi cultores*, persons of antient simplicity, paradisean and hortulan saints', who would 'redeeme the tyme' by gardening and natural philosophy. Browne would be foremost in that company. He wrote regularly to Evelyn, with refinements for the Elysian scheme, compiling learned discourses that could be incorporated in the manuscript, such as a piece on 'Garlands and Coronary or Garland-Plants' and his account of plants in Scripture. Evelyn often affected Browne's lofty and convoluted language, and sometimes his metaphysical habits of thought. In his section on Celestiall Influences on gardens, for example, he begins: 'It has not been improperly affirmed, but the very rootes of Trees grow in Heaven, though planted on Earth, Whether considered in relation to their nourishment, received from the Celestial Influences, or their Almighty Creators benediction.' Coinages such as 'those Arsenical and Scorching Sypherations' or 'the Entelechia and Soule of all things', or the description of Adam as 'the Protoplast' have a true Brownean ring. The habit of expatiating learnedly on the curiosities and prodigies of the ancient world is surely contracted from Browne, as is the fascination with the 'stupendious plants' that travellers have reported from distant lands. We are pleased to learn of a tree 'in the Ilands of Cimbabon' whose leaves have 'on both sides little short and strong feete, not much like to those of a Batt, which falling on the Ground, if any offer to touch it, crawls away.' Evelyn would love to acquire a specimen of this entertaining plant for his Elysium, just as Browne would no doubt have wished to add it to a new edition of *Pseudodoxia Epidemica*.

The adornment of gardens much exercised Evelyn. There will be much statuary, of course, and he discusses at length the proper setting for the statues of the ancient gods and heroes, often reflecting on the way the gods and their stories are symbolic of the processes of the natural world in the manner of Bacon's *Wisdom of the Ancients*. Although he derives so much inspiration from descriptions of gardens in Greek and Roman literature, he is mindful that in a Christian country a more appropriate iconography might be employed, suggesting that statues of the patriarchs might be introduced – Adam, Noah, Abraham, for example, or Solomon – as well as the virtuous classical writers and philosophers. He would also find a place for modern garden heroes, amongst whom would be Bacon, Parkinson and Cowley. Several times he expresses his conviction that statues have the beneficial effect of inspiring emulation, high-mindedness and noble thoughts and designs in those who look on them. Statues, to Evelyn's mind, shared in the elevating influence that all noble public works had on the citizens of a state, and in a digression he calls for 'more sumptuously liberal' buildings and civic monuments in England, remarking that

> It is a just reproch of our northern stupidity & avarice when such an inconsiderable Towne as Viterbo in Italy can shew a publique fountain that cost more art & mony than all the Fountains this day in England, & such Elegances do not only contribute to pomp and shew, & to celebrate and encourage Workmen, but the very sight of them has some effect upon the manners & comity of the men who behold them, & dos sweeten and

> enliven their spirits: as do large streetes, uniforme buildings, great & stately Palaces & churches decently adorn'd.

Evelyn's own plans for the rebuilding of London after the Great Fire show how profoundly he wanted to create a metropolis that would raise its citizens to a new height of dignity and humanism. In a horticultural variation on the theme of public work, he put forward a project to improve the air of London, by large plantations of lavender, rosemary and other fragrant herbs to the west of the city, in his pamphlet *Fumifugium* (1661), which was another spin-off from his composition of *Elysium Britannicum*.

Water-works were an indispensable part of the garden, and mere fountains were the least of these divertissements. Evelyn describes a fantastic array of hydraulic automata that could enhance the pleasure of his fortunate guests. Here we are shown drawings of waterclocks on which the figure of a watchman sounds the hours by trumpet-calls, of a statue of Memnon that will utter sounds when struck by the beams of the rising sun, of artificial birds that will warble at the turn of a tap. Supreme amongst these inventions is the water-organ with its 'Phonotactique Cylinder' like the immense barrel of a musical box, which Evelyn delineates in precise detail, even providing tunes that may be set for it. Amid these Alexandrian marvels, there are rare moments of lightheartedness, as when he shows us how to contrive 'secret pipes to lie so as may wett the Spectators underneath, behind, in front and at every side according as the Fontaneere is pleased to turne and governe these clandestine and preposterous showres.' The exasperated spectator may then sit down in a chair which will promptly squirt water down his neck. Evelyn admits that he found the original of this chair at Rome, in the gardens of the 'Crosse-bearer to the Pope.'

There is no end to the amenities that may be introduced into a royal garden, which is one reason why Evelyn never finished his manuscript. Not only must every feature be excellent, it must be superlative of its kind. The aviaries will contain every kind of singing bird in profusion, and ideally include a few virtuosi, such as the French sparrow that could recite 'intire Psalmes of David' or the bird in the possession of Cardinal Ascanius that 'could repeate all the Articles of the Creede distinctly.' The apiaries will contain multitudes of bees, some of which will live in glass bee-hives. The illustration shows that Evelyn would like to decorate these hives with classical porticos and miniature statues. 'The Invention is a fancy that suits with the nature of that creature', he assures us, and 'they are much taken by their Grandeur, and double their taske with delight.' Even the every-day implements used in Evelyn's elysian fields are touched with an ennobling fantasy. The rollers for the gravel walks are best made from the hardest marble 'procured from the ruins of many places in Smyrna when old Columns of demolish't Antiquities' are broken up. For a protective frame for plants, Evelyn recommends 'a Bed-Stead furnished with a tester and Curtains of Greene, or some other colourd Taffeta', and his illustration charmingly shows a literal flower-bed with the curtains drawn.

What is remarkable about all these flourishes of the imagination that fill the pages of *Elysium Britannicum* is that Evelyn has either seen examples of them in his travels or read about them, often in the classical authors. Brought together in one 'stupendious' garden they produce an overwhelming impression of what may

be achieved by the fullest application of all the horticultural arts and their ancilliaries. Nothing in the extant literature of gardening in the seventeenth century can match the scope and splendour of Evelyn's vision.

Grateful as we are to have this transcription published, the present edition is regrettably inadequate. The book sets off on the wrong foot by printing on the title-page what it claims to be a portrait of John Evelyn taken from the frontispiece of the 1664 *Sylva*, but what is in fact Hollar's etching of Van Dyck's self-portrait with a sunflower. Hollar dedicated his etching to Evelyn, so presumably a misreading of the Latin inscription led to this error. In any case, the 1664 *Sylva* has no engraved frontispiece. Although Evelyn usually provides an English translation for the Latin verses he often quotes, the editor does not offer any translations for the Latin phrases in the text. Greater familiarity with the seventeenth-century scene would have avoided a number of errors of transcription, and we might have had Paulus Jovius rather than Jonius, or Gabriel Platt rather than Plott, and the well-known chemist would be Mr Boyle rather than Mr Royle. The two Restoration naturalists, John Ray and John Rea, are rolled into one. More familiarity with English topography would have found Durdans in Surrey rather than Dundans, and Orford in Suffolk instead of Oxford. Citations in the text are not traced, and it is particularly frustrating that the many references to Bacon are not related to their source. The notes to this large volume only fill eight pages, and are often of an inconsequential nature. It is a pity that John Ingram did not have a collaborator to annotate the text more usefully, although one recognises that a full annotation would require a second volume as large as the first. But later scholars will enroll for such a pleasurable task, just as graduate students will soon draw whole theses from this text. For the time being, let us welcome John Ingram's heroic transcription, and enjoy this wonderful addition to the seventeenth-century library.

University of York **Graham Parry**

Stephen Greenblatt, *Hamlet in Purgatory*, Princeton and Oxford, Princeton University Press, 2001, pp. xii + 322, hb. £19.95/$29.95, ISBN: 0691058733

The idea that the soul must be purged before entering the kingdom of God has a very long history, but the conception of Purgatory as a specific place where this should happen is ‘an innovative work of the imagination’ (p. 85) dating only from the twelfth century. Even more specific and physical in conception was the attribution of a geographical point of entry into a temporary earthly purgatory in Lough Derg, in county Donegal, a tradition begun in the influential twelfth-century Latin treatise, *Saint Patrick's Purgatory*, still extant in 150 manuscripts. The point, as Greenblatt's lucidly written study makes clear, is that the human imagination is inexorably drawn to the question of what happens after death and is driven to formulate specific answers to an unanswerable question. Hamlet's speculation has the force it does because it follows a line of thought deeply embedded in theological tradition, but at a point where Reformation thinking

threatens to expose the whole edifice of Purgatory as a cheap show or, as Greenblatt would have it, 'a piece of poetry' (p. 3).

As ever, Greenblatt locates his scholarly investigations within a sense of his own wider personal development, and situates his urge to explore the force and history of the concept of Purgatory within the context of the death of his father and his own subsequent sense of obligation, albeit 'with a lightly ironic piety' (p. 9), to say 'kaddish', a Jewish prayer for the dead, for him. Hinted at much later in the book is a parallel with an imagined Shakespeare, himself conforming to the scepticism of his time in belief, yet haunted by the spirit of a father whose Catholic beliefs require his son's prayers to release him from pain. As familiar as Greenblatt's investment in the personal are the overarching metatheatrical argument and the striking anecdote. Here the striking anecdote is the fraudulent Jesuit staging of supposed ghosts from Purgatory to trick rich young women into becoming nuns and bringing their wealth to the convent (as recounted in John Gee's *New Shreds of the Old Snare* in 1624); while the metatheatrical argument proposes the stage as appropriating the power of the now-outlawed doctrine of Purgatory and putting its own spectres of the dead on stage. Prospero's plea to be 'relieved by prayer' from the island (or the theatre) provides a memorable final image of the apparent absorption of the one institution by the other.

If this sounds a little showy, as indeed I think it is, it should not be thought that the book carries the argument from analogy to the point of becoming a mere spectacle itself. Though Greenblatt likes to shape his work theatrically, it is mainly a matter of beginnings and endings. In between there is much serious matter, including an unusual concentration on primary texts, in particular medieval primary texts. Two-thirds of the book in fact focuses on medieval and early Reformation thinking about Purgatory. Not until the final third of the book does the discussion turn to Shakespeare, and even then only the last fifty pages or so are on *Hamlet*. The history of the doctrinal issues at stake is complex, and views on Purgatory during and after the Reformation are contested and sometimes contradictory, but Greenblatt's real gift is to write with clarity, excitement and energy about both theology and the interaction between the literary, the dramatic and the theological. His sequencing and analysis of materials is persuasive and highly readable without falsifying or oversimplifying. To read the book is to experience his thrill in tracing the figures arising out of his questions and to share in his sense of discovery.

Greenblatt's approach is to recognise the concept of Purgatory as simultaneously doctrine, fiction and commodity without reducing it to any one of those. Its history thus emerges as a sequence of necessities and ironies intertwined. The psychic and spiritual necessity of explaining what happens to sinners who are not too sinful gives rise to a late-emergent doctrine which must then be belatedly authorised through the figure of St Patrick; while the patent fictionality of St Patrick's Purgatory then threatens to undermine the whole structure of the Christian afterlife, and the practical incorporation of the doctrine into everyday life lays the church open to attack as callously exploitative by seeming to turn prayer into a commodity. Commodification as a point of comparison between the doctrine of Purgatory and the theatre is surprisingly understated, but Greenblatt does make the point that ghosts, once they have been erased by Protestantism from legitimate Christian doctrine, become 'valuable theatrical capital' (p. 157). And Shakespeare,

Greenblatt argues, not only knew better than any of his contemporaries that ghosts were good theatre, but used ghosts to provoke audiences into thinking about theatre's capacity to fashion, question and remake realities. The distinctive quality of the ghost in *Hamlet* is to shift the standard emphasis of theatrical ghosts on vengeance to a new emphasis on remembrance, reminiscent of purgatorial thinking and incompatible with the motive to revenge. The point of the book is not to reach conclusions about where the ghost of Hamlet's father originates in terms of plot, but to understand where and how a ghost like this originates within the social and mental fabric of the world in which *Hamlet* is written.

University of Nottingham **Janette Dillon**

Barbara K. Lewalski, *The Life of John Milton: A Critical Biography*, Oxford, Blackwell, 2000, pp. xvii + 777, hb. £25, ISBN: 0631176659

Barbara Lewalski has written a magnificent critical biography of Milton. It combines a detailed narrative of Milton's career with sensitive readings of all of Milton's writings. William Riley Parker published the standard scholarly biography of Milton in 1968 (this was later revised by Gordon Campbell in 1996). Parker's analyses of Milton's writings – prose and verse – are, however, considerably less nuanced and sensitive than Lewalski's. This new life of Milton has the virtue of combining much fresh literary analysis with an illuminating account of Milton's career as a radical writer and political controversialist. Lewalski has carefully reassessed the facts of Milton's life, as well as the complex political and religious contexts of his writings. Her new biography is supported by exhaustive research in primary and secondary materials. The result is a rich book that offers a great deal to both students and scholars.

The initial chapters of this biography explore Milton's development and show his early commitment for a reformist, militant Protestantism. Some recent scholars (myself included) have questioned the notion of Milton's wholly consistent development during the 1620s and 1630s as a young reformist or radical Protestant. But Lewalski makes a strong case for her point of view by reexamining the Puritan and reformist contexts of Milton's early life and writings. Her young Milton is both a writer with high poetic aspirations and a zealous reformist Protestant who displayed a growing antipathy for the Stuart court. As support for her argument, she rightly notes that Milton the poet ignored, as topics for his verse, the death and funeral of James I, the coronation and wedding of Charles I, visits of Charles and Buckingham to Cambridge, along with notable royal occasions. At the same time, Lewalski's account sensitively examines the aesthetic qualities and bold generic experimentation evident in Milton's early poems. She also brings out well Milton's anxiety and self-doubt during the Hammersmith and Horton years of the 1630s. Nevertheless, as she persuasively demonstrates, 'No previous English poet had made anything like Milton's forthright claim to the role of poet as the essence of his self-definition' (p. 73).

Lewalski's chapters on Milton's career during the 1640s and 1650s reveal the heightening of his antimonarchist and republican sentiments. They analyze

Milton's prose works in impressive detail, as she considers their political, religious, and personal contexts, their varied uses of rhetoric, their lexical variety, their emotional range, and their graphic imagery. She rightly observes that Milton during these years 'did not suppose he was making a momentous choice between left hand and right, polemic and poetry' (p. 153). She considers carefully Milton's republican convictions and ongoing commitment to religious liberty, as well as his personal and political anxieties and hopes during these years of turmoil and changing political regimes. She also carefully reviews the issues regarding Milton's authorship of the heretical theological treatise, *De Doctrina Christiana*; her forceful argument in favour of his authorship will convince most scholars, though a new edition of the treatise is likely to refine our sense of the treatise's precise status in terms of its numerous revisions and additions. Finally, Lewalski demonstrates an excellent grasp of historical detail and provides a fine account of Milton's evolving polemical strategies as he faced rapidly changing political circumstances during the last two highly unstable years of the Commonwealth.

The later chapters of the critical biography do a fine job of situating the last poems in their literary, political, and religious contexts. She examines *Paradise Lost*, *Paradise Regained*, and *Samson Agonistes* fully in their Restoration milieu, revealing Milton's ongoing republican convictions and theological heterodoxies, his vocational aspirations and anxieties, and his opportunities for new and daring literary experimentation during these dark years. The book concludes with a concise and astute account of Milton's varied political and literary influence in England, France, and colonial and post-revolutionary America. Yet as Lewalski observes at the end of her book, 'what endures is the response of generation after generation of readers to Milton's superlative poetry and to his large vision of the human condition' (p. 547). This critical biography is a splendid achievement and is unlikely to be surpassed for many years to come.

University of Wisconsin-Madison **David Loewenstein**

Michéal Ó Siochrú, *Confederate Ireland, 1642–49: A Constitutional and Political Analysis*, Dublin, Four Courts Press, 1999, pp. 295, hb. £35.44, ISBN:1851824006; **Michéal Ó Siochrú** (ed.), *Kingdoms in Crisis: Ireland in the 1640s*, Dublin, Four Courts Press, 2001, pp. 288, hb. £35.44, ISBN: 1851825355

In October 1641 the native Irish of Ulster under the leadership of Sir Phelim O'Neill began an uprising which led to the killing of several thousand Protestants and forced thousands more to flee to Dublin and Britain. Within a few weeks the insurgents controlled most of the province of Ulster and had negotiated an informal alliance with the Old English Catholics of the Pale. The Ulster Irish and their allies formally united in 1642 as the Catholic Confederates of Ireland; a remarkable experiment which saw Irish Catholics engage in a bitter conflict with royalists, parliamentarians, and Scots convenanters, and develop a highly sophisticated system of representative government which controlled much of the island during the 1640s. The Ulster Rising and the subsequent formation of the Confederacy

caused widespread outrage in England and the question of whether the king or parliament would control the army that would be sent to crush the rebels polarised opinion and accelerated the drift to civil war in Britain. Yet, despite the enormous impact of the Confederacy upon the body politic in Britain and Ireland during the 1640s we have, until the appearance of Michéal Ó Siochrús *Confederate Ireland, 1642–49: a Constitutional and Political Analysis*, lacked a systematic, scholarly and detailed account of the birth, growth and decline of the Catholic Confederates.

Most of the records of the Confederates were destroyed in fires in 1711 and 1922, and Ó Siochrú is to be commended for his considerable skill in piecing together this complex and fascinating story from the few surviving, often contradictory, sources. The uprising began as an attempt by the Gaelic elite in Ulster to exert political pressure on Charles I but the leaders soon lost control of events when the lower orders began to take advantage of the situation to take-out their accumulated grievances against the settlers. Ó Siochrú demonstrates that the ferocity and indiscriminate nature of the reaction by the Protestant administration in Dublin exacerbated an already tense situation, and suggests that the authorities, in an attempt to destroy the influence of the Old English, were anxious to force their leaders into an alliance with the Ulster Irish.

By the spring of 1642 the insurgents had lost much of their military advantage; they had failed to capture the administrative centre at Dublin and found themselves isolated from the king (to whom they professed loyalty) and opposed by a government intent on destroying them by force. The necessity of some form of political organisation began to be felt; apart from concerns over the general collapse of law and order, the rebel leadership realised that any peace settlement would require extensive negotiations with the king.

The Confederacy was created in the historic city of Kilkenny in late 1642, and the next two and a half years saw several inconclusive military campaigns and a series of lengthy negotiations with the royalist lord lieutenant, Ormond. In fact, the military campaigns were something of a sideshow to the negotiations and much of this book is, therefore, not so much a history of the confederacy as a history of the confederacy's negotiations with Ormond. Historians have traditionally ascribed the failure of these negotiations to the factiousness of the Confederates and the interference of the Papal Nuncio, Rinuccini. Ó Siochrú, by contrast, argues convincingly that much of the blame lies with Ormond. Ormond was, he argues, unable to reconcile his public duty as a servant of the king with his own personal interests as an Irish Protestant. Even when Charles instructed Ormond to conclude a peace with the Catholics at any price he proved unable or unwilling to do so, and an agreement was only reached in late 1645 after the dispatch of the Earl of Glamorgan to Ireland.

The nuncio Rinuccini arrived in Ireland in late 1645 determined to secure much greater concessions from Charles, particularly the return of church property and 'the unalterable right to the public exercise of the Catholic religion.' Ó Siochrú is particularly good on the differences between the nuncio and the moderates in the Confederacy which led to Rinuccini's coup against the ruling council and a virtual civil war among the Confederates over the nature of the final settlement with the king. In a partial rehabilitation of Rinuccini he argues that the nuncio did not create discord and discontent among the Confederates, but merely

exploited pre-existing tensions for his own ends. The Confederacy dissolved itself in early 1649 in order to form a united front with the royalists against the English regicides and their allies in Ireland. Ó Siochrú's treatment of the last year of the Confederacy is somewhat haphazard, but this is not due to any failings on his part: a number of critical sources for this period are missing and those that do survive paint a picture of an increasingly tired and strife-torn organisation pulled between a number of equally futile strategies.

There is no doubt that this book will be the standard account of events in the ruling circles of the Catholic Confederacy for years to come. It is, however, less reliable as an analysis of the broader events it describes. One of Ó Siochrú's central claims is that the traditional model of confederate politics based on an ethnic division between the native Irish and Old English does not stand up to serious scrutiny. Instead, he argues, the leaders of the Catholic Confederacy were closely related through marriage and had worked together in parliament. For him the Confederacy was not the merging of Old English and native Irish interests in a historic new departure, but rather the coming together of a conservative landed interest in the face of threats from the Protestant administration in Dublin and the Catholic lower orders. Ó Siochrú argues that the old English displayed no hostility towards their native Irish counterparts, and worked in close co-operation with them during the Confederacy because 'class and self-interest took precedence over ethnicity, sentiment or tradition.'

Despite these claims Ó Siochrú's narrative provides more than a dozen examples of the way contemporaries used the language of ethnicity to explain the origins, development and decline of the Confederacy. In support of his argument he quotes the opinion of the bishops that there should be no distinction between Irish and Old English in Confederacy 'upon pain of highest punishment', but one must wonder whether this is better interpreted as proof of the very real differences between the two groups. Ó Siochrú's simplistic model of culture, in which one is either happily integrated or entirely separate, does not allow for the complex and multi-faceted way in which individuals define their allegiance and identity. Indeed, one must question whether his account of increased integration and Anglicisation is an accurate picture of how the native Irish saw themselves or a product of our reliance on the small number of English-language sources which survive from the period.

According to Ó Siochrú's introduction, a re-examination of the sources reveals that the Confederates were divided into three factions which cut across ethnic divisions – a peace party, a war party and a loose grouping of non-aligned moderates. Throughout the body of the book, however, he is content to describe the confederates solely in terms of the war and peace parties. His newly-identified moderate party is only referred to occasionally, and it is tempting to suggest that it may be less of a historical reality than a narrative device wheeled out whenever the account of the interaction between the peace and war factions reaches an impasse. Furthermore, Ó Siochrú is content to allow two or three individuals to stand as models for each faction and then to ascribe one-dimensional motivations to those individuals and the group which they allegedly typify. In his account the moderates were led by self-interested landowners who were prepared to compromise with Charles I on religious matters if only they could be assured of land, wealth and filthy lucre. The war party were, by contrast, more interested in

religious matters, particularly freedom of worship and the rights of the church. Again, one must question whether any of the protagonists would recognise themselves or their motivations and aspirations in this account.

Much of the inspiration for Ó Siochrú's claim to have identified three distinct factions comes from his reading of historians of the English parliament who, in the 1970s, detected peace, middle and war groups at Westminster. Yet, later historians of that institution have detected any number of factions which tend to be identified by permutations or combinations of the words 'Presbyterian', 'Independent' or 'Royalist'. One suspects that future studies of the confederates may, in a similar fashion, be forced to abandon Ó Siochrú's troika in favour of other, perhaps more numerous groupings, which merged, split or changed over time.

The conclusion, which claims that the Confederacy saw 'the genesis of modern Irish nationalism', does this otherwise stimulating and exhaustively researched book a great disservice. In the rush to draw comparisons between the seventeenth and twentieth centuries he ignores the enormous qualitative difference between the confederates and modern nationalists. The former was an assortment of Catholics who, by a combination of accident and misfortune, found themselves in temporary control of part of the island: they were anxious to return to what they saw as their natural loyalty once they had extracted various concessions from the crown. Modern nationalism, by contrast, aspires to unite all people born on the island in a single, sovereign, indivisible republic. That he blurs the difference between the two may be due to a lack of rigour in the analysis of the confederates' use and understanding of political terms such as 'nation', 'patria' and 'Éireannach', but it may also be part of a reaction by scholars in the now prosperous Irish Republic against the grubby and sectarian nature of political discourse in Northern Ireland.

Kingdoms in Crisis: Ireland in the 1640s is intended as a tribute to the Irish historian Dónal Cregan who died in 1995. Toby Barnard's beautifully-crafted essay looks at Catholic and Protestant histories of the 1640s. He demonstrates that the fascination of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century historians with the actions of a small group of noblemen and their deployment of rigid, two-dimensional models of ethnicity and religion have cast a long shadow over all modern histories of the 1640s.

Jane Ohlmeyer's article on Irish recusant lawyers during the reign of Charles I draws heavily on Dónal Cregan's unpublished notes, reproduces his list of Catholics admitted to the Inns of Court between 1625 and 1641, and offers some insights into who they were and why they wanted to study in London. She argues that the surprisingly large number of Irish Catholics who studied in London during these years (Cregan identified at least 140 individuals) were drawn by a belief that a knowledge of the common law was vital if one was to successfully defend one's land and social status against the New English. Ohlmeyer also demonstrates the important role which these lawyers played in the Confederacy during the 1640s. William Kelly's essay on Ormond's servant John Barry provides us with an insight into the activities of that rarest of things, an Irish Catholic Royalist of the 1640s. Pádraig Lenihan argues that the confederates' failure to consolidate their hold on the parts of the island which they controlled and their reliance on a strategy of raiding were the prime causes of their ultimate failure in military terms. Tadhg Ó hAnnracháin's essay on the Irish clergy argues persuasively that the

arrival of Rinuccini did not bring about a change in the objective of the clerics but did make a large difference in the quality of leadership provided for them. Ó hAnnracháin ascribes much of Rinuccini's success in moulding the clergy into a corporate lobby of enormous power to the force of his personality, and the amount of money he brought with him from Rome.

Most of the essays in this volume are clear, concise, well-researched and worthwhile contributions to our understanding of the period. Yet, one cannot but feel that some of the authors are merely treading water; if they were producing confectionery one would probably describe their fare as 'bite-sized'. In this book one detects a decisive move away from the traditional, unhealthy obsession with Ormond and a small number of other peers. Several of the articles, particularly that by Ohlmeyer, are stimulating attempts to look at new types of Irishmen of the 1640s. This interest in the 'middling sort' of lawyers, soldiers, landowners and intellectuals is to be welcomed but, echoing Dónal Cregan's famous review of the *New History of Ireland* in the 1970s, one must express disappointment at the invisibility of the 'lower sort' and the almost total absence of any social history. This book provides one with a sense of the great store of talent among historians of early-modern Ireland, but it also provides eloquent testimony of their conceptual and methodological conservatism. With the sole exception of Tadhg Ó hAnnracháin, who makes extensive use of the Vatican archives, all of the authors are content to ask the same old questions of the usual well-thumbed sources in Dublin, London and Oxford. This is all very well if we are content to confine ourselves to continually re-analyzing the same small group of individuals, but is unsatisfying if we aspire to create a broader (and, dare one say it, more representative) account of life, politics, religion and culture in 1640s Ireland. This conservatism is understandable when one considers the ridiculous excesses of sections of the 'Spenser industry' and the sloppiness on the part of many of those who advocate cross-disciplinary approaches to the past, but it is surely time for historians of early-modern Ireland to ask new questions of new sources and to open themselves to the benefits of methodologies drawn from other fields such as literature, anthropology or cultural history. A history of the period which combined the empirical exactitude of these historians with the broader conceptual framework of other disciplines would be impressive indeed.

University of Cambridge **Jason McElligott**

Keith Wrightson, *Earthly Necessities: Economic Lives in Early Modern Britain*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 2000, p. xii + 372, hb. £25

Keigh Wrightson was told by a friend, he relates in his preface, that this book has 'a particularly middle-aged quality about it'. The friend was right and this points to both the strengths and weaknesses of the work under review. Wrightson's claim is that after thirty years trying to understand the dynamics of social change in early modern Britain he has written an economic study which attempts to blend the ingredients of an exceptionally rich historical literature. As always his concern is the textures of human experience. Wrightson has always been very good indeed

at conveying these and this is chiefly what one remembers from his local studies of Terling and Whickham. But one also recalls the sheer verve of that exciting 1982 survey *English Society 1580–1680*. What this book gains in maturity it loses in fire. There is the fear that it may fall between various stools. The questionable decision to omit footnotes deprives the reader of an invaluable guide to the literature that Wrightson moves through with such ease. The undergraduate reader may have to be urged to persevere in order to appreciate the wisdom and thoughtfulness of the interpretations and judgements.

So how does this distinguished social historian tackle the economic underpinning of the society on which he has laboured long? He has to cope, as any such book will, with continuity and change. The conceptualisation is bold, decisive and overall it works. Wrightson begins with a largely static account, 100 pages, of the period from *c.*1470 to *c.*1550 which he calls 'Households in a landscape'; he follows this with 150 pages on transitions, prices and rents, economic expansion, 'tumbling up and down in the world', specialisation; he ends with sixty pages on 'Living with the market, *c.*1660 to *c.*1750'. We get three maps, tables on prices and population growth and, a concession to Wrigley and Schofield, a 'simple model' of population and economy. Wrightson paints a society increasingly but slowly, hesitantly and unevenly permeated by market values. The context for the consolidation of economic knowledge had been created, he confesses, by the end of his period. Yet the objective throughout, he asserts finally and surely warrantably, had remained in this world the immediate problem of getting a living.

Wrightson's account is always rooted in the makeshift and expedient lives of the poor as much as the more settled ones of the better off. He begins by arguing persuasively that the dynamics of households were much more complex and various than patriarchal insistence set out. Gender in working lives implied a flexible marital partnership in pursuit of shared priorities. From the household, Wrightson moves to the neighbourhood, to lordship, tenancy and kinship. His survey of economic networking in the sixteenth century benefits from Craig Muldrew's important work on the economy of credit and obligations. This part of the book ends with a useful summary of the forces of change: increasing visible social differentiation with wealthy yeomen starting to rebuild rural England or at least its southern shires; enclosure and conversion of arable to pasture; the emergence of manufacturing industry in the countryside; restructuring within the urban system. The account of transitions moves from the negative to the positive. Wrightson is unsparing in picturing the dire times and the deterioration of living standards that lay behind the protests of the mid-Tudor commonwealthsmen. He charts well the revival that followed, with its reciprocal relationship between agricultural development and urban growth. It is an interesting reflection on Wrightson's concept of early modern Britain as a whole that it is only in his final section that social structure dominates the analysis to the extent of determining a chapter by chapter treatment of how the landed interest, the middling sort and the labouring people were faring. As he travels the world of Gregory King and improvement his touch remains sure and the individual vignettes which are taken to summarise the lives of many unspoken here continue to light up the account. The best source material and best studies are well worn and it would have been foolish if not impossible for Wrightson to ignore all this, so we get Robert Loder again and Earls Colne and Margaret Spufford's classic Chippenham and Orwell.

The book synthesises the best of fifty years of intensive research on its field with confidence and mastery. If some may feel this is far from being Wrightson's most exciting work, it should be accepted that *Earthly Necessities* is a fundamental statement of the state of the art of both the social and the economic history of early modern Britain. Moreover Scotland and Wales get serious attention and in one sense this is therefore a significant comparative study besides standing as a powerful histocial statement overall.

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