

Reviews

Patricia O'Connell, *The Irish College at Lisbon 1590–1834*, Dublin, Four Courts Press, 2001, pp. 148, hb. £25.60, ISBN: 1851825649

'I often considered . . . whether the ceasing of persecution might not cause among us a greater falling off from the faith.' Thus prophesied Michael Daly, the rector of the Irish college of St Patrick at Lisbon in 1795. He had persistently and successfully importuned the Portuguese authorities and Irish bishops for the re-foundation of the college, first opened in 1590, but closed in 1779 due to the expulsion of the Jesuits. As Patricia O'Connell shows in this lively history of the college, it did owe its origins to the curtailment at home of the religious liberty of Irish Catholics who sought protection from the rulers of Portugal and Spain in the late Elizabethan and early Jacobean periods. As author of a previous work on the Irish college at Alcalá de Henares in Spain, Ms O'Connell is well qualified to assess the contribution of this institution to Irish religious, social and cultural history, and specifically to the burgeoning Catholic mission in Ireland in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

Ms O'Connell works effectively around the problem of loss of records caused by earthquake, fire, warfare and dissolution to present a narrative of the college from its establishment by John Howling, S.J., in the bustling exchange that was the Portuguese capital. Her central chapter is a prosopography of the more than 500 students who attended the college during its almost two and a half centuries of flourishing. From this group emerged archbishops, bishops and priests of Old English and Gaelic background who served in most of the Irish dioceses, as well as others who remained abroad on completion of their education.

The book reconstructs evocatively the locale and social life of the college. Wider historical issues are also raised and contextualised in the setting of the Portuguese empire. While the training received by the collegians is mooted and the pattern of their induction, for example, into the academic life of the universities of Coimbra and Evora is adumbrated, the author acknowledges that her purpose is not to discourse on these matters but rather to posit them for further research, perhaps on the part of those enlightened by the information provided here.

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Above all this work points up the importance of pursuing the links between Ireland and the continent in the early modern period, a pursuit that may have been obscured by later concentration on the Irish in the U.S. and Australia (by the Irish bishops indeed, among others, in the last decades of the college's existence). The debt of the Irish Catholic church to those patrons, mostly of Portuguese origin, who in their magnanimity conferred generous gifts on the fledgling institution out of genuine concern for the well-being of Catholicism in Ireland, is enormous. In the words of Rector Michael Daly, 'Ireland will reap the profits without contributing a farthing'. The strength of Ms O'Connell's work lies in its reclaiming of this beneficent heritage as it manifested itself in the Irish Counter-Reformation.

National University of Ireland, Maynooth

Colm Lennon

Jane Stevenson and Peter Davidson (eds), *Early Modern Women Poets (1520–1700): An Anthology*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2001, pp. lii + 585, hb.

The choice of editors for this volume, which is now the most authoritative collection of early modern women poets in print, was inspired: Jane Stevenson and Peter Davidson have an extremely extensive knowledge of women's manuscripts in archives in Britain and Europe, and a wide range of academic accomplishments, including several languages. The composition of this volume reflects their interests and experience. They have presented nearly 200 women poets, some of whom, such as Mary Wroth, Anne Bradstreet and Katherine Philips, are well known to the scholarly community; their achievement, however, is in the excavation of so many new poems, and in particular new poets, some of whom, like Anne Southwell, Hester Pulter and Lucy Hutchinson, are just coming to the attention of early modern scholars. Many more of the women represented here would not have thought of themselves as 'poets' at all, and one fascinating aspect of this volume is the number of uses to which poetry has been put: to ward off a seduction, to provide the text for a sampler, or, in verses taken from court records, to libel an enemy. Several of the poems here are epitaphs, which have been recovered from tombstones or monuments. Besides a wider than usual trawl of printed sources, the manuscripts consulted by the editors range far beyond the papers of aristocratic families which have traditionally provided the context for women's poetry, and one salutary aspect of this collection is the inclusion of so many verses from a non-elite literary culture. Particularly ground-breaking is the essay into oral culture: records of instructions and charms have been consulted. Perhaps the most striking feature of this collection, however, is its serious work on women writing in languages other than English: there is substantial selection here from Scottish, Irish and Welsh poets. The trend away from monoglot representations of early modern culture in Britain is salutary. Latin poems are included, and also Greek. Translations are of course represented, and the inclusion of the very different perspectives of women writing in other languages is an important part of the editors' purpose. Their aim is 'to demonstrate the range and variety of women's verse in early modern England'. A side-effect of this aim is that an important historical resource has been created: many of the biographies provided have been painstakingly researched and offer new insights into women's lives and cultural activity. History is clearly important

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to the editors: where significant women have engaged in occasional verse composition, their efforts are recorded. At the other end of the social scale, many anonymous verses are also included. The editors' criteria for inclusion are carefully laid out in the introduction; they are minded to think that a fresh or unorthodox poem in a feminine voice is more likely to be by a woman than an orthodox, or a misogynist one. Even if they are wrong – and there are probably a few of what the editors call 'infiltrators' in the volume, i.e. men writing under women's names, or in female voices – these contributions are valuable in that they extend our ideas of the range of discourses of femininity in the early modern period. Extending scholarly parameters is what this volume does, in all directions: as the editors note, there is every spectrum of political and religious opinion represented here. There is even an example of that rare phenomenon, an explicitly lesbian poem.

All this means that the volume is hugely diverse, and this very diversity is a source of frustration from time to time. The inclusion of so many single poems means that the substantial work of poets such as Katherine Philips and Hester Pulter is not well represented, although when the forthcoming editions of these poets appear this will not be an important limitation. The standard of transcription is generally very high, and the introduction is itself a piece of meticulous scholarship, providing a useful survey of early modern women's poetry which challenges orthodoxies such as the relegation of women's writing to the private domain, and gives some valuable background to the selections of Scots and Irish poetry. At this stage in research into early modern women's writing this volume is necessary and very welcome. Many new avenues of enquiry are suggested by this original and eclectic collection, which should stimulate research in this area for years to come. There are few early modern scholars who will not find much of value within its pages.

University of Warwick

Elizabeth Clarke

Joshua Scodel, *Excess and the Mean in Early Modern English Literature*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2002, pp. xvii + 367, hb. £37.95, ISBN: 0691090289.

In polemical writings, one's own side is always moderate, while the other side is characterized as irresponsible extremists: Dryden's strongly partisan *Absalom and Achitophel*, for example, pretends to espouse a *via media*, targeted 'to please the more Moderate sort'. In this wide-ranging, erudite study, Joshua Scodel shows how the classical ideal of the mean is reinterpreted and appropriated in different contexts by writers ranging from Spenser to Aphra Behn. Later chapters, the most interesting in the book, illustrate how other writers of the period, working in the traditions of love poetry and the Anacreontic/Horatian drinking song, reject 'dull moderation' altogether.

Though Scodel seems to have read everything remotely connected with his topic, the main strengths of this impressive study lie not in its exhaustiveness but in sensitive detailed commentary on individual texts. A chapter on Donne, largely devoted to close readings of Satire 3 and a verse epistle to Sir Henry Wootton, examines the ways in which Donne adapts the tradition of the *via media* to argue the case for freedom of enquiry, the unfettered conscience. Milton, as one would expect, emerges as champion of moderation, in perceptive commentaries on *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso*,

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Paradise Lost, and the sonnets 'Lawrence of virtuous father virtuous son' and 'Cyriack, whose grandsire on the royal bench' – the latter two perhaps the least Bacchanalian drinking songs ever written.

Two chapters on the 'symposiastic lyric' celebrating the pleasures of wine and companionship are attentive to the manner in which Jonson, Herrick, Lovelace, Rochester, and such relatively obscure poets as Alexander Brome and Charles Cotton responded to changing historical circumstances. Canary wine for the elite, educated in their tastes, is contrasted with strong beer for the rude multitude (Herrick's 'The Hock-Cart' is one of the few poems to celebrate both), and drinking in moderation to summon the Muse is contrasted with hard drinking to promote oblivion among the defeated royalists in the 1650s, hoping, as in Lovelace's 'The Vintage to the Dungeon', to 'Triumph in your Bonds and Paines,/ And daunce to th'Musick of your Chaines'. Rochester, from this perspective, represents a *cul de sac*, someone who 'with patrician arrogance . . . expresses his right to fulfil all his desires' (p. 251), celebrating licentious excess – a view of the poet which denies him any complexity and ignores the fact that he is a satirist, concerned with ethical and political questions, as well as a lyric poet.

A more even-handed treatment of pre- and post-Civil War writers is found in two chapters on 'erotic excess', as depicted in works characterized by a 'tension', not easily resolved, 'between new celebrations of "extreme" passion and long-standing norms of moderation' (p. 145). Several Elizabethan texts, citing the figure of Icarus as model to emulate rather than as warning against immoderate ambition, praise the 'high attempts' of the heroic lover contemptuous of danger and denigrate 'the Meane-observer (whom Base Safety keeps)': in these lines from a sonnet by Samuel Daniel, 'meane' can be read as adjective as well as noun, suggesting base or lowly, in birth as in values. Thomas Carew's 'Mediocrity in Love Rejected' and his masque *Coelum Britannicum*, Scodel argues, similarly contrast 'servile minds' with aristocratic 'vertues . . . as admit excesse', 'Brave bounteous Acts' and the 'Magnificence' of the Caroline court. Later in the century, plays of Dryden, Sir William Davenant's unfinished epic *Gondibert*, and poems by Aphra Behn display 'ideological uncertainties' in portraying aristocratic prodigality as both opposed to and contaminated by self-interest, 'the prudential calculations of instrumental reason' (pp. 174, 196).

Poems in the Georgic tradition, discussed in two chapters, sometimes extol 'peace and plenty', sometimes warn of the dangers of 'moral excess' associated with idleness. Here as elsewhere, Scodel is alert to the political dimensions of the texts under consideration, arguing that the praise of expanding trade and empire (and in some cases, of unbridled royal power) by courtier-poets fits uneasily with the Virgilian ideal of the hardy, self-sufficient farmer content to dwell on the land but ready to serve the state. Canonical and less familiar texts are juxtaposed in interesting ways, as *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso* rub shoulders with Drayton's *Poly-Olbion*, Davies's *Microcosmos*, Denham's *Coopers Hill*, and poems by Waller and Cowley.

The idea of the mean, as Scodel acknowledges, is in its nature vague, and, for all the acute insights about particular poems, one is occasionally reminded of a giant vacuum cleaner sweeping up everything in its path. But *Excess and the Mean* succeeds admirably in showing how sixteenth and seventeenth-century writers, under changing historical circumstances, redefine and problematize these familiar *topoi*, giving them new life.

King's College London

Warren Chernaik

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S. P. Gordon, *The Power of the Passive Self in English Literature, 1640–1770*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2002, pp. 279, hb. £40, ISBN: 0521810051

This book is driven by a forceful and thought-provoking general argument which is sometimes permitted to corral the case-studies that support it. *Hypotheses non fingo*, said Newton. That cannot be said by the author of this book. *Hypothesis fingat*. That argument is as follows. Present-day cultural critics and commentators are intensely sceptical about the possibility of ‘disinterested’ points of view, however certain kinds of statement might masquerade as ‘detached’, ‘rational’, ideologically neutral. All judgements, such commentators consider, are self-interested and subjective, shaped by the will-to-power of their proponents. There is no such thing as an ‘objective’ opinion. Professor Gordon’s book examines the aetiology and archaeology of what he fears has now become an unexamined foundational assumption of most thought. When did we start believing this, and was there ever a time when we might have believed something else?

His angle is that the Hobbesian-Mandevillian axis asserting that all discourse and all behaviour is self-interested – that there can be no such phenomenon as altruism – was opposed throughout its active life by an alternative, dubbed by Professor Gordon ‘the passivity trope’. This ‘constructs a self whose disinterestedness is guaranteed by forces outside conscious control. This does not mean *un*conscious forces in the psychoanalytic sense; it means, rather, external forces that work through the body and by-pass the mind’ (p. 5). During the Civil War, Cromwell and his apologists frequently spoke of God’s agency in man. Men were passive receptors for the work of grace in them, and the opinions that propelled their actions were thought of as in an important sense not their own, not initiated by them. Gordon’s chapter on this strand of Puritan thought is alive both to the very many inflections and nuances of it, and to its critics who tried to expose it as a hypocritical masquerade. In his chapter on Hobbes, Gordon argues that to assert the claim that all action is self-interested, Hobbes had to defeat what the author terms ‘romance-heroic discourse’, in which, it seems, claims to disinterested action are frequently made. There is an opposite discourse, the ‘herculean’, in which the pattern of action is self-interested and Hobbesian. Here Professor Gordon’s detailed argument is so much in the grip of his overall hypothesis that it fails entirely to convince. What exactly *is* romance-heroic discourse? Which texts are an expression of it? Where exactly in Hobbes’s writing does he have anything specific to say about those works? Same questions about ‘herculean’ discourse, to which the chapter does not give us satisfactory answers. The conduct of the argument, at all times lively and absorbing, is nevertheless at some distance from works of imaginative literature and is unconvincingly reified.

Chapter three on *The Spectator* faces similar difficulties of the shape of the argument coercing the texture of the argument. Addison and Steele’s periodical is an important transitional stage in Professor Gordon’s case, because although through the discourse of ‘the polite’ it presents the possibility that subjects might be entirely ‘legible’, entirely transparent – concealing nothing, hiding nothing, and therefore non-rhetorical, undeceptive, potentially disinterested – Gordon insists that this way of regarding people is controlled by a Mr Spectator figure who deploys the Hobbesian threat of constant surveillance to discipline such subjects. An early version of the panopticon, *The Spectator* finally interpellates its readers as self-interested – trying to

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get away with something if it were not for the constant possibility of being found out. To my mind, this overblows Mr Spectator's role, which is vestigial at best. Mr Spectator seems a useful device at the outset but the periodical outgrows him. I am not persuaded by the account of this marginal figure as threatening, disciplining, compromising, for example, the authenticity of Sir Roger de Coverly.

Shaftesbury is proposed in the next chapter as the theorist of disinterestedness. In an incisive and subtle treatment of Shaftesbury's work, Gordon begins to unfold the political price that has to be paid by subscribers to the Shaftesburian moral sense. In Shaftesbury, disinterestedness is an achievement of the elite. Those who aspire to it in the non-elite social strata can only possess it at the cost of political disempowerment. They have to sacrifice their agency. The final two chapters, on the way in which David Garrick's body was managed by those who commented on his acting style, and on Richardson's *Clarissa*, show how Garrick and Clarissa forfeit agency in their need to be regarded as 'authentic'. Eighteenth-century acting theory argues that actors can only display those emotions that they can also experience, says Gordon: questionable, but let that pass: Garrick, whose transformability as an actor appears to be an exception to this non-rhetorical hypothesis, is 'managed' by a discourse that endows him with extraordinary sensibility beyond the range of most people, thus constructing him as still a passive vehicle for emotion. If we consider, however, Garrick's contribution to stage history as a *director* rather than as an actor, I doubt if this argument holds. Qua director, Garrick was making conscious choices all the time, adopting positions and gestures, textual readings, pointings of speeches, that he knew were manipulated and rhetorical: that simply could not be the product of the 'passivity trope' and had to show its shortcomings. I do not think, therefore, that Garrick believed about himself, or that the age believed about Garrick, what Professor Gordon says they did. Gordon's Richardson is a writer who makes Clarissa's tears, and the tears she provokes in her readers, stand as guarantors of the non-duplicity, the transparency, the disinterestedness of that paragon's conduct. Politically disempowering, socially enervating, Clarissa's tears are nevertheless the most unambiguous evidence that she is not a Shamela. Is there slippage here between 'disinterest' and 'sincerity'? As Hamlet noticed some centuries before this, there is nothing uniquely authentic about tears. They can be faked, and they are often transient at best. They don't do the job that Gordon's Richardson imagines they do, and I am doubtful that Richardson thought they could.

If one had more space, one might show that in very many literary texts the styles of thought presented by Professor Gordon as mutually exclusive actually coexist. Nevertheless, his is a book with which one thoroughly enjoys engaging. Although sometimes tiresome in its need to reinforce every sentence with an authoritative quotation from a secondary source, it is well written and impressive.

University of Nottingham

Brean S. Hammond

John Kerrigan, *On Shakespeare and Early Modern Literature: Essays*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2001, pp. ix + 266, hb. £40, ISBN: 0199248516

Collections of academic writings that call themselves 'essays' do not always precisely deserve the title, but the pieces in this gathering across ten years of John Kerrigan's

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The later essays take a more intensely scholarly turn, especially in terms of annotation. Utterly convincing, in 1992, on *Astrophil and Stella* as 'a theatre for speech' (149), the work on the theatricality of the poem adumbrates its Moebian counterpart *Revenge Tragedy Revisited* (1997), in which, taking alarmingly convincing issue with a series of established scholars, Kerrigan posits the post-providential death of metaphysical and metatheatrical writing for the stage. In between (in terms of the arrangement of the collection), the sober, scholarly, heavily annotated account of Carew's career (1988) demonstrates beyond dispute, I think, the precise limits of the commerce between courtly literature and its context.

This collection is highly significant. It moves forward a detailed knowledge and understanding of the specifics of the early modern period, and the methodologies that most intelligently and creatively bring about that critical momentum; it demonstrates that a critical essay can be a thing of great beauty as well as efficacy. Most importantly, though, and (characteristically of Kerrigan) therefore most subtly, it quietly reasserts the aporetic provocativeness of the essay, reinventing this most early modern of forms for a postmodern readership.

University of Dublin

A. J. Piesse

Graham Parry and Joad Raymond (eds), *Milton and the Terms of Liberty*, Woodbridge, D. S. Brewer, 2002, pp. xvi + 218, hb. £35, ISBN: 0859916391

This volume presents a selection of papers from the 1999 International Milton Symposium at York, and testifies to the intellectual vigour of contemporary Milton studies. Not all the contributors address the topic of liberty directly, but the book opens strongly with a fine essay by Quentin Skinner on 'John Milton and the Politics of Slavery' which goes right to the heart of Milton's conception of liberty. In his book *Liberty before Liberalism* (1998), Professor Skinner had drawn attention to the seventeenth-century revival of the Roman philosophy of liberty which argued that man cannot be truly free in any state which has a monarchical government: even if the king refrains from acting tyrannically, the mere existence of such a power, such a potential for coercion, cows the subject and discourages heroic achievements. In the present essay Professor Skinner demonstrates how such arguments were deployed by Parliamentary writers in the early 1640s, and how such a conception of liberty and slavery informs Milton's own arguments. The case is made with an admirable combination of scholarly citations and lucid exposition. For this essay alone, the volume would be worth acquiring. Somewhat in the same mould is Joad Raymond's chapter on the language which both royalists and parliamentarians used about Charles I and his son: behind the sometimes satirical, sometimes anxious nomenclature ('Mr Charles Stuart', 'the pretended King of Scotland', 'the Thing of Scotland', 'young Tarquin') lay a debate about whether the 'thing', the actual substance or effective power of kingship had been abolished along with the name, a debate which extended to the assumption of quasi-regal powers, but no regal title, by Cromwell. Dr Raymond's exploration of the tensions around this question is illustrated by a large number of well-chosen citations from contemporary pamphlets. Both essays show the results of close attention to the precise terms which were employed in political debates, and an understanding of the political and social pressures on that vocabulary.

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The question of Milton's consistency – or to put it more plainly, his possible bad faith, even mendacity – is explored by several writers. Thomas Corns revisits the problem of whether the political and religious attitudes of the later Milton can be perceived in his earliest writings, while Stephen Fallon shows that Alexander More's attacks on Milton touched a raw nerve. Milton had accused More (falsely) of being the author of the defence of Charles I, *Regii Sanguinis Clamor*, and More in turn accused Milton both of mendacity and of overweening pride in his presentation of himself as God's chosen instrument. Professor Fallon demonstrates how uncomfortably accurate More's reading of Milton was, and analyses the linguistic and syntactical contortions through which Milton tried to evade these charges without actually lying. Martin Dzelzainis dissects another embarrassment: when Milton used Martin Bucer to promote his own arguments for divorce, and quoted his statement that Christian Roman emperors allowed divorce by mutual consent, he suppressed Bucer's comment that this permission was later rescinded by Justinian. Dr Dzelzainis's learned and intricate analysis of the implications of this not only seeks to establish how much Roman law Milton knew, and when he did that reading, but also leads us on to larger questions about the authority of the Roman heritage and Milton's own honesty. Such essays, grounded in exacting scholarship, tease out the practical and philosophical problems of liberty with exemplary care and stimulating results.

Also ambitious is John Creaser's attempt to link Milton and Marvell's ideas about political liberty with the degree of liberty which they demonstrate in their use of prosody, but in this case I was not convinced that a coherent argument resulted. Other essays are more loosely related to the volume's announced theme. Christopher Orchard explores the use of martial imagery in interregnum texts, while John Rumrich argues effectively against the methods employed by the committee which recently reported on the authorship of *De Doctrina Christiana*. This essay, sceptical of those who would disintegrate the text and deprive Milton of its authorship, should reignite the controversy. Three essays address the Restoration Milton. Katsuhiko Engetsu reminds us that *Paradise Regained* and *Of True Religion* are contemporaries, and neatly associates the two texts' concerns with the ways in which, for a nonconformist like Milton, the private and public spheres had been uncomfortably reconfigured after the Restoration. Janel Mueller argues that *Samson Agonistes* engages with three aspects of Restoration London: the imprisonment of nonconformists; the plague; and the fire. In the first case the nonconformist associations with the story of Samson are effectively established, but I was unpersuaded that the poem really makes use of references to the plague and the fire. Barbara Lewalski contributes an overview of Milton's continued commitment to educating the people in the last seven years of his life, a well-informed but not particularly original essay. The volume concludes with a piece by Anne-Julia Zwielen on the reception of Miltonic notions of empire in the long eighteenth century.

All of these contributions are worth pondering, and some are distinguished. As a whole the volume (though marred by several lapses in proof-reading) is of a high standard, and shows that some fine and original work is still possible in such a well-trodden area, particularly by those investigating the semantics of political debate in the 1640s and 1650s.

University of Leeds

Paul Hammond

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M. P. Winship, *Making Heretics: Militant Protestantism and Free Grace in Massachusetts, 1636–1641*, Princeton University Press, 2002, pp. 340, hb. £19.95, ISBN: 0691089434

The controversial views of Anne Hutchinson and the manner in which the Massachusetts Bay authorities dealt with her were widely debated by religious polemicists on both sides of the Atlantic in the 1640s, and have become a staple subject for colonial historians ever since. Like Salem Witchcraft in 1692, the ‘Antinomian Controversy’ is a topic many would suspect has been totally exhausted. But Michael Winship of the University of Georgia has produced a brilliant study that should totally redefine the way in which the events swirling around Anne Hutchinson are understood.

Winship is one of the handful of American colonialists who are well versed in the theological and social nuances of Tudor-Stuart English religion, and much of the sophistication of *Making Heretics* derives from his ability to draw connections between English developments and the evolution of New England society. He is aware of the many nuances of faith that existed within what has often been depicted as a homogenous puritan community, and the mechanisms used to maintain unity in the absence of uniformity. Cohesion required ‘compromise and tacit restraint’ (p. 10), and was destroyed when some placed the need for purity over the value of unity. Peter Lake and David Como have explored the consequences of such a breakdown in the London puritan community in the 1620s, and Winship draws upon their findings in his exploration of the religious scene in New England in the mid-1630s.

Winship rejects the traditional labels of ‘Antinomian Controversy’ and ‘Hutchinsonian Controversy’, both of which make the dispute seem more straightforward than it was. He places at centre stage the ongoing debate among puritans on both sides of the Atlantic over how assurance of grace was to be achieved and makes clear that in both England and New England there was no ‘clearly defined, reliable orthodox path of assurance’, but rather ‘an assemblage of not entirely consistent techniques, doctrinal emphases, and affects’ (p. 25). John Cotton, who joined the ministry of the Boston, Massachusetts church in 1633, though accused of Arminianism at one stage of his English career, had developed an understanding of assurance that emphasized the ‘Holy Spirit’s witnessing to a unilateral and absolute divine promise of salvation’ (p. 33). Anne Hutchinson, who had been moved by Cotton’s preaching in Lincolnshire and followed him to the New World, held similar views, as did other members of the Boston congregation. Yet that church also contained members who relied on evidences of sanctification to assure them that they had received God’s free grace. By exercising the judgment of charity towards those with whom they disagreed the congregation maintained its unity in the search for further truth.

Winship suggests that the growing episcopal pressure on English puritans in the 1620s and 1630s helped to maintain the unity of the diverse members of that community. In the New World, where the machinery of government was in the hands of the saints, some came to expect and demand greater purity and more complete uniformity. Winship argues that a decisive event in the shaping of the free grace controversy was the arrival of Thomas Shepard in the colony. Shepard was, according to Winship, ‘an activist, an angry militant on the lookout for deviancy, a ministerial type especially prone to perceive serious conflict and dangerous heresy where others might not and act so as to realize that perception (p. 8)’. It was Shepard who raised questions in 1636 about Cotton’s orthodoxy, and Shepard who first suggested that members of

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the Boston church might be holding familist and other radical doctrines. Winship investigates the significance of other members of the Boston church in the developing controversy, including the young Henry Vane, Governor of the Bay colony, and the Reverend John Wheelwright, Anne Hutchinson's brother-on-law. While these individuals and other members of the congregation seem to have been engaged in exploring matters of faith on the spiritist end of the theological spectrum, there was no single set of beliefs that they subscribed to, nor a single leader that they followed. But Shepard's concerns, soon taken up by other clergy and laymen, lumped them together. By making them out to be heretics, their opponents created the illusion of a faction.

Responsibility for this polarization was not all on one side, however. As the dispute developed those who stressed the work of the spirit in conveying assurance of God's free grace became more critical of those who relied on the evidence of sanctification. Clearly, Anne Hutchinson at least began to openly criticize the majority of the colony's clergy as preachers of a covenant of works. Boston's pastor, John Wilson, and the congregation's most distinguished layman, John Winthrop, had tolerated the theological peculiarities which they knew to exist in their community because they failed to see those views as threatening the foundations of orthodoxy. But as the debate became public and escalated, the unity of the Boston church quickly dissolved and members of the congregation attacked Wilson and Winthrop. Soon the dissension became a matter for general concern within the colony.

Winship offers a careful narration of the evolution of the dispute and related the growing divisions to social, geographical, and political forces in the evolution of the colony's culture. He clearly analyzes the roles of Vane, Wheelwright, Hutchinson, and other key figures associated with the free grace movement as well as those of their opponents. Winship explains the deliberations and findings of the Synod of 1637, the trials before the colony's General Court, and the final proceedings against Hutchinson in the Boston church. He avoids the mistake of assuming that those accused of heresy all shared the same beliefs, and suggests reasons for why, following the rout of the dissidents, it served the interests of Winthrop and others to blame the controversy on Hutchinson while downplaying the roles of others such as Cotton and Vane.

Making Heretics will significantly reorient our understanding of the history of early Massachusetts. But it should also be of great interest to students of English puritanism, offering a well-documented case of the ties that bound and the forces that fragmented godly communities in the early seventeenth century. New England was an ocean away, but still part of the same cultural world.

Millersville University of Pennsylvania

Frances J. Bremer

Robert von Friedeburg, *Self Defence and Religious Strife in Early Modern Europe: England and Germany, 1530–1680*, Aldershot, Ashgate, 2002, pp. 290, hb. £55, ISBN: 0754601773

Recent historiography has witnessed two more or less discernable trends regarding the early modern world: the revival of comparative history, and the desire to understand 'England's troubles' within its European context. To the extent that this book seeks to address such concerns, and to introduce into English scholarship recent German research, it is entirely laudable. The author explores ideas of 'self-defence', in

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terms of the identity of those who could legitimately use force against rulers, and in what circumstances, and in terms of ideas of natural laws and rights. The aim is to demonstrate the 'influence' of German ideas in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries upon English thought during the Reformation, the reign of Charles I, and the civil wars, albeit the intention is to suggest that such ideas, displaced from their native context, had far more serious implications for social stability. In England, the lack of dispersed sovereignty, identifiable 'inferior magistrates', and elective monarchs, together with a rather different Reformation experience, ensured that notions of self-defence threatened the dissolution of civil government. This is a stimulating thesis, although its execution is far from successful, for a number of reasons.

In developing the argument, stylistic awkwardness and clumsy translation accentuates some organisational difficulties. The first section, outlining developments in the understanding of self-defence in German thought, in terms of the role of minor princes, inferior magistrates, and heads of families, and in terms of resistance on the part of the whole body politic, discusses the importance of the Reformation, and discusses scriptural arguments from the Smalcaldic League to Melancthon and Selinus, and the Magdeburg Confession. Thereafter, it explores legal arguments for self-defence later in the sixteenth century, particularly through the work of Althusius and Arnisaeus, and in terms of the development of ideas of popular sovereignty and representation, and of the notion that the monarch, or emperor, could be *singulis maior*, but *universis minor*, and that the provinces could defend themselves. It concludes by examining ideas of *patria*, 'fatherland', and *salus populi* during the Thirty Years War, and the attempts to rally the peasants in resistance. Such analysis is undoubtedly interesting, but the argument becomes lost under the weight of detailed scholarly exposition, which may be thought to be somewhat out of place in such a broad-ranging and comparative analysis, which arguably requires much greater organisational drive and sense of direction. More problematic is the concept of self-defence. Although this is logically distinct from resistance, which involves conscious struggle against governmental authority in the interest of different ideas, the authors under discussion may not always have been interested in such distinctions, and the two were often intimately connected. More worryingly, the author never really comes to terms with the need to determine the extent to which self-defence genuinely lay at the heart of matters, given the possibility that it was deployed for rhetorical purposes, and as a mask for ideological resistance by those fearful of being branded as rebels.

The most serious problems, however concern the section on early modern English thought. This suffers from a failure to scrutinise authors such as Dudley Digges and Thomas Hobbes, and to incorporate the scholarship of Johann Sommerville, Michael Mendle, and Richard Tuck. The latter's work is crucial for an understanding of ideas of natural law and natural rights, as well as for appreciation of the importance of European thinkers in early modern English political thought. More troublesome is the treatment of the 'influence' of German ideas, which is barely discussed at a methodological level, and which is rarely demonstrated unambiguously in the work of English authors, although there is a fleeting discussion of the translation of Continental literature. It is plausible to suggest that England differed from Germany in its social structures, political organisation, and religious experience, and in its attitudes regarding the legitimacy of self-defence and the use of force. It is also necessary to examine the thought of Bale and Goodman on the power of inferior magistrates, and the work of Ponet, Fortescue, Sir John Cheke and George Wythers. However, the discussion of

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Sir John Eliot, one of the few authors who is shown to have read German works, indicates the extent to which he misunderstood, or deliberately transformed, such ideas in order to create a rather different ideological construct. This suggests that there is something more to the 'reception' of Continental ideas than the structural and historical factors outlined by the author. With the thought of convenanters such as George Gillespie, it is demonstrable that the language of self-defence and *patria* had taken greater hold, just as subsequent parliamentary ideas can be shown to have rested upon self-defence by a representative body of the whole realm, were not limited by precedent law, and involved imputing a rather different force to the law of nature than can be found in German writers. However, while notions of self-defence can be shown to have been important during the mid-seventeenth century, and to have operated differently in England than in Germany, the author is less successful in demonstrating that the ideas of British authors were 'influenced' by their Continental neighbours in anything more than their fear of the implications of civil war.

History of Parliament

Jason Peacey

Éamonn Ó Ciardha, *Ireland and the Jacobite Cause, 1685–1766: A Fatal Attachment*, Dublin, Four Courts Press, 2002, pp. 468, hb. €45, ISBN: 18518255437

Via del Corso is one of the best known thoroughfares in Rome, running as it does in a straight line from Piazza del Popolo to Piazza Venezia and leading on to the imposing Victor Emmanuel monument. If instead of entering Piazza Venezia one turns left by Via Quattro Novembre and left again one arrives at Piazza dei Santi Apostoli. At the north end of this piazza, number forty nine, stands Palazzo Balestra, formerly known as Palazzo Muti. This was the residence given by Pope Clement XI to the Old Pretender, James III in 1719. It was here that both his sons were born, Charles Edward on 31 December 1720, and Henry Benedict in March 1725. It was here that James expired on 1 January 1766 and it was here too that Charles Edward, better known as Bonny Prince Charlie, died on 30 January 1788. The palace is now occupied by offices and the only reminder that it was once the Stuart court in exile is a plaque on the left wall of the corridor that leads into the courtyard containing the following inscription:

Abitò questo palazzo
 Enrico Duca poi Cardinale di York
 che figlio superstite di Giacomo III d'Inghilterra
 prese il nome d' Enrico IX
 In lui nell' anno MDCCCVII
 S'estinse la dinastia de' Stuardi.

This translates as follows: Henry Duke, later Cardinal of York, lived in this palace. As the surviving son of James III of England, he took the name of Henry IX. In him in the year 1807 the Stuart dynasty expired.

When James's wife, the Polish princess Maria Clementina Sobieska, died in 1735, her body lay in state for three days in the adjacent Basilica dei Santi Apostoli before being buried in St Peter's Basilica. But her heart is preserved in the former church. At

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the bequest of the Friars Minor Conventual, the proprietors of the Church, Filippo della Valle erected a moving monument to contain her heart in 1737 with the Latin inscription stating that only the *praecordia* were contained in the monument, as heavenly love did not allow the heart to survive. A much more imposing monument was erected to Queen Clementina in the left aisle of St Peter's Basilica in 1742, composed of both sculptural figures and a mosaic portrait of the queen, this incidentally being one of the very few representations of a lay person to be found in St. Peter's. The mosaic was actually the cause of some controversy, as the scrupulous Cardinal Landfredi objected to the queen's *scollatura* and protested to the Pope Clement XII. The blind but wily pope, a good friend of the Stuarts, pointed out that a decision as to the portrait's suitability or otherwise could not be taken while work was still in progress. Landfredi's death before the monument was completed ensured that the mosaic was left in St Peter's. The Latin inscription on the sarcophagus reads as follows: *Maria Clementina M. Britain. Franc. Et Hibern. Regina* – a public endorsement in the very heart of the Vatican of the legitimacy of the Stuart claim. It is not too fanciful to imagine the Irish Jacobite poet Liam Inglis, an Augustinian friar arriving in Rome to study for priesthood in 1743–4, standing enthralled before this monument. Inglis' arrival in Rome coincided with preparations for a French invasion of Britain under Marshal Saxe that included the deployment of troops of the Irish Brigades, the Irish Brogades. And in this image are gathered together many of the various strands that made Irish Jacobitism such a potent force, the Catholic powers of Europe both civil and ecclesiastical, the Irish *diaspora* on the continent including the Irish brigades, the Irish Catholic clergy, the Irish poets and literati.

All these topics are treated in depth in Éamonn Ó Ciardha's new study on Irish Jacobitism. He also highlights the importance of rappareecism as a facet of popular Irish Jacobitism and gives due attention to the small but influential group of Protestant Irish Jacobites. In the course of his work the author makes good use of the Stuart Archive in Windsor, a largely untapped source of over eighty thousand letters. He also quotes freely from the great corpus of eighteenth-century Gaelic poetry, 'the single most important source for Irish Jacobitism' (p. 373), and to those who claim that this verse contains little more than rhetorical flourish, he replies that its content finds a mirror image in the fears expressed in the correspondence and documents of Irish Protestant anti-Jacobites. If the latter were not suffering from collective paranoia, why should the former be accused of collective presumption? Ó Ciardha stresses the vital role of the Irish poets in mediating news of European wars and activities of the Stuart court in exile to an Irish speaking public, information obtained from newspapers that would not have been understood by monoglot Irish speakers. Irish Jacobite verse gave its audience an acute awareness of the possible consequences of European political and military affairs for the Stuart cause. The poets' function in disseminating news parallels that of the ballad-singer in contemporary England. Citations from the poetry are given in the original Irish, a brave choice by the author that underlines the importance of the original texts. While it would have been preferable to supply complete translations of the originals, publication costs no doubt militated against this, and in any event the decision to paraphrase enables the reader to focus on the essential political content of the poems. (The rendering of *Rádh na salm do b'annamh dhá dhéanamh* as 'they said their psalms like they seldom did before' (281) strikes me as unwarranted by the original Irish which simply states that the psalms are seldom said.)

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As this is the first comprehensive study of Irish Jacobitism, the author is to be complemented on taking a chronological approach, dividing the eighty years of this movement into seven periods, 1684–1690, 1692–1702, 1702–1716, Irish Jacobitism after the ‘Fifteen’, Irish Jacobitism in the doldrums, 1725–1739, Ireland and the ‘Forty-five’, the Jacobite twilight, 1752–66. The chapter on Ireland and the ‘Forty-five’ is one of the most interesting sections in the book. Here Ó Ciardha offers a very nuanced reappraisal of the consensus that Bonny Prince Charlie’s campaign produced very little reaction from Irish Catholics. While admitting that the traditional interpretation is true in an exact military sense, Ó Ciardha stresses other factors that need to be borne in mind such as the effects of the 1741 famine that wiped out a quarter of the Catholic population, particularly in Munster, the hotbed of Irish Jacobite activity. He notes that Catholic inaction needs to be weighed up against Catholic military impotence and the relative military strength of the Irish establishment. The absence of an invasion force from the continent was a prime factor that influenced not only Irish Jacobites, but also their opposite numbers in England and even in Scotland itself. Given that James III himself was driven to despair at the recklessness of his son’s landing in Scotland, given his emphasis on prudence in reminding episcopal appointees of their duties to God and to their prince, Irish Catholic passivity during the ‘Forty-five’ should not be simply dismissed as mere indifference to the Stuart cause.

Ó Ciardha quotes extensively from the Irish poetry of the period, demonstrating their awareness of the ebb and flow of the campaign. Indeed from the outbreak of the Spanish–British war in 1739 the spirits of the Irish poets rose and they looked to the Bourbon kings of France and Spain for aid, reinforced by the Irish brigades in the service of both monarchs. The optimism of poets was matched by that of influential Irish exiles on the continent such as Daniel O’ Sullivan of Beerhaven, Sir Charles Wogan, Fr James McKenna and Sir Felix O’ Neill of the Fews. The reaction of Irish Protestants on the other hand demonstrates how seriously they took the rising. Rumours of a French invasion in the years 1743–44 led the authorities to intensify their efforts against a number of Irish Catholic bishops while a royal proclamation, publicly displayed in each town in 1745, offered bounties for clergy. Effigies of Bonny Prince Charlie were burnt at Protestant celebrations in Cork while sermons and pamphlets issuing from the Church of Ireland denounced Jacobitism and Popery in the one breath. The proliferation of ‘Cumberland’, ‘Culloden’ and ‘Hanover’ societies in the aftermath of the Jacobite defeat bears testimony to Irish Protestant apprehensions during the rising. Chesterfield, lord lieutenant of Ireland during the crisis (January 1745–August 1746), acted in a prudent and restrained manner, and while adopting a less belligerent manner towards Irish Catholics than that expressed by local Protestants, he nonetheless warned Irish Catholics that he would be worse than Cromwell if they failed to behave like faithful subjects.

Despite the failure of the ‘Forty-five’ Jacobitism persisted in Irish clerical, literary and *émigré* circles. James III continued to exercise his right to nominate Irish bishops to the Pope and the outbreak of the ‘Seven Years War’ raised hopes again of a French invasion. Nevertheless, the aftermath of the ‘Forty-five’ saw the emergence of certain Irish aristocratic and mercantile spokesmen who felt that the best interests of Irish Catholics lay in reaching an accommodation with the Hanoverian regime. Charles O’Conor of Belanagare, the leading intellectual of the Catholic Committee, saw Catholic Ireland’s continuing loyalty to the Stuart dynasty as the chief obstacle to accommodation and compromise. ‘Such a *fatal attachment* has no precedent in the history of any other

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country on earth'. The accommodationalists initially met with stout resistance from Jacobite supporters but the death of James III in 1766 followed by the Vatican's refusal to recognise Charles Edward Stuart as Charles III effectively ended Jacobitism as a powerful political movement and freed Ireland from its 'fatal attachment'.

Éamonn Ó Ciardha's work fills a glaring void in the field of Irish historiography and if eighteenth-century historians have largely focused on the Ascendancy class, this work goes a long way to redress the balance and give due attention to the Irish Catholic nation both at home and abroad. One cannot deal properly with *A Fatal Attachment*, however, without referring to Breandán Ó Buachalla's monumental volume, *Aisling Ghéar: na Stíobhartaigh agus an tAos Léinn 1605–1788* (Baile Átha Cliath, 1996). In many ways these books complement each other, though it must be said that the emphasis in each case is different. While Ó Buachalla takes Irish literature as his main emphasis and fills in the historical background where necessary, Ó Ciardha concentrates on the historical development but uses poetry in particular as the most important source for Irish Jacobitism.

Whereas Ó Buachalla adopts a thematic approach, Ó Ciardha opts for the chronological. And while the death of James III and the refusal of the papacy to recognise his older son as Charles III provides a fitting *terminus* for Ó Ciardha's work, Ó Buachalla's focus on the literature allows him to develop the change from Jacobitism to Jacobinism in Irish literature in the latter years of the eighteenth century. Those able to read both Irish and English will profit from reading both works in tandem, those unable to read Irish will find *Ireland and the Jacobite cause* an indispensable tool in acquiring an understanding of eighteenth century Ireland. A noteworthy supplement to *A Fatal Attachment* is a chronology of events in three columns cataloguing happenings of Jacobite import in Ireland, England/Scotland, Europe/World from 1685–1789 (pp. 424–6). The book is further enhanced by thirty-two illustrations.

During a recent visit to Rome I was very impressed by the Jacobite monuments mentioned at the beginning of this review. St Isidore's Irish Franciscan College in Rome once contained portraits of James III, Clementina Sobieska, Charles Edward Stuart, Henry Benedict Stuart and Patrick Sarsfield. The very presence of the first four of these portraits (now housed in the Franciscan House of Studies, Dún Mhuire, Killiney) must have helped the inhabitants of St Isidore's in maintaining and reinforcing their allegiance to the Stuart dynasty during the eighteenth century. After all the Stuart court was only fifteen minutes walk away. The Irish dominican College in Rome still has portraits of Charles III, Clementina Sobieska and the children of Charles I, Charles II, James II and Mary. How many other Irish colleges in Rome and elsewhere on the continent had similar portraits? An inventory of Stuart portraiture and other memorabilia and their original location would supplement our understanding of the culture of Irish Jacobitism. Perhaps too many Stuart *objets d'art* in Irish possession have been lost in the last two hundred years (or diplomatically removed when the Pope spurned Charles Edward) to make such a trawl worthwhile, but the iconographical aspect of Irish Jacobite culture has not been given sufficient consideration to date. In the meantime Éamonn Ó Ciardha and Four Courts Press are to be complimented on producing a splendid book that enlightens our understanding of Irish Jacobitism in particular and underlines its importance in the overall history of the Jacobite movement as a whole.

Ollscoil na hÉireann, Gaillimh

Mícheál Mac Craith

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Francis Edwards, *Plots and Plotters in the Reign of Elizabeth I*, Dublin, Four Courts Press, 2002, pp. 296, hb £35 ISBN 1851826149

Though addressing the ever-intriguing subject of conspiracy against the Elizabethan regime, Francis Edwards' new book has a specific seventeenth-century remit. The author attempts to set out 'the larger historical context of the gunpowder plot which began about 1570'. 'Certain events between 1570 and 1601', he argues, 'contain much that explains important aspects of the gunpowder plot of 1605'. By endeavouring to show that the plots which litter English history during the later sixteenth century were to a greater or lesser extent manufactured, Father Edwards suggests that successive early-modern English governments honed the skills and neuroses necessary for Robert Cecil, Earl of Salisbury to engage in fabrication on the grand scale when an opportunity arose, early in the reign of a new king bent on new policies towards Roman Catholics at home and abroad. This is, of course, no new argument. Less than a fortnight after 5 November 1605 Dudley Carleton was reporting idle gossip in Paris which called into question the very existence of a conspiracy, and both questions and doubts have been raised – and answered – ever since. Imaginative speculation is indeed timeless, as a moment's reflection on the events of 22 November 1963, or '9/11' serves to demonstrate. Joel Hurstfield once noted wearily that trying to prove Gunpowder plot a fabrication had 'become a game, like dating Shakespeare's sonnets . . . hardly a challenging occupation for adult men and women'. Child's play or not, Francis Edwards has long been convinced that these traditional doubts if anything do not go far enough. His early book on the treason, *Guy Fawkes: The real story of the Gunpowder plot?* (1969), argued that Guy Fawkes and some of his comrades were *agents provocateurs*, while the editorial apparatus to his most valuable translation of Oswald Tesimond's *Narrative* of the treason and his later articles refine the same argument. In this present volume he has composed an explicit, lengthy prologue to support these theories.

Father Edwards writes with style, courtesy, and a real personal conviction, but it might be argued that his interpretations of historical events, like the conclusions that he reaches, too often verge on the simplistic. Here we have space to consider just a few instances. 'By the end of 1584,' Edwards suggests, 'it was due as much to [Dr William] Parry as any that England was in the grip of plotmania' (p. 106). The assassination of William the Silent, which sent shock-waves across protestant (and Catholic) Europe, was, we must assume, a trivial, secondary consideration? In his reference to the 1584 Bond of Association the author seems to deny the complexities of the issue, apparently overlooking David Cressy's excellent analyses of the motivations, hopes and real fears that lay behind this grand, terrifying gesture of protestant mutual reassurance. It had been 'inspired by Cecil, Walsingham and their supporters', he writes, and that is that (p. 134). Though his book dwells frequently on the evidential shortcomings of treason trials Father Edwards seems nowhere to cite any recent study of process and practice, for example John Bellamy's essential survey of *The Tudor Law of Treason*. This leads again to oversimplification and unwarrantable conclusions. There is no evidence whatsoever to suggest that accounts of Edward Squier's trial in 1597 were 'suppressed' because things did not go the way that the government intended. There was, of course, no such thing as an 'official' account of *all* that occurred in a Tudor treason trial. The record in the so-called *Baga de secretis* (PRO, KB8) contains indictment, sentence and other administrative details; it does

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not include a blow-by-blow narrative of what went on in court. For this we are, like the various editors of *State Trials* collections long ago, dependent on private enterprise: on the initiative of those with shorthand skills who sat scribbling in the public courtroom, and who then circulated their account more or less widely among friends and acquaintances. If suppression did indeed take place, the supposedly all-powerful government seems to have forgotten the trick when a prosecution really did go hay-wire in an equally public treason trial – that of Sir Walter Raleigh – at Winchester in November 1603.

There are some genuine attempts to flesh out the principal characters in this ongoing drama, but again the portraits that emerge do not always carry conviction. Did Robert Cecil really ‘stalk’ the second earl of Essex from 1593, as Father Edwards suggests? Recent work on Essex shows that, while the man had personal talents, his inability to compromise and his increasing paranoia contributed in large measure to tensions at court during the 1590s. The author relies far too much on P. M. Handover’s capable but now very dated study of Cecil, ignoring all the excellent recent research by Pauline Croft and others, from which a more rounded, more credible portrait emerges. Indeed, one gains the clear impression that this manuscript was substantially completed a good many years ago, and would perhaps have benefited from thorough redrafting in the light of much recent, scholarly writing on the turbulent politics of the 1590s, which were far more complex than the author allows. Paul Hammer’s book on Essex’s early career, published in 1999 and surely essential to Edwards’ argument, is touched on only in a couple of footnotes. Essays in the important collection edited by John Guy as *The reign of Elizabeth I: Court and culture in the last decade*, and published as long ago as 1995, are nowhere cited. Moreover, *Plots and Plotters* is marred by statements which are just plain silly: ‘The lord treasurer’, we are informed, with reference to the year 1593, was ‘confident of his sway over the old queen in her dotage’ (p. 185). That year, Burghley turned seventy-three, and hardly wore his years well; Elizabeth was just sixty, and had nearly ten years to live. Whose dotage? We are also told that ‘The ruling junta in England never had any intention of openly tolerating Catholics of any kind. The only good Catholic was a dead one’ (p. 81). This sort of thing is both unworthy and, incidentally, untrue.

The fundamental problem with Father Edwards’ argument, however, is that the events of 1570–1601 do *not* in any real sense offer precedents for what happened in 1604–05. Rather, the plotters act as they do because the world has changed and changed radically – England is concluding a peace with Spain, English Catholics have hopes of de facto toleration, and for those who see no mileage in compromise of any sort, for those wedded to the restoration of an unequivocally Roman Catholic England, these are ominous developments. There is now a real danger that some hitherto-defiant Catholics will be lured to accept the bare toleration on offer. Above all, the hope of Spanish intervention has been snatched away; continental powers so long relied upon have proved inconstant allies. It is for just these reasons that Robert Catesby and his followers resolve on action, early in the reign, before the results of the new dispensation can become apparent. It is for these reasons that the character denigration of James among intransigent Catholics begins as early as the summer of 1603, and it is for these reasons that xenophobia forms so powerful an undercurrent in the story of Gunpowder plot, as Jenny Wormald has so effectively pointed out.

Historical evidence, just like any other form of evidence, exists to be examined, challenged and, where necessary, rejected. It might be argued that the study of

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Gunpowder plot has been advanced by the continuing scrutiny of those like Father Edwards who seek to portray it as a fabrication, a stratagem of state. I suspect, though, that the enduring emphasis on these rather tired arguments has on balance been counter-productive, diverting us from more constructive and rewarding investigations centred on the treason. In the extensive sources for the Gunpowder treason, chief among them the Gunpowder Plot Book (SP 14/216) at the PRO and the Cecil papers at Hatfield House, historians enjoy primary material charting in fascinating detail the ways in which the officials of an early-modern government, starting with the thinnest of leads – a stranger, booted and spurred, arrested standing guard over nearly a ton of gunpowder in the cellars of Westminster one November night – investigated a wide-ranging treason, and built up their knowledge of traitors and treachery, always realising, as criminal investigators do, that the picture is incomplete, and that certain facts lie forever beyond them. From these sources we can establish a great deal about the ways in which an early-modern state reacted to danger, real and perceived. Here Father Edwards has a point – for the investigators in 1605 did learn lessons from the Essex rebellion of February 1601 when quartering prisoners in London gaols and when organising the time-consuming examinations of dozens of prisoners, great and small. This, however, is not the sort of precedent that our author has in mind.

St John's College, Cambridge

Mark Nicholls