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A Review of "The Reformation of the Landscape: Religion, Identity, & Memory in Early Modern Britain and Ireland" by Alexandra Walsham

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Alexandra Walsham. *The Reformation of the Landscape: Religion, Identity, & Memory in Early Modern Britain and Ireland*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2011. xvi + 637 pp. + 52 illus. \$65.00. Review by NICOLLE JORDAN, UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI.

Discussions of landscape are notoriously susceptible to conceptual imprecision because of the term's elusive and unstable meaning. The introduction of Alexandra Walsham's *The Reformation of Landscape* promises to be attentive to the dizzying and sometimes contradictory array of meanings that accrue to the term. Thus, she begins by observing the emergence of what we now call landscape from the Dutch vernacular term "landschap," which referred to artistic depictions of natural scenery; "only gradually did it come to be used to denote actual places rather than the subjective simulacra of them that artists produced on canvas and paper" (2). Sensitivity to the subjective nature of landscape is a hallmark of Walsham's method; her book traces how shifting religious beliefs generated corresponding shifts in perception of the physical environment during the early modern period. More specifically, the book focuses on competing interpretations of place that accompany a particularly volatile and controversial phase in British history. Conflicting meaning is thus at the core of her topic; she reckons with contradictory accounts of the same phenomena as well as with the lacuna that puncture the historical record, especially regarding popular perceptions. The widespread illiteracy of the non-elite means that access to their views is restricted to documents that were often hostile or biased toward a particular end, rendering them less than reliable records of popular perception and belief. Though at times Walsham's analysis gives way to plodding recitation of examples of the particular landscape feature under discussion, in general the sheer breadth of primary sources makes for a rich encounter with distant people and their interactions with land and landmarks.

The sanctity of space is a key concept uniting the book's seven chapters. Walsham is interested in how the Reformation initially sought to eradicate Catholic beliefs and practices, and how this phase of the movement had both intended and unintended consequences, notably the persistence of that which was targeted for eradication,

even among Protestants themselves. She often returns to this point, arguing persuasively that Protestant efforts to evacuate sanctity from space and to relocate it in the congregation itself nevertheless failed to eliminate people's seemingly instinctive tendency to invest certain places with spiritual significance. The book's chronological trajectory also proceeds as a tour of various types of sacred space and the rituals that honored them; trees, rock outcroppings, springs and wells figure prominently throughout.

Though purportedly an early modern historical study, Walsham's first and last chapters feature forays into adjacent periods. Thus chapter one, "*Loca Sacra*: Religion and the Landscape before the Reformation," surveys Britain's Neolithic past, and then the Roman conquest, beginning with the arrival of Suetonius Paulinus in AD 61. The book's description of the Roman encounter with the Isles' indigenous peoples presages subsequent emphasis on accommodation and convergence over repression and eradication: "Celtic belief and practice were readily absorbed into the system of pantheistic ritual the Romans imported from the Mediterranean world [...] The idea that nature could be manipulated as an instrument of divination and an aid to prophetic insight was another aspect of Greek and Latin culture which seems to have been compatible with existing pagan assumptions" (22). She then proceeds to the centuries-long phase of Christianization, describing the roles of legendary figures such as St. Patrick in fifth-century Ireland and Augustine in sixth-century England. Throughout, Walsham wrestles with the speculative nature of knowledge about Britain's prehistory, noting the ample evidence of how early Christians sought to assimilate pagan sites within their own ambit, yet also acknowledging that demonization rather than assimilation sometimes occurred. This chapter also sets in motion her plan to cover the entire North Atlantic archipelago: England, Wales, Scotland, and Ireland consistently figure in her analysis, which often features efforts to distinguish developments in one region from the others—a strategy that proves especially illuminating and indeed necessary in the case of Ireland, where the Reformation's impact was less permanent or pervasive than elsewhere.

The first chapter also charts the types of spaces and landmarks that reappear throughout the study, suggesting the continuity linking

ancient, medieval, and early modern manifestations of the sacred. In the discussion of pilgrimage and miracles, for example, we encounter millstones, saints' gravesites, "wonder-working springs" (51), ancient oak trees, and so forth. The economic role of shrines also emerges in this survey of ancient sacred sites; Walsham records the erection of ecclesiastical buildings and the pensions provided to chaplains who attended them. She notes, too, how the rich patrons of these projects invested in them "in an effort to tap and develop their commercial potential" (55). After tracing an array of cult sites dedicated to patron saints, she observes a complex power dynamic embedded in Britain's emergent geography of shrines, noting that although the cults and chapels linked with numinous sites "augmented and supported the central institutions of 'traditional religion' as revealed to us by revisionism, these places were also a fillip to forms of voluntarism that involved a partial withdrawal from it" (65). Similarly, pilgrimage, like cultish shrines, came to be seen as a potential threat to established religion; some authorities—both secular and ecclesiastical—took measures to counteract the disorderly conduct and financial abuses that afflicted these travels and compromised their pious intentions. Thus emerge early indications of the tension that would build to outright conflict in subsequent years—tension about whether "divine presence was 'contained and enclosed in any one space'" (76). Early dissenting movements such as the Lollards were censured for heresy over precisely this issue, for they dared to complain that purportedly spiritual travels encouraged sinful behavior, not to mention wasting time and resources that could better be devoted to helping the poor. In such antagonism one may glimpse early instances of concerns that led to the Reformation—early traces, that is, of the view that "native faith had been corrupted by the papacy and its agents" (79).

Walsham's second chapter, "Idols in the Landscape: The Impact of the Protestant Reformation," focuses on the iconoclasm that literally transformed the landscape once Protestantism began its "crusade against idolatry." She takes special care to impress upon readers that the Reformation was not a monolithic movement but rather "both a political process and an unruly popular convulsion" (81). She also provides a lucid explanation of the theological differences that propelled the movement, the most relevant ones pertaining to the

relation between the material and spiritual realms. By denying that divinity inhered in any particular space or could be manipulated to gain access to the Almighty, Protestantism leveled a damning blow to the very edifice of the medieval Church, sustained as it was by cathedrals, monasteries, chapels, and shrines that stood as testimony to the opposing principle—that divinity was indeed immanent in sacralized sites. As contempt for idolatry gathered momentum, there also emerged a tendency to conflate it with paganism; one Carmelite monk thus attributed the emergence of cults of a Celtic and Anglo-Saxon provenance to “the vacuum left by Jupiter, Saturn, Mercury, Diana, and Mars” (86). Inducements to iconoclasm abound in the period, originating in the Bible but then proliferating in Puritan tracts such as William Perkins’ *Warning against the idoltrie of the last times* (1603). One ironic consequence of the extirpation of idolatry was “to displace attention back onto the natural environment,” as if the outdoors were the only space untainted by the buildings now seen as spurs to idolatry: “A distinction had to be made between ‘what is created by God, and that which is made by man to an unholy and Idolatrous use’” (93). Yet, insisting (as some radical Protestants did) that the only way to crush idolatry was to destroy the buildings that housed graven images did not limit the campaign to architectural targets. Instead, the definition of idolatry expanded such that any object or site invested with sacred meaning became suspect for its potential to steer the devout astray: “the natural world itself, metaphorically speaking, [turned] into a minefield littered with explosive devices” (93). In the face of such perceived threats to proper devotion, both the state and vigilant individuals undertook campaigns to destroy all incentives to idolatry. Walsh catalogues the royal program of iconoclasm, from Henry VIII’s concerted campaign against the cult of Thomas Becket to the Edwardian Injunctions of 1547 against “wandering to pilgrimages” and adoring images. Indeed, the licensed destruction carried out in the 1540s-80s seems so systematic and thorough-going that one is surprised to learn that some remote regions, particularly in Ireland, escaped with many sacred buildings intact—for example, in the provinces of Connacht and Luster. After reading about so many sustained and seemingly ubiquitous campaigns, it is surprising to read that “only a small fraction of hallowed places rooted in the natural environment

ever came under the axe.” Walsham thus offers a sobering reminder that almost anything in the landscape might have been targeted for destruction: “removing all potential obstacles to true belief located in fields, caves, and woods, and on moors, mountains, and beaches was never going to be feasible” (111).

In a typical gesture toward even-handedness, Walsham notes that these campaigns of iconoclasm were counter-balanced by efforts to assimilate sacred buildings and monuments within the fold of the reformed Church. Some instances of compromise are almost comical, such as her observation that in Scotland, many market crosses escaped destruction because they served as “convenient venues at which sinners could be ordered to perform the reformed ritual of public repentance” (112-3). The conversion of Catholic iconography into designated sites for penance indicates how much the Reformation functioned as a project of re-signification. Non-experts like myself are hard-pressed to detect a guiding principle (aside from geographical remoteness) that protected some Catholic property and not others. The author goes on to explain that although many Catholic buildings were razed or vandalized, many others were converted for parochial use. Thus, another consequence of the Reformation was to consolidate worship in sanctioned sites and minimize worship at rival sites (e.g., chapels and wayside crosses), “spatially reorienting belief and practice and focusing it more exclusively upon the parish church” (115).

Walsham’s turn to individual acts of iconoclasm compels one to appreciate once more the varied nature of religious reform. Not only were such acts often punished, but they were also loaded with multiplicitous meanings; they could not necessarily be seen as vigilantism given that they often mimicked state-mandated campaigns of destruction. As she charts the desecration of crosses, maypoles, holy trees, and wells, she acknowledges that court records often reveal the perpetrators’ manifest sense of religious zeal; yet, other records describe some acts of destruction as no more than evidence of “riotous behavior” (123). Regardless of the motives behind them, the destruction of sacred buildings and sites no doubt had the intended effect—“the desacralization of the landscape” (123). The economic incentives for desecration are again noteworthy; the author quotes a father who purchased building materials from a dissolved monastery even though

he bore their former inhabitants no ill will: "I did as others did" (124). Such evidence leads her to speculate that perhaps the reform movement's gathering momentum had less to do with popular consensus about such practices than with the fact that participation became the path of least resistance.

For these and similar reasons, unprecedented zeal against idolatry contributed to the outbreak and execution of the Civil Wars. Iconoclasm grew especially rampant in Scotland in the late 1630s and early 1640s, partly in response to efforts to introduce the revised Laudian prayer book. In England, Parliamentary forces ratcheted up the campaign by transferring authority over iconoclasm from the Church to lay representatives of the state; the Commons were thus enlisted in the effort that was also newly authorized to destroy offensive items not only within the walls of but also outside churches. Such expansion of the forces of iconoclasm not only legitimated past acts of desecration (even those unsanctioned by Church authorities), but also, Walsham says, provides "evidence of the agency of ordinary people in cleansing their land of abominable idols" (137). The zeal of the New Model Army extended even beyond church property, when soldiers saw fit to vandalize mysterious geological sites such as "rocking stones" and megaliths in order to put an end to sinful practices they might host. Opportunity, once again, lent force to the movement: the military benefitted from the desecrations by acquiring much-needed materials for fortifications, such as stone and timber. Although similar assaults on the estates of Stuart loyalists may have been opportunistic rather than ideologically driven, Walsham repeatedly underscores the symbolic significance of these efforts to alter the landscape: "Far from random acts of violence, such initiatives were symptomatic of the manner in which the religious and cultural conflicts of the era continued to be played out on the contested face of the landscapes of early modern Britain" (142).

An intriguing twist in the logic of the campaign against idolatry can be found in the Protestant desire to preserve remnants of the destruction as evidence of Reform's triumph over false Christianity. Such moralistic expressions of triumph appear in late eighteenth-century treatises on the picturesque, featuring faddish quests for ruins; thus, William Gilpin savors "the demise of these nurseries of 'bigotry and

indolence” (149). Walsham is particularly persuasive in observing the contradictory resonance of these memorials to iconoclasm: “such acts of destruction unwittingly reproduce the awe they are designed to dispel. Their perpetrators commit and encourage a kind of idolatry themselves. [... Thus,] the sacred was not so much eroded as reconfigured and relocated; the way in which it was present in the world was redefined rather than wholly denied” (150).

Having reached this point in the book, one begins to labor under the absence of a stable definition of landscape that would distinguish it from the other terms with which Walsham alternates: space, place, site, environment, topography, etc. Although her remarks about subjective perception go some distance toward unifying her analysis, the abstract nature of her object of study sometimes leads her argument to drift into obscurity. Indeed, although her introduction acknowledges the power of visuality as seen in the symbols that “encrust” (a preferred term) the land, one is hard pressed to link her conception of landscape to the many others that she acknowledges in opening her book. Having noted a contemporary tendency to treat landscape as a cultural construction rather than “an immobile entity and almost irresistible force” (as had Annalists such as Fernand Braudel) (6), Walsham seems uninterested in explaining how, exactly, the events she recounts contributed to a “way of seeing” (in Denis Cosgrove’s influential formulation of landscape). That is, one wonders why landscape effectively becomes, in this analysis, a firmly external and knowable object rather than the product of a culturally inscribed mode of visuality that trains the viewer to identify certain types of scenery (typically featuring rural land and sparse man-made or modified objects therein) as landscape. In the absence of visual analysis of the many fascinating images reproduced here, or of textual analysis that attends to how writers compose scenes depicting items in the external world so as to make them perceptible to readers who cannot otherwise see them, one wonders whether the book isn’t as much a history of the natural environment under the Reformation. In the end, I am not convinced that landscape is a necessary term for Walsham’s study.

Having reconciled myself to learning other fascinating information, if not necessarily the process by which the Reformation taught people to see the land, I forged ahead through Walsham’s subsequent

five chapters and did indeed considerably increase my understanding of the Reformation. Thus, chapter three, “*Britannia sancta: Catholicism, Counter-Reformation, and the Landscape*,” explores how residual forms of Catholicism persisted, and indeed were strengthened by the spiritual renewal that galvanized Catholics on the continent—some of whom came to the British Isles as missionaries—following the Council of Trent. This renewal had an especially significant impact on the natural environment given that Catholics were denied traditional sites of worship. We learn about the re-assertion of pilgrimage as a valued religious practice, and about illicit worship at once-sacred sites that were re-discovered, renovated or otherwise re-sacralized—often with renewed vigor inspired by the architectural martyrdom that so many sites suffered. In addition to copious examples of holy wells and impromptu halls of worship fashioned from barns and sheepcotes, Walsham recounts myriad missionary activities on the “Isles of Saints”: consecration of fountains; circulation of registers of authenticated miracles worked there; ample publications renewing the cults of sainthood around the likes of St. Columba, St. Brigid, and St. Winefride, among others; and the proliferation of tales of retribution visited upon iconoclasts. Especially fascinating is the account of how Catholics confronted Protestant efforts to write revisionist history about Britain’s ancient Christian past. Reformers such as John Bale and John Foxe propagated myths about early Christian converts such as Joseph of Arimathea (first century AD); their pretext was that these early Christians prove the existence in Britain of a pure and indigenous form of the religion prior to the sinister invasion of papal agents. An equally compelling example of Protestant revisionism is early seventeenth-century Irish Archbishop James Ussher, who “reinterpreted the religion planted by St. Patrick as free of the taint of papistry and repositioned the Protestant Church of which he was primate as its true heir” (208).

Chapter four, “*The Religious Regeneration of the Landscape: Ritual, Rehabilitation, and Renewal*,” studies evidence of regret and nostalgia among Catholics and Protestants alike with regard to decades of iconoclasm that left behind a pervasively scarred landscape. Walsham considers various examples of Protestant dissidents who pursued alternative modes of worship specifically through recourse

to remote spots in nature in order to hear sermons, conduct camp meetings, read illicit vernacular books, or pursue other unorthodox forms of spiritual engagement. The accumulation of examples of spiritual inquiry conducted in the outdoors makes for a compelling case that the Reformation did not, as influential accounts have argued, amount to the secularization of space. In fact, the very illicit activities through which reformers pursued their resistance to the Catholic, and later Anglican, establishment constitute a form of sacralization of the natural world. One meeting of Covenanters in Scotland offers a striking example of the scope and intensity of religious sects that challenged the Stuart regime after the Restoration; 14,000 people purportedly met at one meeting: “Gathering in fields had become a badge of anti-episcopal and anti-Stuart defiance” (242). Walsham makes much of the sanctified nature that recurs in accounts of these gatherings, from detailed descriptions of the setting—“[The site] was a green and pleasant haugh, fast by the water side [the Whitadder]. On either hand was a spacious brae, in form of a half round, covered with a delightful pasture [...]”—to claims that “the beauty of holiness consisted not in consecrated buildings, or material temples” (241). It becomes clear that these dissident sects locate the sacred in alternative spaces in the natural world, thus undermining orthodox Protestant principles that reject the spirit’s material presence in the physical environment.

The chapter is thus a meditation on the spectrum of fears about retribution for the violence and destruction committed in the name of Reformation. Some Anglicans feared that they were guilty of sacrilege and saw the Civil Wars as retribution for their ancestors’ sins; some even asked authorities whether they should return inherited property that once belonged to the Church. Puritans, meanwhile, insisted that the sacrilege lay in possessing objects that God would want to be destroyed. Even so, Walsham asserts that “The wave of destruction inaugurated by the Reformation engendered a rhetoric of sentimental lament and rueful regret which fed into and fused with the cult of the picturesque” (325).

Chapter five, “God’s Great Book in Folio: Providence, Science, and the Natural Environment,” further pursues Walsham’s challenge to the secularization thesis, here through an analysis of the rhetoric of

enlightenment and its impact on perceptions of divinity. She argues that debates within natural philosophy always included a spiritual dimension and therefore asserts that emerging science reinforced rather than undermined religious belief in this era. As evidence, she traces patterns of interpreting environmental calamity, noting a shift from seeing the landscape as scarred by God's wrath after the Fall to seeing signs of His benevolence therein. In diverse contexts Walsham offers evidence of how "Protestants believed that in the created world the invisible was made visible," which leads to the conclusion that "like their Catholic predecessors and counterparts, Protestants typically regarded Nature as a secondary source of revelation alongside the Bible" (332, 333). Moments like these, echoing earlier sections that emphasize convergence and compromise over repression and obliteration, stand out as one of Walsham's most insightful claims about the Reformation and Counter-Reformation. Reading the Book of Nature alongside the holy book constituted a shared practice for both Catholics and Protestants. Natural catastrophe incited multiple interpretations of the workings of Providence. A litany of examples—from earthquakes, storms, and blood-colored river water to groaning trees, misshapen plants, and off-season blooming—become matters of contestation among reformers seeking to quell superstition but who persist in seeing evidence of divine intervention—and divine instruction—in such aberrations in Nature. The ways in which political partisanship inflected these interpretations of preternatural phenomena also lends complexity to the analysis; Roundheads and Cavaliers proved equally adept at reading such phenomena as signs of God's vengeance upon their enemies and His solidarity with their own cause.

Walsham ranges over Baconian science, the Hartlib Circle, the Royal Society, the Philosophical Society in Oxford, and individuals in Ireland and Scotland who pursued natural philosophy outside official organizations. A recurrent trend within all these contexts is the effort to debunk superstitious claims about legends and miracles associated with saints. Skeptics marshaled the new modes of inductive inquiry, and prioritized observation over inherited tradition, in ways that tended to naturalize phenomena that had heretofore been interpreted as supernatural evidence of God's omnipotence. While acknowledging the profound impact of emergent forms of scientific

inquiry, Walsham cautions against hasty conclusions about increasing secularization. Thus, rather than diminishing people's faith in godly intervention in earthly events, she asserts that "the enormous surge of investigatory endeavor [...] redefined contemporary understanding of the parameters within which the deity intervened in the universe" (368). She brings these debates to bear on her main topic—landscape—in the chapter's final section, "The Sacred Theory of the Earth: Physico-Theology." Here we revisit intriguing conflicts between millenarian visionaries and physico-theologists regarding the causation and significance of the earth's geological construction and evolution. The author explores the influential impact of Bishop Thomas Burnet's *Sacred theory of the earth* (1684), which interpreted irregularities in the earth's surface as evidence of God's punishment for Adam and Eve's disobedience. Debates responding to Burnet continued into the eighteenth century, and among them Walsham detects a willingness to see the earth not as a ruin left by the Fall but rather as a wonder of God's creation that expressed "an emerging awareness of the utility and beauty of geographical features that earlier commentators had dismissed as warts and disfigurements" (389).

Chapter six, "Therapeutic Waters: Religion, Medicine, and the Landscape" explores how spa culture cannot be seen as a simple replacement of spiritual by medicinal practice. Healing through water continued to be seen as a spiritual art, and even when doctors emphasized the chemical properties of the spas, they did not deny the possibility that divine intervention contributed to the healing effects of these places. Thus, the chapter carries on an argument threading throughout the book about modification and syncretism—in this case, in attitudes toward holy wells and springs, and the ways in which Calvinist theology absorbed practices based on miraculous healing so as to rehabilitate the salubrious effects of such places without perpetuating the superstition that, to Reformers, tainted them. Absorption and legitimation of practices and beliefs formerly decried as popular delusion also reappear here; prior to this chapter Walsham paid close attention to divergences between popular and elite patterns of belief, and in the present case she remarks how spas were "an emerging culture of gentility and civility, which the elite embraced along with other aspects of Renaissance self-fashioning" (401). The promise of

profit also drove this trend; she notes how landowners and municipal governors encouraged the rehabilitation of sacred springs as sources of urban renewal but that copy-cat patterns of resurgence and disappearance suggest that not all such sites were able to sustain their appeal. Political conflict also left its imprint upon spa culture. Walsham cites widespread evidence that although anti-popery was often thought to motivate the resurgence of medicinal spas, the case of Bath suggests otherwise. As a Catholic stronghold in the late sixteenth century, this spa served as the site of various seditious activities, including many gatherings devoted to “that ‘hellish design,’ the Gunpowder Plot” (413). Royalist associations with spas like Bath, Tunbridge Wells, and Wellingborough led Parliamentary forces to destroy some such sites. But these acts did not permanently alter Royalist affinity for water cures; witness the claim that Mary of Modena conceived the son of James II as a consequence of her visit to Bath in the 1680s (422). However, interestingly, spa culture did not become the exclusive province of the elite. Walsham offers solid evidence that “such sites constituted a kind of National Health Service,” providing healing to those who could not afford the high expense of doctors and leading to a widespread expectation that “landowners had a moral duty to dispense their waters *gratis*” (449).

Walsham devotes her final chapter, “Invented Traditions: Legend, Custom, and Memory,” to the concept of collective memory and to the book’s overarching argument that Protestantism did as much to perpetuate as to eradicate the vast repertoire of legend and myth about British land and its heritage. Antiquarianism is the primary context through which Walsham pursues this thesis, and she interrogates its guiding assumptions, which are informed by “reformed theology and anti-Catholic commonplaces, [...] a fascination with the classical world [...], an ingrained condescension towards the culture of their social inferiors, and, in the case of Gaelic Ireland and Highland Scotland, by a powerful undercurrent of ethnic and racial prejudice” (473). Like her first chapter, which stretched far back into the pre-history of the Reformation, the last chapter looks well ahead of the Reformation era, observing its legacy in the Victorian age in phenomena such as the widespread fascination with folklore. In the divergent editorial practices of folklorists and antiquarians, Walsham observes

a tendency for some to suppress or downplay what they considered “idle fables,” while others chose to include outlandish tales expressly with the intent to expose and thereby dispel any remnants of “the crafty devices by which the Church of Rome had bamboozled the medieval laity” (479). Once again, irony prevails in the wake of such efforts, for, Walsham argues, attempts to unmask the falsity of Catholic sacred sites had the unwitting effect of re-sacralizing them as sites in which to celebrate Protestantism’s triumph over its “confessional enemies” (482). Similarly, being targeted by Protestant triumphalism did not entirely quell the hagiographical tradition, and Walsham gathers considerable evidence of the continued circulation of tales about, for example, St. Oswald in Shropshire, and Saints Iltud and Baglan in Wales (487). As she traces myriad legends that accumulate to explain the origins of the megaliths known as Hangman’s Stones dotting the British Isles, she detects a recurrent theme of divine wrath for humanity’s transgression. The persistence of narratives of divine justice across both Catholic and Protestant legends further confirms Walsham’s argument for convergence of thought between the two. As she delineates example after example—standing stones supposed to have been “petrified footballers,” punished for playing on the sabbath, and other revelers turned to stone for similar offenses—she persuasively modifies the partial truth that the Reformation entailed a campaign against superstition. The post-Reformation provenance of many tales recounted here reflects “Protestantism’s ability both to accommodate a pre-existing lore of the landscape and, furthermore, to embellish it” (504).

As I have suggested, Walsham is adept at articulating the complex relationship between peoples, land, and customs; yet, her expansive method leads to a loss of specificity in the meaning of the term “landscape.” Despite early recognition of the priority of the visual, the book ultimately reads as an encyclopedic collection of stories that have been told about the land of the British Isles. Her 37-page bibliography of primary sources, featuring over four pages of manuscript sources from twenty-odd regional and national archives (from the Huntington Library in southern California to the Borthwick Institute for Historical Research in York), attests to the enormous amount of research that Walsham conducted and synthesized into this weighty tome. But after

the introduction, her analysis ceases to theorize landscape in a way that interrogates the specific perceptual and subjective processes that contribute to its construction. Nevertheless, we may see the principle of cultural construction at work in the proliferation of tales, legends, myths, hagiographies, memoirs, treatises, court records, and other sources testifying to the competing, yet also mutually reinforcing, narratives that turn the land into a repository of the culture's values and multiplicitous histories. Her book occasionally falters when the litany of examples loses any manifest connection to landscape, particularly because questions of aesthetics rarely factor into her analysis. Granted, specific meanings located in or imposed upon the land are what interest her; the "content" of these places, and not the pleasure derived from looking at them, drives her discussion and leads to a proliferation of detail that is often fascinating but sometimes repetitive. Evincing a fascination with the variety of ways in which people read the landscape as God's artwork, she elucidates how the Reformation affected the topography of the British Isles as well as patterns by which the inhabitants interpreted the land in which they lived. Scholars of religion, antiquarianism, rurality, and related fields will profit from this dense and nuanced book.

Ruth Connolly & Tom Cain. *Lords of Wine & Oile: Community & Conviviality in the Poetry of Robert Herrick*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011. ix + 335pp. Review by SIOBHÁN COLLINS, UNIVERSITY COLLEGE CORK.

Editors Tom Cain and Ruth Connolly provide an excellent "Introduction" to this outstanding collection of essays by a host of international critics. Cain and Connolly detail the textual and political history of the transmission of Herrick's poems in both their manuscript and print communities, providing new insights along the way. Returning Herrick's poetry to the "socio-literary contexts from which it emerges" (8), they remind the reader of the wide-spread manuscript circulation of his verse during the 1620s, prior to its appearance in Herrick's single major volume of poetry, *Hesperides*, which the author brought to press in the momentous year of 1648. With its 1,400