

Steven J. Reid and Roger A. Mason, eds. *Andrew Melville (1545-1622): Writings, Reception, and Reputation*. Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishers, 2014. 233 pp. \$134.95. Review by NATHAN J. MARTIN, CHARLESTON SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY.

In this collection of edited articles, Reid and Mason have assembled a strong selection of varied and substantial contributions to the study of Andrew Melville, the Scottish theologian and religious reformer. Though there are unique approaches taken in each of the nine articles represented in this work, there is enough cohesiveness in the collection to define common overall aims and goals. Generally, Reid and Mason examine Melville as a Neo-Latin humanist poet, as they attempt to “begin the process of elucidating these texts and contexts in which they were written” (5). Modern scholarship on Melville is not robust enough to thread out all of the issues pertaining to his historical presence and textual contributions. Despite some recent works on Melville, including Reid’s monograph, *Humanism and Calvinism*, and Ernest Holloway’s 2011 biography of him, collective research has been hampered because of multiple locations of archival sources of his poetry and prose works. So, there is another aim of this volume: “to provide the first systematic listing of the poetry and prose attributed to Melville” (5). This is accomplished not only by the numerous references interspersed throughout the articles, but also by location information in the appendices of both well-known and lesser-known works. The second appendix provides a thirty-five page primary source bibliography of Melville’s original works including poems, theological works, letters, manuscripts and marginalia, and even misattributed and lost works. Reid and Mason succeed in both contextualizing and cataloguing Melville’s works.

These articles accurately describe Melville’s particular strength at composing Latin poetry. The introduction, written Mason and Reid, does well to describe the variety of poetic forms, lengths, and overall significance of the corpus of Melville’s poetry. Mason and Reid identify five major works, which are the *Antichristus*, *Carmina Danielis*, *Sephaniskion*, *Gathelus*, and the *Topographia Scotiae*. While the lesser known works of Melville are not neglected in this work, these larger, and arguably more historically significant poems received substan-

tial focus in the articles. For example, in “How Andrew Melville Read His George Buchanan,” Mason examines the extent to which Melville employed George Buchanan’s *Rerum Scotticarum Historia* in his understanding of Scottish geography into *Topographia* based on marginalia of an original copy of the Buchanan’s work in Melville’s possession. No link, according to Mason, could be established between them, but the level of this examination is significant. In another case, Reid, in his article on the law of kingship as understood by Melville, examines the *Stephaniskion*, which was produced upon the occasion of the coronation of Anne as queen in Scotland in 1590. The text of the poem was the only one of Melville’s to be commissioned by James VI and was composed in the day or two before the coronation ceremony was held. The 315-line poem is based upon a biblical verse in Proverbs dealing with the duty of a king which Reid argues is the underpinning of Melville’s idea “that the king should work for the good of the church and that he degenerated into tyranny whenever he deviated from this” (50).

In addition to these larger works, analysis of some of Melville’s minor works also contribute greatly to this volume. One of the later articles, “The Poet and His Art” by David McOmish, cites several different examples of Melville’s poetry including a paraphrase of the first book of Psalms, another of Deuteronomy 32, and another of Job 3, in an effort to evaluate Melville’s usage of classical Latin forms. In another instance, Jamie Reid Baxter’s article on Melville and the Gundpowder Plot cites his poetic response to the event. Especially important in that analysis is the examining of the shorter *Coniuratio Pulverea*, against the backdrop of more verbose and well-known productions from that period by other authors. Also, in the earlier-referenced article on how Melville read Buchanan, Mason cites a series of epigraphical poems attributed to Melville writing in the margins of Melville’s copy of *Historia*. In Book I of the more significant St. Andrew’s holding, there is an interesting marginal inclusion of an original short patriotic poem concerning the early history of the Scottish kings. Buchanan used Fergus I, who emerges in the prehistorical period, as the first Scottish sovereign and Melville’s poem makes allusion in this poem to that early mythical king. In that same article, Mason cites a poem written and by Melville across the left margin of folio 6 that deals with the local

geography of the Loch Lomond area. Also, it is significant that in the second appendix minor poems as well as major copies and collections are cited, giving impetus for further examination and research of those works which have not hitherto received much scholarly attention.

Another common theme that runs throughout this work that is worth mention is that of Melville's theory of political power. It is quite clear from Melville's personal biography that he on several occasions conflicted with secular officials, namely, James VI and I. From 1607 to 1611 he was imprisoned in the Tower of London for his views on Presbyterian Church governance. Steven Reid's "Melville's Anti-Episcopal Poetry" chronicles Melville's literary expressions about his antipathy towards that system. Mark W. Elliot also takes a look at Melville's perspectives on the biblical book of Romans, important because of the allusions to divisions of secular and religious power. Beyond these, many of the articles ask what type of relationship existed between himself and the king in earlier times. The intriguingly titled, "Empire and Anti-Empire: Andrew Melville and British Political Ideology," by Arthur Williamson, looks at the rising school of Judeo-centric thought in the 1590s, of which Melville was a part, as a reaction against the concept of 'empire.' The argument here, which is presented loosely as a question, is that the debate about empire had created an anti-Romanism that emphasized a pre-Nicene approach to understanding ecclesiastical history—a stretch to be sure, but an interesting notion nonetheless. In this same article, Williamson shows that during the early reign of James, Melville, before his imprisonment, viewed Elizabeth I as a reformer and a ruler of one of the 'britians,' as is shown in some of his poetry of 1603. In another example of political representation, Reid's opening question in his article on the law of kingship asks what Melville thought of James VI. Reid concludes that for him, James was a secular ruler who needed to be obeyed, based on the Pauline admonitions of Romans 13, who could be understood as a supporter of the Protestant cause and a as a unifier of the 'britains,' there existed an uncertainty in Melville about how far legitimate support and obedience should extend.

Such a view stands in contrast to that of George Buchanan, who was much swifter in condemning secular authority. Buchanan stands as a recurring figure in the articles of this work, and is presented,

generally, as one which overshadows Melville. Buchanan was forty years older than Melville, yet there are some interesting parallels between the two men, as is pointed out by Mason in his article on Melville's marginalia in Buchanan's work. There is a possibility that they had met in 1545, but, as Mason relates, the influence of the *Historia* on Melville can be seen in the multiple readings of the work and the usage of heavy annotation in the portions on ecclesiastical history in his St. Andrew's copy. In several passages dealing with the early history of Christianity in Scotland, Melville included an "R" for especially poignant and important portions of Buchanan's prose. Mason concludes that Buchanan "appears to have loomed large in Melville's mind" (44) during his time in the Tower. In "The Poet and His Art," McOmish directly compares Buchanan's paraphrase of Psalm 1 to Melville's paraphrase of the same chapter. McOmish sees this as evidence of Buchanan's influence on Melville as he was developing his skill as a Neo-Latin poet. In "Empire and Anti-Empire," Williamson cites Buchanan as a major critic of the in the 'empire' debate who pointed out the faults of the Iberian colonies.

Perhaps the most important consequence of this work is that it reinforces a general trend of deconstructing the myth of Andrew Melville. The traditional view of Melville had been a figure who was leading a movement for reform of the ecclesiastical courts of the Scottish kirk, an unbending figure of opposition to royal episcopacy, and an educational reformer in the Scottish universities. The last two articles emphasize the historiographical issues surrounding him. In "'Sone and Servant': Andrew Melville and his Nephew, James," John McCallum argues that James Melville's *Autobiography* provides a more realistic picture of Andrew, and that the traditional, legendary representation of Melville had to have come from some other source. In the last article written by Caroline Erskine, "The Making of Andrew Melville," the aim of identifying those sources is the primary focus. Erskine argues that Thomas M'Crie's *Life of Andrew Melville*, which had been cited as the source of the Melville myth, should be viewed not as the ultimate source, but as part of a long-standing debate about the man. On the one side are those in the Covenanting tradition who have tended to support the image of Melville and on the other are the Scottish episcopalians and English Anglicans who have given a

less flattering view. In the end, this volume contributes much to the overall understanding of Melville as a man and a poet, even if ‘what is emerging is a life of under-achievement’ (10).

Brandie R. Siegfried and Lisa T. Sarasohn. *God and Nature in the Thought of Margaret Cavendish*. Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate, 2014. xvi + 257 pp. + 8 illus. \$109.95. Review by KAROL KOVALOVICH WEAVER, SUSQUEHANNA UNIVERSITY.

God and Nature in the Thought of Margaret Cavendish is a collection of essays that investigates the religious and scientific ideas of seventeenth-century intellectual Margaret Cavendish. The authors consider Cavendish’s concepts of God and Nature, her use of a variety of genres to explore issues of faith and science, and her examination of a variety of spiritual traditions including Christianity, natural magic, Judaism, and the Jewish Cabbala. As with all collections of essays, some contributions stand out because of their fascinating subject matter and outstanding writing.

One of the main themes of the book is Cavendish’s understanding of God and Nature. She affirmed the power and knowledge of God as well as the authority and vitality of Nature. She clearly ranked the Divine in relation to Nature, but stressed that Nature was eternal and active. She also differentiated between the two by gendering each. Cavendish defined God as masculine while Nature was characterized as feminine. In so doing, she connected natural philosophy with real-world female practitioners and spaces. Several essays directly speak to these topics. For instance, Sara Mendelson’s “The God of Nature and the Nature of God” investigates Cavendish’s religious ideas. Mendelson states, “By surveying her use of religious language as well as her comments on a wide range of theological issues, we can begin to explore the complexity of her views on questions concerning the Supreme Being and his relationship with the universe he created” (27). Similarly, Brandie Siegfried’s “God and the Question of Sense Perception in the Works of Margaret Cavendish” approaches these subjects, noting “Cavendish believed Nature to be infinite and agential, made up of preexistent matter; matter, in turn, is both rational and sensitive; and