

Damnable Practises is a valuable addition to studies of seventeenth-century popular culture. Detailing many textual, visual, musical, and performative elements of a group of ballads that offer cautionary and sensational information about women accused of witchcraft, murder, or general unruliness, Williams offers a fascinating glimpse into the world of ballad-making and ballad consumption. In addition to her erudite commentary, Williams' book includes useful appendices that contain samples of ballad verses. Her work has much to offer scholars interested in music history, women's history, and literary history of this period.

Jonathan Healey. *The First Century of Welfare: Poverty and Poor Relief in Lancashire 1620-1730*. Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2014. xvi + 319 pp. \$29.95. Review by TY M. REESE, UNIVERSITY OF NORTH DAKOTA.

In the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, the early modern English state became concerned with the welfare of the deserving poor. The resulting acts, known generally as the Poor Laws, became a national system of poor relief and created, according to Jonathan Healey, the first welfare state.

While the Poor Laws hold an important place within Healey's work, he is more concerned about understanding how people became poor. The reaction to this poverty, the Poor Laws, served as a way to alleviate the adversity of the newly poor or deserving poor. This work is a history from below that explores how, within this newly developing national system of welfare, things worked on a local level. While Healey is concerned with the poor, he creates an engaging work that explores the entire system including both how people became deserving poor and how local officials/structures dealt with them. Healey avoids theory and in doing so provides a straightforward and engaging work that explores the place of poverty within early modern England. Healey relies upon a case study of Lancashire to better understand first how people became poor and then how poor relief functioned on a local level. According to Healey, one of the most important aspects of the Poor Laws was that they developed a system that recognized the

strengths and weaknesses of all sides involved. Healey selects Lancashire for his case study not because of the number of overseers of the poor accounts, but rather because of the large number of petitions to the Lancashire Quarter Sessions that exist. While these petitions cover a wide variety of political, economic and social issues, Healey found over 3,000 first poor relief petitions of those who were originally denied relief and then petitioned to be reconsidered. For someone who wants to understand how people became poor, these petitions are the perfect source in that the petitioner explains to the overseers, or others, as to how they came to require relief. These petitions clearly show how the deserving poor came to deserve relief and how quickly fortunes could change in one county undergoing economic and social change. Healey's examination of these petitions allows him to argue that people became members of the deserving poor, and thus entitled to relief, when marginal members of society, those who were poor but getting by, faced a crisis that diminished their ability to continue in their circumstances.

Healey begins his work with the story of William Bank, and his son Abraham, of Hawkshead, and that of Thomas Gerrard. William was born into a yeoman farmer family in 1639 and upon marriage took over the family farm until the mid 1670s when something happened that made William and his family move. The Bank family then suffered a series of deaths and other events that forced them, by the early eighteenth century, to apply for relief. The troubles of Thomas Gerrard and his young family commenced when he became ill and could no longer work. He was so sick that he needed to ask his neighbor to travel to Wigan to petition for relief for him. The situation of Gerrard and his family entitled him to relief. While neither of these stories are complete, and as historians and readers we want to know more, they clearly establish Healey's argument concerning unfortunate events. These early vignettes also demonstrate the compassion that Healey brings to his study of the Lancashire poor.

Healey divides his work into three sections – Contexts, Marginality and Misfortune – that includes three chapters for the first section, and two each for the next two. This organization provides the reader first with the necessary context to understand what was happening in Lancashire, then the situation of the poor there, and finally how

hard luck created the deserving poor. The work begins by exploring Lancashire, which was an under-developed region in England at the start of the period under study because of its endemic wetness,. While this condition led to Lancashire being 'backward and conservative' [37], by the seventeenth century Lancashire started to change because of industrialization, including both coal mining and textile production. Liverpool served as a primary driver of this development. Socially, industrialization meant that Lancashire was experiencing the development of an entrepreneur middle class along with a lower class that combined traditional means of subsistence farming with the industrial textile work of spinning and weaving. From here, Healey traces, both nationally and on the local level, the development of the Poor Laws. He then follows this with an examination as to why the poor in this period are so well documented (a bureaucratic requirement of the Poor Laws), why these sources can be problematic, and finally the important role that petitions played for those who were initially denied relief. Healey's use of the petitions provides a clear voice to the poor of this period and the crisis that they faced.

The introductory nature of this first section effectively sets up the next two as Healey moves into exploring how people became members of the deserving poor. In many instances, as the petitions show, it was relatively minor events that could drastically change an individual's, or family's, life and make them into deserving poor. An important point here was that not only those on the margins could become deserving poor, but also many people in relatively comfortable positions could find themselves in dire straits. Many of the poor people of Lancashire, before they turned to poor relief, found different ways to try to improve their situations. As Healey shows, the support networks in Lancashire were complex and not always reliable, but people searched for ways to either maintain or improve their situations before asking for relief. These searches included asking for support from their family, neighbors and the local community, begging on a local level, applying to local charities and finally, turning to crime. If none of these provided the solution, then they turned to poor relief, which meant that they had to prove to the system that they were deserving poor. Healey illustrates that contemporary conceptions of the deserving poor focused upon age, especially the elderly or young, health issues, and the breakdown

of family and local support structures. Secondary to these were economic factors such as price fluctuations and unemployment. Healey ends by exploring the economic cycles and other events that caused crisis within Lancashire and thus increased burdens upon poor relief. Within this scope, he explores how the system responded and how different crises, such as a famine or a pestilence, challenged the system in different ways.

By avoiding theory, and effectively utilizing his sources, Healey provides an important history of the Lancashire poor. These were people who did not want to be poor, who worked, who looked for ways to avoid having to ask for poor relief but who, in the end, could only survive by becoming deserving poor. The work provides a complete history of poverty within Lancashire and demonstrates the consequences that the economic changes of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, especially in regards to manufacturing and resource extraction, wrought upon traditional societies.

Alexandra Walsham. *Catholic Reformation in Protestant Britain*. Farnham, Surrey and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2014. xviii + 490 pp. \$139.95. Review by JONATHAN WRIGHT, UNIVERSITY OF DURHAM.

This volume brings together eleven major pieces previously published between 2000 and 2010. They will be well known to scholars of the period and many have received extended discussion elsewhere. I therefore dispense with a detailed piece-by-piece description but, make no mistake, they demonstrate how profound and fruitful Professor Walsham's impact has been in the field of early-modern Catholicism. They assuredly make for "a coherent vision of how ... minority Catholic communities energetically resisted their absorption into the Protestant kingdoms that comprised the British Isles" (xiii). Subjects covered include the moral dilemmas faced by Catholics, with focus on issues of conformity, conscience and the phenomenon of Nicodemism. The significance of the Jesuit mission, especially in the realm of miracles and cults, is also given close attention, as is the Catholic response to developments in print culture and the era's changes in ritual life. Walsham has written a lengthy introduction for this collection. It