Laura Estill. *Dramatic Excerpts in Seventeenth-Century Manuscripts: Watching, Reading, Changing Plays*. Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2015. xxviii + 254. $80.00. Review by Eugene D. Hill, Mount Holyoke College.

"Adventure not all thy learning in one bottom," Thomas Fuller advised in his essay "Of Memory," "but divide it betwixt thy memory and thy note-books. He that with bias carries all his learning about him in his head, will utterly be beggered & bankrupt, if violent disease, a merciless thief, should rob and strip him. I know some have a common-place against common-place-books, and yet perchance will privately make use of what publickly they declaim against. A common-place-book contains many notions in garrison, whence the owner may draw out an army into the field on competent warning." In her valuable recent study Laura Estill demonstrates how assiduously readers and attenders of English drama from the middle, and especially the late, sixteenth and through the seventeenth century followed Fuller's counsel.

Estill distinguishes alphabetical commonplaced collections from "extracts found in a miscellany, and extracts taken seriatim from one play" (8). Thousands of such survive from the period, many listed in Peter Beal's indispensable *Catalogue of English Literary Manuscripts*. Estill adds new examples and also covers the printed collections that became fashionable by the late Elizabethan years. She establishes that readers ranging from college boys to archbishops found in playtexts suitable raw materials for stocking their Fullerian arsenals.

The critic's main thesis is that "the study of dramatic excerpts reveals that for a seventeenth-century audience, drama was, above all, multifunctional and useful" (228). Not only did readers reconfigure and recontextualize (one of Estill's favorite words) bits of dramatic compositions—the dramas themselves were (she contends) written with such second-hand appropriation in mind. "Knowing that people would take parts of their plays (in both print and manuscript commonplace books and miscellanies), playwrights designed their works as texts to be mined in multiple ways: they could be read for extracts; they were meant to be minded, that is, noted; and they were meant to be 'mined,' as in, made mine, taken and personalized" (227).

The book in hand will serve as a welcome spur to future research and a model of some fruitful ways to deal with the profusion of extracts. Estill writes clearly throughout, discussing numerous examples before turning in her final two chapters to a pair of case studies. Any student of English Renaissance drama will profit from this study, though many or perhaps most will probably pick and choose among the numerous examples, looking at songs or paradoxes, masques or evidence for lost plays, according to taste and interest. That praise voiced, this reviewer will give some examples of moments at which Estill's comments may not altogether satisfy readers.

Estill discusses a manuscript of the late seventeenth century in which Polonius' advice to Laertes is transcribed and given the title "Advice to a Young Man." As in the drama, she notes, "these apothegms can be taken at face value or as an object of ridicule"; this sounds right, but is not especially useful as an observation. Nor do we gain much from the scholar's concluding comment that "by giving Polonus a series of commonplaces, Shakespeare himself calls attention to the commonplace tradition" (118).

The Polonian passage comes from a single paragraph, perhaps an unrepresentatively lame paragraph; so let me give two further instances of what may be taken as under- or mis-interpretations from the excellent case studies. The penultimate full chapter deals with a fascinating figure: the former Achbishop William Sancroft, ousted as a non-juror in 1690. This boundless extractor may merit a place in some Book of Records for his laborious transcribing, with drama accorded due attention, especially Shakespeare, but also Fletcher, Jonson and many others early in the century. Sancroft transcribes Iago's satirical speech to Desdemona "She that was ever fair"; the extracting ex-clergyman eliminates Desdemona's interruption and adds the title "Womens unknown virtues." Estill writes that this "title can be read in two ways: it could undermine or underscore the sexism of the tirade." Again, the scholar's final comment does not prove greatly perspicuous: "Sancroft's decontextualized excerpt leaves the interpretation of this poem more open than in the play" (174).

Estill ventures an unexpected bit of psychological reading in her discussion of the good Archbishop's decontextualized stringing together of notably scurrilous insults hurled at one another by the title

character and Apemantus in Shakespeare's *Timon.* The critic reports a contemporary's characterization of Sancroft as a "timorous" soul and adds: "It is difficult to envision the meek archbishop using these insults, although it is compelling to picture bookish Sancroft quietly reveling in the rude slurs, imagining a time when he might use them" (188). This seems altogether supererogatory. After all, boys will be boys, and archbishops will be archbishops; and sometimes the twain will meet.

A moment of possible underinterpretation may be found in the last full chapter, in which Estill traces the origins and afterlife of what she identifies as "the most popular non-song excerpt from all of Shakespeare's plays" (203): "Fat paunches have lean pates, and dainty bits / Make rich the ribs, but bankrupt quite the wits" (spoken by Longaville in *Love's Labour's Lost* [1. 1. 26f.]). The nobleman contributes his bit to the self-congratulatory feast of renunciation in which the exquisitely educated but manifestly callow youth compete. Estill rightly notes the phrase's source in Jerome, who was himself drawing on what he says is a saying from the Greek. Estill reports: "The fat paunches proverb appears in two texts known to have influenced Shakespeare: Erasmus's *Adages* and Leonard Culman's *Sententiae Pueriles*" (204). The proverb was widely reproduced in the seventeenth century, taken whether from the play or from intervening sources ranging from printed commonplace books to handbooks of physiognomy and hygiene. Estill expertly works out the chains of transmission through the seventeenth century and beyond, not excluding Ben Franklin. One manuscript commonplacer in the late seventeenth century places the proverb "in a context of devotional materials and Protestant guidelines." Estill comments: "Shakespeare's play engages with the theme of abstinence, but he could never have foreseen that this line would be appropriated in one man's religious miscellany" (215). Why not? Surely he might well have envisioned Malvolios of a later generation missing the irony at work in the dramatic text. Indeed, and this is the point Estill's research enables a literary interpreter to make, at least a few of the Latinate members of Shakespeare's audience might well have recognized from their schooldays the proverb's source in Culman's textbook, and relished noting that the entire exchange among the nobles is exquisitely *puerile*, a word that was already in the playwright's

day starting to assume the sense that has since become the primary one in English: insipidly juvenile.

As an example of this critic in top form, let me draw attention to Estill's discussion of John Muddyclift's diary and miscellany. This English student of medicine at Utrecht got hold of Dryden's new play *The Conquest of Granada* and on October 3, 1672 undertook to read it aloud alone ("in a bedroom") with one Mrs. Elizabeth Cleyton. Estill's account of the diary entry, to which the reader is referred (128–30), is too long to quote here, but it fully supports the critic's assertions that "Muddyclift presented the act of reading a play as an act of foreplay" and that "Muddyclift described the intimate relationship a play-reader has when performing to an audience of one" (128). *Habent sua fata libelli*, as Dryden might well have envisioned.

Anna Contadini and Claire Norton, eds. *The Renaissance and the Ottoman World*. Ashgate: Farnham, Surrey and Burlington, VT, 2013. xvi + 298 pp. Review by NABIL MATAR, UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA.

This handsomely produced and intellectually rich book includes thirteen essays that were presented at the conference on "The Renaissance and the Ottoman World" that was organized by the two editors and Charles Burnett at the Warburg Institute and SOAS in 2006. The book is divided into four sections: I. Commercial, artistic and cultural contexts (three chapters by Claire Norton, Anna Contadini and Palmira Brummett); II. Texts, art and music as media for the transmission of intercultural influences (four chapters by Deborah Howard, Caroline Campbell, Sonja Brentjes, and Owen Wright); III. Renaissance thought (three chapters by Zweder von Martels, Asaph Ben-Tov, and Noel Malcolm); and IV. The Renaissance and the Ottoman Empire (three chapters by Alison Ohta, Suraiya Faroqhi, and Anna Akasoy).

The relations between the Ottoman Empire and Western Christendom have been the subject of increasing scholarly interest in the past few decades. Books and essays have appeared in print, some by authors included in this collection, that examine the intersections between the Islamic World and Christian Europe. In this collection,