

Corpus Christi rose. The decoration of churches came to assert the new order of Trent. The nobles of the “seggi” became more closely associated with the Viceroy, and they receded from popular involvement into parlor games in their private palaces. Marino provides a good example of the change in festivities through the feast of S. Giovanni Battista. This was very ancient, from the fourth century when a temple of Partenope had been transformed into a church of S. Giovanni. By the sixteenth century S. Giovanni had accumulated a week-long celebration with conspicuous popular involvement: the guilds decorated floats in the procession, there were mountains of free food, and there was nude bathing in the Bay of Naples. There was a confraternity of S. Giovanni and his preserved blood also liquefied. To counteract the “pagan” elements, the Church in the 1560s began to recommend a day of meditation in church, a “Forty Hour Vigil.” To exert their own authority, the Viceroys in the 1580s joined and dominated the procession. Gradually the “popular” elements were muted and the vitality of the feast of S. Giovanni dimmed.

The lesson for “becoming Neapolitan” from this interesting book is that Neapolitan society, as seen through its festivities, was becoming more stratified in the Baroque period. As the author concludes at one point (227), the development of Neapolitan festivities “shows the co-option of popular celebrations by elite civil and clerical powers ... and eventually exhaustion of any authentic popular participation.” This, with the final enfranchisement of the middle classes in the nineteenth century, was the lasting legacy of Baroque Naples: its plebeians were excluded.

Catherine Gimelli Martin. *Milton Among the Puritans: The Case for Historical Revisionism*. Great Britain: Ashgate, 2010. xvi + 360 pp. + 4 illus. \$99.95. Review by JOHN MULRYAN, ST. BONAVENTURE UNIVERSITY.

This beautifully written, stridently polemical book advances, against the grain of current Milton scholarship, the provocative thesis that Milton was *not* a Puritan. The evidence against Milton as a Puritan is laid out in convincing detail, but the terminology may be daunting for the reader unfamiliar with seventeenth-century Protestant theol-

ogy. For example, Martin assumes that the reader understands the meaning of the following terms describing religious and philosophical groups (presented here in alphabetical order), even though she never defines any of them: Anabaptists, Antinomianists, Arians, Arminians, Baptists, Cambridge Platonists, Comenians, Congregationalists, Erasmianists, Erastians, Fifth Monarchists, Latitudinarians, Levellers, Seekers, Ranters. Sometimes these terms are applied indiscriminately to poets and writers as if the designations were settled and not open to debate. Thus it is problematic to refer to Anglo-Catholics like Lancelot Andrewes and Jeremy Taylor as Arminians; and while Martin does define Calvinism in terms of the total depravity of humankind and the special election of the few, it is difficult to see how the term relates to both John Donne and George Herbert (2, 68, 71), especially in the light of Stanley Stewart's brilliant attacks on the supposed Calvinism of both poets. In another bit of rhetorical overstatement, Martin, citing Milton's *Christian Doctrine* as evidence (*Complete Prose Works* 6: 168-202), attempts to demonstrate Milton's "deep conviction that Calvin's God [the god of the Puritans] was always an intellectually reprehensible construct" (88). The problem is that Calvin is not mentioned in the passage under review; in fact there are no references to any text except the Bible. The passage implicitly endorses the attack of Arminius on Calvin's doctrine of double predestination (some are necessarily saved, the rest necessarily damned), but at one point is actually in agreement with Calvin, that some human beings receive more grace than others: "God claims for himself the right of making decrees about them [human beings] as he thinks fit, without being obliged to give a reason for his decree though he could give a very good one if he wished" (192).

In her introductory remarks, Martin traces the idea of Milton as a Puritan back to the nineteenth-century romantic historian Thomas Carlyle, and the Milton biographer David Masson (himself inspired by Carlyle); their legacy is accepted uncritically by the twentieth-century Marxist historian Christopher Hill (twentieth century). Thus a myth is created that Puritans were at the forefront of republican systems of government, free expression of ideas, scientific inquiry, and modernity in general. According to Martin, nothing could be further from the truth. Most Puritans were credulous about science

(especially heliocentrism), distrusted new ideas, disassociated religion from contemporary political practice, focused attention on the issue of their own salvation without regard for the religious community at large, were intolerant of other religions and religious practices (note “iconophobic attitudes toward almost all symbols and rituals” ([169]), and attempted to monitor the behavior of all people, not just members of their own sect. On this last point, Martin quotes, with sparkling cynicism, Allison Coudert’s point that “the idea of a sacred community enshrined in covenant theology made it essential for everyone to be his brother’s keeper lest one erring individual spoil everyone’s chance at heaven” (193).

As Martin points out, there is no evidence that Milton ever belonged to any Puritan sect, and “he was married and buried according to the rites of the Church of England” (xi). A secondary thesis of the book is that Milton looks to the secular Francis Bacon for his thought, rather than the Calvinist theology of the Puritans. While Puritans eagerly sought evidence of their own election and salvation, Milton followed Bacon in eschewing certitude and adopting “the comparatively cool suspension of judgment” associated with Bacon’s methods (3). Unlike Milton, “Puritans almost universally disparaged the pagan classics, the legends of the Round Table, and nearly all ‘feigned’ romances of the kind Milton admired in Spenser” (92). In Milton’s *Likeliest Means to Remove Hirelings*, Milton reveals his suspicion of the Puritans when he warns against giving too much political power to the Elect (the Puritan “godly”) (203).

Calvinism (the theology of Puritanism) certainly does not encourage speculation about the divine, and Milton’s stated aim of justifying the ways of God to man in *Paradise Lost* would be neither permitted nor encouraged by these sober divines: “. . . even the opening pages of *Paradise Lost* would have upset strict Calvinists who denied any human being the capacity to ‘justify the ways of God to men’ (1.26). From their point of view, Milton’s initial invocation openly challenges the common Calvinist orthodoxy that God’s justice cannot and should not be measured by human understanding” (216).

Finally, Milton was not a Puritan by temperament. While bitterly averse to Roman Catholicism, he was consistently tolerant of any and all Protestant belief systems. As “L’Allegoro,” “Il Penseroso,” and

*Comus* amply demonstrate, he did not share the Puritans' aversion to physical pleasures, or even external, "Catholic" signs of religious faith like incense, church music, and the dance. In Milton's Eden, human sexuality is designed for physical pleasure as well as for progeny, a view not shared by St. Augustine and his Puritan successors (238). Moreover, Milton's passion for freedom of expression, enshrined for the ages in the immortal words of *Areopagitica*, goes against the grain of Puritan exclusivity and intolerance.

Nor was Puritanism popular among Milton's contemporaries. Jeremy Taylor "rejected Calvin's inscrutable god as a tyrant who damns all but a select few [e.g. the Puritan elect] for Adam's sin" (195). "After the Restoration, Calvinists were increasingly 'convicted' not only of making God responsible for sin but also of depriving humans of independent authority for their actions" (195).

In short, Martin's richly provocative and engaging study confronts the Milton-as-Puritan thesis head on and invites learned responses that will enrich Milton scholarship for ages to come.