

but our very reliance on perspective in the first place. On that note, one might notice some perspectives not on evidence here, such as the emphasis on premodern race that has energized early modern studies in recent years. Even so, the volume puts forward a model that, far from precluding such work, opens space for the kinds of perspectival shifts that attend it. Beyond what the individual essays have to offer, the collection's conceptual framework is a welcome contribution to Milton studies.

Laura Gowing. *Ingenious Trade: Women and Work in Seventeenth-Century London*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022. x + 275 pp. \$39.99. Review by JOSEPH P. WARD, UTAH STATE UNIVERSITY.

With this important new book, Laura Gowing compellingly expands our understanding of women's contributions to the preindustrial economy by demonstrating their ability to engage in formally recognized work outside the home. Largely focusing on the needle trades during the seventeenth century, she draws on a wide variety of archival, printed, and digital sources to demonstrate conclusively that women were highly capable of engaging independently in the economic life of the metropolis. Although she attends primarily to the experience of women, Gowing also sheds new light on daily life in London in ways that make this book essential reading for anyone interested in the society and culture of the early modern metropolis.

Gowing begins with a richly detailed chapter that reveals the prominent place of women in the manufacturing and distribution of high quality, fashionable clothing in shops located in the Royal Exchange. Working as both seamstresses and shopkeepers, women appear in archival records in several recognized economic roles, including as apprentices, shopkeepers, and tenants of shop stalls in their own right. Along the way, Gowing painstakingly reconstructs the social and economic connections among a subset of several dozen women, highlighting the ways in which kinship, apprenticeship, neighborhood, and executorship established and maintained durable networks of commercially active women.

Gowing's analysis frequently focuses on formal working arrangements, largely apprenticeships, which created relationships that were subject to review by a variety of government agents. Conflict regarding an apprentice's behavior, for example, could spark litigation, and the records of such legal disputes provide much of the evidence for her argument. She substantially advances her story by reading records from the Mayor's Court alongside the records of trade guilds (which were known as 'livery companies'). Different record series contain superficially contradictory data. The vast majority of male apprentices who sued in the Mayor's Court to dissolve their indenture also appeared in livery company records, suggesting that a very high percentage of apprentice bindings were registered with the appropriate company. By contrast, the great majority of female apprentices who sued in the Mayor's Court did not appear in company records. For Gowing, such evidence should meaningfully change our understanding of female participation in work, suggesting that "girls' apprenticeship in City companies was both more extensive and less intermittent than is apparent from the guild records" (80).

This is especially significant when we recognize that only a small portion of apprenticeship contracts generated litigation. Gowing suggests that, unlike a male apprentice, a female apprentice bound to a master or mistress but not registered with a company might not have expected to become free of the company at the conclusion of the term and then able to trade—and to take on apprentices—on her own. This perhaps reflects a difference in social and economic aspirations between female and male apprentices, but it obscures the extent to which young women were engaging in such work. Unlike some previous scholarship, which contrasted the dearth of female apprenticeships appearing in seventeenth-century company records with an earlier 'golden age' of recognized female work, Gowing's innovative methodology shows that female apprenticeship flourished in the latter period, although with variations among occupational groupings and social classes.

Gowing finds that both the number of female apprentices and the number of women who completed apprenticeships and gained the ability to work independently (including the ability to take appren-

tices as ‘mistresses’ rather than ‘masters’) increased during the course of the seventeenth century. She quite plausibly attributes this trend to a variety of factors including the labor shortages resulting from the demographic consequences of major events in the period—such as the Civil Wars during the 1640s and the Great Fire of 1666—and the growth of fashion trades associated with the nascent consumer revolution. Both female apprenticeships and freedom admissions declined at the end of the century, reflecting changes in the structure and geography of the dress trade, but women continued to appear in company apprenticeship and freedom records during the subsequent decades, and their presence increased in the middle years of the eighteenth century. Gowing’s detailed description of women as independent economic agents drawn from court records pushes well beyond what had been previously appreciated by scholars: “In the ambitions and competences of mistresses and their apprentices, late seventeenth-century London’s economic and legal landscape made it a hub of women’s enterprise” (105). The ability of women to support themselves and their households was an essential skillset during an era in which most women could expect to spend much of their adult lives single or widowed (if they married at all).

Although London’s livery companies are not the main focus of Gowing’s work, *Ingenious Trade* makes an important contribution to our understanding of these essential London institutions. Gowing occasionally mentions the historiographical commonplace that the guilds were in decline during the century—“corporate control generally was losing its grip” (213)—as the civic political rights associated, for men, with company membership became less appealing to some. That said, the place of women in company life was in some ways similar to that of immigrants from provincial England and abroad, the ‘foreigners’ and ‘aliens’ so often decried by contemporaries. Yet the companies, through the actions of their rank-and-file members as well as the officials tasked with enforcing the rules, often seemed comfortable bending, if not ignoring, customs and rules when it suited them; many of the court cases Gowing analyzes demonstrate this quite clearly. In such ways, the companies demonstrated their capacity for gradual adaptation to changing circumstances rather than standing rigidly in opposition to change. This may be among

the reasons why many of them have survived, albeit in quite different forms, to this day.

Gowing is a skilled storyteller. Throughout the book she reconstructs the social life of work, with multigenerational households teaming with activity and ties of kinship shaping economic opportunities. Many of the careers she reconstructs through court cases remind us that the margin between prosperity and penury was very fine, and lives as well as livelihoods could be overturned in an instant. In such an environment, partnership and shared accommodation could be crucial forms of social as well as economic support, perhaps especially for single women in an urban society based on the household. Gowing is able to illuminate such commonplaces because she has both a highly sophisticated command of methodology and an eye carefully attuned to nuances hidden in the turns of a phrase in court records. Finally, and perhaps best of all, she writes in a style that makes her book readily accessible to students and those generally interested in early modern daily life.

Ian Gentles. *The New Model Army Agent of Revolution*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2022. xii + 386 pages, illustrations, maps. \$38.00. Review by EDWARD M. FURGOL, MONTGOMERY COLLEGE-ROCKVILLE, MD.

Gentles has revised his 1992 study of the English New Model Army and expanded its coverage from 1654 to 1660. In doing so he has produced a thorough study of the Army and its impact on politics and political ideology. For the immediate future the book will serve as the definitive work on that subject. The author's mastery of the relevant manuscript and printed primary sources and secondary works is exemplary.

The political activity of the army dominates the book's fifteen chapters; thus, the book is not a military history. The first twelve cover the story from 1645 through 1653. Chapter one deals with the army's founding, which illustrates the author's incisive analysis. Three decisions made then had a crucial impact on its ideological diversity. One, not requiring the enlisted men to swear the Solemn League and