

Perry Gauci. *The Politics of Trade: The Overseas Merchant in State and Society, 1660-1720*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001. xvi + 302 pp. \$65.00. Review by JOSEPH P. WARD, UNIVERSITY OF MISSISSIPPI.

This book explores the interconnections between politics and commerce during an era in which both were undergoing important changes that would facilitate England's—later Britain's—imperial ascendance in the eighteenth century. The role of commerce in the politics of late seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century England has hardly gone unnoticed by historians and literary scholars, but Perry Gauci brings a fresh perspective to his subject that should draw the attention of every serious student in this field.

The first three of the book's six chapters examine the public lives of overseas merchants. Gauci's approach is neatly summarized in his insistence that "in order to understand the public merchant, you have to understand the private man, and appreciate how his activity was inseparably linked to business and personal associations" (105). His study therefore concentrates on the social worlds of London merchants, since the metropolis was the center of English commerce throughout the period with which he is concerned. Building upon the works of scholars such as Peter Earle, Richard Grassby, Henry Horwitz, Mark Knights, Gary De Krey, and Steve Pincus, Gauci takes his reader through the common career paths of his sample of 850 metropolitan merchants. He also recovers the various kinds of associations that traders relied upon, from the regulated and unregulated overseas trading companies to the older livery companies that continued to provide opportunities for traders to make valuable connections with others in their line of work (indeed, more than half of the merchants in Gauci's sample were members of livery companies). Gauci's research indicates that, among other things, metropolitan merchants were rather indifferent to becoming landowners, which allows him to challenge effectively the assertion, made quite powerfully by Daniel Defoe, that merchants considered landowning as the essential path to social status. In addition to focusing on London, these early chapters

each contain a section on “provincial parallels” that discuss similar developments in Liverpool and York. Although these comparative sections are rather brief, they do suggest ways in which Gauci’s research into London traders can yield insights that help us to comprehend national trends.

The argument hits full stride in the book’s second half, which focuses on the role of overseas traders in national politics with particular attention paid to Parliament. He begins with a discussion of the growth of the commercial press, especially in London, which increasingly provided guidance for the growing mercantile lobby in Westminster, and then he moves to a highly detailed account of the efforts by merchants to affect Parliamentary debate. Here, Gauci’s disagreements with the works of other historians seem clearer than elsewhere. According to some scholars, the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries were a time when Parliamentary politics increasingly came to be dominated by the mercantile interest, which made its views known with increasing clarity because of the greater presence in the lower House of Members who had themselves been traders. Along those lines, Gauci finds that the debate over the government’s proposed, and ultimately doomed, French commerce bill in 1713 played a crucial role in demonstrating to government ministers and contemporary political commentators that the commercial sector fully grasped the workings of parliamentary government in the post-Revolutionary period. However, drawing upon an extensive study of the records of the House of Commons, Gauci acknowledges that “the Augustan period was an important stage in the changing relationship between the merchant classes and Parliament, with evidence of a rise in the number of merchant MPs, increased petitioning, growing sophistication in economic debate, and improved success rates for commercial bills,” but argues forcefully that “it was not a revolutionary era, and with every advance there was a check to balance the impact of these innovations” (233). Similar to his earlier conclusion that metropolitan merchants did not aspire to the status of country gentlemen, Gauci finds that merchants did

not undertake a concerted effort to use their wealth to wrest power in the lower House out of the hands of the gentry.

Gauci has written a well-balanced, thoroughly researched account of an important aspect of English government during a period that has often been considered one of both commercial and political revolution. The argument is both detailed and subtle, and it should be of interest to scholars actively engaged in research on related topics. It is not the sort of book to which novice students could be referred with confidence, but it may certainly be considered one of the starting points for future work in the field.

Peter Lake and Michael Questier, eds. *Conformity and Orthodoxy in the English Church, c. 1560-1660*. Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2000. xx + 296 pp. \$90.00. Review by DAVID A. SALOMON, BLACK HILLS STATE UNIVERSITY.

This collection of essays is divided roughly between the topics of orthodoxy, conformity, and Catholicism. In their introduction, Peter Lake and Michael Questier note that the recent historiography of early modern England has focused on “debates about what sort of Church the Church of England was” (ix). The book intends to “comment upon and modify” the propensity in the literature to dichotomize the study of the Church between doctrine and discipline, ultimately hoping to find a “third (or middle) way” (xiv). Recent study of the Anglican Church has stressed the conflict with Recusancy. This volume is a refreshing “diversion” from that obsession.

The essays in the volume have all been researched meticulously as evident in the detail with which they treat their subjects. Nicholas Tyacke’s “Lancelot Andrewes and the Myth of Anglicanism” begins with the following argument: because Andrewes’ work was published and reprinted before and even after the English Civil War, and because he was “a quintessential exponent” of Anglicanism, he is to be regarded as “an Anglican benchmark” (7). Tyacke is adept at showing how both reception