volume prevents a more thorough-going analysis of the important social issues of race and class in Herbert's poetic world. Similarly, the exclusion of Latin verse from the volume removes any possible mention of William Kerrigan's provocative essay "Ritual Man" (1985) on Herbert's Latin poems on his mother's death. Of course, Wilcox is not attempting in her volume to address other texts, and she is only marginally concerned with the social and political issues that arise in Herbert's prose and Latin poetry. As Wilcox never purports to understand entirely Herbert's social and poetic world, or even all the paradoxes of this poet-priest, one can very much applaud the "something understood" in *The English Poems of George Herbert*.

John Gouws, ed. *Nicholas Oldisworth's Manuscript (Bodleian MS. Don.c.24)*. Tempe, AZ: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2009. xlv + 256 pp. $54.00. Review by A.H. DE QUEHEN, UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO.

Nicholas Oldisworth was a Gloucestershire man, the nephew of Sir Thomas Overbury, about whose murder he made a collection of papers now in the British Library. He was baptised at Bourton-on-the Hill in 1611, and after his education at Westminster School and Christ Church, Oxford, he became the rector of that parish. He married in 1641 and died four years later, survived by his wife and two of their three children. At Christ Church, where he was an exact contemporary of William Cartwright, Oldisworth wrote a quantity of poetry, which he transcribed the year before his death and dedicated to his wife. John Gouws has edited this holograph of 119 poems (Bodleian MS. Don.c.24), supplemented by additional poems, and variant readings, from several manuscripts and printed books (in particular, Folger MS. V.a.170, which contains forty-two of his poems). The edition includes a biographical and critical introduction and fairly detailed explanatory notes.

Oldisworth writes mostly decasyllabic couplets; also octosyllabics and stanzas of several kinds. There is not much modulation in his verse as he hastens on from line to line, but that is not to be expected from an enthusiastic novice. Had Oldisworth persisted as a poet, he

would no doubt have improved the sound, and hence sense, of his poetry. This may be seen in a lyric, occasioned by the silence of the heavenly spheres, of which he provides two versions. The undergraduate original reads:

> The truth is (Madam) modest they
> Hearing how well you sing and play,
> Doe cease their Musick, and stand still
> To listen to your better Skill.

Compare the mature revision of 1644:

> Lady, your Lute makes them stand still.
> For, modest they
> Nor sing, nor play,
> But listen to your better Skill. (98)

In some poems Oldisworth's discursive patter is entirely appropriate; for example, in the longish "Iter Australe, 1632, Or, A journey southwards," modelled, as Gouws notes, on "Iter Boreale" by the Dean of Christ Church, Richard Corbett. It starts with a visit to Ben Jonson, from whom the awed and reverential travellers anticipate "some Flashes and fantastique Guere"; but to their surprise and disappointment, "His whole Discourse / Was how Mankinde grew daily worse and worse, / How God was disregarded, how Men went / Downe even to Hell, and never did repent" (104). Oldisworth is at his best here, when he has something interesting to say and is not taking himself too seriously. From time to time he offers the modern reader a glimpse of the seventeenth-century England, including filthy, crowded London, where you "suck-in Death, / Halfe-smoak, half Plague, instead of wholsom breath, / And smell such Stinks, as rose-upp from the mudd / When heav'n had washt the Earth's face with a Flood" (60-61). In the city, "but for to sweat, their Doctors send / Sick folks to church. The preacher, to ascend / Into his pulpitt, is constraind to tread / On this man's shoulder, and the next man's head" (59). In the tradition of Juvenal's *Satire 3*, the diatribe opposes city to country—in this case Isleworth in Middlesex, where the poet's addressee and cousin Susan is removing. Apart from occasional details—for example, a drowned ewe, which Oldisworth makes an occasion for wit—the country appears agreeably pastoral. One poem, "On an Arbour made by Master Richard Bacon, on the sea-shoar opposite to the ile of Wight," may

put one in mind of Marvell's "Upon Appleton House":

> No jutting Stumpe, or testy Thorne.
> Noe clownish Bramble dares dwell nigh;
> But all base Shrubbes, which there are borne
> Doe learn good manners straight, and die:
> If any Broome there happes to bee,
> It chandges to some better Tree;
> Furz too and Thistles, in fewe daies,
> Doe turne to Eglantine and Baies. (127)

This witty turn of mind is well adapted to satire. "To a Separatist, that spoiled mens tombes, and built his house with the tomb-stones" predicts the confusion on "the finall Morning" when the dead try to reassemble their own bones and "what uncouth Feare / Shall make thee start, and flie thou knowst not whither, / To see thy House and Thee arise together?" (33). One would like more such poems; Oldisworth has an unfortunate predilection for strained and ingratiating compliments addressed to prospective benefactors from the king downwards. "On his Majesty's Recovery from the small pocks" may not have seemed pretentious or disgusting at the time when a side-note tells us it was even presented to Charles; a poem to the Earl of Carlisle, where self-mutilation and suicide are twisted into a compliment, may once have seemed ingenious; yet, as Gouws says, "these are his least attractive, rather embarrassingly sycophantic, poems" (xxxiv). Like them—though more innocently—the love poems rework their literary models; for personal feelings one should look to the poems "To his Friend beyond sea," Richard Bacon, Oldisworth's schoolfellow at Westminster, whose Catholicism would take him abroad to Douay.

The publication of Oldisworth's poems is a worthwhile undertaking, but the editor's Introduction goes further and claims it

> challenges our present credulities: the undeclared freight of critical practices which constitute our readings of poems is now a matter of controversy, but only in the case of those poems and authors whose history has already naturalized them within such practices, and the false consciousness of much recent theoretical posturing that has encouraged a witch-hunt by readers who, offended by what might be regarded as clandestine ideology, have arrogated to themselves

> the right to function as year-zero scrutineers of custom. In the case of poems and authors without a critical history, all such pretenses are rendered ineffectual, because we simply do not know how to read without presuppositions and established practices. More importantly, the real, as opposed to the occluded, absence of factual information about the poet compels us to acknowledge how important such information about previous literary incarnations is for the location of our discursive engagement with poems. (xv-xvi)

Perhaps a manuscript reposes in the Bodleian of poems so historico-culturally alien as not even to qualify as the other and hence unintelligible without the contextual grounding of a learned commentary. But MS.Don.c.24 is not that: its poems fit easily into our construction of the seventeenth century, and would do so even without Gouws's helpful annotation. Whatever the fate of our present credulities, Oldisworth will not hasten it.

Joad Raymond. *Milton's Angels: The Early Modern Imagination*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010. xviii + 488 pp. + 8 illus. £30.00. Review by ADAM SWANN, UNIVERSITY OF GLASGOW

Joad Raymond observes that "very little has been written about early modern angels, particularly in a Protestant context" (8), and *Milton's Angels* aims to address this oversight. While it is often assumed that the importance of angels diminished after the Reformation due to their association with Catholic doctrine, Raymond demonstrates that angels in fact continued to permeate the thought of even the staunchest Protestants. Milton provides an ideal case study because, while he exhibits a typically Reformed providential understanding of the role of angels, his angels also possess a remarkable tangibility, as they "sing, watch, play games and exercise, eat, sleep [and] make love" (272).

Raymond's most eminent predecessor in the field of Miltonic angelology is Robert West, and the latter's *Milton and the Angels* (1955) provides the structural template for *Milton's Angels*. Raymond follows West by dividing the text into two sections, the first discussing early