

range of expression in early modern England. Both contributions should prove useful as models.

Stephen Guy-Bray. *Homoerotic Space: The Poetics of Loss in Renaissance Literature*. Buffalo; Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002. x + 265. Review ELENA LEVY-NAVARRO, UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-WHITEWATER.

Homoerotic Space represents an important intervention in criticism on the history of “sexuality” in the Renaissance period. Of particular importance is its emphasis on “homoerotic space,” a space created from the central classical texts that comprised a humanistic education. In reading classical pastoral and epic texts, Guy-Bray argues, the educated Renaissance male reader could use them to “construct, or at least to adumbrate, an emancipatory sexual discourse” (9). Interestingly, such readers could do so even as male homoeroticism signified only as something temporally “before” and geographically “other.” As Guy-Bray explains, homoeroticism in this period is “always elsewhere and usually textual” (15).

This book admirably pays close attention to classical texts and in so doing, describes some of the ways that these texts influenced Renaissance male authors. The story Guy-Bray tells overall is curiously pessimistic, however, especially given his stated goal of uncovering a homoerotic space too frequently ignored by critics. He presents a surprisingly straight story in which space is seen as increasingly colonized and diminished, first in the movement from Greek to Roman texts examined in the first two chapters and subsequently in their Renaissance imitations. In chapter one, Guy-Bray sees the move from Theocritus to Virgil as one in which the homoerotic associated with the pristine landscape of the past becomes increasingly irrecoverable as it is overridden by political and military Rome. In chapter two, he describes the epic as teaching the Renaissance reader that intense affective bonds between two men are destructive to the well-being of the state. As Guy-

Bray explains, the “lessons Renaissance writers learned . . . is that death is the price paid for the embrace of two men” (84).

In what follows, the story becomes even more pessimistic as Guy-Bray delineates the further diminishment of this space. In the third chapter, homoeroticism is now located in the vacant space of the tomb. In the subsequent two chapters, even that space is said to disappear as homoeroticism is displaced by heteroeroticism. In the third chapter, for example, Guy-Bray describes Milton’s elegy to his youthful friend Diodati as dismissing the homoerotic relationship of their youth. In the fourth chapter, he describes Spenser as participating in the increasing “heterosexualization” of the English Renaissance pastoral (134). Both of these readings suggest some of the limitations of his approach. The categories Guy-Bray depends on retain a restrictive modern sense that explains in part the story he tells. Terms such as “heterosexual” and “(homo)sexual” seem foremost in his readings, as do modern understandings of “women” and “men.” Below I consider some of the ways in which a very different story might emerge if he did not rely on such modern categories. Some of these poets, it might even be argued, seem to increase the homoerotic space by extending it to male, female, and even angelic or heavenly bodies.

Guy-Bray argues that Spenser diminishes the homoerotic in *The Shephearde’s Calender* in part because he focuses on Elisa and her virgin maids. Queen Elizabeth offers at the very least another version of the homoerotic pastoral, the female homoerotic examined so astutely by Valerie Traub. I would have liked Guy-Bray to problematize his reading here by considering some of the queer implications of the gender of both Elisa and her virgin maids. The variety of ways in which Elizabeth was figured as both masculine and feminine offer alternative readings of the pastoral site, many of which problematize an easy reading of homoeroticism as only possible between male bodies.

Milton’s “Epitaphium Damonis” offers equally challenging possibilities, especially when we consider the final description of heavenly bodily consummation. Guy-Bray is unable to see such a possibility because he is focused only on the empty tomb and a

repressed “sexuality” between men. In the final moments of the poem, Milton describes how Diodati’s virginity is rewarded in heaven with eternal joyful *communal* consummations. Milton, Guy-Bray argues, does so only to defend himself against charges that his friendship had been “sexual” (I’d say “sodomitical”). Ultimately, Milton, like Spenser, is said to turn to the epic to celebrate “heterosexuality” (131). In both his epic and “Epitaphium,” however, Milton seems to open up a sacred space for multiple eroticisms, including those we would call homoerotic. Anticipating the lavish descriptions of angelic consummation in *Paradise Lost*, “Epitaphium” offers its own heavenly erotic space, one in which love is not limited to any two bodies.

Despite these reservations, Guy-Bray has offered a very important book to the subject at hand. It will be of great interest to all scholars interested in the subject.

N. H. Keeble, ed. *The Cambridge Companion to Writing of the English Revolution*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001. xxii + 296 pp. + 7 illus. \$59.95/\$21.95. Review by JASON PEACEY, HISTORY OF PARLIAMENT TRUST.

This collection of fifteen short essays by leading scholars of seventeenth-century literature introduces undergraduate and non-specialized readers to the broad range of literary forms which existed, and emerged, in the English ‘revolution’. It treats not just the canonical authors with whom every schoolchild is familiar, but rather a broad range of less well known figures, and its understanding of ‘literature’ incorporates more