ing book whets the reader's appetite for his forthcoming two-volume biography of Lorenzo.

DENNIS ROMANO, Syracuse University

Reid Barbour. *John Selden: Measures of the Holy Commonwealth in Seventeenth-Century England*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003. Pp. x, 417.

Only two major books about John Selden appeared in the twentieth century, David Berkowitz's *John Selden's formative years*, a lifetime's labour which handles the period from his birth to the early 1630s, and Paul Christianson's *Discourse on history, law, and governance in the public career of John Selden, 1610–1635*. Since Selden was active until his death in 1654, one might ask why no fuller account of his life was completed: the answer is the multifariousness of his achievement. He was a member of a number of parliaments and of the Westminster Assembly; a major theorist of natural law; a cultural historian whose expertise ranged from England to the ancient Near East; a great collector of manuscripts; and more besides. There are good accounts of aspects of his thought in, for instance, Richard Tuck's *Natural rights theories and Philosophy and government* and D. R. Woolf's *The idea of history in early Stuart England*, and short overviews in Graham Parry's *Trophies of time* and the *Oxford DNB* (a fine article by Christianson), but Reid Barbour's *John Selden* is the first modern attempt to give a unified, book-length account of the thought of this extraordinary figure.

The book's subtitle, *Measures of the holy commonwealth in seventeenth-century England*, suggests the clue which is to lead its readers through the labyrinth of Selden's thought: throughout his published works, Selden engaged with the problem of the relationship of civil and spiritual authority in "a religious society," handling "normative vehicles, from poetry to English law, from natural law to Judaism." So, after an overview of Selden's life and publications, the book discusses him in five contexts, in overlapping chronological order: poetry, including his relationship with Jonson, his commentary on the first volume of *Poly-Olbion*, and some highlights from the *Marmora Arundelliana* and other early Latin writings; the common law and Parliament in the 1620s; natural law, including the *Mare clausum* and *De jure naturali et gentium*; church government, including the edition of Eadmer, the earlier writings on Judaic culture, and Selden's contributions to the Westminster Assembly; and ancient Judaic culture, especially the constitution of the Sanhedrin. A conclusion examines Selden's "legacy" between his death and the publication of the *Table Talk* in 1689—by which point "England was on the verge of waking up from the dream of the holy commonwealth to find its society comprehensively civil."

Barbour's achievement is impressive in many ways. He has devised a coherent master narrative which unifies a formidable body of work; henceforth,

nobody will be able to discuss Selden's thought without referring to this book. He engages explicitly from his first paragraph onwards with the alternative readings of Selden which emphasize his preference for the civil over the religious—his Erastianism, in one sense of the word—and he offers a vigorous challenge to those readings. Civil institutions mattered to Selden, he argues, but that was because Selden was convinced that “some form of senate, together with the laws of the land, was the linchpin of the holy commonwealth.” The strength of this argument is, of course, also a weakness: because it can be used to block any claim that Selden's concerns in a given text are exclusively secular, it can subsume every text he wrote into the same narrative of the measure of the holy commonwealth.

Whether its overarching argument is right or not, the book does have significant shortcomings which its readers will have to take into account. For instance, although Barbour makes extensive use of the *Table Talk*, he never engages adequately with the dating or accuracy of its constituent entries. They were written down over a range of at least thirteen years, from the very early 1640s to the last year or so of Selden's life, and some of them appear to be garbled: they are therefore very problematic evidence for the development of Selden's thought. The manuscripts of the *Table Talk*, of which there are at least ten, naturally vary, a point which does not interest Barbour, whose work is almost exclusively from printed books. He refers in his acknowledgements to a summer spent working in “the Selden archive at the Bodleian,” but only refers to Bodleian Selden MSS in a single paragraph, and has nothing to say about those at Lincoln's Inn, Leiden, UCLA, the Huntington, and elsewhere: writing about a seventeenth-century polymath without attempting to discuss his manuscript *Nachlass* is a very curious procedure. Source material is in general thinly cited: the ratio of one page of endnotes to 32 of text contrasts strikingly with the corresponding ratios in Berkowitz's book (1: 6) and Christianson's (1: 3). Barbour's command of the classics is shaky: he sometimes gets the names of ancient authors wrong (hence forms such as Manethius, Possidonius, and Martianus Capellus), and has difficulty with Latin. This last point is important, since many of Selden's major works were written in notoriously awkward Latin. To see Barbour at his worst, take this passage from the *Analecton*:

dum paululum a serie temporum digressi (cum Romanorum iam & quasi publica fide editorum testimonia proxime suppeditentur) administrationis Britannicae reipublicae speciem circa Caesaris adventum, dynastarum item philosophorumque in eadem mores exinde subnectamus.

Barbour translates it as:

when, a very short time ago, when so recently public testimonies were offered up in abundance, indeed testimonies of faith for our command over the Romans, we secured our mores under the same sort affiliated with the British government, dynasty, and philosophy at the time of Caesar's invasion.

A closer translation would be:

when, having turned aside just a little from chronological order (for testimonies of Roman authors, edited now, and as it were, as a matter of good faith with the public, will be supplied immediately afterwards) we proceed to attach a portrait of the governance of the British commonwealth around the time of the coming of Caesar, together with the character of its princes and its philosophers.

A scholar capable of translating so badly should perhaps have thought twice before writing a book on a major neo-Latin author. Reid Barbour's work is too substantial to be dismissed out of hand, but in several respects it falls short of the standards of exact and learned scholarship.

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Marcy L. North. *The Anonymous Renaissance: Cultures of Discretion in Tudor-Stuart England*. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2003. Pp. xi, 309.

Marcy L. North has chosen a subject that resonates with many current debates in early modern literature. She uses the concept of anonymity to investigate differences and continuities between Mediaeval and Renaissance concepts of authorship, to examine the construction of authorship through the material conventions of print, to illuminate aspects of religious controversies in early modern English printed texts, to describe authorship in coterie manuscript culture, and to establish whether Anon really was often a woman. An important part of her project is to stress the prevalence of anonymous authorship in Mediaeval as well as Renaissance texts, and thus to bring together two usually differentiated periods.

What she calls a "theoretical" introduction mercifully eschews a post-modern methodology which might take perverse delight in anonymous texts. Instead it reveals North's interest in the material culture of manuscript and print, building on recent interest in manuscripts and in the History of the Book. Thus there is a great deal of meticulous research here, as well as stimulating ideas. She is scathing about the modern preference for texts with a named author and sees this as a perpetuation of the intentional fallacy. She also deplores the survival of New Critical preconceptions about texts which ignore paratext and pre-text. This is a very healthy corrective to bring to the study of early modern texts, which, as she states, are often the product of "collaboration, compilation, and the communal production of literature." North employs the theories of Barthes and Foucault in her investigation of the nature of authorship. By revealing the author to be a "function," Foucault lays the ground for her study of anonymity, but it is difficult to see how Barthes' theory helps her thesis, apart from his reimagining of the anonymity of every text. North's book devotedly excavates early modern conditions of authorship and reads every text in a profoundly historicist manner, to which Barthes' theory of the eternal re-writing of the text is alien.