

imperial and priestly roles, but recognising always that the sacerdotal aspects of kingship retained their potency.

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Setting aside all authority. Giovanni Battista Riccioli and the science against Copernicus in the age of Galileo. By Christopher M. Graney. Pp. xv + 271 incl. 47 figs and 4 tables. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2015. \$29 (paper). 978 0 268 02988 3

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Imagine an astronomical theory that implied that every single star was over a hundred times larger than the sun? It seems absurd. And yet the evidence available to early seventeenth-century astronomers necessitated this absurdity from supporters of the Copernican theory (that the earth rotates around the sun). Such was the argument of the Jesuit, Giovanni Battista Riccioli (1598–1671), whose work Graney employs to reassess common perceptions that religious motivations were central to the rejection of Copernicanism – typified in the opposition to Galileo. Riccioli, Graney argues, ‘scientifically’ demonstrated the superiority of Tycho Brahe’s system (in which the sun rotates around a central stationary earth, and the planets around the mobile sun), appealing to the lack of observed stellar parallax and apparent stellar volume – caused by an artefact of early modern telescope technology.

Seventeenth-century Roman Catholic discourse accepted the possibility that Scripture could speak figuratively regarding the motion of the sun and the stability of the earth, but only if the evidence from the natural world clearly demonstrated it. Yet, as Graney portrays Riccioli’s argument, setting aside all biblical and ecclesiastical authority, the balance of ‘scientific’ evidence weighed against the sun’s motion, and thus made it both philosophically and hermeneutically logical to take the plain meaning of Scripture. Moreover, Graney argues, in their appeal to divine power to explain massive star sizes, Copernican astronomers were just as dependent, if not more so, on religious justification for their astronomical theory as anti-Copernicans.

Graney’s account of Copernican recourse to divine *fiat* and anti-Copernican experimental and observational rigour makes an excellent case for the complexity involved in investigating the natural world – both now and in the past – and the relationship between such investigation and theological motivations. However, his characterisation of the Copernicans’ appeal to divine power as a ‘religious’ (as opposed to ‘scientific’) argument fails to capture the degree to which all seventeenth-century natural philosophers (unlike modern scientists) framed the natural world as created by God. Thus Copernican invocation of divine power – while making reference to biblical sources – would not have been received as necessarily grounded in biblical or ecclesiastical authority. Such arguments were still within the realm of philosophy and therefore differed categorically from theological arguments drawn from scriptural exegesis. Appealing to God’s power to justify apparent absurdities in the natural world resulting from the Copernican theory was not of the same order as applying hermeneutical principles – the plain meaning of the text or the authority of previous interpreters – to a given

passage, which then resulted in a specific interpretation of the natural world (geocentrism). None the less, as Graney admirably demonstrates, the heart of Riccioli's argument appealed neither to divine power nor to scriptural authority, but relied on the empirical evidence available at the time.

Setting aside all authority provides easy access into the historical complexity of seventeenth-century astronomy and religious discourse, dispelling popular myths regarding the religious basis for anti-Copernican resistance. This book therefore forms a useful supplementary text to undergraduate courses on the history of science and religion.

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PAUL GREENHAM

The royalist republic. Literature, politics, and religion in the Anglo-Dutch public sphere, 1639–1660. By Helmer J. Helmers. Pp. xv + 325 incl. 15 figs. and 1 table. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015. £65 (cloth). 978 1 107 08761 3; 978 1 107 45792 8

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This is, by all measures, an exceptional and imaginative study of the many ways in which Dutch and English (indeed, British) politics, religion and culture overlapped in the turbulent decades of the mid-seventeenth century. From the outset, Helmers carefully and intelligently interrogates notions of a coherent, monolithic 'public sphere' in the early modern period, preferring instead to employ a more discursive lens influenced by the work of Gerard Hauser (pp. 20–2). The book is, however, about far more than the narrow circumscription of differing or overlapping 'spheres' of engagement; rather, Helmers has provided here a picture of a relationship constantly in flux, incessantly pushing at its own boundaries while also prone to fascinating crises. Part I, which maps the 'discursive communities' extant across the 'Anglo-Scoto-Dutch' sphere in the 1630s and 1640s, looks to the agents and media through which news and opinion spread across these regions. Here, British Royalists jostled with the publishing efforts of Scottish Covenanters (whose common cause with international Calvinism has received far greater scholarly attention) to create a 'hybrid sphere' of translations, responses and counter-responses. Part II witnesses the politico-religious culmination of these interconnections, wherein reactions to familiar 'British' events are 'mapped' through these spheres. Here, Helmers's background in literary criticism shines: works such as *Eikon Basilike*, *Eikonoklastes* and the poetry of Marvell (to name only a few) are given new lustre through interpretation alongside their Dutch counterparts, including Constantijn Huygens, Claudius Salmasius, Joost van den Vondel and Jan Vos. These are shown to represent not only 'echoes' of one another – a narrow dialogue between elites – but rather the product of a shared discourse with common languages and concerns (p. 163). Helmers's findings also move beyond the literary into interpretation of visual representations of Dutch royalism, including fascinating instances of cross-regional palimpsest. Chapter vii is particularly enjoyable for both the humour of Anglo-Dutch stereotyping ('de gestaarte Engelsman', or 'tailed Englishman' being a favourite) and Helmers's smart unravelling of the millenarian angst which accompanied the conflicts of the 1650s across religious networks. Helmers retains an admirably wide lens of analysis, never losing sight of the wider 'British' resonances of his work (inclusive of not only Scotland, but also