

endeavor demonstrated here, and are definitely worth undertaking. Recent studies relying on this edition, such as Lara Crowley's *Manuscript Matter: Reading John Donne's Poetry and Prose in Early Modern England* (2018), are already demonstrating how the *Variorum's* function is not only to record but also, and more importantly, to spark the most significant critical responses to the poet. In that, the volume resembles Donne and his writings: prolific, ambitious, daring, at first a little obscure or daunting, perhaps, but undeniably generous in the erudition it spreads, and the legacy it promises to leave behind.

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*Gluttony and Gratitude: Milton's Philosophy of Eating.* Emily E. Stelzer. Medieval and Renaissance Literary Studies. University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2017. xii + 364 pp. \$79.95.

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The Duquesne Studies: Language and Literature Series, sponsored by the much-lamented Duquesne University Press, lives again as the Medieval and Renaissance Literary Studies Series, published by the Pennsylvania State University Press. *Gluttony and Gratitude* is a worthy member. In a departure from the current trend in Milton studies to see the author within the context of seventeenth-century politics and culture, Emily E. Stelzer argues for a "medieval Milton" (2) who draws upon the theology of the church fathers, as well as secular, medieval, and early modern writers, to revive "the tradition of the gluttonous Fall" (1) and to advocate for the redemptive qualities of temperance, charity, and *sophrosynē*.

Stelzer's most engaging chapters are the first two. The first provides an efficient, focused survey of discussions of gluttony from Tertullian to Spenser, with special attention to Saint Augustine and his division of the sin into the triad of lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, and pride of life. Gluttony thus includes not only eating, but also a full range of desires. The second chapter applies this rich understanding of gluttony to *Paradise Lost*, with assistance from *De Doctrina Christiana*, the theological treatise now mostly but not universally accepted as Milton's. In response to the established view that, in *Paradise Lost*, the original sin was disobedience, Stelzer proposes that "gluttony has more explanatory power" (67), as it sets up arguments for temperance, which she sees as the theme of books 11 and 12. Moreover, gluttony had specific resonance for Milton's original readers, as it "provided a metaphor for the disease of the body politic" (75) in Restoration England.

The following three chapters turn to specific instances of gluttony in the poem. Satan and the fallen angels, to no surprise, continue the medieval theatrical tradition

of the Hellmouth, while Milton's language follows "a medieval convention uniting the diabolic with the scatological" (103). In contrast, Milton follows Galen as well as Augustine when representing temperate eating in Eden before the Fall, healthy digestion, and beneficial secretions such as angelic scent. Finally, the Augustinian triads provide a framework for Milton's uniting of temperance, charity, and grace in the poem: "For Milton, grace is the means to God by which our pursuit of temperance must itself be tempered, while paradoxically it is also the means by which the physical sphere is retained at the end of time" (235). The final chapter argues that "Milton's philosophy of eating extends to the poetic process" (242). Milton avoids the fate of the mythical Bellerophon by acknowledging the temporary gift of inspiration and accepting the "moderation of imaginative flight" (250). Thus Milton fulfills his own vision, expressed in *The Reason of Church Government*, of embodying poetic ethics.

Stelzer is at her best when she reminds us that there remains a strong case for emphasizing Milton's inheritance of the medieval and Renaissance cultures of the Western world and regarding *Paradise Lost* as a culmination of those cultures. Stelzer's Milton is a Renaissance man, not an early modern. Thus, the book is at its best when it focuses on exposition and discussion of the works of medieval theologians and writers. One of the virtues of the book, however, is also its weakness. Stelzer's careful and extensive discussion of gluttony and its manifestations sometimes makes the main argument difficult to follow, in places where *copia* interferes with understanding. Some judicious editing would have greatly improved readability. The discussion also would have benefited from further consideration of the appeal of asceticism, especially fasting, and from the insights of current work by medievalists in waste studies. Moreover, recent scholarship on the visual and material culture of Milton's times raises the possibility that some of the poet's attention to smells and excretions may have been prompted at least as much by issues close to hand (such as sewers and epidemics) as by theological concerns. Certainly, Stelzer tells us much more about Milton's reading than about his readers.

These concerns aside, this book will provide a valuable introduction to the theological and cultural traditions behind *Paradise Lost* that will be most helpful to readers who are relatively new to medieval and Renaissance studies, and a provocative challenge to the assumptions of senior scholars.

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*Samson's Cords: Imposing Oaths in Milton, Marvell, and Butler.* Alex Garganigo. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2018. xviii + 332 pp. \$85.

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Some writers use the literature of a period to explain its history. Other writers, such as Alex Garganigo in his *Samson's Cords*, use the history of a period to elucidate its