

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.

UNIVERSITY OF TEL AVIV

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

Ireland) while simultaneously remaining truly binational in focus. Occasionally this reader would have liked to have seen further qualification about the pervasiveness of the ‘public opinion’ evinced in these varied publications – perhaps comparable to the popular voices seen in recent works on early modern Venice and Paris – to round off the discussion; however, this would have moved beyond the established remit of Helmers’s work (pp. 5–6). Indeed, the fact that this work invites so much more research into these intersections and interactions further testifies to its quality, and its relevance to anyone interested in the early modern period.

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MARK WILLIAMS

*The first American Evangelical. A short life of Cotton Mather.* By Rick Kennedy. (Library of Religious Biography.) Pp. xiv + 162 incl. frontispiece, 3 maps and 10 ills. Michigan–Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2015. £11.99 (paper). 978 0 8028 7211 1  
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While the image of Cotton Mather remains the preferred punching bag for those who wish to heap scorn on the Puritan colonists of early New England, serious scholarship has been constructing a picture of Mather that is more complex and that makes the case for his importance in American intellectual and religious history. Rick Kennedy has been one of the architects of this revaluation, in part through his contributions to the multi-volume edition of Mather’s *Biblia Americana* and now in this short introduction to Mather.

In *The first American Evangelical* Kennedy makes the case for Mather’s importance as a preacher, a pastor, a scientist, a civic leader, a husband and father, and an author of works of history, theology, medicine and philosophy. In the process he demolishes numerous myths about the clergyman, most importantly in this regard in his assessment of Mather’s role in the Salem witchcraft episode. Kennedy effectively places Mather in the context of late seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century Boston, but also locates him in the broader Atlantic world of ideas.

A brief guide to sites in Boston that were central to Mather’s life will be useful for those who visit the city and wish to understand what it was like in the colonial period. This book is the best available introduction to Mather’s life and ideas, and offers excellent suggestions for further study. While Reiner Smolinski’s anticipated biography will likely be the definitive scholarly study of Mather, Kennedy’s *Short life* offers a readable introduction that is easily accessible to the general reader.

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FRANCIS J. BREMER

*Spinoza & Dutch Cartesianism. Philosophy and theology.* By Alexander X. Douglas. Pp. vii + 184. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015. £30. 978 0 19 873250 1  
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In this short book Alexander Douglas argues in favour of interpreting Spinoza’s philosophy in the light of the ongoing conflict between Dutch Cartesians and Protestant Scholastics, the latter rooted in Calvinism and Neo-Aristotelianism. At