

chapter queries how “readerly agency” was by turns “encouraged or restricted in the histories produced by early printers” (169). The differences rather than continuities between scribal and print culture are brought to the fore in this final chapter as Tonry advances a carefully nuanced argument about how “the logic of print” (209) seems to have inflected the development of historiographical modes.

*Agency and Intention in English Print* draws fresh attention to a number of little-known texts and early editions. As Tonry herself puts it, it is a work that peers into “the neglected corners and crannies of early English print” (16) to offer a range of new insights. It will undoubtedly prove useful to those researching the earliest decades of English print culture, especially those scholars with interests in the production and circulation of religious books or the intersections between England’s first printers and London’s mercantile classes.

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*“Ungainefull Arte”: Poetry, Patronage, and Print in the Early Modern Era.*  
Richard A. McCabe.

Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016. xiv + 376 pp. \$110.

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Richard McCabe’s book on the relationship of poets to patrons, and patrons to poets, has its epicenter in the Elizabethan period but begins at 1500 and takes in the reign of James I. Throughout he is determined not to read the evidence naively or parochially, but politically and materially. We are dealing with approaches to patrons, threshold or royal; the adopted language of *amicitia*; attempts to create obligation (open-book attempts in the case of Churchyard, usually more encoded); and struggles to achieve financial stability and freedom against inevitable servitude. Models and definitions are taken from the classical world and, at greater length, from Italy, where Cicero’s *De Archia* helped to legitimize the cultivation of magnificence in great families and the Medici’s patronal control. The book showcases the instructively different cases of Petrarch, Ariosto, and Tasso. The first is seen as a tough and influential example of laureate establishment; the middle as involving close control of production and a troubled relationship with the Estensi; and the last as furnishing a signal example of dysfunction in the market and with patrons. From such examples of success and failure, English poets often took pattern. The comprehensive and multifocused scope of *“Ungainefull Arte”* gives it strength. Another welcome feature is the dismissal of simplistic ideas opposing manuscript and print presentations. Many examples are given of complex attempts by writer and bookseller to define an audience in the choice of subject matter and through the comprehensive use of paratextual material. The economies of the book trade are discussed, as in the notable case of Richard Robinson, and various ways are described of giving printed copies extra value for presentation.

Because of the multiple focuses, changing contexts, varying cultural models, different production options, and the sheer range of poet-patron examples covered, *“Ungainefull Arte”* is not an easy book to organize. Nevertheless, individual chapters are tightly structured and authoritative. The book also features areas in which the author has special expertise, as with the patronage issues embedded in the poetry of “colonial” Spenser or the case of Sir Thomas Egerton as literary patron, studied in the rich Huntington Library archive. It is refreshing if sobering to read informed scholarship about the patronal game, showing understanding of its discourses and protocols from the point of view both of poet and patron. Thus it is shown that one reason for Elizabeth’s sovereign control over the many patronal advances to her was that she herself had addressed Katherine Parr as a young woman. McCabe is wryly amusing when reading the vagaries of the game. “The problem with praise is predictability,” he remarks (73). Attention is paid to the tricky protocols of presentation, as at New Year.

When it comes to the English survey, shaped by tracking the different patronage situations typifying each reign and the creation of the Stationers’ Company, McCabe provides a contextual map. The difficult patronal attempts of Skelton and his problems with Wolsey perhaps prefigure Spenser’s later difficulties. English poets desiring laureate status under the Tudors could not really match Petrarch’s achievement. They struggled in unsettled times, dealing with the complexities of threshold patrons or approaching rival courts. These considerations continued into the reign of James I. In fact, English poets usually achieved laureate status posthumously. Then, to match the three major case studies from Italy, there is an English trio: Gascoigne, Spenser, and Daniel. Gascoigne’s case, cultivating both a privileged and a wider readership, is shown as instructive for later poets. It was a career much about office. Spenser’s position is analyzed as that of the poet in exile, like Ovid, constantly struggling to create a secure patronal base, whereas the introspective Daniel’s career is seen as one of much success, combining court privilege with a key commercial partnership with the publisher Simon Waterson.

*“Ungainefull Arte”* provides a valuable reference for studies in this area. Students of the poets will think of other rivalries, sensitivities, and agendas, but the fundamental importance of the patronal system is impossible to ignore, at least until the time of Dr. Johnson. By then, after many religious challenges (God as patron) and social upheavals in the seventeenth century, the intelligent writer could no longer take quite so seriously the enabling pretenses.

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