

partnership was developing well but was cut off by James's untimely death before it could fully develop for their mutual benefit.

This monograph is a very strong piece of scholarship; it is well constructed and clearly written and is highly recommended for both scholars and students. It offers an intensive comparative analysis of the experiences of two interesting women who played important parts in British history, which ultimately provides illuminating insights into the practice of queenship. Beer reinforces current ideas in queenship and Renaissance studies about the significance of areas such as gift giving and patronage with her examples. She also offers innovative discussions about public piety, the queen's role as hostess, and the use not only of material culture but also of material itself, for the projection of queenly authority.

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The Anatomy of Riches: Sir Robert Paston's Treasure. Spike Bucklow.
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The *Paston Treasure*, an enormous still life unique in both subject matter and composition, grounds this impressive volume that discusses everything from the scope of early modern global trade to the history of science in seventeenth-century England. The book begins with almost novelistic intrigue: a huge painting arriving at the conservation studio "one damp winter afternoon" and the discovery of "a mysterious woman wearing a red laced bodice and ribbons in her hair" (9). Maintaining such intense prose throughout, Bucklow offers a rich and compelling portrait of the Paston family, the objects represented in the painting, and the material and economic history behind its composition. Part biography of Sir Robert Paston, part cultural history of seventeenth-century England, part art historical inquiry into a unique painting, *The Anatomy of Riches* is a refreshingly fun read filled with an impressive array of insights into the connection between art, politics, and science in seventeenth-century England.

Organized thematically, the book's first chapter begins in the Middle Ages and traces the history of the Paston family. The writing is vivid as Bucklow uses historical sources to imagine the personalities of the Paston ancestors before turning to focus on the painting's patron, Sir Robert Paston (1631–83). Two chapters connect the particularities of his life to the major events of the seventeenth century such as the Civil War, the 1665 plague, climactic anomalies, and the foundation of the Royal Society. Focus then hones in on the objects represented in the *Paston Treasure* (formerly called the *Yarmouth Collection*), and these chapters are the most engaging for their impressive scope,

discussing everything from the way that New World insects changed the composition of paint to the mysteries of Chinese blue-and-white porcelain. Another chapter describes the decline in Sir Robert's health and finances. Finally, the book closes with an interrogation into the painting's bizarre composition, which eschews realistic techniques in perspective.

Central to the book's argument is the claim that Sir Robert Paston himself was heavily involved in the composition of this painting. Bucklow argues that the painting's apparent flaws are not due to the anonymous "probably Dutch, probably male" artist's lack of skill or incompetence, but to the interventions that Sir Robert made in the artistic process (10). For example, X-ray studies and cross-section analysis of the paint show that the painting went through major changes in composition and subject matter. These *pentimenti* (changes of mind) show that Paston was using the painting as an attempt to make sense of a volatile and changing world, just as an author would with a literary creation (100). The painting's jarring composition and imperfect perspective can be attributed to Paston's decision to reflect the instability of his time, which Bucklow calls a "heroic aesthetic experiment" (202).

One of the book's strengths is the deliberately ekphrastic approach that Bucklow takes to organization. He moves from focal point to focal point throughout the painting to tell the story of each element's cultural import, economic place in the expanding global market of the early modern economy, and personal meaning to Sir Robert. This organizational approach reflects the "chaotic composition" (194) of the work and offers an impressive whirlwind of information about the seventeenth century. This strength is also the book's weakness, though, as it can sometimes feel scattered, and often tantalizingly brief discussions of certain subjects seem to end before they had begun. For example, Bucklow mentions that Sir Robert's wife and his daughter were involved in his alchemical experiments, but quickly moves on from this intriguing fact after only one paragraph (160).

Though the organization can at times feel disjointed, overall *The Anatomy of Riches* takes a refreshing and creative approach that is well worth the read. Because it manages to encompass an impressive array of subjects with aplomb, I recommend this book to anyone beginning their study of seventeenth-century England, particularly undergraduate and graduate students. Scholars interested in the history of science in seventeenth-century England, the history of chemistry, collecting, and art history will all find this book informative and enjoyable. Bucklow's sustained discussions of Norwich and frequent references to Thomas Browne, who was Sir Robert's physician and friend, also make this an important book for Browne scholars.

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