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However, Perkins's carefully constructed chapter introductions and conclusions make clear the ways in which his rich analyses intersect with a complex tradition of thought regarding gifts and gift-giving. *The Gift of Narrative* will be of great interest to scholars interested in medieval romance, Chaucer and Lydgate, and scholars working on ideas of human and nonhuman agency, gift-giving, or narrative.

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Keith Pluymers. *No Wood, No Kingdom: Political Ecology in the English Atlantic*. Early Modern Americas. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2021. Pp. 296. $49.95 (cloth).
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"The early modern world was a wooden one," Keith Pluymers tells us in his impressive history of Atlantic ecology, *No Wood, No Kingdom: Political Ecology in the English Atlantic* (5). This extraordinarily versatile material was freighted with a multitude of uses and meanings. Pluymers maps how it was located at the heart of the household hearth; fueled industrial production of iron and sugar; and propelled the oceanic expansion of English trade and power with timber for naval, colonial, merchant, and slave ships. Both forest and trees are made visible by Pluymers: individual species promised luxuries like lemons or silk, while English forests were preserved as a habitat for royal hunting, honor, and beauty. Woods were also a terrain that governors struggled to oversee and make profitable, condemned as a refuge for rebels and impediment to agriculture. Pluymers reveals how wood became a fulcrum of contact and conflict between competing demands that intensified as England's Atlantic empire emerged between 1560 and 1660.

This monograph rides a new wave of early modern environmental histories. Recent works by William Cavert (*The Smoke of London: Energy and Environment in the Early Modern City* [2016]) and Anya Zilberstein (*A Temperate Empire: Making Climate Change in Early America* [2016]), for instance, have emphasized that environmental change was an intellectual, social, political, and cultural process as much as it was a material one. In charting ligneous lines between English and colonial ecologies, Pluymers's innovative research brings into dialogue often disconnected literatures on early modern England and early America. While *No Wood, No Kingdom* can be situated in a lineage with Richard Grove's *Green Imperialism* (1996) and Paul Warde's *Invention of Sustainability* (2018), Pluymers breaks new ground by using wood to map ideas of scarcity and practices of conservation within and across Atlantic ecologies. Individual chapters travel from English forests to Irish plantations, across the ocean to Virginia's arboreal abundance and then onward to the finite island ecologies of Bermuda and Barbados. Collectively, they challenge two claims: first, that English scarcity triggered the exploitation and degradation of colonial forests and, second, that "careless destruction" characterized early modern management of wood (191).

No Wood, No Kingdom makes a crucial contribution to understandings of the imbrication of imperial ecologies and economies. While the crown launched concerted efforts at domestic reform, it evinced only sporadic interest in wood overseas. Not until the eighteenth century did colonies provide a significant supply of timber to England. In the early, uncertain decades of England's Atlantic ventures, Pluymers shows, no coherent imperial economy of wood developed. Instead, lateral networks were forged: Irish timber serviced mainland European markets and Atlantic wood generated intercolonial connections between New England, Bermuda, and the Caribbean. Meanwhile, Virginia's colonists struggled to supply or market

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wood products to England. Several explanations for the lack of English investment in and regulation of colonial woods emerge from Pluymers's account. First, the crown staked a claim to England's forests as both governor and property owner, often exercising control via leases and lawsuits rather than legislation. Its failure to secure equivalent property rights in overseas colonies limited its interest and influence. Secondly, cheaper, more accessible timber, tar, pitch, potash, and iron were available from mainland Europe, while seams of English coal began to provide an alternative source of energy; this sapped the impetus for merchants, investors, and governors to weather the risks and expense of establishing an imperial wood trade. Finally, Pluymers highlights the disjuncture between metropolitan governors' unrealistic expectations and blurred vision, and colonists' trial-and-error application of existing ideas to unfamiliar environments and the development of distinctive ways of valuing and managing woods.

There was also a gap between the rhetoric of absolute scarcity and struggles over resources in practice. Pluymers uses the concept of political ecology to frame both fragile Atlantic connections and competing claims on wood in specific places. Scarcity and abundance were determined by who had the right to use or sell wood; supply chains relying on investment, labor, infrastructure, transport, and markets; and concerns about social order and political authority. An impressive array of sources is mobilized adeptly to trace these processes; zooming in on the convoluted legal disputes that wracked the Forest of Dean, for instance, while tracking how investors and owners of Dean ironworks were responsive to Irish competition and launched parallel ventures in Virginia. Likewise, extensive use of leases, lawsuits, and property deeds reveals that many English and colonial landowners sought to carefully manage and preserve valuable wood assets. Supporting similar findings in an urban context (Cavert, *Smoke of London*, chapter 5), this evidence suggests that private property— as much as state intervention—acted as a powerful and pervasive method of environmental regulation in this period, albeit fragmented according to individual interest.

In England, governors aimed to "alleviate scarcity," "improve efficiency," and secure profit through reforming woods and forests (49, 29). Although Pluymers acknowledges that "the tools available to the early modern state struggled to provide for a range of uses," the coherence attributed to state forestry sometimes obscures tensions between aims of profit and preservation (6). Royal strategies of disafforestation (complete enclosure), lease of wood rights, and the revival of feudal Forest Laws were all legitimated through the language of scarcity, but had different consequences for resource ownership and use. Ambiguity remains about how far early modern measures to preserve wood worked, while markets and profit appear as the final determinants of deforestation. Only in Bermuda, where reorientation to maritime trade demanded timber, did successful reforestation take place. Moreover, although English scarcity was not restocked by its colonies, preservation in Ireland and Barbados relied on exploiting the wood of neighboring landlords or countries.

Along with trees, Pluymers's protagonists are governors, colonists, landlords, and surveyors. We hear relatively little of the concepts of scarcity articulated by local and indigenous communities whose access to wood was severely restricted by enclosure, colonialism, and conservation. Only fleeting reference is made, for instance, to well-documented riots across western England in the 1630s, triggered by disafforestation and revived Forest Laws. Riot, rebellion, and war posed serious challenges to governors and colonists claiming woods in England, Ireland, and Virginia. Pluymers does, however, emphasize the social politics of labor in resource extraction. The palmetto tree in Bermuda—commercially insignificant but with high use-value for enslaved and free laborers—illuminates the poor's alternative political ecologies. Concerns about social order, racial hierarchies, and labor discipline drove legislative efforts to restrict access, particularly due to palmettos' alcoholic products.

No Wood, No Kingdom tells complex stories about the connections between Atlantic ecologies, introducing a vital sense of contingency rather than inevitability. In doing so, it opens

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up urgent questions about how scarcity, the state, conservation, commerce, and colonialism interacted to transform environments at the dawn of English empire.

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Eric Pudney, ed. *A Defence of Witchcraft Belief: A Sixteenth-Century Response to Reginald Scot's Discovery of Witchcraft*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2021. Pp. 232. $120.00 (cloth).
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Over the past twenty-five years there has been a concerted effort to transcribe and publish late medieval and early modern manuscripts relating to witchcraft and the supernatural. These manuscripts have ranged from manuals of ritual practices, like John of Morigny's *Liber florum celestis*, edited by Claire Fanger and Nicholas Watson, to texts condemning magic's use, like the French treatise *Contre les devineurs* (1411), edited by Jan Veenstra. All have contributed significantly to understanding of the place the supernatural held in premodern society, lending insight into the heterogenous, nuanced, and often conflicting attitudes held towards magic. Eric Pudney's *A Defence of Witchcraft Belief: A Sixteenth-Century Response to Reginald Scot's Discovery of Witchcraft*, an edition of a largely overlooked, and certainly never printed, treatise is a valuable addition to this corpus.

The manuscript presented here Is a part of Harley MS 2302 housed by the British Library, and, as Pudney ably shows, it is a treatise written in response to an unpublished draft of Reginald Scot's *Discoverie of Witchcraft*. Internal evidence suggests that it was written, at the earliest, in late 1580, and surely before the publication of the *Discoverie* in 1584. Despite missing pages at both the beginning and end of the treatise, the treatise is made up of 103 "reasons" or responses to the *Discoverie*'s arguments, making it "the only extant text that responds directly and at length to Scot" (6). The familiar tone of the text and friendly recommendations—despite largely rejecting Scot's premises and methodologies—suggests that it was written at Scot's request, probably by a friend or even kinsman whose opinion was sought some time before the *Discoverie* went to print. Pudney is reticent to conclusively name an author for the text, but proposes the suffragan bishop of Dover, Richard Rogers, as a likely candidate. Whoever the author, they certainly had extensive theological knowledge and sufficient affection for Scot, or concern regarding his ideas, to compose an extensive reply.

A useful introduction prefaces the treatise, situating the work and its author. Attention is given to proving the text was indeed written as a response to Scot's *Discoverie*—though less evidence would have been enough to convince—and that the work was composed in response to an earlier draft of the *Discoverie* than the one that has survived in print. The implications of this, as Pudney outlines, are exciting. The text sheds light on Scot's process in the composition of the *Discoverie*, including where Scot reworked his argument in response to criticism and (more often) where he doubled down on his assertions. Aside from acting as a foil to Scot, though, the *Defence* has value in its own right: it adds another voice to the range of opinions about witches during the later sixteenth century. As was the case with Henry Holland and James VI of Scotland, the author disagrees with Scot's conclusion that witches do not have the powers ascribed to them. What is original about this author, though, is the tone that he strikes in doing so. The author does not seem to be invested in proving the full extent of witches' powers—indeed, he goes as far as stating that he will not "justify all to be true which is testified about witches by the most learned and godly writers, though I do credit

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