

model of ideal queenship, because there was no such model. Instead, contemporaries objected to any political actor standing in for the king. Gendered attacks on Margaret reflect anxieties about Henry VI's (1421–71) absence from political life, rather than objections to unqueenly behavior.

The final three chapters examine lawyers and litigants. S. J. Payling analyzes the murders of three lawyers and MPs who were killed because their opponents in land disputes perceived the victims' legal and political power as an insurmountable threat. His findings suggest that the Crown and gentry accepted violent action as a last resort in irreconcilable disputes. Violence and legal action were also recourses for late medieval townsmen, as David Grummitt demonstrates in his chapter on conflicts between the citizenry and monastic houses of Canterbury, in particular the Rosier riot of 1500 led by the lawyer and MP William Atwode. Grummitt develops an image of a citizenry united by a shared civic identity, mobilized by lawyerly leaders in pursuit of the town's interests. In the final chapter, Deborah Youngs examines the nature of litigation brought before the king's council by women under Henry VII (1457–1509). Youngs argues that the Star Chamber was particularly attractive to women due to its broad jurisdiction, speed, and willingness to waive the laws of coverture. By analyzing female plaintiffs' legal strategies and self-presentation, Youngs shows how determined and savvy Tudor women could be as they pursued redress.

Together, these essays illustrate many of the methods and sources available to historians interested in "finding individuality" in fifteenth-century Britain. The volume does, however, focus narrowly on royals and the gentry. Late medieval and early modern records are rich in detail about nonelite individuals like Alice Steward, a husbandman's wife who laid a case before the king's council (136), but they appear only fleetingly in Grummitt's and Youngs's essays, and nowhere else in the collection. The authors and editors are to be commended for whetting readers' appetites for further explorations of the fascinating characters of fifteenth-century Britain.

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Fellowship and Freedom: The Merchant Adventurers and the Restructuring of English Commerce, 1582–1700. Thomas Leng.

Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020. xii + 344 pp. \$85.

Thomas Leng's new book is a rigorous and detailed look at the Company of Merchant Adventurers during a critical transition in commercial life, from the early modern world of corporate organization to the incipient world of capitalist free trade. The Merchant Adventurers was one of the earliest companies in England and one of the largest and most powerful, with exclusive privileges to trade in broadcloth to the Netherlands.

The rise and fall of the company was a major commercial and economic event in and of itself that justifies a full-length treatment, but Leng also uses the company history in a theoretically rich manner that illuminates both important aspects of early modern commercial life and perennial problems of principal agency and social coordination.

Corporate commercial organization is arguably the foundation upon which England's global ascendancy lay. It certainly has had a transformative effect on the world, so much so that it is now often taken for granted. But, as Leng shows, its effectiveness is always achieved through a precarious balance of interests and obligations. Coordinating the activities of a large group of geographically far-flung people with varied experiences, motivations, and personal circumstances is always an achievement. Showing how the Merchant Adventurers succeeded in this endeavor is at the core of the book. The first half of the book is organized by institutional aspects of the company, and the second half takes a more narrative approach.

Leng spends the first chapter showing how individuals are brought into the trade through a model of apprenticeship. In the next chapter, he uses the lens of social networks to describe the informal balance of power and information that knit company and merchant together once they had been initiated. Chapter 3 addresses how merchants exited from the company, through some fairly exciting instances of commercial failure, and chapter 4 digs into the regulatory regime intended to sanction—and thereby control—the behavior of members. We then see these institutional and organizational aspects slowly evolve as they are put to use in specific historical instances. Chapter 5 covers the early free-trade debates and the threat they posed to the company in the first decade of the seventeenth century. Chapter 6 explores the threat posed by the Cokayne Company in the early teens. Chapter 7 describes the religious tensions in the Civil War era, and the final chapter takes us to the Glorious Revolution and beyond. This organizational structure provides a nice solution to the problem of effectively portraying both the continuity and dynamic change that are both so central to the story of the organization.

The analysis is mainly based upon the correspondence of six merchants whose lives span the mid-sixteenth to seventeenth century, but a variety of other documents and archival materials are drawn upon. Though I, admittedly a social scientist, at times felt a little buried under the weight of the level of personal detail, there were also some genuinely gripping narratives of bankruptcy, flight, ruined reputations, high passions, and even forged elections that would not be out of place in the novels of Balzac. Leng does a particularly good and inventive job of using disputes, malfeasance, and untoward events to reveal the actualities of the governance structure of the company as it was practiced in real time.

Leng persuasively challenges existing scholarship that assigned the Merchant Adventurers to the old or premodern—and, therefore, static and stagnant—way of pursuing trade. But the bigger contribution is that by doing so he effectively undermines the larger, often misleading division between premodern and modern

commercial organization. Yes, the mart system eventually decayed, but the mart system was just another solution to the problems faced by any type of economic organization. As he argues, all companies have to resolve the balance of interests of their constituent members, and all companies accomplish this with networks of informal relations. In the end, Leng provides us with an incredibly detailed and fascinating account of exactly how these problems were worked out in the context of early modern England. The book is certainly a must read for historians of the company form, but I hope it will also interest those with broader interests in the problems of governance, coordination, and market development.

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“A Marvel to Behold”: Gold and Silver at the Court of Henry VIII.

Timothy Schroder.

Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2020. xxxiii + 366 pp. \$80.

If we call to mind the royal Tudor interior, what do we see? Dark paneled rooms, ornate chairs, and sturdy chests; carpets, tapestries, and hangings. Yet the reader of Timothy Schroder’s new book soon discovers that an essential feature is missing from this picture: vast quantities of gold and silver. *“A Marvel to Behold”* recalibrates our view of Henry VIII’s court by restoring to it the gold- and silver-gilt objects—plate (that is, wrought vessels), images, jewels, and cloth of gold—that litter inventories and eyewitness accounts.

The book is organized into thematic chapters that proceed broadly chronologically. An early chapter explores Henry VIII’s inheritance from his father, Henry VII, and reconsiders the latter’s reputation for miserliness. Others discuss the use of gold in religious settings, at banquets, and at court festivities (including the infamous Field of the Cloth of Gold). Schroder examines the patronage of goldsmiths by Henry’s two great advisers, Thomas Wolsey and Thomas Cromwell, and Holbein’s antique designs for plate. He discusses the holdings of royal relatives, including gifts to queens and offspring, and, finally, assesses the collection at Henry VIII’s death in 1547, with a brief coda summarizing its fate over the next century.

Schroder mobilizes an impressive range of sources to reconstruct the appearance, use, and significance of these objects: analogous examples in collections within the UK and abroad; representations in portraits and other visual sources; books on ceremonies; and ambassadorial descriptions. His most important sources are the inventories of the jewel house, a subset of the royal household, based at the Tower of London, which looked after plate and jewels owned by the Crown. Much of these were effectively bullion—liquid assets that could be disposed of as gifts or sent to the royal mint to be melted down into currency. Others were in storage until required for banquets or