

chapter Nuechterlein collects fascinating, often off-art examples that demonstrate her central thesis of Holbein's adaptability and versatility. Her analyses also reinforce her long-held conviction that Holbein's interest in observation of the natural world always came in service of artifice, of the artistic effects that so dazzled his wealthy patrons.

Much of the final chapter, "Patrons, Status, Court," serves as an excellent visual history of London's elite from the late 1520s onward. Full of insight into the many forms of portraiture commissioned from Holbein, from the highest royalty to the upper middle class of merchants, especially from London's Hanseatic community, this chapter will be a rich resource to scholars working on this period and the nonspecialist readers Nuechterlein seems to target with her straightforward writing style throughout.

Although there are occasionally questionable attributions left largely unquestioned (see, for example, pages 87 and 111), art history is, after all, more interesting when it is inclusive than when not. Nuechterlein's biography overall presents the most solid foundational text on Holbein yet, for readers both new to and familiar with the artist's work. Scholars of British art in particular will find this a helpful account of a changeable artist who left behind image-skeptic Reformed Basel to cultivate a new audience for impressive feats of mimesis as the great artificer of the English king.

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SCOTT OLDENBURG. *A Weaver-Poet and the Plague: Labor, Poverty, and the Household in Shakespeare's London*. Cultural Inquiries in English Literature, 1400–1700. University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2020. Pp. 275. \$99.95 (cloth).
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William Muggins is not a household name. Among scholars and students of early modern English literature and culture, he is known, if at all, as the author of a brief plague epic, *London's Mourning Garment* (1603). But for Scott Oldenburg, Muggins's marginality and that of his text are precisely the point. Shifting from a single-minded focus on Muggins as a plague writer, in *A Weaver-Poet and the Plague: Labor, Poverty, and the Household in Shakespeare's London* Oldenburg creates a rich and engaging portrait of a silk-weaver by trade whose craft and labor literalize the notional kinship of weaving and writing. Pursuing a composite method, Oldenburg offers a microhistory that delves deeply into the archival traces of his subject—in parish registers, wills, lay subsidies, and records of the Worshipful Company of Weavers—while an expansive and sensitive literary criticism encompasses a wide variety of texts and genres, including Muggins's poem, to flesh out these archival details, bringing a compelling portrait of the weaver-poet to life. This method, furthermore, enables Oldenburg to capture the perspective, vulnerability, and empathy of those on the lower end of the middling sort. As he points out, "[t]he general poverty of many weavers coupled with . . . the way the craft of weaving lent itself to the production of poetry, meant that weavers were uniquely prepared to speak out about London's social problems" (46). Alongside the pain and pathos of loss the poem conveys is a call for compassion for laborers and the vulnerable poor: a call from below.

A substantial introductory chapter opens with the grim scene of the Muggins household in quarantine following the death of two apprentices who lived with the family—one a ten-year-old girl—and the death of Muggins's daughter, Elizabeth. Here, Oldenburg surmises, Muggins wrote his plague epic. The reader follows the text from composition to print with a degree of detail that typifies Oldenburg's microhistory and demonstrates his keen critical

engagement with the period's literature, particularly uncanonical works. Oldenburg reconstructs Muggins's reading, following his sources into his poem. He suggests influences for and implications of Muggins's use of rime royale, and discusses the work's dedication, choice of and access to the printer, and the lineage of the image on the pamphlet's title page. Oldenburg situates Muggins in a system of interlocking spaces and relationships: as a householder in the Southwark parish of St. Olave's where, in 1603, the plague would first appear; as co-author of a petition published by the Yeomanry of the Company of Weavers, which led to his imprisonment in Newgate; as a debtor for whom a surviving inventory of his household goods was compiled; and as one of a group of weaver-poets, including the factual Thomas Deloney, Shakespeare's fictitious Nick Bottom, and John Careless of Coventry, active forty years before Muggins. There is much to take in here, and nearly every detail is elaborated in the chapters that follow, giving the impression of surface and depth that emerges from a careful exploration of lapses and lacunae in the historical record.

Chapter 1 explores conditions in the Company of Weavers, including Muggins's imprisonment in Newgate along with fellow weavers (and their publisher) who signed and published a petition on behalf of poorer weavers to the leadership of the company to relieve their economic distress and improve their place in a market crowded by immigrant weavers. In chapter 2 Oldenburg discusses the poverty that beset Muggins's household in the parish of St. Mildred's in the Poultry following his imprisonment, stressing the bonds among parishioners and neighbors as foundations for the sense of social responsibility that would permeate *London's Mourning Garment*. Chapter 3 follows the family to the Southwark parish of St. Olave's, where Muggins's economic status improved against the backdrop of the plague and its private and public losses. In chapter 4 Oldenburg casts Muggins as a vatic poet within an expert exegesis of the (chiefly) Old Testament imagery informing his text. Unlike conventional jeremiads, however, Muggins's work understands Lamentation as a public outcry. Refusing the peccatogenic perspective commonly adopted in prophetic and plague literature, Muggins instead issues a call for social justice and imagines a utopian London. It is characteristic in this context that the "fyve dozen & x paire of playing cardes" listed in the inventory of Muggins's household return to suggest that these were items for sale. As such, they imply Muggins's espousal of a view counter to that of ministers and moralists who blamed these demonized these pastimes for the plague (20, 141–42). Oldenburg convincingly glosses the relevance of Muggins's call to the divided American culture of the twenty-first century is glossed convincingly in the book's epilogue.

This topical survey fails to capture the rewarding cache of details and Oldenburg's expansive connections with both primary and secondary literature with which he reconstructs and situates Muggins and his work in the multiple social, cultural, literary, economic sites in which they resonate. The template for Oldenburg's method, he claims, is Muggins's volume itself, which is usefully reprinted in full in the book's appendix: the quantitative data contained in Muggins's numerical table of London's dead is fleshed out by the poem's "close-up picture of what it meant to be living during the tragedy," a picture that tells us "things that no numeric table could possibly express" (41). Oldenburg's study is a compelling example of the benefits to be gained by attending to early modern subjects from the poorer end of the middling sort and the historical and literary traces they leave behind. Doing so, this volume demonstrates, enriches and enlivens our view of life and death in London's parishes, and prompts reconsideration of marginal, nonelite texts that are too often read too lightly, dismissed as predictable or trite. Following the lead of *London's Mourning Garment* itself, Oldenburg creates a fascinating picture of a marginal author and his remarkable work.

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