

MARGARETTE LINCOLN. *London and the Seventeenth Century: The Making of the World's Greatest City*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2021. Pp. 384. \$32.50 (cloth)
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In Margarette Lincoln's immensely readable and engaging *London and the Seventeenth Century: The Making of the World's Greatest City*, metropolitan space comes alive—in all its material, human, sensory, and symbolic dimensions. Lincoln has marshalled an impressive array of perspectives, evidence, and literature about seventeenth-century London, to tell a coherent story about a hugely tumultuous era. This is a narrative history about “the emergence of the capital as a modern city” (xii). Lincoln says that her underlying aim is to explain “how England could emerge from such a turbulent century poised to become a great maritime power” (xii). And thus, in the final pages the reader is presented with the late seventeenth-century perspective of traveler Celia Fiennes, “standing on Shooters Hill and viewing the Thames from Blackwall to Deptford and beyond.” “On this part of the River,” noted Fiennes, “I have seen 100 saile of shipps pass by in a morning which is one of the finest sights that is” (327).

London and the Seventeenth Century is ordered chronologically and framed according to events of national political significance—namely the reigns, and tribulations, of Stuart kings and queens. Naturally, given their severe impact on the capital, the 1665 plague and the Great Fire of 1666 have their own chapters. There are also chapters focused upon metropolitan spaces of social, political, and cultural significance: coffee houses, experimental spaces associated with the Royal Society, domestic environments. Unsurprisingly, in working with such an expansive thematic range, Lincoln has relied on existing scholarship. But in excavating the opinions and lives of Londoners, Lincoln also makes superb use of a range of primary material, including letters, diaries, ballads, ambassadors' reports, and court records. She aims to present varied social perspectives on London life, and while royal personalities admittedly feature very heavily, the voices and experiences of civic worthies, merchants, the middling sort, and occasionally the urban poor also come through. And the reader encounters women, across the social spectrum—queens, shopkeepers, food hawkers, political petitioners, sex workers, even a “plumberess to the yards at Deptford and Woolwich” (161)—engaged in all manner of activities: letter writing, traveling, pursuing scientific knowledge, building earthworks, preaching, and resisting press gangs.

A key contribution of *London and the Seventeenth Century* is Lincoln's close exploration of the changing built environment of the metropolis. Some of this territory, such as the development of the West End, is relatively well trodden, but Lincoln also illuminates the built fabric of London's eastern districts whose rapid development, centered on maritime infrastructure, is not so well known. The discussions of “the maritime identity of London's eastern districts” (148) are fascinating; specifically, how the massive expansion of shipbuilding in response to growing foreign trade networks and warfare—involving the construction of wharves, dockyards, and warehouses—significantly affected the everyday lives of mariners, boatmen, shipbuilders, porters, victuallers, merchants, and their hard-pressed households. Lincoln has a sharp eye for small, fascinating human interactions with the built fabric, which speak volumes about Londoners' shifting political and religious allegiances. Thus, we learn that the spiked phrase “popish frenzy” (265) was added to the inscription on the Monument by London's Court of Common Council in 1681, and the crown and scepter were cut out from William III's portrait at Guildhall. This book also does much to illuminate the symbolic meanings of city sites in the collective imaginary of Londoners. Lincoln makes the point that the particular locations of the brutal executions of the Gunpowder plotters in 1606, for example, were intended to communicate explicit messages: St Paul's Churchyard “to counteract any tendency to make Catholic martyrs of the conspirators”, and the Houses of Parliament in the Palace of Westminster “emphasized the point that the conspirators were punished for

treason not heresy” (21). This is also a metropolitan history closely attuned to the sensory aspects of human experience, presenting a vivid array of sounds, sights, smells, and tastes, including the rowdy noises of apprentices in the city and the strong scent of tar in riverside parishes.

In a book locating London at the heart of booming seventeenth-century networks of international trade, one might expect rather more about the wider web of urban centers of exchange, both within Europe and on a global scale. Moreover, though Lincoln briefly outlines the development of the transatlantic slave trade, rather more space might have been given over to consider the devastating human impact of London’s rapidly expanding maritime infrastructure, a key lynchpin in growing corporate and state imperial ambitions. The subtitle of this book—*The Making of the World’s Greatest City*—sits somewhat uncomfortably against this global canvas of colonialism and exploitation.

Notwithstanding these reservations, Lincoln presents the reader with a vibrant and elegant overview of the transformation of the city into a global metropolis. Lincoln has deftly woven together social, political, and nautical histories into a compelling new narrative.

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DONALD J. NEWMAN, ed. *Boswell and the Press: Essays on the Ephemeral Writing of James Boswell*. Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 2021. Pp. 182. \$34.95 (paper).
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“Generally speaking, Boswell is still thought of primarily as [Samuel] Johnson’s biographer” (29), Donald J. Newman admits in the opening chapter to *Boswell and the Press: Essays on the Ephemeral Writing of James Boswell*. Indeed, scholarship on Boswell has been long wedded to the *Life of Johnson* (1791), but this riveting study begins the challenging and necessary work of disentangling Boswell from his biographical subject. The nine chapters of the edited collection shed light on Boswell as a prolific author of the periodical press—a medium within which he arguably exceeds Johnson in scope and ingenuity. Offering critical methodologies for understanding this “variegated” (27) body of work, this volume highlights how Boswell used ephemeral writing to tap into the zeitgeist of eighteenth-century culture.

Newman’s introduction situates Boswell as a burgeoning author within the expansion of periodical publication in the mid-to-late eighteenth century. The plethora of periodical venues, including the newly created format of the chronicle, enabled Boswell to “publish an article or essay on any subject anytime and anywhere he wished” (6). Additionally, Boswell was able to seek “public affirmation” (8) of his wit, intellect, and talent among a substantial readership that “constituted a little less than one-third of the population” (3). Newman divides Boswell’s literary career into three eras: the “literary genius period” (1758–1767) distinguished by “an effort to impress readers with his wit, humor, and cleverness” (11); the “journalistic period” (1768–1784) when his “attention shifted from himself to events, the life around him, and the cultures in which he lived” (11); and the “pursuit of immortality period [1784–1795] . . . dominated by Boswell’s struggle to establish his claim as *the* superior biographer” (12). Using this career trajectory, Newman outlines Boswell’s lifelong experimentation with various printed formats and clever exploitation of periodical conventions to lay the groundwork for the collection’s subsequent eight essays.

Although diffuse in subject matter, the essays are unified by their examination of Boswell as a pioneer of ephemeral writing, charting both his successful and unsuccessful attempts to