

poem is carefully calibrated to elicit just the right amount of waywardness from the reader so that he or she can be abruptly chastened. But, to take an example that is a different kind of classic, I number myself among those who read the fall of Mulciber in *Paradise Lost*—“lasting from noon to dewy eve / A summer's day”—as a moment in which Milton genuinely and spontaneously thinks himself into an eerie beauty and specificity of experience that goes beyond the didactic needs of the narrative and is in no way erased by the narrator's stern insistence that “thus they relate / Erring” (*PL* 1.742–43, 746–47). I am not suggesting that Teskey endorses Fish's account—indeed he critiques a version of it in *The Poetry of John Milton* (393–94, focusing on Waldock's similar earlier reading of the narrator's “Vaunting aloud but racked with deep despair”). Rather, I have found that only by triangulating Fish's reading with Teskey's account of Milton's pre-thinking of his verse have I been able to develop my own sense of the spontaneous thinking that I do find happening in and through *Paradise Lost*. All I am really saying here is that my admiration for Teskey's work does not imply agreement at every turn: his unparalleled talent for concise critical characterization and aphoristic contrast demands and spurs engagement rather than acceptance; his openness to thought provokes open thought. This might be an obvious point, but it seems worth making, since the business of literary scholarship can sometimes feel like it demands blunt and binary choices: empirical minutiae or theoretical abstraction, historic expertise or critical sensibility, swallowing an idea whole or spitting it out unchewed. Teskey's work shows how ludicrous it would be to pick a team when it comes to Spenser and Milton, and the extent to which appreciating the achievements of either poet requires immersing oneself in the distinct vision of the other; he makes the picking of any of these other scholarly teams feel like an equally flimsy and unnecessary choice.

Joe Moshenska

University College, Oxford  
 Email: joseph.moshenska@ell.ox.ac.uk

DOI: 10.1111/milt.12392

## *Stuart Succession Literature: Moments and Transformations*

Paulina Kewes and Andrew McRae, eds.

Oxford: Oxford UP, 2019. 400pp. ISBN 13: 9780198778172. \$90.00 (cloth).

This volume is a fine example of contemporary early modern studies. Topped and tailed by the editors' Introduction and Paul Hammond's Afterword on the disenchantment of monarchy, these sixteen substantial essays by new and old hands from a number of disciplines illuminate the Stuart monarchy between the “succession crisis” of the 1590s and Queen Anne's coronation in 1702. Professors Kewes and McRae rightly proclaim the novelty of their subject, “Stuart succession literature,” construed as the published literature and other messaging accompanying the death of one monarch and the succession of the next. There were six such occasions between 1603 and 1702 and the two further anomalous successions of Oliver Cromwell and his son Richard as Lord Protector. The editors recount the volume's

This is an open access article under the terms of the [Creative Commons Attribution](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/) License, which permits use, distribution and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

© 2022 The Author. *Milton Quarterly* published by John Wiley & Sons Ltd.

genesis in the United Kingdom's Arts and Humanities Research Council funded project, which has created an open access database of Stuart succession literature to be found at <http://stuarts.exeter.ac.uk/database/>. This funding model, with its emphases on collaborative, interdisciplinary research projects, measurable "outputs" such as datasets, databases, websites, digital editions, training opportunities for early career researchers, workshops, conferences, and public impact that extends beyond academic stakeholders, has increasingly shaped British academic research culture in recent decades.

The Stuart Succession Project has made ample return on the taxpayer's investment: a database, a published anthology, a further online resource, and now, after an earlier colloquium in 2013, these polished papers gathered in a handsome volume. These essays attest to the benefits of collaboration: they refer to the database, which makes the initial bibliographic work far less onerous for researchers; and they frequently allude to other contributions in the collection. However, one of the strongest influences on this entire collection is that of a single historian and one of the project's progenitors, the late Kevin Sharpe. Sharpe's prodigious labors on court culture, the early Stuarts, and the projection of political authority culminated in a remarkable trilogy on the promotion of monarchy and the Commonwealth between 1485 and 1714. In three enormous books (2009, 2010, and 2013) Sharpe methodically catalogued coins and pageants, ceremonies and portraits, sermons and tracts, tournaments and masques, and almost every other material and published form of royal propaganda. His work set the agenda for much of this volume which is fittingly dedicated to his memory.

These essays use medals, sermons, triumphal arches, coronation rituals, addresses, broadsheets, polemics, and panegyrics, and are deeply rooted in the materiality of these cultural products, in the cost of ceremonies, the size, value, and distribution of commemorative medals, the mechanical reproduction of coins, and the printing of sermons, addresses, and poems. Whether pursued by a lone scholar, such as Sharpe, or in the collaborative mode of this volume, the study of monarchy is necessarily multidisciplinary. It also often aspires to be interdisciplinary. Since this book is defined by precise moments of political change, its prevailing tone is historical.

Literary sensibilities are often evident—as in John West's account of the romance and imagination involved in the 1689 succession, or Richard A. McCabe's discussion of the panegyrists of James I, or the magisterial and quicksilver writing of Steven N. Zwicker on Dryden, Marvell, and the two Cromwells—but the most consistent literary theme is the limitations of panegyric as a form. McRae and various contributors debate the potential of a genre of praise that might also offer counsel (for those who could hear it), and the scope that panegyrists had for instruction or criticism or even the prospects for panegyric by another name—Mark Knights shows the affinities of the genre with the prose "Loyal Addresses" offered to monarchs in the 1680s.

The sermon was another prose form which often trod the difficult line between praise and advice: Alastair Bellany's close reading of Bishop John Williams's funeral sermon for James I and David Colclough's analysis of the sermons on the accessions of James I and Charles show the importance of pulpit oratory in both its oral and print forms. Several contributions are a form of reception study, but none more so than Paulina Kewes's *tour de force* on the long seventeenth-century afterlife of Robert Persons's *A Conference about the Next Succession to the Crowne of England* (1594/5). Kewes demonstrates the pervasive interest in elective forms of monarchy, alongside the conventional hereditary model or the pure republicanism that has preoccupied historians of the early modern period: this case study reminds us of the value in questioning the apparently obvious or the peripheral.

Similarly overlooked—perhaps with better reason—are the volumes of Latin poetry, carefully analyzed here by Henry Power, which were produced by both Oxford and Cambridge universities to mark royal deaths and accessions: however, from such unpromising material Power wrests an interesting tale of academic continuity and political prudence. As one might imagine, the humdrum literature surveyed here is often best approached through an exercise in decoding. Much of this volume takes that line: explicating the iconography of coins, coronations, state funerals, and royal entries to the City of London is at the forefront of the fine essays by Jane Rickards on the coronation of Charles I as King of Scotland in 1633 and Charles II in 1651, and Ian Archer's vivid, granular account of James I and Charles II in procession from the Tower to Westminster on the eve of their coronations.

Some contributions sit more loosely to the central themes of the collection but are no less interesting for that. Helmer Helmers shows for example how the Dutch received the news and the propaganda surrounding James II's accession: it wasn't entirely as received historical opinion might expect. Christopher Highley sensitively explores the understandings and portrayals of Charles II's wanderings in the 1650s. Every essay contains insights and information, much of it startling. Who knew that Quakers wrote succession panegyrics? Or that Queen Anne was a stickler for seating arrangements? Or the thickness and weight of a coronation medal? Along the way, some significant historical questions are raised: Hone asks whether Queen Anne's legitimacy as successor was quite as secure as we assume; Smuts offers important correctives to the claims of literary critics about anti-Catholicism; while some of Sharpe's assertions about coinage are gently corrected by B. J. Cook and John West observes that Sharpe's agenda tended to be "top down." This last point is an inescapable difficulty of this enterprise as an historical project. The evidence will always better reflect the message being broadcast than its popular reception, although the contributors are sensitive to this difficulty.

As a literary project, there are other dilemmas that the editors face squarely. The exclusion of drama is purely pragmatic and—as Hammond's invocation of Shakespeare suggests—not entirely convincing; perhaps, as they say, this will be the subject of another volume. The question of literary quality cannot be dodged so easily: the texts under discussion are rarely works of distinction. McRae and McCabe do make powerful cases for looking afresh at panegyric, while Kewes asserts that "succession literature" is not always to be found in imaginative writing and positions her own essay as intellectual history. Yet there are reasons why republican themes attracted more high-powered literary attention and why prose political theory was a more fruitful genre than poetical panegyric in the seventeenth century. Some of these are practical considerations, such as questions of patronage or access to the public sphere. But some are intellectual, arising from the resources provided by Christianity and the classics, or by the emerging sense of what a poet was or should be, or the requirements of literary forms. And, it is perhaps not surprising that scholarly attention has followed the oppositional rather than the celebratory and propagandistic for reasons related to the constitution of the modern academy as much as the literary excellence of Milton or Marvell. Some seventeenth-century writers, of course, run counter to these generalizations simply by virtue of their range of sympathy and literary fecundity; Dryden is perhaps the obvious example.

Although some readers might question the volume's central contention that there is such a category as "succession *literature*," if that means a body of imaginative literary writing as opposed to a number of diverse communicative practices and writings, the broader value of these essays in illuminating both specific moments of succession and the trends across the Stuart century dispels such doubts. Historians, literary critics, numismatists—all are welcome when the collective results are so enthralling.

John Spurr

Swansea University  
Email: [j.spurr@swansea.ac.uk](mailto:j.spurr@swansea.ac.uk)