

when he describes the reception of Whiston's work as he cites from both the variety of responses to Whiston as well as Whiston's companion letters, essays, and books. Nor does Gilliam attempt solely to play the role of an impartial arbiter—if such exists. Although Gilliam presents Whiston in a sympathetic light, he is not afraid to show Whiston's questionable use of evidence in his arguments for the authenticity of the *Apostolic Constitutions*.

Such detailed work makes this book a model of attentive historical scholarship. It provides insight into a figure who desired to push the Reformation in more radical directions than many in eighteenth-century Britain and who arguably remains understudied in the context of modern European church history. The book's narrow focus on Whiston is complemented by its wide-ranging examination of materials from the first four centuries of Christian history. Gilliam has thus provided a study that will challenge and enlighten historians who are interested in the earliest periods of church history, who study the Reformation and its aftermath, and especially those who are interested in British ecclesial disputes in the aftermath of the Civil War and Restoration.

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***Records of Trial from Thomas Shepard's Church in Cambridge, 1638–1649: Heroic Souls.* By Lori Rogers-Stokes. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2021. xxi + 190 pp. \$54.99 hardcover.**

Most seventeenth-century Massachusetts churches required that prospective members tell the church convincingly of the working of God's grace in them. Few of these conversion narratives have survived, and the sixty-seven from the Cambridge church during Thomas Shepard's pastorate (1636–1648) comprise over half. *Records of Trials* is an adventurous revisionist exploration of those Cambridge narratives.

In chapter 1, Rogers-Stokes rejects the general scholarly assumption that these narratives, preserved in two of Shepard's manuscripts, are the ones that candidates delivered for admission. Rather, they come from preparatory sessions for that delivery, a standard Massachusetts practice. Shepard's title in his earlier manuscript "The Confessions of Diverse propounded to be received and were entertained as members" confirms this origin, Rogers-Stokes claims, for a title referring to final confessions would have identified the confessors as members at its very beginning (9–10). Rogers-Stokes might have explained more fully why that had to be so. Her second argument is based on the narratives' under-rehearsed nature, their hesitations, memory lapses, and long pauses, all tending to increase markedly toward the end of a narrative. These characteristics, she claims (11–12), perhaps correctly, would have been out of place in a final confession.

Rogers-Stokes's third and, on the face of it, decisive argument for these being preliminary narratives is that many of them would have been unacceptable as final confessions. Shepard required assurance of salvation for admission, she claims, and since all the confessors were admitted despite only a minority of these narratives demonstrating

assurance, they must be preliminary. She makes her case about Shepard's requirement not by directly demonstrating that he had that requirement, but by quoting statements by John Cotton and Thomas Welde (14–15, 33n41) that do not self-evidently support her case, since they neither refer specifically to assurance nor were intended to. For Cotton, assurance, although desirable for admission, was not necessary: churches would accept those “in whose spirits wee can discern *the least measure of breathing and panting after Christ, in their sensible feeling of a lost estate*” (John Cotton, *The Way of the Churches of Christ in New England* [London, 1645], 58; see also idem, *A Sermon* [Boston, 1713], 32–33). By this standard, almost all the Cambridge confessions were acceptable. Welde advocated a similarly low admission floor (see Thomas Welde, *An Answer to W.R.* [London, 1644], 22).

Moreover, Rogers-Stokes overlooks positive evidence suggesting that Shepard did not demand assurance. That demand does not appear to have been common in Massachusetts, as evidenced by a 1637 Cambridge synod she does not discuss. The synod aimed to suppress heterodoxy radiating from the Boston church, a goal Shepard vigorously supported. Among the “erroneous opinions” it formally “condemned” was the one Rogers-Stokes assumes was Shepard's: no one could be admitted into a church before they had assurance (John Winthrop, ed.[?], *A Short Story* [London, 1644], 1, 6). Shepard confuted a similar claim on the same grounds as the synod in *The Parable of the Ten Virgins* (London, 1660), 1, 129. In 1648, he and another Massachusetts minister John Allin published in London *A Defence of the Answer*, in which they included a discussion of admission standards absent any mention of assurance (188–191). “Long relations of the worke of grace” (which presumably often included assurance), although desirable, they wrote, were not required of every candidate, while “short” and/or “weak” relations could also work. The least self-assured candidates, those unable “to speake so fully for themselves,” could use testimonies. Rogers-Stokes notes (10) but does not fully engage with Shepard's remark after the shortest, most feeble assurance-absent Cambridge confession that “the testimonies caryed it.” Shepard's successor Jonathan Mitchel continued to accept conversion narratives without assurance (see Edmund S. Morgan, ed., “The Diary of Michael Wigglesworth,” *Publications of The Colonial Society of Massachusetts: Transactions* 35 [1942–1946], 113).

In Chapter 2, Rogers-Stokes usefully demonstrates that these narratives' published transcriptions strip out valuable information in the manuscripts. Gone are the manuscripts' interpolations, strike outs, and indications of speech pauses, among other details. What is left intact of the original narratives are only the modernized words of Shepard's sometimes sketchy and/or truncated notes, made even sketchier by being reproduced in large, fairly arbitrary block paragraphs.

Chapter 3 is, first, about Shepard's preaching on conversion, from the soul's preparation for receiving faith to the initial work of faith that culminates in assurance, and, second, about the reception of that preaching among the women in his audience. Rogers-Stokes incorrectly assumes that Shepard's preparationism was “traditional” (97n12), whereas it was developed by him and, with variations, by Thomas Hooker in key areas, especially in preparation's final stage, “humiliation.” Rogers-Stokes's mischaracterization perhaps explains why her treatment of Shepard's preparationism is perfunctory and not entirely accurate and why she overlooks contemporary critiques of it as too harsh. Those critiques might have added nuance to her own discussions, often insightful but sometimes verging on the judgmental, of the “weak” Christians among the females who failed to find assurance (92–94, 99n22, 114–115). For Shepard, humiliation marked

preparation's end. Immediately thereafter, began the soul's possession of the faith that would initially carry it to union with Christ and eventually all the way to heaven. At the moment of union, assurance could first be possible. It is unclear why Rogers-Stokes (81) calls the initial stage of faith "a new final stage in preparation," since Shepard does not. She further claims that it was "unique" to Shepard, whereas it was in fact based on conventional Reformed soteriology. Her description of the phase itself is broadly accurate, if occasionally hyperbolic.

Chapter 4 is about Shepard's increasing disillusionment with New England. From the lack of assurance in many of these narratives, Rogers-Stokes somewhat precariously concludes that one reason Shepard preserved them was because they demonstrated that "so many of his flock . . . could not or would not believe in the gift of salvation" (123). Thus, they provided "certain evidence" that God had broken off his covenant with New England or perhaps had never made one.

Chapter 5 is an insightful, sometimes striking discussion of the thirty-one women's narratives. Reacting against scholarly literature that stresses in various ways their gendered nature, Rogers-Stokes emphasizes the relative lack of gender distinctions in the markedly individual spiritual paths they portray. Her comparisons of married couples' narratives are particularly revelatory in these respects. She invokes parallels between these women's spiritual lives and the "modern hero" (135) to the point of calling their piety "anachronistic." A discussion of how the puritan saint differed from the modern hero would have provided helpful balance. Rogers-Stokes also locates the women within English puritan culture where ministers' conventional emphasis on wifely submission had an uneasy relationship with the female spiritual authority and activism that ministers, like puritanism itself, could also encourage.

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***A Fake Saint and the True Church: The Story of a Forgery in Seventeenth-Century Naples.* By Stefania Tutino. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021. viii + 195 pp. \$26.99 hardcover.**

In her previous books, Stefania Tutino uncovered the complexity of the Catholic Church, seen as a multi-layered organization, in which different systems of truth coexisted in a quite unstable equilibrium. With this new volume, she keeps the focus on her theoretical premises while trying to address a new audience and to experiment with an alternative way of presenting her findings. *A Fake Saint* is micro-history. As she mixes up different micro-historical trends, not only does Tutino aim to investigate a specific case in order to resurface thoughts and strategies of individuals and communities, but she also seeks to captivate a large public of non-specialists through an engaging reading. To accomplish this, Tutino provides an essential apparatus of footnotes and condenses the main bibliographical references into a lengthy final note.

The case under scrutiny revolves around the life of the "Blessed Giovanni Calà," published in 1660 in Naples by his descendant, the Duke of Diano, Carlo Calà, and