

use of such shorthand archetypes allows more probing discussion of changes in production and trading conditions in various parts of the country, above and beyond the individual examples cited as evidence.

This book is very much the work of an economic historian (albeit an excellent one). Its macroeconomic overview occasionally results in repetition, and sections and chapters frequently end *in medias res*. The sometimes breathless delivery of facts and figures occasionally wants further critical reflection or more detailed exemplars, and the macroeconomic approach leaves some areas unexamined (for example, there are gaps in the geographic coverage; production and trade in some areas—e.g., Durham—are left unmentioned). Further, while the period terminology is usually handled with care, occasionally analysis takes historical textile terminology at face value or else relies on past assumptions (we note there is no reference to University of Manchester's Lexis of Cloth and Clothing in Medieval Britain database, which has been available for almost a decade and which could have proven useful to the study: <http://lexisproject.arts.manchester.ac.uk>). However, these are only very minor complaints. Indeed, the book's coverage and evidence base are extremely impressive and do a fine job of handling the topic's inevitable complexity. Overall, Oldland's *The English Woollen Industry* is a comprehensive, thoroughly researched, and much needed study of England's late medieval textile industry.

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*The Loss of the "Trades Increase": An Early Modern Maritime Catastrophe.*

Richard Barbour.

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Barbour's detailed microhistory of the East India Company's doomed Sixth Voyage is a fascinating, sometimes frustrating, and illuminating account of an early capitalist effort by Europeans to stamp their (often arrogant and willfully ignorant) will on the wider world. The core characters of this narrative are the ship *Trades Increase*, "the greatest English merchant vessel of the Jacobean age" (1), and her mercurial, ambitious commander, Sir Henry Middleton. Both were to meet ignominious ends in Eastern oceans—the *Increase* worm-eaten, aground, and burned to the water line at Bantam Bay, and Middleton dead of "disease and despair" (227) nearby—and the casual reader might expect that, based on such titanic failures, the Company should have been destined to go down with them.

This, however, is where Barbour's argument refocuses on the broader implications of the *Increase*'s burning and claims that the methods of modern late-stage capitalism are in fact inspired by how Jacobean responded to such catastrophic losses. The Company's

founding voyages remain pertinent because they “expressed and propagated, in a stark and sometimes brutal manner, global appetites, cultural and material logistics, methods of governance, conflicts of interest, patterns of exploitation, and vulnerabilities that persist in profit-seeking multinational corporations” (4). We can, in Barbour’s telling, trace the “recurrent volatility” of modern markets to enterprises like the Sixth Voyage and the hard-headed determination of English profit-seekers to accept even the unacceptable wreck of the *Increase*.

Whether this presentist framing will convince the reader will, no doubt, be in the eye of the individual beholder. The book’s chapter-by-chapter retelling of the voyage is otherwise rich, entertaining, and valuable to the social, political, and economic history of European expansion, even if we might also despair at the pigheaded and sometimes, frankly, inexplicable decisions made by Middleton and his lackeys. These included attempting to blockade and bombard Mocha after the hapless commander had been imprisoned by local authorities, having apparently forgotten (!) in London their introductory letter to the contemporary Ottoman sultan; another failed attempt to trade with local intermediaries at Surat, nearly provoking open conflict with a Portuguese fleet; intra-Company squabbles with the commander of the Eighth Voyage, led by the altogether more pragmatic (and differently instructed) John Saris; and, of course, the intendant death and destruction of both human and marine bodies as the long, fractured journey took its toll. The labor struggles of the EIC’s sailors and officers, and the difficulties of around-the-world travel in this era, are well complemented by an even more recent work, Eleanor Hubbard’s compendious *Englishmen at Sea: Labor and the Nation at the Dawn of Empire, 1570–1630* (2021).

The chapters follow the voyage chronologically, beginning and ending in London. Barbour starts by tracing the financing and building of the great ship, whose bungled launch was as abortive and sad as its end. Brief but effective biographies introduce us to the personnel of the Sixth and Eighth Voyages, who are then followed to Arabia Felix, to India, back to the Red Sea, and to Bantam. Finally, Barbour finishes the particular story of the *Increase* by tracing what reactions appeared to its loss and the end of the voyage (which, despite everything, was financially successful due to the—albeit slow and limping—survival of one of the *Increase*’s convoy ships) in the British pamphlet press. It is here, in the uneasy triumph of pro-Company publications, that Barbour finds the EIC’s “pattern of self-righteous yet ruthless resilience” that would “turn tragedy into an engine of capital accumulation” (272) and influence later generations of corporate rapacity. After getting through the litany of disaster the Sixth Voyage endured, it is hard to disagree with him.

Only an odd technical decision distracts from the narrative: a confusing double-citation system is present in the text whereby some sources are footnoted and others referenced in-line. I could not determine whether there was any rhyme or reason to these additions, and they are best left to the endnotes. Otherwise, *The Loss* is a thickly

woven, brightly colored, and infuriatingly human tapestry of life, death, greed, and adventure that will be of great service to period scholars.

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*The Madman and the Churchrobber: Law and Conflict in Early Modern England.*  
Jason Peacey.

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John Smyth, a lawyer and aggressive litigant, once remarked that lawsuits dragged on and created new legal quarrels just “as a fiery comet draws her tail” (75). Jason Peacey’s *The Madman and the Churchrobber* seeks to analyze one such shooting celestial phenomenon in early modern England: the century-long dispute over the lease of Warrens Court, a hundred-acre property in Nibley, Gloucestershire. Peacey tracks its evolution from a simple inheritance quarrel to a multi-front war over the running of a grammar school involving scandalous pamphlets, accusations of libel, and violent threats. The two main protagonists of this story, John Smyth and Benjamin Crokey, inherited the dispute and would later pass it on to their children as the enmity outlived them both. Peacey takes a microhistorical approach to a wealth of archival material to illuminate the mental worlds of the litigants, discover why a seemingly insignificant property inspired such great expenditures on both sides, and ultimately connect the details of this case to larger ideological tensions in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century England.

Part 1, “Suits,” lays out the dispute in chronological order, introducing the major players and setting the stage for later analysis. Peacey divides the dispute into two broad arcs. The first period, from 1560 to 1615, primarily focused on the land itself, though the matter entered different court systems and resulted in contradictory verdicts, prolonging the conflict. Smyth’s acquisition of a small grammar school in 1608 brought about the second stage of the dispute (1615–62). Peacey presents litigation as “an iterative process” and emphasizes how both sides pursued multiple legal avenues, challenging both the substance and the manner of their opponent’s litigation (51). The hostility and complexity of the case increased over time, eventually moving into the public arena through Crokey’s publication of pamphlets and Smyth’s subsequent accusations of libel.

Part 2, “Strategies,” analyzes how Smyth and Crokey perceived their conflict. Though both men acted strategically, they had different expectations of the legal system, and this discordance drove further litigation. Crokey saw bad practices and corruption in what Smyth considered legitimate legal tactics, while Smyth balked at Crokey’s escalation into petitions, printed lobbying, and pamphlets. Crokey’s tactics relate to early modern print culture, a subject which Peacey has explored before, particularly in his book *Print and Public Politics in the English Revolution* (2013). In analyzing