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H. G. Cocks. *Visions of Sodom: Religion, Homoerotic Desire, and the End of the World in England, c. 1550–1850*. Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2017. Pp. 352. $55.00 (cloth).
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H. G. Cocks has taken on a subject that, while being the focus of many studies, is still not well understood. There is much about the history of sexuality in general that still has to be unpacked, but the term *sodomy* in particular is tangled, nuanced, and complicated. In this study, Cocks seeks a way to show how the homoerotic specifically relates to early modern Protestant discourse, especially in light of its scripture-based focus. Overall, this is a welcome and fruitful endeavor, and the book is an important one to add to both library and individual collections.

In his introduction, Cocks notes that it should be impossible to draw clear lines between religion and the "deviant" or monstrous, before moving on to the development of the "effeminate sodomite" through the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Tying this into excess and luxury, rather than just passivity and penetration, Cocks successfully demonstrates how biblical discourse was used to solidify cultural discourse. In fact, it is the emphasis on the scriptural language that makes this book crucial to understanding how the homoerotic was understood. The seepage of such language into other cultural areas, especially literary and artistic endeavors, worked to create a broader category, where homoeroticism and sodomy were associated most strongly with fornication and uncleanness—and atheism. In the first chapter Cocks carries this through by exploring the connection between sodomy and false religion, specifically Roman Catholicism. Here polemicists such as Henry More crucially connected sodomy and homoerotic discourse to the idea of the antichrist. Rome was further identified with the ancient city Sodom and its various forms of lewdness. Cocks carefully investigates the writings of early Protestant reformers, such as John Bale, as well as later writers of the Restoration, like Pierre Jurieu, whose works were considered almost prophetic in nature. The meticulous connections Cocks draws between such pieces with the antichrist sentiment, millennialism bent, and Sodom results in a larger picture of the potential large scale destruction such discourse represents.

Cocks carries over this idea of destruction and apocalypse into the next several chapters. He first explores the idea of urban growth as a parallel development to increasing coarseness. Cocks builds on the idea that the lesson learned from Sodom was not "repent and be saved," but rather, that the wicked will be suddenly destroyed without warning, Cocks details the landscape of Sodom as drawn within the Protestant imagination and further discusses how it served as a reminder of community entanglement. The sins of one infected all; the sins of Sodom were reflective of discord in society. The growth of English cities needed to be judiciously husbanded since economic change was usually linked to immorality. Coupled with millennial thinking and fervent desire to crush the antichrist, such an upsurge in dissipation also led to apocalyptic thinking and to a movement Cocks calls the "reformation of manners" (58).

Cocks links the chapters on the apocalypse, laws, and histories by the common theme of seeking betterment—that is, improvement imposed from the outside. Such campaigns, notes Cocks, drew heavily on the rhetoric of providence, a central theme of many Protestant sects. Even more, however, was its reliance upon the connection between immorality and idleness. And despite the push for such reform of manners among the ranks of the merchant and upper classes, it was presented as separate from economic practice. Thus, sodomy and its associated problems (such as general sexual promiscuity, infidelity, swearing, and atheism) were couched as an urban problem, but also a unifying one. All of the Protestant sects and all of the social classes could unite behind a platform of stamping out indecency. Laws were codified in more explicit detail than ever before in order to curb behaviors, yet at the same time, distinctions were being drawn between homoerotic acts and other types of fornication. Each

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was prosecuted differently, and by the eighteenth century, sodomy was its own style of "uncleanness." Around the same time, Louis-Félicien de Saulcy claimed to have found the historical city of Sodom (1851), with Darwinism on the rise and social sciences brewing, sodomy was still considered a branch of excessive lust. Sodomites and whores were lumped together as both working against the laws of nature (reproduction), although sodomites also represented a type of so-called old world morality, meaning depravity and sin connected all the way back to the Fall.

Cocks does all of this to contextualize the modern fascination with the darkness of Sodom and its instant connection with homoeroticism, as well as to provide a new, layered exploration of the development of discourse about sodomy and the sodomite. His focus throughout on theology, prophecy, and the political serves the subject well. To some extent, portions of the book may have been better served with a more straightforward chronological approach; however, by the end of the book, it becomes clear how and why the discourses of several centuries are inextricably intertwined. It is impossible, for instance, to understand the effeminate frippery of the eighteenth-century lustful sodomite without recognizing the underpinnings of the subject found in early Protestant providential writings. This is indeed an important volume on the history of sexuality and on the modern applications of far-reaching terms.

Michelle M. Sauer
University of North Dakota
michelle.m.sauer@und.edu

Lizzie Collingham. *The Taste of Empire: How Britain's Quest for Food Shaped the Modern World*. New York: Basic Books, 2017. Pp. 367. $32 (cloth).
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Over the last three decades, it has become fashionable in the world of fine dining to offer customers a tasting menu that varies from a handful of courses to a meal that consists of forty single bites. In this engaging monograph, Lizzie Collingham offers a tasting menu that distils the history of Britain's empire into twenty meals, and thus twenty chapters. From Kikuyu irio to iguana curry, Collingham emphasizes the importance of ordinary, unusual, and prestigious foodstuffs, and she reminds the reader that Britain's population came to identify with national dishes like plum pudding "not in spite of but because of" their foreign ingredients, such as spices (264).

Several important themes emerge from *The Taste of Empire*: the interconnectedness of Britain's colonies around the globe, empire's debilitating effects, and the mutually constitutive projects of fashioning taste and fashioning empire. Between the sixteenth and twentieth centuries, Britain's imperial peripheries became more closely linked—to Great Britain, and to each other. In the seventeenth century, earthenware pots went from Bideford, England to Ireland, where the pots were filled with Irish butter and sent onward to other places, like Newfoundland. There, people traded butter for salt cod, which they sent to Virginia, where it was, in turn, used to feed enslaved Africans who produced tobacco to ship back to Bideford (26). During the early 1800s, American maize fed the laborers who produced poppy in the province of Bihar, which the East India Company controlled (148). This sense of interconnectedness persisted in some places even until today. In a fascinating chapter on the late 1990s, for instance, Guyanese diamond miners, who were descended from enslaved Africans, prepare a riff on Indian curry, which they made from iguana (199–200).

But if Britain's empire brought people symbolically closer together through a shared knowledge of foodstuffs, it also divided people by solidifying class inequalities. One of the most

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