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Earls Colne, an Essex village, is well known to early modern historians because an exceptional run of records made it one of two villages Alan Macfarlane selected for reconstitution; the records were first made accessible as microfiche, and are now digitized. Its mid-seventeenth century history comes alive because of the diary of Ralph Josselin, who was vicar from 1641 until his death in 1683. Dolly MacKinnon takes what might be thought to be an over-worked subject, and turns it around to examine the landscapes of the early modern village. What did people *see* in early modern Earls Colne? And what did it mean to them? Throughout the book, she reminds us that different people saw different things in the landscape, and that its significance was “heterotopic”, a word she uses to mean “holding simultaneous meanings” (p. 2).

MacKinnon pursues her subject through twenty chapters in three sections. The first focuses on the ways the landscape was seen and remembered – by antiquarians and mapmakers, in the church, and in the lives of one family. The second focuses on the church itself – its organization into pews, its monuments, the people who were present, burials, and memorials. The final section looks at how the archive and physical space of the village contribute to “Remembering, Forgetting and Claiming”. Throughout, she reminds us of what is absent from particular records, and how some records render invisible things revealed in others. She admonishes us to be wary of the tendency described by James Scott of *Seeing Like a State* (1998). Each section has a chapter that delves more deeply into some case – a family, an event, a place – which illuminates these issues of visibility and invisibility.

MacKinnon's primary contribution comes from her focus on one place. Her reconstruction of the early modern church and its monuments provides a vivid example of the ways in which space changed over time, and the varied relationships that individuals had to that space. Many of the subjects she discusses, from antiquarians and maps to church seats, are familiar to early modern historians. However, attention to one place, especially one as well documented as Earls Colne, provides depth to all these issues. For instance, Josselin's diary allows her to talk more explicitly about which burials do and do not get mentioned in the parish register. She uses the Ship Money assessment of 1637 to explore the practice of sub-tenancy: many of those paying Ship Money would not otherwise be known to be living in the village, even when they apparently had a great deal of money. Such discussions are useful reminders that none of our sources are complete, and that we should not be seduced by the apparent completeness of our records. Yet once we see this, it is not clear what this means: what then? How does this change our understanding of early modern society?

This question of larger significance is especially noticeable in the vivid chapters where she pulls out one family or individual. For instance, MacKinnon provides a study of William Death and his family and successors, for instance, in which she traces family links that might otherwise be missed, as well as the properties and leases not listed in manor court rolls. This story could go in many directions, but none are taken: for instance, by the third generation, the heirs to Death's property are living and working in London: yet the place of Earls Colne on the fringes of London, and London's impact on the village landscape, is not a part of this study. Her discussion of the graffiti on the monument to two of daughters of the Harlakendons, the lords of the manor, who had died as children, is similarly inconclusive. We do not, it turns out, know anything about James Potter, whose name was etched in the alabaster in 1694; nor do we know anything about the others whose initials ended up scratched on to the monument. It is

interesting to know that the eighteenth century antiquarians did not mention it – rendering the graffiti invisible to their readers. Since we often have to rely on antiquarian discussions of places, this is a helpful note, but once we recognize it, then what? MacKinnon’s work is full of sharp insights informed by a sophisticated engagement with relevant theoretical scholarship, but it fails to push the implications of those insights to further our understanding of early modern society.

MacKinnon’s study is an outstanding reminder of the richness of the focus on one parish. The vignettes and sense of the missing landscape will be particularly useful for students who are (like mine) asked to work with the Earls Colne records: this study will fill in some of the gaps, and help students see how many connections can be made. Yet the landscape and material culture which are MacKinnon’s subject remain elusive, and lead to a work that is more episodic than most monographs. The visual and material remains of the early modern village are sparse: the church was entirely rebuilt in the 19th century, and the Priory (the early modern manor house) was demolished in the 18th and 19th centuries, though materials were reused in the new building. Some of the monuments in the parish church survived and were reinstalled in the building, but others – including the large tombs of the medieval Earls of Oxford – have been moved to other churches. Her careful attention to these landscapes, and the people who inhabited them – even those who are largely invisible – reminds us that there are many stories that can be told about a place, and our records often lead us to concentrate too much on the official one.

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