

and charming roadmap to Goethe's lemon-tree land. Travelling from the tip to the toe of the Peninsula, she elegantly interweaves personal stories, travellers' tales, historic and horticultural details with cultural insights and a few recipes (de rigueur, these days). Contemporary analysis is sometimes overshadowed by the romance of the glory days but that is entirely forgivable, at least by anyone who shares her fascination with this most beautiful and provocative of fruit. We cannot, however, excuse the publishers for the poor illustrations – and so few of them!

CLARISSA HYMAN

David B. Goldstein: *Eating and Ethics in Shakespeare's England*: Cambridge University Press, 2014: 280 pp., hardback, £65.00.

Goldstein conducts an intense discussion about the rituals of food and eating in the seventeenth century. He delves into the dark side in the first section, 'Cannibal Ethics', in which he looks at *Titus Andronicus* and *The Merchant of Venice*. In *Titus Andronicus* he demonstrates how food is used as a tool of oppression in the way it excludes certain groups and feeds others and shows that eating is a carnal expression of base human nature. Goldstein ends on a more positive note in 'Communion and Community'. It covers Milton's *Paradise Lost*, contains seventeenth-century cookery manuscripts and demonstrates how eating and food can bring people together as well as dividing them. This is an earnest and thorough study and is not for the faint-hearted.

ALICE RICHARDSON

Lorna Weatherill: *Consumer Behaviour & Material Culture in Britain 1660–1760*: Routledge, 2nd edition 1996: 252 pp., paperback, £26.99.

Lorna Weatherill, ed.: *The Account Book of Richard Latham 1724–1767*: Oxford University press for the British Academy (Records of Social and Economic History, new series xv), 1990: 284 pp., hardback, £65.00.

It may take twenty years, but we get there in the end. Our constant preoccupation with material culture (see the next volume of the Oxford Symposium) provoked me to buy the first book of this pair, often referred to but never inspected. The second I obtained because Ms Weatherill clearly valued it highly as evidence. Her book looks at the ownership and rate of uptake of categories of consumer goods as revealed by a large sample of probate inventories. Some of these goods are talismanic: looking glasses, curtains, furniture, cooking pots, and so on (with extra-special emphasis of the materials for making tea and coffee). Their spread gives some clue as to practical change in people's homes and what that might mean in terms of economic stimulus (to production of the goods) or to people's self-image. She is not interested, which is refreshing, in the aristocracy. She can pull out some big facts such as

that simple social standing did not determine the speed at which one group or another obtained these goods (it wasn't, therefore, mere keeping up with the Joneses). She also identifies regional disparities, and links them to wider trade networks. And she subjects her raw statistical material to a certain enrichment by using particular sources (diaries, memoirs and accounts) to amplify the points she identifies. How much the inventories actually tell us is problematic. It would never be easy for her to unscramble the many variables that resulted in the ownership of one good or another. But the book is certainly worth a read.

Her favourite account book, from a small farmer near Southport in Lancashire, is also worth looking at but is not easy to profit from. It suffers a terrible lack of a glossary so that you spend much time and energy trying to understand it. But it does open a window on a class of person who left few written records: the middling sort, spending between £20 and £40 every year. The domestic economy it hints at is an interesting mixture of autarchy and reliance on the market. Bread is often bought, but must have also been made; meat and other food items, ditto. There was very little spent on kitchen hardware (because it lasted) but quite a lot on pottery of one sort or another. Spices are regularly bought in. Less exciting than I had hoped.