

highly educated consumers, creators, and conduits of literary culture. In the final chapter Tyler turns this focus, in extended form, to Edith/Matilda, Henry I's queen descended from the Anglo-Saxon royal line, fêted as the symbolic union of the two dynasties. William of Malmesbury appears here in a new light, not as he depicts himself—as the Latin writer salvaging England's inadequate or lacking historiography for posterity—but rather as the inheritor of a lively and thriving recent tradition.

In a short conclusion, Tyler brings her account of royal women's literary patronage further into the twelfth century, to the beginnings of French historiography and romance. She draws attention to the specific, contingent circumstances that allowed eleventh-century English royal women to play such a forceful role in literary culture—a deep engagement in politics at the highest levels (but without the encumbering daily business of practical governance), combined with the superlative, multilingual literary education and sheer contemplative space afforded by the royal nunneries. Later queens did not have all the same opportunities, but Tyler argues that nonetheless, the influence of those who went before them “put Anglo-Saxon England, though politically dead, at the heart of early-twelfth-century European literary culture” (365). This book is essential reading for scholars of the period, in any discipline.

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MARTINE VAN ELK, *Early Modern Women's Writing: Domesticity, Privacy, and the Public Sphere in England and the Dutch Republic*. Early Modern Literature in History. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017. Pp. 299. \$79.99 (cloth).
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This stimulating study offers the first book-length analysis of selected seventeenth-century English and Dutch women writers paired together or in groups; it thus exemplifies current interest in transnationalism, translation, and cross-cultural comparison. It applies to the Habermasian early modern public sphere a revisionist critique pertaining to women writers. And it includes varied documents on women's responses to the rise of domesticity, ranging from pamphlets, praise poems, and educational and marriage manuals to their contributions to drama, poetry, and the arts.

Martine van Elk's guiding question is how English and Dutch women writers positioned themselves regarding the public/private divide. She argues that regardless of their marital, political, social, and religious differences, they presented themselves within “a traditional model of absolutist power and publicity” (2). Under absolutism, the private and public spheres parallel each other and the process whereby the powerful extend their authority on down is left unexamined. With the undermining of the monarchy, the analogy between the state and the family came under strain, giving rise to “domesticity” and its long-standing prohibition on female speech. To counter this threat on their agency, English and Dutch women writers relied on a rhetoric of exceptionality and models of female publicity derived from absolutist culture to legitimize their writings and views on ideal virtuous femininity. The surprising factor here is that this process occurred on both sides of the Channel even though the Dutch Republic had eschewed absolutism and its writers belonged to wealthy mercantile families, whereas their English counterparts were mostly members of the nobility and upper gentry. Moreover, domesticity came earlier to the Netherlands than elsewhere, placing a new emphasis on the nuclear family and the wife within the home.

A key to understanding women's literary expression is the shifting nature of representations of women in English Protestant and Puritan tracts and Dutch marriage manuals. Protestants

accorded importance to women as teachers of the young, educating them in literacy *and* writing; marriage manuals combined contradictory rhetorical traditions of prescription *and* praise of exceptional women. This fruitful gap gave women leeway to explore venues for literary communication. Likewise, visual representations of women reading and writing within domestic interiors unsettled the ideology of a restrictive domesticity. Women are visualized as devout *and* communicating with the outside world. Van Elk's discussion of Dutch letter paintings is particularly suggestive of the tension between the public and private, "enclosure and movement ... desire and morality" as the letter beckons "into the world outside the windows" (68).

The remaining chapters deftly underscore the strategies women used to assert their agency. Forms of courtly conduct characterized the milieu of Mary Sidney, Countess of Pembroke, and Anna Roemers Visscher; Pembroke came from two fabled families, her own and her husband's, while Visscher was a cultural icon of the Dutch Republic, thanks to her father's prominence among Dutch literati. Both ably countered tributes objectifying them as muse and patron rather than authors in their own right. Both modeled a publicity conforming to their Calvinist identity, Pembroke in her Psalter translation, and Visscher in editing her father's emblems. Both used exceptionality to remain above the fray and protect their reputation.

A new twist appears in the pairing of friendship poems between Katharina Questiers and Cornelia van der Veer, and those of Katherine Philips. Although they differed in marital status and class allegiance, each nostalgically imagines her friendship exchanges in a world where public and private harmonize because her virtuous female friend(s) is at the helm. Confronted in midcentury with the growing split between the two spheres, they meet as public poets exploring a form of erotic expression integral to the genre since antiquity and reformulated not as a lived same-sex experience but as an "embodied" representation of female creativity (142).

Female visibility was often linked with a questionable sexuality. Two of the most famous writers of the age, Margaret Cavendish and Anna Maria van Schurman, managed their reputation through a strategic dynamic of retreat into the household and carefully orchestrated public appearances. This tactic figures in their artistic self-presentations—in their frontispieces and self-portraits. Van Elk contends moreover that their statements on female education (in Cavendish's *The Female Academy* [1662] and Van Schurman's *Dissertatio* [1641]) are underpinned by contradictory impulses and ideologies. Cavendish wished to set up a serious academy for female learning but confined its pupils to mastering the rules of courtly decorum—but might she be mocking them, as well as serious learning? (191). Van Schurman's apology for women's higher studies, founded on Christian humanist, Reformed, courtly, and pietist discourses is contradictory, and fails to resolve the tension between education as a universal human right and Christian piety. The lack of a resolution led Van Schurman to break with her earlier career by joining the separatist "invisible" household of Jean de Labadie (184). However, Van Schurman's *Eukleria* (1673)—her spiritual biography defending Labadism—attempts, certainly, "to construct a new public persona" (195). I would argue further that she did resolve the apparent contradiction between universalism and piety. She moved from an ornamental position in the Republic of Letters to an instrumental one as Labadie's collaborator. As the public face of the network she was its theologian, correspondent, and translator, and she likely encouraged its women to translate into several vernaculars the leadership's writings; and she was far from "invisible" in maintaining a rich correspondence with leading lights among German Pietists and others.

The final chapter examines four theatrical versions of the Herod and Mariamne story by female (Elizabeth Cary and Katharina Lescaijle) and male dramatists (Samuel Pordage and Daniel Mostart). Each is situated differently on the public/private spectrum with opposing discourses on ideal femininity.

Van Elk aptly concludes that these writers operated at important transitions when fluidity still characterized relations between gender, literary genres, and political and religious affiliations. Her study teases out the complexities, contradictions, surprises, and twists at the

heart of their works. Well organized, skillfully written, and amply documented, Martine van Elk's study is an important contribution to the burgeoning field of transnational scholarship.

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ANDREA WALKDEN. *Private Lives Made Public: The Invention of Biography in Early Modern England*. Medieval and Renaissance Literary Studies. Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 2016. Pp. 206. \$70.00 (cloth).
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In this thoughtful and nuanced study, Andrea Walkden departs from the tendency of much recent scholarship on life-writing, as it is frequently called, from the emphasis on little-known, unpublished, and female-authored texts, areas in which a great deal of important work has been done in the past decades. Instead she turns anew to a group of “lives,” to texts well known in their own day and still, setting them in the context of political and cultural events, often pairing them with a contemporary text to show an instructive contrast, and to demonstrate the work they were doing in their historical context. Although biographies “tend to be narratives without closely articulated positions, still less unfettered arguments” (5), Walkden says, they are powerful tools of persuasion, the more so precisely because their argument is implied rather than overt.

Walkden frames her analysis by considering two works published a decade apart: Thomas Fuller's *Abel redevinus* (1651) and his much better-known *History of the Worthies of England* (1662). While both react to the conditions in which they were published, in the Interregnum and the Restoration, Walkden finds in the second not only a shift from a religious to a civic context but also a new kind of biography. She draws a distinction between much of the prose of the period, which was theological or controversial and required a good deal of expertise, and a kind of life writing that, without requiring such knowledge, was carefully constructed to persuade by indirection rather than explicit statement.

Walkden begins with *Eikon Basilike* (February 1649), which purported to represent the thoughts of Charles I before his execution, and Milton's response to it in *Eikonoklastes* (October 1649), contrasting Milton's use of argument, his assertion of the right of the people to depose a sitting monarch, and the use of a personal story and the language of prayer in *Eikon Basilike*. In her analysis, Walkden teases out previously unseen possibilities in material that has already received a great deal of attention, offers a coda on the *de casibus* tales and argues that Milton places the “King's Book” in the category of a romantic but hackneyed story.

Walkden's analysis of Izaak Walton's lives builds on prior work that has demonstrated the agenda underlying his nostalgic presentation of the Anglican good life, his use of the five biographies to fabricate “a primitive English church for his modern Restoration moment” (65) while suppressing more controversial theological issues. For Walkden, Walton is both a servant and a depicter of extraordinary loyal servants, “the bearers of a value system that is out of step with the new social and political order,” representing “a populist defense of hierarchies and traditions” (67); she cites the example of the winding sheet, so famous in the case of John Donne, but present also in the life of Robert Sanderson, as analogous to the biographer's chosen task of preservation.

From Walton's polished performances, Walkden moves to the deliberately elliptical and fragmented brief lives of John Aubrey, pointing to his emphasis on “the overlooked and the commonplace, the objects of a kind of knowledge that had never before been recognizable as