**Renaissance and Reformation
Renaissance et Réforme**

# Gender and Political Culture in Early Modern Europe, 1400–1800

## Svante Norrhem et Goran Stanivukovic

The English and Scottish experiences of queenship appear less distinctive when Beer turns to the question of religious culture. Here, both women embodied orthodox and popular practices of pre-Reformation piety through public devotions that frequently took place before some sort of audience. Beer's analysis of almsgiving, particularly the Royal Maundies, shows how closely these queens' performances of piety were linked to their Tudor royal status. Both queens bore only one royal child to live past infancy and sought to alleviate their concerns regarding fertility through well-publicized pilgrimages. Beer concludes her volume with a consideration of the two queen's regencies and how their different experiences reflect the opportunities of the English court versus the relative limits of the Scottish court regarding the queenly exercise of authority.

Michelle L. Beer has crafted an impressive analysis documenting the common culture of British Renaissance queenship in the early sixteenth century while acknowledging the particular challenges of the English and Scottish courts. Some readers may be frustrated by Beer's omission of other contemporary royal women such as Mary Tudor Brandon, who briefly reigned as queen of France, and the many influential queens of continental Europe who provide further context for British royalty. Beer's analysis also assumes great familiarity with the early Tudor court and the lives of these queens. Nevertheless, *Queenship at the Renaissance Courts of Britain* is an invaluable resource for advanced students and researchers assessing the early modern court or the gendered exercise of power in Renaissance culture.

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**Daybell, James, and Svante Norrhem, eds.**
*Gender and Political Culture in Early Modern Europe, 1400–1800.*
New York: Routledge, 2017. Pp. xiv, 240. ISBN 978-1-138-667420-6 (paperback)
$49.95.

One of the most rewarding aspects of James Daybell and Svante Norrhem's collection of new essays is the breadth of topics, locations, original approaches, and above all archival material presented in meticulously and deeply researched chapters. The book addresses a complex interplay between subjectivity, women,

materiality, and power relations across the class structure in early modern Europe between 1400 and 1800. The editors have already done a lot of work to shape this rich field of historical scholarship, through previous publications, outreach work with major museums, and conference organization. This volume, the latest product of a fruitful and ongoing collaboration, and a significant addition to interdisciplinary scholarship on early modern gender, brings together original contributors and impressive, deep, and diverse scholarship. Most of the essays are devoted to a detailed analysis of a case study, and most of them draw on letters as the primary source of arguments. Overall, the book shows that the period under scrutiny was an age of abundant and diverse transfer not just of knowledge, trade, and texts but, as this book persuasively demonstrates, of the ways in which women negotiated their personal and collective affairs under different cultural and political regimes in Europe.

This well-conceptualized collection—containing twelve essays organized in thematically tight categories—demonstrates that the fields of gender, political culture, and history are vibrant. It shows how political history is energized and refreshed by research and archival revelations. Every essay in this excellent book shows in a different way how richly layered the term "politics" was in the early modern period, and how it exceeded the male-dominated sphere of power and the institutions from which that power came to affect the world around it. This is a book of a revisionary and reconceptualizing nature—one that pushes many boundaries and shatters previous knowledge of the link between gender and political culture.

In Daybell and Norrhem's words, political culture engages with "underlying structures that enabled or constrained political action, as well as with social and cultural practices, the ways and modes in which political power and influence might be achieved" (3). Starting from this clear and inspiring research position, the book offers arguments based on a study of social places between the household and the court, and of gendered and patronage networks. It examines objects of analysis, ranging from porcelain to diplomatic correspondence. One of many impressive features of this book is the breadth of its coverage of geographical and cultural places, including the parts of early modern Europe—individual powers or powers in the making—that were more directly connected by a shared political landscape.

Daybell's framing essay makes the case for the inescapability of archival study for documenting the role gender plays in political culture. His subject is

the "archival afterlife" (26) of female correspondence and the power relations they reveal, based on the contextualized examination of the history of a manuscript book related to one Robert Furze, a yeoman farmer from Devon. From the centrality of the archive, the book moves to a study of porcelain as "a tool of power" (49) in diplomatic contexts and across a span of European cultures, for both women and men, in Susan Broomhall and Jacqueline Van Gent's seminal analysis. From there, the book takes the reader to Sweden, and Peter Lindström and Svante Norrhem's essay which illuminates the role women as political agents played in Sweden between the mid-seventeenth and mid-eighteenth centuries. The authors show how women, despite the limited scope of their political power (usually reserved for the noble household), worked towards brokering political arrangements. Randi Bjørshol Woerdahl makes use of a correspondence collection related to a late medieval landowner and business woman of significant authority, and examines the extraordinary skill with which the woman navigated financial and political contingences. Barbara Harris explores sisters and sisters-in-law as subjects in early Tudor politics. Harris's compelling narrative is based on a large body of testaments, showing how women exerted power resiliently by marrying and re-marrying, through heirs and in posthumous memory. That women's power was negotiated not only within marriage but also in widowhood within the legal framework in France is the topic of Elise Dermineur's essay. Sarah Bercusson's essay about the public, intellectual, and cultural life of five women from the Medici Florentine court explores the power of noble women in Italy, especially at the court of the Medici. From mid-sixteenth-century Florence, the book moves to Georgian England in Elaine Chalus's contribution on the role of women in the Taunton election of 1830. In an elegantly and engagingly narrated story of one Ann Whitfield's connection with the election, and of women in different roles as campaigners, "objects of canvassing" (191), and agents with legal power, Chalus reconstructs a history of women's agency at the core of an election system that creates power. Thematically related to Chalus's essay, but back in Scandinavia again, Peter Lindström, Hilde Sandvik, and Åsa Karlsson Sjögren compare women's political roles in the intertwining histories of Norway and Sweden between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries. Their essay is largely an examination of the legislative reforms that enabled women's decision making and voting rights in church elections and in courts. From microhistories within specific locations of northwest or southern Europe, the book ends with Mary Wiesner-Hanks's

essay which locates gender and culture in a "global perspective" involving the Atlantic world, especially West Africa. She pays attention to the Ottoman and Mughal Empires, and especially to the regal women therein.

Established researchers and student–scholars alike, and particularly scholars of women's history, will relish this book for its wealth of information, clarity of writing, and new archival findings.

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**Deschamp, Marion.**
***Mythologies luthériennes. Les Vies de Luther par lui-même, Melanchthon et Taillepied.***
Lyon : Presses universitaires de Lyon, 2017. 199 p. ISBN 978-2-7297-0921-1 (broché) 20 €.

Cette anthologie commentée de trois « *Vies* » de Martin Luther, traduites en français moderne, permet de mieux cerner pour le lectorat francophone les tensions et les débats qui ont entouré les efforts de ses successeurs en vue d'inscrire dans l'histoire la figure exemplaire du moine et réformateur de Wittenberg. La juxtaposition en un triptyque de ces textes fondateurs de la mémoire publique de Luther est extrêmement ingénieuse, dans la mesure où elle permet de distinguer le culte de la sainteté, issu de pratiques funéraires médiévales, et la construction d'une politique du souvenir, soutenue dorénavant, chez les commentateurs protestants et catholiques, par un travail sur le discours. Parmi les nombreux ouvrages consacrés à Luther en 2017, l'anthologie préparée par Marion Deschamp, soulève donc d'intéressantes questions sur la consignation des faits à l'aube de l'imprimerie et sur la dégradation du concept de véridicité au moment où la rumeur s'empare du texte imprimé.

Dans sa préface générale, Deschamp nous amène d'ailleurs à constater que la normalisation actuelle des *fake news* à l'ère des médias sociaux ne date pas d'hier ! Bien au contraire, les pamphlétaires catholiques et protestants du XVIᵉ siècle avaient parfaitement compris la puissance affabulatrice de l'imprimé, capable de générer, de façonner, aussi bien que de détruire en un rien de temps la réputation des individus. La mémoire de Luther s'est trouvée