

were rumored to be her lovers, but that she seems to show no gratitude for this. Bredsdorff suggests that Thordis may not have wanted those relationships ended, that in its silence about her desires the saga implies that they did not coincide with the wishes of her father and brother. Gisli, however, assumes that they do: “He lives and thinks within a set of conventions that reveal themselves to be incapable of containing and guiding the urges that actually drive human behavior” (70). In other words, Gisli just doesn’t get it, but the saga author recognizes a fundamental disparity between the needs and desires of women and those of their families. This insight of Bredsdorff’s is an important one and a useful point of departure for further feminist scholarship on the sagas.

—Ruth Mazo Karras, *University of Minnesota*

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**Brimacombe, Peter.** *All The Queen’s Men: The World of Elizabeth I.* New York: St. Martin’s Press; London: Sutton Publishing Limited, 2000. Pp. ix + 214. \$35.00.

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**Joscelin, Elizabeth.** *The Mothers Legacy to her Vnborn Childe.* Ed. Jean LeDrew Metcalfe. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000. Pp. x + 135. \$45.00; £28.00 .

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The two Elizabeths who are the subjects of these books would seem at first glance to have little in common beside their given names. One was a queen whose ability to remain single virtually ensured her political and personal longevity, the other a member of the landed gentry, a married woman who died in 1622 at the age of 27 shortly after giving birth to her first child. The books themselves reflect this disparity: *The Mothers Legacy to her Vnborne Childe* is an edition—meticulously prepared by Jean LeDrew Metcalfe—of the advice book Joscelin wrote during the months preceding her daughter’s birth; *All the Queen’s Men* is a biography, geared toward a general audience, that chronicles the careers of Elizabeth I and her chief courtiers. Despite their manifest differences, the two works provoke similar questions about the limits of female authority and authorship in Renaissance England.

Metcalfe’s edition of *The Mothers Legacy* will prove invaluable to scholars wishing to work closely with Joscelin’s original text, and particularly to those who need to consider its problematic transmission history. Joscelin’s manuscript letter of spiritual and educational advice was incomplete when she died. After her death, Thomas Goad, a family friend and a clergyman, produced a manuscript copy incorporating sometimes substantive emendations (modifying Joscelin’s comments on the education of girls and softening her brand of Protestantism, for instance) and featuring his own introduction, entitled an “Approbation” (Metcalfe 23-25). Goad also supervised the publication of the first printed edition, in 1624, which includes the “Approbation” and introduces additional changes, possibly attributable to the printer (25). Although *A Mothers Legacy* enjoyed wide

popularity into the nineteenth century, the only available versions were based on this composite edition (23). The transmission history of *A Mothers Legacy* is thus colored by the fact that Joscelin's voice has been mediated by the interventions of the male authorities who edited and published her work. Metcalfe's commendable purpose is to make Joscelin's original text available to a contemporary audience. Mindful of the impact of the work's transmission history on its reception, Metcalfe has produced a parallel edition that offers both the text of the 1624 edition and a diplomatic transcription of Joscelin's holograph.

Metcalfe offers a range of useful materials. The textual introduction is brief, but provides a comprehensive overview of the work's critical and cultural contexts. It contains a short biography of Joscelin; a synopsis of *The Mothers Legacy* along with a discussion of its place in the history of mother's advice manuals; a commentary on its reception history, with an emphasis on recent feminist criticism; descriptions of extant manuscripts and the work's publication history; and an outline of Metcalfe's editorial procedures. Metcalfe's approach is primarily summative rather than analytical, and at points one might wish for a more probing discussion of Joscelin's work itself, but the exhaustive bibliography, which includes references to pertinent manuscripts and printed editions as well as to recent scholarship on early modern women's writing, offers ample avenues for further research.

Metcalfe's parallel edition makes readily apparent the transformations wrought upon Joscelin's text by its early male editors. On the verso side, Metcalfe has produced a diplomatic transcription of Joscelin's manuscript noting at the bottom of the pages the substantive variants Goad introduced in his manuscript transcription of Joscelin's original. On the recto side, Metcalfe has reprinted the 1624 edition of *The Mothers Legacy*, using the second impression as copy text; annotations are keyed to this text, and appear as footnotes at the bottom of these pages. Given the work's history of editorial intervention, Metcalfe has endeavored to present a historically accurate transcription of both versions. Metcalfe indicates authorial changes in Joscelin's text—deletions, interlineal revisions, and marginalia—with elbow brackets, carets, and braces. Metcalfe's own emendations (all indicated by square brackets) are intended to clarify the original meaning. Some of these emendations reflect standard editorial practice, such as replacing tildes with letters or completing words cut off by the manuscript binding. Others, though minor, themselves represent a degree of editorial intervention: for example, Metcalfe explains in her textual introduction that she has “suppl[ie]d accidentally omitted letters and words,” and added punctuation, “insert[ing] commas where one would expect to find periods in order to maintain the run-on quality of Joscelin's writing” (27). Most readers will not find such changes problematic, and many will find them helpful, but they do seem at odds with the goal of accurately representing Joscelin's original manuscript.

Some readers, however, may wish for an edition of Joscelin's original text that is yet more readable. One consequence of Metcalfe's approach is that the

diplomatic transcription of Joscelyn's text, with its many brackets and carets, is more demanding to read than the parallel 1624 edition. As a result, readers encountering Joscelyn's work for the first time may find themselves drawn to the visually cleaner 1624 edition with its easily accessible annotations at the bottom of the page. The cumulative effect may be to privilege once again the mediated edition of 1624. An alternative—albeit an expensive one—might have been to include a facsimile of Joscelyn's quite legible manuscript.<sup>1</sup> This would have made available a readable version of *The Mothers Legacy* unmarked by editorial intervention and simultaneously reinstated Joscelyn's primacy as author and authority. Metcalfe's aim, however, is not simply to reproduce Joscelyn's text, but "to distinguish the work's original form from subsequent edited versions, while recognizing the historical significance of both" (6), and she succeeds admirably in this dual task.

In *All The Queen's Men*, Peter Brimacombe, whose previous publications include *Gardens on a Grand Scale* and *The Elizabethans*, offers a broad introduction to the world of Elizabeth I and her courtiers that manages to convey something of the atmosphere of that world. The first few chapters recount the Tudors' and then Elizabeth's rise to power, but most of the book is devoted to chapters on "The Statesmen," "The Seafarers," "The Explorers," "The Suitors," "The Scholars," and "The Creators." Although these categories overlap, making for some repetition (Raleigh fits into several of them), the book offers an interesting premise for considering the nexus of political and personal relations that characterized Elizabeth's reign.

The challenge implicit in such an ambitious project is that it requires substantial research. The two-page bibliography indicates that Brimacombe has relied on a range of sources, but despite this research, the book contains a number of significant factual errors: the chapter on "The Creators," for example, numbers Spenser among the period's great playwrights (176) and reports that Enobarbus's barge speech in *Antony and Cleopatra* is "Sir Thomas More's translation of Petrarch transposed into verse" (174), mistaking More for North and Petrarch for Plutarch.

Brimacombe's treatment of Elizabeth is more puzzling. Elizabeth was a brilliant tactician who not only surrounded herself with talented men, but also carefully controlled their activities and alliances. Christopher Haigh—whom Brimacombe cites in his bibliography—has commented on Elizabeth's calculated use of her marital status as a tool for keeping her courtiers in check.<sup>2</sup> Brimacombe acknowledges Elizabeth's considerable intelligence and her capacity as a ruler, but disregards her deliberate manipulation of her marriage prospects. His comments, for example, that "Elizabeth usually demonstrated a wonderful ability to choose men to perform important tasks, but this attribute deserted her when it came to picking a man for herself" (120). A statement such as this seems simply to miss the point.

At moments, Brimacombe aptly recognizes Elizabeth's ability to cultivate political and artistic greatness. Indeed, his work is most compelling when he allows the deeds and words of the figures he portrays to stand on their own;

his jocular interventions tend to undercut the work's more probing observations. He concludes his chapter on "The Creators" by noting Elizabeth's place in England's literary history:

The Queen was the catalyst [for England's development as a literary force], besides being a performer in her own right. Her address given to a potentially hostile parliamentary delegation . . . represented a *tour de force* which any modern actress would have been proud to deliver: 'Though God hath raised me high, yet this I count the glory of my crown: that I have reigned with your loves.' This poses the intriguing question—did Elizabeth also write her own material? (184)

Although Brimacombe probably intends his tag line humorously, his readers would have been better served by a more serious interrogation of Elizabeth's authorial skill, particularly given her facility as a poet. Indeed, her language in this very passage reveals her in the act of scripting the illusion that she rules by the acquiescence of her courtiers. Elizabeth acknowledges God as the author of her greatness, but her words imply that it was her ability to script the details of her reign—including identifying the men who would serve as her supporting cast—that permitted her to wield authority as queen. Elizabeth Tudor, like Elizabeth Joscelyn, achieved authority through a type of authorship, and when the editors and biographers of these two women allow their words and works to speak for themselves, that substantial authority is evident.

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<sup>1</sup> G. Thomas Tanselle argues that when the editorial goal is to reproduce an original text, a facsimile is generally preferable to a diplomatic transcription. "Textual Scholarship," *Introduction to Scholarship* (New York: Modern Language Association, 1981) 36.

<sup>2</sup> Christopher Haigh, *Elizabeth I*, 2 ed. (New York: Longman Publishing, 1998), 17.

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**Cheyette, Frederic L. *Ermengard of Narbonne and the World of the Troubadours*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2002.**

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Ermengard of Narbonne (c. 1130-1196) was about four when she inherited the title of viscountess of the rich and cosmopolitan city of Narbonne and lord of the surrounding region. Although twice married while still young, Ermengard lived her life as a single woman in the society the book's title characterizes as the "world of the troubadours." Ermengard of Narbonne narrates the complicated train of events that led from Ermengard's alliance with the counts of Barcelona, intended to maintain Narbonne's independence, to a forced alliance with the predatory Count Raymond V of Toulouse around 1167.

Scholars will be attracted to this book because of Frederic L. Cheyette's reputation as a scholar and interpreter of the history of the region known as Occitania before it became Languedoc under the Capetians. The title proclaiming Ermengard of Narbonne as its heroine and the rarity of substantial biographies of medieval women who were not queens will attract women's historians. They will be both frustratingly disappointed and