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Review of Philippa Berry, *Of Chastity and Power: Elizabethan Literature and the Unmarried Queen*

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contentment with the forms of worship prevailing before 1547. There was no questioning of the royal supremacy.

Dr. Whiting finds it much more difficult to uncover evidence for the spread of Protestantism than to document the sudden decline of traditional Catholicism. Laymen were increasingly reluctant to accept the office of churchwarden and congregations bought the minimum amount of Protestant books and church furniture required by law. In one parish a bare plank was considered to be adequate provision for a communion table. The severe shortage of parish clergy during the reformation decades replaced an abundance of candidates for the priesthood in the two decades preceding the reformation. Whiting attributes this to a decline in respect for the clergy, but neglects to investigate how the closing of monastic almonry schools disrupted the traditional supply of ordinands during the mid-Tudor period. When Elizabeth came to the throne, few parish priests were licensed to preach — only twenty-eight spread throughout 600 parishes in 1561 — and most of these were concentrated in the towns. Ninety-five per cent of the parishes in the diocese still lacked Protestant preachers and only 20% of the clergy were university graduates in 1561. Dr. Whiting concludes that there was less preaching in the 1560s than there had been in the 1520s.

Although Dr. Whiting does provide a few graphs, he misses a number of opportunities to quantify his data and instead supplies anecdotal and impressionistic evidence. He recites case after case of gentlemen leading or supporting the assault upon traditional religion. Here, surely, the documentation was complete enough to place at least the office-holding gentry into categories according to their religious views.

Moreover, except for a very short perspective at the end of the book, readers are left to make their own comparisons concerning the impact of the Tudor reformations in other counties and dioceses. This is frustrating, because there was such diversity among county and regional communities that practically every diocese was unique. Enough local studies have been published in the last twenty-five years that one might have expected more of a synthesis in order to have placed this valuable study in a larger context extending beyond the Southwest.

The author's conclusion that the Protestant Reformation had not happened in the Southwest by 1570 is, in a sense, a most unsatisfactory one, and we can only hope that Dr. Whiting will follow up this study with another volume on the spread of popular Protestantism. In the meantime, historians examining the impact of the Tudor reformations in other parts of England will need to revise the questions they ask.

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ROGER B. MANNING

Philippa Berry. *Of Chastity and Power: Elizabethan Literature and the Unmarried Queen*. New York: Routledge, Chapman & Hall. 1989. Pp. xii, 193. \$35.00.

Phillippa Berry has written a solidly researched and ambitious study of the impact of Elizabeth I and the cult of the Virgin Queen on Elizabethan literature. Berry's stated goal is to clarify contradictory relations of gender in the discourses of idealized love of Petrarchan love poetry and Neoplatonic philosophy, which so much influenced Renaissance literature. Berry wishes to explore the interrelationship between the love discourses and the cult of Elizabeth. As her title suggest, Berry is concerned to examine a number of literary texts that

intertwine issues of sexual and political power. She argues that in sixteenth-century France as well as England the ideology of absolutism appropriated idealized attitudes toward love. These concerns, Berry believes, helped to shape the way monarchy was represented aesthetically.

Berry presents a new view of the cult of Elizabeth that challenges the standard work of Frances Yates. Berry argues that Yates' account of the cult did not consider the contest for sexual and political authority that motivated the initial formulation by Elizabethan courtiers. Berry sees Yates' thesis as flawed in several important respects. One is that Yates saw the cult as essentially unified, when, says Berry, it was in fact comprised of a number of loose collections of discourses which changed over the course of the reign. More importantly, Yates did not take the issue of gender seriously enough, and described Elizabeth as unique. Berry argues that Yates had a "deleterious influence on the views of the unmarried queen" (p. 61). Berry believes Yates was blind to the ideological and political problems inherent in the rule of an unmarried female.

Berry's own interest is primarily in the problematic status of Elizabeth as a Renaissance woman ruler who was both head of state and "supreme governor" of the Church. Berry states she is reading representations of Elizabeth from a feminist perspective. Her work is influenced and informed, she claims, by feminist psychoanalytic theory, especially the work of Luce Irigaray and Julia Kristeva. She also acknowledges her debt to Jacques Lacan.

Berry begins her study by tracing the history of the contradictory nature of the image of the chaste female beloved (both nature and spirit) within early Western culture and describes its evolution in the later Middle Ages and Renaissance. Berry is well versed in medieval literature as well as mythology, and used this knowledge to challenge Yates' assertion that Astraea was the classical figure associated with Renaissance absolutism in literature and art. Instead, Berry makes a strong case for the position accorded to the Roman goddess Diana, whose chastity was the symbol for the inviolable sanctity of the state. Berry argues that Diana rather than Astraea "affords a better insight into the curious conception of gender roles which underpinned this strand of absolutist ideology" (p. 41).

In re-examining the work of Yates and other scholars such as Roy Strong, Berry initiates fascinating ways to understand the question of complex power relations when an unmarried woman ruled as monarch. Berry argues that Elizabeth has to be understood in connection with her gender, and places herself in opposition not only to the perspectives of Yates but also more recent scholars such as Louis Montrose, who also stresses Elizabeth's uniqueness, her difference from other women. Though Berry's point is significant, she does not sufficiently credit the importance of Montrose's own examination of gender and power relations in Elizabethan literature and culture. Elizabeth was both woman and "king." Despite this reservation, one of Berry's most useful insights is examining Elizabeth in the context of her relations with other women, including her own mother, Anne Boleyn.

In her discussion of the cult of Elizabeth, Berry examines at some length the Kenilworth entertainment of 1575, the Woodstock entertainment of 1575, the Wanstead entertainment of 1579, the Four Forster Children of Desire (1581), the Ditchley entertainment of 1582, and the Elvetham entertainment of 1591. Berry also closely analyses the court plays of John Lily and the poetry of George Chapman and Walter Raleigh. She concludes with an examination of Spenser's *Fairy Queen* and Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

Berry's work is thoroughly researched but she does make some occasionally questionable statements. One is the implication that Elizabeth did not complete Henry VIII's tomb because

of her feelings toward her father. An equally probable motive would have been lack of financial resources for such as project. Also, referring to “Puritan” and “Puritan anxiety” (p. 60) when discussing such texts as John Knox’s *First Blast of the Trumpet* (1558) and John Aylmer’s *An Harbrowe for Faithfull and Trewe Subjects* (1559) may be placing Puritanism much too early in the reign. What is most problematic about Berry’s work is her highly specialized language and difficult prose style, which will limit the accessibility of her work and make the audience for this study a narrow one. This is a pity, since Berry’s insights are fresh, provocative, and well worth considering.

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John N. King. *Tudor Royal Iconography: Literature and Art in an Age of Religious Crisis*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press. 1989. Pp. xx, 286. \$36.00.

Elizabeth W. Pomeroy. *Reading the Portraits of Queen Elizabeth I*. Hamden, Conn.: Archon Books. 1989. Pp. xiv, 98. \$25.00.

At one time scholars liked to note that the Tudors rarely spoke of the divinity of their kingship—they took it too much for granted—and wisely left any full-dress, scholarly exposition on the subject to their pedantic successor, James I. John King and Elizabeth Pomeroy would argue that the historians have been looking in the wrong place. The Tudors, far from downplaying the godliness of their rule, trumpeted their alliance with the deity at every occasion, but they did so visually through pagentry, painting, and book illustrations. The trick, the authors maintain, is to know what to look for and how to translate what you see.

Of the two books, Kings’ *Tudor Royal Iconography* is the most ambitious and useful to the historian. He insists on continuity as well as change in the symbols and images that the Tudors used in their well-staged propaganda campaign to sear the legitimacy of their rule on their subjects’ hearts and to proclaim their special status as the recipients and disseminators of God’s word revealed in Scripture. With the partial exception of official royal portraits designed to be copied and hung in the long galleries of noble and gentry houses, the imagery and symbolic motifs used were neither classical nor Italian Renaissance but Biblical, late medieval, Protestant and solidly English in origins. King argues that the historian must think in terms of the cult of the entire Tudor dynasty, stemming initially from Henry VII, exaggerated and transformed as a consequence of the Reformation under Henry VIII, further expanded by both Edward and Mary, and attaining its ultimate literary and visual forms under Elizabeth.

Hans Holbein’s rendering of the title page of the Coverdale Bible in 1535, which displays Henry VIII as the godly ruler, set the standard for all future representations of Edward and Elizabeth as theocratic sovereigns. Henry sits enthroned, supported by the figures of David and Moses, who denote the Biblical ideal of divinely ordained monarchy. He holds the sword of majesty and the book of God in his hands as he administers divine truth to church and state. King asserts that Holbein used a far older tradition of dynastic self-praise than Henry’s newly acquired title of Supreme Head of the Church; he drew particularly on Henry VII’s