

poetry (chapter 7). But parts 1 and 3 are worthy of close study, given the ways in which Traub takes up two key debates that have defined queer histories: the debates between historicism and presentism (in part 1), and the need to retain gender as a category of analysis linked to queer history (part 3). Traub stakes her ground and her position clearly, but she also affords her critics ample time in her arguments. Indeed, part of the pleasure of this book is reading her thoughtful engagements with her critics: in doing so, she models how “thinking sex”—even when it is contentious and undoubtedly frustrating—can retain a pleasurable, critical *frissance*.

In the conclusion, Traub reframes these debates in wider terms: pedagogy. The book offers not so much a history of sexuality, or even a historiography of sexuality, but, instead, one of “queer futurity” (321). Whereas the introduction foregrounds scholarly debates about queer methodologies, the conclusion hints at the pressures facing all of us in the academy. If sex is, as she suggests, “a pedagogy of unknowing,” then it is also a pedagogy of becoming more aware (and comfortable) with the limits of our own perspective, of what we don’t know and perhaps can never know about psychic, sexual, social, historical, and embodied difference. Trenchant, erudite, feminist, witty, perspicacious, and very queer, *Thinking Sex with the Early Moderns* is a tour de force. Traub reminds us that acknowledging our debts to those who came before us and those with whom we disagree allows us (and our students) to embrace a wider arc of meaning: “What we remember, what we forget, what we retain, what we omit, and what we finally acknowledge as our debts—this is no less than history in the making” (81)—and a queer one at that.

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*Scholars and Poets Talk about Queens*. Carole Levin and  
Christine Stewart-Nuñez, eds.

Queenship and Power. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015. xxii + 230 pp. \$90.

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In *Scholars and Poets Talk about Queens*, Carole Levin and Christine Stewart-Nuñez have brought together a rich, interdisciplinary collection of essays by North American scholars about medieval and early modern queens. Interwoven between these essays are separate poems and plays about these women. As Levin explains, “By pairing scholarly essays with contemporary poems and creative pieces about them, the collection intends to demonstrate the on-going relevance and immediacy of these women” (1). This novel approach is successful, reminding the reader of the inspirational qualities of past queens. An essay by Marguerite A. Tassi, for example, on the maternal grief of the mythical queen, Hecuba of Troy, in Golding’s 1567 translation of Ovid’s

*Metamorphoses*, is paired with a poem, "Hecuba's Dream," by Tassi, and another, "Hecuba Laments," by Darla Biel.

The essays in this volume are all interesting and thought provoking. Andrea Nichols's critical examination of Cleopatra's depiction in late Elizabethan and early Jacobean drama argues, compellingly, that Cleopatra offered a useful figure through whom contemporaries could critique Mary I, Elizabeth I, and Mary, Queen of Scots. Katarzyna Lecky's analysis of Raphael Holinshed's *The Chronicles of England, Scotland, and Ireland* (1577) maintains that the Icenic queen Boudicca was deliberately depicted here in a way that showed her embracing a commonwealth model of rule, thereby pitting "herself against traditionally patriarchal systems" of government (69). Charles Beem's essay provides a valuable appraisal of feminist approaches to studying King Henry I's daughter and heir, the empress Matilda, suggesting that the empress viewed the world in terms of class/status rather than gender. Carole Levin considers why Margaret of Anjou's reputation suffered so much, especially at the hands of sixteenth-century writers. Levin contends that, although the moniker "she-wolf" was used to castigate Margaret, it also had positive connotations, since it acknowledged her role in protecting her son. Theresa Earenfight focuses on Catherine of Aragon's early life (1485–1504), thoughtfully evaluating how Castilian and English experiences of queenly authority may have influenced her approach to queenship.

Alyson Alvarez's exploration of Mary Stewart's periods of widowhood asserts that Mary's erratic behavior after Lord Darnley's death is best understood in the light of her experiences after the death of her French husband. As Francis II's widow, she performed the role of a grieving widow in line with established convention. After Darnley's death, however, Mary's inability to observe the social niceties of mourning contributed to her political downfall. Paul Strauss examines the portrayal of Elizabeth I as a nurse of the church in court sermons, which drew inspiration from Isaiah 49:23 ("Queens shall be thy nurses") as an acceptable model for female rule. Sonja Drimmer's essay on Elizabeth I centers on a lively discussion of the gifts Elizabeth received on New Year's Day 1567, including a fine pedigree book and, intriguingly, a set of instruments for her teeth from Petruccio Ubaldini, an Italian author. Drimmer reasons that the poor state of the queen's teeth threatened her ability to carry out state business, since her mouth and her ability to articulate her views orally in many languages was one of her most important diplomatic tools. Brandie Siegfried looks at an engraving of the 1593 meeting between Grace O'Malley, the Sea Queen of Connaught, and Elizabeth I, published two hundred years later on the cover of the *Anthologica Hibernica*. As Siegfried explains, Grace's portrayal in simple, revolutionary garb, as one of the people, before an outdated Elizabeth I, resonated strongly with late eighteenth-century Irish concerns about English authority in the aftermath of the Irish tax rebellion (1751) and the execution of King Louis XVI of France (January 1793).

The collection draws to a close with two other carefully crafted essays—the first, by Catherine Medici, looks at Jane Dudley (d. 1555), Duchess of Northumberland, a

woman who served five English queens and cultivated fruitful contacts with Spanish nobles at the English court. The second, by Jo Eldridge Carney, examines queens who were prisoners in early modern literature and life. Overall, this remarkable volume contains much that is valuable for specialists in royal studies, literature, drama, and historical research.

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*Conduct Becoming: Good Wives and Husbands in the Later Middle Ages.*

Glenn Burger.

The Middle Ages Series. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2017. 262 pp. \$65.

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Professor Burger's book—smart, complex, and engaging—kicks up a notch and fine-tunes the conversation about works of conduct for women in the late Middle Ages. He convincingly connects the works discussed to the emergence of the good wife as an active reader, providing a model for Christian perfection every bit as potent as that of the dedicated virgin from earlier clerical discussions of female excellence. The texts included under the rubric of conduct promulgate what Burger deems a “radically different” (4) sex/gender system from those of previous clerical or aristocratic models. These late medieval texts on forming the good wife's character evince that their (male) authors deem that a woman's nature, despite the long antifeminist tradition of female waywardness, can indeed be made nobler. The central tenet of such books is female self-restraint. The late medieval wife who willingly and actively submits to the texts' authority desires self-restraint and re-creates herself as a model of secular virtue in the household—an altered social paradigm, Burger claims. He provides fairly persuasive evidence that these texts redefine woman and the feminine for the new age, heralding novel relations between the sexes, emphasizing affection within marriage and the sacramentality of wedlock, and accounting for new realities of lay households, coupled with the era's changing relations between church and state (6).

Chapter 1 discusses *journalées chrétiennes*, primarily vernacular religious works addressing how the layperson emulates celibate devotional practices. While not announcing themselves as conduct manuals, works like Walter Hilton's *Mixed Life*, books of hours, or *Decor puellarum*, among many cited, indicate, argues Burger, a movement to reshape the spiritual nature of the lay reader, advocating both active and contemplative piety in the secular householder. At this cultural moment, some authors erase the gender differences between the devout practices of married laymen and laywomen. Such hybrid texts reflect and engage with the hybridity of the married estate. It's unfortunate that the terms *hybrid* and *hybridity* occur in this book too frequently to have, in the end, the impact the concept deserves, since Burger's point throughout about the mixed/crossbred/fused nature of the conduct texts and the life they encourage is significant.