

“potency of books” (76) themselves. Manuscripts penned in the thirties and forties formed a common fund of inspiration for the rising generation of clerks. By midcentury some also encountered the script at source as the reinvigorated Roman Curia generated career opportunities. Rundle reconstructs the scribal career of Scot, George of Kynninmonth, who served in the household of Pius II, although he places greater emphasis on the output of his countryman, Robert Pringil, whose script suggests a response to humanism on strictly British terms.

The continuing conversation with the Italian script was assured by a second and subsequent wave of foreign visitors. Rundle considers the careers of two Dutchmen whose names are already well known to the field: Theodoric Werken, arriving in 1449, and Pieter Meghen, whose hand supplied the last Tudor generation of manuscript patrons. Their careers, Rundle suggests, reveal a key feature of the era’s cosmopolitanism: their works were not souvenirs of another culture. Kept in institutional libraries, they catalyzed insular innovation. This extended to experimentation in cursive forms, led by clerks in government service; they were also drawn to Rome, and Rundle sees their scribal development in the registers of the English hospices. A chapter on John Tiptoft is acknowledged as a diversion, and is an intimation that Rundle cannot quite detach himself from the classic authorities, which accorded Worcester, the Yorkist “butcher,” a starring role. Rundle’s rationale is that Tiptoft’s cultural patronage further clarifies British cosmopolitanism. It was not an adornment to a public career but a part of its armory, to guide him “to thynke what oure estate publique shal be” (219).

This book is a lively challenge to the lingering view of Britain’s limited Renaissance, and a sharp reminder to notice the nuances of reception, the capacity of the receiver to carry as much agency as the matter received. It is a pity that reform, after the subtitle, passes out of sight; shadowy in the conclusion is the specter of its failure and the stark evidence that continuity prevailed. Given that it carries the reader to the eve of the Henrician Reformation, this implicit insight might have called for more.

James G. Clark, *University of Exeter*
doi:10.1017/rqx.2021.45

The Ties That Bind: Siblings, Family, and Society in Early Modern England.

Bernard Capp.

Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018. xii + 222 pp. \$78.

We have come to expect a great deal from any work by Bernard Capp, and his most recent book, *The Ties That Bind*, does not disappoint. Family is such an important part of understanding the history of early modern England, and there has been much important scholarship done on the subject. But much of it centers on the relationships between husbands and wives, and parents and children. Capp’s new study is a

compelling and well-written book that focuses on brothers and sisters, providing so many fascinating examples of siblings and their relationships. While there have always been sibling relationships and problems with them, going all the way back to Cain and Abel, Capp makes it clear that these relationships have a strong historical dimension; understanding the relationships will allow us much greater understanding of the workings of society in early modern England. We see the impact of different religious beliefs. Some of his examples are Catholics, Puritans, or Quakers. Some are Royalists and some are Parliamentarians; some are landowners and some are servants. The book is thoroughly researched, with many examples drawn from letters, journals, court cases, parish records, and a range of other sources, thus allowing us to understand the differences, as well as similarities, of siblings from a range of statuses.

With the number of deaths of both husbands and wives, and the number of remarriages, there were many siblings as well as stepsiblings and half-siblings. And there were also a number of illegitimate children, who had even more complicated relationships with the legitimate half-siblings. Some siblings felt great rivalry: there are examples of jealousy between siblings with dangerous and tragic results, often having to do with the question of primogeniture. Capp even details cases where there was fratricide. There are also, however, cases of great affection and loyalty, and of older siblings taking responsibility for their younger ones, even at great personal cost. Capp, on the one hand, carefully explores what the expectations of behavior between siblings were, the importance of gender in understanding these expectations, and the dichotomy between expectations and actual lived experience. In addition to examining actual siblings, Capp looks at examples of people who referred to someone as like a sister or brother. One minister wrote to a friend as “Dear Twin” (4). Capp also analyzes how sibling relationships were used as metaphors in religious and political writing.

The first part of the book, “Sibling Issues,” deals with the experience of childhood, relationships between brothers, relationships between sisters, and relationships between brothers and sisters. There is also a full chapter on the way stepchildren, half-siblings, and legitimate and illegitimate siblings negotiated their relationships. The second part, “Family Stories,” is a series of case studies of specific siblings: the siblings of William Stout, Samuel Pepys, and Roger North; the troubles both Alice Thornton and Dorothy Osborne had with their brothers; and the sibling rivalry over and anger at the favoritism of James Yonge. These examples cross religious beliefs and political affiliation, but since they are based mostly on letters and journals, they are all about people with a level of education.

This book is beautifully crafted and makes for fascinating reading. It also puts sibling relationships into a larger historical significance, showing the impact of religion and political change on how siblings negotiated with each other in early modern England.

Carole Levin, *University of Nebraska*
doi:10.1017/rqx.2021.46