

and corruption. Innocent women might be ruined by the smoke of London but for educated women London could be an intellectual center, leading one bluestocking to write that she looks “forward with joy to the dark days of January and the smoke of London,” which reduced the possibilities for outdoor recreations (214).

This book is not about the mixture of smoke with the natural damp atmosphere of London that produced London fogs, the “pea-soupers” that became frequent and dense from the 1830s onward; it is about specific smoke nuisances from industries such as breweries, soap producers, tanners, and glass and brick manufacturers, whose smoke poured into neighboring houses ruining their furnishings and clogging up their lungs. People in these earlier centuries were not environmentally apathetic and they attempted to control or even curb the filthy smoke, although many because they were personally affected. Cavert shows the development from this to attempts to protect the city’s air and beauty as a wider project. All of this sets the scene for later battles as industry in London expanded and domestic hearths increased, which culminated in the Clean Air Act of 1956. William Cavert has written an engrossing, readable, and authoritative study of a significant episode in the history of the urban environment, one with important lessons for today. It is a pity, however, that the publishers have not felt able to include any illustrations, despite the rich visual sources available on this topic.

Christine L. Corton, *Wolfson College, University of Cambridge*

*Cultures of Correspondence in Early Modern Britain.* James Daybell and Andrew Gordon, eds.

Material Texts. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016. x + 322 pp. \$69.95.

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This collection of essays explores early modern letter-writing within the broad matrix of its social and material conditions. In taking this broader view of letter-writing, a genre that contributor Alan Stewart describes as “radical[ly] unmoored” and “even chaotic,” the volume includes chapters written by “scholars of rhetoric, literary analysis, linguistics, history, historical geography, material culture, paleography.” Together the contributors explore how early modern letter-writers immersed themselves in “the range of epistolary literacies” and the “complex series of overlapping and interlocking practices” necessary to read, draft, and post letters (5). Because early modern letter types were diverse in style and aim (including letters of friendship, advice, and news; business and state letters; letters of censure, petition, love, slander, and dedication), the early modern letter-writer acquired a diverse repertoire of epistolary, social, and behavioral skills. The well-versed letter-writer learned the craft and care of penman-

ship, practiced the various hands and modes of address needed to pen familiar as well as state and business letters, and was attentive to the distinct social, gendered, and political registers that different genres of letters required.

To this end, the editors have divided the volume into four broad sections, including “Material Practices,” with chapters on late sixteenth-century Italian handbooks on handwriting, and letter-writing and the ad hoc system for postal delivery in place from the 1550s through the early decades of the 1600s. The second section, “Technologies and Design,” has chapters on early modern cryptographic practices and early modern letter counterfeiting and copying. The third section, “Genres and Rhetorics,” treats the familiar letter’s impact on correspondence among artisans, on handedness and identity, and on male honor codes that legitimized letters of vituperation. The volume ends with the section “The Afterlives of Letters,” which includes discussions likely to appeal to historiographers and specialists, including chapters on why letter collections are often one-sided or incomplete. As the editors explain, the careful study of early modern letter collections’ material conditions reveals the institutional and gendered forces that limited and shaped them.

One of the more interesting chapters in the volume is Akkerman’s “Enigmatic Cultures of Cryptography,” which treats letters written in cipher and code. Royals and aristocrats often used such cloak-and-dagger devices for creating bonds of apparent intimacy with social inferiors and for community building. Akkerman concentrates on aristocratic women’s use of cipher (the queen of Bohemia, Elizabeth Stewart, and Lady Brilliana Conway Harley) in their correspondence with courtiers and potential spies. Akkerman’s takeaway is that cipher and codes were “material tokens of intimacy” (83), class markers of the connection between higher-ranked and lower-ranked correspondents.

A chapter of interest to scholars of early modern sociability is Lynne Magnusson’s “Mixed Messages and Cicero Effects in the Herrick Family Letters of the Sixteenth Century,” which explores the social consequences that the rise of the humanist letter of friendship had on business correspondence. Magnusson argues that Ciceronian models of letter-writing (which emphasized self-prepossession and literate modeling of oral interchange among intellectual equals) clashed with Tudor models of state and business letter-writing (which encouraged writers to position themselves within England’s system of social rank). This clash of letterary cultures was especially visible in epistolary exchanges among provincial artisans (ironmongers and goldsmiths) and accelerated the adoption of oral forms of social address to that harbinger of early modern literate culture, the letter.

Michelle O’Callaghan’s “‘An Uncivill Scurrilous Letter’: ‘Womanish Brabb[l]es’ and the Letter of Affront” explores the intersection of early modern male codes of honor with an epistolary genre of extreme censure referred to as letters of “vituperation” (172). Early modern letter-writing manuals advised letter-writers to use vituperation to censure the behavior of those individuals who had disrespected them or

unfairly challenged their reputations. However, the cultural and rhetorical acceptance of such rhetorical reprisals encouraged those who had suffered such raw and crude censure to respond in kind. Consequently, this literary system for correcting ethical and social indiscretions could devolve to cycles of verbal abuse and legal charges of slander.

Paul Trolander, *Berry College*

*Women and Curiosity in Early Modern England and France*. Line Cottegnies, Sandrine Parageau, and John J. Thompson, eds.

Intersections: Interdisciplinary Studies in Early Modern Culture 42. Leiden: Brill, 2016. xii + 254 pp. \$149.

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This fascinating anthology of thirteen essays investigates for the first time the representations of female curiosity in England and France from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries. It draws upon a wide range of primary sources from theology to science, and from philosophy to literature. By focusing on England and France it situates women's relations to curiosity in two interconnected intellectual traditions—England's empiricist approach to science and knowledge and French Cartesianism. This collection is part of the interdisciplinary Intersections series at Brill and will appeal to scholars working in French and English literatures, women's writing, history of philosophy and science, history of collecting, and material cultures.

As Marie-Frédérique Pellegrin points out in chapter 9, there seem to be two main types of curiosity in the early modern period: good and bad. On the one hand, the Aristotelian tradition sets great store by curiosity, as reflected in the first line of the *Metaphysics*: "All men desire naturally to know." On the other hand, the Augustinian tradition links curiosity to the concept of original sin, and it therefore stands condemned (160). As Cottegnies and Parageau posit in their introduction, in the seventeenth century Francis Bacon liberated scientific curiosity from a damning theological stigma and in so doing laid the foundation for the "culture of curiosity" that emerged in the context of experimentalism and blossomed under the influence of the Royal Society (7).

Yet this partial rehabilitation of curiosity was largely confined to male curiosity. Women (due to the persistent legacy of Eve's and Pandora's inquisitiveness) were increasingly described as prone to bad curiosity. As this anthology convincingly demonstrates, however, despite the pejorative representation of female curiosity by some thinkers in the early modern period, three categories of curious women emerged: women philosophers (Margaret Cavendish and Anne Conway, chapters 5 and 8), women writers of literary works (Lady Mary Wroth, Madeleine de Scudéry, and Susanna Centlivre, chap-