If ever a subject warranted lavish illustrations, this is one, but sadly, there are only a limted number of photos, and those are all in black-and-white. Notwithstanding this, the stories embodied in the portraits examined are extraordinary, and this is an excellent book.

Kathryn Davies, English Heritage

Retha M. Warnicke. *Wicked Women of Tudor England: Queens, Aristocrats, Commoners*. Queenship and Power series. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012. Pp. 282. $95.00 (cloth).
doi:10.1017/jbr.2013.84

This monograph provides a detailed analysis of six frequently maligned Tudor women: Queen Anne Boleyn; Queen Catherine Howard; Anne Seymour, Duchess of Somerset; Lettice Dudley, Countess of Leicester; Jane More; and Alice More. Retha Warnicke employs a range of sources, including diplomatic dispatches, chronicles, and polemical works, to argue that a misinterpretation of historical evidence has contributed to the dubious reputations of these women. Warnicke's earlier studies of Anne Boleyn and Anne of Cleves addressed issues of queenship and power. In this text, she develops her arguments on the limitations of historical evidence and gender expectations in sixteenth-century England.

Warnicke begins by surveying contemporary definitions of wickedness and examining how gossip and social attitudes toward gender shaped women's reputations. In focusing upon these six women, Warnicke emphasizes their similarities rather than their differences. They married men of higher social rank, their husbands possessed considerable political and religious influence, and their lives are documented sufficiently to attract scholarly attention. Warnicke argues these commonalities attest to the existence of a distinct female culture that was subordinate to male culture and that transcended social rank. In subsequent chapters, she focuses predominately on how historical evidence has been distorted to create flawed depictions of these women.

Her first chapter analyzes scholarship on Anne Boleyn and describes how such work has shaped current views of the queen. In this section, she challenges G. W. Bernard's recent biography of Anne Boleyn and marshals considerable evidence to dispute his depiction of the queen as a flirtatious woman and a probable adulteress. Building upon her earlier work, Warnicke offers additional evidence for her belief in the 1507 birth date of the queen and explains the significance of Anne's age in understanding her relationship with Henry VIII. She likewise remains unconvinced of the role of factional politics in Anne's fall and reiterates her view that the delivery of a deformed fetus led to the queen's demise. Warnicke's interpretation, even with the additional evidence provided here, is unlikely to sway those convinced of Boleyn's earlier birth date, her influence in factional politics, or the reasons for her execution. Warnicke's detailed study, however, raises new questions that deserve careful consideration by Tudor historians.

Warnicke's second chapter, on Catherine Howard, argues that earlier work on the young queen neglects the social context in which she acted. Rather than view Howard as a promiscuous girl, Warnicke provides a detailed and thoughtful depiction of her as a naive young woman whose relationships with Henry Manox, Francis Dereham, and Sir Thomas Culpeper reveal much about female vulnerabilities and cultural attitudes toward sexuality in this period. Her interpretation gives greater complexity to our understanding of Catherine and is a welcome alternative to depictions of the queen as a love-struck teenager.

Anne Seymour and Lettice Dudley are the subjects of the next two chapters, which utilize sources ranging from diplomatic correspondence to book dedications to provide more complex views of these noblewomen. Warnicke argues that the narrow emphasis on Anne

Seymour's arrogance and the assumption of her guilt in the death of Thomas Seymour is mistaken. While acknowledging the duchess's political influence and her acute sense of her elevated status, Warnicke places her actions in the larger context of the plots against her husband and the competition for patronage at Edward VI's court. Her chapter provides a compelling portrait of the duchess as an important religious patron in her own right. Similarly, Lettice Dudley was also targeted by polemicists incensed with the power waged by her husband, Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester. Warnicke discusses at length the limitations of court gossip and highlights the problems with such evidence. As she demonstrates, charges of adultery against the countess are based largely upon her husband's reputation for philandering and the questionable claim that her loose-fitting wedding attire was a sign of her pregnancy. Through Warnicke's deft analysis, the countess emerges in this chapter as an influential matriarch and a dedicated Protestant patroness.

Warnicke's final two chapters focus upon Jane Colt and Alice Middleton, the wives of Thomas More. Warnicke disputes scholarship that depicts Jane as an obstinate wife and finds no evidence to support such a claim. Rather, she shows this interpretation misapplies references in literary texts to Jane in order to highlight her husband's saintly character. Alice Middleton's reputation as a shrew is likewise problematic and based upon misinterpretations of Erasmus's works and on the opinions of William Roper, whose legal disputes with his mother-in-law clearly shaped his negative depiction of her. Warnicke's careful scrutiny of Alice reveals instead an obedient and loving wife who carefully managed her household and exemplified the modesty and piety expected of Tudor women.

Warnicke succeeds admirably in her aim to provide more careful assessments of these women. One of the strengths of her monograph is her astute scrutiny of the limitations of the evidence used to malign these women, albeit some chapters are more compelling than others. Her monograph offers a valuable reassessment of women like Anne Seymour, Lettice Dudley, and Alice More and ought to encourage more careful study of their careers. While Tudor historians may not agree with her conclusions, Warnicke's text offers a thorough and insightful study that is a valuable addition to scholarship on queenship, political power, and gender in early modern England.

Melissa Franklin Harkrider, Wheaton College

Louise J. Wilkinson. *Eleanor de Montfort: A Rebel Countess in Medieval England*. London: Continuum, 2012. Pp. 232. $34.95 (cloth).
doi:10.1017/jbr.2013.85

In this straightforward but engaging and scholarly biography of an often-mentioned but rarely studied thirteenth-century noblewoman, Louise J. Wilkinson illuminates how Eleanor de Montfort, like her grandmother Eleanor of Aquitaine, became embroiled in both family intrigue and national politics. Wilkinson's approach to exploring Eleanor's life is strictly chronological, but she accomplishes much more than a utilitarian retelling of the facts. Readers are treated to a vivid illustration of the worldview, lifestyle, and personal, political, and legal affairs of a medieval noblewoman.

As the daughter of King John and the sister of King Henry III, Eleanor's matrimonial importance was understood early. The Montfort surname that Wilkinson bestows upon Eleanor in her title came from her second, more noteworthy, marriage, but Eleanor first wed one of England's wealthiest bachelors, the younger William Marshal. Wilkinson highlights how, despite the elder Marshal's chivalric fame, there was concern on both sides about an unequal union (Eleanor's two sisters had royal spouses). She postulates that the famous