

ing further research and follow-up reading. Thus, the anthology addresses students as well as researchers and lecturers in search of incisive summaries on particular literary works.

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After Lavinia: A Literary History of Premodern Marriage Diplomacy.

John Watkins.

Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2017. xiv + 274 pp. \$59.95.

After Lavinia is an original study of the literature, history, and diplomacy of premodern marriage practices. Besides its declared focus, the book's wide breadth of historical, social, and literary details is applicable to a vast array of disciplines. Watkins examines the institution of royal marriage and the role of royal brides within the political and legal structure of premodern dynastic order and follows its slow demise as the rising modern nation-state increasingly emphasized bureaucracy and rationality.

The originality of the book lies in Watkins's search for a pattern that would reveal how changes in practice correspond to altered political and social circumstances. Watkins's methodology for the assessment of marriage diplomacy as a pan-European instrument of alliance draws in part from the English school of international relations theory, merged with his own literary and social analysis. This approach allows an evaluation of the success, failure, development, and disintegration of marriage practice and a consideration of the shift in foreign policy from dynastic to national state interests. Although the concept of a society of states that share common interests may not directly apply to premodern dynastic societies, Watkins suggests that early European diplomacy found its common ground in a shared canon law and the idea of a world where royal conversions would lead to a sort of Christian commonwealth, a *res publica christiana* rooted in interdynastic marriages.

In the first part of the book, Watkins examines marriage practices and their literary sources from Virgil to medieval romance. Royal brides were symbols of alliances and active facilitators of peace, with the unique ethnogenic ability to merge bloodlines of two different reigning families through procreation. Early premodern queens were also agents of conversion, bringing rulers to Christianity and expanding Christendom's diplomatic reach. At the same time, they brought both endogamy and monogamy as a condition of royal marriages, increasing their own power within the court as sole royal spouses. Watkins aligns diplomacy with literature, recognizing that the role of poet and diplomat often merged in premodern Europe, and that marriage itself was a fundamental narrative element in dynastic epic. Although the earliest fictions may contain as much myth as history, they are invaluable indicators of rituals, ideology, and practice, as well as of the author's preconceptions.

Gregory of Tours, a court bishop, describes in his *Historiae* foreign queens who grow into strong international negotiators supported by savvy court clerics, while in Bede's *Historia ecclesiastica*, the author's monastic condition is reflected in a gendering of diplomacy that favors clerics over queens as marriage negotiators. In contrast to Virgil's silent Lavinia, medieval romances such as Wace's *Brut* highlight a critique of marriage that provides fictional brides with a new voice, while raising the question of feeling and consent as essential elements for the stability of the alliance.

In the second part, Watkins analyzes the influence of the Reformation and printing on the demise of marriage diplomacy and queenly role. While the Reformation undermined traditional marriage diplomacy structures, in Catholic countries the new centralization of royal power and the aristocracy's subordination to a new administration, run by low-born bureaucrats, contributed to deprive royal brides of their original authority. Watkins contrasts Elizabeth Tudor's celibacy to Philip II's and Henry II's complex sixteenth-century marriage alliances through the lens of the Treaty of Cateau-Cambrésis and the poetry connected to it. Moving from Ronsard to Spenser, Watkins aligns the poets' choices of pastoral or epic poetry to the environment surrounding marriage diplomacy. Elizabeth's mythical virginity corresponds to her country's insular independence from medieval interdynastic negotiations, and Shakespeare's revisionary history of marriage alliances in *King John* and *Henry V* encourages pride in England's freedom from French possessions.

The final chapter is an analysis of the plays of Corneille and Racine in the context of the new bureaucratic state, which saw marriage diplomacy as part of its negotiating activities. Professional diplomats completely excluded royal brides from modern policy-making, which aimed not at a lasting peace, but at more endless negotiations. Barred from public administration, queens' voices are limited to the theatric stage, where they rule as tragic heroines and divas. Watkins writes in a clear, elegant style that unveils the human element amidst literary and political transformations and sheds a new light on diplomatic history.

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Plotting Motherhood in Medieval, Early Modern, and Modern Literature.

Mary Beth Rose.

Early Modern Cultural Studies 1500–1700. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017. xiv + 192 pp. \$99.99.

Rose begins her book with Oedipus and Jocasta, citing it as one example in a long tradition of maternal authority as fraught: “unevenly and inconsistently represented” (2). What happens, she asks, if we examine the story not from his point of view, but from hers, from the position of the mother in the plot? This question, across texts span-