
From the artful echo of the joint tomb inscription of these royal sisters, with which Schutte entitles her introduction, through the weaving of the experience of both women as gift-givers and recipients, to the conclusion which neatly summarizes this slim volume, this book skillfully explores the meaning and purpose of gifts. More specifically, the volume focuses on book dedications as both requests for patronage and political statements made by or for England’s first two queens-regnant before their accessions. In an introduction, four chapters, and a conclusion, Schutte presents several strands of thought and analysis: first, that the frequent lauding of Elizabeth’s education and linguistic skills as unique fails to recognize that Mary’s attainments were of equal merit; second, that the translations undertaken by both sisters, although intellectually of similar weight, had different purposes; third, that the politics surrounding gifts given and received by these women reflected their unequal status (Mary, the elder, and widely considered legitimate, was of higher status and consequently courted for patronage); fourth, that Elizabeth was aware of her inferior status and consciously used her translations and gift-choices as a means to enhance her status within her family.

Schutte has a long history of research on the dedications and library of Mary. Her consideration of Elizabeth’s youthful work, in contrast, is new, and to it she brings a fresh perspective. Much scholarship focuses on what the translations themselves tell us about Elizabeth’s education. Schutte maintains that the dedications are a window into Elizabeth’s own perception of her place in her family. She demonstrates that Elizabeth’s youth is understudied and that much of what is assumed about it is based on backward projections from Elizabeth’s reputational success as queen. Schutte is blunt in her disagreement with David
Starkey’s assessment that “there is very little in the adult sovereign which is not to be found in this letter of the twelve-year-old princess,” countering with the more realistic view that she does not “find it plausible that at twelve years old Elizabeth had mastered her theory on queenship” (43).

The first chapter covers the women as dedicatees and what this reveals about their relative familial and political positions. While dedications to Mary (comprehensively covered by Schutte elsewhere) are not the focus of this book, it is somewhat surprising not to find any reference to the work of Stephen Hamrick, which gives an alternative interpretation of the dedication of Duwes’ *An introductory for to lerne to rede*, postulating that it was a deliberate attempt to show Mary as her father’s legitimate heir in 1534, despite the birth of Elizabeth (“His wel beloved doughter, Lady Mary’: representing Mary Tudor in 1534,” 2017). Schutte sees it as, in part, reflecting Duwes’ acceptance of Elizabeth as heir, along with his hopes of being appointed her tutor. Chapter Two looks at Mary’s two known translations. The first, done at a similar age to Elizabeth’s early work (c. eleven years old), was a translation of a prayer of St. Thomas Aquinas. It was undertaken as part of Mary’s education, but, unlike Elizabeth’s work at a similar age, Mary, the assured legitimate child of doting parents, did not need to prove her linguistic skills to win favor. Elizabeth, on the other hand, used her talents to demonstrate to her father and her stepmother, Katherine Parr, that she was worthy to be recognized as a dutiful daughter and potential heir. Schutte contrasts these different dynamics and purposes by juxtaposing Mary’s contribution to the English translation of Erasmus’ *Paraphrases on the New Testament* with Elizabeth’s translation of Marguerite of Navarre’s *The Mirror of the Sinful Soul*. The former, put in hand by Katherine Parr, was intended for publication. Mary was a valuable contributor to the work, precisely because her status was high and, as Schutte explains – rejecting the denigration of Mary’s work by Loades, James, and King – having Mary associated with it would “bolster the authority of the translation project.” The latter was intended for Katherine’s eyes only, at least according to Elizabeth’s modest dedication.

In the third chapter, Schutte comes to the meat of her study: Elizabeth’s translations as gifts, and the accompanying dedications. Elizabeth’s choice of dedicatees, what she said, and why, can, according to Schutte’s well-presented argument, illuminate Elizabeth’s understanding of her position of inferiority vis-a-vis her half-siblings. Schutte describes Elizabeth’s dedication of *The Mirror* as written in the “language of supplication,” showing her as using dedications in the traditional way to request patronage and protection. Unlike Mary, whose work imparted authority, Elizabeth needed to be represented positively to her father by someone with greater power, Katherine Parr. Chapter Four
expands the focus of the book to the significance of New Year gift-giving at
the Tudor court, building on extensive work by Felicity Heal. Schutte discusses
gift-giving within the royal family and amasses details of known gifts. The nub
of her argument is the difference in meaning between the bestowal of expen-
sive, commissioned gifts – the practice of Henry and Mary – and Elizabeth's
presentation of gifts she had made herself. Elizabeth's motivation was partly
monetary, as she lacked the financial resources of other members of the family.
Yet, Schutte argues, this practice also indicates that Elizabeth had a deliber-
ate policy of giving personalized items that were the work of her hand or her
mind, to recall her to the attention of the recipient in her absence, in a way that
a purchased item of plate or jewels could not. That Elizabeth gave translations
to Henry, to Katherine Parr, and to Edward VI after his accession, but never, so
far as is known, to Mary, is significant. According to Schutte, the evidence of
gift giving between the sisters suggests that they were on good terms during
their father's reign, but that Mary had no influence over their father or brother
that might affect Elizabeth's position and repay her pain and labor. Schutte
also postulates that their religious differences would have made translations
by Elizabeth (who often chose works with Calvinist overtones) unappealing
to Mary. It may be worth noting here, though, that until 1549 there would have
been no overt difference in the sisters' religious practice, with both conforming
to the religious regulations of Henry VIII's essentially Catholic church.

The final chapter expounds the afterlife of Elizabeth's translations – focus-
ing on the dedications, and how different publications were used to promote
Protestantism, in Bale's case, but Catholicism in Canceller's edition. Schutte
emphasizes that “... dedications to Elizabeth that focused on religion show
how dedicators could frame their dedications so as to seem to have support
from a royal patron and how that royal person may have little control over how
their name was invoked.”

The reader will notice unfortunate instances of poor editing: “broach” for
brooch, some confusion between Cancellar and Canceller, and a reference
to “guilt plate” that raises a smile. These are minor, but an apparently miss-
ing phrase creates a contradiction in Schutte's argument. On page 54, Schutte
quotes Chapuys reporting that at New Year 1532, Henry had “refused to send
a gift to Catherine, her ladies, or Princess Mary.” However, on the next page,
Henry's 1532 gifts to Mary are described in detail. The 1532 omission regarded
specifically gifts to the princess' ladies. This said, Schutte's work successfully
goes beyond easy praise for Elizabeth's scholarship, makes an effective argu-
ment about how translations by the half-sisters had different significance both
for themselves and the recipients, delves into the meaning and purpose of
the dedications Elizabeth wrote in her own words, and illustrates how Mary and Elizabeth each experienced and participated in the courtly rituals of gift-exchange.

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