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Review by Mary Brantl

Griffey, Erin, ed. *Henrietta Maria: Piety, Politics and Patronage. Women and Gender in the Early Modern World*, Aldershot, Surrey; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2008. 240 pages.

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A recent addition to Ashgate's Women and Gender in the Early Modern World series, Erin Griffey's *Henrietta Maria* has much to offer. Against the commonplace image of Charles I's largely-marginalized French wife, it posits a queen consort ably using cultural patronage as a political tool.

The youngest daughter of Louis XIII and Marie de Médicis, Henrietta Maria, age 15, was married to the new English king in 1625. Only after the 1628 assassination of Buckingham did Henrietta Maria find her footing, remaining a vivid part of Caroline court culture albeit, until recently, a seemingly passive one. Griffey's *Henrietta Maria* suggests that perception requires revision.

Griffey's introduction and Malcolm Smuts's lead-off essay go far to position the queen consort in terms of the political tensions of the day. Smuts capably presents Henrietta Maria's own court as a complex network in which she positioned herself and was positioned in turn in ever-shifting alliances for and against French, Spanish, Roman Catholic, Puritan, anti-Puritan, royalist and parliamentary interests.

Karen Britland and Sarah Poynting broaden Henrietta Maria's already-acknowledged presence in the Caroline theatre. Britland's study pairs royal patronage as a mode of court positioning and theatrical reform with French use of a traveling troupe to maneuver Henrietta Maria. Noting the queen consort's dual role as patron and participant, Poynting explores Walter Montague's *The Shepherds' Paradise* providing a promising model for how such rich documentary and literary evidence might shed further light on the under-documented Henrietta Maria.

Jonathan Wainwright and Diana Barnes delve into materials not directly connected to the queen consort. Wainwright speculatively extends the little documentation of music in

Henrietta Maria's chapel through recent archival finds involving score copying. Barnes's deconstruction of Franciscan Jacques du Bosque's 1638 *The Secretary of Ladies* demonstrates aptly how a simple exchange of letters might mask discourses of gender and religious independence.

Jessica Bell, Gudrun Raatschen, Griffey herself, and Caroline Hibbard address the lack of scholarship on Henrietta Maria's patronage in the visual arts. Bell's attempt to connect Marian imagery in Henrietta Maria's patronage with that in her mother's is challenged by the amorphous mother-daughter relationship, ambiguous nature of much iconography and stylistic significance, and broad sources of Marian imagery, making this a worthy if inconclusive study above all in methodology. Raatschen, in turn, looks to Van Dyck portraiture. If her reading of the queen consort's motivations remains tentative, the essay offers much in layered iconography. Griffey, noting that a lack of religious imagery in early Henrietta Maria portraiture gives way to something quite different in a cluster of portraits around 1636, proposes coded messages often tied to the intended recipients as well as a Henrietta Maria far more engaged in her own constructed image than previously supposed. While efforts to bolster Henrietta Maria's possible role in the patronage and collecting of fine art at the Caroline court remain problematic, Hibbard's analysis of household accounts reminds us that it was goods such as textiles, jewels, costuming, and furnishings that subsumed the larger portion of royal expenditures and considerable royal interest.

Griffey's volume does not arrive in a vacuum but rather participates in a spate of recent studies of Henrietta Maria by Erica Veevers (1989), Michelle White (2006), Hibbard (1991), and Britland (2006), among others. It must also be seen as part of the larger effort, e.g., Wilks (2008) on Prince Henry and Barroll (2001) on Queen Anne, to breakdown the monolithic perspective on royal patronage. As the Ashgate series title signals, moreover, *Henrietta Maria: Piety, Politics and Patronage* participates in a larger effort to find the voices of early modern women. Scholarship on women patrons too often has been grounded in the established models of male patronage. Griffey and her fellow authors ask us to reconsider the outlets through which Henrietta Maria might have functioned both culturally and politically; they ask the reader to consider gender and court position as factors in shaping those

outlets and bring home to readers the challenges scholars face in documenting such alternative channels.

The fragmentary nature of essay collections may frustrate readers in pursuit of a closer study of Henrietta Maria's familial ties or her independent maneuverings through the Civil War era. Less explicable perhaps is limited discussion of fashion or architectural patronage. That said, while one awaits a more sweeping investigation of Henrietta Maria's court culture, Griffey's volume offers significant building blocks towards that goal and valuable models in patronage study methodology.

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