

Angela Andreani. *The Elizabethan Secretariat and the Signet Office: The Production of State Papers, 1590-1596*. xvii, 204 pp. \$149.95; eBook \$49.46. Review by DENNIS FLYNN, INDEPENDENT SCHOLAR.

The inaugural volume in a monograph series to be published by the Society for Renaissance Studies, this book examines in detail papers that were produced by central offices of the Elizabethan regime between the death of the queen's principal secretary Sir Francis Walsingham and his replacement by Sir Robert Cecil. Study of this six-year vacancy is informed by the research of G. R. Elton on Tudor administrative processes as means to gauge how the Tudor state worked and by the work of Penry Williams on change and continuity in Tudor governance.

During the first three years of the vacancy William Cecil, baron of Burghley (who had been Walsingham's predecessor), continued as the most senior and active Elizabethan administrator, gradually doling out secretarial responsibilities to his son, who was being trained as an administrator through "a hands-on approach" in both reading and revising "a vast amount of papers," thus gaining familiarity with the processes and jurisdictions of a "network" of offices and officers within and intersecting with the sphere of the royal secretariat. About halfway through the vacancy, while this education of Sir Robert Cecil was proceeding, Robert Devereux, Earl of Essex, received appointment to the Privy Council and became a competing factor in influence, if not control, over state administration. Here the work of Paul E. J. Hammer informs Andreani's analysis. Essex developed his personal secretariat and tried with some success to place clients within the existing structure of scribal and secretarial functions.

These already included a work force of secretaries and scribes stationed in Burghley's household (principally Henry Maynard), clerks of the Signet Office (Thomas Lake and Thomas Windebank), the Latin and French secretaries (Sir John Wolley and Charles Yetseweit), the Keeper of the State Papers (John James), and the clerks of the Privy Seal, among other secretaries and scribes. Key figures were the signet clerks, Lake and Windebank, and the Latin secretary Wolley, all members of an "'inner circle' very close to the Cecils and to the monarch."

The work was carried on in a number of locations, mainly depending on the whereabouts of the royal court from time to time. Whitehall was the chief royal residence, but Hampton Court, Greenwich, and Richmond palaces were also used by the secretariat at times during the year. At Whitehall palace the administrative offices were near the Privy Council chamber, separated from the royal lodgings by the same narrow gallery, so that clerks and councillors alike were within easy reach whenever papers in production needed to be reviewed or signed by the queen. Thus "the activity of clerks physically took place across the precincts of the inner court as they moved to and from the privy lodgings and their offices." At the same time, some of the work was also done by non-governmental, personal secretariats of chief ministers, predominantly (especially early in the vacancy) by Burghley's secretaries at Cecil House in the Strand.

By 1590 an official State Paper office had been established in a muniment room at Whitehall. Papers kept here circulated to the rooms of clerks and secretaries and even to private residences, where work sometimes went on. The systematic accumulation of these records, beginning in the 1590s seems to have been begun by John James, Keeper of the State Papers, prior to whose work the papers were "scattered" among the shelves and storage chests, a number of them "on loan to government departments and antiquaries." But the collection of James at Whitehall was not the only collection; another quantity were the property of Burghley, accumulating since then and now known as the Cecil Papers at Hatfield. Other collections also existed or came into existence.

These accumulated documents were of several kinds, all "official instruments of state governance." Another important repository already before the end of the sixteenth century was the court of Chancery at Westminster, where writs drawn up by the royal secretariat would end in grants of land, appointments, and treaties, through a process leading, after warranting by the Privy Seal and signet, to documents issued under the Great Seal. These warrants under the smaller seals initiated all letters patent, leases, warrants, and legal writs. Another major category of documents issuing from the secretariat was royal letters, both personal and diplomatic.

The vital center of Andreani's research is presented in two chapters: "The State Papers and Cecil Papers" and "Work in the Signet Office." These survey and analyze the contents of repositories of royal papers, then comparing them to the registers used by clerks of the secretariat to record their activities. By these means the aim is to "reconstruct the dynamics of production at court" and the "inner workings of the Elizabethan secretariat" in order to analyze quantitatively and qualitatively the "forms and physical characteristics of the papers." Production of royal letters is distinguished from production of various executive instruments (e.g. warrants and letters of instructions), revealing the relationships between autograph and scribal copies, multiple versions of single letters, sealing, and other multiple layering and complexity in the modes of production.

Building on the work of such scholars as Sarah Jayne Steen, Henry Woudhuysen, Heather Wolfe, James Daybell, and Daniel Starza Smith, Andreani brings the material features of manuscript letters to indicate the nature of the documents, including revisions by separate hands in multiple copies; various techniques of record-keeping; and secretarial folds, creases, and uses of white space; handwriting; paper; and watermarks. These can establish social implications of the material artifacts, scribal identities, and lines of transmission between offices and persons. Among questions addressed are "how many people put hands on papers; who they were or to which offices they can be associated (hence, which offices were involved in the production of state papers); how papers passed through offices; why certain types of papers survive in the archives; and how they reflect the material reality of production."

Of special interest is the role played both before and during the vacancy by the queen's Latin Secretary, Sir John Wolley. A letter by Thomas Lake to Sir Robert Cecil shortly before Cecil's appointment as Principal Secretary reviews the full process carried out by the royal secretariat from the point of view of a signet clerk. "As can be sensed from these dense lines and specific instructions, the work of the secretariat surrounding the production of royal papers was a complex matter, and even a single letter could involve several people." Among the people with functions mentioned by Lake to Cecil, only Wolley is named. Wolley may have been uniquely able to maintain continu-

ity during the vacancy after the death of Walsingham, sharing the responsibilities of a principal secretary. He was “a senior minister, in service as secretary since the 1560s, and was sworn to the Privy Council on 30 September 1586. He held many positions at court: he was chancellor of the Order of the Garter on 23 April 1589, keeper of the records of the court of augmentations, and clerk of the pipe in the exchequer from 19 February 1592 until his death” in February 1596. Only after Wolley’s death did Cecil secure the official secretaryship.

This book is informative and generally important for anyone working with early modern English State Papers and other collections of government instruments and correspondence; it is a book such as many scholars for many years have imagined in desideration; historians, literary scholars, and editors will find it useful.

Catherine Gimelli Martin. *Milton’s Italy: Anglo-Italian Literature, Travel, and Religion in Seventeenth-Century England*. New York: Routledge, 2017. xv + 318 pp. \$138.10. Review by JOHN MULRYAN, ST. BONAVENTURE UNIVERSITY.

This immensely erudite book focuses on Milton’s rich and varied experience with Italy—its art (particularly opera), its people, its theology, its literature, and the myths that surround it in Protestant England. At times, Martin is relentlessly polemical and seems to imply that everything valuable in Milton’s life and thought emerged from Italy, almost to the exclusion of the native tradition. While her enthusiasm for Renaissance Italy is infectious and admirable, an unfortunate byproduct of her Italophile perspective is her tendency to ignore or depreciate other influences and to focus on Milton’s putative Italian sources at the expense of the intrinsic value of his own art and the originality of his thought.

It is difficult to engage with all of the complex and challenging subjects related to the themes of this rich and challenging book, so I have restricted myself to four topics: Milton and Dante, Edmund Spenser, Freedom of Expression, and Italian Opera. I shall conclude with an account of my appreciation of Professor Martin’s contribution to the subject of Milton and the totality of the Italian experience