

Suzanne Trill, ed.. *Lady Anne Halkett. Selected Self-Writings*. Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2007. xlii + 226 pp + 13 illustrations. \$99.95. Review by TIM REINKE-WILLIAMS, KING'S COLLEGE, LONDON.

Suzanne Trill's selection of self-writings by the seventeenth-century noblewoman, Lady Anne Halkett, forms a welcome addition to the prestigious Early Modern Englishwomen series edited by Betty Travitsky and Anne Lake Prescott, a series that has done so much to rectify the gender balance of the early modern literary canon and to provide insights into how Englishwomen of all social ranks represented themselves and were represented by others. The volume consists of an introduction by Trill, followed by ten chapters, nine of which consist of lengthy excerpts from Halkett's occasional meditations, written between 1658 and 1699. The exception is chapter five, which consists of an edited reproduction of Anne's autobiography, written in 1677-78. In addition, the volume contains a detailed bibliography of primary and secondary sources and a list of Bible references made by Anne in her writings. Each chapter begins with a photograph of a page of Anne's writing from the relevant volume, and a brief discussion by Trill of their size and organization, giving the reader some sense of the materiality of the texts, the originals of which are to be found in the National Library of Scotland, and in the case of the autobiography, the British Library, London.

Anne Halkett was a prolific writer, and Trill estimates that on average she wrote 35,000 words a year. Her writings have been studied previously, and critical accounts have depicted Anne as a spirited Royalist heroine whose primary aim in life was to find romantic fulfilment. Trill's revisionist account questions this depiction of Halkett as a romantic idealist, both in terms of her politics and her private life, suggesting instead that Anne was well aware of the dangers of ill-advised attachments to duplicitous and inconstant men. The selected writings provide insights into Halkett's changing life and experiences as a wife, widow and mother, and in keeping with recent trends in early modern studies towards conceptualising the political and religious upheavals of the period in a British context, Trill emphasises the need to study Anne as both an English and Scottish subject. As is evident from her writings, Anne considered herself to possess a

somewhat ambiguous national identity, often describing herself as a 'stranger' in Scotland. In many ways she was a 'cultural amphibian', having been born to Scottish parents in London on 4 January 1622 whilst her father, Thomas Murray, was in the service of James VI/I. Perhaps her royalism emerged as a result of attempting to reconcile the uncertainties regarding her national identity; after all, in many ways it was only the Stuart monarchs who held the three kingdoms of England, Scotland and Ireland together, albeit precariously, between 1603 and 1707.

Anne's upbringing was largely typical of that of early seventeenth-century noblewomen: she was taught to read and write; to speak French; to play the lute and the virginals; and to be proficient in various kinds of needlework. Most importantly for her subsequent political development her religious education was based on the precepts of *The Book of Common Prayer*, and she attended sermons at the Caroline court regularly. 'I esteeme itt the greatest honour I haue that I haue beene educated in ye Church of England in the time [in] which itt had greatest encouragements' she wrote proudly on Thursday 8 January 1691.

However, Anne's religion and politics consisted of more than mere words. As well as writing the religious 'Meditations' Anne instructed her household in prayer and devotion; operated a weekly surgery for the poor; dispatched medical supplies to the needy; acted as a midwife to women from various social backgrounds; and lodged various children, often from families loyal to the Stuarts. In 1650 she made balms and dressings for over sixty Royalist soldiers injured at the Battle of Dunbar, and on one occasion engaged in conversation with Colonel Robert Overton of the New Model Army, during which she prophesised the restoration of the monarchy. In her later life Anne commemorated the anniversaries of the execution of Charles I and the Restoration, and after the Glorious Revolution became a staunch Jacobite, refusing to accept the authority of William and Mary. Halkett thus provides an interesting juxtaposition to female republican writers such as Lucy Hutchinson, Anna Trapnel, and Mary Cary, and might be compared and contrasted with the stridently feminist, but politically conservative Mary Astell.

There is much in these writings to interest social historians too. Anne records details of domestic affairs, including references to beauty, clothes, pregnancy and childbirth, and the management of her servants, but also of her engagements within her local community through, for example, acts of charity, such as going to visit the minister, Mr Cooper, when he fell sick on 11 July 1694, the same day on which she wrote of her intention to establish a public fund for the support of the elderly, and to enable 'honest parents' to educate their children. Motherhood, both as a biological and social role, formed a key part of Anne's identity. She acknowledged the debts she owed her mother, especially in terms of her religious education, and in her later years displayed a great deal of concern about her son, Robin, when he was imprisoned for his political activities in 1690.

Trill notes in her acknowledgments that two of her postgraduate students, Fith Lanum and Sara Murphy, have completed dissertations on Lady Anne Halkett's life and writings. Thanks to her own scholarship, Trill has enabled a great many other scholars to gain access to Anne's observations and meditations. Anyone interested in the political, religious or social history of Britain in the second half of the seventeenth century will find something of interest in this collection.

Paul Salzman. *Reading Early Modern Women's Writing*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006. 247pp. \$110.00. Review by JULIE D CAMPBELL, EASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY.

Salzman's study of the history of reading early modern English women's writing has two key features: it provides a general overview of the women writers who have been most studied by scholars for the past two decades, and it traces the trajectories of their readerships from their own times to the present. In the process, Salzman deftly weaves commentary from recent scholarship on these writers with his own opinions and research. The result is a book that fulfills his stated goal: it will be of interest to readers from "a wide variety of fields and disciplines who want to know more about what women wrote in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and how that writing was