

him; his displacement of her role and elimination shows the “tyrant [who feels he] must wrest control of his family away from his children’s mother” (223) In the volume’s closing essay, Douglas Brooks looks closely at the paternity and writing technology issues present in Shakespeare’s *The Merchant of Venice*. He contends the metaphors borrowed from printing to express anxieties of legitimacy, ethnicity, sexuality and Christianity are new in the period, one attempting to understand its gendered roles.

The scope of *Performing Maternity in Early Modern England* is manifested in the remarkable treatment of little-known texts alongside familiar works. Scholars interested in links among literature, drama, performance, gender studies, and cultural influences will find this volume replete with the ways “ideologies of maternity” inform the period (12). Well-argued, these essays of “enacted and embodied” maternity contribute to the existing conversation and advance current scholarship (1). Each author offers fresh insights into cultural construction as well as synthesizes the many competing discourses that make up the performances of maternity.

Peter Shoemaker, *Powerful Connections: The Poetics of Patronage in the Age of Louis XIII*. Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2007. 291 pp. \$60.00. Review by GEOFFREY TURNOVSKY, UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON.

Patronage has tended to count amongst those cultural institutions of the Old Regime which are primarily characterized by their archaicness and negativity for holding writers back and impeding their “natural” self-expression and development. Peter Shoemaker offers a much needed corrective to this commonplace view in his provocative new study *Powerful Connections*. “Instead of merely assuming that patronage is constraining,” he asserts in the introduction, “I argue that we might also consider the dynamic possibilities that it offered” (23). Given the centrality of the phenomenon to early modern intellectual culture, Shoemaker’s reevaluation of it is extremely compelling, fruitful and important. The backdrop is France of the 1620s and 1630s at a pivotal moment, as the Kingdom reinvented itself under the political

rule of Richelieu and Louis XIII following the devastating Religious Wars of the sixteenth century. Patronage, according to Shoemaker, was a key mechanism of this transformation, which in the cultural arena was manifested by the elevation of the writer in two crucial ways. On one hand, reflecting the rationalization of the absolutist state with its propaganda arm, the writer was called upon to serve as a personal counselor to the prince. On the other, as an effect of the sophistication of comportments associated by Norbert Elias with the rise of court culture, the writer was integrated into the networks of social elites as their intimate.

Both trends, Shoemaker argues, entailed a move away from the grand oratorical models of the very Classically-oriented Renaissance towards a newer “particularistic rhetoric,” a shift that was driven “by the rapid ascension of the early modern state, with its increasingly sharp public/private divide” (22). The central premise of the study is that patronage was not, as it has so often been viewed, a mere fallback for Old Regime writers who lacked alternative means for supporting themselves and who then experienced it as an outmoded obstacle to their evolving intellectual desires and ambitions. On the contrary, Shoemaker highlights the ways in which patronage extended to writers a timely vehicle for their aspirations and was, as a result, integral to the modernization of literary life in the period, serving “as a kind of ‘primordial soup’ out of which new configurations of culture and power emerged” (228). Paradoxically these new configurations, inasmuch as they advanced a belief in the autonomy and authority of the intellectual, also ultimately advanced a view of the patronage relationship itself as restrictive and archaic, and thus as that from which, in the interest of progress, writers needed to escape.

Powerful Connections develops the analysis in six richly documented chapters exploring different aspects of the aristocratic and royal protection of letters in the seventeenth century, including a theorization and typology in the first chapter. Shoemaker reconsiders some of the conventional categories that have been used to understand the institution. It is, for instance, habitual to distinguish *mécénat*, involving “free” rewards for artistic activities, from *clientélisme*, which implies the rendering of specific services as, say, a secretary. Shoemaker’s critique of this opposition is particularly insightful for bringing to light the

texturing of “actual” practices and idealizations that is so much at the heart of patronage. Chapter two focuses on Guez de Balzac; the “reinventor of eloquence” figures here as a kind of emblematic case that illustrates both the invariably transitional nature of patronage—Balzac always being something of a forerunner or an “archetype” (57)—and its ambivalence. The thorny question of authorship in a patronage regime occupies chapter three, while chapter four turns to the beginnings of an antipatronage reaction in the writings of libertines such as Saint-Amant, Tristan and Sorel. Again, Shoemaker aims for nuance. His analysis is drawn to the types of paradoxes exemplified by Théophile de Viau, who, calling himself a “*serf si libertin*,” lay claim to the freedom that would be such a hallmark of his life and poetry not by overtly repudiating noble protection but by cultivating a certain kind of it, and then plumbing its ambiguities (127-8).

While, in principle, the book presents a well-circumscribed chronology, we do get a distinct sense of opening up towards something new in the sequence of chapters. Chapter five, for instance, turns to patronage in the theatre. This of course evokes the role of Richelieu and his cultural politics of centralization. The life of Jean Mairet reveals how writers’ relations with patrons evolved over this period as the social and political authority of the old aristocracy faded before the rise of the state (Mairet’s own position in the literary field, to be sure, profoundly altered when his protector, the duc de Montmorency, was executed in 1632 for plotting against the King). The final chapter addresses this shift more directly, focusing on the birth of the *Académie française* not in terms of a break with established patronage patterns but of an appropriation and transformation of these patterns in a new political framework. Building on the recent studies of Hélène Merlin and Christian Jouhaud, Shoemaker resists the temptation to see the *Académie* in overly stark terms, though, either as a propaganda machine co-opting writers or as a new space of intellectual freedom. Instead, he underscores the reciprocal logic of the *Académie* by which both writer and political patron benefited.

Overall, *Powerful Connections* delivers an intricate and complete account of the intellectual culture of early seventeenth-century France, refracted through the history of an institution that was absolutely central to this culture yet whose precise contribution to its

development has not always been well defined. As the title suggests, Shoemaker's study is especially strong when it builds its historical analysis on an incisive examination of the rhetoric that, in a way, is what really constituted patronage. The close readings of the stylized language through which patronage relations were evoked and affirmed in poems, letters, and other forms, and through which the identities of protected writers such as Balzac, Boisrobert, and Du Ryer were, in turn, molded and validated, present some of the most evocative, compelling parts of the book. Above all, they effectively get to the essence of the phenomenon, which lies in the fact that patronage assumes its form right at the point where language and social practice interpenetrate. It is inasmuch as we understand this dynamic that we can appreciate how writers may have become autonomous by embracing rather than rejecting the aristocratic and royal protection of letters, and that we can then see, as Shoemaker forcefully argues, the importance of understanding patronage for understanding the modernization of authorship in the Old Regime.

Claire Goldstein. *Vaux and Versailles. The Appropriations, Erasures, and Accidents That Made Modern France*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008. XII + 270 pp. + 24 illus. \$55.00. Review by DENIS D. GRÉLÉ, UNIVERSITY OF MEMPHIS.

At the time Louis XIV took power the expansionist wars, the growth of capitalism and the development of commercial ventures were fundamentally transforming France. It therefore became imperative for the sovereign to find new ways of uniting and governing a heterogeneous nation. In this light, Vaux and Versailles can be seen as aesthetic experiments in assembling a mosaic of groups of people into a strong, united nation that could recognize itself not only in a ruler, but also in a system of values and experiences. Claire Goldstein examines the intersection of a particular aesthetic with the awareness of belonging to French culture and ultimately the feeling of being a subject of the king of France through the descriptive literature of Versailles and Vaux in the mid-seventeenth century. However, Professor Goldstein differentiates Vaux, the most accomplished model of a