

David L. Orvis and Ryan Singh Paul, eds. *The Noble Flame of Katherine Philips: A Poetics of Culture, Politics, and Friendship*. Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 2015. ix + 454 pp. \$60. Review by ANNA LEWTON-BRAIN, MCGILL UNIVERSITY.

In her short life (1632–1664), Katherine Philips (née Fowler) composed some 125 poems, translated two plays by Pierre Corneille, became England’s first female playwright to have her work performed on a public stage, adapted lyrics out of French and Italian songs, and exchanged letters with the intellectual and political elite of her day (her letters to Sir Charles Cotterell, e.g., were published in 1705). Despite her obviously significant contribution to seventeenth-century English literary culture, surprisingly, *The Noble Flame of Katherine Philips: A Poetics of Culture, Politics, and Friendship* is “the first scholarly collection devoted to [her] poetry” (7). This collection of essays, edited by David L. Orvis and Ryan Singh Paul, seeks to remedy this oversight and “to demonstrate the ‘state of the art’ in [Philips] scholarship at the present moment” (7).

In their extensive (40-page) introduction, which begins with a brief and informative biography of Philips’s life, Orvis and Paul provide a detailed literature review of the history of Philips scholarship. They remind us that, although Philips was “rediscovered” in the early twentieth century by George Saintsbury who “included her in the first volume of his *Minor Poets of the Caroline Period*” (published in 1905), it was not until “the feminist, lesbian, gay and queer critics ... in the 1980s and 1990s marshaled her works into debates at the intersections of gender, sexuality, politics, and religion” that Philips’s reputation as a major poet of the seventeenth century was restored (6). Recent Philips scholarship has thus been concerned with “recognition of Philips as an innovator” and with “questions of [female] desire and sexual identity” (9).

This collection combines five reprinted essays on Philips (by Catherine Gray, Paula Loscocco, Elizabeth Hodgson, Valerie Traub, and Lorna Hutson) that helped shape the current field of study with five new essays (by Christopher Orchard, David L. Orvis, Amy Scott-Douglass, Linda Phyllis Austern, and Harriette Andreadis) that take that foundational work further and in new directions. The editors

identify three areas of inquiry in the essays: "(1) cultural poetics and/or the courtly coterie; (2) innovation and influence in poetic and political form; and (3) articulations of female friendship, homoeroticism, and retreat" (35). There are, however, no partitions indicated between groups of essays. Instead, each of the reprinted essays is prefaced by a contextualizing note by either the author herself or the editors, providing the critical background of the original publication, or indicating how Philips scholarship has developed since the original publication. These forewords will be useful for a reader who intends to read only selections from this collection, though a reader of the complete collection may notice in them some repetition of material already covered in the book's introduction.

The first four essays take up the question of Katherine Philips's Royalist sympathies and her coterie readership. In her reprinted essay, "Katherine Philips and the Post-Courtly Coterie" (41–63), Catherine Gray argues that Philips's Royalism is colored by her proto-feminism. She makes the case that Philips both supports Royal hierarchy and simultaneously undercuts hierarchical gender norms in her Platonist ideas of female friendship, noting how, for example, for Philips, women of different classes can be friends (61). In his new essay, "The Failure of Royalist Heroic Virtue" (65–86), Christopher Orchard complicates the issue of Philip's Royalism by attending to Philips's "volatility of feeling and shifts in political affiliations" (67). He argues that for Philips, the value of virtuous friendship supersedes her political leanings (84). But it is David L. Orvis's original essay, "Biblical Poetics, Royalist Politics, and Anti-Eschatological Prophecy in Philips's Poetry" (87–123) that most fascinatingly brings a new light to Philips's political leanings by attending to her theological ones. Orvis wants to "add Orinda to the period's diverse cast of prophets and argue that she, no less than her contemporaries, interprets the events of her day as divinely ordained and biblically significant" (91–92). He shows how Philips reframes "the execution of Charles I and the establishment of the commonwealth not as a harbinger of the eschaton...but as yet another episode in the longstanding [biblical] history of righteous and wicked kings" (92). Orvis's essay combines biblical exegesis with close-reading of Philips's verse to show how Philips's scriptural allusions reveal "not only a poet who knew the Word intimately but also an exegete whose radical

revisions offered an important contrast to the millenarian prophecies of her day" (123).

Amy Scott-Douglass's essay, "Restoring Orinda's Face: Puritan Iconoclasm and Philips's *Poems* as Royalist Remonumentalization" (125–52) follows nicely on Orvis's essay since it likewise takes up the subject of Philips's religious convictions, and it continues the line of inquiry in the first four essays into Philips's Royalist poetics. Scott-Douglass traces the motif of defacement and restoration of monuments and churches in Philips's poetry and suggests a link to the brutal iconoclasm Philips must have witnessed and perhaps even participated in in her home parish as a girl. Scott-Douglass concludes: "Given the extreme contrasts between Philips's [Puritan and iconoclastic] upbringing and her stance against Puritan defacement in her poetry, I have to believe that a...reversal on the subject of church iconography must have been one of the most significant shifts in Philips's life" (152).

The second thematic grouping of essays, comprised of studies of Philips's "innovation and influence in poetic and political form" (35), begins with Paula Lusocco's reprinted essay, "Inventing the English Sappho: Katherine Philips's Donnean Poetry" (153–86). Lusocco compares John Donne's and Philips's use of metaphysical conceits to show how Philips succeeds "where Donne had failed...in realizing the possibilities of total amorous union" (153). Elizabeth Hodgson offers readings of Philips's epithalamia in "Katherine Philips at the Wedding" (187–211), and Linda Phyllis Austern produces a wonderfully rounded account of the relationship between Philips and the musical culture of her day. In "The Conjunction of Word, Music, and Performance Practice in Philips's Era" (213–41), Austern discusses the two extant seventeenth-century musical settings of Philips's verse by Henry Lawes and considers Philips's evocation of theories of speculative music in her poetry. Perhaps most captivating is Austern's discussion of Philips's emotive poetic response to hearing her friend Lady Elizabeth Boyle sing a setting of one of her songs from *Pompey* (221). Philips writes of the experience of being enthralled by the singer: "Your voice, which can in moving strains / Teach beauty to the blind, / Confines me yet in stronger chains / By being soft and kind" ("Subduing Fayre!" stanza 4; 221). Austern's astute sensitivity to music as more than notes on a page, as embodied performance, leads her to remark how "the

singer [Lady Elizabeth Boyle] had eroticized, through her person and performance, the material penned by the poet” (223).

The attention paid to female erotics in Austern’s essay sets up well the final grouping of essays in the collection which discuss “articulations of female friendship, homoeroticism, and retreat” (35). Two of the three final essays are reprints: “‘Friendship so Curst’: *Amor Impossibilis*, the Homoerotic Lament, and the Nature of *Lesbian Desire*” (243–65) is excerpted from Valerie Traub’s 2002 monograph *The Renaissance of Lesbianism in Early Modern England*, and Lorna Hutson’s, “The Body of the Friend and the Woman Writer: Katherine Philips’s Absence from Alan Bray’s *The Friend*” (267–89) was first published in a 2007 issue of *Women’s Writing*. Harriette Andreadis’s new essay, “Versions of Pastoral: Philips and Women’s Queer Spaces” (291–309), follows effectively on Lorna Hutson’s since they are both feminist efforts to fill in the gaps left by male historians who either glossed over or neglected to account for the female perspective in their histories: Hutson aims to supplement Alan Bray’s account of *Homosexuality in Renaissance England* (1982) to include study of female friendship and the body, and Andreadis wants to re-evaluate the ways pastoralism is coded to express transgressive eroticisms, not only for male-male desire (as Bruce Smith, Frederick Greene, and Stephen Wayne Whitworth have explored), but also for “female erotics” (292), which, she points out, “as is often the case [with] male-authored critical studies,” has been neglected (291).

The book concludes with an elegant afterword by Elizabeth H. Hageman, entitled, “The Most Deservedly Admired Mrs. Katherine Philips—Her Books” (311–24). Hageman, who is currently co-editing with Andrea Sununu *The Collected Works of Katherine Philips* (for OUP), traces the history of a seventeenth-century windowpane inscription of two quatrains of Philips’s verse. These lines etched into the Long Gallery at Haddon Hall (213) feature in Washington Irving’s 1822 novel *Bracebridge Hall* and lead Hageman to contemplate anecdotal evidence of Philips’s female readership since the seventeenth century. Having surveyed “more than 100 copies of Philips’s writing” (320), Hageman is in a unique position to comment on Philips’s reception, noting that “early modern owners of Philips’s books included both men and women; scholars and clergymen; members of merchant,

landed gentry, and aristocratic families; and residents of Ireland, Wales, Scotland, England, and even colonial America” (320).

Through this collection of essays that rethink her poetics, politics, religion, philosophy, erotics, and reception, Katherine Philips emerges as an innovative, even transgressive, poet who sculpted a new language of female desire and affection (15). The collection succeeds in representing the current state of Philips scholarship and in suggesting new avenues of scholarly interest. The book is thoroughly indexed (443–54), meticulously edited, and the bibliography (399–437) is usefully divided into three sections: Printed Works of Katherine Philips (399–400), Primary Sources (400–05), and Secondary Sources (405–37). *The Noble Flame of Katherine Philips* will be a valuable addition to the library of any student of Philips or of seventeenth-century cultural history more broadly.

Elizabeth S. Dodd and Cassandra Gorman eds. *Thomas Traherne and Seventeenth-Century Thought*. Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2016. xx + 220 pp. \$99.00. Review by GARY KUCHAR, UNIVERSITY OF VICTORIA.

Two editions of Thomas Traherne’s complete works are now in process. While Jan Ross has edited six volumes for D.S. Brewer, including previously unpublished texts such as *The Ceremonial Law* (vol. 6) and *The Kingdom of God* (vol. 2), Julia J. Smith is overseeing a fully annotated edition to be published with Oxford University Press. Written in the context of these developments, Dodd and Gorman’s new collection of essays reflects the growing excitement of Traherne studies as scholars now try to integrate little-known works into our understanding of his entire oeuvre. As the editors of this collection rightly insist, such a project demands that Traherne be more firmly situated within his own historical contexts, rather than viewed anachronistically as a proto-romantic, or as a mystic transcending political and social pressures.

The collection consists of a forward by Julia Smith, an afterword by Jacob Blevins, an introduction by the editors, and eight essays by both established and newer scholars, including one each by the editors. In her forward, Smith identifies four intellectual developments