work at times resembles "the best tradition of romantic fiction," but she does not delve deeply into why this progression might be occurring (131, 75, 115).

Such questions come to mind as, was there really such a linear progression? And, if so, could it be demonstrated in more detail by further consideration and discussion of "the larger body of possibilities"? Were such women reading the life-writings of other women and men, and to what effect? Would it be worthwhile to consider further the development of complexity of style among seventeenth-century women writers of *belles lettres* (she does mention Austen) alongside that of women who wrote these autobiographical works? While it is true these particular texts suggest a progression toward increasingly sophisticated approaches to self-representation in women's life-writing, Seelig offers little beyond the internal evidence of her selected texts to support this idea; thus, more contextualization of this phenomenon would be useful. She does acknowledge in her conclusion that "one might complicate the picture I've sketched" (159).

The picture that Seelig has sketched is indeed a fascinating one of women recording the events of their lives and families, as they see fit, in a variety of autobiographical styles. Her probing questions help to open these texts up for readers in ways that are insightful, and they complicate theories about life-writing as a genre. In her introduction, Seelig points out even those studies that "deal primarily with women's autobiography struggle to arrive at accurate descriptions or generally valid principles" (5); thus, in her own, she seeks to allow the texts to speak for themselves, discussing on a case-by-case basis what she believes are the shaping forces for each. This study will appeal to scholars of autobiographical and gender studies, as well as to literary scholars and historians, and it will open the way for more questions about the developments in women's life-writing during this period to be addressed.

*The Poems of Robert Parry.* Ed. G. Blakemore Evans. Tempe, Arizona: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2005. x + 380 pp. $48.00. Review by GREG BENTLEY, MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY.

Since 1965, the Renaissance English Text Society has been publishing "literary texts, chiefly nondramatic, of the period 1475-1660." Now, in conjunction with the Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, it has

produced the 30th volume in its series: *The Poems of Robert Parry*, an admirable edition edited by the well-respected scholar G. Blakemore Evans.

In this volume, Evans collects several dedicatory poems to Robert Parry, *Sinetes* (facsimilies of 46 "Passions," 13 "Posies," 31 "Sonnetos," and several miscellaneous poems), *The Lamentation of a Male-content* (facsimilie), "Epitath of Mistris Katheryn Theloall," and the 22 songs from *Moderatus, or the Adventures of the Black Knight*. Against Carelton Brown who, in his edition of 1914, attributed the majority of these works to Sir John Salusbury, Parry's patron, Evans argues that they were all composed by Parry. Evans cites both "external evidence"–the title page of *Sinetes* and the capital "S" in Sonnetos 2-14–as well as "internal evidence"–Parry's statements of intent and verbal and thematic echoes from work to work—to illustrate his position. Thus, he reclaims for Parry the Patron series and the other seven Posies, Sonnetos 1-31, along with the other poems preceding "Sinetes Dump," and *The Lamentation of a Male-content*, a poem at least questioned by Brown.

As part of his argument from external evidence for Parry's authorship of these texts, Evans notes that "Parry makes three statements about the intentions underlying his publication of *Sinetes*: (1) in the top division of the title-page, he tells us that his "Passions vppon his fortunes" are "offered for an Incense at the / shrine of the Ladies which gui- / ded his distempered / thoughtes"; (2) in the opening dedicatory Epistle, he promises that Salusbury will gain lasting honor and immortal fame from what is said about him in *Sinetes*; (3) in the dedicatory Epistle prefacing "The lamentation of a Male-content," he announces that "the Name-lesse (i.e. Parry) is writing the poem to wish "*the Honorable minded* vnknowne" (who will shortly be identified as Helena Owen) "perfect health and / perpetuall happines" (13). Such statements are, indeed, convincing.

When he turns to internal evidence, Evans claims that "'Posie I. The patrones conceyte' offers clear evidence of Parry's hand, furnishing thematic and verbal echoes, a number of them what may be called distinctive Parryisms . . ." (13). At this point, Evans provides a table, one of five, of such verbal echoes. For example, he lists

Line: 5

| | |
|---|---|
| Natures chiefe pride | Posie IIII.33: Natures pride |
| | *Moderatus*, sig. B1: the verie pride of Nature |
| | *Moderatus*, sig. R2: the pride of Nature |

At first, such words and phrases seem too closely to echo Mathew Arnold's "Touchstone Theory," but once one reads the poems, one realizes Evans' intimate familiarity with these texts, and, along with the external evidence, they provide considerable support for the argument that these works were indeed written by Robert Parry.

As Evans points out, Parry's life, and his connection to Salusbury, supplies a rich context for Parry's work. In addition to his poetry, Parry kept a detailed diary, and as Evans states, he is perhaps "the only Elizabethan poet for whom a day-by-day, month-by-month, and year-by-year diary has survived, a personal/impersonal record of his life and times" (3). A landed Welsh gentleman, with "substantial private means" (5), Parry apparently received a liberal education; he was "well-grounded in classical Latin literature, with a command of the language, and easily familiar with Greek and Roman mythology" (4). In addition, as a landed gentleman, Parry knew the law and "may have had some connexion with one the Inns of Court" (5).

Parry's life and work, of course, is integrally bound to his patron, John of Salusbury. Parry's association with Salusbury, who was knighted Sir John in 1601, and his circle "must have begun some time before 1591" (6). Indeed, Parry not only dedicated *Sintetes* to him, but in the opening dedicatory Epistle and in the so-called Patron-series, Parry "paints Salisbury in almost heroic terms" (8). In fact, in the latter poems, a part of the "Posies," Parry practices "a kind of ventriloquism" (25). That is, Parry presents Salusbury "in the role of a would-be lover speaking of his mistress, Dorothy Halsall, a device that enables Parry to lavish 'glorious' praise on both" (25).

Chronologically, Parry's life parallels that of Shakespeare. As Parry himself wrote in his diary: "this yere [1564] the 30 daye of Iulie between 3 & 4 a clocke in the morninge I *Robert Parry* was borne" (1). Although the date of Parry's death is unknown, the last entry in his diary is "12 February 1613" (2). While the two men lived at approximately the same time, their work differs considerably. As Evans says, "Robert Parry, as a poet, may properly be ranked with a group of Elizabethan-Jacobean poet-versifiers, who, occupying what may be called a third level, wrote more from a sense of satisfying a fashionable mode . . . than from any deeply-felt emotional involvement" (23). One element of this "fashionable mode" was Parry's repeated use of acrostics, which were often extensive and elaborate, especially in his connections with four women in his life. Although he never tells his wife's name, he

develops clever acrostics that name Helena Owen, Frances Willoughby, Elizabeth Wolfreston, and Salusbury's sister-in-law Dorothy Halsall. In a less clever and more conventional poem, Sonneto 18, (Parry is apparently the only sonnet writer to use the Italian form of the word), he indirectly praises Helena Owen by writing:

> Namelesse the flower that workes my discontent,
> Endlesse the cares for her I doe sustaine,
> Waste is the soyle which shadowes my content
> Once lende a salue to cure my curelesse paine.
> Ah deere, how deere I purchase my delight?
> Not longe when first I view'd thy sweetest fayre.
> Except thy beauty lend my darknes light,
> Long shall that looke my heauie lookes ympayre;
> Esteeme of him that liues to honour thee,
> Hopes true respose shall then be lodg'd in mee.

Finally, Parry's first published text (1595), a romance entitled *Moderatus, or The Adventures of the Black Knight*, may have been his most original work. In it Parry combines elements of traditional romance with those of contemporary pastoralism to produce a work that is closely associated with Sidney's *Arcadia* (30).

On one level, then, *The Poems of Robert Parry* provides documentation about an individual gentleman-poet whose skills and talents varied widely. In addition to writing numerous poems in a variety of modes and styles, he produced a significant prose romance. Also, as his diary suggests, Parry took an avid interest in history and politics, both personal and public, English and continental, and he was possibly, as evidence suggests, a fairly accomplished translator. In this regard, even though it collects the work of a single individual, this volume provides documentation of the tastes, interests, and habits of a social/political circle that lies beyond our usual range of interest. It is a valuable text that broadens our scope and understanding of the life and literature of the period.