

the editors chose those which represent not only the theological concerns of the different movements, but the personal passion and very human concerns of the individuals as well. Selections from Philip Henry's Diary (243-48) and the farewell sermons of ejected clergy (235-43) add considerably to what, in textbooks, is too often a lifeless social and political narrative; and the selections in Part V, relating to personal experience, give the reader a window into the interests and values which motivated the Nonconformists to risk everything for their convictions.

This volume serves its intended function, as a firsthand introduction to early Protestant Nonconformity, extremely well. The history of religious thought in Tudor and Stuart England is too often dominated by caricatures and generalizations of the groups involved, which only primary sources can dispel. This volume would work well as a seminar reading for graduate students, and it is a must-read for those who wish to address any issues of seventeenth-century English religion in a dissertation or monograph. It is an excellent starting point for all further research in the area. Although Ashgate always produces high quality books, the downside is a price tag which is prohibitive except for libraries. A graduate seminar would have to juggle a single text, when it would make an excellent required text for students of history and literature alike.

Rosemary O'Day, ed. *Cassandra Brydges, Duchess of Chandos, 1670-1735: Life and Letters*. Woodbridge, Suffolk, U.K.: Boydell Press, 2007. viii + 442 + 14 illus. \$145.00. Review by ELLEN J. JENKINS, ARKANSAS TECH UNIVERSITY.

The surviving letters of Cassandra Brydges, first Duchess of Chandos, demonstrate the narrowness of those historical interpretations of the past thirty years that limited seventeenth- and eighteenth-century women of the upper classes to little more than reproductive and decorative roles. Rosemary O'Day has provided an annotated edition of the letters of Cassandra (Willoughby) Brydges, demonstrating that the duchess, who did not marry until she was forty-three, was a talented diplomat, investor, matchmaker, and wielder of influ-

ence on behalf of the large and tangled network of relations and acquaintances in her sphere. O'Day, who teaches history at the Open University and is a Fellow of the Royal Historical Society, has gone to great lengths to identify recipients of these letters and unknot the duchess's relationships, providing a dexterous and expert commentary on this noteworthy woman, her correspondence, and her service to family and friends.

In 1713, Cassandra Willoughby became the second wife of her cousin, James Brydges (1674-1744), who had been a Member of Parliament for Hereford (1698-1714), Paymaster General for the British forces overseas during the War of the Spanish Succession (1701-1714), and subsequently was created Earl of Carnarvon. In 1719, he was created first Duke of Chandos. O'Day points out that one of the reasons Cassandra Willoughby married James Brydges was to further the fortunes and influence of her brothers, their families, and the rest of the Willoughbys, a responsibility she took on with dedication. Hers appears to have been a successful companionate marriage; in a number of the letters included in O'Day's book, the duchess is obviously writing to accomplish the duke's bidding and smooth a difficult situation—either delivering a warning to an unruly nephew or refusing a request for help from someone seeking preferment or support. O'Day explains that by sending such messages at one remove, the duke was able to make use of his wife as “gatekeeper” to his patronage (13).

Both before and during their marriage, Cassandra and James Brydges were involved in the emerging stock market of the early eighteenth century. They advised friends, acquaintances, and family members on stocks, investing for themselves, administering and brokering investments for relatives, and holding stock in a variety of enterprises, including the infamous South Sea Company, chartered in 1711 to help pay off Britain's debts incurred during the War of the Spanish Succession. When the South Sea “Bubble” burst in 1720, many stockholders went bankrupt, and the Duke of Chandos suffered a severe blow to his finances. O'Day argues that Cassandra Brydges was representative of the active roles such women played in managing their own monies, often by the careful investment of inheritances, jointures, or marriage settlements. Several of the letters included in

the collection show the duchess delivering advice or discussing South Sea stocks with her correspondents.

Among Cassandra Brydges's activities, even before she married, was matchmaking. The duke also was active in the ongoing campaigns of finding suitable mates for marriageable women who had appealed to them for help. The Brydges often took young female relatives into their home for the purpose of finding appropriate marriage partners, frequently investing on their behalf to create or increase marriage portions, thus providing an entire program of improvement and rendering the prospective brides more desirable in the marriage market. It is clear that the duchess was particularly effective at this task, though a number of letters register disappointment and include subtly-worded warnings of dismissal to those who do not readily accept the marriage partners selected for them by the ducal couple.

The letters in O'Day's compilation are from what the editor refers to as the "Copy Letter Book," owned by the North London Collegiate School and comprising the duchess's copies of letters she wrote between 1713 and 1735, the year of her death. O'Day includes in her appendices letters from two additional sources: a similar copy letter book assembled from Cassandra Brydges's correspondence for the period from about 1694 to 1706, ending before her marriage (currently at the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust Record Office but owned by Stoneleigh Abbey Limited), and a collection of letters to Cassandra Brydges from 1725 to 1731, in the Stowe Collection of the Huntington Library. In addition, the duchess left a few other writings, including an incomplete history of the Willoughby family, which is now at Nottingham University Library. One major challenge O'Day faced in editing the present collection was mastering the serpentine family trees of the duke and duchess, since the letters are full of variations in the spelling of names, as well as nicknames and other confusing clues. To help the reader keep track of family relationships and correspondents, O'Day has included lineage charts and a compendium of brief biographical sketches for the people mentioned in the letters.

The only flaw in the collection is its rather frustrating structure, which depends heavily upon repetitive editorial annotations. The lengthy "Introduction" to the volume provides the biography of the Duchess of Chandos, along with context for the letters and lavish

substantive notes. The reader is directed to each of the pertinent letters that support the narrative, but the editor's commentary is duplicated in notes appended to the correspondence, as well. The result is that the reader may find the same explanation in several places, instead of further depth of information. Overall, however, O'Day's work is an excellent record, which will add to the history of women of the late-seventeenth- and early-eighteenth centuries.

Vernon Hyde Minor. *The Death of the Baroque and the Rhetoric of Good Taste*. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006. x + 196 pp. + 33 illus. \$80.00. Review by KATHERINE M. BENTZ, SAINT ANSELME COLLEGE.

The question of style—what it is, what it does, and why it changes over time—is perhaps one of the most central questions of the discipline of art history, and it is precisely the question that Vernon Hyde Minor examines in *The Death of the Baroque and the Rhetoric of Good Taste*. Minor's focus is eighteenth-century Italy, and in particular the Accademia degli Arcadi, a powerful group of elites who functioned as the tastemakers of *settecento* Rome. Employing the tools of post-modern critical theory, Minor investigates the waning popularity of the baroque style and the emergence of a new aesthetic influenced by Arcadian concepts of *buon gusto* (good taste) and pastoral poetics. In six discrete but related essays, each concerning different aspects of politics, literature, art and culture during the period, his book provides a densely rich discussion of artistic and literary style as a powerful discourse that directed and influenced the ideas of Italian society in the early years of the Enlightenment.

The book opens with a discussion of baroque visual rhetoric, the style so reviled by the eighteenth-century Arcadians. In his analysis of works such as Caravaggio's *Crucifixion of Saint Peter* and *Saint John the Baptist*, as well as Bernini's *Sant'Andrea al Quirinale*, Minor shows how the baroque utilizes visual effects such as spectacle, metaphor, conceit and fantasy to engender a variety of interpretative reactions and transcendent meanings in the mind of the viewer. Such effects are akin to the experiential and sensory visions taught by Ignatius of