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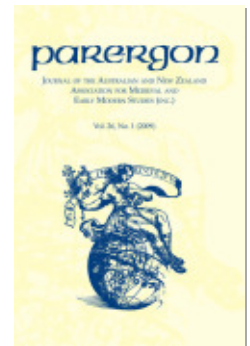
*Elizabeth Tyrwhit's Morning and Evening Prayers* (review)

Sarah Ross

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the context of a praise poem performed before Óláfr Haraldsson and the reconstructed poem itself. Jesch seeks to establish that the reconstructed poem *Hofuðlausn* can be studied as a narrative, why such a mode was adopted and its relationship to the historiographical aims of praise poetry.

From the perspective of this reviewer, more historian than literary scholar, this is an accessible collection of papers that help bridge the methodological gap, real or perceived, between disciplines. Judith Jesch alone identifies connections between her own and other contributions (Airlie and Foot). This offers insight into how contributors, who experienced the collaborative environment of the conference so vividly described in the preface, thought their work related to other contributors. Additional efforts to demonstrate the chapters' interrelatedness would not have been in vain. Still, read in concert, the different contributions are complementary. Together they provoke reflection on the permeable generic boundaries between different historical texts, between 'conventional' histories and documentary texts, between oral and written, fiction and non-fiction.

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**Tyrwhit**, Elizabeth, *Elizabeth Tyrwhit's Morning and Evening Prayers* (The Early Modern Englishwoman 1500-1750: Contemporary Editions), Susan M. **Felch**, ed., Aldershot, Ashgate, 2008; hardback; pp. 216; 2 b/w illustrations, 3 figures; R.R.P. £55.00; ISBN 9780754606611.

This critical edition presents the two versions of Elizabeth Tyrwhit's *Morning and Evening Prayers* to appear in print in the sixteenth century. First printed in 1574, Tyrwhit's prayer book was then included in a longer version, differently arranged, in Thomas Bentley's large compilation of devotional material, *The Monument of Matrones*, in 1582. Susan M. Felch prints both versions separately in her edition, allowing access to the full range of Tyrwhit's prayers and valuable comparison between their arrangements in the two Early Modern printed versions.

Elizabeth Tyrwhit served as a lady of the Privy Chamber for Queen Katherine Parr during the final years of Henry VIII's reign. She was a vital member of 'Parr's evangelical circle' (p. 5), at the vanguard of Lutheran-

influenced devotional reform in England. Felch's introductory material explores her relationship with Parr, as well as her less easy relationships after Parr's death with Thomas Seymour, Lady Jane Grey and the young Princess Elizabeth. Tyrwhit's 'commitment to the more aggressive forms of reformed Protestantism' (p. 7) is carefully teased out from the extant biographical and textual evidence, as Felch proves the devotional, literary and historical significance of Tyrwhit's prayer book. In establishing Tyrwhit as a prominent 'member of the first generation of reformers at court', Felch points out that her prayer book was printed in Bentley's *Monument* immediately after the works of the 'royal trinity', namely Queen Elizabeth, Katherine Parr, and Jane Grey Dudley (pp. 16-17).

Felch's introductory material includes a detailed section on the history of English private prayer books, a very useful explanation and exploration of this devotional genre and its social uses. (It is supplemented by a lovely photographic reproduction of the ornate cover to the 1574 volume, which gives readers a sense of the physical nature of these pocket-sized and much-used books.)

The materials Tyrwhit includes in her prayer book are set in the context of common sources, conventions and concerns, with Felch amply demonstrating that Tyrwhit's prayer book adheres to the Lutheran reformist culture of which its author was a part. Felch considers in the final section of her introduction the variances between the two printed versions of Tyrwhit's texts, arguing convincingly that the later version in Bentley's *Monument* is more likely to preserve the authorial agency of Tyrwhit herself. Her argument here is well evidenced and carefully nuanced, demonstrating a keen sense of questions of editorial framing and the reading and reception of women writers' texts that are of current interest to scholars. Felch's decision to print both versions of the prayers complete and separately from each other also attests to her consideration of these questions, and results in a resource which is of use to scholars with a wide range of interests, from female authorial agency through to wider cultural currents in which women participated and to which they contributed.

The texts themselves are presented in a clear, clean and accessible fashion, as we are coming to expect of this Ashgate series, *The Early Modern Englishwoman 1500-1750*. Light but sufficient annotations for the purposes of comprehension and interpretation (primarily definitions of words) are placed at the foot of each page, with more specialist notes of a textual variety being

presented at the end of each complete text. The edition in this way meets the needs of student readers, for whom clarity is paramount, at the same time as it provides the information necessary for more specialist scholarly readers. A comprehensive table of contents is presented as an Appendix to both texts, allowing the reader to identify specific items by an editorial numbering system, and to compare items' presence and placement in the two Early Modern printed texts.

The material in Tyrwhit's texts will be of great interest to scholars not only of Early Modern women's writing, but also of devotion, devotional poetry, and the English Reformation. Tyrwhit's prayers, and the critical material supplied by Felch, provide evidence for the centrality of women to religious reform in sixteenth-century England, which has recently been argued for by Kimberly Coles (*Religion, Reform and Women's Writing in Early Modern England*, 2008). More than this, Tyrwhit's texts contain unique poetic items, important additions to ongoing exploration of the emergence of original devotional poetry in English. Our understanding of private – or at least individual – devotion in the period is at an early stage, and Felch's edition (like her earlier edition of Anne Vaughan Lock's work) is a significant and authoritative contribution to the field.

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**Walsby, Malcolm**, *The Counts of Laval: Culture, Patronage and Religion in Fifteenth- and Sixteenth-Century France*, Aldershot, Ashgate, 2007; hardback; pp. xi, 220; 12 b/w illustrations; R.R.P. £55.00; ISBN 9780754658115.

In *The Counts of Laval: Culture, Patronage and Religion in Fifteenth- and Sixteenth-Century France*, Malcolm Walsby offers an impressive account of the rise of the influential Breton house of Laval in later medieval and Renaissance France. Through the lens of Laval patronage and clientage, Walsby ambitiously seeks to explore 'the whole of the [family's] affinity' (p. 3) in order to understand the scope and nature of the Lavals' power within Brittany and at the royal court. One of a growing number of case-studies focussed on an individual house, *The Counts of Laval* engages with the larger historical questions surrounding the changing socio-political relationships