



*Mary I and the Art of Book  
Dedications:  
Royal Women, Power, and  
Persuasion*

**Valerie Schutte**

New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015

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*Mary I and the Art of Book Dedications: Royal Women, Power, and Persuasion*. By Valerie Schutte. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015. ISBN: 978-1-137-54126-0. xi + 208 pp. £60.

**D**uring her life, Mary Tudor received thirty-three printed book dedications and eighteen manuscript dedications. These dedications form the basis of this highly interesting study of female authority, patronage, and print culture. The volume operates on a number of different levels. Firstly, it provides a thorough catalogue of the book and manuscript dedications to Mary, as well as the books in the queen's personal library. Secondly, it challenges the assertion that the book and manuscript dedications made to Mary across her lifetime serve only to demonstrate that she was highly educated and remarkably orthodox. Indeed, throughout the course of six main body chapters, plus an introduction and conclusion, Schutte successfully argues the significance of these dedications in revealing not only the different forums in which Mary was able to negotiate patronage, but also crucially, contemporary perceptions of gender and power during the reign of England's first queen regnant. On a broader level, the book also highlights the considerable interplay between royal women, patronage, and the new media of printed books in this period.

Interestingly, given the title, the focus of chapter one is not on Mary I at all. Instead, the chapter examines the printed book dedications to the mother of Henry VII, Lady Margaret Beaufort, and to the six wives of Henry VIII. Schutte's rationale for this is to provide background to the later dedications to Mary, as these earlier dedications serve to illustrate the different motivations of the dedicators themselves. The inclusion of dedications to Lady Margaret Beaufort and the wives of Henry VIII also enables the reader to differentiate between their status as royal women and queens consort, and that of Mary I as England's first queen regnant. As the first royal woman to negotiate patronage through the medium of print, it is hardly surprising to find that the dedications to Margaret Beaufort were mostly for commercial gain, whereas dedications to Henry VIII's consorts, although adding commercial appeal to the books themselves, were essentially pleas for patronage. Attempting to influence political change, the dedicators to Henry's queens relied upon the traditional role of the queen consort to intercede with her husband, and in this context they reflect the specific religious and political changes of Henry's reign.

Also directly reflecting political and religious changes are the dedications and patterns of dedications to Mary before her accession, which are considered in chapter two. Here, Schutte finds a clear correlation between the periods when Mary received no dedications and the political and religious

upheavals of the period. For example, from 1534 Mary received no dedications until she had reconciled with her father later in his reign, and dedications to her again ceased after 1550 while she was in opposition to Edward VI's religious policy. Reflecting her gender and position as princess, and later as Lady Mary, the books dedicated to her were either textbooks or tracts regarding female virtue. Schutte demonstrates that dedicators clearly saw her as having little independent patronage, as their dedications also referred to either her father or her brother to remind her that she could intercede with the king on the dedicators' behalf. Their dedications did not seek to negotiate with Mary, but rather, to instruct her.

The theme of instruction is continued in chapter three, which examines printed dedications to Mary once she became queen. Highlighting the contradiction between Mary's gender and her status as monarch, Schutte identifies four distinct themes adopted by dedicators to covertly offer instruction to the queen: virtue, the importance of obedience for subjects, the return of England to the Catholic Church, and classical literature and philosophy. These themes, Schutte asserts, present Mary as a moral ruler rather than the political one defined by her office. As a woman, Mary was not expected to exercise political authority and would have councillors to do this for her. Hence, the topic of "statecraft" is conspicuously absent, thus revealing the dedicators' perception of Mary's authority as a queen regnant. Given the events of Mary's accession and short reign, with the usurpation of Lady Jane Grey, Wyatt's Rebellion, and the Dudley Conspiracy, it is unremarkable that obedience of subjects is a key theme, and dedications are considered that directly engage with these events. Furthermore, given Mary's devout Catholicism, it is also not surprising that the largest number of printed dedications were on the topic of returning England to the Catholic Church. Although seeking to instruct Mary, dedicators now sought to negotiate with her, because as queen they perceived she was able to educate her subjects. As Schutte highlights, these printed works were aimed for a wider, literate audience, and not solely for Mary. On the other hand, manuscript dedications, which are examined in chapter four, had a different purpose. These, she asserts, were of a far more personal nature and enabled dedicators to appeal to the queen for patronage in a more specific manner.

One of the most important events in Mary's reign was her marriage to Philip of Spain in July 1554, and chapter five examines the dedications to Philip, and to Philip and Mary jointly. Finding that the small number of dedications solely to Philip were all made after Mary's death, Schutte focuses her attention on the joint dedications, of which there were only five. Although examples of "textual negotiations" (ix), these joint dedications are more interesting in what they reveal about contemporary perceptions of the

marriage and the hope of a Catholic heir, rather than about negotiations for patronage. Indeed, Schutte concludes that the small number of dedications that include Philip reinforce the existing scholarship that he had little political influence in England.

In chapter six, Schutte turns her attention to the books actually owned by Mary, providing an overview of the queen's personal library. This is revealing in that it offers a greater insight into Mary's character, and crucially, how she visualised her queenship. Although some of the books owned by Mary reflect her humanist education, it is hardly surprising that the majority were of a religious nature. This reflects Mary's own personal choice of reading, and evidently her interest in humanist texts did not extend much further than her own formal education. Her religious convictions were her main focus, and on both a personal level and as queen, her goal of restoring Catholicism to England is reflected by the books in her personal library.

An eminently readable and accessible volume, this book is a valuable addition to the existing scholarship on Mary I. Schutte's examination of printed and manuscript dedications facilitates a different insight into Mary's queenship that furthers our understanding of contemporary perceptions of female authority. The book also reveals a significant forum by which Mary was both offered instruction, and, in varying degrees, was able to negotiate patronage, politics, and religion.

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