

Michael Green and Ineke Huysman (eds), *Private Life and Privacy in the Early Modern Low Countries* [European Research, Vol. 19.] (Turnhout: Brepols, 2023). 311 pp. ISBN 9782503604442.

DOI: 10.52024/5emqfy65

In this book edited by Michael Green and Ineke Huysman, a collection of ten chapters explores the concept of privacy in the early modern period. Through several case studies, the methods that can be used to study privacy and private life are examined. The contributions cover a wide range of themes such as art, architecture, and religion and make use of different types of sources, such as letters, paintings, and architectural drawings. The different methodologies that are included in this book offer an array of possibilities for the research of private life in early modern sources, as is demonstrated by the diversity of topics in the selection of case studies.

Recurring throughout the different chapters are the methodologies developed at the Danish National Research Foundation Centre for Privacy Studies. One of the two methodologies is the model of “heuristic zones of privacy” created by Mette Birkedal Bruun. These zones of privacy take the form of six intersecting circles, starting with the soul/mind/self and expanding to the zone of the state/society. Early modern conceptions of privacy can be placed within or at the intersection of these circles and provide better insight into the location and nature of privacy. The other method is the terminological approach, where there is an emphasis on so called priv-words as well as words that are in other ways related to privacy. The appearance of these words in sources is analyzed to find out more about private life. However, the success of this approach largely depends on the nature of the sources and the researcher’s selection of words to be included in the analysis, making it a rather undefined methodology that differs from case study to case study.

Egodocuments naturally form the basis of multiple case studies throughout the book. Michael Green applies both the heuristic zones and terminological approach to a selection of four egodocuments from early modern Amsterdam and concludes that notions of privacy in these documents mostly concentrate on the mind, the body, and the home. However, Green does not elaborate on the significance of this conclusion or how it changes our view of privacy. The contributions by Judith Brouwer, and Fayrouz Gomaa and Ineke Huysman focus on letters. Brouwer looks at the Prize Papers, letters captured by the English

in 1672, and concludes that many people made use of intermediaries to write letters. This practice has interesting consequences for the private nature of these letters and their content, because letters were not necessarily as private as is sometimes assumed. This is not the case for the correspondence of Stadtholder Willem IV, which Goma and Huysman concentrate on. By comparing letters sent to his mother and his wife, the authors analyze differences in content and style and conclude that Willem IV shared more private information with his wife than with his mother. On a methodological level, it is interesting to note that the authors consider the terminological approach to be less useful for examining privacy, because this approach did not generate the intended results. The authors are also cautious with the use of the 'zone' method, because of the risk of anachronism.

The interdisciplinarity of the book is made apparent in the chapters focusing on architecture. Heide de Mare searches for notions of privacy in architectural plans and concludes that houses were organized to create an inward dignity, which provided privacy for the inhabitants. Sanne Maekelberg also looks at the relation between architecture and privacy. By looking at the residences of Charles de Croÿ, Her study shows how architecture can restrict access to a person or a space and thus create privacy. Lastly, eighteenth-century extended homes in Amsterdam are examined by Freek Schmidt. He argues that the separation between public and private was more temporal than architectural. The function of rooms could easily change, and rooms could therefore be more private or open depending on the needs of the inhabitants. The architecture of the house was thus closely related to the social life of the elite in eighteenth-century Amsterdam.

The other contributions all explore the different appearances of privacy in different sources, adding to the scope of the book. Jørgen Wadum looks at privacy in paintings of Rembrandt and Vermeer, whereas Ad Leerintveld examines the poetry of Constantijn Huygens. In her chapter, through a selection of sources like wills, letters, and inventories, Tirtsah Levie Bernfeld sheds light on the attitude of Portuguese Jews in Amsterdam toward privacy. Hanna De Lange, on the other hand, looks for notions of privacy in the book collection of an English merchant in Rotterdam, using the auction catalogue that was made up after his death to reconstruct his private library. In general, it is clear the book covers a wide array of topics, though this range also means that the connection between the different chapters is not always very strong.

This book shows a wide range of opportunities for potential research into conceptions of privacy in the early modern Low Countries. However, it also shows the need for further exploration of ways to analyze and categorize notions of privacy without being too much at risk of introducing anachronisms. Notions of privacy depend very much on context, which makes the study of privacy complicated. The case studies in this book show in an insightful manner how the methodologies – in particular, the zones of privacy and the terminological approaches – can be applied to different types of sources. Yet a broader exploration of their benefits and potential for future development would have been helpful. A general conclusion to the book in which these aspects could have been addressed is missing.

This book successfully shows how privacy and private life can be found in early modern sources, which offers possibilities for the incorporation of this topic in future research and encourages historians to further extend the ways in which they research privacy and private life in the early modern period.

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Catriona Macleod, Alexandra Shepard, and Maria Ågren (eds),
The Whole Economy. Work and Gender in Early Modern Europe
(Cambridge [etc.]: Cambridge University Press, 2023). 259 pp.
ISBN 9781009359368.

DOI: 10.52024/gbmp3k77

In *The Whole Economy. Work and Gender in Early Modern Europe*, edited by Catriona Macleod, Alexandra Shepard, and Maria Ågren, an international group of scholars collaborates to explore the evolution of the intricate relationship between gender dynamics and labor structures in the early modern period. Published in 2023, the book offers a diverse range of perspectives on this underexplored topic, challenging existing theories and stereotypes while providing valuable conceptual, methodological, and empirical insights.

The work is organized into seven chapters, each delving into different aspects that influenced life and work during the early modern period. Chapter 1, authored by Maria Ågren, challenges the conventional view of households as static, closed units. Her exploration