

Many other aspects of Art Nouveau are intriguingly explored: the role of colonialism, exploitative imperialism, and the hitherto largely ignored role that women played in the “new art” movement. A particularly interesting chapter discusses the Belgian Congo’s role in the substance, style, and, indeed, financial power of Art Nouveau in Belgium. However, while reading this account, it struck me that this is not a world in which Pablo Picasso’s *Les demoiselles d’Avignon* would have been at all welcome, or much understood. And yet Picasso’s masterpiece, the first “modern” painting and itself a product of the encounter between European art and the art from colonized Africa, dates from 1907, when much of the work Ashby discusses had yet to be created. Picasso is not mentioned by Ashby, nor is Oskar Kokoschka or Adolf Loos. But then why should they? Ashby’s subject is Art Nouveau, and these are figures with different trajectories, with different approaches to what the “new art” and architecture of the future needed to be. They were contemporaries of Art Nouveau, but going in a quite different direction, that of the “modernism” that Ashby mentions as superseding the “new art.” Art Nouveau, including the Vienna *Moderne*, was, it turns out, not so much “modern” as a form of “proto-modernism,” some of which led to later modernism, as in the work of Peter Behrens, some of which did not, left behind by other sources of what we now regard as our modern culture.

Ashby would be happy, I think, with this assessment of Art Nouveau, as she is quite aware of its limitations and inner contradictions—along with its great significance. She shows that a comprehensive understanding of the *global* Art Nouveau movement provides a context to the national and regional art movements within modern culture that greatly aids our understanding of them. Central European modern culture at the turn of the century, especially the Vienna *Moderne*, is a good case in point.

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## Samson, Alexander. *Mary and Philip: The Marriage of Tudor England and Habsburg Spain*

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During the past thirty years, some revisionist Tudor historians, among them Alexander Samson, Reader in Early Modern Studies at University College London, have focused their attention on the brief reign of the first queen regnant of England, Mary Tudor (1553–58). Famously labeled “Bloody Mary” a century after her death for sanctioning the burning of about 300 Protestants, she was the daughter of Henry VIII and his first wife, Catherine of Aragon. As England lurched through the early years of the Protestant Reformation that saw Henry VIII dismantle papal authority and assume the Supreme Headship of the English church, Mary remained a staunch Catholic even during the brief reign of her Calvinist brother, Edward VI. She also remained loyal to the memory of her Spanish mother and all who supported Catherine as she suffered through Henry’s divorce and her banishment from court and daughter. Mary’s Catholicism was a key motive behind Edward VI and his councilors’ plan to alter the succession in favor of the Protestant Lady Jane Grey. But at Edward’s death and Jane’s nine-day queenship, Mary raised troops and claimed her crown with broad support as Henry VIII’s heir. Following her coronation and first parliamentary session, Mary decided to marry Philip of Spain, Catholic son and heir of Charles V, Holy Roman Emperor, who himself was nephew to Catherine of Aragon. This union that lasted 4 years and the resulting co-monarchy is the subject of Samson’s monograph.

The dominant interpretations of Mary's reign for the past 200 years harshly condemn her as a person, wife, and queen. Many historians have found her humorless, stubborn, and narrow-minded; her wifely subordination to a foreign husband put Protestant English interests at risk; and her doomed restoration of Catholicism, attacks on Protestants, and failed war against France indicated a queen not up to the job. From G. R. Elton's dismissal of her as "rather stupid" (Elton 1981, 376) to a current textbook's lamentation of her reign as "tragic, even pathetic" (Bucholz and Key 2020, 111), Mary Tudor's reputation has remained almost as negative as that of King John—her only apparent achievement being the childlessness that enabled her Protestant half-sister Elizabeth to succeed her.

Enter the revisionists. Instead of seeing Mary's reign as an unfortunate roadblock on the journey to a fully realized Anglican Britain, scholars such as Judith Richardson, Sarah Duncan, Anna Whitelock, Susan Doran, Thomas Freeman, Alexandra Walsham, John Edwards, and Jeri McIntosh have reevaluated English Catholicism, Mary's character, and her achievements. Their assessments collectively offer a view of Mary as an experienced leader who as princess governed in Ludlow and her East Anglian properties, who as queen defeated two challenges to her rule (Lady Jane Grey in 1553 and Sir Thomas Wyatt in 1554), and whose successful marriage treaty and constitutional power as a queen strengthened both England and her successor. Samson's approach here, and in his earlier writings, situates Mary and Philip in their European and English contexts.

In chapters about the marriage negotiations, the royal entry into London, joint governance, and gendered monarchy, Samson argues that the union of Marian England with Habsburg Spain created a glistening international court in London that enhanced its status in continental affairs. He sees mutual commercial and economic benefits, especially in regard to the Hanseatic League's London presence, and he highlights the literary, artistic, and cultural energy that their court fostered. Philip's love of impressive tournaments meant that male courtiers had many opportunities to display their martial skills and masculine honor, and Mary's artistic patronage and lavish entertainments showed the couple's understanding of regal ritual. As for their marriage itself, Samson recognizes the difficulty in judging their private intimate relationship and prefers instead to focus on their actions in government and religion.

He finds both partners were "deeply engaged" (188) in governing England: their co-monarchy bound them in that common goal, Philip participated in policy decisions, and Mary was involved in and knowledgeable about government affairs as she exercised her regal authority. This joint rule worked well, Samson argues, because anti-Spanish views did not consume the wider public as they would after the 1588 Armada invasion and because Mary defended female monarchy through the marriage treaty, parliamentary laws, and self-presentation that claimed both gender roles. At her coronation, Mary received the scepter along with the spurs and sword of a king; she ate from gold service while Philip used silver; and in processions she rode on the dominant right side. A contemporary painting of the couple, facing one another under a large pendant Order of the Garter, appears on the book's cover and underscores Samson's thesis: Mary on the right is slightly larger than Philip on the left, and her direct gaze targets his forehead while his eyes find her nose so that she looks slightly down on him. Even so, Philip's name took precedence over hers in government documents and laws.

Samson's archival research does justice to the dual subjects of his study, especially in regard to the Spanish manuscripts and printed materials. Many of Philip's papers were lost in a 1559 shipwreck, but Samson brings other impressive primary sources to bear on his analysis of the Spanish king's governance and reputation. The book has a fine map of Mary's movements in 1553, fifteen color plates that express the richness of the couple's court, as well as chapter endnotes, a full bibliography, and index. While not an easy read, *Mary and Philip* investigates the key facets of this co-monarchy and its European environment and offers a useful reevaluation of this brief but crucial time in Tudor and early modern history.