WOMEN’S WRITING AND THE CIRCULATION OF IDEAS

Until recently it was widely believed that women in Renaissance and early modern England either did not write, or did not publish their work. It is now becoming clear that instead of using the emerging technology of print, many women writers circulated their works by hand, with friends copying and recopying poems, plays, and novels from each other or with the help of professional scribes. Through manuscript publication, women’s writing reached wide audiences and was collected and admired by both men and women. Women’s Writing and the Circulation of Ideas contributes to the discovery and reevaluation of women writers by examining the writing and manuscript publication of key authors from 1550 to 1800. The collection’s analysis of the range and meaning of women’s writing and its circulation during the rise of the modern print industry alters our understanding of the history of the book and early modern British literature alike.


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WOMEN’S WRITING AND THE CIRCULATION OF IDEAS

Manuscript Publication in England, 1550–1800

EDITED BY

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Figure 1  British Library ms Lansdowne 740, fol. 151v: stanzas 68–72 of Southwell’s poem on the third commandment, which praise the king. Reproduced by permission of The British Library.

Figure 2  Folger Shakespeare Library ms V.b.198, fol. 42v: stanzas 53–57 of Southwell’s poem on the fourth commandment, which praise the king. Reproduced by permission of The Folger Shakespeare Library.
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