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978-0-521-12176-7 - Women and Islam in Early Modern English Literature  
Bernadette Andrea

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## WOMEN AND ISLAM IN EARLY MODERN ENGLISH LITERATURE

In this innovative study, Bernadette Andrea focuses on the contributions of women and their writings in the early modern cultural encounters between England and the Islamic world. She examines previously neglected material, such as the diplomatic correspondence between Queen Elizabeth I and Safiye, the Ottoman queen mother, at the end of the sixteenth century, and resituates canonical accounts, including Lady Mary Wortley Montagu's travelogue of the Ottoman empire at the beginning of the eighteenth century. Her study advances our understanding of how women negotiated conflicting discourses of gender, orientalism, and imperialism at a time when the Ottoman empire was hugely powerful and England was still a marginal nation with limited global influence. This book is a significant contribution to critical and theoretical debates in literary and cultural, post-colonial, women's, and Middle Eastern studies.

BERNADETTE ANDREA is Associate Professor of English at the University of Texas, San Antonio.

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This project began during my time as a PhD candidate at Cornell University, where I pursued “parallel tracks” in the Departments of English and Near Eastern Studies. In the former, I answered the question I had broached while completing my master’s thesis at the University of Calgary on Milton’s representation of the mediated woman: what did women in seventeenth-century England have to say for themselves? When I began this investigation fifteen or so years ago, modern editions of early modern women’s writing were scarce (though many were in the works) and access to early modern texts on the World Wide Web was scarcely a dream. Hence, much of my work was archival, which involved a commitment to establishing the textual basis for an investigation of women’s writing in the period rather than privileging representations of women in books written by men. Without such archival work, as my assessment of the continuing absence of sustained attention to women’s writing in studies of early modern England and Islam underscores, women continue to be left out of this discussion as speaking subjects. Many of the groundbreaking scholars who toiled to make early modern women’s writing accessible in modern editions are acknowledged in my endnotes.

While delving into the archives of early modern women’s writing for my doctoral dissertation, I also pursued the study of Arabic, which is a heritage language for me, with generous teachers such as Munther Younes, Samer Alatout, and David Powers of Cornell’s Near Eastern Studies Department. At that time, incredibly, a graduate student from English in an Arabic class was a curiosity, with most students linking western European literature and Islam coming from Romance language departments. Although I did not

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