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0521467772 - Women and Literature in Britain, 1500-1700

Edited by Helen Wilcox

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This is the first comprehensive introduction to the works and social contexts of women writers in early modern Britain, a period when it was considered unfeminine to write and yet women were the authors of many poems, translations, conduct books, autobiographies, plays, pamphlets and other texts. Drawing together the pioneering work of feminist literary critics and historians, this survey examines ways in which the idea of woman was constructed in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and women's role in and access to literary culture; it then focuses on women writers and their output across the spectrum of genres from courtly romance to Quaker prophecy. A unique chronology offers a woman-centred perspective on historical and literary events, and there is a guide to further reading. *Women and Literature in Britain, 1500-1700* explores the history of women's part in the development of literary culture, while revealing how paradoxical that history can be.

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EDITED BY
HELEN WILCOX
University of Groningen



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HELEN WILCOX is Professor of English Literature at the University of Groningen, The Netherlands. Her research and publications concern early modern women's writing, seventeenth-century devotional poetry and Shakespeare. She has co-edited *Teaching Women: Feminism and English Studies* (1989), *Her Own Life: Autobiographical Writings by Seventeenth-Century Englishwomen* (1989), *The Body and the Text* (1990) and *George Herbert: Sacred and Profane* (1995).

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A note on references

Page numbering

Some early modern manuscripts (mss) and printed books do not have pages numbered according to the modern convention. In cases where a number refers to a sheet of paper, both back and front, then these two sides are distinguished in references as 'r' (recto, meaning the front, i.e. the right-hand half of a double open page) and 'v' (verso, meaning the reverse or back of the sheet).

In some early printed books there are no numbers at all but signs such as a printer's mark or a letter at the bottom of the first page of a new section of the book. In these cases, the reference A3v, for example, means the back of the third (right-hand) page of the section marked A; if the beginning of this section was page 1 of the book, then A3v would be page 6 in modern numbering.

Abbreviations

Some publications are referred to in this book by means of abbreviations, as follows:

<i>ANQ</i>	<i>American Notes and Queries</i>
<i>DLB</i>	<i>Dictionary of Literary Biography</i>
<i>DNB</i>	<i>Dictionary of National Biography</i>
<i>EC</i>	<i>Essays in Criticism</i>
<i>ELH</i>	<i>English Literary History</i>
<i>ELN</i>	<i>English Language Notes</i>
<i>ELR</i>	<i>English Literary Renaissance</i>
<i>EMS</i>	<i>English Manuscript Studies</i>
<i>HLQ</i>	<i>Huntington Library Quarterly</i>
<i>JEGP</i>	<i>Journal of English and Germanic Philology</i>
<i>JEH</i>	<i>Journal of Ecclesiastical History</i>
<i>MLQ</i>	<i>Modern Language Quarterly</i>

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A note on references

<i>MP</i>	<i>Modern Philology</i>
<i>MQ</i>	<i>Musical Quarterly</i>
<i>PMLA</i>	<i>Proceedings of the Modern Language Association of America</i>
<i>RD</i>	<i>Renaissance Drama</i>
<i>RES</i>	<i>Review of English Studies</i>
<i>SB</i>	<i>Shakespeare Bulletin</i>
<i>SC</i>	<i>The Seventeenth Century</i>
<i>SCJ</i>	<i>Sixteenth Century Journal</i>
<i>SCR</i>	<i>South Central Review</i>
<i>SEL</i>	<i>Studies in English Literature</i>
<i>SP</i>	<i>Studies in Philology</i>
<i>SQ</i>	<i>Shakespeare Quarterly</i>
<i>SS</i>	<i>Shakespeare Survey</i>

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Chronology: women and literature in Britain, 1500–1700

<i>Event</i>	<i>Text</i> (publication unless stated to the contrary)
1501	Margery Kempe, <i>Short Treatise of Contemplacyon</i>
1504	Lady Margaret Beaufort, translation of <i>The Imitation of Christ</i> (Thomas a Kempis)
1509	Henry VIII's accession to the English throne
1521	Christine de Pisan, <i>Book of the City of Ladies</i> published in English
1524	Margaret (More) Roper, translation of <i>A Devout Treatise Upon the Pater Noster</i> (Erasmus)
1529	Juan Luis Vives, <i>The Instruction of a Christian Woman</i> (1523) published in English
1533	Catherine of Aragon divorced by Henry VIII
1534	Reformation consolidated in England Henry VIII made 'supreme head' of the Church of England
1536	Execution of Anne Boleyn Wales annexed to the English crown
1536-9	Henry VIII closes convents and monasteries
1538	Destruction of shrine of Virgin Mary at Walsingham
1540	
1541	Henry VIII declared King of Ireland
1545	
1546	Execution of Anne Askewe
1547	Edward VI's accession
1548	
1550	(approximately)
1553	Mary's accession as first Queen Regnant of England since the disputed rule of Matilda (twelfth century)
	Sir Thomas Elyot, <i>Defence of Good Women</i>
	Anon., <i>The Scholehouse of Women</i> (attributed in 1548 to Edward Gossynhyll)
	Katherine Parr, <i>Prayers or Meditations</i>
	Anne (Cooke) Bacon, translation of <i>Sermons of Bernadine Ochine of Sena</i>
	Jane Lumley, manuscript translation of Euripedes' play <i>Iphigenia in Aulis</i>

- 1554 Execution of Lady Jane Grey (who reigned briefly in 1553 as the Protestant alternative to Mary)
- 1558 Elizabeth I's accession
- 1560
- 1563 John Knox, *First Blast of the Trumpet against the monstrous regiment of women*
- 1564 Ann Lok, translation of Calvin's *Sermons* with her own sonnet cycle appended
- 1573 First English edition of Foxe's *Book of Martyrs (Actes and Monuments)*
- 1574 Anne (Cooke) Bacon, translation of *An Apologie in defence of the Church of England* (official translation of John Jewel's text on church doctrine)
- 1575-6 Isabella Whitney, *A sweet Nosegay, or pleasant Poeye*
- 1578 Elizabeth Tyrwhit, *Morning and Evening Prayers*
- 1582 Margaret Tyler, translation of *The Mirrour of Princely deedes and Knighthood* (secular romance by Diego Ortunez de Calahorra)
- 1584 Thomas Bentley, ed., *The Monument of Matrones*
- 1586 Anne Wheathill, *A Handfull of holesome (though homelie) hearbs*
- 1587 William Camden, *Britannia*
- 1588 *Jane Anger, her protection for Women*
- 1589 Anne Downriche, *The French Historie*
- 1592 Mary Sidney, Countess of Pembroke, translation of *Antoniüs* (tragedy by Robert Garnier)
- Philip Stubbes, *A Christall Glasse, for Christian Women* (on his late wife Katherine)
- Statute passed (18 Elizabeth) withdrawing benefit of clergy from those who raped by force
- Execution of Margaret Clitherow
- Treaty of Berwick between Scots and English
- Execution of Mary Queen of Scots
- Queen Elizabeth's Tilbury speech
- Spanish Armada defeated

	<i>Text</i> (publication unless stated to the contrary)	
1599	Death of Elizabeth I	Mary Sidney presents manuscript of psalms in verse transition to Queen Elizabeth
1603	Accession of James VI of Scotland to English throne Witchcraft made a punishable offence in English law	Lady Anne Clifford begins her <i>Diary</i> Elizabeth Melville, Lady Culross, <i>Ane Godlie Dreame</i> (in Scots dialect; printed in English c. 1606) Elizabeth Grymeston, <i>Miscelanea</i> Elizabeth (Cooke) Russell, translation of <i>A Way of Reconciliation</i> (John Poynt)
1604		Robert Filmer, <i>Patriarcha</i>
1605		'Authorised Version' (otherwise known as the 'King James Bible') Aemilia Lanyer, <i>Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum</i>
1609	Lady Arbella Stuart attempts to escape to the continent with William Seymour	Elizabeth Cary, <i>The Tragedie of Mariam</i>
1611		Helkiah Crooke, <i>Microscographia: a Description of the Body of Man</i> , first English medical text to mention the clitoris (identified in Venice in 1559 as the 'seat of woman's delight') Joseph Swetnam, <i>The Arraignment of Lewed, idle, forward and unconstant women</i> Dorothy Leigh, <i>The Mothers Blessing</i> Rachel Speight, <i>A Mouzell for Melastomus</i> Ester Sowernam, <i>Ester hath hang'd Haman</i> Constantia Munda, <i>The Worming of a Mad Dogge</i>
1613	Marriage of Elizabeth Stuart (daughter of James I and Queen Anne) to Frederick the Elector Palatine	
1615	Trial of Frances Howard	
1616		
1617		

- 1620 King James pronounces on women wearing men's apparel
- 1621 Anon., *Suetnam the Woman Hater Arraigned by Women*
 Anon., *Hic Mulier, Haec Vir*
- 1622 Lady Mary Wroth, *The Countesse of Montgomeries Urania*
- 1623 Rachel Speght, *Moralities Memorandum*
- 1624 Elizabeth Clinton, *The Countesse of Lincolnes Nurserie*
- 1625 M. R., *The Mother's Counsell*
- 1626 Elizabeth Joceline, *The Mothers Legacie*
- 1629 Lady Eleanor Douglas, *A Warning to the Dragon*
- 1631 Helen Livingston, Countess of Linlithgow, *Confession and Conversion*
- 1632 William Livingstone, *Conflicti in Conscience* (narrative of Bessie Clerksone)
- T. E., *The Leaves Resolutions of Womens Rights*
 Martha Moulsworth writes her autobiographical poem 'My Name was Martha'
- 1633 Alice Sutcliffe, *Meditations of Man's Mortalitie*
- 1634 Jane Owen, *Antidote against Purgatory*
- 1640 Mary Tattlewell and Joan Hit-him-home, *The Women's Sharpe Revenge*
- 1641 Relaxation of publishing laws
- 1642 Women petition parliament in London, led by Anne Stagg, 'Gentlewomen and Brewer's Wife'
 Outbreak of civil war
 Public theatres closed (until 1660)
- 1645 Katherine Chidley, *A New-Yeares Gift and Good Counsel to the Petitioners*
 Elizabeth Richardson, *A Ladies Legacie to her Daughters*
- 1648 Elizabeth Poole, *A Vision ... the disease and cure of the kingdome*
- 1649 Anna Weamys, *A Continuation of Sir Philip Sidney's 'Arcadia'*
- 1651 Mary Cary, *A New and More Exact Mappe*
- 1625 Charles I's accession
- Execution of Charles I; declaration of Commonwealth

<i>Event</i>	<i>Text (publication unless stated to the contrary)</i>
1652	
1653	'Pacification' of Ireland by Cromwellian army
1654	An Collins, <i>Divine Songs and Meditations</i> Margaret Cavendish, Duchess of Newcastle, <i>Poems and Fancies and Philosophicall Fancies</i> Anna Trapnel, <i>The Cry of a Stone</i> Arise Evans, <i>A Message from God, By a Dumb Woman</i> (Elinor Channel's prophecy)
1656	Margaret Cavendish, <i>Nature's Pictures</i>
1658	Sarah Jinner, <i>An Almanack or Prognostication for Women</i>
1659	Anna Maria van Schuurmann, <i>The Learned Maid</i> published in English
1660	
1661	Hannah Wolley, <i>The Ladies Directory</i>
1662	Royal patent that women should play female roles on public stage
1663	<i>The Life and Death of Mrs Mary Frith, Commonly Called Mad Culperse</i> Margaret Cavendish, <i>Plays</i>
1664	Mary Carleton, <i>An Historical Narrative</i>
1666	Katherine Philips's translation of <i>Pompey</i> (Corneille) performed in Dublin
1667	Katherine Philips, <i>Poems</i> Margaret Fell Fox, <i>Womens Speaking Justified</i>
1669	<i>Poems by Mrs Katherine Philips, the Matchless Orinda</i> Dorothy Pakington, <i>Causes of the Decay of Christian Piety</i> Frances Boothby, <i>Marcellia: or the Treacherous Friend</i> performed in London by the King's Company
1670	Aphra Behn, <i>The For'd Marriage</i> and Elizabeth Polwhele, <i>The Faithful Virgins</i> performed in London by the Duke's Company

- 1671 Lucy Hutchinson, *Memoirs of the Life of Colonel Hutchinson* completed (in manuscript until 1806)
 Jane Sharp, *The Midwives Book*
- 1673 Bathsua Makin, *Essay to Revive the Ancient Education of Gentlewomen*
 Susanna Bell, *The Legacy of a Dying Mother*
 Anne Wentworth, *A Vindication*
- 1677 Midwife Elizabeth Cellier tried for alleged involvement in the 'Mcal-Tub Plot' (a supposed Catholic plot to assassinate Charles II)
- 1683 Jane Lead, *Revelation of Revelations*
- 1685 Aphra Behn, *Oroonoko*
 Lord Halifax, *The Lady's New-Years Gift: or, Advice to a Daughter*
 Elizabeth Cellier, *To Dr---An Answer to his Queries*
- 1688 James II's accession
- 1689 'Glorious Revolution'; accession of William and Mary
- 1691 *Account of the Travels, Sufferings and Persecutions of Barbara Blaugdone*
 Mary Astell, *A Serious Proposal to the Ladies*
- 1694 Catherine Trotter, *Agnes de Castro*
- 1695 Delarivier Manley, *The Royal Mischief*
- 1696 Judith Drake, *An Essay in Defence of the Female Sex*
 Mary Pix, *The Beau Defeated*
- 1700 Posthumous publication of Mary Mollineux, *Fruits of Retirement, or Miscellaneous Poems*
- 1702