

LIBERTY AND THE POLITICS OF THE FEMALE VOICE IN EARLY STUART ENGLAND

The female voice was deployed by male and female authors alike to signal emerging discourses of religious and political liberty in early Stuart England. Christina Luckyj's important new study focuses critical attention on writing in multiple genres to show how, in the coded rhetoric of seventeenth-century religious politics, the wife's conscience in resisting tyranny represents the rights of the subject, and the bride's militant voice in the Song of Songs champions Christ's independent jurisdiction. Revealing this gendered system of representation through close analysis of writings by Elizabeth Cary, Aemilia Lanyer, Rachel Speght, Mary Wroth and Anne Southwell, Luckyj illuminates the dangers of essentializing female voices and restricting them to domestic space. Through their connections with parliament, with factional courtiers, or with dissident religious figures, major women writers occupied a powerful oppositional stance in relation to early Stuart monarchs and crafted a radical new politics of the female voice.

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For my people:
Keith, Julia, and Stefan

Contents

<i>Acknowledgments</i>	<i>page</i> viii
<i>Notes on Texts</i>	x
Introduction: Female Voices, Women Writers, Godly Coalitions	I
1 The Politics of the Female Voice	33
2 Conscience and Desire	51
3 Elizabeth Cary and the “Publike-Good”	86
4 “Not Sparing Kings”: Aemilia Lanyer	112
5 Rachel Speght and the “Criticall Reader”	147
6 Mary Wroth and the Politics of Liberty	175
7 “Yokefellow or Slave”: Anne Southwell	216
Epilogue: Anonymity and “Reasonable Libertie”	257
<i>Index</i>	277

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Some chapters in this book draw on previously published material. Chapter 5 in particular, “Rachel Speght and the ‘Criticall Reader’” is based on my two essays: “Rachell Speght and the ‘Criticall Reader,’” *English Literary Renaissance* © 2006 and “A Mouzell for Melastomus in Context: Rereading the Swetnam–Speght Debate,” *English Literary Renaissance* © 2010. I am grateful for permission to reproduce this material here. Small portions of Chapter 2 on William Whately and of Chapter 3, “Elizabeth

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ix

Cary and the “Publike-Good,” appeared in my essay, “Marriage, Politics and Law in *The Tragedy of Mariam* and *The Duchess of Malfi*,” in Rory Loughnane and Edel Semple (eds.), *Staged Transgression in Shakespeare’s England* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 89–103. My discussion of *Othello* in Chapter 1 owes some of its formulations to my Introduction to the third edition of *Othello*, ed. Norman Sanders (Cambridge University Press, 2018). And a portion of Chapter 4 on Aemilia Lanyer was previously published as “‘Not Sparing Kings’: Aemilia Lanyer and the Religious Politics of Female Alliance,” in the volume I co-edited with Niamh J. O’Leary, *The Politics of Female Alliance in Early Modern England* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2017), 165–82. I am grateful to these publishers for permission to reproduce this material here.

Notes on Texts

When citing early modern texts, I have retained the original spelling and punctuation but have modernized u and v, i and j.

Unless otherwise stated, all biblical quotations are taken from *The Geneva Bible: A Facsimile of the 1560 Edition* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1969).

Deletion of letters or words by erasure or by being crossed out in the manuscript are indicated by angled brackets: < >.

“Canticles” is an alternative name for the Song of Songs, or the Song of Solomon. All three names are used in the text.

References to the OED throughout the book are to the online version of the *Oxford English Dictionary*.