WOMEN AND PUBLICATION IN SIXTEENTH-CENTURY FRANCE

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France, in the sixteenth century, experienced an unprecedented transformation in the modes, meaning and technology of publication from manuscript to print. This thesis explores how women participated in evolving and eventually diverging scribal and print forms, during this unique era in publication culture. I argue that women’s published writings arise from a distinct publication sub-culture, separate from those of men. Exploration of women’s writings can help historians understand female experiences of publication.

In order to approach a study of the complex relationship between women and publication culture, I have adopted several original strategies. I expand the study of women and publication by assembling a wide sample group of female authors and publishing experiences. To do so, I examine all types of published writing by women, from prefaces and laudatory verse to entire editions of poetry and prose. This thesis presents the only checklist of all known women’s writings in printed texts between 1488 and 1599. Furthermore, I broaden the concept of publication to include also scribal publication which occurred through circulation and presentation of manuscripts. I challenge the view that manuscript offered a “safe” means of semi-public exposure for female authors. My data suggests that women’s experiences of participation in publication appeared almost identical in both scribal and print mediums. This thesis draws its conclusions from quantitative and qualitative analysis of both women’s printed and manuscript writings.

This thesis explores specific contexts of female publication. I maintain that the discourses to which women could contribute were limited by theoretical understandings of women’s roles and appropriate speech, and the practicalities of access to an education which supplied them with the knowledge they would need to contribute. Further, I examine other restrictions to female writing which were caused by contemporary perceptions of women’s duties and the consequent lack of free time.
and space women could spare from household responsibilities in which to write. The particular context and culture of print publication is also investigated. Women's ability to print their writings was constrained by publishers' and printers' perceptions of female access to publication and public discourses.

Consequently, women developed strategies for agency to publish under such circumstances. Sometimes they justified their published work by adapting the very same perceptions which others used to deny female access to publication. Women exploited the rhetorical strategy of domestic speech, situating their dialogue within the confines of household locations and as necessary to fulfil familial obligations. Others constructed discursive space for their work in southern regions of France by distancing themselves from the typically elite male literary participation in the northern court circles. Women's writings were published in marginal spaces such as in prefaces or translation. Again, I contend that they could turn these restrictions to advantages, discussing politics and challenging prevailing views of women.

Although this study focusses primarily on female authors, I also examine how women could participate in publication in other ways, as patrons, commentators and critics, book collectors, readers of published material and as printers, publishers and booksellers. The gendered mentalité of publication culture influenced these women's experiences of participation as well. Women working as printers, publishers and booksellers struggled, like female authors, to establish their right to participate in publication culture. I argue that the structures, functions and persistence of gendered imbalances affected not only women as authors of publications, but more holistically, the relationship of all women to publication culture in sixteenth-century France.
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Notes on Text

Although this study concerns women and publication in early modern France, its arguments may be of interest to researchers examining other European environments. For greater accessibility to these readers, all foreign-language quotations have been translated into English in the main body of the thesis.

The original text of sixteenth-century writings is available in the footnotes. All translations are my own, except where otherwise indicated. Spellings are reproduced as in the original work. I have not added [sic] after any unusual spellings in the original French, since much sixteenth-century writing is spelt irregularly, often with little or no internal consistency. Women especially tend to employ unconventional spellings and for modern researchers to place [sic] after every inconsistency seems to encourage a perception of early modern women as unlearned about their own language.

Tittles, that is, lines over a letter indicating a missing letter or letters, are shown next to the letter they are printed above in the original text. For example, where an original text spells opinion as opinio-, the line following the o indicates a tittle above the o in the original text. Occasionally, us, as in vous, is reproduced as in the original text as vo9.

I have chosen to leave all book titles in their original languages, so that those which refer to texts by women can be more easily found in the appendices. Since titles of sixteenth-century texts tend to be very lengthy, I have used full titles only for those works not listed in the bibliography. All sixteenth-century printed texts to which women contributed are given a short title in the text and footnotes of the thesis. Full titles of these texts can be found in Appendix 1.

I have chosen to call female authors by their surname, as scholars call male authors. To call women by their first names and their male contemporaries by their surname, as many works do, seems to encourage a perception that men as writers are to be taken more seriously, and women are mere "dabblers" in literary
discourse. Just as no scholar would call Montaigne or Rabelais, Michel or François, there seems no reason why female authors such as Marie de Gournay or Pernette du Guilet should be set apart from serious male authors as Marie or Pernette. The only instance in which I do not follow this rule is for the names of women and men of the royal family, where it is usual to designate them by first name. Indeed, it may be confusing to do otherwise. "Navarre" could refer to Marguerite de Navarre or her grand-daughter Catherine de Navarre, as well as several men. Generally, I have tried to refer to all female authors by the name by which they are most commonly known. Louise Charly is most usually referred to as Louise Labé, Marguerite de Briet as Hélisenne de Cremne, and Madeleine Neveu and her daughter, Catherine Fradonnet, as the Mesdames des Roches.
INTRODUCTION

The sixteenth century experienced an extraordinary transformation in the meanings and modes of publication. With the introduction of the print medium, a massive technical, intellectual and cultural revolution began to occur all across Europe. The printing trades reached Paris in 1470, and the next one hundred years or so would see an unprecedented shift in the forms, meaning and technology of publication from manuscript to print. The sixteenth century in France was a unique moment in publication culture, of evolving and eventually diverging scribal and print forms. In this study, I explore how women participated in this period of profound transition of the modes and understanding of publication.

A separate female literary corpus?

Research on women’s experiences in early modern Europe has typically explored official documents and treatises which were mainly written by men. Women’s writings of the period might provide a different perspective that could challenge our understanding of women’s lives. In particular, I argue that women’s published writings may arise from a distinct publication sub-culture, separate from those of men, which could illustrate female experiences of publication.

Modern feminist literary critics, such as Hélène Cixous, Luce Irigaray and Nancy K. Miller, argue that such a different perspective in writing could be possible, as a female practice of writing apart from men’s, as écriteur féminin, or as women writers celebrating their différence as a way of writing. Cixous defines a process of écriteur féminin in the following way: “Woman must write her self: must write about women and bring women to writing ... Woman must put herself into the text - as into the world and into history - by her own

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movement". However, Cixous argues that a feminine practice of writing "will be conceived of only by subjects who are breakers of automatisms, by peripheral figures that no authority can ever subjugate". She claims that the majority of women's existing writings are in no way different from those of men and suggests that such a process could only ever occur in a future post-patriarchal context.

How then are we, as scholars and as feminists, to approach a study of female published writings of the past? There is plentiful evidence to suggest that women living in sixteenth-century France published under vastly different conditions from those of men. Women's ability to publish texts was determined by the material conditions of their lives, such as their gendered access to education and to texts as readers. Their experiences both as women and as authors were further shaped by sixteenth-century theoretical understandings of "woman". As a consequence of such conditions, women's writing made up far less than 1% of the total printed editions in sixteenth-century France. This suggests an extraordinary divergence from male authors' experiences of print publication.

How useful are twentieth-century criteria and ideologies in assessing a body of work formed in another era with differing ideologies? Some feminist critics have offered alternative methods to perceive difference (from men) in female writings. Nancy K. Miller proposes that we examine the content and theme of women's works. She argues that examples exist if "we situate difference in the insistence of a certain thematic structuration, in the form of content". Discussing early modern women in particular, Patricia Francis Cholakian develops an alternative methodology for identifying feminine writing:

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4 "Le Rire de la Méduse" p. 253, in ibid., p. 93.
5 This conclusion is drawn from my research explored in chapter 3, pp. 81-82.
It is better to begin with an open-ended set of questions. How does the writer portray women? How does she portray men? What ideas or themes does she dwell on? What does she leave out? What does she say about her own writing, her purposes, her difficulties? Does her authorial voice intrude itself as discourse? Does a preface, a dedication, or an aside give a clue to her intentions or the problem of composition she may have experienced? In what ways do gender identities, male-female relationships, or the female body manifest themselves in the text?\footnote{P.F. Cholakian, \textit{Rape and Writing in the Heptameron of Marguerite de Navarre}, Carbondale, Southern Illinois University Press, 1991, p. 220.}

Rather than searching for instances of women writing as figures unsubjugated by authority, researchers can ask questions such as these to explore the more finely nuanced gender differences between men and women’s writings within sixteenth-century French society.

The texts of published women writers did differ in intriguing ways from those of male writers in the sixteenth century. Women certainly did not produce equal quantities of published work to their male counterparts. The genres women chose for their works, the topics they chose to discuss, the locations in which these women’s writings appeared in texts, and the ways that women presented themselves as authors involved different and sometimes extraordinary strategies from those of contemporary male writers. Female writings are writings apart, distinct and unlike that of their male counterparts. Early modern women and their texts warrant a separate historical, cultural and literary examination that takes into account the differences produced by what were frequently gendered restrictions to their participation in publication.

\textit{Historiography of women as authors}

This is not to say no studies of early modern French women writers have yet been undertaken. As far back as the sixteenth century itself, women who published were discussed. Attempts were made to catalogue French women as writers alongside men in the 1584 \textit{Bibliotheques} of François La Croix du Maine and, in
1585, of Antoine du Verdier. Even today, these works remain some of the most valuable sources of information about women’s scribal and print publishing activities in the sixteenth century. However, many studies of women writers have been extremely limited in scope and some of them patronising in tone.

Many of those who chose to recall sixteenth-century female authors in the centuries which followed praised women grudgingly, if at all. Nicolas-Toussaint Le Moyne des Essarts described the poetry of Madeleine and Catherine des Roches as “insipid” in his 1800 Les Siècles littéraires de la France. His appraisal of Marie de Gournay’s literary abilities was barely more: “She was familiar with all the learned languages; she wrote badly in her own; but it was a great deal then for a woman even to know how to write”. The eighteenth-century memorialist Jean-Pierre Niceron pronounced an even more damning assessment of Gournay: “This young lady had no talent for poetry”. Nineteenth-century literary critics who concentrated on women’s writings felt the need to justify the choice and worth of their study. Léon Feugère’s 1860 examination of Les Femmes Poètes au XVIe siècle ended with the explanation that it was the duty of his generation to resurrect literature of the past:

At least I will be excused for this reason for having lent, for too long perhaps, an indulgent ear to the first faltering expressions of the French mind.

Discussions of sixteenth-century women writers have also tended to be limited in scope. Entries in the two Bibliothèques reflected to some extent La Croix du Maine’s and Du Verdier’s own contemporary circle of friends and practical network of patrons. Moreover, those entries that concern educated

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8 François La Croix du Maine, Premier volume de La Bibliothèque du Sieur de la Croix du Maine, Paris, Abel L’Angelier, 1584 and Antoine du Verdier, La Bibliothèque d’Antoine Du Verdier, seigneur de Vauprivas, contenant le catalogue de tous ceux qui ont escrit ou traduit en français et autres dialectes de ce royaueme, Lyons, Barthélemy Honorat, 1585.
10 “Toutes les langues savantes lui étaient familières: elle écrivait mal dans la sienne; mais c’était beaucoup alors pour une femme, que de savoir écrire”, in BN microfiche-m-25273-470-277.
11 J-P. Niceron, Mémoires pour servir à l’histoire des hommes illustres dans la république des lettres, (1729-45) in BN microfiche-m-25273-470-274.
contemporary women were remarkably stereotypical, rather than specific to the individual women author. When in 1647 Hilarion de Coste produced *Les Eloges et les vies des reynes, des princesses et des dames illustres*, he concentrated primarily on a small number of exceptional writers of noble or royal birth. A few studies devoted exclusively to women writers began to appear in the eighteenth century with Joseph de la Porte’s 1769 *Histoire littéraire des femmes françaises*, and continued into the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

It seems significant to note in a study discussing the relationship of women and publication that almost no modern research has concentrated on analysing the approach of some early female critics, commentators and compilers of women’s writings. In 1787, Louise de Keralio produced the 14-volume study, the *Collection des meilleurs ouvrages francois composées par des femmes françaises, dédiée aux femmes*. A small entry on Keralio in the *Dictionnaire des lettres françaises: Le XVIIIe siècle*, revised in 1995, makes no mention of her extensive compilation of women’s writings and does not include the 14 volumes among her œuvres. Similarly, little research has been conducted on the work of Marguerite-Ursuline-Fortunée Bernier Briquet who composed in 1804 her *Dictionnaire historique, littéraire et bibliographique des Françaises, et des étrangères naturalisées en France, connues par leurs écrits*. There is much more study, beyond the scope of this thesis, to be undertaken to uncover whether, and in what ways, these women’s approaches to female writings differed from those of male critics.

Interest in sixteenth-century French women’s writings has generally concentrated on the works of a few exceptional women. Typically, attention has focussed on women who were notable because of their high social status such as Marguerite de Navarre, a member of the French royal family. Her *Heptaméron* is

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15 Some work has been undertaken in this area by the Folger Collective on Early Women Critics (eds), *Women Critics, 1660-1820*, Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1995.
frequently privileged as a "high" literary text and part of the "canon". Likewise, the writings of Louise Labé, the woman whom Calvin labelled "that common courtesan", have been widely studied since the sixteenth century, as a result both of her discussion of physical love and of an enduring fascination with the myth of her sexual exploits. It should be noted, however, that neither she nor Marguerite have enjoyed anything approaching the literary attention bestowed on male writers such as François Rabelais or Michel de Montaigne, for example. Studies devoted to a select famous few women continue to obscure the study and reproduction of a wider body of female writings. In recent years, individual studies of women's works have still tended to be restricted to printed and easily accessible texts in modern editions. These include studies of the works of Louise Labé, Mesdames des Roches, Hélisenne de Crenne, Marie de Gournay and more recently, a few lesser known writings by authors such as Gabrielle de Coignard.

**Strategies for approaching a study of women and publication**

In order to approach a study of the complex relationship between women and publication culture, I have adopted four strategies. The first concerns the range of women's texts to be examined. I expand the study of women and publication by assembling a wide sample group of female authors and publishing experiences. This thesis examines a large array of authors, and broadens the concept of publication. Critical evaluations of the texts and authorial strategies of such women discussed above are a valuable addition to the understanding of sixteenth-century women's literature. However, analysis of a wider sample body of literature is advantageous to examine the conclusions about female experiences drawn from these famous and unconventional few. We can better understand the elements of Marguerite de Navarre's or Louise Labé's

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publications which were unique or universal by juxtaposing their experiences with those of many other women writing.

Recent feminist writing has made us aware of the dangers of using "woman" or "women" as a category which ignores difference.¹⁸ The women whose writings, lives and situations I will examine in this thesis were all affected by generalizations about female capacity and nature, and also by the historically specific circumstances of their own lives and class situation. Marie de Romieu, a baker’s daughter from a provincial town in the south of France, had no doubt a self-perception vastly different from that of a woman writing at the court of Catherine de Medici, though both might share some common elements in their comprehension of what it meant to be female. Women’s writings expressed views that were specific to their sex, financial status, occupation, and individual understanding of both themselves and the world around them.

My second strategy involves broadening the concept of publication to include scribal publication which occurred through circulation and presentation of manuscripts. Women’s manuscript writings have been largely unexplored in all studies of female authorship. However, in sixteenth-century France, not all publication was print publication. Much contemporary writing by women was in manuscripts, some of which were distributed in multiple copies. Harold Love’s recent study of manuscript transmission in seventeenth-century England observes that manuscript circulation was also imbued with a sense of "scribal" publication.¹⁹ Love argues that manuscript transmission, like printed publications, could also reach a large number of readers in its transcription and circulation, and connoted a similar notion of textual surrender in a public setting.²⁰ David R. Carlson describes a similar process in early sixteenth-century England where several modes of publication existed simultaneously. He suggests that multiple manuscript copies were circulated among peers and deluxe copies

²⁰ Ibid., p. 40.
presented to potential patrons as alternative forms of publication to print.\textsuperscript{21} Carlson argues that each of these methods was "endowed with distinctive value within the current system of publication".\textsuperscript{22} In sixteenth-century France, using the term "publication" to denote only printed works is equally problematic. There too, manuscripts were frequently understood by readers and writers to be public, that is, audience-directed. Mellin de Saint-Gelais's career as a poet was established through manuscript circulation of his work at court.\textsuperscript{23} In this study, I use "published" and "publications" as terms with both scribal and print possibilities.

Given these alternate forms of contemporary publication, scribal and print, any study of French women's published writings must include some comparison with scribally published works. My survey excludes those manuscript writings by women which were not distributed publicly nor intended as public documents, such as wills and private exchanges of letters. Antoinette de Loynes' private correspondence to her husband, Jean de Morel, was clearly not intended as a published text in the same way as the printed stylised letters of the Mesdames des Roches in the 1586 Missives or Hélisense de Crenne's 1539 Epistres familières et invectives.\textsuperscript{24} However, it is more difficult to measure the volume and content of manuscripts than those of printed texts. For quantitative evidence of trends in women's writings I have tended therefore to use data concerning all women's writings in printed texts catalogued in Appendices. This checklist is the first to compile sixteenth-century women writers' publications. While a smaller bibliography spanning the years 1488 to 1549 has recently been published by William Kemp, the two have clearly differing parameters. Kemp's bibliography covers entire works by women, whereas the checklist here also includes minor works by women such as prefaces and marginal verse.\textsuperscript{25} Where

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{22} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 165.
  \item \textsuperscript{24} Morel family letters in BN ms. fr. 4673.
  \item \textsuperscript{25} Kemp intends to expand this bibliography to include the whole sixteenth century in the future. "Textes composés ou traduits par des femmes et imprimés en France avant 1550: bibliographie des imprimés féminins (1488-1549)"., \textit{Littératures}, 18, 1998, pp. 151-220.
\end{itemize}
relevant, I have tried to demonstrate qualitatively those same structures present in scribal publications by drawing upon extant women’s writings in manuscripts.

It should be stated at this point that I am not attempting a full scale cliometric approach in this study. I hope to present a balanced examination of women and publication by drawing upon both quantitative and qualitative evidence. I do believe that certain cultural phenomena can be quantified. In this, I follow the direction of the French New Historical school, which evolved from the work of the 1930s Annalistes, and produces historical studies supported by a range of social science perspectives including anthropological, economic and demographic and statistical approaches. Indeed, the simple statistic indicating women contributed less than 1% of writings to sixteenth-century printed texts does highlight certain gender and class factors at play in early modern publication culture and society in general. I intend the statistical analysis I employ here, simple as it may be, to be a useful way of viewing women’s contribution to early modern publication.

I examine all types of published writing by women, from prefaces and laudatory verse to entire editions of poetry and prose. This thesis presents the only checklist of known Frenchwomen’s writings in French printed texts between 1488 and 1599. All women’s writings, irrespective of their literary merit, are of interest. Generally, I term all women who published, whether in print or scribally, “female authors” or “women writers”. This certainly does not reflect the way women who published were seen by their contemporaries but reinforces my aim to avoid pronouncing judgements of literary merit upon women’s writings in order to analyse the context of all women’s published writings. My approach is similar to that of exponents of the theories of the new historicist school and cultural materialists who, Carol Thomas Neely suggests, “refuse to privilege “high” literary texts [in order to] ... emphasise the cultural work which all texts

perform”. For example, the women’s writings examined in this study range from prefaces and marginal sonnets in the works of men, to entire works of poetry and prose by female authors. The women writers whose works are explored here constitute a sizeable group. They reflect the many diverse experiences French women had of publication from its print origins to the end of the sixteenth century. By broadening the group of women writing, it may become clear that those women who have been used as examples of how and what French women wrote in the sixteenth century are not always like the majority of women writers in their practices. Yet examining a wider body of works also brings to the fore the ways in which all women, as authors, appear to share similarities, particularly in their presentation of their right to participate in publication. This study seeks to generalize about how, why and what women wrote in ways which reflect more accurately than in the past the extant evidence we have of their experiences.

A third feature of this study lies in its interdisciplinary perspective. Here, I echo the call of Fernand Braudel for “convergence” and “collective research” between the human sciences. My thesis draws upon the combined contributions of feminist theory, historical research, literary theory, quantitative sciences and French studies. As Natalie Zemon Davis has argued, the literary critic and the historian have converging aims to their studies as “both have a common interest in culture and its conflicts”. This study develops our understanding of women’s published writings in sixteenth-century France by examining the texts as a production of an historical context. Many women’s writings have been studied either purely within their literary context without reference to the historical currents of the time, or as historical documents without acknowledgment of the influence of contemporary literary theories on their production. Women’s writings can be better understood when located in an historical context and can

also tell us about their cultural context, including the interaction of gender and social status.

Finally, this work is also a history of the gendered mentalité of publication culture. Historians have examined the development of the print medium and conditions of scribal publication in early modern France from what has been largely an unacknowledged male perspective. Whilst this study focuses on the participation of women whose writings were published, it also examines other relatively unexplored aspects of women’s participation in publication, women as readers of published material, women printers, publishers and booksellers, women book collectors, women editors, women commentators and critics, and women as patrons commissioning published materials. As Roger Chartier, perhaps the most famous historian of the mentalité of publication culture, has argued, a history of publication leads to inscribe in the same historical context all those - authors, editors, printers, booksellers, commentators, readers, spectators - who participate, each in their place and in their role, to the production, dissemination and interpretation of discourses. It is in this project that we find linked together the history of texts, of the book or, more generally, of forms of communication and of cultural practices.

By examining the participation of women in publication culture, this study can highlight the gendered “production, dissemination and interpretation of discourses” and further, the gendered “forms of communication and cultural practices” at work in sixteenth-century France.

Terms and concepts

Research into women’s texts as products of their cultural context suggests that, in many respects, women’s access to publication was bound by constraints that did not affect men. Women’s experiences as writers were shaped by an understanding of their nature which transcended barriers of time, and yet were

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also specifically a product of sixteenth-century society. In this respect, the work of Joan Kelly has been influential in developing an historical outlook that identifies the interplay of sex and class, particularly in social relations.\textsuperscript{32} For the purpose of this study, it is useful to recognize gender and class as categories of historical analysis, as social factors that greatly influenced the lives of early modern populations.\textsuperscript{33}

Early modern France was a society structured by concepts of hierarchy, rank and gender. Women writers in sixteenth-century France, whilst of differing social status, largely belonged to wealthy, privileged families. Many were from noble families around the court. Other women did not share the high social standing of these elite landed families but were from wealthy families involved in regional \textit{parlements} in the provinces or belonged to families who had gained wealth through mercantile or legal occupations. As such, the vast majority of the women with whom this thesis is concerned belonged to a small literate minority of French society, privileged by birth or by wealth. Their wealth gave them access to areas of French society and culture to which most others, both men and women, were denied. Education, books and discussion of literary discourse, in particular, were restricted to a minority of French society on the grounds of gender and class. Therefore, to some extent, it is not helpful to speak of a monolithic category of "woman" when, clearly, sixteenth-century French society also operated on distinctions of class. The conclusions drawn from this study of the works and experiences of women writers in sixteenth-century France reflect the situation of a minority of socially privileged and literate women.

Similarly, it is problematic to speak of categories of "men" and "males" when a small subset of the entire male population of early modern France disproportionately influenced that society. These categories occasionally refer to men as a biologically defined grouping who in the sixteenth century were given


\textsuperscript{33} See also Scott, "Gender: a useful category of historical analysis", \textit{American Historical Review}, 91, 1986, pp. 1053-1075.
some power and privilege over the biologically defined group "women". However, more often it was a small, socially privileged, wealthy and educated minority of men who most influenced the cultural, theological and intellectual practices of early modern France. Furthermore, in literary discourse, this learned subset most affected the criteria of what was to be written and accepted. This literary discourse was produced by, and in turn reproduced, the power and authority of those men who defined it. This study explores women's participation in published writings within the context of the restricted nature of literary discourse.

Moreover, later sixteenth-century France was torn by violent religious fighting between Catholics and Huguenots. Authors composed texts which either called for reform or supported the Catholic faith. Publishers printed religious and political texts according to their own religious beliefs. Many Huguenot printers fled to Reformed territories, especially Geneva. Increasingly, politically motivated publications formed a growing component of women's printed writings. Thus, it is necessary to make a further distinction concerning the religious affiliation of women in particular aspects of their participation in publication.

The period studied here covers the introduction of print medium in Paris in 1470 until the end of the sixteenth century. However, the first printed text which included writing by a woman, Christine de Pizan, did not appear until 1488. Furthermore, the majority of women whom I discuss in this study lived and wrote after 1500. Thus, for convenience I refer to the time span generally as the sixteenth century. I concentrate on this period because it was a unique time of transformation and divergence in the concepts of scribal and print publication. Here, I again follow Braudel in his tripartite definition of the very long, long and short term. In this study, I concentrate on the long term, the "social history, the history of groups and groupings", of institutions and attitudes such as publication culture and patriarchal society of sixteenth-century France, and on the short term, the "history of events", including the appearance in publication of specific women writers' works. My study examines women writers' texts as Braudel does
events, that is, as “surface manifestations of these larger movements and explicable only in terms of them”.34

My study is divided into three sections. The first explores the specific contexts of female publication. In the first chapter, I examine sixteenth-century notions of “woman” which determined the possibilities of what I term “elite female rhetorical space” in publication. The second chapter concentrates on the equally important material conditions of the lives of socially elite women which also fashioned the extent and nature of their rhetorical space in publication. In Chapter Three, I analyse the particular context of female participation in the print medium, discussing why some women chose to print their writings rather than circulate them in manuscripts, and how the structure of print culture shaped their texts.

In the second section, I focus on three extraordinary strategies used by women in publication. Chapter Four draws attention to women’s inventive use of specific social and geographical locations as sites of entry to publication. In Chapter Five, I examine women’s rhetorical strategies of situating their writings within familial and household contexts. Chapter Six analyses the physical placement of women’s writings in texts and examines how women were able to exploit marginal sites for increased, and often subversive, discursive agency.

Finally, the third section concerns the issues women addressed in publication. I have chosen to examine two significant areas of discourse to which women contributed, politics and sexuality, as it is not within the scope of this thesis to treat individual women’s texts in great detail. In the seventh chapter, I explore the correlation between the volume of women’s printed texts and the religious and political content of their works, at crucial moments of conflict and crisis in the sixteenth century. The final chapter offers reasons why a surprisingly

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high number of women writers chose to address a most subversive and unconventional discourse for female participation in publication: the discourse of sexuality.

I have chosen to focus on thematic issues of female publication, rather than on histories of individual women or examining in detail the form, genre or style of women's writings. In this way, I attempt to demonstrate the interplay between differing literary and historical concepts and ways of viewing texts. Using this approach to study the particular cultural phenomena of publication, at a moment of profound transition, may help to illustrate the structure, functions and persistence of gender inequalities in sixteenth-century French society.
THE "GOOD WOMAN" AND PUBLICATION: A PARADOX

In sixteenth-century France, categories of class and gender imposed limitations on those who had access and authority to write. Few women and men, apart from the landed nobility and some mercantile families, were literate, or had the means to reproduce their opinions publicly in either scribal or print form. However, within the literate minority, further limitations on participation in publication were imposed by the category of gender. Even in the wealthiest social circles in France, educated women have left far less writing than men in either manuscript or printed works. This thesis discusses the factors that prevented these literate women from contributing as writers to published works on a par with their male counterparts.

This chapter examines sixteenth-century theory about privileged women's access to published rhetorical space. I borrow the term rhetorical space from the work of the philosopher Lorraine Code. She defines rhetorical spaces as fictive but not fanciful locations, whose (tacit, rarely spoken) territorial imperatives structure and limit the kinds of utterances that can be voiced within them with a reasonable expectation of uptake ... and an expectation of being heard, understood, taken seriously.¹

In sixteenth-century France, did the perceptions of elite males structure and limit women's ability to contribute to published discourse? As the historian Roger Chartier describes, the context in which writers work shapes, and is reflected in, their writings:

any work inscribes within its forms and its themes a relationship with the manner in which, in a given moment and place, modes of exercising power, social configurations, or the structure of personality are organized.²

In this study, I argue that women's texts were a product of, and dependent upon, a specific cultural, literary and historical context. As Chartier explains, writers are bound by "the unconscious determinations that inhabit the work and that make it conceivable, communicable, and decipherable". In this chapter, I will examine how sixteenth-century women writers wrote in a state of dependence upon these "unconscious determinations" about their right to contribute to publication.

There were obstacles to establishing a female voice within the constraints of the early modern tradition of publication, a tradition created by men of the social and intellectual elite. Michel Foucault's work on discursive formation and in particular, the formation of enunciative modalities, draws attention to the opportunities for a speaking subject in any given discourse. Foucault asks: who can use this sort of language? Who is qualified? In sixteenth-century France, the criteria for public speech, the authority of the canon, and the development of the persona of the poet in literary discourse, all favoured a speaking voice which was that of the elite man. The issues about which, and the methods with which, women chose to write must be viewed as a product of the way in which contemporary condemnation of public female speech, the literary authority of the canon, and developments in sixteenth-century literary theory all shaped female participation.

Much recent research has explored both the difficulties and techniques used by print-published sixteenth-century women writers. Women writers of scribally published works were also bound by contemporary understandings of "woman" which denied them agency as authoritative subjects capable of

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3 Ibid., p. x.
5 Ibid., p. 50.
participation in scribally published discourse. Women, whether authors of printed or scribally published texts, had little access to elite males' conventional means of authority as authors. As a result, women were forced to subvert conventional agency or create new measures of value and authority in their texts.

Sixteenth-century perceptions about the nature of "woman" and her access to a published voice influenced female publication in many ways. The texts of sixteenth-century male authors discussing women's public speech and literary theory both consciously and unconsciously assumed an understanding of a category of woman that denied all recognition of difference within it. If certain women were praised for their literary efforts, it was their freakishness and their extraordinary nature that sixteenth-century men emphasized. This only served to maintain the notion that theoretically all women could be grouped together, particularly in terms of the behavioural expectations of their sex.

The "good woman" and speech outside the home
Publication in either printed texts or manuscript copies disseminated the writings and thoughts of the author to an audience, to a "public", in a way which was not necessarily controlled by the writer. Published writings were a form of participation in contemporary discussion. Contemporaries argued that social intercourse between (elite) men was civilizing. The realm of political, economic, religious and intellectual institutions was the male prerogative, and their participation in debate and discussion expected. Therefore, elite males studied the art of rhetoric which gave them the skill and arts of public speech. However, female education at all social levels ignored the discipline of rhetoric. This emphasized that women were not to speak publicly, but were to be the passive recipients of instruction and authority that were created by men.

Constructions of femininity linked women's speech to the nature of their unruly and dangerous bodies. Female silence outside the domestic environment

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7 For discussion of the differing meanings of the terms intercourse and conversation in male and female contexts, see A.R. Jones, "Surprising Fame: Renaissance Gender Ideologies and Women's
was equated with female chastity, and speech with sexual licentiousness. If women did not occupy themselves with household and familial duties but spoke in realms of elite male participation, they were considered to be transgressing gendered boundaries and their obedience to male authority, which maintained such long established divisions, was questionable. Display of a woman’s thoughts in speech outside the home, or in published writing, might also be seen to reflect a loose character and the availability of her body. Female instruction manuals therefore consistently maintained the virtue of silence for women as evidence of both their obedience and chastity.8 Francesco Barbaro in his 1515 work, De re uxoria, stressed that “women should believe they have achieved glory of eloquence if they will honor themselves with the outstanding ornament of silence” arguing that “the speech of women [should] never be made public”.9

Women were primarily occupied in the domestic sphere of familial and household duties and therefore were not expected to be involved in the political life of their country. In political theory, the household was a reflection of the gendered hierarchy of the state, in which the opinions of husbands and fathers prevailed with God-given authority. As Jean Bodin’s work, Les Six Livres de la République, published in Paris, 1576, explained: “the well-ordered family is a true image of the commonwealth, and domestic comparable with sovereign authority”.10 Although in practice women actively contributed to the affairs of the court and state, their agency tended to be in less visible spheres such as the influential politics of the court household. The lack of visibility of female participation served to reinforce outwardly the supremacy of the male voice in political discussion. Similarly, the Church allowed women only restricted expression in religious discourse. Paul’s first epistle to the Corinthians demanded that women keep silent in church and stated that should they wish to learn

8 See ibid., pp. 74-95.
something, they were to inquire of their husbands at home. Biblical passages such as this which drew attention to women’s silence outside the home were used particularly to deny female speech and authority.

Books and Authority
In the sixteenth century, writers were clearly aware of a body of canonical male-authored texts which it was appropriate to cite and imitate. The canon could serve as a form of power and authority to determine and control which new textual productions were acceptable to contemporary discourse. From the Middle Ages, the value of a text had derived from sources of authority outside of the work itself. These sources of authority were chronologically earlier texts that had been granted “an authoritative or sacred status”.\(^1\) By citing previous authors, auctores, whose work gave authority to one’s own status as an author, a canon of authoritative texts to be used as references in the Church and universities developed. The modern scholar Ernst Curtius observed that “the formation of a canon serves to safeguard a tradition”,\(^2\) in this case, a tradition of elite male-authored and centred textual participation.

Early modern writers continued to use auctores as a method of establishing their own authority to write. They perpetuated the notion of the canon as a tradition of the intellectual literary elite which was almost exclusively male. Furthermore, sixteenth-century literary theory of imitation acknowledged the superiority of classical works and authors as sources.\(^3\) The contemporary French poet and theorist Joachim Du Bellay suggested that the (male) sixteenth-century imitator should feel kinship to the original author: he should “decide on his approach in imitation of the one to whom he feels closest”.\(^4\) Thus authority was reliant on citation of a gendered canon of usually classical auctores with

whom early modern literary men felt kinship and part of the continuation of a tradition.

The creation of a male literary canon functioned by its separation from "the other", woman. It was an intellectual, scholastic tradition and early modern literary theory perpetuated the gendering of the discipline as male. Woman was the other against whom "authors" defined themselves. Women who wished to write had difficulty establishing an authoritative position through which to situate their contribution. How could women establish themselves as authors, as part of a tradition with whom they could feel little kinship? By definition, Carol Singley has noted, women had difficulty establishing an authorial identity since their status as "autonomous beings" was "historically and even ontologically in question". In practice however, rank might displace gender to allow a select group of privileged women to participate at the margins of literary discourse as readers. Jean Bouchet, discussing the learning of Gabrielle de Bourbon, recognized this boundary, which could be bent by social status, saying:

"I am of the opinion that women of low status, and who are constrained to attend to family and domestic affairs, must not concentrate on literature, because it is repugnant to rusticity; but queens, princesses and other ladies who do not have to ... apply themselves to housekeeping ... must better apply their minds and use the time to attend to good and chaste literature."

When women did write in a print or scribally published forum, contemporary male commentators frequently emphasized the unusualness of their actions. Labelling women who participated in publication as extraordinary served to emphasized that "women", a category recognizing no differentiation in individual circumstances, usually had no place in the arena of published speech.

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16 Singley, "Female Language, Body, and Self", in Anxious Power, (eds) Singley and Sweeney, p. 3.

17 "Je suis bien d'opinion que les femmes de bas estat, et qui sont contrainctes vacquer aux choses familières et domestiques, ne doivent vacquer aux lettres, parce que c'est chose repugnante à rusticité; mais les roynes, princesses et aultres dames qui ne se doibvent ... appliquer à mesnages ... doibvent ... mieux appliquer leurs esprits, et employer le temps à vacquer à bonnes et honnestes lettres", in J. Bouchet, Le Panegyric du chevalier sans reproche, Collection Petiot, vol. xiv, pp. 448-9 in P. Rousselet, Histoire de l'éducation des femmes en France, (1883) New York, Burt Franklin, 1971, p. 108.
Epitaphs in the posthumous edition of Pernette du Guillet’s poetry described her as a rare woman, saying that she “merits the praise for her mind, seen to be provided with so many goods, and knowledge, that she is esteemed ... a paragon amongst Lyonnais women.”\textsuperscript{18} Similarly, the female author of poetry, prose and plays, Catherine des Roches, was raised above the ranks of other women in the 1590 edition of \textit{La Puce} by an anonymous writer who wrote: “never have I seen one equal to her who renders Poitiers so proud with her virtues, \textit{ie} have heard the speech of a learned Lady ... but never have I heard anything that can approach the excellent speech of Des Roches”.\textsuperscript{19} Such praise of individual published women writers accepted their contribution to publication, but rejected the theoretical possibility that women as a sex could participate.

Moreover, male writers throughout the sixteenth century situated women writers within a separate feminine literary canon. Most cited Christine de Pizan as a predecessor to sixteenth-century women writers. This included Symphorien Champier in the \textit{Nef des dames} in 1503, Pierre de Lesnaudiere in his 1523 \textit{Louenge de mariage}, Jean Marot in the \textit{Vraydisant Advocate des Dames} (1530-5), Jean Bouchet’s \textit{Tabernacle des illustres dames} and the \textit{Jugement poétique de l’honneur féminin} in 1538.\textsuperscript{20} Christine de Pizan was still recalled as far into the sixteenth century as Pierre de Boaistuau’s 1559 publication \textit{L’Histoire de Chelidonius Tigurius}\textsuperscript{21} and Jean de Marconville’s 1564 \textit{De la Bonté et mauvaisité des femmes}.\textsuperscript{22} Exalting illustrious learned women, particularly those who knew Latin or Greek, was a commonplace sixteenth-century theme. This served to show such female learning as unusual and by definition as beyond the

\textsuperscript{18} "merite los par l’esprit d’elle veu/ De tant de biens, et de scavoirs pourveu/ Qu’on l’estimoit ... / Un parangon entre les Lyonnoises", \textit{Rymes}, Lyons, Jean de Tournes, 1545, p. 80.
\textsuperscript{19} "jamais ie n’en vi qui fut égale à celle,/ Qui rend de ses vertus Poictiers si orgueilleux,/ J’ay ouy les propos d’une Dame scévante,/ ... Mais jamais ie n’ouy rien qui peust approcher,/ Des discours excellens ... / De Des Roches", Poem by O.D.T., in Etienne Pasquier, \textit{La Puce}, Paris, Jean Petit-Pas, 1590, p. 633.
\textsuperscript{20} P. Sommers, “Marguerite de Navarre as Reader of Christine de Pizan”, in \textit{The Reception of Christine de Pizan from the Fifteenth Through the Nineteenth Centuries: Visitors to the City}, (ed.) G. McLeod, Lewiston, The Edwin Mellen Press, 1991, p. 73.
\textsuperscript{22} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 108.
capacity of most women. Thus praise had the effect of reinforcing ideas about women's "natural" intellectual inferiority to men.

However women writers appeared reluctant to place themselves in what was essentially a secondary, "other" and lesser literary tradition. Clearly this was not due to a lack of knowledge about other women's writings, as their borrowings of Christine de Pizan's themes and evidence of women's writings in their libraries testify.\(^ {23} \) Although female authors often prefaced their writings with appeals to other women, it is rare to find them openly acknowledging other women writers as their role models. Some women writers wanted to be accepted into male traditions, and they knew that they would be judged by men.\(^ {24} \) Yet for others, the ambiguities of marginality to the canon might be advantageous to their arguments or authorial position. Occasionally, a female author specifically made no reference to her gender. Evelyne Berriot-Salvadore argues that the late sixteenth-century prose writer, Marie le Gendre, adopted an impersonal style of writing, using "nous" rather than identifying herself as a feminine "je" in her discourses of moral philosophy.\(^ {25} \) Rather than seeing this as the use of the French "nous d'auteur", Berriot-Salvadore claims that Le Gendre saw her discourse as that of the human condition, transcending categories of masculine and feminine. Few women were so confident that their writings deserved to be read on their intellectual or literary merit alone.

The "renaissance" in epistemological and literary practices

Literary and epistemological theory was not static during the sixteenth-century. The early modern era has been distinguished by scholars by what is often seen as a "renaissance" in modes of thought. This questioning of literary and epistemological theory had both positive and negative effects on the position of women as authors. On one hand, one outcome of these revisions to traditional

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\(^ {23} \) Chapter 2 discusses in greater detail women's reading material.

\(^ {24} \) Jones, p. 80.

practices was increasing possibilities for authorship by a wider group of individuals, if the value of a text was measured by an author's originality. Early modern intellectuals began to debate the classification and acquisition of knowledge in a similar way to concurrent questioning of "the source of literary meaning and value".26 Sixteenth-century encyclopaedic theory of knowledge was founded on a curriculum of essential knowledge. This select and necessary knowledge encompassed many disciplines, linking them together in a "circle of learning".27 Encyclopaedic knowledge was not, as commonly understood today, a collection of diverse "facts" with no sense of connection to each other but quite the reverse. To the early modern mind, the knowledge in the circle of learning had to be unified by a underlying plan.28 Although the interpretation of what structure, contents and plan the learning would include varied amongst authors, encyclopaedic thought in whatever form was consistently presented as static and objective.29 Such a theory allowed for little diversity or scope for individual authorial interpretation that did not seek to present itself as objective "truth" and authority, but as one voice amongst many.

Yet towards the end of the sixteenth century, increasing emphasis was placed on experience as an essential part of knowledge, rather than accepted wisdom in the works of the ancients. Hope Glidden cites the example of Bernard Palissy whose 1580 *Discours admirables de la nature des eaux et fontaines* pitted Theory against Practice in a debate over the source of knowledge, questioning the precedence of textual authority over the author's personal experience.30 Bouchet's dual source of authority "by book and by experience" attests to the tension between the *auctores* tradition and the rising validity of an author's originality and individuality.31 Some contemporary craftspeople published practical manuals explaining the skills of their trade. Acquisition of

26 Quint, p. 219.
knowledge was questioned according to the criterion of personal experience in an anti-encyclopaedic trend. Late sixteenth-century authors, such as Michel de Montaigne, presented what Neil Kenny terms “polymathy”, that is, an unsystematic acquisition of diverse and fragmentary knowledge. This conception of knowledge had no static hierarchy, nor unifying plan to connect the various strands. Plurality, insisting on diverse and individual voices, was necessary to a new subjective knowledge that could only be gained by historically bound, personal authorial experience. Furthermore, the writing style was less restrained: making “reflexive comment on their own disorder [and] digressions”. For example, the lengthy passage in defence of education for women in the Parisian prose writer Marie de Gournay’s Proumenoir was excused by the author thus: “But, my father, who could pardon me the lengthiness of my prattle in this digression, if not you who takes me up for being too taciturn usually in return”. Marie de Gournay was able to use her digressions to promote a perspective that was not held by the majority, but might be accepted with a more pluralistic understanding of the nature of knowledge.

Sixteenth-century literary theory did not remain isolated from the influence of these changing perceptions in other areas of intellectual thought. Early modern intellectual men felt that they differed from their medieval predecessors. They declared that they were living in a new era, in a new historical context compared to previous writers. The abundance of new printed classical texts made opportunities for learning vastly superior to those of the medieval past. Yet the personal experience and opinion of an individual author could not be worthy or authoritative within existing systems of evaluation. Since the value and “truth” of a text derived from the citation of auctores, the creativity of an individual author was irrelevant and played no part in determining the authority of the author’s ideas. “Truth” therefore was not the product of an individual

32 Kenny, p. 243.
33 Ibid., p. 244.
34 Ibid., p. 246.
35 “Mais, mo- pere, qui me pourroit pardonner la longeur de mon caquet en ceste digression, sinon vous qui me reprennez que ie suis d’ordinaire trop taciturne en recompense”, in Proumenoir, Paris, Abel L’Angelier, 1594, fol. 58r.
36 Quint, p. 22.
historically specific text, but rather, "nonhistorical [and] transcendent".37 Investing authority in the ancient authors devalued the intellectual merit of sixteenth-century thought. This necessitated the development of new sources of value and authority.

Literary theory progressively developed towards a style of evaluation that recognized the originality and uniqueness of each text.38 The text, rather than a piece containing an eternal and universal concept, became the product of an individual in a specific historical context.39 One poet, Pierre de Ronsard, typical of the Pléiade poetic circle, reflected this change, emphasizing his own historical importance in the creation of a new French literary poetic tradition. In the forty-third sonnet in his Second Livre des Sonets pour Helene (1578), he writes "When you are old ... sitting by the fire ... will say ... "Ronsard celebrated me when I was beautiful"":40 Ronsard suggests that his skill and importance to French poetry will carry his fame across the centuries. By the end of the sixteenth century, authorial creativity was becoming the dominant determinant of textual value and authority, a system which could favour the participation of women as authors.

The Masculinization of Poetry

Outcomes of revisions to poetic practices however were not so positive for women. While sixteenth-century questioning about literature served to broaden the criteria for textual value and thereby increased the opportunities for more people to become authors, new theories about poetry, its importance and method of creation, were increasingly masculinizing the genre. Men of the highly influential poetic circle known as the Pléiade, which formed around 1550, such as Ronsard and Joachim Du Bellay, determined to raise their status as authors of distinction by elevating the value and importance of the genre of their textual creation, poetry. They distinguished themselves as poets in contrast to mere

37 Ibid., p. x.
38 Ibid., p. 22.
39 Ibid., p. x.
versifiers. Poetry became a way of life, with increasing pressure to locate “truth” in eloquence, a rhetorical tool denied women by their education.

Du Bellay’s redefinition of poetry had the important effect of trivializing poetic genres in which women wrote. In his 1549 *Défense et Illustration de la Langue Française* Du Bellay effectively excluded many of the poetic activities in which women had been able to participate in the past:

all that old French poetry at the Jeux Floraux of Toulouse and the Puy of Rouen: such as rondeaux, ballads, virelay, Royal odes, songs and other such merchandise, ... corrupt the taste of our language, and serve only to bear witness to our ignorance.

Both the Jeux Floraux and the Puy which Du Bellay cited as of the old French poetic style had been arenas where the participation of women was theoretically possible. The influence of Clemence Isaure in the Jeux Floraux in Toulouse was essential to its history. Similarly, the poetic circulations of the Puy de Rouen had allowed for female literary inclusions only a few years before publication of Du Bellay’s *Défense*.

As the ideal of poetic endeavour developed as a purely masculine art, so too did the ideal identity of its creator become defined as elite and male. According to the Pléiade, a poet had to have aristocracy of the mind. The ideal poetic identity further bestowed an intellectual authority, placing the poet on a par with noble patrons, although most of the Pléaide poets were already members of the noblesse de province, a comparatively secure social class in its own right.

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41 Castor, p. 24.  
42 Cave, p. 330.  
44 *Biographie Toulousaine* (1823) cites her *Dictats de dona Clamensa Isaure*, Toulouse, Jean Grandjean, 1505, in-4. See discussion of her role in chapter 4.  
45 Marguerite d’Auvrelat, Magdeleine and Marie Du Val, Katherine Laillet, and Marie du Moncel all had poetry included in the published work *Le Puy souverain amour*, Rouen, Nicolas de Burges, 1543 which were taken from the Puy de Rouen competition.  
46 Castor, p. 25.
According to Du Bellay’s ideal, the poet had to have a natural “ardour and quickness of mind” and skill in art and learning.47 A poet was
gifted with an excellent happiness of disposition, instructed in all good Arts and Sciences, principally natural and mathematic, versed in all genres of the great Greek and Latin authors ... not of too high condition, or called to public office, but also not abject and poor, not troubled with domestic business, but in rest and tranquillity of mind, acquired by the magnanimity of [his] ... courage, then maintained by [his] ... prudent and wise behaviour, enriched with so many graces and perfections.48

The business of poetic creation was being reinstated as the realm of men alone. Women could not fit the criteria of the ideal poetic persona. The education of most women excluded knowledge of Greek and Latin authors, and practice in rhetorical skill. Furthermore, women were expected to concern themselves with the very “domestic business” with which Du Bellay thought a poet could not be distracted. Women might contribute poetic verse but could not attain the status of a poet as could their male counterparts. Just as the modern feminist scholar Sandra Harding currently argues that women as rational animals cannot be added “to a conceptual scheme that in the first place has been defined against the feminine”, similarly women producing poetry could not be included as fully participating authors in a conceptual scheme of literary production and speech where poetic creativity and identity had been defined against the feminine.49

**Gender and writing**

Regardless of their social position or medium of writing, all women writers recognized that, theoretically, women had little right to contribute to published discourse. Even the male printers who chose to print Christine de Pizan’s works more than a century after her death recognized that, as a woman’s work, Pizan’s writings had little place in a print-published forum. The preface included in her

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47 “ardeur et allégresse d’esprit”, in *La Défense*, p. 237.
48 “doué d’une excellente félicité de nature, instruit de tous bons arts et sciences, principalement naturelles et mathématiques, versé en tous genres de bons auteurs grecs et latins, ... non de trop haute condition, ou appelé au régime public, non aussi abject et pauvre, non troublé d’affaires domestiques, mais en repos et tranquillité d’esprit, acquise premièremment par la magnanimité de ton courage, puis entretenu par ta prudence et sage gouvernement ... orné de tant de grâces & perfections”, in *La Défense*, p. 240.
Chemin de Long Estude, printed by Etienne Groulleau in Paris in 1549, justified why Pizan had chosen to write scribally published works. It argued:

you must understand that after the passing away of her husband, not wanting to remain idle ... [she] composed this present work ... which signifies the good will that she had to busy herself with sacred and profane works.50

Contemporary women writers used similar reasons to excuse the publication of their writings. They clearly anticipated criticism of a published female voice.

No matter what medium women wrote in, they recognized that gender was a problem to their publication. Although Anne R. Larsen has argued that manuscript represented a sort of safety for women, as an informal channel of textual circulation through which women could pursue literary interests, this thesis argues that developing authority to publish as a woman was not a difficulty faced simply by print-published writers.51 Some women who wrote scribally published works displayed similar hesitations and doubts about their speech, which suggests that print was not the only medium perceived as public by a sixteenth-century audience. For women writing particularly in the early part of the century, the concept of scribal publication connoted a sense of public audience too. Manuscript was a popular method of transmission adopted by the literary elite. This literary discourse had been created to sustain the authority of a male elite, with male linguistic traditions and modes of discourse.52 The difficulties of female participation within scribal literary discourse are visible in the works of two early sixteenth-century women, Gabrielle de Bourbon’s Voyage spirituel and Fort Chasteau pour la retraite de toutes bonnes ames and Anne de Graville’s Palamon and Arcita. Each expressed similar hesitations to those of print-published women writers in presenting an authoritative public female voice.

Gabrielle de Bourbon signals that her manuscript writings, Voyage spirituel and Fort Chasteau, have a place in the public arena as pedagogical

50 "il te faut entendre qu'après le trespas de son mary, ne voulant demourer oysive ... composa ce present œuvre ... qui signifie le bon vouloir qu'elle avoit de soy occuper aux lettres sacrées, et prophanes", Preface to Le Chemin de long estude, Paris, Etienne Groulleau, 1549, sig. aiii v°.
52 Singley (intro.) to Anxious Power, (eds) Singley and Sweeney, p. xvi.
religious texts. Consequently, her writings adopt strategies to invest her work with authority and to excuse her public speech. Bourbon was cited by contemporaries as a learned lady, known for her extensive religious reading and treatises.  

Her son Charles married Suzanne, the daughter of Anne de Beaujeu, for whom Beaujeu wrote the advice handbook *A la requeste de tres haute et puissante princesse madame Suzanne de Bourbon*, published in Lyons around 1534. Bourbon’s extant work is bound in a single volume containing both her *Voyage spirituel* and *Fort Chasteau*. The manuscript contains 22 pictures and an escutcheon incorporating features of the Trémouille, Thouars, Craon and Bourbon-Montpensier devices which would suggest that the only extant manuscript was a copy owned by either Gabrielle de Bourbon or her husband, Louis de la Trémouille. Yet as Bourbon’s own admissions suggested, she envisaged some audience beyond her own household.

Gabrielle de Bourbon stated clearly that she expected her work to have a wider audience than merely herself. She concluded that her work might be of use to a readership of “simple people”, saying “as best I could, I have recorded it and made this little treatise which will be useful to simple people who don’t understand holy Scripture anymore than I do, to put them on the right path”. Since Bourbon offered her work as a public instructional text to an unspecified audience of perhaps men and women, she anticipated some criticism for transgressing a publicly silent female role. Thus, she developed a strategy to deny her creative agency in the writing process in her explanation of the text’s origin. She described the visitation of the “Devout Soul” who called on her to record the events of a journey:

*Lift yourself up from your lazy rest take ink, pen and paper to put in writing what you will hear of my spiritual voyage ... and if you*

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54 Bibliotheque Mazarine manuscrit 978.

55 “le mieulx quil ma este possible lay mis en memoire et en ay fait ce petit traicte qui pourra a gens simples qui nentendent la saincte escripture en plus que moy valloir pour eulx mettre en la bonne voye”, in *Voyage Spirituel*, fols 29r°-v°.
know how to put it well and record it all in writing it will be useful to those who wish to reach ... the noble city of good repose.\(^56\)

Bourbon reduced her role to that of scribe and promoted a portrayal of herself as a passive object, a publicly acceptable view of her actions:

I had heard recounted word by word the holy spiritual journey by the Devout Soul which by divine permission had appeared to me although I have not the sense nor the learning to have retained it all.\(^57\)

She emphasized her lack of creative free will, her obedience to higher spiritual authority and her doubts about her ability to transcribe the text correctly.

In her second work, the *Fort Chasteau*, Bourbon fostered an image of female co-operation and support in the building of a castle of religious virtues for women. Yet, despite the strong female characters she depicted, the work is interrupted frequently by references to the author as an ineffective scribe.

Bourbon described herself on several occasions as unworthy to write and instruct others, an opinion based on her feminine weakness:

> each [character] in this little treatise will be spoken of according to my understanding, which is not such that it knows well how to explain everything, but may all those who will read it know that it is the work of a woman [and] excuse its faults.\(^58\)

She explained her ability to write as not of her own capacities, but rather those God had given her for the task:

> And to the simple people and feminine understandings [He] gives them this great grace of possessing knowledge and the ability to describe some little contemplations which will be more pleasing for poor little women and simple people to hear.\(^59\)

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\(^{56}\) "Su’lieve toy de ton paresseux seiour prens encre plume et papier pour mettre en escript ce que tu oyeras de mon voyage spirituel ... Et si le tout tu scez bien mettre et rediger par escript Il pourra valoir a ceulx qui desirent parvenir ... ala noble cite de bon repoux", in *ibid.*, fols lr°-v°.

\(^{57}\) "jeuz ouy racompter de mot a mot le sainct voyage espirituel de par la saincte ame devote Laquelle par permission divine lad. saincte ame cestoit a moy apparue combien que ie naye pas le sens ne le savoir pour avoir le tout bien retenu", in *ibid.*, fol. 29r°.

\(^{58}\) "De chascun en ce petit traictie parle sera scelon mon entendeme-t qui nest pas tel qu'il sceust bien le tout desclarier. Mais saichent tous ceulx qui le liront qu'il est fait d'œuvre fe-menine seront excusees les faultes", in *Fort Chasteau*, fol. 33r°.

\(^{59}\) "Et aux simples personnages et fe-menins entendemens leur fait ceste grand grace de leur donner scavoirt et pouvoir descrire quelques petites contemplations qui seront plus plaisantes a ouyr a pauvres femmelettes et simples gens", in *ibid.*, fol. 39v°.
In a sense, this continued her earlier passive scribal role and once more denied her creative agency. Whilst her female characters are portrayed as strong and unified in their aid for each other, Gabrielle de Bourbon, as a sixteenth-century woman writer wishing to contribute to religious discourse, albeit to a select, limited audience, portrayed herself as conforming to behavioural expectations of feminine passivity, weakness and reluctance to write.

Other women writers produced texts which were like printed productions: suited to a wide audience, often copied several times in response to the manuscript-buying market and replete with the same need for women to justify their bold public action. The manuscript work *Palamon et Arcita* by Anne de Graville, a lady-in-waiting to Francis I’s Queen Claude, was clearly a piece for public consumption, commissioned by Queen Claude and circulated amongst an audience at court. It was a translation in rhyme of Boccaccio’s *Teseida* which had already been translated into French in a prose version written around 1460. Graville appears to have used this as the base text for her rhymed version.

Graville’s public presentation of herself as author varied significantly from copy to copy. Some of the most formal copies designed for public presentation contained the more obscure references to her identity. This would seem to support the argument of this study that women’s difficulties in developing rhetorical space, and their hesitation to present themselves as contributors alongside elite men, existed in manuscript literary discourse as well as in print publication. The Arsenal copy of Graville’s work contains miniatures, including, on the first folio, an illustration depicting Queen Claude receiving the work from Graville. Another fine copy is written on vellum, with initial letters in blue, gold and red, and is evidently a copy for public presentation. In several copies, Graville is identified as the author only through her anagram device “J’en

61 Four extant copies are BN ms. fr. 25441, 1397, and n.a.f. 719 and 6513 and Bibliothèque de l’Arsenal 5166.
63 BN ms. fr. 1397.
garde un leal” which would probably be known only to other members of the court circle. Other versions of her work were less likely presentation manuscripts, written on paper in a single colour, and one is damaged and incomplete.64 Yet in one of the less formal versions Graville was clearly indicated as the author of the work, rather than implied through her device:

It’s the fine tale of the two lovers Palamon and Arcita and of the beautiful and wise Emylia newly translated into rhyme from old language and prose by my lady Anne de Graville la Malet, Dame de Boys Maslesherbes, by the command of the Queen.65

Even within scribal publication culture, women were bound by similar constraints to those experienced by women in print. When a work was expected to have an audience, women adopted strategies to deny their creative agency and present themselves publicly as passive, conforming objects, by their choice of material and justification for composing it. Graville’s work contained denigrating phrases about her literary and creative ability, based on her sex. She presented herself using typical humility topoi: “as an ignorant and scarcely learned women ... of thick head and poor command of language”.66 In another manuscript work, an adaptation of Alain Chartier’s Belle Dame sans Mercy into rondeaux, she continued to emphasize her “imperfection” and “stupidity”.67 Moreover, Graville restricted her literary contributions as a public writer to adaptations of approved canonical male authors, Boccaccio and Chartier, rather than creative works of her own.

Gender also affected women’s writings at all social levels as well as across different mediums. Even women writers in powerful social positions recognized social expectations that “woman” ought to restrict her speech to the domestic sphere, rather than voice her thoughts publicly. Marguerite de Navarre, the sister of Francis I, occupied a more powerful position than most men and women in French society. As a member of the royal family, Marguerite had the

64 BN n.a.f. 719 and 6513.
65 “Cest le beau rommant des deulx amans Palamon et Arcita et de la belle et saige Emylia translate de viel langaige et prose en nouveau et rime par ma damoiselle Anne de graville la malet dame du boys maslesherbes du co-me-deme-t de la royne”, in BN n.a.f. 719.
66 “come ignorante et peu scava-te fame/ ... De dure teste et langue mal apprise”, in BN ms. fr. 1397.
highest social status, more powerful and wealthy than most of the male commentators who argued against women’s participation in publication. Although in reality she could exploit her exceptional individual circumstances to contribute alongside male authors, Marguerite still acknowledged limitations to a published voice that affected her as a woman no matter what her social level or distinctive situation. In her *Miroir*, she asked readers to excuse “the rhyme and the language, seeing that it is the work of a woman”. Even if in reality women did find ways to publish their writings through their specific circumstances, most acknowledged in their works that public female speech was exceptional.

Women writers often provided lengthy justifications or apologies for their venture into print publication. The Parisian prose writer Hélisenne de Crenne emphasized her “boldness ... in entitling the present work, making mention of immodest love, which according to the opinion of some shy women could be judged more worthy to be conserved in profound silence than to be published for a widespread audience”. Women expressed feelings of self-doubt, unworthiness and hesitation about their work, such as the translator Marie de Cotteblanche’s declarations of the “poverty of ... [her] understanding,” in “this small work”. Antoine du Moulin, prefacing the posthumous work of poet Pernette du Guillet, was at pains to remind his audience that Du Guillet had never intended publication for her work and was writing purely for private pleasure.

**Women’s strategies for published rhetorical space**

How women reacted to these perceived impediments to publication depended on their individual situation. This thesis reveals the diversity of contexts in which women wrote, and celebrates the multiplicity of methods by which women found

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69 “la hardiesse ... d’intituler l’œuvre presente, faisant mention d’amours impudiques, ce que selo-l’opinion d’aucunes dames timides se pourra iuger plus digne d’estre co-serueé en profond silence que d’estre publie ne vulgarisé”, in *Angoysses in Oeuvres*, Paris, Etienne Groulleau, 1560, Geneva, Saltkine, 1977, sig. [lv r].
70 “la pauvrete de ... entendement”, “ce ... petit labeur” in *Trois Dialogues de M. Pierre Messie*, Lyons, Benoist Rigaud, 1593, p. 5.
rhetorical space in published discourse. Women’s responses to prescriptive notions about their agency in the published arena cannot be grouped into a single unified category, although gendered behavioural prescriptions regarding women often functioned to provoke similarities in their written responses. François Rigolot has argued that one can speak of a characteristic method to “écrire au féminin” which involves “destabilizing ... the logic of masculine discourse so as to undermine its exclusivity”, and Jacqueline McLeod Rogers proposes that women’s fictive writings contain distinct similarities. Gender had specific effects on how all women wrote.

Some women writers openly challenged what they perceived as restrictions to their public speech. The poet Louise Labé argued that the “renaissance” in intellectual thought had positive outcomes for women. In the preface to her 1555 Euvres, she encouraged women to take advantage of opportunities for education to improve the public perception of their sex:

The time having come ... when the harsh laws of men no longer forbid women to apply themselves to sciences and disciplines: it seems to me that those who are able, must use this honourable liberty which our sex has so desired for so long ... in order to show men the wrong they have done us in depriving us of the good and the honour that could come to us from it ... and besides the reputation that our sex will receive from it, we will be valued in public.73

Madeleine des Roches, who wrote several printed works with her daughter Catherine, argued vehemently that it was speech which “separates us from unreasoning animals” and that women’s public silence could not “increase the honour” of their sex.74 Rather, silence perpetuated misconceptions about women.

73 “Estant le terns venu ... que les severes loix des hommes n’empeschent plus les femmes de s’apliquer aus sciences et disciplines: il me semble que celles qui ont la commodite, doivent employer cette honneste liberté que notre sexe ha autre fois tant desiree, à ... montrer aux hommes le tort qu’ils nous faisoient en nous privant du bien et de l’honneur qui nous en pouvoit venir: ... et outre la reputation que notre sexe en recevra, nous aurons valû au publicq” in “A.M.C.D.B.L.” in Œuvres complètes, (ed.) Rigolot, Paris, Flammarion, 1986, pp. 41–42.
The Parisian prose writer Marie de Gournay was one of the most outspoken commentators on the subjugated position of women in sixteenth-century society. Today, although of great interest to feminist scholars, she is still often perceived as an eccentric outside of the “canon”. Gournay exposed some of women’s grievances in her preface to the 1595 edition of Montaigne’s *Essais* in which she vehemently wrote:

Lucky are you, Reader, if you are not of a sex which is denied all goods, forbidden freedom, ... power taken away from it ... Lucky are you who can be wise without it being a crime, your sex conceding to you all action, and just speech, and the credit of being believed, or at least listened to.

The truth of Gournay’s perceptions was evident when she was forced by public criticism to remove her preface from her next edition of Montaigne’s work. A digression in her 1594 *Proumenoir* expanded on Gournay’s conviction that women were denied the freedom of public speech that men claimed for themselves. With trenchant criticism of contemporary perceptions of women, Gournay made imaginative leaps between the fate of Paule and Menalia in history and their male counterparts, saying:

If Socrates had been a woman, he would not have been spoken well of, any more than you. Imagine a little, seeing him in the female role, the rigour of his mind, his frankness to bridle public opinions ... his freedom to come and go everywhere ... you will see in the end that the actions which make him Socrates, are those ... which will make him the most scandalous woman in Athens.

Gournay’s incisive commentary anticipated Virginia Woolf’s creation of Shakespeare’s sister, Judith, by over three hundred years. Both revealed how women’s ability and freedom to think and write were determined by

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76 “Bien heureux estu, Lecteur, si tu n’ez pas d’un sexe, qu’on ait interdit de tous les bien, l’interdisant de la liberté ... luy soustrayent le pouvoir ... Bien heureux, qui peuz estre sage sans crime, le sexe te concedant toute action, et parolle juste, et le credit d’en estre creu, ou pour le moins escouté”, in preface to *Les Essais de Michel Seigneur de Montaigne*, Paris, Abel L’Angelier, 1595, sig. aiii r°.

77 “si Socrates eust este femme on n’en eust pas bien parlé non plus que de vous. Imaginez un peu pour voir au roole feminin la rigueur de son ame, sa franchise à gourmer les communes oppinio-s ... sa liberté d’aller & venir par tout ...vous trouverez a la fin que les actions qui le rendent Socrates seront ... celles qui le rendront la plus scandalisée femme d’Athènes” in *Proumenoir*, folis 49v°-50r°.

contemporary expectations about their sex. Gournay also elucidated how the actions for which men were rewarded were those which would damage the reputation of a woman, arguing: "console yourself that if St Paul had been of your sex, he would never have been able to remain a virtuous lady in establishing the Christian Church".79

Women used diverse strategies to find rhetorical space in publication. Some desired to participate in the contemporary intellectual discussions that surrounded them. Marie le Gendre rejected being placed in an alternative and inferior canon for her moral philosophic writing by suggesting her discourse discussed the human condition and was asexual.80 Other women writers, such as Hélisenne de Crenne, situated themselves in the tradition of the male canon for their authority to write. The opening phrase of her Songe (1541) recalled Cicero as her auctores and object of her imitation: "Cicero, prince of Latin eloquence, wanted in his dense works to add the dream of Scipion. Thus in imitation of him, the desire arose in me to relate fully to you a dream worthy of recording".81 Many more women referred to well-chosen biblical or classical women whose virtues were carefully selected to testify to women’s abilities and rights. Larsen notes that Catherine des Roches, who frequently wrote in conjunction with her mother Madeleine, drew on a number of celebrated mother-daughter relationships, including Ceres and Proserpine, Martesie and Otrera, Anne and Sarah, to emphasize the importance of the maternal/filial connection in the creation of her work.82 These sources were part of the canon, heroines created by men, and yet they functioned as precedents to allow women entry into public discourse.83

79 "Davantage consoler vous que si S. Paul eust esté de vostre sexe il n’estut jamais peu se maintenir dame de reputation en etablissant l’Eglise Chrestienne", in Proumenoir, fol. 50v°.
80 Berriot-Salvadore, "Marie Le Gendre et Marie De Gournay", p. 244.
81 "Cicero, Prince d’eloquence Latine, a voulu en ses œuvres ardues adiouster le songe de Scipion ... Doncq’a l’imitation de luy, m’est suruenu le vouloir de vous faire d’vn songe digne de memoire ample recit", in Œuvres, 1560, sig. Piii v°.
No woman writer in the sixteenth-century has yet been shown to have hidden her gender by writing under a male pseudonym. Could something be gained for women by acknowledging their gender in their writings? Randall Martin notes that it is a common fallacy among modern researchers to expect women to have adopted male pseudonyms, given our knowledge about this strategy used by women writers in later periods. So far as we know, it was not common practice during the sixteenth century.84 Most women wrote under forms of their names recognizable to contemporaries. Louise Charly wrote under the name her father had taken from his first wife’s husband, Labé, by which he was known in business.85 Both women and men occasionally wrote works that they signed using only initials. However even these, when used by women, do not appear to have been used specifically to hide their gender. For example, Antoinette des Looynes’ translations of the English Seymour sisters’ verses were recognized as the works of “Dam. A.D.L.” or “Damois. A.D.L.”. Nicole Estienne’s liminary verse in Beroalde de Verville’s *Apprehensions Spirituelles* in 1583 accredited her verse under both her initials and the anagram of her name that she used for her work and that was known by contemporaries: “I’ESTONNE LE CIEL N.E.” Marguerite de Briet presented an identity as a woman author by calling both her protagonist and pseudonym Hélisenne. Even anonymous women writers showed their gender. The author of the 1561 *Petit Devis sur le changement de la cour de France*, had an subtitled stating “composé par une Damoyselle Françoise”.

What could women achieve by openly drawing attention to their gender? Women exploited changing views of contemporary literary theory to legitimate their scribal or print-published voice. Increasing emphasis placed on experience as an essential part of knowledge and validity of an author’s originality and individuality could allow women writers to make use of their gender to find an authorial voice. Their female gender made them different from men and this difference between their writings and those of men gave them originality and uniqueness. In an earlier period, Maureen Quilligan suggests Christine de Pizan

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made gender her social position, stating she was a “woman in the shadows” in the place of a typical male status statement that would include the author’s name, rank and title.86 Lacking a connection to public institutions of the church or intellectual circles to authorize her writing, Quilligan proposes that Pizan’s socially marginal position is a significant part of her self-representation.87 Being of “the other” gender represented, for some women, access to some authority as an author.

Women could have particular types of authority, especially in domestic knowledge such as child-rearing. The Privilège of Madame and Philippe du Verger’s 1595 child-rearing handbook argued that their experience in raising children as governesses in Paris must be published, in order not to be lost to their contemporaries and future generations. In 1609, Louise Bourgeois published her own account of gynaecology in Observations diverse sur la sterilité, perte de fruit, foecondité, accouchements et maladies des Femmes et Enfants nouveaux nais.88 She insisted that her experience as a midwife, both to the women of her neighbourhood and later to the family of Henri IV, would expose the errors of physicians.89 Many women in the sixteenth century emphasized their gender to differentiate their works from those of men and thereby invest some value and authority in their work as that of an individual historical writer influenced by personal experience. In much the same way, the “strong reflexivity” involved in modern feminist standpoint theory as explained by Sandra Harding treats “one’s social location as a positive resource for advancing knowledge”.90 In this way women could use their gendered social location to make a distinct contribution.91 Many sixteenth-century women writers emphasized their work as “œuvre de femme” by using their real names and acknowledging their gender.

87 Ibid., p. 1.
88 Paris, A. Saugrain, 1609.
89 Davis, Society and Culture in Early Modern France, p. 217.
90 Hirsh and Olson, p. 27.
91 Ibid., p. 20.
Envisaging audience

Women writers frequently used dedications or introductory passages to frame their work in a particular audience context. As bell hooks argues, "preoccupation with audience during the composing process can be "dangerous" because it leads to self-censorship".\(^\text{92}\) Certainly women writers did anticipate a critical audience for their works and were influenced in their writings by such conceptions. It was common for women to use the topos of dedication, insisting they were only writing to a close female friend. Others presented their writing as knowledge to be shared with other women and the necessity to impart it provided them with a justification for public speech. This type of knowledge was often associated with the domestic sphere, such as child-rearing or household handbooks. The topos of preventing idleness was adopted by many women, as means of allowing them to speak publicly. By identifying themselves as women and acknowledging male expectations of their behaviour and abilities, women writers developed strategies to allow their inclusion in intellectual and literary discourse. In this way, their language acted in ways which Carroll Smith-Rosenberg has observed as both a social mirror and a social agent.\(^\text{93}\)

Women writers frequently adopted strategies to situate their writing as a discourse between women.\(^\text{94}\) hooks also suggests that "a sense of audience can help ... especially "marginalized people," to develop an authentic voice".\(^\text{95}\) In many instances, female authors addressed their work to other women, whom they could call upon to support them, if only in the fictional literary world. The naming of other women contextualized the work in a female sphere and foregrounded the author's network of supportive relationships between women. Louise Labé, in her *Euvres*, dedicated her preface to a salon friend from Lyons,


\(^{95}\) Olson and Hirsh, p. 106.
Clémence de Bourges, saying “because women do not show themselves willingly in public alone, I have chosen you to serve as my guide, dedicating this little work to you ... to incite you ... to publish another which is more polished and graceful”.96 Just as women of the wealthy social levels did not go out in public unattended, their joint venture into the male realm of literary discourse can be seen as both a supportive and protective gesture.

Published women authors frequently addressed their works to fellow women, sometimes as friends or as patrons. Even Jeanne Flore, which may be a pseudonym covering male authorship, dedicates her *Contes amoureux* to her cousin, Madame Minerve. Women writers perceived women as more willing to accept the work of another woman than a man and more likely to appreciate its preoccupations. This was certainly the case of Hélisenne de Crenne’s semi-autobiographical work *Les Angoisses douloureuses qui procedent d’amours*. The book concerned the protagonist Hélisenne’s adulterous affair with Guenelic, after an unhappy marriage to a much older man, and the affair’s disastrous consequences for both Hélisenne and her lover. The story was divided by the presence of three narratives, first the portrayal of the story by Hélisenne herself, then the account of her lover Guenelic and finally a re-telling by a male friend of Guenelic, Quezinstra. Crenne appealed for the support of a group of friendly female listeners who would help comfort her. “The anxieties and sadness of miserable people ... diminish when one can declare them to a faithful friend. Because I am certain ... that ladies are naturally inclined to have compassion. It is to you, my noble Ladies, that I want my extreme sorrows to be communicated”.97 Furthermore, Crenne presented her work as of instructive value to other women, thereby justifying her public voice. The title indicated that the book was directed to a female readership as a didactic text in which, following the title, “she exhorts

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96 “pource que les femmes ne se montrent volontiers en publiq seules, je vous ay choisie pour me servir de guide, vous dediant ce petit euvre, ... vous inciter ... d’en mettre en lumiere un autre qui soit mieux lime et de meilleure grace”, in “A.M.C.D.B.L.”, *Œuvres complètes*, (ed.) Rigolot, p. 43.

97 “Les anxietez & tristesse des miserables ... se diminuent, quand on les peut declarer à quelque sien amy fidelle. Parce que ie suis certaine ... que les dames naturellelment sont inclinées à auoir compassion. C’est à vous mes nobles Dames, que ie veulx mes extresme douleurs estre communiquées”, Dedicatory epistle in *Angoisses*, sig. aii r°.
all people not to follow passionate love". She appealed to her female readers to "be always on your guard" and suggested that her tale would prevent them from making the same unfortunate choices.

Hélisenne de Crenne was clearly aware of the potential for criticism of her choice of subject, and decision to publish, as a female. In the first section in which she wrote in a female voice, as Hélisenne rather than as a male character, she chose to give her strongest defence of her actions. Significantly, Crenne's justifications in this third of the book in which a woman gave her own rendition of the events of a history in which she was the main protagonist, indicated that she perceived it to be the most upsetting to the social order in which women were expected to be silent, passive objects under male control. However, she argued its public value was that the experience of the protagonist might prevent women from similarly straying from traditional expectations as good and chaste wives:

having many times set aside ... the pen, the affectionate desire I have towards you, noble ladies, was the reason why I swore to myself to declare all to you, without reserving anything: since by the experience of my furious folly I can ... give you advice that will be useful and profitable to you in preserving you from such flames.

Crenne showed her struggle prior to choosing to write, but portrayed herself as forced to do so by the need to share this knowledge with other women as a warning to them. She justified her own subversive action in publishing by acknowledging patriarchal expectations of women to be chaste, good wives. She depicted herself as an exception who must risk the condemnation by society for her discussion of adulterous actions the better to keep other women from doing likewise.

98 *laquelle exhorte toutes personnes à ne suyvrefolle amour.*
99 "Soyez tousiours sur vostre garde", in "Helisenne aux lisantes", *Angoysses*, sig. [ai v°].
100 "ayant par plusieurs fois laissé ... la plume, l’affectueux desir que l’ay enuers vous, mes nobles dames, à este occasion que ie me suis esuertuee de vous declarer le tout, sans rien reserver: car par l’experience de ma furieuse folie, vous puis ... donner conseil qui vous sera vtile & prouffitable pour de tel embrasemens vous conserver", in *Angoysses*, sig. [lv v°].
Sixteenth-century women readers did read texts written by other women, and there is evidence that some women writers owned books by other women.\textsuperscript{101} Women writers frequently negated their authority as an author, speaking rather as one woman to others. This strategy promoted a relationship of communication between reader and the text, not of control. Identification with the contextual background of the writer encouraged a reading dialogue between connecting women. Clearly the strategy of an implied female readership allowed women writers to envisage a receptive audience to their work. Further, by situating the writer’s work in a dialogue between women, it presented women writers as obedient objects under male control; not, as these authorities feared, as instructing, opinionated and unruly women.

Gender mattered to women writing. As “good women”, they could not participate fully in published discourse. The realms of writing and literature were conventionally perceived as those of an elite group of wealthy men, whose education allowed them access and authority to publish as part of a gendered tradition. The “Renaissance” had paradoxical effects for female authors. It both opened up new possibilities for literary contribution, and closed off other areas of authorship and identity as the realm of elite men, such as that of “the Poet”. Gender affected women as writers at every social level and in the mediums of both manuscript and print. Female authors who wished to contribute to publication were forced to subvert and/or create new criteria of value and authority for their works.

\textsuperscript{101} See chapter 2.
THE MATERIAL CONDITIONS OF FEMALE PUBLICATION

For a woman to publish in sixteenth-century France, she needed more than the theoretical possibility of rhetorical space for a female voice in publication. There were also material conditions which structured women's participation in published discourse. To write for publication in sixteenth-century France, an author needed to be wealthy, literate and have access to writing materials such as pens and paper. Depending on what a writer wished to discuss, he or she might need a specialized education such as in classical languages or contemporary literary theory. Further to this, writers needed access to reading materials from which they would develop their own writing style and themes. Finally, all authors required a place to write and the free time to structure thoughts and compose the work. What were women writers' opportunities for obtaining these essential material conditions for contributing to publication both at different social levels, and compared to those of men? 1

This chapter will examine how women's access to publication was structured by the interrelationship between material conditions and theoretical notions of female behaviour. Sixteenth-century notions of the "good woman", such as her abilities and rightful place in the household, shaped assumptions about female access to education and free time. Yet frequently women of high ranking and wealthy families obtained an education far beyond that generally prescribed for their sex. In this chapter, discussion of women's ability to access the tangible practicalities necessary to write and publish will be restricted mostly to the experiences of that minority of women from wealthy families of high social status who constituted the majority of women writing in sixteenth-century France.

Women's education

If socially privileged women's education was above the norm for the majority of women, then what was the standard education for most women? For many people, a girl's education would consist simply of learning domestic skills that would train her to later run her own household as a wife and mother. In 1527, Jacques Marchand, a labourer at Saint-Michel, saw his duty to educate his motherless children as fulfilled by sending "the little boy to school, to learn his holy letters, and to teach the girls housekeeping." \(^2\) Evidently, he felt his daughters Louise and Denise would not need the benefit of letters, as befitted the education of their brother Claude. \(^3\) For the middling and lower classes, where schools did exist, girls were likely to attend for a shorter time than boys, even though in many areas, officially children were expected to attend schooling until 11 or 12. \(^4\) Merry Wiesner also suggests that parents might have been unwilling to pay the expenses for their daughters of paper and pens involved in learning to write. \(^5\) Although the economic realities of many small towns meant that girls and boys learned together in co-educational village schools, it was considered preferable to separate children. Those towns in which the funds could be raised employed a magistra puellarum who would teach a syllabus appropriate for girls. \(^6\) The Catholic Church advocated female education at home by which a girl's learning would be limited to domestic skills and any education her mother could pass on. \(^7\) Women involved in aspects of the printing trade, outside of the rich and powerful families such as the Estiennes whose daughters received an education above the standard for other women, might learn to read by their surroundings in the workshop. The historian Natalie Zemon Davis has observed that wives and daughters


\(^3\) Ibid., p. 6.


\(^6\) Huppert, p. 45.

hanging up sheets of printed material to dry might have been more exposed to the written word than women in other surroundings.8

What was the nature of literacy in sixteenth-century society? Literacy could be composed of several elements, including the two distinct abilities, to read and to write. In sixteenth-century France, these two abilities were not always taught together so it is important not to occlude the specific nature of the literacies of particular groups. Further to this, modern scholars have observed other types of literacies. These include the distinction between the ability to read silently and the need to mouth words.9 There were also aural readers, who may or may not have been able to read independently, whose experience of texts was through public readings by a literate community member.10 Each of these distinctions as to the meaning of literacy allows us to conceptualize and explore women’s different forms of literacies with greater flexibility and precision in understanding their experiences.

Fewer women than men comprised the small minority who could even sign their name in sixteenth-century France. Research has been produced for the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in France from which the low levels of literacy for the sixteenth century can be surmised. From signatures of marriage registers between 1686 and 1690, it seems that 29% of men and 14% of women were able to sign their names.11 A century later, between 1786 and 1790, 48% of men and 27% of women signed their parish register at marriage.12 These figures suggest that, in general, fewer women were able to write than men.

Moreover, reading and writing were not always taught together. Women were encouraged to read, especially to imbibe notions of proper female behaviour but

12 Ibid., p. 113.
writing, which might allow them to express their own point of view, could be threatening to the social order.\textsuperscript{13} Providing they were given the right literature, reading was a passive means of absorbing social expectations for women, yet writing was an active way of disrupting the system with alternative ideas. Literacy could be used as "an effective and efficient means of indoctrination".\textsuperscript{14} Joyce Coleman has defined such a reading aim as exoliteracy: a reading which adopted an exophoric mentality, that is, one which encouraged the reader towards an assimilative, collective, traditional and unselfconscious reading of the text.\textsuperscript{15} Exoliteracy, assimilating women into the patriarchal environment without challenge, was the ideal aim behind teaching girls to read. Although exophoric qualities were evident in the education of males - rote learning methods are one example - women were expected to imbibe the exophoric mentality in general. Thus, the 1587 charter of a girls' school rewarded its best female student, not for her learning, but rather for her "great diligence and application in learning her catechism, modesty, obedience, and excellent penmanship."\textsuperscript{16} Education for women was designed to teach them obedience to authority, to be good, rather than to be learned.

\textit{Education amongst women of the socially elite}

For men of the social and intellectual elite, formation could consist of learning the art of rhetoric, the humanist languages Latin and Greek, and sometimes Hebrew, as well as studying law and the sciences such as medicine. How did women's education differ from this? The ideal curriculum for education of women was a vastly debated issue amongst male writers of the sixteenth century. Juan Luis Vivès in his \textit{De institutione Faeminae Christianae} in 1523 advocated a limited education for women including reading and writing amongst a range of other, more domestic duties.\textsuperscript{17} To the east of France, Luther also took up the debate, demanding schools for boys and

\textsuperscript{13} Wiesner, p. 123.
\textsuperscript{15} See Coleman, chapter 2, especially Chart 2.3, p. 44.
girls alike. In his eyes, each girl was a potential mother and teacher of the faith to her children, so his focus rested on women's ability to read and study the catechism. In most cases, male writers recommended reading and writing only in the vernacular, and any study of Latin was regarded as highly dangerous, and at the very least unnecessary. As Vivès noted, "I perceive that learned women be suspected of many: as who saith, the subtlety of learning should be a nourishment for the maliciousness of their nature."

The circumscribed nature of the education advocated for noblewomen had implications on their access to publication as authors, as well as to their participation in publication culture as patrons and readers. Katherine d'Amboise apologized, in her manuscript work, *Le Livre des Prudens et imprudens des siecles passés*, that as a woman, her education was limited: "a man ... has the freedom to go here and there to the Universities and studies where he can understand all branches of learning ... which is not the business of the female sex". Women did not receive the same instruction as their male counterparts in areas such as scientific, religious and legal matters. As the author Jean Bouchet opined:

queens, princesses and other ladies who don't have to ... apply themselves to housekeeping ... must better apply their minds and use the time to attend to good and chaste literature, concerning moral things ... but they must keep from applying their minds to curious questions of theology, knowledge of which belongs to prelates, rectors and doctors.

Jacques de Rochemore praised the learning and accomplishment of his future wife, Marguerite de Cambis, in a dedication to her. There he showed what was expected by contemporaries of a noblewoman's education: "gracious in speech, humane in

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18 Ibid., p. 104.
19 Ibid., p. 103.
22 "les roynes, princesses et aultres dames qui ne se doibvent ... appliquer à mesnages ... doibvent ... mieux appliquer leurs esprits, et employer le temps à vacquer à bonnes et honnestes lettres, concernant choses morales ... mais se doibvent garder d'appliquer leurs esprits aux curieuses questions de théologie, dont le savoir appartient aux prélats, recteurs et docteurs" in J. Bouchet, *Le Panegyric du
response, modest in progress, and neatly dressed, writing well, ... and ... singing well, playing the lute, spinet, violin and other instruments". Every lauded accomplishment suggested gentility and restraint, rather than the intellectual pursuit necessary to elite male learning.

Women’s participation in publication was further shaped by the writing style which they were taught. When women were taught to write, it was customary for them to be taught the italic hand. In the early sixteenth century, the usual manuscript hand for business, correspondence or literature was still secretary hand or court, for official, almost shorthand business papers. Italic, a hand which proved popular due to its beauty, simplicity and speed, was generally used in manuscript to set off parts of a text, such as a title. Martin Billingsley in an English work, *The Pens Excellencie* (1618), explained the choice of this hand to teach women:

> It is conceived to be the easiest hand that is written with Pen, and to be taught in the shortest time: Therefore it is usually taught to women, for as much as they (having not the patience to take any great paines, besides phantastical and humorsome) must be taught that which they may instantly learne.

However, that women were taught a hand which was not usual for business or literary composition, reflects perceptions of women’s need for a written hand. The notion of teaching women italic, which set apart sections of text from the main, echoed a perception of women’s writings which were also considered separate from, or incidental to, mainstream writing. What a women might write was as ephemeral as the hand it was written in. Women’s words were not assumed to be literary or essential to business transaction, but rather pretty jottings to be written in a hand that was recognized for its grace and beauty. However, as the century progressed, the association between the incidental nature of writings using italic and women’s

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25 Ibid., p. 9.

26 Ibid., p. 10.
writings became less obvious. From the 1530s onwards, italic began to be used by learned men writing Latin, possibly because italic, an Italian hand, was associated with humanist influences.27

Wealth was clearly a prime factor in the education of women. The wealthier a family, the more likely it was that its daughters would be educated as a sign of their leisured freedom from practical household chores. An advanced education for women was largely limited to the upper classes and nobility, with the exception of a few mercantile families. Most literate women were educated from home with tutors, or in cloisters, rather than schools.28 The cloisters provided a centre of almost total female literacy for noblewomen who were educated there. The lifestyle of devotion promoted the study of liturgical texts requiring Latin, and women benefited from the extensive manuscript collections that could be borrowed from other religious institutions.29

Many women in wealthy families, particularly of the landed nobility, were able to read and write not only in French but also other modern languages. There is much evidence of these women's advanced literacy skills in hand-written letters, often addressed to other women, in inventories of the books held in their libraries and in the publications which they wrote. Reading and writing instruction, therefore, also reflected social-class boundaries as well as those of gender. In the upper echelons of society, girls might receive instruction beyond the recommendation of supporters like Vivès to encompass even classical languages. Translations by women indicated many educated Frenchwomen were familiar with Italian, Spanish and English, some knew Latin well while a few had knowledge of Greek.

Praise of humanist women tended to distinguish them from other women: their learning made them more like men. Charles de Sainte-Marthe could not reconcile Marguerite de Navarre's sex with her learning, saying of her: "in the body of a woman, she had a heroic and virile heart, thus she wanted to pass her time in the

27 Ibid., p. 12.
28 Moore, p. 89.
29 Ibid., p. 167.
arts worthy of the occupation of men". This in turn perpetuated the notion that intelligence and capacity to learn were not usual female attributes. It further bound some women who achieved the extraordinary status, as Anne R. Larsen terms it, of "honorary males" to continue the division between themselves and other women, particularly those women writers who wished to participate in male areas of writing. No longer like other members of the female sex, these humanist women acknowledged the superiority of male learning over conventional female domestic pursuits, possibly in order to assimilate. Thus in some works by women, domestic duties, symbolized by the distaff, are rejected in favour of the power of the pen. Louise Labé's preface provides one such example: "I can but beg virtuous women to lift up their minds a little from their spinning wheels and distaffs." In this way, women who achieved more than other women intellectually could feel confused by their separation from a conventional female identity while feeling empowered by their intellectual authority. By praising their learned knowledge as superior to women's domestic knowledge, they were recognizing the authority of a higher male order of learning to which, as women, they could never truly belong. As Evelyn Berriot-Salvador has observed, "the 'learned' woman was the consenting agent in her own submission".

The Protestant poet and historian, Agrippa d'Aubigné, encouraged learning only for some women. In a letter to his daughters, he praised their desire for learning: "I don't blame you for your desire to learn with your brothers," but qualified those women for whom learning was necessary as "princesses who by their condition are required to demonstrate the care, the learning, the adequate abilities, the management skills and the authority of men". The princesses of whom he spoke, the daughters

30 "havoir en un corps feminin, un heroique et virile coeur: ainsi vouloit passer le temps aux arts dignes de l'occupation de lhomme", in Oraison funebre de l'incomparable Marguerite, Paris, Francois Chauldiere, 1550, p. 68.
32 (Cameron's translation) "je ne puis faire autre chose que prier les vertueuses Dames d'eslever un peu leurs esprits par dessus leurs quenoilles et fuseaus", in K. Cameron, Louise Labé: Renaissance Poet and Feminist, New York, Berg, 1990, p. 46.
34 "Je ne blasme pas vostre desir d'apprendre avec vos freres", "les Princeses qui sont par leur condition obligees au soin, à la cognoissance, à la suffisance, aux gestions & auctoritez des hommes"
of the French royal family, including Marguerite de Navarre and her daughter, Jeanne d'Albret, were known across Europe for their learning, progressive education and ideas. Indeed French women of the royal family had been influential and highly visible in the politics of the French court throughout the century. Anne de Beaujeu and Catherine de Medici had both been regents and Jeanne d'Albret had controlled the Huguenot religious faction in France.

Male writers frequently celebrated contemporary learned women. Praise could serve several purposes such as the writer's desire to be favoured by his patron, the praised female subject, and also served to show how advanced France was by the learning of women. Women's writings too were seen as a reflection of France's progressive views of noblewomen's educational status. The contemporary memorialist Pierre de Bourdeille, known today as Brantôme, was one of many who gave generous praise to learned women of his time. He cited as an example, Marguerite de France, the daughter of Francis I and Claude de France: "she was so good, so virtuous, so perfect in learning and wisdom, that she was called the Minerva or Pallas of France for her wisdom."35 One need look no further than the descriptions of learned women in the contemporary Bibliothèques of Du Verdier and La Croix du Maine to confirm the generally overwhelming praise of women whose scholarly achievements and talents surpassed those of other women. Encouragement of appropriate reading as an occupation for women preserved them from idleness and possible mischief. Ladies of the court, "who spend the day in idleness and vain gossip", were a particular target of criticism.36 Marguerite de Navarre provided a noteworthy example to contemporary women, who were expected to model themselves on her behaviour:

when she was alone in her room, one saw her holding in her hands a book instead of a distaff, a pen instead of a spindle, and the stylet of her writing tablet instead of her needlework. And if she applied herself either to tapestry, or some other needlework (which was a most enjoyable pastime for her) she had by her someone who read

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35 "laquelle a este si sage, si vertueuse, si parfaitte en savoir et sapience, qu'on lui donna le nom de la Minerve ou Palas de la France pour sa sapience", in Œuvres complètes, vol. 8, Paris, Renouard, 1875, p. 128.
36 "qui passent le jour en oisivete et vaines paroles", in Oraison funèbre, p. 68.
to her from a historian, or a poet or another notable and useful author, or else she dictated to him some thoughts for him to write down.⁴⁷

Marguerite was commended for the wise occupation of her time, while she was read to:

at her two sides, two of her secretaries or others were occupied by her: one to write down French verse which she composed quickly, but with an admirable erudition and gravity: the other to write letters that she was sending to someone.³⁸

Educated ladies were encouraged to follow the examples given by learned women to improve themselves by some further, well-supervised and appropriate forms of education. In 1545, Antoine du Moulin’s preface to the work of Pernette du Guillet drew attention to her didactic achievements. He first lauded her abilities in the traditional female accomplishments of music and modern languages, saying she was: “perfectly accomplished in all musical instruments, the lute, or spinet and others” and that “she had had ... a whole and familiar knowledge of the most worthy modern languages (other than her own) such as Tuscan and Castilian”. Du Moulin showed Du Guillet’s talent and superiority over other women by emphasizing her study of “the rudiments of Latin, aspiring to learn Greek (had the flame of her life continued until her twilight years) when the heavens envying our happiness took her from us.”³⁹ Du Guillet’s is an excellent example of the type of acceptable education ladies could achieve within the socially defined limitations of female instruction. Du Moulin proved her talent by emphasizing her desire to learn Latin and Greek without it threatening participation in male discourses such as religious and medical debate.

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³⁷ “quand elle se trouvait seule en sa chambre, tu l’auras vue tenir entre ses mains un livre au lieu de la quenoille, une plume au lieu du fuseau, et la touche de ses tablettes au lieu de l’eguille. Et si elle s’appliquoit ou aux tapis, ou à d’aultriers ouvrages de l’eguille (qui luy estoit une tresdelectable occupation) elle havoit pres d’elle quelcun, qui luy lisoit ou un historiographe, ou un poete, ou un aultre notable et utile auteur: ou elle luy dicteoit quelque meditation, qu’il mettoit par escrict”, in ibid., p. 68.
³⁸ “des deus costes au tour d’elle, deus de ses secretaires, ou aultres, estoient soubs elle occup6s: l’un à recevoir des vers francois, qu’elle composeoit promptement, mais avec une erudition et gravite admirable: l’autre, à escrire des lettres, qu’elle envoieoit à quelcun”, in ibid., p. 68.
³⁹ “parfaitement asseuree en tous instruments musiquaux, soit au Luth, Espinette, et autres”, “elle avoit eu ... entiere et familiere cognoissance des plus louables vulgaires (outre le sien) comme du Thuscan, et Castillan”, “les rudiments de la langue Latine, aspirant à la Graeque, (si la lampe de sa vie eust peu veiller iusques au soir de son aage) quand les cieux nous enviants tel heur la nous ravirent”, in “Aux Dames Lyonnaises,” in Les Rithmes, Paris, Jeanne de Marnef, 1546, sig. aij r°.
Du Guillet’s death had prevented her from trespassing too far in her pursuit of scholastically important classical languages. Du Moulin perpetuated the traditional intellectual opinion that women should naturally be striving to male educational pursuits, acknowledging them as the highest possible intellectual goal, especially the almost untouchable areas of Greek, Latin and Hebrew, yet never quite attaining the same freedom and recognition as learned men. Pernette du Guillet never competed as an intellectual equal with her male counterparts. She was the epitome of the sixteenth-century learned lady.

Men dedicated many works to wealthy literate women. By selecting wealthy educated noblewomen as patrons, literary men showed an expectation that women would be capable of recognizing and fostering the great talents of a literary man, at least partly through their own learning. Patronage gave women with money some power but it was considered far less dangerous than allowing women to write for themselves.40

However, were women expected to read the texts dedicated to them, or merely be flattered by the praise of the author? Brantôme’s description of Marguerite de France suggests the former:

all things were ordered ... by the wisdom of which she had great measure, and learning too, which she always improved by continual study after dinner and the lessons that she took from learned people ... So they honoured her as their goddess and patroness. The great quantity of fine books that were made for her, or dedicated to her, bear witness to it.41

Was Marguerite’s learning also proved by the amount of material dedicated to her, because she was expected at least in part to appreciate its contents? Frequently, women’s participation in publication culture as patrons was limited to works considered to address female concerns. Some dedications were clearly intended to appeal to the taste of a female patron. Michel de Montaigne’s chapter “Of the

41 “toutes choses sont régies ... par sapience qu’elle avoit beaucoup, et science aussi, qu’elle entretenoit toujours par ses continuelles estudes les aperz-disnées, et ses leçons qu’elle aprenoit des gens sçavans ... Aussi l’honoroiroit-ilz comme leur déesse et patronne. La grand’quantité de beaux
education of children” in his *Essais*, discussing the pedagogical instructional of (male) children, was dedicated to Madame Diane de Foix, Comtesse de Gurson.\(^42\) Not only was this considered an appropriate subject for women to read but Foix was also expecting a child at the time.\(^43\) However a work dedicated to a woman may not always suggest that it was expected to be appropriate reading for her, for as Larsen shows, a number of scientific books were dedicated to women.\(^44\) Although this suggests a shift in the expectations of women’s capacity to understand scientific principles, it was still an area of learning that women were, by and large, barred from pursuing themselves.

**Women’s discussion of female education**

Education of girls tended to fall into categories based on gender and social demarcations. At all social levels, mothers taught daughters the necessary skills to manage a household. Probably because it was an orally transmitted form of knowledge, sixteenth-century women writers did not detail much of this type of education in print, although Christine de Pizan’s 1405 manuscript *Le Trésor de la Cité des Dames*, printed in the early sixteenth century, included household management amongst its many topics of advice. All women learnt Christian doctrine, which both Protestants and Counter-Reformists hoped would make girls obedient Christian mothers. Most wealthier families by the sixteenth century did teach their daughters to read and so Christian material was a primary source of reading material recommended by influential male authors such as Vivès and women writers alike. To “better know how to live and conduct yourself in devotion”, Anne de Beaujeu advised her daughter Suzanne to read “the little work of the noble Saint Lis, that of St Pierre of Luxembourg ... or other books of the lives of saints, ... whose doctrines must be the right rule and example to you”.\(^45\) Gabrielle de Bourbon’s early sixteenth-

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\(^42\) Chapter 26, *Essais*, Livre 1, Bourdeaux, Simon Millanges, 1580.

\(^43\) Rousselot, p. 106.


\(^45\) “pour mieux vous savoir vivre et conduire en dévotion ... le livret du prudhomme de sainct Lis, celui de sainct Pierre de Luxembourg, ... ou auttres livres de vie des Saintcs, ... lesquelles doctrines vous doivent estre comme droicte reigle et exemple”, in *Les Enseignements d’Anne de France, Duchesse de Bourbonnois et d’Auvergne à sa fille, Susanne de Bourbon*, (ed.) A-M. Chazaud, Moulins, Desrosiers, 1878, pp. 8-9.
century manuscript work *Le fort chasteau pour la retraicte de toutes bonnes ames*, which described the metaphorical construction of a castle made of Christian virtues, wrote of the three rooms and their teachers in the castle devoted to education. There “are three manners of ladies for whom the glorious comforter has built this noble and secure castle ... the beginners go to the school of faith, the persevering to that of hope and the perfect to that of charity”.46 Bourbon went on to describe at some length the lesson which each class must learn on their path to a Christian soul. Georgette de Montenay combined women’s appropriate location in the household with Christian contemplation, recommending her Huguenot verses “to all chaste ladies and damoiselles ... who, seeing it, would like to do the same ... in their homes, making use of it to remember always some passage of Holy Scripture appropriate for their use”.47

Several women writers strongly advocated a more intensive pedagogical instruction that went beyond a limited syllabus of approved religious texts. They argued for humanist education for women on a par with their male counterparts. Marie de Gournay was one such proponent, arguing “whosoever it was who first forbade them [women] knowledge as an incitement to lasciviousness, I think that it was because he knew literature so little that he feared they would run rings around him the second day of their study”.48 She demanded freedom for women to participate as equals in the intellectual debates of humanist scholarship, and condemned the price women paid in the damage to their reputation by speaking out publicly. She argued that
to be a modest women, according to the world, is not to remain modest, but to cast off frankness, renounce the freedom of speech, of manners, and moreover of judgement.49

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46 “y auroit troys manieres dames pour lesquelles le glorieux consollateur a fait ediffier ce noble et seur chasteau ... les commensantes vont a lescolle de foy, les perseverantes a celle desperance et les parfaictes a celle de charite”, in *Le Fort Chasteau*, Mazarine manuscrit 978, fol. 39v°.

47 “A mainte honneste & dame & damoiselle ... Qui le voyans voudront faire de mesmes, ... A leurs maisons, ... s’en aider, ... Rememorons tousjours quelque passage, Du saint escrit bien propre a leur usage”, in *Emblemes ou Devises Chrestiennes*, 1571, (intro.) C.N. Smith, Continental Emblem Books No. 15, Menston, The Scolar Press, 1973, sig. a4 r°.

48 “quiconque soit celuy qui premier leur defendit la science co-me allumette de lascivete, ie croy que c’est pource qu’il cognossoit si peu les lettres qu’il craignoit qu’elles l’en missent au roiiet le second jour de leur estude”, in Preface, *Proumenoir*, Paris, Abel L’Angelier, 1594, fol. 41v°.

49 “estre femme pudique, selon le monde, ce n’est pas garder la pudicite, c’est despouiller l’ingenuite, renoncer a la franchise des parolles, des mœurs, & encorees du iugement”, in *ibid.*, fol. 49v°- 50r°.
Other women argued that a more extensive education could only add to women's Christian understanding and virtue. Catherine des Roches, raised by her widowed mother Madeleine, acknowledged the extensive education her mother had given her. Her dialogue between Placide and Severe, the fathers of two daughters, was a humanist treatise reflecting opposing viewpoints, but left the reader in no doubt as to her own opinion:

Placide: ... I think that women should always be permitted to read, so that some could reduce their stupidity, others increase their wisdom, through books, which are very necessary to them ...

Severe: ... her hand must touch the distaff, not books.

Placide: One exercise aids the other. Pallas used both ...

Severe: ... Will they learn Theology, to go up into the pulpit, deliver a Sermon to the people, acquire Benefices?

Placide: No, but they will learn the Divine Word, because it commands women to obey their husbands, as one can see in Genesis. Having children, it will also be easier for women to maintain them in the fear of God, their Fathers, and themselves.\(^{50}\)

Des Roches's mother, Madeleine, also defended the extensive humanist education she had given her daughter as a means to teach Christian virtues, insisting "the real centre and globe of study is to make virtue a habit".\(^{51}\)

By producing texts of their own, women writers contested prevailing codes of female behaviour which required their public silence and obedience to male authority. Women writers were among the most visible advocates of an extensive education of all women. Educated mothers gave the same opportunities that they had had to their own daughters, as the case of Madeleine and Catherine des Roches shows. So too did Antoinette de Loynes, a participant in the Parisian circles of

\(^{50}\) "Plac: "... ie serois d'avis qu'on leur [femmes]permist tousiours de lire, afin que les unes se pussent diminuer la sottise, les autres acroistre la sagesse, par le moien des livres, qui leurs sont tres-necessaires ..." SEV: "... sa main doit toucher la quenouille non pas le livre." PLA: "L'un de ces exercices aide l'autre. Pallas les avoit tous deux ..." SEV: "... Aprendront elles la Theologie, pour se presenter en chaire, faire un Sermon devant le peuple, acquier des Benefices?" PLA: "Non, mais elles apre-dront la parole Divine, pource qu'elle commande aux Femmes d'obeir a leurs maris, ainsi que l'on peut voir dans Genese. Aiant des Enfans il leur sera plus facile aussi de les maintenir en la crainte de Dieu, de leurs Peres, & d'elles memes", in *Les Secondes CEuvres*, Poitiers, Nicolas Courtoys, 1583, fols 36v°-37v°.

humanist writers around the court. Her three daughters, Camille, Lucrèce and Diane de Morel, were known across Europe for their unusually extensive learning.

Loynes’s interest in her daughters’ education is profound, as her letter to their tutor Charles d’Utenhove indicates:

as to what you wrote to me of Camille, I will permit and commend to her always to revere you as the author, after God, of the access that she and her sisters have to learning and if they profit little from it, it will not detract from your hard work which Monsieur de Morel and I will appreciate always, even though it may seem the contrary to you. It must not amaze you if, as you write to me, the last writings that you have from Camille have not at all answered the expectations that you have. For some time she has cut down a great deal of the time that she was willing to employ in learning, so as to employ it rendering herself by the grace of God wiser and better, or rather, less silly ..., so as to marry learning to the real and certain knowledge of God without which I esteem all study not only useless but pernicious.52

Even the most ardent proponents of humanist education did not fail to highlight their understanding of the purpose of all female education: comprehension and contemplation of Christian doctrine.

Women as readers

Women also participated in publication culture as readers of manuscript and printed works. Much of the debate surrounding education for noblewomen concerned appropriate reading material. Vivès provides some ideas of the limits of a noblewomen’s reading. “If she can read, let her have no books of poetry nor such trifling books as we have spoken of.”53 It is evident from his words that ladies were not expected to choose their reading material themselves. Vivès suggested women should avoid vernacular literature such as Tristan and Launcelot. Michael Danahy

52 "quand a ce que m’escripves de Camille ie luy permettrai & commenderay tousiours de vous reverer comme l’auteur appres Dieu de laccess qu’elle et ses seurs onst auxl lettres et si elles y onst peu profilez ce ne laisse di avoir beaucoup travaille ce que Monsieur de morel & moy recongoynostrons tousiours encorez qu’il vous semble le contraire il ne vous fault esmvuillez si comme vous m’escripvez les derniers escriptz qu’avez de Camille n’ont du tout respondu a l’expectation qu’en aives car de puis queque temps elle a retrancher une grande partie du temps quelle vouloit employer auxl lettres pour l’emploi a se rendre par la grace de Dieu & plus sage & meilleur ou pour mieux dire moins folle ... affin de marier ses lettres a la vraie & certene cognoissance de Dieu sans laquelle j’estime toute estude non seullement inuitle mais pestifere", Deloynes to Charles Utenhove, [1569?] BN ms. fr. 4673, p. 25.

53 Vivès, in Vivès and the Renascence Education of Women, (ed.) Watson, p. 203.
suggests however that as far back as Chrétien de Troyes, women were considered the main target audience of such romantic fictions. Women readers were perceived to prefer the make believe world of the novel, seen as “a womanish cover-up, while history was the grave matter, stately and manly, strong and serious, the truth stark and naked.” Vivès preferred instead that women be given classical authors and the Bible, though these were presumably in translation since Latin, knowledge of which distinguished educated men, was rarely taught and certainly not prescribed as part of a woman’s education. Religious and classical instruction were a safer alternative, and imagination and flights of fancy were not to be encouraged.

Printers influenced the reading material available to women. Their decisions about what to print, which might be based on perceptions about appropriate female reading material as well as economic viability, shaped material to which women had access. Increasing numbers of works were printed in the vernacular in response to a growing audience outside of an academic or distinctly intellectual audience. The patronage of both Louis XII and Francis I encouraged translations into the vernacular. In 1543, Denys Janot was made the Royal printer for French works. This put recognition of the French language on a par with Greek and Latin for whom the Royal Printer had been established as Conrad Néobar some years before. Du Bellay’s La Défense et Illustration de la Langue Française published in 1549, echoed the growing support for the French language. Publishers looking for wider audiences than that of the universities embraced vernacular books which crossed all social levels, especially texts like the Roman de la Rose or Champion des Dames.

Developments in printing helped to popularize reading and spread it beyond the realm of intellectual and clerical establishments. Printers responded to public demand for contemporary works, printing them in smaller and briefer formats.

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55 Ibid., p. 19.
56 Vivès, in Vivès and the Renascence Education of Women, (ed.) Watson, p. 196.
57 Sonnet, p. 103.
60 Ibid., p. 257.
61 Hirsch, p. 42.
Instructional texts were also written for women and children on correct manners, housekeeping, and conduct during widowhood. Bimodal, these books could be read aloud at segregated gatherings, such as in sewing circles, or studied privately. In response to a growing audience, writers also cultivated a simpler style of writing. Some converted medieval verse texts into prose. This easier, simpler text meant that those whose reading capacity might be limited had greater access. Purchases of pocket books helped develop the notion of the book as a mobile object of convenience, rather than an immovable, weighty tome to be consulted in a library. Reading material for women and men outside of elite male institutions, which was usually printed in octavo sized or smaller format, was likely well-handled. More susceptible to damage than books kept in libraries, popular reading material was less likely to survive.

The ability to read silently, rather than mouthing the words, also affected book production. Silent reading increased the speed at which people could read and digest information. Silent readers could therefore also read a greater volume of books than those who had to form each word quietly to comprehend its meaning. For silent readers, the experience of personal devotional material was intensified, and books of hours and prescriptive literature for young girls designed for personal reflection became more popular, to suit the intimate reading. Silent reading also widened the variety of material to be read, since erotic and heretical works could be read secretly and were rarely recorded in inventories.

Since noblewomen were more likely than women of other social levels to read books in manuscript form before print publication, their libraries might contain fewer printed books. In aristocratic circles such as that of the Maréchale de Retz, both men and women might circulate their work in manuscript form. Such reading would not be recorded in inventories. Claude-Catherine de Clermont-Dampierre, la Maréchale de Retz, held one of the most famous literary circles around the court.

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62 Ibid., p. 41.
63 Saenger, p. 402.
Many of the celebrated male poets of the age, such as Jean-Antoine de Baïf, Rémy Belleau, Etienne Pasquier and Flaminio de Birague, attended her circle and celebrated her talents in verse. Many others dedicated works to her. A manuscript dated between 1573 and 1574 contains a collection of 150 poems from Retz’s salon. Although all but one are anonymous, literary critics have identified the works of Desportes, Jamyn and Jodelle and works by women. Responses, many by women, to other pieces indicate that exchange of material, particularly poetry, was common amongst literary circles.

Women of the middling and merchant class were more likely to read printed books. Clearly some were literate, but they were probably less likely than noblewomen to have the elite social standing to participate in court circles or the literary contacts to receive circulating manuscripts. Yet outside Paris, in cities such as Lyons, wealthy women such as Louise Labé, whose husband was a ropemaker, were involved in literary circles. The lines of demarcation in Paris, however, were perhaps more marked, where the nobility were more numerous and formed a distinct body around the court. However, from the evidence of inventories, only a small percentage of merchants possessed books. These were likely to be religious, such as a book of hours. Books, an increasingly liquid asset, might be sold or otherwise passed on after they were read, following a notion of the book which Natalie Zemon Davis has highlighted, as a collective object bearing knowledge for the good of all. The nobility were less likely to follow this pattern, not needing to sell each book in order to buy the next.

Wealthy medieval women contributed to the nature of publication culture by reading, commissioning and building vast collections of manuscripts, provided they had the funds. The historian Susan Groag Bell argues that a large number of medieval women owned manuscripts; Gabrielle de la Tour, the mother of the

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66 Ibid., p. 82. (BN ms. fr. 25455)
67 Davis, “Printing and the People”, p. 211.
69 Davis, “Printing and the People”, p. 212.
sixteenth-century writer Gabrielle de Bourbon, owned 200 in 1474. By far the majority of manuscripts in her collection were works of piety, and most usually the texts were in the vernacular. The collection of Yolande de France, Duchesse de Savoie, catalogued by Claude Bocher between 1473 and 1486, contained a mix of fine manuscript works in parchment and cheaper works of paper. Her library contained works in other modern languages such as "les Cent Nouvelles in Tuscan covered in purple velvet". She also owned books of religion, bibles "in French historiated [illuminated initial letters decorated with the figures of men or animals], covered in blue-green velvet" and "The epistles of saint Bernard in paper". As might be expected, her library contained the conventional instruction manuals for women: "a book in paper about good manners" and "a book about vices and virtues in French covered in green satin".

The considerable financial outlay which noblewomen invested in manuscripts shows the personal value and investment they could draw from their own library collection, both for their didactic and their aesthetic artistic value. Anne-Marie Legaré notes over 370 references to women owning private book collections in the fifteenth century. A prime example of a collector was Jeanne de Laval, the wife of René d’Anjou, and friend of Anne de Bretagne. A French translation of De Temporibus by Matteo Palmieri Florentinus, says of Jeanne de Laval in the Prologue "I know such natures as yours can not stand to pass time in vain without an honourable occupation and that, not being occupied by more serious things, you willingly concentrate your studies on histories and worthy books." Again, religious

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71 Ibid., p. 753.
72 "Item les cent nouvelles en tuscan couvertes de velloux violet" in L. Ménébréa, Chroniques de Yolande de France, Duchesse de Savoie, sœur de Louis XI, Paris, F. Chamerot, 1859, p. 311.
73 "en francois ystorie couverte de velloux pers", "Item les espistres saint Bernard en papier", in ibid., p. 311.
74 "Item ung livre en papier de bonnes meurs Item ung livre des vices et vertus en francois couvert de satin verd", in ibid., p. 311.
76 "je cognois de telle nature que ne seuffres passer le temps en vain sans honorable exercice, et que, n’estant en plus graves choses occupee, volontiers mettés vostre estudie a lire en histoires et œuvres dignes", in Prologue by Giovanni Cossa of De Temporibus, BN ms. Clairambault 1309, 127bis-128, cited ibid., p. 228.
works feature strongly, in finely crafted, valuable manuscripts.\textsuperscript{77}

Somewhat surprisingly, Laval’s collection featured several printed books. Printing, having only arrived in France in the 1470s, was still a relatively new art, and those who could afford the finer, delicate handworked manuscripts, usually made the investment. Laval paid over seven florins for the transcribing and binding of one manuscript.\textsuperscript{78} Printed books were far less expensive, as Laval’s own two show. From her household accounts, we read in July 1480 “To Guillaume, bookseller, one florin four gros, for a book la \textit{Vie des nouveaulx sains}” and in November 1480 “To Guillaume, bookseller, for a book of \textit{Fables de Esopet}, which we had bought from him” (1 florin).\textsuperscript{79} Her choice of printed texts did not vary greatly from her manuscript collection, but since the early printers mainly reprinted the traditional religious and moral manuscript works, this is not surprising.

The manuscript collections of women of the French royal family shows similar types of works expected to form part of a noblewoman’s reading collection. Religious works formed staple reading material, from Anne de Bretagne’s \textit{Traduction de l'Ancien Testament}\textsuperscript{80} to Anne de Beaujeu’s \textit{Une vie de Saint Jérôme}\textsuperscript{81} and Marguerite de Navarre’s \textit{Commentaire sur les Sept Psaumes pénitentiaux}.\textsuperscript{82} Classical authors were also well-represented, all in French translation, ranging from \textit{Discours du Plutarque sur le mariage de Pollion et Euridice},\textsuperscript{83} to \textit{Epistres d’Ovide}\textsuperscript{84} and \textit{Traduction d’Homère}.\textsuperscript{85} There were also the usual instructional texts: \textit{Le

\textsuperscript{77} Legaré, p. 211-2.  
\textsuperscript{78} Ibd., p. 227.  
\textsuperscript{79} “A Guillaume, libraire, ung florin quatre gros, pour un livre de la \textit{Vie des nouveaulx sains}”, “A Guillaume, libraire, pour ung livre des \textit{Fables de Esopet}, qu’avons fait acheter de lui”, in the household accounts of Jeanne de Laval, Marseille, Archives des Bouches-du-Rhone, MS B 2510, cited ibid., p. 227.  
\textsuperscript{81} Ibd., p. 171.  
\textsuperscript{82} Ibd., p. 187.  
\textsuperscript{83} Ibd., p. 124.  
\textsuperscript{84} Ibd., p. 185.  
\textsuperscript{85} Ibd., p. 187.
Chapelet des vertus\textsuperscript{86} and Le Miroir des Dames\textsuperscript{87} Royal women’s libraries often contained historical or topical pieces such as the Relations des funérailles d’Anne de Bretagne, \textsuperscript{88} le Discours adressé à cette reine par maître May du Breul, au nom de l’Université de Paris or Les joutes des faites à Paris lors de l’entrée de la reine Marie d’Angleterre.\textsuperscript{89} While each suggests the owner’s particular interests by its emphasis on religious works or current affairs, the libraries essentially contained similar reading material. This could be commissioned by the royal women themselves or presented to them, either in view of the reader’s personality, or with a specific motive to a political end.

Royal women patrons supported a female presence in publication culture, both as subject matter and as authors. Thomas Tolley suggests that Anne de Bretagne’s choice of reading shows a preoccupation with women in power. “Anne herself had caused to be printed in French in 1493” Boccaccio’s De Claris Mulieribus, and she had evidently commissioned her manuscript copy of Antoine du Four’s Vie des femmes illustres in 1505.\textsuperscript{90} Royal women’s libraries also contained histories of individual women: Relation de la reine de Hongrie depuis Venise jusqu’à Budda\textsuperscript{91} and Gestes de la reine Blanche\textsuperscript{92} Other royal women pursued literary interests which included attention to works not just about but also by women authors. Yolande de France owned “the vision of Christine on parchment with a silver clasp” and another work which may also be by Pizan described as: “the book of Christine covered in gold cloth on parchment and with a clasp.”\textsuperscript{93} Anne de Beaujeu had a printed copy of Christine de Pizan’s Cité des Dames and Othea.\textsuperscript{94} Marguerite de Valois held a copy of Marguerite de Navarre’s Marguerite des Marguerites.\textsuperscript{95}

\textsuperscript{86} Ibid., p. 185.
\textsuperscript{87} Ibid., p. 186.
\textsuperscript{88} Ibid., p. 185.
\textsuperscript{89} Ibid., p. 172.
\textsuperscript{91} Delisle, p. 125.
\textsuperscript{92} Ibid., p. 185.
\textsuperscript{93} “Item la vision de Cristine en parchemin a ung fermail dargent: Item le livre de Crestine couvert de drap d’or en parchemin a ung fermail”, in Ménébréa, p. 312.
\textsuperscript{95} Ibid., p. 81.
Women also exchanged works and gave books as gifts to other women. Abbess Marie de Bretagne’s 1477 inventory lists a borrowed book of poetry from “Mademoiselle Jehanne de Laval” and records show Jeanne ordered a book of hours as a gift for her sister Louise in 1459. Charlotte de Savoie’s inventory recorded some books which were “given and sent to madame la princesse de la Roche-sur-ion, as shown by the receipt of Yllere de Marconay”. In 1538, Anthoinette de Saveuses, a nun at Dunkirk, was sent two breviaries by her English friend living at Calais, Honor Lisle.

Outside the royal households, could other women participate in publication culture as readers? Did they have access to books? From the research of Coyeque, Jurgens, Doucet and Schutz on notarial records, primarily inventories after death, at least 85 women owned books in Paris between 1493 and 1597. Schutz also notes that nine women in Amiens possessed books between 1503-1583, so Parisian women were not alone in owning books. The records of the notary Pierre Crozon, who worked mainly with the clientele of the left bank in Paris, are swayed towards book-owning women married mostly to men of legal, educational, religious and printing circles. Furthermore, Paris drew a population of educated officials working in and around the court, over-representing the literacy of both men and women in a way other large French towns may not have experienced. Seigneurial libraries were not likely to be in Parisian notary records, rather notaries probably returned to the manorial seat to record the inventory.

Given these restrictions, what can be discovered about female ownership of printed books outside the wealthy elite in French society? Firstly, a woman’s book ownership was not necessarily linked to a “literate profession” in which her husband

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96 Legare, p. 217.
97 Ibid., p. 219.
98 “baillés et envoyés à madame la princesse de la Roche-sur-ion, comme appert par recepisse de Yllere de Marconay”, in Les Enseignements d’Anne de France, p. 258.
101 Doucet, p. 21.
MATERIAL CONDITIONS

was involved. Although eleven women of the 85 were married to councillors and a further ten were wives of lawyers in parliament or working in law, as notaries, prosecutors, or in the Clerk’s office, almost a quarter of all the book-owning women had husbands who were named “bourgeois of Paris” with professions and trades such as innkeepers, saddlers, grocers and pastrycooks. As Barbara B. Diefendorf has observed, at the beginning of the sixteenth century, “bourgeois” was a term denoting legal, rather than social, status which was “a privilege formally accorded by the city government to persons who had resided in the city at least a year and who owned property, paid taxes, and served in the militia there”.102 Many of these trades did not necessarily require literacy, unlike others such as printing. Furthermore, within the “bourgeois” families, the women were most often wives of merchants, and then drapers, rather than wives of book-owning professions such as printing and the trades related to it. This in itself suggests that the decision to invest in books was not necessarily related to the husband’s financial investments concerning his business, and may have been the wife’s initiative. If so, the works held in women’s libraries might indicate what women chose to read as appropriate or of interest to them, rather than books husbands bought for commercial purposes.

A collection of four to five books, mostly books of hours, was typical for “bourgeois” women. A few women listed exceptionally large libraries in their records. In 1508, Philippe, the widow of Pierre Bodin, a prosecutor in parliament, owned 173 manuscripts.103 However, as a widow, she may have inherited at least part, if not all, of the former collection of her husband. Another large library, containing eighty books in Latin and French, also belonged to a widow of an officer of the king’s equerry.104 The presence of books in Latin further suggests this was a compilation of both her own and her deceased husband’s collections.

The contents of women’s libraries suggest that works of personal devotion were the most popular purchases. Often a woman owned several books of hours to

103 Doucet, p. 46.
104 Ibid., p. 249.
the exclusion of all other (recorded) material. Sandra Penketh has argued that an examination of medieval books of hours which include female portraits reveals evidence of both "strong female patronage" and of "active participation in personal worship" by women book owners. In 1522, Isabeau Boursier, the widow of Jean Hamelin, merchant and bourgeois of Paris, listed as her library, "A book of Hours, usage of Paris, printed letters, A little book of Hours, on parchment, printed letters" and finally, a more luxurious, "Two books of Hours, on parchment, printed letters, historiated, with gold lettering, of which one is covered in camel skin and the other covered in black velvet." Others listed books of a religious nature, confirming the popularity of this material as the accepted and usual reading matter for women. There seems little difference between women of the royal circle or the bourgeois's wife about the choice of reading material. Only the binding varies, as bourgeois women's books were covered in less luxurious materials.

Like royal women, bourgeois women enjoyed a variety of works and supported the presence of women writers in publication culture. Their libraries contained works of history; Guillette Croquet, wife of Claude Hennequin, draper and bourgeois of Paris, had amongst her books of paper, "Les Croniques de France," while Jacqueline Taillemacque, wife of Jean Collart, a merchant and bourgeois of Paris, owned the stories of Aesop "Ysoppe bound on board of paper." Contemporary material was also recorded including popular works such as Le Chasteau d'amours and Doctrinal de sapience. Some women owned books containing works by women. Marguerite de Navarre's writings in the Hecatomphile (1534) and her Heptameron (1558) were held by François de Carvenonay "councillor of the King's chamber" and his wife Anne Hurault, in 1560. Catherine Jacyer, "wife of Jean le Feron, lawyer in the Parliament", in 1548 had La Chasse et le

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106 "Unes paires d'Heures, usage de Paris, lectres d'impression, Unes petites Heures, en parchemyn, lectres d'impression Deux paires d'Heures, en parchemyn, lectre d'impression, hystoriés, à lectre d'or, dont l'une garnye d'une chemysette de camelot et l'autre couverte de velous noir", in Histoire Générale de Paris. Recueil d'Actes Notariés, p. 55.
107 Ibid., p. 59.
108 "relié en ais de papier", in ibid., p. 122.
109 "conseiller de la chambre du roi", in ibid., p. 76.
Depart d'Amour. Marie Roussel, "wife of J. Maigret, equerry", possessed a copy of Christine de Pizan's Cité des Dames in 1529. Few books were in other languages. Those women whose libraries contained works in Latin tended to be the wives of men in legal or court professions, notably prosecutors, officers of the king's equerry and lawyers. In these cases, wives may have inherited the collection of their husband upon his death.

Some works held in bourgeois women's libraries were not recognized as sufficiently important to be recorded by name. They were perhaps recipes or remedy books. In 1525, Antoinette Ladoré, wife of Antoine Rousseau, merchant and bourgeois of Paris, cites her library as containing "Six books of various sorts, as many large as small." Annette Le Fèvre, wife of Andry Clément, haberdasher and bourgeois of Paris, specifies in detail all her books, books of hours, except for a single "book in French." This may be because they were smaller chapbook editions, of little financial worth and few adornments, and little importance to a record whose purpose was primarily the establishment of valuable goods and possessions. Those of Nicole de Vire, wife of Guillaume Lentier, an innkeeper and bourgeois of Paris, were listed as "in several volumes of books, such as Cicero, bound and unbound, just as you find them." This suggests that their binding, where it existed, was not of fine material or leather that made the work a financial investment to be noted. Alternatively it may be the subject matter of such works would be regarded as unimportant to specify because it concerned only women, as simply "books to read" and therefore of little importance to an official legal document.

Less wealthy women were also manuscript owners. However, the small numbers of women about whom we know, with most of the Crozon's records from the 1520s, does not allow a comparative analysis of the selection of manuscripts over

110 "femme de Jean le Feron, avocat en la court du Parlement", in ibid., p. 79
111 "femme de J. Maigret, ecuyer", in ibid., p. 84.
112 "Six livres, de plusieurs sortes, tant grans que petis", in ibid., p. 60.
113 "livre en françois", in ibid., p. 49.
114 "en plusieurs volumes de livres, comme cicero, reliez et non reliez, tous telz quels", in ibid., p. 115.
115 "livres à lire", in Documents du Minutier Central, p. 318.
printed books, through the century. The presence of manuscripts in a woman's collection in 1521 may be due to its unavailability in a printed form, or suggest that it was a family heirloom to be passed from one generation to the next. However, since many manuscripts were books of hours, this again suggests that it was a woman's own religiously motivated choice to spend more on a fine manuscript for her most personal work. In 1521, Agnès de la Cour, wife of Lucas des Ouches, a saddler and bourgeois of Paris, owned three works: *Vita Christi*, "*Messel for use in Paris,*" and her "*Hours* hand written, on parchment, covered in black serge cloth and with two clasps of gilded silver." Manuscripts were certainly not as common as in the collections of court women. Although women of merchant status would have lacked the social prestige to read the scrapbook-type manuscript poetry circulated amongst the court circle, this did not prevent them from holding a treasured presentation-type manuscript in their libraries.

Women could access texts in other ways than owning or exchanging works. Aurality, or the public reading of written text, was the primary means to hear the written word for most of French society in the sixteenth century. Since the majority of people were illiterate, they experienced books through readings by a literate member of the community, for example, at religious ceremonies or social gatherings. Aurality was enjoyed not only as a learning activity, but also as a social activity, a time of community togetherness. There were occasions for women or men to read aloud in segregated groups or together, and the literature read at those times probably varied. As this was a group activity, individual non-readers had little choice in the subject of their reading matter. Often it was the choice of the reader, perhaps a priest or literate male, whose role as disseminator of knowledge and agent between the author and audience was invested with great power. The reader could omit or add information at will, applying censorship over the non-literate audience.

Aurality had long been enjoyed by the French nobility as an alternative means of exposure to written texts. Public readings were a communal pastime amongst literate audiences as well as illiterate. Coleman cites many examples from the late

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116 "à l'usaha de Paris", "escriptes a la main, en parchemin, couverte d'ostade noir, garnie de deux fermouers, dargent doré", in *Histoire Générale de Paris. Recueil d'Actes Notariés*, p. 27.
medieval French and Burgundian courts showing noblemen being read texts such as histories and philosophical works, as well reading themselves.\textsuperscript{117} Christine de Pizan, speaking of the \textit{Roman de la Rose} in 1401, suggests that women too would also be read texts: "Why should one praise a reading that wouldn't dare be read or delivered, in its original form, at the table of queens, of princesses, and other worthy women".\textsuperscript{118} A large proportion of women's didactic literature was presented to them through such public readings as Pizan describes, and it was still a strong part of sixteenth-century court life, continuing the absorption of values of prescriptive literature. As we have seen, Marguerite de Navarre was read to as she worked in her chamber. Outside of its function as a means of female education and indoctrination, in literary circles too, aurality functioned as one of the methods of poetic and literary dissemination. New verse was read, usually by its author, to the mixed-sex gathering. Far from compensating for illiterate members of the group, public readings from a written and fixed copy served as a pleasurable activity amongst a community of highly literate participants.

\textbf{Ways of reading}

Material circumstances influenced the ways in which manuscripts and books were viewed by women as readers and owners. How did sixteenth-century women read material that was, overwhelmingly, male-authored, and outside of personal religious texts and prescriptive literature, almost certainly male-centred? Reading strategies varied. Pedagogical theories and patriarchal texts encouraged passive exoliteracy in women. Textual reproduction, beginning with manuscript copying, helped to reinforce the concept of text immutability. Literate people read the text as fixed and invariable according to the words on the page, so that works written in the past, taken as fact, could not be adjusted to contemporary ideas. Printing confirmed the indestructibility of the text and perpetuated its circulation in a form that did not change greatly with time. Some humanist women adopted exoliteracy, unchallenging the authority of the masculine intellectual realm, as "honorary males" themselves.

\begin{footnotes}
\item[117] Coleman, p. 117. \\
\item[118] Christine de Pizan, \textit{Le Debat sur le "Roman de la Rose"}, (ed.) E. Hicks, Paris, 1977, p. 56 cited \textit{ibid.}, p. 113. \\
\end{footnotes}
However, many other educated women readers developed different strategies in their reading habits. Some women readers valued their own experiences as women and resisted domination, thus disempowering the male-authored text. Christine de Pizan in the *Livre de la Cité des Dames* describes how the narrator Christine re-reads androcentric texts in a critical light. She first describes her feelings of oppression upon her exophoric reading of Matheolus:

To the best of my knowledge, no matter how long I confronted or dissected the problem, I could not see or realize how their claims could be true when compared to the natural behaviour and character of woman. Yet I still argued vehemently against women, saying that it would be impossible that so many famous men - such solemn scholars, possessed of such deep and great understanding, so clear-sighted in all things, as it seemed - could have spoken falsely on so many occasions.

The arguments of Lady Reason, however, allow Christine to develop an endophoric reading; that is, autonomous, analytic and self-conscious, questioning texts using her own experience, rather than devaluing her knowledge. "We have come to bring you out of the ignorance which so blinds your own intellect that you shun what you know for a certainty and believe what you do not know or see or recognize except by virtue of many strange opinions."

Some women writers described in their texts methods by which women could read male-authored texts. Pizan used Lady Reason to help the protagonist Christine to value her knowledge as a worthy "other" reading and encouraged her to disengage from the text, to apply critical analysis to the context of the work. In *Cité des Dames*, Pizan analyses the authors of misogynist texts and their reasons for writing. Lady Reason explains why Ovid was so biased in his views on women: "when he saw that he could no longer lead the life in which he was used to taking his pleasure, he began to attack women with his subtle reasonings, and through this effort he tried to make

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119 See also Schibanoff, pp. 83-106.
121 Coleman, p. 44.
122 *The Book of the City of Ladies*, p. 6.
women unattractive to others." Similarly the biased context in which Cecco d'Ascoli writes renders his authority invalid:

> If Cecco d'Ascoli spoke badly about all women, my daughter, do not be amazed, for he detested all women and held them in hatred and disfavor; and similarly, on account of his horrible wickedness, he wanted men to hate and detest women.\(^\text{124}\)

Pizan showed an acute awareness of the literate woman's struggle in reading male texts. Furthermore, she provided women with a strategy of resisting reading by developing endoliteracy, as Coleman defines, an independent, critical and contextual analysis of texts.\(^\text{125}\) Women readers were aware of textual domination and their reading experience may have involved the use of resisting strategies.

**Time to write**

For a woman to publish, she needed the freedom from other concerns to devote time to writing. Indeed, Joachim Du Bellay had noted specifically that a poet needed to be "not troubled with domestic business" but able to compose "in rest and tranquillity of mind".\(^\text{126}\) Yet all women, including noblewomen, were expected to occupy themselves with their household and family. How then did women find the time and independence to write?

Looking after a family provided little free time for composition. Once married, a wealthy women's primary role was to bear children to carry on the dynastic line of the family. One woman, Nicole Estienne, viewed child-rearing as an unrewarding and miserable aspect of family-life: "shame, contempt, sorrow, martyrdom that in her poor household she must endure, she alone maintains her little family, raises her children, feeds them".\(^\text{127}\) Elite women faced the prospect of bearing many children. They married at an early age and the common practice of wet-nursing

\(^{123}\) Ibid., p. 21.  
^{124}\) Ibid., p. 22.  
^{125}\) Coleman, p. 44.  
did not afford them the infertility often induced by lactation. Estienne condemned the constant cycle of childbearing that endangered women’s lives: “the incredible sadness that this poor woman endures in her pregnancies, the danger that she is in during childbirth, the tiresome and tedious burden of children.” Many elite women were weakened by constant pregnancy and birth. Rosemary O’Day has observed how marriage partner mortality rates were class-specific. In general, she noted that men, who tended to be the older partner in marriage, died first, but in the peerage, the high mortality of women in childbirth meant that commonly wives died before their husbands. Leonor de Roye, about whom one sixteenth-century woman wrote a biography, subsequently died after the premature birth of her twin boys in 1564 at the age of twenty-eight. She had married at sixteen and had already borne seven children.

Managing what was often a large household was a complex and time-consuming matter, involving dealing with many employees. Wives also extended family interests, forging alliances which might aid in the marriage of their children. Sharon Kettering has argued that noblewomen’s involvement in household politics, which led to placements and patronage for family members, was an extension of their primary responsibilities to care for their family. In times of religious turmoil, when husbands and sons went to fight, wives were expected to manage estates. Leonor de Roye showed the model of the perfect wife, reconciling herself at her death that she had “as faithfully served, loved and honoured her husband as any woman in the world could: that she held also for certain that he was most happy and satisfied with her”. On marriage, a wife might be brought to the established household of her husband’s family, where she was in a secondary position to her mother-in-law. This could be a source of conflict or support depending on their relationship. Katherine d’Amboise suggested that relationships within the household

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128 “l’incroyable tristesse/ Que cette pauvre femme endure en sa grossesse/ Le danger où elle est durant l’enfamement/ La charge des enfants si pénible et fascheuse”, in ibid., p. 40.
130 Ibid., p. 72.
131 “autant fidellement servi, aimé & honoré que femme du monde pouvoot mari: qu’elle tenoit aussi pour certain que il estoit bien content & satisfait d’elle”, in Epistre d’une Damaoisele Francoise, 1564, sig. di r°.
were often difficult for wives: “You know and hear the trouble of some married women even in important households who are sometimes mistreated”. Women often managed the financial concerns of a household and, as widows, could have control of large estates and businesses. Pacience tells the women in Katherine d’Amboise’s manuscript *Livre de Morale* to take consolation in patience for life’s adversities: “if you have lost lands, possessions, seigneuries, offices, rank ... if you have misfortunes on your lands ... if your servants or friends have betrayed you”.

Women could find themselves widows at any age, particularly as women were frequently married to older men. Many were left with young children and little wealth to support their family. Women writers recognized the difficulties for women forced into hardship by the death of their only financial support: “widows ... have such great and pressing needs”. Remarriage was one possibility but the biographies of several women writers of the period indicate this was no certain means of financial support. After the deaths of their second husbands, both Antoinette Peronnet and Charlotte de Guillard chose to manage their printing businesses (successfully) themselves. At different periods in the female life-cycle, remarriage was a more likely prospect than remaining a widow. Madeleine des Roches married the powerful humanist lawyer François Eboissard, Seigneur de la Villée, after the death of her first husband, but when he died, she was sufficiently financially comfortable to support both herself and her daughter on the proceeds of their professional writings.

Wealthy aristocratic widows were usually less likely to remarry than bourgeois widows, lacking the financial necessity to do so. Gabrielle de Coignard had no reason to remarry after the death of her husband, the President of the Parlement of Toulouse, and occupied herself writing. One verse bears witness to the pressures from family members on wealthy women to remarry to sustain family links: “never speak to me of remarrying, you, my dear relatives, if you love my life,

132 “Vous scaves et entendes lenuy daulcunes femmes maries voyre qui sont de grosse maison qui aulcunesfoys mal sont traictez”, in *Traité de Morale sur la Fortune*, BN n.a.f. 19738, fol. 7r°.

133 “si vous aves perdu terres possessions seigneuries offices estatz ... si vous aves des adversites en vos biens terriens ... si voz serviteurs et amys vous ont fait quelque tour de traison”, in *ibid.*, fol. 14r°.

134 “Et les vefves ... tant ont de grous et urge-s affaires”, in *ibid.*, fol. 7r°.
don't speak to me of it again, for I have no wish [for] ... a second husband". 135 Notwithstanding familial pressures, aristocratic women generally fared better than women of less wealthy social levels. They could rely, in theory, on an income guaranteed to a woman in the event of a husband's death when she brought her dowry to the marriage. Widows were also usually awarded custody of any children from the marriage which could give them considerable power and independence.

Fearful of the wealth and independence of widows, post-Tridentine reformers encouraged them to occupy themselves with religious worship and activity. 136 A few chose instead to write. Gabrielle de Coignard's spiritual verse characterized the combination of literary expression with religious contemplation familiar to many women's writings. Her daughters justified her literary contributions in their preface to her works as a worthy occupation for her spare moments, strictly in secondary importance to her duties to household and family. Women also used their writings to express their grief over the death of their husbands. Marie le Prevost's only extant writing is in mourning for her husband. Public expressions of grief also served other purposes for women with literary ambitions. Madeleine des Roches's tribute for her husband was also a declaration of her honourable reputation and chaste life: "finding herself tied according to the sacred laws of Hymen ... with the happy flame of a chaste marriage, she is still happy in her simple widowhood". 137 Furthermore, Des Roches made it clear she was not interested in another marriage. Such a marriage could potentially limit her freedom to write.

Female authors lamented that their domestic duties prevented them from devoting time to their writings. This promoted the writer's image as a good woman who understood and accepted her feminine role and place in the home. Marie de Romieu excused her writing thus: "this ... little discourse, composed quite in haste,

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135 "Ne me parlez jamais de me remarier;/ O vous, mes chers parens, si vous aymes ma vie;/ Ne m'en parlez jamais, car je n'ay plus envie/ ... un second espoux", in \textit{Œuvres Chrestiennes} [sic] de \textit{Feu Dame Gabrielle de Coignard}, (1594), \textit{Le Thresor du Son-et} (XVIe - XVIIe siècles), vol. 3, Macon, Protat, 1890, p. 115.


137 "en se trouvant liée/ Aux saintes loix d'Hymen, .../ Avec l'heureux flambeau d'un chaste mariage;/ Elle est heureuse encor en son simple veufvage", in \textit{Les Secondes Œuvres}, fol. 6v.
not having the leisure because of household duties to attend ... to something so beautiful and divine as verse”. Jacques de Rochemore portrayed the writer Marguerite de Cambis as a good woman by lamenting the amount of time she devoted to household responsibilities: “it seems to me that you will do wrong to your quick and gentle mind, if you employ your time entirely in household duties alone. Even though, as I know well, you run the household very well and to your great honour”. Gabrielle de Coignard’s daughters reminded her readers that their mother,

during her widowhood, having to command her daughters and govern her household, knew so well how to manage the hours of the day ... that she wrote these Christian verses, witnesses of her virtuous thoughts, with which she occupied her mind and her leisure.

A household and family to manage constrained the amount of time a women could devote to writing. The free time which Du Bellay found so necessary to serious composition was rarely a possibility for most women. Although some such as Antoinette de Loynes did publish whilst they maintained both household and family, the majority of women did not. Some married women without children were able to publish works, such as Pernette du Guillet and Louise Labé. However a significantly large proportion of women writers of sixteenth-century France were widows or had never married at all. Marie de Gournay, Catherine des Roches and Camille de Morel never married and Claude Bectone, Anne de Marquets and Charlotte de Minut were nuns. This suggests that the time constraints of household and family inhibited women from writing. Typically, a woman needed to be single, widowed or a nun, so as to have the material condition of free time, to participate in publication as authors.

138 “ce ... brief discours, composé assez à la haste, n’ayant pas le loisir, à cause de nostre mesnage, de vacquer ... à chose si belle et divine que les vers”, in *Les Premières Œuvres Poétiques*, (ed.) A. Winandy, Geneva, Droz, 1972, p. 4.
139 “me semble feries aussi grand tort a votre prompt, & gentil esprit, si l’[le temps]employez totallemè-t au seul menage de votre maison: Bien que, co-me l’ay assez connue, prouvoies fort bien, & à votre gra-d honneur”, in *Propos amoureux*, p. 8.
140 “durant son vefvage ayant à commander des filles et à gouverner sa maison sceut si bien mensager et les heures du jour ... qu’elle en fit ces vers Chrestiens tesmoins des vertueuses pensees dont elle entretenoit son esprit et son loisir”, in “Aux Dames Devotieuses”, *Œuvres Chestiennes*, p. 3.
Together with an extensive education, access to reading materials and leisure, an author also needed a place in which to write. For wealthy men, this was usually the library. Such a location detached its owner from public life outside the home as well as withdrawing him from activities and people inside the household. Within country chateaux or urban homes, the function of retreat was often reflected in the library’s physical location. The late sixteenth-century essayist Montaigne enjoyed an isolated library, in a tower separated from the goings-on of family and domestics: “I try ... to withdraw this one corner from all society, conjugal, filial and civil”. It was here that Montaigne read, mused and wrote: “There I leaf through now one book, now another ... One moment I muse, another moment I set down or dictate, walking back and forth, these fancies of mine that you see here”.

Few women had access to separate rooms such as libraries of their own. They lacked the ability to withdraw from domestic duties in order to write. Instead several recorded in their writings having a cabinet. The modern historian Orest Ranum describes the cabinet as either a small wood-panelled room or a piece of furniture with lockable doors or drawers, much like the *escritoire* or chests used for storing papers and letters. The level of privacy about what a woman stored in her cabinet varied in the writings of female authors. Marie le Gendre wrote to a friend: “You write to ask if I will send you these little discourses that you have seen in my cabinet in the past”. Jacques de Rochemore observed that Marie de Cambis kept “good books of which you have shown me several in your cabinet”. However Gabrielle de Coignard’s denial of public recognition for her work suggested she viewed her cabinet as a private and personal location for her writings, saying: “My verses, rest.

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142 (Goldhammer's translation) “J’essaie ... à soustraire ce seul coin à la communauté et conjugale, et filiale, et civile”, in *ibid.*, pp. 135-6.
143 (Goldhammer’s translation) “je feuillette à cette heure un livre, à cette heure un autre ... tantost je resve, tantost j’enregistre et dicte, en me promenant, mes songes que voicy”, in *ibid.*, p. 136.
145 “vous me ma-dez que ie vo9 envoye ces petits discours, q- vous avez autrefois veu en mon cabinet”, in *Cabinet des saines affections*, Paris, Anthoine du Breuil, 1595, p. 3.
146 “des bons livres: Do-t m’en montrates plusieurs dans votre cabinet”, in *Propos amoureux*, pp. 7-8.
hidden in my cabinet". Coignard also suggested a place where women could keep their writings private: "rest then my verses enclosed in my coffer".

Women lacked public recognition of their need for writing space which reduced their opportunities to participate in public written discourses. Unlike their wealthy male counterparts, many female writers did not have libraries of their own in which to formulate their ideas and to compose. Women often lacked the space and time to organize their writings. Pernette du Guillet's "little heap" of verses were found "amongst her muddle in quite poor order" "in diverse places, and several papers confusedly removed". Other women had to find physical locations where they could write in privacy. Katherine d'Amboise remarked that her work was "written in the secret place of your house at Linières". Few places were specifically designated for women to engage in the solitary activities of reading, musing on their thoughts and recording their own words.

Material conditions, themselves a product of the dominant ideology, were equally influential in shaping women's access to publication as were contemporary perceptions about women's rights to speech in public discourses. How women wrote and what they wrote were structured by many factors. Their limited education circumscribed the discourses to which they could contribute. The works women were recommended to read, the works they did read, and how they read these books all affected their thoughts and writings. Furthermore, women had different opportunities to access free time and space to write than did their male counterparts. Women had constant duties in the domestic sphere from which they could not retreat. Socially privileged women's access to rhetorical space was conditioned by the inter-relation of both theoretical and material considerations which affected all aspects of their experiences of publication.

147 "Mes vers, demeurez coy dedans mon cabinet", in Œuvres Chestiennes, p. 24.
148 "demeurez donc mes vers enclos dedans mon coffre", in ibid., p. 24.
149 "petit amas" "parmy ses brouillaz en assez pour ordre", "de divers lieux, et plusieurs papiers confusément extraitz", in Antoine du Moulin, "Aux Dames Lyonnoises", Les Rithmes, sig. aij v°, aiiij v° and aiiij r°.
150 "au lieu segret de ta maison/ De lynieres", in Poésies, BN ms. fr. 2282, fol. 5v°.
THE STRUGGLE FOR TEXTUAL CONTROL:
FEMALE PRINT EXPERIENCES

At least eighty-seven French women published in print from the beginnings of print culture until the end of the sixteenth century. Many of these women chose to present their writings through print publication, rather than circulate them in manuscripts. As David R. Carlson argues, "the means by which pieces of writing are built and circulated are themselves meaningful, and impinge on the sense of the writings".¹ We have to ask, therefore, whether there were advantages for women in pursuing print publication for their works. What influence did printers and publishers have on the way women as authors and their writings were represented in print publication? Gérard Genette has argued convincingly that the role played by such "editorial peritext" as format and presentation in constructing a text must not be under-rated.² Although print publication had different meanings and outcomes for individual women, there were also common elements in women's print experiences throughout the century. We need to understand both in order to assess contextually women's printed writings.

Since the publication of Lucien Febvre and Henri-Jean Martin's *L'Apparition du livre* in 1958 bibliographical studies of early modern France have been abundant. Yet these have primarily examined publication from a perspective which occludes analysis of gender differences. Febvre and Martin suggest that perhaps 25,000 first editions were printed from Paris during the sixteenth century and 13,000 from Lyons.³ My data, indicating that women's writings appeared in far less than 1% of the estimated total print publications in sixteenth-century France, would suggest that women's access to, and involvement in print publication was markedly different from that of men. If women's published writings are compared to the total editions of

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Parisian printers for specific decades, this is clearly evident. Between 1501 and 1510, Brigitte Moreau suggests that 1,653 editions appeared in Paris alone. For the same period, no entire work by a woman was printed in Paris, although four editions contained women’s works, amounting to 0.2% of Parisian publications. In the next decade, this percentage dropped to approximately 0.1% or four Parisian publications containing women’s work in a total of 2,509, and remained steady in the 1520s at around 0.1% or four works of 2,347 editions. Between 1531-5, Moreau records 1,462 Parisian editions, of which at least eight were works with women’s writings, amounting to slightly more than 0.5%.

Why did French women write less than 1% of all printed works in the sixteenth century? Noblewomen in particular were frequently well-educated and literate. The women of the less wealthy social levels who might have been influenced by increasing emphasis on literacy and education do not appear to be the majority of published women writers. Were there specific gendered differences to authorship in the print medium?

The development of the print medium

The early printers of the late fifteenth century developed their art as an extension of the manuscript market, continuing to supply the traditional clientele of the Sorbonne and the Church. They remained in the university quarter in Paris, in close contact with the faculty. Male workers in the printing trade were expected to participate in University processions and the trades remained under its protection for franchises and also under its surveillance.

Women were essential but largely invisible participants in the developing culture of the printing trades. As daughters of printing families, their marriages could form important economic networks within the industry. Annie Parent’s and

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6 Female printers and publishers are discussed further in chapter 6, pp. 210-215.
Sylvie Postel-Lecocq’s studies of Parisian printing demonstrate that around 28% to 30% of daughters of printing families married within the printing professions.\(^7\) Josse Bade established four of the pre-eminent printers of the next generation through marriages with his daughters. Perette married Robert Estienne, Catherine was the wife of Michel de Vascosan, Jeanne married Jean de Roigny and another was the wife of Jacques du Puys.\(^8\) Printers’ daughters were more likely than most women to have some education and literacy, which made them attractive wives for other printers. Nicole Estienne, the daughter of the printer Charles Estienne, was one of less than one hundred published female authors in the sixteenth century. Her Misères de la Femme Mariée was a strikingly frank portrayal of the grim domestic situation of wives, as she saw and experienced it. As wives, many women often helped in the shop as well as maintaining domestic work.\(^9\) As Christine de Pizan wrote in the Trésor de la Cité des Dames, of the wives of artisans and how they ought to conduct themselves:

> the wife herself should be involved in the work [of her husband] to the extent that she knows all about it, so that she may know how to oversee his workers if her husband is absent, and to reprove them if they do not do well.\(^10\)

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\(^8\) There seems to be some confusion over the names of Bade’s daughters. Most historians have both Vascosan and Du Puys marrying a Catherine Bade.

\(^9\) Not all wives followed their husband’s line of work as C.L. Loats has argued. See her “Gender, Guilds, and Work Identity: Perspectives from Sixteenth-Century Paris”, French Historical Studies, 20, 1, 1997, pp. 15-30. Benoiste Moreau, the wife of printer Julien Beauchesne, was a couturière de bonnets and Claude Josse, wife of journeyman printer Jacques Biton, a chaperonnière. Marguerite Bazin and Claude Brouiller and Gillette de Paris, wives of bookseller and printer Adam Saulnier, printer Gabriel Le Valet and journeyman printer Pasquier II Lambert respectively, were all marchandes publique de possession de mer. Perrette Aubertin, Éspérance de Morese, the wives of bookseller Noël Lateron and bookseller and binder Antoine I Sommaville, were both marchandes de fruits. Catherine Cramoisy, the wife of bookseller Gilles Corrozet, was a lingère, as was Marguerite Marchand, the wife of bookseller Jean I Hulpeau, as well as a tapissière and couturière. See P. Renouard, Répertoire des Imprimeurs parisiens, libraires, fondeurs de caractères et correcteurs d’imprimerie depuis l’introduction de l’imprimerie à Paris (1470) jusqu’à la fin du seizième siècle, (1898) (eds) J. Veyrin-Forrer and B. Moreau, Paris, Minard, 1965.

As widows, women also managed businesses as publishers and printers and, through remarriage, allowed new men into the industry. As "female printers and publishers", women printers were not doing the heavy manual labour of pulling the press for which Louis Le Roy suggested:

"two men are requisite ... one to take, to gather, and order the sheetes, or leaves; thother to beate on the fourme which is on the presse, and to distribute or braye the ynke on the stone or blocke: which could not serve the turn by reason of the great travaile required within, if they did not drawe the presses one after the other, and by turns."¹¹

Rather, women were in control of business, supervising male employees. As the Parlement of Paris claimed in the case of Jeanne Gombault and François Arnoul, "it is certain that master printers do no manual work [themselves], but only oversee to ensure that the work that they have undertaken is executed well and proportionately."¹²

However, there were social constraints on women's participation as workers in publication culture. In sixteenth-century France, women were typically engaged in low-skilled and low-paid work. Printing, however, was highly skilled, required literacy, and was associated with the intellectual elite. As Elizabeth L. Eisenstein has argued:

the new workshops also differed from those run by other contemporary manufacturers because they served as gathering places for scholars, artists, and literati; as sanctuaries for foreign translators, emigrés and refugees; as institutions of advanced learning, and as focal points for every kind of cultural and intellectual interchange."¹³

¹² "il est certain que les maistres imprimeurs n'usent d'aulcun labeur manuel, ains seulement tiennent l'œil à ce que le labeur qu'ilz ont entrepris soit bien et proportionnement fait et accompli", L. Dorez, "Mémoire Juridique Rélatif à l'impression des Livres Liturgiques du Diocèse de Troyes, Juin 1580", Revue des Bibliothèques, 1895, p. 43.
In the medieval past, most manuscripts had been reproduced and circulated by institutions such as the Church and universities from which women were excluded. The main work of printers continued to be the production of classical, humanist and liturgical texts commissioned by the universities and Church. Both these institutions separated “women from knowledge used by men to produce and reproduce power and privilege”. A visitor to Robert Estienne’s household and workshop clearly distinguished between the household space occupied by “his wife, his handmaids” and a “lively band” of children, and that which opposed it: the professional male realm of the printer’s workshop in which the visitor stood speechless, “quite seiz’d with awe, to see the sage companions of his industry, noted for civil learning”. The highly valued literacy and skills required to print, and the elite male market for such work, all contributed to the perception of the book trades as men’s work.

Contemporary attitudes about the inferior quality of work performed by women affected female experiences in the book trades. In June 1580, the publisher and bookseller Jeanne Gombault brought a case before the Parlement of Paris to prevent the canon François Arnoul from printing liturgical texts in Troyes. The widow Gombault was clearly concerned that Arnoul would remove potential clients to whom she could sell her own stock of liturgical texts. Her case was vehemently rejected. Rather than viewing her actions against the canon as protection against competition in the clerical market for own stock, the court concluded that “the said widow is moved only by jealousy of the zeal that the said master François Arnoul has on behalf of ecclesiastics”. The court admonished Gombault further, saying that

The said François Arnoul confesses that great work and diligence is required in printing, especially for religious books ... for this reason his undertaking is all the more praiseworthy, and those who claim to oppose it the more reprehensible.

16 “ladicte vefve est meue seulement d'une envye d'un zèle qui porte ledict maistre François Arnoul envers les ecclesiastiques”, in Dorez, p. 45.
17 “Confesse ledict François Arnoul qu'un grand travail et diligence est requisite en l'imprimerie, signalement pour les livres d'église, ... pour ceste cause son entreprins en est plus louable, et ceux qui se veullent opposer plus reprehensibles”, in ibid., p. 46.
Gombault was reprimanded by the court for criticizing the actions of the laudable Arnoul and her precarious financial position weakened by having to cover the expenses of the legal action. The “great work and diligence” that she also put into the management of a printing business went unrecognized publicly.

Women’s work in the print trades offers an insight into the gendered mentalité of publication culture. Adapting older cultural perceptions in society about the gendered nature of work and intellectual knowledge, the emerging print culture positioned women as secondary participants. In the only two visual representations of women working in the print trades that I have found, their presence was marginalized. A woodcut which was included in the 1539 work Alexander ab Alexandro, Genialium Dierum libri vi published by Jean Roigny, appears to represent his wife, Jeanne Bade, on the far right, at the very border of the scene (See Figure 3.1). Only the third picture ever to represent a printer’s workshop, the woodcut seems to show Jeanne working as a compositor. The image almost appears like a modern photograph since Jeanne is cropped, and yet it must have been either the artist or those who commissioned the woodcut, who chose not to depict her fully. Moreover, the actual printing of this work was undertaken by a female printer, Charlotte Guillard, who was another of the rare women working in the print trades to be represented visually in a printed text. In 1526 or 1527, Guillard and her second husband, Claude Chevallon, were both represented in a rare, if not unique, woodcut portrait of a family group of printers, with Gillette, Chevallon’s daughter (Figure 3.2). Here too Guillard, the older of the two women depicted, was placed on the far right, as a very marginal figure in the group, despite being an established and reputable printer and publisher in her own right. Even in pictorial representations of women working in the print industry, such as Jeanne Bade and Charlotte Guillard, they were depicted on the edge of illustrations. Women were drawn at the borders and their presence as active participants in publication culture marginalized. The printing trades offered few women the freedom and status to pursue a career as equals alongside their male counterparts. From their introduction in Paris in 1470, the French print trades absorbed, and constructed female participation with reference

18 Her sister Perette was also reputed to work as a corrector with her husband, Robert Estienne.
19 See further discussion of Charlotte Guillard in chapter 6, pp. 212-213.
Figure 3.1 Pictorial representations of women working in the print trades marginalized their presence and importance. This rare woodcut seems to show a woman working as a compositor at the far right of the illustration. It may be a portrait of the printer’s wife, Jeanne Bade, herself the daughter of a printer. Alexander ab Alexandro, Genialium Dierum libri vi, Paris, Charlotte Guillard for Jean Roigny, 1539 in H.W. Davies, Devices of the Early Printers 1457-1560: Their History and Development, Folkestone, Dawsons, 1974, p. 681.
Figure 3.2 This unusual portrait of a family group illustrates the established Parisian printer Charlotte Guillard at the far right of the woodcut, with her second husband, Claude Chevallon and his daughter, Gillette, more centrally positioned. S. Bernardus, *Opera omnia*, Paris, Claude Chevallon and the widow of B. Rembolt, [1526-7], in Davies, *Devices of the Early Printers 1457-1560*, p. 691.
to, older social traditions of women’s limited work opportunities, inferior work status and lack of participation in the production and dissemination of knowledge.

While the print trades perpetuated the masculinized intellectual scribal culture of the medieval past, they began to differentiate print productions from manuscripts. Print offered authors substantial advantages over scribal transmission. Texts could be produced in greater volumes and reach a new market of readers. This increased marketability and demand necessitated changes to the appearance of the printed book. Print began to differentiate itself and its audience from that of manuscript. The Gothic script, brought to France by the early Germanic printers, was replaced by the Roman script which was deemed by printers more appropriate to the increased printing of classical texts in Latin. Furthermore, not only was it seen to be connected with the new humanist trends, but it was also easier to read that Gothic script and soon became the common type-face for vernacular works as well. By the 1530s, Febvre and Martin note that double columns had been replaced by lines running the entire way across the page, making for easier and clearer reading. As a result of the increased demand for books, by the beginning of the sixteenth century, new economies meant it was no longer possible to cover each book in the expensive bindings customary for manuscripts. Originally, works had been bound with solid wooden boards covered in fine materials such as velvet and silk, or for a less important client, various leathers. Gold leaf details were then tooled into cover designs. However, the sheer volume of printed material meant it was impossible for each to be bound so painstakingly, and publishers were aware that the success of printed books depended on an affordable price. Texts were sent from the printer to bookshop and then sold without binding. It was then the clients’ option to cover their books. Unbound texts were easier to transport across Europe and precious bindings only added to the weight and cost of losses if the books were damaged in transit.

20 Although the very first works printed in Paris in the 1470s had been published in Roman script, it was quickly superseded by the more popular Gothic by 1473. See E.P. Goldschmidt, The Printed Book of the Renaissance: Three Lectures on Type, Illustration, Ornament, Amsterdam, Gérard Th. van Heusden, 1966, p. 12.
21 Febvre and Martin, p. 83.
22 Ibid., p. 88.
23 Ibid., p. 105.
24 Ibid., p. 106.
Texts sizes too reflected the demands of the new audience that printers were differentiating for printed texts. Scribally transmitted works were limited to circulation amongst the upper classes of society or special interest groups. The volume in which printed publications could be produced meant that texts could be spread amongst more people and reduced their cost, thus increasing their availability to a wider audience. Early printers had initially followed the traditional format of manuscript, producing their editions as folios. Yet folios were expensive to produce and not suitable for the large numbers of books that printers were able to produce. Quartos became the preferred size for books because of their manageability and cost efficiency. During the sixteenth century, a growing readership beyond university scholars and students bought increasing numbers of contemporary writings. The literate audience was expanding, particularly in towns. This created a broader market to whom books could be sold, including merchants, artisans and women. Their perception of the book was not that of a rare, immobile text to be copied or consulted in a library like the manuscript, but as a mobile asset that could be shared and passed on, or sold to finance the next book. Printers responded to the trend by producing briefer texts in smaller quarto and octavo volumes such as personal devotional texts that could be carried in pockets. Printers still produced folio editions of traditional texts like Bibles for display or a pulpit, and for students and scholars who preferred the larger type books for their legibility. However, the popularity of the cheaper, portable format meant that increasing numbers of contemporary literary works, popular tales, instructional manuals and even Latin humanist tracts were adapted to the small sizes that suited their audience. The adaptation of text sizes was another response to market demands and also functioned to increase that market.

**Reasons for printing**

For some women, the decision to print their texts was not their own. Their private and previously scribally transmitted writings were published posthumously. Gabrielle de Coignard’s daughters arranged for the posthumous print publication of her private verses. Although some poetry of Pernette du Guillet had been circulated

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26 Febvre and Martin, p. 88.
27 Ibid., p. 89.
in Lyons in her lifetime, the decision to print was that of her husband after her death. Antoine du Moulin explained in his preface to her works that the "fond exhortations of her grieving husband persuaded" him to publish it.28

Some women claimed that a private piece had been published by others without their knowledge and expressed powerlessness at their loss of textual control. As a strategy of justification, this had a twofold benefit. Firstly, the woman writer acknowledged the traditional role which society expected her to fulfil, as a silent and obedient female, and showed her willingness to conform to this role. Secondly, the act of publication was removed entirely from her power, showing the author as submissive, bowing to the pressures of others. Thus, the work could be published with little damage to her own reputation. Marie de Cotteblanche, in her translation of the *Trois Dialogues de Pierre Messie*, in 1566, presented such an account to Madame Marguerite de Saluces: "I did not intend others than you to have knowledge of it, but without my knowledge my book was transcribed by several people ... to have it printed, without giving me means to correct anything in it".29 An author's insistence on her works' inferiority, consequent upon her loss of textual authority, was common in women's published writings.

Some women chose to print their writings because of the power of print to disseminate their work to a growing sector of the community. Scribal transmission could spread their views to only a relatively small number of readers, but print could make writings available to a much wider proportion of French-speaking people. In particular, women in the royal family harnessed the utility of the printing press for political propaganda.

From 1562, a flurry of pamphlet literature accompanied the violent civil wars which broke out between the "Calvinist union" led by Jeanne d'Albret and her son Henry of Navarre, and the Catholic faction, the "League", of the Valois kings,

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28 "les ... affectionnées remonstrances de son dolent mary m'ont persuadé", in Preface to *Rithmes*, Paris, Jeanne de Marnef, 1546, sig. aii v°.
29 "je ne voulois aussi qu'autre que vous en eust la cognoissance, si sans mon sceu ne m'eust esté mon livre transcrit par quelques personnes ... pour le faire imprimer, sans me donner moyen d'y rien corriger", in Preface, *Trois Dialogues de M. Pierre Messie*, Lyons, Benoît Rigaud, 1593, p. 4.
Charles IX and Henry III, influenced by the Queen Mother, Catherine de Medici and Guise family. Again, in the late 1580s, printers of popular topical events found a market for the reporting of the violent intrigue between Henry III, the political challenger, and popular leader Henry, Duke of Guise, and the legitimate heir to the throne, Huguenot Henry of Navarre. After the murder of the Duke of Guise at the King's orders, on 23 December 1588, sensational publications increased. In April 1589, the Parisian officer in the record department of the royal courts, Pierre de l'Estoile, collected many of these publications in his diary, explaining that there was no minor printer who couldn't find a way to roll some new libelous and defamatory discourse off the press every day ... with all the atrocities one could invent, even borrowing from old memoirs of ruffians and no-goods of the Petit-Pont. I was curious enough about them to acquire about three hundred different ones, all published in Paris and peddled in the streets; they fill four large volumes ... besides a great folio of pictures and placards.

During the Wars of Religion, the writings of queens and princesses directly involved were marketable amongst a wide reading public. Even the correspondence of Queen Louise, who was never perceived as a political figurehead, was printed as a five-page pamphlet after the murder of her husband Henry III in 1589 made such personal writing topical. Such publications usually consisted of few pages, which were cheap to print and distribute. This was not literature to be treasured in finely bound editions, but rather an immediate source of news which served to explain contemporary events and to act as propaganda in broad circulation amongst the French people. In particular, Catherine de Medici and Jeanne d’Albret both exploited their marketability with printers to further their political aims. Both women used letters ostensibly directed to members of the royal family as a common form of printed propaganda. These suggested private correspondence which might arouse a reader’s curiosity but were, in reality, a method of public political commentary.

In 1568, Jeanne d’Albret published a carefully constructed series of letters to members of the French Royal family which served as Huguenot propaganda. In

31 *Lettre de la royne Loyse*, Tours, Jamet Mettayer, 1589.
them, she exposed her political and religious views and justified her military
tions. She wrote to the king, Charles IX, explaining that his Edict of pacification
"having not only been badly observed, but reversed" was threatening Reformed
subjects by "the animosity of [their] ... enemies ... whose rage and passion, had
snuffed out this hope of peace". She announced to Catherine de Medici that the
Guise family, and especially the Cardinal of Lorraine, "declare themselves by their
acts, enemies of the public peace of this realm". The final letter, purportedly to
Queen Elizabeth in England but in reality as much to the French people,
recapitulated Huguenot grievances and announced the inevitability of war: "And
there, Madame, are the ... reasons which have made me do what I have done, in
taking up arms". Similarly, Catherine de Medici also published propaganda to
explain her political actions which took the form of letters.

Contemporary events, such as the murder of the Duke of Guise in 1588,
forced women's plights as mothers, wives and daughters into the public arena and
prompted other women of socially elite families to print works. Women's writings
were often included in a compilation of texts of the same political persuasion, in
small, octavo-sized editions which were easy to carry and distribute across the whole
country. Women in the Guise family took advantage of print publication to serve
their family's political agenda. The language they used in their lamentations was
often highly provocative and inflammatory. Addressing Henry III, Anne d'Este, the
mother of the Duke of Guise, wrote "be assured that you will pay twice over for the
death of my two children one day, ... and that as long as I live, I will try by every

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32 *Lettres de la royne de Navarre*, 1568. Jeanne d'Albret's other published political writings include
her *Lettre d'un cardinal*, Lyons, 1564; *Mémoires in Histoire de nostre temps*, [La Rochelle? 1570?];
*Copie du testament de défuncte très-haute, vertueuse dame et princesse, Jeanne*, 1572.
33 "ayant esté non seullement mal observé, mais renversé", "l'animosité de nos ennemis ... que leur
rage & passion, a estouffé ceste esperance de repos", in *Au Roy*, Bergerac, 6 September, 1568, sig. ai
r°.
34 "se declarent par leurs actes, ennemis du repos public de ce Royaume," in *A la Royne Mere*,
Bergerac, 16 September 1568, sig. bi v°.
35 "Voila, Madame, les ... occasions, qui m'ont fait faire ce que j'ay fait, & prendre les armes", in *A la
Royne d'Angleterre*, La Rochelle, 15 October, 1568, sig. cr v°.
36 Catherine de Medici's published writings include *Canticque louant Dieu & les vaillans capitaines
qui ont chassé l'Angloys hors du Heure de Grace*, Lyons, Benoît Rigaud, 1563; *Lettres de la Royne*,
Lyons, Benoît Rigaud, 1563; Letter "A Monsieur de Boisseguin, Chevalier de l'orde du roy,
monsieur mon fils, capitaine et gouverneur de la ville et chasteau de Poictiers," in *Mandement du roy*,
Paris, Guillaume Linocier, 1586; *Remonstrance faitte au Roy, par la Royne mere*, Blois, P. Tochet,
1589.
means to avenge their death”. Her writing clearly had a popular appeal and was intended for distribution to rouse support for Catholic Guise political aims. Anne d'Este claimed authority to write as a witness of very public events in her own family. She was also protected from censure by her powerful elite position and the death of her main enemy, Henry III, in August 1589, which served to increase the public interest in her message of vengeance for him. Noblewomen were clearly highly involved in the French political situation, if not always immediately visible. Through the medium of print, they could address a wide audience on contemporary political matters.

Print publication offered women specifically some advantages over scribal transmission. Writing as a vocation was financially precarious, particularly for women. Female authors could not generally transcend boundaries of social status, as could some men, through recognition of their literary abilities. The intellectual or literary merit of women's work could not be measured in terms of financial success. Women could not obtain the introduction to court as could, for example, “recognized talents” such as Pierre de Ronsard and Mellin de Saint-Gelais. As a result, women were not in a position to be commissioned to produce the mainly manuscript works of the court literary circles. Print publication allowed female authors to transcend geographical and particularly gendered social barriers that limited their access to exclusive circles where scribal transmission would take place in order to participate in contemporary literary discourse. Print could spread women's renown as writers to a wide audience and might reach potential patrons.

Patronage was the most important form of income for all authors in the sixteenth century. Printers did not usually pay authors for their manuscripts. Authors might receive a few copies of their printed book but were more likely required to buy a substantial number of copies to support the cost of the production. Printers' first publications had been religious or humanist works which were well known and widely circulated before the advent of print. Therefore, the relationship between a

37 “asseure toy de payer un jour au double la mort de mes deux enfans ... & moy tant que je vivray ie tascheray par tous moye-s à venger leur mort,” in Les Regrets de Madame de Nemours, Paris, Hubert Velu, 1589, p. 14.
living author and a publisher or printer was a new and developing concept. Authors did not have copyright on their work nor receive royalties on reprints. They relied more on the financial support and favour given by patrons to whom they dedicated their works than on the small sums they might receive from the greatly unequal relationship between themselves and publishers. By the second half of the sixteenth century, writers might expect a modest sum of money for their manuscript, but by and large, they were still reliant on patronage for their income.

Hélisenne de Crenne was one of the first women writers who sought publication of her work as a conscious contribution to contemporary popular literary discourse. Crenne obtained a legal separation from her husband, Philippe Fournel, Lord of Crasnes, in 1530 and moved to Paris, the centre of French literary activity and publishing. The dedication of her translation of Les quatre premiers livres des Eneydes in 1541 to Francis I and her praise of Marguerite de Navarre in the fourth invective letter of her 1539 Epistres familières et invectives suggests that patronage was one source of her income. Les Angoysses douloureuses qui procedent d'amours, a work which depicted the unhappiness which arose from an arranged marriage to a much older man, is the only work by Hélisenne de Crenne to be specifically dedicated to female readers. Crenne distinguished the social level of her intended audience. Her readers are “ladies”, evidently women of the social elite, perhaps those who were most likely to be in the position of a forced, economic alliance with a much older man, but also important women who could act as patrons, to support and defend her as an independent woman writer in Paris.

Crenne’s works were marketed in a way which suggests that the sales to the general public were also an important target. Her Parisian publisher, Denys Janot, was responsible for the first editions of all her works: publishing one a year;

Angoisses in 1538, Epistres in 1539, Le Songe de madame Helisenne around 1541 and Eneydes in 1542. It is unlikely that this represents an annual literary output by Crenne; rather, it seems to be a deliberate policy of Janot. The privilège of the Epistres in 1539 asks permission for the publication of the Songe which was not published until two years later: “the aforesaid supplicant recovered two small copies composed by my lady Helisenne who composed the Angoisses d’Amours”. Janot was one of few publishers to publish a majority of works in the French language. He used Roman characters and aimed his works at a popular rather than intellectual market. A publisher who catered for a general reading public interested in romance novels would suit Hélisenne de Crenne’s objectives as a professional female author.

Print publication for Madeleine and Catherine Des Roches was a method of participation in contemporary literary discourse. They published their correspondence with the Parisian publisher Abel L’Angelier in their Missives. In letters 69 and 70 Catherine promoted her literary identity as a professional published writer, writing to a pre-arranged schedule and commission rather than composing opportunistic and incidental writings. “[I] have transcribed the first two books of Claudian, hoping soon to finish the third”, she wrote of her translation of Proserpine. In her following letter, she announced its conclusion: “[t]he daughter of Ceres leaves in the hope of finding you”. She discussed possible titles and the marketability of the forthcoming edition: “Give them whatever title you think best, Missives or Letters or Epistles, for readers’ curiosity will perhaps mean more rapid sales”. These authors promoted, rather than denied, their active and determined participation in print publication by including this correspondence in the volume. The correspondence encouraged the public to perceive them as serious writers in the contemporary educated literary discourse, regardless of their sex.

42 “ledict suppliant ait recouvert deux petites copies co-posées par ma dame Helisenne qui a composé les Angoisses D’amours”, in Privilège to Epistres, Paris, Denys Janot, 1539, unpaginated.
43 Mustacchi and Archambault, A Renaissance Woman, p. 15.
44 “moy, qui ay transcrit les deux premiers livres de Claudian, espera-t d’achever bien tost le troisieme tout d’un fil”, in Missives, Paris, Abel L’Angelier, 1586, fol. 40r°.
45 “La fille de Ceres s’en va en esperance de vous trouver”, in ibid., fol. 40r°.
46 (Jones’ translation)”Nommez-le donc ainsi que bon vous semblera, du tiltre de Missives, ou de Lettres, ou d’Epistres: pource que la curiosité des hommes en rendra peut estre la despesche plus prompte”, in Missives, fol. 40v°. Jones, p. 52.
Women and textuality

Some authors of both sexes actively sought print publication in order to control the accuracy of their literary product. Manuscript works, which were transcribed from copy to copy by hand, had the potential to add errors to each newly transcribed copy as well as reproducing those of earlier versions. Adrian de Thou's attempt to collate textual variations in scribal publications of Marguerite de Navarre's Heptaméron in 1553 indicated the textual diversity possible between manuscripts: "in transcribing them on most incorrect copies, I found several omissions, reversals of meaning, replacements of one word by another, and a diversity of readings, I re-established the whole as well as I was able". Thou included a table at the back of the work which recorded the numerous textual diversities between various scribal copies.

Women writers were particularly concerned that their work should be accurately reproduced. Many wanted to show that women too had the ability to participate in discourses of traditionally male concern. If their writings were circulated with errors, such works would only confirm that women were incapable of contributing to scholarly or literary forums. Furthermore, as I argued in the first chapter, female publication represented a breach of women's conventionally silent public role. Female authors were concerned to represent themselves conforming to other conventional expectations of their sex, as chaste and obedient women. Women desired control over their writings to ensure they were not mischievously represented as unruly, unchaste women. Some publications purporting to be the works of women did fuel the fear that women in publication were attempting to upset the social order. The 1597 publication, Instruction pour les jeunes dames, par la mère et fille d'alliance, looked like a female advice manual but used the dialogue format to show an older woman instructing a young girl how to conceal lovers from her husband.

Thus, female authors were concerned that their works should reflect the best they could produce, to protect their image as "good women" and to ensure that they were taken seriously through their intellectual merit. Women writers frequently

47 "en les transcrivant sur Exemplaires fort Incorrectz J'ay trouvé plusieurs Omissions, Inversions de sens, Interpositions de motz pour autres, et diversitez de lectures, J'ay rabillé le tout au moins mal
edited new editions to clarify, revise and reflect the progression of their thought and writing. Hélisenne de Crenne was an active participant in the editing process in reprinted editions of her work. In 1543 Charles Langelier published a collection of her works, with the title “The Works of my lady Hélisenn that she recognized some time ago and put in their entirety ... all compiled accurately better than previously and newly printed at the request of the said Lady”. She was still reviewing her works when Etienne Groulleau reprinted the Epistres in 1550, saying they were “newly looked at and corrected more than preceding printings”. The Œuvres printed in 1560 were said to be “newly reviewed and corrected by her”, although the use of such phrases could possibly be a marketing ploy to attract new sales of an old text. If the statements are taken to be true, Crenne’s constant revision and editing of her work would not be unusual for a female author concerned to see her writing published accurately.

Marie de Gournay went further than editing her printed writings in subsequent editions of her work. She corrected mistakes in the text herself in copies which she sent to friends and other printers in Europe: “having corrected in these copies by my own hand (with extreme care) several errors which escaped detection during the printing process after the Errata, and those of the Errata itself, for fear that printers might neglect to use it”. When her strongly worded 1595 preface to the Essais was heavily criticized, she bowed to public pressure in her next edition in 1598, apologetically retracting it: “Reader, if I am not sufficiently strong to write on the Essais, at least I am generous enough to admit my weakness, and confess to you

qu’il m’a été possible”, in Adrian de Thou’s Preface to Le Decameron de treshaute et tresillustre Princesse Madame Marguerite, BN ms. fr. 1524, unpaginated.

Les Œuvres de ma dame Hélisenn que elle a puis nagueres recogneues et mises en leur entier ... le tout mieux que par cy devant redigées au vray, & imprimées nouvelleme-t par le commandement de ladicte Dame, Paris, Charles Langelier, 1543.


revue et corrigé de nouveau par elle, Paris, Etienne Groulleau, 1560.

“ayant corrigé ces exemplaires de ma main propre (avec un soin extrême) sur quelques fautes échappées en l'impression après l'Errata, et sur celle de l'Errata même, de peur que les imprimeurs ne négligeassent de se servir de lui”, Letter from Marie de Gournay to Juste Lipse, 15 November 1596, cited in E. Dezon-Jones, Fragments d’un discours féminin, Mayenne, José Corti, 1988, p. 192.
that I retract that preface". Furthermore, she even removed her preface from copies she sent abroad: "You will see at the beginning, eight or ten pages cut out: it was a preface". Gournay was prepared to destroy the printed text physically, in order to control the public representation of both her writing and herself as an author.

Women writers hoped that print publication would ensure that their work would be disseminated in its correct form. However, printers were often accused of poor workmanship and also occasionally altered women's texts based on their own assumptions about appropriate female behaviour and roles. Marie de Gournay criticized the lack of care taken in some print publications when she praised the publisher's efforts for her 1595 edition of the *Essais*. Monarchs attempted to make publications accurate by edicts. In 1539, an edict of Francis I stated in article 17 that books had to be printed with good characters, on quality paper and without errors. It was the responsibility of the printer to correct his texts or to hire a corrector if he was not sufficiently educated. If the printed article was found to contain faults, it was, in theory, to be reprinted at the printer's own cost. Once a sheet was ready, it was printed and given to the corrector to compare visually with the copy. Compositors made any necessary corrections to the text before a second proof was printed for the perusal of the author or editor. Despite these measures, innumerable errors were present in completed publications, suggesting that corrections were not as rigorous as edicts demanded. Printers often blamed errors on the illegibility of the original text. The copy from which printers worked was often the author's manuscript. Some authors tried to avoid faulty printing of their work by submitting their manuscripts as booklets of already folded sheets. Alternatively, manuscripts could be transcribed by someone in the print industry so that the printer received a legible copy from which to work. Antoine Augereau felt the need to argue in 1533 that he had confirmed the accuracy of his printed text of Marguerite de Navarre's *Miroir* against Marguerite's

52 "Lecteur, si ie ne suis assez forte pour escrire sur les Essais, aumoins suis-ie bien assez genereuse pour advouer ma foiblesse, et te confesse que ie me retracte de cette Preface", Preface to *Essais*, Paris, Abel L'Angelier, 1598, unpaginated.
53 "Vous verrez a sa tete huit ou dix feuilles coupées: c'était une préface", in Letter from Marie de Gournay to Juste Lipsë, 15 November 1596, cited in Dezon-Jones, p. 193.
own manuscript copy. He claimed that his publication was "diligently acknowledged and restored in its entirety, from the original written in the Queen of Navarre's own hand, for which reason no one will wonder if he finds differences between other printings and this last one".  

After Marguerite de Navarre's death, printed editions of her *Heptameron* were controlled by several different editors. Gilles Gilles had received a six-year privilège in August 1558 to publish his printed version, *Histoires des Amans Fortunez*, edited by Pierre Boaistuau. Boaistuau had used his editorial discretion to alter the text significantly, saying he had "shortened [it] in several places, changed, innovated, added and suppressed in others, having been somewhat forced to give it a new form".  

When Claude Gruget re-edited the *Heptameron* published in 1559, he argued that the first edition had left out several nouvelles. He justified a new privilège issued in December 1558 for the revised edition lasting ten years since "the good order and disposition had not been made and observed in the first printing".  

It is possible that Jeanne d'Albret may have sought to reinstate the integrity of her mother's text, for Gruget observed in his dedication to her that "(as to what I have been able to hear) the first [edition] displeased you".  

Gruget emphasized to Jeanne d'Albret his respect for Marguerite's original intentions by explaining that he had "gathered from all places, the manuscript copies that ... [he] could recover of it, verifying them against ... [his] copy" to rectify the errors of the first edition.  

As well as printing careless errors, publishers and printers also consciously tampered with women's works. Some removed evidence of female authorship.

Printed female authors were concerned to have their work recognized as their own.

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57 "diligemment recongneu, & restitue en son entier, sur L'original escript de la propre main de la Royne de Navarre. Parquoy nul ne s'esmervueillera s'il treuve difference entre les auttres impressions & ceste cy derniere", in Preface to *Miroir*, Paris, Antoine Augereau, 1533, unpaginated.
59 "bel ordre & disposition, que faict & observé n'a esté en la premiere impression", in Privilège to *L'Heptameron de Nouvelles*, Paris, Jean Cavellier, 1559, sig. 6giii r°.
60 "car (à ce que i'ay peu entendre) la premiere vous desplaisoit", in Preface to *L'Heptameron*, Lyons, Loys Cloquemin, 1581, p. 7.
61 "recueilli de toutes parts les exemplaires que i'en peu recouvrer, escrits à la main, les verifians sur ma copie", in *ibid*., p. 5.
Such was the dilemma of Catherine des Roches which Etienne Pasquier noted in describing the background to the production of *La Puce*. He observed how reluctant Des Roches was to view his finished poem before the completion of her own, for fear that she could be accused of plagiarism. Pasquier wrote: "I would have sent her my work, she, having not yet finished hers, put it in the hands of my man, so that I would not think she had enriched hers with mine".  

Female authors were aware that if their works were good, publishers, printers and readers might doubt it was the work of a woman.

What factors influenced publishers’ choice of “suitable” female writings for sixteenth-century readers? The power of publishers to decide what were appropriate discourses for women to participate in had clear implications on in which genres and forms women’s published writings could appear. The highly masculinized print culture itself de-valued the work of women within it as inferior. How would such a culture treat women as authors? Publishers selected only some of Christine de Pizan’s manuscript works to print in the sixteenth century. Their choices bear witness to their understanding of women as writers and the potential audience for female-authored works. In 1488, Antoine Vé尔ard published *Lart de chevalerie selon Vegece* which Pizan had written in 1410 as an educational manual on strategy and martial law. Pizan’s adaptation of *De Re Militari* by Vegetius demonstrated the necessity for a king to be a military leader. The aggrandizing policies of the rulers of early modern Europe made this an appropriate text for publication. *De Re Militari* was printed early in the history of print publication in England as well, by Caxton in 1489. The next work by Pizan to be printed proved to be her most popular reprinted text in the sixteenth century - the *Trésor* (manuscript written 1404). This was a sequel to her *Livre de la Cité des Dames* (manuscript written 1404), providing practical advice on female roles and comportment. Another of her more conventional handbooks, the *Cent hystoires de Troie* (manuscript written 1400-1401), an allegorized advice book on the conduct of the male knight, was also popular in reprinted editions both in France and England.

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62 "je luy eusse envoyé mon ouvrage, elle, n’ayant encore fait mettre le sien au net, le meist entre les mains de mon homme, afin que je ne pensasse qu’elle se fust enrichie du mien", Preface to *La Puce*, Paris, Jean Petit-Pas, 1590, p. 566.
Other works by Pizan were never printed in sixteenth-century France. Some referred to early fifteenth-century events such as her *Ditié de Jeanne d’Arc* (1429). To print others would have been politically unwise. Publication of Pizan’s *Livre de Paix* (1412-1413) or *Lamentacion sur les maux de la France* (1410) would not have been prudent under the warring monarchs of early sixteenth-century France. Other of Pizan’s more personal works, such as the semi-autobiographical *L’Avision Christine* (1405) may not have been considered to appeal to a new generation of readers. Significantly, the forerunner of the *Trésor*, the *Cité des Dames*, which reinterpreted misogynist histories of women, casting female protagonists in a new, positive light, was never printed in France until a modern edition was published in 1986. However several manuscript copies appeared in the libraries of the royal women. Since other sixteenth-century women writers referred to its themes, it was not unknown to them. Evidently, Christine’s most didactic works, her advice books and notably some of her most conservative works on female behaviour, were those which printers selected to print in the sixteenth century. Women’s contribution in print literature in the first decades of the new print era was restricted to issues directly related to publishers and printers’ perceptions of female concerns.

Publishers adapted women’s writings to suit their perceptions of a work’s targeted audience. As T.E. Wareham identified, in both French printed editions of *Lart de chevalerie selon Vegece*, and unlike the contemporary English Caxton edition, references to Christine de Pizan as author were removed. The exchange specified as between Christine and the Prior was altered to read “l’aucteur” instead of Christine. Furthermore, the invocation to Minerva to help protect Christine in her boldness in writing about war and arms in the first chapter was omitted. Female authorship and authority about military matters were denied. Although two differing manuscript sets were circulating at the time, one recognizing Pizan as author, the other not, the contemporary printing of Caxton’s edition with full reference to Pizan

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64 Female reading material is discussed in chapter 2., pp. 78-92.
65 Imitation in the works of women writers is addressed in chapter 6, pp. 278-290.
66 The examples provided in this paragraph come from T.E. Wareham, “Christine de Pisan’s *Livre des Faits d’Armes et de Chevalerie* and its Fate in the Sixteenth Century”, *Seconda Miscellanea di Studi e Ricerche sul Quattrocentro Francese*, 1981, pp. 135-142.
makes the case for Vérard and Le Noir's ignorance of true authorship unlikely. Moreover, Vérard was responsible for printing other of Pizan's works, with recognition of her authorship. Rather, Vérard's removal of female authorship may have reflected contemporary perceptions about women's ability to participate competently in discussion of politics and warfare.

Songs by Pernette du Guillet were also first published without recognition of female authorship. Four epigrams from Du Guillet's *Rymes* (1545) first appeared in compilation songbooks published in both Lyons and Paris. In the Lyons editions, *Le Parangon des chansons, sixiesme livre* (1540) and *neufvieme livre* (1541) by Jacques Moderne, the gender of her poetic voice was altered to a male replying to a piece in a female voice. One song, known today as Epigram 44, was a response to a piece by Francis I, and others were *rebours*, taking the last line of another poem as their opening line. When it was re-published under Du Guillet's name in the *Rymes*, Epigram 44 was presented as the voice of a female persona.

Hélisenne de Crenne's work too was altered as a result of publishers' assumptions about female roles and their perceptions of a female readership. Claude Colet's introduction to the 1550 edition of Hélisenne's *Œuvres* explains his extensive simplification of her Latinate style as the result of a request by the "damoselles M and F": "you asked me to render in our own familiar language the obscure words or those too much approaching Latin, so that they would be more intelligible to you". Although women were not specifically identified as Crenne's prospective audience, publishers assumed that her works were for the pleasure of ladies. Colet's interference in the text could have been completely his own choice; he may have believed that Crenne's style removed a large proportion of potential readership.

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68 Ibid., p. 358.
69 "vous me priastes de rendre en nostre propre & familier langage les motz obscurs, et trop approchans du Latin, a fin qu'elles vous fussent plus intelligibles", in Preface to *Œuvres*, 1560, sig. [Xvi v].
Furthermore, Crenne’s use of Latin was relatively unusual amongst women’s writings, although there is evidence to suggest many educated women had some knowledge of the language. Walter J. Ong has described the study of Latin as a puberty rite for elite males and certainly, it served as a demarcation between those few educated men and even fewer women in intellectual circles and the greater majority of French people, most of whom were illiterate even in the vernacular. Crenne’s choice of linguistic style, which showed her knowledge of Latin, was considered by publishers as inappropriate in a popular text concerned with the theme of adulterous love, rather than elite intellectual thought. Colet’s actions may have been an attempt to situate the work in a more appropriate female literary space by removing her verbose Latin terminology, and presenting it as a simple work for women.

Printers and publishers were also responsible for other “editorial peritext” which also shaped the way a work was perceived by its audience. In particular, they chose the size and format of editions. As shown earlier, publications in the sixteenth century were produced in a variety of sizes, ranging from folios to tiny duodecimo and sexto-decimo. Different sizes carried with them meanings about the use of the specific text. For example, folio editions were produced for traditional religious and scholastic texts for students and scholars to consult in libraries and as permanent records. Smaller sizes were more appropriate for books that needed to be portable, mass produced and therefore cheap, or perhaps even hidden due to their subversive nature. Popular tales and contemplative religious literature for the wider population were most commonly printed in these smaller formats of octavo, duodecimo and sexto-decimo. Such works were not considered tomes of lasting value to be held in libraries, as were publications for scholars. It is little surprise, therefore, to observe that almost all women’s works, no matter what the content, were printed in these smaller formats. One interesting exception, however, was the first ever translation into French of Virgil’s *Aeneid* as the *Eneydes* by Hélisenne de Crenne. This work was produced around 1542 by Denys Janot in Paris as a folio. Crenne had previously

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published popular works in much smaller sizes. The folio publication suggests Janot and/or Crenne might have been hoping to attract an audience of university scholars. Yet the work was presented as a novel, with chapters headed by woodcut illustrations.\(^{71}\) Were Janot and Crenne attempting to make scholastic literature available to a wider audience? Why, then, did they choose to print the work as a folio? The confused marketing of the work probably contributed to its apparent lack of success; the *Eneydes* were never reprinted in folio or any other size. Clearly, by their choice of size and format, printers could direct publications towards a certain type of audience. Few women’s works were considered by publishers as of interest to university or religious scholars. The example of Crenne’s translation from Latin suggests that they were probably correct.

**Choices of publishers and printers**

The publishers and printers whom women chose to manage their works through the printing process also reflected their preoccupation with preserving the textual integrity of their writing. Publishers, booksellers and printers all played a part in the publication process. Natalie Zemon Davis has argued that a small number of printers chose their texts, carried out the impression and were responsible for the sale and transportation of the printed book themselves, as *marchands-imprimeurs*.\(^{72}\)

However, it was more common for printers to be commissioned by publishers, usually entrepreneurial bookshop owners or *marchands-libraires*, to print selected works. These publishers had the initial capital to pay an advance to the printer, who was required to work on the commission until its completion without accepting other work. The publisher decided the appropriate characters from his own collection of fonts and chose the quality of paper for his text, buying directly from a rural papermaker.\(^{73}\) Once the necessary components were organized and the size of the edition decided, he left the impression to his chosen printer, or a group of printers. The publication cost the publisher considerable time and money: it was his task to


obtain *privilège* for the work which often required travelling to court. The book was printed, the publisher was responsible for contacting booksellers across Europe to see if they were interested in buying copies to sell, and arranging the packaging and the transportation of the book bales. The publisher was essentially a businessman who invested his money in works that would return him profit. Publishers were often accused by print workers of being greedy and not concerned with the intellectual value of their publications. A printer’s marque might emphasize the work and its virtues, one suggesting his characters were pleasing to the eye, another that he employed careful workmen to accomplish the printer’s art. Most printers never had the cash outlay to spend on publications in the same way as publishers. A printer’s financial position was less secure. He needed to keep his presses active at all times to cover his expenses. Printers often went into partnership for the duration of a publication, sharing costs and profit between them. Others were itinerant, filling commissions by church or local authorities in towns through which they passed.

Some of the largest producers of women’s work were the wealthy *marchands-libraires*, such as the L’Angeliers, Morels and Denys Janot. This was not always so. In Lyons, a *marchand-imprimeur*, Jean de Tournes, was another strong supporter of women’s writings. With the widespread appeal of the printed book, a greater variety of people were now able to become authors. New authors, such as artisans, also had an audience amongst their fellow workers. Their knowledge of a specific industry or craft gave them a distinctive voice and there were many who might learn of their skills through the printed book. Publishers and printers were willing to finance any works for which there was an audience. This included writings by women which commanded a novelty value compared to the more usual male author.

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77 Dupont, p. 117.
79 Febvre and Martin, p. 115.
Eighty-three first editions containing work by women can be established from Parisian publishers and printers. Of these, eight publications were those of the L'Angelier family, mostly productions of Abel L'Angelier towards the end of the century. Modern researchers Roger Chartier and Henri-Jean Martin note that the L'Angeliers were among the powerful *marchand-libraire* families, who, because of their financial resources, were capable of obtaining *privilèges* and contract out work to other printers.\(^81\) Based on the Ile de la Cité, too far removed from the university to obtain scholarly publications, they tended to specialize in new works, usually in French, and aimed at a broader book-buying market.\(^82\) Towards the end of the sixteenth century, Abel L'Angelier published a substantial proportion of works by women writers, including the *Œuvres* (1578) and *Missives* (1586) of Mesdames des Roches, Marie le Gendre's *Cabinet des Saines affections* in 1584, 1591 and 1593, and Marie de Gournay's *Proumenoir* in 1594 and 1599, as well as her edition of Montaigne's *Essais* in 1595. Several of these women lived outside Paris and at such a distance might have had far less control over their works.

Why did women writers choose Abel L'Angelier? Madeleine and Catherine des Roches published their *Œuvres* in 1578, an augmented second edition of the same in the following year and *Missives* in 1586 from the presses of publisher Abel Langelier in Paris. Since Poitiers was a printing town in its own right, the choice of a Parisian publisher seems worthy of examination. Their writings were already circulating in scribal publications within Poitiers. Towards the end of the sixteenth century, the Poitiers lawyer Pierre Cadot possessed manuscript copies of poems written in the hand of Catherine des Roches.\(^83\) Print publication in Paris had other objectives than publicizing their writings alone. Anne R. Larsen suggests that the 1577 visit of the Parisian court to Poitiers for three months prompted the Des Roches to seek publication in Paris where they were more likely to find patronage in an

\(^{81}\) Martin and Chartier (eds), *Le livre humaniste*, *Histoire de l'édition française*, p. 228.
\(^{83}\) Cadot also owned printed copies of their works. Evelyne Berriot-Salvadore explores in detail some of his fascinating annotations to Des Roches's texts, in her "Les Femmes dans les cercles intellectuels de la Renaissance: De la fille prodige à la précieuse", *Etudes corses, etudes littéraires: Mélanges offerts au Doyen François Pitti-Ferrandi*, Corti, Cerf, 1989, p. 219.
audience who would remember them from the previous year. Etienne Pasquier, who frequented the Des Roches' literary salon, published his work *Lettres* with L'Angelier, a work contemporary with the publications of the Des Roches, and it may be that he provided an introduction for them, or recommended L'Angelier to them. The Des Roches were seeking not only publication, but a very public entry into the centre of the elite literary reading public in France.

Marie de Gournay gives some indication of L'Angelier's success as a publisher of women's writings in the 1595 *Essais*. She observed that "the conduct and success of this book, compared to the miserable lack of correction that had beset others, which had not gone to press whilst the author was alive ... will demonstrate how much some good Angel [a play on the name Langelier] showed that he esteemed it worthy of particular favour". Marie de Gournay recognized and appreciated his careful reproduction of her text. Similarly, Denys Janot, on the Ile de la Cité, had a clientele who wanted romances, poetry and theatre. The popular style of Hélisenne de Crenne was typical of his choice of publications. Furthermore, the quality of Janot's publications was formally recognized by Francis I in 1543, when Janot was appointed royal printer for the French language. Such quality would be highly valuable, particularly to women writers. It was not only their literary credibility that was at stake in publication; a less than faithful production, or even scurrilous misinterpretation of their words could damage their moral reputation irreparably.

A further five works were published by the King's chosen *Imprimeur ès langues*, Fédérick Morel and his son Frédéric. These publications were related to Morels' connections with the literary elite and salons surrounding the court in Paris. Several editions of work by Du Bellay contained marginal works by women, such as that of Jeanne d'Albret in *Ode sur la naissance du petit duc de beaumont* (1561).

85 "la co-duitte et succez de ce livre, confere a la miserable incorrection, qu'ont encouru les autres, qui n'ont pas esté mis sur la presse du vivant de leur autheur, ... apprendra combien quelque bon Ange a monstre qu'il estimoit digne de particulliere faveur", in Preface to *Essais*, Paris, Abel L'Angelier, 1595, sig. III r°.
Morel also had connections with groups like the Brigade at the home of Jean de Morel. Camille de Morel's French, Latin and Greek epitaphs to her father in V.C. Ioan Morelli ... Tumulus, in 1583. The types of women's writings Morel published reflected the composition of the Parisian literary circles, where women tended to contribute to group poetic works but produced few entire works of their own.

Although far fewer editions of women's work were first published in Lyons, there too certain publishers frequently were either the choice of women writers, or were prepared to publish their works. In the sixteenth century, Lyons was a large commercial centre at the crossroads of Western Europe, which held international book fairs four times a year where a large book buying market and money changers were readily available. Of the thirty-two first editions by women established as from Lyons, seven were published by the marchand-libraire Benoît Rigaud who made his fortune in the cheap book-buying market, publishing pamphlets and royal edicts. Many earlier publications of women's material are topical political events such as Catherine de Medici's Lettres de la Royne (1563) or Mary Stuart's Harangue (1563). These publications appealed to an audience eager for contemporary political reports.

Rigaud's marketing strategy does not suggest a particular effort to publish writings by women. Rather, if women were involved in political events, then their opinions were of interest to a wide print market. Similarly, later publications of women's writings, whilst indicating the growing diversity of Rigaud's publishing material, reflected the financial priorities of his print business. Rigaud tended to publish women's incidental or collective works, such as the popular collections of poetry, including Marie de Romieu's marginal work in Les Melanges de Jacques de romieu (1584) and the contribution of epitaphs by Chrestienne Bernard, Jane Bernardon, Marguerite Decousu and Katherine Guillard to La sacrée poesie et histoire evangelique de Iuvencus published in 1591. Rigaud's choice of works seems to have been largely influenced by audience appeal.

By contrast, the seven first editions of women's works that the marchand-

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Jean de Tournes published in Lyons included several works entirely by female authors. Linked with the Lyons literary circles, Tournes supported publications by local writers. The majority of his works were printed in French and Tournes was renowned for his respect for authorial intentions, and the quality of his productions. In 1545, under the editorial supervision of Antoine du Moulin, Tournes had taken on the posthumous publication of the *Rymes* of Pernette du Guillet, a participant in the literary circles of Lyons. Almost a decade later, in 1554, another member of the literary circles, Louise Labé, chose Tournes to publish faithfully her writings. Labé clearly participated in the publication process. Unusually, she had applied for the *privilège* herself. This explained the extent of her role:

> We have received the humble supplication of our dear and well loved Louise Labé of Lyons ... stating that she had some time ago composed ... several Sonnets, Odes and Epistles ... and these not yet perfected had been published in various places. And suspecting that certain people might want to publish them in that form, she, having reviewed them and corrected them at leisure, would be glad to have them published, in order to suppress the first versions.

In her second edition, in which it was made explicit that the work was “reviewed and corrected by the said lady”, there was no alteration in the order of her works, which suggests her careful and intentional layout of the first edition.

Despite varying social backgrounds and experiences, many sixteenth-century women writers shared preoccupations about textual control. Marguerite de Navarre also chose Jean de Tournes as the publisher of her *Marguerites de la Marguerite* in 1547. This was to be Marguerite’s choice of her writings to form a “complete”

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edition of her works, with some important inclusions and exclusions.\textsuperscript{90} The \textit{Miroir}, published originally in 1531 by Simon du Bois, had been censored by the Sorbonne, despite which two re-editions had appeared in 1533, including one in Paris with corrections and additions by Marguerite.\textsuperscript{91} This work appeared in the \textit{Marguerites}, although permission for its publication was not sought in the privilège.\textsuperscript{92} Other works, including the \textit{Inquisiteur}, printed in 1536, which expressed Marguerite's somewhat controversial reforming views regarding personal comprehension of the Scriptures, were excluded.\textsuperscript{93} Clearly, the timing of the publication was an important factor. The religious atmosphere under Henry II, who promoted more strictly Catholic views than his father Francis I, made the inclusion of some works dangerous. Marguerite's choice of Jean de Tournes to publish her selection of her own material to leave to posterity was doubtless influenced by his reformist views. Jean de Tournes had risked death to reprint several of the reformist printer Etienne Dolet's works after the latter's execution and had published a French language edition of the Old and New Testament.\textsuperscript{94} Marguerite could expect him to respect her intentions and reforming views. The \textit{Marguerites}, considered today as one of the most important works of Marguerite de Navarre's literary corpus, represents her attempt to control her readers' access to her works. She published a "complete" set of her works which was her own choice of extant material.

\textit{Retaining copyright privileges}

Some female authors sought to obtain copyright, or privilège, for their works themselves, a highly unusual act. This important aspect of the printing process was usually the duty of the publisher. In the initial years of the establishment of printing, texts published were usually those of the ancients or commonly circulating writings in manuscript form. There was no system of monopoly on texts and any publisher could reprint a work brought out by another publisher.\textsuperscript{95} However, as publishers

\textsuperscript{90} R. Reynolds Cornell, "Silence as a Rhetorical Device in Marguerite de Navarre's \textit{Théâtre Profane}," \textit{The Sixteenth Century Journal}, 17, 1, 1986, p. 31.


\textsuperscript{92} H. Fournier, "New light on the A and B editions of the \textit{Marguerites de la Marguerite des Princesses (1547)}", \textit{Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance}, 46, 3, 1984, p. 632.

\textsuperscript{93} Reynolds Cornell, p. 23.

\textsuperscript{94} Fournier, p. 632.

\textsuperscript{95} Lough, p. 38.
looked for new, contemporary works to print, they began to expect that their labour in preparing the text for publication would be protected by the right to reap the profits alone. As early as 1508, Louis XII issued a *privilege in lettres patentes* which prevented reprintings of specific texts for two to three years within French territory.\(^{96}\) In this time, the publisher or bookseller could distribute his printed work and expect some return before another edition could appear and thus, his economic interests were protected. However, obtaining *privilege* caused difficulties for provincial publishers since it required travelling to court or to other authorities such as the *prévôt de Paris* or the Paris *Parlement*.\(^{97}\) This gave obvious advantages to the powerful Parisian publishing families who were closer to the throne, often had more financial clout and were better known to the authorities.\(^{98}\) In theory, *privilege* could also be obtained for older books but was more likely to give publishers rights over new works. This encouraged further contemporary works since *privilege* recognized and rewarded the risks a publisher took in presenting an unknown work for publication, without guarantee of its financial success.\(^{99}\) Legislation from 1551 to 1586 bears witness the shift towards contemporary or previously unpublished works. The *Arrêts de la Cour* in this period restrict *privilege* to new books, those not already printed or new editions that contained additional material.\(^{100}\) Although there were no formal international agreements, *privilege* could not be granted on works published in other countries as these were considered public property.

*Privilege* later came to be considered as both permission to print and a form of censorship, since the proposed manuscript had to first pass through, usually, the University of Paris, and in particular its Faculty of Theology.\(^{101}\) Before the introduction of printing, a great majority of the copyists of manuscript had worked under the supervision of church authorities. In any case, the Church held probably the finest collection of manuscript available, and so it had been their decision which

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\(^{98}\) Febvre and Martin, p. 242.  
\(^{101}\) Lough, p. 39.
manuscripts were reproduced. However, with the advent of the presses, the choice of texts to be printed and the control of audience was beyond the reach of the Church. While the Sorbonne and the Church could censure a work once it was published, they could not prevent people from reading it. In 1521, with the rising threat of reforming ideas, church authorities put pressure on the king to allow some form of censorship. In Francis I's royal edict of the same year, he forbade a book to be printed or sold without the examination and approval of the Sorbonne and its Faculty of Theology. The Parlement also exercised the right to an opinion on whether a book could be published. For a large part of the sixteenth century, these two authorities shared the power of preliminary examination; the Faculty of Theology over religious works (though this was sometimes seen as any work that might influence religious beliefs) and the Parlement over other works. Even the royal family were not exempt from the Sorbonne's censure. Marguerite de Navarre was known to support reforming views in her court, and her own works had hinted at Reformist ideas. In 1531, influenced by her relationship with Reformers like Briçonnet, she produced her *Miroir*. It was controversial and, consequently, censured by the Sorbonne.

Female authors' concern to obtain *privilege* themselves is a further indication of their desire for control of their texts and presentation as authors. As we read previously, Louise Labé explained that she had "reviewed and corrected" some verses which had been "published in various places" and was asking permission to control their publication "in order to suppress the first versions". The *privilege* allowed her to chose her printer and prevented all others to sell, or distribute her work without her consent for five years. Anne de Marquets exploited her lack of control or choice in her text's print publication in 1561 in order to take control of the subsequent publication of several more works. The circulation of her poetry for the Prelates of the Colloquy at Poissy, in 1561, caused Huguenots to respond, ridiculing her as the "nonnain du Poissy" in a counter work.102 Anne de Marquets later claimed that the publication of her verses was "without my knowledge, and even more

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against my will”, leaving her only the chance to add a dedication. In her “Epistle to the readers” she pleaded loss of control of her text: “This small work ... was published several days ago, without my hearing of it first, about which I can rightfully complain”.

Anne de Marquets more clearly controlled the publication of her translation of the *Divines Poesies de Marc Antonius Flaminius* in 1569. The *privilège* obtained two years earlier, in 1567, indicated that:

The King has permitted ... Sister Anne de Marquets, a nun at Poissy, to choose such a Book Seller and Printer as she sees fit, to have printed the translations from the Latin of M. Antonius Flaminius together with all other translations or works of her invention that she has made or will make.

This gave Marquets the authority to supervise her own work in a way she had not been able to exercise in the past. Perhaps the length in time between granting permission and the publication indicates the importance she placed on the selection of a reputable publisher, the quality of whose work she could be assured.

Similarly, Philippe du Verger chose to control the way in which her mother’s work was presented publicly by editing, embellishing and ultimately, obtaining the copyright to print *Le Verger Fertile des Vertus* in 1595. In the wording of the title which states “composed by the deceased Madame du Verger added to and amplified by Philippe du Verger her daughter, wife of a Court Prosecutor”, she acknowledged her active role in the preparation of the text. Du Verger explained the extent of her involvement in the publication in her preface, “I took the resolution to refresh and make green again this fertile orchard [a play on the name of the book]... the first

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103 “sans mon sceu, & plus encore contre ma volonté”, in Preface to *Sonets, Prieres et devises*, Paris, veuve G. Morel, 1566, sig. a2 r°.

104 “Ce petit opuscule .../ A depuis peu de iours esté mis en lumiere,/ Voire sans que ie l’aye entendu la premiere:/ Dont i’ay occasion de me plaindre à bon droict”, in “Epistre aux Lecteurs” in *Sonets, Prieres*, sig. e r°.

105 “Le Roy a permis & permet a seur Anne de Marquetz, Religieuse a Poissy, choisir tel Libraire & Imprimeur que bon luy semblera, pour faire imprimer les versio-s latines de M. Antoine Flaminius, ensemble toutes autres versions ou œuvres de son invention qu’elle a faictes, ou pourra faire,” in *Privilège* to *Les Divines Poesies de Marc Antoine Flaminius*, Paris, Nicolas Chesneau, 1569, unpagedinated.

106 *composé par defuncte Madame du verger augmenté & amplifié par Philippe du verger, sa fille, femme d’un Procureur de la Cour*, Paris, François Jacquin, 1595.
Dialogue of which I had printed ... principally because of my legitimate desire not to deprive my dear mother of her most honorable intention".\textsuperscript{107} As in the case of Marquets, the \textit{privilège} indicated that it was Philippe who sought the copyright, rather than, as was more usual, the publisher or printer:

[to] our beloved Philippe du Verger Bourgeoise of our city of Paris ... we have permitted and granted ... by the present statement that by such printer and bookseller as she may chose and name, she may ... print and have printed, sell ... in all the country, land and seigneuries obedient to us, the above-named book or discourse.\textsuperscript{108}

This gave Philippe du Verger the power to choose by whom and in what form the work was printed. Du Verger thus controlled the writing and representation of both herself and her mother as authors.

\textit{Patterns of reprints}

Finally, how successful was the printing of women’s writings commercially? Lacking sufficient information on size of print runs and substantial evidence of women’s works in private libraries, it is difficult to ascertain the commercial success of women’s printed writings. One method possible with the extant data is to analyse the reprint history of entire works by women. This analysis specifically excludes examining re-editions of published works to which women contributed writings, because their success may result from other factors. For example, the approximately nineteen sixteenth-century re-editions of Philippe Desportes’ \textit{Premières Œuvres de Ph. Desportes} (1573) in which Madeleine de L’Aubespine’s work is published, cannot determine the popularity of L’Aubespine’s writings. Studies of the history of re-editions of work assume that the more popular and commercially successful a work was, the more it was reprinted. However, this can be misleading. Daniel Russell, observing the dearth of re-editions of Alciati’s emblems in France until the 1580s, suggests that this might be due to the quality and physical durability of the publication. He cites a case of a copy of a 1536 edition being used regularly until

\textsuperscript{107} "i’ay pris resolution de refraichir & revedir ce Verger fertile ... le premier Dialogue duquel i’ay fait imprimer ... principalement par ceste bien nee affection que i’avois de ne priver ma tres-chere mere de sa tres-honneste intention", in Preface to \textit{Le Verger fertile des Vertus}, sig. aiii r°.

\textsuperscript{108} "De la partie de nostre amee Philippes du Verger Bourgeoise de nostre ville de Paris ... A L’exposante avons permis & octroyé, Permetons & Octroyons par ces presentes que par tel Imprimeur & Libraire qu’elle voudra choisir & nommer, elle puisse & luy soit loisible d’Imprimer & faire
1741. In this case, the quality of the work reduced the need for re-editions. Nevertheless, lacking other sources of information, studies of reprint history of works can yield some valuable information.

The whole works of approximately two-thirds of women writers (21 of 32 women) were reprinted during the sixteenth century. Appendix 2 contains a checklist of all editions of whole works by women. For the sake of comparison with the commercial success of other women writers, the first publications of Christine de Pizan’s works are counted as first editions (rather than re-editions of manuscripts). From this data, when women’s work were reprinted, they underwent on average four to five re-editions. However, a small number of women whose works were reprinted at a much higher rate make this figure unrepresentative of the reprint experiences of most female authors. The topical political works of 1589 by Anne d’Este and Catherine de Clèves were reprinted fourteen times in that year, although, not surprisingly, never again afterwards. Their value in print culture was their immediate relation to contemporary political events. The number of re-editions of the works of Marguerite de Navarre was also unlike that of most women writers. Her works were reprinted 31 times. When Marguerite de Navarre, Anne d’Este and Catherine de Clèves’ works are removed, the average for other reprinted women is significantly lower, at three per author.

Marguerite de Navarre represents a unique case in the bibliographical history of sixteenth-century women’s published writings. Her works were published prolifically during the sixteenth century and reprinted more frequently than those of any other woman writer. Her social position as both a queen and the sister of a king, her connections with the elite literary circles of her day and the great diversity of themes and genre of her works must have provided publishers with an unusually wide prospective audience to whom they could market her works. Marguerite’s literature such as the *Miroir, Dialogue en forme de vision nocturne* or her *Oraison a

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nostre seigneur Jesus Christ was suitable for private religious contemplation. The Miroir enjoyed at least seven reprints during the next two decades. The Heptameron had a more popular appeal, similar in style to Boccaccio's bawdy Decameron. It alone was reprinted eleven times, and this excludes the faulty edition of 1558 by Pierre Boaistuau.

In general, women who wrote prose rather than poetry appear to have been the most commercially successful. The popular prose fictions of Hélisenne de Crenne went through nine re-editions, that of Jeanne Flore seven and Christine de Pizan’s diverse works, mostly in prose, went through six reprints. Towards the end of the century, Marie le Gendre's philosophical treatises and fiction were reprinted five times and the prose fiction of Marie de Gournay four. Ian McFarlane argues that "there is considerable demand [for prose fiction], especially it seems among women readers" but he offers no explanation for his comment. It is possible that McFarlane draws this conclusion because women writers are among the more successful proponents of the genre, assuming that women writers had an audience primarily among women readers.

Figure 3.3 Graph indicating the time period over which women's whole works were reprinted between 1497 and 1599

This graph indicates when women's whole works were reprinted between 1470 and 1599. Generally, whole works by female authors were reprinted over a brief time span.

TIME PERIOD OVER WHICH WOMEN'S WHOLE WORKS WERE REPRINTED

Re-edicitions of works by women sustained an intense but short-lived market, illustrated in Figure 3.3. Most women's works were reprinted within only a five-year period after first publication. Jeanne Flore's *Comptes amoureux*, published in Lyons around 1537, enjoyed five reprints in the 1540s although changing literary tastes meant it saw only two more re-edicitions for the remainder of the century. Hélisenne de Crenne's four published works appeared in a concentrated burst between 1538 and 1542, all published by Denys Janot in Paris. Her works were subsequently reprinted nine times until 1560, in individual editions and in a collective work, *Œuvres* (1543). This contained her semi-autobiographical romance *Angoisses*, the defence of women's speech and rights in the *Epistres* and the more didactic guide to women, *Songe*. The *Angoisses* was reprinted at least five times in four years and the *Epistres* four times in nine years, quite apart from their subsequent publication in the three collected editions of the *Œuvres*. Unlike other women, Marguerite de Navarre's works were republished for 67 years during the sixteenth century. Yet in some aspects she followed similar trends to other women writers, with 26 of her 31 reprinted editions between 1530 and 1569, and the remaining reprints were of the *Heptaméron*, rather than Marguerite's other literary works.

Elizabeth L. Eisenstein has argued convincingly that the print medium was an agent of cultural change in early modern Europe. Yet where the participation of women was concerned, printing reinforced the gendering of public discourse that was understood in contemporary scribal publication. Women produced fewer printed works than men because their experiences of print publication were different from those of men at the same social levels. Their participation in the print industry was vastly under-representative of their literacy at the elite, wealthy level to which most published women authors belonged. Although print publication offered women the advantages of reaching a wide audience and the opportunity to contribute work to discourses from which gendered social barriers separated them, female authors continually struggled to retain control of their writings. Women's works were subject

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111 For discussion of the dating of Jeanne Flore's work, see *Contes amoureux par Madame Jeanne Flore: Texte établi d'après l'édition originale (1537 env)* Le Centre Lyonnais de l'Humanisme (CLEH), Lyons, Presses Universitaires de Lyon, 1980.

112 Eisenstein, *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change*. 
to textual interference by publishers and printers, often with the purpose of suppressing the appearance of female authorship or directing the work towards a pre-conceived notion of appropriate audience. Such problems caused many women to seek out publishers who could be relied upon to respect their integrity as authors. This was highly important in order to avoid damage to their moral reputation, a concern which did not comparably affect male authors. Perceptions of the behaviour appropriate to the “good woman” clearly influenced women’s experiences as authors in the medium of print publication.
DYNAMIC BOUNDARIES: SOCIAL STATUS, GEOGRAPHY AND GENDER IN PUBLICATION

Social status and geography could act as boundaries to both men and women. Men and women outside the elite were denied access to participate in court publications through the socially constructed boundaries of class. The physical boundaries of geography meant that many regional women and men were unable to participate in the celebrated literary circles in Paris and Lyons. Dialects served as linguistic boundaries to keep some people from contributing to publications, while favouring those who understood langue d'oeil. However, another boundary also affected women and men's publication in different ways; that of gender. This chapter will explore how women writers interacted with, re-defined and transformed socially constructed, physical and linguistic boundaries, exploiting their dynamism to allow female access to publication.

What influence did social status and geography have on women's opportunities to participate in publication? In Chapter Three, I argued that print publication provided women with a means to transcend limitations of geography and social level which denied them access to exclusive circles where scribal transmission took place. Through printed works, female authors could participate in contemporary political, religious and literary discourse. This chapter will examine whether geography and social level were boundaries to literary contribution which affected women in different ways to men. Did elite social status provide the same types of discursive access to both women and men? How did women's geographical location structure the nature of their writings? Examining both these factors can provide a more carefully nuanced understanding of women's publication experiences within their specific cultural contexts.

Firstly, in what sense is it possible to speak of a geographical entity "France" in the sixteenth century? The lands united under this name lacked uniformity in their

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1 Using the data of Appendix 1.
cultural, legal and linguistic traditions. French lands were a compilation of monarchical territories and recently merged or merging territories. Figure 4.1 indicates the limits of French territories in the sixteenth century. Although the monarchy was consolidating its authority in new regions, the extent of its power varied from area to area, in what Ian McFarlane terms a "patchwork pattern of authority".\(^2\) Brittany, which had come to the French monarchy through the marriage of Anne of Brittany to Charles VIII and been secured by her re-marriage to Louis XII, was not considered French until 1532.\(^3\) Burgundian territory had merged into France after the death of Charles the Bold in 1478. When in 1463 the Count of Provence and Forcalquier died without heirs, the French monarchs inherited the title. Certain areas had only recently become French territory and retained regional identities through their independent traditions and languages. Throughout the sixteenth century, regions such as Provence saw themselves as only loosely connected to France. Other areas surrounded by French land remained altogether independent. Avignon and the Venaissin remained under papal jurisdiction.\(^4\) The territories of the kings of Navarre in the Pyrenees were autonomous until Henry of Navarre became Henry IV of France in 1589.

The lack of uniform cultural traditions across French lands and across social levels, which resulted in independent linguistic, social and literary customs, could clearly produce differing cultural understandings of women's ability to contribute to literary creation and publication. I will use the terms "socio-cultural" and "geo-cultural" to specify the precise locations from which women wrote and to determine how the particularity of these localized notions about women and writing shaped the nature of women's published contributions.

Figure 4.1 A Map of French territories from the fifteenth to the seventeenth centuries

This map shows the accumulation of French territories over the fifteenth to seventeenth centuries. The line between St Malo and Geneva, used for distinguishing northern and southern France, has been added.

Women writers published their work in a variety of towns. Table 4.1 indicates the number of publications in all towns in French territory where women’s work was printed between 1488-1599. The dominance of Paris is clearly evident, in particular, at the introduction of the print trades in the fifteenth century. Parisian presses published all women’s work before 1530 and this was primarily the work of one printer, Antoine Vérand. In the sixteenth century, more than half (54.36%) of works containing women’s writings were published in Paris. At the centre of French political and religious institutions, Paris remained a major distributor of all published works throughout the sixteenth century. Furthermore, in December 1536, Francis I ordered that a copy of every printed book be placed in the Chateau de Blois under the supervision of the keeper of the library, which later formed the basis of what is now the Bibliothèque Nationale. It is possible that fewer books from regional presses were gathered in this collection and certainly large centres of publication like Paris were more likely to be supervised by royal officials, enforcing such regulations. The source material from which this data have been collated is extant largely in large

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libraries such as the Bibliotheque Nationale in Paris.

The remaining works were published by several other major printing cities. Lyons, the second printing city in France, printed considerably fewer works including women's writings (21.48%). Another ten regional city presses accounted for the remaining publications, although 8.05% of all publications cannot be traced to a specific city. Of these regional cities, only Rouen, with 5.37% of all publications is noteworthy and will be examined further in this chapter. The locations of other publications reflect the spread of the print trades across French territory throughout the sixteenth century, at Alençon, Rheims, Blois, Tours in the north of the country, and further afield in Toulouse, Poitiers, La Rochelle, Bordeaux and Marseilles.

Paris was the dominant printing city in French territory for all printed works in the sixteenth century. There, parlement, church and monarchy were centralized. The French royal court was loosely based in Paris, although it moved to follow the king between royal palaces of which few were located further south than the Loire valley. The Parlement of Paris assumed itself to be dominant over the provincial parliamentary bodies. The Sorbonne Theological Faculty was the most powerful religious institution in French territory, retaining control over print censorship throughout the entire sixteenth century. Paris was also the centre of the French publishing trade. Although regional presses flourished throughout the sixteenth century, they could not pool resources and command the same market share as Paris. Obtaining a licence to print a specific work, or privilège, caused difficulties for provincial publishers since it required travelling to court, the prévôt de Paris or the Paris Parlement. This gave obvious advantages to the powerful Parisian publishing families.

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Table 4.2 Table indicating the number of women published in Paris, Lyons and Rouen between 1488 and 1599

On this table, female authors are categorized under the towns in which they were published. Authors can be recorded twice in order to show the variety of women published in different towns. More than one woman's writings could be included in a printed work.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Number of different women published in this city</th>
<th>Total publications of women's works in this city</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Paris</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lyons</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rouen</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

However, proportionately more women's writings were published in editions from Lyons and Rouen than in Paris. Table 4.2 demonstrates that, in Paris, 44 different women contributed to the 83 first editions which contained their writings. Parisian publishers printed larger numbers of works containing the same women's writings. Yet in Lyons, 37 different women contributed to 32 editions in the sixteenth century, many of which were anthologies. In Rouen, only eight editions appeared, but eight individual women's writings were included. Clearly then, although more publications of women's writings appeared from Paris than any other city, those works printed in Lyons and Rouen contained proportionately more writings by a range of women. Indeed, these cities produced several publications of collective works, such as the Rouen publication in 1543 of the *Le Puy du souverain amour*, including work by five local women. Several Lyons publications of poetry compilations in the 1540s contained the works of authors such as Pernette du GUillet, Claude de Bectone and Marguerite de Navarre.

Yet many women had their works printed in cities where they did not live. Did women's geographical environment and its associated political, legal, religious and literary traditions affect the nature of their print participation? In Table 4.3, women are placed under geographic locations not by their place of birth, but rather the town, region or court in which they lived and whose literary culture may have influenced their print contribution. One category, that of the French royal court, is labelled northern although it was itinerant. This is to differentiate it from the court of Navarre in Nérac. Although the northern court is not a specific geographical location,
it is a significant centre of specific political, legal, religious and literary traditions. Furthermore, some women’s classifications are problematic. Women often moved on marriage. Marguerite de Navarre wrote her first work whilst at the court in Paris, but did not begin to print publish until after she had married Henry II d’Albret and established herself at the court in Nérac. I have thus categorized her as belonging to the court at Nérac.

Of the 87 women whose writings we know were published, 22 can not be traced to a specific environment (25.29%). Many women were associated either with the court in the north (14.94%), or the court in Nérac in the south of France (12.64%). A further 12.64% were women who lived in Paris but who were not associated directly with the court, such as Hélisene de Crenne. 9.19% of the published women writers lived in Lyons, including Louise Labé, Pernette du Guillet and Claudine Scève. A small number of women lived in Rouen (5.75%). Some 4.60% of the total published women were from Toulouse and 3.44% from Poitiers. Finally, in each of ten further regions or cities lived one other published woman writer.

By this survey, the courts in Paris and Nérac appear dominant sources of print publications for women, although manuscripts remained a popular mode of literary transmission at court for much of the sixteenth century. This survey takes into account all women’s printed writings, political as well as literary. Some print publications by women of the royal family, including Catherine de Medici, Louise de Vaudemont and Jeanne d’Albret, served as political propaganda. Furthermore, the data also include female publishers’ prefaces which may not necessarily indicate accurately the female literary participation trends in certain geo-cultural locations.

When political works and the category of marginal, prefatorial and collective works are removed from the survey, as in Table 4.4, the results are markedly different. The atmosphere of the court may in fact be less conducive to women’s publication of entire literary works, than it would first appear. The 27 women now included all published whole literary works. Only 11.11% of them are from the northern court environment and 7.41% from the court in Nérac. Yet women outside
Table 4.3 Table indicating the geo-cultural locations of women writers

Women are placed under geographic locations not by their place of birth, but rather the town, region or court in which they lived and whose literary culture may have influenced their print contribution. The French royal court is labelled northern as a significant centre of specific political, legal, religious and literary traditions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Number of women living in this location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Northern court</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paris</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Court in Nérac</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lyons</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rouen</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toulouse</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poitiers</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poissy</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blois</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bourbonnais region</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Picardy region</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Viviers</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marseilles</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tarascon</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cahors</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Languedoc region</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mâconnais region</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>87</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4.4 Table indicating the geo-cultural locations of women writers of whole non-political works

The table categorizes the 27 women who wrote whole literary works by the location which may have influenced their writing.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Number of writers of non-political whole works who lived in this location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Paris</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lyons</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern court</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Court in Nérac</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poitiers</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poissy</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Picardy region</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toulouse</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Viviers</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Languedoc</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>27</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.5 Table showing the geo-cultural locations of women writers as a division between northern and southern France

The division between north and south is taken as the line between St Malo and Geneva, as indicated in Figure 4.1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Writers of all works</th>
<th>Per cent</th>
<th>Writers of non-political whole works</th>
<th>Per cent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Northern France</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>37.93%</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>37.04%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern France</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>36.78%</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>40.74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>25.29%</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>22.22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>87</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>27</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
the court environment, in Paris and Lyons, account for 18.52% and 14.81% respectively of the total. A further 7.41% of the women are from Poitiers and five other print-published women writers lived in four more locations ranging from Toulouse to Viviers. 22.22% women of unknown location complete the survey.

Table 4.5 indicates the geo-cultural locations of female authors, by dividing writers into two categories of “north” and “south” of French territory. The division between the two regions is at a line drawn between Saint-Malo and Geneva which is used to represent literacy trends in the north and south of French territory. By this demarcation, 33 of the 87 women, or 37.31% of the total, can be identified in the north of France, that is, at the French royal court, in Paris, Poissy, Rouen, Blois and the Bourbonnais regions. 32 of the 87 women, or 36.78%, lived in the south, including the court at Nérac, Lyons, Poitiers, Toulouse, Viviers in the Ardèche, Marseilles, Tarascon and the regions of Languedoc and the Maconnais. 37.04% first editions of whole literary works were by women living in the north of France, and 40.74% were by women living in the south of France.

The south of France was probably less than half as literate as the north of France. So why did 49.23%, almost half of the published women writers whose location is clear, live and write in the south of France? As a guide to literacies, two centuries later, between 1786 and 1790, 48% of men and 27% of women signed their parish register at marriage. These figures hide the vast differences recorded between north and south where a division, approximately separating France at a line from Geneva to Saint-Malo, was apparent. 71% of men and 44% of women could sign their marriage licences in the north between 1786 and 1790, but only 27% of men and 12% of women in the south. Only 12% of women in the south could sign their name on a marriage register two centuries after the period under discussion here.

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Literacy in France was closely connected to the spread of the French dialect. For the majority of French territories, French was not the first language. Rather, it was the dialect of the Ile-de-la France and Paris. For many people, French was seen as the written language of formal occasions, not their everyday maternal tongue. French people's ability to read and write was influenced by the availability of texts in a dialect they understood. Therefore, for many French people, the majority of vernacular literature was written in a language that was not their own and possibly completely foreign to them. Its spread in the sixteenth century followed the growth in university towns and administrative capitals across France, such as Toulouse and Montpellier in the south. French was the language of the king and court in the north. Francis I increased its acceptance as the national language with the *Ordannances de Villiers-Cotterets* of 1539 in which Article III stated: “We wish that from now on, all edicts and all other procedures ... be announced, recorded and delivered in our maternal French and not otherwise”. Since most edicts were still designed to be read by a town crier, this gave French aural exposure across the country, increasing its familiarity in regions where other regional dialects were the everyday language.

In summary, geographical and social level factors appear to be significant influences on women's printed publications. Firstly, Paris was the predominant centre for publication of women's works, printing at least half the editions containing women's writings. Lyons, though an important printing city, was less important to women's publishing trends with only 21.48% of the market. A collection of regional centres published a small number of women's writings. However, the data show that publications in Lyons and Rouen printed a wider range of individual women's writings than Parisian editions. Furthermore, whilst women in the court were responsible for a sizeable number of published writings, women in the south of French territory published almost as many writings as women living in the north.

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11 "Nous voulons que doresnavant tous arrestz ensemble toutes aultres procedures ... soient prono-cez enregistrez & delivrez aux parties en langage maternel françois & non aultrement" in Rickard, p. 22.
Despite markedly lower literacy rates in southern regions, women in southern France were also the dominant producers of women's printed whole literary works in the sixteenth century. This then presents us with the central problem of this chapter. What might explain these geo-cultural and socio-cultural differences between women publishing in print?

Socio-cultural locations in Paris

In Paris, parlement, church and monarchy were centralized through the institutions of the French royal court, the Parlement of Paris and the Sorbonne Theological Faculty. Each of these three institutions was concentrated around elite male monarchical, legal and religious power. Both the Parlement of Paris and Sorbonne specifically excluded women from authority within their functions. The French court was a centre of literary production which permitted the inclusion of women based on their elite social status. Although the circulation of literary works at court was both scribal and printed, the audience to whom the literature was addressed was localized. Works frequently contained references to writings of others at court or were signed with anagrams or devices recognizable only to the other members of the elite gathering. Yet despite the presence of powerful queens and noblewomen at court, literature remained primarily the preserve of elite noblemen or gifted male talents in search of patrons, and the court did not encourage female literary participation. Anne de Bretagne's circle of educated court noblewomen remained independent of the court-based literary culture that she helped to create by her patronage of male musicians, poets and artists.

Most of the print publications at the northern court were by women of the royal family. The majority of these works were political and religious propaganda. Catherine de Medici's publications were primarily political propaganda and Louise de Vaudemont's correspondence with Henri IV was published as a result of topical interest in her husband's murder.12 Anne de Beaujeu's publications were advice books, such as A la requeste de très haute et puissante princesse madame Suzanne de Bourbon and the posthumous 1535 publication Enseignements moraux, providing

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12 Political publications by women are discussed further in chapter 3, pp. 91-94, and chapter 6.
practical advice on the conduct of royal women at court, in the tradition of Christine de Pizan’s *Trésor de la Cité des Dames*.

Few royal women had literary works printed. Only Mary Stuart and Marguerite de Navarre produced works that could be seen as contemporary contributions to literature. Significantly, court women’s publications concerned contemplative religious worship, unlike the worldly literature that men at court were producing. Even if royal women could overcome the restrictions to literary participation of their gender, it is clear from their publications that their ability to contribute was marginalized and concentrated in areas of the “appropriate” female literary space of religious work. Mary Stuart’s scarce literary publications include one marginal piece, “Complainte de la Royne Marie au Seigneur Simon Nicolas” in the 1567 *Premiers des Meteores de Jan Antoine de Baif*, and her translation into French, the 1574 *Méditation recueillie du livre des Consolations divines*, the work of John Leslie. Marguerite de Navarre did not in fact publish until she had left the French court for Néron after her marriage to Henry II of Albret in 1527, though it seems likely that her *Dialogue en forme de vision nocturne*, treating the death of Charlotte de France, was written around 1520-1.

Few other women at court contributed to printed literary works. A single poem by Jehanne Filleul, a lady-in-waiting to Margaret of Scotland, the wife of Louis XI, was included in the 1501 publication *Le Jardin de Plaisance, Et Fleur de réthoricque*. Anne de Graville, a lady in waiting to Queen Claude, had one rondel published in Geoffroy Tory’s 1529 work, *Champ Fleury*. However, Graville did sibally publish several other works which were circulated at court. Does scribal transmission account for the dearth of women print publishing at court? At court, manuscript was still the common mode of literary transmission. Contemporary works circulated in manuscript before reaching print, if at all, since authors’ literary careers were not impeded by publishing works sibally. Authors could circulate manuscripts amongst an audience at court, or present presentation copies to prospective patrons.
The literary works of the court poet Mellin de Saint-Gelais remained almost entirely manuscript during his career.\textsuperscript{13}

Yet in manuscript works too, women do not feature as participants in literary culture in significant numbers. Anne de Graville’s scribally transmitted translations were a rare exception to the predominance of male-authored manuscripts. Instead, some women added contributions to collective works. However even here, in one particular manuscript collection of poetry at court, the “Adieux” composed by Madame de Crussol are the only works composed by a woman outside the royal family. Other female contributions are those of Elisabeth de France, Catherine de Medici and Marguerite de Navarre.\textsuperscript{14} Thus, even in scribal culture, women did not participate equally with their male counterparts. The gendered literary culture of the court affected women’s ability to publish both scribally and in print. Women in the socio-cultural location of the court, noble or royal, were largely excluded from mainstream elite secular literary production.

Around the court, a number of other literary forums existed in Paris which select women could attend and through which they could print their writings. Several Parisian women published writings in the collective works of socially elite literary circles in which they participated. The sixteenth-century “circle” should not be confused with the better-known seventeenth-century “salon” concerned with social arts, decorum and abstract discussion of etiquette.\textsuperscript{15} Its predecessor was involved, in the early years, with humanist scholarship and, later, with literature. The sixteenth-century circles were also more closely associated with the court than later seventeenth-century salons are generally thought to have been.\textsuperscript{16} Jürgens Habermas depicts the seventeenth-century hotel salons of the précieuses “which maintained a certain independence from the court” as “the first signs of that combination of the economically unproductive and politically functionless urban aristocracy” although


\textsuperscript{14} BN ms. fr. 883.


he acknowledges that it was not yet independent of "the authority of the aristocratic noble hosts" nor able "to acquire that autonomy that turns conversation into criticism and *bon mots* into arguments". The sixteenth-century coteries in Paris revolved around the court in intersecting circles. Their level of interaction with the court depended to a large extent on the social level of its participants. Circles closest to the court drew members into private literary gatherings where they re-enacted the gendered constraints of the socio-cultural literary tradition with which they were most familiar, namely that of the court. In circles further removed from the court by the lower social standing of their members, participants were less exposed to court literary traditions and could create alternative literary cultures.

Women were clearly visible in the elite Parisian literary circles of the second half of the sixteenth century, but were they active participants in the creation of literature? In the 1570s, prominent women at court such as the Maréchale de Retz and Madeleine de l'Aubespine, dame de Villeroy, opened their houses to the contemporary generation of poets, such as Philippe Desportes, Saluste du Bartas and Pontus du Tyard. These gatherings welcomed the ladies and courtiers of the court entourage and were considerably less involved in the deeply scholastic and humanist traditions of early Paris literary circles than in the more superficial elements of poetic creation. Their circles were considered to be places for games and pleasure rather than serious study. However, this perception may be in fact due to the large proportion of court women such as Henriette de Clèves and Madeleine de Bourdeille who attended. Gendered social perception may have dictated that a sphere allowing the participation of women reduced its potential for serious humanistic scholarship of the kind produced by the all-male intellectual and religious institutions.

Even in forums perceived as less scholarly, still gender affected literary participation. Scribal publications of the works of circle members show only a small number of mostly unsigned works by women. Print publications by female coterie

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17 Ibid., p. 31.
18 Clark Keating, p. 81.
20 See BN ms. fr. 25455 and 1718.
members were equally scarce. Furthermore, women's publications were concentrated in the area of laudatory pieces, such as Marie de la Haye's "Ode de Damoizelle MDL Haye sur les œuvres poétiques de I du Bellay et du Ronsard" in the 1552 Quatrièmes livres de l'Eneide de Vergil or Madeleine de L'Aubespine's "Sur les Amours de Ph. Desportes," in the 1573 Premières Œuvres de Ph. Desportes. These circle members were mostly the same people who attended the court and who imbibed its literary traditions. Although women were responsible for the provision of new spheres for literary discussion in their homes, they remained little more than facilitators of new forums for male speech, rather than their own.

In Paris, distance from the restrictive traditions of the royal court could be an advantage for the less wealthy, particularly for women. Thus, in the context of female literary participation in Paris, a woman's socio-cultural location was highly significant. The Brigade, a literary circle which met at the house of Jean de Morel, was an example of a private, wealthy but not elite social level circle which interacted with the court only for remuneration some time after its establishment. Morel arrived in Paris in 1541 from Switzerland where he had been the secretary of Guillaume du Bellay for eight years.21 As the tutor of Henry II's illegitimate son, Henry of Angoulême, Morel was clearly linked to the French court. Yet his circle originally welcomed professional scholars and poets to share their works with each other, enjoying the praise and critiques of fellow scholars. Morel's wife, Antoinette de Loynes, the widow of the lawyer Lubin Dallier, had received an extensive education due to her enlightened father, a friend of Erasmus.22 She was fêté amongst contemporaries as a renowned Hellenist. The couple had four children, but it was their daughters, Diane, Lucrèce, and especially Camille, who were celebrated by contemporaries for their abilities. Joachim du Bellay wrote in praise of the precocious ten-year-old Camille, "Camille plays with Latin verses as if she were born in Latium. She speaks Greek so elegantly that you would swear she was a young Athenian. Camille knows Hebrew as well; she writes it as she writes Latin".23

21 Clark Keating, p. 22.
22 Ibid., p. 23.
23 "Camille joue avec les vers latins comme si elle était née dans le Latium. Elle parle si élégamment la langue grecque, que vous jureriez que c'est une jeune Athénienne. Camille sait encore l'hébreu, elle l'écrit comme elle écrit le latin", in "De Camilli Jani Morelli P.", Poemata, Paris, 1558, fol. 32,
The Morel women participated in the literary enterprises and exchanges with the celebrated male scholars and poets of the *Brigade*, including Du Bellay, Pierre de Ronsard, Jean-Antoine de Baif and Michel de l'Hospital, many of whose works were first read there. For some years, the coterie provided a sphere away from the influence of the court in which select wives and daughters of literary men could participate in literary discussion and publish their works in collective circle publications. Valentine Alsinois, probably the wife of Nicolas Denisot, wrote a laudatory piece in Latin to the *Hecatodistichon* written by her husband's three English pupils, the Seymour sisters, and published in 1550. Antoinette de L oy n es added her own piece and translated 18 of the sisters' distichs into French in the translated version in *Le Tombeau de Marguerite de Valois, Royne de Navarre*, in 1551. Later, Loynes' and Camille de Morel's contributions were included in the book of epitaphs compiled for Henry II, the *Epitaphe sur le trespas du Roy Treschrestien Henry Roy de France* and their laudatory pieces appeared in the work of fellow circle members, such as Du Bellay's 1569 publication *Œuvres françaises*. Camille de Morel later edited and arranged for the publication of another compilation of epitaphs for her father, including her own works with that of other former *Brigade* members in 1583.

However, worldly success did not affect male and female authors equally. Remuneration could not be achieved within the circle of like-minded literary humanists. Royal or court patronage was necessary, and the *Brigade* found this through the support of Marguerite de France, the sister of Henry II. Marguerite's appointment of Morel as her *maréchal de logis* provided him with the opportunity to introduce his (male) friends to her. Ronsard subsequently became a recognized talent at court. The *Brigade*’s female participants found little success at the court, beyond praise of their "freakish" talents. They were not considered "poets" as were their male counterparts nor did they receive the court's commissions. The *Brigade*’s expansion into court circles reduced opportunities for female publication.


25 Clark Keating, p. 140.
Distance from the influence and constraining literary traditions of the court fostered important literary contributions by several women writers in Paris during the sixteenth century. Some female authors used their socio-cultural distance from the court to address women’s concerns candidly. The Mesdames du Verger who published a child-rearing handbook, *Le Verger Fertile des Vertus*, in 1595, were governesses to the children of the nobility. The work of Nicole Estienne, the daughter of Charles Estienne, from one of Paris’s dominant printing families, was published posthumously in 1587. The work discussed frankly a female perspective of the misfortunes women experienced in the “prison” of marriage. Marguerite de Briet, from a legal family in the Picardy, separated from her husband around 1530 and moved to Paris where she owned several properties. She published four works under the pseudonym, Hélisenne de Crenne, between 1538 and 1541. She proudly emphasized their appearance in the city at the centre of French (primarily elite male) intellectual institutions:

> Oh, it is an inestimable pleasure to me, to think that my books are on sale in this noble Parisian city: which is inhabited by an innumerable multitude of wonderfully learned people, lovers of the affability, sweetness and suavity, that are found here in the delectable circle of Minerva.28

Although Crenne was probably a member of the lower nobility, she dedicated her work, the 1539 *Les Angoisses douloureuses*, to “to all virtuous ladies” rather than a specific patron. Only her 1541 translation, *Eneydes*, is dedicated to a specific patron, Francis I. This does not suggest she had a well-developed circle of court patrons. However, Crenne’s independent wealth and lack of contact with the French royal court left her free to explore her own choice of literary themes. Crenne argued for women’s access to education and other rights, and in defence of women’s capabilities. She was particularly (and perhaps personally) concerned with unhappy marriages caused by inappropriately large age differences between spouses and women’s inability to escape such partnerships.

28 “O que ce m’est vne inestimable felicité, quand ie pense que me liures ont leurs cours en ceste noble Parisienne cité: laquelle est habitee d’innumerable multitude des gens merueilleusement scientifiques,
Outside of Paris, northern France produced comparatively few print-published women writers. Rouen was in fact the only other northern city, apart from Paris, to publish local women’s works. Rouen was commonly held to be the second town of the realm. As an administrative urbanized centre, Rouen was likely to have a proportion of literate and wealthy citizens. Printing had been a trade in the town since 1485. One of the biggest factors affecting the involvement of women in print publication, appears to be the yearly festival competition, the Puy of Rouen, open to all, where prizes were awarded for the best compositions in chants royaux, ballades and rondeaux. The Puy was established in 1486, and similar competitions were held in other western French cities. Lille’s competition used the form of the amoureuse or serventois, in Dieppe it was the chant royal and in Béthune, the pastourelle.

In 1543, Magdeleine Du Val, Marie Du Val, Marguerite d’Auvrelat, Katherine Laillet and Marie du Moncel all published in Puy du souverain amour. The occasion of Catherine Vétier’s marriage in 1543 caused Pierre du Val to call upon the poets of the region to celebrate pure love and marriage in her honour. Poets were not to speak of impudent love and one poem by Henry de Sassefen was rejected on the grounds that it broached the topic of lascivious love. Each of the 24 participants was to present three pieces, a ballad, dizain and a rondel with specific first or last lines, and those judged the best would be proclaimed at the wedding banquet. One of five women whose poems were recorded in the published Puy du souverain d’amour in 1543, was Madeleine Du Val. She received “a silk lily” for one rondel and the third prize of a hat made of lily of the valley, a bouquet and a box of sweets for her dizain. The guidelines, that the poems addressed pure love, made the topic suitable for women. The competition was in celebration of a marriage; had it implied the celebration of physical passion women’s morality might have been questioned. Furthermore, a noble love of minds made an appropriate statement for women who wanted to participate as equals in intellectual capacity in literary

29 McFarlane, p. 2.
30 Ibid., p.32.
32 “vng lys de soye” “ung chappeau de muguet, ung touffoeul et une Boyte de drageee”, in Le Puy du Souverain Amour, sig. Di v°, Diii v°.
exchange. Pierre du Val recognized this problem for female participants in his address to the readers: “one must note here the ignorance of some who do not want to attribute any learning to women as if they were degenerate of virtue”.33 For further justification of women’s presence in the competition, he observed: “O public stupidity which says women gain no profit from the works of Pallas who was of their own sex”.34

North-western France outside of Rouen produced few published women writers. Several women worked in isolation. The Dominican nun, Anne de Marquets, born near Eu in Normandy, published several works in Paris during the 1560s whilst living at Poissy.35 Towards the end of the sixteenth century, Marie de Gournay promoted female education and other rights in her literary work, Le Proumenoir de Monsieur de Montaigne, published in 1594 in Paris but written around 1588 whilst Marie was still at Gournay-sur-Aronde in Picardy. Although Anne of Brittany, a renowned patron of musicians, poets and writers, established a circle of learned women around her at the French court, only one women from Brittany has been recorded as having published works. This was Marguerite de Goulaine who composed works of poetry in French with her husband, Gabriel de Goulaine, contained in Le Livre de Marguerite de Bretagne, dame de Goulaine, dated between 1585 and 1599.36 Brittany was, if not independent of French cultural traditions, at least greatly different. French was a foreign language to the people in Brittany and women were probably less likely to be taught it than men. Since few works were printed in Breton during the sixteenth century, women’s opportunity to participate in print publication was small.37

33 “doibt on icy noter lignorance daucuns qui ne veullent attribuer aucun scâvoir aux fe-mes comme sil feussent degenerez de vertu”, in “Aux lecteurs benevoles” in ibid., sig. Bii v°.
34 “6 asnerye publicque qui dys rien n’estre co-mode a la femme des ceuvres de Pallas, qui fut de leur sexe” in ibid., sig. Bii v°.
Resisting geographies

Why did women south of the Saint-Malo and Geneva line, who were statistically less likely to be literate than women in the north of the country, produce slightly more literary print publications in the sixteenth century? One reason may simply be that print publication increased women's chances of recognition as an author beyond their own locality. Both women and men could use print as a means to transcend geographical barriers to their participation in political, religious and literary discourses. The further away authors were from the literary movements in Paris, the more likely they might be to add their voice through print publication. Certainly Madeleine and Catherine des Roches in Poitiers appear to have chosen to print their writings with a Parisian publisher to spread their renown across France and attract patrons. Furthermore, even in areas of very low literacy, administrative and noble families would be likely to provide their children with some education. At the high social levels to which most women writers belonged, regional illiteracy may not be a relevant factor.

However, were there other influences? Southern France contained some important administrative towns that helped to strengthen the unification of the French realm, such as the parlement at Toulouse and university towns grew at Poitiers and Montpellier. Yet many regions south of the Loire river had only recently come under the jurisdiction of the French monarchy. Angevin sovereignty ended in Provence with the death in 1481 of Charles du Maine, last count of Provence and Forcalquier, leaving no heirs. Louis XI of France succeeded him. Many regions spoke a maternal language which was not the langue d'oil of the French court. Did the loose connection that these regions held to the French court mean that geo-cultural traditions were able to continue, develop and consequently impact on women's participation in literature and French language print publications in ways which differed from areas in the north of France? Could women draw attention to their geo-cultural locations to resist male-centred literary traditions in northern France? Could they exploit their location as a resisting geography from the publications conventions in the north?
Lyons stands out as a leading centre of women writers, where 37 women contributed to 32 editions. Lyons was a large commercial and printing centre but had no university nor parlement. The absence of strong legal and religious control in Lyons allowed more freedom of the press. The social structure of Lyons differed from other major cities, such as Paris. Without parlement, university or strong church institutions, the major social class was that of businessmen, the bourgeoisie and petty nobility. Jacqueline Risset suggests that this helped foster a collective spirit in Lyons. Writers based in Lyons could not be dependent on royal patronage around the court in the same way as Parisian writers who were aided by their proximity to power and wealth. Thus writings from Lyons did not reflect the opinions of those to whom authors were trying to appeal and writers were perhaps able to express their thoughts with greater freedom.

The unique social structure of Lyons helps to explain the prominence of female literary participation. The male-dominated cultural institutions around which literary enterprise occurred in other cities, such as the court and university, were not present in Lyons. Instead, literary activity tended to take place in the literary circles, many of which were, as in Paris, in the homes of women. Women in Lyons were prominent in contributing to literary activity which was conducted amongst the wealthy Lyons merchants and business men, rather than amongst the nobility. In the first half of the century, mixed-sex groups met under the Lyons hostesses, Marie-Catherine de Pierre-Vive and Madame du Perron. Members of these salons included men involved in the book trades, such as Antoine du Moulin, the editor of Pernette du Guillet’s works, and Jean de Tournes who published writings by Louise Labé, Pernette du Guillet and Marguerite de Navarre. Women could not only further their education in these informal private circles, but also mix with the individuals who could facilitate the circulation of their works in print publication.

The appeal to civic pride was also a particularly strong element in the presentation of Lyons women writers. Early sixteenth-century satirical exchanges between the women of Lyons, Rouen and Paris promoted a competitive spirit. When Louis XI had entered Lyons on 10 July 1499, the magnificent celebrations sparked Guillaume Cretin to write "a poem addressing the bourgeois women of Lyons" supposedly on behalf of the Parisian ladies. It drew extensively on the supposed commercial preoccupations and identity of Lyons, saying "go show your painted faces, keeping your bodies and private parts covered", "a good woman must be God-fearing ... But in Lyons ... she puts herself up for sale". A male poet provided a reply for the "ladies of Lyons" in "The Reformation of the Ladies of Paris made by those of Lyons" which alluded to similar charges of prostitution and excessive use of makeup. These exchanges perpetuated the idea of competition and difference between women based on their geo-cultural locations. Similar debates constructed by men were staged between the women of Rouen and Paris during the royal visit to Rouen of Louis XII and Anne of Brittany in 1508. Whilst all of this correspondence was probably written by men as a literary exercise, women may have identified closely with their cities. Ann Rosalind Jones argues that this civic and paternalistic fervour placed pressure on women to project the pride of their town through their actions and writings, as an example to the rest of the country.

The appeal to civic pride seems particularly important in Lyons, where Antoine du Moulin attempted to rouse the women of Lyons to show France what they could achieve. He wrote in his introduction to the Rymes of Pernette du Guillet in 1545:

Ladies of Lyons, to let you finish what she had so happily started: that is to say, to practise virtue like her and in such a way that if by this little pastime of hers she has shown you the path to good, you may so gloriously follow her, that your memory can testify to posterity of the docility and vivacity of good minds, which in all the arts this Lyons climate has always produced in both sexes, in fact more copiously than anywhere else, that one knows about. ... they [the works] will incite some amongst you, or from elsewhere,

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41 "ung dictie adressant aux bourgeois de lyon" in Le Jardin de Plaisance, Paris, Antoine Vérand, 1501? fols 102 v°-103 r°.
42 "Alez monstrer vos musequins fardez/ Contregardez vos corps et cul bardez", "Femme de bien doit estre en dieu fervante/ ... Mais un lion ... elle se met en vente," in Le Jardin de Plaisance, fol. 102 v°.
and inspire you to write, so as to participate in this great and immortal praise that the ladies of Italy have acquired for themselves today, so much so that by their divine writings they dim the lustre of many learned men, and as in France similarly many honourable and virtuous ladies and demoiselles devote themselves to letters with a great expectation of their perpetual renown to the great honour and praise of all this realm: and even if it would be (I repeat) only for all these just and praiseworthy reasons, would I not be judged ungrateful and injurious to you all, if, having this in my hands, I had concealed from you this little incitement to push you to the highest good, in perpetual recommendation of your renown?

One woman to take up the challenge was Louise Charly, known better by her alliterative literary identity, as “Louize Labé Lionnoize” tying her to the specific cultural identity of Lyons. By adopting a female literary identity so closely related to her city, and celebrating the advancement of learned women in Lyons, she could suggest she was publishing her works for the glory of her city and sex, rather than for personal literary fame. In the introduction to her Euvres, published by Jean de Tournes in 1555, addressing fellow circle member Clémence de Bourges, she continued to encourage the civic pride of other “Dames Lyonnoises” to make their writings known - the pride which justified her own print publication.

The trobairitz heritage and independent spirit of Provence
Regions to the south of Lyons were more loosely connected to the French crown. Provence had only recently become French territory. The Assembly of the Estates in 1482, stated in Article 10 of the statutes they presented to Louis XI, that the French king was required to take the title of the Count of Provence in all acts concerning the

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44 “Dames Lyonnoises, pour vous laisser achever ce qu’elle a...
lands and its inhabitants. If this were omitted, subjects were not required to obey, thus reinforcing that Provence’s allegiance was to the Count of Provence, not to the Kings of France. Like Brittany, southern France differed from French linguistic and literary traditions. Occitan, langue d’oc or Provençal, as it was variously known, was their maternal language and the courtly love traditions of the troubadours and trobairitz their literary heritage. In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the southern courts creating troubadour literature had produced centres of relatively high literacy. Women of the socially higher levels, as well as musicians and poets who were generally of a more modest social level, were literate.

The literary traditions of Provence may have encouraged women to write and publish in the sixteenth century. Between 1100 and 1300 vernacular poetry began to create and describe roles for women that differed vastly from the perceptions held in church teachings. The lady of a castle was surrounded by a group of admirers, troubadours, who sang her praises in what was perceived to be a platonic, though often ambiguous, relationship. During the years around 1170 to 1260, a phenomenon of “trobairitz” poetry, that is poetry by or in the voice of women, appeared, producing around 40 texts. Why during a brief period of troubadour literary history did trobairitz poetry appear, then disappear? David Herlihy suggests that the period coincides with more women saints. Sharon Farmer argues that the doctrine of the power of wifely persuasion emerged amongst male clerical writers at this time. These socio-cultural changes may have allowed women briefly to participate in the creation of literature of their time. Although the trobairitz phenomenon seems to have disappeared rapidly and before the end of the troubadour literary era, the tradition of female participation in literary culture may have allowed women in the south of France to contribute their works to printed publications in the sixteenth century.

49 I am grateful for the advice and unpublished research of Jenny Smith in this area.
The sixteenth-century memory of the troubadour literary traditions did include female contributions to the genre, despite the fact women represented a disproportionately small group in the genre. César de Nostredamus' account of the history of Provence in 1614 recalled the efforts of the counts of Poitou, of Toulouse, Provence, the Countess of Die, the Seigneurs of Baulx de Sault, of Grignan and Castellane amongst others to raise the esteem of the Provençal language, having "written and worked for its enrichment". The "Comtessa de Dia" composed four songs which appeared to have been successful, judging by the number of extant manuscript copies. Speaking specifically of the troubadours, Nostredamus counted "in number more than eighty, both men and women (which is not of little glory)". His history noted the importance of women to even the recent history of Provence, praising King René for his advancement of women. In the year 1475, he observed:

> it is good to see that René without having regard to the fact that the laws exclude from all important and public duties, the imperfection of this sex, wanted to leave to posterity as a rare and memorable thing, that in his reign and his State he had had excellent Amazons and illustrious and generous women, capable of breaking down the barriers of civil laws, and of commanding well and courageously.

René's wife, Jeanne de Laval, had strong interests in literature and held a fine collection of manuscript and early printed works. In the sixteenth century, women's participation in the history and literary traditions of Provence was evidently still in the collective cultural memory of the region.

Famed women of letters won renown in early sixteenth-century Provence, such as Claude de Bectone who was said to have lived around 1480-1547. Originally from the Dauphiné, she was abbess of St Honorat in Tarascon and known in religion

52 "en nombre de plus de quatre-vingts tant hommes que femmes (& qui n'est de petite gloire)", in *ibid.*, p. 583.
53 "il est bon à voir que René sans avoir esgard que les loix excluent de toutes charges importantes & publiques l'imperfection de ce sexe vouloit bien laisser à la posterité co-me chose rare & memorable, que de son regne & en son Estat il avoit eu des Amazones excellentes, & des femmes illustres & genereuses, capables de rompre les barriere des loix civiles, & de bien & courageusement commander", in *ibid.*, p. 640.
54 For discussion of Jeanne de Laval's collection of manuscript and printed works, see chapter 2, pp. 63-64.
as Scholastique.\footnote{H. Coste, \textit{Les Eloges et les vies des reynes, des princesses}, (1647) in \textit{Archives biographiques françaises}, BN microfiche-m-25273 -76-184.} She was reputed for her learning, witnessed in her correspondence with men of letters, and was cited as one of the four most learned women in France, by onlookers outside of France. She was named with Catherine de Medici, Marguerite de Navarre and Diane de Poitiers in Ludovico Domenchi's \textit{Nobilità Delle Donne} (Venice, 1549).\footnote{Ibid., BN microfiche-m-25273-76-186.} Guillaume Paradin in his \textit{Histoire de nostre temps} (Lyons, 1550-56) cited Marguerite de Navarre and four nuns from the Tarascon convent, including Claude de Bectone, as examples of learned women of France.\footnote{Ibid., BN microfiche-m-25273-76-188.} In the 1545 \textit{Déploration de Vénus sur la mort du bel Adonis}, published in Lyons by Jean de Tournes, seven pieces are considered the work of a "Claude de Bectone, dauphinoise". The pieces were later reprinted in four other Lyons first editions in the sixteenth century.

Women were also active in the politics of sixteenth-century Provence. Christiane d'Aguerre, the widow of Louis d'Agoult, the Count of Sault, was instrumental in the attempt to retain the individuality and independence of Marseilles, in the late sixteenth century.\footnote{Duchène, p. 188.} The new king, Henry IV was known to support integration of Catholic and Huguenots. Marseilles, a loyal Catholic city, depended on its trade with surrounding Catholic areas, such as Spain. Business and trade looked to follow the examples of independent port city states like Genoa and Venice. A fervent Catholic supporter of the League and for a brief time its leader in Provence, Aguerre used her influence to call on Charles-Emmanuel of Savoy, son-in-law of the king of Spain, to release Marseilles from the prospect of potentially Huguenot policy from the new king, Henry IV. Her choice of help returned to the traditional Provencal policy of situating itself as an axis between east and west in the south of Europe. In February 1591, Charles-Emmanuel's troops installed Charles Casoux as virtual dictator of the city, a post in which he remained until 1595. The independence of Marseilles might have appealed particularly to women who, according to sixteenth-century perceptions of the past, saw an independent Provence as allowing them greater independence.
Whilst Casoux held Marseilles, he accorded Pierre Mascaron rights to print. The first work printed during the regime was Louis Bellaud de la Bellaudière’s 1595 posthumous publication, *Obros, et Rimos Prouvenssalos*. Written in Provençal, the work was an attempt to resurrect the independent spirit and identity of Provence. Included in this work was the writing of another Provençal poet, Marseille d’Altovitis, the daughter of Renée de Rieux and Philippe d’Altovitis, baron of Castellane. She is said to have been taught by the poet Phillippe Desportes in Paris. Her published work is the marginal piece she wrote in French for the works of the Provençal poet, Louis de la Bellaudiere, in 1595 in which she highlighted the friendship between Bellaudiere and another local poet Pierre Paul. A woman’s writings were included in the first work published under the independent Marseilles regime of Casoux which attempted to unite Provence through the cultural identity of its *troubadour* heritage. Women’s participation in poetic enterprise was clearly considered by sixteenth-century Provençal people an important part of their local cultural and literary experience.

*Geo-cultural independence in Toulouse*

Women also published in Toulouse during the sixteenth century. Toulouse, a city merging old and new traditions, had a history of religious resistance with strong female participation during the period of the Cathars in the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries. The strictest followers of the beliefs of the Cathars, or Albigensians after the town of Albi near Toulouse, were the *perfecti*, a small group of both women and men, who observed the moral philosophy of the Cathars. This included rejection of material goods such as wealth, and physical and sexual indulgences “in the hope of one day escaping from the prison of the body and ascending to the realm of pure spirit”. Women could be empowered by being able to join equally in the ranks of the *perfecti* and reject their worldly bodies, which were the source of many perceptions of female inferiority. In the sixteenth century, some women writers in France were attracted to Neoplatonic theories which similarly rejected the physical world for a higher intellectual realm of the soul. Likewise, Marie le Gendre claimed that her discussion of moral philosophy sought to attain

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“human truths”, which were not differentiated by categories of male and female. She developed an impersonal style, using ungendered pronouns such as “us” and drawing little attention to her gender. Dislocation from the bodily realm allowed women to participate as “equal in soul” to men. The period of the Cathars left the south with a memory of female spiritual participation and equality and although the heresy was ruthlessly crushed, the south, and particularly Toulouse, retained a sense of resistance to the influence of the north. In the sixteenth century, it was frequently ridiculed as “Tolose barbara” for its religious fanaticism and intellectual conservatism, trailing well behind the new humanist theories infiltrating intellectual institutions elsewhere.

Toulouse had retained elements of its linguistic heritage. In literary culture, John Hine Mundy suggests that, in Toulouse during the Cathar period, the vernacular was reasonably widely read amongst several social levels, including the many musicians and poets who were generally “persons of modest social class”. Upper class women, such as Esclarmunda of Foix, were also literate. Troubadour literature and the use of langue d’oc had been sustained for longer than in other southern areas by the establishment of the Gay Sabor in 1323. Seven poets had established this competition, not unlike the Puy of Rouen, in which poets presented annually langue d’oc poetry to be judged before the Consistory of the Gay Sabor for the Prix de la Violette. This maintained the use of the langue d’oc as a literary language despite the infiltration of langue d’ceil into the region over the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. In 1476, Toulouse was the fourth town in France to introduce printing. Print inevitably increased the use of the French language, as many printed texts were in French and all official documents had to be printed and announced in French throughout the realm after 1539. Works in langue d’oc were still occasionally printed, as late in the century as 1555, but the unifying influence of the crown was

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62 McFarlane, p. 3.
63 Hine Mundy, p. 117.
64 Ibid., p. 118.
irreversible. The *Gay Sabor*’s name was altered to the *Collège de rhétorique et de poésie françaises*, reflecting the influence of French as a literary language, and in 1554 the celebrated French royal poet Ronsard was a winner.66

The sixteenth-century history of the Consistory of the *Gay Sabor*, or the *Collège de Rhétorique* as it was known then, was closely linked to an elusive female figure, Clémence Isaure. Isaure was supposed to be a woman who, having lost her true love to an early death, never married and died donating her entire fortune to the continuation of the *Collège de Rhétorique*. One version claims she was the daughter of Louis Isaure, born around 1450 and dying in 1500. Others suggest that she was a fictitious figure, created by men of the town “to prevent certain goods from being under the control of the *Parlement* and taxation”.67 They used a funeral statue in the Cloître de la Daurade of a young girl from the family Issalguier from which derived the name Isaure.68 By the sixteenth century Clémence Isaure had become an entrenched legendary figure. In 1496, a dame de Villeneuve wrote a manuscript *canso* to Isaure whom she addressed as “Queen of poetry, powerful Clémence,” saying “I have recourse to you to find rest, If the verses that I recite obtain your praise, I will have the flower which owes you its birth”.69 The *Collège de Rhétorique* was open to either sex. In 1505, Jean Grandjean printed in Toulouse the *Dictats de dona Clamensa Isaure* in which certain pieces suggested that she had died by the time of the publication; others were written in the first person.70 The *Lo Planh d’Amor* was apparently autobiographical. Lamenting her solitude, Isaure wrote: “I, plaintive, solitary, I who only knew how to love and to suffer, I must cry my unhappiness to the world ... restate it and die”.71 It is impossible to conclude from this evidence whether Clémence was a real figure or the invention of literary men, wishing to prevent their money being taken by *parlement*. However, it is significant

66 Ibid., p. 265.
68 Ibid., p. 238.
69 “Reine de la poésie, puissante Clemence,/ j’ai recours à vous pour trouver le repos/ Si les vers que je dicte obtiennent vos louanges,/ j’aurai la fleur qui vous doit sa naissance”, in *Biographie toulousaine*, 2 vols. 1823, *Archives biographiques françaises*, BN microfiche-m-25273-532-148 and 149.
70 Ibid., BN microfiche-m-25273-532-158.
71 “moi, plaintive, solitaire,/ Moi qui n’ai su qu’aimer et que souffrir,/ Je dois, au monde .../ Pleurer mes maux, les redire et Mourir!”, in ibid., BN microfiche-m-25273-532-159.
that Toulouse had such a tradition of women sharing in civic life and literary culture as benefactors, or as literary participants of the Collège de Rhétorique, thus creating space for a female poetic voice.

The sixteenth-century presses in Toulouse published several works that addressed women's rights to contribute to literary discourse. In 1540, the local poet Trasabot claimed to represent the women of Toulouse in a speech read before the public assembly in which he complained that the female right to participate in the Collège de Rhétorique was not being respected as tradition demanded. He argued that,

With women humbly begging, as many from the middle class as the great ladies, Saying that madame Clémence, whom God pardons by his clemency, who gave the three flowers, long ago wished and ordained that whosoever would like to recite, [could do so] without excepting women from it, and with a strongly liberal desire, ... including both males and females.73

In the next decade, several works addressing women's participation in literary culture appeared from Toulouse presses. In 1553, came the La Requeste faicte et baillée par les Dames de la Ville de Tolos. Aux messieurs, Maisttres et Mainteneurs de la Gaye science de Rhétorique, au moys de May ... Avec plusieurs sortes de Rithmes en divers lengaiges et sur divers propos, par lesdites Dames de Tolose composées. Ensemble une Epistre, en Rithme aussi par icelles faicte et envoyée aux Dames de Paris. Le premier jour de May, (Toulouse, Jacques Colomiers, 1553) which resurrected the old rivalry between city women. It included an "epistle in the language of Toulouse, made and composed by the Ladies of Toulouse, responding to that which the Parisian ladies had sent them" and at the end stated it was "By the command of my aforesaid Ladies. Naudeta Petita S."74 It seems likely that this was a satirical work by men, in the tradition of the turn of the century inter-city rivalry. De

72 Ibid., BN microfiche-m-25273-532-170.
Gelis claims that the sixteen women whose names are given as the authors had been invented to suit the topic of the pieces, such as Esclarmonde Espinette, Dona Prouzina Belyvenga, Andieta Peschayre. In 1555, Colomiers published a new work in the same style, this time in \textit{langue d'oc}, entitled \textit{The ordonnances and customs of the White Book, observed through all time, composed by the women of sense of Toulouse, written down according to the rules by their secretary}, and another work in the same vein which André Dupuy argues was “born of a burst of student inspiration taking the Toulouse institutions as its target” as the “last sign of the official Occitan culture ... translating in colourful language Toulouse life with its picturesque types, all social classes mingled”. The memory of the comparatively brief contribution by \textit{trobairitz} to secular poetry, and the legend of the contributions of Clémence Isaure to the continued success of the \textit{Collège de Rhétorique} in Toulouse remained dominant in the literary culture of the southern regions of the newly emerging French state. Although it seems likely that the sixteenth-century publications acknowledging women’s rights to participate in the \textit{Collège de Rhétorique} competitions were written by men, supposedly on behalf of the townswomen, they nevertheless provided space in literary discourse in which women had theoretical rights to participate.

Four identifiable women of Toulouse published their writings during the sixteenth century. All wrote in French, not in the \textit{langue d'oc} with which Toulouse women’s traditions of literary participation had been associated. This is not surprising as the last work in \textit{langue d'oc} was printed in 1555. Furthermore, by the middle of the sixteenth century, the use of the French language for all official documents, had become entrenched. French was the language of administration, the courts, power and written texts. Although many people still spoke regional dialects, these became increasingly associated with rural life and not the medium of literary and written discourse. By the sixteenth century, Toulouse was a distinguished centre for the study of the law, and also held its own \textit{parlement}. There was a significant

\footnote{F. de Gelis, \textit{Histoire critique de Jeux Floraux}, Toulouse, 1912, in \textit{ibid.}, p. 186.}

\footnote{\textit{Las ordensas et coustumas del Libre Blanc, observadas da tota ancianetat, compousados per las sabias femnas de Tholosa et regidas en forma deguda per los secretary} and \textit{La Requeste faicte et baillé par les Dames de la ville de Tolose aux messieurs maistre et mainteneurs de la Gaye Science de Tolose} in Dupuy, p. 271.}
proportion of wealthy citizens in Toulouse. Most of the published women from Toulouse were in fact wives or daughters of parliamentary officials. Although women were excluded from the process of law-making, parliamentary families were usually wealthy and often educated their daughters well.

Each of the four woman writers in Toulouse chose different ways to structure and print her writings. The prefaces of Charlotte de Minut, abbess of the Poor Clares in Toulouse, in her brother Gabriel de Minut’s two posthumous editions *De la beauté, avec la Paule-graphie par Gabriel de Minut* and *Morbi Gallos*, were published in Lyons, in 1587. Her father, Jacques Minut, was the first president of the parlement in Toulouse and reputed a keen humanist scholar amongst his contemporaries. Gabrielle Coignard’s posthumous poetry, *Œuvres chrestiennes* was published in Toulouse and prefaced by her daughters Jane and Catherine de Mansecal in 1594. Coignard was the daughter of a conseiller au parlement and wife of Pierre de Mansecal, also a conseiller au grand conseil and later, president à metier au parlement. Those of the highest social standing in towns without court influence were likely to be the parliamentary families, thus it is not surprising that the educated women who published writings, were in fact from parliamentary families. Even as late as 1595, Coignard’s writings were related to geo-cultural factors by contemporaries. The dialogue between Philandre and Tolose in Coignard’s *Œuvres chrestiennes* had Philandre praising Toulouse: “Generous city, to swell my courage, you present ... these writings of a woman, a prodigious mind, in addition to so many great talents who decorate our era!” Jane and Catherine de Mansecal also implied in their introduction that had their mother wished to publish her verses, she might chosen to dedicate them to Marguerite de Valois. Marguerite was the Queen of Navarre at the court in nearby Nérac and at the time of publication, was living in the Auvergne, at Usson, where she held a small literary court including Brantôme, and Honoré d’Urfé. The reference to Marguerite de Valois suggests that women were

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77 Dupuy, p. 271.
78 Bennesac and Tollon, p. 265.
79 *Biographie toulousaine*, (1823) in *Archives biographiques françaises*, BN microfiche-m-25273-237-209.
80 “Generoose cite, pour m’enfler le courage;/ Tu presentes .../ Ces escripts d’une femme, esprit prodigieux;/ Outre tant de grands dons qui decorent nostre aage!” in *Œuvres chrestiennes*, Toulouse, P. Jagourt et B. Carles, 1594, p. 10.
conscious of the presence of the nearby court of Navarre where royal women encouraged and actively participated in literary discourse.

Other southern regional women also established a literary voice and published works. In the surrounding Languedoc region lived two further published women writers. One was the Languedoc translator, Marguerite de Cambis, the daughter of the baron d'Alais, and married to Pons d'Aleirao, the Baron d'Aigremont. She translated two works from Italian, the 1554 *Epistre du seigneur Jean-Georges Trissin, de la vie que doit tenir une dame veuve* and the 1556 *Epistre consolatoire de l'exil, envoyée par Jean Boccace au seigneur Pino de Rossi* both published in Lyons by Guillaume Rouillé. Cambis remarried Jacques de Rochemore, who was also responsible for several published translations in 1556. In one dedication to Marguerite de Cambis, he noted the difficulties of translation into French "because I am a native ... of this land of Languedoc, whence we still maintain a little of [our] ... mother tongue, I haven't a style favourable to [literary] terms nor a flowing language". Rochemore's awareness of the linguistic differences of his local region to standard French and the difficulties this caused for translation, points to an added impediment for most writers, female or male, who sought to publish writings in standard French whilst living in areas that retained strong dialectic traditions.

Regional dialects made translation more difficult for regional authors, but distance from the cultural traditions that standard French brought with it from the Parisian court to the regions, may have helped some women writers. The poetic works of Marie de Romieu, from Viviers, were published in Paris in 1581. Unusually, Marie was not the daughter of a noble, administrative or wealthy mercantile family: her father was a baker. Marie sent her writings to her brother, Jacques de Romieu, a lawyer in Paris, and he arranged for their publication in the capital. Jacques's dedication to Marguerite de Lorraine, Duchesse de Joyeuse, aligns

81 "causant que suis natif, ... en ce pais de Languedoc, d’ou tenons tousiours quelque peu de ... ramage maternal, n’ay le stile propice de termes n’ay langage coulant", in "A Madamoiselle Marguerite de Cambis Baronne d'Aigremont" in *Propos amoureux contenans le discours des amours et mariage du seigneur Cliophant & damoiselle Leusippe*, Lyons, Benoît Rigaud, 1556, p. 9.
brother and sister with one of the old families of the region: "our forerunners and ancestors were always loving and humble servants to all those of the ancient family and illustrious house of Joyeuse, as ... head of all our great province of Languedoc and Vivarois lands". One laudatory piece to Marie de Romieu was from Togne de Vaulx, in which he emphasized her provincial geographic identity as a disadvantage. She was separated from the centre of literary culture in "Paris, the ornament of cities":

> your verses had such grace ... that all said "Who is this Romieu?"
> The reply comes: "She's a Vivaroise, who makes herself noticed in French land, glory of her people and of her little birthplace."  

Yet what Togne de Vaulx saw as distance from the focus of important literary production may have been what enabled Marie to write and publish. She could use her identity as an outsider to the largely masculinized literary sphere of Paris to ignore Parisian limitations to women's literary participation and enter printed discourse.

The royal court at Nérac

Women at the court of Nérac in Navarre produced several print contributions and may have influenced perceptions of women in print and literary culture in surrounding southern areas. Navarre, on the borders of French and Spanish territories, maintained strong female participation in literature in the sixteenth century through a royal court which was centred around literary women. In 1527, Marguerite d'Angoulême married Henry II d'Albret, the King of Navarre. Marguerite had already written some manuscript works before she arrived in Navarre in the language of the French court, langue d'œil or French. Her brother, Francis I, was responsible for attempting to unify the French kingdom through use of a single language, in his 1539 Edict of Villers-Cotteret. Marguerite continued to patronise the arts in her court at Nérac which was famed for its literary and humanist scholars.

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83 "noz devanciers et ancestres ont esté tousjours tres-affectionnez et tres-humbles serviteurs à tous ceux de l'ancienne famille et tresillustre maison de Joyeuse, comme ... chef de toute nostre gra-d' province de Languedoc et terre Vivaroise", in Dedication to Les Premieres Œuvres poétiques, Paris, Lucas Breyer, 1581, fol. 13 v°.
Lefèvre d'Etaple, Jean Calvin, Theodore de Bèze and Etienne Dolet all spent time at Nérac, which had a reputation of tolerance for freedom of thought. Eight of Marguerite’s noblewomen published directly as a result of her own literary participation. They composed an “Adieu des dames de chez la Royne de Navarre, allant en Gascongne, à madame la Princesse de Navarre,” to the young Jeanne d’Albret which was included in Marguerite’s collection of poetry *Suyte des Marguerites de la Marguerite des princesses*, published in Lyons by Jean de Tournes in 1547.

Marguerite’s daughter, Jeanne d’Albret, was to identify strongly with Navarre’s local culture and heritage. Jeanne recognized the importance of translating Biblical texts into the maternal languages of her people, Béarn and Basque, if she were to successfully co-ordinate the realm’s acceptance of the Reformed religion. By resurrecting the specific linguistic identity of her state, she could forge its independent identity from Catholic France. In 1568, she commissioned Antoine de Salette to translate the Psalms and liturgy of Geneva into Béarn, which appeared in 1583. From Bishop Claude Regin she requested a translation in Basque of the New Testament. Jeanne encouraged science and learning in her court, though most of her own published work was concerned with Huguenot political propaganda.

Proselytising for the Reformed religion was also the inspiration for her fellow female author, Georgette de Montenay. Montenay was born in Toulouse in 1540 but after her parents died of the plague, she was brought to the court at Nérac. Her family held lands in Béarn. Nurtured in the fervent Calvinism of Jeanne’s court, Montenay composed a work of *Emblèmes ou devises chrestiennes*, which was published in Lyons in 1571 by the Huguenot printer Jean Marcorelle. This she dedicated to Jeanne d’Albret, whom she praised as a model of learning for other women to imitate: “Ladies listen, let each of you awake to contemplate in joy and jubilation, the deeds of God toward a princess.” The work enjoyed considerable contemporary success.

85 Dupuy, p. 254.
86 Ibid., p. 277.
87 “Dames ouyez, chascune se reveille/ Pour contempler en ioye & en liesse,/ Les faizt de Dieu enuers une princesse”, in *Emblèmes ou devises chrestiennes*, Lyons, Jean Marcorelle, 1571, sig. A3 r°.
As one modern scholar has claimed, “after its publication, no writer, Catholic or Protestant, could ignore the value of emblem books as vehicles for the presentation of sectarian teaching and for devotional purposes”. Further editions of the *Emblèmes* appeared in Zurich in 1584, Heidelberg in 1602 and Frankfurt in 1619. Publications reflected the emphasis that Jeanne d’Albret placed on maintaining the local language and customs for political and religious purposes.

Social status and geography were boundaries that could both exclude and include women in publication. Elite social status could allow women to attend court literary circles, but gender denied them equal participation as authors. Female authors found discursive agency in other ways. Being outside the boundary of elite social status, separated from the literary conventions at the court in Paris, some women of less wealthy social levels found more discursive access to publication. Women exploited physical geographical boundaries and their connected cultural traditions in order to publish. Women who lived in regions with traditions of female participation in literature, spirituality and politics, appeared more likely to present work for print publication despite the difficulties presented by linguistic barriers. By establishing an authorial persona in specific geo-cultural locations, women could emphasize their independence from the masculine cultural traditions of the French court. Female authors found ways to exploit the dynamism of the boundaries of class, geography and linguistics in order to overcome the limitations to publication that gender placed upon them.

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DOMESTIC SPEECH: RHETORICAL STRATEGIES OF FAMILY AND HOUSEHOLD

In previous chapters, I have argued that women anticipated a critical audience for their published works. However, female authors developed strategies to allow their inclusion in intellectual and literary discourse. They acknowledged male expectations of their behaviour and abilities in a variety of ways. Women used dedications or introductory passages to frame their work within the context of a supportive audience. They suggested that their writings were only for a personal friend or that they wrote to avoid idleness, and claimed that their work had been published without their permission. In these ways, women both reinforced contemporary expectations of appropriate female behaviour and also used these expectations to justify their writing.

In print-published women's writings of the last quarter of the sixteenth century, female authors exploited contemporary constructions of familial relationships and duties to negotiate textual space in publications. Before this, it was much more common for women to dedicate their works to a female friend or to an anonymous female public. From the 1570s however, many women writers chose to represent themselves in a variety of family settings in order to utilize the opportunities these offered for female speech: as mothers and daughters addressing each other, as daughters consulting fathers or as sisters communicating with brothers. This rhetorical strategy occurred predominately in the last quarter of the century when both the Catholic and reformed faiths were redefining female behaviour and expectations in the household, as a daughter, sister, wife and mother. Women writers, contextualizing their writings within the household arena, used the ambiguity surrounding the varied expectations of women in the family to develop literary constructions of their roles in the post-Reformation family. These constructions allowed for female agency and communication outside conventional behavioural ideals.
Pre-Reformation Catholic doctrine presented an ideal of virginity as the highest moral state for women. Marguerite de Navarre, in her 1533 *Dialogue en forme de vision nocturne*, depicted her deceased niece Charlotte, daughter of Francis I, as rejoicing in her virginity and thankful that she died before marriage: “I am delivered from temptation ... my Spouse has done me a far greater honour in taking me in my virginity without sin having reigned in my heart”.¹ Chastity for women, as for members of the clergy and religious orders, made them morally superior to married Christians.² Catholic doctrine developed an ambiguous perception of marriage and sexual relations as necessary evils for the purposes of procreation. Although in reality, elite women could gain some practical power and respect through marriage and producing children, theologically they were inferior to women who remained celibate.

To Protestant reformers however, the ideal of the patriarchal nuclear family replaced that of celibacy, providing for religiously legitimated sexual relations between husband and wife. Within the social unit of the household, the father was confirmed as the central authority, symbolic of God’s authority over the state. However, if the family was the “natural” place for women and men, allowing for religiously ordained procreation, then clearly the traditional theological ideal for women, the virgin, also had to be re-assessed. Women had moral status now as mothers and wives. It was a mother’s duty to instil moral codes in her children and teach daughters survival skills such as household management and child-rearing techniques. The Protestant reformer Martin Luther recognized women’s importance as disseminators of religious and social doctrine to children, and encouraged female literacy. Protestant literature thus created moral power for women within the family, giving them some agency as wives and mothers.

In the wake of Protestant recognition of the family as the basic unit of society, the Council of Trent in 1563 acknowledged the need for supervision and

¹ “Delivree suis de la tentation/ ... mo- Espoux ma faict plusgra-d ho-ne!/ De me prendre en ma virginite/ Sans que peche ayt regne en mon cœu”, in *Dialogue en forme de vision nocturne*, Alençon, Simon du Bois, 1533, sig. [iiij p°-v°].
strict control of Catholic marriage. Although marriage was given greater acknowledgment than previously, it was recognized only reluctantly, not as the social asset binding society as in contemporary Protestant countries such as England. As Rosemary O'Day has argued, in France, "where the sacramental nature of marriage was never seriously challenged in the national Church, the importance of marriage and the family were generally belittled". Nevertheless, post-Tridentine Catholicism increased the ritualization of family life with a series of communal activities, such as prayers, encouraged in the household. Though younger sons and daughters might be encouraged towards the religious life, clearly not everyone could lead a celibate life. Most women could expect marriage and a partner.

The emphasis of Counter-Reformation doctrine on the recognition of parental duties towards children, as well as the reverse, was a clear departure from pre-Tridentine ideology. Jean-Louis Flandrin's research on confessors' manuals during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries indicates a sudden interest in domestic responsibilities after the mid-sixteenth century. In François-Martial Masurier's *Instruction à bien confesser*, around 1550, 33% of the text concerned domestic relationships; by the 1574 publication of Perronnet's *Instruction des curez*, 50% of the work concerned familial responsibilities. This increase was confirmed by the theologian Jean Benedicti's *La somme des pechez* in 1584 where 80% of the text dealt with such issues. By the end of the sixteenth century, Catholics too had taken on the notion that parental duties included religious education for their children: a duty largely adopted by mothers. The patriarchal family was the basis and symbol of the hierarchical state. As Sarah Hanley has argued, metaphors of the family that

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explained the king’s relationship to the kingdom:

depended on gender distinctions to support the socio-economic burdens of family formation and officeholding necessary for monarchic state building; and the sheer magnitude of the social subscription of women ... to that system casts women as prime participants, never merely spectators, in early modern state building.8

Here then was a core unit of French society, and one in which women were valued as important members.

Prescriptive literature on both sides of the religious debate perpetuated female obedience to male authorities in the household, although they offered differing methods to achieve this in practice. Daughters were encouraged to imbibe patriarchal standards of female comportment which restricted them to private obedience to male authority first as daughters, then as wives and mothers. The good woman was chaste, silent and obedient.9 Furthermore, the father, ruler of his kingdom and a reflection of the well-ordered state, represented the family unit in the public arena outside the home. A father had to be able to guarantee the chastity of his daughters both for their marriage prospects and his own reputation as head of the household. Lax behaviour in his wife or daughters was a reflection on his inability to control his environment and would be seen as weakness. Women’s public speech which represented a breach of her silent role in the public domain, could reflect adversely upon her father’s ability to establish his authority. Yet, by simultaneously suggesting that women’s greatest duty was for the welfare of their children, women might justify public speech as an essential part of their responsibilities as a mother. Clearly, the bounds of female authority within the private household might be viably breached to allow public speech. Women writers could interpret the ambiguities of their power within the household to create a literary construction where their published words held authority too.


9 A term used by Suzanne Hull in her Chaste, Silent and Obedient: English Books for Women 1475-1640, San Marino, Huntington Library, 1982 and equally relevant in the perception of the roles of French women.
Constructing a literary relationship based around familial bonds allowed women writers to manipulate the concepts of politically and religiously sanctioned female behaviour. The writers included here were all Catholic, post-Tridentine writers.\textsuperscript{10} The theological re-definitions of family life in the late sixteenth century emphasized the family as a site for the contestation of power and left ambiguities in the expected behaviour of women. In this chapter, I will examine how these ambiguities could be exploited as literary constructs to allow female publication.

**Women constructing motherhood**

Advice books and conduct manuals for women were one area of writing in which the difficulties of presenting a female didactic voice could be lessened. In the sixteenth century, women were usually responsible for the primary acculturation of their children and the education of daughters in particular was their responsibility. Most men did not have the practical knowledge of cooking, housekeeping and child-rearing that a mother could teach her daughter. Thus the maternal role could be a powerful female identity for women in a patriarchal society. It was a legitimate area of female knowledge which allowed women to construct an authoritative voice in writing.

Furthermore, most mothers who wrote in this genre restricted their prospective audience to other women so that they could not be accused of seeking to instruct men. Women speaking as mothers in their writing usually addressed daughter-like figures, if not their own daughters, in a dialogue. Sixteenth-century women's representations of mother-daughter relationships reflected the "collaborative stance towards the world" that Sara Ruddick has termed "maternal thinking".\textsuperscript{11} She has defined this as a behavioural practice which encourages non-competitiveness and connection with others in order to foster their development which she suggests stems from maternal practice.\textsuperscript{12} Female authors imparted to other women valuable information about the realities of the position of women.

\textsuperscript{10} None state and there is no evidence to suggest that they are Protestant.


The first writings by a woman that were published by printers in the fifteenth century were the posthumous manuscripts of Christine de Pizan. The second of all her many manuscript works to appear in print was the conduct book *Trésor de la cité des dames* in 1497. The *Trésor*, originally written around 1405, was constructed as the advice manual of the women in her allegorical city of ladies, the construction of which was the theme of her earlier 1404 work, the *Livre de la cité des dames*. Unlike the *Livre de la cité des dames* however, it contained none of that work’s preoccupation with improving the perception and position of women. The practical *Trésor* was "[p]art etiquette book, part survival manual, it was written for women who had to live from day to day in the world as it was." When it was printed in 1497, the work was almost a hundred years old, yet little enough had changed in the position and status of women for publishers to see it as topical for the late fifteenth century. When the *Trésor* was printed, its publisher Antoine Vérard supplied a prologue which was added to Pizan’s own. This dedicated the publication to Anne, Queen of France, and detailed what she might expect to learn from it:

I ... have made the book of the three ladies of virtues, that is, Reason, Rectitude and Justice, sovereign ladies of the noble city of the ladies of virtues. Lady Christine composed this work for the education and exhortation of Queens, noble ladies and princesses by the commandment of those noble virtues, so that the said Queens, noble ladies and princesses may be summoned to be sovereign citizens and as such placed in the noble city of the ladies of virtues. And as an example to other bourgeois ladies and unmarried girls and women of the common people. And here I show how good princesses must love and fear God, as the first and principal lesson; and that they must heed the good and holy warning that comes for love and fear of our Lord, with many beautiful and virtuous lessons contained in this book. As your glorious and blessed dignity can see and know in reading the book or having it read as a manner of recreation.
Later publishers continued to print the *Trésor* in 1503 and 1536 as if its message for the practical realities of women’s life remained unchanged by the passage of time.

However, motherhood was an historically specific experience. As Toni Bowers argues, motherhood, “far from a static, “natural” experience, is a moving plurality of potential behaviour always undergoing supervision, revision, and contest”.15 In sixteenth-century France, female authors began to contribute to contemporary revisions and constructions of motherhood through their publications. They advanced views on the roles and duties of mothers that shaped the way motherhood was understood in the sixteenth century. Women’s primary role within marriage was to bear children, and wealthy, elite women in particular faced the prospect of bearing many children. They married at young ages and most sent their children to wetnurses which meant they did not benefit from the contraceptive effects of lactation. Amongst the peerage, high mortality rates in childbirth caused many wives to die before their older husbands.16 Nicolas Versoris recorded that at the birth of one child in 1524, his wife had been in labour for two days: “my daughter was born on Saturday the sixteenth of December at about seven in the morning. Her mother was very ill in her confinement and had been in labour since Thursday morning, between four and five o’clock”.17 Nicole Estienne, in her description of marriage, left no doubt that women understood “the danger she [woman] is in during childbirth”.18 A female biographer recounted the life of Leonor de Roye who married at sixteen and had already borne seven children before she died shortly after the premature birth of her twin boys in 1564 at the age of twenty-eight.

More frequent still was the death of the child in birth or soon after. High infant mortality rates were common at all levels of French society. Lack of hygienic

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16 O’Day, p. 95.
practices exposed infants to gastric and other illnesses, and epidemics could carry off children of all classes. As Léonor’s biographer noted,

> From this marriage were born seven children, in six pregnancies: Three daughters, Catherine, Marguerite, and Magdelaine: And four sons, Henry, François, and from her last confinement, twins Charles and Loys. Henry, François, Charles and Marguerite are living, God has taken the others.\(^\text{19}\)

Similarly Marie de Prevost, lamenting her husband’s death in 1590, talked of their family together. She had likewise borne “seven children ... of whom three remain living, two daughters and a son”.\(^\text{20}\) However, Flandrin notes that studies from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries show that high fertility coincides with high infant mortality.\(^\text{21}\) Women at the less wealthy social levels who breastfed their own children were likely to have longer intervals between each child. The loss of the female income or labour that a pregnancy might mean for a small household might discourage a couple from penetrative or other forms of sexual activity where conception was a possibility. However at the wealthier social levels, a woman’s contribution to the household was her reproductive activity, and sons were essential to the lineage of the family.

The conflict for noblewomen between attention to their husbands or children was apparent in several areas of the birth and child-rearing experience. In 1564, an eight-month pregnant Leonor de Roye went into premature labour after being confronted by an angry crowd provoked by violent religious fighting. Her female biographer explained that “this popular rage and fury moved this good Lady in such a way, that being near the end of the eighth month, she gave birth prematurely in fright the same day to two sons in the village of Gandelu: without having time to reach any of her houses”.\(^\text{22}\) The fate of her twin boys was not immediately mentioned, nor was

\(^{19}\) “De ce mariage sont issus sept enfans, en six grossesses: Trois filles, Catherine, Marguerite, & Magdelaine: Et quatre fils, Henry, François: & à sa dernière couche, Charles & Loys iumeaux. Henry, François, Charles & Marguerite sont vivans, Dieu a prins les autres”, in Epistre d’une damoiselle francoise, 1564, sig. fi v°.


\(^{21}\) Flandrin, Families in Former Times, p. 200.

\(^{22}\) “Ceste fureur & rage populaire esmeut ceste bonne Dame de telle façon, qu’estant sur la fin du huictieme mois, elle accoucha le iour mesme de deux fils par frayeur, & avant terme, au village de Gandelu: sans qu’elle eust loisir de pouvoir gagner aucune de ses maiso-s”, in Epistre d’une damoiselle francoise, sig. aiii r°.
Leonor's maternal role the most significant role for her biographer. The author emphasized Leonor's courage and loyalty to her husband in setting out to meet him so soon after the birth: "And a few days later, as she was naturally courageous and active, she set out for Orleans towards Monseigneur, her husband, which she reached with long and difficult days of travel".\(^\text{23}\) Physicians and theologians debated whether men could exact conjugal rights from wives who were pregnant or breastfeeding. If a woman fell pregnant whilst breastfeeding, her milk might dry up and thus the suckling child's life would be jeopardized. Early in the sixteenth century, in 1514, Sylvester da Priero erred towards the importance of the avoidance of sin, suggesting "it is not a mortal sin for the man to demand [his conjugal right] when he fears illicit corruption for himself and he cannot easily satisfy it [through other means]".\(^\text{24}\) However, attitudes towards children were changing over the century, and the historian Jacques Gélis argues that over this period, people were increasingly unwilling to accept children's deaths as the immutable will of God.\(^\text{25}\)

Although wetnursing of noble children could result in the death of the child, a non-lactating wife would be able fulfill her conjugal duty. It further increased the chances that the mother would soon fall pregnant again. In 1584 Benedicti bitterly opposed the practice:

> why is it that nature has given them two breasts like two little bottles if it is not for this purpose ... they send them off to wretched villages, to have them nursed by strange women, unhealthy and with a poor constitution: a thing so detrimental to the poor little children ... For not only are their bodies affected and damaged .. but also, what is much worse, there remains some impression and stamp of the vice of the nurses on the minds of the children.\(^\text{26}\)

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\(^\text{23}\) "Et peu de iours apres, co-me elle estoit courageuse & active de son naturel, elle se mit en chemin pour aller à Orleans vers Monseign-r son mari, où elle parvint à grandes & difficiles journées", in ibid., sig. aiii r°.


\(^\text{26}\) Flandrin, Families in Former Times, p. 207.
Noblewomen were increasingly advised to breastfeed their own children, though the high birth rates amongst noblewomen suggests it took many years for child-rearing practices to change.

Female authors stepped into the contemporary debate of whether they ought to breastfeed their own children. While men debated to whom wives owed the greater responsibility, the husband or the child, female authors showed themselves in favour of the rights of the child. The wife of a wealthy provincial lawyer, Madeleine des Roches speaks at least in a literary sense of nursing her own child, Catherine: “by maternal love, by the gentle milk drawn from the breast, and by the womb which carried you for nine months”.

In 1595, Madame and Philippe du Verger in their child-rearing handbook, had the protagonist Modeste state explicitly: “God gave me a beautiful little girl, whom I nourished with my own milk.” The tide had turned in favour of the child: Peter de Ledesma rejected da Priero’s advice and recommended: “it is sufficient to excuse the spouse from the rendering of the debt ... because intercourse at such a time is against the interests of the child which marriage is particularly designed for.”

Long-held child-rearing practices were examined in close detail and those which might endanger the child’s health discouraged. Simon de Vallambert, in his 1565 treatise De la maniere de nourrir et gouverner les enfants, argued against swaddling as a restriction to the child’s health and development. The historian Philippe Ariès, in his Centuries of Childhood, argued that late sixteenth-century authors believed children were fragile creatures susceptible to the influence of the Devil, and thus had to be instilled with discipline. This too reflected a growing understanding of childhood as a stage of the individual’s development where

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29 P. de Ledesma, De magno matrimonii sacramento, q. LXIV, art 1, 4th difficulty, in Flandrin, Sex in the Western World, p. 183.
important aspects of character could be formed. Madame du Verger echoed this contemporary interest in the protection of the child from the dangers of lack of discipline: “youth is weak and naturally sinful”, “if youth is accustomed by parents, masters and wet nurses to the fear of God, to obey all, to be gentle and peaceful, without doubt it will have an open door and a easy route to proceed on the path of virtues”. Other sources suggest that mild physical rebukes were used by mothers when necessary for the good of the child. In *L’Histoire des Satyres, et Nymphes de Dyane*, Marguerite de Navarre described the admonition of Diana for her ladies in her retinue, comparing her to “the offended mother who comes forward to chastise her child, strikes him many times in a fit of anger, but when her child comes and kneels down confessing his fault without excuse, she then uses great gentleness after great severity, so did Diana”. Marguerite de Navarre’s description suggested that mothers experienced conflict between their natural love for their child and the prevailing notion of the necessity to administer physical punishments to discipline their children to prevent them from sin.

The Mesdames du Verger were in no doubt as to which way maternal feelings ought to be directed: they strongly advised mothers not to coddle their children. The authors used the example of the child-rearing practices of animals to show the correct way to raise children. The example of the monkey was clearly not to be followed: “I will advise you nevertheless that you must not love your children so much, that you are like the monkey, who loves its young too much and pushed by this disorderly love, kisses them with such violence, that thinking to caress, it smothers them in its breast and kills them”. Du Verger continued with discussion

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33 “jeunesse est molle, & courante au peché de sa nature”, “si la jeunesse est accoustumee par les parens, maistres & nourrices à la crainte de Dieu, obier à tous, estre doux & paisible sans doube qu’elle aura une porte ouverte & un chemin facile pour entrer au sentier des vertus”, in *Le Verger Fertile*, p. 82-3.

34 “Et ainsi que la mere offencée/ A chastier l’enfant s’est avancée/ Et par fureur frappe sur luy grandz coups/ Quant son enfant se vient mettre à genouls/ En confessant sa faute sans excuse/ De grand’douceur aprés grand’ rigueur use/ Tout ainsi feit Dyane”, in *La fable du faulx cuyder*, Toulouse, G. Boudeville, 1545, sig. dii r°.

35 “Je vous advertiray neantmoins qu’il ne faut pas tant aymer ses enfans, que l’on face comme le cinge, qui ayme par trop ses petits & poussé de cet amour desordonné il les embrasse avec une telle violence, que pensant les carresser il les estouffe en son sein & les tuë”, in *Le Verger Fertile*, p. 21.
of the habits of leopards, pelicans and eagles in looking after their young. Not all the practices of animals were to be disdained. Modeste summarized the advice of Du Verger in the conclusion and states “the little animals and other beasts show and give good examples of how to live better” although to contemporaries, positive comparison of human children to their animal counterparts was rare. Olwen Hufton observes how “[e]ven in upper-class nurseries, crawling was held to delay the time when the child would walk. To allow the child to crawl was to allow mankind to adopt animal practices by going on all fours.” Increasingly, animal behaviour was shown as a model to be rejected: “indiscretion causes them to love like apes, who it is said squeeze their young so hard out of ardent affection that they suffocate them” wrote Jacques Duval in his 1612 work, Des hermaphrodits, accouchemens des femmes, repeating the words of Du Verger’s earlier handbook.

Women’s writings depicted the particularly close relationships between mothers and daughters. Nicole Estienne criticized the practice of marrying girls at young ages, unprepared for life outside their childhood homes. She reminisced that young girls missed “the gentleness of [their]... mothers”. The upbringing of a girl was primarily the responsibility of her mother. It was she who would teach the child the practical and vocational skills she would need in life. Anne de Beaujeu’s handbook to her daughter, Suzanne, reflected her aspirations for Suzanne would be expected to fill as a member of the Royal family. Written for Suzanne on the occasion of her marriage in 1504, it was later published as A la requeste de très haute et puissante princesse madame Suzanne de Bourbon in Lyons, around 1534. Although, as Colette H. Winn has argued, women’s pedagogy in conduct manuals transmitted the dominant ideology of the early modern era, and was a powerful means of indoctrination, it could also contain much practical advice for women.

36 “les petits animaux & autres bestes mo-strent & donnent de beaux exemples de mieux vivre”, in ibid., p. 121.
39 “la douceur de nos meres”, in Misères et Grandeur, (ed.) Zingueur, p. 34.
Anne de Beaujeu discussed appropriate education and comportment, and emphasized the importance of public perception:

Considering the state of our poor fragility and present miserable life, innumerable and great dangers in this transitory world are to be endured. Also after realizing the brief, sudden and early death that we expect at any hour. In spite of my poor, simple weak means, the natural perfect love that I have for you, my daughter, gives me courage and the will to make you some little lessons, warning your ignorance and youthfulness. Hoping that some time you will remember them and can profit a little from them. ... without giving you any long prologue nor such a little thing great speeches.41

Yet, although she denied her thoughts any “great speeches”, they were in fact essential advice and lessons for a young girl, to understand the way the world worked and what she could expect in life.

Anne de Beaujeu discussed the comportment of noble or royal women who would be prominent in the court circles and involved in politics, unlike Christine de Pizan who offered advice to women at many different social levels. Some aspects of female advice such as virtue were universal. Anne, who had supervised the upbringing of many young girls at court and was unofficial regent of France during the childhood of her brother, King Charles VIII, placed great emphasis on the proper education of young women. She encouraged her daughter to read: “to better know how to live and conduct yourself in devoutness, I advise you to read ... the almanac of wisdom, or other books of the lives of saints, as well as the sayings of the philosophers and ancient sages, whose teachings should serve you as right rules and example, and it is an honourable occupation and agreeable pastime”.42 Yet Anne

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41 “La p-faicte amour naturelle q- iay a vo9, ma fille, Co-siderant lestat de n-re pouvre fragilite, et meschante vie presente. Innumerables et grans dangiers/ en ce monde transitoire sont a passer. Aussi apres reco-gnoissant la tresbriefve/ soubdaine/ et haftive mort q- a toute heure latte-s. Non obsta-t mon pouvre rude et debile e-gin me donne couraige et vouloir, de vous faire/ ... Aulcuns petis enseigneme-s, advertissa-s vostre ignorance, et petite ieunesse. Esperant q- en aulcuns temps en aurez souvenance/ et vous pourroie-t quelque peu p-filter ... sa-s vous faire nulz longs p-logues ne aussi de peu de chose grans parlemens”, in A la requeste de treshaulte etpuissante ma dame Susa-ne de Bourbon, Lyons, [Pierre de Sainte Lucie? 1534?], sig. aii r°.

42 “pour mieux vous scavoir vivre et conduire en devocion, je vous conseille que lisiez ... l’orologe de sapience, ou aultres livres de vie des Saincts, aussi les dictz des philosophes et anciens saiges, lesquelles doctrines vous doivent estre comme droicte regle et exemple, et c’est tres-honneste occupation et plaisant passetemps”, in A-M. Chazaud (ed.), Les Enseignements d’Anne de France, Duchesse de Bourbonnois et d’Auvergne à sa fille, Susanne de Bourbon, Moulins, Desrosiers, 1878, pp. 8-9.
proposed reading not only for the knowledge gained and avoidance of too much free
time, "regarding your youth, which one must never allow to be vague and idle". She
also recognized the importance of keeping occupied for the purpose of the virtuous
reputation of a lady, "all women who wish to be spoken of well, and to be called
sensible women, must have hearts, desires and understanding so great and so highly
elevated, that all their principal efforts must always be to acquire virtues".43 Anne de
Beaujeu's advice to the young noblewoman was not unlike a sixteenth-century
adaptation of much of the practical messages of the Trésor of Christine de Pizan.

Child-rearing was one area of knowledge about which women had practical
experience and which they were expected to learn from female relatives in the
process of female acculturation. Le Verger Fertile des Vertus was constructed as a
dialogue between a new mother, Modeste, who had come to the author, Madame du
Verger, to ask her advice on how best to raise her newborn child. Modeste explained,
"I determined to go to find her, so as to make my joy known to her: and also to
receive from her some good advice, instruction and consolation, for in truth, I do not
gather little profit all the times that I have the pleasure of communicating to her my
most private thoughts".44 The work emphasized that Modeste perceived Madame du
Verger as an authoritative figure in this realm of knowledge, which helped to justify
the publication. Madame du Verger justified her authority to instruct others upon
several premises, saying:

If you have any doubts that I can rid you of, I would never refuse
anyone the little knowledge that God has given me ... we will never
lack material to discuss, I will take you to see my orchard, a place
most pleasant, delectable and enriched with several singular
features which cost my predecessors a lot to dispose and put in
order, and me to maintain. There we will find sufficient subjects to
discuss, more than we will have time to do so.45

43 "touchant vostre jeunesse, laquelle on ne doit aucunement laisser vague ou oyseuse", "toutes
femmes qui désirent avoir bon bruit, et estre dictes femmes de bien, doivent avoir les couraiges les
vouloirs et les entendemens tant grans et si haultement eslevez, que toutes leurs principalles œuvres
doivent estre de tousjours acquérir vertus", in ibid., p. 9, p. 10.
44 "ie me delibere de Taller trouver, a fin de luy faire part de ma ioye: & encor pour recevoir d'elle
quelque bon conseil, instruction & consolation: car à la verité, ie ne moisonne pas peu de prouffit
toutes les fois que l'ay cet heur de luy communiquer mes plus particulieres pensees", in Le Verger
fertile, p. 2.
45 "Si vous avez quelques doutes que ie vous puisse oster, ie ne voudrois iamais refuser à personne ce
peu de scävoir que DIEU m'a donné ... nous n'ayons faute de matiere pour discourir, ie vous
mesneray veoir mo- verger, lieu fort plaisant, delectable & enrichi de plusieurs singularitez qui ont
The Mesdames du Verger situated Du Verger as merely the purveyor of knowledge in a long line of accumulated experience. They presented her child-rearing knowledge as a mixture of her personal experience as a well-respected governess and her acceptance of the wisdom of her predecessors.

Female authors depicted deep bonding between mothers and daughters. Claudine Scève showed the solidarity of women in particularly female misfortunes. Scève related the story of King Federic’s “seduction” of Silvestre in her 1530s translation Urbain le Mescongneu filz de l’empereur Fédéric Barberousse. When the Emperor Federic comes across the beautiful Silvestre, he tries unsuccessfully to woo her by promising to marry her. When Silvestre attempts to flee from him, Scève depicts a scene of sexual violence. “You have made me experience it without my consent”, Silvestre tells Federic afterwards. Scève repeatedly emphasized Silvestre’s innocence and demonstrated the ramifications for Silvestre of Federic’s selfish actions. When Silvestre’s mother uncovers her daughter’s pregnancy, she “knowing her daughter to be scarcely or not all guilty, was moved by compassion and the two wept together”. Women knew the importance of a chaste reputation and shared the bitter knowledge of their powerlessness to protect it.

Men sometimes feared the close relationships between women. They worried that women were passing subversive advice to each other. Works abounded which claimed to be written by women, purportedly reflecting what women might talk about together in private. Ann Marie Rasmussen has argued that it was a literary conceit from classical times to depict an older women instructing younger women on ways to use sexuality to their advantage. The 1597 Instruction pour les jeunes dames, par la mere et fille d’alliance, was composed of a dialogue between an older relative and her charge. The author M.D.R claimed in the introduction “to young
cousté beaucoup à mes predecesseurs à disposer & mettre en ordre, & à moy à entretenir. Là nous trouvero-s suffisant subiect pour discourir plus que le temps ne nous permettra de ce faire”, in ibid., pp. 121-2.

46 “tu mas co-tre mon vouloir faict gouster”, in Urbain, Lyons, Claude Nourry, [1530?], sig. aiiii p°.
47 “cognoiissant la fille peu ou rien coulpable de co-passion meue lune et laultre ensemble plouroyent”, in ibid., sig. B v°.
48 A.M. Rasmussen, Mothers and Daughters in Medieval German Literature, Syracuse, Syracuse University Press, 1997, p. 188. and n. 2.
ladies" that the work would help them to "good success in [their] ... loves". The "adopted mother" figure promised to explain how to:

make yourself so happy and satisfied that you will deem fortunate all your life this day when I put you on the right path of true pleasures in this world, provided that you always use my advice, not only for the preparation and undertaking of your love affairs, but also in the conduct and continuation of them, and believe me that you will find yourself many of them.

The deep bonding that women writers revered in their works was both feared and ridiculed by concerned male writers.

**Mothers and daughters publishing**

Women writers in France constructed versions of motherhood that justified their publication as part of their maternal role. The bond between mother and daughter could be a source of empowerment to both writers in the relationship. The work of Madeleine and Catherine des Roches provides one of the best known cases of the exploration and development of a mother-daughter bond in sixteenth-century French women's writings. Born around 1520, Madeleine married André Fradonnet in 1539 and gave birth to her only surviving child Catherine in 1542 in Poitiers. Madeleine was twice widowed, and occupied herself almost exclusively with providing an unconventional humanist education for her daughter. In 1578 in the year after her second husband’s death, Madeleine published her first work with her daughter Catherine. This was a book of poetry and dialogues, *Les Œuvres*. In the next

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49 "bon succes en voz amours", in *Instruction pour les jeunes dames, par la mère et fille d'alliance*, Paris, Jean Dieppi, 1597, sig. aiii r°.

50 "vous rendre si contente & satisfaicte qu'estimerez toute vostre vie bien-heurise ceste journee que ie vous ay mise au droit chemin des vrais plaisirs de ce monde, pourveu que vous vous serviez tousiours de mon co-seil, non seulement à l'acheminement & entreprise de voz amours, mais aussi à la conduicte & co-tinuation d'icelles, & me croyez que vous vous en trouverez bien", in *ibid.*, fols 68v°-69r°.


decade they were to venture into print both together and independently in various reprinted and new works, including a second book of works and a series of letters. In Poitiers, their home was open to a literary circle and their fame spread largely due to the praise of humanist writers, such as Etienne Pasquier, who attended their salon. In 1587, as plague swept through Poitiers, both mother and daughter succumbed on 30 November, dying as they had lived, inextricably linked to each other.

In keeping with social expectations, Madeleine occupied herself with her daughter’s education. She lamented in her work the poor education given to women, “keeping us closed up in the household, and giving us a spindle for a pen”, and was determined to educate her daughter beyond contemporary expectations. Well-versed in Latin, Catherine was lauded by her contemporaries and encouraged to pursue literary aims by her mother. “How much honour you will have deserved ... I have always wished you to be thus”. Madeleine pushed the boundaries of her maternal responsibilities to educate Catherine sufficiently to be able to participate in literary discourse with men. However, Madeleine was expected to acculturate her daughter in appropriate female behaviour and occupations as well. Catherine was anxious to show that her mother’s attention to her humanist education was not to the detriment of more conventional female accomplishments. She stressed how she continued to pursue other female activities, such as needlework:

I will at least not have been guilty of losing much time on composing such a little work as this since I spent on it the time that other women spend on visits ... I have not abandoned for my pen my clews of string, nor ceased to work with wool, silk and gold thread.

She emphasized how she maintained a balance between appropriate female conduct and her writing, and that the two were not mutually exclusive occupations.

Madeleine argued that Catherine’s intellectual education was a guarantee of her daughter’s morality and, by extension, a fulfilment of her own duties as a good

53 “nous tenir closes dans la maison,/ Et nous donner le fuzeau pour la plume”, in Œuvres, (ed.) Larsen, p. 87.
54 “Combien d’honneur tu auras mérité/ ... Je t’ay tousjours souhaitée estre telle”, in ibid., p. 84.
mother. Indeed, Catherine’s rejection of marriage in pursuit of higher literary aims, confirmed her chastity. Madeleine claimed their publication functioned as proof of their virtue and honour. “If ... you advise me that silence, the ornament of women, can cover the faults of language and understanding, I will respond that it can well prevent shame but cannot increase honour”, she wrote. Through the very act of publishing her writings, which showed her learning and the choice she made to devote her life to mental not physical pursuits, Catherine proved publicly that her mother had fulfilled her maternal duties to educate her morally. Furthermore, Catherine was obliged to follow her mother’s example as a good daughter. Her publications were confirmation that as a good daughter she had followed her mother’s teaching. With the Des Roches, publication functioned as proof both of their humanist education, and of their virtue. Catherine was evidently chaste and obedient to her mother as contemporary authorities would expect, but the education her mother gave her exploited the possibilities of this sphere of maternal responsibility to be much more powerful. Catherine used her mother’s acknowledged duty to educate her child to be able to speak alongside men in publication.

In all the joint writings of the Des Roches women were included an “Epistle to her daughter” by Madeleine and an “Epistle to her mother” by Catherine in which they acknowledge their textual inseparability. Catherine was her mother’s creation, both biologically and through her education, morally. By remaining single and devoting herself to her poetic creations, she had opportunities her mother could not have had as a wife and mother. It was through Madeleine’s sacrifice in following a traditional female path that Catherine was able to write. As Tilde Sankovitch has argued, the valorization of their bond as mother and daughter established their poetic self-confidence and creative interdependence. Madeleine wrote “My dearest, I know that reverence, love and chaste modesty would not permit you to be without me on printers’ paper ... Thus let us walk together in this union that has always

56 “si ... vous m'advisez que le silence ornement de la femme peut couvrir les fautes de la langue, & de l'entendement, ie respondray qu'il peult bien empescher la honte, mais non pas accroistre l'honneur”, in Œuvres, 1578, sig. aii r°.
The interplay of the reality of giving and receiving of biological life were paralleled by reciprocal creative exchange. Their relationship was intertwined as though with an amniotic bond; without her mother’s life force Catherine could not write. In reality, both Madeleine and Catherine’s writings were published in other works by men unaccompanied by each other. The rhetorical strategy of speaking as mother and daughter was a vital element only in their publications as two independent but interdependent women.

However, by choosing to concentrate on writing and to reject marriage, Catherine sacrificed the sense of immortality a woman could achieve by the birth of children. Her mother recognized that Catherine had chosen another path, that of immortality within public literary discourse: “the true history of a not ungrateful century will have to make honourable mention of you”. Catherine’s works became her children, and it was here that Madeleine’s supervision, advice and accompaniment in her literary composition reflected the expectations of a mother of her daughter. They shared the experience of the publication of the books, the mother guiding the way into print as the elder, more experienced in life, in a literary child-rearing process. Madeleine could not be accused of neglecting her child’s moral education but did it in such a way as to allow Catherine a degree of intellectual freedom not often attributed to women.

The Mesdames du Verger represented another type of mother-daughter bond. Philippe du Verger depicted her filial duty to her mother in their work. The 1595 Le Verger Fertile des Vertus was composed by Madame du Verger and improved and prepared for publication posthumously by her daughter Philippe du Verger, the wife of a court prosecutor. The Privilège approving the work for publication, indicated both mother and daughter, acting as governesses, “had the honour of having instructed in good morals and discipline the daughters of the best households of this

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58 "Mamie, ie scay que la reverence, l’amour, & l’honnête pudeur, ne vous permetent été sans moy au papier des Imprimeurs ... Marchons doncques en cete union qui nous a tousiours maintenues", in Second Œuvres, Poitiers, Nicolas Courtoys, 1583, unpaginated.
60 "l’histoire veritable d’un siecle non ingrat devra faire honorable mention de toy", in Missives, Paris, Abel Langelier, 1586, sig. b r°.
town”. The work itself consisted, again, of a dialogue in prose between a young married woman, Modeste, and Du Verger, the mother, instructing her in the proper conduct of raising children. The work concluded with the words “End of the First Dialogue”. Although the privilege permitted Philippe to publish “the next part of the same composition” there is no evidence of any subsequent publication.

Madame du Verger was described as a governess, providing “a holy instruction in doctrine and virtuous morals to the tender minds of many now very prudent and honest demoiselles and ladies, who were taught in her charge”. Thus her writing was established as that of a mother and governess who had a duty to share her knowledge and experience of child rearing with other women. In this context, the authorial female voice represented little threat to public discourse, as mothers were expected to have knowledge of, and to instruct their daughters in, the appropriate skills of child-rearing and housewifery. Philippe also chose to interpret her subversive action in publishing as a representation of the good daughter. In her preface, she explained her duty to respect and fulfil the wish of her mother regarding this book: “which she would have published in time, I believe, if death had not prevented her in this enterprise. In my youth, I was always obedient to her ... I believe that it would be reputed as ingratitude ... if I did not accomplish this most reasonable desire of hers”. Philippe thus managed to avoid giving her opinion as to a woman’s right to speak publicly. Rather, she insisted she had no choice in the matter, as she was bound by maternal obedience to transgress the boundaries of acceptable female behaviour in publishing the work.

However, Philippe did not merely publish her mother’s work. She was equally involved in the creation of the text. Indeed, it may be that her mother’s input

61 “a eu cet honneur d’avoir formé en bonnes mœurs & disciplines les filles des meilleurs maisons de ceste ville”, in Le Verger Fertile, Paris, 1595, sig. qii r°.
62 “la suite de la mesme composition”, in ibid., sig. qii v°.
63 “une saincte instruction & de doctrine & de vertueuses mœurs és tendres esprits de plusieurs, qui sont maintenant tresprudentes & honnestes Damoyelles & Dames, lesquelles ont esté gouvernees sous sa charge”, in ibid., sig. aii v°.
64 “lequel livre elle eust fait avec le temps (comme ie croy) imprimer si la mort ne luy eust empesché son entreprise. Partant ainsi qu’en mes ieunes ans ie luy ay esté tousiours & obeyysante ... i’ay estimé qu’on reputeroit à ingratitude, ... si ie n’accomplissois ce sien tant raisonnable desir”, in ibid., sig. aiii r°.
was just a fabrication and the effort entirely that of Philippe. The two were clearly represented as co-authors of a single work, which germinated in the mind of one, and was brought forth by the effort of the other. Both mother and daughter shared the experience of writing, which Philippe described as a co-dependence:

having read and re-read the beginning, I decided to refresh and make green again this fertile orchard (since thus had she put the title to her work) of my honoured lady and mother, and to adorn and add to it with several sorts of trees, [and] plants, ... which can serve its embellishment relating all the duty of a gardener to the duty of those who take charge of cultivating, watering, raising and training delicate youth. And since I am bringing something of mine, the labour of the mother and daughter make only a single work and a single book, the first Dialogue of which I have had printed ... principally by this well born affection that I have to not deprive my dear mother of her honourable intention.65

It is significant that Philippe du Verger saw their work as a shared experience. Just as women did not go out in public unattended, so a joint venture into the public literary discourse may have been seen as protecting them from censure. The women were united in subversive behaviour in publishing.

The involvement of several generations of women in a text subverted the idea of a book as an immutable tome. Rather than a work of fixed meaning and lessons, Le Verger was women’s knowledge which was passed on from mother to daughter and added to, with the experiences of a lifetime. Whilst Philippe maintained the work was begun by her mother, by the end of her dedication, she talked of the work as if it were her own. “I offer you ... what I can, even though it is small”, “what the smallness of my mind can give birth to”.66 The use of the expression “to give birth to” clearly recalled the connection of the book both to its subject and to the significance of the book-publishing experience to women. Philippe verbalized the

65 “ayant leu & releu ce commencement, i'ay pris resolution de refraichir & reverdir ce Verger fertile (car ainsi avoit elle mis le titre de son œuvre) de ma tres-honoree Dame & mere, & l’orner & augmenter de plusieurs sortes d’arbres, plantes, compartimens, ... qui peuvent servir à son enjolivement rapportant tout le devoir du jardinier au devoir de ceux qui prennent la charge de cultiver, arrouser, dresser & gouverner la petite & delicate ieunesse. Et ainsi y apportant quelque chose du mien ne faire du labeur de la mere & de la fille qu’un mesme œuvre & un mesme livre: le premier Dialogue duquel j’ay fait imprimer ... principalement par ceste bien nee affection que i’avois de ne priver ma tres-chere mere de sa treshonneste intention”, in ibid., sig. aiii r°.
66 “Je vous offre donc ce que ie puis, bien que petit”, “ce que la petitesse de mon esprit peut enfanter”, in ibid., sig. aiii v°.
sense of childbirth with which the work was so concerned. Furthermore, the title itself connoted the same birthing significance, *Le Verger Fertile*, the Fertile Orchard, representing also the literally fertile du Verger women. The loving care with which Philippe nurtured the work was reflected in her personal defensiveness of her writing: “to the envious true enemies of virtue, ... I will reply only that ‘whosoever would like to correct me, let him write something better’”. Finally, Philippe alone brought forth through publication the work that both she and her mother developed from the knowledge of their lifetimes. It was her responsibility as an obedient daughter to take up the work and fulfil the honourable wishes of her mother, and her duty as a mother and inheritor of the family line to nurture the book/child to fruition, in this case publication.

The mother-daughter bond could appropriate a textual space for a woman’s voice but tended to create that space within a marginalized, peripheral discourse. Du Verger’s work concerning child-rearing techniques situated the text in an appropriate female space, and deflected possible censure surrounding women entering public discourse. However, this type of justification, of mother and daughter conversations, while empowering women to speak publicly in the context of filial-maternal support and the backing of a cultural expectation of female-to-female socialization, were not of interest in mainstream discourse. It was knowledge conceived by a woman, for other women. Thus while this justification explained the work’s value as a public text, it appropriated that space within a marginalized discourse.

*Fathers and daughters: A relationship of authority*

Fathers represented the family outside the home. A father safeguarded his daughters’ reputation in order to ensure their marriage prospects and his own reputation as head of the household. An unruly wife or daughter reflected his incapacity to control his familial environment. Fathers were the authority figures of their household. Marie de Brames’s verses to the murderers of her father indicated his importance in the familial structure: “His sad mother ... after having killed her support, and robbed her

67 “aux envieux vrays ennemis de vertu ... le leur respondray seulement que “Quiconque me voudra reprendre/ Face quelque chose de mieux”, in *ibid.*, sig. aiii v°.”
of what made her most happy ... you martyr his wife and family".68 Gabrielle de Coignard raised her two daughters alone, after the death of their father. The “fear of death does not frighten me,” she wrote, “the memory of seeing my girls in childhood, orphans without father nor any defence is a greater torment to me than death”.69 Daughters without fathers were without protection. Claudine Scève’s tale of the unfortunate Silvestre, protected only by her mother, demonstrated the dangers that might befall unguarded women.

Women writers never publicly disputed the position of power and authority that fathers held within the family. Only Catherine des Roches dared to suggest to men what was appropriate instruction for daughters. While mothers taught their daughters essential household skills and religious doctrine, it was fathers who would generally determine the type of formal education that their daughters received. Des Roches’ dialogue between Placide and Severe, the fathers of two daughters, was a humanist treatise debating opposing viewpoints on the education of women. She clearly emphasized her own view that women could “increase their wisdom, through books” and the Divine Word “which commands women to obey their husbands, as one can see in Genesis. Having children, it will also be easier for women to maintain them in the fear of God, their fathers, and themselves”.70 Although Des Roches promoted a humanist education for daughters, she emphasized how it would reinforce appropriate behaviour in women.

The father-daughter relationship depicted between Marie le Gendre, Madame de Rivery and François Le Poulchre, Seigneur de Motte-Messmé, was one of guidance, support and protection. In 1584, Marie le Gendre published anonymously a series of eighteen discourses of moral philosophy Des Saines Affections, following in

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68 “Sa triste mère ... après avoir occis son soutien et susport,/ Et ravy ce qui plus l’entretenoit contente./ ... vous martyrez sa femme et geniture”, in Les Regrets de Damoiselle M de B, Lyons, 1597, in Recueil de Poésies françaises des XVe et XVIe siècles: morales, facetieuses, historiques, (eds) A. de Montaiglon and J. Rothschild, Paris, Bibliothèque Elzervienne, 1858, p. 149.

69 “la peur de la mort ne m’espouvante pas:/ Le souvenir de veoir mes filles en enfance,/ Orphelines de pere et sans nielle defence,/ M’est un plus grand tourment que le mesme trespas,” in Œuvres chestiennes, Toulouse, P. Jagourt and B. Carles, 1594, Le Thresor du Son-et (XVie-XVIIe siècles) vol. 3, Macon, Protat, 1890. p. 129.

70 “acroistre la sagesse, par le moien des livres”, “commande aux Femmes d’obeir a leurs maris, ainsi que l’on peut voir dans Genese. Aiant des Enfans il leur sera plus facile aussi de les maintenir en la crainte de Dieu, de leurs Peres, & d’elles mêmes”, in Secondes Œuvres, fols 36 v°, 37 r°.
the tradition of Michel de Montaigne’s *Essais*. They were subsequently reprinted in 1591, 1593 and, in 1595, with an additional twelve dialogues, for the first time revealing her identity. In 1596, the twelve new discourses were reprinted separately as *L’Exercice de l’ame vertueuse* and again, in 1597, with the addition of a *Dialogue de chastes amours d’Eros et Kalisti*. Because of the similarity between her discourses and Montaigne’s *Essais*, she was often confused with Montaigne’s female associate Marie de Gournay and much of her work was attributed to Gournay when it was “rediscovered” in the late nineteenth century. Her final published work, the *Dialogues des chastes amours* was dedicated to her “father” François Le Poulchre, Seigneur de Motte-Messemé. Motte-Messemé, an established author of several works including *Le Passetemps*, was not the blood relative of Marie le Gendre; their relationship was that of literary adoption, to enable Marie to participate in public discourse whilst protecting her moral reputation.

The breadth of Le Gendre’s thematic range made her work difficult to characterize within accepted boundaries of female authorship. The discourses concerning vanity, sadness, poverty and death mirrored those of Montaigne in theme and transgressed the boundaries of women’s limited textual didactic authority. Evelyne Berriot-Salvadore postulates that Le Gendre insisted on a higher human truth transcending categories of gender and attempted to locate herself within an asexual discourse. The *Dialogue* which drew attention to Le Gendre’s connection with Motte-Messemé, advised women on the dangers of male desires and reminded them of the benefits of chastity. It described Eros’s desire for Kalisti, his temptation of her and finally their honourable marriage. Kalisti’s actions were guided throughout by her mother, Sophie, who safeguarded her conduct. Marie le Gendre’s work concluded with an injunction to those “of the sex that Eros reveres, to become, like Kalisti, all daughters of Sophie: so that being in the protection of wisdom, women may triumph over the passions of Love”.

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Marie le Gendre created an image of a wise woman in power, Sophie, who protected and supported other women by the use of wisdom. The choice of her name was significant, derived from the Greek *sophia* meaning divine wisdom. Sophie advocated knowledge and understanding in order to help women in their lives, and encouraged a natural curiosity (and perhaps questioning), saying "you can if you wish bring curiosity with you [to see Minerva], there is no danger, it is sometimes quite an agreeable access and conduit to knowledge". Le Gendre created a utopian ideal of women in positions of power, able to protect themselves and each other.

Between the twelve discourses and the *Dialogue* were printed a series of verses disclosing a little of Marie’s background. Her sonnets lamented the death of her husband, Monsieur de Rivery, and indicated that she was a widow. As such, she was an independent woman without a controlling male influence. Le Gendre risked judgement on her moral reputation by her subversive act of publication, entering mainstream discourse as a single, uncontrolled woman. By rejecting the patriarchal expectations of a publicly silent woman, might she also reject conformity to other female roles of chastity and obedience?

Le Gendre was clearly aware of the risks of entering male discourse of publication as a single woman. By representing Motte-Messeme as her father, she reminded her audience of her female duty of obedience to male authority. In showing herself to accept male domination, she also achieved a measure of protection from public censure. Motte-Messeme, as a father, had a duty to her; to defend his daughter’s reputation, and uphold his own ability to control “his household”, in public. Le Gendre represented Motte-Messeme as her “defender whose prudence, merit and learning are reliable support against all sorts of censure”. Motte-Messeme’s textual presence provided her with a “safeguard” to print. His authority as an experienced author in the literary public domain was a presence to which she could have recourse: he was “amongst the most capable and rare souls”.

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73 “pouvez si bon vous semble y [à Minerve] amener la Curiosité avec vous il n’y a pas de de danger, elle est quelquefois d’assez agréable accès & conduit à la connaissance”, in *ibid.*, p. 129.
74 “defenseur duquel la prudence, la valeur & la science fussen solubles pour le soutenir contre toutes sortes de ce-sures,” A Monsieur de la Motte-Messemé, in *ibid.*, unpaginated.
75 “parmy les plus capables et rares ames”, in *ibid.*, unpaginated.
in two sonnets framing her text, one commencing and the other concluding her work. He fulfilled his paternal duties, supervising and controlling her literary output, and guaranteeing its worth to the public audience: "my daughter you have no need of defence for what your hand so learnedly wrote". Her writing would be seen as a reflection on his ability to recognize literary worth. Therefore, Motte-Messeme had to assure both the value of her writing and that her activity was justified, to avoid shame on his own reputation as her mentor and father figure. He did this in his own writing, saying that

*L'exercice de l'ame vertueuse*, composed and published some time ago by Marie le Gendre, Dame de Rivery, seems to merit its pre-eminence as much by her ability to make tragic and expressive verse of her passion, as by her ability to write well in prose, in her choice of beautiful expressions, in the elegance of her phrases which in my opinion are inimitable.  

Le Gendre’s use of Motte-Messeme had several purposes: it acknowledged Motte-Messeme as the paternal and literary authority and showed her conformity to conventional female expectations. In return, his presence in her work brought the prestige of his literary recognition and safeguarded her publication from censure. However, Motte-Messeme’s obligations as textual father went beyond praising Le Gendre’s literary merits. As her father figure, Motte-Messeme also had a duty to protect her reputation from slander that might arise from the public activity that publication represented. Clearly aware of this, in his quatrains to her, Motte-Messeme said "My daughter ... your book alone demonstrates your good morals and fine mind to all". More firmly signalling that her liberty to public speech did not equate with licentious sexual behaviour was Motte-Messeme’s final piece at the conclusion of the work: “You can write, by experience, of chastity". The placement

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76 “Ma fille vous n’avez besoing d’autre deffence/ A ce qu’a vostre main si doctement escript”, in *ibid.*, unpaginated.
78 “vostre livre seul qui donne cognoissance/ A chacun de voz mœurs & d’un si bel esprit”, in *Dialogue des Chastes Amours*, unpaginated.
79 “Vous pouvez de la chasteté/ Ecrire par experience”, in *ibid.*, unpaginated.
of Motte-Messemé's piece, as the final viewpoint of the book, signified his importance to the whole writing process. It was he who closed the work and he who had the final say. With that last word Motte-Messemé indicated the ultimate preoccupation with the woman writer: that she recognized male authority through her obedience and importantly, her chastity.

Other women writers too attempted to locate their writings within mainstream literary discourse by addressing themselves to men, whom they adopted as fathers. The writings of Marie de Gournay are comparatively well known for her attempts to write in a male literary sphere as a woman, and to address the sexual inequities she saw in contemporary society. She supported herself as a writer in Paris, and chose to remain single. Gournay was born in 1565 into a family of the minor nobility and in 1580, after her father's death, her mother moved the family to the provincial home where Gournay devoted herself to self-learning. She claimed to have taught herself Latin by comparing it to French translations. It was during this time that she discovered the work of Montaigne; the *Essais*, first published in 1584. She wrote to their author, telling him of her support for his ideas and the two established a friendship through correspondence. In 1588, Montaigne visited her at the family home for three months. He was then 55, Marie 23. Both were transformed by the meeting, and Montaigne went on to laud her in his *Essais*, saying:

> my adopted daughter Marie de Gournay, who is loved by me with more than fatherly love ... She is the only person in the world I have regard for ... The judgement she made on my original *Essays*, she, a woman, in this century, so young, ... as well as the known enthusiasms of her long love for me and her yearning to meet me simply on the strength of the esteem she had for me before she even knew me, are particulars worthy of special consideration.\(^\text{80}\)

However, this passage is considered by many modern researchers as "suspect" since it did not appear in the *Essais* until the 1595 edition that Gournay edited.\(^\text{81}\) If this were the case, then it lends weight to the view that Gournay highly valued her relationship to Montaigne, which, in part, validated her own publications.

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Although Montaigne died in 1592, Marie de Gournay learned of his death through her correspondence with the Flemish humanist Juste Lipse only in June 1593. She spent the next few years overseeing and editing a new edition of his *Essais* in 1594 for publication in 1595. She described her connection to Montaigne as an inherited literary understanding, as her letter to Juste Lipse indicated: “I was his daughter, I am his sepulchre, I was his second being, I am his ashes”. As Montaigne’s adopted daughter, she claimed the inheritance of his literary tradition.

Gournay resolved to make Montaigne live through the re-impression of his work. She emphasized “the friendship that he bore towards” her which allowed her to speak publicly in the interests of preserving Montaigne’s memory. She stated how her writing was bound to Montaigne. “Reader, do not accuse the favourable judgement that he had of me, of temerity: when you consider in this writing how far I am from meritng it. When he praised me, I possessed him: I with him, and I without him, are two separate beings”. Marie de Gournay, the self-professed inheritor of Montaigne’s literary spirit, would “honour the deceased” not only through his work, but also through her own.

Gournay’s first published work was the 1594 *Proumenoir de Monsieur de Montaigne*, which, as an editorial note explained, was based on a story Gournay recounted to Montaigne whilst they were walking together during his visit to her home. The work used the fictive audience of Montaigne to justify Gournay’s entry into print, under the auspices of “paternal patronage”, even though at the time of publication, Montaigne was dead. However, within the preface, Gournay noted that

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82 “J’étais sa fille, je suis son sépulcre, j’étais son second être, je suis ses cendres”, in her letter to Juste Lipse on 2 May 1596 in E. Dezon-Jones, *Fragments d’un discours feminin*, José Corti, Mayenne, 1988, p. 190.
83 “l’amitié qu’il me portoit”, Preface to *Essais*, Paris, Abel L’Angelier, 1595, sig. aiii r°.
84 “Lecteur, n’accuse pas de temerité le favorable jugement qu’il a faict de moy: quand tu consideras en cet escrit icy, combien je suis loing de le meriter: Lors qu’il me lofit, ie le posseidos: moy avec luy, et moy sans luy, somme absoluement deus”, in *ibid.*, sig. li v°-lii r°.
85 “Les dames ... trouveront dans les livres que qui mieux congnoist les hommes plus s’en defiffe, & que le plus fiable des prometteurs de constance est celuy qui ne scourot tenir promesse, par l’instabilité de la nature humaine”, *Proumenoir*, Paris, Abel L’Angelier, 1594, fol. 43r°. See also P.F. Cholakian, “The Identity of the Reader in Marie de Gournay’s *Le Proumenoir de Monsieur de Montaigne* (1594)”, in *Seeking the Woman in Late Medieval and Renaissance Writings: Essays in Feminist Contextual Criticism*, (eds) S. Fisher and J. Halley, Knoxville, University of Tennessee Press, 1989, p. 211.
women might find the story instructive. "Ladies ... will find in books that [she] who knows men better, distrusts them more, and that the most reliable of promisers of constancy is he who does not know how to keep a promise, by the instability of human nature". Clearly her target was a mixed-sex audience; women whom she could call upon to redress their inequalities, and men to whom she could make aware of the injustices done to women. Lengthy digressions on women's education were further proof of her didactic aim: "whosoever it was who first forbade them [women] knowledge as an incitement to lasciviousness, I think that it was because he knew literature so little that he feared they would run rings around him on the second day of their study". Montaigne's name gave her didacticism on the subjugation of women a wider basis of justification, as Montaigne's daughter, she claimed to inherit a male "right" to discuss her opinions and establish herself as a writer in the public literary arena. Had she addressed her work to a woman, her opinions on female advancement would not be given credence nor attention outside of the margins of literary discourse. Montaigne's name in the title, and his connection to the work, were a guarantee that her work would be read and taken seriously.

Women writers who addressed father figures generally broached wider discourses than those deemed appropriate for female speech. Marie le Gendre's discourses on moral philosophic issues, or Marie de Gournay's editing of the *Essais* and her views on the advancement of women clearly went beyond the limitations of female discursive space in publication. The presence of the older male literary author as a paternal protector, gave women's works a wider readership and a justification for addressing such an audience. The father figure became the female writer's moral guardian. In her work on the benefits of chastity for women, Marie le Gendre depicted a divine wise woman in power, Sophie, safeguarding the conduct of other women. Yet her utopian ideal of women in positions of power, able to protect themselves and each other, was not borne out by the realities of her position as a writer in sixteenth-century France. The reality for a woman writer who wished to

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87 “quiconque soit celuy qui premier leur defendit la science co-me allumette de lasciveté, ie croy que c'est pourç qu'il cognoissoit si peu les lettres qu'il craignoit qu'elles l'en missent au roïet le second iour de leur estude", *Prouemenoir*, fol. 41v°.
enter mainstream discourse and to speak as an equal, was that she needed the support of a paternal patron.

Sisters and brothers

Another group of women writers exploited the possibilities of sibling relationships to justify their published voice. Both Marie and Jacques de Romieu, the daughter and son of a baker from Vivers in the south of France, were in part responsible for the publication in print of her writings. Marie de Romieu's work included a collection of sonnets, odes and quatrains dedicated to friends and patrons, and a complaint on the death of Christ, which drew on classical, Italian and French sources. The work was headed by a discourse on the excellence of women, heavily borrowing from a translation by Charles Estienne in 1553 of the work of Ortensio Landi. Barring a laudatory piece and translation from Latin in the work of her brother's Jacques de Romieu Mélanges, a collection not unlike her own, Marie's works are gathered in a single volume, Les Premières Œuvres Poétiques de Marie de Romieu, published in 1581 in a single edition in Paris. Yet it was Jacques who had authorized the publication. He had controlled the choice of the decision to publish, chosen the publisher, written the dedication and was a strong textual presence in the work. Paratextual material suggests that Jacques had taken the work to publication for his own purposes. In her "epistle to my brother" Marie portrayed her piece in defence of women as a retort to "a certain invective ... that you have made against our female sex". Her preface, dated from Viviers in the south of France in mid-August 1581, described her work as a private correspondence between herself and her brother. However, the Privilège indicated that the work had been submitted and approved for publication by mid September of the same year, allowing little time for further correspondence between sister and brother to the decision of publication. It was Jacques de Romieu, who took responsibility for the decision, in his dedication of the

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89 "une certaine invective ... qu'avez faict à l'encontre de nostre sexe fœminin", in Les Premières Œuvres poétiques, p. 4.
entire corpus to the Duchesse de Joyeuse, written in Paris on 30 September 1581. “The reason why I was so bold as to address you and offer this little poetic work which was sent to me ... by my sister Marie de Romieu, was only to make you assured of the good will and singular devotion that I have and owe to your service”.  

From the reading of the available material indicating the process of publication, it would seem that Jacques used the work of his sister to achieve his own ends, to remind the Duchesse of his devotion. Even in conclusion, Marie was not implicated in the decision to publish: “Receive thus, Madame, this little offering that I dedicate to you in her name, until the time my sister can come to court to make her reverence to you”.  

At least for the public presentation of the book, Marie could not be censured for her bold public speech, when the decisions surrounding the publication were depicted as those of her brother, Jacques. This strategy negated Marie’s responsibility for her subversive action, by emphasizing her brother’s textual domination.

Jacques’s presence in paratextual material suggests that as her brother, his role was to supervise her public activity. Significantly Jacques also referred to himself in his *Mélanges* as her “master”. Marie was not free to stand alone in a public literary domain; she was not a separate entity but was linked to her sibling throughout the text. Furthermore, through his geographical location, Jacques positioned himself in power over her. In Paris, he was beside both publishers and court, placing him in a position of authority. Isolated in the countryside at Viviers, Marie could not contest his decision to publish her work. Authorial control over her work fell to her brother. Yet Jacques was not given such authority because of his experience in the literary sphere; rather it seems that his power stems entirely from his sex and the opportunities that allowed him to further education and greater discursive freedom. Marie recognized the advantages his sex allowed him to devote to learning, whilst she had to occupy herself with household duties: “Take ... my

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90 “l’occasion pourquoy j’ay pris la hardiesse de vous adresser et offrir ceste petite œuvre poétique, qui m’a esté (par cy par là) envoyée par ma sœur Marie de Romieu, n’a esté pour autre fin que pour vous rendre assuré témoignage de la bonne volonté et singuliere devotion que j’ay et dois à vostre service”, in *ibid.*, p. 27.

91 “Recevez donc, ma-dame, ceste petite offre que je vous dedie en son nom, jusques à tant que ma sœur mesme vienne en ceste Cour vous faire la reverence”, in *ibid.*, p. 27.

92 *Mélanges de Jacques de Romieu*, Lyons, Benoît Rigaud, 1584, fol. 67r° in *ibid.*, p. xviii.
brother, this brief discourse of mine that I am sending to you, composed quite in haste, not having the leisure ... because of my household duties, to attend to a thing as beautiful and divine as verse". The presence of Jacques in the text of Marie de Romieu allowed her to appropriate textual space for her voice whilst ceding control of her work to her brother. By suggesting her work was published by her brother to fulfil his own duties to the court, against her knowledge and intention, she thus protected herself from the censure her self-publication might have caused.

However, the literary portrayal of the relationship between siblings could also allow for a woman’s public speech in other ways. Charlotte de Minut, Abbess of the Poor Clares in Toulouse, used her paratextual input in her brother’s posthumous publications to appeal for support for her own ailing convent at the highest levels, dedicating one work to Pope Sixtus the Fifth and the other to the Queen Mother, Catherine de Medici. In 1587, she had two works by her brother Gabriel de Minut published. One of the works discussed the contemporary state of France, entitled Morbis Gallos. This small octavo publication was 132 pages in length and contained Charlotte’s lengthy preface to Pope Sixtus V from pages 3 to 18. The other was De la beauté, discours divers Pris sur deux fort belles façons de parler, ... Avec la Paule-graphie, ou description des beautez d’une Dame Tholosaine, nommee La Belle Paule. This work consisted of the two separate texts: the discourse on beauty and the description of Paule Viguier, renowned in Toulouse for her beauty. The octavo first edition was considerably longer than Morbis Gallos, at 282 pages. Charlotte’s preface to Catherine de Medici was again quite lengthy, running from pages 3 to 19. A second edition in duodecimo also appeared in 1587, running to 269 pages.

It was clearly Charlotte’s decision to publish her brother’s works. Regarding De la beauté, it was she who “having found [the work] amongst other compositions of a brother of mine ... following his intention, ... dared, in reverence and profound

93 “Prenez ... mon Frere, ce mien brief discours que je vous envoye, composé assez à la haste, n’ayant pas le loisir, à cause de nostre mesnage, de vacquer ... chose si belle et divine que les vers”, in Les Premières Œuvres poétiques, p. 4.
humility ... to have it published”.\textsuperscript{94} The editorial decisions were evidently hers: “to return to our author, I found a Paule-graphie ... which, being concerned with and referring to the first general proposition, seemed to me proper and suitable to be the conclusion of the book”.\textsuperscript{95} Similarly, she suggested in the preface of Morbi Gallos that it was she who organized the publication:

\begin{quote}
Having found amongst his papers, amongst other compositions of his, this present work ... treating the events of our current miserable times in France, I wanted to publish it, following his intention, having firstly shown it to several friends of his, men of sound and honest judgement, ... and having been assured that many would find reading it useful and profitable, tending to the advancement of Christian people and the sanctity of life. This I did, not for greed of glory ... but rather that blessed souls might profit from the ... good advice.\textsuperscript{96}
\end{quote}

Charlotte suggested that she relied on the opinion of men to encourage her to print the works and in each case, devalued her dominant role in the editing and publication process by claiming only to be fulfilling Gabriel’s “intention” and denied any desire of fame for herself.

Yet it is not possible to ascertain that Gabriel ever intended to publish these works, apart from Charlotte’s own words. It is unlikely Gabriel would have had trouble finding a publisher. He was a prominent citizen in the Toulouse community. Gabriel occupied posts as Catherine de Medici’s counsellor and as a gentleman of the bed-chamber.\textsuperscript{97} He was known to contemporaries as a literary man, writing several manuscript and printed works on a variety of subjects including a manuscript “book of music” and an Alphabet d’astrologie, as well as a printed Dialogue au

\textsuperscript{94} “ayant trouve entre autres compositions d’un mien frere ... suyvant son desseing, ... hazardee, en reverence & tres-profonde humilite ... faire mettre en lumiere”, Preface to De la beauté, Lyons, Barthélemy Honorat, 1587, fol. 2 r°.

\textsuperscript{95} “pour revenir a nostre auteur, i’ay trouve une Paule-graphie ... Laquelle Paule-graphie estant accommodee et referee a la premiere proposition generalle, m’a semblé propre et convenable pour faire la fin du livre”, in ibid., pp. 16-17.

\textsuperscript{96} “Ayant trouve parmy ses papiers, entre les autres siennes compositions, ce present livre ... traitant les occurrences du temps deplorable ou nous sommes en nostre France, i’ay eu desir, suyvant son desseing, de le faire mettre en lumiere, l’ayant au prealable monstre a quelques siens amys, gens de bien et de sincere iugement, ... m’assurant que plusieurs en trouveront la lecture utile et profitable, icelle tendant a l’avancement du peuple Chrestien et sainctete de vie. Ce que i’ay fait, non pour cupidité de gloire, ... ç’a esté plustost pour profiter aux sai-ctes ames par ... bons avertissemens”, Preface to Morbis Gallos, Lyons, Barthélemy Honorat, 1587, pp. 5-6.

\textsuperscript{97} J.C. Hoefer, Nouvelle biographie générale. (1852) in BN microfiche-m-25273-743-195.
soulagement & consolation de tous affligés. Furthermore, Paule Viguier whom the Paule-graphie described, was apparently 70 at the time of the 1587 publication, thus the detailed description of her physical beauty was likely written at least several decades earlier. Such a meticulous study of her body was not unusual in the tradition of the blason du corps literature, but it could have damaged Paule’s reputation as a respectable married woman. That it was never published during Gabriel’s lifetime might indicate the work was only ever intended as a private piece. Was the publication a very deliberate act by Charlotte de Minut, who saw a way of addressing figures of authority through prefacing a male-authored work? Indeed, her prefaces spent vastly more time discussing her own thoughts and situations than introducing the work of her brother. Although Charlotte does not technically fit our category of women who published their work independently or aimed to contribute to contemporary literature, her work is significant here in its use of the brotherly relationship in a contrasting and equally advantageous way to allow for her publication.

The literary relationship between brothers and sisters was not clear cut. Brothers had some obligation to supervise their sisters’ activities, especially in the absence of the father. As Léonor de Roye reminded her son upon her deathbed, “Love your two brothers and sister, not as a brother, but like the father that you must be to them, since you are the eldest”. In this case, the eldest male was instructed to take on the duties of a father, which were distinguished from those of a brother. Yet in both cases here, “sister” writers acknowledged the work of brothers as superior to their own, seemingly on the lack of opportunities accorded to their gender, rather than gender itself. Marie de Romieu was clear in claiming the inferiority of her work was not due to inherently to her sex, rather the obligations of her own gender towards household duties left her little time to perfect literary talents. Charlotte de Minut equally saw the advantages of promoting her brother’s work, rather than any of her own, because he had had the time to develop his capacities. As a woman, she lacked the educational and literary skills of a man. To present work to her patrons, she

98 Hoefer, in BN microfiche-m-25273-743-193.
99 “Aimez vos deux freres & vostre soeur, non comme frere, mais co-me pere que vous leur devez estre, puis que vous estes l’aïné”, in Épistre d’une damoiseille française, sig. dii r°.
stated: “because of my sex and my insufficiency, incapable of the discipline of letters, I would not be able to imitate [other writers] with my own labour, ... I want to be aided to this effect by the labour of a brother of mine”. In many ways, the sibling relationship was one of intellectual equality, but women submitted because of their lack of opportunity, not because of fraternal superiority. Yet each woman writer was able to make use of her particular portrayal of the sibling relationship to present her work in a public literary domain, either by suggesting it was published against her will, or by riding on the publication of her brother’s work to enter discourse.

Finally, there was one family in which mother, father and daughter all published in sixteenth-century France. Jean de Morel, the tutor of Henry II’s illegitimate son Henry of Angoulême, his wife Antoinette de Loynes and their daughter, Camille de Morel, all contributed writings to printed editions. Two younger daughters, Diane and Lucrèce, were also considered learned by contemporaries though none of their works are extant. When she was only twelve or thirteen years-old, Camille entered publication with a Latin dialogue spoken between her parents: “Camillae Morellae, Iani Morelli Ebredunei F. Dialogus I. Morellus et A. Deloina”. Many of Camille’s verses were devoted to the memory of members of her family who had predeceased her. Her mother had died in 1567. “O mother, a hundred times more dear to me than my own life!” Camille lamented in one poem to her. In 1583, she arranged and published a compilation of epitaphs mainly for her father but some for other family members, including her own works with those of his male contemporaries. One piece was a verse to her sister Lucrèce, composed in her memory: “Ad Lucretiae Morellae manes Camilla Morella soror”. The unusually literary Morel household had allowed for Camille’s contributions to publication. There were no other literary forums which accepted her participation. Consequently, she spent much of her literary effort, and indeed her life, preserving the memory of

100 “Moy donc à cause de mon sexe, de mon insuffisance incapable de la discipline des lettres, ie ne scaurois, bien que i’en eusse le sujebt et la volonte, les imitant de mo- propre labeur. ...ie me veux aider pour cest effect du labeur d’un mie- frere”, in Morbis Gallos, pp. 4-5.
101 This dialogue was first published in Epitaphe sur le trespas du Roy Treschrestien Henry Roy de France, Paris, Robert Estienne, 1560.
102 “O mere, a moy cent fois plus chere que ma vie!”, in V.C. Ioan Morelli, Paris, Fédéric Morel, 1583, p. 6.
103 Ibid., p. 44.
her intellectually stimulating family and constructed her family's presence in her work as a justification for her continued publication.

As this chapter has shown, women made use of a wide variety of family relationships as a rhetorical strategy to enter print publication. However, the same strategy could also help women write unconventional texts in scribal publication. Some female authors wrote manuscript memoirs which were constructed around their sons and husbands. Louise de Savoie exploited her relationship to her son, Francis I, to write her manuscript collection of memoirs. Louise chose from her notebooks important experiences or events related to her between 1476 and 1522. Although a secretary may have written up the text, he reminded readers that “it is Madame who recalls these few things”.104 Louise constructed almost all her life and her identity around her son. Louise was twice regent of France yet she scarcely wrote of her political actions. Her memoirs served to justify her political role as an extension of her role as the dutiful and adoring mother of the king.105 When Francis was injured in an accident, Louise wrote: “God, the protector of widows and defender of orphans, foreseeing future events, did not want to abandon me, knowing that, if chance deprived me suddenly of my love, I would be too unfortunate.”106 Louise did not fail to demonstrate that her maternal affection was also reciprocated by Francis's filial love: “On Wednesday 11 January 1514, I left Cognac to go to Angoulême, ... and my son, showing the love which he had for me, decided to go on foot and kept me company.”107 Louise constantly inserted indications of their unique maternal-filial emotional bond into her memoirs: “my son ... got a thorn in his leg, which caused him great pain and me as well, for true love compelled me to suffer the same pain”.108 By drawing upon the rhetorical strategy of

105 Louise de Savoie’s political actions are discussed in chapter 7, pp. 242-244.
106 “Toutefois Dieu, protecteur des femmes veuves, et defensere des orphelins, prévoyant les choses futures, ne me voulut abandonner, cognoissant que, si cas fortuit m'eust si soudainement privé de mon amour, j’eusse été trop infortunée”, in ibid., p. 87.
107 “Le mercredy 11 janvier 1514, je partis de Congnac pour aller à Angoulesme ... et mon fils, démonstrant l’amour qu’il avoit à moy, voulut aller à pied, et me tint bonne compagnie”, in ibid., p. 88.
108 “mon fils, ... se mit une espine en la jambe, dont il eut moult de douleur et moi aussi; car vrai amour me contraignoit de souffrir semblable peine”, in ibid., p. 89.
her maternal devotion to Francis in her manuscript memoirs, Louise justified to posterity political actions that she conducted on his behalf.

Charlotte Arbaleste emphasized her love for her husband and son in her *Mémoires de Charlotte Arbaleste. Sur la vie de Duplessis-Mornay son mari*. Her memoirs recorded the achievements of her husband, the Huguenot statesman Philippe Duplessis-Mornay. She claimed to write in order to leave her son a role model: “so that ... you do not lack a guide [through life], here is one that I send you by hand, and from my own hand to accompany you. It is the example of your father, that I advise you to have always before your eyes.”¹⁰⁹ Yet Charlotte’s memoirs also recorded many of her own life experiences. This included a digression of 13 pages recounting her unique experiences as a Huguenot woman in Paris during the St Bartholomew Day’s massacre in 1572.¹¹⁰ Charlotte claimed to act as an intermediary and as a dutiful wife and mother, recording the life of her husband for her son. By exploiting such a rhetorical strategy, Charlotte was able to leave her children, and posterity, her own story interwoven through the biography of her husband. Furthermore, it was she who controlled and edited its production by telling it in her own words.

In conclusion, society placed a great deal of time instilling appropriate female behaviour in women, and most of their instruction concerned duties within the family and household. It is not altogether surprising therefore, that these were the relationships with which women felt most familiar and comfortable exploiting in public literary discourse. Furthermore, by acknowledging their awareness of their roles as mothers, daughters and sisters, women writers could show conformity whilst perpetrating a highly non-conformist action in publishing their works. The family was one setting in which women played an active and vital role in the maintenance of social bonds, and participated with the full authority and encouragement of political and religious doctrine of either the Catholic or Protestant faiths. By using

¹⁰⁹ “afin ... que vous n’y ayez point faute de guide, en voicy ung que je vous bailie par la main, et de ma propre main pour vous accompagner. C’est l’exemple de vostre pere, que je vous adure d’avoir tousiours deuant vos yeux”, *Mémoires de Charlotte Arbaleste* in *Mémoires et correspondance de Duplessis-Mornay*, vol. 1, Paris, Treuttel and Wurtz, 1824, pp. 2-3.
¹¹⁰ See further discussion of Arbaleste’s account in chapter 7, pp. 251-252.
familial relationships in print, women writers suggested that their publications were equally authorized and encouraged by these religious doctrines.
The physical placement of writings within sixteenth-century texts signified the value that publishers, compilers or authors expected readers to place on them. Textual location explained the relationship a piece of writing held to the text. This chapter will explore the physical location of women's writings in published texts. It seeks to examine whether gender was a factor in how women's writings were located in, and related to texts.

Different women's writings were printed in French first editions between 1488 and 1599 on at least 201 occasions. Although some researchers have drawn attention to the physical placement of individual women's writings, most detailed bibliographical studies of women's writings focus on whole texts by women authors, which makes the study of physical location redundant.¹ No one has yet examined the effect of gender on physical placement of writings within sixteenth-century texts across a large number of women's works. In this survey, I have chosen to analyse all women's writings as equal, without privileging or separating famous or whole texts by women. With such an approach, a significant pattern emerges.

The majority of women's printed writings appeared in marginal locations. Over half of all the occasions when women's published writings were printed, it was in forums where they were not dominant in the publication, either appearing as one author amongst many, or on the margins of another's text. Yet, generally, far more recent scholarship has been devoted to the writings and authors of whole printed works, rather than to those writings which represent a numerical majority of printed

¹ See, for example, William Kemp, "Textes composés ou traduits par des femmes et imprimés en France avant 1550: bibliographie des imprimés féminins (1488-1549)", Litératures, 18, 1998, pp. 151-220 and Evelyne Berriot-Salvadore's study, Les Femmes dans la société française de la Renaissance Geneva, Droz, 1990. The latter does include a small number of marginal writings by women.
female authors. Whole works, such as the *Euvres de Louïze Labé*, are typical of only 35.62% of the occasions when women's writings appeared in first editions from 1488 to 1599.

Typically, women's writings were included with those of male authors in collective works or in a work primarily authored by one other writer, in 64.18% of cases. Of this percentage, 59.69% of the time, women's writings were contributions to collective works, such as *tombeaux* and poetry collections. Some of the time, it was the same writing reprinted in a different new edition. These writings changed locations in the text as a result of their altered relationship to a new edition. For example, Jeanne d'Albret's political propaganda explaining her actions during the religious wars, *Lettres de la royne de Navarre*, was originally printed as a whole work in 1568. Yet in 1573, her letters were incorporated as a literary text into the *Œuvres françaises de Joachim du Bellay* to complement a poetic exchange that d'Albret had written with Du Bellay.

The remaining 40.31% of occasions where women's non-whole works were printed, it was through prefaces, laudatory verse or other small contributions to the work of another author. Of any of these categories, the last is the most likely to be under-representative. Women's writings in the works of others are the most difficult to trace, especially through library catalogues which record works by their primary author and obscure the identity of other authors. In summary, women's writings appeared in less than one per cent of all first editions in France in the sixteenth-century and at least 64.18% of the time, it was in editions which were not exclusively their own.

*Women's writings in anthologies*

More women's printed writings in French first editions were contributions to anthologies, such as collections of poetry and songbooks, than to any other form (38.31%). Many women who published had writings which appeared in collective works. They contributed writings in various ways; exchanging poetry with male

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2 The bibliography provides a good indication of the bias of the secondary literature discussing these women writers.
counterparts, publishing songs in songbooks or including their poems in compilations of contemporary authors’ works. Women also contributed to poetry competitions, such as the *Jeux Floraux* in Toulouse and the *Puy* at Rouen. Within the editions which contained these works, how were women’s works incorporated in the text?

Women’s contributions to collective works rarely equalled those of men in numbers. The six women whose writings were published in the *Jardin de Plaisance* printed around 1501, represented a small minority of the total authors included in the 248 leaves of prose and poetry. Similarly, the eight women whose writings Antoine Du Verdier chose to present in his *Bibliothèque Françoise* was a tiny percentage of the 2,175 total entries. Manuscript poetry collections similarly contained few contributions by women. A collection of late sixteenth-century coterie poetry contained 149 folio pages, of which only two contained a female contribution. A ballad written by Christine de Pizan, who died around 1429, was published in a collection of “nouvelletées” in 1538. The same writings by women were reprinted in a variety of first editions. The same work by Pernette du Guillet, Claude de Bectone and Marguerite de Navarre were repeatedly published in poetry compilations from 1545 to 1550. Whilst this undoubtably happened to male authors as well, it is worth drawing attention to in the context of calculating numbers of women’s writings in printed editions, since each new edition containing women’s work is included in total numbers of publications of women’s work included in Appendix 1. If this amounts to a percentage of less than one per cent, and 63% of

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3 BN ms. fr. 25455.
4 BN ms. fr. 1718.
5 BN ms. fr. 862.
these were non-whole works by women, an even smaller percentage of total editions actually contained new works by women.

Many anthologies in which women’s writings were included were poetic works. Women participated in poetic exchanges of the court and literary circles, and contributed to tombeaux, that is, collections of epitaphs, about royal and literary figures. These poetic genres were often highly stylized with strict conventions. How did gender affect participation? Some women at court exchanged poetry with male authors, sometimes of a less wealthy level who sought patronage. Where were women’s writings placed in relation to those of men in these mixed-sex poetic exchanges? Although exchanges varied according to the specific relationship of the two authors, some facets appeared common to many mixed-sex exchanges. By and large, they were initiated with verses by the male author, to which a woman responded. Thus, many women were dependent on the verse initiation of a male writer for their participation in publication. One example of this form was the poetic exchange in which the male writer began by praising his female subject. The three cases below illustrate the strict formulaic nature of panegyric exchange and the way it situated the female poet.

Many laudatory verses were directed at a female recipient and some included her response. Laudatory verses generally followed a standard formula, frequently using stock hyperbolic phrases and offered few opportunities to display the poet’s creative talent. The poetic exchange between “Minerve” and Bilhard was typical of the genre. Bilhard praised Minerve as “a Minerva, a sun of our ladies, paragon of rare beauty, elite of souls, the tenth muse and the honour of the French”. The female response expected was highly conventional and of limited creative potential. Minerve protested modestly, “Tell me, did you think to render me more superb by pretending I am a sun, calling me your Minerva? No, no, I do not merit so many favours”. Similarly Jeanne d’Albret, in her much reprinted exchange with Du

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7 “une Minerve ung Soleil de nos Dames/ Paragon de beaute rare eslite des Ames/ Des Muses la dixiesme & honneur des françois”, in BN ms. fr. 25455, fol. 114r°.
8 “Dy moy pensois tu donc me rendre plus superbe/ Me feignant ung Soleil me nommant ta Minerve/ Non non ie ne merite avoir tant de favours” in ibid., fol. 113v°.
Bellay, rejected his adulation of her literary ability, saying: “My heavy pen and leaden hand, the style which does not please the ear, my weak argument and words so crude, show my ignorance well enough”.

After denying the veracity of their admirers’ words as unjustified, the women typically deflected acclaim back to the male author. Minerve told Bilhard it was he “that one can call in truth ... the Apollo of these times, the Homer of France.” Jeanne d’Albret bowed to the greater literary ability of Du Bellay and accepted that the best she could hope for was to have his praise: “I know well the price and value of my praise ... if a Du Bellay may have deigned to write it”. In the collected poems of the La Puce, Catherine des Roches also rejected praise and publicly presented her work as of poor quality: “excuse the weak discourse of my verses, they are humble”. The women denied their ability to compete as literary equals with male writers. Minerve expressed her struggle in the face of her admirer’s ability to reply adequately: “Three or four times I have taken the pen in my hand and as many times, I have abandoned it”. She claimed that the fear of not matching male ability made her hesitate to write at all.

All three panegyric exchanges ended with the adulation firmly back on the male literary effort. Du Bellay’s opening phrase reprised that of Jeanne d’Albret and staked his claim to poetic superiority, announcing that “the highest good would be celebrated by” him. Female poetic ability was rendered inferior, despite what seemed like praise, and the female subject was reduced to the secondary, passive and silent position of the praised object. Catherine des Roches recognized that her own work would not survive by its comparison to that of Estienne Pasquier. Only in

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10 “quon peut nommer sans mentir .../ Apollon de ces temps lHomer de la france”, in BN ms. fr. 25455, fol. 113v°.
11 “Je cognois bien le pris et la valeur/ De ma louenge ... qu’un Du Bellay ait daigné de l’escrire”, in Ode, sig. C v°.
12 “excusez de mes vers le trop foible discours,/ Ils sont humble”, in La Main ou œuvre poétique sur la main de Estienne Pasquier, Advocaat au Parlement de Paris, Paris, Jean Petit-Pas, 1590, p. 674.
13 “Par trois ou quatre foys lay pris la plume en main/ Et par autant de foy ie lay abandonnee”, in BN ms. fr. 25455, fol. 113v°.
14 “Le bien du bien seroit par moy chanté”, in Ode, sig. Cii r°.
being praised by Pasquier would she be remembered as a literary figure: “the grace of your verses makes my writing die and gives me life”. The laudatory exchange was a constructed and formal literary enterprise, where each participant knew the role to be played. Its construction did not conceive of female literary equality with male counterparts. Women’s poetic efforts were cast as secondary and female poets reduced to the passive position of a muse in such exchanges.

_Tombeaux_ also presented select women with opportunities to contribute to collective works. _Tombeaux_ were generally a vehicle for presenting the talent of the contemporary generation. A few women, usually wives or daughters of men mixing in the literary circles or at court, could contribute to _tombeaux_. The celebrated Hellenist Antoinette de Loynes was surrounded by literary men in her home where the humanist circle known as the Brigade met. Her entire printed literary contribution was contained in _tombeaux_ for Marguerite de Navarre, the wife of Salmon Macrin and Joachim Du Bellay. Her verse praising Du Bellay contained hyperbolic phrases typical of the _tombeaux_ genre. Yet, again, Du Bellay’s literary authority rendered her incapable of representing his worth fully: “Virtue, learning, the gentle and grave style of his divine mind push me to envy and I, who never saw so many gifts all together, find my muse insufficient for such a subject”. Rather than expressing genuine sorrow at the subject’s death, public _tombeaux_ resounded with the competitive spirit at work amongst literary personalities. Loynes wrote: “I would say that Du Bellay was the honour of Poets, yet I would not lose the favour of Ronsard for I cannot nor do I want to offend him”. Her verse concerning the death of Marguerite de Navarre was impersonal and hyperbolized: “Heaven was envious of the earth, for a bright flame that she [the earth] carried, who by her virtue was so...

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15 “la grace de vos vers/ Fait mourir mes escrits, & me donne la vie”, in _La Puce_, p. 578.
16 Her work is printed in _Oraison funèbre de l’incomparable Marguerite_, Paris, François Chauldiere, 1550; one piece in _Salmonii Macrini_, 1550; _In mortem Divae Margaritae_, in _le Tombeau de Marguerite de Valois_, Paris, Michel Fezendat, 1551 and in _Epitaphe sur le trespas du Roy Treschristien Henry Roy de France_, Paris, Robert Estienne, 1560. Some of her work was reprinted in _Les Œuvres Francoises de Ioachim du Bellay_, Paris, Fédéric Morel, 1573.
17 “La vertu, le savoir, le doux & grave style/ De son divin esprit, me poussent à l’envui/ Et moy qui tant de biens ensemble onques ne vey/ Trouve pour tel subiect ma Muse trop debile”, in _ibid._, fol. 542v.
18 “Je diray .../ Que Du Bellay estoit des Poëtes l’honueur/ Car je ne puis ne veux luy faire aucune offense”, in _ibid._, fol. 542v.
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luminous that her clarity was resplendent everywhere".\textsuperscript{19} Loynes' daughter, Camille de Morel, was similarly able to publish poetry lauding literary celebrities at their deaths, including her own parents.\textsuperscript{20} In 1581, she compiled a collection of mostly Latin verses praising her father, Jean de Morel, after his death. To this, she included works of her own addressed to her mother, father and sister Lucrèce, and responded to verses by other contributors such as Pierre de Ronsard. As vehicles of female participation, public tombeaux contained opportunities only for select women connected to literary circles.

However, some verses that women contributed to tombeaux gathered by family and close friends expressed quite personal condolence. Marie le Prevost expressed her love for her husband after they "had lived together seventeen years, happy and content, having had seven children as a pledge of their affection".\textsuperscript{21} Marie de Gournay's contributions to the tombeaux of Anne de Perrot, the wife of Pierre de Brach, were written at a time when the death of her mentor and "father by adoption", Michel de Montaigne, was still fresh in her mind. Her writing, supposedly to Anne de Perrot, seems closely related to her own process of grief over Montaigne. After his beloved wife Anne, his muse "Aymee", died in 1587, the humanist Bordeaux lawyer and poet Pierre de Brach compiled a manuscript collection of poems composed in his grief, known as Les Regrets et larmes funebres sur la mort d'Aymee.\textsuperscript{22} As was common amongst learned circles, the manuscript was circulated and Brach received verses in praise of Aymee from other prominent literary figures such as the Flemish writer Juste Lipse, the poet Jean-Antoine de Baïf and Etienne Pasquier. This work was intended to be published in a new edition from Paris.\textsuperscript{23} However, after 1604, around which time Brach is presumed to have died, the intended re-edition of his poetic works was abandoned.

\textsuperscript{19} "Le Ciel estoit sur la Terr'envieux./ Pour ung Flambeau luysant qu'elle portoit/Qui par vertu estoit tant lumineux/Que sa clarte par tout resplendissoit", in Oraisons funèbres de l'incomparable Marguerite, Paris, Regnault Chauldiere, 1550, p. 142 [p. 133].
\textsuperscript{20} Her work was included in Epitaphe sur le trespas du Roy Treschrestien Henry Roy de France and V.C. Ioan Morelli, Paris, Frederic Morel, 1583.
\textsuperscript{21} "Apres que dixsept ans avons vescu ensemble/Bienheureux et contens, ayant eu sept enfans/Pour gage d'amitié", in Le Tombeau de feu Missire Francois du Parc, Pierre Sallière, 1590, p. 8.
Marie de Goumay first learned of the death of Montaigne through her correspondence with Juste Lipse in June 1593, although Montaigne had died in September 1592. Between hearing of his death in June 1593 and May 1596, Goumay occupied herself almost entirely with this event, overseeing and editing a new edition of his Essais in 1594 for publication in 1595, and returning to the chateau of Montaigne to arrange his papers and visit his relatives and widow. Clearly, even in May 1596, she was still vividly grieving his loss, as her letter to Juste Lipse, from the chateau of Montaigne indicated:

Monsieur, just as others do not recognize my face at the moment, I fear that you may not recognize my style, so much has the unhappiness of this loss transformed me! I was his daughter, I am his sepulchre, I was his second being, I am his ashes. With him gone, nothing remains of me nor of my life.24

Although he had been dead for almost four years, Goumay was evidently still distraught by the loss of her mentor. It is clear from her later writing that she did not see herself as emotionally stable during the period following the news of Montaigne’s death and the edition of the Essais in 1595. In later editions, Goumay retracted the preface she had written in 1594, explaining in the 1598 edition “I retract the preface that ... a violent fever of the soul caused me lately to let slip from my hands”.25 To Juste Lipse in May 1596, she explained her state of mind in writing the preface; its deficiencies being “as much because of my weakness ... and the absence of curiosity of a sick mind, as because of the shadows of pain which envelop my soul”.26 Goumay and Brach had worked in conjunction over the re-publication of Montaigne’s Essais. Goumay was certainly staying in the Bordeaux area between 1595 and 1598, and it is at this time, in the circles of the Bordeaux literary community, that Goumay most likely composed her verses in memory of Pierre de

24 “Monsieur, comme les autres méconnaissent à cette heure mon visage, je crains que vous méconnaissiez mon style, tant ce malheur de la perte m’a transformée entièrement! J’étais sa fille, je suis son sépulcre, j’étais son second être, je suis ses cendres. Lui perdu, rien ne m’est resté ni de moi-même ni de la vie”, in her letter to Juste Lipse on 2 May 1596 in E. Dezon-Jones, Fragments d’un discours féminin, Mayenne, José Corti, 1988, p. 190.
25 “je me retracte de cette Préface que ... [une] violent fièvre d’ame me laissa n’aguerre eshapper des mains”, in Preface to Essais, Paris, Abel L’Angelier, 1598, unpaginated.
26 “tant à cause de ma faibless, ... et l’incuriosité d’un esprit malade, que par ce aussi que les ténèbres de douleur qui m’envoloppent l’âme”, in letter to Juste Lipse, 2 May 1596, in Dezon-Jones, p. 27.
Brach’s Aymee. Her poetry, although in name for this *tombeau*, served as an expression of her grief over the loss of Montaigne.

Gournay had difficulty reconciling the fact that she was absent at Montaigne’s death. Although early in her ode she suggested that “not to see a friend pass away is a happiness the wise envy”, at other points, this seemed to be something she regretted most strongly. Her envy of Brach’s presence at Aymee’s death was obvious: “Happy are you who, on this sad adieu, could join your hand to her tender hand; happy, that she consoled her own [husband]; happy, that you closed her eyelids; happy, that you omitted nothing of the last duties” towards her. By not being present at Montaigne’s bedside, Gournay was forced to rely on the word of others, as to the circumstances and to his final messages to her:

He died at fifty-nine in 1592. If my mind stays clear, I will publish the particular circumstances of it when I know them more exactly, by the mouths of those who gathered the information ... and gathered it with a tender adieu that he commanded to be sent to me, from him, by the hand of the sieur de la Brousse, his good brother. And the sieur de Bussaguet his cousin, ... could not enlighten me about it when I went to see him purposely to have him tell me.

Gournay craved knowledge of the situation to compensate for having no “sad adieu” of her own.

Gournay’s resolution of her anguish and sorrow was to make Montaigne live through the re-impression of his work, aided by the access his wife granted her to his papers. As she wrote of Madame de Montaigne in the 1595 preface to her edition of the *Essais*,

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27 Colletet, p. lxxvii.
28 “Pour ne voir l’amy trepasser/ C’est un heur que le sage envie”, in *Œuvres poétiques de Pierre de Brach*, p. 309.
29 “Heureux, qui, sur ce triste adieu/ La main peut joindre à sa main tendre;/ Heureux, qu’elle consola sien,/ Heureux, qui clouas sa paupiere;/ Heureux, qui ne luy obmis rien/ Des derniers devoirs”, in *ibid.*, p. 311.
30 “Il est mort à cinquante neuf ans l’an 1592 ... Bien en publieray-ie, s’il l’entendement me dure, les circonsta-ces particulieres, alors que ie les squauray fort exactement, par la bouche de ceux mesmes qui les ont recueillies ... et recueillies avec le tendre à-Dieu qu’il commanda m’estre envoyé, de sa part; de la main du sieur de la Brousse son bon frere. Et le sieur de Bussaguet son cousin ... ne me peut esclairer de cela, quand ie l’allay veoir exprez pour m’en instruire”, in *Preface to Essais*, 1595, fol. Iii r°.
she wanted to embrace again and rekindle in me the ashes of her husband; not to marry him but to make herself another himself,... giving him a new image of life through her continuation of the friendship that he bore towards me.31

In her sonnet concerning Aymee she suggests that Aymee is similarly not dead, by virtue of Brach’s poetry: “Aymee would have lost in returning to life, She lives through her ashes and is born of her tombeau”.32 Just as she told Brach that Aymee was alive, that “through you, her dear spouse, she lives after her death”,33 Marie de Gournay, who saw herself as the very “ashes” of Montaigne, the inheritor of his literary spirit, would honour his spirit not only through his work, but also through her own works which bore his name, Proumenoir de Monsieur de Montaigne. Marie de Gournay’s verses in Anne de Brach’s tombeau demonstrate how the more private tombeau of a friend or relative could allow expressions of women’s grief in scribal and print publication.

Although collective works of poetry, such as exchanges and tombeaux, provided comparatively more opportunities than other areas for many women to have writings published, their conventions were constructed with male participation in mind. The highly stylized and masculinized poetic conventions of the public tombeaux and poetic exchanges allowed little discursive flexibility to represent female experiences. Female writings were incorporated as rarities in poetic compilations, rather than including women as equal participants. Many women’s works were responses to those of men or, in tombeaux, only appeared through the female author’s relationship to a male coterie participant. These types of inclusion in collective works reflected and reinforced the status quo: that women were not free to participate in poetic discourse but were dependent on men. Women’s writings related to collective works as contributions that both came from the margins, and were marginalized within the text.

31 “d’avoir voulu r’embrasser, et r’échauffer en moy les cendres de son mary; et non pas l’espouser, mais se rendre une autre lui-même; ... voire lui restituer un nouvel image de vie par la continuation de l’amitié qu’il me portoit”, in ibid., sig. Aii v°-Aiii r°.
32 “AYMEE auroit perte à retourner en vie:/ Elle vit de sa cendre et naist de son tombeau”, in Œuvres poétiques de Pierre de Brach., p. 307.
33 “par toy son cher espous:/ Aprez sa mort elle a la vie”, in ibid., p. 312.
Women's laudatory verses and prefaces

Some 25.87% of all the occasions when women's writings were printed, it was in the works of another author. Such writing could include a preface, laudatory verses or, more rarely, an inclusion in the work of another. For example, a single letter by Madame de Marillac-Ferrières was published in the 1586 publication, *Les Lettres d'Estienne Pasquier*, as part of his correspondence with her. How did these women's writings relate to the texts within which they were published?

A large number of women contributed complimentary verse for print publications that praised the skill of the text's (usually male) author. During the sixteenth century, the size of printed books was increasing with the addition of the title page and also as a result of the new custom of adding extra pieces in the form of letters or flattering verse at the beginning or end of the book. These were usually written by contemporaries of the author. Poems praising the virtue and learning of Louise Labé almost equalled the quantity of her printed writings. Her own *Débat*, 3 elegies and 24 sonnets were followed by 24 poems in her praise.34

Like many women in poetic exchanges, women writing panegyric verses relied on another, usually a male author, for their opportunity to participate in publication. Since these writings were only written to praise the skill of the main author, it was still the existence of the primary text which allowed for their own. These female writings had no independent existence from the works of others. Some women's sole print-published works were laudatory verses at the beginning and end of an edition. The published work of Marie de l'Aubespine, who was actively involved in the literary circles around the court, only appeared in printed texts through laudatory verse.35 This placement reflected the limitations on women's access to rhetorical space, by situating their work literally at the margins of the text.


Women writing complimentary verses had no difficulties praising the literary superiority of the text’s author. Marie de Villecoq added her praise of Etienne Pasquier, “this beautiful and pure soul ... my learned Pasquier, miracle of nature” with that of other male writers such as Adrien Turnèbe. Marie de la Haye lauded both Ronsard and Du Bellay in her verses, as having received “the green honour of the crown” and promising Du Bellay “eternal life” through his work. This was strikingly different from the way in which men wrote laudatory verses to women’s texts. In 1555, Louise Labé’s poetry was published with a collection of Greek, Latin and French verses in her praise. Several poets devoted their entire verses to praise of her physical beauty, rather than her literary talent. Another author allotted many lines to her physical attributes, then added “on the other hand” a stock qualification of “her learning, her wisdom, her knowledge” as “as great as any other ever had”. Already placed in secondary importance to her beauty, Labé’s literary standing received few lines before the poet returned to more conventional female praise: of her musical talents, “singing them with her voice, strumming at the harmonious string under her fingers” and of her “loyal virtue”. One author suggested that her literary merit was evident because she had been praised by “many noble Poets, full of heavenly wit” who would preserve for posterity her “perfect charms in their learned writings”. This lauded male poets far more than it praised Labé. Yet another poet suggested that immortality was conferred on Labé by the praise of male poets, as they had “written your worth, you can never die, just as Laura and Olive live forever”. Labé became, in these verses, a passive muse rather than active creative talent in her own right. She was certainly not compared to other contemporary literary figures as a fellow poet.

36 “ceste belle ame & pure ... mon docte Pasquier miracle de nature”, in La Main ou œuvres poetiques, 1590, p. 735.
38 “d’autre part, sa doctrine/ Sa sagesse, son savoir ... Autant qu’autre onq put avoir”, “Escriz de divers Poètes, à la louenge de Loui’ze Labé Lionnoize”, Euvres de Loui’ze Labé Lionnoize, Lyons, Jean de Tournes, 1555, p. 172.
39 “En les chantant de sa voix/ A l’harmonieuse corde/ Fretillante sous ses doits”, “chasteté fidelle” in ibid., p. 172.
40 “meints nobles Poètes/ Pleins de celestes esprits”, “graces parfaites/ En leurs tresdoctes escriz”, in ibid., p. 170.
41 “ton loz escrive,/ Mourir ne peus nullement:/ Ainsi Laure, ainsi Olive/ Vivent eternellement” in ibid., p. 171.
One piece by women in the text of another author presents an anomaly in its expression of specifically female experience. “Les Adieu des dames de chez la Royné de Navarre, allant en Gascogne, à ma dame la Princesse de Navarre” published in the *Suyte des Marguerites* of Marguerite de Navarre, was written by eight of Marguerite’s ladies of honour as a farewell to Jeanne d’Albret. The work displayed sensitivity and insight into female relationships. Madame de Clermont reminded d’Albret: “on your return we would dance the *cinq pas*”. Madame de Grantmont wrote of their shared hopes and desires, and their prospective futures:

She whose presence I have desired since my own childhood, and now that I have been granted this wish, I lose sight of you and I do not know for how long. For a husband will take either you or me, thus I must be distanced from your view but I hope that those who will take us, will give us greater freedom to see each other again and whatever happens I require you to remember me, for wherever you go, I will go, and alive or dead, I will love you always.

This brief passage reflected the uncertainties of life for woman at court as they married, and their powerlessness to direct their own futures. Female to female friendships had to survive long partings and distances. The farewell presented a particularly poignant display of the realities of sixteenth-century court life for women. Furthermore, it suggests that women could use their literary contributions to reflect their own situations, rather than an idealized portrayal of women, when the context allowed them. However, opportunities to participate in publications by other women, such as presented here, were few, making this case a rarity in sixteenth-century women’s literature.

Women also wrote prefaces to the works of another author. Like panegyric verse, the preface was situated outside the body of the text. It could be left unread without losing understanding of the meaning of the entirety. The preface, like a woman’s contribution to publication, was essentially on the periphery of mainstream

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42 “au retour nous dancio-s les cinq pas” in *Suyte des Marguerites de la Marguerite*, Lyons, Pierre de Tours, 1549, p. 813.

43 “celle, dont la p-sence/ Fay desire' depuis la mienne enfance:/ Et maintenant que i’ay receu ce bien:/ Te perds de veiie, & ne scay pour combien./ Car un Mary ou toy ou moy prendra/ Do-t eslo-gner ta veiie, me faudra./ Mais i’ay espoir que ceux, qui nous pre-dront/ En liberté plus grande nous rendront/ De nous revoir: & quoy qu’il en advienne./ Je te requiers que de moy te souvienne./ Car quelque part, que tu ailles, ira/ Et vive ou morte à jamais t’aimera” in *ibid.*, pp. 812-3.
discourse. Yet while it reinforced publicly the gendering of the rhetorical space of publication, women also found ways to exploit the marginality of the paratextual site. The potential of the marginal public domain, to advance views within the context of a textual genre which was not itself the main focus of most reading, gave women agency. Prefaces often contained ulterior motives beyond introducing a text. Pierre Boaistuau's preface to Marguerite de Navarre's *Heptameron* addressing Marguerite de Bourbon, discussed the ransack of the library of King Matthew of Hungary. He used the subject as a means of promoting the importance of the art of printing in the preservation of knowledge and literature, and his own role in the print publication of the *Heptameron*. This discussion concerned far more of the preface that did discussion of Marguerite de Navarre or her work. As Gérard Genette observed, one of the functions of the preface can be to exploit "circumstances so as to extend a little beyond the ostensible subject of discussion in favour of a cause which is wider, or possibly, one completely different". Only a few women wrote prefices but most who did exploited the potential of the marginal space to advance their own views.

Some women whose writings were published were not seen as writers by their contemporaries, and their works have rarely been examined in modern studies of women and publication. Yet these women both wrote and published their own works: they were women printers. Three women printers used prefaces to contribute to contemporary debate about women's work roles. The majority of women who worked as printers or publishers in sixteenth-century France were printers' widows, although some were daughters of printers and at least one woman, Nicole Vostre, took over the business of her brother. As wives, many had learnt about the business of printing while helping their husbands. One female publisher and printer, Charlotte Guillard, stated in her preface that she had "continuously for the last fifty years ... been carrying on the duties of a printer". This comment suggests that even though

47 "hosce quinquaginta annos continuos hoc imprimendi munus vobis administro" in M-J. Beaud, "A propos des éditions grecques de trois officines parisiennes (1539-1549)", *Le Livre dans l'Europe de la*
she was publicly represented as a printer on title pages for only twenty-two years, Guillard felt that she worked as such during the twenty-eight years when her two husbands were identified as responsible for the business's publications. In 1560, Catherine Beaumanoir was charged with her husband, the bookseller and printer Martin Lhomme, with printing pamphlets directed against the Cardinal of Lorraine. This suggests authorities believed that, as a wife, Beaumanoir was at least aware of, and perhaps partially responsible for, what was being printed under her husband's name.\(^{48}\)

By and large, women printers stepped in to fill the breach left by the absence of a suitable male relative. That widows took control at all was infrequent. Sylvie Postel-Lecocq's survey of 805 sixteenth-century Parisian contracts suggests that printers' widows assumed control in only 116 cases or 13%.\(^{49}\) Many worked only for several years until they remarried, at which point, if they married within the industry, their husband took over the business, or if they married outside, women generally gave up printing to support their husbands' trade. Marrying a widow was the way in which a large number of journeymen could establish themselves as masters and by which they could inherit the necessary equipment and clientele. In Paris, about 12% of women remarried within the industry.\(^{50}\) Some widows continued publishing and printing for longer periods, until a male relative came of age to assume responsibility. In both scenarios, the widow's business role was an interim, "emergency" action. As Judith M. Bennett argues, in times of social or economic crisis, women were presented with expanded work opportunities.\(^{51}\) In the case of women printers and publishers, the lack of a responsible male heir to the business presented an economic crisis for the family line which offered women the opportunity to fill the breach, albeit temporarily.

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\(^{48}\) She was later acquitted while her husband was hanged on 15 July 1560. Renouard, p. 281.


\(^{50}\) Ibid., p. 262.

As widows assuming the helm of the business for a limited time and in “emergency” circumstances, women made clear in their self-representation precisely why they were there. Most women printers and publishers identified themselves on title pages as either the “widow of Jean Lenoir” or just as “the widow Jean Lenoir”. This suggests that, to contemporaries, the identity of the woman herself was relatively unimportant and largely irrelevant. Instead, what was essential, was that women justified their business presence by emphasizing their status as a printer’s widow. This suggests that women were not normally expected to work as printers and publishers although there were officially no regulations banning them. Women printers were generally not represented as active businesswomen in their own right, but could work only through their connection to their husband. In Troyes, the widow of Jean I Lecoq continued his printing business from 1524 until 1555. She published first with her son Thomas Lecoq, but when he died in 1525, she worked with her son-in-law, Thibault Trumeau, under the identification “at the house of Jean Lecocq”.52 In Paris, Blanche Marentin, the widow of Jacques Kerver, identified herself in her publications as “the widow J. Kervert”.53 This was the most common form of reference to women working as printers and publishers. Such identification reinforced the female business role as only possible through her relationship to her husband.

Women were not presented publicly as equals in status to their humanist fathers and husbands. The public presentation of women working in the industry, by both male observers and by many women themselves, reinforced theoretical assumptions about female incapacity to control businesses and disguised the reality of their management abilities. Jean Huchier, one of several correctors who worked for Charlotte Guillard, named her “a woman of great courage”, “of a noble spirit” but significantly, added the remark “beyond that of her sex”.54 This only reinforced the idea that most women were not capable of business roles. Contemporary men

53 See, for example, André Thevet, Les Vrais Pourtraicts et vies des hommes illustres, Paris, the widow J. Kerver and Guillaume Chauldière, 1584.
held contradictory views of women's capabilities simultaneously. Publicly, the publisher Henri II Estienne criticized the presence of women in printing trades, saying it "only remains to add to the disgrace of the art, that even the little ladies have been practising it." Yet in a private letter to his son, Estienne praised the extensive learning of his mother, Perette, the daughter of bookseller-printer Josse Badius, and of his sister Catherine: "As for your grandmother, except one made use of some very unusual word, she understood what was said in Latin with the same ease as if it had been French." "And your aunt, Catherine, far from needing an interpreter to understand this language [Latin], knew how to express herself in it in such a way as to be perfectly clear to all". Women within Estienne's family were acting in exactly the ways he was prepared to criticize publicly. His mother, Perette Bade, was thought to have worked with her husband on corrections and his aunt, Jeanne Bade, was the only woman depicted actually working in a printing firm in sixteenth-century France. His sister-in-law, Denyse Barbé, the daughter of bookseller Jean Barbé, had managed the business of her husband, Robert II Estienne, before her remarriage. Estienne was surrounded by evidence of women's competent practice in the trade. He could have praised or made no comment at all on women's work, yet he chose to repeat the dominant ideology, to argue publicly in favour of the weakness of the female sex.

One women printer used a preface to defend women's involvement as businesswomen in the printing trades. Jeanne Giunta, the daughter of Jacques Giunta in Lyons, printed under her maiden name during the years when she and her sister Jacqueline controlled his business empire. She used a dedication in a work she published as an opportunity to celebrate women's achievements in male-dominated

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58 See Figure 3.1, pp. 87.
59 Renouard, p. 144.
industries: "being of the female sex did not turn me from the enterprise of publishing, nor the fact that it be more a manly office: ... one can find many of us who exercise not only the typographical art, but others more difficult and arduous".  

However, contemporary misogynistic attitudes towards the status of women's work did affect female printers. One woman published a preface to contribute her own views of women's work abilities. Charlotte Guillard spent, by her own account, fifty years as a printer. When Guillard's second printer husband, Claude Chevallon, died in 1537, she took over the business, managing it for twenty years until her death in 1557. She printed 158 different titles in those years, clearly continuing to attract business and sustain the economic viability of the enterprise. During the first year of her second widowhood, Guillard's productions appeared with the identification "the widow Claude Chevallon". However, after 1538, fewer publications referred to Guillard as a widow. Instead, she published, as she would most commonly until her death, under her own name as "At the house of Charlotte Guillard". Guillard's defence of her public working role, in a preface to a dictionary she published, showed a clear awareness of both the uniqueness of her position as a female publisher and contemporary hostility to her business actions. She feared that critics might reject the work on the basis of her involvement, suggesting that they might say "but look here, woman, did that most learned Toussaint leave so many enormous tasks to be completed by you?" She asserted that the quality of the workmanship stood for itself, arguing "not on this account should you take the work itself for less, since with faithfulness and diligence we have pursued the transcribing and editing not only of the whole work, but also of the individual parts of it".


61 Her editions of Les apophthégmes were originally taken on by her second husband which may be why she continued to refer to herself in these publications as "veuve Claude Chevallon".


63 "Sed heus tu mulier (inquiet aliquis) tot monstra vobis doctissimus ille Tuscanus conficienda reliquit?" in Beaud, p. 207.

64 Beech, p. 354.
A third woman printer used her preface as a method for securing favour and defending her business role. Antoinette Peronnet ran the printing business of her third husband Gabriel Cotier for eleven years after his death in 1565. In 1570, she published a translation to which she included a dedicatory letter to the Governor of Lyons, François de Mandelot. Peronnet drew attention to her status as a printer’s widow as a justification for her business role: as one of “poor widows burdened with orphans”. Yet she did not disguise her active role in preparing the text for publication, explaining that it was she who wished to publish the text for its public utility.

Women printers used the marginal space of the preface as an arena to contribute to publication for a variety of reasons. Yet none disguised her female identity to assuage public hostility to women’s public business roles, and at least two openly challenged disparaging conceptions of women’s ability to control and manage printing workshops. Using the marketability of another’s work, the preface provided an ideal site for literate working women to contest the inequalities of women’s work opportunities.

Marie de Gournay made great use of the prefatory form specifically to attack the gendering of public speech and publication. In her first preface to the 1595 edition of Montaigne’s Essais which she edited after his death, she used the prefatorial space in a well-known male-authored text to promote opinions which might have been difficult to publish in a work under her own name. The twenty-year-old argued vehemently that women were clearly disadvantaged in their inability to express intelligent ideas publicly: “Lucky those who can be wise without it being

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65 Davis, p. 184.
66 “des poures vefves chargees d’orfelins”, Preface to Institution de la vie humaine, Lyons, la vefve Gabriel Cotier, 1570, fol. 3v°.
67 Ibid., fol. 4v°.
68 The work of Cathleen M. Bauschatz on Gournay’s preface has been highly instructive. See particularly her “Marie de Gournay’s Preface de 1595: A Critical Evaluation”, Bulletin de la Société des Amis de Montaigne, 3-4, 1986, pp. 73-82.
a crime, your sex conceding to you all action, and just speech, and the credit of being believed, or at least listened to”. 69

Gournay elaborated on her conviction that women were denied a public intellectual voice. She challenged the inequalities women faced in contributing to scholarly or literary discussion, based on their sex rather than their learning:

Tell me, were I to desire to put the people I know to this test, where there are strings that a woman’s fingers must not touch: or better, had I the arguments of Carnacades, there is not one so insignificant who does not brush me off with the solemn approbation of the present company, by a smile, a nod or some joke, when he says “It’s a women who speaks”. One man remaining silent through scorn will make society marvel in admiration of his gravity, that he would cause to marvel in another way, if you required him just to put down on paper, what he would have answered to the propositions and responses of this woman, if she had been a man. Another stopped half-way by his own weakness, though pretending not to want to bother his opponent, will be called victorious and chivalrous as well. Saying thirty stupid things, he will yet win by his beard. 70

As she scornfully concluded, in contemporary social perception, for women, “the highest reputation that we can attain, is to be like the merest man”. 71

Gournay removed her preface from subsequent editions of the Essais after public criticism, but not from her own literary corpus. She wrote to Juste Lipse in November 1596, reaffirming her ideas. She explained how she would edit and republish the work: “after having repolished it, I will put it at the end of a little work

70 “De moy, veux-ie mettre mes gens a cet examen, ou il y a des cordes que les doigts feminins ne doibvent, dit-on, toucher: ou bien, eussé-ie les argumens de Carncedes, il n’y a si chetif qui ne me r’embarre avec solenne approbatio- de la compagnie assistante, pour un sousbris, un hochet, ou quelque plaisanterie, quand il aura dit, c’est une femme qui parle. Tel se taissant par mespris ravira le monde en admiration de sa gravite, qu’il raviroit d’autre sorte a l’aventure, si vous l’obligiez de mettre un peu par escript, ce qu’il eust voulu responder aux propositions, et repliques de ceste femelle, s’elle eust esté masle. Un autre arreste de sa foiblessé a my-chemin, sous couleur de ne vouloir pas importuner son adversaire, sera dit victorieux, et courtois ensemble. Cetuy-la disant trente sottises, emportera le prix encore par sa barbe”, in ibid., sig. Aiii r°.
71 “la plus haute suffisance ou nous puissions arriver, c’est ressembler le moindre homme”, in ibid., sig. eii r°.
that I had printed last year”.72 She claimed that as the work was already in the public domain, it could never be truly retracted, since she “would no longer know how to tear it away from the public.”73 When she republished her novel *Proumenoir* in 1599, a slightly reworded but still incisive version of the preface duly appeared at its end.

A third use of the preface used by both sexes was to seek the financial assistance of a wealthy patron. However, one woman went further, offering advice to her prospective patrons. In 1587, Charlotte de Minut, Abbess of the Poor Clares in Toulouse had two works by her brother, Gabriel de Minut, printed posthumously from the presses of Barthélemy Honorat in Lyons. She wrote prefaces for both works in which she appealed for support for her convent, which had become impoverished during the religious wars, and dedicated one work to Pope Sixtus V and the other to the Queen Mother, Catherine de Medici. It seems that Charlotte chose to publish her brother’s works precisely because they offered her an opportunity to reach people in positions of power who could help her to safeguard the livelihood of her convent.74

Charlotte de Minut provides a fascinating and unique example of how a woman could offer to authorities her own political advice in print through a unique textual, if marginal, arena. Charlotte heavily downplayed her involvement in the decision to publish her brother’s work and exercised this duty within the peripheral literary space of the preface. Yet if Charlotte de Minut, Marie de Gournay, or the three women printers had been truly accepting of the patriarchal authority which demanded their silence in public, we would have no record of their voices today. It was precisely in their recognition and mutation of the perceived limitations of their sex that these women found some sense of public expression. They seized opportunities to use the works of others to serve as a pretext for their own didactic writings.

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72 "après l'avoir repolie, je la ferai mettre à la queue d'un petit ouvrage que je fis imprimer l'an dernier", in letter to Juste Lipse, 15 November 1596, in Dezon-Jones, p. 27.
73 "[puisque je] ne la saurais plus arracher au peuple", in *ibid.*, p. 27.
74 See chapter 5 for further information regarding Minut’s use of her brother’s work. Chapter 7 examines her political commentary in detail.
Women translators

Another group of women wrote texts which were also in the margins of publication, though not in the physical sense discussed so far. These were women translators. Of all the whole editions that women authored, 15.28% were translations. In theory, the creative contribution came from the text's original author, publicly marginalizing the voice of the translator. However, for women, the works of others, usually male writers who were accepted ancient or modern canonical authors, could allow them to make a contribution to literary discourse. Translation provided rhetorical space for women in a range of contexts depending on the source material. Women could speak to an intellectual audience to whom they had few alternative methods of contributing, by translating a male author's scientific works. They could create fictional literature by choosing to translate short stories, or provide behavioural codes for other women through selecting male-authored conduct literature.

Ultimately, the words women translators published could be their own. The wide-ranging views surrounding translating and imitative techniques allowed women flexibility to interpret the texts according to their own choice of method. Whilst some women followed a strictly word for word approach, others claimed to adopt a "sense for sense" technique, often embellishing the original text to such an extent that its definition as translation was questionable. The medium of translation and imitation allowed women to express thoughts under the guise of an accepted male author's name.

Throughout the sixteenth century, Latin continued to occupy an important position in French literature. Authors frequently wrote about the same subjects in either French and neo-Latin, that is, Renaissance Latin. Arnauld Sorbin's treatise on monsters was written in Latin and his funeral oration for Charles IX in French.75 These neo-Latin works offered translators an alternative source of texts. Both prose and poetry was regularly translated into French. Likewise, writers often re-wrote French works in Latin. Occasionally authors acted as their own translators. Du Bellay, despite his 1549 work encouraging use of the vernacular, Défense et

Illustration de la Langue Française, wrote neo-Latin works and later translated them back into French. There was clearly no shortage of material for translators to use. The abundance of translations which were produced in the sixteenth century in France both encouraged, and were the product of experimentation with new theories of translation and imitation methodology, and meaning.

The relationship between translation and imitation was close. Imitation of the ancients was one of the aims of Renaissance literature, and translation of classical and patristic works was one method of achieving this. Yet, as Valerie Worth notes, there was a clear distinction between the two activities in literary theory. Imitation could function within a single language and many Renaissance texts borrowed from a multitude of sources throughout the work. Du Bellay encouraged imitation of the ancients as a method of enriching French, and it remained a consistent feature of literature throughout the sixteenth century. Imitation could range from Marie de Romieu's abundant variety of classical, Italian and contemporary French sources in her poetic works to the basic structural similarities between works like Boccaccio's Decameron, Philippe de Vigneule's Cent nouvelles nouvelles and Marguerite de Navarre's unfinished Heptameron.

What did an original text mean to sixteenth-century writers? The worth and authority of early sixteenth-century texts was determined according to a system inherited from medieval literary practice. Authors cited earlier texts whose textual message correlated with their own, in order to prove the validity and authority of their work. Continual imitation and citation served to invest these earlier texts, commonly classical and patristic literature, with authority. Since the value and "truth" of a text derived from the citation of such auctores, the creativity of an individual author was irrelevant and played no part in determining the authority of the author's ideas. Thus, for early sixteenth-century authors, intertextuality was not

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76 See Genevieve Demerson's study, "Joachim Du Bellay traducteur de lui-même", in Neo-Latin and the Vernacular in Renaissance France, (eds) Castor and Cave, pp. 113-128.
78 Ibid., p. 67.
plagiarism, but a legitimate form of appropriation and an essential part of literary practice. Jeanne Flore used works such as Francesco Bello's *Menbriano*, Francisco Colonna's *Songe de Poliphile*, Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, Boccaccio's *Decameron*, Boiardo's *Orlando Innamorato* and the Provencal Vidas.\(^80\) She frequently used almost the exact wording of the original texts, with significant intervention of her own views, in what was otherwise a translated text.

Translation was necessarily bilingual and maintained a parallel with the source text throughout the translation.\(^81\) However, the strictness with which the original text was followed was the choice of the translator. Translation required individual interpretation of the source material's meaning and this made each translation an original text in itself. It was often difficult to distinguish between what was a loose sense for sense translation or essentially a new creation. This was even more evident in the translation of contemporary neo-Latin works, or French works translated into Latin. These works did not have the same connotations of ancient authority that had to be strictly observed albeit through the individual judgment of the translator, and allowed more freedom of dialogue between the two texts.

Sixteenth-century literary theorists such as Thomas Sebillet, Jacques Peletier du Mans and Du Bellay varied in their perceptions of the worth of translation as a field of literature. Sebillet, in his 1548 work *Arts Poetique Franqoys*, praised the endeavour, saying "truly he who correctly ... expresses in his own language what another had written better in his after having conceived it well in his mind, merits great praise for himself and his work."\(^82\) However, others rejected such praise of the skill of translation. Du Bellay preferred to name translators of poetry "traitors", "seeing as they misrepresent those whom they undertake to make known".\(^83\) He insisted that translation could never be more than an incomplete rendition of the

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\(^83\) "traditeurs", "veu qu’ilz traahissent ceux qu’ilz entreprennent exposer", in *ibid.*, p. 66.
original, unable to convey the "je ne scay quoy" of another language: "each language has a certain something particular only to it, and if you try to express the sense of it in another language, observing the law of translation which is to not go beyond the limits of the author, your diction will be constrained, cold and inelegant". Nevertheless, later in his career, Du Bellay altered his opinions and even translated some of his own work.

Translation was a popular literary exercise among women writers. Outwardly, it appeared to invest the original text, most usually male-authored, with authority and suggested it was superior to their own literary creativity. Women writers presented themselves as passive recipients of the instructive opinions of the male author. In a 1568 publication, the nun Anne de Marquets claimed that her creative inferiority: "never capable of creating anything worthy", and the ancients' literary authority: "all the pleasure and good that one can draw from here is the work of an author divinely inspired", had led her translate in "in French verses, these Latin verses of M. Antoine Flaminius". Yet, translation allowed the individual writer to make her own judgment about the meaning of the text, and to choose her own degree of similitude with the base text. This could obviously allow women a great deal of freedom of expression. Women writers could reinterpret a canonical text, to represent their own viewpoints, and subtly influence how the authority of the text was read. Marquets admitted that she had translated according to her own judgment of what was important in the text: "I confess to not having observed many things which might have been required, nor rendered verses for verse: as well as paraphrasing in several places, when it seemed right". Translations, whilst

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84 Castor, *Pléiade Poetics*, p. 65.
85 "chacune langue a je ne sais quoi propre seulement à elle, dont si vous efforcez exprimer le naif en une autre langue, observant la loi de traduire, qui est n'espacer point hors des limites de l'auteur, vostre diction sera contrainte, froide, & de mauvaise grâce", *La Défense et Illustration de la Langue française*, (ed.) S. de Sacy, Saint-Amand, Gallimard, 1993, pp. 211-2.
86 "iamais capable d'inventer aucune chose digne", "tout l'heur et le bie/ Qu'on y peut recueillir, a pris son origine/ De l'autheur inspire d'une muse divine", "en vers Francais, ces vers Latins de M. Antoine Flaminus", in *Les Divines Poesies de Marc Antoine Flaminius*, Paris, Nicolas Chesneau, 1569, sig. aiii r°, e r°, aiii r°.
87 "ie confesse n'y avoir observé beaucoup de choses qui eussent esté bien requises, ny rendu vers pour vers: ionct que i'ay en quelques endroicts usé de Paraphrase, selon qu'il m'a semblé bon", in *ibid.*., sig. aiii r°-v°.
appearing to show women writers conforming to perceptions of their literary inferiority by reproducing the works of men, could in fact become very empowering.

The languages women translated from and, sometimes into, most usually conformed to those befitting an educated wealthy woman. Antoine du Moulin, in his preface to Pernette du Guillet’s *Rymes* in 1545, summarized the expected level of language proficiency for educated women. Pernette “had firstly a whole and familiar knowledge of the most worthy modern languages (other than her own) such as Tuscan and Castilian” and “the rudiments of Latin, aspiring to learn Greek.” The learned early modern noblewoman knew her neighbouring humanist countries’ tongues and had some knowledge of Latin and Greek. Her proficiency in classical language was clearly not essential for her to be considered learned, though the evidence of their writings suggests many women had a solid grounding in Latin and more than the rudiments of Greek. Thus, it is not surprising that most translations by women writers were written into French from other modern European languages, frequently Italian and Spanish, and then Latin, both classical and neo-Latin. Much rarer were the translations in manuscript and printed texts by Marguerite de Navarre and Camille de Morel from Greek into French, and Camille de Morel wrote her own verse in Greek and Latin. By and large, women used the vernacular languages that their education taught them but also frequently worked with Latin, showing an extensive understanding of the language.

Like the languages with which women worked, the choice of subject material showed a similar division between acceptable topics for women readers, and more open participation in contemporary humanist literary discourse. In particular, women who worked solely as translators appear to have chosen conventionally appropriate female material in language and themes for their source texts. The anonymous “lady” of the *Jardin de Plaisance* around 1501 chose to translate the Duchess of

88 “elle avoit eu premierement entiere et familiere cognoissance des plus louables vulgaires (oultre le sien) comme du Thuscan, et Castillan”, “les rudiments de la langue Latine, aspirant à la Graeque”, in Preface to *Rithmes*, Paris, Jeanne de Marnef, 1546, sig. aiii r°.
Milan’s lament on the death of her two sons and begged her readers to excuse her “scarcely fertile writings, considering that under the hard surface lies some female tenderness ... of the principal author, [that of] the affection of a mother”. The Italian texts of Boccaccio proved popular translation material. Anne de Graville’s manuscript translations might in fact more accurately be called imitations, or adaptations, since they work within a single language. Her writings consist of reversing French prose versions of Boccaccio’s Teseida in around 1520 and Alain Chartier’s La Belle Dame Sans Mercy in 1524. Claudine Scève translated Cambio di Stefano’s story of Urbano the unrecognized son of Frederick Barbarossa, from Italian around 1530. Marguerite de Cambis adopted a conventional choice of literature in theme and language. After the death of her first husband, she translated Trissino’s epistle on the proper conduct of a widow in 1554 and Boccaccio’s letter of consolation to the exiled Pino di Rossi in 1556. Marie de Cotteblanche selected the more unconventional topic of contemporary scientific theory for her translation of three of Pero Mexía’s Diálogos concerning the nature of the sun, earth and air, for which she used both Italian translations and the original Spanish texts, first published in Seville in 1547. Women writers who did not otherwise contribute to literary discourse with original writings of their own, appear to opt for modern popular vernacular texts to translate.

However, a few women chose unconventional subjects for their translations. They chose to work with at least some source texts in Latin, mostly classical or patristic literature. Hélisenne de Crenne made a French translation of Virgil’s Aeneid in 1542, and Marguerite de Navarre translated amongst other works the Salve

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90 “Excuse ... mes peu fertilles escriptures / considerant toutefoiss que soubz la dure escorce gist quelque douceur femenine ... de celle principale auctrix. Laquelle affection de mere ...” in “Comment une des dames qui est au jardin de plaisance fleur de rethorique envoye une epistre a son singulier amy gra-t orateur”, Le Jardin de Plaisance, Paris, Antoine Vérard, [1501?], fol. 225v°.
91 Boccaccio’s Teseida (1339-41) in BN ms. fr. 1397, 25441, n.a.f. 719, 6513, Arsenal 5166 and Alain Chartier’s La Belle Dame sans mercy in BN. n.a.f. 25535.
92 Cambio di Stefano’s Urbano from his Libro Imperiale (around 1400) in Claudine Scève, Urbain, Lyons, Claude Nourry, [1530?]
93 Marguerite de Cambis, Epistre du seigneur Jean-Georges Trissin, Lyons, Guillaume Rouillé, 1554 and her Epistre consolatoire de l’exil, Lyons, Guillaume Rouillé, 1556.
Regina, as well as writing one of the first translations of Isocrates from Greek into French in 1542.\textsuperscript{95} Anne de Marquets translated Flaminius' Latin work into French in 1568. Catherine des Roches selected Pythagorus' *Vers dorés* and Claudian's *Le Ravissement de Proserpine* to translate in her 1578 *Œuvres*. Women writers showed their humanist learning and desire to participate in the elite male-dominated literary traditions by translations of works of antiquity.

Like their male counterparts, women also wrote neo-Latin literature so popular in sixteenth-century France, producing translations between Latin and French. Antoinette de Loynes was named one of "several of the excellent poets of France" including Jean-Antoine de Baif and Du Bellay amongst others, in translating the Latin distichs of the English Seymour sisters into Greek, Latin and French in the 1551 *Tombeau de Marguerite de Valois*. She contributed a French translation of eighteen of the distichs. Antoinette de Loynes' daughter, Camille de Morel, wrote much of her own poetry in Latin and Greek. Marie Stuart translated John Leslie's Latin work *Afflici animi consolationes et tranquilli animi conservatio*, in her 1574 *Méditation recueillie de livre des consolations divines*.\textsuperscript{96} Marie de Romieu used neo-Latin work of her contemporaries, Jean Passarat and Joachim de la Val, in her *Premières Œuvres poétiques* of 1581.\textsuperscript{97} Like contemporary male writers, women too could contribute translations as part of broader literary participation. Classical and neo-Latin translations served to expose their knowledge of classical learning, showed their recognition of the authority of the ancients and testified to their contemporary humanist spirit. Many learned women desired to be treated as equals with their male counterparts. They mixed in elite literary circles and their choice of translations conformed to the typical pattern of the male literary career.

In this respect, the translation of Virgil by Hélisenne de Crenne was somewhat unusual. Her literary connections are much more difficult to ascertain. As a professional writer living from the proceeds of her writing, Hélisenne's dedications

\textsuperscript{95} See P. Jourda "Une traduction inédite d'Isocrate", *Revue du seizième Siècle*, 1929, pp. 283-300.
indicate little about her circle of literary acquaintances. Her *Angoysses* of 1538 appealed to a general female reading public - “To all honest ladies” - and her translation of Virgil was dedicated to Francis I, indicating her need for patronage of the court, rather than her friendship with a particular coterie. Her translation was unusual, for Hélisenne did not appear to be translating within an elite literary group. The print publication of the work suggests that it was designed to appeal to a wide book-buying reading public. Yet the work, which appeared first around 1542, was in folio, a size traditionally reserved for the learned tomes of students and intellectuals, rather than in octavo, the more usual and manageable size for a popular readership, in which her other earlier works were printed. There appeared some conflict over the target market for such a work. Hélisenne’s previous works were more obviously directed at a popular and female reading public. Her *Eneydes*, the first translation of the work into French, could have some appeal to the elite circles who regularly engaged in classical translations but her previous works might attract a loyal popular audience too.

The dislocation of the work from the conventional setting of the elite literary circle in which translation from classical languages was possible for women writers was a significant factor in its lack of market success. The publication *Eneydes* was never reprinted, unlike Crenne’s other works which enjoyed at least ten reprints. Significantly, when Charles L’Angelier produced a 1543 edition of her *Œuvres* “that she ... put in their entirety”, the collection was without her Latin translation. Clearly, its market was seen as different from her other works for “ladies” and not suitable reading material to be included in the popular, female-focused *Œuvres*. Women’s translations from modern European male-authored works enjoyed popular success. Similarly, women’s translation of classical antiquities could be well-received within the elite literary domain. However, work such as Hélisenne’s *Eneydes* which broke down the barriers of elite and popular readership but did not clearly define its market, achieved little success.

Some of the translations made by women writers could more accurately be termed original creations, or at the very least imitations. Since translation required the individual interpretation of the translator to determine the degree of similarity
with the source text and the latter’s meaning, this gave women agency in contributing to literature. Women writers could use the works of canonical male writers of classical and contemporary literature to transmit a message of their own. This message reflected their female reading perspective and frequently emphasized the position of women.

Hélisenne de Crenne’s translation of Virgil presented such a female perspective. Valerie Worth-Stylianou has noted how she frequently embellished Virgil’s words in order to make personal statements of her own. In the fourth book of the *Aeneid*, where the source text simply states “Our love, the vows you made me, - do these not give you pause, Nor even the thought of Dido meeting a painful death?” Helisenne’s translation follows (given here in the English version of Worth -Stylianou):

O wicked man prone to fickleness, has the faithful and warm love which I bear you been unable to earn reciprocal and mutual affection as it deserves? Have you forgotten that when your hand was placed in mine, you promised me eternal union? Alas, have I, Dido, who am shortly to succumb to the dangers of inexorable Atropos, been unable to win your heart?

Hélisenne’s translation of Virgil was at the very least a very free sense for sense translation of his work. Her text reflected a female reading of the text, showing sympathy for the plight of Dido and emphasizing the loyalty of women at the mercy of men. Under the guise of an accepted male author, Hélisenne was able to reinterpret his words to present a more positive image of women faithful in love but controlled by male actions.


99 “O homme scelere et prompt à mutabilité, l’amour fidele et cordiale que je te porte, n’a elle peu meriter de reciproque et mutuelle affectionestre recompensée? As tu mis en oblivion que lors que ta main dedans la mienne mise fut, de perpetuelle alliance me feiz promesse? Helas moymesmes Dido qui de brief es dangers de l’inexorable Atropos succumberay, n’ay je peu vaincre ton cueur”, fol. 88r° in *ibid.*, p. 336.
The adaptations women writers made to their source texts in their translations frequently emphasized the position of women. Tilde Sankovitch has noted how Catherine des Roches made much of the mother-daughter relationship between Ceres and Proserpine that was symbolic of her own creative and biological bond with her mother, Madeleine. In fact, Catherine called her work “an imitation” of Claudian’s *Le Ravissement de Proserpine*. Her work indicated her authority as an “active interlocutor, student, and critic” of a Latin text like her male contemporaries. Similarly, Marie de Gourmay positioned herself as a valid participant in the translation of a classical text in translating Virgil’s second book of the *Aeneid*. She defended herself in choosing to work on a text already translated by Du Bellay thus:

> the others who took part in this enterprise with him [Du Bellay] must not accuse me of having attempted it in order to carry off the prize: on the contrary, they must hope for companions in the race, from whom they may gain honour, for competition is the essence of victory.

adding, in her 1599 preface, “if they do not disdain it from a mind of my sex”. Although she claimed modestly not to desire to have the best translation, she situated her work as an alternative and equivalent to those of her better-known male contemporaries. Gourmay rejected the concept of one true translation, preferring to see a variety of alternative possible textual readings.

Women translators’ contributions to publication were hidden in part behind the voice of another, usually male, author. However, such marginalized authorial status allowed many women a freedom of expression that was otherwise impossible for them. As translators, women could interpret, re-read and consequently re-write texts in such a way that they infused them with their own interests.

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101 Ibid., p. 64.

102 “les autres qui ont eu part en ceste entreprise, avec luy, ne doivent pas m’accuser que ie l’aye attenté pour cuider emporter le prix: au contraire, ilz doibvent desirer des compagnons en la course, dont ils veulent receuillir de l’honneur, car la concurrence est de l’essence de la victoire”, in *Proumenoir*, Paris, Abel L’Angelier, 1594, fols 4r°-v°.

It is no accident that many women appeared in the margins of publication. The opportunities women were given to participate in published works were often indirect. Their writings were buried in anthologies or hidden on the edges of another's work. This deflected attention from the transgression that publication represented to the expected behaviour of a "good woman". The textual space given to women's writings reflected and reinforced theoretical assumptions denying women a voice in publication. However, for many women, the margins were the ideal place to present views that would have been unacceptable in mainstream discourse. Marginal sites provided agency for female expression which may not otherwise have been published and disseminated publicly. Women used their opportunities to create discursive agency.
Table 6.1 Table indicating the textual relation of women’s writings in printed editions

This table categorizes the 201 occasions when women had writings published in different first editions under three main textual locations. Women’s writings are counted each time they appear in a different edition and editions will be counted as many times as there are different women’s writings published within them. The first category, *Works with one main author*, records women’s writings that appear in editions written by one author, who is not the woman writer herself. This includes laudatory verse and prefaces by women and letters or poems in works written to the book’s main author.

The second category, *Anthologies*, records women’s writings in works with no major author or where it was a shared edition between a male and female author. Such works include *tombeaux* and collections of contemporary poems by many authors. Occasionally a work will be authored by a single writer, but contain an additional selection of other contemporary authors with it. If a woman’s writing is included in this section of the text, it is recorded here, rather than in the first category.

The third category, *Women’s whole works*, records works written by a single female author, or by two women writers working together, such as Madeleine and Catherine des Roches.

I will demonstrate how works have been classified, using the example of Marguerite de Navarre. I have recorded her epigram in the work of Clément Marot, *L’Adolescence clementine*, 1532, under the first category, as a contribution to work primarily authored by a single writer: Marot. Her next printed work, the *Dialogue en forme de vision nocturne*, 1533, is categorized as a whole work by a female author. Finally, her poems “Demonstration des signes qu’Amour fait faire à ses martyrs”, “Ung autre amant pour exalter la puissance d’amour atteste qu’il l’a reduict en umbre par une dame” and “Une dame respond” in the *Hécatomphile*, 1534, are recorded as contributions to collective works with no primary author.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Works with one main author, to which women contribute</th>
<th>Anthologies or works shared by a male and female author</th>
<th>Whole works by women or works shared by two or more women</th>
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<td>Total</td>
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| Per cent         | 25.87%                                              | 38.31%                                               | 35.82%                                               | 100%
Although some texts by women were published without their consent or their knowledge, many women sought to produce scribal or print-published works because they wanted to contribute to contemporary discourses. This chapter examines what discourses they wished to contribute to and what publishers saw as acceptable for a female contribution. I concentrate on women’s writings which concerned religion and politics, two discourses that became inextricably linked in the second half of the sixteenth century in France. Specific circumstances could certainly precipitate women into print. Women could comment on politics either if they had unique experiences to tell about topical events or held a public position, as a member of the royal family and as a relation of men in power, for example. Furthermore, other women less wealthy or powerful, found ways to contribute to contemporary political and religious discourse and also offer their opinions.

In this chapter, I occasionally use the term “public political voice” to express how women contributed to political discourse through publication. However, it must be acknowledged that it is difficult to determine the impact or readership of women’s political writings. We lack data to indicate how their works were received by contemporary readers, or indeed, who contemporary readers might have been. These issues make the terms “public” and “voice” somewhat problematic. However, my aim here is to demonstrate that women did perceive themselves to be making a public display of their opinions and to be participating in political debate. I argue that women justified their publication according to the public action that they believed they were undertaking.

Women, rationality and religion
Many women addressed religious issues in their publications. Religious reading and contemplation were appropriate female activities. Both Catholic and Protestant church leaders and influential male authors who outlined curriculum for
noblewomen alike saw instruction in Christian doctrine as a means of orienting girls towards becoming obedient godly mothers. They recommended religious material as women's primary reading matter. Women did not overtly seek to debate theological doctrine in their publications. Instead, several translated religious works of men, and others composed contemplative poetry. Some women published conduct manuals concerned with how to achieve a good Christian life. Few would be willing to criticize such a socially conforming theme as an inappropriate topic for female writers or readers.

Yet women writers also used their religious publications to revise contemporary perceptions of women. Female authors continually rejected a Christian devotion based on women's simple understanding and irrational faith that male writers expected them to follow. There seemed little doubt to medieval male writers that women's mental capacities did not equal those of men. Both medical and theological discourses agreed on female inferiority, supported by Judao-Christian and Classical traditions.\(^1\) Theologically, woman was accepted as inferior, though equal by grace in paradise. Later, Aquinas explained women's subjection to men by explaining that the wise should rule the foolish. Women were "with rustics and the simple-minded, well-suited to devoutness, but ill-suited to intellectual disciplines".\(^2\)

In the discipline of medicine, Aristotle had already established that women's rationality was imperfect. Medieval and early modern authors attempted to prove women's "natural" irrationality was biologically determined. Scholars cited evidence ranging from the system of humours which left women cold and moist and their brains less acute,\(^3\) to women's smaller brains and relatively hairless and less mature features as proof of their more childlike disposition and mental powers.\(^4\) They attempted to demonstrate that women's bodily differences were clear signs of their inferiority to men in sense and reason. Furthermore, the psychological influence of the uterus was seen to cause illnesses from melancholy and listlessness to emotional,


\(^2\) Aquinas, *Summa*, 2a 2ae 82, 3 in ibid., p. 64.


irrational behaviour. Women’s inability to reason was part of their overall inferiority in mind and body to men, an opinion little altered in the sixteenth century. Like their medieval predecessors, sixteenth-century writers continued to present the assumptions of an earlier scholastic tradition.

What did medieval male writers understand “reason” to be? Augustine in De ordine defined it as “the motion of the mind capable of discerning and connecting those things that it knows, by which it comes to an understanding of God and the soul”. In the twelfth century, Alain de Lille similarly concluded that reason lead to religious understanding, being in itself “the son of God, the Word”. The greatest knowledge reason could determine was knowledge of God and Christianity. In the literary sphere, Jean de Meung’s additions to the Roman de la Rose had presented a Reason incapable of defending women from the attacks on their character by Nature.

Women writers rejected these views of women’s irrational and more animal-like nature. Christine de Pizan had criticized such a misogynist portrayal of women in her Livre de la Cité des Dames. She chose to represent Lady Reason who, with her fellow female allegorical figures Justice and Rectitude, would lead the protagonist Christine to build the city of ladies on a journey of self-discovery. Lady Reason, holding a mirror, explained “I would thus have you know truly that no one can look into this mirror, no matter what kind of creature, without achieving clear self-knowledge”. Reason essentially performed an act of feminist revisionist history in her depictions of illustrious women, suggesting Christine use her own experience of women’s conditions to counter misogynist male scholars’ portrayals of the female character. Christine de Pizan appropriated reason, conventionally attainable only by men, to serve as a guide to women, encouraging them to have faith in their own understanding. Female authors in the sixteenth century continued, in Pizan’s tradition, to emphasize women’s rational capacities and presented reason as a guide

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5 A view advanced by Renaissance scholars including Luis Mercado in De mulierum affectionibus (1579) 11, pp. 4-10 in Maclean, p. 41.
7 Ibid., p. 31.
to Christian understanding.

In the allegorical tradition of the *rhétoriqueur* school, Reason was depicted as a character in the religious conduct works of two sixteenth-century women writers, Katherine d'Amboise and Gabrielle de Bourbon. In the early sixteenth century, the medieval devices of dreams, gardens and allegory were still commonly used in the works of the *rhétoriqueurs*. They drew on classical and Christian figures to emphasize the essential moral function of their work. Amboise and Bourbon re-evaluated the contemporary image of the allegorical character Lady Reason and her role as a guide to women, on a journey of self-discovery and understanding. Their assessment of their own capacities as literate women both reading and living in early sixteenth-century culture is an invaluable addition to historical and literary analysis of women’s literature, self-perception and strategies of resistance in this period.

The texts of both Katherine d'Amboise's *Traicté de Morale* and Gabrielle de Bourbon's *Voyage Spirituel* encouraged a perception of female co-operation, solidarity, and a consequent empowering strength of religious conviction. Each drew on the tradition of an allegorical Lady Reason like that portrayed in Christine de Pizan’s *Cité des Dames*. Amboise's *Traicté de Morale* began with the protagonist, the Unconscious Lady, alone in her room contemplating the fortune of the world, wondering “why the good are often persecuted by fortune and the bad chosen for great authority”. A young man in black intrudes into her solitary reverie, entering her room to present her with several books containing unhappy news. The Unconscious Lady is rendered “passive and as if dead” with no resistance or spirit to conquer the misfortunes that have befallen her. The male entry has breached her private space and his disruptive information reduces her to passivity and powerlessness, only to be eased by the appearance of Lady Reason.

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10 “pourquoy les bons sont souvent persecutes de fortune et les maulvais esleus en grosse auctorite”, in *Traicté de morale sur la fortune*, BN n.a.f. 19738, fol. 1r°.
11 “pasive et comme mort”, in *ibid.*, fol. 1r°.
Lady Reason declares that it is “self-knowledge” that “makes people rise up from the swoon of ignorance”. She explains the fortune against whom the Unconscious Lady riles, and feels powerless, is in fact the working of God. Furthermore, Lady Reason argues that “often adversities are sent to the good by God ... to draw them away or prevent them from sin”. Reason proceeds to illustrate the miseries of the world by reminding her of the transitory nature and unpredictability of human life, counting “the wars, discords, worries, problems, melancholies, adversities, illnesses, inconveniences and other misfortunes that humans have ... the person most living in this world could not take from it ten full years of pleasure”. Hence, Lady Reason advises the Unconscious Lady that she must have patience to cope as best possible with the time she must spend on earth and the two set off “on the path to go to Patience and from her dwelling”. Each step of the journey is marked by the appearance of personified virtues until they arrive at a castle “where was held consideration of divine providence” and Patience is sitting in a walled garden. She receives them and recounting the sorrows of Jesus, the women “all bathed in tears”, resolve to remain “with Patience until the end of [their] days”.

What wrests the Unconscious Lady from her frustration at her lack of resistance to the world’s evils, are two female characters, Reason and Patience. The work’s concluding statement on the necessity of the Christian virtue of patience is a particularly conventional choice for a female audience. The virtue patience requires an exterior display of passivity and as such, suited contemporary sixteenth-century expectations of female behaviour. Katherine d’Amboise appeared to instruct women to accept whatever miseries befall them. At this point, her work does not seem to differ far from Christine de Pizan’s last injunctions to women in the Cité des Dames, where she advocates that married women “who have husbands who are cruel, mean...
and savage should strive to endure them ... if they are so obstinate that their wives are unable to do anything, at least they will acquire great merit for their souls through the virtue of patience". This seems a submissive acceptance of women's position, but Pizan had developed her statement further. For widows, she again exhorts "patience (so necessary!)" however this time with the added characteristics of "strength, and resistance in tribulations and difficult affairs". Herein lies the key to both Pizan and Katherine d'Amboise's later development of the virtue of patience. While patience outwardly required a non-aggressive acceptance of ills, this was reliant on an inner strength of character and a hardened resolve to confront and overcome misfortunes. Therefore, what Pizan and Amboise presented was a patience that required both an exterior conformity to patriarchal expectations of women and also an inner strength and resistance of minds. Both writers imbued the outwardly conforming the virtue patience with an inner power and resistance that could not be seen nor touched by the outside world.

Katherine d'Amboise developed the possibilities of what women could achieve with inner strength. Lady Reason in the *Traicté de Morale* was the guide to female spiritual enlightenment. Rather than relying on faith, Amboise opted to represent logical rationality as the saviour of the Unconscious Lady. It is after all Lady Reason's argument that convinces her to resist her melancholy. As Reason explains, self-knowledge brings power, resistance and strength. It is this reason, coupled with the outwardly feminine passive characteristic, patience, which gives women a self-knowledge and inner strength to cope with misfortunes of body and situation. However, what was specific to Katherine d'Amboise was that Reason was used to bring women to an understanding of God's message, where faith ordinarily might override reason. She showed that in a religious context, women could support and encourage each other to greater spiritual fulfilment, at least in part by appropriating traditionally masculine characteristics such as reason to resist an acceptance "as if dead" of their fate.

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18 *The Book of the City of Ladies*, p. 255.
Gabrielle de Bourbon described a similar scenario of female solidarity and support in her *Voyage spirituel*. The narrator begins “dreaming of the concerns of the world” when the Devoted Soul appears before her and demands that she act as scribe on a journey of testing of faith and spiritual discovery. The pilgrimage “to the noble city of good rest” is undertaken by five female characters --Devout Soul, Lady Hope, Lady Force, Good Will and Knowledge, and their scribe, Gabrielle. During the seven day journey, the group encounters a series of characters who guide or test their faith. For example, the women encounter a nun who directs them to the correct, but more difficult of two pathways. Doubting her, they follow another, easier road encouraged by two men who lead them to a palace of luxury and ease. The women realize their mistake in trusting the men and return to the nun’s path. Throughout the work, the women rely on the individual strengths of each to guide them correctly.

Many of the decisions the female protagonists make along the pilgrimage are aided by the information given by Knowledge. Arriving at one lodging, Devout Soul requests information from Knowledge: “I pray you, Knowledge, tell me what is this lodging you have found for us and who are those who live in it”. Without this information, the women would be helpless in their quest. Bourbon argued that, even in spiritual matters, knowledge was a most valuable asset. The characters themselves presented a curious mix of religious virtues from women; a Devout Soul, Lady Hope, Good Will, but there is Lady Force and no character representing faith. These five meet more traditionally expected personifications of female virtues such as Lady Perseverance, her daughter Virginity with her two hand maidens Shame and Honesty, but throughout the works of both Katherine d’Amboise and Gabrielle de Bourbon, female empowerment was advocated through either “knowledge” or “self-knowledge”.

Gabrielle de Bourbon’s *Voyage Spirituel* promoted a co-operative religious devotion amongst women. Whilst aimed at personal spiritual development, their

20 “en fantasie pour les sollicitudes modaines”, in *Voyage spirituel*, Mazarine ms 978, fol. 1v°.
21 “ala noble cite de bon repoux”, in ibid., fol. 1v°.
22 “Je te prie cognoissance dis moy qui est le logeis que tu nous as trouve et qui sont ceulx qui demeurent dedans”, in ibid., fol. 17v°.
works suggested that this could be achieved through support and shared knowledge between female protagonists and the women they encountered, encouraging each other to continue. When the pilgrims arrive at her house, Lady Perseverance praises the group’s actions, saying to one: “oh lucky pilgrim who is come to stay with me ... when you move on, I promise to go with you to the noble city of good rest where you are going to bear witness to the Holy Trinity of your perseverance, and I will see you crowned with the crown of glory”.23 The women are united in their spiritual devotion and work for the good of each other. They are aided in their journey by a representation of Lady Reason, here named Knowledge, who encourages them to resist male advice and instead rely on themselves and each other.

Gabrielle de Bourbon’s *Voyage Spirituel* begins from a position where men are outside the locus of power; they are peripheral to the story, and sometimes hindrances to the eventual goal. Bourbon starts from the idea that Pizan’s city of ladies exists “which can be not only the refuge for you all, that is, for virtuous women, but also the defence and guard against your enemies and assailants”.24 She built on the foundations of this place where women could act on their own, without male influence, to arrive at their goals. This was an adventure that begins in Pizan city where Mary was “the most excellent Queen, blessed among women, with her noble company ... she may rule and govern the City”25 just as in Gabrielle de Bourbon’s work, Mary was recognized as the “true example and guide to all those [women] who want to go by this path”26 Gabrielle de Bourbon and Katherine d’Amboise took Pizan’s concluding message to heart: “may it please you, my most respected ladies, to cultivate virtue, to flee vice, to increase and multiply our City, and to rejoice and act well,”27 showing in their works what women could achieve together through their knowledge and use of reason.

23 "O bienheureux pellerin qui es venue loger chez moy ... qua-t tu continueras Ie te prometz me rendre avecques toy en la noble cite de bon repos ou tu vas pour porter tesmoignage a la saincte trinite de ta perseverance et te verray couronner de la couronne de gloire", in *ibid.*, fol. 18v°.
24 *The Book of the City of Ladies*, p. 254.
26 “vray exemplaire et la guyde de toutes celles qui veullent par ladicte voye aller”, in *Voyage spirituel*, fol. 18v°.
27 *The Book of the City of Ladies*, p. 257.
Women also produced visual evidence of religious conduct and spiritual guidance with a noticeably feminine perspective. In 1571, the Huguenot Georgette de Montenay published an emblematic work, *Emblèmes ou devises chrestiennes*. Sara F. Matthews Grieco’s recent work on the author calculates that 58% of the illustrations of women depicted them in positive roles, and 42% in negative roles. This was in contrast to other sixteenth-century emblem books in which only 36% of female portrayals were positive and 56% negative, the remaining being neutral. Illustrations of men in Montenay’s work were 42% in positive roles, 47% in negative roles (11% neutral) compared to other contemporary emblem works in which 40% of men were depicted positively and 39% negatively (21% neutral). Matthews Grieco concludes “not only did she refuse the misogynist ethic of her predecessors, but she also proposed, in place of current canons of female conduct, a model of educated and spiritually superior womankind, as well as a more equitable vision of relations between the sexes”. Women writers of religious literature attempted to re-read and revise contemporary negative perceptions of women’s worth in a variety of ways. Their religious texts emphasized women’s support for each other and rejected male assessments of their intellectual and rational incapacity. Female authors too could be participants in contemporary religious discourse.

**Religion and politics**

Women entered into debate on the contemporary religious troubles that France experienced during the sixteenth century. Several women in the royal family were actively involved in politics despite the fact that Salic law prevented them from ascending the throne. Anne de Beaujeu was unofficial regent for her brother, Charles VIII, during his minority. Louise de Savoie was twice regent for her son Francis I. Her grand-daughter, Jeanne d’Albret, ruled the neighbouring territory of Navarre to the south of France and led the Reformed faction. Catherine de Medici, as Queen Mother, played a dominant role during the period of the religious wars whilst

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29 Ibid., p. 795.
Despite the presence of powerful women in French political life, contemporaries were uncomfortable with the concept of female political participation. Pierre de l’Estoile recorded in his notebooks many of the popular verses circulating in Paris during the religious fighting. Some particularly criticized female political action, such as that of Catherine de Medici, as did “the Verses against the Italians” which circulated in Paris in July 1575:

Those Gallic fathers, formerly unconquered,  
Would blush with shame, even if conquered  
By a brave, honored warrior who ruled in Rome.  
But we without shame submit supinely  
While a woman masters us entirely.  
When a woman rules, it is a coward’s home.31

Such works suggested that female power undermined and threatened masculine identity. They reinforced that it was not appropriate for the “good woman” to speak publicly of matters political. Nevertheless, women, especially royal women, did exercise a public political voice. Some 19% of women’s publications contained political discussion in the sixteenth century. Therefore, despite the theoretical prohibition of female political speech, women evidently did seek to contribute their opinions in print.

Women in the royal family held public positions and were more easily able than other women to publish on the political situation. Jeanne d’Albret and Catherine de Medici in particular harnessed the power of the press for propaganda purposes. Women skilfully negotiated political stereotypes and showed political sophistication. Jeanne d’Albret insisted that she strove for peace between differing religious opinions. Promoting her gender for her political purposes, she claimed to the Cardinal de Bourbon that “the business of women and those who, like you, do not handle arms is to pursue peace”.32 However another text she printed in response to the Lettre d’un Cardinal envoyée à la Royne de Navarre written by Georges

32 “le mestier des femmes, & de ceux qui ne manient point les armes, comme vous, est de pourchasser la paix", in Lettres de la royne de Navarre, 16 September 1568, sig. Biii v°- Biv r°.
d’Armagnac in 1563 was an expression of her determination not to surrender Huguenot religious views to the power of a much larger Catholic France. Here, she appealed to maternal duty: “you have made a reply which I find touching, which is that I should prefer to be poor and to serve God: But ... [I am] hoping, instead of diminishing my son’s goods, honours and greatness, to increase them by the sole means that any Christian must try”. In this way, Jeanne defended her actions in the increasingly violent conflicts of the religious dissension as an extension of her role as a mother to give her child Henry of Navarre all she could. Jeanne would be negligent in her maternal responsibilities if she were not to strive for her son’s rights and inheritance.

Jeanne d’Albret’s memoirs were clearly intended as a public political document, defending her actions both as a woman and as the Huguenot political leader. Her printed mémoires were a public defence of both her and her son’s political actions between 1560 and 1568, towards the end of the second civil war. As well as clarifying her political motives as Queen, Jeanne also defended her political action as a woman. Jeanne made a clear reply to a pamphlet Réponse à un certain escript publié par l’Admiral et ses adhérents, by Antoine Fleury, which had suggested that the Reformed faction had taken up the cause of the Huguenot Prince de Condé in 1568 because of the “weakness of a woman and a young prince.” She replied vehemently:

I wanted very much ... to silence those who accused me of having rushed into this cause with my eyes closed, as has some badly advised writer ... ill-informed of my character ... what I have written of it above will be sufficient proof of this stupidly invented lie. I will not amuse myself with that disdainful epitaph of the weakness of women, for if I wanted to undertake here a defence of my sex, I have enough reason and examples against this charitable person, who speaks of it almost as if moved by pity, to show him that he has abused the term in this case.

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33 “vous vous estes fait une response que i’approuve touchant, que i’aime mieux estre pauvre, & servir à Dieu: mais ... esperant, au lieu de diminuer à mon fils, luy augmenter ses biens, honneurs, & grandeurs par le seul moyen que tout Christien doit chercher”, in Lettre d’un cardinal, [1563?] p. 22.


35 “j’ay bien voulu ... fermer la bouche à ceux qui m’accuseroyent de m’estre précipitée en ceste cause à yeux fermez, comme il y a eu quelque mal-avisé escrivain, ... mal informé de mes humeurs ... ce que j’en ay escript cy-dessus sera suffisante preuve de ceste menterie sottement inventée. Je ne
Other women produced public political documents in manuscripts, such as Louise de Savoie’s *Journal*. Louise, the mother of Francis I and Marguerite de Navarre as well as twice Regent of France, wrote her *mémoires* around 1522. She recorded a collection of public and personal events, arranged by the months in which they occurred. As discussed in Chapter Five, many of Louise’s entries concerned the actions of her son, Francis I. When he was injured in January 1521, she wrote, “I was most desolate, for, if he had died, I would have been a lost woman.” Louise constructed her very existence around her son and presented her political actions as the work of a devoted mother. She did not hide her dislike or cynicism in matters which concerned Francis’s inheritance. When Louis’s XII’s queen, Anne de Bretagne, gave birth to a son and potential heir to the throne, Louise showed her ambitions for her own son: “Anne, Queen of France, ... had a son; but he could not halt the exaltation of my Caesar, for he lacked life.” After Anne’s death, Louis remarried young Mary Tudor, daughter of Henry VII, in the hopes of securing a son and heir. Louise’s remarks again exposed her dislike of Louis and fear for her son’s rights: “On the 22 September 1514, the King Louis XII, most old and weak, left Paris to join his young wife, Queen Marie.” Louise barely covered her criticism and hatred for those who stood in the way of her “Caesar”’s glorious future. Her public discussion of political matters was presented as that of a proud mother concerned for her son.

Louise made few references to her own political actions. She drew little attention to her first regency between 1515 and 1518, (the second, from 1524 to 1526, occurred after the composition of the *Journal*) preferring to keep Francis’s actions as the work’s focus. When she discussed Francis’s coronation, she made little

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36 “je feus bien desolee; car, s’il en fut mort, j’étois femme perdue”, in *ibid.*, pp. 91-93. Jane Couchman also refers to this passage in her article “What is “Personal” about Sixteenth-century French Women’s Personal Writings?” *Atlantis*, 19, 1, 1993, pp. 18-19.

37 “Anne, reine de France, ... eut un fils; mais il ne pouvait retarder l’exaltation de mon César, car il avait faute de vie”, in *ibid.*, p. 87.

38 “Le 22 septembre 1514, le roy Louis XII, fort antique et débile, sortit de Paris pour aller audevant de sa jeune femme, la reine Marie”, in *ibid.*, p. 89.
mention of her own role in his success: “I am most grateful to divine mercy, by which I was amply recompensed for all the adversities and inconveniences which came to me in my early years, and in the flower of my youth. Humility has kept me company and patience has never abandoned me”.39 It was clear, however, that Louise had been instrumental in the reign of her son. She spoke of political partnership with her son. This was particularly evident in her retrospective appraisal of the most salient lessons she had learned as Regent and mother of the King: to distrust both financiers and monks. She reflected that every year from 1515 to 1522: “without being able to take precautions against it, my son and I were continually robbed by financiers”.40

Furthermore, Louise was aware of the need to justify her actions and attempted to influence their public perception. On one occasion, she wrote:

Anne, Queen of France, died on the 9 January, 1514, left me in charge of her goods, of her fortune and her daughters, even Madame Claude, the queen of France and wife of my son, whom I have honourably and lovingly looked after: everyone knows it, truth knows it, experience shows it, as well as public makes it renowned.41

Other women praised her political actions. Louise’s daughter, Marguerite de Navarre, proudly lauded her mother’s political actions in a manuscript work, Les Prisons de la Reine de Navarre, composed in the late 1540s. In the third book of the Prisons, in which Marguerite’s male protagonist lauded the Christian deaths of Marguerite d’Alençon, Marguerite’s mother-in-law; of Charles d’Alençon, her husband; of Louise de Savoie, and of Francis I. The protagonist praised Louise’s “great prudence and good judgment” which were “well recognized when she alone

39 “suis-je bien tenue et obligée à la divine miséricorde, par laquelle j’ay esté amplement récompensée de toutes les adversités et inconveniens qui m’estoient advenues en mes premiers ans, et en la fleur de ma jeunesse. Humilité m’a tenu compagnie, et patience ne m’a jamais abandonnée”, in ibid., p. 89.
40 “sans y pouvoir donner provision, mon fils et moi feusmes continuellement desrobés par les gens de finances”, in ibid., p. 90.
41 “Anne, reine de France, alla de vie à trespas le 9 janvier 1514, me laissa l’administration de ses biens, de sa fortune et de ses filles, mesmement de madame Claude, reine de France et femme de mon fils, laquelle j’ai honorablement et amiablement conduite: chacun le saït, vérité le cognoit, expérience le démontre, aussi fait publique renommée”, in ibid., p. 88.
maintained the government” of Francis’s realm. When Francis returned from his captivity in Spain, he “found everything so very well ordered” that he praised his mother generously.

Louise’s memoirs bear witness to her political acuity. She saw and recorded what was going on around her. She heavily criticized those in the Church, writing cynically of a peace treaty “confirmed and “florentined” by Leo, gentle lieutenant and apostle of Jesus Christ”. She was well aware of the worldly ambitions of Church officials, as she recorded “the mad ambition of several popes.” The practical Louise had little time for church ceremony in times of crises, as her comments after the French defeat at Asparros in 1521 demonstrated: “in a long war, paternosters and murmured orisons are of no use; they are the sort of stuff which is of no use in war”.

The publications of Louise’s daughter, Marguerite de Navarre, exposed her complex religious position, favouring religious reform in the Church. Marguerite composed a number of religious works that engaged with the new Reformist theology and politics as well as writing more devotional works such as her chansons spirituelles. Being the King’s sister offered no exclusion from the doctrinal authority of the Sorbonne Theological faculty, responsible for privilèges for printed books. Her first printed work, the 1531 Miroir de l’Ame pecheresse, was censured by the Sorbonne, and many of her other religious works were to remain manuscript until

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43 “trouva le tout si très bien ordonné”, in ibid., p. 273.
44 “affermée et florentinée par ledit Léon, gentil lieutenant et apostre de Jésus-Christ”, in Journal de Louise de Savoie, p. 90.
45 “la folle ambition de plusieurs papes”, in ibid., p. 91.
46 “L’an 1522, en décembre, mon fils et moi, par la grâce du Saint-Esprit, commençasmes à cognoistre les hypocrites, blancs, noirs, gris, enfumés et de toutes couleurs, desquels Dieu, par sa clémente et bonté infinie, nous veuille préserver et defendre”, in ibid, p. 93.
after her death. She composed a number of sacred and profane plays, both of which were performed at her court, which contained overt references to her evangelical faith. For example, in *L’Inquisiteur*, a persecutor of faithful Christians was converted by the simple Christianity of children. In *Le Malade* the ailing patient is cured by following the advice of his chambermaid that faith would provide a more successful cure than his doctors’ prescription. Much of Marguerite’s earlier poetry showed Lutheran influences, and although her later works reflected a wider range of interests such as Neoplatonism and mysticism, even in her last writings her Reformist persuasion was clearly evident. In *Le Navire*, written after the death of her brother Francis I in 1547, Marguerite constructed a conversation between herself and Francis, in which he recommends that she take the Bible “which you can and must read endlessly”. Marguerite used the authority of Francis, as both a much loved King and as one elected into Heaven and thus informed of the “right” beliefs, to support reform in the Church.

Outside of the royal family, did other women participate in public political speech? Certainly women outside of French territory had begun to write in larger numbers for and against the new reforming religion. Argula von Grumbach, a Bavarian noblewomen, published her Protestant writings in the 1520s as well as maintaining extensive correspondence with both Catholic and Lutheran officials. Marie Dentière, one of the most outspoken critics of Catholicism in print, wrote several works including *La guerre et deslivrance de Genesve* in 1536. Marie, a former abbess, left her convent in Tournay, married twice, and in 1535 came to live in Geneva with her second husband, a Protestant pastor. She was active in Protestant campaigning and other activities in Geneva, calling on nuns to question and renounce the religious life. However, Marie began to argue for women to speak

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48 McFarlane, p. 126.
publicly to each other: "If God has done the grace to some poor women to reveal to them by His Holy Scriptures some good and holy thing, dare they not write about it, speak about it, and declare it".53 These publications were not so favourably received. Significantly, no further whole works by women were printed in Geneva for the remainder of the century.54

Other women outside of French territory stepped forward in defence of Catholicism. Jeanne de Jussie, a future Abbess of the Poor Clares in Geneva, in *Le levain du calvinisme au commencement de l’hérésie de Genève*, printed at Chambery in 1535, described convent life until the abolition of Catholic worship in that same year. Her writing reflected the position of those women for whom “the vocation was a deliberate choice”55 and who rejected the new religion. In 1550, Elisabeth Gottgabs, the Abbess of Oberwesel convent, published a tract against the Lutherans.56 Clearly, women did have opinions on the contemporary political situation and a few were willing to risk boldly announcing them in print.

Women of all social levels were affected by the political and religious policies in sixteenth-century France. Catherine de Medici’s letters record the participial participation of women of even the poorest social levels, indicating that they understood methods of collective action and how to exploit ideals of “good women” as dutiful wives and mothers, by which they could make their views known. She wrote:

Some poor women from the towns of Dieppe, La Rochelle and other places in the kingdom, being in large number, came to make their complaints and grievances to Monsieur my son and to me, ... how the king of Spain my son-in-law, still retains on his galleys and elsewhere under his rule, a good thirteen hundred French prisoners, the husbands and children of these women.57

55 Lazard, p. 172.
57 “aucunes pauvres femmes de la ville de Dieppe, la Rochelle et aultres lieux de ce royaume, estant en grand nombre, sont venues faire plainctes et doléances au roi monsieur mon fils et à moy ... comme le roy d’Espaigne monsieur mon beau-fils, retient encore, sur ses galaries et aultres en son obéissance, bien treize cents prisonniers français, tant maris que enfans desdites femmes” Catherine de Medici to...
Catherine's letter also demonstrates how the women not only appealed to their ruler, but also to her, a fellow woman who might understand their plight as a wife and mother herself. Women and children featured in violent protests during the Wars of Religion, as a powerful symbol of "the passage from the present to the future" which had to be safeguarded. However, the violent actions of women defending the town of Autun were celebrated in the 1591 *Quenouille des Dames d'Autun aux habitans de leur ville* in ways which significantly reinforced that their actions were only acceptable in times of extreme need:

> When peace reigns, the distaff and the household are the honour of a chaste woman, who has no other concern in her soul than housework and virtue ... is it not a strange thing to see the distaff swapped for pikes, spears and cutlasses to put down an enemy?

That poor women are not represented as participants in printed political discourse should by no means suggest that they were politically unaware, naive or unconcerned. They were excluded primarily because they were illiterate. For illiterate women, almost the only opportunity they had to have their views disseminated in printed discourse was on the scaffold, like Marguerite Haldebois whose last words were a remonstrance "on the duties of married men to their wives and children".

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59 "Lors que le Paix est en saison/ Et la quenouille et la maison/ Sont l'honneur d'une chaste dame,/ Qui n'a autre soucy dans l'ame/ Que du mesnage et de vertu ... n'est-ce pas chose estrange/ Voir la quenouille qui se change/ En picque, lance, coutelas/ Pour mettre vn ennemy à bas?" in *La vie et faits heroiques du Mareschal d'Aumont, avec la quenouille des Dames d'Autun, aux habitans de leur ville*, Lyons, Jean Pillehotte, 1591 in *Pieces sur la Ligue en Bourgogne*, (ed.) H. Chevreul, Paris, Jules Martin, 1882, pp. 15-17.

60 Marguerite Haldebois, *Histoire sanguinaire, cruelle et enerveillable, d'une femme de Cahors en Quercy pres Montaubant ... Avec la Remonstrance qu'elle fit publiquement, au dernier suplice, sur le devoir des hommes mariez, envers leurs femmes et enffans*, Toulouse, J. Columbier, 1584.
Figure 7.1. Total first editions containing women’s printed writings per half-decades, 1488-1599

However, some wealthier, literate women could evidently enter current political debates. Figure 7.1 indicates that in the years from 1585 to 1589 the largest number of works which contained women’s writings were published. Figure 7.2 shows that the same half-decade saw relatively large numbers of women contributing to print publications. In a survey of the theme of the women’s printed writings in Table 7.1, there is an evident increase in printed writings by women which concerned discussion of political events during the decades 1560-9 and 1580-9. These were both decades in which France suffered great political instability and civil wars. Over the whole sixteenth century, political writings amounted to 19% of women’s writings. Yet between 1560 and 1564 and between 1585 and 1589, approximately 67% of women’s writings discussed political events as the primary theme. When these two half-decades are removed from calculations, women’s political writings in other decades amounted to an average 3.5% of their publications. As Patricia Crawford’s careful research on print publications in seventeenth-century England has shown, there too more editions by women were published from the 1640s when civil
wars destabilized the country. In times of political instability, more women could have works printed, and as Table 7.1 demonstrates, particularly publications concerning politics.

Figure 7.2 Participation of women in printed editions per half-decades, taken from first appearance in print of a woman writer, 1488-1599

This figure records when the first publication of work by each woman writer appeared in the sixteenth century, taken from the data in Appendix 1.

However, although women of all social levels were affected by policies, French women of all social levels did not all contribute to political discourse in publications. Unlike in England, where women of middle and middle-lower class printed writings, in France, it was largely noblewomen who had works published. There were fundamental differences in the politics behind the French and English civil instability. In England, the king was executed and factions such as the Levellers sought to remove social hierarchy. Lois G. Schwoerer has suggested that English civil unrest created “contexts favourable to unorthodox behaviour” which helped lower-class women to publish their political views. In France, equivalent

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questioning of the divine right of the monarch and of the social hierarchy did not seem to ease the entry of non-aristocratic women into political discourse.

Even amongst aristocratic women, although we know noblewomen were active in religious politics, this was not reflected proportionately in many print publications. The two daughters of Jacques Foucaud who were taken prisoner in January 1588 for their Reformed religious beliefs, held strong views on theology. As l’Estoile recorded, when Henry III visited them in prison, he:

listened an hour while a great dispute went on. These poor women responded to the questions and objections of these doctors so resolutely and pertinently, even on the main points of controversy ... that the King was amazed .. and it was not possible to vanquish them. ... The King said that he had never seen women defend themselves so well, nor so well-informed. And the doctors had to agree.63

The young girls were later burned in June 1588 for their religious convictions. Recently, S. Annette Finley-Croswhite’s detailed study of female agency in the Catholic League in Dijon clearly shows women’s often unrecognized role in the civil wars needs to be re-assessed with the evidence of their active participation.64 Furthermore, research by Sharon Kettering has questioned the extent of noblewomen’s powerlessness in the light of their involvement in domestic patronage and household service and politics.65 Robert J. Kalas’s case study of the career of Jeanne de Gontault noted how her ceremonial role at court serving the Valois queens, gave her the opportunity to voice opinions to the queens in a “female world ... where some degree of political power was possible for the wealthy, landed elite”.66

Very few Huguenot women other than Jeanne d’Albret printed political tracts or other writings in France during the sixteenth century. Only Georgette de Montenay had a work printed, her *Emblèmes*, which showed her religious persuasion. Yet

63 Roelker (ed. and trans.), *The Paris of Henry of Navarre*, p. 139.
Natalie Zemon Davis has shown that women at many social levels were actively involved in the religious changes in cities and Nancy Roelker has documented the high participation of well-educated noblewomen in the Calvinist movement. Huguenot women’s letters, both to each other and to Huguenot men, show their evident political understanding and involvement. The correspondence of Charlotte Arbaleste and her husband, the Huguenot statesman Philippe Duplessis-Mornay, indicates both his belief in, and evidence for, Charlotte’s political acumen and ability. Catherine de Parthenay, Madame de Rohan, who wrote the play Judith et Holophernes, performed in La Rochelle in 1573, sent numerically coded correspondence to Arbaleste to hide important political news. In a letter from Paris on 30 July 1594, Parthenay informed Arbaleste that “16. Monsieur de Monpensier 22. a 50. p 159. ri 58. i 94. co 49. o 107. ef 97. de 11. Madame” (Monsieur de Monpensier has taken leave of Madame, Catherine de Navarre). Even if they did not print their writings, women were active in Huguenot political manoeuvres.

Charlotte Arbaleste did however produce the manuscript work for her son, Mémoires de Charlotte Arbaleste. Sur la vie de Duplessis-Mornay son mari which she wrote around 1595. As Catharine Randall has convincingly argued, Arbaleste was able to shape the life of her husband. It was she who selected the record of his achievements for her son. Her work was probably transmitted scribally among the Huguenot faction, since the second volume of a 1625 publication Mémoires de messire Philippe de Mornay, seigneur Du Plessis Marli, which concerned her husband’s biography between 1589-1599, appears to be largely constructed from the

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69 Letters from many Huguenot and some Catholic noblewomen, including Catherine de Parthenay, Madame de Rhosny, Louise de Coligny, Charlotte de la Tremouille, Catherine de Navarre, Anne d’Allegre, Madame Dubouchet, Anne de Rohan, Marguerite de Valois and Louise de Vaudemont, are included in Mémoires et correspondance de Duplessis-Mornay, 12 vols, Paris, Treuttel and Wurtz, 1824.
70 Mémoires et correspondance de Duplessis-Mornay, vol. 6, p. 85.
details provided in Arbaleste’s Mémoires. Arbaleste’s work showed a strong understanding of Huguenot political actions and their motives, and she clearly followed the career of her husband closely. Through their personal and political networks of Huguenot women and men, the couple exchanged political information with each other in their frequent correspondence when apart.

Yet Arbaleste’s mémoires did more than record the events of her husband’s political career. It was also a deeply personal work. Arbaleste recorded for posterity the family’s history, not just her husband’s family, but her own as well, stressing her own historical significance. She emphasized Duplessis-Mornay as a man devoted not only to his faith and career, but also to her, his wife, and their family. Women appeared frequently in the biography. Arbaleste recalled the strength and determination of his mother, Françoise du Bec, widowed at the age of 29 with ten children, and noted that Duplessis-Mornay’s father had died “placing his children and his household under her management and was confident in her”.73 She even recorded the name and character of her husband’s wetnurse, Marguerite Madon.74

Furthermore, Arbaleste made important digressions in the biography of her husband to speak of her own experiences such as her own failing eyesight and the birth of her children, one of whom had the Huguenot author Georgette de Montenay as a godmother. What is so exciting about Arbaleste’s work is that it offers the only first hand account of a Huguenot woman’s experiences in Paris during the St. Bartholomew Day’s Massacre in 1572.75 She describes hiding with her daughter for days, once in a vault above a grain loft whilst one house was searched and moving from house to house as the trouble spread, before she was finally able to flee the city. As she escaped in a boat, soldiers discovered her and threatened to drown her. Charlotte recalled one soldier’s words more than twenty years later: “telling me that if I were a man, that I would not escape so easily”.76

74 Ibid., p. 10.
75 Ibid., pp. 58-71. The Mémoires de Marguerite de Valois provide another unique female perspective of the massacre from the point of view of the Catholic royal family.
76 “me disant que si j’estois ung homme, que je n’en rechapperois pas à sy bon marché”, in ibid., p. 66.
Political events and personal interests

In France, women printed works in political discourse under different circumstances from women elsewhere. Unlike printers in Geneva, French printers did not generally print tracts by women giving their opinions on Reformed or Catholic theology.77 Most French publications by women that concerned politics were printed between 1560-1569 and 1585-89, both periods when political and religious turmoil resulted in widespread warfare across France. Printers knew that there was a market for publications by women who had been personally affected by the religious fighting. Women's ability to profess publicly political and religious views was restricted to a few unfortunate, and usually noble, women whose personal experiences gave them a voice and authority to comment first-hand on the destruction of both their families and their deeply held religious ideology.

Most usually, French printers published women's works because they had family ties to men in power or because of their unique experiences of topical events.78 A letter from Madame de Mayenne to her husband, the Duke of Mayenne, was printed during the siege of Paris in 1590 when Mayenne led the army of the League against that of Henry IV for control of the city.79 When Marie de Brames' father, the governor and commander of the town and citadel of Cusset and supporter of the Catholic League, was murdered in 1597, her Regrets attacking his murderers were eagerly published. When in 1589, Henry III was murdered less than a year after he had ordered the murder of Madame de Nemours' own two sons, Pierre de l'Estoile criticized her public political action: she "betook herself to the Cordeliers', mounted the high altar, and from there harangued the people on the death of the tyrant, showing thereby great immodesty for a woman".80 Although criticized, her censure of Henry III later found its way into print in many popular pamphlets.81

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77 One exception, however, is the pro-Catholic verse of the nun Anne de Marquets who wrote from the Dominican convent of Poissy. In particular, her Sonets, Priers et devises pour l'assemblée de Messieurs les Prelats & Docteurs, tenue à Poissy, contained her "epistre aux Lecteurs", in which she mounted a defence both of the Gallican Church and of attacks against her, which had been published in Huguenot propaganda.

78 See chapter 3 for more details of printing and political propaganda, pp.91-94.

79 Madame de Mayenne, Discours de ce qui s'est passé en l'armée du roy, Tours, Jamet Mettayer, 1590.


81 See discussion of her work in chapter 3, pp. 93-94.
Less wealthy or famous women indirectly discussed political events in publications which were not sensational pamphlets. Occasionally non-noblewomen lamented the loss of loved ones and commented indirectly on the religious and political tensions in *tombeaux*. Marie le Prevost’s husband was also killed in the religious fighting and she published in his *tombeau*. Her opinions could be those of a mother or wife on either side of the conflict, epitomizing her grief and reflecting the reality of the conflict for many women: “Cursed is the war and the rage and the envy of those who make our husbands lose their lives... those who make so many orphans and widows”.\(^82\) Some women treated matters political in relation to appeals for financial compensation. During the siege of Poitiers in 1569, the lawyer’s wife and host of a humanist literary circle, Madeleine des Roches, lost several properties. In 1579, she addressed Henry III in her poetry to plead her case for compensation:

> I saw two houses that I had in the suburb to be no more than embers ... These houses could well have been worth two thousand livres ... I have heard that your royal hand shows itself to be liberal to those who have lost [their possessions], and that your kindness wants to compensate them.\(^83\)

In her prefaces to the posthumous publication of the works of her brother, Gabriel de Minut, the Abbess of the Poor Clares in Toulouse, Charlotte de Minut, described to Sixtus V and Catherine de Medici, the degradation of her convent and lands as a result of religious fighting around Toulouse. Toulouse, a city which supported the Catholic League, was isolated by surrounding Huguenot land and Catholic churches and clergy were under constant attack.

Even in dedications to works, women might signal political views and further the causes in which they believed. Charlotte de Minut chose to appeal to one secular and one ecclesiastical authority in her prefaces. Catherine de Medici had formerly employed Charlotte’s brother Gabriel and might look favourably upon his work. Catherine had also visited Toulouse in October 1578 and might understand the

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\(^82\) "Maudite soit la guerre, et la rage et l’envie/ De ceux qui ont fait perdre à nos maris la vie,/ ... Ceux qui font ... tant d’orphelins et vêves", in *Le Tombeau de feu Misseire François du Parc*, Pierre Salliere, 1590, p. 7.

\(^83\) "j’apperçue deux maisons /Que j’avois au faubourg n’estre plus que tisons/ ... Ces maisons pouvoient bien valoir deux mille livres/ ... j’ay entendu que vostre main Royalle/ A ceux qui ont perdu se monstre liberalle/ Et que vostre bonté les veut recompenser", in *Les Œuvres*, (ed.) A.R. Larsen, Geneva, Droz, 1993, p. 172.
specific situation of the region. Sixtus V was not a surprising choice of dedicatee to whom an abbess of the Poor Clares might appeal since he was not only the head of the church hierarchy as pope, but was also a member of the Franciscan order. Gabriel de Minut’s text, *Morbi Gallos*, about the misery in France suitably correlated with Charlotte’s own plea for assistance due to the troubles caused by the religious wars.

Charlotte de Minut’s exploited contemporary perceptions of the “good woman” in her publications. The good woman, as a mother, had a duty to protect her children and to go to extraordinary lengths, risking all, to do so. This could be an empowering duty. Charlotte, as the Abbess of the convent, had the responsibility of a mother to oversee the welfare of her sisters. She argued that in situations of dire need, it was her duty to risk all to help them, even speaking out publicly at the expense of her reputation. In *De la beaute*, dedicated to Catherine de Medici, Charlotte presented herself as a mother to her nuns, just as Catherine was represented as the mother of France:

> Such virtues which from time immemorial have been unique to your so noble and illustrious house, have appeared in all their perfection in you, Madame, who, amongst other virtues, have taken pains for a long time to smother the Greek fire, which have been too enflamed in our France for the last 25 years. Our France, of which, as of our good king, you could rightly be called mother.84

Charlotte claimed a common bond with the Queen Mother, by which Catherine would appreciate both her need for help and how she could be so bold as to advise her.

As a mother, Charlotte explained her frustration and fear in not being able to care sufficiently for her children, her fellow sisters:

> all generally are oppressed at the present time, under this heavy yoke, particularly our poor monasteries reduced to extreme poverty, by the incursions and hostility of war, not able to work our lands nor enjoy the few things we have by the privileges and concessions of the holy Fathers: for my part in this poor house, I

84 “Telles vertus, qui de tout temps sont peculieres a ceste vostre tant noble et illustre maison, sont parvenues en toute perfectio- à vous, Madame, qui, entre autre vertus de long te-ps avez prins peine incroyable, pour amortir ces feux Gregeois, qui se sont par trop allumez en nostre France, depuis vingt cinq ans. De laquelle, comme de nostre bon Roy, vous pouvez à bon droicte estre ditte mere”, in Preface to *De la beaute*, Lyons, Barthélemy Honorat, 1587, pp. 8-9.
am at the height of anguish. I would say before God, Madame, if I could, I would willingly wish the dissolution of this poor life, fearing to succumb and watch the ruin of my poor nuns, if God does not take pity on us.  

The abbess admitted she might be forced to disband the convent, a seeming failure of her maternal nurturing role. She appealed to Catherine for understanding of the magnitude of this action, as one mother to another. Charlotte suggested Catherine would be negligent in her own mothering duties if she failed to lend support and care to her children, the populace of France.

It was Charlotte, the Abbess, staunch supporter of the Catholic Church, who addressed Sixtus V. She explained that she had obtained this position through correct procedure and popular election: “my election made by the majority of nuns in our community: indeed, by the common consent of all”. By popular vote she had been given the authority and duty to speak on behalf of her fellow sisters. Further, she indicated her obedience to the authority of the Church’s procedure and hierarchy. Charlotte established the historical importance of the Poor Clares convent in Toulouse:

our convent, one of the oldest in this town of Toulouse, second sovereign parlement of France, is also one of the poorest ... And to better prove our antiquity, it was Saint Clare seven years before her death who sent nuns from her monastery of Saint Damien, in the town of Assisi in Italy to these areas ... near the Garonne river, where we are still today.

85 “tous généralement sommes oppressée, sous ce pesant ioug, particulièrement nos pauvres monastères reduits en extreme pauvreté, par les incursions et hostilité de la guerre: ne pouvant faire libreme-t travailler nos terres, ny ioyur de ce peu de bien que nous tenons, par les privileges et concessio-s de saincts Peres: de ma part en ceste pauvre maison, je suis en angoisse au comble de mon plus. Je diray devant Dieu, Madame, s’il m’estoit loisible, je desirerois volontiers la dissolution de ceste pauvre vie, craignant d’y succomber et voir la ruyne de mes pauvres Religieuses, si Dieu n’a pitié de nous”, in ibid., p. 12.


87 “nostre monastere est des plus anciens, situé en ceste ville de Tholose, second Parlement souverain de France, aussi est il des plus pauvres ... Et pour mieux prouver nostre susdite antiquité, c’estoit du vivant de Madame saincte Claire, sept ans avant son decés, icelle envoya des religieuses de son monastere de sainct Damiens, ville d’Assise en Italie en ces quartiers ... pres la riervie de Garonne, où nous sommes encore à present”, in ibid., pp. 9-11.
She established the convent as a historically important site and as a strong promoter of the Catholic doctrine in the south. The Abbess suggested that it would clearly be in Sixtus’s interest not to lose such a stronghold of Catholicism in an area where Huguenot views were widespread.

Women advising rulers

Women within the Royal family were in a favourable position to advise rulers because they could command the authority inherent in certain roles. For example, as a dutiful mother, Catherine de Medici advised her own son, Henry III, to follow a peaceful policy in her *Remonstrance faitte au Roy* in 1589. As an older family member, Marguerite de Navarre translated work by Isocrates to offer her nephew Henri II in 1542. The choice of this text “touching the administration of the realm”, was a carefully planned political manoeuvre. The literary scholar Pierre Jourda has argued that her work showed intelligence and a keen “psychological and political sense”. Marguerite also composed epistles and poems to Henri in which she discreetly advised him. In *Le Navire*, she recommended that he “love God ... justice also, without favour, never preferring the great to the least [subject] ... love peace, and in order to observe it, keep faith with foreign princes”. She counselled that he heed those more experienced, thereby indirectly justifying her own advice: “Love also sense and wisdom, good advice, based on experience, and honour virtuous old age.”

Only a few women outside the royal family attempted to offer advice to religious and political leaders through publication. Judith Ferster argues that the dangers of criticizing rulers encouraged many authors to retreat behind advice manuals such as mirrors for princes, rather than discussing the specifics of a contemporary situation. Furthermore, a woman offering advice within the

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88 Ibid., p. 9.
90 “aimer Dieu ... justice aussy, sans [la] faveur/ Ne preferrant jamais le grand au moindre ... / Aimer la paix et, pour elle observer/ Garder la foy aux princes estrangiers”, *Les Dernières Poésies*, (ed.) Lefranc, p. 428.
91 “Aimez aussy le sens et la sagesse,/ Le bon conseil, bien experimenté/ En honorant vertueuse vieillesse”, in *ibid.*, p. 429.
dominantly male political discourse transgressed all expectations of appropriate
cfemale conduct. Women were not expected to instruct any one other than women,
and then, only in areas of female discourse such as child-rearing or maternal advice.

Those few women who dared to broach political matters justified their
publications carefully. The non-noble provincial published author, Catherine des
Roches, reminded Henry III that kings had been successfully guided by the words of
women in the past: “To punish the English and rebel subjects, one of our Kings
heeded the advice of a Maiden”.93 Having recalled Jeanne d’Arc, Des Roches
continued: “thus I beg you to hear what your virtue divinely inspires in my poor
mind”.94 Catherine des Roches proceeded to extol the virtues of a benevolent king,
praising Henry’s attributes, to which she significantly included “the virtuous love of
your wise mother”.95 While many male political commentators abhorred the Queen
Mother’s political actions, Catherine lauded Henry and Catherine de Medici’s
intense maternal-filial relationship of advice and love which mirrored her own with
her mother, Madeleine.96

The provincial abbess, Charlotte de Minut, offered her pro-Catholic advice to
the Pope Sixtus V and Catherine de Medici through the marginal textual arena of the
preface. Charlotte made use of discursive loopholes that justified her advice. The
“good woman” was also bound by her conscience to act according to her faith. A
woman could exercise her own spiritual understanding, standing out from the
majority and even dying for her faith, as female saints proved. To protect what she
saw as the one true Catholic religion, Charlotte could take extreme liberties. Gillian
T. W. Ahlgren argues that Teresa of Avila adopted a similar rhetorical strategy of
dual obedience to the Church hierarchy and to the divine revelation that God had
given her, to present her religious reform in a non-threatening way to institutional

93 “Pour chastier l’Anglois et le subject rebelle/ Un de noz Roys prit bien l’advis d’une Pucelle”, in
Les Œuvres, p. 299.
94 “Doncques je vous supply de vouloir escouter/ Ce que vostre vertu divinement inspire/ Dans mes
foibles esprits”, in ibid., p. 299.
95 “Le vertueux amour de vostre sage mere”, in ibid., p. 301.
96 See discussion of the intense maternal-filial relationship between Madeleine and Catherine des
Roches in chapter 5, pp. 174-177.
officials. Charlotte saw her duty as a member of the Church to promote and rekindle the faith of Catholic doubters:

*I trust in your kindness and clemency, that you will accept my good intentions, excusing my weakness. What I am doing follows the example of Abraham, that great Patriarch and holy person, whom as he said, ventured to speak to his Lord, ... frequently reiterating his humble prayers for the preservation of his people ... I thus, inferior in virtue and holiness of life, not only to this holy Patriarch but also to many of my fellow sisters, spurred on by extraordinary anxiety and great necessity, I withdraw to [the protection of] your sovereign fatherhood, devoutly dedicating to you this small work by my brother.*

From Charlotte’s ability to exploit opportunities by re-reading patriarchal discourse arose a viable, valid “other” authoritative position.

Charlotte negotiated a position of authority by exploiting the ideal of the religiously motivated woman to uphold the duties of every faithful Catholic, and to see them maintained and promoted. She had instructions for Pope Sixtus. She saw in the present troubles a dissolution of law and order which she described in *De la beauté:*

>cruelties ... exercised by the badly trained soldiers, as much on one side as on the other, the magistrate having no legal power, nor any way to suppress and chastise vices: the more so in that, as Cicero said, during war, law is silent. What threatens us more with atheism than anything else, with just cause ... we must ... hate those who by their machinations declare themselves enemies of God.*

She demanded that he uphold the supremacy of the Catholic faith in the face of alternative doctrine. She described the increasing influence of the devil on the souls

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98 "j‘espère tant en vostre bonté et clemence, que vous recevrez ma bonne inte-tion, excusant mon imbecillité. Ce fais-je donc à l’exemple d’Abraham, ce grand Patriarche et sainct personnage, lequel comme il dit, s’est hazardé de parler à son Seigneur, ... reiterant de souvent ces tres-humbles prieres, pour la conservatio- de son peuple ... Moy do-c inferieure en vertu et saincteté de vie, non seulement à ce saint Patriarche, mais aussi à beaucoup d’autres mes semblables de mo- ordre, pousse par une angoisse mervueilleuse et grandes necessitez, ie me retire à vostre souveraine Paternité, vous consacrant devotement ce petit labeur d’un mien frere", in *Morbi Gallos,* p. 7.

99 "des cruautez ... exercées par les soldats mal criez, tant d’un costé que d’autre, le magistrat n’ayant point le glaive en sa puissance, ny moyen de reprimr et chastier les vices: d’autant que, comme dit Ciceron, durant la guerre les loix sont en silence. Ce que nous menace plustost d’un athaisme que d’autre chose, a iuste cause ... nous devons ... hayr ceux qui par leur mauvaise versation se declarent ennemis de Dieu", in *De la beauté,* pp. 14-15.
of previously faithful Catholics. "Knowing well that he who makes war against us ... like the Prince of Darkness in this world at present, governs the children of infidelity and rebellion, who are Satan's own organs, his ministers to execute his malice, persecuting the children of God through their possessions and their persons, trying to ruin their souls". It was her duty as a Catholic adherent to uphold the faith:

I almost weighed down by such afflictions and poverty, nonetheless with a lightness of spirit, following the Psalmist, who wished to speak of the evidence of his Lord *without any shame in the presence of earthly rulers*, I wished also ... to proclaim these praises in front of a whole nation to exalt his holy Name, and magnify his grandeur, and through this epistle also to demonstrate [it] sufficiently to all those who read it ... knowing and relying on the fact that we are obliged as much by natural obligation as divine, to love those whom we must honour. [My italics]

As a fellow sister in Christ, she reminded herself and Sixtus, of his role to keep the faith, and revive those Catholics who might be doubting their beliefs. Charlotte wrote: "our saviour and redeemer Jesus Christ ... by whom, you are honoured with the title of holiness, called his vicar-general on earth, to enlarge and announce to his people the treasures and wealth of his mercy: which in truth is made in a good and just cause, ordered by God, for the relief of our infirmity". Charlotte's advice to Sixtus was to become more involved in supporting waning Catholicism by re-awakening religious fervour, by his own example. It was advice that she was only able to offer through negotiating the validity of a female didactic voice by recalling her Christian duty to honour her beliefs, no matter what the risk to herself. Charlotte's advice to the pope had become a sacrifice to her love of Christ.

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100 "Sachant bien que celuy qui nous fait maintenant la guerre ... co-me prince des tenebres de ce monde à present il operes enfans d'infidelité et de rebellion, lesquels sont proprement les organes de Sata-, ses ministres pour executer sa malice, persecutant les enfans de Dieu en leurs biens & en leurs personnes à fin de ruyner leurs ames", in *Morbi Gallos*, p. 12.

101 "Moy presque oppressée en telles afflictions et pauvreté, neantmoins d'une allegresse d'esprit en ensuyvant le Psalmiste, lequel desiroit parler des tesmoignages de son seigneur sans nulle honte en la presence des Rois de la terre, ie desirois aussi ... confessier ces louanges devant tout un peuple pour exalter son sainct Nom, et magnifier sa grandeur, et par ceste epistre aussi prouver sufisamment à tous ceux qui en feront lecture ... sachant et m'appuyant sur ce que nous sommes obligez tant par obligation naturelle que divine, d'aimer ceux qui nous devons honorer!", in *ibid.*, pp. 13-14.

102 "nostre sauveur, et redempteur Iesus Christ ... duquel vous estes honoré de ce beau tiltre de saincteté, appellé son vicaire general en terre, pour elargir et annoncer à son peuple les thresors et richesses de sa misericorde: ce que à la verité a esté fait à bonne et iuste cause, ordonné de Dieu, pour le solagement de nostre infirmité", in *ibid.*, p. 15.
Charlotte advised Catherine in a more indirect manner, by stating diplomatically what it was that she prayed God would instruct the Queen Mother to do. Charlotte depicted her as responsible for some peace in the kingdom in the past: “we had enjoyed the benefits of peace, by your most happy diligence”. Charlotte indirectly counselled Catherine: “trusting that almighty God will give you his grace (Madame) as he has done before”, towards a policy of peace again, “to make your good and holy intentions succeed, to draw us out of all these so intolerable calamities”. In concluding her preface, Charlotte twice more indicated how she hoped God would recommend Catherine to act: “I will pray always to God for you, Madame ... to ... deliver us from infernal violence” and “I pray thus to divine goodness that by your means, Madame, [you] once again might make us experience his holy grace”. Charlotte was speculating on what God might counsel. By merely telling Catherine what it was that she prayed to God about the role the Queen Mother could play in the conflict, Charlotte could not be accused of actually advising Medici herself. Charlotte cleverly handled the public perception of offering advice as a woman to leaders by transforming her desire to counsel them into a necessity and duty.

In summary, women could add their opinions to contemporary political discourse but they did so in different ways from their male counterparts in France and their female counterparts in neighbouring European regions. Generally, only in times of political and religious instability, such as during the religious wars in France, could women contribute to political discourse through print publication. It was not a woman’s place to speak on matters political but women’s works could be printed if they concerned contemporary topical events. Thus, women in print frequently criticized politically motivated destruction within their family through murders or within their local region in sieges.

103 "nous avions iouy du benefice de la paix, par vostre tres-heureuse diligence", in De la beaute, p. 11.
104 "esperant que le Dieu tout puissant vous fera la grace (Madame) comme il a fait par cy devant de faire reussir vos bonnes et sainctes intentions, pour nous tirer hors de toutes ces calamitez trop insupportables", in ibid., p. 14.
105 "ie prieray tousiours Dieu ... pour vous, Madame ... pour ... nous delivrer de la furie infernalle" and "ie prie donc la bonte divine que par vostre moyen, Madame, derechefil nous fasse experimenter sa saincte grace", in ibid., p. 18.
However, women writers who commented on the political situation in France, whether in mémoires or political pamphlets, frequently went beyond observing political matters. They demonstrated that they too were capable of political understanding and action. Furthermore, in public documents, whether manuscript or in print, they consciously addressed their detractors who claimed women had no role in public affairs. Women showed how policies which they had no part in making nevertheless affected them. Some even offered advice to political leaders. Female authors reminded readers of their political acumen and refused to be excluded from political discussion on the basis of their sex.
Table 7.1a: First editions of women's printed writings by theme, per half-decade

Themes addressed in the printed writings of women fall into six broad categories. Many works could be included in several categories, but have been classified according to which theme is most central. The categories used are as follows:

1. Literature: Prose and poetic works, including songs, translations of fiction and marginal works.
2. Contemplative religious works: This category is designed to differentiate between meditative religious writings and political events taken in under the third category.
3. Politics: This category includes religious writings primarily concerned with political events, as well as speeches, mandates and political correspondence.
4. Practical advice and conduct manuals: This category includes then writings which describe appropriate behaviour for women at various social levels, also conduct for nuns and widows, as well as techniques of child-rearing.
5. Miscellaneous: This category takes in the remainder of women's printed writings and includes translations of scientific treatises, advice for courtiers, comments on the medium of printing and editor's notes by women printers.

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<th>Literature</th>
<th>Contemplative religious works</th>
<th>Political/Religious wars writings</th>
<th>Practical advice and conduct manuals</th>
<th>Miscellaneous</th>
<th>Total works per decade</th>
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<td>0</td>
<td>12</td>
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<tr>
<td>1590-94</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1595-99</td>
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<td>0</td>
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<tr>
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<td>7</td>
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Table 7.1b: Percentage of first editions of women’s printed writings by theme, per half-decade.

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<tr>
<th>Half-Decade</th>
<th>Literature</th>
<th>Contemplative religious works</th>
<th>Political/Religious wars writings</th>
<th>Practical advice and conduct manuals</th>
<th>Miscellaneous</th>
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<td>61</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>19</td>
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SEXUALITY AND PUBLICATION

At the beginning of this thesis, I discussed how men linked female public speech to uncontrolled sexuality.\(^1\) By publishing, women risked their good reputation based on morality and chastity. Female authors tacitly acknowledged this by consistently prefacing their publications with professions of their modesty. In this last chapter, I return to the issue of sexuality to discuss why women would go further and deliberately address the nature of female sexuality in their publications. A few women used their publications to contribute to discussions of female sexuality, the appropriation of the female body and of its physiological capacities by contemporary ideological discourses.\(^2\) Why did women risk contributing to such a dangerous contemporary discourse as that of female sexuality when they had already brought their morality into question simply by publishing at all?

Women wrote about sexuality because they wanted to question contemporary stereotypes about female sexuality. There were varied opinions of female sexuality in sixteenth-century France, but generally the sexual drive of women was seen as a force in need of supervision. Historians have looked extensively at constructions of female sexuality in the early modern period, but in this chapter I will restrict discussion to aspects of female sexuality with which women writers were themselves concerned. Thus, I will not discuss notions surrounding lesbian sexual practices, nor the early modern obsession with hermaphrodites, neither of which were addressed by female authors in their works. Notions of “woman” were inextricably tied to the female body and to its sexuality, a force so powerful that it controlled all a woman was and did. The misogynist tract *La Description d’Amour* depicted women at the mercy of their bodily desires: “Thus it is not [Love], it is immodest desire which holds a woman, to join body and private parts anytime she has the leisure and

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\(^1\) See chapter 1, pp. 19-21 especially.

Although such perceptions directly concerned women, they often had little opportunity to contribute to contemporary constructions of their sexual nature which were generally provided by authoritative male-centred religious, legal, medical and popular discourses.

In contemporary medical discourse, physicians saw women as unruly, under the influence of their corrupting and impure genital organs and of their uterus which had an insatiable and uncontrollable sexual appetite. This view was supported by the writings of Plato who named the uterus an *animal avidum generandi*. The uterus was a vagabond animal whose sense of smell drew it towards the genital organs of women. It had an enormous appetite for sexual fulfilment, which reduced women to irrational and sexually obsessed creatures. When, in 1543, Vesalius examined real human corpses, he found that his conclusions matched those of Plato. The uterus was "a sort of animal, as even Plato used to say". The learned doctor and popular author, François Rabelais, frequently drew upon contemporary fears of uncontrolled female sexuality as a source of humour in his works. One character, the doctor Rondibilis, echoed contemporary medical discourse on gynaecology, saying of the uterus: "If automotion is a certain indicator of an animate being, as Aristotle writes, and if all that by itself moves itself is called animal, then Plato rightly calls it animal". Those who followed the conclusions of another influential figure in medical discourse, Galen, found that woman was incomplete, and that her genitalia were less developed than those of a man. Women's bodies were less perfect than those of men because woman was an inversion, a corruption of the original. A third

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3 "Ce n'est donc pas [Amour], c'est impudiq désir/ Qui femme tient, de corps & cul conioindre/ Toutes les fois, qu'elle ha lieu et loisir", in *Le Blason de la Femme*, in *La Louenge des Femmes*, Lyons, Jean de Tournes, 1551, (intro.) R. Calder, New York, Johnson, 1967, p. 32.


7 Maclean, p. 41.

8 Screech, p. 92.

9 Ibid., p. 92.

authority to whom sixteenth-century physicians looked for confirmation of their own beliefs about women's bodies was Aristotle who explained that, in all things, the imperfect desired the perfect and thus, women naturally desired men.\textsuperscript{11} By drawing in their works upon negative perceptions of female nature encouraged by the socially authoritative discourse of medicine, sixteenth-century authors promoted the absorption of these notions in contemporary society. "When I say woman", says Rabelais's character Rondibilis, "I mean a sex so fragile, so variable, so mutable, so inconstant and imperfect".\textsuperscript{12}

In a religious context, it was Eve, with her terrible sexual nature, who had caused the fall of man and who had to renounce her sexuality to renounce evil. Religious notions of women promoted a dichotomy between the whore and the virgin, by juxtaposing Eve, the evil temptress, with the chaste Mary, the impossible role model, both mother and virgin. There was little room for women who fitted in between the two. As Sara Matthews Grieco has observed, "the rape of a virgin ... was generally considered worse than that of a widow", which reflected a belief that any sexual activity, even with one man in marriage, was a sinful compromise.\textsuperscript{13} The \textit{Malleus Maleficarum}, produced by two Dominican friars, was an influential text explaining how to determine witches and undertake witchcraft trials. It firmly linked women's abnormal sexuality, "more carnal than [that of] a man," with female predisposition for malevolent acts: "All witchcraft comes from carnal lust, which is in women insatiable".\textsuperscript{14}

In popular tradition, it was commonly held that married women who should be busy in their households could not have time for seeking outlets for sexual pleasure. Proverbs suggested that an unoccupied woman was at risk: "an idle girl will

\textsuperscript{11} Maclean, p. 40.
\textsuperscript{12} Rabelais, p. 356.
be led astray”. Women who remained in the private sphere of the household were isolated from uninvited male contact and out of danger. In contrast, the public sphere outside the home posed dangers for the honest woman who might be tempted to engage in sexual activity. Several popular proverbs of the era echoed this concept: “A girl too much in the street will soon be lost”. Other sayings emphasized the dishonour for men of being sexually pursued by a woman as this reversed the status quo of gender hierarchy: “when the hen seeks the cock, love is not worth a bean”.

Popular texts abounded which contained references to women’s sexual insatiability. The Regrets et complaintes de Madame du moulin sur la fortune à elle avenu, published in Paris in 1599, claimed to be the work of a prostitute lasciviously assessing her clients’ physical assets. Other texts encouraged readers to perceive women as dangerous and constantly susceptible to adultery. In many popular books, such as the much reprinted Les Quinze Joies de Mariage (c. 1464) and the 1567 Les Devis amoureux de Mariende et Florimonde mère et fille d’alliance, par MDR, women were depicted as conspiring together to commit adultery. L’Epistre de Messire André Misoyne depicted men’s fears of marriage in which they would be “cuckolded, married, unhappy and ... never see a happy day, for when one takes a woman, misery comes with her”. Not all male writers supported the misogynist arguments that were promoted by popular authors such as Rabelais. François Billon devoted an entire chapter of Le Fort inexpugnable de l’honneur du sexe Femenin (1555) to defending women’s chastity: the “Deuzième Bastion sur la chastete et honnestete des femmes”. Another chapter “Fuyte et Prinse d’Ennemys”, contained strong criticism of Rabelais’ views of women. Billon’s attempt to restore female honour, however, did not seem to capture the public interest: his work was

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16 “Fille trop en rue, tost perdue”, in ibid., p. 60.
never reprinted whilst those of Rabelais enjoyed a healthy republication rate throughout the sixteenth century.

Contemporary perceptions were that women’s sexual insatiability had the potential to ruin the entire structure of patriarchal society. For example, men feared lesbian sexual practices might result in women having enlarged “penis-like” clitorises or becoming hermaphrodites. Scholars and popular discourse alike debated in abundant literature on the subject whether a hermaphrodite would be a creation worse than woman or better, as a half-way stage between male and female. Women writers however focussed their discussion of female sexuality on heterosexual desire and practices. According to a system of primogeniture, it was important that at least women’s procreative sexual activity (since there could be a range of sexual practices which did not involve penetration or the possibility of conception) be restrained so that a man knew he was giving his goods to his own son, the legitimate inheritor. It seemed to the authorities of both church and state that women needed supervision because of their rampant desires and that the good woman was one who attempted to deny her biologically determined sexuality by being chaste and obedient. Socially authoritative and popular discourses all confirmed and feared the uncontrolled nature of women’s sexuality, not just for the stability of primogeniture but of the contemporary gender order.

Many female authors wanted to address such negative perceptions of their sexuality and participate in a debate which affected them so strongly. Contemporary notions of female sexuality affected every aspect of women’s lives and women too wanted to contribute to the way they were constructed as women. Remembering “the mistake I made in the past in letting your wickedness pass in silence”, Hélisenne de Crenne replied to speculation about her chastity in her publications: “I want to repair it for the future, in publishing what criticism of your poisonous tongues does not permit to remain hidden”. However, when women published works which discussed female sexuality, they did so more indirectly than when they discussed

20 "la faute que j'ay commise au passé tena-t sous silence voz iniquitez", "ie veuil reparer pour l'aduenir: en publiant ce que le detracter de voz venimeuses langues ne permet tenir caché", in Epistres in Œuvres, (1560) Geneva, Slatkine, 1977, 1560, sig. P v°.
politics and religion in conduct works, memoirs or pamphlets. In examining what female authors contributed to discussion of female sexuality, we must also analyse the strategies they used to broach such a matter in publication.

**Advising chastity**

Much religious work praised the virgin ideal for women. Theologians discussed woman as a daughter of Eve, and thus, an impure temptation and instrument of the Devil. Thomas Aquinas had agreed with Aristotle that women was an incomplete man. \(^{21}\) Martin Luther, however, had difficulty believing that a creature of God could be imperfect but even he admitted woman was intellectually inferior to man. \(^{22}\) To male observers, woman could not be separated from her corporality and her sexuality. She was forbidden to administer the sacraments and barred from certain sacred places because of her bodily impurity. Moreover, the connection between women and sex seemed to be reinforced by the spread of syphilis amongst prostitutes which was considered a clear sign of punishment for their sin. \(^{23}\) Women could never escape from their potential to concede to their natural lust at any given moment. After all, as Rabelais’ character Panurge said in *Pantagruel*, “there was nothing but an inversion between “femme folle à la messe” and “femme molle à la fesse”.” \(^{24}\) Such puns only reinforced the serious impossibility of early modern men to perceive woman as a spiritual and intellectual being separate from her sexuality.

At the core of men’s fear of female sexuality was the idea that women possessed power over men. Women had the capacity for multiple orgasms, they could create an erection without ever touching the penis and after intercourse, the penis was flaccid and powerless. A man also needed to be able to control his wife’s sexual activity to know her children were also his. At the heart of patriarchal society was the need to control such a power. The ideal woman therefore was a virgin, untouched by the sin of sexual intercourse and unaware of her sexual power over men. The patristic fathers debated whether there was a

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\(^{21}\) Maclean, p. 8.
\(^{22}\) Ibid., p. 10.
\(^{23}\) Matthews Grieco, p. 77.
\(^{24}\) Rabelais, p. 188.
possibility for a chastity of the mind. St Augustine accorded a certain value to chastity of the mind in cases of rape, although others, such as St Jerome, maintained that only physical virginity could give women spiritual power.25 Clarissa Atkinson has argued that such beliefs in female virginity were still prevalent at the beginning of the fifteenth century, when Jeanne d’Arc and the Dauphin believed only a true virgin could deliver France from the English.26

Some women also celebrated the virgin archetype in their publications. Gabrielle de Bourbon extolled virginity as the path to religious salvation for women in her manuscript *Voyage spirituel*. The pilgrims rest at the house of Dame Perseverance and her daughter Virginity who leads the Devout Soul to:

her little chamber so pure, so clean, so white, without a stain.

There, the two virgins together began to discuss the glory that those will have who are in the city of eternal rest and have passed through the deserts of the world, and combated the prickings of the flesh without being conquered nor stained. O sister, said Virginity, this consideration must be so pleasant to us that no worldly troubles will burden us. There is nothing so pleasant to God as virginity.27

However, when women did praise virginity as ideal female behaviour, they highlighted the difficulty of rejecting the reproductive role that most women would follow. Gabrielle de Bourbon’s Virginity revered Mary as women’s role-model both for virginity and motherhood, typified in her oxymoronic description of Jesus gestating in “the virginal womb of his holy mother”.28 Marguerite de Navarre depicted her niece, Charlotte, as relieved that she died before her marriage, “in [her] ... virginity without sin having reigned in [her] ... heart”.29 Marguerite implied that even sexual activity in marriage was sinful. However, had Charlotte lived, she would

26 Ibid., p. 138.
27 “sa chambre tant pure tant necte toute blanche sans nulle tache. La commencerent adevisir les deux vierges ensa-bles de la gloire que auront ceulx qui seront en la cite de eternel repos et ont passe les desers du monde combatu contre les aguillons de la chair sans estre vaincues ny maculees. O seur se dist virginite ceste consideration nous devroit estre si plaisante que nulles peynes mondaines ne nous sauroient grever. Il nest rien si plaisant adieu que virginite”, in *Voyage Spirituel*, Mazarine ms 978, fol. 18r°.
28 “le ventre virginal de sa sacree mere” in ibid., fol. 18v°.
have certainly been married to sustain dynastic alliances. Only in a virginal death could Charlotte attain the purity expected of women in life.

Most women writers of the sixteenth century had married. Not surprisingly, therefore, they discussed chastity in marriage much more frequently than a life of celibacy. Furthermore, high regard for chastity in marriage was reinforced by church reformers such as Luther who saw marriage as "the institution established by God for the expression of human sexuality".30 Marriage was one aspect of women's lives which many women shared and about which most female authors could talk by experience. Amongst middling and wealthier levels of society, to which most women writers belonged, marriage strategies were essential in economic, social and political bonds.31 Amongst the elite, marriage alliances involved complex financial negotiations to sustain powerful and binding familial interests. The prospects and fortunes of families could depend on making good marriages. When Marguerite de Navarre speaks for her niece, Charlotte, she reflects what would have been Charlotte's probable marriage role:

Married might I have been in a high place, to give peace to others:
whose war I might have had as my share of the spoils of this game.
I might have held great countries and lands as subjects and married a King or Emperor and governed a world.32

When Nicolas Versoris recorded Charlotte's death in his family record book, he presented her purpose in life purely as political strategy through marriage: "At this time died madame Charlotte, princess of France, much grieved, because it was thought that her marriage would bring great good and peace to the kingdom."33

Marriage at this elite level was primarily a careful financial and familial alliance although, because theories about conception still debated whether the sexual enjoyment of both partners was necessary for conception, it was hoped that the partners could feel at least friendship for each other. Contemporary women such as

31 Matthews-Grieco, p. 69.
32 "Maryee ieusse poeu estre en grand lieu/ Pour do-ner paix aux aultres: dont la guerre/ Jeusse eu pour part du butin de ce ieu./ Jeusse tenu grandz pays subiectz et terre/ Et espouse ung Roy ou Empereur/ Et gouverne ung monde", in Dialogue, sig. A4 r°-v°.
Nicole Estienne criticized the secondary attention that the partners' temperaments received in favour of financial considerations: "to make a marriage one thinks only of goods and of lineage without knowing behaviour and temperaments; thus this too rigorous tie binds two contrary humours together forever."  

Women's honour was entirely linked to their sexual behaviour. It could not be earned but was in constant danger of being lost. The only possibility for honourable female sexual expression was within marriage. Yet, for men, there was no increased honour in conferring his sexual activity to one woman. As Michel de Montaigne wrote to his wife: "My wife, you know well that it is not the role of a gallant man, according to the rules of our day, to court and caress you after marriage. For they say that a clever man can of course take a woman, but to marry her is the act of a fool". Pleasure in marriage, Montaigne felt, should be "serious, restrained and intermingled with some gravity; its sensuousness ... somewhat wise and dutiful".

Many women writers chose to present virtue and honour as both achievable and necessary for married women. James R. Farr contends that women in France during the Catholic Reformation who praised female sexual modesty and honour "may not have seen themselves as by nature unruly and thus in need of discipline and even "confinement," but they had other good reasons for borrowing certain dictates of the male normative discourse for their own purposes." As he argues, women valued their honour as a commodity for "the great social prize" of marriage. As the anonymous female biographer of Léonor de Roye depicted her stressing on her

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35 "Ma femme, vous entendez bien que ce n'est pas le tour d'un galand homme, aux reigles de ce temps icy de vous courtiser & caresser encore. Car ils disent qu'un habil-homme peut bien prendre femme; mais que de l'espouser c'est à faire à un sol", in Preface to *Œuvres complètes d'Estienne de la Boëtie*, (ed.) P. Bonnefon, Bordeaux, G. Gounouilhou, 1892, p. 185.


deathbed, “your honour must be more dear to you than your life”.39 To Gabrielle de Coignard, virtue still meant chastity in marriage if possible. In her “Hymne de la Vertu de Continence” she argues that, virtue was “the honour of the body, and the ornament of the soul ... with virtue, one is calm, one lives without passion, it is the bond of peace and holy union”. Coignard advocated chastity in marriage, “Pure chastity has no worry”, “Joseph knew it well, who for following his path received from the all powerful so many admirable graces ... for living chastely”.40 The chaste love in marriage presented as the honourable outcome in Marie le Gendre’s Les Chastes Amours d’Eros et Kalisti was one which conquered “the passions of Love” and protected women’s “honour for all glory.”41

Hélisenne de Crenne advised women to reject the temptations of sensuality in her 1541 publication Le Songe de madame Hélisenne. It described the protagonist Hélisenne’s dream in which a character, Lady Reason, teaches a female Lover to reject the temptations of Sensuality and advises her to adopt “poverty, ... chastity, ... humility and obedience”.42 The choice between Venus and Minerva was a commonplace image in emblem literature of the period but it was usually depicted as the choice of men, showing Hercules at the crossroads. Here Hélisenne presented the battle for a female soul, with a woman at the crossroads, suggesting female souls too could be saved (and were worth saving) from Sensuality’s dangers. Sensuality says to Reason “O Reason, why do you endeavour to ... dominate in this female sex? Don’t you know, that according to nature, your home is more in the virile sex; since commonly woman is reigned and governed more by me”.43 Sensuality’s speech provokes the protagonist Hélisenne to anger. She, “approaching Reason, with earnest

39 “vostre honneur vous soit plus cher que vostre vie”, in Épistre d’une damoiselle françoise, sig. diii r°.
40 “C’est la vertu .../ Estant l’honneur du corps, & l’ornement de l’ame, ... / Par elle on est tranquille, on vit sans passion/ C’est le lien de paix & de saincte union”, “La pure chastete n’a point aucun soucy”, “Joseph le cogneut bien, qui pour suivre ses traces/ Re?eut du tout puissant tant d’admirables graces, /... pour vivre chastement”, in Œuvres Chrestiennes, Tournon, Iaques Faure, 1595, pp. 234, 234, 235.
42 “pauureté, ... chasteté ... humiliété & obeissance”, in Œuvres, sig. X r°-v°.
43 “O Raison: pourquoi t’esforce tu tant de dominer en ce sexe muliebre? Ne sces tu, que selon nature, ton domicille est plustost au sexe viril: car vulgairement la femme se regit & gouuerne plus selon moy”, in ibid., sig. [Tviii r°].
prayers ... asked that she would explain the truth of this thing”.44 She employed Reason and logical thinking, a convincing “rational” instrument, to reduce her opponent’s argument. Reason defeats Sensuality by citing biblical passages to show the equality of women’s souls in Paradise, that they are the crowning glory of God’s achievement and the evidence of Reason in women. Reason advises the female Lover to arm herself “against the world, by accepting poverty, against the flesh by observing chastity and against the devil by retaining humility and obedience”.45 Hélisenne’s text showed that women should and could resist the sexual temptation through their capability for rational thought.

Marriage also protected women from male sexual advances that would lead to ill-repute. Marie le Gendre in her 1597 tale *Dialogue des Chastes Amours d’Eros, & de Kalisti* instructed that the heroine Kalisti’s rejection of the sexual advances of Eros was the path for her female readers to follow. Kalisti was rewarded at the tale’s end by honourable marriage with Eros. Marie le Gendre encouraged her readers not to give in to the beguiling words of lovers as ultimately women would be rewarded for their chastity. As Eros explains,

> my first decision to seek Kalisti was founded upon the desire for pleasure that all lovers wish of their ladies: ... but seeing her ... more resolute in her chastity I have made another resolution completely opposite to that, which is to unite with her in marriage.46

Le Gendre concluded that her tale “must incite those of the sex whom Eros reveres ... [to triumph] over the passions of Love, and perpetually safeguard their honour for all glory”.47 Similarly, Nicole Estienne’s manuscript response to Philippe Desportes’ facetious depiction of the horrors of marriage for men, “happy Marriage, sent into this world to check the hearts of men led astray, celestial and divine gift to

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44 “aprocha-t de raison, avec instantes prieres luy requis, que la verité de ceste chose voulust exprimer”, in *ibid.*, sig. [Tviii v°].
45 “co-tre le monde, par accepter paurete, contre la chair par observance de chasteté & contre le dyable, pour conserver humilite & obeissance”, in *ibid.*, sig. X r°-v°.
46 “m’a premiere deliberation de rechercher KALISTI estoit fondée sur le desir de la jouissance que tous les amans souhaitent de leurs dames: ... mais la voyant ... plus resolu en sa chasteté i’ay fait une autre resolution toute opposite à celle là, qui est de m’unir à elle par mariage”, in *L’Exercice de l’Ame Vertueuse*, pp. 128-9.
47 “doibt inciter celles du sexe qu’Eros revere ... [de triompher] des passions d’Amour, & ayent perpetuellement, la bien-veillance de leur honneur pour toute gloire”, in *ibid.*, p. 134.
repopulate the earth”, reshaped marriage as an outlet for heterosexual activity with a view to procreation.48

Marriage was the only forum for legitimate sexual activity, to fulfil procreative duties, according to the Church. While some women advocated sexual abstinence in marriage, others suggested sexual acts only to fulfil procreative duties were still honourable. Katherine d’Amboise provided an ideal model of marital sexual activity: “Joachim met Saint Anne and by them was produced this virgin in conjugal love which God created in bountiful pleasure without original sin”.49 Marie le Prevost lamented the loss of her “faithful husband” and indirectly indicated that their happiness in marriage was partly the consequence of their sexual activity and pleasure together, although this activity was clearly linked to their reproductive role. They “had lived together seventeen years, happy and content, having had seven children as a pledge of affection”.50 Despite its passionate nature, Marie le Gendre’s desire for her husband could “not be altered by time nor [her]... affection consumed by the years”.51 Her “infinite love” was, she declared, not the result of “Cupid who holds it aflame” but instead “of a chaste and divine fire”.52

Acknowledging women’s sexual desire

By recommending virginity or marital chastity for women, female authors tacitly acknowledged contemporary fears about women’s dangerous sexual appetites. Rare was the woman who risked public censure and her reputation to write explicitly of female sexual desire, unlike the *trobairitz* poets of Languedoc in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. In poetry exchanges, imaginary sexual relationships could be addressed by male and female participants. As they were expected to do in real life, most women who exchanged poetry with men rejected their admirers’ amorous

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48 “O heureux Mariage, en ce monde envoyé/ Pour refrener le cœur de l’homme dévoyé/ Don celeste et divin pour repeupler la terre”, in BN ms. (Les Cinq Cent de Colbert) 500, fol. 90 r°.
49 “iouachim saincte Anne arencontree/ Et q- par eulz nous est administree/ Ceste vierge soubz amours coniugaulz/ Que dieu crea de plaisance faconde/ Sans point sentir vices originaulx”, in BN ms. fr. 2282, fol. 11v°.
50 “dixsept ans ... vescu ensemble/ Bienheureux et contens, ayant eu sept enfans/ Pour gage d’amitié” in Le Tombeau de feu Misseire Francois du Parc, Pierre Lucas Salliere, 1590, p. 8.
51 “par le temps ne peut estre alteré/ Ny mon affection par les ans consommée”, in L’Exercice de l’Ame Vertueuse, sig. [dvii r°].
52 “d’un amour infiny, mon esprit enserré”, “Cupidon qui la tient allumée/ Qui traverse mon flanc de son trait asséré”, “d’un feu chaste & divin”, in ibid., sig. [dvii r°].
proposals. One anonymous female poet warned her hopeful lover that she had “a strong squadron of two brave men who guard my castle so that none can approach it... virtue and chastity hold fast in my heart, honour is the colonel and in conquering, laughs at your threats”.53 Marguerite de Navarre addressed female sexual pleasure in her exchange with “a lover not daring to ask his lady to give him relief”.54 The lover asked Marguerite, as his lady, whether she would consent to physical love or remain chaste by saying “ouy” or “nenny” to his proposal. He explained that “if it is no, I will render my constancy honourable ... if it is yes, it is the fruit of my devotion”.55 The lover concludes by saying “one [of the choices] honours me, & the other pleases me”.56 Already Marguerite’s imagined lover had stated that her rejection of his advances would be the most honourable response. Her reply thus circumscribed, her persona answered: “valuing honour above all pleasure, I will say no, loving my virtuous reputation more than ever”.57 Yet the lady’s response acknowledged female physical desire for a lover. She had to conquer her desire since her “will would willingly choose yes to give you perfect happiness”.58

Prose fiction too provided female authors with rhetorical space to discuss female sexuality. Women could fashion distinct fictional identities through whom they could speak. The border between the thoughts of the author or those of the fictional characters was hazy and open to many interpretations. Hélisenne de Crenne’s fiction Angoysses was divided into three sections which concentrated on different aspects of the overriding theme of the effects of adulterous love.59 Crenne developed and explored the psychology of her small cast of characters in depth, from the jealous older husband, the adulterous wife and protagonist named Hélisenne, to the love sick Guenelic and his companion, Quezinstra. The first section narrated by Hélisenne focused on “violent passions”. This was the first autobiographical tale by a

53 “un fort escadron de deux braves gensdarmes/ Qui gardent mon chasteau qu’on n’y peult aprocher/ ... Vertu & chastete tienent fort en mon cœur/ L’honneur est colonel & se faissent vaingueur/ Se rit de ta menace”, in BN ms fr 1718, fol. 49 r°.
54 “ung amoureux n’ausant requerir sa Dame de luy donner allegement”, in Hecatomphile, p. 87.
55 “Si c’est nenny, ie rendray honorable/ Ma fermeté ... /Si c’est ouy: c’est le fruyct de l’attente”, in ibid., p. 88.
56 “l’ung m’honnore, & l’autre me contente”, in ibid., p. 88.
57 “estimant honneur sur tout plaisir/ Nenny diray, plus que iamais aymant/ Gloire”, in ibid., p. 88.
58 “Pour vous donner parfait contentement/ Ma volanté vouldroit ouy choisir”, in ibid., p. 88.
woman in French, showing a female perspective on love, desire and marriage. Most unusually for a female author, Crenne wrote part two in the persona of Hélisenne’s lover Guenelic, following his adventures with Quezinstra as he tried to find Hélisenne who had been locked in a tower by her husband. Crenne even depicted the eventual consummation of the lovers’ illicit affair: “The night accompanied by desire, permitted me no rest”. The final section narrated by Quezinstra considered the downfall of the lovers. Crenne’s bold discussion of female sexual desire could be justified both as a fiction and as an instructional tale, since she portrayed how love affected and eventually destroyed characters who were obsessed with passion and blind to reason.

Mounting a powerful defence of her writing, Hélisenne de Crenne demonstrated the difficulties central to women’s discussion of female sexuality. This defence appeared in her next printed work, the 1540 Epistres familiaires et invectives, which was a collection of letters. The five epistres invectives directly addressed criticism associated with the publication of her love story narrated in part by an adulterous married women, in the Angoysses. Three letters formed part of correspondence with her husband, one of which purported to be from her husband. The remaining two letters were defences Crenne wrote to other detractors. In the epistres invectives, Crenne both anticipated criticism of her novel and addressed it. Her “husband”’s letter summarized what such criticism were, claiming:

you propose for your defence to advance the remonstrances that you make to Ladies in your Angoysses. You must not think that this fabrication is so effective that it can hide your abominable vices: how ever much you say that by this you feign not to be suffering from lechery, for all women who are surprised and stained by lust, desire to see all others contaminated by the same vice.

60 “La nuit accompagnée de désir, ne me permit aucunement de reposer”, in Angoysses in Œuvres, 1560, fol. Diii. v°.
62 “pour ta deffence tu proposes, mettant en auant les remonstrances que tu fais aux Dames en tes angoisses: tu ne doibs croire que ceste simulation ayt tant d’efficace, qu’elle puisse tes abhominables vices cacher: car co-bien que tu dises q- par cela tu faisons n’estre de lubricité atainte, pourque que toutes femmes qui so-t de luxe esprises & maculees, desiren de veoir toutes les autres de semblable vie contaminer”, in Epistres in Œuvres, sig. Nij r°.
Crenne’s preface which suggested the work would be instructive to other women was, her “husband” argued, a fabrication borne of “female subtlety” designed to mask publicly her desire to divulge her lustful deeds to other women.⁶³

Crenne had prepared her defences against such criticisms of her public discussion of a married woman’s adulterous love. These she exposed in print through her *epistres invectives*. To her “husband”, she wrote that his criticisms were based on personal hatred rather than rationality:

You imagined that that (which I wrote to avoid boredom) was composed by me in perpetual memory of a shameless love. And moreover, you think that such lechery has been experienced by me ... it is easy to conjecture that if with a calm mind you had clearly considered my writing, you would change your mind, at least if your anger was not more founded on the desire to persecute me than on reason. I would desire that you might think about how in several places in my compositions I detest illicit love and with affectionate desire I pray Ladies always to live chastely. By my remonstrances, any prudent and wise man must think my heart pure and chaste.⁶⁴[my italics]

She claimed that her book was made for intelligent people who could discriminate between fact and fiction:

With sorrowful anxiety, I am agitated when I remember what I heard proffered from your abominable mouth ... certainly these works of yours are altogether contrary to my desire, because I would like my books to be shown always to learned people.⁶⁵[my italics]

Therefore, Crenne ingeniously suggested, by criticizing her text as the work of a lascivious woman, Hélisennne’s detractors showed themselves to be ignorant.

⁶³ “subtilite feminine”, in *ibid.*, sig. Nij v°.
⁶⁴ “tu as estime cela (que pour euiter occiositd ay escrit) estre par moy compose, pour faire perpetuelle commemoration d’une amour impudique. Et d’avantage tu crois que telle lasciuete se soit en ma personne experimentee ... il est facile a conjecturer que si auec pensee reposee tu auois distinctement consideré mes escriptz, tu mueois d’opinions, aumoins si ton ire n’estoit plus fondee en l’appetit de me persescuter qu’en la raison. Bien desiroys, que souuent tu t’occupasses, a penser comment en plusieurs lieux de mes compositions ie deteste amour illicite, & auec affectueux desir ie prie les Dames de tousiours le viure pudicque obseruer. Par ces remonstrances miennes, tout homme prudent & discret doibt croyre mon cuer estre pur & chaste”, in *ibid.*, sig. Miiii r°.
⁶⁵ “de douloureuse anxiete suis agitee quand me souuient que de ta bouche abominable i’ay ouy proferer ... certainement ces parolles tienes sont du tout contraires à mon desir, pource que bien vouldrois, que mes liures fussent touiours monstrez aux scauantes personnes”, in *ibid.*, sig. [Ovi v°].
Other women exploited the realistic prose form of the *nouvelle* to discuss sexuality. The *nouvelle* was grounded in contemporary reality, tied to a particular time and circumstances and recalling everyday experiences in the normal realm of possibilities. By the mid-sixteenth century, literary style had moved towards these increasingly moralistic tales which were situated in contemporary history. Marguerite de Navarre’s 1559 publication *L’Heptaméron des nouvelles de Marguerite de Valois, royne de Navarre* was clearly in this genre. The work was based around a group of courtiers, five men and five women, stranded in a remote part of the Navarre kingdom who decided to tell tales to pass the time until a new bridge could be built to reach them. Her prologue differentiated her work from Boccaccio’s *Decameron*, establishing her intention to present only true stories but not altering their generally lewd content.

Marguerite emphasized the availability of space for women to tell stories which were often bawdy and vulgar. Three female characters, Parlamente, Longarine and Ennasuite initiated the search for a suitable pastime, asking the older maternal figure, Oisille, for suggestions. Oisille replied customarily that they should spend their time in Christian contemplation. It was Parlamente who eventually proposes the story telling and defines its objective and form, particularly referring to Boccaccio’s ribald *Decameron* as a source. In a fascinating strategy, Marguerite has the character Parlamente suggest that the story-telling is legitimized as an imitation of court practices and, particularly, those of Marguerite de Navarre herself: “I hear that the two ladies named above [madame la Dauphine, madame Marguerite] ... resolved to write no *nouvelle* which is not a true story. And the said ladies promised ... to each write ten of them ... This enterprise ... through our long leisure could be completed in ten days”. This self-referential strategy made Marguerite the authorizing figure of her own work, requiring no further legitimization. Marguerite implied that the acceptance of the female voice at court, where storytelling allowed noblewomen to

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67 “J’ouïs les deux dames dessus nommées [madame la Dauphine, madame Marguerite] ... se délibérèrent de n’écrire nulle nouvelle qui ne soit véritables histoire. Et promirent lesdites dames ... d’en faire chacun dix ... cette entreprise .. par notre long loisir pourra en dix jours être mise à fin”, in Heptameron, (ed.) S. de Reyff, Paris, Flammarion, 1982, pp. 47-8.
be participants justified its replication in another social context which specifically excluded "those who have studied or are men of letters". The unusual freedom of self-expression for both female and male narrators was explicitly reinforced at several points; none more so than in Hircan's statement that "at games we are all equal". Within the context of a non-serious and fictional situation, equality could exist for both sexes to speak about sexual matters.

The Heptameron was also a moralizing work, with an intrusive framework of analysis by the ten characters after each tale. The device of collective discussion of the stories by both male and female characters helped to reflect on the stories' moral aspects. Cathleen Bauschatz argues that this allowed Marguerite to show a variety of reactions to the same story, which were not necessarily gendered responses. Yet Bauschatz has also observed that many of the tales end with the narrator addressing the women of the group, "there you are, ladies". She suggests that Marguerite's moral message was directed specifically at women. Indeed, some of the manuscript copies of Marguerite's work have no narrator response after the tales but only a brief discussion of the tale's content by a single authorial persona. This unidentified persona still concluded tales with the address "there you have it, ladies" which suggests that, from an early stage in the work's conception, the didactic element was aimed at women readers. However, as Bauschatz observes, Marguerite leaves no clear guidelines as to how the female reader was to apply the tale. The variety of narrator responses suggests her aim was to acknowledge the diversity of possible reactions. Furthermore, Marguerite's device emphasized the power of individual interpretation, engaging the reader to take responsibility for defining a moral to guide their life, and particularly empowering female readers. If Marguerite's primary didactic message was for women, she was asking them to value their own

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68 "ceux qui avaient étudié et étaient gens de lettres", in ibid., p. 48.
69 "au jeu nous sommes tous égaux", in ibid., p. 49.
71 Ibid., pp. 104-5.
72 See, for example, BN ms. fr. 1513.
73 Bauschatz, "Voylà, mes dames", p. 111.
Marguerite opened up a vast range of sexual possibilities for both women and men in her tales. Furthermore, she problematized the simplistic and neat division between “good” chaste women or bad, sexually aware women, emphasizing the complexities of sexualities. Many of the sexual topics she addressed were scandalous to contemporaries, ranging from adultery to rape and incest. With extraordinary boldness for a woman writer, Marguerite broached incest as a complicated emotional and sexual issue. In the thirtieth nouvelle, a mother wishing to punish her son for making sexual advances on a maidservant, swaps places with her in order to chastise him for his conduct when he attempts to meet with her at night. However, the mother finds she is unable to resist her son’s sexual passion and “when she began to descend the first step of her honesty she found herself suddenly carried on until the last”.74

Marguerite also drew attention to complex class considerations in her discussions of female sexuality. She demonstrated how women might support patriarchal culture in order to protect their own sexual reputation and position in the hierarchy of society. The young bourgeoisie Françoise, in the forty-second nouvelle, defends her chastity against a young prince by her steadfast refusal. However, rather than insisting that all women would prefer their chastity and honourable marriage, Françoise encourages him to pursue other women by suggesting that he find pleasure with poor women in her village: “you will find enough of them ... who will not give you the trouble to beg them so much ... whom you will make happy in buying their honour”.75 In the sixty-first tale Marguerite examined the intricate emotional bond that might lead a woman to break a social taboo by living with a canon. When the woman is brought before Louise de Savoie, Claude the Queen, and Marguerite herself, she boldly announces that “whosoever separates us will commit a great sin”.76 Marguerite pushed the boundaries of acceptable female presentation of sexuality in an extraordinary way.

74 “quand elle vint à descendre le premier degré de son honnêteté, se trouva soudainement portée jusqu’au dernier”, in Heptameron, (ed.) Reyff, p. 281.
75 “vous en trouverez assez ... qui ne vous donneront la peine de les prier tant ... et qui vous ferez plaisir en achetant leur honneur?” in ibid., p. 348.
76 “qui nous séperera fera grand péché”, in ibid., p. 441.
She delved into complex and difficult social and sexual issues to tease out the complexities of human relations.

Marguerite’s narrators also had differing and often opposing viewpoints of the characters’ morality. “You always have the most false opinions”, says Oisille of a male narrator, Saffredent, “for you think that all women are just like you”.\(^7\) Marguerite’s *Heptameron* is a intricately crafted and highly complex text. Both the *nouvelles* and the opinions of the narrators reflect a variety of perceptions of sexuality. Thus while Marguerite’s specific views on female sexuality are debatable, one aspect is evident. Marguerite emphasized the problematic contrast, not only between “good” and “bad” women, but also between male and female sexuality. People of either sex would act according to their individual natures. She sought to dispel the stereotypes of the universal female sexual nature, avidly seeking sexual fulfilment, that contemporary commentators imagined. Marguerite’s *Heptameron* suggested that neither women’s characters nor their sexual natures could be predicted on the basis of their sex.

Unique amongst female authors was Louise Labé whose love sonnets reflected an acceptance and even celebration of her sexual nature on a par with her male Petrarchan counterparts. She accorded an equal representation to both the emotional and physical facets of love. Her sonnets used typically Petrarchan expressions of heat and cold: “I am on fire and I drown, I am excessively hot as I sustain coldness”.\(^7\) Labé described desire from a female perspective, unlike conventional male writers’ poetry from the point of view of the male lover. Labé continued to challenge the conventions of female published discourse by creating her poetry in a unique reversed world. Characterized by a desired and inaccessible love object, placed high above the suffering lover, the Petrarchan sonnet was conventionally the domain of men. By using its terms and images, but writing as a woman worshipping her male lover, Labé inverted the norms of passive femininity that Petrarchism assumed. “O beautiful brown eyes, O eyes that turn away from me”,

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\(^7\) “Vous avez toujours les plus fausses opinions”, “car il vous semble que toutes les femmes soient de votre complexion”, in *ibid.*, p. 414.

\(^7\) (Cameron’s translation) “Je me brule et noye./ J’ay chaut estreme en endurant froidure,”
she wrote of her male lover. Whilst this extraordinary construction raised Labé’s male lover to a higher status, potentially reinforcing the gendered social reality, in Labé’s verse, as in that of the male poets, her muse was passive. Labé was the active and vocal agent in the poetic relationship. Yet she also retained all of the power which male poets bestowed on the female muse. When male writers, such as Ronsard, wrote, they declared that they were struck with love by the power of the woman’s eyes. Thus Labé, rather than reversing the image and declaring herself captivated by masculine eyes, described herself as the captivator: “But on seeing him, I shall so welcome him, I shall so use the power of my eyes ... that in very little time I shall make a great conquest”. Labé selectively adapted aspects of male poets’ discourse which gave her increased agency as well as retaining the power granted to a female muse.

Louise Labé spoke of her lover and their physical passion in explicit terms: “But now that you have enflamed me, And I am at the stage where you wanted me”. Incredibly for a female author, some verses appear to depict orgasm: “If while holding him close in my arms, As the tree is surrounded by Ivy, Death were to come, envious of my contentment: And he would gently kiss me more And my spirit would escape on his lips, Then I would die and so be happier than I am now in life.” Labé gave voice to the mute female muse so often described in the poetry of her contemporary male poets. By contrast, she demanded to be satisfied sexually and emotionally: “Kiss me again, rekiss me and kiss: Give me one of your most savoury ones, Give me one of your most loving ones: I shall return it with four hotter than burning coals. And so, mingling such happy kisses of ours, Let us enjoy one another to our heart’s content”. The verb jouir had and still retains a sexual meaning, and was commonly used by male writers in urging their ladies to give them satisfaction.

79 “O beaus yeus bruns, ô regars destournez”, in ibid., p. 63.
80 “Mais le voyant, tant lui feray de feste/ Tant emploiray de mes yeus le pouvoir,/ ... Qu’en peu de temps feray grande conqueste”, in ibid., p. 67.
81 “Mais maintenant que tu m’as embrassee,/ Et suis au point auquel tu me voulois”, in ibid. p. 77.
82 “Si de mes bras le tenant accollé,/ Comme du Lierre est l’arbre encercelé,/ La mort venoit, de mon aise envieuse,/ Lors que souef plus il me baiseroit,/ Et mon esprit sur ses levres fuiroit, Bien je mourrois, plus que vivante, heureuse”, in ibid., p. 74.
83 “Baise m’encor, rebaise moy et baise:/ Donne m’en un de tes plus savoureus,/ Donne m’en un de tes plus amoureus:/ Je t’en rendray quatre plus chaus que braise .../ Ainsi meslans nos baiers tant heureus,/ Jouissous nous l’un de l’autre à notre aise”, in ibid., pp. 78-9.
Labé rejected the conventionally passive role of women in sexual matters. Sexuality, in Labé’s work, was an important facet of human experience, and her work resisted conventions which denied women both discussion and experience of physical passion. Yet even as she rejected the reluctance to acknowledge female sexuality that other women writers presented, she was still aware of the social pressures of virtue and fidelity to a single lover. Labé’s female persona was still faithful to one man alone, although depicted as a lover not a husband.

Such bold discussion of female sexuality was not without danger to the good reputation of female authors. Both Héloïse de Crenne and Marguerite de Navarre shielded their public speech behind the discourse of fiction. Marguerite, whose *Heptaméron* did not appear in print until after her death, was also protected by her powerful position from sustained criticism. However, the attacks on the reputation of Louise Labé may be instructive as to why so few women dared celebrate female sexuality in publication. Although her immediate contemporaries praised her learning, virtue and chaste mind, to later-sixteenth-century readers, Labé was remembered in mixed ways. In 1573, she was “this shameless Loyse l’Abbé, that everyone knows to have been a public whore until her death”.84 No woman would have published such a work suggested Pierre de Saint-Julien in 1584, “a work which has more the flavour of the erudite lasciviousness of the mind of Maurice Scève than of a simple courtesan”.85 In the same year, Antoine du Verdier declared that: “it was not because she was a courtesan that I have placed her in this Library, but only for having written”.86 However, he spent as much of the entry treating her supposed


exploits as her poetic work. The woman who dared to speak out publicly to explore female sexuality would herself be judged not by her work but by her reputation.

*Turning the tables: critiquing male sexuality*

Several women writers offered alternative perceptions of men’s sexual natures. They argued that it was men who needed to control their avid sexual desires. Gabrielle de Coignard celebrated female virginity contrasted to “old men filled with lubricity”. Nicole Estienne’s striking commentary on marriage attacked the husband for “following his weak, lascivious desires, he sowed his loves in thousands of places” and “made love ... with various mistresses”. She suggested that women were given to men “so as to correct their bad nature”. A few female authors focussed on men’s sexual aggression towards women. Others addressed men’s treatment of women in marriage. Women drew attention to their experiences of adulterous men and husbands’ sexual jealousies, particularly towards young wives.

Within marriage, husbands were all powerful. As wives, women’s lives were largely determined by their husbands, as one work by women reflected. Madame de Grantmont observed in an *Adieu* to Jeanne d’Albret upon the latter’s marriage:

> I lose sight of you and I do not know for how long
> For a husband will take either you or me,
> thus I must be distanced from your view.

However, Grantmont hoped that “those who take us, will give us greater freedom to see each other again”. As earlier chapters have shown, it was commonplace among the elite for marriage to occur between older men and young girls. Since women of the wealthy social levels were more likely to die before their husbands, often in childbirth, remarriages were frequently made between older widowers and young,

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87 “les vieillards pleins de lubricité”, in *Œuvres chrestiennes*, p. 235.
89 “afin de corriger ce mauvais naturel”, in *ibid.*, p. 33.
90 “Te perds de veiie, & ne scay pour combien./ Car un Mary ou toy ou moy prendra, / Do-t eslo-gner ta veiie”, in *Suyte des Marguerites de la Marguerite des princesses*, Lyons, Jean de Tournes, 1549, p. 812.
91 “ceux, qui nous pre-dront,/ En liberté plus grande nous rendront/ De nous revoir”, in *ibid.*, pp. 812-3.
and hopefully fertile, girls. Several women writers devoted much of their writing to criticism of this practice which they argued could lead to sexual domination and jealousy by husbands.

Jeanne Flore's *Contes amoureux*, published in the 1530s, explored several stories where unhappy marriages were the result of partners mismatched in age. Her seven *contes* were told by five women in a group gathered together to pick grapes. Their tales primarily concern the situation of women in marriage. Flore's *contes* took place in the world of chivalry with magical events, divine intervention and giants. Gabriel-A. Pérouse uses the term *conte* to define the type of short stories not fixed to any time nor place, outside of the realm of everyday experiences and often drawing on fantastic and magical elements. The stories could be from pre-Christian or pagan traditions. Ian McFarlane also observed that *contes* were often satiric, focussing on conventional targets such as monks, women, doctors and lawyers. He suggested that their rudimentary characterization could be explained the fact that they were presenting types, not reality. Yet Flore used this form to critique the reality of contemporary marriage practices in France, particularly the unhappy marriages of young girls betrothed to much older men. The fictional world was a safer place to situate a group of tales disrupting the social fabric by suggesting women follow love not convention. As Flore insisted in the epilogue, "In conclusion, I want to warn you that all this was a fiction of poetry. And thus, do not gloss to my disadvantage other things in my work that are not there". Her insistence of fictionality functioned as protection for her public boldness in speaking about the contemporary reality of women's positions in arranged marriages.

Flore's stories demonstrated how mismatched partners were bound for discontent. Her tales suggested women were denied love by the large age differences between marriage partners. One character lamented:

92 See discussion of age differences between partners in elite marriages in chapter 2, pp. 73-74 and of maternal and child death rates in chapter 5, pp. 165-167.
93 Pérouse, p. 13.
94 McFarlane, p. 235.
95 "Je t'ay voulu pour la conclusion/ Bien advertir que tout ce est fiction/ De poésie. Et pour ce donc ne gloses/ Point aultrement en mon œuvre les choses/ Qu'elles ne sont, à mon desadvantaiges", in
most often by the will of our relatives we are joined by the adamantine tie of marriage to old men who already have one foot in the grave ... we are constrained to wear out our unhappy years, in what sadness God only knows.\(^6\)

Flore had borrowed large excerpts of her texts from earlier works, usually Italian, Provencal or Latin sources. Yet these sources were clearly directed and adapted to suit her own authorial intentions and Régine Reynolds-Cornell argues that Flore suppressed Christian and moral lessons in these sources to suit her own message which rejected conventional marriage and social customs in the pursuit of love.\(^7\) The work’s subtitle displayed its didactic intention: “concerning the punishment Venus gives to those who denigrate and scorn true Love”. Her epilogue, “Jeanne Flore to the Reader”, clearly stated her concluding message to her audience: “I blame here mismatched marriage”.\(^8\)

The sexual and physical domination of young wives by their elderly husbands was criticized by some women authors. Hélisenne de Crenne described a jealous husband who frequently resorted to physical violence in his efforts to control his young wife emotionally and sexually. Her first published work in 1538, *Les Angoisses douloureuses qui procedent d’amours*, told the semi-autobiographical tale of a disastrous love affair of an unhappily married young woman, Hélisenne, married at eleven to an older man. Hélisenne later falls in love with the young and handsome Guenelic. Crenne, through the persona of Hélisenne, focussed on the extreme physical violence to which wives were subjected if they exposed their husband to sexual humiliation. In the eleventh chapter, Hélisenne described how her husband, impotent to alter her passion for Guenelic: “by great fury and impetuosity, gave me a great blow so that ... I broke

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\(^8\) *touchant la punition que fait Venus de ceulx qui contemnent & mesprisent le vray Amour* and “Je blasme icy l’impareil mariaige”, *Contes amoureux*, p. 225.
two teeth: because of which I was in extreme pain for a long time without showing signs of life".\(^9^9\) On several other occasions, the husband is prevented from severely beating his wife only by the intervention of the couple’s servants. Significantly, Crenne depicted a disastrous love affair as stemming from the very type of mismatched marriage that Flore warned against in her *Comptes amoureux*, which suggests that both women authors addressed a common female concern of the disadvantages of arranged marriages from a woman’s perspective.

Nicole Estienne produced an extraordinary and impassioned criticism of what she saw as women’s debasement and subservient position in marriage. She portrayed young married women like herself who were “hardly ... out of childhood and have not yet knowledge of the world” “and thus we leave the gentleness of our mothers, the paternal household and our sisters and brothers”.\(^1^0^0\) Estienne revealed that jealousy was a reason why husbands wanted to control their wives’ sexuality: “he, remembering his wild youth, if his wife leaves him for a short while, he thinks she will play a trick on him”.\(^1^0^1\) Wives were reduced to little more than a “chambermaid” or a “captive” who “must ... hope for death”.\(^1^0^2\) With insight and courage, she argued that men’s sexual jealousy and domination could be exercised upon women’s bodies and minds with abject cruelty and no redress:

One can’t imagine how much torment the young wife endures, with both body and soul subject to a old man full of cruelty who enjoys her youth at his will ... because he is great in possessions and dignity.\(^1^0^3\)

\(^9^9\) “par si grand fureur & impetuosité me donna si grand coup, que ... ie me rompy deux dentz: dont de l’extreme douleur ie fuz longue espace sans mo-strer signe vital”, in *Angoysses in Œuvres*, sig. [dvii v\(^6^\)-dvii r\(^0^\)].
\(^1^0^0\) “A peine maintenant sommes-nous hors d’enfance/ Et n’avons pas encor du monde cognoissance”, “Ainsi donc nous laissons la douceur de nos mères,/ La maison paternelle et nos soeurs et nos frères”, in *Miseres et Grandeur*, (ed.) Zinguer, pp. 33, 34.
\(^1^0^1\) “Et luy se souvenant de sa folle jeunesse/ Si tant soit peu sa femme aucune fois le laisse/ Pense qu’elle luy veut jouer un mauvais tour”, in *ibid.*, p. 36.
\(^1^0^2\) “chambrière”, “captive”, “elle doit ... à la mort espérer”, in *ibid.*, pp. 17, 17 and 40.
\(^1^0^3\) “On ne saurait penser combien la jeune femme/ Endure de tourment, et au corps et à l’amé/ Subjette à un vieillard remply de cruauté/ Qui jouit à son gré d’une jeunesse telle;/ ... pource qu’il est grand en biens et dignité”, in *ibid.*, p. 35.
“Nothing” declared Estienne vehemently, could be “more tormented, than women subject to iniquitous men, who, deprived of love, make themselves masters of their wives’ bodies and will by their tyrannical laws”.104

Estienne’s incisive criticism revealed her awareness of the extent to which men were empowered through contemporary perceptions of women’s bodies and sexuality. Estienne’s logic seems to stem from the belief that by denying the existence of female desire, women could deny men power over their bodies. She never mentioned female sexual desire in her work, only shame and a desire for total abstinence: “It is the spirit and this soul ... which make one virtuous ... and not [the spirit] which only stops at the corruptible, the body common to all animals”.105 Exploited by men for their own purposes, the female body could only be a source of oppression for women. Estienne denied the existence of female sexual desire in order to empower women, leaving husbands no means by which to manipulate their wives.

Female authors depicted male power and authority as the underlying cause behind sexual aggression against women. It is difficult to determine clear cases of rape within the context of sixteenth-century society. Women such as Claudine Scève and Marguerite de Navarre described sexual aggression and violence without using the term rape. Linguistically, as Patricia Francis Cholakian has demonstrated, the terminology of rape is not clear cut, with both connotations of enjoyment and violent aggression. A phrase such as elle est ravie can mean both “she is ravished”, that is, raped, or “she is delighted”.106 Furthermore, she argues that in contemporary literary tradition, “rape and seduction amounted to the same thing”.107 Popular songs such as those of Gabriel Coste celebrated seemingly non-consenting sexual acts: “seize hold of her and tip her over on her back but take care she doesn’t cry out, speak to her

104 “Rien ... de plus tourmenté/ Que la femme subjette à ces hommes iniques,/ Qui despourvuez d’amour, par leurs loix tiraniques/ Se font maistres du corps, et de la volonté”, in ibid., p. 32.
105 “c’est l’esprit et ceste ame .../ Qui fait le vertueux .../ Et non pas celuy-la qui seulement s’arreste;/ Au corruptible, corps commun à toute beste”, in ibid., p. 37.
107 Ibid., p. 12.
sweetly and beguilingly ... and if both her knees are spread open put yourself between them if you are willing and ready".108

The rape narratives of Claudine Scève and Marguerite de Navarre both emphasize the violence of the crime without discussing its sexual component in detail. Garthine Walker’s examination of rape testimonies in early modern England reveals that women’s narratives frequently defined rape in similar terms, as a violent, not sexual crime.109 She argues convincingly that women could not use sexual language to describe their rape experience for fear of losing their good reputation. By contrast however, male narratives depicted rape as a sexual act and in doing so, they focussed attention on to female behaviour and responsibility for the crime.110 Walker argues that even in consenting heterosexual acts women were seen as passive recipients of male seed, upon whom children were “begotten”. Therefore, if rape were portrayed as a sexual act, women must have consented by definition.111 Cholakian’s study of rape in the Heptameron revealed that Marguerite de Navarre demonstrated similar gendered rape narratives by juxtaposing male and female narrations of rape stories by her characters. While male narrators speak of it as a “heroic quest” or even a “joke”, Marguerite’s women narrators portray rape “stripped of its fictional disguises and revealed as violence, even murder”.112 Female narrators depicted women as more noble and virtuous that male characters and “not as the instigators of cuckoldry but as victims of masculine aggression”.113 Women, whether in real rape depositions, or in fiction, were restricted to speaking of rape as male violence because to use the language of sex would damage their honourable reputation and to construct the crime as a sexual act might imply their consent.

Women writers’ narratives of rape demonstrated that punishments for such aggression varied depending on the circumstances of the victim and aggressor(s). As

108 Lyrics published in the brochure (intro. H. Vanhulst) accompanying a recent recording of sixteenth-century popular songs. Une Fête chez Rabelais: Chansons et pièces populaires, Arles, harmonia mundi, 1994, p. 29. I have been unable to sight an original copy of the text.
110 Ibid., p. 5.
111 Ibid., p. 6.
112 Cholakian, pp. 217, 218.
113 Ibid., p. 218.
Jacques Rossiaud observes, in fifteenth-century Dijon the rape of a prostitute was not considered a crime because a fallen woman was considered common to all. In the 1530 court case of a young woman, Didière, who was seduced by Marc Masson, Masson's "right" to have intercourse with her, regardless of her own sentiments, revolved around whether Didière was reputed in her town as a fille de bien or meschante. The trial implied that had her reputation been in doubt, Masson could have raped her without the resistance of the townfolk. Miranda Chaytor has argued that rape was conceived of in the early modern period as a theft, involving two participants, the robber and the robbed, the man who "owned" the woman. Her research on rape and sexual violence in early modern England reveals that in her data no women who pursued prosecution for rape was a widow. This suggests that the crime was viewed as important (perhaps to rape survivors but particularly to those men who would pass legal judgement) only where a man's rightful possession of a woman had been violated.

Claudine Scève, who translated Urbain in the 1530s, presented Silvestre's "pregnancy by Fédéric" as sexual aggression. Even while he woos her, Fédéric warns her of his "amorous desires which ... [he] can carry out by force". When Silvestre tries to flee from him, Fédéric:

following her, hugging her, he held her and while flattering her, he admonished her to restrain her flight. She already all trembling in his arms, like the innocent Daphne transformed in those of Phoebus. With so many humble prayers and pitiful tears all the time with her hands she tried to escape from the constraining arms of Federic, and almost conquered by him, began as much as she could to cry out. But all the same, in the end she was forced to consent that her pure virginity be stained by him.

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115 Flandrin, p. 232.
117 Ibid., p. 385.
118 "Silvestre ieune fille et pouvre/de Federic Barbe Rousse iiie de ce nom empeure (inco-gneu) enceinte", in Urbain, Lyons, Claude Nourry, [1530?] sig. Ai v°.
119 "des amoureux desirs desquelz par force ie puis user", in ibid., sig. aiii v°.
120 "en la suyva-U en embrassant la print/ et la blandissant ladmo-nestoit refrener sa fuytte. Elle ia toute tre-blant entre les bras dicelluy ainsi comme la innocent Daphne en iceulx de Phebus transformee. Davecques qua-tes humbles prieres/ et avecq-s qua-tes piteuses larmes a toute heure avec les mains sefforcoit deschapper detre les estroicts bras de Federic et quasi de luy vaincue co-menca ta-t
Afterwards, Silvestre reiterated her non-compliance to Fédéric, saying:

you have made me experience it without my consent. Nothing in the world was left to me but my chastity. And you, by violating it, have taken all my honour with it. And I can complain to no one but the forest, stars and birds as my witnesses to this defloretion you committed against my will.  

Scève's translation emphasised that Silvestre was unable to protect her own body from the desires of men. Love may have been a game in courtly romances but Scève demonstrated its disastrous consequences for women. From her portrayal of a female perspective, the destruction such actions caused to a fragile female reputation was shown to be both irreparable and beyond a woman's control.

As we have seen earlier, Marguerite de Navarre's *Heptameron* was a trenchant commentary on contemporary social and sexual attitudes. Gary Ferguson has argued that the constant *leitmotif* of the work was for women to be wary of the deceitful rhetoric of both male characters and narrators.  

Cholakian, whose research in *Rape and Writing in the Heptaméron of Marguerite de Navarre* is both exhaustive and revealing, suggests Marguerite was herself the victim of sexual aggression, depicted in the fourth *nouvelle*. It "was the traumatic experience of near-rape, fictionalized in Novella 4, that originally compelled Marguerite de Navarre to collect and write stories about sexual assault".

Here, I will juxtapose only two *nouvelles* which concerned seduction, rape and attempted rape to create an image of notions of the female body and female sexuality. In the second *nouvelle*, a valet "broke a wall which was between the room
where he slept and that of his mistress” and by consequence, rapes the woman.\textsuperscript{124} Mary Baker has argued convincingly that Marguerite used symbolism such as open or shut doors and walls, indicating access or barriers, to determine the innocence or compliance of victims of sexual aggression.\textsuperscript{125} This correlates exactly with Garthine Walker’s examination of real rape depositions by women in early modern England in which she finds metaphors of open, closed and locked doors conveyed meanings about the intentions and values of the aggressor and the rape survivor.\textsuperscript{126} In Marguerite’s \textit{nouvelle}, the need for the valet to break the barriers of his mistress into pieces by violence suggests the lack of desire of the woman and her innocence in the rape. Furthermore, the woman prefers to be killed than to succumb to the desires of her socially inferior domestic servant. In the discussion that ensues, she is praised by the narrators of the \textit{Heptaméron}, for her “beautiful virtue of chastity” despite the fact that this produced her death.\textsuperscript{127} The connection Marguerite drew between rape and murder showed the importance of chastity. Death was preferable to living with the shame of female dishonour. The domestic who affronted a figure of authority, by raping the wife of a man of higher social standing and violating his superior’s right to possess her alone, committed a heinous crime against the order of society.

Finally, Marguerite portrayed male aggression in rape as a subtext for woman’s right to her own opinion and self, one of the central preoccupations of all female authors. In the attempted rape in her tenth \textit{nouvelle}, Amadour becomes obsessed by a “victory” over Floride at any price, after she refuses his advances. Marguerite presented a male view through Hircan who criticizes Amadour saying: “if Amadour had had more love and less fear he would not have desisted from his attempt for so little”.\textsuperscript{128} The vocabulary of the \textit{conte} becomes more and more militant and violent as Amadour explains:

\begin{quote}
\textit{But just as in a great war necessity compels men to devastate their own possessions and to destroy their corn in the blade, that the
\end{quote}

\begin{footnotes}
\item[124] “rompit ung ais, qui était entre la chambre où il couchait et celle de sa maîtresse”, in \textit{Heptaméron}, (ed.) Reyff, p. 57.
\end{footnotes}
enemy may derive no profit there from, so do I risk anticipating the fruit which I had hoped to gather in season, lest your enemies and mine profit by it to your detriment.¹²⁹

Significantly, Amadour believes that because he desires her, Floride’s body is his possession, despite the fact that she is already married. Floride’s sole means of defence is to disfigure her face. Here, Marguerite presented the female body as a source of power. Floride’s voluntary mutilation represents the mutilation that rape would mean to her reputation and character. However, it is a weapon that Amadour nullifies: “the disfiguring of your face, which I believe to be of your own doing, will not prevent me from having my will”.¹³⁰ As Carla Freccero has argued convincingly, Floride’s self-mutilation is a sign of textual and political resistance but also as an ultimately unsuccessful attempt at female self-representation.¹³¹ Both Marguerite and Claudine Scève’s depictions of male sexual aggression demonstrated the difficulties for women to retain control of their own bodies. They depicted the struggle between the sexes for possession of the female body and mind as symbolic of their fight for women’s right to independent action, thought and speech.

An analysis of women writers demonstrates the myriad points of view which women writers held about their sexuality. None seemed to construct female sexuality outside a heterosexual context. Literary women occupied an ambiguous position between their knowledge of literature and sciences of patriarchal society which condemned the avid sexuality of “woman” and their own perceptions of their sexual nature. While some women advocated virginity or chastity in marriage, others found rhetorical space, often within fictional genres, to acknowledge different desires. They emphasized that there was no generic “female nature” but natural variations between women. Others used their publications to argue that male sexual desire was excessive.

¹²⁹ (Saintsbury’s translation) “mais, ma Dame, tout ainsy que la nécessité en une forte guerre contractant faire le dégaisit de son propre bien et ruiner le bled en herbe de paour que l'enemy n'en puisse faire son profict, ainsi prens je le hazard de advancer le fruict que aveccq le temps j'espéris cueillard, pour garder que les enemys de vous et de moy n'en peussent faire leur point à vostre dommaige”, The Heptameron, p. 41.
¹³⁰ “la difformité de votre visage, que je pense être faite de votre volonté, ne m'empêchera point de faire la miene”, Heptaméron, (ed.) Reyff, p. 119.
and in need of regulation. They demonstrated the detrimental effects to women of uncontrolled male sexuality and of husbands' unchecked power.

Although it was among the most difficult topics for female authors to broach, female sexuality was also one of the most important subjects they addressed. Contemporary perception of women's avid and uncontrollable sexual desires were at the core of restrictions on female publication. It was precisely because men feared the loss of female modesty and chastity if women published, that women were pushed to the edges of contribution in both scribal and print publication. If female authors could influence the way in which their sexuality was viewed by society, by demonstrating that women were not sexually obsessed but were rational beings, and that by publishing they would not become immodest and unchaste, then they could remove one of the principal barriers to their participation in publication.
CONCLUSIONS

How did the introduction of the print medium in 1470 affect women in publication over the following one hundred years or so? In some ways, very little. The print medium inherited many of the gendered traditions of manuscript production and dissemination. There were few differences between women’s experiences as authors in the scribal and print mediums. Women justified their act of publication in both manuscripts and printed texts, as contemporaries conceived of writing in both mediums as a public action. Female authored writings broached similar topics and appeared in similar locations in both scribal and printed publication. Future studies of women writing must discard the convenient but unrepresentative distinction between a dangerous public world of print and the “safe” privacy of manuscript circulation for female authors.

However, in other ways, the print medium also offered women unprecedented means of access to publication culture. The financial imperatives of publishers meant that printed texts needed to be marketable to a wide reading public. Readers’ interests in topical events, romances and practical advice enabled a wider group of people to become authors, including women. Over the sixteenth century, amounts of marginal material such as prefatory letters or verse, an area of texts to which many women contributed, increased in printed books. Women could access intellectual or literary discussions from which they were distanced by gender, class and geography, by reading widely distributed printed texts. Further, print offered them opportunities to contribute themselves. The broadening of text production and dissemination from ecclesiastical and intellectual institutions to commercial enterprises also allowed women to participate in publication culture as workers in the print trades.

Those women who were involved in publication culture did have something to contribute to contemporary discourses. Many infused their particular mode of participation with a spirit of loyalty amongst women and belief in their worth. Elite women such as Anne de Bretagne, Marguerite de France and Queen Claude promoted female participation in publication by commissioning many scribal and printed texts both about women and by female authors. Similarly, many other literate
women supported a female presence in publication in a more modest way, by buying, collecting and reading texts by and about women. Women working as printers, publishers and booksellers exploited their access to the new medium to argue for their right to participate in publication culture as professional businesswomen. Women who contributed to publication may have been divided in reality by many factors of class, social standing or situation, but they shared a desire to use their experiences of publication for the advancement of all women.

Beyond these broad conclusions, few generalisations can be made about women's experiences of publication. My thesis has offered a history of eighty-seven individual women. Each woman has a valuable story to tell about her own relationship to publication, her life experiences and her own identity. Charlotte de Minut's politically charged prefaces were extremely unusual in sixteenth-century French women's literature. Hélisenne de Crenne was the first writer of either sex to publish an autobiography in French, the first to publish a series of letters in the vernacular and the first to print a translation into French of Virgil's *Aeneid*. Similarly, Marguerite de Navarre was unique, because of both her status and its consequent effect on her publications. Louise Labé's bold treatment of sexuality was exceptional amongst female authors. All eighty-seven women deserve to be studied further, in the light of broad cultural movements and their individual contexts.

Rather than concluding, this study opens up a range of new research areas concerning women and their writing. Through an understanding of the circumstances under which women wrote, literary critics are provided with a context within which to read their writings. We can better understand the elements of Marguerite de Navarre's work which were unique or typical when read in the contemporary historical and cultural contexts, as well as in comparison to the work that other female authors were producing. Moreover, this thesis has drawn attention to a considerable array of new texts to examine in French literary studies. Only recently has the poetry of Gabrielle de Coignard even been published in a modern critical edition; many more texts await modern editions.¹ There is still much more to explore

about women and publication in sixteenth-century France. Future studies could examine Marie de Romieu’s writings on women’s status, for instance, or Marie le Gendre’s moral philosophical discourses in relation to those of her more famous contemporary Montaigne.

Women’s writings offer historians intriguing new perspectives on female life experiences in early modern France. The historical evidence they provide is unique, not just about the effects of gender in publication but also about the lives of, generally, elite women. The texts represent a largely unexplored area of primary source evidence, a glimpse into the world of wealthy literate women. Their writings mirror the circumstances of women’s lives in both direct and indirect ways, reflecting and rejecting contemporary perceptions of women. In this thesis women have told their own forms of “herstory” as much as possible, enlightening modern researchers with their views on maternal practices, sexuality, household realities, and child-rearing to name a few. We can now include in our studies of the lives of early modern women the frank portrayal of a wife’s misery in marriage provided by Nicole Estienne, or the child-rearing handbook of the Parisian governesses Mesdames du Verger, the calm face of death depicted by Léonor de Roye’s female biographer and the women printers’ defence of their work in the printing trades.

Warmth and vitality shines from their writings, beckoning both historians and literary critics to continue to delve into their world and discover their stories. Sixteenth-century French women writers strove to be heard in their own time. I think they would be pleased by ever increasing academic attention to their works today. They are women who have not been, and will not be, silenced by the passage of time. To borrow from many a sixteenth-century text,

\[ A \ ces \ illustres \ et \ nobles \ Dames \]
\[ cette \ auctrixe \ donne \ humblement \ Salut. \]


A Checklist of First and Significant Editions.

The number of women's writings printed in sixteenth-century France is difficult to determine accurately. Some works published under female names appear on inspection to be the works of men. Such works published under female pseudonyms frequently presented a satirical male perspective on women's thoughts in print. For example, Les Regrets et complaintes de Madame du moulin sur la fortune à elle advenue, published in Paris in 1599, which purported to be authored by a prostitute, appears unlikely to be the work of a woman, and thus is omitted from the survey. The male-authored advice-book printed in 1567, Les Devis amoureux de Mariende et Florimonde mère et fille d'alliance, par MDR and later titled Instruction pour les jeunes dames, par la mère et fille d'alliance, contained a dialogue in which an older women advised a young girl on how to attract and conceal lovers from husbands.¹

However, men also wrote works which were presented to a female friend or patron, in praise of her, and which were subsequently printed under the woman's name. Jean Bouchet presents some of his Epistres Familieres in the names of women, such as the Vicomtesse de Thouars and Mary Tudor, the sister of Henry VIII, as well as the Virgin Mary and other unnamed women in his Epistres Morales & Familieres du Traverseur. Lachèvre, in his Bibliographie des recueils collectifs de poésies du XVle siècle, mistakenly catalogues Bouchet's work under the Vicomtesse de Thouars as her own composition. Furthermore, there is, of course, the far greater possibility that women published anonymously and these works are almost impossible to trace.

With these points in mind, Appendix 1 represents a checklist of first editions of women's print published writings. The eighty-seven women whose writings comprise the data are all historically identifiable. They were all born in France, or lived there, for a significant proportion of their lives. This means that writings by

both Catherine de Medici and Mary Stuart, who were born outside of French territory, are included, while the work of the young English Seymour sisters in the *Hecatodistichon* (1550), written on the death of Marguerite de Navarre and published within French territory, is not. Medieval women’s manuscript writings that were printed in France are included if the women themselves were seen as French, such as Christine de Pizan. Equally, printed writings by women not seen by contemporaries as French are not included, which removes the print publications of works by women such as Proba Falconia, Mechtild of Hackenbon, Hildegard of Bingen and Elizabeth of Schonau.² This is a deliberate policy, in order to exclude the writings of women from other cultural backgrounds, which may distort the conclusions drawn about women’s experiences of print publication in France.

The data in Appendix 1 comprise all first editions of three categories of printed works. The first category lists entire works printed by women, such as Louise Labé’s 1555 publication *Euvres de Louise Labé Lionnoise*. A second category of women’s published writings is that of reprinted manuscript works such as the 1497 publication of Christine de Pizan’s *Trésor de la cité des dames*, originally written around 1405. The third category included is printed works to which women contributed writings. This includes poetry that women contributed to collective works, such as the contributions by Marguerite d’Auvrelat, Magdeleine and Marie Du Val, Katherine Laillet and Marie du Moncel to the 1543 publication in Rouen of *Le Puy du souverain amour tenu par la Déesse Pallas*. This category also incorporates laudatory verses, prefaces and editorial forewords by women, such as Charlotte de Minut’s preface to the 1587 publication of her brother Gabriel de Minut’s work, *Morbi Gallos*. However, as such marginal writings are contributions to works written by another author, this category is not exhaustive, as many writings by women are effectively “hidden” from bibliographical referencing. Consequently, this checklist probably omits many writings by women that are difficult to locate in this marginal category, although the overall number of writings is sufficiently large to establish some significant trends.

² These works are included in William Kemp’s bibliography of women’s writings. “Textes composés ou traduits par des femmes et imprimés en France avant 1550: bibliographie des imprimés féminins (1488-1549)”, *Littératures*, 18, 1998, pp. 151-220.
Furthermore, there were also a number of works printed in sixteenth-century France which included speeches by women. Amongst the canards catalogued by Jean-Pierre Séguin are two documents which record women's words: *Le désastre merveilleux et effroyable d'un deluge advenu es fauxbours S. Marcel, ... Ensemble un petit discours fait par les Dames des Cordeliers, et le moyen par lesquelles il [sic] se sont preservez de la grande ravine.* Paris, J. Pinart, 1579. Another document recorded a woman's last words before execution: *Histoire sanguinaire, cruelle et emerveillable, d'une femme de Cahors en Quercy pres Montaubant ... Avec la Remonstrance qu'elle fit publiquement, au dernier suplice, sur le devoir des hommes mariez, envers leurs femmes et enfans.* Such works which were preserved and circulated in scribal or print publication, are included in the survey because these women's words were intended as part of public discourse.

Some later editions that were extensively altered and contained new material by women are included. The data include author, title, place of publication, publisher/printer and date. Question marks indicate unconfirmed details. One extant copy, where known, is given in each case. (BN=Bibliotheque Nationale, Paris. BL= British Library, London.) I have used asterisks to mark writings I have seen in either the edition given or a reprint.

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5 Séguin records a third printed text reporting women's speech: the *Discours tragiques et pitoyable sur la mort d'une jeune Damoiselle, âgée de dix-sept à dix-huit ans, [Marguerite de la Rivièr] exécutée dans la ville de Padouë au mois de Decembre dernier 1596. Avec les regrets qu'elle a fait avant sa mort ...* Paris, A. du Brueil, 1597, [Bibliotheque Nationale K. 10979] in *ibid.*, p. 71. I have not included this work since the event took place in Padua. It was common practice for canards to report on events occurring in other European countries.
The checklist is compiled primarily from the following sources.


Lanson, G. *Manuel bibliographique de la littérature française moderne, XVIe, XVIIe, XVIIIe et XIXe siècles*, Paris, Hachette, 1925.


First editions containing work by women by half-decades, 1488-1599

1485-99

Christine de Pizan (trans.), *Lart de chevalerie selon Vegece*, Paris, Antoine Vérard, 1488.*
[BN Rés. R. 611]

[BN Rés. Y2.186]

1500-4

Christine de Pizan, *Les Cent histoires de troye*, Paris, Philippe Pigouchet, [1500?]*
[BN Rés.Ye.286]

Catherine D’Alençon, one rondel ‘Changer ne vueil’
Jehanne Filleul, one rondel ‘Hélas, mon amy, sur mon âme’
Christine de Pizan, one ballad ‘Pour tout plaisir ay-je dueil angoisseux’
Anon., ‘Comment une des dames qui est au jardin de plaisance fleur de rethorique envoye une epistre a son singulier amy grant orateur, rethorique composee par ladicte dame’,
in *Le Jardin de Plaisance, Et Fleur de réthoricque*, Paris, Antoine Vérard, [1501?]*
[BN Rés. Ye. 169]

[BN R. 251]

1505-9

Marie de Clèves, Duchesse d’Orléans, one rondel ‘En la forest de longue actente’ in
*La Chasse et le départ demours faict et compose par reverend pere en Dieu Messire Octovien de Saint Gelaiz Dangoulesme et par noblehomme Blaise dauriot bachelier en chascun droit demeurant à Tholouze*, Paris, Antoine Vérard, 1509.*
[BN microfilm-m-8682]
1510-14

Christine de Pizan (trans.), *Le roman de Melibée* in *Le Chevalier de la Tour*, Paris, Guillaume Eustace, 1514.
[BN Rés. Y2.22]

1515-19

Anon., *Cy commence une petite instruction et maniere de vivre pour une femme seculiere, comment elle se doit conduire en pensees, paroles et œuvres tout au long du jour*, [Paris? Veuve Jean Trepperel? Jean Jehannot ?1516?]
[BN Rés D 17400(3), according to Higman]

1520-24

1525-29

Christine de Pizan, *Le Contre Rommant de la rose nomme le Gratia Dei*, Paris, Julien Hubert, [1529]*
[BN Rés. p. Ye. 239]

[BN Res V. 515]

1530-34

Claudine Sceve (trans.), *Urbain le Mesco-gneu filz de lempereur Federic Barberousse/ qui par la finesse de certains flore-tins surprist la fille du souldan /Histoire de Jeha- Boccace no- moins adve-tureuse q- delectable/Tra-slatee nouvellemene-t Ditalien en Francoys*, Lyons, Claude Nourry, [1530?]*
[BN Rés. Y2. 781]

Marguerite de Navarre, *Le Miroir de lame pecherresse, auquel elle recongnoist ses faultes et pechez aussi ses graces et benefices a elle faictz par Jesuchrist son espoux, La Marguerite tresnoble et precieuse sest preposee a ceulx qui de bon cueur la cerchoient*, Alençon, Simon du Bois, 1531.*
[BN Rés. Ye. 203]

[BN Rés. Ye. 1532]

Marguerite de Navarre, *Dialogue en forme de vision nocturne, entre tresnoble et*
excellent princesse ma dame Marguerite de France, sœur unique du Roy nostre sire, par la grace de dieu Royne de Navarre, duchesse Dalencon et Berry, Et lame saincte de defuncte ma dame Charlotte de France, fille aysnee dudit sieur, et niepce de ladit dame Royne. Le Miroir de lame pcheurresse: auquel elle reco-gnoist ses faultes et pechez, aussy les graces et benefices a elle faictz par Jesus Christ son espoux. Discord esta-t en lho-me par la co-trariete de Lesperit et de la Chair: et sa paix par vie spirituelle. Une oraison a nostre seign-r Jesus Christe, Alençon, Simon du Bois, 1533.*

[BN Rés. p. Ye. 209]


[BN Rés. Y2. 2256]

Anne de Beaujeu, A la requeste de treshaulte et puissante princesse ma dame Susa-ne de Bourbon, femme de tresillustre et puissa-t prince: mo-seigneur Charles, duc de Bourbon et Dauvergne et de Castellerault: Connestable, per et cha-brier de fra-ce, et fille de treshaulte et tresexcelle-te dame Anne de france duchesse desdictes duchez: fille et seur des roys Loys xi et Charles viii, Lyons, [Pierre de Sainte Lucie? 1534?]*

[BN microfilm-m-14652]

1535-39

Anne de Beaujeu, Enseignements moraux adresses à Marguerite de France reyne de Navarre, Toulouse, Jehan Barril, 1535.

[BL 8415d. 9]

Marie de Cleves, rondel ‘En la forest de longue actente’ in Le Triumphe de lamant vert comprins en deux Epistres fort joyeuses Envoyees A madame Marguerite Auguste composees par Jeha- le Maire de Belges indiciaire et Hystoriographe de la Royne, Aveq-s plusieurs lettre missives amoureuses, Plusieurs balades et Ro-deaux nouveaux, Paris, Denys Janot, 1535.*

[BN Rés. Ye. 1389]

Hélissenne de Crenne, Les Angoysses douloureuses qui procedent d’amours, contenanz troys parties composées par dame Hélissenne de Crenne laquelle exhorte toutes personnes a ne suyvre folle amour, Paris, Denys Janot, 1538.*

[Paris, Ecole Nationale des Beaux-Arts: Masson 270]


[BN Rés. Ye. 1457-1460]
Christine de Pizan, ballad 'Pour tout plaisir ay-je dueil angoisseux' in _Le Joyeux devis recreatif de l'esperit trouble; contenant plusieurs ballades, epistres, chansons et autres nouvelletées en rime françoise_, Paris, Alain Lotrian, 1538. [Bibliothèque de De Bure, 3080 B.L, according to Lachèvre]


Jeanne Flore, _Comptes amoureux_, Lyons, Denys Harsy, [1539?]* [BN Rés. Y2. 1979]

1540-44

Pernette du Guillet, Epigram 43 and 44 in _Second livre contenant XXVII Chansons Nouvelles à quatre parties en ung volume_, Paris, Pierre Attaignant and Hubert Jullet, 1540. [Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Mus. Pr. 4° 103, according to Heartz]

Pernette du Guillet, Epigram 43 and 44 in _Le Parangon des chansons, sixiesme livre contenant XXV chansons nouvelles_, Lyons, Jacques Moderne, 1540. [BL K. 10 .a. 9, according to Pogue]

Hélisenne de Crenne, _Le So-ge de madame Helisenne compose par ladicte dame, la consideratio-duquel, est apte à instiguer toutes personnes de s'alliener de vice, & s'approcher de vertu_, Paris, Denis Janot, [1541?][BN Res.p.R.161]

Pernette du Guillet, Epigram 12 and 14 in _Le Parangon des chansons, neufvieme livre contenant XXXI chansons nouvelles_, Lyons, Jacques Moderne, 1541. [BL K. 10. a. 9, according to Pogue]


Anon., _Lexercice pour jeunes gens lesquelz veullent parvenir en bien et perfection de leur estat. Specialement pour les religieuses de lordre de saincte Clere, et pour toutes autres_, Paris, Jean Bonfons, [1543?][BN Rés D. 80288, according to Higman]

Magdeleine Du Val, rondel, ballad, dixain
Marie Du Val, dixain (devise Rien qui ne veult)
Marguerite d’Auvrelat, dixain (devise Le tout d’ung rien)
Katherine Laillet, dixain and dialogue
Marie du Moncel, rondel and dixain (devise Clamer mon dieu)
in *Le Puy du souverain amour tenu par la Déesse Pallas avec l’Ordre du nuptial banquet fait a l’honneur d’ung des siens enfans mis en ordre par celuy qui porte en son nom tourne le vray pendu, ou le vray prelude Jehan Petit*, Rouen, Nicolas de Burges, 1543.*

[BN Résp. p. Z. 578(78)]

Hélienne de Crenne, *Les Oeuvres de ma dame Helissenne qu’elle a puis naguere recoignes & mises en leur entier. Cest asavoir les angoisses douloureuses qui p-cede-t d’amours, Les Epistres familiere & invectives, Le Songe de ladite dame, le tout mieuq que par cy devant redigées au vray, & imprimées nouvelleme-t par le commandement de ladicte Dame*, Paris, Charles Langelier, 1543.*

[BN Résp. Z. 2745]

Marguerite de Navarre, *Epistre envoyée au Roy par sa sœur unique la Royne de Navarre*, Rouen, Jehan Lhomme, 1543.

[Paris, Collection Rothschild, Catalogue, vol.4, nx 2861]

Marguerite de Navarre, *La fable du faulx cuyder contenant l’histoire des Nymphes de Dyane tra-smuees en saulles, faicte par une notable dame de la court, envoyée a madame Marguerite, fille unqique du Roy de France*, Paris, Adam Saulnier, 1543.*

[BN Résp. Ye. 1814]

Marguerite de Navarre, Two pieces in *Recueil de vraye Poesie Francaise, prinse de plusieurs Poetes, le plus exellentz de ce règne*, Paris, Denys Janot, 1544.

[Arsenal, 7231 BL]

Marie Du Val, One piece in *Le Cercle damour auquel estoient escriptes quatre lignes chantées par les Poetes devant les Dieux immortelz*, Rouen, Jehan Petit, 1544.*

[BN Résp. Ye. 1600]

Jacqueline de Stuard, ‘Envoy’
Claude Bectone, ‘Response’
in *Œuvres de Bonaventure de Periers, valet de chambre de Marguerite de France, reine de Navarre*, Lyons, Jean de Tournes, 1544.

[BN Résp. Ye. 1445]

1545-49


[BN Résp. Ye. 1341]

Claude de Bectone, seven pieces in *Déploration de Vénus sur la mort du bel Adonis, avec plusieurs autres compositions nouvelles*, Lyons, Jean de Tournes, 1545.

[Bul. Morgand, 53, according to Lachèvre]

Pernette du Guillet, ‘Suite a la fable’, ‘Amour avecques Psichés’
Marguerite de Navarre, ‘L’Umbre’, ‘La Mort et resurrection d’Amour’
Claude de Bectone, two pieces from Déplor. Vénus (1545)
in Le Discours du voyage de Constantinople en voyé dudit lieu à une Damoyselle de France, par le Seigneur de Borderie. La fable de faux cuyder envoyée a Madame Marguerite fille du Roy ... Avec auttres compositions, Paris, Gilles Corrozet, 1546.*
[BN Résp. Ye. 1342]

Pernette du Guillet, ‘Amour avecques Psichés’ and ‘Quand vous voyez que l’estincelle’
Claude de Bectone, seven pieces from previous edition in Déploration de Venus sur la mort du bel Adonis Avec plusieurs nouvelles chansons, Lyons, Jean de Tournes, 1547.(second edition, but contains 22 new pieces)
[Mazarine 21658]

Pernette du Guillet, ‘Quand vous voyez que l’estincelle’
Claude de Bectone, seven pieces from Déplor. Vénus (1545) in Saingelais Œuvres de luy tant en composition, que translation, ou allusion aux Auteurs, Grecs, et Latins, Lyons, Pierre de Tours, 1547.
[Cat. Rothschild, 629, according to Lachèvre]

Marie Du Val, reprinted piece from Le Cercle in Le Printemps de ma dame poésie chanté par les vrais amants au Theatre de magnificence, Rouen, Robert & Jean duGort, 1547.

Marguerite de Navarre, Les Marguerites de la Marguerite des princesses tres illustre Royne de Navarre, Lyons, Jean de Tournes, 1547.*
[BN Résp. Ye. 1628]

Marguerite de Navarre, [and Madame de Clermont, Madame du Breuil, Madame de Dartigaloube, Madame de Grantmont, Madame la Benestaie, Madame la Seneschalle, Madame de Saint Pather, ‘La Petite Françoysse’ in ‘Les Adieu des dames de chez la Royne de Navarre, allant en Gascongny, à madame la Princesse de Navarre,’ in] Suyté des Marguerites de la Marguerite des princesses, Lyons, Jean de Tournes, 1547.*
[BN Résp. Ye. 1629]

Pernette du Guillet, ‘Suite a la fable’
Marguerite de Navarre, ‘L’Umbre’, ‘La Mort et resurrection d’Amour’
Claude de Bectone, two pieces from Déplor. Vénus (1545)
in Le livre de plusieurs pieces, Paris, Gilles Corrozet, 1548.*
[Lyons, Nicolas Basquenois, 1548 BN Résp. Ye. 2723]

[Cambridge, MA., Houghton Library, Harvard University: *FC5. M3375. D549t, according to Kemp]

[BN Rés Ye. 1505(3)]


[BN Rés. Y2. 2020]

1550-54


[BN microfilm-m-7625]


[BN Yc. 8332]


[BN Rés. p. Yc. 1215]

Antoinette de Loynes, One piece and translation of 18 distiques of Seymour sisters’ 104 Latin pieces from *In mortem Divae Margaritae, in Le Tombeau de Marguerite de Valois Royne de Navarre, faict premiurement en Disticques Latins par les trois Sœurs Princesses en Angleterre, Depuis traduictz en Grec, Italie-, et François par plusieurs des excellenz Poëtes de la Fra-ce. Avecques plusieurs Odes, Hymnes, Cantiques, Épitaphes, sur le mesme subject*, Paris, Michel Fezendat, 1551.*

[BN microfilm-m-1603]


[BN Rés. p. Yc. 1400]

Charlotte Guillard, ‘Avis au lecteur’ in Jacques Toussain, *Lexicon graecolatinum, ingenti vocum accessione Jacobi Tusani ... studio et industria locupletatum,...,
volume 1, Paris, Charlotte Guillard and G. Merlin, 1552.*
[BN x. 166]

Louise Labé, sonnet to Magny in *Amours de Olivier de Magny*, Paris, Etienne Groulleau, 1553.  
[BN Rés. Ye. 1667]

Marguerite de Cambis, (trans.), *Epistre du seigneur Jean-Georges Trissin, de la vie que doit tenir une dame veuve*, Lyons, Guillaume Rouillé, 1554.


1555-59

[BN Rés. Ye. 1651]

Marguerite de Cambis (trans.), *Epistre consolatoire de l'exil, envoyée par Jean Boccace au seigneur Pino de Rossi, traduicte d'ltalien en Franoys par Damoiselle Marguerite de Cambis*, Lyons, Guillaume Rouillé, 1556.


[BN Rés. Y2. 734]

Marguerite de Navarre, two pieces in *Recueil de vraye poesie in Poesie facécieuse extraite des œuvres des plus fameux poëtes de nostre siècle*, Lyons, Benoît Rigaud, 1559.  
[Arsenal 9307, according to Lachèvre]

[BN Rés. Y2. 737]
1560-64


[BN Rés. mYc. 118]


[BN Rés. Ye. 396]


[Paris, veuve G. Morel, 1566 BN microfilm-m.1608]

Catherine de Medici, *Canticque louant Dieu & les vaillans capitaines qui ont chassé l’Angloys hors du Heure de Grace*, Lyons, Benoît Rigaud, 1563.

Catherine de Medici, *Lettres de la Royne du vingtquatriesme de luillet, envoyées à monseigneur le duc de neumours, Gouverneur & Lieutenant general pour le Roy ès païs de Lyonnos, etc ou à son Lieutenant*, Lyons, Benoît Rigaud, 1563.*

[BN Lb33. 132]

Mary Stuart, *La Harangue de très noble et très vertueuse dame Madame Marie d’Estuart, royne d’Ecosse, douairière de France, faite en l’assemblée des Estats de son royaume, tenuz au may dernier passé*, Lyons, Benoît Rigaud, 1563.


[BN Rés. Ye. 405]

Jeanne d’Albret, ‘Jesus est mon esperance’, published in a chansonnier, Lyons, 1564. [according to Davis]

Jeanne d’Albret, *Cantiques des fidelles des Eglises de France qui ont vaillamment soustenu pour la parole de Dieu, auquel ils en rendent graces*, Lyons, 1564.
Anon., Epistre d'une Damoiselle Françoise à une sienne amie dame estra-gère, sur la mort d'excellente et vertueuse Dame, Leonor de Roy, princesse de Condé, Contenant le Testament & dernière volonté d'icelle, Ensemble, le tombeau de ladite Dame, 1564.*
[BN Lb27. 4667]

1565-69

Marie de Cotteblanche (trans.), Trois Dialogues de Pierre Messie, Espagnol, touchant la nature du soleil, de la terre & de toutes les choses qui se sont & apparaissent en l'air, Paris, Fédéric Morel, 1566.*

Jeanne d'Albret, Quatrain de Jeanne, roine de Navarre, à l'Imprimerie de R.Estienne. imprimeur du roy, undated but followed by Response de l'Imprimerie, 1566.*

Anne de Marquets [co-authored with Claude d'Espence], Collectarum Ecclesiasticarum Liber, Paris, 1566.

[BN Rés. p. Y(f). 523(3)]

Anne de Marquets(trans.), Les divines poésies de Marc Antoine Flaminius, contenantes diverses prières meditations, hymnes et actions de graces à Dieu. Mises en françois, avec le latin respondant l'un à l'autre. Avec plusieurs sonets et cantiques ou chansons spirituelles pour louer Dieu, Paris, Nicolas Chesneau, 1568.*
[BN microfilm-m-1744]

Jeanne d'Albret, Lettres de treshautte, tresvertueuse, & treschrestienne Princesse, IANE Royne de Navarre au Roy, à la Royne Mère, à Monsieur frère du Roy, à Monsieur le cardinal de Bourbon son beau-frère, & à la Royne d'Angleterre, contenant les iustes occasions de son partement avec Monseigneur le prince et Madame Catherine ses enfans, pour se venir joindre à la cause générale, avec Monseigneur le Prince de Condé son frère, 1568.*
[BN microfiche- Lb33. 240]

Jeanne d'Albret, ‘Jesus est mon esperance,’
Marguerite de Navarre, ‘Sur l'arbre de la croix, d'une voix claire et belle,’ in Chansons Spirituelles à l'honneur et louange de Dieu, et à l'edification du prochain, 1569.

[BN Rés. Ye. 1719-1727]

Camille de Morel, twelve Latin couplets in In Typographiam Musarum Matrem

1570-74

Jeanne d'Albret, Mémoires in Histoire de nostre temps contenant un Recueil des choses mémorables passées et publiées pour le fait de la religion et estat de la France depuis l'édit de pacification du 23e jour de mars 1568 jusques au jour présent, [La Rochelle? 1570?]*

[BN J. 12525]

[BN Yf.517]

Georgette de Montenay, Emblèmes, ou Devises Chrestiennes, Composées par Damoiselle Georgette de Montenay, Lyons, Jean Marcorelle, 1571.*
[BN Rés. Z. 906]

[Arsenal 8°B 9911 Rés]

Mary Stuart, Copie d'une lettre de la royne d'Ecosse, escripte de sa prison de Chelfield, touchant ses adversitez, et le banissement de ses fidelz serviteurs, Paris, Robert Coulonnel, 1572.

Jeanne d'Albret, Coppie du testament de defuncte tres-haute, vertueuse dame et princesse, Jeanne, par la grâce de Dieu royne de Navarre, 1572.

Jeanne d'Albret, reprint of her responses to du Bellay's epistres and Lettres de la Royne de Navarre au Roy, a la Royne sa mère, a Monsieur, Frère du Roy, a Monsieur le Cardinal de Bourbon, son beau-frère, et a la Royne d'Angleterre Camille de Morel, reprint of three Latin pieces Antoinette de Loynes, one piece in Les Œuvres Françaises de Ioachim du Bellay, Gentil-homme Angevin, & Poète excellent de ce temps, Paris, Fédéric Morel, 1573.*
[BN Ye 7354].
Madeleine de L'Aubespine, 'Sur les Amours de Ph. Desportes,' in Premières Œuvres de Ph. Desportes, Paris, Robert Estienne, 1573.*
[BN Rés. Ye. 580]


Camille de Morel, 'Ad J. Gesseum Camillae Morellae' in J. Gessei ... epigrammaton ad principes et magnates Galliae, Paris, D. a Prato, 1574.
[BN Yc. 8195]

1575-79

Madeleine and Catherine des Roches, Les Œuvres de Mes Dames des Roches de Poetiers Mere et Fille, Paris, Abel L'Angelier, 1578.*
[BN Rés. Ye. 521]

[Mazarine 45398]

[BN Rés. Ye. 522]

Jeanne Giunta, preface in Latin to Iulii Claripatritii alexandrini ... Opera, Lyons, Jeanne Giunta, 1579.
[St Louis Library, St Louis, Missouri, microfilm]

[BN 8o.Lk 7.6817]

1580-84

Marie de Romieu, Les Premieres Œuvres Poetiques de ma Damoiselle Marie de Romieu Vivaroise, contenant un bref discours que l'excellence de la femme surpassse celle de l'homme non moins recreatif que plein de beaux exemples, Paris, Lucas Breyer, 1581.*
[BN Rés. Ye. 1877]

Pernette du Guillet, one piece from Déplor. Vénus (1547)
Claude Bectone, two pieces from *Déplor. Vénus* (1545) in *Le Courtizan amoureux contenant plusieurs propos et devis amoureux, inventez de nostre temps, et propres à ceux qui ayment choses récréatives*, Lyons, Benoît Rigaud, 1582.

Catherine des Roches, four French pieces in ‘Quelques autres poèmes faicts à la suite des Jeux Poétiques de la Puce’ and six pieces in *La Puce de Madame des Roches. Qui est un recueil de divers poèmes Grecs, Latins et Français, composez par plusieurs doctes personnages aux Grands Jours tenus à Poitiers l'an MDLXXIX*, Paris, Abel L'Angelier, 1583.*


Camille de Morel, Two French, one Latin and one Greek piece in *V.C. Ioan Morelli, Ebredun Consiliarij Æconomiq; Regij, Moderatoris, illustrissimi Principis Henrici Engolismaei, magni Franciae Prioris, Tumulus*, Paris, Frederic Morel, 1583.*

Marie de Villecoq, two pieces in *La Main ou œuvres poetiques sur la main de Estienne Pasquier, Advocat au Parlement de Paris*, Paris, Michel Gadoleau, 1583-4.*

Marie de Romieu, Translation and sonnet in *Les Melanges de Jacques de Romieu Vivarois, secretaire de la chambre du Roy où sont comprises les louanges du dict pais de Vivarois*, Lyons, Benoît Rigaud, 1584.*

Catherine des Roches, extract ‘Au Dialogue de Vieillesse & Jeunesse’
Philiberte de Fleurs, dame de Pisay, extract from *Souspirs de Viduité*
Jeanne Gaillarde, rondel ‘Responge à Cl. Marot’
Louise Labé, reprint ‘Apollon plaident pour Amour’
Anne Mallet de Graville, extract of *Palomon et Arcita, et la belle et sage Emilia*, Marie de France, extract
Anne de Marquets, reprint of ‘Comparaison de l’Ame à une fleur’ and Sonnet XXIV
Marguerite de Navarre, Reprint of ‘Oraison de l’Ame fidèle’ and part of Nouvelle XXII
in Du Verdier, *Bibliothèque Françoise*, Lyons, Bathélemy Honorat, 1584.*

Marie le Gendre, *Cabinet des saines affections*, 1584.*

Marie le Gendre, *Cabinet des saines affections*, 1584.*

[BL 87. c. 1]


[BN Rés. p. Ye. 410]


[BN microfilm-m- 1597]

Camille de Morel, Two French, one Latin and one Greek piece in *V.C. Ioan Morelli, Ebredun Consiliarij Æconomiq; Regij, Moderatoris, illustrissimi Principis Henrici Engolismaei, magni Franciae Prioris, Tumulus*, Paris, Frederic Morel, 1583.*

[BN Rés. m.Yc 925 (20)]

Marie de Villecoq, two pieces in *La Main ou œuvres poetiques sur la main de Estienne Pasquier, Advocat au Parlement de Paris*, Paris, Michel Gadoleau, 1583-4.*

[BN Z. 14335]

Marie de Romieu, Translation and sonnet in *Les Melanges de Jacques de Romieu Vivarois, secretaire de la chambre du Roy où sont comprises les louanges du dict pais de Vivarois*, Lyons, Benoît Rigaud, 1584.*

[BN Rés. Ye. 1878]

Catherine des Roches, extract ‘Au Dialogue de Vieillesse & Jeunesse’
Philiberte de Fleurs, dame de Pisay, extract from *Souspirs de Viduité*
Jeanne Gaillarde, rondel ‘Responge à Cl. Marot’
Louise Labé, reprint ‘Apollon plaident pour Amour’
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Anne de Marquets, reprint of ‘Comparaison de l’Ame à une fleur’ and Sonnet XXIV
Marguerite de Navarre, Reprint of ‘Oraison de l’Ame fidèle’ and part of Nouvelle XXII
in Du Verdier, *Bibliothèque Françoise*, Lyons, Bathélemy Honorat, 1584.*

[BN Q 61]

Marie le Gendre, *Cabinet des saines affections*, 1584.*

[Paris, Claude Micard, 1597  Mazarine 27909]
Marguerite Haldebois, *Histoire sanguinaire, cruelle et emerveillable, d'une femme de Cahors en Quercy pres Montaubant, qui desesperée pour le mauvais Gouvernement et ménage de son mary, et pour ne pouvoir apaiser la famine insupportable de sa Famille massacra inhumainement ses deux petits enfans. Et consecutivement sondict mary. pour lesquelz Meurdres, elle fut exécutée à mort par ordonance de justice le cinquiesme jour de febvrier, mil v.c.iiiixx trois dernier passé. Avec la Remonstrance qu'elle fit publiquement, au dernier supplice, sur le devoir des hommes mariez, envers leurs femmes et enfans. Suivant la copie imprimée à Thelouze. J. Columbier, 1584.

[BN Rés 8o.Lk7. 1544]

1585-89

Catherine des Roches, one piece
Présidente Du Gast, one piece
Mademoiselle Du Thier, one piece
Madeleine de Saint- Gelais, One piece
Anne d'Este, Duchess of Guise and Nemours, four sonnets 'Regrets funebres de tres-hautle et tres-illustre princess Anne d'Este (à presente Duchesse de Nemours) aux ombres de tres-hault & tres-excellent Prince François de Lorraine, Duc de Guyse, son mary,'

[BN microfilm - m-4116, incomplete, BN Rés. Ye. 1883]

Ianne de Faulquier, epitaph in *Discours de la vie de Pierre de Ronsard Gentil-homme Vandomois ... Ensemble, Son Tombeau recueilli de plusieurs excellens personnages*, Paris, Gabriel Buon, 1586.*

[BN, Ln27. 17842, according to Lachère]


[BN microfilm- m-1607]


[BN z. 9723]

Catherine de Medici, Letter 'A Monsieur de Boisseguin, Chevalier de l'ordre du roy, monsieure mon fils, capitaine et gouverneur de la ville et chasteau de Poictiers,' in *Mandement du roy pour la publication de la treve et intermission des armes, pour punir ceux qui y contreviendront*, Champigny, 4 novembre, 1586, Paris, Guillaume Linocier, 1586.

Charlotte de Minut, 'Epistre à Royne' in *De la beaute, avec la Paule-graphie par Gabriel de Minut*, Lyons, Barthélemy Honorat, 1587.*

[BN Rés. p. R. 342]
Charlotte de Minut, 'A Nostre Sainct Pere le Pape Sixte Cinquiesme de ce Nom,' in Morbi Gallos: Infestantis salubris curatio et saincta medicina: HOC EST, Malorum, quae intestinum crudeleque Gallorum bellum inflammant, remedium, Gabriel Minut, Lyons, Barthélemy Honorat, 1587.*
[BN 8°. Lb34. 341]

Nicole Estienne, Les Miseres de la femme mariee: où se peuvent voir les peines & tourmens qu'elle reçoit durant sa vie, Mis en forme de Stances, par Madame LIEBAUT, Paris, Pierre Menier, [1587?]*
[BN microfilm - m- 1597]

Nicole Estienne, Sonnet,

Catherine de Medici, Remonstrance faite au Roy. Par la Royne Mere à la fin de ces jours, sur choses advenues au Royaume de France, depuis l'An mil cents cinq huitante quatre, & les causes pourquoy, Blois, Pierre Tochet, 1589.*
[BN Lb 34. 632]

Anne d'Este, Les regrets de madame de Nemours sur la mort de Messeigneurs de Guyse, ses enfans, Paris, N. Givry, [1589?]*
[BN 8°. Lb34. 565]

Anne d'Este, Les cruautez sanguinaires, exercées envers feu Monseigneur le Cardinal de Guise, Pair de France et Archevesque de Reims. Et les moyens tenus pour emprisonner le Prince de Guinville, et les seigneurs catholiques, tant Ecclesiastiques qu'autres pendant les Estats à Blois ... Avec la remonstrance faictes au Roy par Madame la Duchesse de Nemours, sur le massacre de ses enfans, 1589.

[BN 8°. Lb34. 568]

Catherine de Clèves, Les Regrets et lamentations faictes par Mme de Guyse sur le trespas de feu M de Guyse son espoix, 1589.*
[BN 8°. Lb34. 566]

Catherine de Clèves, Les regrets douloureux de Madame la Duchesse de Guyse, sur la mort et trespas de feu Monseigneur le Duc de Guyse son epoux, ... et celle de feu Monseigneur le Cardinal son frère, 1589.
Catherine de Clèves, *Pleurs et souspirs lamentables, de Madame de Guyse: sur la mort & assasinat a son espoux, Monseigneur le Duc de Guyse, le vendredy vingt-troisieme iour de Decembre, 1588*, Paris, François le Jeune, 1589.*


[BN 8°. Lb34. 648]


1590-94

Madeleine Chemeraut, verses in *Deux harangues prononcees par Pierre Umeau pour le serment de la Sainte Union en Poitou en mois d’aout, 1589, 1590.*

Marie Le Prévost, one piece in *Le Tombeau de feu Missire Francois du Parc, en son vivant Chevalier de l’ordre du Roy, Gentilhomme ordinaire de sa chambre, Gouverneur d’Avranches, Baron des Biards, Sieur des Cresnais, de Morferville, de Caindolle, 1590.*

[BN Rés. Ye. 1131]

Madame de Mayenne, *Discours de ce qui s’est passe en l’armee du roy depuis le vingt-troisieme juillet jusques au septieme aoust mil cinq cens nonante, ensemble la coppie d’une lettre des parisiens au duc de Mayenne, et une de madame de Mayenne à son mary*, Tours, Jamet Mettayer, 1590.

Chrestienne Bernard, one piece
Iane Bernardon, one piece
Marguerite Decousu, one piece
Katherine Guillard, one piece
Greffiere Guerin, one piece
Claude Conte, one piece

[BN microfilm -m-997]


[BN microfilm-m-1600]


[BN Z. Payen. 546]
1595-99

[Mazarine 25001]

[BN microfilm-m-3481]

Marie d'Altovitis, one piece in *Obros, et Rimos Prouvenssalos, de Loys de la Bellaudiero, Gentilhomme Prouvenssau*, Marseilles, Pierre Mascaron, 1595.*
[BN Rés. Ye. 870-872]

[Mazarine 27934]


Marie de Brames, *Les Regrets de Damoselle M de B sur l'assassination du sieur de Brames son père, gouverneur et commandant en la ville et citadelle de Cusset*, Lyons, 1597.*
[Mazarine, according to Montaiglon]

Mademoiselle de Salètes, ‘Le feu léger qui s'allume et s'esteinct’ in *Recueil de diverses poesies, tant du feu sieur de Sponde, que des sieurs du Perron, de Bertrand, de Porcheres, et autres non encor imprimees*, Rouen, Raphael du Petit Val, 1597.*

Mademoiselle de Salètes, ‘Le feu léger qui s’allume et s’esteinct’ in *Recueil de plusieurs diverses poesies, Tant de Monsieur du Perron que des Sieurs de Bertrand, de Porchères et autres*, Paris, Nicolas and Pierre Bonfons, 1598.


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Mademoiselle de Salètes, ‘Le feu léger qui s’allume et s’esteinct’ and ‘Elle vous a repris sans que vous l’ayez prise’ in Les Muses Frangöises Ralliees de diverses pars, Paris, Mathieu Guillemot, 1599.*

[BN Rés. Ye. 2738-9]

Mademoiselle de Salètes, ‘Elle vous a repris sans que vous l'ayez prise’ in Second recueil de diverses poesies des plus excellens auteurs de ce temps, Rouen, Raphael du Petit Val, 1599.*
APPENDIX 2

Checklist of All Editions of Entire Works by Women, by half-decades, 1488-1599

reprints indicated by --

1485-99

Christine de Pizan (trans.), *Lart de chevalerie selon Vegece*, Paris, Antoine Vérard, 1488.


1500-4

Christine de Pizan, *Les Cent histoires de troye*, Paris, Philippe Pigouchet, [1500?]


1505-9

1510-14


1515-19

Anon., *Cy commence une petite instruction et maniere de vivre pour une femme seculiere, comment elle se doit conduire en pensees, parolles et oeuvres tout au long du jour*, [Paris? Veuve Jean Trepperel? Jean Jehannot ?1516?]

-- Christine de Pizan, *Cent hystoires de Troyes*, Lyon, 1519.
1520-24

-- Christine de Pizan, *Les cent hystoires de troye Lespistre de Othea deese de prudence envoyee a lesperit chevalereux hector de troye/ avec cent hystoires*, Paris, Philippe Le Noir, [1522]

1525-29


Christine de Pizan, *Le Contre Rommant de la rose nomme le Gratia Dei*, Paris, Julien Hubert, [1529?].

1530-34

Claudine Sceve (trans.), *Urbain le Mesco-gneu filz de lempereur Fédéric Barberousse/ qui par la finesse de certains flore-tins surprist la fille du souldan /Histoire de Jeha- Boccace no- moins adve-tureuse q- delectable/Tra-slatee nouvelleme-t Ditalien en Francoys*, Lyons, Claude Nourry, [1530?]

Marguerite de Navarre, *Le Miroir de lame pecherresse, auquel elle recondnoist ses fautes et pechez aussi ses graces et benefices a elle faictz par Jesuchrist son espoux, La Marguerite tresnoble et precieuse sest preposee a ceulx qui de bon cueur la cerchoient*, Alençon, Simon du Bois, 1531.

Marguerite de Navarre, *Dialogue en forme de vision nocturne, entre tresnoble et excellente princesse ma dame Marguerite de France, seur unique du Roy nostre sire, par la grace de dieu Royne de Navarre, duchesse Dalencon et Berry, Et lame saincte de defunccte ma dame Charlotte de France, fille aysnee dudit sieur, et niepce de ladicie dame Royne. Le Miroir de lame pecherresse: auquel elle reco-gnoist ses fautes et pechez, aussy les graces et benefices a elle faictz par Jesus Christ son espoux. Discord esta-t en lho-me par la co-trariete de Lesperit et de la Chair: et sa paix par vie spirituelle. Une oraison a nostre seign-r Jesus Christe*, Alençon, Simon du Bois, 1533.

-- Marguerite de Navarre, *Le Miroir*, [1533?]


Anne de Beaujeu, *A la requeste de treshaulte et puissante princesse ma dame Susa-ne de Bourbon, femme de tresillustre et puissa-t prince: mo-seigneur Charles, duc de Bourbon et Dauvergne et de Chastellerault: Connestable, per et cha-brier de fra-ce,
et fille de treshaulte et tresxelle-te dame madame Anne de france duchesse
desdictes duchez: fille et seur des roys Loys xi et Charles viii, Lyons, [Pierre de
Saint-Lucie?, 1534?]

1535-39

Anne de Beaujeu, Enseignements moraux adressés à Marguerite de France reyne de
Navarre, Toulouse, Jehan Barril, 1535.

-- Marguerite de Navarre, Le Miroir, Paris, Nicolas Buffet, [1535?]

-- Marguerite de Navarre, Le caresme prenant du cuer bien heureux, 1535.

-- Christine de Pizan, Le Tresor de la cith des dames, selon Dames Christine de la
Cité de Pise, Livre tresutile & prouffitable pour l'introduction des Roynes, Dames
Princesses, & autres femmes de tous estaz, au quel elles pourront veoir la grande &
saine Richesse de toute Prudence, Saigesse, Sapience, Honneur, & Dignité dedans
contenues, Paris, Denys Janot, 1536.

-- Christine de Pizan, Le tresor de la cith des dames, Paris, Jean André, 1536.

Hélisenne de Crenne, Les Angoysses douloureuses qui procedent d'amours,
contenanz troys parties composées par dame Hélisenne de Crenne laquelle exhorte
toutes personnes à ne suyvre folle amour, Paris, Denys Janot, 1538.

-- Marguerite de Navarre, Le Miroir, Lyons, Le Prince, 1538.

-- Marguerite de Navarre, Le Miroir, Lyon, Pierre de Sainte-Lucie, 1538.

-- Hélisenne de Crenne, Les Angoysses douloureuses, Lyons, Denis de Harsey, 1538.

Hélisenne de Crenne, Les epistres Familieres & invectives de ma dame Helisene,
composes par icelle dame, Paris, Denys Janot, 1539.

Jeanne Flore, Comptes amoureux, Lyons, D. Harsy, [1539?]

1540-44

Hélisenne de Crenne, Le So-ge de madame Helisene compose par ladicte dame, la
consideratio- duquel, est apte à instiguer toutes personnes de s'alliener de vice, &
s'approcher de vertu, Paris, Denys Janot, [1541?]

-- Jeanne Flore, La Pugnition de l'Amour contempré, extraict de l'Amour fatal de
madame Jeanne Flore, Lyons, 1540.

-- Hélisenne de Crenne, Les angoysses douloureuses, Lyons, 1540.

-- Anon., *Une petite instruction et maniere de vivre pour une femme seculiere*, Troyes, Jean Le Coq II, [1541?]


Anon., *Lexercice pour jeunes gens lesquelz veullent parvenir en bien et perfection de leur estat. Specialement pour les religieuses de lordre de saincte Clere, et pour toutes autres*, Paris, Jean Bonfons, [1543?]


Marguerite de Navarre, *Epistre envoye au Roy par sa soeur unique la Royne de Navarre*, Rouen, Jehan Lhomme, 1543.


-- Jeanne Flore, *Comptes amoureux, par Madame Jeanne Flore, touchant la punition que faict Venus de ceulx qui contemnent et mesprisent le vray amour*, Paris, Arnoul L'Angelier, 1543.


1545-49


Marguerite de Navarre, *Les Marguerites de la Marguerite des princesses tres illustre Royne de Navarre*, Lyons, Jean de Tournes, 1547.

Marguerite de Navarre, *Suyte des Marguerites de la Marguerite des princesses*, Lyons, Jean de Tournes, 1547.

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1550-54


Marguerite de Cambis, Baronne d’Aigremont (trans), *Epistre du seigneur Jean-Georges Trissin, de la vie que doit tenir une dame veuve*, Lyons, Guillaume Rouillé, 1554.


1555-59


-- Marguerite de Cambis (trans.), *Epistre du seigneur Jean-Georges Trissin*, Lyons, Guillaume Rouillé, 1555.


Marguerite de Cambis (trans), *Epistre consolatoire de l’exil, envoyée par Jean Boccace au seigneur Pino de Rossi, traduite d’italien en Françoys par Damoiselle Marguerite de Cambis*, Lyons, Guillaume Rouillé, 1556.


1560-64


-- Marguerite de Navarre, *Heptameron*, 1560.


Catherine de Medici, *Canticque louant Dieu & les vaillans capitaines qui ont chassé l'Anglois hors du Heure de Grace*, Lyons, Benoît Rigaud, 1563.

Catherine de Medici, *Lettres de la Royne du vingtquatriesme de Iuillet, envoyees a monseigneur le duc de nemours, Gouverneur & Lieutenant general pour le Roy ès païs de Lyonnois, etc ou à son Lieutenant*, Lyons, Benoît Rigaud, 1563.

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Jeanne d'Albret, *Cantiques des fidelles des Eglises de France qui ont vaillamment soustenu pour la parole de Dieu, auquel ils en rendent graces*, Lyons, 1564.

Anon., *Epistre d'une Damoiselle Françoise à une sienne amie dame estra-gere, sur la mort d'excellente et vertueuse Dame, Leonor de Roy, princesse de Condé, Contenant le Testament & dernière volonté d'icelle, Ensemble, le tombeau de ladite Dame*, 1564.


1565-69


Jeanne d'Albret, *Lettres de treshautte, tresvertueuse, & treschrestienne Princesse, IANE Royne de Navarre au Roy, à la Royne Mère, à Monsieur frère du Roy, à Monsieur le cardinal de Bourbon son beau-frère, & à la Royne d'Angleterre, contenant les iustes occasions de son partement avec Monseigneur le prince et Madame Catherine ses enfans, pour se venir ioindre à la cause générale, avec Monseigneur le Prince de Condé son frère*, 1568.


1570-74

Jeanne d'Albret, *Mémoires in Histoire de nostre temps contenant un Recueil des choses mémorables passées et publiées pour le fait de la religion et estat de la France depuis l'édit de pacification du 23e jour de mars 1568 jusques au jour présent, [La Rochelle? 1570?]*


Mary Stuart, *Copie d'une lettre de la royne d'Ecosse, escripte de sa prison de Chesfeild, touchant ses adversitez, et le banissement de ses fidelz serviteurs*, Paris, Robert Coulonnnel, 1572.

Jeanne d'Albret, *Coppie du testament de défuncte très-haute, vertueuse dame et princesse, Jeanne, par la grâce de Dieu royné de Navarre*, 1572.


-- Jeanne Flore, *Contes amoureux de Jeanne Flore*, Lyons, Benoît Rigaud, 1574.

1575-79


1580-84

Marie de Romieu, *Les Premieres Œuvres Poetiques de ma Damoiselle Marie de Romieu Vivaroise*, contenant un bref discours que l'excellence de la femme surpassse celle de l'homme non moins recreatif que plein de beaux exemples, Paris, Lucas Breyer, 1581.


Marie le Gendre, *Cabinet des saines affections*, 1584.

1585-89


-- Anne d'Este and Catherine de Clèves, *Remonstrance faicte par Madame de nemours ... Ensemble les regrets et lamentations faictes par Mme de Guyse*, 1589.


Catherine de Clèves, *Les regrets douloureux de Madame la Duchesse de Guyse, sur la mort et trespas de feu Monseigneur le Duc de Guyse son epoux, ... et celle de feu Monseigneur le Cardinal son frère*, 1589.


Catherine de Clèves, *Requeste presented à Mess. de la cour du Parlemente de Paris,
par Mme la duchesse de Guyse, pour informer du massacre et assassinat commis en la personne de feu Mgr. le duc de Guyse, Paris, Hubert Velu, 1589.


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Louise de Vaudemont, Lettre de la roynge Loyse, douairière de France, au roy, Chenonceaux, 6 Septembre, 1589, Tours, Jamet Mettayer, 1589.

1590-94

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Gabrielle de Coignard, Oeuvres chestiennes de feu dame Gabrielle de Coignard... Toulouse, P. Jagourt et B. Carles, 1594.

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1595-99


-- Marie de Gournay, Le proumenoir de Monsieur de Montaigne, Paris, Abel L'Angelier, 1595.

-- Gabrielle de Coignard, [Jane and Catherine de MANSECAL], Œuvres Chrestiennes, de feu dame Gabrielle de Coignard, Vefve à feu Monsieur de Mansecal, Sieur de Miremont, President en la Cour de Parlement de Tholose, Tournon, Iacques Faure libraire en Avignon, 1595.

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