

Women's History **MAGAZINE**

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*Marjo Kaartinen on
Elite Women in Early Modern London*

*Stefania Licini on
Women's Wealth in nineteenth-century Milan*

*Hasmik Khalapyan on
Training in Needlework for Armenian Girls*

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15th Annual Conference of the Women's History Network

THINKING WOMEN
Education, Culture and Society

1 - 3 September 2006, Collingwood College,
University of Durham



Plenary Speakers

Professor Elizabeth Ewan, University of Guelph, Ontario, Canada
'Learning about Women and Learning: The Biographical Dictionary of Scottish Women'

Professor Linda Eisenmann, John Carroll University, Ohio, USA
'Thinking Women in 1963: To Be or Not To Be Feminist?'

Professor Joyce Senders Pederson, University of Southern Denmark
'Thinking Woman: The Educational Ideals and Legacy of Mary Wollstonecraft'

For further information on papers and academic matters contact the organisers

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Editorial

One of the strengths of the Women's History Network is its diversity, a feature which has been marked at conferences over the years, but particularly recently — possibly a feature of the web and the dynamic WHN website. This summer issue of the magazine, drawing on previous conferences at Aberdeen and Hull, reflects that diversity with articles ranging in time from the seventeenth century to the twentieth, geographically embracing Armenia, Italy and Britain, and the authors hail from Armenia, Russia, Italy and Finland.

Marjo Kaartinen introduces us to the ways that elite women used the metropolis of London in the seventeenth century. Linking her research to the growing body of research on urban culture, consumption and leisure, she shows how women were active participants in the city. Although women's urban experience and urban spheres were partly different from men's, within the boundaries of respectability, women's sphere was extensive, and often permeable and negotiable.

Moving into the nineteenth century, Stefania Licini continues the theme of elite urban women with an examination of women's wealth in Milan. In a detailed economic analysis of estate materials, she demonstrates the importance that female investment had. Through lending to the state, companies, banks and to private individuals, women 'put a vast amount of wealth into men's hands' and contributed to meeting the financial needs of the period. This contribution was supplemented by the third of women who worked in the booming textile industry, so that clearly women's work and investment did make a difference.

Hasmik Khalapyan shows how textiles, particularly needlework and embroidery, were used by women of the Christian Armenian community within the Ottoman Empire to reduce the cost of girls' education, while at the same time giving them the skills to earn their living in the limited female job market, without going against the 'cultural' perceptions of women's space and femininity. She takes us beyond the simple association of women and needlework to show how it became a dynamic if persistent tool in the education of Armenian women.

We return to Britain with Igor Shkolnikov's discussion of the men of the women's suffrage movement. He explores the issues of men's motivation for joining the fray, how they presented themselves, what they brought to the movement and how they perceived their roles within the movement, as well as how they were perceived by others. His concern is primarily with the rhetoric and representations of these men, and argues,

in the words of his opening quote 'that no battle is in question, but a cordial co-operation. This is no duel but a duet.' (Izrael Zangwill, 1907)

Notably the projects of Women's History Scotland (formerly the Scottish Women's History Network) have come to fruition this spring; see the photo from the launch of the *Biographical Dictionary of Scottish Women and Gender in Scotland* on p. 44 of this issue. This and the very large conference on *Single Women in History* (23–24 June at UWE) are clear evidence of the vigour of the local as well as national networks. Which is a tidy way of reminding you that the last chance to offer a paper for this year's WHN conference will have passed, but NOW is the time to register. The conference, *THINKING WOMEN: Education, Culture and Society*, will be held 1–3 September 2006, at the University of Durham. The venue promises to be one of the more attractive, and the city of Durham is a real pleasure. The third plenary speaker has now been announced. She is Joyce Senders Pedersen, of the University of Southern Denmark. Her research interests include the history of education and women's studies, and she is the author of *The Reform of Girls' Secondary and Higher Education in Victorian England* (1987) and numerous articles on educational topics in women's history. Sessions will embrace education, the humanities and cultural representation,

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Cover picture: Nellie Kemper Hedges with her granddaughter Hazel c1910; printed by permission of the copyright holder.

Women's Metropolis — Elite Women in Early Modern London¹

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The past ten or fifteen years have seen a proliferation of fascinating research on the history of early modern English women. Women have been given the place they deserve in history, and, consequently, they have been found in places where they had not been seen earlier. As a result, we now have studies available, for example, on elite and plebeian women, as well as women as consumers, mothers, professionals, or politicians. We have also learned about women's leading role in the eighteenth-century urban culture.² We have come a long way from the days in which urban history assumed that urban experience was essentially male.³

The patriarchal set-up of early modern England has also come under closer examination. On the one hand, we have been shown how the printing presses produced a wealth of pamphlets and conduct books which were intended for the enforcement of patriarchy, and on the other hand, our conceptions of gender in early modern England have been challenged by intriguing revelations of the past exploring the ways in which gender roles were crossed and in which the limits of patriarchy were negotiated.⁴ As Alice Friedman puts it:

Editorial continued

intellectual contribution to the social sciences, scientific endeavour, and past representations. Returning to our opening theme, this conference again promises to explore the diversity and range of women's history in this new millennium.

A key issue for WHN, as always, is a responsible approach to managing and maximising members' money. After many discussions going back several years, WHN has been granted charity status. **BUT** this requires ratification by members (see separate notice on p. 50) so it is more important than usual that we have a good attendance at the AGM at the Durham conference. So come and contribute your voice.

Gerry Holloway, Mary Joannou, Claire Jones, Jane Potter & Debbi Simonton

Just as the authority of the lord over his tenants was called into question by new opportunities for economic and physical mobility in the late sixteenth century, so, too, was the power of the husband over his wife challenged by the new freedoms offered by the city. Profound changes in the ideology of gender among men and women of the upper classes are suggested by recurring tensions in the day-to-day negotiations of married life, by individual women's movements between the country and the city, and in the division of labor and power between couples.⁵

In the same vein, the dichotomy of public and private spheres has been challenged. Earlier the 'public sphere' was mostly seen as governed by men, into which women were not allowed without running the risk of being mentally or physically threatened, in other words, without the danger of becoming impure; the 'private' sphere was seen as the area in which women were more free to operate. I believe there is now a consensus that the dichotomy of public and private is misleading since the early modern spheres of public and private clearly were overlapping, blurred and permeable.⁶

Much of the research on early modern women has focused on the long eighteenth century, for obvious reasons: the wealth of sources available to scholars is both immense and intriguing.⁷ However, this emphasis tends to cast an unfortunate shadow on the women of the earlier centuries, and there appears to be much available space for research on women's experiences in the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries. This seems to be especially true regarding women of the elite as a group before 1660; for example the admirable monographs of Laura Gowing and Bernard Capp have concentrated on plebeian women's worlds. Women of the gentry and aristocracy were of course a very small minority in the early modern metropolis, but nonetheless merit much more consideration.⁸

The generations of women crowding the eighteenth-century metropolis have been by now convincingly shown to have had a great influence on the elite urban culture, but London was not a womanless void earlier, either. As Anna Bryson points out, the early seventeenth century saw well-educated and powerful women in the lead of the aristocratic culture, and already

from the later sixteenth century, partly and initially with the pull of the court, but increasingly with its own momentum, London developed as a magnet and social world for

nobles and gentlemen. This change meant first that the manners of the court, which remained the apex of gentlemanly society except during the period of civil war and interregnum, were now more rapidly transmitted to a greater number of imitators than was possible before. The evolving conditions of gentlemanly social life in the capital, however, also influences manners directly in creating an English version of 'modes of urbanity'. ... it has been argued that it was only after the Restoration that building and transport developments allowed more than a small fraction of the provincial gentry to enjoy London visits. Yet there was clearly a great upsurge in the numbers of gentry who came to London for extended periods well before the Restoration.⁹

It has been more usual not to see pre-civil-war London as an elite women's space; however, if we look carefully, women can be seen moving around London — and taking pleasure in it.¹⁰ One such woman was Lady Elizabeth Twysden, whose diaries from 1645-1651 frequently note not only her husband's but also her own and her sister-in-law's visits to London.¹¹

Elite women in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century London merit more attention, and in order to do so, in a tentative manner, this essay suggests that whereas in the eighteenth century the London season was dominated by women, it was the women of the long sixteenth century who created the 'London season'. As patrons, consumers, and participants, sixteenth- and seventeenth-century women were actively involved in creating new cultural forms, new demands for sophisticated entertainment, and an ever-growing demand for luxury produce. Before 1660, this process mainly took place in London, but provincial towns soon followed suit.¹²

The Scene

Already by the sixteenth century, London was a metropolis. It was densely populated, and much of urban life took place outdoors. Estimates vary greatly, but it could be said that in 1500 there were probably 60,000 inhabitants in London, and in 1600 around 200,000. By 1750, 750,000 people lived in London, and in terms of population it was without peer in Europe. As a metropolis, perhaps only Paris could compete, but it too was overshadowed in terms of size. In England, London had no rivals as a centre of power, wealth, and cultural life. Other towns were quite small: in 1700 only Norwich and Bristol had a population of more than 20,000.¹³

London's cultural importance became firmly established from the 1630s onward, when the elite, polite society,

developed the 'London season', but the season had its roots in the previous decades. In the 1530s, humanists such as Thomas Starkey, inspired by Italian colleagues, exhorted gentlemen to build and live in cities — it was not suitable, he argued, for men in important positions to retire to country houses. In Thomas Starkey's time, building town houses was in great demand, since already by 1520 there were 75 aristocratic residences in London, and by 1560, as Anna Bryson notes, 'half the peerage had acquired a London residence and had been joined by many more gentlemen anxious for experience at court'.¹⁴ Women were an intricate part of this process.

What Starkey promoted when he urged gentlemen to occupy cities was the humanist ideal of *vita activa*, the active life. For humanists, the *vita activa* was an ancient ideal preferable to the medieval ideal of the *vita contemplativa*. Humanists understood active life to be the core of the gentleman's life, and his deeper duty. In practice, this duty meant taking part in politics. Along with the court, politics moulded the London season, since, as the Parliamentary seasons became longer and longer, the wives who earlier had mostly remained at home in the country houses also began to move to London with their husbands for the season.¹⁵

Even if they did not always stay for the whole winter, women might make shorter visits to London.¹⁶ Lady Margaret Hoby's diary and Lady Judith Barrington's correspondence reveal that both women customarily made visits to London, e.g. for business purposes or for medical reasons. In 1476, Elizabeth Stonor wrote about Kateryn Stonor who had 'desese on hir neke: I marvell what it shuld be: yff it wold lyke you, I praye you hartely to suffer hir to come to London to me to the intent she may be holpyn theroff'. A century and a half after, Mrs Katherine Oxiden owed her doctor in London an apparently substantial sum, and eventually seems to have agreed to leave the town because it was too expensive to live in the city.¹⁷

The image of women as solely 'homely spirits' fits poorly at least with English early modern elite women, since they took hold of space even in London, which was frequently seen as being too big and far too dangerous. However, London offered shared space, not reserved for men alone but also for women, and even for respectable women. Naturally, life in the metropolis was hardly without risk for a woman of quality, and under threat was not only her reputation but her body as well, but some women seem to have been willing to confront these dangers.¹⁸ It was not unheard of for a married woman to stay in London without her husband. A relative was a suitable chaperon; for example Joan Thynne would live with her parents when she visited

the town, and her motives for her visits varied from taking care of her ailing mother to shopping.¹⁹ Brilliana Harley, who was perfectly aware of the pleasures and dangers of the metropolis, wrote in 1642 to her son, who was in charge of his young sister, and exhorted him to watch the young lady closely and be sure to give her advice on how to behave in the city: 'shee is yonge, therefore, deare ned, obsarue her carage, and let not your counsell be wanting to her'.²⁰

Admittedly few women were willing to take such risks as those that Lady Fanshawe reminisces in her *Memoirs* about having taken. When her husband was imprisoned, she was in the habit of walking alone in the early hours to see him:

During this time of his imprisonment, I failed not constantly to go, when the clock struck four in the morning, with a dark lantern in my hand, all alone and on foot, from my lodging in Chancery lane, at my cousin Young's, to Whitehall, in at the entry that went out of King Street into the bowling-green. There I would go under his window and softly call him: he, after the first time excepted, never failed to put out his head at the first call: thus we talked together, and sometimes I was so wet with the rain, that it went in at my neck and out at my heels.²¹

Naturally, elite women had to negotiate the limits of their experiences of the city in terms of the patriarchal society, but this did not mean they completely avoided the place. Some women seem to have preferred living in London to any other place. In the later half of the seventeenth century Katherine Austen wrote how her grandmother had not liked the country at all, and had preferred to live in the city.²²

Sociability

I would like to suggest that elite women's days in London were filled especially with sociability. Moreover, that seems to have been the reason they wanted to stay in the city longer than urgent matters demanded. Lady Margaret Hoby was in London in 1600 and 1603, and left only because of the official order to leave town because of the plague. Lady Judith Barrington was in London in May 1632, and clearly not willing to leave the town before her husband's business was taken care of, regardless of the current epidemic of the small-pox, which she seems to have feared.²³ Lady Margaret Hoby's visits to London from rather remote Yorkshire are remarkable also since by 1600 England's

roads were still in relatively primitive condition, and travel was often slow. It took more than a hundred years before the connections to the capital were considered good.²⁴

Women's days in London were, however, filled with sociability. They conquered the city to seek pleasure, entertainment and to converse with polite society. In fact, elite women filled their days with these activities when in the metropolis, sometimes, as in the case of Mary Rich, Countess of Warwick, even to the point that she grew weary of the town. In December 1666 she writes about the burned city: 'I was much pleased that I was no reaturneing to my quiet home from the hurry I had bene in at Londone'.²⁵

Inescapably, London changed, and women found it more and more intriguing; they also changed London. Thus early modern London saw both gentlemen and gentlewomen fully taking part in the seasonal programme of entertainment. Indeed, without gentlewomen there would have been no London season as we know it.²⁶ In May 1616, not being able to reside in London due to her husband's ill will, Lady Anne Clifford felt she literally was left deserted in the country. In her diaries she expressed her envy of her husband's jolly amusements in town and pitied herself because 'I stayed in the Countrey having many times a sorrowful & heavy Heart & being condemned by most folks because I would not consent to the Agreement, so as I may truly say, I am like an Owl in the Desert'.²⁷ Lady Anne's resentment reveals a perception of London as a special place, full of recreation.

By the turn of the seventeenth century, the nights and days of the metropolis were filled with activity. This activity was always at least partly gendered; men led the political life of London, but women were in charge of its social life. It was women who took the major responsibility for social mixing, visits, invitations, and parties.²⁸ Therefore, women were not bystanders, they helped to create the elite metropolis. Cities are essentially systems of relations, formed of human networks, and in this sense much of the metropolitan development was women's doing.²⁹

Visiting seems to have formed the core of a daily routine for elite women staying or living in London in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The sisters of Margaret Cavendish lived in the country with their mother, but since she lived in London for half of the year, the sisters would move there as well. They 'were dispersed into several houses of their own, yet for the most part they met every day, feasting each other like Job's children'. Later she notes, however, that the sisters seldom made visits to other people.³⁰ Mary Rich, who

after her religious awakening mostly found the bustle of London difficult to tolerate, notes that one of London's tiring sides was frequent visits that one had to make or to host. On the first of January 1666/7 she writes: 'went to visett my Lady Roberts after dinner was visited by some of my acquaintancies, in the evening retired and meditated after supper comitted my soule to God in prayer', and two days later: 'went to London to visett my sister Ranelagh and dined there, then went visett my Lady Manchetor who was sick and had with her some good discourse about things of everlasting concernment, returned not home till evening after supper comitted my Soule to God in prayer'.³¹ Lady Elizabeth Twysden spent similarly busy visiting days in London; relatives seem to have been her most frequent guests.³²

If Mary Rich was occasionally tired of the sociability of London life, many others considered the bustle beneficial, even for one's health. In February 1623/4 Jane, Lady Cornwallis was at her home at the countryside recovering from childbirth. She was ill, and her friend the Countess of Bedford suspected her illness might have something to do with the quietness of the country and the solitary life Jane was leading there. In a word, she was overtaken by melancholy, and could only be cured, the Countess of Bedford thought, if Lady Cornwallis changed location:

Howsoever, since the very season of the yeare invites you to itt lett mee perswade you as soone as you are able to come to London, where the best meanes are for the recovery or confirmation of your health. ... and to have you out of that solitarie place, where I heare melancholie getts too much ground of you, which is so dangerous an enemy as I extreemly desire to have you so neare me as I might offer you my best assistance and service to overcome itt in yourself, and remove the causes if itt be possible. Therefore againe I pray you to resolve to change place for a while; some diversions at the leaste you will finde here, from whence I shall not, I thinke, remove till after Midsommer terme.³³

The Countess of Bedford's words above reveal, twice, that by 1624 the preferable season to be in London was winter, and certainly it was a place where a melancholy mind would find if not cure, at least some attractions to divert the mind from dangerous monotony.

What Anna Bryson calls the 'pull of the court' manifests itself here. These women were in London not only because their husbands were there — sometimes they

were there without their husbands — but also for their own social purposes. Vivienne Larminie's study on the Newdigate family interestingly suggests how important early seventeenth-century women considered it to be to provide their daughters with the opportunity of experiencing the London season. Much of the interest was in the sociability of endless visiting. In 1615, Lady Newdigate took her daughters to London, and stayed there for two years. She considered invaluable the connections London would offer the girls in the form of polite society.³⁴

The Verney family, explored by Susan Whyman, gave equal importance to London life, and spent a significant part of their time in London paying visits. She points out that 'visits were signifiers of politeness, especially if done in a coach. The Verneys spent more time paying and receiving calls than any other social activity. During a visit, one's speech, carriage, dress, wit, and manners were placed on public exhibition'.³⁵ London had a profound influence on early modern culture, the culture of the metropolis in its part transformed the elite way of life, and the way in which gendered hierarchies were understood.

Walking and Shopping

A significant part of the polite woman's day in London was spent walking.³⁶ Promenading was an activity that a healthy woman would carry out daily, weather permitting. Walking served at least two purposes: first, it promoted health, and secondly, it promoted one's person and assets, since walking was a social activity. Clearly it was important to see and to be seen long before the eighteenth century. Even Margaret Cavendish, who considered it important to emphasise her own intellectual pursuits rather than sociable activities or exercise such as walking or dancing, seems to have given in to the need to be seen by the fashionable society:

but because I would not bury myself quite from the sight of the world, I go sometimes abroad, seldom to visit, but only in my coach about the town, or about some of the streets, which we call here a tour, where all the chief of the town go to see and to be seen; likewise all strangers of what quality soever, as all great princes or queens that make any short stay: for this town being a passage or thoroughfare to most parts, causeth many times persons of great quality to be here, though not as inhabitants, yet to lodge for some

short time; ... I hold necessary sometimes to appear abroad: besides I do find, that several objects do bring new materials for my thoughts and fancies to build upon.³⁷

In London women walked in parks, gardens, and of course later also on purpose-built promenades such as the Mall, constructed in 1660.³⁸ Lady Margaret Hoby noted in December 1600 that she had walked to the 'Comune Garden'; on another occasion she, her mother and a Mrs Thornborowe 'went in a Cotch in to the feeldes and there walked'.³⁹ Hyde Park, the Mulberry Garden and the Spring Garden were among the most popular places to have a pleasant walk or as in the case of Hyde Park, take a coach ride.⁴⁰ Mary Rich wrote about her youthful pleasures, how she enjoyed going to 'hide Park and Spring Garden, and I was so fond of the Court that I had taken a seacret Resolution that if my father dyede and I ware mistres of my selfe I wold become a courtiar'.⁴¹ Similarly, Margaret Cavendish's sisters would 'ride in their coaches about the streets ... and in the spring time to visit the Spring-garden, Hide-park, and the like places; and sometimes they would have music, and sup in barge upon the water'.⁴²

Later, women were frequently seen walking the shopping streets of the metropolis. London indeed was a place for shopping, an overwhelming place for anyone in these terms. Amanda Vickery points out that eighteenth-century London was famous throughout Europe for its shopping opportunities. For elite women, even before the eighteenth century, shopping meant not only buying necessary goods, but also entertainment.⁴³ The favourite elite shopping areas were Pall Mall, the Strand, and St. Paul's Churchyard. St Paul's was a favourite location for promenades in the seventeenth century, and certainly part of its attraction was the panoply of shops located there.⁴⁴ When Joan Thynne went to London in 1580, the things she bought included a musk rose tree for her husband, and for her father-in-law 'a night cap of red satin'.⁴⁵ She was a potent consumer. Consumerism, the history of women as consuming subjects, and especially the eighteenth-century commercialization of culture, have been keenly studied during the recent years. In the new picture painted by that corpus of studies women have emerged triumphant; it has been suggested that it was women who were the leaders of the luxury markets, and in general, active agents as consumers.⁴⁶

London as spectacle

Since most elite women spent a significant part of their year away from London, long absences made them eager tourists. When in London, they would visit the

range of sights the metropolis had to offer. The most important of these were Westminster Abbey, the Tower, and St Paul's Cathedral. In mid-May, 1619, Lady Anne Clifford visited Westminster Abbey: 'My Lord brought me to Westminster Abbey where I stay'd to see the Tombs and the place where the Queen was buried in an Angle in Henry 7th's Chapel.'⁴⁷ Women would also visit smaller churches, private residences, and hospitals.⁴⁸

In the long eighteenth century, important entertainment experiences were offered by theatres, concerts, operas, exhibitions, puppet theatres, lectures, masquerades, and balls. Pleasure gardens such as Vauxhall in Lambeth were immensely popular.⁴⁹ Certainly eighteenth-century London provided much more variety than it had done in the previous century, as public concerts for example were a new phenomenon,⁵⁰ but plays and other amusements were high priorities for the ladies who visited London in the early seventeenth century. The 'harmless recreations' for Margaret Cavendish's sisters, mentioned above, included going to the theatre.⁵¹

Perhaps a little paradoxically, nature and natural history were also important parts of the urban experience. All cities, including London, had much open space: riversides, parks and gardens.⁵² Paula Findlen has noted that natural history fitted in well with the urban market-minded culture, and it was manifested, for example, in collections and exhibitions of curiosities such as shells and minerals.⁵³ The elite were drawn to these exhibitions to satisfy their curiosity and to show that they were fashionable,⁵⁴ and there is no reason to assume Tudor and Stuart elite women would not have gradually become interested in that as well as the women of the eighteenth century.

Conclusions

We should perhaps not talk about early modern women as Charles Baudelaire's *flâneurs*.⁵⁵ These women did not yet have what we now recognise as the 'modern experience'. However, I am tempted to interpret some early modern elite women as *presque-flâneuses*, since they were enthralled by their urban situations. London played tricks on one's senses. When she was young, in the early seventeenth century, Mary Rich was fascinated by the intensity of London, by its women's beautiful dresses, theatres, and Hyde Park.⁵⁶ I see her reaction to London as the reflection of an urban experience. This lure of London was of course also easily seen as a threat. In 1640 Brilliana Harley warned her son about London, and asked him to spend his time there in a respectable manner. She wrote: 'Deare Ned: be carefull to improuf your time. I know Londoun is a bewitching place.'⁵⁷ For many it was too tempting. In 1699 an anonymous gentleman in London published *The Country Gentleman's Vade Mecum*

and in it exhorted country gentlemen to value country life. London emptied the countryside, the city was a monster:

Believe me, Sir, the Country is so empty already, that a true *Englishman* cannot look into it, without a great deal of just Pity and Concern. Is it not a very ungrateful Spectacle, to see so many Noble Houses mouldring into ruin, and dropping down of want of Inhabitants? and then to behold the prodigious Growth and Increase of this unweildy City, and to observe what a strange multitude of People there is jumbled together in it; who can reflect upon this, but must necessarily believe, that the Head in a little time longer will grow so much too big for the Body, that it must consequently tumble down at last, and ruin the whole?⁵⁸

This call came too late. London was already a place that held the elite under its spell.

Taking part in all these activities made these women active elements in London's human geography.⁵⁹ They had a role to play in the elite metropolis. They were seen and they presented themselves at their best with pleasure. It was not unusual for them to sigh with relief when their visit was finally over and they left London for the summer, but they returned, refreshed and prepared, even regardless of the dangers of life-threatening epidemics.

Even though elite women were excluded from some male public places such as caf  s, there were other urban hot spots where women could be found. The fact that women's urban experience and urban spheres were partly different from those of men does not mean that women were not active participants in the city. Women, too, were city people, seen, heard, and taking part. Within the limitations of respectability, women's sphere was extensive. The edges of their sphere were certainly moving, partly open, often permeable and negotiable. For women, early modern London was a place unlike any other. For many, it was a part-time heaven.

Notes

1. My deepest thanks are due to the participants of the WHN 12th Annual Conference in Aberdeen 2003, the members of Professor Peter Clark's Urban History Group at the University of Helsinki, and SOREAL group at the Department of English, University of Helsinki, for their comments, for my anonymous reviewer, and especially to Dr Anu Korhonen (University of Helsinki) for her outstanding criticism and comments. Warm thanks are also due to Dr Keith Battarbee (University of Turku)

for polishing my English. Funding for my research has been generously provided by the Academy of Finland.

2. Important recent work includes Laura Gowing, *Domestic Dangers. Women, Words, and Sex in Early Modern London* (Oxford, 1996) and her *Common Bodies. Women, Touch and Power in Seventeenth-Century England* (Newhaven and London, 2003); Sara Mendelson and Patricia Crawford, *Women in Early Modern England 1550-1720* (Oxford, 1998); Robert B. Shoemaker, *Gender in English Society, 1650-1850. The Emergence of Separate Spheres?* (London and New York, 1998); Bernard Capp, *When Gossips Meet. Women, Family, and Neighbourhood in Early Modern England* (Oxford, 2003).

3. Maureen A. Flanagan, 'Women in the City, Women of the City. Where Do Women Fit in Urban History?' *Journal of Urban History*, 23 (3, March, 1997), 251-260; Deborah L. Parsons, *Streetwalking the Metropolis. Women, the City, and Modernity* (Oxford, 2000), 1-2. See also Elizabeth Bennett Kubek, 'Women's Participation in the Urban Culture of Early Modern London', in *The Consumption of Culture 1600-1800. Image, Object, Text*, ed. Ann Bermingham and John Brewer (London and New York, 1995), 452. On early modern urban history of England, see Peter Earle, *A City Full of People. Men and Women of London 1650-1750* (London, 1994); Peter Clark, *British Clubs and Societies. The Origins of an Associational World* (Oxford, 2000); *Londinopolis. Essays in the Cultural and Social History of Early Modern London*, ed. Paul Griffiths and Mark S. R. Jenner (Manchester and New York, 2000); *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain. Vol. II 1540-1840*, ed. Peter Clark (Cambridge 2000); Joyce M. Ellis, *The Georgian Town 1680-1840* (Basingstoke and New York, 2001); *Women and Urban Life in Eighteenth-Century England*, ed. Rosemary Sweet and Penelope Lane (Aldershot and Burlington, 2003). On provincial towns, see below, note 11.

4. On print culture, see Ingrid H. Tague, *Women of Quality. Accepting and Contesting Ideals of Femininity in England, 1690-1760* (Woodbridge and Rochester, 2002); Helen Berry, *Gender, Society and Print Culture in Late-Stuart England* (Aldershot and Burlington, 2003); *Didactic Literature in England 1500-1800. Expertise Constructed*, ed. Natasha Glaisyer and Sara Pennell (Aldershot and Burlington, 2003). On challenging patriarchal norms, see note 1 above, and Vivienne Larminie, *Wealth, Kinship and Culture. The Seventeenth-Century Newdigates of Arbury and Their World*, (Woodbridge and Rochester, 1995); Susan E. Whyman, *Sociability and Power in Late-Stuart England. The Cultural Worlds of the Verneys 1660-1720* (Oxford and New York, 1999).

5. Alice T. Friedman, 'Inside/Out. Women, Domesticity, and the Pleasures of the City', in *Material London, ca. 1600*, ed. Lena Cowen Orlin (Philadelphia, 2000), 233-4.

6. Linda K. Kerber, 'Separate Spheres, Female Worlds, Woman's Place: The Rhetoric of Women's History', *Journal of American History*, 75 (1, 1988), 9-39; Lena Cowen Orlin, *Private Matters and Public Culture in Post-Reformation England* (Ithaca and London, 1994); Dena Goodman, 'Public Sphere and Private Life: Toward a Synthesis of Current Historiographical Approaches to the Old Regime', *History*

and Theory 31(1, 1992), 1-20; Linda A. Pollock, 'Living on the Stage of the World: the Concept of Privacy Among the Elite of Early Modern England' in *Rethinking Social History. English Society 1570-1920 and Its Interpretation*, ed. Adrian Wilson (Manchester and New York, 1993), 78-96; Mary Beth Norton, *Founding Mothers & Fathers. Gendered Power and the Forming of American Society* (New York, 1996), 19-23; Laurence, *Women in England*, 10; Hannah Barker and Elaine Chalus, 'Introduction', in *Gender in Eighteenth-Century England. Roles, Representations and Responsibilities*, ed. Hannah Barker and Elaine Chalus (London and New York, 1997), 1-28; Rosemary Sweet, *The English Town 1680-1840. Government, Society and Culture* (Harlow, 1999), 204-5; Vickery, *The Gentleman's Daughter, Women's Lives in Georgian England* (New Haven and London, 1998), especially 3-9, 277; Brian Harrison, 'The Public and the Private in Modern Britain' in *Civil Histories. Essays Presented to Sir Keith Thomas*, ed. Peter Burke, Brian Harrison and Paul Slack (Oxford, 2000), 337-57; Michael Reed, 'The Urban Landscape 1540-1700', in *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain. Vol. II 1540-1840*, ed. Peter Clark (Cambridge, 2000), 289-313; Marjo Kaartinen, 'Public and Private: Challenges in the Study of Early Modern Women's Lives', in *Time Frames. Negotiating Cultural History. Cultural History 1*, ed. Anu Korhonen and Kirsi Tuohela (Turku, 2002), 89-104; Tague, *Women of Quality*, 5-6; Gowing, *Common Bodies*, 29; Patricia Meyers Spacks, *Privacy. Concealing the Eighteenth-Century Self* (Chicago and London, 2003); Rosemary Sweet, 'Introduction' in *Women and Urban Life in Eighteenth-Century England*, ed. Rosemary Sweet and Penelope Lane (Aldershot and Burlington, 2003), 20. On purity, see Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger. An Analysis of the Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (London, 1991).

7. Vickery, *The Gentleman's Daughter* has been especially influential. See also Tague, *Women of Quality*; Joanna Martin, *Women and Children in the Georgian Country House* (London and New York, 2004).

8. Gowing, *Domestic Dangers*; Capp, *When Gossips Meet*. There are some studies on the elite women, however. See especially Friedman, 'Inside/Out', 232-250. See also Barbara J. Harris, *English Aristocratic Women, 1450-1550* (Oxford and New York, 2002), which leaves space for research on women of the later sixteenth and early seventeenth century; Rosemary Baird, *Mistress of the House. Great Ladies and Grand Houses* (London, 2003), with a later emphasis however, and with a focus on women's lives at their country estates. Among the new studies on the early modern elite in general, see James M. Rosenheim, *The Emergence of a Ruling Order. English Landed Society 1650-1750* (London and New York, 1998). There is also a growing number of biographical studies on pre-1700 elite women available.

9. Anna Bryson, *From Courtesy to Civility. Changing Codes of Conduct in Early Modern England* (Oxford, 1998), 128, 129-130.

10. Some excellent research regarding women's social spaces has been carried out during the past few years. See for example Stella Tillyard, *Aristocrats. Caroline, Emily, Louisa and Sarah Lennox 1740-1832* (London, 1995); John Brewer, *The Pleasures of the Imagination. English Culture in the*

Eighteenth Century (London, 1997); Vickery, *The Gentleman's Daughter*; Mendelson and Crawford, *Women in Early Modern England*; Laura Gowing, '"The Freedom of the Streets": Women and Social Space, 1570-1640', in *Londinopolis. Essays in the Cultural and Social History of Early Modern London*, ed. Paul Griffiths and Mark S. R. Jenner (Manchester and New York, 2000), 130-151; Robert B. Shoemaker, 'Gendered Spaces: Patterns of Mobility and Perceptions of London's Geography, 1660-1750', in *Imagining Early Modern London. Perceptions and Portrayals of the City from Stow to Strype, 1598-1720*, ed. J. F. Merritt (Cambridge, 2001), 144-165; *Privacy, Domesticity, and Women in Early Modern England*, ed. Corinne S. Abate (Aldershot and Burlington 2003). Women's previous invisibility in the histories of early modern towns seems to have been an international problem. For example in Finland Kirsi Vainio-Korhonen has turned the womanless world of Turku upside down. See 'Mamselli Falckin tarina eli kaupunkihistorian tuntematon sukupuoli', in *Ihmiset ovat kaupunki. Turun Historiallinen Arkisto 53*, ed. Jari Niemelä (Turku, 1999), 65-78.

11. British Library (hereafter BL), Additional MS 34170, Lady Elizabeth Twysden: Diaries, fos. 8-30. I do not wish to suggest that late medieval elite women would have been absent from London. On the contrary, in 1470s, Elizabeth Stonor resided in London, made social visits, and eventually noted being 'veray wery off London'. See *Kingsford's Stonor Letters and Papers 1290-1483*, ed. Christine Carpenter (Cambridge, 1996), 266, 325.

12. There seems to be a consensus that the urban development in the provinces at least in part followed the example of London, and was a slightly later phenomenon. See Peter Borsay, *The English Urban Renaissance. Culture and Society in The Provincial Town 1660-1770* (Oxford, 1989); Jonathan Barry, 'Provincial Town Culture, 1640-1780: Urbane or Civic?' in *Interpretation and Cultural History*, ed. Joan H. Pittcock and Andrew Wear (Houndmills and London, 1991), 198-234; Sweet, *The English Town*; Ellis, *The Georgian Town; Provincial Towns in Early Modern England and Ireland. Change Convergence and Divergence. Proceedings of the British Academy 108*, ed. Peter Borsay and Lindsay Proudfoot (Oxford, 2002); *Women and Urban Life in Eighteenth-Century England; Eighteenth-Century York: Culture, Space and Society*, ed. Mark Hallett and Jane Rendall (York, 2003); *Creating and Consuming Culture in North-East England, 1660-1830*, ed. Helen Berry and Jeremy Gregory (Aldershot and Burlington, 2004).

13. Brewer, *The Pleasures of the Imagination*, 493-494; Susan Brigden, *London and the Reformation* (Oxford, 1989) 6, 43; Gowing, *Domestic Dangers*, 21; E. A. Wrigley, 'City and Country in the Past: a Sharp Divide or a Continuum?', *Historical Research* LXIV (154, 1991), 110.

14. Thomas Starkey, *A Dialogue between Cardinal Pole and Thomas Lupset, Lecturer in Rhetoric at Oxford*, ed. J. M. Cowper (London, 1871), 177-8; Bryson, *From Courtesy to Civility*, 120, 129-132. See also Peter Clark, *English Provincial Society from the Reformation to the Revolution: Religion, Politics and Society in Kent 1500-1640* (Hassocks, 1997), 207; C. M. Woolgar, *The Great Household in Late Medieval England* (New Haven and London, 1999), 80; Markku Kekäläinen, 'Herrasmies ja Highwayman - James Boswellin

kaksi kaupunkia', in "*Se rakkain kotipolku*", *Erkki Kouri ja yleinen historia. Helsingin yliopiston Historian laitoksen julkaisuja 15*, ed. Kustaa Multamäki, Markku Peltonen and Hannes Saarinen (Helsinki, 2000), 155.

15. Earlier, MPs' wives had remained at home, taking care of the country house, their families and households there. Margaret Paston is a good example. In the 1450s she spent much time without her London-based husband, and their correspondence gives a clear picture of Margaret's great role as the householder. An interesting detail are her orders for her husband in London to buy goods such as fabrics, sugar, and spices, of which she could obtain 'none gode in this town'. See Margaret Paston to John Paston I, 14 Nov, probably 1453 in *Paston Letters and Papers of the Fifteenth Century Parts I-II*, ed. Norman Davis (London, 1971-1976), part I, 252. On frequent shopping requests, see *Two Elizabethan Women: The Correspondence of Joan and Maria Thynne 1575-1611*, ed. Alison D. Wall (Devizes, 1983). On shopping and consuming, see Lisa Jardine, *Worldly Goods* (London and Basingstoke, 1996), 93; Elizabeth Kowaleski-Wallace, *Consuming Subjects. Women, Shopping, and Business in the Eighteenth Century* (New York 1997), 6-7, 75; Vickery, *The Gentleman's Daughter*, 250; Shoemaker, *Gender in English Society*, 270. Lady Elizabeth Twysden's diaries in BL, Add. MS, 34169, f. 30 illustrate the fact that husbands were bound to Parliament for very long periods of time and that gradually the women no longer had to stay behind. Elsewhere, of course, there are contrary examples. Lady Brilliana Harley's husband steadfastly ignored her repeated pleas to be allowed to move to London and to live with him. *Letters of The Lady Brilliana Harley*, ed. Thomas Taylor Lewis (London, 1858), 167, 170, 185-6.

16. Friedman records Bess of Harwick's movements between country estates and London, see Friedman, 'Inside/Out', 241. Bess's recent biographer Mary S. Lovell notes that 'London was not, of course, a new sight to Bess, but it was always an interesting place'. See Mary S. Lovell, *Bess of Hardwick. First Lady of Chatsworth 1527-1608* (London, 2005), 47.

17. *Kingsford's Stonor Letters and Papers*, 266; *The Oxinden Letters 1607-1642. Being the Correspondence of Henry Oxinden of Barham and His Circle*, ed. Dorothy Gardiner (London, 1933), 150.

18. Laura Gowing discusses the eroticization of the city and the physical dangers presented to women by it in Gowing, 'Women and Social Space', 145-7. Alice Friedman study on Elizabeth, Lady Willoughby, shows a late sixteenth-century woman in London, frequently without her husband, negotiating these rules, and eventually ending in a clash with her husband, probably having overstepped the society's tolerance of women's independence. See Friedman's, 'Inside/Out', 239-40.

19. *Two Elizabethan Women: The Correspondence of Joan and Maria Thynne 1575-1611*, ed. Alison D. Wall (Devizes, 1983), 4, 5.

20. *Letters of The Lady Brilliana Harley*, 156.

21. *Memoirs of Lady Fanshawe, Wife of Sir Richard Fanshawe, Bart. Ambassador from Charles the Second to the Courts of Portugal and Madrid*, ed. Henry Colburn and Richard Bentley, new edition (London, 1830), 115.

22. BL, Add. MS 4454. Katherine Austen: Miscellanies, f. 51.

23. *The Private Life of an Elizabethan Lady. The Diary of Lady Margaret Hoby 1599-1605*, ed. Joanna Moody (Stroud, 1998), 127-129, 189; *Barrington Family Letters 1628-1632*, ed. Arthur Searle (London, 1983), 242.

24. The development of turnpike roads and stagecoach services is often seen as paramount in the cultural expansion of London. See Roy Porter, *English Society in the 18th Century. Revised Edition* (London 1991), 189-194; Rosenheim, *The Emergence of a Ruling Order*, 217.

25. BL, Add. MS 27351, Diary of Mary Rich, Countess of Warwick, f. 41v. See also William Gouge: *Of Domesticall Duties*, (Amsterdam & Norwood, N.J., ((1622)1976), 315; Amy Louise Erickson, *Women and Property in Early Modern England* (London, 1993), 10-11; Tillyard, *Aristocrats*, 168; Marjo Kaartinen, 'Vauhtivaunut - elämä pyöriä ennen autoa', in *Sata lasissa. Turun historiallinen arkisto 54*, ed. Ismo Vähäkangas (Turku, 2000), 25-36.

26. Bryson, *From Courtesy to Civility*, 61, 128-131.

27. *The Diaries of Lady Anne Clifford*, ed. D. J. H. Clifford (Stroud, 1990), 33; Friedman, 'Inside/Out', 245. Friedman sees Anne Clifford's relation to London formative: 'Yet the memory of the city was very much present in the life she chose, even as she insisted on its absence. ... a lover of the city, she shields her eyes because the sights were still a source of temptation to her, a woman whose tastes and desires were forged in the London of Elizabeth and in the country houses of consumers, newly awakened to the pleasures of the marketplace', p. 247-8.

28. BL, Add. MS 27351, Diary of Mary Rich, Countess of Warwick, fos. 50v, 51.

29. Pentti Karkama, 'Kaupunki kirjallisuudessa. Ongelmia ja näkökulmia', in *Paikkoja ja tiloja suomalaisessa kirjallisuudessa. Turun yliopiston taiteiden tutkimuksen laitoksen julkaisuja 37*, ed. Kaisa Kurikka (Turku, 1998), 14; J. F. Merritt, 'Introduction. Perceptions and Portrayals of London 1598-1720', in *Imagining Early Modern London. Perceptions and Portrayals of the City from Stow to Strype, 1598-1720*, ed. J. F. Merritt (Cambridge, 2001), 13, notes that 'the early modern city was not fragmented into a mosaic of individually self-sufficient communities, but seems instead more like a complex web of interwoven communities'.

30. Margaret Cavendish, Duchess of Newcastle, *A true relation of the Birth, Breeding, and Life, of Margaret Cavendish* (Kent, 1814), 8-9.

31. BL, Add. MS. 27351, Diary of Mary Rich, Countess of Warwick, fos. 50v-51.

32. BL, Add. MS 34169, Lady Elizabeth Twysden: Diaries, fos. 18, 22.

33. Jane Lady Cornwallis, *The Private Correspondence of Jane Lady Cornwallis; 1613-1644* (London 1842), 87-8.

34. Bryson, *From Courtesy to Civility*, 129-30; Larminie, *Wealth, Kinship and Culture*, 122-3, 130.

35. Whyman: *Sociability and Power*, 91.
36. The importance of walking to eighteenth-century women has been well established, and abroad the English were famous for not walking but actually running, so fast they were. Juha Manninen, 'Kirjallisten opintojen ja matkoilla koetun suhteesta varhaisvalistuksen Euroopassa', in *'Muille maille vierahille'. Kalervo Hovi ja yleinen historia*, ed. Esa Sundbäck (Turku, 2002), 486. On women and walking see for example Vickery, *The Gentleman's Daughter*, 250; Laura Williams, "'To recreate and refresh their dulled spirites in the sweet and wholesome ayre'", Green Space and the Growth of the City', in *Imagining Early Modern London. Perceptions and Portrayals of the City from Stow to Strype, 1598-1720*, ed. J. F. Merritt (Cambridge, 2001), 185-213.
37. Cavendish, *A True Relation*, 28-9.
38. Deborah Epstein Nord, *Walking the Victorian Streets. Women, Representation, and the City* (Ithaca and London, 1995), 3; Vickery, *The Gentleman's Daughter*, 248, 250. As Vickery notes, the Pantiles in Tunbridge Wells were laid out already in 1638.
39. *Two Elizabethan Women*, 127, 129.
40. Bryson, *From Courtesy to Civility*, 131.
41. Cited in Sara Heller Mendelson, *The Mental World of Stuart Women. Three Studies* (Brighton, 1987), 72. See also 'Autobiography of Mary Countess of Warwick', in *Early English Poetry, Ballads and Popular Literature of the Middle Ages*, vol. XXI, ed. T. Crofton Croker (London, 1868), 21.
42. Cavendish, *A True Relation*, 9.
43. Linda Levy Peck's recent *Consuming Splendor. Society and Culture in Seventeenth-Century England* (Cambridge, 2005), offers support for this argument.
44. Bryson, *From Courtesy to Civility*, 131.
45. *Two Elizabethan Women*, 4. Lorna Weatherill's study on consumption from 1660 onwards corroborates that London led the culture of consumption. Lorna Weatherill, *Consumer Behaviour and Material Culture in Britain 1660-1760. Second Edition* (London and New York, 1996), 47-51.
46. There is a wealth of studies on women and ownership, but see for example Susan Dwyer Amussen, *An Ordered Society. Gender and Class in Early Modern England* (Oxford and New York, 1988); Erickson, *Women and Property*; Laurence, *Women in England*, 144-162, 227-235. On consumerism, see note 16 above and Weatherill, *Consumer Behaviour*. On consumerism and the commercialization of leisure, see *The Consumption of Culture 1600-1800. Image, Object, Text*, ed. Ann Bermingham and John Brewer (London and New York, 1995); Kowaleski-Wallace, *Consuming Subjects*; Larminie, *Wealth, Kinship and Culture*, 47, 48, 69, 70; Helen Berry, 'Prudent Luxury: The Metropolitan Tastes of Judith Baker, Durham Gentlewoman' in *Women and Urban Life in Eighteenth-Century England*, ed. Rosemary Sweet and Penelope Lane (Aldershot and Burlington, 2003), 131-55; Berry, *Gender, Society and Print Culture*; Helen Berry, 'Creating Polite Space: The Organisation and Social Function of the Newcastle Assembly Rooms' in *Creating and Consuming Culture in North-East England, 1660-1830*, ed. Helen Berry and Jeremy Gregory (Aldershot and Burlington, 2004), 120-40; Peck, *Consuming Splendor*, 21-2, 68-71.
47. *The Diaries of Lady Anne Clifford*, 75.
48. Churches were plentiful in London, see Brigden, *London and the Reformation*, 6. As a country pleasure, visiting country houses was especially fashionable in the eighteenth century, but the practice was known much earlier. Althorp, for example, was a popular destination in the sixteenth century. The first guidebook to elite homes was published in 1744. See Rosenheim, *The Emergence of a Ruling Order*, 98-99; Dana Arnold, 'The Country House and its Publics', in *The Georgian Country House. Architecture, Landscape and Society*, ed. Dana Arnold (Stroud, 1998), 20. Also Miles Ogborn, *Spaces of Modernity. London's Geographies 1680-1780* (New York and London, 1998), 109.
49. Brewer, *Pleasures of the Imagination*, 65-6; M. H. Port, 'Town House and Country House: Their Interaction', in *The Georgian Country House. Architecture, Landscape and Society*, ed. Dana Arnold (Stroud, 1998), 129; Shoemaker, *Gender in English Society*, 278-9; Vickery, *The Gentleman's Daughter*, 248; Williams, "'To recreate and refresh their dulled spirites'", 191.
50. Peter Clark notes that 'commercial leisure activity was invented in Britain during 'the long eighteenth century'', and that Europe's first commercial concert took place in London in the 1670s. Peter Clark, 'European cities, Culture and Innovation in a Regional Perspective', in *Reclaiming the City. Innovation, Culture, Experience*, ed. Marjaana Niemi and Ville Vuolanto (Helsinki, 2003), 127.
51. Cavendish, *A True Relation*, 9.
52. Margaret Pelling, *The Common Lot. Sickness, Medical Occupations and the Urban Poor in Early Modern England* (London and New York, 1998), 20.
53. Paula Findlen, 'Courting Nature', in *Cultures of Natural History*, ed. N. Jardine, J. A. Secord and E. C. Spary (Cambridge, 1996), 65.
54. Vickery, *Gentleman's Daughter*, 252; Port, 'Town House', 129-130.
55. Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, translated by Steven F. Rendall (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London, 1984), 93; Ritva Hapuli, *Ulkomailla. Maailmansotien välinen maailma suomalaisnaisten silmin* (Helsinki, 2003), 153-5.
56. 'Autobiography of Mary Countess of Warwick', 21; BL, Add. MS 27351, the Diary of Mary Countess of Warwick, f. 51; Mendelson, *The Mental World of Stuart Women*, 72.
57. *Letters of Brillianna Harley*, 101.
58. *The Country Gentleman's Vade Mecum* (London, 1699), 7.
59. Kekäläinen, 'Herrasmies ja Highwayman', 150-1.

Women’s wealth in the nineteenth century: some evidence from the probate records of Milan, Italy (1862–1900)

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Studies in gender history have recently increased in Italy, too. Women at work, women as wives, as sisters or daughters have been taken into consideration. The legal and cultural framework in which the Italian women of the past were living has also been analysed.¹ However, our knowledge is still unsatisfactory. It is worth pointing out, for instance, that middle-class women who shared with men a leading role in the economic and social development of the nineteenth century still remain in the shadows.

Landowners, traders, bankers and industrialists have been examined from every point of view; the role these men played in the industrialization process has been well analysed and highlighted. Due to the fact that middle-class women had to be simply ‘domestic goddesses’, they have been practically neglected by Italian historical literature.² Nonetheless, they have been broadly assumed to have played no role in the public and economic sphere, and to have been relegated to the private one, the family. To identify and define the profiles of all the women belonging to the elite living in nineteenth-century Milan, is the first aim of this paper. Secondly, attention will be drawn to their wealth, in order to assess its value and origins. Finally, the composition of their estates will be taken into consideration, to see if they made a contribution towards economic development.

The historical sources utilized here are mainly estate tax returns. These are the official documents that an heir had to complete and submit to the competent authorities in order to prove his/her right to inheritance; they also served tax purposes. These records, according to many scholars, are the best for shedding light on the structure of wealth and wealth-holders in the past, whether men or women. They can be found in every western country. In

Italy, as in France, they are called Acts of Succession (*Dichiarazioni di successione*).³ The Italian documents are available from the period immediately after the country’s unification (1861). In fact on 21 April 1862, following the example of France, a law was enacted for the constitution of a Registrar’s Office. Thereafter, any person who had inherited an estate, for whatever reason, was bound to declare it and give an estimate of its worth. In the Italian probate records, both real and personal estate had to be listed and the declaration form submitted to the Registrar’s Office nearest to the deceased’s residence.⁴ In France, the type and value of the real estate was probated in the district of location. In England the probate records referred only to the personal part of the estate.⁵ So, as far as research into this source is concerned, the task is easier for Italian scholars than for French or English scholars.

Research carried out in Italy is also advantaged by the legal framework of the time. Following the enforcement in 1865 of the new Civil Code for the Kingdom of Italy, family patrimony was governed by the practice of separation of assets. However, if desired, the couple had the faculty to stipulate a pre-matrimonial contract which provided for a regime of dotal property — as often happened — or community of property.⁶ As a rule, under Italian law, women retained legal rights to their own property, even upon marriage. Thus, by looking at female records, the type and value of each individual’s assets can be precisely traced. In other words, in Italy, information about women’s wealth can be readily ascertained from the Acts of Succession, as long as they are in a good state of preservation and access to the archives is permitted.⁷

Milan is one of the few Italian cities where this precious historical source is available for analysis. In order to conduct a systematic examination of the documentation, a database has been prepared containing name, surname, gross assets and archive reference for all of the 42,053 files deposited during the period 1862-1900.⁸ Information about age and occupation of the wealthy, as provided by the only census carried out in nineteenth-century Italy, has been added for 1871 and 1881. Details of assets and marital status listed in the Acts of Succession have also been included in the 1871-81 data set. All the information pertaining to the wealthy women in the city has thus been brought together.

Table 1. Number of cases, amount and average of estate, by sex. (Absolute values, current Italian lire) <i>Source:</i> Archivio di stato di Milano, fondo Successioni, denunce 1871, 1881.		cases		estate		average of estate
Men	933	59%	91.812.495,92	77%		98.405,68
Women	657	41%	26.791.711,34	23%		40.778,86
Total	1590	100%	118.604.207,26	100%		74.593,84

		cases		estate		average of estate
Table 2. Women: number of cases, amount and average of estate, by marital status. (Absolute values, current Italian lire)	Spinsters	172	28,6%	7.611.480,34	26,6%	44.252,79
	Married	205	17,6%	4.672.496,95	31,7%	22.792,67
	Widowed	262	50,6%	13.476.381,71	40,5%	51.436,57
	Divorced	83	2,0%	860.086,86	1,2%	107.510,86
	Available cases	647	100,0%	26.620.445,86	100,0%	40.778,86
	n.a.	10	0,6%	171.265,48	1,5%	17.126,55
	Total	657		26.791.711,34		

Sources: Archivio di stato di Milano, fondo Successioni, denunce 1871,1881; Archivio dell'Ufficio di statistica del Comune di Milano, Elenco delle persone morte nella città di Milano, nell'anno 1881, Archivio civico di Milano. Elenco dei registri generali dei morti trasmesso all'archivio storico, 1881, Archivio dell'anagrafe del comune di Milano, Elenco degli atti di morte, 1881, 'Archivio dell'Ufficio di statistica del comune di Milano, Riassunto delle morti del 1871, suddiviso per sesso, età e stato civile, 1871, Archivio dell'ufficio di statistica del comune di Milano, Dati relativi al censimento del 1871: popolazione classificata per professioni.

Before entering into the analysis of the data, a final observation must be made. In the first decades after the Unification, Milan was second only to Naples in demographic size and was the most important Italian city in terms of economic development. The early phase of industrialisation was already complete. There were many established textile industries (silk and cotton) in the hinterland relying on the city for their financial and commercial needs. Inside the town, a few mechanical factories had been established since the 1840s', and new chemical, papermaking and ceramic manufactures were starting up.⁹

Wealthy women

According to the registers of deaths of Milan, in 1871 and 1881, on the whole 9,462 women and 9,588 men died. Only 657 women — 6.94 per cent of the female decedents — and 933 men — 9.72 per cent of the male decedents — died in the privileged position of leaving an inheritance.¹⁰ In general there was a high rate of poverty, though it was slightly higher among women.¹¹

The question of how wealth and income were distributed between the factors of production (land, capital, labour) or between individuals during the nineteenth century has long interested numerous groups of economists and social scientists. Some contemporary Italian scholars (including Nitti, Gini and Pantaeloni) were also fascinated by the subject; but the problem of how the 'wealth of the nation' was shared between men and women has never been examined.¹²

In Milan, 41 per cent of the acts of succession recorded in 1871 and 1881 related to deceased women and accounted for 23 per cent of all estate to be inherited (Table 1). Wealthy women were far fewer than wealthy men: as seen in some Italian cities and in other

parts of the Western world, women's fortunes on average were much smaller than men's.¹³ The average value of female estates in Milan was L. 40,778.86 (L. = lire) compared with L. 98,405.68, more than double, for men.

So, the Milan figures confirm that wealth was distributed unequally between the sexes, and at the same time show the importance of women's estates, within the nineteenth-century urban context. Women were the legal owners of nearly one quarter of the wealth in Milan, as in Naples, Bergamo and Catanzaro (these are the only other Italian cities for which this information is available).¹⁴ Seen in another light, two out of five 'rich' individuals were women. Given the small number of middle/middle-high/high class people at that time, this female component of 41 per cent becomes even more significant and merits close attention.

Focusing on marital status is the first step towards furthering our knowledge about women wealth-holders. Over 40 per cent were widows, 32.7 per cent were married and 26.6 per cent were spinsters. The first group held over 50 per cent of the total amount of the estates, spinsters held nearly 30 per cent and married women held less than 18 per cent, notwithstanding the fact that numerically they represented one-third of the entire group. The average amounts of the estates follow the same trend: L. 22,000 for married women, L. 44,000 for spinsters, L. 51,000 for widows and more than L. 100,000 for divorced women (Table 2). According to these figures, 'single women', including those who never achieved the longed for goal of matrimony, seem to be wealthier and in a better economic position. This finding is questionable and difficult to accept. Further explanations are required, keeping in mind that wealth could either be self-created (earnings in a broad sense: salaries, wages, profits, income) or 'gifted' in various ways (donations, inheritance, winnings).

The occupation at the time of death of 560 of the 657 women under examination has been found in the historical town registers of Milan (Table 3). One woman in three was in employment, the others declared themselves ‘*possidenti*’ (landowners), ‘*benestanti*’ (well off) and ‘*agiati/e*’ (annuitants). It is likely but not certain that this last category were actually able to live without working, with some form of financial or property income. In fact, at the time, many people proclaimed to be men — or women — of property, simply to give themselves a more respectable standing.

In this cultural and social framework, the high number of craftswomen, shop-owners, salaried staff, employees and pensioners is worth noting. However, they held only 3,5 per cent of overall wealth, the residual share (96.5 per cent) belonging to women who were, in a broad sense, *rentier* (Table 3). The average value of the assets, L. 4,725.87 and L. 59,906.87 respectively, confirms the gap between the groups. Further evidence is the fact that the great majority (94.5 per cent) of female workers left estates worth less than L. 10,000. Also, it is likely that two-thirds of these had just a decent standard of living, as they left less than L.1.000 to their heirs.

In short, in nineteenth-century Milan, the great majority of women were wealthy only if they came from rich families and received money and property through inheritance or gifts ‘*inter vivos*’. The high rate (49 per cent) of spinsters employed, earning their living, is therefore surprising. The figure hardly fits with the considerable value of their assets previously pointed out. On the other hand, the low average value of married women’s property must be borne in mind and connected to their low rate of employment (25 per cent). (Fig. 1).

One can assume that a married woman was most likely to declare being a landowner, well off, annuitant or a housewife, because it was a husband’s duty to support the family. However, the relative wealth differentials are too high. Nor does the inheritance law help to understand why the financial position of women who died before their husbands was worse than that of those who died never having had a husband or those who died after their husband.

Under Italian law all women were guaranteed a portion of inheritance ‘*legitim*’ as daughters and, in the exceptional case of absence of any other heirs, as mothers. But nothing was guaranteed to wives who could only claim for a usufruct or life interest on the estate left by the husband.¹⁵ Apart from exceptional family situations or thanks to, very rare, bequests from her husband, the widow received nothing more from him. The personal wealth of any woman, married or not, came from the family of origin. Every woman, regardless of marital status, occupation and age, had the same right to inheritance, but nearly always as a result of being a daughter. It is highly improbable that any woman could amass a vast amount of wealth solely from her work income. So we must consider other aspects of the structure of female wealth to understand why, as the records tell us, widows and spinsters were much wealthier than married women. Distribution is the first topic to deal with.

There was an unequal distribution of women’s, and men’s, wealth in the nineteenth century. In Milan, according to data available for the period 1862–1900, 10 per cent of the registrations accounted for nearly 80 per cent of total estates. Inheritances of more than L. 500,000 (less than 2 per cent of the total number) alone

Table 3. Women: number of cases, amount of estate, by occupational status. (Absolute values, current Italian lire)
Sources: see Table 2.

	cases		estate	
Annuitant	239	42,7%	4.552.285,36	19,2%
Gentlewoman	43	7,7%	819.665,63	3,5%
Landowner	100	17,9%	17.509.867,30	73,8%
Total ‘rentiers’	382	68,21%	22.881.818,29	96,5%
Entrepreneurs	6	1,1%	141.439,83	0,6%
Professionals	4	0,7%	9.166,25	0,0%
Craftswomen	64	11,4%	280.660,73	1,2%
Shopkeepers	30	5,4%	130.539,28	0,6%
Wage-earners	25	4,5%	82.769,43	0,3%
Clerks	7	1,3%	46.510,97	0,2%
Retired	34	6,1%	130.224,51	0,5%
Others	8	1,4%	20.072,34	0,1%
Total	560	100,0%	23.723.201,63	100,0%

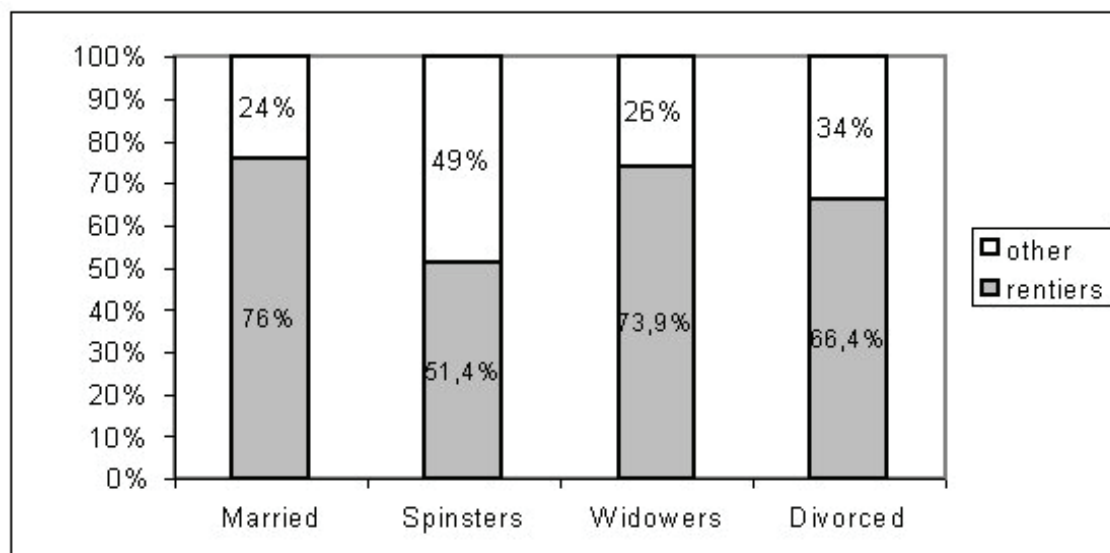


Figure. 1. Women: Distribution of Cases, by occupational and marital status. *Source:* see Table. 2.

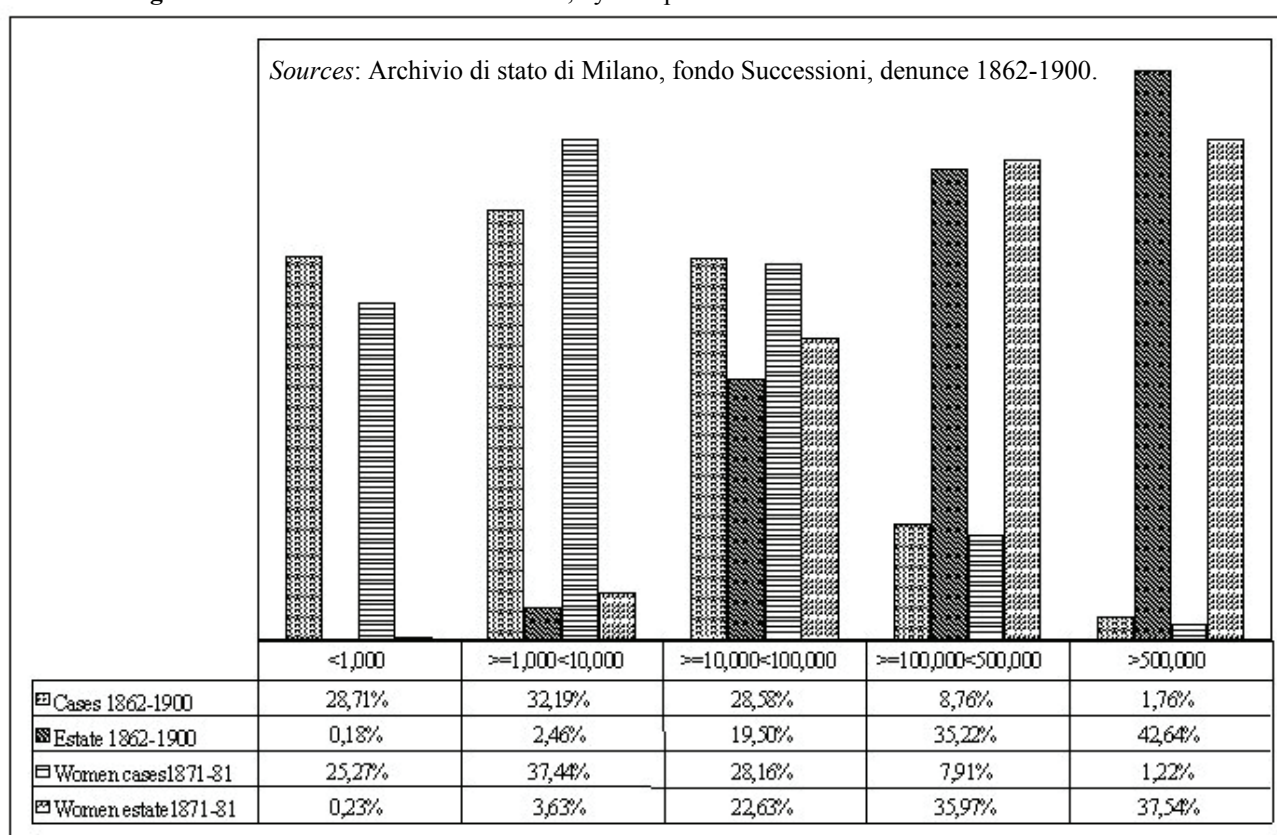


Figure. 2. Cases and estate distribution, women's records 1871-81, all records 1862-1900. (Ranges in current Italian lire)

accounted for 42 per cent of overall wealth. Similar figures, slightly lower in the highest range of wealth and slightly higher in the two central ranges, are found in the distribution of cases and women's estates probated and registered in 1871 and 1881 (Fig. 2). A high concentration can be seen when a calculation is made of overall percentages: 39 per cent of wealth can be found in the first percentile, 47.9 per cent in the second and 63 per cent in the fifth. Meanwhile, the population under the median held only 1.7 per cent of overall wealth. The top two per cent of the richest women, who alone owned nearly half of the overall wealth, was made up of one divorcee, ten widows and

five spinsters, but no married women. What is more, one spinster and two widows had estates exceeding L. 1,000,000,¹⁶ which was an exceptional amount in Italy during that era. It is obvious that, as death is random, in other years it would have been the turn of some rich married women to die. Although no study has yet been made on the entire set of figures for 1862-1900, nor for the entire group of very rich women, it is reasonable to presume that an analysis of the average estate levels of spinsters, widows and married women in years other than 1871 and 1881 could give different results from those indicated in this paper.

This fact confirms the possible ‘statistical distortion’, which is a result of anomalies within the extremely rich part of the population¹⁷ and suggests that a very careful reading of the statistics is advisable. It also indicates that the amount of a woman’s wealth was not influenced by marital status, and in fact reinforces the tie with patrimonial origin, acquired directly at birth. But once marriage was contracted, the woman had to ask her husband’s authorisation (*autorizzazione maritale*) before carrying out any significant administrative acts, such as ‘gifts, sale of property, mortgages, assignment or collection of capital relative transactions and legal proceedings’.¹⁸ In other words she lost control of her assets, even though they remained her property. On the contrary, spinsters, widows and divorced women could manage their own property independently.

Thus it is interesting to see whether there are significant differences in wealth composition according to marital status, in order to search for specific gender features in assets administration and conduct of business. Before starting on this topic, however, it is necessary to first carry out an overall comparison between female fortunes and male fortunes.

Women’s wealth

At a first comprehensive glance, the wealth of women does not seem very different from that of men, in its composition. For both men and women real estate was the main asset accounting for 59.8 per cent in the case of men and 49.90 per cent of women. Next came credits, higher in women’s estates, followed by public and private bonds, stocks and bonds for men and government securities for women (Table 4.A). Seen from a different viewpoint, the figures show that 19.4 per cent of real estate was owned by women, slightly less than the 22.8 per cent of the overall wealth ascribable to women’s assets (Table 4.B).

Land and houses effectively account for a significant amount in some women’s estates. But, as suggested by archival sources hitherto considered, in all those cases the family of origin had no male heirs.¹⁹ Under Italian law half of the inheritance assets were divided equally between the children (or grandchildren) with no discrimination in terms of age or sex.²⁰ But it was customary to commit exclusively to male family members the task of administering and passing on to the next generation any businesses, shops or land. The family and patrimonial strategies of that era meant that, where possible, women and sick or disabled children (or grandchildren) were left property which was not significant to the economic activity of the family. The aim was simply to grant them a certain level of security in terms of value and income. In Milan, as elsewhere in the nineteenth century, government securities were a good way to satisfy such requirements.

Nearly half (39.50 per cent) of the certificates of indebtedness of the State held in Milan belonged to women (Table 4.B), though no more than 13.9 per cent of their resources were held in this type of asset (Table 4.A). These figures, on the one hand, highlight the well-known reluctance by the vivacious Milanese investor to subscribe to Italian annuity bonds. On the other hand, they confirm the importance of the contribution made by women to public debt financing, which was also true in other European countries.²¹ This support was particularly important in Italy, since in the immediate aftermath of unification, the new kingdom was extremely busy with the hard task of setting up essential services and infrastructures. It was therefore more than willing to offer good returns to anyone who would subscribe loans.²²

Government securities, along with deposits in savings banks were the favourite allocation for the modest earnings of female workers. They were also a good way of satisfying the inheritance rights of the daughters of

Items	Women		Men		
	A	B	A	B	
Real estate	48,90%	19,40%	59,80%	80,60%	100,00%
Govt. securities	13,90%	39,50%	6,30%	60,50%	100,00%
Stocks/Bonds	3,30%	16,20%	5,10%	83,80%	100,00%
Credits	22,20%	33,00%	13,30%	67,00%	100,00%
Bank deposits	3,30%	14,30%	5,80%	85,70%	100,00%
Jewellery	0,30%	47,60%	0,10%	52,40%	100,00%
Furniture	3,00%	21,60%	3,30%	78,40%	100,00%
Other	5,10%	18,80%	6,40%	81,20%	100,00%
Total	100,00%	22,80%	100,00%	77,20%	100,00%

Table 4 Estate composition, by sex. *Source:* see Table 1.

	Women	Men
<i>Dowry</i>	25,60%	1,71%
<i>Personal</i>	12,10%	14,16%
<i>Inheritance</i>	8,10%	2,32%
<i>To Family</i>	45,80%	18,19%
<i>Private</i>	25,30%	21,55%
<i>Mortgage</i>	23,10%	27,69%
<i>Other</i>	5,80%	32,57%
<i>To 3rd parties</i>	54,20%	81,81%
<i>Total</i>	100,00%	100,00%

Table 5. Composition of Credits, by sex. *Source:* see Table 1.

Table 6. Women: Composition of Credits, by marital status. *Source:* see Table 1.

	Widows and divorced	Married	Spinsters
Dowry	19,6%	65,9%	0,7%
Personal	16,7%	10,1%	1,5%
Inheritance	11,2%	2,4%	5,8%
To family	47,4%	78,4%	8,0%
To 3rd parties	52,6%	21,6%	92,0%
Total	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%

wealthy landowners, bankers, merchants and industrialists. In the scale of preference of bequests to females, these items were followed by credits. Or rather it was a 'credit portfolio' in the true sense of the word, often substantial and varied, built up by those businessmen who were used to relying on them in order to diversify risks.²³

In Milan, during the middle decades of the 1900s, the banking system was still poorly developed. Commercial and industrial activity was primarily sustained by self-financing. In addition, there was a totally informal credit network, set up by other entrepreneurs, relatives, friends and wealthy individuals in general. Each of them was willing to loan money against a mortgage, or even just on trust, against an IOU signed before a notary.²⁴ This sort of investment was quite safe, as it was based on a personal knowledge of the contractor. It was certainly profitable as the rate of interest was about 6 per cent, compared with the 3 per cent offered by the local savings banks or the 4–5 per cent of the 'consols'.

According to the 1871 and 1881 records, credits worth nearly L. 6 million were formally and legally granted by women, being more than one fifth of women's wealth and 5 per cent of the overall amount of total wealth. Above all, these loans represented one third (33 per cent) of the liquidity available for the economic and productive system (Table 4.B). Therefore, it is

worth asking how many of these resources were effectively administered by women, as well as being in their name.

On the basis of the description given in the records, the credits can be divided into those granted to the family and those to third parties. Women lent equally to both, whilst men made a clear majority of their loans to third parties, with loans to relatives accounting for less than 20 per cent (Table 5). More than a quarter of women's credits were simply their own money: the dowry. As highlighted above, it was an important share of female wealth that was left, upon marriage, at the complete disposal of the husband. Portions of unclaimed inheritance, often given in favour of brothers and children, and various handouts granted to husbands, brothers and children, complete the picture of the strong creditor position of women wealth-holders within the family (Table 5).

Such a situation, naturally, could vary according to marital status. Spinsters, with no dowry, chiefly lent to third parties, whilst only 22 per cent of loans by married women were made outside the family. The percentages of credits within and without the family were equal for widows and divorced women, being exactly 50 and 50 (Table 6). Apart from these aspects, marital and familial status does not seem to influence the composition of wealth to any extent.

Thus real estate was the most important patrimonial asset

Items	Widows and divorced		Married		Spinsters		Total
	A	B	A	B	A	B	
Real estate	50,1%	54,9%	44,7%	16,5%	49,1%	28,7%	100,0%
Govt. Securities	9,2%	35,5%	14,9%	19,3%	22,0%	45,2%	100,0%
Stocks/bonds	4,3%	69,0%	4,1%	21,9%	1,1%	9,1%	100,0%
Credits	23,9%	57,6%	26,6%	21,5%	16,3%	20,9%	100,0%
Bank deposits	2,0%	32,0%	1,7%	9,0%	6,8%	58,9%	100,0%
Jewellery	0,2%	38,6%	1,0%	58,2%	0,0%	3,2%	100,0%
Furniture	4,0%	70,2%	2,9%	17,2%	1,3%	12,5%	100,0%
Other	6,3%	66,7%	4,1%	14,6%	3,3%	18,7%	100,0%
Total	100,0%	53,5%	100,0%	18,0%	100,0%	28,5%	100,0%

Table 7. Women: Composition of Estate, by marital status. *Source:* see Table 1.

for all the richest women (Table 7.A). Government securities and bank deposits were privileged by spinsters, who in searching for a safe use for their earnings, owned a consistent share of those financial instruments (Table 7.B). Among married women and widows, credits, shares and bonds were more significant, as well as the item 'Other', which here refers to the ownership of individual businesses and shares or limited partnerships in companies (Table 7.A). Deceased married women, survived by the spouse, had not had the opportunity to personally administer their assets, neither had the rich heiresses who died prematurely. Aged spinsters, widows and divorced women would have in theory been able to do so. But, these different conditions do not appear to be reflected in the choice of how wealth was employed. This leads us to presume that during the nineteenth century, notwithstanding the fact that by law they were free to act, women did not have much effective freedom of action in economic and financial fields. Most probably, in middle-class families, it was the male family members, through solicitors, accountants and notaries, who made decisions and drew up contracts which daughters, wives, mothers and sisters would simply sign. Anyway, details and certain proof can only be provided by a monographic study, which lies outside the scope of this work.

An examination of all the estate tax returns recorded in Milan, in 1871 and 1881, however, unquestionably reveals that female investments in government and private securities, credits and bank deposits amounted to about 10 million lire. This was more than 40 per cent of women's assets. By lending their money to the state, companies, banks and single individuals, women put a vast amount of wealth into men's hands, so fulfilling the major financial needs of the time. Also the work carried out, particularly in the booming textile industry and in the retail trade, by that one-third of working women previously mentioned, has to be taken into account. So, on the whole, the female contribution to economic development and to the process of wealth creation certainly appears to be significant, even though it was often given involuntarily and, as always, directed by men.

Notes

1. Italian literature on women's history is now rather extensive. At least a few works are worth mentioning, such as M. Bellomo, *La condizione giuridica della donna in Italia. Vicende antiche e moderne*. (Torino, 1970); A.M. Galoppini, *Il lungo viaggio verso la parità. I diritti civili e politici delle donne dall'unità ad oggi*. (Bologna, 1980); M. Di Giorgio, *Le italiane dall'Unità ad oggi. Modelli culturali e comportamenti sociali*. (Roma-Bari, 1992); I. Fazio, 'Economic Values and Symbolic Values - the Decline in Dowries in 19th-Century Italy'. *Quaderni Storici*, 1 (1992); M. Fioravanzo, 'Sull'autorizzazione maritale. Ricerche sulla condizione giuridica femminile nell'Italia unita'. *Clio* 4 (1994); E. Sarogni,

La donna italiana. Il lungo cammino verso i diritti, 1861-1994. (Parma, 1995); A. Groppi, 'Rights of kinship. Family responsibility and welfare across the generations (Rome, 18th-19th centuries)'. *Quaderni Storici*, 2 (1996); A. Groppi, ed., *Il lavoro delle donne*. (Bari, 1996); M. Martini, 'Dowries and inheritance in 19th-century Bologna. The patrimonial practices of the nobility'. *Quaderni Storici*, 2 (1996); M. Salvati, 'Between the public and private domains: The place of women in the 1930s'. *Studi Storici* 3 (1997); M.P. Zanoboni, 'Milan 1481. The legal rights and activities of two women entrepreneurs as defined in a notarial document - Italian, Latin'. *Nuova Rivista Storica*, 1 (1997); S. Patriarca, 'Gender trouble: women and the making of Italy's 'active population', 1861-1936'. *Journal of Modern Italian Studies*, 2 (1998); R. Bizzocchi, 'Sentiments and documents - Some recent historical works on family life, gender relations and correspondence'. *Studi Storici*, 2 (1999); S. Mantini, (2000). 'Women's history in Italy: Cultural itineraries and new proposals in current historiographical trends'. *Journal of Women's History*, 2 (2000); M. Palazzi, 'Economic autonomy and male authority: Female merchants in modern Italy'. *Journal of Modern Italian Studies*, 1 (2002); G. Lumia-Ostinelli, 'Ut cippus domus magis conservetur'. Inheritance in Siena as determined by the legal code and wills (12th-17th centuries). *Archivio Storico Italiano*, 3 (2003).

2. Everywhere, historical studies into the economic role of women have been above all concentrated on their activity as workers. Little research has been carried out, even by gender historians, on their role as property owners, but it is worth remembering the pioneering study by L. Davidoff and C. Hall, *Family Fortunes. Men and women of the English middle class, 1780-1850*. (London, 1987) and more recently A. L. Erickson, *Women and property in Early Modern England*. (London, 1993), A. Goransson, 'Gender and property Rights: Capital, Kin and Owner Influence in Nineteenth-and Twentieth-Century Sweden', *Business History*, 2 (1993), also now in M. A. Yeager, ed. *Women in Business*. (Bodmin, Cornwall, 1999), P. Lane, 'Women, property and inheritance: wealth creation and income generation in small English towns, 1750-1835' and D. R. Green, 'Independent Women, wealth and wills in nineteenth-Century London', both in *Urban Fortunes. Property and Inheritance in the Town, 1700-1900*, J. Stobart and A. Owens, ed. (Aldershot, 2000), M. Agren, 'Contracts for the Old or Gifts for the Young? On the use of Wills in Early Modern Sweden', *Scandinavian Journal of History*, 3 (2000), A. Owens, 'Property, gender and the life course: inheritance and family welfare provision in early nineteenth-Century England', *Social History*, 3 (2001) D. R. Green and A. Owens, 'Gentlewomanly capitalism? Spinsters, widows and wealth holding in England and Wales, c. 1800-1860', *Economic History Review*, 3 (2003). With regards to the Italian case, a short account of the issue can be found in R. Romanelli, 'Donne e patrimoni', in *Il lavoro delle donne*, A. Groppi, ed. (Roma-Bari, 1996); R. Scatamacchia, 'Financial institutions and research projects: Women and the Bank of Italy'. *Quaderni Storici*, 1 (2000); A. Groppi, 'A matter of fact rather than principle: Women, work and property in papal Rome (eighteenth-nineteenth centuries)', *Journal of Modern Italian Studies*, 1 (2002) and in *Le ricchezze delle*

donne. *Diritti patrimoniali e poteri familiari in Italia (XIII-XIX secc.)*, G. Calvi, I. Chabod, ed. (Torino, 1998).

3. Inventories after death and probate records have been studied and analysed by many economists and social scientists interested in the distribution of individual wealth over the long term; among the numerous works published on this subject, it is sufficient to refer to the overviews recently provided by A. B. Atkinson and F. Bourguignon, eds. *Handbook of income Distribution* (Oxford, 2000) and Y. S. Brenner, H. Kaeble and M. Thomas, eds. *Income Distribution in Historical Perspective* (Cambridge, 1991); see also the survey discussed in P. T. Hoffman, 'Real inequality in Europe since 1500', *Journal of Economic History*, 2, (June 2002) and the monographic issue of *Journal of Income Distribution*, 1 (2000).

4. For an exhaustive description of the characteristics of Italian law and details of the Italian archival records, see A. M. Banti, 'Una fonte per lo studio delle élites ottocentesche: le dichiarazioni di successione dell'Ufficio del registro', *Rassegna degli archivi di stato*, 1 (1983) and S. Licini, *Guida ai patrimoni milanesi. Le dichiarazioni di successione ottocentesche*. (Soveria Mannelli, 1999). Further references can also be found in 'Legge generale sul registro', 21 aprile 1862, in *Raccolta delle leggi e dei decreti del Regno d'Italia* (Torino, 1862).

5. For information about the French case, reference can be made to the classic work by A. Daumard, ed. *Les fortunes françaises au XIX siècle. Enquete sur la ripartition et la composition des capitaux privés à Paris, Lyon, Lille, Bordeaux et Toulouse d'après l'enregistrement des déclarations des successions* (Paris, 1973); in relation to England refer to the numerous works by W. D. Rubinstein, 'British millionaires, 1809-1949', *Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research* 1974, *Men of property. The very wealthy in Britain since the industrial revolution* (London, 1981), *Elites and wealthy in modern British history. Essays in social and economic history*, (New York, 1987), 'The structure of wealth-holding in Britain, 1809-39; a preliminary anatomy', *Historical Research*, (1992), 'Businessmen into landowners: the question revisited', in *Land and society in Britain, 1700-1914*, ed. N. Harte and R. Quinault, (Manchester, 1996).

6. For a historical evolution of the framework regarding family law in Italy refer to P. Ungari, *Storia del diritto di famiglia in Italia* (Bologna, 1974), G. Vismara, *Il diritto di famiglia in Italia dalla Riforma ai Codici. Appunti* (Milano, 1978), in addition to P. Melograni and L. Scaraffia, eds. *La famiglia italiana dall'Ottocento ad oggi* (Roma-Bari, 1988), M. Barbagli, *Sotto lo stesso tetto. Mutamenti della famiglia in Italia dal XV al XX secolo* (Bologna, 1984), M. Barbagli and D. I. Kertzer, eds. *Storia della famiglia italiana, 1750-1950* (Bologna, 1992).

7. In many Italian cities nineteenth-century declarations of inheritance are held in the Registrar's Office together with files currently in use, which is therefore a strong hindrance to consultation. But in Milan the Registrar's Office has passed the documents relating to 1862-1900 to the local state Archive (Archivio di stato di Milano), where they are suitably conserved and are freely available for consultation.

A summary outline of the situation in Italy on this subject can be found in S. Licini, 'Studi sulle successioni in Italia: primo bilancio storiografico', *Bollettino del diciannovesimo secolo* (1996), as well as in the afore-mentioned A. M. Banti, 'Una fonte per lo studio delle élites ottocentesche', cit.

8. This databank can now be found on the website www.uni-bocconi.it. See the afore-mentioned study by S. Licini, *Guida ai patrimoni milanesi*, cit. for a more detailed description of the characteristics of this archival source, as well as a discussion on its merits and limitations.

9. For some information about the industrial and economic development of this Italian region and its chief town, reference can be made, among others, to E. Dalmasso, *Milano capitale economica d'Italia* (Milano, 1972), V. Hunecke, *Classe operaia e rivoluzione industriale a Milano, 1859-1892* (Bologna, 1982), B. Caizzi, *L'economia lombarda durante la Restaurazione, 1815-1859* (Milano, 1972), F. Della Peruta, *Milano. Lavoro e fabbrica, 1814-1915* (Milano, 1987), S. Zaninelli, ed. *Un sistema manifatturiero aperto al mercato, dal Settecento all'Unità politica* (Milano, 1988), S. Zaninelli and P. Cafaro, eds. *Alla guida della prima industrializzazione italiana. Dall'unità politica alla fine dell'Ottocento* (Milano, 1990).

10. For information about deceased persons, as well as age and occupations of the population of Milan, see: Archivio dell'Ufficio di statistica del Comune di Milano, Elenco delle persone morte nella città di Milano, nell'anno 1881, Archivio civico di Milano. Elenco dei registri generali dei morti trasmesso all'archivio storico, 1881, Archivio dell'anagrafe del comune di Milano, Elenco degli atti di morte, 1881, 'Archivio dell'Ufficio di statistica del comune di Milano, Riassunto delle morti del 1871, suddiviso per sesso, età e stato civile, 1871, Archivio dell'ufficio di statistica del comune di Milano, Dati relativi al censimento del 1871: popolazione classificata per professioni

11. It is worth mentioning that the rate of poverty (or the percentage of successions compared to number of deceased) in Milan was considerably lower than in Naples but decidedly higher than the calculation for Paris. Regarding Naples refer to P. Macry, *Ottocento. Famiglia, élites e patrimoni a Napoli*. (Torino, 1988) and for Paris the afore-mentioned A. Daumard, ed. *Les fortunes françaises au XIX siècle. Enquete sur la ripartition et la composition des capitaux privés à Paris, Lyon, Lille, Bordeaux et Toulouse d'après l'enregistrement des déclarations des successions* (Paris, 1973).

12. It is sufficient, here, to remember the classic works by C. Gini, 'Il diverso accrescimento delle classi sociali e la concentrazione delle ricchezza', *Giornale degli economisti*. 1909, F. S. Nitti, *La ricchezza dell'Italia* (Torino, 1904), M. Pantaleoni, 'Dell'ammontare probabile della ricchezza in Italia dal 1872 al 1889', *Giornale degli economisti*, (agosto 1890), M. Pantaleoni, 'Dell'ammontare probabile della ricchezza privata in Italia', *Rassegna italiana* (1884)

13. In Naples in 1876, the average amount of women's estates amounted to L. 23,000 compared with L. 46,000 for men. Figures for Catanzaro in the period 1874-76 were calculated as being L. 8,790 for women and L. 27,015 for men. In Bergamo in 1871 average amounts were L. 12,904 and L. 26,740

respectively. Refer to the afore-mentioned D. L. Caglioti, 'La gerarchia del denaro: successioni e patrimoni a Catanzaro, cit.', S. Licini, 'Elites e patrimoni in città, cit.' and P. Macry, *Ottocento. Famiglia, élites e patrimoni, cit.*

14. Ibid.

15. Inheritance succession was governed uniformly throughout the entire Italian territory with the enforcement of the new Civil Code of the Kingdom of Italy, *Codice civile del Regno d'Italia*. (Firenze, 1865)

16. The two widows were Maria Beatrice Barbiano di Belgioso and Carlotta Terzaghi, both belonging to very rich aristocratic families. The spinster was Angelica Ponti, daughter of Antonio Ponti who, with his brother Andrea, founded one of the first cotton mills in Lombardy: she died aged only 20 and left estate worth L. 2,682 million. Antonio had died in 1862 leaving a wife and four children: two boys and two girls. The declaration of succession in his name is not available but, considering that his brother Andrea, who died in 1888 leaving estate worth over L. 15 million, was the richest man in Milan, it is reasonable to presume that Angelica's father was just as rich and that, given the restrictions imposed by inheritance law, she had benefited from this particular family situation. See Archivio di stato di Milano, fondo successioni, 209/72 and 301/77 (Angelica e Andrea Ponti), 94/63 and 214/41 (Maria Beatrice Barbiano di Belgioso and Carlotta Terzaghi).

17. For a discussion on this topic, see, among the others, J. G. Williamson and P. Lindert, *American inequality: A macroeconomic history* (New York, 1980), H. P. Brown, *Egalitarianism and the generation of inequality* (Oxford, 1988), A. B. Atkinson, *The economics of inequality*. (Oxford, 1975).

18. See *Codice civile del Regno d'Italia* (Firenze, 1865), for further details refer to D. Vincenzi Amato, 'La famiglia e il diritto', in *La famiglia italiana dall'Ottocento ad oggi*, P. Melograni, ed. (Bari, 1988) and M. Fioravanzo, 'Sull'autorizzazione maritale. Ricerche sulla condizione giuridica femminile nell'Italia unita', *Clio*, 4 (1994).

19. If we look at the main female landowners deceased in 1871 and 1881, it is not surprising to find that there were no rival male heirs: Maria Beatrice Barbiano di Belgioioso, exponent of an old aristocratic family, inherited land worth as much as L. 2 million from her father because she had to share the inheritance only with her sister Carolina. Carlotta Terzaghi became owner of land worth about L. 1 million solely because her brothers died before her leaving no heirs. Returning to Angelica Ponti, her land, worth L. 850,000, made her the third in the list of 'top landowners'. Even though she had brothers when the estate was divided she (and also her sister) was left land: this can be explained by the fact that the family was engaged in trade and industry. The males were left the business activity, the women a 'sheltered asset', which was safe and certain to guarantee appreciable income without necessitating particular care or management capability. See Archivio di stato di Milano, Fondo successioni, 94/63, 214/41 and 209/72.

20. See again *Codice civile, cit.* and D. Vincenzi Amato, 'La famiglia e il diritto, cit.', and also P. Ungari, *Storia del diritto di famiglia in Italia* (Bologna, 1974).

21. On this issue, the reference is in particular to D. R. Green and A. Owens, 'Gentlewomanly capitalism? Spinsters, widows and wealth holding in England and Wales, c. 1800-1860', *Economic History Review*, 3 (2003).

22. On this subject, historical literature abounds, but it is sufficient to see the overview provided in J. Cohen and G. Federico, *Lo sviluppo economico italiano, 1820-1960* (Bologna, 2001), in particular pages 87-101, which contain further bibliographical references.

23. For further details on this topic refer to S. Licini, 'Banca e credito a Milano, nella prima fase dell'industrializzazione (1840-1880).' in *Antonio Allievi: dalle 'scienze civili' alla pratica del credito*, E. Decleva, ed. (Roma-Bari, 1997), and to S. Licini, 'Finanza e industria a Milano nel triennio 1870-73: azionisti e nuove imprese', *Rivista di storia economica, n.s.*, 2 (1994)

24. For reference to this practice in Milanese business circles, see, among others, S. Angeli, *Proprietari, commercianti e filandieri a Milano nel primo Ottocento* (Milano, 1982), S. Levati, *La nobiltà del lavoro. Negozianti e banchieri a Milano tra Ancien Régime e restaurazione*. (Milano, 1997), S. Licini, 'Ricchi, ricchezza e sviluppo industriale: la 'business community' milanese dell'Ottocento', *Annali di storia dell'impresa* (1999) and Id, 'Francesco Saverio Amman: an Austrian cotton entrepreneur in Lombardy, 1832-1882', *Business History*, 3 (1999).

Women's Education, Labour or Charity? Significance of Needlework among Ottoman Armenians, from Mid-Nineteenth to the Early Twentieth Century

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Introduction

The study of girls' schools and their curricula among Ottoman Armenians reveals an interesting continuity in the way in which needlework as a subject was taught and utilised in the nineteenth century.¹ The first girls' school founded in 1820 was limited to teaching needlework to girls to make outfits for clergymen.² Schools that followed later, particularly after the adoption of the Armenian National Constitution in 1863, introduced subjects that would give basic literacy skills to girls. The development of the curricula of the girls' school in the nineteenth century reveals the

development of more favourable attitudes towards a 'scientific' education for girls. Yet, needlework persisted throughout the nineteenth century and beyond as one of most important subjects in the curricula of girls' education.

Any attempt at exploring the development of women's education requires the analysis of broader national, economic and 'cultural' contexts that would help explain the particularities of trends in a particular locale. The importance of needlework was of course not confined to Ottoman women only and girls/women were expected to master it in many parts of the world.³ Yet, it is the socio-economic situation and the nation-building processes that allow one to best understand the specific ways of constructing girls' schooling in a particular area. This article analyzes the organisation of girls' education and the reasons behind the persistence of needlework as a subject among Ottoman Armenians in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Using the example of three educational institutions, drawing on press reports of the time and primary sources, the paper argues that the girls' education constituted a tangled matrix in which ideologies of gender roles, constructions of femininity versus masculinity, and the structure of the gender division of labour both in the household and the workplace became interwoven. Subjected to these tangled ideologies on one hand, and the local economic conditions on the other, the boundaries between education, labour and charity were blurred around needlework in the period under investigation, with ever-changing meanings and rationales.

The paper is divided into three parts. The first part focuses on the education system among the Ottoman Armenians and gives the history of the three schools, exposing the identical role that needlework played in the three institutions with very different purposes. The second part discusses the construction of women's space in the Ottoman Empire and how this construction was both shaped by and shaped the economy, in the course of which needlework was singled out as an essential part of girls' education. The third part illustrates how education developed to meet the particular economic structure and perceptions of women's role in society. It analyzes the opinions and endeavours of activist women, their use of needlework for their feminist aspirations and the linkage of these aspirations to the national cause.

Education Among Ottoman Armenians and the Establishment of Schools

In the Ottoman Empire, each *millet* was expected to provide schools for its people.⁴ The 1869 law on

public education, while defining the terms and levels of schools, nonetheless left it with each *millet* to establish its schools and teach in the native language of the community.⁵ Any commonality in the system would have been hard to imagine given the religious and linguistic differences among the *millets*. Among Armenians, prior to the Constitution of 1863 the Education Council affiliated to the Patriarchate,⁶ and the Education Council of the National Assembly after the Constitution, were in charge of drafting legislation on education.

In the history of women, education has been the one sphere that was feminized without much resistance. This had to do with the perception of women as the original educators of children. As in the history of female education elsewhere in the world in the nineteenth century, Armenian male reformers and later educated women, made a strong connection between education and motherhood. Women's education was regarded as a means by which 'good' national mothers were to be produced to bring up future generations. It was the tool through which 'good' wives and mothers were to be made, and women were to acquire the skills essential for running the household and bringing-up future generations, because '[a] child's education must begin from the lullaby. But how can one do this without educated mothers?'.⁷

The Constitution of 1863 formally defined the nation's obligation 'to spread knowledge essential to mankind *equally* ... to boys and girls', and established the Education Council to promote national schools and education of both sexes.⁸ Thus, the Constitution gave education a 'scientific' character and an *official* national and nationally endorsed importance was attributed to women's education. The Educational Council had to draft more socially inclusive school programs and continuous attempts were made for the standardisation of educational programs, however with little success.

The minutes of the National Assembly include numerous debates attempting to reform education. Gradually there was more tendency for school curricula to resemble those of European schools partially if not fully to fight the Protestant and Catholic missionary schools, which tended to attract large numbers of Armenian children whose parents wanted their children to have what was considered as 'better education'. The press reports in the post-Constitution period show, however, that the 'Europeanization' of the school curricula was not always welcomed by the literate part of the society. The curricula were often criticized for not meeting local demands and for preparing educated generations with skills that could be hardly useful in every-day life.

As part of the nation-building project, education was to create a common culture in the spirit of the ideals of Armenian reformers/intellectuals who were either educated in Western Europe or were in close contact with it, France being the major point of reference. Yet, these ideals were far from the reality experienced by the total population, when only a small percentage of the population was above the middle-class level, and those in the middle class were rapidly becoming impoverished as a result of European economic penetration into the Ottoman economy. Yielding to the conditions and demands of the job market and the social status of the predominant part of the Armenian *millet*, trade schools were established both for girls and boys to give them basic skills to earn their bread. Vocational classes were also offered in regular schools. While boys' trade schools were largely an accepted phenomenon, it was in the case of girls that vocational education occupied a central place, and the Education Council itself willingly preserved those hours of education for reasons discussed below.

The three educational institutions that are discussed in this paper, the Varvarian Girls' School, Galfayan Orphanage and Pera Girls' Trade School, were established at different times and with different purposes. In 1832 'seeing that the children of the Armenian fishermen of the neighbourhood were wandering on the seaside and considering the ardent eagerness of their parents to have a special school', Haroutune Amira Pezjian founded the Poghossian-Varvarian School in Kum Kapu, the Varvarian being the girls' section of the school.⁹

The sources are sparse on the curriculum of the Poghossian-Varvarian School in the early years of its foundation. It is clear, however, that the two sex-segregated sections of the school intended to give basic literacy skills to the boys and girls. Soon after the establishment of the school, the needlework production by the female students became so popular that the girls' section turned into 'a typical trade school' specialising in embroidery. So popular did the school become, that the Armenian Patriarch, the head of the Armenian *millet* in the ethno-religious division of the Empire, paid special attention to it, established a board of trustees for the school in 1850, thus taking the school under the nation's protection. 300 *kuruş* was allocated from the National Treasury and a skilled needlework teacher hired with her daughters to develop the trade further.¹⁰

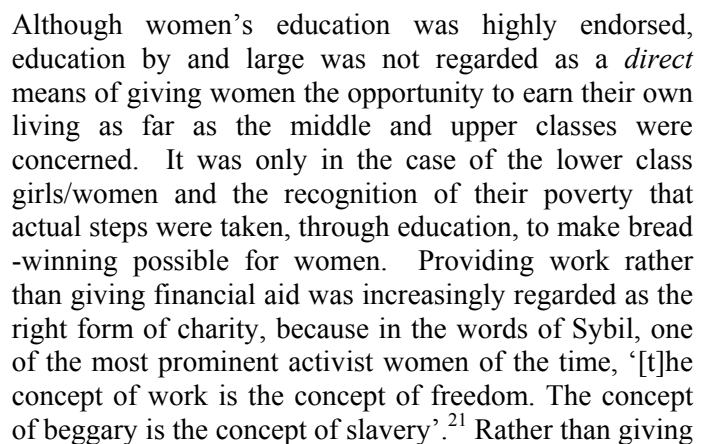
Financially, the school was not dependent on the money from the sale of the girls' crafts. Under the will of the founder, a monthly 1,000 *kuruş* was to be allocated from the endowment fund to cover the expenses of the Poghossian-Varvarian School.¹¹ It is not clear how the

money accumulated through the sale of the crafts was used. Nonetheless, two things suggest that the school might have been converted to a trade school exactly because it generated income. First, the special attention of the Patriarchate to the school followed by the allocation of additional money from the National Treasury on top of the annual budget of the school suggest that such an expense for girls' education so early in the century was financially returnable. Second, when needlework became central to the education that girls received, the Poghossian School as an educational institution increased by one level (from *varzharan* to *oushoumnaran*).¹² It is likely that the generation of income from the girls' section allowed the authorities to develop the boys' section academically by spending on it a bigger proportion of the monthly budget designated by the endowment fund for both sections.

If needlework acquired importance for the Varvarian School after its establishment, needlework made the foundation of the Galfayan Orphanage and the Pera Girls' Trade School possible in 1865 and 1886 respectively. The orphanage among other philanthropic institutions was one place where women were extremely visible. The orphanages were largely supported by donations both by wealthy men and women, as well as fund-raising organised predominantly by women. Though upper-class women were largely involved in philanthropy through material (familial money) and/or physical participation, the Galfayan Orphanage was the only such institution that was established by Mother Serbouhi Galfayan using money she had earned herself. After the bankruptcy of the family with the death of her father, Serbouhi supported her family on money she earned through embroidery. She is said to have been one of the most well-known practitioners of this art, known among diplomatic and European circles with her works decorating the houses of the wealthiest in the Empire.¹³ In 1850, she bought a house and established a trade school for the poor where they were taught embroidery. Having devoted herself to the Church, she maintained the school until the cholera epidemic in 1865, when she gathered seventeen orphaned girls and established the orphanage bearing her name, the Galfayan Orphanage, 'without being a burden on the well-off', spending her own savings and the profit she had gained from needlework.¹⁴ It was an orphan asylum, a boarding school and a trade school at the same time. Not only was the orphanage founded on the money gained from needlework, but also the needlework produced by the orphan girls was initially sold to cover the entire cost, and later the partial expenses of the school.

The Pera Girls' Trade School was founded in 1886 for the purpose of teaching the art of needlework to Armenian girls from lower social classes. The profit

It will require further research to document more precisely how the National Treasury benefited/was relieved from the possibility of reducing costs of girls' education through needlework, and what it meant for the national budget at large. In the meantime, the advantage that needlework presented in financial terms can be appreciated when one considers the scarcity of funds for education in general, so much so that the availability of funding could determine whether or not a secondary school, in addition to the compulsory primary one, should exist in a given district of Constantinople.¹⁹



money to the poor, a women's magazine claimed to follow the example of the French who instead of charity, bought ten sewing machines and gave them away to poor women to earn their bread and support their families 'thus [by giving away the machines] doubling the gains'.²² Yet, what was the ideological and economic background that made needlework particularly attractive and how did it shape the girls' curricula and their future work opportunities?

Recent studies have shown that despite the global character of social change, the organisation of women's labour was strongly influenced by the culture and traditions of a particular locale.²³ According to Kessler-Harris, in the zeal to pursue the impact of industrialism on sexual division of labour '[w]e have blurred aspects of a continuity located in households and communities. But fundamental forms of identity, derived from the household (created and shaped by women and men), survived even the depredations of capital.'²⁴ Ottoman historians in turn have shown that women's labour in the Ottoman Empire should not be understood strictly in terms of wage earning in the workplace, but instead it should be weighed against the local economy and ideology of women's space. Since the eighteenth century women had been involved particularly in the textile industries without having to leave their homes, being paid for various forms of textile crafts produced in their households.²⁵

Such an arrangement was largely due to the specific constructions of male (*selamlık*) and female (*haremlık*) spaces in the Ottoman Empire. Seclusion and segregation of sexes were common to the Ottoman society throughout the history of the Empire. The most familiar institution of seclusion for women to most is the Harem. However, seclusion was never entirely a female experience. It was a marker of social and political status and both men and women of upper classes were secluded from the public eye.²⁶ The Sultan rarely left the palace, and if he did, he was to be surrounded by his officers who were to symbolically represent the walls of the palace. In such a set-up, the household functioned as a 'matrix of complex networks of relationships that transcended the public and the private, the personal and the institutional.'²⁷

Among women, seclusion was practiced by urban upper and middle classes, and among the rural gentry. Urban and rural lower classes, due to the need for work outside the household, did not practice seclusion. The segregation of sexes, on the other hand, was observed by all classes and unlike seclusion, never weakened. Men and women were to occupy different quarters of the household. Segregation was to be strictly observed in public. There were laws banning the appearance of men and women

together in public; men and women had to occupy different sections of the ferry boats and trains; upper-class women could attend theatre on special days of performances when theatres were open to women only, or watch the performance behind bars.²⁸

As a whole, practices that were Islam-based and/or were interpreted as Islamic were to be observed by Muslims only, and each *millet* had its own practices. Yet, a consideration should be made for how the majority culture could influence the minority culture in the context of colonial domination. Though a Christian community within the Empire, Armenians could not have stayed unaffected by the practice. The seclusion and segregation of sexes were on the whole culturally accepted among Armenians, as well as by women of other *millets*.²⁹ The practice of segregation of sexes did not have the same importance attached to it as it had for the Muslim population, since the Armenian *millet* was not officially bound by Islam and/or its interpretation. Nevertheless, as Badran notes in reference to Egypt, although the Greek, Jewish and Armenian women were freer to innovate and set precedents, 'they could not confer legitimacy. Muslim women were more constrained, but only they could lend cultural legitimacy to new behaviors'.³⁰ Similarly, the relatively freer actions of the Armenian women could mean little if there were laws banning the appearance of men and women together in public, such as, the requirement to segregate the sexes on public transport.³¹

Certainly, women's limited mobility was not only common to the Ottomans and/or non-Christian settings.³² Yet, the specific construction of it allows us to consider how the cultural assumption behind women's modesty and decency combined with the local economy to shape the new ideals for a working woman. In particular, it is important for understanding why and how needlework was singled out as *the* ultimate profession for women. Sexual segregation had a great impact on the way women's 'proper' careers were defined. Under the analyzed perceptions of women's space, women's labour in the workplace where they had to mix with men was seen as a problem. One of the leading Armenian newspapers best summarised the worries and thoughts of the time on women's work outside the household:

... the sphere of an Armenian girl's activity is narrow. Even if that sphere were to be expanded, even if the number of factories, trade-shops were to increase among us, the means of that work and living would be recognised as totally unsuitable for Armenian poor girls, since not only the conditions of our customs and

ways of living entirely differ from the European, but this kind of workplaces where men and women continuously are in contact with each other cannot keep indemnified the feelings of modesty and simplicity that are the only treasures of the poor and honor-loving families.³³

The ideology and tradition of sexual segregation were not static among the Ottomans and they changed with the economic needs, both among Ottoman Christians and Muslims. Variations occurred across time, as well as across locations, cities vs. provinces, for example. Whereas women started to work in the filatures of Bursa and had to mix unveiled with men at work after 1855, the fifteen Turkish women hired by the Ministry of Finance during World War I to replace conscripted men had to wear the veil and had offices separate from those of the men.³⁴ Many of the factory owners had close ties with local religious establishments and the religious authorities, both Christian and Muslim, and were frequently asked to convince local families that women's work in the factory was not immoral, a good example of how 'tradition' can change to accommodate economic needs.³⁵

Nevertheless, the Ottoman Empire remained largely an agrarian state up to its decline in 1918 with three quarters of the population living in the countryside and drawing living from agriculture-related activities.³⁶ The economic situation in turn presented a very limited job market for women. The most developed industry was textile manufacturing and women were an integral and vital labour force in it.³⁷ Textile manufacturing never lost its interest within the Empire. Largely due to domestic interest in the textile production, the industry was able to survive in the face of international competition.³⁸

The textile industry was not entirely mechanized and a considerable part of it remained dependent on hand labour. Due to the Ottoman path and space of industrialization, the strict division of household and workplace for women that the Industrial Revolution brought about, coupled with women's activism for a place in the job market, did not occur among the Ottoman Armenians as it did in the western nations. The prejudice against women's labour did lessen resulting in new rationales about why and how women should work, but the ideological construction of the women's space was not threatened *fundamentally* and household wage-earning by women remained the preferred occupation for women among Ottoman Armenians.

Harmonizing Education to Meet Tradition and Economy

The matching of ideological constructions with economic development made needlework an excellent and attractive occupation for women. Needlework was the one profession which was regarded as a 'natural gift' equally important for women of all classes, and one that did not threaten the perceptions of femininity and women's role in the society. It was in perfect harmony with the view of women's role as mothers and caretakers of their household, and education served its initial purpose of producing useful women. Thus, the Regulations of the Pera Girls' Trade School instructed the female members of the Board of Trustees to ensure that the students 'get trained to be decent mothers in the future'.³⁹ Serbouhi Galfayan's initiative, likewise, was characterised as preparing 'teachers and worthy mothers' through education.⁴⁰ Yet what did this mean for financially secure activist women and the nation more broadly?

Activist women, aware of the limitation of women's access to the public sphere and the public stance on women's roles in the society, took great care to define female professions accurately. Whereas needlework was not regarded as an immediate means of earning money for women from upper classes, these women had three main concerns: to improve the material wealth of lower classes; to participate in creating a discourse making middle-class women's work publicly acceptable; and to put an end to the much-condemned leisure and luxurious life-styles of the upper classes. These concerns should be understood in the general context of the national efforts for the creation of a middle-class society with an 'Armenian culture' different both from the Turkish and European 'cultures.' In the case of the lower class and an increasingly impoverished middle class, this goal was also based on some very realistic worries over finding solutions to the increasing misery of their compatriots due to both the economic and the political situation within the Empire. To encourage middle-class women to engage in the vocation as a means of breadwinning, the vocation was referred to as 'art'. The periodical press worked hard to shape public opinion in this respect. The wide coverage of both locally and internationally held exhibitions where women's needlework items were shown, was such means. Women were called artists, and the exhibited works 'works of art'. Moreover, when Nazik Pallarian's embroidery exhibited at the Turkish Pavilion during the International Fair in 1900 in Paris was nominated for a prize, *Arevelian Mamoul* used the rhetoric of nation: 'Indeed Ms. Nazenik Pallarian deserves praise, and not only for presenting a sample of Oriental talent ... but also for bring much beam to her persona and her Nation.'⁴¹

Given the economic and ideological construction of women's work at the time, the Educational Council was often criticised for not making education 'practicable'. Since the practice of private education at home was dying out and girls of all classes had started attending national schools, the curricula were often criticised for being designed to teach girls what were referred to as 'leisure subjects', such as foreign languages, the piano, etc. The Education Council, entirely composed of males, was the direct target for such criticism on the part of women and/or their magazines. For an ethnic minority predominantly below middle-class level within the Empire, 'leisure' subjects were criticised for copying European curricula and not meeting local needs.

Women were more zealous in preserving needlework in the curriculum. Annik Hamamjian of the Holy Cross (*Sourp Khach*) mixed-sex school in Üsküdar, for instance, put a lot of stress on the needlework classes but avoided making them an additional expense for the school with an already tight budget. Allegedly she herself went to the houses of the wealthy both to ask for material required for the work, and to sell the craftwork without ever asking for funding from the school treasury.⁴² Such an eagerness to preserve needlework in the curriculum was connected to the limited job market and women's apprehension of it. Education was necessarily tied to work:

Thus, the woman must be provided with abilities with help of which she becomes capable to support herself, if need be, without being in want for the support of the males. To reach that goal, practical education and handicraft should be given a large share in the girls' education⁴³

Since public opinion considered the European women's movement unreasonable and too radical, women took great pains to define a specific 'Armenian' way of women's emancipation and access to the job market. *Artemis*, a women's magazine, praising needlework as the right field of work for women, wrote: 'Why should we not program and draft a form of education particularly for our Armenian girls, that would open up a peculiar path and organise the fate of our women who in all possible ways differ from the European women'.⁴⁴ Instead of Western European women, Greek women were often set up as example. Living in the same Empire under similar economic conditions, needlework seemed to have had equal importance for the Greeks — another Christian *millet* in the Ottoman Empire. As a matter of fact, the idea of establishment of the Pera Girls' Trade School was taken from Greeks, who had a similar institution for women before the Armenians,⁴⁵ and throughout years, the success of the Greek girls' school

was compared favourably with the not so successful and smooth operation of the Pera Trade School.⁴⁶

Armenian activist women frequently stressed 'being different' from Europe and European women in order to have their public activity endorsed by their male compatriots. Nonetheless, going against Europe in this case was also a very realistic protest against the fashions that were coming from Western Europe and which presented a threat to the local needlework production. At trade schools and primary/secondary schools, Armenian girls of the lower and middle classes were producing works for upper-class families. The representatives of the upper classes were also the most affected by Western European fashions and had the means to obtain the more expensive European products instead of the cheaper local ones. Certainly, European fashions and their imports could not have left the school production unaffected. Thus, with the death of its teacher in 1853, the Varvarian School lost its charm in needlework production, apparently being unable to keep up with the current trends of fashion.⁴⁷ After nine months of support from her own savings from needlework, Mother Serbouhi turned to the Patriarchate for financial support, as the type of lace she had specialised in stopped being in fashion.⁴⁸ Apparently new forms of lace-making were introduced in the Orphanage since the latter continued to be partially supported by the money gained from sales of needlework production by the orphan girls.⁴⁹ Obviously wary of the threat of the European fashions, the Regulation of the Pera Trade School defining the curriculum and types of needlework, instructed the Board of Trustees 'to take *special care*' that the production of 'various Oriental cloth' was taught with all the changes that the trade underwent.⁵⁰

The wealthy Armenians were asked to 'embrace [the Pera Girl's Trade School] with heart' ordering exclusively from the Pera School.⁵¹ The support and encouragement for the prosperity of the school was in fact understood in terms of making orders and purchasing from it.⁵² To attract customers, the availability of the 'latest fashions from Paris at the Pera Trade School' was announced and advertised.⁵³

Often the purchase of nationally produced items, and particularly the encouragement of women's labour in this way, was linked directly to patriotism. Thus, another leading activist woman, Haykanoush Mark, suggested adding a dress-making section to the Pera School and wrote: "I ordered this dress at the [Pera] trade school" would not have less charm than "[ordering it from] Madame Efimi". On the contrary, it would be a more salient marker of our love for the community, giving the double benefit not only to the

nation, [for obtaining the products at a cheaper than European prices] ... but also to the poor needlewomen ...⁵⁴ Connecting the purchase of products made by one's own *millet*/people to patriotism was widely accepted among Turkish women as well who went so far as establishing the Charitable Women's Society for the Consumption of Local Products (*Dahiliye Istihlakı Kadınlar Cemiyet-i Hayriyesi*).⁵⁵

Above all, girls' education had to serve for the benefit of the nation, and not only through bringing up future generations. The self-sufficiency of the schools thanks to needlework is one example of how it served the national goals and nationalist program, which was striving to create a middle-class culture through centralised education available to all social classes. In its report to the National Assembly, the Political Council referring to the Pera Girl's Trade School characterises it as an institution 'meant to be morally and financially beneficial to the nation.'⁵⁶ Yet, numerous examples show that skilful women were gathered in times of crisis to produce articles for profit to be used for some kind of a charitable action. To give only a few examples, with the increase of poverty in 1914, the Poor Relief Society of Hasköy organised the making of embroidery items by the local girls and women, which were later sold to meet some of the needs of the poor.⁵⁷ In 1912, the Girls' Orphanage of Maraş sent embroidery items to the Patriotic Armenian Women's Society (*Azganver Hiyouhats Enkeroutioun*), an organization founded in 1879 with the purpose of spreading education to the provinces, which, after the massacres of Armenians in Cilicia, in 1909, had also assumed financial care of some of the orphanages, the Maraş Orphanage being one of them. The members of the Society estimated the cost of the handicrafts and offered them for sale at a lottery action organized on the island of Knalt, providing another notable example of how girls' indirectly subsidized their own education/care.⁵⁸ Yet, the most remarkable case of charity for the poor, which demonstrated an amazing circulation of material and non-material support through needlework, is the charitable action organised by the Armenian Women's Union. The letter of the Union printed in *Zhamanak* thanked the Armenian girls and women for donating embroideries for the exhibition sale organized in 1908, the profit of which was to be used for poor relief. The letter similarly thanked the Armenian and non-Armenian merchants, jewellers and shop-owners for donating the material required for the needlework (e.g. clothing), thus making the production of these items possible and costless for the organization.⁵⁹

Conclusion

Needlework was not an accepted means of wage earning among only the Ottoman Armenian women. In the course of the nineteenth century, its popularity was global and it was one of the few occupations open to women of the lower classes and as leisure for the upper-class women. Therefore, this paper does not stress the uniqueness of the practice among the Ottoman Armenians. Rather, it accentuates the economic conditions, understood on one hand in terms of the Empire's position in the world system, and on the other, in terms of the Armenians as a community under imperial rule, and the specificity of the perception of women's space and organisation of their labour that shaped the curricula in girls' schools. Through the spread of one trade that did not lose its prestige in the Ottoman Empire, the reformers were able to reduce the cost of girls' education, while at the same time giving them the skills to earn their living in the limited job market for women, and without going against the cultural perceptions of women's space and femininity. Socially better off women became visible through their participation in the forum on what the right education and work for women was. Although they argued for women's access to waged labour, their arguments were carefully shaped with the estimation of local tradition and economy. The usage of rhetoric of nation by them often served as a well-channelled way to gain the sympathy of national authorities and male reformers. For the lower and middle classes needlework was the means to earn their living and support their families through an education that they were entitled to for free, but which was fully at times and partially at others subsidized through their labour. The process of education for them was at times also the process of wage earning and charity, always linked to and determined by national interests.

Notes

1. Ottoman Armenians were a Christian minority in the Ottoman Empire with a historical homeland in Eastern Anatolia. Under the Ottoman rule, along with Greeks and Jews, they were organized into an ethno-religious community known as *millet*. The *millet* was an ecclesiastical institution through which solutions were sought for the political, social and economic problems of the subject peoples. 'Needlework' in this paper refers to all crafts the making of which involves the needle. It can vary from embroidery to sewing to weaving, etc. Since often there were many forms of the craft taught at the same time, I find 'needlework' a helpful umbrella term for the purpose of this paper. When needed and when the specific form of it is important for the context, the character of the needlework will be specified.

2. ՏՊԵՂԱՅԻՆ ԵՐԵՄՅԱՆԻ ՄԱՍԻՆ ԵՐԵՄՅԱՆԻ ՕՐԱՄԵՆԻԱԿԱՆ ԵՐԵՄՅԱՆԻ «ԵՐԵՄՅԱՆԻ ՄԱՍԻՆ ԵՐԵՄՅԱՆԻ 1901 [Comprehensive Calendar of the Holy Saviour National Hospital] (Constantinople: 1901), 185.

3. Meg C. Gomersall, for example, has argued that the

gendered-division of labour shaped the expectations and experiences for the education of working-class girls in England in the nineteenth century. Gomersall singles out needlework as a staple of girls' education which served to develop domestic skills and feminine virtue in girls, at times also helping the schools to support the cost of schools on the saleable items produced by girls. See her, *Working-Class Girls in Nineteenth Century England: Life, Work and Schooling*. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997).

4. This paper has grown out of my PhD research on the Armenian women's movement in the Ottoman Empire, which is based on archival and primary source research. Above all, my research has been greatly informed by the survey of a large number of periodicals (newspapers and magazines). References are given only when the information directly is linked to the paper and its main themes.

5. See the Russian translation of the law printed as appendix in A. D. Zheltiakov and Y. A. Petrossian *ԹԷՂԷՔՆՆՔԷՆԻ ՄԵՐՈՒՆԻՔԻ ԻՍԿՈՒՄՆԵՐՈՒՄԻ ԻՍԿՈՒՄՆԵՐՈՒՄԻ ԻՍԿՈՒՄՆԵՐՈՒՄԻ* (kEÁ Ó XVIII - ÁŸ ÓŸ „Ê XX /> , Ÿ) [History of Education in Turkey: From Late 18th to Early 19th Centuries], (Moscow: Publishing House Nauka', 1965), 154-67.

6. In the millet system the religious leader was also the head of the community. Patriarch acted as the mediator between the community members and the Sultan.

7. *ԷՆՕՆԱԿԱՆ ԵՄՊԵՐԱՆԻ ԵՄՊԵՐԱՆԻ ԵՄՊԵՐԱՆԻ ԵՄՊԵՐԱՆԻ* (Report of the National Education Council to Most Reverend Patriarch Father and Civil Council of National Central Administration] (Constantinople: Official Press of the National Patriarchate, 1871), 4. All translations are mine.

8. *ԵՄՊԵՐԱՆԻ ԵՄՊԵՐԱՆԻ ԵՄՊԵՐԱՆԻ ԵՄՊԵՐԱՆԻ* (Armenian National Constitution] (Constantinople: 1863), General Provisions C and Article 45.

9. Hakob Varzhapetian, “*ԵՄՊԵՐԱՆԻ ԵՄՊԵՐԱՆԻ ԵՄՊԵՐԱՆԻ ԵՄՊԵՐԱՆԻ* 75-*ԵՄՊԵՐԱՆԻ ԵՄՊԵՐԱՆԻ ԵՄՊԵՐԱՆԻ ԵՄՊԵՐԱՆԻ* 1855-1930 [Chronicle of the 75th Anniversary of St. Haroutune Church Off Kum Kapu, 1855-1930] (Constantinople: 1930), 44-5. Pezjian Amira established the school in memory of his parents, Poghos, his father, and Varvaria, his mother. Since my paper concentrates only on the girls' section of the school, I usually use only ‘Varvarian’.

10. Ibid.

11. Will of Pezjian Amira printed in Hakob Varzhapetian, “*ԵՄՊԵՐԱՆԻ ԵՄՊԵՐԱՆԻ ԵՄՊԵՐԱՆԻ ԵՄՊԵՐԱՆԻ* 1828 »*ՄԱՐՏԻ 1- 1928* »*ՄԱՐՏԻ 1* [100th Anniversary of Reconstruction of Mother Church of Kum Kapu, 1 October, 1828 - 1 October, 1928], (Galata, Constantinople: 1928), 27.

12. Hakob Varzhapetian, “*ԵՄՊԵՐԱՆԻ ԵՄՊԵՐԱՆԻ ԵՄՊԵՐԱՆԻ ԵՄՊԵՐԱՆԻ* 75-*ԵՄՊԵՐԱՆԻ ԵՄՊԵՐԱՆԻ ԵՄՊԵՐԱՆԻ ԵՄՊԵՐԱՆԻ* [Chronicle of the 75th Anniversary], 45.

13. Grigor Margarian, “*ԵՄՊԵՐԱՆԻ ԵՄՊԵՐԱՆԻ ԵՄՊԵՐԱՆԻ ԵՄՊԵՐԱՆԻ* 1866 [Biography of Mother Serbouhi Nshan-

Galfayan, Mother-Founder of Galfayan Girls' Orphanage, Founded in Hasköy on 1 January, 1866] (Constantinople: 1892), 13-4.

14. Ibid, 19.

15. “*ԵՄՊԵՐԱՆԻ ԵՄՊԵՐԱՆԻ ԵՄՊԵՐԱՆԻ ԵՄՊԵՐԱՆԻ* [Regulations of Girls' Trade School in Pera drafted by District Council and Ratified by Councils of National Central Administration], Articles 2 and 10, printed in *ԷՆՕՆԱԿԱՆ ԵՄՊԵՐԱՆԻ ԵՄՊԵՐԱՆԻ ԵՄՊԵՐԱՆԻ ԵՄՊԵՐԱՆԻ* (Report of the Civil Council to the National Assembly, 1885-1887), (Constantinople: 1887). The Regulations were ratified in 1887 by the National Assembly and the Trade-School opened its doors to students on 4 May 1887.

16. Ibid, Article 16, 18 and 44.

17. Ibid, Article 20.

18. Toros Azatian, “*ԵՄՊԵՐԱՆԻ ԵՄՊԵՐԱՆԻ ԵՄՊԵՐԱՆԻ ԵՄՊԵՐԱՆԻ* (1861-1927) ü *ԵՄՊԵՐԱՆԻ ԵՄՊԵՐԱՆԻ ԵՄՊԵՐԱՆԻ ԵՄՊԵՐԱՆԻ* (1897-1927) [Anniversary Chronicle of Poor-Relief Society (1861-1927) and Dispensary (1897-1927) of Pera], (Constantinople: 1927), 31-2.

19. The Program of the Educational Council of 1881 recognised as the District's obligation to establish a primary school, while it obliged the District to establish a secondary school only ‘if the District has sufficient revenues’, See Provisions A and B respectively, Article 25 of *ԵՄՊԵՐԱՆԻ ԵՄՊԵՐԱՆԻ ԵՄՊԵՐԱՆԻ ԵՄՊԵՐԱՆԻ* (Program of General Laws of National Education Drafted by the Education Council and Amended by Divans of National Assembly, 1881) printed in *Minutes of the National Assembly*, Session 21 (2 April 1881).

20. In the later half of the nineteenth century, trade schools for girls were popular among the Turks as well. The first arts and crafts school (*kız sanayi mektebi*) was founded by Turks in 1865 for orphan girls (a date that coincides with the foundation of the Galfayan orphanage). Others followed in 1877, 1878 and 1879. The school founded in 1878 was originally a three grades school in Üsküdar, but later the Ministry of Education turned it into a trade school, by adding an atelier to it (a somewhat identical case with the Varvarian School). See Fanny Davis, *The Ottoman Lady: A Social History from 1718 to 1918* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1986), 52-3.

21. Sybil, “*ԵՄՊԵՐԱՆԻ ԵՄՊԵՐԱՆԻ ԵՄՊԵՐԱՆԻ ԵՄՊԵՐԱՆԻ* [Agency for Work] *Zhamanak* 63 (16 December-8 January 1909).

22. G. Zarouhi, “*ԵՄՊԵՐԱՆԻ ԵՄՊԵՐԱՆԻ ԵՄՊԵՐԱՆԻ ԵՄՊԵՐԱՆԻ* [Fundamental Charity], *Tsaghik* (1 April 1906), 741. G. Zarouhi was the penname of Zarouhi Galemkerian, a well-known activist and female writer.

23. For a fine summary of these studies, see Alice Kessler-Harris ‘Reframing the History of Women's Wage Labor: Challengers of a Global Perspective’, *Journal of Women's*

History 15:4 (Winter 2004), 186-205.

24. Kessler-Harris, cited in Ellen Jordan, *The Women's Movement and Women's Employment in Nineteenth Century Britain* (London: Routledge, 1999), p. 15.

25. See, for example, Fariba Zarinebaf-Shahr 'The Role of Women in the Urban Economy of Istanbul, 1700-1850', *International Labor and Working-Class History* 60 (Fall 2001), 141-52; Donald Quataert 'Ottoman Women, Households, and Textile Manufacturing, 1800-1914' in *Women in Middle Eastern History: Shifting Boundaries in Sex and Gender*, Ed. Beth Baron and Nikki R. Keddie (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991).

26. Using Weber's model of patrimonialism, Leslie Pierce has argued that the categories of the private and the public are inappropriate for understanding the power relations in the Ottoman society since both women and men of the upper classes, including the Sultan himself, were secluded from the view of the public. See Leslie Pierce, *The Imperial Harem: Women and Sovereignty in the Ottoman Empire* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993).

27. Ibid., 285.

28. The origins of these practices are interpreted differently by different scholars. Ahmed argues that veiling and harem were transferred into the Islamic societies from Persian and Byzantine cultures. See Leila Ahmed, *Women and Gender in Islam* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992). Most commonly it is interpreted through Islam. The Qur'an distinguishes between the private and public domains. The access to the 'inhabited houses' other than one's own is to be restricted. Personal quarters inside the house and access to them are to be strictly guarded as well. In the public domain, too, women and men are to preserve the rules of modesty. Women are instructed to cover their bosoms by scarves. Medieval traditionalist theologians reinterpreted this command by the law of the veil and the Qur'anic modesty was interpreted as women's seclusion from public life. See Barbara Freyer Stowasser, 'Women and Citizenship in Qur'an' in *Women, the Family and Divorce Laws in Islamic History*, ed. Amira El Azhary Sonbol (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1996), 31-2.

29. In Egypt, seclusion and veiling were practiced both by Christian and Jewish communities. See Margot Badran, *Feminists, Islam and Nation: Gender and the Making of Modern Egypt* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), 4. For Jewish women, see Ruth Lamdan, 'Communal regulations as a Source for Jewish Women's Lives in the Ottoman Empire.' *The Muslim World* 95 (April 2005), 249-63.

30. Badran, 48. My italics.

31. Deniz Kandiyoti, 'From Empire to Nation State: Transformations of the Woman Question in Turkey' in *Retrieving Women's History: Changing Perceptions of the Role of Women in Politics and Society*, ed. Jay Kleinberg (Paris, 1992), 230. Both the practices of seclusion and segregation were weakening at the end of the nineteenth century as the memoirs of Armenian feminists show. See, for example, Anayis, *Հայկական կյանքի պատմություն* [The History of Armenian Life], 191.

»Մեր Վերջին Երկիրը [The Story of My Life and My Memoirs], Anayis Fund, Dossier 9, Yeghishe Charents National Museum of Literature and Art, Yerevan, Armenia, 9; Zabel Yessayan, *Հանքերի Գեղեր* [Gardens of Silihdar] in *Zabel Yessayan: Works*, (Haypethrat, Yerevan 1959), 394.

32. Eliza K. Kent notes about the practice of purdah in colonial India: 'Though based on very different arguments and assumptions, both the middle-class Western ideology of separate spheres and the elite Indian ideology that justified purdah practices measured women's social and moral status by their proximity to home. Both ideologies held that women's moral constitution suited them 'by nature' for lives lived out within the socially constructed limits of the domestic area. Both ideologies were inherently class-inflected perspectives in that they denigrated the experiences of working-class women (in the West) and low-caste and labouring women (in India), who by necessity worked outside the home, deeming such women less than feminine.' Eliza F. Kent, 'Tamil Bible Women and the Zenana Missions of Colonial South India.' *History of Religions* (1999), 120.

33. *Ներքին Պարտիզանական Մարտի Դրոշմ* [Our Girls], *Arevelian Mamoul* 2 (1 February 1894), 36.

34. Reşat Kasaba, *The Ottoman Empire and the World Economy in the Nineteenth Century* (Albany: State University of New York, 1988), fn. 269, 145; Davis, *The Ottoman Lady*, 53.

35. Roger Owen, 'The Silk - Reeling Industry of Mount Lebanon, 1840-1914: A Study of the Possibilities and Limitations of Factory Production in the Periphery' in *The Ottoman Empire and the World Economy*, ed. Huri İslamoğlu-Inan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 276. The religious authorities were asked to help not only in the case of factory work. Among Armenians, any profession that seemed as unusual for women, such as medical nurses or acting, was in need of such promotion by the clergymen. For nurses, see Azatian, 62. For acting, see Sharasan *Երկրորդ Մարտի Դրոշմ* [The Turkish Armenian Stage and Its actors (1850-1908)] (Constantinople: Araks, 1914).

36. Donald Quataert, 'Labor History and the Ottoman Empire, 1700-1922', *International Labor and Working-Class History* 60 (Fall 2001), 94. For a more profound study of the Ottoman economy, see Halil İnalcik and Donald Quataert, Eds, *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire, 1300-1914* (Cambridge, New York; Cambridge University Press, 1994).

37. See fn.30.

38. Donald Quataert, *Ottoman Manufacturing in the Age of the Industrial Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

39. *Ներքին Պարտիզանական Մարտի Դրոշմ* [Regulations], Article 46.

40. Cited in Margarian, 31.

41. [Miss Nazenik Pallarian] *Arevelian Mamoul* [August 1, 1900], 608-09.

42. Father Hmayak Ekserjian, *Հայկական կյանքի պատմություն* [Chronicle of 50th Anniversary of Poor Relief Society of

Üsküdar, 1880-1930], (Constantinople: 1930), 202-3. The Turkish women's vocational education presents a similar case as well. The school founded in 1878 also in the district of Üsküdar, was originally a three-grades school, but later the Ministry of Education turned it into a trade school, by adding an atelier to it. When in 1912 the school was about to be reorganised, its director Fatma Zekiye protested, and while the name of the school changed, the curriculum remained as a combination of the scholastic and practical education. See Davis, 52.

43. Meline Khndouni, «Մեր Զարգացման Կարգը» [‘The Need for Improvement’], *Tsaghik* 19, (12 January 1906), 481.

44. Avo, «Ո՞րքա Երեմյաք Իմ Զարգացման Կարգը Են» [‘What Have Our School-Graduated Armenian Girls Done Until Now?’], *Artemis* 6-7 (June-July 1903), 160.

45. Azatian, 31.

46. See «Մեր Զարգացման Կարգը» [‘The Pera Trade School’], *Tsaghik* 40 (8 June 1906), 1002-3. Condemning the financial failure of the Pera Trade School, *Tsaghik* points to the financial success of the Greek girls’ trade school and the accumulation of profit in the banks. Later, the paper promises the readers to translate the latest report of the Greek trade school and publish it on the pages of the magazine to show ‘how differently [in terms of practicality] from us our Greek neighbours perceive the idea of a trade school’. See «Մեր Զարգացման Կարգը» [‘The Pera Trade School: The Latest Report of the Greek Trade School’], *Tsaghik* 41 (15 June 1906), 1031.

47. Varzhapetian, «Մեր Զարգացման Կարգը 75- Դարձեց» [‘Chronicle of the 75th Anniversary’], 45.

48. Margarian, 20.

49. The rest of the expenses were covered through profit gained from real estate property, donations from philanthropists both in and outside Turkey, as well as a consistent food donation (meat and bread on a daily basis) by the Sultan. See «Մեր Զարգացման Կարգը 1902» [‘Comprehensive Calendar of the Holy Saviour National Hospital 1902’] (Constantinople, 1902), 550. The support (in food donation or the cost of the food) from the Sultan and later the Young Turks stretched from 1870 to 1922 with only three years of interruption in this period of time. See «Մեր Զարգացման Կարգը» (1866-1926) [‘Sixtieth Anniversary of Galfayan Girls’ Orphanage in Hasköy (1866-1926)’] (Constantinople, 1926), 8.

50. «Մեր Զարգացման Կարգը» [‘Regulations’], Provision 13, my emphasis.

51. «Մեր Զարգացման Կարգը» [‘The Pera Trade School and the Issue of Simonian Efendi’], *Tsaghik* 21 (25 January 1907), 533.

52. See, for example, *Tsaghik* 11 (16 November 1906), 287; *Tsaghik* 22 (1 February 1907), 608.

53. *Tsaghik* 16-17 (20 June 1907).

54. Haykanoush Mark, «Մեր Զարգացման Կարգը» [‘A Branch at the Trade School’], *Tsaghik* 32 (13 April 1906), 794-5.

55. See Sepril Çakır, *Osmanlı Kadın Hareketi [Ottoman Women's Movement]* (İstanbul: Metis Yayınları, 1993), 268-9 and Nicole Van Os, ‘Ottoman Muslim Women and the Nationality of Their Dress’ in *The Turks: Ottoman*, Vol. 4, ed. Hasan Celâl Güzel et al (Ankara: Yeni Türkiye Publications, 2002), 587.

56. «Մեր Զարգացման Կարգը» [‘Report of the Civil Council to the National Assembly’], printed in *Minutes of the National Assembly*, Session 3 (17 July 1887), 59.

57. Father Aristakes Hisarlıyan, «Մեր Զարգացման Կարգը» [‘Chronicle of 50th Anniversary of Poor Relief Society of Hasköy, 1878-1928’], (Constantinople: 1828), 49-50.

58. «Մեր Զարգացման Կարգը» [‘Biennial Report of the Patriotic Armenian Women's Society, 1910-1912’], 35.

“Not A Duel But A Duet”: Men and Women’s Suffrage In Britain

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At a period when half a century of hostility and indifference ... produced an impression that female suffrage means a battle of sexes, we have intervened to show the world that no battle is in question, but a cordial co-operation. This is no duel but a duet.

Izrael Zangwill (1907)

For more than fifty years of its existence the women’s suffrage movement in Great Britain managed to create a powerful propaganda mechanism, starting with a broad campaign in the press, and ending with the demonstrations, processions and marches from town to town. Each of these events was reinforced by several visual methods, addressing the various strata of British society. The necessity of such a thoroughly orchestrated campaign was due to one of the main purposes of the women’s movement — to change public consciousness, and from that standpoint its effectiveness is beyond any doubt.

In analysing such phenomenon as male suffragism, one of the most significant issues to be investigated is the issue of its representations, which constitutes one of the

main foundations of the social and cultural analysis of gender relations and is an integral part of representative culture of a society at any historical moment. The main question is what ways male supporters of women's suffrage presented themselves in the framework of both the women's suffrage movement itself and of British society as a whole. What changes (if any) did their gender identity undergo? In what ways were traditional gender boundaries washed out and what new boundaries appeared in the relations between men and women? Generally the issue of whether a man could be a feminist/suffragist is still open for discussion.¹ Thus, for instance, some contemporary feminists believe that man can never be a feminist, because he is either the 'enemy', or does not have any personal experience that is comparable with women's experience. So, at best, he can only be a 'supporter' of feminism.² According to another viewpoint, the nature of men's connection with feminism is inevitable. Women are the subjects of feminism (its initiators and driving force), while men are its objects — representatives of the patriarchal structure that must be transformed.³

In any case, the women's suffrage movement can be considered not only as a social and political movement with the women's vote as its aim, but also as a means to reconstruct a long-established gender system, as a means to overcome those cultural notions of masculinity and femininity that drove women (as well as men) into the framework of the 'separate spheres' theory.⁴ With the right to vote in their hands women could transform the whole society according to their own needs and values; that is why suffragists tried not only to enter the male sphere of public life, but also to change it. Therefore, one of the main aims of female suffragists was to state that private and public spheres had some points of intersection, and that women might also have access to the public sphere.⁵

The question of men's as well as women's participation in the sex equality movement was a particularly sharp issue for early and mid-Victorian society with the family in its centre. The very idea of the home as the source of virtues, which could be found nowhere else, was ultimately conceptualised in mid-Victorian England. The strict framework of separate spheres tabooed the very conception of woman participating equally with man in public affairs. Such behaviour was characterised simply as unwomanly, and was a serious challenge to gender identity. Just the same, in the eyes of Victorian society a man who took up woman's side risked losing a substantial part of his own gender identity — manliness — and turned out to be the 'sexless theorist'.⁶ Of course, one should bear in mind that the limits of separate spheres determined male and female gender roles to a great extent in early and mid-

Victorian society. During that period of British history, this conception was one of the most powerful ideological instruments creating not only gender, but also class differences among the middle classes in British society.⁷ Victorian suffragists (both men and women) believed that women should have had access to the public sphere in order not to break it down, but to extend its limits. Their rhetoric was a kind of 'domestic feminism', which, on the one hand, was probably the only possible way to criticize the masculine nature of the public sphere, but on the other hand, it could turn out to be a critique of liberal ideology.⁸ It can hardly be questioned that liberalism with its ideas of liberty, equality and social justice was one of the main theoretical foundations of the women's suffrage movement, which gave the latter the language to demand political emancipation. And it is quite obvious that the slogan 'Women's Rights' was just the natural extension of Tom Paine's *'Rights of Man'*. At the same time liberalism continued to shape the framework of patriarchy, when theoretical conceptions were identified with a solid masculine culture. It is known, that many prominent Liberals of the Victorian age (e.g., William Gladstone, John Bright, etc.) were strict adherents of the idea of the home as private domain, which was removed from politics and the external world, and that woman had to be its keeper.⁹ On the other hand, they were equally adherents of the idea of public sphere, which had its roots in the masculine cultural tradition. These roots, as Barbara Caine put it, could be found in the system of classical education in men's private schools. In these schools the very ideal of the public sphere was conceptualized, and the model for this ideal was Greek democracy. That is why the appeal to the classical model of public life facilitated the efforts of those, who in the Victorian epoch tried to exclude women from the public sphere, and who saw it as adherence to the true tradition of Western civilization.¹⁰ Thus it was a rather complicated dilemma for those suffragists who felt strong connections with liberalism of how to combine their feminist aspirations with liberal ones. The way out was found in the so-called domestic ideology with its focus on articulating the idea of women's political equality through the idea of sexual differences between men and women, underlying their distinctive virtues, abilities and merits.¹¹

In late-Victorian Britain and especially in the Edwardian period, the situation changed significantly. The language of separate spheres was no longer adequate, since women steadily entered the public spheres which, only recently, had been considered male domains. Besides, the social composition of the women's suffrage movement had expanded due to the women workers who became actively involved from the end of the nineteenth century. The main problem for all women involved in the labour movement was to reconcile their feminist spirits with the

political credo of labour. Women who sympathized with the Labour Party (like their Liberal and Conservative counterparts) were faced with a dilemma — to be committed to the Labour movement in the first place and to the women's suffrage ideals in the second or vice versa. Many women, mainly from the Women's Labour League, were pressing towards improvement of life and work conditions of English women workers, but at the same time they stopped half-way when this aspiration collided with party interests and threatened the unanimity of the movement itself. Others were more committed feminists and their priority was full equality with men. These women viewed socialism through the gender perspective.¹² Actually women's suffrage has never had a common ideology. Some suffragists, like the editor of *The Common Cause* Helena Swanwick, even believed it embarrassing to use the term 'feminist', since their aim was to liberate not only women but also all people. Others (for example, Christabel Pankhurst and Cecily Hamilton) believed that the alliance with men was harmful and destructive for women; that is why they advocated celibacy and launched purely feminist campaigns.¹³

Nevertheless, side by side with women men also participated in the British women's suffrage movement, although their number was comparatively small. And if it is rather questionable whether it is possible to speak about an *independent men's movement* for women's suffrage,¹⁴ then the existence of such phenomenon as male suffragism, which exerted considerable influence upon social and cultural life in Great Britain at the beginning of the twentieth century and the consequent erosion of gender boundaries, is indisputable. And if we speak about New Woman appearing on the public scene of Britain at that time, can we also speak about New Man?

As a rule men did not play the same active role in the women's suffrage movement as women themselves who held the entire leadership in their hands. Nevertheless, it is significant that men involved, at some level, in the women's suffrage movement also took part in the women's rights movement as a whole.¹⁵ Who were these men? Mainly they came from the middle class as did the majority of women suffragists. As to their political affiliation the majority of male suffragists were Liberals (61 per cent) and only 33 per cent socialists, while 46 per cent of women suffragists were socialists and only 16 per cent were drawn towards Liberal party. The professional occupations of male suffragists were mostly located in three areas — journalism, law and politics; about 44 per cent were at some time members of the House of Commons.¹⁶

Being occupied in these professions they could be rather more useful for the women's cause, since they could render a considerable support for women's struggle for their political equality. As journalists, men-sympathizers gave female suffragists the opportunity to be heard through the news columns. It is beyond any doubt that men-politicians could serve the women's cause in the best way. No matter what political rank this or that man belonged to, his opinion as a rule was considered more seriously. Men could also use several other activities if they wished to make a significant contribution to the women's movement. First of all, men could have influence upon public opinion concerning women's suffrage. At the same time, according to Martin Pugh, effectiveness and the real value of men's activity depended on the credibility of these men.¹⁷ In that sense they usually faced two main problems. From the standpoint of politics they were, at least for the Liberals, just another anti-government pressure group. Another problem, already mentioned above, was the discrediting charge for the loss of manliness. The notion of women becoming masculine, men becoming effeminate, and the whole race becoming degenerative was the leitmotif of anti-suffrage agitation. The second way was the role of intermediary between women and politicians, as well as between women themselves. This, for example, was the purpose of Henry Brailsford, who started the Conciliation Committee in 1910. And the last but not least was the transformation of the social composition of the women's suffrage movement by the involvement of representatives of the clergy. The rapid growth of different women's suffrage organisations founded by clergymen was fine testimony to this approach.¹⁸

What was the motivation of those men who took an active part in the women's suffrage movement? It is significant to note that about 50 per cent of male suffragists were married to women suffragists or were their relatives.¹⁹ That allows us to speak about 'suffrage dynasties' acting in the course of several generations. Besides, many male suffragists supported women's suffrage not only out of sympathy or belief in the justice, but also because of the conviction that enfranchised women would have a beneficial effect on social and political life. 'I believe in the sense of justice of English men', said Herbert Jakobs, who became the chairman of the first men's organisation for women's suffrage. And it is curious how he took up this office. In 1907 he was presented at the meeting held by WSPU in honour of women-prisoners. Emmeline Pankhurst asked him to make a speech, in which he expressed the necessity of male organisations for women's suffrage 'not intending to be occupied with it myself. But Ms. Despard began to send me all those who wished to be

its members and virtually *compelled* [my italics] me to become its chairman'.²⁰

We should not forget about the notorious Victorian ideal of the true gentleman with his romantic attitude towards woman.²¹ For example, how was famous journalist Henry Nevinston converted? In Moscow in 1906 he learned that two suffragists, Jane Cobden-Sanderson and Emmeline Pethick-Lawrence, were arrested for militant agitation and imprisoned for two months. Nevinston 'being a mere Liberal at the time ... took little notice of the affair'. He supposed that a question 'which had jogged off and on for forty years as a pious resolution, might be left to jog for another forty ... But when women ... whom everyone respected ... took to rioting and were sent to prison, it set me thinking'.²² Thus his realization of the necessity to give votes for women and the justice of this demand was not devoid of some protectionist attitude, which was typical for almost all male suffragists. Many of them regarded themselves as protectors of women, who might be physically weaker than men, but morally stronger. This was also a widespread Victorian stereotype, inherited by Edwardian England. Thus, for example, Henry Fawcett (1833-1884), who belonged to the first, Victorian, wave of the women's suffrage movement, took up an active pro-suffrage stand, according to his biographer, because of his sharp sense of justice, although in the depth of his mind and soul he admitted that the right to vote would not introduce any essential changes in the life of woman, whose destiny would be home and family anyway.²³ This stereotype, was the basis both for the theory of separate spheres and for the arguments of suffragists that enfranchised woman would contribute to the moral purification of society and moral progress of humankind.

Meanwhile, there were those, such as Lawrence Housman, who regarded the political incapacity of women to be the symptom of the vast illness, which damaged also the nature of men themselves. These male supporters of women's suffrage intended to end all sex differences and replace patriarchy by friendly, egalitarian relations.²⁴ Besides, it was his burning wish to get rid of 'the savage imposition of ignorance under the Victorian code'. As a schoolboy, he received his first anti-suffragist lesson — the lesson that physical force was the basis of any government. His rejection of this rule turned him into convinced suffragist.²⁵ For another suffragist, Izrael Zangwill, suffrage activities were in some sense a service to Judaism. He thought that militants, trying to break through the domestic sphere (ghetto), shared the experience of Jews. Zangwill's strong conviction was that women's involvement in politics would correct the brutal male nature that was asserting itself through racism, anti-Semitism and jingoism.²⁶

At the same time, we could hardly mention even one man who devoted the whole of his life to the women's cause, and for whom no issue was of such vital importance as women's suffrage. Even John Stuart Mill, the most prominent women's herald, only took up an active pro-suffrage position at the end of his life. At the beginning of the 1830s he held a quite romantic attitude towards women, believing that their role in this life was just 'to adore and beautify'.²⁷ It is true that some of the women's suffrage leaders, e.g. Millicent Fawcett, considered Mill as one of the main creators of the nineteenth-century women's movement in Britain. At the same time it is also true that a lot of prominent women's leaders, such as Josephine Butler, Emily Davies, Barbara Bodichon and Frances Cobbe, while acknowledging Mill's contribution to women's movement, did not regard him as their leader. Maybe Emily Davies was quite right when she stated that the high value of Mill's contribution was due to the fact that he was the only prominent man who publicly identified himself with the woman's cause, but not because of the novelty of his ideas.²⁸

When speaking about pro-suffrage MPs we should bear in mind strict party discipline committed these politicians to adapt their steps to the general party politics. Although there were some men, as George Lansbury or Keir Hardie, who could oppose their party, this was rather the exception than the rule. So in June 1912, Lansbury caused a flurry in the House of Commons when he struck the Prime Minister, Henry Asquith, because the latter shut his eyes to forcible feeding of militants.²⁹ After that, following the advice of Christabel Pankhurst, he began to vote against all Government Bills, which had no women's suffrage provision, and consequently he clashed with the Labour Party leadership. It was known that this was not the tactics followed by two other 'advisers' of WSPU — Henry Brailsford and Keir Hardie, and Party leadership demanded a coordination of personal actions with official party politics from Lansbury.³⁰ Instead of that he went to Paris to Christabel Pankhurst who advised him to abdicate his Parliamentary authority and try to win by-elections as a women's suffrage candidate. So he did and failed. Shortly after that Lansbury was in the militants' shoes. In April 1913 he was arrested and sentenced to three months imprisonment. In prison he went on hunger strike but was immediately released, because the Government did not wish to get involved with public scandal even with the former MP.³¹

Did the first wave of male suffragism, John Stuart Mill, Henry Fawcett, Jacob Bright, represent themselves as *male* suffragists? It is difficult to state that with firm certainty because of the insufficiency of the data. For instance, in J. S. Mill's *Autobiography* we can find his statement that the very principle of sex equality had been formulated by him independently, but at the same time he

constantly referred to the fact that it was only due to his wife, that this abstract principle turned into his life stand.³² Representations as male suffragists are more typical for the Edwardian period, when special men's organisations for women's suffrage began to spread in England. The very fact of its foundation entailed the necessity for male supporters to define their own position and role in that movement. Another factor was militancy. Militants' rhetoric regarding men on the whole and on those who supported women's suffrage was sometimes rather tough. Thus at the beginning of the twentieth century male suffragists were experiencing the critical need to define their own identity.

Chivalry was a widespread notion in the rhetoric of both women suffragists and male supporters. In that sense men perceived themselves as women's protectors and patrons. Besides, pro-suffrage men actively tried to represent themselves as the progressives, the ones who had left Victorian society behind. 'We have cast off prejudices of the ages and done our best to rid ourselves of our inherent sense of male superiority' declared Izrael Zangwill at the first meeting of the Men's League for Women's Suffrage. And further he constructed the image of the male suffragist who is not afraid to be ridiculous, who towers over the characterless crowd with his chivalrous intention to help women in their struggle for justice:

As the cowl does not make the monk, so the petticoat no longer makes the suffragette ... we are suffragettes — suffragettes in trousers — and will take with frolic welcome the eggs you hurl for lack of epigrams, the fireworks you let off for lack of any other brilliancy, or the mice you so gallantly let loose among the petticoats.³³

Some male suffragists recognized the dangers of being involved in the sex war. This danger could turn into a real threat as militants' rhetoric became more and more rigid with respect to men. Meanwhile, as Frederick Pethick-Lawrence put it, it was men's participation in the women's struggle for their political emancipation that contributed to the prevention of the war between sexes.³⁴ From that point of view it is quite interesting how Pethick-Lawrence explained his position in court: 'I am a man, and I cannot take part in this women's agitation myself, because I am a man; but I intend, I have intended, and I will intend to stand by the women who are fighting in this agitation ... And when I see other men standing out against this agitation, then I am more determined to stand in with it ...'.³⁵

A characteristic feature of male suffragists' rhetoric was a certain self-removal and self-depreciation. Thus one of

the leaders of Men's Political Union, Victor Duval, wrote: 'I certainly think that the small amount of work or the small amount of sacrifice that my friend and I have made is not to be compared with the tremendous sacrifices made by the members of the WSPU and of the Women's Freedom League'.³⁶ The reason for that was rooted in the notorious conception of chivalry inherent in Englishmen's nature and in their 'readiness to obey and to enforce the rule of "ladies first"'.³⁷ The real man, as male suffragists believed, could not deny the legality, expediency and justice of women's demand for the vote. If women may oppose the enfranchisement from the variety of motives, for men to deny the women's right to vote appeared to be a serious breach of chivalrous code. And that breach would make all efforts of 'friends of justice and fair play' to create a distinct organisation for women's suffrage meaningless and superfluous.³⁸ The positive effect of men's organisation as male suffragists, according to Henry Nevinston, is that they 'cannot be so deeply and personally involved in the struggle, and who by reason of our sex, necessarily escape the worst ignominy of the mob ...', and so can be the opportunity for men to provide calmer and more comprehensive views on the issue.³⁹ On the other hand, as a supporter of women's suffrage, Bernard Shaw in response to the offer to speak at a suffrage meeting said that a man 'always looked a fool on a women's platform'.⁴⁰ The fear of ridicule or just plain indolence prevented numbers of pro-suffrage men from stepping forward to aid women in their struggle. They realized that the women's cause is also the men's cause, but they hardly believed that this idea would become a reality during their life.⁴¹

Quite interesting is the issue of male suffragists' perception from the point of view of women. Were they the devoted friends or the enemies in the sex war? This question is of great significance, first of all, for constructing the gender identity of male suffragists, identity that sometimes took the form of conflict in the movement whose leadership totally belonged to women.

Treatment of male suffragists if not as enemies, but at least as representatives of another camp, the majority of which was either in opposition to women's suffrage or just indifferent, was typical for the militants of WSPU, whose rhetoric, as Sandra Holton put it, was aimed at establishment of a new gender identity, at the creating of a new type of femininity while simultaneously appealing to a long-established ideal of chivalry.⁴² When male suffragists restricted their policy to constitutional methods, their relations with the militants were relatively unproblematic. But when some men began to pretend to the image of martyrs

(imprisonments, hunger-strikes, etc.), the attitude radically changed, for these actions were at odds with the militants' heroic rhetoric.

Despite the fact that militancy meant new ways of being a woman, it operated alongside the old notions of chivalrous men who, according to militants, must protect women and advance their cause, but do it separately from women. Thus, according to the WSPU leaders' opinion, the 'reason for the Union's strength and success is the independence of men. The service of such men should be rendered apart from, and outside, the women's organisations'.⁴³ The only duty of those men who wished to help the suffrage cause might be the war with government as the main anti-suffrage bulwark.

Such seemingly devoted and consistent advocates of the women's cause, like George Lansbury and Keir Hardie, also could not avoid this sort of attitude. There was a well-known cartoon, ordered by Christabel Pankhurst for the *Suffragette* (1913). It depicted Hardie as 'cringing, ape-like creature, smoking a cigar labelled "Liberalo Patrono", clinging to the arm of the Prime Minister and raising his hat to a Suffragette who turned from him with an air of horror'.⁴⁴ Such images can be explained both by the attitude of militants towards men mentioned above, and also by the war declared in 1912 on the Labour Party, because they thought that Labour candidates once elected to Parliament began to vote as Liberals. Therefore, the war between women and Labour would end only when the Labour Party introduced a Bill that dealt exclusively with women's right to vote.⁴⁵

Even the organ of NUWSS, in spite of its name, *The Common Cause*, echoed the militants' view: 'we think that it would be far better and more fruitful for the Men's League to have a policy of its own, supporting the principle of women's suffrage by methods of its own and not by methods dictated by totally distinct organisations, in whose administration it has no share whatever'.⁴⁶ The advice to pursue men's own policy proceeded from the constitutionalists' wish to see men doing that part of the work, which women could not do. The same attitude was typical even for such women's suffrage organisations as the East-London Federation, headed by Sylvia Pankhurst. Originally members of this body, focused on women workers, worked in a close connection with the Labour Party, namely with Lansbury and Hardie. Sylvia's relations with the latter were far from plain friendship, and this had a considerable influence on Hardie becoming a committed suffragist.⁴⁷ Thus even Sylvia in November 1913 wrote to the editor of *The Daily Herald*:

The reason why ... neither I nor the East London Federation have formed any alliance with the Daily Herald League or any other men's political party is that we are the women's organisation formed for the purpose of getting Votes for Women, and, till we are admitted to citizenship, we feel we must make Votes for Women our own plank.⁴⁸

In any case, men were put in a difficult position. They could not step on the proscenium in the role of martyrs, because it was the militants' prerogative. Also they could not remain in the shadow of the moderate wing, for it was doubtful whether they had any independence in that case. The way out was found in the return to the traditional concept of chivalry. Armed with that rhetoric, members of men's organisations acted as protectors of women suffragists against antis' attacks, and as stewards at suffrage meetings. As Charles Drysdale, one of the leaders of the Men's League, explained:

The commonest dictates of justice and chivalry demand that men should come forward to help women to gain the same rights and protection that they have made such struggles to obtain for themselves. Fortunately, for the honour of British men, there are large numbers who have recognized the *duty* and *privilege* [my italics] of assisting in this noble fight; and the number of men who have joined the Men's League for Women's Suffrage, and other men's organisations ... is a testimony to the fact that the true chivalry is not dead but is awakening⁴⁹

As we can see, the most widespread notion in the rhetoric of women suffragists and male suffragists was the conception of chivalry. Antis also had their own notion of chivalry. They believed that true chivalry was a kind of a deal between man and woman: 'I will do you reverence, and protect you, and yield you service; and you, for your part, will hold fast to an ideal of gentleness, of personal refinement, of modesty, of joyous maternity ...'.⁵⁰ Here is the classical, quite stereotyped, Victorian ideal of personal relations between sexes. This ideal (or taboo) was still widespread in Edwardian England among the middle and upper social classes.⁵¹

For the anti-suffragists, all those men who supported women's suffrage were divided into several categories. First, those who like John Stuart Mill felt any criticism of women as a personal abuse to themselves. The most widespread image of Mill and others like him was the image of the 'ladies' advocate', who found themselves

under the authority of women and could not get rid of it. As Maxse put it, 'there can be no doubt that he [J. S. Mill] formed his idea on women generally from a consideration of his wife's peculiar character ... Mrs. Mill was ... precisely one of those women — endowed with masculine thought — whose character was exceptional to that of her sex'.⁵² Second were those 'cranks' who as soon as they thought that they had found a moral foundation, 'immediately gets into the saddle, and then rides hell-for-leather, reckless of all considerations of public expediency'.⁵³ The third type is the romantic idealist for whom some woman's memory has become a religion. Into the last category fall the so-called 'intellectuals' who thought that women's enfranchisement would soothe the ruffled feelings of some very worthy women.⁵⁴

Another widespread image of the male suffragist was the image of the henpecked man. 'We poor male sympathizers' - said Zangwill 'have been described as "men of putty seduced by women of brass"'.⁵⁵ These words were reported to him by a suffragette who asked him to protest publicly against it. When he refused, she replied that he was no gentleman.⁵⁶ Thus, once again, we see the appeal to the traditional image of chivalrous knight who simply cannot say anything.

In the Victorian age, when the ideal for men from middle and upper classes was not power but manliness, those men who championed the women's cause were characterized as weak-willed. The source of this can be found among landowners with their admiration for the cult of games and sport and with their reverence for physical force and boldness.⁵⁷ In response to the publication of Mill's *The Subjection of Women*, Leslie Stephen protested that 'to a man of ordinary flesh and blood, who had grounded his opinions, not upon books, but upon actual experience of life, such doctrines appear to be not only erroneous, but indicative of a hopeless thinness of character'. Mill lacked virility, concluded Stephen.⁵⁸

On the other hand, the ideal of strength and manliness was used for creating the typical heroic image of the male suffragist who was ready to sacrifice his own right to the vote for the sake of women longing for it. A man who grasped the true essence of chivalry

comes forward in the cause of women, in the face of opposition and ridicule. He not only challenges the opponents of women's progress, but extends to her a helping hand to aid her in her struggle for justice ... Men strong in themselves and feeling their own strength, have no fear of being ... outvoted by women ... They are not cowards⁵⁹

Punch gives us a wonderful source of public opinion concerning women's suffrage. A famous speech of J. S. Mill on 20 May 1867 gave contributors to *Punch* a fertile ground for their wittiness. Mill's name, notorious chivalry, Mill's amendment, everything was played up:

Cervantes made fine fun of Spanish chivalry composed of soft metal, but ours, hardened under a vigorous Parliamentary hammering, will not easily be dinted by poking short jokes at it. Don Quixote, believing that he saw before him a monster that held captive distressed damsels, attacked the Mill of the Commons. The Mill of the Commons is now a gallant knight armed cap-à-pie and weaving a white favour.⁶⁰

They argued that women were deeply abused by Mill's amendment to leave out the word man and insert the word person in the text of the Bill: 'Charlie says that Mr. Mill wants to call the ladies "persons" ... But I don't one bit believe him for no *gentleman* would *dream* of using such *coarse language* when speaking of a *woman*! It's probably a misprint in some stupid penny paper. Perhaps he meant to urge that *pastors* should have votes ...'.⁶¹ At the beginning of the twentieth century those men who started men's organisations for women's suffrage also fell into the pages of *Punch*. Their image was traditional. They were depicted as bachelors, who had nothing to do, who were envious of the 'funny' life of suffragettes, and decided also to have some fun, no matter what slogans to declare and what aims to pursue. 'Let us also be martyrs, and shout the battle cry of Freedom', — persuaded his friends to the hero of the sketch 'Votes for Men', — 'Let us call attention to our grievances from the criminal's dock. Let us plan raids upon the House, take the Cabinet Minister in his lair ... Why should women have all the fun?' 'But what do we shout?' — reasonably asked one of his mates. 'It really doesn't matter so long as we are prepared to go to prison for it' — was the reply. As a result three friends formed the Bachelors' Freedom League associated with the Bachelors' Social and Political Union.⁶²

Punch quite precisely reflected the dominant public opinion concerning the women's suffrage movement and its female and male participants. And the shift from the image of hysterical women forcing the Parliamentary door in 1870 to the image of Joan d'Arc in 1918 was applied also to those men who, breaking traditional notions of masculinity, challenging conventional behavioural norms and creating along with women a special suffragist subculture, contributed

significantly to the final victory of the entire movement for women's political emancipation.

Notes

1. I argue that a suffragist is a man whose activity meets two requirements: formal, i.e. affiliation with any women's suffrage organization, no matter who formed it - men or women, and, practical, i.e. his *active* life stance and activities related to the given issue.

2. Valerie Bryson, *Feminist Political Theory: An Introduction*, (Moscow, 2001), p. 8.

3. Stephen Heath, 'Male Feminism', in *Men in Feminism* (London - New York, 1987), p. 1.

4. The similar point of view can be found in: Susan Kent, *Sex and Suffrage in Britain, 1860 - 1914* (Princeton, 1987).

5. Sandra Stanley Holton, *Feminism and Democracy. Women's Suffrage and Reform Politics in Britain, 1900 - 1918* (Cambridge, 1986), p. 18. Christine Bolt, 'The Ideas of British Suffragism', in *Votes for Women*, ed. June Purvis and Sandra Stanley Holton (London - New York, 2000), p. 37.

6. Wilkie Collins, *Muzh i Zhena* [A Husband and a Wife] (Moscow, 1993), p. 296.

7. Leonore Davidoff, Catherine Hall, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class 1780 - 1850* (London, 1987). Catherine Hall, K. McClelland, Jane Rendall, *Defining the Victorian Nation: Class, Race, Gender and the British Reform Act of 1867* (Cambridge, 2003), p. 30 - 34.

8. J. Schneer, 'Politics and Feminism in "Outcast London": George Lansbury and Jane Cobden's Campaign for the First London County Council', *Journal of British Studies*, Vol. 30, 1 (January 1991), pp. 69-70.

9. For example: *Female Suffrage. A Letter from the Right Hon. W. E. Gladstone, M. P. to Samuel Smith, M. P.* (London, 1892), pp. 1-4.

10. Barbara Caine, *Victorian Feminists* (Oxford, 1992), p. 39.

11. For more detailed analysis of domestic ideology see: Caine, *Victorian Feminists*, pp. 41-53.

12. June Hannam, 'Women and Politics', in *Women's History: Britain, 1850 - 1945*, ed. June Purvis (Bristol, 1995), p. 230.

13. Holton, *Feminism and Democracy. Women's Suffrage and Reform Politics in Britain, 1900 - 1918*, p. 17.

14. At least, in the Victorian era, since there were some male supporters of the women's suffrage whose involvement in suffrage campaign was of a sporadic character and did not actually determine their life stance.

15. To compare: 50 per cent of those men who supported the whole women's rights movement took part in the movement for women's education, in the movement for abolishing CDA 22 per cent participated, and in the birth control movement only 17 per cent (Olive Banks, *Becoming a Feminist. The*

Social Origins of "First Wave" Feminism (Athens, 1986), p. 115).

16. Ibid. pp. 107-10.

17. Martin Pugh, *The March of the Women* (New York, 2000), p. 258.

18. Church League for Women's Suffrage, Catholic Women's Suffrage Society, Scottish Churches' League for Woman Suffrage, Jewish League for Woman Suffrage, Free Church League for Women's Suffrage - just a few organisations of that kind.

19. Banks, *Becoming a Feminist, The Social Origins of "First Wave" Feminism*, p. 113.

20. *The Vote*, Vol. II. p. 41.

21. One should be aware of the class limitations of the Victorian ideal of the true gentleman and the true woman to the middle and upper strata of the English society of the time.

22. Henry Nevinston, *More Changes, More Chances* (London, 1925), p. 305.

23. Leslie Stephen, *Life of Henry Fawcett* (London, 1885), p. 176-77.

24. John Tosh, 'The Making of Masculinities, The Middle-Class in Late Nineteenth-Century Britain', in *The Men's Share? Masculinities, Male Support and Women's Suffrage in Britain, 1890 - 1920*, ed. Angela V. John and Claire Eustance (London - New York, 1997), p. 39.

25. Lawrence Housman, *Articles of Faith in the Freedom of Women* (London, 1910), p. 15. See also: Sandra Stanley Holton, *Suffrage Days. Stories from the Women's Suffrage Movement* (London, 1996), pp. 139-40.

26. Sylvia Strauss, *"Traitors to the Masculine Cause": the Men's Campaign for Women's Rights* (London, 1982), p. 220.

27. Olive Banks, *The Biographical Dictionary of British Feminists, 1800 - 1930* (Brighton, 1985), p. 128.

28. Caine, *Victorian Feminists*, pp. 34-38.

29. Elizabeth Crawford, *The Women's Suffrage Movement* (London - New York, 2000), p. 334.

30. George Lansbury, *Looking Backwards and Forwards* (London, 1935), pp. 97-98.

31. Crawford, *The Women's Suffrage Movement*, p. 335.

32. *Autobiography of John Stuart Mill* (New York, 1960), p. 173.

33. *Report of Speeches Delivered at a Great Demonstration Held in the Queen's Hall, on Tuesday, December 17, 1907* (London, 1907), p. 14.

34. *Suffrage Speeches from the Dock. Made at the Conspiracy Trial, Old Bailey, May 15th - 22nd, 1912* (London, 1912), p. 55.

35. Ibid., p. 54.

36. Victor Duval, *Why I Went to Prison. An Address Delivered at Caxton Hall, Westminster on November 1st, 1910* (London, 1910), p. 10.

37. S. A. Holford, *Criticism of the Woman Movement from the Psychological Standpoint* (London, 1911), p. 1.
38. For example: *The Men's League Handbook on Women's Suffrage* (London, 1912), p. 74
39. Henry Nevinston, *Women's Vote and Men* (London, 1909), p. 2.
40. Cited in: Nevinston, *More Changes, More Chances*, p. 321.
41. Andrew Mathew, *Woman Suffrage* (London, 1907), p. 26.
42. Sandra Stanley Holton, 'Manliness and Militancy. The Political Protest of Male Suffragists and Gendering of the "Suffragette" Identity', in *The Men's Share? Masculinities, Male Support and Women's Suffrage in Britain, 1890 - 1920*, ed. Angela V. John and Claire Eustance (London - New York, 1997), p. 111.
43. *The Women's Social and Political Union. Eighth Annual Report* (London, 1914), p. 4.
44. Sylvia Pankhurst, *The Life of Emmeline Pankhurst. The Suffragette Struggle for Women's Citizenship* (Boston - New York, 1936), pp. 125-26.
45. *The Suffragette*. 18 October 1912, p. 8.
46. *The Common Cause*. 29 April 1909, p. 33.
47. See e.g.: P. W. Romero, *E. Sylvia Pankhurst: Portrait of a Radical* (London, 1987), pp. 34-37; Kenneth O. Morgan, *Keir Hardie. Radical and Socialist* (London, 1975), pp. 163-66.
48. Sophia Smith College Archive (Northampton, Mass.), The Papers of Sylvia Pankhurst, 1882 - 1960, Reel 23, folder 181, Sylvia Pankhurst to the Editor of "The Daily Herald". 19 Nov. 1913.
49. Charles Drysdale, *Why Men Should Work for Women's Suffrage. The Wages and Employment Question* (Birmingham, 1914), p. 2.
50. Almroth Wright, *The Unexpurgated Case Against Woman Suffrage* (London, 1913), p. 19.
51. Robert Cecil, *Life in Edwardian England* (London, 1969), p. 157.
52. Maxse, *Reasons for Opposing Woman Suffrage* (London, 1884), p. 37. More strictly it was expressed by the Russian publicist and traveller Konstantin Skalkovsky in 1886: 'John Mill became effeminate and wrote *The Subjection of Women* because he has weakened intellectually and has found himself under his wife's thumb' (Konstantin Skalkovsky, *O zhenshchinakh. Mysli starye i novye* [About Women. Old and New Thoughts] (Saint-Petersburg, 1886), p. 3). By the way, Mill's book caused heated debates in Russian society in the 1870s and 1880s. As a case in point Tolstoy's novel *Anna Karenina* was planned in part as an antidote to the very popular and wide discussion of John Mill's book on "*The Subjection of Women*". See Svetlana Aivazova, *Russkie zhenshchiny v labirinte ravnopraviya* [Russian Women in the Labyrinth of Equality] (Moscow, 1998), p. 42).
53. Almroth Wright, *The Unexpurgated Case Against Woman Suffrage*, p. 2. See also: Constance Rover, *The "Punch" Book of Women's Rights* (London, 1967), p. 92.

54. Wright, *The Unexpurgated Case Against Woman Suffrage*, p. 2.
55. Izrael Zangwill, *Old Fogeys and Old Bogeys. Speech Delivered at Queen's Hall, June 7th, 1909* (London, 1909), p. 2.
56. Ibid.
57. Ibid.
58. Cited in Ibid, p. 201.
59. Mathew, *Woman Suffrage*, pp. 25-26.
60. *Punch*. 20 June 1868, p. 273.
61. *Punch*. 4 May 1867, pp. 179 - 180. One more example: 'To all "persons" whom it may concern. Several enthusiastic Mammies, in commemoration of Mr. Mill's recent speech on Female Suffrage, have christened their infant daughters Amelia, Emily, or Millicent; because any one of these can be familiarly abbreviated into "Milly"' (*Punch*. 1 June 1867, p. 227).
62. *Punch*. 4 March 1908, p. 178.

Book Reviews

Carol Ascher

The Flood: A Novel

Willimantic, Connecticut: Curbstone Press, 1996.
£6.60, ISBN 1 880684 43 8 (paperback), pp. 183

Reviewed by Isolde McKay

Argyll College, Dunstaffnage, Oban

The intellectual approach taken by novelist Carol Ascher follows a literary trend of the latter half of the 20th century, dubbed *moral fiction* by writer and critic John Gardner (d. 1982). Ascher's novel meets Gardner's criteria for superior fiction because it open-mindedly endeavours to test human values against real-life causal consequences. Free of contrived devices put there to preach or peddle a particular ideology, *The Flood* unravels the complexities of morality without attempting to reduce them to any creed or code. Rather, uncovering truth becomes a life-affirming process of discovery that aids us in coming to understand what best promotes human fulfilment.

Ascher fights racial injustice through the inquisitiveness and tenacity of nine year old Eva Hoffman. Growing up in 1950s Topeka Kansas, a segregated community with limited tolerance for racial or religious differences, Eva is confronted by the harsh

realities of prejudice. Cognizant of her parent's strong commitment to human equality, a principle strengthened through their horrific experiences as Austrian Jews subject to Nazi anti-Semitic policies, Eva faces the challenge of accommodating the altruistic values she has been taught at home with the sense of moral indignation engendered in her when she encounters bigoted people who believe that skin colour or sect of religion entitles them to a better quality of life and more respect.

Two historically documented concurrent events incorporated into the story serve to magnify Eva's struggle: a disastrous spring flood that dispossesses many of shelter and employment thus underscoring presumed class divisions within the community, and the controversial issue of mandatory school integration in Kansas where the school system is segregated on the basis of race. Eva's placid upper-middle-class existence is inundated with opposing perspectives on both. As the powerful floodwaters of the rising Kaw River threaten to burst through the sandbag barriers and overflow into the city's waterworks, the NAACP's (*National Association for the Advancement of Colored People*) nationwide movement to abolish legally imposed segregation gains its impetus from the ground-breaking civil rights case of *Brown versus the Board of Education* first argued in Topeka's federal district court in 1951.

Reality sets in when Eva's family offer refuge to a poor family of working-class whites whose house collapsed in the flood. Prejudiced against blacks and Jews, the Williger's supremacist remarks first baffle then enrage Eva. She can't understand why her father and mother chose not to respond disapprovingly to their insults and bigotry. Her own sensitivity to racist behavior threatens to outweigh any sympathy she feels for these refugees. Eva becomes incensed by the Williger's daughter's irrational loathing of swimming with "Jew-Niggers". Her anger spills over in the symbolic gesture of overturning their wading pool. Eva is not yet emotionally mature enough to control her feelings of moral indignation. Intellectually speaking, she must admit to herself that there is no clear answer to her question.

Drawing upon her own childhood, particularly with reference to her father, Ascher creates the Hoffmans. Like Eva, Ascher is the daughter of educated Jewish refugees who fled Nazi-occupied Europe and immigrated to the United States to begin life again in Topeka, Kansas. Ascher's father, Paul Bergmann, much like Eva's father, left Vienna after the *Anschluss* in late 1938 and met her mother in a Kansas Refugee camp in 1939. A trained clinical psychoanalyst and past

member of a Viennese pedagogical society for the furtherment of democratic socialism, his assimilation into post-war US society sadly dashes his hopes for building a better, more equitable society. Disillusioned by the prevalence of racism in America, including the government's ambivalent policy concerning anti-Semitism, he retreats into himself. A confirmed atheist, his faith affords him no satisfactory answers to perplexing questions about man's inhumanity to man. An accomplished pianist, his love of music sustains him.

By sourcing her own story, archival details sprinkled throughout the narrative gain a richer meaning. Ascher's father like Eva's, works at *Menninger Sanitarium*. Established in Topeka in 1919, the clinic offered the alternative of psychiatric treatment to the usual practice of committing the mentally ill to the state asylum where they faced a lifetime of exile, warehoused in wards. In 1934, Menninger began recruiting Jewish analysts banned from practice in Europe during the Nazi era. The clinic became a symbol of hope to many Jews, because at Menninger, it was possible to make a contribution to the hospital's intellectual life and to society in general. Unfortunately, the reluctance among many to treat mentally-ill people with respect, a prejudice closely resembling the attitude toward black people, hindered their efforts

Ascher speaks authoritatively on segregation in the educational system. A senior research scientist at the *New York University's Institute of Education and Social Policy*, she focuses her research on issues of educational equity including desegregation, school finance and improving schools serving low-income children of colour. As an award winning fiction and non-fiction writer, her short fiction, memoirs and essays on education have appeared widely in American newspapers, magazines and literary journals. She has co-authored two works: *Hard Lessons: Public Schools and Privatization* and *Between Women: Biographers, Novelists, Critics, Teachers and Artists Write About Women*, done two studies: *Simone de Beauvoir: A Life of Freedom* and *Women in Medicine*, and completed a memoir: *Without Hitler*.

Richard B. Finnegan and James K. Wiles
Women and Public Policy in Ireland: A Documentary History 1922-1997
Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2005.
50 Euros, ISBN 0-7165-2778-2 (hardback) pp. vii + 439

Reviewed by Dr. Myrtle Hill
Queen's University Belfast

The authors of this volume identify the publication of the First Report of the Commission on the Status of Women

in 1972 as a significant turning point in the history of the relationship between Irishwomen and the state. Claiming that it ushered in 'a new era of social policy in the Republic of Ireland' (p. 1), they set out to 'identify the cases, laws, regulations and practices that pertained to women on a wide variety of public policy issues' (p.3). Three main phases in public policy approaches are identified, with the years from the formation of the state in 1922 until 1972 categorized as one of exclusion, the period 1972–85 marking the formal quest for equality, and the final stage 1985–1997 witnessing a concern with more deeply-embedded aspects of gender discrimination. The agenda of the 1972 report provides a thematic structure, with chapters on equal pay, equality in the workplace, social welfare, the legal status of married women, reproductive issues and violence. The final three chapters focus on education, health and political participation.

As the authors note, whilst comprehensive in its coverage of major issues of concern to women in this 75-year period, they have confined themselves to an examination of the official documentary record. Apart from the 1972 report already referred to, the fifteen key documents include the 1993 Report of the CSW and the 1996 report which monitored progress as well as reports from Social Welfare and Law Reform Commissions. Each theme is (briefly) introduced and concluded, and explanatory commentary accompanies the documents themselves. The Introduction states that the intention is to look backwards as well as forwards from 1972, but information on the early period is disappointingly limited. While the 1972 Report takes centre stage, the other major contributory factors in the challenge to Ireland's conservative and patriarchal culture are clearly recognized — membership of the European Community and subsequent European directives, the stimulus of the Irish women's movement, the revolution in education and the modernization of the economy.

Despite the increasingly rapid rate of progress in the latter decades of the twentieth century, the authors rightly conclude that 'the agenda of women's rights in Ireland is far from having been fully achieved' (p.425), that access to resources remains gendered and imbalanced, and that, while Ireland's 'paternal culture' (p.425) has been challenged, it has not yet been conquered.

The compilation of these materials is clearly useful in charting the growing interest in and the changing nature of women's personal, legal economic and political experience. Analysis and explanation are, however, a little patchy, and this type of approach tends to oversimplify fairly complex issues. Recent research has, for example, drawn attention to a significant degree of women-centered activism in the seemingly barren early

decades of the state. This book is probably best viewed as a useful supplement to other, more analytical, histories of Irishwomen, although it will undoubtedly come in very handy for teachers and lecturers introducing their students to the finer points of documentary analysis.

Marion Arnold and Brenda Schmähmann, eds.

Between Union and Liberation: Women Artists in South Africa, 1910-1994

Aldershot and Burlington: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2005.

£55, ISBN 0 7546 3240, (hardback), pp. xv + 230

Reviewed by Myfanwy Cook

Historical Novel Society

This collection of ten essays was written by eight contributors and edited by Marion Arnold and Brenda Schmähmann. The essays focus on art created by women in South Africa between 1910 the year of Union and 1994, when the first democratic election was held. They also detail the impact on women artists and their art during this period of socio-political change. Some were *empowered* whilst others were disadvantaged.

Every essay brings out different strands of the effects of these changes on women, black, white, named, unnamed, culturally diverse and from different social groupings, and relates these to gender theory within the South African context. The writers consider both *art* and *craft* and their historical and gender roles. They also relate the images and objects made to feminism, and to economic and political conditions that resulted from changes in South Africa at that time.

The text is complemented by a wide-range of visual images of paintings, sculpture, photographic material, baskets, tapestries, embroideries and ceramics. The detailed notes and references at the end of each essay are appropriate and highly informative. Each essay is a mini-history of the particular aspect of women's *art* or *craft* that it celebrates. The text and detail are dense and rich, but this does not detract from the readability of the collection.

Marion Arnold in her discussion of the visual culture in context draws the conclusion that though apartheid ended more than a decade ago, women's opportunities are still limited and their liberation incomplete. Gender politics are also the main theme of Brenda Schmähmann's essay on embroidery projects before the first democratic election. The embroidery projects of Xihoko, Chivirika, Kaross and Mapula are described in relation to the gender politics as well as illustrating the

endeavours and achievements of these communities. Nessa Liebhammer considers the role of both women and men in Zulu basketry and the transformation of craft into an art form with the work of weavers such as Beauty Batembile Ngxongo, Sabina Mttelwa and Laurentia Dlamini.

In her case study Liese Van Der Watt considers the Afrikaner *volksmoeder*. She explores the visual articulation of the *mother of the nation* ideal and the inherent gender implications. She also brings out the ironic fact that it was the democratic *black* government to afford the Afrikaner Nationalist women the credit they merited in 2000 by returning the members of the women and motherhood movement of the Afrikaanese Taal-en-Kultuurvereniging embroidery to the Monument, Pretoria.

In her essay about the female bodies in the art of Penny Siopis, Brenda Schmahmann demonstrates that resistance can be rendered through art to both express and encapsulate personal and private experiences as well as public histories. The struggle of women is also brought to the fore in Jaqueline Nolte's account of the narratives of migration in the works of Noria Mabasa and Mmakgabo Sebidi. According to Nolte their struggle encompasses the constant battle against the forces of nature as depicted in Mabasa's powerful wood carving of the Natal flood disaster and their attempt to reshape their own collective memories.

In this collection of first class contributions three in particular stood out for me. The first was Julia Carman's study of Florence Phillips, which brought to life the invisibility of women artists at the time of Union and clearly illustrated how one of the key patrons of the arts had her original intentions limited by male money and power. The second was Wilma Cruise's study of women ceramists in KwaZulu Natal and the fascinating insight into mentoring from grandmother, to mother, to daughter as in the case of the Nala family. It also provides an interesting account of how ceramic practice has been redefined. Finally Brenda Danilowitz's has managed to bring alive the short working career of the photographer Constance Stuart Larrabee at a time when South Africa was just opening its eyes to *modernity*. Her photographs of the Ndzundza Ndebele were not about politics or even about history, but some untouchable and unchanging spirit.

What is outstanding about this varied collection is that the contributors have all managed to impart passion for their specialist subjects in an objective, readable and engrossing way. The overall consistency of the collection is a tribute to the editors. This is a

remarkable celebration of the creative endeavours of women artists in South Africa from 1910 to 1994.

Women and Gender in Scotland: a review essay
Deborah Simonton
University of Southern Denmark

Leah Leneman *Promises, Promises, Marriage Litigation in Scotland, 1698-1830* (Edinburgh, 2003) 240pp, ISBN 1-901663-52-3.

Mary Prior, *Fond Hopes Destroyed, Breach of Promise Cases in Shetland* (Lerwick, 2005) 85pp. ISBN 1-904746-09-8

Lynn Abrams, *Myth and Materiality in a Woman's World, Shetland 1800-2000* (Manchester, 2005), 252 pp, ISBN 0-7190-6592-5

Historians in Scotland and abroad have been working away on women and gender in Scotland for some time, but over the last ten or so years this has built up a head of steam. Research is inevitably an individual process, but at the same time the growth and vigour of networks, such as WHN and its sisters has played an important role. In Scotland, Women's History Scotland has been part of fostering research and wider public interest.¹ The launch of *Gender in Scottish History* and the *Biographical Dictionary of Scottish Women* in Spring 2006 is testament to the scale of individual endeavour and to the supporting influence of the network.²

Projects such as these rely ultimately however on the basic research of historians 'in the field' so to speak, combing archives, interviewing people and listening to the ways the past expresses itself. The three books reviewed here exemplify the range of work being done on women and gender in Scotland. Leah Leneman's *Promises, Promises, marriage litigation in Scotland, 1698-1830*, is the epitome of detailed archival research from a historian who built her career around research and research projects. Her work with Rosalind Mitchison on sexuality and marriage and her work on divorce have helped reshape understanding of sexual relations in Scotland, and this book fits into her clear area of expertise. The book is a blend of discursive material around the different types of breach of promise cases and a series of case studies that illustrate the main points. Her cases are those that can be found primarily in the Commissary Court during the period between the creation of the register of decrees to 1830. Clearly, as she notes, irregular marriages occurred both before and after these dates, but the value of the records for this period provide a window into the motives and routes followed by couples wishing to marry irregularly and also point up the differences between English and Scottish practice. Notably, however, the book is about people claiming a marriage, and wishing to establish its validity

(or to deny it). The range of human experience that can therefore be found between these pages gives us access to some of the ways that seduced women set out to protect themselves and usually to legitimate their children, how women and men articulated their understandings of marriage, and frequently the influence of family or employers on an individual's circumstances. The sense of heartbreak, anguish and sometimes chicanery (by both men and women) comes out clearly, allowing us to begin to reconstruct not only actions but also feelings and motives. The strength of the book is in its detail and Leneman's clear and detailed knowledge of the subject matter.

Mary Prior's *Fond Hopes Destroyed, Breach of Promise Cases in Shetland* picks up chronologically where Leneman's left off, in 1823 when the responsibility for breach of promise cases transferred from the Commissary Court to the Sheriff courts. It is a more local journey based on the treasure trove of Shetland Archives, which have managed to survive in Shetland rather than being transferred to Edinburgh, where similar materials lie uncatalogued. It is also a smaller book, describing the 25 cases of women whose 'fond hopes were destroyed'. As in the previous book, we see the catalogue of emotional entanglements that often led people to this situation, the occasional greed, and the ways cases were defended. This last is crucial because frequently women were portrayed as philanderers themselves, and if a man could successfully show that she had had relations with another, her case would almost certainly fail. The distinctiveness of the Shetland situation may be important here. The male to female ratio was the lowest in the British Isles (there were 230 women for every 100 men in 1861), and the chances for a Shetland woman to marry were much slimmer than elsewhere in Scotland. Men however were as likely to marry as other men in Scotland. Because of lack of comparative data, we cannot know if Shetland women were more assiduous or not in their claims, or if other factors made the Shetland experience unique. Like Leneman, Prior gives us a window on this world and on the ways that personal relations were negotiated in the public arena. The research embedded in these two books opens the door to further analysis, and raises questions of analysis that hopefully others will take further.

The third book, Lynn Abrams', *Myth and Materiality in a Woman's World, Shetland 1800-2000*, does precisely this. It draws on detailed research in Shetland, and elsewhere, and utilises printed and oral material to build up the history of Shetland and its 'woman's world.' But it does more than this. It is not 'traditional' as a history book, because as Abrams says in her introduction, it 'is about the relationship between myth-making and historical materiality ... about the ways ... the people ... imagine their past, and at the same time it is an attempt to

reconstruct this woman's world from fragments of cultural experience ...' (p. viii). The book starts with the personal journey — landing in twenty-first-century Shetland, noting the lack of women, the pervasive sense of men, and oil. From this point on, she negotiates the present and the past, the ways the past permeates the present, whether as myth or materiality, and the ways that the mythmaking over time has shaped the present, and its myths. It is an unusual book and for some it will be challenging; it breaks the rules about personal intervention into the dialogue; it moves about chronologically; and its materials are slippery. It also subverts the narrative since Shetland, she argues, presents an alternative account, one based on a sense of otherness, a distinctiveness, that demands that we ask questions of the stories we tell. Stories are at the heart of this book, stories that contribute to the myths, and stories that let us hear women speak and articulate their understanding of their lives. The organisation of the book alerts the reader immediately that this is going to be a different journey; chapters on 'pasts, people, selves', 'stories', 'place', 'work', 'culture', 'trust', 'sexualities', 'power' and ultimately 'reflections' speak to the combination of cultural, anthropological and personal narrative that contribute to this 'history'. It is well-written, engaging, clear and a pleasure to read. In order to draw this picture of a woman's world, there is sometimes a sense of repetition, of maybe too much reiteration, but with such a multi-faceted topic, where the point is arrived at by several routes, this is probably inevitable. Readers who are not particularly interested in Shetland, or Scotland, will find there is much to be gained in terms of approach and historical process by reading this book.

Ultimately what these three books do is remind us of the richness of the archival materials; these are by no means exhausted, and using traditional methods still have many stories to uncover. All three have used their sources to enable us to hear women's voices, all mediated in one way or another, but together producing deeper understandings of women's worlds. Expanding the methodology, as Abrams has done, allows us to seek and perhaps find answers using lateral thinking and a sense of creativity in our research and writing. They also, of course, demonstrate the importance of the work that is going on in Scotland, and indeed in many other parts of Europe, work which helps to produce a more rounded, nuanced picture of the lives of women and the interaction of gender in the past.

Notes

1. The original Scottish Women's History Network was founded in 1990, reorganised in 1998 and renamed Women's History Scotland in 2005, see www.swhn.org.uk.

2. See below the photograph and report on the launch. Lynn Abrams, Eleanor Gordon, Deborah Simonton and Eileen Janes Yeo, eds, *Gender in Scottish History, 1700 to the present*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006; Elizabeth Ewan, Sue Innes, Siân Reynolds, eds, and Rose Pipes, co-ordinating editor, *The Biographical Dictionary of Scottish Women*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006. At this point I should admit to a vested interest and involvement in these projects and as Convenor of the network from 1998 to 2005.

Biographical Dictionary of Scottish Women Book Launch



Siân Reynolds, Rose Pipes and Elizabeth Ewan holding a copy of the Biographical Dictionary of Scottish Women - open at the page where there is a photo of the late Sue Innes.

The Biographical Dictionary of Scottish Women was launched at the National Library of Scotland on 8 March 2006 (International Women's Day). The WHN supported this project with a £1,000 grant. They send their congratulations to the editors Elizabeth Ewan, Rose Pipes and Siân Reynolds, as well as Women's History Scotland who initiated the project in May 2001. The book is dedicated to former WHN national steering committee member, Sue Innes, who truly inspired the project and edited it until her untimely death in 2005.

Conference Report

Report on the Sixth European Social Science History Conference¹

By Hasmik Khalapyan
PhD Candidate
Central European University
Budapest, Hungary

From March 22 to 25, 2006, the International Institute of Social History held the Sixth European Social Science History Conference in Amsterdam, Netherlands.²

The conference consisted of twenty-eight networks, covering a wide variety of disciplines and topics. The 126-page conference program speaks eloquently about

the enormous size of the conference, as well as of the amount of effort and work that went into its organization both on the part of the organizer and the individual network chairs.

Issues relating to gender and women were organized under a separate network listed as Women and Gender and co-chaired by Dr. Francisca de Haan of the Central European University, Budapest, Hungary, and Dr. Sonya Michel of the University of Maryland at College Park, USA. Originally the network was planned to include twelve panels. However, as a result of the efforts of the co-chairs to give gender and women's issues a wider space, as well as to accommodate the large number of attractive proposals received, the network was successfully enlarged to include twenty-two panels. The co-chairs are indeed to be congratulated for making gender and women's studies one of the most widely covered fields at the conference. The network participants, ranging from graduate students to well-established scholars, presented papers spanning gender and women's history and politics to representation issues and migration.³

On the second day of the conference, participants had the opportunity of meeting with their network chairs and fellow participants. The Women and Gender network likewise met. The aim of the meeting was to get feedback from the participants regarding the overall organization and content of the network panels. Apart from getting detailed information from the co-chairs regarding the organization of the network, the meeting presented an excellent opportunity for participants to suggest how to further improve the Women and Gender network, as well as to offer new themes for the upcoming conference(s). Suggestions made varied from the simple logistics of chairing the panels to giving more space to certain themes such as violence against women, transnationalism and colonialism in broader historical sense, etc.

The individual network meetings were wrapped up by a general meeting with the lecture by Joan W. Scott, entitled 'History as Critique'. The lecture addressed the importance of poststructuralism for (feminist) historians to retain and rediscover the critical dimension of their work.⁴ A reception followed the meeting and the lecture sponsored by the Amsterdam City Council and the IISH. Apart from the purely academic part, the organizers also ensured some enjoyable events for the participants. Among these was a boat trip at the initiative of the Technology Network following the panel session Water in the City, and a showing of the British *Street Corner* film (directed by Muriel Box), at the initiative of the Criminal Justice Network. The Women and Gender

network participants met separately at an enjoyable dinner following the conclusion of the conference.

To me as a participant, the conference presented two weaknesses. First, in organizing conference panels, more thought needs to be given toward separating topics representing a common theme. In the event that thematic sessions are held concurrently, conference participants will be forced to select between two or more competing panels, all of which will be of interest to certain conferees. Second, although graduate students were greatly represented at the conference, indeed a good thing in itself, no funding was available to support student attendance.

Work on publishing the proceedings of the Women and Gender network is in a preliminary state. The next conference will be held in Lisbon in 2008, as the participants were told at the network meeting. Dr. Maria Bucur from the Indiana University, USA, and Dr. Berteke Waaldijk from the Utrecht University will be the succeeding co-chairs of Women and Gender Network in the upcoming conference.

Notes

1. My participation to the conference was funded by the Academic Fellowship Program of the Open Society Institute, Budapest, Hungary to which I extend my deep gratitude.
2. The conference is a biennial event and was for the first time held in 1996. The conference has no main theme and welcomes papers about all periods and subjects from all around the world. The goal of the conference is "to introduce historians who use the insights and techniques from the social sciences to social scientists that focus on the past in their research and vice versa." For more information on the conference organizer and the conference see <http://www.iisg.nl/esshc/about.html>.
3. See the full program of the Women and Gender network at <http://www2.iisg.nl/esshc/Programme.asp?selyear=8&nw=27&find=>
4. Some of the ideas expressed during the lecture can be found in her article "Feminism's History" in *Journal of*

BACK ISSUES

Back issues of *Women's History Magazine* are now available for purchase. A list of scholarship published within each issue, and purchasing details, can be found by following the 'magazine' links at www.womenshistorynetwork.org

or by emailing

enquiries@womenshistorynetwork.org

Conference Notices & Calls for Papers

Call for Papers

Women's Studies Group 1558 - 1837 2005-2006 Programme

The Women's Studies Group: 1558 - 1837 is a small, informal multi-disciplinary group formed to promote women's studies in the early modern period and the long eighteenth century. We are currently seeking papers for our 2005 - 2006 programme.

We are quite informal and we give good feedback. Papers on ANY aspect of women's studies within this chronological period, in ANY field of scholarly or critical enquiry, are welcome. You do NOT need to be a woman, OR a member, to deliver a paper to our group. Moreover, we welcome work in progress and papers that have been given at another venue. The group meets from 2.00 to 5.00 on Saturdays at the Senate House of the University of London, on Malet Street, W1. Paper length is quite flexible - anything from 20 -50 minutes is fine! Papers are needed for **September** and **November 2006** (dates to be confirmed). Please send your proposal to loisneil@themutual.net

For further information about our group please visit our website at www.womensstudiesgroup.org.uk

Call for Papers

Life Histories, Women's Histories

17 February 2007, University of Sussex Southern Women's History Network/Centre for Life History Research, University of Sussex

The Southern Women's History Network and the Centre for Life History Research at the University of Sussex invite papers on any aspect of women's history that use life histories. We are interested in papers focusing on using oral histories, diaries, journals, auto/biography or other life history sources for any period and in any country in the construction of women's history.

Papers should last around 20 minutes and be aimed at an undergraduate audience not necessarily familiar with life history methodologies. Abstracts of no more than 200 words should be sent to Gerry Holloway at: g.holloway@sussex.ac.uk by **31 October 2006**.

Further details about the conference will be available in the next Magazine.

Conference

Beyond the Widening Sphere: New Transatlantic Perspectives on Victorian Women

8-9 July 2006, Royal Holloway, University of London, Egham, Surrey

Keynote Speakers: Martha Vicinus and Elaine Showalter

An exploration of Victorian Women's history, assessing future developments, comparing the lives of British and North American women, and enabling scholars from both sides of the Atlantic to exchange their views. This conference will reflect on the fruits of thirty-four years of scholarship, comment on the current state of the field and assess its future development. For further information please see the conference website www.rhul.ac.uk/bedford-centre/conference.html

For enquiries regarding the programme please contact the conference organisers Jane Hamlett j.hamlett@rhul.ac.uk or Sarah Wiggins sxwiggine@ualr.edu

For booking and provisional programme please also see the Bedford Centre website www.rhul.ac.uk/bedford-centre/conference.html. You may also contact the conference administrator by email on: Beverley.duguid@rhul.ac.uk. Contact the organizers about bookings after 16th June 2006.

This Conference is being organised by the Bedford Centre for the History of Women, with the support of the Centre for Victorian Studies, Royal Holloway, University of London.

Beverley Duguid, Bedford Centre Administrator, Bedford Centre for the History of Women, Archives, Founders Building, Royal Holloway, University of London, Egham, Surrey, e-mail bedford.centre@rhul.ac.uk

Conference

British Society of Sports History

Friday 1 September-Sunday 3 September 2006, St Martin's College, Lancaster

St Martin's College, Lancaster is pleased to invite you to the 25th annual conference of the British Society of

Sports History on 1-3 September 2006.

The Richard W Cox Postgraduate Prize will be awarded for the best paper by a postgraduate student. *Please indicate when you submit your abstract if you wish to be considered for this award.*

The Sir Derek Birley Annual Memorial Lecture, to be delivered this year by Professor Allen Guttman, will open Saturday's proceedings.

Contact: Dr Carol Osborne, School of Sport and Outdoor Studies, St Martin's College, Bowerham Road, Lancaster, LA1 3JD, UK. Tel: 01524 526540; Email c.osborne@ucsm.ac.uk

The aim of the BSSH is to stimulate, promote and co-ordinate interest in the historical study of sport, physical education, recreation and leisure, with special reference to the British Isles.

Conference

History of Women Religious of Britain and Ireland: Annual Conference

15 and 16 September 2006, Renshan Hall, NUI Maynooth, Co. Kildare, Ireland

Themes/seminar headings:

Expulsions, persecutions and the perils of religious life
Authority struggles and 'foreign control'
Reflections on class structure
Christian residential institution: women in crisis
State/church partnerships in childcare
Image: the visual record
Recruiting religious women and questions of identity

Booking forms for the conference are available from Dr Prunty and Rev. Neil Collins at NUI Maynooth from **16 May 2006** onwards. Overnight accommodation may be booked directly with Maynooth Campus Conference and Accommodation Office, tel. 353-1- 708 3533; fax: 353-1- 708 3534; email: reservations@maynoothcampus.com

Conference

Gender, family and property in legal theory and practice: the European perspective from 10th - 20th centuries

21 - 23 September, 2006, Crete (Greece)

To be held under the aegis of the Department of

History and Archeology, University of Crete, and the Institute for Mediterranean Studies, Rethymno, Crete.

This conference will examine issues relating to the theme of gender, family and property in legal theory and practice as attested in European societies from 10C to 20C. Possible topics might include (but are not limited to) the following:

- * State law, customary law and legal practice - The legislator, the notary and the judge
- * The implications of the system of dowry and inheritance: Inequalities, discrimination and conflict
- * Town v countryside as factors for economic and cultural differentiation
- * Gender relations in law and legal practice

There will be two keynote lectures, one of which will be given by Professor Leonore Davidoff, Research Professor at the Department of Sociology, University of Essex (UK). There will also be up to 20 communications of 25-30 minutes each to allow time for discussion. The conference will conclude with a panel discussion.

The language of the conference will be English.

Practicalities

The conference will cover the expenses of accommodation (3 nights) and most meals of all speakers. The participants will be asked to make every effort to secure travelling expenses from their own institutions but the organizers are working towards reimbursing the cost of budget travelling for those unable to find other sponsors.

For more details and a preliminary programme, please visit the conference website which will operate from January 2006 at the following URL:
www.history-archaeology.uoc.gr

Conference

Rethinking the rural: land and the nation in the 1920s and 1930s

An International Conference to be held at Royal Holloway, University of London, Egham, UK, 4 – 6 January, 2007

Organised by the Interwar Rural History Research

Group

The 1920s and 1930s were a key period in the emergence of new relationships between land and the nation. The agricultural depression – one of the first truly global economic events – provoked different reactions in different countries, but everywhere it influenced shifts in attitudes towards the rural sector, and in the place of the countryside within national economies. Alongside the economic travails of farming in many countries, this was also a period of interesting reconfigurations in the relationship between landscape and national identity, and reformulations of the meanings and significance attached to folk culture and rural society. New demands on land use for resources such as building land, water, wood and minerals, radically altered agricultural landscapes in the interests of urbanisation/suburbanisation, industrialisation, and transport/communications infrastructure, pressures which led to increasing state involvement in rural life and often to a sense of the countryside as something under threat from modernity.

This interdisciplinary conference will explore these themes, bringing together geographers, literary, art, and performance historians as well as political and socio-economic historians. Keynote speakers include Dr Jan Bieleman (University of Wageningen), Professor David Danbom (North Dakota State University), (Professor Kate Darian-Smith (University of Melbourne) and Professor Alun Howkins (University of Sussex).

For further information please visit: www.irhrg.org.uk

Conference

Harriet Martineau: Subjects and Subjectivities

21 April 2007, Institute of English Studies, University of London

This interdisciplinary one-day conference considers the making of political, imperial and individual identities in the work of Harriet Martineau (1802-1876). Organized by Cora Kaplan (Queen Mary) and Ella Dzelzainis (Birkbeck) in association with the University of London's Institute of English Studies, it will be held at the Senate House, Bloomsbury on Saturday 21 April 2007. Confirmed speakers include the leading scholars Catherine Hall (UCL), Deborah Anna Logan (Western Kentucky) and Linda Peterson (Yale).

Contact: Ella Dzelzainis, e.dzelzainis@bbk.ac.uk.

Conference

A Woman's Island? Women in Shetland - Past, Present & Future

20 - 22 April 2007 at Shetland Museum and Archives, Hays Dock, Lerwick, Shetland

Organised by Women's History Scotland and Shetland Museum & Archives

Shetland's history has a powerful influence on the ways in which the islands' inhabitants perceive themselves and their identity. The combination of a wealth of scholarly studies on Shetland and the local interest in the past, as well as the development of a £10 million centre for Shetland Museum and Archives presents an unrivalled opportunity to consider the dominant representations of Shetland's past. In particular we aim to investigate the connections between the idea of Shetland as a female dominated society in the past and present-day gender relations as they are manifested in a variety of contexts: work, art, literature and poetry, textiles, music and so on.

Contact: Lynn Abrams, Department of History, University of Glasgow, 2 University Gardens, Glasgow G12 8QQ or by email to: L.Abrams@history.arts.gla.ac.uk.

Conference

Women's History Scotland

Women's Spaces - Men's Places: Gender, History and the Built Environment

**Saturday 21 October 2006
University of Dundee**

Papers will be presented on themes including (but not limited to) towns and cities, housing, transport, urban space, parks, public space, private space, institutions, retail trade and shopping. Papers may be on any historical period and need not be Scottish focused.

General enquiries to:

UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH SCHOOL OF HISTORY AND CLASSICS

MSC GENDER HISTORY

This taught one-year postgraduate programme explores aspects of global gender history across a broad range of continents (Africa, Asia, Australasia and Europe, including Britain) and periods (classical and medieval to the contemporary world). The role of gender in shaping behaviours, practices and interactions between men and women is discussed in relation to wider political, economic, social and cultural transformations. Key modules on research methods and approaches are combined with a series of specialist optional modules which explore themes such as nationalism, empire, war, revolution, material culture, religion, lifecycle, the emotions, sexuality, crime and deviancy.

For further details contact:

Dr. Paul Bailey (Paul.Bailey@ed.ac.uk) or
Sarah Williams (Sarah.Williams@ed.ac.uk)
School of History and Classics, William Robertson
Building, 50 George Square, Edinburgh, EH8 9JY
tel: 0131 508349.

News from the Women's Library

Newly acquired and catalogued material

The Women's Library would like to draw the attention of WHN members to the following collections, now available for research in our Reading Room.

- **7SMM Papers of Sarah Madeleine Martineau (1892-2005)** This archive consists of two notebooks containing Martineau's diaries, describing her training at art colleges in London and her social and family life (1892-1914). It also includes a typescript of a lecture based on the diaries by Elizabeth Crawford at the 2005 Women's History Network Conference.
- **7MAR Papers of Mary Ann Rawle (1907-2006)** This collection comprises of Mary Ann Rawle's working papers relating to the women's suffrage campaign and the Independent Labour Party. It includes correspondence, a prison diary describing her time in Holloway, an illuminated address and a badge awarded for bravery in prison, plus a copy of family certificates and photographs.

- **7ESP Papers of, and relating to, Sylvia Pankhurst (c.1930-2001)** This archive consists of articles and essays by Sylvia Pankhurst, her prison discharge notice of 1914, and her correspondence relating to the International Ethiopian Council. It also includes articles by her son, Richard Pankhurst, and correspondence of her daughter-in-law, Rita Pankhurst, relating to Sylvia Pankhurst.
- **7DDO Papers of Daisy Dobson (1927-1950)** The Dobson archive consists of papers relating to the Guildhouse Fellowship and lecture tours of Dr Agnes Maude Royden. It includes Guildhouse Fellowship newsletters (1941, 1942, 1950) and lists of key events and speakers at the Guildhouse (1921-1940). Detailed letters from Daisy Dobson report home to friends and colleagues on travels in the USA and India during Royden's world lecture tour (1928). As well as providing information on Royden's schedule, the letters describe the landscape, people and culture of the countries they visit and comment with humour and frustration on the practicalities of their trip. A later letter describes sea travel during World War Two for Royden's lecture tour of the USA (1941-1942).
- **7EGM Papers of Eunice Guthrie Murray (1895-1960)** This collection consists of three diaries of Eunice Guthrie Murray, a member of the Women's Freedom League (with full transcripts by her grand-niece Frances Sylvia Martin), covering the period 1895-1918 and a copy of the death certificate of Eunice Guthrie Murray. Subjects covered include the women's suffrage campaigns, temperance, social conditions in Glasgow, politics, foreign travel and family life.
- **7RCB Papers of Ruth Cavendish Bentinck (1894-1950s)** This collection consists of letters and articles written by Ruth Cavendish-Bentinck, press cuttings and articles relating to the suffrage movement, press cuttings and manuscript notes on women's employment and a drawing of and letter from George Bernard Shaw.
- **11RIP Papers of Rita Pankhurst (c.1953-c.1980)** The archive consists of articles written by Rita Pankhurst on London for a Japanese newspaper, and professional and personal correspondence relating to her work as librarian at City of London Polytechnic, the Fawcett Library and feminist campaigning.

Self-service photography

The Library will be introducing a new self-service digital copying service in the Reading Room from July 2006.

The service is designed for readers who wish to make digital and photographic copies of archive, printed and museum material in the collections, which is not suitable to be copied using the photocopier, for private study or non-commercial use. All copying is subject to an item condition check and completion of a self-service photography declaration form. Readers using this service are required to use their own digital cameras and make an appointment to use the Library's copy stand. A maximum of 25 copies can be made in one session at a charge of £4. For further information, or to book an appointment to use the copy stand, please contact:

enquirydesk@thewomenslibrary.ac.uk

Closed periods summer 2006

The Women's Library's will be closed on Saturdays from 2 August until 16 September. Our annual closed week for stocktaking and maintenance will take place this year from 5 to 9 September. The Reading Room will reopen on Tuesday 12 September.

Touring exhibition: 'Action women: the real story of the Women's Institutes'

The Women's Library acquired the archives of the National Federation of Women's Institutes in March 2002. Comprising over 300 boxes, the collection vividly shows how the lives of women living in rural areas have changed during the 20th century. The Women's Institute (WI) is often associated with jam making and cake baking, but the collection reveals a wealth of other stories about these dynamic women. These range from talks and plays encouraging women to use their new voting rights in the 1920s, to details of the organisation's many campaigns, including 'Keep Britain Tidy'.

In response to great interest in the collection and to celebrate the 90th Anniversary of the first WI in England and Wales, The Women's Library has organised the touring exhibition 'Action women: the real story of the Women's Institutes'. A key motivation for touring the exhibition is to provide access to one of the Library's collections outside London.

The Esmée Fairbairn Foundation has funded the exhibition. It will initially tour to three UK venues: The Museum of English Rural Life (MERL), Reading (30th May – 27th Aug '06), The Borthwick Institute for Archives and Central Library, York (16th September – 15th December '06) and Newport Museum and Art Gallery (3rd February – 31st March '07).

The exhibition has been co-curated by Charlotte Dew of The Women's Library and WI members local to each venue. Three panels describing the history of the organisation locally will complement seven thematic panels exploring the history of the national organisation. The panels will be accompanied by wide range of visual material including photographs, rural crafts, oral history accounts, campaign badges, posters and pamphlets.

The exhibition will be supported at MERL by a series of events, including the following programme of talks:
15th June – Dr Caitlin Adams and Dr Philip Kiszely: Interwar amateur drama and the WI
29th June – Jean Sheppard: From local concerns to national campaigns
6th July – Antonia Byatt: Why The Women's Library?
13th July – Dr Nicola Verdon: Women, work and welfare in the interwar countryside
20th July – Dr Maggie Andrews: The Acceptable face of feminism: the Women's Institute as a social movement

All talks will be held at MERL and will start at 4.30pm. Each talk will last about an hour, with time for questions afterwards. Places are free but must be booked in advance: telephone 0118 378 8660 or email j.moon@reading.ac.uk

Committee News

Charity Status

The most important news on the agenda of the WHN committee which met on March 18 in Senate House, London was the success of the WHN in achieving charitable status. We owe particular thanks to our Treasurer, Elizabeth Foyster, for all her hard work in steering us through the exhausting paper work that this entailed

2006 Conference and WHN AGM

Our status as a registered charity will need to be endorsed by a vote of the members at the Annual General Meeting, which will take place at the fifteenth annual conference of the WHN at Collingwood College, at the University of Durham on September 1-3. The three plenary speakers will be Elizabeth Ewan, Linda Eisenmann and Joyce Sanders Pedersen. This should be a very interesting conference with papers on education, culture and society. Members are urged to attend the AGM so that we can have a decisive vote in favour of the change. See also the right-hand column of this page for further information.

Appeal for New Committee Members

Anne Anderson, Claire Jones, Maureen Meikle and June Purvis are due to stand down from the committee at the AGM when their period of office expires although June will continue as the WHN representative on the International

Federation for Research into Women's History. We are looking for new volunteers to take their place. Please contact any member of the committee if you would like to know more about what is involved.

Schools Liaison

Flora Wilson, who has taught in comprehensive schools in the London area for five years, joined us as schools Liaison officer and is strengthening an area of work that we all feel to be important. Zilan Wang will be taking over the WHN website from Claire Jones.

WHN Banner Competition

The competition for the design of a new WHN banner is nearing an end. The designs will be considered at the June Committee Meeting where the winner will be decided. We hope to present the winner with a cheque at the Durham Conference and to display the plans of all the entrants to the competition at this event.

September Committee Meeting

All WHN members are welcome to attend the national steering committee as observers and the next meeting will take place on Friday September 1st in Durham (time to be announced). Please e-mail enquiries@womenshistorynetwork.org to ensure there have been no last minute changes if you intend to come.

WHN Awarded Charity Status

Members will be pleased to hear that the WHN has been awarded charity status. This will allow us to continue our work promoting women's history, and bring us some financial benefit in terms of tax relief on UK membership subscriptions.

What you can do to help:

1. For these benefits to come into effect we have to make slight changes to the wording of our Constitution. Since any amendment to our Constitution needs the assent of the Members of the Network, we will wait until our next AGM, held at the annual conference, to ratify these changes.

Please make sure that you attend the AGM in Durham, so that we can explain and make these changes!

If you would like a copy of our existing constitution, please email convenor@womenshistorynetwork.org

2. If you are a UK taxpayer, please complete a Gift Aid Declaration form, if you have not already done so. We can then claim tax relief on your subscription fee. You can find the gift aid declaration on our Membership Form which is on our website, or fill in and return the form on the back page of this issue.

What is the Women's History Network?

The WHN was founded in July 1991. It is a national association concerned with promoting women's history and encouraging women interested in history. WHN business is carried out by the National Steering Committee, which is elected by the membership and meets regularly several times each year. It organises the annual conference, manages the finance and membership, and co-ordinates activities in pursuit of the aims of the WHN.

Aims of the WHN

1. To encourage contact between all people interested in women's history — in education, the media or in private research
2. To collect and publish information relating to women's history
3. To identify and comment upon all issues relating to women's history
4. To promote research into all areas of women's history

What does the WHN do?

Annual Conference

Each year the WHN holds a national conference for WHN members and others. The conference provides everyone interested in women's history with a chance to meet and it has become an exciting forum where new research can be aired and recent developments in the field can be shared. The Annual General Meeting of the Network takes place at the conference. The AGM discusses issues of policy and elects the National Steering Committee.

WHN Publications

WHN members receive three copies per year of the *Women's History Magazine*, which contains: articles discussing research, sources and applications of women's history; reviews of books, conferences, meetings and exhibitions; and information on calls for papers, prizes and competitions, and publication opportunities.

Joining the WHN

Annual Membership Rates

Student/unwaged	£10	Overseas minimum	£30
Low income (*under £16,000 pa)	£15	UK Institutions	£35
High income	£30	Institutions overseas	£40

Membership application/renewal, Gift Aid Declaration and Banker's Order forms are available on the back cover.

WHN CONTACTS

To submit articles or news for the *Women's History Magazine*, please contact any of the editors at the addresses below:

Deborah Simonton, Department of English and Danish, University of Southern Denmark, Engstein 1, 6000 Kolding, Denmark. Email: magazine@womenshistorynetwork.org

Claire Jones, 7 Penkett Road, Wallasey, Merseyside, CH45 7QE.
Email: magazine@womenshistorynetwork.org

Jane Potter, Oxford International Centre for Publishing Studies, The Richard Hamilton Building, Headington Hill Campus, Oxford, OX3 0BP. For **book reviews**, please contact Jane; books for review must go to this address.
Email: bookreviews@womenshistorynetwork.org

Gerry Holloway (Advertising and announcements), University of Surrey.
Email: advertising@womenshistorynetwork.org

Mary Joannou (Committee liaison and information), Anglia Ruskin University.
Email: liaison@womenshistorynetwork.org

To update contact details, or for any membership inquiries (including subscriptions), please contact Dr. Moira Martin, at the following address: HLSS, University of the West of England, Bristol, BS16 2JP.
Email: membership@womenshistorynetwork.org

Membership Application

I would like to *join / renew my subscription to the Women's History Network. I */ enclose a cheque payable to Women's History Network / have filled out & returned to my bank the Banker's Order Form / for £ _____. (* delete as applicable)

Name: _____

Address: _____

Postcode: _____

Email: _____ Tel (work): _____

Tick this box if you DO NOT want your name made available to publishers/conference organisers for publicity: ☐

Detach and return this form with, if applicable, your cheque to **Dr Moira Martin, HLSS, University of the West of England, Bristol, BS16 2JP. Email: membership@womenshistorynetwork.org**

Gift aid declaration

Name of Charity: **Women's History Network**

Name :

Address:

..... Post Code:

I am a UK taxpayer and I want the charity to treat all donations (including membership subscriptions) I have made since 6 April 2000, and all donations I make from the date of this declaration until I notify you otherwise, as **Gift Aid donations**.

Signature: _____ Date/...../.....

Notes

1. If your declaration covers donations you may make in the future:
 - Please notify the charity if you change your name or address while the declaration is still in force
 - You can cancel the declaration at any time by notifying the charity – it will then not apply to donations you make on or after the date of cancellation or such later date as you specify.
2. You must pay an amount of income tax and/or capital gains tax at least equal to the tax that the charity reclaims on your donations in the tax year (currently 28p for each £1 you give).
3. If in the future your circumstances change and you no longer pay tax on your income and capital gains equal to the tax that the charity reclaims, you can cancel your declaration (see note 1).
4. If you pay tax at the higher rate you can claim further tax relief in your Self Assessment tax return.
5. If you are unsure whether your donations qualify for Gift Aid tax relief, ask the charity. Or you can ask your local tax office for leaflet IR113 Gift Aid.

Banker's Order

To (bank) _____

Address _____

Account no.: _____

Pay to the account of the Women's History Network, Account No. 91325692 at the National Westminster Bank, Stuckeys Branch, Bath (sort code 60-02-05), on _____ 200_, and annually thereafter, on 1 September, the sum of

(in figures) £ _____ (in words) _____.

Signature: _____