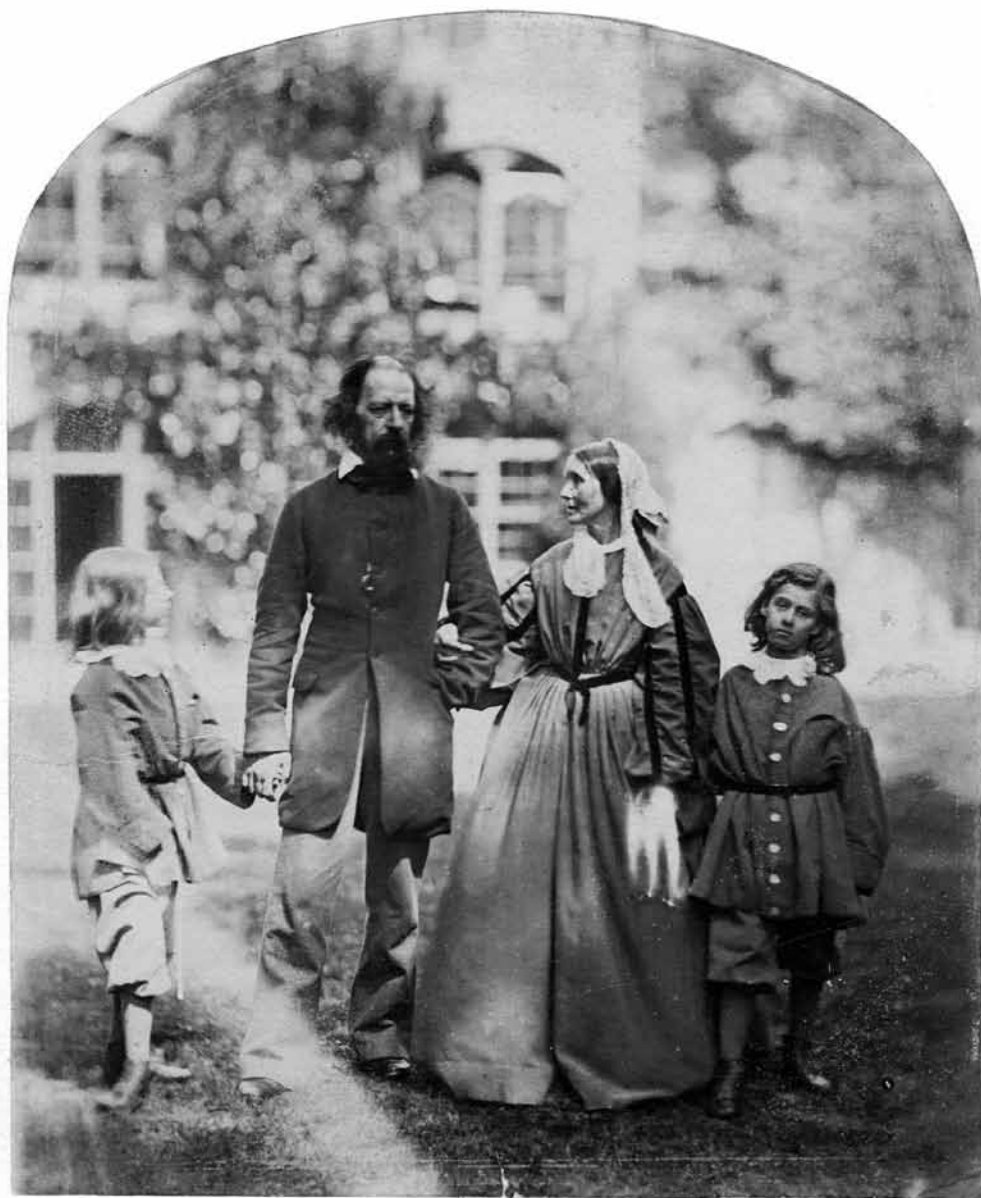


Women's History MAGAZINE

Issue 66
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Ros Aitken on Catherine Gladstone and Emily Tennyson as Victorian Matriarchs

Nina Koefoed on the Regulation of Non-Marital Sex in 18th Century Denmark

Theresa Irina Svane Jepsen on Wicked Women of 18th Century Aberdeen

Louise Nyholm Kallestrup on the Witch as a Woman in Reformation Denmark

Julie Day on Household Management for 18th Century Elite Yorkshire Women

Jennifer Helen Davey on Marriage and Lord and Lady Palmerston

Plus

Five book reviews
Call for reviewers
Committee news

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NETWORK





9 – 11 September 2011

**20 Years of the Women's History Network
Looking Back – Looking Forward
The Women's Library,
London Metropolitan University**

'Early bird' registration now open

Keynote Speakers: Kathryn Gleadle (Oxford): 'Are we nearly there yet? Women's history in 2011: Current challenges and future agendas' and Caroline Bressey (UCL): 'Geographies of belonging: White women and Black history'.

Plenary panels: Sally Alexander, Anna Davin and Sheila Rowbotham on 'The future of women's history' and Krista Cowman, Leonore Davidoff, Helen Meller and Jane Rendall on 'The early days of the Women's History Network'.

We will be looking at histories of feminism, work in progress, current areas of debate such as religion and perspectives on national and international histories of the women's movement. The conference will also invite users of The Women's Library to take part in one strand that will be set in the Reading Room. We would very much like you to choose an object/item, which has inspired your writing and thinking, and share your experience.

Registration information can be found at the conference website:
<http://bit.ly/whnconference> or contact the conference administrator at
conference@womenshistorynetwork.org

Further information at the WHN web
www.womenshistorynetwork.org

Editorial

We are 20! This year marks twenty years of the Women's History Network, which we are celebrating with the theme of the Annual Conference, *20 Years of the Women's History Network: Looking Back - Looking Forward*. This will be held in London as was the first and the tenth, creating a nice piece of symmetry. It will be held 9 – 11 September 2011, appropriately at The Women's Library. Throughout its history, the Women's History Network has sought to make women's history accessible to anyone with an interest in women and history, not only catering to the academic world. The conference reflects this with sessions from networks, from users of the Women's Library and drawing keynote speakers from many who were at the groundbreaking edge of the movement. By the time this goes to press, the organisers will be vigorously trying to fit in all the exciting proposals and details will be updated regularly on the WHN website, www.womenshistorynetwork.org.

This Summer issue of the *Magazine* celebrates our more distant past, from Reformation Denmark through to nineteenth-century Britain, with two linked themes. Marriage, motherhood and household management overlap with issues of non-conformity and questions of gender and 'deviance'. Our authors also reflect the breadth of women's history, including independent researchers, young scholars and women in academic posts.

Ros Aitken leads off with an examination of Catherine Gladstone and Emily Tennyson as contemporaries married to 'significant' men. She argues that these two women, each in their own ways, challenged the stereotypical image we have of the Victorian Matriarch, one by using a public persona and the other from a more retired position which also allowed her scope for 'free-spirited' behaviour. Jennifer Davey similarly explores the life of a woman married to a man of power, examining the marriage of Lord and Lady Palmerston. She argues that this marriage was crucial to Palmerston's success, and that 'Palmerston's centrality within the political elite was cemented by Emily's social influence, political advice and appeasing endeavours'. The lives of these three women provided further evidence which nuances the notion of public/ private in Victorian Britain. Julie Day, in contrast, explicitly looks at household management from the previous century, studying three Yorkshire wives and their varied success in managing the household and establishing control under quite different circumstances. This allows her to ask what personal characteristics might help a woman make a success of the job, how they utilised and developed their authority and what specific challenges they faced.

Moving away from the socially acceptable state of marriage, Nina Koefoed provides a careful and sensitive analysis of the impact of law on the regulation of non-marital sex in Denmark during the eighteenth century. Her title, 'From Sinner to Parent', reflects the shifting notion of woman reflected in legal discourses and the development of the idea of woman as naturally mothers, which significantly altered the legal position of the unmarried mother. Staying with the eighteenth century, Theresa Jepsen takes us to Aberdeen where she questions the notion of 'wicked women'. Like Koefoed, she argues that views of women and their behaviour shifted, but in this case, she makes

the case that with the growth of 'polite society', the male authorities in Aberdeen came to be increasingly vigilant in policing female behaviour, criminalising activities that had formerly been largely ignored or tolerated. Female behaviour is also the centrepiece of Louise Kallestrup's article on the 'Devil's Milkmaid'. Comparing Catholicism and Reformation Lutheranism, she demonstrates that the period of the Danish reformation was characterised by a struggle for power between the Church and King with witchcraft an obvious tool for attacking the Church. In her carefully worked article, she shows how beneficial magic, like healing, shifted from good to evil, but she also shows how both conceptions of witchcraft 'made use of the perception of the witch as a woman'.

This issue says farewell to our 'founder' Book Review Editor, Jane Potter. She has done solid service since the Magazine began, and shall be sorely missed. However, we are pleased to say that Anne Logan has taken over this role, and we also welcome another new member to the editorial team, Katie Barclay, the former Newsletter editor. You can find her biography and a picture (!) on the Women's History Network website, which keeps you up to date on the Network as well as a wide range of issues related to women's history.

Editorial Team: Katie Barclay, Sue Hawkins, Ann Kettle, Anne Logan, Juliette Pattinson, Jane Potter, Emma Robertson and Debbi Simonton.

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Cover:

Albumen print of Alfred and Emily Tennyson and their sons Hallam and Lionel, by Oscar Rejlander. Image courtesy of Reading Museum Service.

Challenging the stereotype: Catherine Gladstone and Emily Tennyson as examples of the Victorian matriarch¹

Ros Aitken, Visiting Scholar,
The Gladstone Library, St Deiniol's.

Introduction

He presses on through calm and storm
Unshaken, let what will betide;
Thou hast an office to perform,
To be his answering spirit-bride.

Be thou a balmy breeze to him,
A fountain singing at his side;
A star, whose light is never dim
A pillar, to uphold and guide.

So wrote Sir Francis Doyle, William Gladstone's best man, to the bride, Catherine Glynne, on the occasion of their wedding on 25 July 1839.² Eight years earlier, Lady Cecily Talbot's father had written to her on her marriage: 'You have now no duty but to obey him [your husband]'.³ In a similar vein, Emily Tennyson, writing for her sons in her old age, professed: 'I don't know if I should ever have ventured to become his [Alfred Lord Tennyson's] wife, knowing the greatness of the responsibility'.⁴ All these quotations suggest that the perceived main concern of the upper- and middle-class Victorian wife was to succour her husband. A secondary duty was 'to give the tone to society; for the rules of morality are placed under their safeguard'.⁵ Most social historians would now agree that the Victorian ideal of wife and mother content with her role as the 'Angel in the House' was rarely borne out by reality, but the contemporary sources quoted above suggest there was no room for ambiguity or uncertainty in the writers' own minds about the roles demanded of these women.⁶ The knowledge that many exceeded these limited and limiting demands should not blind us to the fact that in doing so they risked, and outfaced, calumny. Catherine Gladstone and Emily Tennyson, wives respectively of a four times prime minister of Great Britain and of the poet laureate, illustrate the way in which such women courted criticism by behaving not according to accepted social norms, but according to their own desires and consciences. There is a wealth of written evidence, since both women not only kept diaries or journals and wrote copious letters to their husbands, from whom they were frequently separated, and to their children, but also were abundantly written to and about by family and friends. They have been chosen as *exempla* of the Victorian matriarch, both because of what they had in common, in that, firstly, they were virtual contemporaries, Catherine's dates being 1812-1900 and Emily's 1813-96, and, secondly, both their husbands were viewed in their time as unequivocally great men; and because of what separated them, namely the differences in their own social circumstances. Catherine's background was upper class, the Glynnes being an ancient landed family, inhabiting Hawarden Castle in North Wales, tracing descent back to

Charlemagne, while Emily Sellwood, daughter of a small town lawyer, was brought up in Horncastle, Lincolnshire, in a relatively modest house overlooking the town square, so between them they cover the gamut of Victorian polite society. This study will examine firstly how these two women, who knew each other, approached their roles as wives, mothers and members of society, and secondly how they were viewed by their husbands, offspring and contemporaries.

Catherine

It has been said that 'You can find your own Gladstone',⁷ a statement which could equally well be applied to Catherine, as this section will demonstrate, not least because for reasons of space it will omit far more of her intensely crowded existence than it can adequately cover. Various attempts have been made to sum up her life as a politician's wife, suggesting that loneliness and a desperate attempt to attract Gladstone's attention is the key to understanding her; that her multiple activities and interests were all actually inextricable from those of her husband; that Gladstone acted as her lynchpin; and that, on the contrary, she cultivated her own interests in friends and family at the expense of his.⁸ The following evidence will seek to show that while there is some truth in all these ideas, none of them fully reflects either Catherine's view of herself or the way in which her contemporaries saw her.

William Ewart Gladstone was not an obvious choice of husband for the attractive, well-born family favourite Catherine Glynne. His father was a self-made man, if a wealthy one, a Liverpool merchant, and Gladstone himself was awkward and shy in women's company, ill at ease in the social circles Catherine frequented. Indeed, her mother, Lady Glynne, was so dismayed at her daughter's choice that she refused to attend the wedding, albeit it was a joint ceremony, at which her other daughter, Mary, was marrying an eminently suitable aristocrat, Lord Lytton. Gladstone's original clumsy oral proposal had been backed by a pompous letter, which Catherine brushed off in an elegantly phrased reply.⁹ His second attempt was accepted for several possible reasons, not least that she, now 26 years old, had recently been jilted by a Colonel Francis Harcourt. Furthermore, Gladstone was good looking and had been tipped for greatness, as a friend advised her: 'Look well at that young man, he is going to be prime minister'.¹⁰ She was not interested in politics, and a brief and unhappy period as president of the Women's Liberal Federation in the early 1890s illustrated her lack of appetite for frontline activism; and nor was she interested in playing the role of political hostess, entertaining people who would be useful to her husband. Whenever possible



Mrs Gladstone felling trees at Hawarden.

she avoided formal political dinners and did not even make out the guest lists for the Thursday breakfasts at Downing Street. Her concerns were quite different. She had been brought up by her mother to do her duty in visiting and succouring the poor, early habits which underlay her later charity work, and she took pleasure in a rather different kind of visiting, spending long periods of time staying with relatives, particularly her sister Mary at Hagley Hall in Worcestershire. Her disorganised, unpublished diary records her enjoyment of such aristocratic events as a ball at Buckingham Palace where she noticed Melbourne 'looked aged and careworn', a function at Northumberland House 'where we saw the Duke of Wellington' and social visits to Queen Victoria at Buckingham Palace, Windsor and Sandringham.¹¹ She was disdainful of what she saw as the superficial demands of so-called polite society and the rigid conventions of the middle class, amongst whom were many of Gladstone's constituency.

This is not to say that she did not support her husband, and indeed *The Times* Death Notice referring to the wedding poem, described her as 'that pure courageous spirit which was the guiding star of his fortunes and the Good Angel of his house'.¹² Catherine was so disorganised by nature that on one occasion she even had to confess: 'Your letter to me by some strange mischance blew away. Having hunted in vain I am quite disturbed if you told me to do anything ...'.¹³ She taught herself how to keep household accounts and organise the many essential train journeys. She shared Gladstone's strong religious faith, frequently praying for him, and nurtured a loyal hatred of his political rivals, referring dismissively to Disraeli as 'that Jew'. She constantly urged her husband not to retire, even when he eventually became old and physically frail, since she believed he had been chosen by God to govern.¹⁴ She went on the campaign trail with him and made a habit of being present whenever he was speaking in a parliamentary debate, sitting in the cramped

Ladies' Gallery, often changing there behind a screen before setting off for a party, and she was absent for only one major speech, that in response to Disraeli's first budget in December 1852.¹⁵ She had always bombarded him with letters urging him to take care of his health and particularly his throat, advising him 'to be very careful and sparing of your voice before and after speaking ... and on no account try your voice or get hot or cold'.¹⁶ As they grew older and spent more time together, she became even more protective, providing him with flasks of eggnog to sooth his throat during debates in the House and, at political meetings, fending off fans trying to touch him before helping him onto the platform and off with his coat.¹⁷ She had always been closely involved with his work. If we are to believe Ishbel Gordon, Catherine told her that when she and Gladstone returned from their wedding trip,

... my husband took up his political work again; and as soon as we were settled in our home, I took my desk into his room and said 'Now I am going to write my letters and do my work here, except when you want to see anyone in private, when I shall go away.'¹⁸

There is a story that when they were first married Gladstone asked her to choose between knowing nothing of his political secrets and knowing everything and being bound to secrecy, upon which she opted for the latter.¹⁹ Fifty years later Gladstone told a friend: 'My wife has known every political secret I ever had, and has never betrayed my confidence,' Catherine having become expert at politely refusing to be pumped for information.²⁰

'All this life of unselfish care for others was, however, subordinated to the devotion for her husband which flooded her whole being.'²¹ So wrote Catherine's obituarist in the *Daily Telegraph*. The 'care for others' refers to the vast amount of social work she undertook between the beginning of the 1860s and the mid 1890s. While no one

can seriously question her 'devotion' to Gladstone, there must be some suspicion that the extensive social work was far more important to her than was her devotion to the life of the wife of a leading politician. Her niece Lucy, Lady Frederick Cavendish, wrote:

... but Atie. P. [Catherine] has undertaken to visit a hospital in S. George's in the E., besides 3 other things. And how is she to do that, and all her own innumerable kind deeds, and her season and societyums, [sic] and be deep in politics, and be everything to Uncle W – all at once?²²

Esther Simon Shkolnik has pointed out that there was no existing pattern for her role, but there must have been certain expectations.²³ Starting during the Lancashire Cotton famine of 1861-5 and gaining momentum with the start of the Cholera outbreak in the East End of London in 1866, Catherine was heavily and personally involved in a wide range of charity work for more than three decades. Involvement in good works was not of itself unconventional, but Catherine's approach was original for one of her class.²⁴ Uninterested in organised charities with their drawing room meetings and emphasis on patronage and privilege, she pursued a hands-on approach, for, as she put it: 'It does not do to run away and leave all the organisation to the intrepid workers'.²⁵

During the Lancashire cotton famine, having seen the hardship for herself, she started up an industrial school and a soup kitchen and not only took a dozen girls back to Hawarden to train as domestic servants, but, just as importantly, found places for them, also dreaming up a plan for a squad of unemployed men to make roads in Hawarden Park, feeding and clothing them all out of her own resources. In 1864, realising the existing Soho House of Charity, run by the Clewer Sisterhood, was vastly oversubscribed, she began a scheme to provide a refuge for people who were unable to find places there, raising £1,200 and finding, buying and adapting a disused slaughterhouse in Newport Market, Seven Dials, which provided food, shelter and sometimes a new start to 100 men every night. When the Cholera epidemic broke out she went round the Whitechapel hospital wards, not trespassing on the nurses' duties, but doing what they had no time to do: encouraging the patients and organising relief for their dependants, freeing them from worries and so improving their chances of recovery. The hospitals were too hard pressed to cope with convalescents. Quick to see not only problems but solutions to them, she acquired funding for a free convalescent home in Woodford, where she shopped, prayed and played the piano for the residents and gave them a cow 'because animals are first rate to interest people'.²⁶ Meanwhile in the hospital, she comforted the dying and looked after their children, sometimes in her own home in Carlton House Terrace; raised money for a temporary orphanage in Clapton, which she often visited; and opened up an empty house at Hawarden to take in boys, while the Bishop of London's wife looked after the girls. Also at Hawarden, she set up an Incurables Home which later became a home for old ladies. Since 1846, she had shared with Gladstone a concern for prostitutes²⁷

and she supported the St. Mary's Training Home for the Protection and Care of Young Girls, which aimed to prevent prostitution, her view being, 'Surely there can be no question that it is better work to attack evil at its source, and prevent misery and vice, rather than help in the more sensational rescue work'.²⁸ She organised, and attended, days out in the country and tours and tea at 10 Downing Street for 'old girls', dispensing flowers and presents.²⁹ As well as concerning herself with the plight of hundreds of individuals who wrote to her asking for help, she retained an active interest in all these ventures, frequently writing to *The Times* to beg money, and fighting off regular attempts to close down her institutions well into old age: only with the onset of dementia in 1896 did she lose interest in her charities.³⁰

Although her children did sometimes feel neglected, and certainly Gladstone worried that she was overtaxing herself,³¹ the charity work did not seriously begin until after her family were old enough to do without her constant attention. There were seven of them, three girls and four boys, one girl, Jessie, having died distressingly young of meningitis. Catherine breastfed them all as babies, as was by then common practice, gave them their basic education and took a keen interest in all their doings, which was less common.³² The boys were sent away, as was the custom, to prep schools and then to Eton, but she wrote regularly with family gossip, advice and instructions, displaying maternal concern and demanding reciprocal news, as illustrated by these extracts from letters to the two youngest boys, Henry or Herbert, or both:

Is Herbert's bed tolerably comfortable? I am pining for a letter ... oh do write home ... remember the crack of open window ... do not read novels at present ... PS I need not remind you to be very careful about your prayers; had you a good journey or were you squashed? Pray wrap up in this cold weather; can it be possible that not one little line has been sent to your old father or mother or sister! ... I have watched and waited and hoped in vain. I trust by return of post will come a letter & that I may have a letter once a week in future dear old boys; can you keep warm enough in bed? Remember to eat enough for you are growing.³³

She continued to maintain a close interest and offer advice and support as her family entered adult life, writing regularly to Henry when he was in India with the family firm, supporting her eldest son, Willy, when he was electioneering in Chester and helping her second, clergyman son, Stephen, in his parish work in first Lambeth and then Hawarden.

Catherine's life was a full and largely self-determined one, since she had the good fortune, unlike many of her more circumscribed contemporaries, to be able to do what she liked. She lavished attention on her young offspring because she loved children; she maintained a close supervision over their personal lives, and that of her husband, because she enjoyed being in control; she was able to use her influence and privilege to raise money to

do what her conscience dictated; and she took an active part in the day to day running of her various self-selected concerns because she was genuinely interested in people and took pleasure in organising their lives and entertaining them. On the contrary, she could be careless of other people's feelings, neglected areas of life which held no interest for her and took no notice of critics. Blessed with self-confidence, abundant energy and generally good health, she attracted many admirers, including the *Daily Telegraph* obituarist and early biographers such as E. A. Pratt.³⁴ One might note that both these writers were male and her charm was, with some exceptions, more appreciated by the opposite sex. Her husband adored her, describing her as 'hero-woman' and 'my treasure'.³⁵ He defended her obvious faults, cheerfully stating: 'My wife has a marvellous faculty for getting into scrapes and a marvellous one for getting out of them'.³⁶ Others were less impressed, her own niece, Lucy Cavendish, saying, over her attitude to entertaining: 'Many people have had their feelings lacerated by her'³⁷ and even *The Times* Death Notice, an obituary in all but name, remarked: 'When she thought it her duty to administer a snub, no one snubbed so aptly'.³⁸ This lack of tact is not consonant with what was expected from a prominent figure in Victorian public life. Even before the marriage, Margot Tennant, later Mrs. Asquith, noted that she did not think her [Catherine] fit to be the wife of a rising politician like her fiancé.³⁹ Impatient with social convention, she often provoked cattiness, as various anecdotes illustrate. On one occasion two MPs' wives were discussing having received rare calling cards from her. 'What have you done with yours?' asked one. 'Oh, I've framed it and hung it up in the hall,' responded the other sarcastically.⁴⁰ On another occasion, when Gladstone was MP for Oxford University, and Catherine accompanied him to a dinner there, one of the other female guests commented: 'Mrs Gladstone vanished as soon as we left the dining room and did not appear until the men came up. I don't think her manners are particularly pleasing, but she is a fine, fashionable looking woman'.⁴¹ Her charity work also provoked irritation, with one guest at a Downing Street Thursday breakfast reporting: 'Mrs G., as is usual with her, begged of all the party for a charity which she is promoting: a silly habit, which brings her into ridicule'.⁴²

More serious criticisms were levelled at her seeming interference in politics. Even Gladstone, who rarely criticised her, had to ask her not to censor his mail in both his first and second premierships. On the first occasion he had discovered that she had done just that in November 1868, when he was absent campaigning in South West Lancashire and she had opened all his post, forwarding only what to her seemed important, not because she was interested in the contents, but in order to protect him from what she saw as unnecessary work. Fellow politicians thought that she did wield influence and there is evidence for their view. He talked to her about cabinet reshuffles, his problems with Queen Victoria, with whom she herself remained on good terms, and church appointments. In 1868 Queen Victoria's secretary General Gray, coming to Hawarden to see Gladstone, and being met at Chester by Catherine, was disconcerted to realise

how much she knew about the secret intricacies of the political situation.⁴³ In 1880, when the Liberals won the General Election, she campaigned secretly, with the help of their daughter, Mary, to get him reinstated as leader. In 1882 Lewis Harcourt recorded in his diary: 'Lord Richard Grosvenor, Mr and Mrs Gladstone walked about the garden settling the arrangement of the cabinet'.⁴⁴ Sometimes her influence was malign: when the news of the Gordon Massacre arrived in London in 1885, she insisted Gladstone nevertheless took her to the theatre, for the simple reason that they had already booked the tickets, and the result was hate mail. In 1892 when the question of Gladstone's retirement came up yet again, Harcourt grumbled that she was 'always fussing and interrupting' and refused to allow Gladstone to talk to anyone for five minutes.⁴⁵

Her children, writing about her after her death, were uniformly loyal but had by no means been so compliant while she was still there to exasperate them with her unwanted attentions.⁴⁶ In October 1888 even the normally submissive Stephen, now Rector of Hawarden and a happily married man, was emboldened to write to his mother about her incessant interference in his affairs, complaining of 'a spirit of prejudice & distrust on your part of our arrangements, and a want of fairness & of just judgment in anything which we do which, for any reason, goes against your ideas'.⁴⁷ This attitude had left him, he says, with 'a feeling of having been a good deal interfered with and embarrassed'. Catherine never stopped meddling. Seven years later, in 1895, when Stephen and his family were on holiday in Colwyn Bay, Stephen recuperating from illness, he wrote to his brother Henry about the unwelcome possibility of Catherine and Gladstone coming to join them, hoping that if they did, at least they 'might be boarded next door. But I don't think Mama would ever be satisfied with our regime, no matter what it was; and it would continually try her and vex us'.⁴⁸ Never able to let go, she was a difficult mother-in-law, and she had plenty of scope for interfering: the oldest son Willy and his wife lived actually in Hawarden Castle, and then close to it; the same is true for Mary and her husband, the curate Harry Drew; and at the Rectory, Stephen and Annie were within walking distance.

In summary, Catherine can be seen both as the archetypal Victorian matriarch, working behind the scenes to ensure the happiness and success of her husband and family, and indeed many at the time saw them as the perfect family; and as a free spirit, doing what she wanted, when she wanted, defying contemporary stereotypes and later categorisation. With her intimate dealings with prostitutes and other members of the lower classes and her wilful disregard of social convention, she certainly did not 'give the tone to society', nor did she have any desire to do so. In this, she was close to Emily Tennyson, the subject of the second part of this article.

Emily

Just as one can find one's own Catherine, so, to a lesser extent, can one find one's own Emily. This is partly because of the riddle of her health, considered in detail

by Ann Thwaite in her illuminating biography.⁴⁹ Periods of debilitating illness were interspersed with times of demanding physical activity; accounts of her spending all day lying feebly on a sofa, the epitome of the frail Victorian female, seem to conflict with records of her coping with prodigious and varied claims on her time. Whatever her state of health, however, Emily, like the far more physically robust Catherine, and in far better mental condition, outlived her husband.

Emily Sellwood had to wait fourteen years to marry Tennyson, for a variety of reasons mainly concerned with his obvious shortcomings as a prospective husband. Far from, like Gladstone, being tipped for greatness, he was perceived, certainly by Emily's father, as an impecunious, irreligious, indecisive, depressive hypochondriac, an incessant smoker with a drink problem. She, on the other hand, was a good choice for him, being well educated, by her father, accustomed to holding her own in male company and, her mother having died when she was only eight years old, a competent household manager. She was much better organised than Catherine, as her meticulous household account books witness, noting every penny spent on, among other things, an inordinate quantity of stamps and lemons; an inventory of linen, and a comprehensive list of jobs for the servants.⁵⁰ While sharing Catherine's aversion to the idea of women's suffrage, she was much more interested in politics: among her papers are drafts of letters on the Irish Question and many pages of notes on the issue of the disestablishment of the church. She wrote to Gladstone with proposals about taxation⁵¹ and when the Gladstones visited her home in Aldworth in 1871, she took the opportunity to talk to him about schemes for local government and her views on the Empire.⁵² Before her marriage, her life had been very restricted socially and, unlike Catherine, who had been presented at court and whose mother at least thought she was marrying beneath her, Emily found her social position much advanced by marriage, particularly when Tennyson became Poet Laureate. Not only was she on visiting terms with Gladstone, Tennyson's old school friend, and Catherine, but she visited the Brownings in Paris, had Garibaldi to stay and met Prince Albert, who was a neighbour on the Isle of Wight, and, once, Queen Victoria, in May 1863, with whom she 'never felt it so easy to talk to any stranger before'.⁵³

In one respect, Emily exemplifies the stereotype of the Victorian matriarch, in that her main aim in the marriage was to boost the unconfident Tennyson's self esteem and keep him writing. Like Catherine, she was concerned for her husband's ability to look after himself especially when he was away from her in London: 'Own dearest, I cannot bear to think of thy bed all tumbled & forlorn. Pray make them have the sheets washed every day or two'.⁵⁴ Apart from occasionally asking him to buy things, such as 'some tooth brushes for which thou wilt have to pay [three shillings and sixpence]', she shielded her husband from all domestic cares.⁵⁵ It is inconceivable that she could ever have sent to him a letter like this of Catherine's, to Gladstone, from Hagley: 'I have written to Hawarden and given the directions you advised about the housemaid'.⁵⁶ While subscribing to the view that 'God has

created man as head of the woman', Emily believed that 'individual women ... are superior in intellect to many men [so should take care] that they mate wisely with those to whom they are to be helpmates'.⁵⁷ In this view, she was in accord with the more forward thinkers of the time, such as the American, Margaret Fuller, who, discussing satisfactory marriages, urged intellectual communion and companionship where 'the parties meet mind to mind, ... for how sad it would be on such a journey to have a companion to whom you could not communicate thoughts and aspirations as they sprang to life'.⁵⁸ Emily, who, rightly, saw herself as Tennyson's equal in intelligence and mental ability, not only acted as secretary, proof reader and critic, but also effortlessly ran a small farm in Aldworth in Surrey and two households, one there and one in Farringford on the Isle of Wight. Socially more dutiful than Catherine, although preferring the quiet life, she was a gracious and conscientious hostess to the hundreds of visitors and friends who came to see Tennyson, with and without appointments. She took things in her stride, as can be seen in this letter to her sister: 'Such a strange week as we have had. On Monday the Monkton Milneses & Simeons to luncheon. Tuesday Prince Albert to call. Two rings at the door & Colonel Phipps or somebody announced the Prince who had come to see the fort & had heard Ally [Tennyson] lived near'.⁵⁹ June 1866 found her entertaining the Archbishop of Dublin, serving up a dinner of soups, salmon, roast mutton, ducks, peas, tarts, puddings, strawberries and cherries.⁶⁰ She was equally prepared to play host to 'an artisan' who came down, unexpected, from Nottingham. 'We ask him to dinner. He wants to hear some of "Maud." A. reads all. We fear that the poor man must have been hurt that we knew nothing of his poems which he had sent'.⁶¹

Many wives were similarly active in protecting and promoting their husbands' careers and reputations behind the scenes, but Emily was not afraid to adopt a high profile, dealing directly with editors and the press. In 1854 she wrote to the editor, John Foster, about *The Charge of the Light Brigade*,

Will you kindly put this into *The Examiner* for Alfred? It was written yesterday as a recollection of the first report of *The Times* which gave the number of 605. He prefers "six hundred" on account of the metre but if you think it should be altered to 700 which from later accounts seems to have been the number he says you are to alter it.⁶²

Sure of her own judgement, in the same year she wrote to Tennyson about a forthcoming edition of the poems: 'Ally dearest, I see in *The Reader* the title is to be *Idylls of the Hearth*. Surely not. Will not *Enoch Arden and Other Poems* be more in thy usual simple style? I don't like this *Idylls of the Hearth*. Will thou not change it?'⁶³ When she wrote in a similar vein the following day, Tennyson, as he often did, accepted her suggestion.

Like Catherine, though on a much reduced scale, Emily involved herself in charity work, helping individuals such as an ex-seaman, orphaned son of a servant, down on his luck, working for Dr Barnardo's, promoting 'living

clubs' for single women who would otherwise have had to enter a workhouse and planning the Gordon Boys' Home to be set up in memory of General Gordon. Had her health and circumstances allowed, she would have liked to do more, but 'My lot has seemed to be differently cast. God forgive my failures in it'.⁶⁴ As it was, she did what she could by writing letters to influence government policy: the Gladstone Papers lodged in the British Library contain seven pages in her handwriting concerning the unemployed, the poor and the elderly.⁶⁵ She aimed to keep a balance in her own life, expressing concern reminiscent of Lucy Cavendish's that 'Mrs Gladstone wears herself out, I fear, by all her hospital work in addition to the work of a prime minister's wife'.⁶⁶ None of her own charitable concerns was ever allowed to eclipse what she saw as her duties as wife, mother and homemaker. As a result, anyone reading her obituary would have had no idea that she had ever pursued any activity outside the home, for it stated firmly that: 'Her married life ... was one of complete self-effacement and utter devotion to [Tennyson's] work.'

A letter to her husband when he was away in London on business sums up the supportive and affectionate domestic atmosphere, for which she was largely responsible:

Do not forget ... to get Hoxon [?] to send Burns' Illustrated Edition of Nursery Rhymes and Jingles unless indeed he knows of a better. Hallam [the older son, named after Tennyson's great friend who died young] expressed great sorrow at thy departure & poor little baby sighed over it. Thy wife, thou knowest, wishes thee back with all her heart but then with half of it she would have thee stay if there be good or pleasure in staying.⁶⁷

Emily's first son died at birth, and, possibly as a result of this, and because she became a mother comparatively late in life, Hallam and Lionel, the younger brother, were somewhat over-indulged. They were only reluctantly sent away, when Hallam was already twelve and Lionel ten, to a prep school which was far less austere than either of those chosen by the Gladstones for their boys. The journal is full of descriptions of time spent with the children, teaching them, playing in the garden or enjoying the downs above Farringford. As they grew older, they were introduced to a wide circle of Tennyson's acquaintances and taken travelling in Europe. When they were at public school, Hallam at Eton and Lionel at Marlborough, Emily, like Catherine, wrote regularly with news and advice, among other topics discussing with the former her Christian beliefs and urging the latter not to read novels.⁶⁸ When Hallam nearly died of pneumonia at school in the depths of winter 1867, she rushed to his bedside in appalling weather conditions and remained there till the danger was over. When Lionel was accused of a sexual misdemeanour in 1872, both parents believed in his innocence but it was Emily rather than Tennyson who wrote all the necessary letters.⁶⁹ Lionel always needed more support than Hallam, his stammer and a propensity for getting into trouble both being causes for concern, but Emily was there for her sons in good times as well as bad:

when Hallam was at Cambridge Emily became keenly interested in his *Undergraduates' Journal*, offering ideas and her experience as a proof reader.⁷⁰ The search for a career was not easy for either boy, and it is to Emily's credit that she supported Lionel in his original desire to become an actor as much as she did in his eventual appointment to the India Office.

Unlike Catherine, Emily never suffered from divided loyalties. Catherine, in 1857, spent weeks away with her dying sister Mary and again in 1875 gave up everything to nurse her niece May for nine weeks.⁷¹ Emily never felt the need to neglect her husband and sons for her own family. Not that she didn't worry about them, with both sisters Anne and Louisa having difficult marriages, the former finishing her life in a mental asylum and the latter's daughter, Agnes, developing anorexia. Her father's life was less spectacularly unhappy, but when he grew older he had to endure first a change from living with Louisa to living with Anne, originally near Emily, but then much further away, in Bath, and he gradually became blind. Emily supported them all with love, letters and invitations to stay at Farringford, which was also the permanent home of Tennyson's difficult sister Tilly. What her obituarist described as 'her strength of character, her wide sympathy' implies that, again unlike Catherine, Emily was liked and admired by both men and women.⁷² Coventry Patmore, who originated the idea of 'The Angel of the House', praised her for being 'in all respects worthy of her husband',⁷³ but she was much more than this. The photographer Julia Margaret Cameron, a neighbour and friend, commented that she was 'as great as he [Tennyson] was'. And Edward Lear, a close friend, was deeply enamoured:

I should think ... that 15 angels, several hundreds of ordinary women, many philosophers, a heap of truly wise and kind mothers, 3 or 4 minor prophets, and a lot of doctors and schoolmistresses, might all be boiled down, and yet their condensed essence fall short of what ET is.⁷⁴

The American author, Annie Fields, though less effusive, was as impressed, describing her as 'intellectually and morally strong' and commenting that 'you feel her sincerity in every movement and expression'.⁷⁵

Many of their friends thought Tennyson did not deserve her, Lear for example, writing in his diary about all the work she did for her husband: 'What labour for him & how little he seems to regard it'.⁷⁶ Their architect friend, James Knowles, apparently said that Tennyson often announced, 'My wife is the most wonderful woman in the world'.⁷⁷ The poet described her in his dedication of *Enoch Arden* as 'Dear, near and true' but as the writer Julia Wedgwood rather waspishly pointed out to Browning, 'there is a little too much about himself in it & not enough about his wife,' and it is undeniably true that out of a total of thirteen lines, only four and a half are actually about Emily.⁷⁸ Her sons were certainly aware of their debt to her. When they were young, they responded to their mother by being 'wonderfully tender and thoughtful, so different from what one often hears of boys'.⁷⁹ As they grew up, they remained concerned for her, writing to urge her to

take care of herself.⁸⁰ Hallam actually interrupted his studies at Cambridge in 1875 to look after her and take over some of her duties and she relied on him more and more as she grew older. Hallam had, as a young man, seemed destined for the law, but in the event worked as secretary for his father, relieving his mother of much of her burden, and there is no indication that Emily put him under any pressure to assume the role. As Lionel had done, he remained on good terms with his mother, which did not always result in good relations between her and their wives. Lionel married young, Hallam late, and neither of their spouses found it easy to deal with Emily's sons' devotion to her reluctance to relinquish her maternal care, which after Lionel's early death she also lavished on her grandchildren.⁸¹ She seems to have been as difficult a mother-in-law as was Catherine, if less aggressively so.

To illustrate Emily's unconventional side, we need to examine the behaviour of Hallam. After Tennyson died, he wrote a two-volume *Memoir* of his father, in which filial task he was deeply indebted to his mother, now in her eighties.⁸² He asked her to rewrite her journal in a form he deemed more suitable for public quotation, and this is the only version we have, relatively legibly written, by Emily's standards, on one side of the paper only, with many sections cut out so that he could paste them straight into the big scrap book which formed his basic manuscript.⁸³ This task accomplished, he burned the original journal, together with most of the letters written during the courtship. His main aim was to present his father, and therefore by association, his mother, in the best possible light. She had to be seen as socially above reproach, and this involved him in a major act of deception. In August 1871, displaying considerable social bravado, Emily visited Henry Lewes and George Eliot, who were living together without benefit of matrimony, and therefore beyond the pale of polite female society, near Aldworth. We know she made this visit because, as well as a comment by a friend and neighbour, James Henry Mangles,⁸⁴ she herself referred to it, briefly, in a letter to Hallam, written a few days later: 'I called there & stayed some time & then left him [Tennyson] & he read some of *Maud*'.⁸⁵ The scandalous unconventionality of her behaviour is clearly demonstrated by the later actions of Hallam. In the *Memoir*, supposedly quoting his mother's journal, for, according to his dating, 22 July, he wrote: '... so A. [Tennyson] and Hallam called on Mr and Mrs Lewes. [sic] She is delightful in a *tête-à-tête*, and speaks in a soft soprano voice, which almost sounds like a fine falsetto, with her strong masculine face'.⁸⁶ This clumsily written account, while surely quoting Emily's words, suggests that he and his father paid the visit without her. The rewritten journal has the relevant entry cut out, according to Hallam's usual practice, except for the final sentence, which is at the top of a new sheet, but the scrapbook does not contain the page. Presumably, even the rewritten entry so offended Hallam's social sensitivities that he edited it, even substituting his own name for his mother's, and then destroyed the evidence. In his cull, he overlooked her letter to him, quoted above, and since the reference to the visit is scribbled sideways in the margin, it must be assumed that he missed it on his re-reading.

Conclusion

So, in conclusion, it seems fair to state that Emily, although superficially conforming more closely than Catherine to the ideal of the Victorian matriarch, was at heart equally free spirited. While both women were, in their different ways, loyal and supportive spouses and mothers, neither cared much about 'setting the tone for society'. If Catherine's exalted position gave her the freedom to be unconventional, Emily's life of relative retirement conferred on her the same advantages. While Emily was less in the public eye than Catherine, and so less subject to public criticism, her visit to Eliot and Lewes, a visit which her own son was desperate to suppress, was as great a challenge to the stereotype of the Victorian matriarch as was Catherine's wayward eccentricity and championing of 'fallen women'.

Notes

1. I should like to thank the audience at the annual Gladstone conference, then called The Gladstone Umbrella, at St Deiniol's Library, Hawarden, where this paper had its origins, for their feedback in its preparation for publication.
2. Quoted in E. A. Pratt, *Catherine Gladstone* (London, Samson Low, Marston & Co. Ltd., 1898), 28-9.
3. Quoted in K. D. Reynolds, *Aristocratic Women and Political Society in Victorian Britain* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1998), 5.
4. Narrative for her Sons, bound into the *Journal*, in the Tennyson Research Centre, Lincoln, afterwards TRC.
5. E. J. Tilt, *Elements of Health and Principles of Female Hygiene* (1852), quoted in Pat Jalland and John Hooper, *Women From Birth to Death: The Female Life Cycle in Britain 1830-1914* (Brighton, Harvester Press, 1980), 124.
6. Simon Morgan, *A Victorian Woman's Place Public Culture in the Nineteenth Century*. (London and New York, Tauris Academic Studies, 2007), 1; Joan Perkin, *Women and Marriage in Nineteenth-Century England* (London, Routledge, 1989), 55 and 76 and Reynolds, *Aristocratic Women*, 221, question the validity of the epithet coined by Coventry Patmore as the title of a narrative poem first published 1854.
7. By Professor Deryck Schreuder in a paper on *Gladstone's Globalism* at the Bicentenary International Conference in Chester, July 2009.
8. Lucille Ironmonger, *And His Charming Lady* (London, Secker and Warburg, 1961), Chapter VI, 'The Wife who was Lonely'; Anne Isba, *Gladstone and Women* (London, Hambledon Continuum, 2006), 48; Joyce Marlow, *Mr and Mrs Gladstone. An Intimate Biography* (London, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1977), 143; Georgina Battiscombe, *Mrs Gladstone. The Portrait of a Marriage* (London, Constable, 1956) 118, 141.
9. Undated in the Glynne-Gladstone archive in the Flintshire Record Office, Hawarden (afterwards G-G) MS 609.
10. Quoted in 'Death Notice for Catherine', *The Times*, 11, 36, (15 June, 1900), 1969.

11. Catherine Gladstone's *Diary*, undated entries 1840, G-G MS 1773.
12. Death Notice for Catherine.
13. Letter to Harry (Henry) dated December 1869, G-G MS 854.
14. Esther Simon Shkolnik, *Leading Ladies. A Study Of Eight Late Victorian and Edwardian Political Wives* (New York, Garland Pub. Inc., 1987), 78-9.
15. Battiscombe, *Mrs Gladstone*, 99.
16. Letter to Gladstone dated 24 Aug. 1887, G-G MS 623.
17. Battiscombe, *Mrs Gladstone*, 204.
18. Ishbel Maria Gordon, *Musings of a Scottish Granny* (London, Heath Cramton, 1936), 107.
19. See Death Notice for Catherine.
20. *ibid.*
21. The *Daily Telegraph*, 15 June 1900.
22. John Bailey, ed, *The Diary of Lady Frederick Cavendish* (London, John Murray, Vol. I, 1972), 18 March 1864, 205
23. Shkolnik, *Leading Ladies*, 85-6
24. See F. K. Prochaska, *Women and Philanthropy in 19th Century England* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1980.)
25. Quoted by Battiscombe, *Mrs Gladstone*, 134.
26. *Ibid.*, 132.
27. Isba, *Gladstone and Women*, 116, and Marlow, *Mr and Mrs Gladstone*, 69.
28. Letter to the editor of the *Sunday Times*, quoted Pratt, *Catherine Gladstone*, 188.
29. Pratt, *Catherine Gladstone*, 185-7
30. See letter from Stephen to Henry dated 5 March 1896, G-G MS 896.
31. Penelope Gladstone, *Portrait of a family: The Gladstones 1839-1889* (Distributed by Thomas Myser, 1989), 64-5; M. R. D. Foot and H. C. G. Matthew (eds.), *The Gladstone Diaries: with Prime Ministerial Correspondence* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1968-94.) Entries for 6 December 1884 and 27 July 1865. Afterwards GD.
32. Perkin, *Women and Marriage*, 97.
33. G-G MS 854.
34. E. A. Pratt, *Catherine Gladstone*.
35. GD 6 January 1862 and 15 December 1893.
36. Quoted by Battiscombe, *Mrs Gladstone*, 37.
37. *Ibid.*, 141.
38. Death Notice for Catherine.
39. Margot Tennant – Arthur Balfour, Balfour Papers, B. Lib B. M. 49794, ff 41-42, quoted by Shkolnik, *Leading Ladies*, 44.
40. Frances Horner, *Times Remembered* (London, William Heineman Ltd, 1933), 72, quoted Shkolnik, *Leading Ladies* 141.
41. Margaret Jane Gifford, *Papers from the Diary of an Oxford Lady 1843-1862*, quoted Penelope Gladstone, *Portrait of a family*, 25.
42. Quoted by Shkolnik, *Leading Ladies*, 114.
43. On 1 December 1868, see Battiscombe, *Mrs Gladstone*, 140.
44. Lewis Harcourt Diary, Vol. 352, 6 December 1882, quoted by Shkolnik, *Leading Ladies*, 143.
45. *Ibid.*, 177.
46. See Mary Drew, *Catherine Gladstone*, (London, Nisbet & Co. Ltd. 1919) and Viscount Gladstone, *After Thirty Years* (London, Macmillan, 1928).
47. Letter 9 October 1888, G-G MS 768.
48. Letter to Henry 15 October 1895, G-G MS 896.
49. Ann Thwaite, *Emily Tennyson: The Poet's Wife* (London, Faber and Faber, 1996), 284-7, 340, 418, 504-5.
50. Preserved in the Tennyson Research Centre, Lincoln, afterwards, TRC.
51. Letter dated 14 Feb 1869, TRC.
52. Thwaite, *Emily Tennyson*, 480.
53. As she told Benjamin Jowett, quoted *Ibid.*, 382.
54. Letter dated 20 July 1870, TRC.
55. Letter to Tennyson, 22 June 1859, TRC.
56. Letter from Hagley, dated 17 January 1842, G-G MS 610.
57. Letter to her niece Agnes Weld, 7 March 1896, TRC.
58. Margaret Fuller, *Woman in the Nineteenth Century* (New York and London, W. W. Norton and Company, 1998, first published 1845), 42.
59. Letter to Anne Weld, 15 May 1850, TRC.
60. Thwaite, *Emily Tennyson*, 418.
61. Journal entry for October 1855, TRC.
62. 6 December 1854, TRC.
63. Letter dated 25 June 1864, TRC.
64. Letter to her niece, Agnes, quoted by Thwaite, *Emily Tennyson*, 589.
65. Thwaite, *Emily Tennyson*, 379.
66. Journal entry for 23 July 1871, TRC.
67. Letter to Tennyson dated 25 September 1855, TRC.
68. Letter dated 21 Feb 1871, TRC; letter to Lionel, dated 26 September 1868, TRC.
69. Thwaite, *Emily Tennyson*, 487-8.
70. *Ibid.*, 497.
71. Mary Drew, *Catherine Gladstone*, 212.
72. *The Times*, 11 August 1896, 11.
73. In a letter to his wife dated 15 August 1850, quoted by Thwaite, *Emily Tennyson*, 208.
74. Thwaite, *Emily Tennyson*, 1-2.
75. Annie Fields, *Authors and Friends*, 1897, based on her diary, quoted *Ibid.*, 343.
76. Entry for June 1859, quoted *Ibid.*, 342.
77. In the *Nineteenth Century* xxxiii, January 1893, quoted *Ibid.*, 465.
78. Quoted by *Ibid.*, 372.
79. Entry dated 13 December, 1866, TRC.
80. Thwaite, *Emily Tennyson*, 503-4.
81. *Ibid.*, 576 and 570.
82. Hallam Tennyson, *Alfred Lord Tennyson, a Memoir* 2 vols (London, Macmillan, 1897.)
83. Both the cannibalised *Journal* and the scrapbook are in the TRC.
84. Earl A. Kneis, *Tennyson at Aldworth, the Diary of James Henry Mangles* (Athens, Ohio, London, Ohio University Press, 1984), 104.
85. Letter dated 29 August 1871, TRC.
86. Hallam Tennyson, *Alfred Lord Tennyson: A Memoir*, 2, 107-8.

From sinner to parent: The regulation of non-marital sex in Denmark during the eighteenth century

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In most of northern Europe, the regulation of marriage and sexuality was made a concern of the king and secular law by the Lutheran Reformation in the sixteenth century. Even though marriage was a sacrament in the Catholic Church, the regulation of marriage had largely focused on kinship and the interests of the family throughout the Middle Ages. Marriage was unbreakable because it was a sacrament, but the question of inheritance, or knowing the father of the child, was as important an issue as the religious aspect. According to medieval legislation, the deceived husband had a number of possibilities for revenge and for restoring his honour. The most famous of these laws allowed the deceived husband to kill the man he found in bed with his wife and to drive his unfaithful wife away from his house and bed.¹

In Denmark, when the Reformation separated the church from the regulation of marriage and sexuality, the result was not a separation of regulation from the Christian rules for marriage. On the contrary, the Christian ideal of virginity at the time of marriage and monogamy through marriage became obvious in the regulation of both male and female sexuality in the following centuries.² For example, in 1683 the Danish king issued a law called the *Danish Law of Christian the Fifth*, a codification of all existing legislation into one common law.³ The sixth and final book of the *Danish Law* concerned *misdeeds* and was structured according to the Ten Commandments so as to emphasize the king's obligation to ensure that his subjects respected the Decalogue. Both the character of the misdeeds being punished and the punishments themselves were inspired by the Bible, while inspiration from natural law was almost non-existent in the *Danish Law*.⁴ The Sixth Commandment – Thou Shall Not Commit Adultery – caused a number of bans on all sexual relations outside marriage.

The aim of this paper is to describe and analyse the regulation of non-marital sex in eighteenth-century Denmark and, by this means, to address the question of how gender and sexuality were constructed. Starting with the regulation of non-marital sex in the *Danish Law* in 1683, it focuses on the extent to which men and women were treated equally by the law, as well as on the role of honour and responsibility in the construction of gender. It highlights that in the religious context, marriage was regarded not only as the only legitimate place for sex, but also as the institution fit to expiate sexual sin. Tracing relevant laws in force in eighteenth-century Denmark, it shows how this religious legitimization of sexual regulation was replaced by a secularly based social consideration for the illegitimate child and a certain degree of concern for the unmarried mother. As a result of this development, pre-marital sex was decriminalized and both men and women began to be regarded more as parents than as sinners. Providing for the illegitimate child, rather than

marrying the mother, thus became the responsibility of the father and a sign of his masculinity. The mother, for her part, became both the natural parent and the dangerous seductress. Based on legal material, the analysis will primarily focus on the normative level, but when possible it will also take into account legal and cultural practice.

Pre-marital relationships in the *Danish Law*

According to the *Danish Law*, all non-marital sexual relations were punishable sins. Just as, later on, homosexuality became the anomaly that gave heterosexual relations their normal character, during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, sex outside marriage was seen as opposed to heterosexuality within marriage. Judith Butler argues that homosexuality is necessary for heterosexuality to appear normal and natural.⁵ But homosexuality did not function as the main deviation from normal sexuality in the early modern age. Instead, sex outside marriage was the necessary deviation, one that ensured attention to the sexual norm: sex inside marriage.

Extramarital heterosexual relations constituted the kind of sexual relations that most directly threatened the holy institution of marriage and were thus seen as the most dangerous kind of sexual act.⁶ This is obvious in the *Danish Law*, which severely punished both premarital relations and adultery. After the first and second instance of fornication, both men and women were fined and made to confess publicly in church. A woman only paid half the fine of a man, but otherwise the law treated the two genders equally in these cases.⁷ The equal punishment ended after the third pre-marital relationship. A woman would then be whipped in public by an executioner: a punishment that violated both her body and her honour.⁸ This violation connected female honour with sexual behaviour and made it almost impossible for the woman in question to work and provide for herself and her children afterwards. The repetition of an unacceptable sexual act thus made the woman a social outcast, but it was the punishment, not necessarily the act itself, that corrupted her.

The punishment of a man who had been involved in three pre-marital relationships depended on the kind of women with whom he had offended. The crime was subject to capital punishment if the woman in question was unmarried and of unblemished reputation, but he was only sentenced with fines and public confession if the woman involved was of 'ill repute'.⁹ This underlines the connection between female honour and sexuality, but the risk of the death penalty also shows that even though a man and a woman were both regarded as sinners and guilty of pre-marital relations, it was, in the end, a male responsibility. Only when a woman was considered promiscuous was she assigned responsibility for the sexual relationship.

While the female responsibility depended on the number of pre-marital relationships, the male responsibility also depended on the honour of the woman.

Marriage as expiation

The purpose of criminal law was to ensure respect towards the word of God and especially the Ten Commandments.¹⁰ Respecting the Sixth Commandment, 'thou shall not commit adultery', allowed the expression of sexuality inside marriage. The Protestant churches regarded sexual activity within the bonds of marriage as natural, a sign of God's blessing. Marital sex was not a sin, but a sign of marital love.¹¹ Furthermore, the household, based on the married couple, was regarded by Luther as the foundation of society, which determined its importance as an institution. Power relations in the household reflected power relations in the state and stability in the household was a precondition for stability in society.¹²

Legislation was used to encourage people to marry before having sex by forbidding sexual intercourse even during the often long period of engagement.¹³ But customarily, sexual relations were accepted before marriage as long as the couple married when the woman became pregnant. This tradition was linked to the acceptance of clandestine marriage in the Catholic Church, but became a problem for the Protestant monarch when he swore to uphold the Ten Commandments.¹⁴ The solution in the *Danish Law* was to make marriage the essential means of expiating the sin of fornication. This meant that there were no prohibitions against marriage except in cases where people were too closely related.¹⁵ And if a couple married after a pre-marital relationship, their fines were reduced considerably and they avoided confession.¹⁶

The status of the pre-marital relationship as a male responsibility also became evident in a man's obligation to marry a woman of unblemished reputation if he got her pregnant, whether or not he had proposed.¹⁷ Again, the obligation of the man was dependent on the reputation of the woman. If she was promiscuous, he was not bound by his deeds. The male obligation to marry the woman was dictated by law, whereas the fact that a woman lost her right to refuse a proposal if she had had a pre-marital sexual relationship was only implied.¹⁸ Significantly, the man had to take the initiative to marry the woman, whereas female interest in the marriage was considered obvious, since marriage was the only way she could restore her honour.

According to the masculine ideal evident in the *Danish Law*, the man was expected to take the initiative not only in marriage, but also in pre-marital relations that were often seen as the first step towards marriage. The right to take the initiative also made the man the responsible party. The hierarchy among men and masculinities was not determined by men's sexual activities, but by their position in and acceptance of the social structures. The main factor was the hierarchy between generations of men and between the suitor and the prospective bride's father. The suitor had the right to take initiative, but the father had the power to decide whether the marriage was

going to take place. Only in one situation was a hierarchy implied between men dependent on sexual honour. If a man had a pre-marital relationship with a woman of higher social rank, he would lose his honour and be regarded as a 'lesser man'.¹⁹ This implies that it was the male's responsibility to ensure social stability. It was a duty that the man brought with him into marriage, where it was the responsibility of the husband to ensure stability in the household and thereby in society. The hierarchy between men therefore depended not only on their social and civil status, but also on how they handled this responsibility towards social stability and on their respect for the social hierarchy.

The passive and thus honourable and reliable woman was directly opposed to the active and responsible man. But the picture was made more complicated by a hierarchy amongst women as well. The fact that the woman forfeited her right to turn down a marriage if she had freely engaged in a pre-marital relationship indicates that part of the initiative and responsibility was placed on the woman. This responsibility increased according to the number of pre-marital relationships she had been involved in, making up a hierarchy between women dependent on sexual honour and the responsibility that follows the loss of sexual honour. The woman of unblemished reputation was passive, reliable and held no responsibility for establishing connections that could lead to marriage or sexual relationships. Consequently, she had the right to marry the man. The woman of doubtful reputation was regarded as the active party and as unreliable and responsible. She therefore had no right to marry the man. These two female gender constructions are not to be seen as oppositions, but rather as extremes in a hierarchy with many levels. The individual position of a woman in this hierarchy was made up by several other factors, such as her reputation and her status in local networks. Likewise, the hierarchy of femininities was not opposed to the hierarchy of masculinities, but created through interaction with it. For example, a promiscuous woman could assume masculine characteristics.

Adultery

When unmarried people engaged in sexual activities, it was seen as a threat to social order, which was based on the holy marriage. Sexual relations between unmarried people created a group of persons who did not fit into the available acceptable social categories, especially unmarried, disgraced mothers and illegitimate children. But, the problems arising from pre-marital relationships could be solved by marriage. Marriage, however, was clearly not possible if one or both parties in a non-marital relationship were married to someone else.

It was a more direct violation of the Sixth Commandment when a person committed adultery. In the case of adultery, the law made no distinction as to gender. It was only a question of whether one or both of the persons involved were married to someone else. When a married man or woman had a relationship with an unmarried person, the married man or woman was punished financially. The second time, the married party

was exiled as well, and the third time the married party was punished with death. If both parties were married to someone else, it was possible to sentence both of them to death after only one warning.²⁰ The punishment for repeated non-marital sex can be seen as fulfilling the obligation of the people of God, as it is written in the Bible that sinners should be expelled from their congregation. The exclusion could be in the form of the death penalty, but it could also be carried out through a disgraceful lashing or exile.

Rape

The use of marriage to expiate the sin of a pre-marital relationship became most conspicuous in the case of rape. If a man committed rape, or tried to commit rape, he could be sentenced to death – a punishment that left no doubt about the seriousness of the crime. But the law took the possibility of reprieve into account with a provision stating that, in case of pardon, the rapist was obliged to marry the victim. The obligation can be seen as a parallel to the requirement that a man must marry a woman with whom he had a pre-marital relationship, but a woman could refuse to marry the man who had raped her. If the woman rejected marriage, the rapist was liable to pay her compensation.²¹

Given the possibility of pardon and the requirement to marry the victim in the case of rape, marriage became an alternative way, not to punish the man, but to expiate the sin. But the marriage between rapist and victim or, alternatively the financial compensation of the victim, also indicates that female honour was injured by rape, which could make it difficult for the woman to get married at all. As always in questions of pre-marital sex and marriage, the man was only bound by his act if the woman in question was of unblemished reputation. A promiscuous woman could not even demand marriage from her rapist.²² He would still be charged with rape and possibly sentenced to death, but could not be forced to marry his victim.²³

Sexuality and gender

In the *Danish Law*, both male and female sexuality were bound up with marriage. Sexual relations outside marriage were forbidden and considered sexually deviant behaviour, which made sex within marriage the norm. But pre-marital sex could be normalized by marriage. Marriage was the institution that made a sexual relationship between man and woman heteronormative. Heteronormative does not refer to heterosexuality, but to the kind of heterosexual relations regarded as normative – as natural and privileged.²⁴ The construction of sexuality as belonging to married life mostly affected the construction of the female gender, because female honour was connected with a woman's sexual reputation. Even though men's and women's sexual relations outside marriage were punished equally, male extramarital sex most often did not affect male honour negatively, while the female ideal depended on her sexual purity. A woman's unblemished reputation gave her credibility and thereby rights.

Passivity was the key female character trait that

removed her responsibility for pre-marital sex. To take initiative and to be the active force were masculine characteristics, characteristics that linked a man with the responsibility for maintaining social order. While the honourable woman could be seen as possessing the opposite qualities of the active and responsible man, the promiscuous woman was associated with some masculine characteristics. She was described as sexually responsible in the eyes of the law, suggesting her active role and, as a result, her inability to claim the right to marry. These masculine characteristics made it possible to regard her as a seductress. It is not evident in the *Danish Law* what the consequences of a relationship with a woman with a masculine character were for male masculinity.

The female seductress

At the beginning of the eighteenth century, changes in marital law revealed a shift in the perception of female character: woman was viewed as more promiscuous and seductive. While the ideal remained the passive and honourable woman who controlled her sexuality, the expected female role became that of the seductress, who was active, responsible and dangerous. She was especially a threat to the male masculine identity, which included being responsible for and taking an active role in establishing marriage and sexual relations in general.

The seductive unmarried woman became the inspiration for legislation. A law issued in 1734 stated that a woman should have two witnesses to validate a promise of marriage.²⁵ Prior to this law, the sexual act in itself had been a promise of marriage, due to the obligation of the man to marry an honourable woman if she became pregnant as a result of pre-marital sexual relations. After the law of 1734, the word of even an honourable woman was no longer automatically trusted; she had to be able to prove the promise.

Cases from legal practice tell us that the female right to demand marriage was used before 1734. Women actually did take legal action against the father of their illegitimate children in order to get married. They referred to his promise of marriage, to their loss of honour and to their previously good reputation. Both the legal system and the king often supported their cases.²⁶ For example, in 1724, Abeline Madsdatter got pregnant and took legal action against the father of her child, Søren Mortensen. He tried to escape from his responsibility by becoming a soldier. In general, soldiers were pardoned from punishment for the first instance of pre-marital sex, but in this case becoming a soldier was not enough. Abeline Madsdatter obtained judgement on his obligation to marry her and the king ordered his military superiors to keep Mortensen under arrest until he had married her.²⁷

In spite of the wording of the law, sexual relations before marriage were an accepted part of traditional culture as long as the relationships led to marriage if the woman became pregnant. Apparently, it was possible for women to play an active role in establishing pre-marital sexual relationships as a way to find a husband, because the legal system bound him to the consequence of a sexual relationship by means of the right to demand marriage.

But this active utilisation of the male obligation became a problem, opening up the possibility that all women were potentially promiscuous – the background for the law of 1734. The purpose of the law was to prevent women from using their sexuality to get married and to make sure that men were not tempted into sexual relationships, binding them to a marriage that they might not want after all and possibly to a woman of lower social status.²⁸

From 1734, law described women as seductresses and men as seducees. The problem for men was that their sexuality was a natural instinct that could not always be controlled by will or reason, which made them vulnerable to female seduction. Female sexuality, on the other hand, could and should be controlled. The possibility of controlling female sexuality made sex a weapon for women, who consequently became responsible for their sexual behaviour. In this way, female sexuality was both controllable and dangerous to the stability of society. In contrast, male sexuality became the male weak point: if tempted, he could not resist and his sexuality would lead him to his ruin.

This left men with no responsibility for engaging in sexual relations outside marriage. While female sexuality was still linked with marriage, male sexuality, as an instinct, became as natural and understandable outside marriage as within. This meant that maintaining social order and the stability of society – i.e., keeping the number of unmarried parents and illegitimate children at a minimum – which had been a male obligation in the seventeenth century, now became a female obligation. The development is obvious in the fact that the law of 1734 made maids responsible for sexual relations between themselves and their masters or the masters' sons. When the man in question was the woman's master, the law removed all rights that she would otherwise have had in cases of pre-marital sex. Instead, it punished both her sexual relationship and her unfaithfulness toward the household.²⁹

The consequence of this new construction of sexuality and femininity was a new hierarchy dependent on whether women controlled their sexuality, rather than a measure of their sexual reputations. At the top of the hierarchy was the passive and honourable woman in control of her sexuality. At the bottom was the seductress who actively used her sexuality and who was thereby responsible and dangerous. She became a challenge to masculinity because she took the initiative and in this way possessed the possibility of taking the initiative in marriage.

The seductress was described by a young man in a letter requesting pardon from the king. At the time of writing the letter, he was a miller boy, but had been in the service of the widow of a distiller. Her twenty-seven year-old daughter (a few years younger than the average age of marriage) lived in the house as well. The miller boy informed the king that the girl had asked him to have an affair with her several times – an offer he had resisted. But one day she had succeeded in drugging him with a drink, and while he was out of his senses, he had, according to the girl, made her pregnant. Not believing that he was the father, he argued that it had to be someone else's child. In this way he stressed both that he had been too drunk

to commit the sin of premarital sex and, more importantly, the promiscuous character of the girl. As a result, he made her word unreliable and was himself heard, believed and pardoned from punishment and from paying child support.³⁰

The male breadwinner

The naturalisation of male sexuality disconnected it from marriage and made it both possible and normal for men to have sexual relations before marriage. It was an early sign of the loosening of ties between the law of God and secular law. The eighteenth century was a period of secularisation in the Protestant Scandinavian countries, which meant that the king was no longer obliged to ensure that his people lived according to the Decalogue. Secularisation in this sense became obvious in various areas of politics and legislation.³¹ It involved a process of decriminalising extra-marital sex, beginning with the exclusion of the church from the system of justice. In 1767, the demand for confession in church after a non-marital relationship was replaced by eight days imprisonment on bread and water.³² This change in punishment also symbolised a shift from the public to the private arena.

Both secular and religious authorities found these legal changes appropriate and fair. They believed that confession had become a shameful act that only poor, unmarried women were forced to perform. The fear of confession was seen as one of the main reasons why some unmarried mothers killed their newborn babies to hide their pregnancy.³³ Concealment of birth was a serious problem during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Approximately half of those convicted of murder were unmarried mothers who had killed their children shortly after birth.

The abolition of confession has to be seen in connection with another law from 1763, stating that fathers of illegitimate children were obliged to contribute to the support of their children. Previously, no law had required this practice. According to the law, the father had to pay half the cost of supporting his child until the child turned ten years old.³⁴ The important point here is that neither father nor mother was seen primarily as the sinner any longer, but that both were viewed as parents. The separation of church and state law had made room for social considerations about the life of the illegitimate child. Natural law emphasised the obligation of the parents towards the child as a result of the birth itself, rather than of the marriage. Other laws of this period forbade differential treatment of children according to the marital status of their parents at the time of birth and members of the administration discussed how illegitimate children could be made useful citizens instead of a burden to society.³⁵ It was nevertheless not until 1937 that illegitimate children became entitled to inherit. What is important to note here is the fact that they became visible at all and became subjects in their own right.

This shift from looking for sinners to looking for parents also made room for another shift in gender models, in which parenthood became more important than sexuality, even when the parents were not married.

The responsibility to support a child became a central element of positive masculinity. Just as sexual purity or promiscuity had formed a hierarchy among women, so the fulfilment of the demand for support became essential to masculinity. Negative masculinity was associated with the man who did not take responsibility for his own children. The main responsibility for the sexual relationship was again placed on the man through the obligation to support his illegitimate children. He was recommitted to the consequences of sexual relations outside marriage, but not committed to marriage. The responsibility for maintaining social order had shifted back to the man – but now child support was enough. This meant that even a married man who committed adultery could legitimise his deeds by supporting his illegitimate children.³⁶ Supporting children made male sexuality not only legitimate, but also normal and privileged. It was no longer necessary for a man to get married to make his sexuality heteronormative.

The renewing of male responsibility made women victims of seduction again. But even though pre-marital sex had made women promiscuous, their superior parental abilities remained unquestioned. A woman was considered a far more competent parent than a man. A mother's support and love for her child, illegitimate or not, was considered as natural an instinct as sexuality was for men – an instinct that could not always be controlled by reason, but made the mother willing to sacrifice everything in order to provide for her child. Women's love for their children made them better suited than men to care for them. The law stated that the mother should be responsible for raising her child, while the father just had to pay his share of child support.³⁷ This was not only because of the natural love of the mother, but also because the unmarried man was unable to love his illegitimate child. Whereas motherhood in itself made the woman capable of loving her child, only marriage made the man capable of loving his child.³⁸

The inability of the unmarried man to care for his illegitimate child may be illustrated by the case of an unmarried mother who went to the local authorities to make the father of her illegitimate child provide for the child. She turned down the father's offer to provide for the child in his own household with these words: 'My maternal love does not allow me to leave my child to be abused by him and his wife, who hate both me and the child, so that the child ends its days there because of their cruel treatment.'³⁹ The father was not a bachelor without a household, but had married another woman shortly after the illegitimate child was born. However, the local authority fully supported the mother and agreed with her argument and thereby her construction of the unloving relationship between a father and his illegitimate child. This construction is also supported by the legal confirmation of the mother's right to bring up the child.

The extent to which men fulfilled their duty to support their illegitimate children created a hierarchy of masculinities. The man representing positive masculinity at the top of the hierarchy was characterised by taking on the responsibility to marry and by showing responsibility in relation to his illegitimate child. Once again, being active

and responsible were masculine character traits, only the focus shifted from the sexual act – the sin – to the child and the way in which parenthood was handled. The man representing negative masculinity at the bottom of the hierarchy was characterised by an unwillingness to fulfil the duty of providing financially for his child (often actively demonstrated – the man is always pictured as if he made a deliberate choice) and a refusal of responsibility. The necessity to reauthorize the law regarding the obligation of the father to provide for his children, and even to use imprisonment as a reprisal for not paying child support, shows that this construction of positive masculinity on the normative level did not necessarily correspond very well with popular culture and the common view of masculine behaviour amongst unmarried young men.

On the other hand, the question of supporting and loving one's children did not create a hierarchy among women. As an instinct, motherhood was common to all women, which was a new perspective. Earlier in the century, unmarried mothers had been described as capable of killing their own children, which was a violation of the Fifth Commandment, because they had already violated the Sixth Commandment; the idea was that if they had already violated one of the Ten Commandments, it was likely that they would violate another. But even though women were described positively as mothers, this did not lend respect or credibility to the female role in non-marital sexual activities.

Decriminalisation

The process of decriminalisation, of making sinners into parents, culminated in 1812, when the punishment for the first and second incident of pre-marital sex was abolished.⁴⁰ Many reasons can be given for this step. One is that it was often the duty of the local landowner to initiate legal proceedings against sexual crimes.⁴¹ This practice made it possible for them to abuse the power they were given, but more commonly, they did not press charges and thus did not use their power at all.⁴² The lack of uniformity in the administration of justice became a problem in the emerging constitutional state. But the official and probably more important reason for the process of decriminalisation was the fact that punishment made the parents unable to support their own children. When the fines were abolished in 1812, the law explicitly stated, '[t]hat the king (taking into special consideration that it is the duty of the parents of illegitimate children to contribute to providing for these children) has decided to abolish the fine for sexual intercourse between unmarried persons'.⁴³ Whereas the violation of the Sixth Commandment previously had been a problem for morality, now the problem was that government fines made it impossible for parents to support their children, which was a violation of natural law.

Decriminalising sexual relations outside marriage also involved making them private. Not considered first and foremost sinful and criminal, sexual relations became part of people's private lives. The privatisation of sin is obvious in the development of punishment during the eighteenth century. The first step in the direction of

privatisation was to abolish the public whipping of women after their third pre-marital relationship and replace it with six or eight years of prison.⁴⁴ The next step was to abolish public confession in church and replace it with eight days in prison on bread and water.⁴⁵ Punishment for pre-marital sex shifted from the public to the private sphere even before the total decriminalisation of the act.

In the case of adultery, protecting the family and securing support for the wife and legal children became more important than punishment. During a discussion in the central administration of how to handle an unmarried mother identifying a married man as the father of her illegitimate child, it became obvious that the unmarried woman's qualities as a mother had not made her reliable in general. Despite being a competent parent, the unmarried mother was described as an evil and unpredictable person who just wanted to ruin the life of peaceful families and might identify a married man as the father of her child just to get some kind of revenge. Therefore, unless the wife asked for divorce, the central administration decided on the practice of not pressing charges against a married man when an unmarried woman identified him as father of her illegitimate child. The peace and privacy of the family were a central concern and the word of an unmarried mother was no longer trustworthy enough to risk a public accusation of adultery.⁴⁶

However, the illegitimate child still had to be provided for. The solution was to make the married man provide for the child, even though he did not admit to being the father. Otherwise, a criminal case was necessary in order to find the person responsible for supporting the child. This shows how both the peace of the family and the support of illegitimate children were more important than punishing the sin and criminal act of adultery. The unmarried woman was now described as a threat not to the man and his masculinity, but to the family, i.e., her sexuality was a threat to middle-class family life.⁴⁷

The obligation of the man to provide for the illegitimate child made sexual relations outside the bonds of marriage a possible part of hegemonic masculinity. It no longer really mattered whether a man had non-marital sex as long as he provided support for any resulting children. But the fact that the man no longer had any obligation to marry the unmarried mother of his illegitimate child made it impossible for the unmarried mother to play an active role in bringing her sexuality inside the heterosexual matrix and thereby making it normal. The unmarried mother continued to be the deviation, the necessary other, in relation to the married woman, whereas the 'otherness' of male heterosexuality disappeared, making male homosexuality the necessary deviation.

Conclusion

In 1683, the *Danish Law* distinguished between legal sexual activity, or sex within marriage, and criminal sexuality, or all sexual activity outside marriage. But both the law and public culture regarded marriage as the institution that could make pre-marital sex normal and legal. A man's obligation to marry the mother of his

illegitimate child gave him the responsibility for initiating both the pre-marital relationship and the marriage. The female ideal in relation to marriage was passivity, which also left her with no responsibility for the non-marital relationship. If the woman was promiscuous however, she also shared responsibility for the sexual relationship.

In 1734, the obligation of the man to marry the woman with whom he had a pre-matrimonial relationship was made dependent not only on the good reputation of the woman, but also on her ability to prove the promise of marriage by means of two witnesses. The former distrust of the word of the promiscuous woman was extended to all women. Female sexuality was seen as a weapon controlled by the woman to seduce men, whereas male sexuality was described as a natural instinct – a construction that lifted the responsibility for sexual relations from the man and shifted it to the woman.

In 1763, the father's responsibility to support any illegitimate offspring was established as the institution that could make his non-marital sexual activities normal by bringing them within the heterosexual matrix. The stress put on parenthood made the father's support of his offspring a key aspect of positive masculinity. Meanwhile, the woman was assumed to possess a natural motherly instinct, which made her loving and caring and capable of taking responsibility for her children, but there was no distinction between women in this respect: as a female instinct it was common to all women. In competition with the loving mother, the father was left to pay the bill as he was not considered capable of having positive relationships with his illegitimate children. But the woman's status as an unmarried mother did not make her sexually reliable, and the man's obligation to support mother and child financially, instead of through marriage, made it more difficult for the woman to legitimise and normalise her sexuality. While male sexuality was disconnected from marriage, female sexuality was still only considered normal inside marriage.

Notes

1. 'Jyske Lov' (Jutlandic Law), *Danmarks Gamle Landskabslove med Kirkelovene*, vols. I-IV (Copenhagen, 1933), III, 37.
2. Nina Koefoed, *Besovede kvindfolk og ukærlige barnefædre. Køn, ret og sædelighed i 1700-tallets Danmark* (Copenhagen, Museum Tusculanum Press, 2008), Chap. 3.1.
3. *Kong Christian den Femtes Danske Lov*. Henceforth: DL in references.
4. Ole Fenger, *Lov og ret i Europas Historie* (Aarhus, Aarhus University Press, 2001), 136-7. Only the rule of keeping one's promises indicates the influence of Hugo Grotius and natural law.
5. Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble. Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York and London, Routledge, 1999), 98.
6. Isabel V. Hull, *Sexuality, State, and Civil Society in Germany, 1700-1815* (Ithaca and London, Cornell University Press, 1996), 21.
7. DL 6-13-1.

8. DL 6-13-9.
9. DL 6-13-8.
10. Tyge Krogh, *Oplysningstiden og det magiske. Henrettelser og korporlige straffe i 1700-tallets første halvdel* (Copenhagen, Samleren, 2000), 100.
11. Hull, *Sexuality, State and Civil Society*, 12.
12. Ove Korsgaard, *Kampen om folket. Et dannesperspektiv på dansk historie gennem 500 år* (Copenhagen, Gyldendal, 2004), 62.
13. DL 3-16-12.
14. Kari Telste, 'Samliv før ekteskap i lys av norsk ekteskaps- og seksuallovgivning fra reformasjonen til omkring 1900', in *Ægteskab i Norden fra Saxo til i dag*, ed. Kari Melby, Anu Pykkänen and Bente Rosenbeck (Copenhagen, Nord 14, 1999), 154.
15. DL 3-16-9.
16. DL 6-13-1.
17. DL 6-13-5.
18. DL 6-13-4.
19. DL 6-13-10.
20. DL 6-13-24 and 25.
21. DL 6-13-16 and 18.
22. DL 6-13-16.
23. DL 6-13-18.
24. Heidi Eng, 'Homo- og Queerforskning', in *Kjønnsforskning. En grunnbok*, ed. Jørgen Lorentzen and Wencke Mühleisen (Oslo, Universitetsforlaget, 2006), 146-7.
25. Statute of 5 March 1734.
26. Koefoed, *Besovede kvindfolk*, 145.
27. Danish National Archives (hereafter RA, DK), D28, case number 70, 1724, Jutland.
28. RA, DK, D19, case number 63, 1734, Sjælland.
29. Statute of 5 March 1734 (women who become pregnant have the right to marry the father).
30. RA, DK, E19 and E20, case number 17, 1771, første og andet departements brevbøger (first and second departments' letter books) and kancelliets breve, første departement (the chancellery's letters, first department).
31. See Krogh, *Oplysningstiden og det magiske*; Koefoed, *Besovede kvindfolk*; Nina Koefoed, 'Mellem religion og oplysning. Sekularisering af 1700-tallets politiske og kulturelle univers', *Den jyske Historiker*, 105 (2004), 35-51.
32. Statute of 8 June 1767 (public confession is abolished).
33. RA, DK, D19, case number 322, 1767, Sjælland.
34. Statute of 14 October 1763 (the father of an illegitimate child must pay half of the child's support until its tenth year).
35. Statute of 13 June 1771 (fines and all other punishment for fornication must be forgiven, and illegitimate children may be baptized etc); Statute of 27 February 1772 (the statute of 13 June 1771, on forgiving fines and punishment for fornication, is abolished, and the birth of illegitimate children must not be considered dishonourable or the male responsibility).
36. Koefoed, *Besovede kvindfolk*, 298.
37. Statute of 30 May 1794 (mothers of illegitimate children are entitled to keep and raise these children,

and the mothers shall receive monetary support from the fathers, etc).

38. Koefoed, *Besovede kvindfolk*, 240.
39. RA, DK, F10, case number 966, 1790, Sjælland: 'at jeg efter moders hjerte umulig kunne villige I at hengive mit barn til mishandling af ham og hans kone, som hader bade mig og barnet, så barnet der, under den grusomste behandling ville ende sine dage'.
40. Statute of 12 June 1812 (fines for fornication are abolished).
41. Gunner Lind, 'Den heroiske tid? Administrationen under den tidlige enevælde 1660-1720', in *Dansk Forvaltningshistorie. Stat, forvaltning og samfund*, vol. 1, ed. Tim Knudsen and Ditlev Tamm (Copenhagen, Jurist- og Økonomiforbundets Forlag, 2000), 174.
42. RA, DK, I8, case number 939, 1812; Koefoed, *Besovede kvindfolk*, 296.
43. 'at kongen (med særdeles hensyn til, at det påligger slegfredsbørns forældre at bidrage til disse børns opfostring og underhold) har bestemt: at lejemålsbødernes aftingelse og inddrivelse skal for fremtiden være aldeles ophævet.'
44. Statute of 19 March 1751 (women in Denmark who procreate three children out of wedlock should be sentenced to a nearby prison).
45. Statute of 8 June 1767.
46. RA, DK, I8, case number 939, 1812; Koefoed, *Besovede kvindfolk*, 298.
47. *Ibid.*

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Wicked women of eighteenth-century Aberdeen

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Women in today's society are not condemned for having sex, or expressing themselves freely, nor do women have to marry to be financially secure or successful, but as any historian will tell you, women's lives were not always so liberated. In the eighteenth century, women were strictly disciplined for actions that we today take for granted. Officials of the time harshly punished unconventional sexual behaviour; in fact, they did not condone *any* expressions of sexuality from females. Moreover, they disapproved of less than graceful speech and believed women's place was within the home under the watchful eye of a patriarch. When women failed to conform to these standards, society branded them as 'wicked'. This article will shed some light on the kind of women who were deemed wicked or deviant by their contemporaries when they failed to conform to the patriarchally constructed gender roles of the eighteenth century. It will consider questions such as: what offenses did these women commit to make society brand them as wicked? And how did the authorities deal with their unwanted and often criminal behaviour?

This article is based on a variety of evidence. The *Aberdeen Journal*, the *Aberdeen Black Kalendar* and the *Enactment Books* are the key primary sources. The *Aberdeen Journal* was established in 1747, and it contained foreign news from America and the continent and national news from London, Edinburgh and Glasgow. However, more importantly, it had a section on the back page, titled 'Domestick Occurences' [sic], where notices of people being committed to prison or being banished for their crimes could be found among other things. The *Black Kalendar* specifically deals with crime. It is a collection of cases from the years 1746-1878, which was gathered and printed for the public. The preface specifically states that the 'following pages contain brief accounts of the lives of criminals who may truly be said to be distinguished – not for their good, but for their bad deeds'. These materials were collected with the view to be published for a public audience, which meant the author often took the liberty of adding his own opinions and comments within the text; nevertheless, it still provides valuable insight regarding the social conventions of the time. The *Enactment Books* are minutes recorded by the Aberdeen town council at the four quarterly sessions held every year in Aberdeen. Similar to these are the *St. Nicholas Kirk Session Minutes* and the *Justice Court Records*. These hold brief summaries in chronological order of men and women appearing before the courts for various reasons, including criminal charges. Even though most of these sources are the product of official bodies' record keeping, they still assist in constructing a detailed picture of the social complexity of the past. Patterns and individual histories can be drawn from these sources, which can give a glimpse of the reality of eighteenth-century women's lives.

Historians have opened up the area of female crime and deviance as an area of research, exploring a wide range of themes. A key collection is that of Margot Arnot and Cornelia Osborne, which raises issues of female sexual activity being viewed as criminal behaviour and it examines violence within domestic settings and urban environments.¹ Similarly, Shani D'Cruze's work, *Women, Crime and Justice in England Since 1660* and *Crimes of Outrage: Sex, Violence and Victorian Working Women*, focuses on violent crimes and women's relationship to the criminal justice system in England, while Jenny Kermode's *Women, Crime and the Courts in Early Modern England* is a valuable source on female criminality and the justice system.² An important contribution to our understanding of crime in Scotland is the work of Anne Marie Kilday who has demonstrated that Scottish women were more violent than their English neighbours, as well as drawing attention to the more untraditional crimes women were involved in and the controversy they caused in 'respectable' society.³ Another valuable collection of articles for Scotland is *Twisted Sisters: Women, Crime and Deviance in Scotland Since 1400*, edited by Yvonne Galloway Brown and Rona Ferguson. In this collection, articles by Elizabeth Ewan and Gordon DesBrisay provide interesting particulars about women's daily activities and how these were at times viewed as deviant and therefore punishable by religious law.⁴ In a similar manner, this article will deal with female criminality, but it will focus on, not violent crime, but 'soft crime' that relates more to the behaviour and activities of women. It will additionally demonstrate how the institutions of eighteenth-century Aberdeen applied punishments to reflect this.

Eighteenth-century Aberdeen

The eighteenth century is generally characterised by a sense of improvement and need for politeness, both physically and mentally. Accordingly, major improvements to architecture and infrastructure marked eighteenth-century society. Local pride and an active sense of civic identity came to characterise many cities in eighteenth-century Scotland. The inhabitants of Aberdeen, among others, were proud of their metropolitan status. 'In the 1790s, when Edinburgh was being graciously extended and rebuilt to much public admiration, the town council and citizens of Aberdeen determined also to give their city a new "modern", and improved physical setting', which included programmes of cleaning, water systems and lighting.⁵ Additionally, the council decided to lay out ten new straight streets and even ensured that farmers came in to town to remove the manure from the streets to keep them clean.

Along with improving the physical setting of Aberdeen, there was a desire to improve the behaviour

of the inhabitants as they collectively influenced the city's reputation. One of the council's early attempts to improve the inhabitants' manners is recorded in the *Extracts from the Council Register in Aberdeen*. On 16 March 1642,

the provost, baillies, and council considering that there are diverse Acts of Parliament made against blasphemies of Gods holy name, containing as well pequnial as bodily punishments to be inflicted upon those that shall be noted and herd banning and swearing ... ordains that every master and mistress of any family within this burgh as often as any of them happens to be found banning or swearing any sort of oath, shall pay eight pence to the use of the poor, and every servant four pennies, and a box to be in every family for this effect.⁶

Interestingly, the council clearly had faith that the general population was in support of improving the language and behaviour in society, otherwise such an act, which was to be enforced within the privacy of households, would have had little effect.

It was believed that the greatest threat to the control of sexual acts in the early modern period was *female* sexuality. The real problem, however, was that men viewed women as extremely dangerous and sexually voracious. Deviance from the chastity that was expected of women meant a chaotic society. Often the city fathers sought to control the visible presence of women in the towns by introducing regulations in attempt to stamp out their wickedness or deviant behaviour, as it was defined by the improved standards of society.

Over the course of the eighteenth century, there was an increased emphasis on the fundamental biological difference between men and women. Women were viewed as having a more delicate system, and a greater degree of sensibility than their male counterparts, especially women of the middle or upper classes. Because of this, women were also believed to signal a greater susceptibility to weakness and disorder. Interestingly, there was also a significant difference between middle- and lower-class women as they were ascribed different traits. Upper- and middle-class women were associated with virtues such as modesty and chastity, contrary to working-class women who were often characterized as sexual and decadent.⁷ In fact, it was specifically those of the lower or labouring classes, who were targeted, because they were often labelled uncontrollable and were believed to be capable of the worst of vices.

The largest concentration of labouring women were to be found in the cities as industrialisation expanded trade and commerce, which greatly affected urban environments like Aberdeen. Expansion meant an increase in population, which in turn increased the demand for domestic servants in the cities, wherefore many labouring women were drawn to urban environments in pursuit of employment. Linda Colley argues that 'the close connexion between the progress of urbanization and apprehension about the roles of the sexes emerges very clearly in the case

of Scotland, where the growth of Edinburgh, Aberdeen, Glasgow and many lesser towns can be measured by the rate of gloomy pronouncements on the deterioration of female manners'.⁸ This is further established by considering terms such as 'streetwalker' and 'woman of the town', which suggest that prostitution was understood as an essentially urban phenomenon. The Aberdeen town council was aware of this tendency and in response 'ordered that all "light women" associated with the "vice and sin of venery" leave off their occupation and pass to another trade or leave the town'.⁹ It was disconcerting to the authorities that there was a high number of servants in the cities, as they feared for the morals of such women as they moved within foreign environments and away from the protective gaze of their fathers.

Despite their different backgrounds, working women, like high-class ladies, were expected to conform to gendered stereotypes. It was believed women's lives should revolve around their households, and they were discouraged from unnecessarily entering public spaces, especially without appropriate chaperones or for frivolous reasons. But for all working-class women, household concerns and activities went beyond the closed confinement of their own home. It was this narrow definition of women's proper household role that often led to everyday female activities being defined as criminal. Throughout the century, female defendants in the court records account for a significant proportion of the accused in only a small number of offences. These were particularly minor theft cases, such as pick pocketing, shoplifting and receiving stolen goods, and behavioural crimes, such as defamation, drunkenness and fornication, as well as offences surrounding childbirth.

Behaving badly

The following section will explore some of the minor or non-violent offences, which were typical for female offenders, as well as the punishments that Aberdeen council applied. These included defamation, 'keeping bad company' and other deviant behaviour. Defamation, especially, was a crime that was believed to be very serious, because the consequences of ill-chosen words or slanderous gossip could ruin a person's reputation. In some instances, individuals went to great lengths to preserve a good reputation. Consider for example this following advertisement from the *Aberdeen Journal*:

Some malicious Reports have been industriously rumoured about ... Mr. Brown of Skene's Square, His Family, by some very dangerous Persons; Mr. Brown hereby offers to pay a very handsome Reward to any one that shall discover the Propagators of such wicked Intentions, so as they may be brought to that Justice, which on account of so enormous a Crime, they most justly deserve.¹⁰

It is interesting to note that defamation was related specifically to a certain class since it was believed a

person of abject character could not suffer from verbal injustice because he had no reputation to lose. It was generally only people who had an established role in society, such as men of business or ladies of virtue who were concerned about 'reputations'. For many of the lower classes a good reputation was naturally desirable and those who were too poor, or who had lost their 'good name' through wrongdoing, were excluded. In fact, the common or lower classes did not often show enough concern about their own reputations so as to bring such matters to court; rather, they appear to be the offenders in such crimes. Interestingly, defamation cases in Aberdeen almost solely concern female offenders. This seems in line with the preconceived notion that women were more capable of swearing and slander because they, unlike men, were governed by feelings and therefore more likely to succumb to fits of rage.

On 31 August 1767, the Kirk Session in Aberdeen 'Received a signed letter Containing a grievous Complaint concerning one Elizabeth Linton, in the Head of the Gallowgate, as much addicted to Cursing and Swearing, abusive Language and bitter imprecations against the Neighbours'.¹¹ The letter contained the names of six female neighbours, as well as one woman's husband, all of whom were willing to attest to Elizabeth Linton's defaming behaviour. The Session ordered her to appear at the next session to allow the witnesses to attend in response to the written complaint. At the following session, on 7 September, Elizabeth Linton 'flatly deny'd' the charges against her. Accordingly, all the witnesses were called to the stand. Each of them testified to hearing the accused 'fall out into terrible flashes of swearing and cursin', 'taking Gods name in vain', saying 'God Damn them all' or even 'calling her [neighbour] an adulterous whore, and [her husband] a Mealmonger Dog'. As a result of the testimonies against her, the session found 'that it was as clear and strong as could be wished' and sentenced her to be publicly rebuked 'as a warning to others to behave'. Misdemeanours and other behavioural crimes similarly met with disciplinary punishment. These crimes were minor offenses, such as keeping bad company or roaming the streets at night, and they were typically met with punishments designed largely to shame the offender, such as public whipping or exposure in the stocks.

Due to the change in values after Enlightenment ideas had been embraced, criminal behaviour was more often viewed as an individual moral failure than a product of one's environment and circumstances. This attitude meant residents often complained to the Council about women whose dealings were considered unsavoury; the Council then took action. Take for example Fanny Hall, who on 5 September 1757, was 'complained upon several times for haunting loose and disorderly company [and for] disturbing the neighbourhood where she resided at unreasonable hours in the night-time'.¹² At the court session in the spring of 1758, she was whipped and then banished. Due to the ideals of eighteenth-century society, moral or behavioural crimes were among the most common crimes. Proportionately, women appear more often in the court records for 'keeping disorderly

company' or for 'being persons of bad fame and character' than for any other offence. For example, in 1758 alone, 18 out of the 29 women who are recorded in the Aberdeen enactment books were convicted of misdemeanours. The council tried to suppress misdemeanours, which were believed to be character flaws, by shaming and banishing women who displayed such behaviour.

In addition to 'haunting' the company of soldiers and behaving indecently, some women also took to drinking. Being drunk in public was punished with whipping, as was the case of one young woman, recorded in the Aberdeen *Black Kalendar*, who was 'whipped for intoxication and bad behaviour in the streets'.¹³ It was inexcusable for a woman to haunt the company of soldiers and other bad company, but it was even worse if she allowed herself to become intoxicated and, in doing so, behave like a man.

Women were not permitted to encroach on masculinity. They were expected to recognise their proper place in submission to men. When women broke the unspoken rules of gender and acted mannishly or aggressively, which was completely opposed to the ideals for the fairer sex, they were shown no leniency. A case which demonstrates this very clearly is that of Isobel Mulligan. On 5 June 1763, she 'had dressed herself in sailors clothes and gone to Captain Robert Bruce, then enlisting men for the navy, and offered herself for the service in order to obtain the bounty, having professed an enthusiastic desire to serve her King and country'.¹⁴ The imposter was detected. 'When brought before the Baillie, the woman admitted that having drunk "some beer" she had been induced by the persuasion of another woman to go and endeavour to play off this trick on Captain Bruce'. At the court session, she was banished from the Burgh for seven years as punishment.

Gender, poverty and unregulated trading

The town fathers were intent on regulating and controlling any irregular behaviour that did not conform to their ideal standards. In line with this, the council placed strict regulations on trade within the burgh. They wanted orderly and regulated businesses to flourish and so within this commercialization there was no room for individuals making business by selling goods door-to-door. Low-scale trading among women in the town had been common practice for decades. Often they purchased extra supplies, either to sell on in smaller quantities or to produce food and drink to sell on. This way they contributed to the family economy, but in the eyes of the town officials it was unregulated trade outside the market place, which was against the law, and penalised.

Such regulation may have had a direct effect on women's lives, as most women would do all they could to avoid poverty by developing self-help strategies such as small-scale saving, trading, selling homemade goods or, ultimately, even resorting to crimes like prostitution and theft. Kilday argues, 'women's instincts to protect themselves, their interests, or their families were the main reason why they committed criminal acts. They often had clearer and more precise motives than men, and female

criminal behaviour was usually – although not always – associated with practical needs rather than irrational, spontaneous displays of aggression'.¹⁵

Theft was one such crime that was undoubtedly provoked by poverty. Women who appeared before the courts charged with theft were usually servants, widows, single parents, outlawed fugitives or vagabonds, all groups of the lowest social classes, and deeply affected by poverty. Note for example Helen Lawson who was charged with stealing a gown, petticoat and shirt on 27 September 1750.¹⁶ In the court record, she is described as a vagabond so it is likely that she was very poor. Similarly, in another case, a woman named Elspet Sim was imprisoned for 'going into a tavern, and picking up empty bottles, with intent to steal them'.¹⁷ Empty bottles may seem worthless, but they could be used as containers for homebrew or even be sold on to the brewers for a small profit. Resetting stolen goods was not uncommon. When theft was successful, the offender would in most cases sell on the stolen goods to make a bit of money, or, in some cases, even have someone else sell them on. On 25 July 1758, a widow named Margaret, 'being convicted of her own confession of resetting stolen goods', was banished from the Burgh.¹⁸ This woman was on her own, having lost her husband. As a single woman, maybe even advanced in age, she most likely found it difficult to support herself. Resetting stolen goods would have given her an income, albeit not a law-abiding one. In another case, a woman named Bathia Stobri was whipped in the yard of the Poor's Hospital, 'fifty stripes on her naked back', for resetting stolen goods and being a person of bad character.¹⁹

Simple theft, as well as resetting stolen goods, was usually punishable with banishment from the burgh, but it could additionally be punished by public whipping and with confinement within the Tolbooth [gaol], for a period up to three months. Helen Lawson's case mentioned above conformed to this model of punishment. She was taken out of prison immediately before her banishment, where she was kept while waiting for her case to come before the court. Jails were mainly used to confine defendants awaiting trial or convicts awaiting punishment, rather than as punishment itself. When she was banished, she was drummed out of town by the executioner, which is an obvious demonstration of power by the council. This public display was meant to shame the offender, but it also displayed a clear warning to others not to commit a similar crime. According to the law, the authorities were to 'inflict Punishment upon the offenders, for the good of the public, to prevent the like in time coming, either in the offenders, or others, by the influence of their example'.²⁰

At times when offenders were unrepentant and continually returned to their 'bad' ways, the council enforced harsher punishments. Transportation, for example, was used to get rid of tough criminals, either those committing very serious crimes such as murder, or who had proven to be 'hardened in wickedness' and beyond redemption. For example, in 1767, two women were transported for continuous theft, according to the *Enactment Books*.²¹ In some cases, the consequences for continued theft were much worse. Often the council would banish an offender

twice, with additional strokes in the market place or some other shameful punishment, but if the offender was caught thieving three times, then the penalty was almost always hanging.

Consider the case of Jean Craig.²² She was described as 'one of the most daring and enterprising thieves on record'. Her first appearance before the court was in January 1782 when she was charged with stealing poultry from several persons. In this instance, she petitioned the Sheriff to be banished from the country, which was consented to 'on condition, that if the petitioner should again be found in the country, she would be again put in prison, then whipped through the streets of the city, and again banished'. But in September that same year, she was again before the court, accused of theft. She petitioned for banishment a second time, which was again granted. Then, in May 1783, she was apprehended for housebreaking and theft along with another woman. This crime was not proven, however, and she was dismissed. Nevertheless, 'Jean Craig, as soon as she got clear, fell again to thieving, and was committed to prison in October for stealing cloth'. She was brought to trial for this crime in May 1784, where it was decided that 'on account of it, as well as her former numerous thefts, she was condemned ... to be executed'. Theft was dealt with severely, even if it was brought on by poverty, which was the most common reason for female criminality.

Prostitution, fornication and rape

Even prostitution was viewed as a way of making money when times were hard. Often it was working women, such as servants or seamstresses, who supplemented their income in this way.²³ For some women, though, poverty was so pressing that they took to the trade on a full time basis. In fact, most prostitutes appear to have been born into the poorest sections of the community and most acquired few skills while growing up that would allow them to escape poverty. This meant a lifetime of prostitution in order to survive.

Prostitution, defined as immorality in the Bible, was not tolerated by the church, but from the end of the Middle Ages, despite the repugnance with which they viewed prostitution, many within the church were prepared to tolerate the trade. They acknowledged the sexual impulse in man, and it was believed greater sins, such as bestiality and sodomy, could be avoided.²⁴ Prostitution was a part of daily life despite it being an offence, but once prostitutes became increasingly visible in the streets threatening public order, it increased the resistance to such immoral behaviour. As the enlightened thought of the eighteenth century took hold, the attitude to prostitution changed. Whereas women had previously been able to occasionally turn to prostitution or combine it with another occupation as a financial supplement when respectable employment was unavailable, this was no longer acceptable to polite society.²⁵

Whether it was a regular offender, with prostitution as a profession, or intercourse between unmarried lovers, the law strictly forbade fornication and adultery. For example,

on 13 December 1748, Jean Henderson, a 'late servant to James Smith, Sadler ... acknowledged that she was guilty of the scandal of fornication with James Thomson, Servant to the said James Smith'.²⁶ At some point these two people most likely worked together and it is possible a romantic attachment formed. This apparently continued even when Jean Henderson was no longer employed by the same master as her lover. Even so, when they were discovered, they both had to answer to the courts and suffer the consequences of their illegitimate affair.

The court showed great perseverance in finding and convicting persons accused of immoral conduct. A notice in the *Aberdeen Journal* asked the people of Aberdeen to co-operate in the apprehending of 'Isobel Robertson, a young Woman, of a middle Stature, and Fair Complexion, aged Twenty-two Years [who] hath made an Elopment'.²⁷ It went on to state that 'It is hoped and expected that no person will conceal or harbour her till her Innocence is cleared up, or her Guilt appear, in the Scandal she is accused of, before the Kirk Session'. The most common punishment that the Aberdeen council applied to fornication and adultery cases was the use of fines. Scottish secular and church law prescribed the same fines for men and women: £10 Scots for fornication, £40 Scots for adultery.²⁸ Some may argue this was a sign of equality, but the fact is that prevailing wage differentials meant that such fines inevitably bore more heavily on women than men. It is estimated that women's earnings comprised only half or two-thirds of an equivalent male wage.²⁹ A female domestic servant had annual cash earnings of approximately £10 Scots, which is the amount one was fined when committing fornication.³⁰ These were large amounts of money, and to make matters worse offenders had just one week to pay their fines before they were imprisoned. In addition to this, offenders of either sex who were unable to pay could be carted, whipped and ritually banished by the hangman. One in four adulterous men convicted in Aberdeen, and three in four of the women they impregnated, proved unable to pay and were made to suffer accordingly.

Women had to suffer many indignities when behaving in ways the council deemed unacceptable, but what made their impropriety even worse was the often inevitable result of fornication: an unwanted pregnancy. In the case of a child being born, the court went to great lengths to discover who the father of the child was. Often the woman would be interrogated and urged to name the father. If the man she named as the father acknowledged it to be true, he would then have the responsibility of the child put upon him. This was the case with Daniel Mowat, merchant in Aberdeen, who was found guilty of uncleanness with Margaret Brechin, a servant girl. He was to promise 'the Child shall not be burthensome to the town but that he shall maintain the same under the penalty of one hundred pound Scots'.³¹ Both were also fined for their crime: she £10 Scots and he £12 Scots.

In some cases though, the implicated man would go free, as was the case of Helen Aiken:

The unfortunate creature had fallen with child to Baillie Forbes who persuaded her to father

it upon another man, which the simple girl at first did ... [However] the session made no application to him to get himself properly whipped through the town and banished, though it is evident that he stood much in need of such a sentence.³²

Helen Aiken, on the other hand, was both whipped and banished from the city.

A number of the cases only mention the woman and her punishment. According to the *Justice Court Book*, 42 cases of fornication or adultery came before the magistrates in the years 1748-52.³³ In 29 of these cases, only the woman was indicted and punished accordingly. The men with whom the acts were committed were almost always named, but there was no mention of them being either charged or punished. As a contrast, only two cases appear in which only the man was mentioned; the remaining 11 cases resulted in indictments for both men and women.

The records unfortunately do not hold the answer as to why women were charged more often with moral offences. It may be linked to the gendered view of women being temptresses and therefore more culpable, or it could be that status played a part. Some men may have been able to bribe the baillies [bailiffs] to be exempt from appearing in court. The fact that many women were discovered only when an unwanted pregnancy became evident was also relevant. When these women appeared before the courts, they were encouraged to name the man they had had intercourse with, but often such charges could not be confirmed unless the man admitted to the sin. The woman could not deny her sin because of her obvious physical state, but the man was often excused based on lack of evidence.

There is a peculiar example in the case of one man, the well-named George Naughtie, who was cited twice within the space of six months for being involved in two separate fornication charges. In the first case, on 3 February 1748, Anne Stuart, a servant girl, was accused of uncleanness with George Naughtie, and both were fined 'ten pound scots'.³⁴ Then on 10 August 1748, Agnes Innes, the daughter of John Innes, 'acknowledged she was guilty of uncleanness with George Naughtie'.³⁵ He, on the other hand, was not asked to appear before the court nor held responsible. Agnes Innes was fined ten pounds Scots as was customary, but George Naughtie was not. As was common, offenders were imprisoned until their debts had been paid so it would be reasonable to assume George Naughtie paid his debt in the first instance and was released from gaol since he was afterwards involved in another fornication charge. But it is also a possibility the second girl, Agnes Innes, had been impregnated before he was imprisoned for the first charge and she simply did not show until later. If this was the case, George Naughtie may still have been in prison which would explain why he was not tried further.

In cases of rape, men appear to have received more lenient treatment. Because early modern beliefs about women as wicked temptresses still held currency, it was nearly impossible for a woman to prove that she

had not consented to sex, which, in some cases, meant that a woman's testimony was simply not believed. Even if charges were raised, they rarely resulted in convictions. For example, in one case a soldier, Doug Leech, was indicted for rape 'upon Margaret Mackenzie a servant maid [and] the most material witness', but she did not even appear in court.³⁶ Therefore, the case was dismissed. There are several possible scenarios as to why Margaret Mackenzie did not appear in court; she might have been afraid to testify or been bribed not to appear. Women were often under huge amounts of community pressure not to testify as people really disliked executing men for rape and in some cases women suffered attacks by members of the community after successful convictions.

There are, however, a few examples throughout the records of men being convicted of rape. In one case, three men, Edgar, Turnball and Potts were 'placed at the bar, charged with committing a rape on Mary Munro, a girl of seventeen years of age'.³⁷ The Jury found it proven 'that William Turnbull was Guilty of the rape, and that Edgar and Potts were Guilty of aiding and assisting him'. They were all sentenced to death by hanging but afterwards 'pardoned on the condition of entering the Kings service'. They suffered no public disgrace, whippings or even imprisonment. Instead, they just joined the army. Moreover, even when the courts did acknowledge rape, they still held the woman culpable by implementing fornication or adultery fines upon her person.

The women in the case

As has been argued, immoral behaviour was believed to cause disorder or chaos in society. To the town officials, uncontrolled sexual relations were a threat as they could result in soaring levels of illegitimate children, broken families and even higher levels of disease. At the time, there was a limited medical knowledge and diseases like tuberculosis or syphilis, which can be treated today, had no known cure. Moreover, contraceptives were virtually non-existent, and a child born out of wedlock posed a financial problem to the council.

Immorality and other disorderly behaviour usually went hand in hand with a pronounced drinking and gambling culture, which brought things like poverty and theft in their wake. By enforcing regulations, officials partly ensured a more structured society and promoted safety. At the time, social support was far from comprehensive enough to carry the burdens of single mothers, orphans, elderly and the poor. In fact, it seems the financial implications of supporting single mothers and their children, rather than the moral implications, were the main problem for the town officials.³⁸ The Poor's Hospital, for example, was crammed to its maximum capacity immediately after its opening in 1741. The hospital was initially privately funded and, for decades, private entrepreneurs and benefactors donated huge sums of money. According to the *Statistical Account of Scotland* in 1784, there were 'no less than 36 charitable societies in this town, besides the corporations; and their annual disbursements to the poor, amounted to £1183 Sterling'.³⁹ Aberdeen was notable for not having to

raise poor relief through the rates during the century. It is not likely that charitable work would have expanded to the degree it did had the wealthier families in Aberdeen not embraced this Enlightenment trend.

When the council systematically targeted certain areas of crime, it invariably affected specific groups of people. Women between the ages of 20-35 were more likely to be involved in crimes than for example 40-55 year olds. This is because most young women were introduced to employment in foreign environments while they were still single. As soon as women got married, their chance of being involved in criminal activity diminished greatly. This is mainly because, as was pointed out earlier in this article, young unmarried women were more likely to be associated with fornication or morally disorderly behaviour, such as keeping the company of soldiers. The women in these records tended to be either servant women, often first-time offenders, or more mature single women, who persisted in their criminal behaviour. The older generations of women were more likely to be indicted with charges of theft or resetting stolen goods. These cases were rarer and, interestingly, in these cases the women were almost always widowed and therefore probably in severe financial want. Naturally, this simple grouping is far from all-encompassing. There were several examples within the records of mature married women committing fornication or adultery and young women stealing goods from the market. However, these demographics have one thing in common: they all involved women from the lower social classes of society.

As these women were so different, it is only logical to conclude they also experienced crime and punishment differently. For example, when women were banished from the burgh for minor crimes, like petty theft or disorderly behaviour, it was only required that the woman leave Aberdeen, even though a number of these women were married and perhaps even had children. The *Aberdeen Journal* mentions that 'Isobel Keith, wife to soldier, was banished for pick pocketing'.⁴⁰ Whether her husband was present the source does not say, but either way the punishment only applied to Isobel herself. It is not likely women moved away from the burgh on their own, leaving their family behind. In some cases, other family members may have decided to join the banished woman in her exile. But it is also plausible that some of these banished women returned soon after their punishment had been enforced. Because there was no fully established police force at the time, it may have been possible for some to return to their families undiscovered. Offenders were most often brought to court based on official complaints by members of the public. If such women were able to keep a low profile, by acting in a manner that did not draw the attention of the authorities, they might have been able to resume their lives almost as if nothing had happened. As it is, the records show that many women did return since they reappeared in court as offenders. Notably, women, who were by profession prostitutes or thieves, tended to return to the burgh and their familiar networks.

These women operated within a society that was not stagnant. As the eighteenth century progressed, great

changes took place, which in turn had a direct effect on crime and punishment. The approaches to crime changed along with the emergence of Enlightenment ideas. There was a shift from a religiously dominated society, which applied physical punishments, as well as shaming rituals, to a more corporate system which used banishments and imprisonment to 'reform' criminal offenders. The idea was not to punish *per se*, but to encourage a change in personality. Control of morality and social order were central to the policing strategies of Aberdeen town officials. Thus women who acted outside the newer norms of a more polite society came under scrutiny for activities which might not have drawn the same sort of attention previously. At the same time, punishment reflected the shift away from violence by utilising the tools of correction, shame and reform.

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'The Devil's Milkmaid': The witch as a woman in reformation Denmark

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Demonisation of women and the idea of the witch

In 1532, four years before Denmark officially became Lutheran, a woman suspected of witchcraft was brought to the manor court of Øster Horne in Jutland. The woman on trial was called Karen Hanskone, her name indicating that she was the wife of a man called Hans, and the man who dragged her to court was the local notary, Jeb Skrivers. From the records, we learn that this was not the first time the two of them had met in court. Legal proceedings had already taken place between them, although these records are not preserved in the archives. A phrase in the court record suggests that, prior to this trial, Jeb Skrivers had tried to obtain a sentence of witchcraft on Karen Hanskone, but had not succeeded. This time round, however, he presented *dannemænd*, i.e. eight good, impartial men of honour, as required by the court. These eight men were to confirm that Karen had, during a previous trial not preserved in the records, been convicted (*oversvoret*) of witchcraft. Jeb Skrivers had even brought the executioner to court with him and Skrivers proposed that if anyone wished to accuse Karen Hanskone of witchcraft, he would assist them in any legal way possible to obtain a guilty verdict. According to the court records, nobody stepped forward to accuse or demand a conviction of Karen Hanskone and the manor court dismissed the trial.¹

The trial of Karen Hanskone is one of the few preserved documents of witchcraft trials in Denmark prior to the Lutheran Reformation of 1536.² This is a period known as the 'Winter of Catholicism' in Denmark, when jurisdiction over witchcraft was shared between lay and Church courts. Nevertheless, the trials preserved in the scattered legal records of the pre-reformation era were all brought to lay courts. In the case against Karen Hanskone, Skrivers simply followed standard lay procedure by presenting a number of impartial witnesses, but the trial was dismissed when nobody came forward to formally accuse her. There is no sign of any Church involvement in the trial, and witchcraft, generally, appears to be a crime handled by lay courts.³ In other parts of Europe, however, the Church played an active role in trials of witchcraft, and in some areas the sole arbiter of justice.⁴ The beginning of the sixteenth century was also the period when the idea of the witch as a woman who harmed her surroundings, travelled at night to the sabbat and engaged in sexual relations with the devil was at its peak. The case against Karen Hanskone bears no sign of this diabolical witch image, but we do find fragments of this creature in other sources from the period of the Lutheran Reformation. The intention of this short article is to introduce examples of these and to shed light on how this idea of the witch as a

woman was exploited by authorities for various purposes before and after the Lutheran Reformation.

The demonisation of women and the idea of the witch as the devil's collaborator and erstwhile concubine was a melding of popular and theological ideas, which unfolded during the fifteenth century. This demonisation was greatly assisted by two publications: the Papal Bull *Summis desiderantes affectibus*, referred to as the Witch's Bull of Innocent VIII (1484), and the publication of the notorious witch-hunting manual *Malleus Maleficarum*, Hammer of Witches. The Bull's warnings of how witches could be found amongst villagers was a break with previously held beliefs that magicians belonged to a group of learned or semi-learned persons who experimented with magical rituals that could harm people or help gain good fortune or love for their clients.⁵ According to the Bull, witches' one goal in life was to harm their fellow villagers, and they were motivated only by their hatred of all Christians. The inclusion of the Witch's Bull in the *Malleus* probably caused it to enjoy a higher status and more attention than originally intended.⁶ In the *Malleus Maleficarum*, the tone was equally merciless towards witches, but the viewpoint in the manual had shifted. It is here we find the strongest emphasis on the deceitfulness of the female sex, which was not dealt with in the Papal Bull. For instance, the manual had chapters devoted to how to recognise female witches who stole penises and copulated with demons.⁷

During this period of the diabolical witch, only one law was issued against witchcraft in Denmark. This was the *Landslov* (National Law) of 1521. Prior to his dethronement in 1523, King Christian II passed two comprehensive laws, the *Landslov* and the *Bylov* (Town Law). The Danish historian, Jens Chr. V. Johansen referred to the *Landslov* as a move towards canon law, especially with reference to the use of torture in order to extract a confession.⁸ Instead of focusing on the procedural regulations of the law, from a gender historical perspective, it is interesting to stress some of the perceptions of the witch and her deeds as they are described by the law. First of all, one notes that the articles on witchcraft (no. 78 and no. 79) were written in a gender neutral language, beginning with 'About witchcraft, [a] man or woman, rumoured to practice witchcraft of danger to villages will be arrested by our official'.⁹ Witchcraft was, as this shows, a crime committed by men as well as women, and in the following paragraphs the law referred to witches as 'those people' or simply 'they'. Compared to transcripts from the Provincial Law Code of Jutland from the beginning of the fifteenth century, which only spoke of men performing witchcraft against other men, women were now explicitly written into the text.¹⁰ Christian II himself was accused of witchcraft when the mother of his mistress Dyveke, called Mor Sigbrit (Mother Sigbrit), was rumoured to be a witch.



The Church in Viksta: Sko-Ella and the Devil

Within a short period of time, Mor Sigbrit had become the closest advisor to the king, and for this she was feared and despised by the *Rigsråd* (National Council) and the court.¹¹

The accusations against Mor Sigbrit echoed traditionally-held beliefs about the evil woman in the late middle ages. The concern was about the king being under strong female influence. Whether Mor Sigbrit was a witch or not, and whether the people believed her to be so, was not the issue. Nevertheless, witchcraft was the accusation brought against her, not allegations of fraud or corruption. She was the personification of the evil woman, controlling the king with the power of the devil.

The witch and/or the evil woman is found in many late medieval church murals in Denmark and Sweden. These witches appear in different scenes rooted in biblical stories, for example, depictions of the Fall, in which witches are escorted to hell; or in folklore where the woman is depicted as more evil than the devil himself. Common images show the 'butter witch' or the milk-stealing witch, and in Swedish churches the journey to the *Blåkulla*, a Swedish variety of the sabbat; in Danish churches we find a number of murals representing the witch, or a woman, whipping the devil.¹²

There are indications that the idea of witches gathering in particular places at particular times of the day or year was not foreign to the Danish elite and they surfaced in the *Landslov* of Christian II. Shortly after introducing this theme in article 78, the text went on to list actual places and times, which, in turn, raised suspicions of witchcraft:

They appear in uncommon places, and as follows [:] night time, late at evening [early] morning, near running water, and other holy times [such as] Maundy Thursday and Walpurgis Night, and they are said to spend more time on these than on other [high] seasons during the year.¹³

Even though the law did not specifically say women performed these activities, they were similar to the actions of witches condemned in the Witch's Bull of Innocent VIII and of witches found in the church murals.¹⁴

The witch and the Lutheran bishop

In 1523, Christian II was dethroned, and following the civil war of 1533-36, Christian III pronounced the kingdom Lutheran. Thus, the only prevailing law against witchcraft was the medieval Law Code of Jutland. Contrary to the *Landslov*, in which benevolent and malevolent witchcraft were equally prohibited, the Law Code of Jutland defined witchcraft as causing damage to something or somebody. The differentiation between good or evil magic was thereby temporarily dismissed; this prevailed until 1617.¹⁵ Yet, the biblically-based explanations that females were more likely to become witches and fall into the arms of the Devil were still nurtured by reformed theologians. In Denmark, this was most explicit in the writings of Hans Tausen, Bishop of Ribe, and Peder Palladius, a student of Luther and the first reformed Bishop of Zealand.

The writings of Peder Palladius are essential to understanding the campaign led by the Lutheran Church

in order to reform ordinary people. In his *En Visitatsbog* (hereafter *Book of Visitations*) (1543), based on his own experiences, Palladius advised his clerical colleagues on the important themes of moral life. Each chapter was dedicated to a theme, of which one was witchcraft. The title '*Om Traalquinder*', i.e. on female witches, clearly indicates Palladius' approach, and throughout the text the witch was always referred to as female. The text served as a warning to people who consulted witches as well as to those who engaged in magical rituals, and Palladius described witches as women who performed all kinds of magical rituals, benevolent as well as malevolent.¹⁶ In this sense, Palladius operated within a broad perception of witchcraft, which included healing as well as destructive magic and, in addition, criminalised the witches' clients. This was also the case, especially in article 79 of the *Landslov* of Christian II, although Palladius narrowed the potential witch down to being a woman.

In the *Book of Visitations*, the purpose of the admonitions against witches was identical to the overall purpose of the book, which was to instruct parish priests in how to teach and discipline parishioners within the new faith. The change from Catholicism to Lutheranism had brought about significant changes, which needed careful guidance with the highest level of expertise. In general, his admonitions against women were, not surprisingly, significantly more than those aimed at men. In the second part of the book, we find chapters on aspects of reproduction, including instructions for women in childbed, midwives and children with no names. Here we also find warnings against witches. Palladius represented a strongly gendered condemnation of witches. This is strikingly similar to the pre-Reformation understanding of women as weaker in their faith than men. At the same time, he contested popular ideas of witchcraft, in particular, the tale of the evil woman. The popular idea that a witch had power over the devil was expressed in many trials from the beginning of the seventeenth century. For instance, in a trial from 1612, we are introduced to a witch tormenting the devil she kept in her house. According to witnesses and other witches, she kept the devil in a chest and would occasionally let him out but only to whip him. The devil did not appear as a goat with horns; he was a small, black, hairy thing with staring eyes.¹⁷ The most common appearance of the devil in Danish witchcraft trials was when he acted as a creature assisting the witch by doing her dirty work for her.¹⁸ In the *Book of Visitations*, this diabolic relationship was addressed in the final passages of the chapter on witches:

For it is just a lie, when they say that even the devil is afraid of her. He is not afraid of anybody but God; and that he at one time had offered her a new pair of shoes, handed to her on a long pole, because he did not dare get anywhere near the old witch, that is an utter lie. Why should he not dare consort with her, since a witch is the devil's milkmaid? She milks him, and he milks her, and they milk each other right to the ends of Hell.¹⁹

This passage is interesting due to its drawing on popular as well as theological beliefs and also shows how a reformed bishop outlined a popular tradition in order to overpower it with a theological argument. When Palladius referred to the devil handing the witch her shoes on a pole, because he was afraid of her, he was playing on the tale of the evil woman, by referring to the story of Sko-Ella (Shoe-Ella), a Nordic variation of the tale of the *Old Woman as a Troublemaker*.²⁰ According to this tale, Sko-Ella was employed by the devil to break up married couples, and, in return, she was treated to a new pair of shoes. Sko-Ella was devious and cunning to the extent that even the devil feared her, which was why he handed her the shoes on a pole. Stephen Mitchell notes that the story of Sko-Ella served as an admonition of good behaviour to the parishioners, females in particular. In Swedish churches, depictions of Sko-Ella were often placed beside the door, serving as a final warning when leaving the church.²¹ It is interesting that Palladius chose to draw on the tale of Sko-Ella, since so far I have not located any depictions of Sko-Ella in Danish murals.²² It is likely that the moral of the tale of Sko-Ella could be linked to the evil woman whipping the devil, which is a common motif in Danish church murals.²³ Palladius rejected the perception of the devil being afraid of the witch as expressed in the story of Sko-Ella. Instead, he introduced the theological idea of a relationship between the witch, the devil and God. The key-point in this was the witch entering into a diabolical pact with the devil, which, according to theologians, meant she was under the devil's command. Thomas Aquinas systematised the theological understanding of the diabolical pact in the thirteenth century in his writings on magicians and the origins of magical powers.²⁴ When the witch entered the pact, she was awarded her own magical powers, and, in return, the devil demanded and received her soul. In this sense, the two benefitted from each other; they exploited or, as Palladius put it, they milked each other. Even though the devil might have pretended to obey the witch, he was never afraid of her; God was the only one that the devil feared.

Conclusion

In his text on witches, Peder Palladius addressed Catholic rituals as well as a popular perception of the witch. By drawing on the tale of the evil woman, personified by Sko-Ella, he dismissed the idea of the devil fearing anything but God, thus consolidating and reaffirming God's power. Palladius used a similar rhetoric when he condemned performers of beneficial magic, including those who consulted magicians. In this way, he came to reject significant Catholic practices of healing and protection by labelling them witchcraft. Ever since the Lutheran Reformation these rituals formerly practiced and administered by the (Catholic) Church had been forbidden. It must have been difficult for ordinary people to comprehend that rituals they once believed to be sacred were now illegal. Prior to the Reformation, the articles regarding witchcraft in the *Landslov* of Christian II had drawn on similar ideas of the witch, but the context and the purpose of the law was rather different. The reign

of Christian II ended just before the Reformation. These years were characterised by an escalating conflict and struggle for power between the Church and the king. The two comprehensive laws of Christian II were a statement of power and an attempt to gain stability. Witchcraft was an obvious area to attack the Church. Still, in both contexts, they made use of the perception of the witch as a woman.

Notes

1. The records do not explicitly say why Jeb Skivers refrained from formally accusing Karen; Rigsarkivet (National Archives), Copenhagen, transcript from 'Danske Domme og Retsakter 1445-1550', Chr. V. Christensens Saml.
2. To my knowledge, there is evidence of an additional four trials for witchcraft prior to the Lutheran Reformation, but in none of these cases were the court records preserved. In 1516, a witch was burned in Kalundborg, recorded in *Kong Christians II aabne Breve*, obtained by P.F. Suhm, *Samlinger til den danske Historie*, vol. 2 (Odense, Gyldendal, 1781), 149; two trials from the 1520s are mentioned in the records of Chancellor Claus Giordsens, see Per Ingesman, 'Kirkelig disciplin og social kontrol i senmiddelalderens danske bondesamfund. En casestudy af det ærkebiskoppelige gods under Lundegård 1519-22 og Hammershus 1525-40', in *Konge, kirke og samfund*, (ed) fs Agnes S. Arnórsdóttir, Per Ingesman and Bjørn Poulsen (Århus, Aarhus University Press, 2009), 329-80; and fragments of a trial against a priest were published by Bjørn Kornerup, 'En præst sværger sig fri for at være kætter og troldkarl', *Kirkehistoriske Samlinger*, 7/1 (1953), 650-2.
3. It should be noted that an accusation against a priest in 1533 also ended up in the lay court of Horsens, Kornerup, 'En præst sværger sig fri', 650-2.
4. The most obvious examples are the Catholic Inquisitions; among recent works in English, see Matteo Duni, *Under the Devil's Spell* (Florence, Florence University Press, 2007).
5. Relevant extracts of the two Summae 'Summa theologia, Quest. 94-96' and 'Summa contra gentiles, 93, 96' are published in English in *Witchcraft in Europe 400-1700, A Documentary History*, (ed) Alan C. Kors and Edward Peters, 2nd ed., revised by Edward Peters (Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001), 90-102.
6. Louise Nyholm Kallestrup, *I pagt med djævelen. Trolddomsforestillinger og trolddomsforfølgelser i Italien og Danmark efter Reformationen* (Copenhagen, ANIS, 2009), 46; a revised and extended English edition is forthcoming by Palgrave-MacMillan.
7. Heinrich Institoris, *Malleus Maleficarum*, selected, edited and translated by P.G. Maxwell-Stuart (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2007), pt. 2, chs. 4 and 7.
8. Jens Christian Vesterskov Johansen, *Da Djævelen var ude... Trolddom i det 17. århundredes Danmark* (Viborg, Odense University Press, 1991), 21.
9. The National Law of Christian II, quoted in J.C. Jacobsen, *Danske Domme i Trolddomssager i øverste Instans* (København, GEC Gad, 1966), 139ff.

10. *Law of Jutland (Jyske Lov)*, in Stig Iuul and Erik Kroman, *Danmarks gamle Love paa Nutidsdansk*, Vol. I-III (København, Det Danske Sprog og Litteraturselskab, 1945-1948), 224.
11. See Benito Scocozza, 'Sigbrit. Et studie i kvindeforståelse', in *Tradition og kritik. Festskrift til Svend Ellehøj*, (ed) Grethe Christensen, Karl-Erik Frandsen, Kai Hørby, Benito Scocozza and Alex Wittendorff (Copenhagen, Den danske historiske forening, 1984), especially 29-37.
12. Stephen Mitchell, *Witchcraft and Magic in the Nordic Middle Ages* (Philadelphia/Oxford, Pennsylvania Press, 2010), 185; for the Danish murals in particular, see Ebbe Nyborg, *Fanden på væggen* (Copenhagen, Wormianum, 1978), 38-45.
13. Translated from Jacobsen, *Danske Domme i Trolddomssager*, 139; brackets in original.
14. It should be noted that the *Landlov* also included a differentiation between malevolent and benevolent magic and touched upon Roman Canonical law on more than one point in trials of witchcraft, which strongly indicates a consensus in the perception of witchcraft from the beginning of the sixteenth century to at least 1620. This is one of the themes included in my present research project to be published as a monograph in 2013.
15. The term witchcraft was not used within legislation before the important Ordinance of 1617, in which all kinds of magic and witchcraft were criminalised. H.F. Rørdam, *Danmarks Kirkelove samt udvalg af andre bestemmelser vedrørende kirken, skolen og de fattiges forsørgelse fra Reformationen indtil Christian V's Danske Lov. 1536-1683* (Copenhagen, Selskabet for Danmarks Kirkehistorie, 1886), 59-63.
16. *Peder Palladius Samlede Skrifter*, Vol. I-V, published by Lis Jacobsen (Copenhagen, Nordisk Forlag, 1926) fs, *The Book of Visitations* is in vol. V, 1-240.
17. Kallestrup, *I pagt med djævelen*, 126, 167f.
18. These devils are a central theme in Louise Kallestrup, 'Women, Witches and the Town Courts of Ribe. Ideas of the Gendered Witch in Early Modern Denmark', in *Why and How Gender Matters: The Concept(s) of Gender in Late Medieval and Early Modern World*, ed. Marianna Murayeva (forthcoming).
19. *Peder Palladius Samlede Skrifter*, vol. V, 111.
20. Also referred to as Kitte-Grå or Titta-Grå; Nyborg, *Fanden på væggen*, 41. Mitchell, *Witchcraft and Magic*, 137, 177f, drawing on Oloph Odenius, "Hon som var värre än den onde" – en sagohistorisk oh ikonografisk notits', in *Den ljusa medeltiden*, Statens Historiska Museum Studies vol. 4, ed. Hans Åke Nordström (Stockholm, Statens Historiska Museum, 1984), 197-218.
21. Mitchell also notes that the story might have been meant to be amusing, although the moral would be the same, fs Mitchell, *Witchcraft and Magic*, 137, note 92.
22. Motifs of the devil handing Sko-Ella her shoes on a pole are most common in churches in Uppland, Sweden; some of them are reproduced in Odenius "Hon som var värre än den onde" 199, 202, 207, 210.
23. As indicated by Nyborg, *Fanden på væggen*, 41.
24. See note 5.

Household management as a method of authority for three eighteenth-century elite Yorkshire women

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The following piece of correspondence superbly illustrates the dynamics of household management for any eighteenth-century elite woman:

I am sorry to learn that you are putting on weight. It's perhaps because of too much inactivity. It could lead to much inconvenience, and does not augur well for motherhood. It is not like you to not take any exercise [and] you have every opportunity to do so. You must study how they manage their accounts of the house where you are, to get an idea of how to do it, so as not to be a complete novice, if by chance you have to do it yourself. It is what women are called on to do, and it is their duty, unless they want to be ruled over by their servants, instead of ruling over them. I urge you to study this well.¹

Full of moralising imperatives, the passage was written by a mother to her married daughter, and was intended to steer its recipient away from her self confessed boredom. That recipient was Sabine Winn, the Swiss wife of Sir Rowland Winn, and mistress of Nostell Priory, near Wakefield.

It is not difficult to dissect this passage of correspondence in order to see the layers of managerial responsibility expected of an elite woman. By supervising the accounts, she gained her first steady step into running the rest of the household; it gave her purpose and placed her firmly in the domestic setting. Study of the household accounts was the foundation of good household management. It was also about gaining a form of business-like identity both within and without the walls of the home itself. If the elite woman could manage in this department, she was thought dependable and reliable: a good wife and good mother. Within the wider departments of country estate management, the household demanded the most from its mistress. So with Sabine's mother's advice in mind, the ideal model negotiated her way through matters of authority that might have started with accounting but also embraced servant organisation, household welfare and that supposedly more refined female managerial accomplishment, the role of society hostess.

Three elite women and their first managerial steps into their marital homes are the focus of this article: Sabine Winn (née d'Hervart), mistress of Nostell Priory between 1765 and 1798; Frances Ingram (née Shepheard), mistress of Temple Newsam in Leeds from 1758 until her death in 1807; and Elizabeth Worsley (née Lister), household mistress of Hovingham Hall near Malton, North Yorkshire, from about 1751 until the 1790s. Their homes varied in size and estate income, but they

are defined as elite here by their husband's position in the social strata through education, political involvement or hereditary title. Sabine, Frances and Elizabeth were not exceptional characters amongst the Yorkshire elite. By selecting these three particular women, it is possible to see the levels of success or failure an elite woman of this period could often face in asserting her authority over large numbers of people.² They also serve to demonstrate the scope of influence an elite woman of this period had within the household through the use of communication, experience and expectation, and above all, procedure and daily routine.

Household management was not a term readily used in the eighteenth century. Literature, like the conduct book and cookery book, and personal correspondence instead identified the management of the household with quasi-professional titles like 'the government of the household', 'domestic œconomy', and 'household œconomy'.³ The less grand expressions of 'housekeeping' or 'housewifery' would also determine the processes and outcome of running the household, and marked out the activity as that chiefly carried out by women. Amanda Vickery has done much to contextualise the change from creative and productive housekeeping to that of household management for the elite woman of this period in *The Gentleman's Daughter* (1998). Influenced by the studies of Peter Earle and L.T. Ulrich, Vickery's argument considers the organisational model of the elite household which determined gendered divisions of labour.⁴ 'Hands-on' creative and productive housekeeping, summarised by Gervase Markham in 1615, was the 'inward and outward virtues which ought to be in a complete woman; as her skill in phisic, cookery, banqueting-stuff, distillation, perfumes, wool, hemp, flax, dairies, brewing, baking and all other things belonging to a household'.⁵ Mass production, access to luxury goods and foodstuffs and the spread of wealth at the end of the seventeenth century supposedly saw this type of household involvement of the elite woman dissolve into that of mere consumer.⁶ An elite woman's gendered role was thought of as nothing more than idle and inconsequential by eighteenth-century commentators and authors of conduct literature. The elite wife existed merely as a tool to direct and wave a wistful hand to her servant for refreshment. Mary Wollstonecraft in *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792) grieved at the aspirations of other women to accomplish such a lifestyle where 'every duty is done by deputies, as if duties could ever be waived ... [and] Women, in particular, all want to be ladies. Which is simply to have nothing to do, but listlessly to go they scarcely care where, for they cannot tell what.' Such attitudes have since been disputed by Vickery and many others, including Rosemary Baird, Stana Nenadic

and Ingrid Tague, whose studies have shown that many women sought to gain greater leverage in the household through administrative responsibility.⁷ Sabine Winn's mother understood this and urged the great need for an elite woman to assert herself in a business-like manner if she were to maintain control over the processes and functions of her household.

It is important to identify the framework or structure of the eighteenth-century elite household (see Figure. 1). Many elite households of the late eighteenth century, give or take specific staff roles and family size, would have distinguishable groupings related to experience and proximity to the stem family, i.e. kin household members, as well as the permanence of position with regards to the type of role being performed.

Kin are simply master and mistress, any children and co-resident kin staying for long periods, like cousins, siblings, in-laws, etc. We then move into the extended family and that of employment and the specialist/professional household members who had good experience like the housekeeper or butler; those who had training, like the steward or chef; and those who may possibly have had familial connections or long-standing friendships with the master and mistress, like a chaplain, governess or ladies' maid. The general servants are more recognisable by their association with a specific department and would have had their numbers supported with regular auxiliary members who worked at weekends or over seasonal festivities and large family gatherings.

If this household dynamic were to be part of her marital home, an elite woman would see this structure in a much less mechanical way. Having been given a brief moment to adjust to married life, a new home with its unfamiliar faces, routines and expenses, many women sought to comprehend the complexities of their husband's estate through careful enquiry. How many servants? How many departments – are there stables and kennels? What of gardeners, gamekeepers, and blacksmiths? Does the estate revenue match or better its outgoings? What about the quality of locally traded goods – foodstuffs, linens and hardware? This was precisely why observation and study of the accounts was so critical in the eyes of Sabine's mother. It was not an elite woman's business to sit idly all day writing letters to friends or bothering her neighbours with society gossip. She had to be aware from the very start of servant wages, the cost of livery, the adequacy of existing servant roles in meeting her own needs and the condition of estate resources dependant upon staffing numbers.

As the first step in running the household, managing the accounts was often performed through observation, preferably on a daily or weekly basis. Yet, she would not have succeeded to any level of authority without two key aspects which were pivotal for the early demands made upon her by the marital household. These were experience and expectation. The first hopefully gave her financial awareness; the second provided the elite mistress with regard for what she, and in some circumstances her husband and family, considered an appropriate lifestyle.

Experience

For Frances Ingram, experience was founded upon the stern direction of her father's will and a highly cosmopolitan upbringing in London. With the interest from an investment of £40,000 (the spending power equivalent of about two million pounds in today's money) made by her father, Samuel Shephard, a Cambridgeshire MP, Frances had a fantastic disposable income. Until the age of ten she had access to a spending limit of £400 per year, £600 until the age of 15, £1,000 until the age of twenty-one, and beyond that whatever interest was available.

Frances held an account with Drummonds in Charing Cross, whose surviving records show various payments to tradesmen, landlords and for lottery tickets.⁸ As her huge bundles of bills and receipts testify, she had wonderful taste and her purchases included shoes, hats, perfumes, fans, a sedan chair, linens, muslins and silks, as well as consumables like biscuits, tea, sugar and spices. This, however, makes her sound too frivolous. She certainly had the financial background to permit her great spending freedoms, but with her wedding date approaching a more considered and attentive woman is found. Here was the sign of expectation, which in this case suggested that Frances had a clear view of the prospect before her as an elite wife. Her spending freedoms had already bestowed a certain form of training and preparation for this stage in her life and placed Frances in a position of good fortune which many women might never have experienced.

With less than a month to her wedding to Charles Ingram, Frances wrote indirectly through her husband-to-be to the Temple Newsam steward, Mr Samuel Keeling, with enquiries into the housekeeping costs there. Keeling's reply contained historically valuable details into the running of the house in 1758 which came to an overall sum of £2175 / 0s / 6d. Keeling listed servant expenses for a total twenty-eight members of staff, eleven female and seventeen male, and the cost of their livery clothing. Below that were the expenses in wine, malt, hops and brewing, and finally the expenses in stabling, including the cost of oats for coach and saddle horses, plus corn and straw. As a piece of surviving documentation, this letter serves as a snapshot of one specific household structure.

From her marriage in the summer of 1758 to her own death in 1807, Frances' name appeared within a wealth of accounting paperwork. Every few weeks, for example, she would send out a note of disbursement to the steward declaring herself as witness and signatory for the household account book. Notes of disbursements would vary in total, usually between £4 and £6 for one week in housekeeping expenditure.

Imagining herself in the picturesque, Frances described her lifestyle at Temple Newsam as that of a rural gentlewoman, referring to her home as 'an old worn out house'.⁹ Once widowed, she remained physically active by making regular visits to her five grown-up daughters or taking dinner whilst on a country house tour with female friends or elderly servants who had become close companions. Many of her relationships within the household remained solid throughout her time

Groupings	Non-essential/ temp.	Core Members of Household		Non-essential/ temp.
Kin		Master (Children) (co-resident kin = extended visits made by wider family members)	Mistress	
Specialist/ Profession	Chef Valet Tutor Chaplain Surgeon Baker Menagerie man Gardener	Steward Butler Groom Gardener Cook Bailliff/Farmer	Housekeeper Cook Companion Ladies Maid	Governess Nurse Baker Menagerie woman
General	Clerk of the kitchen Underbutler Undergroom	Footman Coachman Porter Gamekeeper Postilion Poultry man	Housemaid Kitchen maid Stillroom maid Laundry maid Dairymaid Poultry woman	Chambermaid Scullery maid Baker maid Nursemaid
Auxiliary (dept. of work)	Stables Servants' hall			Stillroom House Laundry Bakery Dairy Kitchen
	Apprentices and sojourners			

Figure 1. Author's framework for the structure of the eighteenth-century elite household.

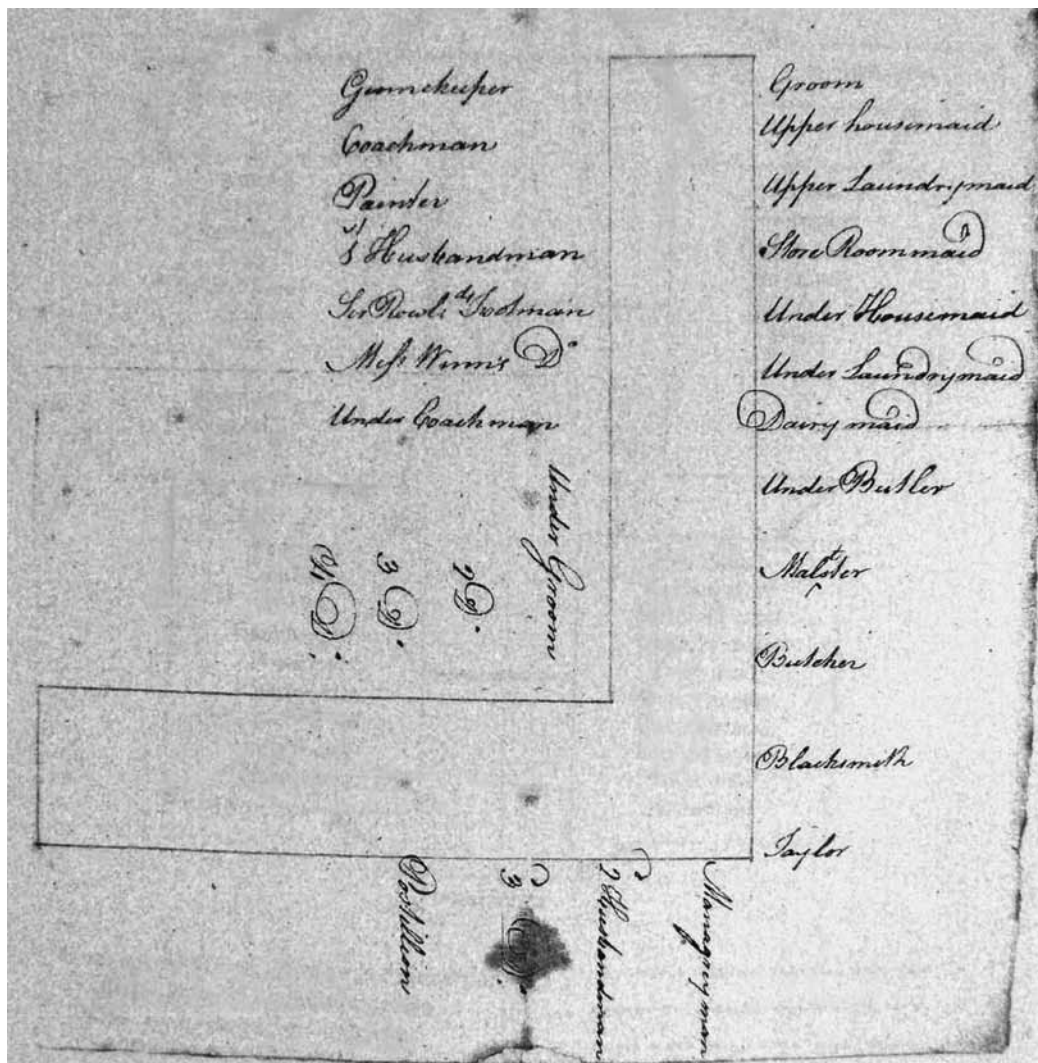
as chatelaine, though her own beliefs often clouded her perception of a servant's ability. When she discovered one of her gardeners had 'turned Methodist', she was willing to dismiss him since she thought he would do nothing but pray in the fields all day. Frances clearly had set ideals for interpreting hard work and sincerity, but for those who did fit the criteria, such as her daughter's elderly governess, an annuity of £50 was to come her way upon Frances' death. For every other servant there was an outright gift of £20 each. Flamboyant though she may seem, her confidence with money was probably nurtured by her father who had amassed his wealth through political manoeuvrings, a position with the East India Company and, of course, landownership. That he tutored her from an early age in good business sense is very possible.

Expectation

At the other end of the social strata was Elizabeth Worsley. Her experiences and expectations regarding any such management and authority in her marital home were extraordinarily different. She did not have the cosmopolitan

flare of Frances Ingram. She had no wonderful bundles of bills and receipts. There is no evidence of fashionable footwear purchases, hats, fans or dress fabrics in her surviving paperwork. Elizabeth was instead a fifteen-year-old penniless orphan who had been taken into the Worsley household as a nursemaid. Comparisons can easily be made to Samuel Richardson's *Pamela* since it was not long after her arrival at Hovingham that Elizabeth was seduced by the Worsley's eldest son, Thomas.¹⁰ On discovering she was pregnant, and rather surprisingly, Thomas contradicted expectation by choosing to run away with her. They soon returned with babe in arms, but were not to marry for another nine years until 1757, by which time Elizabeth had been pregnant several times but only five children had survived.¹¹

Elizabeth was a net cost to the Worsley family. By choosing to marry her, Thomas was creating two problems. The first was the moral dilemma arising from his seduction of a young servant in his house. The second was the financial dilemma in which Elizabeth had access to an allowance of £330 per year, which had obviously not been provided by any paternal settlement upon her. Until



West Yorkshire Archives, Wakefield. WYL 1352/C4/2/8. Seating plan at Nostell Priory for the servants' hall, c.1775

her death in 1809, she was to become a substantial drain on the family finances. In terms of experience, this elite woman had arrived at her position through particularly strained circumstances for all concerned, and she certainly had not expected a life of complicated business transactions, servant discipline and account monitoring.

As for having any say in the remodelling at Hovingham during the 1750s, Elizabeth's own involvement was minimal. Coincidentally, the marital homes of all three elite women received vast attention throughout their time as household mistresses, but for Elizabeth Worsley this must have presented a sense of inconvenience, not to mention anxiety. Already having to assert herself in the role of elite wife and mother, she now had to endure the complete rebuilding of her home as planned by her equestrian-obsessed husband. The house is rather impractical even today; it is approached through a riding house, with the principal apartments built over the stables. Visiting in the 1760s, the agriculturist and author Arthur Young commented on the architectural arrangement of the place and referred to Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* for comedic affect, 'I should suppose that when they [the riding house] are well stocked with horses in hot weather, it would be easy enough to *smell*, without being *told* that these two

rooms (the best in the house) are built over the apartments of the *Huhnhyms*.¹² Not only would such circumstances cause some embarrassment, there is also no doubting the substantial level of work required by the Hovingham servants to keep the apartments smelling fresh. Many an elite woman commanded cleanliness and orderliness and placed special emphasis on open windows to keep their homes 'sweet and fresh' or 'airy and dry'.¹³ Such results for Elizabeth at Hovingham would rarely have been realised!

This does not mean that she had no choices to make for herself, and she did have greater presence elsewhere. Her own letters are certainly legible and her use of language is eloquent following the conventions of the day. Although her parentage is very hazy, she seemed to have adapted fairly well despite endless misgivings and little support from the Worsleys after Thomas's death in 1778. Her surviving documentation is especially scanty after that date; there are few pieces which suggest any direct involvement within estate paperwork and particularly the Hovingham household accounts, and she appears to have hesitated in making any extensive changes to the household structure and its routines. Yet, she had the assistance of London lawyer James Seton and her husband's former steward, William Schoolcroft. Moreover,

a number of letters addressed to her suggest that she tackled some estate issues including rents, servants' travelling expenses, matters of drainage and the family's Sun Fire insurance.

In one episode, there was evidence that she had willing assistance from Seton when it came to enquiries of a difficult financial nature. The Worsleys' London landlady-cum-housekeeper, Mrs. Peterson, had become quarrelsome when, in November 1786, she had demanded her expenses in wages and rent for the previous quarter of the year, probably because they were already overdue. This became too much for Elizabeth's eldest son, Edward, who mentioned his displeasure to Seton. Promptly reporting back to Elizabeth at Hovingham, Seton reminded her that the 'heavy Drain of Mrs Peterson' had meant the family 'were nearly obliged to observe great Æconomy' and her bills should be settled with immediate effect since Edward was liable to ill-temper whenever the subject was brought to him.¹⁴ At other times however, she did not accept the recommendations of others. Writing to her second eldest son, George, shortly after his taking over of the Hovingham estates in 1794, she admitted to a lack of forcefulness with certain members of the household which he soon tackled under his own management. With words of regret she stated, '... as far as I have gone I did wrong in not following Mr Wilmot's advice when I took the care upon me, he desired that all old servants might be turned away which I did not.' Elizabeth appeared apologetic at having had no doubts at all about keeping the old servants, despite being warned that some were thought to be idle and no longer met the requirements of the family.¹⁵

The pursuit of an appropriate outcome

As for Sabine Winn, idle servants were the least of her worries. Not unlike Frances Ingram, Sabine Winn was fashionable, witty and extremely wealthy. She was set to inherit nearly £70,000 upon the death of her mother including several possessions and a house in Switzerland. The Winn family, however, had concerns about their heir marrying a foreigner, but a few relatives tried to show optimism. Rowland's brother-in-law, Nathaniel Cholmley pointed out the benefit of Sabine's inheritance, suggesting that Sabine had good character and believed she was likely to be a good fortune and, more importantly, a Protestant.¹⁶ Rowland's aunt Mary was much terser in displaying her understanding of the intended marriage by proposing that £70,000 was not something to be turned down.¹⁷

For all the advice offered by her mother, Sabine's first crucial step into household management through the supervision of the accounts was blatantly missed. There are no surviving notes on disbursements, her signature does not appear in account books and there are few letters addressed directly to her concerning rents, drainage and insurance matters. Sabine's surviving documentation relating to all things domestic is rather mixed. Instead, there are bills and receipts for foodstuffs and fancy goods, dozens of medicinal and culinary recipes and a wealth of correspondence with tradesmen, haberdashers, dressmakers and close female friends.

And much of that personal correspondence conveys a woman full of impatience, frivolity and deep insecurity.¹⁸ Her own experiences with money were fairly conventional in that much of her inheritance was controlled by her mother and then her husband; Sabine certainly relied too heavily upon Rowland in the running of the household and estate, but he was also not a competent manager.¹⁹ Moreover, Sabine did not have access to large amounts of capital interest without some say from him, but likewise she lacked a ready assertiveness when dealing with day-to-day payments and small financial necessities. One episode highlights how Sabine lacked even the smallest degree of foresight in dealing with simple everyday occurrences when she was left with no cash to pay the children's nursemaid while her husband Rowland was away on business. She scolded him severely:

'What can I do? You should it seems to me, always leave a little money, at least when you are absent. *This is exactly the state of the case. I could not help, when I began to write, mentioning these circumstances, because I really was very much vexed ...*'²⁰

Like many an elite woman, she was accompanied by one or more close female companions to her marital home as such individuals acted as familiar support in unfamiliar surroundings. Frances Ingram brought her housekeeper-cum-companion, the fabulously named Margaret Henchman, with her to Temple Newsam, whilst Sabine brought several French-speaking maids with her to Nostell Priory. At Temple Newsam, Henchman was active in accounting minutiae like the distribution of wages to auxiliaries or ensuring money and equipment were received by local charities. At Nostell Priory, Sabine Winn and her maids were instrumental in making quite exhaustive lists and inventories of clothing and linens and kitchen equipment. Here was proof that Sabine was actually acting upon the example set by her mother, since the latter's personal papers also included a wealth of similar inventories and lists in pamphlet form, filed with other lengthy domestic paperwork.

Peculiarly, Sabine Winn also had her maids record the seating arrangements in the servants' hall and annotated it in French for her own records. Like the letter from Samuel Keeling at Temple Newsam, this provides a single snapshot of one elite household at a specific date. In the 1770s, Nostell Priory had a gamekeeper, coachman, painter, a groom and four undergrooms, an underbutler, housemaids, two laundrymaids and two footmen – amongst others. The purpose of this piece of documentation is a little unclear, but it is significant that it was composed at a time when the servant structure looked unsteady and was consumed by often violent quarrels between staff members and Sabine herself.

She had perennial problems with some servants, including dairymaids who refused to milk the cows and scullery-maids who declined to make bread, but it was the role of Nostell Priory housekeeper that provided the greatest irritation. One woman in the position was labelled by Sabine 'an adventuress', and allowed the

lower female servants access to the housekeeping stores to help themselves. Sabine thought her thoroughly uncontrollable and despicable and threatened to dismiss her if circumstances grew worse. In one such episode, Sabine dramatically noted an encounter her 'adventuress' housekeeper had with another female servant, 'Today she treated the poor Mrs Barr like a dog. I thought she wanted to seize her by the throat in front of me.' Having confronted the housekeeper about her attitude and exorbitant ways, Sabine had her anger renewed. In a report to Rowland, she accused the Nostell staff of ruining her reputation as an employer by turning the house into a brothel. 'The dairymaid who is moreover a whore', complained Sabine, was colluding with the housekeeper and spreading gossip about, while a male upper servant was 'twenty times a day in the housekeeper's bedroom'.²¹

As an upper servant and generally literate too, the housekeeper defended her corner if she thought she was not being taken seriously enough. The disappointment felt by a housekeeper at Nostell was recorded in an undated letter addressed directly to Sabine Winn sometime in the 1770s, but there is no way of telling whether this was the same woman who Sabine had previously labelled an adventuress.

My Lady ... I had no body to support me in my place and nor was I ever treated as a housekeeper since I came ... there were some things no doubt your Ladyship may think I do not do my Dutey [sic] in, it is not in my power to mend it as I never took orders as a housekeeper, [as] I find I am not treated as such it gives me Reason to believe your Ladyship does not think me a servant to sute (sic) her ...²²

It would be wise to point out here that the difficulties Sabine faced were perhaps rooted in cultural prejudice as well as her own reluctance; the two factors no doubt working against each other. The servants' bad behaviour could certainly be linked to xenophobia. Sabine received deep personal criticism from a cousin of the Winns, Catherine Harrison (later known as Mrs. Catherine Cappe) who thought her 'trifling in her turn of mind, and in her temper, violent and imperious; at once, covetous and extravagant. Her appearance and manner however to strangers was singularly captivating, for she was very beautiful, and had a great deal of vivacity'. These characteristics, noted Harrison, hid a rather more shallow nature.²³ Similarly, Sabine's household authority was already set to be a struggle before she had even married into the Winn family, with Rowland's father suggesting that his son should picture a foreign wife at the head of the dinner table and unable to converse. He added that love was not enough to ensure a happy marriage, 'for without connections and means a man will make but a mean figure in this country'.²⁴

Yet, many of Sabine's problems in running her household were definitely caused by her own approach to managerial responsibility. The xenophobic attitudes of her staff may well have stifled any progress she hoped to

make as a figure of authority. Her 'foreignness', as viewed by the Winns, was also a tool for setting themselves to an advantage; if Sabine proved unsuitable as an elite wife, then it was because she was foreign and only substantiated their original prejudices. She certainly had a sparkling personality and vivacity to which Rowland was attracted, but his absences due to business and political socialising were unbearable for Sabine. Her frustration at being left alone was reflected in her relationships within the household and, upon his death in 1785, she became a recluse, spending long hours in her apartments at Nostell.

This was to be a pivotal moment for the core members of the household. Sabine's son (also called Rowland) was the ten-year-old cherubic child, the apple of his parents' eye.²⁵ Upon his father's death, Sabine became over protective and grew suspicious of family members who thought it in his best interests to be educated away from home. Her daughter Esther, on the other hand, now seventeen years old, had always been a stubborn and somewhat doleful child. She was also intelligent and accomplished with a wealth of admirers, but when in 1793 she married the Nostell Priory baker, John Williamson, Sabine immediately cut her from her will and never spoke to her again. From that point, Sabine's own health deteriorated and she became gouty and obese, eventually requiring two servants to lift her out of her bed.

Here was the decisive point at which strength of character, confidence and even approachability became part of the dynamics of building household authority. Frances Ingram stepped easily into the role of elite household mistress because she prepared herself; she asked questions about the financial make-up of what was to be her marital home and continued to ensure regularity. Elizabeth Worsley did not have the luxury of experience, but was instead shown the practicalities of financial matters, whilst receiving some support from the family's employees. Sabine Winn, on the other hand, was the foreigner; the outsider who struggled to shake off feelings of isolation, and yet took no firm step towards integrating herself within important household routines and procedures that would have improved her state of mind. She described the Yorkshire countryside as 'one of the more desolate and ill-fated corners of the universe', and yet had Sabine acted upon her mother's early advice, then perhaps her authority and, indeed, duty in the household would have been a more pleasurable affair than the reality she experienced.²⁶

The scope of household authority for all three elite women was shaped by four main factors: wealth, social background, culture and personality. The first exposed a woman to the accounting routines and alerted her to the necessity of observing the scale of payments involved in her own household. Wealth offered managerial experience because it was dominated by matters of inheritance. An elite woman had to display a responsible attitude towards finance since it guaranteed stability for her family, the household and the safeguarding of her husband's estate.²⁷ The second was dictated by the presence and degree of wealth. Where great wealth imbued managerial experience with careful and responsible actions, the

social background of a woman who would marry into an elite family mattered because she brought extra capital and land to her husband's estates as agreed through an exhaustive marriage settlement. Without this element of inheritance and transfer of wealth, an elite woman would become a net cost whilst receiving her jointure. There were also serious ramifications within the family when attempting to introduce the authority of a woman from a lesser social rank. With no experience of accounting routines, any woman faced difficulties in gaining an upper hand, but it also meant she may have lacked assertiveness or a willingness to place herself in a position of authority.

Yet, this was equally true of elite women who had great wealth and the parental guidance needed for achieving authority in their households. In terms of the third factor, a different cultural heritage could also impede a woman's authority. An elite marriage founded on love and supplemented by wealth should have proved beneficial for those involved in forming the household, from kin to general and casual servant. Difficulty in communicating requisite domestic routines, however, left many household members bereft of a common influential figure. Delegation – a byword for authority – could become scrappy and ineffective because of language barriers, which in turn triggered frustration and insecurity amongst the household. For an elite woman hoping to control and command large numbers of staff, it was crucial for her to recognise these obstructions and to act upon them. Observing the household accounts provided a woman with important time for reflection and ushered her into the administrative domain. Here, she could question payments noted in the global account books and discuss running costs with the steward. It was not a public display of authority and for a woman unaccustomed to specific methods of accounting it offered quiet moments of study.

Each woman's success at acquiring and then maintaining authority over large numbers of people was down to the fourth factor: the strength of character to adapt to the running of her marital home and the ability to show assertiveness. Elizabeth Worsley wrote of her regret at having not exhibited a better degree of forcefulness towards certain members of the household and generally within her role as chatelaine. Frances Ingram was born with the necessary streak of confidence and, although her father's investment permitted her unusual financial freedoms, she was an attentive woman who fully understood the household as a community, whilst preserving fantastic friendships with many of her long-standing servants. For Sabine Winn, the feelings of boredom and isolation were penetrating enough to impair her already low levels of assertiveness.

If household management is to be viewed in business terms then forcefulness is a must in whatever era we probe. For the eighteenth-century elite woman, household management was neither hands-on, nor completely detached. In her marital home, an elite woman's authority started with the supervision of the accounts because without knowledge of financial matters and domestic routine she could not identify the needs of the household. More importantly, it allowed for discreet

interaction, which early on in her managerial role showed she expected control and regularity. Without experience, she could seek assistance and tackle household issues upon the advice of others. Without inclination, authority was clawed at and squandered by others.

Notes

1. West Yorkshire Archives Service, Wakefield (hereafter WYAS, Wakefield), Nostell Priory MSS (hereafter NP), A1/5A, Jeanne Esther d'Hervart at Vevey, Switzerland to Sabine Winn at Badsworth Hall, Yorkshire, 15 June 1763. I am extremely grateful for all the help given to me by Professor Christopher Todd in the translation and organisation of much of Sabine Winn's personal correspondence.

2. This article represents one theme explored in my doctoral thesis, 'Elite Women's Household Management; Yorkshire, 1680-1810', University of Leeds, 2007. It has since been published under the same title by VDM-Verlag, Saarbrücken 2008. Several women and their marital homes were the focus of that study across the old West and North Yorkshire Ridings divisions, including amongst others Mary Rockingham at Wentworth Woodhouse, Isabella Carlisle at Castle Howard and Frances Robinson at Newby Park.

3. Contemporary dictionaries like Kersey's *Dictionarium Anglo-Britannicum; or a General English Dictionary* (1708) determined *œconomy* to mean the government of a house or family. Johnson's 1760 *Dictionary of the English Language* was slightly more dissecting, offering his definition as, 'pertaining to the regulation of an household' and 'frugality; discretion of expense'. The modern-day *Oxford English Dictionary* cites the use of the phrase 'domestic *œconomy*' in *The Tatler* (1710) as of similar meaning to these early definitions of household management: 'the manner in which a household or a person's private expenditure is ordered.'

4. Peter Earle, *The Making of the English Middle Class: Business, Society and Family Life in London, 1660-1730* (London, University of California Press, 1989); L.T. Ulrich, *Good Wives: Image and Reality in the Lives of Women in Northern New England, 1650-1750* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1983); Amanda Vickery, *The Gentleman's Daughter* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1998), 130-5.

5. G. Markham, *The English Housewife*, (ed.) Michael R. Best (Kingston and Montreal, McGill-Queen's University Press, 1986), 1, title-page for 1615 edition. This has also been quoted in Alison Sim, *The Tudor Housewife* (Stroud, Sutton Publishing, 1996), 43.

6. See Ingrid H. Tague, *Women of Quality: Accepting and Contesting ideals of Femininity in England, 1690-1760* (Woodbridge, Boydell, 2002), 99-107.

7. For further reading on the subject of gendered division of labour and the elite household for this period see: Amanda Vickery, *Behind Closed Doors: At Home in Georgian England* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 2009) and also Vickery, 'His and Hers: Gender, Consumption and Household Accounting in Eighteenth-Century England',

Past and Present, 1/ supplement1 (2006), 12-38; Rosemary Baird, *Mistress of the House: Great Ladies and Grand Houses* (London, Phoenix, 2004); Stana Nenadic, *Lairds and Luxury: Highland Gentry in Eighteenth-Century Scotland* (Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 2007); Naomi Tadmor, *Family and Friends in Eighteenth-Century England: Household, Kinship, and Patronage* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2001); Randolph Trumbach, *The Rise of the Egalitarian Family: Aristocratic Kinship and Domestic Relations in Eighteenth-Century England* (New York, Academic Press, 1978); Joanna Martin, *Wives and Daughters: Women and Children in the Georgian Country House* (London, Palgrave Macmillan, 2004); Karen Harvey, 'Men Making Home: Masculinity and Domesticity in Eighteenth-Century Britain', *Gender & History*, 21/3 (2009), 520-40.

8. The Drummond's Bank archive is now incorporated into The Royal Bank of Scotland Group, which now holds details of all her transactions. Frances' account runs from 1755, the year of her twenty-first birthday, to 1807 [boxed 1811], when she died. Mainly DR/427/34, fol. 222, Folio 359 (1755); DR/427/35, Folio 223 (1756); DR/427/37, Folio 179; and DR/427/39, Folio 408.

9. National Archives (formerly Public Record Office), Kew (hereafter NA: PRO), Granville MSS, Leveson-Gower, first Earl Granville and predecessors and successors: Papers 30/29/4/2 papers of Lady Susan Stewart (from May 1768, Countess Gower; from March 1786, Marchioness Stafford). Letters from Frances Shephard (from 1758, Mrs Ingram; from April 1763, Viscountess Irwin). Frances to Lady Susan Stewart, 'Thursday night' [c.1765].

10. Thomas Worsley's father had accumulated great debt before his death in 1750, and his step-mother would still enjoy her jointure until 1768. Richard Wilson and Alan Mackley, *Creating Paradise: The Building of the English Country House 1660-1880* (Hambledon and London, Continuum, 2000), 337.

11. Giles Worsley, 'The Seduction of Elizabeth Lister and its Implications for the Worsley Family', *Women's History Review*, 13/2 (2004), 289-90.

12. Arthur Young, *A Six Months Tour through the North of England* (London, W. Strahan, 1770), 293.

13. Sheffield Archives, Wentworth Woodhouse Muniments (hereafter WWM), Stw P2/12, 28 December, and P2/17, Mary Rockingham to the steward Benjamin Hall, no date.

14. North Yorkshire County Record Office (hereafter NYCRO), Hovingham Hall, Worsley Archives, ZON 13/4/94, Ja Seton at Adelphi to Mrs Elizabeth Worsley at Hovingham, 10 November 1786, and ZON 13/4/95 Ja Seton at Adelphi to Elizabeth Worsley, 25 November 1786. See also Worsley, 'Seduction of Elizabeth Lister', 294-8. It is important to note here that Edward was probably suffering from manic depression, which, because of common contemporary misunderstandings of the condition, led the Worsleys to successfully set up a committee of lunacy through the Court of Chancery.

15. NYCRO Hovingham Hall, Worsley Archives ZON 13/6/3/7 and ZON 13/6/3/8, E. Worsley to her son George, 1794.

16. WYAS, Wakefield, NP A4/1509/8, Nathaniel Cholmley to his brother-in-law Rowland Winn, the fourth Baronet, 24 April 1760.

17. WYAS, Wakefield, NP A4/1541/22, Mary Winn to the fourth Baronet, 5 April 1760.

18. The most obvious example of this correspondence was that to a milliner, Mrs A. Charlton, in London. Charlton seems hurried in her efforts to advise Sabine on London fashions, sometimes having her sample wares returned when Sabine had not found them to her taste. Despite this, Charlton writes her hopes of seeing the Winn family in London each winter, even though Sabine herself rarely travelled to the capital.

19. Sir Rowland and Sabine Winn seemed to lack managerial authority in most aspects of Nostell Priory's household and estate business. Rowland's own letters concerning money and expenses are abrupt and demanding, especially when he is approached by close family members stating terms of inheritance in the wills of his uncle and father. For example, see WYAS, Wakefield, NP A1/5/3, Letters from Elizabeth, Lady Strickland, sister; from brother-in-law Sir George Strickland; nephew William Strickland to Sir Rowland and Sabine, c.1766-1785; and A1/5/7/2, Letters to Rowland Winn, from his Aunt A. E. Winn regarding an uncle's will, mainly 1763.

20. WYAS, Wakefield, NP A4/1535/6, Sabine at Nostell to Rowland, 9 October 1775. Most of Sabine Winn's personal correspondence was written in French, especially to her husband. The italicised text here was Sabine's own emphasis where she broke into English as a means of literally underlining her anger.

21. WYAS, Wakefield, NP A4/1535/8, Sabine at Nostell to Rowland in Thornton, 24 October 1775.

22. WYAS, Wakefield, NP A4/1549/12, letter to Sabine Winn, unsigned and undated.

23. Catherine Cappe, *Memoirs of the Life of the Late Mrs Catherine Cappe* (London, Longman, 1823), 85-6.

24. WYAS, Wakefield, NP A1/1509/7, Letter from Rowland Winn 4th Baronet to his son, June 1759.

25. Christopher Todd, 'A Swiss Milady in Yorkshire: Sabine Winn of Nostell Priory', *Yorkshire Archaeological Journal*, (2005), 221.

26. Rowland and Sabine Winn lived at Badsworth Hall (about four miles south-east of Nostell Priory) for a time in the early 1760s when it was rented to them by the second Marquis of Rockingham. Christopher Todd and Sophie Raikes, 'Love, Rebellion and Redemption: Three Generations of Women at Nostell Priory', in *Maids and Mistresses: Celebrating 300 Years of Women and the Yorkshire Country House*, ed. Ruth M. Larsen (York, The Yorkshire Country House Partnership, 2004), 79.

27. Tague, *Women of Quality*, 106.

The importance of being married: Lord and Lady Palmerston

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On the 17 September 1869, Emily, Lady Palmerston, was buried alongside her husband at Westminster Abbey. *The Morning Post*'s editorial from that day noted:

We hope, as we believe, that the instances are not few in married life in which husband and wife are so clearly each other's complement, that in mind as well as in heart each makes up for the deficiency of the other. But with regard to the husband and wife who to-day rejoin each other in the grave, the part they had to play in the great world and the extraordinary abilities with which they were gifted, single them out as examples of what wedded life may be and ought to be, and how vital is the influence which springs from the union of congenial natures.¹

The Morning Post was not alone. *The Daily News* felt she was in the truest sense her 'husband's helpmate'. *The Pall Mall Gazette* noted how her 'service to her husband extended far beyond the creation of the brilliant salon at Cambridge House', while *The Times* argued 'it was her intense interest in him and in his political fortunes that made her a politician'.² None of these sentiments are reflected in the wealth of work on Lord Palmerston's career. In ignoring the role played by Emily, political historians have failed to recognize and appreciate a crucial contributing factor in Palmerston's political success. This article explores how, for almost forty years, Emily helped secure Palmerston's position at the centre of both politics and London society.

Emily, like most of her contemporaries, has been pushed to the sidelines of political history, confined to a world of frivolous gossip and stained bed sheets. Political historians, and more recently gender historians, have presumed that women played a restricted role in the world of high politics in the nineteenth century. The reasoning is to some extent logical. They had no vote and would, apparently, spend their lives bombarded by prescriptive literature, instructing them on how to be docile wives. High-politics is thus presumed to be conducted solely by the likes of Palmerston, Disraeli and Gladstone. The narrative of the struggle for political emancipation has reinforced the male-only image of the political citizen. Meanwhile, women's history, influenced by second-wave feminism, focused on those women who fought against oppression and pushed for the right to vote. Emily and others like her do not sit comfortably in the story of women's suffrage. This gap in the literature has been compounded by the proliferation of the language and imagery of 'separate spheres', which located the political in the 'public' world outside the home.³

Dualisms based on a strict division between the public and the private, the work and the home and the

male and female have been the focus of an intense debate among gender historians. The polarising image of the public and the private has been revised, offering a more nuanced interpretation of nineteenth-century life. It is now almost accepted that the nineteenth-century man could be both the 'breadwinner' and the 'doting father', moving freely between the public and the private often conducting essentially private acts – eating, drinking, intercourse – in public spaces: the gentleman's club, the brothel, and depending on his orientation, St James's Park.⁴ In a similar vein, it is now commonplace to recognise that women could play a 'public' role. The importance of working-class females in Britain's industrial expansion has been well documented, as has the involvement of middle-class women in the public world of charity, education and the church. However, the world of high politics and diplomacy – the world of Emily and Palmerston – is still conceived in exclusively male terms. As a consequence, the political role aristocratic women played in the familiar, 'private' spaces of the home is still a neglected area of study.

The masculine imagery of political spaces – the Houses of Parliament, Whitehall and certain West-End clubs – presented by traditional political historians has been seldom questioned. This leaves us with a distorted picture of nineteenth-century politics. For a satisfactory understanding of Palmerston's political success, this is unfortunate. Palmerston was Secretary at War for eighteen years, serving under five Prime Ministers; Foreign Secretary under Grey and Melbourne in the 1830s and Lord John Russell in the 1840s; Home Secretary in the Whig-Peelite ministry of 1852, and served two terms as Prime Minister. While his career has provided political and diplomatic historians with abundant evidence about his domestic and diplomatic policy, little attention has been paid to the role his wife played in his political advancement. Palmerston's career was marked by victories over his own party, the press, the public and the crown. His victory over London society, the victory that secured his political position, has been largely ignored. This is because his wife has been neglected as a relevant partner in his political life.

Born in 1787, the daughter of Peniston and Elizabeth Lamb, Emily grew up immersed in Whig society. The family, whose wealth and peerage were barely three generations old, owed their society position to the work of Emily's mother, Lady Melbourne. Under her watch, Melbourne House had become one of the centres of Whig life and Elizabeth, together with the Duchess of Devonshire and Lady Holland, became the pin-up girls for Georgian society. Emily, like her siblings, was groomed to have a public role. While she received a typical education, provided by a governess as was suitable for her sex and class, her mother and the Duchess of Devonshire taught her the skills and morals she needed for life as a Whig

woman. These included a love of parties, a strong sense of family, a keen interest in political comings and goings and a loose interpretation of sexual morality.

The influence of Georgiana manifested itself in Emily's speech. She quickly adopted the 'Devonshire House drawl', the odd form of pronunciation favoured by the Regency Whigs. Having made her debut in society a year earlier, Emily married the unremarkable Lord Cowper in 1805. Having given Cowper an indisputable heir and a few questionable spares, Emily quickly followed in her mother's footsteps. Contemporaries recalling the young Emily noted how she possessed the 'most exquisitely feminine qualities ... [of] grace, refinement, sweetness of disposition, womanly sympathies, instinctive insight into character, tact, temper and wonderful to relate heart'.⁵ No doubt these qualities helped ensure her position as the 'undisputed leader of English society'.⁶ By her early twenties, she had become one of the famous female Patronesses of Almack's, the only mixed London club. Emily, together with Lady Jersey, Lady Sefton, Princess Lieven, Princess Eszterhazy and Lady Castlereagh, ensured that the club in the heart of fashionable St James' became 'the seventh heaven of the fashionable world'.

Such an achievement was remarkable for a club that offered only tea and lemonade and bread and butter to its customers. The pull of Almack's was the Patronesses: they had the 'power to determine who was worthy of admission into Almack's, and by extension, who was worthy of admission into the aristocratic class they represented'.⁷ The competition for admission was fierce. In 1820, Emily told her youngest brother that people were 'as mad as ever after Almack's ... and plague me with their applications'. To keep this 'Almack's tyranny' in check the Ladies had 'started upon half a score of new rules to keep them in order'.⁸ No one was immune from the strict rules governing admission and even the Duke of Wellington fell foul of the rules when he turned up wearing the wrong colour of trousers. That episode prompted a daily newspaper to print a verse directed at the Patronesses:

Tired of our trousers are ye grown?

But since to them your anger reaches,

Is it because 'tis so well known,

You always love to wear the breeches.⁹

In her bid to 'wear the breeches', Emily was helped by her circle of close political friends and relatives. By the 1820s, she had established a formidable network of correspondents. The close relationship Emily had with her two brothers, William, the heir apparent following the death of the eldest Lamb in 1805, and Frederick, would be maintained throughout their adult lives. Both of Emily's brothers were rising stars within the Whig Party. William served as Prime Minister from 1835 to 1841, while Frederick had a distinguished career as British Ambassador in Lisbon and Vienna. The three relied on each other to ensure that they all knew the latest political news. Along with writing to her brothers, Emily communicated regularly with, among others, Princess Lieven, the notorious wife of the Russian Ambassador; Harriet Cavendish, daughter of

Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire and wife of first Earl Granville; and Mary Huskisson, wife of William Huskisson, a Tory politician and the first and only minister to be run over by a steam train.

Her letters have survived almost in their entirety. They reveal a woman obsessed with the minutia of the day-to-day business of politics, with an opinion about everything and everyone. Indeed her letters were so damning, she quickly adopted a system of cypher names. George IV was referred to as Henry; Metternich was known as Betsey; Wellington became The Child and Palmerston was referred to as either Mary or the Viscount. Instructing Fred on the system, she reflected that while she felt their 'letters are not read at the [Foreign] office ... one cannot be too careful'.¹⁰ Through this tight-knit group of friends, Emily was often privy to more information than most of the sitting members of the Houses of Parliament. To the wider political world, she used this privileged position with discretion, never over-stepping the mark, preferring to support Whig politics rather than force a political agenda. While Emily's close connections with her friends and brothers placed her in a privileged political position, it would be her relationship with Henry Temple, Lord Palmerston that secured her most important political success.

Although noted by Palmerston's numerous biographers, the relationship between Emily and Palmerston has received remarkably little attention. As David Brown has recently pointed out, this is partially due to constraints of time.¹¹ Historians writing Palmerston's biography are confronted with the monumental task of reading and rationalising the thousands of letters, diary entries and official dispatches produced during his sixty-year career. Few historians have attempted this. The more conscientious have recognized the marriage, but tend to skip over Emily's role, perhaps because she is worthy of study in her own right. Historians have given more attention to Palmerston's reputation as Lord Cupid. It is easy to see why. In parts of his diary, which he kept intermittently, Palmerston recorded his 'conquests'. Emily would have been scornful. Writing to her brother about another man's diary, she remarked that it was 'so stupid of a man to go thro' life with a high flown scrap book of hearts'.¹²

His diary recorded his 'fine days' and 'fine nights', with some days and nights being 'very fine', and the occasional emphatic '2' written after the Lady in question. For instance, in 1829 Palmerston spent three fine days with a Lady K and in 1819 there were a couple of entries for a Lady Whaley, who, in the end of year budget was recorded as having been paid £827.¹³ Not every night was a success. During the Christmas period of 1827, which Palmerston spent in Paris, he met a Madame Demay. The diary entry for the 27 December recorded, 'met Madame Demay. Entered Porters Lodge. Trouble with the Porter. Failed'.¹⁴ The diary also gives an insight into the turbulent state of affairs between Palmerston and Emily. The pair had been close since their teenage years, when Palmerston, a contemporary of William's, often visited the Melbournes' country estate. The first mention of the couple

in public was in 1809, four years after Emily's marriage to Lord Cowper, when Harriet Cavendish recorded seeing them together at a society ball, although Disraeli always swore their encounter was at the Opera.¹⁵ From 1809 until 1833, when the relationship 'settled down to a permanent and relatively exclusive arrangement', the pair continued to see each other, despite their meetings ending with the two, as Palmerston recorded, at 'war'. It was not unusual for them to spend months at time not speaking to each other.¹⁶ The source of the tension appears to have been Emily's inability to stay faithful to either her husband or her lover. She was, after all, regarded as the 'most notorious and profligate woman in London', with her affections pulled in at least three different ways at any one time.¹⁷

Palmerston was driven mad with jealousy. In the summer of 1816, he followed Emily and her husband on their continental tour, hoping to catch a few quiet minutes with his lover. Despite ten weeks spent manically dashing from one European city to the next, he never set eyes on her. His diary also records how, after finishing the day's session in Parliament, Palmerston would hurry to see Emily for a couple hours, returning home before sunrise. By 1830, the political connection between the pair was utilised by their contemporaries, with Princess Lieven seeking Emily's help to secure Palmerston's appointment as Grey's Foreign Secretary. The death of Lord Cowper in 1837 eventually gave Palmerston the opportunity to formalise the relationship. Within a few months, he had made his first advance, an overture for which he received Emily's rebuke:

Your statement today is completely and entirely true. I wish to say no more on this subject now, but this I will say, that there is no other person in the world of whom I should ever think of for one moment in that light, and that I am quite sure that there exists no other person with whom I could ever have the least prospect of happiness. Now pray pray do me justice, look into my heart and cease your suspicions.¹⁸

Emily's protest quickly ceased.

The lovers, both in their fifties, were married at a small ceremony at St George's, Hanover Square, on the 16 December 1839. The news of the nuptials drew warm wishes from all sections of high society. Even the young Queen wrote to tell her fiancé the news, as she knew it would make him 'smile'.¹⁹ Emily's closest friends were quick to congratulate her, writing that she was 'wise to look for happiness and comfort; a peaceful home; someone to care for you; support, constant companionship and a common interest for the rest of your days'.²⁰ For her own part, the new bride reflected that she was 'much happier than [she] ... ever expected to be again', while Lady Holland noted that she 'never did ... see a man more in love & devoted' than Palmerston.²¹

The Palmerston marriage offers an interesting picture of aristocratic gender relations. Courtship, marriage and sexual relations have long been an important subject of enquiry for gender and social historians. Here

the experience of couples, such as the Palmerstons, falls victim to the periodisation imposed on the past by academics. While both Pat Jalland and Joan Perkins look at aristocratic unions within the wider context of marriage in the nineteenth century, both suggest that the political power wielded by aristocratic wives was limited. Jalland acknowledges that a political hostess 'could oil the wheels of her husband's career' but ultimately she could rarely 'push her husband's interest far beyond the bounds of his political capacity'.²² Perkins' position is a similar one, concluding that 'political power had little to do with social supremacy'.²³

A more sympathetic picture is painted by Kim Reynold's in her work *Aristocratic Women and Political Society in Victorian Britain*.²⁴ This study offers a comprehensive account of the 'public' activities of some forty aristocratic wives. To provide some theoretical framework to her study, Reynolds adopts the concept of 'incorporation' from the work of feminist sociologists. This model, which argues that 'in most societies ... married women are in many ways asymmetrically drawn in to the social person of their husbands', is used to support the notion that wifely influence was an integral feature of Victorian political society.²⁵ The model presents a useful framework within which to assess and quantify wifely influence. However, imposing models upon the past can have a distorting effect. Incorporation recalls uncomfortably the glib remark that 'behind every great man, is a great woman'. The cumulative impression evoked by these works is one of political wives, two or three steps behind their husbands, latching on to the political agenda when and if they could.

Such condescension is not apparent in the work on elite women in the previous century. The work of Amanda Vickery, Elaine Chalus, Randolph Trumbach and Amanda Foreman has served to stress the diversity of upper-class female experience in the eighteenth century.²⁶ Foreman's portrayal of the unhappy marriage between Georgiana and her husband, the Duke of Devonshire, is counterbalanced by the picture painted by Vickery of the marriage between William and Anne Gossip. The myriad of matrimonial experience – from blissful happiness to nightmarish misery – suggests that the experience of marriage was dependent on the individuals involved, as well as the ideological, economic or legal context the unions found themselves in. Such diverse experience is explored in a political context by Elaine Chalus in her work on elite women in late Georgian and Regency England. Chalus offers four 'rough' categories for 'women's participation' – confidante, adviser, agent and partner.²⁷ The characteristics of a political partner – 'high politicized, directly involved, and independent ... their political judgement ... trusted ... their influence recognized' – fit Emily just as appropriately as Chalus' description of Lady Rockingham's activities.²⁸ That Emily had the opportunity to be Palmerston's political partner challenges the prevailing image of nineteenth-century aristocratic marriage.

Although Emily was occasionally fearful her husband's political success meant she would 'hardly be able to bully him as usual', the marriage was one of

relative equality.²⁹ The suggestion of some form of gender equality in the nineteenth century appears oxymoronic. Emily, like all of her female contemporaries, was legally her husband's subordinate. The roof over her head, the food on her plate and her status in society can all be linked to her husband's position. 'The Law though', as Linda Colley has pointed out, 'if not an ass, is rarely an adequate reflector of social realities'.³⁰ Dismissing the nuances of the relationship between Emily and Henry on the basis of a legal framework, not the complexities of their marriage found in contemporary evidence, seems foolish. By virtue of their age, Emily was fifty-two when she married the fifty-four-year-old Palmerston, the pair escaped many of the trappings of aristocratic marriage. Neither was under pressure to marry well. Palmerston, by waiting for Emily, had put love before the need for heirs. Although widowed, Emily's lot was hardly a bad one: she was still financially secure and her status in society owed as much to her own efforts as that of her closest male relation, be that her father or her first husband. With such outside pressures removed, the pair was free to marry for companionship. Their shared happiness was immediately conveyed to friends. Palmerston 'confidently expect[ed] much future comfort and happiness', a set of emotions Princess Lieven was certain would be bestowed on Emily after the nuptials, writing to her dear friend: 'you are happy ... and you always will be.'³¹ That the pair were in love is easy to prove.

That it was a marriage with some form of equality at its core is, perhaps, harder to claim. Gender equality is, of course, a term inextricably linked with twentieth- and twentieth-first-century feminism; it is bound up in calls for equal pay, a fair division of domestic labour and sexual liberation. Such demands seem a world away from the experience of women in the nineteenth century, who were legally, economically and ideologically second-class citizens. However, the characteristics of aristocratic life – with politics conducted in drawing rooms, household management involving hundreds of staff and acres of land, and sexual permissiveness (especially in Whig circles) a normal part of adult life – diluted the impact of the legal and ideological constraints and expectations that were pressed upon nineteenth-century wives. This was undoubtedly the case for the union between Emily and Palmerston. The correspondence between the pair, and their wider friendship network, reveal a marriage based on mutual respect and support.

Palmerston, who had waited thirty years to marry Emily, would regularly solicit his wife's opinion on both domestic and foreign affairs. Emily, who 'buried herself in ... [Palmerston's] red boxes', became well versed in 'always poking in her small advice'.³² She often found herself charged with curbing her husband's 'radical propensities', feeling 'he has more leading that way than I think right in these times'.³³ This was never more apparent than during Palmerston's third tenure at the Foreign Office, when relations between Crown, Cabinet and Foreign Secretary had reached breaking point. Contemporary perceptions that Palmerston was ruling with 'absolute despotism' reflected the mood at Windsor.³⁴ The continuing battle

over the control of foreign affairs between the Foreign Office and the royal couple had been compounded by Palmerston's policy during the 1848 revolutions. Although Emily thought the Queen was 'a little witch', she continually urged her husband to treat the Monarch 'more lightly and more courteously, and not enter into disagreement with her but lead her gently, by letting her believe you both have the same opinions'.³⁵ Had Palmerston followed his wife's advice, his plan to meet Kossuth, the Hungarian Nationalist leader, and his recognition of Louis Napoleon's *coup d'état* might not have forced him from office in 1851. Emily's role, however, extended beyond political advice.

Writing immediately after his marriage, Palmerston noted how the change in his domestic circumstances would 'render his house more useful'.³⁶ In her work on elite women in the late eighteenth century, Elaine Chalus has identified that there was 'no neat dividing line between family and politics'.³⁷ This feature of Georgian politics was still a characteristic in Whig political culture as late as the 1850s.³⁸ The beneficiaries of this link between political influence and family networks are normally cast as mothers, wives and sisters. A women's access to the political agenda was, in this sense, secured only by her close male relations. The reality for the Palmerstons union was the reverse. As a bachelor, Palmerston had been a sought-after guest at dinners, but had rarely reciprocated. His marriage to Emily transformed his position in this respect. For Palmerston's political fortunes, this development should not be underestimated. He had been a cuckoo in the Whig nest since 1830. His relationship with the Lambs helped him integrate, socially and politically, with his new colleagues, but, until 1839, he had remained something of an outsider. In the years following the marriage, Emily exercised her formidable talents as a hostess to the considerable advantage of her husband's career.

The importance of political society will be understood by readers of the novels of Trollope and Disraeli.³⁹ The few square miles between Oxford Street, Hyde Park, Piccadilly and Regent Street became the playground for politicians and their wives during the parliamentary sessions. It was here, as on the floor of the House of Commons, that reputations were ruined and careers fortified. While occasionally growing tired of being 'hunted like a hare', Emily preferred being in London where 'everyday there is something new and interesting', and grew increasingly annoyed when there was 'nobody in town' as 'one hears very little'.⁴⁰ Emily's appreciation of the political importance of London society is confirmed by her continued advice to Palmerston when she was out of town. She was concerned that as the 'House of Commons takes up so much of his time', her husband 'goes but very little into general society'.⁴¹ She was continually anxious he did not 'shut' himself 'up too much with' his 'papers in' his 'distant room', and insisted that he should appear to 'enjoy the society'.⁴²

Immediately following their marriage, the couple moved into 5 Carlton House Terrace in Piccadilly, now the Army and Navy Club. Emily immediately remarked that her new house was 'a beautiful home' which 'will do

well for receptions'.⁴³ Within the first month of married life, Carlton House Terrace was the venue for 'one ball and a great many dinners and parties', all of which had been 'agreeable'.⁴⁴ Emily quickly settled into her London social pattern. She held her regular party on Saturdays, leaving Wednesday free so she could stay 'at home with a tea table for all [her] friends who choose to come ... with about 30 people being her usual number'. These mid-week gatherings were believed to be still more liked than her larger parties.⁴⁵ Emily's right to Saturday night was quickly established, so much so that she regularly pulled guests away from the Prime Minister's own gatherings and coaches would queue for over a mile from 'circus to Apsley House'.⁴⁶ The appeal of Carlton House Terrace, and later Cambridge House, stemmed from Emily's guest list. Contemporaries often told her she did not need to 'offer ... any excitement beyond that of your own society'.⁴⁷ Unlike her contemporaries, Emily Lamb's guest list was strictly non-partisan. She invited politicians from across the political spectrum to meet with foreign dignitaries, diplomats and journalists under one roof. Reflecting on her friend's unique position, Princess Lieven wrote to Emily: 'There is no one more popular than yourself and there is no one cleverer in smoothing over difficulties, in making people meet each other, in fact in performing the tasks which are at the same time the most useful and the most difficult'.⁴⁸ This was enormously useful.

Emily opened up Carlton House Terrace for the first time in the midst of the second Mehmet Ali crisis. The affair, sparked by Mehmet Ali's reassertion of his rights over Syria in 1838, had brought Melbourne's administration to the verge of collapse. The unfolding of events in the Near East saw Palmerston's foreign policy come into direct conflict with the leading Whig grandees within the government. Clarendon and Holland were angered by the Foreign Secretary's decision to discard one of the guiding principles of Whig foreign policy, an alliance with Louis Philippe's Orleanist France, in favour of working with Russia. On 8 July 1840, the two took the unprecedented decision to send a separate minute to the Queen, voicing their dismay at the diplomatic isolation of France. Here Emily was in full support of her husband's policy, believing that Thiers 'had completely lost his head'.⁴⁹ Significantly, Emily chose these months to hold her first parties as Palmerston's wife. The diplomatic community was 'much pleased' at her 'absolutely brilliant' parties, which had been of the 'utmost assistance ... to the government'.⁵⁰

With the Melbourne administration on the verge of collapse, the opportunity to discuss politics away from the pressure of the Cabinet room was welcomed. Contemporaries noted how Palmerston's Cabinet enemies would corner Emily to ensure that she, and by default her husband, understood that if he 'carried his point' to the 'last', the Government would be 'broken up'.⁵¹ In the end, Palmerston's policy of bluff and blunder won out. The British and Austrian military presence forced Mehmet Ali to the July Note in November 1840. Significantly, Palmerston's departure from the principles of Whig foreign policy did not ruin his position within the

party in the way it might have done. He could have been forced from office. It helped that his wife was the Prime Minister's sister, as did her parties. Emily ensured that Palmerston cemented his position at the centre of Whig politics by offering the opportunity for fighting factions to meet and by taking the time to re-assure her husband's critics about his intentions.

Emily's socialising had become one of Palmerston's strongest assets, as the role of Carlton House Terrace during the Mehmet Ali crisis illustrates. Commentators noted: 'In a perfectly virtuous state of society, a card for dinner, a civil speech and a smile, would be without political influence. But we have not yet attained this blissful condition'.⁵² Emily continually used her guest list to ensure Palmerston's position was strengthened. Writing to Princess Lieven, Emily reflected on her role: 'A woman's part is to create understanding and sympathy between conflicting partners. I can truthfully say that I have always tried to do this'.⁵³ During the upheavals over the Repeal of the Corn Laws in 1846, contemporaries noted how Emily's parties were still well attended, as 'people [were] glad to have some talk', a situation made easier because the leading political figures all 'met willingly in [her] house'.⁵⁴

When Palmerston was Prime Minister, any Liberal member threatening to vote against the government at the division would have to 'reckon' with Lady Palmerston. She would invite them to her 'headquarters' to 'soften down' their 'asperities' and gratify their 'vanities'.⁵⁵ Each guest was accorded the same welcome, whether a foreign monarch or an insignificant backbencher, and Emily would often be on hand to ensure that her husband, although 'often ignorant of the name of the person whose hand he so cordially shook', conveyed the 'impression that he had been most anxiously expecting and was quite delighted' at their arrival.⁵⁶ After any success in the Commons, Emily, dutifully watching from the Ladies Gallery, would rush home to open her house, so that MPs coming to congratulate Palmerston would be greeted by an invitation to stay for a party. The political implications were clear. Palmerston had, by the formation of the 1852 Whig-Peelite ministry, become indispensable. This was in no small part due to the role Emily played in her corner of Piccadilly.

Historians have found it easy to either ignore or dismiss Emily's concern over her guest list as a frivolous occupation suited to a woman with nothing better to do. In this, they have exercised a level of prejudice contemporaries did not hold. For those attending or observing Emily's 'glorious parties', the wider political significance was clear. To them, it meant that 'the Russells, Cavendishes and Greys today and the Stanleys and their lieutenants tomorrow' could share 'a fair division of the spoils of administration between the two camps'. *The Morning Chronicle* felt that Emily's parties 'represented the rule of a great people by one order - one caste ...'.⁵⁷ It is this aspect of aristocratic government that is often overlooked. Emily's parties do not show up in the copious Public Record Office files and Hansard reports so loved by political and diplomatic scholars. This does not provide a suitable justification for ignoring her role and influence. In

her own correspondence, and that of her contemporaries, there is enough evidence to suggest Emily played a decisive role in pivotal moments in Palmerston's career, notably his appointment as Foreign Secretary in 1830, his victory over Clarendon and Hollan in 1839-1840, the crisis of 1852 and ultimately his victory over Lord John Russell for the leadership of the party. She maintained her position, and that of her husband, for four decades.

Emily's role in Palmerston's career serves as a reminder that high politics in the nineteenth century did not just depend on having the keys to office or the right to vote. Late-Georgian and early-Victorian politics was facilitated, influenced and modulated by women who have since been airbrushed out of the picture. The assertion that 'political power had little do with social supremacy' only serves to dismiss the role Emily played on the grounds it does not fit the narrow and exacting fraternal image of nineteenth-century political spaces and politicians that historians have hitherto presented.⁵⁸ Emily's activities suggest that politics was not just conducted by men in top hats and tails gesticulating on the floor of the Commons. A successful Saturday party held as much political utility for Palmerston's career as a good hustings. Emily's role, as Palmerston's political partner, ensured that her husband dominated British politics for over three decades. Her significance should not be underestimated. In 1855, Queen Victoria had no choice but to call for Palmerston, a man she detested, to be Prime Minister – both the fourteenth Earl of Derby and Lord John Russell realised they could neither form a government with Palmerston or without him. Palmerston's centrality within the political elite was cemented by Emily's social influence, political advice and appeasing endeavours.

Notes

1. *The Morning Post*, 17 September 1869, 4.
2. 'The Daily News' reported in *The Pall Mall Gazette*, 13 September 1869; *The Pall Mall Gazette*, 15 September 1869; *The Times*, 15 September 1869, 8.
3. For discussions on the 'separate spheres' debate see: Lynn Abrams, 'The Unseamed Picture: Conflicting Narratives of Women in the Modern European Past', *Gender and History*, 20 (2008) 628-43; Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class 1780-1850* (London, Routledge, 2002); Amanda Vickery, 'Golden Age to Separate Spheres? A Review of the categories and chronology of English Women's History', *The Historical Journal*, 36 (1993), 383-414.
4. For discussion about masculinity and male roles in the eighteenth and nineteenth century see: Stefan Dudink, Karen Hagerman and John Tosh (eds), *Masculinities in Politics and War: Gendering Modern History* (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2004); Tim Hitchcock, *English Sexualities, 1700-1800* (Basingstoke, Macmillan, 1997); Michael Roper and John Tosh (eds), *Manful Assertions: Masculinities in Britain since 1800* (London, Routledge, 1991); John Tosh, *A Man's Place: Masculinity and the Middle-Class in Victorian* (London, Yale University

Press, 1999).

5. Francis Evans Bailey, *The Love Story of Lady Palmerston* (London, Hutchinson & Co., 1938), 50.
6. *Ibid.*, 50.
7. Judith Lewis, *In the Family Way: Childbearing in the British Aristocracy 1760-1860* (New Jersey, Rutgers University Press, 1986), 20.
8. Lady Cowper to Frederick Lamb, 4 May 1820, in *The Letters of Lady Palmerston: Selected and Edited from the Originals at Broadlands and Elsewhere*, ed. Tresham Lever (London, John Murray, 1957), 33.
9. *The Morning Chronicle*, 13 May 1819.
10. Lady Cowper to Frederick Lamb, 20 March 1821, cited in Kenneth Bourne, *Palmerston: The Early Years 1784-1841* (London, Allen Lane, 1982), 193.
11. David Brown, *Palmerston: A Biography* (London, Yale University Press, 2010), 3.
12. Lady Cowper to Mrs Lamb, 7 February 1815, cited in Bourne, *Palmerston*, 212.
13. Palmerston's diary [hereafter PD], 28 May, 11 and 13 September 1829; cited in Bourne, *Palmerston*, 214.
14. PD, 24 and 27 October 1819. For annual accounts, see Bourne, *Palmerston*, 214, fn. 59.
15. See Bourne, *Palmerston*, 188.
16. PD, 27 December 1829, cited in Bourne, *Palmerston*, 215.
17. See Bourne, *Palmerston*, 194, fn. 28.
18. Lady Cowper to Lord Palmerston, 11 October 1837, in *The Letters of Lady Palmerston*, ed. Lever, 212.
19. Arthur Christopher Benson and Viscount Esher (eds), *The Letters of Queen Victoria: A Selection from Her Majesty's Correspondence between the years 1837 and 1861* (London, John Murray, 1907), i, 255.
20. Princess Lieven to Lady Palmerston, 23 December 1839, in *The Lieven-Palmerston Correspondence 1828-1856*, ed. A. Sudley (London, John Murray, 1943), 177.
21. Lady Palmerston to Frederick Lamb, 15 March 1840, cited in *The Letters of Lady Palmerston*, ed. Lever, 225.
22. Patricia Jalland, *Women, Marriage and Politics 1860-1914* (Oxford, Clarendon, 1986), 195.
23. Joan Perkin, *Women and Marriage in Nineteenth-Century England* (London, Routledge, 1989), 80.
24. Kim Reynolds, *Aristocratic Women and Political Society in Victorian Britain* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1998).
25. Hilary Callent and Shirley Ardener (eds), *The Incorporated Wife* (London, Croom Helm, 1984), 1.
26. Amanda Vickery, *The Gentleman's Daughter: Women's Lives in Georgian England* (London, Yale University Press, 1998); Elaine Chalus, *Elite Women in English Political Life c. 1754-1790* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2005); Randolph Trumbach, *The Rise of the Egalitarian Family: Aristocratic Kinship and Domestic Relations* (New York, Academic Press, 1978); Amanda Foreman, *Georgiana, the Duchess of Devonshire* (London, Harper Collins, 1998).
27. Chalus, *Elite Women*, 54. Chalus defines her four categories thus: confidantes 'were given insights into the workings of the political word but required to do little in return,' (56). Advisers would extend 'the

range of involvement manifested by confidants ... they provided political men with a discreet (or not-so-discreet) combination of support, criticism, direction, and strategy, either through correspondence or in person,' (58). Female agents were 'the acknowledged delegates of their families, friends, or political connections,' (68-69).

28. Ibid., 70.

29. Lady Palmerston to Frederick Lamb, 20 April 1846, in *The Letters of Lady Palmerston*, ed. Lever, 280.

30. Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nations 1707-1837* (London, Pimlico, 2003), 239.

31. K. Bourne (ed.), *The Letters of the Third Viscount Palmerston to Laurence and Elizabeth Sullivan 1804-1863* (London, Royal Historical Society, 1979), 270; Princess Lieven to Lady Palmerston, 23 December 1839, in *The Lieven-Palmerston Correspondence 1828-1856*, Ed. Sudley, 177.

32. Lady Palmerston to Comtess de Flauhaut, October 1840 and Lady Palmerston to Lord Palmerston, 19 September 1853, in Ibid., 238, 334.

33. Lady Cowper to Frederick Lamb, 14 June 1832, in Ibid., 193.

34. Henry Reeve, *The Greville Memoirs* (London, Longmans, 1885), iv, 307.

35. Lady Palmerston to Lord Palmerston, 19 October 1848, British Library (hereafter BL) Add. MS 45553 f. 198-201.

36. Bourne, Palmerston to Laurence and Elizabeth Sullivan, 270.

37. Chalus, *Elite Women*, 26.

38. Lesley Mitchell looks at the family networks that dominated Whig politics in *The Whig World: 1760-1837* (London, Hambledon and London, 2005).

39. For example see Benjamin Disraeli, *Endymion* (London, Longmans, 1880) and A. Trollope's *Palliser Novels: Can You Forgive Her?*, 2 Vols. (London, Chapham and Hall, 1864-1865); *Phineas Finn*, 2 Vols. (London, Virtue & Co., 1869); *The Eustace Diamonds*, 3 Vols. (London, Chapham and Hall, 1873); *Phineas Redux*, 2 Vols. (London, Chapham and Hall, 1874); *The Prime Minister*, 4 Vols. (London, Chapham and Hall, 1876) and *The Duke's Children*, 3 Vols. (London, Chapham and Hall, 1880).

40. Lady Palmerston to Lady Holland, 16 July 1853, BL. Add. MS 52125, ff. 190-191; Princess Lieven to Lady Cowper, 6 August 1834, in *The Lieven-Palmerston Correspondence*, ed. Sudley, 51; Lady Palmerston to Lord Palmerston, 28 April 1859, in *The Letters of Lady Palmerston*, ed. Lever, 355.

41. Lady Palmerston to Lady Holland, 16 August 1853, BL. Add. MS 52125, ff.160-162.

42. Lady Palmerston to Lord Palmerston, 19 September 1853, in *The Letters of Lady Palmerston*, ed. Lever, 334.

43. Lady Palmerston to Mrs. Huskisson, 26 December 1839, BL Add MS. 39949, ff. 170-171.

44. Lady Palmerston to Mrs. Huskisson, 19 March 1840, BL Add MS. 39949, ff. 172-173.

45. Lady Palmerston to Mrs. Huskisson, March 1846, BL Add. MS 39949, f. 223.

46. *Lloyd's Weekly Newspaper*, 19 September 1869.

47. Princess Lieven to Lady Cowper, 27 November

1828, in *The Lieven-Palmerston Correspondence*, ed. Sudley, 6-7.

48. Lady Palmerston to Princess Lieven, February 1840, in Ibid., 182.

49. Lady Palmerston to Lord Palmerston, 29 November 1840, B. L. Add. MS 45553, ff. 15-19.

50. Princess Lieven to Lady Palmerston, 8 March 1840, in *The Lieven-Palmerston Correspondence*, ed. Sudley, 183.

51. Reeve, *The Greville Memoirs*, iv, 332.

52. *The Pall Mall Gazette*, 13 September 1869.

53. Lady Palmerston to Princess Lieven, November 1846, in *The Lieven-Palmerston Correspondence*, ed. Sudley, 292.

54. Lady Palmerston to Mrs. Huskisson, March 1846, BL Add. MS 39949, f. 223.

55. *The Pall Mall Gazette*, 13 September 1869.

56. Ibid.

57. *Lloyd's Weekly Newspaper*, 19 September 1869.

58. Perkins, *Women and Marriage*, 80.

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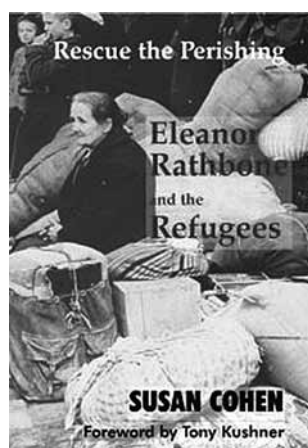
Book Reviews

Susan Cohen, *Rescue the Perishing: Eleanor Rathbone and the Refugees*.

Middlesex and Portland: Vallentine Mitchell, 2010. £18.95, ISBN 978-0-85303-779-8

(paperback), pp xviii + 286

Reviewed by Anne Logan
University of Kent



Susan Cohen's new work on Eleanor Rathbone is a welcome contribution to the growing body of work on women humanitarians, a subject pioneered a decade ago by Sybil Oldfield. Using a variety of hitherto under- or unused sources, Cohen spends over half her book documenting in detail the great lengths to which Rathbone went in the last decade of her life to do everything she could for Jewish refugees from Nazi-

dominated Europe and to raise the consciousness of the British authorities and people about the refugees' predicament.

Cohen is an empathetic biographer, who clearly admires Rathbone and is sympathetic towards her stance and humanitarian motives, while recognising that she was a child of her time in regard to her views on Britain's power and 'civilising influence' in the world. However, Cohen's premise that Rathbone's work for refugees has been unjustly 'overlooked' (p. 3) – particularly by previous (feminist) biographers – is debateable, especially in the case of Susan Pedersen's work (*Eleanor Rathbone and the Politics of Conscience* [New Haven and London, 2004]). Moreover, Cohen's estimation of the extent to which Rathbone's core values remained constant is not consistently sustained throughout the book. In the introduction Cohen rightly claims that Rathbone continued to maintain throughout her life 'an active interest in many of her earlier feminist and gendered activities' (p. 7) and hints that, far from being a diversion from feminist principles, Rathbone's humanitarian work was part and parcel of her core beliefs. Yet in Chapter 2 Cohen argues that Rathbone's championing of causes in India and other parts of the British Empire in the early 1930s represented a 'turning point' in her career at a time when 'interest in the feminist movement was losing ground' (p. 44), even though she acknowledges that Rathbone's campaign against child marriage in India was 'gender related'. On page 45 Cohen reports that 'Interest in the age of marriage and age of consent was renewed in the 1920s, largely due to a conference held by the League of Nations in 1921, but does not mention the gendered political forces at work in placing such a matter on the League's agenda. Having

rejected the notion in the book's introduction that Rathbone turned away from feminist causes, Cohen actually claims in her discussion of Indian matters that she undertook 'a shift away from gendered issues' in the 1930s (p. 56).

This biographical account would therefore have been more satisfying had Cohen sustained more consistently her original premise that Rathbone's core values, not only feminism, but also her belief in British power and in the efficacy of collective security, provide a common thread which bind together all her political activities. It is notable, for example, the extent to which Rathbone continued to use feminist networks and contacts in her work for refugees, although Cohen rarely comments on this. It was also a basic tenet of the suffragist cause to which the young Eleanor Rathbone was so dedicated that foreign policy was as much a political issue for women as it was for men. Women in the interwar period had won the right to enter fully into political debate and did not have to remain the ghetto of 'women's issues', however pressing these were, and when feminists like Rathbone and her friend from university days, Margery Fry, took up humanitarian issues they did so because feminism was itself a humanitarian cause.

In contrast to the seeming muddle over feminism, Cohen does write interestingly and convincingly about other aspects of Rathbone's motivation, particularly her notions of duty and of 'Britishness', and her strong identification with Jewish people. The final chapters contain a detailed and fascinating narrative of Rathbone's tireless efforts on behalf of refugees in the face of the British government's indifference and even hostility. Rathbone should certainly be held in high regard for all that she did, especially in the light of her continued efforts and notwithstanding the limited success of her campaigns. *Rescue the Perishing* is therefore a stimulating and valuable addition to the body of work on Rathbone which should serve to highlight further the significance of its subject.

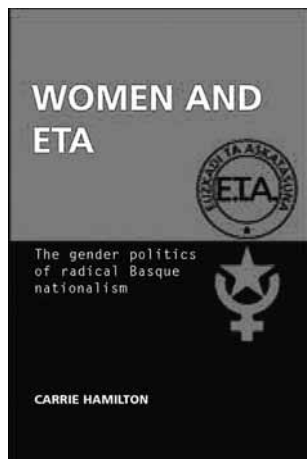
Note: Anne Logan is currently working on a biography of Margery Fry.

Carrie Hamilton, *Women and ETA: The Gender Politics of Radical Basque Nationalism*.

Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2007. £55.00, ISBN 978-7190-7545-2 (hardback), pp. vii + 256

Reviewed by Rosa Matheson

This is a very scholarly book, robustly theoretical, comprehensive and detailed, demanding solid concentration. I took it away on holiday looking for a 'good read' but found myself having to switch from 'holiday' mode to 'sit-at-the-table-and-make-copious-notes' mode. There is a lot of in-depth information given and, being new



to this subject, that is radical Basque Nationalism and ETA, not the politics of gender, I found it, initially, hard to hold on to. There is much that is necessary to absorb in order to process the historiography and make sense of the various discourses. Despite my maternal grandfather coming from San Sebastian, like many others, what I knew of the Basque country was general and rather geographical, and what I knew of ETA was limited

to sensational news headlines.

The book gives the background to the emergence of what Hamilton identifies as 'radical Basque nationalism' in relation to Basque nationalism, or nationalists. ETA, which stands for *Euskadi ta Askatasuna* – 'Basque Homeland and Freedom', was, like many 'radical' groups who take violence as their *modus operandi*, born out of deep frustration with the slow, ineffectual passivity that had been the practice of the many existing political groups such as the Basque Nationalist Party (PVN). In 1959 a handful of *young* men formed a break-away group and took the name which has ever since been associated with violent actions and deaths both of State and of its own members, including women. The age of its membership is of significance because, Hamilton explains, of the politics of 'generations' whereby the 'old guard' – fathers and grandfathers – soldiers of the Civil War give way to 'los chicos', the young boys, and ETA's armed struggle becomes 'la guerra de los chicos', literally 'the boys' war' (p. 81). In a war with such a name, what is the place, role and status of women? These are the questions that Hamilton scrutinises, analyses, dissects and interrogates through a variety of themes and over decades to the present day.

The gender politics of several of her 'themes' – State, family, motherhood, society, religion, school, workplace, politics, media representation, femininity, feminism and sexuality were familiar territory and carried a resonance with many other eras and contexts, whilst others such as female armed activists and combatants, prison, torture and the politics of rape were, to me, new and sometimes disturbing experiences. I was particularly interested in the agency of 'language' that is central to many of the themes. 'Language' is fundamental to a Nationalist identity, especially to the Basques who fought against Franco's directive to speak only 'Spanish'. 'Language' played many roles in many different contexts not least that of symbolism, and as a weapon, particularly a gendered weapon – as when used by male prison guards on female prisoners. It also was a political agent for feminist activity within ETA activism:

Through protests and demonstrations they introduced into public, a new language of women's pain, one that broke down the opposition between men's direct suffering

and the indirect, mute suffering associated with motherhood (p. 157).

Spoken language, in the guise of oral history, is the primary methodology of research that informed the book, which, claims Jesus Casquete, Professor of History of Political Theory and Social Movements, University of the Basque Country, is 'Oral history at it best' (back cover).

Whilst not an easy read, for those interested in feminist political theory and gender studies, in Nationalism and radical activism, in women's involvement in insurgence and terrorist activity and in the political history of the Basque Country, it is worth the effort as they will find this a useful and fruitful text to engage with.

**Katherine Bradley and Helen Sweet, eds.
*Women and the Professions. Politics and Philanthropy 1840-1940.***

La Vergne: Trafford Publishing, 2009. £22,
ISBN 9978-1-4269-1187-3 (paperback), pp. 300
Reviewed by Elizabeth Darling
Oxford Brookes University



In this edited volume, Bradley and Sweet bring together a series of essays which explore different, though often complementary aspects, of middle- and upper-class women's work from the mid-nineteenth century through to the first half of the twentieth. Biographical or institutional in their focus, the seven chapters seek to draw attention to women, often well known in their lifetimes, whose contribution to the shaping of

the worlds of welfare and education has been erased from historical writing. It is noticeable that many of the authors use contemporary biographical accounts as well as hitherto unaccessed archival sources to return their subjects to history.

The book is divided into three sections: Women in Philanthropy, Women in the Professions and Women and Politics (an implied progression perhaps?). There is an Introductory essay by Anne Digby, while the editors write a prefatory explanation to outline the themes of each section. In the first section, Gwen Searle examines the women who oversaw female emigrants on their way to Australia, outlining the considerable role they played in the organization of these journeys and how they campaigned for better conditions for passengers. Gina Burrows outlines the life of Catherine Tait, a clergyman's wife whose faith, as was common in this period, was the propelling force behind a life of philanthropic work, particularly in work with the sick. Caroline Morrell completes the section with a chapter on the movement for single women's housing. She discusses the work of the Girls Friendly Society and the National Association of Women's Lodging Homes with

reference to their founders' concern to use housing as one means to protect women from the potential sexual exploitation they might face in unregulated rooms and boarding houses. The work of such women reinforces the well-established notion that women were able to exploit the attributes of their gender to create access to the world of (albeit unpaid) work.

The next section, *Women in the Professions*, discusses those who made the next leap to paid work – Anne Keene discusses several Oxford women's college principals between 1879-1925, and the vital, and demanding, role they played in keeping such institutions together in the early days of women's university education. Helen Sweet explores the life of the district nurse, making effective use of the records of the Bacup District Nursing Association. Both authors emphasize the difficulties such women made as pioneers in their respective spheres.

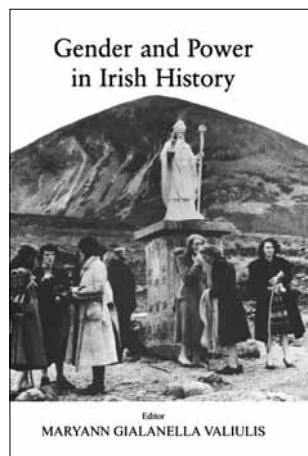
The collection finishes with essays on the women's suffrage movement by Katherine Bradley. She offers an illuminating account of the Oxford branch of the NUWSS and its activities. Finally, she and Lesley Wade write on the early history of the National Federation of Women's Institutes.

A mild criticism of this volume is that the essays veer a little towards reclamation and recovery at the expense of analysis. That said, taken together they do help illuminate our understanding of the richness of women's work from philanthropy to the professions.

Maryann Gialanella Valiulis, ed. *Gender and Power in Irish History*

Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2009. £19.95, ISBN 978-0716529637 (paperback), pp. 244.

Reviewed by Jane McDiarmid
University of Southampton



This collection is based on a Women's History Association of Ireland conference held in 2006, with chapters on theory, method and particular case studies. The first two chapters (by the editor, and Mary O'Dowd and Phil Kilroy) focus on theory, while the third, by Mary Cullen, considers how women's and gender history have developed in Ireland, with a focus on the sometimes difficult relationship between feminism and

republicanism, a theme which later chapters develop, notably Eve Morrison on the Bureau of Military History and female republican activism (1913-23). There is some repetition of key terms and definitions in these early chapters, but at the same time they lay the groundwork for the case studies which follow, notably Mary McAuliffe on an early modern witchcraft trial, Sandra McAvoy on the campaign for a Criminal Law Amendment Act (1912-35), Maryann Valiulis on the Free State's attitudes to women's

rights, or rather lack of rights, Cliona Rattigan on legal cases on abortion (1925-50), Jennifer Redmond on female emigration from Ireland to Britain in the same period – all of these are based on impressive research and are closely and carefully argued. The chapter on doing gender history visually, by Úna Ní Bhroiméil and Donal O'Donoghue, shows the significance of photographic evidence for drawing attention to key issues and themes of gender construction and how that changes over time. Katherine O'Donnell's chapter on masculinity considers the differences in methods and approaches of literary scholars and historians, the tensions between them within the academy, as well as the embracing of inter-disciplinarity by feminist scholars, usually outside of the academy. She also considers the difficulties in portraying same-sex relationships historically.

The penultimate chapter by Angela Dowdell on the surface seems to be a sort of cuckoo in the nest, in that it considers British big game hunting (1880-1914); but besides providing some examples of Irish ladies among the minority of elite women who went on safari (such as Helena Mary Molyneaux, Countess of Sefton, who shot her first lion in 1908) and noting the increasing participation of upper-class women in fox hunting in Ireland, Dowdell shows how Ireland's elite was part of an imperial world. As she argues, the hunter's idealized masculinity was as much about being white, British and modern as it was simply about being a manly man. The final chapter by Maureen Flanagan, on the application of gendered ideas to the construction of cities in the nineteenth century, compares Dublin to Chicago and Toronto, placing Ireland within an Anglo-Atlantic world. At the risk of simplifying, Flanagan argues that male planners tended to look on the city as a built environment requiring order, to be divided between public and private spaces separating family from work and, where possible, excluding or restricting women's access to the public. In contrast, women tended to look on the city as a site of neighbourhoods, rather than imposing rigid divisions between workplace and home.

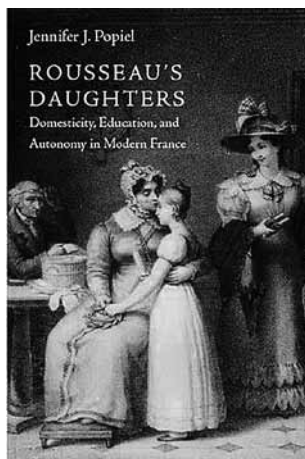
Overall, this is a varied collection, one which is of consistently high quality, providing some fascinating detail and nuanced insights into gender and power in Irish history, and which also situates that history within an international context.

Jennifer J. Popiel, *Rousseau's Daughters: Domesticity, Education and Autonomy in Modern France*

London, University of New Hampshire Press, 2008. £44.95, ISBN 978-1-58465-732-3

(hardback), pp. xii + 262.
Reviewed by Katie Barclay
Queen's University, Belfast

Jennifer Popiel's *Rousseau's Daughters* charts changing attitudes to child-rearing and childhood education in France in the wake of the publication of Rousseau's *Emile* in 1762 to 1833, by which point his ideals (or a form of them) were firmly entrenched cultural values. She begins with a detailed discussion of Rousseau's *Emile*, explaining



his views on the socialisation of citizens and also why they were radical enough in the 1760s to have his work banned in the French state. Then, using a close and engaging study of changes in children's fashion and toys, developments in advice manuals for parents, and the contents of children's literature, Popiel highlights how mothering became increasingly culturally important for shaping autonomous, modern individuals and citizens. She then demonstrates the social and cultural importance of socialisation within the home in nineteenth century France through a discussion of the importance given to the relationship between education given by mothers and national education in schools by early nineteenth century politicians. In some senses this is a conventional, if fascinating, history of the rise of domesticity at the end of the eighteenth century and the promotion of the virtuous mother, devoted to her children, breast-feeding, personally involved in child-rearing, and located in the private sphere, as an ideal. But it is also a history of the relationship between the private and public spheres during a period where historians have often seen the division between them crystallised. Popiel argues that what makes Rousseau's work radical and what ultimately gave feminist potential to domesticity was the role of women in making citizens. She argues that while Rousseau and his contemporaries' interpretation of domesticity often had misogynist undertones, the centrality of mothers to the formation of citizens and thus to the maintenance of social order and state creation more broadly, allowed women to shape civic life. She then highlights how this was taken to its logical conclusion by nineteenth century thinkers who believed women's domestic role required women to be both individuals and citizens (not just citizen creators), giving them a place in public life (albeit one located in the private sphere).

The strength of *Rousseau's Daughters* is the subtle and complex reading of the relationship between the public and private. In making the domestic both a place to create citizens and for (female) citizens to perform their civic duty, Popiel indicates that there can be no clear distinction between private and public spheres – at least in the context of civic life. Furthermore, she suggests that while men and women had distinctly gendered roles within the polity, it did not necessarily follow that one sphere was given precedence over the other during this period. Popiel concludes very positively that while the gender differentiation required in this model of family life is problematic to modern eyes, 'it need not imply a misogyny inherent in modernity' (p.179). Within Popiel's work, there is a strong sense in which modernity was a process and one that women were heavily involved in shaping, so she is right to indicate that it is unlikely modernity was 'inherently misogynist'. But, at the same time, it is difficult

to get away from the impression that through this model for domesticity women were creating active male citizens for the exercise of power both at home and away, while they remained the enablers – the woman behind the man. Women may have been performing their civic duty, but what did that actually mean for their social status *vis-à-vis* their husbands, sons and other members of the polity – at least until the mid-nineteenth century when women begin to use domesticity as a justification for a broader public role (a phenomenon that Popiel hints is to come in France). Work on marriage during this same period highlights the extent to which women were seen as helpmeets, enabling men to have full lives as the expense of their wives' personal development, even as they were described as companions and partners. The rhetoric of citizenship hid power as much as it dissolved it, in the private sphere, as in the public. Yet, these are perhaps questions for another project – Popiel's work is a cultural, rather than a social history – and it is certainly not the case that she does not recognise that this is a complex picture. Overall, this is a sophisticated, well-written and enjoyable contribution to the debate on the relationship between Enlightenment discourse, private life and the creation of the modern individual.

BOOKS RECEIVED & CALL FOR REVIEWERS

If you would like to review any of the titles listed below, please email Anne Logan: bookreviews@womenshistorynetwork.org

Lynne Attwood, *Gender and Housing in Soviet Russia: Private Life in a Public Space* (Manchester University Press)

Amanda Capern, *The Historical Study of Women, England, 1500-1700* (Palgrave Macmillan)

Kate Culkin, *Harriet Hosmer: A Cultural Biography* (University of Massachusetts Press)

Allan T. Duffin, *History in Blue: 160 Years of Women Police, Sheriffs, Detectives, and State Troopers* (Kaplan)

Libbie Escolme-Schmidt, *Glamour in the Skies: The Golden Age of the Air Stewardess* (The History Press)

Menna Gallie, *You're Welcome to Ulster* (Honno)

Betty Haglund, *Tourists and Travellers: Women's Non-Fictional Writing about Scotland, 1770-1830* (Channel View Publications)



Lesley A. Hall, *The Life and Times of Stella Browne* (I.B. Taurus)

Jane Hamlett, *Material Relations: Domestic Interiors and Middle-Class Families in England, 1850-1910* (Manchester University Press)

Jeanette Hardage, *Mary Slessor Everybody's Mother: the Era and Impact of a Victorian Missionary* (The Lutterworth Press)

Laura Hein and Rebecca Jennison, eds. *Imagination with Borders: Feminist Artist Tomiyama Taeko and Social Responsibility* (University of Michigan)

Angela V. John, ed. *Our Mother's Land: Chapters in Welsh Women's History, 1830-1939* (University of Wales Press)

Anne Jordan, *Love Well the Hour: The Life of Lady Colin Campbell (1857-1911)* (Matador)

S.K. Keltner, *Kristeva* (Polity)

Marti Kheel, *Nature Ethics: an Ecofeminist Perspective* (Rowman & Littlefield)

P.F. Kornicki, Mara Patessio, and G.G. Rowley, eds. *The Female as Subject: Reading and Writing in Early Modern Japan* (University of Michigan)

Rachel Jones, *Irigaray* (Polity)

David Llewellyn, *The First Lady of Mulberry Walk: The Life and Times of Irish Sculptress Anne Acheson*

Stuart L. Love, *Jesus and Marginal Women: The Gospel of Matthew in Social-Scientific Perspective* (James Clarke & Co., Ltd.)

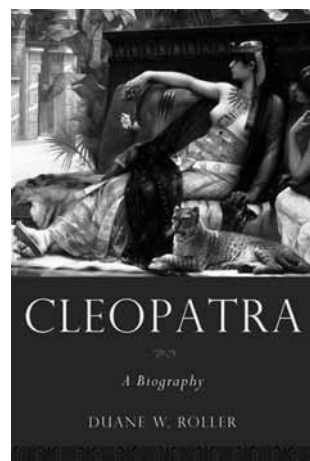
Judith Niechcial, *Lucy Faithfull: Mother to Hundreds* (Judith Niechcial)

Mara Patessio, *Women and Public Life in Early Meiji Japan: the Development of the Feminist Movement* (University of Michigan)

Laura Probert, *Women of Thanet Rally Round the Flag, 1914-1918* (Millicent Press)

Christina Quinlan, *Ireland's Women's Prisons, Past and Present* (Irish Academic Press)

Lindsay Reid, *Midwifery in Scotland: A History* (Scottish History Press)



Duane W. Roller, *Cleopatra: a Biography* (Oxford University Press)

Megan Smitley, *The Feminine Public Sphere: Middle-Class Women and Civic Life in Scotland, c. 1870-1914* (Manchester University Press)

Leigh Whaley, *Women and the Practice of Medical Care in Early Modern Europe, 1400-1800* (Palgrave Macmillan)

Membership Announcements

You can now manage your WHN membership, update your details, pay your subscription, add your research interests/books and make a donation by logging into the **Members' Area** at www.womenshistorynetwork.org

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If so, can you check that the payment details reflect the 2011 rates. Don't forget, we have different rates to reflect different personal circumstances, so it is worth checking that you are paying the correct rate for you. Details of the 2011 rates for all categories of members can be found on the inside back cover of the magazine or by logging in to your account at www.womenshistorynetwork.org.

Why not switch to standing order for your subscription? It could reduce the cost of your membership fee and certainly helps the Network, by reducing administrative overheads. Please be sure to ask your bank to use your *WHN reference number*, which can be found by logging in to your account at www.womenshistorynetwork.org.

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All information (or queries) about membership, including requests to set up a payment by standing order and changes to personal details, can be arranged by logging in to your account at www.womenshistorynetwork.org OR by emailing membership@womenshistorynetwork.org OR by mail to Dr Henrice Altink, WHN Membership Secretary, Dept of History, University of York, Heslington, York YO10 5DD.

Carolyn D. Williams, Angela Escott, and Louise Duckling, *Woman to Woman: Female Negotiations During the Long Eighteenth Century* (University of Delaware Press)

Galina I. Yermolenko, *Roxolana in European Literature, History and Culture* (Ashgate)

Committee news

The Steering Committee met on 26 February 2011 at the Institute of Historical Research. Grainne Goodwin, the Treasurer, reported that the finances were generally healthy. The Membership Secretary, Henrice Altink, reported that there were almost 400 members and that the new online system will facilitate members checking their subscriptions. Lucy Bland, the organiser of the 2011 conference, convened by the Women's Library and London Metropolitan University, reported on current arrangements. Tanya Cheadle, on behalf of the publicity sub-committee, reported on various possibilities to raise the profile of women's history and the network. Two representatives of Women's History Month attended part of the meeting to discuss the possibility of future collaboration. Claire Midgely, the President of the International Federation of Women's History, attended and reported that the 2013 IFWH conference was being held in Britain and proposed a joint venture with the WHN.

Next Steering Committee Meeting

The next meeting of the Steering Committee will be at 11.30am on 18 June 2011 at the Institute of Historical Research, University of London, Senate House, Malet Street, London, WC1E 7HU. The subsequent meeting will be held on 9 September at the conference. All members of the Women's History Network are invited to attend the meetings as observers. For further details, contact: **convenor@womenshistorynetwork.org**

**Conferences, Calls for Papers, Events,
Prizes, News, Notices, Publishing
Opportunities ...**

All of the above can be found in the WHN electronic

Newsletter

The WHN *Newsletter*, which will be emailed to members monthly, enables us to keep you up-to-date with news, conferences and other events concerning women's history.

The *Newsletter* also provides a more frequent forum for publicising your events and informing members about other activities and projects.

To advertise in the WHN *Newsletter*, please email its editor, Jane Berney, at:

newsletter@womenshistorynetwork.org

To download current and back issues visit the Newsletter pages at

www.womenshistorynetwork.org

Publishing in *Women's History Magazine*

Women's History Magazine welcomes contributions from experienced scholars and those at an earlier stage in their research careers. We aim to be inclusive and fully recognise that women's history is not only lodged in the academy. All submissions are subject to the usual peer review process.

Articles should be 3000-8000 words in length. Contributors are requested to submit articles in final form, carefully following the style guidelines available at:

www.magazine.womenshistorynetwork.org

Please email your submission, as a word attachment, to the editors at

editor@womenshistorynetwork.org



What is the Women's History Network?

The WHN was founded in July 1991. It is a national charity 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	£15*	Overseas minimum	£40
Low income (*under £20,000 pa)	£25*	UK Institutions	£45
High income	£40*	Institutions overseas	£55
Life Membership	£350		

* £5 reduction when paying by standing order.

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Women's History Network Contacts:

Steering Committee officers:

Membership, subscriptions

membership@womenshistorynetwork.org

or write to Dr Henrice Altink, WHN Membership Secretary, Department of History, University of York, Heslington, York, YO10 5DD

Finance, Dr Gráinne Goodwin:

treasurer@womenshistorynetwork.org

Committee Convenor, Professor Barbara Bush:

convenor@womenshistorynetwork.org

Web Team:

web@womenshistorynetwork.org

WHN Book Prize, Chair, Professor Ann Heilmann:

bookprize@womenshistorynetwork.org

UK Representative for International Federation for Research into Women's History, Professor Krista Cowman:

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*You may now join the WHN online – just go to
www.womenshistorynetwork.org and follow the instructions.
Payments, standing-order mandates and Gift-Aid declarations can all be accessed
online as well – see panel on page 49 for further details*

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Detach and return this form with, if applicable, your cheque to Dr Henrice Altink, WHN Membership Secretary, Department of History,
University of York, Heslington, York, YO10 5DD
Email: membership@womenshistorynetwork.org

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Name of Charity: Women's History Network

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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).

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