

Gender, Church and State in Early Modern Germany

Essays by Merry E. Wiesner

Merry E. Wiesner

Women And Men In History



Gender, Church, and State in Early Modern Germany

WOMEN AND MEN IN HISTORY

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Gender, Church, and State in Early Modern Germany:

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ESSAYS BY

MERRY E. WIESNER

 **Routledge**
Taylor & Francis Group
LONDON AND NEW YORK

First published 1998 by Addison Wesley Longman Limited

Published 2013 by Routledge
2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 4RN
711 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10017, USA

Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business

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ISBN 13: 978-0-582-29282-6 (pbk)

British Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is
available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Also available

Set by 35 in 10/12pt Baskerville

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Acknowledgements

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'Women's defence of their public role' was originally published in *Women in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance: Literary and Historical Perspectives*, ed. Mary Beth Rose (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1986). Used by permission.

'Ideology meets the Empire: reformed convents and the Reformation' was originally published in *Germania Illustrata: Essays Presented to Gerald Strauss*, ed. Andrew Fix and Susan C. Karant-Nunn (Kirkville, MO: Sixteenth Century Essays and Studies, 1992), pp. 181–96. Used by permission.

'The Reformation of the women' was originally published in *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte. Sonderband Washington* (Gütersloh: Gerd Mohn, 1993), pp. 193–208. Used by permission.

'Frail, weak, and helpless: women's legal position in theory and reality' was originally published in *Regnum, Religio et Ratio: Essays Presented to Robert M. Kingdon*, ed. Jerome Friedman. Sixteenth Century Essays and Studies, Vol. 8 (Kirkville, MO: Sixteenth Century Journal Publishers, 1987), pp. 161–9. Used by permission.

'Paternalism in practice: the control of servants and prostitutes in early modern German cities' was originally published in *The Process of Change in Early Modern Europe: Essays in Honor of Miriam Chrisman*, ed. Phillip N. Bebb and Sherrin Marshall (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1988), pp. 179–200. Used by permission.

'Spinning out capital: women's work in the early modern economy' was originally published in *Becoming Visible: Women in European History*, 2nd edition, ed. Susan Stuard, Renate Bridenthal and Claudia Koonz (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1987), pp. 221–50. Used by permission.

'Guilds, male bonding and women's work in early modern Germany' was originally published in *Gender and History* 1 (1989): 125–37 and reprinted in *La Donna nell'Economia Secc. XIII–XVIII. Serie II: Atti delle 'Settimane di Studi' e altri Convegni*, 21 (Prato: Istituto Internazionale di Storia Economica 'F. Datini', 1990), pp. 655–69. Used by permission.

'*Wandervögel* and women: journeymen's concepts of masculinity in early modern Germany' was originally published in *Journal of Social History* 24/4 (Summer 1991): 767–82. Used by permission.

For Neil



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Introduction

For several years, whenever I have written or given a talk about the history of women in early modern Europe, I have invariably used the word ‘explosion’ in the first sentence to describe what has happened to the amount of scholarship available. When I began graduate study in 1974 – only a little over twenty years ago – and decided I wanted to write first a master’s thesis and then a dissertation on women, it was possible to read nearly everything that had been written about women in all countries of Europe for the period 1500–1800, and a good share of the material about medieval women as well. For many of the questions I wanted to look at, there were almost no descriptive studies available and certainly no theory, a fact which I had to impress upon some members of my dissertation committee who kept asking about comparable analyses and theoretical frameworks.

Those days now seem like a rosy, distant past, as book-length studies and collections about medieval and early modern women in Europe now number in the hundreds, and articles in the thousands. Added to these are hundreds of studies of gender, a word that was not even part of the academic vocabulary twenty years ago other than in linguistics, and scores in other related fields, such as the history of sexuality and the body. And instead of a lack of appropriate theory, the study of early modern women and gender is almost over-theorized, with every theoretical school seeming to have something to offer: post-colonialism offers ways to analyse the first European colonial ventures and their real and metaphorical impact on women; socialist feminism ways to examine women’s changing work options and the values accorded men’s and women’s work; post-structuralism ways to analyse power relationships imbedded in the developing national languages; cultural materialism ways to

understand the meaning and significance of new consumer goods and changing economic structures; psychoanalysis ways to view both family relationships and witchcraft; new historicism ways to use literature by and for women in our analyses. Conversely, many of these theoretical perspectives use changes in ideas about gender and in the actual lives of women and men in the early modern period to support their case; proto-industrial capitalism, the growth of the state and its forces of social discipline, the witch hunts, encounters between European and non-European women and men, and the emphasis on the patriarchal family and lineage are all developments now viewed as central to understanding how the modern world became what it is. The picture is now a much more complicated one, and having spent the first decade of my academic career, along with many others, arguing that there was no development in early modern Europe that did not involve and have an impact on women, I sometimes wish our words had not been so widely heeded.

In some ways this sense of being enveloped by a flood of research comes from my perspective as a scholar whose first language is English, and would be even stronger if I specialized in English history, for studies of women and gender in early modern England vastly outweigh those of any other European country, and perhaps those of all other countries in Europe taken together. In part this results from the fact that much of the earliest work in women's history was done by English-language historians, who introduced their students to key texts and sources; those students in turn went on to explore gender and sexuality and to develop theory, but their geographic base remained England. The imbalance in terms of available materials has actually increased in the last fifteen years with the publication of key texts by and about early modern women in modern editions, a process that is continuing at a great rate today.¹ If we want our students to read original sources about early

1. The Brown University Women Writers Project is a primary sponsor of such editions, published by Oxford University Press in the series *Women Writers in English, 1350–1850*, edited by Suzanne Woods. Scholar Press also publishes a series of facsimile reprints, *The Early Modern Englishwoman: A Facsimile Library of Essential Works*, edited by Betty S. Travitsky and Patrick Cullen. Study of the works of English women writers will become increasingly easy in the near future when the Brown Women Writers Project will go on line. In 1996, Brown received \$400,000 from the Mellon Foundation to make approximately 100 Renaissance texts written by women available through the Internet, and then to assess the impact of delivering these texts electronically instead of in the paper versions that the Brown project has provided up to now.

modern women, they will almost invariably be about women in England, for published sources from other parts of Europe are very limited and translations even more so.

In contrast to England, early modern Germany, or, politically speaking, the Holy Roman Empire, has been relatively understudied, in both English and German. In part this is a language issue, for with the influence of bilingual instruction in schools in the US and the predominance of French theory in the academy, historians whose first language is English are much more likely to learn French or Spanish as their second. In part this is a reflection of the way academic fields have been defined, for to study Germany in the early modern period generally meant one was defined as a historian of the Reformation, a field that has been somewhat sceptical of women's history. Those drawn to issues regarding women on the Continent in the early modern period were thus more likely to choose France or Italy as their focus.² In part this is a result of the initial hostility of the German academic system in both the west and the east to women's history and often to women historians, whatever their field.³

Despite the initial hostility, a small number of extremely dedicated German historians began to explore aspects of women's history in the early 1980s, and their work and that of their students has

2. This was also enhanced by the fact that several of the most prominent scholars and theorists in the field of early modern gender studies, particularly Joan Kelly, Natalie Zemon Davis, and Christiane Klapisch-Zuber, worked on France or Italy.

3. Two of the most important historians of women in early modern Germany, Heide Wunder and Christina Vanja, wrote in 1992 that 'female students and doctoral candidates who inquired about "female people" received little attention from professors or thesis advisors. If not rejected outright, research on women's issues was under no circumstances encouraged or promoted . . . the historical brotherhood of Germany persistently resists (with only a few exceptions) women's history and up to now has hardly deigned to notice the results' (Ute Frevert, Heide Wunder, and Christina Vanja, 'Historical research on women in the Federal Republic of Germany', in Karen Offen, Ruth Roach Pierson and Jane Rendall (eds), *Writing Women's History: International Perspectives* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990), p. 292.

From the outside this appears to be changing somewhat. There are now three chairs of women's history in Germany – one at Bielefeld and two in Berlin – and seven more general women's studies centres. Only three of these are officially parts of universities, however – the others are either free-standing or affiliated with a university in an indirect way – and most of them were started with outside funding, so are not viewed as 'regular' parts of the university. There is clearly strong interest in women's and gender history, but younger women report that they are still discouraged from focusing specifically on women and are advised to leave anything they publish on women off their official curriculum vitae if they want to get a position. The chill also applies to foreign scholars known to work on women, particularly if these scholars are themselves female, and has only been aggravated by the turmoil in German academia since reunification.

now created at least a small flood. Most of these scholars are very conversant with American and English theoretical and substantive works, and set their own work within a European-wide context. This cross-fertilization has not gone the other way, however, for, unlike the work of French and Italian scholars, very little of this German scholarship has been translated, so that generalizations made about women in early modern 'Europe' by scholars who do not read German usually do not include developments in this large part of the Continent.⁴

This collection is a small effort to address this problem, and provide English-language readers with a series of essays which focus largely on women and gender in early modern Germany. The volume begins, however, with a broader essay, 'Women's defence of their public role', which I wrote in 1983 as part of a workshop at the Newberry Library in Chicago. That title represents both the way I addressed the specific question posed by that workshop, 'How free were women in the Renaissance?', and how I conceptualized my research on women at that point, for the construction and nature of the public/private dichotomy was a very common topic in the early 1980s for women's historians. This essay includes material from many parts of Europe and lays out some general considerations of the three themes of the rest of the book – religion, law, and work.

The next nine essays, seven of them published before and two of them previously unpublished, look specifically at religion, law, and work in Germany. Each of these three sections is preceded by a brief introduction discussing research trends in scholarship pertaining to Germany and to Europe as a whole. In each section the articles are arranged in chronological order of publication, so that the reader can get some sense of how the historiography has developed. The final section, 'Reassessing, transforming, complicating: two decades of early modern women's history', explores several of the questions that have been central to the field, and assesses the ways the writing of early modern women's history has changed since 'Women's defence of their public role' was written.

4. Translations of works of French historians of women include: Christiane Klapisch-Zuber, *Women, Family, and Ritual in Renaissance Italy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985); Christine Fauré, *Democracy Without Women: Feminism and the Rise of Liberal Individualism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991); Genevieve Fraisse, *Reason's Muse: Sexual Difference and the Birth of Democracy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994); Georges Duby and Michelle Perrot (eds), *A History of Women in the West*, 5 Vols (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992), Vol. 2 of which does include one essay by the German historian Claudia Opitz on medieval women.

The book ends with a descriptive bibliography of some of the materials available for further reading. Because of the 'explosion', or 'flood', or whatever metaphor you choose, I have not been able to include everything, so I have concentrated, when discussing English-language materials, on only those things that have appeared in the last three years or that specifically discuss Germany. Readers interested in earlier studies of other parts of Europe should consult the chapter bibliographies in my *Women and Gender in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge University Press, 1993). When discussing German-language materials I have ranged more widely, though also with a preference for the most recent work.

Most of these essays were written while I was a member of the history department at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and also for four years the director of the Center for Women's Studies there. I would like to thank my colleagues and friends in both history and women's studies for their advice and suggestions, and in particular the members of my Renaissance Women reading group: Margaret Borene, Martha Carlin, Janet Jesmok, Gwynne Kennedy, Gretchen Kling, Deirdre McChrystal, Jennifer Sansone, Sandra Stark. The volume was completed during the year I held the Association of Marquette University Women (AMUW) Chair in Humanistic Studies, and I would like to thank AMUW for its support which allowed me to complete this and many other writing projects. I would also like to thank Pam Sharpe, the editor of the Early Modern tier of the series, and Hilary Shaw of Addison Wesley Longman for their assistance and their willingness to take on a collection of essays as the first volume in a new series. The book is dedicated to my husband, without whom my life in these last ten years would have been very different and far too serious.

CHAPTER ONE

*Women's defence of their public role*¹

The question which Joan Kelly posed a decade ago, 'Did women have a Renaissance?', is one which has led to a great deal of re-examination and rethinking of that particular period. Kelly examined courtly love literature, Castiglione's *The Courtier*, and the experience of Italian upper-class women to answer the question with a resounding 'no'. Instead of expanding opportunities and increasing liberation from ideological constraints, she argues, these women 'experienced a contraction of social and personal options that men of their classes . . . did not'.² Kelly further describes this contraction as a 'new division between personal and public life', a division which also relegated women to the personal, private realm.³

Kelly primarily uses prescriptive literature written by men to make her points, but the voices of actual women from the period indicate that they were aware of what was happening to them. They felt both the shrinking of opportunities in a variety of areas and the increasing split between public and private life. Their objections

1. As I explain in my Introduction to this volume, this article was written in response to one of the workshops in the conference 'Changing Perspectives on Women in the Renaissance' at The Newberry Library in May 1983, and it specifically addresses the question posed by that workshop: 'How free were women in the Renaissance?' It is very much a working paper, exploring a wide variety of disparate material with that particular question in mind, rather than culminating extensive research on one particular aspect of the issue. Much of the German material comes from city archives where I was carrying out research on working women. My thanks to the American Council of Learned Societies and the Deutsche Akademische Austauschdienst (DAAD) for their support for that research. All translations are my own, unless otherwise noted.

2. Joan Kelly-Gadol, 'Did women have a Renaissance?', in *Becoming Visible: Women in European History*, ed. Renate Bridenthal and Claudia Koonz (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1977), p. 139.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 160.

to this growing constraint took on many different forms but generally centre on women's right to a public role. While male writers, officials, theologians, workers, and professionals were attempting to limit women's activities to the private realm, women consistently defended their public role.

These defences are closely linked to the question of the nature and degree of women's freedom in the Renaissance. Most scholarly discussions of female freedom focus on male definitions and limitations of that freedom – law codes, sermons, guild restrictions, prescriptive treatises, literary models. In all of these, the word 'free' would rarely have been used when referring to women. Classical authors, to whom the Renaissance writers looked for models of thought and language, would not have done so, as 'free' meant to them enjoying the rights and privileges of a citizen and possessing an educated capacity for reason, neither of which was possible for women. Italian humanists, while occasionally allowing women some rational capacity, sharply restricted the avenues by which a woman could develop that capacity; her course of study was to be neither as 'free' nor as 'freeing' as a man's. It is only in a religious sense that the word 'free' is applied to women in the Renaissance. According to Erasmus, a woman had the same 'free will', the same moral responsibility to do good, that a man did. According to Luther, of course, no one had free will, but a woman could receive God's grace and come to faith the same as a man, participating thereby in the 'freedom of a Christian' which resulted from this faith.

Philosophical discussions of 'freedom' as it was defined by male authorities may be leading us somewhat astray, however. While Renaissance women used a variety of philosophical, legal, rational, and religious justifications to argue their case, they in fact had a much more pragmatic definition of the word: 'freedom' to them meant the ability to participate in public life. Their voices tell us a great deal about female self-conception during the Renaissance, which never emerges when listening to male voices alone. It is true that women's sphere in most cultures has been defined by men, as have the limits of what is considered 'public' and what 'private'; but women have often objected to or ignored those limitations, and at no time more than during the Renaissance when they were aware that restrictions on them were increasing.

The contraction of women's public role, and their responses to it, occur in a variety of realms of life during the Renaissance and may best be explored realm by realm. It will also be instructive to look at examples from somewhat later periods, for this process

continued over centuries, eventually restricting not only the upper-class women who are the focus of Kelly's study, but middle- and lower-class women as well. As Natalie Davis has noted, 'Women suffered for their powerlessness in both Catholic and Protestant lands in the late sixteenth to eighteenth centuries as changes in marriage laws restricted the freedoms of wives even further, as female guilds dwindled, as the female role in middle-level commerce and farm direction contracted, and as the differential between male and female wages increased.'⁴

The theoretical limits of female freedom in economic, political, and familial life were set by a variety of municipal, national, and regional law codes. These differed widely from area to area throughout Europe, but some general trends can be seen by examining changes in them from the thirteenth through to the seventeenth centuries.

In regard to the basic obligations and duties of citizenship, little distinction was made between men and women; all heads of households were required to pay taxes, provide soldiers for defence, and obey all laws. Beyond that, however, there were clear legal restrictions on what the female half of the population could do. Women differed from men in their ability to be witnesses, make wills, act as guardians for their own children, make contracts, and own, buy, and sell property. These limitations appear in the earliest extant law codes and were sharpened and broadened as the law codes themselves were expanded.

A good example of this process can be seen in the restrictions on women buying and selling goods, or loaning, borrowing, or donating money without their husbands' or guardians' approval. The earliest law codes (for example, Lübeck 1220–26) simply prohibited any woman from engaging in these transactions unless her occupation required it, an exception so broad as to make the law meaningless.⁵ As the occupations that were to be excluded were described more specifically, this list shrank gradually over centuries. When one goes beyond law codes to actual court proceedings, however, it is apparent that women were making contracts, buying, selling, and trading goods all the time. Perhaps because

4. Natalie Zemon Davis, 'City women and religious change', in her *Society and Culture in Early Modern France* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1965), p. 94.

5. Wilhelm Ebel, *Forschungen zur Geschichte des lübischen Rechts* (Lübeck: M. Schmidt-Römhild, 1950); Luise Hess, *Die deutschen Frauenberufe des Mittelalters* (Munich: Neuer Filser-Verlag, 1940), p. 52; A. Abram, 'Women traders in medieval London', *Economic Journal* 26 (June 1916): 280; Inger Dübeck, *Købekoner og Konkurrence* (Copenhagen: Juristforbundets Forlag, 1978), pp. 184ff.

theoretical restrictions were bypassed, evaded, or ignored in so many cases, we can find few objections by women when they were added or expanded.

Other types of legal restrictions began to appear in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and were opposed both by women and by individual men. Most areas began to tighten their system of guardianship, demanding that all widows and unmarried women choose a male guardian, who was to oversee their financial affairs and appear for them in court.⁶ Women not only took these guardians to court when they felt their rights had been violated and demanded new guardians; they also objected to being required to have a guardian at all.⁷ Women had appeared before city courts in the past in regard to financial matters and had been handling their own property and inheritance, they argued, so why did they now need male guardians to do the same things?

Some cities were very frank as to why they were requiring guardians; the Strasbourg city council demanded this expressly to prevent women from going into convents and deeding all their property to the convent, 'by which their relatives are disinherited and the city loses people who provide it with horses' (that is, taxpayers).⁸ Because such personal decisions by women ultimately had repercussions in the public realm, the council felt they were really public affairs and thus should be placed under male control.

The prominent Catholic preacher and moralist Geiler of Kaysersberg opposed this move, seeing it as an infringement on individual women's opportunities to perform works of charity. In a sermon from 1501 he comments:

Arranging a guardian for widows who are responsible and sensible persons is a novelty that has arisen in this city supposedly for the common good. In truth, as I will report, it is a self-seeking move by those who were in power . . . Everyone who is bothered by something always

6. Strasbourg, Archives municipales (hereafter AMS), Statuten, Vol. 24, fol. 62 (1464), Vol. 18, fol. 104 (1471); Augsburg, Stadtarchiv (hereafter AB), Verordnungen, Vol. 16, fol. 272-3 (1615), *Anschlage und Dekrete*, 'Erneuerte Witwen und Waisenordnung' (1668).

7. AMS, Akten der 15, 1633, fol. 26; Frankfurt, Stadtarchiv (hereafter FF), Bürgermeisterbücher 1608, fol. 184, 1609, fol. 136; Munich, Stadtarchiv (hereafter MU), Ratsitzungsprotokolle, 1522; Stuttgart, Hauptstaatsarchiv (hereafter ST), 1540 *Witwen und Waisen Ordnung*. My specific examples here are all German, but similar developments were occurring in other parts of Europe, as Natalie Davis has discovered in Lyons ('Women on top', in *Society and Culture*, pp. 124-51) and Pearl Hogrefe in England ('Legal rights of Tudor women and their circumvention by men and women', *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 3 (April 1972): 97-105).

8. AMS, Statuten, Vol. 18, fol. 104 (1477).

says it harms the common good, but it really involves his own affairs . . . The Gospel tells us directly – if you want to be saved, go out and sell everything you have and give it to the poor. It doesn't say to give it to your heirs and relatives. This law is totally against the word of Christ. It is a mockery of God, a haughty service of the devil to forbid a pious person to give everything she owns for the will of God.⁹

The thrust of Geiler's argument here is that such decisions were personal matters and should be left up to the individual woman without city interference. He thus at least tacitly agrees with the city council that women should not have a public role, but sets the boundary between private and public differently. This line of argument will emerge in male defences of women's activities in other realms as well. Men, whether humanists, reformers, or political thinkers, often argued that the activity concerned – such as writing, education, or inheriting an estate – was essentially private and thus should be open to women.

Women's objections to guardians follow a very different line of reasoning. This was a period when the division between public and private was not as sharp and distinct as it would become later, and when the household, as a legal and economic unit and as the location of most production, was clearly within the public sphere.¹⁰ City councils recognized this fact, for they taxed households, not persons, as did Protestant reformers who spoke of the family as a little commonwealth, from which basic unit the larger society was made. Women also recognized this and were aware that they were making 'political' decisions, or certainly decisions which had effects beyond the immediate household, when they were planning something as simple as whether to cook fish or meat on fast days, whether a political or religious refugee was to be fed, or what quality and amount of food journeymen were to receive.¹¹ They, along with their husbands, were held responsible by municipal and regional authorities for maintaining order within the household and keeping children and servants under control.¹² Thus they saw their legal

9. *Die Aelteste Schriften Geiler von Kayserberg* (Freiburg, 1877).

10. Heide Wunder, 'Frauen in den Leichenpredigten: Personen, Bilder, Rollen?', unpublished paper.

11. I am grateful to Lyndal Roper for pointing this out to me, both in private conversation and in her unpublished paper, 'Urban women and the household workshop form of production: Augsburg 1500–1550'.

12. Heide Wunder sees this recognition of the wife's authority within the household and of her importance to the smooth operating of society as the reason why numerous funeral speeches for women were not only written and given, but also printed. (See note 10 above.)

and financial activities in the larger sphere as no different from, or simply an extension of, those activities in which they were already involved within the household.

Though Geiler and the women were arguing for the same thing – women's ability to make financial decisions without the aid of a guardian – and though the underlying issue was an economic one which had little to do with women's rights *per se* – the tax base of the city – and though none of the arguments was successful in this case, the differences between their justifications are very important. As the split between public and private hardened, and as the public realm expanded to include education, administration of public welfare, and a growing number of occupations, Geiler's line of reasoning resulted in an ever-shrinking female sphere. The assertion by the Strasbourg women that the household was part of the public realm allowed for an augmented, or at least for a stable, female sphere. Had the women's line of reasoning ultimately triumphed, the gender divisions which evolved in early modern Europe might have looked somewhat different. The advent of national governments and the end of the household form of production may have made the public/private, work/home, male/female divisions which did develop inevitable, but the speculation is still an interesting one.

Along with increasing restriction of women's ability to make financial decisions and to handle their own property, the Renaissance and early modern periods saw a restriction of women's work. This issue is very complex and may be partially attributed to nearly every major economic change that was going on: the decline of the craft guilds and the rise of journeymen's guilds, the shift in trade patterns, the general inflation, the decline of old manufacturing centres and the growth of new ones, formalization of training requirements, the rise of capitalism. In addition to strictly economic factors, political and ideological ones also affected women's work: the rise of territorial states, dislocation caused by the religious wars, increasing suspicion of unmarried women, secularization of public welfare, campaigns against prostitution and begging, new ideas about women's 'proper' role and ability to be trained. Whatever the reasons behind it, in every occupation in which women's work was restricted, the women themselves objected. In this arena we can hear most clearly the voices of lower- and middle-class women defending their public role.

Some of the most vocal individuals were widows of master craftsmen. The earliest guild ordinances rarely mention widows, who seem to have had unrestricted rights to carry on their husband's

shop after his death, or at least as long as they remained unmarried.¹³ Beginning in the mid-fifteenth century, nearly every craft began to impose limitations: widows could only continue operating the shop for a few months or finish work that was already started and could not take on apprentices, hire new journeymen, or buy any new raw materials. Such restrictions were particularly strict in crafts which were declining and whose craftsmen were thus feeling threatened, or in those with strong journeymen's guilds, as the journeymen saw widows as a block to their being able to open their own shops.¹⁴

Individual widows frequently brought requests to guild authorities, city councils, ducal courts, and other governing bodies that they be excused from the normal restrictions. Each used a variety of tactics, stressing her age or infirmity, number of dependent children, good reputation, and quality products. These requests referred primarily to the individual facts of the case, but an occasional supplication also mentioned widows' rights in general: 'I bring my humble request . . . that the apprentice be allowed to stay with me, as it is the practice everywhere else in the entire Holy Roman Empire that widows who run a workshop with journeymen are allowed to retain an apprentice until he has finished his training.'¹⁵

The individualized nature of widows' requests is not terribly surprising, given the fact that there were very few women's guilds or other corporate bodies in which women could develop a sense of group work identity. In the few cases in which they did, their objections to restrictions on their work are couched in corporate terms. A group of unmarried veil weavers in Augsburg objected to an ordinance which forbade them to continue weaving 'because this is a fine and honourable female trade'.¹⁶ Ceremonies which celebrated women's work identity were very rare, in contrast to the huge number of parades, banquets, drinking parties, and festivals in which men participated as members of a craft. In the few

13. Karl Bücher and Benno Schmidt, *Frankfurter Amts- und Zunfturkunden bis zum Jahre 1612* (Frankfurt: J. Baer, 1914), and numerous guild ordinances in city archives.

14. MU, Ratsitzungsprotokolle, 1461, fol. 39, 42; AMS 15, 1612, fol. 201, 1634, fol. 116, 127; FF, Bürgermeisterbücher 1580, fol. 189b; FF, Zünfte, C-54M (1640); Ugb. D3L (1588 & 1596), Ugb. C59, Gg; Memmingen Stadtarchiv (hereafter MM), Hutmachern 51, Nr. 3 (1613); Nuremberg Staatsarchiv (hereafter N), Ratsbücher, 2, fol. 282 & 318 (1479), 2, fol. 31 (1475), 11, fol. 324 (1520), 22, fol. 236 (1544).

15. FF, Zünfte, Ugb. C-32, R no. 1 (1663). Widows' supplications and requests can be found in many city archives.

16. Claus-Peter Clasen, *Die Augsburger Weber: Leistungen und Krisen des Textilgewerbes um 1600* (Augsburg: Verlag Hieronymus Mühlberger, 1981), pp. 130-2.

instances in which such ceremonies had been established, the women fervently defended their right to continue holding them. The Strasbourg midwives, for example, required each new midwife to provide all the others with a 'welcome meal' when she was taken on. The older midwives justified this ritual with the comment that the city council had a similar requirement for new council representatives and ambassadors, holders of offices which, they said, were certainly no more important or honourable than midwifery.¹⁷ They recognized that such events were important in establishing work identity and publicly demonstrating group cohesion. Midwives in general seem to have had the strongest sense of work identity found among women, as they were always careful to mention their occupation when appearing in court, making an appeal, or acting in any legal or public capacity.

While journeymen and guild masters were fighting against widows' rights, professionalization and the formalization of training requirements worked against women's labour in several fields, most prominently in medicine. Until about 1500 there seems to have been little opposition to women practising medicine of all kinds. Women are listed as doctors in early tax lists and were even rewarded for special medical services.¹⁸ Every housewife was expected to have some knowledge of herbs, salves, and ointments, and care of others was seen as an extension of household healing. A fourteenth-century law from Calabria even notes, 'It is better, out of consideration for morals and decency, for women rather than men to attend female patients.'¹⁹

Gradually, however, under pressure from barber-surgeons, physicians, and apothecaries, cities and territories began to pass regulations expressly forbidding 'women and other untrained persons' to practise medicine in any way.²⁰ These ordinances did not keep

17. AMS, 15, 1584, fol. 121.

18. Hess, *Die deutschen Frauenberufe des Mittelalters*, p. 101. Helmut Wachendorf, *Die Wirtschaftliche Stellung der Frau in den Deutschen Städten des Späteren Mittelalters* (Quackenbrück: C. Trute, 1934), pp. 23-6; Karl Bücher, *Die Berufe der Stadt Frankfurt a. M. im Mittelalter* (Leipzig: B.G. Teubner, 1914); Gerd Wunder, 'Die Bürgerschaft der Reichsstadt Hall von 1395-1600', *Württembergische Geschichtsquellen*, Vol. 25 (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1956); FF, Bürgermeisterbücher 1436, fol. 17, 1446, fol. 47, 1491, fol. 96.

19. *Collectio Salernitana*, III, p. 338, quoted in *Not in God's Image: Women in History from the Greeks to the Victorians*, ed. Julia O'Faolain and Lauro Martines (New York: Harper and Row, 1973), p. 165.

20. Karl Weinhold, *Die Deutschen Frauen in dem Mittelalter* (Vienna: C. Gerold, 1851), I:160; ST, Polizeiakten A-38, Württembergische Landesordnung; AB, Schätze, no. 282.