

ANNE WHEATHILL

PATRICK CULLEN

The Early Modern Englishwoman:
A Facsimile Library of Essential Works

Part 1: Printed Writings, 1500–1640

Volume 9

Anne Wheathill

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Selected and Introduced by
Patrick Cullen

General Editors
Betty S. Travitsky and Patrick Cullen

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PREFACE

BY THE GENERAL EDITORS

Until very recently, scholars of the early modern period have assumed that there were no Judith Shakespeares in early modern England. Much of the energy of the current generation of scholars has been devoted to constructing a history of early modern England that takes into account what women actually wrote, what women actually read, and what women actually did. In so doing the masculinist representation of early modern women, both in their own time and ours, is deconstructed. The study of early modern women has thus become one of the most important – indeed perhaps the most important – means for the rewriting of early modern history.

The Early Modern Englishwoman: A Facsimile Library of Essential Works is one of the developments of this energetic reappraisal of the period. As the names on our advisory board and our list of editors testify, it has been the beneficiary of scholarship in the field and we hope it will also be an essential part of that scholarship's continuing momentum.

The Early Modern Englishwoman is designed to make available a comprehensive and focused collection of writings in English from 1500 to 1700, both by women and for and about them. The first series in the facsimile library provides a comprehensive if not entirely complete collection of the separately published writings by women. In reprinting these writings we intend to remedy one of the major obstacles to the advancement of feminist criticism of the early modern period, namely the unavailability of the very texts upon which the field is based. The volumes in the facsimile library reproduce carefully chosen copies of these texts, incorporating significant variants (usually in appendices). Each text is preceded by a short introduction providing an overview of the life and work of the writer along with a survey of important scholarship. These works, we strongly believe, deserve a large readership – of historians, literary critics, feminist critics, and non-specialist readers.

The Early Modern Englishwoman: A Facsimile Library of Essential

Works is published in two parts: *Printed Writings, 1500–1640* and *Printed Writings, 1641–1700*. We project that it will be complemented by separate facsimile series of *Essential Works for the Study of Early Modern Women* and of *Manuscript Writings*, and by a series of original monographs on early modern gender studies, also under our general editorship.

New York City
1996

INTRODUCTORY NOTE

Almost nothing is known about Anne Wheathill. It has been suggested that she may have been the daughter of Thomas Wheathill of Leicestershire, but the only evidence for that speculation is an inability to 'locate any other relevant Wheathills' (Bell, 213). At this point, the only reliable clues we have about her life are contained in her work, and the most they permit us to say is that she apparently flourished around the date of publication (1584), and that she portrays herself as: 1, a gentlewoman; 2, unmarried; and 3, Protestant. The title page describes her as 'Anne Wheathill, Gentlewoman,' and she signs herself, at the end of 'The Epistle Dedicatorie', 'Yours in Christ, Anne Wheathill, Gent.'. She alludes to her unmarried state in the opening of the dedicatory epistle when she cites her writing as testimony of the well-spent time of her virginity: 'For a testimoniall to the world, how I haue and doo (I praise God) bestowe the pretious treasure of time, euen now in the state of my virginitie; lo heare I dedicate . . . a small handfull of grose hearbs . . .'. As to her religion, Elaine Beilin is certainly correct in her claim that Wheathill's 'work is completely within the tradition of the Reformed books for private devotion, deriving prayers from Scripture and emphasizing human depravity, the need for divine grace, and the doctrine of the elect' (53). Her insistent emphasis on the redemptive power of faith also suggests strong Protestant convictions, and yet Wheathill's is not a polemical, anti-papal Protestantism: like the Psalms, her prayers make much of 'enimies', especially enemies of the church and the faithful, but there is no indication that she sees these 'enimies' as being specifically Roman Catholic.

It is tempting to examine the work for other biographical clues: so persistently does she speak of her poverty and affliction ('[we] that are poore and distitute of any helpe', 118v) that we may think we hear something more personal than the generic construction of someone speaking through, especially, the Psalms; but until we know more about her than we do, it is impossible to distinguish a personal 'I' from the generic 'I' of confessional and penitential discourse.

We do not know, then, whether Wheathill had actually fallen on hard times. Hence Warnicke's related conjecture that she may have been

trying to make money through her writing cannot be verified at this point. Warnicke, noting that only three women (Isabella Whitney, Margaret Tyler, and Jane Anger) in Elizabeth's reign tried to earn money by writing, observes that 'this number does not include the six or seven women, like Anne Wheathill in 1584, who may also have been primarily interested in earning money when they had works on religious topics printed' (123). But if Wheathill wrote for money, unlike (for example) Tyler she says nothing about it. In fact, one of the most striking features of her work is its total avoidance of self-promotion. She eschews the customary dedication to well-placed contemporaries and indeed does not even so much as allude to any of her contemporaries for purposes of affiliation or flattery. The only affiliation she suggests for herself is with the community of 'the church and the faithful', and that fact in itself may say as much about who she was as anything else.

In terms of Wheathill self-presentation as, above all, a member of the congregation of the faithful, her dedication is appropriately not to the temporally powerful but 'To all Ladies, Gentlewomen, and others, which loue true religion and be deuoutlie disposed' (Aii). This dedication, with its reduction of men to the category of 'others', may suggest that Wheathill saw herself principally as a woman writing for other women, and she evidently found the formulation sufficiently important to use it twice elsewhere in the front matter; but one should be careful not to overemphasize this. First, she dedicates the work, in her subtitle, 'for the *common* benefit and comfortable exercise of *all* such as are deuoutlie disposed' (Aii, my italics) and she expresses her hope of obtaining 'the good iudgement and liking of all my *brethren* and sisters in the Lord' (Aiii, my italics). And secondly, the work itself does very little, if anything, to suggest the femaleness of author or audience.

A *handfull of holesome (though homelie) hearbs* is part of the history of the English Reformers' effort to revise the Roman Catholic primers and Books of Hours to satisfy the private devotional needs of a Protestant middle class (on the history of sixteenth-century books of private devotion, see White, chapters x–xi especially). In Wheathill, as in most Protestant books of private devotion, the organization of the Catholic primer around the Hours of the Blessed Virgin Mary is largely dropped and replaced by a more informal, less liturgical structure; the morning and evening prayers at the beginning of her text are vestiges of the earlier primers' organization. Her prayers, like those in other primer-like collections of prayers such as *Praiers of Holi Fathers*

(1540), are constructed as borrowings, by way of paraphrase and pastiche, of prayers in the Old and New Testament. Moreover, her prayers are typical of sixteenth-century Protestant prayers in their performing 'the function of a meditation as well as of a prayer' (White, 179), and her choice of a botanical trope for her collection is anticipated by other collections of prayers and meditations, such as Thomas Becon's *The Flower of Godly Prayers* (1560, *et seq.*) and the anonymously edited *A Godly Garden* (1574).

Although Wheathill apologizes for her inexperience and lack of learned counsel, her text really requires no apology for our reprinting it in this facsimile edition. It is the work of someone who has thoroughly immersed herself in, and mastered, the cadence of the best English religious prose of her age – of the biblical translators and of the Book of Common Prayer. Some of her writing would not be embarrassed beside the prayers in the Book of Common Prayer. She is more than intermittently capable of sentences of genuine power – 'Thine eare was in my heart, before my voice was in my mouth' or 'We bring our years to an end, even as a tale that is told' – and a truly arresting use of example, as when (having described 'the God of Iacob, who wrestled with thine angel, and preuailed') she petitions: 'Even so make me a strong wrestler against mine enimies in this world' (33v). And while she may not be learned in the sense that Hooker and Becon are, she has at least some acquaintance with allegorical exegesis (see her reading of the waters Ezekiel saw issuing from the Temple, 95v) and with typology (see her linking of Adam and Eve to the Good Samaritan, 51–51v, or her reading of God's rescuing the Israelites through the destruction of Pharaoh's cavalry as a type of Christ's preservation of the Church, 119).

Only one copy of Wheathill's work, at the Folger Shakespeare Library, survives. A handsome duodecimo volume (5.7 × 10.8 cm; text block 4.4 × 8.6 cm), it is a product of the house of Henry Denham, a printer noted for the clarity and beauty of his varied assortment of letter and ornaments. Denham in 1574 acquired the patent for printing the Psalter, the primer for little children, and all books of private prayer in Latin and English (McKerrow, 88–89). Perhaps his most elegant book is the *Monument of Matrones (Lamps 1-4)* (STC 1892), printed in 1582, which is like Wheathill's work a collection of (among other things) private prayers.

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STC 25329

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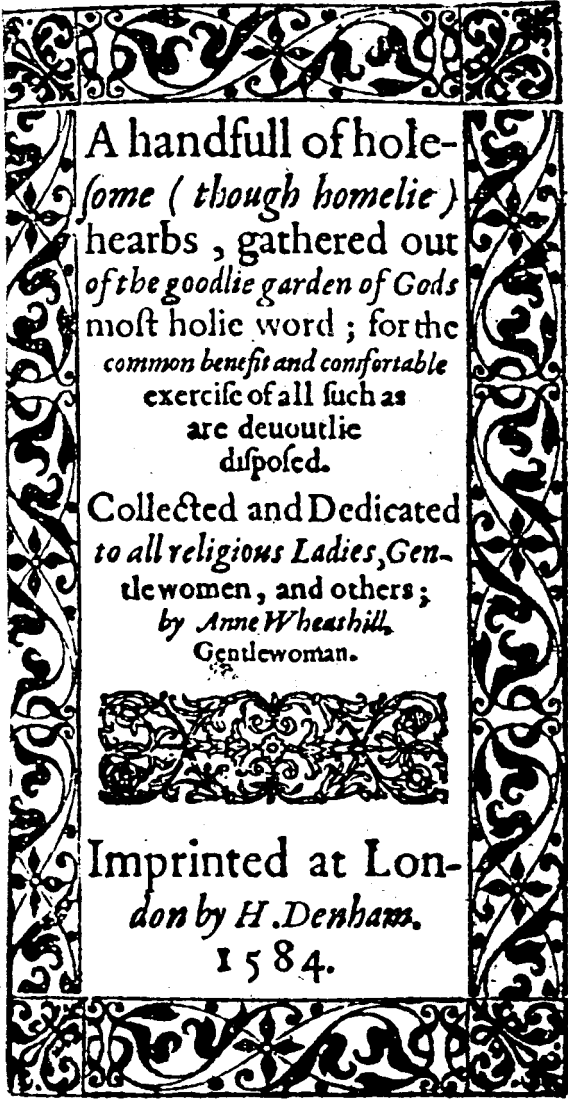
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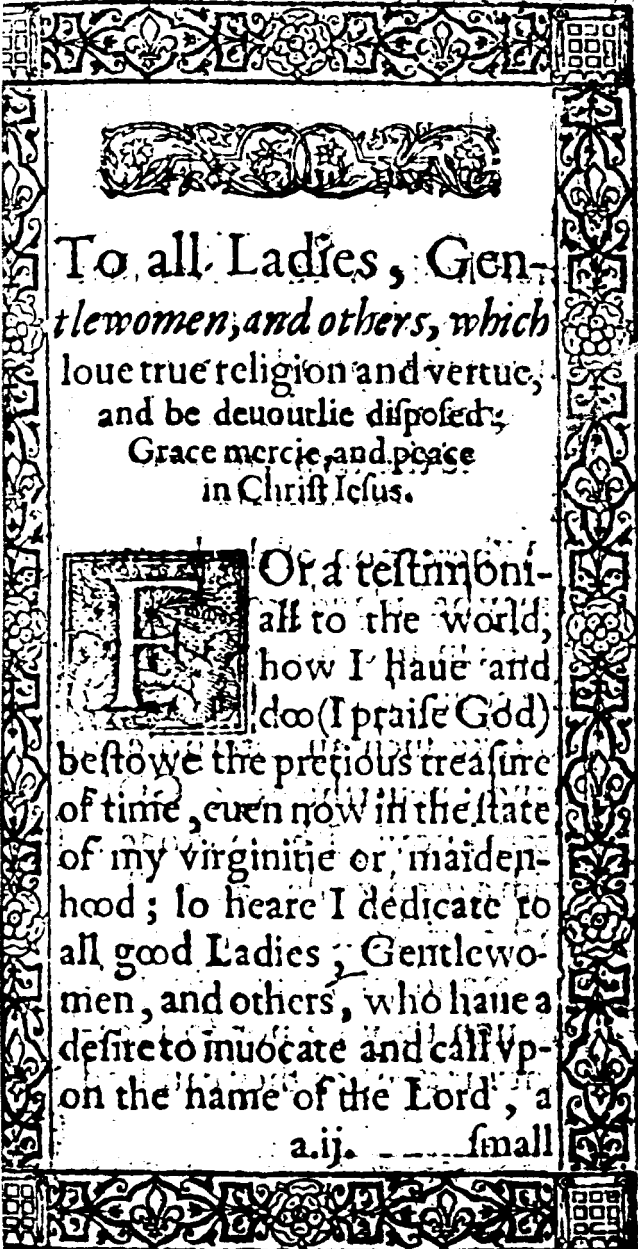
A handfull of hole-
some (though homelie)
hearbs , gathered out
of the goodlie garden of Gods
most holie word ; for the
common benefit and comfortable
exercise of all such as
are deuoutlie
disposed.


Collected and Dedicated
to all religious Ladies, Gen-
tlewomen, and others ;
by Anne Wheashill,
Gentlewoman.




Imprinted at Lon-
don by *H. Denham.*
1584.

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To all Ladies, Gentlewomen, and others, which
loue true religion and vertue,
and be deuoutlie disposed;
Grace mercie, and peace
in Christ Iesus.

 Or a testimonie
all to the world,
how I haue and
doo (I praise God)
bestowe the precious treasure
of time, euen now in the state
of my virginitie or maiden-
hood; so heare I dedicate to
all good Ladies; Gentlewo-
men, and others, who haue a
desire to inuocate and call vp-
on the name of the Lord, a
a.ij. small

The Epistle dedicatorie.

small handfull of grose hearbs;
which I haue presumed to ga-
ther out of the garden of Gods
most holie word . Not that
there is anie vnpurenes there-
in, but that (peraduenture) my
rudenes may be found to haue
plucked them vp vnreuerent-
lie, and without zeale.

Wherevpon of the learned
I may be iudged grose and vn-
wise ; in, presuming, without
the counsell or helpe of anie,
to take such an enterprise in
hand : neuertheles, as GOD
dooth know, I haue doone it
with a good zeale, according
to the weakenes of my know-
ledge and capacitie . And al-
though they be not so plea-
sant in taste, as they can find
out,

The Epistle Dedicatorie.

out, to whom God hath gi-
uen the spirit of learning: yet
doo I trust, this small handfull
of grose hearbs, holesome in
operation and workeing, shall
be no lesse acceptable before
the maiestie of almightie God
than the fragrant floures of o-
thers, gathered with more vn-
derstanding.

But without presumption
I may boldlie saie, they haue
not sought them with a more
willing hart and feruent mind;
nor more to the aduancement
of Gods glorie, & the desire of
acceptation, than I haue doon.
Which if I may obtaine, with
the good iudgement and li-
king of all my brethren and
sisters in the Lord, I shall
a.iiij. thinke

The Epistle dedicatorie.

thinke my time most happilie bestowed: for that thereby I did auoid idlenes, to the pleasing of almightie God; and haue gained those, whom I know not, as well strangers to me, as my acquaintance, to be my freends, that shall taste these grosse hearbs with me.

The Lord Iesus Christ, who moisteneth all his elect with his most precious blood, giue vs all a sweete taste in him: whome I humbly beseech, from the bottome of my hart, to giue vnto those that are vertuousslie bent, a desire to increase therein; and those, which haue not yet reached therevnto, I praie the holie Ghost to inspire their hearts from

The Epistle dedicatorie.

from aboue, that they and we
may be worthie to meete to-
gether, in the blessed king-
dome of our heauenlie father,
which his deare sonne our sa-
uior Iesus Christ did purchase
for vs; whose blessed name,
with the liuing father, and
the holie Ghost, be prai-
sed and magnified
now and for euer,

Amen, A-
men.

Tours in Christ,

Anne Wheathill,
Gens.

A table of the praier con-
teined in this booke, as they
begin and followe one an-
other in number ; from 1.
to 49 .

A Praier for the morning.
praier. 1.

A praier for remission of sins,
&c. praier. 2.

An other praier for the same. 3

An Euening praier. prai. 4.

Against the temptation of the
diuell, &c. praier. 5.

A praier for faith, and for Gods
helpe and assistance, &c. 6.

Another for the same. prai. 7.

A praier of the iustice of God,
and of his mercie. prai. 8.

A praier for humilitie, and a
confession of sinnes, &c. 9.

A praier for patience in trou-
ble,

THE TABLE

- | | |
|--|-------------|
| ble, &c. | praier. 10. |
| A praier wherein the bounti-
fulnes of God is confessed
and praised. | praier. 11. |
| A praier for grace and repen-
tance. | praier. 12. |
| A praier wherein we desire the
life to come. | praier. 13. |
| A praier for comfort in trou-
ble. | praier. 14. |
| A praier for the prosperitie of
the church. | praier. 15. |
| A praier that we may be heard
of God. | praier. 16. |
| A praier against the enimies of
the church. | praier. 17. |
| A praier of the afflicted per-
son. | praier. 18. |
| A praier of the iustice of God,
&c. | praier. 19. |
| A praier for faith & grace. | 20. |

A

THE TABLE.

A praier of the creation of
mankind,&c. praier.21.

A praier & thanksgiuing vnto
God, for his manifold gifts,
&c. praier.22.

A praier wherein the hart pow-
reth out it selfe before God,
&c. praier.23.

A praier wherein the afflicted
person praieth against his
enimies,&c. praier.24.

A praier for the increase of
faith,&c. praier.25.

A praier vnto God the father,
&c. praier.26.

A praier vnto the sonne of
God,&c. praier.27.

Another to the sonne,&c. 28.

A praier vnto the holie Ghost;
&c. praier.29.

A praier in the remembrance
of

THE TABLE.

- of death, &c. praier. 30.
A praier to heare the word of
God & keepe it, praier. 31.
A praier wherein the word of
God is praised, &c. pr. 32.
A praier to be said at all times,
&c. praier. 33.
An humble confession of our
sinnes before God, &c. 34.
A thanksgiuing vnto God for
the redemption of the world,
&c. praier. 35.
An other praier of praise and
thanksgiuing, &c. 36.
A breefe confession, &c. 37.
A praier, shewing that none,
but God, is omnipotent. 38.
A praier of lamentatio, &c. 39.
A praier, wherein the fatherlie
loue and preseruatiō of
God is set forth, &c. 40.

THE TABLE.

A praier, for grace, &c. 41.

A praier against offenses. 42.

A praier for the good estate of
the church, &c. praier. 43.

A praier, that the wisdom of
God is to be praised, &c. 44.

A praier wherein is shewed,
how blessed they are that
trust in God, &c. prai. 45.

A praier of Gods maiestie, 46.

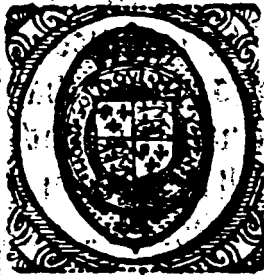
A praier, wherein is shewed
how blessed they are that
feare the Lord. praier. 47.

A praier, shewing that God
dwelleth in the harts of the
righteous, &c. 48.

A praier, shewing that God is
alwaies our protectiō, &c. 49.

FINIS.

1. A praier for the
Morning.



O Mightie
maker & pre-
seruer of all
things; God
omnipotent,
whiche like a
diligent watchman, alwaies
attendest vpon thy faithfull
people; so that whether they
 sleepe or wake, liue or die, thy
providence neuer forsaketh
them: looke fauourablie vpon
me, O Lord, thy poore and sin-
full seruant, which am not
worthy, but through thy
great mercies offered to me
in Christ, once to lift vp mine

eyes

A handfull of

eies vnto thy mercie seat.

Wherefoze in the name of
thy deere sonne my Lord and
Saviour, I offer vnto thee,
through him, the sacrifice of
praise and thanks giuing; that
thou hast preserved me both
this night, and all the time and
daies of my life hitherto, vntill
this present houre. I beseech
thee of thy great mercie
to illuminate my vnderstanding,
that I may lead and
frame my life as thou hast
taught me in thy holie word,
that my light may so shine
here on earth, that my heauenly
father may be glorified in
me, through Iesus Christ our
Lord and redeemer; for whose
sake heare me deare father,
and

wholsome hearbs. 2

and send thy holie Ghost to direct me in all my doings. To thee O glorious and blessed Trinitie, the Father, the Sonne, and the holie Ghost, be giuen all honoz and praise, now and for ever more, Amen.

2. A praier for remission of
sinnes, for victorie against satan,
and for the inward light of
the soule.

O Mercifull Father that art the sure safegard and defense of all that earnestlie trust in thee, and desirest not the death of sinners, but their conuersion and amendment of life; I acknowledge
b.ij. ledge

A handfull of

ledge vnto thy highnesse, all
mine offenses by me commit-
ted, which if I would hide from
the Lord, I could not. I con-
sider the miserable estate,
thereto through sinne I am
brought : for thereby I haue
woorthilie lost thy fauour, and
am fallen from thy grace,
which while thou withdrawest
from me, I can do no good
thing, nor thinke one good
thought. My finnes haue
caused thee to put me out of
thy remembrance, and to for-
get me, delaing to giue me
that which is my strength and
comfort. But how long wilt
thou forget me, Lord: For e-
uer? How long wilt thou
withdraw thy grace from me?

Thou

Thou knowest my hartie
contrition and sorowe ; for
that I haue vnkindlie forsaken
thy seruice , and serued
thine enemies , the diuell and
sinne . But trusting assuredlie
in thy promise made to me,
and all people , by the mouth
of thy prophet Ezechiel , that
is ; If the sinner will turne a-
waie from all his sinnes , that
he hath committed , and keepe
all thy commaundments,
doubtles he shall liue and not
die : as for all his sinnes that
he did befoze , thou wilt not
thinke vpon them . I now most
entirelie beseech thee , that as
my sinnes were the cause , why
thou diddest put me out of thy
fauour ; so let my hartie repen-

b. iij.

tance