

# Ashgate Critical Essays on Women Writers in England, 1550-1700

Volume 1: Early Tudor Women Writers

*Edited by*  
**Elaine V. Beilin**



Ashgate Critical Essays on Women Writers in England, 1550-1700

Ashgate Critical Essays on Women Writers in England,  
1550–1700: Volume 1

**Ashgate Critical Essays on Women Writers in England, 1550–1700**

*Series Editor: Mary Ellen Lamb*

The opportunities offered by the explosion of knowledge about early modern women writers in the past two decades also pose a sometimes formidable challenge. For some sixteenth- and seventeenth-century English women writers—Mary Sidney, Mary Wroth, Aemilia Lanyer, Margaret Cavendish, Anne Clifford, and Elizabeth Cary—the critical literature has already become voluminous. For others, such as Anne Lock and Lucy Hutchinson, recent editions of exceptional work provide good reason to foreground them as likely figures soon to assume prominence in the field.

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Early Tudor Women Writers

*Edited by*

Elaine V. Beilin

*Framingham State College, USA*

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# Contents

<i>Acknowledgements</i>	vii
<i>Series Preface</i>	xi
<i>Introduction</i>	xiii
<i>Bibliography</i>	xxxiii
<i>Chronology</i>	xliii

## PART I MARGARET MORE ROPER

1 Margaret Roper's English Version of Erasmus' <i>Precatio Dominica</i> and the Apprenticeship Behind Early Tudor Translation <i>John Archer Gee</i>	3
2 Margaret More Roper's Translation of Erasmus' <i>Precatio Dominica</i> <i>Elizabeth McCutcheon</i>	19
3 The Name and the Signature of the Author of Margaret Roper's Letter to Alice Alington <i>Nancy E. Wright</i>	27
4 Margaret Roper, the Humanist Political Project, and the Problem of Agency <i>Mary Ellen Lamb</i>	47

## PART II KATHERINE PARR

5 A Tudor Queen Finds Voice: Katherine Parr's <i>Lamentation of a Sinner</i> <i>Janel Mueller</i>	75
6 Devotion as Difference: Intertextuality in Queen Katherine Parr's <i>Prayers or Meditations</i> (1545) <i>Janel Mueller</i>	109
7 Complications of Intertextuality: John Fisher, Katherine Parr, and 'The Book of the Crucifix' <i>Janel Mueller</i>	137
8 Queen Kateryn Parr's <i>Lamentacion of a Synner</i> and the Formularies <i>Frank Howson</i>	155
9 'A supernal liuely fayth': Katherine Parr and the Authoring of Devotion <i>Andrew Hiscock</i>	185

- 10 Katherine Parr, Princess Elizabeth, and the Crucified Christ  
*Jonathan Gibson* 207

### PART III ANNE ASKEW

- 11 Anne Askew's Dialogue with Authority  
*Elaine V. Beilin* 227
- 12 'Except that they had offended the Lawe': Gender and Jurisprudence in  
*The Examinations of Anne Askew*  
*Paula McQuade* 237
- 13 Anne Askewe, John Bale, and Protestant History  
*Thomas Betteridge* 251
- 14 Translating (Anne) Askew: The Textual Remains of a Sixteenth-Century Heretic  
and Saint  
*Theresa D. Kemp* 271
- 15 The Plural Voices of Anne Askew  
*Joan Pong Linton* 297
- 16 The Inheritance of Anne Askew, English Protestant Martyr  
*Susannah Brietz Monta* 315
- 17 Stepping into the Pulpit? Women's Preaching in *The Book of Margery Kempe*  
and *The Examinations of Anne Askew*  
*Genelle Gertz-Robinson* 343
- Response to Genelle Gertz-Robinson, 'Stepping into the Pulpit?'  
*David Wallace*

### PART IV THE COOKE SISTERS: ANNE COOKE BACON, MILDRED COOKE CECIL

- 18 The Cooke Sisters: Attitudes toward Learned Women in the Renaissance  
*Mary Ellen Lamb* 379
- 19 The Library of Mildred Cooke Cecil, Lady Burghley  
*Caroline Bowden* 399
- 20 Mildred Cecil, Lady Burleigh: Poetry, Politics and Protestantism  
*Jane Stevenson* 427
- Index* 451

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## Series Preface

The opportunities offered by the explosion of knowledge about early modern women writers in the past two decades also pose a sometimes formidable challenge. This series of seven volumes presents a selection from the best work in this field for the use of scholars new to the area as well as for experienced scholars who may have overlooked an important essay published in a minor journal. The most difficult challenge is one of selection. As we decided to attend to depth rather than breadth of coverage in a seven-volume set, inevitably some early modern writers and some significant critical essays become excluded. It seems fitting to provide some sense of our general principles of selection. For most of the selected early modern writers – Mary Sidney, Mary Wroth, Aemilia Lanyer, Margaret Cavendish, Anne Clifford, and Elizabeth Cary – the critical literature has already become voluminous. For others, such as Anne Lock and Lucy Hutchinson, recent editions of exceptional work have moved us to foreground them as figures who we believe will soon assume prominence in the field. Contributions by such writers as Margaret Roper and Anne Askew demonstrate the significant role women played in the development of humanism and the Reformation. In the coming years, additional writers whose names we do not even yet know will, we are sure, become newly visible. It will be exciting to review, some decades in the future, how the field will continue to shift in interesting and perhaps unpredictable ways.

The editors of individual volumes also confront a difficult selection process determined by material factors as well as by quality of work. Essays are to be drawn primarily from periodicals and from some anthologies, but not from single-authored books. Since all essays are reproduced in their entirety, long essays dealing with several authors are usually not included; and there is a tendency to choose shorter essays. Widely-reprinted essays are discouraged. While editors may select frequently-cited work from prominent journals, the series is somewhat biased in favor of essays published in some less well-known journals not readily available in academic libraries. Given the financial restraints of publishing any series, permission fees exceeding a certain limit have caused the exclusion of some articles. Perhaps most frustrating to our editors, the sheer abundance of excellent work makes it impossible to include all deserving articles. Some of these omissions are addressed in the introductions and select bibliographies of individual volumes. While we whole-heartedly celebrate the essays our editors have selected, we also note that these are not the only significant articles.

MARY ELLEN LAMB  
*Series Editor*



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# Introduction

## Overview

Religious texts by Margaret More Roper, Katherine Parr, Anne Askew, Mildred Cooke Cecil, and Anne Cooke Bacon possess a vital, fervent language that has drawn readers to them for centuries. In this introduction to scholarship on these five writers, I highlight some of the remarkable qualities that have moved scholars to study and engage with their texts and the literary, social, political, and cultural worlds to which they belong. Traceable in this survey are shifts in critical practice involving many kinds of feminist, historicist, and materialist approaches to texts, authorship, and culture. Although I recognize that any critical essay reflects aspects of its own historical moment and thus risks later obsolescence, in developing this survey I have taken the long view and have recovered a multiplicity of ideas, approaches, and observations from a wide range of scholarship. This introduction will, I think, demonstrate the vitality of the field and its potential for vigorous debate and continuing growth.

Studying these writers begins most usefully with ideas about early modern society succinctly articulated by Deborah Shuger:

Religion during this period supplies the primary language of analysis. It is the cultural matrix for explorations of virtually every topic: kingship, selfhood, rationality, language, marriage, ethics, and so forth. Such subjects are, again, not masked by religious discourse but articulated in it; they are considered *in relation to* God and the human soul. That is what it means to say that the English Renaissance was a religious culture, not simply a culture whose members generally were religious. (*Habits* 6)<sup>1</sup>

As the scholarship surveyed here attests, studying the “cultural matrix” of religion initiates many kinds of inquiry, from investigating the “age-old problem of the role women were to exercise in the faith” (Wabuda 42), to exploring early modern subjectivity, to joining current debates about the political and religious character of the Reformation. Susan Wabuda accurately remarks on the “oscillations of the early years of the Reformation, as it unfolded in England in its own series of unique gyrations” (42), and understanding Roper, Parr, Askew, Cecil, and Bacon—or other writers of their moment—requires interpreting the nexus of religion, education, family connections, social practices, politics, and textual conventions specifically relevant to each text. Although these five writers’ common origin in upwardly-mobile, well-educated gentry families might have predicted their literacy and piety, it is to the details and contingencies of specific historical moments, familial identities, and localities that scholars have increasingly turned to reconstruct the conditions enabling their individual writing careers. The development of this field owes a great deal both to microhistory and to continually expanding intertextual analysis.

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<sup>1</sup> See also Shuger, *The Renaissance Bible*: “in practice social and religious existence formed a continuum” and “politics and religion remained impenetrably entangled” (1).

In this regard, the place of biographical study and the question of autobiographical readings of religious texts need early consideration. Many critics argue that women writers are particularly vulnerable to the biographical fallacy, a justifiable complaint if biographical research yields only a simplified conclusion that their writing is “personal” expression or experience. And yet, study of the rhetoric of “self-expression” should not be too quickly dismissed when thoroughly historicized and localized. The following survey of the field indicates how variously and productively many scholars have used life stories involving family, social and political contexts, and education to unlock their texts and furnish valuable insights. For the future, rather than avoiding biography or simply conflating autobiography with a textual “I,” scholars working on early Tudor women’s texts may find helpful the model that Mary Ellen Lamb proposes for scholars of Wroth’s *Urania* who “rather than denying the centrality of autobiographical meanings, seek to improve our methods of conceptualizing them” (“Biopolitics” 110).

Even at first glance, the entanglement of religion, politics, and the lives and works of these writers offers many threads to unravel. Occupying the most complicated political position was Queen Katherine Parr. As Henry VIII’s wife and sometime regent, as a close associate of leaders of the English Reformation, such as Cranmer and Latimer, and as the center of a circle of educated, evangelical women, Parr contributed devotional texts and patronage to the evangelical movement in the 1540s, while safely navigating the minefield of court politics. By contrast, possessing no political authority, and yet participating in the same political-religious controversies as Parr, Anne Askew confronted dignitaries of the church, the city of London, and the Privy Council and provided an account of her interrogations that have never been out of print since their first publication in the year of her execution for heresy. A decade earlier, Margaret More Roper participated actively in the political-religious conflict between her father, Sir Thomas More, and Henry VIII, sharing something of her father’s renown and his friendship with Erasmus, one of whose texts she translated. Two of the famously learned Cooke sisters, Anne Cooke Bacon and Mildred Cooke Cecil, began their writing careers in the late 1540s and early 1550s, Anne as the translator of Reformist sermons and by 1564, the translator of a defence of the English church, and Mildred as the translator of a patristic text. Committed to the continued reform of the English church, both sisters used letters, patronage, and their access to powerful husbands—William Cecil, Lord Burghley and Sir Nicholas Bacon—to promote their political-religious goals.

The public aspect of these writers’ lives has created some interesting interpretive problems for modern scholars seeking to assess their texts and their cultural contributions, because during her lifetime and afterwards, each figured as a celebrity in narratives serving multiple political, religious, or social purposes. Perhaps most notably, Margaret More Roper, eldest child of Thomas More, appears in early biographies of her father as a model daughter and living embodiment of More’s ideas about education; through the centuries, writers and artists continued to memorialize her in prose and paintings as a loving and courageous devotee of her sainted parent. In our own time, Roper appears as a radiantly devoted daughter in Robert Bolt’s iconic play and film about Thomas More, *A Man for all Seasons*. Particularly because Katherine Parr was Henry VIII’s sixth wife who “survived,” histories and biographies depict her as the generically religious, devoted nurse of the sick king, and as the canny antagonist of the conservative court faction. Her romance and later marriage to Thomas Seymour have been the stuff of heated historical novels. Less widely known, but certainly as much endowed

with a legendary character, Anne Askew is celebrated by her first editors, John Bale and John Foxe, as a Reformist hero who was burned at the stake at the age of twenty-five; and by later historians, balladeers, and novelists as a courageous champion of the Reformation.<sup>2</sup> Perhaps the least known outside of academia, Anne Cooke Bacon and Mildred Cooke Cecil appear in contemporary and later accounts through their connections with their famous husbands and sons—Anne in particular as the mother of Francis Bacon. From contemporary works like John Foxe's *Actes and Monuments* (1563) or William Roper's *The Life of Sir Thomas More* (c. 1556; printed 1626) to later collections like John Strype's influential *Ecclesiastic Memorials* (1721) or George Ballard's *Memoirs of Several Ladies of Great Britain* (1752), to a number of nineteenth-century histories and biographies, admirers have continually provided sympathetic accounts of these writers. Perhaps accepted somewhat too trustingly at times as reliable or transparent narratives, these sources have nevertheless offered modern scholars starting points for research into texts and contexts as well as a valuable history of reception.

Although only one essay in this collection dates from the 1930s, that decade marks a beginning of modern scholarship on these early Tudor writers, most notably in the Ph.D. dissertations of Ruth Hughey (1932) and Charlotte Kohler (1936). Both Hughey and Kohler introduced the five writers represented in this volume and began to explore both gendered authorship and the historical phenomenon of the woman writer of the Renaissance and Reformation. Neither scholar published her dissertation, although Hughey published brief articles on the editions of Anne Cooke Bacon's translations and on the editions of Elizabeth I's *Godly Meditation* (in which she thought Katherine Parr had a hand) before turning to the major publications of her distinguished career.<sup>3</sup> In 1931, Mary Bradford Whiting published an essay on Anne Cooke Bacon's religious translations and letters, and in 1934, Muriel St. Clare Byrne wrote a positive assessment of Bacon's career that considerably exceeded the bounds of her title, "The Mother of Francis Bacon." Unfortunately, however, immediately succeeding generations of scholars did not follow the lead of these pioneers, and for the next decades, work on all of these writers was sporadic. Between the 1930s and the 1980s, only two journal articles appeared on Katherine Parr, one by C. Fenno Hoffman, Jr. (1959) and the other by William C. Haugaard, (1969); Parr was also included in Roland H. Bainton's *Women of the Reformation* (1973) and was the subject of a popular biography, Anthony Martienssen's *Queen Katherine Parr* (1973). In the 1960s, Margaret More Roper returned to notice with a full-length biography by the Thomas More scholar, E. E. Reynolds, who provides a photograph and a translation of Roper's Latin letter to Erasmus. The journal, *Moreana*, published the texts of Erasmus's *Precatio Dominica* and Roper's English translation in 1965, their correspondence in 1966,

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2 See Elaine V. Beilin, "A Woman for all Seasons." For references to individual authors, see the bibliographies for those authors.

3 Hughey also published *The Correspondence of Lady Katherine Paston 1603–1627* with her introduction and notes. Her Preface may help us to understand why female graduate students contributed to this field in the 1930s: she had funding and was supported by established scholars. Hughey refers to a fellowship from the New Jersey State Federation of Women's Clubs and an American Association of University Women Margaret E. Maltby Fellowship that supported her graduate study; she also expresses gratitude to Professor Frederick Marcham at Cornell who first gave her "photostats" of the Paston correspondence and "stimulating guidance and encouragement" as she wrote her dissertation chapter on Lady Paston (13).



and in the next two decades, a series of informative articles. Derek Wilson's research on Anne Askew resulted in his vivid, speculative chapters on Askew in *A Tudor Tapestry* (1972).

By the mid-1980s, a number of scholars had begun to investigate the specific circumstances surrounding the production and publication of these writers' texts, at first including them in studies of other writers or movements and then reading the texts themselves within varied contemporary contexts. For example, in their historical and literary studies of John Bale, Leslie P. Fairfield and John N. King directed scholarly attention to Anne Askew's *Examinations* as Reformation texts.<sup>4</sup> The publication of Retha Warnicke's *Women of the English Renaissance and Reformation* (1983) indicated the arrival of "Tudor Women" in the History curriculum and heralded a wave of historical research. Similarly, the publication of essays focused on all of these early Tudor writers in the groundbreaking anthology, *Silent But for the Word*, edited by Margaret P. Hannay (1985), opened up debate about the nature and significance of women's religious texts, including the ongoing discussion about their role as translators.<sup>5</sup> In the more than two decades since these books appeared, historical and literary scholarship on Parr and Askew has flourished, and interest in Roper, Cecil, and Bacon appears to be growing. All five writers have been included in Ph.D. dissertations, perhaps a good sign that their work has finally regained a place in the academy.<sup>6</sup>

A crucial aspect of work on these authors has focused on the recovery of the texts themselves, resulting in the unprecedented publication of texts that only a few scholars had read before the 1970s. In its Renaissance Women Online series, The Brown University Women Writer's Project has reprinted the c. 1526 and c. 1531 editions of Margaret More Roper's translation of Erasmus, *A Devout Treatise upon the Paternoster*; Katherine Parr's *Prayers stirryng the mynd vnto heauenlye medytacions* (1545) and *The Lamentacion of a synner* (1548); Anne Askew's *Examinations* in both the Bale and Foxe editions (1546–7; 1563); and the translator's preface to Anne Cooke Bacon's 1548 translation of Ochino's *Sermons* and her 1564 translation, *An*

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4 See also Susan Brigden's ground-breaking *London and the Reformation* (1989), still essential reading about the Reformation "made by individuals" (4).

5 Significant contributions to the ongoing debate over women translators include Suzanne Trill's essay, "Sixteenth-century Women's Writing," in which she argues against the marginality of translation and for the "central social and religious significance" of specific women's translations (147), particularly Mary Sidney's poetic *Psalmes*, a crucial contribution to "the construction of protestant subjectivity ... in the (traditionally) most highly valued literary form" (155). See also Jonathan Goldberg, pp. 75–90.

6 *Dissertation Abstracts International* lists, for example: Sheridan Harvey, "The Cooke Sisters: A Study of Tudor Gentlewomen," Indiana U, 1981; James Glass, "Silent Reform in Henry's Court: Katherine Parr and Her Court and Their Contribution to the English Reformation," Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1991; Theresa Kemp, "Incriminating Women: Identity, Resistance, and Early English Literary Women," Indiana U, 1994; Patricia Brace, "'Set Furth and Put in Print': Agency and Print in Sixteenth-Century Books by Women," Queen's U, 1996; Sheryl Anne Kujawa, "'To Be Useful in What I Do': The Religious Legacy of Queen Kateryn Parr," City U of New York, 1999; Edith Snook, "Reading women writers in the cultural politics of early modern England," The U of Western Ontario, 2001; Rosanne Fleszar Denhard, "'Words are women': Early modern women's epistolary self-writing," State U of New York at Albany, 2002; Genelle Gertz-Robinson, "Trying testimony: Heresy, interrogation and the English woman writer, 1400–1670," Princeton U, 2003; Jann Esther Boyd, "Learning to Know: Representations of the Conscience in the Writings of Kateryn Parr, Anne Askew, and Jane Grey," U of Saskatchewan, 2006; Patricia Nardi, "Mothers at home: Their role in childrearing and instruction in early modern England," City U of New York, 2007.

*Apologie or answere in defence of the Churche of Englande*. The Ashgate series, *The Early Modern Englishwoman*, has published facsimile editions of Margaret More Roper's *A Devout Treatise upon the Paternoster* (c.1526); the 1547 edition of Katherine Parr's *Prayers or Medytacions* and the 1548 edition of *The Lamentacion of a synner*; the first edition of Askew's *Examinations*; and Anne Cooke Bacon's *Certayne sermons* and *Fourtene sermons* (1551?) and *An Apologie or answere in defence of the Churche of Englande*. The Oxford University Press series, *Women Writers in English 1350–1850*, published Askew's *Examinations* in Bale's first edition and in Foxe's 1563 edition. The Perdita Project provides information on Mildred Cecil, Lady Burghley's life and manuscript translation of Basil the Great's sermon. Particularly in the last decade, scholars have paid close attention to the textual issues connected with retrieving and publishing women's texts, including the critical significance of the early paratextual material.

One of the most challenging questions to confront scholars assessing the work of these writers concerns the nature and extent of their contribution to contemporary culture, particularly to the political-religious controversies of the Reformation. Quantifiers look at the tiny number of texts produced by women in relation to the number produced by men and assert confidently that their impact must have been minimal. However, a number of scholars argue that those few texts may have had an influence out of proportion to their number for some very clear reasons. Indeed, in *Lost Property*, Jennifer Summit argues that the "religious woman writer became a pivotal figure in Reformation efforts to shape and define English literary culture" (110). In her study of Bale's edition of Askew's *Examinations*, for example, Summit focuses on his "Elucidation," where he uses the material and symbolic figure of Askew the writer to retrieve a lost English history for English Protestants—what Summit terms "the return of England's dissident repressed" (150). In the work of the last decade, scholars have demonstrated with considerable precision additional ways in which the texts of Katherine Parr and Anne Askew were received and used by their contemporaries; debate continues as to whether editors with agendas different from theirs co-opted and subverted their work or whether they achieved their "unique and prominent positions" as agents of the Reformation (Snook 32).

The essays that are anthologized in this volume contribute significantly to the ongoing discussion of these five early Tudor writers. In the introduction to each writer, I have sketched the history of the wider critical conversation to which each essay belongs, although I am able only to hint at the complexities and riches of scholarly research and dialogue.

### **Margaret More Roper (1505–1544)**

As a number of scholars have noted, the famous Holbein sketch of the More family represents a meditative Margaret More Roper, sitting, perhaps on a low stool, a book open on her lap, positioned below the central horizontal axis created by her grandfather, father, and brother. Felicity Riddy argues that Holbein expresses Thomas More's view of the patrilineage of his family, with his married daughters reabsorbed into the family group to represent their collective goodness, learning, and piety: "More's household was industrious in its propagation of the myth of the good daughter, of which this picture is an instance" (34). Roper's reputation as Thomas More's learned and virtuous daughter was indeed well-disseminated in her own

time.<sup>7</sup> She was first praised in Richard Hyrde's preface to her translation of Erasmus's *Precatio Dominica*, then in *The Life of Sir Thomas More, Knight* written by her husband, William Roper, and in a chapter of Thomas Stapleton's *Life and Illustrious Martyrdom of Sir Thomas More* (1588). John Archer Gee (Chapter 1) feelingly summarizes Roper's status as celebrity daughter: "For ever endeared to posterity because of her heart-rending loyalty and devotion to her father in the cruel days of his martyrdom, even as a young girl she was highly esteemed by her relatives and friends for her fineness of character and her erudition" (9–10). In later centuries, Roper features, for example, in Pierre Le Moyne's *La Galerie des femmes fortes*, translated into English by John Paulet, Marquis of Winchester (1652), as a version of the biblical mother of the Maccabees, the woman who resists a tyrannical attack on her religion<sup>8</sup>; and in George Ballard's 1752 *Memoirs of Several Ladies of Great Britain* as a figure who "seems to have had all things that either art or nature could give her to make her perfect" (87). Among other appearances in the nineteenth century, she is the heart of one of Anne Manning's popular novels, *The Household of Sir Thomas More* (1851), written as a series of entries in Margaret's diary. Early in the twentieth century, scholars of humanism studied her as a translator and contributor to humanist scholarship. In his 1912 volume, *Vives and the Renaissance Education of Women*, Foster Watson included Hyrde's preface to *A Devout Treatise*, commenting on "the modern humanism, so delightfully exemplified ... in More's household" (27). The continual attachment of Roper's achievements to her father's influence has posed an intriguing challenge for modern scholars, many of whom have wondered how—or whether—to represent Margaret More Roper as an individual subject and how to assess her achievements.

The biographical issues involved in studying Margaret Roper resonate most intensely in the problematic authorship of the Alington letter, which has generated considerable scholarly debate. Ostensibly written by Roper to her step-sister, Alice Alington, on the subject of Thomas More's resistance to taking the Oath of Succession and his subsequent imprisonment in the Tower, the letter was first printed in More's 1557 works with the editorial headnote, "But whether thys aunswer wer written by syr Thomas More in his daughter Ropers name, or by her selfe, it is not certaynelye knowen" (1434). In the twentieth century, scholars are divided among believers in one or the other author, although there are a significant number of agnostics. In his important 1932 essay on the development of English prose, R.W. Chambers, having praised More's gift for dramatic dialogue (clvii), cites the Alington letter as "perhaps the most remarkable proof of this dramatic power of the Chelsea household" (clxii). Convincingly, he compares the letter to Plato's *Crito*, but finds the authorship still "a puzzle. The speeches of More are absolute More; and the speeches of Margaret are absolute Margaret. And we have to leave it at that" (clxii). Louis Martz's influential opinion ceded authorship to More: "one ends up with very little doubt that this letter is primarily More's own composition. One can imagine More and Margaret planning it together and speaking much of it aloud in More's Tower room. But its art seems to me all More's" (63). In his analysis of the letter, another influential More scholar, Richard Sylvester, follows Martz's lead. In an essay analyzing the reasons for the

7 Eugenio M. Olivares-Merino has recently suggested that Juan Luis Vives' friendship with More extended to a friendship with Margaret More Roper and a possible influence on her work.

8 See Maber, who includes a facsimile of Le Moyne's text in "Une Machabée moderne" and a facsimile of Paulet's text in "Pierre Le Moyne's Encomium."

letter's "tragic pathos" akin to that experienced in the theatre, Walter Gordon accepts Chambers' suggestion of "dual authorship," finding there "More's thought" and "Margaret's feelings" (12, n.2). More recent scholarship examines the theoretical issues and assumptions exposed by the very existence of the authorship question. In an ardently argued 1989 essay, Peter Iver Kaufman—accepting Roper's authorship—finds Roper's resistance to More's arguments to be telling evidence against then-current critical acceptance of a monolithic, uncontested patriarchy. Kaufman thinks that Margaret withstands her father's strict construction of a Catholic conscience by independently asserting her adherence to Erasmian humanism, and so he calls for a general reconsideration of assumptions about sixteenth-century gender roles and relations. Taking the authorship question in a different theoretical direction, Nancy Wright (Chapter 3), working with—and to correct—a Foucauldian model, finds that the subsuming of Roper's authorship into More's works exposes the historical significance of gender in the workings of cultural "mechanisms" that control discourse dissemination. Wright claims that gender hierarchies determine the subordination of Margaret's writing to More's *Works* and the disappearance of her authorship into an "author function" that enables More to argue his position, not openly against Henry VIII and the Acts of Succession and Supremacy, but covertly, as if against the position Margaret, his "maistres Eve," assumes. This essay most valuably reveals the complex ironies and rhetorical layers of the letter.

Beyond issues of attribution, scholars have considered the significance of Roper's education in the More household for her major work, the translation of Erasmus's *Precatio Dominica*. While Gee seems to reflect More's own view of his daughter's intellect as articulated in his letters, the value of Gee's seminal essay (Chapter 1) is that it does not simply acknowledge Roper's classical education, but begins the work of analyzing Roper's text as that of a humanist scholar and skilled translator. She was the beneficiary, Gee surmises, of More's educational system of double translation from Latin to English and English to Latin that shaped the development of English prose style. Continuing Gee's historicized textual work and largely responsible for returning scholarly attention to Roper in the 1980s, Elizabeth McCutcheon provided foundational biographical and historical contexts for Roper's work. Contributing to current women's studies scholarship, she claimed Roper as a beneficiary of the new learning for women and as a precursor of the Renaissance woman writer. Reprinted here is an essay (Chapter 2) in which McCutcheon studies Roper's text as a "sensitive rethinking of the Latin..." (23), mainly because of her use of doublets and a more "affective" style. Like Rita Verbrugge in a 1985 essay, McCutcheon makes claims for Roper's "personal" touches, although without delving into the rhetorical issues raised by this term; nevertheless, she lays groundwork for further study of the translator's art by explaining the significance of Roper's adjectives, vocatives, and syntax. Roper's rhetorical skill continues to be a ripe area for future analysis. In addition to her textual groundwork, McCutcheon provided an important resource in her introduction to Roper's work and bibliography in *Women Writers of the Renaissance and Reformation* (1987). In that chapter, taking her cue from the Holbein drawing, McCutcheon makes the case for the social, political, and religious significance of Margaret Roper's scholarly accomplishments and political activities. In *The Invention of the Renaissance Woman*, Pamela Benson adds to this discussion her argument that More's program for Margaret was intended to provide "spiritual autonomy," a condition more valuable than worldly participation (171). However, Jonathan Goldberg dissents from the critical consensus on the overwhelming

influence of More on Roper, claiming that “Roper found in Erasmian reproduction a way to swerve from and to rewrite her relationship to her earthly father” (104).

While Elizabeth McCutcheon highlighted the publication question, “But why was the *Pater Noster* published, when just a year before Thomas More had addressed Margaret as one who expected an audience of two—her husband and her father...?” and suggested that “More himself played an important part in the decision to publish” (“Life and Letters” 114), a compelling answer did not appear until Mary Ellen Lamb’s 1999 essay (Chapter 4). Enriching the critical debate by including questions of class and by investigating More’s complex socio-political agenda, Lamb offers a significant revisionist reading of the father-daughter relationship and the cultural work performed by Roper’s texts. In her view, father and daughter collaborated in a political campaign to replace the power of aristocratic privilege, represented by frivolous pastimes and inherited wealth, with a superior model of the humanist woman, represented by her classical learning, moderation, and the ideals of a companionate marriage. Lamb suggests reassessing the relevance of contemporary ideas about female identity and agency to the early modern period and opens up possibilities not only for future study of the women in the More circle, but for the fruitful reconsideration of other early modern familial and social groups. One such study that appears promising is of Roper’s daughter, Mary Roper Clarke Bassett, translator of *Th’Ecclesiastical History of Eusebius* (MS. c. 1547–1553) and Thomas More’s *Of the Sorowe, Werinesse, Feare, and Prayer of Christ Before Hys Taking* (1557).<sup>9</sup>

### Katherine Parr<sup>10</sup> (1512–1548)

Until recently, scholars attributed two works to Katherine Parr: *Prayers stirryng the mynd vnto heauenlye medytacions* (1545)—usually referred to by its 1547 title, *Prayers or Medytacions*—which is her revision of Richard Whitford’s translation of Thomas à Kempis’ *Imitation of Christ*, with five appended prayers; and *The Lamentacion of a synner* (1547). In *Kateryn Parr: The Making of a Queen*, Susan James offers a credible argument to support Strype’s attribution to Parr of a translation of John Fisher’s *Psalms or Prayers* (1544), an attribution now accepted by several Parr scholars.<sup>11</sup> Each text has arrested scholars’ attention with its powerful expression of a seemingly personal faith. Demers, for example, calls *The Lamentacion* Parr’s “spiritual autobiography” (103), and readers have understood this term variously, from literally autobiographical to representative of an ungendered Christian journey. Indeed, Parr’s devotional texts raise significant interpretive questions about the rhetorical conventions of

9 See, for example, Jaime Goodrich’s 2008 dissertation. I cite Goodrich’s date for Bassett’s *Eusebius*. See also Demers 76–7.

10 Contemporaries varied the spelling of her name as “Katherin,” “Katherine,” and “Catherine,” and modern scholars and popular writers have used “Katherine” and sometimes “Catherine”; however, Susan James argues for “Kateryn,” as derived from her signature after 1543, “Kateryn the Quene. K.P.” The current consensus, reflected in the *New DNB* entry, appears to be “Katherine.” In this essay, I have chosen to refer to her as “Parr,” to parallel the other writers in this volume.

11 The attribution is accepted by Hiscock and Gibson. See also Goodrich, chapter 3. In her valuable biography of Parr, Susan E. James provides useful details of and contexts for Parr’s life as a girl, wife, surrogate mother, teacher, political figure, and writer. More questionably, however, James sees Parr as a unique antagonist of monolithic patriarchal values and offers a troubling reading of almost all Parr’s texts as transparently autobiographical.

expressive style and the genre of devotional confession. Most scholars have wrestled with a methodology for defining or decoding Parr's "I," although some, including Andrew Hiscock, urge greater resistance to the search for a "gendered subjectivity" in her texts at the expense of attempting to construct the "full nature of Parr's textual relations with her culture" (184, 193). Perhaps the greatest uncertainties about Parr's texts relate to these cultural contexts, particularly their theological positions and their political-religious influence: in the days of fluctuating religious policy, where did they stand and what did they do? Scholars frequently cite Foxe's dramatic story of Parr's successful defense against the orthodox faction at court, thereby securing Henry VIII's support and furthering the Reformation, but they then note the continuing puzzle of Foxe's total silence about Parr's authorship, although he publishes texts by Anne Askew and Jane Grey.

Early work on Parr emphasized her humanist affinities, particularly represented by her patronage of the translation of the *Paraphrases of Erasmus upon the Newe Testament* (1548). Scholars aligned her with Erasmian reform, and while briefly acknowledging her more "protestant" devotion, did not turn to close readings of the texts themselves (see Hoffman, Haugaard, and McConica). As part of his extensive analysis of Reformation patronage, John King demonstrated Parr's significant efforts to disseminate Reformist texts and doctrine, positioning her in a network of female patrons. But not until Janel Mueller published her close textual and intertextual analyses did critical debate on the devotional, theological, political, and social contexts of Parr's texts begin. Mueller argued that contemporary Reformist texts simultaneously provided Parr with models and the encouragement to innovate. In each of her three essays anthologized here, Mueller considers theoretical and practical aspects of the intertextuality that necessarily shapes the discussion of Parr; each essay works successively with a different scholarly paradigm even as Mueller interrogates its assumptions. In her seminal essay, "A Tudor Queen Finds Voice" (1988) (Chapter 5), Mueller writes at a moment when feminist scholars' recovery of women's early modern texts was gathering momentum, with its attendant search for a feminine "voice," and she explores the possibility that the structure, style, and strategies of Parr's text might be legible as feminine discourse—only to find that Parr's breakthrough was to conceive of her "self" as an archetypal Christian. She also argues strongly for Parr's considerable influence on the English Reformation as a patron and proponent of the new faith, bound not to Erasmus, but to texts by Tyndale, Cranmer, and above all, Hugh Latimer. In "Devotion as Difference" (Chapter 6), Mueller turns the same searching light on *Prayers or Medytacions*, calling for a thoroughly historicized analysis of gender as it affects authorship, publication, and reception. She exemplifies this critical turn with a reassessment of Parr's revision of Whitford's translation of Thomas à Kempis as an original work complementing Archbishop Cranmer's Reformist *Litany*—thus deeply imbued with Scripture—and considers again whether feminine "self-expression" is an issue. In "Complications of Intertextuality" (Chapter 7) Mueller develops a more precisely historicized gender analysis, locating gender not only with class, but also with determinants like generation and religion. Studying Parr's metaphor of the "book of the crucifix" in the *Lamentacion*, she draws distinctions between a probable source, a sermon by Bishop John Fisher, and Parr's text by seeing Parr as part of a younger, Reformist generation for whom both "book" and "crucifix" signified differently. Ultimately, this generational difference equates with the difference between Catholic and Protestant, and Mueller makes her case for a "much more

explicit allowance for historical and situational variation” when considering any combination of textual determinants (153).

Following Mueller, since 2000, scholarly interest in Parr’s texts has focused intensely on the ways they performed the work of the Reformation and contributed to the transitional years in Reformation England when a Christian might convert to the essential tenets of the Reformed faith, yet still follow traditional devotional practices. Frank Howson (Chapter 8) pursues Parr’s connections to Archbishop Cranmer by examining similarities between the *Lamentacion* and *The Necessary Doctrine and Erudition for any Christian Man* (1543), also known as *The King’s Book*, which clerics developed from Henry VIII’s and Cranmer’s amendments to the earlier *Institution of a Christian Man* (1537), also known as *The Bishops’ Book*.<sup>12</sup> Whereas Mueller found Parr’s “boke of the crucifix” rooted in Fisher, Howson describes it as a guide to meditation, a specific response to *The Bishops’ Book* where Cranmer enjoins meditation on “the book of the rood” and Henry’s annotations call for instruction in doing so.<sup>13</sup> That both Mueller and Howson make their case is not a small point, since they demonstrate the theoretically limitless possibilities of intertextual study. Indeed, in his essay (Chapter 9), Jonathan Gibson (Chapter 10) tracks the “cluster of devotional texts” written between 1544 and 1548 by Parr and her stepdaughter, Princess Elizabeth, each including meditation on the crucifixion.<sup>14</sup> Gibson expands Mueller’s link between Parr and Bishop Fisher to encompass his associate in Passion meditation, Margaret Beaufort, herself a translator of Thomas à Kempis. Adding to the evidence for the complexities of Reformation faith, Gibson finds that both Katherine’s and Elizabeth’s texts negotiate between Catholic and Reformist devotion with the ultimate goal of “protestantizing” meditation on the Cross, and that such work may well have influenced later texts by Anne Lock and Aemilia Lanyer. Andrew Hiscock’s essay (Chapter 9), also considers fluctuating religious identities in relation to Parr’s devotional texts, arguing for her evolving commitment to the evangelical community.

In the continuing attempt to understand the nature and influence of Parr’s devotional texts, Parr studies will clearly require even further intertextual investigation. Howson’s work indicates (as James suggests) that more intensive examination of both *The King’s Book* and *The King’s Primer* (1546) together with *The Lamentacion* is needed, particularly, I would speculate, an exploration of whether the influence goes all one way from Henry and Cranmer to Katherine, or whether there may be textual evidence of real collaboration. As Howson writes, “Henry, Cranmer, and Kateryn were all engaged in the same combat” (170 herein), and like Lamb’s work on Roper, study of Katherine Parr’s circle might include investigation of various and possibly changing, political-religious collaborations, rather than sole authorship. Since additional texts written, published, or influenced by Parr may continue to come to

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12 Since Henry’s holograph annotations to the Bishop’s Book are extant, it is possible to compare his views with Cranmer’s and Parr’s. See also Gibson, pp. 211 and 218 n.16 herein.

13 Howson does not address Parr’s putative change of “rood” to “crucifix,” but it is a textual crux worth pursuing in the larger context of Parr’s Reformist role.

14 In this regard, see also Guy Bedouelle’s edition of Parr’s *Oeuvres Spirituelles*, which includes Elizabeth’s French translation of *Prayers or Medytacions* from BL Royal MS 7D X, and a French verse translation of the *Lamentacion* (titled *La complainte de l’ame pecheresse*, perhaps to recall Elizabeth’s translation of Marguerite de Navarre), which Bedouelle attributes to Jean Bellemain. Bedouelle’s bibliography of Parr editions and inclusion of the English texts make this edition a significant addition to Parr studies.

light, further archival research on Parr's activities between 1543 and 1548 is also essential.<sup>15</sup> Recently, Edith Snook has opened up a promising reading of Parr's active evangelism, accomplished, she argues, by Parr's "rhetorical deployment" of her "self" as a "repentant, unlettered, pious reader and obedient wife" (49), the ideal position for resisting orthodox theological authority.

### Anne Askew (1521–1546)

Scholars often contrast Katherine Parr's apparently circumspect expression of her Reformist views and her seemingly submissive relationship with authority to Anne Askew's open confrontation with civic, religious, and royal figures over doctrines of faith, which ended with Askew's execution for heresy at Smithfield. Whether Askew and Parr knew each other personally or whether Askew was a habituée of Parr's circle are perennial questions—or more often, outright assumptions—appearing in both academic and popular publications. Since no textual evidence has yet come to light to locate Askew at court, the evidence is at best circumstantial; the strongest indication of their association is Askew's account of Sir Richard Rich's interrogation about any "man or woman of my sect," during which Rich asks about Parr's close friend, Catherine Brandon, duchess of Suffolk, and several other women associated with the court (Askew 186).<sup>16</sup> This purported connection or relationship raises the larger biographical problem, that representation of Anne Askew has been dominated by the enthusiastically partisan life and character presented by her first editor, the Reformist polemicist, John Bale, and developed by her second editor, John Foxe, in his magisterial *Actes and Monuments*. John Bale's editions of *The first examinacyon* and *The lattre examinacyon*, and Foxe's inclusion of *The two examinations* in all editions of *Actes and Monuments*, have ensured the continuous availability of those texts and also of Askew's editors' views of her as a prototypical Protestant martyr. Later histories of the Reformation and collections of lives of "famous women" have perpetuated and added some of the more colorful details of her character and story, and fictional versions of her antagonistic dialogues with officials of church, city, and state enliven novels and dramatizations.<sup>17</sup> The caution necessary in accepting as transparent truth "historical" accounts of Roper and Parr applies equally to Askew's story

15 James cites Strype's attribution to Parr of a translation of Savonarola's *A goodly exposition, after the manner of a contemplation upon the li Psalm called Miserere mei deus* (1538), although her internal evidence is not convincing (207–8). As noted, in addition, James claims that "there is evidence to indicate that the queen may also have had a hand in" the creation of *The Primer in English and Latin set forth by the King's Majesty and his Clergy*, i.e. *The King's Primer* (224).

16 All references to Askew's text are to *The Examinations of Anne Askew*, ed. Elaine V. Beilin. Some sources for the Parr-Askew connection are highly tendentious; for example, the first source to claim Askew was the supplier of heretical books to Katherine Parr's circle is Robert Parsons, the Catholic polemicist, whose 1604 text, *The Third Part of A Treatise*, attacks Foxe's martyrology as spurious adulation of dubious characters (494); nevertheless, later writers adopt his claim.

17 For a survey of Askew's "afterlife," and reception, see the Introduction to *The Examinations*, ed. Beilin. xxxvi–xlii; and Beilin, "A Woman for All Seasons." Bale is the sole (and I argue, unreliable) source of the detail that Askew left two children behind in Lincolnshire, perhaps part of the "domestic piety" Watt claims for his construction of Askew as a "type of the godly woman" (106–7). See also Susan Wabuda, "Sanctified" 122–24.



as preserved by church historians like Strype, whose narratives are frequently cited as a historical source rather than examined as a text itself requiring interpretation.

*The Examinations* is actually a collection of texts that includes a first-person account of Askew's questioning, letters, and statements of faith. To varying degrees, most scholars, even as they discuss "Askew" or "Askew's text," recognize that the first editions of Askew's texts are mediated and that their production, publication, and dissemination are fraught with puzzles and problems, including significant issues of authenticity and authorship. The first editions, printed with John Bale's often lengthy interspersed "elucidations" raise questions of how much Bale tampered with the text of the first examinations, which he claims to have received in "her owne hande writynge" (Askew 7), or with the "coppie" of the final examinations apparently brought to him in Germany by "serten duche merchauntes" present at her burning (Askew 88). As Diane Watt summarizes, "It is entirely possible that Bale made quite radical, although almost entirely undetectable changes to Askew's autobiographical accounts. This caveat must be kept in mind in any reading of Askew's text" (95). Watt approaches the problem by assessing Bale's changes to *A Godly Meditation*, his 1548 edition of Princess Elizabeth's translation of Marguerite de Navarre's *Mirror of the Sinful Soul*, for which a holograph exists. Her findings are striking, since his changes include "correcting the spelling, word order, grammar and punctuation and paragraph divisions" as well as word substitutions and "extra scriptural references in the margins" (90); however, Watt also acknowledges that at times, Bale may simply have copied earlier corrections and editing, perhaps by Elizabeth herself, perhaps by Katherine Parr or someone in her circle. But if Bale did intervene in Elizabeth's translation, by analogy, would he have edited Askew's holograph in a similar manner? Was there perhaps, as in the case of Elizabeth, an intermediate editor? In Askew's case, as Boyd Berry and others have noted, after she was tortured on the rack, Askew may have needed help to produce her manuscript (197). And as in the case of Elizabeth, what critical avenues open if we posit an early modern model of text-production that allows for collaboration at several different points? In this regard, in turning attention to Foxe's paratextual material, Frances E. Dolan recognizes the importance of examining his presentation of Askew's text, finding that he erases her actual bodily suffering in the fires of Smithfield, instead locating her subjectivity solely in a "spiritual integrity" (163). Sarah Wall considers both Bale's interventions and Foxe's extensive formatting, continuing work she published in an earlier article co-authored with Thomas Freeman. Wall questions the ways in which the printing of Askew's text in Foxe's *Actes and Monuments*—with the addition of paragraph divisions, for instance—might change interpretation. As Freeman and Wall's enlightening close study of Foxe's 1563 and 1570 editions shows, Foxe was an active editor who may have added only a few new "scraps of text" (Wall 259), but who used "marginal notes, additional stories and documents, omissions and the arrangement of his narrative" to ensure that "the potentially subversive figure of Anne Askew was transformed into an effective icon for the causes he cherished" (Freeman and Wall 1191), including the necessity for religious reform initiated by the king. Similarly, Susannah Brietz Monta (Chapter 16) studies Foxe's "shaping mechanisms, such as printed sidenotes and additional commentaries" (329) to create his "ambiguous portrayal" of Askew as a female martyr. While Watt, Monta, Wall, and Freeman make compelling cases for the significance of editorial interventions, overall, a comparison of *The Examinations* in Bale's and Foxe's editions shows remarkably similar—and often identical—texts, suggesting at least that Foxe and Bale agreed on the basic words to be published, whether or not they were transcribed from

Askew's holograph. Scholars continue to debate the possibilities: that there is a text by Anne Askew, differentiated from Bale's on stylistic and rhetorical grounds; that Bale's and Foxe's view of Askew as a Reformist martyr may have encouraged them not to alter a holograph text beyond attempts to "enhance" its surface elements; that *The Examinations* is best described as a collaborative text rather than single-authored; that it is ultimately Bale's text. Taking up this last point, Oliver Wort has recently proposed that Bale edited and emended *The Examinations* as hagiography rather than history, masterminding a Reformist revision of his own life of Saint Anne, written during his days as a Carmelite friar. In all cases, scholars must clearly attend to the textual production and provenance of *The Examinations* as we determine our critical practices. In her work on *The Examinations*, Megan Hickerson decides

to engage with it as written, to accept the problem of its historical veracity, and nevertheless to consider it not as a discrete text, but rather as an artifact of, product of, and source of evidence for the context in which the historical Askew lived, experienced persecution for her religious beliefs, presumably wrote something that became the published *Examinations*, and died. ("Negotiating Heresy" 781)

Whether adopting this position or another on the authorship question, for the time being, many scholars will likely continue to refer to *The Examinations* as "Askew's text." Considering the editorial problems that are daily elided in the teaching and criticism of Shakespeare, we might be grateful that *The Examinations* apparently passed through the hands of so few editors.

Two related textual problems deserve further consideration. One problem is the common critical habit of accepting Askew's text as a reliable source for the words, emotions, and intentions of her interrogators. Even assuming Askew's authorship and Bale's minimal intervention in her text, we should see that Askew has constructed her examinations according to her own specific agenda and that they are not transparent transcriptions. Lashing out at Bale's publications, Bishop Gardiner famously wrote that *The Examinations* was "very pernicious, seditious, and slaunderous" as well as "utterly misreported" (293). Even if Gardiner's letter is political spin, we are left pondering how both Askew and Bale construct dialogues and events, a process that should foreclose unproblematic attribution of intention or motive to Askew's interrogators. As Genelle Gertz-Robinson comments (Chapter 17), in *The Examinations* we are often looking at "literary constructions": "Characterization, setting, and dialogue reshape the content and space of the trial" (345). The second critical problem is, simply put, the function of Askew's "I." Like Katherine Parr's first person, Askew's has often been taken as transparently autobiographical. However, to claim that Askew wrote a "spiritual autobiography" (as I among others have) is not necessarily to accord simple historicity to that first person, but rather to argue that it might be a discursive strategy in the representation of Askew's religious vocation. In recent criticism, readers of Askew's text have theorized its first-person account from varied perspectives, including those of rhetoric, logic, psychology, and martyrology.

For much of its earlier existence, *The Examinations* was read as a historical narrative rather than interpreted as a multivalent text. As with other early women writers, modern literary study begins with Hughey and Kohler who comment on Askew's texts, Hughey marking the significance of Askew's story as printed in Foxe, and Kohler focusing on the ballad "Lyke as the armed knight." But from the 1930s to the 1980s, scholarly consideration of Askew's work was apparently limited to including Askew as an ancillary and cautionary figure in biographies

of Katherine Parr.<sup>18</sup> In the last twenty-five years, however, numerous articles and book chapters on Askew indicate scholars' increasing attention to textual analysis, debates about gendered voice, identity, and agency; and political, religious, and social contexts of the Reformation.

Askew's texts reappeared in scholarly discussion beginning with Betty Travitsky's anthology, *The Paradise of Women* (1981), and John King's *English Reformation Literature* (1982). Over the years, my own work on Askew centered on close readings of *The Examinations* in contexts related to local history and the religious, political, and gender polemics of the 1540s, genre, rhetoric, and reception. In *Redeeming Eve*, I argue that Askew constructs a text in which she is "the active, teaching voice," rhetorically adept at irony and understatement and deploying her scripturalism to transcend gender stereotypes articulated by her opponents, her persona quite distinct from Bale's female "Protestant saint." To emphasize Askew's knowing deployment of generic conventions, I have included in this collection my analysis of Askew's dialogues, a form which enables her to capture the textual authority of Scripture.<sup>19</sup> Extending the study of rhetoric in *The Examinations*, Tarez Samra Graban has recently examined the linguistic and rhetorical technicalities of Askew's ironic first-person, arguing that Askew deliberately subverts the interrogation by reinventing both her own and her interrogators' roles through "non-cooperative" communication.

Beyond the textual issues surveyed above, scholars have argued for various relations between Askew's text and Bale's "elucidation" in the first printed editions and Askew's text and Foxe's historiography in *Actes and Monuments*, and several essays are included here to represent that ongoing debate. The ways in which a scholar construes "Askew" naturally affect his or her argument about Bale's role. A landmark exposition of the differences between Bale's and Askew's texts is Thomas Betteridge's 1997 essay (Chapter 13), in which he claims that the importance of reading Askew's text against Bale's commentary lies in understanding their contrasting views of Askew's subjectivity: her text represents her in the line of scripturally-based Christians following in Christ's footsteps, their vocations realized through persecution, whereas Bale's "elucidation" constructs Askew as part of his magisterial history, so that her text necessarily requires explanation, leading him to subvert both the silences and the centrality of Scripture in her text. Betteridge develops this work further in his chapter on Askew and Bale in *Tudor Histories of the English Reformations, 1530-83* (1999), where he expands the analysis of Bale's historiography and argues for the radicalism of Askew's texts because of her "performance" as the handmaid of God. Offering a positive reading of Bale's representation of Askew, Krista Kesselring, in a 1998 essay, emphasizes his support for learned, godly women and the exemplarity of "womanly" and "manly" virtues for Christians of both sexes. While Gwynne Kennedy traces Bale's anxieties towards a woman filled with righteous anger who speaks authoritatively on Christian doctrine ("Bale's ambivalent comments look more approving than they are" 158), she argues for an Askew who draws that anger from Scripture to define her "mission: to defend the true church, record its formative struggles, and spread the central tenets of faith" (146). Taking a different tack, Kimberly Coles finds Askew's faith to be personal and interior, contrasting her self-presentation with the views of Bale and Foxe who require public, communal martyrs for a public cause. By contrast, many

18 Askew is included in Martienssen, who claims a Lincolnshire connection and includes Askew in a chapter on "The Queen's Ladies"; see also McConica (222-25) and Hoffman (356).

19 Ruth Hughey first noted the importance of Askew's use of the "dialogue device" (26).

scholars define Askew's text within a community, whether of discourse, vocation, faith, or gender—or all of the above. John Knott sees Askew's self-representation as conforming "to patterns familiar from the Bible, accounts of martyrs from the primitive church, and such recent examples as the well-known cases of Oldcastle and Thorpe" (56), and he analyzes Bale's representation of Askew and Oldcastle as his "model of a new kind of martyr," and as "skillful and assertive defenders of scriptural truth" (59). In Chapter 16, Susannah Brietz Monta draws on her extensive work on early modern martyrdom to argue that representations, beginning with Bale's, rely on Askew's physical frailty to define her martyrdom, whereas Askew draws on saint Stephen's iconoclasm from Acts and Pauline rhetoric to conceptualize herself as the female teacher-martyr. Indeed, a number of scholars have written persuasively on the fundamental importance of the complex figure of saint Stephen to Askew's work, including Kennedy, Monta, Gertz-Robinson, and Hickerson ("Ways of Lying").

In general, study of Askew's scripturalism has been particularly fruitful, as the work of McQuade, Beilin, Betteridge, Kennedy, Linton, Monta, Gertz-Robinson, and Snook demonstrates. In her essay (Chapter 15), Joan Pong Linton provides a single focus on all three verse publications attributed or connected to Askew—"The voice of Anne Askew out of the 54. Psalme of David," "The Balade whych Anne Askewe made and sange whan she was in Newgate," both published in Bale's first edition; and "A Ballad of Anne Askew, Intituled *I am a Woman poore and Blind*," which was circulating by 1596 and printed after 1624 (Askew 72, 149–50, 195–8). Rooting these verses in both Scripture and oral tradition, Linton examines the "participatory dynamics" (304) that the poetic "I" makes available to an expanding Christian community. In a more recent article (2006), Linton adds further to this scholarship by arguing for Askew's control of her text and her agency as a dissident and martyr, largely achieved by her citation of numerous biblical texts relevant to her own struggle, including key references to the Book of Job. Following Summit's ideas about the importance of the woman writer to Reformation historians, Edith Snook returns to the argument that reading the vernacular Bible is central to Askew's text. Like Betteridge, she sees Askew's radical scripturalism as essential, but, more, she claims that cultural codes enjoining women's silence and excluding women from formal education and public debate enable Askew to adopt the role of pious, simple—and unassisted—Bible-reader, thus giving her ultimate "protestant" authority; this woman reader, Snook claims, is precisely the ideal Protestant figure Bale and Foxe, and later Thomas Bentley in *The Monument of Matrones*, needed for their evangelizing projects, thus accounting significantly for their eagerness to publish Askew's texts: "Her text remains visible in their histories and is the foundation upon which they can authorize a challenge to the Catholic theological tradition" (35). This argument should stimulate further discussion, particularly as Snook reminds us to consider how gender may influence the production and reception of texts even when it is not an explicit textual presence.

In her chapter on Askew, Diane Watt provides a significant discussion of Askew's vocation as a preacher and teacher following the Christological model and alludes to similarities with Margery Kempe and Lollardy.<sup>20</sup> This connection is closely examined in Genelle Gertz-Robinson's essay (Chapter 17). Here, Gertz-Robinson for the first time addresses at length questions posed by many readers about similarities in Kempe's and Askew's authorizing

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20 Davis briefly connects Askew to Lollardy in his 1982 article. See Alec Ryrie's comment that Askew was "very likely to have come across former Lollards or their books" (*The Gospel*, 236–7).

strategies and shows how they enable their “homiletic rhetoric” by using scriptural knowledge and exegesis as a foundation for preaching. As David Wallace concludes in his response to Gertz-Robinson (Chapter 17), such a comparison helps us to overcome the artificial divisions of periodization, so that we may investigate “the continuities in the struggles of Kempe and Askew to survive political coercion” as well as the history of regulating women’s presence at institutional sites of teaching and learning (373). As Summit also advocates, linking fifteenth-century women’s writing to that of the Tudor period is surely an area for further scholarly inquiry, as is the question whether women’s exclusion from literal and figurative masculine spaces provokes them to construct their own “spaces” in which to read, think, write, and speak. We might imagine thoroughly historicized and localized studies of “a room of one’s own.”

Askew’s confrontation with authority has been a significant element in her critical and curricular appeal. Since the historical Askew faced both civil and ecclesiastical authorities, an investigation of legal contexts for *The Examinations* is essential, and included here (Chapter 12) is Paula McQuade’s foundational work on Askew’s legal position and exploitation of the conflict between civil and ecclesiastic courts to assert her legal rights; McQuade clarifies the importance of Askew’s references to the “quest” or grand jury that should legally have determined whether she should stand trial. Elizabeth Mazzola reads the “autobiography” of *The Examinations* not as self-revelatory, but as a form enabling Askew’s doctrinal attack on her examiners. Analysis such as Megan Matchinske’s directs the discussion towards the political discourses of Askew’s texts and contexts, particularly their role in the court battles between the reformers and orthodox factions maneuvering for power in Henry VIII’s last months, but also in Askew’s individuation as a political subject. Matchinske’s emphasis on the political elements of Askew’s work joins Boyd Berry’s essay on Askew’s “rhetorical shrewdness” (184) in the political conflicts of *The latter examinacyon*. Also emphasizing the importance of the political conflict, and more fully integrating politics and religion, Theresa D. Kemp (Chapter 14) distinguishes among the representations of Askew by the religious conservatives of Henry’s court, by John Bale, and by Askew herself. While she acknowledges that Askew’s text may be compromised by Bale’s editorial intervention, she argues that Askew’s style and methods are distinct from Bale’s, representing her always as a “speaking subject” interested in creating a record of her own beliefs.

In the light of ongoing debates by historians over the nature of the Reformation, reassessment of Askew’s place in and contribution to the political-religious situation in London of the 1540s has begun and will certainly continue. Megan Hickerson provides significant insight into Askew’s text in relation to evangelical dissenters in the circle of Dr Edward Crome; as Hickerson shows, in her *First examinacyon*, Askew appears to be aware of the life-saving strategies of dissembling, false, or recalled recantations used by her co-religionists (“Ways of Lying”). In a later essay, Hickerson builds on Alec Ryrie’s work to argue that since persecution of heretics was less widespread in 1545 than in 1546, Bonner’s releasing Askew after her initial arrest may be better understood; Bonner’s refusal to condemn Askew for heresy thus recasts the “foxish” prelate demonized by Bale as a politically astute negotiator (“Negotiating Heresy”).<sup>21</sup>

21 See Alec Ryrie, “Strange Death” and *The Gospel and Henry VII*; and Ethan Shagan. Ryrie points out that under Cromwell, Bonner was a self-described “lutherane” (*The Gospel*, 217), although he clearly enforced the 1539 Act of Six Articles. Betteridge’s note is worth quoting: “Certainly it would be equally accurate to describe Bonner’s first encounter with Askew as an act of pastoral care by a man of the Church seeking to bring a straying member back into the flock” (*Tudor Histories*, 102, n. 73).

In a recent essay, David Loewenstein makes the case for reading Askew with texts representing the heresy persecutions that became particularly dangerous in 1546. Like studies of Katherine Parr, Askew studies should continue to emphasize intertextuality and the discourses of various political-religious communities. Her webpage will undoubtedly offer increasing numbers of hyperlinks.

### The Cooke Sisters

Sir Anthony Cooke and Lady Anne Fitzwilliam Cooke's five daughters and four sons grew up at Gidea Hall, Essex, in a home renowned for godliness and humanist education. Marjorie Keniston McIntosh's foundational scholarship on Sir Anthony Cooke provides a detailed description of the family's intellectual and religious training. In Jane Stevenson's view (Chapter 20), "the Cookes are among the most politically significant women in Elizabethan England who were not of the blood royal" (427), not only because they married men who would eventually gain political power, but quite independently, because they combined intellect, personal connections, and religious commitment to advance Protestant political causes. In particular, their letters reflect their attempts to influence both familial and public affairs. Lynne Magnusson quotes one of Anne Cooke Bacon's letters, written to pressure her son into obeying her excellent advice: "But *matris monita nihili estimantur*. I think for my long attending in court and a chief counsellor's wife, few *preclarae feminae meae sortis* are able or be alive to speak and judge of such proceedings and worldly doings of men" (May 12, 1595, LPL MS 651.95. quoted in Magnusson 11). The two sisters included here, Anne Cooke Bacon and Mildred Cooke Cecil—like their sister, Elizabeth Cooke Hoby Russell—were particularly proficient in languages, and each translated significant religious works. Mildred translated "An Homelie or Sermon of Basile the Great" from Greek; Anne translated nineteen Italian sermons by Bernardino Ochino, a Protestant exile and protégé of Archbishop Cranmer, and Bishop John Jewel's *Apologia Ecclesiae Anglicanae* as *An Apologie or answere in defence of the Church of Englande*. In her frequently cited essay, Mary Ellen Lamb (Chapter 18) opens up many elements of the critical discussion about the significance of women's religious translations: defining familial, religious, and political contexts; seeking reasons why well-educated women chose to translate specific works; considering the possibility of gendered translation; and investigating conflicting evidence about the cultural status of translation itself. A decade later, Louise Schleiner pursued similar questions, exploring ways in which the Cooke sisters benefited from their evangelical affiliations to become participants in religious conflicts and projects; her research also brought manuscript works and funerary verse into the discussion of the sisters, highlighting the Latin and Greek dedicatory verses that Mildred, Anne, Elizabeth, and Katherine contributed to an illuminated manuscript, Bartholo Sylva's *Il Giardino cosmografico coltivato*. All scholarship on the sisters points toward their strong commitment to Reformation religion and politics, and once again, raises intriguing questions about the extent of their influence.

#### *Mildred Cooke Cecil (1526–1589)*

Although Mildred Cooke Cecil gained limited notice in biographies of her husband, William Cecil, Lord Burghley, Pearl Hogrefe accorded her a full chapter in her popular history, *Women*

of *Action in Tudor England*, largely devoting it to her political activities.<sup>22</sup> However, only in the last few years have scholars begun to analyze the significance of Mildred Cecil's classical learning and the compelling evidence of her intellectual and political influence. Pauline Croft situates her as an educational and political force in familial and diplomatic circles, emphasizing the multiple facets of her cultural roles. Caroline Bowden's path-breaking essay on Cecil's library (Chapter 19), opens up many possibilities for future scholarship, no doubt beginning with the list of thirty-eight books that certainly belonged to Cecil. Similarly, Jane Stevenson's wide-ranging essay on Cecil's roles as scholar, educator, linguist, correspondent, puritan, patron, and philanthropist from the era of Katherine Parr to the Elizabethan decades (Chapter 20) indicates many areas for future investigation.

*Anne Cooke Bacon (1528–1610)*

Scholarship on Bacon has been sporadic. In the 1930s, both Ruth Hughey and Charlotte Kohler commented on Anne Cooke Bacon's translations from Ochino and Jewel, and Mary Bradford Whiting and Muriel St. Clare Byrne surveyed Bacon's works and her political, religious, and maternal activities. Two decades later, C.S. Lewis paid close attention to her linguistic skill:

Anne, Lady Bacon ... deserves more praise than I have space to give her. Latin prose has a flavor very hard to disguise in translation, but nearly every sentence in Lady Bacon's work sounds like an original. Again and again she finds the phrase which, once she has found it, we feel to be inevitable. *Sacridiculi* become 'massing priests,' *ineptum* 'a verie toy,' *quidam ex asseclis et parasitis* 'one of his soothing pages and clawebackes,' *lege sodes* 'in goode fellowshipe I pray thee reade,' *operae pretium est videre* 'it is a world to see,' and *magnum silentium* 'all mum, not a word.' If quality without bulk were enough, Lady Bacon might be put forward as the best of all sixteenth-century translators. (307)

In his biography of Nicholas Bacon, Robert Tittler comments briefly on Bacon's marriage to Anne Cooke, noting in particular how well-matched the two were in intellectual and religious inclinations. Pearl Hogrefe's chapter on Bacon provides a fuller biography; however, recent work suggests that a full-scale life is much needed. For example, Lynne Magnusson's analysis of the reception of Bacon's letters indicates how carefully she fashioned her epistolary rhetoric as she responded to her mother or to her sons in the voice required at that moment for her ideas or influence to be felt or accepted. As Magnusson argues, "Attention to the more complex interactions of advice-giving by an old and learned Elizabethan widow can help us to understand how the 'order of things' and the place of gender in that order are not merely static—how instead invisible authority is built up, acted out, and reproduced, moment by moment, within historically specific contexts and everyday dialogic or epistolary exchange" (7). Similarly focusing on the variations of Bacon's long life, Alan Stewart demonstrates how the successive roles Anne Cooke Bacon assumed as unmarried daughter, wife, and widow are reflected in the paratextual material surrounding her writings and activities, indicating her "iconographic significance" (94) for the publisher's strategies of presentation; her eventual freedom—and freer speech—as a widow, Stewart surmises, may have motivated the tactics

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22 Stevenson judges that Burghley's biographer, Conyers Read, "gravely underestimates the significance of Mildred" (444).

her sons and their servants adopted in their responses. Even Bishop Goodman's often-quoted comment that she was "little better than frantic in her age" may relate to her behavior as an independent widow (99).

## **Conclusion**

As this survey indicates, historicist scholarship—old, new, macro, micro, and revisionist—has essentially dominated scholarly work on these writers, but encompasses a broad range of approaches and methodologies, involving studies of women's lives, women's work as writers and patrons, gender, class, texts and paratexts, intertextual materials, and material culture. Whether analyzing their lives or their texts, or the ground in between, scholars in the disciplines of English, History, and Religion have found these early Tudor writers to be rich and challenging subjects.<sup>23</sup> Regrettably, collaborative interdisciplinary or multi-disciplinary scholarship has been limited. Collaboration, increasingly understood as an important aspect of early modern writing and publishing, might also be a worthy goal for scholars wishing to explore the depth and breadth of these writers and their texts and to ensure the future health of this field.

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23 At least two of these writers appear to have current theological relevance. Paul F.M. Zahl, a systematic theologian and parish minister, writes a contemporary exposition for a Protestant lay audience of Parr and Askew as "lay theologians" and participants in the Reformation.





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# Chronology

## MARGARET MORE ROPER

- 1505 Born to Thomas More and Jane Colt More, the eldest of four children.
- 1511 Jane Colt More dies. Thomas More marries Alice Middleton.
- By 1521 Studies Greek, Latin, theology, astronomy, philosophy, mathematics, poetry, logic, grammar, and rhetoric.
- July 2, 1521 Marries William Roper.
- 1523-c.1535 Gives birth to five children: Elizabeth, Mary, Thomas, Margaret, and Anthony.
- 1524 Erasmus dedicates his commentary on two of Prudentius' hymns to her.
- 1524 Translation of Erasmus' *Precatio Dominica* published as *A devout treatise upon the Pater noster* (edition not extant).
- c. 1526 Another edition of *A devout treatise upon the Pater noster* published in London.
- 1527 Holbein visits the More household to sketch the More family.
- 1529 Erasmus writes to Roper on September 6 about the Holbein sketch, and she replies on November 4.
- c. 1531 Another edition of *A devout treatise upon the Pater noster* published in London.
- 1534-1535 Visits Thomas More in the Tower of London where he is imprisoned for refusing to take Henry VIII's Oath of Succession.
- 1534-1535 Roper and her father correspond (two of Roper's letters extant).
- August 1534 Alice Alington and Roper exchange letters.
- July 6, 1535 Thomas More executed for treason.
- 1544 Margaret More Roper dies.
- c.1547-1553 Mary Roper Clarke Bassett translates *Th'Ecclesiastical History of Eusebius*.
- 1557 The Alington letter published in *The Workes of Sir Thomas More* with a headnote proposing either Roper or her father as the author.
- Mary Roper Clarke Bassett's translation of Thomas More's *Of the Sorowe, Werinesse, Feare, and Prayer of Christ Before Hys Taking* published in *The Workes of Sir Thomas More*.
- 1578 William Roper dies.

## KATHERINE PARR

- 1512 Born to Sir Thomas Parr and Maud Green Parr, the eldest of three children.
- 1529?-1533 Married to Edward, Lord Borough.
- 1534-1543 Married to John Neville, Lord Latimer.
- July 1543-January 1547 Married to Henry VIII.
- July-October 1544 Regent-General during Henry VIII's absence in France and in daily contact with Archbishop Cranmer.
- 1544 Translation of John Fisher's *Psalmes or prayers* published.
- December 1544 Elizabeth Tudor sends a New Year's gift of her translation of Marguerite de Navarre's *The Mirror of the Sinful Soul*.
- 1545 *Prayers stirryng the mynd vnto heauenlye medytacions* published.
- 1545 Elizabeth Tudor translates Parr's *Prayers* into French, Italian, and Latin as a New Year's gift for Henry VIII.
- January 28, 1547 Henry VIII dies.
- 1547 *The Lamentacion of a sinner* and another edition of *Prayers or Medytacions* published.
- 1547-1548 Married to Sir Thomas Seymour. Parr and Seymour correspond.
- 1548 Another edition of *The Lamentacion of a sinner* published.
- September 5, 1548 Parr dies from puerperal fever, six days after giving birth to a daughter, Mary.
- 1570 "The story of Q. Katherine Parre" included in John Foxe's *Actes and Monuments*.
- 1582 *The Lamentacion of a sinner* and *Prayers or Medytacions* published in Thomas Bentley, *The Monument of Matrones*.

## ANNE ASKEW

- c. 1521 Born to Sir William Askew and Elizabeth Wrottesley Askew, one of five children.
- 1520s? Elizabeth Wrottesley Askew dies and Sir William marries Elizabeth Hutton Hansard. The family moves to South Kelsey, Lincolnshire.
- By 1540? Marries Thomas Kyme. According to Bale, two children are born.
- 1541 Sir William Askew dies.
- Early 1540s? According to Bale, Kyme drives Askew out of his house. Askew seeks a divorce and goes to London.
- March 1545 Imprisoned in the Counter, examined for heresy, and released.
- June 18 and 19, 1546 Askew and Kyme examined by the king's council at Greenwich.
- June 20, 1546 Imprisoned for heresy in Newgate.
- June 29, 1546 Interrogated in the Tower of London and tortured on the rack.
- July 16, 1546 Burned at the stake as a heretic in Smithfield.
- November 1546 *The first examinacyon* published in Wesel, Duchy of Cleves.
- January 16, 1547 *The lattre examinacyon* published in Wesel, Duchy of Cleves.
- 1547 Another edition of *The first examination* and *The latter examynacyon* published in London by Nicholas Hill (?).
- 1548? Another edition of *The firste Examinacion* and *The latter Examination* published in London by William Hill.
- c.1550 Another edition of *The first Exawinacion* [sic] and *The latter Examinacion* published in London by William Copland (?).
- 1559 John Foxe's *Rerum in Ecclesia Gestarum Commentarii* (Basel) includes a Latin translation of the *Examinations* and Foxe's epitaph, "In Annae Askevae Constantissimae foeminae & martyris bustum."
- c. 1560 Another edition of *The first examination* and *The latter examinacion* published in London.
- 1563 *The two examinations* included in John Foxe's *Actes and Monuments*.
- 1582 "Praier of Anne Askue the Martyr" published in Thomas Bentley, *The Monument of Matrones*.
- 1585? Another edition of *The first examination* published in London by Robert Waldegrave.

## MILDRED COOKE CECIL

- 1526 Born to Sir Anthony Cooke and Lady Anne Fitzwilliam Cooke, possibly at Gidea Hall, Essex, one of five daughters and four sons.
- December 21, 1545 Marries William Cecil.
- c. 1551 Translates "An Homelie or Sermon of Basile the Great"
- 1556 Daughter, Anne, born.
- 1558 William Cecil becomes Elizabeth I's Secretary of State.
- 1563 Son, Robert, born.
- 1571 William Cecil becomes Lord Burghley.
- 1572 Anne Cecil marries Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford.
- Contributes Greek verses to Bartholo Sylva's *Il Giardino cosmografico coltivato*.
- Burghley becomes Lord Treasurer.
- 1588 Anne Cecil, Countess of Oxford, dies.
- April 4, 1589 Mildred Cooke Cecil dies and is buried in Westminster Abbey with Anne.
- 1598 William Cecil, Lord Burghley dies.
- 1612 Robert Cecil, Earl of Salisbury, dies.

## ANNE COOKE BACON

- 1528 Born to Sir Anthony Cooke and Lady Anne Fitzwilliam Cooke, possibly at Gidea Hall, Essex, one of five daughters and four sons.
- 1548 Translation of five *Sermons of Barnardine Ochine of Sena* published.
- 1551? Translation of nineteen sermons published in *Certayne Sermons of the ryghte famous and excellente Clerk Master Barnardine Ochine*
- 1551? Translation of *Fouretene Sermons of Barnardine Ochyne* published.
- c. February 1553 Anne Cooke marries Nicholas Bacon and becomes the mother of his six children by his first wife.
- 1558 Anthony Bacon born.
- Nicholas Bacon appointed Lord Keeper of the Great Seal.
- 1561 Francis Bacon born.
- 1564 Translation of Bishop Jewel's *Apologia Ecclesiae Anglicanae* published as *An Apologie or answere in defence of the Church of Englande*.
- 1570? Translation of the nineteen sermons from 1551? published in *Sermons of Barnardine Ochyne*
- 1572 Contributes Latin verses to Bartholo Sylva's *Il Giardino cosmografico coltivato*.
- February 20, 1579 Sir Nicholas Bacon dies.
- 1570s-1580s Patron of reformist preachers.
- February 26, 1585 Letter to Lord Burghley on behalf of the reformist preachers.
- 1601 Anthony Bacon dies.
- August 1610 Anne Cooke Bacon dies at Gorhambury, Herefordshire.
- 1626 Francis Bacon dies.





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Part I  
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