

Early Modern European Conduct Books
Women, Gender, and the Book
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Books

Barret, Robert. *The Theorike and Practike of Moderne Warres*. London: Printed for William Ponsonby, 1598.

Cleaver, Robert. *A godle form of householde government*. London: Printed by Felix Kingston for Thomas Man, 1598. X Collection 392.3 C62

Cockeram, Henry. *The English Dictionary: or, An interpreter of hard English words. Enabling as well ladies and gentlewomen, young scholars, clerks, merchants*. London: Printed by A. Miller, and are to be sold by A. Crooke, 1650. PE1620 .C65 1650

La Primaudaye, Pierre de. *The French academie: Wherein is discoursed the institution of manners*. London: Printed for Thomas Adams, 1614. 5th edition. Special Collections X collection BJ1520.L313 1614

Minsheu, John. *Pleasant and delightfull dialogues in Spanish and English: profitable to the learned, and not unpleasant to any other reader*. London: Edm. Bollifant, 1599.

Niccholes, Alexander. *Discourse of marriage & wiving & of the greatest mystery therein contained*. London: Becket, 1620. Special Collections x-collection 173.1.N58

Turberville, George. *The noble art of venerie or hunting*. London: Printed by T. Purfoot, 1611. Special Collections x-Collection 799.2942.T93n 1611

Vives, Juan Luis. *Introduction to Wisedome: Blanket of Sapience*. London: Tho. Berthelet, 1550. Special Collections, 170.V85.iM

Questions

This session, we're focusing on what historians of the book and literary scholars call "paratexts": the bits and pieces that surround the main text or content of a book: the title pages, tables of contents, indices, letters to the readers, dedicatory poems, advertisements, and other bits and bobs. These may or may not be written by the author of the main text; their author may be the printer or publisher, an editor or literary executor, or a friend of the author's, among others.

Paratexts, like conduct books more generally, are about disciplining the reader, about teaching the reader how to experience and how to read the book they're about to read. They can tell us a lot about the "implied reader" of a text: who does the author, his friends/editors/executors, or the publisher think should be reading this text? How should they be reading it? They can also tell us a lot about how a publisher or author wishes to be seen by the world: who do they dedicate their book to? What do they hope to get out of the dedication?

As you move through your book, consider the following questions:

- 1) What are the paratexts in your book? Create a list of these elements, with a brief description of each (e.g., “architectural title page,”; “dedicatory letter to Lord so-and-so,” etc.)
- 2) Explore each piece in more depth. What is the imagery on the title page? How does it serve to advertise the book? How does it condition the reader’s entry into the book?
- 3) What does the dedicatory letter say? How about the letter to the reader? Note that many early modern books have both of these pieces. What can these letters tell us about the author, the publisher, and/or the book itself? What do they tell us about the “implied reader”?
- 4) Turn to the inside of the book, the main text. What do you see there that tells you anything about women and men as readers—how or why they interacted with written and printed material? What were the uses of books, the book you’re studying, in particular? How were they meant to discipline behavior and shape educational formation?