The New Synthese Historical Library
Texts and Studies in the History of Philosophy

VOLUME 63

Managing Editor:
Simo Knuuttila, University of Helsinki

Associate Editors:
Daniel Elliot Garber, Princeton University
Richard Sorabji, University of London

Editorial Consultants:
Jan A. Aertsen, Thomas-Institut, Universität zu Köln
Roger Ariew, Virginia Polytechnic Institute
E. Jennifer Ashworth, University of Waterloo
Michael Ayers, Wadham College, Oxford
Gail Fine, Cornell University
R. J. Hankinson, University of Texas
Jaakko Hintikka, Boston University
Paul Hoffman, University of California, Riverside
David Konstan, Brown University
Richard H. Kraut, Northwestern University, Evanston
Alain de Libera, Université de Genève
John E. Murdoch, Harvard University
David Fate Norton, McGill University
Luca Obertello, Università degli Studi di Genova
Eleonore Stump, St. Louis University
Allen Wood, Stanford University

The titles published in this series are listed at the end of the volume.
VIRTUE, LIBERTY, AND TOLERATION
Political Ideas of European Women, 1400–1800

Edited by
JACQUELINE BROAD AND KAREN GREEN
Monash University, Melbourne, VIC, Australia
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Illustrations vii
Acknowledgements and Note on the Text ix
Notes on Contributors xi
Introduction xv
*Jacqueline Broad and Karen Green*

## I. Political Thought as Improvisation: Female Regency and Mariology in Late Medieval French Thought
1
*Earl Jeffrey Richards*

## II. Phronesis Feminised: Prudence from Christine de Pizan to Elizabeth I
23
*Karen Green*

## III. Catherine d’Amboise’s *Livre des Prudents et Imprudents*: Negotiating Space for Female Voices in Political Discourse
39
*Catherine M. Müller*

## IV. “Machiaveli in Skirts.” Isabella d’Este and Politics
57
*Carolyn James*

## V. Liberty and the Right of Resistance: Women’s Political Writings of the English Civil War Era
77
*Jacqueline Broad*

## VI. Margaret Cavendish and the False Universal
95
*Hilda L. Smith*

## VII. The Social and Political Thought of Damaris Cudworth Masham
111
*Regan Penaluna*

## VIII. “Our Religion and Liberties”: Mary Astell’s Christian Political Polemics
123
*Michal Michelson*

## IX. Virtue, God, and Stoicism in the Thought of Elizabeth Carter and Catharine Macaulay
137
*Sarah Hutton*

## X. Catharine Macaulay and Mary Wollstonecraft on the Will
149
*Martina Reuter*
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

| XI. Keeping Ahead of the English? A Defence of Jews by Cornélie Wouters, Baroness of Vasse (1790) | 171 |
| Carrie F. Klaus |

| Bibliography | 189 |
| Index | 205 |
LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

I.1 Blanche de Castille and her son Louis 7
II.1 A manuscript illumination of Prudence 26
II.2 Louise of Savoy holding a compass and the scales of justice 30
II.3 Elizabeth I by Quentin Metsys the Younger 33
IV.1 The Parnassus by Andrea Mantegna 64
IV.2 The Expulsion of the Vices by Andrea Mantegna 65
IV.3 Coronation of a Lady by Lorenzo Costa 66
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We gratefully acknowledge the financial assistance of the Australian Research Council: the editorial work on this volume was completed as part of an ARC-funded project on the history of women’s political thought. We would also like to thank the participants at our ARC-funded conference, “Towards a History of Women’s Political Thought, 1400–1800,” hosted by the School of Philosophy and Bioethics, Monash University, in July 2005. Many of the essays in this volume were first presented at this conference. We are particularly grateful to our key-note speakers on that occasion, Sarah Hutton, Catherine Müller, Hilda Smith, and Patricia Springborg. We are also grateful for the generous financial assistance of the French Government in funding Catherine Müller’s participation, and for the use of the Alliance Française de Melbourne, organised by Edouard Mornaud. For her terrific work in organising the conference, we are greatly indebted to Lisa Curtis–Wendlandt, and for their help on the day, to Jeremy Arons and Tamsin Green. For their kind permission to use illustrations in this volume, we thank the Pierpont Morgan Library, New York; the Pinacoteca Nationale, Siena; the Bodleian Library, University of Oxford; the Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris; and the Musée du Louvre, Paris. Thanks are also due to our editors at Springer, Floor Oosting and Ingrid van Laarhoven, as well as the anonymous reader of the original manuscript. For their meticulous and invaluable work on this volume, we are especially grateful to our editorial assistants, Nicole Kouros and Patrick Spedding.

Jacqueline Broad
Karen Green

NOTE ON THE TEXT

Unless otherwise indicated, all English translations of foreign language quotations within the text are the authors’ own.
NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

JACQUELINE BROAD is a Postdoctoral Research Fellow in the School of Philosophy and Bioethics at Monash University, Melbourne, Australia. Her main research area is the history of early modern women’s philosophy. She is the author of *Women Philosophers of the Seventeenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), and journal articles on Mary Astell, Damaris Masham, and other early modern women. Together with Karen Green, she is currently completing an Australian Research Council-funded project on the history of women’s political thought.

KAREN GREEN is Associate Professor in Philosophy at Monash University, Melbourne, Australia. She was educated at Monash University and Oxford University, where she took the BPhil in 1977, and at the University of Sydney where she completed her PhD in 1983. She is the author of two books, *Dummett: Philosophy of Language* (Cambridge: Cambridge Polity Press, 2001) (Key Contemporary Thinkers Series) and *The Woman of Reason: Feminism, Humanism and Political Thought* (Cambridge: Polity Press; New York: Continuum, 1995). She has recently edited, with Constant J. Mews, *Healing the Body Politic: The Political Thought of Christine de Pizan* (Turnhout: Brepols Publishers, 2005).


CAROLYN JAMES is Cassamarca Lecturer in the School of Historical Studies at Monash University, Melbourne, Australia. She is the author of two books on the late fifteenth-century literary figure, Giovanni Sabadino degli Arienti, *Giovanni Sabadino degli Arienti: A Literary Career* (Florence: L S Olschki, 1996) and *The Letters of Giovanni Sabadino degli Arienti. 1481–1510* (Florence: L S Olschki/The University of Western Australia, 2002). She is presently working on an Australian Research Council funded project on the role of elite women in the early modern Italian state.

CARRIE F. KLUS is an Associate Professor of Modern Languages (French) at DePauw University in Greencastle, Indiana, in the United States. She earned a PhD in French from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign in 2000. A recipient of a Bourse
Chateaubriand, she has recently published an English-language translation of Jeanne de Jussie’s *Short Chronicle* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006). Her current research project is an investigation of the works of pre-Revolutionary writer Cornélie Wouters, Baroness of Vasse (Wasse).

**Michal Michelson** teaches at Bar-Ilan University and Talpiot College in Israel and is currently writing on theology, identity, and authority in the works of early modern women writers. She is co-editor with William Kolbrener of *Mary Astell: Reason, Gender, Faith* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007).

**Catherine M. Müller** is an independent Swiss scholar who is currently the beneficiary of a Swiss national research fellowship. She is the author of *Marguerite Porete et Marguerite d’Oingt de l’autre côté du miroir* (New York: Peter Lang, 1999), and the editor of Catherine d’Amboise, *Poésies* (Montréal, Quebec: CERES, 2002). She has published more than thirty articles, including studies of the poetry and patronage of Marguerite d’Écosse, Marie de Clèves, and Marguerite d’Autriche, and of the translations of Anne de Graville and Antoinette de Loynes.

**Regan Penaluna** is an instructor of philosophy at Luther College in Decorah, Iowa, in the United States, where she specialises in the history of philosophy and social and political thought. She is a PhD candidate at Boston University and her dissertation is a comparative study of Mary Astell, Damaris Cudworth Masham, and Catharine Trotter Cockburn on their arguments for women’s education. In the summer of 2006, she received a grant from the Lily Foundation to fund research on the concept of duty in early modern English thought.

**Martina Reuter** is an Academy Research Fellow attached to a research project on the history of the philosophy of mind financed by the Academy of Finland, and she teaches history of philosophy and feminist studies at the University of Helsinki. She received her doctorate at the Department of Philosophy, University of Helsinki, in 2000 with a dissertation on the role of the body, sexual difference, and equality in Cartesian philosophy. She has published articles on Descartes’ conception of the body, feminist philosophy, phenomenology, and most recently Mary Wollstonecraft’s moral psychology.

**Earl Jeffrey Richards** has been Professor of Romance Literatures at the University of Wuppertal, Germany, since 1995. He has published a translation of Christine de Pizan’s *The Book of the City of Ladies* (New York: Persea Books, 1982; second edition, 1998), and edited *Reinterpreting Christine de Pizan* (Athens and London: University of Georgia Press, 1992), and *Christine de Pizan and Medieval French Lyric* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1998). He has also published a critical edition of Christine de Pizan’s *Le Livre de la Cité des Dames* (Milan: Luni Editrice, 1997).

**Hilda L. Smith** is Professor of History and former Director of the Center for Women’s Studies at the University of Cincinnati, in the United States. Her publications include *Reason’s Disciples: Seventeenth-Century English Feminists* (Urbana,
INTRODUCTION

It has sometimes been observed that the textbook history of political thought is, figuratively speaking, a hall of mirrors in which our present political concerns and preoccupations are reflected back at us, albeit in a slightly distorted form. Several scholars have challenged this traditional kind of history: if we propose to understand the true origins of modern political thought, it is argued, then it is a mistake to search for the present in the past, or to identify purely contemporary ideas in the works of historical figures. The true historian of political thought looks not for individual originators of modern concepts such as liberty, equality, and toleration—individuals who may turn out to be imaginary, in any case—but rather the complex historical-intellectual processes out of which those concepts emerged. It is rarely observed that the traditional hall of mirrors also reflects a male image or an exclusively male perspective on political concepts and political issues. Yet the historian of philosophy who focuses on male political ideas alone also makes the mistake of failing to take into account the precise historical circumstances of pre-modern political thought. This is because women were also active participants in the conflict of opinions that shaped and defined modern political philosophy as we know it. The essays in this volume highlight the fact that in addition to influencing the development of ideas through their practical support and patronage, women themselves discussed political ideas and wrote influential political works. The historical evidence suggests that the phenomenon of the female political thinker was not an isolated one, but a recurring feature across the centuries and in different regions of Europe.

The history of women’s political ideas in Europe before the French Revolution still awaits recognition. Although a number of women’s political works have been reprinted, translated, and discussed in print, there is still a common perception that women simply have no history of political thought. A number of reasons for this persistent view suggest themselves. The first can be traced to that traditional approach to the history of political thought in which the historian only ever looks for the present in the past. Following this approach, scholars tend to blind themselves to those texts that do not fit easily into the modern paradigm of the political treatise. Because women often develop their ideas in works that are unusual vehicles for political philosophy—“unusual” according to our modern sensibilities, that is—their political commentaries are not recognised as such. Women’s political texts, as the essays in this volume show, range from petitions, speeches, memoirs, and letters, to fictional narratives, prayers, plays, and poetry. Yet they are still obviously political in the sense that they engage with questions about what legitimises political authority, the political obligations of subjects and sovereigns, the attributes of a good ruler, the
connection between the church and ruling authorities, the best way to uphold civil peace and harmony, and the nature of power relations between the sexes—among other subjects.

A second possible reason for the invisibility of female political thought is that, without a long history of interpretation to wrest their ideas for a modern audience, some of their ideas still appear to be rather strange and inaccessible. Women writers often focus on party political debates that have now passed into oblivion, as well as topical matters to do with well-known figures in their own time—so much so that (we might think) a modern philosopher unfamiliar with the historical details could not hope to appreciate all the nuances or to derive any widely applicable lessons from their political observations. Although these women use the concepts of liberty and toleration, they do not appear to use them in the popular liberal sense of these words; and their concern for the virtues of rulers and citizens, and the cultivation of prudence, temperance, courage, and so on, is no longer something we associate with mainstream political thought. Thus, according to that approach in which the history of ideas is one long, progressive march toward modern enlightenment, these women might appear as hopelessly alien or conservative—and subsequently not worth the bother.

There is, perhaps, one further reason why female political thinkers of the past remain largely invisible in the standard intellectual histories. In the seventeenth century, Gilbert Burnet, the Bishop of Salisbury (1643–1715), observed that there are two sorts of person that ought not to meddle in “public affairs”—these are churchmen and women. The clergy ought to be above it, he said, and women are below it. This common perception of women, as somehow unqualified to engage in political affairs, or outside of the sphere of theory altogether, seems to have persisted well into the twentieth century. In some circles there has been an assumption, encouraged even by feminist thinkers such as Simone de Beauvoir and Luce Irigaray, that women have been the other, that they have been objects of the male gaze, or have circulated as objects of exchange, but have not been subjects who have their own political agendas. In light of this pessimistic view of women’s contribution to the political tradition, it may have appeared pointless to attempt to chart the history of a subjectivity that did not exist. In Women in Western Political Thought (1979), Susan Moller Okin offered one of the first feminist critiques of the western political tradition. But even Okin focused exclusively on famous male theorists—Plato, Aristotle, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, and John Stuart Mill—charging them with the systematic subordination of women in their political philosophies. Despite the promising title, Okin did not examine women’s own unique contributions to western political thought and so, to some extent, her work conformed to the general trend of women being talked about, rather than doing the talking.

The problem, of course, is that women of the past did not subscribe to the view that they had no business with political theory. Far from seeing themselves as having no role in public affairs, many pre-modern female writers have a strong conception of women as political commentators or political agents, gaining encouragement from
powerful women depicted in the Old and New Testaments, as well as female political leaders in their own time.

The essays in this collection arose out of an attempt to rectify the absence of women’s political thought in the standard textbooks. Although this selection offers only a partial and disjointed glimpse of the development of women’s political ideas, we hope that it provides a set of points from which the outlines of a more complete image can be inferred. In our approach, we aim to strike a middle path between specialist historical study, on the one hand, and purely modern philosophical analysis, on the other—we intend for these women’s political ideas not only to be situated in their historical-intellectual context, but also to be accessible and relevant to the contemporary reader.

The modern political philosopher, for example, might be able to discern that women made a small but significant female-centred contribution to the development of modern political ideals. In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, women’s political thought grounds itself in a meditation on the virtues. The virtues of a good ruler are the staple of most medieval political writing, whether it is by men or women, and for many women establishment of their claim to participation in the virtues—and in particular the virtue of prudence—marks the first step in an argument that progresses through the centuries towards the demand for full female citizenship in the eighteenth century. It is but a small step from the claim to possess virtue to the demand for spiritual liberty, given that during the medieval period the exercise of the virtues had come to be seen as necessary for salvation. Women’s status as members of a Christian community implied their access to salvation and the need to cultivate the virtues necessary in order to attain it. Increasingly, education and autonomy came to be seen as prerequisites for the cultivation of virtue and the attainment of salvation. During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, much of women’s political writing therefore focuses on women’s spiritual liberty and women’s higher education. The value placed upon liberty and autonomy inevitably led to questions about the relationship between patriarchal authority and the individual’s conscience, as well as the toleration of different religious viewpoints. The themes of virtue, liberty, and toleration thus unite this partial snapshot of the development of women’s political ideas in early modern Europe.

The more historically inclined reader might recognise that these women use the concepts of virtue, liberty, and toleration in a different, more nuanced, sense than we do today. By placing women’s texts in their historical-intellectual context, we can see that the terms “prudence” and “liberty,” for example, do not always have the same connotations that they do in post-twentieth-century political philosophy. While the modern philosopher tends to regard prudence in the Hobbesian sense, as rational self-interest, writers such as Christine de Pizan and Catherine d’Amboise use prudence with an awareness of its Aristotelian connotations as phronesis or practical wisdom—a decision-making capacity that is absolutely vital in a virtuous ruler. Likewise, Katherine Chidley (act. 1616–53) and the women petitioners of the civil war era in England (c. 1642–60) tend to promote a conception of liberty as freedom
from arbitrary domination—a conception that is quite distinct from the modern liberal sense of liberty as freedom from interference. The reader will also see that these early women thinkers do not observe a strict division between religion and politics. For these women, as for the men of their time, appeals to God and the Bible carry a certain amount of weight and authority in political argument: with their appeals to the political significance of the Virgin Mary as “queen,” and their repeated references to women’s political involvement in the Bible, it is hard to ignore the fact that these women do not have a modern, secular understanding of political argumentation. Yet, by seeing women’s political ideas in such an historical light—as different rather than similar to our modern political outlook—we hope that we might not only avoid anachronism, but uncover unique concepts and philosophical ideas.

All the essays in this volume, in various ways, endeavour to shed light on the original and historically significant aspects of women’s political ideas, with particular reference to the themes of virtue, liberty, and/or toleration. Our collection begins with Christine de Pizan (1364–1430), one of the earliest and most significant female political thinkers in France. In the opening essay on the political and legal context of Christine’s Book of the City of Ladies (1405), Earl Jeffrey Richards examines Christine’s response to the exclusion of women as inheritors of the French crown. Richards demonstrates how Christine opposes that exclusion by exploiting the tradition of medieval Mariology to establish a politicised image of the Virgin Mary as queen of justice. In this way, Christine provides strong theoretical foundations in support of female political power: as head of the female sex, Mary not only underscores women’s status as virtuous inhabitants of the “city of ladies,” but as both regent and queen, she represents an important precedent for female rule. This argumentative aspect of Christine’s text remains obscure if we fail to acknowledge the political significance of Mariology in her work.

In “Phronesis Feminised: Prudence from Christine de Pizan to Elizabeth I,” Karen Green’s analysis of prudence as a political virtue underscores the political character of Christine de Pizan’s writing. Prudence is the medieval counterpart of Aristotle’s phronesis, a virtue that Aristotle describes as necessary in a ruler, but lacking in women. Green argues that in the first part of her Book of the City of Ladies, Christine responds to Nicole Oresme’s glossed translation of Aristotle’s Politics (c. 1374). Christine asks Reason whether women have prudence, and receives the expected positive reply, thus helping to clear the way for Christine’s endorsement of women’s right to govern in certain circumstances. The centrality of a claim to possess the virtue of prudence in later ideological campaigns in support of women’s capacity to govern is demonstrated by a glance at illuminated manuscripts prepared for Louise of Savoy in the late fifteenth century. Grounding her argument on features of the allegorical representation of prudence in a number of medieval manuscripts, Green argues that in the famous Elizabethan sieve portraits we also see Queen Elizabeth I of England (1533–1603) represented as the incarnation of this primary political virtue.

In “Catherine d’Amboise’s Livre des Prudents et Impudents: Negotiating Space for Female Voices in Political Discourse,” Catherine Müller also highlights the central importance of prudence in a little known work titled Le Livre des Prudents
et Imprudents (1509), by the French writer Catherine d’Amboise (1482–1550). This history of prudent and imprudent figures, written from a perspective which is avowedly biased towards women, includes an early criticism of women’s exclusion from higher education, and shows another female author claiming to speak with the authority of Prudence. In the opening scenes of d’Amboise’s work, this virtue appears to the authorial persona Katherine, encouraging her to write her revisionist history. D’Amboise takes a strong stance on the question of power relations between the sexes, by showing that women are not naturally inferior to men, but equally capable of acting with prudence and authority in the public sphere.

In “Machiavelli in Skirts. Isabella d’Este and Politics,” Carolyn James discusses the various ways in which Isabella d’Este (1474–1539), the marchioness of Mantua, promotes herself as a prudent and virtuous ruler. In her numerous letters, and in the paintings she commissioned for her studiolo, Isabella strongly endorses the notion that, as queens and regents, women can possess all the virtues necessary for the exercise of political power. Isabella adheres to the common fifteenth-century belief that governors ought to protect the spiritual well-being of subjects, but at the same time she upholds the rather uncommon view that women have the requisite virtues to be such spiritual leaders.

In “Liberty and the Right of Resistance: Women’s Political Writings of the English Civil War Era,” Jacqueline Broad examines the key political themes in women’s writings of the English civil war era, with particular emphasis on the transition in their arguments from the spiritual liberty of souls to the political liberty of subjects. In the past, scholars have claimed that the civil war women might be seen as natural predecessors to Catharine Macaulay (1731–91) and her republican contemporary, Mary Wollstonecraft (1759–97). Recent commentators take the comparison a step further: they argue that the civil war women make an early and significant contribution to the liberal feminist tradition. But in this paper, Broad critically examines these claims about the significance of these women’s writings for the history of liberal feminism or liberalism more generally. She demonstrates that these women do not develop a fully fledged theory of women’s rights, they do not espouse a modern liberal concept of “liberty,” and nor do they develop a thorough-going critique of the marriage/social contract analogue. Yet the political ideas of the civil war women are philosophically interesting for what they tell us about the non-liberal origins of radical thought in the period.

In “Margaret Cavendish and the False Universal,” Hilda L. Smith focuses on one of the most prolific and original women philosophers of the seventeenth century, Margaret Cavendish, the Duchess of Newcastle (1623–73). Smith reveals that Cavendish’s political thought is much more complex and unique than scholars have previously acknowledged. She highlights Cavendish’s positive remarks on religious toleration and freedom of conscience in her collection of speeches, Orations of Divers Sorts (1662). There is reason to think that these views form part of a consistently utilitarian approach in Cavendish’s political philosophy—an approach that sets her apart from her royalist contemporaries and her husband, William. But, as Smith shows, nowhere is Cavendish more original than in her comments about the political status
of women in her *Sociable Letters* (1666). In terms of the history of political thought, Cavendish is remarkable for her potentially seditious observation that women are not, properly speaking, subjects of the commonwealth and are not therefore bound by oaths of allegiance to the government.

In “The Social and Political Thought of Damaris Cudworth Masham,” Regan Penaluna examines the political thought of Masham (1659–1708), a close companion and correspondent of the great political philosopher, John Locke (1632–1704). During the many years that Masham lived with Locke, from 1691 till his death, political issues were undoubtedly a common topic of conversation between the two friends. Yet while there have been several scholarly accounts of Masham’s philosophy (and its debt to Locke), there have been no intellectual studies of Masham as a political thinker in her own right. Here Penaluna points to evidence that Masham intended her *Occasional Thoughts in Reference to a Virtuous or Christian Life* (1705) to be a reflection upon the good government of the commonwealth. This paper is one of the first analyses of Masham’s two works, the *Discourse concerning the Love of God* (1696) and the *Occasional Thoughts*, as continuous and complementary texts: the one an account of the significance of a social and political life for the good Christian, the other an argument for the view that a Christian commonwealth can flourish only if all of its citizens—both men and women—are taught to be wise and virtuous.

In “‘Our Religion and Liberties’: Mary Astell’s Christian Political Polemics,” Michal Michelson demonstrates how Astell’s political thought radically diverges from the “new orthodoxy” of Whig liberalism in the early modern period. An ardent feminist, Astell was also an active participant in party polemical debates about occasional conformity and religious toleration in early eighteenth-century England. In this paper, Michelson emphasises that we can properly understand Astell’s political thought only if we acknowledge the biblical references and Anglican doctrine inherent in her political texts. Against this religious backdrop, it is apparent that Astell interprets “liberty” as a purely spiritual concept—in terms of the individual’s freedom, that is, to cultivate the virtues necessary for salvation. For Astell, liberty for women consists in the intellectual freedom to choose their own spiritual destiny, regardless of the restrictive social and material circumstances that they might experience in life. But she does not rule out women’s equal social and political involvement in principle, even though she does not advocate it in practice. Astell’s appeals to biblical precedent show that women might legitimately be active participants in public life and political affairs.

In “Virtue, God, and Stoicism,” Sarah Hutton examines the moral-theological basis of the political views of two late eighteenth-century English women: Elizabeth Carter (1717–1806) and Catharine Macaulay. Until recently, the ethical and theological dimensions of women’s political philosophy—or their views on virtue and religious duty—have been overlooked in favour of the modern emphasis on Lockean civil and political rights. But Hutton demonstrates that if we examine the theological assumptions behind women’s political ideas, then we might be able to identify a common female strand in the history of political thought. In particular, Hutton examines parallels between the views of Macaulay and Carter. Although these women seem to have little in common politically speaking, both uphold a conception of
God as a deity who is bound to exercise his power in accordance with his supreme benevolence, justice, and wisdom. Hutton shows how Carter and Macaulay’s discussions of Stoicism are informed by their ethico-theological outlook—an outlook that has significant implications for their political approaches, and especially their views on women’s role in society. These views echo not only the philosophies of their seventeenth-century predecessors, Damaris Masham and Mary Astell, but anticipate the feminist ideas of their immediate successor, Mary Wollstonecraft.

In “Catharine Macaulay and Mary Wollstonecraft on the Will,” Martina Reuter presents one of the first analyses of the conception of the will underlying Wollstonecraft’s notion of political liberty. Reuter shows that, in terms of her conception of freedom, Wollstonecraft shares much in common with her republican contemporary, Macaulay. In her Letters on Education (1790), Macaulay maintains that human freedom and necessity are compatible because freedom is the ability to act in accordance with reason. Though our reason might necessitate us to act in a particular way—according to the eternal and immutable principles of morality, for example—we are nevertheless free provided that our actions are not determined by any external causes or physical impulses. In some of her works, Wollstonecraft seems implicitly to support Macaulay’s rationalist compatibilism. But under the influence of Rousseau, Wollstonecraft places greater emphasis on both the passions and the imagination as motivational forces in moral development. This, in turn, has implications for Wollstonecraft’s views about freedom and necessity: for Wollstonecraft, reason does not always have the compelling force that it has for Macaulay; the will is sometimes free to choose what we should do.

In the final paper, “Keeping Ahead of the English? A Defence of Jews by Cornélie Wouters, Baroness of Vasse (1790),” Carrie Klaus examines a little-known pamphlet addressed to the National Assembly in late eighteenth-century France. The author of this nine-page pamphlet, Cornélie Wouters, Baroness of Vasse (1737–1802), is the only woman known to have contributed to a topical political debate on the status of Jews in Revolutionary France. Like other tolerationists in this debate, she calls for the recognition of full civil and political rights for Jews as French citizens. She bases her arguments upon an impartial application of the principles of justice, equality, and liberty to all human beings. But unlike her peers, she does not suggest that Jews must ultimately give up their religious beliefs in order to become integrated into French society. She also appeals to national pride, urging the Assembly to show their greatness as a nation by beating the English to the political emancipation of Jews. Finally, there is some suggestion that Wouters might have had women in mind when she calls for recognition of politically excluded social groups. Like her contemporary, Olympe de Gouges (1745–93), it is possible her work was inspired by a desire to see equality and liberty extended to all human beings, women as well as men.

In a selective work of this nature, it is inevitable (and unfortunate) that there will be gaps in terms of the chronological-geographical focus. We aim to acknowledge a number of neglected women thinkers from the medieval period to the enlightenment, from a number of different regions in Europe, and from many different social classes. But we have had to omit figures of equal, if not greater, significance than the thinkers
discussed here—women such as Marguerite de Navarre, Marie le Jars de Gournay, the Quaker pamphleteers, Queen Kristina of Sweden, Aphra Behn, Queen Anne of England, Judith Drake, Mary Chudleigh, Madeleine de Scudéry, Gabrielle Suchon, Olympe de Gouges, Jeanne Marie Roland de la Platiere, and Mary Hays—to name but a few. It is to be hoped, however, that our volume will have a positive impact upon the future academic study of such women. By showing that women’s political ideas are worth the bother—that women thinkers can open our minds to new and interesting interpretations of intellectual history—we hope that their marginalisation might become a thing of the past.

NOTES

1 The classic example of this approach is Herbert Butterfield, *The Whig Interpretation of History* (London: G. Bell and Sons, 1931).


EARL JEFFREY RICHARDS

I

POLITICAL THOUGHT AS IMPROVISATION: FEMALE REGENCY AND MARIOLOGY IN LATE MEDIEVAL FRENCH THOUGHT

Since regency *per se* implies the temporary exercise of power, it represents at best an instable institution that perhaps dare not even speak its name in searching for its own legitimacy. Standard reference works for French from Du Cange to von Wartburg claim that the first example in Old French for *regentacion* [regency] is found in Christine de Pizan’s biography of Charles V.1 A closer inspection of this text itself reveals important terminological hesitations. Twenty years after the fact, Christine describes how Charles’s oldest brother, Louis I de Valois, Duc d’Anjou, relinquished the regency to his brothers: “after the death of his brother king Charles, although the regency of the realm of France belonged to him until the child was of the age to be crowned, he left everything in the hands of the other princes, his brothers.”2 Christine knew that the story was more complicated: between Charles V’s death on September 16, 1380, and Charles VI’s accelerated coronation on November 4, 1380, in over twenty letters Louis d’Anjou called himself “Louis, son of the king of France, ruling the kingdom, Duke of Anjou, of Touraine and Count of Maine,” sealing documents with the formula “We have had our seal—which we used before this regency—to these letters.”3 The hesitation between the present participle “regent le royaume” [ruling the kingdom] and the substantive “regence” points to the term’s novelty. While the details of Louis’ regency of sixteen days are still open to comment, Christine avoids Louis’ medieval French term *regence*, and coins a new word based on the rare medieval Latin verb *regentare*, meaning “to teach, to profess.”4 The coinage implies that the uncles acted not as rulers in a *regence*, but as counsellors in an advisory and teaching capacity in a *regentacion*.

This brief philological excursion into the origin of the term regency should serve as a thread through the labyrinth of early attempts to designate, define, and justify this institution founded on political expediency, and how issues raised by regency touched upon the precarious political and legal ambiguity of women’s legal position during the middle ages.5 Even if women exercised political power, they remained beholden to men: they ruled within a situation of a classic double-bind. While the standard linguistic reference works incorrectly claim Christine as the first author to use the term regent, she is arguably the first to formulate, using subtle classical theological allegoresis, one of the most profound and indeed systematic vindications of female regency based on a solid knowledge of conflicting legal traditions and medieval theology, in particular Mariology. In order to appreciate Christine’s use of the Virgin as an exemplum of female political power, it is important first to examine how the term *regent* was actually used. Second, one must understand how legal traditions were abused to invent a specious tradition excluding women. Third, one must study two specific catalogues of contemporary women in government that Christine gives in the

City of Ladies [Cité des Dames] which function as alternative female councils of state. And fourth, it is helpful to consider Christine’s innovative Marian solution because the Virgin Mary was the exception to legal restrictions applied to women, whence her fitness to rule with her Son. What emerges from this examination will demonstrate the hitherto neglected political significance of the Virgin Mary for Christine and for women’s political thought in general.6

Christine’s re-inventing of political power for women on a Mariological basis flies in the face of a juggernaut of legal opinion. Christine turns to sacred history for a two-fold solution: she argues for the legitimacy of female co-rule (not her term) based on the co-rule of the Virgin as both mater Dei and sponsa Dei who, like Esther, the Old Testament allegorical or more correctly, figural, anticipation of Mary, ruled half of her husband’s kingdom. The City of Ladies is filled with a series of women who ruled with their sons, beginning with Semiramis, who all function as allegories of the Virgin Mary as Queen of Heaven. The Virgin Mary, as Christine presents her, refutes Hostiensis’s claim that the Apostles rather than Mary received the keys to the Kingdom of Heaven. She does not exploit the argument in favour of matrilineal inheritance advanced in 1339 by Edward III in a letter to the Pope that Jesus as King of the Jews descended from David through Mary.

I. LEGAL PRECEDENTS AND LINGUISTIC PRACTICE

The terminological confusion starts with the medieval Latin word tutela, the Roman law term for inheritance, borrowed in chancery texts in Latin as ballia et tutela, and into French as “la tutelle des enfants du Roi de France” [the tutelage of the children of the King of France]. Latin texts speak of the regimen regni or regnans regnum—whereas the term employed in 1316 by Philippe V, Regens regnum, was a new coinage, since regens, although found in classical Latin authors with the meaning “ruler, commander,” had become the title for the head master of a college. The other fixed formula in chancery documents is regimen regni, found also in Thomas Aquinas and in Ptolemy of Lucca. The term regentia (whence “regency”) is extremely rare in Latin sources. Regent and regence in fourteenth-century French connoted possible usurpation, and appear at critical moments in royal succession in chancery documents from 1316, 1327, 1360, 1380, and 1390.

The Valois regency tradition excluded women from succession, and thus Christine did not associate female government with the usurpation camouflaged by the term regent. As Paul Viollet explains in a classic essay from 1893,7 the future Philippe V received the homage of the nobles, interested in a weak monarchy, as gouverneur, not as king.8 Gouverneur, a conventional term, corresponds to the Latin phrase, gubernacula regni tenenda. Philippe, to further his own future claims to the throne, introduced the title regent.9

To gauge how the Valois exclusion of women entailed a radical departure from previous tradition, one might recall that in 1314, after ascending the throne, Louis X cited natural law to justify female inheritance, reversing an earlier judgment of
Philippe IV: “Reason and natural law grant that, lacking male heirs, the females must quite rightly inherit and succeed to the goods and possessions of their father by whom they were procreation and descend in loyal marriage as do the males.”10 This principle concurred with customary law in the Parisian region which permitted noble inheritances to be divided equally among sisters when a male heir was absent,11 but it also corresponds to the principle, in Gratian, that “established usage and custom cannot overcome law and reason.”12 When Philippe V took over the crown by force, he established an inexorable iron rule for the Valois dynasty: “in the realm of France women must not succeed.”13 The next generation of Valois legists spared no effort at creating a fraudulent legal basis for excluding women by invoking customary law found in the Consuetudines feudorum.

The importance of establishing the exclusion of women as a consuetudo stemmed from the fact that Gratian and Thomas Aquinas, both citing St. Augustine,14 maintained that customary law prevailed over Roman and Canon law.15 The legal arguments for excluding women, all cited decades after the fact, depended on the one hand on passages in Roman law which restricted women from exercising tutela and officia publica, and on the other hand on a passage from Canon law, “a cleric may give his own property to whomever he wishes,”16 applied by analogy to the election of Philippe V. Since these arguments were hardly cogent, the next Valois tack was to claim customary law excluded women. In 1340, Benedict XIII declared Philippe VI legitimate on the basis of a consuetudo not quite twenty-five years old. In 1374, the same year when Charles V issued an edict on royal majority,17 an anonymous legist at the court of Charles V compiled the legal arguments excluding women in the Somnium Viridarii. This compilation manipulates legal texts to falsify French historical practice. The high point of this seventy-year-old propaganda blitz by the Valois chancery came in 1390 when Jean Montreuil—later Christine’s opponent in the Rose quarrel—cited a passage from Salic Law and proclaimed it French custom.18

Christine, taking her cue from Gratian’s remark that “non potest usus et consuetudo legem et rationem vincere” [established usage and custom cannot overcome law and reason], offers an implicit correction to the use of customary law to exclude women. Her innovative response is to employ in her City of Ladies the allegories Raison and Droiture—Reason and Law (droiture had the specific sense of contract law and charter rights and privileges).19 Striking is that the misogynous arguments by the late thirteenth-century commentator on Canon law, Hostiensis (d. 1271) (cited in the Somnium Viridarii), were the opinions that Christine systematically refuted.

A review of the history of the terms regent and regence shows that there was no institution of regency in the narrow sense in France, but that it was a tradition initiated by the Valois.20 Regent first occurs in two 1316 documents in French issued by Philippe V before he assumed the throne,21 and then again in the first decree issued by Philippe VI in 1327 during his short interregnum, before he simply took over the throne, with the title Philippe, Comte de Valois et Anjou, Regent. By contrast, the two best-known late medieval French regents, Suger and Blanche de Castille, never used the term regent to describe the office they exercised. When Eudes IV, Duke of Burgundy (1295–1349), raised objections in July 1316 to the succession of Philippe V,
he was told point-blank that women did not succeed to the throne of France. In his *Memoriale historiarum*, the chronicler Jean de St. Victor records the event but takes note of the precarious legality of the exclusion of women:

after his (the infant king, Jean I's) death, the Count of Poitou received the realm, but the Duke of Burgundy objected and said that his niece [Jeanne, daughter of Louis X and his first wife, Marguerite de Bourgogne, whose legitimacy was in question because of the *affaire de la Tour de Nesle*], although the daughter of the king and closer [to the throne] with her brother being dead, should succeed by her own right. Response was made to Eudes that in the realm of France women should not succeed. However it was not possible to demonstrate this cogently.22

That the coronation of Philippe in January 1317 was marred by an uproar or *turbatio* is recorded in detail by different chroniclers.23 Jean de St. Victor was intellectually honest enough to observe, and his observation bears repeating, that a traditional exclusion of women from succession to the crown could not be cogently proven, “Hoc tamen probari non poterat evidenter” [However it was not possible to demonstrate this cogently].

Since the publication in 1900 of the now classic article by Élie Berger on the use of the term regent in chancery records, scholars have applied the term regent retrospectively to prominent individuals exercising power on behalf of the French king before 1316, even if they did not use this title. This practice projects Valois procedure and terminology retrospectively onto Capetian custom and is contradicted by linguistic usage. Medieval Latin chancery sources show extraordinary terminological precision in delimiting ruling powers. In his entry on the Latin term *regens* ("regni gubernator"), Du Cange implies that the anonymous continuations of the Chronicle of Guillaume de Nangis took the term as a neologism, requiring glossing, and that it was associated with two specific events: the accession of Philippe V to the throne in 1316/17 and of Philippe VI in 1327.24 Du Cange cites the chronicle. In both cases, the term *regens* was used in a non-traditional manner. The linguistic hesitation found in the continuation of Guillaume de Nangis is even more apparent in the chronicle of Bernard Gui, who described Philippe V’s ascension to the throne in his *Flores chronicorum*, taking special note of the unusual or unprecedented title employed by Philippe V. He observes that Philippe ruled under the title of regent until the majority of Jean I “holding however the rudders of both realms, France and Navarre . . . under the title of ‘regent’” and says that he assumed power “not with title of king but with the title of regent,” the implication being that the concept *sub nomine regentis* was indeed something new,25 and as though the term regent were largely confined to chancery documents and not a commonly used term in political treatises.26

On September 19, 1356, at the Battle of Poitiers, Edward the Black Prince took the French king Jean II, Le Bon, prisoner. His capture prompted his son, the future Charles V, to change his title seven months later from *lieutenant* (literally, “place-holder”) to regent.27 On March 18, 1357, he begins a decree with a new formula *regent le royaume*, and then speaks of the title of regent itself, showing that the original hesitation in usage found forty years earlier had not yet been resolved: “We, Charles, oldest son of the king, ruling the kingdom of France, Duke of Normandy