

## Primary Source Packet

### 1. Manual, Witch Hunters

Perhaps the most spectacular manifestation of early modern European discrimination against women was the conviction of thousands of women for witchcraft. Over three centuries, more than 40,000 people were executed as witches, 75 percent of them female. The greatest witch hunts occurred from the 1550s to the 1660s in the Franco-German borderlands, areas wracked by the religious struggles of the Reformation.

The following excerpt comes from the most famous manual for witch hunters, the *Malleus Maleficarum* (Hammer of Witches) written in 1487 by a Dominican monk, Heinrich Kramer (1430-1505). The Pope appointed Kramer an inquisitor in 1484, with the mission to eliminate heresy in southern Germany. Kramer moved ruthlessly to do away with witches, who were believed to gain evil powers through pacts with the Devil. Written to justify his actions, Kramer's manual presented witchcraft as a growing threat to Christianity, arguing that witches not only used their powers against common folk, but also led Christians to perdition. Kramer also argued that women were particularly susceptible to the crime because of their inability to control their passions, a commonly-held viewpoint. Although never officially accepted by the Church, Kramer's work greatly influenced secular magistrates across Europe; it was they who ordered the execution of the majority of so-called witches.

*Source:* Kramer, Heinrich. *Malleus Maleficarum*. Translated by Rev. Montague Summers. London: J. Rodker, 1928.

*The First Part Treating of the Three Necessary Concomitants of Witchcraft, Which are the Devil, a Witch, and the Permission of Almighty God*

*Question VI. Concerning Witches who copulate with Devils. Why is it that Women are chiefly addicted to Evil Superstitions?*

Therefore, let us now chiefly consider women; and first, why this kind of perfidy is found more in so fragile a sex than in men. And our inquiry will first be general, as to the general conditions of women; secondly, particular, as to which sort of women are found to be given to superstition and witchcraft; and thirdly, specifically with regard to midwives, who surpass all others in wickedness...

As for the first question, why a greater number of witches is found in the fragile feminine sex than among men; it is indeed a fact that it were idle to contradict, since it is accredited by actual experience, apart from the verbal testimony of credibly witnesses...

For some learned men propound this reason; that there are three things in nature, the Tongue, an Ecclesiastic, and a Woman, which know no moderation in goodness or vice; and when they exceed the bounds of their condition they reach the greatest heights and the lowest depths of goodness and vice. When they are governed by a good spirit, they

are most excellent in virtue; but when they are governed by an evil spirit, they indulge the worst possible vices...

Others again have propounded other reasons why there are more superstitious women found than men. And the first is, that they are more credulous; and since the chief aim of the devil is to corrupt faith, therefore he rather attacks them... The second reason is, that women are naturally more impressionable, and more ready to receive the influence of a disembodied spirit; and that when they use this quality well they are very good, but when they use it ill they are very evil... The third reason is that they have slippery tongues, and are unable to conceal from the fellow-women those things which by evil arts they know; and, since they are weak, they find an easy and secret manner of vindicating themselves by witchcraft... All wickedness is but little to the wickedness of a woman. And to this may be added that, as they are very impressionable, they act accordingly.

But because in these times this perfidy is more often found in women than in men, as we learn by actual experience, if anyone is curious as to the reason, we may add to what has already been said the following: that since they are feebler both in mind and body, it is not surprising that they should come more under the spell of witchcraft...

But the natural reason is that she is more carnal than a man, as is clear from her many carnal abominations. And it should be noted that there was a defect in the formation of the first woman, since she was formed from a bent rib, that is, a rib of the breast, which is bent as it were in a contrary direction to a man. And since through this defect she is an imperfect animal, she always deceives...

And indeed, just as through the first defect in their intelligence that are more prone to abjure the faith; so through their second defect of inordinate affections and passions they search for, brood over, and inflict various vengeance, either by witchcraft, or by some other means. Wherefore it is no wonder that so great a number of witches exist in this sex...

To conclude. All witchcraft comes from carnal lust, which is in women insatiable. See *Proverbs xxx*: There are three things that are never satisfied, yea, a fourth thing which says not, It is enough; that is, the mouth of the womb. Wherefore for the sake of fulfilling their lusts they consort even with devils. More such reasons could be brought forward, but to the understanding it is sufficiently clear that it is no matter for wonder that there are more women than men found infected with the heresy of witchcraft. And in consequence of this, it is better called the heresy of witches than of wizards, since the name is taken from the more powerful party. And blessed be the Highest Who has so far preserved the male sex from so great a crime: for since He was willing to be born and to suffer for us, therefore He has granted to men the privilege.

## 2. Diary, Mendez Pinto

One of the most important results of the early modern period was the spread of European culture generally, and Christian religion particularly, throughout the globe. The selection below, taken from the diaries of Mendez Pinto, a Portuguese sailor captured by the Chinese, illustrates the early stages of contact between Europe and the East. Pinto was shipwrecked around 1537, and landed in the Chinese town of Sempitay. There he encountered Inez de Leyria, a Chinese Christian of Eurasian ancestry, who boldly approached him as a fellow Christian. The episode demonstrates that unofficial channels of Christianization—most likely through the Silk Road—were available prior to 1580, when the Jesuits were granted official permission to enter China, the most powerful state in the world at the time. The excerpt also shows that women played a crucial role in this early transmission of European culture in Asia. Moreover, we learn that, in contrast to Confucian mores which excluded women from major public roles, Christianity offered de Leyria a leadership role in the local community, as well as ties to a larger global identity.

*Source: The Voyages and Adventures of Ferdinand Mendez Pinto, the Portugese.* London, 1663. Reprinted and translated by Henry Cogan. London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1892.

...whereupon a woman who was come thither amongst the rest to see us....she gave us two Mazes, which amounts to about sixteen pence of our money, advising us to make no more such long voyages, since our lives were so short. Hereupon she unbottoned one of the sleeves of a red sattin gown she had on, and baring her left arm, she showed us a cross imprinted on it, like the mark of a slave, *Do any of you know this sign, which amongst those, that follow the way of truth, is called a cross?*...To this falling down on our knees, we answered, with tears in our eyes, that we know exceedingly well. Then lifting up her hands she cried out, *Our Father, which art in Heaven ...* speaking these words in the *Portugal* tongue, and because she could speak not more of our language, she very earnestly desired us in *Chinese* to tell her whether we were Christians; we replied that we were; and for proof thereof,...we repeated all the rest of the Lord's Prayer, which she had left unsaid, wherewith being assured that we were Christians indeed, she drew aside from the rest there present, and weeping said to us, come along Christians of the other end of the world, with her that is your true sister in the faith of Jesus Christ...

...she carried us home to her house, and there kept us all the while we remained in that place, making exceeding much of us, and using us very charitably. Here she shewed us an oratory, wherein she had a cross of wood gilt, as also candlesticks, and a lamp of silver. Furthermore she told us, that she was named, *Inez de Leyria*, and her father *Tome Pirez*, who had been great ambassadour from *Portugal* to the King of *China* and that in regard of an insurrection with a *Portugal* captain, made at *Canton*, the *Chineses* taking him for a spy, and not for an ambassadour...clapped him...in prison....[He was] into this place, where he married with her mother, that had some means, and he made her a Christian, living so seven and twenty years together, and converting many *Gentiles* to the faith of Christ, whereof there were above three hundred then abiding in that town; which every

*Sunday* assembling in her house to say the catechisme: whereupon demanding of her what were their accustomed prayers, she answered, that she used no other but these, which on their knees and hands lift up to Heaven, they pronounced in this manner, *O Lord Jesus Christ, as it is most true that Thou art the very Son of God, conceived by the Holy Ghost in the womb of the Virgine Mary for the salvation of sinners, so Thou wilt be pleased to forgive us our offences, that thereby we many become worthy to behold Thy face in the glory of Thy kingdom, where Thou art in Heaven, hallowed be Thy name. In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy [page 193] Ghost. Amen.* And so all of them kissing the cross, imbraced one another, and thereupon every one returned to his own home. Moreover, she told us, that her father had left her many other prayers, which the *Chineses* had stollen from her, so that she had none left but those before recited; whereunto we replied, that those we had heard from her were very good, but before we went away we would leave her divers other good and wholsome prayers, *Do so then,* answered she, *for the respect you owe to so good a God, as yours is, and that hath done such things for you, for me, and for all in general.* Then causing the cloth to be laid, she gave us a very good...dinner, and treated us in like sort every meal, during the five days we continued in her house....[D]uring the five days we remained in her house, we read the catechism seven times to the Christians....beside, *Christophoro Borbalho* made them a little book in the *Chinese* tongue, containing the *Pater noster*, the *Creed*, the *Ten Commandments*, and many other good prayers. After these things we took her leaves of *Inez de Leyria*, and the Christians who gave us fifty *Taeis* in silver, which stood us since in good stead...and withall *Inez de Leyria* gave us secretly fifty *Taeis* more, humbly desiring us to remember her in our prayers to God...

### 3. Fiction, Gargantua and Pantagruel

The following passage comes from one of the most famous literary works of early modern Europe: François Rabelais's *Gargantua and Pantagruel*, first published in four volumes between 1532 and 1552. A satirical chronicle of the journey through France of the giant Gargantua and his son, Pantagruel, the story's intended audience was the French aristocracy, the educated elite upon whose patronage Rabelais—first a lawyer, then a priest, and ultimately a doctor—depended throughout his life. *Gargantua and Pantagruel* embodies in part Northern Renaissance ideals like the belief in man's ability to fulfill his own potential. However, Rabelais's story also illustrates the dark side of the "rebirth" of classical learning, as the Renaissance encouraged not only a positive view of man, but also a negative image of women.

The excerpt below concerns Panurge—Pantagruel's friend—and his search for expert advice on whether he should marry. One expert, doctor Rondibilis, replies that he should not, as any wife will be unfaithful because she is ultimately an irrational being. His comments reveal contemporary medical views of feminine irrationality, believed to be caused by the uterus's haphazard wandering about the female body. This quasi-animal's roaming, as Rondibilis would have it, caused physical and mental unbalance. The theory of the wandering uterus, known as hysteria, was an ancient Greek idea revived during the

European Renaissance.

*Source:* Rabelais, François. *Gargantua and Pantagruel*. Edited by Donald Douglas. New York: The Modern Library, 1928.

My worthy friend, the nature of women is set forth before our eyes and represented to us by the moon, in divers other things as well as in this, that they squat, skulk, constrain their inclinations, and, with all the cunning they can, dissemble and play the hypocrite in the sight and presence of their husbands; who come no sooner to be out of the way, but that forthwith they take their advantage, pass the time merrily, desist from all labour, frolic it, gad abroad, lay aside their counterfeit garb, and openly declare and manifest the interior of their dispositions, even as the moon, when she is in conjunction with the sun, is neither seen in the heavens nor on the earth, but in her opposition, when remotest from him, shineth in her greatest fullness, and wholly appeareth in her brightest splendour whilst it is night. Thus women are but women.

When I say womankind, I speak of a sex so frail, so variable, so changeable, so fickle, inconstant, and imperfect, that in my honour and reverence which is due unto her, did in a manner mistake the road which she had traced formerly, and stray exceedingly from that excellence of providential judgment by the which she had created and formed all other things, when she built, framed, and made up the woman. And having thought upon it a hundred and five times, I know not what else to determine therein, save only that in the devising, hammering, forging, and composing of the woman she hath had a much tender regard, and by a great deal more respectful heed to the delightful consortship and sociable delectation of the man, than to the perfection and accomplishment of the individual womanishness or muliebrity. The divine philosopher Plato was doubtful in what rank of living creatures to place and collocate them, whether amongst the rational animals, by elevating them to an upper seat in the specifical classis of humanity, or with the irrational, by degrading them to a lower bench on the opposite side, of a brutal kind, and mere bestiality. For nature hath posited in a privy, secret, and intestine place of their bodies, a sort of member, by some not impertinently termed an animal, which is not to be found in men. Therein sometimes are endangered certain humours so saltish, brackish, clammy, sharp, nipping, tearing, prickling, and most eagerly tickling, that by their stinging acrimony, rending nitrosity, figging itch, wriggling mordicancy, and smarting salsitude, their whole body is shaken and ebrangled, their senses totally ravished and transported, the operation of their judgment and understanding utterly confounded and all disordinate passions and perturbations of the mind thoroughly and absolutely allowed, admitted, and approved of; yea, In such sort that if nature had not been so favourable unto them as to have sprinkled their forehead with a little tincture of bashfulness and modesty, you should see them in a so frantic mood run mad after lechery, and hie apace up and down with haste and lust, in quest of and to fix some chamber-standard in their Paphian ground, that never did the Proetides, Mimallonides, nor Lyaen Thyades deport themselves in the time of their bacchanalian festivals more shamelessly, or with a so affronted and brazen-faced impudency; because this terrible animal is knit unto, and hath an union with all the chief and most principal parts of the body, as to anatomists is evident. Let it not here be thought strange that I should call it an animal, seeing therein I

do no otherwise than follow and adhere to the doctrine of the academic and peripatetic philosophers. For if a proper motion be a certain mark and infallible token of the life and animation of the mover, as Aristotle writeth, and that any such thing as moveth of itself ought to be held animated and of a living nature, then assuredly Plato with very good reason did give it the denomination of an animal, for that he perceived and observed in it the proper and self-stirring motions of suffocation, precipitation, corrugation, and of indignation so extremely violent, that oftentimes by them is taken and removed from the woman all other sense and moving whatsoever, as if she were in a swooning lipothymy, benumbing syncope, epileptic, apoplectic palsy, and true resemblance of a pale-faced death.

#### **4. Nonfiction, Confucian Doctrine**

This excerpt comes from *Onna daigaku*, or *Greater Learning for Women*, which is commonly attributed to Kaibara Ekiken (1630-1714), a Japanese botanist and Neo-Confucian philosopher. Ekiken was most concerned with translating Confucian doctrine into terms people from all classes could understand. His *Onna daigaku* is considered by many to be the most important ethical text for Japanese women, in part because it was the first Confucian text to include specific prescriptions for what women's role in society should be. In keeping with traditional Confucian ideals, the book stresses that, in order to maintain order, society must be organized into a clear hierarchy. This hierarchy was decided by a person's gender and age. Older males, for example, were usually seen as the worthiest members of society. However, one's place within the hierarchy was also dependent on merit, which Confucians defined as the possession of humanness (love of mankind) and propriety (doing the right actions with the right attitude). Whereas earlier Confucians described humanness and propriety as they pertained to men, Ekiken's *Onna daigaku* advocated specific actions and attitudes for early modern Japanese women, and explained the consequences of failing to abide by them.

*Source:* Ekiken, Kaibara. "Greater Learning for Women." In *Women and the Wisdom of Japan*. London: John Murray, 1914.

##### **I. Girl's Instruction**

It is a girl's destiny, on reaching womanhood, to go to a new home, and live in submission to her father-in-law... Should her parents, through her tenderness, allow her to grow up self-willed, she will infallibly show herself capricious in her husband's house, and thus alienate his affection; while, if her father-in-law be a man of correct principles, the girl will find the yoke of these principles intolerable. She will hate and decry her father-in-law, and the end of these domestic dissensions will be her dismissal from her husband's house and the covering of herself with ignominy...

##### **II. Demarkation Between the Sexes**

From her earliest youth a girl should observe the line of demarkation separating women from men, and never, even for an instant, should she be allowed to see or hear the least

impropriety. The customs of antiquity did not allow men and women to sit in the same apartment, to keep their wearing apparel in the same place, to bathe in the same place, or to transmit to each other anything directly from hand to hand. A woman... must observe a certain distance in her relations even with her husband and with her brothers. In our days the women of lower classes, ignoring all rules of this nature, behave themselves disorderly; they contaminate their reputations, bring down reproach upon the head of their parents and brothers, and spend their whole lives in an unprofitable manner... [A] woman must form no friendship and no intimacy except when ordered to do so by her parents or middlemen. Even at the peril of her life must she harden her heart like rock or metal and observe the rules of propriety.

### III. "Seven Reasons For Divorce"

In China marriage is called "returning," for the reason that a woman must consider her husband's home as her own, and that, when she marries, she is therefore returning to her own home. However low and needy her husband's position may be, she must find no fault with him, but consider the poverty of the household which it has pleased Heaven to give her as the ordering of an unpropitious fate... With regard to this point, there are seven faults which are termed the "Seven Reasons for Divorce":

(i) A woman shall be divorced for disobedience to her father-in-law or mother-in-law. (ii) A woman shall be divorced if she fails to bear children, the reason for this rule being that women are sought in marriage for the purpose of giving men posterity. A barren woman should, however, be retained if her heart be virtuous and her conduct correct and free from jealousy, in which case a child of the same blood must be adopted; neither is there any just cause for a man to divorce a barren wife if he have children by a concubine. (iii) Lewdness is a reason for divorce. (iv) Jealousy is a reason for divorce. (v) Leprosy or any like foul disease is a reason for divorce. (vi) A woman shall be divorced who, by talking overmuch and prattling disrespectfully, disturbs the harmony of kinsmen and brings trouble on her household. (vii) A woman shall be divorced who is addicted to stealing. All the "Seven Reasons for Divorce" were taught by the sage. A woman once married, and then divorced, has wandered from the "way," and is covered with great shame, even if she should enter into a second union with a man of wealth and position.

### IV. The Wife's Miscellaneous Duties

A woman has no particular lord. She must look to her husband as her lord, and must serve him with all worship and reverence, not despising or thinking lightly of him. The great lifelong duty of a woman is obedience. In her dealings with her husband, both the expression of her countenance and style of her address should be courteous, humble, and conciliatory, never peevish and intractable, never rude and arrogant... When the husband issues his instruction, the wife must never disobey them... Let her never even dream of jealousy. If her husband be dissolute, she must expostulate with him, but never either nurse nor vent her anger. If her jealousy be extreme, it will render her countenance frightful and her accent repulsive and can only result in completely alienating her husband from her, and making her intolerable to his eyes... In her capacity of wife, she must keep her husband's household in proper order. If the wife be evil and profligate, the house is ruined. In everything she must avoid extravagance, and both with regard to food

and raiment must act according to her station in life, and never give way to luxury and pride...

### 5. Advice Book, Women's Roles

The following selection comes from a late 17th-century English advice book for women. Such advice books became extremely popular across early modern Europe as material comforts increased and people felt a need to act more "civilized." With their practical tips for everyday living, along with their prescriptions for better behavior, advice books offer a glimpse of contemporary social ideals as well as social realities.

Although *The Whole Duty of a Woman* is attributed to "a Lady," lacking any other information we cannot be sure whether the author was actually a woman. However, such a distinguished attribution suggests that the book was intended for a female audience from the middle- through upper-levels of English society. The two excerpts below—the pamphlet's Table of Contents and a selection entitled "The Whole Art of Love," give a sense of what the ideal roles and virtues for such women were. It was commonly believed in England, as elsewhere in Europe, that women were the weaker sex, physically inferior to men and more prone to irrationality. Related to these qualities, however, were the traits of gentleness and softness, characteristics which some saw as indicating a sense of feminine moral equality, if not superiority, to men.

*Source: The Whole Duty of a Woman: or a guide to the female sex...* London, 1696. Also available online through Early English Books Online.

#### *Frontispiece [title page]*

Being Directions, How Women of all Qualities and Conditions, ought to Behave themselves in the Various Circumstances of this Life, for their Obtaining not only Present, but Future Happiness.

I. Directions how to obtain the divine and moral virtues of piety, meekness, modesty, chastity, humility, compassion, temperance, and affability, with their advantages, and how to avoid the opposite vices.

II. The duty of virgins directing them what they ought to do and what to avoid, for gaining all the accomplishments required in that state. With the whole art of love, etc.

III. The whole duty of a wife,

IV. The whole duty of a widow, etc.

Also, choice receipts in physick, and chirurgery, with the whole art of cooking, preserving, candying, beautifying, etc.

#### *The Whole Art of Love*

The sexes are made of different tempers, that the defects may be better supplied, by mutual assistance. Our sex wants the others *reason* for our *conduct*, and their *strength* for



our *protection*. Theirs want our gentleness to *soften* and *entertain* them, our *looks* have more *strength* than their *laws*; there is more power in our *tears*, than in their *arguments*; and therefore things prudently managed, will by degrees, bring over a *husband* to see his *errors*; and by acknowledging his failings, take care for the future, to amend them; but then the *wifes gentleness* and *virtue*, must be the *mirror*, wherein he must see the deformity of his *irregularities*.

## 6. Painting, "The True Woman"

This is a 17th-century French engraving entitled The True Woman. Although its author and its circulation to the public in general is not precisely known, engravings such as this one were ever more popular in the 16th and 17th centuries, when the power of the newly-invented printing press to reach the masses became apparent. Engravings are another tool which helps historians gauge common views and attitudes held in the early modern period, when the majority of the population remained illiterate and pictures were really worth more than a thousand words. Although the picture speaks for itself, the engraving includes a poem, intended to drive home the picture's message:

This horrible double-headed monster,  
Passing, does it not frighten you?  
However, o great beast,  
Your two sides are often one.

Consider this infamous monster,  
Who does not hear any reason,  
You will see that it is woman,  
Who is an Angel in Church and a devil at home.

Both the engraving and the words are representative of the common belief in early modern Europe that women had a double nature, being simultaneously angels and demons. The depiction also reveals a second contemporary concern: one's inability to tell from outer appearances a person's inner nature. Such concerns were echoed in the period's witchcraft craze, in which fear of women's potential power to disrupt peace and order manifested itself in violent attacks against them.

*Source:* "The True Woman." Seventeenth-century engraving. In *A History of Women: Renaissance and Enlightenment Paradoxes*, Davis and Farge, eds. Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1993.



## 7. Petition, Ming China

This letter is an official petition to the Ming Emperor of China, Shi Zong (r. 1522-67). Written around 1566, it is attributed to Lady Chang, only wife of Shên Shu, a high bureaucrat in the Chinese court. However, it was likely co-authored by his favorite concubine, whose name is unknown. A Censor for the Ministry of Rites, Shên Shu was accused by a powerful rival of misleading the Emperor with wrongful advice, and imprisoned without trial for more than 14 years. Shên Shu was ultimately liberated in 1567, thanks in part to Lady Chang's letter and in part to the rise of a new emperor, Mu Zong (r. 1567-72).

Not much is known about the Lady Chang herself, but her letter gives us a hint of the difficulties she faced during her husband's prolonged absence. Lady Chang underscores

her filial responsibility to her in-laws, as prescribed by Confucian philosophy. It also makes clear that she had access to official channels for justice and did not hesitate to use them when she felt her situation had become impossible. Most intriguingly, this petition shows Lady Chang's use to her benefit of the very philosophy which prescribed her inferiority and submission.

*Source:* Giles, Herbert A., ed. *Gems of Chinese Literature*. Vol. I, *Prose*. Shanghai: Kelly & Walsh, 1923.

The Lady Chang  
In her husband's stead

May it please your Majesty,

My husband was a Censor attached to the Board of Rites. For his folly in recklessly advising your Majesty, he deserved indeed a thousand deaths; yet, under the Imperial clemency, he was doomed only to await his sentence in prison.

Since then, fourteen years have passed away. His aged parents are still alive, and there are no children in his hall, and the wretched man has none on whom he can rely. I alone remain—a lodger at an inn, working day and night at my needle to provide the necessaries of life; encompassed on all sides by difficulties; to whom every day seems a year.

My father-in-law is eighty-seven years of age. He trembles on the brink of the grave. He is like a candle in the wind. I have naught wherewith to nourish him alive, or to honor him when dead. I am a lone woman. If I tend the one, I lose the other. If I return to my father-in-law, my husband will die of starvation. If I remain to feed him, my father-in-law may die at any hour. My husband is a criminal bound in gaol. He dares dive no thought to his home. Yet can it be that when all living things are rejoicing in life under the wise and generous rule of to-day, we alone should taste the cup of poverty and distress, and find ourselves beyond the pale of universal peace?

Oft, as I think of these things, the desire to die comes upon me; but I swallow my grief and live on, trusting in providence for some happy termination, some moistening with the dew of Imperial grace. And now that my [page 222] father-in-law is face with death; now that my husband can hardly expect to live—I venture to offer this body as a hostage, to be bound in prison, while my husband returns to watch over the last hours of his father. Then, when all is over, he will resume his place and await your Majesty's pleasure. Thus, my husband will greet his father once again, and the feelings of father and child will be in some measure relieved. Thus, I shall give to my father-in-law the comfort of his son, and the duty of a wife towards her husband will be fulfilled.

## 8. Nonfiction, Jesuit Relations

This excerpt comes from a 1639 letter written by Mother Marie de Saint Joseph, a French Ursuline nun in Canada. The letter is part of the *Jesuit Relations*, a collection of official yearly reports on the progress of Catholic missionary efforts based on the first-hand accounts of field missionaries. Published for 41 years beginning in 1632, the *Relations* offer a glimpse into European-Native American encounters in Canada, and reveal the active official role European women played in spreading Christianity throughout the globe during the Early Modern period.

The Jesuits were but one of several orders engaged in Christianizing the peoples of America. Female orders such as the Ursulines also played an integral, although complicated, role in this process. Believing in the need for greater control over nuns, as part of Church reforms in the 16th and 17th centuries, the Popes urged that convents be closed to the outside world. However, in practice the isolation of nuns was never made absolute. In fact, in the New World nuns interacted openly with the outside world, bringing native girls into their monastery in order to educate and convert them. As we learn, Mother Marie believed these efforts, and her role in them, to be necessary—and ultimately successful.

*Source:* Thwaites, Ruben, ed. *The Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents*. Vol. 19, *Quebec: Hurons*, 1640. Clark, N.J. : Lawbook Exchange, 2005.

“I have never seen Mothers so solicitous for their children as are Madame de la Pelletrie and the Ursulines for their little seminarists. The love that finds its source in God is more generous and more constant than the tenderness of nature. These good sisters seem to have neither arms nor hearts except to cultivate these young plants, and to render them worthy of the garden of the Church, that they may be some day transplanted into the holy gardens of Paradise....

“Mother Cecile de la Croix and Mother Marie de Saint Joseph have sometimes entertained me with the good qualities of their children. See how the latter speaks of them: there is nothing so docile as these children. One can bend them as he will; they have no reply to anything one may desire from them. If they are to pray to God, recite their catechism, or perform some little piece of work or task, they are ready at once, without murmurs and without excuses.

“They have a special inclination to pray to God outside the hours specified for doing so and for their instruction. They urge us a hundred times a day to have them pray, and to teach them how it should be done, never wearying of this act. You will see them clasping their little hands, and giving their hearts to our Lord. They attend holy Mass every day, and are so attentive—not playing and talking, like the little children in France—that we are delighted...

“They do not fail to recite their rosary every day. If they notice some Nun going aside to say hers, they present themselves to say it with her... They sometimes slip into our choir,

and placing themselves on opposite sides, each holding a book in her hand, they act as we do during our service. They sing the *Ave Maris stella* and the *Gloria Patri*, making the same inclinations that they see us make; they sing it twenty and thirty times without tiring of it, thinking that they are offering a prayer very acceptable to God. This innocence is enchanting...

“Their favorite recreation is to dance, after the fashion of their country; they do not do this, however, without permission. Having come one Friday to ask this, they were told that Jesus had died on Friday, and that it was a day of sadness. Nothing more was needed to stop them. ‘We will dance no more on the day,’ they said; ‘we will be sad, since Jesus died on such a day.’”

## 9. Autobiography, Bahina Bai

This selection comes from the autobiography of Bahin-   B   (1628-1700), a Hindu poetess. Most of what we know about Bahin-   comes from her own writings, where she tells her life story. Born into a family of the Brahmin—or priestly—caste, she was married at the age of five to a widowed thirty-year-old priest, in keeping with the practices of the time. From the age of nine, Bahin-   traveled throughout the villages of India, where her husband performed religious services. In one of her travels, Bahin-   heard the devotional verses of the Bhakti priest Tukaram (ca. 1608-1650) recited in the vernacular—not the Sanskrit of the Brahmin—and therefore accessible to all. Bahin-  ’s encounter with Bhakti devotion, which advocates pure devotion over ritual, changed her life. She broke away from the traditions of her caste, choosing instead to follow Tukaram, who was of the lowest caste, the sudra. However, Bahin-  ’s ability to choose her preferred method of worship did not mean a complete break with the traditions and views of her time. Rather, as the excerpt below shows, her views regarding the role of women did not change, remaining instead conservatively traditional.

*Source:* Bai, Bahina. *Bahina Bai: A Translation of Her Autobiography and Verses*. Translated by Justine E. Abbot. Poona, India: Scottish Mission Industries Co., 1929.

...My husband was a religious mendicant by profession, but a man of very angry disposition. He rushed up to the house. He seized me by the braids of my hair, and beat me to his heart’s content....All this happened to me when in my eleventh year. In what duty to my husband had I failed?...

...What am I to do with my Fate? I must bear whatever comes to my lot. I am not one who is possessed. My body is not subject to demonic possession. Therefore, holding to my own special duties, I will give my mind to listening to the Scriptures, and the winning of God. My duty is to serve my husband, for he is God to me. My husband himself is the Supreme Brahma. The water in which my husband’s feet are washed has the value of all the sacred waters put together....If I transgress my husband’s commands, all the sins of the world will be on my head. The Vedas in fact say that it is the husband who has the

authority in the matter of religious duties, earthly possessions, desires, and salvation....I want my thought concentrated on my husband. The supreme spiritual riches are to be attained through service to my husband. I shall reach the highest purpose of my life through my husband. If I have any other God but my husband, I shall have committed...a sin like that of the killing of a Br\_hman... My husband is my means of salvation...

... Listen, my dear ones, to the law regarding the duties of a wife. Blessed is the home-keeper of noble deeds! By merely listening to this, one's soul will gain the final release. Without a husband, one does not keep God in mind. Blessed is she who knows herself as a dutiful wife. She carries along at the same time her household duties, and her religious duties. Such an one bears the heavens in her hands, she who understands that duties performed are Brahma, and that Brahma is the performer of duties. And she whose mind constantly contemplates God, she is recognized in the three worlds as the dutiful wife. She who holds no anger or hatred in her heart, she who has no pride of learning, she who does not associate herself with evil, she, who obedient to law, puts aside all sensual appetites, and in whom is not seen the selfish spirit, she who is ready to serve saints and *s\_dhus*, and fulfils her husband's commands, she indeed is a blessed dutiful wife. She who keeps the peace, who is forgiving and kindly, and compassionate towards all creatures, keeping in mind her husband's character, she to whom her husband's words are like nectar, blessed is her birth, blessed her mother and father!...

...She who in everything accepts her husband's wishes in a noble spirit, and though it might mean even death will not violate his command, blessed is she in this present world, blessed is her caste, her *gotra* [family line] and her family. For her comes the summons to heaven. In body, speech and mind she submits herself to her husband, and the knowledge of Brahma play at her door. Without enquiring the right or the wrong of it, she is willing to give her very life to fulfill his wish. She serves her husband as prescribed by religious rites, and is ever at his side like a slave. Says Bahin\_, 'Such an one has saved both family lines by the power of her observance of her duty to her husband' ...

...Blessed in the three worlds, and to be praised, is the dutiful wife. She works out her own good. And if one meets such an one, one's sins are quickly destroyed. She who recognizes her husband's image in her heart, blessed is she in this world, and in the three worlds. In her listening it is only of his voice. In her contemplation she sees him only, and in that contemplation finds her happiness. Her thoughts differ not in the least from his. Her comfort lies always in the happiness of her lord. If such is the state of a woman...,blessed is that dutifulness of wife....Says Bahin\_, 'Blessed is her birth, and her praise is spread through the three worlds'...

## 10. Autobiography, Glückel of Hameln

The following passages offer us a glimpse into the margins of early modern European society. Glückel of Hameln (1645-1724) was born into the Jewish community of Hamburg, a thriving German commercial center. When Glückel was four, the city expelled its Jewish residents, forcing her family's exile. Ten years later, Glückel married Hayim of Hameln, with whom she had twelve children. During her marriage, and continuing after Hayim's death in 1689, Glückel played an important role in managing her husband's commercial and financial affairs. Despite her managerial abilities, she felt it necessary to remarry, which she did in 1700. Glückel's second husband, banker Cerf Lévy, proved incompetent at financial matters, squandering the family's hard-earned wealth by the time of his death in 1712.

Beginning in the 1690s, Glückel wrote her memoirs, intending them as a private family history for her children. Her writings reveal the difficulty of being doubly marginalized: by the majority Christian community because of her religion, and by her patriarchal Jewish community—which identified her primarily as a wife—because of her gender. However, Glückel's involvement in commerce illustrates the opportunities available, even if mostly through unofficial channels, to early modern European women.

*Source:* Glückel of Hameln. *The Memoirs of Glückel of Hameln*. Translated by Marvin Lowenthal. New York: Schocken Books, 1977.

### *A merchant wife*

... Some time later, while my husband was attending the Leipzig Fair he fell grievously ill... Judah Berlin, who was likewise at the fair, tended my husband and nursed him with great care... [Berlin] proposed they should enter into partnership... My husband said to him, "I can't decide in Leipzig. I'm not yet myself, and I fear to remain longer lest, God forbid! I grow worse. Since this is settlement week at the fair and at best little business can be done, I will hire coach and return home... Once home, God willing, we can talk further, and my Glücklechen will be there to give us her sound advice." For my husband did nothing without my knowledge...

... Since worry and fright always came with my husband's journeys, I was ready to welcome a scheme whereby he could remain at home. So I did not look unfavourably on the partnership with Judah. And he kept at his proposals and offered the most tempting conditions... I spoke now with my husband and told him of our talk, and what great business Judah boasted he would do. Whereupon my blessed husband said to me, "Words, my dear child, are all very well, but I have big expenses and I don't see how they will be met by a partnership with Judah." At last I said to my husband, "We can try it for a year. I will draw up a little agreement and show it you, and then you tell me what you think of it." So, at night, I set to work by myself and drafted a compact...

### *A disastrous second marriage*

... The betrothals were concluded in the deepest secrecy. I did not wish them known because of the high tax due to the Town Council on departing for good from the city. It

would have cost me several hundred thalers, for I was well known in Hamburg, and every merchant who dealt with me thought I was worth many thousands... My children, my brother and sisters, and all my close friends knew of the marriage. Yet even though I had taken counsel with them and they had all approved of it, still it went awry... When I consented to the match I feared that were I to remain struggling as I was, I should lose all I had and God forbid, suffer the shame of harming others, both Jews and Gentiles, and finally fall to the care of my children. But, alas, I was to fall into the care of a husband, and suffer the very shame I feared. Helpless though I be, he is still my husband, whom I thought to live in ease and plenty. And now I find myself in such a state, I wonder whether I should have a roof above my hoary head or a crumb of bread to eat. And my children whom I thought to spare the burden may yet be at pains to take me in. I believed I was marrying a man who with his means and distinguished station could have aided my children and put them in the way of great wealth. But the very contrary happened...

## 11. Letters, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu

The following are excerpts from the letters of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu (1689-1762), a noted English essayist and one of the earliest advocates of women's rights. She is perhaps best known for her letters from Constantinople, which she wrote to various friends and family members while living abroad with her husband, Lord Edward Wortley Montagu, the British Ambassador to the Ottoman court from 1717 to 1719. Lady Montagu's letters demonstrate a keen interest in Turkish customs, particularly those relating to women. She was clearly intrigued by the differences between her own sensibilities—and ideas of propriety—and those of Ottoman ladies. She wrote extensively on those differences, always remaining open-minded and conscious of the cultural differences that explained otherwise “weird” behavior. Her commentaries serve to paint simultaneously a picture of European woman's views of the world and those of their Turkish counterparts, as mediated by a contemporary woman.

*Source:* Montagu, Mary Wortley. *The Letters and Works of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu*. Volume 1. Edited by her great-grandson Lord Wharncliffe. London: George Bell and Sons, 1887.

To the Countess of \_\_\_\_\_.

Adrianople, April 18, O.S. [1717]

...I was invited to dine with the Grand Vizier's lady, [the Sultana Hafitén, favourite and widow of the Sultan Mustapha II., who died in 1703] and it was with a great deal of pleasure I prepared myself for an entertainment which was never given before to any Christian. ...I chose to go *incognito*, to avoid any disputes about ceremony, and went in a Turkish coach, only attended by my woman that held up my train, and the Greek lady who was interpretress... In the innermost I found the lady sitting on her sofa, in a sable vest. She advanced to meet me, and presented me half a dozen of her friends with great civility... The treat concluded with coffee and perfumes, which is a high mark of respect; two slaves kneeling censed my hair, clothes, and handkerchief. After this ceremony, she



commanded her slaves to play and dance, which they did with their guitars in their hands...

I... would have gone straight to my own house; but the Greek lady with me earnestly solicited me to visit the *kiyàya's* lady, [the wife of the Grand Vizier's lieutenant] saying hers was the second officer in the empire, and ought indeed to be looked upon as the first, the Grand Vizier having only the name, while he exercised the authority... All things here were with quite another air than at the Grand Vizier's... I was met at the door by two black eunuchs, who led me through a long gallery between two ranks of beautiful young girls... I was sorry that decency did not permit me to stop to consider them nearer... On a sofa, raised three steps, and covered with fine Persian carpets, sat the *kiyána's* lady... and at her feet sat two young girls, the eldest about twelve years old, lovely as angels, dressed perfectly rich, and almost covered with jewels... She stood up to receive me, saluting me after their fashion, putting her hand upon her heart with a sweetness full of majesty, that no court breeding could ever give... Her fair maids were ranged below the sofa, to the number of twenty, and put me in mind of the pictures of the ancient nymphs....She made them a sign to play and dance... This dance was very different from what I had seen before. Nothing could be more artful, or more proper to raise certain ideas. The tunes so soft!—the motion so languishing... that I am very positive the coldest and most rigid prude upon earth could not have looked upon them without thinking of something not to be spoken of....

To the Lady \_\_\_\_\_

Belgrade Village, June 17, O.S. [1717]

...I am afraid you will doubt the truth of this account, which I own is very different from our common notions in England; but it is no less truth for all that.

If one was to believe the women in this country, there is a surer way of making one's self beloved than by becoming handsome; though you know that's our method. But they pretend to the knowledge of secrets that, by way of enchantment, give them the entire empire over whom they please. For me, who am not very apt to believe in wonders, I cannot find faith for this. I disputed the point last night with a lady, who really talks very sensibly on any other subject; but she was downright angry with me, that she did not perceive she had persuaded me of the truth of forty stories she told me of this kind; and at last mentioned several ridiculous marriages, that there could be no other reasons assigned for. I assured her, that in England, where we were entirely ignorant of all magic, where the climate is not half so warm, not the women half so handsome, we were not without our ridiculous marriages; and that we did not look upon it as any thing supernatural when a man played the fool for the sake of a woman. But my arguments could not convince her... though, she added, she scrupled making use of charms herself; but that she could do it whenever she pleased... You may imagine how I laughed at this discourse; but all the women here are of the same opinion. They don't pretend to any commerce with the devil; but that there are certain compositions to inspire love. If one could send over a ship-load of them, I fancy it would be a very quick way of raising an estate...

To the Countess of \_\_\_\_\_

Pera of Constantinople, March 10, O.S. [1718]

I went to see the Sultana Haftén, favourite of the late Emperor Mustapha... The Sultana seemed in very good humour, and talked to me with the utmost civility. I did not omit this opportunity of learning all that I possibly could of the seraglio, which is so entirely unknown among us. She assured me, that the story of the Sultan's throwing a handkerchief is altogether fabulous; and the manner upon that occasion, no other but that he sends the *kyslár agá*, to signify to the lady the honour he intends her. She is immediately complimented upon it by the others, and led to the bath, where she is perfumed and dressed in the most magnificent and becoming manner. The Emperor precedes his visit by a royal present, and then comes into her apartment: neither is there any such thing as her creeping in at the bed's foot. She said, that the first he made choice of was always after the first in rank, and not the mother of the eldest son, as other writers would make us believe. Sometimes the Sultan diverts himself in the company of all his ladies, who stand in a circle around him. And she confessed that they were ready to die with jealousy and envy of the happy she that he distinguished by any appearance of preference. But this seemed to me neither better nor worse than the circles in most courts, where the glance of the monarch is watched, and every smile waited for with impatience, and envied by those who cannot obtain it...

TO THE COUNTESS OF \_\_\_\_\_

...Turkish ladies... are perhaps freer than any ladies in the universe, and are the only women in the world that lead a life of uninterrupted pleasure exempt from cares; their whole time being spent in visiting, bathing, or the agreeable amusement of spending money, and inventing new fashions. A husband would be thought mad that exacted any degree of economy from his wife, whose expenses are no way limited but by her own fancy. 'Tis his business to get money and hers to spend it: and this noble prerogative extends itself to the very meanest of the sex. Here is a fellow that carries embroidered handkerchiefs upon his back to sell, as miserable a figure as you may suppose such a mean dealer, yet I'll assure you his wife scorns to wear anything less than cloth of gold; has her ermine furs, and a very handsome set of jewels for her head. They go abroad when and where they please. 'Tis true they have no public places but the bagnios, and there can only be seen by their own sex; however, that is a diversion they take great pleasure in...

## 12. Painting, "Susanna and the Elders"

"Susanna and the Elders," a 17th-century Italian painting by Artemisia Gentileschi, portrays the biblical story of Susanna, a virtuous Jewish woman preyed upon by two judges, important members of the community. Without her knowing, the men spied on her while she bathed. Overcome with lust, they cornered her, offering a bargain: she could either sleep with them or they would claim to have seen her lying with a young man. Her refusal condemned her to death by stoning. However, she was saved by divine intervention, and the judges were put to death instead.

Susanna's story was used throughout medieval Europe to teach that salvation comes to those who put their trust in God. However, Artemisia Gentileschi, one of a very few female artists of her time, used the story to stress instead the dark nature of men. Raped—or seduced with the promise of marriage—by her painting teacher, Artemisia was made to stand trial against him, being tortured to ensure that she was telling the truth. In the early modern period, suing for rape was more than once used to force the hand of a reluctant suitor. Often, the punishment for rape was marriage to the victim—as a way of restoring her lost reputation and virtue.

*Source:* Gentileschi, Artemisia. "Susanna and the Elders." Schloss Weissenstein, Pommersfelden, Germany, 1610.

<http://gallery.euroweb.hu/html/g/gentiles/artemisi/susanna.html>.

