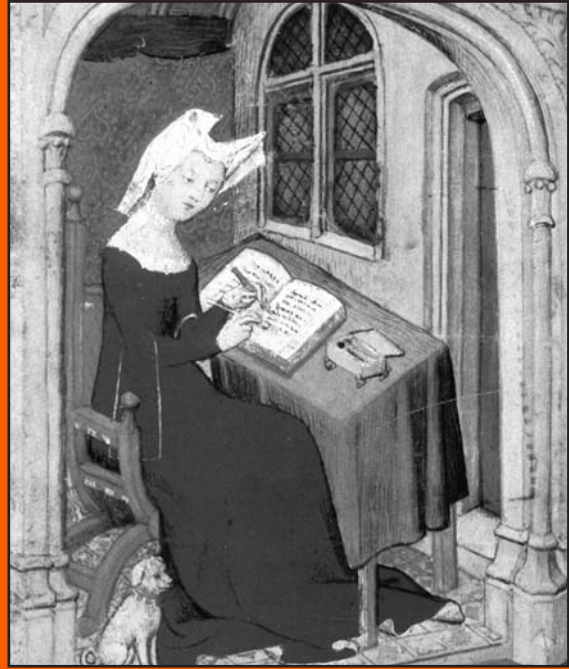


# Medieval & Early Modern Women



Part 1: Manuscripts from the British Library, London  
Part 2: Household Books, Correspondence and Manuscripts  
owned by women from the British Library, London



*Adam Matthew Publications*

“Although these women lacked the authority of public office, they actually possessed a considerable power: the power to describe who they were, and what they thought, and to persuade others, mainly men, that they should be heard and taken seriously.”

Professor Constance Jordan  
Claremont Graduate University

Medieval and Early Modern Women will delight those searching for original source material for this period. Explore texts by key women authors, illustrated manuscripts and sources describing the lives of women in this period.

**Part 1** draws upon the manuscript resources of the British Library. It contains the first known autobiography in English – that of Margery Kempe (c1373-c1439), the mystic and traveller – and the earliest extant English diary – that of Lady Margaret Hoby (1571-1633) – which started as a spiritual and confessional diary but changed over time into an account of her life.

There are no less than thirteen manuscripts relating to **Christine de Pisan** (1363-c1429). A particular gem is *Harleian 4431*, known as ‘the Queen’s Manuscript’ and prepared under the author’s supervision. It is a richly illuminated volume containing the majority of her works and many pictures of the author in the process of writing.

**Marie de France**, the earliest known French woman poet, lived in England for some of her life and was much admired by English writers from the twelfth century onwards. The manuscripts featured cover various versions of her *Lais* - stories of love and adventure - including the famous *Lay de Lanval Chevalier de Arthur Roy de Bretagne*.

Another beautifully illustrated manuscript is the **Queen Mary Psalter** (Royal 2 B vii), made for an unknown patron in the early fourteenth century and later presented to Queen Mary Tudor in 1553. This volume is a valuable source of iconographic data. It contains over 800 images, many documenting strong female characters from Eve to Bathsheba.

Some more of the women writers represented are:

- Katharine Aston (1619-1658)
- Katharine Austen (1628-1683), the diarist

- Jane Barker (c1652-1727)
- Julian of Norwich (c1343-c1413)
- Mary (Roper) Clarcke (c1522-1572)
- Grace Cary, Lettice Cary (her Life)
- Elizabeth Jocelyn, Jane Lumley (1537-1576)
- Katharine Parr (1512-1548)
- Margaret Roper (1505-1544), educated by her father, Sir Thomas More, and Erasmus
- Rose (Hickman) Throckmorton (c1527-1613), represented by her autobiography.

**Part 2** contains a significant collection of Household Books and related materials, a range of noteworthy association copies and correspondence between women.

The Household Books and related materials offer a variety of Recipe Books, Accounts, Household Books and Medical recipes dating from 1465 to 1700. The earliest is the *Household Book of the Duchess of Buckingham*, 1465. The most detailed are the accounts of Anne Archer – daughter and co-heiress of Simon Crouche, alderman of London, and wife of Henry Archer, 1608-1617.

Other items include the *Recipe Book*, c1682, of Mary Doggett, wife of actor Thomas Doggett; the *Medical Recipe Book* of Anne Brockman, c1638; and the culinary and medical recipes of Mary Birkhead and Mary Alexander (featuring ‘apple tart the Queene Mothers way’).

There are sixteen distinguished Association Copies that provide evidence of texts read and owned by women, starting with the Prayers and Meditations composed by Queen Katharine Parr, c1545.

There are seven manuscripts formerly held by

Syon Abbey, the religious order of women founded in England. These include a *Confessor Generalis*, a set of orders and constitutions for the nuns and Rules of the Abbey, and a Martyrologium, Hours of the Virgin and Vulgate Bible.

The final section of Correspondence and records is dominated by three families:

- *The correspondence and Religious Conversations at Little Gidding*, c1630, between John Ferrar, his sister Susanna Collet, and her daughters, reveals much about religious and family anxieties and the proximity of death in early modern England.
- Original correspondence of the Evelyn family from c1634
- The letters of the Conways cover much of the seventeenth century and include letters by Dorothy, Katherine and Anne Conway.

These sources bring us closer to the social and domestic lives of women in the medieval and early modern period and offer insights into women's reading and learning. They provide a wealth of material to be explored and will be of interest to all centres of medieval and renaissance studies, as well as to scholars in history, English, French and women's studies.

**Part 1: 14 reels • Available**  
**Part 2: 12 reels • Available**

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