

Women Latin Poets in Britain in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries

The idea that, after the Elizabethan age, women's opportunities for education contracted is one which is very widely accepted. Certainly, there are a number of voices from the sixteenth century which express a delight in women's newly discovered abilities as classical scholars which it is not easy to parallel in later texts. William Kempe wrote in 1588 that 'the fair sex seemed to believe that Greek and Latin added to their charms, and that Plato and Aristotle untranslated were the frequent ornaments of their closets'.¹ Similarly, *A Dyalogue defensyue for women, agaynst malycyous detractoures*, paints a picture of halcyon days for learned women:²

In our countrey natyue, women thou mayst se
In both tongues experte, the Latin and the Greke,
In Rethoryke and Poetrye, excellent they be
And with pen to endyte, they be nat to seke
If women in youth, had suche educacyon
In knowledge and lernynge, as men vse to haue
Theyr workes of theyr wyttes, wolde make full probacyon
And that of men counceyll, they nede nat to craue.

This happy state of affairs is widely seen as having come to an end with the reign of Elizabeth. No one would have written in this tone about women classicists in 1688, and certainly, no twentieth century scholar would write such a thing *about* 1688. 'Recent studies ... suggest that enthusiasm for classical learning and for any kind of liberal education for women declined at the end of the sixteenth century and continued to worsen during the seventeenth.'³ This summation of the present view expresses a generally held opinion, but is not entirely accurate. In this essay, I want to examine the evidence for the extent and nature of women's knowledge of Latin (and to a lesser extent, Greek) language and literature in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

The received opinion about women and education involves a rather worrying departure from the principle of comparing like with like. The

impression which Kempe, Bercher and others give of an Elizabethan England replete with women classicists actually comes down rather rapidly to a small number of highly visible women, almost all at the court. By the eighteenth century, in contrast, a far larger proportion of women received some kind of education, but it was entirely focused on 'polite learning', which is generally understood to have consisted of a smattering of general knowledge, music, dancing, and the mastery of various handicrafts though, as I hope to show later, this is also an idea which can usefully be interrogated. But in comparing the one with the other, there is an element of illusion caused by two principal factors: the fashionableness, and hence the visibility, of Latin-learning for girls varied over time; and the proportion of the female population who received some kind of education expanded. It seems to me quite possible that the apparent vanishing of women Latinists may reflect modern Humanities scholars' problem with the difference between gross number and proportion. To create some unnaturally tidy figures for the sake of illustrating the point: in 1600, we might guess that there were 25 women who could read and write Latin, but perhaps 250 women who could seriously be described as 'educated'. Thus, 10% of educated women would be Latin-literate. But if in 1700, there were 25 women who could read and write Latin, but 2,500 who could be described as educated, 1% of educated women would be Latin literate. This could be presented as catastrophic decline, but in fact it is stasis, since it is only the base figure which has changed. The question which I would prefer to pose is whether the kinds of women who learned Latin in the sixteenth century did so in the seventeenth: if one is studying elite individuals, the fact that the daughters of the middling sort have started going to school to learn French, deportment and embroidery is not directly relevant.

My enquiries into women's Latinity centre around the writing of Latin verse, since otherwise the idea of 'knowing Latin' is too fluid and ambiguous. We cannot tell if a woman described by contemporaries as 'knowing Latin' was able to pick up a theological work in Latin and read it, or to appreciate Horace: it might simply mean that she could pick her way through the inscription on a tombstone. Similarly, if a woman quotes 'amor vincit omnia' or 'o tempora! o mores!', can we conclude from this that she could read Latin, let alone write in it? But Latin verse composition is difficult, and was always the last thing to be taught: it is therefore possible to say without further argument that a woman who wrote Latin verse had been taught as if she were a boy. So it is interesting, and unexpected, to observe that while there were fourteen sixteenth-century Englishwomen composing Latin verse who have left some trace of their activity, there were no fewer than eleven in the seventeenth century, two of whom published Latin poetry with their name on the title-page during their lifetime. It is hard to interpret this as a picture of catastrophic decline, especially since the actual number of lines of women's Latin verse to survive from the seventeenth century is considerably greater.

Probably the principal reason why Latin-literate women plummet into invisibility at the end of the sixteenth century has to do with cultural fashions among the most visible sector of the community, the court: the admiring comments of writers such as William Kempe and Erasmus about sixteenth-century English women Latinists relate entirely to court circles. Great ladies and women courtiers stopped learning Latin from the reign of James onwards. This may perhaps be partly due to James's own dislike of learned women;⁴ though this change of fashion is certainly also connected with Europe-wide trends in language use, and also with changing practices of royal marriage.

The Latin and classical learning of aristocratic women in the sixteenth century is a testimony to the absolute utility of high culture as a tool of diplomacy: princesses learned Latin, because queens needed to use it. For example Queen Elizabeth adroitly refused a peremptory Spanish demand by sending a verse reply:⁵

Ad Graecas, bone rex, fient mandata calendos.

Noble king, I will obey your commands on the Greek calends.

This means 'no' (the Latin calendar divided the month into nones, ides and calends, while the Greeks divided it into nones and ides, thus, 'on the Greek calends' means 'never'). Furthermore, according to Suetonius, the Emperor Augustus regularly used 'on the Greek Kalends' to mean 'never'.⁶ A flat refusal that is couched in Latin verse, especially when it also evokes a shared recognition of a scrap of antiquarian lore, is a soft answer calculated to turn away wrath, and an implicit statement of equality. Therefore, not a few girls with a chance of *becoming* queens, the daughters of great families such as the Seymours and the Howards, were also taught the language of high culture, as Richard Mulcaster observed at the time.⁷

such persons as be borne to be princes, or matches to great peeres, or to furnish out such traines, ... are to receve this kinde of education in the highest degree, that is convenient for their kinde.

Of Henry VIII's six wives, no fewer than four were selected from within his own court. In the next reign, it was widely rumoured in 1551 that Protector Somerset was attempting to bring about a marriage between Jane Seymour, one of his Latin-verse-writing daughters (niece of Henry VIII's queen of the same name) and Edward VI. With this in mind, Lady Jane Grey's famous devotion to humanist scholarship looks less politically innocent, and certainly less unworldly than it might at first appear.⁸ Similarly, in the next generation Arbella Stuart, an acknowledged if remote claimant of the throne, received a full humanist education and was Latin literate.⁹ Of the English-women who could and did write Latin verse or prose in the sixteenth century, the majority are connected with the court – royal women, such as Lady Jane Grey, Queen Elizabeth, Mary Tudor (and Mary, Queen of Scots,

educated at the French court), and also the daughters of courtiers, such as Margaret, daughter of Sir Thomas More, the Seymours,¹⁰ the Cooke sisters,¹¹ and the daughters of the Earl of Arundel.¹² But it is also important to realise that there were many members of the female court élite who were *not* educated. There were noblewomen at Henry VIII's court who were not only unable to read and write, but who were not in the slightest degree embarrassed by their incapacity, such as Anne Basset, who cheerfully confessed to her mother (Honor, Lady Lisle, a notable letter-writer) in 1540 that 'I cannot write nothing myself but mine own name'.¹³ Similarly, there is no evidence that Queen Jane Seymour or Queen Katherine Howard had any humanist interests. So we are looking at a small, high-profile group, whose common ground, I suspect, is political ambition – their own, or their parents'. Hardly surprising, when the educational level of male courtiers also varied wildly from, at one extreme, humanistically-educated intellectuals such as Lord Burleigh, to at the other, beef-witted men of action who thought of nothing but hunting and the tilt-yard.

In the seventeenth century, the potential benefit of educating socially aspirant court ladies in the Classics dwindled away. Although a number of court ladies succeeded in becoming royal mistresses (and in the case of Anne Hyde, a morganatic wife), none stood the slightest chance of becoming a reigning queen. Thus the argument from utility for teaching young noblewomen Latin would have ceased to exist, even if it had not been the case (which it was) that in the course of the seventeenth century, French had tended to supersede Latin as the diplomatic *lingua franca*, as even Bathsua Makin admitted.¹⁴

It has always seemed that at lower levels of society there never *was* an argument from utility, a point which is supported by Martha Moulsworth, born in 1577, who notes in her autobiographic poem that her father had her taught Latin,¹⁵ but adds,

Lattin is not the most marketable mariadge mettall	But I of Lattin haue no cause to boast ffor want of vse, I longe agoe itt lost Had I no other portion to my dowre I might have stood a virgin to this houre Butt though the virgin Muses I loue well I haue longe since Bid virgin life ffarewell.
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However, Mrs Moulsworth may not be wholly accurate in stating that there was no point to her women contemporaries' learning Latin. Doctor Denton, physician to the King, wrote in the uncertainties of the Civil War of his seven-year-old daughter Ann,¹⁶

my highest ambition of all is to have her so much Latin as to understand a Latin testament, which is enough to understand a Drs bill and to write one, and then I could (if God bless me with life and health) leave her a portion without money ...

I would faine have her of as many trades as I could to get her living by, for I am in no great likelihood to provide her a portion.

Clearly, he saw a positive utility in his daughter's acquisition of what he sees as practical Latin: 'a portion without money'.¹⁷ Bathsua Makin is also clear in her *Essay* that positive benefit might accrue to Latinate women: it might give them a position in an aristocratic household (as she herself became tutor to Princess Elizabeth). She makes this argument for the utility of woman's learning directly, and in similar words: 'Here is a sure Portion ... How many born to good Fortunes, when their Wealth hath been wasted, have supported themselves and Families too by their Wisdom?'¹⁸ She also points out the utility of this education for society as a whole:¹⁹

Had we a sufficient number of Females thus instructed to furnish the Nurseries of Noble Families, their Children might be improved in the Knowledge of the Learned Tongues before they were aware.

In a household blessed with more brains than money, there might be good reason to think carefully about the possibility of educating a daughter, for her own sake, as Dr Denton suggests, or for the sake of the family more generally. The Autobiography of Sir Simonds d'Ewes interestingly suggests yet another twist on this basic situation, when he points out that the future Bathsua Makin's father not only got her to assist him in his school in her youth – thus directly putting her education to practical use – but educated her beyond *his own* capabilities, drawing a direct benefit from this:²⁰

He had a daughter named Bathshua, being his eldest, that had exact knowledge in the Greek, Latin and French tongues, with some insight also into the Hebrew and Syriack: much more learning she had doubtless than her father, who was a mere pretender to it; and by the fame of her abilities, which she had acquired from others, he got many scholars, which else would neither have repaired to him, nor have long staid with him.

Sir Simonds d'Ewes was a pupil at the school in question, and therefore well placed to observe his preceptors, both father and daughter. He implies that like certain other fathers of amazingly learned women, Rainolds exploited the fact that the daughter's ability (simple-mindedly in this case) was generally interpreted as an advertisement for her father's talents as a pedagogue.²¹

Although great ladies of the Stuart court found that there was no longer either a real point, or any social cachet, in being able to discuss Latin poets or the Greek Fathers, members of the upper gentry and relatively minor aristocracy and educated citizens continued to behave much as before and educate, or fail to educate, their daughters according to the traditional practice of their own particular family. Leaving the royal family and its satellites to one side, the kinds of men who had their daughters taught Latin (or taught them themselves) in the 1550s did so in the 1650s, and may well have done

so in the 1750s. In the middle of the sixteenth century, beside the much-discussed Elizabeth Tudor, Lady Jane Grey, the Seymour sisters, and other women of the court, we find the daughters of educated upper gentry such as Dr Hooper and Dr Ailmer,²² and London citizens such as Dr Withypoll and Stephen Vaughan (father of Anne Lok) learning Latin, and in some cases even Greek. In the seventeenth century, a number of men of similar type – country gentry, educated professionals – such as the Earls of Huntingdon, the Apsleys, Dr Baynard (physician, surgeon and bibliophile), Dr Denton (the King’s physician), and Henry Rainolds (schoolmaster), do likewise. In the eighteenth century, the same pattern is visible: Samuel Wesley taught his daughter Mehetabel both Latin and Greek alongside his sons John and Charles,²³ and similarly, Jacob More, a schoolmaster in Bristol, and Thomas Seward, canon of Lichfield, taught Latin to their respective daughters, Hannah More and Anna Seward.²⁴

The principal motive, in many cases, was probably religious. In the second half of the sixteenth century, the study of Latin and Greek marched alongside the enormous Protestant impetus to translate liturgy and scripture into the vernacular. The élite, both men and women, were increasingly concerned to understand at least the Latin, and sometimes, the Greek bible (few non-theologians ventured on Hebrew), principally because the savage religious strife which divided nations and families alike so clearly turned at some crucial points on details of interpretation, and translation is necessarily tendentious. Another factor which led to women, as well as men, studying Greek was the pressing need to create an intellectual justification for the Anglican compromise: in an effort to maintain continuity with Christian tradition while steering clear of Papal pretensions, the theorists of Anglicanism turned to the Fathers of the Greek Church, who provided a potential model for episcopacy and religious authority which was not mediated by Rome: Mildred Cecil, for instance, one of the more distinguished Elizabethan Grecians, translated a homily from the Greek of Basil the Great, dedicating it to that notable Protestant patroness, Anne Seymour, wife of the Lord Protector.²⁵ This motive is clear in the interests (and choice of texts for translation) of the most notable sixteenth-century women classicists, and since the precise nature of the Anglican compromise continued to be a matter for furious debate, it may also be relevant to women of the seventeenth century.

Seventeenth-century women whose interests were theological or scholarly were not necessarily without opportunity to follow their bent.²⁶ As Lawrence Stone points out, by the 1630s many of the upper squirearchy and aristocracy educated their sons at home. Though he does not say so, the presence of a tutor in the home would obviously open up the possibility of education for daughters.²⁷ Furthermore, the Civil War left a number of educated men whose relationship to their daughters would in other circumstances have been remote under house-arrest, or unemployed, and consequently thrown into the company of their own children with time on their hands. This

may have spurred some of them to educate their girls: one such possible beneficiary of paternal idleness is Rachel Jevon, the daughter of a Worcestershire clergyman, Daniel Jevon and his wife Elizabeth, who was christened at Broom in Worcestershire in 1627. Her family may have been connected with a gentry family of Jevons in Staffordshire, but were impoverished by the Civil War. Her father, a loyal clergyman of the diocese of Worcester, though threatened and imprisoned, contrived to preserve his flock, so that not one took arms against His Majesty, but could only give his children education, without maintenance'. This is to say, he was deprived of his living during the Civil War, which may explain why he made use of his enforced leisure to teach his daughter Latin: was he seeking to give her 'a portion without money'? Two of Rachel Jevon's works are listed in the Bodleian library, parallel texts in English and Latin, both of which were printed for the Restoration: *Carmen θριαμβευτικον regiae maiestatis Caroli II principum et Christianorum optimi in exoptatissimum eius restaurationem* (London, John Macock, 1660), and *Exultationis Carmen* (in English). She followed this up with specific requests for a position: in 1662 she petitioned Charles II 'for the place of one of the meanest servants about the Queen', and subsequently, sent another petition described simply as 'For the place of Rocker to the Queen' (something of a sinecure, since the unfortunate Catherine of Braganza was childless): both these requests survive in the State Papers. It seems entirely possible that her father educated her with the intention of allowing her to attract attention and capitalise on the interest thus gained by finding a patron, as the fathers of sixteenth-century Continental women Latinists such as Olimpia Morata and Luisa Sigea had done. Morata and Sigea were luckier, though: in both cases, the local ruling family had a daughter of a suitable age, and thus Morata was retained as a companion and teacher for the Duke of Ferrara's daughter Anne d'Este, and Sigea became the tutor of the Infanta Maria of Portugal. Unfortunately, the continued (official) childlessness of Charles II – even assuming that he would have wished to see a daughter classically educated – meant there was simply no context in which Jevon's learning could be put to effective use, and she dropped back into the obscurity from which she had briefly emerged.

There is a substantial amount of evidence that seventeenth- and eighteenth-century England was well stocked with educated, more or less Latinate gentlewomen, familiar with the contents and diction of Classical texts. Besides the daughters of gentlemen, it also contained a number of schoolmasters' daughters and women of the middling sort who had been taught Latin – Mary Mollineux, Quaker and Latin poet, is one such; and we may note that Mollineux is not presented by her cousin and biographer as a *lusus naturae*. But this is not how the womens' studies academy sees it. Germaine Greer, commenting on the fact that when Henrietta Price, one of the Maids of Honour to the Queen, sent Lord Chesterfield a pair of gloves as a prelude to her

marriage with his kinsman Alexander Stanhope, Rochester supplied a verse letter to go with them written in her name, states that

‘Henrietta Price did not write her own poem because, like all the other English-women of her generation, she lacked both the basic training in literacy and the classical learning deemed essential to the formation of taste.’²⁸

This as a proposition cast in a general form, is simply false, however true it may be of Henrietta Price in particular. If one turns to a group of early modern women with whom Professor Greer is intimately acquainted, the fifty women poets included in her anthology, *Kissing the Rod*, and explores contemporary biographical material, one finds that fifteen of them, i.e. almost a third, could read Latin. Of course, some seventeenth-century women were uneasily aware of their ignorance, but equally, it is clear that others were modestly aware of their knowledge. The unusually high level of Latin literacy among women poets may indeed suggest that there is a relationship between Latin and the confidence to write, but it also shows that a number of women possessed both. Simple ignorance may explain the case of Henrietta Price (or it may not), but if early modern women as a class seldom wrote, then we have to look somewhere other than universal ignorance for an explanation. It may be, moreover, that the idea of a single explanation for such a fact is not a very useful one.

As Isaac Watts observes, there were many Stuart gentlewomen ‘rich in Learning, yet averse to Show’.²⁹ Among numerous other examples, we may consider Martha, Lady Giffard, who read Latin with ease, made an accomplished English translation of Horace’s ‘O fons Bandusiae’, and advised her niece Lady Berkeley in 1698, ‘I would faine advise about y^r reading what I practice myself not to read anything very serious before you goe to bed; that would be a good time to read Virgil in, and let y^r Turkish history only goe a dayes’.³⁰ Similarly, Anna Hume, daughter of the Scots historian, poet and essayist David Hume of Godscroft, is usually given credit for the English translation of the Latin verses in her father’s *History of the Houses of Douglas and Angus*.³¹ Other daughters of the gentry in the seventeenth century who studied the Classical languages include Dudleya North, Lady Frances Norton, and Dorothy Pakington. Margaret Godolphin, née Blagge, the friend of John Evelyn, evidently read Latin. A manuscript in Evelyn’s hand, ‘Devotions of Mrs Blagge which I copied out at the request of my Lady Sylvia’, includes two excerpts which she made from Tertullian’s *Ad Uxorem*, in Latin, with a tart note, ‘Such a Wife had this Severe Doctor had, neuer would he haue left such Invectives in his Booke de Castitate, where he celebrates the being loosed from a Wife in this rapturous style.’³² Tertullian is not the easiest of writers, so this passage suggests that Margaret Blagge read Latin without difficulty. Dame Sarah Cowper (1644–1720), the daughter of a London merchant, made a memorandum of her library in London (incidentally, the phrasing seems to imply that she had other collections of books elsewhere).

The 133 volumes listed include ‘L’Strang’s Seneca, Montaigns Essays in three parts, Memoirs of China, Plutarchs Lives in five parts, Plutarchs Morals in five parts, Philip l’Comines, Bacons Essays, Erasmus in English, Epictetus, Puffendorf, Turkish Spy, Cicero of y^e Gods, Tully’s Offices, Grotius of Religion, Erasmus Praise of Folly, Ruler of Health, the Countess of Warwick, Erasmus Christian Souldier.’³³ Her library consisted mainly of English translations (though some of these books may be in French), but it would be hard to support the contention that she lacked classical knowledge, or indeed, basic training in literacy.

There is clear evidence that some gentry-level men were thoroughly supportive of this feminine activity. Charles Hatton wrote in 1678, ‘I am very pleased to hear y^t not only my nephews but my nieces are so good Latin scholars’,³⁴ while Sir James Langham, an unusually good Latinist himself, was delighted to find Mary Isham so erudite, as her brother proudly reports:³⁵ ‘Having entered the dining-room, as he speaks Latin well, he [Sir James Langham] discoursed with Sister Mary [then 18], and praised her very much. He said Richardson spoke of her knowing Tully, Virgil and Buchanan well.’ Sir James Langham did not merely admire erudite girls from a safe distance: he chose a classically educated woman as his wife, Lady Elizabeth Hastings, daughter of the Countess of Huntingdon.³⁶ She and her mother had both been taught Latin by the famously learned Mrs Bathsua Makin.³⁷

At a lower level of society, we may consider the interesting figure of Anne Ley, born c. 1600, the wife of Roger Ley, Curate of St Leonard’s Church, Shoreditch. The Leys spent their lives in deep poverty, despite having a loyal patron in John Squire, vicar of St Leonards, and kept a school in Shoreditch to eke out their income. Anne was highly literate in English and Latin: her surviving commonplace book (containing material written from the 1620s to 1641) includes her letters in both languages, written to her husband, her father, friends, to a stranger to invite him to preach in a less offensive style, and to young university men, probably erstwhile pupils.³⁸

A group who need a moment’s special consideration in this context, since they had a particular stake in Latin learning, were Catholic nuns. The More family and its connections continued to educate their daughters for generations after the death of their illustrious and martyred ancestor.³⁹ More generally, the Constitutions of the English Benedictine convents at Cambrai and Paris specifically state that the divine office and profession ceremonies were sung in Latin by the quire nuns.⁴⁰ Thus Latin was a part of everyday life for them, and the post-reformation temper makes it unlikely that they were content to parrot.⁴¹ In fact, the various convent annals, such as those published by the Catholic Record Society, make it absolutely clear that many nuns learned Latin. For example: ‘In this year (1633) upon the 8th day of July died most blessedly our worthy Mother Prioress (Mary Wiseman). She had her Latin tongue perfect, and hath left us many homilies and sermons of the holy fathers translated into English, which she did with great facility, whilst some

small respite of health permitted her.⁴² It is worth observing that the surviving library catalogue of the Benedictine nuns of Cambrai, Cambrai, BN 901, contains two copies of Alvares' *Introduction to the Latin Tongue for Young Students*, 1684 and 1686, suggesting that some of the women who came to the convent without Latin proceeded to learn it. A letter by Dom Augustine Baker on the nuns of Cambrai written in 1629, notes, 'I wish I had Hilton's *Scala Perfectionis* in Latin. It would help the understanding of the English (and some of them understand Latin).⁴³ The only Latin verse emanating from the English convents of the Low Countries that I know of, however, is the following:⁴⁴

'the lady Lucy, in y^e world called Mrs Elizabeth Knatchbull, dyed at Gaunt 1629 on y^e 5th of August y^e 45 yeare of her age y^e 19th of her profession, y^e 6th of her prelature and Superiority in y^e monastery of the Immaculate Conception of y^e euer glorious virgin Mary Mother of God, and of y^e holy order of St Benedict, of y^e English Nation. Then followeth 6 verses in Latin [not given]

Domina Lucie Knatchbull
Anagramate
Which in English are as followeth

The name of Mother clayms tears by right
in y^s sad and shadowed monument:
She Lucy was and by her light
The world receaude all tru content
but whilst on earth her rays were cast
The heauens grew enuious of our bliss
And drew her to yourselues in hast
We to they, wills must be submiss
Ther lik ye moone is full, she shines in glory
And will on earth assist and ayd us in o^r story.

We have here by implication Latin verse writing by an English Benedictine nun. This house certainly used Latin, and read it fluently. Elsewhere in the same narrative Dame Anne records the resolution of a dispute over authority (p. 28): 'Wee immediatly gaue y^m y^e latin statutes to peruse, and poyntd out y^e place where it giues y^e community y^e choyce of tow Religious men to be present with y^e Bishope ... '.

This may also be the place to introduce another anomaly: one of the very few women from 'Old English' or 'Pale' Dublin who can be identified as having written anything: Richard Stanihurst, himself an Old Englishman, though he mentions a number of leading intellectuals in Dublin, singles out no women at all. I mention her here, because she was very evidently Catholic. She was a member of the Old Norman family of the De Burnells. In the course of the sixteenth century, the Burnells were repeatedly in trouble with the English crown. In 1535, John Burnell was attainted and executed at Tyburn for having been one of the principal supporters of Thomas Fitzgerald

in his war against the Pale. Henry Burnell was thought able by Sir Henry Sidney in 1577, except that ‘he thirsteth earnestly to see the English government withdrawn from hence.’ He was nonetheless appointed Justice of the Queen’s Bench in 1589. During the persecution of Recusants in 1605, although very aged, he was put under house arrest for having participated in a deputation formed by the principal Roman Catholics of the Pale to petition for a remission of the religious disabilities imposed on them. She thus came from a fiercely Catholic, Irish loyalist family, which is why I consider her here after early modern nuns. Her father, Henry Burnell, probably the son of the Henry Burnell mentioned above, wrote and published a play, *Landgartha*, one of the very few to be written for the brief and abortive pre-Cromwellian Dublin theatre,⁴⁵ and his daughter Eleanora wrote two prefatory poems in Latin.⁴⁶ These are accomplished, easy Latin in the Continental style, in their conversational quality with extensive enjambement from line to line, characteristic of Continental, Catholic latinity, which her background would encourage us to expect.

Thus, while the *court* culture of Stuart England, as already indicated, no longer favoured Classically educated women, who consequently do not have as high a public profile as they did in the sixteenth century, it is clear from these (and other) examples of various kinds that there were still country gentry families who continued to educate their daughters comparably with their sons, and also that a few women of lower status continued to be taught in this way, such as Anne Ley, and also Mary Mollineux, whom I will discuss below. It should be stating the obvious to observe that decisions relating to the education of any one girl were based on the individual family’s attitude to education, but it seems not to be as obvious as it should be.⁴⁷ Despite the conduct-books and other forms of prescriptive text dealing with the formation of the ideal girl,⁴⁸ stories about individual lives, such as those mentioned in the preceding paragraphs, suggest that early modern English society was very far from unanimous about the degree of education appropriate to the daughters of the gentry.

Greer’s comment also sets aside the obvious fact that in Henrietta Price’s day, classical *learning* could easily be acquired by reading English or French translations, as we can see from the library of Dame Sarah Cowper.⁴⁹ Elsewhere in Rochester’s circle, Anne Wharton could hardly have written a manuscript blank verse tragedy in five acts called *Love’s Martyr*, celebrating the love of Ovid for the emperor Augustus’s daughter Julia,⁵⁰ and translated Ovid’s ‘Penelope to Ulysses’ from the *Heroides*, without a knowledge of Classical culture. She may also have known Latin (though her translation of Ovid may equally have been, as Aphra Behn’s certainly was, made from pre-existing translations).⁵¹ Aphra Behn herself was not a Latinist (though she had good French), yet she was sufficiently unalarmed by Classical culture to produce an elegantly revisionary version of Horace’s famous Pyrrha Ode (*Odes* I.v) in which the sexes are reversed:⁵²

What mean those Amorous Curles of Jet?
 For what heart-Ravisht Maid
 Dost thou thy Hair in order set,
 Thy Wanton Tresses braid?
 And thy vast Store of Beauties open lay,
 That the deluded Fancy leads astray ...

Another of her poems, 'To Amintas, Upon reading the Lives of some of the Romans' playfully reworks episodes from Roman history for her own purposes, and she also translated the whole of Ovid's 'Oenone to Paris', using a French translation as her basis,⁵³ thus explicitly measuring herself against one of the greatest of the Roman poets, suggesting that she was far from being overawed by the classical heritage. What all this shows is that not only educated gentlewomen such as Martha Giffard, but also middle-class poets such as Behn, were able, and free, to employ a classicised discourse without necessarily going to the trouble of learning Latin. Behn hailed Creech's Lucretius with delight:

Till now, I curst my Birth, my Education
 And more the scanted Customes of the Nation.
 Permitting not the Female Sex to tread
 The Mighty Paths of Learned Heroes dead...
 So thou by this Translation dost advance
 Our Knowledg from the State of Ignorance,
 And equals us to Man: Ah how can we
 Enough Adore, or Sacrifice enough to thee!

The sense that Classical learning *was* available to them, as ever more works were translated, is reiterated by women writers in the later seventeenth century. For example, Elizabeth Rowe's *Poems on Several Occasions* includes a preface by her friend Elizabeth Johnson, signed as from Hardings-rents in May 10 of that year, cheerfully polemic and replete with classical reference, explaining, 'for you must know we Read Plutarch now 'tis Translated'.⁵⁴ Even in a scholarly family such as that of the Newdigates, the fact that her husband's classical studies were mostly pursued via translations meant that Dame Alice Newdigate was in a position to imbibe a great deal of classical lore, and did so.⁵⁵ One of several women's responses to John Sprint's attempt to circumscribe women's role entirely to the service of men, *The Ladies Defence, or, The Bride-Woman's Counsellor Answer'd, a Poem in a Dialogue between Sir John Brute, Sir William Loveall, Melissa, and a Parson*, includes an 'Epistle Dedicatory' by the poet Mary, Lady Chudleigh, advising women to read Classics in translation (Seneca, Plutarch, Epictetus, then the poets).⁵⁶

On the other hand, one phenomenon which women's use of the Latin language itself does throw into relief is the purely sociocultural aspects of Classical learning in early modern England, and probably elsewhere. Here Ong's perception that Renaissance Latin language-learning functioned as a *rite de*

passage for boys may be highly relevant – though of course Ong’s assumption that as a result women did not study Latin literature at all is quite incorrect.⁵⁷ The use of Latin, and of reference to Classical culture, among gentlemen functioned as a sign. Its value was to a very great extent as an indicator of common ground: a gentleman thus addressed could be sure that his interlocutor spoke out of a context of shared experience, similar identity formation, and similar values. Edmund Leach once suggested that, if the phenomenon of higher education is considered anthropologically in terms of function, its whole purpose is to establish a class of literati to operate the network of power relationships in a bureaucratic system (this formulation is intended to cover the purpose of classical education in non-Western cultures such as China as well as the use of Greek and Latin in Europe). As he sees it, the ostensible justification of classical learning is no more than pseudo-rationalism, concealing a pragmatic subtext, which is the need to ensure that the élite share the same cultural background.⁵⁸ Foster Watson may not have been thinking of gender issues when he commented that the general use of Latin led to the ‘freemasonry’ of learned men, but like freemasonry, it had the effect of creating an arena from which women were (apparently) excluded. But few, if any, early modern men were sufficiently self-analytic to perceive the issue in these terms. They said, and believed, that Classical learning was important for its own sake; the fact that it carried with it a vast amount of conceptual baggage was not normally visible. Thus when women such as Anna Maria van Schurman attacked the question of classical education for women using the masculine tool of logic,⁵⁹ none of them seem to have been aware that the problem facing them was not logical at all, but political. It is difficult to think how such a perception could conceivably have been articulated anywhere in early modern Europe. Leach also observes the basic fact which I am concerned to demonstrate: ‘There have in fact always been a number of learned women, and it hasn’t needed an elaborate set of scholarly institutions to create them.’⁶⁰ Which is to say, the social structuring of the European intelligentsia was sufficiently elastic to permit a number of women to become scholars without any perceptible social effects: the existence of such women as Anna Maria van Schurman suggested no general principles which might lead to a revision of the opportunities open to women more generally.

One piece of evidence which suggests that Leach and Ong’s perception of the subtext of Latin learning is fundamentally correct is Edmund Campion’s suspicion and contempt for the use of Latin by the native Irish.⁶¹

Witheowt either preceptes or observation of congruitie they speake Latten like a vulgar language, learned in theire common scholes of leachcraft and lawe, whereth they begynn children, and hold on sixtene or twentie yeares, connyng by rote the aphorismes of Hippocrates, and the ciuill institutes, and a fewe other paringes of thos twoe faculties.

His fear is probably that this knowledge might allow a mere Irishman to pass as a human being; if not in the flesh, at least on paper. Equipped with the right passwords, the stranger could insinuate himself within the ‘freemasonry of learned men’, and once there, might be a menace to social consensus and political hegemony alike. The English élite had a similar problem with Catholic latinity, which may help to explain why the English maintained a markedly different system of pronunciation from that used in Europe.⁶²

It is, however, very questionable whether Latin as pronounced by the educated Englishman would be intelligible to the foreigner. Tom Coryat found his Latin so little understood when travelling on the Continent that he soon found it necessary to abandon his old English pronunciation ... neither is this, he says, ‘proper to Italy only, but to all other nations whatsoever in Christendome, saving to England.’ Milton was of opinion that the Italian pronunciation was necessary if one would talk with foreigners, and declared that, ‘to smatter Latin with an English mouth is as ill a hearing as law French.’

The political problem posed by women Latinists is of a quite different order. They normally shared a class and a race with the power élite; they had been brought up with the same values, they were stakeholders in the status quo. Their visible, ineradicable otherness meant that their ability to menace the male Latin-speaking élite was extremely limited, as long as their desire to learn Latin was not accompanied by a demand to enter the professions. They had learned the same kind of Latin, and pronounced it the same way, but there was still a profound difference. In virtually all cases I know of, except that of the novelist Mary Sherwood (1775–1851), the unwilling victim of her brother’s idleness,⁶³ a girl’s knowledge of Latin was voluntary. Boys were flogged into their Latin; their acquisition of this tool of government was in many cases a battle of wills between boy and master. School was a brutal, painful experience, and even private tutors were not necessarily gentle. Girls were more likely to experience irrelevant solicitude. Boys, thrown into the pack-animal conditions of school, struggled for the most part to remain in their primordial ignorance, while intellectually ambitious girls struggled to escape from it.

It was all very well for Bathsua Makin to imply that the public schools’ approach to the acquisition of knowledge was stupid and unnecessary. If the sole aim was efficient language acquisition, and the teaching of literature, then she was obviously right. But if the purpose actually was to create an élite, partly through the acquisition of a body of knowledge but also through a formidable bonding experience of brutal and arbitrary suffering, then Mrs Makin’s comments, which address only what people *think* they are doing, are entirely beside the point. Few girls can ever have been beaten for not learning enough Latin at any time after the year 1500. Their experience of Latin learning was solitary or familial – few would ever learn Latin at school. The resultant perception that women’s Latinity somehow did not count is

soundly based, though it requires a significant shift of focus from the content to the purposes of education to see why. English society has never been entirely clear what girls' schools were for. If we think of boys' schools in their social rather than educational aspect, they have traditionally been institutions which aimed at detaching boys from the family and recreating them as men, it is possible to see why this might be so. No equivalent process has ever been considered desirable for daughters: in early modern England, the difference between girlhood and womanhood hinged on sexual experience and its *sequelae*: motherhood, and the exercise of domestic authority. The mere knowledge of Latin, or even of Latin and Greek, did not in itself give girls the wherewithal to compete with men for patronage or professional advantage, since it did not give them the political skills unconsciously acquired by boys as a byproduct of their education, and the access that it gave them to networks of power was a peculiar one, which was dependent on continued good behaviour.

The narratives of women's acquisition of knowledge in the nineteenth or early twentieth centuries are transgressive and Promethean: they are stories of ambitious girls, fighting for the right to education, which went together with demands for the vote, and entry into the professions. The domestic politics of the early modern learned lady are quite different. I cannot think of a single woman known to have acquired her Latin in the teeth of paternal opposition – there are a few cases of paternal indifference, in which women such as Marta Marchina, Anna Maria van Schurman or Elizabeth Carter formed an independent desire for study, and successfully carried their point. But the great majority of women Latinists were taught by their fathers. Some of them were actively involved in the aggrandisement of their families, and their own achievement was considered by contemporaries contributory to their father's reputation, sometimes simply as advertisements of their fathers' pedagogic genius, which may be the case with Bathsua Makin, née Rainolds. As such, rarity value was part of their stock-in-trade, as it was for women writers more generally: it was always in the interests of a woman who published work in Latin to pretend to uniqueness.⁶⁴

Only a few seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Englishwomen demonstrably wrote Latin verse. The names of those currently known to me are Bathsua Rainolds, Martha Norton, Jane Owen, Rachel Jevon, Sara Staples, Mary Mollineux, Mary Monck, Anne Baynard, Elizabeth Tollet, and Elizabeth Carter. Not all of these names will be unfamiliar. Bathsua Rainolds, under her married name of Bathsua Makin, has been highly visible as a theorist of women's intellectual oppression for some decades, though it is only in the last five years that the volume of polyglot verse she published at sixteen has been noticed and correctly assigned. The names of Mary Mollineux, Mary Monck, Elizabeth Tollet and Elizabeth Carter are also widely known, since English verses of their composition appear either in *Kissing the Rod* or in *Eighteenth-Century Women Poets*. Greer, in *Kissing the Rod*, discussed

Mary Mollineux and Bathsua Makin as poets. She notes in one sentence of her introduction to the verse of Mary Mollineux that she wrote Latin poetry, but this fact, so clearly at odds with the overall picture which she presents of early modern women, is left as it were hanging in the air. She does not mention the Latin poetry of Bathsua Makin at all. Roger Lonsdale's generally admirable *Oxford Book of Eighteenth-Century Women Poets* includes English poems by, and biographies of, Mary Monck, Elizabeth Tollet, and Elizabeth Carter, and in not one of the three does he mention the composition of Latin verse. It is as if he could not see it, though it is there in the obvious sources for the work of all three ladies. It seems almost as if the historiography of early modern women Latinists appears to replicate, in miniature, the greater story of pre-modern women and their writing. Forty years ago, women writers were seen as curious anomalies, and elided out of the historical record on grounds which included statistical insignificance. A very powerful counter-argument has been mounted in the last couple of generations, which bases itself on the premise that for women's history, it is the distinction between 'some' and 'none' which really matters, not the distinction between 'few' and 'many'. It is disconcerting to find this sort of attitude surfacing in the 1990s with respect to women Latinists, even among feminist scholars.

Bathsua Rainolds, later Makin (1600–after 1673) is a person long known to students of early modern women, though it is only recently that her life and work has been successfully pieced together. Her grandfather was Henry Reginald/Reginaldus/Rainold, who lived in Ipswich until the 1580s or 1590s, and is known to have translated two books of Latin sermons by the German humanist Christopher Hegendorff.⁶⁵ Her father, another Henry, moved to Stepney by 1600, and became a schoolmaster.⁶⁶ This is the kind of family paradigm which is repeatedly found for women Latin poets in various centuries and countries: behind the learned maiden stands a family of men with a strong commitment to learning, often demonstrably educators or scholars.⁶⁷

As a young girl of sixteen, Bathsua Rainolds collected together evidence for her precocious and multilingual brilliance in a published book, *Musa Virginea graeco-latino-gallica*, published in 1616, containing poems in Latin, Greek, French, Hebrew and Italian.⁶⁸ Since this is dedicated to James VI and consists almost entirely of poems on members of the Royal Family, it seems virtually certain that she was doing so in order to attract patronage.⁶⁹ This is a reasonable sample of her oeuvre:⁷⁰

Fingitur Antiquis Pandora habuisse Minervæ
 Ingenium, os Veneris, donaque, Phæbe, tua:
 At si Pythagoræ sunt dogmata vera putarem
 Hanc animam pectus, Diva, petisse tuum.
 Haec namque, & longè his in Te majora refulgent,
 Relligio, & verae Nobilitatis honos.

Pandora was portrayed by the ancients

with the wit of Minerva, the face of Venus,
and, Apollo, your gifts: If I were to imagine
that the ideas of Pythagoras were true,
I would think, O goddess, that her soul
had sought your breast. May these qualities
long shine out yet more greatly in you:
Religion, and the honour of true Nobility.

Anne of Denmark could certainly read and write Latin;⁷¹ but evidence for her possession of ‘Apollo’s gifts’ is not easily found, and that she possessed ‘the face of Venus’ is distinctly overstating the case. Furthermore, she was a Catholic, and Bathsua was vehemently Protestant: all in all, the verse bespeaks almost complete ignorance of its subject. In spite of her extreme youth, Bathsua seems to have kept a remarkably steady eye on the main chance: like her near-contemporaries Elizabeth Weston, and Aemilia Lanier, she was apparently attempting to use poetry as a stepping-stone to social or financial advancement. This, however, was a matter of luck, since finding a patron was a highly problematic business, especially for a woman. Her father wrote something very similar a few years later, a broadside of Latin poems praising James I, Charles I and Henrietta Maria, printed in 1625, the year of James’s death and Charles’s accession and marriage.⁷² It seems probable that, in 1616, Bathsua Rainolds had no court connections which would enable her to target one Stuart in particular. Print was thus an appropriate strategy; one book could be, and probably was, sent to each. In the short term, the project earned her presentation at court, and, probably, an often-quoted put-down from King James:⁷³

when a learned maid was presented to King James for an English rarity, because she could speake and rite pure Latine, Greeke and Hebrew, the King ask’d ‘But can shee spin?’

In the longer term, though, it perhaps earned her the position of tutor to the Princess Elizabeth. Her husband, Richard Makin, whom she married in 1621, was a minor court servant in the 1620s and 30s, but then lost his place, which may explain why Bathsua herself was seeking court preferment in the 1640s.⁷⁴ I think it is important to notice that the publication of *Musa Virginea* was no more transgressive or self-assertive than writing it in the first place; both were quite evidently done with the active assistance and co-operation of her father.

She continued to write Latin verse in later life. It is not that surprising to find a copy of her Latin verses on the Parliamentary Sir Henry Vane in Oxford, Bodleian Library Rawl. Poet. 116, a MS belonging to the Elyot nephews of her admirer Sir Simonds d’Ewes (who had been one of her father’s pupils). Many of her friends were parliamentary, even though she herself was directly dependent on the court: it was Simonds d’Ewes who put her in touch with Anna Maria van Schurman. Another surviving late poem is

an elegy for the countess of Huntingdon's son in the Huntington Library.⁷⁵ In both cases, this is verse written for a patron, of a standard humanist kind.

Other seventeenth-century women Latin poets include Jane Owen (?c.1600–after 1628), a connection, perhaps the niece, of one of the most famous Latin poets ever produced by the British Isles, the epigrammatist John Owen (so again, there is at least one highly educated man in the previous generation of the family). Her existence is revealed in an epigram by John Owen, which runs (quoted in a contemporary translation),⁷⁶

To Mistris Iane Owen, a very learned Woman

Of thy five sisters, *Iane*, I know but thee,
I onely haue heard what their number bee:
I cannot one of them by their names call;
Yet if they be like thee, I know them all.

Addition

Faire, modest, learned, wise, beyond my prayse:
Happy is he shall marry one of these.

There is more direct evidence for her capacity in Robert Hayman's translation of Owen's epigrams, which also reveals that she was a resident of Oxford, and wrote Latin verse.⁷⁷ Part II, which is separately paginated and seems to have been separately printed, is *Certaine Epigrams out of the first foure Bookes of The Excellent Epigrammatist, Master John Owen*, which is dedicated to women: the preface declares that the epigrams are being translated for the sake of the Beauties, 'because they cannot understand Latin'. But on p. 40, as a *coda* to the epigrams, we find verses in praise of John Owen, including the following:

Praise-worthy verses of Learned Mistris Iane Owen of Oxford, in praise of my Iohn Owen, translated out of her Latine

It was, and is Poets quaint property,
To carpe at men, and womens vanity:
Yet this I iudge, thy salt lines merit it
Both men and women will commend thy wit.

To the same learned Woman, whose vertues I reuerence, I dedicate this Encomiastick.

I'd rather have thy praises on my side
Then any Womans I doe know beside:
Thy wit and iudgment is more iust and able,
Then many miriads of the vnlearned rabble.

Hayman refers to Owen as 'my Friend'. The epigrams of Owen are translated by another friend, John Vicars. Hayman is plainly in Owen's personal circle; but all the same it is interesting that this woman's literary reputation and her work circulates outside the immediate family. There is little to be gleaned from

this verse, beyond the fact that she participated in the economy of praise which is central to humanist poetic activity, but we might also observe that Owen's epigram specifically associates her virtue, her learning, and marriageability.

Retha Warnicke suggests this Jane Owen may be the identical with the Jane Owen who wrote *An Antidote Against Purgatory*, published posthumously, probably on the continent, in 1634.⁷⁸ This seems fundamentally implausible. John Owen was clearly a Protestant, from remarks such as a reference to 'Romish bloody Superstition' (II, no. 148) – this is confirmed by the fact that his works were placed on the *Index*. Hayman himself was notably anti-Catholic. For such men, had the learned Jane Owen they knew been a Catholic, her learning would not have attracted such epithets as 'learned' and 'wise', or verbs such as 'reuerence': it would have been associable rather with perversity.

Another woman Latin poet, who has already been briefly mentioned, is the Quaker Mary Mollineux (1651–1695). Her cousin, who provides a brief biography in her book *Fruits of Retirement*, notes that she was an only child, and her weak eyesight decided her father to educate her in Latin, Greek, arithmetic, 'Physick and Chyrurgy' rather than conventional feminine skills. Curiously, she preferred to communicate with her husband in Latin, even on her deathbed: one of her last utterances, which he records in his memoir of her, was 'ne nimis sollicitus esto': don't worry about me so much.⁷⁹ Mary Mollineux's devotion to Latin is particularly remarkable, not to say strange, since to Quakers, Latin was 'the language of the Beast', a clear reference to the Church of Rome and a possible reference to the monopolies of the learned which Latin helped defend.⁸⁰ However, her father may have been a Catholic who became a Quaker: the poem on pp. 102–106 (written in 1682) hints as much, so her Latin education may derive from a rather different milieu to the one she chose as an adult. Her husband records and translates three of her Latin poems, of which this poem in Sapphics is the longest:⁸¹

In a Letter dated the 9th of the Twelfth Month, 1691, she sent to me in Prison these lines, viz.

I

Qui nocent Sanctis, Dominus locutus,
Hi fui tangunt Oculi Pupillam,
Sentient iram, quoque reddet istis
Praemia dira.

II

Si Deo credis, filioque Christo
Quisquis es Vir desipiensque rudis!
Cautus es ne tu Domino repugnas
Cordeque pugnis

III

Stultus at dixit sibi Corde, nullus
Est Deus: spernens igitur doceri

Saepe protervus ruit in ruinam
Absque timore

M.M.

I

The Lord, of them that hurt his Saints, doth say
They touch the Apple of his Eye, and they
Shall feel his Anger; he will them requite
With dreadful Plagues, in Death's eternal Night.

II

If then thou believest God, and Christ his son,
Whoe'er thou art, thou rude and foolish Man,
Beware, lest then the Lord of Heaven resist
And Fight against him both with Heart and Fist.

III

But in his heart the foolish Man hath said
There is no God; and therefore not dismay'd,
To slight his Teachings: he, in Froward Wrath
Runs fearless on in Ruin's dreadful path.

Englished by H.M. [her husband]

She signified her Haste in the writing of these, because the Bearer staid for the Letter, and that she had not made any of such Quantities for above twenty years.

There is some further evidence for the existence of other early modern women Latin poets. Apparently one of the most ambitious was Anne Baynard, if we may judge by contemporary responses to her, but her work has sadly been lost. She was the daughter of Edward Baynard, a physician and surgeon practising in the City of London by profession, and a scholarly bibliophile by inclination,⁸² so he may also be presumed to have supported and encouraged his daughter's education. According to her funeral sermon, preached by John Prude, Anne Baynard disputed with Socinians (early Unitarians, who doubted the doctrine of the Trinity) in 'severe satyrs written in the Latin tongue'.⁸³ No trace of these is preserved, though her work was known beyond her family circle: she is mentioned, for example, by 'Eugenia' in *The Female Advocate* (1700) who declares, 'Learning becomes us as well as the Men. Several of the French Ladies, and with us the late incomparable Mrs. Baynard, and the Lady that is Mr. Norris's Correspondent [Mary Astell], and many more, are Witnesses of this'. Thomas Brown wrote two sets of verses on her death, one of which suggests that she was known as a poet.⁸⁴ Eugenia herself was far from ignorant: she notes, 'I shall not brag that I understand a little Greek and Latin ... having made some attempt to look into the more solid parts of Learning.' Later in her work, she argues, with respect to 1 Corinthians vii.34, the same Greek word $\mu\epsilon\rho\iota\mu\upsilon\upsilon\alpha$ is used of men pleasing their wives and wives pleasing their husbands, and therefore a wife's duty is not intrinsically different from that of a husband, which suggests not

merely that she knew some Greek, but that she was capable of using the knowledge effectively.⁸⁵

Another potential source of Latin verse by women is inscription on tombstones. In seventeenth-century England, I have found two such poems, by Sarah Staples and Martha Norton. The first wrote on her husband, the second, more unusually, on her aunt: no manuscript material is preserved from either woman, that I have been able to find.⁸⁶ Sarah Staples' brief poem runs as follows:

Quod cum coelicolis habitas, pars altera nostra,
Non dolet, hic tantum me superasse dolet.
Hoc posuit moestissima uxor SARA.

That you live with the inhabitants of heaven,
one part of us does not mourn: But he mourns,
that he is so far above me.

This was placed by the griefstricken wife, Sara.

Though very short, the thought is distinctly complex. It insists on the abiding unity of husband and wife, who are each 'pars altera' of a single whole, 'nostra'. The expected pattern of thought is reversed: the wife is the one who does *not* grieve, because the husband is in heaven; he, on the other hand, must regret that he has overleaped her. Implicit in this idea that he finds something regrettable in being in a superior position to his still-living wife, is the equality of the relationship they had enjoyed until his death.

The survival-rate of the works of these seventeenth-century women is infuriatingly small. Rachel Jevon bobs up into a brief, if glorious, visibility, then vanishes. The work of Anne Baynard is lost completely, that of Jane Owen and the Benedictine nun is suggested only by a single poem preserved in translation. Sara Staples and Martha Norton have left one poem each, with no papers, no context. But they provide at least a sort of glimpse into an early modern England in which a number of educated gentlewomen periodically assayed writing in the language of power. So why has this seemed, in the past, so unlikely? Part of the answer to this, I suspect, may be to do with Bathsua Makin. She has already been discussed as a poet, but of course the reason why her name is widely known is not that she wrote Latin poetry, but that she has been hailed as the first significant feminist writer in England on account of her *Essay to Revive the Antient Education of Gentlewomen, in Religion, Manners, Arts & Tongues*, published anonymously in 1673. As it is presented to students of women's history, the *Essay* is perceived as a groundbreaking account of the glories of women's education in the past, contrasted with the regrettable academic wasteland of the present, and as such, of course, it is central to the scholarly consensus that seventeenth-century women had no access to real education. Read with reasonable care in its entirety, its rhetorical strategy appears rather different. The speaking voice is male, and the glories of women's education in the past are presented with a

stress on the promotion of virtue and social stability. Having then depressed the reader as far as possible about the sorry state of education in the present day, the *Essay* then produces a solution: for a mere £20 per annum, Mrs Makin is available to transform your daughter into an educated and virtuous gentlewoman. It seems to me that to read the *Essay* as a disinterested study of women's educational opportunities is perverse: it is not a tract, but an advertisement.⁸⁷

Unfortunately, the way it has been read in our own time has led to the assumption that it is straightforwardly factual in implying that in the late seventeenth century, Mrs Makin's school at Tottenham High Cross was the only place where girls could get a proper education: this may be true, but I doubt it. I have mentioned the Latin-literate Mrs Anne Ley and her school at Shoreditch: we do not know if she only taught boys. But it is worth pausing over what we know of the girls who did go to Mrs Makin. Elizabeth Robinson, née Drake, mother of Elizabeth Montagu, née Robinson, the Bluestocking, is reported to have attended Bathsua Makin's school.⁸⁸ The Earl of Huntingdon's daughters, Elizabeth and perhaps also Mary Hastings, were also among her pupils: as I have already indicated, the Hastings girls moved in a social circle where their Latinity was unexceptional. Most of these girls were probably taught at home, like the Isham girls: particularly when it comes to girls' education, schools are a long way from giving the whole picture. Elizabeth Drake's own cultural context is highly literary, and equally, that of her daughter was one in which Latin literacy for women was, if not normal, far from unusual. Mrs Montagu, who was herself sent to Mrs Robarte's school in Kensington, spoke deprecatingly of her complete ignorance of Greek and small knowledge of Latin, but she read Classical literature (mostly in French translation) voraciously, and had a passion for Sophocles: on one occasion, she dressed for a ball, opened her Sophocles and ended up reading both all of *Ajax* and all of *Philoctetes*, still sitting in her ball-dress, and went to bed in the small hours without having left the house.⁸⁹

Mrs Montagu's friend Elizabeth Carter, whom I will discuss in more detail a little later, is spoken of as the bluest of the bluestockings because she translated Epictetus, but while the depth of her knowledge of Greek is something very out of the ordinary, as a student of Latin she is a less isolated figure than she appears: to name only other obvious Queens of the Blues, Hannah Thrale read Latin and translated Latin poetry (notably that of her friend, Dr Johnson),⁹⁰ and so did Hannah More.⁹¹ Lady Mary Wortley Montagu taught herself Latin, so effectively that her juvenilia at sixteen or so includes an imitation of Ovid's *Heroides*, the death of Adonis from his *Metamorphoses*, and an imitation of Virgil's tenth eclogue;⁹² Sarah Fielding, another friend of Mrs Thrale's, learned first Latin, then Greek.⁹³ But by the eighteenth century, the *sprezzatura* of polite society was not compatible with too much booklearning; those who had it did not parade it.⁹⁴ John Gregory's well-known work, *A Father's Legacy to his Daughter* (1774) advised learned women 'to keep it

a profound secret, especially from men'.⁹⁵ It would seem that so profoundly has the secret been kept, that it is secret still; despite the obvious fact that this popular book of advice acknowledges, implicitly, that there *were* still learned ladies.⁹⁶ I came across one such recently, a completely obscure gentlewoman called Catherine Maria Throckmorton. An anonymous letter to this lady in the Warwickshire Record Office, written between 1782 and 1819, begins in Latin (congratulating her on her progress in learning that language), and continues in English, Spanish, Italian, Greek and French, all of which she could presumably read.⁹⁷

Apart from these known instances of well-educated women, voices abstractly in favour of real education for women were still to be heard in the eighteenth century. For example, the Master of Tonbridge School, Vicesimus Knox, declares: 'there are many prejudices entertained against the character of the learned lady, and perhaps, if all ladies were profoundly educated, some inconveniences might arise from it, but I must own, it does not appear to me, that a woman will be rendered less acceptable in the world, or less qualified to perform her duty in it, by having employed the time from six to sixteen in the cultivation of her mind.'⁹⁸ He also speaks positively in favour of classical studies for gentlewomen: 'Whenever a young lady in opulent circumstances appears to possess a genius, and an inclination, for learned pursuits, I will venture to say, she ought, if her situation and connections permit, to be early instructed in the elements of Latin and Greek. Her mind is certainly as capable of improvement as that of the other sex ... the method to be pursued must be exactly the same as that which is used in the private tuition of boys, when it is judiciously conducted.'⁹⁹ Knox on Liberal Education was a well-received work which went through many editions, not the outpouring of a solitary eccentric; it was evidently read by influential people. Anna Barbauld, perhaps optimistically, thought that learning Latin '[would] not in the present state of things excite either a smile or a stare in fashionable company.'¹⁰⁰ Mrs Chapone, another very influential voice in the education of girls in the eighteenth century, was inclined to be ambivalent: 'I respect the abilities and application of those ladies who have attained them ... yet I would by no means advise ... [any] woman who is not strongly impelled by a particular genius to engage in such studies', yet on the other hand, her grounds are that 'the real knowledge that they supply is not essential, since the English, French, or Italian tongues afford tolerable translations of all the most valuable productions of antiquity.' She assumes that a graceful and accomplished woman will read seriously in Classical literature, and says of Homer and Virgil in translation, 'every body reads [them] that reads at all'; incidentally, she strongly recommends that Virgil be read in Annibale Caro's Italian version.¹⁰¹ She may not have been a Latinist, but Mrs Chapone's ideal young gentlewoman would have been, by modern standards, rather erudite.

While bearing in mind that we have plenty of evidence for girls learning Latin from a private tutor (as Mrs Thrale did), or from their fathers, so that

schools are only part of the picture, the schools themselves were not as useless as they are sometimes thought to be. Obviously, some were depressingly narrow in their aims. Mrs Hannah Wooley advertised a curriculum which focused on ‘Works wrought with a Needle, all Transparent Works, Shell-work, Moss-work, also Cutting of Prints, and adorning Rooms or Cabinets, or stands with them ... all manner of Pretty Toys for Closets ... Setting out of Banquets, Making Salves, Oyntments, Waters, Cordials, healing any wounds not desperately dangerous ... Writing and Arithmetic, Washing black or white Sarsnets, [and] Making Sweet Powders for the Hair’, and many parents clearly wanted that kind of education for their girls.¹⁰² When Mary, daughter of Sir Edmund Verney, went to school in 1682, most of the curriculum was devoted to dancing; though her father gave permission for her also to be taught how to make lacquer boxes.¹⁰³ But even in the eighteenth century, it is possible to demonstrate that there were still girls’ schools which taught more than elegant accomplishments. As Mrs Chapone makes clear, the study of French was as much taken for granted as the study of dancing.¹⁰⁴ Charlotte Charke (1713–66) attended a fashionable girls’ boarding school from the ages of eight to ten (1721–23), where she learned Italian, music, geography and Latin.¹⁰⁵ She described her education as ‘not only a genteel, but in fact a liberal one, and such indeed as might have been sufficient for a son instead of a daughter.’ Ellis Cornelia Knight (1758–1837) similarly attended a seminary for girls where she learned French, Latin, Greek, mathematics, geography and history:¹⁰⁶ the similarity of her curriculum to that of Charlotte Charke suggests that this may be the same school, unnamed by either woman. Mary Darby, who in later life became the lovely actress known as ‘Perdita’ Robinson (1758–1800) attended a number of schools as a girl, including that of Mrs Meribah Lorrington at Chelsea. She remembered Mrs Lorrington admiringly as ‘the most extensively accomplished female that I ever remember to have met with ... She had a sound knowledge of the Classics ...’. Unfortunately, by the time she became a schoolmistress, she had also become an alcoholic: Mary was taken away.¹⁰⁷ Towards the end of the century, in 1790, Elizabeth Benger, née Ogilvy, was sent at twelve to a *boys’* school in order to learn Latin,¹⁰⁸ and her contemporary, Mary Russell Mitford, later the author of *Our Village*, attended a rather good school at Hans Place, run by M. de St Quintin, a French emigré and inveterate gambler; the sort of place where ‘those who chose to learn had full opportunity of learning’. She learned Latin there, despite her father’s objection that the subject ‘would occupy more of your time than you could conveniently appropriate to it’.¹⁰⁹

Of the women poets active in the eighteenth century who actually write in Latin (as opposed to translating from it – a rather larger group) perhaps the most interesting is Elizabeth Tollet (1694–1754), the daughter of George Tollet, Commissioner of the Navy under William III and Anne. She was brought up as a child in the Tower of London (as, coincidentally, was a somewhat earlier woman Latinist, Lucy Hutchinson, née Apsley, who published a translation

of Lucretius). According to the anonymous biographer who edited her collection of poems, Elizabeth Tollet ‘received a handsome fortune from her father, who observing her extraordinary Genius, gave her [an] excellent education’. As a result, she spoke fluent French, Italian and Latin. She seems to have had one brother, who attended St John’s College, Cambridge: relations between the siblings were cordial, on the evidence of a number of affectionate poems to him included in her published collection. Later in her life, she lived at Stratford and West Ham, in Essex, where she died, and was buried.¹¹⁰ She was a friend of Sir Isaac Newton, who commended some of her first essays. Another close friend, on whom she wrote two Latin poems after his death, was John Woodward (1665–1728), geologist, physician and antiquarian, a man who often served as President of the Royal Society: this may suggest something of the intellectual circles in which she moved. She amassed an extensive library, never married, and left her estate to her oldest nephew.

Her poetry circulated in manuscript in her lifetime,¹¹¹ and she published a collection of verse, *Poems on Several Occasions, with Anne Boleyn to King Henry the Eighth: An Epistle* (anonymous in 1724 while she was still alive; attributed after her death in two editions, 1755 and 1760). Her poems are in a variety of forms in both English and Latin. She was also one of the few women to attempt a heroic-letter on the model of Ovid’s *Heroides*,¹¹² ‘Anne Boleyn to King Henry the Eighth’. The collection bears witness to her awareness of earlier women’s writing in Latin: she translates the distich said to have been written by Lady Jane Grey in the Tower, and imitates Mary, Queen of Scots’ Buxton distich. Both of these are printed in George Ballard’s collection, published in 1752, only two years before her death: but since they appear in the 1724 edition of her work, she must have got them from other sources. Lady Jane’s distich is in Foxe’s *Book of Martyrs*, which was still being read as Protestant hagiography in the eighteenth century; the question of where the Buxton distich may have come from is perhaps more interesting.

Tollet’s Latin verse is highly competent; mostly on Christian subjects, including three poetic versions of psalms, and a paraphrase of part of the Book of Job – such paraphrases were a literary genre of the early eighteenth century, practised by such poets as Elizabeth Rowe (née Singer). In every way, her Latin oeuvre is directly comparable with that of male contemporaries: solemn, musical, and fundamentally serious-minded. The Renaissance love for jests, word-play and wit in Latin verse was not part of the eighteenth-century aesthetic, which preferred to keep such moods for vernacular composition. In general, though, Elizabeth Tollet’s verse in both languages suggests a serious-minded and thoughtful personality to whom *leviora* would not come naturally.

Best known for translating Epictetus, another eighteenth-century writer, the Bluestocking Elizabeth Carter was learned in both Greek and Latin.¹¹³

It was her most eager desire to be a scholar ... the slowness with which she conquered the impediments, that always oppose the beginning of the study of the

dead languages, was such as wearied even the patience of her father ... but she was determined to overcome the difficulty.

A long, reflective poem on her eighteenth birthday is preserved in parallel-text Latin and English versions.¹¹⁴ There seems no *a priori* reason to assume that the Latin text is not her own work, since the view that women ‘never wrote in Latin’ is, as I hope I have demonstrated, a hard one to maintain. The fact that despite her ‘slowness’, she had been taught to write Latin verse, is demonstrated by a Latin epigram, published in the *Gentleman’s Magazine* for 1738.¹¹⁵

Ad Elizam in Popi Horto Lauros carpentem
 Elysios Popii dum ludit laeta per hortos,
 En! aridâ Lauros capit *Eliza* manu.
 Nil opus est furto; Lauros tibi, dulcis *Eliza*,
 Si neget optatas Populo, Apollo dabit.

Answer to the Epigram

En! marcet Laurus nec quicquam finit *Elizam*
 Furtim sacrilega diripuisse manu:
 Illa petit sedem magis aptam, tempora Popi,
 Et florere negat pauperiore solo.

Eliza.

In vain *Eliza*’s daring hand
 Usurp’d the laurel-bough
 Remov’d from Pope’s the wreath must fade
 On ev’ry meaner brow.

Thus gay exotics, when transferr’d
 To climates not their own,
 Loose all their lively bloom, and droop
 Beneath a paler sun.

The ambiguous status of the Latinate woman in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries is perhaps indicated by the notable fact that a surprising number of the poems discussed here are parallel texts, written in Latin *and* English versions. Rachel Jevon’s very ambitious work, and two longish poems by Mary Monck and Elizabeth Carter have been mentioned; but we find versions of the same poem in two or more languages in Bathsua Rainolds’ book as well, while others of this small body of works were translated by contemporaries. The Latin-educated were by this time a relatively small section of the reading public; and rather than accepting that Latin was a mystery best left to the learned, early modern readers increasingly demanded translations: as Elizabeth Johnson declares, ‘we Read Plutarch now ’tis Translated’. By writing parallel texts, a woman such as Rachel Jevon could have her cake and eat it, simultaneously signalling her right to be considered as among the learned, and opening her work to those who were unable to read Latin. The awareness of a potential audience who were not Latin-readers

implied by the production of parallel texts is also signalled by the nun's translation of her fellow-sister's poem on Dame Lucy Knatchbull, Hayman's translation of both John and Jane Owen, and Henry Mollineux's translation of his wife's verses. They are testimony not to the transgressiveness of women's writing in Latin, but to the dwindling importance of Latin as a literary language, even while classical reference and a Latinate vocabulary remained central to cultivated discourse.

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Notes

- 1 W. K. [William Kempe], *The Education of Children in Learning* (London, T. Orwin for J. Parker and T. Gubbin, 1588), sig. D 3.
- 2 Attributed to Robert Vaughan, *A Dyalogue defensyue for women, agaynst maly-cyous detractoures* (London, R. Wyer for R. Banckes, 1542), sig. B 2, published anonymously. The attribution is made by Thomas Corser, *Collectanea Anglo-Poetica; or a bibliographical and descriptive catalogue of a portion of a collection of early English poetry*, 5 vols in 11 (Manchester, for the Chatham Society, 1860–83), V.2 (1880), 319–23, though perhaps written by Robert Burdet: see Beatrice White, 'Three Rare Books about Women', *Huntington Library Bulletin*, 2 (1931), 165–71.
- 3 Jean R. Brink, *Female Scholars: A Tradition of Learned Women before 1800* (Montreal, Eden Press Women's Publications, 1980), p. 98. A variety of similar remarks are quoted by Margaret J. Ezell, *The Patriarch's Wife: Literary Evidence and the History of the Family* (Chapel Hill and London, University of North Carolina Press, 1987), p. 10.
- 4 He was of the opinion that 'To make Women Learned and Foxes Tame had the same effect to make them more cunning', and that 'even a man who was vain and foolish was made more so by learning, and as for women, where it did one good, it did harm to twenty' [Lady Frances Erskine], *Memoirs Relating to the Queen of Bohemia, by One of her Ladies* (no place, privately printed, c. 1770), p. 109.
- 5 George Ballard, *Memoirs of Several Ladies of Great Britain Who Have Been Celebrated for their Writings or Skill in the Learned Languages, Arts and Sciences* (Oxford, for the author, 1752), p. 227.
- 6 *The Twelve Caesars*, Augustus 87.
- 7 Richard Mulcaster, 'Education of Girls', in his *Positions wherein these primitiue circumstances be examined, necessarie for the training vp of children* (London, T. Vautroller for T. Chase, 1581), quoted from Shirley Nelson Kersey, *Classics in the Education of Girls and Women* (Metuchen, NJ, and London, Scarecrow Press, 1981), pp. 52–67, p. 54.
- 8 The rehabilitation of Lady Jane Grey as something more than a martyr to cruel, wicked men has been ably set on foot by Carole Levin, 'Lady Jane Grey, Protestant Queen and Martyr', in M. P. Hannay (ed.), *Silent but for the Word: Tudor Women as Patrons, Translators and Writers of Religious Works* (Kent, OH, Kent State University Press, 1985), pp. 92–106.

- 9 Arbella Stuart, b. 1575, was educated as a prospective ruler. She studied Latin, French and Italian, chancery script, history and globes, the Bible, the lute and virginals, and dancing. some of her letters are in Latin (published as *The Letters of Lady Arbella Stuart*, ed. Sara Jayne Steen (New York & Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1994)).
- 10 Brenda M. Hosington, 'England's First Female-Authored Encomium: The Seymour Sisters' *Hecatodistichon* (1550), to Marguerite de Navarre. Text, Translation, Notes, and Commentary', *Studies in Philology*, 93 (1996), 117–63.
- 11 Mary Ellen Lamb, 'The Cooke Sisters: Attitudes towards Learned Women in the Renaissance', in Hannay, *Silent but for the Word*, pp. 107–25.
- 12 William Bercher, *The Nobility of Women*, By William Bercher, 1559, ed. R. Warwick Bond, 2 vols (London, Roxburghe Club, 1904), I, 155. From Jane Fitzalan we have translations of Isocrates from Greek to Latin, and a translation of Euripides' *Iphigeneia* into English, now London, British Library Royal 15 A ix; from her sister Mary, four small quarto volumes of Greek and Latin translation exercises, presented to her father as successive new year's gifts, London, British Library Royal 12 A i–iv.
- 13 Maria Dowling, *Humanism in the Age of Henry VIII* (Beckenham, Croom Helm, 1986), p. 242. Since it was rumoured that Henry was taking a fancy to Anne Bassett after Katherine Howard's execution, her lack of education might indeed have suddenly become an embarrassment to her: fortunately perhaps, he chose the eminently well qualified Katherine Parr instead (*Letters and Papers Foreign and Domestic of the reign of Henry VIII, XVII, for 1542*, no. 92, p. 40).
- 14 Bathsua Makin, *An Essay to Revive the antient Education of Gentlewomen* (London, for J.D., 1673), p. 34: 'Was all Learning in *English*, as it is now in *French*, I think those dead Languages would be of little use, only in reference to the Scriptures.' The declining prestige and significance of Latin is also emphasised by Richard Foster Jones, *The Triumph of the English Language: A Survey of Opinions Concerning the Vernacular from the Introduction of Print to the Restoration* (London, Oxford University Press, 1953), p. 307.
- 15 In Yale, Beinecke Library Osborn fb.150, now edited by Robert C. Evans and Barbara Wiedemann, 'My Name was Martha': *A Renaissance Woman's Autobiographical Poem* (West Cornwall, CT, Locust Hill Press, 1993).
- 16 Miriam Slater, *Family Life in the Seventeenth Century: The Verneys of Claydon House* (London, Boston, Melbourne and Henley, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1984), p. 135.
- 17 The fact that Latin was needed 'to understand a Drs bill and to write one' explains why a number of women with medical interests knew, or learned, Latin: Charlotte Charke will be discussed later, but among others, Jane Barker, born in 1652, similarly combined Latin and medicine, and so did Judith Ailmer (see n. 22).
- 18 Makin, *An Essay*, p. 41.
- 19 Makin, *An Essay*, p. 28. Her argument is pitched at the general social utility of educating women; but it is obvious that the situation here envisaged would also benefit the women themselves.
- 20 *The Autobiography and Correspondence of Sir Simonds d'Ewes, Bart.*, ed. J. O. Halliwell, 2 vols (London, Richard Bentley, 1845), I, 63.
- 21 Other examples would include Johannes Otho of Ghent, schoolmaster and father of a learned daughter, Fulvio Pellegrino Morata, educator and father of the

- famous Olimpia Morata, and closer to home, perhaps also the four learned daughters of the educator Sir Anthony Cooke.
- 22 Bishop Hooper's daughter Rachel was started on German, French, and Latin at two, as we know from a letter from Hooper to Bullinger: see Mary Prior, 'Reviled and crucified marriages: the position of Tudor bishops' wives', in Mary Prior (ed.), *Women in English Society, 1500–1800* (London and New York, Routledge, 1985), pp. 118–48, p. 124. Anne Ley testifies in her commonplace book, 'Dr Squire married Mrs Judith, daughter to Bishop Ailmer, a rare scholler of that sex, furnished with the Greeke and Latine tongue and withall a very good physicion, not an empiricke, but grounded in theory, as well as expert in the practise, being able to deale with Galen as he wrot in his owne language.' Los Angeles, William Andrews Clarke Memorial Library, MS L6815 M3 C734, fol. 181. Dr Ailmer had been the tutor of Lady Jane Grey: it is significant that he should also have educated his own daughter. Margaret Howe, who married Roger Ascham, the tutor of Queen Elizabeth, is also said to have been a scholar in her own right. Kathy Lynn Emerson, *Wives and Daughters: The Women of Sixteenth-Century England* (Troy, NY, the Whitston Publishing Co., 1984), p. 124.
- 23 Roger Lonsdale, *Eighteenth-Century Women Poets* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1990), p. 110.
- 24 For more examples, see R. Fowler, 'On Not Knowing Greek: The Classics and the Woman of Letters', *Classical Journal*, 78 (1982–3), 337–49, an article which focuses primarily on the nineteenth century, but looks back to the eighteenth.
- 25 BL MS Royal 17.B.xviii: dedicated to 'ye veray noble and vertuose Duchess of Summarsid [Somerset] hir ryght good Lady and Mystres' (fol. 1v).
- 26 We might notice here the example of Elizabeth Warren, who meditated on the works of Plato, Aristotle, Cicero, Plutarch and Augustine. Her margins are adorned with Latin quotations footnoting her reflections. *Spiritual Thrift, or, Meditations ...* (London, no publisher, 1647). She is discussed by Phyllis Mack, *Visionary Women* (Berkeley & LA and Oxford, U. of California Press, 1992), p. 91.
- 27 Lawrence Stone, 'The Educational Revolution in England, 1560–1640', *Past and Present*, 28 (1964), 41–80, p. 45.
- 28 Germaine Greer, 'How to Invent a Poet', *TLS*, 25 June 1993, pp. 7–8, p. 7.
- 29 *An account of the life & death of Elizabeth Bury*, ed. Samuel Bury (Bristol, J. Penn, 1720), sig. R3v.
- 30 Julia C. Longe, *Martha, Lady Giffard* (London, George Allen, 1911), p. 213.
- 31 She may also be the 'Gentlewoman' responsible for the editing and publication of this work, referred to in a letter of William Drummond of Hawthornden (Edinburgh, National Library of Scotland MS 2061, no. 30).
- 32 London, British Library Evelyn MS, Bound F. 38, p. 20.
- 33 Hertfordshire County Record Office, D/EP F 36.
- 34 Ezell, *The Patriarch's Wife*, p. 15.
- 35 *The Diary of Thomas Isham of Lamport (1658–81) kept by him in Latin from 1671 to 1673 at his father's command*, trs. Robert Isham (Norwich, Miller & Leavins, 1875). Mary was born in 1654, Vere 1655, Thomas (the heir) 1656: this close succession of children may help to explain why the older girls were educated with their brother.
- 36 Her grandmother, the prophetess Lady Eleanor Davies, seems also to have had some Latin: she probably composed the Latin text of her tract *Prophetia* – there

- is no *a priori* reason to say that she did not, since she includes Latin passages in other tracts and wrote Latin words in the margin in her own hand. See Esther S. Cope, *Handmaid of the Holy Spirit: Dame Eleanor Davies, Never soe Mad a Ladie* (Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Press, 1992), p. 121. Her sister Maria, who married Thomas Thynne of Longleat, also knew Latin and wrote well: on the latter see A. Wall, 'Elizabethan Precept and Feminine Practice: The Thynne Family of Longleat', *History*, 75, no. 243 (1990), 23–38.
- 37 Makin, *An Essay*, p. 10: 'I am forbidden to mention the *Countess Dowager of Huntington* (instructed sometimes by Mrs Makin) how well she understands *Latin, Greek, Hebrew, French, and Spanish*; or what a proficient she is in arts, subservient to Divinity, in which (if I durst I would tell you), she excels.' She translated the Latin poetry of Peter du Moulin (San Marino, Huntingdon Library, MS CH HA 9465, letter from du Moulin to the countess thanking her for her translations). In her elegy on Lady Elizabeth's death, Makin notes, 'she / in Latin, French, Italian, happily / advanced with pleasure.'
- 38 Los Angeles, William Andrews Clarke Memorial Library, MS L6815 M3 C734.
- 39 Margaret Roper, née More's daughter Mary Bassett was 'well experted in the latine and greeke tonges; she hath very hansomely and learnedly translated out of the greeke into the englishe all the ecclesiasticall storye of Eusebius, with Socrates, Theodoretus, Sozomenus and Euagrius.' John Harpsfield, quoted by McConica, *English Humanists*, p. 266. Two generations later, Dame Bridget More (b. 1609) could write Latin: a letter survives as Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Lat. Barberini 8624, no. 35.
- 40 Lille, Archives du Département du Nord, 20H1.
- 41 *The Chronicle of the English Augustine Canonesses Regular of the Lateran at St Monica's in Louvain, 1625–1644*, ed. Adam Hamilton (Edinburgh, Sands & Co., 1906), II, 47, says revealingly of Dame Paula Hubert: 'His daughter came over, and was received here, but finding herself very weak, and not apt to learn Latin, she would not undertake any more than to be a white sister.'
- 42 *The Chronicle of the English Augustine Canoness Regular of the Lateran at St Monica's in Louvain, 1625–1644*, II, 104.
- 43 Dorothy E. Latz, "Glow-Worm Light": *Writings of Seventeenth Century English Recusant Women, from Original Manuscripts* (Salzburg, Institut für Anglistik und Amerikanistik, Universität Salzburg, 1989), p. 27.
- 44 The lady Abbess of St Scholastica's Abbey, Teignmouth (ed.), *Abbess Neville's Annal of Five Communities of English Benedictine Nuns in Flanders, 1598–1687*. Catholic Record Society 6, Miscellanea 5 (London, Burns and Oates, 1909), pp. 1–72. Mary Neville (Dame Anne), b. 1605, daughter of Henry, Baron Abergavenny, was the abbess of a community which was founded from that of Ghent and settled at Pontoise (p. 22).
- 45 See Peter Kavanagh, *The Irish Theatre, being a History of the Drama in Ireland from the Earliest Period up to the Present Day* (Tralee, The Kerryman Ltd., 1946), pp. 40–45. A forthcoming book by Alan J. Fletcher, *Drama and the performing arts in pre-Cromwellian Ireland* (Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 2000), will doubtless have much more light to shed on this brief adventure in drama.
- 46 Henry Burnell, *Landgartha. A Tragie-Comedy, as it was presented in the new Theatre in Dublin, with good applause, being an Ancient story, written by H.B.* (Dublin, no publisher, 1641), sig. A3r.

- 47 Ezell, *The Patriarch's Wife*, p. 13.
- 48 See for example Suzanne W. Hull, *Chaste, Silent and Obedient: English Books for Women, 1475–1640* (San Marino, CA, Huntington Library, 1982).
- 49 J. W. Saunders, 'From Manuscript to Print: An Note on the Circulation of Poetic Manuscripts in the Sixteenth Century', *Transactions of the Leeds Philosophical and Literary Society*, 6 (1951), 513, notes that as early as the sixteenth century, when fewer Latin texts were easily available in translation, 'John Croke's wife and Edmund Becke's cousin who knew no Latin secured the poems they wanted' – that is, by getting some Latinate individual in their circle to translate them.
- 50 Now London, British Library Add. MS 28693.
- 51 Janet Todd, *The Secret Life of Aphra Behn* (London, André Deutsch, 1996), p. 256, *The Surviving Works of Anne Wharton*, ed. Germaine Greer and Susan Hastings (Stump Cross, Stump Cross Books, 1997), pp. 22, 309.
- 52 Janet Todd, *The Works of Aphra Behn* (London, William Pickering, 1992), I, 84–5. Warren Chernaik, *Sexual Freedom in Restoration Literature* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 174.
- 53 *The Works*, ed. Todd, I, 284–5, 12–19.
- 54 *Poems on Several Occasions, written by Philomela* (London, John Dunton, 1696).
- 55 Vivienne Larminie, *Wealth, Kinship and Culture: The Seventeenth Century Newdigates of Arbury and their World* (Ipswich, Royal Historical Society/Boydell Press), 1995, p. 121.
- 56 Described as 'written by a Lady' (London, John Deere, 1701) (possibly the work of Sarah Field). Another, written by 'Eugenia', is mentioned below.
- 57 W. J. Ong, SJ, 'Latin Language Study as a Renaissance Puberty Rite', *Studies in Philology*, 56 (1967), 103–24, and see also Ong, *The Presence of the Word* (New Haven, CO, Yale University Press), 1959, p. 251.
- 58 Edmund Leach, *Culture and Nature, or La Femme Sauvage* (London, Bedford College [The Stevenson Lecture], 1968), p. 7.
- 59 Her *De Ingenii Muliebris* was written in the 1630s, and published in English in 1659, as *The Learned Maid, or Whether a Maid may be a Scholar*.
- 60 'Culture and Nature', p. 12.
- 61 Edmund Campion, *Two Bokes of the Histories of Ireland [1571]*, ed. A. F. Vossen (Assen, Van Gorcum & comp. 1963), p. 24. This is copied verbatim by Richard Stanihurst, *Description of Ireland*, in *The Second Volume of Chronicles: containing the Description, Conquest, Inhabitation, and Troblesome Estate of Ireland [1586]*, (New York, AMS Press, 1965), p. 68.
- 62 W. B. Rye (ed. and tr.), *England as Seen by Foreigners in the Days of Elizabeth and James the First* (London, John Russell Smith, 1865), p. xxxvi. This point is expanded with additional examples by Peter Burke, *The Art of Conversation* (Cambridge, Polity Press, 1993), pp. 57.
- 63 Her brother was idle and inattentive: in order to keep him up to the mark, the parents decided to teach her Latin as well. From her sixth to her thirteenth year she did her lessons standing in stocks and wearing an iron collar round her neck. The collar 'was put on in the morning, and seldom taken off till late in the evening, and it was Latin which I had to study! At the same time, I had the plainest food; dry bread and cold milk were my principal fare, and I never sat on a chair in my mother's presence.' E. J. Harvey Darton, *The Life and Times of Mrs Sherwood* (London, Wells Gardner, 1910), pp. 33–4.

- 64 Abraham Cowley makes this point with respect to Katharine Philips:
 Orinda on the Female coasts of Fame,
 Ingrosses all the Goods of a Poetique Name.
 She does no Partner with her see,
 Does all the business there alone, which we
 Are forc'd to carry on by a whole Company.
 Abraham Cowley, *Poems*, ed. A. R. Waller (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1905), pp. 441–3, p. 442. The commercial metaphor is significant: Cowley implies that the rhetoric of uniqueness used by women poets had direct economic consequences, since it facilitated the establishment of a monopoly.
- 65 Christopher Hegendorff, *Domestycal or householde sermons nowe fyrst translated out of laten by H. Reginalde* (Ipswich, J. Oswen, 1548), and *The second parte* (Worcester, J. Oswen, 1549).
- 66 See now Francis Teague, *Bathsua Makin, Woman of Learning* (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 1998).
- 67 The household of Sir Thomas More is a well-known example, so is that of Sir Anthony Cooke: outside England, the Pirckheimers in Nuremburg, and the families of Olympia Morata and Luisa Sigea in Ferrara and Lisbon respectively are other famous examples.
- 68 *Musa Virginea Graeco-Latino-Gallica* (London, Edward Griffin for John Hodggets, 1616). Now forthcoming in facsimile: *Neo-Latin Women Writers: Elizabeth Jane Weston and Bathsua Reginald [Makin]*, ed. Donald Cheney, *The Early Modern Englishwoman: The Printed Writings* (Aldershot, Ashgate, 2000).
- 69 Bathsua's book is addressed to James I, and also includes poems to his queen, Anne of Denmark, his son Charles (later Charles I), and the Elector Palatine, his son-in-law.
- 70 *Ad Annam Dei Gratiae Magnae Britanniae, Franciae et Hyberniae Reginam longe augustissimam, serenissimam et prudentissimam*, in her *Musa Virginea*, sig. A3.
- 71 There is an undated Latin letter by Anne of Denmark to the Doge of Venice, Marino Grimanio, in Leicester Record Office, DG7, Lit. 2, fol. 41.
- 72 *Magnae Britanniae chronographa imperialia, seu trophea trina* (London, no publisher, 1625).
- 73 *The Commonplace Book of John Collet 1633*, p. 129, in *Anecdotes and Traditions illustrative of Early English History and Literature*, ed. William J. Thoms (London, Camden Society, 1839), p. 125.
- 74 Biographical details are from Teague, 'The Identity', and Brink, 'Bathsua Rainolds Makin'.
- 75 San Marino, Huntington Library, Hastings Collection, Uncatalogued Papers, Miscellaneous literature.
- 76 J. R. C. Martyn, *Joannis Audonei Epigrammata*, 2 vols (Leiden 1876), Appendix I, 146 (first published London, Simon Waterson, 1622, II, p. 68. The translation is from *Quodlibets* (see next note) p. 11.
- 77 *Quodlibets, lately come over from New Britaniola, or Newfound-Land. Epigrams and other small parcells both Morall and Divine, the first four bookes being the Authors owne: the rest translated out of that Excellent Epigrammatist, Mr. Iohn Owen, and other rare Authors: with two Epistles of that excellently wittie Doctor, Francis Rablais: Translated out of his French at Large. All of them Composed and done at Harbor-Grace in Britaniola, anciently called Newfound-Land*, by R. H,

Sometimes Governor of the Plantation there (London, Printed by Elizabeth Allde, for Roger Michell, Pauls Church-yard, at the signe of the Bulls-head, 1628).

- 78 Jane Owen, *An Antidote against Purgatory*, 1634, English Recusant Literature 166 (Menston, Scholar Press, 1973).
- 79 Mary Mollineux, *Fruits of Retirement, or, Miscellaneous Poems, Moral and Divine, Being Contemplative, Letters &c, written on Variety of Subjects and Occasions* (London, Printed and Sold by Mary Hinde, at no. 2 in George-Yard, Lombard Street, 1772 (first published 1702)).
- 80 Jones, *The Triumph of the English Language*, p. 314.
- 81 *Fruits of Retirement* (London, 1702), sig. B8v.
- 82 A catalogue of his collection, which was sold after his death in 1721, lists some 300 works in Greek, Latin, French and Italian. Dorothy Gardiner, *English Girlhood at School* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1929), p. 383.
- 83 *A Sermon at the Funeral of the Learned and Ingenious Mrs Ann Baynard ... preached at the Parish Church of Barnes in the County of Surrey the 16 June 1697* (London, for Daniel Brown, 1697).
- 84 Thomas Brown, *Works*, 5 vols (London, 1720), III, 288–90. This is part of the long poem in alcaics:
- Hinc te micantem virgineo in Choro
Cornata castis excipit oculis
Schurmanna te visam stupescens
Inde cupit, fruiturque visa
Hence Cornata receives you with chaste kisses
as you shine in the chorus of virgins
Schurmanna, amazed by the sight of you,
desires the vision, and rejoices in it.
- The other ladies in the virginal chorus are probably Elena Cornaro Piscopia (1646–84) and Anna Maria van Schurman (1607–78), both of whom were Greek and Latin scholars and poets, and unmarried.
- 85 *The Female Advocate, or a Plea for the Just Liberty of the Tender Sex, and Particularly Of Married Women, being reflections on a late Rude and Disingenuous Discourse delivered by Mr John Sprint, By a Lady of Quality* (London, Andrew Bell, 1700), pp. vi and 10. It is dedicated by Eugenia to Lady W—ley (probably not Lady Mary Wortley [Montagu] who, though already intellectually ambitious, was only eleven).
- 86 Sarah Staples' verses (1650) were taken from St Giles, Cripplegate, London, by Thomas Ravenshaw, *Ancient Epitaphs* (London, Joseph Masters & Co. 1878), p. 28. Martha Norton's (made in 1620), are still *in situ* in Canterbury Cathedral, though I know them from a copy in London, British Library, Egerton 3310 A, fol. 26r.
- 87 Compare an almost contemporary book: Edward Chamberlayne, *An Academy, or College, wherein Young Ladies and Gentlewomen may at a very moderate expence be educated in the true Protestant religion and in all virtuous qualities that may adorn that sex* (London, Thomas Newcomb, 1671), a different prescription for feminine perfection, but in itself, a very similar text.
- 88 See John Doran, *A Lady of the Last Century (Mrs Montagu) illustrated by her unpublished letters* (London, Bentley, 1873), p. 5. Her stepfather, Conyers Middleton, went to considerable efforts to train her memory, then sent her to school.

- 89 Doran, *A Lady*, p. 72. We might also note that her sister Sarah Scott wrote a long novel called *Millennium Hall* (1762) about ladies who come together to found a female school and society.
- 90 She was from a landed gentry family, born near Pwllheli in Caernarvonshire, and grew up mainly in London. She was educated at home by her mother and aunt in French, Italian, Latin, and Spanish, and subsequently studied Latin, logic and rhetoric with Arthur Collier. She made a co-translation with Samuel Johnson of the metres of Boethius (then a basic schooltext), and wrote two English ‘imitations’ of Latin poems by Johnson, ‘In Theatro’, and verses to Dr Lawrence. See A. Hayward (ed.), *Dr Johnson’s Mrs Thrale* (Edinburgh and London, T. N. Foulis, 1910), p. 12. Her *Retrospection ...*, a history of the last 1800 years (2 vols, London, John Stockdale, 1801) makes it clear that she used Latin sources with ease.
- 91 She was the fourth daughter of Jacob More, a Tory, high-churchman, and headmaster of the free school at Fishponds, Stapleton, who taught her Latin. When her eldest sister Mary set up a school in Bath in 1757, Hannah joined her there, continued her Latin and learned Italian and Spanish. Janet Todd, *A Dictionary of British and American Women Writers* (London, Methuen, 1984), p. 224. Note that the heroine of Hannah More’s *Coelebs in search of a wife* learns Latin in secret and blushes to have it discovered.
- 92 It was her admiration for the *Metamorphoses* which induced her to study Latin. Robert Halsband, *The Life of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1956), pp. 5–7. See also Isobel Grundy, ‘Books and the Woman: An Eighteenth Century Owner and her Libraries’, *English Studies in Canada*, 20:1 (1994), 1–22.
- 93 ‘I have heard Doctor Collier say that Harry Fielding quite doated on his Sister Sally till she had made herself through his — Dr Collier’s — Assistance, a competent Scholar, & could construe the 6th Book of Virgil: he then began to joke, & afterwards to taunt her, as a literary Lady &c. till she resolved on Study – and became eminent in her Knowledge of the Greek Language, after which her Brother never more could perswade himself to endure her Company with Civility —’ (Quoted by Margaret Ann Doody, *Frances Burney: the Life in the Works* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1988), p. 241, from Hester Lynch Piozzi, undated letter, salutation missing, Manchester, John Rylands University Library MS 533, no. 16). The brother’s attitude is interesting, but so is the fact that it did not act as a deterrent.
- 94 Lady Mary Wortley Montagu advised her daughter on her granddaughter’s education that she should learn to read the Classics in the original, but should not be allowed to ‘think herself learned, when she can read Latin and Greek.’ *The Works of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu*, ed. I. Dalloway, 5 vols (London, R. Phillips, 1803), IV, 180–3.
- 95 John Gregory, *A Father’s Legacy to his Daughter* (London, W. Stratton & T. Cadell, 1774), p. 31.
- 96 This fact is not always acknowledged: see Beth Kowaleski-Wallace, ‘Milton’s Daughters: The Education of Eighteenth-Century Women Writers’, *Feminist Studies*, 12 (1986), 275–94.
- 97 Warwickshire County Record Office, CR 1998/TCD/fol. 3/5.
- 98 *Liberal Education: or, a practical treatise on the methods of acquiring useful and polite learning*, 10th ed. (London, Charles Dilly, 1789), ‘On the literary education

- of women', pp. 324–36, p. 324.
- 99 *Ibid.*, p. 329.
- 100 'On Female Studies', reprinted in *The Female Spectator: English Women Writers before 1800*, ed. Mary R. Mahl and Helene Koon (Bloomington, Indiana and London, Indiana University Press, 1977), p. 268.
- 101 *Letters on the Improvement of the Mind*, 3rd edn (Dublin, for the United Company of Booksellers, 1777), pp. 100–103.
- 102 Marjorie Reeves, *Pursuing the Muses: Female Education and Nonconformist Culture, 1700–1900* (London and Washington, Leicester University Press, 1997), gives an interesting overview of the education available to girls in one serious-minded and liberal circle. One of the most feminist, Mary Scott (author of *The Female Advocate*, published in London in 1774), declares: 'it is the duty absolutely incumbent on every woman whom nature has blest with talents of what kind soever they may be, to improve them', pp. v–viii: see Reeves, p. 52. Despite this heartwarming attitude, it is plain that the access of the women of this circle to formal education was extremely limited.
- 103 Gardiner, *English Girlhood*, p. 216: 'Japanning' was an expensive extra: the course cost a guinea, with another forty shillings for the materials.
- 104 'Dancing and the knowledge of the French tongue are now so universal that they cannot be dispensed with in the education of a gentlewoman.' *Letters*, p. 99.
- 105 From her autobiography, *A Narrative of the Life of Mrs Charlotte Charke written by herself* (London, for W. Reeve, A. Dodd, and E. Cook, 1755). After school, she spent about four years at home learning languages, music and dancing. Around the age of fourteen she was sent to board with a relative, Dr Hales, ostensibly to learn housewifery. She conceived a passionate interest in medicine and rode about the countryside assisting Dr Hales with his practice: two years later in Hillingdon, she set up her own dispensary, in which her knowledge of Latin will have been of direct practical utility.
- 106 Scholarly historian, novelist, translator and poet. Her mother, Philippina Knight, took special care with her daughter's education. See Todd, *Dictionary*.
- 107 Josephine Kamm, *Hope Deferred: Girls' Education in English History* (London, Methuen, 1965), p. 138.
- 108 She published poetry anonymously in periodicals, novels, translations, and biographies of Elizabeth Hamilton, Anne Boleyn, and Mary Queen of Scots. She was friendly with Mary Lamb, Mrs Barbauld, LEL, and Elizabeth Hamilton. Jean Buyze, *The Tenth Muse: Women Poets Before 1806* (Berkeley, California, Shameless Hussy Press, 1980), p. 11.
- 109 *The Life of Mary Russell Mitford*, ed. the rev. A. G. L'Estrange (London, Richard Bentley, 1870). See Kamm, *Hope Deferred*, p. 139.
- 110 There is an account of Elizabeth Tollet in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1815, ii, p. 484. Interestingly, Mary Scott is aware of Elizabeth Tollet, and regards her as a strong argument for her cause: see Reeves, p. 53.
- 111 e.g. *A New ballad, to the tune of all you ladies now at land &c*, in London, BL MS Harley 7316, fols 68v–69v.
- 112 Ann Francis (1738–1800), the daughter of Daniel Gittins, rector of South Stoke, near Arundel, Sussex, who educated her in Latin, Greek and Hebrew, published *Miscellaneous Poems, by a Lady* (Norwich, for the author, 1790), which included heroic epistles: 'Dido to Iarbas', 'Anna to Aeneas'. In the late seventeenth

century, Anne Finch, Countess of Winchilsea, published an epistle from 'Alexander to Hephaestion', and 'Col. Maddens Lady, late Miss Cooper', wrote an unpublished 'Abelard to Eloisa', Bodley, MS Eng. poet. e.40, fols 88r-96r, possibly in the 1740s.

- 113 Montagu Pennington, *Memoirs of the Life of Mrs Elizabeth Carter* (London, F.C. and J. Rivington, 1807), p. 6.
- 114 Pennington gives *In Diem Natalem, Memoirs*, pp. 348-53.
- 115 It is also in Pennington, *Memoirs*, p. 26 and in BL Add. Ms 4457, fol. 72v, marg. note, 'Epigram by Eliz. Carter' (there is also another text of epigram and reply on fol. 123v).

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