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“Women Outside the Household in Early Modern Germany”

By

Abigayle Edler

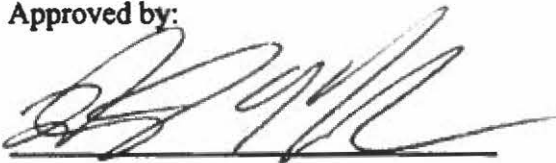
**A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the Honors College at University
of South Alabama and the Bachelor of Arts in the History Department**

University of South Alabama

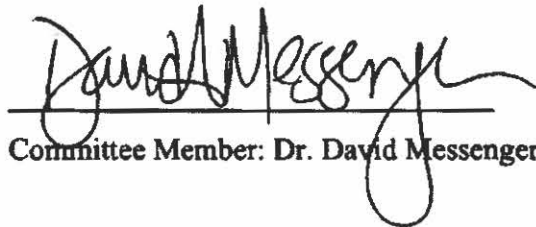
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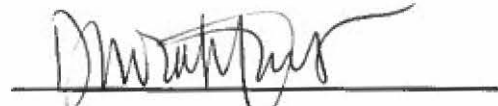
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Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to the important women in my life who continue to inspire me: my mom, Debi Edler; my sister, Micayla Edler; my best friend, Hannah Giannini; and my late grandmother, Judith Farina. I am grateful for all my friends and family who put up with me over the Christmas break this past year as I wrote the majority of this thesis.

Acknowledgements

This thesis would not have been possible without the support and advice of my professors. I would like to thank my thesis mentor, Dr. David Meola, for his insight and expertise. He was instrumental in helping me navigate through the thesis writing process. I am especially grateful for his understanding and constantly reminding me to take care of myself. I would also like to thank my committee members, Dr. David Messenger and Ms. Deborah Gurt. Their comments and participation in the thesis defense process helped improve my thesis and my writing overall.

Abstract

During the early modern period, women were highly regulated by society. This regulation included everything from sumptuary laws restricting consumerism and clothing to exclusion from guilds and other occupational restrictions. Women were generally expected to remain within the household sphere and were discouraged from deviating from traditional norms. However, some early modern German women were able to challenge and subvert these expectations. Given the prescribed gender roles often enforced within early modern German society, what prominent roles and industries, if any, were women able to participate in outside of the household? “Women Outside the Household in Early Modern Germany” utilizes a case study approach to analyze the ability of early modern German women to participate in the fields of medicine, commerce, and scholarship. A variety of circumstances, including social status, financial stability, and familial support, either supported or further restricted the ability of early modern German women to participate in these fields. Through the efforts of these women, gender norms within early modern Germany were challenged, and some women were able to find more avenues for their talents.

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Introduction

In 1572, during a particularly devastating outbreak of illness, over one hundred people came to Mansfeld Castle each day desperate for a cure, “At the center of the bustle moved a wizened old woman of nearly eighty years, dressed in the garb of a widow, who dipped a tankard into a steaming cauldron and administered a medicinal drink to each invalid with her own hands.”¹ Dorothea of Mansfeld, a widow from a financially struggling noble family in eastern Germany, was not as high born or wealthy as many other noblewomen involved in medicine, but she made a considerable impact upon her local community and the field of early modern medicine through the charitable distribution of her medical cures.

Throughout history the unique stories of women like Dorothea have often been sidelined or overshadowed. Some might argue that this was often due to cultural practices that rendered women less vocal and influential in society. However, this argument fails to acknowledge that even within the societies where women were restricted and regulated some women were still able to contribute to and greatly influence certain aspects of those societies. Regardless of cultural restrictions and traditional expectations, some early modern German women were able to contribute to industries outside of the household. The extent that these women were able to make an impact outside of the household heavily depended on their status within the defining characteristics of life in early modern society.

There is some variation among historians as to the exact boundaries of the early modern period depending on what events they choose to define its start and end. For example, some historians, such as Merry E. Wiesner-Hanks, describe the early modern period as extending from

1. Alisha Rankin, *Panacea's Daughters: Noblewomen as Healers in Early Modern Germany* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013), 1.

the Renaissance to the French Revolution.² Others simply define the era as stretching from the beginning of the 16th century through the end of the 18th century, which is often stretched until 1815. No matter how it is classified, the early modern period in European history covers around three hundred years of complicated history.

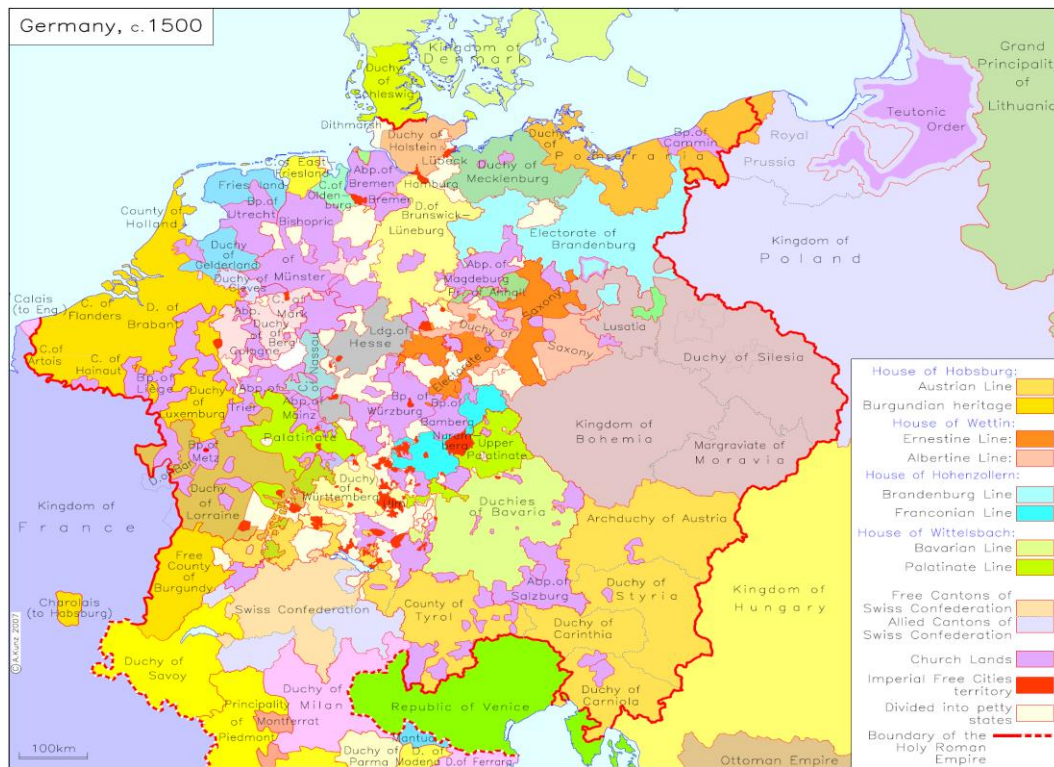


Figure 1. A. Kunz, "Germany, c. 1500," 2007, IEG-Maps, Institute of European History, Mainz, GHDI, https://ghdi.ghi-dc.org/map.cfm?map_id=3752.

The German-speaking states, which are the main geographical focus of this thesis, were located in central Europe and are often referred to simply as Germany or the Holy Roman Empire. The Holy Roman Empire, which dominated central Europe during the early modern period, was a complicated but relatively loose union between various states and municipalities. Religious conflict was a defining characteristic of the Holy Roman Empire and the early modern

2. Merry E. Wiesner-Hanks, *Women and Gender in Early Modern Europe*, 4th ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 10.

period. The Thirty Years War and the subsequent Peace of Westphalia in 1648 was one of the major episodes in a long line of religious conflicts to occur within the Holy Roman Empire. The Protestant Reformation sparked increasingly volatile religious conflicts between Catholics and Protestants, especially within the German-speaking states. These religious movements and conflicts greatly impacted the lives of many German people. This impact was intensified by the bloodshed caused by these conflicts, the religious discrimination and persecution that accompanied them, and the overarching importance of religion in early modern life. These religious conflicts and their larger implications provide valuable insight into the context in which most early modern people, especially those in the German-speaking states, lived their lives. The early modern period also witnessed revolution and renaissance. The Scientific Revolution, the Enlightenment, the Protestant and Counter Reformations, and the spread of the Renaissance are examples of the major movements that characterized the early modern period. Each of these movements worked to alter and expand understandings of reality within Europe and the German-speaking states.

In addition to major events and trends, early modern German women also had to navigate the pressures of daily life. During the early modern period, the lives of women were often highly regulated by various aspects of society, including religion and class structures. This regulation was enforced by common cultural practices and expectations. One way in which early modern societies tried to further enforce the regulation and restriction of women is through the publication of sumptuary laws. The exact nature of sumptuary laws varies greatly across cultures, even those within Europe, and as a result is often difficult to define. However, Alan Hunt provides an example of a common definition where sumptuary laws are "...defined as laws

intended to limit or regulate the private expenditure of citizens.”³ While they did not always accurately reflect the reality of early modern society, sumptuary laws provide an important insight into how the governing bodies of the society, whether that be the government itself or other authoritative institutions such as the church, expected people to behave.

Another way in which early modern societies tried to regulate and restrict women was through labor and the workforce. In the early modern German-speaking states women were usually barred from participating in guilds, which “...used social capital to exclude women (and other sorts of outsiders, including foreigners and Jews), narrowing their range of employment options and pushing them into low-paying work.”⁴ The work of women was often relegated to the household instead of the market and described simply as “domestic work” even if the work being done would not directly benefit the household or family members. Women who were able to individually participate in the market economy could face harsh discrimination or restriction by local authorities. For example, unmarried women in Württemberg who worked independently in the market economy were commonly known as “eigenbrötlerinnen”, which literally translates to “own-breaders” meaning those who are “independent”.⁵ “Eigenbrötlerinnen” were tolerated by their communities “as long as they did not encroach on guild privileges, demand wages above the legally fixed rate, deprive male relatives of household labor, take risks that might burden the

3. Alan Hunt, *Governance of the Consuming Passions: A History of Sumptuary Law* (Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, 1996), 2-3.

4. Wiesner-Hanks, 137.

5. Sheilagh Ogilvie, “Consumption, Social Capital, and the ‘Industrious Revolution’ in Early Modern Germany,” *The Journal of Economic History* 70, no. 2 (June 2010): 291, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S002205071000029X>.

welfare system, annoy respectable citizens, or violate other social norms.”⁶ If they violated these stringent expectations, these women could face a hefty fine or, in the event that they refused to return to working within the household, be forced to leave the community altogether.

Religion can be easily recognized as a fundamental aspect of early modern life. Religious institutions played an important role in societies and in the restriction of women. This was done not only through religious expectations but also through religious persecution. For example, Jewish women faced both discrimination as women with a male-dominated society and the egregious religious persecution that came along with being Jewish in early modern Germany and Europe in general. The additional religious persecution that these women experienced further restricted them within early modern society. Women who were within the religious majority, either Catholic or Protestant depending on the region, could be discriminated against by their religious peers if they did not meet the societal expectations of women of their religion, age, and class. For example, widows were generally viewed in a negative light during the early modern period, often either as a decrepit old woman or a scandalous, greedy woman. Widows whose husbands left them a considerable amount of money or property were often able to overcome pressures to remarry and establish a sense of independence whereas poor widows with many children were viewed as being unable to remarry due to a socially constructed sense of general undesirability.⁷

Despite the aforementioned restrictions and attempted regulations of women, some women were still able to participate in industries usually dominated and defended by men. The

6. Ogilvie, 291.

7. Wiesner-Hanks, 102-103.

three subcategories through which this thesis examines the achievements of women outside of the household are medicine, business and trade, along with literature and scholarship. These three subcategories represent often male-dominated institutions within early modern society that women were hard pressed to enter. Despite the restrictions and regulations placed upon them, some women were able to achieve notability within these industries.

In the medical field, some were able to develop extensive medical knowledge and medicinal collections, become well-respected members of the medical communities at large, and foster networks of other medically influential women. Although this medical prowess was often restricted to noblewomen, the achievements of these women in a male-dominated field remain impressive. In business and trade, women were able to take control of their own business or trade endeavors and participate in a market economy from which they were increasingly barred. These women, while perhaps not as well-known as their medical counterparts, managed to surpass the restrictions placed upon them and gain varying degrees of success in business and trade. In literature and scholarship women were once again limited. Women were often barred from institutions of higher learning and young girls were often not provided with advanced educational opportunities, “Even where girls’ schools were established, the education they offered was meager.”⁸ There is not as much evidence of women participating in literature and scholarship. Some suggest that female authors and scholars may have used pseudonyms to disguise themselves. However, there is still evidence that can be used to argue that women were able to subvert the scholastic restrictions placed upon them and contribute to the fields of literature and scholarship.

8. Wiesner-Hanks, 163.

Initially, the three subcategories outlined above were separated for the sake of clarity. However, research has shown that such a separation is not possible. For example, the work that women did in the household often overlapped with work that could be done outside of the household both in the activities themselves and how those activities were framed. The sources collected demonstrate the complexity of these institutions, their interrelated nature, and the involvement of women in them. While these changes in structure have altered the appearance of the thesis throughout the research process, the main research question has remained the same. Given the prescribed gender roles often enforced by society in Germany during the early modern period, what prominent roles and industries, if any, were women able to participate in outside of the household? The case studies of seven early modern German women are the main methodology used to address the main research question and further demonstrate the complexity of early modern life.

Several supplemental questions have accompanied the main research question. What roles within these industries did women hold? What were the circumstances, including the class and social status, individual family dynamics, and community expectations, of these women? How were women in these roles viewed by others within their communities? How did these women view their actions outside their traditional household obligations? Were there punishments or consequences for women who acted outside the traditional expectations? The hypothesis that accompanies the main and supplemental research questions for this thesis is as follows. It is most likely that the women of early modern Germany were able to be involved in activities outside of their traditional household roles to a certain extent. Some of these women were able to make important contributions to the areas of medicine, business, and scholarship. Additionally, the ability of the average woman to be involved in these industries, to be generally

accepted in them, and to be acknowledged by other members of those industries greatly depended on a number of variables including class and social status, economic situation, and community.

Historiography

The following review of literature related to this topic will consist of four major sections: medicine; regulation; the economy, commerce, or business; and scholarship and education. The countless historians who have written about medicine in the early modern period tend to agree that male and university educated professionals originally dominated the profession. However, the work of Alisha Rankin and others suggest that as the era progressed the field included more women, particularly noblewomen, and empirics or those lacking university education in medicine. The empirics, along with their many “marvelous cures”, rapidly rose to fame in Germany roughly during the sixteenth century.⁹ According to Rankin this transition was not without its troubles and many of the “...university-trained physicians felt threatened by the rising popularity of cures hawked by empirical practitioners...”¹⁰ In addition to the competition between university educated physicians and the more practically educated empirics, the cures and medical practices that took up the majority of patient care were also changing and constantly debated. Many people, often without the direct support of a university-trained physician, sought out a wide variety of sources to provide cures for their ailments. This was especially true in cases of chronic illness where university trained physicians were unable to alleviate their patients’

9. Alisha Rankin, “Empirics, Physicians, and Wonder Drugs in Early Modern Germany: The Case of the *Panacea Amwaldina*,” *Early Science and Medicine*, 14 (2009): 680, <https://doi.org/10.1163/138374209X12542104913920>.

10. Rankin, “Empirics, Physicians, and Wonder Drugs in Early Modern Germany: The Case of The *Panacea Amwaldina*,” 680.

symptoms. These cures and their proprietors, however, were still met with incredible amounts of suspicion.¹¹

Noblewomen who participated in the making of cures and medicinal recipes can be considered one of the proprietors of these unconventional cures. These women operated within a precarious position in early modern society. Not only were they not university educated and not male, but they were also creating and distributing medical cures sometimes to the degree that earned them considerable acclaim within their communities and beyond. The attention that these noblewomen received for their medical activities was not always positive. For example, these women might attract unfavorable accusations of witchcraft as a result of their medical practice. Consequently, these women often had to ensure that their medical activities were framed in such a way as to avoid widespread suspicion and criticism that could result in perilous consequences.

These noblewomen were not the only women to participate in the medical field. Many women worked in medicine on a much smaller scale, especially during times of crisis. An example of this comes from the infamous pox houses, such as those constructed in sixteenth century Augsburg for managing plague outbreaks and other infectious or misunderstood illnesses. Women were often employed in these institutions as maids or assistants. A woman married to the head of the pox house, who was sometimes known as the “wood father” or “pox father,” might share in some of the medical responsibilities given to her husband along with general care of the house.¹² Although it may have been rarer, some women even contributed to

11. H.C. Erik Midelfort, *Mad Princes of Renaissance Germany* (Charlottesville; London: University Press of Virginia, 1996, 1994).

12. Claudia Stein, *Negotiating the French Pox in Early Modern Germany*, translated by Franz Steiner, *History of Medicine in Context*. rev. ed. (London: Routledge, 2016), 98.

these houses as healers, “But it is not only men who appear in the hospital records as successful pox healers. On 11 November 1499 the hospital guardian Hans Pfefferlin paid an unspecified female healer who had cured twenty people...”¹³

Midwifery was an important way that women could contribute to the medical field. Midwifery and knowledge of childbirth rituals were traditionally female dominated aspects of medicine in the early modern period. However, as male physicians became more interested in obstetrics, and since they generally had greater access to medical schooling and knowledge, there began to be a rise in male midwifery. While these male midwives became fairly common in England and France during the early modern period, they were not nearly as common in Germany and it was a virtually non-existent practice in eastern and southern Europe.¹⁴ According to Claudia Stein, physician’s influence on midwives “...was indirectly extended when, in 1531, the municipal midwives were brought under the control of four patrician women who supervised the midwives’ work, informing the council of any malpractice and other punishable offenses.”¹⁵ In other words, even in areas where male midwives were uncommon, physicians still found ways to increase their control over the practitioners and methods of midwifery.

Another important theme that appears often in scholarly works relating to this topic is regulation. The restrictions and regulations placed upon early modern German women often impacted a women’s ability to maneuver within society. For example, sumptuary laws, described by Wiesner-Hanks as “...in essence urban dress codes...,” were an important aspect of the

13. Stein, 110.

14. Wiesner-Hanks, 94-96.

15. Stein, 116.

attempted regulation of people in early modern society by authoritative institutions such as the local governments or churches.¹⁶ Hunt argues that sumptuary laws “...manifested an aspiration to construct an ‘order of appearance’ that allowed the relevant social facts, in particular about social and economic status, gender and occupation, to be ‘read’ from the visible signs disclosed by the clothes of the wearer.”¹⁷ By marking the social classes of individuals, sumptuary laws restricted social mobility to a certain degree. While it is likely that sumptuary laws were not capable of reflecting the reality of early modern German societies either completely or accurately, Sheilagh Ogilvie argues that sumptuary laws did not need to be perfectly enforced in order to be effective in controlling the economic choices of women and the community as a whole.¹⁸ This was mainly due to the social consequences that came as a result of breaking such laws. The following is an example both of what might be included in sumptuary laws and how violators were dealt with by the local authoritative institutions, “In 1708 the Ebhausen church court admonished and penalized a proto-industrial worsted weaver’s wife for wearing ostentatiously large neckerchiefs.”¹⁹ It is important to note that while sumptuary laws regulated both men and women “...it is undoubtedly the case that sumptuary laws were a component of the wider processes in which women were the targets of regulation and control.”²⁰

Sumptuary laws varied in specificity and in some regions became increasingly specific over time. Sumptuary laws in Germany, of which over 3,500 examples survive, reportedly

16. Wiesner-Hanks, 127.

17. Hunt, 42.

18. Ogilvie, 306.

19. Ogilvie, 306.

20. Hunt, 254.

carried more weight and were more commonly written than in other early modern European societies.²¹ This pervasiveness of German sumptuary regulations suggests that the public had a considerable amount of power to regulate the home and other private spheres of individuals, such as the purchase of certain goods and clothes. According to Maria Giuseppina Muzzarelli, the evolution of German sumptuary laws can be characterized by three distinct phases. These three phases are most notably distinguished by an increase in social stratification as is evident through the types of sumptuary regulations attributed to the various social classes. During Muzzarelli's second phase, which includes the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, sumptuary laws in Germany reflected a notable increase in the distinction of social classes not previously seen.²²

There were other publications besides the sumptuary laws that attempted to advise or regulate the lives of early modern German people. For example, the physician Bernhard Christian Faust's *Catechism of Health: For the Use of Schools, and for Domestic Instruction* provides advice on the proper treatment of children through a question and answer format.²³ This source contains important medical knowledge as well as provides advice on how to raise children. This includes how children should be educated and how they should be dressed at particular ages. Such publications were not usually created or enforced in the same manner as

21. Maria Giuseppina Muzzarelli, "Reconciling the Privilege of a Few with the Common Good: Sumptuary Laws in Medieval and Early Modern Europe," *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 39, no. 3 (Fall 2009): 605, <https://doi.org/10.1215/10829636-2009-006>.

22. Muzzarelli, 606.

23. Bernhard Christoph Faust, *Catechism of Health: For the Use of Schools, and for Domestic Instruction*, translated by J.H. Basse. London: C. Dilly, in the Poultry, 1794, GHDI, http://ghdi.ghi-dc.org/sub_document.cfm?document_id=3621, accessed February 10, 2020.

sumptuary laws and could be tailored to any manner of regulation. Whether people followed what was suggested in such regulatory publications remains to be seen.

There are several scholarly sources that cover the general themes of the economy, commerce, or business, providing analysis and data collection about the intersection of early modern German economics and culture. These sources argue that the economy and the ability to participate in the workforce were instrumental in providing people with increased political and social capital. This increased political and social capital, while relatively minor in many instances, helped some women differentiate from traditional expectations. However, the intersection of the economy and culture also contributed to the regulation and restriction of many early modern German women.

Ogilvie's article concludes with the assertion that "Communal institutions restricted women's market work where it threatened or annoyed entrenched interests," often through wage caps, outright exclusion, or religious and other social regulations.²⁴ However, women in some areas were still able to contribute to the market and economy. While Ogilvie's article is focused on early modern Württemberg, the analysis can provide an insight into the economic experiences of early modern German women in other areas. The contributions that early modern German women were able to make in terms of the market and economy can be demonstrated by their increased reallocation of time from household activities to those of the market and by their attempts to navigate the economic and social regulations posed against them.²⁵

24. Ogilvie, 319.

25. Ogilvie, 319.

As the contents of the sumptuary laws suggest, consumerism, such as the purchase of household goods and clothing, played an important role in identity, the economy, and in the existence of social capital in early modern Germany. In an article written about the artisans of Göppingen, Dennis Frey discusses the patterns of wealth and consumerism that can be observed in different social groups. The Göppingen artisans left behind several inventories, including those related to marriage. These inventories often shed light on what items were purchased by the artisans and their families or what items were brought into a marriage. The women of these artisan families are mentioned sparsely throughout the article. However, Frey does discuss women in terms of the control of consumption. Frey suggests that consumerism, similar to sumptuary laws, could be used as a form of social control.²⁶ A similar discussion is echoed by Ogilvie amidst a discussion of social capital and gender dynamics within the market.

In “The Gender of Europe’s Commercial Economy, 1200-1700,” Martha Howell reaches the conclusion that women, specifically wives, “By devoting herself to useful, tasteful consumption for the benefit of his household, she not only escaped the charges of whoredom, profligacy, vanity and greed that so easily were attached to women who dealt in the market, she simultaneously made consumption safe for men.”²⁷ Howell defends this conclusion by arguing that the necessity of consumption for economic growth required a change in the traditional view of consumption as an evil practice. This change corresponded with a separation of consumption and production between females and males respectively. In doing so women were stuck with the

26. Dennis A. Frey Jr., “Wealth, Consumerism, and Culture among the Artisans of Göppingen: Dynamism and Tradition in an Eighteenth-Century Hometown,” *Central European History* 46 (2014): 741-778, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0008938914000028>.

27. Martha Howell, “The Gender of Europe’s Commercial Economy, 1200-1700,” *Gender & History* 30, no. 3 (November 2008): 532, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-0424.2008.00535.x>.

evil consumption tendencies whereas men were seen as noble producers benefiting society through a just cause.²⁸ This highlights the dichotomy that occurred between male and female participation in the market. As Howell acknowledges, often when women were able to contribute to the market, they were only able to do so as a dependent producer attached to a household, not as an independent and control enabled producer.²⁹

The total number of writings done by early modern women will likely never be known. Many of these works will remain unavailable to historians and other researchers. However, the women who did manage to publish their works made an important contribution to scholarship and education. Although women created only a small fraction of the publications from the early modern period, the women in Germany who did manage to publish and print writings were almost exclusively high-born.³⁰ This was likely due to an increased access to education and other resources that would help make such scholarship possible. Mara Wade discusses the unreliability of current knowledge about female writers in the early modern period that contributes to a lack of published works, “In many cases, texts are often unattributed, or even misattributed, often to a man.”³¹ Overall, women were either discouraged from participating in the field of literature and scholarship, unable to contribute due to socio-economic constraints, or their works were hidden by error and the passage of time.

28. Howell, 521.

29. Howell, 522.

30. Wiesner-Hanks, 212.

31. Mara R. Wade, “Invisible Biographies: Three Seventeenth-Century German Women Writers,” *Women in German Yearbook* 14 (1998): 41, <http://www.jstor.com/stable/20688871>.

Despite the constraints and difficulties that women faced regarding any contribution to the field of literature and scholarship, some women still managed to publish various works and engage with other scholarly individuals. According to Wiesner-Hanks, some women formed exclusive literary societies, such as the *Academie des Loyales* and the *Tugendliche Gesellschaft*. In these literary societies, like their male only counterparts, the women were encouraged to exercise their poetic and other literary talents through correspondence, writing, and general study.³² An emphasis on religious and moral virtues accompanied the scholarly leanings of these literary societies. Wiesner-Hanks describes one of these all-female literary societies as having a motto that purposefully ignores the literary aspect of their society. Such an emphasis suggests that women, even in their own literary societies, were still not permitted to have an entirely scholarly approach to their activities. The existence of such societies demonstrates that women were still involved in literature and scholarship despite not making an enormous visible contribution.

Wade discusses some of these noblewomen, specifically the writings of three sisters from Saxony: Sophie Eleonore Landgravine of Hessen, Marie Elisabeth Duchess of Schleswig Holstein, and Magdalena Sibylle of Saxony. Each of these women loved books and kept an extensive library. Their interest in literature does not end there as Wade also covers both their writings and how their lives set them up for creating such works. These women created prayer books, devotionals, and festival books, important pieces of literature in early modern German society. The women who created collections of medical recipes also contributed to literature and scholarship. Other than the noblewomen who either published or simply compiled collections of medical recipes, Rankin notes that recipe writing and collection also occurred outside of the

32. Wiesner-Hanks, 216.

aristocratic circles and gained a great deal of prestige. In some instances, such as in the consultation of Regina Zangmeister by the Countess Claudia of Oettigen, those of non-noble birth gifted collections of medical recipes to members of the aristocracy.³³ Within many of the medical recipe collections compiled by noble individuals there are also recipes attributed to common people who either wrote the recipe or somehow contributed to it.³⁴

Women of Primary Interest

Within early modern Germany, many women likely exceeded the societal and traditional expectations of their communities. Some of these women did so on quite a significant scale while the impact of others was more subtle. Seven of these women particularly stand out for their impacts upon medicine, commerce, and scholarship. Each of these women experienced different community dynamics, religious experiences, family situations, and status within society that shaped their journeys. The ability of these women to operate outside of traditional expectations demonstrates its possibility. However, the conditions in which they were able to do so highlight the potential difficulty for similar achievements by the average early modern German woman.

The first of these women is Dorothea Susanna of Saxony-Weimar. Dorothea Susanna, whose brother was the Elector Ludwig VI of the Palatinate, was a noblewoman by birth.³⁵ Through marriage she became the Duchess of Saxony-Weimar. Dorothea Susanna kept a wide range of contacts within the nobility to discuss and share medicinal recipes as well as friendly correspondence. In 1570, Dorothea Susanna asked Anna of Saxony, the medically skilled

33. Rankin, *Panacea's Daughters: Noblewomen as Healers in Early Modern Germany*, 68.

34. Rankin, *Panacea's Daughters: Noblewomen as Healers in Early Modern Germany*, 68-69.

35. Rankin, *Panacea's Daughters: Noblewomen as Healers in Early Modern Germany*, 31.

Electress, for some medicine to help with an illness.³⁶ Even though Dorothea created her own medical cures, her connections to other skilled noblewomen healers allowed her to benefit from their advice and expertise. Recipes attributed to her have been found in several recipe books, such as the collection of recipes curated by Duke Richard of Pfalz-Simmern sometime around 1570.³⁷

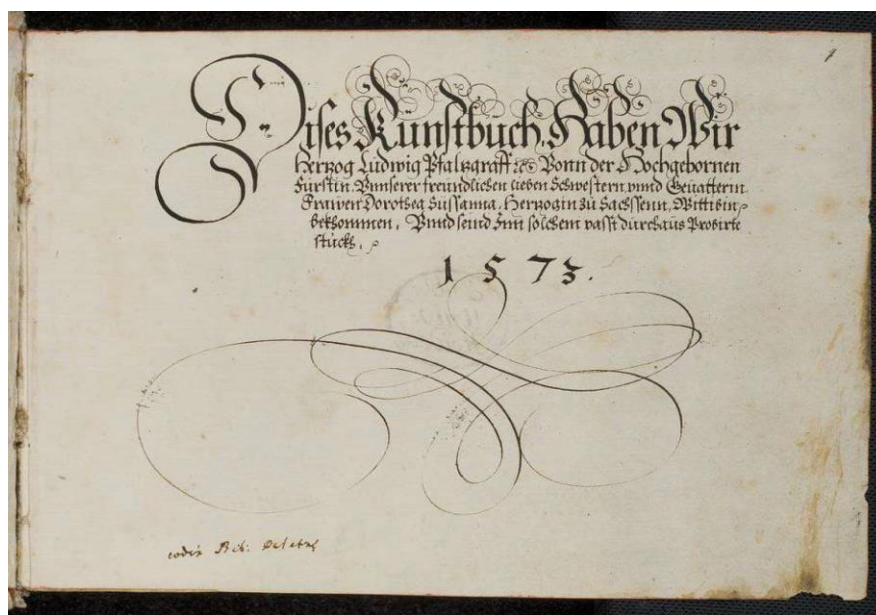


Figure 2. Dorothea Susanna of Saxony-Weimar, “Recipe Collection of Dorothea Susanna of Saxony-Weimar, 1573,” Universitätsbibliothek Heidelberg, *Codices Palatini germanici*, 182, <https://digi.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/diglit/cpg182>.

Dorothea Susanna’s contribution to medicine was not as significant as some of the other women included in this section. However, she was active in the creation of medical cures and in the circulation of cures and medical information. The image included in figure 1 provides an example of Dorothea Susanna’s medical expertise in the form of a recipe book. This page includes the title and dedication that attributes the collection to “...Dorothea Susanna, Duchess

36. Rankin, *Panacea’s Daughters: Noblewomen as Healers in Early Modern Germany*, 190.

37. Rankin, *Panacea’s Daughters: Noblewomen as Healers in Early Modern Germany*, 69.

of Saxony,” and emphasizes the legitimacy of the remedies by stating that they have been “...durchaus probirte...” or “...thoroughly tried...,” a common attribution for medical cures and remedies in the early modern period that held a considerable amount of importance, especially within the German courts.³⁸ According to Rankin, the use of the German “probiert” meaning “tried,” “bewert” meaning “proven,” and other such phrases almost always accompanied remedies to vouch for their efficacy.³⁹

This recipe book contains a large variety of recipes listed in the index. Some of the recipes are organized by body part, including entries for the eyes, nose, and mouth.⁴⁰ This demonstrates the usefulness of the recipe book as a medical aid and highlights its marketing as a reference guide for common ailments. There are also more complex remedies listed in the index, such as the increasingly popular cure of aqua vitae. Aqua vitae is a strong distilled alcohol with an extensive ingredient list and almost as many purported uses as a medicinal remedy. The inclusion of more complex, and often coveted, remedies in Dorothea Susanna’s collection suggests that while her basic cures may have demonstrated the usefulness of the collection as a simple guide and reference, it may have also been meant for more practiced healers and those with extensive medical knowledge. This recipe book, her correspondence with others involved in the creation of medical cures, and the inclusion of her recipes in other works, demonstrate Dorothea Susanna’s relatively small but significant impact upon the medical industry.

38. Dorothea Susanna of Saxony-Weimar, “Recipe Collection of Dorothea Susanna of Saxony-Weimar, 1573.”

39. Rankin, *Panacea’s Daughters: Noblewomen as Healers in Early Modern Germany*, 39.

40. Dorothea Susanna of Saxony-Weimar, “Recipe Collection of Dorothea Susanna of Saxony-Weimar, 1573.”

Like Dorothea Susanna of Saxony-Weimar, Eleonora of Württemberg often received more benefit from receiving medical advice than from sharing it. Eleonora, along with the majority of noblewomen involved in medicine, participated in the local networks of both friendly correspondence as well as exchanges of medical knowledge and information. Engaging with the early modern medical industry "...the Württemberg duchesses epitomized the main characteristics of the noblewoman healer...they all became local heroines in large part due to their charitable medical activities..."⁴¹ Eleonora married Georg I of Hesse-Darmstadt and established her own apothecary at her residence in Lichtenberg after his death in 1596.⁴² According to Rankin, Elenora also helped to manage the court apothecary in Hesse-Darmstadt and its employees, several of which were women themselves.⁴³

41. Rankin, *Panacea's Daughters: Noblewomen as Healers in Early Modern Germany*, 205.

42. Rankin, *Panacea's Daughters: Noblewomen as Healers in Early Modern Germany*, 13.

43. Rankin, *Panacea's Daughters: Noblewomen as Healers in Early Modern Germany*, 14.

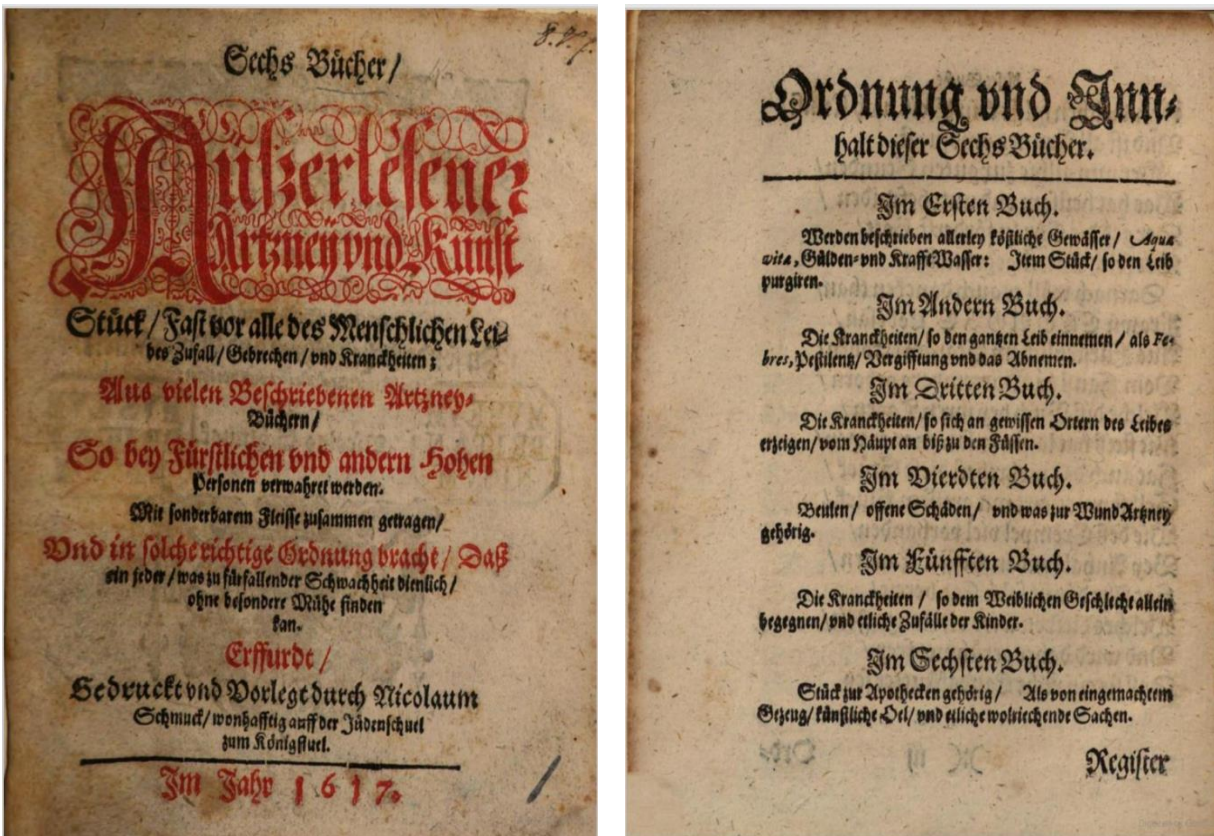


Figure 3. Frontispiece and Table of Contents for Eleonora, Duchess of Württemberg, *Sech Bücher / Auserlesener Artzney und Kunst Stück / fast vor alle deß Menschlichen Leibes Gebrechen und Krankheiten*, Torgau, 1600, https://books.google.com/books?id=hcVjAAAACAAJ&pg=PA4&source=gbs_toc_r&cad=4#v=onepage&q&f=false.

One of the most significant things about Eleonora of Württemberg is that she became the first of these noblewomen to publish her collection of medical remedies.⁴⁴ Given the relatively small portion of published works that were written by women in the early modern period, not to mention the additional obstacle of the male and physician dominated medical field, this was quite an achievement. The images included in figure 2 are pages taken from Eleonora's elaborately decorated and bound book *Sechs Bücher Asserlesener Artzney und Kunst Stück fast vor alle deß Menschlichen Libes Gebrechen und Kranckheiten*. This can be roughly translated

44. Rankin, *Panacea's Daughters: Noblewomen as Healers in Early Modern Germany*, 21.

into *Six Books of Exquisite Medicine and Skills for Almost All Human Bodily Ailments and Illnesses*. The book was published in 1617 and originally printed in Torgau, a city in Saxony.⁴⁵

A portion of the text included on the title page in figure 2 reads, “Six Books / Selected Medicine and Art Items / Just about everything for the Human body by chance / afflictions / and diseases ; From many described medicine books / So with Princes and other high-ranking persons are kept safe.”⁴⁶ The specific inclusion of “Princes” or other high born individuals being the main individuals to benefit from this book suggests that Eleonora did not intend to widely circulate the published collection outside of the court or nobility. However, as Rankin notes, Eleonora’s book reached a considerably larger audience than intended, going through several editions and remaining relevant for a considerable period of time.⁴⁷ The many recipes categorized within the collection’s index are separated into six separate books, as referenced in the title of the work, with corresponding descriptions. In the first book, Eleonora includes recipes for varieties of aqua vitae and other “waters.” The descriptions for the second, third, and fifth books all contained remedies relating to specific diseases or ailments. Book four includes remedies to treat “...offene Schaden...” or “...open wounds...” and recipes for medicine that can be taken orally. The sixth book includes “Items belonging to pharmacies...”⁴⁸

45. Rankin, *Panacea's Daughters: Noblewomen as Healers in Early Modern Germany*, 205.

46. Eleonora, Duchess of Württemberg, *Sech Bücher / Ausserlesener Artzney und Kunst Stück / fast vor alle deß Menschlichen Leibes Gebrechen und Krankheiten*.

47. Rankin, *Panacea's Daughters: Noblewomen as Healers in Early Modern Germany*, 21.

48. Eleonora, Duchess of Württemberg, *Sech Bücher / Ausserlesener Artzney und Kunst Stück / fast vor alle deß Menschlichen Leibes Gebrechen und Krankheiten*.

Because she was the first woman to publish a collection of medical recipes, doing so under her own name, Eleonora of Württemberg led the way for other noblewomen to pursue a similar path. The introduction to Eleonora's book contains a poem written by a physician, Joseph Conrad Ratz. In this poem, Ratz emphasizes Eleonora's medical expertise, her experience trying many of the recipes herself, and her prestigious noble standing.⁴⁹ The inclusion of this poem at the beginning of Eleonora's published collection and its explicit praise of her many medical and noble attributes provides evidence for her success in the early modern medical industry stemming from her status as an aristocrat and as a woman. Eleonora's original recipes and vast collection demonstrate her connection to the medical industry in early modern Germany. Her achievements, bolstered by her status and connections within the nobility, helped solidify the prestige of noblewomen as medical practitioners.

The third women of particular interest is Elisabeth of Rochlitz, a noblewomen and duchess from Saxony. Elisabeth also kept up correspondence with her peers within the nobility, often seeking their medical advice. For example, Elisabeth solicited advice from Dorothea of Mansfeld about the debilitating illness of her cousin the Duke Moritz of Saxony in 1546.⁵⁰ While Elisabeth did provide her own advice on occasion, she maintained a lower and more local profile when it came to her medical activities and was ultimately unable to reach the same level of medical renown as her contemporaries, such as Dorothea of Mansfeld or Anna of Saxony. Rankin acknowledges Elisabeth's medical practice by saying that she "dabbled" in it as well as

49. Rankin, *Panacea's Daughters: Noblewomen as Healers in Early Modern Germany*, 207-208.

50. Rankin, *Panacea's Daughters: Noblewomen as Healers in Early Modern Germany*, 100.

“...kept an extensive collection of medical remedies...”⁵¹ Unfortunately, Elisabeth of Rochlitz had a far greater number of experiences with medicine as a patient. Dealing with a chronic illness beginning in the early 1540s, Elisabeth regularly underwent medical procedures and sought various medical opinions about her illness.⁵²

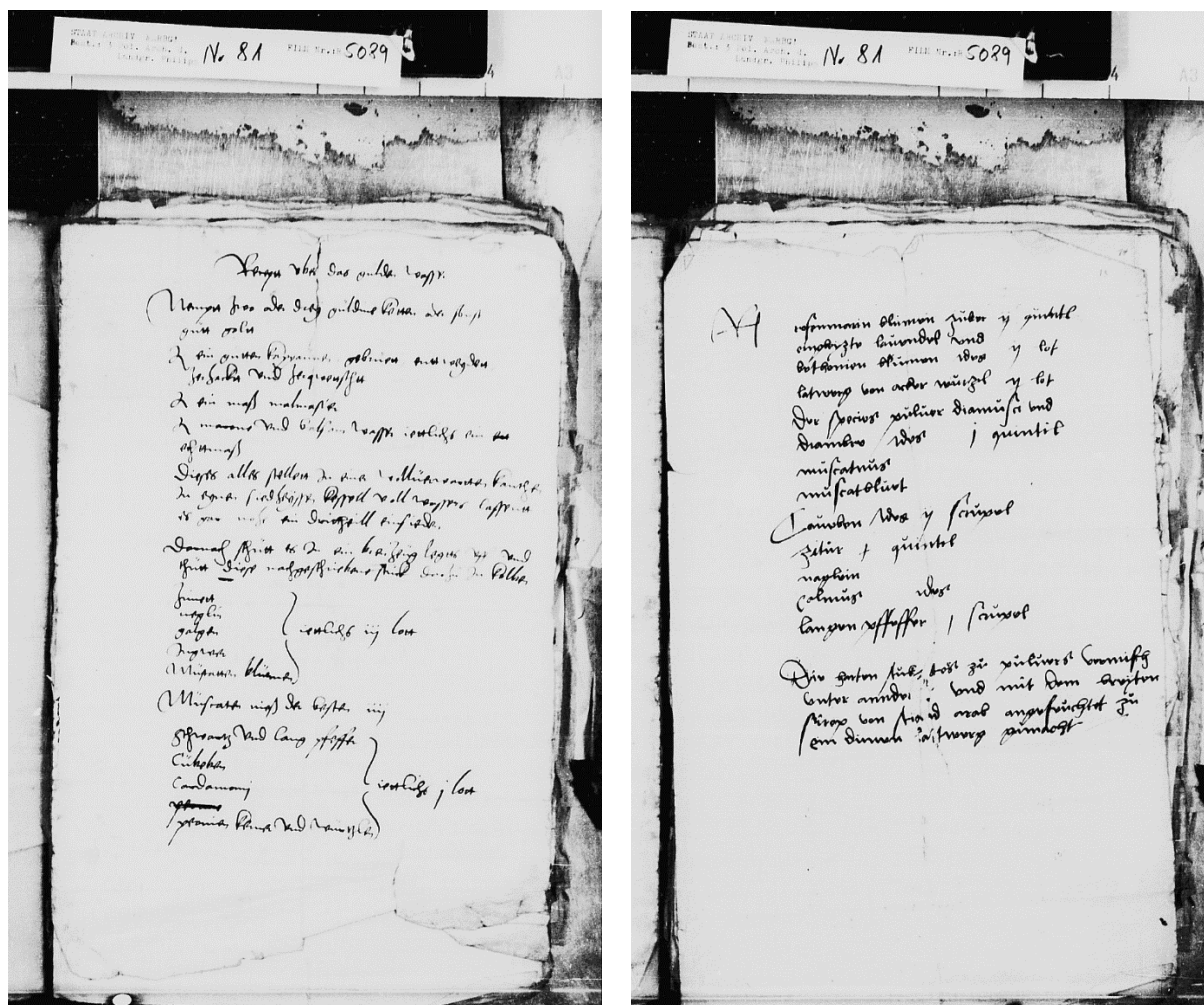


Figure 4. Elisabeth of Rochlitz, “Collection of medical recipes, c. 1537-57,” 80, *Papers of Elisabeth of Rochlitz, Duchess of Saxony (1502-57)*, Hessische Staatsarchiv Marburg, Politisches Archiv Landgrafs Philipp des Grossmütigen (Bestand 3), <https://arcinsys.hessen.de>.

51. Rankin, *Panacea's Daughters: Noblewomen as Healers in Early Modern Germany*, 168.

52. Rankin, *Panacea's Daughters: Noblewomen as Healers in Early Modern Germany*, 169.

Many of Elisabeth's letters, account books, and inventories of her estate survive, including her extensive medical recipe collection. These documents provide a wealth of insight into the experience of Elisabeth as a patient, as a healer, and as a member of the nobility. Figure 4 includes pages from Elisabeth's recipe collection and, even though they are incredibly difficult to read, they provide some examples of the types of recipes that Elisabeth included in her collection. The lengthy recipes are hand written and include lists of ingredients as well as notes. There are even portions of the recipes that are crossed out. The messily handwritten nature of these recipes along with the errors left within the text demonstrate Elisabeth's lower status as a noblewoman and as a healer. If this collection were geared towards high profile publication or intended as a valuable piece or a potential heirloom collection, such as that of Eleonora of Württemberg and Dorothea Susanna of Saxony, marks of mistakes would likely have been excluded from the final copy. Elisabeth's relatively lesser medical knowledge and extensive experience with debilitating illness may also have contributed to the contrast between her recipe collection and that of the other noblewomen. Poor archival conditions and other less than optimal circumstances have exacerbated these issues as demonstrated by the current condition of the collection.

While the previous women demonstrated their ability to transcend the confines of traditional societal expectations of early modern German women to contribute to the field of medicine outside of their household sphere, others were making headway in fields of their own often with similar struggles. Glückel of Hameln, also known as Glikl Bas Judah Leib, is especially unique amongst this group of women because she was Jewish. Glückel would not have been considered a noblewoman equal to that of Eleonora of Württemberg, Dorothea Susanna of Saxony and others. Glückel's father, the first to be allowed back into Hamburg after

an invasion by the Swedish, was an important member of the displaced German-Jewish community in Hamburg and Altona.⁵³ Between her father's status within the Jewish community and the positive trade reputation established by Glückel and her first husband, Glückel was considered a member of the "Jewish elite" and once attended the same wedding as a young Frederick the Great. Despite this elevated status, Glückel and her family were still subjected to harsh discriminatory practices, including the restriction of trade as one of the only legal yet incredibly dangerous forms of business open to Jewish people.

After the untimely death of her first husband, the widowed Glückel took over the family business and was able to significantly expand it. Glückel's business activities included both the production of goods, through the manufacture of stockings, as well as far reaching and local trade networks, which were driven by trading pearls from Asia in various European cities.⁵⁴ Glückel and her sons regularly attended trade fairs in the region where she often multitasked by negotiating the marriages of her children at the same time. These trade fairs were some of the only times that Jewish people could interact with members of other Jewish communities. Jewish families and communities were often spread out because of discriminatory practices and frequent expulsion they experienced throughout Europe. Having wide reaching Jewish connections allowed for a reliable network of support in an age of rampant anti-Jewish sentiment. It may seem unusual for a woman of early modern Germany to run a family business, but it was actually

53. Natalie Zemon Davis, "Arguing with God," in *Women on the Margins: Three Seventeenth-Century Lives* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1997) 11, <https://hdl-handle-net.libproxy.usouthal.edu/2027/heb.01639>.

54. Wiesner-Hanks, 146.

fairly common for German-Jewish women to work in this manner, although Glückel operated a considerably larger scope of trade than other such women.⁵⁵

Something else that makes Glückel unique was the memoir that she published. According to Glückel, one of the reasons she wrote her memoir was to provide her children with information about their ancestors.⁵⁶ These memoirs were also a way that Glückel tried to deal with the grief she felt after the untimely death of her first husband. Glückel's memoir provides an invaluable firsthand account not only of her experiences as a Jewish woman living in early modern Germany, but also of many of her business ventures. In her own words, Glückel describes her efforts in the world of business and trade that allowed her to continue providing for her family and set up advantageous marriages for several of her twelve children.

At that time I was busied in the merchandise trade, selling every month to the amount of five or six hundred Reichsthalers...My business prospered, I procured my wares from Holland, I bought nicely in Hamburg as well, and disposed of the goods in a store of my own. I never spared myself, summer and winter I was out on my travels, and I ran about the city the livelong day.⁵⁷

The extent that Glückel was able to participate in early modern trade networks is incredibly fascinating. Many other women who were involved in the markets or business in general were unable to extend their business quite as far. Despite her success, both her Jewish religion and her status as a woman did limit Glückel in notable ways. Wiesner-Hanks notes that the limits placed on women like Glückel who engaged in business endeavors can be seen in Glückel's financial

55. Davis.

56. Glückel of Hameln, *The Memoirs of Glückel of Hameln*, translated by Marvin Lowenthal (New York: Schocken Books, 1977), <http://www.loc.gov/catdir/description/random042/77075290.html>.

57. Glückel of Hameln, 179.

obligations and contributions to her sons and second husband, both of which cost her a considerable amount.

Johanna Eleonora Petersen and Glückel of Hameln both contribute different perspectives to the group of seven early modern German women. Although Johanna Eleonora was a noblewoman, her journey led her away from the realm of the nobility and towards piety and an important contribution to literature and scholarship. Born in Frankfurt in 1644, Johanna Eleonora grew up in the turbulent aftermath of the Thirty Years War.⁵⁸ Johanna Eleonora ended up marrying outside of her class, much to the dismay of many of her relatives. Her contribution to religious conversations through her published literature was quite unusual for a woman of her time and class. As noted by the volume editor of *The Life of Lady Johanna Eleonora Petersen, Written by Herself: Pietism and Women's Autobiography in Seventeenth-Century Germany*, female writers were quite rare in early modern Germany, and "...most women in Germany remained silent, because most of them could neither read nor write and those who could were usually muted..."⁵⁹ Similar to many other woman who stepped out of their expected societal roles, Johanna Eleonora faced a great deal of discrimination for her religious views and life choices. However, her work likely paved the way for other women to contribute to literature in a similar way.

58. Johanna Eleonora Petersen, "Johanna Eleonora Petersen, nee von und zu Merlau (1644-1724): From Noblewoman to Radical Pietist," in *The Life of Lady Johanna Eleonora Petersen, Written by Herself: Pietism and Women's Autobiography in Seventeenth-Century Germany*, 3, Other Voice in Early Modern Europe (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), <https://web.a.ebscohost.com/ehost/command/detail?vid=7&sid=bb3bfc63-8339-41e9-b3d3-6f5b6a10a9fb%40sessionmgr4008&bdata=JnNpdGU9ZWWhvc3QtbGl2ZQ%3d%3d#db=e000xna&AN=212676>.

59. Petersen, "Johanna Eleonora Petersen, nee von Merlau (1644-1724): From Noblewoman to Radical Pietist," 1.

Johanna Eleonora published around fourteen religious writings from 1689 to 1718 with her autobiography serving as the culmination of her work.⁶⁰ Published in 1718, Johanna Eleonora's autobiography was attached to her husband's autobiography but was still written under her name and had a distinct title page that differentiated her work from that of her spouse.⁶¹ Other than her writings, Johanna Eleonora also made an impact through the devotional gatherings she held in Frankfurt. These religious gatherings created an inviting atmosphere for other women to share their religious views and questions. These gatherings, whose members were referred to as the "Saalhof Pietists," also helped connect Johanna Eleonora with other influential members of the pietist movement and notable figures, including William Penn.⁶²

Johanna Eleonora was an influential figure both in the world of literature and scholarship as well as in the early modern German religious sphere. Her religious writings and autobiography added to contributions of early modern German women to the field of literature and scholarship. Johanna Eleonora's connections within the pietist community and outspoken radical views and practices earned her a level of notoriety and influence among those who disagreed with her as well as others who followed in a similar path. Her status as a woman and as

60. Petersen, "Johanna Eleonora Petersen, nee von Merlau (1644-1724): From Noblewoman to Radical Pietist," 2.

61. Johanna Eleonora Petersen, "The Life of Lady Johanna Eleonora Petersen, nee von und zu Merlau, Wife of Dr. Johann Wilhelm Petersen, Written by Herself...", in *The Life of Lady Johanna Eleonora Petersen, Written by Herself: Pietism and Women's Autobiography in Seventeenth-Century Germany*, Other Voice in Early Modern Europe (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), <https://web.a.ebscohost.com/ehost/command/detail?vid=7&sid=bb3bfc63-8339-41e9-b3d3-6f5b6a10a9fb%40sessionmgr4008&bdata=JnNpdGU9ZWwhvc3QtbGl2ZQ%3d%3d#db=e000xna&AN=212676>.

62. Petersen, "Johanna Eleonora Petersen, nee von Merlau (1644-1724): From Noblewoman to Radical Pietist," 1.

a person of noble birth helped Johanna Eleonora achieve some level of influence. However, her willingness to radically deviate from cultural expectations, such as when she rejected many of the activities and practices of the court in favor of a more religious and pious life, are what make her a truly influential and notable figure.

The final two women that will be included in this section were some of the most formidable and influential in the early modern medical industry. Of the noblewomen involved in medicine and healing, none had quite the impact and renown of Anna of Saxony and Dorothea of Mansfeld. Anna of Saxony was the Electress of Saxony, and her marriage to Elector August of Saxony played a significant role in her ability to pursue medicine. The Elector and Electress shared a common interest in medicine, experimentation, and hands-on work. August even went so far as to build Anna her own palace for her medical experimentation and development of cures, “The new, expanded palace, which he called Annaburg, included a large distilling house for Anna’s medical work, as well as an extensive herb garden and Saxony’s first palace apothecary.”⁶³ The support of and collaboration with her powerful husband gave Anna a notable advantage when it came to developing her medical expertise. However, it was well known that Anna’s intelligence and personal work ethic were a major component of her success.⁶⁴

Throughout her life, Anna continually grew her medical expertise and the extent of her stores. One way that the medical expertise of Anna can be demonstrated is through her correspondence with others and attempts to teach others her own techniques and recipes. After meeting Maria of Austria, the Holy Roman Empress, in 1570, Anna sent along multiple recipes

63. Rankin, *Panacea’s Daughters: Noblewomen as Healers in Early Modern Germany*, 136.

64. Rankin, *Panacea’s Daughters: Noblewomen as Healers in Early Modern Germany*.

and cures for the Empress and her husband to use for their ailments.⁶⁵ Such a high profile individual accepting the remedies and advice of the Electress of Saxony demonstrates her expertise and its renown throughout Europe. Anna of Saxony also “...acted as Dorothea’s patron and gave her substantial support, providing her with both gifts of money and ingredients for her medical practice.”⁶⁶ Another way that the expertise of Anna can be demonstrated is through her activities within the apothecary and her extensive medical stores. At Annaburg, as well as in the palace in Dresden, Anna managed the distilling houses, herb gardens, and their employees. One of Anna’s most sought after remedies were her versions of aqua vitae, both yellow and white, and “...she supplied friendly nobles and acquaintances with hundreds of jars a year.”⁶⁷ By the time of her death “...her stores at Annaburg alone contained 181 different types of distilled waters, catalogued alphabetically, as well as thirty-two medicinal oils, six vinegars, and two jars of rose honey.”⁶⁸

Between fulfilling her role as the Electress of Saxony, the wife of Elector August of Saxony, and her role as noblewoman healer, Anna of Saxony gained widespread recognition and renown. The remedies, recipes, and name of Anna of Saxony reached farther than many of her counterparts. Her status as the Electress of Saxony, which carried a great deal of prestige due to the importance and power of Saxony during the early modern period, and her high level of involvement in medical and court affairs earned her such renown. Many of the expectations that accompanied Anna were much different than others. Noblewomen in medicine belonging to a

65. Rankin, *Panacea’s Daughters: Noblewomen as Healers in Early Modern Germany*, 128.

66. Rankin, *Panacea’s Daughters: Noblewomen as Healers in Early Modern Germany*, 20.

67. Rankin, *Panacea’s Daughters: Noblewomen as Healers in Early Modern Germany*, 129.

68. Rankin, *Panacea’s Daughters: Noblewomen as Healers in Early Modern Germany*, 129.

less influential court would likely have had less prestige and influence within the region than Anna of Saxony as well as perhaps less financial freedom. It is because of her role within Saxony and her power in the region and in the court that Anna of Saxony reached a higher level of prestige and recognition than noblewomen in medicine who lacked those advantages.

The medical activities pursued by Anna of Saxony were intentionally framed, often by Anna herself, in a specific light. Less focus was placed on the charitable distribution of her medical cures and more focus placed on her contribution to noble fascination with scientific experimentation and her role as a Lutheran wife.⁶⁹ This framing helped qualify Anna's actions to better support her role and status as the Electress of Saxony. It is through these actions that Anna of Saxony earned the moniker of "Mother Anna."⁷⁰ As the Electress of Saxony, Anna was very involved in the affairs of Saxony, including the management of the court, issues of political importance, and other aspects vital to the power and operation of Saxony.⁷¹ Her medical activities contributed greatly to her involvement as well. Finally, the retrospective view of the Elector and Electress as the "father" and "mother" of Saxony, or the ideal Lutheran heads of a household, whose only goal was to serve their people, has contributed greatly to the continued representation of Anna as "Mother Anna."

Dorothea of Mansfeld held a similar, although not quite equal, sense of renown as Anna of Saxony in the world of early modern noblewoman medical activities. While Dorothea carried an incredible amount of medical knowledge, which she often shared with her peers, she did not

69. Rankin, *Panacea's Daughters: Noblewomen as Healers in Early Modern Germany*, 130.

70. Rankin, *Panacea's Daughters: Noblewomen as Healers in Early Modern Germany*, 130.

71. Rankin, *Panacea's Daughters: Noblewomen as Healers in Early Modern Germany*, 130.

have as privileged of a position as the Electress. Dorothea of Mansfeld, who often faced financial ruin at the hands of her sons and, "...relied on her charitable healing to survive," was never able to achieve the same level of success as Anna within the broader medical industry.⁷² Dorothea always put the majority of her medical efforts into charitable healing and learned much of her knowledge and expertise through experience. Over her lifetime, Dorothea of Mansfeld became just as well known for her piety and charity as for her medical knowledge and cures. Dorothea's cures and charity gained her admiration far beyond that of her local community. For example, Johannes Magenbuch and Novenianus, two well-known and educated physicians, held Dorothea's medical skills and charitable works in particularly high esteem.⁷³ As has been previously mentioned, Dorothea had a patronage relationship with Anna of Saxony. Dorothea also provided advice and cures to "...a number of German princes..." and others of renown within the Holy Roman Empire.⁷⁴ Dorothea of Mansfeld also made an incredible contribution to the wealth of medical recipes created by noblewomen of the era, "...She was also a prolific author of medical recipes; her name held enough recognition that her recipes were incorporated into a large number of medical recipe collections from Saxony and the Palatinate..."⁷⁵

Questions

The previous section discussed seven early modern German women and their impacts upon the industries of medicine, business and trade, and scholarship. Each of these women are

72. Rankin, *Panacea's Daughters: Noblewomen as Healers in Early Modern Germany*, 20.

73. Rankin, *Panacea's Daughters: Noblewomen as Healers in Early Modern Germany*, 2.

74. Rankin, *Panacea's Daughters: Noblewomen as Healers in Early Modern Germany*, 94.

75. Rankin, *Panacea's Daughters: Noblewomen as Healers in Early Modern Germany*, 94.

incredible examples of how early modern German women were sometimes able to subvert the traditional expectations of their society and contribute to a larger field outside of their household obligations. Their experiences raise a number of questions that are essential to understanding the circumstances that made these achievements possible. For example, what roles within the industries of medicine, commerce, and scholarship did women hold? As has been established, Dorothea Susanna of Saxony-Weimar, Eleonora of Württemberg, Elisabeth of Rochlitz, Anna of Saxony, and Dorothea of Mansfeld all participated in the early modern medical field. Each of these women played a unique role in this field and contributed various levels of experience, perspectives, and levels of notoriety. Johanna Eleonora Petersen, on the other hand, held a different role within the religious and literary fields. Johanna Eleonora's role was that of writer and radical pietist within her communities. Glückel of Hameln held the role of business woman with extensive knowledge of trade as well as important contacts throughout Europe. The roles that each of these women held within their fields as well as their standings within their respective communities helped them achieve outside of traditional expectations.

This leads into questions about the class and social status, individual family dynamics, and community expectations of these women. Broadly speaking, what were the circumstances of these women? Unfortunately, not all of this information is documented within the sources. Beginning with class and social status, all the women, except Glückel of Hameln, were at one time members of the German nobility. Dorothea Susanna became the Duchess of Saxony-Weimar through marriage. Eleonora of Württemberg and Elisabeth of Rochlitz were also duchesses. Dorothea of Mansfeld and Johanna Eleonora Petersen were from smaller and less influential noble families within Germany. Anna of Saxony, of course, became the Electress of Saxony through marriage. As is to be expected, women who were a part of the nobility,

especially those from larger and more influential principalities, dealt with different levels of community expectations. Anna of Saxony, for example, was held to much higher standards as the Electress of Saxony, and the “Mother” of the land, whereas Dorothea of Mansfeld was not as widely nor as harshly scrutinized. None of these women faced the discrimination and persecution experienced by Glückel of Hameln, whose slightly elevated status as a member of the “Jewish elite” did not exempt her from widespread, vicious anti-Jewish sentiment.

The family dynamics of each of these women is not entirely known. However, it can be said that some of them experienced much more supportive family situations than others. For example, Anna of Saxony was given a great deal of free reign in terms of experimenting within the medical field. This was due to her status within Saxony, her financial stability, and her husband’s general support. Glückel of Hameln was similarly supported by her first husband and supported him in his business, as was common for many Jewish women, which allowed her to gain extensive knowledge of and connections within European trade networks. Those who came from smaller and less wealthy noble families, such as Dorothea of Mansfeld who was also widowed, and were without familial support had to manage more on their own. Johanna Eleonora Petersen faced a similar lack of support from her immediate family. The class and social status, family support or lack thereof, and community expectations of these women contributed to the extent that they were able to participate in their respective fields by either encouraging or restricting their actions.

In addition to the circumstances in which they lived, these women had to contend with the members of their communities. How were women in these roles viewed by others within their communities? This includes both positive and negative views that a particular community may have held. Not all of the women discussed within this thesis reach the same level of

notoriety within their communities. However, each of them likely experienced varying degrees of disapproval and support from the members of their respective communities. For example, several notable physicians were connected to the noblewomen involved in medicine and often commented on the merits of these women. Dorothea of Mansfeld received praise from several notable physicians, including “Physician Philip Michael Novenianus [who] dedicated a book to the countess in 1558, in which he provided a particularly effusive view of her medical talents.”⁷⁶ In 1577, a physician named Jacob Theodor Tabernaemontanus praised Elisabeth of Saxony and her medical abilities through an acknowledgement of the increasing commonality of noblewomen in healing.⁷⁷ The ability to create medical remedies and be generally involved in pharmacy became somewhat of an expectation for women of the aristocracy. Although women as healers were still generally depicted quite negatively by physicians, a great number of noblewomen were known for their healing abilities, whether locally or on a larger scale, because of their status as women and as women of noble birth.

Glückel of Hameln encountered the views of multiple communities as she interacted with both Jewish and non-Jewish people. One particular instance that Glückel recounts in her memoir involves the help and support of an influential member of the Jewish community.

Then it was, the rich Chief Rabbi Samson wrote me that, because of the rage against the Jews in Hamburg, I had best come to Vienna immediately after the wedding and dwell in his house. He offered me two of his best rooms and bade me engage in any business I would, and to this end sent me a puissant Imperial passport.⁷⁸

76. Rankin, *Panacea's Daughters: Noblewomen as Healers in Early Modern Germany*, 2.

77. Rankin, *Panacea's Daughters: Noblewomen as Healers in Early Modern Germany*, 3.

78. Glückel of Hameln, 202.

Glückel and her family, like many Jewish people during the early modern period, often faced expulsion from their home cities, various legal restrictions that limited the types of professions open to Jewish people, and general discrimination by their non-Jewish counterparts. However, a few times within her memoir Glückel remarks about relatively positive trade connections with non-Jewish people. For example, Glückel's son was reportedly well-liked amongst both groups.⁷⁹ Unfortunately, the appreciation of Jewish business and trade did not often extend to an acceptance of their religious and cultural practices.

The somewhat controversial nature of her position within the religious community and the nobility meant that Johanna Eleonora also attracted a considerable amount of attention. Johanna Eleonora recounts in her autobiography that she faced a great deal of criticism for marrying someone from a lower class, "Afterward many lies were told about me in this place and many reasons were fabricated why I had married below my class. Some said that I had behaved badly at court, others invented other evil things and passed them off for truth."⁸⁰ Despite the negative views of their endeavors by some members of their communities, and with the help of more positive views, these women were able to contribute to industries outside of the traditional household expectations for the average early modern German woman. However, the views of the community were not the only potential influence upon these women.

Regardless of how they were received by their communities, how did these women view their actions outside their traditional household obligations? This question is particularly important because how women felt about their own activities and how they identified themselves

79. Glückel of Hameln, 174.

80. Petersen, "The Life of Lady Johanna Eleonora Petersen, née von und zu Merlau, Wife of Dr. Johann Wilhelm Petersen, Written by Herself...", 83.

played a major role in how they conducted those activities and the extent of their success.

According to Rankin, Anna of Saxony held particular views of her role and that of others, “Her firm belief in strict hierarchies – whether based on sex or on social class – underscores the extent to which she saw her hands-on endeavors as part of her general duties as wife and electress.”

Although she enjoyed a degree of fame within the nobility for her expertise, Dorothea of Mansfeld viewed her medical activities as first and foremost charitable in nature. Rankin notes that Dorothea’s own view of her medical practice as such was “...a characterization that was accepted without question by her contemporaries.”⁸¹

Because their personal writings have been published in the form of an autobiography and a memoir, there are more direct explanations from Johanna Eleonora Petersen and Glückel of Hameln about how they viewed their own actions. Johanna Eleonora Petersen refers to her own published work as “my little book” demonstrating her modesty regarding her own success.⁸² Glückel’s view of her own business and trade ventures can be gleaned from many different stories presented in her memoir.

Thereafter I went to my brother-in-law Joseph and begged him go over my stock...He looked at everything and said, “You have valued it all too cheaply. Were I to sell my goods at such prices I should go bankrupt.” But I told him, “Methinks it is wiser to set a low value on my goods and have them go at a higher price than the other way around. As it is, I have reckoned that even sold as cheaply as I have marked them, they will yield me an excellent capital for my fatherless children.” Then I held my auction, and it passed off very happily. Everything brought a good price, and...I suffered no losses.⁸³

81. Rankin, *Panacea’s Daughters: Noblewomen as Healers in Early Modern Germany*, 113.

82. Petersen, “The Life of Lady Johanna Eleonora Petersen, née von und zu Merlau, Wife of Dr. Johann Wilhelm Petersen, Written by Herself...,” 63.

83. Glückel of Hameln, 158.

In this story, Glückel demonstrates her confidence in her own knowledge of business and trade practices. Glückel appears to conduct such successful business ventures with a degree of pride, which suggests that she valued her own ability to provide for her family.

The answer to the following question appears obvious at first. Were there punishments or consequences for women who acted outside the traditional expectations? There were definitely punishments and consequences for women who acted outside of what was expected of them, especially if their communities viewed them in a negative light. However, the degree to which women experienced negative consequences for their actions varied. For example, a woman who maintained a higher status within society and had the available capital to further any activities would likely face different consequences than a poor woman with little to no maneuverability within the expectations placed upon her.

One monumental example of the consequences that early modern women faced when they did not conform to societal expectations or standards comes in the form of accusations of witchcraft. How these women responded to such accusations greatly depended on the support they were able to call upon and the validity of the argument they presented against these accusations in the eyes of their peers. Although Anna of Saxony had an expansive medical practice, she was not often confronted with accusations of misconduct. However, Rankin describes two particular incidents in the 1570s where accusations of sorcery and witchcraft were leveled against the Electress. In one of the incidents, Anna's daughter Elisabeth was "...taunted by one of her ladies-in-waiting at the court of the Palatinate that Anna was 'a sorceress...and my dear father wants to put Your Dearest with the old wives in a sack and drown you.'"⁸⁴

84. Rankin, *Panacea's Daughters: Noblewomen as Healers in Early Modern Germany*, 45.

Accusations and general suspicion of women as being involved in witchcraft was incredibly common in the early modern period. This is underscored by the fact that occasional accusations were made even against as powerful a woman as Anna of Saxony.

Unfortunately, many early modern women faced much more dire consequences for such accusations. Accusations of witchcraft leveled at women who lived on the margins of society or outside of traditional expectations were incredibly common, “The geographic and cultural heartland of the witch hunts, where both single accusations and mass panics were most common, was west-central Europe: the Holy Roman Empire...”⁸⁵ This often included widows, older women, and others on the margins of society. The brutality of the consequences of accusations of witchcraft are not to be underestimated. One such instance, which took place during a period marked by an increase in the mass persecutions of witches throughout Europe, occurred when “...in 1585, two villages in Germany were left with one female inhabitant each after such an outburst...”⁸⁶ Accusations of witchcraft, often including their deadly outcomes, were a common consequence that might result from a woman acting outside the traditional expectations of a woman of any particular status within early modern European society.

Conclusion

Given the prescribed gender roles often enforced by society in Germany during the early modern period, what prominent roles and industries, if any, were women able to participate in outside of the household? The answer to this primary research question is not absolute because of the many factors and unique situations involved. The initial hypothesis surmised that the

85. Wiesner-Hanks, 295.

86. Wiesner-Hanks, 296.

women of early modern Germany were likely to be involved in activities outside of their traditional household roles to a certain extent. Additionally, some of these women were able to make important contributions to the areas of medicine, business, and scholarship. However, the ability of a woman to be involved in these industries, be generally accepted in them, and be acknowledged by other members of those industries greatly depended on a number of variables. The case studies of seven early modern German women demonstrated that each individual faced a unique set of circumstances and external pressures that greatly impacted their ability to involve themselves in non-traditional activities outside of the household. These circumstances included supportive or unsupportive family members, financial stability, religious community expectations, social status, and more.

Many of the women who were successful in rising to prominence within these outside industries of medicine, business, and scholarship framed their activities in some socially accepted fashion. In order to gain the general support of those around them, these women used the same traditional expectations made to limit their activities in order to justify them in a widely acceptable manner. For example, the medical activities that were carried out by Anna of Saxony fit well within her role as “Mother Anna” by allowing her to care for her subjects as well as promote courtly values. Anna of Saxony also maintained her own strict version of societal gender norms and social hierarchy among her staff. Dorothea of Mansfeld framed her medical activities mainly within the sphere of pious generosity and charity. Since such actions were expected of the nobility and revered by society, Dorothea largely avoided any suspicion and negativity surrounding her medical activities. These justifications did not allow these women to completely avoid scrutiny. However, such explanations for their actions allowed them more freedom and maneuverability within societal expectations. Whether these women justified their

activities in terms of already established societal norms and expectations of women knowingly in order to pacify their contemporaries or if they did so because they truly believed their actions fit within these roles and expectations, such actions helped provide additional opportunities for future generations of women.

Some early modern German women were in fact able to contribute to industries outside of their household and traditional expectations. Only few women, however, were able to hold prominent roles within these industries. Due to the lack of primary source evidence, it is difficult to focus on the daily activities of the average early modern German woman. However, future and more extensive research may be able to provide some data and analysis of how such themes may have been echoed in the lives of those less visible than the main women discussed in this thesis.

The actions of women like Anna of Saxony, Johanna Eleonora Petersen, and Glückel of Hameln helped pave the way for future generations of women to continue surpassing traditional expectations. The connection between these early modern German women and those of subsequent generations provides an additional opportunity for future research endeavors. For example, Johanna Eleonora was a radical pietist. Did her role within the pietist movement inspire or make room for other women to become members of radical Protestant movements? Overall, these women, their expected roles within society, and how they responded to those expectations remain an important and necessary field of study.

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Ausserlesener Artzney und Kunst Stück / fast vor alle deß Menschlichen Leibes

Gebrechen und Krankheiten. Torgau, 1600.

https://books.google.com/books?id=hcVjAAAACAAJ&pg=PA4&source=gbs_toc_r&cad=4#v=onepage&q&f=false.