

VIRTUE, LIBERTY, AND TOLERATION

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

VOLUME 63

Managing Editor:

SIMO KNUUTTILA, *University of Helsinki*

Associate Editors:

DANIEL ELLIOT GARBER, *Princeton University*

RICHARD SORABJI, *University of London*

Editorial Consultants:

JAN A. AERTSEN, *Thomas-Institut, Universität zu Köln*

ROGER ARIEW, *Virginia Polytechnic Institute*

E. JENNIFER ASHWORTH, *University of Waterloo*

MICHAEL AYERS, *Wadham College, Oxford*

GAIL FINE, *Cornell University*

R. J. HANKINSON, *University of Texas*

JAAKKO HINTIKKA, *Boston University*

PAUL HOFFMAN, *University of California, Riverside*

DAVID KONSTAN, *Brown University*

RICHARD H. KRAUT, *Northwestern University, Evanston*

ALAIN DE LIBERA, *Université de Genève*

JOHN E. MURDOCH, *Harvard University*

DAVID FATE NORTON, *McGill University*

LUCA OBERTELLO, *Università degli Studi di Genova*

ELEONORE STUMP, *St. Louis University*

ALLEN WOOD, *Stanford University*

The titles published in this series are listed at the end of the volume.

VIRTUE, LIBERTY, AND TOLERATION

Political Ideas of European Women, 1400–1800

Edited by

JACQUELINE BROAD AND KAREN GREEN

Monash University, Melbourne, VIC, Australia

 Springer

A C.I.P. Catalogue record for this book is available from the Library of Congress.

ISBN 978-1-4020-5894-3 (HB)
ISBN 978-1-4020-5895-0 (e-book)

Published by Springer,
P.O. Box 17, 3300 AA Dordrecht, The Netherlands.

www.springer.com

Printed on acid-free paper

All Rights Reserved
© 2007 Springer

No part of this work may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, microfilming, recording or otherwise, without written permission from the Publisher, with the exception of any material supplied specifically for the purpose of being entered and executed on a computer system, for exclusive use by the purchaser of the work.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Illustrations	vii
Acknowledgements and Note on the Text	ix
Notes on Contributors	xi
Introduction	xv
<i>Jacqueline Broad and Karen Green</i>	
I. Political Thought as Improvisation: Female Regency and Mariology in Late Medieval French Thought	1
<i>Earl Jeffrey Richards</i>	
II. <i>Phronesis</i> Feminised: Prudence from Christine de Pizan to Elizabeth I	23
<i>Karen Green</i>	
III. Catherine d’Amboise’s <i>Livre des Prudents et Imprudents</i> : Negotiating Space for Female Voices in Political Discourse	39
<i>Catherine M. Müller</i>	
IV. “Machiavelli in Skirts.” Isabella d’Este and Politics	57
<i>Carolyn James</i>	
V. Liberty and the Right of Resistance: Women’s Political Writings of the English Civil War Era	77
<i>Jacqueline Broad</i>	
VI. Margaret Cavendish and the False Universal	95
<i>Hilda L. Smith</i>	
VII. The Social and Political Thought of Damaris Cudworth Masham	111
<i>Regan Penaluna</i>	
VIII. “Our Religion and Liberties”: Mary Astell’s Christian Political Polemics	123
<i>Michal Michelson</i>	
IX. Virtue, God, and Stoicism in the Thought of Elizabeth Carter and Catharine Macaulay	137
<i>Sarah Hutton</i>	
X. Catharine Macaulay and Mary Wollstonecraft on the Will	149
<i>Martina Reuter</i>	

XI. Keeping Ahead of the English? A Defence of Jews by Cornélie Wouters, Baroness of Vasse (1790) <i>Carrie F. Klaus</i>	171
Bibliography	189
Index	205

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

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

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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

Jacqueline Broad

Karen Green

NOTE ON THE TEXT

Unless otherwise indicated, all English translations of foreign language quotations within the text are the authors' own.

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

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

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

SARAH HUTTON is Professor at the University of Wales, Aberystwyth, in the United Kingdom. She has recently published *Anne Conway. A Woman Philosopher* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004). She has edited, with Anna Baldwin, *Platonism and the English Imagination* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994) and, with Lynette Hunter, *Women, Science and Medicine 1550–1700* (Stroud: Sutton Publishing, 1997). She has also edited Ralph Cudworth's *Treatise Concerning Eternal and Immutable Morality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996) and a revised version of Marjorie Hope Nicolson's *The Conway Letters* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992).

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

CARRIE F. KLAUS is an Associate Professor of Modern Languages (French) at DePauw University in Greencastle, Indiana, in the United States. She earned a PhD in French from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign in 2000. A recipient of a Bourse

Chateaubriand, she has recently published an English-language translation of Jeanne de Jussieu's *Short Chronicle* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006). Her current research project is an investigation of the works of pre-Revolutionary writer Cornélie Wouters, Baroness of Vasse (Wasse).

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

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

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

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

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

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

Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1982), and “*All Men and Both Sexes*”: *Gender and the False Universal in England, 1640–1832* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2002). She has published, with Susan Cardinale, *Women and the Literature of the Seventeenth Century: An Annotated Bibliography Based on the Wing Short Title Catalogue* (New York: Greenwood, 1985). She has also edited *Women Writers and the Early Modern British Political Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998) and, with Berenice Carroll, *Women’s Political and Social Thought: An Anthology* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2000).

INTRODUCTION

It has sometimes been observed that the textbook history of political thought is, figuratively speaking, a hall of mirrors in which our present political concerns and preoccupations are reflected back at us, albeit in a slightly distorted form. Several scholars have challenged this traditional kind of history: if we propose to understand the true origins of modern political thought, it is argued, then it is a mistake to search for the present in the past, or to identify purely contemporary ideas in the works of historical figures.¹ The true historian of political thought looks not for individual originators of modern concepts such as liberty, equality, and toleration—individuals who may turn out to be imaginary, in any case—but rather the complex historical-intellectual processes out of which those concepts emerged. It is rarely observed that the traditional hall of mirrors also reflects a male image or an exclusively male perspective on political concepts and political issues. Yet the historian of philosophy who focuses on male political ideas alone also makes the mistake of failing to take into account the precise historical circumstances of pre-modern political thought. This is because women were also active participants in the conflict of opinions that shaped and defined modern political philosophy as we know it. The essays in this volume highlight the fact that in addition to influencing the development of ideas through their practical support and patronage, women themselves discussed political ideas and wrote influential political works. The historical evidence suggests that the phenomenon of the female political thinker was not an isolated one, but a recurring feature across the centuries and in different regions of Europe.

The history of women's political ideas in Europe before the French Revolution still awaits recognition. Although a number of women's political works have been reprinted, translated, and discussed in print,² there is still a common perception that women simply have no history of political thought. A number of reasons for this persistent view suggest themselves. The first can be traced to that traditional approach to the history of political thought in which the historian only ever looks for the present in the past. Following this approach, scholars tend to blind themselves to those texts that do not fit easily into the modern paradigm of the political treatise. Because women often develop their ideas in works that are unusual vehicles for political philosophy—"unusual" according to our modern sensibilities, that is—their political commentaries are not recognised as such. Women's political texts, as the essays in this volume show, range from petitions, speeches, memoirs, and letters, to fictional narratives, prayers, plays, and poetry. Yet they are still obviously political in the sense that they engage with questions about what legitimises political authority, the political obligations of subjects and sovereigns, the attributes of a good ruler, the

connection between the church and ruling authorities, the best way to uphold civil peace and harmony, and the nature of power relations between the sexes—among other subjects.

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

There is, perhaps, one further reason why female political thinkers of the past remain largely invisible in the standard intellectual histories. In the seventeenth century, Gilbert Burnet, the Bishop of Salisbury (1643–1715), observed that there are two sorts of person that ought not to meddle in “public affairs”—these are churchmen and women. The clergy ought to be above it, he said, and women are below it.³ This common perception of women, as somehow unqualified to engage in political affairs, or outside of the sphere of theory altogether, seems to have persisted well into the twentieth century. In some circles there has been an assumption, encouraged even by feminist thinkers such as Simone de Beauvoir and Luce Irigaray, that women have been the other, that they have been objects of the male gaze, or have circulated as objects of exchange, but have not been subjects who have their own political agendas.⁴ In light of this pessimistic view of women’s contribution to the political tradition, it may have appeared pointless to attempt to chart the history of a subjectivity that did not exist. In *Women in Western Political Thought* (1979), Susan Moller Okin offered one of the first feminist critiques of the western political tradition. But even Okin focused exclusively on famous male theorists—Plato, Aristotle, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, and John Stuart Mill—charging them with the systematic subordination of women in their political philosophies. Despite the promising title, Okin did not examine women’s own unique contributions to western political thought and so, to some extent, her work conformed to the general trend of women being talked about, rather than doing the talking.

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

powerful women depicted in the Old and New Testaments, as well as female political leaders in their own time.

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

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

The more historically inclined reader might recognise that these women use the concepts of virtue, liberty, and toleration in a different, more nuanced, sense than we do today. By placing women's texts in their historical-intellectual context, we can see that the terms "prudence" and "liberty," for example, do not always have the same connotations that they do in post-twentieth-century political philosophy. While the modern philosopher tends to regard prudence in the Hobbesian sense, as rational self-interest, writers such as Christine de Pizan and Catherine d'Amboise use prudence with an awareness of its Aristotelian connotations as *phronesis* or practical wisdom—a decision-making capacity that is absolutely vital in a virtuous ruler. Likewise, Katherine Chidley (act. 1616–53) and the women petitioners of the civil war era in England (c. 1642–60) tend to promote a conception of liberty as freedom

from arbitrary domination—a conception that is quite distinct from the modern liberal sense of liberty as freedom from interference. The reader will also see that these early women thinkers do not observe a strict division between religion and politics. For these women, as for the men of their time, appeals to God and the Bible carry a certain amount of weight and authority in political argument: with their appeals to the political significance of the Virgin Mary as “queen,” and their repeated references to women’s political involvement in the Bible, it is hard to ignore the fact that these women do not have a modern, secular understanding of political argumentation. Yet, by seeing women’s political ideas in such an historical light—as different rather than similar to our modern political outlook—we hope that we might not only avoid anachronism, but uncover unique concepts and philosophical ideas.

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

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

In “Catherine d’Amboise’s *Livre des Prudents et Imprudents*: Negotiating Space for Female Voices in Political Discourse,” Catherine Müller also highlights the central importance of prudence in a little known work titled *Le Livre des Prudents*

et Imprudents (1509), by the French writer Catherine d'Amboise (1482–1550). This history of prudent and imprudent figures, written from a perspective which is avowedly biased towards women, includes an early criticism of women's exclusion from higher education, and shows another female author claiming to speak with the authority of Prudence. In the opening scenes of d'Amboise's work, this virtue appears to the authorial persona Katherine, encouraging her to write her revisionist history. D'Amboise takes a strong stance on the question of power relations between the sexes, by showing that women are not naturally inferior to men, but equally capable of acting with prudence and authority in the public sphere.

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

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

In "Margaret Cavendish and the False Universal," Hilda L. Smith focuses on one of the most prolific and original women philosophers of the seventeenth century, Margaret Cavendish, the Duchess of Newcastle (1623–73). Smith reveals that Cavendish's political thought is much more complex and unique than scholars have previously acknowledged. She highlights Cavendish's positive remarks on religious toleration and freedom of conscience in her collection of speeches, *Orationes of Divers Sorts* (1662). There is reason to think that these views form part of a consistently utilitarian approach in Cavendish's political philosophy—an approach that sets her apart from her royalist contemporaries and her husband, William. But, as Smith shows, nowhere is Cavendish more original than in her comments about the political status

of women in her *Sociable Letters* (1666). In terms of the history of political thought, Cavendish is remarkable for her potentially seditious observation that women are not, properly speaking, subjects of the commonwealth and are not therefore bound by oaths of allegiance to the government.

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

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

In “Virtue, God, and Stoicism,” Sarah Hutton examines the moral-theological basis of the political views of two late eighteenth-century English women: Elizabeth Carter (1717–1806) and Catharine Macaulay. Until recently, the ethical and theological dimensions of women’s political philosophy—or their views on virtue and religious duty—have been overlooked in favour of the modern emphasis on Lockean civil and political rights. But Hutton demonstrates that if we examine the theological assumptions behind women’s political ideas, then we might be able to identify a common female strand in the history of political thought. In particular, Hutton examines parallels between the views of Macaulay and Carter. Although these women seem to have little in common politically speaking, both uphold a conception of

God as a deity who is bound to exercise his power in accordance with his supreme benevolence, justice, and wisdom. Hutton shows how Carter and Macaulay's discussions of Stoicism are informed by their ethico-theological outlook—an outlook that has significant implications for their political approaches, and especially their views on women's role in society. These views echo not only the philosophies of their seventeenth-century predecessors, Damaris Masham and Mary Astell, but anticipate the feminist ideas of their immediate successor, Mary Wollstonecraft.

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

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

In a selective work of this nature, it is inevitable (and unfortunate) that there will be gaps in terms of the chronological-geographical focus. We aim to acknowledge a number of neglected women thinkers from the medieval period to the enlightenment, from a number of different regions in Europe, and from many different social classes. But we have had to omit figures of equal, if not greater, significance than the thinkers

discussed here—women such as Marguerite de Navarre, Marie le Jars de Gournay, the Quaker pamphleteers, Queen Kristina of Sweden, Aphra Behn, Queen Anne of England, Judith Drake, Mary Chudleigh, Madeleine de Scudéry, Gabrielle Suchon, Olympe de Gouges, Jeanne Marie Roland de la Platiere, and Mary Hays—to name but a few. It is to be hoped, however, that our volume will have a positive impact upon the future academic study of such women. By showing that women's political ideas are worth the bother—that women thinkers can open our minds to new and interesting interpretations of intellectual history—we hope that their marginalisation might become a thing of the past.

NOTES

- ¹ The classic example of this approach is Herbert Butterfield, *The Whig Interpretation of History* (London: G. Bell and Sons, 1931).
- ² There are a few anthologies of women's political writings: Lynn McDonald, ed., *Women Theorists on Society and Politics* (Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1998); Hilda L. Smith and Berenice A. Carroll, eds., *Women's Political and Social Thought: An Anthology* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2000); and Hilda L. Smith, Mihoko Suzuki, and Susan Wiseman, eds., *Women's Political Writings in England, 1610–1740*, 3 vols. (London: Pickering and Chatto, forthcoming). The Cambridge University Press series, *Texts in the History of Political Thought*, includes Margaret Cavendish, *Political Writings*, ed. Susan James (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003); Mary Astell, *Political Writings*, ed. Patricia Springborg (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996); Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Men and a Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, ed. Sylvana Tomaselli (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995); and Christine de Pizan, *The Book of the Body Politic*, ed. and trans. Kate Langdon Forhan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994). There have also been a few collections of essays on women's political thought: Hilda L. Smith, ed., *Women Writers and the Early Modern British Political Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), and Tjiske Akkerman and Siep Stuurman, eds., *Perspectives on Feminist Political Thought in European History from the Middle Ages to the Present* (London: Routledge, 1998). Thus far, however, there has been no book-length scholarly overview of the history of women's political thought from 1400 to 1800.
- ³ On Gilbert Burnet's attitudes to women, see Myra Reynolds, *The Learned Lady in England, 1650–1760* (Gloucester, MA: Peter Smith, 1964), 350.
- ⁴ Simone de Beauvoir, *Le Deuxième Sexe*, 2 vols. (Paris: Gallimard, 1949); and Luce Irigaray, *Speculum de l'Autre Femme* (Paris: Editions de Minuit, 1974).