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The Influence of Civic and Christian Humanism on the Education of Women in Northern Italy and England during the Renaissance

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The development of humanism during the Renaissance changed the way in which people were educated and greatly affected the education of women in particular. Two different types of humanism predominated in two geographically separate regions: civic humanism in Northern Italy and Christian humanism in England. The development of these two strains of humanist thought resulted in part from the varied political conditions in the two regions. Developing Italian city-states sought civic guidance, while the firmly established English monarchical system sought Christian guidance. The focus of education in each region took a corresponding path. When women were allowed an education in either region, the nature of that education reflected the form of humanism dominant in that region. The influence of civic humanism in Florence and northern Italy resulted in a greater likelihood that women in that region would gain an education, since the education of Italian women was considered to serve the needs of the state. The influence of Christian humanism on the education of the English resulted in women being less likely to gain an education. The limited curriculum provided to women served primarily to promote personal moral and religious virtue.

Historical inquiry focused on the education of women in Europe has been limited. Prior to the increase of attention to social issues during the 1960s, the subject of women in history received little attention beyond attempts to document exceptional women. Jacob Burckhardt includes a discussion of women in his late-nineteenth century pioneering work on the Renaissance, but only as a portion of one chapter. William H. Woodward's 1906 analysis of various Renaissance education theorists mentions women only briefly. Not until the feminist movement matured and gender studies emerged as a new field of scholarship did women
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as a class begin to be included in larger studies in a significant way. Women's and gender studies have now evolved to the point that specialized studies have begun to emerge in an effort to give proper place to half of the human population. Collections of writings by women in various historical periods have been published over the past quarter-century, as have works that analyze these writings. One area that remains poorly analyzed, however, is the education of women in the Renaissance.

While a number of works about women in the Renaissance have been produced, few address education in any detail. Works that examine individual women, especially writers and artists, are numerous. Other works provide analyses of male Renaissance pedagogues and theorists, or cover only one geographical region. Melinda K. Blade's slim volume, *Education of Italian Renaissance Women*, fails to do justice to the topic. Journal articles devoted specifically to the area of education of women before 1600 are very difficult to find. Comparative studies of women's education that cover more than one region or that include the collective voices of the women affected remain equally scarce. I have been unable to locate a study that focuses on the education of women specifically and that also utilizes a multi-regional, comparative approach. This paper will begin a correction of that scarcity by addressing the reasons for variations in quantity and quality of education of women in Northern Italy and England during the Renaissance.

Humanism arose during the Renaissance as a new method of scholarship, learning, and education. Scholars looked to the ancient texts as sources of authority in matters civic and religious. Quattrocento Italian humanists mined Greek and Roman texts for inspiration in areas as diverse as politics, architecture, city planning, and personal behavior. In contrast, moral philosophy and Christian theology were the primary focus of the Northern or Christian humanists who looked to the works of Plato, the Bible, and the Church Fathers for spiritual guidance. Thus two distinct forms of humanism developed in two geographically separate regions, each of which was home to a different political system.

Differing governmental forms produced specific expectations for civic participation in their respective countries. These expectations stimulated the need for basic education and thereby influenced the specific form of humanism that came to prominence in each region. The type of humanism that developed in a region directly affected the quantity and quality of education that women in the area received. The formation of communes and city-states in northern Italy created a greater expectation for civic participation among the upper and middle classes. Civic humanism became the predominant form in northern Italy and was expressed in the idea of the *vita civile*, or political life. Civic humanism advocated the education of women in an effort to promote civic virtue through better-educated potential marriage partners, wives, and mothers.

England's feudal monarchy and agrarian economy, on the other hand, offered fewer
opportunities for popular participation in the governmental process. Christian humanism thus came to prominence as scholars devoted their studies to moral and theological pursuits. Christian humanism grudgingly accepted the education of women under a much-reduced curriculum, only insofar as it promoted Christian virtue and piety. The varying degrees of emphasis on education, and the accompanying type of humanism, therefore determined not only how women were educated, but whether they were educated at all. Italian women were more likely to be educated than were their English counterparts, and the primary purpose of education for Italian women was the promotion of civic virtue. Women in England were less likely to be educated, and that education was narrower in content and primarily intended to promote Christian virtue. It must be emphasized, however, that throughout the period educated women remained a fraction of a fraction, since only a small percentage of the entire population of any European region or nation acquired an education during the Renaissance.7

The form of government in the city-states of northern Italy differed from the monarchies found throughout most of Europe in the Renaissance. The early rise of communes led to the establishment of city-states with relatively small populations in comparison to other European nations. Florence, for example, had a population of about 90,000 in 1338.8 The governing bodies that evolved in Florence encouraged participation in the civic process by a larger proportion of the population than did England's monarchy. The Florentine parlamento of 1200 may have numbered more than one thousand men, setting an early precedent for large-scale participation in government.9 Following the economic and political unrest resulting from the 1348 plague, the guild regime was established. The nine-man Signoria, the twelve-man buoniomini, and the sixteen-man gonfalonieri di compagnia supervised two legislative councils of 200 members each. Thus a total of over 450 people participated in government, at least to some extent, at any one time. Terms of office were measured in months and office-holders were replaced frequently after being chosen by lot.10 As a result, a significant portion of the male Florentine population could have expected to be called to the state service at some point during his lifetime. After the wars with Milan in the early Fifteenth Century, the preservation of civic virtue became a primary Florentine goal and it was asserted that no individual could remain a private person as long as the liberty of the citizen was at stake.11 The merchants and businessmen who made up this large governing class became supporters of the core of the civic humanist movement, which advocated the vita civile in the fifteenth century.12

England developed a different form of government, resulting in a different expectation for civic participation. That expectation influenced the English attitude toward education in the general sense, thereby allowing for the predominance of Christian humanism in England. England's monarchical system dated back to before the Norman Conquest of 1066. Political power was vested in the king and his council of noble-born advisors. Beginning in the thirteenth century, nobles and wealthy commoners began to assert their right to counsel the king in Parliament. However, the number of men who participated in Parliament was
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quite small in relation to the total population. What would become known as the House of Commons never numbered more than five hundred men in a country with a population of over two million in 1500. The majority of the members of the Commons during this period were “placemen” selected by landowners for their political allegiances rather than through free elections, thus limiting popular participation. If a placeman served the local landowner well when called, he might have been re-appointed each time Parliament was called, thereby eliminating participation by a larger number. The ability to participate in the legislative process was further limited by the failure of kings to call parliaments with any frequency. Thus only a minute percentage of the total population could expect to participate in governmental office during their lifetime.

Even the expectation of participation in local government was limited by the lack of numerous population centers outside of London. This lack was due in part to the feudal and agrarian nature of England’s economy during this period. Thus there was little basis in England for the development of civic humanism on the Florentine model. Instead, Christian humanism, and after 1535 specifically Protestant Christian humanism, developed as men sought to strengthen their Christian virtues in hopes of heavenly reward in the afterlife. Education, when it was pursued or provided at all, was intended to bolster Christian virtues and enable closer communion with God. Christian humanism thus became the dominant form of humanism affecting education in England during the Renaissance, while civic humanism remained dominant in Northern Italy.

Civic humanism exerted the greatest influence on the process of educating all people in Florence, including women. The Florentine Matteo Palmieri, writing shortly after 1435 in “Della Vita Civile,” stated that the ultimate aim of education was to prepare men for what he termed “the noblest of human activities,” the governing of communities of men organized on the basis of social justice. The perfect citizen, he believed, was the combination of a scholar and a man of affairs. Similarly, Leon Battista Alberti declared that duty to the community and social virtue were the ends of education, and that an education was a necessity “for any person who must manage and govern things.” The education of the youth of northern Italy and Florence was therefore afforded considerable resources and attention during the Renaissance, at least in part in an effort to educate the citizenry for civic participation. This was shown in a study of Florentine records for the year 1338, which reveals that thirty-seven to forty-five percent of all children between the ages of six and fifteen years attended schools outside the home. However, only ten percent of children in that age group attending schools were girls. Giovanni Villiani, a contemporary Florentine chronicler, stated that 10,000 children attended schools in 1338, though modern scholarship has placed that figure more conservatively at 3000. In 1480, the casta enumerata enumerated 1031 boys in schools outside of the home. Girls were not mentioned in this survey. The overall literacy rate in Florence in the
same year, taking reading and writing as separate skills, has been conservatively estimated at thirty to thirty-three percent. Such a relatively large percentage of people with a basic education was a result, in large part, of the need to prepare for participation in civic affairs and business. Male Florentine citizens were expected to engage in the vita civile, and a basic education based on civic humanist principles and curricula was necessary for this participation. England's agrarian-based monarchical society took a different view.

Christian humanism determined the quantity and quality of both female and male education in England. To many Englishmen in the early sixteenth century, an education was considered of little value. Thomas Starkey lamented the general lack of education among ruling nobles and clergy alike, stating that they were far more interested "in hunting and hawking, dicing and carding, eating and drinking and, in conclusion, in all vain pleasure, pastime and vanity." Thomas Elyot attributed the lack of learning to pride, avarice and parental neglect. To be called learned was an insult in early Tudor England. This generalized antipathy to education is reflected in the available statistics. David Cressy found that literacy rates in England at the beginning of the sixteenth century were approximately ten percent for men and less than one percent for women. The literacy rate for all socioeconomic classes in Norfolk and Suffolk as late as 1580 was not more than twenty percent, and only eleven percent for women. The rate in London after 1580 may have been as high as forty percent for men and twenty-four percent for women.

This low literacy rate was the result of many factors and cannot be attributed solely to the monarchical form of government in England. However, England's slow emergence from feudalism into a mercantile economy and its lessened expectation of popular participation in government did not encourage the growth of a civic form of humanism or education. Thus Englishmen like Thomas More and Desiderius Erasmus espoused Christian humanism, bringing that form of humanism to bear on the education of women.

During the Renaissance, access to education was limited to a small portion of the population in both England and Italy, as noted above. Women were afforded even fewer opportunities for education than the general male population. This was in part the result of misogyny rooted deep in history. Greco-Roman attitudes toward women are well documented, and survive into this period. Subsequent Roman Church tradition portrayed women as pure and virginal (Mary) or as temptresses (Eve), as "queenly virgins or dissipated whores." They were perceived to be evil by nature and prone to vice, or innocents whose virtues were easily corrupted by lustful and crafty men. It is perhaps significant that the majority of sources documenting this attitude are English, not Italian. Women in England were more likely than their Italian sisters to be viewed as childlike and inferior, both physically and intellectually. The misogyny found throughout Renaissance patriarchal society, however, was a response to the fear that women were part of some "other," separate from the male world.

Fear of women as "others" was also manifested in male concern for female behavior. Women should ideally be "sober, steadfast and demure. Peace, retirement, the veil, these
belonged to the femynyn gendere." Cultural concern for female behavior and misbehavior was evidenced by the steady production of courtesy books, pamphlets, and ballads in the late sixteenth century, particularly in England. Humanist concern for behavior was equally evident in attitudes toward educating women in both Italy and England.

Renaissance humanists of both types generally acknowledged that women were individual personalities with intellects equal to those of men. Leon Alberti and Domenico Bruni both believed that the education of women in the cultured classes was required to make them intellectually equal with their husbands and to aid them in educating their children. Baldesar Castiglione depicted Giuliani de Medici in The Book of the Courtier proclaiming the equal virtues of women. Similarly, Sir Thomas More, in a letter to William Gonell, stated that women were "equally suited for the knowledge of learning by which reason is cultivated." In his *Utopia*, More depicted women attending lectures and spending spare hours in study on an equal footing with men. The English educational theorist Thomas Elyot agreed with More when he wrote that "Women being well and vertuously brought vp, do not onely with men participate in reason, but som also in fidelitie and constaunce be equall unto them." While humanists generally agreed on the intellectual capacities of women, they differed on how and why those capacities should be developed. Italian civic humanists believed that the education of women would serve the needs of the community and should be directed to that end. Christian humanists in England believed that the purpose of a woman's education should be to promote Christian virtues and prevent wayward behavior.

To the Italian civic humanist, the needs of the state were paramount. Women should be educated so that they might be of greater value to the state as prospective brides, as wives and household managers, and as mothers and educators of children. Though Burckhardt claimed that women of the upper classes were afforded the same education as men, it has since been shown that the curricula studied varied between the sexes. Curricula for both sexes included training in the vernacular language, Latin, history, selected classical authors, and instructive religious works. The extended liberal arts offered to men, including arithmetic, geometry, music, and astrology, were frequently excluded from women's curricula. The study of theology was explicitly forbidden to women on largely Biblical grounds. The female curriculum was dictated by a specific purpose, and that purpose was the value of women to the city-state.

As prospective brides, Italian and Florentine women were of civic concern. The social status of women had undergone a striking change in the fifteenth century as women became valued supporting partners to husbands in the merchant and noble classes. This rise in social status outside the domestic sphere was paralleled by an increase in domestic status. The ability to read and write increased the marriage potential of women in all classes, thereby increasing their value as family members. Alberti declared that the family reflected the pattern of the State, and an extended gens family that was secured through marriage alliances increased that family's value to the State. Educated women of greater familial value were
therefore of greater civic value, according to civic humanism. Women in the civic schema became valuable commodities as potential brides, mothers of children, and assets to the family. Daughters were therefore educated in the humanities, this being useful to them as potential wives and mothers.45

Women of noble families were educated as potential rulers, or as mothers of rulers. The Montefeltre family that ruled the papal vicariates of the Marche educated its daughters for this purpose.46 The family's noble status made it likely that the daughters would marry into princely families, as many of them did. Unlike Englishmen, northern Italians had fewer objections to women serving as regents for absent husbands or minor male heirs, thus increasing the possibility that a wife or mother might be directly involved in state affairs. Three generations of Montefeltre women did, in fact, participate actively in the political arena.47

The education of children within families of all classes was a duty for both parents, though most of the responsibility for the early education of children fell to the mother. “The [elementary] education of children . . . is . . . certainly the most serious of a wife’s duties,” proclaimed Francesco Barbaro.48 A fifteenth-century Florentine bookseller declared that the first rule he expected his wife to obey was to bring up her children piously.49 A mother who could read and write was better prepared to raise and educate children, increasing the necessity for the education of women. This was an indirect response to the civic humanist advocacy of vitacivile.

The curriculum prescribed for girls by Leonardo Bruni was grounded in Latin. In a letter to Battista da Montefeltro,50 Bruni outlined an entire curriculum that began with instruction in Latin and included readings in Cicero, Vergil, Livy, Sallust, and the Church Fathers. He treated writing as a separate skill that should also be learned.51 He excluded arithmetic, geometry, rhetoric, and astrology as being in the sphere of men.52 History was accepted as being of potential value both for civic and moral instruction.53 Vittorino da Feltre added music to the curriculum, while Matteo Palmieri added both music and geometry as training for the voice and mind.54 Those women in Northern Italy who did benefit from the opportunity to gain an education were thus exposed to a curriculum beyond simply reading and writing, though not a full liberal arts education equivalent to that of men.

Women in sixteenth-century England were not as well-educated, largely because of Christian humanist influences. English Christian humanists rationalized the education of women, if they were to be educated at all, as a means of preserving and promoting Christian virtue. The literacy data clearly indicate that English persons of both sexes were significantly less well-educated than Florentines, and far fewer English women were educated in comparison to their Italian counterparts.55 When women were given an education, the curriculum was much more limited than that found in Italy, focusing almost exclusively on Christian texts and religious studies.56 Opportunities for higher education were non-existent, and examples of educated women are fewer in England than in northern Italy.
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Not every Christian humanist in England favored the education of women. Writing in 1579, Thomas Salter stressed that

it [was] not mete nor convenient for a Maiden to be taught or trayned up in learnyng of humane artes, in whome a vertuous demeanour & honest behaviour would be a more sightlier ornament, then the light or vaine glorie of learnyng.  

In true Christian humanist tradition, Salter cited no less an authority than Jesus Christ, who “utterly condemned worldly wisdom as inimical to good life and religion.” Sir Thomas Overbury expressed the common English view that books were a man’s prerogative and that learning made women mentally unstable. He believed that women should be restricted to the care of their families since they would never be magistrates or professors of philosophy. Juan Luis Vives, tutor to Katherine of Aragon and Mary Tudor, observed that “learned women be suspected of many: as who sayth the subtilie of lernynge be a nourishment for the malitiousnes of their nature.”

Vives became a major influence on the education of English women through his association with the Court. In the space of just one year, Vives wrote three books on the education of women. Only seven other such books had been produced in England over the preceding 500 years. His treatise, “Instruction of a Christen Woman,” was widely translated and published in England. In this treatise, he advocated a closely circumscribed curriculum, barring any subject not related to Christian piety, “as for a woman hathe no charge to se to, but her honesty and chastity.” By filling a woman’s mind with moral teachings, he reasoned, she would be less likely to become frivolous. Natural philosophy, mathematics, political reasoning, rhetoric, and even history were expressly forbidden. Vives grounded the purpose for educating a woman entirely in directing them to virtuous conduct and arming them against the temptation of vice.

Desiderius Erasmus, one of the leading humanists of the age, was of the opinion that women were capricious, vain, shallow intriguers, though he eventually rationalized the basic education of women as a means to sustain Christian virtue and improve the early home-life of boys. This may have been due to his close association with Sir Thomas More and his exposure to More’s well-educated daughters. Erasmus remarked in a letter to John Faber, regarding More’s household:

You would say that in that place was Plato’s Academy. But I do the house injury in likening it to Plato’s Academy. I should rather call it a school or university of Christian religion. For there is none therein who does not study the branches of a liberal education. Their special care is piety and virtue.

Erasmus eventually penned a treatise in classical dialogue form that specifically addressed the issue of education for women. In “The Abbot and the Learned Lady,” Magdalia
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asked if "a wife's business is to manage the household and rear the children...can [I] manage so big a job without wisdom? Books teach me this wisdom." However, no specific curriculum was prescribed, and his earlier work, De pueris, addressed only male children. Thomas Elyot's 1534 *Defence of Good Women*, though it also failed to advocate a specific curriculum, expressed the true humanist spirit for the training of women in moral philosophy. Elyot perceived, that without prudence in moral philosophy, women might be brought lightly into error and folly, and made therefore unmete for the company, whereunto they were ordained: I mean, to be assistance and comfort to man through their fidelities.

The method for educating women in England differed from that of northern Italy. Almost all girls were educated at home, either by their parents or a hired tutor. This method served to reinforce Christian virtue by limiting exposure to the temptations of the larger world, and reflected the earlier tradition of cloistering women. A tutored education was necessarily limited to the wealthier and privileged classes and the examples of this practice are correspondingly limited. The royal ladies Mary Tudor, Elizabeth, Jane Grey, and Katherine Parr were all relatively well educated. The daughters of Sir Thomas More and of Sir Anthony Cooke were well known for their education. These examples are remarkable for their uniqueness, however. A cursory review of modern collections of Renaissance literature reveals essentially no female authors incorporated into the collections. One collection comprised specifically of Early-Modern English female writers contains the work of just twelve authors in the period before 1600.

The non-wealthy, non-noble classes had few opportunities for education. The Dissolution of the Monasteries in the 1530s eliminated convent education. English grammar schools admitted girls, but dismissed them either by the age of nine years or as soon as they learned to read. Writing as a separate skill was not taught to girls in grammar schools. The parish priest theoretically educated children among the poorer classes, both male and female, though in practice this seldom occurred for either sex. The State took little interest in the education of children, and few publicly supported schools developed. Thus education for young women was available, in practice, only to the noble and wealthy classes, and was limited to subjects that promoted Christian virtue. Education for non-noble women in England was essentially non-existent, as evidenced by Cressy's study revealing that literacy rates for women in England in 1500 were less than one percent.

Women outside the aristocratic and wealthy merchant classes in Northern Italy were far less likely to acquire even a basic education. In northern Italy noble and wealthy women were educated primarily within the home under tutors hired for the purpose. Paul Grendler states that almost all girls in this class learned at least to read and write. Middle-class girls were allowed to attend outside schools, giving them the opportunity to be active in a civic social setting. However, there were thirty female pupils in outside schools in Venice in 1587. Convents also provided an education to middle class girls. This practice was common enough
that the papacy felt compelled to publish regulations governing it. Convent education was usually limited to vernacular reading and writing and domestic skills. There were numerous female teachers in Northern Italy during this time, indicating numerous girls were educated in some fashion. Lower class girls had fewer, if any, opportunities for an education.

The most striking difference between attitudes governing the education of women during this period occurs in respect to higher education. Women in Italy differed markedly from their English cousins in that they were occasionally able to pursue a university education. The University of Bologna allowed women to attend lectures, albeit in a limited capacity, beginning at the university's founding in 1088. Bettina Gozzadini received a doctorate there in 1237. In the mid-Quattrocento, Novella Calderini taught her husband Giovanni da Lignano's law classes while he was away in service to the papal curia. Dorotea Bucca occupied a chair of medicine at the same university just before her death in 1436. Civic humanism not only advocated basic education of women to further the interests of the family and State, it apparently at least tolerated higher education in some instances and locales.

The opportunity for education beyond the elementary level was essentially non-existent for women in England during the Renaissance. Oxford University did not allow attendance by women until late in the nineteenth century, and it did not grant degrees to women until 1927. Even then the number of women allowed to attend lectures was limited until 1956. The University of Cambridge began allowing women to attend lectures as a "privilege" in 1871. They were allowed to sit for the Tripos exams beginning in 1881, but no degrees were granted until 1923. The effects of English Christian humanism on the education of women have therefore extended into the twentieth century, limiting educational opportunities for women. When Renaissance Englishwomen were educated at all, it was to promote personal virtue and piety, not to serve any larger social or civic purpose. Not until the twentieth century did women in both regions have similar opportunities for education.

Education of women in the Renaissance was an issue of civic concern in Northern Italy and of Christian concern in England. This difference developed in part from the form of humanism that had come to dominance in each region. Civic humanism had developed in the Northern Italian city-states, where an education facilitated expected participation in the political process. Women were more likely to be educated, and to receive a broader education than women in England, so that they might promote civic virtue in their male children. In contrast, Christian humanism gained pre-eminence in monarchical, agrarian England where expectations for political participation in were lower. Women were far less likely to receive an education, and its purpose was to promote Christian virtue and piety rather than civic participation. Education for women lagged far behind that of men in both regions until the twentieth century.
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NOTES

1 One notable exception is the 1916 Ph.D. dissertation of Mary Agnes Cannon, The Education of Women During the Renaissance (Westport, Conn.: Hyperion Press, 1916).


6 A search utilizing the online search engine “JSTOR” (http://www.jstor.org), as well as printed historical abstracts, revealed no journal articles since 1993 that specifically addressed the education of women prior to 1600.


8 The population of London in 1340 was approximately 40,000 to 50,000, while the population of England as a nation was approximately 4,000,000. Internet site at http://www.demographia.com/dm-lon31.htm, accessed on 17 April 2002; Kenneth O. Morgan, ed., The Oxford History of Britain, 1999 edition, 212.

9 Ibid., 112.

10 Ibid., 132.


14 Guy, 265.

15 Woodward, 69.

16 Charlton, 33.


18 Paul Grondler, Schooling in Renaissance Italy: Literacy and Learning, 1300-1600 (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989), 72.

19 Ibid.

20 Ibid., 75.
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71 Ibid., 78.
73 Woodward, 293.
75 Ibid., 144.
79 Katherine Woodard, Vittorino da Feltre and Other Humanist Educators (New York: Teachers College, Columbia University Press, 1963), 248. The early Church Fathers believed that the New Testament declared that women were not eligible to preach or to debate theology. See I Timothy 2:12.
81 Grendler, 88.
82 Charlton, 32.
84 Ibid., 42.
85 Ibid., 47.
87 Sachs, 16.
89 Ibid. David Cressy has also identified that Renaissance women might be able to read but not write.
90 Ibid., 244.
91 Woodward, Vittorino da Feltre, 248.
92 Blade, 35.
93 Supra, 8.
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57 Thomas Salter, “The Mirror of Modesty,” quoted in Ambiguous Realities, 201. Holm observes that, paradoxically, Salter is specifically addressing “all Mothers, Matrones, and Maidens of England.” He therefore assumes the prior acquisition of the very education he is opposing.
58 Ibid., 208.
59 Henderson and McManus, 86.
61 Ibid., 51.
62 Henderson and McManus, 82.
64 Woodward, Studies in Education: 208.
65 Ibid.
66 Woodward, Education in the Renaissance, 125.
67 Charlton, 204. This citation is problematic in that the original letter from Erasmus to John Faber is not longer extant. The portion quoted here is taken from Charlton from another non-original source, making documentation of the Sixteenth-Century source very difficult.
70 Quoted in Ambiguous Realities, 57.
71 Henderson and McManus, 85. Cooke’s daughter Mildred went on to become the wife of William Cecil, Lord Burghley, and Anne became the mother of Francis Bacon.
72 Baker, Herschel and Hyder E. Rollins, eds., The Renaissance in England: Non-Dramatic Prose and Verse of the Sixteenth Century (Lexington, Mass.: D.C. Heath and Co., 1950). Several other anthologies in the San Francisco State Library collection were also reviewed. In all, only one author was represented: two private letters of Queen Elizabeth were included in one anthology.
73 Cullen, Patrick and Betty S. Travitsky, eds., The Early Modern Englishwoman: A Facsimile Library of Essential Works (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1996). While the paucity of works by women writers may reflect modern patriarchal prejudice against female authors of the Renaissance period, it should be noted that numerous collections of works by Continental Renaissance women are currently available, indicating an underlying scarcity of examples from England.
74 Ibid., 88.
76 supra. 9.
77 Grendler, 101.
79 Ibid., 97.
80 Ibid., 90.
82 Ibid., 90.
83 Ibid., 90.
85 Blade, 31.
87 The British “Tripos” is similar to the American “major field of study.” Rita McWilliams Tullbery, Women at Cambridge (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 1.