



Women in history: 1450- 1600's

Catherine de Medici (1519-1589)

- ❖ Born into Europe's famous Medici family, Catherine became Queen of France in 1547, having married the future Henry II in 1533; however, Henry died in 1559 and Catherine ruled as regent until 1559. This was an era of intense religious strife and, despite trying to follow moderate policies, Catherine became associated with, even blamed for, the Massacre of St. Bartholomew's Day in 1572.



Elizabeth I (1558-1603)

- ❖ Elizabeth was the fifth and last monarch of the Tudor dynasty. The daughter of Henry VIII, she was born a princess, but her mother, Anne Boleyn, was executed three years after her birth, and Elizabeth was declared illegitimate.
- ❖ Elizabeth sought to end the religious instability recognizing that one day it might challenge her reign, ruled with a group of trusted advisors: William Cecil, and Baron Burghley.
- ❖ She was known for her policies and for the fact that she was less assertive than England previous monarchs.
 - ❖ This is seen in one of her mottos "*video et taceo*" (I see and say nothing
 - ❖ "*I will make no windows unto men's souls*" which describes her approach on religion in England.
- ❖ And although intrinsically Elizabeth did not defeat the Spanish armada, Elizabeth dwindled the armada making Spain's naval fleet less threatening (1588)



Elizabeth's Policies

Policies

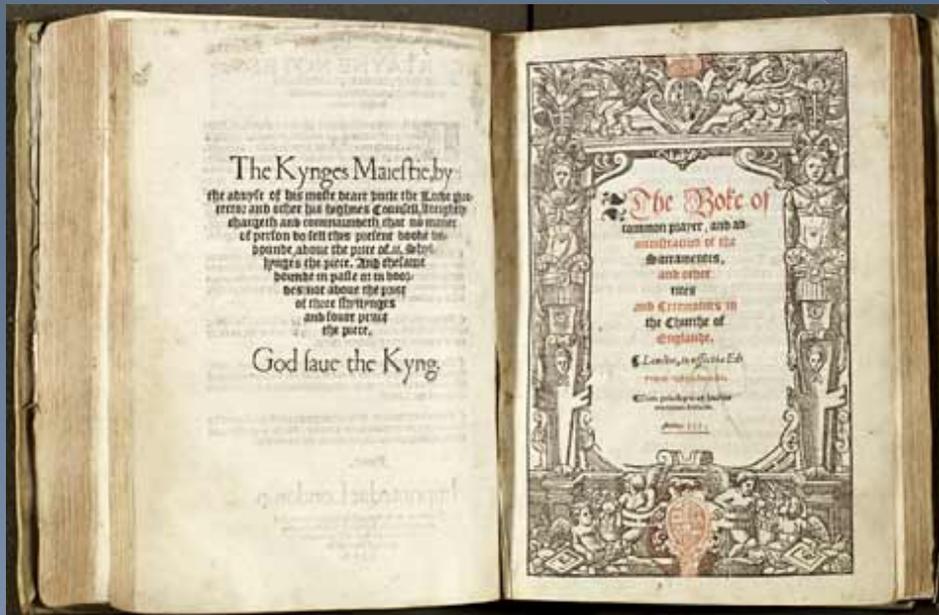
- ❖ Treaty of Nonsuch (1585)
- ❖ Act of Uniformity (1559)
- ❖ Nine Years War (1594-1603)

Significance

- ❖ Treaty between England and the Netherlands in which England provided the Netherlands with soldiers and horses in order in exchange of Robert Dudley and his post.

Reinforced the book of common prayer, noting that every man had to go to church once a week or be fined .

Elizabeth faced her most severe test in Ireland, in this war against Hugh O'niell



WOMEN IN GUILDS

Bakers consisted of male as well as female job occupants and they made and sold bread of different varieties. Because bread was the staple food throughout the Middle Ages, regulations concerning bakers were in force from an early time. Most of these involved penalties for insufficient bread in the community, or for poor quality product.

Brewers the most common association most people will call to mind concerning women in this context will be that of the *alewife*. Women were quite common in this industry, the *alewife* in particular referring predominantly to a woman whose husband was in some other trade, usually bakers. Evidence suggests that women made as much if not more of the ale and beer served in the Middle Ages as men.



Women in Guilds continued.....

- **Butchers:** Women often continued as butchers after the death of their spouses, and in this one area seemed to be somewhat immune from the protection usually afforded women by being social 'non-entities.' Butcher's wives, not the butchers themselves, were frequently fined for leaving dung and entrails in the street.

Women and Education

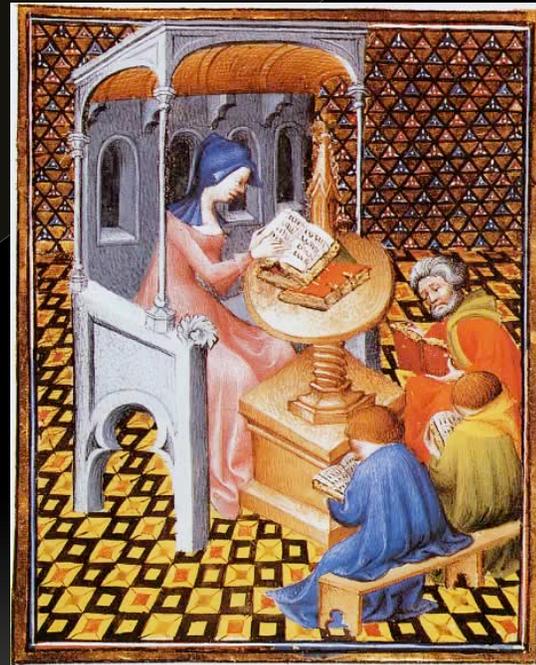
Properzia de Rossi - Italian Artist

- ❖ The social structure of sixteenth century Europe allowed women limited opportunities for involvement; they served largely as managers of their households. Women were expected to focus on practical domestic pursuits and activities that encouraged the betterment of their families, and more particularly, their husbands. In most cases education for women was not advocated
- ❖ Religious study was considered an acceptable pursuit for women, and provided them with another context within which they could communicate their individual ideas and sentiments.
- ❖ Women were also attracted by music. Women's involvement with medieval music took a variety of forms, and they were also included in art, due to the attractiveness of renaissance art and the new style of Baroque



Nuns

- A woman who belongs to a religious group devoted to active service or meditation, living under vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience.
- Hospitals were staffed by nuns
- Performed social work among the poor
- St. Theresa of Avila a well known nun had a big impact on the Counter-Reformation



Teresa of Avila (1515-1582)

- Spanish nun born in Alva
- Teresa founded 17 reformed nunneries.
- This saint followed God's orders like modern day business women
- Most known works her autobiography, the *Way of Perfection*, and the *Interior Castle*



Isabella d'Este (1474-1539)

- known as "The First Lady of the Renaissance"
- Well educated
- At sixteen she could speak Greek and Latin, play the lute, sing, dance, and debate



Isabella d'Este

- founded a school for young women to observe a strict code of moral
- Patron of the arts
- Wrote letters on many topics including politics and war
- Isabella ruled Mantua alone following husband's death

Angela Merici (1474-1540)

- Angela Merici was born in Northern Italy and lived on Lake Garda with her parents and sister
- Entire family died
- establish a community of religious and dedicated young women called Sisters of Ursuline

Angela Merici

- established infirmaries for those suffering from syphilis along with widows and their families, and founded an orphanage and a shelter for former prostitutes
- In 1532 women joined her to form Angela's Community

Laura Cereta (1469 – 1499)

- A Renaissance humanist and feminist
- Born Brescia
- sent to a convent at seven to be educated and learned religion, reading and writing
- publishing a volume of her letters in 1488, called *Epistolae familiares*
- *Letters* discussed defending women's right to education, oppressing women, war, death, fate, chance, and malice.



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