

Acknowledgments

At the outset of this project several years ago I was puzzled by the lack of source material in the collections of the Harvard libraries, where I did the greater part of my research. Works by seventeenth- and eighteenth-century women, even texts well known in their time, were often nowhere to be found in the United States. Research at Harvard for my last book had turned up seemingly far more uncanonical and obscure items. It didn't take me long to realize that gender made all the difference, for the items I had successfully located before were by men. Travel to France, a normal part of this type of project, was on my agenda in any event, but I decided to do what I could to remedy the situation at one of North America's major research libraries. Thanks to the graciousness of Assunta Pisani and the generosity of Harvard's Collection Development Department at the Widener Library, many of the titles cited in these pages can now be found on microfilm in the Harvard libraries. My experience is of course not unique; ferreting out long-neglected sources is one of the pleasures and frustrations of feminist scholars, particularly those who specialize in the early modern period. Librarians on both sides of the Atlantic spared me incalculable time and effort and provided precious information. At the Widener and Houghton libraries of Harvard University and at the Bibliothèque Nationale, the Bibliothèque de l'Arse-nal, and the Bibliothèque du Sénat in Paris, I was met with unfailing help and patience. I am especially grateful to Marion Schoon, Barbara Daims, and Charles Montalbano at the Widener and Madeleine Colomb at the Bibliothèque Nationale.

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