

Women in Book History Bibliography

Women in Book History Bibliography. Texas A&M University: 2016. <www.womensbookhistory.org>

[Women in Book History Bibliography](http://www.womensbookhistory.org) is a very useful tool for researchers interested in the scholarship devoted to the topic. Compiled by Cait Coker and Kate Ozment, two doctoral students in English at Texas A&M University, it has grown from 165 entries at the time of the web site's launch on May 2, 2016, to 588 entries as of November 11, 2016. Whether this sort of growth can be sustained as the two editors keep up with current scholarship and also expand the retrospective coverage of the project remains to be seen, but they are off to an auspicious start and one would hope that this guide to the field will only increase in scope as time goes by. It is not meant to be a completed, final, comprehensive survey but an ever-changing and fluid work in progress, or as they put it, "a growing organism."

First, some definitions. "The bibliography is a resource that lists secondary sources on women's writing and participation in the book trades." The editors go on to say, "We define book history in the same terms as Leslie Howsam in *Old Books and New Histories*: the intersection of history, literary studies, and bibliography." And while both Coker and Ozment are interested in the early modern period themselves (pre-1800) and their study reflects this personal and professional specialization, the bibliography itself is expansive chronologically, geographically, and linguistically. Though English and studies of English and American topics predominate at present, French, German, Spanish, Italian, and other studies are included with increasing frequency. Broad subject areas include publishers and the book trade, reading and consumption, authorship, professional writing, manuscript and letters, and theory and meta-analyses of the field. Included in the bibliography are monographs, journal articles, and chapters in books. With a handful of exceptions, theses and dissertations haven't been included in any systematic way, but that may change going forward.

Second, how does the site work? It is clean, attractive, and easy to navigate. One can take a bird's eye view and generate a list of their entire corpus (alphabetical by author's last name or chronological by publication date). As of this writing, the earliest study they have listed dates from 1862, Alphonse Alkan, *Les Femmes Compositrices de l'Imprimerie Sous La Revolution Française En 1794*. This chronological display is especially helpful in getting a sense of how scholarship in this field has developed over time. At present, they have included only 21 citations to works published before 1970; one suspects this will change as new entries are added retrospectively, but it also suggests how feminist scholarship of the past 40 years or so has shaped the field. One can also generate lists based on five time periods: antiquity to medieval, 23 studies at present; early modern, 1500-1800, with 199 citations; the nineteenth century with 191; early twentieth century with 99; and post World War II, 1946-present, with 202 entries.

The editors have also assigned entries to broad subjects: authorship, with 108 entries; the book trades, 157 entries; feminist editing, 54 entries; genre studies, 76 entries; manuscript and letters, 25 entries; reading and consumption, 118 entries; and professional writing, 33 entries. Coker and Ozment also provide a selective list of digital projects and resources beyond their web site. Most importantly, they solicit contributions from others and provide links for contacting them with suggestions, new entries, and corrections.

As with any web site of this kind, one hopes that it will be maintained and augmented in the future. In addition to Coker and Ozment, we also must thank the English department at Texas A&M, which provided the funding and material support necessary. One suspects that graduate students in the field will especially benefit from the site but it should also be useful for faculty and other scholars. The bibliography is not a searchable database (for example, no queries are possible by author, keyword, or subject). One clicks and views either the entire checklist or facets of it. But this sort of interactivity is not a great liability and in fact, the design of the site also serves to underscore the importance of enumerative bibliography, still an essential activity in our digital present and future. Of the making of books there is no end. So, too, with the making of lists. Coker and Ozment are to be commended.

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