historical research, will be of interest not only to literary scholars but also to social historians and historians of manuscript and print culture.

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In this superb study, Gillian Wright examines within the material environments of manuscript and print the work of five seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century women writers (Anne Southwell, Anne Bradstreet, Katherine Philips, Anne Finch, and Mary Monck), whose poetry collections were either constructed by them or by individuals close to them. One of the distinctive features of this work is its recognition that the production of women’s writing involves more agents than one, especially when manuscript compilation and print publication were the result of male transcription, selection, arrangement, and editing. In those cases where the compilers were not the authors, what was at stake were which writings were to be preserved or excluded, how they were to be organized, and, implicitly, how each poet was to be remembered.

Wright first discusses Anne Southwell as a manuscript poet, the only one of the five writers whose work did not reach print in its own era. She emphasizes that Southwell operated outside the usual social networks of manuscript transmission and that her husband, Henry Sipthorpe, had a crucial role in shaping her two extant manuscripts. Southwell herself wrote in a variety of secular and religious genres and sometimes engaged in acts of literary appropriation. Wright portrays her as militantly Protestant, confident in her literary activities; yet, while the literary talents were Anne’s, the production of the collections of her verse was in Henry’s scribal and editorial hands.

In dealing with the poetry of Anne Bradstreet, who left no manuscript remains, Wright works back from the biographical and print evidence of her writing to delineate the relationship of her public and personal poems and their presentation in print in The Tenth Muse (1650) and Several Poems (1678), mainly in the former book. While her relationship with Thomas Dudley was central to her writing, it was her brother-in-law in London, John Woodbridge, who made
significant decisions of how this work was to be presented and who arranged the publication of the first collection of her verse. Woodbridge, Wright argues, emphasized Bradstreet’s observance of her wifely duties and her status as “a respected member of her community” (68) as she wrote verse that was “generated by and within a male-dominated context of textual exchange” (74) — mainly that “between father and daughter” (77). Wright points out that “the much remarked-on dichotomy between public and private poems in Bradstreet’s oeuvre does not . . . reflect a division between her early poetry — public, didactic, and still obsessed with Europe — and the later, more American poems of her maturity, but is instead a construct of print-publication” (79). The production of her verse in print, then, distorts our view of her literary career. The decision to exclude the personal verse from The Tenth Muse, Wright suggests, was Woodbridge’s. Conscious of the critical preference for Bradstreet’s personal poetry, Wright argues for the literary value of “The Four Monarchies,” seeing in this work her political rewriting of Raleigh, elements of whose Historie of the World she used to comment on contemporary politics, thus laying claim to woman’s right to intervene in the public world.

Katherine Philips is at the center of Wright’s study. The production of her writing, however, is the most complicated one Wright examines in this book. Here the surviving evidence in both manuscript and print allows us to see the full picture of the production, transmission, compilation, editing, and dissemination of a poet’s work. Wright examines closely the four major manuscript compilations of Philips’s poetry to trace the extension of the work from her literary coterie to the broader readership of the unauthorized and authorized print editions. The Tutin manuscript, a selective collection done in the 1650s, separates the philosophical poems from the personal ones in a “purposeful arrangement” (105): associated with literary royalism, it contains, by contrast with the later collections, few pieces dealing with contemporary politics. The Clarke manuscript and the Dering manuscript, transcribed when Philips and her husband James were in Ireland in 1662–63, show signs of authorial revision, but retain the basic order of the Tutin manuscript. The collections are still royalist and they demonstrate her “willingness to permit circulation of a selected range of her poetry, even if only to a limited degree amongst friends and allies” (126). Poems by Several Persons (1663), printed in Dublin, was supposedly, as Wright observes, an authorized publication. By contrast, the unauthorized 1664 Poems, by the incomparable Mrs. K.P. embarrassed the author, especially because it identified by name two friends she fictionally disguised in the verse, Mary Aubrey and Anne Owen. This print
edition, Wright argues, prompted Philips to undertake further revision of her work before her death, the fruits of which are visible in the Rosania manuscript and the 1667 edition of her Poems. Wright, finally, is unequivocal about Philips’s accomplishments and example, stating that this was a crucial moment “when a young woman with little formal education and no conspicuously literary relatives could engage competently, creatively and assertively with the most stubbornly masculine poetic genres in the English language” (144). Although the role of male relatives and publishers in the production of this poet’s work may be less visible than it is in some of the other examples Wright offers, she does suggest that the posthumous print edition may have been edited by her husband.

The chapter on the Jacobite Anne Finch deals with the production of four collections of her verse (three in manuscript) as a collaboration with her husband Heneage, who was her main scribe for thirty years and also the editor of two of the manuscripts. Wright goes so far as to say that “Anne Finch’s poetry is almost unimaginable without the support it received — even beyond her death — from her husband Heneage” (154) as her ideal reader and the overseer of the compilation of the Wellesley manuscript, which he fashioned as a memorial to her, structuring for it an optimistic devotional conclusion meant to summarize her career. Although some of her poems started to appear in printed collections from the 1690s onward, she initially felt comfortable having them circulate only among friends and acquaintances. The 1723 printed Miscellany Poems, however, still assumed a literary community appreciative of her work. Her Jacobitism and political conservatism, attractive to Alexander Pope, who included her verse in his edited collection, Poems on Several Occasions (1717), made her fearful of a hostile reception by readers outside her coterie.

Wright discusses Mary Monck, whose work was published posthumously by Jacob Tonson in Marinda: Poems and Translations upon Several Occasions (1716), as a manuscript poet whose work was circulated among few of her friends. Her father, Robert Molesworth, an important Whig writer with an initially disastrous diplomatic career, arranged for the publication of her work, dedicating it to Princess Caroline of Ansbach. Wright states that there is “no good reason to suppose that Monck herself had any role in preparing her poems and translations for publication” (196). She also identifies problems of attribution, shifting the attention finally to Molesworth’s literary and political activities in the production of this memorial volume.

In the conclusion to her study, Wright takes the opportunity to question the conventional narrative of progress of women’s writing. She looks back at the
achievement of Emilia Lanyer’s *Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum*, which was remarkably confident in its engagement of poetic tradition, manipulation of genre, and appropriation of social and cultural authority, to observe that the history following is not one of ever-improving conditions for women’s literary agency. She compares the work of Margaret Cavendish and Lucy Hutchinson, the first print-oriented and the second, manuscript-based, to examine their roles in the dissemination of women’s writings. Wright identifies a “decisive change” (245) in women’s literary possibilities in the late 1660s and early 1670s, but sees only the mid-1680s as the time when women poets became concerned about their professional status. Throughout the study, Wright points to male editors or publishers crucial in bringing women’s writing to a broad readership. As a final case study, she briefly discusses Mary Chudleigh, who until her mid-forties remained almost exclusively manuscript-based, and then became a successful publishing author after her work received attention from influential men, such as John Dryden, William Walsh, and Jacob Tonson. She alludes to Chudleigh’s “self-confidence” (251) as a publishing author in a “transitional moment in the history of English women’s poetry” (252) in which women could “print-publish original and even controversial poetry . . . respectfully, and without scandal” (252), but she suggests that, although many women favored manuscript, it was the publishers, with an eye on profit, who were the real decision-makers determining what reached print. The former was the medium that at least initially allowed women a less mediated way of reaching readers, even though down the line of transmission in both manuscript and print other producers changed, arranged, and paratextually framed what they originally wrote. The literary history Wright sets forth in this study is brilliantly executed at every textual and contextual level.

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