



Women in Early Modern Europe, 1500-1700

By Cissie Fairchild

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In this wide-ranging volume, Cissie Fairchild rejects conventional accounts of the Early Modern period that claim it was a period of diminishing power and rights for European women. Instead, she shows that it was a period of positive changes that challenged and led to the eventual destruction of traditional misogynist notions that women were inferior to men.

The book explores the historical basis of patriarchal views of women and describes the great intellectual debate over the nature and roles of women taking place at the time. It gives an account of women's daily lives and looks at women's work during the period. The book also deals with the role of women in religion and with witchcraft and the prosecution of women as witches. The book concludes by examining the relationship between women and the State.

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Editorial Review

From the Back Cover

The early modern period in European history – the age of the witch-hunting craze - is often considered a time of setbacks for women. It's associated with the loss of the economic and political power and prestige they had enjoyed in the Middle Ages and their subjection to the growing authority of male patriarchs in the family and state.

In this third volume in The Longman History of European Women series, Professor Fairchilds challenges this view. Synthesizing the latest research in the field, Fairchilds reveals a time of positive change for women where many of our modern concepts about love and family and notions of equality between men and women were formulated. Significant changes included: challenges to the idea that women were inferior to and more sinful than men; a rethinking of women's possible social role; a redefinition of marriage, stressing the necessity of love and equality between husband and wife; a new emphasis on motherhood as woman's primary role; the spread of literacy and the growth of female self-expression in literature and the arts and new roles for women in the churches and the state. In addition, the age produced a remarkable cluster of female rulers, along with the first demands by women for political rights equal to those of men.

Early modern woman inhabited many roles: wife and mother, worker and property owner, artist and scientist, nun and martyr, citizen, soldier and ruler. This book portrays the early modern period as a time when women not only helped shape their world but also challenged traditional notions of their place within it.

Cissie Fairchilds is Professor Emeritus of History at Syracuse University, New York, USA. She is the author of *Poverty and Charity in Aix-en-Provence , 1640-1789* (1976) and *Domestic Enemies: Servants and their Masters in Old Regime France* (1984).

About the Author

Cissie Fairchilds is Professor of History at Syracuse University and is an expert in 18th Century French history, Early Modern European social history and European Women's History. Her previous publications include *The Production and Marketing of Populuxe Goods in Eighteenth-Century Paris in Consumption and the World of Goods* (1993), *Domestic Enemies: Servants and Their Masters in Old Regime France* (1984) and *Poverty and Charity in Aix-en-Provence , 1640-1789*(1976).

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