

Introduction

The Other Voice

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What we know about Jeanne Flore, if indeed there *was* a Jeanne Flore, we glean solely from her printed works, a total of seven tales, each introduced and narrated by a female storyteller. Despite its relatively small volume, Jeanne Flore's body of work significantly elucidates important questions about women's status and roles in the culture of Renaissance France, particularly in the city of Lyon. Jeanne Flore's contemporaries Pernette du Guillet and Louise Labé also lived in Lyon; each had a volume of poetry printed in her name, and prominent male authors dedicated poems to both women in praise of their beauty and learning. Some thirty years after *Comptes amoureux* was first published, the Dames des Roches would host a literary coterie in Poitiers, publish both poetry and prose, and gain the recognition of noted male and female intellectuals.¹ Unlike these women, we have no written record of Jeanne Flore aside from her two published works.² We do not know who this author was. Or even *if* she was. Scholars and students of French Renaissance literature generally accept that Jeanne Flore is a pseudonym, and names ranging from Héli-senne de Crenne, Clément Marot, Étienne Dolet, Bonaventure des Périers, Maurice Scève, and even Marguerite de Navarre have been suggested as possible authors,

1. Works by these contemporaries and near-contemporaries of Jeanne Flore are included in this series. See Louise Labé, *Complete Poetry and Prose*, ed. Deborah Lesko Baker, trans. Annie Finch (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), Pernette du Guillet, *Complete Poems: A Bilingual Edition*, ed. Karen Simroth James, trans. Marta Rijn Finch (Toronto: CRRS, 2010), and Madeleine and Catherine des Roches, *From Mother and Daughter: Poems, Dialogues, and Letters of Les dames Des Roches*, ed. and trans. Anne R. Larsen (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993).

2. Jeanne Flore does earn a reference in *La Bibliothèque d'Antoine du Verdier, seigneur de Vauprivias* (Lyon: Barthélémy Honorat, 1585): "Jeanne Flore a escrit Comptes amoureux touchant la punition que fait Venus de veux qui mesprisent le vray amour. {imprimé à Lyon 8°, à la marque d'Icarus, & à Paris par Pöcet le Preux 1532," (761).

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contributors, or editors of the collection.³ And furthermore, the name Jeanne Flore appears as part of the title, *Comptes amoureux par madame Jeanne Flore*, as if to signal that the name is part of the fictional construct.

Mireille Huchon has generated a great deal of discussion with her study *Louise Labé, une créature de papier*, in which she proposes that Labé's *Euvres* (Lyon: Jean de Tournes, 1555) is an elaborate literary hoax in which Lyon's intellectual elite were involved.⁴ There is convincing evidence of this type of literary deception occurring in sixteenth-century Italy. Ortensio Lando posed as both Isabella Sforza and Lucrezia Gonzaga in order to cultivate heterodox religious views, for example.⁵ But the lack of archival evidence of a writer, particularly

3. A number of new and previously published studies about Jeanne Flore were gathered in *Actualité de Jeanne Flore*, ed. Diane Desrosiers-Bonin, Éliane Viennot, and Régine Reynolds-Cornell (Paris: Champion, 2004). See also Gabriel-André Pérouse's introduction to *Contes amoureux par Madame Jeanne Flore* (Lyon: CNRS, 1980). Régine Reynolds-Cornell has proposed several hypotheses about Jeanne Flore's identity. See "Introduction," in *Les Contes amoureux* (Saint-Etienne: Presses Universitaires de Saint-Etienne, 2005), 9–39. Additional references are listed in the bibliography.

4. See Mireille Huchon, *Louise Labé une créature de papier* (Geneva: Droz, 2006). Huchon suggests that a similar hoax is at play in Jeanne Flore's works (66–69). The Société internationale pour l'étude des femmes de l'Ancien régime maintains a page on its website, "Louise attaquée!" <http://www.siefar.org/debats/louise-labe.html>, that chronicles contributions to a debate on Huchon's hypothesis.

See also Dominique Varry's unpublished conference paper, "Sur quelques pages d'une édition de Louise Labé," presented at the colloquium *Copier et contrefaire à la Renaissance. Faux et usage de faux*. (Paris, 2009). Varry reveals that the copy of the 1555 edition of Labé's *Euvres* on which Huchon bases her hypothesis was significantly altered in the nineteenth century, calling into question aspects of Huchon's argument based on this copy's material presentation. See Dominique Varry's personal website, where he summarizes the paper on the page, "Dévoiler les faux," <http://dominique-varry.enssib.fr/mpde/34>.

5. On Sforza, see Francine Daenens, "Isabella Sforza: Beyond the Stereotype," in *Women in Italian Renaissance Culture and Society*, ed. Letizia Panizza (Oxford: European Humanities Research Center, 2000), 35–56. On Gonzaga, see Meredith Ray, "Textual Collaboration and Spiritual Partnership in Sixteenth-Century Italy: The Case of Ortensio Lando and Lucrezia Gonzaga," *Renaissance Quarterly* 52, no. 3 (2009): 694–747. Ray suggests: "It is clear from their repeated literary invocations of one another that Lando and Gonzaga had a long and mutually beneficial association: Lando by using Gonzaga's name and persona both to authorize and enliven his works, Gonzaga by the celebrity and fame she gained through Lando's repeated invocations of her virtue" (697).

of a woman writer, is not altogether unusual for the time due to the social stigma associated with women's speech, the ambiguity of the author-figure, and the various overlapping, often ambivalent methods of publishing and participating in the literary world.⁶

In Renaissance Europe—and from the very early days of European literary history—authorship was not necessarily tied to notions of originality, authority, or ownership. In the medieval oral and manuscript traditions, authorship could be a cumulative experience; texts were renewed, altered, or expanded with each iteration.⁷ In the era of print, authors increasingly gained control over the text; movable type allowed for a more stable, self-contained, and reliable—though not infallible—medium.⁸ While a paradigm shift in the production and availability of books was underway, as well as in the ways that books presented the figure of the author, these transitions were by no means seamless or structured.⁹ Indeed, as David McKitterick demonstrates in *Print, Manuscript and the Search for Order, 1450–1830*, the still flourishing manuscript and oral traditions and the now burgeoning printing industry were not mutually exclusive. On the contrary,

6. See James's introduction to Pernette du Guillet's *Complete Poems*, 11.

7. See Andrew Bennett, *The Author* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 3.

8. Again, see Andrew Bennett's *The Author*. He offers a concise discussion of the etymology of the term "author" (6–8). He also succinctly summarizes the transition from manuscript to print culture, noting the greater possibility of uniformity of a work and assertion of one's individuality. Whether positive or negative, the result is "a new relationship between text and author. This new, commercial relationship is expressed in a strengthening of the sense of the individuality and privacy of acts of reading and writing, and in the eventual development of legally constituted rights of authorial ownership" (46). See also Cynthia J. Brown, *Poets, Patrons, and Printers: Crisis of Authority in Late Medieval France* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995). Brown suggests that the turn of the sixteenth century marks a paradigm shift in the concept of intellectual property, and she demonstrates that the desire to protect one's work was yet in its nascent stages of development.

On the fallible, human nature of the fledging printing industry, see D. F. McKenzie, "Printers of the Mind," *Making Meaning: "Printers of the Mind" and Other Essays*, ed. Peter D. McDonald and Michael F. Suarez, S. J. (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 2002), 13–85.

9. See David McKitterick, *Print, Manuscript and the Search for Order, 1450–1830* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), particularly chapter 1, "The printed word and the modern bibliographer" (1–21). Here, McKitterick discusses the overlap between scribal and print culture.

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the manuscript and print traditions continued to thrive in parallel, to contribute to their mutual success, and even to depend on each other. Among the elite, lavishly illustrated manuscripts continued to carry a mark of prestige. Several printers of incunabula—Peter Schoeffer, who began his printing career with Johannes Gutenberg in Germany, and Antoine Vérard, a prolific printer and bookseller in Paris, for example—had previously worked as scribes, and, McKitterick explains, the printing industry provided a good bit of work to manuscript artists who would manually decorate printed works with miniatures and ornamental illuminations.¹⁰ For students and scholars, scribal copying of borrowed books for personal use—the *pecia* system—allowed for private study of academic texts. Furthermore, collections and catalogs of books, known as *bibliotheca*, continued to intermingle manuscript and print books well into the seventeenth century.¹¹

These early modern *bibliotheca* provided two types of knowledge to readers and collectors of the period: organizational guidance (enumerative lists of book collections and items contained therein, including groupings by author, genre, medium, etc.) and theoretical guidance (abstract surveys of bodies of knowledge, a sort of survey or inventory of existing literature).¹² For today's readers of sixteenth-century French literature, the *bibliothèques* of Antoine Du Verdier and François de La Croix du Maine offer an insightful indication as to the various manners of participating in literary culture, particularly of women engaging in that culture. Among the myriad male authors listed, the *Bibliothèque d'Antoine du Verdier* (1585) also includes references to women writers, among them Lyonnais women, whose works survive only in collected volumes of poetry, such as that of Jeanne Gaillarde, or circulated only in manuscript copies, such as Anne

10. See chapter 3, "Pictures in Motley," in McKitterick, *Print, Manuscript and the Search for Order*, 53–96. Of particular interest, McKitterick observes: "Because it increased the number of books in circulation, and engendered demand for yet more, for a few generations the spread of printing actually increased demand for miniaturists and other decorators" (67).

11. Again, see McKitterick, *Print, Manuscript and the Search for Order*, 11–12. He notes that the curators of the French Royal Library continued to emphasize manuscript acquisitions over printed books in the early seventeenth century, and its catalog did not differentiate between manuscript and printed books until 1622.

12. See McKitterick, *Print, Manuscript and the Search for Order*, 13.

de Graville's French translations and adaptations of works by Alain Chartier and Giovanni Boccaccio.¹³ Of these, a handful of luxurious manuscripts survive, but less expensive copies also were sold in bookshops alongside printed books.¹⁴ François de La Croix du Maine, in his own *Bibliothèque* contemporary to that of Du Verdier, praises a number of women writers for their learning and wit whose writings had not yet been published, but whose literary activities he either witnessed in intellectual gatherings or heard about from fellow *litterati*.¹⁵

The manuscript and oral traditions did not immediately coalesce with the growing printing industry to create an autonomous print culture. Likewise, various means of composing books continued to coexist. A book need not take shape under the influence of a single individual. Anonymous authorship, ambiguous authorship, collective authorship, and explicit naming of an author were simply additional literary conventions that practitioners in the book trade—printers, scribes, editors, or authors—could employ to package a book with a deliberate strategy for its sale in mind.¹⁶ Indeed, Jeanne Flore's print-

13. On Anne de Graville, see *Encyclopedia of Women in the Renaissance: Italy, France and England*, ed. Diana Robin, Anne Larsen, Carol Levin (Santa Barbara: ABC-Clio, 2007), s.v. "Anne de Graville."

14. See *La Bibliothèque d'Antoine du Verdier*, 762. On other women writers mentioned in this work, see also, for example, Anne de Graville, whose translation of the *Romant des deux amans Palamon et Arcite* du Verdier claims to have seen in manuscript in the bookshop of Monsieur le Comte d'Urfé (42–43), as well as the revelations of St. Brigitte, translated into French and copied by hand for sale in Sala's bookshop in Lyon (132), and verse written by Catherine de Navarre, sister of Henry, king of Navarre (144). Du Verdier also praises the poetic and musical talents of Clémence de Bourges, dedicatee of Louise Labé's *Euvres* (218).

15. See François Grudé, seigneur de La Croix du Maine, *Premier Volume de La Bibliothèque du Sieur de La Croix du Maine* (Paris: Abel l'Angelier, 1584), for example, the entry on Françoise Hubert: "l'un des plus excellens Poètes tragiqs de nostre siecle [...]. Elle n'a encores mis ses escrits en lumière. [One of the most excellent writers of tragic poetry in our century [...]. She has not yet published her writings]." (100).

16. See Margaret J. M. Ezell, *Social Authorship and the Advent of Print* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999), which focuses on the material conditions of authorship in early seventeenth-century Britain. Marcy L. North, in *The Anonymous Renaissance: Cultures of Discretion in Tudor-Stuart England* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), offers a brief and helpful overview of uses of anonymity in her introduction. She notes, for example: "The anonymity that the print industry disseminated sometimes took the form of a missing author's name, but not always. Pseudonyms, ambiguous initials, and the names of institu-

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ers and booksellers printed and packaged the product differently, and those changes illuminate the fascinatingly intricate nature of the literary world in which *Comptes amoureux* was created and published. Authors, editors, printers, and booksellers collaborated and conspired competitively, in effect creating books collectively, thereby cultivating literary communities that both shaped and were shaped by the multiple manners of producing and of consuming books: the printing industry, the scribal tradition, and intellectual coteries.¹⁷ In an introductory epistle ostensibly written by Jeanne Flore to another female storyteller, the author alludes to all of these aspects of literary life, illustrating conveniently and concisely how women contributed to book culture at the time.¹⁸

Jeanne Flore's work was printed with two distinct titles, by at least four different printers and in two different locations, first in Lyon and then in Paris. Four of Jeanne Flore's tales, which Gabriel-André Pérouse¹⁹ terms the *noyau* tales, or the core of the collection, were printed together as *La Pugnition de l'amour contempne, extrait de l'amour fatal de madame Jane Flore* (Lyon: François Juste, 1540 and Paris: Denys Janot, 1541). Three additional tales, a final poem to the reader and an extended frame narrative passage were added to create a second edition of the book, printed with the title *Comptes amoureux par madame Jeanne Flore touchant la punition de ceulx qui condamnent et mesprisent le vray amour* (Lyon: s.n., s.d. and Paris: Jean Real for Arnoul l'Angelier, 1543). Notwithstanding its puzzling authorship, *Comptes amoureux* presents itself as a female-authored work, and from it rises a voice—the "Other Voice"—that challenges traditional

tions or sponsoring groups gave anonymity a textuality that allowed it to compete with the author's name for popularity and marketability" (3).

17. Michèle Clément discusses this practice at length in "Co-élaborations à Lyon entre 1532 et 1542: des interventions lyonnaises en réseau sur les 'récits sentimentaux?'" *Réforme, humanisme, renaissance* 71 (2011): 35–44. See also her "Nom d'auteur et identité littéraire : Louise Labé Lyonnaise. Sous quel nom être publiée en France au XVIe siècle?" *Réforme, humanisme, renaissance* 70 (2010): 73–101.

18. For a discussion of the introductory epistle, see below, 15–22.

19. Gabriel-André Pérouse and a team of scholars at the Centre Lyonnais d'Étude de l'humanisme (CLEH) edited the first critical edition of Jeanne Flore's tales, *Contes amoureux* (Lyon: CNRS, Presses Universitaires de Lyon, 1980).

misconceptions about women.²⁰ With its first edition in 1540, this brief and eclectic collection of tales becomes the vanguard of female literary production in Lyon, for an upsurge in female-authored and female-centric literary works would follow in its wake. The voice of this woman writer, and the voices of the women within its fictional framework, question the validity of long-held prejudices related to chastity, power, speech and knowledge.²¹

In Jeanne Flore's *Comptes amoureux*, women have agency and influence. In several of these tales, women succeed in shaping their own lives, and in all tales they dispute or subvert authority. In this literary world, women are storytellers and in a sense, archivists and propagandists: they narrate, record and distribute their writings in print. Jeanne Flore's storytellers demonstrate a breadth of knowledge of the literary tradition, drawing from ancient, medieval, and contemporary literature. Likewise, the storytellers claim an equally broad knowledge of the romantic tradition, claiming firsthand experience in emotional, spiritual and physical love. Indeed, the storytellers refer to one another, and to their readers, as *dames amoureuses* (ladies-in-love). This gesture at once points to a literary ancestor, *The Decameron*, which Boccaccio also dedicates to ladies-in-love, and to the aim of these stories, which each woman reiterates as she introduces her tale. There is one dissident voice within this group of women who refuses to revel in love's joys, and Jeanne Flore's storytellers seek to convert this nonbeliever.

This dissident voice represents the Old Voice, the stance of classical literature and of philosophy, of early church fathers and of jurisprudence, a negative attitude perpetuated in medieval literature that women are biologically, psychologically, and intellectually inferior to men. The Old Voice maintained that a woman's place was in the home or, somewhat less frequently yet also acceptable, within the walls of the convent. By the early modern period the Old Voice was deeply rooted in European cultural and intellectual life. While this voice was beginning to meet friction, its long-established momentum

20. While the authorship of *Comptes amoureux* is uncertain, I refer to Jeanne Flore as the author and use feminine pronouns when necessary.

21. See the series editors' introduction, "The Other Voice in Early Modern Europe," available online at <http://www.othervoiceineme.com/OVIntro.pdf>.

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was difficult to restrain, and its persistent circulation slow to divert. To contradict these traditional notions was unseemly and disorderly. Indeed, it was associated with, and suggestive of, lust and excess.

The ingenuity of this odd little book is that its author exploits this scandalous image of prurience and impropriety to question social convention and imagine a better, happier existence for women. While Jeanne Flore's storytellers freely admit to their physical desire, the lack of restraint they claim to practice in the frame narrative²² is not necessarily the example put forward in their tales. Jeanne Flore and her storytellers do, indeed, urge their readers to experience love and to respond kindly to potential suitors. Those who do not do so reap severe punishment. On the other hand, of the seven tales, not one of them suggests a life of unbridled, indiscriminate promiscuity without consequence. There are certain rules to this game.

And *Comptes amoureux* does, in fact, participate in a type of game, a lively literary game. Jeanne Flore converses with, responds to, and contradicts other writers whose works consider various notions of love and marriage, a body of literature now known as the *querelle des Amyes*, an offshoot of the century-old *querelle des femmes*, or "woman question."²³ Works associated with the *querelle des femmes*—Christine de Pizan's *Book of the City of Ladies* (1405), for example—debate woman's capacity for both virtue and virtuosity. Themes and motifs by which literary works of many genres broach and respond to this "question" became ubiquitous in the early modern period and decidedly associated with ideas of female impropriety and impiety. Women who frequented courtly and literary circles were at once praised for their learning and accomplishments and blamed for their perceived disrespect of tradition.²⁴ The *querelle des Amyes* is also a "woman

22. The frame narrative is the extradiegetic space, i.e. the *frame*, that precedes and follows the tales. Here, the storytellers introduce their tales and respond, if only briefly, to one another.

23. The series editors discuss the *querelle des femmes* in their introduction, "The Other Voice in Early Modern Europe."

24. Julie Campbell explains in her *Literary Circles and Gender in Early Modern Europe: A Cross-Cultural Approach* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), 1–2: "In short, the *querelle* provided *topoi* for most genres of early modern writing. Moreover, during the period addressed in this study, approximately 1530–1650, it was inextricably related to perceptions of women defying traditional mores that included provocative behaviors by the *cortigiane oneste*, or honest courtesans, of Italy, the early Italian actresses, and the ladies of the French and

question,” but here, it is more specifically a question concerning the woman-in-love. Within this revised context, what is at issue is neither woman’s spiritual and moral fortitude nor her intellect, but rather the place love occupies in her life. The woman-in-love faces the question of whether she must experience love from afar, as an impossible, unachievable ideal, outside of wedlock in an illicit, clandestine affair, or within the bond of marriage. And the dilemmas of the woman-in-love were of particular interest in the intellectual and literary world of mid-sixteenth-century Lyon, a place with unique and unusual circumstances that inspired and incubated equally unique and unusual ideas. As the sixteenth century progressed, books became the currency of ideas, and in Renaissance Lyon, a thriving book trade and other prosperous commercial enterprises contributed to an economy that was of international importance.

*Imprimé nouvellement à Lyon*²⁵

Situated at the confluence of the Rhone and Saone rivers and along important land- and water-based trade routes between northern and southern Europe, Renaissance Lyon was a place where many people, goods, and ideas converged. The city was home to a number of prominent Italian and German banking and printing families,²⁶ and it was a

English courts and literary circles. Such women were admired for their humanist educations and their abilities as poets, musicians, orators, and conversationalists, but some were also reviled for their behaviors in matters regarding love and marriage and for their breaching of traditional gender boundaries. The combination of admiration and dismay acted as a catalyst for numerous writers of the period.” Campbell presents an insightful overview of historical implications of the *querelle des femmes* and an overview of recent scholarship in her “Introduction” (1–19).

25. I borrow this heading from the colophon of Denys de Harsy’s edition of *Comptes amoureux*, which reads: “*Fin des Comptes amoureux imprimés nouvellement à Lyon.*” The location is one of the few Bibliographical signposts that is available in this edition. On the colophon in the hand-press period, see John Carter, *ABC for Book Collectors*, 8th ed. (New Castle: Oak Knoll Press, 2004), s.v. “Colophon.”

26. The international population was of such importance in Lyon that expatriate residents were organized into “nations,” including the Florentine, Lucchese, Milanese, and German nations. See Jacqueline Boucher, *Présence italienne à Lyon à la Renaissance* (Lyon: LUGD, 1994), 14–22. On Italians in the printing industry, see 57–66, and on banking and finance, 75–97.

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frequent stopover for merchants, lawyers, and scholars, as well as for royals and nobles who followed the court's progress²⁷ or participated in military maneuverings in Italy.²⁸ From the late fifteenth century on, Lyon hosted four large, annual fairs, each fifteen days in length. This international marketplace allowed Lyon's burgeoning industries—textiles (particularly silk), spices, and books—to thrive and contributed to enormous population growth in the first half of the sixteenth century.²⁹ The city's two annual book fairs were among the most important in Europe and provided a dependable market and a valuable meeting-place where book merchants, printers, and journeymen established commercial relationships, surveyed their competition, and publicized their printed and forthcoming works.³⁰

Lyon's geographical and economic separation from the capital of Paris, which was the administrative, judicial, and theological center of France, afforded its inhabitants and those passing through a certain independence and shelter from the dominant social, intellectual and religious traditions.³¹ Although the city had neither a university nor

27. Lavish entries were prepared for the arrivals of dignitaries and royals into the city. Lyonnais poet Maurice Scève was involved in at least two entries: that of King Henry II and Queen Catherine de Medici in 1548 and that of Cardinal Ippolito II d'Este in 1540. The latter was named archbishop of Lyon by François Ier in 1539; he was the brother of Ercole II d'Este, Duke of Ferrara, whose wife, Duchess Renée de France (also known as Renata de Ferrara), was the sister-in-law of François Ier, as her sister was Queen Claude de France. See Boucher, *Présence italienne*, 10.

28. During the reign of François Ier, France engaged in a series of military campaigns in Italy, motivated by a deep-seated rivalry with the Holy Roman Emperor, Charles V. Although François Ier was able to capture the duchy of Milan in 1515, he was captured by Imperial forces ten years later at the Battle of Pavia and held in Madrid until the 1526 Treaty of Madrid.

29. Lyon's population grew from 30,000 at the beginning of the sixteenth century to around 55,000 by mid century, an increase of over 80%. See Huchon, *Louise Labé*, 25. On Italian imports in Lyon, e.g., spices and textiles, see Boucher, *Présence italienne*, 27–34.

30. See Lucien Febvre and Henri-Jean Martin, *The Coming of the Book and the Impact of Printing, 1450–1800*, trans. David Gerard (Brooklyn, NY: Verso, 2010), especially the section “Business Methods at the Time of the Book-Fairs,” 224–33.

31. Karen James offers a panorama of Renaissance Lyon in the introduction to Pernette du Guillet, *Complete Poems*, 3–9. See also Huchon, *Louise Labé*, 15–69, for a substantial overview of the economic, cultural, and literary atmosphere of Renaissance Lyon and Dominique Varry's unpublished conference presentation, “Round about the Rue Mercière:

a *parlement*—or perhaps *because* it housed neither—money, goods, and ideas, including literary, cultural, and religious trends, circulated quickly, in great volume and relatively easily in Lyon.³² Royal and local authorities sought to protect the longevity and profitability of the fairs and granted liberal financial and legal privileges to buyers and sellers who came to the city for these annual events. But all during the year a busy printing industry flourished and practiced its trade at the heart of Lyon.³³ Only Paris and Venice rivaled the size and success of Lyon's book trade.³⁴ A large number and wide range of books were printed and sold along the *rue Mercière* (Merchant Street) and in the surrounding neighborhood of St-Nizier on the *presqu'île*, a peninsula extending between the Rhône and Saone rivers, the crowded, narrow streets of which were lined with commercial stalls and boutiques. There, many of Lyon's printers, booksellers and practitioners of the related trades (papermaking, type-founding and binding, for example) set up shop. There, the relatively sophisticated and culturally varied population of authors and readers went to print, to buy, and to bind their books.

Lyndan Warner intriguingly describes the tightly woven web of networks that drove the book trade in Renaissance France, and she demonstrates how their imprints shaped the ideas of man and woman at the time. Printers, booksellers, and authors had intertwined relationships that could be mutually beneficial, competitive, and antagonistic.³⁵ Associations could extend beyond the local market, linking cities, particularly Lyon and Paris, by deliberate business

The People of the 18th Century Book-Trade in Lyon," available on his personal website, http://dominique-varry.enssib.fr/textes_inedits.

32. See Jean-Pierre Gutton's "Introduction" to chapter 3, "Renaissance et XVIIe siècle: Pour un temps, une capitale de l'occident," in *Lyon, l'humaniste: depuis toujours ville de foi et de révolte*, ed. Claude Royon (Paris: Les Éditions Autrement, 2004), 59–66.

33. Natalie Zemon Davis estimates that by the 1550s, the printing industry of Lyon employed between 500 and 600 people and produced several hundreds of books each year. See "Le Monde de l'imprimerie humaniste: Lyon," in *Histoire de l'édition*, ed. Henri-Jean Martin, Roger Chartier, and Jean-Pierre Vivet (Paris: Promodis, 1983), 1:255–77.

34. See Henri-Jean Martin's "Les Imprimeurs et l'humanisme" in chapter 3 of Royon, *Lyon, l'humaniste*, 67–74.

35. See Lyndan Warner, *The Ideas of Man and Woman in Renaissance France: Print, Rhetoric and Law* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2011).

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arrangements and by the surreptitious piracy of books that their colleagues had already printed or were planning to print. Those involved in the book trade worked together and against one another to fashion the market, and they deliberately packaged certain types of books in a manner that would clearly place them in dialogue with the larger literary world—as complements and as competition. Leah Chang focuses specifically on how female-authored books broke into the literary marketplace in early modern France. Chang artfully demonstrates the importance of the combined effect of a book's textual content and its physical presentation, the result of complex and deliberate interactions among writers, editors, printers, and booksellers. Books presented as having a female author not only suggest their commercial or cultural viability, but also their strategic participation in the shaping of gendered identities.³⁶ Floyd Gray also draws attention to the intricate interplay among printers, authors, and readers, arguing that the growth of the printing industry profoundly affected what people read in Renaissance France, allowing potentially controversial material to nudge its way into the marketplace. Controversy sold books, thereby voicing discourses that often were suppressed or divisive due to their marginal—or marginalizing—nature, including misogynist, feminist, autobiographical, homosexual, and medical discourses.³⁷ Noted scholars Lucien Febvre and Henri-Jean Martin further the notion that those working in the printing industry had a marked influence on the reading public's tastes, focusing on deliberate, strategic typographical decisions made by the Lyonnais editor-printer pair of François Rabelais and François Juste.³⁸ Febvre and Martin argue that

36. See Leah L. Chang's "Introduction" in her *Into Print: the Production of Female Authorship in Early Modern France* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2009), 17–25. In subsequent chapters, she discusses the female author figures of the Des Roches, Louise Labé, Dame Héloïse, and Marie de Gournay.

37. See Floyd Gray's "Introduction" to his *Gender, Rhetoric and Print Culture in French Renaissance Writing* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 1–5.

38. In the first half of the sixteenth century, roman script, the type used by the renowned Venetian printer of humanist works, Aldus Manutius, became one of prestige in the printing world. In Lyon and in Paris, type founders and printers copied and spread the use of this script, including the renowned printers Joost Bade, Henri Estienne, and Galliot du Pré, among others. See Febvre and Martin *The Coming of the Book*, 82–3. Joseph Dane, however, in *Out of Sorts: On Typography and Print Culture* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania

Rabelais and Juste intentionally employed an outdated, traditional, gothic type for printing works steeped in Christian humanism, including Rabelais's own *Pantagruel* (1532) and Clément Marot's poetry collections, such as *L'Adolescence clémentine* (1533). Doing so would impart an air of crudeness to these books, suggesting that these were unsophisticated, inexpensive volumes for popular consumption, thereby inviting readers from a variety of social strata to contemplate their new ideas.

It is within the larger socio-cultural context of Renaissance Lyon that we should read *Comptes amoureux*, and that context encompasses economic, religious and literary preoccupations and conversations. The city's healthy commercial exchanges facilitated an atmosphere of captivating intellectual and literary dialogue. The growth of the printing industry and the increase in the number of books available in print further supported existing means of publishing and circulating the works that were read, discussed, and written in this environment. While print did not immediately surpass the scribal and oral traditions, it certainly facilitated, fostered, and encouraged the culture of the book and the dissemination of knowledge. Books became more widely available, more easily accessible, and more quickly produced. Consequently, education expanded, literacy rates increased, and more people read more books. Readers increasingly began to compare, contrast, and conflate the world in which they lived with the worlds about which they read.³⁹ Lyon in the mid-sixteenth century, while far from utopian, was at least more hospitable toward women's educational, literary, and artistic accomplishments. A number of well-born

Press, 2011), contests Febvre's and Martin's correlation between humanism and roman typography, judging it a "bibliographical myth (or hope) that the rise of printing could be associated with the rise of humanism" (58). In chapter 3, "The Voodoo Economics of Space," Dane considers the case of noted humanist printer Nicholas Jenson, credited for creating an important roman type, but who also continued to produce books in gothic type. Dane justifies Jenson's practice, maintaining that the typeface chosen for an imprint corresponds to that book's genre: "what Jenson did was the more pedestrian act of printing a book in the visual genre of that book. Why would his buyers have wanted a text in roman type that they were used to reading in gothic?" (70). Despite this difference, both points of view underscore the interdependent relationship among printers' and booksellers' production and marketing strategies and the reading public's tastes and expectations.

39. See Gray, *Gender, Rhetoric and Print Culture*, 5.

and bourgeois Lyonnais women participated in the intellectual circles of the city, often under the tutelage of prominent male scholars and writers, such as Maurice Scève and Clément Marot,⁴⁰ or at the prestigious Collège de la Trinité, the first coeducational institution in France. Indeed, as a recent collection of essays on women's involvement in Renaissance Lyon's literary world demonstrates, the unique social circumstances of this city made it possible for women to achieve authorship—that is writing, publishing, and engaging with their readers through their works—in ways that were not possible elsewhere.⁴¹ In *Comptes amoureux*, Jeanne Flore offers an insightful glimpse of the types of coteries in which contemporary women may have participated, taking up within her imagined community themes that engaged the larger literary world of Lyon.

Comptes amoureux: Content and Analysis

Comptes amoureux is an eclectic collection of seven tales, loosely linked by the theme of love and framed by the brief commentary of their female storytellers. This group of women presumably gathered together during the fall grape harvest and passed the time telling tales of love. As the tales are written representations of an oral and aural experience, Jeanne Flore frequently punctuates the narrative with interjections that simulate that convivial atmosphere, drawing the audience's attention to a particular detail with expressions such as: "Think, ladies-in-love," or "and so it came to pass, my dear ladies-in-love."⁴² To further recreate the spoken nature of the tales for the reader, each storyteller briefly introduces and concludes her tale, often announcing her intended moral, lamenting the central character's misfortune, or

40. See Verdun-L. Saulnier, "L'Heure de Dolet," in *Maurice Scève (ca. 1500–1560)* (Repr., Geneva: Slatkine, 1981), 115–17.

41. See Michèle Clément and Janine Incardona, eds., *L'Émergence littéraire des femmes à Lyon à la Renaissance 1520–1560* (Saint-Étienne: Publications de l'Université de Saint-Étienne, 2008). See especially Clément's "Introduction," 7–11.

42. On similar interjections in Marguerite de Navarre's *Heptaméron*, see Cathleen Bauschatz, "Inscribed Women Listeners and Readers in the *Heptaméron*," in *Critical Tales: New Studies of the Heptameron and Early Modern Culture*, ed. John D. Lyons and Mary B. McKinley (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993), 104–22.

referring to the overarching objective of persuading Madame Cebille of the importance of reciprocal love, as she is the lone woman in the group to deny Cupid's sovereignty and to reject love. The reader does not witness any real discussion or conversation of the tales among the women, only brief allusions to dialogue that allegedly took place.⁴³ Jeanne Flore presents only two points of view in the frame narratives: a dichotomy between Madame Cebille, who is against love, and the other storytellers, who are for love.

It is the desire to persuade Madame Cebille of the error in her judgment that motivates the storytelling and gives purpose to the gathering of women. Jeanne Flore describes this gathering and the fictional premise of the work in her introductory epistle to Madame Minerve. Jeanne Flore articulates in convenient microcosm, and a reasonably accurate one, how well-born women⁴⁴ produced and consumed literature in Renaissance France, from the manner by which a book could be conceived and arrive on the marketplace to the literary dialogues that captivated the reading public.⁴⁵ Women participated in oral recitations; they circulated texts in manuscript form; and they served as patrons of other aspiring writers by requesting works of their correspondents and commissioning works tailored to their personal interests and causes.⁴⁶

The Preliminary Epistle: Imagining Communities of Letters

The prefatory epistle is a literary commonplace in Renaissance Europe that provides authors a venue for dedicating their works to a patron

43. See, for example, the frame narratives preceding tales three and six.

44. Jeanne Flore specifies that her companions are of "good grace and learning" and that all are "of gentle birth."

45. Similarly, Chang observes: "[...] the dedicatory epistle traces a path of textual production, from oral recitation (the women who *racontent* and Madame Minerve who listens to the stories) to writing, and to print (at which point Madame Minerve now becomes the recipient of the material book)." See Chang, *Into Print*, 41–42.

46. See Kirk D. Read, "Women of the French Renaissance in Search of Literary Community: A Prolegomenon to Early Modern Women's Participation in Letters," in *Romance Languages Annual* 5 (1993): 95–102. He states: "Women wrote. Women circulated manuscripts. Women argued in literary salons that they themselves organized and directed. Women learned, wrote and taught Latin. Women ran publishing houses upon the death of their spouses. Women published their own writing under their own names" (95).

or supporter and for signaling a target audience. In female-authored works, liminary pieces feature other women with near exclusivity, calling on their readers and dedicatees to identify with a certain aspect of the ensuing text.⁴⁷ In other words, female-authored paratexts tend to favor the creation of a common place, a safe place.⁴⁸ Some of these virtual communities reproduce or reshape real-life iterations while others are true utopias, rhetorical places that exist nowhere, yet inspire their contemplation. These imagined societies come into being in relation to the literary work. Authors craft fictional communities within the framework of their narrative (e.g., the gathering of storytellers in *Comptes amoureux* or in Marguerite de Navarre's *Heptaméron*). Once offered to the public, a work creates another community, this one constructed of readers who adopt its message and practice its activities, whether individually or collectively, quietly or openly. Jeanne Flore describes such a scenario:

My cousin, following the promise that I made to you the other day to give you a copy of some stories (these stories concern what happens to those who condemn and scorn true love), I took the quill in hand to write them out for you. You witnessed the telling of these very pertinent stories at the recent wine harvest. Our dear friends and relatives, Madame Melibée, Madame Cebille, Mad-

47. Again, see Read, "In Search of Literary Community," 96, where he observes: "What is immediately striking about women's published writings in the French Renaissance is the continual address to other women within the dedicatory and prefatory locus of their works. Almost without exception their collections begin with epistles dedicated 'aux dames,' 'aux lectrices,' 'à toutes vertueuses femmes,' or with letters which hailed certain patronesses or female friends."

48. Lorraine Code's notion of rhetorical spaces is particularly helpful in studying imagined communities. In *Rhetorical Spaces: Essays on Gendered Locations*, she defines these spaces as "fictive but not fanciful locations, whose (tacit, rarely spoken) territorial imperatives structure and limit the kinds of utterances that can be voiced within them with a reasonable expectation of uptake [...] and an expectation of being heard, understood, taken seriously" (New York: Routledge, 1995), ix.

Susan Broomhall, in *Women and the Book Trade in Sixteenth-Century France* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002), 71–2, suggests the usefulness of Code's terminology in describing the theoretical context shaping women's publications.

ame Hortence, Madame Lucienne, Madame Salphionne, Madame Sapho, Madame Andromeda, and Madame Meduse were present at this event, as well as a few other acquaintances of good grace and learning. Indeed, I dare say that all of these women are of gentle birth. As I was writing I suddenly thought to myself that it would be a most agreeable and pleasant thing for young ladies-in-love (especially for those young ladies who persist loyally in their devotion to Cupid and who take great pleasure in reading such joyful stories) if I were to have those stories printed at once. And I did just that, hoping nevertheless that my readers would excuse my unpolished and poorly composed writing. This is the work of a woman, after all, and one cannot expect it to be as finely executed as that of a man of greater skill. Thus, do with these stories what you will. And I bid you Godspeed, my dear cousin, to whom I pray for the fulfillment of all your heart's desires. (63)

In her opening epistle, Jeanne Flore addresses Madame Minerve, mimicking the relationship between an author and her real-life patron. She indicates that by recording the ensuing tales, she is fulfilling a promise to her addressee to provide a written recording of stories that had been recited and discussed aloud. But Jeanne Flore sees usefulness in her collection that extends beyond this bilateral relationship, and as the letter progresses, its audience broadens. This epistle, and indeed the entire project of *Comptes amoureux*, hinges on cultivating women's literacy, and here, literacy—the acquisition of a particular skill through training and practice—applies both to the writing and reading that shape narratives and to their thematic content: love. By evoking the names of the women who had participated in the recent gathering at which those stories were told, she acknowledges their participation in this female community and announces their potential to contribute to a larger community of letters.⁴⁹

49. Read, "In Search of Literary Community," 96, maintains "that women carefully wove their texts not only to protect or promote their works, but to project a sense of community as well which was equally important to their literary livelihood," and he highlights texts in which "literary women, while demurring to concerns regarding their publication,

Within the protected environment of their storytelling circle, a room of their own so to speak, these women practice and hone their skills, preparing them for future performance in larger communities. Thus, as Jeanne Flore redacts her manuscript, she implicitly theorizes the book's reception by explicitly offering additional women membership to the privileged community. First, she draws in a specific group of young ladies (those who demonstrate a particularly loyal devotion to Cupid) and second, she includes all ladies-in-love, without specifying any further criteria other than an appreciation for tales of love. Having this collection printed will allow the author to reach this wider audience, by making it possible to reproduce the tales more quickly, in larger volume, with fewer errors or alterations than either the manuscript or oral traditions would allow. Printing the tales protects the value of their currency and facilitates their circulation in the public sphere.

In her preliminary pieces, Jeanne Flore explicitly defines both communities, that occurring within the fictional construct and that resulting from the book's reception once a community of readers has been established. Both imagined communities propose a decidedly gendered, privileged, and seemingly impossible existence, the former, fictional community functioning as a model for the latter, potential real-life community. In other words, the coterie of women who recite and discuss the tales that would become *Comptes amoureux* serves as a *mise en abyme* of women's literacy. However, the books women wanted to read, the books they were encouraged to read, and the books women were able to print were not necessarily of the same genres. Here, Jeanne Flore blurs the boundaries between fiction and reality.

Women's reading material had long included practical, utilitarian books, such as instructional volumes on cookery, needlework, and appearance, devotional works intended to cultivate piety and compendia of exemplary women—mostly virtuous ones—designed

manoeuvred as well to present themselves and their works as appealing and belonging to a specific female community." Read identifies three potential communities: regional (e.g., women from Lyon), familial (e.g., between mother and daughter) and religious (e.g., women living within convents).

to impart essential moral values to their readers.⁵⁰ Humanist scholars, such as Erasmus and Vivès, were printing an increasing amount of didactic literature, in which they emphasize women's intellectual, spiritual, and moral capacities. Humanist scholars also dedicated many of their works to prominent women patrons and admirers: Catherine of Aragon and Margaret Roper in Great Britain, Marguerite de Navarre, among others in France. Female-oriented titles, themes, and liminary pieces such as dedications and epistles indicate an increasingly important market for women readers and books that consider the female experience.

Boccaccio, for example, dedicates his *Decameron* to “charming ladies,” specifically women who “conceal the flames of passion within their fragile breasts,” but who, in the current social situation, “are forced to follow the whims, fancies, and dictates of their fathers, mothers, brothers, and husbands, so that they spend most of their time cooped up within the narrow confines of their rooms.” Through his tales, the author purportedly aims “to provide succor and diversion for the ladies.”⁵¹ Although Boccaccio and Jeanne Flore both prescribe—and inscribe—a female audience for their fictional works, women's conduct books acerbically proscribe love stories and chivalric tales, confirming a strong penchant for pleasure reading of the type that the *Decameron* and *Comptes amoureux* offer.⁵² However, we now know that this type of literature constituted a significant portion of noble

50. Even practical, utilitarian books incorporated moral and spiritual lessons. See, for example, André Le Fournier, “La decoration and honnestete de laquelle nous parlerons cy apres, ne se prent point a decorer la teste seulement, mais aussi toute la personne,” A2r, in *La decoration d'humaine nature, & aornement des dames* (Lyon: François Juste, 1537). A copy of this work is available in the University of Virginia Special Collections Library (Gordon 1537 .L45) and has been digitized through the project “The Renaissance in Print: Sixteenth-Century Books in the Douglas Gordon Collection,” <http://search.lib.virginia.edu/catalog/uva-lib:745506/view?x=812&y=1713.5&z=0&lock=false&page=uva-lib:774275>.

51. See Giovanni Boccaccio, *The Decameron*, 2nd ed., trans. and ed. G. H. McWilliam (New York: Penguin, 1995), 1–3.

52. Similarly, in a study of Marguerite de Navarre's *Heptaméron*, Bauschatz demonstrates that the repeated occurrence of the demonstrative phrase “voilà, Mesdames” (from this you may surmise, my ladies) that a female audience is anticipated. See her “Inscribed Women Listeners,” 104–22.

and bourgeois women's book collections.⁵³ Vivès, in *The Education of a Christian Woman*, condemns the consumption of fanciful books in the vernacular, ones that "treat no subjects but love and war." He deems this literature a veritable pestilence, insisting: "a woman who contemplates these things drinks poison into her breast."⁵⁴

Jeanne Flore writes what women read at the time. But an overwhelming majority of books printed specifically for and accessible to women was still written by men. Women could not yet print as freely as their male counterparts, nor could they scribally publish at will without anxiety or consequence.⁵⁵ The private and informal environments of literary coteries and manuscript circulation may have offered a modicum of protection and freedom for women's literary production and consumption, particularly those socially and/or geographically removed from the constraints of court.⁵⁶ Nonetheless, women's speech—both verbal and in print or manuscript—was fraught with difficulty and often met resistance in reflecting the bimodal nature of their reading patterns.⁵⁷ In theory, within this literary world it was

53. Susan Broomhall describes patterns of women's literacy in her *Women and the Book Trade in Sixteenth-Century France* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002), 28–32. She confirms that popular works such as *Le Chateau d'amours* and *Doctrinal de sapience* were commonly found in the libraries of noble women (42). Louis B. Wright also offers a panorama of women's reading habits, including chivalric romance, in "The Reading Renaissance English Woman," *Studies in Philology* 28 (1931): 139–56. Ruth Kelso's *Doctrine for the Lady of the Renaissance* provides an overview of didactic literature teaching chastity (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1978), 41–44.

54. See Juan Luis Vivès, *The Education of a Christian Woman: A Sixteenth-Century Manual*, trans. Charles Fantazzi (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 73–74.

55. See also note 5, page 2.

56. See Anne Larsen, "Un honneste passetems: Strategies of Legitimation in French Renaissance Women's Prefaces," *Esprit Créateur* 30, no. 4 (1990): 11–22. See also Broomhall, *Women and the Book Trade*, 132–35.

57. Broomhall, *Women and the Book Trade*, 26, uses the adjective "bimodal" to describe the two manners by which women accessed texts: by sharing orally in a group setting and by reading silently alone. She elaborates: "Instructional texts were also written for women and children on correct manners, housekeeping, and conduct during widowhood. Bimodal, these books could be read aloud at segregated gatherings, such as in sewing circles, or studied privately." I extend the adjective to apply to two vast categories of women's reading: instructional, "self-help" books (e.g., didactic literature) and pleasure reading (e.g., love stories and chivalric romances).

unquestionably unusual and daring for a woman to print love stories and chivalric romances. To write is to express one's voice. To publish one's writing is to confirm the validity of that voice within a public arena, and the "other" voice certainly did not enjoy the same widespread validation as did the voice of the well-born and well-educated man. Restrained silence was equated with chastity and piety, and public speech with indecency and lewdness.⁵⁸ In practice, within this literary world women likely wrote and published much more than we realize. Indeed, the quantity of books in print openly attributed to female authors was meager in comparison to their male counterparts. And female authors who scribally published often crafted strategic postures in order to deny or to undermine their creative voice.⁵⁹ However, the quantity of unattributed female-authored works, particularly poetry, such as those included in collections and in miscellanies—both in print and in manuscript—is difficult, if not impossible, to determine accurately.⁶⁰

While the activities of Jeanne Flore's imagined society of women are certainly plausible—telling stories, recording stories, sharing their manuscripts in their correspondence—in light of what we now know about women's writing in sixteenth-century France, the cavalier manner by which the author claims to have printed her collection is rather unlikely. Jeanne Flore suddenly thought about printing her stories and proceeded to do so. With the exception of Christine de Pizan, considered Europe's first professional woman writer, the great majority of secular or non-instructive literature by women was either published posthumously, as in the case of Marguerite de Navarre's *Heptaméron* or Pernette du Guillet's *Rymes*, or was published pseudonymously either by men posing as women, or by noblewomen protecting their

58. See Broomhall, *Women and the Book Trade*, 72–73.

59. See Broomhall, *Women and the Book Trade*, chapter 3, "Women Publishing: Theoretical and Practical Contexts," 71–91. Of particular interest are Broomhall's discussions of Gabrielle de Bourbon and Anne de Graville, both of whom published in manuscript.

60. Not only does the absence of authorial attribution in miscellanies render the task of quantifying the frequency of women's writing difficult, many personal miscellanies—scribal copies of works gathered into collections and imprints bound together by their owners—were broken for the interest of managing libraries. On the importance of personal miscellanies to the reading public and the breaking of volumes bound together, see McKitterick, *Print, Manuscript and the Search for Order*, 47–52.

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identity, as some believe to be the case with Hélienne de Crenne.⁶¹ In sixteenth-century France, “gender mattered to women writing.”⁶²

Apart from a brief, nearly parenthetical apology for her poor composition, Jeanne Flore’s epistle gives no impression of hesitation, of shame or of expected criticism. The author unabashedly submits the ensuing work to the reading public and appears fearless of public opinion. Furthermore, the dedicatee of this epistle, Madame Minerve, bears a conspicuous and heavily charged name. Her name and her role within the fictional community, I argue, encourage the reader to consider a progressive proposition: that women become their own advocates, agents of change who, through their participation in the book trade and literary life through tales such as these, refashion the notion of a relationship that is fundamental to the health of their community. That relationship is marriage. But, before tackling marriage, the storytellers first tackle love, and the manner in which they illustrate love changes drastically between the two editions of Jeanne Flore’s collection of tales.

Madame Minerve’s Introductory Poem

Immediately preceding the epistle, Jeanne Flore’s dedicatee, Madame Minerve, offers a poem, targeting as her audience a specific group of women readers: noble ladies-in-love. The poem’s ostensible author was herself a member of that temporary community of women writers-in-training, and Jeanne Flore twice places her in a prominent position in the preliminary pieces of *Comptes amoureux*—first as poet and then as dedicatee, the first designated reader of the work. In so doing, Jeanne Flore carefully crafts the position of this storyteller as one of authority. The name Minerve, or Minerva, was a particularly charged designation in Renaissance France due to the omnipresence of Greco-Roman

61. For an enumerative bibliography of female-authored works printed in France in the first half of the sixteenth century, see William Kemp, “Textes composés ou traduits par des femmes et imprimés en France avant 1550: Bibliographie des imprimés féminins (1488–1549),” *Littératures* 18 (1998): 151–220.

62. Broomhall, *Women and the Book Trade*, 91.