

# Research in Progress

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*Maria Bogucka*

## NEW PERSPECTIVES ON GENDER

Interest in women as a group whose position in society has in nearly every epoch been largely determined by their gender has been increasing in historiography and sociology in the last 20–30 years, that is, since the beginning of large-scale research on minorities. As regards women, “minority” is not a happy term, even though females’ numerical preponderance, so obvious in the 20th century, has been called into question with regard to the Middle Ages. Women’s greater biological resistance and the fact that they were less endangered during wars was more than equalised by the extremely high maternal mortality; it is therefore disputable whether women outnumbered men in medieval towns (E. Ennen, P. J. Schuler, K. Wesoly). The problem is all the more difficult to solve as the male population was more mobile and medieval towns developed not as a result of natural increase (the death-rate was higher in towns than the birth-rate) but thanks to in-migration. Besides, women have been “marginalised” not so much because of their smaller number but because of political, legal and social discrimination, and discrimination often serves as a distinguishing characteristic of minority groups.

Disputes of this kind are a recent phenomenon. Old historiography did not pay much attention to women, one of the reasons being that as a rule women did not create sources. It is said about the poor that they were the most silent part of old societies (A. Sapori), but this also applies to women, even though the old ages had their women writers, poetesses and learned ladies who conducted a vast correspondence, kept diaries and even wrote treatises. But they were exceptions. Sources contain a great deal of information about women saints, great courtesans and female

rulers, but everyday life of ordinary people and its anonymous female creators are not so well documented. Not much was previously written about common women who were not fit to be heroines of widely read biographies. Witches were the only exception, their trials fascinating researchers since the time of the French historian J. Michélet, that is, since the middle of the 19th century. Witches have therefore a rich literature, even in Poland, where there were not many trials for witchcraft. The average peasant woman, town woman or noblewoman unsuspected of witchcraft was less popular with researchers. This has lately been changing, partly because the feminists — very active in the United States and Western Europe — have been demanding equal rights for women also in historiography, and partly because of new interests, researchers having turned their attention to broad folk masses, large discriminated groups, to the poor and to “low” popular culture, in which women have played an enormous role. It is the French “Annales” school formed under the influence of three eminent scientists, Marc Bloch, Lucien Febvre and Fernand Braudel, which deserves credit for this development. It is thanks to their influence that *histoire événementielle* (chronicle of events) in which political facts naturally predominate and attention is focused mostly on eminent personalities, has been limited and researchers have concentrated on *longue durée* (long-term trends and structures) created by entire societies, by all their members, irrespective of gender.

Literature dealing with the history of women has in the last few years been coming down in streams especially in the United States, Britain and Germany; in France, Italy and Spain, too, many publications on this subject have appeared and special periodicals began to be published (e.g. in Australia “Feminist Studies” has been appearing since 1973, in USA “Women Studies” since 1973 and “Signs” since 1976, in France “Pénélope” since 1985, in Britain “Gender and History” since 1989, in Austria “L’Homme. Zeitschrift für Feministische Geschichtswissenschaft” since 1990, in the Netherlands “Jarboek voor Vrouwen-geschiedenis” since 1980). It is, of course, impossible to discuss all publications in this review; we will therefore confine attention to the most important items selected from an ocean of others, and will leave out e.g. a numerous group of publications concerning the persecution of witches. This question, linked with

women's history in a special way (though men, too, were accused of witchcraft), demands a separate exhaustive study.

The 1970s and 1980s were a period of important theoretical, methodological and methodical reflections on women's history; it was then that scholars outlined the area of research and explained its purposefulness. The polemics and discussions were very vehement, which is not surprising for, in the end, studies on women's history have reassessed whole areas of the past, abolished or questioned many stereotypes and formulations, and destroyed the hierarchy of values previously binding in historiography. Entire areas of women's activity, hitherto regarded as of little importance, have become subjects of intensive research. Doubts were frequently raised whether women's history can and should be treated as a research field and whether it is possible to practise it<sup>1</sup>. On the other hand, women scholars linked with the feminist movement (which has rendered great services to the development of research into the history of women) maintained that the traditional methods should not be applied in research on women's history for they were tainted with a patriarchal point of view. They asserted that the history of women should be examined from women's point of view, from female perspective, even from the point of view of women's present day experiences<sup>2</sup>. Of course such an ahistoric model of research, linked to the political struggle for women's rights, defies scientific objectivity (radical feminists regard scientific objectivity as unattainable for according to them, it is influenced by the patriarchal structure of society). Moreover, a one-sided examination of the "oppression" of women produces a model constructed on the basis of 20th century values and evaluations. The isolation of women's experiences from the experiences of the whole society makes it difficult to discover mutual relations between men and women, to find out females' power and influence, which varied in individual epochs, depending on many factors<sup>3</sup>. According to less extreme feminist groups of researchers, scholars should assume that women were

<sup>1</sup> Cf. C. N. Degler, *Is There a History of Women?*, London 1975; *Une histoire des femmes est-elle possible?*, collective work ed. M. Perrot, Paris 1984.

<sup>2</sup> M. F. Weinstein, *Reconstructing Our Past. Reflections on Tudor Women*, "International Journal of Women's Studies" vol. 1, no. 2, March-April 1978, esp. p. 139.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. A. Shephard, *Gender and Authority in Sixteenth Century England. The Knox Debate*, Keels 1994, pp. 14 ff.

a group clearly separated from the rest of society, a group subjected to a strong legal, political and social control and to respective restrictions<sup>4</sup>. Of course the assumption that women constituted a separate group with a completely different history creates serious doubts and problems for it means the recognition of women as a separate caste in which gender is a more important determinant than social or economic status.

Doubts have also been expressed about the point from which researchers should start examining the history of women. The American historian Joan W. Scott, who has exerted a great influence on researchers in many European countries, holds the view that the whole history should be deconstructed and written anew<sup>5</sup>. Some other female researchers propose that the periodisation of history should be revised for it does not agree with the chronology of women's history<sup>6</sup>. Many studies and polemical interventions have proposed, however, a more positive research model. Such scholars as Gisela Bock, Karin Hausen and Annette Kuhn in Germany, Natalie Zemon Davis and Joan Kelly-Gadol in USA, Arlette Farge and Michelle Perrot in France have formulated an interesting large-scale research programme<sup>7</sup>. In their view the same historical events have been perceived and experienced differently by women, their consequences have frequently been different for females and their reactions have been different too, but women's history should not

<sup>4</sup> H. Smith, *Feminism and the Methodology of Women's History*, in: B. Carroll, ed., *Liberating Women's History*, Urbana 1976, p. 369.

<sup>5</sup> J. W. Scott, *Rewriting History*, in: M. R. Higonnet, J. Jenson, S. Michel, M. Collins Weitz, eds., *Behind the Lines: Gender and the Two World Wars*, New Haven-London 1987.

<sup>6</sup> I. Knibbelle, *Chronologie et l'histoire des femmes*, in: *Une histoire des femmes*, pp. 50-57.

<sup>7</sup> G. Bock, *Historische Frauenforschung. Fragenstellungen und Perspektiven*, in: K. Hausen, ed., *Frauen suchen ihre Geschichte, Historische Studien zum 19. und 20. Jh.*, München 1983, pp. 22-60; eadem, *Frauengeschichte, Geschlechtergeschichte, "Geschichte und Gesellschaft"*, 14, 1988, pp. 364-391; eadem, *Challenging Dichotomies. Perspectives on Women's History*, in: *Writing Women's History. International Perspectives*, ed. K. Offen, R. Pierson, J. Rendall, London 1991 (materials from the conference held in Bellagio in 1989), pp. 1-24; N. Z. Davis, *Women's History in Transition. The European Case*, "Feminist Studies", 3, 1976, pp. 83-103; J. Kelly-Gadol, *The Social Relations of the Sexes: Methodological Implications of Women's History*, "Signs", 1, 1976, pp. 809-824; eadem, *Women, History and Theory*, Chicago 1984. Cf. also the above-quoted collective works *Une histoire des femmes* (footnote 1) and *Writing Women's History*.

be isolated from the general historical context and above all, researchers should avoid looking only for manifestations of male domination and evidence of women's oppression in history<sup>8</sup>. They should also remember that women's historical experiences have varied too and have been, to a large extent, dependent on their social status.

In the mid-1970s the concept of gender (*genre, genere, Geschlecht*) was introduced into historiography as a socio-historical and cultural category<sup>9</sup>, not a biological one, the term "sex" being applied to the biological category. This was followed by a demand to enlarge the scope of women's history by including in it the history of gender relations, that is, the mutual relations between men and women, which varied in different epochs, as well as research on relations between various groups of women, similarly to research on relations between various groups of men. This is connected with the demand to put an end to the "biologisation" of history, that is to the transformation of raw biological sex into gender, as well as to stop confining women's history to such questions as sexual life, maternity, the physiology of female's body, topics which predominated in previous studies. Gender as a social, historico-cultural and political category is a result of a complex web of influences and processes which go far beyond biology. The introduction of this concept into historiography is of enormous methodical and methodological importance. Its consequence is the significant statement that the subordinated status of women, their subjection to men and their social and political helplessness were not determined by the laws of nature but were historically conditioned social, political and cultural constructions. One of the reasons for the success of the term "gender" in the historical writings is that from a linguistic

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<sup>8</sup> Reflections on this subject can be found in an interesting essay by R. Habermas, *Frauen und Männer im Kampf um Leib, Ökonomie und Recht. Zur Beziehung der Geschlechter im Frankfurt der Frühen Neuzeit*, in: R. van Dülmen, (hrsg.) *Dynamik der Tradition. Studien zur historischen Kulturforschung IV*, Frankfurt/M 1992, pp. 109–136 which shows how women managed to make use of stereotypes about them to get the upper hand over men in law cases. Similarly, N. Z. Davis shows how French women brought to trial before French courts in the 16th century made skilful use of stereotypes and prejudices against women to get a more lenient punishment or even escape it in cases for murder, cf. *Fiction in the Archives. Pardon Tales and Their Tellers in Sixteenth-Century France*, Stanford, Calif. 1987, pp. 77 ff.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. Joan W. Scott, *Gender. A Useful Category of Historical Analysis*, "American Historical Review", 92, 1987, pp. 1053–1079.

and grammatical meaning (genre, gender) it has become a theoretically important definition. The replacement of the term "sex" by "gender" means that women's history need no longer be confined to manifestations of sexual-biological life and reflections on the role of the wife and mother. Moreover, gender studies concern not only women but also men, for they too are gendered beings<sup>10</sup>.

Parallely, a discussion is going on the place of women's history in social history in general, e.g. on the relationship between gender and class. The well known German historian J. Kocka strongly emphasises the superiority and precedence of the category of class over gender<sup>11</sup> while according to G. Bock, these categories overlap; moreover, in Bock's view class membership is "measured" and felt differently by men and women and its results are not the same for both genders<sup>12</sup>.

The requirements and methodical programme in research on women's history have probably been presented the most fully by N. Z. Davis<sup>13</sup>. She has repeatedly emphasised that women should be treated neither as heroines nor as victim, as has frequently been done in old historiography. What is needed is new research on various aspects of women's situation: the demographic aspect, the position of women in the family, in sexual life and its symbolic representations, on the labour market, in the structure of power (including the informal one); according to Davis, it is necessary to find out and analyse the roles performed by men and women and the rites, gestures and symbols connected with these roles. Women's history should not, in her view, be isolated from the

<sup>10</sup> Cf. G. Bock, *Challenging Dichotomies*, pp. 7-8; eadem, *Women's History and Gender History: Aspects of an International Debate, Gender and History*, 1 (Spring 1989), pp. 7-30; A. Kuhn, *Das Geschlecht — eine historische Kategorie? Gedanken zu einem aus der neueren Geschichtswissenschaft verdrängten Begriff*, in: J. Brehmer, J. Jacobi-Dittrich, E. Kleinau, A. Kuhn, eds. *Frauen in der Geschichte, IV: Wissen heißt leben... Beiträge zur Bildungsgeschichte von Frauen im 18. und 19. Jh.*, Düsseldorf 1983, pp. 29-50.

<sup>11</sup> J. Kocka, *Frauengeschichte zwischen Wissenschaft und Ideologie, "Geschichtsdidaktik"*, 7, 1982, fasc. 1, p. 104; idem, *Sozialgeschichte*, Göttingen 1986, pp. 139-141.

<sup>12</sup> G. Bock, *Geschichte, Frauengeschichte, Geschlechtergeschichte*, pp. 388 ff. Cf. also P. Stock-Morton, *Finding Our Own Ways: Different Paths to Women's History in the United States*, in: *Writing Women's History*, pp. 59-77, esp. p. 63.

<sup>13</sup> N. Z. Davis, *Gesellschaft und Geschlechter. Vorschläge für eine neue Frauengeschichte*, in: eadem, *Frauen und Gesellschaft am Beginn der Neuzeit*, Berlin 1986, pp. 117-132.

history of the whole society; what is necessary is to show the relationship between the genders in the functioning of social structures<sup>14</sup>. Similar proposals have been put forward by German researchers, Uta Frewert and Karin Hausen<sup>15</sup>.

In her analysis of the contents of "Annales" in 1970–1982<sup>16</sup>, A. Farge says that at first subjects connected with the body, sexuality, motherhood and female physiology dominated in the works dealing with women's history; studies on nurses, midwives, women teachers and servants were also frequent. The range of subject has been greatly extended since then. Serious studies have been undertaken on women's legal status. The special volume of the Jean Bodin Society published in 1962<sup>17</sup> which included articles on the legal status of women in Poland and Russia (S. Roman and A. Eck) and also in Hungary (Ch. d'Eszlary) is rather old-fashioned, considering the latest scholarly requirements. A basic work in this field appeared in Germany in 1991; it deals with the legal status of women in 16th century Europe (mainly in Germany and Italy, unfortunately with the exclusion of East-Central Europe and Scandinavia)<sup>18</sup>. Its author, E. Koch, comes to the conclusion that the humanists' discussion on the female question, in which some of them formulated quite radical proposals, did not lead to an improvement in women's legal status. What is more, Koch holds the view that gender determined the situation and opportunities of the individual in the 16th century: *Die Kategorie Geschlecht bildet in Rede und Realität des 16. Jahrhunderts von daher die ausschlag-*

<sup>14</sup> In response to the development of women's history, attempts have been made to write men's history, to conduct separate studies on men as a male gender. A conference concerning *Man in the Middle Ages* was organised in New York in 1990. Such isolation of studies may be dangerous and distort the general picture of society in previous centuries.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. U. Frewert, *Bewegung und Disziplin in der Frauengeschichte. Ein Forschungsbericht, "Geschichte und Gesellschaft"*, 14 Jg. 1988, Heft 1, pp. 364–391; K. Hausen, *Historische Frauenforschung*, in: G. Förder-Hoff, H. Hilzinger, hrsg., *Was hilft der Frauenforschung? Vorschläge für die mittelfristige Förderung von Frauenforschung im Berlin*, Berlin 1987, pp. 60–68.

<sup>16</sup> A. Farge, *Pratique et effets de l'histoire des femmes*, in: *Une histoire des femmes*, pp. 17 ff.

<sup>17</sup> "Recueils de la Société Jean Bodin", vol. XII, *La Femme*, II partie, Bruxelles 1962, A. Eck pp. 405–420, St. Roman pp. 389–404, Ch. d'Eszlary pp. 421–444. The recent study in this field is: Ute Gerhard, (hrsg.) *Frauen in der Geschichte des Rechts. Von der Frühen Neuzeit bis zur Gegenwart*, München 1997.

<sup>18</sup> E. Koch, *Major est dignitas in sexu virili. Das weibliche Geschlecht im Normensystem des 16. Jahrhunderts*, Frankfurt/M 1991.

*gebende Kategorie für den gesellschaftlichen Status eines Menschen und legt seine Machtchancen und Abhängigkeiten in den Beziehungen zu anderen irreversibel fest. An den einer Frau auferlegten Verhaltensbeschränkungen ändern deshalb auch ihre persönlichen Abstammungs- und Wirtschaftsverhältnisse nichts*<sup>19</sup>. Koch's categorical statement is open to question, but her book is irreplaceable as regards the large information material gathered by her.

Women's legal position in 16th and 17th century France has been presented by W. Gibson<sup>20</sup> and partly by E. Berriot-Salvadore<sup>21</sup>; the latter strongly emphasises that women's status deteriorated in the 16th century (restriction of the right to inherit and dispose of property, dependence on guardians), but she admits that as a rule practice was less restrictive than the law. In England the situation seems to have developed differently; from the 16th century on, women who appealed to the Court of Chancery could be granted the right to inherit property, and even married women could be given the right to have separate property in the form of trust<sup>22</sup>. The next significant step forward in this respect was made in 1660<sup>23</sup>.

Much has been written about Renaissance women. This subject has been treated by Margaret L. King, an American researcher into the history of Italy, who published her work in Italian as early as 1991<sup>24</sup>. Her study covers the years 1350–1650 and theoretically deals with the whole of Western Europe (Central Europe and Scandinavia have been omitted, and less attention has been paid to Germany than to Italy, France and England). King does not confine herself to the presentation of eminent women but describes the lives and living conditions of the commoners, too. In her view the whole cycle of a woman's life in

<sup>19</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 244.

<sup>20</sup> W. Gibson, *Women in 17th Century France*, New York 1989.

<sup>21</sup> E. Berriot-Salvadore, *Les femmes dans la société française de la Renaissance*, Genève 1990.

<sup>22</sup> M. L. Cioni, *Women and Law in Elizabethan England with Particular Preference to the Court of Chancery*, New York 1985. Cf. also P. Hogleve, *Legal Rights of Tudor Women and Their Circumvention by Men and Women*, "Sixteenth Century Journal", 3 (1972), pp. 97–102.

<sup>23</sup> S. Staves, *Married Women's Separate Property in England 1660–1833*, Cambridge, Mass.–London 1990.

<sup>24</sup> Margaret L. King, *Le donne nel Rinascimento*, Roma–Bari 1991; German translation: *Frauen in der Renaissance*, München 1993.



that epoch was connected with her biology; whereas men were qualified by their social and professional rank, women's position was defined by their sex and the consequent place in the family. King pays much attention to the role of the Reformation (appraising it rather critically) and of convents (negatives predominate too) in the life of women. In presenting women's place in culture, she unfortunately confines herself to elitist culture, even though women played a greater role in what is known as popular culture. King is also fascinated by the question of power and women's share in it (she discusses at length the "virago" type and the rule of Elizabeth I). She is not, however, interested very much in everyday life, which after all was the main domain of women's activities.

More attention to this last question has been paid by E. Berriot-Salvadore who in her book on women in French society during the Renaissance devotes also much space to the development of education and women's intellectual activities; she analyses middle-class' life too, showing women's place in handicrafts and trade<sup>25</sup>.

Some studies dealing with Renaissance women keep to the old pattern of heroines and victims<sup>26</sup>, others, in accordance with new requirements, re-analyse the gender-determined place and activities of individuals and entire groups<sup>27</sup> and show how women's question was reflected in literature (e.g. in Shakespeare's works)<sup>28</sup>. Anthony Fraser's interesting book discusses wo-

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<sup>25</sup> E. Berriot-Salvadore, *Les femmes dans la société française de la Renaissance*, Genève 1990.

<sup>26</sup> Cf. S. Heissler and P. Blastenbrei, *Frauen in der italienischen Renaissance: Heilige-Kriegerinnen-Opfer*, Pfaffenweiler 1990.

<sup>27</sup> M. Ferguson, M. Quilligan, N. Vickers (eds.), *Rewriting the Renaissance: the Discourses of Sexual Differences in Early Modern Europe*, Chicago 1986; M. Migiel, J. Schiesari, *Refiguring Woman: Perspectives on Gender and the Italian Renaissance*, Ithaca 1991.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. *Die Frau in der Renaissance*, hrsg. P. G. Schmidt, Wiesbaden 1994, "Wolfenbütteler Abhandlungen zur Renaissanceforschung", Bd. 14. These are materials from a conference held in Wolfenbüttel in 1990. Most of the ten papers read at the conference dealt with the image of women in literature or with women's literary activity. An interesting new contribution to the long discussion on Shakespeare's heroines was made by W. G. Müller, *Das Problem Weiblicher Identität bei Shakespeare* (pp. 223-242). Though by no means regarding Shakespeare's works as "feminist", Müller rejected the view that the poet had supported extreme patriarchy and treated women as secondary category beings or *verkappte Männer* (as, for instance, S. Greenblatt and K. McLuskie maintain).

men's lot in 17th century England. The author presents legal discrimination of women, their place in the family and in marriage, their access to education (with an extensive passage devoted to the famous Mary Ward and her Institute); in Fraser's view, educational opportunities for women deteriorated in the 17th century as compared with the 16th century. Finally she presents women active in the 17th century in the public arena (in particular during the civil war), including many female predicants and women claiming their rights before courts of law. According to Fraser women also played a significant role in the English economy of the 17th century<sup>29</sup>.

Worthy of attention are some ambitious outlines covering the whole modern era, that is, the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries. A volume devoted to women in early modern times was published in Paris in 1985; it contains acts of the conference organised on this subject in 1984<sup>30</sup>. Another work published in France was a several-volume outline of women's history, a collective work<sup>31</sup>; the volume dealing with the 16th–18th centuries was edited by the well known researchers N. Z. Davis and A. Farge<sup>32</sup>. As the title indicates, the book is unfortunately confined only to Western Europe.

Western Europe is also the field of reflections in the book written by Heide Wunder, a well known German researcher into social history in the early modern era<sup>33</sup>. The author presents changes brought about in the situation of women of all social groups (not only rulers and saints on one side and witches and prostitutes on the other, as is the case in many studies) by great socio-economic transformations and the modernisation of European societies in the 16th–18th centuries. Wunder is interested in the areas of activity (*Handelsräume*) open to women in those centuries, and in the changes which were going on in this field. Most of the material on which the book is based comes from

<sup>29</sup> A. Fraser, *The Weaker Vessel. Woman's Lot in 17th Century England*, London 1984.

<sup>30</sup> *La femme à l'époque moderne, XVIe–XVIIIe ss. Actes du Colloque de 11–12 mai 1984*, Paris 1985.

<sup>31</sup> *Histoire des femmes en Occident*, eds. G. Duby and M. Perrot, Paris 1989–1994.

<sup>32</sup> Paris 1991.

<sup>33</sup> H. Wunder, "Er ist die Sonn', sie ist der Mond". *Frauen in der Frühen Neuzeit*, München 1992.

Germany and France, but the conclusions have a wider meaning. Wunder says that contrary to what has often been asserted in historiography, class structure was not the only reason for the system of social differentiation and discrimination; inequality was also a result of the institution of marriage. Both marriage and the family were structures shaped and stamped by the feudal system; it was through these structures that control and power were executed. Nevertheless, according to Wunder, gender did not have such a universal structuring power in the early modern society as it had in the 19th century bourgeois society. Until the end of the 18th century, the influence of gender was subordinated to age, civil status and social rank; hence the differences in the subordination of women. The author doubts, whether the situation of women was worse in the early modern era than in the Middle Ages, as some researchers assert.

M. E. Wiesner, a well known American researcher, has presented an outline of women's situation in Europe from the 16th to the 18th century<sup>34</sup>. Her book differs from those discussed above in that it is more general and systematic; it covers not only Western countries but Central and even Eastern Europe (Russia) too, and includes rich useful bibliographic information. It is meant as an aid for university lecturers, for gender studies are already included in the regular programme of many American and European universities.

A very large group of publications concerns women's economic activities, their place in urban and rural societies<sup>35</sup>. Their authors deal mainly with economic transformations on the threshold of the early modern era and the consequent ousting of

<sup>34</sup> M. E. Wiesner, *Women and Gender in Early Modern Europe*, Cambridge 1993.

<sup>35</sup> N. Z. Davis, *Frauen im Handwerk. Zur weiblichen Arbeitswelt im Lyon des 16. Jh.*, in: R. van Dülmen, *Arbeit, Frömmigkeit und Eigeninn. Studien zur historischen Kulturforschung II*, Frankfurt/M 1990, pp. 43-74; M. Prior, *Women and the Urban Economy: Oxford 1500-1800*, in: *Women in English Society 1500-1800*, ed. M. Prior, London-New York 1985, pp. 92-117; B. Vogel, U. Weckel, *Frauen in der Ständegesellschaft. Leben und arbeiten in der Stadt vom späten Mittelalter bis zur Neuzeit*, Hamburg 1991; M. Wensky, *Die Stellung der Frau in der Stadtkölnischen Wirtschaft im Spätmittelalter*, Köln-Wien 1980; H. Wunder, *Zur Stellung der Frau im Arbeitsleben und in der Gesellschaft des 15. bis 18. Jh.*, "Geschichtsdidaktik", 6, 1981, pp. 239-251; H. Wunder (hg.), *Weiber, Menschen, Frauenzimmer. Frauen in der ländlichen Gesellschaft 1500-1800*, Göttingen 1996; I. Titz-Matuszak, "Starcke Weibes-Personen". *Geschichte der Goslauer Frauen vom Mittelalter bis 1800*. Bd. I, *Arbeits- und Lebensbedingungen*, Hildesheim-Zürich-New York 1994.

women from many trades and craftsmen's guilds as well as their degradation to worst-paid jobs<sup>36</sup>. This problem is combined with reflections on women's place in the early modern family and society<sup>37</sup> and the direction of the changes taking place at that time; many researchers hold the view that women's opportunities and their living conditions deteriorated in the 16th century<sup>38</sup>. Research on women's place in the great socio-religious Reformation movement (females' role was very important at first but was gradually restricted in later phases) has led to some rather pessimistic views on the development of women's status<sup>39</sup>.

Many studies present a socio-cultural phenomenon characteristic of the early modern era, namely, the unprecedented outburst of "feminist" and "anti-feminist" literature (though those

<sup>36</sup> Cf. S. Cahn, *Industry of Devotion. The Transformation of Women's Work in England 1500–1660*, New York 1987; B. A. Hanswalt (ed.), *Women and Work in Preindustrial Europe*, Bloomington 1986; S. Lese mann, *Arbeit, Ehre, Geschlechterbeziehungen. Zur sozialen und wirtschaftlichen Stellung von Frauen im frühneuzeitlichen Hildesheim*, Hildesheim 1994; Ch. Vanja, *Frauenarbeit in der vorindustriellengesellschaft. Fragestellungen — Quellen — Forschungsmöglichkeiten*, in: *Frauenalltag, Frauenforschung. Beiträge zum 2. Tagung der Kommission Frauenforschung in der Deutschen Gesellschaft für Volkskunde*, Frankfurt/M 1988, pp. 261–273; M. E. Wiesner, *Working Women in Renaissance Germany*, New Brunswick–New Jersey 1986.

<sup>37</sup> Cf. N. Z. Davis, *Frauen und Gesellschaft am Beginn der Neuzeit. Studien über Familie, Religion und die Wandlungsfähigkeit des sozialen Körpers*, Berlin 1986; L. Roper, *The Holy Household. Women and Morals in Reformation Augsburg*, Oxford 1989.

<sup>38</sup> Cf. J. Kelly, *Early Feminist Theory and the Querelle des Femmes, 1400–1789*, "Signs", 8, 1982, pp. 23 ff.

<sup>39</sup> M. B. Broda, *Herr über Sie. Ein Versuch über Typisierung der Frau in der Reformation*, in: "Feministische Studien", 5, 1986, pp. 46–58; R. Bainton, *Women of the Reformation in Germany and Italy*, Minneapolis Minn. 1971; A. Classen, *Footnotes to the German Canon: Maria von Wolkenstein and Argula von Grumbach*, in: J. P. Brink, A. P. Coudert, M. C. Horowitz, *The Politics of Gender in Early Modern Europe*, Kirksville Missouri 1989, pp. 131–148; A. P. Coudert, *The Myth of the Improved Status of Protestant Women*, in: *ibidem*, pp. 61–87; D. Lorenz, *Vom Kloster zur Küche: Die Frau vor und nach der Reformation Dr. Martin Luthers*, in: B. Becker–Cantarino (hrsg.), *Die Frau von der Reformation zur Romantik*, Bonn 1980, pp. 7–35; P. A. Russel, *Lay Theology in the Reformation. Popular Pamphleteers in South–West Germany 1521–1525*, Cambridge 1986; recently especially A. Classen, *Frauen in der deutschen Reformation. Neufunde von Texten und Autorinnen sowie deren Neubewertung*, in: *Die Frau in der Renaissance*, hrsg. P. G. Schmidt, Wiesbaden 1994, pp. 179–201.

terms are rather anachronistic) in many countries<sup>40</sup>. Numerous works analyse learned treatises as well as the output of frequently primitive and vulgar market and street literature, which served mostly to amuse the reader of Renaissance and Baroque times. In learned literature an important place was held by medical treatises dealing with women's constitution and physiology; some progress was made in this field during the 16th and 17th centuries, though facts continued to be mixed with moral speculations and old prejudices<sup>41</sup>.

Women's access to education is a question which arouses considerable interest. The question is discussed in studies concerning education in general<sup>42</sup> as well as in separate studies on female education<sup>43</sup>. Among other problems the authors analyse reading matter for females which was to turn girls and women into meek and submissive creatures<sup>44</sup>. A more general issue —

<sup>40</sup> P. J. Benson, *The Invention of the Renaissance Woman. The Challenge of Female Independence in the Literature and Thought of Italy and England*, Univ. Park, Pennsylvania 1992; J. R. Brink (ed.), *Privileging Gender in Early Modern England*, Kirksville, Missouri 1993 (particularly worthy of mention in this volume is the interesting essay by R. Warnicke, *Private and Public. The Boundaries of Women's Lives in Early Stuart England*, pp. 123–140); R. Gössmann, *Ob die Weiber Menschen seyn oder nicht?*, München 1988; S. Davis, *The Idea of Woman in Renaissance Literature. The Feminine Reclaimed*, Brington 1986; K. Usher Henderson and B. F. Mc Manus, *Half-Human Kind. Context and Texts of the Controversy about Women in England 1540–1640*, Urbana–Chicago 1985; J. Larsen Klein (ed.), *Daughters, Wives and Widows. Writings by Men about Women and Marriage in England 1500–1640*, Champaign–Urbana 1992; A. Shephard, *Gender and Authority in Sixteenth Century England. The Knox Debate*, Keels 1994; S. Shepherd (ed.), *The Women's Sharp Revenge. Five Women's Pamphlets from the Renaissance*, London 1985; Joy Wiltenburg, *Disorderly Women and Female Power in the Street Literature of Early Modern England and Germany*, Charlottesville–London 1992.

<sup>41</sup> E. Berriot-Salvadore, *Un corps, un destin. La femme dans la médecine de la Renaissance*, Paris 1993.

<sup>42</sup> Cf. R. O'Day, *Education and Society 1500–1800. The Social Foundations of Education in Early Modern Britain*, London–New York 1982; D. Cressy, *Levels of Literacy in England 1530–1730*, in: Harvey J. Graff (ed.), *Literacy and Social Development in the West: A Reader*, Cambridge 1981, pp. 105–121; R. A. Houston, *Literacy in Early Modern England: Culture and Education 1500–1800*, London 1988; P. F. Grendler, *Schooling in Renaissance Italy: Literacy and Learning 1300–1600*, Baltimore 1989; G. Huppert, *Public Schools in Renaissance France*, Urbana 1984.

<sup>43</sup> N. McMullen, *The Education of English Gentlewomen 1540–1640*, in: "History of Education", 6, 1977, pp. 87–101; the development of girls' education in Germany has been extensively presented by P. Retzschauer, *The Education of Women in Eighteenth-Century Germany. New Directions from the German Female Perspective*, Lewiston–Lampeter–Queenston 1989 (contrary to the title the book goes back to the beginning of the 16th century).

women's participation in culture — is also frequently discussed. Researchers have taken special interest in women painters and try to explain why there were so few successful female artists in the modern era<sup>45</sup>. The traditional current of research on women's cultural patronage is continued<sup>46</sup>. The lot of women scholars and women writers arouses enormous interest<sup>47</sup>. Many publications discuss the phenomenon of development of literary and political salons and the activity of the *précieuses* in 17th century France<sup>48</sup> as well as the role of women in the French Revolution<sup>49</sup>.

<sup>44</sup> S. Hull, *Chaste, Silent and Obedient: English Books for Women 1475–1640*, San Marino 1982; C. Niekus Moore, *The Maiden's Mirror: Reading Material for German Girls in the 16th and 17th Centuries*, Wolfenbütteler Forschungen 36, Wiesbaden 1987; M. Spufford, *Small Books and Pleasant Histories: Popular Fiction and Its Readership in 17th Century England*, London 1981.

<sup>45</sup> M. Garrad, *Artemisia Gentileschi: The Image of the Female Hero in Italian Baroque Art*, Princeton 1989; G. Greer, *The Obstacle Race: The Fortunes of Women Painters and Their Work*, New York 1979; L. Nochlin, *Why are there no Great Women Artists?*, in: E. C. Baker and T. B. Hess (eds.), *Art and Sexual Politics: Women's Liberation, Women Artists and Art History*, New York 1973, pp. 1–43; A. Sutherland Harris and L. Nochlin, *Women Artists 1550–1950*, New York 1976; E. Tufts, *Our Hidden Heritage: Five Centuries of Women Artists*, New York 1974.

<sup>46</sup> S. Kettering, *The Patronage Power of Early Modern French Noblewomen*, "Historical Journal", 32, 1989, pp. 817–841; C. Valone, *Roman Matrons as Patrons: Various Views of the Cloister Wall*, in: C. Manson (ed.), *The Crannied Wall: Women, Religion and the Arts in Early Modern Europe*, Ann Arbor 1992, pp. 49–72.

<sup>47</sup> E. Beilin, *Redeeming Eve: Women Writers of the English Renaissance*, Princeton 1987; S. Harcstark Myers, *Women, Friendship and the Life of Mind in Eighteenth Century England*, New York 1990; M. Hannay, *Silent but for the Word: Tudor Women as Patrons, Translators and Writers of Religious Works*, Kent, Ohio 1985; S. Heller Mendelson, *The Mental World of Stuart Women, Three Studies*, London 1987; P. H. Labalme (ed.), *Beyond Their Sex: Learned Women of European Past*, New York 1980; F. Morgan, *The Female Wits: Women Playwrights on the London Stage 1660–1720*, London 1981; H. Z. Smith, S. Cardinale, *Women and the Literature of the 17th Century*, New York 1990 (the book includes a bibliography of women's works published in English in 1641–1700). Information on women who wrote and published their books in England in the 16th and 17th centuries can also be found in: S. Heller Mendelson and P. Crawford in: M. Prior (ed.), *Women in English Society 1500–1800*, London–New York 1985, pp. 181–210 and 211–282.

<sup>48</sup> Some researchers think that the phenomenon of salons and the way they worked meant the recognition by some circles of the moral and intellectual equality of the genders, cf. J. Maclean, *Woman Triumphant. Feminism in French Literature 1610–1652*, Oxford 1977. Also A. L. Backer, *Precious Women: A Feminist Phenomenon in the Age of Louis XIV*, New York 1974, and C. C. Lougee, *Le paradis des femmes: Women, Salons and Social Stratification in Seventeenth-Century France*, Princeton 1976.

<sup>49</sup> For the expansion of women's political activities during Revolution see J. B. Landes, *Women and the Public Sphere in the Age of the French Revolution*, London 1988.

Women's delinquency, prostitution and the way it was penalised in order to "discipline society" as well as females' sexual offences, birth control, infanticide and transvestism continue to interest researchers<sup>50</sup>.

A new current of research is focused on the theory launched some time ago by Christine L a r n e r who has asserted that the changes which took place in the 16th and 17th centuries had led to women being regarded as persons threatening social order (which was identified with the patriarchal order in the early modern era)<sup>51</sup>. Other researchers point out that the males' fear of women's domination played a great role in the development of the 16th–17th century literature which criticised and ridiculed women<sup>52</sup>. Recently Joy W i l t e n b u r g has discussed this question in her very interesting book<sup>53</sup> devoted to an analysis of German and English street literature which reflected common notions and convictions, and at the same time constituted an important instrument for shaping social mentality.

The works mentioned above are selected from a vast literature devoted to women. They concern mainly Western Europe, in particular France, England, Germany and Italy. Less attention has been paid in these studies to Scandinavia, Spain and the

<sup>50</sup> Cf. R. Dekker, L. van de Pol, *Frauen in Männerkleidern. Weibliche Transvestiten und ihre Geschichte*, Berlin 1990; P. C. Hoffer, N. E. Hull, *Murdering Mothers: Infanticide in England and New England 1558–1803*, New York 1981; A. McLaren, *Reproductive Rituals: The Perception of Fertility in England from the 16th to the 19th Century*, London 1984; P. Laslett, *Family Life and Illicit Love in Earlier Generations*, Cambridge 1977; P. Laslett, K. Oostervoen, R. M. Smith (ed.), *Bastardy and Its Comparative History: Studies in the History of Illegitimacy and Marital Non-Conformism in Britain, France, Germany, Sweden, North America, Jamaica and Japan*, Cambridge, Mass. 1980; R. Mitchison, L. Leneman, *Sexuality and Social Control: Scotland 1660–1780*; O. and P. Ranum (eds.), *Popular Attitudes toward Birth Control in Preindustrial England and France*, New York 1972; A. McLaren, *A History of Contraception*, Oxford 1890; L. van de Pol, *Het Amsterdams Hoerdom. Prostitutie in de Zeventiende en Achttiende Eeuw*, Amsterdam 1996; G. Ruggiero, *Boundaries of Eros: Sex Crime and Sexuality in Renaissance Venice*, Oxford 1985.

<sup>51</sup> Ch. L a r n e r, *Witchcraft and Religion: The Politics of Popular Belief*, London 1984, esp. pp. 84–88.

<sup>52</sup> Cf. M. E. Perry, *Gender and Disorder in Early Modern Seville*, Princeton 1990; C. Ulbrich, *Unartige Welber. Präsenz und Rentenz von Frauen in frühneuzeitlichen Deutschland*, in: R. van Dülmen, *Arbeit, Frömmigkeit und Eigensinn*, Frankfurt/M 1990; also H. Wunder and Ch. Vanja (ed.), *Wandel der Geschlechterbeziehungen in der Neuzeit*, Frankfurt/M 1991.

<sup>53</sup> J. W i l t e n b u r g, *Disorderly Women and Female Power in the Street Literature of Early Modern England and Germany*, Charlottesville–London 1992.

Netherlands<sup>54</sup>; the history of women in Central and Eastern Europe has attracted rather few researchers. Most of the books dealing with the last-named countries concern old Ruthenia and Russia; in addition to an outline written by the Russian researcher N. L. Puskareva<sup>55</sup>, many American studies have appeared recently on women's life and situation in Ruthenia in the Middle Ages or in Russia from the 16th to the 18th century<sup>56</sup>. Rich information on Bohemia can be found in studies by B. Kopiczkova and J. Janaček. Kopiczkova in her book presents the state of sources and the possibility of their being used for research into the history of women in Bohemia and Moravia in the Middle Ages, but she also formulates some more general remarks, for instance, she analyses the influence of the financial and social stratification on the situation of women or discusses the circulation of some West European literary and scholarly works in Bohemia and Moravia, trying to find out how they influenced the attitude to women in the Czech territories. Janaček presents a comprehensive picture (based on an analysis of concrete examples) of the evolution of women's status in Bohemia on the threshold of early modern times, up to the defeat at the White Mountain in 1620<sup>57</sup>. A rich material on women in the economic, social and cultural history of Bohemia's capital city has been presented recently in a volume containing material from a conference held in Prague in 1993<sup>58</sup>.

Polish literature on the situation of women in the 16th to the 18th century is not impressive. The subject aroused, however,

<sup>54</sup> However, it is worth mentioning the volume edited by E. Kłosk, N. Tesuwen and M. Huisman, *Women of the Golden Age. An international debate on women in 17th c. Holland, England and Italy*, Hilversum 1994, which contains rich information on the situation of women in the Netherlands.

<sup>55</sup> N. L. Puskareva, *Zhenshchyny drevney Rust*, Moskva 1989.

<sup>56</sup> They are discussed by N. L. Puskareva, *Zarubezhnaya istoriografiya o sotsyalnom polzhenii zhenshchiny v drevney Rust*, "Voprosy Istorii", 1988, № 4. Let us also mention the volume edited by Barbara Evans Clement, *Russia's Women: Accommodation, Resistance, Transformation*, Berkeley 1991, which also contains studies concerning the 16th–18th century period, e.g. N. Shields Kollman, *Women's Honor in Early Modern Russia*, pp. 60–73.

<sup>57</sup> B. Kopiczkova, *Historické prameny k studiu postavení ženy v české a moravské středověké společnosti. Interdisciplinární pojetí studia*, Praha 1993; J. Janaček, *Ženy české renesance*, Praha 1977.

<sup>58</sup> *Žena w dějnach Prahy. Sbornik příspěvků z Konference Archivu hl.m. Prahy a Nadace pro Gender Studies 1993*, eds. J. Pešek and V. Ledvínka, Praha 1996, Documenta Pragensia.



attention as early as the 19th century. In addition to studies by K. W. Wójcicki<sup>59</sup> and Z. Kaczkowski<sup>60</sup> written in an old-fashioned panegyric style with a view to persuading contemporary Polish women to keep faith to the ideals of piety, chastity and submissiveness, some smaller studies and articles were published in various periodicals; today they are of no significant scholarly value<sup>61</sup>. Studies devoted to Polish customs and their history (I. L. Czerwiński, F. Siarczyński, Ł. Gołębiowski, W. A. Maciejewski, W. Łoziński) pay some attention to women and a few of them (e.g. W. Łoziński) contain interesting information<sup>62</sup>. The emancipation movement which developed in the Polish territories at the beginning of the 20th century yielded a crop of rather unimpressive studies on women's history<sup>63</sup>.

Considerable progress was achieved in the inter-war period. In addition to the fundamental works on the history of culture by A. Brückner<sup>64</sup> and Jan S. Bystron<sup>65</sup> which discussed at length the history of the family, including women's role in it, there appeared Łucja Charewiczowa's book on women in Old Poland, the first scholarly study on this subject, based on a

<sup>59</sup> K. W. Wójcicki, *Niewiasty polskie (Polish Women)*, Warszawa 1845.

<sup>60</sup> Z. Kaczkowski, *Kobieta w Polsce. Studium historyczno-obyczajowe (Woman in Poland. An Historical Study in Customs)*, Petersburg 1895; the work, however, was written earlier, in the 1860s.

<sup>61</sup> e.g. B. Chlebowski, *Udział kobiet polskich w życiu duchowym społeczeństwa naszego (The Participation of Polish Women in the Spiritual Life of Our Society)*, in: *Upominek. Książka zbiorowa na cześć E. Orzeszkowej*, Kraków 1893; idem, *Udział kobiet w twórczości literackiej (Women's Participation in Literary Work)*, in: *Kobieta współczesna*, collective work, Warszawa 1904; W. Chomętowski, *Stanowisko praktyczne dawnych niewiast (The Practical Attitude of Women in Old Times)*, Warszawa 1872; K. Szajnocha, *Staropolskie wyobrażenia o kobietach (Ideas about Women in Old Poland)*, in: *Dziela* vol. IV, Warszawa 1876; H. Skimborowicz, *Polki autorki i artystki (Polish Women Writers and Artists)*, "Bluszcz", 1879–1880, №8; J. Terpiłowska, *Historia kobiety. Studium społeczne (Woman's History. A social study)*, "Bluszcz", vol. 40, № 41, Warszawa 1905.

<sup>62</sup> W. Łoziński, *Prawem i lewem. Obyczaje na Czerwonej Rusi w pierwszej połowie XVII w. (By Right and by Might. Customs in Red Ruthenia in the First Half of the 17th Century)*, 1st ed. Lwów 1903; idem, *Życie polskie w dawnych wiekach (Polish Life in Old Times)*, 1st. ed. Lwów 1907.

<sup>63</sup> A. Machczyńska, *Kobieta polska. Szkic historyczny skreślony na wystawę w Pradze w r. 1912 (Polish Woman. An Historical Essay Written for the 1912 Prague Exhibition)*, Lwów 1912; J. Petrażycka-Tomiccka, *Z dziejów kobiety polskiej (From a Polish Woman's History)*, Lwów 1914.

<sup>64</sup> A. Brückner, *Dzieje kultury polskiej (A History of Polish Culture)*, Kraków 1931.

<sup>65</sup> Jan S. Bystron, *Dzieje obyczajów w dawnej Polsce. Wiek XVI–XVIII (A History of Customs in Old Poland. 16th–18th Centuries)*, vols. I–II, Kraków 1932.

through knowledge of many sources<sup>66</sup>. Before the publication of this valuable study, Charewiczowa, a researcher from Lwów, formulated a programme of research on women's history in the paper *Est-il fondé d'écrire une histoire spéciale de la femme*<sup>67</sup> which she read at the 7th International Congress of Historical Sciences. This opened a new stage in research on women's history in Poland, severing the subject from patriotic, religious or emancipation slogans and channeling it into a solid search based on sources and the use of scientific research methods.

Several studies on the history of laws regulating the relationship between spouses were also published in Poland during the inter-war period<sup>68</sup>; it is also worth mentioning some studies on women's religious orders<sup>69</sup> as well as S. Wasylewski's popular book *The Convent and Woman*<sup>70</sup>; the latter is not a scholarly monograph but it contains a great deal of interesting information on the subject from the 16th and 17th centuries.

Some post-war studies on the history of customs have also dealt at large with the feminine question<sup>71</sup>. A greater interest began to be taken in various aspects of women's life especially concerning the beginning of the early modern era in Poland. Many

<sup>66</sup> Ł. Charewiczowa, *Kobieta w dawnej Polsce do okresu rozbiorów (Woman in Old Poland up to the Period of Partitions)*, Lwów 1938.

<sup>67</sup> Ł. Charewiczowa, *Est-il fondé d'écrire une histoire spéciale de la femme?*, Varsovie 1933.

<sup>68</sup> W. Abraham, *Zawarcie małżeństwa w pierwotnym prawie polskim (Contract of Marriage in the Original Polish Law)*, Lwów 1916; P. Dąbkowski, *Charakterystyka prawa prywatnego polskiego. Nowe spostrzeżenia (Characteristics of the Polish Private Law. New Remarks)*, Lublin 1923.

<sup>69</sup> J. Gajkowski, J. M. Giżycki, K. Kantak, M. Pirożyński, P. Rokicki, W. Szoldrski.

<sup>70</sup> S. Wasylewski, *Klasztor i kobieta. Studium z dziejów kultury polskiej w średniowieczu (The Convent and Woman. A Study in the History of Polish Culture in the Middle Ages)*, Kraków 1923.

<sup>71</sup> Z. Kuchowicz, *Z dziejów obyczajów polskich w wieku XVII i pierwszej połowie XVIII (A History of Polish Customs in the 17th and Early 18th Centuries)*, Warszawa 1957; idem, *Obyczaje staropolskie XVII-XVIII w. (Old Polish Customs. 17th-18th Centuries)*, Łódź 1975; M. Bogucka, *Staropolskie obyczaje w XVI-XVII w. (Old Polish Customs in the 16th and 17th Centuries)*, Warszawa 1994. Z. Kuchowicz's book *Człowiek polskiego baroku (Man of the Polish Baroque)*, Łódź 1992, is, in a way, a history of customs in which the author analyses such questions as women's social position, conjugal and extramarital love (there is a chapter on sex which discusses women's sexual behaviour), procreation, etc. But the author's interpretation is too biological; moreover, he has made little use of such basic sources as minutes of law proceedings, noblemen's records, correspondence.

biographies presenting eminent women, in particular rulers, have been published, to mention Z. Kuchowicz's *Portraits of Uncommon Women*<sup>72</sup> and his book on Barbara Radziwiłłówna<sup>73</sup>, biographies of Bona Sforza and Anna Jagiellon<sup>74</sup>, of Zofia Jagiellon and Anna Vasa<sup>75</sup>, of Marie-Louise<sup>76</sup> and Marie-Casimire<sup>77</sup> as well as the popular collection of lives of Polish queens by E. Rudzki<sup>78</sup>. Speaking of biographies let us also mention K. Górski's life story of a prodigious woman, Mother Magdalena Mortęska, a Benedictine nun<sup>79</sup>, and 17th century Polish mystic. The description of the exceptionally tragic life of Anna Zbąska née Stanisławska<sup>80</sup> and of the stormy life of Regina Pilsztynowa née

<sup>72</sup> Z. Kuchowicz, *Wizerunki niepospolitych niewiast staropolskich w XVI–XVIII w.* (*Portraits of Uncommon Women in Old Poland from the 16th to the 18th Century*), Łódź 1972.

<sup>73</sup> Z. Kuchowicz, *Barbara Radziwiłłówna*, Łódź 1976. The author has laid stress on the sexual-biological aspect of the Radziwiłłówna's life at the expense of its socio-psychological context; moreover, he has presented Barbara as an emancipated woman fighting for females' rights, which is rather an anachronic misunderstanding.

<sup>74</sup> M. Bogucka, *Bona Sforza d'Aragona*, Warszawa 1989; eadem, *Anna Jagiellonka*, Wrocław 1994. In 1965 P. Jasienica published a book entitled *Ostatnia z rodu* (*The Last of the Family*), Warszawa 1965. However, strictly speaking this is not Anna's biography. The work presents loosely connected pictures from Poland's history during the reign of the last two Jagiellons and gives little and rather misleading information on the heroine herself.

<sup>75</sup> J. Pirożyński, *Die Herzogin Sophia von Braunschweig-Wolfenbüttel aus dem Hause der Jagiellonen (1522–1575) und ihre Bibliothek*, Wiesbaden 1992; G. Kurkowska, *Anna Wazówna 1568–1625. Polskie losy szwedzkiej królowny (Anna Vasa 1568–1625. The Lot of the Swedish Royal Daughter in Poland)*, Toruń 1995; A. Saar-Kozłowska, *Infantka Szwecji i Polski Anna Wazówna 1568–1625. Legenda i rzeczywistość (Anna Vasa, the Infant of Sweden and Poland 1568–1625. The Legend and the Reality)*, Toruń 1995.

<sup>76</sup> Z. Libiszowska, *Żona dwóch Wazów (The Wife of Two Vasas)*, Warszawa 1963; eadem, *Królowa Ludwika Maria (Queen Marie-Louise)*, Warszawa 1985; B. Fabiani, *Ludwika Maria Gonzaga. Szkic biograficzno-ikonograficzny 1645–1667 (Marie-Louise Gonzaga. A biographical-ikonographic essay 1645–1667)*, "Rocznik Muzeum Narodowego w Warszawie", XVII, 1973, pp. 163–248.

<sup>77</sup> M. Komarzyński, *Maria Kazimiera d'Arquien Sobieska, królowa Polski 1641–1716 (Marie-Casimire d'Arquien Sobieska, Queen of Poland 1641–1716)*, Kraków 1983; idem, *Piękna królowa Maria Kazimiera d'Arquien Sobieska, 1641–1716 (The Beautiful Queen Marie-Casimire d'Arquien Sobieska, 1641–1716)*, Kraków 1995.

<sup>78</sup> E. Rudzki, *Polskie królowe (The Polish Queens)*, vols. I–II, Warszawa 1985.

<sup>79</sup> K. Górski, *Matka Mortęska (Mother Mortęska)*, Kraków 1971. Woman's place in the Catholic Church has been recently discussed by B. Adamiak, *Milcząca obecność (Silent Presence)*, Warszawa 1998.

<sup>80</sup> I. Kotowa wrote about her before World War I in her book *Anna Stanisławska, pierwsza autorka polska (Anna Stanisławska, the First Polish Authoress)*, "Pamiętnik Literacki", 1934. After 35 years J. Ruszczykówna has chosen

Rusiecka gives us an idea of the lot of Polish noblewomen<sup>81</sup>. B. Popiołek has recently joined the group of biographers and presented an eminent noble lady of the turn of the 17th century, Elżbieta Sieniawska née Lubomirska<sup>82</sup>. Popiołek's book shows the great political role played by Polish women in the 18th century, a theme first raised more than thirty years ago by W. Konopczyński<sup>83</sup>.

Many researchers have taken an interest in the colorful question of love in Old Poland and the relationship between the genders<sup>84</sup>. The eternal triangle is the subject of J. Sere dyka's interesting study on marriage in the magnates' families at the beginning of the 17th century<sup>85</sup>. An image of a model Polish woman, wife and mother in the 16th–18th centuries has been presented by A. Wyr obisz<sup>86</sup>. The upbringing and education of Polish girls in early modern times has been discussed by H. Barycz in an essay published shortly after the war<sup>87</sup>. A little

Stanisławska as the heroine of her book entitled *Trzy portrety polskiej poetki XVII w. Anna ze Stanisławskich Zbąska (Three Portraits of a 17th Century Polish Poetess. Anna Zbąska née Stanisławska)*, Warszawa 1969.

<sup>81</sup> *Regina Salomea z Rusieckich Pilsztynowa. Proceder podróży i życia mego awantur (The Ways of My Travels and My Life's Adventures)*, ed. R. Pollak, Kraków 1957. The book includes an extensive introduction and Pilsztynowa's biography reprinted in Pollak's book *Od renesansu do baroku (From the Renaissance to the Baroque)*, Warszawa 1969, pp. 292–327.

<sup>82</sup> B. Popiołek, *Królowa bez korony. Studium z życia i działalności Elżbiety z Lubomirskich Sienawskiej, ok. 1669–1729 (The Crownless Queen. A Study in the Life and Activity of Elżbieta Sienawska née Lubomirska about 1669–1729)*, Kraków 1996.

<sup>83</sup> W. Konopczyński, *Kiedy nam! rządziły kobiety (When We Were Ruled by Women)*, Londyn 1960.

<sup>84</sup> Cf. Z. Kuchowicz, *Miłość staropolska (Love in Old Poland)*, 1982; D. Ciepleńko-Zielińska, *Staropolskie romanse (Love Affairs in Old Poland)*, Kraków 1965; A. Sajkowski, *Staropolska miłość (Love in Old Poland)*, Poznań 1981. This current also includes editions and analysis of love letters, cf. R. Ganszyniec, *Polskie listy miłosne (Polish Love Letters)*, Kraków 1925, and M. Miślorny, *Listy miłosne dawnych Polaków (Love Letters in Old Poland)*, Kraków 1971.

<sup>85</sup> J. Sere dyka, *Księżniczka i chudopacholek. Zofia z Radziwiłłów Drohostajska — Stanisław Tymiński (The Princess and the Poor Nobleman. Zofia Drohostajska née Radziwiłł — Stanisław Tymiński)*, Opole 1995; see also M. Bogućka, *Marriage in Early Modern Poland*. "Acta Poloniae Historica", vol. 81, 2000, pp. 51–78.

<sup>86</sup> A. Wyr obisz, *Staropolskie wzorce rodziny i kobiety — żony i matki (Old Poland's Models of the Family and Woman — Wife and Mother)*, "Przegląd Historyczny", 1992, № 3, pp. 405–421; idem, *Kobiety w społeczeństwie staropolskim: wzorce i rzeczywistość (Women in Old Poland's Society: Models and the Reality)*, *Pamiętnik XV Powszechnego Zjazdu Historyków Polskich*, vol. II, ed. A. Żarnowska, Gdańsk-Toruń 1995, pp. 17–22.

later W. Urban<sup>88</sup> and A. Wyczański<sup>89</sup> raised the question of women's literacy in Old Poland. H. Malewska has in a small but interesting volume presented some letters written by and to women in the Old Polish period<sup>90</sup>. A separate place in female epistolography is undoubtedly held by Queen Marie-Casimire, whose letters to John Sobieski as well his letters to her have been the subject of many studies<sup>91</sup>. Polish learned women in the 17th century have been presented by K. Targosz<sup>92</sup> and this research current has been recently enriched by M. Czarnicka's study on the education and literary activity of women in Silesia in the 17th century<sup>93</sup>.

<sup>87</sup> H. Barycz, *Kartka z dziejów staropolskiego wychowania dziewcząt (A Page from the History of the Upbringing of Girls in Old Poland)*, "Nasza Przeszość", IV, 1948, pp. 157-178.

<sup>88</sup> W. Urban, *Korespondencja kobiet ze średniozlacheckiej rodziny Kanimirów z przelomu XVI i XVII w. (Correspondence of Women from a Middle Noble Family of the Kanimirs from the Turn of the 16th Century)*, "Odrodzenie i Reformacja w Polsce", vol. 33, 1988, pp. 239-244; idem, *Umiejętność pisania w Małopolsce w drugiej połowie XVI w. (Writing Skill in Little Poland in the Second Half of the 16th Century)*, "Przegląd Historyczny", 1977, № 2, pp. 231-257.

<sup>89</sup> A. Wyczański, *Oświata a pozycja społeczna w Polsce XVI stulecia. Próba oceny umiejętności pisania szlachty woj. krakowskiego w drugiej połowie XVI w. (Education and Social Position in 16th Century Poland. The Cracow Voivodship Nobility's Ability to Write in the Second Half of the 16th Century)*, in: *Spółczeństwo staropolskie*, vol. I, Warszawa 1976, pp. 27-56.

<sup>90</sup> H. Malewska, *Listy staropolskie z epoki Wazów (Old Polish Letters from the Vasa Period)*, Warszawa 1959.

<sup>91</sup> *Marta Kazimiera d'Arquien de la Grange, Listy do Jana Sobieskiego (Letters to John Sobieski)*, ed. T. Kukulski, Warszawa 1966; *Jan Sobieski, Listy do Marysieńki (Letters to Marie-Casimire)*, ed. L. Kukulski, Warszawa 1970.

<sup>92</sup> K. Targosz, *Uczony dwór Ludwiki Marii Gonzagi 1646-1667. Z dziejów polsko-francuskich stosunków naukowych (The Learned Court of Marie-Louise Gonzaga. From the History of Polish-French Scientific Relations)*, Wrocław 1975; eadem, *Sawantki w Polsce XVII w. Aspiracje intelektualne kobiet ze środowisk dworskich (Learned Women in 17th Century Poland. The Intellectual Aspirations of Women from the Royal Court Circles)*, Warszawa 1997. B. Fabiani has also written about female royal court in her book *Warszawski dwór Ludwiki Marii (The Warsaw Court of Marie-Louise)*, Warszawa 1976, and *Na dworze Wazów w Warszawie (At the Vasas' Court in Warsaw)*, Warszawa 1988, but rather from the point of view of customs and the court's place in culture in the broad sense of the word. Materials from a session held in 1986 and devoted to Polish writing women were published as a book entitled *Pisarki polskie epok dawnych (Polish Women Writers in Old Epochs)*, ed. K. Stasięwicz, Olsztyn 1998.

<sup>93</sup> M. Czarnicka, *Die "verse-schwangere" Elysie. Zum Anteil der Frauen an der literarischen Kultur Schlesiens im 17. Jh.*, Wrocław 1997; eadem, *Das "gelehrte" Frauenzimmer. Zur Erziehung und Bildung der Frau im 17. Jh. am Beispiel Schlesiens*, "Acta Poloniae Historica", vol. 74, pp. 45-72.

Studies dealing with everyday life usually devote much space to the situation and life of women. As regards the period of interest to us, particularly important are the studies by B. Baranowski<sup>94</sup>, A. Berdecka and I. Turnau<sup>95</sup>, M. Bogućka and L. Sieciechowiczowa<sup>96</sup>, W. Czapliński and J. Długosz<sup>97</sup> and B. Fabiani<sup>98</sup>. M. Borkowska's recent book<sup>99</sup> on the everyday life of Polish nuns in the 17th and 18th centuries throws new light on various aspects of female convent life and the role of convents in women's life.

Studies concerning historical demography and the history of the family also raise questions connected with women's history. M. Koczerska's thorough study concerns the late Middle Ages<sup>100</sup> but it provides a good starting point for reflections on the 16th century. S. Waszak and C. Kuklo have written about urban families<sup>101</sup> and A. Izydorczyk about peasant families<sup>102</sup> in the early modern era. C. Kuklo has also raised the im-

<sup>94</sup> B. Baranowski, *Życie codzienne małego miasteczka w XVII i XVIII w.* (*Everyday Life in a Small Town in the 17th and 18th Centuries*), Warszawa 1975.

<sup>95</sup> A. Berdecka, I. Turnau, *Życie codzienne w Warszawie okresu Oświecenia* (*Everyday Life in Warsaw during the Enlightenment*), Warszawa 1969.

<sup>96</sup> M. Bogućka, *Życie codzienne Gdańska. Wiek XV–XVII* (*Everyday Life in Gdańsk. 15th–17th Centuries*), Warszawa 1967; eadem, *Życie w dawnym Gdańsku* (*To Live in Old Gdańsk*), Warszawa 1997; L. Sieciechowiczowa, *Życie codzienne w renesansowym Poznaniu* (*Everyday Life in Renaissance Poznań*), Warszawa 1974.

<sup>97</sup> W. Czapliński, J. Długosz, *Życie codzienne magnaterii polskiej w XVII w.* (*Everyday Life of Polish Magnates in the 17th Century*), Warszawa 1976.

<sup>98</sup> B. Fabiani, *Życie codzienne na Zamku Królewskim w epoce Wazów* (*Everyday Life at the Royal Castle during the Vasa Period*), Warszawa 1996.

<sup>99</sup> M. Borkowska, *Życie codzienne polskich klasztorów żeńskich w XVII–XVIII w.* (*Everyday Life in Polish Female Convents in the 17th and 18th Centuries*), Warszawa 1996.

<sup>100</sup> M. Koczerska, *Rodzina szlachecka w Polsce późnego średniowiecza* (*The Noble Family in Poland in the Late Middle Ages*), Warszawa 1975.

<sup>101</sup> C. Kuklo, *Rodzina w osemnastowiecznej Warszawie* (*The Family in 18th Century Warsaw*), Białystok 1991; S. Waszak, *Dzielnosc rodziny mieszczańskiej w XVI–XVII w. i ruch naturalny ludności miasta Poznania w końcu XVI i w XVII w.* (*Fertility Rate of the Middle Class Family in the 16th and 17th Centuries and the Natural Movement of Poznań's Population at the End of the 16th and in the 17th Centuries*), "Roczniki dziejów społecznych i gospodarczych", vol. 14, 1954, pp. 316–384.

<sup>102</sup> A. Izydorczyk, *Rodzina chłopska w Małopolsce w XV–XVI w.* (*The Peasant Family in Little Poland in the 15th and 16th Centuries*), in: *Spoleczeństwo staropolskie*, vol. III, Warszawa 1983, pp. 7–27. For the situation of old women in Kujavian villages see M. Koczyski, *Old Age Gives no Joy? Old People in the Kujawy Countryside at the End of the 18th Century*, "Acta Poloniae Historica",

portant problem of single women<sup>103</sup>. M. Kamler has for many years been studying the question of crime, including infanticide and other crimes committed by women<sup>104</sup>. Women-managers of manorial farms has been the subject chosen by A. Wyczański<sup>105</sup> who, together with A. Izydorczyk-Kamler, has contributed an interesting general appraisal of women's role in rural economy in Poland in the 16th and 17th centuries<sup>106</sup>. A. Karpiński has devoted several studies to towns-women<sup>107</sup>; he has recently published a fundamental study on this subject,

1998, pp. 81-102.

<sup>103</sup> C. Kuklo, *Kobieta samotna w miastach Europy przedprzemysłowej jako przedmiot badań historycznych* (Single Woman in Pre-Industrial European Towns as a Subject of Historical Research), in: *Miasto — region — społeczeństwo*, Białystok 1992, pp. 286-287. The situation of widows has been researched by M. Bogucka, *Wdowi skarb z r. 1566. Inwentarz ruchomości Małgorzaty, wdowy po Tidemanie Feldstete* (A Widow's Treasure from 1566. Inventory of the Personal Property of Małgorzata, Widow of Tideman Feldstete), in: *Balticum. Studia z dziejów polityki, gospodarki, kultury XII-XVII w.*, Toruń 1992, pp. 61-66.

<sup>104</sup> M. Kamler, *Dziełobójstwo w miastach Korony w drugiej połowie XVI w. (Infanticide in Polish Towns in the Second Half of the 16th Century)*, "Czasopismo prawno-historyczne", vol. 38, 1986, № 1, pp. 171-184; *idem*, *Kary za kradzież w Krakowie i Poznaniu w drugiej połowie XVI w. (Penalties for Theft in Cracow and Poznań in the Second Half of the 16th Century)*, in: *Spółczeństwo Staropolskie*, vol. IV, Warszawa 1986, pp. 7-17; *idem*, *Struktura i liczebność środowisk przestępczych Poznania i Krakowa w drugiej połowie XVI w. (The Size and Structure of Criminal Groups in Poznań and Cracow in the Second Half of the 16th Century)*, in: "Przeszłość Demograficzna Polski", vol. XV, 1984, pp. 71-93; *idem*, *Świat przestępczy w Polsce XVI i XVII stulecia (The Criminals in 16th and 17th Century Poland)*, Warszawa 1991.

<sup>105</sup> A. Wyczański, *Kobiety kierowniczk folwarków w starostwie sieradzkim w XVI w. (Woman Managers of Manorial Farms in Sieradz District in the 16th Century)*, "Zapiski Historyczne", 1976, № 3, pp. 41-49.

<sup>106</sup> A. Izydorczyk-Kamler, A. Wyczański, *La femme et l'économie rurale en Pologne aux XVIe et XVIIe siècles*, in: *La donna nell'economia secc. XIII-XVIII*, ed. S. Cavaciocchi, Prato 1990, pp. 275-282.

<sup>107</sup> A. Karpiński, *Prostytucja w dużych miastach polskich w XVI-XVII wieku (Kraków, Lublin, Poznań, Warszawa) (Prostitution in Polish Cities (Cracow, Lublin, Poznań, Warsaw) in the 16th and 17th Centuries)*, "Kwartalnik Historii Kultury Materialnej", 1988, № 2, pp. 277-304; *idem*, *Prostytucja, złodzieje, czarownice. Z badań nad kobiecą przestępczością w Poznaniu w drugiej połowie XVI i w XVII wieku (Prostitutes, Thieves, Witches. Research on Women's Delinquency in Poznań in the Late 16th and 17th Centuries)*, "Kronika Miasta Poznania", № 1-2, 1993, pp. 110-132; *idem*, *Przekupki, stragantarki, kramarki. Zakres feminizacji drobnego handlu w miastach polskich w drugiej połowie XVI i w XVII wieku (Women Hawkers, Stall Keepers and Peddlers. The Feminisation of Small Trade in Polish Towns in the Late 16th and 17th Centuries)*, "Kwartalnik Historii Kultury Materialnej", 1990, № 1-2, pp. 81-91; *idem*, *Żeńska służba domowa w miastach polskich w drugiej połowie XVI i w XVII wieku (Female Servants in Polish Towns in the Late 16th and 17th Centuries)*, in: *Nędza i dostatek na ziemiach polskich od średniowiecza po wiek XX*, ed. J. Sztybel, Warszawa 1992, pp. 41-61.

presenting women's place in urban communities, their economic and cultural activity in towns, their intellectual level and mentality on the basis of a meticulous analysis of rich sources from the archives of five cities: Poznań, Cracow, Warsaw, Lublin and Lwów<sup>108</sup>. Women's economic activity in old Poland has been discussed by M. Bogucka<sup>109</sup>, who has recently presented works on the general situation of women and their role in Polish society in the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries<sup>110</sup>. Bogucka had also published studies concerning disputes over women in early modern times, as well as the role of religion in females' life and their participation in the culture<sup>111</sup>. There is a growing interest in the gender history in Poland as is proved by the fact that a special section dealing with this subject held debates during the 15th and 16th General Congresses of Polish Historians<sup>112</sup>. A special issue of "Acta Poloniae Historica" concerning gender relations appeared in 1996<sup>113</sup>.

Thus, although as regards volume and number, Polish works yield precedence to West European studies, interest in the question of gender relations in the early modern period has been growing, in particular in the last few years, and studies dealing with various questions linked to this subject have been published. There has however been a lack of theoretical reflections, especially of works which might crystallise terminology and put

<sup>108</sup> A. Karpiński, *Kobieta w mieście polskim w drugiej połowie XVI i w XVII wieku* (Woman in Polish Towns in the Late 16th and 17th Centuries), Warszawa 1995.

<sup>109</sup> M. Bogucka, *Women and Economic Life in the Polish Cities during the 16th–17th Centuries*, in: *La donna*, pp. 185 and 200; eadem, *Gender in the Economy of a Traditional Agrarian Society: the Case of Poland in the 16th–17th Centuries*, "Acta Poloniae Historica", vol. 74, 1996, pp. 5–20.

<sup>110</sup> M. Bogucka, *Kobieta w społeczeństwie polskim XVI–XVII w.* (Woman in Polish Society in the 16th and 17th Centuries), *Pamiętnik XV Powszechnego Zjazdu Historyków Polskich*, vol. II, pp. 3–16; eadem, *Białogłowa w dawnej Polsce* (Woman in Old Poland), Warszawa 1998.

<sup>111</sup> M. Bogucka, *Women and Religion in the Early Modern Period*, "Acta Poloniae Historica", vol. 77, 1998, pp. 5–26; eadem, *Great Disputes Over Women in Early Modern Times*, "Acta Poloniae Historica", vol. 78, 1998, pp. 27–52; eadem, *Women and Culture in Poland in Early Modern Times*, "Acta Poloniae Historica", 80, 1999, pp. 61–97.

<sup>112</sup> The papers read then can be found in *Pamiętnik XV Powszechnego Zjazdu Historyków Polskich* (Diary of the 15th General Congress of Polish Historians), Gdańsk-Toruń 1995 and *Pamiętnik XVI Zjazdu Historyków Polskich* (Diary of the 16th General Congress of Polish Historians), in print.

<sup>113</sup> Vol. 74, *Gender Studies*.



it in order. Polish scholars have not yet worked out all the concepts and terms needed in the gender studies. Without an adequate and proper terminology it will be difficult to develop research.

Source base is another difficult problem. In the Middle Ages and from the 16th to the 18th century women constituted a silent part of society: sources produced by women are scant; researchers must therefore study all documents of a given epoch if they want to examine women's lives. Urban and rural records (especially law court records), church archives, private archives, diaries, noblemen's records, collections of sermons, last wills, inventories, *belles lettres*, correspondence, all these sources always contain more or less scattered direct or indirect information on women and gender relations. If American female scholars assert that history should be re-written, it seems that first off all sources should be re-examined and new questions formulated, in order to get better perspective on the history of women and their place in society.

*(Translated by Janina Dorosz)*