Editing Early Modern Women. Sarah C. E. Ross and Paul Salzman, eds.
Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016. xii + 300 pp. $99.99.

A happy coincidence or a curse? As Sarah C. E. Ross and Paul Salzman remark in the
introduction to their invaluable new collection of essays, the rise of scholarly interest
in early modern women's writing over the past few decades has, from one perspective,
been extraordinarily inapposite. What less auspicious time could there have been to
construct author- and woman-centered literary-historical narratives than in the post-
1960s aftermath of the death of the author and the deconstruction of gender essential-
ism? Yet, as this rich and engaging collection so amply indicates, in other, evidently
more important, respects, the past few decades have offered the ideal conditions for re-
search on early modern women's writing to flourish. In practical terms, research in this
area has been immeasurably facilitated by the internet, and more particularly by elec-
tronic resources such as Early English Books Online, Eighteenth-Century Collections
Online, and the Perdita Project. Although access to electronic resources comes at a
price, it has nonetheless enabled scholars from throughout the world to work on rare
texts that were once available only to a very few. Theoretically and methodologically,
furthermore, editorial work on early modern women's writing has also benefited from
the more liberal attitudes to editorial theory and practice that have obtained since the
1990s. With many different styles of editing now available to them, editors have seized
on the opportunity to devise distinctive methods to suit the material and historical cir-
cumstances of individual texts and authors. In a few instances, they have even enjoyed
the luxury—all but unimaginable to earlier generations of editors—of being able to
produce multiple, diversely purposed and orientated editions of the same female-
authored text.

Editing Early Modern Women both is and is more than a witness to this rich, di-
verse, and thought-provoking editorial history. Almost all its contributors have direct
experience of editing early modern women's texts and write knowledgeably and in-
structively of the challenges they have confronted in their work. The first of the collec-
tion's four sections, "Editorial Ideologies," examines the theoretical and methodological
issues involved in recovering early modern women's writing for a present-day reader-
ship. Danielle Clarke and Ramona Wray expose and deconstruct the critical preconcep-
tions that too often distort modern responses to female-authored texts, while Susan M.
Felch and Elizabeth Clarke discuss the particular difficulties and responsibilities faced
by editors of hitherto unedited works. Section 2, "Editing Female Forms," focuses on
genre, with essays by Suzanne Trill on Anne Halkett's religious and autobiographical
manuscripts; Diana G. Barnes on women's letters; Leah Marcus on Elizabeth I's letters,
speeches, and poetry; Marion Wynne-Davies on drama; and Marie-Louise Coolahan on
the 1664 edition of Katherine Philips's *Poems*. Trill's, Barnes's, and Marcus's essays pro-
vide insights into the issues involved in editing genres conventionally classed as nonlit-

erary, while Wynne-Davies and Coolahan make the case for postauthorial editorial orientations—respectively, performance and reception focused.

In the final two sections, contributors look to the future, considering how traditional print-based editions can best mediate early modern women's texts for a student readership, and also how prospective editors may be able to take still further advantage of electronic resources. In "Out of the Archives, Into the Classroom," Mary Ellen Lamb discusses the methods and motives underlying her student-facing edition of Wroth's daunting *Urania*, while Sarah Ross and Elizabeth Scott-Baumann outline their objectives in planning a new anthology of women's Civil War poetry, and Pamela Hammons considers the gains and losses involved in modernizing Katherine Austen's verse manuscript, *Book M*. Finally, in "Editorial Possibilities," Patricia Pender and Rosalind Smith survey recent electronic editions such as *Mary Wroth's Poetry* and *Bess of Hardwick's Letters*, and preview their own Material Cultures of Early Modern Women's Writing, a "digital archive of seven author-based case studies" (265). As they show, far from displacing traditional print editions, as was once feared, electronic resources at their best can enhance and complement the hard-copy editions that many readers, of all ages, still prefer.

This important volume will be essential reading for scholars and students interested in editing and gender, in the early modern period and beyond.

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