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Reading and Writing Between the Lines: Lady Eleanor Douglas, a Midland Visionary and her Annotated Pamphlets

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In the first half of the 17th century, Lady Eleanor Douglas earned notoriety for pouring tar on the Lichfield altar and flooding London with controversial pamphlets. While she published her tracts for a public audience, she saved some of her most scathing comments for a private readership. Just before her 1652 death, Lady Eleanor bound 44 of her pamphlets together and gifted the volume to her daughter, Lucy Hastings, 6th Countess of Huntingdon. While Lady Eleanor was a religious and political pariah, her daughter was the matriarch of the prominent Leicester Hastings family, earls of Huntingdon, a leading royalist family during the civil war. This volume, now at the Folger Shakespeare Library, contains line-by-line edits and personal commentaries in Lady Eleanor's hand. By reading the text and annotations alongside Lady Eleanor's private correspondence to her daughter, these annotations provide a crucial lens that allows us to better perceive the voice of this infamous woman. A close reading of this volume also allows us to see a more complex personal editorial process for female writers in the early modern period.

KEYWORDS Women writers, Lady Eleanor Douglas, political and religious tracts, editorial process, prophetic writing, female visionaries, print culture, manuscript culture

Lady Eleanor, the famous female visionary, sprang to notoriety in 1635 when she and a group of women sat in the bishop's throne in Lichfield Cathedral and poured tar on the altar. Lady Eleanor spent some time in Bedlam for this offense but it was not her first brush with law. During the 1620s, she earned a notorious reputation at court for making outrageous prophecies about the assassination of the Duke of Buckingham and the end of days. These prophecies not only got Lady Eleanor into trouble with her husbands, but with Charles I and Archbishop Laud. To exacerbate matters, Lady Eleanor published seventy-seven scathing and prophetic tracts between 1625 and her death in 1652. While

she spent years in Bedlam and the Tower over the course of several decades, imprisonment never slowed her writings and publications.

As the daughter of George Touchet, 1st earl of Castlehaven, an English man with an Irish title, Lady Eleanor occupied an unusual place among the English nobility. She married Sir John Davies in 1609 and lived with him in Ireland while he was Solicitor-general for Ireland. The couple had three children, but only their daughter, Lucy, lived into adulthood. When Sir John died in 1626, Lady Eleanor remarried Sir Archibald Douglas a year later. The couple did not have any children and rarely resided under the same roof. Sir Archibald disagreed with his wife's wild prophecies and despaired over his inability to control her. Although Lady Eleanor was an elite woman and wife, her roles as mother, prophetess, and troublemaker defined her identity during her adult life.¹ Her daughter, Lucy, was a child bride when she married Ferdinando Hastings, heir to the earldom of Huntingdon and a midland landed magnate. When Sir John died in 1626, the Hastings-Davies match experienced considerable strain when the earl and countess of Huntingdon filed suit against the estate of Sir John, claiming that Lucy's marriage portion was still unpaid. Lady Eleanor spent the better part of her remaining life engaged in lawsuits to regain or maintain control of property she believed to be rightfully hers.

The dysfunctional and complicated relationships with her in-laws grew significantly worse over time. Lucy's mother-in-law was Elizabeth Hastings (nee Stanley), one of the celebrated Stanley co-heiresses, daughters to Ferdinando Stanley, 5th Earl of Derby, and Alice Egerton (nee Spencer), the formidable Dowager Countess of Derby. In 1624, the countess of Huntingdon's eldest sister, Anne, married Lady Eleanor's brother, Mervyn Touchet, 2nd earl of Castlehaven. In the 1620s, Lady Eleanor battled the Stanley women over Lucy's marriage portion and lost. By the 1630s, the relationship was catastrophic when the countess of Castlehaven accused her husband and one of her servants of raping her. In 1631, the earl was found unanimously guilty of rape and was executed. Lady Eleanor was enraged and published numerous pamphlets about the trial and her vengeful hatred of the Stanley family.²

Like many in the first half of the 17th century, Lady Eleanor relied on the growing use of print as the mechanism to disseminate her political and religious view, spread her prophetic visions, and shame her many enemies. She also annotated some of her printed tracts to convey personal messages. In the months before her 1652 death, Lady Eleanor selected forty-four printed pamphlets she had authored, bound them together, and gifted the volume to her daughter, Lucy, 6th countess of Huntingdon. The pamphlets date from the 1640s and 1650s, the years she was most actively publishing. This volume, now at the Folger Shakespeare Library, contains line-by-line edits and personal commentaries in Lady Eleanor's hand.³ 'Lady Huntington' is written several times

¹ While many sources account biographical details of Lady Eleanor's life, the authoritative biography is Esther Cope, *Handmaid of the Holy Spirit: Dame Eleanor Davies, Never Soe Mad a Ladie* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1992).

² For more about the Castlehaven trials, see: Cynthia Herrup, *A House in Gross Disorder: Sex, Law, and the 2nd Earl of Castlehaven* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).

³ Folger Shakespeare Library (hereafter FSL), D2010. Each pamphlet is catalogued separately in Hamnet, The Folger's online catalogue, but it is described as an entire volume in their card catalogue. Each online catalogue record for the 44 pamphlets includes a note intellectually linking the pamphlets together: 'MS. notes, cropped at fore-edge, but possibly in the author's hand. Bound with 44 other tracts by Lady Eleanor. Provenance: inscription on front paste-down: "Lady [Lucy?] Huntingdon"; bookplate of Fairfax of Cameron, with "1910" added in pen'. (hamnet.folger.edu; accessed 31 August 2015). When referring to the entire volume, D2010 is used. When citing a specific copy of a pamphlet the title is used, again with the volume reference.

in an unidentified hand on the inside of the front cover and along the top of the first page. A bookplate from a later owner is glued into the front cover. In the final months of her life, Lady Eleanor repurposed her own writings to make corrections, additions, and to caution her daughter about the dangers she believed infected English society.⁴

Lady Eleanor was a notorious figure during her lifetime and her reputation was well earned. Many of her contemporaries described her as ‘mad’.⁵ Her actions, relationships, and writings defied contemporary norms for elite English women and while it is easy to cast Lady Eleanor as a Caroline rabble-rouser, that role is far too limiting.⁶ As one of the best-documented women in the early modern period, Lady Eleanor’s life and writings deserve closer study. Scholars like Phyllis Mack and Teresa Feroli have rightfully argued for the need to better understand Lady Eleanor’s convoluted writings and rantings in a broader early modern context.⁷ By looking beyond the label of ‘mad’, historians and literary scholars can glean important insights into the ways early modern women engaged with their wider world. Lady Eleanor was a high profile figure who produced influential sources that offered complex commentary on her world. As Thomas Cogswell and Alastair Bellany have argued, historians ‘cannot afford to dismiss the strange, the implausible, and the fantastic: if our subjects wrote about it, talked about it, debated it, believed it or scoffed at it, then it matters.’⁸

While Lady Eleanor published her tracts for a public audience to engage in religio-political debates, she saved some of her most scathing comments for a private readership. At the end of her life, Lady Eleanor took great care in editing selected texts with messages specifically for her daughter, all captured in the Folger volume. Lady Eleanor habitually annotated her pamphlets throughout her life, yet the particular annotations in this volume provide a crucial lens that allows us to better perceive the public voice of this infamous woman. Considering her annotations alongside her surviving correspondence is also essential to recognize patterns and habits in her writing. Bringing personal correspondence into the fold to analyze printed and annotated tracts also helps us consider Lady Eleanor as a person, not just an author, and deepens our understanding of the relationship Lucy would have with the volume, as both a reader, a daughter, and a midland countess.⁹ A close reading of this volume allows us to see a more complex personal editorial process for female writers in the early modern period. It also contributes to ongoing discussions about the porous relationship between the production and reception of print and manuscript sources in early modern England.¹⁰

⁴ The latest pamphlet in the volume is *Bethlehem Signifying the House of Bread*, with an imprint date of 1652. Lady Eleanor died in London 5 July 1652.

⁵ Peter Heylyn, *Cyprianus Anglicus* (London: E. Cotes, 1668) p. 266; Phyllis Mack, *Visionary Women: Ecstatic Prophecy in Seventeenth-Century England*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 16–17.

⁶ Modern scholars have long been willing to cast Lady Eleanor merely as insane. See: S. G. Wright, ‘Doulge Fooleries,’ *Bodleian Quarterly Record* 9 (1932–34), 95–98; Theodore Spencer, ‘The History of an Unfortunate Lady’ *Harvard Studies and Notes in Philology and Literature* 20 (1938), 43–59; C. J. Hindle, ‘A Bibliography of the Printed Pamphlets and Broad-sides of Lady Eleanor Douglas the Seventeenth-Century Prophetess,’ *Edinburgh Bibliographic Society Transactions* 1:1 (Edinburgh: R. and R. Clark, 1936), 65–98.

⁷ Mack, *Visionary Women*, 16; Teresa Feroli, *Political Speaking Justified: Women Prophets and the English Revolution*. (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2006), p. 38.

⁸ Thomas Cogswell and Alastair Bellany, *The Murder of Kings James I* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2015), xxx.

⁹ Margaret J. M. Ezell, *Social Authorship and the Advent of Print* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999), 12–14.

¹⁰ Julie Crawford, *Mediatrice: Women, Politics, and Literary Production in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014); Margaret J. M. Ezell, *Social Authorship*; David McKitterick, *Print, Manuscript, and the Search for Order, 1450–1830* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003); Jason Peacey, *Print and Publication in the English Revolution* (Cambridge University Press, 2013).

The writings produced by Lady Eleanor and her contemporaries have certainly mattered to historians and literary scholars. Not only did female political writing increase between 1620 and the 1650s, but there were some three hundred active female writers by the 1640s and 1650s.¹¹ The majority of these women wrote prophetic political tracts, and between 1641 and 1660, at least fifty women prophets published 156 treatises.¹² These women had broad educational backgrounds, social standings, and religious beliefs, yet they all generated visionary writings as their mechanism for political commentary. Jason Peacey has argued that many writers, regardless of gender, took to print to air their frustrations, but as Adrian Johns demonstrates, print could be a remarkably and uniquely liberating mechanism for female authors.¹³ Lady Eleanor was without doubt the most famous of these female visionary writers in this period, having published sixty-nine prophetic tracts between 1625 and her death in 1652.¹⁴ Esther Cope has argued that prophetic writing (by someone of any gender) serves two functions: to 'disclose the will of God in history' and 'foretelling specific events.'¹⁵ These purposes establish a crucial need to annotate or edit prophetic tracts because visionary works must be revised to consider whether or not the prophecy came to fruition. Phyllis Mack has also established a gendered need for editing or annotating female prophetic texts by pointing out that for all female visionary writers, *except* Lady Eleanor, male ministers added commentary and annotations to validate the author's political and spiritual claims.¹⁶ Lady Eleanor's elite status and the lack of a male editorial eye place her annotations firmly outside the norm in this regard, but an analysis of her annotated pamphlets can still speak to a wider significance.

Scholars, like Jesse Lander, have considered the editorial process in early modern writings, but most of the time they only compare variations between printed editions.¹⁷ In the 1990s and early 2000s editors of published series, like *The Early Modern Englishwoman*, put out edited facsimiles of published early modern texts with the goal to, 'remedy one of the major obstacles to the advancement of feminist criticism of the early modern period, namely the unavailability of the very texts upon which the field is based.'¹⁸ These volumes only contain a single edition of a particular work and do not always address whether or

¹¹ Elaine Hobby, *Virtue of Necessity: English Women's Writing 1649–88* (London: Virago Press, 1988), 29; Mack, *Visionary Women*, 1.

¹² Hobby, *Virtue of Necessity*, 26; Feroli, *Politically Speaking Justified*, 19.

¹³ Peacey, *Print and Publication*, 18; Adrian Johns, *The Nature of the Book: Print and Knowledge in the Making* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), pp. 414–415.

¹⁴ Hobby, *Virtue of Necessity*, 27; Barbara Keifer Lewalski, *Writing Women in Jacobean England* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993), p. 4; Mack, *Visionary Women*, 94; Dorothy Paula Ludlow, 'Arise and Be Doing,' *English Preaching Women, 1640–60*, (Indiana University, PhD, 1978), 33, 342; Feroli, pp. 15–21, 36.

¹⁵ Cope, *Handmaid*, 50.

¹⁶ Mack, *Visionary Women*, 97.

¹⁷ Jesse Lander, *Inventing Polemic: Religion, Print, and Literary Culture in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

¹⁸ Betty S. Travitsky and Patrick Cullen (series eds), *The Early Modern Englishwoman: A Facsimile Library of Essential Works, Series I, Printed Writings, 1500–1640: Part 2, Vol 3, Eleanor Davies*, selected and introduced by Teresa Feroli (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000), vii. See also: Betty S. Travitsky and Anne Lake Prescott (series eds), *The Early Modern Englishwoman: A Facsimile Library of Essential Works, Series II, Printed Writings 1641–1700: Part 4, Vol 6, Eleanor Davies Douglas, Writings 1647–1652*, selected and introduced by Teresa Feroli (Ashgate: Aldershot, 2010); Esther Cope, *Prophetic Writings of Lady Eleanor Davies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995). Some of the facsimiles in these volumes come from D2010 at the Folger.

not multiple editions of that work were published. They also reflect various ‘act[s] of choice’ made by series editors.¹⁹ While it does enable access, it also inadvertently favours the represented facsimile as the authoritative edition without any critical bibliographic analysis. Access to sources is critical for scholars, but so too is a careful consideration of what they represent. The proliferation of printed facsimile series, EEBO, and other digital resources has also given scholars unprecedented access to sample editions or fair copies of early modern printed tracts. While this can feel like a windfall of primary sources, it can also lend itself to problematic research methodologies.²⁰ Problems in analysis of a text arise when scholars use a single edition from facsimiles in an edited series and do not consider multiple editions of a work. This can also be the case when scholars use EEBO as a bibliography, when that was not its indented purpose. It is pivotal to consider different editions of a printed work, who initiated the publication of those different editions, and annotated copies of these same sources. It is also imperative to read manuscript sources by authors when available to develop a sense of personal style, habits, and tendencies.²¹

Lady Eleanor’s volume at the Folger suggests that her annotated copies of her tracts served as yet another ‘edition’ for her own use and her daughter’s use, which was not intended to contribute to public debates and discursive polemics. While some scholars have acknowledged that Lady Eleanor routinely annotated her pamphlets, they have yet to incorporate her annotations into a comprehensive study of what this prolific writer attempted to say and the complex ways she interacted with her works. They have merely acknowledged the annotations, read them as Lady Eleanor’s desire to be precise with her predictions, or characterized them as glosses.²² Cope, characterized sources that pertain to Lady Eleanor’s life as ‘public and private records, especially from family papers among the Hastings Manuscripts at the Huntington Library, and her own prophetic tracts, many of which appear in a volume that probably belonged to her daughter and is now in the Folger Library’²³ While Cope comprehensively read printed and manuscript sources in her reconstruction of Lady Eleanor’s life, her distinction between ‘public and private records’ and family papers raises an important issue. Jason Peacey has argued that many family archives often contain printed sources with heavy annotations, essentially transforming the printed sources into manuscripts.²⁴ But this view, too, subscribes to the notion that something is either manuscript or print, even if it is merely an intellectual distinction. By annotating her pamphlets and gifting them to her daughter, Lady Eleanor was in one sense allowing her printed tracts to circulate in the way manuscript sources typically did within a family.²⁵ Scholars have long argued that manuscript circulation, in particular,

¹⁹ Margaret J.M. Ezell, *Writing Women’s Literary History* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999), 162. While Ezell’s discussion here is of anthologies, the same methodologies apply.

²⁰ It is important to consider that ESTC and EEBO do not use a standard metric for quantifying their holdings, and scholars often conflate *title*, *work*, and *record* to all mean the same thing. See: Stephen Tabor, ‘ESTC and the Bibliographic Community, *The Library: The Transactions of the Bibliographic Society* 7th ser.8, no. 4 (December 2007), 367–86.

²¹ A review of the bibliography in Teresa Feroli’s *Politically Speaking Justified* suggests that she only read a single edition of each of her author’s work and took it to be the authoritative text. She also did not cite a single manuscript source pertaining to Lady Eleanor.

²² Hobby, *Virtue of Necessity*, 28; Mack, *Visionary Women*, 91; Hindle, ‘Bibliography ... of Dpouglas’, 10.

²³ Cope, *Handmaid*, 4.

²⁴ Peacey, *Print and Publication*, 41.

²⁵ I have not yet been able to discern at what point the annotated volume was separated from the Hastings family archive.

was an essential tool in building a community, social bonding, and disseminating information outward to new localities. In this case, Lady Eleanor counted on her daughter reading and caring for the annotated volume the same way she would read and care for their correspondence. By annotating tracts, most of which were printed in London, Lady Eleanor also ensured that her daughter, who spent most of her time in Leicestershire, was cognizant of debates and voices beyond the county.²⁶

Cope frames Lady Eleanor's life in terms of public, private, and prophetic. A closer analysis of Lady Eleanor's annotations and correspondence reveal that these categories should be seen as far more porous. Public debate and private use in this paper are conceived as that which an author put out for mass circulation and how she, herself, then interacted with her texts and thoughts. This methodological approach is shaped in part by the works in Peter Lake and Steve Pincus's edited volume, *The Politics of the Public Sphere in Early Modern England*. Lake, Pincus, and their contributors are interested in exploring the ways that print and manuscript interacted and informed one another. They envision that, 'The result is to place a depiction of communication, the relaying of accounts of political processes to different audience, at the centre of our history of the period' (meaning the post-Reformation period to the 18th century).²⁷ Margaret Ezell's work also cautions of the dangers of 'collapsing public into publication,' and tells us to 'look instead at the extent to which intellectual and literary life, as well as politics, was created, invigorated, and sustained through the writing and reading of script texts.'²⁸

We must read Lady Eleanor's annotated volume and her pamphlets in general with great care. Without close bibliographic analysis, it is misleading to assume a single edition is the authoritative edition, ignoring other editions and the author's annotated copies. It is also crucial to consider personal correspondence when available. When we read all of these sources and genres together it is possible to see that Lady Eleanor believed she was creating living documents. Peacey conceives of the 'outward distribution' of printed texts, but by revisiting her own writings to convey specific messages for her daughter, Lady Eleanor is casting her work for inward distribution as well.²⁹ Her annotations demonstrate that she did not view her texts as static and conceived of them as she did the manuscripts she produced. By considering the different forms her annotations took and recognizing them as habitual when read alongside her letters, we come to develop a much more dynamic understanding of her tracts, and ultimately her view of the world. Because Lady Eleanor's work is a regular fixture in studies of gender, politics, rhetoric, discourses of feminism, sexuality, and even madness set in the 17th century, it is particularly important to approach her texts with analytical care.³⁰ With her edits, Lady Eleanor was doing three things. First, she edited her tract to revise typos and add omitted words.

²⁶ Peter Beal, *In Praise of Scribes: Manuscripts and their Makers in Seventeenth-Century England* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), viii; Crawford, *Mediatix*, 25–6; Ezell, *Social Authorship*, 103; Harold Love, *Scribal Publication in Seventeenth-Century England* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 36–9, 160, 175.

²⁷ Peter Lake and Steve Pincus (eds), *The Politics of the Public Sphere in Early Modern England* (Manchester UP, 2007), 3; Peacey, *Print and Publication*, 12.

²⁸ Ezell, *Social Authorship*, 39.

²⁹ Peacey, *Print and Publication*, 23–123.

³⁰ For example: Nigel Smith, *Perfection Proclaimed: Language and Literature in English Radical Religion 1640–1660* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989); Katharine Gillespie, *Domesticity and the Dissent in the Seventeenth Century: English Women Writers and the Public Sphere* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004); Feroli, *Politically Speaking Justified*; Mack, *Visionary Women*.

Second, she added commentary to validate her prophecies. Third, she added personal messages either for herself or for her daughter. In a world determined to silence her, Lady Eleanor gave herself the final word. In doing these three things Lady Eleanor reclaimed her texts, an act which allows scholars to conceive of public, print, and manuscript culture in more dynamic ways.

Lady Eleanor's annotations immediately raise broader issues of audience. Phyllis Mack has offered the most detailed analysis to date by arguing that Lady Eleanor, 'invited her audience to contemplate her as the literal embodiment of a feminine archetype...Her audience in turn, responded to her largely in terms of her metaphoric qualities...the prophet was herself a living text.'³¹ A closer consideration of her annotations and broader writing habits, however, demonstrates that that Lady Eleanor did not see *herself* as the 'living text,' but rather, that she saw *her pamphlets* as living texts. Her edits, annotations, and marginalia reveal her frantic dialogue with her imagined audience, generally, and her daughter, specifically, in a desperate attempt to clearly express herself and continue to modify her printed words. Scholars have studied the 'consumption of print', but reading Lady Eleanor's volume expands that scope to include analysis of the ways early modern authors, themselves, consumed their own printed words.³² In her manuscript and printed sources, she thought and wrote in a model of constant exchanges and evolving interpretations. This is likely why she took great care to edit multiple copies of her tracts and took extra strides to leave her most up-to-date annotations for her daughter at the time of her death.

Edits

The first category of edits includes basic editorial changes. Not surprisingly however, even these minor changes can be complicated. In some instances Lady Eleanor crossed out a single word, in others she crossed out entire passages or pages. For example, in the second pamphlet, *Samson's Fall*, Lady Eleanor removed the second 'thus' from a line which reads: 'This legacy toward your young men's feastings (thus armed at all points) ~~thus~~ turned into fire and sword'.³³ In the seventh pamphlet, *For Whitsonyds Day Feast*, Lady Eleanor struck through every single line across two pages.³⁴ Pages 7 through 10 have been entirely removed from the volume. There is no way to know if Lady Eleanor crossed off some or all of the pages, or if she tore them from the volume to indicate that she wanted to redact the entire range of pages. Either way, the aggressive nature of the pen strokes indicate that she did not want her daughter to consume those words any longer and she was distancing herself, and her daughter, from her old thoughts.

The Early Modern Englishwoman series also includes a facsimile copy of this tract.³⁵ The original tract reproduced in the facsimile copy is housed in Worcester College Library, Oxford. Lady Eleanor annotated the title page of that copy, whereas the Folger's title page is unmarked. Feroli comments in the introduction to the tract, 'The handwritten

³¹ Mack, *Visionary Women*, 23–4.

³² Peacey, *Print and Publication*, 29–30.

³³ FSL, D2010, *Samson's Fall* (1642), p. 11. The volume D2010 is not paginated as a volume, so all page numbers reference the printed page of the pamphlet in the volume.

³⁴ FSL, D2010, *For Whitsonyds Day Feast* (1645), pp. 6 and 11.

³⁵ The Worcester College Library copy and the Folger copy in D2010 have the same Wing number: D1990.

comments in this tract resemble the hand of those that appear in the Folger tracts.³⁶ Feroli likely does not recognize the hand as being that of Lady Eleanor's because she did not consult any manuscript sources, but others have remarked on the identifiable quality of Lady Eleanor's hand, usually commenting on the large sloppiness of it.³⁷ The hand also matches that of all of her letters in the Hastings Collection. The annotation on the facsimile copy reads: 'Leicesters Loss: revela. &c. The Second Woe is past. &c', probably referencing the city of Leicester's destruction before the battle of Naseby in 1645.³⁸ The annotation links the battle and the Book of Revelations. Lady Eleanor likely wrote this to present this specific copy to a specific person. She routinely presented annotated copies of her works to people, including the Queen of Bohemia.³⁹ But, when annotating the Folger copy for her daughter, she did not feel the need to add commentary about this civil war battle to the title page, suggesting that earlier message was not meant for Lucy. Whereas the Folger copy has pages crossed off (and cut out), the rest of the facsimile copy is unmarked. This creates an important tension between the two copies of the exact same edition. Lady Eleanor first published the tract for a wide distribution. She likely annotated the Worcester College copy for a specific person, as she frequently did. In 1652, she annotated a different copy in a different way for herself and her daughter. Centuries later, the inclusion of the Worcester copy in a facsimile volume suggests modern scholars consider *that* copy as the authoritative text, yet Lady Eleanor's very purposeful edits to the Folger copy suggest that to her, it reflects her most current thoughts and lacks an annotated title page because she intended her daughter to read the text differently than her previously identified audience.

Conversely to crossing off text, Lady Eleanor also edited her pamphlets by adding words that were missing. In the fifth pamphlet, *The Restitution of Reprobates*, she added a word to a line which reads: 'And in a day the world made, no more times without their determined Bounds and precincts ...' The edited line reads, 'And in a day the world **not** made, no more times without their determined Bounds and precincts ...'⁴⁰ This makes a dramatic change to the meaning. (The Folger's copy is the copy published in the facsimile volume, thus disseminating this particular edit to a wider modern audience.) This volume is riddled with examples just like this. Of the forty-four pamphlets in the Folger volume, thirty-six contain some edits or annotations and only eight are untouched.

These edits are interesting for several reasons. By removing the second 'thus' in the first example given above, it is easy to assume she did not like that the word repeated in the sentence. The edit does not change the meaning of the sentence, but it does change the flow. Adding the 'not' in the example given above, does change the sentence, but its original omission was probably an error to begin with. Lady Eleanor believed it was never too late to correct errors, even if the wider world would never know. By revisiting her published works, Lady Eleanor shows us that she continued to care about what she said long after her tracts were circulated, read, and in some cases probably forgotten or ignored. The language of her tracts is notoriously difficult to follow, filled with anagrams,

³⁶ Betty S. Travitsky and Anne Lake Prescott (series eds), *The Early Modern Englishwoman: A Facsimile Library of Essential Works, Series II, Printed Writings, 1641–1700: Part 4, Vol 5, Eleanor Davies, and Writings 1641–1646*, selected and introduced by Teresa Feroli (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000), 312.

³⁷ Cope, *Handmaid*, 1–6; Hindle, 'Bibliography ... of Douglas', 10.

³⁸ My thanks to the peer reviewer for pointing out this connection.

³⁹ Cope, *Handmaid*, 61–63.

⁴⁰ FSL, D2010, *The Restitution of Reprobates* (1644), p. 11.

difficult references, rambling streams of consciousness and, all around, are a challenge to read.⁴¹ A closer examination of her correspondence confirms that her letters followed similar patterns,

Lady Eleanor routinely wrote and edited her letters in the same way. The twelve letters she wrote to her daughter between 1625 and 1646 that survive in the Hastings Papers at The Huntington, all show similar kinds of edits.⁴² A letter dated 14 May 1643 is the best example. In the letter, Lady Eleanor updated Lucy on her fight to regain control of Englefield, the estate she claimed after her first marriage, but which she lost in subsequent legal entanglements with the countess of Huntingdon during her imprisonment. She dedicated much of her time in prison to regaining the estate. In this one-page letter, Lady Eleanor twice crossed off words and replaced them with something else. She also inserts six carrots to add words between the lines. In five of the cases the additions are minor: adding 'had' or 'then' to fit the verb tense. Toward the end of the letter she writes, 'For mine owne parte I shall bee slowe Now' but edits the line to read, 'For mine owne parte I shall **not** bee slowe Now ...'⁴³ As with the additions to her printed volume, this dramatically changes her point.

As is the case across her annotated pamphlets, her handwriting in her correspondence changed over time and her writing often appears to be quick and sloppy. By the 1630s, her sentences are frequently written as one long word and her letter shapes are inconsistent. At times she shapes her lower-case d in a standard way, and at times she moves to '@', spelling words like 'ten poun@s a@@@e@.'⁴⁴ It is easy to envision that a manuscript exemplar she provided her printers with would be missing words. It is also easy to envision that a printer would be challenged to follow any manuscript exemplar she provided. [Figure 1] Three of Lady Eleanor's tracts were printed in Amsterdam because she could not get them printed in London. She then smuggled them back into England for dissemination.⁴⁵ It is entirely feasible that a non-English speaking printer would be challenged setting the print form based on the gibberish in the manuscript she provided. This may also account for some of the typos in print that Lady Eleanor endeavored to correct in post-production.⁴⁶

While many of the edits in the Folger volume seem minor, they raise important issues about the trustworthiness of Lady Eleanor's printed tracts. Because she revisited what appear to be typos, we have access to what she meant to say. And because she annotated the same pamphlet in different ways at different times, we know she customized her comments for her various audiences. Some words were for the general public, some for specific contemporaries, and some just for herself and her daughter. These revisions have an even greater context when read in conjunction with her letters. This is an uncommon insight for early modern sources and authors. The edits in the Folger volume alone provide unique insight into her tracts. It would be easy to see them as printer errors if one did

⁴¹ Feroli, *Politically Speaking Justified*, 38–39, 44–46; Hobby, *Virtue of Necessity*, 27; Smith, *Perfection Proclaimed*, 32.

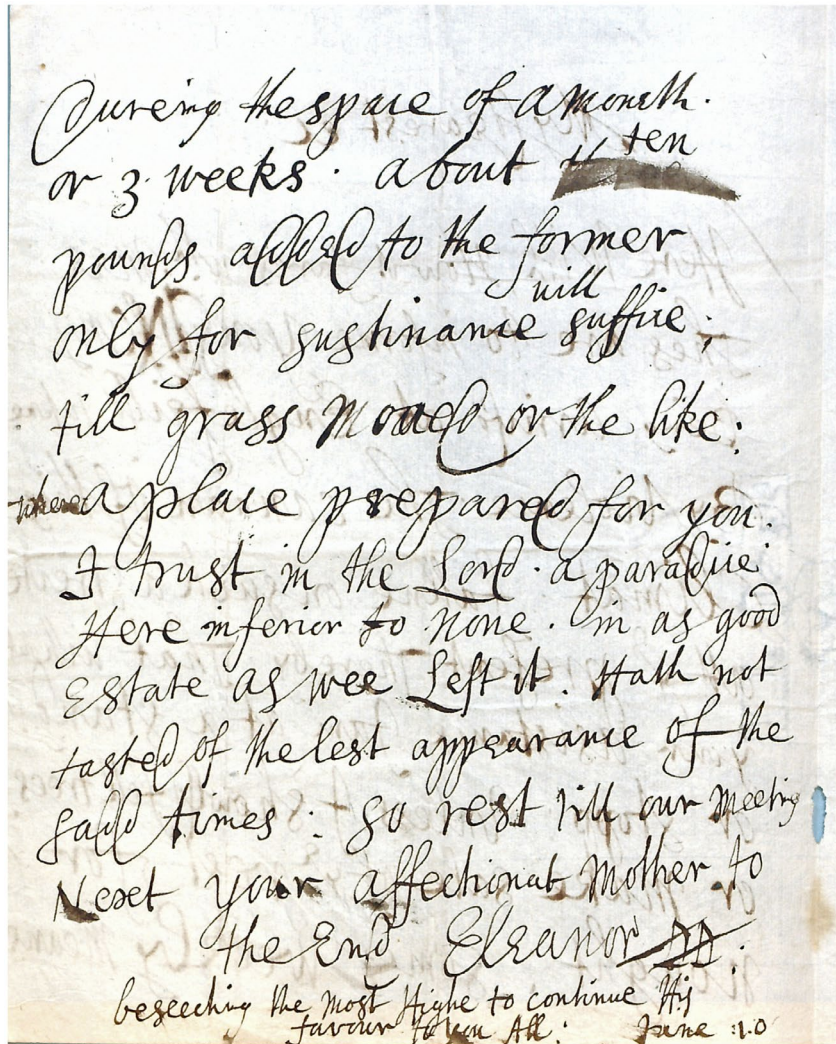
⁴² Huntington Library, (hereafter HEH), HA 2332–2343, Lady Eleanor to Lucy Hastings, written intermittently between 1625–1646.

⁴³ HEH, HA 2338, Lady Eleanor to Lucy Hastings, 14 May 1643.

⁴⁴ HEH, HA 2341, Lady Eleanor to Lucy Hastings, 10 June 1643<. Cope, *Handmaid*, 1–6. Even her signature changes over time.

⁴⁵ Feroli, *Politically Speaking Justified*, 38.

⁴⁶ My thanks to Stephen Tabor for pointing out this possibility.



During the space of a month.
 or 3 weeks. about ~~10~~ ^{ten}
 pounds added to the former
 only for sustenance ^{will} suffice;
 till grass mowed or the like:
~~where~~ a place prepared for you.
 I trust in the Lord. a paradise:
 Here inferior to none. in as good
 estate as wee left it. Hath not
 tasted of the least appearance of the
 fall times: so rest till our meeting
 Next your affectionat mother to
 the End Eleanor ~~DD~~
 beseeching the most High to continue His
 favour to you All. June 10

FIGURE 1 This letter Lady Eleanor wrote to her daughter, Lucy, reveals the unusual letter shapes, particularly the 'd' that is identifiable in the annotations in the Folger Shakespeare Library's D2010 volume. It also reflects her tendency to add words between lines that she left out during her original composition of the letter. Huntington Library, HA 2341, Lady Eleanor to Lady Hastings, June 10 1643 (Reproduced with thanks to the Henry E. Huntington Library, California, USA).

not also look closely at the habits in her personal correspondence. By reading both, we come to see Lady Eleanor as a fast-thinking speed-writing woman and this can account for many of her common errors. This defines important personal and stylistic quirks that are necessary to consider when fully deconstructing her writings. When researchers rely only on her printed sources, they ingest printing errors and assume the pamphlets say what Lady Eleanor meant. This is dangerously misleading.

Added Commentary

Beyond edits, Lady Eleanor also added a range of commentaries to her pamphlets. These additions were intended to revisit her prophecies and at times to embed words over printed words, adding layers to her meanings. She followed up on her predictions and stayed engaged with her prophecies. (Mind you, she did not claim any specific predictions she got wrong. Arguably, she just believed they hadn't happened *yet*.) She also relied on hindsight to provide even greater meaning to specific dates. Print establishes an idea or claim in a particular moment. The way Lady Eleanor continued to engage with her thoughts and prophecies allow us to see a seemingly fixed set of printed ideas evolve over time. The Folger volume allows us to consider how Lady Eleanor actively altered, amended, and reconsidered her printed words as her own thoughts and understandings changed. Lady Eleanor wrote, and then read and re-wrote her prophecies to validate ideas and document that her own sufferings were not in vain.

The scholarly literature connecting reading, writing, self reflection, and piety, especially for women, is vast.⁴⁷ Connections between Lady Eleanor's writing and piety, however, do not follow any conventional norm. In fact, it is virtually impossible to firmly pin her to any confessional identity. Her religious rantings and actions wavered constantly throughout her life. At moments, she seemed to embrace the Calvinist rejection of altars, yet always rejected predestination. She inconsistently quoted from both the King James Bible and the Geneva Bible. Some of her tracts embraced the radicalism of the Fifth Monarchist but she also believed in the divine right of kings. Scholars have attempted to link her to a stable and recognized theology but have universally agreed that she did not adhere to any specific religious group.⁴⁸ Whereas all other known seventeenth-century visionary women analyzed their prophecies in light of religious doctrine and ministers would gloss their printed prophecies accordingly, Lady Eleanor's added commentaries fall far outside this standard practice. Phyllis Mack has referred to Lady Eleanor's annotations as glosses, but because Lady Eleanor edited her letters in similar ways and did not adhere to any particular religion confession, her engagement with her texts are not a common spiritual exercise.⁴⁹ She analyzed, reflected, and annotated in accordance to her own spontaneous thought and outside any conventional religious ideology.

One prime example of Lady Eleanor's reflection of a specific date and event is found in a passage in *The Blasphemous Charge*. The passage is written in Latin and recounts several days in 1633 when Lady Eleanor was charged in the High Commission for illegally distributing her pamphlets.⁵⁰ On 23 October 1633, Archbishop Laud burned her tracts, and she was found guilty of the crime the next day. Lady Eleanor describes the scene in

⁴⁷ For example: Heidi Brayman Hackel and Catherine Kelly (eds.), *Reading Women: Literacy, Authorship, and Culture in the Atlantic World* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008); Mary Erler, *Women, Reading, and Piety in Late Medieval England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006); Isaac Stephens, *The Gentlewoman's Remembrance: Patriarchy, Piety, and Singlehood in Early Stuart England* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2016); Patricia Crawford, *Women and Religion in England: 1500–1700* (London: Routledge, 1993); Margaret Patterson Hannay (ed.), *Silent But for the Word: Tudor Women as Patrons, Translators, and Writers of Religious Works* (Kent: Kent State University Press, 1985); Gemma Allen, *The Cooke Sisters: Education, Piety and Politics in Early Modern England* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013).

⁴⁸ Feroli, *Politically Speaking Justified*, 60; Cope, *Handmaid*, 84; Mack, *Visionary Women*, 91–100.

⁴⁹ Mack, *Visionary Women*, 91.

⁵⁰ FSL, D2010, *The Blasphemous Charge* (1649), p. 5.

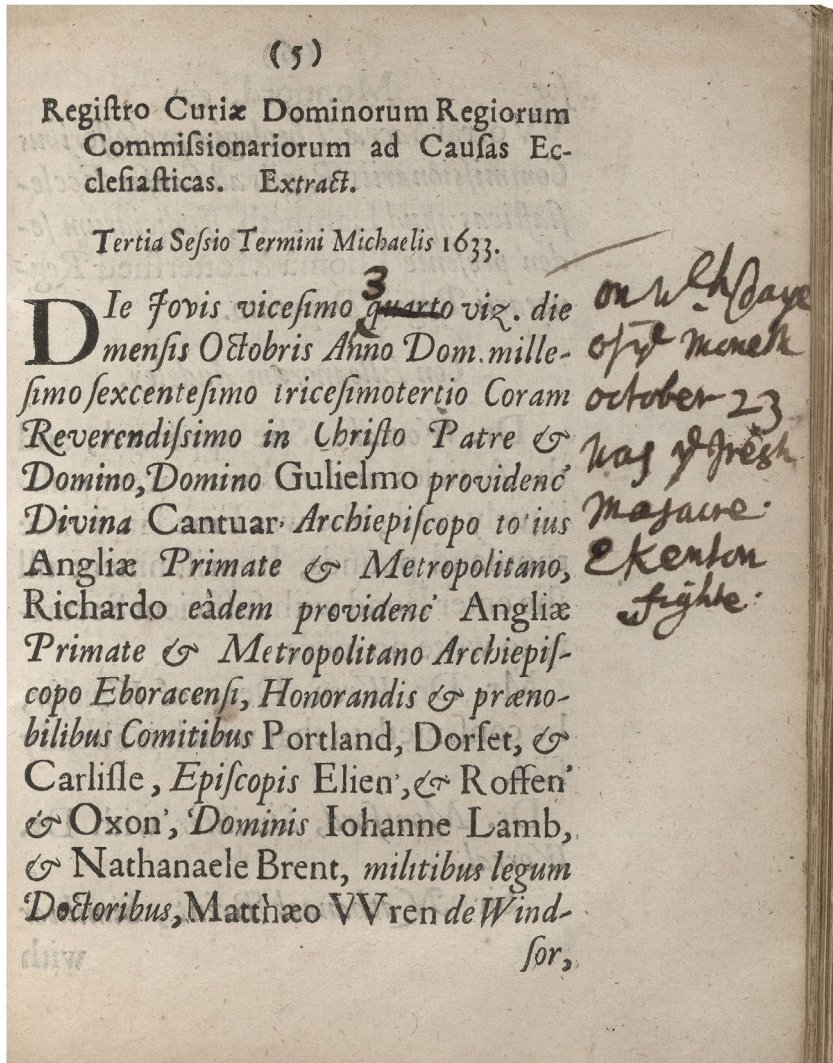


FIGURE 2 Lady Eleanor corrected her printed text and added details in her annotated volume for her daughter. The unusual shape of the letter 'd' in daye is pronounced. FSL, D1980 bound with D2010, p. 5. *The blasphemous charge against her* (1649) (Reproduced with thanks to the Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington DC, USA).

the text. In the margins of the Folger copy, next to this passage she wrote, 'on wch daye of the moneth October 23 was ye Iresh Masacre & Kenton fighte.' This note references the Irish Massacre on 23 October 1641, and the Battle of Edgehill on the same day 1642. [Figure 2] Cope argues that Lady Eleanor's 'emphasis upon her books was a conscious one, not a misremembering or an accidental observation of the wrong date.'⁵¹ 23 October

⁵¹ Cope, *Handmaid*, 66.

was the day Laud burned her books, making that date important to her. Her marginal notes suggest that after her own ordeal, the date held significant meaning demonstrated by the other atrocities that had occurred on the same day in 1641 and 1642. As the pamphlet was not printed until 1649, we do not know if she intentionally left out the massacre and battle or not. But with her annotation we do know that toward the end of her life, she was continuing to read deeper meanings into her own writings and that she wanted to preserve the connections she saw for her daughter.

She also edited *The New Jerusalem* in the Folger edition.⁵² The printed tracts reads, 'Ye may believe me, for I think ye know it had been better for the Lord Mayor of this City, Anno Dom. 1638 to have heard me from the Lord, then to have had the Plague of God amongst them...' In her edits, she crossed off 1638 and wrote, '1635 owt of New Castle 3000.' In this edit, she corrected her prophecy to show when the foretold event actually took place. She also added a specific reference to the horrific Newcastle plague outbreak.⁵³ Here again, Lady Eleanor is looking at the past to verify the predictions she made about the future. She annotated the printed text to update it and to prove that she was right. Lady Eleanor did this a third time in the final paragraph of *A Prayer or Petition for Peace*.⁵⁴ The text reads: 'So look upon us amended Lord like the backward Spring, with those ungrateful graceless Lepers...' In the Folger volume, she crossed out 'like the backward Spring' and in the margin wrote, 'Ts August Last'. This note again gives the precise date that she believed the event really happened.

Another style of her added commentaries do not take place in the margins, but rather demonstrate Lady Eleanor writing a new word over printed text. In the Folger volume, she alters a passage in *The Appearance Or Presence of the Son of Man*.⁵⁵ The printed line reads: '... with the aforesaid Golden Number of Nineteen years and a half to A^o 1644. Extending the A.B.B. his January Account ...' In the Folger volume, Lady Eleanor wrote over 'the A.B.B.' to read 'to LAud', lining the printed 'A' up with the 'a' in Laud. Here we see she believed that her prophecy came to fruition, and while in 1650 she may not have known the specific person that the prophecy was about, in 1652 she could clearly spell out it was her nemesis, Archbishop Laud. Although Laud was dead when she first published the tract, Lady Eleanor constantly combed through her own printed words, searching for deeper meaning and connections.

Lady Eleanor spent most of her adult life defending herself from her enemies and critics. While it is easily argued that she brought this on herself, what really matters is that from her perspective, the state, the English church, her husbands, and her in-laws were out to get her. In the final year of her life, Lady Eleanor revisited her latest works in part to assure herself, and her daughter, that her suffering was not in vain. She wanted her tracts to be read by the wider public, but these added commentaries demonstrate that she also produced them for her own use. Each annotation brought a new, more current, layer to the text, pushing the printed page to evolve across the years.

⁵² FSL, D2010, *The New Jerusalem* (1649), p. 19.

⁵³ Keith Wrightson, *Ralph Tailor's Summer: A Scrivener, His City and the Plague* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011).

⁵⁴ FSL, D2010, *A Prayer or Petition for Peace* (1644), p. 16.

⁵⁵ FSL, D2010, *The Appearance or Presence of the Son of Man* (1650), p. 14.

Personal Messages

Lastly, Lady Eleanor added personal messages for her daughter in her annotations in the Folger volume. Most of the time, scholars describe Lady Eleanor as caring more about prophesying and her many legal battles than her domestic responsibilities.⁵⁶ There is no doubt that she neglected her role as a wife to both of her husbands, but Lady Eleanor maintained a close relationship with Lucy throughout her life. By compiling this volume for Lucy, Lady Eleanor took great care at the end of her life to reinforce a very important point: England was home to many dangerous and wicked figures and even in her estates in Leicestershire, Lucy was never safe. Lucy's own in-laws were chief among these immoral threats, most specifically the Stanley co-heiresses and their mother. Marriage bound the Stanley and Davies women together, but to Lady Eleanor, the ties of kinship felt like a noose.

Scholars have long dedicated efforts to untangle the secret names embedded in Lady Eleanor's published anagrams. She arranged 'Eleanor Audley' to be 'Reveale O Daniel,' 'Belchaser' was her name for 'Charles Be,' and, she addressed Anne Stanley in her tracts as 'Lye Satan'.⁵⁷ Lady Eleanor also directly referenced people by their known names in her tracts. Her writings about Laud mention him by name. As discussed above, the complicated structure and anagrams in her writings meant that she sometimes needed to spell things out more clearly to ensure that her desired readers understood her convoluted messages. There was nothing veiled in her pamphlets against the Stanley women, but she still annotated the volume for Lucy to be sure she understood how much her mother hated the Countess of Castlehaven. The notorious Castlehaven trials took their family fights to an even more intense level.

Lady Eleanor's disdain for the Stanley women is well discussed and well documented.⁵⁸ The fight takes on another layer when we look at her annotations in the Folger volume. At the top of *The Restitution of Reprobates*, Lady Eleanor wrote in large sprawling letters, 'For ye Countess of Castlehaven present...'⁵⁹ She made minor edits throughout the text, but on the bottom of the last page wrote, 'in prison doubtful whether Hee the Christe because the person dares not open to Him...[illegible]...The Forerunner of Peace.' Lady Eleanor's disdain for the countess of Castlehaven was no secret, but the annotated dedication demonstrates that the animosity did not defuse over time. The Countess of Castlehaven died in 1647, and there is no evidence that the women had any contact with each other in the later years of their lives. While she initially published the tract for wide circulation, the annotation show that Lady Eleanor wrote for a personal and particular audience. Feroli argues that in this tract, Lady Eleanor cast the countess of Castlehaven as a Jezebel and arbiter of the apocalypse to allow her to 'reconcile her

⁵⁶ Mack, *Visionary Women*, 95; Feroli, *Politically Speaking Justified*, 50.

⁵⁷ Cope, *Handmaid*, 12.

⁵⁸ Teresa Feroli, 'Sodomy and Female Authority: The Castlehaven Scandal and Eleanor Davies's *The Restitution of Prophecy* (1651),' in *Women's Studies: An Interdisciplinary Journal* 24, no. 1-2 (1994), 31-49; Herrup, *A House in Gross Disorder*; Cynthia Herrup, 'The Patriarch at Home: The Trial of the 2nd Earl of Castlehaven for Rape and Sodomy,' *History Workshop Jnl.*, 41 (1996), 1-18; Cynthia Herrup, '“To Pluck Bright Honour From the Pale-Faced Moon”: Gender and Honour in the Castlehaven Story,' *Trans. of the Royal Hist. Soc.*, 6th series, no. 6 (1996), 137-159; Vanessa Wilkie, *Such Daughters and Such a Mother: The Countess of Derby and her Three Daughters, 1560-1647* (University of California-Riverside, PhD thesis, 2009); Cope, *Handmaid*, 43-46.

⁵⁹ FSL, D2010, *The Restitution of Reprobates* (1644).

brother's death as symptomatic of a political order nearing the end of its tenure.⁶⁰ The printed tract addressed her public family demise and her belief about the downfall of English society. Her annotated title page demonstrates that even at the end of her life, years after the countess of Castlehaven's own death, Lady Eleanor still saw the situation as dire and firmly held onto her anger. Her published writings created a broad audience for the dramatic scenes; annotating them allowed her to act out monologues for the daughter she would leave behind.

These edits also allowed Lady Eleanor to infuse her already published text with special messages for her daughter. Lucy certainly understood the tensions between her mother and the Stanley family. She was, after all, daughter-in-law to Elizabeth, countess of Huntingdon. But more importantly, Lucy was always a loyal advocate for her mother.⁶¹ In 1633 she petitioned the King on her 'distressed mothers behalfe,' begging him to move Lady Eleanor from Gatehouse prison to a different location, 'where she may have free ayre' and 'that for womanhoods sake shee may have some woman of her owne to attend her in this her great misery.'⁶² Unfortunately no letters from Lucy to her mother survive in the Hastings Collection, but she did write letters to advance her family's causes and at times, 'hoped to hear of [her] mothers health.'⁶³ In the end, Lucy immortalized her devotion to her mother in the tomb she constructed for Lady Eleanor. Lucy wrote an epitaph which reads:

... Learned above her sex,
 Meek below her rank
 Than most people greater
 Because more humble,
 In eminent beauty She possessed a lofty mind,
 In Pleasing affability, singular modesty:
 In a woman's body a man's spirit.
 In most adverse circumstances a serene mind,
 In a wicked age unshaken piety and uprightness ...⁶⁴

Teresa Feroli argues that Lady Eleanor 'founded her prophetic vocation on the failure of traditional institutions such as the monarchy to preserve order ... In many senses, hers is a prophetic career devoted to mourning the passing of old social structures.'⁶⁵ Lady Eleanor believed she was leaving her beloved daughter to a dangerous world, both on a national and personal level. She did not believe the text was enough. Lady Eleanor wanted to drive home the aftermath of her long-standing feuds with the Stanley women with a personal annotation for Lucy. She also wanted to ensure that she was well versed in the evil doings of state and church leaders. In this way, she was instructing her daughter how to read her mother's controversial writings, how to accurately remember the past, and how to learn from those bitter times. With her epitaph, it is clear Lucy understood.

⁶⁰ Feroli, *Politically Speaking Justified*, 88.

⁶¹ Mack, *Visionary Women*, 98.

⁶² The National Archives, SP 16/255 fo. 75, Lucy Hastings' petition to Charles I.

⁶³ HEH, HA 5744, Lucy Hastings to Ferdinando Hastings, 15 January [c. 1649/50].

⁶⁴ Rev. Alexander B. Grosart (ed.), *The Works in Verse and Prose of Sir John Davies*, Printed for Private Circulation, 1876, cxxiii.

⁶⁵ Feroli, *Politically Speaking Justified*, 34.

Conclusion

Print is a medium that at first glance appears fixed in time. Rare source like Lady Eleanor's annotated volume allow scholars to see beyond the snapshot of the printing press and encourages us to better understand how authors could engaged with their own ideas long after they circulated in the London marketplace and spread to the countryside. Too often we rely solely on a single copy of a printed source and analyze the tracts in vacuum, or do not have access to annotated works. Through her annotations, Lady Eleanor was able to express herself more accurately than she would have otherwise. She was also able to continue her thoughts across the decade and to reclaim them to leave private messages for her daughter. Her edits give her the final word, a very rare things for an author in the early modern period.

Notes on contributor

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