

The Writings of an English Sappho

ELIZABETH COOKE HOBY RUSSELL



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Introduction

THE OTHER VOICE

Dedicating his *Margarite of America* (1596) “to the noble, learned, and virtuous lady, the Lady Russell,” Thomas Lodge calls his dedicatee, “our English *Sappho*.” Perhaps by way of explanation, he writes that “your deep and considerate judgment, your admired honor, and happy readings have drawn me to present this labor of mine to your gracious hands.”¹ Lodge may have remembered, as his dedicatee certainly would have, that Russell’s first husband, Sir Thomas Hoby, had included Castiglione’s praise of Sappho as a woman “most excellent in poetry” in his 1561 translation of *The Courtier*. Lodge may also have hoped to please Russell by comparing her skill at poetry to that of her sovereign and girlhood friend, Queen Elizabeth I, whom Jan van der Noot had called “the second Sappho” in his 1569 *Theatre of Wordlings*.² Lodge is clearly confident that his readers will be familiar with Russell’s literary works and talents, but when he dedicated his work to the fifty-six-year-old Russell, nothing of her authorship had appeared in print. Russell’s entertainment for Queen Elizabeth’s visit to her home in Bisham in 1592 was printed shortly after the event, but no author was identified.³ The only work that she brought to

1. Thomas Lodge, *A Margarite of America* (London: John Busbie, 1596), A4. See below, 262.

2. See Thomas Hoby, trans., *The Courtier of Baldasser Castilio* (London: William Seres, 1561), E4v; and Jan van der Noot, *A Theatre Wherein Be Represented as Well the Miseries and Calamities That Follow the Voluptuous Worldlings* (London: Henry Bynneman, 1569), A4v. I am grateful to Elizabeth Hageman for pointing out this reference to me. Lodge’s comparison of Russell to Sappho was by no means unique. As Jane Stevenson, in *Women Latin Poets: Language, Gender, and Authority, from Antiquity to the 18th Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 9, states it: “Any Latinate woman, however minuscule her oeuvre, tended to be hailed ... as a sister or rival to Sappho.” Less erudite women writers, particularly those writing Petrarchan poetry, were often compared to Sappho as well. See Lawrence Lipking, *Abandoned Women and Poetic Tradition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), 57–126.

3. Elizabeth I, Queen of England, 1553–1603, *Speeches Delivered to Her Majesty This Last Progress* (Oxford: Joseph Barnes, 1592). See below, 147–57. Russell may have had a hand in

2 Introduction

press in her name, a translation of John Ponet's *Way of Reconciliation of a Good and Learned Man*, would not appear until nine years after Lodge's dedication.⁴ We may be tempted to read Lodge's praise of Russell's "happy readings" as presenting her more as a felicitous reader than a prodigious writer—a learned woman capable of understanding *his* text. However, to appreciate fully Lodge's comparison of Russell to the Greek poet Sappho, we must rethink our notion of "publication."

Elizabeth Cooke Hoby Russell's literary standing rested on three related forms of publication, which Lodge clearly recognized as establishing her credentials as a writer but which modern readers sometimes overlook. First, Russell's fame spread through the circulation of manuscript works. Among these were poems in Greek and Latin,⁵ a manuscript version of her translation (which she completed in her youth but printed in her old age), and possibly accounts of ceremonial performances, including the Bisham entertainment.⁶ Second, Russell was widely acclaimed in her lifetime as an author of funerary epitaphs in three languages, engraved upon tombs that she designed and commissioned for members of her family. Finally, Russell's reputation was established through the joint endeavors of the Cooke sisters and the works that praised them. Lodge's comparison of Russell to Sappho may respond to the perception that she was a member of a distinguished group of women, or perhaps more specifically a group of women writers.⁷ Her membership in such a group, as one of the

bringing this work to press.

4. John Ponet, *A Way of Reconciliation of a Good and Learned Man*, trans. Elizabeth Russell (London: Robert Barker, 1605). See below, 318–416.

5. See below, 49–50, 52–53, and 257–58.

6. Russell states of her translation that she loaned "the copy of mine own hand [i.e., her own manuscript] to a friend." The Bisham entertainment was printed from "loose papers," and more than one manuscript account of her daughter's christening survive, a fact that suggests (as do the ceremony's political and social agendas) that they may have circulated. See below, 125–34, 151, and 328.

7. As the poet of Lesbos, Sappho was associated with a circle of literary women. For a parallel history of Sappho as a homoerotic writer, see Joan DeJean, *Fictions of Sappho, 1546–1937* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989); Harriette Andreadis, *Sappho in Early Modern England: Female Same-Sex Literary Erotics, 1550–1714* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001); and Valerie Traub, *The Renaissance of Lesbianism in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002). In 1568, Russell's sister Mildred was com-

erudite daughters of Sir Anthony Cooke, was commonly observed by her contemporaries. As early as 1559, William Barker's manuscript work, *The Nobility of Women*, praised Russell and her sisters, "which for Greek and Latin be not inferior to any we have named."⁸ All of Russell's writings display her commitment to "honoring [her] Cooke's blood,"⁹ and she and her sisters worked throughout their lives to promote their individual and collective reputations in a variety of texts and public performances.

Russell's other voice, rooted in her lifelong celebration of her identity as a Cooke sister, foregrounds the importance of feminine community and woman-to-woman alliances—relationships that until recently have been overlooked in critical and historical approaches to early modern England. The Cooke sisters' literacy in Greek and Latin forces even reluctant critics to include them in the ranks of humanists,¹⁰ and this shared erudition lays the groundwork

pared to Sappho by Hadrianus Junius in a Latin manuscript poem: see TNA SP 12/47, 18; and on Junius (1511–1575), see *ODNB*. Jane Stevenson, "Mildred Cecil, Lady Burleigh, Poetry, Politics, and Protestantism," in *Early Modern Women's Manuscript Writing: Selected Papers from the Trinity/Trent Colloquium*, ed. Victoria Burke and Jonathan Gibson (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2004), 56, identifies the author as Franciscus Junius and dates the poem from 1565. The manuscript is endorsed July 1568, and dated July 9, 1568 in *CSPD*, 1:311. Junius' publication of Eunapius, *De vitis philosophorum et sophistorum* (Antwerp: Christophe Plantin, 1568), which occasioned an accompanying petition to Queen Elizabeth (TNA SP 12/47, 14) and his poems to Cecil, confirms the later date. See also below, 324n14.

8. William Barker, *The Nobility of Women* (1559), ed. Warwick Bond, Roxburghe Collection, 142 (London: Chiswick Press, 1904), 155. The others named are Elizabeth and Mary Tudor; Jane Lumley and her sister, Lady Mary Fitzalan, daughters of Henry Fitzalan, 12th Earl of Arundel (1512–1580); and Jane, Anne, and Margaret Seymour, daughters of Edward Seymour, 1st Duke of Somerset (1502–1552), lord protector under Edward VI and a mentor to Anthony Cooke and William Cecil. See *ODNB* on Jane Lumley, Lady Jane Seymour, and Edward Seymour; below, 128, 319n4; and Letter 34nn5 and 8. On the works of the Arundel sisters, the Seymour sisters, and the Cooke sisters, see Brenda M. Hosington "Minerva and the Muses: Women Writers of Latin in Renaissance England," *Humanistica Lovaniensia* 58 (2009): 1–43; and Brenda M. Hosington, "The well-wrought verses of an unknown bard: Renaissance Englishwomen's Latin Poetry of Praise and Lament," unpublished paper, 1–32. I am grateful to Dr. Hosington for sharing this work with me.

9. See Letter 56.

10. For many other early modern women who qualify for this title, see Stevenson, *Women Latin Poets*.

for Russell's self-representation and self-defense as a woman of learning, culture, and literary achievement. Throughout her writings, her self-awareness as one of a group of highly educated women enables Russell to argue that her own and her sister's intellectual abilities, far from being the aberrations that some of her contemporaries would claim, suggest similar abilities—often lying dormant—in all women. By foregrounding her role as co-heir, with her sisters, of their father's intellectual legacy, Russell's writings challenge her period's common dismissal of the educated woman as an anomaly, the exception proving the misogynist rule.

Russell's advancement of women's rights and roles in her writings takes many forms. Her letters indefatigably defend her own interests and those of her daughters. A self-taught expert in English law, she rarely hesitated to insert herself into or comment upon legal or political affairs ordinarily considered to fall within the purview of early modern men. She was an activist in promoting the reformed religion and felt herself to be a spiritual counselor for women in particular. She was an advocate for women who had been misused by husbands or guardians; an advisor to women who, through their lack of discretion, had fallen into error; and a worthy adversary to those who threatened and maligned her. She understood how the many ceremonies that marked the stages of early modern men's and women's lives could strengthen political bonds by affirming the social alliances between women. In the series of funeral monuments she designed for the Cooke, Hoby, and Russell dead, the otherwise unremarked deaths of three young women are mourned. Her monument for her parents celebrates the Cooke sisters' accomplishments as much as it does their father's, and her own tomb preserves her self-perceived social worth and personal value for posterity.

Thanks to the research of recent scholars attending to manuscript writing and other "public" works (those published or circulated

in forms other than print) in early modern England,¹¹ we are able now to hear Russell's voice, conveyed as it is through unpublished correspondence, manuscript poems, monumental inscriptions and elegies, sculptural images, legal transcripts, ceremonial performances, and a single printed translation. By considering these works not as scattered, disparate productions but as elements within a unified authorial program, the gendered difference in Russell's writings becomes apparent. She speaks in a myriad of registers in multiple media, always confident and competent, censorious and humorous by turns, often haughty and self-promoting, sometimes mournful and desolate. Reading her varied corpus of writings offers a rich experience of the genres, conventions, and formalities of early modern English culture, revealing the astounding degree of self-expression these tools could afford when employed by an innovative author. Russell's indebtedness to the strictures and codes of her tradition is clear, but the difference in her motives—her defense and celebration of women's rightful inheritance of the intellectual legacy of this tradition—is also undeniable. In her hands, the educated woman's "troublesome" erudition is tempered and naturalized, and what may have seemed strange and incongruous to many of her male contemporaries appears, in her formidable works, as an inalienable birthright and a defining feature of femininity.

ELIZABETH RUSSELL AND ELIZABETHAN ENGLAND

In 1558, Princess Elizabeth Tudor came to the throne as Queen Elizabeth I. She reigned for four and a half decades, a period that coincides with nearly all of Russell's adult life and writings. Born in 1540, Russell was the daughter of Sir Anthony Cooke, sister-in-law to William Cecil and Nicholas Bacon, and aunt to Robert Cecil and Francis Ba-

11. These might include texts in needlework, epitaphs and monumental inscriptions, and epistles. See, most notably, Margaret J. M. Ezell, *Social Authorship and the Advent of Print* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999); Burke and Gibson, eds., *Early Modern Women's Manuscript Writing*; and George L. Justice and Nathan Tinker, eds., *Women's Writing and the Circulation of Ideas: Manuscript Publication in England, 1550–1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002). On letters, see James Daybell, ed., *Early Modern Women's Letter Writing, 1450–1700* (London: Palgrave, 2001); and James Daybell, *Women Letter-Writers in Tudor England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).

con. Her family connections put her in close proximity to the center of power in her day, while her intelligence and tenacity ensured her ability to negotiate the political, social, and religious complexities of Elizabethan culture.

The Court of Elizabeth I

During Queen Elizabeth's long reign, the court surrounding her became the center of the country's political and cultural life. It was a place of tremendous theatricality and intrigue, where rivalries were frequent and often bitter. As a female monarch, Elizabeth was reluctant to marry, because doing so would require her to subordinate herself to a husband and thus to surrender some of her political power to him. Her subjects' anxieties about being under a woman's rule—and, as the years went on, about the lack of an heir to succeed her—led the queen to seek a delicate balance between advances toward marriage and motherhood, on the one hand, and her vigorous self-styling as the Virgin Queen, on the other.¹² Elizabeth conducted marriage negotiations with foreign princes and monarchs into her fifties, well beyond the age at which she might have been expected to conceive a child. Meanwhile, at court she cultivated relationships with a number of "favorites" (most prominently Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, and Robert Devereux, Earl of Essex), while her courtiers jockeyed for her favor and that of her most influential advisors—first among them William Cecil, Lord Burghley, and, following his death, his son Robert.

Because Russell's father had been tutor to Princess Elizabeth's half-brother, Edward VI, Russell probably had some contact in her youth—perhaps even a friendship, given that she was only seven years younger than the princess—with the future queen. Certainly she asserted this intimacy from the earliest years of Elizabeth's reign and throughout her adult life, and she relied upon it (to her peril, as it turned out)

12. See Susan Doran, *Monarchy and Matrimony: The Courtships of Elizabeth I* (London: Routledge, 1996); Susan Frye, *Elizabeth I: The Competition for Representation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993); and Leah S. Marcus, Janel Mueller, and Mary Beth Rose, eds., *Elizabeth I: Collected Works* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000).

to win the queen's support in her legal undertakings.¹³ Russell's writings give us a window onto the social and political machinations of the Elizabethan court, and they underscore the central place of women in a court ruled by a woman.¹⁴ They display the various ways in which a mastery of the conventions of polite society could work to advance one's career and interests, as well as the degree to which what we would consider personal details of the lives of the nobility were subject to the scrutiny and approval of the queen. As heirs to considerable inheritances, Russell's children became wards of the crown following their fathers' deaths—a precarious state, since the queen routinely sold wardships (and with them, the property these wards had inherited) to the highest bidder.¹⁵ Because Russell's brother-in-law William Cecil was master of wards and liveries, Russell was able to serve as her children's guardian, but she was beholden to the queen for accepting her impoverished daughters, Bess and Nan Russell, as maids of honor, because the position offered their best chance to arrange acceptable marriages. When a match was made for Nan, the queen's approval was needed to finalize the contract, and Russell even sought her permission to collect her daughter from court. The queen's attendance at the wedding was Russell's most outstanding social coup.¹⁶

The world of the Elizabethan court as revealed in Russell's writings is one in which personalities, rather than policies, seem to hold sway. In 1585, Robert Dudley wrote to Lord Burghley, informing him that, "Lady Russell came to my house and spoke with me touching her daughters' causes."¹⁷ With this informal social visit, Russell most likely hoped to capitalize on Dudley's position as the queen's favorite. Russell is sometimes at odds with other members of the court, and is on record as having interfered in matters beyond her immediate interest.¹⁸ Her correspondence bemoans the sometimes cool reception

13. See Letters 9 and 11.

14. See Letter 23.

15. See Neil Hurstfield, *The Queen's Wards: Wardship and Marriage under Elizabeth I* (London: Longmans, Green, 1958).

16. See Letters 44 and 46, and below, 270–76.

17. Strype, 3, appendix, 133. On Dudley, see Glossary of Persons.

18. She admits this in Letter 23. See also Salis MS 31.106 (printed in *Calendar*, 5:181), in which Edward de Vere, Earl of Oxford, complains that Russell had written to Burghley to

afforded her by the queen, and she suspects even her closest allies of malice and backstabbing. She unabashedly relates a hefty list of gifts amounting to £500, including jewels, hats, and dresses, with which she plied the queen in her (successful) effort to acquire the lease of Donnington Castle.¹⁹

Russell often employs the language of courtship culled from Castiglione's *Book of the Courtier*, at once affirming the pervasive influence of this handbook of courtly behavior made available in England through a translation by her first husband, Thomas Hoby, and establishing her proprietary relationship to the work as Hoby's widow. A self-described "courtier and parliament woman,"²⁰ Russell navigated the perilous waters of courtly favor and exerted influence on those around her, sometimes with success, sometimes not. Her writings vividly portray a society dominated by rank and rule, tradition and hierarchy, in which one must master the rules of the game in order to survive.

Reform and Religious Activism

Queen Elizabeth's long monarchy followed the two very brief reigns of her half-brother, Edward VI (1547–1553) and half-sister, Mary (1553–1558), both of which were rocked by religious turmoil. Edward was nine years old when he ascended to the throne, and the regents who ruled for him (with whom Russell's father and brothers-in-law were closely aligned) instituted sweeping reforms of the Church of England, including the eradication of Catholic beliefs in church doctrine and episodes of iconoclasm that targeted images, statues, and icons within churches.²¹ Under Mary, Catholicism was reintroduced into the country and Protestant reformers, including many of Edward's bishops and advisors, were persecuted as heretics. Many others,

dissuade the payment of his daughter's marriage allowance, "but for that she was herself the first that moved this allowance, and hath since altered her mind upon some conceit, I hope my lord will not be carried away upon such unconstant balance."

19. See Letters 15 and 43.

20. See Letter 52. Russell's sense that gender presents no barrier to her assumption of these roles is noteworthy.

21. See Diarmaid MacCulloch, *The Boy King: Edward VI and the Protestant Reformation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 21–25 and 107.

such as Russell's father, fled to the Continent until Mary's reign ended with the ascension of Elizabeth.²² Under the guidance of William Cecil and Nicholas Bacon (Russell's brothers-in-law), and with the help of Sir Anthony Cooke (then a member of the House of Commons),²³ the new queen established the "Elizabethan settlement" with the 1559 passage of the Act of Supremacy, which proclaimed the Church of England to be independent from the Catholic church with Elizabeth as its supreme governor, and the Act of Uniformity, which required all subjects to attend Church of England services and established the *Book of Common Prayer* as orthodox doctrine.

Although Elizabeth and her bishops sought religious uniformity and conformity, belief was far from unified, and two version of nonconformity persisted throughout her reign. At one extreme, Catholic recusants resisted the imposition of the Church of England service and doctrine; at the other, some subjects, including many of the returning Marian exiles, pushed for more austere and thorough reforms of the Anglican service and hierarchy, oriented toward the Calvinist examples they had experienced in Europe.²⁴ Among those returning from exile was Edmund Grindal, who became archbishop of Canterbury (the highest position in the Church of England) in 1575. Grindal's sympathies with the Puritan position led to a tolerance that was ultimately intolerable to the queen, who placed him under house arrest and demanded his resignation. Upon Grindal's death in 1583, Elizabeth replaced him with John Whitgift, who vigorously prosecuted nonconformists and sought to squelch dissent.²⁵

Throughout her life, Russell supported the Puritan, nonconformist position. At the heart of her writings is a commitment to

22. Marjorie McIntosh, "Sir Anthony Cooke: Tudor Humanist, Educator, and Religious Reformer," *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 119 (1975): 242–45.

23. On the role of the "Cooke coterie" in crafting the Elizabethan settlement, see Conyers Read, *Mr. Secretary Cecil and Queen Elizabeth* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1961), 129–32; Robert Tittler, *Nicholas Bacon: The Making of a Tudor Statesman* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1976), 88–90; and Jaime Goodrich, "Early Modern Englishwomen as Translators of Religious Literature, 1500–1641" (Ph.D. dissertation, Boston College, 2008), 366–69.

24. See Alexandra Walsham, *Church Papists: Catholicism, Conformity, and Confessional Polemic in Early Modern England* (London: Boydell and Brewer, 2000); and Patrick Collinson, *The Elizabethan Puritan Movement* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967).

25. See ODNB on both.

promulgate this faith and to protect and patronize its advocates at court, in the universities, at the pulpit, and in print.²⁶ The participation of Russell and her sisters in the powerful Protestant faction headed by Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, has long been noted: the four surviving Cooke sisters contributed poems to Bartholo Sylva's *Giardino cosmografico coltivato* in 1572, a manuscript intended to influence Queen Elizabeth in favor of the nonconformist position.²⁷ When Russell organized a christening for her daughter at Westminster Abbey, the participants were carefully chosen to cement the Russells' alliance with the Dudley faction.²⁸ Her letters give further evidence of this commitment, embracing the activism of the reformed movement; a missionary, didactic approach to the Word that sees spirituality as a social undertaking, intimately bound to conversation, conference, and debate. Residing in the threshold between the public and private spheres, Russell's faith and the works through which she promoted it are inseparable from secular institutions, interlocutors, and concerns.

Imagery and Iconoclasm

This awareness of the social, public aspects of spirituality and religious devotion also informs Russell's commemorative works. The funeral monuments and epitaphs which she created often convey conversations between the mourner and the departed that traverse the border between life and death. Funeral monuments occupy a space that is at once sacred and public, so these conversations also include the congregation of the church in which the monument is placed. Russell could count on her audience's fluency in the language in which these conversations took place: funerary verse and inscriptions shared many

26. See Letters 3, 10, 14, and 18; and see below, 72–73, 318–416, and 439.

27. See Schleiner, 34–51; Micheline White, "Renaissance Englishwomen and Religious Translations: The Case of Anne Locke's *Of the Marks of the Children of God* (1590)," *English Literary Renaissance* 29 (1999): 386–89; and see below, 52–53. Dudley was Russell's brother-in-law following her marriage in 1574 to John Russell: see Glossary of Persons.

28. See Alexandra F. Johnston, "'The Lady of the farme': The Context of Lady Russell's Entertainment of Elizabeth at Bisham, 1592," *Early Theatre* 5 (2002): 73–74; Collinson, *Elizabethan Puritan Movement*, 50–55; and see below, 147–57.

of the commonplaces of spiritual consolation found in the numerous *ars moriendi* (“art of dying”) texts published in the early modern period. Although Russell uses many of these commonplaces, her epitaphs revise and challenge them. While Protestant arts of dying stressed the need to moderate sorrow with an acceptance of God’s will, Russell’s tombs often commemorate not only their absent subjects, but also the speaker’s struggle to relinquish them to death.²⁹

In this period of profound uncertainty about the status of visual images, particularly religious imagery, funeral monuments often fell victim to iconoclasts. Protestant reformers, influenced by Calvinism and the plain, white-washed churches they had seen in Geneva, associated religious imagery with Catholicism.³⁰ The year after the Elizabethan settlement, in 1560, a royal proclamation sought to clarify the role of funerary imagery and sculpture and to protect monuments from destruction. Probably influenced by the visual imagery and symbolism inherent in heraldry (which flourished in the period under the direction of the College of Arms),³¹ the Elizabethan policy on funeral monuments emphasized their historical function in documenting the genealogies of noble families.³² This policy is typified by William Camden’s 1600 survey of the tombs of Westminster Abbey, which transcribes epitaphs and inscriptions but does not offer descriptions or illustrations of the monuments.³³ Post-Reformation English men and women, hesitant to admit icons into the church, valued monumental inscriptions above effigial sculpture, texts above images.

29. See, for example, William Perkins, *A Salve for a Sick Man* (Cambridge: John Legate, 1595); and Thomas Playfere, *The Mean in Mourning* (London: J. Orwin for Andrew Wise, 1595).

30. See Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England, 1400–1580* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1996).

31. See Charles Boutell, *Heraldry, Historical and Popular* (London: Richard Bentley, 1864). The queen’s portraiture and personal imagery were also influenced by heraldry: see Roy Strong, *The Cult of Elizabeth: Elizabethan Portraiture and Pageantry* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1977).

32. See Peter Sherlock, *Monuments and Memory in Early Modern England* (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2008), 165–230.

33. William Camden, *Reges, reginae, nobiles et alii in Ecclesia Collegiate B. Petri Westmonsterii Sepulti* (London: E. Bollifantus, 1600).

Russell's approach to monuments as a visual and sculptural medium was innovative and highly personal. As a group, her monumental projects display a confidence in the power of visual forms that grows increasingly evident in her later works, running counter to the suspicion of images more common among her reformed countrymen. Although Russell's religious convictions might predictably foster an antipathy toward images in churches, it seems clear that she viewed monuments as permanent embodiments of the heraldic imagery common in funerals and other ceremonies in which she and her contemporaries engaged. A consideration of Russell's funerary texts in relation to their attendant images, observing those places at which she allows images to transcend texts, brings to light her revolutionary relationship to the monumental form, and the vastness of her contribution to this early modern medium.

Womanhood and Widowhood

Like her contemporaries, Russell was keenly aware of rank and class, but her writings also speak to the place of gender in the legal and social climates of Elizabethan England. As *femmes couvertes*, women were legally "covered" by male governors, whether fathers or husbands, throughout most of their lives.³⁴ The law of coverture meant that married women could not own, bequeath, or inherit private property, because they were, in effect, the property of their husbands, part of his "goods and chattel." In the wake of the Reformation, an ideal of companionate marriage emerged that stressed the partnership between husband and wife and insisted that a husband's marital sovereignty must be tempered by love.³⁵ During her first marriage (1558–1566), Russell and her husband, Thomas Hoby, apparently enjoyed a companionship resting on shared interests, including an interest in literature. Russell accompanied Hoby to London for thirteen weeks in 1560 while he arranged for the publication

34. See Tim Stretton, *Women Waging Law in Elizabethan England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

35. See, for example, Edmund Tilney, *The Flower of Friendship: A Renaissance Dialogue Contesting Marriage*, ed. Valerie Wayne (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1992).