

### **The Other Voice**

My final project is a digital exhibit titled “The Other Voice.” This exhibit aims to highlight women’s involvement through individual female printers and authors as representatives for the group as a whole, as well as bring to light the impact women have had throughout the communications circuit to transmit and advance information of cultural, artistic, religious, scientific, and literary importance and shape book history. I chose this focus for my final project due to the manner in which women have been placed in the shadows in regards to book history. “While there have been studies of women papermakers, binders, and printers, they have been fairly strict in their historical focus – finding evidence of women’s presence...[and] writing them into the record” (Travis, 2008, pp. 276). Although writing them into the record is important and is one aspect of my final project, the greater contribution of this project is, through evidence and analysis, to illustrate the many ways in which women have been more than just present, to actually contributing to society, intellectual and cultural circles, and various fields.

One of the best means of exploring this is through the use of primary source materials. At the minimum, primary sources such as printers’ marks referencing a female printer or title pages showing a female author, place these women in the historical record. However, further materials from the period help paint a picture of women in their cultural context and how their lives and work would be understood by society. Letters and diaries are some of the only means of understanding the personal meaning of the work and reading done by women. Like any review of non-standardized materials or observations of non-standardized activities, the use of primary sources to understand women’s impact on book history has disadvantages when attempting to draw large conclusions and quantification. Of particular challenge was the limited primary source material for women from printing’s earliest history.

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Final Project

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To combat this I reviewed and referenced secondary source materials from experts in the field and used historical reasoning and interpretation to draw conclusions about their involvement and impact.