

1 Time, gender, and the mystery of English wine

Frances E. Dolan

Abstract

Wine was widely drunk in early modern England. But would we recognize it? Time unsettles the meaning of this 'timeless' beverage because early modern people were unable to control its effects on the wines they consumed. Wine's unpredictability was, in the early modern period, both associated with femininity and, occasionally, an opportunity for women who joined experiments in growing grapes and making wine in England so as to make wine that was more dependable and affordable. Ranging across a wide variety of sources, from the sixteenth century to popular depictions of that period today, this essay argues that wine connects us to the past largely to the extent that it continues to be a mystery or a knowledge problem.

Keywords: wine; winemaking; early modern England; women; gender; Shakespeare

We know early modern women and men drank wine. But we can't know exactly what that wine tasted like. As a knowledge problem, wine joins many other mysteries of gendered experience in the past. Surviving evidence confirms an historical phenomenon we can call 'English wine' and some of the ways in which it was gendered. As we will see, it is easy to document popular attitudes toward wine in ballads and plays. We can readily find recipes for making, using, or ameliorating wine, as well as fulminations against and paeans to it. We can also find references to wine in inventories and account books, lyric poetry, letters and diaries, popular accounts of commensality and of murder, recipe compilations, medical texts, the notebooks of early experimental scientists, and in the surprisingly large literature advocating English grape growing and wine making in the seventeenth century. Moving across the social landscape, wine left archival stains that offer tantalizing

Wiesner-Hanks, M.E. (ed.), *Gendered Temporalities in the Early Modern World*, Amsterdam University Press, 2018.

DOI: 10.5117/9789462984585/CH01

traces of its cultural centrality and its instability. To understand it, we need to gather evidence from a range of sources, accepting that the resulting assemblage will still be missing pieces and can never answer all of our questions. As we try to pin down women's lived relationship to wine as consumers and producers, we find enigmatic hints, marginal comments, texts of questionable provenance. No matter how widely we forage, the specifics of how that wine smelled and tasted elude us.

In early modern England, most people, young and old, male and female, queens and servants, routinely drank fermented beverages of some sort since water was widely and wisely distrusted. Although we often associate the English with beer, ale, and cider, those beverages they still manufacture and export, wine, largely imported, was a favored beverage in England for most of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, until coffee, tea, chocolate, and distilled spirits diversified beverage options and challenged its monopoly. Wine had sacramental meanings, of course, in the communion cup at the center of the celebration of the mass as well as in its supposed inversion, the witches' sabbath.¹ Its sacramental meaning depended on its capacity for transformation, its ability to become or be experienced as something else, as well as its ability to change and bind its consumers. It was the lubricant of good fellowship, from households to taverns to palaces. A standard gift to and from royals and among aristocrats, it was so prized that it was the object of piracy and profiteering; Sir Francis Drake, for instance, seized wine from the Spanish.² Fortunes were made in importing wine. Elizabeth I rented out or farmed the right to collect customs duties on all imported sweet wines to her particular favorites, first Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, and later the Earl of Essex. While it could be a luxury good, and a marker of elite status, wine was also a crucial part of recompense for servants, high and low.³

While wine was highly valued and widely drunk, it had often fallen victim to the ravages of time and transport by the time it reached English consumers' cups. As a consequence, wine was widely distrusted as foreign, spoiled, and adulterated. It was also understood to have its own timeline or life course, moving from new wines that were prized above older vintages to the spent wines that formed the basis for distilled spirits and medicines. Frugal housekeepers and tapsters found uses for wine at every stage in its timeline, from grape lees to vinegar, from new wine to distillations. Tackling wine as a work in progress, most who served wine, from housewives to coopers

1 Bynum, *Wonderful Blood*; Camporesi, *Juice of Life*.

2 See Sebek, 'More natural to the nation', esp. pp. 107, 116; Fischer, 'Digesting Falstaff'.

3 Somerset, *Elizabeth I*, p. 333; Braddock, 'Rewards of Office-Holding', esp. p. 45.

and tavern keepers, artfully amended and blended it. Did this make wine foreign or domestic, a taste of the past, as it is often still called, or a fragile compromise in the present? No one could be sure. That uncertainty was both associated with femininity and, occasionally, an opportunity for women who joined experiments in growing grapes and making wine in England.

The mystery of early modern wine is not only a function of the time that has passed between now and then. Then as now, taste would have been highly subjective, varying from person to person. More than that, early moderns themselves struggled to anticipate and control the taste of their wine because the process of importing and storing wine exposed it to the ravages of time, temperature, and oxygen. While the causes of wine's decay were not fully understood, the effects were widely lamented. As we will see, if we focus on early modern wine as a process unfolding in time, rather than a stable product, we can see more clearly women's roles as agents who made and amended wine as well as consumed it.

Starting in the nineteenth century, the discovery of bacteria's role in making and spoiling wine opened up strategies for managing fermentation and for preserving wine. But precisely because winemakers today have so many ingredients and techniques available to them, the provenance and contents of the wine we drink now remain less certain than we sometimes like to think. Although many describe wine as a vehicle for tasting the time and place where grapes ripened, this romanticization glosses over the many interventions between vine and glass. What we know about early modern wine is that it was inscrutable: unstable, contaminated, mixed up. What we share with early modern drinkers, I contend, is uncertainty about what, exactly, is in the wine we drink. It might seem as if wine links us to drinkers in the past. But that link is tenuous. Ranging across a wide variety of sources, from the sixteenth century to popular depictions of that period today, this essay argues that what appears to be the same comestible simultaneously connects and divides the present and the past.

Gender and wine consumption

Various scholars have explored the relationships among alcohol, sex, and gender in medieval and early modern Europe, demonstrating the associations of drunkenness with violence, sexual excess, and disorder for both sexes.⁴

4 Martin, *Alcohol, Sex, and Gender*; Kümin, *Drinking Matters*; Bloom, 'Manly Drunkenness'; Ellinghausen, 'University of Vice'; and *Pleasing Sinne*.

But what was particular to wine? In *The Anatomy of Melancholy*, Robert Burton identifies 'The two main plagues, and common dotages of human kind, Wine and Women, which have infatuated and besotted Myriades of people. They goe commonly together'.⁵ Proverbs provide more concise versions of the same warnings, linking wine and women as threats to the male drinker: 'wine and wenches empty men's purses'; 'wine and women make [wise]men runnagates'.⁶ Numerous ballads elaborate on the various plots by which wine and women conjoin to ruin men.⁷ We might view even the most conventional advice about wine as gendered. 'Wine wears no breeches' is an early modern version of 'in vino veritas', suggesting drunks have no secrets.⁸ This proverb depends on the twin assumptions that wine drinkers are men (who conventionally wear pants) and that, when they drink, they surrender the gendered authority that was so often troped as 'wearing the breeches', exposing, even emasculating themselves.

Medical advice variously advised and prohibited wine consumption, usually based on the gender and age of the drinker. Andrew Boorde, in his *The Compendious Regiment of Health*, advises that 'Wine [...] doth comfort old men and women, but there is no wine good for children and maidens'.⁹ This advice continued for more than a century. Wine was bad for children and good for the old because it raised the body's temperature. Thomas Venner, for example, advises that only after 40 should men 'begin to make much of the use of wine'; then it should be 'given with a liberall hand unto old men' especially from 60 to death.¹⁰ According to proverbial wisdom, 'Wine is old men's milk'.¹¹ Wine benefited the old because it provided the vitality and heat they lacked.

5 Burton, *Anatomy of Melancholy*, sec. 1.2.3-13, p. 291.

6 *Oxford Dictionary of English Proverbs*, W 473, p. 474. See also Apperson, *English Proverbs and Proverbial Phrases*, pp. 692-93.

7 See, for example, 'The subtil Miss of LONDON'; 'A Merry Dialogue'; 'A Mornings Ramble'; and 'A Caueat or VVarning'. See also *Wine and Women*. On the association of wine and women, see Scott, 'Discovering the Sins of the Cellar,' in which she emphasizes the homonyms cellar and seller.

8 *Oxford Dictionary of English Proverbs*, W 490. Even 'Put not good Wine into an ill bottle' can have gendered implications. In *The Arte of Rhetoric*, Thomas Wilson elaborates on this as an example of allegory or extended metaphor: 'It is evill putting strong Wine into weake vessels, that is to say, It is evill trusting some women with weightie matters', sig. N2r. This is connected to advisories against women drinking wine since they were sometimes thought to have weaker brains in general and thus poorer heads for wine.

9 Boorde, *Compendious Regiment of Health*, sigs. D1v-D2r.

10 Venner, *Via recta*, p. 40.

11 *Oxford Dictionary of English Proverbs*, W 483.

The drama provides another gauge both of the ubiquity of wine in early modern England and the gendering of its consumption. According to Alan Dessen and Leslie Thompson's *Dictionary of Stage Directions*, wine is 'the most common item in tavern or banquet scenes or at other times when figures drink', appearing in about 65 stage directions. Shakespeare's plays mention wine at least 82 times. This doesn't count the other words for wine, including canary, malmsy, sack, and bastard.¹² While some female characters drink wine—Gertrude, for instance, pledges Hamlet with a poisoned stoup of wine—it is male characters who most often call for wine. 'Give me some wine; fill full', requests Macbeth (3.4.90), trying to recover from seeing Banquo's ghost; 'a Stoup of wine' Sir Toby Belch demands in *Twelfth Night* (2.3.111).¹³ In *Antony and Cleopatra*, Antony and Pompey call for wine, but Cleopatra does not.

In Shakespeare's plays, men's wine drinking is as much a vulnerability as it is an entitlement. In *Richard III*, the Duke of Clarence begs his executioner for 'a cup of wine', is offered 'wine enough' then stabbed and drowned in 'the malmsey butt' (malmsey was a fortified wine like Madeira; 1.4.147-48, 245); his ghost later laments that he was 'washed to death with fulsome wine' (5.3.130). In *The Tempest*, Stefano exploits Caliban's unfamiliarity with and immediate lust for wine. The most famous manipulator of a man's weakness for wine would probably be Iago, who both insists on Desdemona's sexual availability through a leveling aphorism he appears to have invented—'the wine she drinks is made of grapes' (2.1.239)—and exploits Cassio's 'very poor and unhappy brains for drinking' (2.3.29-30). He explicitly offers Cassio 'a stoup of wine' (1.26; the very thing Claudius calls for and from which Gertrude drinks in *Hamlet*). Cassio elaborates that he 'could well wish courtesy would invent some other custom of entertainment', that he has already had the one cup he allows himself, 'craftily qualified' or diluted, and that he is therefore reluctant to 'task [his] weakness'. Iago plays on Cassio's desire to drink 'to the health of black Othello' and to conform to what the other gallants desire. Iago has cunningly used wine to prepare his pawns: Roderigo, who has 'caroused' to Desdemona 'Potations pottle-deep'; three Cypriots, whom he has 'flustered with flowing cups'; and then Cassio,

12 Varriano, *Wine*. Varriano has his own calculations: 'In the 26 plays in which they are mentioned, sack appears 44 times, Rhenish wine four, and claret and malmsey once each', p. 178. In her study of sack in the Henry IV plays, Sebek, 'More natural to the nation', p. 109, points to the play's 'interest in anchoring the wine that Falstaff consumes and that flows abundantly in Eastcheap in the Elizabethan "moment"', when imports from Spain dominated consumption despite ongoing war with Spain.

13 All citations of Shakespeare will refer to *The Norton Shakespeare*.

whose weakness he knows and on which he plays. He has created a 'flock of drunkards' on watch and then thrown an inebriated Cassio into the volatile mix. He keeps it going with the repeated cry 'Some wine, boys!' (2.3.65). While Iago is undoubtedly a villain, his strategy is not unique in Shakespeare.

Lady Macbeth proposes that she will tempt Duncan's two chamberlains 'with wine and wassail' so that they become 'spongy officers' who lose their control over memory and reason (1.7.64, 71). She later specifies that she has drugged their possets—a comforting drink of spiced milk curdled with wine that was often served at bedtime. What's more, she associates their incapacity with her own stimulation: 'That which hath made them drunk hath made me bold./ What hath quenched them hath given me fire' (2.2.1–2). Thus the wine cup is a crucial weapon in instigating and escalating these two tragedies, *Othello* and *Macbeth*. Perhaps more surprisingly, Portia, too, exploits a man's taste for wine to keep control over her marriage plot. She complains that one of her suitors, 'the young German, the Duke of Saxony's nephew', is always drunk by the afternoon and so advises Nerissa, her servant, that they can eliminate him as a marriage prospect if they use his weakness to game the casket test her father established to determine her husband: 'set a deep glass of Rhenish wine on the contrary casket; for if the devil be within and that temptation without, I know he will choose it. I will do anything, Nerissa, ere I will be married to a sponge' (1.2.81–85). Here, as in *Macbeth*, a female character uses the word 'sponge' to describe men's weakness for wine, a weakness she both disdains and exploits. When male characters call for 'some wine, ho!' they cannot be sure exactly what they are getting or why it is being offered. The cup of fellowship might be a means by which the host gains control of the story at the guest's expense.

In various genres, women might also be described as drinking wine to excess. Ballads describe how men's and women's wine drinking made women more sexually vulnerable. One sums this up helpfully: 'When Wine is settled in your braine,/ you may be got with Child.'¹⁴ While wine was often linked to heterosexual congress and risk, it also linked women to one another. In the satirical pamphlet *'Tis Merry When Gossips Meet*, the gossips are drinking

14 'A new Ballad'. A female character in John Fletcher's comedy *The Wild Goose Chase* (1621) suggests that wine makes women more sexually vulnerable not only when they drink it but when men do. Oriana advises her brother that as men drink sack 'they ne'r speak modestly/ Unless the wine be poor, or they want money [...] If in *Vino veritas* be an Oracle,/ What woman is, or has been ever honest?/ Give 'em but ten round cups, they'll swear *Lucretia*/ Dy'd not for want of power to resist *Tarquinc*,/ But want of Pleasure, that he stayed no longer', Act 1 scene 1, sig. B2r.

claret and sack.¹⁵ In Middleton's *A Chastemaid in Cheapside*, the gossips at the Allwit Christening get drunk on 'comfits and wine' (3.2.49sd) and the scene links their gossip and incontinence explicitly to wine. The Third Gossip promises to tell the Fourth about her daughter's 'secret fault' (which turns out to be that she's a bed-wetter) 'when I have drunk', and her friend points out that 'Wine can do that, I see, that friendship cannot' (96–97). Allwit is sure that the puddles under their stools are not 'some wine spilt' but rather urine.¹⁶ According to these satires, the open 'secret fault' of women socializing together is their incontinent consumption of wine. Do warnings and satires suggest that enough women drank to provoke disapprobation or that the very idea of women drinking wine—especially together—provoked both mirth and terror? It is always hard to know.

Either way, texts in a range of genres constantly, even obsessively, imagined women's wine drinking.¹⁷ For example, in *Paradise Lost*, Milton describes Eve, once 'satiated' with forbidden fruit, as 'heightened as with wine, jocund and boon' (9.793). Milton's simile requires readers to know how women who are 'heightened' with wine would look and act.¹⁸ The simile also draws on widespread unease about the connection between drinking wine and poor judgment for women—and its potentially ruinous effects.

Thomas Tryon, for example, returns—repeatedly!—to the suggestion that women should drink sparingly if at all. 'Women ought not to drink

15 Rowlands, *Tis Merry*. Women drank with male friends as well as female. In Cavendish's *Convent of Pleasure* (3.6), a Citizen's Wife, Mrs. Negligent, looking for her husband, enters a tavern, 'where a Bush is hung out', advertising that it sells wine. But she lingers to accept the wine two gentlemen offer her, confiding 'In truth, I find a cup of Wine doth comfort me sometimes', p. 114.

16 Middleton, *A Chastemaid in Cheapside*; Paster offers an illuminating reading of incontinence in the play in *Body Embarrassed*, pp. 52–63. I want to emphasize the central role of wine drinking in this incontinence.

17 While all the speakers in a dialogue called *Wine, Beere, and Ale, Together by the Eares* are male (Wine is a gentleman and Beere is a citizen) several of them suggest that women drink wine. Wine boasts to Beere: 'I am a companion for Princes, the least droppe of my blood, worth all thy body. I am sent for by the Citizens, visited by the Gallants, kist by the Gentlewomen: I am their life, their Genius, the Poeticall furie, the Helicon of the Muses, of better value then Beere', sig. B2r. The unclear antecedent for 'they', following hard upon the reference to gentlewomen, suggests that perhaps gentlewomen value wine as their genius. Beer points out that wine is 'kept under locke and key, confinde to some corner of a Cellar, and there indeed commonly close prisoner, unlesse the taylor or Yeoman of the Bottles turne the Key for the chamber-maid now and then, for which shee vowes not to leave him till the last gaspe where Beere goes abroad, and randevous in every place', sigs. B2r–B2v. Asserting his own accessibility and mobility, Beere associates women's wine consumption with sexualized secrecy and confinement.

18 Goldstein wonders whether this drunkenness might be the result of 'a psychosomatic reaction to her disobedience, or because of the chemistry of this particular fruit, or both?' in *Eating and Ethics*, p. 189.

Wine or strong Drink, which are bad for Men, but an *hundred fold worse for Women*, he advises.¹⁹ According to him, wine is worse for women because it encourages an inclination to a sexual excess to which, he points out, only human females descend. This includes activities he deems unproductive, such as having sex while menstruating or pregnant and marrying younger men. In *A Way to Health*, which begins with a laudatory poem from a Mrs. Ann Behn, he warns of

the too frequent drinking of *Wine* and *strong Drinks*, which heats the Seed, and pervokes Nature, and make her lose her way, which is very pernicious and dangerous to all sorts of People, but more especially to WOMEN; and therefore the Ancients did direct those of *that Sex*, to observe an higher degree of *Temperance* and *Order* than they prescribed to *Men*, as knowing that the whole Welfare and Preservation of Mankind did chiefly depend on their good or ill Constitution.²⁰

Note how Tryon's concern with controlling women also asserts men's dependence on them for the 'whole welfare and preservation of mankind'.

While some of Tryon's concerns seem idiosyncratic, his recourse to the ancients is not. In *The English Gentlewoman*, for instance, Richard Brathwait similarly announces that wine drinking leads inevitably to adultery and that as

For these *Feminine Epicures*, who surfet out their time in an unwomanly excesse, we exclude them the pale of our Common-weale. Be they of what *state* soever, they are staines to their *Sexe* for ever. Especially such, who carouse it in deepe healths, rejoyce at the colour of the wine, till it sparkle in their veines, inflame their bloods, and lay open a breach to the frailty of their *Sexe*. For prevention whereof, we reade [in Pliny] that kinsmen kissed their kinswomen to know whether they drunke wine or no, and if they had, to be punished by death, or banished to some Iland.²¹

This is yet another instance of the fantasy we find everywhere in the early modern period that disorderly women could be killed or banished, a fantasy

19 Tryon, *Way to Health*, sig. N8r.

20 *Ibid.*, sig. N6v. In the earlier *A Treatise of Cleanness*, he states that: 'The whole Preservation of Mens Health and Strength does chiefly reside in the Wisdom and Temperance of Women. Therefore the ancient Wise Men in former Ages, did direct and accustom their Women to a higher degree of Temperance than the Men', sig. B4r.

21 Brathwait, *English Gentlewoman*, sig. Har. Brathwait here refers to Pliny, *Historie of the World*, I, p. 418, sig. Nn5v.

that is always recalled wistfully as practice in some other time and place. Kiss the girls and make them disappear. However different they may be, Tryon and Brathwait both offer us vivid pictures of female desire enhanced by wine and outside men's control. Before cutting himself off with the fantasy of a diagnostic kiss, Brathwait lingers over the vision of the 'feminine epicure', risking the possibility of the reader who identifies with or desires her. Sparkling in her veins, inflaming her blood, the wine she drinks seems to become the blood it resembles, and therein lies its appeal and its danger.

We see the association of wine with bodily fluids in an erotic verse that is often considered a curiosity or an embarrassment. In sonnet 63 of Barnabe Barnes's sonnet sequence *Parthenophil and Parthenope* (1593), the speaker imagines copying the gods in taking different forms to gain access to his mistress, contemplating encompassing various parts of her body as a glove, a necklace, a belt. Parthenophil builds toward a discussion of becoming a comestible, going inside rather than around. 'Or that sweet wine which downe her throate doth trickle, / To kisse her lippes, and lye next at her hart, / Runne through her vaynes, and passe by pleasures parte'. Thomas Nashe ridiculed this conceit as destined for the chamber pot, both fleeting and debasing.²² But what interests me is how the sonnet builds toward a desire to inhabit the female body and imagines that the way to do that is as wine, which is not quite digested as other nutrients might be but rather becomes part of the body even as it passes through. Barnes's conceit is affiliated with Ben Jonson's in much more famous and beloved lines: 'Or leave a kiss but in the cup, / And I'll not look for wine'.²³ Jonson's trick here is a displacement that eludes Barnes. Contented with just a kiss in the cup, his speaker enjoins Celia to drink to him only with her eyes, to quench their spiritual thirst with a 'drink divine'. Just as, in the Song of Solomon, the bridegroom admires his beloved's mouth as 'like the best wine [...], that goeth down sweetly, causing the lips of those that are asleep to speak',²⁴ Jonson's speaker imagines himself as the drinker and his beloved as the drink. In contrast, Barnes puts the male lover, Parthenophil, in the position of what will be consumed and imagines an unsettlingly material mistress, Parthenope, who not only drinks but urinates. Her lover, Parthenophil, combines aggression, imagining encircling and then invading her, with the abjection of being consumed and then

22 Barnes, *Parthenophil and Parthenope*, sonnet 63, sig. F4r; Nashe, *Have with You*, sig. Q2v.

23 Jonson, 'Song: To Celia'. Wine's supposed property of being human adjacent, a supplementary bodily fluid, was described as being 'homogeneall'. See Whitaker, *Tree of Humane Life*, and Dolan, 'Blood of the Grape'.

24 Song of Solomon 7.8-9, 7.12.

eliminated. But both Barnes' and Jonson's poems exploit the erotics of wine as an animate extension of or supplement to the female body.

Because wine was so often associated with vulnerability, exemplary women were praised for abstinence or moderation. According to the famously ambivalent biography of Elizabeth Cary by one (or more) of her daughters, while she 'seemed not to have full power over herself in matter of diet' and had a weakness for sugar, 'she by custome and nature never [drank] wine; of which she never drunke more then a spoonfull att any time'.²⁵ Of the many contrasts between Elizabeth I and Mary Stuart, yet another is that Elizabeth watered her wine, drinking more water than wine, while, by various accounts, Mary Stuart both grew fat on wine and bathed in it.²⁶ One of Mary's biographers, John Guy, argues that Mary asserted her queenship even when imprisoned by maintaining the multicourse meals with wine pairings that characterized the court. Apparently, she not only put on the show but injudiciously indulged herself. Guy specifies her wine drinking as particularly fattening.²⁷ A letter from the Earl of Shrewsbury to Sir Walter Mildmay (then Chancellor of the Exchequer and a member of the Privy Council) in January 1569 complains that one of the unexpected costs of housing Mary is the expense of procuring additional wine. He simply must have more wine, he writes, because 'truly two tonnes in a monthe have not hitherunto sufficed ordinarily, besids that that is occupied at tymes for her bathings, and suche like uses'.²⁸ Each tun would be the equivalent of about 252 gallons. A small bathing tub might have held around 40. To place Shrewsbury's request for more than 2 tuns a month for his household or 24 per year in context, Elizabeth's court went through about 300 tuns per year at its heights, later reduced to 240. However little Elizabeth drank herself, imported wine was a major expense for the court²⁹—and for those who entertained visits from her and her entourage.

25 *Elizabeth Cary*, p. 144. There is some dispute as to which of Cary's four daughters who became Benedictines, Anne, Elizabeth, Lucy, or Mary, wrote the biography. Interest focuses on Anne and Lucy.

26 On Elizabeth's abstemiousness, see an undated manuscript attributed to John Clapham, a member of William Cecil, Lord Burghley's household: 'The wine she drank was mingled with water, containing three parts more in quantity than the wine itself' (Read and Read, eds., *Elizabeth of England*, p. 89). The editors claim that 'these observations were rapidly composed within four months of the death of Queen Elizabeth' (*ibid.*, vi). See also Somerset, *Elizabeth I*, p. 350.

27 Guy, *True Life of Mary Stuart*, pp. 431–32.

28 The letter, from the Talbot Papers, appears in Lodge, *Illustrations*, II, pp. 27–28.

29 Woodworth, 'Purveyance for the Royal Household'. According to Woodworth, 'The cellar was expected to furnish annually from two hundred to three hundred tuns of wine. In the earlier and more extravagant years of Elizabeth's reign the household required three hundred tuns.

Shrewsbury's request in this letter hardens into a 'fact' about Mary in the index of Lodge's *Illustrations of British History*, which includes the entries 'baths of wine used by the Queen of Scots', and also, under Mary, 'used to bathe in wine'.³⁰ Neither the Earl of Shrewsbury nor his wife, popularly known as Bess of Hardwick, seems to have been happy about having Mary billeted upon them by Elizabeth, who established the arrangement immediately after they married. It would last for more than 15 years and inflame conflict between the couple, including suspicions about possible adultery between the Earl and Mary (who was 20 years younger than Bess).³¹ Mary, a prisoner, did not like this arrangement either. As a consequence, communications from the Earl or Countess of Shrewsbury, or Mary herself, regarding the arrangement have to be read critically. This letter from the Earl was written very early in Mary's stay. Is it evidence that she bathed in wine or served or drank it at bath time? Is it evidence of the Earl's prurient interest in her habits? Or is it an attempt to capitalize on her reputation as a larger than life consumer to get more support for what quickly emerged as a financially ruinous assignment? For my purposes, it serves as evidence that even when wine finds a place in the story or appears in the index, its meaning is simultaneously gendered and murky. From communion cup to bathtub wine was always bearing significance beyond itself. But what it signified was usually under debate.

Wine and time

Wine's epistemological instability and its usefulness both depended on the fact that it had its own life course; it was, for good and ill, in time. Because early moderns did not know how to control the effects of time and air on wines, old wines were seldom valued as better than young ones. Time was not a friend to early modern wine, which was most consistently praised as 'fresh', young, or 'brisk'. As a consequence, early modern links between women and wine do not celebrate maturity—in the way that we see in popular culture

but later the amount was reduced to two hundred and forty tuns. Most of the wine was French wine. The merchants who supplied it were English and often were the same men who furnished groceries for the spicery. Besides French wine the court used a small quantity of sweet wine which it bought from merchants trading in Spain and the Levant', p. 55. By the end of Elizabeth's reign, the cellar had compounded with wine merchants in order to reduce brokerage fees and exert more control over the quality of the wine.

30 Lodge, *Illustrations*, II, pp. 435, 441.

31 See Durant, *Bess of Hardwick*.

now. Rather, they offer a particular twist on the *carpe diem* tradition. The speaker in one late seventeenth-century ballad concludes that for both wine and women, 'Nothing can be like the present Time,/ Give me Wine and Women in their prime,/ And before that e'er they pall/ Give me all'.³²

It was so difficult to stabilize wine in this period that it was usually doctored in one way or another to conceal and slow spoilage, enhance sweetness, and extend supplies. Amendments might be as benign as the addition of herbs and spices, but they also included a witch's cauldron of bizarre possibilities. Strategies for preserving and improving wines included variations on what have since become reliable methods: increasing its sugar or acid levels; or using a preservative in the form of vitriol (a metal sulfate) or sulfur. In other words, while sweetened wines were often called 'bastard', most wines were adulterated in one way or another. One contemporary called this the 'mystery of vintners'.³³ In the early modern period, wine amendment was recognized as widespread and denounced as fraud; it was variously called adulteration, transubstantiation, and alchemy. What went into the barrel then was a bit more eclectic than it is now. But then as now amending wine was part of the standard business of producing, storing, and serving it.³⁴

Many wine connoisseurs now suggest that drinking wine is a way to taste the essence of another time and place. The word 'terroir' is often used to describe how all of the constituents of location (soil constitution, sun exposure, climate, precipitation, etc.) express themselves in a wine. Although the effects of soil constitution, for example, cannot yet be quantified, it is widely asserted that wine 'tells the story of its origin'; that a glass of wine 'tells a story, first of that place, and second of that year'.³⁵ Purportedly, then, to drink wine is to travel through time and space, to 'uncork the past'

32 'Beauteous JENNY'. There is some contradictory evidence as well, suggesting that aged wines might be preferred, especially for older drinkers. According to Simon's *History of the Wine Trade in England*, for example, 'The most unfortunate queen, Catherine of Aragon, was only given new wine for her drinking, although this did not suit her failing health, and she begged, but in vain, to have some other. In 1534, she sent to Chapuys, the Emperor's Ambassador, for a cask of old Spanish wine, which was given her, but it appears that the servant who executed her commands was dismissed for the offence of obeying her orders, the King not choosing her to drink or eat anything but what he provided for her', II, pp. 138–39.

33 For lists of additions to wine, see Plat, *Jewel House*, sigs. 13v–14r; *True Discovery*, pp. 27–28; and Charleton, 'The Mysterie of Vintners', in *Two Discourses*.

34 For an overview of additives widely used in winemaking today, see the appendices to Feiring, *Naked Wine*.

35 Goode and Harrop, *Authentic Wine*, pp. 2–4, 235. See also Dolan, 'Wine, Time, and Terroir'.

or, as Keats put it, to savor 'a beaker full of the warm south'.³⁶ This access to the past is always a fantasy. But aggressive wine amendments make it especially hard to sustain. Renaissance drinkers did not taste another season and climate as much as they sampled a fragile compromise cooked up in a London tavern or a Yorkshire kitchen. Layers of time, place, and agency commingled in a single mouthful.

Whose agency? Coopers, who both made barrels and shaped their contents, were important wine amenders, as were tapsters. But housewives, too, participated in fighting the effects of time through and in wines. Cookbooks and other how-to guides addressed to women routinely tell them how to use wine in medicines intended to offset the ravages of time.³⁷ These practical guides also advised housewives on how to 'amend'—we might say 'disguise'—wines that had gone off. Gervase Markham's *The English Housewife*, for instance, includes a chapter on wines borrowed from a manuscript on vintner's secrets; in it, he advises the housewife on how to amend enormous quantities of wine. As Michael R. Best points out in his edition of Markham, 'what in the vintner was scandalous adulteration was admirable ingenuity in the frugal housewife'.³⁸ Women were also, as we will now see, important participants in the venture of growing grapes and making wine in England.

Women and winemaking

Grape growing and winemaking, like the many other agricultural innovations of which they formed part, were driven by men, those whom Joan Thirsk calls 'gentlemen farmers', who both experimented with new methods and wrote about those experiments.³⁹ The majority of texts advocating English

36 See, for example, McGovern, *Uncorking the Past*, pp. 27, 269, and *passim*; Keats, 'Ode to a Nightingale', l. 15.

37 See Wall's chapter on 'Temporalities', in *Recipes for Thought*.

38 Best, 'Introduction', xxv. Markham's recipes for amending wine deal with huge quantities—appropriate to the professional and not the housewife. This is because, as Markham only explains in his third edition, he took his chapter on wine from a 'rudely written' and unpolished manuscript by 'one professed skillful in the trade' and expert in 'vintner's secrets' (Best, 'Introduction', p. xviii). This manuscript, *Secreta Dei pampinei*, had been in Hugh Plat's hands and in, his *Floraes Paradise*, Plat claimed to have written it. Best compares a surviving fragment of the manuscript (in the British Library) with Markham's text, concluding that Markham added nothing substantial to the content, polishing and reorganizing it. On Plat's relation to the manuscript, see also Thick, *Sir Hugh Plat*.

39 Of writers including Markham, Walter Blith, and John Worlidge, Thirsk asserts that '[t]hroughout the [seventeenth] century the strongest stimulus to experiment came from

winemaking promote it as an extension of the many other ways of making a rural estate self-sufficient and productive. Ancient taboos insisted women were inimical to wine production: vines wither if a menstruating woman passes;⁴⁰ wine sours if she enters the cellar in which it is stored. While these fears were still occasionally repeated into the early modern period, they were lapsing into obsolescence and they did not prevent women from experimenting with grape growing and winemaking. Perhaps this is not surprising since there was a long tradition of women brewers, as Judith Bennett among others has documented, and winemaking in particular resides at the intersection of domains women often controlled, including gardening, medicine, and food production.⁴¹ Although gentleman farmers like gentlemen virtuosi instigated, bankrolled, and documented much of the experimentation in gardens, kitchens, and labs, they did not monopolize it, depending on wives, children, and servants. Those figures were not only on the margins assisting.⁴² In the notebooks, correspondence, and published writings of various prolific polymaths, we catch glimpses of women who were in the vanguard of English winemaking.

Barnabe Googe, in an 'Epistle to the Reader' in his translation of Heresbach's *Four Bookes of Husbandry*, mentions that, at the time he writes in the late sixteenth century, at an 'ancient house' at Chilwell, in Nottingham, there 'remaineth yet as an ancient monument in a great windowe of glasse the whole order of planting, proyning, stamping, and pressing of Vines. Besides, there is yet also growing an old Vine, that yeeldes a Grape sufficient to make a right good Wine, as was notably proved by a Gentlewoman in the said house'.⁴³ This gentlewoman is then the preserver of an ancient tradition, like the window, like the vine, but also an innovator who 'proves' that it is possible to reclaim a lost past so as to realize a future for English wine.

Also in the late sixteenth century, Hugh Plat visited the gardens of Sir Francis Walsingham, principal secretary to Elizabeth I and often referred

gentlemen farmers such as these' (Thirsk, 'Plough and Pen', esp. p. 301).

⁴⁰ Crawford, 'Attitudes toward Menstruation', esp. p. 59; Camporesi, *Juice of Life*, pp. 113–17; Krazitzky, *Healing, Performance and Ceremony*, p. 202, n.49.

⁴¹ Bennett, *Ale, Beer, and Brewsters*; Wall, *Staging Domesticity*; Wall, *Recipes for Thought*; Laroche, *Medical Authority*; and Munroe, *Gender and the Garden*.

⁴² A. Cooper, 'Homes and Households'; Hunter and Hutton, *Women, Science, and Medicine*; Harkness, *Jewel House*.

⁴³ Heresbach, *Four Bookes of Husbandry*, sig. A3v. Googe mentions two men as well, but he points out that the wines they produce are not 'right good' because of 'the malice and disdain peradventure of the Frenchmen that kept them', rather than any fault of soil or situation. The gentlewoman he mentions seems to have avoided this pitfall by doing the work herself.

to as her 'spymaster', and his wife, Ursula, at their estate at Barn Elms, on the Thames between London and Richmond. There, he observed that: 'my Lady Walsinghams vines at barnes elms be planted against the back of chimneys whose fiers doo greatly helpe the ripening of the grapes, so likewise of the Apricock wch are bounde upp to the wall with the vines'. According to Malcom Thick, what Plat saw 'may have been the earliest heated walls in English gardens'.⁴⁴ Lady Walsingham is one of those women whom we know largely through her associations with men: the best sources on her are biographies of her husband, and even there she is only briefly mentioned (and her heated walls not at all). She is the mother of the Frances Walsingham who married Sir Philip Sidney and later the Earl of Essex. Perhaps most intriguingly for my concerns here, John Dee was her near neighbor at Barn Elms, and he describes Ursula as coming to his house 'very freely'; she served as godmother to his daughter Madinia.⁴⁵ Walsingham may have been engaging in intrigue, but Ursula was forging connections with influential if eccentric knowledge producers and ripening her grapes.

Plat was especially interested in grapes because he made wine which he boasts is 'rich, and of a strong boiling nature' and would keep for 'a whole yeere, and sometimes longer, without any shewe of fainting deadness, or discolouring; which is as much as any Vintner can well require in his best French wines'.⁴⁶ Touting his own vintage, Plat also draws our attention to the limited lifespan expected for all wines, homemade and imported. In his *Floraes Paradise* (1608), Plat offers his wine as a 'new, rare, and profitable invention', second only to secrets in metallurgy. He identifies women as particularly appreciative consumers of his homemade English wine. Defending it as just as good as imports, he argues that 'if any exception should be taken against the race and delicacie' of his homemade wines, 'I am content to submit them to the censure of the best mouthes, that professe any true skill in the judgement of high country wines', adding that the French ambassador said 'that he never drank any better new Wine in France'. 'Race' can mean many things in Plat's praise for his wine, but it seems most likely that he refers to the meaning specific to wine, that is, a kind or class of wine, its essence or spirit, and a distinctive taste that links product to place. Race

⁴⁴ Thick, *Sir Hugh Plat*, pp. 58–59, quoting British Library manuscript SL 2210 (sig. 79v). Thick dates the notebook to about 1581–92. See also Mukherjee, 'Secrets of Sir Hugh Platt'.

⁴⁵ On Walsingham, see Budiansky, *Her Majesty's Spymaster*; and Hutchinson, *Elizabeth's Spymaster*. For the detail about Ursula's relation to Dee, see J. Cooper, *Queen's Agent*, p. 263; and *Private Diary*, pp. 3, 9, 18–19 (on visitors to Dee's library) and 33 (on Ursula as godmother).

⁴⁶ Plat, *Floraes Paradise*, sig. OBv.

here is, then, an early word for *terroir*, what makes Plat's wine distinctly his, what distinguishes it from others.⁴⁷

Plat goes on to say

that now mee thinks I begin to growe somewhat strong in my supporters; & therefore I make some doubt, whether I shall need to bring in that renowned Lady *Arabella*, the Countess of *Cumberland*, the Lady *Anne Clifford*, the Lady *Hastings*, the Lady *Candish*, & most of the Maides of Honour, with divers Lordes, Knights, and Gentlemen of good worth, that have generally applauded the same.⁴⁸

The women Plat mentions include three, Arbella Stuart, Margaret Russell (the Countess of Cumberland and Anne Clifford's mother), and Anne herself, who will appear as dedicatees of Amelia Lanyer's long devotional poem *Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum* just a few years later (1611). The maids of honor seem likely to be Anne of Denmark's 'maids of honor', that is, many of the same crew who had appeared in Ben Jonson's *Masque of Blackness* at court in 1605,⁴⁹ and which included Elizabeth Hastings, Countess of Huntington, whom Plat seems to mention, as well as others of Lanyer's dedicatees (Lucy Russell, Countess of Bedford, and Catherine Howard, Countess of Suffolk). Performers and patrons, this posse might also have been among what Plat calls 'the best mouths', encouraging and benefitting from the experimentation that helped to produce drinkable English wine. They offer an appealing corrective to the much more familiar satires of women drinking and gossiping together. Promoting invention, these 'mouths' are, in Plat's account, productive.

Samuel Hartlib's compendious text *Samuel Hartlib His Legacie* (1652), gathering together other writers' texts and letters written to Hartlib, is, like all of the texts Hartlib midwifed into print, an undigested hodgepodge.

47 Ibid., sig. E7v. Plat's use of 'race' corresponds to the term 'typicity': 'the way a wine displays characteristics shared among wines from this particular location' (Goode and Harrop, *Authentic Wine*, p. 13). 'Racy' is still used as a wine descriptor, but it has only gradually moved from meaning tasting of the earth or tasting of its own sap or spirit to meaning more generally lively or sprightly wine.

48 Ibid., sigs. E8r-v.

49 Of these women, the only one I cannot yet identify is 'Lady Candish'. On Queen Anne's court and her ladies, see Barroll, *Anna of Denmark*. The names Plat lists do not overlap precisely with Anna's favorites. It is also not easy to determine exactly who served as 'maids of honor'. However, the cast lists of masques do survive. Nagy, *Popular Medicine*, discusses the herbal knowledge and skill of aristocratic women, especially 'the delight she [the Countess of Cumberland, Anne Clifford's mother] took in distilling waters and other chymical extractions', p. 65.

It includes a discussion of orchards and fruit growing, titled *A large letter concerning the Defects and Remedies of English Husbandry*. The letter is addressed to Hartlib, and he frames it as a work he first commissioned and then amended and augmented. Written in the first person, it is often attributed to Robert Child, who attempted, unsuccessfully, to establish a vineyard in Massachusetts in the 1640s.⁵⁰ In the course of a fervent argument that the English should make their own wines and ciders rather than relying on imports, the speaker (Child?) points to 'some *Ingenious Gentlemen*' who 'usually make *wine* very good, long lasting, without extraordinary labour and cost' especially one in Kent, whom the margin identifies as Sir Peter Ricard who 'yearly maketh 6 or 8 hos-heads, which is very much commended by divers who have tasted it, and he hath kept some of it two years, as he himself told me, and it hath been very good'.⁵¹ Hartlib's manuscript journal, now searchable digitally, also records that 'at my Lord Warwick's Lady Ranelagh heard a Relation of 20. Or 3. Tonnes of wine made last year 1652 of English Grapes by one in Kent whose name she can easily learne'.⁵² Perhaps Lady Ranelagh was describing the same Kentish gentleman who ends up in Hartlib's *Legacy* via Child. Lady Ranelagh was, of course, Katherine Jones, Robert Boyle's sister; they may have collaborated, certainly lived together for the last 23 years of their lives, and are buried together.⁵³ Focusing on wine brings into view those women some historians of science have refused to see but whose stories those who attend to early modern women are telling; the digitization of lives, letters, and other sources is making it easier to piece these stories together. Furthermore, Hartlib's and Boyle's notation of intelligence women brought them about wine affirms that winemaking was news. Lady Ranelagh was eager to hear a relation of it and to pass it on to Hartlib as part of the overall project of agricultural 'improvement'.

Women are part of this story, not only as what early moderns called *relators*, that is, those who collect and convey information, but as newsmakers and experimenters. In that capacity they are both on the record and off it, in the story and at its margins. In Hartlib's *Legacie*, the section on orchards proceeds to recount that 'lately in *Surrey* a *Gentle-woman* told me, that they having many *grapes*, which they could not well tell how to dispose of, she, to play the good *House-wife*, stamp them to make *verjuice*; but two

50 Pinney, *History of Wine in America*, pp. 29–30; Morison, *Builders of the Bay Colony*, pp. 244–68.

51 Hartlib, *Samuel Hartlib His Legacie*, sig. D4v. On Hartlib, see Greengrass, 'Samuel Hartlib', pp. 304–22; Picciotto, *Labors of Innocence*, pp. 118–21; and Yeo, *Notebooks*, pp. 97–131.

52 Hartlib, *Ephemerides*, 1653, n. pag.

53 DiMeo, 'Lady Ranelagh's Book'; DiMeo, 'Such a sister became such a brother'. On Hartlib's female correspondents, see also Bourke.

moneths after drawing it forth, they found it very fine brisk wine, cleer like Rock-water, and in many other places such experiments have been made'.⁵⁴ The one 'she' stands out amidst the three 'theys', trumpeting the moment when she resolves their uncertainty and we learn what motivated her, the desire to play the good housewife and outwit the ravages of time. While the 1655 edition of this text mysteriously adds 'Captain Tucker' in the margin as if to identify this Surrey gentlewoman, the passage itself remains the same. Joan Thirsk notes this and laments that this change amounts to 'robbing the Surrey lady of her claim to fame, and transferring it to Captain Tucker'. But the original passage remains unchanged next to the reference to Captain Tucker. Thirsk finds in Hartlib's papers a 1653 reference to a 'Captain Tuck' who married Lord Winchilsea's sister from Kent, and 'is the likeliest gent. Who hath so many tuns of wine out of English grapes'. For her, this is a possible route to 'tentatively restore the lady to the record'.⁵⁵ But what's interesting to me about this particular amendment by Hartlib is that it leaves the description of the gentlewoman winemaker unrevised. She is still on the record. If anything, the possibility of her association with a Captain Tucker promises to add specificity to the attribution. Captain Tucker could be a member of the 'they' who had excess grapes and who discovered that the verjuice she had made turned into wine. But in all three versions of Hartlib's text (1651, 1652, 1655), she is there. Her experiment is an important part of the text's evidence that the English can and should make good wine. Hartlib's text goes on to appeal not to others who hope to play the good housewife but to 'ingenious men': 'I therefore desire Ingenious men to endeavour the raising of so necessary and pleasant a commodity'.⁵⁶ But while it cannot quite attach ingenuity to women, it depends on female informants and reports on a female experimenter. Similarly, William Coles's *Adam in Eden: or, Natures Paradise*, also published in the 1650s, hales the effort of a single woman: 'And though many of our Vines be of the same kind with those in France, yet they seldom come to maturity, to make so good Wine as theirs, our Country being colder: however, I have heard of

54 Hartlib, *Samuel Hartlib His Legacie*, sig. D4.

55 Thirsk, *Alternative Agriculture*, p. 137. Thirsk includes several invaluable pages on grape growing as, ultimately, a failure, pp. 135–39. Picard, *Elizabeth's London*, p. 167, claims 'acqua vitae (brandy) was being made commercially, on a small scale, by Jane Garrett, the wife of a foreign leather dresser and merchant, in 1593'. Picard cites Scouloudi, *Returns of Strangers*, where one finds other records of women aqua vitae distillers (entries 838 and 803v; 896 and 863v).

56 Hartlib, *Samuel Hartlib His Legacie*, sig. D4v.

Wine made in England, of Grapes, growing in Mrs. Pits Garden at Harrow on the Hill' (on the outskirts of London).⁵⁷

The praise for the effort of a single woman in Surrey or Harrow on the Hill suggests the sliding scale of the local. This might expand to include various English colonies, especially Virginia, in which the English aspired to make 'English wine', with either native or imported grapes. For example, James I sent hundreds of copies of a text on viticulture, as well as plant starts and French experts, to Virginia in the hope of countering tobacco growing with two other crops, grape vines and silk worms.⁵⁸ But if the dream of making English wine might extend to the Jamestown plantation it most often condensed down to one gentlewoman in Surrey, one old vine, one year's glut of grapes, one housewifely scheme, one heated wall.

If rural gentlemen's and gentlewomen's experiments in winemaking yielded only small quantities for the consumption of their families and friends, inspiring anecdotes of ingenuity in a dream of English wine production that has not quite been realized even yet, the English had a more powerful contribution to make to the history of wine as consumers who pushed the market, and through contributions to the production and transport of wine.⁵⁹ For example, in the 1630s, Sir Kenelm Digby invented the sturdy dark glass wine bottle with a flat bottom and a punt, which required a coal furnace that could reach extremely high temperatures. Without what we still recognize as the modern wine bottle, as just one example, moving champagne from lucky accident to method would have been impossible. While Digby is credited with the bottle's invention, it was probably tested and first produced in Sir Robert Mansell's glassmaking works, since he held a patent until 1642. Elizabeth, Lady Mansell, ran her husband's glassmaking business in his absence, defended his patent, and switched from Scottish coal to Newcastle coal for the glassmaking furnaces (thus lowering costs).⁶⁰

In exploring how time and gender conjoin in creating the mystery of English wine, I have proceeded by gathering, combining, and scrutinizing surviving fragments of evidence. I have ranged across the early modern period, gratefully synthesizing the work of other scholars, relying on our

57 Coles, *Adam in Eden*, sig. X1r.

58 On these initiatives, see Bigelow, 'Gendered Language'.

59 Lukacs, *Inventing Wine*, pp. 61, 110.

60 Godfrey, *Development of English Glassmaking*, pp. 115, 196, 225–32. While I'm on the subject of women's involvement in manufacture, Elizabeth Cary, as part of her ongoing attempts to secure maintenance from her husband, tried to get her husband's pipe stave license 'diverted to her' (Wolfe, 'Introduction', p. 23); this was a license to make and export staves used in making barrels and casks for wine (Wolfe, 'Introduction', p. 23, n. 54).

growing treasure trove of biographical information to connect the dots among some of the players, valuing plays, pamphlets, poems, agricultural treatises, proverbs, ballads, notebooks, and correspondence equally as evidence that wine was ubiquitous, gendered, and inscrutable. At every turn, I have emphasized the questionable provenance of the surviving evidence. In this, the surviving evidence resembles the wine I'm using it to trace—ephemeral, elusive, possibly tainted. My method, then, resembles that of the maligned wine amenders, who combined and doctored what they received. The only difference is that I draw attention to this process of collection and combination, to what has gone into this cask and what is missing.

Wine in the popular imaginary

Wine remains central to popular depictions of the Renaissance broadly conceived: fountains running wine epitomize court excess; overflowing wine cups at Renaissance fairs and in historical fictions in various media capture passion, risk, and excess—and more rarely, women taking a place at the table to consult and consort with men and with one another. Even as it captures one version of what makes the Renaissance a recognizable and appealing brand, the wine in those cups seems to link us to the past; they drink and we drink. Indeed, shows like *The Tudors* almost seem to imply drinking games among viewers; one can easily find suggestions for such games online. Lift your glass every time Henry has a tantrum. But what we know about early modern wine is that it was unstable, adulterated, illegible. What was and is in that cup?

The wine in popular representations of the Renaissance reinforces two robust associations we have seen in early modern culture itself: that wine was associated with sexual danger for women; and that English pride was wounded by the reliance on imported wine. We see the association between wine and sexual danger in the pilot of *Reign*, the Mary Stuart soap opera, in which a female shadow warns her: 'Taste all the love and sorrow but don't drink the wine' (which will be drugged). 'Don't drink the wine' condenses the advisory that haunts so many fictions of Renaissance courts, those bowers of bliss and blood into which we are invited as voyeurs even as we are warned that many a maiden will not make it out intact.

We find versions of the association of wine with nationalism in two popular depictions of Henry's court. Hilary Mantel's novel *Bring Up the Bodies* figures Anne Boleyn's exotic tastes and sexual allure in terms of wine. The protagonist and narrator, Thomas Cromwell, observes that 'Henry

[the VIII] has been adapting his taste to hers. Henry used to enjoy hedge wines, the fruits of the English summer, but now the wines he favours are heavy, perfumed, drowsy'—that is French.⁶¹ While Mantel has achieved a cultural prestige rarely afforded to historical fictions about Renaissance queens, she has surprisingly little to say of interest about Anne Boleyn. But Mantel suggests that the association of so many English queens with wine-producing countries—France, Spain—helped to shape both the fashions for (and distrust of) particular wines.

In the Showtime series *The Tudors*, Henry serves English wine to the skeptical French ambassador, reminding him that 'We've been making wine in England since the Romans'. 'As late as that?' the ambassador sneers. The ambassador's verdict is that the wine is 'uh, very fruity [...] and strong like a gladiator sweats'.⁶² The joke still works for audiences today because of the assumption that the English still don't make good wine—although climate change is giving them an assist—even as it tries to remind viewers that the English did make wine and that wine consumption and national pride were inseparable even in the sixteenth century.

The role of wine in the popular vision of the Renaissance extends into consumer goods, including the 'wives of Henry VIII wine charms' one can find on Etsy. A wine charm is, of course, a way to identify your glass so that you don't constantly need a new one or drink from the wrong one. It's a way to know your wine from someone else's. The charm secures a costume party identification between present and past, frolicsome knower and object of knowledge: 'I'm Jane Seymour! It also depends on the partygoer to recognize the difference between, say, Catherine of Aragon and Catherine Howard, Anne Boleyn and Anne of Cleves. Few could. This technology for knowing your wine depends, in this case, on knowing your history. But neither is very stable. Even if you can consistently identify your queen and your glass, that doesn't mean you know any more about its contents than Anne Boleyn might have. It's the not knowing, I have been arguing, that links us to early modern wine drinkers. Iago reassures Cassio that wine is a 'good familiar creature/ if it be well used' (2.3.283–84). But on this as on so many other fronts, he is not to be trusted. Cassio and Iago both know that Cassio responds to wine differently than others do. For him, the cup of fellowship is 'unblessed' and 'the ingredient is a devil' (2.3.282). The contents of the cup vary from drinker to drinker. Wine is also dynamic in the bottle or in the glass and dynamic over time, so that what is consistently called

61 Mantel, *Bring Up the Bodies*, p. 94.

62 Hirst, 'Definition of Love'.

wine varies considerably. One final early modern proverb is this: 'Wine by the barrel, you cannot know'.⁶³ This is the vinous version of 'You can't judge a book by its cover'. Early moderns knew that they could not know.

One can find in historical fiction harbingers of stories other than the predictable extremes of drunken, randy men and women who are either villainous or victimized. For example, in Philippa Gregory's *Other Boleyn Girl*, that other Boleyn, Mary, stakes her claim as a domestic goddess who thrives outside the court when she confides in the reader 'I made an agreement with one farmer that if he should get a good crop of grapes then I would ask my father to send to London for a Frenchman to come on a visit to Hever Castle and teach the art of winemaking'.⁶⁴ That glimpse of Mary, overseeing an experiment in making wine, is the kind of story about women and English wine I've been inviting you to think about—a story for which we have some evidence but that has not yet captured the popular imagination. But that is starting to change.

In Deborah Harkness's *All Souls Trilogy*, in the second book, *Shadow of Night*, largely set in the sixteenth century, there are stolen moments when the witch Diana Bishop attempts to distill spirit of wine, a concentrate used in medicine and alchemy, and shares wine with Joanna Kelley, Edward Kelley's wife.⁶⁵ The vibrant intersections of domesticity, the occult, and science, the strange ways the past picks up signals from and sends out reverberations to the present, are part of the early modern we know from attending to women and gender. But it's not a story we've had honored and told back to us all that often. So far. Perhaps wine will help us to tell more interesting stories about early modern gender for a popular audience. The surviving evidence about wine supports more varied and engrossing stories than have dominated popular depictions of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century England. That's so often true. It's not just that there are better stories in the archives if we dig for them. It's also that even the dustiest of archival research depends on collecting fragments, looking in the margins, and puzzling over blots and holes. As teachers and scholars, we can follow the lead of the best writers of historical fiction and exploit gaps in our knowledge as opportunities. If we have to speculate and elaborate anyway, why not do so in ways that assign pleasure and agency to women?⁶⁶

63 *Oxford Dictionary of English Proverbs*, W 492.

64 Gregory, *Other Boleyn Girl*, p. 29.

65 Harkness, *Shadow of Night*.

66 First, a toast. Merry Wiesner-Hanks's invitation inspired me to write this essay; she then guided me as I delivered it as a talk and then turned it into a chapter. Audiences at the Attending to Early Modern Women conference and at the University of Maryland Baltimore County and

Works cited

- Apperson, G.L., *English Proverbs and Proverbial Phrases: A Historical Dictionary* (London: J.M. Dent, 1969).
- Barnes, Barnabe, *Parthenophil and Parthenophe* (London, 1593).
- Barroll, Leeds, *Anna of Denmark, Queen of England: A Cultural Biography* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001).
- 'Beauteous JENNY:/ OR,/ The Maiden Mistress' (National Library of Scotland—Crawford 725, English Broadside Ballad Archive [EBBA] 33288).
- Bennett, Judith, *Ale, Beer, and Brewsters in England: Women's Work in a Changing World, 1300–1600* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996).
- Best, Michael R., 'Introduction', in Gervase Markham, *The English Housewife*, ed. by Best (Kingston/Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1986), pp. xi–lv.
- Bigelow, Allison Margaret, 'Gendered Language and the Science of Colonial Silk', *Early American Literature* 49.2 (2014), 271–325.
- Bloom, Gina, 'Manly Drunkenness: Binge Drinking as Disciplined Play', in *Masculinity and the Metropolis of Vice, 1550–1650*, ed. by Amanda Bailey and Roze Hentschell (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), pp. 21–44.
- Boorde, Andrew, *The Compendious Regiment of Health* (London, 1547).
- Bourke, Evan, 'Female Involvement, Membership, and Centrality: A Social Network Analysis of the Hartlib Circle', *Literature Compass* (14 March 2017), e12388, doi:10.1111/lic3.12388.
- Braddock, Robert C., 'The Rewards of Office-Holding in Tudor England', *Journal of British Studies* 14.2 (1975), 29–47.
- Brathwait, Richard, *The English Gentlewoman, drawne out to the full Body* (London, 1631).
- Budiansky, Stephen, *Her Majesty's Spymaster: Elizabeth I, Sir Francis Walsingham, and the Birth of Modern Espionage* (New York: Viking, 2005).
- Burton, Robert, *The Anatomy of Melancholy*, ed. by William H. Gass (New York: New York Review Book, 2001).
- Bynum, Caroline Walker, *Wonderful Blood* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007).
- Camporesi, Piero, *Juice of Life: The Symbolic and Magic Significance of Blood* (New York: Continuum, 1996).

Loyola University, New Orleans, especially Rebecca Laroche, Megan Machinske, Wendy Wall, Amy Froide, Kathryn McKinley, and Hillary Ecklund, pushed my thinking with their comments and questions. Yasmine Hachimi offered invaluable research assistance. Elizabeth Crachiollo and Samantha Snively helped shaped the essay from first to last. While I claim the essay's faults as my own, I'm grateful for such a collaborative and collegial process.

- 'A Caueat or VVarning: For all sortes of Men both young and olde, to auoid the Company of lewd and wicked Woemen' (Magdalene College—Pepys 1.46–47, EBBA 20217).
- Cavendish, Margaret, *The Convent of Pleasure*, in *Paper Bodies: A Margaret Cavendish Reader*, ed. by Sylvia Bowerbank and Sara Mendelson (Peterborough: Broadview, 2000), pp. 97–135.
- Charleton, Walter, 'The Mysterie of Vintners,' in *Two Discourses* (London, 1675).
- Coles, William, *Adam in Eden: or, Natures Paradise* (London, 1657).
- Cooper, Alix, 'Homes and Households,' in *The Cambridge History of Science, III: Early Modern Science*, ed. by Katharine Park and Lorraine Daston (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 224–37.
- Cooper, John, *The Queen's Agent: Francis Walsingham at the Court of Elizabeth I* (London: Faber & Faber, 2011).
- Crawford, Patricia, 'Attitudes toward Menstruation in Seventeenth-Century England,' *Past and Present* 91.1 (1981), 47–73.
- DiMeo, Michelle, 'Lady Ranelagh's Book of Kitchen-Physick? Reattributing Authorship for Wellcome Library MS 1340,' *HLQ* 77.3 (2014), 331–46.
- '“Such a sister became such a brother”': Lady Ranelagh's Influence on Robert Boyle,' *Intellectual History Review* 25.1 (2015), 21–36.
- Dolan, Frances E., 'Blood of the Grape,' in *Blood Matters*, ed. by Bonnie Lander Johnson and Eleanor Decamp (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, forthcoming).
- 'Wine, Time, and Terroir: Biodynamic Viticulture, Natural Wine, and the Premodern,' in *Oecologies: Engaging the World, from Here*, ed. by Vin Nardizzi and Tiffany Jo Werth (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, forthcoming).
- Durant, David N., *Bess of Hardwick: Portrait of an Elizabethan Dynast* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1977).
- Elizabeth Cary, Lady Falkland: Life and Letters*, ed. by Heather Wolfe, Renaissance Texts from Manuscript no. 4 (Tempe, AZ: ACMRS, 2001).
- Ellinghausen, Laurie, 'University of Vice: Drink, Gentility, and Masculinity in Oxford, Cambridge, and London,' in *Masculinity and the Metropolis of Vice, 1550–1650*, ed. by Amanda Bailey and Roze Hentschell (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), pp. 45–66.
- Feiring, Alice, *Naked Wine: Letting Grapes Do What Comes Naturally* (Cambridge, MA: De Capo Press, 2011).
- Fischer, Joshua B., 'Digesting Falstaff: Food and Nation in Shakespeare's *Henry IV* Plays,' *Early English Studies* 2 (2009), 1–23.
- Fletcher, John, *The Wild-Goose Chase: A Comedie* (London, 1652).
- Godfrey, Eleanor S., *The Development of English Glassmaking, 1560–1640* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1975).
- Goldstein, David B., *Eating and Ethics in Shakespeare's England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

- Goode, Jamie, and Sam Harrop, *Authentic Wine: Toward Natural and Sustainable Winemaking* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011).
- Greengrass, M., 'Samuel Hartlib and the Commonwealth of Learning,' in *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain, IV (1557–1695)*, ed. by John Barnard and D. F. McKenzie (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 304–22.
- Gregory, Philippa, *The Other Boleyn Girl* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2001).
- Guy, John, *The True Life of Mary Stuart, Queen of Scots* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2004).
- Harkness, Deborah, *The Jewel House: Elizabethan London and the Scientific Revolution* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007).
- *Shadow of Night* (New York: Penguin, 2012).
- Hartlib, Samuel, *Ephemerides*, pt. 1 (1653), 1 January–1 March, ref. 28/2/49B, https://www.hrionline.ac.uk/hartlib/view?docset=main&docname=28_02_45&termo=transtext_ranelagh#highlight (accessed 21 December 2016).
- *Samuel Hartlib His Legacie: Or An Enlargement of the Discourse of Husbandry Used in Brabant and Flaunders* (London, 1652).
- Heresbach, Conrad, *Four Bookes of Husbandry [...] Newly Englished, and encreased*, ed. by Barnaby Googe (London, 1601).
- Hirst, Michael, 'The Definition of Love,' *The Tudors*, season 2, episode 6 (2008).
- Hunter, Lynette, and S. Hutton, *Women, Science, and Medicine, 1500–1700* (Stroud: Sutton, 1997).
- Hutchinson, Robert, *Elizabeth's Spymaster: Francis Walsingham and the Secret War That Saved England* (New York: Thomas Dunne, 2006).
- Jonson, Ben, 'Song: To Celia,' in *Seventeenth-Century British Poetry, 1603–1660*, ed. by John P. Rumrich and Gregory Chaplin (New York: W.W. Norton, 2006), pp. 104–5.
- Keats, John, 'Ode to a Nightingale,' Poetry Foundation, <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/44479/ode-to-a-nightingale> (accessed 20 November 2017).
- Krazitzky, M.A., *Healing, Performance and Ceremony in the Writings of Three Early Modern Physicians* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012).
- Kümin, Beat, *Drinking Matters: Public Houses and Social Exchange in Early Modern Central Europe* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007).
- Laroche, Rebecca, *Medical Authority and Englishwomen's Herbal Texts, 1550–1650* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009).
- Lodge, Edmund, *Illustrations of British History, Biography, and Manners*, 3 vols. (London, 1838).
- Lukacs, Paul, *Inventing Wine: A New History of One of the World's Most Ancient Pleasures* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2012).
- McGovern, Patrick E., *Uncorking the Past: The Quest for Wine, Beer, and Other Alcoholic Beverages* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009).
- Mantel, Hilary, *Bring Up the Bodies* (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 2012).

- Martin, A. Lynn, *Alcohol, Sex, and Gender in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001).
- 'A Merry Dialogue between Thomas and John. / In the praise, and dispraise of Women, and Wine' (British Library — Roxburghe 3.88—89, EBBA 30419).
- Middleton, Thomas, *A Chastemaid in Cheapside*, in *Thomas Middleton: The Collected Works*, ed. by Gary Taylor and John Lavagnino (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).
- Morison, Samuel Eliot, *Builders of the Bay Colony* (Boston/New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1930).
- 'A Mornings Ramble: OR, Islington Wells Burlesq't' (National Library of Scotland — Crawford 1038, EBBA 33741).
- Mukherjee, Ayesha, 'The Secrets of Sir Hugh Platt', in *Secrets and Knowledge in Medicine and Science: 1500–1800*, ed. by Elaine Leong and Alisha Rankin (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011), pp. 69–86.
- Munroe, Jennifer, *Gender and the Garden in Early Modern English Literature* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2008).
- Nagy, Doreen G., *Popular Medicine in Seventeenth-Century England* (Bowling Green, OH: Bowling Green State University Popular Press, 1988).
- Nashe, Thomas, *Have with You to Saffron-Walden* (London, 1596).
- 'A new Ballad, intituled, A Warning to Youth, shewing the lewd life of a Marchants Sonne of London, and / the miserie that at the last he sustained by his riotousnesse' (British Library — Roxburghe 1.447, EBBA 30301).
- The Norton Shakespeare*, 3rd edn., ed. by Stephen Greenblatt et al. (New York: W.W. Norton, 2016).
- The Oxford Dictionary of English Proverbs*, 3rd edn., rev. F. P. Wilson (Oxford: Clarendon, 1970).
- Paster, Gail Kern, *The Body Embarrassed: Drama and the Disciplines of Shame in Early Modern England* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993).
- Picard, Liza, *Elizabeth's London: Everyday Life in Elizabethan London* (New York: St. Martin's Griffin, 2003).
- Picciotto, Joanna, *Labors of Innocence in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010).
- Pinney, Thomas, *A History of Wine in America: From the Beginnings to Prohibition* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989).
- Plat, Hugh, *Floraes Paradise, Beautified and Adorned with Sundry Sorts of Delicate Fruites and Flowers* (London, 1608).
- *The Jewel House of Art and Nature* (London, 1653).
- A Pleasing Sinne: Drink and Conviviality in Seventeenth-Century England*, ed. by Adam Smyth (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2004).

- Plinie, *The Historie of the World: Commonly called, The Naturall Historie of C. Plinius Secundus*, trans. by Philemon Holland Doctor in Physick, 2 vols. (London, 1601).
- The Private Diary of Dr. John Dee*, ed. by J.O. Halliwell (London: Camden Society, 1842).
- Read, Evelyn Plummer, and Conyers Read, eds., *Elizabeth of England: 'Certain Observations concerning the Life and Reign of Queen Elizabeth', by John Clapham* (Philadelphia, 1951).
- Rowlands, Samuel, *Tis Merry When Gossips Meet* (London, 1609).
- Scott, Sarah K., 'Discovering the Sins of the Cellar in *The Dutch Courtesan*', *Medieval and Renaissance Drama in England* 26 (2013), 60–74.
- Scouloudi, Irene, *Returns of Strangers in the Metropolis* (London: Huguenot Society of London, 1985).
- Sebek, Barbara, "'More natural to the nation": Situating Shakespeare in the "Querelle de Canary"', *Shakespeare Studies* 42 (2014): 106–21.
- Simon, Andre, *The History of the Wine Trade in England*, 3 vols. (London: Wyman & Sons, 1909).
- Somerset, Anne, *Elizabeth I* (New York: Knopf, 1991).
- 'The subtil Miss of LONDON: / OR, / The Ranting Hector well fitted by this cunning Miss, / Who by putting certain Ingredients into his Wine, laid him into a deep sleep, and striping his Gallant At- / tire, cloathed him in a red Petticoat, and a Coyf on his Head; then sent him in a great Chest by water to / Gravesend' (Houghton Library — Huth EBB65H 2.255, EBBA 34701).
- Thick, Malcolm, *Sir Hugh Plat: The Search for Useful Knowledge in Early Modern London* (Devon: Prospect Books, 2010).
- Thirsk, Joan, *Alternative Agriculture: A History from the Black Death to the Present Day* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997).
- 'Plough and Pen: Agricultural Writers in the Seventeenth Century', in *Social Relations and Ideas: Essays in Honour of R.H. Hilton*, ed. by T.H. Aston et al. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), pp. 295–318.
- A True Discovery of the Projectors of the Wine Project, out of the Vintners owne orders made at their Common hall* (London, 1641).
- Tryon, Thomas, *A Treatise of Cleanness in Meats and Drinks* (London, 1682).
- *The Way to Health, Long Life and Happiness: Or, A Discourse of Temperance, and the Particular Nature of all Things requisite for the LIFE of MAN* (London, 1697).
- Varriano, John, *Wine: A Cultural History* (London: Reaktion, 2010).
- Venner, Thomas, *Via recta ad vitam longam* (London, 1620).
- Wall, Wendy, *Recipes for Thought: Knowledge and Taste in the Early Modern Kitchen* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015).
- *Staging Domesticity: Household Work and English Identity in Early Modern Drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).
- Whitaker, Tobias, *The Tree of Humane Life, or the Blood of the Grape* (London, 1654).

Wilson, Thomas, *The Arte of Rhetoric* (London, 1553).

Wine, Beere, and Ale, *Together by the Eares* (London, 1629).

Wine and Women: *Or A briefe Description of the common curtesie of a Curtezan* (London, 1647).

Wolfe, Heather, 'Introduction', in *Elizabeth Cary, Lady Falkland: Life and Letters*, ed. by Wolfe, Renaissance Texts from Manuscript, no. 4 (Tempe, AZ: ACMRS, 2001), 1–85.

Woodworth, Allegra, 'Purveyance for the Royal Household in the Reign of Queen Elizabeth', in *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society*, n.s., 35.1 (1945), 1–89.

Yeo, Richard, *Notebooks, English Virtuosi, and Early Modern Science* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014).

About the author

Frances E. Dolan is Distinguished Professor of English at the University of California–Davis. She has published five books, most recently *True Relations: Reading, Literature, and Evidence in Seventeenth-Century England* (2013), which won the John Ben Snow prize from the North American Conference on British Studies. A former president of the Shakespeare Association of America and an award-winning teacher, she has also edited six Shakespeare plays for the classroom. Her current project, of which her essay in this volume forms part, is tentatively entitled *Digging the Early Modern: How Alternative Agriculture Remembers the Seventeenth Century*.

2 Women in the sea of time

Domestic dated objects in seventeenth-century England

Sophie Cope

Abstract

This essay looks at domestic objects inscribed with dates in early modern England. It investigates how time was perceived and experienced by women through the inscription of these objects. Two case studies of dated objects provide the focus for discussion. The first looks at wares used in the everyday running of the household, and considers their meaning in relation to the cyclical rhythms of daily life. The second considers samplers inscribed with personal information including dates and ages, arguing that such objects demonstrate the significance of dates in marking and extending social connections between women. Overall, the essay aims to show the opportunity dated wares present to analyze the connection between women, time, and material culture.

Keywords: materiality; dates; cycles; duration; kitchenware; embroidery

A tin-glazed earthenware mug in the collection at the Victoria and Albert Museum poses an interesting puzzle about the position of women in time in seventeenth-century England (Figure 2.1).¹ In many ways, it is an unremarkable piece of ceramic. Made in one of the London potteries that lined the river in Southwark, likely Montague Close, Pickleherring, or Rotherhithe, it holds about half a pint of liquid, and was likely to have been intended for strong beer. The decoration on the mug is not unusual, with grotesques painted in shades of blue, green, and brown, and an inscription around the rim records the name of the owner in fairly typical blue with white background. Yet it is precisely this inscription, reading 'ANN CHAPMAN ANNO 1642', which makes this object so interesting. Through the inscription a clear connection

¹ Victoria and Albert Museum, London, mus. no. 1107-1853.

Gendering the Late Medieval and Early Modern World

Series editors: James Daybell (Chair), Victoria E. Burke, Svante Norrhem, and Merry Wiesner-Hanks

This series provides a forum for studies that investigate women, gender, and/or sexuality in the late medieval and early modern world. The editors invite proposals for book-length studies of an interdisciplinary nature, including, but not exclusively, from the fields of history, literature, art and architectural history, and visual and material culture. Consideration will be given to both monographs and collections of essays. Chronologically, we welcome studies that look at the period between 1400 and 1700, with a focus on any part of the world, as well as comparative and global works. We invite proposals including, but not limited to, the following broad themes: methodologies, theories and meanings of gender; gender, power and political culture; monarchs, courts and power; constructions of femininity and masculinity; gift-giving, diplomacy and the politics of exchange; gender and the politics of early modern archives; gender and architectural spaces (courts, salons, household); consumption and material culture; objects and gendered power; women's writing; gendered patronage and power; gendered activities, behaviours, rituals and fashions.

Books in the series:

Gendered Temporalities in the Early Modern World
English Aristocratic Women's Religious Patronage, 1450-1550: The Fabric of Piety
Chivalry, Reading, and Women's Culture in Early Modern Spain: From Amadís de Gaula to Don Quixote

Gendered Temporalities in the Early Modern World

Edited by Merry E. Wiesner-Hanks

Amsterdam University Press