

Introduction to the Gerritsen Subject Series - German Language Titles

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General Introduction

Aletta Jacobs and Carl Gerritsen left their mark on the collection of writings in women's history which bears their name. It is hard to read through the guide without thinking of them - the first woman doctor in the Netherlands and her radical lawyer/politician husband - going from one antiquarian bookstore to another, absolutely delighted at their finds, at the wealth of materials on the subject of women still available during the latter years of the nineteenth century. One can imagine that they, as professional people, tended to buy heavily in the areas that most interested them, in law, politics, and medicine, but the collection itself represents an eclectic approach that makes non-lawyers and nondoctors grateful: the variety of the materials is immensely exciting.

The dissemination of these materials (in addition to the works added since the turn of the century by others) through the means of microform is a significant development. When viewed as a whole as a compendium of materials on both European and American women's history, the collection is one of the most complete of its kind in existence; when the 930 German items are considered, what becomes immediately apparent is the great mass of valuable sources that were in many cases thought to be lost forever. There is material here for the social scientist, the historian, the literary scholar, the student of the history of science; there are, moreover, a number of journals in more complete form than they can be found anywhere else in the world.

Although the richest part of the Gerritsen German collection centers on the nineteenth century, when women were beginning to organize and make themselves heard in ever greater numbers, the monographs extend as far back as 1566 work by Agrippa von Nettesheim and as far forward as the 1930's. What is most exciting, however, is the large variety of works that emerged from the last century: studies abound on subjects as diverse as the pathology of women, the history of German feminism, the powerful concern with the education and employment of women, the role of women in literature and the arts, and the issues of suffrage and other legal reforms. Trends become discernible; cross references are frequently possible - the interdisciplinary nature of the collection is, in fact, one of its most impressive attributes. For the first time, an overview of German women's history in all its diversity becomes possible and should serve as impetus and encouragement to social historians and scientists as well as to scholars in the burgeoning field of women's studies to work together in comparative and contrastive endeavors.

Although a separate volume will be published that will detail the riches of the periodicals collection within the Gerritsen Collection, they should not go unmentioned here. Some fifty-nine journals are contained therein, including the most valuable periodicals to emerge from the nineteenth-century

fledgling German women's movement: journals edited by Louise Otto, Gertrud Baumer, Helen Lange, and Minna Cauer are present, as are a number of periodicals that are less well-known but equally interesting.

Since the publication in 1900 of *La Femme et le Feminisme* (E 1385), the original catalogue of the now greatly-expanded Gerritsen Collection, there has been scant opportunity for most scholars and researchers of women's history to do more than to think wistfully about the great treasures contained in this unique compendium. Now, at a time when interest in women and the significance of their role in history are growing at an unprecedented rate, the microform publication of the monographs, pamphlets, and journals of the Gerritsen Collection is a propitious event.

Bibliography

In the fashion of true German thoroughness, the German materials within the Gerritsen Collection are more often than not replete with footnotes and other bibliographical information, much of it particularly useful to the late-twentieth-century scholar who hasn't such easy access to sources that have often drifted into oblivion since the time of their publication. The Gerritsen Collection boasts individual bibliographies as well, ranging in subject matter from Hugo Hayn's two bibliographies of erotica and sexuality (D 1209 and D 1210), as well as his edition of a 1780 bibliography by Karl Friedrich Wegener (D 3052), to the sober lists of Gustav Krusche, who in 1887 assembled an extensive and valuable account of materials relating to the education of women in Germany between 1770 and 1886 (D 1559). A particularly fascinating bibliography is a 1794 work that offers a reading list for proper young ladies at the close of the eighteenth century (D 1738). Documenting and defending his selections vigorously, the unnamed author/editor also finds time to deliver a number of pronouncements on the role of women in society. Yet another and much more recent bibliography is the 1904 *Verzeichnis der auf dem Gebiete der Frauenfrage ... erschienenen Schriften* (D 696.1), an extremely useful detailing of works pertaining to women's concerns.

The category is thus both large and small: small, but valuable, in the number of entries devoted exclusively to bibliography, but large in the listings of often obscure source material provided.

History and Social Condition

The German approach to women was for a long time reasonably conventional: at its most liberal it assumed the woman capable of a role greater than that usually allotted to her, but in most cases the capable and loving mother, wife, and homemaker was looked upon as the acme of perfection. Some of the works in this category, like the 1566 *Das ander Theil* by Agrippa von Nettesheim (D 30), are extremely rare and valuable. Many have specific subjects in mind. See, for example, Franz Albert's *Die Frau des deutschen Unteroffiziers* (D 39), where the woman's position is clearly subservient to that of her husband's, or Christoph Poehlmann's *Die deutsche Frau nach 1914* (D 2234). Others take a historical approach and trace women through the ages: Max Bauer's 1907 *Die deutsche Frau in der Vergangenheit*

(D 170) is a particularly multifaceted work, whereas Franz Andlaw-Birseck's 1861 *Die Frauen in der Geschichte* (D 78) follows the rather common practice of concentrating on the female members of houses of royalty. And still others show evidence of a very strong interest in non-German women. See, for example, Shingoro Takaishi's *Japans Frauen und Frauenmoral* (D 2796), or H.J. Jentsch's *Frauen- und Familienleben in aussereuropaischen Landern* (D 1413). This area is of course rich in studies of the German woman in her traditional role, works that underline the importance of such a function and thereby reinforce the rather narrow boundaries to which the woman was frequently confined. Luise Buchner's 1856 *Die Frauen und ihr Beruf* (D 405 and D 406) is a clear and important example, for although it emphasizes the personal development and improvement of the woman, it concentrates almost exclusively on the role of mother and wife.

Within the category are also a surprisingly large number of writings on the subject of prostitution, which came forcefully to the public's concerned attention around the time of the 1848 revolution and continued to evoke commentaries and suggestions thereafter. Especially interesting are the earlier works (e.g. Anton GrossHoffinger's 1847 *Die Schicksale der Frauen und die Prostitution* (D 110) and Carl Rohrmann's 1846 *Der sittliche Zustand von Berlin nach Aufhebung der geduldeten Prostitution* (D 2418); just as fascinating are later studies like Hans Anton's 1905 book (D 87), which deals with the problem of middle-class women in financial straits being forced to turn to prostitution.

The Gerritsen holdings are particularly plentiful in this area of traditional views of women's history and social condition. To peruse them is to gain an immensely variegated picture of German womanhood from as early as the midsixteenth century until as recent a time as the 1930's, when the conservative orientation once more held sway, this time under the omnious tutelage of National Socialism.

Education and Professional Training

The relatively traditional position assigned to German women by many of the nineteenth-century feminists and commentators on women's concerns did not preclude a vital and abiding interest in the improvement of education. Concepts like *Erziehung* and *Bildung* have always been looked upon with awe by the Germans, and thus it comes as no surprise that the Gerritsen holdings on this subject are myriad and voluminous.

Given that the Gerritsens themselves were in medicine and law, it stands to reason that materials on training in these fields are abundant. The debate on whether to admit women to medical schools, indeed to universities in general, was a long and heated one; thus, writings such as Mathilde Weber's *Ein Besuch in Zurich bei den weiblichen Studierenden in Medizin* (D 3048), or Edmund Bernatzik's *Die Zulassung der Frauen zu den juristischen Studien* (D 229), talk of Switzerland or Austria, where progress in higher education for women tended to be far more rapid than in Germany.

If advanced education for women was often unthinkable in the minds of many Germans, reform in primary, secondary, and vocational education for women occupied them a great deal. Helene Lange, the pedagogical leader in the early women's movement, is richly represented in the Gerritsen Collection; among her writings on education are the 1889 *Frauenbildung* (D 1616) and the 1903 *Grundfragen der Madchenschulreform* (D 1617). There are reports on specific kinds of schools: Friedrich Zimmer (D

3234 and D 3236) is particularly concerned with the subject of boarding schools, and C. von Braunmühl broaches the possibility of *Das achtjährige Madchengymnasium* in an 1897 study (D 353). Johannes Ziegler (D 3233) and Carl Grundscheid (D 1105.5) both reflect the abiding interest on the part of the Germans in the way America was handling its social problems, in this case the education of its youth, female as well as male.

The considerable number of entries on the education of women is indeed reflective of the major importance attached to education within German-speaking countries.

Women and Employment

Like the Gerritsen holdings on education and professional training, this category is particularly strong in the areas of law and medicine. The major portion of the materials on employment emerged, in fact, after the mid-nineteenth century: early feminists like Louise Otto, Auguste Schmidt, and Jenny Hirsch put great emphasis on the need for equality in employment opportunities, but their activities grew out of women's organizations that did not come into existence until after the mid-1860's. Yet they, like many others, offered significant contributions to the discussion of employment: Otto's *Das Recht der Frauen auf Erwerb* (D 2185) is an especially notable example, as is Jenny Hirsch's history of the Berlin Letten-Verein (D 1276), whose principal function was to work for an improvement in the lot of employed women. Luise Buchner, actively involved in the Darmstadt Alice-Verein, provides another, very practical voice in her writings on the sorts of jobs women should seek (D 407 and D 408). In contrast, and at a considerably later date, Tony Kellen, in the 1900 work, *Welche Stellungen koennen Frauen im Handel und Gewerbe finden?* (D 1483) and Paul Dobert, in his *Frauen-Erwerb ...* (D 714) detail an obviously far greater number of job possibilities. Specific professions other than medicine and law are also dwelled upon: Marie Calm, an early feminist, contributed a study on the position of German women teachers (D 446); Elvira Castner discussed the importance of horticultural work for women in three unusual studies (D 479, D 480 and D 481); and Cornelia Beaujon authored a work entitled *Die Mitarbeit der Frau bei der Polizei* (D 181). And there is no lack of material on philanthropic and social work for women: see, for example, Ernst Fabarius' *Die allgemeine weibliche Dienstpflicht* (D 832) and Clara Molsberger's 1904 *Wie erziehen wir unsere Tochter zur sozialen Arbeit?* (D 1967).

There are, as expected, frequent crossings-over between the areas of education and employment: the 1869 Berlin conference proceedings of the *Deutscher FrauenBildungs- und Erwerbs-Vereine* attest to such a mingling (D 569). The volume of Gerritsen material in both areas, but especially in employment, is a reflection of the growing interest on the part of German women and men in the variety of roles the former could indeed play in a society that had so staunchly held to its conservative beliefs about women for so long.

Feminism

Feminism in Germany had a late, slow start, but within a few years after the founding of the Allgemeiner Deutscher Frauenverein in 1865, it burst forth in such variety and vehemence that it seemed to be making up for lost time. The women's movement emerged from the well-read middle class, and it was not until considerably later in the nineteenth century that another group more involved with working-class women was to come into the limelight. In a century that was, in any case, marked by the emergence of the German phenomenon known as the Verein, it was only a matter of a few years before women too were organizing and working together for a variety of goals.

The Gerritsen Collection has a wide and good selection of materials on the feminist movement, particularly in the years between the mid-nineteenth century and the early 1900's. There are works on a number of women's organizations and their congresses and activities (see, e.g., D 55.3, D 55.4, and D 55.5 on the Allgemeiner Österreichischer Frauenverein; D 569, on a conference of the Deutscher Frauen-Bildungs- und ErwerbsVereine; and Jenny Hirsch's account of the first twentyfive years of the Lette-Verein, D 1276); on the history of the German feminist movement (D 553); handbooks providing both historical and current information (the best of these is the important Handbuch der Frauenbewegung, edited by Helene Lange and Gertrud Baumer and published between 1901-1906 (D 1169); and there is virtually no end to the mass of commentaries both for and against feminism. Their range is great, from satiric accounts (D 3062) to the careful and infinitely solemn analysis by Helene Lange (D 1615).

There are several fascinating earlier works, most of them emerging from the time of the 1848 revolution and concentrating on the issue of Emanzipation, a word that was anathema to the bourgeois founding mothers of the movement. Among these documents are Emilie Lehmann's two studies, her 1846 *Das Glaub ensbekenntniss der Emancipirten* (D 1666) and her 1848 *Interessante Briefe an eine emancipirte Dame* (D 1667).

Most significant about the Gerritsen holdings is, in fact, the wide array of opinions and attitudes expressed, from the rabidly anti-feminist to the powerful voices raised in support of the movement. Major figures such as Louise Otto, Helen Lange, Gertrud Baeumer, Lina Morgenstern, Luise Buechner, and Mara Zetkin are represented by one or more works, and the spectrum is very impressive.

Physiology of Women

The physical constitution of women has always been a significant issue in arguments over the extent to which they can indeed take full part in the professions and activities of men. Whether the works that have been written had the major purpose of providing more complete physiological information (as in the case of the impressive study edited by Josef Halban, *Biologie und Pathologic, des Weibes* (D 1150.1), or of using such medical information to slant an argument for or against the women's movement, the application of physiological facts has long been an important theme in writings about women.

Among the works that fall into the latter category, several notable studies are present in the Gerritsen Collection. Most intriguing perhaps is Paul Julius August Mobius' fanatically anti-feminist *Über den physiologischen Schwachsinn des Weibes* (D 1959.1), a work that caused a general uproar and led to

counterattacks (e.g. Oda Olberg's *Das Weib und der Intellektualismus* (D 2095) - not to mention innumerable editions of the work itself. Included in the medical studies, besides the Halban work mentioned above, are a number of treatises on problems relating to gynecological and obstetric matters, among them Hans Schlösser's *Über Menstruation, Wehenschwäche, Nachgeburtsperiode und Haarfarbe* (D 2546.1) and Alfred Specht's *Über die Geburt bei Minderjaehrigen* (D 2691.2), which, in their concern for specifically womenrelated problems and conditions were effective in disseminating useful knowledge on subjects that all too often were avoided in a show of false modesty.

Thanks no doubt to Aletta Jacobs Gerritsen's professional interest, the collection is a particularly rich source for this most important and often overlooked area of women's history.

Psychology of Women

In the history of German women, discussions relating to the finer points of psychology come reasonably late in the nineteenth century, with tracts and essays on the ways in which the emotional state of women can affect other areas of their lives. Common themes here are the female-male relationship, usually tied in some way to the topic of marriage, and the need for sexual reform, which becomes a predominant topic towards the close of the 1800's. There are occasional exchanges on such discussions: see, for example, Max Runge's *Das Weib in seiner geschlechtlichen Eigenart* (D 2463), with a rebuttal by Marie Bruhl, *Die Natur der Frau und Herr Professor Runge* (D 388). There are psychological essays, like Ria Claasen's *Das Frauenphantom des Mannes* (D 532), that discuss the ways in which women are viewed by men; and there are psychoanalytical studies, like Helene Deutsch's valuable 1925 *Psychoanalyse der weiblichen Sexualfunktionen* 93.1), that add insight into the psychological developments in the twentieth century.

As in the case of physiological themes, psychological topics are used as well to create bias for or against the advancement of women. E.F.W. Eberhard's *Feminismus und Kulturuntergang* (D 769.1) is a particularly negative example, whereas Paul Gizycki's *Das Weib* (D 1039) is ebullient in its praise of the psychological traits of women. However positive or negative the opinions are, the Gerritsen Collection manages through its multifaceted holdings to give both sides of the issue and to provide access to a number of virtually forgotten works.

Biography and Autobiography

Biographies and autobiographies of women serve the purpose of not only imparting information, but also of reinforcing positive images and creating a sense of community. The Gerritsen holdings boast a small but impressive collection of such writings, not all of them about German women: there are, for example, an 1898 biography of Mary Wollstonecraft by Helene Richter (D 2389) and an 1866 biography of Margaret Fuller by Ernestine Castell (D 477).

A frequent approach, especially in the nineteenth century, was to publish a collection of biographical sketches - on women during the Goethe-Schiller era, for example (D 2546), or on noted women in general in the eighteenth century (D 2899). Such works are not confined to that epoch, however; there are interesting portraits of feminists and other women from the nineteenth century (see, for example, Alice Bousset's two works, *Lebens- und Character-bilder deutscher Frauen* (D 327) and *Zwei Vorkämpferinnen fuer Frauenbildung*, a work about Marie Calm and Luise Buechner (D 328), as well as Johannes Scherr's *Geschichte der deutschen Frauenwelt* (D 2530), and individual portraits of such intriguing figures as Charlotte Stieglitz (D 2018), whose 1834 suicide shocked and inspired the German literary world, and the brilliant Rahel Varnhagen, a brooding and fascinating woman whose introspective writings were not published until after her death in 1833 (D 225).

One of the most interesting autobiographies is certainly that of Regula Engel, *Die schweizerische Amazone* (D 802), who married and then fought alongside her soldier-husband in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. A later work, apparently the notes of a young woman medical student at the onset of the twentieth century (D 620), provides a look into the new era of professional women.

Whether the material in this category concerns well-known or obscure women, feminists, famous - or infamous - heroines throughout history, it is exciting to see the obvious interest the Germans felt in the histories and narratives of individual women.

Opinions, Satires, Anecdotes, Aphorisms

This particular category is most interesting, for it contains the satires, the philosophizings, the aphorisms and the sayings of a number of authors who judged women and their concerns with a generally jaundiced eye. The Germans have never been noted for the lightness of their wit; on the other hand, they are often quoted when it comes to appropriate sayings and aphorisms. Responses to women need not always be sober treatises: witness, for example, Jacob Blaufus' 1745 *Zwo Scherzreden ...* (D 284) and the ensuing back-and-forth between him and Gottlieb Friedrich Trautmann (D 284, D 2856, and D 2857), with their half-amusing, half-serious debate on the virtues and vices of women.

Writings in this category tend generally to be anti-feminist: A. Weinholz's *Madame Daniel als Emanzipirte* (D 3062) is a clever example; the anonymous *Paradoxe über die Ehe* (D 2140) is, in fact, dedicated to the man as "master of creation"; and the 1889 *Unsere Frauen als Kinder, Maedchen, Verliebte, Verlobte...* (D 2941) consists primarily of a large quantity of anti-women jokes. Nevertheless, Elsa Nestonoff's 1898 *Aufuhr der Weiber und das dritte Geschlecht* (D 2055) shows evidence of a different trend, an effort to convince women that they are in every way superior to men and should therefore give up their attempts to be like them.

It is perhaps unfortunate that in most of these cases the humor is so vicious, so obviously negative. It is, however, evidence of yet one more side to the study of women's history and should not be neglected.

Women and the Arts

The role of women in German arts and literature was - and no doubt remains - twofold: in the Gerritsen Collection and elsewhere women are viewed, discussed, criticized, and lauded as both inspiration for artists and writers and, as time goes on, also as talents in their own right. Although there are few fictional holdings in the Gerritsen collection, an interesting novelle here and there, the roles mentioned above are well represented. Whether the themes concern male poets and the women whom they depict or who inspired them - see, for example, Carry Brachvogel's *Hebbel und die moderne Frau* (D 336), or Leopold von Wiese's *Strindberg* (D 3099) - or women writers and artists themselves (see especially Ludwig Geiger's *Dichter und Frauen* (D 991 and D 992), which is a biographical mixture of talented women and those women who inspired men) - the overwhelming impression is that the former view of woman as stimulus and inspiration, as a somewhat passive, or at the very best, power-behind-the-throne figure, was emphasized more than the latter, even until the turn of the century. Thus Franz Sintenis' 1897 *Über Frauenlitteratur* (D 2652), which is an attempt, albeit an unfriendly one, to deal exclusively with women as writers, is a less common occurrence, and a work like Anton Hirsch's 1905 *Die Frau in der bildenden Kunst* (D 1275) is even rarer.

The title of the Geiger study mentioned above, a title used as well in an earlier work by Karl Frenzel (D 946), thus seems appropriate to describe the German attitude towards women's relationship to the arts. Even more revealing (and indeed a bit staggering in its implications) is the title of Karl Vogel's 1873 study: *Frauenliebe und Dichterleben* (D 2992). Despite the presence of talented and able women writers and artists, there is little acknowledgement given to them in most of the Gerritsen holdings - which seems an accurate reflection of widespread attitudes that have lingered on into our own times.

Political and Social Reform

It is characteristic of the German women's movement that its first major concern was improved education rather than direct political reform. Unlike the Americans and the English, the Germans concentrated less on women's suffrage and such social issues as temperance; the abolitionist movement also did not often attract their attention, most probably because of Germany's great distance from the problems of American slavery.

That said, as the nineteenth century progressed, interest in social issues such as the reform of antiquated marriage laws grew by leaps and bounds, and political awareness also became more and more acceptable and desirable. When August Bebel published his major work on German women, *Die Frau und der Sozialismus* (D 183, D 184, and D 185) later in the century, it called forth commentaries, praise, damnations from all sides (cf. for example the anonymous 1905 work, *Die Bibel der Sozialdemokraten* (D 192) and the 1898-99 *Bebel im Lichte der Bibel*, a pseudonymous study (D 1008).) And the passing of the new Bürgerliches Gesetzbuch at the turn of the century was an even more significant step, for its changes in provisions regarding the rights of women were of major concern and importance. Authors such as the jurist Emilie Kempin (D 1485 and D 1486) and organizations such as the Rechtsschutzverein für Frauen (D 2323) are among the many who responded to the bill proposing the new civil law; suggestions, commentaries, and glosses were rampant.

Women's suffrage as an issue of critical importance did not surface until late in the nineteenth century, except for occasional lone and prophetic voices like that of Hedwig Dohm, who saw the necessity of such a step long before most (see, for example, her *Der Frauen Natur und Recht*, published in 1876 (D 718). But thanks to the Gerritsens' great interest in law and politics, their collection contains a surprisingly large number of documents relating to the legal status, rights, and responsibilities of women.

Women and Religion

In the earliest days of German feminism, it was often through the Church that women found a voice and a degree of authority. Many of the pioneer feminists were indeed members of the liberal sect known as German Catholicism; in the following decades they were joined by others who found a sense of security and purpose through church work.

The Gerritsen holdings are particularly strong in the area of studies on the role of women in the church - and less often in the synagogue. Not all of the writings are positive or supportive of such a role: Hedwig Dohm's *Was die Pastoren von den Frauen denken* (D 720), for example, is a bitter attack against the conservative clergy who want only to keep women in their place. Other works deal more directly with the woman's role as missionary, doing the work of the church outside its walls - see Hedwig von Stüpnagel's *Deutsche Frauen-Mission im Orient* (D 2772) and W. Lutschewitz's *Frauenelend und Frauenhilfe in China* (D 1770) - or try to relate church work of whatever variety to the philanthropic task of helping the less fortunate, as in Christian Stromberg's *Freie Frauenthätigkeit im Reiche Gottes* (D 2769), or in a number of studies on the activities of deaconesses (see Ferdinand Euler's *Die weibliche Diakonie der Gegenwart ...* (D 820.1).

Despite the limited power that women have enjoyed in church or synagogue work, their function has been broadly-based and in many cases considerable. The Gerritsen holdings, in all their great variety, attest to this fact.