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Acknowledgements

This book of essays represents the fruits of a collaborative project of about four years’ duration. In the late 1990s it became apparent to me and some others that, despite the huge amount of new work on women, including those living in the early modern period, much was still unexplored about their letter-writing. Yet the potential field is very large indeed and of much interest to scholars in different disciplines. Accordingly, a dedicated group of seminars was set up within the fourth international Literature and History conference at Reading, in July 1998, as a first means of bringing interested scholars from Britain, the United States and Australia together. This group of sessions was entitled ‘Privy and Powerful Communications: Women’s Letters and Letter-Writing in England 1450–1700’. My thanks are due not only to those who presented papers at the event but also to those who provided informed support at the conference: Toby Barnard, Phillipa Hardman and Anthea Hume.

During the conference it became apparent that there was much enthusiasm for the project, and plans were formed to build further on the work and to produce a broadly based book which could offer a review of an exciting field. Consequently, delegates agreed to revise and augment their contributions in the light of discussions at the conference, and new contributions were sought to strengthen the volume, producing the present essays from Roger Dalrymple, Sara Jayne Steen and Susan Whyman. As editor, I would like to thank the various collaborators over the whole period of the development of the book for their enthusiasm and dedication to the venture. I should also enter a note of regret, that two contributions presented at the 1998 conference had already been committed to publication elsewhere: Susan Doran’s ‘Elizabeth I’s Religion: Clues from Her Letters’, Journal of Ecclesiastical History (2001), and Karen Robertson’s ‘Tracing Women’s Connections from a Letter of Elizabeth Lady Ralegh’, in Maids and Mistresses, Cousins and Queens: Women’s Alliances in Early Modern England, eds Karen Robertson and Susan Frye (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. 149–64.

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J.R.T.D
List of Abbreviations

BL        British Library
BL Add. MS British Library, Additional MS
BL Cott. MS British Library, Cottonian MS
BL Eg. MS  British Library, Egerton MS
BL Harl. MS British Library, Harleian MS
BL Lansd. MS British Library, Lansdowne MS
Bodl.     Bodleian Library, Oxford
CKS       Centre for Kentish Studies, Maidstone
CSP       Calendar of State Papers
CUL       Cambridge University Library
CUP       Cambridge University Press
DNB       Dictionary of National Biography
EETS      Early English Text Society
EHR       English Historical Review
EcHR      Economic History Review
Folger    Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington
GLRO      Greater London Record Office
HJ        Historical Journal
HMC       Historical Manuscripts Commission
HMSO      Her Majesty’s Stationery Office
Kendal RO Kendal Record Office, Cumbria
LPL       Lambeth Palace Library
LSE       Leeds Studies in English
MSS       Manuscripts
N&Q       Notes and Queries
NRA       National Register of Archives
NRO       Norfolk Record Office, Norwich
NUL       Nottingham University Library
OED       Oxford English Dictionary
OUP       Oxford University Press
P&P       Past and Present
PRO       Public Record Office, Kew
PRO SP 10 Public Record Office, State Papers, Domestic, Edward VI
PRO SP 12 Public Record Office, State Papers, Domestic, Elizabeth
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PRO SP 15 Public Record Office, State Papers, Domestic, Addenda
PRO SP 46 Public Record Office, State Papers, Domestic, Supplementary
RES Review of English Studies
RH Recusant History
RO Record Office
Staffs. RO Staffordshire Record Office
TRHS Transactions of the Royal Historical Society
WCRO Warwickshire County Record Office
YAS Yorkshire Archaeological Society, Leeds

Original spelling has been retained throughout in quotations from manuscripts. Symbols are used where quoting from editions to replicate the editorial practices employed.
Notes on the Contributors

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James Daybell is a Research Fellow in History at the University of Reading. His doctoral thesis is on ‘Women’s Letters and Letter-Writing in England, 1540–1603’ (University of Reading, 1999). He has published several articles and is currently working on a book, *Women Letter-Writers in Tudor England*.

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Alison Truelove is completing an edition of the Stonor Letters for her doctoral thesis, while teaching medieval literature in the Department of English at Royal Holloway, University of London.

Claire Walker lectures in the History Department at the University of Newcastle, Australia. She researches early modern women’s religious houses in France and the Low Countries, and she is currently completing *Gender and Politics in Seventeenth-Century English Convents*.

Alison Wall was Senior Lecturer in History, University of Sidney, and Lecturer in Modern History at Christ Church, Oxford. She has published articles and a book on politics, articles on marriage and women’s role, and *Two Elizabethan Women: Correspondence of Joan and Maria Thynne 1575–1611*, Wiltshire Record Society, 38 (1983).

Jennifer C. Ward was Senior Lecturer in History at Goldsmiths College, University of London, until her retirement in 1999. She is author of *English Noblewomen in the Later Middle Ages* (1992), and edited *Women of the English Nobility and Gentry 1066–1500* (1995).