DICTIONARIES IN EARLY MODERN EUROPE

Lexicography and the Making of Heritage

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Two fundamental changes affected the status of early modern women. Women under protoindustrialization were valued domestic workers, but they also had little economic independence; the male head of the household, the father or husband, gained the chief fruits of their labour. A second change, perhaps related to the first, was the advancing age of first marriage. Aspects of early modern society. To examine the psychology of merchants is to stay within a narrow social elite. Historians, in what is sometimes called the new social history, have paid close attention to the common people of Europe and to hitherto neglected social groups—women, the nonconformists, and minorities. Two fundamental changes affected the status of early modern women. The history of dictionaries, of how they were produced, published and used, has much to tell us about the language and the culture of the past. This monumental work of scholarship draws on published and archival material to survey a wide range of dictionaries of western European languages (including English, German, Latin and Greek) published between the early sixteenth and mid seventeenth centuries. John Considine establishes a new and powerful model for the social and intellectual history of lexicography by examining dictionaries both as imaginative texts and as scholarly instruments. Far from dry, factual collections of words, dictionaries are creative works, shaping as well as recording early modern culture and intellectual history.