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## WOMEN IN THE HISTORY OF LEXICOGRAPHY

### An overview, and the case of German

**Abstract** This paper first attempts a state-of-the-art overview of what is known about women in the history of lexicography up to the early twentieth century. It then focusses more closely on the German and German-English lexicographical traditions to 1900, examining them from three different perspectives (following Russell's 2018 study of women in English lexicography): women as users and dedicatees of dictionaries; women as contributors to and compilers of lexicographical works; and (in a very preliminary way) women and female sexuality as represented in German/English bilingual dictionaries of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

Russell (2018) was able to identify some 24 dictionaries invoking women as patrons, dedicatees or potential users before 1700, and some 150 works in English lexicography by women between 1500 and 1900, besides the contribution of hundreds of women as supporters and helpers, not least as unpaid readers and sub-editors for the *Oxford English Dictionary*. Equivalent research in other languages is lacking, but this paper presents some of the known examples of women as lexicographers. The evidence tends to support Russell's finding for English, that women were more likely to find a place in lexicography outside the mainstream: sometimes in a more private sphere (like Hester Piozzi); often in bilingual lexicography (such as Margrethe Thiele, working on a Danish-French dictionary), including missionary and or colonizing activity (such as Cinie Louw in Africa, Daisy Bates in Australia); and in dialect description (Coronedi Berti in Italy, Luisa Lacal and María Moliner in Spain).

Within the German-speaking context, women who participated in lexicographical work themselves are hard to identify before the late nineteenth century, though those few women who did have access to education were often engaged in language learning, including translation activity, and they were likely users of bilingual and multilingual dictionaries. Christian Ludwig's (1706) English-German dictionary – the first of its kind – was dedicated to the Electoral Princess Sophia of Hanover. Elizabeth Weir may have been the first named female compiler of a German dictionary, with her bilingual *New German Dictionary* (1888). Rather better known are the cases of Agathe Lasch and Luise Pusch, who, as pioneering women in the field of German linguistics, ultimately led major lexicographical projects documenting German regional varieties in the first half of the twentieth century (Middle Low German and Hamburgish in the case of Lasch; the Hessisch-Nassau dialect dictionary in the case of Berthold).

In the light of existing research on gender and sexuality in the history of English lexicography (e.g. Iamartino 2010, Turton 2019), I conclude with a preliminary exploration how woman and sexuality have been represented in dictionaries of German and English, taking the words *Hure* and *woman* in bilingual German-English dictionaries of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries as my case studies.

**Keywords** Lexicography, German, women, Hester Piozzi, Margrethe Thiele, Cinie Louw, Theodor Arnold, Christian Ludwig, Elizabeth Weir

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