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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

### 1. Introduction

Lindsay Rose Russell's ground-breaking study of women in English-language dictionary-making (Russell 2018) is important not just for the history of English lexicography, but also as a model for future work in other language traditions. Russell first unpicks the standard narrative, that in early English lexicography, women were, when invoked as potential dictionary users, 'useful as a passive and ignorant audience', an 'exploitable but ultimately expendable, uneducated demographic', and so one that ceased to be mentioned after about 1660 (Russell 2018, p. 30). James Murray, the first editor of the *Oxford English Dictionary* (*OED*), suggested in 1900 that the supposed 'elegant' ignorance of women, with their sys-

tematically greatly reduced access to education, could mask the 'merely shameful ignorance of men' (Russell 2018, p. 34, citing Murray 1900, p. 32). Russell is able to show, in contrast, that

invocations of women had been both genuine and genuinely successful in establishing a popular foothold for the genre [...] women's early involvements in dictionary making and use did not abate, but continued long after the seventeenth century' (Russell 2018, p. 34).

Russell (2018, pp. 41, 43) was able to uncover 24 dictionaries published between 1500 and 1700 which name or invoke women, whether as individual dedicatees, as individual inspiration (as former pupils, for example), or as a class of intended users. What is more, between 1500 and 1900, Russell finds some 150 lexicographical projects involving English undertaken by women, of which about a quarter are bi- or multilingual (Russell 1918, pp. 73, 76–105, Tables 3.1 and 3.2). Russell's definition of lexicographical activity is deliberative expansive, precisely because many women's activity lies at the margins of mainstream, archetypical dictionary-making, and is often linked to language learning, missionary activity, documenting local dialects, or focused on the domestic sphere in some way. An example of the latter is Mary Evelyn's (1690) *Mundus Muliebris: Or, The Ladies Dressing-Room Unlocked, Together with the Fop-Dictionary, Compiled for the Use of the Fair Sex* (Russell 2018, pp. 68–71).

Hester Lynch Thrale Piozzi (1740–1821) is emblematic of much of what Russell seeks to show about women and English lexicography. Piozzi was exceptionally well educated in several languages – 'till I was half a prodigy', in her own words – and she wrote and published work herself (Russell 2018, p. 143). She was a close friend and associate of Dr Samuel Johnson, compiler of the epoch-making *Dictionary of the English Language* (1755), and he relied heavily on Piozzi's collegiality and patronage: he had rooms in her house and used her library. Russell also makes a strong case that Piozzi's role in recording the history of the great man Johnson's work has been marginalized – her *Anecdotes of Dr Johnson* (1786), written in three months on her honeymoon after Johnson's death in 1784, was the first such account of Johnson's life, and is an important source. Yet it is, Russell suggests, backgrounded in Reddick's otherwise excellent (1990) account of Johnson's work on the dictionary, just as Piozzi's involvement in Johnson's life is backgrounded compared to the role played by Johnson's wife (Russell 2018, pp. 170f.).

More than supporting Johnson, though, Piozzi was also a lexicographer in her own right. Her *British Synonymy*; or an attempt at regulating the choice of words in familiar conversation, appeared in 1794, in two volumes comprising over 900 (generously spaced) pages. In one sense, then, she could be placed among women using their learning as educators, producing glossaries and dictionaries for a domestic sphere. Piozzi herself suggests in her preface that her *Synonymy* should take its place on 'a parlour window, [...] unworthy of a place upon a library shelf' (Piozzi 1794, Vol. I, pp. iv–v). She appears to claim a space for women that does not impinge on male domains: 'while men teach to write with propriety, a woman may at a worst be qualified – through long practice – to direct the choice of phrases in familiar talk' (Piozzi 1794, Vol. I, p. iv). To give an example (Piozzi 1794: vol. II 9–11):

#### Malapert. Saucy, Impertinent.

THE last of these has by corruption become the common conversation word, and turned the first, which is the proper one, out of good company: for by IMPERTINENT is meant in strict propriety [...] the man goes to supper with his mistress when he hears she has an ague, and inveighs against the marriage stage when invited to celebrate a wedding dinner [...]. Now nothing of this perverseness is

required to form what we are at present content to call IMPERTINENCE, falsely enough, for the MALAPERT miss, or SAUCY chambermaid, often possess sufficient skills to time their sprightly innocence and lively raillery reasonable well [...]. Whoever wishes to learn the full meaning of the word MALAPERT, may study the ready responses of an English miss, or an Italian chambermaid.

Russell argues that in focusing on word-choice in 'familiar conversation', Piozzi 'relocate[s] the lexicon from the abstract page to the concrete parlor, to (re)domesticate meaning in order to highlight its nuance, contingency and power, particularly in social circulation'. She perhaps thus even 'anticipates trends in lexicography that favour spoken corpora' (Russell 2018, pp. 147 f.).

Piozzi is, then, representative of much of what Russell has to say about women in lexicography. She is unusual in one way, however. While few women's contributions to English lexicography before the twentieth century were noteworthy for 'originating' something new, Russell judges that Piozzi's *British Synonymy* was ground-breaking, as the first of many publications in English inspired by Gabriel Girard's (1718) French synonymy, which were pre-cursors to Roget's famous *Thesaurus*, first published in 1852.

Women also participated in lexicography as paid (or more often unpaid) assistants, or as enablers of others' (men's) lexicographical activity by maintaining a household or providing companionship. The history of the iconic *OED* is rich in such stories. James Murray's daughters helped sort the slips on which attestations of words were written. Ada Murray, James Murray's wife, ran the household, reportedly had the idea to build an office (the so-called Scriptorium) for the dictionary in their home (Russell 2018, p. 150), and acted as Murray's unpaid secretary for many years. James Murray described Ada as 'the pivot on which the whole house revolved', and apparently consulted her on every important decision: it may have been at her urging that he took on the editorship of the *Dictionary* in the first place (Gilliver 2016).

Among the unpaid army of so-called readers around the country who recorded citations of words in use to be incorporated into the dictionary entries, there were by 1884 nearly 240 women. We can note, for example, Edith Thompson (1848–1929) and her sister Elizabeth (both authors in their own right). who contributed 15,000 quotations between 1880 and 1888, and continued through the rest of their lives too; Jennett Humphreys (1829–1917), a children's author, who had contributed nearly 20,000 quotations by 1888 (Gilliver 2016, n.p.).

Other women found a foothold as voluntary sub-editors. Five out of sixty sub-editors working on particular letters of the *OED* were women. Novelist Charlotte Yonge (1823–1901) was one of the first volunteer 'sub-editors', preparing draft entries in the letter N in the 1860s. One early paid member of staff was Ethelwyn Rebecca Steane (1873/4–1941), employed as an assistant by William Craigie, the OED's third editor, in 1901; she went on to work for the dictionary for three decades. Of course in the twentieth century, some woman forged a full lexicographical career within the *OED*. Jessie Senior (later Coulson) (1903–87) was among the first. She began work as an assistant in 1928, engaged in the compilation of the first Supplement to the *OED*, going on to establish a successful career as a lexicographer. The Shorter *OED*, the first edition of which appeared in February 1933, bore her name on the title page, the first such Oxford dictionary to do so, followed also a few months later by the Supplement to the *OED*. Amongst her work on other Oxford dictionaries, Coulson also compiled a Russian-English dictionary which appeared in 1975 (Gilliver 2016).

Reviewing Russell's book, Arias-Badia (2019) called for further work to examine the history of women in lexicography beyond English. As far as I know, similar systematic cataloguing of women's participation in lexicography remains a desideratum for other languages, and certainly for the German context with which I am most familiar. In this short paper, I cannot begin to approach Russell's meticulous documentation and incisive analysis of women's roles in the history of English lexicography, but I shall set out something of what we know already for some of the languages beyond English, before focusing on what we know for the field of German lexicography. Throughout, my approach is inspired by Russell – and my case studies chiefly lend weight to Russell's key conclusions. Women who found opportunities to undertake lexicographical work, even as late as the early twentieth century, were most likely to do so in domains that fell outside the interests of mainstream national-language monolingual lexicography: in domestic settings; in bilingual lexicography, including in missionary work; and in dialect lexicography. In some cases, though, their work was ground-breaking and of lasting significance.

## 2. Beyond English

The scale of the challenge set by Arias-Badia (2019) becomes clear when we turn to the important new edited volume on *Women in the History of Linguistics*, whose 19 chapters provide state-of-the-art overviews on women in the history of linguistics of European, African, American, Australian, and Asian languages. Even this fine volume yields very slim pickings for someone pursuing the history of women in lexicography, for it seems that Russell's bibliographic and analytical work in English lexicography has yet to be replicated for other languages.

A fifteenth-century Arabic source includes a tantalizing mention of a woman dictionary compiler, but no such dictionary has survived (Sadiqi 2020, p. 483). In Italy, Carolina Coronedi Berti (1869–1874) produced a two-volume dialect dictionary, *Vocabolario Bolognese Italiano* (Sanson 2020, pp. 84–86). In Spain, Luisa Lacal produced a *Diccionario de la musica tecnico*, *historico*, *bio-bibliografico* (1900 [1899]), while María Moliner prepared an unpublished dialect dictionary, and revised a Spanish dictionary published by the Spanish Royal Academy (1914) prior to a well-regarded dictionary of Spanish usage published in the 1960s (Calero Vaquera 2020, pp. 142 f.).

In Denmark, Margrethe Thiele (1868–1928), a practising scientific translator from Danish to French, pioneered work towards a Danish-French dictionary large enough to meet the needs of translators such as herself (Bull/Henrikson/Swan 2020, pp. 266 f.), going beyond the existing medium-size *Dansk-norsk-fransk Haand-Ordbog* of Sundby and Baruëls (1883–84). By 1910, Thiele had collected sufficient material to approach Jens Kristian Sandfeld (1873–1942) at Copenhagen University, himself involved in work on a dictionary of the Danish language (*Ordbog over det danske Sprog*; see Barr/Høybye 2014), and although the First World War delayed progress and access to funding, from 1918 onwards Thiele received an annual grant from the Carlsberg Foundation for her work. As illness slowed Thiele's progress, she involved Dr Andreas Blinkenberg from 1923, and after her death in 1928, he completed the dictionary and saw it through to publication in 1937 (Blinkenberg/Thiele 1937).

With its 1,700 double-column pages, the dictionary was the largest of its kind at the time, and the fact that Thiele was (like Blinkenberg) working out of her native language into a learned language makes it all the more impressive. Schösler (2014) praises the systematic

structure of the dictionary's entries, which she suggests had an influence on later Danish lexicography: clear definitions and adequate translations in the first part of the entry, followed by exemplifications, collocations and expressions in the second part. To what extent these structural principles had been developed by Thiele is not clear. Thiele's material amounted to some individual 100,000 slips, which passed after her death to the Royal Library of Denmark, but that archive has not, it seems, received further attention.

The dictionary's entry for *kvinde* ('woman'), reproduced below, is noteworthy for how it attests to women's growing economic and social independence. We find phrases such as the 'fallen woman' and the Biblical injunction to be silent in church, but they are balanced by newer collocations that attest to the economic power of women, their independence in travel, their access to education, and their participation in competitions and in associations:

As Russell (2018, pp. 102–105) notes, one increasingly common form of bilingual lexicography by European women from the nineteenth century was undertaken as part of missionary or colonizing activity. To the examples identified by Russell up to the year 1900 (including, for example, Kilham 1820, a Wolof-English dictionary, and Woodward 1892, an English-Chichewa dictionary), we can add Daisy Bates (1859–1951), appointed by the Western Australian government to record word-lists for Kimberley languages in the early twentieth century (McGregor 2013), and Mary Haas (1910–1996), who produced dictionaries of two American Indian languages, Creek and Tunica (Heaton/Koller/Campbell 2020, pp. 356–358).

Another such missionary linguist, active in the early twentieth century, is Cinie Louw (1872–1935), who produced a two-way vocabulary of Karanga, a language spoken in southern Africa, as part of a language manual which also includes a grammar (Louw 1915). The English-to-Karanga part of the vocabulary (ibid., pp. 149–291) precedes and is almost half as long again as the Karanga-to-English part (ibid., pp. 291–395). This is, I suspect, somewhat unusual in the history of bilingual lexicography, where the target-language-to-source-language tends to be prioritized, and it possibly reflects the importance attached to ensuring that the authorized knowledge of the missionary/colonizer can be expressed in the local language. Louw (1915, pp. v-vi) explains that

The Vocabulary of Part IV. does not claim to be either an exhaustive or correct dictionary. Such words have been collected as could be collected from the natives, and meanings assigned to them, which, it is hoped, will be found to be generally correct. [...] I must also express my deep indebtedness to my faithful native helper Timotheus, who assisted me with untiring perseverance.

Despite the structural prioritization of English-to-Karanga, many of the entries under English headwords reveal how Louw's work is in fact shaped by how her informant supplies words. As the entries below, for *adulterer* and *woman*, show, Louw records relevant Karanga words even when there is no clear English lexeme for which they serve as equivalents. (Louw's numbers in brackets indicate the noun class).

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adulterer, adulteress, mupati (1); mombge (4); nzenza (4); zengeya (4).
very bad --- mushwerakwenda (1); mvemveti (4); mbgamati (4); ziveve (5).
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A 'very bad adulterer' is hardly a current English collocation or usual sub-entry, and its meaning is underspecified: we are left guessing as to what it distinguishes, as opposed to some more acceptable form of adultery. (In the other dictionary half, the word *mushwerak-wenda* is glossed as one who goes from one place to another.) However, the English phrase provides a 'slot' for recording Karanga words supplied by the informant. Similarly, some sub-entries under the lemma *woman* are in effect paraphrases for Karanga lexemes:

woman, *mukadzi* (1); *munukadri* (1). --- who has borne children, *mvana* (4) --- whose children all die, *vumba* (7), *u ne pfuva* (1) lying-in ---, *muzere* (1). old --- *muchemgere* (1); or *chembere* (4). a young married --- , *murovora* (1).---, a stranger who becomes the wife of a chief, *moromoka* (4)

Despite the English-to-Karanga format, then, once we progress beyond the initial headwords, the material of the entries often reads more like the result of a Karanga-to-English process, where English paraphrases are given for Karanga lexemes that Louw presumably felt deserved to be recorded, in order to capture the cultural specificities of the host society. To add further examples, under *aggravate*, we find 'aggravate illness by casting a shadow', and under *apportion*, 'apportion work in a garden'. Under the entry *assegai* (a light spear), we find Karanga terms for the spiral shaft, the wooden handle, the blade, edges, ridge, and point of such a spear. Similarly, headwords such as *apron*, *ant* and *antelope* have multiple equivalents in Karanga which are disambiguated through description in English (e. g. small black ant, large black ant; front and back aprons, aprons of men and of women).

## Women in the history of German lexicography

So much, then, for the relatively few clues of women's early contributions to lexicography outside English that the histories in Ayres-Bennett/Sanson (2020) provide. I have no doubt that, just as for English, there are hundreds more, but the work to uncover them remains to be done. For the remainder of this paper, I shall focus on German, the language context with which I am most familiar. Loosely following Russell's approach, I shall consider women as imagined or actual users and dedicatees of dictionaries; women as unrecognized contributors to lexicographical works and as known compilers of dictionaries; and finally, very tentatively indeed, women as represented in dictionaries. My time-frame is, like Russell's limited to before about 1900, but including, like Ayres-Benett/Sanson (2020), women born before 1900 and active in the twentieth century.

# 3.1 Women invoked as imagined readers and as patrons

I noted above that Russell (2018, p. 41) identified 24 examples of English dictionaries before 1700 that named or invoked women, and that many of these works were multilingual. Knowledge of languages was an accomplishment 'intellectually appropriate for women and socially practical' (ibid., p. 47), and indeed could be essential for women of high social standing navigating international dynastic connections. Women were among the subscribers to John Minsheu's *Guide into Tongues* (1617), which includes German among one of several languages alongside English (Russell 2018, p. 38), but I am not aware of instances of German monolingual or multilingual dictionaries that invoke women in German before 1700. (There may well be some; that investigation has not been done). Nevertheless, we know that many German women with access to education were involved in language learning, and in translation, which – since it could be considered an exercise in language learning –

was one of the few acceptable ways for women to undertake scholarly work, even if the work usually remained unpublished. A handful of women, some of them practising poets, also became members of various language societies of the time (Brown 2009; McLelland 2020, pp. 196–200).

Women are explicitly invoked as an audience in the Frauenzimmer–Gesprächsspiele (Conversation Games for Ladies), published in eight volumes by Georg Harsdörffer between 1643 and 1649 and involving all kinds of language games (see Wade 2014). The contents are not lexicographic in any usual sense, but do contain some word lists, lists of emblems, and even a listing of hand sign language. The major German grammar published by Harsdörffer's contemporary and friend Justus Georg Schottelius (1612–1676) included lists of thousands of German rootwords and their compounds (Schottelius 1663, pp. 1278–1446), intended as a basis for a future dictionary, much discussed within the language society of which he was a member, the Fruitbearing Society. Schottelius was also tutor to the children of his patron Augustus the Younger, Duke of Brunswick-Wolfenbüttel, including two daughters, for whom Schottelius wrote several plays, and he dedicated his poetics, first published in 1645, to their mother Elisabeth Sophie, herself a poet and musician. Might his interactions with them have influenced his lexicographical work in any way? We do not know.

The first known female dedicatee of a German dictionary is Sophia, Electoral Princess and duchess-dowager of Hanover, to whom Christian Ludwig dedicated his English-German dictionary, the very first bilingual dictionary of English and German, which he published in 1706, at a time of intensifying relations between the House of Hanover and England. Sophia, who conducted a substantial correspondence with Gottfried Leibniz, was known for her education and intelligence, 'long admir'd by all the Learned World, as a Woman of incomparable Knowledge in Divinity, Philosophy, History, and the Subjects of all sorts of Books, of which she has read a prodigious quantity' (Strickland 2011, p. 1, citing the philosopher and writer John Toland in 1705). Sophie was also heir to the thrones of England and Scotland (later Great Britain) and Ireland, though she died shortly before she would have become queen (so that her son became king in 1714, as George I). She was, then, measured against what Russell has found for English, a prototypical female dedicatee, and especially for a multilingual dictionary: she was exceptionally highly educated and multilingual herself; and she was powerful. She was also interested in the instruction of her children, preparing for life as English royalty, so that Ludwig's dictionary was likely to be of practical value too. In the following century, the 1846 edition of Hilpert's bilingual German-English dictionary is likewise dedicated to an important Hanoverian woman, Queen Victoria (as the OED would later be), jointly with her German-born and German-educated husband Albert, whom she had married in 1840. Queen Victoria's mother was German, she had had a German governess, and she and Albert employed a German governess for their children.

# 3.2 Women as contributors to lexicographical work

As for the hidden role that women may have played in dictionary-making, we can do no more than speculate on whether and how household members of known male dictionary compilers might have supported that work. Caspar Stieler, who compiled the first complete dictionary of German, *Der teutschen Sprache Stammbaum und Fortwachs* (1691), was married twice – did either of his wives Regina and Christiane Margarethe Cotta have any involvement in the dictionary, or was their role restricted to running the household that enabled Stieler to complete his task? Again, we do not know.

Women who participated directly in German lexicographical work are hard to identify before the late nineteenth century. There are no women at all amongst the seventy-eight authors listed in Moulin-Fankhänel's two-part bibliography (1994, 1997) of German grammars and orthographies up to the end of the seventeenth century, nor in William J. Jones's (2000) bibliography of seventeenth-century German lexicography. Even in the area of language purism – one of the most widespread forms of lay engagement with linguistic ideas, and a prominent thread in the history of the German language from about 1500 – there is only one woman represented amongst the 117 texts in Jones's (1995) documentation of foreign word purism between 1478 and 1750, and it is not a lexicographical text. It may be that there are instances of dictionary-like material in so-called *Anstandsliteratur* (manners guides) and letter-writing guides written by and/or for women. Certainly women's language was a topic in some of these works, including in works written by women (see McLelland 2020, pp. 200–203).

Luise Gottsched, née Kulmus (1713–1762), wife of Johann Christoph Gottsched (1700–1766), seems to have enjoyed working with her husband, rather than caught in 'literary drudgery work' for him (Lerner, cited in Brown 2012, p. 3). However, the Gottscheds' activities did not include lexicographical work. As for the Grimms' *Deutsches Wörterbuch* project, Lelke (2005, pp. 190–250) shows how, through participation in their half-private, half-public intellectual world, women like Wilhelm Grimm's wife Dorothea Grimm and others could assist in, or help publicize, the work of the Grimms and their circle. We know that Amalie ('Malchen') Hassenpflug (1800-1871) – a writer in her own right, and a friend of the Grimm family – was named in the 1854 foreword to the dictionary as one of many volunteer excerptors of word attestations. Women also contributed to the early stages of the *Deutsches Rechstwörterbuch*, and at least one was paid as early as 1901 (see Deutsch forthc.).

# 3.3 Women lexicographers in German

#### 3.3.1 Elizabeth Weir

It was not a German, but an English woman who is, as far as I can see, the first named woman who produced a German dictionary: Elizabeth Weir. That is perhaps no surprise, given the pattern identified by Russell – and largely borne out by my few examples beyond English – that the mainstream work of monolingual lexicography remained out of reach of women before the twentieth century. Weir's bilingual German-English dictionary appeared in 1888 as *Heath's New German Dictionary* in Boston (and as *Cassell's New German Dictionary* in Britain). Frustratingly, despite careful detective work by Husbands (2001), nothing is known of Elizabeth Weir beyond what her preface reveals, written while she was living in Stuttgart in 1888, where the second, English-German part was largely written, and where, she reports, German friends helped her with numerous technical expressions and idioms that, 'though of common occurrence in every-day life, are not generally found in dictionaries'.

Our lack of knowledge about Weir's background and training is particularly frustrating because Weir's original contribution seems to have been substantial. Weir's dictionary was intended to serve the 'young student' as 'a handy volume', with 'a collection of idioms, proverbs, and quotations [...], which is larger and more varied' than in other dictionaries' (Weir 1888, p. v). Virtually all of the preceding dictionaries had been compiled by Germans and intended for German learners of English. This meant, Weir explained, that they had 'not provided for the difficulty which the English student feels when called to select from some

dozen German words the special one which answers to the special sense in which the English word is to be used' (Weir 1888, p. v). Weir's aim, by contrast, was to produce a dictionary really suitable for English learners of German, and her dictionary is the first to give disambiguations of different senses in English rather than German. Among her predecessors, even the 1841 revised edition of Flügel's dictionary, ostensibly 'adapted to the English student' (as the title page states), had not yet done this. The first few lines of Weir's entry for *Head* show what this looks like in practice, as Weir's paraphrases in English allow the English student to select the appropriate German equivalent:

Head, I. s. das Haupt, der Kopf; (individual) das Individuum, der Mann, das Stück; (chief) das Haupt, der Häuptling, Führer; (principal) der Vorsteher, Verwalter, Direktor; (chief place) das Haupt, die Spitze; (understanding) der Kopf, Verstand; (prow) der Schiffschnabel; (source) die Quelle; die Höhe, Krisis (of an illness); (division) der Punkt, Hauptpunkt, Abschnitt, Paragraph [...]<sup>1</sup>

Weir's dictionary is more concise than that of her predecessors – both dictionary halves fit into a single 'handy volume' – but Weir still made a particular effort to give plentiful examples of how words are used in context 'thoroughly illustrative of the points in the two languages in which they differ from one another' (Weir 1888, p. v). For instance, under *head*, we find examples where a literal translation of 'head' will not do:

To make neither ---- nor tail of, aus (einer Sache) nicht klug werden können; [...] ---- of the stairs, der oberste Theil einer Treppe; [...] she sat at the ---- of the table, sie saß oben am Tische

The last example – where a woman sits at the head of the table – likewise stands out in contrast to examples given by Weir's predecessors under the same lemma, where none of the people taking a position as head or at the head of something is a woman. By contrast, indeed, Hilpert (1857) gives *The husband is the ---- of the wife, der Mann ist des Weibes Haupt.* Whether Weir's introduction of female headship is a single isolated example or perhaps representative of a more systematic approach by Weir remains to be investigated. Taken together with the example of Thiele's treatment of the headword *kvinde*, discussed above, it hints tantalizingly that women lexicographers produced different dictionaries to men. More detailed study of the dictionaries of such early women lexicographers also has the potential to add a historical dimension to more recent debates about the extent to which dictionaries may perpetuate gender stereotypes, something the pioneering feminist linguist Pusch (1984) showed in her witty analysis of the *DUDEN-Bedeutungswörterbuch* (1970) as a story with disappointingly marginal and feeble female characters.

Weir's work was clearly considered successful, for the prominent Germanist Karl Breul, the first Schroeder Professor of German at Cambridge, undertook to produce a revised version of it. When it appeared in 1906, Breul thanked his former students 'the Misses G. M. Parry, H. Sollas, and J. Burne' (Breul/Weir 1906, pp. v–vi), and above all 'Miss Minna Steele Smith, Head Lecturer in Modern Languages at Newnham College, Cambridge', who assisted in checking the proofs. These women's roles conform to the pattern that Russell identified of women as assistants rather than protagonists in the business of dictionary-making in the nineteenth century. This makes the gap in our knowledge about Elizabeth Weir, whose work underpins Schroeder's later edition, all the more frustrating.

Here, and in examples from other dictionaries below, I have not attempted to replicate the use of different fonts (black letter and antiqua), used for German and English respectively.

### 3.3.2 Klara Hechtenberg Collitz

Klara Hechtenberg Collitz (c. 1865–1944) is another women lexicographer of German who was a partial outsider at least. Born in Germany, she trained as a teacher, then studied French in Lausanne, then English at the University of London and Oxford, and taught in Belfast and in America, before returning to study in Germany, gaining her PhD from the University of Heidelberg in 1901, returning to Oxford University as a lecturer in German (1901–1904). She then married and moved to America, and did not hold an academic position again, but she continued to research, and her publications include an alphabetical Fremdwörterbuch des 17. Jahrhunderts ('Foreign-word dictionary of the seventeenth century', 1904), with a list of 3380 foreign words, and Verbs of Motion in their Semantic Divergence (1931), which contained alphabetical listings of verbs of motion in Greek, Latin, German, English, French, Italian, and Spanish with analysis of their figurative use with senses of 'propriety, fitness, suitability, or related meanings' (Collitz 1931, p. 7; see Maas 2018; McLelland 2020, pp. 211f.).

A generation after Hechtenberg Collitz, the first two women trained entirely within the German-speaking world who had careers as lexicographers are both already well known today for their work: Agathe Lasch and Luise Berthold.

### 3.3.3 Agathe Lasch

Agathe Lasch (1879-1942) was the first woman to follow a conventional academic path in German linguistics. After gaining a PhD from Heidelberg and then her habilitation from Hamburg in 1919, where she was initially a postdoctoral assistant to Professor Conrad Borchling, Lasch was in 1923 given a so-called extraordinary chair in Low German philology, thus becoming the first German Professorin in Germany (though the 'extraordinary' title in effect meant the rank of professor without the funds for assistants and support that go with a chair in the German system). Lasch had already published an important grammar of Low German in 1914; in 1917, while still a postdoctoral assistant to Borchling, Lasch was given the role of running a newly established dictionary archive. In this role, she was responsible for planning and collecting material for a dictionary of the variety of German spoken in the city of Hamburg, Hamburgisch. The dictionary was ground-breaking, not just in recording a city vernacular rather than a rural dialect, but also because Lasch used both systematic evaluation of historical sources, and questionnaires to capture current Low German usage, yielding 180,000 attestations by 1933. Lasch was in effect taking a sociolinguistic approach to dialectology to capture the changing status, and heterogeneity of, Low German in Hamburg, past and present (Schroeder 2009, p. 49). The dictionary of Hamburgisch was completed in 2006, still following the basic structure devised by Lasch (ibid., p. 47).

In 1923, Lasch, now a professor herself, launched a second major lexicographical project, a concise dictionary (*Handwörterbuch*) of Middle Low German, finally completed in 2009 (Schroeder 2009, pp. 56–58). Lasch again devised the structural framework to be followed, and also worked on seven fascicles of the dictionary herself. A concise dictionary could not include examples of words in context, or information on the temporal and regional distribution of individual words, as Lasch would have liked if space had allowed. Nevertheless, it benefited from recent work on the Middle Low German vowel system that had in part been triggered by Lasch's Low German grammar. For example, Umlaut was systematically marked, and original long vowels were distinguished from long vowels that were the result of vowel lengthening (Schroeder 2009, p. 58).

Lasch, a Jew, was forced out of her post and into 'retirement' in 1934. After unsuccessful attempts to emigrate, she was deported in 1942, and was killed in Riga in the same year (Kaiser 2009, p. 21). Despite her tragically curtailed career, she had a decisive impact on Low German lexicography.

#### 3.3.4 Luise Berthold

Luise Berthold (1891–1983) is second only to Agathe Lasch in her pioneering role as a woman in German lexicography, again in German dialectology. Berthold studied German philology at Marburg and then, alongside her doctorate (awarded 1918), devoted half her time to working on the Hessisch-Nassau dialect dictionary, funded by the Prussian Academy of Sciences. The first fascicle of the *Hessen-Nassauisches Volkswörterbuch* was published in 1927, and in 1930 Berthold was, like Lasch, made an extraordinary professor, though she was awarded a full chair only in 1952 (Berthold 2008, pp. 110 f.).

The Hessen-Nassau dictionary, the compilation of which Berthold led from 1934, stood in the tradition of the Marburg school of dialectology, specifically Wenker's *Sprachatlas*. Just as Georg Wenker had used questionnaires to gather data to map the geography of sound changes in the nineteenth century, so Berthold proposed a new series of questionnaires that would yield word-geography maps for the dictionary (Berthold 2008, p. 53), an approach which became a model for later work. Both the Prussian and Mecklenburg dialect dictionary projects, which both began publication in 1934, followed the example of using word-geography maps, as did the German Word Atlas project itself (*Deutscher Wortatlas*, ed. W. Mitzka et al., 1951–1980), which Berthold was in charge of for a time after World War II.

# 3.4 Women in German/English bilingual dictionaries

Russell (2018) devotes her final chapter to feminist lexicography, one dimension of which has been the uncovering of the systemic ways in which definitions and examples have under-represented, stereotyped, or misrepresented women.<sup>2</sup> Of course, given what we know of the history of power relations, what we are likely to find is predictable. Russell (2018, p. 184), citing the provocative title of a short piece, 'Women are alcoholics and drug addicts, says dictionary' (Kaye 1988), noted drily that by 1988, such a finding should hardly have been surprising. Russell also warns that analysing "isolated instances of ideological bias in definitional text" does very little to enrich our understanding of the inevitable partiality of lexicography' (Russell 2018, p. 174, citing Ogilvie 2013, p. 86). Nevertheless, there is still a case to be made for providing evidence and for bearing witness to the phenomenon, and arguably doing so is all the more valuable when examining historical sources, thus complementing the social history and discursive histories of gender, sexuality, and minoritization. The representation of women, of sexuality, and of minoritized groups, has accordingly come under scrutiny in recent work on history of English lexicography (e.g. Iamartino 2010, Turton 2019; see also Brewer 2005–). I shall end this paper, then, with a very preliminary exploration of two words in the field of sexuality and gender in a group of dictionaries that I have been looking at for a different project: bilingual German/English dictionaries of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. These dictionaries have received very little attention to

One might also explore the representation of women among the authors from whom citations are taken. To what extent past German lexicography has represented or under-represented woman authors in its attestations is, as far as I know, also uncharted territory.

date.<sup>3</sup> To explore this theme adequately would therefore be a major undertaking, and here I present case studies of just two words, with no claim to generalizability, but given as indication of how such a project might be rewarding: the German headword *Hure* ('whore'), and the English headword 'woman'.

#### 3.4.1 German Hure

My first case study is the word *Hure*, 'whore', a word where the German and English words are cognate and have broadly similar scope. I was initially curious to see how Ludwig (1716), the first producer of a German to English dictionary, rendered *Hure* in English, the first time it ever needed to be done in a dictionary. It was somewhat unexpected to find that Ludwig gives fully ten equivalents in English, with no immediate further differentiation:

**Hur oder Hure (die)** a whore, wench, harlot, prostitute, strumpet, crack, cucquean, trull, cockatrice, doxy. [...]

The explanation for this richness is disappointingly prosaic, however. In 1706 Ludwig had published an English–German dictionary, based on two earlier bidirectional French-English dictionaries by Abel Boyer (1699, 1700). In Boyer (1699), Ludwig would have found the following entry:

**PUTAIN, S.F.** (*Fille ou femme prostituée*) Whore, Wench, Harlot, Prostitute, Strumpet, Crack, Cockatrice, Doxy

Eight of Ludwig's ten equivalents come, then, straight from Boyer's equivalents for *putain*, in the same order. The remaining two, *cucquean* and *trull*, are both listed as English headwords by Boyer, and following him, by Ludwig (1706). In each case Boyer gives *Putain* as one of the possible equivalents, and *eine hure* is the only German equivalent that Ludwig gives. (Ludwig indeed gives *hure* as an equivalent for all ten English terms, but often among others.) There is no mystery, then, in how Ludwig arrived at the English equivalents for *Hure* in his pioneering dictionary, and there is nothing to say about how he differentiates them. He does not.<sup>4</sup>

What about Ludwig's successors in the German-English lexicographical tradition? The first competitor to Ludwig, Theodor Arnold (1753), lists the same ten items as Ludwig, and in the same order, except that *cockatrice* and *doxy* are reversed:

*Hure*, a Whore, Wench, Harlot, Prostitute, Strumpet, Crack, Wench, Cucquean, Trull, Doxy, Cockatrice

At the very end of the eighteenth century, a later edition of Arnold's dictionary (Bailey/Fahrenkrüger/Arnold 1797) and Ebers (1796–99) both still offer the same list of ten terms. There is, then, virtually no change over almost a century in the equivalents given, though the 1797 dictionary adds *drab*, and, more significantly, Ebers (1796–99) also adds three euphemistic terms *A woman of the Town, a Woman of Pleasure, a Courtezan*.

Stein's (1985) survey stops with Ludwig (1706). Hartmann (2007) includes Ludwig (1706) and Flügel (1838), and Adler (1848), the latter in fact closely based on the revised edition of Flügel (1841). Cormier (2009) briefly discusses Ludwig, and mentions Theodor Arnold, Johann Christoph Adelung, and Johannes Ebers, on whom see also Lewis (2013).

Note also the equivalents given for compounds with -hur later in the same entry: 'Eine schand-hur, soldaten-hur, allermans-hur, allgemeine hure a prostitute, tomboy, drab, camp-whore, romp, rig, slut, jade or wench; a common whore, a common hackney'. The term tomboy here is presumably intended in the now obsolete sense of 'forward, immodest, or unchaste woman' (OED online, s. v. tomboy).

In the nineteenth century, the compilers of a revised edition of Flügel (1841) stated their intention to refresh the dictionary while also attending to propriety. Flügel's original dictionary was, they judged, full of unnecessary and unsuitable material, in which 'the forgotten obscenities of the 17th and 18th centuries have been raked together into one heap' (Flügel 1841, p. iii). The revised 1841 dictionary accordingly lists just four English equivalents for *Hure: whore, harlot, strumpet, prostitute.* 

Some years later, the professed aim of Hilpert (1857) was to give

the most modern and the most colloquial forms to its expressions, instead (as been heretofore almost universally the case with such German and English dictionaries) of copying and handing down from lexicon to lexicon old terms and forms of speech' (Hilpert 1857, p. xv).

Hilpert (1857) gives the same four English equivalents for *Hure* (whore, harlot, strumpet, prostitute), together with two euphemisms in English (a common woman, a woman of the town, the latter already found in Ebers 1796–99). Lucas (1868) keeps largely the same terms as Hilpert (1857), whore, harlot, prostitute, strumpet, woman of the town, but also introduces another euphemism, street-walker in 'zur --- werden, to turn prostitute, to turn street-walker', the first time street-walker is included for *Hure*, although it was already included as an English headword by Ludwig (1706), glossed there as eine gassenhure.

There is, then, little evidence of a sensitivity to connotations of the different English terms for women who sell sex in Ludwig (1716) and his successors into the mid-nineteenth century. However, the inclusion, from the late eighteenth century onwards, of euphemistic English equivalents for *Hure* is noteworthy, and perhaps needs to be considered as part of an emerging wider sensitivity to vulgarity and obscenity – something we have seen was indeed explicitly thematized by the revisers of Flügel (1841). A related development is that in Flügel (1841), we are warned about the 21 noun *huren*- compounds listed: 'these are with a few exceptions, all vulgar', the first such warning in this lexicographical tradition for *Hure* (even though Ludwig did use such metalinguistic labelling when he chose to). In Hilpert (1857), the German base term *Hure* is itself now marked † for 'vulgar'.<sup>5</sup>

We can also detect a subtle change in how the German term is understood. Bailey/Fahren-krüger/Arnold (1797) was the first to differentiate two figurative usages for *Hure* (marked *f*. below) to indicate that the term may be used, in an extended sense, of any woman caught in unchaste behaviour:

[...] f. eine geschwächte Person defloured [sic] maid, lady; f. jede weibliche Person, welche die Keuschheit oder eheliche Treue verletzt lady -- woman of pleasure, one of the family of love

The new distinction of a separate figurative sense for *Hure* made by Bailey/Fahrenkrüger/ Arnold (1797) is almost certainly taken from Adelung's monolingual German dictionary (1793), which distinguishes first the narrow sense, then two wider senses, which apply either to an unmarried woman who has become pregnant (a use 'in der harten Sprechart und im gemeinen Leben') or to any woman, whether married or not, 'welche durch unerlaubten Beyschlaf die Keuschheit verletzet, gleichfalls nur in der harten Schreibart und mit beleidigender Verachtung'.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Probably following Heyse (1833) in the monolingual German tradition.

Hilpert (1857) followed suit, but now gave the figurative sense for *Hure* first, as had the more recent German dictionary of Christian Heyse (1833).

- 1) [in general] any woman who violates chastity [eine gefallene]. Ein Mädchen zur --- machen, to debauch or deflour [sic] a girl; zur --- werden, to become or be defloured or debauched; sie hat ihre Tochter selbst zur --- gemacht, she has prostituted her daughter herself.
- 2) [in a more limited sense] a woman who prostitutes her body for hire, a harlot, prostitute, a whore, a common woman, a woman of the town, a strumpet.

Over a period of some hundred and fifty years of German-English lexicography, then, even though the English equivalents change little, we see a changing sensitivity to the acceptability of the term *Hure*; an emergence of euphemistic language; and a sensitivity to the idea that there is a distinction to be preserved between a woman who actually sells sex for money and one who is willing to have sex with a man outside of marriage.

### 3.4.2 English woman

My second exploration concerns entries under the English headword *woman*. Ludwig (1706) gives a very simple entry:

Woman, eine frau, ein weib, femme, A lady's woman, a waiting woman, einer damen kammerfrau, la femme de chambre d'une dame. A woman of the town, ein unzüchtiges weib, eine hure, une femme debauchée, une putain.

Arnold (1752) gives a far fuller entry than Ludwig for *woman*, with several idioms, which are, as far as I can tell, his own selection:

WO'MAN, (wumän, V. S. wiman, prob. V. wamb u. Man) femme, mulier, fœmina, das Weib, die Frau. WOMEN, Money and Wine, have their good, and their Ruin, femmes, argent & vin, ont leur bien et leur venin, in muliere, pecunia, et vino venenum, Weiber, Geld und Wein, pflegen so schädlich als nutzlich zu seyn. Three WOMEN and a Goose make a Market, deux femmes font un plaid, trois un grand Caquet, quatre un plein marché, est quasi grande forum, vox alta trium mulierum, drey Weiber und eine Gans machen einen Jahrmarkt. The more WOMEN look in their Glasses, the less they look to their Houses, femme qui trop se mire, peu file, quæ in speculo diutius seipsam intuetur, colum neglegit et fusum, je fleißiger die Weiber in Spiegel sehen, je weniger sehen sie nach ihrer Haushaltung. WOMEN laugh when they can, and weep when they will, femme rit, quand elle peut, et pleure, quand elle veut, quoties potest ridet, stet autem quando lubet mulier, die Weiber lachen, wenn sie können, und weinen, wenn sie wollen. A WOMAN conceals what she knows not, une femme cache ce qu'elle ignore, quod nescit fœmina, celat, eine Frau verschweigt, was sie nicht weiß. Tell a WOMAN she's handsome, but once, the Devil will tell her so fifty times, dis à une femme, qu'elle est belle, et le diable lui le dira cinquante fois, pulchritudo nimis laudata tumescit, wenn man das Frauenzimmer gar zu sehr lobet, wird es nur stolz.

Arnold's entry is an eloquent instance of all that feminists have objected to in dictionary-making by men. From the six idioms that Arnold gives, it emerges that i) women – likened to consumables, money and wine – can lead to ruin; ii) women are overly talkative and loud, so that three together is like a market; iii) women are vain, and likely to neglect their domestic duties; and iv) women are deceptive, able to weep on demand, and adept at concealing their ignorance.

The impact of these depictions of womanhood on the reader is arguably all the more emphatic for being repeated in four languages, English, German, French and Latin. Further work would be needed to determine if this misogynist selection of material is typical of Arnold, or simply an isolated instance in his work. It does not seem to have set the direction for future English–German bilingual lexicography, at any rate. Adelung (1783/1793) based his work on Johnson (1755)'s English dictionary, which gives literary attestations of use. From Johnson's nine attestations for the word *woman* – from Shakespeare, the Bible, and other sources – Adelung selects just two, one admittedly stereotyping from Addison ('Vivacity is the gift of women, gravity that of men') and one illustrating the use of *woman* to refer to a female servant to a lady ('By her woman I sent your message', Shakespeare).

### 4. Conclusion

This paper began with an overview of what is currently known about women in the history of lexicography. With the exception of the exemplary work of Russell (2018) for the case of English, this remains largely uncharted territory, and for languages other than German, I have done little more here than look a little more closely at the two instances identified mentioned in Ayres-Bennett/Sanson (2020) that were accessible to me: Thiele's work towards a comprehensive Danish–French dictionary and Louw's (1915) vocabulary of Karanga.

As for the history of women in German lexicography, again much more needs to be done, but what we know thus far suggests a similar pattern to that identified by Russell of women as patrons and dedicatees, but also of participation by women outside the mainstream of national dictionary-making, at least as far as the early twentieth century: in particular in the spaces afforded them in bilingual lexicography (Weir), in lexicographical projects that supplement mainstream dictionaries (Collitz's foreign-word dictionary) and in the area of dialectology (Lasch, Berthold). It is worth emphasizing the importance of these works, however: Weir's dictionary was successful and innovative; Collitz's foreign-word dictionary is still included on reading lists today; and, in the twentieth century, both Lasch and Berthold took charge of important lexicographical projects that were pioneering in method and far-reaching in their influence.

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