Introduction

The Other Voice

Anne Vaughan Lock (ca. 1534–after 1590) was a well-known religious reformer and writer in sixteenth-century England. The daughter of Stephen Vaughan and Margaret Gwynnethe, both of whom served in the court of Henry VIII, Anne Vaughan Lock was raised in a Protestant home where she received an excellent education. She married first Henry Lock, the son of a prominent London merchant, then the fiery preacher and Greek scholar Edward Dering, and finally Richard Prowse, a member of Parliament from Exeter. During the reign of Queen Mary I, she left England for Geneva, where she renewed her friendship with John Knox, worshipped with other members of the English church in exile, and heard sermons preached by John Calvin on the biblical book of Isaiah, four of which she later translated into English.

On her return to England after the accession of Queen Elizabeth, Lock published these sermons, which were augmented by a lengthy dedicatory letter to the duchess of Suffolk and a sonnet sequence on Psalm 51 that was later set to music in Scotland. She maintained her connections with those who had been in the English exile community and with the international Reformed church, sending and receiving circular letters, providing financial assistance and hospitality, and writing poems and books to support her coreligionists. Although her safety was jeopardized in the early 1570s, when radical Protestants were being detained, by 1576 she was recommended to the queen, along with her friends the Cooke sisters, as a model of learning and piety. In the 1580s, she sent aid to struggling Protestants on the Continent and was commended in print as “no young scholar” in the school of Christ. In 1590, in the aftermath of the Marprelate controversy, when many Reformed leaders were exiled, dead, or in prison, she published her second book, urging her fellow Christians to remain firm and to count suffering as a mark of God’s love for them. After her death, she was remembered as a woman of great learning and virtuous life, and her writings continued to be reprinted and read.

Anne Lock was dedicated to the promotion of Reformed Christianity, which later in her life became known in England as Puritanism. As a recognized public figure, she took on the roles of reformer, exile, poet, translator, correspondent, spiritual counselor, and political advocate. Recovering her voice in the twenty-first century and placing that voice in the larger context of the Tudor period allow readers to better trace the intertwined complexities of political, social, and religious life in sixteenth-century England.
Anne Lock’s Name

Anne Lock wrote under the names A. L. (*Sermons of John Calvin*), Anna Dering (Latin manuscript poem), and Anne Prowse (*Of the Marks of the Children of God*). The spelling of “Lock” is uncertain, although an inscription by her husband in the London copy of the *Sermons of John Calvin* gives the family name as “Lock,” which is the preferred spelling in this edition. Historians often call her Anne Locke, associating her with the philosopher John Locke, a descendent of her first husband’s brother. Some literary scholars use the name Anne Lok, connecting her to her son, also a poet, whose name is usually spelled Henry Lok.

The Family of Anne Vaughan

Anne Vaughan was born, mostly likely in 1534, to Stephen Vaughan, a London merchant, and his wife, Margaret Gwynnethe. Both Stephen and Margaret served in the court of Henry VIII and his succession of wives. Stephen Vaughan was a well-regarded diplomat who spent much of his life on the Continent, dealing with the intricacies of international trade. Margaret Vaughan, described as witty and cultured, was a silkwoman, a sought-after position at the Tudor court given the access it afforded to queens and courtiers alike. As members of the royal wardrobe staff, silkwomen made ribbons and other trimmings, mended clothing, and sometimes oversaw the laundering and care of expensive garments. They were recognized as tradespeople in their own right and were allowed to employ apprentices. When Stephen Vaughan was away from London, Margaret managed her own work and also dealt with the family’s business affairs: she transferred money, letters, and goods to various people, accepted receipts, sued for the auditing of accounts, sent her husband a horse, and kept him informed about the political maneuverings at court.1

The letters to and from Stephen Vaughan and his primary patron at court, Thomas Cromwell, reveal a family that was well established in the up-and-coming merchant class, on the middle rungs of the English court hierarchy, and with the emerging group of “evangelicals” who were interested in reforming the church. Often these interests—mercantile, courtly, religious—merged and sometimes they came into conflict with one another.

1. The account of Anne Lock’s life that follows is detailed in *The Collected Works of Anne Vaughan Lock*, ed. Susan M. Felch (Tempe: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 1999), xv–xxxvi. Additional references may be found in that volume. See also ODNB, Anne Locke.

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One such merger and conflict revolved around the English reformer William Tyndale. Tyndale had gone into exile on the Continent in 1524 to pursue his dream of translating the Bible into everyday English. The first publication of his New Testament was confiscated in 1525 before it could be widely distributed. His 1526 New Testament, printed in Germany, was smuggled back into England but was placed on a list of banned books and burned alongside other prohibited texts. In 1530, Stephen Vaughan was commissioned by Henry VIII to contact Tyndale, convince him to renounce his heretical views, and return to England. Henry, by this time, was pursuing the course that would lead to the annulment of his marriage to Katherine of Aragon, his second marriage to Anne Boleyn, and his break from the Roman Catholic Church.

Vaughan did not convince Tyndale either to renounce his religious views or to return to England. Tyndale was wary of being arrested if he returned to England, and he had good reason to be afraid. A few years later, as he left the English House of the Merchant Adventurers in Antwerp, Tyndale would be kidnapped, taken to prison, and strangled and burned at the stake. But Tyndale did convince Vaughan, who himself had been charged with heresy although he was never arrested or punished, to continue supporting the work of the reformers. Although Stephen Vaughan insisted to his patrons that he was not a “Tyndalian,” he did write letters in support of both Tyndale and other English reformers. He even urged the king to read Tyndale’s writings for himself. He also recommended the works of Robert Barnes, a defender of Protestant views later executed for heresy, because Barnes was someone, Vaughan said, who “proves his learning by Scripture, the doctors [traditional teachers in the church], and the Pope’s law.”

Linking the Bible, church tradition, and the Pope was a masterful way to straddle the growing divide in England between the old Roman church and the emerging evangelical movement.

After Tyndale was arrested in 1535, Stephen Vaughan petitioned Cromwell to advocate on Tyndale’s behalf, arguing that his arrest at the English House in Antwerp had violated his immunity as an English citizen. In April 1536, just six months before Tyndale’s execution, Stephen Vaughan again urgently asked Cromwell to use his influence to preserve Tyndale’s life: “If now you send but your letter to the Privy Counsel, I could deliver Tyndale from the fire, so it came by time, for else it will be too late.”

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3. For Tyndale’s life and influence, see ODNB, William Tyndale.
7. If it came in time.
8. Brewer et al., eds., Letters and Papers, 10:no. 663.
Cromwell declined to intervene, and Stephen Vaughan was not able to save Tyndale from the fire. Cromwell himself was beheaded in 1540 when he fell out of favor with Henry VIII. Stephen and Margaret Vaughan, however, continued to serve at the Tudor court until Margaret’s death in September 1544. Although he wished to return to London to care for his family in the wake of their mother’s death, Stephen was not allowed to leave his post on the Continent. Instead, he procured a tutor for his children, a man by the name of Stephen Cob.

**Anne Vaughan’s Education**

Stephen Cob had a checkered history. In 1543, he was summoned before the Privy Council for translating an illegal Lutheran commentary on the Gospels. A year later, he was back before the Court of Aldermen, rescued on this occasion by Queen Katherine Parr, who sent her servant Edward Warner to plead on his behalf. In September 1545, he was taken to the palace of the bishop of London to be examined yet again for his radical religious views. This was the man Stephen Vaughan chose to manage his household and teach his children.

It was certainly no light thing for Stephen Cob to stand accused in “matters of religion” in the fall of 1545, because by then Henry VIII was waffling in his support for the Reformation. On the one hand, the break between the Roman Catholic church and the English church was complete. The English church no longer obeyed the Pope. Instead, Henry VIII had been declared the “supreme head of the church.” On the other hand, Henry VIII was much more in sympathy with many points of Roman Catholic theology and piety than with Protestant doctrine and practices. For instance, he did not want ordinary people to read the English Bible on their own, and he wanted to retain many of the sacraments of the Roman church. The courtiers who had access to Henry VIII tried to exploit his ambivalence. Some wanted to align the English church more closely with Rome; others wanted to change it to be more like the Lutherans in Germany or the newly rising Reformed church in France and Switzerland.

Henry’s sixth and current queen, Katherine Parr, found herself caught between these powerful factions. Stephen Gardiner, bishop of Winchester, and Thomas Wriothesley, the Lord Chancellor, accused her not only of heresy (holding the wrong religious beliefs) but also more seriously of treason (opposing the will of the king) because she supported the Protestant reformers at court and talked—perhaps even argued—theology with the king. Although Parr was able to defend herself to the king and was restored to his good graces, some of her friends were not so fortunate. One such court lady, who was related to Parr by marriage, was Anne Askew. She was first arrested in March 1545, tortured and questioned about her beliefs, and then burned at the stake on July 16, 1546.  

9. For details on Parr and Askew, see *ODNB*, Katherine Parr and Anne Askew.
Stephen Cob’s appearance before the bishop of London, while he was acting as tutor for the children of the widowed Stephen Vaughan, thus occurred almost midpoint in the ongoing drama of Anne Askew’s fate. Despite Vaughan’s desire for a stable manager of his household affairs and guardian of his children, he placed Cob in this position after the schoolmaster had already been in trouble with the authorities over his radical Protestant views. It would appear that the formation of his children as well-educated evangelical English subjects took precedence over finding a safe, conservative tutor. Cob taught not only Anne but also her younger siblings, Jane and Stephen, as well as a son of George Brooke, the sixth lord Cobham, and a Joan Reede. Joan was likely the daughter of Cob’s associate, William Reede, a curate who had found himself in trouble for reading and discussing Erasmus’s *Paraphrases on the New Testament* with his students. As a result of her home education, Anne Vaughan learned to read and write French, Latin, and English, and she may have learned other languages as well.

In April 1546, Stephen Vaughan remarried, choosing as his second wife a long-time acquaintance who moved in the same radical religious circles. Margery Brinkelow’s first husband, Henry, was well known as the author of two pseudonymous Protestant pamphlets, one of which urged disobedience to ungodly laws. To be fair, Henry Brinkelow did not advocate physical violence but rather urged resisters to accept the imprisonment or death that might result from their actions. Margery herself had a reputation for being an honest, pious woman, although one with little worldly fortune, who could be expected to nurture her stepchildren in the Protestant faith. Although we do not know the details of the relationships between Anne Vaughan and her tutor or later with her stepmother, what we do know is that she was raised in a household consistently marked by sympathy for and activism in the fledgling evangelical movement in England. These formative experiences would come to fruition as she moved forward into adulthood.

**Anne Vaughan Lock in London**

In 1551, when Anne Vaughan was around seventeen years old, she married Henry Lock, the fourth son of a prominent London merchant family, whose older brother Thomas had worked with her father on the Continent. Henry’s father, Sir William Lock, had been sheriff of London in 1548; on his death in 1550 he left a substantial inheritance to Henry, as well as to his other surviving children. Although it was unusual for a merchant-class woman to be married at such a young age, the marriage of Anne Vaughan and Henry Lock may have been precipitated by the death

of Stephen Vaughan on December 25, 1549, and the probable subsequent death of her stepmother.

By the time the Locks married, Henry VIII had been dead for four years and the reformation of the English church had moved forward rapidly under the direction of Edward VI’s bishops and councilors. Thomas Cranmer, Princess Elizabeth’s godfather and the Archbishop of Canterbury, had taken the lead, compiling the English-language Book of Common Prayer, promoting the reading of the English Bible, and moving the practices of the English church away from those of Roman Catholicism.

As early converts to and supporters of evangelical Protestantism, the Lock family welcomed these changes. Late in her life, Henry’s sister Rose Lock Hickman Throckmorton recalled how her mother read Protestant books to her daughters in the 1520s and 1530s, although “very privately for fear of trouble because those good books were then accounted heretical.” Not only did the Lock family read Protestant books at home, but they also helped deliver them to the court. Rose Throckmorton remembered that Anne Boleyn “caused” her merchant father, William Lock, “to get her the gospels and epistles written in parchment in French together with the psalms,” a reference to manuscript portions of Scripture probably compiled for devotional reading.13

Two years after their marriage, Anne and Henry Lock, along with Rose and Anthony Hickman, served as hosts to the reformer John Knox when he returned to London to preach at the court of Edward VI.14 Knox had already made a name for himself as a proponent of Protestantism in Scotland and had suffered for his faith: he served nearly two years as a galley slave aboard a French ship after being captured by Roman Catholic forces. Shortly after his release in 1549, he had been invited to London to preach and he likely met the Vaughan and Lock families and other members of the “godly community” in London during that and subsequent visits. Other prominent Protestant preachers also gave sermons to Edward VI’s court. One of these, Hugh Latimer, is commemorated in a woodcut titled “A description of Master Latimer, preaching before King Edward the sixth, in the preaching place at Westminster.” The woodcut was printed in 1563 in John Foxe’s history of the church, known as the Acts and Monuments or later as “Foxe’s Book of Martyrs.”


Figure 1. Latimer preaching before Edward VI, *Actes and Monuments of these latter and perilous dayes touching matters of the Church* (London: John Day, 1563), 1353. STC 11222. Courtesy of the Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library, University of Toronto.

Here, a crowded scene depicts Latimer preaching while the young king listens from an upper window, a bevy of courtiers and Londoners crammed into the lower frame. There are also two prominent women in this picture. The listening woman in the upper left-hand window near the king is probably Katherine Brandon Bertie, the dowager duchess of Suffolk, who appointed Latimer her chaplain in 1550.\(^\text{15}\) The duchess was one of the most prominent Protestant women in the court and later became the dedicatee of Anne Lock’s first published book. The reading woman seated at the center of the woodcut represents all Protestant laywomen, like Anne Lock herself.

\(^\text{15}\) This identification has been proposed by Micheline White in a private communication. For details of the duchess’s life, see *ODNB*, Katherine Bertie.
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Figure 2. Annunciation Triptych (Merode Altarpiece), c.1427–1432 (oil on oak), Master of Flemalle, (Robert Campin) (1375/8–1444) / Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, USA / Bridgeman Images.

The woodcut from Acts and Monuments echoes the Annunciation pictures that were particularly popular in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. In these Annunciation pictures, the Virgin Mary is also looking down at a book as she hovers on the cusp of recognizing her visitor, the angel Gabriel, who has come to announce that she, a young unmarried Jewish woman, will conceive the promised Messiah. The Annunciation pictures and the Foxe woodcut both mark significant liminal moments in the history of the Christian church. The Annunciation serves as the hinge between the Hebrew Bible (later known by Christians as the Old Testament) and the Christian New Testament. It is commemorated with the Song of Mary, the Magnificat (Luke 1:46–55), which is written in the form of a Hebrew psalm but became the centerpiece of evening prayer in the medieval and later in
the English church. The woodcut in Foxe serves as the hinge between the medi-

eval Roman or papal church and the Reformation church of the Protestants. It is

commemorated by the figure of a woman reading the Bible for herself.

The echoes between the two scenes also serve to accentuate their differ-

ences. In many Annunciation pictures, the book held by Mary is marked with

red rubrics or rules that indicate it is a Book of Hours. The Books of Hours were

medieval devotion manuals that used Scripture and composed lyrics to praise

the Virgin Mary. In the Annunciation pictures, Mary is always meditating alone,

secluded in a garden or an inner room. She is a singular, extraordinary figure.

The Protestant woman reader, by contrast, is exemplary rather than extraordi-

nary. Although she is singled out by the centrality of her figure and by her fixed

attention on the book in her lap, she is not secluded. She is clearly sitting within

a public rather than a private space. In fact, her placement in the woodcut sig-

nals that she is able to read the Bible for herself, to participate in public worship

(particularly the communal act of listening to public preaching), and to take her

place in the larger society of the court. She is not singular, the one and only Virgin

Mary. Nor does she need an extraordinary event or an angel to announce her

vocation. The Bible alone—accessed through preaching and through reading—is

her sufficient guide for faith and for life in the world.

The woman who participates in public worship and reads the Bible for her-

self is an emblematic Protestant figure in sixteenth-century England because she

represents not just women but all laypersons, female or male.16 Roman Catholic

doctrine insisted that male priests were necessary to mediate God’s word and

presence to ordinary people. Priests and other clergy were distinguished from

laypersons or the laity. Their vocation or calling in life was considered “spiritual”
in contrast to the mundane or “secular” vocations of the laity.

Protestants, in contrast, insisted that every Christian had a spiritual voca-

tion. Martin Luther argued that baptism, not ordination to the priesthood, cre-

ated a spiritual person: “All Christians are truly of the spiritual estate … This is

because we all have one baptism, one gospel, one faith, and are all Christians alike;

for the baptism, gospel and faith alone make us spiritual and a Christian people.”17

Later John Calvin said, “Because you are each consecrated in Christ to be both the

associates of His kingdom, and partakers of His priesthood, … the Lord bestows

16. See, for instance, Micheline White, “Protestant Women’s Writing and Congregational Psalm
Singing: From the Song of the Exiled ‘Handmaid’ (1555) to the Countess of Pembroke’s Psalms
in *The Intellectual Culture of Puritan Women, 1558–1680*, ed. Johanna Harris and Elizabeth Scott-

Fortress, 1966), 127.
these high titles on all whom He makes his people” (emphasis mine). To highlight the figure of a woman reading the Bible in the context of public worship was thus to make a powerful Protestant statement that all Christians, not simply the clergy, had direct access to God. This doctrine later became known as the “priesthood of all believers.”

The figure of the reading woman also directly contravened Henry VIII’s 1543 “Act for the Advancement of True Religion,” which singled out women in the list of laypersons forbidden to read the English Bible in public and which had been used against Anne Askew and Katherine Parr. Yet less than a decade later, the exemplary layperson would be emblemized by the figure not only of a Bible reader, but emphatically that of a female Bible reader.

When John Knox came to London and stayed with the Locks, he quickly recognized Anne Lock’s spiritual vocation. Although Knox was twenty years older than Lock, he looked to her as a surrogate mother and spiritual counselor. After he left London, he wrote to thank her for her advice and comfort. You showed, he said, “a special care over me, as the mother useth to be over her natural child.”

For several years thereafter, Knox continued to write to Lock, exchanging news and spiritual advice and often asking for help (pages 149–86, below).

The heady days for Protestant laypeople and clergy alike, however, were coming to an end. On July 6, 1553, when Anne Lock was nineteen years old, Edward VI died. After the brief nine-day reign of the Protestant Lady Jane Grey, Edward’s elder sister, Mary Tudor, became queen. Mary Tudor, also known as Mary I, was the daughter of Henry VIII’s first wife, Katherine of Aragon, and she had remained loyal to the Roman Catholic faith of her mother. She quickly reinstated Roman Catholic worship in the English churches and moved to supplant or suppress prominent Protestant leaders, among them Hugh Latimer, Thomas Cranmer, and John Knox.

Latimer and Cranmer were soon imprisoned and later burned at the stake. Knox, along with many other prominent Protestants, fled to the Continent to escape arrest. He eventually settled in Geneva, which was already the hub of Reformed Protestantism.


19. *Anno tricesimo quarto et quinto Henrici octauii Actes* (London: Thomas Berthelet, 1543; STC 9408), A4r. Noble women and gentlewomen were allowed to “read to themselves alone” but not aloud to others.