

Dylan Black

Lecture 23: Women, gender, & early modern beliefs

Social beliefs/institutions + beliefs of the individual

- attitudes about gender
- periods of birth of modern world
- other respects - gender may get worse
- Beliefs + practices of 16th century hostile towards ♀
- women blamed for fall of man (Eve)

Women + work

↳ essential but under-reported

Women portrayed spinning

- spindle + distaff symbols of hard working woman

Marriage

↳ importance of matrimony

The impossible example - Virgin Mary

- virginity AND marriage seen as virtues

Courtesans

Women's bodies

- speaks to male control during era
- female sexual organs - male inside out
- female "humors" - cold and moist
 - seems prone to disorders
 - "Wandering womb" - uterus is a living creature

Law

- Biblical
- Roman - particularly strong in Italy, Spain, Portugal
- Customary

Family Law

- Male control - dictatorial
- domestic discipline
- marriage is a transfer of power from father to daughter
- Model wife - obedient wife
- Divorce - existed if contract was broken
 - 70% of divorces in Archdiocese of Comagüé were from women
- threaten life/honor, refuse to economically support

Death from complications of childbirth

- 3/4 wives of Philip II