



# Women, Writing, and Language in Early Modern Ireland

*Marie-Louise Coolahan*

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## **Women, Writing, and Language in Early Modern Ireland** Marie-Louise Coolahan

This book examines writing in English, Irish, and Spanish by women living in Ireland and by Irish women living on the continent between the years 1574 and 1676. This was a tumultuous period of political, religious, and linguistic contestation that encompassed the key power struggles of early modern Ireland. This study brings to light the ways in which women contributed; they strove to be heard and to make sense of their situations, forging space for their voices in complex ways and engaging with native and new language-traditions. The book investigates the genres in which women wrote: poetry, nuns' writing, petition-letters, depositions, biography and autobiography. It argues for a complex understanding of authorial agency that centres of the act of creating or composing a text, which does not necessarily equate with the physical act of writing. The Irish, English, and European contexts for women's production of texts are identified and assessed. The literary traditions and languages of the different communities living on the island are juxtaposed in order to show how identities were shaped and defined in relation to each other. Marie-Louise Coolahan elucidates the social, political, and economic imperatives for women's writing, examines the ways in which women characterized female composition, and describes an extensive range of cross-cultural, multilingual activity.

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