ABSTRACT

LAUREN SCUDDER.  Compiling Textual Agency: An Examination into the Recipe Collection of Constance Hall. (Under the direction of Dr. Margaret Simon.)

The following work entails a detailed reading and transcription of portions of the recipe book of Constance Hall. Rather than focus solely upon what is found within the collection, this work also focuses on what is left out of the work. There are several notable factors in Hall’s recipe collection that emphasize her role as a compiler. A lack of demonstrated testing and proving of recipes, an absence of marginal notes, and a high number of collaborators combine to demonstrate a diminished presence of Hall as an author in the traditional sense. These instead allow for Hall to take an ownership of her work through compilation. When examined alongside previous scholarship on similar manuscripts, the work of Constance Hall stands out through her method of demonstrating textual agency. In addition, this work investigates the role audience plays in the efficacy of these recipes and what the efficacy reveals about the function and purpose of the Hall’s collection. Constance Hall’s recipe book provides a contrasting view to the previous scholarship on the authority and ownership early modern women employed in the construction of such manuscripts.