



**The Life of Lady Johanna Eleonora Petersen,
Written by Herself: Pietism and Women's
Autobiography in Seventeenth-Century Germany
(The Other Voice in Early Modern Europe)**

Johanna Eleonora Petersen

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In a time when the Pauline dictum decreed that women be silent in matters of the Church, Johanna Eleonora Petersen (1644–1724) was a pioneering author of religious books, insisting on her right to speak out as a believer above her male counterparts. Publishing her readings of the Gospels and the Book of Revelation as well as her thoughts on theology in general, Petersen and her writings created controversy, especially in orthodox circles, and she became a voice for the radical Pietists—those most at odds with Lutheran ministers and their teachings. But she defended her lay religious calling and ultimately printed fourteen original works, including her autobiography, the first of its kind written by a woman in Germany—all in an age in which most women were unable to read or write.

Collected in *The Life of Lady Johanna Eleonora Petersen* are Petersen's autobiography and two shorter tracts that would become models of Pietistic devotional writing. A record of the status and contribution of women in the early Protestant church, this collection will be indispensable reading for scholars of seventeenth-century German religious and social history.

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