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978-0-521-50867-4 - Women Writing History in Early Modern England

Megan Matchinske

Frontmatter

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WOMEN WRITING HISTORY IN EARLY MODERN ENGLAND

In 1603 an English gentlewoman, Elizabeth Grymeston, composed for her young son a series of meditations – meditations that would offer posthumous advice and reflection on everything from the nature of sin to the limits of royal authority. Six months later Grymeston was dead and her words memorialized not just for a small boy but also for an English audience eager for moral edification and enlightenment. As one of the first writers of the mother’s legacy to appear in England, Grymeston looked to history to find her answers. Using life experience as her witness, she drew immediate and powerful connections between yesterday’s actions and tomorrow’s possibilities. She was not alone – throughout the seventeenth century, scores of Englishwomen did likewise, exploring in their own ‘histories’, the shifting relationships between past and future. This book focuses on this dynamic exchange, asking us to look seriously to and at the ends of history.

MEGAN MATCHINSKE is Associate Professor in the Department of English and Comparative Literature at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. She is the author of *Writing, Gender and State in Early Modern England: Identity Formation and the Female Subject* (Cambridge, 1998). Her work has appeared in many publications including *Shakespeare Quarterly* and *English Literary History*.

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Frontmatter

[More information](#)*Contents*

<i>List of illustrations</i>	vii
<i>Acknowledgments</i>	viii
1 Strategies for survival: gender, ethics and history	1
Inheriting history	2
History as discipline	4
Gender and genre as ethical categories	7
Structure and method	12
Past and future	18
2 Truth in the telling: moral, method and history in Anne Dowriche's <i>The French Historie</i>	20
History writing in Elizabethan contexts	24
Providentialism	26
History as lesson learning	28
The documentary impulse	37
3 Gendering Catholic conformity: equivocal history and cultural context in Elizabeth Grymeston's <i>Miscelanea</i>	45
The background	46
Grymeston's <i>Miscelanea</i>	48
Equivocation: its historic contexts	53
Equivocation and the middle path	54
Equivocation: its material contexts	60
Metaphorical equivocation: good Catholics make bad wives	65
Equivocal pragmatism	67
Equivocation and outcome: policy-making in action	70
Strategic equivocation: a politics of feminist historical thought	72
4 From here to 'henceforth': history, gender and identity in the diary writings of Lady Anne Clifford	74
Early modern autobiography	76
Form, function and identity in autobiography	81

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978-0-521-50867-4 - Women Writing History in Early Modern England

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Frontmatter

[More information](#)

vi

Contents

Lady Anne Clifford	85
History and historical precedent	86
Serial justification	87
The 'Great Picture'	94
Beyond Clifford	98
Temporality	101
5 Receptive readers: dissimulation and historical truth in Mary Carleton's bigamy trials	103
Carleton's history	105
Wit, sexuality and the court	107
Restoration erotics	113
Criminal biography, history and truth	115
Raillery and rectitude	115
Oath taking and oath breaking	120
Receptive readers	125
Political and domestic bigamy	127
History and historical protocols	129
Multiple pasts	133
6 The 'dying-tale': history and the ethics of action	136
Nuntio's charge	137
Disciplines and boundaries	139
Problems and protocols: the evidence of evidence	145
Conversations: the postmodern dilemma	149
Lying like truth: promises and the past	150
Ethics and responsibility	152
The death of fathers: history as revenge	153
History and conflict	154
<i>Notes</i>	158
<i>Bibliography</i>	210
<i>Index</i>	237

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-50867-4 - Women Writing History in Early Modern England

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Frontmatter

[More information](#)*Illustrations*

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Reproduced by permission of the Huntington Library. 23
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of the University of Chicago Library, Special Collections
Research Center. 48
 - 3 Table of Contents, Elizabeth Grymeston, *Miscelanea. Meditations. Memoratives* (1606). Reproduced by permission
of the British Library. 50
 - 4 The Outer Gatehouse, Skipton Castle. Reproduced by permission
of Skipton Castle (<http://skiptoncastle.co.uk/index.asp?page=1>). 92
 - 5 The Countess's Pillar, Brougham, Cumbria. Photo by Simon
Ledingham. Reproduced by permission. 93
 - 6 The Clifford 'Great Picture', by John van Belcamp. At Appleby
Castle, Cumbria. Reproduced courtesy of Abbot Hall
Art Gallery, Kendal, Cumbria, UK. 95
 - 7 Frontispiece, Mary Carleton, *The Case of Madam Mary Carleton*.
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ix

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