

Authority, Gender and Emotions in Late Medieval and Early Modern England.
Susan Broomhall, ed.

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What forces shape emotional experience? In what ways do emotional scripts fashion acceptable or inappropriate emotions? How do socially produced and individually internalized gendered mores influence emotional expression, particularly in regard to authority? These are the types of questions this fascinating collection of essays congregate around and to some extent begin to answer. *Authority, Gender and Emotions in Late Medieval and Early Modern England* is a rich and wide-ranging collection of essays that addresses the ways men and women negotiated and often manipulated emotion to engage in social, legal, and political life. In its focus on the intersection of authority and gender, the essays collectively interrogate the extent to which emotion, and emotional performance, is natural, individual, social, and cultural. As such, this collection will be of interest to anyone concerned with emotional expression and the performativity of gender in relation to the various types of authority that stretch across medieval and early modern divides.

The scope of the collection ranges from the thirteenth to the seventeenth century, and with this expanse comes a number of challenges, largely mitigated by thoughtful arrangement. The essays appear in chronological order, but they also follow four thematic groupings that convincingly demonstrate the extent to which authority, in the form of individual and communal practices of dominance, are shaped by socially produced gender ideologies that influence the emotional lives of men and women across time. The first grouping treats the ways in which emotional scripts are employed to persuade and cultivate authority through affective rhetoric. The second cluster places a spotlight on the emotional and political anxieties at play in England's urban and mercantile centers in the late medieval period. The collection then turns from the public and popular to the personal and private in its treatment of familial, neighborhood, and parish structures of authority and the emotional constructs that underpin these relations. The last section focuses on early modern sources, but the thematic connections are much more disjointed than the previous groupings. Respectively, these final three chapters treat the emotional resonances and opportunities for agency at work in women's embroidery; the construction of local, female authority against masculine, epistolary authority in the letters of *The Merry Wives of Windsor*; and the socially produced emotional scripts at the heart of Chancery court proceedings.

Challenging as it may be, the breadth of the collection provides an opportunity to demonstrate how emotional practices are embedded in structures of authority, which are in turn produced by social and cultural practices that might transform or persist over time and locale. For example, Kathleen Neal's "From Letters to Loyalty" treats a thirteenth-century noblewoman's careful manipulation of gendered epistolary forms and masculine patronage operations in a letter to the royal chancellor of England to

formally request letters patent for her husband, but within this framework she also articulates royalist loyalty to bolster her own political authority. This first chapter contrasts productively with the last, Amanda Capern's "Social Role of Chancery," which focuses on the emotional performances and expectations of common men, women, and children documented in the legal disputes of Chancery records from 1550 to 1650. Capern's careful explanation of the lord chancellor's role to symbolically represent the monarch's conscience, while also executing the Chancery court's promise of equity, provides a rich backdrop to the affective performance and appropriately gendered emotional scripts that Kathleen Neal identifies in the Countess of Norfolk's thirteenth-century letter. While these two chapters draw from dramatically different sources and contexts, they collectively demonstrate the lasting necessity of both emotional acuity and political acumen when negotiating national and local systems of authority.

Overall, the most impressive aspect of this collection is its variety of sources, ranging from popular productions like William Caxton's early book trade to conduct manuals, didactic literature, ballads, and drama to guild records, personal letters, epistolary manuals, embroidery, legal proceedings, and church court records from French Huguenot communities in London. This incredibly diverse range of sources indicates an exciting wealth of material from which the history of emotions might be mined. The expanse of time, range of sources, and diversity of social and cultural groups represented within this collection lead to a number of interesting and potentially productive intersections for historians and literary scholars alike.

Katey E. Roden, *Gonzaga University*