Katherine O. Acheson, ed. *The Diary of Anne Clifford, 1616-1619: A Critical Edition*. New York: Garland Publishing, 1995. Pp. ix. 225.

Katherine Acheson's edition represents a significant contribution to the growing scholarship devoted to the autobiographical writings of Anne Clifford. Among the earliest of her surviving works, Clifford's diary for the years 1616-19 was written during her marriage to her first husband, Richard Sackville, third Earl of Dorset. The diary records Clifford's continued effort during this time to override the entailment of her father's vast northern estates, and claim the inheritance for herself as his only living child. She documents her bitter disputes with not only her husband and uncle, but also the Archbishop of Canterbury and James I. The diary offers a unique record of aristocratic life, ranging in its concerns from Clifford's reading habits and needlework to her involvement in court politics.

Unlike the works of many other seventeenth-century women writers, Clifford's diary has been available to readers throughout most of the twentieth century. Vita Sackville-West, a descendant of Anne Clifford's brother-in-law, edited the diary in 1923. More recently, D. J. H. Clifford offers the most extensive edition of his ancestor's writing in *The Diaries of Lady Anne Clifford* (1990). Acheson's edition, however, is the first *critical* edition of any of Clifford's writing. Moreover, Acheson uses a previously unknown manuscript — an eighteenth-century copy of the diary in the Portland Papers belonging to the Marquess of Bath — as the copy-text for her edition. No holograph or seventeenth-century copies of the diary survive, and the two earlier editions both reproduce a nineteenth-century copy located among the Knole/Sackville Papers at the Centre for Kentish Studies, Maidstone, England. Acheson's collation of the two manuscripts reveals that the Knole copy omits or abbreviates material in the Portland, and the latter provides superior historical and contextual readings. The nature of the variants and certain similarities between the manuscripts lead Acheson to conclude that the Portland manuscript represents the single exemplar from which the Knole manuscript was transcribed.

The edition's formal organization further distinguishes it from prior editions. Acheson negotiates between the demands of a modern typographical text and a fidelity to the original manuscript in order to achieve a "diplomatic edition" (p. 29). Thus, she retains the manuscript's eighteenth-century spelling and reproduces its two-column format. The edition's scholarly apparatus, placed at the end of the text, includes a list of variants, a series of annotations, an index, and an extensive bibliography. The annotations, which identify individuals, places, events, and literary works referred to by Clifford, will be essential for many readers and might have been more conveniently located as footnotes.

In addition to an astutely edited text, Acheson provides an insightful introduction to the diary. Here, she addresses the biographical, bibliographical, and critical issues

raised by the work. For instance, her biographical account of Clifford corrects previous interpretations of Clifford's legal claim to inherit her father's barony, honours, and lands; she clarifies the basis for Clifford's lawsuits and discusses the unsettled state of the law during the seventeenth century. Acheson goes on to distinguish the three types of autobiographical discourse represented in Clifford's works: diary (1616, 1617, 1619, 1676), chronicle (1603, 1650-1675), and autobiography ("The Life of Me," 1652-53). Whereas scholars and editors have failed to differentiate Clifford's diary and chronicle writing (Vita Sackville-West is an unacknowledged exception), Acheson argues that the chronicles are a formal and definitive rendering of material originating in diaries which no longer exist. She, therefore, draws a valuable distinction between Clifford's "formal manuscript works, and informal papers," the former revealing "the way she intended to be remembered," and the latter "how she chose to remember herself" (p. 36). Acheson also supplies useful bibliographical descriptions of the Portland and Knole manuscripts. She identifies the scribe of the Portland copy as Margaret Bentinck (1715-1785), and includes photographs of the Portland manuscript along with an example of Margaret Bentinck's hand. The Knole copy was undertaken by two scribes, whom Acheson tentatively identifies as Elizabeth Sackville (1796-1870) and, less conclusively, her sister Mary. The Knole manuscript's two hands and an example of Elizabeth Sackville's handwriting are reproduced. Acheson's conclusion that the survival of Clifford's early diary has depended upon the "care and patience of noblewomen related to Clifford" (p. 17) has important implications for the study of the historical transmission of female-authored texts.

Overall, Acheson's edition is a notable achievement in the ongoing effort to recover early modern women's writing. More specifically, the edition will prove indispensable for scholars of Anne Clifford and her writing.

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