

Abstract

Biographical approaches to early modern history

This book contributes to the debates on the role and theory of biographical and life-writing research in historical research and methodology. The first part of the study analyses how biographical approaches have until now been used in research into the early modern history of Finland. It explores how the trends in biographical history have evolved from the eighteenth century to today. Church leaders and bishops were emphasised in a country that could boast of few statesmen. Early modern women's biographies have been strongly influenced by fictional traditions. The second part presents four attempts at new ways of producing and presenting biographical histories that yield new kinds of information on early modern society. These chapters are influenced by the so-called new histories (which by now have become rather traditional social and cultural histories), microhistory, gender history, and the history of experience.