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‘Sche evyr desyryd mor and mor’: The appropriation of mercantile language and practice in fifteenth to seventeenth-century English women’s writing

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‘Sche evyr desyryd mor and mor’:

The appropriation of mercantile language and practice in fifteenth to seventeenth-century English women’s writing

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2020

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Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis is the results of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated. All other sources are acknowledged by bibliographic references. This work has not previously been accepted in substance for any degree and is not being concurrently submitted in candidature for any degree unless, as agreed by the University, for approved dual awards.

This submission is made with the agreement of my Supervisor(s).

Abstract

Analysing a wide range of pre-modern women's non-fictional life-writing – letters, memoirs, wills – from the fifteenth to seventeenth centuries, this thesis assesses the authors' appropriation of mercantile discourse and practice to portray and vindicate various areas of their lives. Geoffrey Chaucer's Wife of Bath boldly states in her 'Prologue' (c.1437), 'Wynne whoso may, for al is for to selle', but did historical women believe so too?[1] A feminist and historicist interrogation of the commercial language and theory employed in the quotidian texts created by women is needed to fill a gap in the historiography and literary history of women. The introductory chapter contextualises the complex social and religious attitudes to women and money that female writers had to negotiate in their everyday lives as well as in their texts, and exposes the neglect that these texts have suffered in favour of studies of canonical literature – which is overwhelmingly male-authored. The Introduction concludes with a brief analysis of Chaucer's Alisoun of Bath as a jumping-off point for the subsequent assessment of women's writing. The correspondence of the Paston women of the fifteenth century, the Thynne women of the late-sixteenth and early-seventeenth centuries and the Civil War letters of Brilliana Harley are the subject of the second chapter. How do these practical documents engage with and manipulate commercial vocabulary for their own purposes? In the third chapter, letters written in the action of life are replaced with the retrospective memoirs of Margery Kempe's *Boke* (1436-8) and Martha Moulsworth's poetic autobiography, 'The Memorandum of Martha Moulsworth Widdowe' (1632). These two texts, and their authors, could not be more different, and yet both utilise mercantile rhetoric with striking effect. In the fourth chapter, I assess the final act of textual life administration: the will. This formulaic legal document may seem an unlikely source of female agency, but an analysis of bequests, terminology and the nuances of expression makes fruitful discoveries. Testaments range from 1422 to 1646, providing wide scope across historical period, religious belief and social rank. Finally, the concluding 'Codicil' of this thesis draws the findings of the previous chapters to a close with a discussion of Isabella Whitney's fictional poetic 'Wyll' (1573) and Elizabeth Joscelin's *Legacy to Her Unborn Child* (1622). The similarities and differences of women writers' appropriation of mercantile discourse across the late medieval and early modern periods, their social rank, their religion, and their choice of genre will be considered. How far did pre-modern women writers manipulate fiscal vocabulary, commercial theory and mercantile metaphor to inhabit

[1] Geoffrey Chaucer, 'The Wife of Bath's Prologue', in *The Riverside Chaucer*, ed. by Larry D. Benson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), pp.105-16 (p.110, l.414).

traditionally male roles? In what ways do they utilise this rhetoric to carve out a uniquely female space within their writings and contemporary societies? Do their writings reveal that each author really 'evyr desyryd mor and mor'?

Abbreviations

Bible

Unless otherwise stated, biblical quotations relating to the medieval context of this study are taken from the Douay-Rheims translation of the Latin Vulgate into English. <https://www.biblestudytools.com/rhe/>

In relation to early modern, Protestant context, the King James Bible is quoted unless otherwise referenced. <https://www.biblestudytools.com/kjv/>

MED refers to the online edition of the *Middle English Dictionary* <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/middle-english-dictionary/dictionary>

NACC refers to the online *National Archives Currency Converter* <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/currency-converter/#currency-result> This source has been used for all examples of equivalent values and purchasing power.

OED refers to the online edition of the *Oxford English Dictionary* <https://www-oed-com.ezproxy.bangor.ac.uk>

Referencing

As this thesis has been submitted solely in an electronic format due to the Covid-19 pandemic, new full references are given for primary and secondary sources at their first mention in each new chapter as a courtesy to the reader. Subsequent references in the same chapter are made using the short form.

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First and foremost, I owe a huge debt of thanks to my supervisors, Professor Sue Niebrzydowski and Professor Helen Wilcox, for their unfailing support, encouragement, invaluable feedback and, above all, friendship during my studies at Bangor. It has been a joy to work under your guidance. I will be forever grateful to – and inspired by – you both.

Mum and Dad have put up with me living in their household for far longer than they bargained for. While I may not have been earning money while I covered the house in books and papers, I was certainly rich in love. Thank you.

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To my own network of exceptional women – friends and relatives – thank you. Thank you for making me a godmother and for sharing wine, (so many) cups of tea, ginger biscuits, tears and lots of laughter, and for proving that the currency of affection is still doing a roaring trade.

I gratefully acknowledge the fee-waiver awarded by the College of Arts, Humanities and Business at Bangor University, without which I could never have embarked upon this project. Thanks also to my fellow PhD students and colleagues at Bangor and in the wider academic community for your camaraderie. It would have been lonely without you.

I dedicate my own little legacy to the memory of Jen. The experience of being her sister enriched my life beyond words and the memories we banked are, thank goodness, enough to last a lifetime. It is also for Nanna Kay, because if anyone taught me the value of the solace to be found in a book, buttery toast and a cat, it was her. And finally, for Nanna B., because she always said my hard work would be worth it.

Chapter One

Introduction: 'Wynne whoso may, for al is for to selle'

This study investigates the appropriation of mercantile vocabulary and practice in various areas of life, including the devotional, marital, sexual, political and familial, in non-fictional writings by medieval and early modern women from the fifteenth to seventeenth centuries. Financial discourse is applicable to many aspects of lived experience, as Geoffrey Chaucer demonstrates in his ventriloquizing of a female cloth merchant, the Wife of Bath. As Chaucer's Alisoun boldly states in her 'Prologue' (c.1437), 'Wynne whoso may, for al is for to selle'.[2] For Alisoun, and by implication for Chaucer's contemporary society, the knowledge that everything and everyone has a value to be exploited, is key. With skilful negotiation, Alisoun implies, anyone can profit. Commercial discourse is central to Alisoun's portrayal in her 'Prologue' and to the exchange of knowledge and marriage in her 'Tale'. Business practice and phrasing are crucial to Alisoun's understanding of life and unite her roles as a medieval woman: spiritual, marital, sexual and economic. By examining a range of texts and genres written by pre-modern women spanning two centuries, this project hopes to demonstrate that this was not just the case for Chaucer's fictional Alisoun, but for a variety of mercantile and higher-ranking female authors themselves.

The texts with which this thesis is concerned are a selection of wills written by pre-modern women ranging from 1422 to 1646, the fifteenth-century letters of the Paston women, Margery Kempe's *Boke* (1436-8), Isabella Whitney's fictional poetic 'Wyll' (1573), the late sixteenth to early seventeenth-century correspondence of Joan and Maria Thynne, Elizabeth Joscelin's *Legacy to Her Unborn Child* (1622), Martha Moulsworth's 'The Memorandum of Martha Moulsworth Widdowe' (1632), and the Civil War letters of Lady Brilliana Harley.[3] This group of texts, brought together for the analysis of their fiscal rhetoric for the first time, showcases pre-modern female authors' engagement with financial discourse and theory, covering a range of genres. The epistolary genre, memoirs and wills have been favoured over other genres such as lyrics, household books and drama for several reasons. Due to the predominance of tropes of courtly love, the metaphorical language of finance is largely absent

[2] Geoffrey Chaucer, 'The Wife of Bath's Prologue', in *The Riverside Chaucer*, ed. by Larry D. Benson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), pp.105-16 (p.110, l.414). All references are to this edition, hereafter cited by line number.

[3] Throughout the thesis, authors will be referred to by their surname except where this is shared by another writer whose texts are discussed in this project; in such a case, as with the Thynne and Paston women, they will be referred to by their given name.

from lyrics, and those lyrics of a religious nature have already been much discussed: this thesis deals with lesser-known genres and texts. Women's household books and accounts, while useful for context in this study and obviously rich in financial material, do not, overall, present language and rhetoric conducive to literary analysis. Furthermore, this project is concerned with English women's writing in the English language (with the exception of some wills such as that of Margaret Blakburn which have been translated from Latin) between the fifteenth and seventeenth centuries, and as far as I have been able to discern, the only surviving medieval drama known to have been written by a female author was written in Latin by a German nun in the tenth century.[4]

My chosen selection of women's writings can loosely be categorised as autobiographical; with the exception of Whitney's text, all are non-fiction. In his consideration of the type of texts we might class as life-writing, beyond the diary or self-conscious autobiography, Adam Smyth includes financial documents among the texts he deems 'central to a historically sensitive explanation of early modern life-writing.'[5] While none of my chosen texts are solely financial accounts, Smyth's research demonstrates that an exploration of monetary matters in pre-modern literature can be fruitful in broadening our perception of the era. This thesis aims to extend backwards the period on which Smyth focused by including texts written by late medieval women. My choice of texts challenges the validity of the medieval and early modern divide imposed upon literature by scholars. Smyth argues for a less inward-looking understanding of life-writing than previously advocated by critics who cite the 'Renaissance' period as the birth of self-contemplating autobiography.[6] Instead, he claims that the early modern era encompassed many forms of life-writing which, I suggest, is also true of the earlier period – and, indeed, of antiquity.[7] By including texts which are not explicitly autobiographical but dealt with the day-to-day lives of female authors, we can gain greater insight into their use of language to express a sense of society as well as of self. Smyth argues that many kinds of texts are 'loosely related to an idea of self-accounting' including among them letters, conversion narratives, annotated family Bibles and legal documents.[8] Important to this study is Smyth's recognition of the 'migration of financial lexicon – credit, debt, obligation, trust, account – into a broader cultural sphere to describe social relations' in life-

[4] Hrotsvit was canoness of Gandersheim Abbey (c.935 – c.975) and wrote six plays in Latin: *Gallicanus, Dulcitius, Callimachus, Abraham, Paphnutius*, and *Sapientia.*
[5] Adam Smyth, *Autobiography in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), p.1.
[6] Smyth, pp.2-3; pp.9-11.
[7] Augustine's *Confessions*, for example.
[8] Smyth, p.1.

writing.[9] This project takes the exploration of the appropriation of financial lexicon further than its migration to a description of social relations to include its presence in pre-modern women's writing about matters of devotion, conflict, affection, marriage, death and law. The letters, memoirs and wills which this project investigates are all inherently bound up with economic matters. Over the course of the following chapters, I hope to reveal the surprising creative expression and revelatory quality of women's writing about money and of their writings which use financial lexicon to engage with aspects of lived experience.[10]

The degree to which the women studied in this thesis were exceptional in their shrewd writing and financial dealing is open for debate.[11] Were they remarkable or was their behaviour the norm for women of their position? This project does not intend to answer the question of their exceptionality, but it is one that is useful to keep in mind throughout any reading of their writings. What does make these women exceptional is the survival of their texts. By default, pre-modern's women's writing is largely limited to those with money and/or education – however informal it may have been. The quotidian nature of the majority of women's writing, as opposed to the 'Literature' of canonical male authors such as Chaucer and Shakespeare, means that a great deal was destroyed as the wastepaper of everyday life, in much the same way as we might recycle a letter, dispose of a shopping list, or delete an email today. Even where female pre-modern authors are included in courses studying English literature, they are often limited to those authors with cursory, quasi-canonical status such as the works of Aemila Lanyer or Aphra Behn.

Of course, in the pre-modern era, as today, not all women (or men) were equally adept at managing their finances and seeking out the best deal, and no one could always act with good financial sense. Access to funds does not necessarily equate to sound economic acumen, nor does poverty parallel poor financial dealings.[12] At times the authors on whom this project concentrates display moments of questionable financial judgement. In her *Boke* (c.1436-8) Margery Kempe reveals her own financial misdemeanours. She recalls over-spending on lavish clothing – of which she 'evyr desyrd mor and mor' – prior to her conversion to a devout life, as well as referring to two failed businesses which would have required substantial initial

[9] Smyth, p.10.
[10] Further details on the selected texts and the thesis structure can be found at the end of this Introduction.
[11] The known details of their lives are outlined in Appendix Two.
[12] See, for example, my analysis of the letter by the financially vulnerable Cecily Daune, mistress of John Paston (II) in Chapter Two in which she appeals to him for clothing using abundant financial metaphor, pp.99-101.

investment.[13] Her poor financial record did not improve with her rejection of commerce. Kempe documents her attempt to obtain donations to undertake her pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela:

> sche went to the best frendys that sche had in Lynne and teld hem hir entent, how sche purposyd to gon to Seynt Jamys, yyf sche myth han good [money] to gon wyth, but sche was powr and awt meche dette. And hir frendys seyden to hir:
>
> 'Why have ye yovyn awey yowr good and other mennys also? (3485-90)

Kempe's excessive giving had landed her in 'dette'. Thanks to her immoderate charity, the initial response to Kempe's attempt to fund her pilgrimage was scorn. By irresponsibly giving she created her own poverty and became a burden on her society. Kempe documents the voice of her contemporaries to highlight the contrast between their focus on worldly economics, and therefore their religious folly, with her higher spiritual understanding. However, for the practical, mercantile community in which she lived, an appropriate balance between charitable giving and careful conservation of funds sufficient for survival was vital. Furthermore, adequate resources for the post-mortem financing of masses for the dead and a respectable burial would need to be preserved for the health of the soul. In contrast to Kempe's shunning of worldly goods and wealth is the Paston women's eager involvement with shopping and family finances. Perhaps the reason for the Pastons' keenness to get the best value for money was their relatively new-found wealth and social rank as they climbed from peasant farmers to mercantile élite and gentry over the course of three generations.[14] While Kempe's writing is an attempt to refute her engagement with worldly dealings and highlight her spiritual grace, the Paston women's letters are concerned with maintaining their worldly position. As the following chapters hope to reveal, the context and purpose for their writing had a profound impact on pre-modern women's representation of their own financial acumen.

Like that of Kempe, in the sixteenth century Elizabeth Hardwick's financial conduct was questioned by her contemporaries. In response to her lavish spending and ambitious building work at new Hardwick Hall, which itself can be read as an autobiographical expression of self-identity, Robert Cecil's mocking rhyme 'Hardwick Hall? More window than wall' has echoed down the centuries so that modern visitors to the Hall, or readers of Hardwick's papers,

---

[13] Margery Kempe, *The Book of Margery Kempe,* ed. by Barry Windeatt (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2004), pp.57-60, ll.253-310. All references are to this edition of the text, hereafter cited by line number. See Chapter Three pp.135-40 for more on Kempe's failed businesses.

[14] See Chapter Two, pp.87-9 for a discussion of Margaret Paston's shopping orders.

can still hear the condemnation that met her self-aggrandisement.[15] Important to Hardwick's financial status was her journey from daughter of impoverished gentry to the Countess of Shrewsbury.[16] On route to attaining this title and becoming the wealthiest non-royal woman in the country, she had in fact been in dire financial difficulty thanks to inheriting debts of over £5000 owed to the Crown by her husband, William Cavendish.[17] Perhaps, as well as a reaction to female pride and ostentation, Cecil's mockery was also due to the perceived imprudence of Hardwick's extravagant spending.[18] It seems that when pre-modern women's financial acumen came under attack, it was often closely related to social or political disapproval of their actions.[19] Social, political, ethical and financial prudence were closely related, and those women who were profligate spenders were criticised for expenditure above their station. The remaining sections of this Introduction and the chapters that follow will demonstrate how this combination of social, political, and economic concerns permeated their societies, and how the writings of women responded to and manipulated this discourse.

This Introduction continues with a survey of the feminist and economic literary studies of pre-modern women's writing to date, along with scholarship on the financial history of pre-modern England as this research informs the context for the analysis of my chosen texts. A discussion of the biblical use of financial metaphor and attitudes to money follows. This biblical precedent is vital to understanding the writings of each author studied in this project and was central to pre-modern life. Connected to biblical devotion and its practice was the pre-modern understanding of marriage, and so the next section discusses the implications of marriage on the legal and financial position of pre-modern women. This thesis analyses the literary works of single, married and widowed women, and their marital status impacted on

---

[15] Mary S. Lovell, *Bess of Hardwick: First Lady of Chatsworth* (London: Abacus, 2005), p.410; Sarah Gristwood, *Arbella: England's Lost Queen* (London, Bantam Press, 2003), p.154. Tudor glass was notoriously expensive and laborious to make, and Hardwick required such a great deal for the fenestration of New Hardwick Hall that she set up her own 'glasshouse' employing her own glaziers. Lovell, p.390.

[16] See Appendix Two for more details on Hardwick's life.

[17] The debt was released by Elizabeth I on her accession to the throne. See Lovell, pp.107-12 for more information on this. As with the Paston women's letters, however, Hardwick's will reveals her careful safeguarding of her newfound wealth and assets for her descendants. Her bequests are discussed in Chapter Four of this thesis.

[18] Sarah Gristwood notes that early modern architectural projects did, in fact, financially ruin some of Hardwick's contemporary Elizabethan courtiers, such as Sir Christopher Hatton. Gristwood, p.154.

[19] Lettice Knollys (1543-1634) is said to have been banished from court by Elizabeth I due to her attempts to out-dress the Queen, as well as for being more attractive than the monarch. Simon Adams, 'Dudley [née Knollys; other married name Devereux], Lettice, countess of Essex and countess of Leicester (1543–1634), noblewoman', in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford University Press, 2008), <https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-8159> [Accessed 2 June 2020].

both their financial dealings and their use of rhetorical techniques in their writing. Following the section dealing with marriage is an overview of pre-modern conduct literature which strove to control the financial activities and social behaviour of women. Such literature provides an important context for the attitudes found in the texts examined in the subsequent chapters. Next is a summary of attitudes towards borrowing, lending and the contentious issue of usury in the period in question. Understanding pre-modern concerns over the spiritual implications of trade and lending is crucial in appreciating the complex attitudes found in the literature investigated in the later chapters. Accountancy handbooks emerged in early modern England, and, although these were predominantly aimed at men, a brief overview of their moral and gendered discourse is relevant to the texts studied in this project. Trust and risk are important concepts in any monetary dealing, and there is therefore a summary of these concepts and how they were understood in the pre-modern era, before the analysis of Chaucer's Wife of Bath's appropriation of mercantile language and practice to her marital and sexual relationships. Alisoun is, of course, a mistrusted and threatening figure for Chaucer's patriarchal society. The title of this Introduction is taken from her 'Prologue', and the analysis of this text offers a starting point for the wider investigation of this study. I close the Introduction with an outline of the structure that the thesis will take.

(i) Pennies and Pens: Economic History and Literary Criticism

The medieval or early modern businesswoman was not a rare phenomenon. Women of all social ranks engaged with the economy in some way, whether they were peasants who farmed, abbesses and nuns administering religious houses, merchant-class cloth makers, brewers, millers and (later) printers, or gentry and aristocratic women managing households and estates. Women's account books survive from across the period. In 1412-13, Dame Alice de Bryene recorded the costs of feeding her extensive Acton household and numerous guests, the delicacies on which they dined and the produce grown and made on her estate.[20] Two centuries later, women of a similar social class were still making records in this way. In her 1601 *Kitchin Booke*, Magdalen Herbert logged the expenses of her London household, including food, clothing and books, and listed the names and professions of the diners.[21] Though these account

[20] *The Household Book of Dame Alice de Bryene*, trans. by M.K. Dale, ed. by Vincent B. Redstone (Bungay: The Paradigm Press, 1984).
[21] The manuscript of Magdalen Herbert's *Kitchin Booke* is held in the private collection of John Herbert, Earl of Powys who granted access by kind permission.

books were compiled by stewards who also acted as scribes, both women were active overseers and personally signed-off the accounts at regular intervals, evidencing their ultimate authority over the household economy, its administration and its textual representation.

David Hawkes identifies the etymology of 'economy' as having its root in the Greek word for 'household': *oikos*.[22] He notes that for ancient Greeks, 'economics' referred to 'managing the resources of an aristocratic family,' and 'was the theory and practice of providing for the household's needs'.[23] This connection of economy with the household is particularly relevant to the pre-modern female writers studied in this thesis, as it is their centrality to household and families (whether biological, marital, political or spiritual) which necessitates their involvement with finance and allows them to infuse their writings with fiscal diction. Commercial, spiritual, and legal language permits numerous connotations and meanings, and it is for this reason that linguistic choices made by authors are so fascinating. As Appendix One demonstrates, pre-modern financial and mercantile terms were often polysemous.

Female appropriation of mercantile language and practice in pre-modern literature is a relatively unexplored area. While the recent collection of essays edited by Craig E. Bertolet and Robert Epstein makes important headway into the analysis of economic theory and metaphor in late medieval English literature, their focus is overwhelmingly on canonical, male authors such as Chaucer, Gower and Langland.[24] Similarly, Diane Cady's 2019 monograph, *The Gender of Money in Middle English Literature*, chooses to analyse only literature written by men when discussing the similarities between the negative discourses of women and money in medieval culture.[25] Epstein's 2018 monograph assesses value and exchange in the 'Canterbury Tales', noting the complexity of the theory and practice of monetary exchange in Chaucer's most famous work.[26] Epstein highlights the importance of studying the abstract and material aspects of money in gaining understanding of social history.[27] He argues that this

[22] David Hawkes, *Shakespeare and Economic Theory* (London: Bloomsbury, 2015), p.3.
[23] Hawkes, *Shakespeare and Economic Theory,* p.3.
[24] Craig E. Bertolet and Robert Epstein ed., *Money, Commerce, and Economics in Late Medieval English Literature* (Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018).
[25] Diane Cady, *The Gender of Money in Middle English Literature: Value and Economy in Late Medieval England* (Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019). See also, Cady's 2006 article which focusses on William Chestre's *Launfal* and William Langland's *Piers Plowman*: Diane Cady, 'The Gender of Money', *Genders,* 44 (2006), <https://www.colorado.edu/gendersarchive1998-2013/2006/12/01/gender-money> [Accessed 27 December 2020].
[26] Robert Epstein, *Chaucer's Gifts: Exchange and Value in the Canterbury Tales* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2018), pp.146-7.
[27] Epstein, p.198.

social theory is 'crucial' to literary criticism as literature itself is a 'social phenomenon'.[28] While these ideas linking money with society are critical to this study, Epstein does not consider the relevance of money in medieval women's writing, instead focussing solely on Chaucer. Another work centred on Chaucer is Jill Mann's important study of estates satire in which she recognises his use 'professional jargon' in the 'pilgrim portraits' of the 'General Prologue' but argues that this 'contributes relatively little to our sense of the individual psychology of the pilgrims'.[29] This thesis contends that the opposite is true for the female-authored texts studied here. The connected 'jargons' of commerce, finance and law which these pre-modern women employ in their writings reveals a complex psychology which unites the aspects of devotion, marriage, family and friendship of their lives in a shared discourse. Mann argues for 'Chaucer's continued insistence on the assembly of skills, duties and jargon that characterises an estate' for his pilgrims.[30] The following chapters investigate whether an 'estate' of women writers emerges from their texts through identifying the 'jargon', 'duties' and 'skills' they use in their writing.[31]

Thirty years ago, Deborah S. Ellis's article paired Margery Kempe's *Boke* with Chaucer's 'Merchant's Tale' in a discussion of language and commerce.[32] Crucially, Ellis suggests that 'sex serves to bridge the gap' between the overlapping 'language of commerce' and the 'language of women' in medieval literature.[33] Rhetorical appropriation of commercial language to sexual and personal relationships is central to much of the women's writing analysed in Chapters Two and Three. Primarily, Ellis suggests that Kempe 'adapts' her 'mercantile perspectives to questions of piety', while Chaucer's May adapts her 'mercantile perspectives' to sexuality; Ellis does not allow for a wider application of commercial theory and discourse to multiple areas of life by these authors. What I hope to demonstrate is that female pre-modern authors adeptly appropriated mercantile diction and theory to numerous aspects of their lives simultaneously. Not only does Kempe use the language of commerce in her presentation of her spirituality, she forcefully represents her marriage as a mercantile

[28] Epstein, p.198.
[29] Jill Mann, *Chaucer and Medieval Estates Satire: The Literature of Social Classes and the General Prologue to the Canterbury Tales* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973), p.12.
[30] Mann, p.15.
[31] Shulamith Shahar argues for an 'estate' of medieval women in *The Fourth Estate: A history of women in the Middle Ages*, trans. by Chaya Galai (London and New York: Routledge, 1990). This thesis looks specifically for an estate of women writers who utilise financial rhetoric.
[32] Deborah S. Ellis, 'The Merchant's Wife's Tale: Language, Sex, and Commerce in Margery Kempe and in Chaucer', *Exemplaria,* 2 (1990), 595-626.
[33] Ellis, p.595.

bargain.[34] Ellis's analysis of Kempe's *Boke* is perhaps the first literary study to focus on a female medieval author's use of economic discourse, but her choice to pair it with the canonical work by Chaucer leaves a gap which this thesis aims to fill by studying Kempe in conjunction with numerous female-authored works. Chaucer's use of financial idiom and discourse has been widely analysed to the neglect, it seems, of other medieval authors, particularly female.[35]

In his 2013 study of multilingualism in medieval literature, Jonathan Hsy recognised the importance of 'code-switching' and commerce in informing language use in literary texts.[36] Hsy's monograph reveals the importance and fluidity of an author's choice of register, but the focus on the polyglot nature of English works – including those by Chaucer and Kempe – and translingual vocabulary leaves room for a discussion of specific mercantile discourses employed by pre-modern women writers.[37] Hsy's examination of multilingualism is concerned solely with medieval texts and predominantly with canonical literature. This present study takes a broader chronological range of women's writing which varies from the well-known, such as Kempe's *Boke*, to the lesser-known works, such as the testamentary writing of Katherine Barnardiston.

Similar to medieval women's writing, early modern women's writing has been overlooked in terms of analysis of its employment of financial metaphor and theory, with the work of economically-focussed literary critics such as Jonathan Gil Harris, David Hawkes and Linda Woodbridge concentrating largely on Shakespearean drama.[38] Canonical authors of the pre-modern era seem consistently to have been the first choice for scholars interested in analysing commercial metaphor. Barbara Harris has noted the early modern 'social convention [which] encouraged close relatives to use the language of economic advantage and favor in

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[34] See Chapter Three, pp.164-6, for my analysis of Kempe's negotiation for an agreement of chastity with her husband.

[35] See for example, Paul Stephen Schneider, '"Taillynge Ynough": The Function of Money in the "Shipman's Tale"', *The Chaucer Review,* 11.3 (1977), 201-209; Patricia J. Eberle, 'Commercial Language and the Commercial Outlook in the "General Prologue"', *The Chaucer Review,* 18.2 (1983), 161-174; Gerhard Joseph, 'Chaucer's Coinage: Foreign Exchange and the Puns of the "Shipman's Tale"', *The Chaucer Review,* 17.4 (1983), 341-357; John M. Ganim, 'Double Entry in Chaucer's "Shipman's Tale": Chaucer and Bookkeeping before Pacioli', *The Chaucer Review*, 30.3 (1996), 294-305; Helen Fulton, 'Mercantile Ideology in Chaucer's "Shipman's Tale"', *The Chaucer Review*, 36.4 (2002), 311-328.

[36] Jonathan Hsy, *Trading Tongues: Merchants, Multilingualism and Medieval Literature* (Columbus: The Ohio State University Press, 2013), pp.4-6.

[37] Hsy's chapter on Kempe analyses the *Boke* through the lens of travel-writing and the multilingual nature of her interactions. See Hsy, pp.131-56.

[38] Jonathan Gil Harris, *Sick Economies: Drama, Mercantilism, and Disease in Shakespeare's England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004); David Hawkes, *Shakespeare and Economic Theory* (London: Bloomsbury, 2015); Linda Woodbridge ed., *Money and the Age of Shakespeare: Essays in New Economic Criticism* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003).

their dealings with one another'.[39] While Harris's article does focus on the correspondence and life of Elizabeth Stafford, Duchess of Norfolk, it does not assess the wider use of such discourse by women in other genres, nor does it investigate Stafford's own use of this language in any great depth. From an historical rather than literary perspective, Alexandra Shepard has assessed the 'language of self-description' used by women and men appearing as witnesses in early modern English court records, finding that worth was understood in terms of both economic and reputational wealth.[40] This is also evident throughout the literature studied in this thesis: so often female authors conflate their financial standing with their rank in society.

Effie Botonaki's 1999 article comes closest to the aims of this project. In it, Botanaki has shown how seventeenth-century women's spiritual diaries 'enabled them to slip into forbidden shoes', including those of merchant and lawyer, in their 'blending' of commercial, legal and religious discourses.[41] What Botonaki's article does not do, however, is analyse women's writing across genres, or prior to the seventeenth century. Her argument that the spiritual diary and its merging of religious, mercantile, and legal discourses enabled women to walk in men's shoes is also problematic. I suggest that women authors do not use their language to assume traditionally masculine roles, but to carve out unique and distinctly female positions through their writing.[42] The writers studied in this project do not strive to forge positions which challenge the social order, but create a space for agency in their written works, and by implication their daily lives, within the accepted gendered roles of their culture.[43] Botonaki argues that the combination of 'the language of commerce with religious discourse' in the seventeenth century 'was not accidental' due to the increasing mercantile nature of society, the purchasing of titles and land by prosperous commoners, and the Protestant ideology which favoured hard work and thrift as godly duties.[44] She suggests that for these reasons, 'the language of exchange "infected" the language of God.'[45] While Protestantism undoubtedly impacted the way in which English society interpreted their prosperity, the later section of this Introduction entitled 'Christian Wealth', and the following chapters, prove that this 'infection'

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[39] Barbara Harris, 'Marriage Sixteenth-Century Style: Elizabeth Stafford and the Third Duke of Norfolk', *Journal of Social History,* 15.3 (1982), 371-382 (p.371).
[40] Alexandra Shepard, *Accounting for Oneself: Worth, Status, and the Social Order in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), pp.1-2; p.35; p.305.
[41] Effie Botonaki, 'Seventeenth-Century Englishwomen's Spiritual Diaries: Self-Examination, Covenanting, and Account Keeping', *The Sixteenth Century Journal*, 30.1 (1999), 3-21 (p.21; p.15).
[42] See, for example, Margaret Paston's invention of 'captenesse' to describe herself, discussed in Chapter Two, p. 81-2.
[43] Of course, this is can cause tension within their contemporary society, as is evident in Margery Kempe's *Boke*, analysed in Chapter Three of this thesis.
[44] Botonaki, p.15.
[45] Botonaki, p.15.

of devotion with mercantile language was present far earlier than the seventeenth century. It can be found in the biblical language and metaphor that informed the writings of medieval Englishwomen, particularly Margery Kempe, whose combination of religious, commercial and legal discourse employed in her *Boke* is analysed in Chapter Three.

This thesis strives to begin to fill a void left by critics of pre-modern literature in regard to women's writing and build on the work started by Botonaki's study of seventeenth-century women's spiritual accounts. If male authors were influenced, informed and inspired by the financial world, surely their female contemporaries had the potential to be so too? In addition, I am not aware of any study which has yet assessed the linguistic choices of female medieval and early modern authors simultaneously, nor one which covers a range of genres of self-writing.

The methodology used in this project combines and builds upon feminist and historicist approaches to literature to offer a rounded analysis of pre-modern women's non-fictional writing. While historicism contains the danger of being arbitrary by grouping seemingly unrelated texts and documents together in an attempt to identify connections, a careful selection of appropriate historical sources and literary texts can enlighten our understanding of particular writings. Additionally, historicism gives authority to texts not previously understood as 'Literature', such as the wills and letters studied here. However, as Bertolet and Epstein have observed, historicism, 'while attentive to social divisions and disparities in wealth and privilege, often avoided economic process'.[46] Attention to economic process and metaphor is vital to the analysis of the women's writing assessed in this project. Furthermore, historicists have frequently focussed on male-authored texts; my focus on female writers works towards redressing the balance. Feminist literary critics have not considered many of the texts that this thesis addresses in any great detail, such as the wills of Margaret Blakburn (1434) and Maud Parr (1530). Of course, Margery Kempe's *Boke* (1436-8) has been a popular subject of feminist critique for several years, but not alongside the writings present in this thesis. This study analyses a new combination of texts and aims to bridge the gap between the medieval and the early modern period through the study of women's non-fictional writings.

Recent theorising of female use of business language suggests that the exploration of pre-modern female mercantile vocabulary could shed further light on the literary historiography of these women. Particularly useful is the work of Caja Thimm, Sabine C. Koch,

[46] Bertolet and Epstein, p.5.

Sabine Schey, Janet Holmes, Maria Stubbe, and Shari Kendall, who have demonstrated that women and men employ language differently in the workplace and at home in our contemporary moment.[47] Collectively, they suggest that in a workplace setting, women manipulate and appropriate language for rhetorical purposes to a higher degree than their male colleagues, who are more likely to speak in a direct fashion using concise language. This linguistic research suggests that women continue to use diction to redress a power imbalance and navigate their way through the power-politics of the workplace and social hierarchy. My own study investigates the degree to which pre-modern women appropriate and manipulate vocabulary for rhetorical purposes in their written voices. In her analysis of Kempe's and Chaucer's language, Ellis observes that 'medieval slander cases, as well as literature, tell us that language is explicitly the tool of women who are otherwise at a power disadvantage.'[48] In their exclusion from public and civic office, and their financial and legal dependence on fathers and husbands, pre-modern women were always at a 'power disadvantage'. Paradoxically, this power disadvantage results in a powerful manipulation of words to exert rhetorical agency in texts written by such women.[49] Connected to Ellis's argument that, in the Middle Ages, language was a highly-charged form of exchange laden with economic and sexual commerce, is Florian Coulmas's identification of the connection between money and language in the twentieth century which highlights them both as forms of exchange and as social institutions.[50] As today, so in the pre-modern era: an interlinking of mercantile thought and language can be traced in the literary outputs of women.

Economic historians such as John Hatcher have assessed the impact of major disasters such as the Black Death on Britain's trade and labour market: the reduced population pushed labour to a premium, forcing wages higher, which in turn inflated prices but also allowed peasant men and women greater freedom of choice and movement in their employment.[51] Anne

[47] Caja Thimm, Sabine C. Koch and Sabine Schey, 'Communicating Gendered Professional Identity: Competence, Cooperation, and Conflict in the Workplace'; Janet Holmes and Maria Stubbe, '"Feminine" Workplaces: Stereotype and Reality'; Shari Kendall, 'Creating Gendered Demeanors of Authority at Work and at Home', all in *The Handbook of Language and Gender*, ed. by Janet Holmes and Miriam Meyerhoff (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2003).
[48] Ellis, p.603.
[49] For a striking example, see Cecily Daune's letter in Chapter Two, pp.99-101.
[50] Ellis, p.600, p.604; Florian Coulmas, *Language and Economy* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1992).
[51] John Hatcher, *Plague, Population and the English Economy 1348-1530* (London: The Macmillan Press, 1977); John Hatcher, 'England in the Aftermath of the Black Death', *Past & Present*, 144 (1994), 3-35. See also: Lawrin Armstrong, Ivana Elbl and Martin M. Elbl ed., *Money, Markets and Trade in Late Medieval Europe* (Leiden: Brill, 2007); John Day, *The Medieval Market Economy* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1987); Christopher Dyer, *Making a Living in the Middle Ages* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002); Christopher Dyer, *An Age of Transition? Economy and Society in England in the Later Middle Ages* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2005).

F. Sutton has noted the gender-bias of the Black Death and its particularly devastating effect on the young male population, thereby leading to more women being apprenticed to craft trades in London.[52] Others, such as J. L. Bolton, provide a general overview of the medieval economic situation as it developed from a feudal society and saw the emergence of a new merchant class who enjoyed newfound independence, material wealth and civic power as the Middle Ages progressed.[53] Members of this medieval merchant class included the fifteenth-century Pastons (whose letters are studied in Chapter Two), Margery Kempe (whose 1436-8 *Boke* is analysed in Chapter Three) and Margaret Blakburn (whose 1434 will is discussed in Chapter Four). Sylvia Thrupp's landmark study of medieval merchants gives an insight into the workings of this influential group of society.[54] Joel Kaye has noted 'the emerging sense of the marketplace as a dynamic […] system of equalization' occurring in European countries from the fourteenth century onwards.[55] As time progressed in the pre-modern world, so greater numbers of people from differing social ranks engaged in trade, negotiation, exchange and purchasing, and this is reflected in the appropriation of related discourses in the written works of the aristocratic through to merchant class women throughout this thesis.

The development of the mercery of London and the roles of women in this has been traced by Sutton. She observes that silkwomen prove increasingly difficult to find in early modern records, both because record-keeping changed and because it became ever more desirable for a man to have a wife who did not engage in trade to signify his social position and sound financial standing.[56] Additionally, Sutton notes the precarious financial position of unmarried female servants in the mercer community of London, a position which leads to the destitution of Isabella Whitney's speaker.[57]

The instability of economic structures, where they existed at all, impacted on pre-modern women's writing. Raymond De Roover, Martha C. Howell and Eric Kerridge have analysed the lack and development of organised banking systems in late medieval through to

[52] Anne F. Sutton, *The Mercery of London: Trade, Goods and People, 1130-1578* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2005), p.98.
[53] J. L., Bolton, *The Medieval English Economy 1150-1500* (London: J.M. Dent & Sons, 1980); Martin Allen, *Mints and Money in Medieval England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).
[54] Sylvia L. Thrupp, *The Merchant Class of Medieval London* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1948). See also Jenny Kermode, *Medieval Merchants* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).
[55] Joel Kaye, *Economy and Nature in the Fourteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p.11.
[56] Sutton, *The Mercery of London,* p.445.
[57] Sutton, *The Mercery of London,* p.208. See the 'Codicil' of this thesis for my analysis of Whitney's 'Wyll'.

early modern Europe.[58] Recently writing on female participation in rural copyhold mortgages in seventeenth-century England, Juliet Gayton noted that prior to the founding of the Bank of England in 1694, and the following emergence of formal, institutional lending, the majority of involvement with the credit market was done on a person to person basis.[59] While Gayton's work centres on the early modern period, this 'person to person' involvement in the financial world is evidenced by all the women's writing studied in this thesis: communal, mercantile, devotional and kinship networks are crucial to the financial activities of each woman, and vital to their writing. The absence of banking infrastructure as a depository for cash influenced the financial practices of women such as Maud Parr and Elizabeth Hardwick, whose wills reveal their investment in plate and storage of money in multi-lock chests.[60] Shepard has identified early modern wives' household saving and accounting as a type of banking which allowed them a degree of economic agency.[61] The activities of widows such as Parr and Hardwick show that this was also true for widowed pre-modern women, and the financial involvement of medieval wives such as the Pastons, as well as the early modern Thynnes and Brilliana Harley, demonstrate that medieval women were as active in 'household banking' as their early modern successors.[62] Other economic historians have analysed the impact of war and civil unrest on English currency, leading to the Tudor debasement of coins.[63] Civil instability, of course, had ramifications of economic precarity for those with financial assets. The turmoil before and during the English Civil War and its implications of economic insecurity inform the letters of Lady Brilliana Harley.[64]

Numerous historical studies have been carried out on the economic activities and labour of women throughout the medieval and early modern periods. P.J.P. Goldberg's work is invaluable in providing a detailed examination of urban women's economic activities and the ways in which they altered and developed as their lives progressed and marital status changed.[65]

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[58] Raymond De Roover, *Business, Banking, and Economic Thought in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974). See also: Martha C. Howell, *Commerce Before Capitalism in Europe 1300-1600* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010); Eric Kerridge, *Trade and banking in early modern England* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988).
[59] Juliet Gayton, 'Women's Participation in Rural Copyhold Mortgages in Seventeenth-Century England', in *Women and Credit in Pre-Industrial Europe*, ed. by Elise M. Dermineur (Turnhout: Brepols, 2018), pp.143-71 (p.144).
[60] See Chapter Four, p.228-9.
[61] Shepard, p.308.
[62] See Chapter Two for a consideration of the Pastons', Thynnes' and Harley's financial involvement.
[63] Kerridge, pp.36-7; p.85.
[64] See Chapter Two, pp.96-9 for an insight into Harley's understanding of this financial precarity.
[65] P.J.P. Goldberg, *Women, Work, and Life Cycle in a Medieval Economy: Women in York and Yorkshire c.1300-1520* (Clarendon Press, 1992). See also, Barbara A. Hanawalt, ed., *Women and Work in Preindustrial Europe* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986).

Judith M. Bennett focuses on the prolific trade of female brewers in the medieval period and examines their decline in numbers thanks to the advent of larger scale production and emergence of organised male brewing associations as the early modern period progressed.[66] Bennett's volume is particularly relevant to the study of Kempe's *Boke* which records her sometime successful brewing enterprise before its sudden failure to emphasise her transition from worldly businesswoman and sinner to devout pilgrim.[67] Alice Clark's ground-breaking monograph, first published in 1919, provides an overview of English women's engagement with the economy during the 1600s.[68] The advent of printing and the growth of the market for printed texts saw more women, including Isabella Whitney, become involved in the book trade as the early modern period continued: as printers, authors, sellers and consumers.[69] Susan Cahn has assessed the development of women's work and the effect of changing religious attitudes from 1500 until the Restoration in 1660.[70] Regardless of religion, social rank or geographical location, women remained central to the economic survival of the household.

The contemporary attitudes towards unmarried women who acted as money-lenders in early modern England have been discussed by Judith M. Spicksley. She notes that their activities were generally more accepted and less reviled than those of married or widowed women.[71] She suggests that this was due to the fact that their financial activities were understood as a means to increase their 'portion' and so enable a better marriage, therefore promoting the accepted social order.[72] The women studied in this thesis are predominantly married and widowed,[73] yet they too engage with money-lending, and understand 'the value of their debts as financial assets' in bequeathing them to friends and relatives, which Spicksley

[66] Judith M. Bennett, *Ale, Beer, and Brewsters in England, Women's Work in a Changing World, 1300-1600* (Oxford University Press, 1996). For further information on women's involvement with specific trades, see Marian K. Dale, 'The London Silkwomen of the Fifteenth Century', *The Economic History Review*, 4.3 (1933), 324-335; Natalie Zemon Davis, 'Women in Crafts in Sixteenth-Century Lyon' *Feminist Studies,* 8.1 (1982), 46-80; Natasha Korda, *Labors Lost: Women's Work and the Early Modern English Stage* (Philadelphia: University of Philadelphia Press, 2011); Maryanne Kowaleski and Judith M. Bennett, 'Crafts, Gilds, and Women in the Middle Ages: Fifty Years after Marian K. Dale', *Signs*, 14.2 (1989), 474-501.

[67] Discussed in Chapter Three, pp.135-40.

[68] Alice Clark, *Working Life of Women in the Seventeenth Century* (London and New York: Routledge 1919, reprinted 1992).

[69] See Helen Smith, *'Grossly Material Things': Women and Book Production in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

[70] Susan Cahn, *Industry of Devotion: The Transformation of Women's Work in England, 1500-1660* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987).

[71] Judith M. Spicksley, 'Women, 'Usury' and Credit in Early Modern England: The Case of the Maiden Investor', *Gender & History*, 27.2 (2015), 263-292 (p.274).

[72] Spicksley, p.274.

[73] Margery Brews (later Paston), Cecily Daune, and Isabella Whitney were not married at the time of writing the texts under investigation in this thesis.

suggests is particularly common in the wills of single female money-lenders.[74] The results of my analysis of pre-modern women's wills propose that this was a common practice amongst all female money-lenders regardless of their marital status or social rank.[75] The testators studied in Chapter Four transform their money-lending into bequests which are employed as a rhetorical strategy to perpetuate their memory in the consciousness of their survivors within the strict confines of a legal will. As will be revealed, the discourse of commerce is utilised to give gifts a value which goes beyond the monetary in pre-modern women's wills.

Gender expectations circulating within culture certainly impacted upon women's involvement with credit networks in the pre-modern era. The 2018 book of essays edited by Elise M. Dermineur, *Women and Credit in Pre-Industrial Europe*, considers the extent of this in numerous European countries, including England, Spain, Germany, Italy, France and the Low Countries.[76] This collection of essays is the first to focus entirely on the financial credit of women in pre-modern Europe. In this volume, Teresa Phipps claims that rather than signifying poor financial management, medieval women's debts provide 'a general indicator of commercial activity'.[77] In the same volume, Gayton notes that the reasons that seventeenth-century English women borrowed money included building costs, business investments, financial difficulties, to fulfil bequests or pay off inherited debts, to provide dowries and support children.[78] Brilliana Harley's Civil War letters reveal her borrowing for building work on the family home of Brampton Bryan Castle and the direct language and tone she employs when informing her male relatives of her actions.[79] Gayton argues that the motives of providing marriage portions and the upkeep of children were far more frequent in loans taken out by female borrowers than they were by their male counterparts.[80] It seems that the financial aspect of bringing up children fell to pre-modern women, as well as the nurturing itself. The letters of Harley, the Paston and the Thynne women demonstrate the female responsibilities of marriage negotiation and the financial organisation of family provision.[81] With the historical and economic research of critics as contextual groundwork, this thesis will interrogate the

[74] Spicksley, pp.279-83.
[75] See p.227 of this thesis for examples of wives and widows bequeathing debts.
[76] Elise M. Dermineur ed., *Women and Credit in Pre-Industrial Europe* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2018).
[77] Teresa Phipps, 'Creditworthy Women and Town Courts in Late Medieval England', in Dermineur, p.76. Phipps's study traces fourteenth-century women in the town court records of Chester, Nottingham and Winchester, observing that medieval women confidently used town courts to recover debts which varied from as little as 3d. for milk to much larger amounts such as 30s. 7d. owed by one female merchant to another. Phipps, pp.78-80.
[78] Gayton, pp.154-5.
[79] See Chapter Two, pp.95-6 of this thesis.
[80] Gayton, pp.154-5.
[81] See Chapter Two.

similarities and differences between the rhetorical uses of mercantile diction and metaphor in the writings of pre-modern women. How important was their social, marital and economic status, relative to their gender? To what extent was this also affected by their historical period?

The emotional aspect of financial activity is vital to the non-fictional writings analysed here, as the authors constantly weigh up trust against risk, gain against loss, agency against dependence. Ultimately, financial metaphor is the representation of this struggle, and the final linguistic choices of each author signifies the strength (or rhetorical pretence of weakness) with which she infuses her writing, whether that be in fighting for the family property, defending her spirituality, or asserting a post-mortem control over assets in her last will and testament.[82] Laurence Fontaine concludes the volume edited by Dermineur with the crucial remark that 'emotions were […] part of all economic relations', and that they were 'behind mental accounts' used in daily life to 'frame' expenditure.[83] Economic discourse and mercantile practice combine in the female authors' representation of their lives, in which the worlds of spending, borrowing, business, devotion, marriage and friendship overlap and are all tied together by the understanding of human and divine relationships as an emotional currency.

(ii) Christian Wealth

The Bible is abundant in financial metaphor with which the pre-modern English population would have been very familiar. While literate early modern Protestants had access to the Bible in their vernacular language and the opportunity to read the text as part of their individual devotional practice, the medieval laity rarely accessed the text themselves, even if they were literate in Latin, without the mediation of a priest.[84] Nevertheless, their attendance at church services, where they would listen to sermons and see walls adorned with murals and stained-glass windows depicting important biblical teachings, would ensure that they were familiar with such metaphors.

St Luke's Gospel includes Christ's teaching in which a woman's fondness for money is the metaphor for God's mercy towards repentant sinners:

[82] Margaret Paston and Brilliana Harley in Chapter Two, Margery Kempe in Chapter Three and all testators in Chapter Four respectively.
[83] Laurence Fontaine, 'Concluding Remarks', in Dermineur, p.356.
[84] In the Middle Ages, those who called for access to the Bible in the vernacular faced deadly accusations of heresy and Lollardy.

> what woman, having ten groats; if she lose one groat, doth not light a candle, and sweep the house, and seek diligently until she find it?
>
> And when she hath found it, call together her friends and neighbours, saying: Rejoice with me, for I have found the groat which I had lost. (Luke 15:8-9)[85]

The desire and, of course, need for money is assumed to be universal in this passage which teaches the importance of Christian repentance for sins. Just as the woman and her neighbours feel joy at the rediscovery of her coin, the angels of God rejoice over the return of the sinner through her/his repentance. Sinners are presented as temporarily missing through worldly temptation rather than irrevocably lost to the devil, using financial metaphor which links women with caring for money and the virtue of household prudence.

The parable of the labourers in the vineyard (Matthew 20:1-16) uses financial metaphor to highlight fiscal tolerance and the award of grace. Each labourer receives the same payment for his work, regardless of whether he has laboured for the whole day or only the final hour. Through this parable, Christians are taught the generosity of God and that it is never too late to repent and worship with true belief.[86] The metaphorical wages and financial reward signify spiritual benefit to the soul. This discourse provides a biblical model for the mingling of the fiscal and spiritual found in abundance in the writing of the medieval Margery Kempe, and throughout the wills analysed in Chapter Four.[87] Two seventeenth-century mothers Brilliana Harley and Elizabeth Joscelin also draw on this tradition: their writings appropriate the legal and financial discourse of inheritance to encourage their children to practice sincere, Protestant piety as an expression of their position amongst the elect.[88]

Similarly, the parable of the talents, through its allegory of golden coins, teaches that those servants of God who work to increase His glory and the spiritual wealth of others will receive the greatest heavenly rewards (Matthew 25:14-30). In contrast, those who bury and hide the coins – their gifts – in fear or shame will bring 'darkness' upon themselves. Once again, financial metaphor encourages Christians to understand the economics of redemption. Of course, 'redemption' is itself a financial term and encompasses the inherent interconnection

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[85] The King James Bible simply updates the coinage used in this parable to 'pieces of silver'.

[86] The vineyard parable is utilised by the late fourteenth-century *Pearl* poet. The Dreamer misunderstands the biblical metaphor and struggles to accept that it is the purity of belief which is rewarded, rather than the length of time over which worship is performed. 'Pearl', in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, Pearl, Cleanness, Patience,* ed. by J.J. Anderson (London: Everyman, 2005), pp.1-46 (pp.19-25).

[87] Kempe's writing is the topic of Chapter Three.

[88] See Chapter Two and Codicil.

of mercantile and devotional discourse across the pre-modern era that is so vital in each text analysed in the following chapters.[89]

On the other hand, the Bible includes Christ's explicit warnings against inappropriate use of monetary wealth: 'It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven' (Matthew 19:24). In addition, those with wealth are cautioned against greed: 'the desire of money is the root of all evils; which some coveting have erred from the faith' (1 Timothy 6:10). Believers are left in no doubt that their wealth can be a direct obstacle to their salvation and a danger to their souls. The performance of alms and the Seven Corporal Acts of Mercy must be used to balance wealth in a bargain for salvation.[90] Christ casts 'out all them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the moneychangers', declaring that they transformed the temple from 'the house of prayer' into 'a den of thieves' (Matthew 21:12-3). Money-making and worship should not be combined: they cannot co-exist in the same building. Such teaching must have influenced the thoughts, life, and writing of Kempe, whose *Boke* shows her struggle to reconcile her mercantile and devotional self.[91]

Despite being an entrepreneur, mercer and merchant adventurer himself, when translating the French *Book of the Knight of the Tower* (1484), William Caxton retained the original's depiction of the money-lenders in the temple as mercers, illustrating the continuing distrust of trade and its potential incompatibility with devotion.[92] If Caxton, himself a mercer, was comfortable to maintain the derision towards merchants in the presentation of this biblical episode, it suggests that the perception of traders as spiritually dirty – for they prevent the church from being 'kepte clene' – was ubiquitous in medieval culture (60). Perhaps Caxton suggests that, rather than inherently immoral itself, trading is spiritually acceptable if carried out *outside* the church, as a separate part of community life. This desire to keep commercial

[89] 'Redemption', as well referring to salvation, can mean the act of freeing a prisoner by payment; compensation; purchase of guild or society membership; buying back something offered as security; or paying off a debt (*OED* 2a; 1a; 3b; 4; 6a; 6b). See Appendix One for a glossary of terms combining the discourses of economics, commerce, devotion, law and human relationships which are relevant to this study.

[90] These seven acts are to feed the hungry; give drink to the thirsty; shelter the homeless; visit the sick; visit prisoners; clothe the naked and comfort the dying (Matthew 25:35-6).

[91] See Chapter Three.

[92] Anne F. Sutton, 'Caxton was a Mercer: his Social Milieu and Friends', in *England in the Fifteenth Century: Proceedings of the 1992 Harlaxton Symposium,* ed. by Nicholas Rogers (Stamford: Paul Watkins, 1994), pp.118-148 (p.124; p.133). The translation reads: 'Ihesu Cryst entred or went in a chirche. whiche at that tyme was called the Temple, where as men sold Mercery and other ware/ And as oure lord god sawe this/ he put them out euerychone/ And sayd that his hows sholde be kepte clene/ And that it ought to be the hows of hooly orysons and prayers. and not hows of Merchaundyse nor pytte [pit] or spelonke [den] for theues.' *The Book of the Knight of the Tower* trans. by William Caxton, ed. by M.Y. Offord (London: published for the Early English Text Society by the Oxford University Press, 1971), p.60. All references are to this edition.

activities separate from the devotional is seen in sharp detail in Kempe's *Boke.*[93] The crossover of the two, however, is evident in the financial and spiritual metaphors employed in women's epistolary and life-writings and in bequests of luxurious devotional items that double as signifiers of worldly wealth.[94] While devotional practices changed from the Reformation onwards, commercial metaphor remained throughout the pre-modern era and continued to be prevalent in the female-authored texts that I have studied.

The language associated with Christian belief has strong connotations of financial dealings. Judgement Day, also known as the Day of Reckoning, has, like redemption, its own financial overtones and meanings of settling debts.[95] It conjures images of souls being weighed by the Archangel Michael in a set of scales to decide whether they should be condemned to hell or redeemed into heaven, as exploited in the fifteenth-century morality play, *Everyman*.[96] Such images adorned medieval church walls, stained glass windows, paintings, and carvings.[97] Not only does this imagery evoke thoughts of financial sales of goods by weight, but also of mathematical calculations related to finance and accounting, specifically those of credit and debt. Proverbs 16:11 states 'Weight and balance are judgments of the Lord: and his work all the weights of the bag'. Just as merchants and traders would be subject to quality checks using weights and measures, so too would believers be subject to checks on the sincerity of their devotion as their sins were balanced against their good deeds. Value according to weight is a familiar practice in commerce, and medieval shoppers would be used to paying for goods such as spices according to their weight, rather than number of items or size of the bag.[98] In the Judgement Day scales, the sins of Christians are reckoned against their good works to determine the fate of their souls.[99] The concept of salvation and the language used to express it are both bound up with the theory of mercantile activity.

[93] See Chapter Three for my discussion of this, and figures 1 to 3 on pp.124-5 for an illustration of the close physical proximity of devotion and business in Kempe's contemporary Lynn.
[94] See Chapter Two for an analysis of the rhetoric employed in pre-modern women's epistolary writing, and Chapter Three for Moulsworth's and Kempe's use of overlapping spiritual and mercantile discourses. The discussion of bequests of the material items of devotion can be found in Chapter Four.
[95] 'Reckoning', of course, refers to counting as well as judging. See Appendix One for more definitions.
[96] See pp.28-9 of this Introduction for a brief analysis of *Everyman.*
[97] Diana Wood, *Medieval Economic Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p.91.
[98] Margaret Paston orders items such as dates and sugar using weight rather than quantities in her shopping lists sent to her son and husband. See Chapter Two pp.87-9.
[99] This metaphor of Judgement Day as spiritual payment for worldly actions is reiterated in Christ's words to his disciples: 'For what doth it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and suffer the loss of his own soul? Or what exchange shall a man give for his soul? For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels: and then will he render to every man according to his works.' (Matthew 16:26-7). Biblical language leaves Christians in no doubt that the salvation of the soul relies on a system of exchange which is mirrored in that of employer and employee, or buyer and seller.

Liz Herbert McAvoy points out the lengthy tradition of using financial vocabulary in literature discussing the relationship between God and Christians, locating its beginnings in the third century.[100] McAvoy shows that in *Revelations of Divine Love* (c.1373), Julian of Norwich's depiction of Christ's relationship with humanity is 'essentially transactional'.[101] For example, Julian expresses the relationship between the soul and God in mercantile terms: 'he is mede wharefore ilke trewe saule travailles': the wages of the soul's spiritual labour will be God's love.[102] Julian was a contemporary of Margery Kempe, and a meeting between the two women is recorded in Kempe's *Boke* (1335-50). The appropriation of commercial discourse when discussing religion by both Julian and Kempe hints that this may have been a recognised practice in their contemporary, mercantile East Anglian society.

The friction between wealth and salvation found in biblical teaching and medieval thought is reflected in pre-modern literature which attempts to reconcile worldly wealth with devotion. After all, the circulation of wealth was as necessary for the successful functioning of society as it is today. The fifteenth-century morality play, *Everyman*, teaches the need to moderate worldly fortune and goods with charitable giving in order to obtain salvation:

> I wyll make my testament
> Here before you all presente.
> In almes half my good I wyll gyve with my hands twayne
> In the waye of charyte with good entent,
> And the other halfe styll shall remane
> In quyet [bequest] to be returned there [where] it ought to be.
> This I do in despyte of the fende of Hell
> To go quyte out of his parell [peril][103]

The language of legal wills is used to sum up this lesson of charitable giving, suggesting to the audience that testamentary bequests can add to the good deeds done in life. A testament is a

[100] Liz Herbert McAvoy, ''And Thou, to Whom This Booke Shall Come': Julian of Norwich and Her Audience, Past, Present and Future', in *Approaching Medieval English Anchoritic and Mystical Texts*, ed. by Dee Dyas, Valerie Edden and Roger Ellis (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2005), pp.101-13 (pp.104-5).
[101] McAvoy, ''And Thou, to Whom This Booke Shall Come', pp.104-5.
[102] Julian of Norwich, 'A Vision Showed to a Devout Woman', in *The Writings of Julian of Norwich*, ed. by Nicholas Watson and Jacqueline Jenkins (Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2006), pp.61-119 (p.97).
[103] 'Everyman', in *Everyman and Its Dutch Original*, ed. by Clifford Davidson, Martin W. Walsh, and Ton J. Broos (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 2007), pp.15-77 (p.63, ll.695-704). All references are to this edition, hereafter cited by line number.

reckoning of a life, and a contract in which goods are bequeathed for the profit of the soul.[104] Everyman makes his will and promises to give half of his wealth as alms, and the other half in bequests to deserving heirs. Both acts will help to fend off the devil while shortening the soul's time in Purgatory and eventually lead to Heaven. The importance of balancing wealth with good deeds through the Seven Corporal Acts of Mercy is summed up in the final scene of *Everyman* with, 'he that hath his accounte hole and sounde, / Hye in Heven he shall be crounde' (916-7). This metaphor of earthly life as an 'account' to be balanced to obtain salvation was ubiquitous throughout the Middle Ages and into the early modern era. Dated c.1498, *Everyman* sits on the cusp of the two periods, demonstrating that the issues it discusses are important to both eras, while challenging the very existence of such a divide. Of course, Protestant belief denied the existence of Purgatory, but the focus on balancing the account of the soul remained present in Christian thinking beyond the Reformation. Indeed, Botonaki deems that, for early modern Protestants, 'meticulous account keeping' was 'a pathway to godliness'.[105] Rather than the system of exchange understood by the Roman Church, account-keeping of the soul became a way for Protestants to identify signs of grace and their personal salvation.

The negotiation between ideal devotion and practical mercantile activity was often fraught with difficulty for pre-modern merchants.[106] The real medieval merchant, like Everyman, would need to balance his/her wealth with good deeds to ensure spiritual health. As in the Middle Ages, so in the early modern era did Christians of all denominations interpret their devotional practices through economic metaphor, as illustrated by the writings of medieval Margery Kempe and Protestant Katherine Barnardiston.[107] Though official doctrine differed between the Roman and Protestant churches, the financial metaphors used to understand salvation remained. Under Calvinism the role of the merchant became particularly prominent as believers searched for evidence of their predestination, and worldly success was interpreted as a sign of divine favour.

[104] See Chapter Four for more on this.
[105] Botonaki, p.16.
[106] Francisco García-Serrano notes that 'the medieval merchant, whose primary goal was the increase of wealth' was regarded as suspicious and 'placed under spiritual surveillance.' Francisco García-Serrano, 'Conclusion: The Mendicants as a Mediterranean Phenomenon', in *Mendicants and Merchants in the Medieval Mediterranean* ed. by Taryn E. L. Chubb and Emily D. Kelley (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2012), pp.124-141 (p.124).
[107] The writings of Kempe and Barnardiston are discussed in Chapters Three and Four respectively.

(iii) Marriage and Money

The devotional and the financial were inseparably combined in pre-modern marriage. As it is for Christians today, marriage was more than a legal contract between man and woman: it was also a sacrament. The ceremony performed by the priest bound husband and wife in an unbreakable religious bond. Significantly, both partners vowed to stay together 'for rycher, for porer', implying that financial situations were understood as potential reasons for separation.[108] The marriage ceremony began at the church door, where the legal contract and recital of the dowry would take place, and, during his reign, Edward II contributed money to be thrown over the heads of aristocratic couples to symbolise the dowry exchange and bring good luck to the marriage: money was central to the ceremony and practicalities of matrimony.[109] Additionally, when presenting the woman with the wedding ring, according to *The Book of Common Prayer*, the early modern man stated 'withal my worldly Goodes I thee endowe' (p.66). At the point of marriage, the man was required to provide financially for his new wife. Ironically, of course, it was he who gained the possession of his wife's worldly wealth (as explained in the next section) rather than the wife receiving his possessions. She had to wait until widowhood to profit financially from the marriage. The inclusion of these financial terms within the pre-modern marriage vows demonstrates the importance of the sacrament and resulting partnership in the successful fiscal organisation of contemporary society. For pre-modern men and women alike, devotion, civic order, and financial conduct were inseparable.

As well as combining their devotional and financial lives, pre-modern women's marriages impacted on their legal identity. Upon marriage, an English woman's legal status transferred to her husband: she did not have an individual legal persona.[110] A wife was a *femme covert*, or covered woman, subsumed into the legal identity of her husband.[111] Not only did this

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[108] F.H. Dickinson ed., *Missale ad Usum Insignis et Praeclarae Ecclesiae Sarum* (Oxford and London: J. Parker & Soc., 1861-83, republished 1969), columns 831-32; 'The Book of Common Prayer, 1549', in *The Book of Common Prayer: The Texts of 1549, 1559, and 1662*, ed. by Brian Cummings (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp.1-97 (p.66). All references are to this edition of the text, hereafter cited by page number. The vow to continue marriage through richer and poorer times remained throughout each edition of the Protestant *Book of Common Prayer* in 1549, 1559, and 1662, demonstrating that it persisted as a vital part of early modern matrimony.

[109] Sue Niebrzydowski, *Bonoure and Buxum: A Study of Wives in Late Medieval English Literature* (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2006), p.65.

[110] This was not the case in any other European country. Amy Louise Erickson, 'Coverture and Capitalism', *History Workshop Journal*, 59 (2005), 1-16 (p.3); Tim Stretton, 'Women, Property and Law', in *A Companion to Early Modern Women's Writing*, ed. by Anita Pacheco (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2002), pp.40-57 (pp.42-3).

[111] Lawrence Stone, *The Family, Sex and Marriage in England 1500-1800* (London: Penguin Books, 1979), p.136; Lyndan Warner, 'Before the Law', in *The Ashgate Research Companion to Women and Gender in Early Modern*

mean that a married woman could not sue in her own right, it also meant that her economic wealth, landed property and valuable assets passed to the control of her husband.[112] If a woman married a man with debts, any wealth she possessed would be understood as fair and legal means of repayment by his creditors.[113] Although a husband could not sell his wife's land without her permission, neither could she sell it without his, and she could not create a will to dispose of property without her husband's consent.[114] Furthermore, a married woman's social identity was defined by her husband's.[115] Therefore, if a peasant woman married a merchant, she would be raised to the merchant rank, but equally, if a gentry woman married a merchant, she would be lowered to the mercantile class. In contrast, a man held a degree of control over his own status through his worldly ventures.[116] Despite these legal and social implications, 'marriage was still women's best hope of financial security' in pre-modern England.[117] Theoretically, marriage ensured that a woman would be provided for, passing the financial burden she posed to her parents on to her husband. Perhaps because of the financial dependence of women, first on fathers and subsequently on husbands, in pre-modern England, financial need was perceived as feminizing.[118] The other side of the coin is that a woman in possession of financial independence could in turn be perceived as dangerously masculine, threatening the established social order.

In contrast to the *femme covert*, unmarried women retained their legal identity and were able to own, buy, sell and bequeath property and land by writing a will, and could sue and be sued at law.[119] These lone women – *femme sole* – were possessed of legal and economic

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Europe, ed. by Allyson M. Poska, Jane Couchman and Katherine A. McIver (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013), pp.233-56 (pp.237-8).

[112] Dyan Elliott, 'Marriage', in *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval Women's Writing*, ed. by Carolyn Dinshaw and David Wallace (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp.40-57 (p.44); Warner, pp.237-8.

[113] Stone, p.136.

[114] Elliott, p.44; Tim Stretton, *Women Waging Law in Elizabethan England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p.23.

[115] R.B. Outhwaite, 'Marriage as business: opinions on the rise in aristocratic bridal portions in early modern England', in *Business Life and Public Policy*, ed. by Neil McKendrick and R.B. Outhwaite (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986; 2002), pp.21-37 (p.32).

[116] Though he could not, of course, have any influence over his inherited social rank at birth.

[117] Amy Louise Erickson, *Women and Property in Early Modern England* (London and New York: Routledge, 1993; 1995), p.91. The reaction of the Paston family to Margery Paston's clandestine marriage to the family servant, Richard Calle, is illustrative of the social and economic importance placed upon a woman's marriage in the Middle Ages, see Chapter Two pp.111-2. Margery was effectively disowned by her family and condemned to the social standing of her husband.

[118] Diane Cady, 'My Purse and My Person: "The Complaint of Chaucer to His Purse" and the Gender of money', in Bertolet and Epstein, p.114.

[119] Cordelia Beattie, *Medieval Single Women: The Politics of Social Classification in Late Medieval England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), p.25; Stretton, 'Women, Property and Law', p.46; Mary Prior, 'Women

responsibilities, which could place them in a vulnerable position should they lack the economic means and social support to defend themselves at law.[120] In England, some married women were able to occupy the position of the *femme sole* and maintain their own financial assets, trade independently of their husbands, engage in legal proceedings, or write a will, provided that their spouse agreed to this arrangement and that the necessary marriage settlement had been drawn up.[121] In some towns and cities, such as London, married women who traded *sole* were required to register at the Guildhall stating that they traded on their own behalf, taking responsibility for their own finances, including all deals and debts.[122] The degree to which married women achieved commercial freedom through their status as a *femme sole* varied depending on their locality.[123] The married *femme sole*'s economic business activities were independent from her husband.[124] Although she does not make it explicit in her *Boke*, the medieval Margery Kempe appears to have traded as *femme sole*, while the writings of other women, such as Margaret Paston and Brilliana Harley, show that they were involved in financial transactions due to their position as wives: acting on behalf of husbands rather than in autonomous trade.[125] Contrary to traditional understanding, English court records suggest that for some pre-modern women, marriage was the moment at which they 'took on more varied and independent forms of work.'[126] This certainly seems to have been the case for the Pastons and Harley.[127] While in her poetic 'Memorandum' the seventeenth-century Martha Moulsworth fondly remembers the financial autonomy allowed her by her husband, Bevill, she acknowledges that she appreciates the greater economic independence of widowhood to such a degree that she chooses not to remarry.[128]

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and the urban economy: Oxford 1500-1800', in *Women in English Society 1500-1800*, ed. by Mary Prior (London and New York: Methuen, 1985), pp.93-117 (pp.102-3).

[120] Beattie, p.31.

[121] Elliott, p.44; Warner, pp.237-8; Erickson, *Women and Property*, p.100. There is no evidence of such a custom in Scotland, see Cathryn Spence, *Women, Credit, and Debt in Early Modern Scotland* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2016), p.14.

[122] Sutton, *The Mercery of London,* p.202.

[123] Jane Laughton has noted that in fifteenth-century Chester, married *femme soles* were limited to the 'lowly' position of huckster, obtaining their wares from higher ranking townspeople rather than producing their own ale or foodstuffs. Jane Laughton, 'Women in Court: Some Evidence from Fifteenth-Century Chester', in *England in the Fifteenth Century: Proceedings of the 1992 Harlaxton Symposium,* ed. by Nicholas Rogers (Stamford: Paul Watkins, 1994), pp.89-99 (p.93).

[124] Shahar, p.13.

[125] See Chapter Three pp.135-7 for Kempe's independent business activities and Chapter Two pp.74-86 for the discussions of the Pastons' Thynnes' and Harley's deputy financial and estate management.

[126] Shepard, p.307.

[127] See Chapter Two.

[128] See Chapter Three pp.144-5.

The concept of the *femme covert* was an extension of the ideal chaste, silent, and obedient woman encouraged by conduct literature such as the *Book of the Knight of la Tour Landry* (1484).[129] In his *Book* intended to guide his daughters in their marriages, Geoffrey de la Tour Landry recounts the tale of three merchants who compete to prove whose wife is the most obedient; the winner is to receive a dinner paid for by the husband with the most disobedient wife, as well as increased social admiration from his peers.[130] Two of the merchants' wives are shamed when they refuse to do as their husbands command, whilst the third is praised for her whole-hearted obedience (26-8). Judith M. Bennett has remarked that femaleness in the Middle Ages was 'defined by the submissiveness of wives who were expected to defer to their husbands in both private and public.'[131] In de la Tour Landry's tale, it is the wives' *public* obedience of their husbands which is tested. Importantly, the disobedience of the wife is seen as the husband's failing, as well as her own. Significantly, the knight-author chose the merchant class rather than his own gentry rank to teach this lesson, revealing that wifely obedience was required and admired at every social level. Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew* (c.1590) concludes with a parallel episode to de la Tour Landry's exemplum.[132] As in de la Tour Landry's tale, the husbands in Shakespeare's version arrogantly pit their wives' obedience against one another for monetary gain.[133] Katherina's explanation as to why she has so transformed from 'shrew' to a paragon of wifely virtue is grounded in economic reasoning:

> Thy husband is thy lord, thy life, thy keeper,
> Thy head, thy sovereign; one that cares for thee
> And for thy maintenance; commits his body
> To painful labour both by sea and land,
> To watch the night in storms, the day in cold,
> Whilst thou li'st warm at home, secure and safe,

[129] See section (iv) 'Suitable Financial Conduct' in this Introduction for more on pre-modern conduct literature regulating female behaviour.

[130] Geoffrey de La Tour-Landry, *The Book of the Knight of La Tour-Landry*, ed. by Thomas Wright (London: Published for the Early English Text Society by N. Trübner & Co., 1868, revised edition, 1906), p.92. All references are to this edition, hereafter cited by page number.

[131] Judith M. Bennett, 'Public Power and Authority in the Medieval English Countryside', in *Women and Power in the Middle Ages*, ed. by Mary Erler and Maryanne Kowaleski (Athens and London: The University of Georgia Press, 1988), pp.18-36 (p.24).

[132] A variation of this exemplary tale can be found in Shakespeare's *Cymbeline* (c.1610), in which the wifely chastity – another form of obedience – of the heroine, Innogen, is wagered upon. William Shakespeare, *Cymbeline* ed. by Valerie Wayne (London: Arden Shakespeare, 2017, reprinted 2020), 1.4.55-172; 5.5.179-225.

[133] William Shakespeare, *The Taming of the Shrew* ed. by Ann Thompson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, revised edition, 2003), 5.2.66-74. All references are to this edition.

And craves no other tribute at thy hands
But love, fair looks and true obedience –
Too little payment for so great a debt. (5.2.146-54)

Using the loaded and combined discourses of finance ('labour', 'secure', 'safe', 'debt', 'payment') and civic order ('lord', 'keeper', 'sovereign', 'commit'), Katherina ostensibly implies that the wife's payment to her husband for economic, and therefore physical, security is complete obedience. While he puts himself at risk in 'painful labour' on land and at sea to provide for her wellbeing, she remains 'warm at home' in luxurious leisure, apparently not contributing to the household economy as she 'li'st' rather than labours. Instead, she pays her 'debt' with 'love, fair looks and true obedience'.[134] The extreme length and hyperbole of Katherina's forty-five-line speech, however, implies that hers is not entirely a 'true obedience', and rather that she and her husband have negotiated a more equal bond and a matching of wits which they exploit for their mutual monetary gain to their associates' disadvantage. The joke is on their contemporaries, as it were. Again, it is the public obedience of wives that is tested, leaving audiences to decide for themselves how obedient Katherina may, or may not, be in private. Regardless of how we interpret this closing scene of Shakespeare's play and Katherina's transformation, its very existence, more than a century after the translation of de la Tour Landry's book, illustrates that wifely obedience remained tied up with ideas of economics and central to social issues for early modern England.

Upon widowhood, the *femme covert* obtained economic independence and (re)gained her separate legal identity. The pre-modern widow of means had the greatest level of financial and legal autonomy available to a woman. Consequently, some women, such as Maud Parr (1492-1531) who was widowed at the age of only twenty-five, chose not to remarry.[135] In theory, widows, unlike wives, were free to bequeath their land, property and possessions as they desired, except, of course where properties were legally entailed to ensure the continuation of family possession.[136] Additionally, some widows would face immense social pressure to

[134] For a discussion of the concept of marital debt to which Shakespeare refers here, see p.60 below.
[135] Susan E. James, 'Katherine [Kateryn, Catherine] [*née* Katherine Parr] (1512-1548), queen of England and Ireland, sixth consort of Henry VIII', in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford University Press, 2012), <http://www.oxforddnb.com.ezproxy.bangor.ac.uk/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-4893?rskey=8qRWGz&result=1#odnb-9780198614128-e-4893-div1-d1949383e127> [Accessed 6 August 2018]. Parr's will is analysed in Chapter Four. See also Martha Moulsworth's reference to her decision to remain a widow in her poetic autobiography, discussed in Chapter Three, pp.144-5.
[136] Barbara A. Hanawalt, 'Widows', in Dinshaw and Wallace, p.60. In the seventeenth century, Elizabeth Hardwick disinherited her eldest son, Henry, as far as was possible: she was unable to prevent him inheriting the Chatsworth estate, which was entailed to him, but she could, and did, deny him the contents, which, as Susan

remarry to provide financially for their dependents or to gain further advancement of family status.

As a social demographic, women were excluded from holding public, legal, political, and clerical office in pre-modern England, with the exception of the female sovereigns: Mary I and Elizabeth I.[137] For these reigning queens, the issue of coverture was problematic: if she married, she would be expected to obey her husband, but as the monarch she should be able to demand *his* obedience as her subject. Female heirs to the English throne also faced their male councils' doubt that a woman could make financial decisions on topics such as how much to spend on war, her ability to lead troops, control Parliament, and negotiate with fellow rulers. In addition, Elizabeth I faced the impossible question of how she could be the head of the Church of England when St Paul had instructed women to neither teach nor speak in church.[138] Mary I made the decision to marry in the hope of producing an heir for her throne. This hope was not fulfilled, and her half-sister Elizabeth succeeded her in 1558. During her forty-five-year reign, Elizabeth I faced immense pressure to marry and produce an heir. However, she remained unmarried, presenting herself as the Virgin Queen, whole-heartedly devoted to and in control of her subjects and country, married to her nation rather than to a husband. Like those widowed women who were able to remain single rather than remarry, Elizabeth I appears to have appreciated the benefits of living (and ruling) as a *femme sole*. Erickson has observed that in early modern England 'approximately half of all adult women at any given time were single, either unmarried or widowed.'[139] It is plausible that, along with the continuing threat of high mortality rates, the existence of a successful, unmarried, female monarch and the reality of coverture deterred women from marriage in this period. Significantly, a high proportion of the texts studied in this thesis were created by widows, which implies that along with economic freedom came intellectual and creative expression.

Despite the legal invisibility of the *femme covert*, the number of women who engaged with legal proceedings rose significantly during the Elizabethan period.[140] Tim Stretton has

James notes, was not uncommon when a son disobeyed his mother. Susan E. James, *Women's Voices in Tudor Wills, 1485-1603: Authority, Influence and Material Culture* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2015), p.194. Hardwick's 1601 will is discussed in greater detail in Chapter Four of this thesis.

[137] Shahar, p.11; Martha C. Howell, 'Citizenship and Gender: Women's Political Status in Northern Medieval Cities', in Erler and Kowaleski, p.37; Sara H. Mendelson, 'Women and Work', in Pacheco, p.70.

[138] Sara Mendelson and Patricia Crawford, *Women in Early Modern England, 1550-1770* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), p.349. (1 Timothy 2:12)

[139] She also recognises that the 'sixteenth and seventeenth centuries saw the highest rates of non-marriage before the 1990s.' Erickson, 'Coverture and Capitalism', p.8.

[140] Stretton, *Women Waging Law*, p.43.

observed the impact of this in the lives of early modern women such as Lady Margaret Clifford (1560-1616) and her daughter, Anne (1590-1676), who tirelessly campaigned for Anne to be awarded her father's great legacy of titles, land and money.[141] In her meticulous diary-keeping, Lady Anne refers to this long-lived campaign as her 'Businesses', indicating both the seriousness with which she approached the financial and legal battle, and that it became her vocation which involved a great deal of busy-ness.[142] Clifford's 'business' exemplifies the closeness between financial and legal language which is so often important in the women's writing studied in this thesis. Stretton also identifies the influence of legal proceedings in the writings of early modern women: legal discourse and metaphor can be found in their letters and diaries when discussing seemingly unrelated topics such as religion or family marriages.[143] This rhetorical use of legal lexicon will be analysed in the following chapters of this thesis, particularly in reference to the letters by the Thynne women in Chapter Two and the female testators whose wills are studied in Chapter Four. However, my own research demonstrates that female appropriation of legal diction and metaphor has been present in women's writings much earlier than the Elizabethan period: Margaret Paston (c.1420-1484) and Margery Kempe (c.1373-after 1438) are just two medieval examples.

The 'closeness of identity and money' in the seventeenth century has been noted by Helen Wilcox, and identified as 'a particular pressure for women' as a wife 'represented a purchase or investment' by her husband and his family.[144] For pre-modern women, finance and identity were inseparable and a defining feature of the way in which they understood and represented their lives and relationships. Of course, for those women who married, the expected vocation of their lives was motherhood, and childbirth brought with it not only physical danger but additional financial expense both during and after labour. Denise Ryan has highlighted the disapproval with which Henry Gee, mayor of Chester, viewed the feasting and celebrations that accompanied the churching ceremony.[145] Gee's 1539 proclamation criticises the

[141] Stretton, *Women Waging Law*, p.65. See Appendix Two for a short summary of Anne's life and legal battle.
[142] Anne Clifford, 'The Knole Diary, 1603-1619', in *The Diaries of Lady Anne Clifford* ed. by D.J.H. Clifford (Stroud: Sutton Publishing, 2003 reprinted 2005), pp.21-87 (p.48).
[143] Stretton, *Women Waging Law*, p.66.
[144] Helen Wilcox, 'Her Own Life, Her Own Living? Text and Materiality in Seventeenth-century Englishwomen's Autobiographical Writings', in *Betraying Ourselves: Forms of Self-Representation in Early Modern English Texts*, ed. by Hank Dragsrta, Sheila Ottway and Helen Wilcox (Basingstoke: Macmillan Press Ltd, 2000), pp.105-119 (pp.109-10).
[145] Denise Ryan, 'Playing the Midwife's Part in the English Nativity Plays', *The Review of English Studies*, 54.216 (2003), 435-448 (pp.438-9). Churching was the public appearance of a woman at church to give thanks after childbirth. The churching ceremony typically took place on the fortieth day after the birth, as a reference to the Purification of the Virgin Mary in accordance with Mosaic law (see Luke 2:22-40 and Leviticus 12:2-8). It is usually the first time after the birth that the woman may take Communion. The ceremony survived into post-war

'superfluous […] excesse' of childbed and churching expenses, attempting to curtail the quantity of meat and wine consumed by the all-female group, as well as forbidding any woman beside the midwife from returning to the home of the new mother to continue the celebrations.[146] Ryan argues that Gee's proclamation 'objects to the post-processional feasting' that would have put the gathering of women 'on a par with other public expressions of group identity – which were more readily available to men – of which […] dining together, was a defining feature.'[147] Gee does not criticise the act of worship and devotion of the churching ceremony, but wishes to cap the financial outlay for the feasting which follows. Importantly for this study, Gee's proclamation exposes the perceived potential of a gathering of women with unchecked spending to jeopardise the patriarchal order of their society. Financial means enabled a degree of autonomy and shaped the identity of an individual and of a gendered group, as well as their relationship with wider society. This understanding is vital to the writings of the women studied in the chapters that follow.

(iv) Suitable Financial Conduct

Chester's Henry Gee feared the unchecked behaviour and spending of the city's female community. He was not alone: throughout the Middle Ages and on into the seventeenth century, conduct literature sought to control female behaviour with the intention of preserving patriarchal social order. These popular manuals attempted to ensure that women conformed to the patriarchal ideals of female chastity, silence and obedience. As noted by Deborah S. Ellis, 'two of the most problematic areas in medieval thought were women and money.'[148] Separately, they had the potential to disrupt the smooth running of the economy and society; combined in a wealthy, unmarried, woman they could pose a serious threat to the established patriarchal order. Diane Cady has noted the similar attitudes towards women and money in conduct literature from the Middle Ages onwards: both, she writes, were 'imagined to have a similar character […] marked by movement and instability.'[149] As a result, it is no wonder that conduct literature was ubiquitous in attempting to regulate not only women, but their financial actions. In the medieval *Book of the Knight*, Geoffrey de la Tour Landry recounts numerous

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Britain and elsewhere but has now been largely discontinued in the Western Church. However, it still takes place in some Eastern churches. (*OED* 1)

[146] Ryan, p.439.

[147] Ryan, p.439.

[148] Ellis, p.595.

[149] Cady, 'My Purse and My Person', p.111. See also, Cady, *The Gender of Money in Middle English Literature*, p.9; pp.13-32.

tales of ideal female virtue in contrast to tales of female vice. Interestingly, among the lessons of chastity, silence, and obedience, de la Tour Landry includes the biblical tale of Samson and Delilah, with specific reference to Delilah's financial covetousness. He recalls how 'thorughe couetise of a lytelle golde' Delilah, 'that wiked woman betrayed her husbonde' (92). As well as being guilty of one of the Seven Deadly Sins – covetousness – Delilah is guilty of breaking the medieval woman's marriage vow to be meek and obedient to her husband, all for the sake of just 'a lytelle golde'.[150] De le Tour Landry lists the crimes to which covetousness can lead, including theft, usury, and murder (92). In addition to this, covetousness can lead maidens and widows 'to be strompetys' (92). For de la Tour Landry and his contemporaries, female monetary greed was not only spiritually immoral, but also sexually immoral and thereby threatened the established patriarchal order. Through his wife's betrayal, Samson is humiliated by his enemies: they bind him, blind him and force him to turn a mill in place of a horse (92). Samson regains his strength and Delilah and her associates suffer a horrible death as punishment for their sins: he causes the roof of the hall, in which they celebrate Delilah's bigamous marriage, to collapse upon the party (93). Specifically, it is Delilah's sin which is punished: 'God yelde *her* that *she* had deseruid' (93, my emphasis). De la Tour Landry ensures that his daughters and readers are left in no doubt of the fact that female covetousness is a mortal sin for which guilty women will be punished by God.

The fourteenth-century devotional treatise, *Book to a Mother*, written by an unknown priest for the spiritual instruction of his mother and other lay people, reverses the parent-teacher and child-learner roles. What remains is the male figure asserting control over female thought and action. The priest reminds his readers that poverty is the ideal state for true devotion, as Christ encourages his followers: '"ȝif þou wolt be parfite, go and selle al þat þou hast, and ȝif hit to pore men; and com" lyue as I do, "and þou schalt haue tresour in heuene."'[151] Frugal living on earth combined with charitable giving leads to spiritual wealth in heaven. The priest goes on to address his 'dere modur', calling on her 'wiþ wilful pouerte to hele þe synne of properte' (31). For this fourteenth-century priest, wealth is akin to sin, and indeed he refers to riches as the cause of some of the Seven Deadly Sins, including avarice, pride, and covetousness (3; 31; 58-9). In addition to this, he rebukes his mother for associating with

[150] For the medieval marriage ceremony see, *Missale ad Usum Insignis et Praeclarae Ecclesiae Sarum*, ed. Francis Henry Dickinson (Oxford and London: J. Parker & Soc., 1861-83, republished 1969), *Ordo Sponsalium*, columns 831-2.
[151] Adrian James McCarthy ed., *Book to a Mother, an edition with commentary* (Salzburg: Institut für Anglistik und Amerikanistik, 1981), p.3. All references are to this edition, hereafter cited by page number.

tradesmen and merchants, claiming that they 'unhelpen man' and encourage 'pride and alle maner synnes'; she should 'be now sori' for misusing her 'soule' by 'byinge or syllinge' from such men (111). Thus, any involvement with money and trade was potentially damaging to the spiritual health of medieval women.

This concern with the morality of female involvement in the marketplace and the potential damage to virtue is also seen in the anonymous fourteenth-century didactic poem 'How the Goode Wife Taught Hyr Daughter'. What makes this poem particularly interesting is its focus on female monetary and vocational dealings, as well as its mercantile setting. The daughter here is not an aristocratic lady preparing for marriage (as were de la Tour Landry's three daughters), but an urban woman, one we assume would be married to a tradesman, or could possibly even be a servant girl. 'How the Goode Wife Taught Hyr Doughter' survives, in varying forms, in five manuscripts, suggesting a wide audience across three centuries: the earliest manuscript dates from c.1350 and the latest c.1500.[152] The one-hundred-and-fifty-year span is indicative of the enduring popularity of the discussion of appropriate female behaviour. It is possible that such a text, or an oral version of it, was used by women to educate their daughters.[153] Whether the poem was used by mothers for the education of daughters or by mistresses for the instruction of employees or female apprentices, as Felicity Riddy suggests, its choice of lessons and focus on labour and finance is vital evidence in this study.[154] Particularly noteworthy is the poem's connection of a woman's working life with her status as a wife: this is a text aiming to prepare young women for a life of household management and work alongside their husbands. It is a text very much aimed at the class of women destined to become wives of urban tradesmen, rather than governing the actions of the aristocratic rank, widows, or religious women. The poem cautions its audience against the dangers of travel and the marketplace for a woman:

> Go not as it wer a gase [goose]
> Fro house to house, to seke the mase [idle fantasy]
> Ne go thou not to no merket

[152] Bodleian Library MS Ashmole 61 c.1500; Emmanuel College Cambridge MS 1.428 c.1350; Trinity College Cambridge MS 599 c.1500; Lambeth Palace Library MS 853 c.1430; Huntington Library MS HM 128 c.1450.

[153] Felicity Riddy argued that the poem may have been written by a cleric and was later adopted by the growing medieval urban bourgeoisie to train young women in appropriate behaviour. Felicity Riddy, 'Mother Knows Best: Reading Social Change in a Courtesy Text', *Speculum*, 71.1 (1996), 66-86 (p.73).

[154] Riddy, p.83.

To sell thi thrift [earnings], bewer of itte.[155]

The 'Goode Wife' teaches that travelling idly from house to house has the potential to be damaging to a woman's reputation and conjures thoughts of money which itself is always 'on the move', exchanging hands from house to house or business to business. If a pre-modern woman is to change hands in such a way as an object of exchange, this has a detrimental impact on her good name and implies a lack of chastity. Similarly, going to market can pose a danger to female reputation. Readers and listeners could understand the instruction to 'bewer' [beware] of losing 'thi thryft' literally, as the caution not to lose money or spend lavishly on shopping. 'Thryft' was 'material wealth', 'prosperity' and, interestingly in this female urban context, 'earnings' (*MED* 1a). However, there was also a metaphorical meaning to 'thryft' particularly applicable to the instruction of women: 'value', 'profitability', 'utility', 'prudence', and 'good management' (*MED* 1e). Audiences may interpret this as a warning to women to guard their virginity, and so their monetary value, in the marketplace of marriage.[156] Additionally, 'bewer' referred to the care required in the bestowing of a daughter upon someone else as well as the squandering of wealth (*MED* 1a). The physical marketplace, with its hive of activity and social interaction between the sexes and social ranks, could threaten the social order of the marketplace of marriage. Aligned with prudence, thrift itself becomes a virtue. For medieval women, engagement in the marketplace could damage not only their reputation, and their prospects, but also their soul through loss of virtue.

Beyond this caution against the marketplace, 'How the Goode Wife Taught Hyr Doughter' makes it clear that the respectable wife should not have debts. The concise couplet, 'At es he lyves that awes no dette, / Yt is no less, withouten lette', instructs the audience that a debt-free life is a worry-free life (161-2). The advice is to avoid obtaining credit as debts need to be repaid: 'Bororwyd thinge muste nedes go home' (191).[157] The need to repay creates an uncertain and unstable foundation for the future of a household. Loans create a network of obligation which can place the borrower at a vulnerable disadvantage in relation to the lender.

[155] 'How the Goode Wife Taught Hyr Doughter', in *The Trials and Joys of Marriage,* ed. by Eve Salisbury (Kalamazoo, Michigan: Medieval Institute Publications, 2002), pp.219-24 (ll.61-4). All references are to this edition, hereafter cited by line number.

[156] The loss of virginity would also mean the loss of a woman's value on the marriage market: effectively she was a commodity for her family to bargain with to gain wealth and honour, as seen in the marriage negotiations of Margery Brews, and in the reaction of Margery Paston's family to her clandestine marriage to the family bailiff Richard Calle, both discussed in Chapter Two (pp.110-1 and pp.111-2 respectively). The marriage market is also imagined by the early modern Martha Moulsworth in her poetic memoir: she observes that her knowledge of Latin was of little value when it came to negotiations of her own marriage (see Chapter Three, p.170).

[157] The cautions against borrowing are repeated by Shakespeare in *Hamlet*. See pp.46-7 below for more on this.

This network of obligation is fundamental to human relationships and is a critical aspect of the literature studied in this thesis.[158] The distrust of lending was ubiquitous within medieval culture, with usury feared as a sin.[159] For financial, reputational and spiritual health, borrowing and lending were best avoided.

Christine de Pizan explains how a woman should manage her money correctly in the fifteenth-century *The Treasure of the City of Ladies*: she should 'command that the bills be fully paid on a certain day, for she will certainly not want the curses or the ill will of creditors. She will wish to owe nothing: she will prefer to manage with less and to spend her money more moderately'.[160] De Pizan echoes the teaching of the 'Goode Wife' to live within the means of the household for the security of all who live there. The very title of de Pizan's work demonstrates her appreciation of female involvement with money: it is *The* ***<u>Treasure</u>*** *of the city of Ladies*. 'Treasure', of course, refers to wealth, gold, and riches saved, stored and accumulated, highlighting the metaphorical and literary potential of financial language (*MED* 1). Female participation in the financial world was recognised by contemporary literature, yet this literature attempted to govern the ways in which women engaged with money, implying that this involvement was perceived as potentially problematic to the social order. Pre-modern women were required to balance the paradox of responsibility with restraint, and this is revealed in the language and activity of their writings.

In his fabliau, Chaucer describes Absolon's attempt to woo Alison in 'The Miller's Tale' (c.1437): 'for she was of town, he profred meede [offered money]; / For some folk wol ben wonnen for richesse'.[161] Not only does Chaucer recognise that suitors can use their monetary wealth to obtain the person they desire, but the 'Tale' suggests that Alison's status as an urban woman increases her fondness for money. Both 'The Miller's Tale' and 'How the Goode Wife Taught Hyr Doughter' imply that urban women in particular were prey to financial avarice. Furthermore, Chaucer's 'Wife of Bath's Tale' (c.1437) claims that what women most 'desiren' is 'to have sovereynetee' over their husbands, presumably including their finances.[162] In his search for the answer to what women most desire, the Knight receives replies including

[158] For example, see the letters studied in Chapter Two.
[159] As assessed in more detail in section (v) of this Introduction, 'Borrowing and Lending'.
[160] Christine de Pizan, *The Treasure of the City of Ladies*, trans. by Sarah Lawson (London: Penguin Books, 2003), p.53.
[161] Geoffrey Chaucer, 'The Miller's Tale', in Benson, pp.68-77 (p.70, ll.3380-1). All references are to this edition, hereafter cited by line number.
[162] Geoffrey Chaucer, 'The Wife of Bath's Tale', in Benson, pp.116-22 (p.119, ll.1038-9). All references are to this edition hereafter cited by line number.

'richesse', 'riche array' and 'lust abedde', and the infamous teller interjects to state that these 'gooth ful ny the soothe', or are very close to the truth (919-31). Read alongside each other, the two 'Tales' and the 'Goode Wife' suggest a common discourse between Chaucer and the anonymous poet, revealing a contemporary concern with urban women, sexuality and money. Chaucer's 'Miller's Tale' shows that using money to win a woman is foolish as Absolon's quest for Alison's affections descends into slapstick comedy – a feature of fabliau. Absolon is left humiliated and bitter as Alison and her lover, Nicholas, succeed in cuckolding her husband, John, while Absolon is tricked into kissing her 'naked ers' (3734). Despite Absolon's somewhat sinister attempt to punish Alison with the red-hot plough-blade, it is Nicholas who is scalded (3775-3815). Alison escapes retribution and appears to have successfully manipulated all three men who desire her body. It is the men who are ridiculed in this 'Tale', while the sole female character, Alison, is immoral but not guilty of folly. The audience are meant to laugh, but also to recognise the dangerous threat posed to the male community by the combination of sins in a lustful, disobedient and avaricious woman of urban society. Several female authors studied in this thesis were of the urban social class, including the Pastons, Margery Kempe, Margaret Blakburn, Isabella Whitney and Martha Moulsworth. This thesis hopes to demonstrate, however, that the appropriation of commercial diction and theory transcended the mercantile ranks to include the higher gentry and aristocracy who were sometimes located on rural estates, such as Isabel le Despenser, Countess of Warwick, Dame Eleanor Hull, the Thynne women, Brilliana Harley, Lady Katherine Barnardiston and Elizabeth Hardwick, Countess of Shrewsbury.[163]

The widespread desire to control wifely economic activities continued into the early modern period. The 1523 publication of John Fitzherbert's agricultural handbook, *The Book of Husbandry*, details the separate responsibilities of rural married men and women who must work in partnership to ensure the successful enterprise of the farm. In contrast to the advice in 'How the Goode Wife Taught Hyr Doughter', Fitzherbert claims that it is the duty of the wife to take the excess farm produce to sell at market, and to buy the provisions for the household.[164] On her return from market, the wife should 'make a trewe rekenynge and accompt to her huſband what ſhe hath receyued and what ſhe hath payed' (l[r]). This 'rekenynge', or balancing, of the accounts with her husband is not because the wife is to be distrusted, however, as the

[163] The lower social ranks are not included due to the lack of surviving literature by poorer pre-modern society. Isabella Whitney and Cecily Daune are the most financially vulnerable of the authors studies here.
[164] John Fitzherbert, *Here begynneth a newe tracte or treatyse moost profytable for all husbandmen* (London: Rycharde Pynson, 1523), fo.l.[r]. All references are to this edition.

same is to happen should the husband go to market: he is 'to ʃhewe his wife in lyke maner' his profits and his spends. Significantly, Fitzherbert's choice of 'rekenynge' recalls the biblical 'Reckoning', endowing the wife's accounting with virtue. Fitzherbert stresses that both spouses must be honest with the other about their spending 'for if one of them ʃhulde vʃe to diʃceyue the other: he diʃceueth hymʃselfe and he is nat likely to thriue' (I[r]). Honest financial teamwork between wife and husband is vital for the economic survival of the marital partnership. For Fitzherbert's readers, the marketplace is accessible for both married men and women, provided that their spending is audited by their spouse to ensure economic solvency continues. The contrast between the advice from the 'Goode Wife' and Fitzherbert demonstrates the complex attitudes which pre-modern women needed to negotiate to maintain their economic status and virtue. Rather than suggesting a change between the medieval and early modern concepts of women's involvement in the marketplace, I propose that the context of women's behaviour is of greater importance than their era. The author of 'How the Goode Wife Taught Hyr Daughter' writes for urban women facing urban threats, while Fitzherbert's manual instructs rural couples for whom attending market is crucial to survival as the place to both sell and purchase produce. The wives of urban, bourgeois traders did not necessarily have to attend markets personally to ensure the family survival. The 'Goode Wife' presents the urban wife's role within the domestic locale with servants to whom she can delegate the tasks of shopping and selling the produce of her husband's trade. As the following chapters will demonstrate, it is social and economic context, rather than historical period, that is most significant in women's rhetorical use of the language of commerce. The circumstances at the moment of writing impact upon pre-modern women's linguistic choices, and their resulting texts show their astute manipulation of discourses, varying their rhetoric as necessary.[165]

In 1583, the Puritan pamphleteer Phillip Stubbes's *The Anatomie of Abuses* repeated the warnings against covetousness, avarice, excessive wealth, and debt.[166] Stubbes claims the 'powch [purse] of a rich couetous Man, is the mouth of the deuill, which euer is open to receiue, but always ʃhut to giue.'[167] Wealth itself is not the issue, rather the unwillingness to give aid to

[165] See Chapter Two for examples of the varying degrees of rhetoric employed by the Paston women, Thynne women, and Brilliana Harley according to the situation in which their letters were penned.
[166] After the death of his nineteen-year-old wife, Katherine Emmes, following childbirth, Stubbes wrote *A Christall Glasse for Christian Women* (1591), a highly popular Protestant *ars moriendi* which extolls Katherine's virtues as an exemplary wife and Christian. Alexandra Walsham, 'Stubbes [Stubbs], Philip (b.c.1555, d. in or after 1610), pamphleteer', in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, (Oxford University Press, 2014) <https://www-oxforddnd-com.ezproxy.bangor.ac.uk/view/10/1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-26737> [Accessed 19 November 2019].
[167] Phillip Stubbes, *The Anatomie of Abuses* (London: Richard Jones, 1583), D.viii[v]. All references are to this edition.

the poor, and the overwhelming desire to amass more and more for oneself. He goes on to condemn the success of merchants as the result of cheating, scheming, and fraud (K.ii^{v}). Stubbes writes that humanity's 'thirſt of Gold & monie' results in the 'ſhamefull end' of 'an infinit nūber' of people and can even incite murder (K.ii^{v}). According to Stubbes, more have been ruined by 'the peſtilence of auarice' than 'the ſword hath deſtroid' (K.ii^{v}). Stubbes discourages his readers from borrowing money, as did the medieval 'Goode Wife', describing lenders and usurers as worse than Judas, Hell, death and the devil (K.viii^{v}; L.^{r}).[168]

Authors of advice for women continued to demonstrate monetary concerns into the seventeenth century.[169] Puritan clergyman William Gouge's *Of Domesticall Duties* (1622) explains that the husband is always 'the head of his wife' upon marriage: she takes on his social status and she must obey him, regardless of age or wealth before marriage.[170] Gouge suggests that in order to live in harmony, spouses should be from similar financial backgrounds (189-90). He fears that 'if a rich woman mary a poore man, ſhe will looke to be the maſter, and to rule him' (189-90). A woman in possession of a greater fortune than her husband had the power to upset patriarchal control. Should a wife exert control over her husband, Gouge claims that 'the order which God hath eſtabliſhed will be cleane peruerted' (189-90). Gouge's concern with the economic accordance of husband and wife was not a new idea. In 'The Merchant's Tale' (c.1437) Chaucer alludes to the contemporary discourse surrounding the economics of marriage. Januarie's advisors, Placebo and Justinus, argue over the pros and cons of having a wife. While it is suggested that it is better to have a servant than a wife to help with 'housbondrye', as she would 'clayme half part' of her husband's wealth 'al hir lyf' unlike a servant who only requires wages, it is also recognised that if a husband 'be povre', his wife will 'helpeth him to swynke [labour] […] and wasteth never a deel'.[171] However satirical Chaucer's 'Merchant's Tale' may be, it betrays the presence of economic considerations in contemporary marriage: before marrying, a man should weigh up the contribution of a wife against that of a servant to the household finances.

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[168] The ongoing issue of usury throughout the pre-modern period will be discussed in more detail in section (v) of this Introduction.

[169] Gervase Markham's 1615 manual, *The English Housewife*, provides practical advice for married women running large rural households. Like Fitzherbert, Markham details specifically female tasks which ensure the survival of the household. His chapters include instructions on brewing, spinning, dairy preparations, cooking, and moral virtues, demonstrating that morality was closely linked to female labour. Gervase Markham, *The English Housewife,* ed. by Michael R. Best (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1994).

[170] William Gouge, *Of Domesticall Duties* (Amsterdam and New Jersey: Theatrum Orbis Terrarum Ltd., and Walter J. Johnson Inc., 1976), p.272. All references are to this edition, hereafter cited by page number.

[171] Geoffrey Chaucer, 'The Merchant's Tale', in Benson, pp.154-68 (p.155, ll.1296-1300; ll.1342-3).

Gouge acknowledges that married couples could benefit from sharing the responsibility of almsgiving and learn from each other by working as a team: ‘the husband by telling the wife who are fit to be releeued’ and ‘the wife by telling the huſband what things are fitteſt to be giuen away’ (264-5). This cooperation exposes that husband and wife were not equal in their partnership: he had power over people, whilst she only over things. Gouge calls on his readers to ‘be bountifull to the poore’ as nothing ‘can bring more profit to the houſe’ (264-5). ‘Profit’ here of course means good reputation and spiritual health, as almsgiving cannot be of financial benefit to the household. Gouge highlights the gendered tasks of the married couple as he anticipates that the husband will be aware of those in need of alms as he is more frequently travelling outside of the home, whereas the wife will know what the house can spare to donate. Despite the clear division of labour and male dominance advocated in Gouge’s book, women are given an important role which combines devotion, morality and money in their involvement in almsgiving. This blended role is displayed in women’s own writing through their lexical choices, as will be shown in the following chapters.

Each of the above didactic texts demonstrates the complex attitudes towards women and money that were so abundant throughout pre-modern England. Elaine Hobby has famously argued that seventeenth-century women writers ‘transformed prescriptions [of behaviour] into a kind of permission’, and that ‘we need to see their works as a series of strategies that “make a virtue of necessity”.’[172] This thesis hopes to demonstrate that such strategies were employed by medieval *and* early modern women authors to enable them to engage with family politics, finance, warfare and devotion in their various texts. The following chapters will show a variety of women’s writing that makes virtue out of necessity: from Maria Thynne’s plea to her husband to trust her to run the estate in his absence, to Margaret Paston’s and Brilliana Harley’s active defence of their family properties and purchasing of weapons, Margery Kempe’s account of ambitious pilgrimages and unique devotional practices, Martha Moulsworth’s poetic justification of her decision not to marry for a fourth time and so enjoy the financial freedom of widowhood, Eleanor Hull’s provisions of alternative dowries for poor nuns to enter convents and Elizabeth Hardwick’s dynastic ambitions evident in her architectural projects and last will and testament. All these women negotiate the prescriptions of their contemporary societies to find a role permitting a degree of self-expression and independence which remains evident in their writings as we read them centuries later.

[172] Elaine Hobby, *Virtue of Necessity: English Women’s Writing 1646-1688* (London: Virago Press, 1988), p.7.

Liz Herbert McAvoy and Teresa Walters have addressed the fact that 'an excess of appetite' for money, sex, power, piety or food in the pre-modern era was 'regarded as monstrous within familial, social, religious or nationalistic context.'[173] Whilst this project deals primarily with the discourse of money, the following chapters reveal that a woman's appetite for finance was so often inextricably linked with her sexual relationships, her devotion and her power within both familial and political contexts. Rather than being unfailingly monstrous, however, the pre-modern women's writing studied in this thesis often transforms their use of financial lexicons into an empowering force to justify their actions within family life, estate management, personal spirituality and marriage. On occasion, they adopt the notion of monstrosity for their own ends; Margery Kempe, for example, reviles the voracious appetite for money, clothing and sex that she pursued in her youth to highlight the extent of her spiritual conversion.[174] The ideals of pre-modern conduct literature permeated the consciousness and writings of a wide range of contemporary women writers.

(v) Borrowing and Lending

The 'Goode Wife' cautioned her daughter against borrowing, and such concerns over the morality of lending continued to be expressed in literature in the early modern era.[175] In Shakespeare's *Hamlet* (c.1601), Polonius instructs his son, Laertes, that he should be

> Neither a borrower nor a lender, boy,
> For loan oft loses both itself and friend
> And borrowing dulleth th'edge of husbandry.[176]

Rather than the mother-to-daughter advice seen in 'How the Goode Wife Taught Hyr Doughter', Shakespeare depicts a father's advice to his son, demonstrating that the dangers of borrowing and lending were applicable to both sexes, and that it was the responsibility of both parents to guide their children in appropriate economic behaviour. Polonius's instructions to Laertes are not connected to the household, but to his personal finances. Together, the texts hint at a gendered division within borrowing and lending: in these works, women's financial

[173] Liz Herbert McAvoy and Teresa Walters, 'Introduction', in *Consuming Narratives: Gender and Monstrous Appetite in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance*, ed. by Liz Herbert McAvoy and Teresa Walters (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2002), pp.1-11 (p.8).
[174] See Chapter Three.
[175] See pp.39-41 above for the lessons of the 'Goode Wife'.
[176] William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, ed. by Ann Thompson and Neil Taylor (London: Arden Shakespeare, 2006), 1.3.74-6.

dealings are confined to those associated with the household, while men's exist beyond domestic concerns. The gender of the teacher and pupil has changed, but the fundamental lesson has not: as a creditor Laertes could find he loses both money and friendship if the borrower takes advantage of him, and as a borrower himself he would be denied the spiritual benefit of hard work. As the 'Goode Wife' points out, idleness is dangerous to both economic and spiritual wellbeing.

The morality of lending, particularly charging interest on loans, had been a contentious subject far earlier than the Middle Ages, and usury was understood as an especially dangerous activity. Aristotle's struggle with the concept of interest on monetary loans continued to be an issue for medieval Europe. Aristotle had argued that not only was usury sinful, but that earning interest from money was 'unnatural' as rather than using money in exchange for goods, as it was intended, money-lending equalled 'the birth of money from money'.[177] For Aristotle, usury was inherently wrong as a monetary loan should have the same value on repayment to the lender as it had at the moment it was given to the borrower, in contrast to a borrowed item which, through use, would depreciate in value (46).[178] In the Middle Ages, 'usury did not mean, as now, taking an exorbitant rate of interest on a loan; it meant the taking of *any* interest on a loan.'[179] Money-lending itself was not an issue, but the charging of interest on loans was perceived as sinful. Writing in 1338, Gerard of Siena claimed that 'usury is a form of robbery' and 'wicked and bound up with vice'.[180] Gerard recalls Aristotle's claim that engendering money with money is unnatural (77; 83). Aristotle's theories remained influential on medieval European ideas of the morality of profiting from financial loans.

Usury posed a threat to the fate of the soul for medieval Christians. The Roman Church 'regarded usury as a mortal sin' which 'led to eternal damnation if the usurer did not repent'.[181] In addition to the lender committing sin, the borrower also sinned through their agreement to

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[177] *Aristotle's Politics*, trans. by Benjamin Jowett with introduction, analysis and index by H.W.C. Davis (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1931), p.46. All references are to this edition, hereafter cited by page number.
[178] In other words, if I borrowed £50, spent the money, and later repaid the lender when I had the funds available, her £50 would still be £50, and so she would not have lost anything. In contrast, if I borrowed her horse and used it to carry out labour for six months, on returning the horse to her it would be older and possibly weaker, and so would have lost value: in this case a payment of compensation, or interest, would be valid and not usurious. See David Hawkes, *The Culture of Usury in Renaissance England* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), pp.22-3.
[179] Wood, p.75.
[180] Gerard of Siena, 'A Question on Usury', trans. by Lawrin Armstrong, in *The idea of a Moral Economy: Gerard of Siena on Usury, Restitution and Prescription*, Lawrin Armstrong (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2016), pp.39-141 (p.41; p.77). All references are to this edition, hereafter cited by page number.
[181] Wood, p.161.

pay usury.[182] Despite this, the Roman Church in England failed to punish usury to a great extent, with 'an average of no more than three' cases prosecuted per year in 'most diocesan courts.'[183] It appears that the practicalities of life and the necessity of financial funds for the medieval English population meant that however much commentators disapproved of the charging of interest on loans, in practice it proved to be tolerated as a necessary evil. Much like the conduct books discussed in the previous section of this Introduction, which strove to control behaviours, literature condemning usury exposes the fact that such activity was taking place.[184]

The concern with the morality and spiritual impact of usury lived on into the early modern period. David Hawkes, who has written extensively on usury in early modern England, sums up the fear which usury inspired: 'people of Renaissance England believed that [...] usury would bring about the triumph of atheism, the reign of Satan, and the death of the human soul.'[185] This belief is not dissimilar to the medieval understanding of usury as a mortal sin leading to eternal damnation. For both eras, which of course flow freely from one into the next, usury was spiritually detrimental to both borrower and lender, and both were expected to fall prey to further vice.[186] Martin Luther denied usurers absolution, Christian burial and the holy sacrament.[187] However, the late Middle Ages in Britain saw the transition of usury from a spiritual issue for debate in the Church Courts, to a state issue for debate in Parliament.[188] Norman Jones pinpoints the time at which this changed: 'when Parliament enacted England's first general statue against usury' in 1487.[189] With this statute, usury became not only a moral and spiritual crime but a legal one too.[190]

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[182] Wood, p.166.
[183] Wood, p.173; see also, Spicksley, p.267.
[184] The fourteenth-century English translation of *Somme le Roi* by Lorens d'Orléans, the *Book of Vices and Virtues,* recounts the four types of usurer: those who charge interest on credit (whether in the form of money or goods); those who inherit profit gained through usury; those who employ others to collect interest; those who borrow at little cost and lend the same goods to those who are in greatest need at a high cost in order to profit. Usurers are condemned as 'despitals and foule'; usury is connected to the Deadly Sins of covetousness and avarice by the *Book's* author, who claims they are the 'roote of alle yueles', echoing the biblical phrase (1 Timothy 6:10). *The Book of Vices and Virtues, a fourteenth-century English translation of the Somme le Roi of Lorens d'Orléans*, ed. by W. Nelson Francis (London: Published for the Early English Text Society by Humphrey Milford, Oxford University Press, 1942), pp.30-1. It is important to remember, however, that the *Book of Vices and Virtues* is a book of ideal behaviour rather than a practical manual detailing actual behaviour.
[185] Hawkes, *The Culture of Usury*, p.5.
[186] Hawkes, *The Culture of Usury,* p.19.
[187] Spicksley, p.268.
[188] Norman Jones, *God and the Moneylenders: Usury and Law in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989), p.47.
[189] Jones, p.47.
[190] Of course, as Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice* (1596-7) depicts, money-lending, even at interest, was always understood to be acceptable for Jews, and so, if required, pre-modern money-lending was available regardless of its high financial (and spiritual) cost to Christians.

Under Protestantism, salvation came to be understood as predestined, and so could not be changed by worldly actions of individuals, and this appears to have been mirrored, for the most part, in more relaxed attitudes towards the charging of interest.[191] A series of laws which attempted to exert control over lending were passed under the Tudor monarchs before James I finally settled on an interest rate of eight percent in 1624, following the public protest which met the ten percent legalised in 1571.[192] Presumably the protest which saw the legal rate of interest eventually lowered was fuelled by similar feelings towards high lending rates today: consumers need to be able to borrow money for an economy to function successfully, but only at reasonable rates of interest can this be morally acceptable and economically sustainable. By the seventeenth century, the term 'usury' had developed from the medieval meaning of interest of *any* rate on a monetary loan, to 'extortionate rates of interest', and was now seen to be 'a crime of the social-climbing *nouveaux riches*' rather than as a sin against God.[193]

It seems that as time progressed, the English population, its churches and its laws came to understand usury as a defined crime which threatened the social order rather than the fate of the soul. Jones suggests that English Protestantism 'created a rationale that sanctioned economic self-aggrandizement' as financial success began to be interpreted as a divine sign of predestined salvation.[194] Financial sin 'ceased to be a public concern' and was 'replaced with questions of public order and economic efficiency.'[195] Money-lending was necessary, as was the reasonable charging of interest, for the economy to function, and so it became slowly accepted into society while concerns with personal sin and morality were not the responsibility of the state, but of the individual. As Ceri Sullivan has observed, 'an inability to lend or borrow would have put a merchant out of business.'[196] In order for the English economy to survive, let alone flourish, money-lending and interest charges had to be legally acceptable. Sullivan has noted that there was a marked difference between 'usurers who extort and plot' and merchants

[191] Jones explains how changing attitudes towards God and salvation throughout the sixteenth century impacted upon England's understanding of usury. Jones, pp.47-146.
[192] 'Henry VIII legalized interest rates of up to 10 percent in 1545, but Edward VI reversed that law six years later. In 1571 usury of 10 percent was again legalized, despite public protest that eventually succeeded in getting the maximum lowered, to 8 percent in 1624.' Hawkes, *The Culture of Usury,* p.24; see Spicksley for a detailed discussion of Tudor interest rates, pp. 268-70.
[193] Jones, p.146. Interestingly for this study's focus on female finance, Judith M. Spicksley has noted that both Mary Tudor and her half-sister Elizabeth I used their powers as monarchs to protect their creditors against prosecutions for usury in 1558 and 1561 respectively. For these two female monarchs, the practical need for cash ameliorated theological and moral issues. Spicksley, p.268.
[194] Jones, p.203.
[195] Jones, p.203.
[196] Ceri Sullivan, *The Rhetoric of Credit: Merchants in Early Modern Writing* (London: Associated University Presses, 2002), p.26.

who 'earn their interest by being prepared to suffer risk and lose opportunities of profit'.[197] Where lenders stood to lose their investment, a measure of interest was morally and legally permissible. Those who exploited and preyed upon the financial instability of others and who charged extortionate rates of interest were the true usurers.

Judith M. Spicksley observes that the usurious character in early modern literature was predominantly male – Shylock in *The Merchant of Venice* (1596-7) for example – while the allegorical figure of usury was usually female.[198] Spicksley suggests that this representation of usury as female was due to 'the understanding of usury as an illicit form of reproduction'.[199] This section began with the Aristotelean problem of monetary reproduction and it is little wonder that the early modern period made the connection between usury and female sexuality.[200] Perhaps the earliest reference to a female usurer, 'Vʃureʃʃe', is Richard Braithwait's in *The English Gentlewoman* (1631), and, significantly, she is a widow: a woman assumed to have possession of her deceased husband's money.[201] Braithwait insinuates that her money-lending is inappropriate as it endangers her ability to provide for her children's future since she is unable to make the 'reʃtitution' required by the Church and leave sufficient provision to raise them (54). In contrast to single women, who did not have the responsibility of (legitimate) children, it was thought by men that widows' finances needed to be tightly controlled to protect the social, financial and moral order. A single woman risked only her own livelihood, while a woman with children jeopardised the fate of her offspring. As a consequence, a woman's marital status impacted upon her contemporary society's attitude towards her lending. Braithwait implies that a money-lending mother is a bad mother. For pre-modern society, finance was inseparable from issues of morality, sexual (mis)conduct and spirituality.

Closely connected to money-lenders and usurers were pre-modern merchants, thanks to their involvement with financial exchange and social advancement which posed a threat to the established higher ranks. Jill Mann's observation that merchants were associated with fraud

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[197] Sullivan, p.44.
[198] Spicksley, pp. 271-2. Interestingly, at the close of the seventeenth century and on into the eighteenth century, the favourable literary figure of 'Lady Credit', who sustains the English economy and (pro)creates wealth, provides a positive view of female money-lending, and is the antithesis of the earlier 'Lady Usury'. Spicksley, p.282.
[199] Spicksley, p.272.
[200] The contemporary linking of female sexual conduct and financial order has already been discussed in section (iv).
[201] Spicksley, p.272; Richard Braithwait, *The English Gentlewoman* (London: Michaell Sparke, 1631), p.54. All references are to this edition.

and dishonesty by medieval satirists, regardless of their rank, is illustrative of the contentious nature of commerce in the Middle Ages.[202] Laura Caroline Stevenson has traced the development of the character of the male merchant in Elizabethan literature and noted the emergence of 'merchant heroes' who were praiseworthy for exemplifying the ideal attributes of chivalrous knights rather than for their proficiency in trade.[203] Stevenson makes the important point that it was not until the eighteenth century – beyond the time period under investigation here – that merchants were praised in literature for their commercial activity rather than their knightly behaviour.[204] Tracy Adams argues that it was only after the English Civil War with its 'assault on the aristocratic way of life' that the merchant finally became a 'viable figure with its own distinct set of positive values.'[205] Evidently, the notion of commerce – male as well as female – remained a morally troubling issue throughout the pre-modern era.

These complex and changing attitudes to usury, money-lending and merchants inform the writing of each female author studied in this thesis. While they may not all actively engage in the debate surrounding the charging and payment of interest on monetary loans, each author is active in the financial and spiritual worlds as a practicing Christian. Some, such as Margery Kempe, struggle to reconcile these two worlds, while others, like Martha Moulsworth, create texts in which their devotional and financial lives sit side by side in harmony. The letters and wills of other women, such as the medieval Pastons and seventeenth-century Katherine Barnardiston, show them to be active money-lenders and borrowers, alert to the spiritual and moral dimensions of their activity and their expression of it in writing.

(vi) Accounting by Default?

Early modern book-keeping guides for merchants imply that (even) women could record financial matters, using the forms and templates provided by the manuals, should the male merchant, his male apprentice, sons or male servants be unavailable to do so. Hugh Oldcastle's 1588 manual, *A briefe instruction and maner hovv to keepe bookes of accompts after the order of debitor and creditor*, for example, suggests that, however 'unlearned' the servant of 'any

[202] Mann, p.99.
[203] Stevenson refers to Elizabethan literature such as that by Thomas Delaney and John Stow that praised the loyal civic actions of merchants. Laura Caroline Stevenson, *Praise and Paradox: Merchants and craftsmen in Elizabethan popular literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), pp.107-30.
[204] Stevenson, pp. 108-13; p.128.
[205] Tracy Adams, ''Noble, wyse and grete lordes, gentilmen and marchaunts': Caxton's Prologues as Conduct Books for Merchants', *Paragon*, 22.2 (2005), 53-76 (p.76).

marchant', they 'may enter & write the parcelles concerning the booke Memoriall [account book]'.[206] The vocabulary of devotion and mercantilism combines as Oldcastle refers to the process of accounting as 'reckoning', demonstrating how closely tied the two subjects remained in the early modern era (B6ᵛ). Oldcastle provides a template which (un)educated and (un)official servants of the merchant could follow to leave the best possible record for their master (B7ʳ). By demonstrating an example that 'might ſerue' and subsequently offering a more comprehensive and therefore superior style, Oldcastle subtly implies the benefits to merchants who educate their servants with his guide (B7ʳ). He notes that whether the transaction recorded has been carried out with 'ready money' (cash), 'time' (on credit), or 'batrid' (negotiated), it should be diligently noted in the account book (B7ʳ). Such precision and careful logging of amounts is evident in the pragmatic letters of Margaret Paston, and on occasion those of Brilliana Harley, in Margery Kempe's life-writing, and in the wills of money-lenders such as Martha Moulsworth.[207] While the texts of the women studied in this project are not account books, they are undeniably created with mercantile practice and discourse as a significant proportion of their rhetorical make-up. Oldcastle makes no direct reference to women, suggesting that he did not expect women generally to carry out this accounting duty, but neither does he specifically state that they should not. This ambiguity gives his manual the potential to be utilised by female as well as male compilers of mercantile records, should the need arise.

Early modern instruction manuals for mercantile book-keeping are frequently formatted as dialogues with all male participants, again implying that women were not expected to undertake this task on an official or regular basis. James Peele's 1569 guide entitled *The pathe way to perfectnes, in th'accomptes of debitour, and creditour* features exchanges between merchant, schoolmaster, scholar, servant and master, all of whom are male.[208] Peele's title – *pathe way to perfectnes* – is a phrase which implies an almost godly perception of accounting. The *OED* defines 'perfect' as 'characterized by supreme moral or spiritual excellence or virtue; righteous, holy; immaculate; spiritually pure' (*OED* 1a). By implication, the process of book-keeping, when carried out according to Peele's instructions, was a spiritually beneficial activity for those who pursued it. Sullivan has noted that, as with conduct

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[206] Hugh Oldcastle, *A briefe instruction and maner hovv to keepe bookes of accompts after the order of debitor and creditor*, rev. by John Mellis (London: Iohn Windet, 1588), B6ᵛ. All references are to this edition.
[207] See pp.87-9 for Paston's detailing of costs in her shopping orders, p.79 for Harley's recording of financial amounts, pp.156-7 for Kempe's inclusion of monetary transactions in her autohagiography and the note to p.225 for Moulsworth's notation of loaned sums.
[208] For further examples of manuals which present their key figures and intended readers as male, see: John Carpenter, *A most excellent instruction for the exact and perfect keeping merchants bookes of accounts* (London: Iames Boler, 1632). All references are to this edition of Carpenter, hereafter cited by page number.

literature, merchants' manuals 'mix devotional, commercial, and social graces without distinction in order or style' and that these 'mercantile texts annex a display of godliness to good accounting.'[209] Therefore, in conflating devotional, mercantile and moral discourses pre-modern women's writing was not exceptional, but this study is the first to look closely at women's manipulation of genre to do so in their position outside male, organised, commercial literature, and indeed beyond the official, regulated, male world of trade. It explores how women carve out a new and separate style for a distinctly female creative process which combines practical, spiritual and reflective purpose. Significantly, in Peele's work, book-keeping is very much a male activity, and yet, the suggestion that it is morally and spiritually good practice makes it, to some degree, accessible and acceptable for women to emulate this behaviour. This thesis investigates how women's practical life-writing takes up this understanding that accounting and financial 'perfectnes' aids spiritual neatness, and analyses the ways in which this is reflected in both the language, rhetoric and structure which their writings take.

In his use of dialogue and conversation, Peele reveals the verbal, social and interactive aspects of accounting.[210] This is mirrored in the female-authored works studied in this project. The letters discussed in Chapter Two, for example, are one half of a conversational exchange, and on occasion record the speech of others, which is particularly prominent when the women report business and financial dealings. In doing so, the correspondents echo the verbal exchanges represented in Peele's manual but manipulate them to fit the epistolary genre as their personal and familial situations demand. Similarly, Margery Kempe's careful accounts of conversations with Christ, pilgrims, male clerics and her contemporary Lynn inhabitants are often accompanied by financial transactions: the practice of her mercantile background and wider community seeps into the devotional writing she works so hard to distance from her worldly past. Importantly, Peele's manual demonstrates the value of combining numerical records with verbal communication as numbers and words are put to work most effectively in conjunction. This is something which the authors studied in this project seem to handle with confident ease.[211] Rather than writing in the traditionally male genre of the account book, female writers appropriate aspects of the book-keeping genre to forge representations of their

[209] Sullivan, pp.38-40.
[210] James Peele, *The pathe waye to perfectness, in the accomptes of debitour, and creditour* (London: Thomas Purfoote, 1569), A1^{r}. All references are to this edition.
[211] See, for example, Maria Thynne's letter to her husband Thomas on p.108 along with the letters of the Pastons and Brilliana Harley more generally.

lives in forms of writing which simultaneously strive to achieve practical purposes (reporting news, shopping, leaving bequests, arranging marriages) and express devotion, creativity and emotion.

Importantly for pre-modern England, the willingness to handle risk was understood as the justification for traders to make financial profit.[212] In the contemporary accounting manuals, this risk-taking, as with the general readership and official merchant community, is gendered masculine. In John Carpenter's manual, *A most excellent instruction for the exact and perfect keeping merchant bookes of accounts* (1632), all the figures who hazard their wealth and trade for profit are male, as are both creditors and debtors (70-1).[213] The risks taken are not only the economic ventures of trade, but the physical risks of travel undertaken by the merchant-adventurer. Lewes Roberts's *The merchants mappe of commerce* (1638) reveals the extent to which a seventeenth-century, male merchant could travel across Europe, Asia, Africa and the Americas to carry out trade.[214] This male-dominated world of travel, risk and finance was largely off-limits to the female authors studied in my project, and yet their writings are infused with the discourses of risk, commerce, and even, in the case of Margery Kempe, overseas travel. Rather than solely recording the practicalities of transactions as in account books, the women's writings in this thesis combine accounting with other aspects of their lives in a way that is paradoxically unique to the individual in the nuances of language and content, but applicable to their gender as a whole as numerous genres are transformed, manipulated and combined to fit their specific purpose.

The double-entry account book, which we picture today as representing the archetypal book-keeping record in which credits and debits appear in columns alongside each other, seems only to have arrived in England in the sixteenth century. The earliest surviving guide for this book-keeping method in English is a translation of merchant Jan Ympyn's 1543 work: *A notable and very excellente woorke, expressyng and declaryng the maner and forme how to kepe a boke of accomptes or reconynges* (1547).[215] Ympyn, born in the Low Countries,

[212] See Sullivan, pp.44-70.
[213] Like Peele's, Carpenter's title makes use of the positive moral and spiritual connotations of 'perfect' which imbue his writing with moral as well as financial value. See also, James Peele, *The Maner and Fourme How to Keep a Perfecte Reconyng* (London: Richard Grafton, 1553). In this work, Peele's title is an overt combination of vocabulary which combines the economic and the devotional in 'perfecte reconyng'.
[214] Lewes Roberts, *The merchants mappe of commerce* (London: R.O., 1638).
[215] R. H. Parker, 'Ympyn, Jan (c.1485-1540), merchant and author of a text on double entry accounting', in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004) <https://www-oxforddnb-com.ezproxy.bangor.ac.uk/view/101093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-56448> [Accessed 22 May 2020]. All biographical details of Ympyn are from this source.

travelled to Italy, Spain, and Portugal for business and to learn commercial book-keeping practices.[216] As well as being the first double-entry guide in English, the translation of Ympyn's work is the earliest surviving of an accountancy manual in English of *any* style.[217] Of course, domestic household accounts existed and merchants had been keeping records out of necessity far earlier than the sixteenth century, but might a lack of formal guides imply a more informal approach to accounting? If this is so, would this informality allow women greater access and involvement with financial matters or the book-keeping process? Formal education was primarily a male privilege, and therefore any written guide for accounting would be largely for male consumers. Natasha Glaisyer and Sara Pennell claim that early modern manuals of accountancy 'were often produced as textbooks for use in the classroom'.[218] By implication, the form, language and methods of formal accounting, were aimed at privileged, literate men of wealth and business, who were educated at home or in the early grammar schools. For early modern England, accountancy represented social, moral and religious order but the masculine gendering of manuals ostensibly excluded women from formal training. Instead, women were forced to find alternative routes and genres with which to record both financial transactions and life events in a way which created a recognisably feminine discourse.

It may be possible to read the absence of accountancy manuals in the didactic literature of the English medieval period as a silent signifier that there was a lack of gendering of fiscal language, genre and practice in the Middle Ages. Phyllis Whitman Hunter claims that the accountancy instruction manuals during the early modern period were aimed at teaching both the merchant and the 'gentleman of wealth and property' the process of double-entry book-keeping.'[219] Significantly, Hunter makes no mention of gentle*women* of wealth and property nor of any manuals for them to follow: a telling absence. The specifically early modern phenomenon of book-keeping manuals was, Hunter believes, due to the 'surge in long-distance trade accompanied by the growth of colonial settlements in the new world, and trading posts in the Far East.'[220] While Hunter argues that it was during this time that 'fashionable display

[216] It was in Venice that he studied and practised double entry accounting.
[217] It is worthy of note that both the Dutch and French publications of Ympyn's guide were carried out posthumously under the supervision of his widow, Anna Swinters, suggesting that in some European countries women were able to actively engage in the world of financial publication, albeit behind the voice of their husbands when the men were unable to do so themselves. Unfortunately, time and space does not allow for a further exploration of this in a more international context.
[218] Natasha Glaisyer and Sara Pennell, 'Introduction', in *Didactic Literature in England 1500-1800*, ed. by Natasha Glaisyer and Sara Pennell (London: Routledge, 2003), pp. 1-18 (p.13).
[219] Phyllis Whitman Hunter, 'Containing the Marvellous: Instructions to Buyers and Sellers', in Glaisyer and Pennell, p.175.
[220] Hunter, p.169.

became a commonplace part of many peoples' everyday lives', a close reading of texts such as the letters written by the Paston women, Margery Kempe's *Boke*, and medieval women's wills, reveals that conspicuous consumption and 'fashionable display' was an important part of women's lives in late medieval England, as well as in the early modern period.[221] As global trade expanded and became more commonplace, Hunter argues that a consumer society was forged which 'required new forms of education and improved methods of conducting commerce.'[222] The emergence of accounting manuals was inherently linked to the formalisation of commercial activity and fundamentally aimed at male merchants and readers.

Despite the notable absence of female protagonists in the surviving accountancy manuals, domestic and estate accounts by women of wealth were, of course, compiled. Practicality and necessity overruled the ideology of male authors of commercial handbooks. Alice de Bryene's 1412-13 household accounts for her Acton property record expenses, purchases and produce in a prose manner rather than numerical columns which, while comprehensive, does not appear to be formalised to any great degree.[223] Although it is possible to interpret de Bryene's accounts as demonstrating agency through their lack of formalised generic form, it is equally feasible that they differ from the strict double-entry style advocated by Ympyn simply because she was unaware of the format. Similarly, Magdalen Herbert's *Kitchin Booke* (1601) does not use the double-entry process to record the expenditure of her London household. While compiling her accounts after the English translation of Ympyn's work, Herbert was not an urban merchant and so may never have encountered such handbooks. Context, rank and location are as important as gender in moulding women's writing, as will become apparent across the following chapters of this thesis.

Adam Smyth's 2010 monograph on early modern autobiographical writing makes valuable advancements in identifying the 'links between financial account and life-writing'.[224] He points out that the popular accountancy guides 'constructed a particular idea of truthfulness', and that these manuals 'provided one readily available template' that could be appropriated by 'life-writers' for 'their own projects'.[225] Smyth's argument that financial templates lent themselves to early modern life-writing implies the close connection between ordered finances and organised memoirs: both are concerned with presenting what they believe

[221] Hunter, p.169.
[222] Hunter, p.170.
[223] See also, p.13 above.
[224] Smyth, p.4.
[225] Smyth, p.4.

to be accurate and just representations of the transactions recorded. However, my research reveals that such a method for records of life was present much earlier than the appearance of specialised manuals of accounting in the sixteenth century. Medieval women's letters, memoirs and wills demonstrate their appropriation of financial practices – written and spoken – to their textual inscription of themselves, their devotion, their family, and their legacies, which, while they may not have been intended as documents of autobiographical self-reflection, do record the events of their life with occasionally surprising literary flair embellished with financial rhetoric.

(vii) Trust and Risk

As well as being a justification for profit in pre-modern England, the risk of financial loss had to be mitigated in any economic transaction. One way of controlling financial loss was an assessment of the credit, or trust, of the potential borrower. Issues of trust and risk are fundamentally bound up with those of finance, and so are found in abundance in the texts studied in this project. Whether the authors are writing letters, memoirs, or wills, they can be seen to negotiate risks of economic loss, as well as the personal loss of reputation which would damage social, spiritual and familial relationships.

The first written record of 'risk' in the English language occurred in 1621 and contemporary definitions include 'the possibility of loss, injury, or other adverse or unwelcome circumstance' (*OED* 1a), and 'the possibility of harm or damage causing financial loss […] the possibility of financial loss or failure as a quantifiable factor in evaluating the potential profit in a commercial enterprise or investment' (*OED* 2a). Before the advent of 'risk', words such as 'hazard', 'chance' and 'jeopardy' were used to describe the concept of possible danger or loss of fortune in the Middle Ages. It is the inherent linking of risk to financial and spiritual loss and the management of monetary and devotional investments which is crucial in the texts analysed in the following thesis. In the medieval era the possibility of spiritual loss or deficit was key: medieval Christians ran the risk of lengthy sojourns in Purgatory if they did not manage their wealth and devotion appropriately. For Protestant women, there was a concern with spiritual loss, but the denial of Purgatory by Luther in 1517 means that their writings display their attempt to demonstrate their devotion and so their place in Heaven, rather than to

speed their way through Purgatory.[226] With the Calvinist belief in predestination, wealth ceased to be a direct obstacle to salvation and instead, provided it was accompanied by appropriate humility rather than greed, became evidence of an individual's position as one of God's chosen elect.[227]

'Trust' is an older word than 'risk', first recorded in 1225, and continues to be used in its original meaning today. The *OED* defines 'trust' as the 'firm belief in the reliability, truth, or ability of someone or something; confidence or faith in a person or thing' (*OED* 1a). Such trust is abundant in the letters, memoirs and wills studied in the following chapters. Indeed, trust and risk together are forever between the lines of the texts studied in this thesis and are sometimes explicit issues of great importance. The letters of the Pastons, Thynnes and Brilliana Harley strive to mitigate the risk of losing family reputation, wealth, and even life. The autobiographical writings of Margery Kempe and Martha Moulsworth seek to balance their devotion and trust in God with the risks of their worldly lives. In writing their last wills and testaments, pre-modern women perform their final acts of life-administration and exert a post-mortem control over their spiritual fate and financial assets by placing trust in their executors when they are no longer able personally to mediate the risk of loss.

As the earlier section on conduct literature demonstrated, women themselves were seen to pose a risk to their society if their behaviour and financial activities went unchecked by husbands, fathers and male civic figures. One such woman is Geoffrey Chaucer's Wife of Bath whose manipulation of the economic theory of 'supply and demand' successfully makes her a financial threat to her husbands, and by implication, to her wider society. She becomes the ultimate representation of distrust as she rejects the ideal of pre-modern womanhood. Alisoun disregards the moral issues at the centre of the debates surrounding merchants and women in the Middle Ages. In creating Alisoun, Chaucer invented a character who captured and embodied the fears of contemporary clerical and patriarchal society. Despite being a figure of derision who ultimately submits to her husband, Alisoun is potentially threatening through the

[226] The writings of recusant early modern women have not been studied in this project partly due to the limited space but partly to the fact that Protestant women's writings provide a greater test of the differences, and possible continuities, with the late medieval period. Recusant women's writing is, however, the next stage of research which I would like to undertake. Research on recusant women's writing has recently begun with Victoria Van Hyning's *Convent Autobiography: Early Modern English Nuns in Exile* (Oxford: Oxford University Press for The British Academy, 2019). Assessment of writings by greater numbers of medieval and early modern Catholic women could elucidate further the findings of this current study. Maud Parr's 1530 will, is of course just one example of a testament of a Catholic early modern woman.

[227] John Balserak, *Calvinism: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), p.12; Simon Schama, *The Embarrassment of Riches: An Interpretation of Dutch Culture in the Golden Age* (London: Collins, 1987), p.335.

power she holds over the men who surround her, using her body to gain control over financial and landed assets.

(viii) Alisoun of Bath

Chaucer's Wife of Bath is a well-known, fictional businesswoman of the medieval merchant class who poses a risk to social order as the antithesis of the ideal chaste, silent and obedient wife of contemporary conduct literature. Her confident motto, 'wynne whoso may, for al is for to selle', provides the title of this Introduction and her words exemplify the mercantile spirit (414). Alisoun's 'Prologue' (c.1437) encapsulates the way in which commercial discourse and practice can be appropriated to describe and place a value upon female sexuality, marriage and life-course, albeit via a male author. Whilst Chaucer's audiences are not meant to approve of Alisoun's behaviour, she demonstrates the agency which commercial language and theory could give to a woman when used rhetorically. A figure of both ridicule and distrust, yet also of boundless energy and enterprise, the Wife of Bath is the personification of the contemporary unease surrounding women, merchants and money.

The distrust evoked by Alisoun is due to the phenomenon that occurs 'when the objects of trade become the agents of trade, and the subjects of their own discourse' which results in the overturning of 'the accepted relations of exchange'.[228] Rather than being presented as a passive object in and on the marriage market, Alisoun recognises and owns her commodification, thereby subverting gender and social expectations which gives her a threatening power over patriarchal order. Furthermore, while the commodification of a person may be expected to be dehumanising and detrimental to selfhood, the literature studied in this thesis reveals that, paradoxically, when women take possession of their own commodification their language discloses that it can enable them to assert agency, strength and a sense of self.[229]

As she ages, Alisoun moves from negotiating the marriage market with her looks to bargaining with money, acknowledging 'The flour is goon [...] The bren, as I best kan, now moste I selle' (477-8). She applies the commercial theory of 'supply and demand' to her sexual

[228] Teresa Walters, '"Such Stowage as These Trinkets": Trading and Tasting Women in Fletcher and Massinger's *The Sea Voyage* (1622)', in McAvoy and Walters, p.75.
[229] This is true in Margery Kempe's bargaining with her husband for chastity (see pp.164-6), Maria Thynne's defence of her capabilities within marriage (see pp.78-9), Margery Brews's intervention in the financial negotiations surrounding her marriage (see pp.110-1) and Martha Moulsworth's recollections of her education and subsequent marriages (throughout Chapter Three).

relationships with her first, second and third husbands, exploiting the 'marital debt', which 'neither spouse had the right to withhold.'[230] Biblical teaching of the 'marital debt' outlined that,

> for fear of fornication, let every man have his own wife: and let every woman have her own husband. Let the husband render the debt to his wife: and the wife also in like manner to the husband. The wife hath not power of her own body: but the husband. And in like manner the husband also hath not power of his own body: but the wife. (1 Corinthians 7:2-4)

With its use of the mercantile discourse of debt, the Bible lends itself to supporting the interpretation of human relationships in commercial terms. It teaches that to refuse intercourse with a spouse endangers his/her soul as he/she would be likely to be tempted into adulterous acts.[231] Alisoun blatantly disregards this aspect of canon law which originated with St Paul, confronting her audience with the question, 'What sholde I taken keep hem for to plese, / But it were for my profit and myn ese?' (213-4).[232] While Alisoun disregards the teaching that the marital debt cannot be denied, she appropriates and redefines the mercantile theory used to explain it in the Bible in her employment of 'profit' and 'ese'. In manipulating this financial biblical discourse, Alisoun exemplifies the threatening way in which women could subvert male, Church authority by using its own vocabulary in a destabilising manner. 'Ese' could mean 'pleasure, enjoyment, delight; desire; gratification (of the flesh)' as well as monetary profit and means (*MED* 3; 4; 5). Chaucer's choice of diction demonstrates the fluidity of medieval commercial terminology and its suitable application in metaphorical descriptions of human relationships. Alisoun rejects the idea of the marital debt as an equal agreement between partners, instead exploiting her youth and beauty to her own financial gain. Presenting herself as a commodity to be purchased by her older and wealthier husbands, she is aware of her own value: 'Til he had maad his raunson unto me; / Thanne I wolde suffer hym do hys nyctetee' (411-2). Alisoun's commercial manipulation of the 'marital debt' is made explicit in these lines. 'Raunson' referred to the 'release of a prisoner of war by payment' (*MED* 1a). Alisoun's husband is her prisoner in the battle of their marital relationship.

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[230] Joseph Allen Hornsby, *Chaucer and the Law* (Oklahoma: Pilgrim Books, 1988), p.101.
[231] See Chapter Three pp.164-6 for an analysis of how Margery Kempe presents her understanding and negotiation of the marital debt in her own marriage.
[232] Kathryn Jacobs, *Marriage Contracts from Chaucer to the Renaissance Stage* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2001), pp.3-4.

Alisoun holds her husband's sexual desire to ransom, only submitting once he has paid the price she names. She uses worldly business philosophy to justify her manipulation of the sacrament of marriage as a source of income and profit: 'Wynne whoso may, for all is for to selle; / With empty hand men may none haukes lure' (415-6). Chaucer's metaphor that men cannot lure hawks without bait suggests that desirable women, like the young Alisoun, cannot be expected to be attracted by older men, like her first three husbands, without the compensation of monetary gain. 'Selle' did not only mean to engage in commerce, but also to sell oneself 'into bondage or servitude', which is exactly what Alisoun willingly does to her own financial advantage (*MED* 3). Teresa Walters suggests that women who trade '*on* their sexuality, rather than being traded *for* it' collapse the 'symbolic economies of gender and trade' into one.[233] This is precisely the result of Alisoun's confident reclamation of her own body within marriage: she trades on her sexual appeal for her own monetary profit to the detriment of her husbands' wealth and authority within the marriage.

Alisoun's description of her relationships displays her familiarity with terms of business: 'Unnethe myghte they the statut holde / In which that they were bounden unto me' (199-200). Business language is conflated with legal language here; 'statut' can be defined as an 'agreement', 'promise', 'obligation' as well as 'a legally enforcible obligation, as to pay a debt' (*MED* 3a; b); whilst 'bounden' refers to 'feudal arrangements, the relation between master and servant' and can also mean 'to join in marriage' and 'to have sexual intercourse' (*MED* 6a; 10a; 10b). Chaucer provides Alisoun with an overtly mercantile and legal vocabulary to describe her marriages, ensuring that his readers understand the hyperbolic caricature whilst picking up on the purpose of his 'Canterbury Tales' to provide 'sentence' and 'solaas.'[234] Again, an equal partnership with regard to the marital debt is rejected in favour of an unequal power-relationship of creditor and debtor: 'An housbonde I wol have […] Which shal be bothe my dettour and my thral' (154-5). Chaucer's use of the financial and legal terms 'dettour' and 'thral' illustrates the appropriation of mercantile practice to marriage. Alisoun prefers her husbands to be in a subservient position of obligation and servitude, reversing the ideal medieval marriage in which the wife obeys the husband. Alisoun's voracious appetite for money, sex, husbands and power makes her the epitome of the 'monstrous' pre-modern woman.[235]

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233 Walters, p.76.
234 Geoffrey Chaucer, 'The General Prologue', in Benson, pp. 23-36 (p.36, l.798).
235 McAvoy and Walters, p.8.

Additionally, Chaucer's Alisoun appropriates mercantile practice and language to her interpretation of scripture.[236] Despite having 'wedded fyve' men, Alisoun remains childless (43). Instead of procreation, she interprets 'God bad us for to wexe and multiplye' in a mercantile sense (28).[237] Further to this commercialisation of Christian belief, Chaucer's use of domestic metaphor to exemplify the need for wives has clear economic overtones:

> For wel ye knowe, a lord in his houshold,
> He hath nat every vessel al of gold;
> Somme been of tree, and doon hir lord servyse (99-101).

'Servyse' here refers to 'assistance', 'benefit' and 'advantage' whilst also having connotations of feudal relationships and servitude (*MED* 7; 6). Of course, for Alisoun as merchant, golden bowls would be far more valuable than wooden, disclosing that mercantile ideology can be manipulated to suit the context and purpose of women's words. Alisoun disregards her economic knowledge to claim value for her present position as a sexually active woman: even without children, she is one of the wooden bowls of her society. It is important to remember that Church teaching, based on St Jerome's interpretation of the gospel of Matthew, evaluated women's spiritual worth according to their marital status, giving 'virgins a hundred-fold reward in the kingdom of heaven, consecrated widows sixty-fold, and matrons a mere thirty-fold.'[238] In this context, Alisoun's mercantile interpretation of scripture is less surprising, but no less important. The following chapters will demonstrate that pre-modern women's appropriation of commercial diction and practice to their devotion is ubiquitous regardless of their faith or class. Particularly striking is Margery Kempe's use of mercantile vocabulary in reference to her spirituality in her 1436-8 *Boke*, and Martha Moulsworth's application of the strict numerical order of book-keeping to make sense of her bereavements and own spiritual position as a widow in her 1632 poetic 'Memorandum'.[239]

With Chaucer's famous ventriloquising of a medieval businesswoman in mind, this thesis seeks to discover the ways in which *real* pre-modern women appropriate the discourses of finance and commerce in their writings. The aim is to interrogate where, how and why

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[236] This feature of her characterisation has been recognised by Stewart Justman. Stewart Justman, 'Trade as Pudendum: Chaucer's Wife of Bath', *The Chaucer Review*, 28.4 (1994), 344-52 (p.346).

[237] Sheila Delany claims that for Alisoun this commandment 'bears fruit not in children, but in profit.' Sheila Delany, 'Sexual economics, Chaucer's Wife of Bath and *The Book of Margery Kempe*', in *Feminist Readings in Middle English Literature. The Wife of Bath and all her sect*, ed. by Ruth Evans and Lesley Johnson (London: Routledge, 1994), pp. 72-87 (p.72).

[238] Elliott, p. 40. For a discussion of Martha Moulsworth's ruminations on this, see Chapter Three pp.168-9.

[239] See Chapter Three.

medieval and early modern women authors use business practice and language in the texts of their everyday lives: in their devotion; relationships with husbands and family network; household and estate management; and last wills and testaments.

(ix) Text Selection and Thesis Structure

Having provided some important contexts for this study, and briefly analysing Chaucer's Wife of Bath, whose characterisation inspired this project, this final section of the Introduction outlines the structure which the remaining chapters will take. James Daybell has argued that 'there is a correlation between a woman's language and her self-perception of her power.'[240] It is precisely the perception of her own power that is revealed by the choice to employ financial diction by each author studied in this thesis. While the texts analysed in this project are what we might term non-fictional, autobiographical documents (letters, memoirs, wills) rather than fiction (with the exception of Isabella Whitney's poetic 'Wyll' (1573)), this is a literary study and not an historical survey. The rhetorical use of mercantile diction is the focus and so the thesis is organised by genre rather than chronology, though within each genre the texts are introduced in a broadly chronological sequence. This study tests the often false divide between the medieval and early modern eras, using financial language as a lens through which to view and question this periodisation. The order of the following chapters does, however, mirror the sequence in which the works were written over the life-course of their authors: from letters composed in the midst of the action of life, through retrospective memoirs, to the writing of last wills and testaments at the end of life. Within each chapter the organising principle is thematic, and the analyses of medieval and early modern texts are interwoven. This structure enables a clearer comparison between individual texts while continuously interrogating the questionable divide between the historical periods.

Chapter Two, 'The Business of Letters', focuses on epistolary writing by women who were active participants in estate and family administration. Daybell has noted that letters written by women 'offer a useful corrective to prescriptive texts, such as conduct books and sermons, which expound the values [… of female] obedience and subordination.'[241] This is certainly true of the women's correspondence focused on in Chapter Two. The well-known fifteenth-century Paston women were astute estate managers in the absence of their sons and

[240] James Daybell, *Women Letter-Writers in Tudor England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), p.262.
[241] Daybell, *Women Letter-Writers*, p.200.

husbands. In addition to this, their letters demonstrate their involvement in marriage negotiations, purchasing and money-lending. For the purpose of this study, I focus on the letters of Margaret Mautby Paston (c.1420-1484), wife of John Paston (I); Margery Brews (d.1495), future wife of John Paston (III); Elizabeth Brews, mother of Margery; and Cecily Daune, mistress of John Paston (II). With the exception of the financially vulnerable Daune, these women occupied the boundaries of mercantile and gentry rankings as the Paston family continued to rise with each generation. Their letters provide a glimpse into their struggle to maintain their newfound wealth and rank, keeping up with their contemporaries as it were. Each woman writer in the Paston collection (whether she was wife, mother, bride-to-be or mistress) was adept at carrying out business transactions and negotiating profit for herself and her family.

Studied in conjunction with the Paston letters is the correspondence of Joan Thynne (bap.1558-d.1612) and her daughter-in-law, Maria (c.1578-1611), which survives from between the years of 1575-1611. Like the Paston women, the Thynnes dealt with estate administration in the absence of their husbands, and each of them, too, used inventive rhetoric to impose her own will over that of her husband. Alongside the letters by Joan and Maria are a number written by Lucy Touchet, Lady Audley (d.c.1611), Maria's mother, who was also no stranger to legal metaphor and financial involvement when it came to orchestrating family connections. The majority of the letters between the in-laws deal with Maria's clandestine marriage to Joan's son, Thomas, and the resulting tense relationship between the women. The abundance of legal diction appropriated to the discussion of family politics is striking.

The latest letter collection focused on is that of Lady Brilliana Harley (bap.1598-d.1643), the seventeenth-century occupant of Brampton Bryan castle, Herefordshire. Harley's surviving correspondence (1623-1643) illustrates her vocation as wife, mother, devoted Puritan, household manager and defender of the family property during the English Civil War. For Harley, none of these callings negated the responsibilities associated with the others, and her letters demonstrate an ingenious interweaving of each activity and discourse.

The three letter collections have been chosen as they demonstrate a continued rhetorical use of commercial discourse in women's epistolary writing form from the late Middle Ages until the Civil War.[242] The epistolary form exposes the ease with which pre-modern wives,

[242] This project does not go beyond the Civil War due to the dramatic political and theological changes imposed upon England. This entirely different context would have implications which this project does not have the space to deal with.

mothers, widows and single-women employed powerful rhetoric whilst adapting it as necessary to match the financial, social and political context in which their letters were penned. The genre and very form of the letter is manipulated and adapted to suit the purpose of writing. As well as conveying family news, letters became shopping lists, contracts, bills, political weapons, marriage negotiations and crucial legal records. An analysis of these epistolary writings reveals that, far from being quotidian records of everyday life, they are rich with varied rhetorical techniques ranging from Margaret Paston's acutely pragmatic style which reflects her social and financial security, to Brilliana Harley's emotive language used to express her fear of coming under attack during the Civil War. Despite these differences, the letters disclose lexical and metaphorical choices plentiful in the rhetoric of credit, debt and commerce.

Chapter Three, 'Accounting for a Life', moves away from the active and practical administration of correspondence and focuses on the spiritual autobiographical remembrances of Margery Kempe (c.1373-after 1438) and Martha Moulsworth (1577-1646). Both Kempe and Moulsworth were products of the mercantile class, and both wrote during their later middle-age: a point in their life-course at which they had the leisure to do so from a mature vantage point. Kempe's *Boke* (1436-8) is a lengthy memoir of her conversion to a devotional life, yet she makes prolific use of commercial diction within the context of her spirituality. She applies mercantile theory and practice to her relationships with fellow humans and the divine. Moulsworth's concise autobiographical poem, 'The Memorandum of Martha Moulsworth Widdowe' (1632), of only fifty-five rhyming couplets is defined by its numerical structure which has all the exactness of accounting. Moulsworth's poem charts her progress from daughter, to wife (on three occasions), to satisfied widow of comfortable economic means. Whereas Kempe's writing evidences her continuous struggle to reconcile her devotion with her position in the mercantile world, Moulsworth's poem portrays her comfortable acceptance of her worldly life and, like Martha from the Gospels, the spiritual value that this gives her. By pairing the two works, I aim to highlight the notable differences as well as paradoxical similarities in the rhetorical application of commercial diction, theory, numeracy and record-keeping that sit side by side in the works of two very different authors in two very different texts.

Chapter Four, 'Trust, Risk and the Currency of Memory', analyses the final textual act of life-administration: the will. An extensive range of the wills of pre-modern women are

studied: Lady Peryne Clanbowe (1422); Margaret Blakburn (1434); Isabel le Despenser, Countess of Warwick (1439); Dame Eleanor Hull (1458); Margaret Mautby Paston (1482); Elizabeth Paston Poynings (1487); Maud Parr (1530); Elizabeth Hardwick, Countess of Shrewsbury (1601); Lady Katherine Barnardiston (1633); and Martha Moulsworth (1646). This combination of testaments includes those by the merchant, gentry and aristocratic ranks of pre-modern women. The uniting factor of the testators is their gender which allows consideration of women's employment of the will as a genre and the influence of each individual's wealth as she attempts to exert a post-mortem control over the fate of her material and spiritual legacies. This chapter explores the significance of bequests and how female testators used these to exert their influence and individuality through the employment of the will as a rhetorical tool in an appropriation of financial administration. Of particular interest is the way in which the female testators transformed bequests such as items of clothing into alternative texts on which to inscribe their lives.

The conclusion, 'Codicil', of this thesis draws the findings of the previous chapters to a close with a discussion of Isabella Whitney's fictional poetic 'Wyll' (1573) and Elizabeth Joscelin's *Legacy to Her Unborn Child* (1622). These texts are not actual wills, yet they are undeniably influenced by the legal genre, borrowing its terms and features with striking literary agency. Whitney's fictional will is written from the perspective of a destitute woman who bequeaths the institutions of London to her contemporaries.[243] Her poem provides an interesting point of contrast for the will-writing conventions with which her writing engages, as does the fact that she wrote for monetary profit. Elizabeth Joscelin's *Legacy* functions as conduct literature for her child, but also as a moral inheritance and alternative will, bequeathing spiritual lessons rather than material possessions. Joscelin's text abounds with official testamentary language while gendering the instructions for the upbringing of her unborn child. In my Codicil I hope to reveal the flexibility of legal, financial discourse and diction and its potential for appropriation to literary uses, whether they be for financial gain, as in Whitney's case, or for private, family emotional and spiritual guidance, as in Joscelin's manuscript. This final section of the thesis brings together the topics of the previous chapters to form concluding remarks on the continuities and discontinuities in pre-modern women writers' appropriation of mercantile discourse across the period, their social ranks, their religion, and their choices of genres. To what extent is all 'for to selle' in the non-fictional writings of historical pre-modern

[243] Whitney's text fills the gap exposed in my study of historical wills: there is an absence of poor women's testaments simply because their wills, where they survive, do not provide sufficient material to analyse due to their sparse possessions.

women as it is for Chaucer's Wife of Bath? What does their use of financial discourse reveal? How far is it true that that they, like the young Margery Kempe, 'evyr desyryd mor and mor'?

Chapter Two

The Business of Letters

Letters are more than the quotidian remnants of life: they are the autobiographical written records of lived experience. The epistolary form has been recognised by literary critics as an alternative method of self-writing for pre-modern authors, alongside account books, marginalia, legal records, and memoirs.[244] As a genre, letters engage with various aspects of family, financial, personal and political business. Their form is flexible enough to include shopping lists/orders, bills, negotiations and contracts, depending on the needs of the individual woman and the context in which she wrote a particular letter. On some occasions pre-modern women's epistolary writing contains several of these things, smoothly moving between news of family health, updates on the progress of crops, arranging a marriage, fortifying a property, requesting a new necklace and recording a loan. Their fluidity of form and their potential to contain financial content means that letters are vital to understanding medieval and early modern women's engagement with the economic world as well as their management of persuasive rhetoric.

The surviving letters of the Paston women (fifteenth century), the Thynne women (late sixteenth and early seventeenth century), and Brilliana Harley (seventeenth century) use financial discourse to articulate female involvement in family affairs, the arrangement of marriages, the running of estates and even the defence of family properties.[245] All three letter collections provide enlightening examples of women's absorption of, and involvement with, mercantile and legal language as well as processes. As material texts, the letters written by the Pastons, the Thynnes and Harley travelled from the domestic household into the public arena. These letters, of course, will usually have received replies (though many are now lost) demonstrating that letters, just like money, are a form of exchange; they functioned as a currency of information, ideas, and even accompanied payments and goods on some occasions.[246]

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[244] Adam Smyth, *Autobiography in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), p.1; Phillipa Kelly, Lloyd Davis, and Ronald Bedford, 'Introduction', in *Early Modern Autobiography: Theories, Genres, Practices,* ed. by Ronald Bedford, Lloyd Davis and Philippa Kelly (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2006), pp.1-16 (p.15).

[245] In order to differentiate between the numerous Paston and Thynne women, they will be referred to by their first names throughout this chapter, while Brilliana Harley will be give her surname, as is the usual critical practice when discussing authors.

[246] See p.98 for Harley's letter to her son which makes reference to a parcel including family plate and a cake.

The exchanges between the women letter-writers at home and their sons and husbands in London on business, at court and at war show their authors to be concerned with far more than the domestic 'female' concerns of raising children and managing the home.[247] Indeed, Jennifer Summit has argued that early modern women's epistolary writing was 'not in opposition to women's household activities but in tandem with them taking its place as a female "accomplishment" alongside the domestic practices of needlework and cookery.'[248] This 'accomplishment' and need for correspondence also applied to medieval women. Each collection of correspondence in this chapter reveals the pre-modern expectation that the wife of a prosperous merchant or gentleman would act as his capable deputy in his absence and report any news, issues and transactions – including any decisions she made in her own right. The letters penned by Joan and Maria Thynne showcase their use of legal and financial rhetoric in an attempt to manipulate family politics between two female correspondents, something which is rare amongst the letters of the Pastons and Brilliana Harley whose recipients were usually male.

This chapter seeks to discover the ways in which pre-modern female letter-writers employed and adapted commercial terms and legal metaphors, and the extent to which this usage changed across the period under investigation, taking into consideration the social ranks, religious beliefs and political contexts of each woman.[249] I investigate how and why these individual women used mercantile terms and metaphors, and whether differences can be detected according to their circumstances. The analysis will be organised thematically to enable a direct comparison between the rhetorical strategies and subject matter chosen by the authors. I will begin by assessing the representation of the authors' financial role as estate managers in the absence of their husbands. Secondly, the epistolary traces of the involvement of the Pastons, Thynnes and Harley with financial networks of credit as borrowers and lenders will be studied. The chapter will subsequently move on to a discussion of the letter-writers' use of commercial and legal metaphors in their portrayal of family relationships. Finally, the employment of fiscal language in the 'women's business' of marriage and childbearing will be evaluated, followed by concluding remarks.

[247] Of course, these female roles were themselves political and vital to the running of patriarchal pre-modern society.
[248] Jennifer Summit, 'Writing Home: Hannah Woley, the Oxinden Letters, and Household Epistolary Practice', in *Women, Property and the Letters of the Law in Early Modern England*, ed. by Nancey E. Wright, Margaret W. Ferguson and A.R. Buck (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), pp.201-18 (p.202)
[249] See Appendix Two for more information on each woman discussed in this chapter.

Some of the letters assessed in this chapter are holograph, such as most of those by Joan and Maria Thynne;[250] many, however, made use of a scribe. Whether this was through necessity, as was the case for the illiterate Margaret Paston, or through a certain element of choice, as with Brilliana Harley's decision to employ a clerk during bouts of ill-health, the woman who sent each of these letters is undoubtedly its author. Even when able to write themselves, medieval gentlewomen, like gentlemen, frequently used scribes for letter-writing, even to the extent of signing their names, but this did not mean that the views contained within the correspondence was not their own, nor did it inhibit expression of feeling.[251] The indomitable Margaret Paston certainly did not edit her views because she employed a scribe, firmly telling her son, John Paston (II),[252] in response to his sister, Margery's, clandestine marriage to the family bailiff, Richard Calle, that 'we haue lost of her*e* but a brethele [wretch]' and if she was 'ded at thys owyr*e* sche xuld neu*er*e be at myn hart as sche was.'[253] The presence of an amanuensis did not minimise the expression of Margaret's feelings, and their full force is felt. Diane Watt has noted the medieval definitions of the word 'secretary'; as well as a scribe employed to write, 'secretary' also referred to a 'confidant' or 'a trusted servant'.[254] Evidently Margaret trusted her scribe with her family business and personal emotions. Additionally, the use of a clerk could be an assertion of social status, as well as a strategy to speed up the laborious writing process. The social-climbing Paston family no doubt wanted to capitalise on this connection of high social rank with the employment of a clerk.

In his study of early modern women's letter-writing, James Daybell has noted the volume of business and legal correspondence that women were responsible for in their estate and household management and claims that it was 'therefore only administrative good sense to employ a scribe to deal with what potentially could be an overwhelming amount of

[250] Alison D. Wall, 'Introduction', in *Two Elizabethan Women: Correspondence of Joan and Maria Thynne 1575-1611*, ed. by Alison D. Wall (Stoke-on-Trent: Wiltshire Record Society, 1983), pp.xvii-xxxiv (p.xxxii).
[251] Anne Crawford, *Letters of Medieval Women* (Stroud: Sutton Publishing, 2002), p.5.
[252] The Paston family includes several men with the same Christian name. In order to distinguish between them I shall refer to them as William (I) and so on, as is common practice amongst critics and historians of the Pastons.
[253] Margaret Paston, in Norman Davis ed., *Paston Letters and Papers of the Fifteenth Century, part I* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), p.343. The Paston letters and papers have been compiled into a three-volume edition printed by Oxford University Press for the Early English Text society: Norman Davis ed., *Paston Letters and Papers of the Fifteenth Century, part I and II* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004) and Richard Beadle and Colin Richmond, ed., *Paston Letters and Papers of the Fifteenth Century, part III* (Oxford: The Oxford University Press, 2005). All references are to this edition of the Paston letters, hereafter cited by letter number and line number.
[254] Diane Watt, *Secretaries of God: Women Prophets in Late Medieval and Early Modern England* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1997), p.1; See also *MED* 1.

paperwork.'[255] The use of a scribe did not necessarily mean that a woman was unable to write her own letters, nor did it deny her authorship; rather, it was evidence of her time-management and administrative role as mistress of a household. Owing to their ability to produce documents quickly, professional scribes were used for personal as well as business correspondence.[256] Agnes Paston's letter of 20 April, probably 1440, to her husband, William Paston (I), informed him that she wrote 'in hast' and 'defaute of a good secretarye', implying that she was apologising for the untidy letter, whether in her own hand or that of an unsatisfactory clerk, and that in her urgency she had not had time to employ a neater scribe (13: 12-14).

Carol M. Meale has argued that women's correspondence represents their voices, and, regardless of the utilising of clerks, it is epistolary writing that reveals that 'women kept their eyes and ears open to the local and national politics which impinged upon them and their families.'[257] The Pastons and Harley are prime examples of women affected by, and reacting to, local and national politics. Of course, particularly during times of political tension, pre-modern correspondence was at risk of being lost, stolen, intercepted and, like all written texts, misinterpretation.[258] These factors all impact upon the women writers studied in this chapter, yet their letters remain confident, forceful documents, vital to the smooth running of their financial affairs and family matters.

The Paston papers of the fifteenth century – the earliest of the letter collections to be considered in this chapter – include over 400 letters, wills, legal documents and memoranda.[259] The letters focused on here are those by the women of the extended Paston network, specifically Margaret Mautby Paston (c.1420-1484), wife of John Paston (I); Margery Brews Paston (d.1495), wife of John Paston (III); Elizabeth Brews, mother of Margery; and Cecily Daune, mistress of John Paston (II). In terms of social rank, the Pastons occupied a position between the gentry and merchant classes: William Paston (I) obtained much of the family's property and land through purchases enabled by the profits from his legal career and through his marriage to heiress Agnes Berry (c.1405-1479), and the family also received revenue from

[255] James Daybell, 'Female Literacy and the Social Conventions of Women's Letter-Writing in England, 1540-1603', in *Early Modern Women's Letter Writing, 1450-1700*, ed. by James Daybell (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001), pp.59-76 (p.65).
[256] Daybell, 'Female Literacy', p.65.
[257] Carol M. Meale, 'Women's Voice and Roles', in *A Companion to Medieval English Literature and Culture c.1350-c.1500*, ed. by Peter Brown (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing Ltd., 2007), pp.74-90 (p.77).
[258] Gary Schneider, 'Affecting correspondences: Body, Behavior, and the Textualization of emotion in early modern English letters', *Prose Studies,* 23.3 (2000), 31-62 (p.32).
[259] Norman Davis, 'The Language of the Pastons', in *Middle English Literature, British Academy Gollancz Lectures*, selected and introduced by J.A. Burrow (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), pp.45-70 (pp.45-6).

their rents and wool trade.[260] John (II), grandson of William and Agnes, was knighted in 1463, further raising the family's social rank.[261] The Paston papers, including the letters written by women, are driven by the concern with maintaining the family's land, wealth, and legal business. The family's preoccupation with holding on to their property was not misplaced, as due to its relatively stable value, the right to land 'defined both the aristocracy who controlled it and the peasants who worked it, providing each a social identity and assuring class continuity' through the generations.[262] William (I) was the first Paston to begin a career which would lead him to social advancement: his father, Clement, had been a peasant farmer.[263] The new-found Paston social position was made even more unstable due to the ongoing conflicts of the Wars of the Roses (1455-1485) and numerous property disputes.[264] As the following analysis will show, the Paston women's letters embody the desire to advance and maintain the family's social and financial status through marital alliance and negotiation of local politics. This desire is reflected in the context and content of the women's letters, but also in their lexical choices and rhetorical styles. Sue Niebrzydowski deems the 'mature Paston women' to be 'examples of highly capable estate managers, marriage brokers and litigators.'[265] This is certainly the case, but over the course of this chapter I hope to show that the younger Paston women were as adept as their more mature kin in employing skilful rhetoric through which they participated in financial family matters.

The second set of letters on which this chapter focuses consists of the correspondence of Joan Thynne (bap.1558-d.1612) surviving from 1575-1611, and that of her daughter-in-law, Maria (c.1578-1611), which survives from the years 1601-1610. Through their marriages to the Thynne gentleman, Joan to John, and Maria to Thomas (Joan and John's son), both women became mistress of Longleat when their husbands inherited in their turn. Of higher social

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[260] Helen Fulton, 'Autobiography & the Discourse of Urban Subjectivity, The Paston Letters', in *Early Modern Autobiography: Theories, Genres, Practices,* ed. by Ronald Bedford, Lloyd Davis and Philippa Kelly (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2006), pp. 191-216 (p.91); Brian Gastle, 'Breaking the Stained Glass Ceiling: Mercantile Authority, Margaret Paston, and Margery Kempe', *Studies in the Literary Imagination,* 36.1 (2003), 123-47 (p.130).

[261] N. Davis's note to Margaret Paston's letter to John Paston (III), 1465, p.308.

[262] Martha Howell, 'Movable/Immovable, What's in a Name? – The Case of Late Medieval Ghent', in *Money, Markets and Trade in Late Medieval Europe,* ed. by Lawrin Armstrong, Ivana Elbl and Martin M. Elbl (Leiden: Brill, 2007), pp. 538-571 (p.539).

[263] See Helen Castor, *Blood and Roses: the Paston Family in the Fifteenth Century* (London: Faber and Faber, 2004) for a useful biography of the family's advancement from peasant farmers to gentry through William's career as a lawyer and marriage to Agnes later in life.

[264] See Castor, pp.124-35 and pp.146-59 for details of the conflict over property allegedly willed to the family by Sir John Fastolf.

[265] Sue Niebrzydowski, 'Introduction: "Becoming bene-straw": The Middle-Aged Woman in the Middle Ages', in *Middle-Aged Women in the Middle Ages*, ed. by Sue Niebrzydowski (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2011), pp.1-14 (p.11).

ranking than the Paston women, the Thynnes' letters are concerned with running the family estate, providing for children, and the politics of family match-making. Maria's clandestine marriage to Joan's son, Thomas, caused a family rift that never healed, despite Joan's care for her infant grandson after Maria's death in childbed in 1611.[266] In conjunction with the correspondence of Maria and Joan, some letters by Maria's mother, Lucy Touchet, Lady Audley (d.c.1611), are analysed as they disclose a shared legal and economic discourse in the writings of the female family network.

The third and final collection of letters studied in this chapter comprises approximately 375 extant letters written by Lady Brilliana Harley (bap.1598-d.1643), mainly written to her husband, Robert (from 1623 onwards), and to her son, Ned (from 1638) until her death in 1643.[267] Of the surviving set, 115 are holograph, with the remaining 260 making use of a scribe, occasionally her younger son, Thomas.[268] During the English Civil War in the 1640s, Harley and her husband were Parliamentarians despite living in Royalist Herefordshire, and she actively defended their home at Brampton Bryan from a Royalist siege lasting almost seven weeks in 1643.[269] Her letters give evidence of the practicalities faced by a woman running an

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[266] Alison Wall, 'Thynne [née Touchet], Maria, Lady Thynne (c. 1578-1611), gentlewoman', in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford University Press, 2010), <http://www.oxforddnb.com.ezproxy.bangor.ac.uk/search?q=maria+thynne&searchBtn=Search&isQuickSearch=true> [Accessed 7 November 2018]. All biographical information is taken from this source unless otherwise indicated. For more information on the marriages of the two women, see Appendix Two. Joan's provision for her grandson, like Margaret Paston's bequest to her Calle grandchildren discussed in Chapter Four, suggests that these women did not penalise the children for the disobedience of their parents, but carried out their provision for their grandchildren for the future good of the biological bloodline, always looking to the future survival of the family.

[267] I have written on Harley's letters elsewhere. See Vicki Kay, 'Brilliana Harley: Civil War Woman', *Scintilla*, 22 (2019), 144-53.

[268] Jacqueline Eales, 'Harley, [*née* Conway], Brilliana, Lady Harley, (bap.1598-d.1643)', in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford University Press, 2008), <http://www.oxforddnb.com.ezproxy.bangor.ac.uk/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-12334?rskey=LKCbA8&result=1> [Accessed 7 November 2018].

[269] Rachel Adcock, Sara Read and Anna Ziomeck ed., *Flesh and Spirit: An Anthology of Seventeenth-Century Women's writing* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2014), p.125. During February 1643, Harley had received a summons from Fitzwilliam Coningsby, Governor of Hereford, to surrender the castle, its men and munitions, to the use of the King; she refused, claiming that she merely had the equipment required to defend her house which was her lawful right. Coningsby's successor, William Vavasour, took action in an attempt to force Harley into submission on 26 July by surrounding Brampton Bryan with 'two or three troops of horse, closely followed by two or three hundred foot soldiers' which cut off all access to and from the estate. Musket fire ensued, earthworks were built, the estate cattle and sheep were driven away, and the parish church, in close proximity to the gates of the castle, was won by the besieging Royalist forces. Harley protested her loyalty to the King claiming she was doing nothing more than lawfully protecting her property and continued to delay negotiations with Vavasour through ingeniously playing upon her rank and gender, presenting herself as a weak woman who could not act without the instruction of her husband. Whilst some inhabitants of the castle were injured, including Harley's friend, Lady Colebourn who lost an eye thanks to a bullet, the casualties seem to have been few. Finally, on 9 September, the troops besieging Brampton Bryan were called away to the greater task of the battle at Gloucester, where the Royalist siege had been lifted. Harley died on 29 October 1643 at Brampton Bryan, shortly after sending her final letter, whilst anticipating further Royalist attack. Alison Plowden, *Women All on Fire: The Women of the English Civil War* (Stroud: Sutton Publishing, 1998), pp.53-9.

estate in the absence of her husband and dealing with the imminent danger of civil war. Of all the women studied in this chapter, Harley was of the highest social rank, and yet the concerns apparent in her letters are not dissimilar to those in the letters of the lowest ranking, the Pastons. The vocabulary and expression that Harley employs in her epistolary writing are deeply affected by the political turmoil through which she lived; this becomes particularly apparent in the analysis of her dealings with financial matters and use of economic rhetoric to discuss devotion, love and warfare.

(i) Estate Managers and Defenders

The Pastons, Thynnes and Harley were all faced with the responsibilities of administering their husbands' estates and business whilst the men were away from home. The family estate and household were financial institutions on which the political, legal and social establishment of pre-modern England largely depended. The women's letters studied in this chapter prove their capabilities as astute deputies. In the Middle Ages 'women of property could expect to exercise a measure of responsibility' when their husbands were absent from the family property.[270] Women would learn how to manage estates from their mothers, grandmothers, mothers-in-law and the mistresses of the households that they may have been placed in for training in their youth.[271] The Pastons, Thynnes, and Harley would be familiar with their society's long-held expectation that they would, at some stage during their marriages, be required to act as estate and household manager, and their confidence in this role is reflected in their written styles.

Contemporary conduct literature often combined instructions on ideal behaviour with practical skills for estate management. [272] One such book is Christine de Pizan's *The Treasure of the City of Ladies* (1405), in which women are informed,

> wives should be wise and sound administrators and manage their affairs well, because most of the time they stay at home without their husbands, who are at court or abroad.

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[270]Rowena E. Archer, '"How ladies … who live on their manors ought to manage their households and estates": Women as Landowners and Administrators in the Later Middle Ages', in *Woman is a Worthy Wight: Women in English Society c.1200-1500*, ed. by P.J.P. Goldberg (Gloucestershire: Alan Sutton, 1992), pp.149-81 (p.150).

[271] Ann S. Haskell, 'The Paston Women on Marriage in fifteenth-Century England', *Viator*, 4 (1973), 459-472 (p.464).

[272] Sarah Salih, 'At home; out of the house', in *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval Women's Writing*, ed. by Carolyn Dinshaw and David Wallace (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp.124-40 (p.128; p.133).

> They should have all the responsibility of the administration and know how to make use of their revenues and possessions.[273]

De Pizan's writing demonstrates that wives were expected to oversee and run estates efficiently in the absence of husbands. This section asks how the Pastons, Thynnes and Harley represent their roles as estate managers and defenders in their correspondence, using rhetorical techniques to give authority to their writing and decisions. The activities they report frequently had financial implications. It is worth first assessing the women's use of rhetoric in their communication of economic activity and estate management before moving on to sections analysing financial metaphor and discourse employed as part of their persuasive writings when discussing seemingly unrelated topics such as relationships or faith. To what extent is there a difference in their stylistic choices when reporting financial activity to that used when writing about devotion, marriage or childbirth?

It is not surprising that the majority of the letters written by Margaret Paston concern the administration of the family estates, carrying out business on behalf of her husband and sons whilst they were otherwise occupied. Margaret shows that she worked alongside her husband, John (I), in her letter to him dated 1 July 1451, informing him that she 'spoke w*y*t*h* my Lady Felbrygg of that ye bad me speke to her*e* of' (141: 2-3). She reveals that she is a trusted messenger on her husband's behalf and proceeds to relay the reply to John (I). Within the same letter, Margaret notifies her husband of the death of 'Ser Herry Inglose', and wishes to know whether he 'desyer to bey any of hys stuff', and if so she will 'speke to Rob*er*t Inglose *and* to Wychyngh*a*m', whom she supposes are the 'executor*ys*' (141: 35-9). Margaret's letter illustrates her willingness to act as purchaser on her husband's behalf as well as her position as his business partner. This letter is pragmatic rather than consciously rhetorical, which is characteristic of Margaret's plain written style and itself speaks of her ease and security as a trusted partner in family business.

Similarly, an early modern woman was expected to deal with her husband's affairs while he was absent from business.[274] In the 1620s, clergyman William Gouge observed that 'it oft falleth out that an husband is a long time farre off abſent', for the reasons of business, war, or out of neglect for his home and family, and during his absence 'the wife hath power to

[273] Christine de Pizan, *The Treasure of the City of Ladies*, trans. by Sarah Lawson (London: Penguin Books, 2003), p.111. All references are to this edition.
[274] Lawrence Stone, *The Family, Sex and Marriage in England 1500-1800* (London: Penguin Books, 1979), pp.139-40.

diſpoſe matters'.[275] Gouge's use of 'power' is telling: the wife is granted agency while her husband is absent. She is able to 'diſpoſe matters' according to her own mind, rather than deferring to his judgement. 'Dispose' implies that the wife deals fully with the matter, resolving any issues herself before her husband returns. However, on his return she is subject to his judgement, and so this 'power' could, in fact, be the limited power of intervention still under the moderating eye of her husband.

Joan Thynne, writing to her husband, John, on 30 September 1600, shows herself to be an able estate manager, ostensibly on behalf of her husband:

> I have received the wheat which is very little and not so much as we shall need at this time, not by forty bushels, for this will not serve one of your fields [...] They demand much more than you write that I should give them for the carriage of the millstone, but he shall have no more than you have set down [...] For sending of beefs thither they must be fat and very forward in fat before they come hither, for here is very little grass to feed any here [...] Your hay this year was not so much as it was last year, not by twelve loads, and yet you bought great store of hay for your cattle and horses, and I think it will be very much more dearer and scarce in the end of the year.[276]

At the time of writing, Joan was living at Caus Castle, Shropshire, gifted to the couple by her father on their marriage, and managing the land there whilst her husband was based at Longleat or in London. Her letter shows that she was knowledgeable about the livestock and harvesting that she supervised.[277] As with Margaret Paston's letter quoted above, Joan's is quotidian and practical, illustrating the comfortable teamwork that could exist between a married couple. Joan's persuasive rhetorical decision is revealed in her employment of a plain written style to report the workings of the estate and its produce in a straightforward business-like manner. The frugal use of literary devices would ensure that women were understood as the capable, respected and serious estate managers that they were, reserving more elaborate expression for moments of writing which required more intense persuasion.[278]

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[275] William Gouge, *Of Domesticall Duties* (London: John Haviland for William Bladen, 1622), p.288.
[276] Joan Thynne, in *Two Elizabethan Women: Correspondence of Joan and Maria Thynne 1575-1611*, ed. by Alison D. Wall (Stoke-on-Trent: Wiltshire Record Society, 1983), p.23. All references are to this edition of Joan and Maria Thynne's letters, hereafter cited by page number.
[277] The 1523 publication of the agricultural handbook, *Book of Husbandry,* by John Fitzherbert outlines the duties of a rural housewife and expects her to be educated in dealing with cattle and processes of harvesting; Joan's letters reveal that upper-class women could also be expected to have such expertise. John Fitzherbert, *Here begynneth a newe tracte or treatyse moost profytable for all husbandmen* (London: Rycharde Pynson, 1523), fo.xlix^{r}-fo.l.^{r}. See pp.42-3. of the Introduction to this thesis for more on Fitzherbert's instructions.
[278] See Maria Thynne's letters below for examples of this literary persuasion.

Joan refers to the money and produce as belonging to John – '*your* hay' – rather than claiming her share, placing herself in an inferior financial and administrative role. Joan uses her husband's letters to give authority to her own decision not to pay the couriers of the millstone the price that they demand; a strategy to prevent accusations that she usurped the authority of her husband by acting as estate ruler at Caus, perhaps. Similarly, Margaret Paston skilfully played on her perceived inferior social position as a woman to ensure that her desires as estate manager were met. On 20 May 1465, she informed her husband that, as the tenants were not able to pay their debts, she had seized their cattle and refused to release them until such payment was made (182: 1-29). Just as servants were paid according to their work, so Margaret, as landlady, expected to be paid by her tenants for the use of land and property. Margaret's letter shows initiative in her actions, but stresses that she acts on behalf of her husband, as it is him to whom the money is owed: 'such dewt*ys* as they oght for to pay to *you*' (182: 8, my emphasis). Her choice of 'dewtys' (duties) rather than 'debts' emphasises the moral obligation of the tenants to her husband; it is a word which combines the economic obligation with legal, social and religious connotations. In not paying their rent, the tenants were acting immorally and failing to fulfil their side of the bargain. Margaret's choice of vocabulary casts her as the party acting from the moral, social, legal and religious high-ground, cleverly deflecting accusations of greed or inappropriate female autonomy. In referring to the debts as those owed to her husband, Margaret skilfully protects herself from defiance and rebuke by the tenants.

Both Joan Thynne and Margaret Paston use their status as wife and their husband's deputy as a tool to justify their more autonomous actions undertaken in their husbands' absence. Although their matter-of-fact tones may indicate that they were secure in their position as estate manager within their marital relationships, their letters also hint that this position was not entirely accepted within the wider community. Watt argues that early women writers frequently 'explained their decision to speak or write as an act of obedience, representing themselves as passive and compliant'.[279] Whilst Watt is referring to medieval writers such as Margery Kempe, who justified their writing by presenting it as an act of obedience to God, the same strategy is seen in the letters of Joan Thynne and Margaret Paston: the reason that their contemporary societies tolerated them writing and acting as they did was that their roles as

[279] Watt, *Secretaries*, p.13.

estate managers were understood as acts of obedience to their husbands. Under the guise of obedience, these women were able to direct matters of family business.

In contrast to John Thynne's trust in Joan to manage Caus, their daughter-in-law, Maria, admonishes her young husband, Thomas, for not bestowing the same trust and power in her to administer the Longleat estate shortly after he inherited in 1604. Her letter written between 1604-6 demonstrates her strength of feeling:

> I cannot grieve a little to find that I, who have been a willing companion and partaker in your hard fortunes, should now be made so great a stranger to your proceedings in your better estate […] I am both sorry and ashamed that any creature should see that you hold such a contempt of my poor wits, that being your wife, you should not think me of discretion to order (according to your appointment) your affairs in your absence, but if you be persuaded that it is most for your credit to leave me like an innocent fool […] I wish you should send someone hither to discharge the business here, that you better trust. (31-2)

Maria strongly rebukes Thomas for denying her the role of deputy. With rhetorical flair, she juxtaposes her previous role as his 'companion' with her current position of 'stranger'. By recalling her past position as her husband's 'companion', Maria claims parity in their relationship, rather than inhabiting the subservient position of 'handmaid' expected of pre-modern wives. An early modern 'companion' was a 'person who shares *in* or partakes *of* the work, circumstances, experience, etc., of another' (*OED*, 1d). It also referred to a spouse, particularly a wife (*OED*, 3a). Maria plays upon the meanings of her chosen word to exert her qualifications as a worthy partner in life and, by extension, in estate administration. Unlike the letters of Joan Thynne and Margaret Paston above, Maria's is bursting with rhetoric. 'I cannot grieve a little' emphasises that she is doing the exact opposite: grieving greatly and seething with anger. She reminds Thomas of her support during the 'hard fortunes' of his trials with his parents following their clandestine marriage, when John and Joan campaigned for seven years to have Thomas and Maria's union annulled.[280] In no uncertain terms, Maria implies that Thomas owes her more respect and confidence for being a 'partaker' in their 'hard fortunes'. Now, adopting the theory of *quid pro quo*, in Thomas's 'better estate' at Longleat, Maria believes she should be rewarded for the labour of her support. She carefully stresses that she would act only as his deputy, running the estate 'according to your appointment'. Maria

[280] The marriage was finally declared valid in 1601.

attempts to infuse her writing with pathos; her husband is intended to see the folly of his ways and pity the situation he has forced on his wife and so remedy it by placing more trust in her capabilities. Maria's skilled rhetoric shows her to be anything but an 'innocent fool' of 'poor wits'. By no means does she truly wish Thomas to 'send someone hither to discharge the business'. Instead, she attempts to use her writing to manipulate Thomas into recognising her potential and appoint her as his deputy. Maria's later letters to Thomas show that he changed his mind, perhaps thanks to her persuasive writing, and did indeed place his trust in her (37).

Lady Brilliana Harley's letters reveal her role as a capable deputy in her husband's business transactions when he is absent. On 17 March 1625, Harley writes to her husband, Robert, that she had that day 'deleverd the £100 to my father: which he has payed to Mr Davis; that mony that was wanting of it, was made vp with the £50 pounde Mr. Lacy payed for wood.'[281] Harley records her role as an intermediary between the business of her husband and her father, while also demonstrating her own financial competency: she is able to make up the £50 deficit through selling wood and organising transactions accordingly so that the credit can be used to balance the debt. Her later letters to her eldest son, Ned, show Harley's confidence as an employer in her role as household and estate manager when she advises him on engaging servants. Writing on 22 May 1641 from Brampton Bryan to Ned in Westminster, Harley counsels him not to employ 'Gorges' brother as he is too young; children, in her experience, do not make good servants (131-2). Daybell has observed that when writing as mothers women could 'attain a high degree of status, and the "voice" of maternal authority is one that echoes strongly' in their letters.[282] This motherly authority is a robust presence in Harley's letters to Ned. Ultimately, Harley defers to Ned's male judgement but pointedly ends her writing on the subject with 'Pleas yourself in your choyce, and I shall be pleased; but take my word; boys are trubellsome saruants' (132). The voice of household experience and maternal authority is used as a rhetorical technique to give Harley's written words power. Like Maria Thynne, Brilliana Harley writes pointedly while hiding behind protestations of female submission when attempting to direct the opinions and actions of her close male relatives.

Similarly, another letter written to Ned in 1641 shows Harley's rhetorical skill when asserting her wishes both personally and in her role as estate manager:

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[281] Brilliana Harley, in *Letters of the Lady Brilliana Harley, wife of Sir Robert Harley, of Brampton Bryan, Knight of the Bath. With Introduction and Notes by Thomas Taylor Lewis, A.M. vicar of Bridstow, Herefordshire* (London: Camden Society, 1853), p.2. All references are to this edition of Harley's letters, hereafter cited by page number.
[282] James Daybell, *Women Letter-Writers in Tudor England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), p.179.

> I should be very glad, if your father would be pleased to bye a coach and haue horrses. I thinke it would not cost him much: and insteed of other horsess, if he keepe coach horsess, which would be of much vse as other horsess, I thinke I shall be abell to take the ayre in it; and I beleeue it would be much aduantage to my health. And good Ned, tell your father so, and let me pray you to put him in minde of it. The maire and one or two horsess are sike, and so will not be fite to be sould as yet. (134)

Harley enlists Ned to help persuade her husband to buy a coach and coach horses as she believes it would be beneficial to her health to take the air (her letters abound with references to ill health). Perhaps unconsciously, Harley appears to trade on the affection between herself and her son in order to get what she wants – by saying it will improve her health she increases the chance of Ned and Robert agreeing that the coach and horses are necessary purchases. Harley is careful to consider the expense, claiming it would not cost her husband much; it is *his* money she wishes to spend, and she no doubt fears that her request will be dismissed as an needless outlay. She also suggests that the sale of the present horses could in fact fund the purchase of coach horses that could both pull the carriage and carry out the duties of the current horses: effectively saving money and getting two for the price of one. Harley anticipates her husband's agreement and cautions Ned that the current horses cannot be sold on just yet as they are not in good health, and so, presumably, would not fetch such a good price. Harley's letter reveals a woman of sound financial understanding, aware of how to drive a good bargain with her husband.

The same letter, however, exposes the difficulties faced by a woman acting as her husband's deputy, recalling the letters of Margaret Paston and Joan Thynne. Harley writes: 'I am grieued with all my hart that the tenants doo not pay theaire rents, that I might send it to your father, whous ocations I hard rather a hundred times weare supplyed then my owne' (134). The Harleys' tenants were refusing to pay their rent and so she considered asking her husband to demand payment as she believed they were 'a hundred times' more likely to obey him. Sara Mendelson and Patricia Crawford have argued that during the Civil War 'wives' work in estate management intensified' as more husbands were away fighting.[283] Harley's letter shows the issues that women in this position could face, making their administration of the family estates more difficult. As a woman, and as deputy rather than leader, Harley did not have the political, legal and social power that her husband could bring to bear on disobedient tenants. She

[283] Sara Mendelson and Patricia Crawford, *Women in Early Modern England 1550-1720* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), p.310.

positions herself as inferior to her husband as a tool to gain his support. Her hyperbole that she grieves 'with all my hart' is illustrative of the emotion Harley appears comfortable in expressing in her correspondence. Similarly, Maria Thynne's vocabulary confidently conveys feeling which appears absent in the administrative letters of Margaret Paston and Joan Thynne whose matter-of-fact tones are features of their writing (discussed in more detail below) revealing the potential for the epistolary genre to be adapted to suit the author and the situation in which she wrote.

In keeping with her deference to her husband, Harley is keen to stress that she has spent money wisely when she discusses the renovation, or possibly fortification, of Brampton Bryan in a letter to Ned dated 2 July 1642: 'I beleeue the mending of the howes will cost greate deale, for the plumers have 5sh. a day […] besides the carpenters and masons, but I thinke your father will not repent of it when it is donn' (175). Harley does not play down the cost here as she did when discussing the coach and horses, implying confidence in her opinion that this is a necessary expense. She employs religious language, believing her husband will not 'repent' the work (and cost) once it is complete. The religious connotations of 'repent' create the impression that Harley's renovations are part of a pious cause.[284] In 1640, five shillings was three days' wages for a skilled tradesman, yet here Harley states it is only one day's pay, suggesting that the political situation of the Civil War put labour at a premium. Of course, it is also possible that her plumbers, carpenters, and masons were aware of her vulnerable position as a Parliamentarian woman in the centre of a Royalist county and so demanded higher wages as she would be unable to negotiate, as well, perhaps, as payment of 'danger money' for being associated with her.

Also seen defending the family property is Margaret Paston. Perhaps the most famous of her letters to her husband is that written on 10 May 1465, in which she describes her defence of their property at Hellesdon, and calls herself 'captenesse' (180: 104), prefiguring Maria Thynne's identification of herself as her husband's 'careful officer', in a letter written around 1607 informing Thomas of potential trouble on the estate concerning a man named 'Brownwints' (36). Both Margaret and Maria employ military discourse in their self-representations, thereby endowing themselves with strength, bravery and power. Although Margaret's involvement in defending the manor may be striking to modern readers, Mavis Mate points out that while 'women were not directly involved in military campaigns, the

[284] Indeed, she believed that the Parliamentarians fought 'for the caus of our God' (p.179). See Kay, p.152.

defence of manor house or castle was a fairly regular occurrence.'[285] Although their actions were not revolutionary, Margaret's and Maria's use of diction describing this action was. In his 1954 paper, Norman Davis discussed the Pastons' use of language not previously recorded, one example being Margaret's 'captenesse'.[286] This perhaps suggests that, in the absence of an existing apt description of her occupation, Margaret manipulated male military language to create a fitting title for herself. Margaret invents a language which reflects her strong sense of self-worth. She carves out a unique representation of self which is neither wholly feminine nor is it masculine. She does not completely step into male shoes in the way in which Effie Botonaki suggests that women authors could in their choice of vocabulary: Margaret creates a feminine version of 'captain'.[287] Rather than usurping her husband's role, Margaret Paston's lexical choices demonstrate her confident capability specifically as the female defender of the family home: she is the true partner of her husband and does not challenge his authority. Her writing reveals autonomy *within* the accepted bounds of gendered behaviour for medieval married couples.

An earlier letter from Margaret to her husband, written in 1448, showcases her knowledge of combat as she requests weapons with which to defend their manor at Gresham:

> Ryt w*ur*chipful hwsbond, I recomawnd me to ȝu *and* prey ȝw to gete som crosse bowis, *and* wy*nd*ac*is* [winch] to bynd [bend] þe*m* w*yth*, *and* quarrel [crossbow bolt], for ȝ*wr* hwsis her*e* ben so low þat þer*e* may non man schet*e* owte w*yth* no long bowe þow we hadde neu*er* so moche nede [...] And also I wold ȝe xuld gete ij or iij schort pelle-axis to kepe w*yth* doris, a*n*d als many jakkys [protective jackets] and ȝe may. (130: 1-6)

For Margaret, the business of household management becomes the business of combat. Alongside the lists of spices and clothing she requests in many letters to her husband (including this one, further discussed later in this chapter), she demands items with which to do battle, should her fear of attack by Lord Moleyns be realised. Margaret shows that she understands the practicalities of preparing for a siege, informing John (I) that the houses are too low to use longbows and so he must obtain crossbows. The need for defensive clothing is also covered as she asks her husband for as many 'jakkys' – protective jackets – as he can send (*MED* 1). The

[285] Mavis Mate, *Women in Medieval English Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Pres, 1999), p.65.
[286] Norman Davis, 'The Language of the Pastons', in *Middle English Literature, British Academy Gollancz Lectures*, selected and introduced by J.A. Burrow (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), pp.45-70 (p.65).
[287] Effie Botonaki, 'Seventeenth-Century Englishwomen's Spiritual Diaries: Self-Examination, Covenanting, and Account Keeping', *The Sixteenth Century Journal*, 30.1 (1999), 3-21 (p.21). See also, pp.17-8 of the Introduction to this thesis.

business of nurture has not been forgotten but has evolved in the context of conflict in which Margaret writes and lives. She asks that John 'gete som crosse bowis' and the necessary equipment to use them. The verb 'to gete' meant to 'acquire', 'earn, buy, win, receive, find' as well as to 'conquer', 'capture' or 'take' (*MED* 1a; 1d). Therefore, 'gete' is a word which perfectly encapsulates Margaret's combination of the language of business with the language of war: in this letter, the two dovetail in her administration of the Paston manor. There is a distinct absence of fear in Margaret's letter: instead she writes in a direct manner, dealing with the matter in hand using vocabulary that does not betray emotion. Margaret's decision to omit any mention of anxiety may be a deliberate ploy to attempt to limit John's worry. Even if this is the case, in times of urgency an elevated style is inappropriate, and she acts with unchallenged agency. After formally addressing John with the formulaic 'Ryt w*ur*chipful hwsbond, I recomawnd me to ȝu', she dispenses with formalities and directly requests the items she requires, simply stating her reasoning to swiftly demonstrate she is well-informed. Attaining the crossbows and their associated accessories is the priority of Margaret's letter: it is this matter with which she opens her epistle, and once this is accomplished, she relays the local news before finally placing her order for almonds, sugar and cloth (130: 25-30). Margaret's letter reveals a hierarchy of required and desired goods. Interesting to note, in contrast to her orders for spices and clothing, is her omission of price restrictions on her orders for the crossbows and accessories: an exclusion which tells the irrelevance of the cost of some commodities.[288] The weaponry and defensive clothing, of course, have a value beyond the monetary, enabling Margaret's household to defend not only their lives, but the family property and therefore reputation.[289]

Many of Brilliana Harley's letters were written during the Civil War to her husband and eldest son whilst they were fighting for the Parliamentarian cause. In their absence, Harley became more than their second-in-command, effectively becoming the commander of a

[288] See pp.87-9 below.

[289] Similarly, in 1602, Joan Thynne reminds her husband, John, to send her 'gunpowder', along with starch, from London while she defends Caus Castle (24). In addition to the order for gunpowder, Joan's inventories show that she kept muskets in her bedroom in case Edward Lord Stafford attempted to repossess the castle by force, and the muskets remained there until Joan's death in 1612. For Joan, like Margaret Paston, dealing with threats to the ownership of family property formed part of her daily life as estate manager. Joan's father had given Joan and her husband Caus as part of their marriage settlement; however ownership was disputed for many years as Edward Lord Stafford refused to allow the Thynnes to take possession after the sale to Joan's father. Caus and the surrounding lands had been seized by Henry VIII on the Duke of Buckingham's execution in 1521. Henry Stafford, the Duke of Buckingham's son, only recovered parts of the Buckingham estate. Edward was the second son of Henry and inherited Caus when his older brother died in 1566. It was Edward who sold the estate to Sir Rowland Hayward, Joan's father, in 1573, but later refused to give the land up. A. Wall, p.xx; p.xxiv.

Brampton Bryan garrison. Daybell has noted that 'the kind of news conveyed in women's correspondence illustrates female interest in areas of news traditionally viewed as "masculine": parliamentary business, war, armed rebellions.'[290] Harley's letters go further than showing an interest: they encapsulate the practicalities of defending an estate under siege during the Civil War. Her correspondence is more than 'female interest': it is created out of necessity and direct involvement with war, and showcases capabilities befitting Margaret Paston's title of 'captenesse'. Harley requests and receives weapons, including muskets, bandoliers, powder and match in numerous letters (153-4; 161; 178; 183). [291] When it comes to obtaining weapons of war, Harley discards her hyperbolic language and takes on a direct tone in order to ensure that her husband and son fully understand what it is she requires and so can supply the means of defense swiftly without questioning the need. This common feature of forceful pragmatism overtaking hyperbole is identifiable in the letters of Margaret Paston, Joan Thynne and Brilliana Harley during the times at which they demand arms. In contrast to Margaret and Joan, Harley also supplied the physical means of warfare herself. In a letter to Ned dated 24 June 1642 she refers to the carrier by whom she sends 'the 2 pistolls you rwite me word your father would haue' (172). Arguably, supplying firearms became a *quid pro quo* system in the Harleys' marriage.

Interestingly, Harley desired advice from her husband on defending Brampton Bryan, but refers to the castle as *hers* rather than theirs or his, suggesting that she felt responsible for, and entitled to claim ownership of, the estate since she had been left in charge in a dangerous situation: 'I hope your father will giue me full derections how I may best haue *my* howes gareded, if need be' (180, my emphasis). This is in stark contrast to her appeal to Ned to encourage his father to spend *his* money on coach horses, discussed above.[292] Perhaps Harley interpreted her husband's action of leaving her at Brampton Bryan as a partial relinquishment of control; she was now in charge, whether she/he liked it or not. Indeed, Harley explicitly states that she is not happy remaining in a strongly Royalist area:

> I acknowledg I doo not thinke meself safe wheare I am. I loos the comfort of your fathers company, and am in but littell safety, but that my trust is in God; […] if your father thinke it beest for me to be in the country, I am every well pleased with what he shall thinke beest. (167)

[290] Daybell, *Women Letter-Writers*, p.156.
[291] Bandoliers are belts worn over the shoulder to hold both muskets and ammunition.
[292] See p.80.

Harley was acutely aware of the danger she faced as a Parliamentarian supporter living within a Royalist county. Unlike Margaret Paston's pragmatic tone which does not reveal anxiety or distress during the attacks on Gresham manor, Harley openly admits fear and frustration in her letters to Ned. Harley's choice of expression – to 'acknowledg' – that she does not feel safe, conveys a reluctance to admit her vulnerability and weakness. Notwithstanding her fear, she fulfils her marriage vows to obey her husband and remains on the estate to act as his representative. If her emphasis that she stays because her husband 'thinke it best' was a rhetorical strategy to highlight his folly and encourage him to call her away from danger, it was not successful, and Harley remained on the estate until her death.[293]

Despite clearly being literate (in Latin and French as well as English), when Harley wrote in her own hand her spelling was particularly idiosyncratic even for this period of unfixed orthography, as shown in the extract above. Perhaps as the civil unrest increased, she did not have the time to employ a suitable clerk. Should her younger sons be otherwise occupied, she perhaps chose to write her epistles herself to send her correspondence as quickly as possible. The decision of whether to use a scribe and the spelling of Harley's letters might tell us something of the value placed upon time at the historical moment in which each was written. During political turmoil, time itself becomes a valuable commodity and this is reflected in her writing. The business of war impacts on the very form of the letters that Harley writes. From March 1642 onwards, a number of Harley's letters are written in a code which is broken with a key of cut paper which is placed over the letter (191-4; 196-7; 199).[294] The openings in the cut paper convey her message; without the key the letters appear to be of no importance and make very little sense. She gave keys to Ned and her daughter, Brill. Harley's invention adapts her writing to fit the dangerous political situation of the Civil War: she occupies a precarious position as a Puritan, Parliamentarian, female supporter within the Royalist county of Herefordshire. Under such circumstances, Harley's letter-writing becomes a defiant act of ingenuity.[295]

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[293] Harley was not killed in battle but succumbed to illness – see Appendix Two. A later letter, written to Ned on 20 June 1642, reiterates her fear: 'Since your father thinkes Hearefordsheare as safe as any other country, I will thinke so too; but when I considered how long I had bine from him, and how this country was affected, my desire to see your father, and my care to be in a place of safety, made me ernestly desire to come vp to Loundoun; but since it is not your father's will, I will lay aside that desire' (170). Again, Harley stresses it is her husband's choice and not hers that she is to remain at Brampton Bryan. She obeys his orders regardless of her worries for the family's safety and her desire to be with him.

[294] James Daybell has noted that the technique was first used by Girolamo Cardano (1501-76), Italian physician, mathematician and astrologer. James Daybell, *The Material Letter in Early Modern England: Manuscript Letters and the Culture and Practices of Letter-Writing, 1512-1635* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), p.164.

[295] See Kay, p.148.

Each of the letter collections studied in this chapter shows that women were expected to, and indeed did, act as their husbands' deputies in administering estates in their absence, and that weaponry and war were not solely male concerns during the pre-modern period. In the event of property disputes, such as those at Hellesdon, Gresham, and Caus, or during the political turmoil violently disrupting the whole country in the Civil War, women were called upon to procure and provide means of defense for their homes and families. When pre-modern women write to their husbands regarding the everyday running of estates, their letters can be lacking in literary flair, which, as those sent by Margaret Paston and Joan Thynne demonstrate, is itself telling of a rhetorical style disclosing the security and confidence in their position. Conversely, Maria Thynne's letters to her husband employ hyperbolic rhetoric in a bid to achieve the established and trusted financial role inhabited by Margaret and Joan. Brilliana Harley's vocabulary and idiosyncratic spelling reveal her feelings of fear, while Margaret's rationality is showcased in her direct approach. As deputy rulers of the family estates, pre-modern women became involved in financial networks, buying, selling, lending and borrowing as necessary.

<u>(ii) Savers, Spenders, Borrowers and Lenders</u>

It was because of their married state and the social ranking of their households that the Pastons, Thynnes and Harley were involved in the commercial world as consumers and in the financial world as both borrows and lenders.[296] Upon marriage, the money and property owned by a woman transferred to her husband and she became a *femme covert*, 'covered' legally by her husband.[297] Upper-class husbands 'often granted wives a proportion of the family income for household management' as well as for 'clothing' and charity.[298] This financial allowance gave women a degree of choice and authority as shoppers and as providers for their households and dependents. Women from the higher social ranks, however, did not necessarily shop in person. In the pre-modern era, their 'routine' purchases for household staples were carried out by

[296] As Keith Wrightson explains, 'outside the context of the household few women could exercise authority in economic affairs. Within it, however, they had a role in the daily provision and management of resources which could, and often did, confer a right to be informed and to be heard.' Keith Wrightson, *Earthly Necessities: Economic Lives in Early Modern Britain* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2000), p.65.

[297] Cordelia Beattie, *Medieval Single Women: The Politics of Social Classification in Late Medieval England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), p.25. A single woman remained *femme sole* and retained legal independence at the risk of financial strife; without marriage she would need to find a way of making a living. See also the Introduction to this thesis.

[298] Mendelson and Crawford, p.220.

servants responsible for such tasks, while 'personal orders for their own luxury goods' may have been made and rural women sometimes did so through an 'agent' based in the cities.[299] The Pastons, Thynnes and Harley utilized their husbands and sons as agents to shop by proxy, in a reversal of their own appointments as deputy estate managers by their husbands. The travels of husbands and sons were capitalized upon as they allowed for a wider access to commercial markets and provided the opportunity to obtain the best value for money.[300] Orders for luxury goods become a rhetorical expression of personal and familial social rank in the letters studied in this chapter.

The marketplace posed potential dangers to both the physical safety of women and to their reputation. In the Introduction, cautions against the marketplace for women in the anonymous fourteenth-century didactic poem 'How the Goode Wife Taught Hyr Doughter' were highlighted.[301] The Paston women appear to have heeded the warning against visiting the market themselves, instead including shopping lists in their letters to their male relatives in London. Margaret Paston wrote a precise shopping list to her husband, John (I), in 1448:

> I p*ra*y ȝw þat ȝe wyl vowche-save to don bye for me j li. of almand*is and* j li. of sugyre, *and* þat ȝe wille do byen su*m*me frees to maken of ȝ*wr* child*er*is gwyns; ȝe xall haue best chepe *and* best choyse of Hayis wyf, as it is told me. And þat ȝe wyld bye a ȝerd of brode clothe of blac for an hode fore me of xliijj d. or iiij s. a ȝerd, for per is nother*e* gode cloth ner*e* god fryse in this twn. (130: 25-30)

Margaret specifies the weight of almonds and sugar required, and the amount to spend on the material for her hood – leaving little room for misunderstanding. It is clear that Margaret, like Margery Kempe, had a strong sense of self and status as conveyed through her appearance, clothes and jewellery.[302] She suggests that the best trader to buy cloth from is 'Hayis wyf', indicating that she has done her research to ensure that money is not spent unwisely. Interestingly, this trader is a woman – 'wyf' – like Margaret, illustrating the presence of, and respect for, businesswomen. Margaret's letter demonstrates that she was skilled in the business of provision and nurture and suggests that she ensured the finances are kept under control. Joel

[299] Marjorie Keniston McIntosh, *Working Women in English Society, 1300-1620* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p.240.
[300] Of course, this also meant that they had to rely on the men's judgement, which did not always work out well. For example, John Paston (I) purchased caps which were 'to lytyl' for his children, causing his wife, Margaret, to insist that he bought replacements which were both 'feynere' and 'largere' (127: 20) It seems she was dissatisfied with both the fit and quality of his chosen purchase.
[301] See pp.39-40 of this thesis.
[302] For my discussion of Margery Kempe's clothing, see Chapter Three, pp.147-52.

T. Rosenthal deems the Paston women's letters 'vital for the coordination of family business'.[303] Letters such as this one by Margaret show that medieval women's epistolary writing formed part of their administration of the basic business of nurture, such as feeding and clothing children. Of course, this shopping list does not mean that the Paston women did not take advantage of local markets. This list may only exist due to the lack of local availability of the goods desired; as Margaret states, she cannot obtain 'gode cloth […] in this twn'.[304] London was known to offer high-quality goods and products and to have a greater variety to choose from.[305]

Similarly, Margaret writes to her son John (III) on 5 November 1471, requesting a long list of exotic, and therefore costly and more difficult to acquire, ingredients:

> I send yw v s. to by w*y*t*h* swg*er and* dat*ys* for*e* me. I wold haue iij or iiij li. of swger, *and* be-war*e* þe remnont in dat*ys and* send hem to me as hastley as ye may, *and* send me woord qwath p*r*ice a li. of pep*er,* clowys, mac*ys,* gyng*er*, sinamu*n,* alma*n*nys, rys, reysons of coranis [currants], gannyngall, safru*n*, grenys *and* comfyt*ys* – of ych of these send me word wath a li. ys worth, *and* yf yt be bett*er* shepe at Lo*n*don than yt ys her*e* I shall send yw money to by such stfe as I wull haue. (209: 52-8)

As in her earlier letter to her husband, Margaret is shown to be an astute accountant, researching where she can obtain her goods for the best price. She sets John (III) a budget of five shillings, equal to eight days' wages for a skilled tradesman, to spend on dates and sugar. Purchases of this kind would demonstrate both wealth and status: poor labourers or servants would not be able to afford such expensive and luxurious foodstuffs.[306] The lengthy list of spices and ingredients suggests Margaret's familiarity with exotic goods, which would be at a premium cost thanks to their journey from the Mediterranean and beyond. The *Forme of Cury* (c.1390), a cookery manual compiled by the cook of Richard II, details several recipes for extravagant meals which include the exotic ingredients, such as pepper, cloves, ginger, galangal, saffron,

[303] Joel T. Rosenthal, 'Letters and letter collections', in *Understanding Medieval Primary Sources: Using historical sources to discover medieval Europe*, ed. by Joel T. Rosenthal (London: Routledge, 2012), pp.72-85 (p.83).
[304] Margaret wrote this letter from the Paston manor at Gresham, Norfolk. The town she refers to could have been the local marketplace, or even Norwich which is 45 miles away – itself a lengthy journey in the Middle Ages.
[305] Christopher Dyer, *Making a Living in the Middle Ages: The People of Britain 850-1520* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2002), p.305.
[306] Christopher Dyer has noted that 'London had a long-term leading role in the luxury trades.' Christopher Dyer, *An Age of Transition? Economy and Society in England in the Later Middle Ages* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2005), p.192.

and almonds requested by Margaret.[307] Her food-shopping is not only intended to sustain the household, but also to display the Paston family's élite social status. With this letter dated 5 November, it is possible that Margaret intended to stock up on spices, dried fruits and nuts in readiness for the feasting that would accompany the Christmas and New Year celebrations and worship. Her shopping confirms the interlinking of devotion and the liturgical calendar with finance and social status that was central to pre-modern women's lives and writing.

Margaret's shopping lists are pragmatic and her itemised writing style can be interpreted as the evidence of everyday occurrence; however, rather than revealing a lack of literary flair, they illuminate the practicality which is her distinctive rhetorical technique. The shopping lists disclose Margaret's organised mind and perhaps hint at her involvement in the household cooking. Had she discussed menus and recipes with her cook? Margaret is as shrewd in her employment of language as she is in her shopping: she invests minimum words and minimum financial expenditure for the maximum return. By exerting tight control over her diction, she ensures that the recipient of her orders will not misunderstand her instructions but fulfil the requests within her budget. In her study of early modern accountancy manuals, Phyllis Whitman Hunter argues that accounting provided merchants with an opportunity to 'contain instability and reduce risk' as they 'attempted to methodize business, to record details, to negotiate values, and, at least temporarily, stabilize mobile goods.'[308] Hunter believes that the process of book-keeping 'provided a means by which merchants could momentarily pause the incessant movement of goods.'[309] Margaret's shopping lists function in much the same was as these merchant account books: they endeavour to maintain control over the business of nurture and running of the wider household, including preparing for its celebrations. The items Margaret wished to purchase and the price she was prepared to pay for these are frozen in time by ink and parchment, while the real market trade continued to fluctuate and move around her correspondence; itself an object of exchange making a physical journey from author to recipient. Margaret's precise recording of items and budgeting for costs does more than preserve her spending habit for posterity; it creates a linguistic representation of a woman who was both astute and adept in her use of money and language.

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[307] British Library Add MS 5016. Accessed digitally via <http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/FullDisplay.aspx?ref=Add_MS_5016&index=0> [Accessed 24 December 2020]

[308] Phyllis Whitman Hunter, 'Containing the Marvellous: Instructions to Buyers and Sellers', in *Didactic Literature in England 1500-1800*, ed. by Natasha Glaisyer and Sara Pennell (London: Routledge, 2003), pp.169-85 (pp.174-5).

[309] Hunter, p.175.

More verbose that Margaret Paston, Brilliana Harley disclosed her affection for her son, Ned, with a more bountiful expenditure of language. Writing to him, on 14 January 1638, she provides for his bodily and spiritual well-being:

> I haue sent you a littell purs with some smale mony in it, all the pence I had, that you may haue a penny to giue a power body, and a pare of gloufs; not that I thinke you haue not better in Oxford, but that you may some times remember her, that seldome as you out of my thoughts : the Lord blles you. (20)

Harley sends Ned gloves to wear in remembrance of her, in much the same way that early modern female testators, such as Elizabeth Hardwick, bequeathed jewellery to kin to be worn in remembrance.[310] This letter demonstrates Harley's awareness of the potentially greater shopping opportunities of Oxford compared to rural Herefordshire: Ned's gloves are sent for sentimental value rather than for superior craftmanship. She recognises that there are likely to be 'better' gloves available in Oxford, but Harley rather slyly jibes at her son when she writes that he 'may some times remember her' thanks to the gloves she sends. Her phrasing suggests that the gloves function as an emotional currency in a form of bribe, or at least to incite a feeling of guilt, reminding him of his duty of affection owing to his mother. In the same letter she informs Ned, 'I heare in closed send you the bookebinedrs letter from Woster, that you may see bookes are not so cheep there as in Oxford', revealing her familiarity with books and their presence in her household (20). Harley had clearly acted as a market-researcher for Ned's benefit. Like Margaret Paston, she is a 'savvy' shopper, aware of varying prices in different locations thanks to supply and demand.

Harley's letter goes beyond the bodily provision for children and also cares for Ned's spiritual health. As Puritans, the Harleys sought to discern their elect status through meaningful acts of kindness and charity.[311] Harley encourages Ned to do this through giving alms to a poor person and provides him with the financial resource to be able to do so. She gives him 'all the pence I had', implying that she would sacrifice her own spiritual health for that of her son. This hyperbolic expression is intended to further stimulate a feeling of duty in Ned to carry out his mother's wishes for his spiritual wellbeing. Harley's letters are carefully thought out and constructed texts. Potentially Harley intended to provide for the poor by proxy and so show her

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[310] See Chapter Four, note to p.215.

[311] For more on this aspect of Puritanism, see, Francis J. Bremer, *Puritanism: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), p.12; Helen Wilcox, 'Sacred and Secular Love: 'I Will Lament, and Love'', in *The Oxford Handbook of Early Modern English Literature and Religion* ed. by Andrew Hiscock and Helen Wilcox (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), pp.613-33 (p.620).

own spiritual well-being at the same time, in a two-for-one deal. She applies shrewd commercial shopping sense to her devotion and spiritual care for her son.

As well as researching prices on Ned's behalf and sending him goods, Harley takes advantage of his studying in 'Megdeline Hall', Oxford, in 1639 to request numerous items:

> if theare be any good looking glasses in Oxford, shuse me one aboute the biggnes of that I use to drees me in, if you remember it. I put it to your choys, because I thinke you will chuse one, that will make a true ansure to onse face.
>
> All my frute disches are brocken ; thearefore, good Ned, if theare be any shuch blwe and white disches as I vse to haue for frute, bye me some; they are not purslane, nor they are not of the ordinary mettell of blwe and white disches. I beleeue you remember what I vse to haue; if you chuse them against the horses come for you, I will take order with the men about the bringeing of them home, and will send mony to pay for them. (76)

Harley employs Ned as her shopping deputy in much the same way as Margaret Paston engaged her husband and son to obtain items from London. Different locations offered different retail opportunities. Like Margaret, Harley is specific in requests for commodities: a 'good' mirror like the one she had which must be clear and give a true reflection, and blue and white fruit bowls that are neither porcelain nor the 'ordinary mettall' – the usual material – of which such dishes were made (*OED* II.7).[312] The postscript states 'I would haue 6 frute disches', to clarify the number (76). It is possible that Harley's original dishes were early pieces of Delftware, which was 'a type of tin-glazed earthenware typically decorated with blue designs on a white background, originally and primarily produced in Delft, Holland' (*OED* 1). While this would be early for the import and purchase of such pottery in England, it is not impossible that Harley had obtained some. Brilliana Harley was born in, and named after, the Dutch town of Brill.[313] The shopping request in this letter could reveal her fondness for material items which held connections to the country of her birth. Might they have been purchased by her mother while the family were in Holland and inherited by Harley as an heirloom? She possessively refers to the crockery as '*my* frute disches'; they are her personal property, not the Harley family's. Or were they simply pretty, English-made dishes that she had purchased? Either way, Harley's

[312] Harley's request for a mirror hints that she, like Margaret Paston and Margery Kempe, was conscious of her appearance and wanted to give the desired impression of herself to the world.
[313] See Appendix Two.

wording implies that they were of emotional value to her, and that her son will remember this fact – 'I beleeue you remember what I vse to haue' – further indicating a close relationship between mother and son, and an awareness on his part of her sentimental attachment to the crockery. 'All' the 'frute disches' are broken, disclosing the fact that they had once been numerous, and, presumably, signified financial as well as emotional expenditure and investment.

Harley wants to arrange for the shopping to be collected when a journey to Oxford is already being taken to avoid additional expense, but also to ensure that she does not owe Ned money for long. On 4 May 1640 Harley sends 20 shillings to pay for a looking glass and tells Ned 'the rest you may dispose of, as pleas yourself' (93). She gives the change from her purchase to her son, perhaps as a thank-you payment for doing her errands. This implies that Harley had her own money to spend and give away, or at least the liberty to purchase household items from a budget authorised by her husband.[314] Harley's writing style differs greatly in this letter to those in which she expresses fear of siege to Ned. Here, her spelling is regular, conforming to conventional usage implying her use of a scribe which in turn suggests a more leisurely, organised approach to writing. Additionally, the domestic, almost luxury items – these are certainly not everyday essentials – along with the care taken to describe them, suggests time and attention invested in a letter which is not hampered by worry. The language, style and content of Harley's epistles enables us to trace her emotions and circumstances at the moment of their creation.

As well as being frequent shoppers, female letter-writers were involved in credit networks as borrowers and lenders. Margaret Paston connects her attire to the representation of rank and her status as the wife of John Paston (I).[315] In a letter to her husband written 20 April 1453, Margaret laments not having an appropriate necklace to wear for Margaret of Anjou's visit to Norwich, and asks her husband to buy one for her:

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[314] By the later seventeenth century, the allowance of 'pin money' often formed part of marriage settlements and gave women some independent spending money. Mendelson and Crawford, pp.312-3; Amy Louise Erickson, *Women and Property in Early Modern England* (London and New York: Routledge, 1993; 1995), p.26. In the same letter Harley pays Ned's 'tutor's quartrege' suggesting that she, rather than his father, was in charge of and paid for the education of their son (92-3).

[315] John Scattergood has noted that in the late Middle Ages 'clothing is meaningful as well as practical: it is a gesture, a statement as to how one sees oneself in relation to the rest of the world.' John Scattergood, 'Fashion and Morality in the Late Middle Ages', in *England in the Fifteenth Century,* ed. by Daniel Williams (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 1987), pp.255-72 (p.255).

> I p*ra*y yow […] þ*a*t I may haue somme thyng for my nekke. When þe Quene was her*e* I borowd my cos*yn* Elysab*et* Cleris devys, for I durst not for shame go wy*th* my bed*ys* among so many fresch jantylwo*m*man as her*e* wer*e* at þ*a*t tym. (146: 22-6)

Margaret's concern that her own beads would not be good enough in such illustrious company as the Queen's is not only indicative of her concern with her own reputation and pride, but with that of the entire Paston family. The attire of a wife would be a statement of the prosperity and honour of her husband. There were evidently times at which, for Margaret, it was not sinful to be proud, and her clothing was an important symbol of Paston prosperity.[316] In pre-modern society 'social rank was clearly demarcated by dress'.[317] Margaret implores her husband with 'I p*ra*y yow', speaking deferentially to obtain his approval and his money for the necklace. Unlike the letter in which she orders crossbows, Margaret maintains her rhetoric throughout the letter with phrases like 'I durst not for *shame* go wyth *my* bedys' (my emphasis), stressing that her own beads would be an embarrassment to herself, and therefore to her husband and the entire Paston circle. She refers to 'fresch jantylwo*m*man', gentlewomen of course signifying the social rank of the women in Margaret of Anjou's retinue. 'Fresch', could describe them as 'bright', 'pleasant', 'cheerful' and 'vivid', but it could also be a misspelling of French; either way, it is clear that Margaret wished to emphasise the disparity between her own beads and the jewellery of the fashionable, sophisticated women with whom she mingled (*MED*, 6c; 7a; 2a). Margaret's choice of 'devys' rather than 'bedys' to describe Elizabeth Clere's neck piece underscores its ornate and intricate design. Clere's lending of her necklace to Margaret presents an alternative currency of female credit: by aiding Margaret's appropriate self-representation, Clere bolsters the reputation of her friend and extended family whilst reinforcing their relationship. As seen in the pre-modern women's wills studied in Chapter Four, items of jewellery were understood to function as important markers of female kinship as well as wealth. This episode in Margaret's letter is carefully constructed to convince her husband that it would be better for her reputation, and by association his, if she owned suitable jewellery rather than having to borrow accessories from Elizabeth Clere.

Medieval society was nervous about the implications of borrowing.[318] Despite the contemporary call to avoid lending, the Paston women did engage with debt. Lisa Jardine explains that debt was a 'feature of the day-to-day life of the wealthy in the early-fifteenth

[316] This is in stark contrast to the way in which Margery Kempe came to understand and represent her expensive clothing in her *Boke* – see Chapter Three pp.147-52.
[317] P.J.P. Goldberg, *Medieval England: A Social History 1250-1550* (London: Arnold, 2004), p.4.
[318] See Introduction section (v) 'Borrowing and Lending'.

century', so much so that it equalled 'the accumulation of belongings.'[319] Margaret Paston's letters give an insight in to a community of female money-lending. They also show the potentially detrimental effect that borrowing could have on the family estates. In a letter written to her son John (III) on 5 November 1471, Margaret reveals that she had borrowed 100 marks (over £45,000 today) from Elizabeth Clere, and subsequently lent this to her son, John (II) (209: 1-34). Clere required settlement so that she may assist another friend, but Margaret could not repay and feared she must sell some land to do so if John (II) did not reimburse her (209: 5-10). In her writing, Margaret demonstrates an understanding that land was a more valuable asset than cash: 'I mwst ell ned*ys* sellyn all my wood*ys, and* that shall dissawayll hym bett*er* than cc m*a*rc. yf I dey' (209: 9-10). John (II) stood to inherit the Paston land which Margaret would need to sell, and its value would be expected to increase over time, therefore the sale of the land would cause a loss to John's future wealth, and that of his heirs in turn. Margaret rhetorically emphasises that the loss of the woods would equate to a deficit of over 200 marks – double the loan from Clere – and that this loss would be transferred to John on Margaret's death. She explains that the fluctuating economy meant that she would sell the wood at a loss as 'ther*e* be so many woodsalis in Norfolke at thys tym', illustrating that she fully understood the concept of supply and demand and the effect this has on prices (209: l.12).[320] In this letter the female network of money-lenders is shown to be unstable and subject to the whims of the male economy (here represented by John (II)). Margaret denounces John (II) as an unreliable borrower:

> *And* whan I r*e*membret it is to myn hart a very sper*e*, considering that he neu*er* gaue me comforte þ*er*-in, ner*e* of all þe mony þ*a*t he hath r*e*seyvyd wull neu*er* mak shyfth þ*er*-for*e*. *And* he had yet be-forn thys tyme haue sent me 1 mar*c*. (209: 21-4)

Hyperbolically depicting John's financial mismanagement as a metaphorical spear to her heart, Margaret adopts the language of courtly love and lyric traditions. Rather than Christ's wounded heart, as commonly depicted in lyrics, it is Margaret's heart that John wounds. As the matriarch of the family finances, she is struck with a double-edged sword through John's financial misdemeanour; not only is she wounded economically by his failure to repay the loan, but her dignity and reputation are injured as it implies a lack of respect and honour towards his mother. Margaret exposes the danger in which money-lending could place a woman as she did not have

[319] Lisa Jardine, *Worldly Goods* (London: Macmillan, 1996), p.93.
[320] Female networks of credit and lending are also evident in the wills of late medieval and early modern women studied in Chapter Four, suggesting that such activities were a life-long business with which both married and widowed women engaged. See section (vi) 'Credit and Financial Networks' of Chapter Four.

the authority to force her son to repay. This letter presents a rare occasion in which Margaret is shown to be a foolish and inefficient businesswoman. It seems she was guilty of the mercantile folly of mixing business with family. In contrast to the strong, pragmatic manner we encounter in her letters ordering crossbows and dealing with estate administration, here Margaret's tone is regretful and implies a sense of shame in her son's behaviour, and indeed in her own inability to foresee this outcome. Economic vulnerability appears to increase the rhetorical intensity of Margaret's letters.

Like Margaret Paston's, Brilliana Harley's letters disclose female networks of lending. On 18 August 1642, Harley writes to a Mrs Wallcote:

> I haue had of late in the mending of the leeds of my howes bine inforsed to lay out an extriordary some of money; and Edward Dally with others, oweing me rent, I can not as ye geet it; if you can lend me 40*l*. for halfe or a quarter of a yeare, I shall take it as a greate kindenes, an I will pay the interest of it with all my hart, and giue you any securety my sonne and I can giue you, which I hope will be enough for a greater some. (184)

Harley places great emphasis on the cost of the maintenance of her house: it is 'an extriordary some of money'. She also makes reference to tenants not paying their rent; she implies that it is for this reason that she requires a loan, not because she has been a poor manager of her finances in the absence of her husband, the circumstances are beyond her control. In 1640, £40 could pay the wages of a skilled tradesman for 571 days, showing just how much work Harley needed to pay for. Her careful recording of this is used to justify her action in obtaining a loan. Writing approximately one year before the siege of Brampton Bryan began, it is possible that Harley's 'mending' of the house was actually fortification work in order to strengthen the castle, perhaps going some way towards creating a garrison, as the political situation intensified. Interestingly, Harley refers to Brampton Bryan as 'my' house.[321] In a later letter to Ned, shortly before the house is under siege, Brilliana writes 'it is poscibell that I may keepe the possestion of your fathers howes for him' (188). Harley evidently switched between 'my' and 'his' house to suit the purpose of her letters. Playing on the relationship between the women and emotionalising rather than rationalising her financial request, Harley promises to pay interest 'with all my hart'.[322] The circumstances of Harley's loan allowed her to act as the

[321] Harley's possessive vocabulary was previously discussed on p.84.

[322] Harley's following letter to Mrs Wallcote dated 22 August 1642 thanks her for loaning £20 – half of the sum originally requested – and acknowledges receipt of the money (184-5). A bill is drawn up between the women

financial representative for the family, making decisions for the benefit of the family without the participation of her husband, but not, it seems to the extent that she dispensed with her use of emotive expression.

It is significant that both Margaret Paston and Brilliana Harley turned to female lenders in times of need, suggesting that the gender of the money-lender was a factor in their choice. They perhaps anticipated that a woman would give them a more favourable rate of interest in honour of a shared life experience. On the other hand, it is equally likely that Paston and Harley chose to borrow from women as they would have a greater knowledge of female lenders due to their social roles, and their contemporary society would be more accepting of women borrowing from female acquaintances and kin rather than from an unrelated male. Craig Muldrew has observed that, during the early modern era, borrowers would be more likely to borrow from kin than an unrelated lender as the relationship would 'add an extra degree of trust.'[323] Paston's and Harley's letters show their attempts to maintain control of their finances in times of need. Both women borrow to benefit the wider family in an attempt to safeguard assets such as land and property for the next generation; they were keen to protect the inheritance of their eldest sons in particular. Rather than the confident shoppers we see in other examples of their writings, their roles as borrowers expose a vulnerability not frequently visible in their correspondence.

Harley's letters not only show her spending and borrowing habits but demonstrate her role in financing the Parliamentarian cause. In January 1642 she counsels Ned on the best way to raise funds for their war effort:

> in my opinion it weare better to borrow mony, if your father will giue any, then to giue his plate; for we doo not know what straits we may be put to, and thearefore I thinke it is better to borrow whillst on may, and keepe the plate for a time of neede […] This I doo not say, that I am vnwilling to part with the plate or any thing ells in this case: if your father cannot borrow mony, I thinke I might finde out some in the cuntry to lend him some. (169)

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and Ned to make the loan official: his name and involvement adds male authority to the women's economic transactions. This letter is also accompanied by the acquittance by the Walcott family in 1682 to discharge the debt after payment is finally received forty years after the loan – much longer than the quarter to half year Harley originally promised.

[323] Craig Muldrew, *The Economy of Obligation: The Culture of Credit and Social Relations in Early Modern England* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 1998), p.113.

Harley encourages Ned to suggest to his father that, if he wants to donate money to the Parliamentarian cause, he would be better borrowing cash rather than giving away the family plate. Harley discreetly attempts to influence the course of her husband's support of the Parliamentarians. Rather than simply being the obedient and submissive wife, she shows herself to be an active and worthy partner. Daybell has observed that 'correspondence represents the dominant form by which women exerted power and influence.'[324] Harley's letters certainly support this claim. Thanks to the political and civil crises, Harley's letters allow her to engage with and influence the course of history, albeit from the side-lines. She sensibly suspects that the situation is volatile and unpredictable and so plans to save the plate as an insurance policy should they need money to survive in the coming months and years of the war.[325] Like Margaret Paston, who, in the 1470s, saw land as a more stable investment than cash, Harley understood that plate had greater stability as an investment than ready money. Harley is keen to stress that she is not reluctant to part with their possessions for the greater good, however. Offering to act as in intermediary to obtain credit for her husband, she reveals female involvement in the financing of warfare.

Six months later, in July, Harley sent the plate to her husband, writing to Ned, 'I am confident you are not troubled to see the plate goo this way; for I trust in our gratious God, you will haue the frute of it' (177). Presumably they could no longer borrow money and had to cash-in their assets. Mendelson and Crawford have noted that both Parliamentarian and Royalist supporters, men and women, raised funds by donating plate, cash and jewellery.[326] Antonia Fraser has shown that London women sold their jewellery at the Guildhall to raise funds for the Parliamentary forces, whilst others in London, Norwich, Canterbury and Coventry organised committees to raise money for horses and troops.[327] In his Restoration mock-heroic narrative poem, *Hudibras*, Samuel Butler would recall women, 'From *Ladies* down to *Oyster-Wenches*' and '*Handmaids* of the *City*', financing the Civil War:

> *Women*, that left no stone unturn'd,
> In which the *Cause* might be concern'd:
> Brought in their children's *spoons* and *whistles*,
> To purchase *Swords, Carbines* and *Pistols* […]

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[324] Daybell, *Women Letter-Writers*, p.229.
[325] The will of Maud Parr (1530) analysed in Chapter Four also shows this early modern concern with investing family wealth in plate. See p.228.
[326] Mendelson and Crawford, p.401.
[327] Antonia Fraser, *The Weaker Vessel: women's lot in seventeenth-century England* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1984), p.185.

> All they could rap and run and pilfer,
> To scraps, and ends of Gold and Silver [...][328]

Butler depicts women across the social ranks cashing in their assets to support their cause, just like Brilliana Harley. Instead of the violent battles between strong and heroic male figures encountered in epic poetry, Butler ironically notes the children's 'spoons', 'whistles' and any 'scraps' the women could get their hands on which, of course, would be useless in warfare. There is a sense of his derision of such women which is intensified by his reference to 'oyster-wenches' alongside 'Ladies'. His chaotic grouping of women from all ranks of society and their futile donations is in direct opposition to the dignity and pragmatism demonstrated in Harley's letters.

The Harleys' plate would form part of Ned's inheritance, yet she suggests that it will act as an investment to bear 'frute' of a greater inheritance: political stability and Puritan victory. 'Frute' suggests a multiplying and a reproduction connected with labour – both manual labour and the labouring of birth. Poignantly, Harley sends cake along with the plate – 'In the hamper with the plate, I haue sent your father a cake' – throughout her letters she mentions parcels of food and drink for Ned and her husband (177). The juxtaposition of selling the family silver with 'homely' baking demonstrates that Harley's motherly and wifely duty to provide nourishment for her family was not stopped by the need to fund warfare.

As well as pistols and plate, Harley sent a man and a horse to join Ned's 'troope' in May 1643, 'becaus I cannot be with you myself' (199). As a woman, Harley was unable to take up arms and fight as part of the Parliamentarian army and so sent a cavalryman in her place, fighting by proxy as she previously shopped and performed alms by proxy. Arguably, Harley employed a deputy to fight in her place in the same way as her husband instructed her to defend and administer the Brampton Bryan estates as his deputy at home. She informs Ned that 'the hors cost me 8*l*' (199).[329] Two months later, in July 1643, Harley writes to Ned that she 'can get but little towards the byeing of a hors, what it is, I haue sent you inclosed' (207). Due to the siege of Brampton Bryan she could no longer afford to buy a horse outright, nor did she have the opportunity to do so, confined to the property and with retail and supply lines cut off.[330] Harley's extreme situation during the Civil War was a more intense version of Margaret Paston's position as her husband's 'captenesse', and it was for this reason that she so actively

[328] Samuel Butler, *Hudibras*, ed. by John Wilders (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967), pp.148-9, ll.777-809.
[329] The *NACC* confirms that £8 in 1642 would purchase one horse.
[330] The siege began in July 1643 and lasted for six weeks.

engaged in financial activities. Her letters are abundant in examples of her involvement in financing certain causes precisely because of the historical moment in which they were written. Had her letters been written in peacetime it is unlikely that she would have been so vocal in advising her husband and son on how best to support a military cause, had the letter existed at all: it is the absence of her son and husband that give occasion to her writing. Harley's social as well as political position allowed her to become a participant in the financial side of warfare: for her it provided an alternative to personally taking up arms to fight. Harley's frustration recalls that of Shakespeare's Beatrice in *Much Ado About Nothing* (1599) when she is unable to challenge Claudio for Hero's slander. Beatrice laments the inability of women to duel for their honour: 'O that I were a man […] But manhood is melted into curtsies, valour into compliment'.[331] Women, Beatrice points out, are refused the satisfaction of action and instead confined to 'trim' words (4.1.319). To use Elaine Hobby's phrase, Harley makes a 'virtue of necessity' through capitalizing on the form that her words take – correspondence – to create a substitute action in the Civil War through finance.[332]

The context of pre-modern women's letter-writing has been shown to be central to their employment of rhetoric when dealing with monetary matters. Margaret Paston's correspondence reveals that, when writing from stable financial positions, pre-modern women's letters are less likely to express anxiety, use emotive language or elaborate rhetoric. Brilliana Harley's writing demonstrates that when faced with urgent need, she too dispensed with hyperbole to ensure her directions were followed swiftly. Volatile political situations, both locally and nationally, impacted upon the letters of late medieval and early modern women. In times of pressing need, the cost of provisions is not always considered, and formulaic greetings are the extent of epistolary rhetoric. 'Savvy' shopping is a concern for all the women letter writers in this chapter, as they apply commercial practice to their devotion, provision of clothing, nurture and obtainment of desired goods.

(iii) Negotiating Relationships

Pre-modern women adopt the language strategies of financial negotiation as a rhetorical tactic to manipulate relationships with their kin and acquaintances in their letter-writing for their own

[331] William Shakespeare, *Much Ado About Nothing* ed. by Claire McEachern (London: Arden Shakespeare, 2006), 4.1.315-8. All references are to this edition.
[332] Elaine Hobby, *Virtue of Necessity: English Women's Writing 1646-1688* (London: Virago Press, 1988).

gain, which is itself often financial. A letter to John Paston (II) from his mistress Cecily Daune, dated November 3 and written sometime between 1463 and 1468, depicts clothing as necessary to survival rather than as the desired commodity seen in the letters of Margaret Paston and Brilliana Harley above:

> s*ir,* like it yo*ur* maist*ir*ship to vndirstond þat wynt*ir* and colde weders draw*eth* negh, and I haue but fewe clothez but of your gift, God thanke you. Wherefore, s*ir*, and it like you I besech your gode maist*ir*ship that ye will vouchsafe to remembr*e* me yo*ur* s*er*u*au*nte with som lyu*er*ey [livery] such as pleaseth you ayens this wynt*ir*, to make me a gown to kepe me from the colde wedders; and þat I myght haue it, and such answar*e* as ye pleace in the premises, sente vnto me be the bringer*e* herof. (753: 16-22)

Daune's language reveals that she is of a lower social rank than John (II), addressing him as 's*ir*', referring to him as 'yo*ur* maist*ir*ship' and herself as his 'pore s*er*u*au*nte' (753: 23). Through her vocabulary, Daune creates pathos and signifies the imbalance of power in their relationship to her own financial advantage (if we understand the clothing in terms of economic value here). Paradoxically, Daune's social and financial powerlessness is what creates her literary and rhetorical power in this letter. In reality, what Daune requests is that John (II) gives her alms and performs one of the Corporal Acts of Mercy in clothing the needy.[333] Rather than the female writer as the provider of clothing and alms seen in the letters of seventeenth-century Harley, Daune's letter gives us a rare example (in the literature studied in this project) of a woman applying for those alms herself.[334] In this project, it is predominantly women's financial stability that allows them to write, whereas it is Daune's poverty which occasions her letter-writing. This difference reveals itself not only in the content of her letter but in her rhetoric. It is possible to interpret John (II)'s provision of Daune's clothing as a payment. In effect, they have a business arrangement, and whilst she does not receive monetary reward – at least there is not any evidence of any in this letter – she appears to have taken on the role of prostitute to some degree. Daune certainly presents herself as being in John (II)'s employment, referring to the gown she requests as 'lyuerey'. She cleverly manipulates her vocabulary, creating a textual representation of herself as a deferential, dependent, servant to ensure that she obtains what she both desires and needs. John (II) never married; he had one surviving illegitimate child, Constance, with another mistress (Constance Reynyforth), and it is possible that Daune could

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[333] The need to balance wealth with the provision of the Seven Corporal Acts of Mercy was discussed in the Introduction, p.26.

[334] Provision of the Seven Corporal Acts of Mercy can be seen in abundance in pre-modern women's wills as shown in Chapter Four.

have been pregnant at the time of writing to him.[335] Her rhetoric reminds him of his unofficial duty to provide for her, a duty which may well carry greater weight with the unspoken presence of an unborn child. Despite being of inferior social rank, Daune shows herself to be a skilled rhetorician when dealing with John (II): she exploits her lowly social position and flatters his ego to her own benefit in a similar way that Joan Thynne and Margaret Paston (John (II)'s mother) were previously shown to do when acting as their husbands' deputy estate managers.[336]

This deferential voice appears to be a rhetorical technique characteristic of women's writing irrespective of their social rank, employed accordingly to enable the author to obtain her desired outcome. Daune shops with flattery rather than money; she creates a currency of words, trading on John's desire for her body to obtain necessary provisions for her survival. She is excluded from the legitimate Paston world of purchasing the exotic goods of international trades with which Margaret engages. For Daune there is no indulgent thought of imported luxuries. In contrast to Margaret's financially and socially secure position reflected in her direct and business-like tone, Daune's letter reveals her financial and social vulnerability through her employment of literary techniques to create her rhetorical style. In analysing the letters of the two women together, we discover that their economic position (which was a result of their marital statuses and relationship to men) impacts on their writing and governs both the features and the tone of the resulting text. While Margaret's style is direct, forceful and unadorned, Daune's is embellished with rhetoric and metaphor which veils the desperate pragmatism behind its purpose. The difference between letters written from the position of financial stability and economic precarity is striking.

As in Daune's letter, financial metaphors abound in the early seventeenth-century Thynne letters when dealing with emotional relationships. The Thynne women, however, add legal metaphors to their epistolary armoury. Joan and Maria both discuss family relationships using fiscal terms, as does Maria's mother, Lucy, Lady Audley, suggesting that all three women were confident rhetoricians. Gary Schneider notes that letter-writing 'is a social behavior' which 'inscribes certain socio-communicative language, rhetoric required to represent […] face-to-face interaction.'[337] For the Thynne women, this rhetoric is based upon their shared

[335] If Daune was pregnant, there is no record of the child surviving. See also, Diane Watt, 'Introduction: Three Generations of Women's Letters', in *The Paston Women: Selected Letters,* translated from the Middle English with Introduction, Notes and Interpretive Essay by Diane Watt (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2004), pp.1-16 (p.7).
[336] See p.77 for Joan's and Margaret's performative obedience to the male authority of their husbands.
[337] G. Schneider, p.34.

knowledge of the legal terms of financial dealings. When writing to her mother-in-law, Joan, on 15 September 1601, Maria confidently presents her case using legal terms:

> If I did not know that my thoughts had ever entertained any unreverent conceit of you (my good mother), I should be much ashamed to so impudently importune your good opinion as I have done by many entreating lines, but having been ever emboldened with the knowledge of my unspotted innocence, I could not be so great an enemy to my own happiness, as to want your favour for want of desiring it. I must confess that if I had not diverse and sundry ways had great experience of God's powerful working, I should long since have been discouraged from presenting my suit, having often entreated yet could never obtain it, but knowing there is in God both a power and a will, I cannot but hope He will exercise that power to the turning of your heart towards me: so as one day you will say that I have undeservedly borne the punishment of your displeasure. (21)

'Entreating', 'innocence', 'confess', 'entreated' and 'suit' all have legal connotations and Maria's letter reads as an appeal from a defendant convinced of her own innocence to a judge or jury equally as convinced of her guilt. Joan's own use of 'entreat' is discussed below, suggesting that she did in fact share a vocabulary with Maria, a collection of words familiar to both women which they identified as appropriate to appropriate to the manipulation of family relationships.[338] Equally, as with so many lexical choices made by the female authors studied in this project, these legal terms used by Maria have religious connotations which add to her expression that she hopes that God will be on her side. Maria certainly presents herself as one to whom forgiveness should be given; however, her righteous tone is more likely to have infuriated Joan further than to have brought conciliation between the women.

George Herbert's poem, 'Redemption', published in 1633, exemplifies a similar conflating of devotional, financial and legal discourses to those used by Maria. Herbert's poetic persona seeks out God 'In heaven at his manour' to make a 'suit' for 'A new small-rented lease' as he is 'Not thriving', only to find that God, as Christ, is on earth where his crucifixion grants the speaker his suit.[339] This 'suit' is a plea for a more satisfactory relationship with God. Herbert's Christ redeems the sins of Christians so that they can thrive and prosper in salvation through their own devotion. Maria Thynne similarly exploits and manipulates the devotional connotations of her legal discourse to suit her own rhetorical strategy to win Joan's acceptance,

[338] See p.115 below.
[339] George Herbert, 'Redemption', in *The English Poems of George Herbert* ed. by Helen Wilcox (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2007), p.132, ll.2-14.

and perhaps even submission. Maria's use of parenthesis – '(my good mother)' – hints that she is aware that her tone may be too forthright and attempts to appease the situation by quickly adding in a deferential address like that found in the formal greetings to husbands, discussed in the first section of this chapter.[340] This letter, written in 1601, is the earliest surviving written by Maria attempting to appease Joan after her clandestine marriage to Thomas Thynne seven years earlier. The marriage between Maria and Thomas was declared valid earlier in 1601, suggesting that Maria now felt obliged as well as justified in her attempt to reconcile her mother-in-law and husband. Evidently Maria was unable to plead her case to her mother-in-law in person and so employed her epistolary skills in the place of oral exchange. Maria recalls that she has written 'many entreating lines', implying that the effort was wearing thin; her resentment towards her mother-in-law is thinly veiled by deferential address.

Along with her rhetorical use of legal and religious discourse, Maria's letter bears the Audley seal with a lock of her red hair beneath it in an ostentatious display of her higher ranking birth in an attempt to manipulate Joan into accepting the marriage between Maria and Thomas.[341] This lock of hair is a physical manifestation of the way in which letters attempt to represent 'the physical […] and non-verbal actions of face-to-face interaction.'[342] Whilst Maria may have presented a fond mother-in-law with a lock of hair as a memento of their affection, here she attempts to coerce Joan into submission through forcing a tangible and intimate representation of her physical self upon the older woman in an employment of emotional currency. Maria's use of the seal further implies her understanding of her letter as a legal negotiation or contract between the two women in an attempt to reach an agreement of peace – a truce between two warring families. Pre-modern women will-writers apply their seals to their testaments to give their final wishes authority and legal validity, as discussed in Chapter Four.[343] Maria employs the seal of her natal family for the same reason, while also asserting her biological social rank. By attaching her seal, Maria gives her letter a quasi-legal status as documentary evidence that she is bound to Joan through marriage to her son. Maria appropriates the physical aspects of legal texts to exert authority over the older woman.

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[340] See pp.82-3 for an example of Margaret Paston addressing her husband with respectful formality, using 'Ryt w*ur*chipful hwsbond, I recomawnd me to ȝu'.
[341] Maria was the daughter of George Touchet, Lord Audley (later earl of Castlehaven) and his wife, Lucy. Her parents outranked Joan and John Thynne, who, although knighted was not titled. See Appendix Two for more information.
[342] G. Schneider, p.34
[343] See pp.232-3 of Chapter Four for a discussion of female testators' rhetorical and legal employment of seals.

Maria's later letters to Joan continue her use of legal and financial vocabulary proving that she was prepared to use such rhetorical strategies over a prolonged period: she did not expect an instant reconciliation. On 24 February 1602, for example, she writes 'if you did but know at how high a rate I would estimate your favour' (22). Using diction relevant to the world of business and trade, Maria creates a metaphorical representation of their relationship in which she features as the merchant who 'estimates' Joan's esteem as a commodity with the highest 'rate' of value. Maria also uses 'bestow', 'requited', 'confess', 'beseech' and 'requital' during her appeal for Joan's approval in this letter (22). Once again, Maria appropriates words which combine legal, commercial and devotional understanding in an attempt to manipulate the feelings of her mother-in-law.

It appears that Maria may have learned such rhetorical techniques from her mother, Lucy, Lady Audley. In her surviving letter to Joan, dated 10 June 1602, Audley's use of vocabulary with legal connotations is striking:

> It is not a matter unlikely (though very unnaturally) that some, even near to me in blood, the better to establish their own credit with you, hath wronged me by misreporting […] but mine own conscience who is my best witness, can not accuse me of giving breath to any thought, which might ever sound your least disgrace no not when mine own honour was touched in the highest degree, by a scandalous report of your husband's. Wherefore, since the offence I have committed against you concerning your son, rested more in manner than matter, and that all which I may justly be charged withal, I will hope between your good disposition and mine own good desert, the band being indissoluble that should tie our affections together […] you will the rather be pleased to accept these lines, which are the true witnesses of a heart most willingly studying to become yours. (26)

Like her daughter's letter, Audley's presents its writer as the innocent party appealing to her wrongful accuser. Audley's use of 'witness', 'disgrace', 'honour', 'scandalous', 'highest degree', 'offence', 'committed', 'justly' and 'charged' gives the impression of a woman familiar with legal terminology and phrasing, and perhaps even the processes of a trial. Although the marriage between Maria and Thomas had been declared valid in 1601, Audley still appeals to Joan to accept it and settle the dispute between the families the following year. Audley refers to the 'indissoluble' wedding 'band', or ring, that represents not only the marriage of Thomas and Maria Thynne but the connection of the two families in an attempt to

coerce Thomas's mother into acceptance. Audley employs wordplay in her punning use of 'band', a word closely connected to the legal 'bond' of matrimony: each are equally 'indissoluble' in this instance. The metal wedding ring cannot be dissolved, nor can the match of Thomas and Maria be undone. By toying with the closeness of band/bond, Audley pointedly reminds Joan of the Thynnes' failed attempt to dissolve the clandestine marriage of their children.[344] No matter how much Joan disliked it, Audley and Maria had the backing of the law. Audley, like her daughter, presents herself in a subservient yet righteous light more likely to anger than pacify Joan. Minna Nevala has written that politeness in correspondence 'is always at least partly goal-driven.'[345] This is certainly the case in the letters of Maria and her mother: they are too deferential and protest their innocence too keenly to be entirely believed. The intense verbosity of their rhetoric reveals that they are not as skilful in their writing and manipulation of character as they may wish to be. The motives behind Maria and Audley's letters were financial: Maria's clandestine marriage to Thomas left her without any jointure and so in the event of Thomas predeceasing his wife she would be at the mercy of her in-laws. Through formal marriage negotiations, the bride's family would provide a dowry, and, in return, the groom's family would organise a jointure to support the bride in the event of her widowhood.[346] Whilst the Audley family saved themselves the cost of a dowry, they sacrificed any jointure that Maria would receive in return.[347] Audley writes that her lines are 'the true witnesses of a heart most willingly studying to become yours'. 'Studying' implies that a relationship between the two mothers is something which needs hard work and effort, and it is not an affection which comes naturally to either of them. The letters of Audley, Maria and Joan are illustrative of tense female networks exposing negative as well as positive aspects of a woman's financial and legal relations.[348]

Joan Thynne proves herself a match to Maria's and Audley's legal and financial metaphors. In August 1602 she responded strongly to Audley's attempts to manipulate her:

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[344] In her poetic 'Memorandum', Martha Moulsworth employs playful puns in recalling her marital career. See Chapter Three, p.170.
[345] Minna Nevala, 'Address in Early English Correspondence: Insights into Historical Socio-Pragmatics', *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen*, 106.1 (2005), 85-8 (p.88).
[346] Fraser, p.10.
[347] 'Jointure' in early modern England usually referred to the 'annuity arising from a rent charge on specified lands. The cash portion a woman brought into marriage was generally used to buy land to provide and annual income, first to support the new couple and subsequently to support the wife should she survive to become a widow.' Erickson, *Women and Property,* p.25.
[348] In contrast, networks of female support can be is found in pre-modern women's wills, such as that of Martha Moulsworth analysed in Chapter Four. Of course, a final will and testament is more likely to pay homage to the positive relationships the testator has enjoyed than note disagreements.

> my son was not long mine but wrongfully detained from me before he had either years or experience to judge what was fit in so weighty a cause. I confess your daughter's birth far above my son's deserts or degree but since you were pleased not to scorn my son to be yours, methinks you should not have scorned to have acknowledged me to be his mother, in respecting me as was my due […] For your daughter, I cannot yet account of her, as you may of my son, for that I have not had the trial of the one, as you have had of the other, but if he be not respected of you, I cannot pity his wrong, since he hath hazarded for your love, and yours, the loss of theirs that he was born to honour perpetually. (28-29)

Joan suggests that Thomas was tricked into the clandestine marriage with Maria at too young an age.[349] She concedes that Maria is of higher social ranking than Thomas; however, she resents Audley's part in the marriage and deceit of the Thynne parents. By excluding Thomas's parents, Maria and her parents avoided any negotiation of a marriage settlement and dowry, denying the Thynnes the financial gain that they, and their contemporaries, believed they were entitled to on the marriage of their son and heir. Like Maria and Audley, Joan is convinced of her own innocence and is not afraid to defend herself and accuse them of wrongdoing in return. Joan too demonstrates competent use of legal vocabulary which combines economic concerns: 'account', 'trial' and 'hazarded' all have financial connotations. 'Hazarded' is particularly interesting. Joan implies that her son took a risk when marrying Maria, gambling his parents' affections. 'Hazard' only became synonymous with danger and risk in the sixteenth century, but its earlier definition of a gambling game also remained in use (*OED* 1a; 3b).[350] Joan's seventeenth-century use of the word implies a knowledge of both meanings which enhances her point: in marrying Maria, Thomas gambled the affections, respect and wealth of his parents for the risky gain of the Audley family status. Lady Anne Halkett's 1677-8 memoirs (slightly beyond the main chronological range of this thesis) make similar use of the word 'hazard', particularly when discussing her own relationships with men: she recalls that her mother would not 'lett mee take my hazard' in a marriage to Thomas Howard.[351] In the writings of Halkett and Joan Thynne, marriage is presented as a gamble which may not pay off, and their shared use of 'hazard' succinctly encapsulates this. Halkett recollects that her younger self, like

[349] In reality, he was aged sixteen and so it was legal: the age of consent being fourteen for a boy and twelve for a girl. Fraser, p.12.

[350] The definition of 'hazard' as a gambling game was extant from the fourteenth century onwards (*OED* 3b).

[351] Anne Halkett, 'The Memoirs of Anne, Lady Halket', in *The Memoirs of Anne, Lady Halkett and Anne, Lady Fanshawe*, ed. by John Loftis (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979) pp.1-87 (p.14). All references are to this edition, hereafter cited by page number.

Thomas Thynne, was prepared 'to hazard my mother's displeasure rather than nott see him [Howard]' (16). The term 'hazard' appears to lend itself particularly to the risk taken by early modern children should they displease (and dishonour) their parents through choosing a spouse without parental consent.

Joan displays her anger towards her son for jeopardising the family fortune and reputation by marrying without his parents' approval: she 'cannot pity his wrong' (29). It is clear that Joan saw Thomas's marriage as a heinous disobedience and denial of one of the Ten Commandments as 'he was born to honour perpetually' his parents and the Thynne legacy.[352] Graham Williams has observed that Joan's letters contain substantially more legal terms when she employs the services of a scribe than when she personally writes her correspondence.[353] He has suggested that this is evidence of scribal intervention and that her letters 'were not taken down completely verbatim from dictation.'[354] While this is a valid argument, Joan remains the author of her letters and it is her final decision to put her name to an epistle and its contents and send it to the recipient. In their use of legal and financial language Joan's letters demonstrate a process of collaborative writing that ultimately presents her own feelings and intention through an accomplished understanding of metaphor and legal rhetoric.[355]

In addition to financially-charged legal terms used to negotiate relationships with female kin, pre-modern women's correspondence reveals their metaphorical application of mercantile vocabulary to relationships with husbands. Earlier, Cecily Daune was shown to interpret her relationship with John Paston (II) in terms of a financial agreement. Similarly, Brilliana Harley, writing in 1625 from her father's property at Ragley, Warwickshire, to her husband, Robert, in Herefordshire, uses the language of book-keeping to show her affection: 'I pray you remember that I recken the days you are away' (1). The discourses of religion and accounting combine in 'recken', as they do so often in the writing of pre-modern women, here forming an expression of love and desire to be reunited. As discussed in the Introduction, 'reckon' means not only to count and add up, but to judge; the Day of Reckoning being an alternative term for Judgement Day in Christianity (*OED* 2a; 4a). Harley's devotion is apparent

[352] The fifth of the Ten Commandments is 'Honour thy father and thy mother' (Exodus 20:12).
[353] Graham Williams, ''yr scribe can prove no nessecarye consiquence for you'? The Social and Linguistic Implications of Joan Thynne's using a Scribe in Letters to her Son, 1607-11', in *Women and Writing c.1340-c.1650*, ed. by Anne Lawrence-Mathews and Phillipa Hardman (Woodbridge: York Medieval Press, 2010), pp.131-45 (pp.139-40).
[354] G. Williams, p.142.
[355] See Chapter Three for a discussion on scribal intervention and collaborative writing in relation to Margery Kempe's *Boke*, pp.126-8.

in a great number of her letters and she will have been aware of these connotations in writing to her husband: her choice of vocabulary illustrates the way in which her devotion, marriage and desire combined in a transferable discourse. This letter, written long before her Civil War correspondence, is infused with positive emotion revealed through rhetorical expression which contrasts with the direct confessions of fear seen in her later letters. It seems that when writing from a place of safety and with leisure time, Harley's emotions are expressed with a 'feminine' modesty using multi-layered discourse, and when in danger with the pressing matters of fortifying Brampton Bryan to contend with, she moves to a more direct, but no less meaningful, turn of phrase.

Similarly, Maria Thynne writes to her husband in 1607, fondly calling him her 'best beloved Thomken', using the language of book-keeping:

> know that I have not, nor will not forget how you made my modest blood flush up into my bashful cheek at your first letter, thou threatened sound payment, and I sound repayment, so as when we meet, there will be pay, and repay, which will pass and repass. (37)

Maria, like Chaucer's Wife of Bath discussed in the Introduction, understands the marital debt in mercantile terms.[356] Unlike Alisoun of Bath, however, Maria presents her relationship with her husband as one of equal desire and satisfactory exchange. Maria's passionate letter to Thomas suggests that their marriage was in fact a love-match beyond the arrangement of Maria's family. Despite claiming she is 'modest' and 'bashful', Maria's rhetoric, unlike Harley's, does not demurely hide her desire but is used to emphasise the strength of her feelings with 'pay, and repay' and 'pass and repass'. The repetition implies a cyclical and eternal desire; once the marital debt has been paid, it is simply renewed. Her letter ends with 'fare ever well, my best and sweetest Thomken, and many thousand times more than these 1 000 000 000 000 000 000 000 000 00 for thy kind wanton letters' (37). Maria employs numbers to give emphasis and hyperbole to her affectionate words to demonstrate the strength of her feeling. Where words are not strong enough alone, she combines them with the numerical language of accounting.

Furthermore, given the content of her letter and the context in which these numbers appear, it seems that Maria inventively combines wordplay with number-play. The number '0',

[356] See pp.59-61 of the Introduction. The marital debt is also central to Margery Kempe's understanding of her marriage discussed in Chapter Three, pp.164-6.

zero, signifies ‘nothing’: a complex concept in early modern England. Helen Wilcox has written on the often contradictory various early modern meanings of ‘nothing’ which included ‘negativity and completeness’, ‘hole’ and ‘whole’, something ‘invisible and immeasurable’ and ‘no “thing”’ – a euphemism for the female genitals, yielding the famous pun in the title of Shakespeare’s comedy *Much Ado About Nothing* (1598-9).[357] Wilcox has identified the ‘bawdy’ potential of ‘nothing’ which is present in the writings of early modern authors such as Margaret Cavendish, John Donne and Shakespeare, to name but a few.[358] Maria Thynne appears to join their ranks in her playful, repetitive use of ‘0’. Not only does Maria’s repeated use of ‘0’ exaggerate her status as a legal ‘nothing’ as a married woman, but it claims, owns, and proudly declares her sexual status as a married woman who both desires and loves her husband. Maria’s letter reveals that, within the legal dependence of marriage, she has paradoxically found freedom in the expression of her sexual desire. She is far from an insignificant ‘nothing’, claiming her status not only as a some*thing* – a wife – but as a some*one* – a woman with powerful feelings. Using the innuendo surrounding the circular number ‘0’, Maria exerts her femaleness in an expression of sexuality and longing for her husband, in the hope, or even confident knowledge – he has, after all, sent her ‘wanton letters’ – that he returns her yearning. For Maria, the combination of words and numbers creates a strong representation of self.

Similarly, in a display of affection for her husband, Brilliana Harley writes to him in 1628 (again pre-Civil War) that he ‘cannot poscibilly measure my loue’ (4). ‘Measure’ combines the practical, the financial and the poetic. Harley intimates that her love cannot be counted, nor that it can be constrained to the metrical order of poetry. In letter-writing she is not restricted to a fixed metre or number of lines.[359] Gary Schneider observes that the expression of emotion in early modern letters was an ‘expected component of suing for preferment and favor – what might be called the epistolary politics of love.’[360] Brilliana Harley and Maria Thynne employ the ‘politics of love’ in voicing their feelings for their husbands. For both Maria and Harley, immeasurable love is the ultimate expression of human emotion for the very reason that it defies the ordered definition so tied up with the accounting central to their roles as estate managers.

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[357] Helen Wilcox, ‘“Needy Nothing Trimmed in Jollity”’, in *Renaissance Historicisms,* ed. by James M. Dutcher and Anne Lake Prescott (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2008), pp.313-29 (pp.314-6).
[358] Wilcox, ‘“Needy Nothing Trimmed in Jollity”’, pp.317-27.
[359] In stark contrast is Martha Moulsworth who finds expression in the restraint and metrical order of poetry in her autobiographical poem of fifty-five rhyming couplets discussed in the following chapter.
[360] G. Schneider, p.47.

My analysis thus far has revealed pre-modern women's epistolary use of financial and legal language to communicate relationships and manipulate family members. We see authors expressing their needs and feelings through a range of rhetorical devices; from Cecily Daune's use of pathos to obtain her clothing, to Maria Thynne's creative combination of letters and numbers to convey her desire for her husband. It has become clear that the context in which a letter is composed has an impact on the author's employment of rhetoric. When faced with immediate danger, as is the case for Margaret Paston and Brilliana Harley, female letter-writers become more direct and pragmatic in detailing what they require. Particularly in Margaret Paston's writing, plainness takes precedence over high rhetoric. Harley's correspondence illustrates the changing ways that women express emotion according to their physical safety: in security she coyly expresses love and desire through multi-layered vocabulary, whereas in immediate danger she directly and openly declares her fear. While Cecily Daune finds herself faced with the dangers of a cold winter, it is not an immediate threat to her safety and so she is able to invest time and energy in accomplished commercial metaphor. The letters that Joan Thynne exchanged with Maria Thynne and Lucy, Lady Audley reveal a shared understanding of judicial and mercantile terms which combine the devotional with the financial, implying an established discourse between the women of their circle. Audley and her daughter rely heavily on legal and religious metaphors of innocence to attempt to heal rifts created by the absence of the financial negotiations expected to surround marriage in this period.

(iv) Women's Business: Marriage and Children

All three letter collections analysed in this chapter reveal female involvement with practical marriage brokering, during which they employ commercial metaphor for their own financial, social and personal gain. Margery Brews (d.1495) writes to her prospective husband, John Paston (III), in 1477, aware of the transaction taking place between him and her father: 'I lete yowe pleynly vndyrstond þ*a*t my fad*er* wyll no mor*e* money parte w*yth*-all in that behalf but an c li [£100]' (416: 13-5). Margery adopts the pragmatism of her future mother-in-law, Margaret Paston, with her direct language: she needs John to 'pleynly vndyrstond' the financial position of her father. Margery intervenes in the male business deal in an attempt to urge John to accept the £100 and terms of marriage, asserting that theirs is a love match when she writes, 'yf þ*a*t ȝe cowde be content w*yth* þ*a*t good and my por p*er*sone, I wold be þe meryest mayden

on grounde' (416: 17-8).[361] With this statement Margery moves to more rhetorical writing as she strives to present herself as part of the bargain and payment. Fay Bound has noted the 'commodification of emotion as something to be purchased, exchanged or bartered with' in early modern love-letters.[362] Margery's letter demonstrates that medieval women were equally adept at representing emotion as something to be bought and sold as their early modern successors were. In contrast to David Hawkes's opinion that if 'a human being is commodified, it follows, [that] his or her essential identity is occluded', Margery's own understanding of her identity seems to be informed and strengthened through her depiction of herself as a commodity which John desires.[363] Diane Cady suggests that 'commodification might be understood as a form of containment', arguing that 'it turns a woman into a good, rather than an actor who possesses goods.'[364] Margery's rhetoric implies the opposite: she owns her commodification, turning herself into the actor that possesses the good of her own person. Far from understanding 'commodities as passive things', Margery's writing reveals that, paradoxically, medieval women writers could and did understand commodified bodies as the catalyst for agency within their lives and texts.[365]

This surviving letter by Margery discloses that the Pastons believed that the Brews family had overpriced their daughter's marriage. In response to the economic negotiations between the men, Margery's mother, Dame Elizabeth Brews, attempted to map gendered virtues onto contemporary finances when she wrote to emphasise her daughter's value in a letter to John (III) in 1477: 'I schall gyffe yowe a grett*ur* treasur*e*, þ*a*t is a wytty gentylwoma*n,* and if I sey it, bothe good and v*er*tuos; for if I schuld take money for hyr I wold not gyffe hyr for a m li [£1000]' (790: 7-10). Brews claims that, if she was selling her daughter in marriage (which is in effect exactly what was happening), she would not do so even for £1000. Her rhetoric employs mercantile monetary values to emphasise that her daughter is worth more than can be expressed in financial terms; she is a woman, not just a commodity. This emotional manoeuvre aims to ensure that the marriage is brought to fruition as Margery desires, and to the financial benefit of the family.[366]

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[361] This £100 would be the equivalent of almost £70,000 today (*NACC*).
[362] Fay Bound, 'Writing the Self? Love and the Letter in England, c. 1660 – c. 1760', *Literature and History,* 11.1 (2002), 1-19, p.8.
[363] David Hawkes, *Shakespeare and Economic Theory* (London: Bloomsbury, 2015), p.132.
[364] Diane Cady, *The Gender of Money in Middle English Literature: Value and Economy in Late Medieval England* (Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), p.163.
[365] Cady, p.164.
[366] The marriage went ahead in 1477 – the same year in which Margery and Elizabeth Brews penned their correspondence.

Paston daughters were also subjects of financial transaction through marriage brokering. In 1465, Margaret Paston wrote to her son, John (III), about finding a suitable husband for his sister:

> I wuld be right glad *and* she myght be proferrid be mariage or be service so þ*a*t it myght be to her*e* wurchep *and* prefight in discharging of her*e* frend*es*, *and* I p*ra*y you do yo*ur* p*ar*te ther-in for you owyn wurchep. (186: 6-9)

Margaret's choice to express her daughter's marriage as something to bring 'wurchep *and* prefight' to her family signifies the impact marriage had on members of the family beyond the couple. 'Wurchep', or worship, conveys the social honour, glory, fame, merit and esteem that a suitable marriage can bring to a family (*MED* 1a).[367] 'Prefight', or profit, could mean benefit, advantage, or financial and spiritual gain in this period: a medieval woman's marriage combined all these for herself and her family (*MED* 1a; b). Margaret's writing shows that the marriages of Paston daughters were used as a tool to obtain status and prosperity for Paston sons. By implication, Margaret's choice of phrasing exposes the conversely negative impact that an unsuitable marriage could have on the wider family honour and finances.[368] Interestingly, Margaret's husband, John (I) was still living, and yet *she* takes over the business of marriage, enlisting the help of her son. As Laura Watson rightly states, 'the idea behind the complicated and numerous Paston marriage negotiations was to get the best possible return on the dowry investment.'[369] In their correspondence, the Paston women appropriate mercantile practice in arranging the marriages of their daughters for both financial and reputational gain. Margaret's expression that she 'wuld be right glad' hints at the emotional discourse caught up with marriage, status, and monetary profit in the Paston family and wider society. The striking lack of emotive language in Margaret's letters ordering shopping and reporting the turmoil of attack on family property was noted above. Its presence in her relating of marriage negotiations reveals the importance she placed on such matters for the survival of the family, and even suggests that a marriage was the most valuable transaction of the Paston business. Ingredients such as the imported and expensive saffron that Margaret ordered could only be used once and stocks would require replacing as time went on. The fertility of a wife could be 'used' repeatedly for the family benefit: an important and lasting investment purchase. In the letter written in September 1469 following Margery Paston's secret betrothal to Richard Calle,

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[367] See also Margery Kempe's concern with 'worshep' discussed in Chapter Three, p.148.
[368] Such as that of Margaret's daughter, Margery, to family employee Richard Calle.
[369] Laura Watson, 'The Disposal of Paston Daughters', in *Sovereign Lady, Essays on Women in Middle English Literature,* ed. by Muriel Whitaker (New York; London: Garland Publishing Inc., 1995), pp 45-62 (p.51).

Margaret's anger seethes through her written words: 'we haue lost of her*e* but a brethele [wretch] […] fore *and* he [and if she] wer*e* ded at thys owyr*e* sche xuld neu*er*e be at myn hart as sche was' (203: 65-8). For Margaret, marriage meant business and the chance for social betterment, and the denial of this caused an outrage which is inked for posterity in her intense claim that even if her daughter was to drop dead this moment, she would not love her as she had before. When contrasted with her lack of fear when preparing for physical attack, Margaret's expression of emotion in relation to the business of her daughters' marriages implies that she sees these negotiations as a greater threat to the stability of the family's future than that any siege could pose.

When Lucy, Lady Audley writes to her daughter, Maria, in early 1610 regarding the marriage settlements of Maria's siblings, her letter demonstrates that marriage was as much a family affair for the Audleys as it was for the Pastons:

> Bargains with me doth so usually take my word for matters of good worth, as I forget to think what should be done according to the ordinary course of dealing with others; I protest upon my faith, my son Davies had no more but my word for his wife's marriage portion. But now to the purpose, if 300 pounds be not ready provided but two now and let my son Thynne pay the other hundred pounds a week after, and this let him know, that the tenth day of this month he will expect the money to be ready at Deverill, and thither will he come to give bond, which I think may suffice with my poor credit until my cousin Hill come down. (64) [370]

Audley gives details of another unofficial dowry in the marriage of another daughter (Eleanor) and suggests that she views her own spoken words as equal to a written legal contract. Considering the clandestine nature of the marriage of Maria and Thomas, and the absence of any dowry, the 'good worth' of Audley's words is doubtful. She claims to 'protest upon my faith', creating an exaggerated protestation of innocence, once again, which falls short thanks to her excessive words. While Margaret Paston is shrewd with her writing and employs minimum words for maximum return, the rhetoric of Audley's letter, like those of her daughter Maria, fails to succeed as she invests too many words and too much expression trying to coerce

[370] In this letter, Audley and Maria act as mediators between Audley's two sons-in-law in the sale of property, showing the important role of women in negotiating family estates: 'believe upon my credit and faith that we intend to sell Warminster, Boreham, and Bishopstrow and that we both desire nothing so much next our own welfare as to see it joined to Longleat, which I know will add much and very much grace to that seat' (64). Both Warminster and Bishopstrow were within close proximity of Longleat; Audley anticipates Thomas Thynne's interest in purchasing the estates from his parents-in-law, thereby financially profiting the Audleys and the Thynnes by increasing their landed assets.

others to her aid. Audley's choice of vocabulary throughout the letter illustrates her familiarity with mercantile discourse: 'bargains', 'worth', 'bond' and 'credit'. She switches from talking about her 'poor [financial] credit' to entreating her daughter to 'believe upon my credit [reputation]', moving between definitions with ease (64). On the one hand this can be interpreted as skilled rhetoric and manipulation of language, but on the other it can imply inconsistency. As with her earlier letters, Audley's diction exemplifies the crossover between financial and religious language, her phrase 'credit and faith' encapsulating this (64).

Despite the fact that Lord Audley, Lucy's husband and father of Maria and Eleanor, was still alive at the time of the girls' marriages, their mother appears to be the key negotiator and broker in the arrangements, suggesting that the Audley family saw marriage as a female business. Likewise, it is the Paston women, particularly Agnes and Margaret, as widows and as wives, who were the main players in the drama of family matchmaking.[371] Rosemary O'Day has observed that early modern letter collections show how women played an active and key role in arranging marriages, even if their husbands were living and that such correspondence collections 'indicate that this was a generally accepted role.'[372] Audley and the Paston women do not challenge the male authority of their husbands in negotiating the marriages of their younger female relatives, but participate in the marriage marketplace in the socially accepted female manner. Their lexical choices in doing so demonstrate a shared interpretation of marriage as a business bargain in which financial outputs and profits must be balanced for the benefit of the extended family reputation and fortune.

Inseparable from pre-modern women's careers as wives was their childbearing. In an age before reliable contraception, a married woman was simply expected to produce heirs for her husband. Margaret Paston coyly writes to her husband, John (I) in December, probably 1441, telling him that he has 'lefte me sweche a rememrav[n]se þ*a*t makyth me to thynk*e* vppe-on yow bothe day *and* nyth wane I wold sclepe' (125: 29-31). This 'reminder' that prevents Margaret from sleeping, is their child with whom she is heavily pregnant. The same letter shows Margaret's concern with employing the services of an able and experienced midwife: 'Elysabet Peverel hath leye sek*e* xv or xvj wekys of þe seyetyka [sciatica], but sche sent my

[371] For a poignant insight into Agnes's attempt to force the marriage of her daughter, Elizabeth, to the much older Sir Stephen Scrope, see the letter written by Elizabeth Clere to Agnes's son (Elizabeth's borther), John Paston (I), detailing the abuse that Elizabeth Paston suffered at the hands of her mother: sche hath son Esterne ┌þe most p*ar*t┐ be betyn onys in þe weke or twyes, *and* som tyme twyes on o day, *and* hir hed broken in to or thre places' (446: 22-4).

[372] Rosemary O'Day, 'Tudor and Stuart Women: their Lives through their Letters', in *Early Modern Women's Letter Writing, 1450-1700*, ed. by James Daybell (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001), pp.127-42 (p.131).

modyr word be Kate þat sche xuld come hedys wane God sent tyme, þoov [though] sche xuld be crod in a barwe' (125: 17-9). The promise that Elysabet Peverel will attend her labour is evidently of some comfort to Margaret as she takes the time to report to her husband Elysabet's pledge that she will serve Margaret despite suffering from sciatica, even if she must be pushed there in a wheelbarrow. Bathos is used to lighten the seriousness of the situation: without a skilled and experienced midwife, Margaret's experience of childbirth could be fatal. Potentially, Margaret gains further comfort through conveying this promise to John (I); the more people were aware of the promise, the more likely Elysabet would be to fulfil it to maintain her reputation.[373] Perhaps Margaret understood this promise as a verbal contract of employment and so records it in writing to her husband to give it greater validity in her own perception of the situation. Margaret's correspondence combines and appropriates the genres of letter, contract and shopping list as occasion demands.

Likewise, Joan Thynne wrote to her husband regarding her approaching childbirth in 1590:

> If my sister be in London I pray you entreat her to provide me of a good midwife for me against Easter or a ten or twelve days after, for I think my time will be much thereabout. Here is none worth the having now Goody Barber is dead and therefore I pray you be earnest with her and tell her that I hope she will not deny to come down to me. (6)

Joan employs the favoured legal and religious pleading term of her female circle, 'entreat'.[374] This time, her husband needs to adopt their rhetoric and enlist the help of her sister. Combined with 'I pray you', Joan's use of 'entreat' stresses the urgency of her situation and request: childbirth is fast approaching. Joan writes from the couple's residence at Longleat to her husband in London, significantly requesting that he acts as a mediator in asking Joan's sister to help employ 'a good midwife': this is a woman's job and Joan evidently trusts her sister's experience over the opinion of her husband. As with the shopping requests previously discussed, women on rural estates looked to their family networks in the cities for the provision of services when the local area could not provide what they required. Denise Ryan has noted the references to childbirth preparations in the correspondence of women, calling it 'the

[373] Denise Ryan has recognised the importance of local reputations in the careers of midwives. Denise Ryan, 'Playing the Midwife's part in the English Nativity Plays', *The Review of English Studies,* 54.216 (2003), 435-448 (pp.435-8).
[374] See discussion of Maria Thynne's and Lucy Audley's use of 'entreat' above, p.102.

prerogative of the female members of the family'.[375] Joan was evidently concerned that the local women acting as midwives were not sufficiently experienced now that Goody Barber had died, leaving a vacant position in the area, and so turned to the knowledge of her female relatives. As with their shopping, the employment and payment of midwives formed part of the pre-modern woman's household management. As mentioned above, Brilliana Harley advised her son on the employment of suitable servants; in this case, Joan's request for her sister's advice draws on the bank of female experience and household authority.[376]

Harley, too, is concerned with obtaining the services of a midwife. In March 1625 she writes to her husband, Robert, 'This last night I not being very well, made me seend this day for the midwife, which I thinke I should haue defered to longe' (2). The couple's eldest son, Ned, was born the previous year, and their next child, Robert, was not born until April 1626; possibly Harley was pregnant at the time of writing but later miscarried. On the other hand, she could call the midwife, rather than a male doctor, should her illness be connected to menstruation, or if she suspected it to be gynaecological. She suggests that she has 'defered to longe', or put off, calling out the midwife. This could be due to cost, or an emotional denial of her physical illness. Harley's bouts of illness appear to occur monthly throughout her correspondence and so it is likely that she did suffer from a complaint connected to menstruation. If this is the case, her letters chart the male professionalisation of gynaecology as her later letters refer to her calling out male doctors to attend her in her days of illness, rather than a female midwife.[377] Harley was certainly aware of the financial cost of male doctors and the strain that this could cause. In a letter written in 1640, Harley describes a family acquaintance delaying seeking medical attention due to the financial cost:

> Mr Ballam is very sicke; I thinke it is an ague, but he eates, and so make his fits violent; he will take nothinge of Wodows, nor Morgan, but is resolued to send to morrow for doctor Rwit, but he feares he will stay longer with him then 3*l.* will hoold out; that he is willing to giue, but he can spare no more, as he says: this 2 dayes he has bine debating of, as they tell me; but now in his fitte, he resoulfes to send for him, and dous not recken the charges. I hope he will doo well; he is so prouedent. (117)

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[375] Ryan, p.443. Ryan has also stated the expenses of childbed, recording that once again it is the female members of the family who purchase the items needed for a woman's lying-in, p.443.
[376] Harley's advice to Ned over the employment of servants was discussed on p.79.
[377] Although, of course, writing these later letters in her late thirties and early forties, Harley may have been suffering the symptoms of early menopause.

Harley reports that Ballam refuses the attention of Wodows and Morgan, possibly doctors or medical men she favoured. Perhaps the services of Wodows and Morgan were costlier than those of Rwit; Ballam was used to 'reckoning' the 'charges' and was clearly careful with his money. Harley observes that 'he is so prouedent', which, from the sixteenth century onwards, meant 'thrifty', 'frugal' and 'economical in the management of resources' (*OED*, 2). Prudence and thrift were understood to be Christian virtues rather than negative terms to describe greedy guarding of resources (*OED* 1a).[378] Of course, excessive frugality could be irresponsible in terms of health. Whilst Ballam appears to have been gambling with his life by delaying employing a doctor, his decision may in fact prove he was a financially astute man; the uncertain political situation of the run-up to the Civil War would jeopardise financial security for the entire community at Brampton Bryan. In 1640, £3 could pay the wages of a skilled tradesman for forty-two days. Evidently, the wages of a doctor were substantially more as it is unlikely that Dr Rwit would attend his patient for such a long period. Ballam clearly wanted to avoid any unnecessary expenditure, should he recover without the aid of a doctor.

Harley's choice of language once again combines the financial and the religious: Ballam becomes so desperate that he will 'not recken the charges', with overtones of the 'Day of Reckoning'. As previously noted, 'reckon', in Harley's contemporary society, of course, also meant to count out money for payment, to calculate, and to give an account.[379] In the depths of his illness, Ballam's hazarding of his health to avoid expenditure is abandoned; his gamble is shown to be foolish and not to have paid off. Death threatens, and so too do payment and judgement. Potentially, Harley herself took a similar gamble, described in the 1625 letter above, in which she writes that she delayed the midwife for too long (2). Harley's letters suggest that the early modern provision of healthcare was a cost that needed to be balanced against serious physical and spiritual danger to be a sound financial expenditure and even investment.

Pre-modern women's careers as daughters, wives, and mothers involved a great deal of financial negotiation combined with emotional cost and investment and spiritual hazard, with the added physical risk to life in childbirth which they attempted to offset through employing a skilled and experienced midwife. Where women discuss their own marriage negotiations and

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[378] Ceri Sullivan has noted the importance of thrift and the associated virtues of sobriety and diligence to the early modern merchant's reputation. While Sullivan argues that these 'were neither causes nor effects of Protestantism and the spirit of capitalism', they were undoubtedly valuable considerations for early modern society and measures of character, for women and merchants alike. Ceri Sullivan, *The Rhetoric of Credit: Merchants in Early Modern Writing* (London: Associated University Presses, 2002), p.38.
[379] See Appendix One for more definitions.

those of their family members, they are unafraid to embrace the discourse which transforms women into commodities and means of financial gain. Rather than this having a detrimental effect on self-worth, the female letter-writers studied in this chapter find a degree of strength and individuality through engaging with and re-appropriating financial vocabulary and metaphor to take ownership of the course of their lives. In their context and in their lexical choices, pre-modern women's letters demonstrate their authors' understanding and acceptance of this inevitable combination of commerce, life, death and faith.

(v) Conclusion

The correspondence of medieval and early modern women shows them to be capable and proficient estate managers, marriage brokers, financial investors and advisors, and active borrowers and lenders. For each of the women writers studied in this chapter, financial, mercantile and legal discourse is used in their understanding and representation of their everyday lives, even as part of their identity. From the fifteenth-century Pastons, whose struggle to maintain their hard-won status is evident in Margaret's perception of herself as 'captenesse', through to the seventeenth-century letters of Lady Brilliana Harley, who understands her family's Parliamentarian fight in the Civil War as a godly calling, pre-modern women used letters as a vital means of communication when separated from their husbands, sons, siblings, friends and lovers. This separation allowed them a degree of independence, authority and autonomy, but, most strikingly, it promoted most of these (married) women to the position of partner: their words and their letters gain value through their unique perception of the family position in the absence of male authority. Paradoxically, obedience to their husbands and to God licensed these pre-modern women to break most of the contemporary restrictions on their lives: it enabled them to run estates, make decisions and advise their husbands on financial matters, deal in the provision of weapons, and write letters which rise far above practical necessity to illustrate a strong sense of their characters.

The Pastons, Thynnes and Harley were all shrewd shoppers, keen to obtain their desired goods for the best possible price by researching the cost and quality available in their local markets and those where their male relatives may have been. Cecily Daune's letter to John Paston (II) poignantly showcases the precarious position of a woman on the outside of the family financial network. She too 'shops' via her letter to John (II), but as his mistress, she had an even weaker legal position than as his wife: he is under no obligation to provide her with

the clothing she requires. Yet Daune's letter proves she was equally adept at epistolary rhetorical persuasion as John (II)'s mother (Margaret) and sister-in-law (Margery), suggesting that gender as well as rank was an important factor in shaping these women's epistles.

For the Paston and Thynne women in particular, marriage negotiations (or the lack of them) engendered moments of intense emotion as the family stood to lose or gain significant wealth through settlements and dowries. Maria Thynne's letter to her husband Thomas in which she applies financial metaphor and number-play to their sexual relationship exemplifies female manipulation and appropriation of commercial discourse. The dangerous moment of childbirth troubled the women of all three letter collections, and their efforts to use their wealth to secure their physical safety through the employment of a suitable midwife is evident.

Through reading letters of pre-modern women we can gain an insight into their involvement with commercial activity, estate management and defence, marital negotiations, childbearing and rearing, but also into their understanding of their own place within their family, society, relationships and marriages, and how this was influenced by their involvement in the financial world. The language of finance spills over into the language of love, discord, and religion in their letters, illuminating a complex mix of interconnected emotions that mercantile and legal language can articulate. Each author analysed in this chapter employs literary strategies including simile, metaphor, bathos and pathos to convey her meaning and encourage the recipients of her letters to fulfil her desires. The very nature of the letter as communication and an exchange between correspondents encourages this use of rhetoric to persuade the recipient to agree with the author. The situation from which individual letters arise can, however, impact upon the degree of rhetoric employed and the language used. When writing in times of urgent need or danger, such as Margaret Paston's and Brilliana Harley's letters sent when their homes were under attack, elaborate rhetorical strategies are dispensed with and language becomes forceful and direct: the recipients must act quickly. Without the leisure that financial and physical safety affords, correspondence becomes more pragmatic and forthright. The content and purpose of epistles influences the kinds of literary techniques employed by authors. In Elizabeth Brews's letter to her prospective son-in-law, John Paston (II), we saw her use of metaphor and hyperbole to present her daughter, Margery, as a priceless treasure. Cecily Daune, appealing to John Paston (I) from the subservient position as his mistress cleverly adapts pathos as a rhetorical technique to obtain the clothing that her survival depends on. In contrast, Margaret Paston's shopping lists to her husband and son appear plain

in their language, simply because of the nature of the instruction and business transaction that they represent and due to her confident, stable place in society as a Paston wife.

Pre-modern women's letters encompass several aspects of their lives, as well as a variety of literary techniques whose expression are dependent on time, leisure, physical and financial security. Over the course of this chapter's analysis it has become apparent that the most influential factor to impact upon pre-modern women's use of financial rhetoric in their correspondence was the specific material context in which their writing was created.

Chapter Three

Memoirs: Accounting for a Life

In contrast to the correspondence studied in Chapter Two, which frequently plans ahead, the autobiographical writings which are the subject of this chapter are memoirs of lived experience. While some letters were shown to lack literary flair thanks to their urgent or practical purpose, the texts analysed in this section of the thesis enjoyed the benefit of time and leisure, which enabled the careful selection and employment of techniques such as metaphor, irony and pathos by the authors. Margery Kempe (c.1373–after 1438) and Martha Moulsworth (1577–1646) may at first seem an unlikely pairing: one a medieval, married, mother, businesswoman-turned-mystic and pilgrim, and the other an early modern, Protestant widow revelling in worldly comfort. However, both authors appropriate business language and practice to create a textual self-portrait. Kempe is credited with writing the first autobiography in English: her *Boke* (c.1436-8).[380] This lengthy prose text written by amanuensis differs widely from Moulsworth's controlled and concise autobiographical poem, 'The Memorandum of Martha Moulsworth Widdowe' (1632). Both authors, however, chose to record their lives in writing, and in terms of their language and content, both texts are inseparable from the mercantile backgrounds of their creators.

This chapter will examine the ways in which Kempe and Moulsworth redefine the language of their inherited commercial backgrounds to evaluate their lives. The chapter will be organised as follows: beginning with a brief biographical outline of Kempe and Moulsworth, subsequent sections discuss the authors' writing processes, the two women's involvement with business and education, Kempe and Moulsworth as consumers of fashion, their devotion and their marriages. Ultimately, the use of commercial discourse and metaphor reveals Kempe's and Moulsworth's reconciliation (or otherwise) of all these aspects of their lives.

(i) Mercantile Women

Margery Kempe lived in the busy town and port of Bishop's Lynn (now King's Lynn) in Norfolk during the early fifteenth century.[381] Growing up in this commercial port helped form

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[380] Tara Williams, *Inventing Womanhood: Gender and Language in Later Middle English Writing* (Columbus: The Ohio State University Press, 2011), p.128.

[381] Sheila Delany writes of Bishop's Lynn: 'Because of its strategic location at the mouth of the River Ouse, and its function as the only port for the trade of seven shires […] Lyn [sic] had by the thirteenth century established itself as one of the richest and most important commercial cities in England.' Sheila Delany, 'Sexual economies,

Kempe into the woman that her *Boke* represents. Kempe was the daughter of John Brunham, vintner and five-time-mayor, and later the wife of John Kempe, with whom she states she had 'born xiiii childeryn'.[382] This relatively conventional domestic background (including the traumatic experience of childbirth itself) engendered a mystical conversion and, in turn, her *Boke*.[383] Michael D. Myers has observed the 'integral role' played by the 'social reality of the merchant community of King's Lynn' in the 'formation of Margery Kempe's self-image', claiming that her status as John Brunham's daughter provided her with 'self-worth'.[384] Undoubtedly, Kempe identifies herself through the mercantile culture of Lynn throughout her *Boke.* However, contrary to Myers's opinion that Kempe 'eventually rejected the role imposed on her by Lynn's merchant culture as the daughter of Brunham and wife of John Kempe', this chapter hopes to show that Kempe's writing does not fully reject the roles of her mercantile community but rather redefines them to suit her spiritual vocation.[385] Sue Niebrzydowski claims that the *Boke*'s 'purpose is to record Margery's attempt to follow her vocation and record her experiences as a middle-class housewife struggling towards sainthood.'[386] For Kempe, her devotion is indeed a vocation, and it is this which she attempts to vindicate through her writing.[387] Arguably, her transformation to spiritual figure was never fully completed, as I suggest that Kempe is, ultimately, unable to shake off both the vocabulary and ideology of the mercantile community of her birth. She remained married until her husband's death and so had a legal, sacred and economic tie to Lynn's society and is careful to record her care of her husband in his final illness (6007-6080).[388]

Throughout her *Boke* Kempe struggles to reconcile the devotional and mercantile aspects of her life. Her use of language demonstrates that the two were interwoven and

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Chaucer's Wife of Bath and *The Book of Margery Kempe*', in *Feminist Readings in Middle English Literature: The Wife of Bath and all her sect*, ed. by Ruth Evans and Lesley Johnson (London: Routledge, 1994), pp.72-87 (p.73). For further details on Lynn's importance to trade and its wealth see, Richard Britnell, 'Town life', in *A Social History of England, 1200-1500*, ed. by Rosemary Horrox and W. Mark Ormrod (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp.134-78 (pp.153-4), and Anthony Goodman, *Margery Kempe and Her World* (Harlow: Pearson Education Limited, 2002), p.15.

[382] Goodman, p.49; Margery Kempe, *The Book of Margery Kempe,* ed. by Barry Windeatt (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2004), p.235, ll.3826. All references are to this edition of the text, hereafter cited by line number.

[383] It is 'for the labowr sche had in chyldyng and for sekenesse goyng beforn' that she 'dyspered of hyr lyfe, wenynyg sche mygth not levyn' (179-80).

[384] Michael D. Myers, 'A Fictional-True Self: Margery Kempe and the Social Reality of the Merchant Elite of King's Lynn', *Albion: A Quarterly Journal Concerned with British Studies*, 31.3 (1999), 337-94 (p.377).

[385] Myers, p.377.

[386] Sue Niebrzydowski, ''Late hir seye what sche wyl': Older Women's Speech and the *Book of Margery Kempe*, in *Middle Aged Women in the Middle Ages*, ed. by Sue Niebrzydowski (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2011), pp.101-14 (p.101),

[387] Tara Williams argues that Kempe's purpose was 'to chronicle her transformation from middle-class married businesswoman to travelling spiritual figure.' T. Williams, p.128.

[388] Kempe's care for John will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter from p.172.

ultimately inseparable in her interpretation of life. Indeed, her parish church in Lynn, St Margaret's, is located in Saturday Market directly opposite the Holy Trinity Guild Hall.[389] A visit to either the Church or Guild Hall would include an unavoidable sight of the other, in the fifteenth century as today, demonstrating the interconnectivity of the centres of devotional and civic/mercantile power within the town. It was in this guild hall that the Holy Trinity Guild sessions were held, as were the mayoral and council meetings.[390] The physical embodiment of Kempe's religious and mercantile ideologies in the juxtaposition of church and guild hall give a lasting and tangible representation of their central role within her contemporary society as they jostle for central position in her world. The locality of Kempe's spirituality lies in the fiscal heart of Lynn (see figures 1-3 overleaf).

[389] Saturday Market was literally named for its purpose of holding a weekly market on Saturdays, as with the Tuesday Market, so revealing the commercialism central to Lynn. Margery Kempe herself became a member of this Holy Trinity Guild. See p.128 of this chapter for more on the possible impact of her guild membership on her writing.

[390] Goodman, p.17. Richard Britnell explains that most larger medieval towns 'had such administrative headquarters, commonly situated near the central markets since the supervision of trade was one of the principal duties of town officers', and, it was in the central guild hall that 'the money collected from tolls was guarded in a communal wooden chest', along with 'records that increasingly from the thirteenth century onwards charted the growing scope and sophistication of urban government by townsmen.' Britnell, p.142.

Figure 1: Saturday Market, King's Lynn showing the close proximity of the fifteenth-century Holy Trinity Guild Hall (left) and St Margaret's church (right). ©Vicki Kay 2019

Figure 2: The fifteenth-century Holy Trinity Guild Hall in Saturday Market, King's Lynn. ©Vicki Kay 2019

Figure 3: St Margaret's Church, now King's Lynn Minster, in Saturday Market.

©Vicki Kay 2019

While Kempe's family heritage was undeniably mercantile, Martha Moulsworth's natal inheritance was clerical. She was born on 10 November 1577, daughter of clergyman Robert Dorsett (d.1580) and his wife Martha (d.1580).[391] Orphaned at around the age of three and a half, with little or no financial inheritance from her parents, the young Martha Dorsett was brought up by her maternal grandmother and step-grandfather, Helena and Ralph Johnson.[392] At the age of twenty, in 1598, she married a London goldsmith named Nicholas Prynne. Her second marriage was to an older widower, Thomas Thorowgood – a London draper – in 1605. She was widowed again in 1615. In 1619, at the age of forty-one, she married sixty-five-year-old Bevill Molesworth – a London goldsmith. All three of Moulsworth's husbands had mercantile links and were likely to have connected her to the City of London and its guilds;

[391] Roberts C, Evans, 'Moulsworth, Martha (1577-1646), poet', in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), <http://www.oxforddnb.com.ezproxy.bangor.ac.uk/view/article/47074> [Accessed 30 October 2017]. All biographical information for Moulsworth is from this source, unless otherwise stated.

[392] Germaine Greer, '"Backward Springs": The Self-Invention of Martha Moulsworth', in *The Muses Females Are: Martha Moulsworth and Other Women Writers of the English Renaissance*, ed. by Robert C. Evans and Anne Little (West Cornwall, CT: Locust Hill Press, 1995), pp.3-8 (p.6).

therefore, like Kempe, Moulsworth spent the majority of her adult life surrounded by men connected to commerce. Unlike Kempe's, however, her autobiographical writing portrays Moulsworth's main 'vocation' as that of wife and widow. Kempe's most important career is spiritual and the more important of her marriages is that to Christ rather than to John Kempe. None of Moulsworth's children survived infancy, and her role as mother does not feature so greatly in her writing as that of daughter and wife. London remained a centre of trade into the early modern era, and it was perhaps Moulsworth's marital career within this commercial hub that led to her accomplished use of financial discourse and theory within her poetry. In contrast, Kempe's own business activities and dealings within the economic community engendered her appropriation of commercial language and metaphor. As with Kempe, Moulsworth made the decision to utilise commercial discourse in her life-writing when discussing her devotion, familial and marital relationships, as the following sections will demonstrate.

(ii) The Business of Writing

As with the letters studied in the previous chapter, the question of authorship is vital to any interpretation of Kempe's use of language. Despite the fact that she employed amanuenses, it is undoubtedly Kempe's own story which is related through the *Boke*, with its unfixed and irregular chronology echoing the order in which she recalled the events of her mystical and worldly lives. Nicholas Watson argues that Kempe is the true author and her work represents the real events of her life.[393] Other critics, however, such as John C. Hirsh have argued that Kempe's 'second scribe […] should be regarded as the author.'[394] Diana R. Uhlman sees the production of Kempe's *Boke* as a collaboration of the spoken word of Kempe and the written word of the amanuenses.[395] Lynn Staley Johnson has suggested that scribes function as a literary trope to give male authority to Kempe's work, and has proposed a division between Kempe as author and 'Margery' as a constructed literary persona.[396] In my discussion I see

[393] Nicholas Watson, 'The Making of *The Book of Margery Kempe*', in *Voices in Dialogue: Reading Women in the Middle Ages*, ed. Linda Olson and Kathryn Kerby-Fulton (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2005), pp.395-434 (p.397).
[394] John C. Hirsh, 'Author and Scribe in "The Book of Margery Kempe"', *Medium Ævum*, 44.1-2 (1975), 145-150 (p.150).
[395] Diana R. Uhlman, 'The Comfort of Voice, the Solace of Script: Orality and Literacy in "The Book of Margery Kempe"', *Studies in Philology*, 91.1 (1994), 50-69 (p.61).
[396] See Lynn Staley Johnson, 'The Trope of the Scribe and the Question of Literary Authority in the Works of Julian of Norwich and Margery Kempe', *Speculum*, 66.4 (1991), 820-838; Lynn Staley, *Margery Kempe's Dissenting Fictions* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1994). Jonathan Hsy follows Johnson's division of Kempe as author and 'Margery' as fictional representation in *Trading Tongues:*

Kempe as both the author and as the 'Margery of the Book'. Her careful selection of episodes does not eclipse the historical woman, nor invent a wholly fictional character. Instead, Kempe's choice of what to include and exclude from her narrative is deliberate, of her own volition and ruled by her purpose of defending her sanctity, perhaps to encourage other women to embark upon a similar path of devotion, or at least for recognition of her own spirituality. Kempe's writing is for spiritual edification through the recounting of serious accounts of her lived experiences. In her selection of events, facts and anecdotes to include, and, importantly, those to exclude, Kempe is no different from Martha Moulsworth, nor indeed to any writer of autobiography today.[397] Any representation of a self in writing is a construct to an extent, but this does not negate the historical person whom it represents.[398] Kempe as author and as subject of the *Boke* form two halves of one whole: each aspect informs a more rounded understanding of this real medieval woman. It is for this reason that I refer to both the author and persona of the *Boke* as Kempe throughout my analysis.[399]

Kempe's employment of a scribe is illustrative of her position in mercantile society and aligns her with other medieval women writers of similar rank such as the Pastons.[400] Kim M. Phillips suggests that, when writing of spiritual matters, medieval women 'gained more authority through employing the aid of a male (especially clerical) amanuensis, than they could have ever gained through sole authorship.'[401] Even if Kempe was capable of writing, her choice of amanuenses, at least one being a 'prest' and another likely to be her son, gives her *Boke* male approval and thus further authority in the eyes of her contemporaries (123).[402] This would provide her and her *Boke* some protection against potential criticism, along with a defence

Merchants, Multilingualism and Medieval Literature (Columbus: The Ohio State University Press, 2013), p.133.

[397] See also, Elaine Hobby, *Virtue of Necessity: English Women's Writing 1646-1688* (London: Virago Press, 1988), p.78.

[398] See, Ronald Bedford, Lloyd Davis and Philippa Kelly ed., *Early Modern Autobiography: Theories, Genres, Practices* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2006); Adam Smyth, *Autobiography in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016); Sharon Cadman Seelig, *Autobiography and Gender in Early Modern Literature: Reading Women's Lives, 1600-1680* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006); and the introductory discussions in *Her Own Life* ed. by Elspeth Graham, Hilary Hinds, Elaine Hobby and Helen Wilcox (London: Routledge, 1989).

[399] With the same reasoning, I refer to Martha Moulsworth as both author and poetic persona as 'Moulsworth'.

[400] The previous chapter of this thesis discussed women's use of scribes in letter-writing, see pp.70-1.

[401] Kim M. Phillips, 'Margery Kempe and the Ages of Woman', in *The Book of Margery Kempe*, ed. by John H. Arnold and Katherine J. Lewis (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2004), pp.17-34 (p.21). See also Diane Watt, *Secretaries of God: Women Prophets in Late Medieval and Early Modern England* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1997), for a discussion of medieval women's devotional authorship.

[402] See Sebastian Sobecki, '"The writyng of this tretys": Margery Kempe's Son and the Authorship of her Book', *Studies in the Age of Chaucer*, 37 (2015), 257-283.

against accusations that she denied the teachings of St. Paul.[403] Women of Kempe's social class would be familiar with the use of scribes, and it is indeed possible that Kempe would see her use of amanuenses not as mere necessity, but as an indicator of her status within Lynn's élite; the same can be said for the Paston women discussed in the previous chapter.[404] As a consequence, even in her writing process, Kempe reveals and asserts her mercantile background and rank amongst the social élite.

Kempe records her status as a purchaser of the services of her amanuensis in the *Boke*: 'grawntyng hym a grett summe of good for hys labowr' (119). Writing is a commodity for which Kempe was clearly prepared to pay. 'Labowr' has various connotations with definitions including 'hard work', 'activity', 'business', a 'project' or 'task' as well as 'hardship' and 'difficulty' (*MED* 1a; 2a; 3a; 4a). All these meanings are applicable to the task undertaken by Kempe and her scribes. Furthermore, in the Middle Ages labour was 'a means of developing the spiritual life of the individual.'[405] In the physical 'labowr' of writing down Kempe's words to create her physical *Boke,* her amanuensis gains spiritual development, and it is this, rather than the financial 'good', that is his true reward. As in the letters of Brilliana Harley to her son Ned, discussed in the previous chapter, Kempe's lexical choices such as 'good' or 'labowr', reflect her conflation of spiritual and commercial discourse, revealing the complex blending of the two aspects in pre-modern women's lives.[406] The cross-fertilisation of religious and mercantile language within biblical metaphor in the pre-modern period was discussed in the Introduction.[407] Additionally, when associated with women, labour also has connotations of new life and childbirth – something with which Kempe was familiar after at least fourteen pregnancies. Perhaps the 'labowr' of creating her *Boke* represents her (re)birth as a mystic as she attempts to break free from the bonds of her natal mercantile society and forge a new life for herself, adding a further layer of meaning to her chosen vocabulary. I suggest that Kempe was never able to fully distance herself from the expectations of her community. Rather than entirely breaking away, Kempe requires the approval and acceptance of the society whose

[403] 'I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to use authority over the man: but to be in silence' (I Timothy 2:12). Kempe herself stresses that she is not usurping male clerical authority: 'I preche not, ser; I come in no pulpytt' (4213).
[404] Phillips notes that 'mercantile and gentle women often used secretaries for letter writing, even when they had orthographic abilities', p.21. See also pp.70-1 of the previous chapter.
[405] Mavis E. Mate, 'Work and leisure', in Horrox and Ormrod, p.276.
[406] See p.98 for the discussion of Harley's use of 'frute' to signify her belief in the reward of a Parliamentarian and Puritan victory.
[407] See section (ii) 'Christian Wealth' of the Introduction.

commercial activities she refutes; it is by influencing their devotion, and rescuing their souls from sinful financial covetousness, that her own sanctity will be proven.

The Trinity Guild of Lynn, of which Kempe's father was alderman, was a mercantile guild which encompassed a number of different crafts and also performed charitable, religious functions in providing alms for the poor (including members fallen on hard times), organising funerals and holding masses for the dead.[408] The Guild also played an important role in the town government.[409] Margery Kempe is recorded as becoming a member of the Guild on 13 April 1438, and fifteen days later she began the writing of Book II.[410] By 1438 Kempe was around sixty-five, had been widowed for a number of years, was established in her holy way of life and had completed extensive pilgrimages, including those to Santiago de Compostela, Rome, Jerusalem and Gdansk, as detailed in her *Boke*.[411] The Guild admitted an older, experienced, well-travelled and presumably admired – or at least tolerated – Kempe. It is possible that she understood her admission to the Guild as vindication of her lifestyle, and so set out to complete the writing of her *Boke.* After all, readers are told that she was anxious not to write down her experiences before time:

> Summe of these worthy and worshepful clerkys […] bodyn hyr that sche schuld don hem wryten and makyn a booke of hyr felyngys and hir revelacyons. Sum proferyd hir to wrytyn hyr felyngys wyth her owen handys, and sche wold not consentyn in no wey, for sche was comawndyd in hir sowle that sche schuld not wrytyn so soone. (76-82)

Significantly, Kempe records that it was clerics who encouraged her to write, suggesting that she received the support and approval of the Church, thereby defending herself against potential accusations of heresy or Lollardy. She stresses that the clerics were 'worshepful', or respected, emphasising that she did not challenge Church authority. Kempe does not name the clerics whom she consults for reassurance that her visions are 'of the Holy Gost and of noon evyl spyryt', instead she simply groups them with 'archebysshpys and byssoppys, doctors of dyvynyte and bachelers […] ankrys [anchorites]' (65-75). She implies that a wide range of religious men (along with potentially female anchorites) sanctioned her spirituality: it is their

[408] See Roger A. Ladd, *Antimercantilism in Late Medieval English Literature* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), pp.102-4 and Windeatt, note to line 267, p.58.
[409] Windeatt, note to line 267, p.58.
[410] David Wallace, *Strong Women: Life, Text, and Territory, 1347-1645* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2011), p.129.
[411] Goodman, p.xiii.

numbers and holy professions which are important here rather than their personal identity.[412] In contrast, later in the narrative, Kempe recalls that after hearing her speak of her 'medytacyons, & hy contemplacyons' the 'Bysshop of Lynkoln' reacted by 'cownselyng her sadly [seriously] þat hir felyngys schuld be wretyn' (1066-1072). The specific identity of Philip Repingdon (Bishop of Lincoln 1405-19) is used to verify Kempe's experiences and to stress the Church's acceptance of her piety, both for her readers and for her personal satisfaction (1056). In response to the Bishop's suggestion that Kempe record her experiences, she tells him, 'it was not Goddys wyl þat þei schuld be wretyn so soon' (1073). Despite the clerical encouragement, it was over twenty years later that Kempe began to have her *Boke* written down. Arguably, she waited to begin writing until her wider contemporary audience (beyond the approving clerics) were ready for her latest 'product'; the new self she represents in words. Crucially, Kempe stresses it was at the command of God that she began to write, deflecting any potential criticism of inappropriate teaching, gaining authority for her work and presenting herself as a vessel for the word of God (83-8).[413]

Kempe's Guild membership so late in her spiritual 'career' hints that she did not entirely reject the mercantile values and institutions of her community, but that she embraced the charitable and spiritual benefits that might be 'purchased' through the membership of such an organisation.[414] Medieval guilds kept meticulous records, and it is possible that such a practice inspired Kempe to record her spiritual experiences in a similar manner. While the sequence of the events she recalls is not chronological and at times can appear erratic, her

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[412] This grouping of clerics may have included those involved in the Trinity Guild of which she became a member, although this is unclear. Kempe later records a meeting with the female anchorite Julian of Norwich who sanctions her religious experiences (1335-1390).

[413] See Diane Watt, *Secretaries*, p.50.

[414] The Trinity Guild was 'the leading and most overtly mercantile guild' in Lynn: a seemingly odd choice for a woman who, at first glance, appears so opposed to commerce and acutely aware of its associated vices. Records exist for the membership of a John Brunham (potentially Kempe's father) in the Guild of St Giles and St Julian and the Guild of Corpus Christi, and of John Kempe (Margery Kempe's husband) in the Guild of Corpus Christi. Kempe did not, therefore, join Lynn's Trinity Guild solely in a continuation of family tradition or through its association with her husband; had she wished to do this, she could also have chosen the Guilds of St Giles and St Julian or Corpus Christi. Rather, it is more likely that she chose the Trinity Guild due to its particular charitable provisions. All members of the Guild were required to attend funerals of fellow members, and the Guild supplied twelve torches for such funerals, while the Aldermen who managed the Guild finances were obliged to visit the poor and the sick and distribute the alms raised by the Guild. Roger A. Ladd argues that Kempe's Guild membership 'late in life' after she had 'long since abandoned trade' is evidence that 'primarily charitable members' were admitted to the Guild. He cites the 'charitable and convivial activities' of the Guild as the only 'plausible incentives' for her membership. I agree that Kempe's Guild membership was governed by her desire to give alms to add to her 'column' of good deeds in her final reckoning before God, but, as previously suggested, this must have been combined with a need for acceptance, for the spiritual benefit of the entire community, and a continuation of her natal and marital association with the guilds. Ladd, pp.102-3. See also Pamela M. King, *The York Mystery Cycle and the Worship of the City* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2006), p.11 for more on the charitable actions and obligations of medieval guilds

detailed accounts of journeys undertaken, people encountered and exchanges made are united by her spiritual purpose for the benefit of her own soul and for those readers who may wish to emulate her way of living. Like guild records, Kempe's *Boke* could be used as a method to follow to recreate pilgrimages and charitable deeds for spiritual benefit. Similarly, the concluding prayer of the *Boke* recalls the Litany in structure and reads like an itemised list, not dissimilar to an account book or guild record, in which she prays for 'the Pope and alle hys cardinalys, for alle erchebischopys, and for al the odir of presthode, for alle men and women of religyon' as well as 'alle Cristen kynges, and for alle lordys and ladiis […] alle misbelevarys, […] and for alle myschevows levarys [with wicked lives]' (8404-35).[415] She repeats 'I cry the mercy, Lord' for a number of beneficiaries including her 'gostly and bodily' children, friends and enemies (8438-64). Her use of repetition lends itself to the possibility that the prayer could be learned by rote by readers to recite in their personal, daily devotion. The prayer could be adopted as a formula by devout readers who could easily adapt it to suit their own lives and spiritual needs by substituting the names of their own acquaintances and communities in place of Kempe's.

While it is possible that Kempe's acceptance into the Trinity Guild was the catalyst for her writing as it symbolised her society's tolerance of her chosen way of life, Martha Moulsworth's stated reason for writing is commemoration of her life, and the catalyst is her own birthday:

> The tenth day of the winter month November
> […]
> did open first theis eis, and shewed this light
> Now on thatt day uppon that daie I write
> This season fitly willinglie combines
> the birth day of my selfe, and of theis lynes
> The tyme the clocke, the yearly stroke is one
> thatt clocke by ffiftie five retourns hath gonn.[416]

[415] Also included are 'Jewys, and Sarazinys, and alle hethen pepil','fals heretikys', 'thevys, vowtereys [adulterers] and alle comown [loose] women' (8404-35).

[416] Martha Moulsworth, 'The Memorandum of Martha Moulsworth Widdowe', in *Early Modern Women Poets: An Anthology (1520-1700),* ed. by Jane Stevenson and Peter Davidson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp.126-9 (p.126, ll.1-7). All references are to this edition of the text, hereafter cited by line number, with the exception of Moulsworth's marginal notes which are referenced by page number. The manuscript of Moulsworth's poem can be found is in the Beineke Library, Yale, MS Osborn fol 150. See Barbara K. Lewalski, 'Literature and Household' in The earlier Stuart era, in *The Cambridge History of Early Modern English*

For Moulsworth, it is logical and pleasing that she should write her autobiographical poem on the anniversary of her birth. Her poetry abounds with neat mirroring, and the act of writing an account of her life on her fifty-fifth birthday is part of this; to write at the age of fifty-four and a half, or fifty-five and a few days, would simply not be as well-ordered as writing at fifty-five exactly. This mirroring is linguistically represented with 'on thatt day uppon that daie I write'. As her marginal note states, Moulsworth uses her age as a measure for her words: 'a coupled ryme so many tymes […] 55' (126), creating a poem of fifty-five rhyming couplets. Moulsworth's choice of rhyming couplets controls and condenses her life into manageable space with a satisfying neatness: a summary of events, or even 'minutes' of her life's proceedings. Her poem becomes an account of her life in more ways than one: it has all the precision and numbers of book-keeping. While Kempe uses lengthy prose, which reflects her dramatic affective piety, Moulsworth's tightly constrained poetry is reminiscent of Margaret Paston's shrewd use of language that was identified in the previous chapter. Moulsworth's writing contains greater literary flourish than Paston's letters due to her purpose and choice of genre, but both authors' measured words ensure that their writing cannot be misinterpreted in their portrayal of women confident in their own worth and in their position as writers.

In contrast to Paston and Moulsworth, Kempe's *Boke* constantly records her struggles with misinterpretation. Her loud affective piety, her weeping, wailing and her white clothing all lead to Kempe being the victim of misunderstanding by her contemporaries. Her fellow pilgrims mock and mistreat her (1991-2010). She is accused of heresy and faces allegations of Lollardy and calls that she be burned at the stake (4130-5; 4324-6). The Mayor of Leicester is concerned that she will lead away the married women of the town, and she is even accused of birthing an illegitimate child while away from Lynn (3841-2; 3401). Her readers are intended to interpret these trying episodes as evidence of her greater suffering for her piety which aligns her with the struggles of saints and so emphasises her God-given grace. This is a dangerous strategy, however, as Kempe's convoluted syntax and seemingly erratic order of remembered events could confuse and irritate her readers, meaning that her employment of the written word, like her speech and actions, can be misinterpreted. As a writer, Kempe does not exhibit the precision or measure that Paston and Moulsworth prove themselves mistresses of. Like her youthful dressing, Kempe's writing is characterised by its excess.[417]

Literature, ed. by David Loewenstein and Janel Mueller (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp.603-29 (p.623).

[417] Kempe's depiction of her consumption of fashion as an indicator of her (im)morality is analysed in section (iv) of this chapter, headed 'Fashionable Women'.

As Kempe waits until the autumn, or possibly winter, of her life to begin her *Boke*, so too does Moulsworth look back over her life from comfortable middle age. Not only is it logical that these two authors should choose their later years to begin the telling of their lives once their experiences are banked in their memories; they are also afforded the time which, in their youth, would not have been available to them as young wives and mothers. As shown in Chapter Two, leisure and time enables greater employment of rhetoric and careful consideration of language; both Kempe's and Moulsworth's age and stage in their life-courses can thus be expected to impact upon the language and form that their writings take. Unlike the authors of sometimes-hurried letters, Kempe and Moulsworth were able to choose the form in which their memoirs took shape. This choice can itself influence meaning. Kempe's prose autohagiography may have been influenced by the saint's lives of early holy women such as Bridget of Sweden (1303–1373), Elizabeth of Hungary (1207–1231) and Mary of Oignies (1117–1213).[418] The poetic form with its tight restrictions of rhyme and metre of Moulsworth's chosen genre governs her neat recording of her marital career. The constraints of the poetic genre lend themselves to Moulsworth's specific use of language and mirrors the precision of book-keeping which is echoed in her writing. The experiences of Kempe's and Moulsworth's lives may have engendered a need to write, to make sense of the events and traumas through which they lived. In her analysis of the 'Memorandum', Germaine Greer argues that Moulsworth's 'rigorous numerical ordering […] reveals that she is anxious to impose order upon a disorderly career' in which she was widowed three times and suffered the loss of all her children.[419] The persona that emerges from Moulsworth's writing, however, is far from anxious. Instead, readers are met with a contented and confident woman. Kempe's and Moulsworth's autobiographical writings can be understood as acts of worldly and spiritual accounting as they put their affairs in order in preparation for the final reckoning of Judgement.[420]

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[418] This has been widely commented on by scholars such as Barry Windeatt in his 'Introduction' to his edition of Kempe's text, pp.13-15. Kempe's desire to align herself with such women after hearing the stories of their lives and visiting locations associated with them whilst on pilgrimage, is likely to have influenced her choice of genre. See the *Boke* for parallels with St Bridget's life which include fasting (371), wearing of a hair shirt (375), son's conversion (7434), regular confession (368-9, 513), marriage to Christ (2541-9) and extensive pilgrimages. The *Boke* directly cites that 'Elizabeth of Hungry cryed with lowde voys' (5173), just like Kempe. Mary of Oignies famously wore white clothing (1018-9), convinced her husband to live chastely and was prone to pious weeping; all traits shared and adopted by Kempe.

[419] Greer, p.4.

[420] This parallels with women's wills discussed in Chapter Four, and the literary wills briefly analysed in the Codicil.

In contrast to Kempe who carefully informs her reader that she writes in obedience to God and via a male amanuensis, Moulsworth takes proud ownership of her creative writing and writes with her own hand. She specifies the date of writing as her fifty-fifth birthday, 10 November 1632 (8). Not only is historical time noted, but also the point of life-course; she writes as a comfortable, satisfied widow. Moulsworth's writing becomes her offspring as she writes on 'the birth day of my selfe, and of theis lynes' (6). Moulsworth appropriates the poetic form to fulfil that most feminine of labours: (pro)creation. Like Kempe's writing, Moulsworth's is presented as a worthwhile toil producing an alternative fruit to children. Her poetic legacy seems largely for her own personal benefit, perhaps creating a sense of well-being and order, while Kempe's writing is for the spiritual benefit of her 'evyn-Cristen' (4763).

The very title that Moulsworth gives to her autobiographical poem suggests a sense of value attributed to herself: 'The Memorandum of Martha Moulsworth Widdowe'. A 'memorandum' can be 'a note to help the memory; a record of events' (*OED* 1a). Moulsworth's poem is certainly a record of the events of her life, a note made of her memories. However, a contemporary 'memorandum' could also be 'a record of a financial transaction' (*OED* 1b). Moulsworth's title grounds her poem in economics, and it is through such a filter that she analyses and makes sense of her life. Furthermore, in the mid-seventeenth century, a 'memorandum' was an 'informal diplomatic message', particularly for 'justifying a decision' (*OED* 1d). For Moulsworth, her 'Memorandum' is written justification of her chosen life-path as wife, mother, widow – and her ultimate decision not to re-marry – much like Kempe's *Boke* is vindication of her preferred spiritual way of life. For both authors, the act of creating a literary record of their lives bestows metaphorical value upon their lived experience, which is made all the richer through their employment of financial rhetoric. The idea of a memorandum as a justifying text combined with the other definitions linked to memory and finance, bestows multi-layered meaning upon Moulsworth's poem and textual representation of her life. She engages with political, legal, and fiscal discourse, appropriating the relevant diction for her own purposes. The following section builds on this economic foundation and analyses Kempe's and Moulsworth's references to – and their rhetorical uses of – their involvement with the business world in their autobiographical writings.

(iii) Women's Work

Kempe begins her story with the condemnation of the business ventures of her younger self, both because they fail – and so indicate the error of her worldly preoccupation – and because they strongly connect her to the world of commerce rather than spirituality. She details her activities first as a brewer, and, secondly, after her brewing failed after a period of prosperity, her milling. Sylvia L. Thrupp points out that the business activities of married merchant class medieval women were usually a 'means of earning additional money to spend' rather than necessary for survival.[421] This is certainly applicable to Kempe's representation of her businesses: she claims that she 'evyr desyryd mor and mor' and engaged in these activities 'for pure coveytyse and for to maynten hir pride' (274-5). Kempe presents her money-making as sinful because it goes beyond the necessary income for survival: her businesses encourage her to commit sin through covetousness and pride. Recalling Chaucer's portrayal of Alisoun of Bath, Kempe chooses to present herself as the repulsive, greedy mercantile woman whose sin lies in coveting more than the means for survival.[422] Kempe adopts the words of the Church, describing the motivation behind her brewing in the language of the Seven Deadly Sins and Ten Commandments when she admits that she continued her business out of 'coveytyse' and 'pride'.[423] Her readers are intended to disapprove of her mercantile desires and so be discouraged from similar behaviour and recognise the progress that the mature Kempe has made in her spiritual life.

Kempe's hyperbolic description of herself as 'on of the grettest brewers' in Lynn for three or four years recalls Chaucer's Wife of Bath's business activities: 'Of clooth-makyng she hadde swich an haunt / She passed hem of Ypres and of Gaunt' (277).[424] Whilst Ypres and Ghent are known to have been the cloth-making centres of the Low Countries, Bishop's Lynn was not known for its ale. Lynn's port did, however, ship ale along with corn and malt to the Continent.[425] It is likely that Kempe exaggerates her success in the trade of the popular dietary staple to emphasise her sinful pride rather than to suggest that she supplied the overseas

[421] Sylvia L. Thrupp, *The Merchant Class of Medieval London* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1948), p.170.

[422] Chaucer's Wife of Bath's 'Prologue' was briefly analysed in section (viii) of the Introduction, 'Alisoun of Bath'.

[423] The tenth commandment instructs that one should not 'covet' the belongings of others, and pride is derided as one of the Seven Deadly Sins (Exodus 20:17).

[424] Geoffrey Chaucer, 'General Prologue', in *The Riverside Chaucer*, ed. by Larry D. Benson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), pp.23-36 (p.30, ll.447-8). All references are to this edition, hereafter cited by line number.

[425] Clarissa W. Atkinson, *Mystic and Pilgrim: The Book and the World of Margery Kempe* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1983), p.73.

trade.[426] Even when long removed from involvement with commerce, Kempe could not fully relinquish her mercantile roots: they are vital in revealing the extent of her spiritual journey. Kempe fits the trend of medieval brewster: they were usually married and 'from families of middling status'.[427] Her brewing business was appropriate to both her marital status and social rank. She was the 'typical brewster' or 'anywoman'.[428] Kempe's business was not inappropriate to her gender; rather, the motive behind her venture went against Christian virtue and towards vice. Kempe depicts her brewing as going beyond the 'economy of makeshifts' which Judith M. Bennet identifies as the usual motive behind the sale of excess ale.[429] Kempe's is a more organised, industrial process with the intention of making extra money for personal expenditure, not as a necessary means to provide sustenance for her family: she pursued her business for 'coveytyse and for to maynten hir pride' (275). Indeed, Anthony Goodman interprets Kempe's business ventures as an indication that her husband 'was failing to generate income commensurate with the lifestyle she considered to be appropriate to her status.'[430] Kempe hints at this in her *Boke*: 'Sche wold not […] be content wyth the goodys that God had sent hire, as hir husbond was' (272-3). Again, the younger, commercially active Kempe is presented as a covetous, ambitious woman. Unlike her husband, she was not content with the life and possessions which God had bestowed upon her. Her choice of phrasing implies that the young Kempe's desire for worldly wealth had a negative impact on her spiritual health. Kempe also presents herself as a bad wife, unable to be satisfied with the life provided by her husband: a double failing in contemporary eyes.

Kempe's husband, John, has been identified as a brewer in Lynn records. It is unclear, however, whether Kempe's trade was connected to John's or if hers was a separate enterprise.[431] In the *Boke*, readers are led to believe that Kempe's brewing is very much her own business, independent of John. Kempe's *Boke* is the story of *her* conversion to a holy life, and so it is *her* business activities which are the focus of her own criticism to heighten the contrast with her later piety. The purpose of the *Boke* is to demonstrate Kempe's own spiritual progress; she recognised her own failings and changed for the better. By carefully recording

[426] In the Middle Ages, 'most people rarely drank water, milk, or wine, they relied on ale and beer for their basic liquid refreshments.' Judith M. Bennett, *Ale, Beer, and Brewsters in England: Women's Work in a Changing World, 1300-1600* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), p.8.
[427] Mavis E. Mate, *Women in Medieval English Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p.40. Whilst Kempe was part of the mercantile élite thanks to the status of her father, she was neither peasant nor aristocrat.
[428] Bennett, *Ale, Beer, and Brewsters,* p.27.
[429] Bennett, *Ale, Beer, and Brewsters,* p.34.
[430] Goodman, p.72.
[431] Barry Windeatt, note to line 276, p.58.

her youthful sins, Kempe ensures that her readers understand that she has followed the biblical instruction to 'cast out first the beam out of thy own eye, and then shalt thou see to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye' (Matthew 7:5). Through her writing, Kempe's failed businesses are transformed into a rhetorical strategy to stress her position as reformed sinner, and so invest her with greater authority in the eyes of fellow Christians. Kempe presents herself as the voice of experience and a model to emulate; she is no 'hypocrite' (Matthew 7:5). Just as with the biblical Saul, the metaphorical 'scales' fall from Kempe's eyes thanks to her commercial failures, and she receives her 'sight' through the grace of Christ which leads her to a more devout way of life (Acts 9:18). As Saul's conversion led him to become Paul, so Kempe's visions and conversations with Christ convert her from covetous businesswoman to devout pilgrim and mystic. Maria DiBattista claims that 'writing about one's life […] indicates that one feels that one has proved oneself a match for life.'[432] Writing in her maturity as reformed sinner, Kempe's criticism of her younger self is indicative of the satisfaction with which she regarded her later devotional status. Her journey demonstrates to readers that if even she was able to get her spiritual accounts in order, then anyone (or anywoman) could. Kempe's *Boke* illustrates her growth from the covetous businesswoman of her youth into the *sponsa Christi* whom she perceives is 'a match' for the grace accorded to her by Christ.

Brewing had additional sinful connotations beyond those of pride and covetousness. Kempe's contemporaries would be familiar with the distrust of female brewers and ale-sellers thanks to the abundance of church art, ballads and didactic literature.[433] Independent alewives – those who worked without husbands/fathers/sons – were distrusted as they were perceived as undermining patriarchal authority, particularly in their involvement with money and they 'challenged the economic power of men', while their bargaining with male customers gave them potential to obtain 'unnatural power'.[434] Not only was Kempe's brewing problematic in a moral sense as it endangered her soul through her covetousness, but it also had the potential to disrupt the sexual, economic and social order of her society. This contemporary context aids Kempe's presentation of her conversion, emphasising the extent of her transformation and the singularity of her grace.

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[432] Maria DiBattista, 'Women's Autobiographies', in *The Cambridge Companion to Autobiography*, ed. by Maria DiBattista and Emily O. Wittman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), pp.208-21 (p.213).
[433] Bennett, *Ale, Beer, and Brewsters,* pp.125-34. See the 'Harrowing of Hell', in *The Chester Mystery Cycle*, ed. by R.M. Lumiansky and David Mills (London: Oxford University Press for the Early English Text Society, 1974), pp.325-39 (p.337, ll.285-92), for a negative representation of female brewers.
[434] Bennett, *Ale, Beer, and Brewsters,* pp.125-34.

Kempe reports that her brewing business failed through no practical fault of her own or of her servants:

> sche had nevyr so good servawntys and cunnyng in brewing, yet it wold nevyr prevyn wyth hem. For, whan the ale was as fayr standing undyr brem as any man myth se, sodenly the berm [froth] wold fallyn down [go flat], that alle the ale was lost every brewyng aftyr other. (278-82)

Despite Kempe's knowledge and experience – her 'cunnyng' – her ale-brewing became repeatedly unsuccessful, failing at the last moment and becoming flat, with none of the batch being salvageable. Her use of 'cunnyng' is particularly telling here as its medieval definition is 'possessing skill in a professions, art or craft: skilled, skillful, expert, competent' (*MED* 1a).[435] Displaying her commercial and intellectual skill, 'cunnyng' reveals that she was not an inexperienced and ignorant brewer who failed thanks to a lack of knowledge of the manufacturing process. Kempe instead interprets and presents her business failure as punishment from God for her sinful covetousness:

> sche askyd hir husbond mercy for sche wold not folwyn hys cownsel afortyme, and sche seyd that hir pride and synne was cause of alle her punschyng, and sche wold amend that sche had trespasyd wyth good wyl. (286-9)

Again, the language of the Church and the Seven Deadly Sins is used by Kempe in relation to her business – 'mercy', 'pride', 'synne' and 'trespasyd' – emphasising her error. Her linguistic choices highlight not only that she abused the good will of God in committing sin in her pursuit of monetary gain, but also that she had been disobedient to her husband as she did not 'folwyn hys cownsel' to pursue a more modest lifestyle. She intertwines religious vocabulary with lexical selections that hint at a knowledge of civic discourse – 'cownsel', 'punschyng' and 'amend' – illuminating the close connection between social and financial order with appropriate devotion for Kempe and her contemporaries. Kempe's reference to servants implies that her enterprise went beyond mere household brewing and the sale of surplus ale. Hers seems to have been very much a commercial operation creating a need for employees: accentuating her desire for economic gain and material wealth. This desire is depicted as sinful greed and economic folly. Her wifely disobedience would intensify Kempe's contemporaries'

[435] For Kempe and her contemporaries 'cunnyng' did not carry the negative connotations of slyness that exist today.

disapproval of her past worldly self as, in their wedding vows, medieval women promised to be 'buxom' and 'bonyr', or obedient and meek, to their husbands (2854).[436]

Despite the mature Kempe interpreting the ruined ale as a warning from God to turn to a more religious life, her initial brewing failure did not deter her younger self from setting up a new venture in milling:

> But yet she left not the world al hol, for now she bethowt hir of a newe huswyfre. Sche had an hors-mille. Sche gat hire tweyn good hors and a man to gryndyn mennys corne, and thus sche trostyd to getyn hir levyng. (289-91)

Again, in this passage we see Kempe's exposure of her misplaced worldly complacency: she naively 'trostyd', or expected, that the horse-mill would 'getyn', or obtain, her living. Like Margaret Paston's simple style, Kempe's unadorned telling of this episode candidly presents the facts before the reader, thereby increasing her credibility as both author and reformed sinner. Paradoxically, the apparent lack of rhetoric can simultaneously function as a literary style and technique which is vital to Kempe's purpose of showcasing her transformation. The dialogue she records in the *Boke* – for example, the episode in which she bargains with John for a chaste marriage – reveals Kempe can be a skilled rhetorician, and so it is unlikely that the passages in which her writing style is plain are entirely unintentionally so.[437] Rather, her simplicity is a rhetorical device. While Moulsworth's style and literary flourish are elaborate and highly-constructed thanks to the poetic genre and considered use of metre, Kempe's simple prose style is subtle but no less intentional and appropriate to her purpose.

As with her brewing business, Kempe encountered difficulties with her horse-mill that ultimately resulted in its failure. On the eve of Corpus Christi, the horse refused to turn the mill and Kempe's servant left her employment as a result (292-310).[438] There is added significance that God chose to punish her for her covetousness through the failing of her worldly commerce on the eve of the Corpus Christi feast. Kempe's references to this important date in the liturgical calendar draws the reader's attention to the fact that when the young Kempe should have been focussed on devotion, she was more concerned with worldly profit. When contrasted with the mature Kempe's practice of being 'schrevyn [absolved] sumtyme twys or thryes on the day',

[436] For the medieval marriage ceremony see, *Missale ad Usum Insignis et Praeclarae Ecclesiae Sarum*, ed. Francis Henry Dickinson (Oxford and London: J. Parker & Soc., 1861-83, republished 1969), *Ordo Sponsalium*, columns 831-2.

[437] See pp.164-6 of this chapter for the negotiations between the Kempes.

[438] Pamela M. King explains that the feast of Corpus Christi 'celebrates Christ's presence in the Host consecrated at the Mass, effectively an annual affirmation of the doctrine of transubstantiation.' King, p.7.

this youthful neglect of the seriousness of the Mass is remarkable: once more readers are presented with the impressive change in Kempe (368-9).[439] The converted Kempe received written dispensation from Archbishop Arundel which allowed her to receive weekly Communion and to choose her own confessor (1160). The juxtaposition of the temporally-focused entrepreneur of her youth, with the mature, pious Kempe's intense belief in the Eucharist and the benefits of Communion for spiritual health is striking. She is careful to note that the Archbishop gave this dispensation freely, refusing 'any syluer er gold, ne he wold latyn his clerkys takyn anythyng for wrytyn ne for seelyng of þe lettyr' (1163-4). Rather than making monetary payment, Kempe implies that her spiritual value was enough in exchange for the material document of the dispensation. In recording the Archbishop's refusal of payment for himself and the clerks, Kempe not only showcases her spiritual worth but elevates her interaction with this figure of Church authority beyond the everyday, mercantile life which was bound by commercial exchange. The very fact that she records the absence of a financial transaction does, however, reveal that Kempe's writing is, paradoxically, rooted within commercial society and that she interprets her spiritual worth through her relationship with money.

After this second business failed, Kempe finally understood that she must amend her lifestyle and move on from commercial vocations to a devotional one. Her diction reflects this change, shifting from trade-appropriate words such as 'cunnyng' to vocabulary loaded with religious meaning and biblical connotations such as 'skowrges', 'penawnce' and 'evyrlastyng lyfe' to relate her change of career (318-23). In particular, 'skowrges' highlights her spiritual favour while connecting Kempe to Christ, as scourging preceded the Crucifixion (Mark 15:15). Kempe's turn, in this instance, from diction highly attuned to her engagement with trade, to that which fittingly emphasises her spiritual awakening thanks to its biblical connotations, demonstrates the rhetorical nature of Kempe's composition. However, as her *Boke* reveals, on the whole Kempe retains and exploits mercantile rhetoric in her recording of this conversion. Rather than dispensing with the terms which describe commercial practice altogether, she manipulates and redefines them to fit her spiritual vocation. Kempe uses her devotional acumen to justify her failure to prosper as a businesswoman: replacing the businesses of profit in this world for an independent spiritual career for profit in the next. Kempe's business failings are

[439] Frequent confession aligned Kempe with earlier female visionaries whose hagiographies her *Boke* emulates, including St Bridget, Elizabeth of Hungary and Mary of Oignies. Windeatt, p.63.

transformed into examples of Divine communication which ultimately lead to her grace.[440] In the psychological negotiation of the commercial and devotional aspects of her contemporary society, Kempe's mercantile failures lead to the triumph of her devotion, and so she pursues this as her fourth and final vocation.[441]

Kempe's involvement in the brewing business ironically gave her access to the material needed to make her homemade hair shirt, a crucial tool for her devotion:

> Than sche gat hir an hayr of a kylne (swech as men dryen on malt), and leyd it in her kyrtylle as sotyllych [discreetly] and prevylich [privately] as sche mygth, hir husbond schuld not aspye it. (375-7)

Kempe's use of the sacking on which malt was dried to make a garment with which to pay bodily penance shows her adaptability and ingenuity, and even her continuing business-mindedness: refusing to let anything go to waste, she recycled the materials of her previous trade to fit her new vocation. St Bridget was known to have worn a hair shirt as part of her personal devotion.[442] Kempe's reference to her own bodily penitence in a similar manner works as a rhetorical device to connect her to this recognised and respected holy woman. Kempe's emulation of St Bridget signifies and vindicates her own sanctity. This passage also reveals that Kempe embarked on her career of holiness when she was still a relatively young wife and mother. Kempe's intimate and hidden manner of wearing the sacking reveals that she had begun to turn away from her commercial careers whilst still functioning in her worldly community as wife and mother. She fits her piece of sacking discreetly in her kirtle so that her husband will not notice it, and indeed she claims that he does not despite sharing her bed and fathering children during this time (377-9). Kempe's desire to hide the hair garment from John hints that she was not yet the confident woman who later bargained with him to agree to a chaste marriage.[443] Perhaps her understanding of her primary role at this stage in her life-course was that of a wife and mother. Kempe's linguistic choices disclose the risky business of pursuing her devotional aspirations during her early marriage: she takes pains to ensure that

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[440] As Ladd argues, the 'suggestion that her entrepreneurial failures were ordained by God makes both stories of God's protection from material temptation and mercantile sin, rather than stories of her ineptitude as a brewer or mill manager.' Ladd, p.106.

[441] Her first vocation being that of wife and mother, second of brewer and third of miller.

[442] Janet Wilson, 'Communities of Dissent: The Secular and Ecclesiastical Communities of Margery Kempe's *Book*', in *Medieval Women in their Communities* ed. by Diane Watt (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1997), pp.155-85 (p.161).

[443] The negotiation between Kempe and John is discussed in more detail in section (vi) of this chapter, entitled 'Mercantile marriage'.

the hair shirt is concealed as discreetly ('sotyllych') and privately ('prevylich') as possible to avoid confrontation with John. It seems that the younger Kempe was not confident in the value of her spirituality or its potential as a bargaining tool. It was only around the age of forty, when no longer bearing children that she was assured enough to strike a deal with John, allowing her to devote herself entirely to pilgrimage and piety.

Throughout her middle years, Kempe was active as a household manager as well as a businesswoman. She uses imagery which combines the sacred and the fiscal to describe this sometimes-traumatic period of her life. Kempe's control of her sanity is symbolised in the keys to the buttery which she recalls receiving from John at the end of her post-natal illness:

> anoon the creature was stabelyd in her wyttys [… she] preyd hir husbond […] that sche mygth have the keys of the botery to takyn hir mete and drynke as sche had don beforn. Hyr maydens and hir kepars cownseld hym he schulde delyvyr hir no keys, for thei seyd sche wold but yeve awey swech good as ther was, for sche wyst not what sche seyde […] Nevyrthelesse, hir husbond, evyr having tendyrnes and compassyon of hir, comawndyd thei schulde delyvyr to hyr the keyys. (237-45)

In this passage, the power struggle between Kempe and her female servants is evident. For medieval society, 'the keys on a housewife's belt symbolized her position within the house.'[444] Kempe employs the symbolic power of the keys and their connection to economic control of the household as a literary device to simultaneously signify her sanity, financial activity, marital status and devotional position. The symbolism of the keys links her to another holy female figure; St Sitha of Lucca, the patron saint of servant girls and housewives, was often depicted holding a bunch of keys.[445] Depictions of the saint have been located in churches in East Anglia, Oxford and the West Country.[446] It is likely that Kempe would be familiar with such depictions as a devout worshipper in East Anglia, and it is possible that she adds this episode to the story of her conversion to a holy life to bolster her claim for recognition as a holy woman herself. This early episode illustrates that from the very beginning of her *Boke*,

[444] Katherine L. French, *The Good Women of the Parish: Gender and Religion After the Black Death* (Philadelphia: University of Philadelphia Press, 2008), p.18. Sarah Salih argues that Kempe's 'keys embody the circumscribed, but real, authority over her household, its resources and its servants which, as a married woman of the urban elite, she might normally expect.' Sarah Salih, 'At home; out of the house', in *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval Women's Writing*, ed. by Carolyn Dinshaw and David Wallace (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp.124-40 (p.124).
[445] Shulamith Shahar, *The Fourth Estate: A history of women in the Middle Ages*, trans. by Chaya Galai (London and New York: Routledge, 1990), p.203.
[446] ffiona Swabey, *Medieval Gentlewoman: Life in a Widow's Household in the Later Middle Ages* (Stroud: Sutton Publishing, 1999) p.159.

Kempe appropriates the symbolism of economic order to express her devotional vocation. The keys simultaneously function as a metaphor of her sanity and worldly responsibility and her status as a mystic.

Having control of the keys before she has fully recovered her wits causes Kempe's maidservants economic concerns that she will recklessly give away the food and drink stored in the buttery: 'for thei seyd sche wold but yeve awey swech good as ther was' (242). For medieval Christians, the appropriate level of charitable giving was of great concern: it was a delicate balancing act between giving away your excess to the needy and retaining enough to sustain yourself and your household.[447] Excessive almsgiving endangered the social order of medieval society. The 1523 publication of John Fitzherbert's manual for husbands and wives, *Book of Husbandry*, instructs readers to only 'gyve to the nedy what thou well may'.[448] John Kempe's compassion and trust in his wife is evident: as the male head of the household he can overrule the concerns of the maidservants and command that Kempe is restored to her position of control as manager of the economic unit of the household. The terms that Kempe uses in her description – 'tendyrnes and compassyon' – present John as her supporter, and by implication suggest that he is endorsing her spiritual experiences, in opposition to the maidservants' distrust of her sanity and financial capabilities. While the keys to the buttery function as an economic symbol, they also have allegorical significance in this episode – they may even be interpreted as a gendered version of St Peter's keys to the Kingdom of Christ – combining the financial and the religious as happens so frequently in the literature studied in this thesis.

Unlike Kempe's prose life-writing, Martha Moulsworth's poetic autobiography does not detail any business ventures of her own. Greer claims that 'Moulsworth wishes to present herself as an outsider in the world of business, a gentlewoman among tradesmen', but I disagree with this view.[449] While Moulsworth certainly attempts to embellish her paternal lineage with gentility, claiming her father was 'of spottles ffame' and 'gentle Birth', her writing showcases the 'business' of her life as daughter, wife, widow, and poet (21-2). With the exception of her calling as a poet, each of these life-stages had economic value for her contemporary society. In

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[447] P.H. Cullum observes the dangers of giving too much: 'Too close an identification with the needs of the poor risked the possibility of stepping from an imagined to a genuine life of poverty, with the concomitant destruction of social hierarchy and indeed of the possibility of fulfilment of the social contract.' P.H. Cullum, 'Gendering charity in medieval hagiography', in *Gender and Holiness: Men, women and saints in late medieval Europe*, ed. by Samantha J.E. Riches and Sarah Salih (London: Routledge, 2002), pp.133-51 (p.142).
[448] John Fitzherbert, *Here begynneth a newe tracte or treatyse moost profytable for all husbandmen* (London: Rycharde Pynson, 1523), fo.lxii^{r}. All references are to this edition of the text. Fitzherbert's instructions for women are also discussed in the Introduction (pp.42-3) and Chapter Two (p.76).
[449] Greer, p.7.

early modern England, a daughter provided the opportunity for her family to gain financially through marriage, a wife oversaw the financial administration of the household, and a widow was able to invest and loan her money as she desired.[450] Vitally, her widowed state provided Moulsworth with the financial freedom and stability which enabled her writing: she did not require the financial aid of a new husband and so was able to use her time as she wished. Moulsworth celebrates the 'business' of her life not only through her accomplished use of the poetic form in its fifty-five rhyming couplets, one for each of her fifty-five years of life, but in reference to her education and 'career' as wife and household manager.

Moulsworth's final husband, Bevill, appears to have been the favourite of her three spouses as with him she 'led an easie darlings life' (66). Part of this enjoyable life was his allowing her to have her 'will in house, in purse in Store', and, as she says, 'what would a woman old or yong have more?' (67-8). Chaucer's Wife of Bath, of course, claims what all women desire is 'sovereynetee' over their husbands.[451] Moulsworth may not have had such complete 'sovereyntee', but she was certainly given control of the household finances and provisions by Bevill. Moulsworth's 'will in house, in purse in Store' recalls Kempe's regaining control of the keys to the buttery. Moulsworth's 'purse' and 'Store' signify the household finances and provisions: the usual domain of an early modern wife. As with Kempe's keys, for Moulsworth the 'store' becomes a metaphor for female agency and happiness within the socially accepted sphere for a wife: the home. Financial and administrative control of the household was a usual wifely role; however, Moulsworth appears to suggest that she did not act as her husband's deputy and did not need to defer to him. Instead, she has *her* 'will', hinting that she achieved something of the control which Alisoun of Bath insists that all wives crave.

Financial independence is shown to be of further importance to Moulsworth when she states her decision not to marry for a fourth time:

> whie should I
> then putt my Widowehodd in jeopardy?
> the Virgins life is gold, as Clarks us tell
> the Widows silvar, I love silvar well. (106-9)

[450] See section (iii) 'Marriage and Money' of the Introduction for the financial implications of pre-modern women's marital status.
[451] Geoffrey Chaucer, 'The Wife of Bath's Tale', in *The Riverside Chaucer*, ed. by Larry D. Benson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), pp.116-22 (p.119, ll.1038-40).

Ending her poem with such a direct statement drives home that Moulsworth values the worldly and spiritual freedom that widowhood has given her. Moulsworth's repetition of 'silvar' highlights her appreciation of the financial benefits of widowhood, and the higher spiritual worth bestowed on widows than wives.[452] Her decision not to marry for the fourth time results from the combined consideration of monetary and devotional wealth. The mirroring of actual and metaphorical 'silvar' exemplifies Moulsworth's ease in combining these two aspects of her personal life and wider society, in contrast to Kempe's struggle to reconcile those in her own, as disclosed by Kempe's rejection of commercial vocations for a life of intense devotion. Moulsworth's syntax and diction combine to illustrate her conflating of mercantile and devotional discourse to portray a satisfied and financially stable woman. While Kempe, too, employs mercantile discourse in her rhetoric, it is always to justify and promote her spirituality, and encourage that of her readers, rather than to express a way of life in which financial and spiritual security co-exist with ease.

Remarriage had financial implications for pre-modern women: a new marriage risked the control of inherited property – from a previous marriage or from her natal family – passing to her new husband, who might not take sufficient care of his wife's wealth.[453] After three marriages, and therefore three inheritances of jointure, Moulsworth was certainly a widow of means.[454] While her reluctance to re-marry could have been related to the love and respect she felt for her last husband, her poem implies that she was reluctant to give up the rights accorded to her by widowhood (106-9). 'Jeopardy' has connotations of financial risk; it is the 'risk of loss, harm, or death', along with a 'position […] in which the chances of winning and losing hang in the balance' (*OED* 3a; 2). For Moulsworth, the business of marriage was economically profitable. Her playful repetition of 'silvar' reveals that a fourth match would gamble her profits and could result in financial and personal loss, since Moulsworth's money would go to her new husband upon their marriage. Her poem suggests that her future wealth hangs in the balance, hinging on her decision of whether to remarry. Therefore, despite Greer's claim,

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[452] See pp.168-9 below for a discussion of Moulsworth's pun and appropriation of patristic teaching of hierarchical differentiation between the heavenly rewards of widows, wives and virgins in this passage.

[453] Barbara J. Todd argues that it 'is possible, but difficult to prove, that seventeenth-century women came to be aware of this implication of matrimony'. Barbara J. Todd, 'The remarrying widow: a stereotype reconsidered', in *Women in English Society 1500-1800*, ed. by Mary Prior (London and New York: Methuen, 1985), pp.54-92 (p.75).

[454] 'Jointure' in early modern England usually referred to the 'annuity arising from a rent charge on specified lands. The cash portion a woman brought into marriage was generally used to buy land to provide and annual income, first to support the new couple and subsequently to support the wife should she survive to become a widow.' Amy Louise Erickson, *Women and Property in Early Modern England* (London and New York: Routledge, 1993; 1995), p.25.

Moulsworth was certainly a businesswoman, albeit in her own household and marriages as opposed to on the commercial market in which Kempe participated.

Moulsworth's writing takes pride in her intellect, in contrast to Kempe who strives to reject her own commercial capabilities and sometime-success by stressing her failures in brewing and milling. Moulsworth explains that she was raised 'In modest chearefullnes, and sad sobrietie', according to the ideals of her contemporary society (28). However, she does not see the use of female minds and voices as sinful or socially problematic. Instead, she sees them as potential evidence of education and skill. She believes that given the chance of university education, women 'would in witt, and tongs surpasse / All art of men thatt is, or ever was' (35-6). According to Anthony Fletcher, after 1660, women such as Bathsua Makin, Elizabeth Elstob and Mary Astell 'argued that women had the capacity to benefit from academic training'.[455] Moulsworth's writing hints that she may have been a precursor of such proto-feminist thinking and was possibly even aware of the emergence of these beliefs in like-minded women. Moulsworth's choice of the word 'tongs' to represent languages highlights the contemporary distrust of female education and speech but twists it into a positive female accomplishment which surpasses that of men. Of course, the idea that female learning could exceed male intelligence was a socially, and therefore financially, subversive suggestion for patriarchal early modern England. Controlled speech formed part of the 'ordinary' early modern woman's 'duty' to 'maintain an absolutely chaste, obedient, silent, and pious private life'.[456] These characteristics of ideal feminine virtue lived on through the medieval period well into the early modern era.

It is clear that Moulsworth and Kempe both place importance upon the financial activities of their younger selves in the written representation of their lives. For Kempe, this is to stress her former sins and emphasise her conversion to a more spiritual life, while for Moulsworth it is to assert her sense of fulfilment, self-worth, and of a life well-lived. The linguistic choices of both authors reveal that their perceptions of self and their relationships with their 'careers' as wives, mothers and Christians were bound up with their understanding of their economic involvement. Their chosen phrasing demonstrates a complex combination of discourses which both women strive to navigate in their writing. Kempe's and Moulsworth's

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[455] Anthony Fletcher, *Gender, Sex and Subordination in England 1500-1800* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1995), p.365.

[456] Betty S. Travitsky, 'Introduction: Placing women in the English Renaissance', in *The Renaissance Englishwomen in Print*, ed. by Anne M. Haselkorn and Betty S. Travitsky (Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1990), pp.3-41 (p.18).

perceptions of themselves and their careers – as businesswomen, learners and wives – were inherently connected to their understanding of their natal family and place in society. This self-awareness was profoundly affected by the ways in which women of their time were expected to dress, behave, speak and spend.[457]

(iv) Fashionable Women

As with her commercial activities, Kempe uses the clothes she wore as a young woman to signify her erroneous pre-occupation with worldly wealth and material goods and highlight the extent of her conversion. Kempe records her response to her husband's criticism of her extravagant clothing, reminding him of his inferior position to that of her father, who had served as chamberlain and was elected mayor of Bishop's Lynn on an impressive five occasions: [458]

> whan hir husbond wold speke to hir for to levyn hir pride, sche answeryd schrewydly and schortly, and seyd that sche was comyn of worthy kenred – hym semyd nevyr for to a weddyd hir – for hir fadyr was sumtyme meyr […] and sythyn he was alderman of the hey Gylde of the Trinyte in N. And therfor sche wold savyn the worschyp of hyr kyndred, whatsoevyr ony man seyd. (263-9)

The youthful Kempe defends her elaborate fashions by claiming she dresses appropriately for the honour, or 'worschyp', of her 'worthy kenred.' She speaks 'schrewydly and schortly'; while we may interpret these adjectives as a sign of her impatience and sharp speech as a 'shrewish' wife, it also implies 'shrewd' business practice and the application of concise, itemised business-speak with which her husband should also be familiar. Margaret Paston's letters showcase her practical written vocabulary, and Kempe's recollection of her conversations with John imply that such shrewd expenditure of vocabulary was also applicable to speech.[459] Kempe and Paston, of course, were near-contemporary members of the East Anglian urban élite – was there a shared thriftiness in language amongst their communities? Like Kempe, Paston was also concerned with the expression of status and identity through the language of

[457] These are all issues which were discussed in the Introduction to this thesis.
[458] John Brunham served as chamberlain in in 1355, 1361 and 1367, and mayor in 1370, 1377, 1378, 1385 and 1391. Goodman, p.49.
[459] See p.89 of the previous chapter for the discussion of Margaret Paston's shrewd expenditure of the written word.

clothing and jewels.[460] Kempe claims that she married beneath herself as John Kempe was not as successful as John Brunham. Isabel Davies suggests that in this episode Kempe informs her husband that he is of lower status than her father in an attempt to 'insist on continuity between her pre- and post-marital status, to try to avoid her own economic and social identity being subsumed by that of her husband.'[461] Indeed, in pre-modern England, a woman took on the social status of her husband, no matter if it was higher or lower than that of her birth.[462] Kempe's use of the verb to 'savyn', or preserve, the reputation of her kin indicates that the young Kempe perceived it her duty to honour her natal family, which she expressed through financial investment in clothing.[463]

Kempe attributes another of the Seven Deadly Sins – envy – to her youthful self: 'Sche had ful greet envye at hir neybowrs, that thei schuld ben arayd so wel as sche. All hyr desyr was for to be worshepd of the pepul' (270-2). Feeling envy if her neighbours were as well-dressed, Kempe reveals her materially competitive nature. Her younger self was certainly guilty of breaking the Commandment not to covet her neighbour's goods (Exodus 20:17). For Kempe, the longing to be admired for her attire is symbolic of her desire for status amongst the ruling mercantile élite of Lynn. Kempe's frequent use of the words 'worshepd' and 'worshepful' throughout the *Boke* illustrates just how important reputation was to her and her contemporary society. To 'worship' something or someone in the Middle Ages was to hold it/them in high esteem and perform a show of respect to bring them honour (*MED* 1a). Interestingly, worship was an act of embellishment to enhance and enrich something: particularly relevant in terms of dress which could be embroidered and adorned with costly decoration such as gold thread, beads and pearls (*MED* 3a). Additionally, numerous professional guild names began with 'Worshipful Company', indicating in this context a group whose members were 'honourable, virtuous' and 'of noble character' as well as 'of high rank'; membership of a company indicated professional status and trustworthiness in trade (*MED* 1a;

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[460] Margaret Paston's letter requesting a suitable necklace from her husband was discussed on pp.92-3.

[461] Isabel Davies, 'Men and Margery: Negotiating Medieval Patriarchy', in *A Companion to the Book of Margery Kempe*, ed. by John H. Arnold and Katherine J. Lewis (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2004), pp.35-54 (p.44).

[462] R.B. Outhwaite, 'Marriage as business: opinions on the rise in aristocratic bridal portions in early modern England', in *Business Life and Public Policy*, ed. by Neil McKendrick and R.B. Outhwaite (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986; 2002), p.32.

[463] A similar understanding of a woman's responsibility to preserve her family's reputation by dressing to reflect their financial and social achievements is seen in the letters of Margaret Paston discussed in Chapter Two, pp.92-3.

6a).[464] It is likely that this commercial context influenced Kempe's choice of vocabulary when discussing her own reputation and that of her highly successful father.

Kempe's detailed descriptions of her attire allow her readers to visualise clearly her elaborate clothing for themselves, whilst appreciating what it would cost; this was not the attire of a brewster or miller:

> sche wold not leevyn hir pride ne hir pompows aray that sche had usyd befortym, neithyr for hyr husbond ne for noon other mannys cownsel […] she weryd gold pypys [thread/wire] on hir hevyd, and hir hodys [hoods] wyth the typettys [long decorative cloth draped from the hood or sleeves] were daggyd [cut decoratively]. Hir clokys [cloaks] also wer daggyd and leyd wyth dyvers colowrs betwen the daggys, that it schuld be the mor staryng to mennys sygth and hirself the mor ben worshepd. (255-62)

Once again Kempe's reference to her desire to be noticed and 'worhshepd' is striking. It is noteworthy that it is specifically male voices whom Kempe records as attempting to moderate her dress: she ignores both her husband and 'other mannys cownsel.' Perhaps Kempe's confessor had warned her against her liking of rich clothing in her youth. Kempe's spending on clothes which were above the Kempes' status exemplified her wifely disobedience, thereby endangering the social order. Kempe emphasises her sinful pride by the additional adjective of 'pompows', meaning 'ostentatious', 'arrogant', and 'pretentious', along with 'excessively rich' (*MED* 1c; 1d). Kempe's use of vocabulary not only demonstrates her moral failings but also hints at the elaborate detail of her clothing, and indeed, as a result, its cost. Kempe's choice of diction makes value judgements on the material goods (her clothing) which have direct implications for her spiritual wealth. The 'gold pypys' worn on her head or in her hair suggests that these were costly items. Women's headdresses were commonly vilified in medieval sermons warning against the spiritual dangers of following fashion.[465] 'Dagging' was a decorative technique which saw geometric shapes cut into the edging of clothing.[466] This wasteful cutting of cloth would not be cost-effective and so the shape, as well as the material, of Kempe's clothes demonstrates their high economic expense: a striking contrast with her re-

[464] For example, The Worshipful Company of Mercers.

[465] G.R. Owst observes that in the sermons of the Middle Ages, congregations were warned that women who followed fashion were more likely to be guilty of lechery as well as pride: too much of a concern with appearance put the soul in peril. G.R. Owst, *Literature and Pulpit in Medieval England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1933), pp.390-404.

[466] Gale R. Owen-Crocker, 'Dagging', in *Encyclopaedia of Dress and Textiles in the British Isles c.440-1450*, ed. by Gale R. Owen-Crocker, Elizabeth Coatsworth and Maria Hayward (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2012), p.167.

use of the malt sack mentioned above.[467] Tippets would also be seen as wasteful as they were a 'decorative hanging appendage extending from the back of the hood or the end of a sleeve', and therefore did not have any practical function.[468] The details of Kempe's clothing speak of economic extravagance, which, combined with the implication that she dressed in such a way for the sinful motive of attracting the attention of 'mennys sygth', is intended to encourage the disapproval of her readers and vindicate the white clothing of her mature years. Kempe explains that her clothes were of 'dyvers colowrs', again suggesting financial outlay.[469] Kempe's careful detailing of her apparel, and the linguistic choices she makes in doing so, reveals that the social value placed on dress by her younger self reduced her spiritual worth. In Kempe's writing, clothes function as a combined measure of economic and spiritual (im)moderation.

The 1422 treatise, *A Revelation of Purgatory*, possibly written by an anchoress, depicts the torture of a nun – Margaret – in Purgatory because of her proud dressing:

> I saw Margarete in hir werste clothes as scho wente one erthe and in þe gretteste fyre of thir þe whilke I sawe by-fore in purgatorye. And me thoghte I sawe abowte hir seuene deuylles, and one of þame clede hir with a longe gowne and a long trayle folowyng hir, and it was full of scharpe hukes with-inne. And þe gowne and þe hukes me thoghte were alle rede fyre. And þan þe same deuell tok wormes and pykk [pitch] and tarre and made lokeds [ringlets] and sett þame appone hir hede. And he toke a grete longe neddir [adder] and putt all abowte hir hede, and þat me þoghte hissed in hir hede as it had bene hote-brynnyng iryne in þe cold water.[470]

Margaret is dressed by devils in clothing which parodies the extravagant dress so enjoyed by the young Kempe. The long gown and trail with hooks of fire could easily replace Kempe's outfits with the dagged edges in its wasteful use of material. The worms, pitch and tar replace the golden wire adorning Kempe's hair, and the hissing adder is wound around Margaret's head in painful mockery of the fashionable hood. This torture could not be more appropriate for

[467] Owen-Crocker, 'Dagging', p.167.
[468] Robin Netherton, 'Tippet', in Owen-Crocker et. al., p.585.
[469] Hazel Uzzell explains the origins of dyes and the process of colouring material in the medieval period. Dyes in the Middle Ages 'were derived from minerals, insects, shell-fish, lichens and fungi.' Interestingly, Uzzell notes that there were several dyeing businesses in Norwich in the later Middle Ages thanks to its position on the River Wensum. Perhaps Lynn's proximity to these dye works in Norwich allowed Kempe to engage in shopping for a variety of coloured cloth, and gave her, and her contemporaries, the knowledge to recognise expensive clothing more readily. Hazel Uzzell, 'Dyeing', in Owen-Crocker et. al., pp.175-80. Women's wills from this period give evidence of clothes being regarded as valuable economic assets as they bequeathed them as legacies to their relatives, friends and servants (see Chapter Four, pp.222-4).
[470] 'A Revelation of Purgatory', in *A Revelation of Purgatory*, ed. by Liz Herbert McAvoy (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2017), pp.72-155 (pp.101-2, ll.203-13). All references are to this edition, hereafter cited by line number.

someone guilty of the sin of pride. Perhaps it is for fear of a similar fate in Purgatory that, following the instructions of Christ, Kempe renounces her elaborate attire in favour of white clothing, a decision which connects her to the esteemed Mary of Oignies who wore a white woollen mantle and coat.[471]

Kempe juxtaposes the colourful dressing of her worldly youth with the austere white clothing of her converted holy self. As she develops her relationship with Christ and her understanding of her devotional vocation, so too her clothing alters. Clothing becomes a symbol of her devotional status rather than the social status of her family. In addition to symbolising virginity, white dress also indicated 'martyrdom, special virtue or holiness'.[472] Undoubtedly, this combination of meanings is alluded to in Kempe's references to her white garments. Carmelite nuns wore white habits, and it is possible that Kempe chose to align herself with this community of holy women, intensifying her experience of her ideal ascetic life, which, as a wife and mother, she was unable to achieve entirely. Her change in style, material and colour of clothing was a way to appropriate the trappings of a devotional ambition she was never able to fully attain. Kempe justifies her white clothing by claiming it was the will of Christ that she dressed in such a way, utilising dialogue to vindicate her choices: 'I wyl that thu were clothys of whyte and non other colowr' (1018-9). Just as Kempe's extravagant clothing attracted negative comments and judgement from her contemporaries, so too do her white clothes. The Mayor of Leicester fears Kempe's white clothing as a sign of her power to disrupt the social, and therefore economic, order of his town: 'I wil wetyn why thow gost in white clothys, for I trowe thow art comyn hedyr to han awey owr wyvys fro us and ledyn hem wyth the' (3840-2). In a society in which the household functioned as an economic unit symbolic of the town, and indeed state, in miniature, the Mayor's question indicates the disruptive impact a disobedient woman could have. The Mayor, as the head of patriarchal power in his domain, fears that Kempe will entice the wives of his fellow élite, her social equals, away from their mercantile and civic lives towards an alternative way of life in devotion, free from the responsibilities of wifehood and motherhood. As the coloured clothes of her youth are a device to signify her sinful excess and pride, so the white clothes of her converted years become a trope to exemplify her piety, purity and saintliness.

Kempe's decision to wear only white would in fact incur financial cost as she would need to purchase new garments and could not continue to wear her normal attire; there may

[471] Wilson, p.170.
[472] Wilson, p.170.

also be increased laundry costs as she could not risk the transfer of colours from John's garments tainting her white dress. Ironically, by attempting to renounce her worldly life in favour of a spiritual one, Kempe would in fact have been required to make significant financial outlay to invest in the reputation of holy woman to which she aspired. Kempe records contemporary judgement which sees a hierarchy of holiness in much the same way as a hierarchy of economic and social status may be understood. She encounters clerical distrust of her white clothes in the Archbishop of York: '"Why gost thu in white? Art thu a mayden?" Sche, knelyng on hir knes befor hym, seyd: "Nay, ser, I am no mayden; I am a wife"' (4130-2). In this episode, Kempe's white clothing leads onlookers to assume she is a virgin and contributes to the accusations that she is 'a fals heretyke' (4134). In Kempe's writing, as in her life, she uses her clothing as a rhetorical device to signify first her sinfulness, and later her piety, but her extremity in both exposes the difficulty faced by a medieval woman whose economic investment in clothes stepped outside the status quo.

Martha Moulsworth does not discuss her clothing or current trends; unlike Kempe, she did not need to present herself as a proud consumer of fashion who converted to a spiritual career. She does, however, appropriate the discourse of extravagant dress to her discussion of her own mental accomplishments: 'Beyond my sex and kind / he did with learning Lattin decke [my] mind' (29-30). Moulsworth claims that her father 'bedecked' her mind by teaching her Latin, adding a precious and valuable trait to his daughter's intellectual repertoire; unfortunately, as will be discussed in a later section of this chapter, it was a trait whose value her society failed to appreciate.[473] 'Decke' implies an attractive adornment but carried the additional early modern meaning (now obsolete) 'to equip' (*OED* 3). Moulsworth credits her father with beautifully furnishing her with intellectual ornament. Ironically, however, this mental 'equipment' failed to be of use in her marital career (37-8). Moulsworth appears to have employed poetic licence in representing her father; she was aged only two and a half when he died, and so it is extremely unlikely that he would have been able to teach his daughter Latin. It is plausible, however, that Dorsett left instructions for his daughter's education, and so could, indirectly, have bejewelled her mind with the knowledge of Latin.

For Moulsworth, like Kempe, clothing and jewellery are symbolic of personal achievements. Her mention of her father's scarlet robe signifies his clerical vocation (25). Moulsworth also refers to the symbol of wedlock: the wedding ring. She explains that 'thrice

[473] See section (vi) of this chapter, 'Mercantile Marriage'.

this Left' hand has been adorned with 'pledged ringe' (44). Not only would these rings be of monetary value, made of precious metals and possibly containing diamonds like those of Lady Katherine Barnardiston described in her 1633 will, but they would symbolise the legal and sacred bond between wife and husband.[474] Moulsworth's wedding rings also symbolised her status as a sexually active woman. Kempe may have owned a wedding ring as well, although she does not record one in her *Boke*. Kempe does, however, refer to a ring engraved with 'Jhesus est amor meus', likely to signify her vow of chastity and metaphorical marriage to the Godhead (2541-9). The rings owned by the two authors denote their different life-choices. Moulsworth's worldly marriages, as represented by her wedding rings, form the life-pattern with which her writing is concerned, while Kempe's most important marriage was that to Christ, and the ring she records is representative of her own primary vocation: her devotion.

Unlike Kempe, Moulsworth does not strive to return to her virgin status, nor does she mention altering her clothes to represent widowhood or chastity. Instead, she refers to the loss of her virgin status without shame: 'I have longe since Bid virgin life ffarewell' (42). Moulsworth appears contented with her past status as a sexually active wife, recalling 'three husbands me, and I have them enjoyde / Nor I by them, nor they by me annoyde' (45-6). Her use of metre, rhyme and mirroring syntax convey her sense of satisfaction. She fondly remembers three harmonious marriages, unlike the acrimonious relationship of the older Margery and John Kempe. Moulsworth seems comfortable with her sexual activity; it does not pose a problem to her spirituality as it does for Kempe.[475]

Kempe and Moulsworth both understand clothing and jewellery as items which represent an individual to their wider society. In Kempe's text this is problematic as she struggles to extricate herself from the money-centred business world of Lynn, and from a sexual relationship with John, to pursue a devotional career as mystic and pilgrim. Moulsworth, on the other hand, expends fewer words and smaller space on concerns of clothing and appearance, using them to signify pride in her father, in herself and in her husbands. The crucial difference between Kempe and Moulsworth is that Kempe fights against the society whose adornments define her, whilst Moulsworth comfortably accepts these. Kempe's pride is

[474] See pp.224-5 of Chapter Four for a discussion of Barnardiston's bequests of her wedding rings.
[475] This will be discussed further in section (vi) of this chapter headed 'Mercantile marriage'. Moulsworth affectionately remembers her husbands as 'all lovely, lovinge all', with particular reference made to the good looks of her final husband, Bevill, stating 'such comlines in age we seldome ffind' (47; 58). Moulsworth's understanding of her spiritual status as a wife, and then widow, is analysed further on pp.174-5 of this chapter.

straightforwardly sinful. In contrast, Moulsworth's is not a sinful pride, but a justified appreciation of her lineage and the position that her marriages have given her. Kempe's autobiographical writing is primarily concerned with her spiritual conversion, and yet it is inseparable from her life in the mercantile town of Lynn. In Moulsworth's writing, the worldly and the spiritual sit comfortably side by side.

Clothes and jewellery become alternative texts for Kempe and Moulsworth to symbolically express their life choices within their autobiographical writings. The emblematic use of clothing and jewellery by both authors is connected to their understanding of their spirituality and relationship with the divine. The following section will discuss this further by analysing their appropriation of mercantile and fiscal discourse to their devotional lives.

(v) Fiscal Devotion

Historians have acknowledged the importance and slipperiness of language in economic history; the same is true of fiscal language used in a literary context. M.M. Postan has noted that the terminology of business used by merchants in the Middle Ages is often difficult to define, with words having a 'wide and vague sense.'[476] This fluidity of meaning is exploited by Kempe, who uses the fiscal term of 'chefsyawns' (trust) both in relation to the will of God, and in its more usual context of financial loan. When on their way to Norway, Kempe and her fellow pilgrims sailed amid 'stormys and tempestys' so violent that they 'wendyn alle to ben perischyd' (7711-2). Kempe writes that the crew and passengers lost control of the ship: 'The tempestys weryn so grevows and hedows that thei myth not rewlyn ne governe her ship' (7713-4). The only hope they had, in Kempe's opinion, was to pray to God for salvation from danger, and it is in this passage that she adopts economic language to suggest her plan:

> Thei cowde no bettyr chefsyawns than comendyn hemself and her ship to the governawns of owr Lord; thei left her craft and her cunnyng and leet owr Lord dryvyn hem wher he wolde. The seyd creatur had sorwe and care inow; hir thowt sche had nevyr so mech beforn. Sche cryid to owr Lord for mercy and preservyng of hir and alle hir felaschep. (7714-9)

Kempe relates her fear when the crew abandon their 'craft' and 'cunnyng' – skill and knowledge – leaving the fate of the ship to the 'governawns' of God. Kempe's choice of

[476] M.M. Postan, *Medieval Trade and Finance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973), p.88.

language demonstrates her awareness of the specialised skills of differing trades – she previously referred to her 'cunnyng' of brewing.[477] Kempe and her readers would be familiar with the biblical story of Christ's disciples' perilous journey on the sea of Galilee, during which he calms their fears of the storm and delivers their ship safely to land (John 6:16-21).[478] Kempe's use of biblical intertextuality works to highlight the grace accorded to her by Christ as she aligns herself and the ship in which she travels to that of the disciples. 'Governawns' has obvious connotations of civic rule but had further meanings in the Middle Ages. It could refer to 'determining influence over events', and, fascinatingly, the 'piloting of a ship' (*MED* 2a; 5b). Of course, in this episode the 'governawns' given to God is the determining influence over events and the metaphorical piloting of the ship to safety. It is likely, however, that, living in the port of Lynn, Kempe was familiar with its nautical meaning and the severe financial consequences of the failure of such seafaring 'governawns'. Her choice of diction was evidently linked to and influenced by the situation she chose to describe.

'Chefsyawns', as it appears in the beginning of Kempe's account of the storm, is glossed by Barry Windeatt as 'stratagem', but the *MED* provides more expansive definitions of the word.[479] It could mean the fulfilment of an enterprise, prosperity in relation to God, or atonement for sins (*MED* 1a; b). Further meanings include 'profit', 'sustenance', 'provisions', 'support', 'protection' and 'relief' (*MED* 2; 3; 4). Finally, it could refer to 'the borrowing of money' (*MED* 5). Roger Ladd adds to the many connotations of 'chevisaunce' when he makes the link between business and sin, calling it 'a simple euphemism for usury.'[480] While I agree with Windeatt that Kempe does intend the meaning of a stratagem for attempting to get out of danger, and indeed uses it to emphasise the crew and passengers' inability to save themselves from the storm, I also believe that she will have been aware of the other connotations and meanings of 'chefsyawns'.[481] As the product of a mercantile family and community, and businesswoman herself, Kempe must have been familiar with the practice of obtaining credit. However, she removes the sinful undertones of usury and endows 'chefsyawns' with virtue. The religious connotations of 'chefsyawns' are of importance here given the context of the

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[477] Kempe's 'cunnyng' of brewing was discussed above on p.138.
[478] It is also likely that living in the busy trading port town of Lynn, she would be accustomed to hearing stories of tragedy at sea, as well as being aware of the necessity of skilled sailors.
[479] Windeatt, note to line 7714, p.396.
[480] Ladd, p.17. Likewise, Jill Mann notes Chaucer's use of 'chevyssaunce' to 'suggest shady dealings', which she claims was a 'widespread' connotation in the Middle Ages. Jill Mann, *Chaucer and Medieval Estates Satire: The Literature of Social Classes and the General Prologue to the Canterbury Tales* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973), p.100.
[481] See also, Hsy, p.147.

episode, and its purpose to highlight the grace, or indeed credit, that Kempe receives from God in the ship's safe delivery thanks to her prayers: they docked safely in Norway on Good Friday (7721-60). David Wallace has noted that 'movement between commercial and religious lexicons is one of the most striking features of late medieval European literature.'[482] Kempe's conflating of the two discourses shows her to be rooted within this contemporary context and highlights the extent to which she and her writing were products of both her mercantile and spiritual society: neither can be entirely separated from the other. Significantly, as a woman, Kempe herself could not be part of the official fraternities of commercial or clerical society, and yet she takes these discourses for her own to give value to her lived and written experiences. Jonathan Hsy has shown that, when appealing to the Divine, Kempe utilises 'code-switching into a Francophone business register' that 'readily evokes a pragmatic language-world that would have been not only familiar to merchant-class Margery but also readily recognizable to Kempe's own urban peers.'[483] These complex linguistic choices with numerous connotations of business could signify Kempe's careful employment of a discourse enjoyed and shared by her anticipated audience, giving spiritual value to the vocabulary of her contemporary townsfolk as well as her own devotional experience.

Throughout the *Boke*, Kempe records transactions in which she receives monetary payment in exchange for prayers, revealing the close relationship between devotion and finance in her contemporary society. For example, Kempe reports that, when 'sche toke hir leve of the Bysshop of Lyncolne', he gave her 'xxvi schelyngys and viii pens to byen hyr clothyng wyth and for to prey for hym' (1138-40). Goodman dates this exchange to 1413, at which time this would be enough money to pay a craftsman in the building trade for sixty-six days, demonstrating the value placed on Kempe's prayers by the cleric.[484] In her detailed recording of the money she receives, twenty-six shillings and eight pence, she echoes the book-keeping of a businesswoman and household manager. Costs and payments are meticulously documented in the accounts of Lady Alice de Bryene (1412-13) and are frequently found in the letters of the Paston women analysed in the previous chapter, implying that the financial, managerial role women held in their households influenced their writing in genres beyond accounts and administrative documents. Of course, Kempe had been both businesswoman and household manager in her youth, as her *Boke* reveals. Familiarity with numbers and money spills over into Kempe's display of personal devotion and clerical validation in her writing.

[482] Wallace, p.93.
[483] Hsy, p.155.
[484] Goodman, p.xiii.

Frustratingly, it is unclear how much of the payment that Kempe received from the Bishop was intended for clothing, and how much was intended as payment for prayers.[485] Kempe's pious reputation is nevertheless very much an asset to be traded upon to obtain those items necessary to survive. Exchanges such as this one work as rhetorical evidence to give Kempe religious credence and value while providing an insight into the ways in which a holy woman could finance herself. By noting the monetary amounts that she receives, Kempe reveals to her readers that her spirituality is a commodity of high financial value, thereby bolstering her reputation, and by implication, increasing this value further in an attempt to manipulate the commercial practice of 'supply and demand'. Her close relationship with Christ provides her with the skills necessary to earn earthly wages, but she can never be entirely free of her entrepreneurial past.

Further to the financial aspects of her devotion, Kempe adopts remarkable legal discourse in her representation of her relationship with Christ: 'Lord, sythen thow hast foryovyn me my synne, I make the myn executor of alle the god werkys that thow werkyst in me' (633-5). The conspicuous language of will-writing is used by Kempe to exemplify her trust in Christ. This quotation also demonstrates the reciprocal nature of their relationship. It is because Christ has forgiven Kempe's sins that she desires to make him the executor of her good works. To 'execute' meant both to carry out a request or instruction and to fulfil the will of God (*MED* 1; 2). Kempe's use of 'executor' is appropriate to her fiscal roots and illustrates her devotional reliance on the figure of Christ to ensure that she continues to carry out pious works. As noted in Chapter Four, pre-modern women often chose executors from their networks of family and acquaintances with whom they had close relationships.[486] Kempe adapts this to her closest relationship: that with Christ.

Kempe presents herself as both a bride and daughter of Christ. She records his words in their dialogue:

> I take the, Margery, for my weddyd wife, for fayrar, for fowelar, for richer, for powerar, so that thu be buxom and bonyr to do what I byd the do. For, dowtyr, ther was nevyr

[485] At other points in the narrative, Kempe records precise transactions for her spiritual intercession. Kempe writes that, 'aftyrwarde ther cam a woman, a good frend to this creatur, and yaf hyr vii marke for sche shulde prey for hir whan that sche come to Seynt Jamys' (3501-3). Here, we have a definite transaction of money in direct payment for prayers. Unlike the exchange with the Bishop of Lincoln, Kempe details the amount paid specifically for prayer. Seven marks in c.1417 is equal to over £2,000 today and could buy Kempe three horses: a large sum. The anonymous woman is shown to place high financial investment in the ability of Kempe's prayers to aid the soul.
[486] See, for example, Martha Moulsworth's appointment of her step-daughter as her sole executor, discussed on pp.218-9.

> childe so buxom to the modyr as I schal be to the, both in wel and in wo, to help the and comfort the. And therto I make the suryte. (2853-7)

This exchange between Christ and Kempe demonstrates her familiarity with the wording and structure of the medieval marriage vows. She appropriates the contract binding man and woman to her religious understanding: she creates a spiritually binding contract between herself and Christ. Importantly, this contract is presented as mutually dependent: both Christ and Kempe will be 'buxom', or obedient, to the other, unlike the promise between earthly husband and wife, when only the wife vowed to be obedient. The riches that Christ and Margery vow to share are those of spirituality and obedience to God, while the poverty they could endure are temptations to sin. Kempe reworks the recognisable marriage ceremony into a rhetorical device to emphasise the grace bestowed on her by Christ.

Kempe reports that Christ accepts the appointment as her executor: 'I schal be a trew executor to the and fulfyllyn all thi wylle, and for thi gret charyte that thow hast to comfortyn thin even-Cristen, thu schalt have dubbyl reward in hevyn' (641-3). Again, their relationship is depicted as reciprocal as Christ promises to be a true executor, fulfilling her desires, and rewarding her further for her care for her fellow Christians. This metaphorical enaction of the executor's obligation to fulfil the wishes of a testator reveals that the relationship between Christ and Kempe is one of an equal business partnership rather than a hierarchical relationship between deity and believer, or man and woman. Of course, in a real, legal will there is no recording of the executor's vocal promise to carry out the testator's wishes.[487] Kempe conflates the genre of the will with that of hagiography to showcase her spirituality and favoured position of grace. She reworks the social and legal obligations of the will contract to stress her special relationship with Christ, and therefore emphasise her sanctity. Peter Coss describes fifteenth-century England as 'a world where contracts and legal obligations dominated.'[488] If this were the case, it is hardly surprising, but no less important to recognise that a woman of the mercantile élite of a commercial town would internalise such fiscal discourses and appropriate them to her life-writing in a way that suited her ultimately spiritual purpose. As in the letters of the Thynne women discussed in Chapter Two, Kempe's lexical choices fluctuate between the financial and legal to represent herself as the innocent and virtuous party whom the reader should admire.

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[487] If such acceptance is recorded, it is not until probate is granted and the testator is deceased. Instead, as the following chapter will demonstrate, testators frequently employ rhetorical strategies to ensure obedience.
[488] Peter Coss, 'An age of deference', in Horrox and Ormrod, p.43.

By applying legal terms to her devotional practices, Kempe creates a position of authority for herself which was otherwise denied to married women in her contemporary society. A wife required her husband's permission to write her will, 'despite the fact it was allegedly sinful to die intestate.'[489] Kempe notes that her husband always had 'tendyrnes and compassyon of hir', and so it is likely that John would agree to his wife's writing of a will (244). Katherine J. Lewis believes that Kempe was likely to have made a legal will during the serious illness that followed her first experience of childbirth and that this knowledge enabled the employment of the will 'formula when it suited the autobiographic purposes of her later life.'[490] Kempe records the illness that began her conversion, telling readers that she believed she would not live and so 'sent for hyr gostly fadyr' to make her final confession. It is probable that she ordered a will to prepare for death as she readied her soul to enter the afterlife (180-2). Kempe's worldly experience may have equipped her with the legal, as well as financial, discourse necessary to write her life's text as an alternative will.[491] The next chapter of this thesis examines pre-modern women's wills and reveals that female testators' bequests usually include provision for the spiritual benefit of themselves and their wide networks of kin.[492] Kempe's *Boke* functions in a similar manner: the recording of her extensive pilgrimages, visions and social interactions attempt to vindicate her way of life while providing spiritual edification (and perhaps an alternative life-course for female contemporaries to emulate). The 'death' of the old Kempe begun by her near-fatal illness after her first experience of childbirth leads to the 're-birth' of the new, pious Kempe as the mystic whose story the *Boke* tells. Indeed, Nona Fienberg argues that, following her years of childrearing, Kempe 'enacts her right to produce herself' in her maturity.[493]

The new version of herself which Kempe produces does not relinquish the fiscal language of her upbringing. Her new self is centred on her relationship with the Godhead and the special favour she receives from Christ, which is relayed in vocabulary and imagery echoing the creditor-debtor relationship: 'Dowtyr, thow schalt han […] gret mede and […] gret reward wyth me in hevyn for thi good servyse' (6844-5). 'Mede' meant both monetary wages

[489] Dyan Elliott, 'Marriage', in *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval Women's Writing*, ed. by Carolyn Dinshaw and David Wallace (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp.40-57 (p.44). See Chapter Four of this thesis for more on pre-modern women's wills.
[490] Katherine J. Lewis, 'Women, Testamentary Discourse and Life-Writing in Later Medieval England', in *Medieval Women and the Law*, ed. by Noël James Menuge (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2000), pp.57-75 (p.66).
[491] The Codicil briefly looks at early modern women's appropriation of aspects of the will to their literary writings.
[492] See section (ii) 'Religious Networks' of Chapter Four.
[493] Nona Fienberg, 'Thematics of Value in "The Book of Margery Kempe"', *Modern Philology*, 87.2 (1989), 132-41 (p.137).

and spiritual reward, showing Kempe's understanding of the various meanings of mercantile terms and the possibility of appropriating these to devotion (*MED* 1a; 2). In the parable of the vineyard, the Bible appropriates commercial discourse to teach the lesson of spiritual reward.[494] As a frequent member of the congregation at her parish church, Kempe would have been familiar with this parable and so it would come as second nature to her to juxtapose divine love and the discourse of waged workers.[495]

Whilst Martha Moulsworth's autobiographical writing is less explicitly spiritual than Margery Kempe's *Boke* – her purpose was not to showcase her piety or special favour – there is evidence of her devotion throughout. Particularly interesting is her measurement of time using both the seasonal and Church calendars with the precision of book-keeping, to bring order to the distressing successive deaths of three husbands and at least three children. Moulsworth observes that, 'My husbands all on holly dayes did die' (73). Her 'first knott', or marriage, to Nicolas Prynne, 'held five years' until he died on 'Saint Stevens ffeast' (53; 78). Her 'second bond tenn years nine months did last' with Thomas Thorowgood, who died 'on a double sainted day / To Jude, and Symon' (55; 81-2). Her third and final marriage to Bevill Moulsworth lasted 'eleven years, and eight months' until his passing 'on Saint Mathias day' (63; 89). Sara Heller Mendelson has noted the focus of Stuart women's memoirs on the 'portrayal of the biological cycle of married life', and the concern with birth, illness and death in these texts.[496] Moulsworth's concise poem is no exception, but she appears to take particular comfort in numbers, making sense of events by marking their dates and times. In doing so, her autobiographical poem adapts the household book or diary used by pre-modern women to record important events, guests and expenditure in their daily financial administration.[497]

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[494] As discussed in the Introduction, p.25. The parable teaches that no matter how long a Christian has laboured for devotion, the same wages of grace will be offered equally to all the redeemed (Matthew 20:1-16). The fourteenth-century anonymous poem 'Pearl' adopts the parable of the vineyard to teach the importance of pure devotion. 'Pearl', in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, Pearl, Cleanness, Patience*, ed. by J.J. Anderson (London: Everyman, 1996), pp.1-46.

[495] As mentioned in the Introduction to this thesis, Liz Herbert McAvoy has noted the use of financial terms in devotional writing by medieval women. See Liz Herbert McAvoy, ''And Thou, to Whom This Booke Shall Come': Julian of Norwich and Her Audience, Past, Present and Future', in *Approaching Medieval English Anchoritic and Mystical Texts*, ed. by Dee Dyas, Valerie Edden and Roger Ellis (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2005), pp.101-13

[496] Sara Heller Mendelson, 'Stuart women's diaries and occasional memoirs', in *Women in English Society 1500-1800*, ed. by Mary Prior (London and New York: Methuen, 1985), pp.181-210 (p.195).

[497] One such book (mentioned in the Introduction on p.13) is Magdalen Herbert's 1601 *Kitchin Booke* which records the members of her household and the names and professions of the diners at each meal on a daily basis, alongside the expenses of food, clothing and books. The manuscript of Magdalen Herbert is held in the private collection of John Herbert, Earl of Powys who granted access by kind permission.

Moulsworth's title of 'Memorandum' further emphasises the business-like book-keeping of her writing.[498]

Moulsworth's use of the saints' days to seek patterns in death follows the Church calendar according to the *Book of Common Prayer* (1599), demonstrating that her use of such an order conforms to the state-prescribed liturgical year.[499] She appears to take comfort in the fact that her husbands all died on holy days, and she expresses this through the metaphor of death as a feast-day and life as a laborious toil: 'This life is worke-day even att the Best / butt christian death, an holly day of Rest' (74-5). 'Worke-day' is presumably a form of 'workaday', meaning ordinary, routine, and a day on which one is employed, as opposed to a holiday, holy day or day of rest (*OED* A; B). Moulsworth suggests that life on earth is full of labour and toil (both spiritual and physical), and death should be welcomed as the eternal rest for the soul, rather than excessively mourned. Such linguistic choices epitomise Moulsworth's appropriation of devotional and financial hierarchies to represent her understanding of her own life, and of the relationships which play a defining role in her identity.

Further to the book-keeping precision of her notation of saints' days, Moulsworth's consolation in patterns and mirroring portrays a fondness for neatness reminiscent of administrative organisation. In describing her marriage to Bevill, she observes, 'third wife I was to him, as he to me / third husband was, in number we agree' (61-2). This mirrored numbering suggests that Moulsworth pictured an itemised list, or ledger, in which the experiences of herself and her husbands were tallied up. Her use of mirroring continues to display numbers as a source of comfort:

> Two years Almost outwearinge since he died
> And yett, and yett my tears ffor him nott dried
> I by the ffirst, and last some Issue had
> butt roote, and ffruite is dead, which makes me sad (69-72).

Acutely aware of how much time has passed without Bevill, Moulsworth's stuttering repetition of 'yett, and yett' emphasises the love and emotion she feels. Lamenting the loss of her children, the poignant rhyming symmetry of 'roote, and ffruite' exposes Moulsworth as a childless widow. In fitting the deaths of her husbands and children into constricted, numerically

[498] See p.134 for the discussion of Moulsworth's choice of title.
[499] Mary Ellen Lamb, 'The Poem as a Clock: Martha Moulsworth Tells Time Three Ways', in Evans and Little, p.95; Greer, p.6.

ordered, poetic and historical time, as well as the rhythms of the devotional year, Moulsworth creates for herself an alternative worship that is consolatory within conformity.

The ordered symmetry of the form of Moulsworth's poetry can be understood as an act of worship to glorify God; it is as a child of God that she has the opportunity and ability to write. She describes her parents' rush to baptise her immediately after birth:

> In carnall state of sin originall
> I did nott stay one whole day naturall
> The seale of grace in Sacramentall water
> so soone had I, so soone become the daughter
> of earthly parents, and of heavenlie ffather
> some christen late for state, the wiser rather. (11-16)

Moulsworth's poem portrays the fragility of life during childbirth for early modern mothers and their babies. Indeed, since the Middle Ages, midwives were authorised in emergencies to baptise any baby they did not believe would survive long enough to be baptised by a priest or male member of the Church. A man, of course, was not permitted to enter the birthing chamber, and baptism was the only way to prevent condemning an infant to eternal damnation: it simply could not be allowed to die without being baptised.[500] Moulsworth grounds her writing within very real devotional practice despite also being heavy with worldly concerns: in the lives of early modern women, it is impossible to separate the two.

Moulsworth's marginal note at the beginning of the 'Memorandum' states 'my muse is a tell clocke, and echoeth everie stroke wth a coupled rhyme' (126). The image and sound of a ticking clock is conjured; the rhyming couplets mimic the neat procession of each stroke of the second hand as time – and life – progresses. Inspired by the passing of time and of her life, Moulsworth gives life to her verse; by doing so, she makes herself and those she commemorates in her writing immortal. Specifically, a 'tell-clock' is a 'a person who marks time', a fitting description for Moulsworth herself (*OED* 1a). 'Tell' also means 'to mention numerically, to count, reckon' and 'count out (pieces of money) in payment' (*OED* 17a; 18b).[501] Moulsworth uses numbers and patterns to bring order to what must have seemed an uncertain and disordered world. Her poetic persona is very much a woman who is a mistress

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[500] See Alice Clark, *Working Life of Women in the Seventeenth Century* with a new introduction by Amy Louise Erickson (London and New York: Routledge, 1919, reprinted in 1992) pp.277-8.
[501] See Appendix One for more definitions.

of mercantile thinking. Moulsworth's reference to her 'muse' as a tell-clock rather than the beautiful woman of classical tradition redefines and updates the literary trope in a way suitable for her numerically ordered intelligence. Kempe appropriates the language of business to her understanding of her relationship with the Divine, whilst Moulsworth applies the mathematical order of book-keeping along with the order of the Church calendar to the chaotic and unpredictable world of human life. Both women combine familiar discourses to create their own unique strategy with which to make sense of their experiences.

As Kempe draws on the examples of earlier religious women, so Moulsworth gives herself a spiritual value through connecting herself to the biblical Martha:

> My name was Martha, Martha took much payne
> our Saviour christ her guesse to entertayne
> God gyve me grace my Inward house to dight
> that he with me may supp, and stay all night. (17-20)

The biblical Martha is the model of the active spiritual life, in contrast to her sister Mary's contemplative spirituality (Luke 10:38-42; John 11:20). Through her mirroring of Martha, Moulsworth gives herself Christian value through her household management, of which economic activities formed a significant part. Christ is presented as a houseguest for Moulsworth to cater for, and her soul is her 'Inward house' or estate to manage. Moulsworth's active life as a wife protects her from the sin of idleness or sloth, and she appropriates domestic management to her devotion to feel closer to Christ. Idleness in devotion is as dangerous to the soul as idleness towards finances is to worldly survival.[502] Like Kempe, Moulsworth uses her relationship with Christ to vindicate her chosen life-course. Unlike Kempe, however, Moulsworth's text does not imply that she is ashamed of her worldly life as a wife and mother; instead, she uses the biblical precedent to demonstrate that her active life is as important and as spiritually valid as the contemplative alternative. The genres used by both authors disclose their familiarity with the administration of daily life as it influences their recording of dates, events and financial transactions in relation to their piety. Kempe's *Boke* capitalises on legal terminology and processes in her depiction of her relationship with Christ whereas Moulsworth's poetry relies heavily on numerical symmetry and patterns to invest life with spiritual worth.

[502] See 'Codicil' for a discussion of idleness in Isabella Whitney's 'Wyll', p.263.

(vi) Mercantile Marriage

As well as giving credit to their chosen ways of life through expressing their relationships with the Divine in terms relevant to their mercantile societies, Kempe and Moulsworth represent their marital relationships through recourse to financial practice and discourse.

In writing about her marriage to John, Kempe represents herself as a commodity to be purchased, recalling Margery Brews's self-commodifying in her letter analysed in the previous chapter.[503] This thesis proves Brian Gastle's argument that 'one of the most common areas in which we can see [medieval] women's sense of themselves as merchants developing, was the commodification of the body' to be an accurate assertion.[504] Kempe's negotiation with John, leading to their agreement to live chastely, reads like the bargaining between two business associates. This prolonged discussion between the Kempes occurs as she desires to pursue her spiritual calling and embark on pilgrimages, fearing that their sexual activity has damaged her relationship with Christ, while John desires his wife to remain at home to continue to fulfil her marriage vows and the marital debt.[505] The medieval guide to women's medicine, now known as the *Trotula,* refers to the sexual act between wife and husband as 'carnal commerce', and claims that intercourse is required for the health and well-being of women.[506] The use of economic terms in both religious and medical discourses to describe the sexual act suggests that it was understood as an exchange between wife and husband from which both could profit, providing satisfaction, ensuring spiritual and physical health, and producing children. Consequently, it is no surprise that Kempe's *Boke* shows her attempting to renegotiate this sexual contract to meet her own desired end of a chaste life with the freedom to go on pilgrimage, without the potential of further pregnancies and the ties of wifehood to keep her at home. In contrast to Chaucer's Wife of Bath, Kempe wants to withhold 'the dette of matrimony', for spiritual, rather than monetary profit (347).[507]

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[503] See pp.110-1 for this analysis.
[504] Brian Gastle, 'Breaking the Stained Glass Ceiling: Mercantile Authority, Margaret Paston, and Margery Kempe', *Studies in the Literary Imagination*, 36.1 (2003), 123-47, (p.130).
[505] St. Paul's teaching of the 'marital debt' is discussed in the Introduction to this thesis (see p.59). Neither spouse could refuse the other sexual intercourse. To do so would endanger the spouse's soul as he/she would be tempted into fornication elsewhere.
[506] *The Trotula: An English Translation of the Medieval Compendium of Women's Medicine*, ed. and trans. by Monica H. Green (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001; 2002), p.71.
[507] Alisoun of Bath withholds the marital debt from her elderly husbands in order to gain worldly goods: 'What sholde I taken keep hem for to plese, / But it were for my profit and myn ese?' Geoffrey Chaucer, 'The Wife of Bath's Prologue', in *The Riverside Chaucer*, ed. by Larry D. Benson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), pp.105-16, (p.108, ll.213-4). All references are to this edition, hereafter cited by line number. See section (viii) of the Introduction to this thesis, 'Alisoun of Bath', for my analysis of her manipulation of the marital debt.

Kempe recognises that she did not (in terms of canon law) have the right to withhold the marital debt from John, explaining that she submitted to his desires 'only for obedyens', and not because she felt a reciprocal desire for him; she describes the idea of the sexual act as 'abhominabyl' (350;347).[508] John's words show his awareness of his wife's contractual obligations and the contemporary belief that the marital debt should not be withheld when he tells her, 'Ye arn no good wyfe' (722). This episode is used to highlight Kempe's desire for bodily purity and her desperation for chastity to enable her to become a *sponsa Christi*. Kempe is able to buy herself out of the marital debt by agreeing to pay John's monetary debts, showing the degree to which financial independence could be exploited by medieval women of means who possessed a talent for negotiation. Kempe converts the sexual debt owed to her husband into a monetary one which she can pay without damaging her understanding of her spiritual purity. Kempe strikes a bargain that John cannot refuse: 'Grawntyth me that ye schal not komyn in my bed, and I grawnt yow to qwyte yowr dettys er I go to Jerusalem' (779-80). Her syntax reads like the bargaining between two merchants which sets out a theory of *quid pro quo*. Additionally, Kempe's repetition of 'grawntyth' with 'grawnt' lends itself to a written contract.[509]

The couple appear to apply the same ideology to their marital vows as the Wife of Bath applies to hers – 'Wynne whoso may, for al is for to selle' – albeit to opposite ends (414). All, it seems, can be purchased at the right price. It is important to keep in mind that Kempe's economic position allowed this agreement with John and gave her the opportunity to pursue an alternative life-course.[510] Women of poorer ranks would not have the means to follow her example. Kempe's experience of business allows her to forge her own path. She applies the mercantile values of her contemporary society and upbringing to her marital relationship which in turn allows her to pursue her devotional ambitions. Her business acumen enables her to purchase what Nona Fienberg calls her 'contractual widowhood.'[511] The basis of Kempe's textual self is rooted in mercantilism, even when advocating a pious life.

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[508] Kempe emphasises her revulsion by recording that she would rather see John slain than 'turne ayen to owyr unclennesse' (720-1).

[509] 'Grawnt' was a term of commercial and legal agreement appropriate to verbal negotiation which is later formalised in writing (*MED* 1; 2).

[510] E.I. Watkin suggests that Kempe may have inherited money from her father, who died earlier that year, which enabled her to pay John's debts as well as her own, and to finance her pilgrimage to Jerusalem. E.I. Watkin, *On Julian of Norwich and In Defence of Margery Kempe* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1979), pp.37-40.

[511] Fienberg, p.138.

Kempe credits John with the initial idea of the monetary deal (746-50).[512] This rhetorical strategy distances herself from any criticism she may have encountered; firstly, for engaging in sinful monetary business which could potentially be interpreted as usury or lending at interest – the interest she receives is paid in a vow of chastity and the freedom to travel on pilgrimage rather than in economic profit – but also for failing in her duty to be an obedient wife. Kempe emerges from the episode as the spiritually superior spouse. She simultaneously demonstrates the agency and freedom that financial wealth could provide a woman while stressing that spiritual wealth should be the focus and priority. John's bargaining with Kempe shows that he was an active participant in the deal; he is allowed his own voice and agency in the *Boke* and is not just a passive enabler. John, too, is shown to have been familiar with the practices of business with his use of 'grawnte' and his bargaining (746). However, Kempe, with Christ's support, is shown to be the more successful negotiator as the final deal between husband and wife is that she will pay his financial debts (in addition to any of her own) before travelling to Jerusalem, eat and drink with him on Fridays, but he is not 'to askyn no dett of matrimony aftyr this day' (778-85). Kempe's piety prevails thanks to her financial means and commercial acumen.

Before embarking on pilgrimage, medieval Christians were required to pay any outstanding debts.[513] In her deal with John, Kempe reworks this obligation to fulfil her own desires. Pilgrimage was a dangerous business, with pilgrims vulnerable to assault, robbery, disease, famine and shipwreck, as well as the risk that they would get caught up in civil conflict or war.[514] Paying their debts before setting out would not only release pilgrims from worldly and social ties to their homeland, but aid the spiritual preparation for death, should this fate

[512] Significantly, Kempe first attempts to negotiate with John on spiritual terms, rather than monetary: 'Good sere, I pray yow grawnte me that I schal askyn, and I schal pray for yow that ye schul be savyd thorw the mercy of owyr Lord Jhesu Cryst, and ye schul have mor mede in hevyn than yyf ye weryd an hayr or an haburgon [penitential clothing]' (729-34). Kempe tries to entice John into a vow of chastity through the offering prayers for his soul, promising that he shall receive more 'mede', or payment/reward, in Heaven for agreeing to live chastely, than if he wore a hair shirt (like her garment of malt sack) for penance. It is only once this spiritual bargain fails to appeal to John that she agrees to contemplate monetary deals, illustrating that even before she fully embarked upon her exceptional devotional career, Kempe's spirituality appropriated the practice of commercialism through necessity.

[513] Goodman, p.164.

[514] Adrian R. Bell and Richard S. Dale, 'The Medieval Pilgrimage Business', *Enterprise & Society,* 12.3 (2011), 601-27 (p.603). During the Middle Ages, one of the seven questions asked on the deathbed ensured that the dying person had settled their debts. 'Seven Questions to be Asked of a Dying Man', in *Instructions for Parish Priests*, ed. by Edward Peacock (London: Published for the Early English Text Society by Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co., Ltd., 1902), pp.69-71. See Chapter Four pp.225-7 for the resolution of debts in women's wills.

befall them on their travels.[515] Kempe records the process of resolving her debts before leaving Lynn:

> Whan tyme cam that this creatur schuld vysiten tho holy placys […] sche preyd the parysch preste of the town […] to sey for hir in the pulpyt that, yf any man er [or] woman that cleymyd any dette of hir husbond or of hir, thei schuld come and speke wyth hir er [before] sche went, and sche […] schulde makyn aseth [settlement] to ech of hem that thei schuldyn heldyn hem content. And so sche dede. (1939-46)

Evidently, Kempe kept her side of the bargain with John as she recalls enlisting the help of the parish priest to announce to their community that she would pay his debts before leaving for Jerusalem. The announcement from the pulpit gives the impression that, in this instance, Kempe's behaviour was clerically sanctioned. The church as site of devotion becomes the site of mercantile reckoning through this proclamation.[516] She is keen to assure her readers that she paid all her debts before embarking upon her travels with the succinct statement, 'And so sche dede' (1946). Kempe's inner businesswoman would never allow her to leave a debt unpaid, or a contract broken, as she left for Jerusalem. To leave with outstanding debts would be socially and economically damaging for Kempe, her husband and the wider Lynn community.

Like Kempe's, Moulsworth's text reveals that she was acutely aware of the business partnership, as well as the legal and sexual bond, of marriage. A clear appreciation for worldly riches is demonstrated in her poem. As noted above, Bevill Moulsworth appears to have been the favourite of her three husbands as with him she 'led an easie darlings life' as he permitted her to have her 'will in house, in purse in Store' (66-7). The letters of Margaret Paston, Joan Thynne and Brilliana Harley discussed in the previous chapter reveal their roles as their husbands' deputies in times of peace when they require his sanction, and in times of danger when they express agency and autonomy through their words and actions for the safety of the family and its assets. Instead of insisting upon the final say himself, Moulsworth asserts that Bevill allowed her to have her 'will' in all circumstances: 'was never man so Buxome to his

[515] Kempe records her fears that she might be robbed as she sets out for Santiago de Compostela: 'And than was it seyd in Lynne that ther wer many thevys be the wey. Than had sche gret drede that thei schulde robbyn hir and takyn hir golde awey fro hir' (3505-7). Similarly, she expresses fear of travelling by sea and of being caught up in the war between the Polish and Teutonic Order when travelling in Danzig (Gdansk) in the 1430s: 'Be the watyr wolde sche not gon as sche myth, for sche was so aferyd as sche cam thedirward; and be lond wey sche myth not gon esyly, for ther was werr in the cuntre that sche shulde passyn by' (7795-8). She also notes her fears of shipwreck (7714-9), her desire to travel in company to avoid assault (7941-94), and recalls bouts of sickness (2144-5).

[516] Anthony Fletcher has noted that churches, naves in particular, remained a site of fiscal and civic business into the early modern period, p.265.

wife' (65). Unlike that of Paston, Thynne and Harley, Moulsworth's writing does not record the threat or occurrence of a physical attack on the family home and property: according to her writing, her own agency was not subject to the local political climate. In a striking reversal of the medieval marriage vows, Moulsworth's husband is 'buxome', or 'obedient', to his wife. On the other hand, by the time Moulsworth was writing, 'buxom' had come to mean 'gracious, indulgent, favourable; obliging, amiable, courteous, affable, kindly' as well as 'obedient' and 'submissive' (*OED* 1c; 1a). Whichever meaning of the word Moulsworth had in mind – indeed, it may have been a combination – she makes clear that her relationship with Bevill was one of mutual affection.

As Helen Wilcox writes, the 'achievement of domestic autonomy marked an important stage in the metamorphosis of a medieval or early modern woman's social identity'.[517] It is significant that it is with her third and final husband that Moulsworth achieved this autonomy: age provided the experience and money accrued from previous marriages needed to reach this life-stage. Moulsworth depicts and appreciates the advantages of age and the experience of previous marriages, as does Alisoun of Bath. Both women develop as they grow older and as their number of marriages increases. Arguably, Kempe's age and experience of marriage also enabled her to develop into the astute woman who negotiated her way out of marital obligations to achieve her goal of living chastely in the closest possible return to the virginity she coveted. Wilcox has noted that, 'in practice Kempe functions as a widow long before her husband dies.'[518] Crucially, it is Kempe's financial status which allows her to achieve her ideal lifestyle, in much the same way as Moulsworth's monetary wealth affords her a comfortable widowhood and deters her from a fourth marriage. Female authority and wealth remained an important issue in the minds of writers into the early modern period.

As previously observed, financial independence is shown to be important to Moulsworth in her decision not to marry for a fourth time (106-9). Moulsworth defends her decision to remain a widow with a religious justification that contemporaries could not criticise: 'the Virgins life is gold, as Clarks us tell / the Widows silvar, I love silvar well' (108-9). Based St Jerome's exegesis of Matthew 13:8, Church teaching evaluated women's spiritual worth in the business sense of value and 'accorded virgins a hundred-fold reward in the kingdom of

[517] Helen Wilcox, 'The Metamorphosis of Women? Autobiography from Margery Kempe to Martha Moulsworth', in *Saints, Scholars, and Politicians: Gender as a Tool in Medieval Studies*, ed. by Mathilde van Dijk and Renée Nip (Turnhout and New York: Brepols, 2005), pp.209-26 (p.219).
[518] Wilcox, 'The Metamorphosis of Women', p.219.

heaven, consecrated widows sixty-fold, and matrons a mere thirty-fold.'[519] Another popular way of expressing such a hierarchy of spiritual value between women was that virgins would receive gold, widows silver and wives bronze.[520] Mischievously capitalising on the layered meanings of silver as coinage and as a metal more economically valuable than bronze, but less so than gold, Moulsworth reveals her wit while (re)claiming the worth of her spiritual and worldly status as a woman within society. For the benefit of her eternal soul, as well as for financial freedom, Moulsworth wants to remain a widow. However, she does not lament and wish to return to her lost virginity and hundred-fold reward, as Kempe does, but rather cherishes her position as a widow in a playful pun: 'I love silvar well' (109). In this esteeming of widowhood, and the available profit it brings her, Moulsworth once again recalls Chaucer's Wife of Bath. As shown in the Introduction to this thesis, Alisoun justifies the need for wives as well as virgins with the metaphor of golden and wooden bowls.[521] Chaucer gives married women value with this homely metaphor. Without wives, the supply of virgins would cease, and Alisoun is keenly aware of this. Similarly, Shakespeare's *All's Well That Ends Well* (1605) opens with a debate on the practicality of virginity, with Parolles pointing out that 'there was never a virgin got till virginity was first lost.'[522] Evidently virginity remained an important and popular subject for discussion throughout the period studied here. Both Alisoun and Moulsworth interpret Church teaching through their mercantile understanding to award themselves, and their marital status, spiritual worth. Two of Moulsworth's husbands were goldsmiths and the other a draper; it is hard to believe that as an intelligent woman she would not have learnt something of financial management from their businesses. It is clear from Moulsworth's writing that marriage was still viewed in terms of a marketplace in which one, or both, partners could profit. By the time she has outlived her third husband, Moulsworth decides to keep her widow's silver to herself.

As Kempe financially negotiates her way *out* of her marital obligations, Moulsworth notes the financial negotiations required to *make* a marriage when discussing her knowledge of Latin. Moulsworth suggests that her Latin was not of any real benefit to her life, as her marginal note wryly observes, 'Lattin is not the most marketable mariadge mettall' (127). An

[519] Elliott, p.40. See also, p.62 of thesis Introduction.
[520] For the patristic exegesis of Matthew 13:8, see St Jerome's *Against Jovinian* 1.3, trans. W.H. Fremantle, *The Principal Works of St Jerome,* A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church, 2nd ser., vol. 6 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1893), p.347.
[521] 'For wel ye knowe, a lord in his houshold, / He nath nat every vessel al of gold; /Somme been of tree, and doon hir lord servyse' (99-101). See p.62 of the Introduction to this thesis.
[522] William Shakespeare, *All's Well That Ends Well* ed. by Russell Fraser (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 1.1.113.

educated woman was not valued in the early modern marriage market; instead a sizable dowry or marriage portion was of more importance: ‘Had I no other portion to my dowre / I might have stood a virgin to this houre’ (39-40). Moulsworth’s humour reveals that she was matter-of-fact in her reflections on the business-like nature of betrothals. She laments, ‘I of Lattin have no cause to boast / ffor want of use, I longe ago itt lost’ (37-8). In her life as a married woman, Moulsworth’s knowledge of Latin was not required, fell out of use and was therefore forgotten. However, its absence is felt and remembered in her poem. It appears that while her financial dower may have increased with each marriage, her intellectual wealth did not, and she feels justified in grieving this loss alongside the deaths of her husbands and offspring.

As well as lamenting the lack of appreciation for the value of her intellect, Moulsworth’s note that ‘Lattin is not the most marketable mariadge mettall’ demonstrates her knowledge and use of puns (127). The metal alloy ‘latten’ is very close to Moulsworth’s ‘Lattin’.[523] The Latin/latten pun was longstanding and well-known by the educated.[524] Moulsworth and her contemporaries would certainly be familiar with the negative connotations of ‘latten’. It is possible that her marriage to a goldsmith exposed Moulsworth to a knowledge of metals which she subsequently adopted and adapted for her own creative work. By making the connection between Latin and latten, Moulsworth quips that the metal alloy of education is not equal to the gold of a financial dowry in the marriage market. She also hints that the ‘alloy’ of her education is not equal to the ‘gold’ of her father’s education at Oxford: the unofficial teaching of a daughter in contrast to the recognised, formal teaching of a son.[525]

In their texts, marriage is inherently bound up with finance for both Kempe and Moulsworth, as indeed it was for their wider contemporary societies. The marital relationship is something requiring constant negotiation for Kempe, and her use of dialogue reflects this. On the other hand, Moulsworth’s marriages are depicted as harmonious business arrangements between two partners. Kempe uses her own financial wealth to achieve the life she desires; once this is done, she renounces affluence in favour of a more frugal existence to bring her closer to Christ. Kempe’s rhetorical presentation of her negotiations with John protects her from criticism for wifely disobedience and Christian sinfulness while revealing the possibility of agency for women of economic means. Moulsworth’s wordplay, conversely, discloses an

[523] Anne Lake Prescott, ‘Marginally Funny: Martha Moulsworth’s Puns’, in Evans and Little, p.88.
[524] Prescott, p.89. In the ‘General Prologue’ to the *Canterbury Tales* (c.1387), Chaucer describes the corrupt Pardoner’s ‘croys of latoun’ which he uses along with false relics to prey upon the poor believer for financial gain (699-705).
[525] As previously mentioned in this chapter, Moulsworth wistfully imagines what universities for women might have offered her and her contemporaries (32-5).

appreciation for and enjoyment in the wealth which she has accrued through her three marriages. She admits she is reluctant to part with it by marrying for a fourth time. For both women, money provides a degree of independence and autonomy without which they would be unable to pursue their chosen ways of life. Kempe's employment of mercantile vocabulary and theory in her writing is primarily to vindicate her chosen spiritual life-course. She adapts and appropriates the familiar language of her social milieu to reject the very mercantile values it perpetuates. In contrast, Moulsworth uses financial diction to express her comfortable understanding of her own devotional and worldly positions of daughter, wife and widow which, rather than fighting for superiority as they do in Kempe's writing, work in conjunction – neatly summarised in her repetition of 'silvar'. While Kempe's writing strives to maintain a high tone appropriate to pious texts, Moulsworth employs a mischievous creativity in her use of puns hinged on mercantile knowledge.

(vii) Marriage and the Business of Salvation

Connected to pre-modern women's duties as wives and Christians was charitable giving.[526] Kempe explains to a widow how charity could benefit the soul of her deceased husband: 'Yy[f ye] wyl don almes for hym iii pownde er iiii in m[essys] and almes-yevyng to powyr folke, ye schal hyly plesyn God and don the sowle gret esse' (1497-9). Despite her apparent renunciation of the mercantile world, Kempe appropriates commercial practice and language to her perceived role as a spiritual authority. She is precise in detailing the amounts, giving the impression of a business deal in which a set price is paid for a commodity or service: the relief of the soul in Purgatory.[527] Rather than selling the produce of her brewing and milling trades, Kempe promotes her brand of spirituality in a similar manner: everything has a price. In this instance, Kempe's sale fails and the widow takes 'lytyl hede at hir wordys' (1500). This disappointment does not reflect badly on Kempe, however, but is used to highlight the error of her contemporaries – represented by the widow – in prioritising worldly wealth over spiritual.

[526] This duty was discussed in the Introduction to this thesis (pp.28-9; p.45) and is present in women's letters and wills from across the period. For examples, see, p.90 of Chapter Two and p.202 of Chapter Four of this thesis.
[527] In the 1430s, £3 or £4 could purchase five horses; Kempe's monetary record suggests that the widow was wealthy and able to spare a substantial amount of money to ease the suffering of her husband's soul.

Even Kempe's caring of her husband, John, after his accident is presented as a charitable act and remedial exchange with Christ, redeeming the sinful lust that she felt for John in their youth:

> many tymys sche schuld an yrkyd hir labowr, saf sche bethowt hir how sche in hir yong age had ful many delectabyl [pleasurable] thowtys, fleschly lustys, and inordinat lovys to hys persone [body]. And therfor sche was glad to be ponishcyd wyth the same persone and toke it mech the mor esily, and servyd hym and helpyd hym, as hir thowt, as sche wolde a don Crist hymself. (6074-80)

Excessive desire, even for a spouse, would endanger the soul, and Kempe explains that her lust for John was immoderate and 'inordinat'.[528] She focuses on the bodily nature of her desire with her use of 'delectabyl', 'fleschly lustys' and 'inordinat lovys' towards John's 'persone'. Lust, of course, is another of the Seven Deadly Sins. Kempe's *Boke* works as an account book in which the sins of her youth are weighed up against the virtues of her mature and pious self. She interprets her care for John as an appropriate penance, claiming that she was 'glad to be ponischyd' by the same body which incited desire and lust in their youth. Whereas Moulsworth comfortably recognises the sexual enjoyment that came with her marriages – 'three husbands me, and I have them enjoyde' (45) – with a contentment that does not challenge her spiritual value, Kempe's understanding is that her pleasure in her physical relationship with John is in direct opposition to her spiritual worth. These differing perceptions of marital sexual relations are reflected in the ways in which the authors choose to record them. Moulsworth's relaxed appreciation of her sexual relationships with her three husbands is confined to one succinct line. An economising of words once again reveals the secure and untroubled position from which a text was created.[529] Kempe, on the other hand, uses inflammatory diction and lengthy syntax to drive home that her desire for her husband's body in their youth was excessive: a sin for which she must atone by caring for his now unappealing physical body. Kempe's hyperbole stresses her transformation from sexually active wife to chaste holy woman.

The description of Kempe's care for John as her punishment is key, demonstrating the repulsion she now feels for the body she once desired. She reports that John 'lakkyd reson' and 'as a childe voydyd hys natural digestyon in hys lynyn clothys' (6068-70). His incontinence not only caused extra work and kept her from her contemplation, but Kempe records that it

[528] For more information on the 'marital debt' and attitudes towards sexual desire, see p.60 of the Introduction.
[529] Margaret Paston's letters reveal a shrewd use of language as her rhetorical technique (p.89 Chapter Two).

increased 'hir costage in fyryng', hinting at the economic drain of illness on the household (6073-4). Kempe saw her care for John as an act of devotion, substituting Christ's body for his. In the late Middle Ages, 'the imperative of works for the needy, as if for the suffering body of Christ on earth, was entrenched deep within the consciousness of all believers.'[530] Kempe uses this belief to come to terms with the mentally, physically and financially demanding task of caring for her husband. She capitalises on her charitable care for John, representing it as an investment for which she will receive spiritual reward to pay off the debt owed to God for the lust she felt in her youth.

The relationships between John and Kempe, Kempe and Christ, and Christ and John are all defined and controlled by exchange. Not only is a debt paid to Christ in Kempe's repentance of her bodily sins, but Kempe also presents her care for John as *his* payment *from* Christ for agreeing to live chastely and allowing her to travel (6058-62). Kempe is reassured by Christ that caring for John will result in 'meche mede', or spiritual reward, when she worries it will keep her away from church and contemplation (6055). Kempe converts the worldly care of her husband into a labour of devotion for spiritual benefit in a three-sided contract.

Kempe's nursing of John in his final illness echoes the Seven Corporal Acts of Mercy so prevalent in the pre-modern women's writing studied in this project.[531] Medieval Christians believed they would be rewarded for these good deeds at the Last Judgement. Female figures dominate medieval church art depicting the Corporal Acts of Mercy.[532] Care for the body seems to have been a particularly female duty, in the birthing chamber, the sickroom and preparing the body after death.[533] Kempe is unable to escape her duty of tending for the body of her husband during his illness, and so she transforms this into a pious act. Kempe retrospectively employs the suffering she endured in providing John's care as an indicator of her sanctity. In effect, Kempe 'buys' salvation through her good works for John. Her nurture of John's physical body is converted into a currency with which to redeem her sinfulness. While her care for John is mostly physical, and indeed her wifely duty, she does refer to the monetary cost of his care. She is required to feed, wash, and clothe John which increases her expenses dramatically. His

[530] Carole Hill, *Women and Religion in Late Medieval Norwich* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2010), p.118.

[531] The Seven Corporal Acts of Mercy are: feed the hungry; give drink to the thirsty; shelter the homeless; visit the sick; visit prisoners; clothe the naked and comfort the dying (Matthew 25:35-6).

[532] Miriam Gill, 'Female piety and impiety: selected images of women in wall paintings in England after 1300', in *Gender and Holiness: Men, women and saints in late medieval Europe*, ed. by Samantha J.E. Riches and Sarah Salih (London: Routledge, 2002), pp.101-20 (p.102).

[533] Good works and almsgiving to 'buy' salvation are also evident in medieval women's wills as they bequeath money to feed and clothe the poor. See Katherine Barnardiston's bequests discussed on pp.205-6 of Chapter Four.

incontinence raises her laundry and firewood expenditure (6073). Kempe makes a financial commitment and investment through her charitable act, for which she expects to be rewarded in the afterlife (6055).

In contrast to Kempe's *Boke*, Moulsworth's autobiographical poem does not deal with nursing her husbands or children in their decline; her writing is more concerned with representing the events of her personal life on earth rather than presenting herself as a spiritual benefactress in a bid for beatification, as Kempe does. Of course, Kempe's performance of alms was part of her journey to salvation, while any charity performed by Moulsworth as a Protestant would be part of her Christian duty and could not directly impact upon her salvation; perhaps this is the reason she does not include a discussion of her good works within her poem. However, Moulsworth does take great care to stress her affiliation with the scriptural Martha, hinting at her active devotion which could imply her performance of charitable actions. Crucially, as noted above, Moulsworth does not interpret the sexual relations she enjoyed with her husbands as detrimental to her salvation or religious worth. Moulsworth does, nevertheless, consider which husband, if any, she will be reunited with in the afterlife:

> In vayne itt were, prophane it were ffor me
> I shall call husband in the Resurrection
> ffor then shall all in glorious perfection
> Like to th'immortall heavenlie Angells live
> Who wedlocks bonds doe neither take nor give (97-101)

Moulsworth reproduces her thought-processes in her writing. At first, she wonders if she will be reunited with a husband in the afterlife; if so, which one? Her faith soon reminds her that she need not worry but trust in God to arrange everything: it is 'vayne' and 'prophane' of her to question His plan. Once again Moulsworth uses biblical intertextuality to highlight her devotion (Mark 12:22-25). The internal rhyme highlights Moulsworth's moment of realisation that she does not have any influence over salvation, whilst stressing the symmetry – and therefore perfection – of God's plan. Moulsworth is not troubled by her three marriages in the way that Kempe worries about her own marital relationship impacting upon salvation. Moulsworth believes that her marriages do not incriminate her everlasting soul; resurrected souls will not be bound by wedlock but will be returned to 'glorious perfection'.[534]

[534] The use of 'perfect' in the titles of merchant guidebooks was noted on pp.52-3 of the Introduction, revealing the presences of a discourse which combined accounting with devotion and moral worthiness.

Unlike Kempe's *Boke*, Moulsworth's poem does not include a discussion of any provision of end-of-life care for her husbands. Perhaps this is due to her certainty that her marriages were not detrimental to the fate of her soul, and so she saw no need to record charitable acts of nursing as the spiritual agreement of *quid pro quo* that Kempe adopts. As Anthony Law argues, Moulsworth 'memorializes her loved ones by writing her poem, but she does not seek to influence their fate'.[535] He describes 'commemoration' as the 'chief authorized response to death of loved ones in the Anglican communion.'[536] Moulsworth's act of autobiographical writing is a cathartic process of grief, which commemorates her father, grandmother, husbands and children, as well as herself. Her grief becomes a rhetorical strategy to justify and give authority to her position as poet. This strategic deployment of grief was utilised by other female early modern poets such as Mary Herbert, Countess of Pembroke, revealing that women's emotional turmoil could, in fact, be both authorized and regulated by their creative literary output.[537]

Due to their differing theological periods and beliefs, Kempe's and Moulsworth's understanding and representation of acts of charity and salvation are fundamentally different: it is essential to Kempe's writing but is replaced in Moulsworth's poetry by a neutral commemoration which does not seek to intercede. The different ways in which the two women interpret their sexual relationships with their husbands has a vital impact on their literary remembrances of their lives. Due to her perception of her desire as sinful, Kempe appropriates her care for John in his final illness as an act of devotion, even redemption, which contrasts to Moulsworth's comfortable acknowledgement of the bodily pleasure that came with her three

[535] Anthony Law, 'Martha Moulsworth and the Uses of Rhetoric: Love, Mourning, and Reciprocity', in Evans and Little, p.78.
[536] Law, p.78. This authorised commemoration and memorialisation is not only seen in writing, but in architectural projects in the early modern period. One prominent example is Lady Anne Clifford's construction of the Countess's Pillar in 1654 on the crossroads where she last saw her mother. The financial means available to each woman impacts upon the style of commemoration available to them; Clifford was of the landed aristocracy with greater funds available to carry out building works, in contrast to Moulsworth's merchant class which enabled her to commemorate herself and her loved ones, modestly but carefully, in her writing. Richard T. Spence, 'Clifford, Anne [known as Lady Anne Clifford], countess of Pembroke, Dorset, and Montgomery (1590-1676), noblewoman and diarist', in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), <http://www.oxforddnb.com.ezproxy.bangor.ac.uk/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-5641?rskey=YJVmMD&result=1> [Accessed 20 February 2019].
[537] In the late sixteenth century, the Countess of Pembroke's grief sanctioned her literary activities. She bestowed patronage in honour of her brother – Phillip Sidney's – memory, supervised the 1593 and 1598 editions of his *Arcadia*, and translated works of which he would have approved. Furthermore, she completed his metric paraphrase of the *Psalms*, and, showcasing her own creative literary talents, composed poems praising him. By asserting her status as Phillip Sidney's sister, the Countess of Pembroke emphasised her position as author and patron in her own right. Margaret Patterson Hannay, 'Herbert, [neé Sidney], Mary, countess of Pembroke (1561-1621), writer and literary patron', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008) <https://doi-org.ezproxy.bangor.ac.uk/10.1093/ref:odnb/13040> [Accessed 2 April 2021].

marriages. The letters by Margaret Paston and Maria Thynne refer to their sexual relationships with their husbands in a comfortable manner similar to Moulsworth's.[538] When comparing the writings of Kempe and Moulsworth, it seems that a regretful perception of marital sexual relations leads to Kempe's appropriation of book-keeping to redress the spiritual balance with acts of charity. For Moulsworth, recollection of desire simply merits observation, rather than creating a need for justification or restitution.

This section has revealed Kempe's understanding of her good works as labour towards her salvation, in contrast to Moulsworth's appreciation of her worldly life as separate from the fate of her own soul. The lexical choices and stylistic features of their writings reflect this. Moulsworth's neat rhyme shows that her contented belief that the fate of her soul is not connected to her marriages, while Kempe applies mercantile logic to her representation of her nursing as a strategy to amass further spiritual credit and prove she is worthy and deserving of salvation.

(viii) Conclusion

Separated by historical time and by aspects of faith, Margery Kempe and Martha Moulsworth are, nevertheless, both products of their mercantile societies. Both authors appropriate commercial practices and discourse in their autobiographical writings. Kempe claims to renounce the mercantile world for the devotional, yet her *Boke* is evidence that for a medieval woman in the commercial port town of Bishop's Lynn, the two could never be separated. Commerce and religion live side by side in Saturday Market now, as they did in Kempe's time, and as they do in her autobiography. For Moulsworth, faith provides a framework to make sense of the loss of her children and husbands and gives her a sense of personal value through recalling the biblical Martha.

While Kempe's *Boke* tracks her development from the young woman who took sinful pride in her beautiful clothing into the mature and pious pilgrim dressed in white, money never ceased to be an issue for her. Her career as a businesswoman equipped her with the necessary negotiating skills and knowledge of accounting and law to enable her extensive pilgrimages. This understanding informs her representation of her relationships with both Christ and her

[538] Maria Thynne's letter reveals that numerical rhetoric can be applied to expressions of love and desire, perhaps even leaning towards an expression of the youthful feelings alluded to by Kempe. See p.108 in previous chapter.

husband. Likewise, Moulsworth's interpretation of her marital career abounds with financial implications; marriage becomes her vocation as the alternative of pursuing university education, at a time when expanding upon her knowledge of Latin was simply not an option for a woman. As a result, Moulsworth safeguards the emotional and monetary assets that she has amassed by avoiding a fourth match.

Kempe records her pursuit of an alternative, spiritual vocation made possible by her experiences within the very mercantile world she claims to renounce. Moulsworth's 'Memorandum' is a neat act of personal administration in which she commemorates her father, grandmother, children, husbands, and, most importantly, herself, in fifty-five rhyming couplets to mark her fifty-fifth birthday. With her writing Moulsworth skilfully provides an account of the life she has lived thus far, appropriating numbers, words, the poetic genre, devotion and even time to express herself and her emotions sufficiently. Piety and a desire for vindication are undeniably the driving forces behind Kempe's writing, but her *Boke* allows her readers to glimpse the world from which it emerged through her utilisation of financial discourse, theory and occasional recording of transactions reminiscent of book-keeping. Without a doubt, Kempe and Moulsworth were mercantile products, as are the texts the two women created.

In contrast to some of the letters written by pre-modern women (discussed in the previous chapter) which were hurried and urgent, the reflective time which Kempe and Moulsworth could invest in their writing results in careful and considered rhetoric and linguistic choices. The written legacies of both Kempe and Moulsworth reveal that they were astute in their employment of commercial diction loaded with spiritual and social connotations, as were the letters by women such as Cecily Daune and Brilliana Harley. The flexibility of mercantile lexicons to move smoothly between matters of faith, relationships and commercial matters is at the very heart of the writing of each woman studied in this thesis.

The genres chosen by Kempe and Moulsworth set them apart the authors studied in Chapters Two and Four, whose letters and wills were governed by the practical demands of their writing. Kempe's and Moulsworth's freedom in choice of genre, however, does not necessarily engender greater use of literary technique. At times Kempe's prose is equally documentary in style as that of Margaret Paston's shopping lists or Joan Thynne's estate reports: Kempe's writing needs to report her exceptional relationship with Christ and her conversion to a pious life. Paradoxically, this purpose also leads, at times, to her most skilful employment of financial language as devotional rhetoric, as seen in her negotiation for chastity,

for example. Kempe's prose writing, with its seemingly illogical pattern of remembered events, is in fact endowed with biblical and hagiographical intertextual references – such as her white clothes linking her to Mary of Oignies and the near-shipwreck echoing the biblical story of the disciples' perilous journey on the sea of Galilee (John 6:16-21). These echoes are carefully inscribed in her *Boke* to vindicate her chosen life-course and emphasise the grace bestowed on her by Christ, all of which she views and presents through a commercial lens. While Kempe's writing never escapes the values and diction of her mercantile society, this does not detract from her spirituality. Rather, the vocabulary which is invested with religious and commercial connotations becomes stronger in her application of such diction. Terms such as 'chefsyawns' define Kempe's writing style which combines the mercantile and spiritual aspects of her life in a way in which, it seems, she was not entirely willing to reconcile. In contrast, Moulsworth's confident writing comfortably employs commercial metaphor and terms which give equal value to her worldly and devotional life. Moulsworth's choice of poetry aids her self-representation as a woman who is intellectually, spiritually and emotionally 'tidy', as her metrical and numerical precision combine to convey an impression of herself in her 'Memorandum'.

Overall, Kempe's use of vocabulary relies more deeply on legal terminology and mercantile theory to express her experiences than Moulsworth's does. Moulsworth's style is weighted more heavily on numerical precision in its very form – fifty-five rhyming couplets – and in her enjoyment of symmetry and patterns. Nevertheless, Moulsworth utilises mercantile puns – such as Latin/latten – to highlight playfully the contradictions of a woman's career as daughter, wife and widow in early modern London. Uniting the two authors is their accomplished application of commercial practice and associated diction to understand and communicate the varying aspects and events of their lives.

The letters written amid the action of life analysed in Chapter Two deal with the present and plan ahead for family and financial stability, while the memoirs of this chapter look back reflectively over lived experience to provide precise and careful accounts of lives for personal, social and spiritual recognition. The penultimate chapter of this thesis looks at the final act of life-administration: the will. This specifically legal and financial mode of writing fascinatingly combines elements of both the preceding genres – planning for the future (albeit not the author's own) while at the same time reflecting on the events of a life that is approaching its end.

Chapter Four

The Will: Trust, Risk and the Currency of Memory

Chapters Two and Three demonstrated that the chosen samples of pre-modern women's letters and memoirs apply commercial diction and theory to the written representations of self-identity, as well as in devotional, marital and family relationships. The final will and testament is perhaps the most formulaic genre studied in this thesis in terms of language possibilities and freedom of expression, thanks to the legal requirements and structure imposed upon the authors. This does not, however, mean that pre-modern women were devoid of agency when writing their wills. The very word 'will' suggests personal wishes and a desire for control.[539] Wills can serve as surety for the fate of souls, and the testators studied in this chapter employ bequests as rhetorical devices to ensure that they are remembered in ways they see fit. Architectural projects, jewels, household items and clothing become signifiers of wealth, personality and family status through the written instructions contained in testaments. This chapter argues that for pre-modern female testators, the will acted as life-writing infused with personality through their chosen bequests, beneficiaries and phrasing.[540] The humour, puns, pathos and bathos which can be evident in women's letters and memoirs are largely absent from the legal will; however, the conflation of religious and financial discourses, and the use of literary devices such as metaphor and hyperbole can be found in the wills chosen in this sample. The very nature of wills means that they are replete with financial bequests and manifestations of wealth. This study seeks to interpret these bequests as literary expressions of devotion, investment for the soul, affection amongst kin and acquaintances, personal and family status and a desire to remain present in the communal memory after the testator's decease. The chapter will be divided into sections analysing these aspects accordingly.

The wills of pre-modern women may helpfully be considered as strategies of earthly and spiritual 'risk management', through which they attempt to exert post-mortem control over executors and beneficiaries to ensure that their wishes are met. Throughout the selection of wills studies in this chapter, testators frequently impose conditions on inheritance as well as

[539] The *OED* defines 'will' as 'desire, wish, longing; liking, inclination, disposition (*to do* something)' as well as 'a desire or wish as expressed in a request', noting that these definitions have remained in use from the twelfth and fourteenth centuries respectively (*OED* 1a; 3b). The additional meaning of an 'inclination *to do* something, as contrasted with power or opportunity' which first emerged in the sixteenth century reveals the constant struggle present in testamentary writing (*OED* 1b). This awareness of the posthumous lack of power and opportunity which a testator must always address was perhaps more prominent in the minds of women who faced further restrictions on their ability to perform their wishes in their lifetimes.

[540] See Intro. p.9. for the different genres Adam Smyth has recently given value to as autobiographical writings.

utilising vocabulary that combines legal and spiritual obligation to encourage, if not coerce, beneficiaries and executors into obeying their written instructions.[541] As will be seen, pre-Reformation testators mitigate the risk of a lengthy stay in Purgatory with bequests of alms in exchange for intercessory prayer. Protestant testators, on the other hand, leave charitable bequests in a display of piety which reinforces their status as member of the elect. Whether the female testators have large or moderate estates, they can be seen to negotiate risks of financial and spiritual loss with spiritual gain and economic surety within their last wills and testaments.[542] For women of both eras, the desire to direct the ways in which they were commemorated and remembered by their kin and by society was paramount: their bequests guide the living by means of a currency of memory.

The wills analysed in this chapter provide a representative sample across the historical period, social rank and religious beliefs studied thus far in this thesis, ranging from Lady Peryne Clanbowe's will of 1422, to Martha Moulsworth's 1646 testament. Between these are the wills of Margaret Blakburn (1433), Isabel le Despenser, Countess of Warwick (1439), Dame Eleanor Hull (1458), Margaret Mautby Paston (1482), Elizabeth Paston Poynings (1487), Maud Parr (1530), Elizabeth Hardwick Talbot, Countess of Shrewsbury (1601), and Lady Katherine Barnardiston (1633).[543] For those women who amended their wills through numerous drafts, such as Hardwick who died in 1608, seven years after beginning her writing, the final will and testament was a document which enabled reconsideration according to personal need and desire.[544] Her marginal notations and codicils speak of the writing process as time, and the circumstances of her family life, progressed. In this sense, a will is very much a considered construction.

The marriages of each of the testators studied in this chapter altered and defined their social status. Elizabeth Hardwick, for example, progressed from the daughter of impoverished

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541 See, for example, the wills of Peryne Clanbowe and the Countess of Warwick discussed on p.232 of this chapter, and Katherine Barnardiston's on pp.227-8.

542 'Estate' here refers to the land, belongings and monetary wealth which these women possess at the moment of will-writing. For more on the importance of pre-modern trust and risk, see section (vii) of the Introduction to this thesis.

543 The date given for each will is the date of writing. In some cases, this is also the date of probate, for others it signifies a draft of the final will. For biographical information on each of these women, see Appendix Two. The later wills are generally much longer documents, hence the imbalance in numbers of medieval and early modern testaments.

544 Although she wrote her will as Elizabeth Talbot, since this was her legal name, I will refer to the Countess of Shrewsbury as 'Hardwick' in my analysis. History has remembered her as the indomitable 'Bess of Hardwick', and, although her marriage to George Talbot brought her great wealth and power, Elizabeth herself clearly identified herself with both the place and family name of Hardwick as evidenced by her architectural projects (see Appendix Two for more detail).

gentry to the rich and powerful Countess of Shrewsbury, a status which the language of her will reinforced and retained for her descendants through precise bequests. The social ranks of the women studied range from merchant (Blakburn, Paston, Moulsworth), through gentry (Clanbowe, Hull, Poynings, Parr, Barnardiston) to aristocratic (Despenser, Hardwick). Social status impacted on their capacity for almsgiving and the nature of their bequests.

The analysis of the wills is organised thematically rather than chronologically to identify similarities and differences between individual wills and across the period. This organisation mirrors the order in which the topics are often dealt with in the wills themselves: the negotiation of salvation, religious networks, charitable bequests, marriage and mothering, the value of material goods, credit networks and, finally, payments of thanks and approval to exert control over heirs. These topics are used to investigate the stylistic strategies and lexical choices of the testators when dealing with each subject. Within this analysis of genre and vocabulary, the financial decisions and monetary bequests of will-writers will also be interrogated as evidence for rhetorical strategies that combine numeracy with literacy.

The moment of pre-modern will-writing combined the spiritual and worldly lives of testators, having become, at that moment, 'one sociocultural phenomenon'.[545] Therefore, it is not surprising to see the intense negotiation and amalgamation of devotional and secular issues within the wills of the women studied here. The act of will-writing engenders an instant at which issues of trust and risk go beyond physical, worldly control. If female testators chose to appoint female executors, this could also push women's wishes beyond patriarchal control. Testators left written legacies in an attempt to exercise post-mortem power over the fate and destination of their souls, as well as their finances and belongings, and to ensure that they were remembered by later generations while benefiting the financial and spiritual wealth of their survivors. Joel T. Rosenthal suggests that a will is 'a document of spiritual power' in which the 'wishes of the dead loom large over the living […] and those wishes become a form of posthumous social control.'[546] I suggest that the testators studied in this chapter go beyond spiritual power by adding aid for the worldly well-being of their beneficiaries through bequests of marriage portions – a particularly female legacy – and charitable donations to alms-houses. Their desire for a 'posthumous social control' can be seen in the conditions placed upon beneficiaries and executors by testators.[547] Jenny Kermode observes that, for medieval

[545] Joel T. Rosenthal, *Margaret Paston's Piety* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), p.83.
[546] Rosenthal, *Margaret Paston's Piety,* p.86.
[547] These will be discussed later in this chapter. For example, for Katherine Barnardiston's terms to her husband's inheritance, see p.235.

merchants, the desire to create a will was induced by 'the need to take stock, to identify executors, to provide for family and dependents, to settle unfinished personal and business matters, to make a social statement, to arrange the secular and spiritual future.'[548] While Kermode's observation deals only with the wills of medieval, male merchants, this was the case for all pre-modern will-writers – medieval, early modern, male and female, merchant to aristocratic. The female testators studied here use their wills as their final act of household and spiritual estate management. Will-writing can be seen as a last stage in the life-course of pre-modern women: an act which combines their devotional and worldly selves as they bequeath their souls to God, their bodies to the earth, and their material wealth and possessions to heirs. For medieval women, however, will-writing was also preparation for the penultimate destination of their souls, Purgatory, before entrance into Heaven.

Women's wills have been identified as a genre – a type of life-writing – and as literary texts rather than simply legal documents.[549] This approach is particularly useful in analysing the negotiations of trust, risk and the language of financial order in the wills of women across the pre-modern era, since this methodology unites the testaments as a coherent and consistent literary form. Though they are not spiritually consistent due to the changes caused by the Reformation, women's wills are a continuing genre across the Middle Ages and into the early modern period and, of course, beyond.

The writing of wills was increasingly common in the Middle Ages and was a recognised act for those of sound mind and independent means.[550] Officially, under the English laws of coverture existing throughout the pre-modern period, a married woman was unable to write a will without the permission of her husband.[551] Nevertheless, around one fifth of surviving wills from the mid-sixteenth to mid-eighteenth century were written by female testators.[552] Despite the restrictions on their will-writing, women were evidently active participants in this genre across the entire period discussed in this thesis.

[548] Jenny Kermode, *Medieval Merchants* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p.71.
[549] See Katherine J. Lewis, 'Women, Testamentary Discourse and Life-Writing in Later Medieval England', in *Medieval Women and the Law*, ed. by Noël James Menuge (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2000), pp.57-75.
[550] Shona Kelly Wray and Roisin Cossar, 'Wills as primary sources', in *Understanding Medieval Primary Sources: Using historical sources to discover medieval Europe*, ed. by Joel T. Rosenthal (London: Routledge, 2012), pp.59-71 (p.61).
[551] Barbara Hanawalt, *The Wealth of Wives: Women, Law, and Economy in Late Medieval London* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), p.216; Amy Louise Erickson, *Women & Property in Early Modern England* (London and New York: Routledge, 1995), p.104. See also, the Introduction to this thesis, pp.30-2.
[552]Erickson, *Women and Property*, p.204.

Greater numbers of pre-modern women were appointed executors than were testators. Often, they were appointed by husbands – sometimes as sole executor and so demonstrating the trust in their capabilities – but also by brothers, fathers, sons, and occasionally unrelated men of lower social rank.[553] Ann J. Kettle has highlighted the number of wives who were named as executors by their husbands in Bristol and Lincoln in the Middle Ages, suggesting their familiarity with the form, processes and language of a legal will, and that women were trusted partners in life and death.[554] Middle to upper-class women's matrimonial and financial positions required them to be familiar with testamentary language and processes, and they were key players in this drama of death and the afterlife.[555] The creation of a will and the language it employs can be interpreted as a contract combining the worldly and spiritual lives of the testator, and as an act of stage-management in which she directs the future of her soul, body, finances, material possessions and the lasting legacy of memory within the community she leaves behind.

Some women, such as Margaret Blakburn (d.1435), wrote their wills in Latin, while others chose English. It is possible that Blakburn's will was written in Latin due to her mercantile family background and understanding of Latin as a language of law and commerce. It is equally possible that she chose Latin simply to use the same language as the wills of her husband, family members and social group. Some female testators, such as Dame Eleanor Hull (c.1394-1460) and Lady Katherine Barnardiston (d.1633), penned their testaments themselves, whilst others used scribes. As with the correspondence and memoirs previously analysed, I interpret the wills of all the women studied here as a representation of their own wishes, and so see the women as the authors of their documents regardless of the employment of a translator or amanuensis.[556] Each will reveals its author's creative process so far as the formulaic genre will allow.

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[553]Anne Crawford in, *Letters of Medieval Women* ed. by Anne Crawford (Stroud: Sutton Publishing, 2002), p.23. Tim Stretton, 'Women, Property and Law', in *A Companion to Early Modern Women's Writing,* ed. by Anita Pacheco (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Ltd., 2002), pp.40-57 (p.52).

[554] In Kettle's sample of wills, 80-82% of men with surviving wives made them executors. Ann J. Kettle, ''My Wife Shall Have It': Marriage and Property in the Wills and Testaments of Later Medieval England', in *Marriage and Property*, ed. by Elizabeth M. Craik (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1984), pp.89-103 (p.100).

[555] The dramatic nature of testaments in early modern drama has been noted by scholars such as Alex Davis, *Imagining Inheritance from Chaucer to Shakespeare* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), pp. 21-3; Michelle M. Dowd, *The Dynamics of Inheritance on the Shakespearean Stage* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), pp. 1-8; Gary Watt, *Shakespeare's Acts of Wills: Law, Testament and Properties of Performance* (London: Bloomsbury, 2016).

[556] I have discussed the use of scribes in reference to letters and Kempe's *Boke* in previous chapters (pp.70-1; pp.126-8).

(i) Negotiating Access to Salvation

One highly conventional aspect of the pre-modern will is its opening bequest of the body to the earth and the soul to God, as testators negotiate their access to salvation. The struggle to reconcile financial wealth and spiritual value, and the acceptance of the co-existence of earthly and devotional riches, is reflected in the linguistic choices of the female authors studied thus far. The previous chapter demonstrated that Margery Kempe's inner conflict between her youthful mercantile practice and her mature vocation as mystic and pilgrim is reflected in her language. In contrast, Martha Moulsworth's choice of vocabulary and accomplished use of poetic conventions in her memoir comfortably display her acceptance of her earthly career as wife and wealthy widow alongside her position as a devoted Christian. The genre of the will is the formal culmination of these two aspects of pre-modern living, as the document combines the spiritual and worldly ordering of a life before the moment of death. The most desperate risk medieval women attempted to mitigate in their wills was the length of their stay in Purgatory. During the Middle Ages, 'the clear-cut message [was] that the rich would have a harder time getting through Purgatory and into Paradise than the poor.'[557] The unknowable future of the soul features prominently in medieval wills, as salvation was not to be taken for granted, but something to strive for. In effect, medieval life was one in which the risk of an eternity in Hell was continuously off-set by the performance of good deeds and devotion, in the belief that the reward would be an eternity in Heaven. Medieval wills are an intensification of this process due to their written and legal status, as the moment of death, truth and judgement approaches.

In her will dated 10 March 1433, Margaret Blakburn (d.1435) writes, 'I give and bequeath and commend my soul to almighty God and to the most blessed virgin Mary and her most holy mother Anne and to all the saints'.[558] This opening bequest of the soul to God is formulaic, as is the trust placed in Mary as intercessor for the soul in the journey through Purgatory to Heaven, one of her key roles in medieval belief. Kermode sums up the nature of such aspects of medieval wills perfectly: they are 'at once tantalisingly intimate and conventionally standardised.'[559] This intimacy is revealed in Blakburn's invocation of St Anne, mother of the Virgin Mary. In doing so, Blakburn aligns herself with a dynasty of important

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[557] Christine Carpenter, 'The Religion of the Gentry in Fifteenth-Century England', in *England in the Fifteenth Century*, ed. by Daniel Williams (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 1987), pp.53-74 (p.58). See also the Introduction to this thesis, p.25.
[558] Margaret Blakburn, in *The Blakburns in York: Testaments of a Merchant Family in the Later Middle Ages* ed. by Valerie Black et al. (York: The Latin Project, 2006), pp.26-36 (p.27). All references are to this edition, hereafter cited by page number.
[559] Kermode, p.117.

and virtuous women. Eamon Duffy points out that the 'cult of Anne' appealed to the late medieval laity as she 'provided an image of female-fruitfulness which was maternal rather than virginal, and her thrice-married state [...] was an unequivocal assertion of the compatibility of sanctity and married life.'[560] As a mother and grandmother, it is likely that Blakburn looked to St Anne to give spiritual meaning to her own life and status as a member and founder of a mercantile dynasty through her marriage and childbearing.[561] St Anne figures in the Blakburn stained glass window in All Saints Church, York, hinting at a family affiliation with the saint.[562] St Anne was favoured by medieval urban élite, to whom the Blakburns belonged, due to her exemplary piety and virtue outside of monastic life whilst also being a hardworking wife, mother and then widow.[563] It has been observed that medieval English noblewomen drew on biblical figures as a strategy 'to promote their position' in commissions of 'a variety of media such as illuminated manuscripts, stained glass, tapestry, sculpture, and panel painting.'[564] Blackburn was not a noblewoman, but her opening act of spiritual rhetoric links her with a saint whose worldly life gave value to her own. Blakburn's choice of saint to whom to appeal speaks of her own earthly interests, perhaps even operating as spiritual rhetoric. Similarly, Margery Kempe's *Boke* aligns her with saints who give value to her career as wife, mother and pious pilgrim.[565] Medieval women could choose from the array of saints 'on the market' in order to bolster the presentation of their own spiritual worth. Through this selection of saints, the will becomes a text for personal expression by mercantile women in the way that the commissions of tapestries, illuminated manuscripts and sculpture could serve for their noble counterparts.

Testators' choices of saints are emblematic of their personal devotion, and the written reference to them signifies a degree of agency beyond the formulaic features of the legal and

[560] St Anne 'represented both the notion of the family and the principle of fertility, whose three holy daughters gave birth in their turn to six Apostles and the Saviour of the world.' Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England c.1400-c.1580* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2005), pp.181-2.

[561] In artistic representations, St Anne is often depicted teaching the Virgin Mary to read; perhaps Blakburn's appeal to her in her will is suggestive of an interest in reading, literacy, and the passing on of knowledge. David Farmer, *The Oxford Dictionary of Saints* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), p.20-21.

[562] All Saints website <http://allsaints-northstreet.org.uk/stainedglass.html> [Accessed 30 August 2018]. Nicholas Blakburn, Margaret's husband, financed a perpetual chantry in a chapel dedicated to St Anne on Foss Bridge, York in January 1425. Sarah Pederson, 'Piety and Charity in the Painted Glass of Late Medieval York', *Northern History*, 36.1 (2000), 33-42 (pp.36-7).

[563] Pederson, p.37.

[564] Marian Bleeke, Jennifer Borland, Rachel Dressler, Martha Easton and Elizabeth L'Estrange, 'Artistic Representation: Women and/in Medieval Culture' in *A Cultural History of Women in the Middle Ages, Volume Two*, ed. by Kim M. Phillips (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013), pp.179-214 (pp.206-7).

[565] See p.133 of this thesis.

spiritual genre.[566] In contrast to Blakburn, Dame Eleanor Hull appeals directly to Christ as the sole intercessor for her soul in her will written in her 'owne hande' on 14 October 1458:

> I betake my soule to the swete mercy of Oure Lord Jhesu Crist, besechyng hym, as he made hit by his infinite goodnes and bought hit with the most dere price of his precious blode, that he graunt hit a place among the nombre of his chosen people in the blisse of hevyn.[567]

Perhaps due to the influence of her male confessor, Roger Huswyff, Hull's appeal for salvation is focussed on the male figure of Christ, rather than his mother the Virgin Mary. Instead of the community of saints centring on the Virgin Mary found in other medieval women's wills, Hull appears to envisage a community of 'chosen people' centred on Christ. She concentrates on Christ's purchase of salvation for humankind, referring to it as something that he 'bought' with the 'most dere price of his precious blode' (247). Hull's use of financial terms to describe the intercessory role of Christ in her salvation indicates her familiarity with monetary exchange, recalling both her worldly life as a wealthy member of the retinue of Queen Joan (second wife of Henry IV), and her devotional life within Benedictine religious houses in later years.[568] Hull's fiscal terms encapsulate the medieval understanding of the financial metaphor of redemption.[569] Christ's sacrifice wipes out the debt of sin on behalf of humanity.

Maud Parr (1492-1531) lived on the cusp of the early modern period. She lived during the reigns of the early Tudors but before the Reformation: she is the embodiment of the falsity of a clear division between the two eras. As with the earlier medieval women's wills examined in this chapter, Parr's will (1530) begins with the conventional bequeathing of her 'ſoule to

[566] Like Blakburn, Margaret Paston (c.1420-1484) opens her will (1482) with a choice of appropriate saints: 'First, I betake my sowle to God Almyghty and to Our Lady his blissed moder, Seint Michael, Seint John Baptist, and to alle seintes'. Paston invokes the help of St Michael as his intercession was believed to be so powerful that he could rescue souls from Hell, not just speed them through Purgatory – in medieval art he was commonly depicted weighing souls for judgement. John the Baptist was also believed to have special intercessory influence for devout souls. Paston appeals to the saints that she believes will most benefit the progression of her soul through Purgatory into Heaven; a written investment in her afterlife. Margaret Paston, in *Paston Letters and Papers of the Fifteenth Century, part I*, ed. by Norman Davis (Oxford: Published for the Early English Text Society by the Oxford University Press, 2004), pp.382-9 (p.383). All references are to this edition, hereafter cited by page number. All other references to the Paston papers in this chapter are also taken from this volume. Wills are cited by page number while letters are cited by letter and line number as was done in Chapter Two of this thesis.

[567] Dame Eleanor Hull, 'Dame Eleanor's Will', in *Women's Writing in Middle English: An Annotated Anthology, second edition*, ed. by Alexandra Barratt (London: Routledge, 2013), pp.246-8 (pp.246-7). All references are to this edition, hereafter cited by page number.

[568] Hull was associated with the powerful and wealthy Benedictine Abbey of St Albans. During her widowhood she lived in a house of Benedictine nuns at Sopwell Priory. She died in 1460, at the small Benedictine priory at Cannington, not far from the place of her birth. See Appendix Two.

[569] This was discussed on pp.25-6 of the Introduction. See Appendix One for more definitions.

allmighty god'.[570] Interestingly, she does not refer to the saints or the Virgin Mary as intercessors. Like Hull, Parr appears to cut out the middle-men (and women) to appeal directly to the highest authority for salvation, hinting at Parr's personal beliefs and the lessening of the significance of the saints and the Virgin Mary in the years preceding the Reformation. As with the memoirs studied in the previous chapter, the choice to exclude certain aspects of the formulaic genre of the will reveals as much agency as the decision of what to include. An exclusion is as much a persuasive technique as the inclusion of specific saints to signify personal affiliation to an aspect of devotion.

Writing from a Protestant perspective in 1601, Elizabeth Hardwick seems not to require the intercession of the saints. The post-Reformation Virgin Queen, rather than the Virgin Mary of medieval wills, is the woman with whom she chooses to align herself in her will. Hardwick begins by referencing the reign of Elizabeth I:

> the ſeaven and twentieth day of Aprill in the three and fortith yeere of the happie Raigne of oure moſt gracious Soueraigne Ladye Elizabeth by the grace of god Quene of England ffrance and Ireland Defender of the faithe and in the yere of oure Lorde god one thowſande sixe hundred and one.[571]

Following this deferential nod to the monarch, Hardwick asserts her own worldly status: 'I Elizabeth Counteſe of Shrewſburye lately wife of George late Earle of Shrewſburye Deceaſed' (188[r]). Despite this apparently worldly opening to her testament, Hardwick declares that she writes for pious as well as financial reasons. In a continuation of the medieval desire for a 'good death', she states that the 'tyme of Deathe ys moſt vncerteyn and not be known to any mortall creature' and so it is the duty of 'euery chriſtian whilſt healthe and memorye beſt ſerve ſo to diſpoſe of ſuche goodes and thinges as god hath lent them during this mortall life' (188[r]).[572] Hardwick's reference to the 'goodes and thinges' that God has 'lent' her during her life on earth suggests that she credits her financial and social advancement to divine grace and interprets her worldly wealth as a sign that she is one of the chosen elect for salvation. She

[570] Maud Parr, PRO prob/11/24, 84[v]. All references are to this document; transcriptions are my own.
[571] Elizabeth Hardwick, PRO prob/11/111, 188[r]. All references are to this document; transcriptions are my own.
[572] Vincent Gillespie has noted the medieval concern with the 'Three Sorrowful Things' that 'haunt human consciousness: the inevitability of death, the uncertainty of its time, and the unknowability of the soul's fate after death.' This uncertainty remains present in human consciousness in modern life, and was no less applicable to early modern women like Hardwick. Gillespie writes in reference to the medieval lyric genre, but the creation of a testament must in its very nature be informed by these concerns, and Hardwick's is no exception. Vincent Gillespie, 'Dead Still/Still Dead', *The Medieval Journal*, 1 (2011), 53-78 (p.53).

writes in preparation for inevitable death which will occur at an unknown point in her future, striving to interpret clues to the fate of her soul in relation to her privileged worldly status. While prosperous medieval testators could use their wealth to influence the fate of their soul and purchase salvation, Protestant women such as Hardwick were unable to influence redemption, and so looked for signs that they were predestined to achieve salvation. Nuances such as these reveal testators' personal beliefs as they write within an otherwise restricted genre.

After her reference to the Queen, Hardwick bequeaths her soul and body with characteristic exactness:

> I commend and committ my ſoule into the hands of my moſt mercifull and heavenlie father moſt humblie beſeeching hym and moſt fullie beleeving that he will place the ſame in the moſt bleſſed companye of his elect there moſt comfortable to [...] praiſe his moſt holie name for euermore. (188ʳ)

The saints of pre-Reformation wills are replaced by God's 'elect' in Hardwick's testament.[573] Despite this, Hardwick's choice of vocabulary –'moſt mercifull', 'humblie beſeeching', 'moſt holie' – retains the tone of appeal found in pre-Reformation wills, and her language works hard to present herself as a humble Christian.[574] Having lost the ability to choose appropriate saints to whom to appeal, early modern women such as Hardwick faithfully bequeathed their souls to God, trusting that they were already saved.[575] Hardwick's will places her within conventional contemporary Protestant belief, as well as locating her within the circles of Elizabeth I. The two worlds exist and are honoured simultaneously in Hardwick's testament.

Hardwick's instruction that her body is to be buried in 'All Hallowes church at Derbye', now Derby Cathedral, is particularly interesting as none of her four husbands nor family appear to have been buried there (188ʳ). Hardwick's final resting place speaks of her identification

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[573] Her plea that she will find herself amongst the elect hints that her beliefs lent towards Calvinism. Calvinists believe that the fate of the soul is predestined and so cannot be altered by worldly actions. John Balserak, *Calvinism: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), p.12.

[574] Praying to saints was also ruled out in Protestantism. George Herbert's 'To all Angels and Saints' (1633) suggests, however, that this was not necessarily easily accepted and that should 'our Master' decree it, invocation of the saints would resume readily. George Herbert, 'To all Angels and Saints', in *The English Poems of George Herbert* ed. by Helen Wilcox (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp.281-2.

[575] Charles W. A. Prior has observed that 'the majority of English Protestants identified themselves with a Calvinist theology, rooted in predestination piety.' Charles W. A. Prior, 'Early Stuart Controversy: Church, State, and the Sacred', in *The Oxford Handbook of Early Modern English Literature and Religion*, ed. by Andrew Hiscock and Helen Wilcox (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), pp.69-83 (p.69).

with the county of her birth.[576] Indeed, she has come to be defined far more enduringly as 'Bess of Hardwick' than by the names of her husbands. Perhaps she chose to be buried in the county town owing to the extensive land and property she owned in Derbyshire: Chatsworth, the two Hardwick halls and the Oldcotes estate were all within the county. Her will informs us that she oversaw the design and construction of her own monument, thereby ensuring that she was commemorated in precisely the manner she desired: 'my Tombe and monument sεalbe errected and builte which at this preſent ys finiſhed and wanteth nothing but ſetting vp' (188r). Her choice of burial place and the construction of her own monument are in keeping with the triumphal declaration of status seen in the 'ES' adorning the towers of new Hardwick Hall.[577] The architecture is inscribed in the same way as her text, to signify her choice, authority and power to posterity; these architectural and linguistic choices are enabled through significant financial means and independence. The written instructions of Hardwick's will exist beyond the text as she inscribes herself on the landscape and buildings of her locality.

Going further than Hardwick, Puritan Katherine Barnardiston presents her 1633 testament as an act of worship: she writes 'In the name' of the Holy Trinity. [578] The intense devotion of Barnardiston's testament reads like a prayer at times, revealing the potential for the will to be influenced by other genres:

> I make my teſtamt and will In the name of the eternall living god the father ſonne and the holy ghoſt In whoſe name I was baptiſed In whom only I hope and beleeve to be ſaved, ffirſt I bequeath my ſoule into thy hande o god father ſonne and holy ghost thou haſt firſt made me and thou haſt giuen thy ſonne to become man and died for my ſinns o father for thy ſone ſake have mercye on me. (205r)

Barnardiston believes that her salvation has been paid for by Christ's crucifixion and that she has been admitted to salvation through the power of baptism. Her syntax reveals her understanding of this as a reciprocal transaction in which Christ's life was given in payment for her worldly sins in exchange for her salvation: 'thou haſt giuen thy ſonne [...] for my ſinns'. Her repetition of 'I' and 'me' infuses this formulaic appeal to God with Barnardiston's personal

[576] Similarly, in her will Margaret Paston chooses Mautby church as her burial place, aligning her with her natal rather than marital family (p.383).
[577] See figures 5 and 6 in Appendix Two.
[578] Katherine Barnardiston, PRO prob/11/163, 205r. All references are to this document; transcriptions are my own.

devotion, therefore functioning as her own personal investment in Christ's sacrifice and claiming her place as a beneficiary of the resulting redemption.[579]

The emotional currency of trust, invested in the figures of saints and later Christ or God, remains the same in the wills of late medieval and early modern women; it is simply the figurehead or focal point of that trust which changes. This aspect of trust found in women's wills is of a hierarchical, vertical nature, as they defer responsibility for the fate of their souls to the higher beings of the saints (in the Middle Ages) and Christ/God (post-Reformation). With the loss of the Virgin Mary and saints, such as Anne, as intercessors for the soul, female testators from the early modern period lost the woman-to-woman relationship, replacing it with the patriarchal woman-to-man supplication for salvation to Christ/God.

Despite the apparently formulaic opening of wills, a closer reading of the vocabulary, tone and divine figure(s) to whom the authors chose to appeal reveals the agency that testators invested in their writing. The spiritual formula of the genre itself is interpreted as a rhetorical device through which identity and personal preference can be expressed. The relationship with the saints, the Virgin Mary, Christ and God is categorically one of exchange and defined by transaction in the wills of pre-modern women. Regardless of whether the authors were member of the Roman faith, like Margaret Blakburn, and appealed to a chosen saint, or, like Katherine Barnardiston, were Puritan and believed their salvation, if predestined, to be the result of divine grace, their writing implies that they understood the eternal fate of their souls to be granted through a system of payment, demonstrating that commercial theory is central to the understanding and performance of devotion in the testamentary genre before and after the Reformation.

(ii) Religious Networks

It was not only through appeals for intercession to God or the saints that pre-modern women attempted to negotiate and signify their salvation in their wills; bequests to religious communities were an equally important strategy. Andrew J. Counter has noted that the provision of an inheritance can promote, preserve, deny or destroy different family models or

[579] The importance of personal pronouns in Brilliana Harley's letters was noted in Chapter Two (pp.84; p.95) and is also relevant to Elizabeth Joscelin's *Legacy* (pp.240-1).

networks.[580] This section discusses the advancement and conservation of women's religious networks through the discourse of inheritance in their wills, and the nuances of this representation in their individual texts.

The style in which female testators established and maintained their place within religious networks varied. Maud Parr's will (1530) contains a list of gifts to a community of friars, detailing her bequests using brief business-like language (84^{v}). By contrast, in 1458, Dame Eleanor Hull bequeathed a material inheritance representing a meaningful, spiritual relationship with fellow religious women. Rather than the itemised financial list of Parr's will, Hull's reveals material objects which signify the value that she placed on her own piety, her devotional network and communal worship. Hull's bequests imply a reciprocal relationship with the nuns of Cannington priory, her place of residence at the time of her death. She bequeaths to them 'one peyre of chaundelers [candlestick/chandelier] of silver, a crosse of silver and a censere [censer] of sylvere and the appayrell of the auter [altar] of white damaske and a chesiple [chasuble], such as they wol desire of two' (247). Emblematic of the emotional ties built up over the time of Hull's residence with the nuns, her bequests conform to the medieval tradition of legacies left to religious houses to hasten the soul through Purgatory. The nuns are given a choice of chasubles for their priest to wear at Mass, suggesting that Hull was aware of their community's need whilst a granting them some freedom of choice: she relinquishes an element of control over her material goods to the religious female community, which, by implication, denies the male priest this agency. For communal benefit in the celebration of Mass, the repeated use of these objects would remind all who worshipped of the donor. Such aids to devotion are appropriate items to leave to a community of religious women, but they also illustrate the worldly wealth of the testator. The candlesticks, cross and censer are all silver, whilst the altar cloth is damask and the 'chesiple' (priest's vestment) would usually be made from costly, embroidered fabric.[581] Hull's careful notation of the 'white damaske' hints that these cloths would be used for the important Christian festivals of Christmas and Easter.[582] Through such bequests, Hull aligns herself with the major events of the Roman

[580] Andrew J. Counter, *Inheritance in Nineteenth-Century French Culture: Wealth, Knowledge and the Family* (London: Legenda, 2010), pp.20-21.
[581] Barratt, p.247.
[582] The colours of robes and altar cloths denote the season within the Christian Church. White is also used for saints' days. Green signifies growth and is used throughout the year. Purple is used during fasting at Lent and Advent. Red is associated with Holy Week, Pentecost and martyr days. John Bowker, 'Liturgical Colours', in *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of World Religions* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), <https://www-oxfordreference-com.ezproxy.bangor.ac.uk/view/10.1093/acref/9780192800947.001.0001/acref-9780192800947-e-4322> [Accessed 21 December 2020].

Church, thereby amassing spiritual value for herself. These material objects are invested with her personal devotion, which is transformed into communal, female worship as she bequeaths them to Cannington Priory.

Like Hull, Elizabeth Poynings bequeathed devotional items in her 1487 will; however, these were to remain within her immediate family rather than benefit a religious house. Included in Poynings's bequests of household items to her daughter, Mary, for her dowry are objects to aid devotional practice, such as 'an Agnys w*ith* a baleys [balas ruby], iij saphires, iij perlys, w*ith* an jmage of Saint Antony apon it'.[583] This beautiful and expensive Agnus Dei (the Lamb of God) set with jewels and pearls demonstrates the connection between the worldly and devotional aspects of medieval women's lives and relationships. Both the balas ruby and the sapphires have qualities appropriate for a devotional item owned and bequeathed by a woman to a woman. The fifteenth-century English translation of the French lapidary of King Philip, known as 'The North Midland Lapidary', describes the qualities of precious stones.[584] A 'balyes' stone 'dolyu*er*is a ma*n* of ydel thoghtes & sorrow, & he sal kel a ma*n* of lychery' (48-9). The 'saphir' is associated with 'chastite' and 'is of suche colo*ur* as heuen [and] […] He y*t* lokes appon a saphir, he most haue in mynde ye Ioye of heuen and most be in gret hope' (42-3). Protection against idleness, lechery and the encouragement of chastity is especially appropriate here for a daughter hoping to make a good marriage, and recalls the advice for women in the fourteenth-century didactic poem 'How the Goode Wife Taught Hyr Doughter'.[585] The precious stones adorning the Agnus Dei demonstrate materiality of the highest quality and far-reaching trade links as they would be mined in distant countries such as India. Poynings's detailing of the number of precious stones adorning the item recalls the itemised letters of her sister-in-law, Margaret Paston, and reveals the influence of women's household accounting upon their testaments as they strive to combat any confusion over the items they bequeath.[586]

St Anthony was believed to be a healer and medieval wives and mothers would provide much of the corporal care for their families during sickness.[587] The inclusion of his image, and

[583] Elizabeth Poynings, in *Paston Letters and Papers of the Fifteenth Century, part I*, ed. by Norman Davis (Oxford: Published for the Early English Text Society by the Oxford University Press, 2004), pp.210-4 (p.211). All references are to this edition, hereafter cited by page number.
[584] 'The North Midland Lapidary of King Philip', in *English Medieval Lapidaries*, ed. by Joan Evans and Mary S. Serjeantson (London: Oxford University Press, 1933), pp.38-47. All references are to this edition.
[585] This was discussed in the Introduction, pp.39-41.
[586] Margaret Paston's shopping lists were analysed in Chapter Two, pp.87-9.
[587] Farmer, p.24.

indeed Poynings's specific reference to him, hints at a particular female alignment with St Anthony and her perception of care for the body as a female duty. For Poynings, this Agnus Dei is at home amongst the household items that she leaves to her daughter, confirming that devotional practice formed part of a medieval woman's daily routine. As with the appeals to saints for intercession noted in the previous section, Poynings's ownership of the image of St Anthony and her bequest of the object to her daughter serves as a rhetorical device to encourage Mary to cultivate certain virtues considered appropriate for medieval women. Whilst Hull's bequests of devotional items to the nuns of Cannington demonstrate a female devotional network of otherwise unrelated women, Poynings's bequests to Mary illustrate a familial network of devotion based on a biological connection. Reading the precise detailing and identification of material objects can enable us to interpret the tangible bequests as alternative texts which pass on certain values from testator to heir. The language of the will invisibly inscribes tactile items with the emotion and beliefs of the previous owner.

In a similar strategy, Maud Parr (1530) bequeaths her daughter, Katherine, 'a payer of bades of corall with white croſſes' and 'a payer of greate beades of mother of perle' (86ʳ). These beads could be rosaries – an aid to devotion used by the believer to count their way through their prayers – as well as expensive items of adornment.[588] Parr's beads could combine spiritual and material wealth. In her 1439 will, the Countess of Warwick included rosaries in her wishes for the decoration of her tomb: 'all a-bowt my tumbe, to be made por*e* men a[*n*]d wemen In theire por*e* Array, w*ith* their bedys In theire handes'.[589] Warwick's words represent the sculptural depiction of her earthly presence – her tomb – which acts as an extension of the written bequests in her will. As with Parr's beads, Warwick's reference to the artistic representation of rosary beads connects her to a community of shared religious experience through an object that could also demonstrate wealth. Rachel Dressler has argued that the medieval tomb and effigy were 'among the most powerful vehicles for representing one's

[588] In Chapter Two, we saw Margaret Paston refer to a necklace as beads without any apparent devotional connotations in her letter to her husband, and this could be the case for the beads to which Parr refers here. See pp.92-3. In the late Middle Ages rosary beads were items commonly bequeathed by women in their wills, to statues in their parish church as well as to relatives. Rosary beads are a specifically Marian devotional aid, connecting prayers to the Virgin Mary as intercessor for the soul. The material of which the beads were manufactured was believed to have some significance; for example, coral beads were said to stop bleeding and promote fertility, jet was thought to provoke menstruation and discern female virginity, while amber beads helped women in childbirth. See Katherine L. French, *The Good Women of the Parish: Gender and Religion After the Black Death* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), p.47.

[589] Countess of Warwick, in *The Fifty Earliest English Wills in the Court of Probate, London,* ed. by Frederick J. Furnivall (London: Published for the Early English Text Society, by Trübner & Co., 1882), pp.116-9 (p.117). All references are to this edition, hereafter cited by page number.

social and spiritual condition', particularly for members of the aristocracy.[590] Warwick's meticulous description of her tomb implies that she understood this and used her wealth to perform her identity for posterity. Details of 'carefully rendered costume', such as the rosary beads, 'speak to a time-consuming and careful sculptural process', which would, of course, in turn indicate the financial investment in the craftmanship and time required to create the desired tomb.[591] By depicting the prayers of the poor surrounding her, Warwick must have hoped to help her soul's journey through Purgatory, lessening the risk of prolonged punishment. Of course, her wealth enabled her to request such a detailed monument, showing the commercial aspect of devotion in this period. The poor were considered to have special intercessory powers as Christ had identified himself with them.[592] Warwick's financial situation allowed her to direct how she was represented and remembered for posterity. Warwick inscribed her monument with rhetorical bodily adornments in much the same way as Margery Kempe embellished her *Boke* with references to her symbolic white clothing.[593] Apparel, jewellery and the artistic representation of these in texts and in art forms by pre-modern women operate as extended metaphors for the earthly and spiritual wealth of their owners across a number of genres.

Like Poynings and Parr, Margaret Paston (1482) created a family-based female religious network through her bequests, adding Books of Hours to expensive beads and devotional aids. She bequeaths her daughter, Anne, her 'p*re*mer' (386). To her daughter-in-law, Margery, wife of her son John (III), Paston leaves her 'pixt of siluer with ij siluer cruett*es* [Mass vessels] and my massebook [possibly another Book of Hours], with all myn awterclothes' (387). It is interesting that Paston chose to leave these objects of worship to her female heirs, and to Margery in particular, who receives several more devotional items than Anne. Perhaps Paston saw Margery as the next in line to guide the Pastons in their devotional practice. As the matriarch of the household, Margery would be expected to ensure that her servants and children abided by religious teachings and attended services. Margaret Paston obtained a license for her private altar in her home at Mautby in her old age.[594] Evidently, she was a pious woman who would not allow her infirmity to hamper her worship. Her bequests to Margery appear to be the altar accoutrements and personal devotional items necessary for

[590] Rachel Dressler, 'Identity, Status, and Material: Medieval Alabaster Effigies in England', *Peregrinations: Journal of Medieval Art & Architecture*, 5.2 (2015), 65-96 (pp.67-8).
[591] Dressler, p.80.
[592] Duffy, p.360.
[593] See Chapter Three of this thesis for more on Kempe's white attire, pp.147-52.
[594] H.S. Bennett, *The Pastons and Their England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), p.206.

Mass. For the gentry of the fifteenth century, of which the Pastons were part, 'the family religious business was emphatically confined to the nuclear family.'[595] In gifting her devotional objects to Margery, Paston refines this tradition to focus specifically on the women of the nuclear family. It is also possible that the two Books of Hours bequeathed by Paston contained intimate family details, such as dates of death.[596] If this was the case, these devotional items would further aid the commemoration of the souls of the departed as written records of their lives and deaths. As with Hull's bequests of altar accessories to the nuns of Cannington, Paston's legacies of items to be used during Mass work as a devotional currency of memory: the sight of the objects during use would call to mind their original owner. Beyond this, however, through her bequest of the Books of Hours, Paston left the younger women material, indeed literary objects which could quite literally be inscribed with the text of the family's life. In this sense, Paston's will serves as a pointer of alternative and communal life-writing within a network of women related by marriage and by blood as the Books of Hours pass from one Paston woman to the next. The text of Paston's will potentially worked in conjunction with the texts of the Books of Hours in an intertextual currency of devotion, family history and memory.

Emphasising her devotional networks, Paston's will includes instructions for the maintenance and repair of various churches. While the clergy were responsible for the upkeep of the chancel, it was the duty of the laity to maintain the nave and supply candles, altar cloths, vessels, liturgical books in the Middle Ages.[597] Performing and financing this duty was a pious act beneficial for one's soul.[598] Paston seems to have fully assumed this responsibility to maintain the physical building of the church, first commissioning the repair of the roof, windows and walls surrounding her burial place at Mautby (383). Counting towards parish maintenance, this sprucing-up of her final resting place would profit her soul, but it would also aid the honourable representation of the Paston and Mautby families; a worn and untidy

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[595] Carpenter, p.69.

[596] For example, the death dates of Alice Bolton (daughter of Margaret Blakburn) and her husband are written in the Bolton Hours, Pederson, p.41; Eamon Duffy has noted the familiar practice of recording family births and deaths in Books of Hours by late medieval owners, p.25; The de Bois Hours (c.1325-30) includes family obits and births recorded by the successive owners between the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries: Kathryn A. Smith, *Art, Identity and Devotion in Fourteenth Century England: Three Women and their Books of Hours* (London: The British Library and Toronto Press, 2003), pp.31-2; pp.309-10.

[597] French, pp.17-8. The High Cross Wardens' and Churchwardens' Book, 1512-78, gives evidence of women's activities in the maintenance of the furnishings of their parish church of Stratton, Cornwall. For example, in 1518 Allson Hoge is paid 'viijd' (one days' wages of a skilled labourer) for 'mendyng of churche clothyng', and Morton's wife receives half of Allson's wages, just 'iiijd', for 'mendyng the serpyls.' 'High Cross Wardens' and Churchwardens' Book, 1512-78', in *Stratton Churchwardens' Accounts, 1512-1578*, ed. by Joanna Mattingly (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2018), pp.41-144 (p.47).

[598] French, pp.17-8.

ancestral grave would not help the worldly advancement of her heirs nor the honouring of her ancestors. Eamon Duffy suggests that, particularly in the East Anglian rebuilding of churches, wealthy fifteenth-century donors used their renovations 'as post-mortem fire insurance' to limit the time spent in Purgatory.[599] Of course, Paston lived amongst the wealthy East-Anglian bourgeois and her testamentary instructions for restoration speak of her involvement with this trend, and of her understanding of the need to spend her worldly wealth wisely for the benefit of her soul and those of her family. Rosenthal suggests that her choice of burial site in Mautby, the village of her natal family, made 'a statement regarding her proprietorial hold on the village and on the power of her purse'.[600] Paston combined devotional responsibility to maintain the church with a desire to express familial inheritance and economic power. As with Hardwick's and Warwick's instructions for their tombs, Paston uses the Mautby church building as an alternative material on which to write her legacy. She goes on: 'to the emendyng of the church of Freton in Suff*olk* I bequethe a chesiple and an awbe', giving the same to the churches of Basyngham, Matelask and Gresham (385). Contemporary definitions of 'emendement' included 'improvement, alleviation, redress, remedy', as well as, in theological terms, 'improvement or amendment of moral life, repentance' and 'penance' (*MED* 1a; 2). This combination of meanings perfectly encapsulates Paston's understanding of her bequests for 'emendyng' the churches: in leaving vestments for the priests and repairing the physical aspects of the properties, she would not only improve the state of the church and so glorify God, but perform penance for her sins, aiding the salvation of her soul and ensure her memorialization in these churches. Even within the business-like listing of her bequests to her chosen churches Paston's diction is carefully chosen to convey her instructions using vocabulary that appropriately combines her commercial understanding with her devotion.

In the margins of Paston's will, next to the bequests to the churches, the amounts 'xvj s. viij d.' appear; presumably these are the sums to cover the 'emendyng' of the buildings (385). The specific notation of monetary amounts again recalls Paston's shopping lists.[601] Studied together, Paston's letters and will give the impression of a woman who writes with a confident grasp of finances in a business-like manner. Far from revealing a woman devoid of literary skill, these documents showcase her commercial acumen which is her written style. Paston reserved her most substantial bequest for church maintenance 'to the rep*ar*aci*o*n of the cherch of Redham, there as I was borne, I bequeth v m*a*rc and a chesiple of silk with an awbe with

[599] Duffy, p.302.
[600] Rosenthal, *Margaret Paston's Piety*, p.111.
[601] See pp.87-9 of Chapter Two.

myn armes thereupon, to the emendement of the same cherche' (385). This larger sum shows Paston's emotional tie to her birthplace, and honours her natal family connection. The silk 'chesiple' and 'awbe' decorated with her family arms further displays the pride felt for her ancestors, as does her request for the inclusion of Mautby and Redham arms on her tombstone, and also ensured that, every time the chasuble and alb were used, the Mautby, Redham, and Paston names would be recalled (383-4). These material objects are transformed into texts through the symbolic family inscription with which they are adorned.[602]

Unlike Paston and Hardwick, Maud Parr chose to align herself in death with her marital family. More conventionally, Parr gives instructions for her 'body to be buryed in the blacke ffryers church of london where my husbond lyethe' (84[v]). Significantly, Parr chose to be buried with her husband, who predeceased her by fourteen years, beneath the monument she had built for them.[603] Peter Sherlock has observed that 'a monument is the self-proclaimed voice of the past': Parr's decision to spend eternity next to her spouse evidences her understanding of her identity as the wife/widow of Sir Thomas Parr, and her wish to be remembered and commemorated according to the social status this gave her.[604] Sir Thomas and Maud Parr had purchased a home in Blackfriars not long before the birth of their daughter, Katherine; Parr's choice to be buried in this locality suggests her perception of this as a significant stage of her life.[605] In return for her burial in the church of the 'blacke fryers', Parr bequeaths to them 'thre poundes ſix ſhillings eight pence' rather than the standard 40s which they are to receive, in line with the other London orders of friars, should be she buried elsewhere (84[v]).[606] Parr's gift to the Dominican friars (also known as the black friars due to their habits) implies not only a payment in thanks for her eternal resting place within their walls, but also that she understood salvation was purchasable, to an extent, through donations in exchange for the prayers given in thanks for the money: in this reciprocal and cyclical process, cash for the living inspires remembrance and guarantees prayers for the dead. Her will reveals the financial cost of death

[602] Like Margaret Paston, her sister-in-law Elizabeth Paston Poynings sets aside money in her 1487 will for the repair of churches. She bequeaths 20s for the maintenance of the church of Dorking, Surrey, and for the 'reparacion of the stepull of the said chruche of Saint Albans xx solid' (210). Whilst she does not devote the same level of monetary worth to the repair of churches, nor to the same number of parishes, as Margaret Paston does, the presence of such bequests in Poynings's will suggests medieval women did so as insurance against a prolonged stay in Purgatory. The marital connection between Paston and Poynings (Elizabeth was the sister of Margaret's husband) also suggests that the repair of churches was a particular concern for women of their social rank: the Pastons were influential members of the mercantile gentry community.
[603] Susan E. James, *Kateryn Parr: The Making of a Queen* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1991), p.19.
[604] Peter Sherlock, *Monuments and Memory in Early Modern England* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), p.1.
[605] James, *Kateryn Parr,* p.14.
[606] In 1530, £3 6S 8d would have the approximate spending power of almost £1,500 today with which the friars could purchase two cows or pay the wages of a skilled tradesman for 111 days.

and commemoration while disclosing that a pre-modern widow had agency in her choice of burial place, and that this choice was itself an expression of self-identity when written down in her testament. Whether a widow chose to be buried with her natal family, like Margaret Paston, with her deceased husband, like Maud Parr, or separately from any natal or marital relations in an assertion of her own independent status, like Elizabeth Hardwick, the inclusion of such a written instruction in a will combined with financial legacies in a rhetorical tactic to ensure executors obeyed the testator's directions.[607]

Parr's pragmatism is revealed in her recognition that death is unpredictable and that burial with her husband may not be practical should she die away from London. Exerting post-mortem control over the fate of her body, she provides a contingency plan should this happen: 'if I dye not within xx miles of London then my body to be buryed where myn executours ſhall thinke moſt convenyent' (84v). Parr's precise instruction of a twenty-mile cut-off distance for her burial in London creates the impression of a woman comfortable and familiar with numbers, who was an able traveller at the time of writing her will, and indeed one with a great deal of sense: returning the body from a distance would incur a great cost as well as a delay in a funeral service and so, potentially, in her passage through Purgatory.[608] In the event of her death occurring further than twenty miles from London, Parr relinquishes control of her burial site to her executors, demonstrating the extent to which she trusts them to honour her suitably. Parr's writing style reveals a practical rather than emotional approach to death. Her syntax expresses composure and a logical thought processes which is not hampered by any fear surrounding the possibility of a sudden death which could prevent her first choice of burial place being possible.

Despite the reform of doctrinal practices in the sixteenth century, some similarities remain between late medieval and early modern women's wills, particularly in the maintenance of religious networks. Katherine Barnardiston's 1633 will expresses the importance of her natal parish in her choice of burial place: 'My deſire is alſo that my bodie […] be brought to the church and the parriſhe where I was borne' (206r). Her use of 'deſire' implies Barnardiston's

[607] Unfortunately, it is not always possible to trace whether the testators' rhetorical strategies succeeded, and their wishes were fulfilled, as some tombs and churches do not survive. Margaret Paston's grave at Mautby has been lost, Maud Parr was buried according to her wishes in Blackfriars but the monastery was dissolved in 1536, and the graves, records, and buildings lost in the Great Fire of London (1666). Elizabeth Hardwick's tomb can still be seen in Derby Cathedral. It seems the written and financial rhetoric of these three women combined successfully.
[608] James has noted that, in the Tudor period, a death twenty miles outside London was understood to be the cut-off distance for a burial within the city. Parr's inclusion of this distance in her will implies a familiarity with the protocol. *Women's Voices*, p.25.

perception of her agency in her written testament. She requests to be buried ‘in the grave of my deareʃt and firʃt huʃband if it may be or ells in the grave where my deare father does lye’ (206r). Barnardiston employs the language of affection in her will as she refers to her ‘deare father’ and ‘deareʃt’ husband revealing that a will can be an expression of emotion as well as a document to order the legal, financial and spiritual preparations for death. As both men were buried within the church of the parish of her birth, Barnardiston is happy to be eternally identified with either her father or first husband, even though she kept the name and title of her second and most worldly-successful husband. Significantly, Elizabeth Hardwick chose to adorn her magnificent new Hardwick Hall with the initials she obtained on her marriage to her final husband, George Talbot, Earl of Shrewsbury, despite their separation. For Hardwick, her husband’s title of Shrewsbury represented her greatest rise in status. The ‘ES’ directed towards the Derbyshire heavens is not in honour of their marriage or in any affection for her estranged husband, but a symbol of her worldly success: the choice of ‘ES’ over ‘ET’ speaks volumes. Both Hardwick and Barnardiston pick and choose the aspects of their marital identities by which they wish to be known to exert their hard-won status, using their names as texts to express social rank.

Despite the affection expressed for her father and first husband, Barnardiston’s flexibility over her burial place discloses that, for her, the most important relationship is with Christ. Furthermore, her will reveals her use of her spiritual network to share her Puritan faith using sermons for communal benefit. Of course, as a woman she was unable to write or present sermons herself, but her will unveils her involvement with the creation of such texts which was enabled through her financial means. She bequeaths ‘to the Miniʃter of St. Michaells in querne a black gowne wth this condition that he ʃhall giue me leave to make my choyce of a preacher to pforme my funerall ʃermon ʃome of tenn pound’ (206r).[609] In the 1640s, £10 could pay the wages of a skilled tradesman for 142 days, showing the importance Barnardiston placed on her freedom of choice. Her bequest is different from those of medieval women to their parish churches, in that her aim is not to purchase salvation, but to purchase a sermon which meets with her approval. Barnardiston’s money provided the opportunity to employ a preacher whose competence and religious persuasion she trusted. This sermon is her final purchase in this

[609] St Michael-le-Querne, London, was the parish of Barnardiston’s birth. Janet Gyford, ‘Barnardiston [*née* Banks], Katherine, Lady Barnardiston (d.1633), patron of puritanism’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford University Press, 2008), <http://www.oxforddnb.com.ezproxy.bangor.ac.uk/view/article/68914?docPos=1> [Accessed 8 November 2017]. All biographical details of Barnardiston are from this source unless otherwise stated.

world, and through it she invests in the dissemination of her religious beliefs and her faith in the Reformation. Early modern Puritans 'believed they were required by God to spread their belief and practice to others by word and example – to turn their families, their communities, and their larger societies into parts of the kingdom of God.'[610] Barnardiston's purchase of her desired funeral sermon demonstrates her active role in the propagation of her faith. Her rhetoric transforms her will into a contract: the minister of St Michael-le-Querne will only receive his black gown if he grants her the freedom to choose her own minister. She chooses Minister Marshall to perform the funeral sermon and bequeaths £10 for his black attire for the funeral (206^{r}). This is £2 more than the amount set aside for her husband's mourning clothes (206^{r}). This substantial difference implies that the most important actor in the performance of Barnardiston's funeral was the minister of her choice.[611] Barnardiston's own use of 'pforme' illustrates her understanding of the drama of death and the funeral as a display of devotion alongside earthly success. While the text of her will is a private document, the text of the sermon which she purchases the right to influence, is a communal text to be read aloud to a large audience.[612] As with the bequests of altar accoutrements made by medieval testators, Barnardiston's linguistic choice signifies the use of the private final will and testament as a tool with which to convert personal, earthly wealth into communal, spiritual capital.

The post-Reformation wills studied here move away from bequests of material devotional aids. What remains, however, is the rhetoric of self-identity and authorship, transferred from the objects used in Mass to chosen sermons. Pre-modern women's wills indicate a wide range of 'texts' through which the testators left their legacies – Books of Hours, tombs, church buildings, altar accoutrements, sermons. Lexical decisions and written styles indicate the varying attitudes with which individual women approached death. Maud Parr's matter-of-fact tone when dealing with the fate of her body reveals her practicality, as does Margaret Paston's listing of amounts to be bequeathed. The business-like manner of their wills demonstrates their familiarity and ease with detailing financial matters. Business acumen becomes a literary style. Katherine Barnardiston's adoption of the terms of drama uncovers an

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[610] Francis J. Bremer, *Puritanism: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), p.4.
[611] See also Barnardiston's direction for sermons, or lectures, read to the prisoners of Newgate on p.206 of this chapter.
[612] The document of the will itself would not have been printed or widely circulated, but bequests could have extensive social impact. Testaments did need to be read by numerous people, including at the probate court where it had to be proved before it could be executed. Carolyn Sale 'The Literary Thing: The Imaginary Holding of Isabella Whitney's "Wyll" to London (1573)', in *The Oxford Handbook of Law and Literature, 1500-1700* ed. by Lorna Hutson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), pp.431-47 (p.32).

understanding of the performative aspect of the will as well as the funeral. Despite being private, legal documents, wills were the texts through which testators could exert control over the performance of their posthumous selves.

Of course, the destruction and closure of monasteries, convents, abbeys and chantries, as well as the denial of Purgatory, greatly altered the religious landscape of post-Reformation England. On one hand, the field of recipients of testamentary giving was restricted, as monks, nuns and the poor could no longer provide intercession for the soul, while on the other it was widened as the funds which would have otherwise been bequeathed to religious houses could be bestowed as the testator wished – for dowries, to the inhabitants of alms-houses or to prisoners. The wills of Protestant women focus on a wide range of charitable causes which demonstrate their piety.

(iii) Charitable Bequests

For medieval people, charitable deeds and almsgiving formed a vital part of their insurance policy for salvation.[613] Piety and charity were inseparable and 'belief in purgatory fuelled the welfare system of charitable bequests'.[614] As discussed in the Introduction to this thesis, the fifteenth-century morality play, *Everyman*, teaches the need to moderate worldly wealth and goods with charitable giving in order to obtain salvation.[615] The metaphor of earthly life as an account to be balanced in order to obtain salvation was ubiquitous throughout the Middle Ages. Lisa Jardine explains,

> With the balance-sheet precision of the professional bookkeeper the successful merchant set aside for God and good works a carefully judged portion of his wealth, to ensure his soul a place in heaven […] In his will he left ample amounts to the poor, to charitable institutions and to convents, as well as a modest amount for masses to be said for his soul.[616]

[613] J.A.F Thomson has observed that 'it is often impossible to separate pious gifts from charitable ones, because no such differentiation existed in the mind of the donor' in the medieval period. J.A.F. Thomson, 'Piety and Charity in Late Medieval London', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, XVI (1965), 178-195 (p.180).
[614] Roberta Gilchrist, *Medieval Life: Archaeology and the Life Course* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2012), p.169.
[615] See pp.28-9 of the Introduction for a brief analysis of *Everyman.*
[616] Lisa Jardine, *Worldly Goods* (London: Macmillan, 1996), pp.124-5.

It was not only men who needed to balance their worldly wealth by performing or funding good works; women, too, had a responsibility to themselves and their community to do so.[617] Female figures were prominent in medieval church wall paintings which depicted the Seven Acts of Corporal Mercy, suggesting the particular association of women with charitable deeds in medieval belief.[618] These images would be seen by churchgoers on a regular basis, and so the link between femininity and corporal charity would be absorbed into the social consciousness. Works of mercy were reciprocal in nature as they 'constituted the only poor relief available to most' so that 'the benefactor could be confident of the grateful recipient's intercessory prayer'.[619] As a result, those with financial means 'would continue to invest' in such works.[620] Women's wills provide an insight into their participation in this unofficial welfare system of the Middle Ages, and the ways in which they manipulated this in their texts, as they invested in the salvation of their souls for the final time.

In her will written on 3 April 1422, Lady Peryne Clanbowe is keen to provide for those less fortunate, with the 'Residue' of all her 'goodes' not otherwise 'bequethen' in her testament left to her 'executo*u*rs' to divide, giving one half to her 'pore tena*u*ntz' and 'be her [their] discrec*i*on', the 'other halfe to god men faithfull and nedy þ*a*t ben in disese'.[621] Clanbowe places her trust in her executors to identify the deserving poor and sick who will benefit from the second half; she is careful to specify that they must be 'faithfull', meaning both devout and loyal. Duffy observes that 'the [prayers of the] living could do no good to the dead if they themselves were in a state of mortal sin.'[622] Clanbowe ensures that her beneficiaries are 'faithfull' so that her investment in intercessory prayers and alms is not wasted. 'Disese' meant not only illness, but also dis-ease and 'material discomfort' (*MED* 1a). Clanbowe's linguistic choices detailing this bequest imply that she perceived a hierarchy amongst the deserving and

[617] The prominence of this idea in pre-modern women's writing has been noted in the previous chapters. See, for example, Margery Kempe's care for her husband, John, discussed in the previous chapter (p.172 onwards) and Brilliana Harley's provision of alms detailed in Chapter Two (p.90).
[618] Miriam Gill, 'Female piety and impiety: selected images of women in wall paintings in England after 1300', in *Gender and Holiness: Men, women and saints in late medieval Europe*, ed. by Samantha J.E. Riches and Sarah Salih (London: Routledge, 2002), pp.101-20 (p.102). Likewise, Carole Hill and Amy Appleford have made the connection between women and the physical care for the body in the Middle Ages. Carole Hill, *Women and Religion in Late Medieval Norwich* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2010), pp.123; Amy Appleford, *Learning to Die in London, 1380-1540* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015), p.7. See also p.25; p.29; p.100; pp.171-2; pp.203-4 of this thesis.
[619] Hill, p.124.
[620] Hill, p.124.
[621] Lady Peryne Clanbowe, in *The Fifty Earliest English Wills in the Court of Probate, London,* ed. by Frederick J. Furnivall (London: Published for the Early English Text Society, by Trübner & Co., 1882), pp.49-51 (p.51). All references are to this edition, hereafter cited by page number.
[622] Duffy, p.365.

undeserving poor which was related to their piety. Clanbowe's halving of her remaining estate not otherwise bequeathed in her will recalls the wording used in *Everyman:* 'In almes half my good I wyll gyve with my hands twayne / In the waye of charyte with good entent'.[623] Clanbowe's vocabulary and syntax are recognised within the discourse and structure of the legal genre. While the fictional Everyman's charitable bequest is symbolically and purposefully ambiguous, Clanbowe specifies that her own poor tenants are to receive a charitable payment: it is her choice of beneficiary which displays agency rather than her language or tone. As with Paston's listing of financial quantities, Clanbowe's choice of phrase and diction locates her writing within the established legal form which is itself an expression of her style as well as purpose.

Like Clanbowe, Eleanor Hull relies on her executors to perform her posthumous charity in her 1458 will, directing that 'the pour folkis that have any wokely comfort of me' will continue to have it 'whiles they lyve, payed by the handis of myn executours' (247). Whereas Alexandra Barratt glosses 'wokely' as 'weekly', the *MED* also defines it as 'of little worth' and, in terms of food, 'plain' (*MED* 1). Hull may have been keen to stress that she gave the poor ordinary sustenance rather than anything luxurious and surplus to survival. Or, perhaps she adopts self-deprecating diction to present herself as a figure who was not hampered by worldly wealth: the poor, after all, were believed to have been 'images of Christ' and would find their souls entered Heaven much more speedily than those of the wealthy.[624] Hull follows Christ's example in identifying herself with the poor. Hull's will employs biblical intertextuality in much the same way as Margery Kempe's and Martha Moulsworth's memoirs were shown to in the previous chapter. Hull's writing style exemplifies her devotion not only through her bequests but in the biblical echoes she takes care to present in these, making linguistic choices for spiritual as well as financial effect.

Hull's will goes further than Clanbowe's financial bequests, leaving physical items to provide worldly comfort for the poor, including beds, mattresses, blankets and sheets (247).[625] She carefully specifies that her beneficiaries must be deserving and religious people: 'Goddis pour creaturis' (247). She goes on to 'bequthe my mantel, my cloke, al my gounes and furres to poure religious that have nede', likely to be the nuns and sisters with whom Hull had

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[623] 'Everyman', in *Everyman and Its Dutch Original*, ed. by Clifford Davidson, Martin W. Walsh, and Ton J. Broos (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 2007), pp.15-77 (p.63, ll.699-700).

[624] Duffy, p.362. The biblical teaching that wealth was a direct obstacle to obtaining salvation was discussed in the Introduction to this thesis, p.26.

[625] Her provision of the bed and its coverings fulfils her spiritual obligation of sheltering the homeless (Matthew 25:35-6).

associated in her widowhood, again benefiting her soul (247). Most female religious houses required novices to arrive with personal goods rather than money, including items such as mattresses, bedsheets and coverings, clothing such as furs, cloaks, veils and wimples, and crockery such as cups, basins, ewers and saucers.[626] Hull's bequests of such items 'to poure religious that have nede' provides them with an alternative dowry in the form of these essential belongings; enabling them to enter religious houses and embark upon a devotional vocation rather than a career as wife and mother. She capitalises upon the genre of the will to create and promote a new family model.[627] The conventional provision of dowries for marriage is seen in abundance in pre-modern women's wills; Hull adapts this tradition to suit her purpose of providing an alternative, stable future for younger, poorer women than herself as an act of almsgiving. Through her writing, Hull invests in the future generation of religious women while endowing these objects with her own worth.

After the Reformation, charitable bequests continue in wills, though without the expectation of intercession for the soul through the prayers of the beneficiaries.[628] Testamentary giving provided will-writers with a final opportunity to demonstrate their salvation.[629] Elizabeth Hardwick's will (1601) states, 'I giue and bequeathe to euery of the poore of my Almeʃεouʃe of my foundation at Derbye that ʃεalbe there liuing at the tyme of my Deceaʃʃe one mourning gowne and twentie ʃεillinges a peece in money, the money to be payed them the day of my ffunerall' (188^{v}). [630] The creation of an alms-house was intended to display the wealth and status of the founder whilst ensuring that their name was not forgotten after

[626] Roberta Gilchrist and Marilyn Oliva, *Religious Women in Medieval East Anglia: History and Archaeology c1000-1540* (Norwich: University of East Anglia, 1993), p.52.
[627] Counter has recognised the potential of inheritance to promote new family models and networks, pp.20-21. For a more conventional assertion of family lineage in medieval women's charitable bequests, see Margaret Paston's 1482 testament. In her typical business-like style, Paston wills 'that eu*ery* houshold in Mauteby, as hastily as it may be conuenyently doo aft*er* my decesse, have xij d.' (385). Her connection to Mautby, the village after which her birth family was named and the place of her burial, is remembered and given an emotional and spiritual value through her economic bequest. Such a bequest, along with Paston's instruction to be buried in Mautby parish church, show her deep connection to her natal family name and location. Instead of Paston property, Paston's focus stakes her claim for identity and memorial as a member of the Mautby family.
[628] Eamon Duffy observes that the Protestant authorities of 1547 issued royal Injunctions that clergy present at the deathbed encouraged testators to give to the poor rather than request or finance requiem Masses, p.505. Peter Carlson explains that the theoretical teaching and belief behind charitable acts altered and the post-Reformation regime taught that, 'your good deeds cannot save you, but you will do good deeds because you are saved; so do good deeds to prove that you have been saved.' Peter Carlson, 'The Art and Craft of Dying', in Hiscock and Wilcox, p.639.
[629] As R.H. Tawney summed it up, 'Good works are not a way of attaining salvation, but they are indispensable as a proof that salvation has been attained.' R.H. Tawney, *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism* (London: John Murray, 1964), p.109.
[630] Hardwick's foundation of an alms-house in Derby perhaps further explains her choice to be buried in the city, and connects her to Lady Anne Clifford (1590-1676), the great northern landowner of Cumbria and Yorkshire who also funded alms-houses.

death, in a similar way that chantries were intended to do in the pre-Reformation era, but without, of course, the expectation of intercessory prayers.[631] Protestantism recast the 'traditional understanding of the merits of works in terms of gratuitousness rather than reciprocal interactions with God.'[632] The alms-house becomes the physical embodiment of Hardwick's pious deeds motivated by her faith and status as a child of God: the text that exists beyond the document of the will. Hardwick's public charitable giving serves as an act of devotion and as an assertion of her status within the county of Derbyshire. The bequest of a mourning gown for the inhabitants would not only provide them with suitable attire for the funeral, but also endow them with clothing which was itself a valuable and practical commodity. The attendance of the inhabitants at the funeral is further encouraged by the direction that their twenty shillings are to be paid on the day of the funeral: a financial reward for paying their respects, whose written presence in the will functions as a *quid quo pro* agreement.[633] Hardwick fulfils four of the Seven Corporal Acts of Mercy through her bequests to the alms-house inhabitants: she feeds the hungry, gives drink to the thirsty, shelters the homeless and clothes the naked. Her provision for the poor is written in plain syntax due to the nature of the legal genre and formulaic pattern she follows, but this increases the authority of her wishes as they cannot be dismissed as the emotional or excessive desires of an irrational woman.

The Puritan testator, Katherine Barnardiston (1633), is particularly enthusiastic in her charitable bequests and presents them as an act of devotion within her will. Lloyd Davis suggests that the 'godly disposal of wealth implies that religious and moral aspects of will making are fundamentally linked to social and material concerns.'[634] As a woman of substantial wealth and considerable piety (demonstrated by the lengthy devotional preamble to her will), Barnardiston exemplifies this sense of social obligation in the layout of her testament. She

[631] Duffy, p.328. Appleford notes that the establishment of an alms-house by Richard Whittington, London mayor and money-lender to the Crown, on his death in 1423 is represented by his executors in the alms-house ordinances (1424) as part of his 'good death' to be emulated by his contemporaries. She also refers to the contemporary literary appreciation for wealthy citizens, particularly merchants, who return their wealth to the city through such endowments. See Appleford, pp.55-97.

[632] Ilana Krausman Ben-Amos, *The Culture of Giving. Informal Support and Gift-Exchange in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), p.243.

[633] Hardwick does not specify how many people lived in her alms-house, and so the total amount to be bequeathed is uncertain. However, the bequest would be of significance to each individual as the equivalent of twenty days' pay of a skilled tradesman. Hardwick required her funeral to be 'fit for that estate and Degree wherunto yt hath pleased my most mercifull god to preferre me' as Countess of Shrewsbury (188^r). To do this, she provided a budget of 'twoe thowsand poundes' (188^r).

[634] Lloyd Davis, 'Women's Wills in Early Modern England', in *Women, Property, and the Letters of the Law in Early Modern England* ed. by Nancy E. Wright, Margaret W. Ferguson and A.R. Buck (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), pp.219-36 (p.221).

inserts a sub-heading of 'The Poore' into her will of 'Seaventeene ſheetes of paper' to deal with her almsgiving, indicating the great importance that she placed on such acts (206^{v};211^{v}). This sub-division lends itself to a more literary consideration of her testament than the documents of Clanbowe, Hull and Hardwick: Barnardiston is keen to be perceived as a pious woman above all else. Money permits personality to emerge on the pages of a will through the chosen (and omitted) bequests for good causes.

Whilst post-Reformation acts of charity and almsgiving were, for those who believed in predestination, no longer a way to obtain salvation, they were 'an unmistakeable sign of spiritual health.'[635] Barnardiston clothes the poor of the parish, feeds them with 'two penny loaves', and leaves money to the prisoners of Newgate to hear a sermon (206^{v}-207^{r}). Her direction to have a sermon, or lecture, given to the prisoners of Newgate illustrates her Puritan motive to spread her spiritual beliefs in much the same way as her employment of Minister Marshall to preach her funeral sermon: again the text of her will fosters the continuation, and indeed creation, of devotional texts to be consumed aurally.[636] The Newgate bequest also demonstrates Barnardiston's humanist belief in education, further shown in her specific almsgiving 'to the poor Children of Chriſt hoſpitall' – a school founded in 1552 – 'the ſume of fforty pounds' (207^{r}).[637] Barnardiston's chief concern in almsgiving is with moral improvement, and her testament becomes the written instrument with which she can put this into motion. When Elizabeth Poynings (1487) bequeaths money to the prisoners of Newgate, she does not define the use to which it should be put, indicating that it is intended to go towards their payments for bed and board (211). By contrast, Barnardiston's bequest to the prisoners of Newgate directs that her money should be used for the betterment of their religious education. Her charity is more concerned with the spiritual wellbeing of the prisoners than Poynings's, which is concerned with their worldly survival and her own spiritual benefit resulting from their prayers.

[635] Helen Wilcox, 'Sacred and Secular Love: 'I Will Lament, and Love'', in Hiscock and Wilcox, p.620.
[636] For Protestants, particularly Puritans, 'salvation was effected by hearing' rather than the visual worship which was associated with Catholicism. Jeanne Shami, 'The Sermon', in Hiscock and Wilcox, p.197. Shami has noted the early modern sermon's role 'as an instrument of God, conveying saving grace in instruct, move, and convert', and that lectures were 'a mainly puritan institution', p.185; p.190
[637] Christ's Hospital website <https://www.christs-hospital.org.uk/about-ch/history-of-the-school/> [Accessed 24 October 2017]. Interestingly, Christ's Hospital had both male and female pupils. The girls were taught to read and sew but not to write: reading was necessary for devotion and sewing gave the girls a skill with which to earn a living. Writing, on the other hand, was not seen as a necessary skill for young women. Erickson, *Women and Property*, pp.56-7.

Moving on from the business of spiritual charity to acts of civic charity, bequests to protect trade links acted as alternative almsgiving. Peryne Clanbowe (1422) leaves a legacy 'to amend*e* brygges and foule wayes' (49). Provision for trade routes was a usual charitable bequest for medieval women and men alike.[638] Bridges and roadways were the key to mercantile business and so were remembered in wills to keep them in good working order. Of course, these routes were also important to pilgrims who would use them to access cathedrals and shrines. Clanbowe's description of the 'foule wayes' also has religious connotations: 'foul' meaning sinful as well as muddy and dirty in this period (*MED* 1a; 3). Her choice of vocabulary shows an awareness of the metaphorical significance of safe roads and crossings for Christianity. In addition to secular and practical needs for maintaining bridges, they were also symbolic emblems of Christian life.[639] Each bishop was 'a *pontifex*, a bridge-builder.'[640] Perhaps Clanbowe's bequest to protect bridges, and the language she uses to do so, signifies her understanding of their symbolism, or perhaps she finances their maintenance in a charitable act for her wider community whose livelihoods would depend, or at least be made easier, with accessible trade routes. Either way, her bequest would go towards purchasing a shorter stay in Purgatory for her soul.

Similarly, Margaret Blakburn's will is concerned with repairing bridges, an interest she shared with her husband, and perhaps pursued in honour of his memory. In 1432, Nicholas Blakburn, merchant and previous mayor of York, added a codicil to his will protecting Catterick, Kexby, Thornton and Skip bridges to maintain trade links vital to his community and merchant class.[641] The original contract for the building of Catterick bridge survives, and

[638] Susan James suggests that, 'Wills demonstrating civic engagement provide a link between the activities of a woman's life and her understanding and investment in the life and commerce of the community to which she belonged.' She further explains that, 'As members of communities whose lives and livelihoods depended on access to markets and the free flow of goods and material, women were well aware of the need to create and maintain highways and the fundamental public architecture that connected their community with the rest of the country.' Whilst James studies Tudor women's wills, the same can be said for earlier medieval women. Clanbowe's protection of bridges and highways exemplifies this understanding perfectly. Though she was not a member of the mercantile élite, but a member of the royal court as lady-in-waiting to Queen Anne of Bohemia, wife of Richard II, Clanbowe and her contemporaries would rely on trade links to supply the necessary commodities to the court, whether in London or on progress. Susan E. James, *Women's Voices in Tudor Wills, 1485-1603: Authority, Influence and Material Culture* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2015), p.55.

[639] Duffy, p.367.

[640] Duffy, p.367.

[641] He instructs 'that if any mischance or defect in workmanship befall […] to Catterick Bridge, Kexby Bridge, Thornton Bridge or Skip Bridge, within 4 years following my death, my executors are to sue them that by recognizance are bound to maintain them; and […] rather than the said bridges fall I will that my executors of God's goods and mine, by the best advice and counsel that they can get themselves, amend the faults so that the aforesaid bridges, with God's grace, do not in any way fall down.' Nicholas Blakburn, in *The Blakburns in York: Testaments of a Merchant Family in the Later Middle Ages*, ed. by Valerie Black et al. (York: The Latin Project, 2006), pp.13-34 (p.21).

Nicholas's name is included amongst those who financed it.[642] In addition, Catterick bridge lay on route from York to Richmond, the town of Nicholas's birth, whilst the other bridges all connected York to important trade routes and ports, such as Hull.[643] His codicil directs his executors to continue the work on his behalf for four years after his death. Margaret's 1435 codicil to her will, three years after the death of her husband, adheres to her duty as one of his executors:

> if my said husband's goods […] be insufficient for the repair and maintenance of the bridges of Kexby and Catterick, then I will that my said executrices pay, for the fulfilment of my said husband's will, to the fabric of the bridge of Kexby £100 […] to the fabric of Catterick Bridge £100, on the conditions […] that if those who have oversight of the said bridges are willing to find sufficient security for my abovesaid executrices within the city of York and also that the bridges in question be sufficiently, in all matters, made and fully constructed within a term of four years following my death, and under these conditions, I will that my said executrices should pay annually to the fabric of each of the said bridges for the period of the said four years from the said £200, £25, always provided that the portion of the goods my husband are insufficient to cover the works on the said bridges. (33)

Blakburn inherits the care of the bridges from her husband, and bequeaths this to their daughters, her executors, keeping the responsibility within the biological, female nuclear family. Blakburn's written style is almost identical to that of her husband's will, suggesting a shared interest and adherence to conventions of form and genre, possibly following a template. The desire to protect the routes of trade on which the Blakburn family depended is passed down as a family responsibility from husband to wife to children. Rather than the physical possessions of clothing or jewels, Blakburn bequeaths mercantile responsibilities to her daughters, thereby transforming acts of charity into a family legacy through her writing. Blakburn imposes conditions on the funding of the bridges; she takes on her husband's deadline of four years after death, adds a total limit of £200, protects her daughters by requesting 'sufficient security' for their payments and will only pay if her husband's estate has insufficient funds. Blakburn's inclusion of her husband's wishes in her own testament proclaims the seriousness with which she understood her duty as his executor. In effect, she appoints her

[642] Pederson, p.37.
[643] Pederson, p.38. Like Margaret Paston's concern with churches relevant to her personal life, Nicholas's focus on bridges important to the locations and commercial activities of his life centres his charitable giving on his own life experience.

daughters as replacement executors for her husband, demonstrating the network of family trust. By reading the wills of married couples alongside each other, layers of intertextuality can become apparent.[644] Instead of perceiving a lack of agency in Blakburn's adherence to her husband's style and content of his testament, I suggest that she uses this as a rhetorical technique to add authority to her written voice. As with Margaret Paston's will, Margaret Blakburn's business acumen is a feature of her written style. Blakburn's testament becomes a contract which harks back to her husband's wishes while planning ahead to ensure and protect her daughters' performance of their parents' instructions.

The wills of Clanbowe and the Blakburns demonstrate the 'recognised charitable deed', particularly in the fifteenth century, of leaving money for the repair of bridges and roads.[645] The Blakburns combined their devotion with their business practice in their provision for bridges: benefitting both their souls and the commercial future of their heirs. The social rank of the Blakburns as mercantile, urban and civic élite perhaps explains their involvement with such charitable acts, whilst the rank of other women such as Dame Eleanor Hull, and her religious life in her retirement to Cannington priory, might explain why they did not leave such bequests. However small it may seem, an omission in a will can be as much of an act of self-assertion as a statement can be.

Provision for the maintenance of highways or bridges does not feature in the wills of Elizabeth Hardwick, Katherine Barnardiston or Martha Moulsworth.[646] Their decision not to invest in certain civic infrastructures is as important as their decision to bequeath monies to education or family members in demonstrating the distinctively idiosyncratic nature of pre-modern women's wills, and indeed of the women themselves. It is possible that post-Reformation England saw the construction and conservation of bridges and highways less as acts of pious charity and individual responsibility and more of a communal parish responsibility.[647] Instead of protecting the structures of trade, Hardwick's bequests protect the

[644] The next step of research beyond this project proposes widening the sample of wills to include those by the Paston and Blakburn men and Martha Moulsworth's husbands.
[645] H.S. Bennett, pp.136-7. H.S. Bennett has observed that for medieval testators, 'bequests for the repairs of bridges' were 'unquestionably charitable and pious acts', p.145.
[646] Hardwick's status as Countess of Shrewsbury could explain why she does not support such quotidian causes, although she would need to use trade routes in order to move from one property to another, which she particularly did during the early years of her marriage to George Talbot, and less so in her widowhood which saw her focus on her building projects at Hardwick. Likewise, Lady Anne Clifford (1590-1676) famously processed between her estates in the north of England. Both Barnardiston and Moulsworth had mercantile connections through their husbands.
[647] The surviving accounts of the General Receivers in Stratton, Cornwall, for 1574 include payments 'for charges aboute the bridge'. Labourers are recorded to have received wages in cash, food, and drink for their work, alongside payments documented for barrels of lime, sand, wooden slats and the use of horses. 'General Receivers'

status of the familial and architectural dynasty she worked hard to found over her long life; Barnardiston uses her money for protecting and promoting spiritual education; Moulsworth does not invest in any institutions beyond that of her extended family. The lack of funding and instructions for building work in the wills of Hardwick, Barnardiston and Moulsworth does not, however, mean that by the early modern era women had retreated from involvement with such tasks, as is proven by the famous architectural projects of Elizabeth Hardwick and Lady Anne Clifford in the seventeenth century.[648] Rather, as with the women will-writers of the later Middle Ages, the desires and donations evident in early modern women's wills demonstrate their individual nature and the personal choice of each woman.

(iv) Money, Marriage-making and Mothering

Like the provisions for bridges and roadways, bequests for dowries and the funding of marriages can be interpreted as testamentary charity. Pre-modern women's wills provide evidence of lateral giving amongst their female relations, friends, servants and acquaintances.[649] My research confirms that the horizontal lines of inheritance identified by Susan E. James are particularly evident in the provision for female relatives and acquaintances in the form of dowries in the wills of pre-modern women. The bequests intended to give female heirs value in the marriage market are ubiquitous across all the social ranks represented in this sample. Further, these lateral bequests can be interpreted as rhetorical strategies used by testators to support the stories of women's life-courses.

The responsibilities of motherhood, and the desire to perform 'mothering', are not limited to the biological connection in pre-modern women's testaments. Financial wealth becomes a tool with which to care for their extended female kin. Lady Peryne Clanbowe uses her will (1422) to provide for her nieces: 'I bequeth to Iane myn nece, to her mariage, or when

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Account Book 2: 1557-81', in *Stratton Churchwardens' Accounts, 1512-1578*, ed. by Joanna Mattingly (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2018), pp.167-210 (pp.189-90).

648 See Appendix Two for more information on these building projects, including images of Hardwick Hall.

649 Susan E. James has studied the lines of inheritance in Tudor women's wills: 'For most men the family ran in vertical lines of descent from their fathers to their sons. Women's processes were more horizontal, incorporating siblings and their offspring, godchildren, indigent female relations, and assorted dependents whom they considered to have a claim on their notice and protection. Over and over again, women as a population group demonstrate through their wills a more active interest in an expanded definition of family, a more extensive investment in broad-ranging communal concerns, and a greater awareness of social interactions and obligations than has generally been assumed.' James, *Women's Voices*, pp.1-2.

sche is of age, xx li. Also I bequeth to Peryne her suster, my god doughter in þ^{e} same forme, x li' (50). Despite the quotidian style of the itemised listing in which Clanbowe details these bequests, it reveals her agency in adopting the role of provider for her younger female relations, paying tribute to their kinship but also evidencing female networks of finance. Crucially, her bequests allow her nieces better access to the marriage market with a larger dowry. It is likely that the young Peryne was named for her godmother and aunt, illustrating a network of female kinship. Peryne's name is written into the younger generation in an embodiment of her legacy. In theory, should Clanbowe's dowry enable the young Peryne to marry and produce daughters of her own, her money could potentially perpetuate her name through Peryne's offspring. The young Peryne's life, along with that of Jane, has the potential to symbolise a continuation of Clanbowe's legacy that exists long after her will ceases to act.

In contrast to Clanbowe's monetary legacy, Elizabeth Poynings (1487) bequeaths her daughter, Mary, material objects 'to the promocion of her mariage' (211). Poynings leaves to Mary 'all my plate and other juell*es*, with all myne hole apparel and all my stuff of houshold being within my dwelling place or any other within the cite of London or surburbes of the same' (211). It is notable that Poynings geographically locates her properties, much like the later Elizabeth Hardwick's references to 'my houſes at Chateſworth Hardwicke and Oldcoates in the countie of Derby' (189^{r}). These were women very much aware of their importance and wealth within their local communities. By inking their geography on the paper of their wills, they figuratively inscribe their lives upon the map or landscape of their communities. Poynings describes in minute detail each item that she intends her daughter to inherit, including the design and weight of objects such as silver cups, and the measurements, colours and materials of clothing, sheets and tapestries (211-12). When compared to Clanbowe's itemised financial list, Poynings's care in detailing the material objects intended for her daughter shows the difference between monetary and material bequests, along with the potential difficulty in the correct interpretation by an executor in recognising the intended goods. Poynings's writing is reminiscent of a merchant's catalogue of wares. The list of objects is so extensive and lengthy that it reads as a smaller version of the inventory which accompanies Elizabeth Hardwick's 1601 will. This listing of possessions can be interpreted as a stock-take of a life within in the confines of the legal genre: it has both a practical and metaphorical use. Each object signifies an aspect of Poynings's life, which is later transferred to her daughter in the expectation that Mary will adopt this same career as wife and mother.

Like Clanbowe's bequests to her nieces, Poynings's legacy to her daughter is intended to increase Mary's economic value in the marriage market, and so indirectly provide for her future and that of any children who may result from her union. Poynings bequeaths her only daughter the physical items with which to establish her home and role as wife and mother, from 'a saltseler of syluer and gilt', 'a grete federbed' and 'a blak gowne furryd with white' to 'a flesshe hoke' (211-3). The furnishings and objects from the hall, bedroom and kitchen are perhaps particularly relevant to a daughter's inheritance as they were considered the female domains within the household. Poynings's bequests to Mary equip her with the practical, devotional (such as the bejewelled Agnus Dei previously discussed), and decorative items of status to embark upon a successful vocation as wife and mother but they also serve as items through which to remember her kinship with her mother. Poynings's bequests of essential (if expensive and elaborate) household goods to Mary recalls the legacy left by Eleanor Hull to poor women which could have been intended to form part of their dowry of possessions required to enter a religious house, discussed above. The provision of monetary dowries is so prevalent in medieval wills that it can be understood as a convention of the genre. The alternative dowries left by Hull and Poynings suggest that medieval women appropriated and adapted the financial business practices of marriage, as well as the feature of dowry bequests within the will genre, to their personal resources and circumstances. Like the authors of memoirs studied in Chapter Three, writers of wills capitalised on and exploited certain aspects of genre to fit their own purpose.[650] Hull and Poynings expanded and built upon the kind of itemised, monetary list found in Clanbowe's testament. For Hull, a widow without younger female blood-relatives, the nuns of her religious community may well have replaced familial relationships, and so she used her material wealth in order to provide other women with a stable future in the devotional community as an alternative to wifehood and motherhood. As a widow leaving a young daughter who was to become an orphan on her death, Poynings utilised her testament to provide Mary with all that she needed to make a good marriage and achieve a financially stable future.

Unusually for the sample of wills studied in this project, Margaret Paston does not provide women with specific dowries in her will and is most concerned with the vertical lines of inheritance more frequently found in men's testaments.[651] However, Paston does engage in marriage-making in her will when she instructs that her son William is to use his monetary

[650] Margery Kempe, for example, uses aspects of hagiography in her self-authored memoir, and Martha Moulsworth turns rhyming couplets into a 'Memorandum'.
[651] See Erickson, *Women and Property*, p.213.

inheritance of one hundred marks to purchase land to increase the family wealth 'or ellys to bye a warde to be maried to him' (387). Paston's almost colloquial turn of phrase reveals that she perceived marriage as a business investment. Her choice of commercial wording cannot be coincidental: she fully intended her son to 'bye' a wife. In the Middle Ages this verb meant to purchase, obtain, acquire or bargain for (*MED* 1a; 2). These were all mercantile practices applicable to medieval marriage, and Paston's linguistic choice reveals she was both familiar with and accepting of this. Paston clearly saw marriage as a worthwhile financial investment, and accepted that wives could be purchased at the right price, just like the clothing, dried fruit and spices that she ordered in her letters.[652] As with those orders, her tone remains pragmatic and unemotional to alert her reader to the fact that this is a matter of business, not of affection.

The financial bequests made by Paston to her grandchildren, presumably to increase their value in the marriage market, are also recorded with precision without reference to affection for the children. Despite the rift between herself and her daughter, Margery, caused by Margery's clandestine marriage to the family bailiff Richard Calle, Margaret Paston does not disinherit the children of that union, remembering Margery's children in her will:

> to John Calle, sone of Margery my dought*er*, xx li. whan he cometh to the age of xxiiij yer. And if the seid John dye or [before] he cometh to the seid age, than I wulle that the seid xx li, euenly be diuided attwen William and Richard, sones of the seid Margery, […] and if either of the seid William and Richard dye […] than I wull that the part of him so dying remayne to the survyver. (388)

Paston appears to create a hierarchy amongst her Calle grandsons: if he survives, only the eldest grandson, John – presumably named for his grandfather and uncles – will receive an inheritance. It seems that Paston had absorbed the rules of primogeniture, while also placing her own restrictions on the legacies of the sons of a disobedient daughter. As a result of her rebellion in marrying a man of her own choosing, and of lower social status, Margery Calle does not receive an inheritance from her mother. However, Paston's remembrance of Margery's children implies her reverence for the biological relationship as well as her pragmatism.[653] Duffy notes that medieval Christians were required to have 'reconciled enemies' in order to 'have hope of Heaven.'[654] Perhaps Paston's remembrance of Margery's

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[652] See Chapter Two pp.87-9.
[653] On the other hand, Rosenthal uses Margery Calle's absence from her mother's will as evidence to suggest she had in fact pre-deceased her mother. Rosenthal, *Margaret Paston's Piety*, p.92.
[654] Duffy, p.322.

sons replaced a reconciliation between mother and daughter.[655] Paston's bequest to her Calle grandsons omits any reference to the hostility between the two women: Margaret remains characteristically professional and concise while dealing with the matter in hand. Here there is a definite contrast between the writing style she employs in her will and in her letters when discussing Margery's marriage in her letter to John Paston (II): 'we haue lost of her*e* but a brethele [wretch] […] fore *and* he [and if she] wer*e* ded at thys owyr*e* sche xuld neu*er*e be at myn hart as sche was' (203: 65-8). This is a rare glimpse of unchecked feeling in Paston's writing; on the whole her style is characterised by extreme measure, control and pragmatism. However, when compared with the detached language of her will, the presence of anger in Margaret's epistolary writing demonstrates that purpose and genre could impact upon expression, tone and choice of diction.

As in the wills of medieval women, so in the wills of early modern women we find evidence of expansive networks of kin following horizontal lines.[656] Despite having a relatively large network of children and grandchildren to whom to leave properties, possessions and money, Elizabeth Hardwick (1601) took care to recognise her extended family. She writes, for example,

> I will and bequeathe […] ffyve poundes in money after my Deceaſſe yerelie to my daughter Anne Baynton during her huſbands life and hers for and towards her mayntenence only & yf ſɛe ouerliue her ſayed huſband Then I will that yerelie payment to ceaſe and my sayed executor to paye to her ffiftie poundes in money within ſixe monthes next after ɛer ſayed ɛuſbands deceaſe, to be by her diſpoſed at her beſt liking. (189[r])

[655] The extent to which Paston campaigned to have the marriage annulled, and Margery's determination to prove her marriage valid, gives credence to the argument that her mother would not reconcile their difference and punished her disobedience through disinheritance, testifying to Margery's strength of will, as well as Margaret's. Margery was aged seventeen at the time of her clandestine promise to Richard Calle in 1466; their marriage was only declared valid three years later in 1469 by the Bishop of Norwich. Margery resisted sustained pressure from her family to deny the pledge made to Calle throughout this time, demonstrating her strength of character and determination as well as her knowledge of what constituted a legally binding marriage. Ann S. Haskell, 'The Paston Women on Marriage in fifteenth-Century England', *Viator*, 4 (1973), 459-472 (p.467)

[656] As with James's study of Tudor women's wills, Amy Louise Erickson has noted that later early modern women continued the practice of lateral giving, in contrast to early modern men whose wills reveal more of a tendency for vertical lines of inheritance: 'The difference between women's wills and men's wills is in large part the difference between matrimony and patrimony. Patrimony suggests property extended vertically or longitudinally through time; matrimony, although significantly does not mean property in and of itself, implies ties of kinship – and therefore of property – extended horizontally, or latitudinally, in a much more immediate timeframe.' Erickson, *Women and Property*, p.213.

Anne Baynton was Hardwick's step-daughter, the daughter of her second husband, William Cavendish, and his first wife. Anne's marriage was arranged by Hardwick and her third husband, William St Loe in 1562.[657] St Loe provided a dowry of 1000 marks for Anne, but Hardwick may have felt that this was insufficient provision for her stepdaughter, since Anne would not have had access to this money herself.[658] Hardwick's legacy of £5 a year specifically for Anne's 'mayntenence *only*' (my emphasis) implies that there may have been some tension between Anne and her husband. Did Hardwick suspect Baynton was not sufficiently providing for Anne? In comparison to Anne's dowry and with other bequests in Hardwick's will, £5 is not a significant amount. However, Anne was a step-daughter and so Hardwick's gift to her implies a genuine affection between the two women rather than signifying a biological obligation to provide for a child. Hardwick disinherited her son, Henry Cavendish, and granddaughter, Arbella Stuart: she would not bequeath money to someone of whom she disapproved (189^{r};188^{v}). Hardwick's language makes it clear that the money is intended solely for Anne and not her husband; it may have been sufficient to provide a degree of financial freedom. A contingency plan is also set out: if Anne's husband dies, the annuity is to stop and be replaced by a single payment of £50 'to be diſpoſed of at her beſt liking.' This is unusual in Hardwick's will: bequests of money are usually followed by instructions on how to spend them.[659] This indicates that she gives the money to Anne with a true generosity and desire that it provides some enjoyment – 'liking' – whilst also suggesting that Hardwick trusted Anne to spend it wisely. In a close reading of phrasing, it is possible to identify nuances of expression which reveal the affection felt by testators which may otherwise not be conveyed in the formal, legal genre. Perhaps Hardwick feared that the jointure agreed upon would not provide for Anne in the event of her widowhood, or perhaps she simply did not trust Baynton to allow Anne to retain the full £50. Whatever the reason, Hardwick's will makes clear that this bequest is for Anne alone, and while not a dowry, it could indeed be money intended to support Anne through her marriage.[660]

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[657] Anne's bridegroom, Sir Henry Baynton, was St Loe's first wife's younger brother. Mary S. Lovell, *Bess of Hardwick: First Lady of Chatsworth* (London: Abacus, 2005), p.180.

[658] Lovell, p.180.

[659] Hardwick leaves 100 angels to her daughter-in-law and stepdaughter, Grace, "to buy her a Rynge to weare for me" (188^{v}). Similarly, her grandson, Robert, and her granddaughter, Elizabeth, are to receive £30 and £20 respectively to purchase rings (189^{r}).

[660] Similarly, Barnardiston makes provision for her niece should she be widowed 'to and for her owne proper uſe' (209^{r}). It is significant that Barnardiston stresses that this money is for her niece's 'owne proper uſe', recalling Hardwick, suggesting that she trusts her to spend it wisely, and wishes her to have full control over the legacy: no man is to control the money on her behalf.

Hardwick's will was a working document and changes made over an eight year period are evident. Following politically dangerous attempts by her granddaughter, Arbella, to flee from her grandmother's care with the aid of her uncle, Henry Cavendish and defy the Royal Marriage Act in a clandestine marriage to Edward Seymour, Hardwick's later marginal annotations disinherit Arbella, reading, 'All and euery the bey conteyned in thys my last will and giuen to my grandchilde Arbella Stewart I haue revoked vnder my hand and Seale' (188^{v}), and this is confirmed by the codicil dated 20 March 1602 (192^{r}).[661] For Hardwick, the 'final' will and testament was not really final until the moment of death occurred. The difference between the fondness evident in the bequest to Anne, and the abrupt tone revoking Arbella's legacy is striking. The short and business-like revocation of Arbella's inheritance conveys an anger and disappointment more searing than an outpouring of words. Hardwick remains aloof and professional within the legal genre, to ensure that her wishes cannot be challenged on the grounds of irrationality or excessive emotion; her business and legal acumen prevails in her written style.

Bequests for the benefit of extended family are perhaps less surprising when found in the wills of women without surviving biological children. Indeed, Barbara J. Harris has identified this trend in pre-modern aristocratic widow's testaments and also noted the particular favouring of female beneficiaries by these testators.[662] Although married at the time of writing her will, Katherine Barnardiston was childless. Her will expands her network of collateral relatives to include her marital kin, establishing a place for herself within their memories and family history. In pre-modern women's wills, the definition of 'family' is flexible and encompasses those beyond the biological connection to express affection through monetary and material bequests which can take the place of words of feeling. Barnardiston makes bequests to nearly ninety beneficiaries, including godchildren, step-children, step-grandchildren, servants, siblings, nieces and nephews in her will. For example, she directs 'the yearly ſome of Twelve pounde of lawful Engliſhe mony vnto myn foreseyd lovinge ſiſter Draper for and towards the education and bringing up of her youngeſt daughter Mary Draper vntill the said Mary ſhall accompliſhe her age of One and twenty yeares or untill the daye of her marriage' going on to leave £200 to be paid to Mary within six months of her twenty-first birthday or marriage, whichever comes first (209^{r}). Once again Barnardiston's humanist belief in advocating education, including for women, is demonstrated and given extra significance

[661] See Lovell, pp.427-39. Despite this revocation by Hardwick, it appears that Arbella did inherit the original sum of £1,000 after her grandmother's death in 1608. Durant, pp.245-6; p.161.
[662] Barbara J. Harris, *English Aristocratic Women, 1450-1550* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), p.172.

here as it illustrates a network of female kin. In the 1630s, £12 would equate to just over £1,200 today and was enough to purchase a horse; this shows the level of annual investment Barnardiston was willing to make in her niece, set to continue for an unspecified length of time. In contrast to Paston, whose bequests for her grandchildren lack any description of affection, Barnardiston is careful to record the 'lovinge' relationship she has with Mary's mother. This adjective justifies the bequest, potentially guarding against opposition from Barnardiston's husband who was still living at the time of writing. As a widow, Paston did not require the approval of a husband for her will-writing. The marital status of testators can impact upon their representation of family relationships and therefore on the rhetoric of their wills.

Like Barnardiston's will, Martha Moulsworth's 1646 testament reveals a vast network of kinship incorporating relatives from her natal family and all three of her marital families. All Moulsworth's biological children died in infancy, but her will reveals that she was part of a wide and inclusive extended family.[663] Moulsworth mentions five Marthas besides herself in her will, suggesting a family network in which children were named for their godparents or relatives in much the same way as the medieval Peryne Clanbowe's will implies. Moulsworth's poetic 'Memorandum' (1632), discussed in the previous chapter, plays on the significance of the name 'Martha', establishing connections with the biblical figure of the same name.[664] Creating a 'family-tree' of Marthas through her poetic work and will – one which looks back to the biblical Martha, the figure of active piety, and forward to her namesakes – gives Moulsworth's own life as wife, mother, stepmother, godmother and widow dynastic and devotional value. This alignment with the biblical Martha performs a similar role to Margaret Blakburn's testamentary affiliation with St Anne.[665] Moulsworth invests in her self-worth by toying with her biblical namesake in a manner which verges on wordplay, building on and developing the techniques identified in medieval noblewomen's commissioning of artwork drawing on pious or biblical figures to 'promote their position'.[666] Rather than for political or financial gain, however, Moulsworth's use of the biblical Martha in her poem is for personal satisfaction, hinting at an evolving way in which women of mercantile rank appropriated artforms and texts for self-representation. It is significant that both Blakburn and Moulsworth

[663] Moulsworth's commemoration of her children in her autobiographical poem, 'Memorandum', is analysed in Chapter Three, pp.161-2.
[664] 'My name was Martha, Martha took much payne/ our Saviour christ her guesse to entertayne.' Martha Moulsworth, 'The Memorandum of Martha Moulsworth Widdowe' (17-18). See Chapter Three, p.163 for my analysis of this.
[665] See pp.184-5 for the discussion of Blakburn's invocation of St Anne.
[666] Bleeke, Borland, Dressler, Easton and L'Estrange, pp. 206-7.

choose *female* biblical figures with whom to align themselves. For Blakburn, St Anne gives spiritual worth to her worldly vocation of mother and grandmother; for Moulsworth, Martha's active housekeeping endows her housewifely activities with a sacred value equal to that of contemplation. These female testators choose specific female biblical figures relevant to their personal life-courses, employing them as rhetorical techniques to strengthen their sense of identity and credit within their contemporary societies. These pre-modern societies traded on/with the contradictory ideal currencies of female piety and virtue with expectations of marriage and reproduction for women. Female authors' referencing of biblical women reveals their individual interpretation of their own positions in the paradoxical world in which a woman's spiritual value was defined by her chastity and virginity but her societal (and thereby financial) worth was defined by her ability to produce children. When studied in conjunction with one another, Moulsworth's will, poem and the Bible create layers of intertextuality around the name 'Martha', and so as author and poetic persona, Martha Moulsworth remains multi-dimensional. Her extended female network embraces biblical figures as well as goddaughters.[667]

Moulsworth's will builds on the affectionate language identifiable in Barnardiston's testament. Moulsworth names her stepdaughter, Elizabeth Rawdon (née Thorowgood) daughter of her second husband, Thomas, her 'full and sole executrix'.[668] Moulsworth's testament is exceptional in the sample studied in this thesis in that it names a sole female executor. Moulsworth is also the only testator who goes to great length to rationalise her choice using emotional discourse. Moulsworth's rhetoric suggests that she chose her executor based entirely on affection. She includes a testimony to the relationship between the two women (worth quoting at length), justifying her choice:

> The rest and residue of all my goodes, chattells, debts, Iewells, plate, money, lands of inheritance, ffee simple, and Coppiehold I give and bequeath vnto my daughter in lawe Dame Elizabeth Rawdon […] whome I doe hereby make and ordaine fulle and sole executrix […] I doe hereby intimate declare and publishe that the reasons which doe

[667] See also Aemelia Lanyer's country-house poem 'The Description of Cooke-ham' (1611), in which she imagines meeting Christ and the disciples in the garden of the house inhabited by the Clifford women. Her poetry, like Moulsworth's will and autobiographical verse, connects women with biblical figures in order to emphasise and celebrate their virtue and spiritual worth. Aemelia Lanyer, 'The Description of Cooke-ham', in *Isabella Whitney, Mary Sidney and Aemelia Lanyer: Renaissance Women Poets*, ed. by Danielle Clarke (London: Penguin Books, 2000), pp.274-80 (especially p.277, ll81-2).

[668] Martha Moulsworth, 'The Will of Martha Moulsworth', in *"The Muses Females Are" Martha Moulsworth and Other Women Writers of the English Renaissance* ed. by Robert C. Evans and Anne C. Little (West Cornwall, CT: Locust Hill Press, 1995), pp.221-4 (p.223). All references are to this edition, hereafter cited by page number.

> enduce and cause mee to be so liberall and beneficiall vnto my said daughter in lawe Rowdon, and to her children, and grandchildren before named in bestoweing the most parte of my estate on them, and giveing my inheritance as aforesaid are as followeth That Thomas Thorowgood my late deceased husband, and ffather of the said Dame Elizabeth left mee a plentifull estate of chattles and landes and other hereditaments, which I have enjoyed these manie yeares, And for that the said Dame Elizabeth and her said children, and grandchildren have ever bene loveing and kinde vnto mee and allwaise diligent & carefull of mee both in sicknes and in health, in soe much that shee and they have gayned and deserve my love, and I doe love her the said Dame Elizabeth as if shee were my owne child, and I love the said children, and grandchildren, as if they were my owne. (223)

Moulsworth embellishes the legal document of her will with diction representing strong emotion and the close bond between testator and executor: ‘plentifull’, ‘enjoyed these manie yeares’, ‘loveing’, ‘kinde’, ‘allwaise diligent & carefull’, ‘deserve’, ‘love’. These phrases and adjectives transform the financial transaction represented by the will into one of gratitude and love. Moulsworth’s decision to adorn her writing with such emotion pays homage to the extended family network which she has ‘enjoyed these manie yeares’ as a bonus to the ‘hereditaments’ left to her by her husbands. Moulsworth’s writing suggests that the inheritance of greatest value received from her husbands was that of the love between their children and herself. Michelle M. Dowd argues that ‘rightful succession is fundamentally a narrative construct’, claiming it is ‘as much fiction as fact, as much story as certainty’.[669] In the employment of hyperbolic, affectionate language, Moulsworth invests in the construction of the ‘narrative’ of her family life, through which she asserts the ‘rightful succession’ of her stepdaughter, manipulating the genre of the will to tell the ‘story’ of their bond. Moulsworth recognises the public aspect of will-making in her use of ‘intimate declare and publishe’. Rather than discovering the terms of finance in the written expression of love, such as Margery Brews’s letter to her prospective husband discussed in Chapter Two, in Moulsworth’s final will and testament we find the language of love unexpectedly in a document of finance.[670] This showcases that, no matter the genre, pre-modern women could and did apply relevant discourses as and when they saw fit.

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[669] Michelle M. Dowd, *The Dynamics of Inheritance on the Shakespearean Stage* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), p.1.

[670] See pp.110-1 for my discussion of the letter by Margery Brews.

Money, marriage and motherhood – in all its forms – are inseparable in the bequests and language of pre-modern women's testaments. The sample of wills studied here illustrates that across the pre-modern period female testators used their wills to ensure the financial survival of their biological heirs and wider kinship circles, including step-children, nieces and grandchildren, through bequests which would enable them to marry well. What appears to emerge from this range of wills is that the convention of providing dowries was adapted by women to fit their personal life-course and their available possessions. Objects are endowed with meaning through the legal rhetoric of testators. Some women, such as Margaret Paston (1482) remain emotionally detached and business-like as they focus on the task of distributing funds, while others such as Elizabeth Poynings (1487) carefully describe luxurious items which continue a family legacy, and others still, like Katherine Barnardiston (1633) and Martha Moulsworth (1646), take trouble to record the fondness between themselves and their beneficiaries. The chronological sequence of these wills implies a shift in the employment of vocabulary and discourse to include feelings of affection and emotion as the pre-modern period progressed.[671] Within the apparently restrictive genre of the legal will, nuances of expression and writing style, governed by the need to dispose of financial, material and spiritual wealth, can be identified as the female testators strive to prepare themselves and their heirs for the unknowable moment of death.

(v) The Value of Material Goods

Working alongside, and sometimes replacing, written expressions of emotion within wills, the bequests of material goods speak of attachments and reveal lineage building. In pre-modern women's wills, the bequeathing of belongings such as household linen, devotional items and jewellery reinforces networks of trust and kinship while providing practical inheritance which encompasses female circles. Margaret Blakburn (1433) takes great care to identify the items she bestows upon her kin:

> I leave to Alice Bolton my daughter 1 silver spiceplate and 2 silver pots […] one of which is marked with a shield with 7 bars and a dog and an N and a b, the other is marked under the foot with a sign like this ΛΛ and one covered silver piece with a knop and a gilded lion sitting on top of the same. (27)

[671] A wider sample of wills would need to be assessed before a definite statement could be made on this preliminary finding.

Blakburn creates and maintains family ties through the detailed, precise descriptions of the personal and functional household items that she leaves to each member of her family. The pot marked with the seven-bar shield and a dog could be embossed with a family crest. The Blakburn coat of arms is visible in their donor window of All Saints Church, North Street, York; this features a griffin rather than a dog, but the dog could be connected to wider kin. The 'N and a b' also included on this vessel suggests it previously belonged to Margaret's late husband, Nicholas Blakburn, while the 'ΛΛ' symbol of the other pot could represent 'M' for Margaret herself. Sally Badham has argued that the letter 'B' in the donor portraits in the stained glass of All Saints is in fact the family's merchant's mark.[672] If this is the case, the domestic items bequeathed by Blakburn are not only gifts with practical uses but signify and commemorate the commercial careers of her husband and sons, and indeed her own involvement in the mercantile élite of the city. In effect, these items become the 'texts' of her family history and legacy in the same way as Elizabeth Hardwick's 'ES'-topped towers at Hardwick Hall. Significantly, it is Blackburn's daughter who receives the items engraved with the family symbols: it is through the female line that she intends to commemorate the family business.

Arguably, Blakburn leaves these household items to her daughter as a memento rather than as an economic legacy. Through these objects she reinforces relationships of trust and fosters the hope of commemoration when the objects would be used after her decease. Katherine J. Lewis suggests that women's bequests 'frequently reveal a female network […] who helped and supported the testator during her lifetime, and were now being relied upon to continue that support after her death, by remembering her in their prayers' and that the material items would prompt them to 'memorialise their mother/sister/friend/employer thus whenever they made use or caught sight of the bequest that she had left them.'[673] Like those bequeathed by Hull and Poynings discussed above, the objects left by Blakburn to her daughter and other relatives would serve as reminders to pray for her soul and commemorate her memory through their use.[674] They are multifunctional in their use as vessels, signifiers of wealth, memorial triggers and family records of commerce and social rank, inscribed as they are with initials and imagery.

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672 Sally Badham, 'Commemoration in brass and glass of the Blackburn family of York', *Ecclesiology Today*, 43 (2010), 68-82 (p.73).
673 Lewis, pp.72-3.
674 She left silver pots to her brother, sister-in-law and daughter, Isabella, as well as these left to Alice, p.27.

As Margaret Blakburn bequeaths to her daughter household goods inscribed with the family history, so Elizabeth Hardwick leaves to Frances Cavendish, her eldest daughter, 'my greate booke of gould ſett with ſtones, with her fathers Picture and my picture drawne in yt and three hundred poundes in money' (188^{v}). As well as being a commodity of high monetary value, the gold portrait book set with precious stones is also of high dynastic value in that it contains images of Frances's parents. Arguably it is an item which would aid her understanding of her identity – at the time Hardwick wrote her will Frances was married to Henry Pierrepoint and so in the eyes of contemporary society her identity would have been subsumed into that of her husband and his family. Hardwick's decision to be buried in Derby, along with her building projects at Hardwick, loudly demonstrate the importance she placed on her identity: perhaps her bequests to Frances are to encourage her to cultivate a sense of dynastic history. This portrait book bequeathed to the eldest daughter takes the equivalent place of the Books of Hours Margaret Paston left to her daughter, Anne.[675] Both can be interpreted as alternative 'texts' of family history; the differing forms the result of the Reformation. Some medieval Books of Hours contained images of their patrons or owners within the illuminations, including portraits and heraldic arms, and as these books were passed down to daughters and granddaughters, they became invested with the story of family identity.[676] It is possible that Hardwick's diptych is an evolution of this use of a book to commemorate and cultivate family history and identity. Not only are the nuances of women's language, rhetoric and writing style evident in the somewhat constrictive genre of the last will and testament, but so are the nuances of bequests; combined, a study of these reveals the individuality of the documents' authors.

Margaret Paston is also specific in detailing the items she leaves to female relatives.[677] Along with household items, to her daughter-in-law, Katerine, she wills 'a purpill girdill h*er*neisid [harnessed] w*ith* siluer and gilt' (386).[678] The girdle was a decorative item to be worn

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[675] Paston's bequest to Anne is discussed on p.194 above.

[676] Such as the Book of Hours commissioned by Hawisia de Bois (c.1425-30) which includes numerous portraits of de Bois and her relatives, for example the illumination depicting de Bois, her kinswoman and kinsman adoring the Enthroned Virgin and Child: Kathryn A. Smith, *Art, Identity and Devotion in Fourteenth Century England: Three Women and their Books of Hours* (London: The British Library and Toronto Press, 2003), p.20; p.307; De Bois Hours, New York, Pierpont Morgan Library MS M.700 (fol. 3^{v}). The De Bois Hours ostentatiously proclaims the importance of Hawisia's natal family through the illustration of 133 individual shields depicting 22 different coats of arms connected to the various de Bois family lines (Smith, pp.20-7). See also the *Bedford Hours* (c.1410-30) and the *Hours of Mary of Burgundy* (c.1475) <https://www.bl.uk/collection-items/bedford-hours> [Accessed 8 January 2020]; Vienna, Österreischische Nationalbibliothek, Codex Vindobonesis 1857, fol.14^{v}.

[677] To her daughter Anne, married to William Yelverton, Margaret Paston leaves a number of household items, including 'xij siluer spones', 'my fetherbedde', 'ij peir of my finest shetes' and 'ij bras pottes' (386-7). Anne Yelverton is also bequeathed her mother's 'best corse girdill, blew herneised w*ith* siluer and gilt', and 'bedes of siluer enamelled' (386-7).

[678] Katerine was married to Margaret's son, Edmund Paston.

by Katerine, an intimate item of clothing which would presumably aid her commemoration of Margaret. The closeness of items such as 'girdill' to a woman's sexualised body meant that they were inscribed with their lives as wives and mothers. Just like Blakburn's silver pot, Paston's girdle becomes an alternative text; instead of paper, ink and words, cloth and thread take on the story of her life through the intimate connection with her body and life-course. Without exception in the sample of wills studied here, these items are bequeathed to female beneficiaries in a continuation of a legacy of fertility, but also in a guarding of chastity and respectability as they are retained by a circle of women, away from the potential taint of male ownership. Not only would these items of clothing be of practical use to Paston's beneficiaries, but they would also be of important economic value. Along with the silver and gilt detailing, the colour purple is suggestive of its material value in the use of costly dye.

In the pre-modern era, clothing was a 'currency of cloth and gems', which could be redeemed for cash if needed.[679] Through her bequests of clothing and jewels, Paston provided female friends and relatives with a practical insurance policy for their futures: pragmatism remained at the heart of Paston's writing from her letters to her final will and testament. Lewis has noted that, in contrast to medieval men's wills, medieval women's wills have an 'emphasis on chattels such as clothing and jewellery which were perhaps the only items that many women could definitively call their own.'[680] Bequests of garments and accessories can be understood as an alternative female economic currency utilised by testators and beneficiaries. Margaret Hallissy notes that 'garments were intended for use by more than one generation and bequeathed as valuable property.'[681] She explains that this 'linked' the generations and 'had a socially stabilizing effect' through reflecting 'a society in which rank was heritable.'[682] By bequeathing garments to her female relatives, Paston symbolically passes on her social status to the next generation in much the same way a son would inherit a title from his father. Paston's bequests of clothing and jewels can be interpreted as an assertion and expression of her social rank and female status.

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[679] Ann Rosalind Jones and Peter Stallybrass, *Renaissance Clothing and the Materials of Memory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p.27.

[680] Lewis, p.72. In her study of 550 London and Canterbury wills dated between 1327 and 1487, Kristen M. Burkholder found that women were far more likely than men to leave clothing in their wills, and in particular to female beneficiaries. Kristen M. Burkholder, 'Threads Bared: Dress and Textiles in Late Medieval English Wills', in *Medieval Clothing and Textiles, volume 1*, ed. by Robin Netherton and Gale R. Owen-Crocker (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2005), pp.133-53 (pp.137-9).

[681] Margaret Hallissy, *Clean Maids, True Wives, Steadfast Widows: Chaucer's Women and Medieval Codes of Conduct* (Westport, Connecticut and London: Greenwood Press, 1993), p.115

[682] Hallissy, p.115.

Paston remains her business-like self in bequeathing clothing and jewels, with the addition of extra description to identify certain pieces (386-7). She does not explain why each item is singled out for particular recipients; again, there is an absence of language to signify emotion in her will. I suggest that each bequest was, however, carefully thought out in terms of practical need and biological relationship which is hinted at in Paston's diction. Her appreciation of economic value and subsequent bequeathing of certain items reveals a privileging of beneficiaries. Paston's daughter, Anne, is to receive the 'best' and 'finest' of her mother's textiles; Anne is the sole biological daughter in Paston's will, and so her privileged position is signified by such adjectives to describe material bequests (386-7).[683] Anne receives 'bedes of siluer enamelled' from her mother, recalling Paston's plea to her husband for a suitable necklace to reflect the family wealth and rank amongst the gentry (386-7).[684] Could these be the beads which Paston subsequently obtained which she passes on to her remaining daughter? Of course, they could be one of a number of rosary beads and bequeathed to Anne due to their spiritual as well as economic value.[685] If they are the ornamental beads which Paston requested from John (I) in her letter, they gain additional significance as intertextual object, endowed with the family's rise in status from peasant farmers to gentry; a pre-figuring of Elizabeth Hardwick's social climbing expressed through her will, portraiture and architectural projects.

Katherine Barnardiston (1633) uses a similar strategy to denote favoured connections with her beneficiaries. Like Paston, she implies valued relationships through describing her 'best' jewellery and clothing in her bequests to her family members: she gives 'unto Katharen Barnardiſton eldeſt daughter of my ſonne Thomas Barnardiſton my beſt Dyamond Ringe' as opposed to the 'other Dyamond wedding Ringe' given to her husband (210^{v}). It is significant that Barnardiston chooses to bequeath her best – presumably the most expensive as well as her favourite – diamond ring to her namesake. It is likely that her stepson, son of her second husband Sir Thomas Barnardiston, named his daughter after his stepmother, suggesting that the relationships within the extended family network were strong. A legacy of Katherines are created and textually represented in the same way as the wills of Peryne Clanbowe and Martha Moulsworth create dynasties of Perynes and Marthas which go beyond the nuclear family.

[683] As explained previously, Margaret's other daughter, Margery, had been disowned following her marriage to Richard Calle and it is unclear whether she had predeceased her mother.
[684] This letter by Margaret was discussed in Chapter Two, pp.92-3.
[685] Paston's piety has been noted and is the subject of a book-length study: Joel T. Rosenthal, *Margaret Paston's Piety* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).

Barnardiston's current husband, William Towse, is to inherit another diamond wedding ring from his wife. It is unclear whether the ring bequeathed to Towse is the ring symbolising their union. If it is the Towse wedding ring, Barnardiston honours their relationship in leaving it to him.

Barnardiston is the only woman in this group of testators who wrote her will as a wife and not as a widow. Her testament includes reference to the consent of her husband, without which her testament would not be valid (205r). Mary Prior has found that the number of married women who wrote wills increases in the mid-seventeenth century and that, in the late-seventeenth century, wives' wills 'show an increased independence and assertiveness.'[686] What Barnardiston's detailed bequests and instructions on the fate of items and monetary gifts in her early to mid-seventeenth-century will proves, however, is that such independence and assertiveness occurs in earlier testaments than those studied by Prior. Despite being married and under the legal coverture of her husband, Barnardiston's will deals with her bequests in much the same way as those of the widowed testators studied in this sample: the language she uses to express her independent wishes is equally forceful, with the exception of occasional justification of bequests as noted above.

Material goods thus symbolised female networks of kin and friendship within the wills of pre-modern women. In addition, these objects were inscribed with stories of family history and identity, becoming alternative 'texts' that can be read alongside the wills which relay their existence. Distinctions in expression have been revealed – from the inventory-like listing of Blakburn to the subtle use of adjectives like 'best' in Barnardiston's testament – supporting the case that even the legal genre of a will can represent the individuality of the writing style of pre-modern women. Bound up with these material gifts, of course, were financial and credit links which so often relied on networks of family and friends, disclosing the importance and seriousness with which pre-modern women dealt with monetary matters in their lives and in their testaments.

(vi) Credit and Financial Networks

Financial concerns are apparent in the desire to settle debts found wills which unveils not only testators' pragmatism but also their spirituality. In the Middle Ages the settling of debts before

[686] Mary Prior, 'Wives and wills 1558-1700', in *English rural society 1500-1800. Essays in honour of Joan Thirsk* ed. by John Chartres and David Hey (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp.201-25 (p.225).

death was required and formed one of the seven questions asked on the deathbed.[687] For pre-Reformation testators, 'debts left undischarged would detain a soul in Purgatory'.[688] Consequently, it is not surprising that the concern with the settling of debts is so abundant in wills of late medieval women, and that instructions that debts are paid are given with urgency. Highlighting the important link between financial solvency and salvation, Harris points out that 'failure to pay one's debts was a mortal sin.'[689] In preparing for death in 1422, Lady Peryne Clanbowe ensured that her debts would be paid as quickly as possible: 'I will And ordeine þ*a*t all my dettes [...] be principaly payde in all þe hast þ*a*t it may be' (49). In doing so, she adhered to the conventions of medieval will-writing. It was of great concern that debts were settled, both for worldly and spiritual reasons: an ordered legacy would ease the task of executors and the futures of heirs, while enabling the soul to pass peacefully from life to afterlife. In 1439 the Countess of Warwick expected 'my dettes be furst paide of eny thyng' (199). In 1487, Elizabeth Poynings directed, 'as sone as my body is buryed and th'expenses therof done and paid, that myn executo*ur*s provide and see that my dett*es* be contented and paid' (210). Resolved debts and organised worldly affairs formed part of the performance of a 'good death'.[690] Clanbowe, Poynings and Warwick all deal with the issue of their debts swiftly, using the appropriate financial and legal phrasing ('ordeine', 'due', 'principaly', 'hast', 'paide', 'contented', 'expenses', 'executours', 'dettes') almost as a formality lacking in individual expression. While demonstrating the potential restrictions of genre on the written expression of testators, resolving debts was vital in preserving the reputation, or credit, of these testators, and their formulaic articulation attests to this.

Debts owing to testators also needed to be recalled. Margaret Paston's 1482 will states,

> dettes to me owing, I yeve and comitte to the good disposic*i*on of myn executours to p*ar*fo*ur*me this my testament and last wille, and in other ded*es* of m*er*cye for my sowle, myn auncest*er*ez sowlez, and alle Cristen sowlez, to the most pleaser of God and p*ro*fit to my sowle. (389)

Paston's characteristically direct manner instructs her executors to collect her debts to fulfil the terms of her will, and to use any remaining funds to perform good works to the 'profit' of her

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[687] 'Seven Questions to be Asked of a Dying Man', in *Instructions for Parish Priests*, ed. by Edward Peacock (London: Published for the Early English Text Society by Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co., Ltd., 1902), pp.69-71.
[688] Duffy, pp.355-6.
[689] B. J. Harris, *English Aristocratic Women*, p.155.
[690] Indeed, Rosenthal calls will-writing 'a vital component of the "good death"' for late medieval society, *Margaret Paston's Piety*, p.83.

soul, the souls of her ancestors and the souls of all Christians. This concern with her wider kinship and all Christians deflects any potential charge of selfish motivation and recalls Julian of Norwich's concern with her 'evencristene' and Margery Kempe's 'charite' to her 'evyn-Cristen sowlys'.[691] Both Julian and Kempe were near-contemporaries of Paston and all lived in East Anglia; their similar use of language uncovers a shared concern with the souls of fellow Christians and is suggestive of a common female spirituality at the time and locale in which they lived.[692] Paston's use of the word 'profit' demonstrates that she interprets salvation as something which can indeed be purchased, through the business of indulgences, charitable works and donations of money to support religious persons and fund masses and prayers for the dead. In a departure from Paston's usual comprehensive instruction, the decision of the exact amount to be spent and the recipients of her charity is left to her executors, showing the level of trust placed in them. Paston relinquishes testamentary control when it comes to spiritual matters, preferring to create a distance between her monetary and spiritual wealth. This is the closest we see Paston come to the difficulties which Margery Kempe grapples with in reconciling her mercantile and devotional lives in her *Boke*.[693]

Katherine Barnardiston's will (1633) reveals that she was a money-lender and, like Blakburn before her and Moulsworth after her, she redefined the loans she made as commodities to bequeath.[694] Barnardiston releases her (third and current) husband, William Towse, from the £1,000 she lent him on their marriage in 1612, on the condition that he pays

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[691] Julian of Norwich, 'A Vision Showed to a Devout Woman', in *The Writings of Julian of Norwich* ed. by Nicholas Watson and Jacqueline Jenkins (Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2006), pp.61-119 (p.73); Margery Kempe, *The Book of Margery Kempe,* ed. by Barry Windeatt (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2004), p.278, l.4763.

[692] Of course, this does not mean that such spirituality is not evident in medieval men's texts, nor that they do not use similar phrasing. William Paston (II)'s will (1496) instructs that 'xx il. in money be geuen and disposed for my soule and all Cristen soules in dedes of pitee and charitee the day of my said burying' (p.194). When looking at the surviving male Paston wills, William (II) is the only one to use such an expression. The wills of William Paston (I) (1444), Edmond Paston (I) (1449, nuncupative), and Walter Paston (1479) are all recorded in Latin, and so do not use the vernacular phrasing favoured by Margaret Paston. John Paston (II)'s will (1477), whilst being written in English, does not refer to the 'alle Cristen sowlez' which are provided for by his mother, Margaret, and his uncle William (II).

[693] These difficulties are explored Chapter Three.

[694] As noted in the 'Introduction' to this thesis, Judith M. Spicksley has identified this practice in the wills of never-married women in the early modern period. Judith M. Spicksley, 'Women, 'Usury' and Credit in Early Modern England: The Case of the Maiden Investor', *Gender & History*, 27.2 (2015), 263-292 (pp.279-80). Margaret Blakburn uses the codicil to her will in 1435 to release her daughter, Alice Bolton, and son-in-law, John, from the debt they owed to Margaret's late husband, Nicholas. She leaves the sum of £400 to John's use in business for two years, after which he must divide it between Blakburn's two daughters (p.33). Martha Moulsworth's will (1646) also gives evidence of her money-lending and use of this as a rhetorical tool to provide for her beneficiaries. She too transforms her loans into possessions to bequeath. Moulsworth returns 'to Martha Henne the parcell of table lynnen; on which I lent her ffather tenn poundes' (p.222). The surety which was given to Moulsworth as creditor she now takes for her own as an object of value to bequeath to the next generation.

his daughter a £10 annuity (209r).[695] The fact that Barnardiston lent her new husband such a large sum of money – enough to purchase 121 horses – suggests that she was the wealthier partner, perhaps benefiting financially from her previous marriages. Indeed, her will begins with a direct statement of the wealth she held 'before' their union: 'at the tyme of the treatye of marrige betweene her the ſaid Dame Katharen and the ſaid Willm Towſe her now huſband [she] was poſſeſſed of divers goode cattells chattells howſehold ſtuffe plate & jewells ringes gould ſilver and ſomes of monye' (205r). This formulaic sentence reinforces the justness of Barnardiston's decision to distribute her wealth according to her own wishes. It is for this reason that she employs concise expression: for her will to serve its legal purpose, Barnardiston must avoid the chance of misinterpretation. Concise syntax presents her astute use of business logic in a strategy to present an image of herself as a fair lender and/or testator.

The risks taken by ventures made in the financial world needed to be resolved in order to pass peacefully onto the next life; they formed part of ordering worldly affairs in readiness for the next generation for all pre-modern people. In 1530 and 1601 respectively, Maud Parr's and Elizabeth Hardwick's wills dealt with the risk of safeguarding funds and assets. The fact that Parr leaves her daughter, Anne, her inheritance in the material form of plate demonstrates the pre-modern investment of cash in property: in the absence of a bank account it would be safer to invest wealth in objects which would retain value and which could be sold should the need arise. Parr directs that Anne's inheritance is stored securely:

> all ſuche mony that I haue in keping toward the mariage of my doughter Anne whiche my huſbond willid to hir and all ſuche plate and other bequeſts as I haue willid to my ſaid dougter Anne by this my will be putt into an indifferent place in ſuer keping in cofers lockid with diuers locks wherof euery one of my Executours and my ſaid daughter Anne to haue euvery of them a key and there yt to remayne tyll yt ought to be delyuid [delivered] vnto hir. (85v)

[695] A further example of Barnardiston's transformation of loans into commodities is her bequest to her niece, suggesting that she was a prominent woman in network of credit: 'I give vnto my Niece Katherien Goodin Two hundred pounds to be payed her by ffather Sir Richard Deane out of the three hundred pounds wch he oweth me upon bond' (211r). The vast amounts lent by Barnardiston demonstrate the extent of her wealth and situate her as a key player in a network of credit and trust within her kin. She is careful to state that Sir Richard Deane 'oweth' money 'upon bond', using the correct legal and commercial terminology to demonstrate her understanding of monetary matters which are formalised using recognised documents and practices. Barnardiston's are not casual loans founded on verbal promises but are validated by written documents. The plain language which she uses in these bequests signifies her straightforward dealings with the financial world: these are not bequests of emotion but of business.

The plate and money intended for Anne is to be locked in secure ‘cofers’ in a safe location, and each executor and Anne are to have a key. Parr evidently trusted her daughter sufficiently to take part in guarding her future wealth. Parr’s directions are pragmatic, concise and astute in a style recalling the writings of Margaret Paston. Parr’s instructions for the protection of Anne’s inheritance also disclose her obligation to carry out her husband’s instructions in her role as his executor, which she states explicitly: ‘I will that my huſbands will be perfourmed aſ muche as belongythe to my parte to perfourme’ (85v). As with Margaret Blakburn’s, Parr’s will demonstrates her understanding of her duty to ensure that her role of executor is fulfilled. By referencing their position as their husband’s executors in their writings, Parr and Blakburn create a rhetorical strategy to give male authority to their own testaments.

In the time before bank accounts, any money stored as cash could prove insecure. Hardwick attempts to ensure that her legacies are carried out by allocating ‘readye’ money to cover costs, stored in bags (presumably so that it could be counted and divided up in certain values as is still done in banks today) and locked in a chest, entrusting this to her executor and favourite son, William (190v). The similarity with Parr’s strategy is striking and suggests that this was the safest and usual way for the wealthy to store their money. Hardwick’s written orders document her practical economic policy which is reflected in concise syntax. This is not the time for literary flourish, but for clear commands. It is interesting that Hardwick refers to the money as ‘good and lawfull’; as with her will, she is keen to stress that it is legal and not counterfeit, whilst also hinting at the Tudor debasement of coinage (190v).[696] This concern with ‘lawful’ money is shared with Barnardiston (208v) and Moulsworth (222), indicating that with the increase in mercantile exchange the legality of currency became a specifically early modern issue.

This brief study of the networks of credit and debt within my sample of pre-modern women’s wills has revealed that in their recording of such transactions they write in a style appropriate to the formal discharging of debts, demonstrating the authors’ grasp of commercial and legal language and phrasing to safeguard the validity of their documents alongside protecting their monetary stores.

[696] Eric Kerridge, *Trade and banking in early modern England* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988), pp.36-7; p.85. See below for Hardwick’s reinforcement of the legality of her will.

(vii) Payments of Thanks and Seals of Approval

Beyond monetary networks, female agency can be identified in testators' payments to servants and friends for services received in life. Pre-modern women used financial bequests to servants as a declaration of their gratitude. These legacies formally take the place of expressions of emotion which can sometimes be found in their letters.[697] In this respect, simple statements of financial amounts are silently invested with emotion and appreciation which, in another genre, could find expression through stylistic agency. The Countess of Warwick (1439) bequeaths money to her female servant, Elizabeth, 'for the labo*ur* sche hath had a-bowot me yn my Sekenysse, xx mark*es*' (118).[698] Warwick's bequest works as a payment for specific services received in life. As a wealthy countess, she was able to employ a servant to care for her during her final 'sekenysse'. Her notation of Elizabeth's 'labour' recalls Margery Kempe's reference to her scribe's 'labour' of writing.[699] It is a word invested with spiritual virtue as well as female suffering. In Warwick's will as in Kempe's memoir, 'labour' is multi-layered and implies Elizabeth is a deserving and virtuous beneficiary.

Elizabeth Hardwick's will (1601) goes beyond Warwick's remembrance of a single servant and ensures that her entire household is provided for after her death, detailing precisely how this should be done in a confident tone of authority:

> I will and appoynte that my ffamilie be kept together at my ordinarie expenſes vntill my bodye ſεalbe buryed. And likewiſe that my houſhould Servaunts haue allowance of meate and drinke and Lodging at my like chardge at my houſe at Harwicke […] one whole moneth next after my ffunerall for the better beſtowing of them ſelues in the meane tyme And I giue and appoynte one thowſand poundes to be payed and beſtowed amongst my Servauntes […] within tenne days next after the finiſhing of the ſaied ffunerall. (188^{r}-188^{v})

Hardwick's household, or 'ffamilie', are to be maintained at her expense until her burial. In leaving such a legacy she posthumously provides her household servants with some of the Corporal Acts of Mercy as they are griven food, drink and shelter at her expense for a further one month after the funeral – a final payment for their loyalty. By supplying them with sustenance and lodging for a month after the funeral, Hardwick gives her employees time to

[697] Brilliana Harley admitted feelings of fear in her letter to her son, Ned, analysed in Chapter Two, pp.84-5.
[698] Twenty marks in 1440 could pay the wages of a skilled tradesman for 440 days.
[699] See Chapter Three p.128.

find suitable employment: 'for the better beſtowing of them ſelues.' This turn of phrase implies an appreciation of her staff as especially gifted or hardworking. 'Beſtowing' suggests the giving of a gift: Hardwick's servants are presented as special and talented individuals despite their anonymity. She hints that their new employer will be lucky to have their service. She leaves £1,000 to be divided amongst the servants; the same monetary bequest as was given to Hardwick's granddaughter, Arbella Stuart (188v).[700] It is unclear among how many servants this is to be divided, or how evenly, but it is a substantial amount of money.[701] Hardwick provides them with the freedom to find the best possible opportunity for new employment, rather than placing them in a position of being forced to accept the first chance of paid work in order to survive. Her legacy takes away any uncertainty caused by the loss of livelihoods occasioned by her death. In early modern England, men of gentry status and above were considered financially responsible for their servants, however many or few they had in their employment.[702] Gentry and aristocratic men often honoured the service of their employees with monetary bequests.[703] Hardwick's will showcases that these obligations also existed and were honoured by matriarchs of such families. Writing her will as a widow, Hardwick took the place of the aristocratic master of the household, ensuring that her servants were provided for.[704] Her writing style uses the existing and accepted conventions of the testamentary genre with great authority.[705]

Payments for services received in life are not the only wages which pre-modern women will-writers include amongst their bequests: they also attempt to exert control over executors through payments for the labour they will undertake after the decease of the testator. These payments are transformed into rhetorical devices to coerce executors and heirs into acting as the testators wish. By default, the act of will-writing places a great deal of trust in those who are to carry out the wishes of the deceased.[706] The Countess of Warwick (1439) makes it a

[700] This was later revoked.
[701] At the time Hardwick wrote her will, £1,000 was enough to pay a skilled tradesman for over fifty-four years.
[702] Anthony Fletcher, *Gender, Sex and Subordination in England 1500-1800* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1995), p.138.
[703] Fletcher, p.138.
[704] Of course, long before her widowhood, Hardwick had been estranged from her husband and ruling the Hardwick estate in her own right.
[705] Amongst her bequests to numerous servants as rewards for their dutiful service, Katherine Barnardiston differentiates between the 'best' items intended for her family and 'all other the worſer ſorte of my wearing apparrell' that she gives 'unto my maide ſervantes to be devided amongſt them' (210v). Moulsworth also provides for specific servants, including the 'auncient' Edward Roberts (p.233).
[706] As James writes of Tudor female testators, 'their trust lay in those whom they named as overseers and executors of their estates. Making certain that their wishes would be carried out after they were gone was something that concerned them profoundly, and that anxiety is much evident in their wills.' James, *Women's Voices,* p.187.

godly duty for her executors to carry out her will, using carefully selected vocabulary to transform the legal contract of the will into a spiritual one: 'I requir*e* hem all […] that they do trwly and feithfully theyr*e* part and dever to execute and p*a*rfome this my last will, as they all […] woll Answer*e* a-for*e* god at the day of dome' (119). 'Dever' conflates legal, financial and religious discourses as its medieval definitions include 'to do one's duty as a Christian', 'to do one's best', 'to assume responsibility', and perform a 'feudal service' (*MED* 1; 2; 3). These fluid meanings lend themselves perfectly to Warwick's rhetoric. She manages the risk of disobedient or reluctant executors by invoking God and calling to mind the eternal fate of their souls: they must answer to the highest authority. Warwick suggests that if her executors fail to carry out her wishes they will commit a sin for which they will suffer the consequences on Judgement Day. For Warwick, acting as an executor was a moral duty and a will a document to be respected and followed accordingly.[707]

Like Warwick, Peryne Clanbowe (1422) presents the role of executor as a godly duty, calling on hers to 'do her [their] besynesse to fulfyll goddes will and myne, as they woll aunsuer afor gode' (51). Interestingly, 'besynesse' referred to specifically worldly affairs in this period (*MED* 2c). In combining this terminology in the same sentence as 'goddes will', Clanbowe invests her syntax with devotional importance. Indeed, she states that her will is God's will, thereby ensuring that her executors obey her instructions. For Clanbowe, the act of making a will was an appropriate act of piety as well as one of financial administration.

Moving beyond the religious duty of executors to carry out the testator's will, Margaret Blakburn (1433) forcefully presents her will as a legally binding document between herself and her executors when she states it has been witnessed and that she has 'attached my seal to this my present testament' (29-31). The act of attaching her seal illustrates Blakburn's literal stamp of approval and the finality of her choice of executors.[708] The seal gives her wishes an official authority and binds her executors into their duty to obey her.[709] Like Blakburn, Elizabeth Poynings (1487) states that 'to this my p*re*sent test[a]ment and last wille haue put my seale' (214). Her lexical choices infuse her document with devotional overtones when she writes that

[707] Ann J. Kettle has remarked upon the tendency of some medieval husbands to issue their wives and female executors 'dire warnings about the consequences of ignoring their wishes', such as facing repercussions on Judgement Day, p.101. Evidently, medieval female testators also employed such rhetorical devices in their written wills.
[708] She appoints her daughters Isabella and Alice, her brother William Ormeshede and chaplain John Fox as her executors (p.29-31).
[709] Susan M. Johns observes that, during the Middle Ages, seals were 'visual representations of power, and they conveyed notions of authority and legitimacy.' Susan M. Johns, *Noblewomen, Aristocracy and Power in the Twelfth-Century Anglo-Norman Realm* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003), p.122.

she 'ordeigne[s] myne executours my forsaid sonnes Ser Edward Ponyngys and Mathew Browne' (214). In addition to being invested in holy orders, 'ordeigne' could also mean to choose or appoint a person to an office or position, and to command or order an action (*MED* 6; 4; 7). While bearing in mind the use of conflated discourses in the same context by Warwick and Clanbowe, I interpret Poynings's use of this term in a similar manner. The language of devotion and the vocabulary of financial law intertwine once again.

Adding a seal to a will – as done by Blakburn, Poynings and Paston (382) – reinforced its status as a legal contract. All three women had merchant and legal connections through their natal families and husbands, which perhaps explains their understanding and use of such a tool to inscribe their textual authority in an additional material. Into the early modern period Maud Parr, Elizabeth Hardwick, Katherine Barnardiston and Martha Moulsworth continued this practice, and all refer to the act in writing. The two 'texts' of the will document and the seal work alongside each other in a rhetorical strategy of legal reinforcement. By including a reference to the seal in their writing, the testators leave a 'paper-trail' of evidence which would expose any unauthorised interference and potentially invalidate claims against the legality of the document.

Maud Parr (1530) states that she has 'ſubſcribed my name and putto my ſeale' to her 'laſt will and teſtamet', mitigating the risk of claims against her will and the possibility of counterfeit testaments (86^{r}). She also revokes all previous wills (85^{v}). Evidently women updated and revised their wills. Drafts of the Paston women's wills have survived, demonstrating the careful thought and editing process employed by the female testators as their lives progressed, and also suggesting that the ever-present fear of death and eternal damnation meant that they were always keen to ensure their worldly affairs were in order whilst preparing for a 'good death'.[710]

Alongside sealing her will, Elizabeth Hardwick (1601) strongly emphasises its legality and finality:

> in witneſſe that this preſent writing Indented is my true and only laſt will and teſtament, I do hereby revoke renounce and vtterlie diſavowe all other willes and teſtaments by me at any tyme heretofore made or publiſhed and all other words and wrytinges any

[710] See, for example, the draft wills of Agnes Berry Paston in *Paston Letters and Papers* ed. by Davis, pp.44-9. Similarly, Elizabeth Hardwick's testament includes amendments within its margins and multiple codicils as she revokes inheritance and redistributes this as she sees fit. These texts were very much working documents subject to revision until the moment of death.

> wayes to be mentyoned or preferred to be my laſt will vleſſe the ſame ſɛalbe by my owne hande after this tyme ſealed and ſubſcribed and by me openlie publiſɛed and Declared to be my laſt will with revocation of all former willes in the preſence of fower or more lawfull witneſſe preſent at my ſo doynge the ſame. And for more confirmation of the premiſſes I here openlie and very adviſedlye ſeale this writing Indented with the Seale of my Armes and ſubſcribe the ſame with my owne hande and openlie in all ſuretie publiſhe and declare this onlie to be my laſt will and teſtament (192^{r}).

Hardwick's choice of vocabulary – to 'revoke renounce and vtterlie diſavowe' all previous wills – is strikingly powerful. Her will is indented, witnessed, sealed and signed to protect it from accusations of fraud and to distinguish it from any potential false imitations. In addition to this, her repetition of terms such as 'laſt', 'true' and 'only' increases their rhetorical power and the strength of her written voice. Hardwick's determined and forthright personality speaks through her writing: the text will become her posthumous voice. She refers to the public nature of her will, recalling previously 'publiſhed' (made known) wishes, revealing the social drama of death and inheritance for the wealthy.[711] This new will is made known in 'ſuretie', a legal term denoting a guarantee, as she declares ownership and responsibility for the document and the contained financial transactions which will be set in motion by her death (*OED* 1). Hardwick capitalises on legal discourse and phrasing in a display of personal fiscal acumen. Her statement contains all the required legal tools to invalidate previous wills, but with added force thanks to her linguistic choices, extended syntax and repetition which invest extra strength in the wishes contained in the document she protects.[712]

As well as appealing to their executors' sense of duty and affixing their seals to the documents, female will-writers manage the risk of disobedient beneficiaries through placing conditions on their inheritance. Ann J. Kettle has shown that husbands placed conditions on the inheritance of their widows in their wills, such as stating they must not remarry in order to remain in possession, or in residence, of property.[713] These conditions were to prevent the deceased husband's property and money becoming the possessions of a new, unrelated man.

[711] Moulsworth also refers to making her wishes known using 'publishe', as noted above on p.219.
[712] Similarly, Barnardiston writes: 'It. I doe hereby revoke all former wills […] I have putt to my hand and Seale to this my laſt will and teſtament conteyning Seaventeene ſheetes of paper' (211^{r}-211^{v}). Like Barnardiston and Hardwick, Moulsworth states: 'I doe revoake and Comptermande all former and other wills legacies, and bequests by mee heretofore made giuen and bequeathed In wittnes whereof this my present testament conteyning therin my last will I the said Martha Molesworth have sett my hand and seale' (p.223-4). All three early modern women suggest they have written, or at least signed, their wills in their own hand. They revoke previous testaments, suggesting they may have prepared various draft versions at different stages of their lives.
[713] Kettle, p.99.

The female testators studied here are equally keen to control the behaviour of their beneficiaries as the husbands evaluated by Kettle. Family members could hinder testators' wishes but could also provide valuable support to executors. Katherine Barnardiston (1633) placed conditions on the inheritance granted to her husband, to mitigate any risk he posed to the carrying out of her will. She bequeaths him the £1,000 he owes her 'uppon this condition that my ſaid huſband ſhall not any ways oppoſe or hinder the performance of this my laſt will and teſtament but that he ſhall ayde and aſſiſt my ſaid executors with his beſt advice and counſell' (209ᵛ). Of course, as a married woman, Barnardiston was only able to write a will with the consent of her husband. Using her strong tone and carefully selected formal syntax, Barnardiston presents herself as a justified testator in asserting her financial and moral authority over her husband. A husband could withdraw his consent to his wife's will even after her death.[714] Evidently, Barnardiston attempted to mitigate this risk. At the very end of her will, she mirrors the opening page with reference to 'the conſent of my loving huſband', reminding anyone who might dispute the validity of her will that she was acting with the approval of her husband, and not in independent disobedience (211ᵛ).

The robust legal terminology employed by pre-modern female testators works in conjunction with payments of thanks to servants, family and executors in a rhetorical strategy to ensure that their wishes were adhered to. In some cases, particularly prominent amongst the medieval wills studied here, this fiscal diction is invested with connotations of godly duty. Seals become more common in the later wills of this sample, implying a greater concern with fraudulent documents and evidencing a further layer of textual self-representation attached to the genre as time progressed. Terminology such as Hardwick's 'publiſhe' discloses the social and performative nature of women's testaments in pre-modern England.

(viii) Conclusion

In the pre-modern era, redemption was understood in terms of financial metaphor. Often the testators studied here employ vocabulary which conflates the religious and the financial in accomplished rhetorical strategies to give their written voices authority, and to reinforce the duty of their executors. Singly, a will reveals the individuality of its author; comparatively, wills illuminate developments and continuities in social and religious history.

[714] Mary Prior, p.203.

Each of the female testators whose wills are analysed in this chapter are significantly concerned with the dissemination of the currency of memory between those who survive them; it is a currency which sustains remembrance of themselves, their natal families, their marriages, their meaningful relationships with friends, kin, stepchildren and religious communities. While asserting their individuality and identity, the women proclaim their perception of their place within the story of their family histories and futures, as well as within their wider society. The discourse of finance brings together the varying aspects of each woman's life within the legal document of her final will and testament.

Vitally, it was the social and financial standing of these women that gave them the opportunity not only to write a will, but also to express specific instructions on how their money should be used and possessions bestowed. In the Middle Ages their money allowed them to amass good deeds by providing alms to the benefit of their souls and to secure prayers to speed their exit from Purgatory. Post-Reformation testator Katherine Barnardiston used her wealth for acts of charity to express her gratitude to Christ and God for the salvation in which she trusted, whilst Elizabeth Hardwick cared for her household servants and alms-house inhabitants.

The increased use of seals, witnesses, signatures and renouncing of previous wills, specifically demonstrated through the employment of the language of probate, implies that the concern with legality intensified as the period progressed. On the other hand, perhaps this concern with legality actually reflects that the wealthier the woman was, the more concerned she was to prove the legitimacy of her wishes and prevent fraud after her death. Across the period, female will-writers provided for future generations through the bequeathing of belongings and of monetary gifts, particularly to female kin. As in the Middle Ages, so in the early modern era women expressed their networks of trust through their wills, whether these circles of contacts were familial, marital, devotional or financial. Material objects functioned as a currency of memory, visual prompts of remembered kinship for the living. At times, these objects served as 'texts' themselves, an extension of the written document as they were inscribed with meaning through previous ownership and occasionally by engraving or artwork. Where instructions were left for tombs and burial monuments, these worked in much the same way.

Perhaps the most surprising discovery of this chapter is that, albeit rarely, explicit use is made of the language of emotion and love in legal testaments. When this occurs, it is often to justify the generous bestowing of legacies on favoured kin and the appointment of executors, suggesting that love is itself a currency which has authoritative and rhetorical value within the

genre of the will. Use of emotive adjectives of affection appears to have increased as the period progressed, revealing an evolution of the way in which women adapted and used the will. Of course, this is a difficult judgement to make as the individual personalities and purposes of women differ widely. A greater sample of wills would need to be assessed before a firm conclusion can be drawn.

It is, of course, always impossible for a testator to guarantee that her/his wishes are fulfilled after death. However, the wills of the women studied in this chapter provide strong evidence of their attempt to exert control, ensure commemoration, limit loss, and mitigate posthumous risk. Beyond this evidence, the analysis of the wills has demonstrated the possibility of self-writing through the genre of a legal document. While financial diction is included in final testaments by necessity, a close reading of pre-modern women's wills elucidates their use of material bequests as alternative texts through which to express individual and familial identity. At the same time as dealing with practical financial matters in which we expect to find commercial and legal phrasing, this study has emphasised the appropriation of mercantile discourse and theory to personal and communal devotion. Despite the constraints of the legal genre, nuanced agency and expression can be discovered.

Building on the analysis of the factual wills in this chapter, the following 'Codicil' concludes the thesis by assessing the literary wills of Isabella Whitney and Elizabeth Joscelin. Whitney's poetic 'Wyll' (1573) is entirely fictional, while Joscelin's *Legacy to Her Unborn Child* (1622) consists of instructions for her child in the event of her death in childbirth. After a close reading of both texts, which retains a focus on commercial rhetoric, the 'Codicil' will bring together the findings of this study.

Chapter Five

Codicil: Pre-modern Women and the Language of Money

The *OED* defines a 'codicil' as a 'supplement to a will, added by the testator for the purpose of explanation, alteration, or revocation of the original contents' (*OED* 1a). This amendment or addition to an existing will is therefore an appropriate title with which to draw together the conclusions of this thesis, while looking forward to the next steps this research could take. Much like the wills discussed in the previous chapter, the conclusion of this thesis both looks back over what has been uncovered and ahead to future possibilities. To do so, this 'Codicil' will analyse two literary adaptations of the will which can themselves be understood as 'codicils' or supplementary amendments to the legal form. Neither Isabella Whitney's 'Wyll' (1573) nor Elizabeth Joscelin's *Legacy to Her Unborn Child* (1622) is a legal will, yet both authors were greatly influenced by the genre. These two texts encapsulate the central argument of this thesis that commercial and legal diction and theory unite pre-modern women's understanding of the various aspects of their lives including their personal, communal and familial identities. This 'Codicil' examines the rhetorical techniques employed and manipulated by Whitney and Joscelin to enable and inform their writing. Rather than including Whitney's and Joscelin's texts in the former chapter on wills, it is beneficial to study them in light of the findings of the previous three chapters. This allows revelation of continuities and discontinuities in the linguistic choices, features of genre and rhetorical techniques employed by women authors of the pre-modern era, while testing the longevity of the findings of the preceding analyses. The 'Codicil' will begin by briefly outlining the circumstances of Whitney's and Joscelin's writing before moving on to a discussion of the texts as alternative wills, the spiritual and moral teachings of the texts, their attitudes towards gendered work and education, and lastly the commercial practices of shopping for clothes and husbands. My 'Codicil' will end with concluding remarks, drawing together the findings of this project as well as posing remaining and new questions generated by this study.

The late sixteenth-century poet Isabella Whitney, unlike any of the other female authors studied in this project, wrote to sell her writing for financial profit. Whitney locates her printer amongst the stalls at St. Paul's in her 'Wyll', calling on her friends to purchase her work.[715]

[715] Isabella Whitney, 'The Maner of Her Wyll', in *Isabella Whitney, Mary Sidney and Aemelia Lanyer: Renaissance Women Poets*, ed. by Danielle Clarke (London: Penguin Books, 2000), pp.18-28 (pp.24-5, ll.193-200). All references are to this edition of the text, hereafter cited by line number.

Also setting Whitney apart is her choice of fictional genre: all other texts here are non-fiction.[716] Her text belongs in this project, however, as it demonstrates the use of mercantile diction by a pre-modern woman writing in a fictional context, in parallel to its appropriation in various areas of life such as devotion, love and legacy as explored in this thesis. Whitney's satirical, versified 'Wyll' is highly commercial in both subject and purpose, and first appeared as part of a volume of poetry by Whitney entitled *A sweet Nosgay* published by Richard Jones in 1573. Danielle Clarke points out the paradoxical way in which, feigning to be letters and a will, Whitney's writings are 'quasi-manuscripts' that 'circulate within the literary marketplace of print' creating an 'illusion of non-commercial exchange'.[717] In claiming to be private letters and a final will and testament, Whitney's printed texts mimicked the private manuscript form made use of by many other female authors of this project. In doing so, Whitney hints at distaste for the overtly commercial exchange that printed texts signified.[718] At the time at which Whitney wrote and published, manuscript circulation was assumed to be of higher status than the printed market as the author could control its dissemination.[719] By adopting genres which were more usually manuscript texts, authors of printed literary works distanced themselves from the association with the very marketplace on which they relied for income. The struggle between virtue, gentility, commercial exchange and financial gain continued beyond the imagined world of the medieval 'Goode Wife' and impacted upon the physical form of sixteenth-century literature along with the appearance of the book trade.[720] Publishing texts not only threw a woman's virtue into question, it also implied that authors – male as well as female – were 'member[s] of the un-elite'.[721] To use Wendy Wall's phrase, the female author became a 'fallen woman' in terms of both her social ranking and sexual morality.[722] The pretence of private, manuscript texts and non-commercial exchange which Clarke identifies allowed Whitney a degree of protection from moralising criticism of her work and behaviour, while she herself satirised the ruling classes of her contemporary society. She writes in imagined preparation for death and

[716] While this is a modern literary term which would not be recognised in the pre-modern period under investigation, I apply it here to mark the distinction between, on the one hand, the texts written for practical reasons (letters, wills, mothers' advice books) or recording real events (the memoirs of Kempe and Moulsworth) and, on the other, the commercially-driven, fictional writing of Whitney. Furthermore, there is a distinction between the non-fictional texts which all survive in manuscript form, and Whitney's printed, fictional poetry.
[717] Danielle Clarke, *The Politics of Early Modern Women's Writing* (Harlow: Pearson Education Limited, 2001), p.195.
[718] Clarke, *Politics,* p.195.
[719] See Danielle Clarke, 'Introduction', in *Isabella Whitney, Mary Sidney and Aemelia Lanyer: Renaissance Women Poets*, ed. by Danielle Clarke (London: Penguin Books, 2000), pp.x-xl (p.xiii).
[720] The dangers that the marketplace posed to a medieval woman's morality, safety and reputation in the didactic 'How the Goode Wife Taught Hyr Doughter' were discussed in the Introduction to this thesis, pp.39-40.
[721] Wendy Wall, 'Isabella Whitney and the Female Legacy', *ELH* 58.1 (1991), 35-62 (p.36).
[722] W. Wall, p.36.

uses the faux will as a stage on which to display the flaws of London society, cloaked in the illusion of sociable manuscript writing.

Existing as a genuine manuscript text, Elizabeth Joscelin's *Legacy to Her Unborn Child* is one of numerous early modern tracts written by parents – fathers as well as mothers – setting out their child's upbringing.[723] Joscelin wrote during her first pregnancy, at the age of twenty-six, in anticipation of the possibility of her death in childbirth – a fear that was tragically realised shortly after the birth of her daughter, Theodora, in October 1622.[724] Joscelin's text was created for private, family use but was printed two years after her death as *The Mothers Legacie, To her Vnborne Childe* (1624), having being edited by Thomas Goad.[725] The title by which Joscelin's text is now known was given by the editor and printer of the 1624 publication, a version which has significant differences to Joscelin's manuscript. Much like Margery Kempe's *Boke*, Joscelin's *Legacy* has posthumously gained its title from printers, editors and critics but this does not impact on the validity of her authorial agency within the manuscript. In the accompanying letter to her husband, Joscelin describes her tract as 'my little legacy', and so it is appropriate that modern scholars should interpret her text as a 'Legacy'.[726] While 'little' is self-diminutive, 'my' strongly proclaims ownership and authorship.[727] A 'legacy' is usually something material bequeathed to another at the time of the giver's death. The *OED* reveals that the first written record of 'legacy' in reference to an 'intangible thing handed down by a predecessor' occurred in 1579 (*OED* 5b). This sixteenth-century definition is central to Joscelin's text as she bequeaths not material possessions or wealth, but moral and spiritual lessons to her as yet unborn daughter. This meaning is also applicable to some of the pre-modern women's legal wills analysed in the previous chapter, such as those by Eleanor Hull

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[723] Betty S. Travitsky suggests that Renaissance Englishwomen 'developed a new genre' in the form of the 'mother's advice book, actually a variation on the more traditional advice book by a father.' Betty S. Travitsky, 'Introduction: Placing women in the English Renaissance', in *The Renaissance Englishwomen in Print*, ed. by Anne M. Haselkorn and Betty S. Travitsky (Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1990), pp.3-41 (p.26).

[724] Sylvia Brown, 'Elizabeth Joscelin: Introduction', in *Women's Writing in Stuart England: The Mothers' Legacies of Dorothy Leigh, Elizabeth Joscelin, and Elizabeth Richardson*, ed. by Sylvia Brown (Stroud: Sutton Publishing, 1999), pp.91-105 (p.100).

[725] Thomas Goad was a minister of the church and Chaplain to the Archbishop of Canterbury. He is assumed to have been known to Joscelin and her extended family. According to the Stationer's Register, it was he who licensed Joscelin's text in 1623/4. His amendments to Joscelin's text brought it in line with gender expectations, moderating her voice on the merits of female education, or curbing her religious zeal at moments at which it could be taken for 'outspoken Puritanism', for example. Brown, p.96; pp.100-1.

[726] Elizabeth Joscelin, 'Elizabeth Joscelin's Manuscript Mother's Legacy', in *Women's Writing in Stuart England: The Mothers' Legacies of Dorothy Leigh, Elizabeth Joscelin, and Elizabeth Richardson*, ed. by Sylvia Brown (Stroud: Sutton Publishing, 1999), pp.106-39 (p.106). All references are to this edition of the text, hereafter cited by page number.

[727] See also Brilliana Harley's fluctuating use of 'his' and 'my' in her letters in Chapter Two, p.84 and p.95. Pronouns can speak loudly of pre-modern women's identity and authorship status.

(1458) and Katherine Barnardiston (1633), who used their wealth to leave a spiritual legacy.[728] In their texts, these women used tangible possessions – including but not limited to money – to facilitate their true bequests of morality and piety to their surviving communities. While the recognised definition of 'legacy' in terms of bequeathing moral instruction may not have been recorded until the sixteenth century, pre-modern women's wills reveal that, in practice, this understanding of the meaning of a will was capitalised upon much earlier. Wall has identified the propensity of early modern women's mothers' legacy texts (which she also refers to as 'mothers' "wills"') in creating 'proprietorship' in the 'realm' of 'intellectual riches' at a moment in which their material possessions and wealth were legally held by their husbands.[729] Joscelin's choice of 'little' functions as a modesty trope to protect herself from any accusations of inappropriate wifely behaviour which simultaneously masks and reveals her autonomous action of writing from her repressed state of wife and authoritative position as mother. Interestingly, Kempe refers to her writing as her 'lytyl tretys', demonstrating a shared self-deprecating representation of their authorial activities as a shield from the possibility of religious and social condemnation and censure which spans the pre-modern era assessed in this project.[730] For the purpose of this study, Sylvia Brown's edition of Joscelin's manuscript will be used to read Joscelin's original version of the text, without the interventions of Thomas Goad (1576-1638), the theologian responsible for the introductory 'Approbation' of the 1624 printed edition whom Brown credits with overseeing, editing and altering the text for publication as a model for female piety.[731] Brown's edition of Joscelin's manuscript reclaims her text from the male, clerical appropriation by Goad as a tool to further his own ideal of feminine devotion and behaviour. Using Brown's edition allows an appreciation and analysis of Joscelin's own linguistic choices, rather than those imposed upon the text by later male interference.[732]

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[728] See Hull's bequests forming alternative dowries for religious women (pp.203-4), and Barnardiston's legacy of sermons for the prisoners of Newgate (p.206).
[729] W. Wall, p.45.
[730] Margery Kempe, *The Book of Margery Kempe,* ed. by Barry Windeatt (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2004), p.41, l.11. All references are to this edition of the text, hereafter cited by line number.
[731] Brown suggests that Goad and Joscelin were known to one another through her maternal grandfather, Bishop Chaderton (Bishop of Chester and then Lincoln), and their respective roles within the Church hierarchy (Goad was ordained as a minister in 1606 and became a Bachelor of Divinity in 1607 before Chaderton's death in 1608). Brown notes that the interventions of the 1624 edition 'bring Joscelin's words more strictly in line with conventional gender expectations' and 'moderate Joscelin's zeal where it verges too close to outspoken Puritanism'. Brown, pp.100-1.
[732] Brown observes the continued male editorial interference in the 1684 edition printed in Oxford which replaced Joscelin's recommendations of Puritan prayers with references to *The Book of Common Prayer*, through which, Brown argues, 'Joscelin was re-appropriated for post-Restoration conformity', p.101.

As is common for most of the writings studied in this thesis, Whitney and Joscelin both allude to the date on which they began their writing.[733] Whitney locates her poem in a specific historical time, following the form of a legal will by noting the date of creation as 'xx of October […] in ANNO DOMINI: A Thousand: v. hundred seventy three' (313-5). Joscelin dates her writing through referencing the point in her life-course: the time of childbirth 'now drawing on' (109), recalling Elizabeth Hardwick's reference to her own worldly status as the widow of George Talbot, Earl of Shrewsbury.[734] Rather than for the purpose of asserting the social importance with which Hardwick references her independent, widowed rank, Joscelin's status as a young, expectant wife is used to emphasise her modesty and justify her writing. Both Hardwick and Joscelin capitalise on their marital relationship, defining their right to write in relation to their association with men.[735] Joscelin writes as a young, married mother-to-be poignantly facing the possibility of death while Whitney's persona is an unattached, poverty-stricken woman preparing for impending death caused by poverty rather than complications of childbirth, old age or ill health. While Whitney's persona is bestowed with the authority of a testator, Joscelin inhabits the authoritative voice of a mother. As a married woman she did not have the legal right to write a will that Whitney's *femme sole* enjoys, and so capitalises on the socially acceptable authority that her maternal status accords her.[736] The positions of authority occupied by the speakers of Whitney's and Joscelin's texts are used as insurance for the acceptance of their literary creation by their intended readership: Whitney's commercial audience, and Joscelin's child and intimate family. Although Joscelin's work became available on the commercial market after her death, this was not the intention of her treatise. The manuscript was discovered posthumously in the drawer of her desk, alongside a letter to her husband asking that he pass the treatise on to their child.[737] In this respect, Joscelin's letter functions as a will both separately and in conjunction with the manuscript of her *Legacy*; in bequeathing the treatise through the letter, her instructions for her child become a currency of memory which recalls and reworks the bequests of natal importance found in the legal wills of

[733] Legal wills are, of course, dated as a requirement of validity. Letters usually referred to the date on which they were written – by month, week, day, religious occasion if not the year. Moulsworth located her writing as her fifty-fifth birthday as well as the exact date, and Kempe noted the beginnings of her dictation. Each female author appears to have given importance to their writing by placing it within historical and personal time.
[734] See p.187 of previous chapter.
[735] Similarly, Katherine Barnardiston's will stresses the permission granted by her husband on which the legal validity of the document rests. See p.235 of Chapter Four.
[736] James Daybell's argument that early modern women gained an authoritative voice through motherhood was discussed in Chapter Two, and my analysis showed that Brilliana Harley capitalised on this authority in her letters to her son, Ned. See p.79.
[737] Valerie Wayne, 'Advice for women from mothers and patriarchs', in *Women and Literature in Britain, 1500-1700* ed. by Helen Wilcox (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp.56-79 (p.70).

pre-modern women in Chapter Four. The difference with Joscelin's text is that, rather than the material fruits of financial wealth, she bequeaths to her child the profit of spiritual contemplation in an inheritance of practical and literary labour. As with the bequests of Books of Hours, devotional items, clothing, jewellery and family portraits identified in the wills of the previous chapter, Joscelin bequeaths a text inscribed with her identity of mother. Her manuscript is a written alternative to the material objects and tombs owned and designed by female testators of the pre-modern period. Her document is a private item in contrast to memorials in a public place to which many, beyond the family, would have access.

(i) Literary Wills

Although not legally binding, Elizabeth Joscelin's use of the discourse of wills has been recognised by Jennifer Heller who claims it 'is not surprising, given the period's emphasis on will-making' and points to the Book of Common Prayer (1549) which 'specifies that individuals should set their affairs in order when they are in health, rather than on the deathbed.'[738] Joscelin appropriates and adapts this belief to the business of providing for her child: she writes her *Legacy* while still healthy during pregnancy rather than in her last moments.[739] Writing in a time of health, and by implication leisure rather than in a rushed panic during illness, enabled Joscelin to invest greater thought and consideration of her instructions for the unborn child's upbringing, much like the thoughtful recollections of Margery Kempe and Martha Moulsworth.[740] Their writings contrast with the rushed correspondence of Margaret Paston and Brilliana Harley during attacks on their homes.[741] Joscelin's text is endowed with time and consideration; a feature this project has identified as vital to rhetoric and linguistic choice in the letters discussed in Chapter Two. The creation of 'a legal will enables a smooth transition from life to death.'[742] This smooth transition was ensured through the organisation of financial affairs, material goods and spiritual provision for oneself and one's heirs. As a married woman, however, Joscelin could not legally write a will without her husband's permission, in a pre-nuptial marriage settlement or in a later agreement.[743] Instead of writing a

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[738] Jennifer Heller, *The Mother's Legacy in Early Modern England* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011), p.186.
[739] Despite this, her *Legacy* remains unfinished. Joscelin died following the birth of her daughter after enduring a fever for nine days. Brown, p.100.
[740] Kempe's *Boke* and Moulsworth's 'Memorandum' were analysed in Chapter Two.
[741] See Chapter Two.
[742] Heller, p.186.
[743] Amy Louise Erickson, *Women & Property in Early Modern England* (London and New York: Routledge, 1995), p.104. See also Lloyd Davis, 'Women's Wills in Early Modern England', in *Women, Property, and the*

legal will dispensing of material possessions and financial wealth, Joscelin appropriates the discourse of will-making to create a spiritual and moral 'will' to benefit her heir. Valerie Wayne has remarked that most authors of mothers' legacies in the seventeenth century wrote in anticipation of death.[744] In creating these treatises of mothers' advice, authors made spiritual provision for their children alongside practical instruction. In the absence of personal material wealth (which, if present, would be under the control of husbands), mothers turned to bestowing moral advice as alternative riches upon their children. In contrast to the extensive networks present in the legal wills studied in the previous chapter, the network represented in Joscelin's *Legacy* is much smaller, restricted to her immediate family in the direct line of descent. Joscelin's focus is on the metaphorical riches a mother can confer on a child, rather than a dispersal of her financial wealth amongst extended family and friends. In this focus on spiritual wealth, Joscelin's writing recalls that of Margery Kempe which leaves a legacy of exemplary female devotion for her contemporaries.

Heller suggests that the authors of early modern mothers' legacies 'repurpose the conventions of will-making, giving their text a quasi-legal dimension that turns readers into legatees, executors, and overseers.'[745] Similarly, Lloyd Davis argues that 'advice books are a kind of discursive adaptation of the will, developing the latter's complex of familial, moral, and material concerns and its hybrid private-public address into a personally voiced, socially oriented genre.'[746] Both Heller and Davis have identified the appropriation of the discourse of will-making by the married authors of mothers' legacies to fill the gap created by the denial of a wife's opportunity of leaving material bequests of land and property. Joscelin is no exception. As already noted, in her covering letter to her husband, Taurell, Joscelin refers to her following manuscript as her 'legacy', but she also names her 'childe' as her 'executor' and implores her husband that he 'must be the ouerseer for god sake' (106-7). Joscelin's textual representation of her husband engenders his role as her delegate and deputy in the business of raising their child in her absence. Much as the letters of the Paston and Thynne women and Brilliana Harley employed their husbands as their deputy shoppers, and the numerous pre-modern women testators engaged overseers and executors to carry out their wishes, Joscelin exerts an authority

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Letters of the Law in Early Modern England, ed. by Nancy E. Wright, Margaret W. Ferguson and A.R. Buck (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), pp.219-36 (p.223), and Chapter Four for more on this (p.182). As discussed in the Introduction to this thesis (pp.30-2), when she married, a pre-modern woman became a *femme covert*: in the eyes of the law, she and her husband were one.

[744] Including Joscelin, Elizabeth Grymeston (1604), Dorothy Leigh (1616) and M.R. (1623). Wayne, p.70.

[745] Heller, p.187.

[746] Davis, p.231.

over her husband which nevertheless remains within the bounds of conformity.[747] In creating her text, she coerces her husband into obliging her wishes as it functions as a unique form of contract, similar to Katherine Barnardiston's will which repeatedly refers to her husband's permission as a strategy of risk-mitigation to ensure that he continues to oblige her after her decease.[748] Joscelin implores her husband to act as the overseer of her legacy for 'god sake', investing his part with a godly duty in the same way as the previous chapter revealed pre-modern female testators transformed their executors' labour into a spiritual obligation.[749] Written from the imagined position of dead mother, Joscelin's work gains an authorial control over her husband and the upbringing of their child, and, like the testators of legal wills, her *Legacy* will be endowed with a post-mortem authority on her death. Combined with her use of legal terms which are choice selections from the formula and phrasing of testaments, this play on her husband's guilt and duty as a father provides Joscelin with a powerful rhetorical device to ensure that her wishes will be met. Joscelin was not alone in appropriating the discourse of law, inheritance and wealth in the spiritual instruction which she interprets as her rich gifts for her child.[750] The title page of M.R's *Mothers Counsell* (c.1630), for example, proclaims her treatise to be 'the laſt Will and Teſtament to her deareſt Daughter'.[751] The discourses of law and devotion inescapably overlap and interplay in pre-modern women's writing as in their lives.

What Heller and Davis do not recognise is that the appropriation of legal language is not confined to the writings of early modern mothers but is found in those of childless early modern women and by medieval women, too. Joscelin's use of terminology borrowed from law is reminiscent of Margery Kempe, the fifteenth-century wife and mother turned visionary pilgrim whose *Boke* was analysed in Chapter Three. In her autohagiography, Kempe recounts her conversations with Christ in which she makes him 'executor of alle the god werkys' she performs (634). Female appropriation of legal language spans the centuries as women find alternative ways of bequeathing their devotional and worldly advice to their children – both

[747] The correspondence of the Pastons, Thynnes and Harley was analysed in Chapter Two, and pre-modern women's wills were the subject of Chapter Four.
[748] Barnardiston's rhetorical strategies were noted in Chapter Four, p.235.
[749] For example, The Countess of Warwick and Peryne Clanbowe both made lexical choices which depicted their executors' obligations as a godly duty. See p.232.
[750] I have chosen to focus on Joscelin's text rather than that of 'M.R.' due to the uncertainty of the gender of the real author. I refer to 'M.R' as 'her' as, regardless of gender, the author performs the role of the writing mother. The focus of this project has been on texts created by known female authors, and in order to draw the thesis to a close I felt this should continue in the 'Codicil.' The potential that M.R.'s text was written by a male author would alter interpretation of her vocabulary, as is the case with Chaucer's Wife of Bath, discussed in section (viii) of the Introduction.
[751] M.R. *Mothers Counsell, or, Live within Compasse* (London, John Wright, 1630?), A[1].

biological and spiritual. From the far-reaching heirs of Kempe's 'evyn-Cristen' (4763) to the singular child at the centre of Joscelin's treatise, pre-modern women adeptly use legal terms usually found in documents dealing with financial provision to express their personal devotion as an inheritance for the benefit of those who survive them. Regardless of the differing Christian doctrines subscribed to by Kempe (Roman Church) and Joscelin (Protestant), legal diction remains suitable for appropriation within their literary works; despite the Reformation, the fundamental vocabulary continues in the writings of these women, and this is true across all the texts studied in this thesis.

Unlike Joscelin, Isabella Whitney's single female persona has a legal right to write a will: she is a *femme sole.*[752] Whitney shows herself to be familiar with the formal features and legal wording of wills. She begins her faux will with the conventional wording 'I whole in body, and in minde' (1); to appreciate Whitney's satire, her reader must recognise the legal form that she parodies. Importantly, Whitney does not satirise the practice of will-writing, but the financial mismanagement of testators with means who failed to support those in need during life. Whitney's adherence to the formula of an early modern will continues beyond her conventional dating (noted above) to 'commend' her 'Soule' to 'God the Father and the Son' and her 'Body to the Grave' until the day of Judgement (5-12).[753] Of course, the poetic form, including the use of rhyme, immediately signals to readers that this is not a factual, legal will, but a playful take on the genre as she replaces lengthy prose with fast-moving poetry. Whitney showcases her own knowledge of wills and relies on that of her readers.

Whitney's faux will and testament is successful as a satirical attack on the economy of her contemporary society, its hierarchical structure and lack of welfare, for the very reason that her speaker's poverty renders her will-making futile. Unlike the women who bequeath financial and material possessions in Chapter Four, Whitney's persona is a victim of poverty. Her rhetoric reveals that she is aligned more with the financially and socially vulnerable Cecily Daune, whose letter to John Paston (II) was studied in Chapter Two.[754] Whitney's rhetoric, like Daune's, is skilled and relies on knowledge of social convention. Where Daune adopted the discourse of patronage and employment, Whitney implements the diction of testamentary law.

[752] The *femme sole* was explained in the Introduction, pp.31-2.
[753] Heller explains that the 'formula of early modern wills was familiar to the general public. After stating that she or he was in good health and of sound mind the will-maker bequeathed soul and body to God and land and movables to the living.' Heller, p.186.
[754] See pp.99-101.

While Whitney's speaker has the legal right to make a will, her single status has left her open to financial insecurity which, it is implied, ultimately leads to destitution and subsequent death.

In her study of the mercery of London, 1130-1578, Anne F. Sutton observes that women working as servants in mercers' households were 'dangerously near the breadline, doomed to servanthood if they did not marry'.[755] Whitney's speaker is perhaps one of these women who failed to accumulate enough capital to form her own marriage portion and attract a husband. Her poetic persona is one of the poor women whose dowries are provided by the wealthy female testators studied in the previous chapter as an act of charity: the contrast between the destitute and the wealthy is thrown into sharp focus when these texts are studied in conjunction. Following the speaker's declaration that she is whole in body and mind, Whitney informs us she is 'very weake in Purse' (2). Whitney's poetic mirroring, contrasting a whole mind with an empty purse, is reminiscent of Martha Moulsworth's rhyming lamentation that that her husbands and children have died: 'I by the ffirst, and last some Issue had / butt roote, and ffruite is dead, which makes me sad'.[756] Moulsworth's juxtaposition of life-giving roots producing fruit with the death of both creates a jarring but effective wordplay to convey an emotion encompassing both love and loss, similar to Whitney's uncomfortable pairing of 'very weake' finances with a 'whole' body and mind full of the promise of life. Whitney's persona has received nothing from London in life, except a good deal of hard work. As a result, she looks beyond the domestic realm that has not provided her with security to bequeath the city only that which it already owns.[757]

(ii) Making Bequests

The purpose of satire, of course, is to reveal faults and teach a moral lesson for readers and society. Elizabeth Joscelin's *Legacy* is also highly concerned with morality. It is not only a practical manual instructing her husband on how she wishes their child to be raised, but forms part of her personal spiritual preparation for death, much like the legal wills of pre-modern women in the previous chapter. For Joscelin and her contemporaries, spiritual preparation for death was 'as much a part of a woman's pregnancy as taking physical care of herself and her

[755] Anne F. Sutton, *The Mercery of London: Trade, Goods and People, 1130-1578* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2005), p.208.
[756] Martha Moulsworth, 'The Memorandum of Martha Moulsworth Widdowe', in *Early Modern Women Poets: An Anthology (1520-1700),* ed. by Jane Stevenson and Peter Davidson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp.126-9 (p.128, ll.71-2). All references are to this edition, hereafter cited by line number.
[757] The civic institutions that she bequeaths to London's inhabitants will be discussed later this 'Codicil'.

unborn child.'[758] In using her writing as a spiritual act, Joscelin makes her text part of her process of 'making a good death.'[759] The medieval tradition of *ars moriendi* continued into the early modern period, adapted as necessary to Protestantism.[760] In early modern England some of the 'most popular devotional texts were dedicated to teaching their readers how to die.'[761] Joscelin's writing is clearly informed by this continuing tradition of the *ars moriendi*: the central purpose of her text is to provide devotional guidance for her as yet unborn child. Heller identifies Joscelin's religious beliefs as Puritan, and it is clear throughout her writing that her main legacy to her child is to be a godly upbringing – like Katherine Barnardiston's will (1633) which works to perpetuate her Puritan beliefs, and the wills of Dame Eleanor Hull (1458) and Margaret Paston (1482) which showcase their financial investment in the continuation of religious networks centred on women.[762] Unlike these testators, however, Joscelin does not have personal material or monetary wealth to do this and so relies on textual expression of her spirituality. Crucially, she also appears to lack the extended female networks enjoyed by Barnardiston, Hull and Paston, centring her entire moral wealth on the single beneficiary of her child whose gender could not be known at the time of writing. As part of her moral legacy, Joscelin poignantly includes an instruction for her child on how to make a good death using mercantile metaphor:

> Thou knowest not if thou re= pentest not to night whether thou shallt liue to morrow and though thou weart sure of it yet the oftner thou makest euen thy accounts wth god thy sleeps will bee the sounder and thou shalt awake wth a hart full of ioy and ready to serue the Lord. (123)

Joscelin entreats her child to ensure that s/he repents of any sins and is conscientious in the labour of her/his devotion. She presents devotion as an account book which must be kept up to date and completed daily. As has been mentioned previously in this project, the Day of Judgement weighs up good deeds against sins. Joscelin perpetuates the belief that a Christian must take care over their spiritual account book to ensure that it balances devotion and good

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758 Brown, p.91.

759 After her death, Thomas Goad appropriated Joscelin's manuscript text as a model for contemporary married women to follow in approaching their demise, imposing linguistic changes to fit his own male, religious ideas of how this should be done. Brown pp.100-1.

760 David W. Atkinson discusses the early modern *ars moriendi* tradition in his article 'The English ars morendi: its Protestant Transformation', *Renaissance and Reformation*, 6.1 (1982), pp.1-10. See also p.187; p.226; p.233; p.254 of this thesis.

761 Heller, p.158.

762 Heller, p.165.

deeds with social stability and material wealth, that they may be rewarded with God's grace.[763] This mercantile theorising of the Christian's relationship with the Divine is prevalent across all three genres and throughout the period under investigation in this thesis, as the previous three chapters have demonstrated. Despite the religious upheaval of the Reformation and divisive doctrinal changes, the discourse and theory of finance remained central to Christian religion in England throughout the pre-modern era, and the women's literature analysed in this project provides extensive evidence that they continued to understand and represent personal and communal devotion in this way.

Drawing on the ceremonies related to death and spirituality, Isabella Whitney makes an appeal to her reader to

> let me have a shrowding Sheete
> to cover me from shame:
> And in oblivion bury mee
> and never more mee name.
> Ringings nor other Ceremonies,
> use you not for cost:
> Nor at my burial, make no feast,
> your mony were but lost. (265-72)

As with factual, legal women's wills, Whitney's speaker leaves instructions for her burial, but contrary to the desire for commemoration and presence in the communal memory that the legal wills of the previous chapter demonstrated, Whitney wishes to be left to 'oblivion'. Concerned with hiding her body from 'shame', Whitney alludes to contemporary distaste for poverty and the impropriety of the naked female form. Unlike the instructions for tombs, monuments and funerals found in the wills of testators such as the Countess of Warwick (1439) and Katherine Barnardiston (1633), Whitney dismisses the trappings of a lavish burial. The acute contrast between the financial situations of the testators exposes the inequality of the distribution of wealth in pre-modern England. The different ways in which they approach the subject of funerals – Warwick and Barnardiston with minute attention to detail, and Whitney with a brusque and dismissive tone – highlights that the financial position of a female testator had a significant impact on her written style, regardless of the fact that Whitney's text is fictional.

[763] This was discussed in the Introduction at greater length, see pp.28-9. Despite the difference in doctrinal belief at the time of writing, the same idea of 'Reckoning' is evident in the medieval drama *Everyman*.

Furthermore, Whitney's dismissal of ceremonies and preference for oblivion can be interpreted as a rejection of Christian burial traditions: she makes no mention of consecrated ground or scared burial place within a church. Her speaker's poverty denies her a privileged position within the church building or even graveyard, which is so frequently specified in pre-modern wills, implying that, paradoxically, when it came to burial place, wealth was actually interpreted as an aid rather than impediment to spirituality. The closer the deceased was to the altar, the closer their soul to God. This came at premium financial cost. Whitney exposes the flaw in society's perpetuating of this privileging of the wealthy, as to desire burial in 'oblivion', rather than in consecrated ground, may deny the soul redemption.

As well as being anti-Catholic in dismissing feasts, tombs and bell-ringing, Whitney's chosen vocabulary suggests an understanding of contemporary funeral practices in terms of financial waste rather than spiritual gain: she deems them as an unnecessary 'cost' which is emphasised with the rhyme of 'lost' money. There were gendered roles for men and women in dealing with the dead and dying. Men 'tended to perform official functions: they diagnosed illness, wrote wills, administered last rites, and preached funeral sermons. Women […] served as long-term attendants to the sick and the dying, tending to their physical, emotional and spiritual needs.'[764] Whitney's speaker is completely alone in the world without anyone to carry out these duties for her. In addition, perhaps for Whitney, once the 'female' task of caring for the living person is completed, the funeral rituals are needless expense. Indeed, the idea of an expensive burial, like that budgeted for by Elizabeth Hardwick, would be entirely inappropriate for a woman 'very weake in Purse' (2).[765] Whitney's criticism of contemporary funeral rituals forms part of her wider criticism of a society which does not care for its needy. Her dispensing of conventional funeral practice implies a disapproval not only of their cost, but of the sinful pride which they reveal. 'Use you not for cost […] your mony were but lost' appears to suggest a funeral feast is too little, too late: the speaker needed food and drink whilst living (270-2). Whitney subverts the conventions of the will-writing genre to intensify the poverty in which her speaker lives and dies, thereby exposing the inadequacy of London's care for the poor. Whitney's use of rhyme and fast-paced rhythm moves her reader quickly through this distressing topic. The tone lightens the tragic matter of her speaker's lonely and shameful death – a literary tool to increase the satire of Whitney's writing which is of course absent in legal wills. The juxtaposition of Whitney's upbeat rhyme with the tragic want of her speaker creates

[764] Heller, p.158.
[765] Hardwick specified a £2000 budget for her funeral. See note to p.205.

a sense of unease, while reflecting the disparity of London's immense wealth with the poverty of so many of its inhabitants. The poetic genre enables Whitney greater freedom in her use of literary technique and allows an expression of literary flair which is not otherwise available within the strict legal structure of the testamentary genre. In appropriating phrases and vocabulary of the legal will and combining them with the feature of poetic form, Whitney creates a new genre for herself in a similar way to Margaret Paston's creation of the concept of 'captenesse' to encapsulate her role and feeling in her writing.[766] Thus, appropriation of discourse and genre should not be understood as a passive borrowing of patriarchal texts and conventions, but as forming part of the creation of new and innovative writing by pre-modern women.

Rather than Whitey's satirical and poetic take on the last will and testament, Joscelin's prose *Legacy* functions as an alternative to the traditional legal will bequeathing worldly goods by replacing these bequests with those of spiritual advice and moral instruction. A 'legacy' is 'an act of bequeathing' (*OED* 4), and Joscelin adopts this fiscal and legal language when justifying her writing:

> it may peraduenture when thou comst to som discretyon appear strange to thee to receyue theas lines from a mother that dyed when thou weart born but when thou seest men purchas land and store vp tresure for theyr [vnborn] babes wonder not at me that I am carefull for thy Saluatyon beeinge such an eternall portyon. (110-11)

Just as a father might accrue estates and wealth for his heir, Joscelin presents her writing as a spiritual inheritance for her child. Joscelin's use of the word 'portyon' has legal and financial connotations as well as spiritual. 'Portion' can mean 'the part or share of an estate given or passing by law to an heir', alongside 'a person's lot, destiny, or fate', and, crucially for a daughter, the marriage portion or 'dowry' (*OED* 1c;d; 2).[767] As a married woman, Joscelin did not have the legal right to bequeath any property and so instead she bequeathed her spiritual beliefs and practices to her child, presenting them as valuable heirlooms. Joscelin's vocabulary recalls the letters of Brilliana Harley, who encouraged her son, Ned, to believe that the family's support of the Parliamentarian cause of the Civil War would lead to their greater spiritual reward.[768] Like Harley, Joscelin anticipates her child being 'an inheritor of The kingdom of

[766] See letter 180, line 104 in Norman Davis ed., *Paston Letters and Papers of the Fifteenth Century, part I and II* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004). All references to the Paston letters are to this edition, hereafter cited by letter and line number. Margaret's creation of a fitting title for her role was considered in Chapter Two, pp.81-2.
[767] See also, Appendix One.
[768] See Chapter Two, p.98 and Kay, p.152.

heauen' (109). Together, Harley's and Joscelin's texts create a case for arguing that such rhetoric is used with particular enthusiasm by Puritan early modern mothers who strive to care for their children's spiritual health. The inheritance that Joscelin, through Christ, leaves for her child is 'eternall' 'Saluatyon' (111). Like Katherine Barnardiston whose will was studied in the previous chapter, and Margery Kempe whose *Boke* was analysed in Chapter Three, Joscelin wishes to share her devotion to God for the spiritual benefit of her heirs.[769] Whether these women write for the spiritual benefit of biological heirs, as Joscelin and Harley do, or for fellow followers of the Roman Church, as Kempe does, or make bequests to spread Puritan teachings as an act of charity for the poor and imprisoned, as Barnardiston does, they each manipulate and combine the discourses of law, finance and devotion to maximise their rhetorical impact upon their intended beneficiaries and readers. In pre-modern women's letters, memoirs, wills and legacies, linguistic choices drawing upon fiscal discourse to represent their worship are ubiquitous. The genre, purpose, and religious belief of individual authors vary, but their exploitation of commercial vocabulary as an interpretative tool of their personal devotion and relationship with the Divine, their heirs and communities, does not.

Jennifer Heller suggests that 'Joscelin's legacy is clearly grounded in the *contemptus mundi*' and her text is illustrative of the belief that 'worldliness leads to covetousness, which draws the soul away from heaven.'[770] Like Geoffrey de la Tour Landry, Joscelin warns her child against committing the sin of envy: 'god deliuer thee from couetousnes' (110).[771] This short, simple, and direct statement is prayer-like and recalls the Ten Commandments in its structure, giving Joscelin an almost biblical authority. Like Margery Kempe, Joscelin combines her appropriation of fiscal language with the language of Scripture to emphasise her call for contented living. Recalling Colossians 3:2 which urges Christians to 'Mind the things that are above, not the things that are upon the earth', Joscelin entreats her child to focus on 'diuinity' as this 'will make thee greater richer happyer then the greatest kingdom of the earth though thou couldst posses it' (118). Joscelin once again reinforces her belief that her child will benefit more from devotion than worldly success. Her choice of adjectives to describe her child's devout state ('greater richer happyer') is ripe with connotations of wealth and social status relevant to this life. 'Greater richer happyer' are all terms defined by their opposites; Joscelin's

[769] See Chapter Four, p.206 for Barnardiston's bequest to promote Puritan teachings and p.134 and p.227 for Kempe's legacy for her spiritual family.
[770] Heller, p.169.
[771] Geoffrey de la Tour Landry's tale cautioning his daughters against covetousness was considered on p.38 of the Introduction.

child is encouraged to pursue devotion to prevent spiritual want, poverty and misfortune. As a member of the upper ranks of English society, Joscelin – and later her child – would be familiar with the differences between those who have and those who have not, and Joscelin appropriates this theory to urge her child to gain spiritual rewards which are hyperbolically defined as even greater than the worldly wealth which the family enjoys.

Joscelin's attempt to steer her child away from worldly goods and towards spiritual reward is similar to the exhortations made in medieval conduct literature, such as the anonymous fourteenth-century poem 'How the Goode Wife Taught Hyr Doughter'. In that poem the speaker urges her daughter 'For no covetys no giftys thou take'.[772] In Joscelin's text, the 'Goode Wife' and in Kempe's *Boke*, earthly wealth is seen to be detrimental to spiritual well-being and profit. Writing from financial stability enabled Joscelin to appear 'comfortable rejecting earthly riches' as she was safe in the knowledge that her child's economic future was secure.[773] Joscelin's family wealth certainly has a bearing on her spiritual outlook; she can write in this way precisely because she has never experienced want. Undoubtedly, had she been living in poverty, her advice to her child would have been more concerned with worldly survival as well as spiritual. Perhaps because she was financially secure, Joscelin's writing is especially concerned for the health of her own soul and the soul of her child. The contradictory yet combined social and religious attitude to financial wealth is evident in the letter written by Agnes Paston to her son John Paston (I) in 1465:

> Be my cou*n*seyle, dispose ȝoure-selfe as myche as ȝe may to haue lesse to do in þe worlde. Ȝoure fadyr sayde, 'In lityl bysynes lyeth myche reste.' Þis worlde is but a þorugh-fare and ful of woo, and wha*n* we departe þ*er*-fro, riȝth nouȝght bere wyt*h* vs but oure good dedys and ylle. And þ*er* knoweth no man how soon God woll clepe hy*m*, and þ*er*-for it is good for eu*er*y creature to be redy. (30:8-11)[774]

Agnes entreats her son to take heed of his late father's words and to prepare to 'make a good death', reminding him of the transitory nature of worldly goods: all that travels with the soul

[772] 'How the Goode Wife Taught Hyr Doughter', in *The Trials and Joys of Marriage,* ed. by Eve Salisbury (Kalamazoo, Michigan: Medieval Institute Publications, 2002), p.221, l.91. See also the Introduction of this thesis, pp.39-41.
[773] Joscelin was the sole heir of her maternal grandfather, from whom she inherited three Huntingdonshire estates: Moyne's Hall, Holywell, and the manors of Boughton and Southoe. His will specified that her child, in turn, was to inherit this property. Heller, p.169.
[774] See also the discussion of the biblical attitudes to wealth as an obstacle to salvation in section (ii) of the Introduction, 'Christian Wealth'.

beyond the grave are their good and ill deeds.[775] Agnes quotes her husband's words in a manner which invests them with a proverbial value: 'In lityl bysynes lyeth myche reste'. His words, conveyed through her writing, take on a sermon-like tone, and the phrase encapsulates the paradoxical relationship of wealth and the Christian ideal in the pre-modern era: if the ideal spiritual state is obtained through poverty, the ideal social state is obtained through wealth. However, to have leisure for contemplation, financial security is required. Agnes adopts the Chaucerian proverb on the journey to the afterlife: 'Þis worlde is but a þorugh-fare and ful of woo'.[776] She perpetuates the accepted belief that every person must be ready for death at any moment: good financial administration is part of this. Her use of 'creature' echoes Margery Kempe's use of the noun for herself and other Christians (8), suggesting a shared discourse of self-deprecation in relation to the Divine and their personal worth amongst these fifteenth-century, East-Anglian, mercantile women. Wealth enabled contemplation of the soul and of the profit devotion could bring. Financial security allowed pre-modern women both the time and health (in the sense of a sure supply of sufficient food and drink vital for survival) necessary for such contemplation. Joscelin's writing demonstrates that financial status continued to have an impact on women's writing to their children on the nature of devotion, regardless of whether they perceived life from a Catholic or Puritan perspective.

In contrast, we do not find such overt concern with spiritual health in Isabella Whitney's 'Wyll': her speaker is not in a position to discuss the issue of covetousness as she has insufficient provision for survival, let alone luxury. Whitney's speaker is utterly destitute and so has no worldly goods to dispose of, instead bequeathing London's institutions to its inhabitants. Her vivid descriptions of the city, however, do suggest a covetous eye. Whitney indirectly criticises those who have wealth for not effectively helping those in need: they are guilty of failing to achieve the delicate balance that Agnes Paston's letter reveals pre-modern Christians of merchant rank and above must strive for. Whitney claims there 'is such a store' of cash at the 'Mint' it is 'unpossible to tell it' (111-2). The verb to 'tell' can mean both to speak and count.[777] Whitney's lexical choice is highly appropriate to her subject matter, emphasising the abundance of money at the Royal Mint which is grotesque in the light of the

[775] Throughout the Middle Ages literature and church teaching sought to instruct people on the *Ars Moriendi,* or the art of making a spiritually good death. See, for example, *Here begynyth a lytell treatyse called Ars moriendi* (Westminster: Wynken de Worde, 1497).

[776] 'This wold nys but a thurghfare of wo, / And we been pilgrymes, passynge to and fro.' Geoffrey Chaucer, 'The Knight's Tale', in *The Riverside Chaucer*, ed. by Larry D. Benson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), pp.37-66 (p.63, ll.2847-8).

[777] The same dual meaning is played upon by Martha Moulsworth in her employment of the verb, as noted in Chapter Three, pp.162-3. See Appendix One for more definitions.

destitution of the speaker and within London society as a whole. The profusion of money at the Mint is contrasted with the nearby debtors' prisons (173-92). There is a definite aspect of envy in the speaker's tone throughout the poem, as she flits between scenes of plenty and utter deprivation. Unlike Joscelin's, Whitney's writing does not seek to provide spiritual edification; it does, however, intend to teach society to be more charitable to the needy through its satirical depiction of London. While Whitney does not write to share spiritual profit, but for monetary gain, her satire does attempt to improve the morality of her contemporaries and encourage charitable behaviour, and so indirectly impacts upon their spiritual health.

As with the legal wills discussed in the previous chapter, and indeed Kempe's *Boke* and some of the correspondence in Chapter Two, Isabella Whitney's writing is concerned with the Seven Acts of Corporal Mercy.[778] Whitney provides for the citizens of London through mapping the cityscape according to the required acts. Her poem describes where food and drink can be found (31-8), where clothing can be bought (41-64), where the prisons are located (137-92), and directs readers to apothecaries and physicians (93-6). It is with irony that Whitney bequeaths these places and goods to the people of London: the city's failure to fulfil the Seven Acts of Corporal Mercy for her speaker has left her destitute and will cause her death. The speaker pays particular attention to those in prison, aligning herself with those who are equally impoverished. Like Katherine Barnardiston, Whitney's speaker provides for inmates.[779] She 'wyll to prisons portions leave' (137), and even bequeaths Ludgate[780] to the debtors it imprisons:

> I dyd reserve, that for my selfe,
> yf I my health possest.
> And ever came in credit so
> a debtor for to bee.
> When dayes of paiment did approch,
> I thither ment to flee.
> To shroude my selfe amongst the rest,

[778] These seven acts are to feed the hungry; give drink to the thirsty; shelter the homeless; visit the sick; visit prisoners; clothe the naked and comfort the dying (Matthew 25:35-6). See also p.26; p.29; p.90, p.100; pp.171-3; p.205 of this thesis.
[779] Barnardiston's bequest for a sermon for the prisoners of Newgate was noted in Chapter Four, p.206.
[780] Ludgate prison had a long history connected with debtors. Opened in 1378, it was where 'freemen of the city [were] held as debtors or on charges other than felony or treason.' It was rebuilt in 1586 before being finally demolished in 1760. Margery Bassett, 'Newgate Prison in the Middle Ages', *Speculum*, 18.2 (1943), 233-246 (p.233).

> that chuse to dye in debt:
> Rather then any Creditor,
> should money from them get.
> Yet cause I feele my selfe so weake
> that none mee credit dare:
> I here revoke: and doo it leave,
> some *Bankrupts* to his share. (179-92)

The speaker laments being unable to obtain credit, and, since she will not be able to inhabit the debtors' prison as she is too poor to receive any loan at all, she bequeaths it to those in the more fortunate position of bankruptcy: an ironic interpretation of financial affairs so ludicrous that it exposes the flaws of the system. Of course, Whitney's absurd suggestion that those in debtors' prison are better-off than her speaker is another of her rhetorical devices to parody the state of London society. The inmates of debtors' prisons were required to pay for their food and accommodation, thereby burying themselves ever further in debt.[781] As Margery Bassett has observed, if a prisoner 'was poor when he came to prison, he was likely to be destitute before he left it. For the destitute there was nothing but cold, thirst and hunger, and many prisoners died of the lack of the barest necessities of life.'[782] Evidently, Whitney was familiar with the trend for donations to prisoners amongst contemporary testators and re-works this to expose London's dire need for social reform.[783]

Whitney's 'Wyll' ostensibly fits within her society's attitude towards charitable giving. However, her speaker's poverty exposes London's failing to act upon its own teaching. Following the Christian duty to give alms, Joscelin entreats her child to 'open thy hand to the poor', but measures this action as it must only be 'according to thy ability', further cautioning them with the instruction they must 'meddle not wth oth[er] mens occasions but whear maies[t] doo good' (130). Joscelin shows restraint in advocating charity, stressing that it must only be given in accordance with your own wealth and must not result in your own poverty, recalling Margery Kempe's maids' concerns that she will be over-generous with her almsgiving.[784]

[781] Bassett, 'Newgate Prison in the Middle Ages', p.245. For more on the cost of board and lodging in the London prisons see, Margery Bassett, 'The Fleet Prison in the Middle Ages', *The University of Toronto Law Journal*, 5.2 (1944), 383-402 (p.396).
[782] Bassett, 'The Fleet', p.402.
[783] In 1487 Elizabeth Paston Poynings left bequests for the support of prisoners, as did Katherine Barnardiston in her will of 1633, demonstrating an ongoing concern with prison welfare throughout the pre-modern era (see Chapter Four, p.206).
[784] See pp.142-3 of Chapter Three.

Interestingly, Joscelin combines this with an instruction not to interfere with the 'occasions', or business, of others unless it can do good. She is aware that charity can be misused and misconstrued and be detrimental to the receiver and the giver. An interesting contradiction emerges through the study of women's writing in this thesis, as they struggle to navigate the appropriate level of charitable giving to balance worldly wealth with Christian duty. In negotiating this balance, the authors' linguistic choices reveal the symbiotic relationship of religious and mercantile vocabulary which replicates the sometimes-uneasy intertwining of these aspects of pre-modern life.

Joscelin's words raise the issue of how 'private' money was viewed in the period under investigation in this project. The literature studied has revealed that money is at once something personal and private, yet also social and political for its authors. This paradox needed careful negotiation in the lives and writings of pre-modern women. Over-exuberant enjoyment of wealth and material possessions had long been linked to a vulgarity which is exemplified in literature by the figure and speech of Chaucer's Wife of Bath. The fear of appearing economically, sexually and verbally excessive – like Alisoun of Bath – moderates the correspondence of the Pastons, Cecily Daune, the Thynnes and Brilliana Harley; all are concerned with maintaining a respectful and appropriate modesty, despite their agency in acting, writing and spending. This same fear is apparent in Margery Kempe's struggle to reconcile her actively mercantile past and pride in her commercial lineage (exemplified in the luxurious clothing of her youth) with her conversion to mystic and pilgrim who ostensibly throws off the trappings of monetary enjoyment. In contrast, Martha Moulsworth accepts her status as relatively wealthy widow: she does not interpret her material and monetary possessions as excessive, and so they are not depicted as posing a threat to her devotion or salvation in her poetic 'Memorandum'. In pre-modern women's wills, we see their final act of administration as they negotiate the risks posed by their worldly wealth in personal and social displays of alms as they apply the potentially troublesome wealth for spiritual benefit. Whitney's satirical writing calls on the institutions of London and its hierarchy to reform the distribution of wealth, to transform it from a private to a public matter as an act of charity and Christian goodness.

All the female authors studied in this thesis appear to accept financial matters as a license for involvement with the affairs of others, whether that be Margaret Paston's reporting of local news and financial disputes, Lucy Audley's brokering of deals between her sons-in-law, Brilliana Harley's advice to her son on servants and almsgiving, or Margery Kempe's

encouragement that a widow should invest in masses for her husband's soul. The assumed authority granted by wealth may be seen in the precise instructions on how money should be used for what female testators perceive as the benefit of their heirs and contemporary societies, from the earliest will by Peryne Clanbowe in 1422 to the latest by Martha Moulsworth in 1646, and, at the other extreme of society, in Isabella Whitney's satirical attack which calls for the reform of welfare and the distribution of wealth and privilege. It is not until Joscelin's mother's legacy that we encounter an appeal to the reader of her manuscript to refrain from intervening with the finances of others. Potentially, this marked difference is due to the fact that Joscelin writes about *ideal* behaviour, as opposed to the practical writings based on *real* life in letters, wills, and memoirs. Even Whitney's fictional poem presents an exaggerated reality, as is often the case with satire.

Moving on from moral and spiritual legacies, the next section of this 'Codicil' analyses Whitney's and Joscelin's instructions and opinions on education and intellectual riches, which were, of course, related to spiritual learning in this period.

(iii) Educational Legacies

Joscelin's mother's legacy prominently bequeaths ideals of conduct to her unborn child. Eber Carle Perrow claims that the 'impulse to give advice with regard to the conduct of human life […] is all the more powerful when one is about to leave those in whose future welfare one is especially interested.'[785] This desire to give advice, and indeed exert control over those left behind, can be seen in the wills of the pre-modern women studied in Chapter Four; from Margaret Paston's instruction that her son 'bye' a wife in order to increase his wealth, to Katherine Barnardiston's wish to educate prisoners spiritually with a lecture or sermon. Likewise, the urgent need for straight-forward communication translates to the direct rhetorical style of the letters written by Margaret Paston and Brilliana Harley during the attacks on their family homes, as well as the matter-of-fact directness of wills. Joscelin's impending labour and possible death is inextricably linked to the genre and content of her legacy-writing: her text exemplifies the need to give advice which Eber identifies as a feature of testamentary writing. Joscelin's gendered instructions, especially in regard to the education of a daughter, strengthen the reading of her text as a conduct book as well as a will:

[785] Eber Carle Perrow, 'The Last Will and Testament as a form of Literature', in *Transactions of the Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts and Letters*, *Vol XVII, Part I* (Wisconsin: Madison, 1914), pp.682-750 (p.692).

> If it bee a daughter I hope my mother Brooke if thou desirest her will take it amonge hers and let them learn one lesson I desire her bringinge vp may bee learninge the Bible as my sisters doo. good huswifery, writing, and good work other learninge a woman needs not (107).

Joscelin asks her husband to send their child to her stepmother's to be educated with her half-sisters, if it is a girl, but only if he agrees. She does not over-rule the patriarchal control of her husband at any point in her writing, deferring to his judgement: 'but I will leaue it to thy will' (107). Joscelin works within the accepted place for a wife within patriarchal early modern society: she gently persuades rather than demands. Unlike Margery Kempe, she does not apply mercantile negotiation to her marital relationship: instead, she rhetorically capitalises on her valued position as the woman who will provide the future of her husband's family in order to write her text. Much like Brilliana Harley's deference to her husband's judgement, Joscelin is careful not to usurp her husband's authority as the head of the household and ultimate decision-maker.[786]

As Elaine Hobby observes, 'It was necessary for women to interpret and present their lives in ways consistent with desired models of femininity.'[787] Joscelin adopts this rhetorical strategy as she ironically finds the power to write and leave her moral legacy thanks to the vulnerable 'virtue' that the feminine role of wife and mother had placed her in: pregnancy. Importantly, none of the female authors studied in this thesis proclaim themselves to act outside of the established patriarchal order in a challenge to male authority; instead, all navigate accepted female roles. Even Margery Kempe insists that she acts with (male) Divine sanction and clerical approval. Using God's grace as justification for her writing, Kempe protects her written voice from contemporary condemnation. Each female author discussed in this thesis uses a trope of intellectual and authorial modesty to imply a male superiority which pre-emptively defends their text from criticism or censure, regardless of what their tone, vocabulary and written style may imply of their personal capability and strength.

Joscelin suggests that the only education a daughter required was in devotion, household management ('huswifery'), writing and 'good work' – presumably charity as part of her Christian teaching. The instruction that her daughter should be taught to write (107) places Joscelin firmly within the early modern period and distinguishes her from the medieval

[786] See Chapter Two, pp.84-5 for Harley's obedience of her husband's ruling that she is to stay in Herefordshire.
[787] Elaine Hobby, *Virtue of Necessity: English Women's Writing 1646-1688* (London: Virago Press, 1988), p.79.

authors in this thesis who did not perceive writing as a skill necessary for female household administration: should writing be required a clerk could be employed. Indeed, this continued to be done so even with the more widespread encouragement of female literacy; for example, Brilliana Harley called upon scribes to whom she could dictate her correspondence when she was indisposed to write personally. The skill of writing would enable Joscelin's daughter to fulfil her wifely duties of household management while facilitating her devotion as she could endeavour to perform Protestant self-reflection and improvement through the private and personal act of writing a diary or journal, such as those compiled by Lady Margaret Hoby for the years 1559-1605.[788] Today, autobiographical writing continues to be recognised as offering 'the chance and means to judge as well as represent oneself'.[789] The potential judgement of one's behaviour and morality is an advantage of journal-writing, which we now understand as a branch of life-writing. It is likely that Joscelin wanted her daughter to be taught to write for her spiritual benefit. Like Katherine Barnardiston, Joscelin appears to have had a humanist interest in education. Her main concern is that her daughter be brought up as a pious Christian and learn the skills which will enable her to be a good wife and mother in the future, teaching her own daughter in turn.

Joscelin understands that if her baby is female, that daughter will be expected to be part of the 'business' of reproduction and child-rearing. Joscelin's instructions for a daughter's education are her attempt to ensure she is trained and prepared for this role as wife and mother. In effect, she desires her daughter to be sent to her step-grandmother's home to complete an apprenticeship in running a household, in much the same way that the Paston daughters were placed within the households of other gentry women. For example, on 3 April 1469, Margaret Paston entreated her son John (II) to find a place for his sister Margery:

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[788] See Margaret Hoby, 'The Diary of Lady Margaret Hoby 1559-1605' in *The Private Life of an Elizabethan Lady* ed. by Joanna Moody (Stroud: Sutton Publishing Limited, 1998). For an analysis of the mix of commercial, legal and religious discourses in seventeenth-century women's spiritual diaries, see Effie Botonaki, 'Seventeenth-Century Englishwomen's Spiritual Diaries: Self-Examination, Covenanting, and Account Keeping', *The Sixteenth Century Journal*, 30.1 (1999), 3-21. This project did not undertake an analysis of women's spiritual diaries since Botonaki's article has already identified the striking ways in which early modern women appropriate mercantile and legal discourse in this genre. In addition, the genre's equivalent cannot be found in the Middle Ages (the closest being Kempe's *Boke*). Instead, Chapter Three widened the discussion by analysing the use of language in different genres used by women accounting for their lives. The next stage of research could include examples of spiritual diaries from the early modern era in conjunction with Kempe's *Boke* and Moulsworth's 'Memorandum'.
[789] Maria DiBattista, 'Women's Autobiographies', in *The Cambridge Companion to Autobiography*, ed. by Maria DiBattista and Emily O. Wittman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), pp.208-21 (p.210).

> I wuld ye shuld p*ur*vey for yo*ur* sust*er* to be wy*th* my lady of Oxford or wy*th* my lady of Bedford or in su*m*me other*e* wurchepfull place wher*e* as ye thynk best, *and* I wull help to her*e* fyndyng, for we be eyther*e* of vs wery of other*e*. (201: 28-31) [790]

Family tensions are clear in this letter, as Margaret and Margery are 'wery' of each other. Perhaps the lack of occupation and living within close proximity heightened the friction between the two women as Margery grew into a young woman keen to run her own household and family. Certainly, Margery had disappointed the family through her betrothal to Richard Calle, the family bailiff, in 1466; their marriage was declared valid in 1469 by the Bishop of Norwich. Perhaps it was an attempt to separate the couple that caused Margaret to write to her son. She hints at motives beyond mother-daughter bickering in her eagerness to place Margery elsewhere: 'I shall telle you more whan I speke wy*th* you. I p*ra*y you do yo*ur* deveyr*e* her*e*-in as ye wull my comfort *and* welafar*e* *and* yo*ur* wurchep, for diu*er*se causes which ye shall vnd*er*stand aft*er*ward, &c.' (201: 31-3). Margaret asserts her authority as matriarch, calling John to do his duty, 'deveyre', and hints it will be to his benefit and honour to do as she asks, referring to his 'wurchep' as well as her own 'comfort', suggesting that the family reputation may well be at stake here. Margaret's letter also demonstrates that correspondence cannot always be a satisfactory substitute for face-to-face conversation, as she will need to explain the situation further to John when she sees him: epistolary writing does not stand alone but functions in conjunction with oral communication. Some things can be too scandalous or private for a family to commit to paper in a document that could be intercepted and used against them. Besides this, Margaret's letter highlights the need for an appropriate placement of a daughter. Similarly, her mother-in-law, Agnes Paston, shows a concern with the occupation of her daughter Elizabeth. Agnes's memorandum of errands, written 28 January 1458, requests that Elizabeth be told 'that che must vse hyr-selfe to werke redyly as other jentylwomen don, *and* su*m*what to helpe hyr-selfe ther-wy*th*' (28: 19-20). Elizabeth Paston is to be encouraged to learn how to run a household as is appropriate to a young gentlewoman. Agnes's memorandum also requires that Lady Pole be paid 'xxvj s. viij d. for hyr bord' (28: 21). This payment makes it clear that Elizabeth's tutoring is not done out of friendship and charity but is indeed a business arrangement between the women.

[790] For more on the education of medieval daughters, see Rowena E. Archer, '"How ladies … who live on their manors ought to manage their households and estates": Women as Landowners and Administrators in the Later Middle Ages', in *Woman is a Worthy Wight: Women in English Society c.1200-1500*, ed. by P.J.P. Goldberg (Gloucestershire: Alan Sutton, 1992), pp.149-81 (pp.151-2).

In contrast to the restricted education that she sets out for her daughter, Elizabeth Joscelin herself was a very educated woman. Brown explains that Joscelin's 'early education was closer to that a boy would have received, particularly in its attention to languages (especially Latin), history, and […] the liberal arts, traditionally grammar, logic, rhetoric, arithmetic, geometry, music and astronomy.'[791] Such an education is perhaps what Martha Moulsworth dreamt of for other women in her 'Memorandum'.[792] Whether or not Joscelin truly believed that her daughter need not be educated to the same level of her own learning, the rhetoric of her writing reveals she is careful not to threaten the established patriarchal social order by suggesting her daughter should receive anything above the bare necessities of education. There is no sign in Joscelin's writing of any desire for a daughter to learn the Latin which she herself and Martha Moulsworth enjoyed. Joscelin's writing exposes the potential for hypocrisy within women's texts. Despite her own educational accomplishments, she adheres to the status quo, implying that differing standards are appropriate for differing circumstances and between individual women. Wayne has observed the 'contradictions and restraints' within the legacy writings of 'learned mothers to their own daughters'.[793] What was right and acceptable for the author herself, she did not necessarily see as appropriate for her daughter. The same is true for letters and wills: pre-modern female authors accept behaviour in themselves which they counsel their children, kin and fellow Christians against.[794]

The speaker in Isabella Whitney's 'Wyll' does not appear to have benefited from her education. Despite the historical Whitney earning money through her writing talents, and therefore her education, the persona of the poem is left destitute. Her speaker's only witnesses to her will are 'Paper, Pen, and Standish': the equipment and tools necessary to write, implying that the skill of writing is not financially advantageous to women of her social rank (321).[795] In addition, a lack of credible (human) witnesses legally invalidates a will, further exposing the plight and social isolation of Whitney's speaker. Lynette McGrath argues that Whitney's 'poetic "Wyll" itself becomes her deeded heritage; poetic and intellectual capital in her poem successfully compete in value with material property.'[796] Despite the ideological victory of intellect over materialism, however, Whitney's speaker is the ultimate loser in the struggle for

[791] Brown, p.93.
[792] Moulsworth's musings on women's intellectual potential were considered in Chapter Two, p.146.
[793] Wayne, p.65.
[794] See, for example, Agnes Paston's letter advising her son to shun worldly business in order to focus on devotion, quoted above in this Codicil, pp.253-4.
[795] A 'standish' is a 'stand containing ink, pens and other writing materials and accessories' or 'inkpot' (*OED* a).
[796] Lynette McGrath, *Subjectivity and Women's Poetry in Early Modern England* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002), p.155.

survival in London. Whitney, like Moulsworth and Joscelin, seems to suggest that whilst women are capable of learning equal to men, their education is not met with approval in their contemporary society and therefore cannot be used to guarantee their survival financially. The only way they can ensure survival is by conforming to the ideal feminine behaviours, to marry, and become mothers. Instead of the child for whom Joscelin writes her alternative will, the only fruit of Whitney's labour is her poetic mock-will, adding a further level of irony to her work as the only heir she has is her writing, and the only thing she has to bequeath is that same writing. Like Moulsworth's, whose biological children did not survive infancy, Whitney's poem becomes her alternative offspring.[797] Unlike Moulsworth, however, Whitney's speaker is fictional and so allows greater freedom and rhetorical use of hyperbole to create a successful satire. It is interesting that both early modern women chose to produce poetic legacies. Poetry is a genre which requires a deal of skill, care, time and concentration for literary construction which, it could be argued, is an alternative to the labour invested in childrearing.

Although Whitney's speaker is less concerned with formal education than Joscelin, and she does not explicitly bequeath an educational legacy, she does note the gendered economic differences of employment. Whitney juxtaposes hard-working, if low-paid and low-skilled, female workers such as 'Fruitwives', 'Matrones that shal styll / See Chalke well chopt', spinsters and millers, and highly paid, highly-trained male lawyers with idle gentlemen who dance and play tennis (213-52). She presents the Protestant ethic of hard work by signalling the distrust of those who are not occupied. Whitney's derision of the absurdly wealthy, landed ranks adds to her satire as she contrasts them with her destitute speaker. Puritan clergyman William Gouge's 1622 manual, *Of Domesticall Duties,* outlining the gendered duties of husband and wife, cautioned against 'Idleneſſe, and a carleſſe neglect of their eſtate'.[798] Both the worldly and spiritual estate needed care and labour for society to function effectively. Idleness creates the opportunity for temptation and sin, while endangering the economic stability of the family. Spiritual, economic and intellectual education go hand in hand throughout the texts studied in this project. No matter the genre, whether it is letters, memoirs or wills, the female authors advocate a currency of learning from which they and their readers will profit. The spiritual, economic and intellectual aspects of life are all approached in a similar

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[797] See Chapter Three, p.134.

[798] William Gouge, *Of Domesticall Duties* (London: Printed by John Haviland for William Bladen, 1622), pp.255-6. All references are to this edition of the text, hereafter cited by page number. Gouge was also discussed in the Introduction, pp.44-5.

manner as areas which need careful cultivation and nurture. These three facets of pre-modern women's lives are interlinked in their writing and presented in such a way to suggest that each provides a valuable return on the time with which they are invested, for the individual woman, her family and her society.

(iv) Musings on Money and Marriage

Vital to the education and legal rights of pre-modern women was their marital status and wealth, and the varying degrees of freedom this gave them. Whitney's 'Wyll' reads like a commercial map of London – an educational tool in itself. She directs her readers on where to go in order to clothe themselves. Not only does she demonstrate awareness of basic clothing made from linen and wool (41-4), the appropriate clothing for a woman of her low rank, but she reveals where readers with disposable income can access extravagant and costly attire:

> And those which are of callyng such,
> that costlier they require:
> I M[e]rcers leave, with silke so rich,
> as any would desire.
> In Cheape of them, they store shal finde
> and likewise in that streete:
> I Goldsmithes leave, with Juels such,
> as are for Ladies meete. (45-52)

Like Margery Kempe and Margaret Paston, Whitney has a keen awareness of dressing according to wealth and social status. She bequeaths the goldsmiths and their jewels that are suited for 'Ladies', much like the bequests of Paston to her daughter-in-law, which are matched to her ambitions and social rank.[799] Whitney goes further in her listing of the items wealthy men and women can adorn themselves with:

> With Hoods, Bungraces, Hats or Caps,[800]
> such store are in that streete:
> As if on ton side you should misse
> the tother serves you[r] feete.

[799] These bequests were discussed in Chapter Four, pp.222-4.
[800] A bon/bungrace was a 'shade or curtain formerly worn on the front of women's bonnets or caps to protect the complexion from the sun; a sunshade' or a 'broad-brimmed hat fitted to shade the face' (*OED* 1;2).

For Nets of every kynd of sort,
I leave within the pawne:
French Ruffes, high Purles, Grogets and Sleeves[801]
of any kind of Lawne. (57-64)

In cataloguing these items of clothing and placing them in direct contrast with simple linens and wools, along with the speaker's destitution, Whitney presents them and those who wear them in a critical, almost grotesque, light. As Joscelin strikingly comments, those who dress themselves in 'fantasticall habit make himself so vgly that one cannot find among all gods creatures any thinge like him' (115). Whitney, like Joscelin and Kempe, presents those who dress extravagantly, and perhaps beyond their means, as objects of derision.[802]

The speaker's knowledge of where to find the various commodities described by Whitney is indicative of her economic status. As noted in reference to the Pastons in Chapter Two, wealthy women usually shopped via agents. Whitney's, and her speaker's, familiarity with mapping the city in terms of its mercantile layout discloses that she is amongst the working classes, perhaps a servant of a greater lady and sent out to complete her purchases. Her descriptions of where to find the more luxurious goods also function as a working guide for wealthier readers wishing to make their own personal purchases. Whitney's lists of commodities, such as 'Salt, Otemeale, Candles, Sope' (105), recall Margaret Paston's shopping lists sent to her husband and son in London.[803] The landscape of Whitney's writing is rooted in commercial London. Whitney's listing recalls Margaret Paston's pragmatic and business-like style of writing, creating a sense of abundance which is starkly contrasted with her economic disability. In Whitney's London, Margaret Paston could have obtained everything that her money could buy, while the closest Whitney's speaker can get to this abundance is to re-create shopping lists within her poem. Wall argues that the 'Wyll' can be read 'as her possession rhetorically […] of material things that were denied in reality.'[804] A rhetoric of possession is a recurring feature throughout the texts analysed in this thesis, ranging from Margery Brews's possession of the commodity of her body that she hopes her prospective husband John Paston

[801] 'Grogets' could be a variation on the word 'grogram', a term for 'coarse fabric of silk, of mohair and wool, or of these mixed with silk; often stiffened with gum' (*OED* 1).
'Purles' were 'ornamental edging' or braiding on clothing, but also a 'pleat or fold in the ruff or band of a garment, popular in the early 17th century' (*OED* 2;3).
[802] Kempe's depiction of her grotesquely extravagant dressing in her youth was discussed in section (iv) of Chapter Three, 'Fashionable Women'.
[803] These shopping lists were considered in Chapter Two, pp.87-9.
[804] W. Wall, p.54.

(III) will accept as part-payment of their marriage settlement, to the possession (and loss) of knowledge portrayed in Martha Moulsworth's 'Memorandum', and the literal possession of the material goods bequeathed in wills that are endowed with the value of affection alongside the currency of memory. Whitney's written words take the place of the coveted objects and create the impression of a woman isolated from the abundance that surrounds her.

Related to covetousness, of course, is pride. Joscelin is keen to prevent her child, male or female, from committing sin and she warns against pride as a particular danger to women: 'in a daughter I feare that vice pride beeinge now rather accounted a vertue in our sex worthy prays then a vice fit for reproof' (108). Joscelin is critical of her contemporary society's practice of admiring proud women instead of criticising them. A feature of pride from which she is keen to keep her child is that of extravagant dress:

> though I beleeue theare are diuers sorts of pride more pestilent to the soule then this of apparell, yet this is enough dangerous and I am sure betrays a mans folly more then any other […] I desire thee for godsake shun this vanyty whether thou be son or daughter if thou bee a daughter I confesse thy taske is harder be cause thou art weaker and thy temptations to this vice greater (115)

The medieval concern with the appropriate manner of dress continued throughout the early modern period, and perhaps even intensified as the economy expanded and luxury items become more readily available to a wider range of people and classes.[805] Joscelin vehemently implores her child to 'for godsake shun this vanyty', emphasising the fear she has of this dangerous sin. Her passion here is evidence of her love and care for her unborn child, but also of her adherence to contemporary distrust of extravagant dressing. In contrast to the practical, economic, inventory style of Whitney's writing which parodies both the will and shopping list, Joscelin's *Legacy* adopts a sermon-like tone which adds to its seriousness. While Whitney's is a text for entertainment, Joscelin's is for edification, and their written styles reflect this. Writing in 1622, Elizabeth Joscelin had lived through, and was living amidst, the controversy of appropriate clothing. The early modern monarchs attempted to control and limit the clothing worn by their subjects with a series of sumptuary laws and proclamations. James I issued bills regulating dress in 1610, 1614, 1621, 1626 and 1628.[806] Edith Snook explains that these

[805] See section (iv) of Chapter Three, 'Fashionable Women' for a discussion of the medieval concern with appropriate dress. Lisa Jardine's, *Wordly Goods: A New History of the Renaissance* (London: Macmillan, 1996) provides a summary of the materialism of the early modern period.

[806] 'During the Tudor period, dress was regulated by a series of sumptuary laws, the last of which came into effect in 1553. The last act of apparel concerned the wearing of silk fabrics among the lower classes, while proclamations

'regulatory efforts document the imagined dependence of order on clothes, which were meant accurately to testify to the subject's place within the hierarchies of age, class and gender.'[807] By encouraging her daughter not to dress extravagantly, Joscelin was not only steering her away from sin, but attempting to ensure that she conformed to society's expectations of class and gender. Joscelin concedes that her daughter could 'follow modest fashion but not to be a beginner of fashions' (116). Such a concern with dress is a continuation of that found in Margery Kempe's *Boke*, which is dotted throughout with references to clothing as noted in Chapter Three. Kempe becomes a figure of mockery and distrust amongst her contemporaries when she first adopts her striking white clothing: she is the 'beginner of fashions' Joscelin cautions her unborn daughter not to become.

The preoccupation with suitable dress was not only a concern of morality, but of economics and social rank. For women especially, 'expensive clothing and jewellery signalled the magnificent spending of money and were, therefore, important items of display.'[808] Gouge's *Of Domesticall Duties* connects a wife's modesty with her ability to match her dress to her husband's means:

> Modeſtie appertaining to a wife is much manifeſted in her apparell […] A wiues modeſtie therefore requireth that her apparell be neither for coſtlineſſ aboue her husbands abilitie, nor for curiouſneſſ vnbeſeeming his calling. (280)

Gouge's manual was published in 1622, the same year in which Joscelin wrote, gave birth and died. A concern with the economics of dress was clearly important to her contemporaries and must have been on her mind as she approached motherhood. Perhaps it was for economic reasons that Joscelin engages with contemporary discourse governing dress. By being moderate in her dress, Joscelin's daughter would be moderate in her spending and therefore safeguard herself against possible debt or loss of fortune: more than shallow vanity putting the soul in peril, ostentatious fashion could endanger financial stability. Snook highlights that 'clothing was the early modern parent's second largest expense, costing less than food but more than

issued by Queen Elizabeth dealt with other facets of fashion – in 1562, the amounts and types of textiles that could be used in hosiery and double ruffs. Further proclamations in 1574, 1577, 1578, 1580, 1588 and 1597 considered foreign goods, extended regulations to women […] and lowered the minimum income needed to become eligible to wear velvet, satin and other silk clothes […] In 1604, James I repealed the existing statutes and attempted to enable himself to regulate dress by proclamation alone'. Edith Snook, *Women, Beauty and Power in Early Modern England* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), pp.89-90.

[807] Snook, p.90.

[808] Katherine A. McIver, 'Material Culture: Consumption, Collecting and Domestic Goods', in *The Ashgate Research Companion to Women and Gender in Early Modern Europe*, ed. by Allyson M. Poska, Jane Couchman and Katherine M. McIver (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013), pp.469-88 (p.478).

education', and 'materially, practically and economically, ensuring that children had appropriate clothing was one of motherhood's activities.'[809] In Joscelin's text, her discussion of apparel inseparably combines devotion and economics as she implores her daughter 'for godsake shun this vanyty' of elaborate clothing which is 'pestilent to the soule' (115). The previous chapter demonstrated the common bequeathing of clothes to female friends and relatives by female pre- modern testators. Joscelin's concern with her child's clothing serves as an alternative to these bequests. Rather than recycling costly garments, she attempts to limit any wasteful production. The reformed Kempe would surely approve of this advice which combined devotion with textile thriftiness. What may appear as an ostensibly stereotypically female folly of concern with fashion in the texts focussed on in this thesis, is actually a valid and much deeper concern with spirituality and economics which exemplifies the far-reaching impact of their knowledge of commerce, finance and religion. This is showcased not only in their fluid use of diction from numerous discourses, but in their subtle application of theories which are redefined and appropriated as necessary to meet the purpose of each particular text.

An early modern woman's clothes should reflect her economic status, and, importantly, that of her husband, particularly since woman could elevate (as well as lower) her financial and social rank through marriage. Isabella Whitney satirically notes the covetous practice of marrying for money, an issue prevalent in all the texts studied in this thesis:

> So, Maydens poore, and Widdoers ritch
> do leave, that oft shall dote:
> And by that meanes shall mary them,
> to set the Girles aflote.
> And wealthy Widdowes wil I leave,
> to help yong Gentylmen:
> Which when you have in any case
> be courteous to them then:
> And see their Plate and Jewells eake
> may not be mard with rust,
> Nor let their Bags too long be full,
> for feare that they doo burst. (201-12)

[809] Snook, pp.87-8.

Whitney presents marriage as an unequal business transaction between one wealthy and one poor partner as a contract for survival. Her rhyme – such as ‘dote’ and ‘aflote’, or Gentylmen’ and ‘then’ – heightens her satire and creates an almost flippant tone which exposes the inappropriate manner with which London society has come to (dis)regard the sacrament of marriage. Whitney’s claim that marriage to rich widowers sets girls ‘aflote’ implies they are saved from drowning in the sea of destitution. The supply and demand attitude of Chaucer’s Alisoun of Bath underlies Whitney’s depiction of matrimony: marriage can be an investment through which to gain profit.[810] Her reference to ‘Plate and Jewells’ and money ‘Bags’ explicitly makes the connection between marriage and material wealth. Capitalisation of these words further emphasises the importance placed on wealth in the making of marriages. This financial investment in marriage is never more apparent than in the writings of the Paston family as they strive to gain financial and social wealth through creating marriages. In Margery Brews’s letter we saw a potential Paston bride actively engage in the negotiations over her marriage using accomplished rhetoric.[811] Furthermore, in her will dated 1482, Margaret Paston defined one son’s monetary inheritance as the funds to ‘bye’ himself an heiress to marry.[812] Whitney exposes this practice of pre-modern society in an unashamed fashion; she does not criticise but nor does she defend. Instead, she appears to accept it as a necessary means of survival for both individuals and the economy. Among the authors examined in this thesis, three instances of early modern women who accrued wealth through their marital careers and numerous unions are Martha Moulsworth, Elizabeth Hardwick and Katherine Barnardiston. Interestingly, the Paston *men* benefited from their marriages to heiresses, demonstrating that both sexes could provide their spouse with economic gain, much like the ‘yong Gentylmen’ who save the widows’ plate and jewels from rusting in Whitney’s poem.[813] The reaction of the Paston family to Margery’s scandalous match with Richard Calle evidences the potential economic loss which marriage between unequal partners could signify to a family.[814]

[810] Alisoun’s manipulation of the theory of ‘supply and demand’ in her marriages was discussed in section (viii) of the Introduction, ‘Alisoun of Bath’.
[811] See Chapter Two, pp.110-1 for a discussion of Margery Brews’s letter to her prospective husband John Paston (III).
[812] Margaret Paston’s choice of verb was considered in Chapter Four, p.213.
[813] William Paston (I) married heiress, Agnes Berry, obtaining both land, money and status for the Paston name by doing so. Helen Fulton, ‘Autobiography & the Discourse of Urban Subjectivity, The Paston Letters’, in *Early Modern Autobiography: Theories, Genres, Practices,* ed. by Ronald Bedford, Lloyd Davis and Philippa Kelly (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2006), pp.191-216 (p.91); Brian Gastle, ‘Breaking the Stained Glass Ceiling: Mercantile Authority, Margaret Paston, and Margery Kempe’, *Studies in the Literary Imagination,* 36.1 (2003), 123-47 (p.130).
[814] See Chapter Two pp.112-3 for a discussion of Margaret Paston’s letter to her son John (II) written in response to the couple steadfastly defending their marriage (203: 65-8).

In *Of Domesticall Duties*, Gouge notes that 'Vnmeet it is that an aged man ſhould be maried to a young maid, but much more vnmeet for an aged woman to be maried to a youth' (274). He goes on to claim that, as well as accordance in age, similarity in wealth is needed for a successful marriage:

> equalitie in outward eſtate and wealth is alſo befitting the parties that are to be maried together, leſt the diſparitie therin (eſpecially if it be ouer-great) make the one inſult the other more than is meet: for if a man of great wealth be maried to a poore woman, he will thinke to make her as his maid-ſervant […] ſo as ſuch an one may rather be ſaid to be brought vnto bondage, then mariage. And if a rich woman mary a poore man, ſhe will looke to be the maſter, and to rule him: ſo as the order which God hath eſtabliſhed will be cleane peruerted: and the honour of mariage laid in the duſt. (189-90)

While equality of financial status in marriage partners was idealistically important to early modern society, it is clear in Whitney's writing that marriage remained a marketplace in which one, or both, partners could profit – just like Chaucer's Wife of Bath with whom this thesis began. There is an overwhelming number of bequests towards dowries in the legal wills of pre-modern women in Chapter Four, demonstrating that marriage was a vital monetary transaction necessary to survival and financial stability for women. Besides Cecily Daune, the mistress of John Paston (II), Whitney's speaker is the only other woman in the texts featured in this project believed never to have married, and the two are also the poorest figures, posing the possibility that a never-married woman was open to greater financial vulnerability than a wife or a widow who had the protection of her husband, the jointure and the inheritance to provide her with an income to survive. Their single status and financial vulnerability are reflected in their texts which are ubiquitous with metaphor and literary flair in a bid to gain the materials of survival, whether this be clothing in Daune's case, or monetary sales of her poetry in the case of Whitney.

In contrast to Whitney, Joscelin does not appear to be concerned with the monetary aspect of her child's marriage. As noted previously, Joscelin provides her unborn child with a spiritual portion rather than a financial dowry, leaving the negotiations and economic arrangements to her husband. Instead of a worldly marriage to a financially rich spouse, Joscelin chooses to provide the means for a spiritually rich relationship with God. This choice evidences the agency employed by different early modern women and the varying ways in which they choose to appropriate commercial discourses to their writing. Like Margery Kempe,

Joscelin appropriates the economic discourse of pre-modern marriage to give value to her relationship with the Divine. Joscelin cultivates a meaningful relationship with God which places herself (and her daughter) in an unequivocally subservient role, rather than in that of favoured interlocutor and *Sponsa Christi* presented by Kempe. Regardless of this difference, both authors employ vocabulary connected to marriage and commerce to give credit to their preferred way of worship. While their relationship with the Divine and fundamental beliefs differed due to the doctrines of the Roman and Protestant churches, the texts written by Kempe and Joscelin reveal that the lexical choices made by women authors to represent their religious beliefs continued to be influenced by financial and legal discourse throughout the pre-modern period, despite the upheaval of the Reformation.

(v) Conclusion

The analysis of Whitney's and Joscelin's texts has enabled a recollection of the findings of the previous chapters. Both Whitney and Joscelin appropriate parts of Christian teaching, legal documents and financial diction to create distinctive works, much like the authors whose writings were the focus of the main body of this thesis. The voices created in the 'Wyll' and *Legacy* speak forcefully of their views of their contemporary societies. Whitney's faux will is grounded in the legal formula of early modern wills, whilst Joscelin's *Legacy* employs and manipulates certain features of them to give her voice authority. Ostensibly, both writers adhered to proscribed feminine roles, but successfully manipulated these to varying degrees to leave a legacy of their lives, opinions, personalities, and, in the case of Whitney, wit. This brief analysis of their works reveals the influence of testaments across different genres of women's writing, both fiction and non-fiction, encapsulating the central argument of this thesis that financial and legal discourse is the ribbon which ties together women's understanding of their lives as a whole from the late medieval to the early modern era.

This thesis has revealed the persistent extent to which pre-modern women authors appropriate mercantile discourse and theory in their writing. Through the study of their letters, memoirs and wills it has become apparent that not only do these authors interpret their worldly worth through the lens of financial wealth, but they represent their personal and spiritual value through economic and legal metaphor and diction. Despite the upheaval of the Reformation, the denial of Purgatory and the saints, the belief in pre-destination and a move towards personal devotion and meditation on the Bible, the commercial metaphors favoured by female writers

did not change. The differences between individual authors appears to be influenced more by personal circumstance and idiosyncratic personality than it does by historical period. The situation from which individual texts arose impacted upon the degree of financial rhetoric employed. Chapter Two revealed that when writing in times of urgent need or danger, such as Margaret Paston's and Brilliana Harley's letters sent when their homes were under attack, conventional rhetorical strategies were dispensed with and language became more forceful and direct: the recipients needed to act quickly – this too, of course, is rhetoric of a different style. While danger and haste were experienced by these women, they also adopted these cultural markers as rhetorical strategies to give authority and justification to their actions, financial involvement and written voices. Without the leisure that financial and physical safety afforded, Harley's correspondence took on pragmatic and forthright qualities more akin to Margaret Paston's written persona. Claiming financial insecurity, Cecily Daune's letter to John Paston (I), written from the subservient position as his mistress, cleverly adapts pathos as a rhetorical technique to obtain the clothing that her survival depended on. Of course, the stable position of wife allowed Margaret Paston to enjoy a matter-of-fact style and tone which would not be acceptable in the writing of John (II)'s mistress. Daune's vulnerable social and financial status combined with her illegitimate relationship with John Paston (II) meant that her written words became her currency and revenue for survival, and so they were endowed with astounding rhetoric for a woman hitherto presumed to be relatively uneducated. When Maria Thynne wrote to express her love and desire for her husband, Thomas, she employed witty humour in her combination of words and numbers. Brilliana Harley endowed her affection for her husband with the simultaneously spiritual and economic discourse of 'reckoning'. Margery Brews asserted her own worth through transforming her body into a desired commodity in her letter to her prospective husband, challenging the perspective that arranged marriages devalued women and stripped them of personality. Metaphor, hyperbole and pathos are all present in pre-modern women's correspondence, proving their letters are far more than dreary records of everyday life. Margaret Paston's coining of 'captenesse' to describe her perception of herself revealed the innovative ways in which pre-modern women manipulated language to create a unique representation of their own lives.

In Chapter Three it was shown that, at times, Margery Kempe's style was on a par with that of Margaret Paston's shopping lists or Joan Thynne's report of cattle. Kempe's *Boke* was the practical product of recording remembered experiences of her exceptional relationship with Christ and her conversion to a pious life. However, as with Margaret Paston and Joan Thynne,

this constructed ‘ordinariness’ is characteristic of Kempe’s written style and should not be understood as a negative feature. Paradoxically, this apparently plain recollection of events also led to Kempe’s most skilful employment of financial language as devotional rhetoric. In addition, it worked to heighten the impression that, whilst being extraordinary in piety and grace, Kempe began her life as an ordinary mercantile woman, and there was no reason why a contemporary female reader should not be inspired to pursue a similar path to attain greater spiritual wealth herself. Kempe’s written style connected her with her urban, secular peers, revealing that it can be understood as a textual strategy. Her writing never managed to escape the values and vocabulary of her mercantile society, despite her efforts to emphasise her personal piety and denial of worldly concerns. However, this did not detract from her spirituality; rather, her vocabulary, invested with religious and commercial connotations, became stronger in her application of such diction. Terms such as ‘chefsyawns’ mark Kempe’s writing style which ultimately combined the mercantile and spiritual aspects of her life. Martha Moulsworth’s confident writing and choice of poetic genre aided her self-representation as a woman who was intellectually, spiritually and emotionally ‘tidy’ as her metrical and numerical precision combined in her ‘Memorandum’. Moulsworth applied the neatness of book-keeping to her autobiographical writing as she maintained a tight rhyme scheme, delighted in puns and utilised chiasmus; hers was the first text discussed in this thesis which was overtly literary in its design and style. Despite this development, her writing maintained the employment of mercantile discourse and theory which was prolific in the writing of Kempe and the female letter-writers of Chapter Two. Moulsworth’s own linguistic choices, such as ‘tell’, highlighted the continued multi-faceted meanings of financial language with which a text can be invested.

Chapter Four focussed on the final act of life-administration by pre-modern women: the will. The tight legal requirements of the will genre and formulaic templates, of course, restricted the literary agency available to testators. The individual choices of beneficiaries and bequests, however, exemplified alternative currencies of family identity, devotional networks and of communal memory. Throughout the period studied there was an overwhelming concern with the provision of dowries to ensure the financial survival of future generations of women. As with all the texts studied in this thesis, it was the social and financial standing of the women that gave them the opportunity to write. In addition, the financial security of the female testators in Chapter Four enabled them to give specific instructions of how their money should be used and possessions bestowed. In the Middle Ages their wealth was used to amass good deeds and give alms for the benefit of their soul and to secure prayers to speed their progress through

Purgatory. Wealth allowed the opportunity to create these strategies of risk management. Post-Reformation testator Katherine Barnardiston used her wealth for acts of charity to express her gratitude to Christ and God for the salvation in which she trusted, whilst Elizabeth Hardwick cared for her household servants and alms-house inhabitants. A focus on legality appears to have intensified as time progressed as evidenced by the increased use of seals, witnesses, signatures and renouncing of previous wills, specifically demonstrated through the employment of the language of probate. Beyond the written will, bequests of material objects functioned as a currency of commemoration and memory – visual prompts of remembered kinship for the living. On occasion, these possessions became 'texts' themselves, working as an extension of the written document. They were inscribed with meaning through previous ownership and sometimes artwork or engraving. In wills, in contrast to several letters in Chapter Two and memoirs in Chapter Three, we rarely encountered explicit expression of love or emotion. When testators did employ the language of affection, it was often to justify their legacies and the appointment of executors, transforming love itself into a currency which had authoritative and rhetorical value within the genre of the will. Notable is the apparent increase of emotive adjectives as the period under investigation proceeded, implying that the ways in which the legal form was adopted as a form of self-expression developed as time passed. However, a larger sample of wills, by men as well as women, would need to be assessed before a definite claim could be made on this. The issues of trust and risk, and the way that these concerns were dealt with in wills, brought together the financial, social and spiritual aspects of selfhood.

Financial and legal vocabulary is included in final wills and testaments by necessity; without it, the genre would not exist. However, a close reading of pre-modern women's wills illuminates the testators' use of material bequests as alternative texts through which to express themselves. The study of wills underlined the appropriation of mercantile discourse and theory to personal and communal devotion which can be traced through the writing of pre-modern women studied in this thesis as a whole: their letters, memoirs and wills.

Adopting Jill Mann's terms, I asked whether an 'estate' of women authors could be identified through the 'jargon' of their writing in the Introduction to this thesis.[815] While gender was undoubtedly important in shaping these women's writings, social and financial rank had a

[815] Jill Mann, *Chaucer and Medieval Estates Satire: The Literature of Social Classes and the General Prologue to the Canterbury Tales* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973), p.12. See p.15 of the Introduction to this thesis.

profound impact upon their writing style and vocabulary, as did marital status and geographical location. It was a combination of all these factors which resulted in the distinctive written style of each author. Rather than suggesting an all-encompassing estate of women found in their literature, this thesis has shown that within the gendered category of 'Women' there were sub-divisions based on rank, just as there were in male pre-modern society, but also those based on marital status. The lexical choices of these female authors to represent themselves and their beliefs reveal the diverse ways in which fiscal discourse could be exploited by pre-modern women. Paradoxically, this varied use of financial rhetoric is what unites these women as authors.

Commercial, mercantile and financial language, metaphor and practice abounds in the writing of pre-modern women as a force with which to unite the varying aspects of their lives. Each woman presents a sense of her identity through her use of fiscal philosophy and vocabulary. While their use of such language as a rhetorical technique is the linking factor of these texts, the way in which each author capitalised upon this meaning varied in to suit her purpose, whether that was to display her piety, convince her husband to purchase desired goods, record a memoir of marriages and lost children, bequeath wealth and possessions, ensure salvation, create a poetic satire for social reform, or leave instructions for an unborn child. What this thesis reveals is the far-reaching potential of commercial discourse, vocabulary and mercantile practice which was exploited by women writers of the pre-modern era to create texts of idiosyncratic style which are as individual as the authors themselves. This conclusion disagrees with Effie Botonaki's argument, relating to seventeenth-century women's spiritual diaries, that female authors used a combination of religious, commercial and legal discourses in order to inhabit a pre-existing male-authored genre.[816] By contrast, this project reveals that an assessment of a wider range of genres, including writings by medieval authors, discloses that, rather than striving to step into male shoes, pre-modern women manipulated genres and employed lexical choices to carve uniquely *female* roles and literary representations of themselves which allowed autonomy within the culturally accepted bounds of gender. In all the women's writing studied here, practicality and necessity over-ruled the male ideology of the conduct books – like those discussed in the introductory chapter – which cautioned women against financial involvement for the good of their spiritual health and worldly reputations.[817]

[816] Botonaki, p.21.
[817] These ideological texts were considered in section (iv) of the Introduction, 'Suitable Financial Conduct'.

The resulting texts present self-portraits of women who were strong, capable, astute and, importantly, virtuous.

Beyond these outcomes, this project has raised the question of how female authors' use of financial idiom and language differed from that written by male authors. The next step of my research will be a comparison between letters written by pre-modern men and women, male-authored memoirs with female-authored autobiographical texts, and wills created by men and women. In addition, the sample of women's writing needs widening to encompass a greater number of letters, memoirs and wills to gain a more comprehensive view. Similarly, a search for recusant women's letters, memoirs and wills could strengthen (or challenge) what this thesis has discovered. Expanding genres to include prayers and conversion narratives could also add a greater variety of literary forms to provide interesting contrast between these explicitly devotional texts with those of mixed purpose, such as correspondence, wills, Kempe's *Boke*, and Joscelin's *Legacy*.

In the meantime, the unearthing of pre-modern women's appropriation of fiscal terms, commercial metaphor and practice as the thread with which to unite the various aspects of their personal, familial and communal identities, across differing genres and in hitherto unseen combinations of texts, exemplifies the richness of pre-modern women's writing. All may not have been 'for to selle' as Alisoun of Bath suggests, but all, it seemed, had a value communicable through mercantile lexicons and metaphor for the women studied in this project.[818] To echo the phrase from Margery Kempe used in my title – 'sche evyr desyryd mor and mor' – although these writers did not unanimously ever desire 'mor and mor' in terms of material wealth, they certainly appear to have 'desyryd' and invested themselves with 'mor and mor' spiritual, personal and social worth through their utilisation of language. As authors, these women were not simply passive absorbers of contemporary financial, social and spiritual discourses; they were active rhetoricians who appropriated the words and theories of such discourses to their own purposes, and indeed created their own when there was no suitable phrase available.[819] These actions endowed pre-modern female authors with power, influence and agency, albeit in varying degrees. This thesis is testimony to the dynamic and shaping role the language of commerce and finance had in the self-writing of pre-modern English women. I hope that this present study leaves a legacy for further investigation on this topic.

[818] This project began with a consideration of Alisoun and her mercantile view of life. See Introduction, p.8 and section (viii), 'Alisoun of Bath'.
[819] See Chapter Two for a discussion of Margaret Paston's invention of 'captenesse', pp.81-2.

Appendix One: Definitions

Below is a list of financial, mercantile and legal terms whose medieval and early modern definitions are important to this study.[820]

Account

(noun) (c.1300 – present)

I. Meanings relating to counting, enumerating, or calculating numerically.

1. Counting, reckoning, enumeration; computation, calculation; (also) a style or mode of reckoning; an amount established by counting. Now chiefly in *money of account.*

II. **Connotations relating to accounting for money paid and received.**

2. A financial record or statement; accounting.

(a) A statement of financial expenditure and receipts relating to a particular period or purpose, with calculation of the balance; a detailed statement of money due; (also) any of the heads or subdivisions under which accounts are kept in a ledger or other accounting system.

(verb)

I. To render a reckoning.

1. *transitive*. To present an account or reckoning of (one's actions, etc.); to answer for, to explain or justify. Also *intransitive* with *of.* (c.1300-1605, now o*bsolete.*)

2. a. *transitive*. To provide or present an account of (transactions, money given or received, etc.), esp. formally. Also *figurative*. (c.1300 – present)

b. *intransitive*. To prepare or present an account of transactions, esp. of money given or received; (also) to receive such an account (*obsolete*). Also *figurative*. (c.1340 – present, now *rare.)*

Bond

I. *literal*. That with or by which a thing is bound.

[820] All definitions are taken from the *OED* online or the *MED*, as indicated where appropriate.

a. Anything with which one's body or limbs are bound in restraint of personal liberty; a shackle, chain, fetter, manacle. *archaic* (and only in *plural*).

II. *figurative.* to enter bonds: to give a bond, pledge oneself (*obsolete*)

a. Connotations present in the bonds of wedlock and matrimony

b. An agreement or engagement binding on him who makes it.

c. A covenant between two or more persons.

III. Legal and technical meanings.

a. *English Law*. A deed, by which A (known as the *obligor*) binds himself, his heirs, executors, or assigns to pay a certain sum of money to B (known as the *obligee*), or his heirs, etc. (c.1590s)

Business

I. The quality or state of being busy. *Obsolete*. Used from Middle English down to the 18th cent., but now differentiated as BUSYNESS *n.* (with trisyllabic pronunciation).

1. Diligent labour, exertion, effort. *Obsolete*. 14th to 16th cent.

2. Application or commitment to a task or purpose; industry, diligence. *Obsolete*. 14th to 18th cent.

3. Eagerness, earnestness, importunity. *Obsolete*. 14th to 16th cent.

4. Fuss, ado, trouble, difficulty, disturbance, commotion. *Obsolete*. 14th to 17th cent.

5. Care, attention, observance. *Obsolete*. 14th to 16th cent.

6. Activity, briskness, motion; = BUSYNESS *n.* *Obsolete*. 14th to 17th cent.

II. Something with which a person is busy or occupied.

1. A pursuit or occupation demanding time and attention; a serious employment as distinguished from a pastime. *Obsolete*. 14th to 19th cent.

2. As a mass noun: action which occupies time and demands attention and effort; *esp.* serious occupation or work, as opposed to pleasure or recreation. 15th cent. to present.

3. With possessive adjective or genitive: a task appointed or undertaken; a person's duty, part, or role (frequently *to* do something); function, occupation. c.1400 to present.

4. An activity or matter that someone is engaged in, or with which he or she is concerned at a particular time; (often) *spec.* the errand or matter on which a person comes. c.1400 to present.

5. The object of anxiety or serious effort; a serious purpose or aim. *Obsolete*. 15th to 16th cent.

6. Work that has to be done; matters demanding attention. Formerly also as a count noun: a particular matter requiring attention; a piece of work, a job (mid 15th cent. now *rare*).

7. With possessive adjective or genitive: a person's official or professional duties as a whole; one's regular, habitual, or stated profession, trade, or occupation. Now frequently *colloquial*: 'line of work'. 15th cent. to present.

8. Trade and all activity relating to it, esp. considered in terms of volume or profitability; commercial transactions, engagements, and undertakings regarded collectively; an instance of this. Hence more generally: the world of trade and commerce. Also *figurative*. 15th cent. to present.

Chance

OED:

1. The falling out or happening of events; the way in which things fall out; fortune; case. 13th cent. to present.

2. Happening or occurrence of things in a particular way; a casual or fortuitous circumstance. 14th cent. to present.

3. That which befalls a person; (one's) hap, fortune, luck, lot. *Obsolete* or *archaic*. 13th to 17th cent.

Chaunce (noun) Also **chance**, **chea(u)nce**, **cheiance**, **chaunche**, **sha(u)nce**.

MED:

1. (a) Something that happens or takes place; an occurrence or event, esp. one that is unexpected, unforeseen, beyond human control, or attributed to providence or destiny; **nightes ~**, nightfall; **~ be)falleth (bitideth, cheveth)**, an event occurs, it so happens; **cheven ~**, bring to pass; **worldes ~**, vicissitude of this world; (b) **what ~ so bitide**, whatever may happen; **for ~ that may falle**, no matter what happens; **as God yeve the ~**, as God may grant, God willing.

2.Something that happens (to sb.) and affects (his) circumstances for better or worse; a stroke of (good or bad) luck; **god, beter ~**; **fel, ivel, hard ~**, bad luck.

3.One's luck, lot, or fate (whether good or bad); **god ~, ivel ~**, etc.; contextually: good luck; **~ of the worlde**, (one's) lot on earth; **don ivel ~**, cause misfortune; **abiden ~, stonden to ~, taken ~**, submit to (one's) fate; **~ faileth**, fortune fails (one); **as I have god ~**; **God yeve the god (ivel) ~**!

4. (a) Something that may or may not come about or be realized; a fortuitous event or circumstance, an eventuality; vicissitude; **bi ~, o ~**, on the chance (that); **bi ~ of armes**, by luck in battle; **Martis ~**, the fortunes of war; **taken ~, stonden to ~**, take a chance or risk; (b) an incidental donation.

5. (a) A situation or circumstance; a case; (b) a favorable circumstance, an opportunity; **chesen ~**; **haven no ~**, have no future.

6. An adventure or exploit in arms; **don ~**, engage in the fortunes of warfare; **fonden ~**, seek the fortunes of warfare, make war.

7. (a) A force that shapes man's life on earth; (b) influence upon events, control of man's destiny, dominance.

8. (a) The falling of the dice, the number turning up at a throw, the number thrown; **~ of cast**; **~ falleth**, a number turns up; **casten ~ (on des)**, try one's luck at dice; **chesen bi ~**, choose by throwing dice; (b) *fig.* one's fortune as predicted by the fall of the dice.

9. (a) **bi chaunce, in ~, o ~, per ~, thurgh ~, up(on ~, with ~**, by chance, accidentally; **at ~**, by chance, haphazardly; (b) **for alle chaunce, for ~ upon erthe, in eche ~**, at all events, under all or any circumstances; **for ani ~**, in any event, under any circumstances; **for no(n ~**, under no circumstances, in no way; **for ~ of**, because of.

<u>**Chevisaunce**</u> (noun) Also **cheviss-**, **chevish-**, **cheves-**, **chefes-**, **chefs-**, **ches-**, **cheis-**, **chivesaunce**. (Middle English)

1.(a) Outcome or fulfillment (of an enterprise or action); **god ~**, prosperity; (b) **don ~**, make atonement (for sins).

2. A provision or arrangement for accomplishing something; a means, device, expedient, or stratagem (esp. for getting out of a difficulty or avoiding it).

3. The act of acquiring something, or what one acquires; acquisition, gain, profit; an acquisition, (hunter's) bag, booty.

4.Sustenance; providing of food, provisions; nourishment (of plants).

5.Assistance, support, protection; relief.

6.(a) The borrowing of money, esp. on security or/and at interest; also, raising of funds by other means; (b) the lending of money at interest, esp. also at high interest; usury; **~ of usurie**; also, the business or practice of lending money at high interest, or in an illegal way; **fals ~**; (c) **withoute ~**, ?without interest.

Coinage (noun) Also **cunage** in Middle English.

1. *(a)* The action or process of coining money. *(b)* The right of coining money. 14th to 19th cent.
2. Coins collectively, coin; a system of coins in use or in currency; the currency. 15th cent. to present.

Costage (noun) Also **castage**, **coustage in Middle English**.

1.(a) Expenditure, expense, cost; also *fig.*; charges incurred, expenses, costs; also, legal expenses; -- frequ. pl.; (b) **don (maken, taken) costage(s**, to make expenditure(s, spend money; **at (bi, of, on, upon, with) costage(s**, at the expense (of sb.), at (someone's) charges; **with gret ~**, at great expense; **of gret ~**, at great expense; costly, expensive; extravagant; **of no ~**, free of charge. 14th to 17th cent.

2.(a) Money for expenses, expense money; (b) financial responsibility; a pecuniary burden, charge.

Credit

OED:

I. General meanings

1. The estimate in which the character of a person (or thing) is held; reputation. Now *rare*. Mid 15th to 19th cent.
2. Right to be believed; authority on which to be accepted as true, truthful, or authentic. Mid 15th cent. to present.
3. The quality of being generally believed or credited; reputation for truthfulness, accuracy, or honesty; trustworthiness, credibility (of a person, statement, etc.). Mid 16th cent. to present.
4. The mental action or state of accepting something as true. Mid 16th cent. to present.

5. The charge, trust, or care of a person (to which a thing is committed). *Obsolete.* Mid-16th to mid-17th cent.
6. Personal influence based on the confidence or trust of others; power derived from character or reputation. c.1550 to present.

II. Business and finance

1. Trust or confidence in a customer's ability and intention to pay at some future time, shown by allowing money or goods to be taken or services to be used without immediate payment. 16th cent. to present.
2. Money lent or borrowed with an agreement as to repayment; money placed at a person's disposal in the books of a bank, etc., which may be drawn on to the extent of the amount; (more widely) the value of goods or services available without immediate payment. Also: the availability of such funds. 16th cent. to present.
3. Reputation for solvency and probity in financial dealings, allowing money or goods to be taken or services to be used without immediate payment; the ability of a customer to obtain money, etc., on such a basis. 16th cent. to present.
4. *Accounting*. An entry in an account recording money received, listed on the right-hand side or column; the record of receipts as a whole; the sum so listed. Also: the right-hand side or column of an account (abbreviated *Cr.*) c.1638 onwards.

Dette (noun) Also **det(e)**, **deatte**, **ded**, **debt**. (c.1380 onwards)

MED:

1.(a) Whatever one owes another in goods, money, tribute, rent, dues, or the like; a debt; **paien (quiten, yelden) ~**, to pay a debt; **borwen ~**, incur a debt; **axen ~**, demand payment of a debt; (b) the state of one who has debts, indebtedness; **ben in ~**, to be in debt; **ben out of ~**, have no debts.

2. *Law.* **accioun (ple, pledinge) of ~**, a suit to recover what is owed.

3a. (a) A moral, religious, or social obligation; an act conforming to such an obligation; **don (paien, yelden) ~**, to do (one's) duty; **withholden ~**, fail to do (one's) duty; **bihest is ~**, a promise is binding; (b) whatever is due (to sb.).

3b. (a) **ben in ~**, to be obliged (to do sth.), be in duty bound; (b) to be indebted (to sb.), owe thanks.

3c. (a) **after ~, as ~**, according to justice or nature; (b) **bi ~, thurgh ~**, as an obligation or duty; (c) **of ~, with ~**, as a matter of duty or justice; duly, in justice; also, ?in gratitude [quot. Gower 6.1502]; (d) **withouten ~**, without being in duty bound.

4. *Theol.* (a) A debt incurred through sinful behavior, guilt, sinfulness; (b) that which spouses owe to each other, sexual intercourse; **~ of matrimoni, ~ of the bodi**; (c) that which man owes to his nature, death; **dethes ~**; **paien ~ onto nature**, to die.

5.The state of owing retaliation for injury.

6.det-bunden, in duty bound.

Dūe (noun)

MED: (a) What one deserves or is entitled to; due share, due punishment; **~ of wedlok**, debt of matrimony, sexual intercourse between husband and wife; (b) that which is appropriate or expected; **biforen ~**, before the proper time, too early; **thries ~**, three times the expected or normal number; (c) an obligation or duty; **of ~**, as a matter of duty; (d) *pl.* dues, fees; (e)?a required list of sinners.

OED: (a) An obligatory payment due to an authority such as the church or the State; a tax, tribute, toll, etc. 15th cent. to present. (b) That which is due or owed legally or morally; a debt. *Obsolete. 15th to 17th cent. (c)* That which is expected, fitting, or appropriate; a proper procedure or observance. *Obsolete*. 15th to 19th cent. (d) With possessive of the person owed: that which is due or owed to a person; that to which a person has a right or which he or she deserves; a person's due share or reward. 15th cent. to present.

Fortūne (noun)

MED:

1.(a) The goddess of fortune, personification of fate [= Roman **Fortuna**]; (b) **dame ~, ladi ~**, Lady Fortune; (c) **blind ~**; **fals ~**; **~ whel**; **whel of ~**; **~ is mi fo**, etc.; (d) **godes of ~, yiftes of ~, fortunes yeving**, the gifts of Fortune, worldly prosperity, temporal goods, success due to chance.

2. Chance, accident; **bi (of) ~**, by chance, as it happened, accidentally; (b) that which happens to someone, fate, destiny, luck; **tellen ~**, to foretell (someone's) future, tell (one's) fortune; **~ of werre**, fortune of war.

3.(a) A state or condition brought about by fate or chance, lot; esp., a desirable state, prosperity, good luck, success; (b) **ilondes of ~**, the happy isles of the western ocean; (c) *pl.* goods, possessions.

OED:

1. Chance, hap, or luck, regarded as a cause of events and changes in men's affairs. Often (after Latin) personified as a goddess; her emblem is a wheel, betokening vicissitude. 14th to 19th cent.

2. A chance, hap, accident; an event or incident befalling any one, an adventure. *Obsolete. 14th to 18th cent.*

3. A mishap, disaster. ***to run a fortune*** (= French *courir fortune de*): to run a risk. *Obsolete. 15th to 17th cent.*

4. One's condition or standing in life; often *absol.* a prosperous condition, as in ***to make one's fortune*** = to win a good position in the world. Also *plural*. 17th to 19th cent.

5. Position as determined by wealth; amount of wealth; *concrete* a person's possessions collectively, wealth, ‘substance’; †formerly also *plural* in the connotation. ***a man,* etc. *of fortune***: one possessing great (usually inherited) wealth. Also (with *a* and *plural*) a stock of

wealth, accumulated by an individual or received by inheritance, as a marriage portion, etc.; ordinarily implying a somewhat ample amount. ***to make a, one's fortune***. 16th cent. to present.

Hasard/hazard

MED: (a) A game of chance played with dice; playing at hazard; **table ~**, a table on which hazard is played; **leien to (setten at) ~**, to risk (sth.), gamble (sth.) away; **pleien at ~**; (b) **chek ~**, an unlucky turn of events, misfortune.

OED: **1.** *transitive*. To risk losing (something) in a game of chance; to stake, wager (something); to expose (something) to hazard or risk in an attempt to gain something. 16th cent. to present. **2.** To put (a thing or person, or oneself) at risk of being penalized, disadvantaged, or afflicted in a specified way. *Obsolete. 16th to 18th cent.* ***3.*** As a count noun. A chance happening; an unpredictable outcome; (also) a chance, an opportunity. 14th cent. to present. **4.** As a mass noun. Risk, danger, jeopardy. 16th cent. to present.

Lucre

(noun) Also **lucour**, **-or**, **-ur**, **lukir**.

MED: (a) Monetary gain, profit; money, wages; (b) illicit gain; **~ of vileinie, worldli ~**, filthy lucre; (c) advantage, benefit; **gostli ~**, spiritual gain; (d)?as surname.

OED: **1.** Gain, profit, pecuniary advantage. 14th to 19th cent. Now only with unfavourable implication: Gain viewed as a low motive for action. **2.** Const. *of*: *(a)* gain or profit derived from (something) (*obsolete*); *(b)* acquisition of (something profitable) (*obsolete* exc. *archaic*).The phrase ***lucre of gain***, frequent in 17th cent., is echoed as an archaism by some writers of the 19th cent.

<u>Memorandum</u> (noun)

OED:

1. A note to help the memory; a record of events, or of observations on a particular subject, esp. for future consideration or use. 15th cent. to present.
2. A record of a financial transaction. 16th cent. to present (now rare).
3. An informal diplomatic message, *esp.* one summarizing the state of a question, justifying a decision, or recommending a course of action. c.1650 to 20th cent.
4. An injunction to remember something. *Obsolete*. 16th to 17th cent.

<u>Portion</u> (noun)

OED:

1. An allocation, a share.
   (a) The part of anything allotted or belonging to one person; a share; an appointed task, duty, or the like. Also *figurative*. 14th to 20th cent.
   (b) A quantity or allowance of food allotted to, or enough for, one person or animal; a helping. 14th to 20th cent.
   (c) The part or share of an estate given or passing by law to an heir or other beneficiary, or to be distributed to an heir in the settlement of the estate. 15th to 20th cent. Now *historical*.
   (d) A dowry. 16th to 20th cent. Now chiefly *historical.*
2. A person's lot, destiny, or fate. Chiefly with possessive adjective. 14th to 20th cent.

Profit

OED:

(noun)

1. A favourable circumstance or condition; advantage, gain; a person's benefit or good. 14th cent. to present.
2. The advantage or benefit inherent in or resulting from something; favourable potential or outcome. Frequently with *of*. *Obsolete*. 14th to 18th cent.
3. As a count noun: an advantageous result or effect of something. *Obsolete*. 14th to 16th cent.
4. A material benefit derived from a property, position, etc.; income, revenue. Frequently in *plural*. 14th cent. to present.
5. Progress, advancement. *Obsolete*. 14th to 17th cent.
6. A financial gain, *esp.* the difference between the amount earned and the amount spent in buying, operating, or producing something. 14th cent. to present.

(verb)

I. Connotations relating to benefit, advantage, or gain.

1. Of a thing. Frequently with *it* as subject.

a. *transitive*. To be of advantage or benefit to; to advance or promote (a person). 14th cent. to present

b. *intransitive*. To be of advantage, use, or benefit. Frequently with *to* in early use. Now *rare* and *archaic*. 14th to 20th cent.

2. a. *intransitive*. To derive profit; to receive a benefit; to gain.

b. *intransitive*. To derive benefit *from* or gain *by*; to make use or take advantage of; to make a profit from. 15th cent. to present.

3. Of a person.

a. *intransitive*. To be profitable; to bring benefit. Usually with *to*, *unto*. *Obsolete*. 14th to 16th cent.

b. *transitive*. To bring profit or benefit to (a person). *Obsolete*. 15th to 17th cent.

c. *transitive* (*reflexive*). To benefit oneself. Now *rare*. 16th to 20th cent.

II. *Meanings relating to progress or achievement.*

1. *intransitive*. To make progress, advance; to improve; to increase, esp. in knowledge or virtue. *Obsolete*. 14th to 18th cent.

Prosper

OED:

(adjective) Prosperous or successful. *Obsolete*. 14th to 17th cent.

(verb)

1. (a) *intransitive*. Of a person, community, etc.: to be prosperous, fortunate, or successful; to flourish, thrive, succeed, do well. 14th cent. to present. **(b)** *intransitive*. Of a thing: to flourish or succeed; (occasionally also) to turn out in a specified way, as *ill*, *well*, etc. 15th cent. to present.

2. *transitive*. To cause to flourish; to promote the prosperity or success of; to be propitious to. 16th to 20th cent. Now *rare*.

Reckoning (noun)

1. **(a)** The action or an act of accounting to God after death for (one's) conduct in life; an account so given; the occasion of giving such an account, the Last Judgement. Also: God's judgement on or penalty for a person's actions. 14th cent. to present. **(b)** The action or an act of giving or being required to give an account of something, esp. one's conduct or actions; an account or statement so given. Also: an occasion of giving or being required to give such a statement; a calling to account. 14th cent. to present. **(c) D**ay of reckoning *n.* the Day of Judgement. Frequently in extended use (also in moment (also time, year, etc.) of reckoning): a time of calling or holding to account; a time when the consequences of an action must be faced; (more generally) a momentous occasion or period; a turning point.

2. The action of providing an account or record of property, money, etc., entrusted to one's charge; an account or record so provided. Also: an occasion of giving such an account. In later use chiefly (S*cots Law)* in count and reckoning, with reference to a legal action whereby an agent may be compelled to provide such an account. Now *rare*. 14th cent. to present.

Redemption (noun)

1. The action of freeing a prisoner, captive, or slave by payment; the fact of being freed in this way. Also occasionally: the payment itself. 14th cent. to present.
2. *Theology*. Deliverance from sin and damnation, esp. by the atonement of Christ; salvation. 14th cent. to present.
3. **(a)** Expiation or atonement for a crime, sin, or offence; release from punishment. 15th cent. to present. **(b)** A recompense, a compensation. 17th cent. to present.
4. Purchase of membership of a society, guild, or company. 15th to 20th cent.
5. **(a)** The redeeming or buying back of something offered as a security, esp. mortgaged property or a pawned item; an instance of this. 15th cent. to present. **(b)** The action or fact of discharging or paying off a debt, obligation, or charge. 16th cent. to present. **(c)** *Finance*. The repayment of a stock, bond, or other security, esp. at the maturity date; an instance of this. 18th cent. to present.

Risk

1. (Exposure to) the possibility of loss, injury, or other adverse or unwelcome circumstance; a chance or situation involving such a possibility. Frequently with *of*. Frequently in *to run (*also *take) a (*also *the) risk (*also *risks)*, †*to run one's risk*. 17th cent. to present.
2. (Exposure to) the possibility of harm or damage causing financial loss, against which property or an individual may be insured. Also: the possibility of financial loss or failure

as a quantifiable factor in evaluating the potential profit in a commercial enterprise or investment. 17th cent. to present.

3. A hazardous journey, undertaking, or course of action; a venture. *Obsolete*. 17th cent. only.

Selle

MED:

1.(a) To give (sth., sth. to sb.), present as a gift, bestow; also, give away possessions [quot.: *Bod.Hom.*, 2nd]; **~ on honde**, give (sth. into someone's hand); (b) to grant (sth. to sb.), render; provide (sth., sth. for sb.); do (sb. an injury); **~ mid**, entrust (sth.) to (sb.); **~ on honde**, pledge (sth. to sb.); **kinges honde solde**, granted by the king personally; (c) to administer (a medicine), administer (medicine to sb.); give (sb. curative food or drink); -- also without obj.; (d) to give up (one's life); deliver up (sb.); **~ on honde**, deliver up (sb. to sb.); **~ to deth**.

2.(a) To sell, engage in selling; **~ and bien, bien and (or) ~**, etc., buy and sell, engage in commerce; **~ forth**, sell openly; **yeven and ~**, give and sell; -- used *fig.*; (b) to sell (sth.); -- also without obj.; offer (sth.) for sale; also *fig.*; (c) **~ awei**, to sell off (sth.), dispose of; **~ contre**, lease out a district (to a friar to beg in); **~ for**, sell (sth.) for (money); also, barter (sth.) for (sth. else); also *fig.*; **~ to**, sell (sth.) for (money); **~ to sale**, offer (sth.) for sale; **~ up**, sell off (wares); -- used *fig.*; (d) to sell (sth. to sb.); -- also without obj.; **~ o (of)**, sell an amount of (sth.); sell (sb.) some of (sth.); (e) **for) to ~**, for sale, to be sold.

3.To sell (oneself, sb., sb. to sb.), sell (sb.) into bondage or servitude; -- also without obj.; also *fig.*; **~ in-to (in-til)**, sell (sb.) into servitude in (a foreign land); **~ in (to) servage, ~ in-to a servaunt (thral)**, **~ unto bondage**.

4.To betray (sb., Christ, a realm) for gain; betray (sb. to sb.) for gain; also *fig.*; **~ to deth**, betray (sb.) to his death.

5. *Fig.* or in *fig.* context: (a) to receive remuneration for (spiritual gifts, ecclesiastical privileges or benefices, bestowing of sacraments, etc.); (b) to gain temporal or eternal reward for (good deeds); (c) to sell (sb., oneself, one's soul to the devil or into perdition); barter away (heaven,

heavenly joy, God's gifts, etc.), sell; **~ for**, exchange (heavenly joy) for (earthly praise); **~ into (under)**, sell (oneself, one's soul) into (the bondage of sin); **bien and ~ peine**, traffic in (one's own) eternal punishment; (d) **~ dom (laue**, etc.**)**, to receive payment for rendering a favorable judgment; **~ soth (treuth)**, receive payment for advancing a falsehood or furthering an unjust action at law; (e) to give up (freedom of action); of a woman: sell (herself, her maidenhood); **~ awei; bien and ~**, bargain over the marriage of (a woman); (f) to exact retribution for (an evil deed, an injury, insult); (g) **~ lif (deth), ~ lif (deth) dere**, to sell (one's) life dearly, go down fighting; **~ to**, sell (oneself) to (an enemy) by hazarding one's life in combat; (h) **~ lif**, to sell (someone's) life, kill (sb.); **bien and ~** , destroy (an opposing force); **ben bought and solde**, have one's fate sealed; of one's life: be forfeit; **i have thi thrift solde**, I have destroyed you; **she mai me yeven and ~**, she may do with me as she pleases; (i) **bought and solde**, of heaven: repurchased, repossessed from the devil; (j) in proverbs.

Taille

MED:

(noun) Also **tail(e**, **taiel**, **taȝile**, **tayille**, **teil(e**, **tale**.

[OF **taill** & **taille**, **taile**, **talle**, pl. **tales**; also cp. AL **tailla**, **tal(l)a**, vars. of ML **tallia**.]

1.(a) A slash, cut; (b) a style, fashion, manner in which cloth is cut; (c) physical appearance, shape; (d) *coll.* slips of wood, cuttings; also [1st quot.], ?a thicket; ?undergrowth [this word and the following **ac** have been construed as a single word, from **teien** v. & **-lāc** suf., with the meaning 'entanglement, ' but this seems less likely than the present explanation]; (e) *cook.* **taille(s**, the name of a dish made with cut-up fruit.

2.A tax; tribute [cp. **taillage** n.].

3.(a) A scored wooden stick used for financial recordkeeping, tally stick; ?**~ stiche**; **contre ~**, q.v.; (b) a tally stick used as a receipt for sums collected on behalf of the Crown; (c) a tally stick recording revenue owed the Exchequer and used by it to disburse sums owed by the Crown, with the responsibility for collecting the debt transferred to the holder of the tally stick; (d) a tally stick in general use as an instrument of credit; **taken bi ~**, to receive (sth.) on credit;

also, make a purchase on credit [1st quot.]; (e) the record kept by scoring a tally stick; also, a contract recorded on tally sticks; **bi taille(s**, according to the tallied record; also, by contract; (f) ?a written loan contract; **blaunk ~**, a form contract or document having blank spaces to be filled in by an agent specifying the details of the transaction; (g) **~ yerdes**, ?yards measured by a scored stick.

4. *Law.* The arrangement under which inheritance of an estate is restricted to an heir or a class of heirs stipulated in a will or deed of gift, an entailment; also, a document establishing an entail; **in (the) ~**, according to the terms of the entail; in the line of succession designated by the terms of the entail.

5. (a) A number; **everi tailes**, every one; **ilke (a) ~**, each one; (b) **in ~**, by count, in number; **setten in ~**, to count (persons) [cp. **tale** n. **7.**(h)].

Talent

MED:

Also **talent(t)e**, **talant**, **taland(e**; pl. **talent(e)s**, etc. & **talentus** & **talens**.

[OE **talent(e** & OF **talent**, **talant** (pl. **talens**) & **talente** & L **talentum**.]

1. (a) An ancient unit of weight of varying value, ranging from about 55 pounds to over 130 pounds; a talent weight of gold, silver, or brass; **of led**, a talent weight of lead used as a lid; **as a**, of the size or weight of a talent; (b) an ancient monetary unit of varying value; a coin representing the value of a talent, sometimes equated with the Byzantine bezant; the gospel talent [see Mat.25.14-30 and Luke 19.12-27]; also, *her.* a coin-shaped heraldic charge [quot. 1486]; (c) *coll.* & *pl.* treasure, riches; (d) *fig.* that which God has granted to one; **accounten for ~, bringen answere of ~**, to render an account at the Last Judgment of what one has been given; **quiten ~**, give (sb. his) reward, pay (sb. his) due.

2. (a) Desire, will; inclination, habit, bent; **~ of (to)**, desire for (sth.); **~ of a mannes thought**, the tenor of a man's thought; **leien ~**, to set (one's) heart (on sth.); (b) that which is desired, (one's) wish or wishes; **the ~ of here hertes**, their hearts' desire; **ful-fillen ~**, to fulfill

(someone's) desire; **graunten ~**, grant (someone's) wish; **heren min ~**, hear my wish, hear what I want; **seien ~**, argue for (one's own) wishes; (c) in phrases with inf.: **cacchen a ~**, to take an inclination (to do sth.); **haven (setten) ~**, have an inclination (to do sth.), desire (to do sth.); **losen ~**, lose (one's) desire (to do sth.); (d) **at ~**, at (someone's) pleasure, at (someone's) service; **with (god, gret) ~**, willingly, with good will.

3. (a) An inherent physical urge or drive; **~ of being**, the drive for existence, survival instinct; (b) a desire for food or drink, an appetite; **~ in tonge to**, a craving of the tongue for (certain foods), a taste for; **~ o (of, to)**, appetite for (food, drink); **ben served to here ~ of**, to be served their fill of (meat, fish); **drinken at here ~**, drink their fill of (sth.); (c) sexual desire, sexual appetite, lust.

4. (a) Feeling, emotion, passion; also, a feeling, an emotion; also, power, force; **grevous ~**, sorrow; **irous ~**, wrath; **with ~ fin, with gret ~**, with passion, forcefully; (b) affection, love; (c) pleasure, liking, delight.

5. (a) Courage, heart; also, resolve; **haven ~**, to have resolve, be resolute; **yeven ~**, hearten (sb.), encourage; (b) an intention, a purpose, plan; also, an impulse, a notion; **prechen ~**, to preach (God's) word; **taken ~**, take a notion, form an intent; also, with inf.: take a notion (to do sth.); (c) disposition, nature, character; (d) physical ability or capacity; **haven ~**, to have physical ability; also, with inf.: have the capacity (to do sth.).

Tell (verb)

OED:

I. To mention, narrate, relate, make known, communicate, declare. 13th cent. to present.

II. To mention numerically, to count, reckon. 12th cent. to 20th cent. Now rare.

Tithe

MED: **tīthe** (noun) Also **tide**, **teth(e**, **teithe**, **toithe**, (16th cent.) **teath** & (early) **tigeðe** & **teche**; pl. **tithes**, etc. & **tigthes**, **teuthes**, **tuthes**, **thethis**, **tiȝeþes** & **tyches**.

(a) The tenth part of one's goods, income, etc. given to a church, cleric, etc. as a religious obligation; also, the goods or income so given; **~ daies**, the forty days of Lent; (b) a specific praedial tithe; in combs.: **~ corn (hei, shef, venesoun)**; **~ predial**; **lesse (smal) ~**, a tithe on minor crops and livestock; **more ~**, a tithe on such major crops as wheat; (c) in surnames.

<u>Thrift</u> (noun)

MED: Also **thrifte**, **thrif**, **trift**, **threfte**, **thref**, **thruft**, **ȝrift** & **þryst**.

(a) Material wealth, prosperity; a state of prosperity; *pl.* wealth; also, earnings; **blouen ~ at the col**, to use one's wealth to kindle a fire;—used *fig.,* perhaps with punning reference to (d); **letten ~**, hinder (sb.) from prospering; **putten oute of (sellen) ~**, impoverish (sb.); (b) luck, fortune; success; **god (ivel**, etc.**) ~**, good (bad, etc.) luck;—used esp. in well-wishing or cursing; (c) in oaths or asseverations: **bi ~**, by (one's) luck, prosperity, etc.; **sweren bi ~**, to swear by (one's) good fortune or prosperity (that sth. is so); (d) vigor, energy; the power to grow, vitality; also, the kernel of a plant; (e) value, profitability, utility; also, prudence, good management; also, skill, learning; (f) as surname.

OED:

(a) The fact or condition of thriving or prospering; prosperity, success, good luck; in early use sometimes = fortune (good or bad); luck. *Obsolete*. 14th to 17th cent.
(b) Means of thriving; industry, labour; profitable occupation. Now *dialect*. 16th to 19th cent.
(c) Prosperous growth, physical thriving. 13th to 19th cent.
(d) Savings, earnings, gains, profit; acquired wealth, estate, or substance. *archaic*. 14th to 19th cent.
(e) That which is saved (*of* something); savings. *Obsolete*. 14th to 17th cent.
(f) Economical management, economy; sparing use or careful expenditure of means; frugality, saving; †euphemistically, parsimony, niggardliness (*obsolete*). 16th to 19th cent.

Trust (noun)

1. (a) Firm belief in the reliability, truth, or ability of someone or something; confidence or faith in a person or thing, or in an attribute of a person or thing. Chiefly with *in* (formerly also *of*, *on*, *upon*, *to*, *unto*). 13th cent. to present. **(b)** With possessive adjective: a person in whom or thing in which confidence is placed; an object or source of trust. *Obsolete*. 14th to 20th cent. **(c)** *to take on (*also *upon) trust* (formerly also *to take up in (*also *upon) trust, to receive in trust* and variants): to believe or accept a statement, story, etc., without seeking verification or evidence for it. 16th cent. to present.

2. The quality or condition of being trustworthy; loyalty; reliability; trustworthiness. 14th cent. to present.

3. Confident expectation of something; hope. Also occasionally: an instance of this. Frequently with †*of* or *that*-clause. Now *rare*. 14th to 20th cent.

4. (a) *Law*. The confidence or faith placed in a person or persons into whose possession assets, property, etc., are put, to be held or administered for the benefit of another. Chiefly in *upon trust*. *Obsolete*. 15th to 19th cent. **(b)** A legal arrangement whereby assets, property, etc., are put in the possession of a trustee or trustees to be held or administered for the benefit of another; assets, property, etc., held in this way. Formerly also: a trustee; the role of a trustee. 17th cent. to present.

Ware (noun)

MED:

1. (a) merchandise offered for sale, wares; manufactured goods, commodities; also, *sg.* a commodity [quot. a1500 *Aboue all thing*]; **gret wares**, merchandise sold by large measures; **sotil ware(s**, goods sold in powdered form, finely ground products; also, goods sold by small measures;

(b) *fig.* stock in trade, stuff; also, that which God offers, heaven, salvation; **ape (aped) ~**, false deceits (of the devil), deceptive tricks;

(c) in cpds. and combs.: ~ **cheste**, a box or container for storing goods; ~ **hous**, a room or building set aside for storage of merchandise, possessions, etc.; **chap-manes ~**, a merchant's or peddler's wares; **cours ~**, ordinary or coarse processed or manufactured goods, specif. rough leather goods [quots. 1398 & 1408]; ?crude or rough pewter articles [quot. 1438]; **fel ~**, skins, furs, etc. as merchandise; **groceres ~**, groceries; **haberdasher(es (haberdashrie) ~, mercer (mercerie) ~**, goods offered for sale by a haberdasher (mercer), small goods; **hal-peni ~**, merchandise selling at a halfpenny; **iren ~**, articles, implements, hardware, etc. made of iron; **spices ~**, spicery; **timber ~**, wooden ware.

2.*Coll.* (a) Fabric; woven articles; also, ornamental fur decoration [last quot.]; **untreue ~**, fabric not woven up to standard, irregular cloth, cloth of second or inferior quality;

(b) livestock; also, fish; **plough ~**, animals that draw the plow;

(c) dung used as fertilizer.

3.*Fig.* A penis;—also coll.; also, the female pudenda.

OED:

1. A collective term for: Articles of merchandise or manufacture; the things which a merchant, tradesman, or pedlar, has to sell; goods, commodities. 11th to 19th cent.

2. The privy parts of either sex. *Obsolete*. 16th to 18th cent.

Appendix Two: Biographical Details

Barnardiston, Lady Katherine (d.1633)

Katherine was the daughter of Thomas Banks, a barber-surgeon, in London.[821] Her first marriage was to girdler Batholomew Soame. She was widowed in 1596, and married Thomas Barnardiston three years later. Thomas was knighted in 1603, raising Katherine to gentry status. He died in 1610. Thomas Barnardiston's knighthood elevated Katherine from her natal and marital association with trade and guilds to gentry and aristocratic circles. Around 1612 Katherine was married for the third time, to lawyer William Towse. She retained her name and title from her second marriage. Katherine is not known to have had any children, but her will evidences close ties with her relatives from her natal and marital families: the Bankses, Soames, Barnardistons and Towses. She was an active promoter of Puritanism, and her will includes a lengthy devotional preamble. Barnardiston's third husband survived her by a year. Barnardiston died a very wealthy woman: 'Her bequests included about £7700 in specific gifts of money, together with other unquantified sums, jewellery, plate, furnishings, and a Suffolk manor.'

Blakburn, Margaret (d.1435)

Margaret Blakburn (née Ormeshede) was married to Nicholas Blakburn the elder of York, a wealthy merchant of the Staple and benefactor of All Saints, York. In 1414 she entered the Corpus Christi guild along with her husband. Margaret appears to have lived a long life as she names great-grandchildren among her legatees. Her will was written in 1434, with a codicil added in 1435. Her death is recorded in the Obituary of the Corpus Christi guild for 1433-5.[822]

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[821] Janet Gyford, 'Barnardiston [*née* Banks], Katherine, Lady Barnardiston (d.1633), patron of puritanism', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford University Press, 2008), <http://www.oxforddnb.com.ezproxy.bangor.ac.uk/view/article/68914?docPos=1> [Accessed 8 November 2017]. All biographical information for Barnardiston is from this source.

[822] *The Blakburns in York: Testaments of a Merchant Family in the Later Middle Ages* ed. by Valerie Black et al. (York: The Latin Project, 2006), pp.2-3.

Brews, Dame Elizabeth

Elizabeth Brews was the second wife of Sir Thomas Brews of Topcroft, Norfolk and mother to Margery Brews Paston.[823] Her surviving letters demonstrate her involvement in bringing the marriage negotiations to fruition.

Browne, Elizabeth Paston Poynings (c.1429-1488)

Elizabeth Paston was the daughter of Agnes and William Paston, born c.1429. She was the sister-in-law of Margaret Mautby Paston. Elizabeth was subject to the ambitious marriage brokering of her mother, and surviving letters show that, at the age of twenty, she was beaten as a result of her resistance to the negotiations of a match with the fifty-year old Stephen Scrope, stepson of Sir John Fastolf. The marriage did not take place, however. Elizabeth was married to Robert Poynings (c.1419-1461) in 1458, with whom she had one son, Edward. She was widowed when Robert Poynings lost his life fighting for the Yorkists in February 1461 at the second battle of St Albans.[824] Ten years later she married Sir George Browne, with whom she had a son and a daughter. Once again, she fell victim to the Wars of the Roses when she was widowed for the second time: Browne was executed for rebellion against Richard III on 3 December 1483. The marital life of Elizabeth Paston Poynings demonstrates the impact of the Wars of the Roses on the domestic and financial lives of women. Arguably, her careful endowment of wealth to her daughter illustrates her internalisation of the precarious position of women: she ensures that Mary is provided for and financially stable. Elizabeth Paston Poynings died on 1 February 1488.[825]

[823] Diane Watt, *The Paston Women: Selected Letters,* translated from the Middle English with Introduction, Notes and Interpretive Essay by Diane Watt (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2004), p.7.

[824] Peter Fleming, ‘Poynings [Ponyngs], Michael, first Lord Poynings (c. 1318-1369), soldier’, in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), http://www.oxforddnb.com.ezproxy.bangor.ac.uk/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-22684?result=1&rskey=O5iqqT#odnb-9780198614128-e-22684-headword-5> [Accessed 28 August 2018].

[825] Norman Davis, The Paston Family’, in *Paston Letters and Papers of the Fifteenth Century, part I*, ed. by Norman Davis (Oxford: Published for the Early English Text Society by the Oxford University Press, 2004), Davis, *part I,* pp.lvi-lvii.

Clanbowe, Lady Peryne (1392-1422)

Peryne Clanbowe (née Whitney) married Thomas Clanvowe/Clanbowe in 1392. She was lady-in-waiting to Queen Anne of Bohemia, wife of Richard II. Her husband, Sir Thomas, was part of the household of Richard II. Sir Thomas Clanvowe was probably the son of Sir John Clanvowe, poet, emulator and friend of Chaucer.[826] The Clanvowe family were of Welsh heritage. Sir Thomas Clanvowe was a Member of Parliament, Justice of the Peace and sheriff for Herefordshire in 1397. He went on to serve the government of Henry IV. Sir Thomas died in 1410, twelve years before his wife Peryne. The couple did not have any surviving children.[827]

Clere, Elizabeth (d.1493)

Born Elizabeth Uvedale, she married Robert Clere in 1434 with whom she had four children; one daughter and three sons.[828] Elizabeth was widowed in 1466 and did not remarry, instead managing her estates for the remainder of her life.[829] Elizabeth was a cousin of the Paston family and a close friend of both Agnes and Margaret.[830] Their letters demonstrate the women's involvement in family matters, such as marital negotiations, but also money lending between the friends.

Clifford, Lady Anne (1590-1676)

Anne Clifford was born in Skipton Castle, Yorkshire, on 30 January 1590 to George Clifford, third earl of Cumberland (1558-1605) and his wife, Lady Margaret Russell (1560-1616).[831] Anne was the only surviving child of the couple. Anne was educated by her mother and maternal relatives along with her governess, Anne Taylor, and her tutor, Samuel Daniel. In

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[826] See John Clanvowe, 'The Boke of Cupide, God of Love, or The Cuckoo and the Nightingale', in *Chaucerian Dream Visions and Complaints*, ed. by Dana M. Symons (Kalamazoo, Michigan: Medieval Institute Publications, 2004).
[827] History of Parliament online <http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1386-1421/member/clanvowe-thomas-1410> [Accessed 25 October 2017].
[828] Watt, *The Paston Women,* p.6.
[829] Watt, *The Paston Women,* pp.6-7.
[830] Watt, *The Paston Women,* p.6.
[831] Richard T. Spence, 'Clifford, Anne [known as Lady Anne Clifford], countess of Pembroke, Dorset and Montgomery (1590-1676), noblewoman and diarist', in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), <http://www.oxforddnb.com.ezproxy.bangor.ac.uk/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-5641?rskey=SvxaNe&result=1> [Accessed 3 December 2018]. All biographical information for Clifford is from this source.

1605, Anne's father died, bequeathing his estates to his brother, Francis, leaving Anne a £15,000 portion. Anne's mother initiated a claim to both the titles and estates that she believed her daughter was entitled to. The fight for her rightful inheritance dominated Anne's life. In 1609 she married Richard Sackville, third earl of Dorset (1589-1624) with whom she had five children; three sons who died in infancy, and two daughters, Margaret and Isabella. Dorset took over Anne's lawsuit from 1612 and attempted to maximise his own financial gain and force Anne to yield to James I's offer of £17,000 in return for relinquishing her claim to her uncle and his heirs. She refused. After her mother's death in 1616, Anne continued to fight for her inheritance of both the titles and the land she saw as rightfully hers. Anne was widowed in 1620 and received £20,000 annual landed income in jointure on Dorset's death. She also purchased her daughters' wardships from the crown so that she would be able to manage their upbringings. In April 1629, Margaret was married to John, Lord Tufton, later second earl of Thanet (1609-1664). Isabella was married in 1647 to James Compton, third earl of Northampton (1622-1681). In 1630, Anne herself married for the second time; her new husband was Philip Herbert, earl of Montgomery and fourth earl of Pembroke (1584-1650). This marriage provided Anne with greater power, status and wealth. The couple became estranged in 1634 and lived separately until Herbert's death in 1650. Henry Clifford – who had inherited the Clifford estates from his father, Francis – died without any surviving male issue in 1643 and Anne finally achieved her inheritance, although the hostilities of the Civil War prevented her from taking possession of her estates in the north until 1650. Anne famously commissioned two copies of a triptych depicting herself as rightful heir to the Clifford family lands and titles, one for each of her daughters. She restored, rebuilt, and renovated several her ancestral castles including Appleby, Brough, Pendragon, Brougham and Skipton. She also founded and financed alms-houses in memory of her mother. Commemorating her last parting from her mother, Anne erected the Countess's Pillar, near Brougham, in 1654. Anne built monuments to her mother in Appleby church, to Edmund Spenser in Westminster Abbey, and her cousin Lady Frances Bourchier in Chenies church; building projects and monuments that link her to predecessors such as Margaret Mautby Paston, Elizabeth Hardwick and Maud Parr. As with Elizabeth Talbot, Countess of Shrewsbury ('Bess of Hardwick'), Anne Herbert, Countess of Pembroke, Dorset and Montgomery, identified herself by and has been remembered for posterity by her maiden name: Anne Clifford. Once in possession of her lands, Anne processed from estate to estate in a fashion akin to a monarch. Her diaries and account books give evidence of a financially astute woman aware of her own power and influence which she saw as justified by her birth and ancestral families. Anne's writings show that she understood her

life as one piece of the Clifford and Russell family jigsaws, stretching backwards through the lives of her ancestors and forwards through her daughters and grandchildren; her fight for inheritance was not merely personal but dynastically important. Anne Clifford died in Brougham Castle aged eighty-six on 22 March 1676 and was buried the following month in St Lawrence, Appleby, in the vault she had built.

Figure 4.

Anne Clifford's triptych: 'The Great Picture' attributed to Jan Van Belcamp, 1646. The central panel depicts Anne's parents and elder brothers both of whom died in infancy. Anne's mother gestures towards her womb where the unborn Anne is growing. The left-hand panel shows Anne at the age of fifteen, when her father died, and she was disinherited. The right-hand panel shows Anne aged fifty-six, when she regained her inheritance.

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Daune, Cecily

Little is known about Cecily Daune beyond the fact that she was once the mistress of John Paston (II) in Lincolnshire.[832] John was the eldest son of Margaret Mautby Paston and John Paston (I). Daune's surviving letter to John Paston (II) makes use of a scribe, but the signature is autograph.[833] Her letter is dated November 3, and Davis places it between the years of 1463-8.[834]

Despenser, Isabel le, Countess of Warwick (1400-1439)

Isabel was the posthumous daughter of Thomas le Despenser, Earl of Gloucester. Upon marriage to Richard Beauchamp, first earl of Worcester (1394-1422) she became Countess of Worcester in 1411. After the death of her first husband, she married his cousin, also named Richard Beauchamp, thirteenth earl of Warwick (1382-1439), and became the Countess of Warwick in 1423. Richard, Earl of Warwick was named as one of the executors of Henry V's will in 1422, acted as a member of Henry VI's minority council and was later made his personal governor and tutor.[835] The Countess brought the manors of Hanley (Worcestershire), Tewkesbury (Gloucestershire) and the lordship of Glamorgan and substantial property in the Welsh marches to her marriage to the Earl of Warwick. The Countess died aged thirty-nine in London, twenty-six days after writing her will, and was buried in Tewkesbury Abbey, the Despenser religious centre, according to her wishes.[836] The Countess's first husband, Richard Beauchamp, Earl of Worcester, was also buried in Tewkesbury Abbey where chantries to both families were built in the fifteenth century, implying her eternal identification as both a Despenser and a Beauchamp.[837]

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832 Watt, *The Paston Women,* p.125.
833 Watt, *The Paston Women,* p.125.
834 Norman Davis ed., *Paston Letters and Papers of the Fifteenth Century, part II* (Oxford: published for The Early English Text Society by The Oxford University Press, 2004, p.389.
835 Christine Carpenter, 'Beauchamp, Richard, thirteenth earl of Warwick (1382-1439), magnate', in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography,* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013) <http://www.oxforddnb.com.ezproxy.bangor.ac.uk/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-1838?rskey=ssaodg&result=2> [Accessed 28 August 2018]. All biographical details for the Countess of Warwick is taken from this source unless otherwise stated.
836 The Peerage online <http://www.thepeerage.com/p10744.htm> [Accessed 25 October 2017].
837 Tewkesbury Abbey website <http://www.tewkesburyabbey.org.uk/tewkesbury-abbey-timeline/> [Accessed 28 August 2018].

Harley, Brilliana (bap.1598-d.1643)

Named after the Dutch town of Brill, where her father was lieutenant-governor at the time of her birth, Brilliana was baptised in 1598. [838] She was the second daughter of Edward, Viscount Conway and Viscount Killutagh (d.1631), of Ragley, Warwickshire, and his wife Dorothy (d.1612), who was the daughter of Sir John Tracy of Gloucestershire. Brilliana and her siblings were naturalized by a private act of parliament in 1606. In July 1623, Brilliana became the third wife of Sir Robert Harley (bap.1579-d.1656) of Brampton Bryan, Herefordshire. Brilliana and Robert had seven children: Edward (1624-1700), Robert (1626-1673), Thomas (b.1628), Brilliana (b.1629), Dorothy (b.1630), Margaret (b.1631), and Elizabeth (b.1634). Elizabeth was the only child not to survive into adulthood. During the Civil War (1642-1651), Brilliana defended the family estate of Brampton Bryan whilst her husband and son were away fighting, following the wishes of her husband, despite her own desire to move to a place of safety. The Harleys were Puritan supporters of the Parliamentarian cause, whilst Hereford was a Royalist stronghold. Brilliana's surviving letters to her husband and eldest son demonstrate her piety as well as her astute management of the family affairs. Brilliana successfully resisted the Royalist siege of Brampton Bryan in 1643 which lasted almost seven weeks. She died on 29 October 1643 at Brampton Bryan, shortly after sending her final letter, whilst anticipating further Royalist attack.

Hull, Dame Eleanor (c.1394-1460)

Born in Enmore, Somerset c.1394, the daughter of Sir John Malet, a retainer of John of Gaunt. In c.1410 Eleanor married Sir John Hull, who also served John of Gaunt and his son Henry Bolingbroke, later Henry IV. Eleanor was in the service of Queen Joan, Henry IV's second wife. Eleanor's only son, Edward, died in 1453. Eleanor was a widow by 1421 but did not remarry. She was associated with the powerful and wealthy Benedictine Abbey of St Albans. During her widowhood she lived in a house of Benedictine nuns at Sopwell Priory. Dame Eleanor Hull's *The Seven Psalms* is a translation of a French commentary of the Latin Penitential Psalms. Her translation was possibly influenced by her confessor and legal advisor,

[838] Jacqueline Eales, 'Harley [née Conway], Brilliana, Lady Harley (bap. 1598, d. 1643), parliamentarian gentlewoman', in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), <http://www.oxforddnb.com.ezproxy.bangor.ac.uk/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-12334?rskey=6d6oMU&result=1> [Accessed 31 October 2018]. All biographical information for Harley is from this source.

Roger Huswyff. Huswyff worked as a lawyer for St Albans before becoming a priest. Eleanor Hull died in 1460, at the small Benedictine priory at Cannington, not far from the place of her birth.[839]

Kempe, Margery (c.1373 – after 1438)

Margery Kempe (née Brunham) was the daughter of John Brunham, vintner and five-time-mayor. She married John Kempe, with whom she states she had 'born xiiii childeryn'.[840] This relatively conventional domestic background (and indeed the traumatic experience of childbirth itself) engendered a mystical conversion and what is now considered to be the first autobiography in English: her *Boke* (c.1436-8).[841] Kempe lived in the busy town and port of Bishop's Lynn (now King's Lynn) in Norfolk during the early fifteenth century. She travelled extensively on pilgrimage across Europe and to the Holy Land.

Moulsworth, Martha (1577-1646)

Martha was born on 10 November 1577, daughter of clergyman Robert Dorsett (d.1580) and his wife Martha (d.1580).[842] After she was orphaned, Martha was cared for by her maternal grandmother and step-grandfather, Helena and Ralph Johnson. She wrote her poetic autobiography, *The Memorandum of Martha Moulsworth Widdowe* in 1632 at the age of fifty-five. At the age of twenty, in 1598, she had married a London goldsmith named Nicholas Prynne. She had two children with Prynne, a son named Richard in 1602, and a daughter, with whom she was pregnant when Prynne died in 1603 or 1604, named Martha. Both children predeceased their mother. Her second marriage was to an older widower, Thomas Thorowgood, in 1605. Thorowgood was a London draper. This marriage did not produce any children, but Martha evidently developed a close relationship with her stepchildren, especially Elizabeth Thorowgood, as shown in her will. She was widowed again in 1615 after ten years of marriage.

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[839] Alexandra Barratt, 'Dame Eleanor Hull', in *Women's Writing in Middle English*, ed. by Alexandra Barratt (London and New York: Longman, 1992), pp.219-31 (p.219).
[840] Anthony Goodman, *Margery Kempe and Her World* (London: Pearson Education Limited, 2002) p.49; Margery Kempe, *The Book of Margery Kempe,* ed. by Barry Windeatt (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2004), p.235, ll.3826. All references are to this edition of the text, hereafter cited by line number.
[841] It is 'for the labowr sche had in chyldyng and for sekenesse goyng beforn' that she 'dyspered of hyr lyfe, wenynyg sche mygth not levyn' (179-80).
[842] Roberts C. Evans, 'Moulsworth, Martha (1577-1646), poet', in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008) <http://www.oxforddnb.com.ezproxy.bangor.ac.uk/view/article/47074> [Accessed 30 October 2017]. All biographical information for Moulsworth is from this source.

In 1619, at the age of forty-one, she married sixty-five-year-old Bevill Molesworth, a London goldsmith. She had one son with Molesworth, but he also died in childhood. She was widowed for the final time in February 1641. Moulsworth's poem exemplifies the affection she had for her final husband, and the grief she was still experiencing. All three of Moulsworth's husbands had mercantile links and possibly connected her to the City of London and the guilds. Moulsworth is believed to have had a keen interest in theology, history, reading, and note-taking, and her religious sympathies appear to be Laudian due to her reference to Saints' days in her autobiographical poem. She died in 1646 after a long illness.

Parr, Maud (Matilda) (1492-1531)

Maud Parr was the mother of Henry VIII's sixth and final wife, Katherine (1512-1548). Maud was the daughter of Sir Thomas Green of Greens Norton, Northamptonshire, and his wife Jane Fogge.[843] Maud married Sir Thomas Parr (1478-1517) in 1508.[844] Sir Thomas Parr was a courtier serving Henry VIII, and Maud became lady-in-waiting to the King's first wife, Catherine of Aragon. It is possible that the Parrs named their eldest daughter, Katherine, after this queen. The couple had three surviving children: Katherine, William (1513-1571) and Anne (c.1515-1552). Sir Thomas Parr died on 11 November 1517. Although aged just twenty-five at her husband's death, Maud did not remarry and remained a widow until her death in 1531. She was the chief executor of her husband's will, took charge of the education of her children and arranged the first marriages of Katherine (to Edward Borough) and William (to Anne Bourchier).[845] On her death at the age of thirty-nine on 1 December 1531, Maud was buried in St Anne's, Blackfriars under the monument she had had built for herself and her husband.[846]

[843] Susan E. James, 'Katherine [Kateryn, Catherine] [*née* Katherine Parr] (1512-1548), queen of England and Ireland, sixth consort of Henry VIII', in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), <http://www.oxforddnb.com.ezproxy.bangor.ac.uk/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-4893?rskey=jt0WXq&result=1> [Accessed 6 August 2018]. All biographical information for Maud Parr is taken from this source unless otherwise stated.
[844] Rosemary Horrox, 'Parr family (per. c. 1370-1517), gentry', in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography,* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), http://www.oxforddnb.com.ezproxy.bangor.ac.uk/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-52790#odnb-9780198614128-e-52790-headword-5> [Accessed 6 August 2018].
[845] Susan E. James, *Kateryn Parr: The Making of a Queen* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1991), p.19.
[846] James, *Kateryn Parr*, p.19; p.63.

Paston, Agnes Berry (c.1405-1479)

Agnes Berry was the daughter and heiress of Sir Edmund Berry of Hertfordshire.[847] She married William Paston (I) in 1420.[848] Agnes received the manor of Oxnead from William and inherited the manors of Marlingford, Stanstead, and Orwellbury on her father's death in 1433.[849] William died in 1444 and Agnes held property to the value of £100 a year until her death in August 1479.[850] Agnes's letters show that she remained an active participant in the Paston family business until her death. The surviving family letters depict her as a strong and forceful woman. She is perhaps most famous for the harsh treatment of her daughter Elizabeth during the marriage negotiations with Stephen Scrope, during which time, according to the letters of family friend, Elizabeth Clere, Agnes kept her daughter imprisoned and would routinely beat her in an attempt to force her into submission.[851] Elizabeth Paston resisted, and the marriage did not take place.

Paston, Margaret Mautby (c.1420-1484)

Margaret was the daughter and heiress of John Mautby of Mautby, Norfolk, and his wife Margery. Her maternal grandfather was John Berney of Reedham, and it is through him that she was related to Sir John Fastolf. Sir John Fastolf (1380-1459) was a highly successful soldier, knight, literary patron, and Norfolk landowner.[852] He died childless aged seventy-nine and the Fastolf inheritance debate ran for many years. John Paston (I), Margaret's husband, campaigned to be made Fastolf's heir and overseer of his will to establish a college at Caister Castle. John Paston argued that the dying man had indeed expressed his wishes for John to do so, despite the lack of a written will stating this, and the absence of any witnesses to the statement other than himself.[853] Fastolf's name, but not personality, was used by Shakespeare for the Sir John Falstaff character for the Henry IV history plays. Around 1440 Margaret

[847] N. Davis, *part I*, p.liii.
[848] N. Davis, *part I,* p.liii.
[849] N. Davis, *part I,* p.liii.
[850]Anne Crawford in, *Letters of Medieval Women* ed. by Anne Crawford (Stroud: Sutton Publishing, 2002), p.82.
[851] See Elizabeth Clere's letter to John Paston (I) dated 29 June, not after 1449, in Norman Davis ed., *Paston Letters and Papers of the Fifteenth Century, part II* (Oxford: published for The Early English Text Society by The Oxford University Press, 2004, pp.31-3.
[852] G.L. Harriss, 'Fastolf, Sir John (1380-1459), soldier and landowner', in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004) <http://www.oxforddnb.com.ezproxy.bangor.ac.uk/view/article/9199?docPos=1> [Accessed 15 November 2017]. All biographical information relating to Fastolf is from this source unless otherwise stated.
[853] See Helen Castor, *Blood & Roses: The Paston family and the Wars of the Roses* (London: Faber and Faber, 2004), pp. 115-28.

married John Paston (I), son of Agnes and William Paston. Margaret defended the family manor of Gresham when it was attacked by Lord Moleyns over the dispute of rightful ownership in 1449. She was widowed in 1466. Margaret herself died in 1484 and was buried in Mautby church.[854] Like her mother-in-law Agnes, Margaret was an active and powerful matriarch within the network of the Paston family and their kin. Her letters illustrate her knowledge of law, business, and military defence. She frequently managed the family properties in her husband's absence.

Paston, Margery Brews (d.1495)

Margery was the daughter of Sir Thomas Brews of Topcroft, Norfolk and his second wife, Elizabeth.[855] Margery's Valentine's Day letter to John Paston (III) is famous. Despite not being an heiress, and the financial difficulties that impeded marriage negotiations (evident in the letters of Margery and her mother), Margery married John Paston (III) (son of Margaret Mautby Paston and John Paston (I)) in 1477.[856] John (III) was knighted in 1487.[857] Margery predeceased her husband in 1495 and is buried in the White Friars church, Norwich.[858]

Talbot, Elizabeth Hardwick, Countess of Shrewsbury (1527?-1608)

Elizabeth Talbot is better known as 'Bess of Hardwick'. Born Elizabeth Hardwick, probably in 1527 to John Hardwick (c.1485-1528) and his wife Elizabeth Leake, in Hardwick, Derbyshire, she was one of four daughters and one son.[859] Bess [hereafter, Hardwick] married her first husband Robert Barlow (or Barley) in 1543. Both wife and husband were teenagers at the time of their marriage and it was said that when Barlow died just a year later, on 24 December 1544, the marriage had not been consummated. Hardwick's second marriage was to Sir William Cavendish (1508-1557). Cavendish was twenty years her senior and twice

[854] N. Davis, *part I*, pp.lv-lvi.
[855] N. Davis, *part I,* p.lxi.
[856] N. Davis, *part I,* p.lxi.
[857] Watt, *The Paston Women,* p.7.
[858] N. Davis, *part I,* p.lxi.
[859] Elizabeth Goldring, 'Talbot [née Hardwick], Elizabeth [Bess] [called Bess of Hardwick], countess of Shrewsbury (1527?-1608), noblewoman, in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), <http://www.oxforddnb.com.ezproxy.bangor.ac.uk/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-26925?rskey=Huzgvm&result=2> [Accessed 6 August 2018]. All biographical information for Elizabeth Hardwick is from this source unless otherwise stated.

widowed. He was appointed treasurer of the king's chamber in 1546. The couple married on 20 August 1547; it is possible they met whilst Hardwick served as lady in waiting to Frances Grey, marchioness of Dorset and mother of the ill-fated Lady Jane. During their marriage Hardwick gave birth to eight children (five girls and three boys), of whom six survived to adulthood: Frances (b.1548), Temperence (1549-50), Henry (1550-1616), William (1551-1625), Charles (1553-1617), Elizabeth (1555-1582), Mary (1556-1632) and Lucres (1557-1557). In 1549 Sir William Cavendish purchased the Chatsworth estate and the couple began renovating the property. Unusually, all the Derbyshire lands (including Chatsworth, Ashford, Baslow and Edensor) were held in the joint names of Hardwick and Cavendish to prevent property being seized by the court of wards should Cavendish die before their eldest son, Henry, reached his majority. Cavendish died in 1557. Before Elizabeth I became queen, Hardwick married her third husband, the wealthy Sir William St Loe (c.1520-1565?). The couple did not have any children and lived apart for much of their marriage whilst Hardwick continued to oversee renovations at Chatsworth. St Loe served in the household of Princess Elizabeth and was made captain of the guard when she became queen; Hardwick herself was given the position of gentlewoman of the queen's privy chamber. On St Loe's death, Hardwick, rather than his brother Edward, inherited the majority of his estate. Hardwick's fourth and final marriage was to the rich and powerful George Talbot, Earl of Shrewsbury (c.1522-1590). At the time of the Shrewsbury wedding, four of Hardwick's and Talbot's children were also wed to each other; Gilbert Talbot (later seventh earl of Shrewsbury) married Hardwick's daughter Mary Cavendish; and Henry Cavendish married Grace Talbot. Hardwick and Shrewsbury did not have any children together. During their marriage, Shrewsbury was made keeper of Mary Queen of Scots by Elizabeth I for sixteen years. Hardwick arranged the marriage of her daughter Elizabeth to Charles Stuart (grandson of Henry VIII's sister, Margaret Douglas); their daughter, Arbella, was a potential heir to Elizabeth I's crown. After the death of Charles and Elizabeth Stuart, Hardwick took control of her granddaughter's upbringing. However, their relationship turned sour and her ambitions for a Queen Arbella were not realised.[860] In 1584 the Shrewsburys separated and Hardwick purchased the Hardwick estate from her brother, James, and began renovating the old hall of her birth. On 18 November 1590 George Talbot died and Hardwick became a widow yet again. Shortly afterwards, Hardwick began her most famous building project: new Hardwick Hall. This masterpiece of Elizabethan architecture still

[860] The tragic life of Arbella Stuart is told in her surviving correspondence: Sara Jayne Steen ed., *The Letters of Lady Arbella Stuart* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994).

dominates the Derbyshire countryside today: the bold ES (for Elizabeth Shrewsbury) crowned with the countess's coronet atop each tower declares Hardwick's advancement from her relatively humble beginnings and financially uncertain childhood at old Hardwick Hall, to one of the richest and most powerful people (not just women) in the country. New Hardwick Hall speaks as much of Hardwick's dynastic ambition and desire to leave a lasting monument for her heirs as her last will and testament. Hardwick died on 13 February 1608 and was buried, according to her instructions in All Hallows, Derby (now Derby Cathedral).

Figure 5.

'ES', for Elizabeth Shrewsbury, exults skyward, declaring Hardwick's worldly advancement from Elizabeth Hardwick, daughter of impoverished gentry, to Elizabeth Talbot, Countess of Shrewsbury; one of the richest people in England, and grandmother of a potential successor to Elizabeth I.

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Figure 6.

New Hardwick Hall.

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Thynne, Joan (bap.1558-d.1612)

Born Joan Hayward, she was the daughter of Sir Rowland Hayward (c.1520-1593) sometime mayor of London, and his wife Joan Tillesworth (d.1580). Joan Hayward was baptized on 28 August 1558.[861] Joan married John Thynne (c.1551-1604) in 1576; theirs was an arranged marriage. John was the heir to Sir John Thynne of Longleat. As part of the marriage settlement, Joan's father gave them Caus Castle in Shropshire. Ownership of Caus was contested, however, with the previous owner, Edward Lord Stafford, maintaining possession until the Thynnes took the castle by force in 1591. Joan herself defended Caus for the remainder of her life while her husband lived at Longleat and Westminster. Joan and John's eldest son and heir, Thomas, married the daughter of their political enemy, Lord Audley, Maria Touchet in clandestine circumstances in 1594. Joan and John attempted to get the marriage annulled, unsuccessfully, for many years. The clandestine match between the teenagers denied the elder Thynnes profit

[861] Alison Wall, 'Thynne [née Hayward, Joan, Lady Thynne (bap. 1558, d. 1612), gentlewoman', in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010) <http://www.oxforddnb.com.ezproxy.bangor.ac.uk/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-64886?rskey=MZWkMG&result=2> [Accessed 31 October 2018]. All biographical information for Joan is from this source unless otherwise stated.

from their son's marriage as it was carried out without any financial negotiations, and so Maria joined the Thynne family without a dowry. After John's death in 1604, Joan continued to manage Caus as well as a lead mine in Somerset while Thomas and Maria became the occupants of Longleat. Joan carried out a lawsuit in the chancery courts against Thomas in 1605 for the monetary benefit of her three other children. After Maria's death in childbed in 1611, Joan cared for her infant grandson, named Thomas for his father.[862] Joan made her will three days before her sudden death in 1612, with her two daughters as executors, however she did not leave sufficient funds for her bequests to be fulfilled.

Thynne, Maria (c.1578-1611)

Maria Touchet was born c.1578, the daughter of George, Lord Audley (d.1617), and his first wife, Lucy (d.c.1611). Maria briefly served Elizabeth I, who was her godmother, at court in 1594 before her clandestine marriage to Thomas Thynne (1578-1639) the same year.[863] Following the lengthy lawsuit pursued by Thomas's parents, Joan and John Thynne, the marriage was declared valid in 1601. Maria's mother, Lucy, and sister, Amy, along with extended kin, were present at the marriage which took place in The Bell inn, Beaconsfield, and testified for Maria in support of the legality of the union during the court case.[864] Both Maria's father, Lord Audley, and grandfather, Sir John Marvin, were absent at the time the marriage took place.[865] The lack of financial negotiation prior to the marriage that so angered Thomas's parents as it denied them a dowry income, also left Maria unprotected: should Thomas have died she did not have the protection of jointure to support her during her widowhood.[866] Maria predeceased her husband; she died in childbirth in 1611, however, the baby, also named Thomas, survived. On the death of Sir John Thynne in 1604, Thomas and Maria inherited Longleat. Maria's letters to her husband demonstrate a headstrong yet competent and intelligent woman who proved herself to be a capable mistress and manager of the Longleat estate.

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[862] Alison Wall, 'Thynne [née Touchet], Maria, Lady Thynne (c. 1578-1611), gentlewoman', in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), <http://www.oxforddnb.com.ezproxy.bangor.ac.uk/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-64887?rskey=qZUAR4&result=1> [Accessed 31 October 2018]. Unless otherwise stated, all biographical information for Maria is taken from this source.

[863] Alison Wall, 'For Love, Money, or Politics? A Clandestine Marriage and the Elizabethan Court of Arches, *The Historical Journal,* 38.3 (1995), 511-33 (p.512).

[864] A. Wall, 'For love', p.512; p.529.

[865] A. Wall, 'For love', p.512.

[866] A. Wall, 'For love', p.517.

Touchet, Lucy, Lady Audley (d.c.1611)

Lucy was the daughter and sole heiress of Sir James Marvin (d.1611) and first wife of George Touchet, Lord Audley and later earl of Castlehaven (d.1617).[867] She was the mother of Maria Touchet and was present at her clandestine marriage to Thomas Thynne in 1594, possibly orchestrating the match.[868] Lucy's letters show her to be active in family politics and finances, particularly in arranging marriages for her children and, once they were married, manipulating the extended family wealth and estates for the greatest return for the Audleys. Lucy predeceased her husband c.1611.

[867] A. Wall, 'For Love', p.512.
[868] A. Wall, 'For Love', p.512; p.529.

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