

Ioanna Zoe Tsakiropoulou
Lincoln College

**‘The Piety and Charity of London’s
Female Elite, c. 1580-1630’**

Doctor of Philosophy in History

Short Abstract

Why was an ideal of elite women's virtue promoted in London c. 1580-1630, and why was it based on their reformed piety and charity? To what extent can elite women's piety and charity reveal their religious identity, among an elite characterised as 'puritan' by contemporaries and historians? How did women practise piety and charity in a worldly City, and did they share a civic ethos?

This thesis engages with historiographies of urban history, the history of charity and hospitality, and gender history. It concerns over 400 wives and widows of the 331 aldermen elected 1540-1630, and uses 78 widows' wills. Women's wills are analysed qualitatively save to consider widows' public charitable bequests. From preambles to exceptionally diffuse bequests, wills are an intimate source for studying women's religious identity through their piety and charity. They reveal women's understanding of their gender in a patriarchal society that fostered an attitude of sorority that is particularly evident in women's charity and hospitality.

To study the piety and charity of aldermen's wives extra-testamentary personal evidence complements the wills. Sources written by women themselves include a household book used to reconstruct a woman's charity and hospitality, portraits, devotional works and letters. Sources of praise and abuse authored by men including Stow's *Survey*, funeral sermons, verse libel and verbal abuse are used to reconstruct ideals and antitypes of elite female virtue and hypocrisy, and are read critically in comparison with other sources to furnish evidence of female piety and social conduct. Chapter II-VII focus on the conforming female elite, comparing contemporary discussion of female piety, charity and religious identity to women's lives and practice in the household and the community, and Chapter VIII considers three Catholic women to ask to what extent the civic ethos shared by reformed City women could accommodate even their recusant kinswomen.

Long Abstract

Why was an ideal of elite women's virtue promoted in London c. 1580-1630, and why was it based on their reformed piety and charity? To what extent can elite women's piety and charity reveal their religious identity, among an elite characterised as 'puritan' by contemporaries and historians alike? What was the practice of elite mercantile women's piety and charity in such a worldly City, and did they share a common civic ethos?

The methodology is tailored to the sources on which this thesis rests, and seeks to include all the wives of the aldermen of the City of London, c.1580-1630, more broadly defined as the wives and widows of the 331 aldermen elected between 1540 and 1630. Multiple marriages mean that their number cannot be exactly defined but exceeds 400 women. Every attempt has been made, using existing lists of aldermen and the cross referencing of kin through wills and genealogical data, to identify every woman who should form part of this cohort, and to find their wills, but the changing of women's names under coverture means that the trail can go cold.

Wills were documents made by every widow who had the opportunity to make a testament at the end of her life, and they are reflective of women's lives as wives too. The wills of 78 aldermen's widows who have been identified are important as their abundance allows both qualitative and quantitative analysis, as well as the comparison of women's wills with those of their husbands. A will is often the only extant source written by a mercantile woman.

Widows of citizens of London benefited from the City's legal custom and so had good reason to make a will. Their late husbands, who overwhelmingly chose their wives as executrixes, generally provided for them generously with goods and property that women in turn sought to leave through their wills, which was after all the primary reason for making one — despite historians' preoccupation with the bequest of the soul in the preamble as an

expression of religious identity. Historians' concerns about the use of preambles to wills to study religious identity have centred around two general, and related questions: of composition and authorship of preambles, and of the value of the preamble as a measure of religious identity.

The preamble alone is an unreliable and unsuitable guide to religious identity. A simple comparison of preambles with one another and with evidence from the body of women's wills, and with sources external to the will too, suggests that even pious women did not necessarily take the opportunity to express themselves in the preambles to their wills. Even when they did, the success of historians of the early Reformation who pioneered the categorisation of preambles, particularly in Susan Brigden's work on London before the accession of Elizabeth I, cannot be replicated for the later Reformation when even soteriological nuances become increasingly impossible to discern.

This thesis resists the categorisation of the kinswomen of the governing elite of the City under partisan labels for religious identity, which Ian Archer has complained that historians have been especially overeager to apply to Londoners, because they bear little meaningful relation to women's individual understanding of themselves or others. Rather this thesis reveals women's religious identity through the study of their piety and charity, in a way, following Alec Ryrie, which recognises the tensions which the particular combination of women's personalities, gender, and status in the City entailed. This can be achieved not least through attention to the bequests in the body of women's wills, which Ian Archer and Amy Erickson have described as gendered in their particularly diffuse nature, and which are analysed here qualitatively and quantitatively as appropriate.

Some of the most interesting findings and new insights come from the comparison of the sample of women's wills with other sources. For 78 widows, their wills from their preambles to diffuse bequests are a personal source for studying their religious identity through their piety and charity. To study the lives of aldermen's wives throughout the span of their lives in marriage

as well as widowhood it is necessary to embrace an eclectic range of source material wherever it survives. Sources written by women, from published devotional works to manuscript household accounts, alongside their portraits, are suggestive and are used in this thesis to shed new light on the display of wealth and status, household piety, women's religious writing, translation and publication, and women's management of hospitality and household charity.

Extensive use is made here of sources authored about elite mercantile women, overwhelmingly but not exclusively by men, including works praising them written by men to whom they were kin, friends and patrons, and works satirising them written and spoken by both men and women in the City who were known and unknown to those they mocked. Particularly in Chapter II, these sources are used to examine the ideal of female virtue based on piety and charity which was promoted by the elite, and its popular antitype of the hypocrite in which standard misogyny comingled with suspicions of the wealthy and selfstyled godly. These are sources – from funeral sermons, verse epitaphs, and Stow and Munday's editions of the *Survey of London*, to satirical characterisations, verse libels and verbal slanders — whose primary purpose was plainly not faithfully to represent the piety and charity of their subjects. Yet by analysing the context and circumstances of the production, performance, and publication of these same sources written about women, something meaningful can be gleaned about women's piety and charity, and their religious identity. This thesis suggests that it is in the comparison all different types of sources against one another that the richest understanding of elite mercantile women's piety and charity, and their religious identities can be achieved.

This is a thesis about early modern London and it contributes to our understanding of a metropolitan experience that in many ways was unique to London. Historians' interest in the stability of London from Reformation to Civil War has focused their research on the men who governed the City, in works which featured the wives and widows of the governing elite only incidentally. Historians have focused particularly on the question of the extent of

Puritanism amongst the elite and its effect on civic unity and policy. Yet the work of Julia Merritt, and Kenneth Fincham and Nicholas Tyacke suggests that we might expect to find a spectrum of religious identity in a conforming civic elite in London c.1580-1630. That the aldermen did not oppose the moderate puritans among them who took the lead cannot be taken to suggest that the aldermanic elite were all puritans, or that their wives were. Even as the requirements of conformity became more onerous, the Church could accommodate a wide spectrum of belief. Partisan attitudes and identities within an elite pursuing the peaceful coexistence that would support the flourishing of their families, households, neighbourhoods, businesses and the government of the City were unlikely to be pursued uncompromisingly, and so are better considered, following Alec Ryrie, as tendencies which individuals were constantly working out amid the many tensions of their lived religion.

This thesis poses and pursues fresh research questions that make the piety and charity of *elite* women the priority of study, though the work of Laura Gowing, Lena Orlin, and Eleanor Hubbard in particular has greatly advanced our understanding of the wider female metropolitan experience.

The household has been notably absent from the historiography of early modern London, a neglect that is perhaps historically the product of the assumption or perception that the household was a female domain and an arena particularly suited to women's agency. To continue to overlook the household, though, seems particularly unwarranted in light of the wider historiography of early modern hospitality, particularly the work of Felicity Heal, and the expansive literature on the importance of the household as a religious environment, especially for women. The notable exceptions of Lena Orlin's study of alderman's wife Alice Barnham within her household, as well as beyond it, and Ian Archer's study of the charity of London widows have been instructive.

Attention to elite mercantile women and to the household has also largely been absent from the historiographies of charity and hospitality even in studies of charity of early modern Londoners because historians have focused on the public charity of private individuals. Ian Archer's revision of the techniques of W. K. Jordan's much criticised study, towards understanding society in London and the state of charity between Londoners, and his study of the charity of London widows suggests what qualitative and quantitative analysis of charitable bequests from a sample of elite mercantile women's wills can achieve. This thesis sets that approach alongside extra-testamentary evidence for charity particularly in relation to lifetime giving, and relates analysis of charitable giving and the state of charity in London to household charity, and to the wider private charitable bequests made in wills which is a particular area of neglect for women.

This thesis puts a sample-wide study of women's public charitable giving in the context of the daily exercise of charity in the community and in the household. This is made possible through analysis of letters, and a mercantile woman's household book against evidence from women's wills. Management of the household was concentrated in women's hands, and included payment of charitable contributions to their communities via the officers of parish and ward. Women led household charity, towards servants and towards the community through the workings of hospitality. Scholarship on hospitality has focused on landed gentry and aristocratic households where it achieved its original and fullest expression, but the urban findings of Chapter VI are surprising and its insights suggestive. Reciprocal conviviality and the business of provisioning hospitality and maintaining the household intertwined in urban hospitality, where they were concentrated in women's hands and drew them into their communities (even the tiny intramural parish), and drew women's communities into their households across a broad spectrum of society, both religiously and socially. A hallmark of Susan Brigden's work which has influenced this thesis, particularly in her unparalleled account of the state of charity

and social obligation in London, is the value of understanding personal relationships between people even, and perhaps especially, in the context of the research of a broader study.

The reconstruction of one woman's charity using her household book, together with close readings of women's wills, set alongside their quantitative analysis suggests that women's charity was distinctive because it was informed by a gendered understanding of women's place in the world and the moral obligations of women towards one another. Historians have long recognised the gendered nature of women's wills, noting the preponderance of bequests to women in number, generosity, and form of bequest which Amy Erickson calls 'personalism'. This thesis explores the theme of sororal attitude, in charitable aid in the household and the community to the known and stranger poor, and between kinswomen even across confessional divides.

The historiography on gender and women in early modern England, which in general has not prioritised the study of women in the pious middle of the religious spectrum, has focused on more plebeian London women using their depositions, to study reputation, marriage, property, service, work and credit.

The historiography of gender and elite women in early modern England has also widely focused on gentry and aristocratic women, especially following the work of Barbara Harris, making extensive use of correspondence, literary, household, estate and devotional documents authored by women, legal documents relating to property transfer and dispute including wills, and material culture to understand women's agency and identity in relation to their gender and status as maids, wives and especially as heads of households as widows. These women were kin to aldermen's wives, and sometimes even born to City families, but the sense of women's careers which these studies evoke has not translated to the study of elite mercantile women.

Neither has interest in the elite household as a religious environment of particular importance to female piety and religious identity both within Protestant conformity and

Catholic recusancy been extended to a study of elite mercantile women. Studies of ordinary women have considered religious extremes, and attention to the middling sort has focused on funeral sermons exclusively. The major contributions of the historiography of gender and religion for women in Reformation Europe and especially England that inform this thesis have been: to explore the ways in which gender and religion acted mutually on one another in an individual's understanding of their religious identity in a patriarchal society; to understand how gendered spiritual insights had valence for men and women which often entailed consequences for religious and social behaviour that made elastic, even if they did not necessarily 'temper', accepted patriarchal boundaries of agency; and to urge historians to consider gender alongside status in the study of female piety and religious identity. Gender is a key tool of analysis, for the study of Protestant and Catholic kinswomen's relationships, for understanding ideals of female virtue, and the practice of women's piety and charity, within marriage and widowhood, household and community.

The question of why an ideal of mercantile women's virtue based on piety and charity was promoted in London charity is set out in Chapter II, against the popular gendered antitype of the elite mercantile woman as puritan hypocrite.

Whether we ought to look for puritan women among the elite, and the spectrum of belief are explored in Chapter III through a discussion of preambles to wills, and the question of how we might best seek and understand religious identity in relation to gender and status.

Chapters IV-V explore women's piety in and beyond the household and women's relationship to the community through the critical use of sources in praise of women's piety, manuals written by clerics, works written and printed by women, and wills. Chapter II introduced the tensions of gender, status and piety in the criticism of elite women's consumption and their quest for balance, in relation to apparel, a theme which Chapters IV and

V take up in discussions of the material culture of the household as constitutive of the religious environment, and an exploration of women's attitudes towards elaborate funerals.

Chapters VI and VII consider the gendered nature of female charity. Chapters VI focuses on women's hospitality and their charity within the household, through a reconstruction of hospitality using a mercantile woman's household book, and household charity using women's wills. Chapter VII compares the qualitative and quantitative analysis of women's wills against literature of praise and criticism of the charity of London's elite to explore women's public charity, and why charity remained so central to women's religious and civic identity.

Chapter VIII reconstructs the lives of three Catholic kinswomen of the civic elite in the metropolis, around Clerkenwell and the Spanish Embassy, through sources praising and satirising them. This chapter uncovers the significance of the entangled fortunes of kin, and asks whether the civic ethos shared by reformed City women could accommodate even their recusant Catholic kinswomen.

My conclusion reflects on the most important insights and suggestive findings of this thesis, and the distinctive dimensions which it offers to the historiographies of piety, women and gender, charity and hospitality, and early modern London.

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Any infelicities which regrettably linger in the text are my own, and many more would have endured were it not for the help of my mother who heroically proof read the entire beast, Katie McKeogh who read Chapter VIII, and Leif Dixon who read Chapter III and provided generous guidance and encouragement besides.

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Abbreviations

Note on the text: the place of publication is London, unless otherwise stated.

APC	<i>Acts of Privy Council</i>
BL	The British Library
CCRO	Cheshire County Record Office
CRS	<i>Catholic Record Society</i>
CSPD	<i>Calendar of State Papers Domestic</i>
EHR	<i>English Historical Review</i>
HJ	<i>Historical Journal</i>
HMC Salisbury	<i>A Calendar of the Manuscripts of the Most Honourable Marquis of Salisbury, preserved at Hatfield House, Hertfordshire, eds. M. S. Giuseppi, R. A. Roberts, E. Salisbury, G. Dyfnalt Owen (24 vol., Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts, 1883-1976), vii, xviii, xx.</i>
JBS	<i>Journal of British Studies</i>
JEH	<i>Journal of Ecclesiastical History</i>
LMA	London Metropolitan Archives
NRO	Northamptonshire Record Office
OED	Oxford English Dictionary
ODNB	Oxford Dictionary of National Biography
P&P	<i>Past and Present</i>
PROB 11	Prerogative Court of Canterbury Wills Registers
RH	<i>Recusant History</i>
SCH	<i>Studies in Church History</i>
SP	State Papers
TNA	The National Archives, Kew.
TRHS	<i>Transactions of the Royal Historical Society</i>

Chapter I Introduction

Why was an ideal of elite mercantile women's virtue promoted in London c. 1580-1630, and why was it based on their reformed piety and charity? To what extent can piety and charity reveal women's religious identity, among an elite often characterised as 'puritan' by contemporaries and historians alike? What was the practice of elite mercantile women's piety and charity in such a worldly City, and did women share a common commitment to civic values with each other and with their male kin?

In posing these guiding questions and seeking to answer them this thesis draws on the historiographies of urban and elite women, of the civic elite, of charity and hospitality, of religious identity and religious culture, and of women, gender, and piety in the Reformation. It contributes new dimensions to the historiographies of urban history, hospitality and charity and gender history.

The methodology of this study is tailored to the sources on which it rests. First it will be helpful to define who this thesis is about: it seeks to include all the wives of the aldermen of the City of London, c. 1580-1630, a more complex task of definition than may at first appear for a number of reasons. One basic observation is that the lives of the women who lived and made their wills during this period extend beyond it, so the women who form the focus of the thesis can be more broadly defined as the wives and widows of the 331 aldermen elected between 1540 and 1630.¹ Since some aldermen married as many as five times, and others married an uncertain number of times, the number of their wives cannot be exactly defined but exceeds 400 women.²

¹ A. Beaven, *The Aldermen of the City of London Temp. Henry III – 1912*, 2 vols. (1908); C. Cokayne, *Some account of the lord mayors and sheriffs of the city of London, 1601 to 1625* (1897).

² A. McConnell, 'Billingsley, Sir Henry (d. 1606)', ODNB.

Some aldermen's wives were the daughters of other aldermen, and some women married multiple aldermen; the testator Margaret Nicholson was the widow of three aldermen, Giles Garton, Sir Richard Goddard and William Walthall.³ To avoid overlong nomenclature, women are referred to here by their married aldermanic name, unless otherwise indicated. For some women even this much is not possible, such as for widows of no great age whose aldermanic husbands died and who presumably remarried, yet whom it has proved impossible to locate. Every attempt has been made, using existing lists of aldermen and the cross referencing of kin through wills and genealogical data, to identify every woman who should form part of this sample, and to find their wills.⁴ This problem, so familiar to historians of women in early modern England, does not impede those working on women in early modern Europe, because it was the English coverture of a wife's legal person in marriage that meant she took her husband's name, and which means that the trail can simply go cold.⁵

Wills were documents made by every widow whom I have been able to identify who had the opportunity of making their own testament at the end of their lives, and as a source they are reflective of women's lives as wives too. The wills of 78 aldermen's widows have been identified from the sample of women, and a list of them is appended. The two women who made their wills as wives, did so with the permission of their husbands to whom they left their entire possessions. Wills are especially important for the study of women of elite mercantile status as sources whose abundance allows qualitative and quantitative analysis, as well as comparison of women's wills with those of their husbands. Mercantile women's surviving correspondence is extremely scant in comparison with that of their gentry and aristocratic

³ Though 50% of aldermen's marriages lasted over 20 years, and 6% of aldermen's widows remained single: N. Adamson, 'Urban Families: the social context of the London elite, 1500-1605', Toronto Univ. Ph. D thesis (1983), pp. 186, 188.

⁴ Beaven, *The Aldermen*; C. Cokayne, *Some account of the lord mayors and sheriffs*; R. Lang, 'The greater merchants of London in the early 17th century', Oxford Univ. D. Phil. thesis (1963).

⁵ On coverture see: B. Harris, *English Aristocratic Women, 1450-1550: marriage and family, property and careers* (Oxford, 2002), pp. 18-19; M. Prior, 'Wives and wills, 1558-1700', in J. Chartres and D. Hey (eds.), *English rural society, 1500-1800: essays in honour of Joan Thirsk* (Cambridge, 1990), pp. 201-25; A. Erickson, 'Coverture and Capitalism', *History Workshop Journal*, 59 (2005), p. 4.

counterparts, and their presence in legal depositions does not match that of their humbler neighbours, so a will is often the only extant source written by a mercantile woman, though this thesis exploits some notable exceptions.

Women who were widows of citizens of London had good reason to make a will, because the their late husbands, some of whom were enormously wealthy, generally provided for them generously with goods and property which they in turn sought to leave, at least in part, through their wills.⁶ The custom of the City, cited by most aldermen in their wills, allowed widows one third of their husband's moveable goods (one half if they were childless) for life, and to claim rights of dower to the principal domicile.⁷ Most aldermen provided generously for wives who were trusted partners in life and were overwhelmingly chosen as executrices. Some women found themselves heirs to aldermanic fortunes in the tens of thousands of pounds, but even those with comparatively little to give made careful wills proved in the Prerogative Court of Canterbury.⁸

The subject matter of the body of the will, bequests of goods and property, was after all the primary reason for making one — despite historians' preoccupation with the bequest of the soul in the preamble as an expression of religious identity. This thesis is interested in how we might approach the question of female religious identity, and how wills might best be used as a source towards this aim, and therefore the wills of a few testators who lived c. 1580-1630, but died later, have been included in the sample to explore religious positions which developed later in the period. Historians' concerns about the use of preambles to wills to study religious

⁶ R. Lang, 'Social Origins and Social Aspirations of Jacobean London Merchants', *Economic History Review*, 2nd ser., 27 (1974), pp. 28-47, 'The greater merchants of London'.

⁷ C. Barron and A. Sutton, *Medieval London Widows, 1300-1500* (1994); C. Carlton, *The Court of Orphans* (1974); R. Grassby, *Kinship and Capitalism: marriage, family and business in the English speaking world, 1580-1740* (Cambridge, 2001); B. Hanawalt, 'The Widow's Mite: Provisions for Medieval London Widows', in L. Mirrer (ed.), *Upon my husband's death': Widows in the Literature and Histories of Medieval Europe* (Michigan, 1992), pp. 22-6.

⁸ I. Archer, 'The Charity of London Widows in the later sixteenth century and early seventeenth centuries', in N. Jones and D. Woolf (eds.), *Local Identities in late medieval and early modern England* (Basingstoke, 2007), p. 182, Table 7. Wills proved in the Commissary and Archdeaconry Courts are not included in this thesis.

identity have centred around two general, and related questions: of composition and authorship of the preambles, and of the value of the preamble as a measure of religious identity.⁹

These historiographical debates and my methodological response to them are considered fully in Chapter III. It will be instructive though to establish at this point that this thesis does not rely on preambles to wills as a measure of religious identity — not because there is any suggestion that these literate aldermen's widows did not compose the bequests of their own souls, albeit with the aid of the clerics and scriveners whom they counted as friends, but because the preamble alone is an unreliable and unsuitable guide to religious identity.¹⁰ A simple comparison of preambles with one another and with evidence from the body of women's wills, and with sources external to the will, suggests that even pious women did not necessarily take the opportunity to express themselves in the preambles to their wills, which can be highly misleading when read alone. Even when women did write fulsome preambles, historians of the later Reformation cannot hope to achieve similar success to that of pioneers of the categorisation of wills working on the earlier Reformation, particularly in Susan Brigden's work on London before the accession of Elizabeth I, as later even soteriological nuances become increasingly impossible to discern.¹¹

⁹ A. Dickens, *Lollards and Protestants in the Diocese of York, 1509-1559* (1959), pp. 171-2, 220-1; P. Clark, *English Provincial Society from the Reformation to the Revolution: Religion, Politics and Society in Kent, 1500-1640* (Hassocks, 1977); C. Litzenberger, *The English Reformation and the laity: Gloucestershire, 1540-1580* (Cambridge, 1997), pp. 7, 54-6, 78, 93, 169-71; C. Marsh, 'In the name of God? Will-making and faith in early modern England', in G. Martin and P. Spufford (eds.), *The records of the nation* (Woodbridge, 1990), pp. 215-49; M. Spufford, 'The scribes of villagers' wills in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and their influence', *Local Population Studies*, 7 (1971), pp. 28-43; J. Alsop, 'Religious Preambles in early modern English Wills as Formulae', *JEH*, 40 (1989), pp. 23, 27.

¹⁰ A. Fox, *Oral and literate culture in England, 1500-1700* (Oxford, 2001), p. 18; S. Hull, *Chaste, Silent and Obedient: English books for women, 1475-1640* (San Marino, 1982), p. 18; D. Cressy, *Literacy and the Social Order: reading and writing in Tudor and Stuart England* (1980), pp. 128-9, 141; E. Hubbard, 'Reading, Writing, and Initialing: Female Literacy in Early Modern London', *JBS*, 54 (2015), pp. 553-577. On the spectrum of literacy in the sample, building on Hubbard's work, see Ch. IV, iii.

¹¹ S. Brigden, *London and the Reformation* (Oxford, 1989), p. 382; E. Duffy, *The stripping of the altars: traditional religion in England c.1400-c.1580* (1992), Ch. 15; D. Hickman, 'The religious allegiance of London's ruling elite, 1520-1603', London Univ. Ph. D thesis (1996), pp. 62, 250, 283; N. Tyacke, 'Puritanism, Arminianism, and the counter-revolution', in C. Russell (ed.), *The Origins of the English Civil War* (1973), pp. 119-143; A. Walsham, 'The Reformation of the Generations: Youth, Age and Religious Change in England, c. 1500-1700', *TRHS*, 6th ser., 21 (2011), pp. 93-121.

More importantly perhaps this study rejects the notion that the categorisation of the kinswomen of the governing elite of the City under partisan labels for religious identity (which Ian Archer has complained that historians have been especially overeager to apply to Londoners) necessarily bears any meaningful relation to their individual understanding of themselves or others.¹² Rather each chapter seeks to reveal women's religious identity through the study of their piety and charity, in a way which, following in particular the work of Alec Ryrie, recognises the manifold tensions which the particular combination of women's gender and status in the City entailed alongside their individual characters.¹³ This can be achieved not least through attention to the bequests in the body of women's wills, which Ian Archer and Amy Erickson have described as gendered in their particularly diffuse nature. They are analysed here qualitatively and quantitatively here as appropriate.¹⁴

The sample of wills is the foundation of this study, but some of the most interesting findings and new insights come from the comparison of the sample with other sources. For 78 widows, their wills from their preambles to diffuse bequests, are a personal source for studying their religious identity through their piety and charity. To study the lives of aldermen's wives throughout the span of their lives in marriage as well as widowhood it is necessary to embrace an eclectic range of source material wherever it survives. Sources written by elite mercantile women are not abundant, and indeed the authors of some of those used here were not written by aldermen's wives and widows but by their kinswomen who stood proxy for them. But these sources alongside women's portraits are suggestive, and are used to shed new light on the display

¹² For further discussion see below and Ch. III. I. Archer, 'Religious Identities', in S. Gossett (ed.), *Thomas Middleton in Context* (Cambridge, 2011), p. 139, and 'The City of London and the Theatre', in R. Dutton (ed.), *Handbook of Early Modern Theatre* (Oxford, 2009), pp. 396-412.

¹³ A. Ryrie, *Being Protestant in Reformation Britain* (Oxford, 2013), pp. 6-9; K. Narveson, *Bible Readers and Lay Writers in Early Modern England: gender and self-definition in an emergent writing culture* (Farnham, 2012), Ch. 4, esp. pp. 214-24, 232-5; C. Haigh, *The plain man's pathways to heaven: kinds of Christianity in post-reformation England, 1570-1640* (Oxford, 2007), pp. 140-1; L. Dixon, 'Calvinist Theology and Pastoral Reality in the Reign of King James I: the Perspective of Thomas Wilson', *Seventeenth Century*, 23 (2008), pp. 174-5.

¹⁴ Archer, 'The Charity of London Widows', p. 182; A. Erickson, *Women and Property in early modern England* (1993), pp. 212-21; J. Bennett and C. Whittick, 'Philippa Russell and the Wills of London's Late Medieval Singlewomen', *The London Journal*, 32 (2007), pp. 251-269.

of wealth and status, household piety, women's religious composition, translation and publication, and women's management of hospitality and household charity.

Extensive use is made here of sources about elite mercantile women, overwhelmingly but not exclusively by men, including works praising them written by men to whom they were kin, friends and patrons, and works satirising them written and spoken by both men and women in the City who were known and unknown to those they mocked. Particularly in Chapter II but also throughout the thesis, these sources are used to examine the ideal of female virtue based on piety and charity which was promoted by the elite, and its popular antitype of the hypocrite in which standard misogyny comingled with suspicions of the wealthy and self-styled godly. These are sources – from funeral sermons, verse epitaphs, and Stow and Munday's editions of the *Survey of London*, to satirical characterisations, verse libels and verbal slanders — whose primary purpose was plainly not faithfully to represent the piety and charity of their subjects. Yet by analysing the context and circumstances of the production, performance, and publication of these same sources written about women, something meaningful can be gleaned about women's piety and charity, and their religious identity. To read these sources critically, the terms of praise and of abuse of the culture that produced them must be taken seriously, since they relate to external perceptions of group and individual identity, and self-perception too.¹⁵ This thesis demonstrates, through its overall structure and that of each chapter, that it is in the comparison all different types of sources against one another that the richest understanding of elite mercantile women's piety and charity, and their religious identities can be achieved.

This thesis aims to refine, advance and offer new dimensions particularly to three broad historiographical areas: urban history, the history of hospitality and charity, and gender history.

¹⁵ P. Lake and I. Stephens, *Scandal and religious identity in early Stuart England: a Northamptonshire maid's tragedy* (Martlesham, 2015), p. 7; P. Lake, *The Boxmaker's Revenge: 'orthodoxy', 'heterodoxy' and the politics of the parish in early Stuart London* (Manchester, 2001); A. Hughes, *Gangraena and the Struggle for the English Revolution* (Oxford, 2004), p. 11; E. Carlson, 'English funeral sermons as sources: the example of female piety in pre-1640 sermons', *Albion*, 32 (2000), pp. 567-97.

This is a thesis about women, but in many ways it is also a thesis about early modern London and as such it contributes to our understanding of the social and religious culture of the City and its suburbs. It is to be admitted that though its findings and insights are suggestive for urban history more broadly, it engages in little comparison of London to other cities in England or on the Continent. Comparators seem to suggest the importance of recognising that this thesis explores a metropolitan experience that in many ways was not unique to London.

Work on early modern London has largely been focused on the condition of the City, and interest in the stability of London through the turbulent sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries has meant that historians' focus has been trained especially on the men who governed it, in works which featured the wives and widows of the governing elite only incidentally.¹⁶ Historians have been interested particularly in the relationship between the religious identity of the governing elite and the governance of the City which was the cradle of both. This interest has focused particularly on the question of Puritanism, how we might identify its presence within the elite, and what effect this may have had on the unity and policy of civic government.¹⁷

The mercantile elite has been seen as distinct in relation to its religious identity, thanks to the prominence of puritan aldermen, such as those who became Feoffees for Improvements.¹⁸ The civic elite was widely characterised as 'puritan' by contemporaries from Archbishops to playwrights. In the context of this period, the homogeneity projected by an elite

¹⁶ V. Pearl, *London and the outbreak of the Puritan revolution: city government and national politics, 1625-43* (1961); F. Foster, 'Merchants and bureaucrats in Elizabethan London', *Guildhall Miscellany*, 4 (1972), pp. 149-60, and *The Politics of Stability: A Portrait of the Rulers in Elizabethan London* (1977); I. Archer, *The Pursuit of Stability: social relations in Elizabethan London* (Cambridge, 1991); S. Rappaport, *Worlds within worlds: structures of life in sixteenth-century London* (Cambridge, 1989).

¹⁷ Hickman, 'The religious allegiance of London's ruling elite', 'From Catholic to Protestant: the changing meaning of testamentary religious provisions in Elizabethan London', in N. Tyacke (ed.) *England's Long Reformation, 1500-1800* (1998), pp. 161-40, 'Religious Belief and Pious Practice among London's Elizabethan Elite', *HJ*, 42 (1999), pp. 941-60; D. Williams, 'Puritanism in the City Government, 1610-1640', *Guildhall Miscellany*, 1 (1958), pp. 2-14.

¹⁸ Pearl, *London and the outbreak of the Puritan revolution*; Williams, 'Puritanism in the City Government', pp. 2-14.

which relied on solidarity for good governance has been misunderstood, and the puritanism of the civic elite overstated.¹⁹

Yet to reject ‘puritan’, seeing it as a term of abuse hurled at clergy from perhaps the 1560s, indiscriminately from the late-1580s after the publication of the Marprelate tracts, and especially at rich merchants’ wives as a form of the stock ‘covetous, seditious, and randy’ puritan hypocrite on the London stage and in City presses, is to lose a sense of aldermen’s wives in the public sphere. Therefore this thesis, through its overall structure and that of each chapter, approaches a definition of what was named ‘puritan’ culturally, by studying the social and cultural practices of the godly. It follows Patrick Collinson’s suggestion that since puritan was ‘in the eye of the beholder’, ‘not a thing definable in itself but only one half of a stressful relationship’ and an index of a ‘dynamic and mutual antagonism’, the best place to start considering puritanism is often with the person hurling the abuse.²⁰

Historians who have relied on the preambles to aldermen’s wills to identify puritanism admit overlarge margins of error. Preambles to wills, which were at best a declaration of faith, should not be treated by historians as an index of an elusive religious identity. This problem of identification extends across the wider spectrum of religious identity we might expect to find

¹⁹ Archer, ‘Religious Identities’, pp. 135-42; Hickman, ‘Religious Belief and Pious Practice’, pp. 941-60.

²⁰ A. Walsham, ‘A Glose of Godlines’: Philip Stubbes, Elizabethan Grub Street and the invention of Puritanism’, in S. Wabuda and C. Litzenburger (eds.), *Belief and practice in Reformation England: a tribute to Patrick Collinson from his students* (Aldershot, 1998), pp. 198-203; P. Collinson, *The Birthpangs of Protestant England: religious and cultural change in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries* (Basingstoke, 1988), p. 143, *The Puritan Character: polemics and polarities in early seventeenth-century English Culture* (Pasadena, 1989), p. 122, ‘Antipuritanism’ in J. Coffey and P. Lim (eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to Puritanism* (Cambridge, 2008), pp. 19-33, *Richard Bancroft and Elizabethan anti-Puritanism* (Cambridge, 2013), pp. 1-3, 50, ‘Ecclesiastical vitriol: religious satire in the 1590s and the invention of Puritanism’, in J. Guy (ed.), *The Reign of Elizabeth I* (Cambridge, 1995), pp. 150-70, ‘The theatre constructs puritanism’ in D. Smith, R. Strier, and D. Bevington (eds.), *The Theatrical City: culture, theatre and politics in London, 1576-1649* (Cambridge, 1995), pp. 157-169, ‘Elizabethan and Jacobean Puritanism as Forms of Popular Religious Culture’, in C. Durston and J. Eales (eds.), *The Culture of English Puritanism, 1560-1700* (1996), pp. 32-57; P. Lake, ‘Defining Puritanism-Again?’, in F. Bremer (ed.), *Puritanism: Transatlantic Perspectives on a seventeenth-century Anglo-American faith* (Boston, 1993), p. 29, *Moderate Puritans and the Elizabethan Church* (Cambridge, 1982), ‘Puritan Identities’, *JEH*, 35 (1984), pp. 112-123, ‘William Bradshaw, Antichrist, and the Community of the Godly’, *JEH*, 36 (1985), pp. 570-89, ‘Feminine Piety and Personal Potency: the “emancipation” of Mrs Jane Ratcliffe’, *The Seventeenth Century*, 2 (1987), pp. 143-165, *Boxmaker’s Revenge*, ‘Order, orthodoxy and resistance: the ambiguous legacy of English puritanism or just how moderate was Stephen Denison?’, in M. Braddick and J. Walter (eds.), *Negotiating power in early modern society: order, hierarchy and subordination in Britain and Ireland* (Cambridge, 2001), pp. 206-26; P. Lake and M. Questier, ‘Puritans, Papists and the Public Sphere’, *Journal of Modern History*, 72 (2000), pp. 587-627.

within a conforming civic elite in London, especially moving through the period c. 1580-1630, as the work of Julia Merritt, and Kenneth Fincham and Nicholas Tyacke suggests in particular.²¹

Episcopal and archiepiscopal attempts to marginalize partially nonconformist clergy achieved mixed success in London; many who looked for compromise to remain within the Church which alone could license their preaching, and who initially refused to subscribe to articles that were ever more aggressively put to them and offensive to their conscience, eventually reluctantly subscribed.²² Only a minority of the godly within the civic elite supported the radical clergy in the Vestiarian controversy of 1563-7, deplored as precisians for objecting to the legal requirement to use adiaphora; in the Admonition controversy of 1572 which threatened a revolution in church government; through the interrogation of clergy who refused to admit that the Book of Common Prayer contained nothing contrary to the word of God, and were forced before High Commission to incriminate themselves in a hated civil law procedure under the oath of *ex officio mero* in 1583-4; through the 'nasty' 1590s when the classis movement was suppressed, legislation against separatists tightened, and the godly community of saints turned inward towards its own homes. The community of the godly among the elite, marked out by their thirst for the word preached, sheltered the unbeneficed curates, and especially lecturers and preachers, during the devastating promulgation of Laud's 'Directions for the Church' of 1629 which appeared as the Royal Injunctions and into the 1630s and

²¹ K. Fincham and N. Tyacke, *Altars Restored: The Changing Face of English Religious Worship, 1547-c. 1700* (Oxford, 2007), pp. 3, 55-6, 101-3, 110-1; P. Lake, 'The Anglican Moment? Richard Hooker and the Ideological Watershed of the 1590s', in S. Platten (ed.), *Anglicanism and the Western Tradition: continuity, change and the search for Communion* (Norwich, 2003), pp. 90-121; J. Merritt, *The social world of early modern Westminster: abbey, court and community, 1525-1640* (Manchester, 2005); P. White, 'The Rise of Arminianism Reconsidered', *P&P*, 101 (1983), pp. 52-3; T. Webster, *Godly Clergy in early Stuart England: the Caroline Puritan Movement c. 1620-1643* (Cambridge, 1997), pp. 15-35; A. Walsham, *Church Papists: Catholicism, Conformity and Confessional Polemic in early modern England* (1993), p. 97; N. Tyacke, *Anti-Calvinists: the Rise of English Arminianism, c. 1590-1640* (Oxford, 1987), p. 7.

²² H. Owen, 'The London Parish Clergy in the Reign of Elizabeth I', London Univ. Ph. D thesis (1957), pp. 372, 275, 278-9, 393; P. Collinson, *Archbishop Grindal, 1519-1583: the struggle for a reformed Church* (1979), *Bancroft*, pp. 14-15, 217; P. Seaver, *The Puritan Lectureships: the politics of religious dissent, 1560-1662* (Stanford CA, 1970), pp. 123-62, 203-54.

beyond, through charitable support of their positions which forwarded the propagation of the Gospel, and through hospitality within their own households.²³

In an ageing Erastian Reformation, the Protestant governing orders in the City conformed to the letter of the law. United by anti-popery, they prized practical godliness over matters of church government and promoted the provision of capable preaching as essential to the maintenance of order in the City. That the aldermen did not oppose the moderate puritans among them who took the lead cannot be taken to suggest that the aldermanic elite were all puritans, and nor that their wives were.²⁴ What was legally required of the civic elite, and their wives who occupied a semi-official position within the religious life of the City, was conformity.

Even as the requirements of conformity became more onerous, the Church could accommodate a wide spectrum of belief. It was suspected that amongst the elite, who ‘still customably went to Church with the worldings’ who were their neighbours, there were antinomians, anti-legalistic Protestants who believed that Christians were free from the curse and condemnation, if not the command, of Mosaic law, for God regarded their sins in the light of Christ’s satisfaction and his free grace, and Familists, members of a sect founded by Hendrik Niclaes and opposed to solifidianism, called ‘The Family of Love’.²⁵ Catholics might, as ‘church

²³ P. Collinson, *The Elizabethan Puritan Movement* (1982), ‘Ecclesiastical vitriol’, pp. 150-2, ‘Hooker and the Elizabethan Establishment’, in A. McGrade (ed.), *Richard Hooker and the construction of Christian community* (Tempe, AZ, 1997), pp. 14-81; I. Calder, ‘The St. Antholin’s Lecture’, *Church Quarterly Review*, 140 (1959), pp. 49-70; D. Williams, ‘London Puritanism: the Parish of St Stephen Coleman Street’, *Church Quarterly Review*, 160 (1959), pp. 464-82, ‘London Puritanism: the Parish of St Botolph’s Without Aldgate’, *Guildhall Miscellany*, 2 (1960), pp. 24-38; Lake, ‘Defining Puritanism-Again?’, pp. 3-29. On the relationship of lecturers to the parish see: P. Seaver, *The Puritan Lectureships: the politics of religious dissent, 1560-1662* (Stanford CA, 1970); P. Collinson, *Godly People: essays on English protestantism and puritanism* (1983); J. Merritt, ‘The pastoral tightrope: a puritan pedagogue in Jacobean London’, in T. Cogswell, R. Cust and P. Lake (eds.), *Politics, Religion and Popularity in Early Stuart Britain: essays in honour of Conrad Russell* (Cambridge, 2002), pp. 146-61.

²⁴ Walsham, ‘The Reformation of the Generations’, pp. 93-121; Archer, *Pursuit*, pp. 39-40, 45, 467. Female testators recognised that their provisions to ensure the gospel was preached might prove controversial: Archer, ‘The Charity of London Widows’, pp. 197-9.

²⁵ Brigden, *London and the Reformation*, p. 636. On antinomianism see: D. Como, *Blown by the Spirit: Puritanism and the emergence of an antinomian underground in pre-Civil-War London* (Stanford CA, 2004); R. Pederson, *Unity in diversity: English Puritans and the Puritan Reformation, 1603-1689* (Leiden, 2014), esp. Ch. 5; P. Lake and D. Como, ‘“Orthodoxy” and Its Discontents: Dispute Settlement and the Production of “Consensus” in the London (Puritan) “Underground”’, *JBS*, 39 (2000), pp. 34-70; C. Marsh, *The Family of Love in English Society, 1550-1630* (Cambridge, 1994).

papists', conform to the legal requirement for attendance at Church of England services rather than choose as recusants to reject its claims. Recusancy might be a permanent or temporary refuge from persecution, and a way of reconciling a Catholic's allegiances to the Church of Rome and to their sovereign.²⁶

Even in the face of official expressions of universalism in the late 1580s and early 1590s, and late 1620s and early 1630s, there was space within the Church of England to accommodate all those who subscribed to the soteriology formulated by Calvin and elaborated by his contemporaries — that Christ's atonement was limited to the remnant of saints, who by divine decree were elect to salvation and justified by grace through faith alone, and not sufficient for the reprobate who were predestined to damnation. The godly amongst these Calvinist predestinarians — who asserted that assurance of salvation might be sought and the saints recognised in this life, that Scripture was the rule of faith, and the law a moral guide for the godly life of believers whose free will was bound by sin — also found a way to live within the Church.²⁷

So too did anti-Calvinists, who rejected the doctrine of double predestination and limited atonement, believed that Christ's atonement was universal, and elevated the role of grace conferred by the sacraments.²⁸ Partisan attitudes and identities within an elite pursuing the peaceful coexistence that would support the flourishing of their families, households, neighbourhoods, businesses and the government of the City were unlikely to be pursued

²⁶ Walsham, *Church Papists*, and *Catholic Reformation in Protestant Britain* (Farnham, 2014), p. 10.

²⁷ On the range of the practical outcomes of predestinarian soteriology see L. Dixon, *Practical Predestinarians in England, c. 1590-1640* (Farnham, 2014); Ryrle, *Being Protestant*. On the definition of puritan Calvinism in contradistinction to anti-Puritan anti-Calvinist doctrine and piety see: Collinson, *Elizabethan Puritan Movement*; P. Lake, "The Anglican Moment?", pp. 90-121.

²⁸ Tyacke, *Anti-Calvinists*, pp. 197-221.

uncompromisingly, and so are perhaps better considered, following Alec Ryrie, as tendencies which individuals were constantly working out amid the many tensions of their lived religion.²⁹

Despite their efforts to understand the aldermen, historians have not made a full length study of the mercantile female elite who were the kinswomen of the governors of the City, even to answer research questions posed from the perspective of a study about their husbands. This study engages with those historiographical interests where their findings and insights are suggestive, but poses and pursues fresh research questions pertinent to a thesis that makes the piety and charity of these women the priority of study. Women in early modern London more widely have interested historians, and the work of Laura Gowing, Lena Orlin, and Eleanor Hubbard in particular has greatly advanced our understanding of the female metropolitan experience with which the findings here may be compared.³⁰

However, the household has also been notably absent from the historiography of early modern London, despite interest in the architectural spaces in which the elite lived, and the built, material and social environment of the neighbourhoods in which they resided.³¹ This is perhaps the product of the assumption or perception (not with undue cause, as I will show) that the household was a female domain and an arena particularly suited to women's agency. To continue to overlook the household though seems unwarranted in light of the wider historiography of early modern hospitality, particularly the work of Felicity Heal, and the

²⁹ Ryrie, *Being Protestant*, p. 8; A. Walsham, 'The Parochial Roots of Laudianism Revisited: Catholics, Anti-Calvinists and 'Parish Anglicans' in Early Stuart England', *JEH*, 49 (1998), p. 637; Narveson, *Bible Readers*, pp. 4, 214–24, 232–5; J. Spohnholz, *The Tactics of Toleration: A Refugee Community in the Age of Religious Wars* (Newark, 2011), pp. 14, 226; Archer, *Pursuit*, pp. 45, 49, 76; L. Abray, *The People's Reformation: magistrates, clergy and commons in Strasbourg, 1500-1598* (Oxford, 1985), p. 178; L. Orlin, *Locating Privacy in Tudor London* (Oxford, 2007), pp. 59-62; McClendon, *The quiet Reformation*, pp. 28, 156, and see Chapter III, n. 27.

³⁰ Gowing, *Domestic Dangers*, 'Women, Status and the Popular Culture of Dishonour', *TRHS*, 6th ser., 6 (1996), pp. 225-234, 'The freedom of the streets': women and social space, 1560-1640', in P. Griffiths and M. Jenner (eds.), *Londinopolis: essays in the cultural and social history of early modern London* (Manchester, 2000), pp. 130-53; Orlin, *Locating Privacy*; E. Hubbard, *City women: money, sex, and the social order in early modern London* (Oxford, 2012).

³¹ J. Schofield, *Medieval London Houses, 1200-1600* (1994); J. Colson, 'Local Communities in Fifteenth-Century London: Craft, Parish and Neighbourhood', London Univ., Royal Holloway Ph. D thesis (2011); T. Hamling, *Decorating the Godly Household: Religious Art in post Reformation Britain* (2010); F. W. Fairholt, 'On an inventory of the household goods of Sir Thomas Ramsey, Lord Mayor of London, 1577', *Archaeologia*, 40 (1846), pp. 311-342; T. Cooper, *Citizen Portrait: Portrait Painting and the Urban Elite of Tudor and Jacobean England and Wales* (2012); R. Tittler, *The Face of the City: civic portraiture and civic identity in early modern England* (Manchester, 2007).

expansive literature on the importance of the household as a religious environment, especially for women, which is discussed below.³² There are notable and suggestive exceptions to the neglect of the female civic elite and the household in London, including Ian Archer's study of the charity of London widows, which is considered below. Lena Orlin's brilliant elucidation of the life of the alderman's wife, Alice Barnham, in her household and in the wider culture of the City is instructive, particularly in her portrait of how the gendered position of aldermen's wives in patriarchal London gave Alice room to follow her conscience, and thereby to have a profound influence on the faith of her children.³³

Attention to elite mercantile women and to the household has also largely been absent from the historiographies of charity and hospitality, even in studies of the charity of early modern Londoners which since the Reformation seemed ever increasingly famed by Protestant authors but derided too by both Catholic and Protestant writers. This absence is at least in part because the focus of the historiography of charity has overwhelmingly been on public charity by private individuals.³⁴ Londoners' public charity was first analysed on a grand scale by W. K. Jordan but his work featured only what are essentially the celebrity cases of women who made

³² F. Heal, 'The Idea of Hospitality in Early Modern England', *Pe&P*, 102 (1984), pp. 66-93; *Hospitality in early modern England* (Oxford, 1990); A. Walsham, 'Holy Families: the Spiritualisation of the Early Modern Household Revisited', in Doran, Methuen and Walsham (eds.), *Religion and the Household*, pp. 122-160; Ryrie, *Being Protestant*; L. Roper, *The Holy Household: women and morals in Reformation Augsburg* (Oxford, 1991); M. Rowlands, 'Recusant women, 1560-1640', in M. Prior (ed.), *Women in English Society, 1500-1800* (1985); 'Harbourers and housekeepers: Catholic Women in England, 1570-1720', in B. Kaplan, H. van Nierop and J. Pollman (eds.), *Catholic Communities in Protestant States: Britain and the Netherlands, c. 1570-1720* (Manchester, 2009), pp. 200-215; *The Private Life of an Elizabethan Lady: the diary of Lady Margaret Hoby, 1599-1605*, ed. J. Moody (Stroud, 1998); Hamling, *Decorating the Godly Household*, 'Guides to Godliness: From Print to Plaster', in M. Hunter (ed.), *Printed images in early modern Britain: essays in interpretation* (Farnham, 2010), pp. 65-85, 'Living with the Bible in Post-Reformation England: the Materiality of Text, Image and Object in Domestic Life', in J. Doran, C. Methuen and A. Walsham (eds.), *Religion and the Household*, SCH, 50 (Woodbridge, 2014), pp. 210-39; E. Longfellow, 'The Isham family and their clergy', in H. Adlington, T. Lockwood and G. Wright (eds.), *Chaplains in early modern England: Patronage, Literature and Religion* (Manchester, 2013), pp. 159-76; C. Peters, 'Religion, Household-State Authority, and the Defence of "Collapsed Ladies" in Early Jacobean England', *Sixteenth Century Journal*, 45 (2014), pp. 631-658; M. Todd, 'Humanists, puritans and the spiritualized household', *Church History*, 49 (1980), pp. 18-34; L. Underwood, 'Catechesis, Socialization and Play in a Catholic Household, c. 1660: the "Children's Exercises" from the Blundell Papers', in Doran, Methuen and Walsham (eds.), *Religion and the Household*, pp. 269-281; P. Collinson, 'The English Conventicle', in W. Sheils and D. Wood (eds.), *Voluntary Religion*, SCH, 23 (Oxford, 1986), pp. 223-59.

³³ Orlin, *Locating Privacy*, esp. pp. 59-62.

³⁴ J. A. F., Thomson, 'Clergy and Laity in London, 1376-1531', Oxford Univ. D. Phil thesis (1960); Archer, *Pursuit*; C. Schen, *Charity and Lay Piety in Reformation London, 1500-1620* (Woodbridge, 2002); M. McIntosh, 'Charity and Coercion in Elizabethan England', *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 35 (2005), pp. 457-9.

particularly notable gifts and bequests.³⁵ Ian Archer refined the techniques of Jordan's much criticised study and greatly advanced work on the charity of the civic elite, particularly towards understanding society in London and the state of charity between Londoners.³⁶ Ian Archer's study of the charity of London widows is an important exception to the absence of women in the literature on public charitable giving in London, and is extremely suggestive as to what the qualitative and quantitative analysis of charitable bequests from a larger sample of elite mercantile women's wills can achieve. This thesis uses the qualitative and quantitative analysis of women's wills, set alongside extra-testamentary evidence for charity particularly in relation to lifetime giving, to further our understanding of the public charity of the kinswomen of the aldermen of London both as wives and as widows.³⁷ Historiographical studies of charitable giving have not adequately related the state of social relations to household charity or to the wider private charitable bequests made in women's wills, beyond the work of Ian Archer and Lena Orlin.³⁸

The richness of Susan Brigden's sensitive evocation of the state of charity between Londoners in the Reformation sets a challenging example for scholarship on charity and has been inspirational.³⁹ Could elite City women live in charity with their spouse, family and peers amongst the elite? Could they live in charity also with the communities beyond their households — through acts of commensality and conviviality in the parishes in which they lived and worshipped, both in London and in the parishes of their county residences too? Were they in

³⁵ W. K. Jordan, *Philanthropy in England 1480-1660: a study of the changing pattern of English social aspirations* (London, 1959), *The Charities of London 1480-1660: the aspirations and the achievements of the urban society* (1960).

³⁶ Archer, *Pursuit*, 'The Charity of Early Modern Londoners', *TRHS*, 6th ser., 12 (2002), pp. 223-44, 'The Charity of London Widows', pp. 178-206.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ I. Archer, 'Social networks in Restoration London: the evidence of Samuel Pepys's diary', in A. Shepard and P. Withington (eds.), *Communities in early modern England: Networks, place, rhetoric* (Manchester, 2000), pp. 76-94; 'The Charity of London Widows'; Orlin, *Locating Privacy*; M. McIntosh, 'Servants and the Household Unit in an Elizabethan English Community', *Journal of Family History*, 9 (1984), pp. 3-23; J. Bennett, 'Conviviality and Charity in Medieval and Early Modern England', *P&P*, 134 (1992), pp. 19-41; S. Hindle, 'Dearth, Fasting and Alms: The Campaign for General Hospitality in Late Elizabethan England', *P&P*, 172 (2001), pp. 44-86.

³⁹ Brigden, *London and the Reformation*.

charity with communities with which they dined, and to which they left charitable gifts, funeral dinners and entrusted their charitable foundations?⁴⁰ And how might self-consciously godly women cope with the existence of erroneous conscience among their own kin?⁴¹

A sample-wide study of women's public charitable giving is considered here in the context of its relation to the daily exercise of charity in the community and in the household throughout women's lives as well as in their wills. This is made possible through analysis of correspondence, and of a mercantile woman's household book — a remarkable survival — against evidence from women's wills. Management of the household was concentrated in women's hands and included the regular payment of charitable contributions to their communities via the officers of parish and ward. Women led household charity too, towards servants and towards the community through the workings of hospitality.⁴² The use of the household book offers a particularly distinctive contribution to the historiography of hospitality, which it advances and refines in relation to the urban, metropolitan context. Scholarship on hospitality has focused on landed gentry and aristocratic households where it achieved its original and fullest expression. As Felicity Heal has lamented in her study of urban hospitality, this preference is not without good reason, since urban source material survives in far less abundance and without it 'of individual householders, little can be said.'⁴³ Reciprocal conviviality and the business of provisioning hospitality and maintaining the household

⁴⁰ On county residence: R. Lang, 'Social Origins and Social Aspirations of Jacobean London Merchants', *Economic History Review*, 2nd ser., 27 (1974), pp. 40-5. On women's relationship to livery companies: Archer, 'Charity of London Widows', p. 188; L. Branch, 'Faith and Fraternity: The London Livery Companies and the Reformation c.1510-c.1600', Univ. of Warwick Ph. D thesis (2011). On the parish: Collinson, *Birthpangs*, p. 32, 'The Cohabitation of the Faithful with the Unfaithful', in O. Grell and B. Scribner (eds.), *Tolerance and Intolerance in the European Reformations* (Cambridge, 1996), pp. 51-76.; A. Walsham, *Charitable Hatred: tolerance and intolerance in England, 1500-1700* (Manchester, 2006), pp. 207, 228, 277-89, and 'In Sickness and In Health: Medicine and Interconfessional Relations in Post-Reformation England', in C. Scott Dixon, D. Freist and M. Greengrass (eds.), *Living with religious diversity in early modern Europe* (Farnham, 2009), pp. 161-2.

⁴¹ A. Walsham, 'Ordeals of conscience: casuistry, conformity and confessional identity in Post-Reformation England', in H. Braun and E. Vallance (eds.), *Contexts of conscience in early modern Europe, 1500-1700* (Basingstoke, 2004), pp. 32-48.

⁴² Gowing, 'The freedom of the streets', pp. 130-53; A. Shepard, *Accounting for Oneself: Worth, Status, and the Social Order in Early Modern England* (Oxford, 2015), pp. 201, 308-9.

⁴³ Heal, *Hospitality*, p. 306, Ch. 8.

intertwined in urban hospitality. The responsibilities of hospitality were concentrated in women's hands and drew them into their communities (none more so than even the tiny intramural parish), and drew women's communities into their households across a broad spectrum of society, both religiously and socially.

The inspiration of Susan Brigden's method has been a guiding influence on the approach of this thesis, and the reconstruction of one woman's charity using her household book, together with close readings of women's wills, set alongside their quantitative analysis suggests that women's charity is distinctive because it was informed by a gendered understanding of women's place in the world and the moral obligations of women towards one another.⁴⁴ Historians have long recognised the gendered nature of women's wills, noting the preponderance of bequests to women in number, generosity, and form of bequest which Amy Erickson calls 'personalism' in her work on women and property.⁴⁵ This thesis explores the theme of sororal attitude, in charitable aid in the household and the community to the known and stranger poor, and between kinswomen even across confessional divides. There is not space here for my own work on property using women's wills, but this thesis begins to explore gendered relations and testamentary strategy between kin, and the extension of charitable aid to social groups whose vulnerability in patriarchal society women identified with their own.

This thesis does, however, advance the historiography of gender and women in early modern England, which in general has not prioritised the study of women in the pious middle of the religious spectrum or the respectable middle of the social spectrum, beyond the

⁴⁴ Brigden, *London and the Reformation*.

⁴⁵ V. Brodsky Elliot, 'Widows in late Elizabethan London: remarriage, economic opportunities and family orientations', in L. Bonfield, P. Laslett and R. Smith (eds.) *The World We Have Gained: histories of Population and Social Structure: essays presented to Peter Laslett on his seventieth birthday* (Oxford, 1986), pp. 148-50; Archer, 'Charity of London Widows', pp. 185, 188, 191; Erickson, *Women and Property*, pp. 211-21; Jordan, *Philanthropy, Charities*; Thomson, 'Clergy and Laity in London'; Schen, *Charity and Lay Piety*; I. Ben-Amos, *The Culture of Giving: Informal Support and Gift Exchange in early modern England* (Cambridge, 2008); L. Gowing, 'The Politics of Women's Friendships in Early Modern England', in L. Gowing, M. Hunter and M. Rubin (eds.), *Love, Friendship and Faith in Europe, 1300-1800* (Basingstoke, 2005), pp. 131-149.

suggestive work of Tim Reinke-Williams.⁴⁶ Historians interested in female urban and metropolitan experience have focused their studies on the lives of more plebeian women, characteristically using women's own testimony through legal depositions, in studies which have focused on how gender affected the economic and social position of women in relation to honour, reputation, marriage, property, service, work, and credit.⁴⁷

The historiography of gender and elite women in early modern England has also widely focused on gentry and aristocratic women, especially following the work of Barbara Harris, making extensive use of correspondence, literary, household, estate and devotional documents authored by women, legal documents relating to property transfer and dispute including wills, and material culture to understand women's agency and identity in relation to their gender and status as maids, wives and especially as heads of households as widows.⁴⁸ These women were often kin to aldermen's wives, and sometimes even born to City families, but the sense of women's careers which these studies evoke has not translated into the study of elite mercantile women.⁴⁹

⁴⁶ T. Reinke-Williams, 'The negotiation and fashioning of female honour in early modern London', University of Warwick Ph.D thesis (2006), 'Women's clothes and female honour in early modern London', *Continuity and Change*, 26 (2011), pp. 69-88; *Women, work and sociability in early modern London* (Basingstoke, 2014).

⁴⁷ Gowing, *Domestic Dangers*, 'Women, Status and the Popular Culture of Dishonour', pp. 225-234, 'The freedom of the streets', pp. 130-53; Hubbard, *City women*; A. Shepard, *Accounting for Oneself*, 'Crediting Women in the Early Modern English Economy', *History Workshop Journal*, 79 (2015), pp. 1-24; D. Willen, 'Guildswomen in the city of York, 1560-1700', *The Historian*, 46 (1984), pp. 204-18; V. Brodsky Elliot, 'Single women in the London marriage market: age, status and mobility, 1598-1619', in R. Outhwaite (ed.), *Marriage and Society: Studies in the History of Marriage* (1981), pp. 81-100, 'Widows in late Elizabethan London', pp. 122-54; J. Spicksley, 'Usury legislation, cash, and credit: the development of the female investor in the late Tudor and Stuart periods', *Economic History Review*, 61 (2008), pp. 277-301, 'Women, 'Usury' and Credit in Early Modern England: The Case of the Maiden Investor', *Gender & History*, 27 (2015), pp. 263-292; 'Money lending on the periphery of London, 1300-1600', *Albion*, 20 (1988), pp. 557-71; G. Walker, 'Expanding the Boundaries of Female Honour in Early Modern England', *THRS*, 6th ser., 6 (1996), pp. 235-245.

⁴⁸ Harris, *English Aristocratic Women*; M. Franklin-Harkrider, *Women, reform and community in early modern England: Katherine Willoughby, Duchess of Suffolk, and Lincolnshire's godly aristocracy, 1519-1580* (Woodbridge, 2008); L. Pollock, 'Teach her to live under obedience': the making of women in the upper ranks of early modern England', *Continuity and Change*, 4 (1989), pp. 231-258, 'Rethinking Patriarchy and the Family in Seventeenth-Century England', *Journal of Family History*, 23 (1998), pp. 3-27; A. Wall, 'Elizabethan Precept and Feminine Practice: The Thynne Family of Longleat', *History*, 75 (1990), pp. 22-38; C. Peters, 'Religion, Household-State Authority, and the Defence of 'Collapsed Ladies'', pp. 631-658; J. Daybell (ed.), *Women and Politics in Early Modern England 1450-1700* (Aldershot, 2004), *Women Letter Writers in Tudor England* (Oxford, 2006); G. Allen, *The Cooke Sisters: education, piety and politics in early modern England* (Manchester, 2013).

⁴⁹ A. Wall, *Two Elizabethan women: correspondence of Joan and Maria Thynne, 1575-1611* (Devizes, 1983).

Neither has interest in the elite household as a religious environment of particular importance to female piety and religious identity, both among Protestant conformists and Catholic recusants, been extended to a study of elite mercantile women.⁵⁰ Studies of gender and religion have also focused on the religious extremes of ordinary women.⁵¹ Gender has received some attention in the study of women beyond the landed gentry and aristocracy, and of a middling religious position, characteristically using funeral sermons alone, though this thesis prefers a comparison of different source types, as explained above.⁵² The major contributions of the historiography of gender and religion for women in England that inform this thesis have been: to explore the ways in which gender and religion acted mutually on one another in an individual's understanding of their religious identity in a patriarchal society; to understand how gendered spiritual insights had valence for men and women which often entailed consequences for religious and social behaviour that made elastic, even if they did not necessarily 'temper', accepted patriarchal boundaries of agency; and to urge historians to consider gender alongside status in the study of female piety and religious identity.⁵³ Gender is a key tool of analysis

⁵⁰ See n. 33 above.

⁵¹ P. Mack, 'Women as Prophets during the English Civil War', *Feminist Studies*, 8 (1982), pp. 18-45; *Visionary Women: Ecstatic Prophecy in Seventeenth-Century England* (1992), 'Women and Gender in Early Modern England', *Journal of Modern History*, 73 (2001), pp. 379-392.

⁵² For example: P. Lake, 'Feminine Piety and Personal Potency', pp. 143-165; E. Carlson, 'English funeral sermons as sources: the example of female piety in pre-1640 sermons', *Albion*, 32 (2000), pp. 567-97; J. McIntosh, 'English Funeral Sermons, 1560-1640: The Relationship Between Gender, and Death, Dying, and the Afterlife', Oxford Univ. M. Litt. thesis (1990).

⁵³ The term is Diane Willen's: 'Godly Women in early modern England: Puritanism and Gender', *JEH*, 43 (1992), pp. 561-580, at 579, 'Women and Religion in early modern England' in S. Marshall (ed.), *Women in Reformation and Counter Reformation Europe* (Bloomington, 1989), pp. 140-165, "'Communion of the Saints': Spiritual Reciprocity and the Godly Community in Early Modern England', *Albion*, 27 (1995), pp. 19-41; Rylie, *Being Protestant*, esp. p. 472; C. Peters, *Patterns of piety: women, gender and religion in late medieval and Reformation England* (Cambridge, 2003), 'Single Women in early modern England: attitudes and expectations', *Continuity and Change*, 12 (1997), pp. 325-345; Hughes, *Gangraena*; 'Puritanism and Gender', in J. Coffrey and P. Lim (eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to Puritanism* (Cambridge, 2008), pp. 294-308, *Gender and the English revolution* (Abingdon, 2012); J. Daybell, 'Scripting a Female Voice: Women's Epistolary Rhetoric in Sixteenth-Century Letters of Petition', *Women's Writing*, 13 (2006), pp. 3-22, 'Women's letters, literature and conscience in sixteenth-century England', *Renaissance Studies*, 23 (2009), pp. 516-533; Narveson, *Bible Readers*, pp. 132-2, 179-80, 194; Mack, *Visionary Women*, pp. 9-10; H. Smith, "'More swete vnto the eare / than holsome for ye mynde": Embodying Early Modern Women's Reading', *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 73 (2010), pp. 413-432; Webster, *Godly Clergy*, pp. 126-8; S. Amussen, *An Ordered Society: gender and class in early modern England* (Oxford, 1988), Ch. 4; Mendelson and Crawford, *Women in Early Modern England*, p. 72; Lake, 'Feminine Piety', pp. 143-165; P. Seaver, *Wallington's World: A Puritan Artisan in Seventeenth Century London* (1985), p. 79; P. Crawford, *Women and religion in England, 1500-1720* (1993), p. 79; F. Dolan, *Whores of Babylon: Catholicism, Gender and Seventeenth-Century Print Culture* (1999).

throughout the thesis, for the study of Protestant and Catholic kinswomen's relationships to one another, and for understanding ideals of female virtue, and the practice of women's piety and charity, within marriage and widowhood, and within the household and community in the City and its suburbs.

The question of why an ideal of mercantile women's virtue was promoted in London, and why it was based on reformed women's piety and charity is set out in Chapter II, which uses sources written to praise and satirise aldermen's wives and widows, and their portraits, to consider the idealised virtues of the godly City lady against the popular gendered antitype of the elite mercantile woman as a puritan hypocrite.

Whether we ought to be looking for these supposedly puritan women among the civic elite, and the spectrum of belief, are explored in Chapter III through a discussion of preambles to wills, and the question of how we might best seek and understand religious identity in relation to gender and status is posed here and pursued throughout the rest of the thesis.

Chapters IV-V explore women's piety in and beyond the household, and women's relationship to the community through the critical use of sources in praise of women's piety, manuals written by clerics, works written and printed by women, and wills. Chapter II introduces the tensions of gender, status and piety in discussions of the criticism of elite women's consumption and their quest for balance, in relation to apparel, a theme which Chapters IV and V take up in discussions of the material culture of the household as constitutive of the religious environment, and an exploration of women's attitudes towards elaborate funerals.

Chapters VI and VII consider the gendered nature of female charity, its characteristics, constraints, continuities and developments. Chapter VI focuses on women's hospitality and their charity within the household, through a reconstruction of hospitality using a mercantile woman's household book, and household charity using women's wills. Chapter VII explores

women's public charity, comparing the qualitative and quantitative analysis of women's wills to literature of praise and criticism of the charity of London's elite, to ask why charity remained so central to women's religious and civic identity.

Chapter VIII reconstructs the lives of three Catholic kinswomen of the civic elite in the metropolis, around Clerkenwell and the Spanish Embassy, through sources praising and satirising them. This chapter compares and relates the reformed ideals of female virtue in the City to the lives of the Catholic kinswomen of the civic elite, to uncover the significance of the entangled fortunes of kin, and to ask whether the civic ethos shared by reformed City women could accommodate even their recusant Catholic kinswomen.

My conclusion reflects on the most important insights and suggestive findings of this thesis, and the distinctive dimensions which it offers to the historiographies of piety, women and gender, charity and hospitality, and early modern London.

Chapter II The Ideal of the Godly City Lady

Introduction

The methodology of this chapter is instructive for the rest of the thesis to follow. Sources used to reconstruct ideals and stereotypes of elite female civic virtue and vice are read critically as texts and events, in the context of their production, display, performance, and publication, to furnish evidence too of the reality of women's piety and social conduct, particularly through comparison between many different types of sources, not least women's wills.

Men wrote for and about elite mercantile women in London and dedicated works to them. Sources penned by men to whom aldermen's wives were patrons, kin and friends are used to reconstruct the ideals of elite female civic virtue of which they claimed their subjects and dedicatees to be paragons. The long tradition of elite women's charitable giving in London was celebrated by John Stow, and commemoration of reformed women's charity was updated and greatly expanded during their lifetimes by Anthony Munday in his editions of the *Survey of London*. Puritan clerical authors of funeral sermons epitomised the celebration — common with verse epitaphs, conduct books and dedications — of the ways in which women's gendered religious experience could be turned to the edification of men and women among kin, household and neighbours in the audiences who attended their funeral sermons, and the wider readership of published works.

The accounts of elite mercantile women's lives from funeral sermons to verse epitaphs, whose primary purpose was not to render a report of female piety and charity, are expressed in conventional terms and using rhetorical strategies that appear excessively generic without proper contextualisation. This chapter begins that task through a study of competing public ideas about women in the City, and through the critical comparison of different types of source which is pursued throughout the thesis to uncover the real practice of women's piety and

charity, and how women's own sense of identity was shaped by their gender, status, religion and personalities.

Sources written by anti-puritan playwrights and satirists sent up aldermen's wives. An antitype was conjured through direct comparison of ideals of female virtue with acute, misogynistic observational comedy of elite mercantile wives' and widows' low births and low behaviour, and their husbands' anxious imaginings of the widowhoods of women they were unable to rule as wives.¹ These accounts suggested that the self-interested hypocrisy of the usurious elite was compounded in its female iteration, by women's gendered weaknesses, and the sham piety and charity of a particularly puritan shade of hypocrisy. Plays presented a community corrupted by the open secret of their rulers' vices dressed up as virtues, and indeed there is evidence that women were liable to be commended or condemned by ordinary Londoners even as they walked in the street.²

These were competing judgements, in relation to which elite women's portraits, which sought an impossible virtuous balance between gender, status, religious identity and personal character in the City, are analysed here. Between sources of praise and criticism, elite mercantile women in London did not lack for counsel and censure, but the extent to which they heeded either is revealed to be less certain by the critical reading and comparison of sources begun here and continued throughout the thesis. Yet the terms of praise and abuse that relate to external cultural perceptions of group and individual identity also affected women's self-perception, self-presentation, even the practice of their piety and charity, and their own sense of religious identity.³ These themes are pursued through the analysis of all types of source material in Chapters III-VIII, in which a single source is often capable of affording multiple perspectives.

¹ C. Carlton, 'The Widow's Tale: Male Myths and Female Reality in 16th and 17th Century England', *Albion*, 10 (1978), pp. 118-129.

² D. Hawkes, *The culture of usury in Renaissance England* (Basingstoke, 2010), p. 97. See below, and Ch. VIII.

³ P. Lake and I. Stephens, *Scandal and religious identity in early Stuart England: a Northamptonshire maid's tragedy* (Martlesham, 2015), p. 7; P. Lake, *The Boxmaker's Revenge: 'orthodoxy', 'heterodoxy' and the politics of the parish in early*

Mary, Lady Ramsey, wife of Sir Thomas Ramsey, achieved an almost unmatched, but not uncontested, reputation for godly virtue and particularly charity.⁴ Thomas Heywood's character of Ramsey in *If You Know Not Me You Know Nobody, Part II* was the first and only portrait of a named City lady on the stage when it was first performed at the Red Bull in Clerkenwell in 1605, just three years after her death. Heywood took his lead from John Stow's recently published 1598 edition of his *A Survey of London* in which Ramsey was the only contemporary woman featured in Stow's pantheon of charitable civic worthies.⁵

Heywood imagined a scene in which Alexander Nowell, dean of St Paul's, shows Mary Ramsey around his picture gallery. Ramsey recognises Nowell's portraits of former Lord Mayors, yet she cannot identify the portraits of Agnes Foster and Alice Gibson, the first two women to be celebrated by Stow's *Survey*, whom Nowell claims 'have deserv'd a memorie worthy the note of our Posteritie'.⁶ Nowell recounts their charitable civic projects that can be seen 'in every street', yet aldermen's wives of Ramsey's generation clearly had not been inspired by their example. Heywood insists that all that is wanting for godly virtue to be transformed into charitable engagement with the civic community is the affirmation that such a career is still possible for an alderman's wife and will win her praise.

Heywood's Ramsey displays the ideal response to the example of former City women. She questions 'why should not I live so, that being dead,/My name might have a register with

Stuart London (Manchester, 2001); A. Hughes, *Gangraena and the Struggle for the English Revolution* (Oxford, 2004), p. 11; E. Carlson, 'English funeral sermons as sources: the example of female piety in pre-1640 sermons', *Albion*, 32 (2000), pp. 567-97.

⁴ I. Archer, 'Ramsey [née Dale; other married name Avery], Mary, Lady Ramsey (d. 1601)', ODNB.

⁵ M. Bayer, 'The Red Bull Playhouse', in R. Dutton (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Early Modern Theatre* (Oxford, 2009), pp. 225, 232; Stow, *A survey of London* (1598), p. 81.

⁶ Stow, *A survey of London* (1633), pp. 107-8; T. Heywood, *If You Know Not Me You Know Nobody, Pt. II* (1606), I. vi. 828-9; I. Archer, 'The Charity of London Widows in the later sixteenth century and early seventeenth centuries', in N. L. Jones (ed.), *Local Identities in late medieval and early modern England* (Basingstoke, 2007), p. 178; R. Tittler, 'Thomas Heywood and the Portrayal of Female Benefactors', *Early Theatre*, 11(2008), pp. 33-52; Heywood, *If You Know Not Me* (1606) I. vi. 811-9, 820-4.

theirs', and resolves to follow their 'way/'To guide my life for a more blessed stay'.⁷ Heywood dramatized Stow's nostalgic vision of the City once unified in charity and distinguished by its reputation, now languishing in hard-hearted division.⁸ Heywood used Ramsey to suggest practical ways in which the City could encourage the wives of its aldermen to turn the virtues of the recent Catholic past into inspiration for a godlier future, in which aldermen's wives could once again be praised for their virtuous deeds.⁹ The elite were bound together through a culture of civic engagement, which through charity would renew the social bond with those over whom they exercised authority.

Heywood's vision of London suggested that worthy works would bring forth spontaneous praise, without the unseemly need for women to promote the commemoration of their own achievements. Mary Ramsey's example had elicited an ideal response from the City. On Sir Thomas Ramsey's funeral monument of 1596 in St Mary Woolnoth, Mary was praised in equal terms to his first wife, as one of 'his two virtuous Ladies'.¹⁰ For those who, like Heywood, read the first edition of Stow, Ramsey was a paragon of female civic virtue. Stow recorded the abundant praise for Ramsey's endeavours while she lived, and encouraged other wives to take up the potential that their married status afforded them. Stow recorded that in 1578 Ramsey had made an endowment:

being seased of landes in fee simple of her inheritance to the yearely value of 243. pound, by his [her husband's] consent gaue the same to Christs Hospitall...towards reliefe of poore children...which gift she afterward in her widowhode confirmed, and greatly augmented.¹¹

Christ's Hospital commissioned a celebratory portrait of Ramsey.¹² Anthony Munday's 1633 edition of Stow demonstrated that the commemoration of Ramsey grew apace with her

⁷ Heywood, *If You Know Not Me*, I. vi, 844-5, 872-3.

⁸ I. Archer, 'The Nostalgia of John Stow', in D. Smith, R. Strier and D. Bevington . (eds.), *The Theatrical City: culture, theatre and politics in London 1576-1649* (Cambridge, 1995), esp. pp. 21, 31.

⁹ I. Archer, 'The Charity of Early Modern Londoners', *THRS*, 6th ser., 12 (2002), pp. 225-7.

¹⁰ Stow, *A survey of London* (1633), p. 224.

¹¹ Stow, *A survey of London* (1598), p. 81.

¹² Mary Ramsey, unknown artist, early seventeenth century, oils, Christ's Hospital.

achievements, by reproducing in full the tables of her charitable gifts erected in St Bartholomew the Less in 1598.¹³ Nicholas Bourman's verse *Epitaph* (1602) itemized her gifts as they appeared in her will, each stanza celebrating a single bequest. Bourman focused on Ramsey's care of diverse social needs:

First for the relief of children very poore,
Orphins, and such as be deeply distrest:
She has ripte up the bountie of her store,
By whose good meanes those infants they be blest,
Succorde, and well defended as they ought,
Thus much for them Sweet Ramsey she hath wrought.

So many Londoners expected generosity from Ramsey that paupers were killed in the crush for her funeral dole in 1602.¹⁴

Audiences in London who might have read Stow, bought a copy of Ramsay's *Epitaph*, or seen her funeral monument and portrait, would have weighed Heywood's idealised Ramsey against the real woman they saw at Paul's Cross, processing in funerals, at lectures and parish services. They might have wondered why Mary, a childless widow in 1578, married the man who Alice Barnham had refused as grasping and insincere.¹⁵ Heywood depicted Ramsey walking around her neighbourhood in Lombard Street talking with Dean Nowell. Londoners may equally have caught a glimpse of her, bedizened in rubies, diamonds and pearls as she sped by in her coach, or noted her abundance of silverware when they were admitted to her house on business.¹⁶ Contemporaries confronted a confusion of messages about City women when they were called on publicly, by the civic elite and by its detractors, to judge women's fulfilment of an ideal of civic virtue. Conscious of the pejorative commonplaces about women and puritans in early seventeenth-century London, the elite sought to save their wives from condemnation

¹³ Stow, *A survey of London* (1633), p. 348.

¹⁴ Ibid., pp. 108-9, 155; N. Bourman, *An Epitaph on Mary Ramsey* (1602), Sigs. A3v, B2r. This experience affected the distribution of charity at funerals in London: Archer, 'Charity of Early Modern Londoners', p. 234.

¹⁵ L. Orlin, 'The Character of Sir Martin Barnham Knight' by his son Sir Francis Barnham', in J. Dutcher and A. Prescott (eds.), *Renaissance Historicism: essays in honour of Arthur F. Kinney* (Newark, 2008), l. 215-56.

¹⁶ Heywood *If You Know Not Me* (1606), l. xvi; Archer, 'Mary, Lady Ramsey', *ODNB*; TNA, PROB 11/98, fols. 190v-193v.

as hypocrites by mounting their defence on the unstable ground of personal godliness.¹⁷ This chapter considers how and why this ideal of the *godly* City lady emerged between c. 1580 and 1630, and to what extent the elite managed to stabilise the ideal and its consequences for the lives of their own kinswomen.

i) Counsel and censure

City women were more used to counsel than commendation. Ramsey set an example because she was an exception, very few of her contemporaries being singled out for similar celebration.¹⁸ Though men might be disgraced by the example of a woman surpassing their own efforts, praise of female virtue was needful and edifying primarily for women. Thomas Gataker published his funeral sermon on Rebekah Crispe, wife of Alderman Ellis Crispe, ‘for the enticing and egging on of others, of that sex especially, and to the imitation of her’.¹⁹ That William Gouge’s sermons on the *Domesticall Duties* of spouses were contested by the women of his congregation at St Anne’s Blackfriars, referenced by Gouge in the preface to his printed edition of 1622, has become a commonplace of modern historiography.²⁰ Historians object to the use of Gouge to study the ‘Protestant family’ or ‘spiritualized household’, either as a stale concept merely reiterated in the early seventeenth century, or as prescriptive of an ideal rather than descriptive of reality.²¹ Patrick Collinson has warned of the risk of sanding down the distinctive grain of early seventeenth-century conduct literature which makes it a valuable source.²² The metropolitan context of Gouge’s advice to City wives is essential, and must be read as part of a

¹⁷ P. Lake, ‘Feminine Piety and Personal Potency: the “emancipation” of Mrs Jane Ratcliffe’, *The Seventeenth Century*, 2 (1987), p. 184.

¹⁸ Save perhaps the flurry of commemoration of Helen Branch on her death: J. Phillips, *A commemoration of the life and death of the right worshipfull and vertuous ladie; Dame Helen Branch* (1594); S.P., *An epitaph of the vertuous life and death of the right worshipfull ladie, Dame Helen Branch* (1594); W. Hervey, *Epicedium, a funerall song, upon the vertuous life, and godly death of the right worshipfull the Lady Helen Branch* (1594).

¹⁹ T. Gataker, *Two Funeral Sermons* (1620), Sig. A3v.

²⁰ P. Collinson, *The Birthpangs of Protestant England* (Basingstoke, 1988), p. 71; A. Hughes, *Gender and the English Revolution* (2012), p.11; S. Amussen, *An Ordered Society* (Oxford, 1988), pp. 44-7.

²¹ K. Davies, ‘Continuity and Change in Literary Advice on Marriage’, in R. Outhwaite (ed.), *Marriage and Society* (1981), pp. 58-80; M. Todd, *Christian Humanism and the Puritan Social Order* (Cambridge, 1987), Ch. 4.

²² Collinson, *Birthpangs*, pp. 81, 83-4, 90, 93.

wider conversation conducted in pamphlets, dedications, sermons, epitaphs, on funeral monuments and in portraits, about the powers and responsibilities of women in London. The women who labelled Gouge a woman-hater for his opposition to their financial freedoms included rich merchants' wives whose behaviour as spouses to the City magistrates was central to their conduct as public figures. Though the margins between prescription and description of marital behaviour in conduct literature remain partially opaque, the interaction of these texts tells us something of how and why 'these features became elevated to a high point of explicit consciousness and of emulation and perpetuation'.²³ Gouge's insistence that a wife's conduct, as 'modest, submissive, chaste, thrifty and wise', bore responsibility for marital success is indicative.²⁴ Aldermen's kinswomen were praised when they fulfilled expectations throughout their lives: as obedient, loving daughters; as aldermen's wives charitable, hospitable, modest, sincere in their piety, subordinate yet competent in the religious education of the household; and as chaste widows devoted to the fulfilment of their late husband's wishes, careful of the welfare of their children and of the City. Gouge suggested that husbands might temper the harsh expression of authority through companionable delegation of suitable tasks, but only if wives offered obedient subordination.²⁵

For aldermen's wives, the fulfilment of their wifely duties was subject to public evaluation throughout the civic and religious calendar. Through marriage, aldermen's wives gained a semi-formalized civic position, joining an established and dignified collective of

²³ Ibid., p. 93. I. Maclean, *The Renaissance Notion of Woman* (1980), p. 76.

²⁴ On the development of historiographical readings of advice literature see also: C. Hill, *Society and Puritanism* (New York, 1964), pp. 445-6, and Ch. 13; L. Wright, *Middle Class Culture in Elizabethan England* (Chapel Hill, 1995); K. Davies, 'The sacred condition of equality': how original were Puritan doctrines of marriage?', *Social History*, 2 (1972), pp. 563-80; Todd, *Christian Humanism* (1987), Ch. 4; J. Eales, 'Gender construction in early modern England and the conduct books of William Whateley', *SCH*, 34 (1998), pp. 165-74.

²⁵ D. Willen, 'Godly Women in early modern England: Puritanism and Gender', *JEH*, 43 (1992), p. 555; A. Fletcher, 'The Protestant idea of marriage in early modern England', in A. Fletcher and P. Roberts (eds.), *Religion, culture and society in early modern Britain* (Cambridge, 1994), pp. 165, 168, 170-1, 172-4; Collinson, *Birthpangs* (1998), pp. 62-3, 70, 93; Amussen, *Ordered Society* (1988), pp. 41-7, and 'Gender, Family and the Social Order', in A. Fletcher and J. Stevenson (eds.), *Order and Disorder in Early Modern England* (Cambridge, 1985), pp. 200, 202; A. Shepard, *Meanings of Manhood in early modern England* (Oxford, 2003), pp. 10, 76-83; Eales, 'Gender Construction', pp. 167-8, 171.

women. At Paul's Cross, and the Spittle in Holy Week, the aldermen's wives sat in public view on the first floor of the sermon houses.²⁶ Tradition required aldermen's wives to don civic dress specific to the occasion: on Innocents' Day at Paul's Cross 'the Aldermen dine at the Lord Maiors and the Sheriffes, wearing Scarlet: but the Ladies weare blacke', while at the Spittle in Holy Week, on Monday and Tuesday the ladies wore scarlet, changing into black for Wednesday's sermon.²⁷ Watercolours of aldermen's wives commissioned by European visitors for their *alba amicorum* recorded the uniform of City women and showed them attended by liveried pages and well-dressed maids carrying their trains.²⁸ By the 1620s, City women like Margaret Cotton and Mary Clitherow dressed in their civic colours of scarlet and black to sit for their portraits.²⁹ Preachers addressing the assembled citizenry at Paul's Cross hardly represented the aldermen's wives as so many Ramseys, or the aldermen as model magistrates, but like prophets admonished their governors. As Arnold Hunt has argued, the patronage and hospitality of the Corporation in the early seventeenth century did not silence the proud

²⁶ M. Morrissey, *Politics and the Paul's Cross Sermons, 1558-1642* (2001), pp. 13-4.

²⁷ Stow, *A survey of London* (1633), pp. 657-8.

²⁸ BL, MS Egerton 1264 (Album of G. Holtzchucher, 1621-5), fo. 26, Edinburgh University Library, MS Laing III 283, (Album of Michael van Meer (1614-5), fo. 146v: For a full list of watercolours of Lady Mayoresses of London in *alba amicorum*, see: J. Schlueter, *The Alba Amicorum and the London of Shakespeare's Time* (2011), p. 60.

²⁹ See Figs. 1, 6. R. Tittler, *Portraits, Painters and Publics in Provincial England, 1540-1640* (Oxford, 2012), pp. 29, 73-4; *The Face of the City* (Manchester, 2007), pp. 85-6, Appendix B; T. Cooper, *Citizen Portrait: Portrait Painting and the Urban Elite of Tudor and Jacobean England and Wales* (2012), pp. 2-3; I. Archer, 'The arts and acts of memorialization in early modern London', in J. Merritt (ed.), *Imagining early modern London* (Cambridge, 2001), p. 97.



Figure 1. Mary Clitherow, unknown artist and date, oil on canvas, 76.2 x 63.5cm, Guildhall Art Gallery.

tradition of independence at Paul's Cross. Preachers standing before the aldermen exhorted them in pointed commonplaces within conventions of criticism, hoping that their words would reach the hearts of their abashed governors. Preachers were punished for straying too close to specificity in attacking the aldermen, teaching others a measure of caution, yet their diverse Sunday audiences were left in no doubt where preachers' counsel was directed, even if it did not find its mark.³⁰

In 1606, Richard Stock reminded the elite that the gathered public were called on to decide whether the aldermen would be praised for the fulfilment of their responsibilities or face 'dishonour', a judgement that began in conversations in Paul's yard as the sermon was preached.³¹ The aldermen were especially touchy on the subject of usury. In a sermon preached in 1610, William Holbrooke called it 'the Aldermen's trade', though aldermen's widows lent money at interest too.³² Usury became shorthand to discuss the discrepancy between the aldermen's self-presentation as godly magistrates and their dubious commercial conduct.³³ Usury was hotly debated in the pulpits, condemned as a sign of covetousness, the solvent of the social bond, when it did not support trade or charity.³⁴ Yet unease about wealth and the signs and symptoms of covetousness extended beyond usury to the general conduct of the aldermen and their wives, who sought lasting fame but seemed to court only infamy.

In 1607 Robert Wilkinson preached a jeremiad on *Lot's Wife* warning the wealthy that their riches alone could not buy them lasting fame: 'if ye could sell all the world to make a tombe, in that tombe to set up a name for eternitie, yet that tombe shall one day tumble

³⁰ A. Hunt, *The Art of Hearing: English Preachers and their Audiences, 1590-1640* (Cambridge, 2010), pp. 17, 333-335 and on the character and audiences of Weekday/Sunday sermons see pp. 212, 217, 220, 222; and P. Collinson, *The Religion of Protestants* (Oxford, 1982), p. 259.

³¹ *Dudley Carleton to John Chamberlain 1603-24: Jacobean Letters*, ed. M. Lee (New Brunswick, 1972) p. 91; Hunt, *Art of Hearing*, pp. 6, 326.

³² W. Houlbrooke, *Love's Complaint* (1610), Sig. E3r; N. Jones, *God and the Moneylenders: usury and law in Early Modern England* (Oxford, 1989).

³³ Hunt, *Art of Hearing*, p. 339.

³⁴ Jones, *God and the Moneylenders*, pp. 16-17, 22, 27-33, 42-5, 145-153, 173-6, 200; Hunt, *Art of Hearing*, pp. 237-8, 324; Hawkes, *The culture of usury*, pp. 95-104.

downe.³⁵ The rich had long been rebuked over their irresponsible use of wealth, both in London and the counties, and were urged to curb their wives' appetite for consumption.³⁶ Philip Stubbes' condemnation of London's addiction to costly fashion in 1583 called for the collective censure of general female excess:

Their parents & Freinds are muche to be blamed, for suffering them to go in suche wanton attyre. They should not allowe them such large pittance, nor suffer them to measure their apparell, after their own licentious yarges of selfe will, and wicked desires.³⁷

Continental visitors were particularly amazed at rich City women's apparel. A Swabian merchant in London in 1585 was astonished that 'they dress splendidly in stuffs, and many a one wears three cloth gowns or petticoats, one over the other'. In 1592 the Duke of Wirtemberg noted that 'they go out dressed in exceedingly fine clothes, and...many a one does not hesitate to wear velvet in the streets', concluding tellingly 'England is a paradise for women...for the females have great liberty and are almost like masters'.³⁸ Edmund Thomas Hill, a Benedictine monk, imagining the objections that a newly converted Catholic alderman's son might have to his parents' lifestyle, described the fashions loved of

the Laitie of the Protestants...such Pride, especially in apparell....your loose Gownes, your Traines, your Verdingales, your Borders, your Peringles, your Coronets, your Wyres, your Ruffes starched, while below your setting stickes, your Venetian, French, Spanish and Switzers hose, your Gallegascones, your Scabilonians, your Thomas Onions, your Ruffes, your Cuffes.³⁹

³⁵ On jeremiads see: A. Walsham *Providence in early modern England* (Oxford, 1999), Ch. 6; Collinson, *Birthpangs*, (1989), Ch. 1; M. Morrissey, 'Elect nations and prophetic preaching: types and examples in the Paul's Cross Jeremiad', in P. McCullough and L. Ferrell (eds.), *The English Sermon Revised* (Manchester, 2000), pp. 43-58; P. Lake with M. Questier, *The Antichrist's Lewd Hat: Protestants, Papists and players in post-Reformation England* (2002), p. 355; R. Wilkinson, *Lot's Wife* (1607), p. 57.

³⁶ Jones, *God and the Moneylenders*, pp. 42, 145-55, 172-9, 200.

³⁷ I. Archer, 'Material Londoners?', in L. Orlin (ed.), *Material London, ca. 1600* (Philadelphia, 2000), pp. 178, 184, 185; Maclean, *Renaissance Notion* (1980), pp. 15-6; Lake, *Lewd Hat*, p. 344; P. Stubbes, *The anatomie of abuses* (1583), Sig. F7r.

³⁸ W. Rye, *England as Seen by Foreigners in the Days of Elizabeth and James* (1865), pp. 7-8, 90; T. Reinke-Williams, 'Women's clothes and female honour in early modern London', *Continuity and Change*, 26 (2011), pp. 71, 74.

³⁹ E. Hill, *A Quartrion of reasons of Catholicke religion* (London [called Antwerp], 1600), Sig. G4 or p. 85: see also Ch.VIII.

At Paul's Cross, preachers talked in pointed platitudes to the aldermen's wives just as to their husbands. In 1613, Thomas Baughe admonished 'You beauteous Ladies; and faire matrons, and damzels of this Honourable Citie' who 'come hither clothed like Salomon in his royaltie'.⁴⁰ Only a woman's conscience could dictate whether she considered herself amongst his intended audience, or above such criticism.

Stubbes complained 'one can scarsly know, who is a noble woman, who is an honorable, or worshipfull Woman from them of the meaner sorte'.⁴¹ The following of courtly fashions by rich City wives provoked the extreme aristocratic fashions which attempted to maintain sumptuary differentiation.⁴² Citizens were able to afford the luxurious black cloth which had formerly been favoured by their superiors.⁴³ Dekker and Webster in *Westward Ho* (1607) observed that 'ther is equity enough between a Lady and a City Dame' in the following of trends and the wearing of jewels.⁴⁴ The sumptuary uses to which citizens' wives put their wealth indicated their ambitious and grasping natures, seeking status beyond their station. John Heath described a courtly lady in his *Satirical Epigrams* (1611) who 'cannot haue a Hat or Ruffe,/A Gowne, a Pettycoate, a Band, or Cuffe,/But that these Citizens (whom she doth hate)/ Will get into't, at nere so deare a rate'.⁴⁵ As Gouge emphasised, it was within a husband's power to control his wife's budget for luxuries.⁴⁶ Observers of all confessional complexions, including godly commentators, despaired of an elite who vaunted charitable commitment yet flaunted their wealth in their attire. John Earle suggested in his *Microcosmographie* (1628) that even to dress as puritans were wont to do, was in itself a breed of vanity. In his portrait of a 'Shee-Precise

⁴⁰ T. Baughe, *A Summons to Judgement* (1613).

⁴¹ Stubbes, *The anatomie of abuses*, Sig. F7r.

⁴² I. Warren, 'Elite female householders in an elite Stuart Westminster parish', *London Journal*, 32 (2007), p. 212.

⁴³ Cooper, *Citizen Portrait*, pp. 2-3, 9, 11, 15.

⁴⁴ T. Dekker and J. Webster, *Westward Ho* (1607), I. i. 27-34.

⁴⁵ J. Heath, *The House of Correction or Certain Satirical Epigrams* (1611), Sig. A5v.

⁴⁶ Also John Dove at Paul's Cross in October 1602: *The diary of John Manningham of the Middle Temple, 1602-1603*, ed. R. Sorlien (Hanover, 1976), p. 114.



Figure 2. Hester Crispe, unknown artist, c. 1620, oil on canvas, 110 x 90 cm, private collection.



Figure 3. Joyce Frankland, unknown artist, 1586, oil on panel, 63.5 x 52.1, Brasenose College, Oxford.

Hypocrite', Earle sent up her hypocrisy by reducing her taste in religion to fondness for fashion:

shee is indeed one that ha's taken a toy at the fashion of Religion, and is enamour'd of the Newfangle. She is a Nonconformist in a close Stomacher and Ruffe of Geneua Print, and her puritie consists much in her Linnen.⁴⁷

The apparel of the female elite seemed to advertise their hypocrisy. Portraits commissioned by the aldermen of their wives embodied the tension between their insistence on sober gravity and their addiction to conspicuous consumption, even as they responded to accusations of hypocrisy. Hester Crispe's portrait of 1620 drew the viewers' attention to the passage of time and universal mortality even as she flaunted the splendour of her attire. She wears a sober suit of rich slashed black cloth with a modest, plain hat under which most of her red hair is concealed.⁴⁸ Set against it are ruffs and cuffs of white lace 'two or three fingers broad', edged with three rows of large pearls.⁴⁹ Like Joyce Frankland painted forty years before, Hester holds open a watch, refocusing the viewer's mind on mortality, though the ornate gold watch is itself a luxury commodity.⁵⁰ A similar gold and silver watch of 1600-10 in the British Museum is gilded and engraved with the arms granted to Alderman Henry Jaye in 1601 inside the lid, and decorated with scrolling foliage, squirrels, snails, birds and rabbits, while the Latin inscription reading 'Metiuntur diei horae vitae negliuntur' [the hours of the day are measured, those of life are unknown] is inverted for the wearer to read.⁵¹ Hester also holds 'sweet washed gloues imbrodered with gold, siluer, and what not', a scarlet floral motif completing the civic colour palette.⁵² Hester Crispe's tastes appear restrained compared to her contemporary

⁴⁷ J. Earle, *Microcosmographie* (1628), Sig. G1r.

⁴⁸ Fig. 2; Cooper, *Citizen Portrait*, pp. 2, 9, 67, 79, 105.

⁴⁹ Stubbes, *Anatomie of abuses*, Sigs. F6r, G1r-v.

⁵⁰ Fig. 5.

⁵¹ Figs. 3, 4; D. Thompson, *English Watches 1580-1680* (2012), II.

⁵² Stubbes, *Anatomie of abuses*, Sigs. F6r, G1r-v.



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Figure 4. Museum No: 1878, 0311.41. Oval gilt-brass cased verge watch, 1600-1610, English, 76.3 x 48.7 x 33 mm. These are the arms of Sir Henry Jaye (granted 1601) engraved inside the lid: Gules, on a bend engrailed argent, three roses of the field seeded or, leaved proper. Crest: An otter passant proper.



©Trustees of the British Museum.

Figure 5. Museum No: 1878, 0311.41. Oval gilt-brass cased verge watch, 1600-1610, English, 76.3 x 48.7 x 33 mm. This domed, hinged lid is engraved with strapwork creating three panels for Latin inscriptions, engraved upsid-down so that the wearer of the pendant watch could look down to meditate on them: two are badly rubbed, one reads 'Metiuntur diei horae vitae negliuntur' [The hours of the day are measured, those of life are unknown.]



Figure 6. Margaret Cotton, Unknown artist, c. 1620-30, oil on panel, 114 x 82 cm, Guildhall Art Gallery.

Margaret Cotton in her portrait of c. 1620-30.⁵³ Cotton's dress of scarlet silk and black velvet with gold peeping through, announced her status. Her brother, Sir Allen Cotton, became mayor in 1625 and her niece was the wife of Sir John Gore who became mayor in 1624. It was around this time that Margaret's portrait was commissioned. She wore enormous, extended ruffs and cuffs of intricate lace, edged with ropes of pearls. An ornate girdle sits below a huge chain of gold links onto which are pinned jewelled badges and rings, which also nestle in her ruff and on her cuffs. Another ring adorns her bare hand which clasps soft leather gloves with elaborate cuffs edged with gold fringing, stitched with heavy gold and silver brocade and red silks, and with pearls adorning the serpentine pattern. When Mary Clitherow was painted, possibly to celebrate her husband's mayoralty in 1635, she wore the City colours with a truly prodigious lace-edged ruff, with heavy ropes of pearls, gold chains, broaches and a pendant watch.⁵⁴

The aldermen were aware that their apparent inability, or unwillingness, to curb their wives' extravagances tarnished their reputation for good governance, though they financed their wives' finery and commissioned portraits. In 1569 Sir Thomas Rowe built the sermon house at Paul's Cross and gave a special key to his wife Susanna. This was no austere shelter. In 1585 payment was made for rushes, flowers, 'strawings', faggots, coats, and attendant mens' wages for the carrying of cushions, perfumes, bread, ale, and water.⁵⁵ By the later 1620s, ladies enjoyed 'a refressing collacon of contied thinges, and other iucattes [junkets] in the time of the preachinge the word of God'. In 1628, an order of the Court of Aldermen indicated their embarrassment:

att the request of diverse of the Aldermen for some reasons declared to the court, It was thought fitt and soe ordered, that the said custome and vsage shalbe noe longer contynued but be wholie abrogated.⁵⁶

⁵³ Fig. 6.

⁵⁴ Fig. 1.

⁵⁵ LMA, COL/AD/01/020, fo. 237.

⁵⁶ LMA, COL/CA/01/01/046, fo. 152v: I thank Mary Morrissey for this reference.

If the aldermen themselves criticised and sought to reform their wives' collective public conduct, they did it quietly amongst themselves.

ii) Commendation

Rather than refuting commonplace ideas about women who were rich and claimed to be godly, the elite gradually attempted to stabilize the ways in which these ideas affected the reputations of their wives. Texts praising an individual woman presented her personal godliness as evidence of her rejection of hypocrisy. These texts did not refute generic negative ideas about rich godly women, but simply insisted that they did not apply to the woman in question, a piecemeal approach that cumulatively defined what an aldermen's wife should and should not be.

Authors, preachers, printers, and booksellers laid down proof that their patronesses' virtues and integrity were exceptional, implicitly confirming the aspersions cast against other City wives. Dedications of texts created layers of positive statements about the women with whom they were associating and even entrusting the commercial success of a printed text, advertising women's status as brokers of taste, whose approval of a religious work could be valuable. In 1580 Thomas Crewe suggested that Elizabeth Martin's learned opinion was so well respected that merely for 'coming out under the name of so woorthie a Patronage' his translation of Gabriel Meurier's *The Nosegay of Moral Philosophy* 'shalbe the better accepted of all men'.⁵⁷ In 1593 John Danter, printer, paid tribute to Katharine Heyward as an able critic who used her position to further learning in the City: 'you sweet Lady...whose virtuous minde hath ever bin willing to prefer Schollers to the setting forth of Gods truth, and to beautyfie the true endeavours of us citizens'. Danter praised Katherine as a woman who would welcome a text by Henry Smith, the late celebrated lecturer of St Clement Danes, on 'the vaine Heresies of sundry religions now vsed in England, to the great hurt of this flowrishing Common wealth', in her

⁵⁷ C. Challis, 'Martin, Sir Richard (1533/4–1617)', ODNB.

devotions on both ‘winters weary nights and summers pleasant Evenings’.⁵⁸ Ezekiel Charke emphasised how necessary it was that City women be convinced that their deeds would not go unsung:

one speciall reason hath beene to testifie their thankfullnesse to the parties to whom they dedicate the same, by publishing their Name both to the present age, and to posteritie for the further encouraging, both of themselves And others to proceed in piety and vertue; and especially in patronizing learning and godlinesse *when they shall see that such a reward remaineth for them even in this present world.* [my emphasis]

Charke’s dedicatee was his aunt, Rebecca Romeney, and so he suggested that ‘the neernesse of bloud betwixt your Ladship and my selfe, will hardly suffer mee to say the one halfe of that which I might truely say’.⁵⁹ As Helen Smith has argued, to cite kinship with a dedicatee or to express the hope that a respected woman’s endorsement would encourage sales of a text was a way of attempting to prove that the patronage relationship that produced the dedication was appropriate.⁶⁰ Not every reader was convinced.

City patronage might be satirized as crude exchange, of money for flattery at best or engendering a corrupt relationship. John Webster and Thomas Dekker’s ‘Citty Poet’ in *Northward Hoe* was the hireling of whichever City lady ‘sends for him, about a sonnet or an epitaph for her child that died at nurse, or for some deuice about a maske or so’, who makes ‘many deuises for Cittizens wiues’ such as ‘twelue posies for a dozen of cheese trenchers’.⁶¹ John Danter, who had made a profuse dedication to Katharine Heyward in 1593, was by 1601 very

⁵⁸ H. Smith, *God’s arrowe against atheists* (1593), dedicatory epistle; P. Trodlander and Z. Tenger, *Sociable Criticism in England* (Newark, 2007), p. 32; G. Jenkins, ‘Smith, Henry (c.1560–1591)’, ODNB; P. Slack, ‘Hayward [Heyward], Sir Rowland (c.1520–1593)’, ODNB; G. Meurier, *The nosegay of moral philosophy* (1580), dedicatory epistle.

⁵⁹ P. Bayne, *A helpe to happinesse* (1618), [dedication by Ezekiel Charke], Sigs. A2v-A3r; J. McDermott, ‘Romney, Sir William (d. 1611)’, ODNB.

⁶⁰ H. Smith, *Grossly Material Things: Women and Book Production in early modern England* (Oxford, 2012), p. 69; P. de Mornay trans. A. Ratcliffe, *3 Homilies upon Psalm 55.22, John 14.27, Luke 10.42* (1626); P. Bayne, *Christian letters of Mr Paul Bayne* (1620).

⁶¹ T. Dekker and J. Webster, *Northward Hoe* (1607), Sigs. D4r, E3v-E4r; T. Gataker, *Ieroboam’s sonnes decease a funeral sermon* (1627).

frank about the fact that a dedication was a transaction for which he generally received ‘40 shillings and an odde pottle of wine’.⁶²

If laymen, relatives, and printers seemed to protest too much, preachers sought to counter accusations levelled at both preacher and patron, which suggested that their relationship itself formed the root of the ‘godly’ lay and clerical coalition sustaining the sway of hypocrisy in the City.⁶³ In 1579, the bookseller Edward White dedicated Thomas Salter’s *A mirror mete for all mothers, matrones, and maidens, the Mirrhor of Modestie* to Anne Lodge, ‘affirmyng that which is contenied therein (by your lyfe) to be laudable and also to incourage other by your supporte to followe your steps, to attain your atchieved fame’.⁶⁴ Salter did not hesitate to present Anne’s life as a manual to the practical steps other women could take to secure a commensurate virtuous reputation for themselves.⁶⁵ The atmosphere of accusation in London became increasingly tense in the early seventeenth century, and frankness about the practical reasons for praising women as models for civic virtue was cloaked under the insistence that sincere spiritual inspiration must be the sole grounds for praise and imitation. Every preacher sought to prove that it *was* his intimate relationship with the City lady which motivated his praise. A preacher’s congregation or readers could confirm his honesty by comparing his depiction with their own knowledge of his patroness.

Stephen Denison dedicated his ‘best-selling’ funeral sermon on Elizabeth Juxon in 1620 to her husband and her children, whom he knew ‘by five yeares experience, living in the house with her’ as the family chaplain. Denison confirmed the innocence of his relationship with Elizabeth, who died when she was only 27, by grounding their connection in his friendship with her husband and his tutorship of their children. He insisted that Elizabeth’s spiritual reflections on which his sermon was based were never meant to be publicly known, but that his estimation

⁶² Smith, *Grossly Material Things*, p. 74.

⁶³ Lake, *Lend Hat*, p. 549.

⁶⁴ A. McConnell ‘Lodge, Sir Thomas (1509/10–1585)’, ODNB.

⁶⁵ T. Salter, ... *the Mirrhor of Modestie* (1579), Sigs. A2r-v.

of her insights along with the example of her godly living justified his publication. Moreover, Denison implicitly argued that Elizabeth had been as vigilant against hypocritical patronage relationships as he:

she feared both the company and doctrine of such ministers, as she perceived would give her too much liberty...she delighted most in such conference, both at her table, and in company, which savoured of religion.⁶⁶

Detractors of funeral sermons saw them as relics of popish trental masses, indicative of flattery or worse, so those who preached funeral sermons on the lives of recently deceased citizens were obliged to defend their controversial choice of subject.⁶⁷ Patrick Collinson dismissed funeral sermons as a source that can yield little insight into the individual, who was invariably described in impersonal platitudes by a preacher who may have enjoyed an inappropriate relationship with his subject. Collinson's description of these 'affairs' conveyed much of the contemporary accusation that emotional intimacy between a wife and a man who was not her husband and with whom favours, of one sort or another, were exchanged, was a questionable basis for claims of moral and spiritual integrity.⁶⁸ Yet while 'lives' of women and funeral sermons alluded to a generalised model, individuation of the portrait of the deceased had to render these claims plausible to their family, the congregation and readers who would have known them or their general reputation.⁶⁹ Preachers engaged the prior knowledge of their audience. Thomas Gataker noted in his funeral sermon on his aunt Rebekah Crispe that she would prove an especially potent example to 'all those that here knew her, and who were continuall eye-witnesses' of her daily life.⁷⁰

⁶⁶ S. Denison, *The monument or tombe-stone...* (1620), Sigs. A2v-A4v, pp. 83, 97; I. Green, *Print and Protestantism in early modern England* (Oxford, 2000), pp. 203-5.

⁶⁷ P. Collinson, *The Elizabethan Puritan Movement* (1982), p. 370; Collinson, *Birthpangs*, p. 75; P. Marshall, *Beliefs and the Dead in Reformation England* (Oxford, 2002), pp. 156-61.

⁶⁸ P. Collinson, 'A Magazine of religious patterns: an Erasmian topic transposed in English protestantism', in his *Godly People: essays on English protestantism and puritanism* (1983), and *Birthpangs*, p. 143; A. Porterfield, 'Women's Attraction to Puritanism', *Church History*, 60 (1991), pp. 196-209.

⁶⁹ Lake, 'Feminine Piety and Personal Potency', pp. 143, 160-1.

⁷⁰ T. Gataker, *Two Funeral Sermons*, Sig. A4 r. On the preacher's portrait of the deceased compared by the congregation with their own estimation of character, see: Orlin, 'Character of Sir Martin Barnham', l. 616-20.

Such funeral sermons, dedications and lives claimed to be sufficient advertisement and memorialization of a woman's deeds during her life and posthumously, yet City women also promoted their own reputations.⁷¹ Thomas Adams' sermon on *The White Devil* of hypocrisy, preached at Paul's Cross in 1612, addressed futile self-aggrandisement directly: 'I speake to you settled Citizens...You loose your charitie whiles you giue glosingly, illiberally, too late: not a window you haue erected, but must beare your names'.⁷² Hester Crispe's vault and monuments to her parents, her husband and her children dominated St Mildred Bread Street. The windows at the upper end of the chancel glazed in 1629 recorded that Hester had born the cost of the monuments and that she oversaw their upkeep. In 1630 with her son Nicholas, Hester erected five panes commemorating the providential delivery of England from popish threats since the Armada, of which the fifth was a portrait of Nicholas.⁷³ Heywood had characterised his Dean Nowell with the established refrain against self-aggrandising funeral monuments, warning Gresham and Ramsey that charitable works, effected throughout one's life and not merely on one's deathbed, were the surest monuments to posterity.⁷⁴ Yet women's civic reputation rested as much on their conduct as wives and widows and their spiritual example as on their public works. The praise of others, which women should not appear to court, would confirm these qualities as the ultimate *monument or tombe-stone* or *Epitaph*, as many of the texts were entitled.⁷⁵

Aldermen's wives were scrutinized, whether through direct observation in their daily lives or through reading of the texts written to or about them. This surveillance informed and entitled the public, in and beyond the City, to judge how fit a woman was to exercise the

⁷¹ P. Sherlock, *Monuments and Memory in early modern England* (Aldershot, 2008), pp. 12-13; Marshall, *Beliefs and the Dead*, pp. 33, 276-84.

⁷² T. Adams, *The white deuil, or The hypocrite vncased* (1613), p. 26.

⁷³ Stow, *Survey* (1633), pp. 859-60.

⁷⁴ Heywood, *If You Know Not Me* (1606), I. 8. l. 1240-1; Archer, 'Charity of Early Modern Londoners', pp. 238-9, and 'The arts and acts of memorialization', p. 103; R. Houlbrooke, *Death, Religion and the Family in England, 1480-1750* (Oxford, 1998), pp. 61-2.

⁷⁵ J. Phillips, *Epitaph on the death of the virtuous Matrone, the Ladie Mayoress...Agnes Avenon* (1570); Bourman, *Epitaph*; Phillips, *A commemoration*; S.P., *An epiftaph*; Hervey, *Epicedium*; Denison, *...tombe-stone*.

influence that her status afforded her.⁷⁶ Aldermen's wives and their families accepted that the most effective defence of an individual woman's character was as an exception.

There were women in London who defended the reputation of their sex collectively, such as Rachel Speght, daughter of James Speght the Calvinist minister of St Mary Magdalen Milk Street and St Clement Eastcheap. Rachel may have known Elizabeth Hicks, and her husband the alderman Baptist, to whom her father dedicated his *The day-spring of Comfort preached before the Lord Maior and Aldermen* (1615), thanking them for showing 'undeserved kindnesse to me-wards (more like the kindnesse of Parents then meere friends)'.⁷⁷ Two years later, aged 19, Rachel became the first female polemicist to use her own name in published refutations of the misogynist tracts of Joseph Swetnam, but her arguments in defence of the female sex as a whole were not those pursued in the City where virtuous women were praised as exceptional examples in terms of essentially traditional virtues. Stephen Denison claimed that though Elizabeth Juxon had once been a sinner, after her conversion 'such things as a carnall hypocrite would have esteemed but mores...she esteemed them beames', making spiritual examinations of her own behaviour and checking that of her household.⁷⁸ Preachers argued that through vigilance against sin, the truly godly City lady was not the ultimate hypocrite but hypocrisy's fiercest opponent.

The tarnish of hypocrisy that tainted godliness proved irremovable. Even the life most apt to be praised according to the ideal might not satisfy members of a congregation whose memories allowed them to compare a woman's life before and after she claimed to be godly, and who considered the sermon itself to be hypocritical. Elizabeth Juxon had once mocked the godly, and the carnal friends she abandoned after her conversion 'exceedingly wronged her by

⁷⁶ P. Lake and M. Questier, 'Puritans, Papists and the Public Sphere', *Journal of Modern History*, 72 (2000), p. 590; P. Lake and S. Pincus (eds.), 'Rethinking the Public Sphere in early modern England', in their *The Politics of the Public Sphere in early modern England* (Manchester, 2007), p. 6.

⁷⁷ J. Speght, *The day-spring of comfort A sermon preached before the Lord Maior and Aldermen of London on Sunday the 6. of Ianuary, Anno 1610* (1615); R. Speght, *A mouzell for Melastomus, the cynicall bayter of, and foule mouthed barker against Euahs sex. Or an apologeticall answere to that irreligious and illiterate pamphlet made by Io. Sw. and by him intituled, The arraignment of women* (1616); R. Ashton, 'Hicks, Baptist, first Viscount Campden (1551?–1629)', ODNB; B. Lewalski, 'Speght [married name Procter], Rachel (b. 1597?, d. in or before 1661?)', ODNB.

⁷⁸ Denison, *...tombe-stone*, pp. 83, 89, 90-1, 97, 102, 109, 114.

their slanderous tongues', yet she never publicly rebuked them, despite her 'very cholericke' nature. Denison emphasized that Elizabeth's zeal was contained within the parish community, for she was carried on a chair to the parish church to worship amongst them even when she was ill. He sought to save Elizabeth from accusations of hypocrisy by noting that she maintained the company of the godly and separated herself from the profane.⁷⁹ Denison attempted to demonstrate that Elizabeth's conversion had eschewed, rather than courted, worldly interest. He insisted that in the preservation of her own godliness, Elizabeth was far from 'the contemping of Gods deare children'.⁸⁰ Denison's idea of a defence of his patroness missed its mark with an audience beyond the godly community. Denison defended Elizabeth against charges of scorning other zealous Christians whose godly piety differed from her own, but not from reviling the community around her in general.

In a London where some citizens no longer thought it necessary to vaunt their goodwill to one another, even charitable mercies could fail to demonstrate love for one's neighbour.⁸¹ Denison recounted Elizabeth's generous charity to her community as a testament of faith, but his account of her attitude of thinly veiled scorn towards fellow parishioners suggests that, like Earle's 'Shee-Hypocrite,' she dismissed them as reprobates whose salvation seemed 'as desperate as [that of] the Turkes'.⁸²

Suspensions that godliness itself might be feigned, and that such feigning qualified one as member of the Protestant elite, corroded the social bond that charitable giving sought to inscribe in the City, expressing not a duty of care fulfilled, but a contempt for the receiver.⁸³ Not everyone in the City was convinced by the claims of the elite that they could maintain

⁷⁹ Collinson, *Puritan Movement*, p. 26; P. Collinson, *The Puritan Character: polemics and polarities in early seventeenth-century English Culture* (Pasadena, 1989), p. 30; P. Lake, 'William Bradshaw, Antichrist, and the Community of the Godly', *JEH*, 36 (1985), p. 572.

⁸⁰ Denison, *...tombe-stone*, pp. 88, 103; see also Ch. V.

⁸¹ S. Brigden, 'Religion and Social Obligation in Early Sixteenth-Century London', *P&P*, 103 (1984), pp. 67, 68, 102, and *London and the Reformation* (Oxford, 1989), pp. 26, 28; Lake, *Leind Hat*, p. 350.

⁸² Earle, *Microcosmographie*, Sig. G3v.

⁸³ I. Archer, *The Pursuit of Stability: social relations in Elizabethan London* (Cambridge, 1991), pp. 92-99.

somewhat socially separate godly lives, whilst also sustaining an attitude towards their neighbours that was charitable and civic; many regarded this as the heart of their hypocrisy.

iii) City comedy

Aldermen's wives were held to the reputation that their City status required them to pursue. The ideal of the godly City lady projected by the elite had been at odds with observable reality in the City since its earliest inception. Stephen Gosson dedicated his *The Schoole of Abuse* (1579) to the Mayor and Aldermen, and also to 'the Gentlewomen Citizens of London', urging those who had not learned to 'abhorre Playes' to follow those who had and 'withdrawe your steppes...if you be chary of your good name [my emphasis]'.⁸⁴ Patrick Collinson argued that in understanding the way puritans were characterised, 'the critical variable is not so much the subject labelled as the social audience, which may be defined as society at large, or as those individuals with whom the subject is in daily interaction'.⁸⁵ What Peter Lake has called the 'popular' public in London formed an overlapping audience which consumed printed literature, heard sermons at Paul's Cross and the Spittle, and observed aldermen's wives in their duties and communities — at parish services, at lectures, at dinners, in civic processions, at funerals, even in supposedly 'private' spaces.⁸⁶ What intensified after c.1605 was the

struggle between the moralised, incipiently godly pamphlet and the drama, indeed between the pulpit and the stage, over a common body of traditional or popular assumptions, narrative habits and patterns.⁸⁷

The rival appeal of the playhouse concerned preachers. In 1607, Robert Wilkinson complained at Paul's Cross that 'Men come now adaies to a sermon as to a play', expecting the entertainment

⁸⁴ J. Howard, 'Cross Dressing, the Theatre, and Gender Struggle in early modern England', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 39 (1988), p. 440. On aldermen's attitude towards theatre, see: I. Archer, 'The City of London and the Theatre', in R. Dutton (ed.), *Handbook of Early Modern Theatre* (Oxford, 2009), esp. pp. 398-99, 410-12; I. Archer, 'Swinnerton, Sir John (bap. 1564, d. 1616)', *ODNB*; Lake, *Levd Hat*, pp. 487-92; S. Gosson, *The schoole of abuse* (1579), Sigs. C6r, F1v, F2r.

⁸⁵ Collinson, *Puritan Character*, p. 22.

⁸⁶ A. Gurr, *Playgoing in Shakespeare's London* (1987), p. 106; T. Middleton, *The Puritan Widow* (1607), II. i. 288-90; L. Orlin, *Locating Privacy in Tudor London* (Oxford, 2007).

⁸⁷ Lake, *Levd Hat*, pp. 360, 377, 425-30.

of novelty.⁸⁸ The playgoers whom Gosson called on to judge the aldermen's wives for their attendance at theatres were the same public who were invoked to judge the ideal of the godly City lady against real City ladies in dedications and funeral sermons.

Playgoers in London were used to the stage puritan which followed their characterization in the Marprelate tracts, which was fundamental to securing the idea of the puritan as 'self righteous and self serving hypocrite', barely concealing the truth.⁸⁹ When the theatres reopened after almost a decade, the stage hypocrite was updated on the stages of the boys' companies at Paul's and Blackfriars. Acute observational comedy drew on shared knowledge of these real City women and the ideal, to send up the discrepancy between present grandeur and modest beginnings.⁹⁰ Thomas Dekker reminded audiences that before Margery Eyre ever wore the 'French-hood' with which she seemed obsessed as a marker of status, she could be found 'selling tripes in Eastcheap'.⁹¹ Thomas Middleton's exaggeration of the humbleness of Jane Lucre's origins, reminded his audience that ladies fond of airs and graces once had none: 'Thou'rt a fine cook, I know't/ Thy first husband married thee out of an alderman's kitchen. Go to!/ Most of our beginnings must be winked at'.⁹² Far from separating themselves socially from the ungodly, the aldermen's wives of the City comedies partook in the mercantile, sexualised world of the workshop, 'where a man may be made a cuckold at one end, while he's measuring with his yard at t'other'.⁹³ Stage City ladies abused their wealth and position, using their household authority and keeping of keys to facilitate liaisons with gallants,

⁸⁸ Wilkinson, *Lot's Wife*, Sigs. C1V-2 (pp. 10-11).

⁸⁹ P. Collinson, 'Ecclesiastical vitriol: religious satire in the 1590s and the invention of Puritanism', in J. Guy (ed.), *The Reign of Elizabeth I* (Cambridge, 1995), pp. 154-167, and *Puritan Character*, p. 21, and 'The theatre constructs puritanism', in D. Smith (ed.), *Theatrical City* (1995), p. 168; Lake, *Levd Hat*, pp. 514, 526-7, 538-50; I. Archer, 'Religious Identities', in S. Gossett (ed.), *Thomas Middleton in Context* (Cambridge, 2011), p. 136.

⁹⁰ T. Heywood, *Troia Britannica* (1608), pp. 89-90, stanzas 50-4; W. Holden, *Anti-Puritan Satire, 1572-1642* (1954), p. 76. On the boys' companies, see: L. Manley, *Literature and culture in early modern England* (Cambridge, 1995), p. 469. See also: T. Dekker, *The Shoemaker's Holiday* (1599), x. 36-51, 147-53; vii. 69; T. Middleton, *A Trick to Catch the Old One* (1605), IV. ii. 70-5.

⁹¹ T. Dekker, *The Shoemaker's Holiday* (1599), x. 36-51, 147-53; vii. 69.

⁹² T. Middleton, *A Trick to Catch the Old One*, IV. ii. 70-5.

⁹³ T. Middleton, *Michelmass Term* (1605), II. iii. 1. 36-9.

and using their personal effects — ‘My cambric apron, and my Romish gloves,/ My purple stockings, and a stomacher’ — to bribe maids to act as go-betweens.⁹⁴ Lordling Barry embodied the wealthy puritan lady’s janus-faced hypocrisy by naming his alderman’s wife in *Ram Alley* (1611) ‘Changeable Taffetta’ after a favoured luxury fabric. She is a glutton with as much a nose for a rich meal as a good sermon and ‘with ease can smell, / An edefying capon some fiue streets off’.⁹⁵ John Earle agreed that the only thing a godly City lady loved more than religion was food, and that being unable to preach in Church, the ‘Shee-Hypocrite’ sermonized ‘at the Table, where she prattles more then any against sense, and Antichrist, till a Capon wing silence her’.⁹⁶

Specific virtues extolled in lives, funeral sermons and dedications that appear oddly chosen reflected the anxiety of the godly about everyday sins, and answered accusations of vices in which playgoers and readers knew the godly to indulge. In his dedication to Katharine Heyward, John Danter’s account of her reading a text on atheism and irreligion of a leisurely evening sought to set her apart from citizens’ wives who preferred ‘wanton pamphlets, as Hero and Leander, Venus/ and Adonis, O two luscious mary-bone lies for a young/married wife!’⁹⁷ Stephen Denison made much of Elizabeth Juxon’s early rising, citing as evidence that she was not among the ‘simpering merchant’s wives...the fairest liers in the world’, who like Dekker’s Margery Eyre ‘marvel how many wives in Tower Street are up so soon. God’s me, ‘tis not noon!’⁹⁸

It became a trope of City comedies that the hypocrisy of the elite was an open secret. Plays in which a husband tests his wife’s fidelity, often through feigning his own death, assumed

⁹⁴ T. Middleton, *The Puritan Widow* (1607), I. i. 88-91.

⁹⁵ L. Barry, *Ram-Alley* (1611), Sig. B3v.

⁹⁶ Earle, *Microcosmographie*, Sigs. G3r-v.

⁹⁷ See n. 49. T. Middleton, *A Mad World, My Masters* (1605), I. ii. 46-9; H. Smith, ‘More swete vnto the eare / than holosome for ye mynde’: Embodying Early Modern Women’s Reading’, *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 73 (2010), pp. 491-20. Marrowbone was believed to possess aphrodisiacal properties, and so Middleton suggests that the female readers of romance will be made more susceptible to concupiscence by it.

⁹⁸ Denison, *tombe-stone...*, pp. 90-1; T. Dekker, *The Gull’s Hornbook* (1609, repr. 1812), p. 62; Dekker, *The Shoemaker’s Holiday* (1599), iii. 33-5.

that the aldermen, knowing their wives to be well practised in duplicity, suspected that they themselves were being duped. City comedies played by the boys' companies satirized the chaste wife and dutiful widow, depicting her pursuing long-laid plans for advancement or overcome with lust.⁹⁹ Chapman's *Widow* had once rejected 'that incestuous life (as she termed it) of widows' marriages, as being but a kind of/lawful adultery, like usury permitted by the law, not approved'. She had claimed 'that to wed a second was no better than to cuckold the first' when her husband was alive, yet she proved quick to remarry.¹⁰⁰

When dealing with widowhood City plays often focused on the liminal moment of the funeral. Pomp and display signalled both the measure of a widow's regard for her late husband and her mourning advertised her availability to new suitors, a period during which the maintenance of proper appearances might conceal anything, including the subversion of his will.¹⁰¹ In the stage directions for *The Puritan Widow*, Middleton sought to recreate standardized mourning behaviour when the Lady Plus enters in funeral blacks, 'wringing her/hands, and bursting out into a passion, as newly come from the Buriall of her husband.'¹⁰² In *The Widow's Tears* Chapman's focus on suspicion and deception draws biting comment from the men on 'how short-lived widows' tears are, that their weeping is in truth but laughing under a mask, that they mourn in their gowns, and laugh in their sleeves'.¹⁰³ The 'characters' printed with Sir Thomas Overbury's poem on the qualities of the ideal wife concluded in 1616 that

An ordinary widow is like the Heralds Hearse-cloath; she serues to many funerals, with a very little altering the colour. The end of her Husband begins in teares; and the end of her teares beginnes in a Husband.¹⁰⁴

The test that Quomodo sets for Thomasine in Middleton's *Michelmass Term*, is to gauge

⁹⁹ G. Chapman, *The Widow's Tears*, I. i. 99-144. On the differing treatment of women on the childrens' stages see: B. van Es, *Shakespeare in Company* (Oxford, 2013), pp. 200, 217-8; Gurr, *Playgoing*, pp. 72-5, 153-8.

¹⁰⁰ Chapman, *Widow's Tears*, II. iv. 23-30.

¹⁰¹ T. Overbury, *Sir Thomas Overburie his wife* (1616), Sigs. L3r-L5r: 'A vertuous widow' and 'An ordinary widow'.

¹⁰² Middleton, *Puritan Widow*, I. i. 2-7.

¹⁰³ Chapman, *Widow's Tears*, I, i, 138-44.

¹⁰⁴ Overbury, *Sir Thomas Overburie*, Sig. L4r.

how pitiful my wife takes my/death, which will appear by November in her eye, and/
the fall of the leaf in her body, but especially by the cost/she bestows upon my funeral,
there shall I try her love/ and regard... I am as jealous of this land as of my wife, to
know what would become of it after my decease.

Middleton suggested that aldermen reliant on the trustworthiness of their wives as executors were too willing to believe the best of them. Thomasine's funeral arrangements — 'The livery all assembled, mourning weeds/'Throughout his house e'en down to his last servant, /The herald richly hired to lend him arm' — form the basis of Quomodo's trust in her.¹⁰⁵ Though these plots gave rise to comedy, the plays offer embittered judgements of a rich wife emancipated and powerful as a widow, stopping not 'in/effect, to prostitute herself upon her husband's coffin!'¹⁰⁶ The anxiety of husbands, their pervading mistrust of their wives, and the desire for surveillance expressed in plays satirized the aldermen's own response to their kinswomen's actions.

iv) Civic duty

Women who as wives may have appeared to represent the ideal, as widows might fulfil its antitype, by transgressing the boundaries of how the ideal insisted aldermen's wives should conduct themselves. Women used their own reputations to attempt to redefine their relationship with the City and its ideal, and were able to employ leverage from powers beyond the City elite when the aldermen abused them to save their own reputations.

Aldermen's wives, as well as their widows, were capable of conducting themselves in ways that made it impossible to describe them as ideal. Paul Bayning was far from an ideal alderman.¹⁰⁷ After he accused his wife Susanna of adultery in 1594 and ejected her from their home, for a decade she pursued maintenance, access to her child, and reconciliation, with the support of the Bishop of London, the Lord Treasurer, High Commission, Parliament and the

¹⁰⁵ Middleton, *Michelmas Term*, V. iii. 4-8.

¹⁰⁶ Chapman, *Widow's Tears*, V. ii. 41-4. For a comedic funeral scene: Middleton, *Michelmas Term*, IV. iv.

¹⁰⁷ I. Archer, 'Bayning, Paul (c.1539–1616)', ODNB; *The Letters of John Chamberlain* ed. N. McClure, (Philadelphia, 1939), I, p. 144.

King.¹⁰⁸ Ursula Walsingham, widow of Sir Francis, wrote to High Commission in August 1598 to vouch for her friend's reputation as a 'poor, distressed and disgraced gentlewoman ... helpless (though I hope guiltless)'.¹⁰⁹ John Manningham claimed that Paul's attempt to retire from the aldermanry in 1602 was to prevent the inevitable situation that Susanna would become Lady Mayoress if he was Mayor.¹¹⁰

In her 'submission', sent to Sir Julius Caesar in April 1604 after Paul brought a bill against her in Parliament, Susanna presented herself as the chaste, submissive wife of the ideal, suffering Paul's persecution and neglect:

upon my knees with cares...I have solecettred his favour by many petyful letters...I was inforced by affection I loved him so dearly...I will not goe out of the Sety upon any such...but doe her purpose to contynewe in that he never gave me one grot.

Susanna intimated that Paul had slandered her amongst the aldermen who attempted to intimidate her, by politely acknowledging that the involvement in her case of Alderman Sir John Watts, to whose son Paul was godfather, was at Caesar's discretion, adding 'I doe not wright to Sir John Watts for that I have been abused by him and his'. Confident of the strength of her City reputation beyond the City's jurisdiction, Susanna set her own terms — full vindication of her honour and status:

It need be no long matter mad of it to knowe his answer first himselfe doe knowe that a wife he hath had of me the tryall 14 yeares the want of me he have had experience nyne years tyme injoyne to bethink himself of some Resolution...unless I maye injoye him as a loving husband I will never desyer to live with him.¹¹¹

There is more evidence that women resisted the circumscriptions which the ideal of the godly City lady sought to impose on their freedom of action as widows than they did as wives. Anne Gresham resented the responsibilities with which Sir Thomas Gresham's unfinished business encumbered her widowhood.¹¹² In 1580, a year after Sir Thomas Gresham died, the

¹⁰⁸ BL MS Add., 161/68, fols. 189r-190r.

¹⁰⁹ Salisbury MSS, 7.317.

¹¹⁰ *The Letters of John Chamberlain* ed. McClure, I, p. 144.

¹¹¹ BL, MS Add. 161/68, fo. 158r.

¹¹² Thomas Gresham was never an alderman, though he occupied the same social and kinship group: I. Archer,

Mercers and the City asked Anne to assure their interests in the Exchange, to which she had been granted the rents for life, and which were then settled by an Act of Parliament. Anne had been saddled with responsibility for the upkeep of the Exchange along with a grant of the rents for life, both of which on her death would pass to the Mercers and the City. They were highly suspicious of her sense of civic responsibility, seeking an assurance of their interests too through another Act of Parliament in 1580.¹¹³ Between 1581-6, Anne's neglect resulted in the physical decay of the structure of the Exchange. The Privy Council wrote to her, initially citing her husband's memory and finally the offence taken by the Queen, to encourage her to fund repairs for which the rents, a fraction of her yearly income, would amply pay.¹¹⁴ As an alderman's widow, Anne was by her behaviour a civic disgrace:

the deformytye of so bewtifull a monument lyenge open to the viewe of people not onelie of the wholl lande, but of manye other nations reparyenge to the cytye, to the dishonour of her Majestie.

The Council stated the benefits which the City afforded aldermen's wives in exchange for their civic responsibility and accused Anne of a dereliction of duty: 'Wee doe not a little marveylye...especiallye considering besides other meanes used unto you on the behalf of the Cytye'. The Council were anxious that Anne should not succeed in leaving the repairs until the others were liable and insisted that 'the same is during your life by you to be performed'.¹¹⁵ Anne used her own reputation and the scandal that her neglect of the Exchange brought on the City to parley a compromise. In April 1586, the Council received a letter from the Lord Mayor stating that Anne claimed that she had already paid £50 towards the repairs 'and that the decaye grewe of the unskillfullness and defaulte of the workmen'; 'she is contented to beare one thirde part of the said reparations', the remainder covered by the Mercers and the Corporation. This was

'Gresham, Sir Thomas (c.1518–1579)', *ODNB*; I. Doolittle, *The Mercers' Company, 1579-1959* (Leeds, 1994), pp. 33-7.

¹¹³ A. Saunders. 'The Building of The Royal Exchange' in her *The Royal Exchange* (1997), pp. 46-7.

¹¹⁴ TNA, PC 2/13 (1581), fo. 419.

¹¹⁵ TNA, SP 12/187 (March 1586), fo. 129.

agreed and the work begun.¹¹⁶ When Anne attempted to divert the inheritance of the rents and leases of the exchange to her heirs by Act of Parliament in 1592, the aldermen claimed that her request was ‘against all reason and equitie’ since the citizens of London had purchased the land and conveyed it to Gresham. The aldermen closed ranks against Anne’s attempt to redefine the terms of her civic service in a way that would be more profitable to her. They assured Anne of what she was due by the will during her life and no more.¹¹⁷

Anne also embodied the anxieties of aldermen over wives whose first priorities were their own children. Sir Thomas Gresham had made no provision for the children of Anne’s first marriage, choosing his niece instead as his heir. In 1586 the Council was petitioned by Sir Henry Neville to secure a legacy made by Sir Thomas Gresham to Neville’s daughter, Gresham’s great niece, because Anne ‘pretendeth that she hath not inough to answer the legacies over and above the debts of the said Thomas’. The following year Anne was asked to pay the legacy or appear before Star Chamber, to which she was duly called in 1588.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁶ TNA, PC 2/14 (28 June 1586), fo. 135.

¹¹⁷ BL, MS Lans. 73 (1593), fo. 47.

¹¹⁸ TNA, PC 2/15 (5 Feb 1587), fo. 51; TNA PC 2/15 (28 April 1588), fo. 129.



Figure 7. Anne Gresham by Antonio Moro, c. 1560-5, oil on canvas, 88 x 75.5cm, Rijksmuseum.

Sir Thomas Gresham's illegitimate daughter had been provided for by marriage, but the son he fathered on a maidservant who was quickly married to another servant, John Markham, threatened the inheritance of William Reade, Anne's son from her first marriage, to the tune of £600 a year plus arrears by 1597.¹¹⁹ Anne therefore sought to subvert the private wishes of her husband too. With the aid of her daughter-in-law and grandson from her first marriage, who lived with her at Osterley, Anne implicated Markham in a robbery at her house. As Markham was illiterate, Anne hired a clergyman and a vintner, 'common cozeners of very lewd behaviour' for £2,000 to overthrow the deeds of rent-charges from Gresham lands and force a scrivener to make false entries claiming that the money had already been paid to Markham. The forgeries included the counterfeiting of the Gresham grasshopper crest and the Mercers' seals.¹²⁰ The Attorney General originally entered a cross-bill in Anne's name against Markham, but in November 1595 with Anne's eroded reputation indefensible the scrivener was pardoned of the accusations Anne made against him in Star Chamber, and of the risk of having his ears cut in the pillory.¹²¹ Ian Blanchard has characterised the Greshams' marriage as one of 'close relations', yet aldermen witnessing Anne's example might have suspected even the most faithful wives of becoming scheming widows in time.

The City patriarchy expressed a *prima facie* mistrust of its wives and updated the Custom which attempted to enforce their loyalty and obedience, on which the City depended to maintain its reputation.¹²² The inheritances belonging to 'orphans', the children of deceased freemen of the City, paid into the Chamber until their majorities or marriages, financed the Corporation which ensured that orphans, and their wealth, remained within London, safeguarded from unscrupulous relatives and executors. These basic arrangements were established in the late

¹¹⁹ Saunders, 'Building of The Royal Exchange', pp. 36, 46. On the Reads' connection to the Greshams see: ODNB sv. Thomas Gresham, by I. Blanchard. See also: TNA, PC 2/15 (5 Feb 1587), fo. 51; TNA, PC 2/15 (28 April 1588), fo. 129; M. Riordan, 'Henry Neville (c. 1520-1593)', ODNB.

¹²⁰ TNA, SP 12/261 (1596), fo. 101.

¹²¹ TNA, SP 12/254 (Nov.? 1595), fo. 155; TNA, SP 12/255 (5 Dec 1595), fo. 5.

¹²² C. Carleton, *The Court of Orphans* (1974), esp. pp. 42-5, 51, 56, 58, 67, 70.

thirteenth century, but forthcoming research suggests that the more stringent provisions were not codified before the sixteenth century.¹²³ The Court of Orphans recognised the reliance of freemen on their wives, assuming that ‘the mother, or mother in Law, [would be] Executrix of the last Will and Testament of her late husband’ because women, as dependents as well as confidants, made the most trusted executors and guardians. The Court expressed a deep suspicion of widows, firstly because of the high incidence of remarriage to men of questionable intention towards their step-children’s inheritances. Yet the greatest suspicions touched the widows themselves, who were required to turn in an inventory:

many times they (either for feare or affection of their husbands, or for some other sinister cause) doe bring in very suspicious Inventories, omitting therein either ready Money, Plate, Iewels, or Debts, or some other thing or things, whereby some benefit should redound to the fatherlesse children, to the great losse and hinderance of the Orphanes, and sometimes slander to the Lord Maior and Aldermen of the City, notwithstanding their great care and travaile that they take for the good ordering, and true answering of the said Orphanes.¹²⁴

The customary City laws that have been characterized as generous and favourable to women convey a deep unease with the power of widows loosed from the guardianship of their husbands, and a willingness to act punitively against any women who transgressed from their familial and civic roles. The Court warned women that there was no way to circumvent its control without dire consequences, for which the customary law made equal provision. Any woman failing to turn in an inventory:

before she do ensure her selfe in marriage, or contract marriage...perfectly solemnize or consummate marriage... every person so offending, shall forfait and lose eight shillings of every pound, of her Portion, of the goods of her late Husband, due to her by the laudable Custome of the said City, the same to goe to the use of such Orphane, or Orphanes, as then shall bee intituled to have or demand any Orphanage or Portion, after the death of his or her late Father... by Bill originall of debt, to bee commenced in our Sovereigne Lord the Kings Court, holden in the vtter Chamber of the Guild-Hall of the said City, before the Lord Maior and Aldermen of the same City.¹²⁵

¹²³ A. Sykes, ‘Civic attitude to urban wardship: an appraisal of the practice of the Court of Orphans in later medieval London’, The Child in the Pre-Modern Town, Pre-Modern Towns Conference, IHR, London, unpublished paper read 26 January 2014.

¹²⁴ Stow, *A survey of London* (1633), p. 661. See also: Overbury, *his wife* (1616), Sig. L4v.

¹²⁵ Stow, *A survey of London* (1633), p. 663.

For the aldermen to articulate the aggression of its attitude towards women was rare. When the City elite made public statements about its wives and widows, in dedications, funeral sermons, lives, verse epitaphs, portraits, funeral monuments, the ideal of the godly City lady created and sustained therein presented women with rewards for compliance. The offer could appear generous, applying to all women who lived within the parameters of what could be praised according to the ideal. These texts and images, produced by the elite, engaged the 'popular' public yet remained silent on the consequences of the ideal of the godly City lady for women who violated its principles and boundaries.

Other Londoners were more vocal, and elite women in London gauged their own reputation in the City as they heard it estimated in the streets. Middleton's Mistress Harebrain complained that a husband's presence alone offered her some protection from the malice of the citizens: 'our attires are taxed, our very gait/Is called in question, where a husband's presence/scatters such thoughts, or makes 'em sink for fear/Into the hearts that breed 'em.' Thomas Heywood's portrait of Mary Ramsey's relationship with Dean Nowell suggests that preachers at least were more frank with elite women face to face about their options and the stark effects of their choices. Having moved Ramsey to model her life on the example of the women whose portraits he keeps, Nowell seals her commitment to this ideal:

If you will now follow the religious path,
That these have beat before you, you shall have heaven.
Even in the mid-day walkes you shall not walke the street,
But widows orisons, Laysars prayers, Orphanes thanks,
Will fly into your eares, and with a joyfull blush,
Make you thanke God that you have done for them:
When otherwise theil fill your eares with curses
Crying we feed on woe, you are our Nurses
O ist not better that yong couples say,
You rais'd us up, then you were our decay:
And mothers teach their first born to sing,
Of your good deeds, then by the bad to wring.¹²⁶

¹²⁶ Middleton, *Mad World* (1605), III. i. 116-9; Heywood, *If You Know Not Me* (1606), I. vi. 854-65.

Conclusion

The tradition of idealizing elite female civic virtue in London that developed between c. 1580 and 1630 gradually established personal godliness as the qualification for praise. The marital status of aldermen's wives brought with it a public profile and civic responsibilities alongside their household and family ones. The ideal sought to stabilize a volatile mixture of commonplaces, about women and about puritans, which became authoritative in London. Individual women's godliness was offered as proof that they embodied vigilance *against* the hypocrisy that was rife in the City, justifying their authority over children and servants in aldermanic households, and their wider influence in London that made them models for praise and imitation. The ideal achieved sufficient recognition that its terms defined what an alderman's wife *should* be. Like Heywood's Nowell, the ideal presented City ladies with a false choice. The aldermen preferred to present the ideal as an offer of a civic career that could win women lasting fame, and only considered the shortcomings of their wives privately. When the ideal was rejected or attacked it threatened consequences for women and the City, and yet it was exploited both within the City and beyond its jurisdiction, to vindicate or condemn aldermen's kinswomen beyond their control.

Chapter III Preambles to Wills and the Spectrum of Belief

Ian Archer has lamented that even for relatively well known male figures amongst the civic elite in the seventeenth century, such as Rowland Heyward, their religious identity can remain ‘maddeningly elusive’.¹ The problem is only multiplied for their wives of aldermen, and there are limits to what we can know of the religious belief and practice of even the best documented among them.

Moreover, for the governing elite as a whole, the moderation of belief and of zeal within the Church of England required by law was an expression of the moderation and homogenous cohesion that secured good governance and the semi-official position of aldermen’s wives in the City. We should not see this position as inconsistent with the patronage of clergy, at either end of the spectrum, who were far more divisive, particularly as conformity made different demands on women and men. In their civic attitude towards religion, the London elite was not alone.²

London was a heartland of both the Catholic and Separatist underground, as well as an arena of persecution.³ Almost without exception, the kinswomen of the civic elite attended Church of England services, in conformity with their husbands and were observed at civic services there. The question for the historian then is how to smoke out women’s sympathies within conformity across the spectrum — church papists, Calvinists of different complexions, puritans, anti-puritans, anti-Calvinists, antinomians, even Familists.⁴ How the historian might

¹ I. Archer, ‘The City of London and the Theatre’, in R. Dutton (ed.), *Handbook of Early Modern Theatre* (Oxford, 2009), p. 408.

² M. McClendon, *The quiet Reformation: magistrates and the emergence of Protestantism in Tudor Norwich* (Stanford CA, 1999); L. Abrey, *The People’s Reformation: magistrates, clergy and commons in Strasbourg, 1500-1598* (Oxford, 1985), p. 178; L. Orlin, *Locating Privacy in Tudor London* (Oxford, 2007), pp. 59-62.

³ P. Collinson, *The Elizabethan Puritan Movement* (1982), pp.317-29, 385-431; A. Marotti, *Religious Ideology and Cultural Fantasy: Catholic and Anti-Catholic Discourses in Early Modern England* (Notre Dame, 2005), pp. 33-4.

⁴ See Ch. I.

best approach the inner life of women whose religious belief is especially elusive, might have been unconfessed even to themselves, and was rarely set in stone?

Against the representation of women by others, invariably by men, women's wills offer a unique opportunity to measure women's depiction of their own religious identity. Historians have amassed reasonable objections to and guidelines for the use of preambles as 'testaments of individual faith', but this chapter seeks to show that they are an invaluable source, especially when used in combination with the rest of the will and external source material.⁵ This is particularly important in the study of women, for the preamble may often be the only extant religious text written by them, or by someone they trusted, and the will the only historical source.

There are limits to what this brief chapter seeks to achieve. Analysis has revealed no Catholics amongst the testators, and therefore the spectrum of belief dealt with here is a Protestant one.⁶ Catholic women are the subject of Chapter VIII.

Preambles—at their most perfunctory as at their most fulsome—are almost always a revealing record. Further information about individual women mentioned is offered in the subsequent sections and chapters. The questions and conclusions of this section are suggestive, to be read in the context of the full range of source material which throws back light on the doctrinal statements of preambles considered here through an analysis of the practices of piety at home and in the community, of charity and of kinship, in the changing religious and political climate in London c. 1580-1630.

The use of preambles to wills as evidence of an individual's religious position has long created controversy amongst historians of early modern England, since A.G Dickens first raised

⁵ S. Brigden, *London and the Reformation* (Oxford, 1989), p. 29.

⁶ Save Barbara Champion, a Catholic whose preamble simply leaves her soul to God: see Ch. VIII.

concerns.⁷ Margaret Spufford questioned assumptions that preambles were composed by testators unmediated, by considering the effect of scribal influence on villagers' wills, a theme pursued by J. D. Alsop on the use of formulae for preambles that could obscure the testator's voice entirely, challenged by Christopher Marsh who emphasised choice, and Caroline Litzenberger who warned that preambles might be formulated with an eye to official religious policy.⁸ Aldermen's wives were literate, on a spectrum from ability to read alone to accomplishment in writing modern and classical languages.⁹ City ladies were also well-connected. Anne Glover counted the scrivener of her will, Thomas Chapman, as one of her 'trustie and loving ffrendes' and she named him overseer of her will alongside Alderman Sir William Craven, styled as one of her 'brethren'.¹⁰ While City ladies enjoyed close relationships with clergy, these associations did not necessarily define their religious beliefs or identities any more than they influenced the wording of their preambles, though the associations can be suggestive. The will of Mary Farrington, whose preamble is the barest of the whole sample, was witnessed by 'Tobias Morison Minister of Totteridge' in Hertfordshire at her country residence where she made her will, to whose son she left a legacy as godmother. Her second witness was a Totteridge parishioner to whom she also left a legacy. Mary could not write; her will is signed 'the marke of Mary Farrington'. Whoever wrote down her extraordinarily brief preamble in the presence of the parish minister and fellow parishioner — perhaps the third witness 'Daniel Prigge' — was not inclined to embellish.¹¹ Nevertheless, most preambles in the sample are in

⁷ A. Dickens, *Lollards and Protestants in the Diocese of York, 1509-1559* (1959), pp. 171-2, 220-1; P. Clark, *English Provincial Society from the Reformation to the Revolution: Religion, Politics and Society in Kent, 1500-1640* (Hassocks, 1977); C. Litzenberger, *The English Reformation and the laity: Gloucestershire, 1540-1580* (Cambridge, 1997), pp. 7, 54-6, 78, 93, 169-71; C. Marsh, 'In the name of God? Will-making and faith in early modern England', in G. Martin, P. Spufford (eds.), *The records of the nation* (Woodbridge, 1990), pp. 215-49.

⁸ M. Spufford, 'The scribes of villagers' wills in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and their influence', *Local Population Studies*, 7 (1971), pp. 28-43; J. Alsop, 'Religious Preambles in early modern English Wills as Formulae', *JEH*, 40 (1989), pp. 23, 27.

⁹ See Ch. IV, iii.

¹⁰ TNA, PROB 11/121, fo. 146v.

¹¹ TNA, PROB 11/151, fo. 199v.

varying degrees more demonstrative, and the majority of testators seem to have put some value in the preamble to their will as a testament of faith.

In reading this large sample of wills of aldermen's wives infinite variations suggest that all but the most thoroughly unremarkable bequests of the soul were individually composed, as does the brevity of the most cursorily expressed preambles, which are shorter than any standard formula. This is especially palpable when the preamble is read in the context of the will as a whole, where an individual woman's voice is often highly distinctive. This adds a dimension to Zell's assertion that the preamble is best read in the context of the body of the will, where he argues the analysis should rest. There is value in taking seriously the preamble, what was and was not written into it. This chapter seeks to show that it would be a mistake to neglect close consideration of the preambles to elite women's wills as testaments of faith, by privileging concerns over authorship over the historian's informed critical abilities.

My approach incorporates Alsop's point that 'research indicates that lukewarm or more muted preambles are not necessarily evidence of religious apathy'.¹² What value might an individual actually put on their preamble as an expression or testament of faith, and what this might suggest? The first bequest any Christian made was to leave the soul to God, or rather to return it to Him. But there were avenues other than preambles open to women wishing to make a testament of their faith. Wills were primarily a means of bequeathing worldly goods. In the case of the two women in my sample who made wills as wives, they did so with the permission of their husbands with the sole purpose of leaving them their entire possessions.¹³ In the body of the will an historian can locate an individual woman and her religious identity more fully and surely; in her overlapping communities—her household, her parish or parishes, her City—in her networks of kinship, friendship, patronage, neighbourhood, business, and charity.

¹² Alsop, 'Religious Preambles', p. 19.

¹³ See Appendix.

Historians have tended to consider religious identity, and particularly women's identity using one source type, such as wills, funeral sermons, or diaries.¹⁴ The approach of this thesis is to consider a more eclectic mixture of source material to form a better-adjusted view of women's piety and charity, in other words their religious identity, and to penetrate more of what is knowable in individual cases where one source or another opens a door and another kicks it wide. The preamble, whether distinctive or generic, is one important source among many, and an important starting point.

It is vital to treat preambles then as *individual* testaments, and to follow up their indications accordingly, rather than to read the preambles to a large sample of wills against a set of criteria with the aim of categorising them into religious identities for statistical analysis. The pioneers of the categorisation method of wills analysis were typically concerned with the early Reformation, where differences were clearer and historians sought to explore conversion from traditional faith to newly formulated reformed beliefs. Susan Brigden's work on *London and the Reformation* developed the technique with exceptional sensitivity for reading London wills from before the Reformation to the accession of Elizabeth I. Her account vividly conveys the experience of working out one's faith with reference to the changing religious and political landscape which left delusive traces in preambles to wills.¹⁵ As Eamon Duffy noted, the use of preambles to wills to differentiate between varieties of Protestantism becomes increasingly complex even from the midsixteenth century.¹⁶ The success of historians of the early Reformation has not yet been replicated for the later period, largely because it becomes increasingly unsuitable to categorise religious belief from testaments of doctrinal faith alone.

¹⁴ D. Hickman, 'The religious allegiance of London's ruling elite, 1520-1603', London Univ. Ph. D thesis, (1996); P. Lake, 'Feminine Piety and Personal Potency: the "emancipation" of Mrs Jane Ratcliffe', *The Seventeenth Century*, 2 (1987), pp. 143-165; *The Private Life of an Elizabethan Lady: the diary of Lady Margaret Hoby, 1599-1605*, ed. J. Moody (Stroud, 1998).

¹⁵ Brigden, *London and the Reformation*, p. 382.

¹⁶ E. Duffy, *The stripping of the altars: traditional religion in England c.1400-c.1580* (1992), Ch. 15.

David Hickman's study of the religious allegiance of the aldermen 1520-1603 rightly recognises a range of religious positions amongst the aldermen. He argues that the aldermen were held together by common civic values, a conclusion with which subsequent chapters tend to agree in the general sense.¹⁷ His categorization of wills into six types is particularly helpful for the earlier- to mid-sixteenth century. Yet towards the later sixteenth century his categorisation blurs distinctions between Protestants by rendering every member of the elite some sort of 'godly'.¹⁸ Between 1591 and 1603 Hickman tellingly can only confidently—and perhaps too confidently—distinguish two types of preamble: 'Protestant' and 'Puritan'.¹⁹ However, historians informed by such a view of the City elite as 'godly' have been tempted to apply the term 'puritan' too readily, both to the elite as a whole and to individuals.²⁰ Hickman admits a large margin of indistinguishable belief, perhaps because generic preambles *by themselves* cannot tell us much of any certainty.²¹ It should be said that where Hickman has applied the term 'Puritan' to individuals to whom he gives special attention based on the preamble supported by the body of the will and external sources, the analysis of this thesis tends to agree with his interpretation.²²

Looking further ahead into the early seventeenth century, sensitivity to the changing religious and political landscape becomes increasingly important. Historians of the clerical elite have spoken of a drift towards a doctrinal 'Calvinist consensus' (if emphatically not a 'static, even sterile' consensus, nor a consensus about the implications of that doctrine in this world).²³

¹⁷ L. Branch, L., 'Faith and Fraternity: The London Livery Companies and the Reformation c.1510-c.1600', Univ. of Warwick Ph. D thesis (2011).

¹⁸ Hickman, 'The religious allegiance of London's ruling elite', pp. 62, 250.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 283.

²⁰ I. Archer, 'Religious Identities', in S. Gossett (ed.), *Thomas Middleton in Context* (Cambridge, 2011), p. 139, and 'The City of London and the Theatre', in R. Dutton (ed.), *Handbook of Early Modern Theatre* (Oxford, 2009), pp. 396-412.

²¹ Hickman, 'The religious allegiance of London's ruling elite', p. 283.

²² *Ibid.*, pp. 182, 218, 260, 263, 268, 274, 283.

²³ The term used by theologians was first adopted by N. Tyacke, 'Puritanism, Arminianism, and the counter-revolution', in C. Russell, (ed.) *The Origins of the English Civil War* (1973), pp. 119-143. P. Collinson, *The Puritan Character: polemics and polarities in early seventeenth century English Culture* (Pasadena, 1989), 'Antipuritanism', in J. Coffrey and P. Lim (eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to Puritanism* (Cambridge, 2008), p. 23; P. Lake., *Moderate*

This term must be used tentatively when describing the laity, even the lay elite, amongst whom there was a more mixed picture. Yet the preambles to wills in this sample, as expressions of soteriological understanding, overwhelmingly refer to a Calvinist understanding of predestination. Within this Calvinist umbrella a potentially ‘puritan’ position can be identified with the most confidence from certain highly distinctive features which can be corroborated beyond the preamble—a distinctive religiosity, social conduct and politics. Beyond that, it can be difficult to tell what a less stridently articulated preamble represents without an eye to the wider spectrum—of soteriology, of religious identities within Calvinism—and an awareness of the relative importance or unimportance of a preamble to an individual. Even where religious identities were rooted in a distinctive soteriology, the differences between Calvinist and anti-Calvinist understandings can be more difficult to recognise or confidently identify than differences between a Protestant and Catholic preamble. On further investigation beyond the preamble in these cases, what was not written into the preamble proves to be more suggestive than what was.²⁴ Neither can doctrinal understandings within the Calvinist consensus be translated into religious identities by a reading of the preamble alone, as they often cannot be identified with any confidence there. A sensitivity to generational change becomes increasingly necessary to capture religious identities forming towards the end of the period amongst the lay elite that will only show up in wills written beyond 1630.²⁵

Lastly such partisan identities and attitudes, particularly within a governing elite seeking the least disruptive consequences of intolerance through coexistence, were not *necessarily* accepted or perceived by individuals.²⁶ The elite had kin at both ends of the religious spectrum with whom they preserved affectionate relations. By the late sixteenth and early seventeenth

Puritans and the Elizabethan Church (Cambridge, 1982), p. 279; L. Dixon, *Practical Predestinarians in England, c. 1590-1640* (Farnham, 2014), esp. Ch. 5.

²⁴ N. Tyacke, ‘Puritanism, Arminianism, and the counter-revolution’, pp. 119-43.

²⁵ A. Walsham, ‘The Reformation of the Generations: Youth, Age and Religious Change in England, c. 1500-1700’, *TRHS*, 6th ser., 21 (2011), pp. 93-121.

²⁶ K. Narveson, *Bible Readers and Lay Writers in Early Modern England* (Farnham, 2012), pp. 4, 214-24, 232-5; J. Spohnholz, *The Tactics of Toleration: A Refugee Community in the Age of Religious Wars* (Newark, 2011), pp. 14, 226.

century Londoners had lived with difference for decades, and we ought not to expect quotidian variance between neighbours on the basis of evidence of extraordinary moments of conflict.²⁷ Shared Christian ideals and the values of neighbourliness bound those whose livelihoods and wellbeing depended on cooperation, conviviality and coexistence, and the governing elite were charged with maintaining the peace.²⁸ Protestants shared broad culture of reformed piety and spirituality too and, as Alec Ryrie has shown, attention to the everyday lived experience of religion ought to convince historians to approach our subjects holistically, as whole humans who are ‘more than credal statements on legs’.²⁹ The apparent contradictions of an individual’s worldview rightly confound the historian’s attempts to categorise religious identity along partisan lines rather than to recognise, as contemporaries did, that even those who strove to rid themselves of hypocrisy from their lives faced irreconcilable inconsistencies, ambiguities and conflicts in their lives.

The analysis of the preambles which follows indicates where preambles can only do part of the work. No testator left her soul in the language and expression of the traditional preamble

²⁷ S. Brigden, ‘Religion and Social Obligation in Early Sixteenth-Century London’, *P&P*, 103 (1984), pp. 110-111, *London and the Reformation*, p. 26; C. Marsh, *The Family of Love in English Society, 1550-1630* (Cambridge, 1994), esp. Ch. 7, pp. 96, 147, 170-3, 182-7; J. Bossy, *Peace in the Post-Reformation* (Cambridge, 1998), pp. 87-91; A. Walsham, *Charitable Hatred: tolerance and intolerance in England, 1500-1700* (Manchester, 2006), pp. 207-13, 277-9, ‘Supping with Satan’s Disciples: Spiritual and Secular Sociability in Post Reformation England’, in N. Lewycky, A. Morton (eds.), *Getting Along? Religious Identities and Confessional Relations in Early Modern England-Essays in honour of Professor W.J. Sheils* (Woodbridge, 2012), pp. 29-55.; W. Shiels, ‘Getting on’ and ‘Getting along’ in parish and town: Catholics and their neighbours in England’, in B. Kaplan H. van Nierop and J. Pollman (eds.), *Catholic Communities in Protestant States: Britain and the Netherlands, c. 1570-1720* (Manchester, 2009), pp. 67-83; K. Luria, ‘Separated by death? Burials, Cemeteries, and confessional boundaries in seventeenth-century France’, *French Historical Studies*, 24 (2001), pp. 185-222, *Sacred Boundaries: Religious Coexistence and Conflict in Early-Modern France* (Washington, 2005), esp. pp. xiii-xxxviii, 316-7; M. Halvorson and K. Spierling (eds.), *Defining Community in Early Modern Europe* (Aldershot, 2008), p. 7; B. Kaplan, *Calvinists and Libertines: Confession and Community in Utrecht, 1578-1620* (Oxford, 1995); O. Christian, ‘Peace must come from us: friendship pacts between the confessions during the Wars of Religion’, in R. Whelan, and C. Baxter (eds.), *Toleration and religious identity: the Edict of Nantes and its implications in France, Britain and Ireland* (Dublin, 2003), pp. 92-103; W. Frijhoff, ‘Dimensions de la coexistence confessionnelle’, in C. Berkvens-Stevelinck, J. Israel and G. Posthumus Meyjes (eds.), *The Emergence of Tolerance in the Dutch Republic* (Leiden, 1997), pp. 213-37.

²⁸ I. Archer, *The Pursuit of Stability: social relations in Elizabethan London* (Cambridge, 1991), pp. 45, 49, 76.

²⁹ A. Ryrie, *Being Protestant in Reformation Britain* (Oxford, 2013), p. 1.

to ‘Almighty God, to His Son, Jesus Christ, Saviour and Redeemer, to the Blessed Virgin Mary and the Saints in Heaven’.³⁰ Almost all the testators within this period subscribed to a reformed soteriology. No matter how brief or expansive their wording, testators regarded Christ as the sole intercessor for their souls through His sacrifice when they ‘avowed emphatically their absolute reliance upon the mercy of Christ and the saving power of His passion’ alone, and without intercessors.³¹

In some preambles there is no indication that a testator subscribed even to this baseline of Protestant belief. In 1627 Mary Farrington made a startlingly token bequest of her soul in comparison to her more mellifluous contemporaries, her preamble reading simply ‘I bequeath my soule into the handes of god that gave it’. The starkness of this statement could be mistaken for a statement of neutrality in the tense atmosphere of the late 1620s, when positions polarized as anti-Calvinism took on the theological consensus. Yet Mary Farrington’s preamble serves as a warning against the assumption that an alderman’s wife of any religious complexion would necessarily value the preamble to her will as a place to make a testament of her faith; Mary did not. The body of her will is also unique in that despite its correspondent brevity, the bequests that seem to be her primary purpose in making a will are almost solely pious in character. As a godmother she left death’s head mourning rings as *memento mori* to the nine children whose religious development she had sworn before God to oversee.³² Mary is a strong candidate for identification as a puritan, as she was a patron of one of the founding ministers of the Feoffees for Improvements, John Preston of All Hallows Honey Lane, and godmother to his daughter who shared her name. Preambles such as Mary’s, that seem to tell us nothing, should serve methodologically as a spur to read further into the will and external source material to situate its reticence in a personal as well as a temporal context.

³⁰ Brigden, *London and the Reformation*, pp. 30, 380.

³¹ Ibid., pp. 381, 384, 483-5.

³² TNA, PROB 11/151, fo. 199v.

The vast majority of aldermen's widows made testaments of faith that demonstrated their predestinarian understanding of soteriology. This broadly Calvinist position, which following Leif Dixon I will call 'predestinarian' rather than 'double predestinarian', is recognisable in preambles precisely because its baseline requirements are soteriological.³³ Beyond that, the preamble can tell us little without help from the will and external sources. Predestinarian preambles as testaments of faith often betray very little at all. Many testators can seem to have been content to express orthodox solifidian soteriology without any particular reflection on the consequences of limited atonement for the testator's sins or anyone else's as something unfathomable. In 1603 Elizabeth Bowyer left her soul to God 'hoping only by Christs passion, and his onely meritts to be saved and redeemed'.³⁴ The body of Elizabeth's will made no attempt to elucidate her religious identity, and no extra-testamentary evidence survives either. Inference based on comparison with women about whom more is known, through more fulsome preambles and wider evidence and beyond the will, is the limit of what can be known.

Many aldermen's widows left their souls to God in a similar way; in a couple of stock sentences they expressed hope for remissions of sins and admittance to heaven, before getting onto the business of burial arrangements and material bequests.³⁵ In 1625 Ann Pemberton committed her soul to God with great brevity, outlining her funeral arrangements in much greater detail. Ann also left a large bequest of £10 to 'Mr Spencer', the puritan preacher William Spencer, whom she also entrusted with the key to her counting house.³⁶ Ann had clear ideas about how she wanted to be perceived publicly, yet puritan associations did not necessarily mean that *she* was a puritan. When her funeral arrangements and her patronage are read against

³³ L. Dixon, *Practical Predestinarians in England, c. 1590-1640* (Farnham, 2014), p. 10.

³⁴ TNA, PROB 11/110, fo. 133r.

³⁵ See for example: TNA, PROB 11/83, fo. 92r (1592); PROB 11/73, fo. 77v (1588); PROB 11/146, fo. 490v (1627); PROB 11/145, fo. 231r (1623); PROB 11/145, fo. 282r (1624); PROB 11/95, fo. 279r (1599).

³⁶ TNA, PROB 11/46, fo. 277v.

her preamble, any attempt to label her religious identity must be cautious, taking into account her civic status and the mood in the City in 1625. Ann's will expresses no opinion on her own salvation or that of anyone else's, nor does it subscribe to any partisan agenda. A preamble such as Ann's might also warn against simplistic interpretation of the rest of her bequests. William Spencer was a puritan preacher, but when Ann made generous bequests to him she identified him as the trusted 'parson of the same parish of St John Zacharies where I doe nowe dwell'.³⁷ City women in general poured their resources into the maintenance of godly households and communities, and the support of a proficient preaching and pastoral ministry first and foremost. They patronised minsters whom they found spiritually comforting and engaging, and pastorally effective, focusing their pious and charitable efforts within their own parish (or parishes), prizing these qualities even where more partisan views over doctrine and its implications were strongly held.³⁸

As a statement of soteriology, predestinarianism is identifiable in preambles to wills but what the consequences of this belief were for the testator's own sense of the implications of that doctrine in the world, and for their own of religious identity are not necessarily indicated in any way in a preamble. What precisely the consequences of predestinarian belief might be have been debated at length. R. T. Kendall posited a distinction between Calvinists, differentiated by their ideas about the consequences of that belief for their individual circumstances and those of others. He briefly defined the 'experimental' predestinarian as one who had knowledge of saving faith, and who believed that assurance that one numbered amongst the elect might be sought and gained through experience and by measuring one's faith against that of other Christians. The 'credal' predestinarian he defined as one whose soteriology is predestination, but who does not apply this belief to individual circumstances, either one's

³⁷ TNA, PROB 11/46, fols. 276r, 278r.

³⁸ See Chs. IV, V.

own or that of other people.³⁹ Kendall's distinction has been widely employed by historians seeking to define a Calvinist theological consensus that held together varying ideas about the consequences of that doctrine in the world, a consensus shattered by the advent of Laudianism in the 1630s as anti-Calvinist anti-puritans came into real power.⁴⁰ The 'experimental' descriptor is the more helpful of the two, particularly when it is qualified and complicated by such a nuanced account as Leif Dixon offers of how experimental predestinarianism as 'practical predestinarianism' could present itself in a wide spectrum of pastoral approaches and personal understandings.⁴¹ We ought to be sceptical about the usefulness of the term 'credal' predestinarians, by which Dixon suggests we mean something slightly different, and that this term therefore does little to help the historian—as indicated by the fact that it is rarely used. Dixon suggests that a finer distinction might be between predestinarians who took an 'anthropocentric' view of assurance, in which the believer uses the resources available to her to gain a relatively quick and permanent sense of assurance of her election; and predestinarians whose perspective on assurance was 'theocentric', emphasising the unreliability of the believer's perception and the need for patience now as perseverance towards a possible future outcome of assurance as a comfort given by God.⁴² As Dixon's case studies of individuals show, in seeking out religious identity we should treat predestinarianism as a worldview rather than simply a doctrine, and our analysis must treat believers individually: 'The doctrine of predestination...shaped the individual as much as the individual shaped the doctrine of predestination around his [or her] own life and circumstances'.⁴³ Dixon's description of a predestinarian spectrum of 'anthropocentric' and 'theocentric' understandings of assurance are

³⁹ R. Kendall, *Calvin and English Calvinism to 1649* (Oxford, 1997), pp. 8-9, 79-80.

⁴⁰ N. Tyacke, *Anti-Calvinists: the Rise of English Arminianism, c. 1590-1640* (Oxford, 1987), *Aspects of English Protestantism, c.1530-1700* (Manchester, 2001); Lake, *Moderate Puritans*.

⁴¹ Dixon, *Practical Predestinarians*, esp. Chs. 2-5.

⁴² *Ibid.*, pp. 11, 221, 247.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 209.

particularly helpful as explanatory terms, and can inform analysis of bequests the soul and of goods, and readings of sources on piety beyond the will.

Dixon's attention to individuals is important; as his studies of clerics show, religious identity was highly individualistic. The subsequent chapters show that the patronage, funeral sermons and epitaphs, and funeral monuments of aldermen's wives and widows suggest their subscription to an 'anthropocentric' understanding of assurance. This nevertheless remains an inference, for the same sources do not exist for elite women as for preaching, publishing clergy. On Dixon's analysis the clergyman Thomas Wilson's extreme 'theocentric' understanding which led him to believe that faith was inherently assuring was a highly idiosyncratic position, though it was one that an equally pastorally insensitive and assured lay puritan saint might plausibly share.

Who might be a puritan, whether such a person existed and whether they can be characterised as part of an alienated opposition group or a person integrated into the establishment has been hotly debated.⁴⁴ The puritan worldview was not necessarily dependent on a particular understanding of assurance on Dixon's scheme, but was rooted in a sense of one's own assurance and consequently of the election or reprobation of others and often (but not necessarily) expressed in preambles.⁴⁵

Some aldermen's wives expressed a hope—sometimes hedged, sometimes not—that they numbered amongst the elect.⁴⁶ Confidence is not hard to find, across this period. In 1603

⁴⁴ P. Christianson, 'Reformers and the Church of England under Elizabeth I and the Early Stuarts', *JEH*, 31 (1980), pp. 463-82 and *Reformers and Babylon: English Apocalyptic Visions from the Reformation to the Eve of the Civil War* (Toronto, 1978); M. Findlayson, *Historians, Puritanism, and the English Revolution: The Religious Factor in English Politics before and after the Interregnum* (Toronto, 1983); C. Hill, *World Turned Upside Down: radical ideas during the English Revolution* (1972), and *Society and Puritanism in pre-Revolutionary England* (New York, 1964), esp., pp. 13-29, 124-44; P. Collinson, *The Religion of Protestants: the church in English society, 1559-1625* (Oxford, 1982); esp. Ch. 4, pp. 255, 485; P. Lake, 'Puritan Identities', *JEH*, 35 (1984), pp. 112-123, and *Moderate Puritans* (1982); J. Morrill, 'The Religious Context of the English Civil War', *TRHS*, 5th ser., 23 (1984), p. 162; L. Wright, *Middle Class Culture in Elizabethan England* (Chapel Hill, 1995); L. Schücking, *The Puritan Family: a social study from the literary sources*, trans. B. Battershaw (New York, 1970).

⁴⁵ Lake, *Moderate Puritans*, pp. 282, 284.

⁴⁶ Brigden, *London and the Reformation* (1989), pp. 381, 384, 483-5.

Elizabeth Billingsley, widow of Rowland Martin, made her will as Sir Henry Billingsley's fourth wife. She hoped to be a 'partaker of the kingdome which he hath prepared for his Children of the which number his holye spiritt doth assure me to be one'.⁴⁷ In 1610 Dionizie Staper left her soul to God 'trusting and nothing doubting but that for he will receive my soule into his glory and place it in the Company of heavenly Angells and Blessed Saints with God'.⁴⁸

Patrick Collinson has always argued that puritanism should be defined socially by their 'singularity', marked by the voluntary religious exercises to which they were addicted, as well as by peculiarities of moral and social behaviour'.⁴⁹ Puritanism was a 'brand name for a certain kind of Protestant religiosity, social conduct and politics' born of this worldview and hated by its opponents.⁵⁰ Anti-puritanism was predicated on hatred not necessarily of repressive social views but of the basic division of the godly from the ungodly.⁵¹ Robert Sanderson's enduring hatred of puritans with whom he shared so many other ideas was based on their 'unwarranted and uncharitable judging of other men'; both of the fawning hypocrites who seemed to be elect according to fallible human perception, and especially of the 'weak' who were rejected as reprobate.⁵² Uncertainty about one's own election and that of others who outwardly seemed to be godly was an insecurity that plagued the godly community. Therefore, when testators identify themselves as elect, particularly with confidence, and especially as 'one of' the elect, the hunt is on in the rest of the will and further source material to see just how this translated into their pious behaviour.

⁴⁷ TNA, PROB 11/109, fo. 16v.

⁴⁸ TNA, PROB 11/119, fo. 50v; I. Archer, 'Staper, Richard (c.1540–1608)', *ODNB*. For example: TNA, PROB 11/122, fo. 213v; TNA, PROB 11/122, fo. 147.

⁴⁹ P. Collinson, *Elizabethan Puritan Movement* (1982), *The Birthpangs of Protestant England: religious and cultural change in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries* (Basingstoke, 1988), p. 143, 'A comment: concerning the name Puritan', *JEH*, 31 (October 1980), pp. 483–8.

⁵⁰ See Ch. I.

⁵¹ P. Lake, 'Serving God and the Times: the Calvinist Conformity of Robert Sanderson', *JBS*, 27 (1988), pp. 93, 96; A. Milton, *Catholic and Reformed: the Roman and Protestant churches in English Protestant thought, 1600–1640* (Cambridge, 1995), p. 8; S. Foster, *The Long Argument: English Puritanism and the Shaping of New England Culture, 1570–1700* (Chapel Hill, 1991), p. 9; TNA, PROB 11/141, fo. 227r.

⁵² P. Lake, 'Serving God and the Times', p. 116; Dixon, *Practical Predestinarians*, pp. 218, 227; A. Hunt, *The Art of Hearing: English Preachers and their Audiences, 1590–1640* (Cambridge, 2010), p. 348.

No preamble which places an individual as a likely puritan has been contradicted by the body of bequests, or evidence external to the will. Anne Glover left bequests to an array of puritan preachers in her will, including John Dodd, and gowns to her friends, including Elizabeth and Sir William Craven, who were amongst the most fervent puritan ‘brethren’ of the civic elite, but her preamble alone leaves little room for doubt.⁵³ In 1613 Anne bequeathed her soul to God in complete confidence of her understanding of her salvation:

beyng most certaynelie persuaded that all my sinnes altogether never so many and so grevous as yet, neverthelss forgiven and...sealed up in the onlie precious blood bitter passion meritth deathe and resurrection of my Lord and onlie savorre Jesus Christ by whome and by noe other meanes my Redemption is made sure and certayne according to the unspeakable love of god towards man kynde in his eternall and unsearchable counsell and purpose before the foundations of the wordle were layed.⁵⁴

Many puritan preambles, in their distinctive lexis, their heightened tone, their focus and their length provide the first hints of a particular style of puritan piety. Whether they were especially anxious about assurance or not, the godly striving to obey the law out of love took their awareness of their sins and their distinctive reaction to them to be a mark of grace, and spent a lifetime of self-examination and improvement between conversion and death.⁵⁵ The ledger of personal sins bulked large in the mind of the saint, and the sufficiency of Christ’s sacrifice to wipe it clean for them as a member of the elect.⁵⁶ This culture of piety is reflected clearly in the ways women who believed themselves to be saints understood the relationship of their earthly lives to their salvation, as expressed in their preambles. In 1627 Elizabeth Martin reflecting that even her godliest works were mired with sin took comfort in her election:

the best of them to be sinfull and sufficient to draw the wrath and Judgement of God upon me, were not the guiles thereof by his infinite mercie wasted awaie, and buried in the grave of his onelie sonne.⁵⁷

⁵³ TNA, PROB 11/121, fols. 146r-v.

⁵⁴ TNA, PROB 11/121, fo. 145r.

⁵⁵ C. Cohen, *‘God’s Caress’: the Psychology of the Puritan Religious Experience* (Oxford, 1986), pp. 45, 95; Rylie, *Being Protestant*, pp. 409-15; C. Richardson, *A sermon concerning the punishment of malefactors* (1616), pp. 34, 36-7.

⁵⁶ M. Knappen, *Two Elizabethan Puritan Diaries* (Chicago, 1933), pp. 87-8, 114-5; *The Private Life of an Elizabethan Lady: the diary of Lady Margaret Hoby, 1599-1605*, ed. J. Moody (Stroud, 1998).

⁵⁷ TNA, PROB 11/152, fo. 311r.

Alice, widow of alderman Richard Herne, acknowledged in 1629 that she returned her soul to God hopeful that Christ's sacrifice would prove 'a full and perfect ransome for mee' but

not in that perfection wherein it was created...but insuperable defiled with mine infinite transgressions besides originall Corruptions...defaced and defiled with sin and with iniquitie...no unclean thing can enter into heaven but as it is washed and cleansed with the blood of his onely begotten sonne and covered with the white robe of his righteousness.⁵⁸

These kinds of statements are highly indicative of an intense Protestant piety and worldview, and a surer foundation than other preambles for identification of a religious identity.

Whereas predestinarian soteriology set out within a puritan worldview is identifiable in a preamble, it is essentially impossible to differentiate an *anti*-puritan worldview from preambles which share the same Calvinist soteriology. Rather, an anti-puritan Calvinist identity must be pursued through the rest of the will and external sources to differentiate the testator from simply *non*-puritan Calvinist preambles, or where a preamble is entirely nondescript. Recognising this blind spot can help to identify anti-puritan features of Calvinists' worldview in other material.

The changing religious and political landscape of the 1620s complicates attempts to differentiate religious identities in these less demonstrative preambles, even with the help of other sources. This requires an open mind. Easy distinctions cannot be drawn from enthusiasm for 'avant-garde' church building that is later associated with the Laudian 'beauty of holiness' programme. Anti-puritan enthusiasm for building emerged as early as 1583/4 in the City, and later proponents of beautification included puritan aldermen.⁵⁹ Yet the changing situation in the 1620s when anti-puritan *anti*-Calvinism or 'proto-Arminianism' made serious inroads amongst the laity, particularly after the accession of Charles I 'transformed [anti-Calvinist] influence into power', muddies the search further.⁶⁰

⁵⁸ TNA, PROB 11/155, fo. 252r.

⁵⁹ K. Fincham and N. Tyacke, *Altars Restored: The Changing Face of English Religious Worship, 1547-c. 1700* (Oxford, 2007), pp. 55-6, 101-3, 110-1.

⁶⁰ P. Lake, 'The Anglican Moment?', pp. 90-121; Fincham, and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*, p. 3, Ch. 3; J. Merritt, *The social world of early modern Westminster: abbey, court and community, 1525-1640* (Manchester, 2005); P. White, 'The Rise

I have found no preamble similarly distinctive to that which Fincham and Tyacke use to exemplify an ‘avant-garde conformist’ soteriology. However, their broad criteria fit a much less strident range of wills; no mention of assurance, let alone election, and universalism—the implication that Christ’s sacrifice was sufficient for all.⁶¹

To test this we might look at the preamble of a woman who was in the prime of her life in the 1630s when Laudian reaction to puritanism was at its peak. Margaret Garway made her will in 1656 when these categories had broken down, but we might have good reason to expect a distinctive bequest of her soul based on her Arminian familial networks. In 1636 John Gore dedicated the publication of his Paul’s Cross sermon to Lord Mayor Sir Christopher Clitherow, a member of an Arminian kinship network including the Abdy and Garway families remembered by Clitherow in his will.⁶² Yet Margaret’s preamble is unremarkable:

First I commend my soule into the handes of God my Maker hoping that by the meritts of Jesus Christ my onlie Saviour and Redeemer my Sines are pardoned and that I shall after this naturall life endes raigne with him in everlasting life.⁶³

In the context of the times she lived through, perhaps her silence on assurance or election merits further investigation. These sorts of preambles are impossible to identify without supporting evidence, and there may well have been more proto-Arminian aldermen’s wives and widows than the few who can be even tentatively identified from evidence beyond their preambles. These few women are nevertheless suggestive.

Preambles to wills are a valuable part of the analysis of religious belief, particularly in the study of a sample and particularly in the study of elite women—whether or not the preamble itself was valued by an individual as a testament of faith, or whether much can be gleaned from

of Arminianism Reconsidered’, *P&P*, 101 (1983), pp. 52-3; T. Webster, *Godly Clergy in early Stuart England: the Caroline Puritan Movement c. 1620-1643* (Cambridge, 1997), pp. 15-35.

⁶¹ Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*, p. 105; A. Walsham, *Church Papists: Catholicism, Conformity and Confessional Polemic in early modern England* (1993), p. 97; N. Tyacke, *Anti-Calvinists*, p. 7.

⁶² Tyacke, *Anti-Calvinists*, pp. 181, 216-21.

⁶³ TNA, PROB 11/157, fo. 113r.

the preamble alone. Preambles are a good place to *begin* researching a sample of women as individuals, when evidence from the preamble is afforded from the body of the will and an eclectic range of external source material. This is a more suitable approach to understanding the religious identities of a sample of women in this period than categorisation of religious identity by soteriological statements in the preambles to their wills, which are often absent, brief, undifferentiated or misleading when read alone. Wills were made overwhelmingly by widows, at the end of their lives but the body of the will and external sources can allow the historian access to a religious life lived in the world. Thinking about what makes up religious identity also affects the definition of positions on a spectrum of religious identities for elite lay women. Comparison of the preamble with a will and external evidence urges sensitivity to the individualistic nature of religious identity, as well as to the importance of women's gender and elite status in shaping their religious identity expressed in their piety and charity throughout their lives. What contribution did soteriological beliefs make to the way elite women lived out their piety and charity within a Christian household and community, and within a broadly Protestant culture? Were Puritan women confident, insensitive saints, separated from their communities? Were women who objected to this culture anti-Calvinist or merely anti-Puritan? How was women's understanding of coexistence, cooperation and conviviality in relation to their religious identities also affected by their gender and their status as elite?

Chapter IV Personal Piety: Godliness in Practice

Introduction

Alec Ryrie has amply demonstrated that much of what made up the piety of those who thought of themselves as godly was not unique to those who held views that we might characterise as ‘puritan’, even if we decline to label as ‘puritan’ an individual who would not have done so themselves.¹ In spite of his fundamental disagreements with Ryrie, Peter Lake has nevertheless argued that the study of individuals demonstrates the need for a capacious definition of puritanism as a distinct style of piety and divinity distinguished by a distinct *synthesis* of strands also found *beyond* puritanism, resulting in a characteristic world view that we might still usefully call ‘puritan’.² What then was the synthesis of strands that made up a pious godly life for elite mercantile women living out their religion in London, as they sought to persevere towards assurance of their election and sanctification through living righteous lives in the service of a gendered vocation as female saints in a community of the godly? ³ This chapter and the following chapter seek to explore this question.

Patrick Collinson warned that as a ‘general proposition’ the historian may not hesitate to aver that the essence of Puritanism was ‘a kind of intense religious experience, both painful and ecstatic’, but that ‘it is another matter to be certain about the nature and quality of experience in a given individual’.⁴ Diane Willen has argued that ‘puritanism’ held particular attraction for women: in its expectation and praise of female piety, as well as in its opportunities for reciprocal relationships with clergy and the influence of gentry women over the household

¹ A. Ryrie, *Being Protestant in Reformation Britain* (Oxford, 2013), esp. pp. 8, 469-70; R. Pederson, *Unity in diversity: English Puritans and the Puritan Reformation, 1603-1689* (Leiden, 2014), pp. 288-97.

² P. Lake, ‘Defining Puritanism-Again?’, in F. Bremer (ed.), *Puritanism: Transatlantic Perspectives on a seventeenth-century Anglo-American faith* (Boston, 1993), p. 6.

³ P. Lake, *The Boxmaker’s Revenge: ‘orthodoxy’, ‘heterodoxy’ and the politics of the parish in early Stuart London* (Manchester, 2001), pp. 18, 21, 209; J. Shami, ‘Reading Funeral Sermons for Early Modern English Women: Some Literary and Historiographical Challenges’, in A. Marotti and C. Goodblatt (eds.), *Religious Diversity and Early Modern English Texts: Catholic, Judaic, Feminist, and Secular Dimensions* (Detroit, 2013), pp. 282, 296.

⁴ P. Collinson, *The Puritan Character* (Pasadena, 1989), p. 7; Ryrie, *Being Protestant*, p. 472.

and patronage.⁵ By attending to individuals something meaningful can be said about what godliness meant for an elite, mercantile woman in London.

i) Funeral Sermons

First amongst sources for women's piety have been funeral sermons, which this thesis argues are sources which can be read critically in the context of their production, performance and publication, to reconstruct ideals of elite female virtue and to furnish evidence too of the realities of women's piety and social conduct.⁶ Written overwhelmingly, though not exclusively by moderate puritan clergy funeral sermons described the piety of the women who were often their authors' patrons. These women, as described by these writers, can be characterised as practical predestinarians, who applied the doctrine of double predestination to their own lives, and persevered towards assurance through lives that were self consciously godly in comparison to those of their neighbours.⁷ The term 'practical predestinarian' serves 'to widen and refresh the debate: to stress continuity and stability of faith within the life of the self aware saint'.⁸ Funeral sermons show women applying the priorities of a puritan agenda to their lives, in the synthesis of otherwise unremarkable aspects of piety that in combination appear distinctive.⁹ In his survey of funeral sermons printed between 1590 and 1640, Dixon argues that funeral sermons were 'compassionate rather than didactic', yet funeral sermons on women—at least in their printed form—seem to be only perfunctorily compassionate but highly didactic.¹⁰ As such they are highly descriptive and offer a view, albeit obliquely, on female piety.

⁵ D. Willen, 'Godly Women in early modern England: Puritanism and Gender', *JEH*, 43 (1992), pp. 563, 566, 568, 569, 576 and "Communion of the Saints": Spiritual Reciprocity and the Godly Community in Early Modern England', *Albion*, 27 (1995), pp. 19-41.

⁶ See Ch. II.

⁷ R. Kendall, *Calvin and the English Calvinists to 1649* (Oxford, 1981), pp. 79-80.

⁸ L. Dixon, *Practical Predestinarians in England, c. 1590-1640* (Farnham, 2014), p. 12.

⁹ R. Houlbrooke, *Death, Religion and the Family in England, 1480-1750* (Oxford, 1998), pp. 294-330; P. Lake, 'Feminine Piety and Personal Potency: the "emancipation" of Mrs Jane Ratcliffe', *The Seventeenth Century*, 2 (1987), p. 143, and 'Defining Puritanism-Again?', p. 6; M. White, *English Women, Religion, and Textual Production, 1500-1625* (Farnham, 2011), pp. 1-3.

¹⁰ Dixon, *Practical Predestinarians*, p. 308.

Funeral sermons have generally been studied in isolation from the women who were their subjects and from their female contemporaries. Sources that allow a glimpse into female piety in London do so indirectly; the lack of spiritual diaries and correspondence makes funeral sermons the more important when approached with awareness that the clerical authors of funeral sermons on women sought to promote ideals of female virtue that needed to maintain a sufficient, not perfect, semblance of real women's lives to achieve their purpose in the communities where they were preached and in print. Dedications of religious texts to women were the products of patronage relationships that can reveal women's religious networks, and similarly to funeral sermons their dual nature allows the historian to study both the construction of ideals of female piety and religion as women really lived it. Sources that give the historian direct access to women's piety are rarer; mentions of devotional objects in wills, the odd survival of religious objects themselves. Read together, these sources are rarely sufficient to fix confessional labels to individual women, but together they outline the contours of elite godly women's piety, the religious culture of the City, and of religious material culture in the household that grounds the claims of funeral sermons.

Funeral sermons have been a highly contested source for the study of piety. They certainly held contemporary appeal. Ralph Houlbrooke has estimated that twenty funeral sermons were published under Elizabeth, but that by the late 1630s over 100 and possibly over 200 had been printed.¹¹ In their increasing numbers from the beginning of the seventeenth century, they became popular publications, among Ian Green's 'best sellers'.¹² The funeral sermon on Elizabeth Juxon by Stephen Denison, the famous puritan rector of St Katharine Cree, went through five editions from 1619-31, which was not unusual; Jeri McIntosh has observed that funeral sermons on women were typically reprinted far more than those on men

¹¹ Houlbrooke, *Death, Religion and the Family*, p. 298.

¹² I. Green, *Print and Protestantism in early modern England* (Oxford, 2000), pp. 203-5.

and were affordable.¹³ Elizabeth Juxon's funeral sermon was so well known that when Denison published his subsequent sermon from the funeral of her widower, merchant taylor John Juxon, Denison described him to the reader as 'the Husband of the same worthy woman' of whose funeral sermon readers were reminded.¹⁴ Many printed sermons make no mention even of the date and location of the original preached event, yet funeral sermons reminded the reader, very possibly a Londoner, of both.¹⁵ Just three full funeral sermons survive for the women this thesis studies, a tiny fraction of those which were commissioned by women in their wills, but the evidence is suggestive.¹⁶

Detractors of funeral sermons saw them as relics of trental masses, indicative of flattery or worse, so those who preached funeral sermons on the lives of recently deceased citizens were obliged to defend their controversial choice of subject.¹⁷ The tone of funeral sermons was defensive, as preachers presented glorification as being for the sole purpose of edifying their auditory and readership.¹⁸ Commercial writers of verse epitaphs as producers of affordable ephemera had no such qualms, presenting them as much as entertainment as edification; John Phillips' epitaph on Agnes Avenon had the 'very popular dittie: to the tune of Lightie love' printed on the verso.¹⁹

¹³ J. McIntosh, 'English Funeral Sermons, 1560-1640: The Relationship Between Gender, and Death, Dying, and the Afterlife', Oxford Univ. M. Litt. thesis (1990), p. 10; Dixon, *Practical Predestinarians*, pp. 336, 50-1; S. Denison, *The monument or tombe-stone...* (1620); A. Bayman, 'Denison, Stephen (d. 1649)', ODNB.

¹⁴ S. Denison, *Another tombstone* (1626), epistle to the reader.

¹⁵ Dixon, *Practical Predestinarians*, p. 256.

¹⁶ For funeral sermons commissioned but lost: TNA, PROB 11/110, fo. 143r; PROB 11/122, fo. 213v; PROB 11/131, fo. 19r; PROB 11/171, fo. 259r; PROB 11/121, fo. 71r; PROB 11/141, fo. 233v; PROB 11/134, fo. 492r; PROB 11/90, fo. 462r.

¹⁷ P. Collinson, *The Elizabethan Puritan Movement* (1982), p. 370, *Birthpangs of Protestant England: religious and cultural change in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries* (Basingstoke, 1988), p. 75; P. Marshall, *Beliefs and the Dead in Reformation England* (Oxford, 2002), pp. 156-61; F. Tromly, 'The Elizabethan Controversy over the Funeral Sermon', *Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies*, 13 (1983), pp. 298-307; McIntosh, 'English Funeral Sermons', pp. 26, 28, 174-8.

¹⁸ Dixon, *Practical Predestinarians*, p. 309.

¹⁹ J. Phillips, *Epitaph on the death of the virtuous Matrone, the Ladie Mayoress... Agnes Avenon* (1570), verso; S.P., *An epitaph of the vertuous life and death of the right worshipfull ladie, Dame Helen Branch* (1594), p. 4.

Spiritual intimacy and patronage relationships between the authors of funeral sermons and their female subjects recommended neither minister nor matron to the sceptical.²⁰ Yet while 'lives' of women and funeral sermons alluded to a generalised model, individuation of the portrait of the deceased had to render these claims plausible to their family, the congregation and readers who would have known them or their general reputation.²¹ It is essential to treat sermons as events as well as texts if they are to be used as sources for the practice as well as the idealisation of female piety.²²

Preachers called on collective observation of godly women to substantiate their claims, as well as staking their own judgement of character on their portrait of a patron; if there was room for idealisation there was none for flights of fantasy before audiences and readers who might know a woman by experience or reputation.²³ Denison presented the marks of assurance that Elizabeth Juxon recognised in herself and had recorded since her conversion. He confronted those sceptical of these marks, and their claim to have been composed by her, by citing his own reputation, contending that 'for my owne part I know them to be no fables...by five yeares experience, living in the house with her...'.²⁴ Denison invited the congregation or reader to consider their own observations of Elizabeth Juxon's behaviour; her attendance at sermons whatever her health or the season, her Bible readings, her pious speech and virtuous living, her love of poor brethren, her godly gatherings.²⁵ Elizabeth was, Denison argued, almost never unobserved, in the City or in the household, though

²⁰ P. Collinson, 'A Magazine of religious patterns: an Erasmian topic transposed in English protestantism' in his *Godly People: essays on English protestantism and puritanism* (1983), and *Birthpangs* (1990), p. 143.

²¹ Lake, 'Feminine Piety', pp. 143, 160-1, and *The Antichrist's Lewd Hat: Protestants, Papists and Players in post-Reformation England* (2002), p. 549; R. Houlbrooke, 'The Puritan Death-Bed, c. 1560-1660', in C. Durston and J. Eales (eds.), *The Culture of English Puritanism, 1560-1700* (1996), pp. 126-7; M. Ezell, 'Domestic Papers: Manuscript Culture and Early Modern Women's Life Writing', in M. Dowd, J. Eckerle (eds.), *Genre and Women's Life Writing in Early Modern England* (Aldershot, 2007), p. 33.

²² M. Morrissey, 'Interdisciplinarity and the Study of Early Modern Sermons', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 42 (1999), pp. 1112-6.

²³ Dixon, *Practical Predestinarians*, p. 309.

²⁴ Denison, *The monument*, p. 83.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 85-6, 88-9, 90-1, 98, 102-3, 104-5.

she had attained that degree of sinceritie, as that her studie was to hide her graces, at least so farre as grace could be hid. She hated vaine shewes; she could not brooke those that would publikly make shew of more then was manifest by their priuate practise.²⁶

He dared the London reader to challenge anyone who knew Elizabeth to support his claims: ‘this we all knew which knew her, and can testifie’.²⁷ Denison argued that even Elizabeth’s frequent personal prayers, prayed aloud, were noticed in her household: ‘I my selfe haue bene an eare witnesse, for I haue heard her pray when she was not aware of me...the family are not ignorant how exactly she kept and observed her religious hours in private’.²⁸ Thomas Gataker, a puritan preacher known for giving funeral sermons, likewise argued that ‘domesticall examples are of all other the most powerfull’ especially because there were those who could testify, ‘continuall eye-witnesses of those her [Rebekah Crispe’s] gracious parts and godly courses, which most others had in part onely by heare-say’.²⁹ In the case of funeral sermons on elite women in the City, there were limits to how far the facts could be fabricated or even idealised.

Moderate puritan preachers valued the funeral sermon as a way to extend the influence of a saint over the community from beyond the grave.³⁰ Preachers sought to retain something of the character of the woman in question. Denison preserved what he could of Elizabeth Juxon’s voice, in acknowledgement that her testimony as a pious woman offered something that his own affirmations as a clergyman could not:

I will not adde any thing above the sence of that which she hath written...she that is dead, shall yet speake unto you...examine whether thou findest these signes in thy selfe or no; for this is the way to benefit by them.³¹

²⁶ Ibid., pp. 107-8.

²⁷ Ibid., p.120.

²⁸ Ibid., p. 92; A. Stewart, ‘The Early Modern Closet Discovered’, *Representations*, 50 (1995), pp. 81-3; T. Hamling, ‘Living with the Bible in Post-Reformation England: the Materiality of Text, Image and Object in Domestic Life’, in J. Doran, C. Methuen and A. Walsham (eds.), *Religion and the Household*, SCH, 50 (Woodbridge, 2014), p. 214, n. 12.

²⁹ T. Gataker, *Two Funeral Sermons* (1620), Sig. A4r; B. Usher, ‘Gataker, Thomas (1574–1654)’, *ODNB*.

³⁰ Lake, ‘Feminine Piety’, pp. 143-6.

³¹ Denison, *The monument*, p. 84.

Pastorally, funeral sermons on women offered a unique opportunity to a preacher. Whereas Arnold Hunt has argued that printed sermons tended to favour doctrinal instruction over the moral exhortation of the spoken word, funeral sermons on women combined the two by presenting doctrinal instruction with a real moral example.³² Denison used Elizabeth Juxon's marks of election as an extension of his biography of her godly life. Thomas Gataker valued the chance to show any Christian how a godly life could be lived within the community:

Good Examples (as the Heathen man obserueth) are of great force; and are therefore (not without cause) so frequently propounded in Gods word. They preuaile oft more then precepts. Precepts shew vs what we should do: Examples goe further, and shew vs how we may doe it; and that the things enioyned vs may be done of vs, because they haue been done by others like our selues before vs: and so they take away that obiection of impossibilitie, as if that were required of vs, that could not be done, or that none before vs euer did.³³

A female auditory and readership was thought to gain most benefit from funeral sermons and other commemorative texts on women. The earliest verse epitaph on an alderman's wife, John Phillips' *Epitaph on the death of the virtuous Matrone, the Ladie Mayoress ... Agnes Avenon* (1570) was addressed to the women of London, and his later *A Commemoration* (1594) on Helen Branch addressed 'Ladies all'.³⁴ Funeral sermons set their subjects up as models of godly virtue, but otherwise as ordinary women who suffered through the levelling afflictions of childbirth and illness. Gataker presented his aunt Rebekah Crispe's example as evidence that 'Patience indeede, that putteth Piety to the prooffe', for she had been confined to her bed with her final illness.³⁵ The only extraordinary thing about her was love of God:

Neither was this her patience such as proceeded either from some senselesnes and stupiditie, or from some kinde of immanitie and inhumanitie, as in some; (for she was a woman made of meekenes and lowlines, of minde, as of a tender constitution her selfe naturally, and therefore soone sensible of paine and grieffe, so full of bowels of mercy and tender compassion towards others, and free from all austeritie and harshnes of

³² A. Hunt, *The Art of Hearing: English Preachers and their Audiences, 1590-1640* (Cambridge, 2010), pp. 11-12.

³³ Gataker, *Two Funeral Sermons*, Sig. A3v.

³⁴ J. Phillips, *Epitaph on the death of the virtuous Matrone, the Ladie Mayoress...Agnes Avenon* (1570), *A commemoration of the life and death of the right worshipfull and vertuous ladie; Dame Helen Branch* (1594), p. 6.

³⁵ Gataker, *Two Funeral Sermons*, Sig. B2v.

spirat) but from an apprehension of Gods hand in those things that befell her and a conscience of submitting her will to his pleasure.³⁶

Lake has argued that one aspect of the appeal of puritan religiosity was its ability to ‘remove the sheer meaningless contingency from human suffering’, such as the death of a child taken by inscrutable divine providence.³⁷ In 1627 Thomas Gataker preached a funeral sermon on the death of his infant cousin for his (now) aunt and uncle, Anne and Nicholas Crispe and he presented comfort even within such a bewildering loss, as falling within the incomprehensible will of God.³⁸

In the hands of skilful preachers at least, the daily example of elite puritan women’s piety might not be alienating but rather familiar enough to be uniting and encouraging, especially but not exclusively amongst women with whom she shared common, gendered experiences.³⁹ Stephen Denison did not suggest that Elizabeth Juxon was unfeeling to love God more than her six children, but that her love for God should be measured by her love not for the ‘furniture of her house’ but for ‘her very children, which were farre more deare vnto her, then any worldly riches whatsoeuer’, sentiments with which other mothers could identify.⁴⁰ Pregnancy need be no barrier to hearing the Word preached, for Elizabeth would rise ‘by fieve a clocke in the morning, and that in the cold winter, and when she was with child, to go to the Lecture in the citie at six a clocke; and this she did constantly’.⁴¹ Illness was no excuse either: ‘if God would giue her but so much strength to endure to be carried in a chaire to the Church, she would desirously go’.⁴² Elizabeth had suffered a ‘fiery triall...not onely dolours, but...long and tedious,

³⁶ Ibid., Sig. B3r; K. Thomas, *Religion and the decline of magic: studies in popular beliefs in sixteenth and seventeenth-century England* (1971).

³⁷ Lake, ‘Feminine Piety’, pp. 143-16.

³⁸ T. Gataker, *Ieroboam’s sonnes decease a funeral sermon* (1627).

³⁹ Merritt, J., ‘The pastoral tightrope: a puritan pedagogue in Jacobean London’, in T. Cogswell, R. Cust and P. Lake (eds.), *Politics, Religion and Popularity in Early Stuart Britain: essays in honour of Conrad Russell* (Cambridge, 2002), pp. 146-61.

⁴⁰ Denison, *The monument*, p. 80.

⁴¹ Ibid., pp. 90-1.

⁴² Ibid., p. 98.

coming upon her with great extremitie for the space of a yeare and upwards' before she died.⁴³ Denison portrayed her suffering as very ordinary, and only her reaction to it alone as saintly: 'let vs not thinke it strange if she roared and cried with paine at some times; when she had any mitigation, she condemned her impatiencie, and iustified God'.⁴⁴

Preachers valued the difference that gender brought to women's piety, by presenting femininity positively, by depicting women sanctifying the shortcomings of their gender through their piety, and by representing masculine and feminine religious virtues as available to believers of irrespective of gender. Stephen Denison was so impressed by Elizabeth Juxon that he admitted 'Yea, I do suppose, that her inner man was come to that degree of love and zeale' with which she committed her life to God', though his admiration of her piety turned primarily on her femininity.⁴⁵ Elizabeth Juxon marked her conversion by beginning to suckle her own children, and ending the wet-nursing abhorred by Protestant commentators.⁴⁶ Dixon argues that affliction could be problematic in funeral sermons, as a reprobate trait in the elect, but his example of the downplaying of affliction is in relation to a funeral sermon on a *man*.⁴⁷ Women's relationship to affliction had unique potential.

Jeri McIntosh has observed that funeral sermons on women more frequently described their subjects in paradise than did those on men.⁴⁸ Elite women no less than their poorer neighbours had cause to prepare themselves for the possibility of death with every pregnancy. As Gataker warned in his sermon on the death of his infant cousin, a woman's chances of an early grave were greater than those of a man: 'Death is euer at our doores. It lieth in wait for vs not in our fields, or our streets, or our shops, or our beds onely, but in our cradles to, in our

⁴³ Ibid., pp. 79-80.

⁴⁴ Ibid., pp. 81-2.

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 98.

⁴⁶ Ibid., pp. 112-3; Ryrie, *Being Protestant*, p. 451.

⁴⁷ Dixon, *Practical Predestinarians*, pp. 338-9.

⁴⁸ McIntosh, 'English Funeral Sermons', p. 5.

swathing-bands, in the childe-bed, in the childe-birth'.⁴⁹ In the example of her acceptance of affliction as from God, Denison suggested that Elizabeth Juxon might prove an apt example for all men and women who shared physical vulnerability in the world. Affliction in the saints could bring on crises in assurance, or stand as a metaphor for them.⁵⁰ Godly women relished what opportunities they had to prove their faith.⁵¹ Such sentiments were clearly thought to be impressive to congregations too, as Elizabeth Juxon's longing for martyrdom was the only speech of hers that Denison ventriloquized in her funeral sermon:

she was very mindfull of the...triall which might come vpon vs...rather to burn...then euer to yeeld vnto Poperie, or to betray the truth of the Gospell...Oh said she, how shall I endure to be drawne vpon an hurdle vnder Newgate, and to be bound vnto a stake, to suffer the violence of the fire? ⁵²

Preachers gained personal knowledge of their female subjects through intimate relationships with these women who were their patrons, and were happy to own it in their publications. It was through witnessing women's experiences and meditating on them that clergy found inspiration to strengthen their own spiritual armour. Clergy like John Dod, who was patronised by Anne Glover, were recommended by godly women to one another and expected to learn from women's godly example.⁵³ Clergy came to express their own comforts through imagined gender reversals, and enjoyed 'a surprisingly extensive degree of influence and agency in households', particularly as spiritual guides for personal and household devotion.⁵⁴ The relationship of rich female patrons to their younger, humbler chaplains in

⁴⁹ Gataker, *Ieroboam's sonnes decease*, Sig. C2r.

⁵⁰ Dixon, *Practical Predestinarians*, p. 291.

⁵¹ M. Knappen, *Two Elizabethan Puritan Diaries* (Chicago, 1933), pp. 82-3.

⁵² Denison, *The monument*, p. 111.

⁵³ E. Longfellow, 'The Isham family and their clergy', in H. Adlington, T. Lockwood, G. Wright (eds.), *Chaplains in early modern England: Patronage, Literature and Religion* (Manchester, 2013), p. 169; TNA, PROB 11/121, fo. 146v; A. Pritchard, 'Puritans and the Blackfriars Theater: The Cases of Mistresses Duck and Drake', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 45 (1994), p. 94; J. Fielding, 'Dod, John (1550-1645)', *ODNB*.

⁵⁴ Webster, *Godly Clergy* (1997), pp. 127-8; A. Porterfield, 'Women's Attraction to Puritanism', *Church History*, 60 (1991), p. 202.

London was scrutinized by the community in London. Their intimacy was that of a reciprocal spiritual relationship.⁵⁵

Preachers advertised this closeness. In 1629 the well-connected puritan City preacher Ezekiel Charke dedicated his edition of the letters of the radical puritan preacher Paul Bayne, ‘the bright star in the Church of God’, to the sisters and daughters of Margaret Slany, Mary Weld and Elizabeth Lennard. He assured the reader that the dedication was intended as recompense for the support they had given his faith: ‘I cannot so rejoice in any improvement of my best love and service to them, as when *mutually* I may bee a helper forward of faith [my emphasis]’.⁵⁶ Puritan women like Gataker’s aunt Rebekah Crispe regularly enjoyed the company of the godly who sought her out:

priuate conference with such as resorted vnto her, and might that way further her, to the searching out of the good and holy and acceptable will of God...

Rebekah’s experience enabled her to hold her own in these exchanges, with the vigour of the Catholic women Gataker had debated with:

In this kinde shee was a great Questionist and (as those religious Romane Ladies were sometime to a whetstone to my selfe... by her studious enquirie occasioning the more diligent search, and the more exact discouery of many particulars...so oft as I resorted vnto her, I did *tam proficere quàm prodesse*, as well benefit by her, as benefit her...such points as bent and aymed at the practise of piety, the tryall of faith, and sound sanctification.⁵⁷

‘The practise of piety, the tryall of faith, and sound sanctification’, were core themes of funeral sermons on women. The authors of funeral sermons idealized the active piety of effective saints as individuals and as part of a community, in which women’s patience through

⁵⁵ Longfellow, ‘Isham family’, in Adlington et al. (eds.), *Chaplains*, pp. 3-4, 198.

⁵⁶ N. Tyacke, *Aspects of English Protestantism, c.1530-1700* (Manchester, 2001), p. 117; B. Usher, ‘The Fortunes of English Puritanism: an Elizabethan Perspective’ in K. Fincham, and P. Lake, (eds.), *Religious Politics in Post Reformation England: essays in honour of Nicholas Tyacke* (Woodbridge, 2006), p. 106; P. Bayne, *Christian Letters of Mr. Paul Bayne* (1620), dedicatory epistle, Sig. 2v; I. Archer, ‘Weld, Mary, Lady Weld (bap. 1560?, d. 1623)’, ODNB; C. Knighton, ‘Baynes, Paul (c.1573–1617)’, ODNB.

⁵⁷ Gataker, *Two Funeral Sermons*, Sigs. B1v-B2v.

trials of affliction were only one accomplishment.⁵⁸ Historians have long pondered the role of anxiety in puritan piety. Lake has characterized puritan piety as oscillating between ‘fear and confidence, anxiety and assurance’, a state of dread which he importantly characterises as ‘fruitful’ in so much as it was motivating to works of faith and mutual support within the godly community.⁵⁹ Dixon depicts the saint less as the vacillating and anxious worrier as which the antinomians characterised them, and more the effective instrument of God: ‘ministers sought to create a generation of self-confident and assertive everyday saints who would be able to engage with others because they were not constantly fretting about themselves’, but rather taking heart from their vigilance over sin to put their regenerated will to work.⁶⁰ Funeral sermons and dedications to women described their relationship to sin and perseverance in just this way.

ii) Surveillant saints

Discipline, and particularly self-discipline, was an ethic as well as a product of anxiety for the saints.⁶¹ It was an ethic which godly women sought to inculcate in all those who lived under their spiritual care in their homes, and inscriptions praised mothers for their solicitude, as did dedications and funeral sermons.⁶² Funeral monuments depicted the idealised family at prayer, children in rows kneeling at prayer desks around their parents. As a good wife, Elizabeth Juxon had taken special care over the soul of her spouse, and Denison urged her widower John to ‘remember with ioy, that which drew teares from you at her death, to wit, what a great care she had of your soule whilst she liued’.⁶³ Denison praised Elizabeth Juxon’s care over her household, her children and her spouse:

⁵⁸ Lake, *Boxmaker’s Revenge*, pp. 21, 25.

⁵⁹ P. Lake, ‘William Bradshaw, Antichrist, and the Community of the Godly’, *JEH*, 36 (1985), pp. 576-7, *Boxmaker’s Revenge*, pp. 116-69; V. Gregory, ‘Bradshaw, William (bap. 1570, d. 1618)’, *ODNB*.

⁶⁰ Dixon, *Practical Predestinarians*, pp. 7, 130-47; D. Como, *Blown by the Spirit: Puritanism and the emergence of an antinomian underground in pre-Civil-War London* (Stanford CA, 2004), p. 35; Pederson, *Unity in diversity*, pp. 139-40, 212-5, 219, 237, 239-40, 244-7.

⁶¹ Dixon, *Practical Predestinarians*, pp. 160, 164; P. Gorski, *The Disciplinary Revolution: Calvinism and the Rise of the State in early modern Europe* (Chicago, 2003), p. 20.

⁶² R. Houlbrooke, ‘Death, Church, and Family in England between the late fifteenth and early eighteenth centuries’ in his *Death, Ritual and Bereavement* (1989), pp. 39-40.

⁶³ Denison, *The monument*, Sig. A2r.

She did most diligently ouersee the wayes of her family: and she eate not the bread of idlenesse, but still she employed her selfe in some commendable employment. And as for her children and seruants, she did diligently instruct them in good wayes. She was grieued at any prophanenesse found in them: she mourned for them: she prayed for them; she pitied their estate: and as for the soule of her louing and kind husband, she had an especiall care.⁶⁴

In the godly household the thoughts and behaviour of all members were under surveillance from one another and from the images that gazed on inhabitants as they went about their daily routine.⁶⁵ When Denison sought to defend Elizabeth Juxon from accusations of carefully hidden hypocrisy, he imagined that even ‘her chamber, and closet, and orchard, and garden, and watergate, and turret, and euery corner could testifie that she had dearely and earnestly sought after God’.⁶⁶ Portraits of matriarchs, as objects full of ambivalence about self-display in the juxtaposition of finery and *memento mori*, and as images that were only questionably permissible for the home, stared down from the walls of merchants’ houses to remind their viewers that repentance for sin could not be deferred but must be practised daily as a habit of mind.⁶⁷ Elite mercantile women favoured clocks over the skulls that Tarnya Cooper has shown their husbands incorporated into their iconography, as ‘a type of ready sermon hanging upon the wall’.⁶⁸ City women also wore these *memento mori* about their person to refocus their thoughts on God throughout their day. In her will of 1599, Margaret Wythens left her son ‘all the Pictures [portraits]’ from the two halls in the house where she lived.⁶⁹ A portrait represented a significant investment and City women had made specific choices about how they wanted to be

⁶⁴ Ibid., p. 113.

⁶⁵ T. Hamling, *Decorating the Godly Household: Religious Art in post Reformation Britain* (2010), pp. 4, 90, Ch. 6.

⁶⁶ Denison, *The monument*, p. 122; *The Private Life of an Elizabethan Lady: the diary of Lady Margaret Hoby, 1599-1605*, ed. J. Moody (Stroud, 1998), p. 11.

⁶⁷ M. Aston, *England's iconoclasts* (Oxford, 1988), pp. 300-1, 445-51; T. Cooper, ‘Predestined Lives? Portraiture and Religious Belief in England and Wales, 1560-1620’, in T. Hamling and R. Williams (eds.), *Art Re-formed: Re-assessing the Impact of the Reformation on the Visual Arts* (Newcastle, 2007), pp. 49-63; ‘Barrington family letters, 1628-1632’, ed. A. Searle, (Camden Society, 4th ser., 28, 1983), p. 18.

⁶⁸ T. Cooper, *Citizen Portrait: Portrait Painting and the Urban Elite of Tudor and Jacobean England and Wales* (2012), pp. 11, 15; R. Tittler, ‘Thomas Heywood and the Portrayal of Female Benefactors’, *Early Theatre*, 11 (2008), p. 45.

⁶⁹ TNA, PROB 11/95, fo. 279v.

represented.⁷⁰ Women were painted in fineries that were perhaps *restrained* in comparison to what they wore on a daily basis in the City.

City women filled their homes with Biblical images, through furniture and furnishings that were constitutive of the religious environment as well as representative of conspicuous consumption. Where the mistress of a household could not personally keep watch, the inclusion of Biblical scenes into the decorative fabric of the home made sure residents felt surveyed.⁷¹ Religious decorations sat alongside luxuries in the homes of the godly elite. In the inventory appended by Elizabeth Ryvers her will of 1619 was a ‘waynescott Bedstead carved with Adam and Eve’; a provoking prospect for any couple who slept beneath it, inviting them to think both on the Fall and on Christ’s corresponding satisfaction for their sin, and whether to bind their own fallen wills to concupiscence or grace when they climbed into bed in the evening and rose in the morning.⁷² In 1622 Mary Weld bequeathed her niece Elizabeth Brooke many luxuries: ‘my chayne of diamonds....one furniture for a bed of greene velvet laid with gold lace and five taefetta curtains edges with green silk and gold fringe...’. She also left her ‘the best sute of damask which was my mothers being stitched about with an open stitch conteyninge the storye of Jonas’.⁷³ Needlework was an activity which allowed the listener to meditate on a text read aloud in godly company as they worked.⁷⁴ This piece of meditative needlework stitched by Margaret Slaney passed between three generations of the women of the family, to continue its everyday improvement of their spiritual life.⁷⁵

Godly women neither claimed to be free of sin themselves, nor that their households were perfect, but their surveillance over their own sins and those of the household marked them

⁷⁰ Cooper, *Citizen Portrait*, p. 4.

⁷¹ Hamling, *Decorating*, p. 202; A. Ryrie, ‘Sleeping, Waking and Dreaming in Protestant Piety’, in J. Merritt and A. Ryrie, (eds.), *Private and Domestic Devotion in early modern England* (Farnham, 2012), p. 81.

⁷² TNA, PROB 11/133, fo. 505r; Hamling, ‘Living with the Bible’, pp. 221-3; I. Moulton, *Love in Print in the Sixteenth Century: The Popularization of Romance* (Basingstoke, 2014), pp. 2, 14-5.

⁷³ TNA, PROB 11/141, fo. 231v.

⁷⁴ *Private Life*, ed. Moody, pp. 12, 39, 69.

⁷⁵ Hamling, *Decorating*, pp. 213-5.

out from the ungodly. Rector of St Margaret Lothbury, the puritan preacher and writer John Downname argued in his *Christian Warfare* (1604), that it was plain to see that the godly had a different relationship to sinning:

the one sort securely goe on in sinne the other are so affrighted, astonished, and continually tormented with doubtings, feares, and the continuall assaults of their spirituall enemies, that they goe mourning all the day long, pining away in griefe and anguish of mind, till at last they grow wearie of their liues, thinking their soules an intollerable burthen to their bodies, and their bodies to the earth.⁷⁶

Elizabeth Juxon was wary even of the possibility that she hid her own sins from herself. On her deathbed, according to Denison

she desired the iudgements of more then of one Minister, that she might know the very truth of her estate. Yea she desired to heare of her sinnes, and to that end desired me, either in my owne person, or by some other good Minister, to preach a Sermon of the cursed estate of man by nature, and of the vttermost terrours of the Law against sinne; that so her stonie heart might be more and more broken: and for that paines she would haue giuen me or any other Minister of Christ, which would haue made the Sermon, a large reward in gold.⁷⁷

Elizabeth Juxon left a list of the spiritual marks of election she had found within herself throughout a lifetime of self-examination, sanctification and repentance so that her family could look for the marks in themselves and find comfort in assurance of their own election too.⁷⁸

Elizabeth followed clerical guidance in compiling her list.

Downname sought to help the godly cope with this hyperawareness of sin, and therefore also included a guide to recognise ‘these markes and signes of their election, vocation, iustification, and sanctification in them, that so they may boldly and fitly apply vnto themselues these comforts and consolations as rightly and truly appertaining vnto them’.⁷⁹ The saint’s duty was to trust that God would care for them and to persevere, even in adverse circumstances, in their own spiritual improvement and in their worldly vocation. Downname’s *Christian Warfare*

⁷⁶ J. Downname, *The Christian Warfare* (1604), Sig. 3r; P. Seaver, ‘Downham, John (1571–1652)’, *ODNB*.

⁷⁷ Denison, *The Monument*, p. 108.

⁷⁸ J. Heller, *The Mother’s Legacy in Early Modern England* (Aldershot, 2011), pp. 1–5, 11; K. Narveson, *Bible Readers and Lay Writers in Early Modern England: gender and self-definition in an emergent writing culture* (Farnham, 2012), p. 9.

⁷⁹ Downname, *Christian Warfare*, Sig. 5r.

was published to help those experiencing the ‘most daungerous...the temptations and assaults of our spirituall enemies, whereby they labour to hinder the saluation of Gods elect, and to increase the greatnesse of their hellish dominions’.⁸⁰ Against these manifold temptations and attacks of the times, God’s children could be confident that they were protected by their election;

God their heauenly father who hath taken vpon him their protection, frustrateth all their subtile policies with his all-seeing wisdom, and withstandeth all their might with his almightie power, yet doe they exceedingly with their assaults and temptations, foyle, vex and trouble them.⁸¹

Texts such as Downname’s therefore addressed their dedicatees, and often their readers too, as if they were sure they were elect. Downname dedicated *The Christian Warfare* to a group within the elite godly laity who were related by kinship, politics, and by salvation. Their spiritual introspection supported, not hindered, their vocations in the world in the cause of true religion. Downname addressed the work to Sarah Smythe and her sister-in-law Katharine Scott (née Smythe, widow of Sir Rowland Heyward) and to their husbands. These were tightly knit kin, whose bonds endured through suspicion during the Essex rebellion. Sir John Scott was saved from trial by Essex’s kinsman Sir Robert Sidney, who Sarah married in early 1625 after the death of Sir Thomas Smythe in 1625. Downname also dedicated the work to Richard and Anne Chamberlain his ‘welbeloved and most respected friends’. All these dedicatees Downname addressed as ‘GODLY, ZEALOUS AND SINCERE PROFESSORS OF GODS TRUE RELIGION’.⁸² Downname chose them for this dedication

of mine vnfained loue which I beare to you all, for your vertues and approued godlinesse; and partly because I thought none fitter to whom I might commend this discourse of the *Christian Warfare*, than your selues who are olde experienced souldiers in fighting these spirituall battailes...⁸³

⁸⁰ Ibid., Sig. 2v.

⁸¹ Ibid., Sigs. 2v-3r.

⁸² Ibid., Sig. 2r.

⁸³ Ibid., Sig. 5r.

Every saint had a battle to fight, according to their particular vocation as well as their gender.⁸⁴ The primary battle for any saint was that of the long perseverance throughout their lives. Denison recorded that ‘upon her death bed’, Elizabeth Juxon arranged the details of her funeral sermon, ‘called for her Bible, and turned to this portion of Scripture, and desired me to intreate of it at her buriall’.⁸⁵ She chose

Iob 7. 3. 4. So am I made to possesse the moneths of vanitie, and wearisome nights are appointed to me: when I lie downe, I say, when shall I arise, and the night be gone? and I am full of tossings to and fro, vnto the dawning of the day.⁸⁶

Elizabeth Juxon rose early, before her neighbours.⁸⁷ This choice of funeral text attested to the attitude of vigilance in the night-time and daytime dissatisfaction with the world, the ‘holy scorne of the contentments of this life’ that characterised godly piety, but it also evoked the saint’s longest experience, that between conversion and death, in perseverance towards assurance of salvation.⁸⁸ It was commonly accepted that assurance could be obtained. The spectrum of puritan ministers’ thought on assurance which Dixon describes ranged from those who put little importance on assurance in the life of the saint, to others who assumed that assurance was relatively easy for the saint to attain.⁸⁹ If you were sure you were within the Covenant of Grace, there was comfort in that knowledge.⁹⁰ Elizabeth Juxon constantly reviewed her ‘spirituall estate... by a strict and serious examination which she tooke of her selfe in the time of her health’. Gradually she noted down the twenty ‘markes which this our sister found to be wrought in her, by Gods holy Spirit’.⁹¹ From her deathbed, Rebekah Crispe engaged in ‘long discourse to and fro’ and

before some few of her familiar frends, made a worthy and pithy confession and profession of her Faith...laid open the grounds and notes of her assurance fetched forth

⁸⁴ P. Lake, ‘The Significance of the Elizabethan Identification of the Pope as Antichrist’, *JEH*, 31 (1980), p. 177.

⁸⁵ Denison, *The monument*, p. 78.

⁸⁶ Ibid., Sig. A6r.

⁸⁷ Ryrie, ‘Sleeping’, pp. 76-7.

⁸⁸ Denison, *The monument*, p. 80.

⁸⁹ Dixon, *Practical Predestinarians*, pp. 11-12, 147-52, 157, 176, 190, 192.

⁹⁰ J. von Rohr, ‘The Covenant of Assurance in early English Puritanism’, *Church History*, 34 (1965), pp. 195-7.

⁹¹ Denison, *The monument* (1620), p. 83.

of Gods word, of Gods loue vnto her, and of her owne vnto God; requesting either to be better informed, if in ought she were mistaken, or to haue further confirmed by pregnant proofes out of Gods booke, what she rightly apprehended.⁹²

Though the preambles to women's wills that reveal puritan tendencies acknowledge the state of mournful watchfulness of one's sins, that worry is washed clean away with the assurance of the efficacy of the sacrifice of Christ's blood for the remission of their sins. Elizabeth Juxon surveyed her sins even in her last hours, but her deathbed was not a scene of doubt: 'she made a very excellent sensible acknowledgement of the goodnesse of God vnto her, and how she knew that it should be well with her after this life ended'.⁹³

When writers described the lives of female saints, however idealized, the sainthood they depicted was not one of closeted piety and introspective perseverance leading to wracked inaction, but of divine motivation to social engagement. The anti-puritan Calvinist divine Robert Sanderson saw no reason that the introspection of practical predestinarianism should be debilitating, and exhorted his Boston auditory in March 1624 'Oh up then, and be doing!...be profitable to human society by the exercising of some or other of those gifts....If thou hast a gift, get a calling!'⁹⁴ The saints excelled in their efficient vigilance against sin, deep introspection, regular repentance, but the spiritual development of the saint also fostered and enriched conference with godly clergy and laity, informed household education, and motivated ecclesiastical patronage and charity in the community. Elizabeth Juxon considered her godly life a vocation to be pursued as a gift from God, and counted this the fifteenth mark of election she recognised in herself: 'I desire to deale faithfully in the charge and calling in which I am, and to discharge it in the conscionable feare of God'.⁹⁵

⁹² Gataker, *Two Funeral Sermons* (1620), Sigs. B3r-4v.

⁹³ Denison, *The monument*, pp. 99-100.

⁹⁴ Dixon, *Practical Predestinarians*, pp. 221-23; J. Sears McGee, 'Sanderson, Robert (1587-1663)', ODNB.

⁹⁵ Denison, *The monument*, p. 112.

iii) Patronage and piety

Elite godly women's status in London allowed them very varied opportunities to exercise their vocation. Their support of clergy was attested to through the dedications that came out of these relationships, while the choice of works dedicated to women reveals what sort of religious texts were thought to be attractive to them and why.

Women in London took initiative in patronising godly clergy, offering them a wide range of support. Gataker dedicated the edition of his funeral sermon on the death of the infant son of his 'cosens' Nicholas and Anne Cripse as 'a *pledge* of my continued *loue* and *affection* to that *Family*, which since my first *acquaintance* with, and *alliance* to, I haue found so much *comfort* in, and receiued so much *kindnesse* from.'⁹⁶ Anthony Munday dedicated a translation of a French sermon to Sir Stephen and Elizabeth Soame, having heard the same topic of the Cross 'on good Friday...with the rest of your bretheren', in thanks for 'such extraordinarie gentlenes' in evidence that 'I forget not such favours.'⁹⁷

As patrons who lacked official positions of authority within the City, women were prepared to show loyalty to the clergy they patronised, even when they fell foul of the ecclesiastical authorities. Richard Bernard was a puritan who had briefly embraced Separatism in 1605-6 but had been persuaded to return to the Church.⁹⁸ He dedicated a devotional work *The Good man's grace, or His stay in all distresse*, a manual for meditation, to 'the right worshipfull his very good Lady, the Lady' Susanna Billingsley, widow of Sir Henry, and to 'the Vertuous and Christianly affected Gentlewoman' Rebecca Strode, the daughter of Alderman Nicholas Crispe, who were related through the Trappes family. He thanked the women for proving

⁹⁶ Gataker, *Ieroboam's sonnes decease*, Sig. A2v.

⁹⁷ A. Munday, trans., *A Brief Treatise of the Vertue of the Crosse* (1599), Sig. A3r; T. Cowper, *The Cry and Revenge of Blood* (1620), dedicatory epistle; S. Wright, 'Cooper, Thomas (b. 1569/70, d. in or after 1626)', ODNB.

⁹⁸ R. Greaves, 'Bernard, Richard (bap. 1568, d. 1642)', ODNB.

‘faithful friends...that will know a man in adversity...substantiall friends be rare’, but ‘true love, as Saint John speakes, driveth away feare’ to help friends in need.⁹⁹

Women’s reputation for godliness, and their patronage of godly preachers attracted dedications of religious texts from preachers with whom they had no prior relationship. When the printer John Danter dedicated the renowned puritan preacher Henry ‘Silver- Tongued’ Smith’s *God’s Arrowe against atheists* (1593) to Katharine Heyward, he appealed to her as a woman known to protect true preachers, who could be expected to ‘shadow [the sermon] under the wings of your clemencie from the bitter stormes of all Heretical Schismaticks’.¹⁰⁰ Such was Katharine’s reputation that she was known beyond mercantile circles to Sir Francis Bacon as ‘a gentlewoman much commended’.¹⁰¹ A common hope expressed by those dedicating texts to women according to their reputation, was that they would further and protect both godly preachers and their publications.¹⁰² The translator of *A Spiritual Grammer, or the parts of speech moralized* (1597) dedicated his work to Mary Ramsey, trusting that she would prove ‘a mirror of so many good deeds, a lover of all godly enterprises, and a furtherer of all virtuous labours’.¹⁰³ Women’s reputations for godliness meant that they could vouch for the quality of a work by accepting its dedication, thereby recommending it to the reader. In 1580 the translator Thomas Crewe, of whom little is known, asserted that his edition of Gabriel Meurier’s *The Nosegay of Moral Philosophy*, merely for ‘coming out under the name of so woorthie a Patronage’ as that of Elizabeth Martin ‘shalbe the better accepted of all men’. Crewe perhaps sought simultaneously to invite personal spiritual relationship or employment as a tutor with his new patron, asking

⁹⁹ R. Bernard, *The Good man’s grace, or His stay in all distresse* (1621), Sigs. A3r-A4r; A. Walsham, ‘Holy Families: the Spiritualisation of the Early Modern Household Revisited’, in J. Doran et al. (eds.), *Religion and the Household*, p. 132.

¹⁰⁰ H. Smith, *God’s Arrowe against atheists* (1593), dedicatory epistle; G. Jenkins, ‘Smith, Henry (c.1560–1591)’, ODNB.

¹⁰¹ *The Letters of Lady Anne Bacon*, ed. G. Allen (Camden Society, 5th ser., 44, Cambridge, 2014), p. 101.

¹⁰² P. Trolander and Z. Tenger, *Sociable Criticism in England, 1625-1725* (Newark NJ, 2007), p. 32.

¹⁰³ *A Spiritual Grammer, or the parts of speech moralized* (1597), dedicatory epistle.

that ‘if you receieve any comfort by [the sermons], you would adde one petition the more to your prayers; that God would make mee faithful and profitable in my calling to the end’.¹⁰⁴

The commercial importance of a dedication was not underestimated, and women were thought to be ideal dedicatees. In 1620 Samuel Smith’s bookseller insisted that his work have the endorsement of a dedicatee, so Smith approached Mary Weld: ‘Your Ladiship came in my mind. And albeit I am a stranger unto you, yet the constant report I have received of your good affection to the best things, and zeal to God’s house, that emboldened me.’¹⁰⁵ The commercial advantage of the patronage of godly City women vouching for devotional texts was apparent to publishers. Mary Houghton, wife of Alderman and Sherriff Peter Houghton, was the dedicatee of a 1594 edition of Nicholas Breton’s poem *The Passion of the Spirit* published by Thomas Este, famed musical editor and publisher. While Breton awaited the patronage of Mary Herbert, Countess of Pembroke for whom it was originally penned, Este prepared a hand bound manuscript copy, set out with decorative borders as a template for the printed edition, with a dedication to Houghton as ‘right worshipfull’ and offered her the poem as a gift of thanks ‘having received many favours at your hands’.¹⁰⁶ Breton could afford to denigrate Houghton’s patronage to Pembroke when he was back in her favour in 1597, and he dedicated the three subsequent editions to Pembroke. Houghton could ‘speak more to the purpose then many wives of the parish’ but in any comparison of ‘this Crystal with my Diamond, she would quickly show her dimness’.¹⁰⁷ Whatever the motives of poet and publisher, both recognised that the dedication of a text to a godly City lady had commercial value.

¹⁰⁴ G. Meurier, *The nosegay of moral philosophy* (1580), dedicatory epistle; J. Burns, ‘Crewe, Thomas (fl. 1580)’, ODNB.

¹⁰⁵ S. Smith, *Christ’s preparation to his owne death delivered in 3 sermons* (1620), dedicatory epistle.

¹⁰⁶ Bodleian MS Rawl. Poet 186, fols.1-2; J. Smith, ‘East, Thomas (1540–1608)’, ODNB.

¹⁰⁷ M. Brennan, ‘Nicholas Breton’s “The Passion of the Spirit” and the Countess of Pembroke’, *The Review of English Studies*, 38 (1987), pp. 221-5; J. Robertson, “The Passion of the Spirit” (1599) and Nicholas Breton’, *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 3 (1939), pp. 69-75.

Other authors with indirect connections to women through godly circles in the City openly sought enduring relationships with female dedicatees, citing a common cause of the furtherance of true religion; to preserve the memory of other saints as women hoped their own memories would be celebrated. Mary Weld's reputation for godliness and patronage preceded her. William Holbrooke was curate to the staunch puritan John Randall at St Andrew Hubbard from around 1613, so when Randall died in late May 1622 and he became rector, Holbrooke sought to inherit Randall's patronage too.¹⁰⁸ Holbrooke dedicated his edition of Randall's sermon *The description of fleshy lusts* (1622) to Mary Weld, as a work preserving the memory of the godly to one of their number, 'whom you have oft desired to have bin familiarly acquainted with, and to have entertained, as you long have done, and still doe, many of God's faithfull ministers and servants'. Holbrooke presented himself as 'a Fatherles childe' of Randall, and he was adopted as a favoured preacher by Mary Weld, who appointed him to preach her funeral sermon in her will of the same year.¹⁰⁹

Elite City women were the dedicatees of religious texts not merely by virtue of their reputation for godliness and their capacity to support preachers. Authors advertised the role of women in bringing about the publication of a text.¹¹⁰ The richest patrons with country houses could provide a different kind of support for publication, by offering clergy a retreat away from the City to prepare the text. Prolific puritan author and popular preacher at St Anne's Blackfriars William Gouge dedicated his *Whole-armour of God* to the Lord Mayor and Aldermen, but acknowledged a particular favour from amongst their kin:

That which afforded me the opportunity to publish this treatise was the kindness of the right worshipful William Rowe esquire, and the right religious Cicely Rowe, his wife, at whose country house, being entertained a good part of last summer, I found leisure to

¹⁰⁸ S. Wright, 'Randall, John (1570–1622)', *ODNB*.

¹⁰⁹ J. Randall, *The description of fleshy lusts* (1622), dedicatory epistle.

¹¹⁰ Trolander and Tenger, *Sociable Criticism*, p. 19.

review and copy out of my notes, which had not been possible for me to have done if I had been in London.¹¹¹

Women also kept custody of sermons until a suitable time for their publication. Gataker allowed the widow of a haberdasher the ‘full power of the copy’ of her husband’s funeral sermon ‘for her use.’ The widow, having reflected on it during her lifetime, left it to Gataker’s friend the moderate puritan and reputed preacher Richard Sibbes, later a founding Feoffee for Improvements, who published the sermon in 1624 ‘as intreated by the widow of the late deceased’ and ‘in her behalfe, and at her desire’, and presented the dedication to a group of puritan Aldermen.¹¹²

The authors of religious texts valued the opinion of godly women of their works, which was freely given and might itself be sufficient to make an author publish a particular text. Godly ladies commonly asked preachers to provide them with copies of a sermons they had found edifying for further contemplation. Ursula Owen, daughter of the great patroness Alice Owen, followed her mother’s example in patronising London preachers even when marriage took her to the counties. In 1617 Samson Price, newly rector of All Hallows the Great and vicar of Christchurch Newgate, dedicated his *The Cleaning of the Saints’ Sight* to Ursula Owen: ‘your Ladship, whom I know to be zealous for the truth’. Sampson made his motivation very clear: ‘This sermon preached before you was attentively hearkened unto, and the copie required after the speaking of it’, showing the reader that it was ‘your religious desire of the Copie’ that had provoked his publication.¹¹³

There may also be a modesty trope at work here, suggesting tacitly that women’s sermon notes contributed to the published copy. This practice was commonly owned when the note-

¹¹¹ W. Gouge, *The Whole-armour of God* (1616), dedicatory epistle; William and Cicely Rowe were the nephew and niece of Alderman Henry and Susanna Rowe, and son and daughter-in-law of Sir William and Mary Rowe; B. Usher, ‘Gouge, William (1575–1653)’, *ODNB*.

¹¹² McIntosh, ‘English Funeral Sermons’, p. 52; T. Gataker, *Christian Constancy* (1624), Sigs. B3r-B4r; M. Dever, ‘Sibbes, Richard (1577?–1635)’, *ODNB*.

¹¹³ S. Price, *The Cleaning of the Saints’ Sight* (1617), dedicatory epistle; N. Cranfield, ‘Price, Sampson (1585/6–1630)’, *ODNB*.

taker was *male*, but no examples have been identified here of the same admission for women's notes. Preachers did not habitually preach from a full text, and so publications were compiled from their notes and those of sermon-goers. When Thomas Gataker dedicated his funeral sermon on his aunt Rebekah Crispe to his uncle and his three female cousins, he recalled that 'finding among my loose papers the notes of that Sermon that I made at the enterrement of that blessed Saint' he had '*collected and transcribed* [ie. from the notes taken by others at the sermon] not long after at the request of some of you for your owne priuate vse and benefit', before demand caused him to publish it.¹¹⁴

Dedications of texts celebrated women's central role in the godly community, as saints who held lay and clerical networks of kinship, friendship, and patronage together within true religion. By celebrating these networks, dedications to women sought to further strengthen the saints and the bonds between them. Authors expected that women's sociable engagement with the texts themselves would form part of this endeavour. Godly networks in the City were a closely woven web of kinship, friendship and patronage. Patronage relationships within a family might be transferred between an alderman's successive wives without concern. The London-born clergyman Abraham Fleming's early career as he published his first literary works was nourished by his relationship with Sir Rowland Heyward.¹¹⁵ In 1581 Fleming dedicated his *The Footpath of Faith* to Rowland and his new wife Katharine for their friendship, but also recalled the part of 'the good Ladie your wife now deceased', in accepting his former dedications of works.¹¹⁶ Authors who shared kinship with great City women advertised their connection in dedications. Gataker found patrons in both Rebekah and Anne Crispe, his cousin Nicholas Crispe's wives.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁴ Gataker, *Two Funeral Sermons*, Sigs. A3r-v.

¹¹⁵ C. Clegg, 'Fleming, Abraham (c.1552–1607)', *ODNB*. I. Archer I., P. Kewes and F. Heal (eds.), *The Oxford handbook of Holinshead's chronicles* (Oxford, 2013).

¹¹⁶ A. Fleming, *The Footpath of Faith* (1581), dedicatory epistle; his first wife was Joan née Tilesworth, daughter of a London goldsmith, d. 1580.

¹¹⁷ Gataker's second wife, Margery née Pinner, was a cousin of Sir Nicholas Crispe, Rebekah's husband.

Authors with closer kinship connections presented the godly family in the household as bound even more closely by religion than by blood. On 5 January 1625, Anthony Ratcliffe dedicated a translation of homilies by Philippe de Mornay, seigneur du Plessis-Marly, to Dorothy Gerard, Elizabeth Harvey and Anne Moulson, three grand dames of the City, as his ‘very loving Sisters...seing it hath pleased God to vnite vs together by most neere and strict bands of amity, as namely, those of nature and grace’. Ratcliffe, their ‘very loving brother’, sought a way to honour these bonds with an expression of his love.

what burdened soule, would not gladly accept of ease? What trembling heart would not reioyce to find peace? And who is he or shee, whose heart & head being distracted & cumbred about many carking cares, would not willingly light upon that one thing, which being obtained, would breed in them a world of contentment?

Ratcliffe intended that his texts would become part of his sisters’ devotions, bequeathing the homilies ‘not as a worldly, but as a spiritual legacy, the fruit wherof my hope is shall abide with you forever.’ Female dedicatees were not imagined passively accepting the honour of a dedication, but actively promoting the work, not merely through their public reputation but through their own spiritual enrichment by it. Aware of the huge sums of money that were famously bequeathed within City families, Radcliffe argued that the *godly* elite left richer spiritual legacies: ‘Treatises carefully read, digested, and well practised, may in some cases proue more beneficiall; then to be left by the gift of friends, thousands of gold & silver.’ Many of the texts addressed to women by close kin aimed to be a help in perseverance and were meant to be *used* by women seeking self-understanding and the Spirit through contemplation.¹¹⁸ Even such godly ladies as his sisters, Radcliffe argued, fought the good fight for a godly life:

Let me intreate you all then, my deare sisters, with good *Mary* to chuse the better part, w^{ch} as Christ sayth, *shall never be taken from you*, lest being overmuch busied about the things of this life, you should seeme to come short of the heavenly...beloved Sisters, I am perswaded better things of you, & such as accompany salvation...¹¹⁹

¹¹⁸ F. Molekamp, *Women and the Bible in early modern England: religious reading and writing* (Oxford, 2013), p. 119; Narveson, *Bible Readers*, pp. 4, 82.

¹¹⁹ P. de Mornay trans. A. Ratcliffe, *3 Homilies upon Psalm 55.22, John 14.27, Luke 10.42* (1626), dedicatory epistle.

Godly authors who could cite no personal kinship with a dedicatee, favoured dedications to pairs or groups of women who were themselves kin. In 1620 Ezekiel Charke edited the letters of Paul Baynes and dedicated the collection to Mary Weld and Elizabeth Lennard, sisters of a City family, daughters of Margaret Slaney, and women with a great reputation for piety and charity.¹²⁰ Charke intended the letters to aid their spiritual improvement as saints, to

draw upp your minds from these vanishing delights below, to these hopes and joyes of an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you...as you are Sisters in nature, so you are nearer Sisters in grace.

Those who, like Charke, dedicated godly advice books to women did not expect the volume to gather dust on a shelf, but to be pored over: ‘if you attentively reade this Booke, you shall find many motives to heavenly mindednesse...Reade it, my respected Good Ladies, and the LORD give you understanding in all things.’¹²¹

Authors recognised the influence of mothers over daughters’ piety.¹²² Daniel Rogers, of the Essex clan of puritan preachers, dedicated his *Davides cost* (1619) to Margaret Slany and Mary Weld, mother and daughter.¹²³ Anne Tyndall, the other dedicatee, indicated the godly clerical networks such families also befriended, as she was the younger sister of the radical puritan City preacher at St Anne Blackfriars, Stephen Egerton.¹²⁴ Rogers explained that the timing of his dedication of this work to these women was on account of ‘that common interest, which we had in a reverent and deare friend of ours lately deceased’, who was his father, the puritan preacher Richard Rogers.¹²⁵ Rogers’ dedication of this particular work was motivated by the

¹²⁰ Tyacke, *Fortunes of English Puritanism*, p. 8.

¹²¹ Green, *Print and Protestantism*, pp. 583-6; S. Hull, *Chaste, Silent and Obedient: English books for women, 1475-1640* (San Marino, 1982); J. Simon, *Education and Society in Tudor England* (Cambridge 1966), p. 10; P. Baynes, *Christian letters of Mr Paul Bayne...to promote the honour of godlinesse* (1620), Sigs. 3r-4v.

¹²² Heller, *Mother’s Legacy*, p. 5;

¹²³ J. Yiannikou, ‘Rogers, Daniel (1573–1652)’, ODNB.

¹²⁴ B. Usher, ‘Egerton, Stephen (c.1555–1622)’, ODNB.

¹²⁵ D. Rogers, *Davides cost, first preached, now a treatise* (1619), Sig. A7v.

response these ‘three elect Ladies... I doubt not’ had shown to this sermon.¹²⁶ They had first heard it preached in church and then repeated, possibly in one of their homes, it ‘being first cast into your own treasury (I mean preacht in your owne Citie, neere to some of your dwellings), and sinthence that, in some of your Audience’.¹²⁷ Rogers advertised his own close relationship to his patrons by acknowledging a godly correspondence between them, explaining that he could only speak generally in a dedicatory epistle yet ‘if I were to write to any of your Ladiships in severall, I should use some other or further discourse’.¹²⁸

Rogers expected his work to support the piety of his dedicatees, and intended it to ‘stir up your godly minds’.¹²⁹ These women had not lived lives free of trials. He asked them to ‘remember God hath done much for you (besides the cost of many deep humiliations, wherewith he hath exercised some of you, that you have small cause to repent of, out of respect to Anne Tyndall whose husband, Sir John Tyndall, had been notoriously stabbed in the back in Lincoln’s Inn by a disgruntled old man against whom he had judged in Chancery’.¹³⁰ Rogers’s dedication had a dual purpose: to inspire strangers witnessing the example of these women, but also to contribute to his dedicatees’ responsibility for maintaining a religious life in their own homes:

Be yet still I beseech you not onely Patronesses of this Treatise, among strangers, to whom your Names shall come (unknowing and unknown) but also patterns of the instruction herein commended unto you, before such as live under you, and among you in your dwellings.¹³¹

Funeral sermons on women were dedicated to their families, but as they were thought to be especially beneficial to a female audience, daughters of the deceased were singled out to pay special and continued attention to the example of their mothers. Denison dedicated his

¹²⁶ Ibid., Sig. A3v.

¹²⁷ Ibid., Sig. A4r.

¹²⁸ Ibid., Sig. A7r.

¹²⁹ Ibid., Sig. A5v.

¹³⁰ Ibid., Sig. A6r; *A True Relation of a Most Desperate Murder, Committed upon the Body of Sir Iohn Tyndall, Knight* (1617), Sigs. B1r–v, B4v, C3v; Trolander and Tenger, *Sociable Criticism*, pp. 32, 37–41.

¹³¹ Rogers, *David’s cost*, Sigs. A6r–A7v.

funeral sermon to Elizabeth Juxon's whole family; he addressed general advice on good living to her two sons, but her daughters were directed to take particular heed. Elizabeth's example was expected to be most efficacious for her daughters, both her conduct in life and on her deathbed, and also in her written meditations on the marks of election which could also draw her daughters towards assurance.

In a word, be carefull to reade and consider the marks which were in your mother, and labour to find the like in your selues. And thus you shall leade a blessed life, and accomplish a happie death, and at the last shall come to that heauenly kingdome, whither your deare mother is gone before.¹³²

Gouge considered the example of his parishioner Margaret Ducke née Southworth, daughter of Henry Southworth, merchant and Customer of London, worthy of a funeral sermon as a known saint — 'what her life, faith, charity, patience was during her abode there [at Blackfriars] was general well known to all'. He remarked on Margaret's care to instil her example into her two daughters, calling first the eldest and then the youngest to her deathbed from their school at Putney to hear her exhortation to a godly life and her blessing.¹³³

A woman's example could also inspire her male kin and hold them to account, as feminine religious virtues could be embraced irrespective of gender. As godmothers, elite women could help shape the religious lives of their godchildren. Thomas Gataker dedicated his *Iacobs thankfullnesse* (1624) to Sir William and Sir George Whitmore, holding them accountable to their mother Anne Whitmore's intimate support of his ministry.¹³⁴ Gataker was proud to acknowledge that Anne had 'performed one of the first religious offices for [Gataker] soone after my birth' when she became his godmother, and she had continued to oversee his spiritual growth and nurtured his preaching career until her death. Gataker told her children that

¹³² Denison, *The monument*, Sigs. A4v-5r.

¹³³ W. Gouge, *A funerall sermon preached by Dr Gouge of Black-Friers London, in Cheswicke Church, August 24. 1646. At the funeralls of Mrs Margaret Ducke wife of Dr Ducke... With a short relation of her life and death, written by a friend* (1646), Sigs. D3v-4r, F2r-v; H. Brayman Hackel, *Reading material in early modern England: print, gender, and literacy* (Cambridge, 2009), p. 206; P. Stein, 'Duck, Arthur (1580–1648)', ODNB.

¹³⁴ Trolander and Tenger, *Sociable Criticism*, p. 33.

I stood obliged to the Stock you both sprang from, before I was able to apprehend what such obligation meant. Your worthy Mother was one of those that presented mee to the sacred Laver [baptism]...Shee answered there for me, when I could not answer for my selfe; and did further also then seale up her free affection to me with a reall testimonie of her Love.

This was a huge old City family: Anne was the daughter of Alderman Sir William Bond and granddaughter of Lord Mayor Sir George Bond; Anne's eldest daughter Elizabeth married Sir William Craven and her younger sister Frances married into the Weld family. So when Gataker appealed to 'the onely two Principalls now left of that Family...with the rest of the Branches of that Family' he cast the net of the late Anne's influence wide within the City in his bid for patronage.¹³⁵

iv) Reading, writing and listening

The basis of elite women's engagement with texts dedicated to them was their literacy. Historians disagree over levels of literacy among women, but there is a consensus that that social status was crucial and mercantile women were more likely to be literate, particularly in London.¹³⁶ The dedication of texts to women turned on their ability to read them. Amongst the godly the facility to write was highly valued in women.¹³⁷ To deny women a spiritual education was Antichristian, and female godly learning was claimed as a mark of a true church. Gataker considered the example of learned women like Rebecca Crispe to be 'the more needful' because

That Popish conceit sticketh still in the mindes of many; that knowledge and booke-learning is for great Clarks onely; meane men, and women much more then, haue no neede of it, neither indeed can attaine vnto it... to be ignorant of him, cannot be, or bring but eternall destruction. Besides that Christianitie maketh no distinction of Sex'.¹³⁸

¹³⁵ T. Gataker, *Jacobs thankfullnesse* (1624), dedicatory epistle.

¹³⁶ A. Fox, *Oral and literate culture in England, 1500-1700* (Oxford, 2001), p. 18; Hull, *Chaste, Silent and Obedient*; Simon, *Education and Society*, p. 18; D. Cressy, *Literacy and the Social Order: reading and writing in Tudor and Stuart England* (1980), pp. 128-9, 141; E. Hubbard, 'Reading, Writing, and Initialing: Female Literacy in Early Modern London', *JBS*, 54 (2015), pp. 553-577.

¹³⁷ J. Morgan, *Godly Learning: Puritan Attitudes towards Reason, Learning and Education, 1560-1640* (1986), p. 165.

¹³⁸ Gataker, *Two Funeral Sermons*, Sig. A3v.

The opportunities full literacy offered to women to enrich their piety and pursue their vocations was prized by women who had felt its transformative effect on their own lives. William Gouge considered literacy to be ‘the groundwork of all callings’, because it was central to protestant and particularly to puritan piety.¹³⁹ Women valued the opportunities that their learning gave them to strengthen their contemporaries’ faith as well as their own.¹⁴⁰ Literacy was not only essential to a fully developed personal religious life, and allowed City women to perform their obligations towards others effectively. Yet the spectrum of literacy amongst elite women in London was wide, encompassing women unable to write their own names, translators of texts from classical and modern languages, and everyone in between.

A few City women viewed writing and publishing as the core of their vocation to further true religion, and they formed highly literate, politically involved alliances with one another and with preachers. Dorcas Martin translated her catechism from French in 1582.¹⁴¹ Her efforts may have been nourished by her relationship with Anne Lock, a fellow religious translator. Edward Dering, Lock’s future husband, first spoke to her through ‘Mysterys [Dorcas] Martin’, in the early 1570s. Dering was amongst the preachers under suspicion of supporting Cartwright’s *A replye to an answere made of M. Doctor Whitgifte Against the admonition to the Parliament* which Dorcas published in 1573 during the Admonition crisis. When Dorcas’s daughter married Anne’s nephew, the two women became kin as well as friends.¹⁴² In 1590, Anne translated the Walloon Jean Taffin’s *Of the markes of the Children of God, and of their comfort in Afflictions*, a work originally aimed at the Dutch Protestants with whom she suggested English Protestants might identify in preserving their faith under persecution.¹⁴³ Anne prefaced her translation with a defence of the

¹³⁹ Morgan, *Godly Learning*, pp. 165-6; Simon, *Education and Society*; Cressy, *Literacy and the Social Order*, pp. 4, 118.

¹⁴⁰ G. Allen, *The Cooke Sisters: education, piety and politics in early modern England* (Manchester, 2013), pp. 165-7, 233.

¹⁴¹ T. Bentley, *Monument of Matrons (1582)*, pp. 221-52.

¹⁴² T. Cartwright, *A replye to an answere made of M. Doctor Whitgifte Against the admonition to the Parliament* (1573); *The Remains of Edmund Grindal*, ed. W. Nicholson (Cambridge, 1843), pp. 347-48, 443.

¹⁴³ M. White, ‘Renaissance Englishwomen and Religious Translations: The Case of Anne Lock’s ‘Of the Markes of the Children of God’’, *English Literary Renaissance*, 29 (1999), pp. 382-4.

publication of scholarly devotional material by a woman as her particular vocation, according to her talents.

Everie one in his calling is bound to doo somewhat to the furtherance of the holie building, but because great things by reason of my sex I may not doo, I have according to my duetie brought my poore basket of stones to the strengthening of the walles of that Jerusalem whereof (by grace) wee are all both citizens and members.¹⁴⁴

Other women wrote manuscripts to regulate their daily devotions and to support their perseverance towards assurance of salvation. These texts were not published independently by women, perhaps because it was deemed immodest or too risky to acknowledge their own assurance so confidently. Yet women's spiritual writings could be made public indirectly through their inclusion in funeral sermons. Kate Narveson uses the term 'household publication' to describe texts prepared for family use which might have circulated in the household or amongst kin while they were still being compiled.¹⁴⁵ Elizabeth Juxon's funeral sermon implied that her manuscript circulated or was read within a godly community that included friends and brethren beyond kin and household.¹⁴⁶ Denison felt that Elizabeth Juxon's spiritual writings on assurance were of a quality that demanded publication, but carefully defended his decision to publish to the Reader, by citing demand for the text *within* the godly community.

I haue bene exceedingly importuned, and that by many worthy Christians, for the markes which our worthy sister deceased left behind her. I could not tell how so well to satisfie the religious request *of my brethren* in this thing, as by making publike for the common good both the Sermon and the Markes.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁴ A. Lock, *Of the markes of the children of God, and of their comforts in afflictions to the faithfull of the Low countrie* (1590), dedicatory epistle; P. Collinson, 'Locke [née Vaughan; other married names Dering, Prowse], Anne (c.1530–1590x1607)', *ODNB*.

¹⁴⁵ Narveson, *Bible Readers*, p. 70.

¹⁴⁶ E. Longfellow, 'Take ye unto words: Elizabeth Isham's 'Booke of Remembrance' and Puritan Cultural Forms', in J. Harris and E. Scott-Baumann (eds.), *The Intellectual Culture of Puritan Women, 1558-1680* (Basingstoke, 2011), p. 122.

¹⁴⁷ Denison, *The monument*, address to the Reader.

Elizabeth Juxon's piety and her vocation as part of the godly community were strongly supported by her ability to read and write which fostered a profound study of scripture.¹⁴⁸ She was not only able to record her spiritual progress 'set downe with her owne hand', but she could read and write Hebrew. She had been taught by Denison in the twelve years that he was her resident chaplain; commending her abilities in his funeral sermon, he praised her ability 'to write letters in the very language of Canaan with great sufficiency'.¹⁴⁹ When Denison published his funeral sermon on Elizabeth's widower John in 1626, the title page cited the texts he preached from in Hebrew, and he quoted in Hebrew (as well as Greek and Latin) frequently throughout the text.¹⁵⁰ William Gouge celebrated the extensive and deep spiritual reading and meditation of Margaret née Southworth which he supported in their parish of Blackfriars, and the Latin and Hebrew annotations to his funeral sermon on her suggest that her reading extended to Biblical languages too. She diligently attended to her household responsibilities but

the rest of the day she spent in reading books of Piety and Devotion, most willingly of Dr Gouges, by which means he made her heart Bibliotecam Christi, a library of Christ, and furnished her self with such a stock of Christian knowledge and devotion, as carried her on with much comfort through all her afflictions, to her long and much long'd for home.¹⁵¹

The godly community was nourished by women's learning. Joan Whitelocke was the widow of two London merchants, and her son Sir James celebrated the care she had taken to preserve the wellbeing of her children through their education in 'Latin, Hebrew, Greek, and Frenche tongues, and to write faire...all wear by her appoynted and directed to the best course, that is, of learning'.¹⁵²

¹⁴⁸ D. Clarke, 'The Countess of Pembroke and the Practice of Piety', in Harris and Scott-Baumann, (eds.), *Intellectual Culture of Puritan Women*, p. 33; H. Smith, "More swete vnto the eare / than holsome for ye mynde": Embodying Early Modern Women's Reading', *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 73 (2010), p. 416.

¹⁴⁹ Denison, *The monument*, pp. 83, 119.

¹⁵⁰ Denison, *Another tombstone*, title page, Sigs. A5r, A6v, pp. 3, 12, 30, 59-61.

¹⁵¹ Gouge, ... *Margaret Ducke*, Sigs. E1v-2r.

¹⁵² *Liber Famelicus of Sir James Whitelocke, a Judge of the Court of King's Bench*, ed. J. Bruce (Camden Society, Old Series), 70 (1856), p. 6; D. Powell, 'Whitelocke, Sir James (1570-1632)', *ODNB*.

Godly women were praised for their careful reading. Phillips admired Helen Branche's integration of extended periods of study into her devotions: 'To watch to fast and pray she settled hir delight,/And at hir booke did vse to sit from morning vntill night'.¹⁵³ Elizabeth Juxon 'read daily morning and euening some part of the Scripture, from the beginning of the Bible vnto the end thereof. And she did not reade the Scripture as many do, in haste, but with serious consideration, application, and meditation', and evidently in the original languages.¹⁵⁴ Elizabeth Martin left her personal Bible to her brother in her will in 1627.¹⁵⁵ Gertrude Style valued the comforts of John Downame's work of 1622, *A Guide to Godlinesse or A treatise of Christian Life*, 'shewing the duties wherein it consisteth, the helps inabling & the reasons parswading vnto it the impediments hindering the practise of it, and the best meanes to remoue them'.¹⁵⁶ Gertrude trusted Downame's counsel as he was known personally to her. She left him 'one gilt tanker of silver' in her will of 1627, and this same 'booke of divinity published by Mr John Downham minster of godswarde', to her godson.¹⁵⁷

While learning to read could be taught relatively easily, learning to write was more difficult and it was probably a rarer skill, even amongst the female civic elite.¹⁵⁸ Alice Owen's funeral monument depicted her kneeling with a prayer book surrounded by her family. An Islington innholder's daughter, she may have been able to read but she was certainly unable to write. She signed the funeral certificate of her second husband, Alderman William Elkin, when he died of plague in 1593 with what the herald noted was 'the executrix marke', a simple cross, rather than a signature.¹⁵⁹ Many other women did have some level of writing ability, as they signed their own wills.¹⁶⁰

¹⁵³ Phillips, ...*Helen Branch*, p. 6.

¹⁵⁴ Denison, *The monument*, pp. 85-6.

¹⁵⁵ TNA, PROB 11/152, fo. 311v.

¹⁵⁶ J. Downame, *A Guide to Godlinesse, or a Treatise of the Christian Life* (1622).

¹⁵⁷ TNA, PROB 11/167, fo. 238r.

¹⁵⁸ Hull, *Chaste, Silent and Obedient*, pp. 4, 103.

¹⁵⁹ College of Arms, MS Vincent 92, fo. 741b; Fox, *Oral and literate culture*, p. 408.

¹⁶⁰ See for example: TNA, PROB 11/171, fo. 260r; PROB 11/73, fo. 77v; PROB 11/46, fo. 276r; PROB 11/145, fo. 282r; Hubbard, 'Reading, Writing, and Initialing'.

Funeral sermons preserved women's writing and praised their educated eloquence, and women were the dedicatees and intended audiences of a many godly advice books, in which they were jointly addressed as religious educators in the household with their husbands.¹⁶¹ Martin Billingsley, writing master, was the great-nephew of Sir Henry Billingsley, Lord Mayor and translator of Euclid, who had five wives. In his *The Pen's Excellencie* (1618), Martin wrote 'if any be commendable in a woman...it is this of Writing'.¹⁶² Literacy had an effect on aspects of piety not usually associated with the need to read and write. Attendance at sermons was a definitive aspect of elite female piety, as aldermen's wives had the time to devote themselves to note-taking and listening. Puritans put a distinctive importance on preaching, which went beyond that of other Calvinists, and which was undermined by Arminians.¹⁶³ Puritan women were certainly also praised for their devotion to reading spiritual texts, especially the Bible.

Yet the power of the word preached to convert was second to none; even a poor sermon preached was more effective than a better one read from a printed copy, for the elect would hear not the preacher but the Holy Spirit in the words.¹⁶⁴ Denison boasted that Elizabeth Juxon heard 'nine or ten Sermons euery weeke; whereof foure of them constantly vpon the Sabbath day, besides catechizing', at parishes all over the City — including those given by him.¹⁶⁵ Egerton's sermons on Wednesdays and Fridays tended to focus on 'civil and social relationships' because the majority of their auditory were women. Weekday lectures were the preserve of the leisured, such as the famous series at St Antholins, St Bartholomew Exchange and St Olave Jewry.¹⁶⁶ Women were not expected merely to hear, but to listen actively and that meant taking or making notes on sermons for personal and sociable reflection, and practical

¹⁶¹ McIntosh, 'English Funeral Sermons', p. 7; M. Todd, *Christian Humanism and the Puritan Social Order* (Cambridge, 1987), pp. 105-6; Hull, *Chaste, Silent and Obedient*, pp. 25, 31.

¹⁶² M. Billingsley, *The Pen's Excellencie* (1618), Sig. B4v; L. Peltz, 'Billingsley, Martin (1591-1622)', *ODNB*.

¹⁶³ Hunt, *Art of Hearing*, pp. 25-7, 30, 40, 43, 54.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., p. 271; M. Morrissey, 'Scripture, Style and Persuasion in Seventeenth-Century Theories of Preaching', *JEH*, 53 (2002), pp. 686-706.

¹⁶⁵ Denison, *The monument*, pp. 85-6.

¹⁶⁶ Hunt, *Art of Hearing*, pp. 207-10, 220, 222.

use particularly within the household.¹⁶⁷ John Earle characterized his puritan lady as one who ‘overflows so with the Bible, that she spils it upon every occasion, and wil not Cudgell her Maides without Scripture’.¹⁶⁸ Indeed, Egerton encouraged ‘Superiors’ (of either gender) to

redresse and reforme such as belong to their care and charge, by a more speciall applying of such things as are deliuered in Sermons, to their speciall sinnes and transgressions, doubts or feares, whereby they shall discharge a brotherly dutie, and inure the other to thinke more deeply and fruitfully of the things that are taught.¹⁶⁹

Denison urged Elizabeth Juxon junior to follow her mother’s example regarding getting the most benefit from sermons:

as you beare the name of your vertuous mother...be you diligent to heare Gods word preached, and to reade the same in private every day; meditate that which you heare and reade, and be careful to practise that which you learne...For these were the stops of your worthy mother.¹⁷⁰

Downname’s *Guide to Godlinesse*, her personal copy of which Gertrude Style left to her grandson, taught the sermon-goer and novice note-taker how to visualise a sermon on a page.¹⁷¹ To teach techniques of learning, such as note-taking at sermons, would have been ‘virtually incomprehensible to anyone who had not received at least a basic minimum of formal education’, because they were ‘heavily dependent on literacy skills’. For City women educated at home, schooling in the arts of listening began in the holy household.¹⁷²

Gouge confirmed in his *Of domesticall duties* (1622) that the instruction of young children in the household was the responsibility of the mother, and that it was both holy work and a ‘publike worke’.¹⁷³ Women were expected to lead household education, of children and servants

¹⁶⁷ A. Walsham, ‘Jewels for Gentlewomen: Religious Books as Artefacts in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe’, in R. Swanson (ed.), *The Church and the Book*, SCH, 38 (Woodbridge, 2004), p. 134; Cressy, *Literacy and the Social Order*, pp. 5-6.

¹⁶⁸ J. Earle, *Microcosmographie* (1628), Sigs. G2v-G3r.

¹⁶⁹ S. Egerton, *The Boring of the eare* (1623), p. 68.

¹⁷⁰ Denison, *The monument*, Sig. A4r.

¹⁷¹ Downname, *Guide to Godlinesse*, Sig. 2G1v.

¹⁷² Hunt, *Art of Hearing*, pp. 98, 103; C. Sullivan, ‘The Art of Listening in the Seventeenth Century’, *Modern Philology*, 104 (2006), pp. 34-71; K. Charlton, ‘Mothers as educative agents in pre-industrial England’, *History of Education*, 23 (1994), pp. 129, 131-2, 148-9.

¹⁷³ W. Gouge, *Of domesticall duties* (1622), pp. 18, 258-9, 546; Heller, *Mother’s Legacy*, p. 19.

(who might not be able to read for themselves), particularly concerning repetition of sermons, Bible study, and catechizing at home.¹⁷⁴ Biblical literacy was essential to sustaining godly life. The radical puritan nonconformist writer Ezekiel Culverwell recommended that children aged ten and above should daily memorize a chapter of the Bible to be checked by recitation to their parents.¹⁷⁵ John Dodd taught the Isham children, gentry descended from a London merchant family, their catechism but expected their parents to take over this responsibility.¹⁷⁶ On 5 January 1617 at Paul's Cross, Immanuel Bourne, Church of England controversialist and preacher at St Christopher-le-Stocks, exhorted those before him, including the aldermen and their wives, to make Bible reading, learning and discussion part of their household life:

Hearken not hereunto only in the Church, but also at home, let the husband talke together with the wife, let the father with the childe talke together of these matters, and both to and fro let them enquire, and give their judgements.¹⁷⁷

This was a lifelong duty godly women took seriously. When the puritan matriarch Margaret Slaney's daughter Anne died while her daughter Elizabeth, born in 1601, was still in her infancy, Margaret took over responsibility for the education of her granddaughter.¹⁷⁸

These responsibilities framed the elite godly lady's daily devotions. Routine was the key to godly living.¹⁷⁹ When Rebekah Crispe was bedridden, her nephew Gataker recalled that she had passed the days 'complaining of nothing so much in her afflictions, as that by meanes of them she was disabled to the performance of such duties as shee desired with her Familie'.¹⁸⁰ Gouge presented the daily devotions that Margaret née Southworth led in her family home as

¹⁷⁴ Morgan, *Godly Learning*, pp. 146-60; A. Cambers, *Godly reading: print, manuscript and puritanism in England, 1580-1720* (Cambridge, 2011), p. 7.

¹⁷⁵ Ryrie, *Being Protestant*, p. 272; B. Usher, 'Culverwell family (per. c.1545-c.1640)', *ODNB*.

¹⁷⁶ Longfellow, 'Isham family and their clergy', p. 171.

¹⁷⁷ I. Bourne, *The true way of a Christian* (1622), pp. 18-19; R. O'Day, 'Bourne, Immanuel (1590-1672)', *ODNB*.

¹⁷⁸ N. Parkhurst, *The faithful and diligent Christian...* (1684), pp. 42-3; I. Archer, 'Weld, Mary, Lady Weld (bap. 1560?, d. 1623)', *ODNB*; J. Blatchly, 'Parkhurst, Nathaniel (1643-1707)', *ODNB*.

¹⁷⁹ Dixon, *Practical Predestinarians*, p. 165.

¹⁸⁰ Gataker, *Two Funeral Sermons*, Sigs. B2r-3v.

her vocation and a model to be imitated by other women, whose personal prayer and excellent education would equip them to perform the holy work of spiritual education in the home:

her constant and unfailing practice was, besides daily public prayers in the family, to betake herself in the morning and at other time, to her constant private devotions in her closet, and then allotting some time (for being a wife and a prudent women, she made a little time reach farre) in the education of her Children, and dispensing the affairs of her family...¹⁸¹

Householders — ideally fathers but very often mothers if they were especially talented, widowed, or if their husband was absent on work — led prayer in godly houses twice a day for which all members of the household including servants gathered together in the largest space in the house.¹⁸² They knelt together for about a quarter of an hour in the morning, slightly less at the end of the day, and prayers were said at mealtimes before and after eating.¹⁸³ Children were thought to be especially in need of instruction, having inherited original sin but not the education to withstand temptation, and so their education began early under the auspices of their mother. Mary née Allen, daughter of Alderman Edward Allen, and wife of Lord Mayor Sir Martin Lumley, so valued the religious education of her own childhood that she undertook instruction of two generations of her family:

well knowing the advantages of an early Piety, like a pious and most affectionate Mother, she took great care to have her Son in his younger Years instructed in Religion, whom she herself taught the most necessary and fundamental Points thereof; and the like Care and Pains she did likewise take of her Grandchildren, having instructed them also in the Matters of Religion, as much as their tender Years would admit of...¹⁸⁴

In 1627 Gataker preached a funeral sermon on the death of his infant cousin and urged his uncle and aunt, Nicholas and Anne Crispe, to begin religious education as soon as anything could be expected to stick.

¹⁸¹ Gouge, ... *Margaret Ducke*, Sigs. E1v; Molekamp, *Women and the Bible*, pp. 79-83.

¹⁸² Hamling, 'Living with the Bible', pp. 224-5.

¹⁸³ Ryrie, *Being Protestant*, pp. 356-69, 381-7; Hamling, *Decorating*, p. 105.

¹⁸⁴ T. Pritchard, *A sermon preached at the funeral of the Lady Lumley at Great Bardfield in Essex, September 20. 1692. By Thomas Pritchard, M.A. and late rector of West-Tilbury in Essex. Imprimatur. C. Alston. Nov. 16. 1692.* (1693), pp. 19-20.

To admonish *parents* of their *dutie* concerning their *children*; to begin as soone as they can with them, and as they are capable of ought, to vse the *good meanes* by *God* himselfe prescribed for the working of this *inbred naughtinesse* out of them.¹⁸⁵

Godly women in London had a model for prayers written by an alderman's wife that they could use throughout their day: Dorcas Martin's translation from French, *An Instruction for Christians*, prayers and a catechism modelled on her own practice. Uniquely, Dorcas made her catechist a mother, preparing her child for admission to the Lord's Supper.¹⁸⁶ This was a rare work; few laymen wrote catechisms, fewer still were penned by women.¹⁸⁷ Catechism was ideally fulfilled at home.¹⁸⁸ Dorcas's catechism shows that a godly mother led her children in prayer throughout the day, including before and after mealtimes.¹⁸⁹ Dorcas's mother catechist emphasized the importance of education and instructed her children to pray accordingly:

seeing it hath pleased thee to giue mee the meanes to be instructed in the age of mine infancie, to make mee knowe how to gouerne the whole course of my life holilie and honestlie: vouchsafe also to illuminate mine vnderstanding.¹⁹⁰

The whole atmosphere of the house tended towards spiritual improvement. Before going to sleep at night, the children were exhorted to think on their sins, 'whereby wee cease not to prouoke thy wrath against vs', but also to rest, 'our consciences also shall haue their spirituall rest, as our bodies take theirs'. The key was balance: 'let not our sleepe be excessiue; to accomplish the ease of our flesh beyond measure, but onelie to satisfie the frailtie of our nature; that we may be disposed to serue thee.'¹⁹¹ Dorcas's home was famously godly; it was said that

¹⁸⁵ Gataker, *Ieroboam's sonnes decease*, Sig. C1r.

¹⁸⁶ M. White, 'A Biographical Sketch of Dorcas Martin: Elizabethan Translator, Stationer, and Godly Matron', *The Sixteenth Century Journal*, 30 (1999), pp. 776-77. On translation as a female pursuit, see White, 'Renaissance Englishwomen', esp. pp. 374-6.

¹⁸⁷ I. Green, 'For Children in Yeeres and Children in Understanding': the Emergence of the English Catechism under Elizabeth and the early Stuarts', *JEH*, 37 (1986), p. 403.

¹⁸⁸ Morgan, *Godly Learning*, pp. 152-3; J. Willis, 'The Decalogue, Patriarchy and Domestic Education in Reformation England', in J. Doran et al. (eds.), *Religion and the Household*, p. 200.

¹⁸⁹ Bentley, *Monument of Matrons*, p. 229.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 227.

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 230.

'her whole family doth breath out a smel of Christianitie'. Dorcas's mother catechist taught her children that the life of a saint was one of perseverance:

Mother

What is it to beleue in God?

Child

It is a full assurance and hope to trust and commit all to him, according to his promises in Iesus Christ.

Mother

Can we haue this faith in perfection, whiles we be in this world?

Child

No. For we haue neede with the Apostles to require augmentation of faith. The Lord increase it in vs, and make vs perseuere in it vnto the end.¹⁹²

Dorcas's mother catechist assumed that the children of godly parents would feel themselves a part of a godly community. When those gathered recited the Lord's Prayer the mother asked

Mother

What doth this word (our) [Father] shew?

Child

The vnitie and charitable brotherhood which ought to be heere well practised among vs, according as the communion of Saints requireth.¹⁹³

Dorcas's mother catechist readied her children for the questions of those who would be suspicious of their claims to godly virtue.

Mother

Faith then, it is not an opinion vaine and fleshlie, to entise vs to sinne more boldlie, and to liue in all carnall libertie.

Child

No. For if we by faith be trulie graffed in Iesus Christ, and call vpon God to saluation, we will no more bring forth the works of the flesh, but the fruits of the spirit.¹⁹⁴

¹⁹² Ibid., p. 235.

¹⁹³ Ibid., p. 236.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid., p. 238.

Dorcas imagined a child would have need of skills with which to dispute with detractors of the godly who might quote chapter and verse, and so she familiarised them with the proofs for their argument, as part of the catechism, such as for communion:

Mother

Where shall we find the institution of the holie Supper?

Child

In three Euangelists, and verie largelie declared in the first to the Corinthians the xi. Chapter.

Mother

Reade the place.¹⁹⁵

The prayers Dorcas recommended to godly women to be said throughout the day in the household began with the prayer of the whole family, that ‘all our works may be to the praise of thy name, and *to the edifieng of our neighbours* [my emphasis]’.¹⁹⁶ The whole household was to set an example, not only for the furthering of those within it, but to stand as a beacon of godly living in the parish.

Dorcas argued that the godly lady should strive to make her household an example to others every day, but on the Sabbath the voluntary exercises of the godly household became a focus for the wider godly community who would resort there together.¹⁹⁷ Sabbath exercises formed part of women’s responsibility for the spiritual health of the household, and were crucial to maintaining that unity of the godly with the Church which Dorcas’s catechist mother impressed upon the child. This began with the household preparing to hear the sermon in the parish church. Egerton recommended the readers of his *The boring of the eare* (1623) to ‘reade and meditate in priuate with others if wee may fitly, and by our selues vpon that place of Scripture that is to bee handled in the publike Assembly’.¹⁹⁸ The Puritan preacher Henry Smith published

¹⁹⁵ Ibid., pp. 243-4.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid., p. 225.

¹⁹⁷ F. Bremer, *Lay empowerment and the development of puritanism* (Basingstoke, 2015), p. 30.

¹⁹⁸ Egerton, *Boring of the eare*, p. 34.

his *The Art of Hearing* (1592) to guide sermon-goers, particularly householders who were encouraged to bring their household to church all together.¹⁹⁹ Stephen Egerton warned the sermon-goer

To keepe in minde that the Sabbath is not ended as soone as the Sermon is done: and therefore not to meddle with Worldly matters: but to spend the rest of the time in Prayer, Reading, Repetition, singing of *Psalms*, &c. according to the scope of the fourth Commandement. Therefore they are greatly deceiued who thinke they haue sufficiently sanctified the Sabbath, when they haue heard a Sermon superficially in the fore-noone.²⁰⁰

After the sermon, the godly company might retire to the home for a repetition of the sermon they had heard that morning from notes taken in church.²⁰¹ Egerton addressed both mothers and fathers together as ‘parents’ when he stated that they ‘must demand, and take account of their people, of the things they haue heard’ on returning home after the Sunday sermon.²⁰² The home and the church were where Gouge suggested virtuous women should spend their time, in his funeral sermon on Margaret née Southworth who he says was heard to say ‘that next to Gods house, she could best spend her time in her own....sentences, verses and songs [were] enough to refresh and delight her soul’.²⁰³

To a cynical observer like John Earle, these types of exercise were more like ‘Gossipings’, a sort of faux-conventicle in which the godly met to show off their piety to their friends: ‘When she comes home, shee commends the Sermon for the Scripture’ and the ‘two houres’ the preacher spoke for.²⁰⁴ Yet even the sceptical accepted that the arts of hearing and of memory were essential to this godly rehearsal of sermons. Earle’s ‘Shee-Precise Hypocrite’ characterized the elite puritan City lady listening ostentatiously to sermons: ‘Her devotion at the

¹⁹⁹ Hunt, *Art of Hearing*, p. 64.

²⁰⁰ Egerton, *Boring of the eare*, p. 64; P. Collinson, ‘Elizabethan and Jacobean Puritanism as Forms of Popular Religious Culture’, in C. Durston and J. Eales (eds.), *The Culture of English Puritanism, 1560-1700* (1996), p. 49.

²⁰¹ Hunt, *Art of Hearing*, pp. 13, 72-5; Ryrie, *Being Protestant*, p. 262.

²⁰² Egerton, *Boring of the eare*, pp. 61-2.

²⁰³ Gouge, ... *Margaret Ducke*, Sigs. E1r.

²⁰⁴ Earle, *Microcosmographie*, Sig. G2r; P. Collinson, ‘The English Conventicle’, in W. Shiels and D. Wood (eds.), *Voluntary Religion*, SCH, 23 (Oxford, 1986), pp. 223-59; Walsham, ‘Holy Families’, pp. 138-40; Lake, ‘Defining Puritanism-Again?’, pp. 14-5.

Church is much in the turning up of her eye, and turning down the leafe in her Booke when shee heares nam'd Chapter and Verse'.²⁰⁵ This was not a universally welcomed practice, but it was recommended in 1623 by Egerton.²⁰⁶ Other churchgoers would observe note-takers writing in their table-books, often in a mixture of long hand and one of the many 'characteries' or shorthands which were commonly known even to women.²⁰⁷ These notes could be copied out and the table books wiped clean for the next sermon, and allowed the listener to meditate on the message of the sermon long after it was preached and read their notes to others. On her deathbed, Elizabeth Juxon spent her last hours 'exhorting her kindred and friends which were about her, that they should be carefull to heare Sermons, and to meditate of them', a process that began as soon as the words were out of the preacher's mouth.²⁰⁸ Gouge supervised repetitions of sermons in his church at Blackfriars immediately after they were preached. At these sessions 'he did not use word by word to read out of Notes what he had preached, but would by Questions and Answers draw from those of his own household such points as were delivered'.²⁰⁹ More commonly the saints gathered in one another's homes to spend the Sabbath in godly conversation.²¹⁰ Denison recalled that Elizabeth Juxon

was growne so deuout and pious, as that she made conscience to expell worldly thoughts vpon the Lords day, as appeared by many godly questions, from time to time put forth vnto me by her...sometimes walking in her hall vpon the Sabbath day, and conferring of Gods word, she hath heartily desired, neuer to go againe into the world, but if it were the will of God, that shee might spend all her dayes in that blessed fellowship with God.²¹¹

²⁰⁵ Earle, *Microcosmographie*, Sig. G1v.

²⁰⁶ Egerton, *Boring of the eare*, p. 38.

²⁰⁷ Ibid., p. 139; Rylie, *Being Protestant*, p. 359; Cambers, *Godly reading*, pp. 161-5, 246, 259; Molekamp, *Women and the Bible*, pp. 14-5.

²⁰⁸ Denison, *The monument*, pp. 99-100.

²⁰⁹ Sullivan, 'Art of Listening', p. 39.

²¹⁰ Hunt, *Art of Hearing*, pp. 75-6.

²¹¹ Denison, *The monument*, pp. 89-90, 104-5.

Conclusion

Honesty about the desire to withdraw from the wider community might appear to be surprising in a funeral sermon on an alderman's wife. Funeral sermons written by moderate puritans about women's piety sought to refute accusations from all sides; from mainstream Protestants, from papists, separatists, and Arminians who saw their godliness as hypocritical, and their voluntary religion as seditious.²¹² No wonder then that the elite female puritan piety defended in funeral sermons and dedications was depicted as homely, charitable, orderly, informed, zealous, conforming and sincere. Should we be surprised to find unapologetic statements about the relationship of elite godly women to their community in funeral sermons? How 'moderate' did puritan women and the preachers they supported appear to their neighbours? How have the assumptions of historians about puritan women partially misrepresented their relationship to the community?

²¹² Lake, 'Feminine Piety', pp. 145-6.

Chapter V Piety and the Community

Introduction

How then did the godly women live as saints within their communities? Puritan women arranged their social and devotional lives around voluntary religion— Sabbath household gatherings and sermon repetitions, gadding to weekday sermons, and clerical patronage. This chapter argues that concerns about the effect of the voluntary religion of the godly on the parish communities within which they worshipped were gendered, as were attempts to manage this concern. Peter Lake has developed Collinson's characterisation of puritanism as a form of voluntary religion seeking to enrich the community by remaining within it.¹ The godly communities whose religious lives were dominated by the practices of voluntary religion which reached beyond the household and the parish felt pressure to define and validate their status as 'non-separating congregationalists', especially because the gatherings of godly might appear little different from separatist or antinomian conventicles, from the outside looking in.² One way in which the godly sought to defuse concern about their activities was through the funeral sermons in which preachers described, both to the parish congregation and to readers of the printed versions, what puritan voluntary religion looked like in order to demonstrate why it was beneficial. Funeral sermons and epitaphs, and dedications are read here as they are throughout this thesis; with a critical eye to the circumstances of their production, display, performance and publication, and to the limits of idealisation of women's real practice possible in the context of the City. Read cautiously and alongside evidence of patronage from wills these sources suggest the ways in which puritan women navigated cohabitation with the ungodly in order to remain in charity with their neighbours, and to what extent their neighbours and peers concurred with

¹ P. Collinson, *The Religion of Protestants: the church in English society, 1559-1625* (Oxford, 1982), esp. Ch VI.

² P. Lake, 'William Bradshaw, Antichrist, and the Community of the Godly', *JEH*, 36 (1985), p. 579; 'Defining Puritanism-Again?', in F. Bremer, (ed.), *Puritanism: Transatlantic Perspectives on a seventeenth-century Anglo-American faith* (Boston, 1993), pp. 14-16, 22; P. Collinson, 'The English Conventicle', in W. Sheils, D. Wood (eds.), *Voluntary Religion*, SCH, 23 (Oxford, 1986), pp. 223-59; D. Como, *Blown by the Spirit: Puritanism and the emergence of an antinomian underground in pre-Civil-War London* (Stanford CA, 2004), pp. 30, 34, 52.

the type of community they fostered. Evidence of provision for women's funerals from wills and funeral orders suggests that a rejection of heraldic funeral pomp does not *necessarily* reflect puritan identity, but rather shows how confessional identity was one consideration among many for aldermen's wives as they sought to balance expression of their elite civic status with their shared reformed ethos.

i) Limited separation and community relations

Concerns about the effects of the social separation of the godly, in all but civil matters, on community and especially on women in London, were voiced long before funeral sermons were adopted as a way to address them. Women were suspected of embracing godly piety for the influence it could lend them; where sermons were avidly attended and were repeated, Bibles read, prayers led and ideas disputed, women became bold in their vocation. Aldermen's wives and widows seemed particularly apt to be seduced by the enhanced agency that voluntary religion delegated to its devotees, and tended dangerously towards the separatist and antinomian visions of female empowerment that cleaved all too closely to the puritan notion of the confident, effective saint.³ This view of the capacities of female piety among the saints was feared for its effects within the household which affected the wider community, especially as the community of the godly cut across divisions of social status.⁴ Elizabeth I complained to her clergy at Somerset House on 27 September 1585, that in the City

every merchant must have his schoolmaster and nightly conventicles expounding Scriptures and catechizing their servants and maids, in so much that I have heard how *some of their maids* have not sticked to control learned preachers, and say that a such a man taught otherwise in our house.⁵ [my emphasis]

³ R. Pederson, *Unity in diversity: English Puritans and the Puritan Reformation, 1603-1689* (Leiden, 2014), pp. 210, 212-3, 237; Como, *Blown by the Spirit*, pp. 215, 305.

⁴ E. Longfellow, 'Public, Private, and the Household in Early Seventeenth-Century England', *JBS*, 45 (2006), p. 313, 327-8; D. Cressy, 'Response: Private Lives, Public Performance and Rites of Passage', in B. Travitsky and A. Seeff (eds.), *Attending to women in early modern England* (Newark, 1994), p. 187.

⁵ TNA, SP 12/176/68.

John Earle's 'Shee-precise Hypocrite' expressed the common suspicion that elite godly women, already accustomed to influence, subscribed to a poorly concealed agenda in their enthusiasm for the voluntary religion which was the outward proof of sainthood:

No thing angers her so much as that Woemen cannot Preach, and in this point onely thinks the Brownist erroneous: but what shee cannot at the Church, shee do's at the Table, where she prattles.⁶

The private voluntary gatherings of the godly outside the parish church were suspected to be conventicles and puritanism a faith practised in homes, one step away from congregationalism and separatism.⁷ Ambiguities in the language of female sainthood and empowerment in particular invited accusations of antinomianism, and familism as a species of it, amongst the godly elite.⁸ As Lyndal Roper argued for Augsburg, the voluntary 'concomitants of the sermon', as they were collectively termed by Patrick Collinson, were 'not unrelated to womens' involvement' because they were primarily household forms of association.⁹

The City aldermen as a governing elite were sensitive to public accusations, but Christopher Marsh has found evidence of elite support of familism in the City.¹⁰ On 6 December 1581, three months after Lawrence Deios, Bishop Aylmer's chaplain, preached before the aldermen and their wives at Paul's Cross, Lord Mayor James Harvey relived the moment Deios had 'publicly defamed them to their faces, and stated that if the appointing of preachers were committed to them, they would appoint such as would defend usury, the Family of Love and puritanism'.¹¹ Tobias Crispe, who later became 'the standard bearer' of open antinomianism in the City in 1642-3, was already preaching antinomian pastorally focused sermons in London in the mid-1620s. Crispe contrasted his view of the transformative effect

⁶ J. Earle, *Microcosmographie* (1628), Sigs. G2r-G3v.

⁷ S. Brigden, *London and the Reformation* (1989), p. 93.

⁸ Como, *Blown*, pp. 38, 52, 115.

⁹ P. Collinson, 'Elizabethan and Jacobean Puritanism as Forms of Popular Religious Culture', in C. Durston and J. Eales (eds.), *The Culture of English Puritanism, 1560-1700* (1996), p. 49; L. Roper, *The Holy Household: women and morals in Reformation Augsburg* (Oxford, 1991), p. 253.

¹⁰ C. Marsh, *The Family of Love in English Society, 1550-1630* (Cambridge, 1994), pp. 116-24.

¹¹ W. and H. Overall, *Analytical index to the Remembrancia* (1878), p. 366: 6 Dec 1581.

of free grace on the life of believers who could happily live out their vocation through a godly life, with the impotent introspection of the puritan saint endlessly weighing their sins against the letter of the law and fruitlessly searching for marks of an assurance of their election which could not last.¹² Crispe's sermons were attended by curious puritan sermon goers as well as confirmed antinomians; a note-taker who attended a Crispe sermon also listened to the puritan Elias Crabtree preach in London.¹³ Tobias Crispe was intimately related to the civic elite of which his family was one of the godliest. Tobias was the son of Hester and Alderman Ellis Crispe, brother of Anne and Sir Nicholas Crispe through whom he was also kin to the puritan preacher Thomas Gataker, first cousin of Tobias's uncle Nicholas Crispe and his wives Rebekah and Anne Crispe. Tobias married Mary Wilson, daughter of a London merchant vintner.¹⁴ The kinship of the civic elite and puritan clergy with religious radicals in London heightened the importance of advertising the purpose of their own voluntary meetings as crucial to the unity of the community of saints *within* the Church, to the maintenance of household order, and the accommodation of the most zealous saints otherwise in danger of being seduced into separation.¹⁵

The praise of City ladies shows that the godly believed they had a positive duty to maintain a limited separation from their communities. Funeral sermons praised godly women's vocation as most ideally exercised within the household where it was protected from worldly contagion. William Gouge celebrated the 'retirednesse' of Margaret née Southworth who

was so farre from the gadding disposition of other talking, walking women, that she was for the most part as a Snail. Domi-porta, within her own shell and family. She seldom went abroad and especially chose to decline the houses of Noble and Honourable Ladies, lest she should be tempted to see those vanities which she resolved to contemn, and so be unwillingly wrought to desire, what she so willingly despised.

¹² Pederson, *Unity*, pp. 210-14, 217, 237-8, 242; Como, *Blown*, p. 63, 215.

¹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 63, 434.

¹⁴ R. Pooley, 'Crisp, Tobias (1600-1643)', *ODNB*.

¹⁵ A. Hunt, *The Art of Hearing: English Preachers and their Audiences, 1590-1640* (Cambridge, 2010), p. 78.

But even one supposedly so separate as she, was a figure known to the community in Blackfriars; 'what her life, faith, charity, patience was during her abode there was generally well known to all.'¹⁶ The private person had no capacity for ecclesiastical separation from the church and every saint was obliged to live in charity with and communicate alongside their neighbour as they sat together every Sunday to worship as fellow parishioners.¹⁷ Of course, any Christian could ultimately only conjecture about the salvation of even their godliest neighbour, and could only know for sure about their own if they felt assurance of election.¹⁸ Even the most objectionable sinner might potentially become a mutual partaker of election, however unlikely that prospect might seem. In 1582 Dorcas Martin encouraged mothers catechizing their children to explain the importance of communion with the parish both for their own spiritual lives and for the value it held as an expression of their attitude of charity towards their community:

The right vse of comunicating at the supper, is chieflie, a man to proue himselfe, whether he haue true faith with repentance & charitie towards his neighbours.¹⁹

In 1623 Stephen Egerton continued to urge the godly readers of his guide to sermon-going to maintain these same values of taking the godly household community into the parish church and to encourage their neighbours to join them, as evidence of a saintly disposition towards the community:

Anlet such as bee Gouvernors of Families bring as neere as may bee their whole Family with them, saying...with holy *Hester, I and my Maides will doe likewise*, that is, fast and pray.

Qu. What is the second dutie?

An. Such as haue Neighbours must endeauour to encourage and quicken them to ioyn in company, and to goe together to the House of God...²⁰

¹⁶ W. Gouge, *A funerall sermon preached by Dr Gouge of Black-Friers London, in Cheswicke Church, August 24. 1646. At the funeralls of Mrs Margaret Ducke wife of Dr Ducke...With a short relation of her life and death, written by a friend* (1646), Sigs. D3v, E1r-v; W. Frijhoff, 'The threshold of toleration: interconfessional conviviality in Holland during the early modern period', in his *Embodied Belief: ten essays on religious culture in Dutch history* (Hilversum, 2002), p. 61.

¹⁷ J. Bossy, 'The Mass as a Social Institution 1200-1700', *P&P*, 100 (1983), pp. 29-61.

¹⁸ L. Dixon, *Practical Predestinarians in England, c. 1590-1640* (Farnham, 2014), p. 309.

¹⁹ T. Bentley, *Monument of Matrons* (1582), p. 246; A. Hunt, 'The Lord's Supper in Early Modern England', *P&P*, 161 (1998), pp. 39-83.

²⁰ S. Egerton, *Boring of the eare* (1623), p. 30.

In imitation of Christ, it was an expression of charity to show forbearance to one's neighbours of a weak or misguided faith, to be patient for them to take heed of the example of the saints, and hate the sin but show compassion to the sinner.²¹ The godly shared with the whole Christian community deep instincts towards inclusion and compromise, and as reforming governors the elite promoted unity within the established church which the law required.²² The peace of the Church was highly valued and officially insisted upon, and puritans were not insincere when they insisted that their efforts to be separate *within* the Church sought to serve this aim.²³ Elite mercantile women navigated a City life that occasioned as many opportunities for compromise as for confrontation. After all, it was a 'blasphemous act of presumption to claim to be able to know who was elect and reprobate', although in practice this applied rather more to identifying another Christian as a reprobate, which none could know, rather than as elect which might reasonably be inferred.²⁴ Private saints should separate themselves socially, in all but mundane affairs, from those whose behaviour was profane in favour of the company of those whose lives already bore witness to their election and so could be recognised as fellow saints.²⁵ William Gouge praised Margaret née Southworth for perceiving a very stark choice between Gouge's pulpit and the Blackfriars theatre just a stone's throw away from it in her parish, and he commended her refusal of the pleas of friends to join in their recreation:

²¹ A. Walsham, *Charitable Hatred: tolerance and intolerance in England, 1500-1700* (Manchester, 2006), pp. 238, 277-9.

²² A. Walsham, 'In Sickness and In Health: Medicine and Interconfessional Relations in Post-Reformation England', in C. Scott Dixon, D. Freist and M. Greengrass (eds.), *Living with religious diversity in early modern Europe* (Farnham, 2009), p. 161, and 'Cultures of Coexistence in Early Modern England: History, Literature and Religious Toleration', *The Seventeenth Century*, 28 (2013), p. 115; K. Luria, *Sacred Boundaries: Religious Coexistence and Conflict in Early-Modern France* (Washington, 2005), p. xxii.

²³ Dixon, *Practical Predestinarians*, pp. 78-9; J. Spohnholz, *The Tactics of Toleration: A Refugee Community in the Age of Religious Wars* (Newark, 2011), pp. 20-16, 223-7.

²⁴ Lake, 'Bradshaw', p. 586.

²⁵ P. Collinson, 'The Cohabitation of the Faithful with the Unfaithful' in O. Grell, I. Israel and N. Tyacke (eds.), *From persecution to toleration: the Glorious Revolution and religion in England* (Oxford, 1996), p. 61, and *Puritan Movement*, p. 132; A. Walsham, 'Supping with Satan's Disciples: Spiritual and Secular Sociability in Post Reformation England', in N. Lewycky and A. Morton (eds.) *Getting Along? Religious Identities and Confessional Relations in Early Modern England: Essays in honour of Professor W. J. Sheils* (Woodbridge, 2012), p. 45; P. Lake, 'A Charitable Hatred: the Godly and their Enemies in the 1630s', in Durston and Eales (eds.), *Culture of English Puritanism*, pp. 165-6, and *Charitable Hatred*, pp. 210-11; P. Seaver, *Wallington's World: A Puritan Artisan in Seventeenth-Century London* (1985), p. 189; Lake, 'Defining Puritanism-Again?', p. 24.

notwithstanding the many opportunities she had to see Playes, to which the neighbourhood and vicinity of the the Play-house there, and the frequent throngs of Gentlewomen which prest thither, might have been forcible and prevailing invitations, she could never while she lived there, nor all the time of her being in London, be induc'd to see any; and being sometimes advised by her dearest friend, to go thither as other Gentlewomen did, to avoid too much retirednesse, she answered, 'tis hard to say whether with more discretion or religion, She liked it not...'²⁶

The godly elite themselves do not seem to have been wracked with concern about the effects of their alienation from the sociability of the majority of their communities, considering the crucial expression of community to be in communion and charity.

The godly elite, in contrast, were unselfconscious about admitting in funeral sermons that they were collectively *extremely* concerned that the maintenance of the health of the godly community be sustained. Godly sociability held a heightened importance for women since socialization towards marriage within a suitably limited pool of co-religionists was achieved therein. Stephen Denison acknowledged Elizabeth Juxon's concern for her daughters' futures after her death, and in his funeral sermon on their mother warned them to 'haue a care with whom you consort your selues: marrie not without the consent of your parents or gouernours, and be sure that you marrie *in the Lord*' [my emphasis].²⁷ Sociability with others who kept a godly life was an essential obligation of the saint, out of love to one another as God's children and through mutual encouragement to improve each saint's spiritual condition towards assurance.²⁸ Actively to convene such a community and animate its devotions, within the household and among saints of a wide spectrum of social status, was a sign of grace in the women who took the initiative in voluntary religion. Denison praised Elizabeth Juxon for choosing the company of poorer brethren, over her carnal peers of her own estate, and for praising them freely and without expectation of their service.

²⁶ Gouge, ...*Margaret Ducke*, Sig. D4r.

²⁷ S. Denison, *The monument or tombe-stone...* (1620), Sigs. A4v-A5r.

²⁸ P. Collinson, *The Puritan Character: polemics and polarities in early seventeenth-century English Culture* (Pasadena, 1989), p. 30.

She loued poore Christians as well as the rich, to my knowledge; she preferred them before rich kindred. She loued them meerly for their graces and not for worldly respects. For indeed she was a giuer, and not a receiuer.²⁹

Women who ensured the continuity of the godly community through organising voluntary religion were marked out by this endeavour as elect, models of virtue worthy of praise to the communities who had known them, as godly and charitable mainstays of their parish and their City. The death of Helen Branch in 1594 attracted three verse funeral epitaphs, the least fulsome of which was composed by William, Baron Hervey of Kidbrooke in a classical style which celebrated the benevolence she had shown to her whole City in her widowhood but especially to her home parish, described as ‘gratefull Abchurch hath her bones in store’.³⁰ All three funeral epitaphs reminded the reader of Helen Branch’s parish church, directing the eager visitor to her funeral monument and reminding Londoners of her funeral which they might have witnessed. John Phillips advertised this crucial information on the title page to his *A Commemoration*:

Which godly ladie left this mortall life (to liue with Christ Ihesus) the 10. of April last: and lieth interred in the parish church of Saint Marie Abchurch, nigh vnto Canwicke streete, the 29. day of the same month. 1594.³¹

Preachers of funeral sermons faced their London audiences in person and confronted the possibility that their congregations might voice their disagreement with the description of one of their deceased neighbours as a godly and charitable woman, or the obverse. Samuel Hieron ‘dayly tasted of the strife of tongues’ in ‘Markets, Innes, Ordinances’ and even at the funeral dinner itself after preaching an offensive funeral sermon in 1618 which suggested that the deceased was *not* destined for salvation.³²

²⁹ Denison, *The monument*, pp. 102-3.

³⁰ W. Hervey, *Epicedium, a funerall song, upon the vertuous life, and godly death of the right worshipfull the Lady Helen Branch* (1594), p. 7; J. Phillips, *A commemoration of the life and death of the right worshipfull and vertuous ladie; Dame Helen Branch* (1594); S.P., *An epitaph of the vertuous life and death of the right worshipfull ladie, Dame Helen Branch* (1594).

³¹ Phillips, *A commemoration*, title page.

³² J. McIntosh, ‘English Funeral Sermons, 1560-1640: The Relationship Between Gender, and Death, Dying, and the Afterlife’, Oxford Univ. M. Litt. thesis (1990), p. 23.

Nevertheless, preachers continued to stake their local reputations, in the parish and the City, on their funeral sermons. The printed texts of funeral sermons show that preachers expected to have to persuade elements of their auditory, and that they sincerely tried to convince congregations and readers who might have known the deceased woman, formed a hostile opinion of her, or who had simply been baffled by her contradictions. Evidence of godliness was highly contested; what might look to one Londoner like the observable marks of a saint might to another appear to be the outward show of a highly competent hypocrite. Preachers sought to unite the whole community in their good opinion of the deceased.

Leif Dixon has suggested intriguingly that the idea of the hypocrite may have functioned positively as a means by which saints could understand or privately express their dislike towards another who outwardly appeared to be pious, without causing damage to the godly community.³³ Funeral sermons on elite mercantile women offered a preacher an opportunity to unite the *godly* as well as the parish community in their opinion of the deceased as one of their own elect saints.

Though verse epitaphs praised elite women without recourse to external evidence or witnesses, they too suggest that social relations between the elite godly women and their City parishes became increasingly fraught. Phillips' first verse epitaph on Agnes Avenon in 1570 established the genre as essentially a form of entertainment; if Phillips claimed Agnes as a saint he did so only obliquely, buried amongst his praise of her equal virtues of wit and wisdom, as 'a mate so Wittie,/ A phenyx rare, a turtell true'. Phillips celebrated Agnes as a 'vertuous matrone' in her community generally, rather than as a saint, and the main virtues he extolled were social. Phillips presented Agnes as esteemed amongst her female peers whom he did not hesitate to characterise as richly dressed, bidding them to 'Cast off your costly silkes: your juelles now forsake:/To decke your selves in mournynge weedes'. If Agnes had lived as Phillips

³³ Dixon, *Practical Predestinarians*, p. 292.

described then the women of her community would mourn her as a woman of generous charity, who used her position to offer protection and advice to the neighbours whose needs were intimately confided to her: they should weep to ‘misse a Matrone grave in danger you to cheare/Whose Counsell in their neede, her neighbours could not want’.³⁴ Phillips made a speciality of writing verse epitaphs on City ladies, and his later publications reflected the changing times.³⁵ The title of his 1594 verse epitaph on Helen Branch described her ‘*godly* and virtuous life [my emphasis]’, and as one ‘of his deere Saints’.³⁶ Phillips insisted that the basis for imitation of Helen’s virtues by other women should be her godliness, and advertised in an arrestingly untroubled formulation that her life could be used as a blueprint for how to accrue praise according to the values of the age:

Ladies all example take, by this most vertuous Dame,
And learne by hir whilst life you haue, to conquer death by fame.³⁷

Phillips was not primarily concerned to prove Helen’s sincerity; he ended his epitaph ‘*Virtutis Laus Actio*’.³⁸ But Phillips suggested that blame for provoking conflict lay with a few evilly affected members of the community, that Helen met animosity with still more charity and kindness, and that she had a good relationship with the community at large.

When she receued ill for good, to doe good she was bent...
Hir friends doe waile, hir kinsfolke weepe, hir neighbours all lament,
Hir seruants sob, the pore crie out, but teares in vaine are spent.³⁹

By the 1620s, the preachers of funeral sermons took more care to justify their praise of elite women, who were subject to the widespread verdict that they were hypocrites. According to the conventions of the *ars moriendi*, funeral sermons presented the deathbed as the final test

³⁴ Phillips, *A Commemoration*.

³⁵ A. Walsham, ‘Phillips, John (d. 1594x1617)’, *ODNB*.

³⁶ Phillips, *A Commemoration*, p. 3.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 7-8.

of faith through which a saint could vindicate her reputation.⁴⁰ In 1596 Adrian Poyntz dedicated a translation of a Spanish tract on how to die, *The Treasure of the Soule*, to his 'loving Aunt', Susanna Saltonstall, in recognition of this long tradition.⁴¹ The tone of funeral sermons became defensive, seeking to draw together the community who had known the deceased lady and to join their collective eye-witness of her godliness to that of the preacher. Patrick Collinson cautioned against the hall of mirrors surrounding hypocrisy of which puritans who were culturally assumed to be guilty, as puritans frequently examined themselves of the innocence of this charge. His judgement that 'the inside of Puritanism insofar as we can see into it is not so much discreditable as contradictory' is persuasive.⁴² Preachers of funeral sermons sought to make sense of contradictions in the narrative of a life of a saint towards sanctification for a suspicious audience, therefore constancy and integrity were demonstrated in the life of the deceased that no hypocrite could accomplish. The historian might also reason that though no real woman could accomplish that idealised degree of behaviour either, a woman's reputation for striving which made the idealisation of her behaviour credible, also makes the source useful for the study of her practice, as well as the author's purposes.⁴³

Preachers of funeral sermons did not shy away from recognition that elite godly women in London could be a divisive force in the culture and unity of their parishes. Aldermen's wives, holding no office of governance themselves were at greater liberty than their husbands to value religious truth over social unity, and puritan women seem to have attracted confrontation rather than concord in their daily lives in their communities.⁴⁴ Some of the most vivid evidence of Londoners' poor opinion of elite godly women comes from funeral sermons, which

⁴⁰ Dixon, *Practical Predestinarians*, pp. 320-8; R. Houlbrooke, 'The Puritan Death-Bed. c. 1560-1660', in Durston, Eales (eds.), *Culture of English Puritanism*, p. 133.

⁴¹ A. Poyntz, *The Treasure of the Soul* (1596), dedicatory epistle; I. Archer, 'Saltonstall, Sir Richard (1521?-1601)', *ODNB*.

⁴² Collinson, *Puritan Character*, p. 11.

⁴³ Dixon, *Practical Predestinarians*, p. 225.

⁴⁴ S. Brigden, 'Religion and Social Obligation in Early Sixteenth-Century London', *P&P*, 103 (1984), pp. 110-11; J. Coffey, *Persecution and Tolerance in Early Modern England, 1558-1689* (Harlow, 2000), Ch. 2, esp. pp. 22, 34-7.

nevertheless blame the social friction occasioned by godly women's pious example and support of voluntary religion squarely on the ungodly. Preachers were not concerned to present puritan women as likeable or liked, and vigorously rejected any notion that City ladies courted popular opinion by praising the strict discipline of women's lives that often precluded social acceptance. Turning towards God enlisted the entire person.⁴⁵ The saints cultivated an honest awareness even of those parts of one's character that tended towards ungodly behaviour, but were not much bothered by those which offended their neighbours.⁴⁶ By mastering ungodly traits, the elect believer could begin to sanctify even an abrasive personality. Elizabeth Juxon worked hard at her 'patience, because by nature she was verie cholericke, and subiect to passions'.⁴⁷ Arnold Hunt argues that a high regard for neighbourliness restrained many parishioners from 'adopting any ostentatiously godly religious practices that set them apart'.⁴⁸ Yet funeral sermons on women dealt unabashedly with the social conflict engendered when an elite woman turned her back on her carnal life and friends for a godliness that seemed a sudden affectation that was an entrée into an elite world of others who called themselves godly. Denison suggested that Elizabeth Juxon's sudden conversion might remain fresh in the mind of her neighbours at the time of her death:

vntill it pleased God to conuert her soule (which was about fiae yeares ago) she walked according to the course of the world, and maruelled (as she her selfe confessed) what people meant to runne dragling to Sermons. But the Lord changed her mind, and then I thinke she ran as fast to Sermons as the rest of her brethren and sisters; I meane as the rest of Gods deare Saints and children...She acknowledged vnto me after her conuersion, how vaine her course had bin in former times.⁴⁹

Elizabeth's new life was a repudiation of her former pastimes and the neighbours with whom she had previously associated, especially on the Sabbath:

⁴⁵ C. Cohen, *'God's Caress': the Psychology of the Puritan Religious Experience* (Oxford, 1986), pp. 5, 80-8.

⁴⁶ P. Lake, 'Feminine Piety and Personal Potency: the "emancipation" of Mrs Jane Ratcliffe', *The Seventeenth Century*, 2 (1987), p. 149.

⁴⁷ Denison, *The monument*, pp. 109-10.

⁴⁸ Hunt, *Art of Hearing*, p. 289.

⁴⁹ Denison, *The monument*, pp. 86-7.

whereas she had wont to seeke her bodily recreation vpon the Sabbath day, in walking vp and downe, in sitting at her gate, in talking of worldly matters, and such like: now she was growne so deuout and pious, as that she made conscience to expell worldly thoughts vpon the Lords day... she saw that some walked not wisely in the vse of Christian libertie, as in the vse of recreations and such like. And much more did she grieue for the common swearing in the land, for Sabbathbreaking, for whoredome which is so ordinary, and for all such abominations.⁵⁰

This social separation, Denison argued, could not possibly have been motivated by the desire for popular praise, for she was scorned by many in the community:

she obeyed against credite; for whereas in her carnall estate, her carnall neighbours respected her; afterwards, when they obserued this godly change in her, they ceased to giue her that respect which was due vnto her; yea indeed they enuyed, hated, and neglected her.⁵¹

Funeral sermons on elite women in London indicated that one could be both godly and neighbourly, that saints ought to strive for this charity as a mark of salvation against ungodly aggression. Yet as in predestinarian texts the view of society presented in funeral sermons was potentially very divisive. Many historians have argued that preaching predestination was avoided at the pastoral level; of rebarbative complexity, it was a ‘pastoral tightrope’.⁵² Yet it *was* preached pastorally; an unidentified sermon note-taker in St Olave Hart Street or St Olave Jewry recorded predestinarian sermons he heard preached 1607-14.⁵³ Some preachers had few qualms about preaching openly about reprobation, as well as salvation. In *The Mirror or Miracle of Gods Love Unto The World and his Elect* (1619) Paul Baynes began by asserting that ‘mercie is over all’ but ‘the love wherewith [the reprobate] are embraced, compared with that love wherewith he hath his children accepted through Christ, is called hatred’.⁵⁴ Leif Dixon has argued persuasively that predestinarian ideas were central to puritan preaching whether a sermon addressed the doctrine

⁵⁰ Ibid., pp. 89-90, 93-4.

⁵¹ Ibid., p. 90.

⁵² A. Walsham, *Providence in early modern England* (Oxford, 1999), p. 104; C. Haigh, ‘The Taming of the Reformation: Preachers, Pastors and Parishioners in Elizabethan and Early Stuart England’, *History*, 85 (2000), p. 581; J. Merritt, ‘The pastoral tightrope: a puritan pedagogue in Jacobean London’ in T. Cogswell, R. Cust and P. Lake (eds.), *Politics, Religion and Popularity in Early Stuart Britain* (Cambridge, 2002), pp. 143-61.

⁵³ MS Bod Rawlinson E. 204, fo. 16.

⁵⁴ P. Bayne, *The Mirror or Miracle of Gods Love Unto The World and his Elect* (1619), p. 7.

by name or not, and that preaching could be fairly blunt.⁵⁵ Predestinarian sermons were given at Paul's Cross and *anti*-predestinarian preaching was effectively censored between 1590-1620 by the 'Calvinist consensus' and support from the elite, a unity that was threatened by the rising support for Arminianism.⁵⁶ Following Arnold Hunt, Dixon has argued with particular attention to funeral sermons that the doctrine was used to bring comfort to all parishioners, who could never know themselves to be reprobate but could always hope to be elect.

The claims of these sermons to bring comfort were highly contested and not only by Arminians. In 1622 James I prohibited 'popular' preaching on 'predestination, reprobation or of the universality, efficacy or resistibility or irresistibility of God's grace'.⁵⁷ As Peter Lake and David Como have shown, between 1629-31 antinomian radicals and Arminians formed an opportunistic alliance to discredit puritans: Arminians insisting puritans' doctrine aligned them with antinomianism, antinomians arguing they were purer than the tainted puritans, and puritans using the antinomian extremity to demonstrate their own moderation.⁵⁸ Puritans preaching on predestination — not least in funeral sermons on women as saints — sought to counter accusations of antinomianism by demonstrating that the elect were not free to live outside the law and obeyed it lovingly. Elizabeth Juxon found evidence of her election in her willingness to obey, as she recorded: 'I finde a willing receiuing of Gods commandements, they are not grievous'.⁵⁹ Funeral sermons that presented predestination as a doctrine of comfort aimed to demonstrate that the saint was relieved of the burden of free will that fallen human

⁵⁵ Dixon, *Practical Predestinarians*, Ch. 6, p. 280.

⁵⁶ N. Tyacke, 'Puritanism, Arminianism, and the counter-revolution' in C. Russell, (ed.) *The Origins of the English Civil War* (1973), pp. 120-1.

⁵⁷ Hunt, *Art of Hearing*, pp. 544-72; Dixon, *Practical Predestinarians*, p. 284; N. Tyacke, *Anti-Calvinists: the Rise of English Arminianism, c. 1590-1640* (Oxford, 1987), p. 102.

⁵⁸ Dixon, *Practical Predestinarians*, p. 221; P. Lake, 'Serving God and the Times: the Calvinist Conformity of Robert Sanderson' *JBS*, 27 (1988), pp. 81-116, *The Boxmaker's Revenge: 'orthodoxy', 'heterodoxy' and the politics of the parish in early Stuart London* (Manchester, 2001); Como, *Blown*, esp. Chs. 3 and 11.

⁵⁹ Denison, *The monument*, p. 85.

nature could never bear, yet that they were haters of sin, keepers of God's commandments and active in their vocations, qualities to which their ordinary Christian neighbours could also aspire.

Yet the writers of funeral sermons and verse epitaphs could only describe what the saints did *not* do in relation to their neighbours, who, they argued should be cheered by the provision of a local example of godliness to imitate. They described Elizabeth Juxon's and Helen Branch's refusals to respond to their neighbours' taunts, rather than reporting any positively neighbourly interaction which we may infer might have stretched the truth beyond credibility. Denison's description of Elizabeth's behaviour was written for a local community of eyewitnesses as well as a national readership of strangers, who he did not expect to be surprised or concerned about local animosity, so long as

it was not with our sister as it is with the children of this world, which speake euill of all such as will not runne with them to the same excesse of riot.

Denison emphasised that the godly would be beloved by her; where others sought to condemn zealous professors as radicals and thereby to divide the saints, she welcomed and united all the elect.

She was farre from contemning of Gods deare children, vnder a colour as though they were Puritans and Precisians, and irregular persons, or the like. But she iudged as *David* did in Psal. 16. that those that feared God, and were endued with grace, they were the Excellent ones.⁶⁰

Denison's concern was that elite female godliness should prove inclusive *within* the godly broadly defined, a community in which he was anxious to include more radical elements rather than to dissociate elite women's piety from them. According to puritan clerics, the object of voluntary religion was not to divide the godly from the ungodly, and where social friction was caused it does not seem to have been the focus of moderate puritan clerical concern, nor indeed that of certain women who patronised them. Voluntary religion prioritized the inclusivity of the

⁶⁰ Ibid., pp. 102-3.

godly, drawing the most zealous, pious women of the City elite into a community of saints within the Church, where their vocations could be satisfied and praised.

ii) Patronage, preaching and the parish

The elite community made efforts towards nourishing the godly within the Church, using their wealth for the critical support of godly preaching that seemed to undermine parish religion, beginning with the support of lectureships.⁶¹ The Feoffees for Improvements began to meet in 1612 but the formal organization of four ministers, four lawyers and four merchants was only formally convened on 15 February 1626. Tom Webster has shown that far from Laud's depiction of them as a subversive group, the Feoffees made little secrecy of their activities which they saw as part of a wider commitment to voluntary religious activities.⁶² The families and preachers that sustained this effort were patronised by the godly kinswomen of aldermen. The preacher Thomas Gataker's godmother was Anna Whitmore née Bond whose children were: Elizabeth Craven née Whitmore; William, who gave £500 to the Feoffees for Improvements in 1629; and Sir George Whitmore, Lord Mayor in 1631, an enthusiastic Sabbatarian, and close friend of committed preacher Richard Stock and nonconformist controversialist William Bradshaw.⁶³ Mary Weld's daughter-in-law was Elizabeth Craven's sister. The preacher Ezekiel Culverwell, to whom Mary Weld left £20 in her will, was a close friend of Richard Rogers and contemporary of John Dodd, who had all been part of the Braintree Classis in 1582.⁶⁴ Ezekiel's sister Elizabeth was the preacher William Gouge's mother, and his sister Cecilia was married to Laurence Chaderton, first master of Emmanuel College, Cambridge. Culverwell was deprived for nonconformity in 1609, but Richard Sibbes and William Gouge were, outwardly at least,

⁶¹ P. Seaver, *The Puritan Lectureships: the politics of religious dissent, 1560-1662* (Stanford CA, 1970).

⁶² T. Webster, *Godly Clergy in early Stuart England: the Caroline Puritan Movement, c. 1620-1643* (Cambridge, 1997), pp. 10, 81-3.

⁶³ D. Willen, 'Thomas Gataker and the Use of Print in the English Godly Community; *Huntington Library Quarterly* 70 (2007), pp. 343-364; B. Usher, 'Stock, Richard (1568/9-1626)', *ODNB*; V. Gregory, 'Bradshaw, William (bap. 1570, d. 1618)', *ODNB*.

⁶⁴ TNA, PROB 11/141, fo. 232v.

more moderate.⁶⁵ Sibbes was converted by Paul Baynes at Cambridge. Amongst the laity to whom Mary Weld left bequests were ‘my loving friendes Mr [alderman] Rowland Heylin and his wife’ Alice, who became leading lights amongst the Feoffees for Improvements, through their own donations and Rowland’s administration of the treasury.⁶⁶ In 1626, Mary widow of Alderman Richard Farrington left forty shillings to John Preston, ‘preacher at Allhallowes Hony Lane’, a Sabbatarian puritan and anti-Arminian preacher who had recently been accused of nonconformity and who was a key figure in the formation of the Feoffees that year.⁶⁷

Though a preacher denouncing popular culture to a congregation with a small and conspicuous cohort of Sabbatarians was likely to be divisive, preachers did not generally go out of their way to precipitate social cleavage. In his *The Doctrine of Faith* (1627) the nonconformist preacher John Rogers admonished the godly who dismissed other parishioners: ‘Oh you be so precise, and shall no body be saved but you, and a few more?...You wil bee wiser than all your neighbours’.⁶⁸ Nevertheless, the godly were under a duty to shame the profane into repentance.⁶⁹ This was a duty to be done with hatred for a neighbour’s sins but without hatred for one’s neighbour, although plenty of parishioners claimed that their ministers had named and shamed parishioners in their sermons.⁷⁰ A godly peace in which social tensions were inherent was preferable to mere conformity.⁷¹ While Denison recognised these principles as important to the success of the godly community, the effect of his attitude on his own relations with his community was tellingly divisive. Whereas Denison credited Elizabeth Juxon with the capacity to restrain her temper, he seems to have been unable or unwilling to temper his own exasperation with his parishioners. He was so disliked that a female parishioner, whom Denison

⁶⁵ Tyacke, *Fortunes of English Puritanism*, p. 15.

⁶⁶ TNA, PROB 11/141, fo. 227r; M. Schwarz, ‘Heylyn, Rowland (1562–1632)’, *ODNB*.

⁶⁷ TNA, PROB 11/151, fo. 199v; J. Moore, ‘Preston, John (1587–1628)’, *ODNB*.

⁶⁸ Hunt, *Art of Hearing*, p. 289; J. Yiannikou, ‘Rogers, John (c.1570–1636)’, *ODNB*.

⁶⁹ Lake, ‘Bradshaw’, p. 381.

⁷⁰ Hunt, *Art of Hearing*, pp. 244–54.

⁷¹ Lake, ‘William Bradshaw’ (1985), pp. 587–9; L. Dixon ‘William Perkins, “Atheism”, and the Crises of England’s Long Reformation’, *JBS*, 50 (2012), p. 808.

considered to be one of the ungodly remnant, preached in a parody of his style to her friends in 1617. In 1622, Denison was made to answer for having ‘wronged and offended’ his parish, whom in 1633 he addressed as ‘frogs, hogs, dogs...knaves and villains, queens, she-devils and pillory whores’.⁷² Elizabeth Juxon patronised Denison until her death, though she was not resident in Denison’s parish and gadded to his sermons by preference.

Earle’s ‘Shee-Precise Hypocrite’ was characterised by her attitude towards preaching and the parish; valuing preaching even over prayer, she gadded to sermons and advertised her addiction to preaching which seemed to excuse her from other devotions:

Shee is one that thinks shee performes all her duty to God in hearing, and shewes the fruits of it in talking.⁷³

In their parish churches on Sundays, distinguishing herself from her neighbours in their private pews, the hypocrite godly matron could, in her assurance, appear as ridiculous as the beliefs she scorned:

Shee doubts of the Virgin Marie’s Salvation, and dare not Saint her, but knowes her own place in heaven as perfectly as the Pew shee ha’s a key to.⁷⁴

Alternatively the godly might be conspicuous in their parish services by their absence, abandoning their neighbours to ‘the Priests of Baal Reading Ministers’ for someone more edifying. Earle’s puritan lady deigned to hear only the minsters under her patronage, and she was known to be ‘a maine derider...of those that are not *her* Preachers [my emphasis]’.⁷⁵ By Earle’s account, puritan ladies’ piety depended on what made the best show:

She loves Preaching better then Praying, and of Preachers Lecturers, and thinks the Weeke-daye Exercise farre more edifying then the Sundaies...shee will goe in Pilgrimage five mile to a silenc’d Minister, when there is a better Sermon in her owne Parish.⁷⁶

⁷² Lake, *Boxmaker’s Revenge*, pp. 56, 63-4, 312-5. Though Julia Merritt has rightly insisted that historians must not lose sight of the many ‘emollient, unifying, pastorally sensitive puritan clergymen’ too: Merritt, ‘The pastoral tightrope’, p. 160.

⁷³ Earle, *Microcosmographie* (1628), Sig. G4r.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, Sig. G2r.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, Sig. G3v.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, Sigs G1v-G2r.

This behaviour was not unknown in the City, where daily sermon attendance was celebrated. Denison boasted of Elizabeth Juxon's prodigious attendance at sermons.⁷⁷ A certain amount of flexibility was permissible; as long as parishioners attended their parish church on Sunday mornings they might go on to Paul's Cross, and to other sermons in the afternoons and during the week.

Yet others beyond godly circles questioned the legality of attending services beyond one's own parish, and the practice of sermon gadding was attacked by anti-puritan polemicists as a disorderly disloyalty unsuitable for the female elite who should provide an example to their neighbours rather than abandoning them.⁷⁸ While the Juxons were enthusiastic patrons of so divisive a minister as Denison and gadded to hear him, *residents* of Denison's parish amongst the civic elite were sufficiently disgusted by his conduct that they risked resorting to a neighbouring parish, a decision which led to serious embarrassment. Martin Bond and Sir John Gayer and his wife were no Arminians, but as conformists they did not warm to Stephen Denison's uncompromising ministry at St Katharine Cree. After childbirth, Sir John Gayer's wife had not appeared at the church to give thanks, and all three were prosecuted for not attending services at Denison's parish church where they were resident. They had not joined their neighbours in *communion* for over a year when they were prosecuted, having resorted instead to the next door parish of St Andrew Undershaft.⁷⁹ The preference for another parish over one's own was not limited to gadding to the godly sermons of a preferred preacher, nor was it necessarily an expression of positive preference for another preacher so much as loathing for one's own, which could drive those who cannot be described as puritans reluctantly away from parish services and out of communion with their neighbours.

⁷⁷ Denison, *The monument*, pp. 85-6.

⁷⁸ Hunt, *Art of Hearing*, pp. 188-202; Seaver, *Wallington's World*, p. 109; M. Ingram, 'Puritans and the Church Courts', in Durston and Eales (eds.), *Culture of English Puritanism*, p. 87.

⁷⁹ Lake, *Boxmaker's Revenge*, pp. 313-6, 399.

Even amid such local tensions the governing elite of the City, of all religious complexions, affirmed the importance of the parish to community and to themselves as members of that community. Londoners consistently defined their residence with reference to their parish, rather than their ward.⁸⁰ In their wills aldermen and their wives remembered their parish or multiple City parishes in which they had been resident, and many women born in the counties or with houses there focused their efforts jointly, if unevenly, between the City and the country. Women's patronage of ministers was eclectic but included their local minister, and the confirmation of their place in the parish remained one of women's testamentary priorities. Women left bequests, most often of cash but occasionally of plate, to the clergy they had patronised. Some women exclusively patronised the godliest preachers. Of the £1000 Mary Weld left generally to preachers in her will of 1622, she bequeathed specific sums to the preachers who were most important to her, and who most relied on her aid. She left £20 each to Ezekiel Culverwell, and to the puritan preacher Daniel Rogers who had dedicated his *Davides Cost* to her.⁸¹ William Holbrooke who preached her funeral sermon, lecturer and curate at St Andrew Hubbard and lecturer at West Ham, received £100. Certain preachers were especially popular amongst puritan women: in 1613 Alice Owen left £5 to John Randall, who was also patronised by Mary Weld.⁸² More commonly, City ladies sponsored a range of clergy whom they valued for different reasons, amongst whom was often their local parish incumbent. In 1583 Elizabeth Nicholas left gowns to 'my very good friend the Dean of Pauls' Alexander Nowell, 'Mr Foxe the Preacher' (who may be John Foxe), and Nicholas Bradshaw, the parson of her parish of St Mildred Breadstreet.⁸³ In 1613 Anne Glover left £10 and gowns to Richard Watson and his wife, 'the preacher of this parish', the very godly parish of St Stephen Coleman Street where he had succeeded John Dodd, whom Anne also forgave ten of the £50 she had lent

⁸⁰ I. Archer, *The Pursuit of Stability: social relations in Elizabethan London* (Cambridge, 1991), pp. 82-92. .

⁸¹ J. Yiannikou, 'Rogers, Daniel (1573-1652)', ODNB.

⁸² TNA, PROB 11/141, fo. 232v; PROB 11/122, fo. 148r.

⁸³ TNA, PROB 11/65, fp. 349v; Vivienne Larminie, 'Bradshaw, Nicholas (1574/5-1655)', ODNB.

him.⁸⁴ She also left a gown to Richard Sherwood, a puritan activist who had collaborated with William Bradshaw to refute George Downname's defence of episcopacy in 1609. Yet even the godliest women pursued a diverse patronage, in which support of the parish minister might override reservations about their churchmanship. In spite of her otherwise godly sympathies Elizabeth Craven appointed an Arminian 'Mr Henry Mason Parson of the said parish' of St Andrew Undershaft to 'make a sermon at my funerall to my frends and Neighbors' because he was her local minster.⁸⁵

One of the primary ways in which women expressed their membership of the parish community was through their choice of location for burial, where their funeral would be performed with its attendant charity, and where the lasting funeral monument that would establish their place in the memory of the community would be erected.⁸⁶ In 1588 Margaret widow of Alderman William Bond asked to be buried in St Helen Bishopsgate 'where I am a parishoner' and left the minister 'of the parish where I live cloth for a gowne'.⁸⁷ In 1613 Alice Owen chose to be buried in St Mary's Islington 'where I was borne... my funerall to be solemnized in the parrishe of Bassishaw within the Cittie of London', while she also left £5 to the staunch puritan preacher John Randall, 'parson of Sainte Andrewe in Eastcheape'.⁸⁸ Like many women, Anne, widow of Alderman John Allot chose to be buried where her husband was, 'in the pariss Church of St Margaret Moyes in Friday Streete in London', but she also remembered the Croydon parish where she was resident, asking that 'My Reverend and lovinge frend, Mr Gregorie Wilkinson parson of Sawndersted where I nowe inhabit shall preach at my funeral... in token of my love unto him I doe give unto him a mourning gowne and in money the some of ffower poundes'.⁸⁹ In 1636 Joanne Bolles chose to be buried in St Swithins where

⁸⁴ TNA, PROB 11/121, fols. 146r-v.

⁸⁵ TNA, PROB 11/134, fo. 492r; J. Alsop, 'Mason, Henry (1575/6–1647)', *ODNB*.

⁸⁶ V. Harding, *The Dead and the Living in Paris, 1500-1670* (Cambridge, 2002).

⁸⁷ TNA, PROB 11/73, fo. 77v.

⁸⁸ TNA, PROB 11/122, fols. 147v-148r.

⁸⁹ TNA, PROB 11/131, fo. 19r (1615).

her natal and marital families had worshipped, ‘in the vaulte there, where in my late deare father Sir John Hart...and my late and loving husband Sir George Bolles were buried,’ and bequeathed ‘Mr [Richard] Cooke Parson of the parish’ £10 for a gown if he would preach her funeral sermon.⁹⁰

Godly women did not only provide sermons, tombs, and money for their parish churches. Communion too formed an important moment for the parish community as a whole, and for the godly who might renew their assurance.⁹¹ Preaching and communion complemented one another; at St Katharine Cree, Stephen Denison prepared his parishioners with a lecture on the first Saturday of each month for communion on the following Sunday.⁹² The very godly Anne, widow of Alderman William Glover indicated the value she placed on Sunday worship and parish communion when she left ‘to the parish of All Hallowes where I was sometyme a parishoner tenne poundes whereof sixe poundes thereof my minde is to buy a Communion Cuppe to serve the said parish church’.⁹³

Not all women felt their principal bonds lay within their City parishes. In exceptional circumstances where women had particularly strong connections to a rural estate, City ladies chose to be buried beyond London. Dorcas Martin’s natal family hailed from Tottenham, where she had also married her husband Richard, and where they had established their principal residence — beyond the City but close by it. She chose to be buried there in 1599.⁹⁴ Women who died beyond London and whose funerals took place in the counties recalled their standing in the City at large in their funerals, remembering their particular parishes more privately. In 1601 Susanna Saltonstall died at her house in South Ockenden, Essex, her natal town where her parents still lived and the site of the Saltonstalls’ country residence where she had buried

⁹⁰ TNA, PROB 11/171, fols. 258v, 259r.

⁹¹ Webster, *Godly Clergy*, pp. 115-7.

⁹² Lake, *Boxmaker’s Revenge*, pp. 67-70.

⁹³ TNA, PROB 11/121, fo. 145r.

⁹⁴ College of Arms MS I 16, fols. 45-55.

her husband Richard earlier in the same year. Susanna's heraldic funeral was conducted to her provincial parish 'according to hir degree' on 'Tuesday 7 April 1601 and affirmed her extraordinary standing in the City, proclaimed by a 'penon of London....penon of the Skyners...penon of the merchant adventurers...penon of the Co. of Muscovia', of which her husband had been Master, Governor and privileged member respectively.⁹⁵ The parish represented one important community amongst many for City women, and even within London women's funerals advertised their Company affiliations as well as their parish ones, loyalties which might overlap in the City. The funeral of the daughter of Sir William Allen attested to her continuing relationship to the City livery companies as a widow, proceeding on 31 August 1623 'from Grocers Hall to Mercers' Chapel in London where she lyeth interred'.⁹⁶

Some of the richest women who expected to die at their country estates made the expensive arrangements for their corpses to be conveyed to their London residences to be buried in their City parish churches. Elizabeth Craven was reportedly one of the richest women in the whole country when she was widowed in 1618, and she spared no expense when her 'body was conveyed to hir house in London, in Leaden Hall Streete', all the way from her residence in Comb Abbey, Warwickshire where she had died, to be buried at St Andrew Undershaft on 17 August 1624.⁹⁷ When Elizabeth Elwes died on 11 November 1625 'at hir house' in Woodford, Essex, a monument to her was erected in the chancel of Woodford parish church. Her funeral was celebrated in the City 'proceeding from Merchanttaylorshal' where her husband Geoffrey had been Master, to St Mary Bothaw to be interred where she had buried him in 1616.⁹⁸

⁹⁵ College of Arms MS I 16, fols.110-11.

⁹⁶ College of Arms MS I 22, fo. 104v.

⁹⁷ College of Arms MS I 22, fo. 102v.

⁹⁸ College of Arms MS I 23, fo. 2v.

iii) Funerals arrangements and pomp

Concern to avoid pomp at funerals originated as an early reformist cause and concern. Elaborate ceremonies, dirges, masses and obits, and the crippling expense of funeral blacks were rejected as vain show. The reformers funded anniversary sermons in place of obits.⁹⁹ Something of this practice continued into the late sixteenth and seventeenth century as City women embraced the early reformation tradition of bequeathing sermons as occasions on which the provision of good preaching would regularly occasion the revival of their memory in their community, rather than simply celebrating the anniversary of their death. In 1588 Margaret Bonde left ‘fower poundes to be distributed to godly preachers who shall preache twelve Sermons for the edifying of well disposed people in the parishe Church of St Hellen upon twelve severall Sondaies in one year next after my decease’.¹⁰⁰ Women left whatever they could to support preaching after their deaths. In 1599 Margaret, widow of Alderman Robert Wythens left 20 shillings to four parishes, St Michael Crooked Lane, where she was buried, St Magnus the Martyr, St Mary at Hill, and St Martin Orgar, and she expected this sum to suffice for at least one sermon in each.¹⁰¹ Joane Bolles had a relative fortune to spend in 1635, when she left £20 in the trust of her son-in-law, ‘to procure a sufficient Preacher to make and preache a Sermon in the Church of Eastham’ on the feast of St John the Evangelist for twenty years after her death.¹⁰²

Yet traditional forms of funerals persisted. Rejections of pomp in the mid-sixteenth century ‘were cries in a Catholic wilderness’, when some Londoners continued to order funerals as elaborate as they could afford, and not only for worldly show, but for intercession.¹⁰³ By the early seventeenth century there had been a change; calls for the rejection of pomp were almost ubiquitous in the wills of the elite, and historians have continued to interpret them as ‘puritan’

⁹⁹ Brigden, *London and the Reformation*, pp. 32-6, 388-91.

¹⁰⁰ TNA, PROB 11/73, fo.77v.

¹⁰¹ TNA, PROB 11/95, fo. 279r.

¹⁰² TNA, PROB 11/171, fo. 259r.

¹⁰³ Brigden, *London and the Reformation*, p. 385; R. Houlbrooke, ‘Death, ‘Church, and Family in England between the late fifteenth and early eighteenth centuries’, in his *Death, Ritual and Bereavement* (1989), pp. 33-6.

sentiments.¹⁰⁴ Rejections of pomp expressed in the context of a City in which Protestantism was no longer a confession of protest but of the established Church. Phillip's 1594 epitaph on Helen Branch praises her rejection of show in her life *generally* as evidence of the virtue and wisdom which he had praised in City ladies since his 1570 epitaph on Agnes Avenon. Connotations of the rejection of Catholic wastefulness and vainglory endured within the rhetoric which rejected the worldly show of other Protestants as an irresponsible use of money, and which treated a funeral as an opportunity for an individual City lady to make a final statement about her place in the religious and civic community.

Funeral pomp was widely but by no means ubiquitously rejected by City women, nor was this decision defined by a woman's religious complexion. For some women ostentatious pomp befitted their profile and status in the City.¹⁰⁵ Elite women's funerals were big business for the heralds. In 1591 the heralds drew up a set of rules for the dignity appertaining to a Lord Mayor's funeral, after a dispute over the lucrative rights to conducting the proceedings. Garter and Clarencieux disputed the right to serve at the funeral of Sir John Allot, Lord Mayor. Garter won, on the argument that the previous Garter, his father, had officiated for Lord Mayors dying during their mayoralty, as he had for William Bowyer, and he also presided over the funerals of Lady Bowyer and Lady Avenon, who died when they were Lady Mayoress.¹⁰⁶ It was agreed that a Lord Mayor should have equal provisions as for a Baron, and therefore, it seems reasonable to assume that a Lady Mayoress would be afforded dignities akin to those of a baroness, and the wives of more junior Aldermen beneath her a slightly more moderate ceremony.¹⁰⁷ A herald's sketch of a baroness's hearse shows its four post frame furnished with black velvet drapes and pennons of arms. The orders for the funeral of a baroness allowed her a substantial

¹⁰⁴ McIntosh, 'English Funeral Sermons', p. 159.

¹⁰⁵ Harding, *Living and the Dead*, pp. 11, 128-41, 181.

¹⁰⁶ College of Arms MS Vincent 151, v. 1, pp. 178-83; for the proceedings of the funeral on 4 October 1591 see College of Arms MS Dethick's funerals v.1, fols. 274r-v, 275v.

¹⁰⁷ College of Arms MS Vincent 152, v.1, pp. 247-52, 258-63, and v. 2, pp. 372, 394-95; Harding, *Living and the Dead*, pp. 209, 252.

procession of her network and community walking behind her corpse: conductors, poor men, stewards gentlemen, esquires, knights, Lords and Ladies to the defunct, chaplains to the defunct, Doctors, Preachers. After these the Great Banner, such as was carried at Lady Avenon's funeral, was borne and followed by the serving officers of arms. Behind them came the corpse upon the hearse, attended by 'a lady chefe mourner' who 'must have sircoate and mantel and a hood' and a 'a gentlewoman or lady' 'to beare her trayne in A blacke cassoke and a white head of fine cambrick or holland', supported by two knights, six other ladies or assistants, gentlewomen in blacks, and finally the parish and others who came to pay their respects. A Baroness was to have a 'great banner of arms' and escutcheons and banneroles in addition to the usual pennons. On the day of the funeral of an alderman's wife the heralds' painters were 'to have bayes or cotton to hange her house and churche' to advertise the occasion of the passing of their great ones to the whole parish and City.¹⁰⁸ After the funeral the hearse might be left on show in the parish church for months, and the funeral hatchments outside the house of the deceased for up to a year.¹⁰⁹ The heralds also note 'a sertayne singing man to be appointed at the day of the funeral.'¹¹⁰ At the end of the procession the 'parish and other company' came to pay their respects, followed by those named in the schedule of the procession. The heralds led mourners in a show of respect towards the corpse of the deceased.¹¹¹

The women who favoured the splendour of a heraldic funeral and those who vehemently rejected it ran across the spectrum of religious complexions. The costs soon racked up; the painters' bills represented a tiny fraction of the costs, of which the greatest were certainly black cloth, but they alone are not inconsiderable. Elizabeth, Lady Buckle's funeral on Monday 4 November 1594 required items including five pennons, two of hers, two of her and her husband's in pale, 'one of the Citie and one of the vyntners', her late husband's company. Her

¹⁰⁸ College of Arms MS Dethick's funerals, v. 1, fols. 236a-b, 274a-b.

¹⁰⁹ C. Gittings, *Death, Burial and the Individual in early modern England* (1984), p. 183.

¹¹⁰ College of Arms MS Dethick's funerals, v. 1, fo. 236a-b.

¹¹¹ Gittings, *Death, Burial and the Individual*, pp. 176-7.

total account for painters' bills came to £7.4s6d Elizabeth had solemnized her husband's funeral on 29 July that year, also at St Mary at Hill, which had been far grander, costing £29.12s6d for painters. Painters' costs for ladies' funerals seem to have been fairly consistent: Anne, Lady Gresham's on 14 December 1596 at St Helen's cost £9.14s8d, Margaret, Lady Blanke's on Thursday 22 February 1596 at St Mary at Hill cost £4.10s, the funeral of 'Lady Mayres Sir Henry Billingsley his wyfe' Katharine who died in May 1598 cost £6.4s3d and Dorcas, Lady Martin's in September 1599 cost £4.15s.¹¹² £40 was paid to Clarencieux and Rougecroix for the heraldic funeral of Anne, Lady Gresham at St Helen's on 15 December 1596, which was the same sum they would receive for their duties at the funeral of Elizabeth I.¹¹³ By 1619, Elizabeth Ryvers saw no reason to waste such huge sums of money on fripperies, and rejected 'vayne show of Blackes or often extraordinary funerall expenses'.¹¹⁴

Clare Gittings has questioned whether executors were expected to ignore the false modesty of the testator, for some women who requested simple burials received heraldic funerals.¹¹⁵ Margaret Slanye's injunction to her daughters in 1612 to 'suffer no offensive or superstitious ceremonies to be used' at her funeral may have influenced her daughter Mary Weld in 1622 to make the same request to be buried 'decentlie...without all shewe of superstition'.¹¹⁶ Yet she assigned £1200 on blacks to be spent on her funeral of 1623, a figure more associated with aristocratic funerals than civic ones, following her mother's example five years before.¹¹⁷ Godly women did not necessarily choose to reject funeral pomp. In 1625, Ursula Brooke, wife of Alderman Robert Brooke, writing her will enjoined modesty for her funeral, desiring 'that my bodie may be buried without herauldes funerall pompe, vayne glory, ostentation'.¹¹⁸ The godliest funerals might be heraldic ones. Susanna Saltonstall's heraldic funeral took an extremely

¹¹² College of Arms MS Vincent 188, fols. 3r, 15v, 17r, 22r, 23r.

¹¹³ J. Burgon, *The Life and Times of Sir Thomas Gresham* (1839) ii, pp. 490-1.

¹¹⁴ TNA, PROB 11/133/631, fo. 504v.

¹¹⁵ Gittings, *Death, Burial and the Individual* p. 52.

¹¹⁶ TNA, PROB 11/133, fo. 333r; PROB 11/141, fo. 227r.

¹¹⁷ TNA, PROB 11/141, fo. 227r; PROB 11/133, fo. 333r.

¹¹⁸ TNA, PROB 11/171, fo. 258v.

godly tone; she appointed 'that the first and second parte of the fowre and twentieth Psalme shalbe songe at my funeral' yet was buried with full civic honours.¹¹⁹ When the godly Susan Billingsley died on 25 April 1633 she chose to be buried 'with Eschutcheons' in 'St Gregory's church near Paules where she had in her lifetime erected a Monument for Edward Barker esquire, her first husband'.¹²⁰ This group of women, including women who rejected funeral pomp and others who set aside huge sums to pay for it, were all amongst the godliest women.

Even aldermen's wives who did not choose pomp for their own funerals were never entirely dissociated from it, as the huge heraldic funerals of aldermen, and particularly lord mayors, continued to represent a civic occasion through which the governing elite demonstrated their solidarity. Following John Allot's hearse 'out of Woodstreet into his parish church in Friday Street' on 4 October 1591 was the current Lord Mayor, Rowland Heyward and all those to whom he had left mourning blacks, including Lady Ellen [Helen] Branch, and Dorcas, Lady Martin.¹²¹ Women who were friends or kin of the deceased walked behind an alderman's corpse in blacks bequeathed by the deceased. Humphrey Weld's body was taken to St Lawrence Old Jewry in January 1610 by the present Lord Mayor, William Craven, the ladies of his family following the hearse in blacks: Lady Joane Brooke, daughter of Humphrey's first marriage was the wife of Sir Robert Brooke, a leading patron of puritan clergy who asked for her own funeral to eschew pomp; she was accompanied by her sister, Mrs Anne Corbett and by Mrs Whitmore, probably Anne Whitmore.¹²² Women of the City elite were expected to attend in a general civic capacity too, and were referred to in the heralds' schedule for the procession collectively as 'aldermen's wives without [bequeathed] blacks'. The procession attended the funeral and then

¹¹⁹ TNA, PROB 11/121, fo. 71r.

¹²⁰ College of Arms MS I 23, fo. 59.

¹²¹ College of Arms MS Vincent 151, v. 1, pp. 178-83; College of Arms MS Dethick's funerals v.1, fols. 274r-v, 275v.

¹²² BL Add. MS 14417.

‘they go home from the church in like manner they came’, retiring to the house of the deceased for refreshment.¹²³

For women funerals were a natural consequence of family, friendship and the ties of affection, as well as a civic occasion. Elizabeth Deane’s funeral demonstrated her standing within civic networks as well as indicating her place amongst distinctly mixed proto-Arminian and godly company. Her funeral was celebrated on Thursday 2 November 1609 in the afternoon at St Sepulchre’s. Elizabeth married John Brewster, a Secondary of the Fine Office, less than a month following the loss of her second husband Alderman Sir James Deane in 1608, but continued to be referred to as Lady Deane.¹²⁴ Elizabeth’s funeral drew together her three marital families and her natal one, the poor and worthy of her parish, the preachers whom she favoured, her relatives amongst the civic elite and her closest friends. Before her coffin walked Elizabeth’s male friends from the City elite: Aldermen Sir John Jolles, Sir James Lancaster, privateer and trader and dedicatee of works by the mainstream preacher Samuel Crooke, and Sir Rowland Litton.¹²⁵ Litton’s daughter Margaret had married Sir William Webbe, son of Lady Elizabeth Deane’s first marriage by Christopher Webbe, the son of sometime Sir William Webbe, Lord Mayor 1591-2. Margaret Webbe was Chief Mourner for her mother-in-law, supported by her husband, and walked immediately behind the hearse. The corpse was guided by Nicholas Charles, Lancaster Herald and William Camden, Clarencieux King of Arms. Margaret Webbe was followed by Elizabeth’s friends Lady Judith Plat, recently widowed wife of Sir Hugh Plat, agricultural writer and inventor, Lady Anne Lowe, wife of Sir Thomas Lowe, Lord Mayor in 1604.

¹²³ College of Arms MS Vincent 151, fols. 183 and 169-72.

¹²⁴ Elizabeth Deane’s is the only elite woman’s funeral in London for which detailed proceedings survive in this period: BL Add. MS 14417, fo. 4b-5.

¹²⁵ V. Larminie, ‘Crooke, Samuel (1575–1649)’, *ODNB*.

Two clergymen walked in Elizabeth Deane's funeral. 'Mr Johnson' may have been Mr Robert Johnson, puritan nonconformist and chaplain to William Barlow.¹²⁶ Barlow was London born and the former sub-dean of St Paul's until 1607 but was notorious amongst London preachers as protégé of Archbishop Whitgift who on 1 March 1601 had preached favourably at Paul's Cross on the execution of the late earl of Essex, and who wrote an episcopalian account of the Hampton Court Conference of 1604 for the King. Barlow's beliefs were perhaps not Arminian though he was suspected of advancing Catholic practices and was a confirmed critic of what he considered to be excessive preaching.¹²⁷ In this context, his chaplain Mr Robert Johnson, who dedicated a sermon to him on the importance of preaching, can be seen as a moderating influence on a conservative patron. 'Mr Simpson' may have been Mr Alexander Simpson, who was nominated by James I to preach at Middle Temple in a letter of 27 April 1613, but who was rejected in favour of Abraham Gibson, a more reformed alternative to the King's candidate.¹²⁸

The heraldic funeral procession and ceremonies of godly women who asked for heraldic pomp probably looked little different from those of women whose religious patronage indicates Arminian preferences. The arms of Elizabeth Deane's three husbands were carried before her hearse. Inside the church, Elizabeth's daughter-in-law Margaret Webbe stood with her female assistants. First, she was led by the hand by Clarencieux to lay down gold by the hearse. Then she went with a gentleman to offer silver. Elizabeth's eldest step-son Thomas Brewster placed her pennon beside Mr Whitson the preacher. All the knights, doctors and divines and all the gentle mourners in gowns rose to end the offertory.¹²⁹

¹²⁶ C. Knighton, 'Johnson, Robert (1540/41–1625)', *ODNB*.

¹²⁷ C. Knighton, 'Barlow, William (d. 1613)', *ODNB*.

¹²⁸ Seaver, *Lectureships*, p. 142. Gibson was later advanced by Nathaniel Barnardiston. Nathaniel was the son of Katharine née Banks, great patron of puritan preachers, whose first husband was Bartholomew Soame, brother of Lord Mayor Sir Stephen. Nathaniel married his cousin Jane, Sir Stephen's daughter, in May 1613.

¹²⁹ BL Add. MS 14417, fo. 4b-5.

Women who rejected funeral pomp were conscious of saving their families huge sums of money, and that this decision held significance for their reputation as part of an elite who used their wealth responsibly. It was this same ethic that led London women to lead the trend for private funerals, held at night. On 25 September 1601 Susanna, Lady Rowe was buried in a vault in St Pancras Soper Lane between ten and eleven o'clock at night, 'with all thiftiness'.¹³⁰ The relative privacy of a night time funeral became a recognisable feature of metropolitan culture. John Chamberlain wrote to Dudley Carleton in December 1618 that 'it is grown altogether in fashion to bury now by night'.¹³¹ Women were concerned that even the route taken to the church could smack of vainglory. Funeral processions were commonly prepared on the day of the funeral, mourners processing from the house of the deceased to the church, and returning there for the funeral supper.¹³² In 1625 Ann, widow of Alderman James Pemberton desired that 'my Corppes maue be buried in the night and carried the direct and neerest waie to the Church', St John Zacharies 'where I nowe dwell'.¹³³ In 1627 Ursula Brooke stated 'it is my desire that my corppes maie be buried in the night and carried the direct and nearest waie to the Church'.¹³⁴

Other godly women who desired that their restrained funerals be widely attended specified that they should be held in the daytime. In 1627 Julyan, widow of Alderman Oliver Style stipulated that her funerals were to cost no more than the not inconsiderable sum of £200, but she desired 'to be decently buried in the Christian manner in the daie tyme without any manner of vaine pompe'; the equally godly Ursula Brooke sought 'privateness' in her funeral of the same year.¹³⁵ Private night funerals were by no means a puritan practice, and the uncomfortable connotations of torchlight funerals were only compounded by their use by

¹³⁰ V. Harding, *Dead and the Living*, p. 227.

¹³¹ Gittings, *Death, Burial and the Individual* pp. 188-9; R. Houlbrooke, *Death, Religion and the Family in England, 1480-1750* (Oxford, 1998).

¹³² *Ibid.*, pp. 173, 179-80.

¹³³ TNA, PROB 11/46, fo. 277v.

¹³⁴ TNA, PROB 11/146, fo. 490v.

¹³⁵ TNA, PROB 11/153, fo. 50r; PROB 11/146, fo. 490v.

Arminian and Catholic women too. When the (Catholic) Countess of Clanricarde, who lodged at Clerkenwell when she was in London, was buried from her house in Somerhill, Kent on 23 February 1631/2, by night with torches, her funeral was described as proceeding ‘after the London fashion.’ In 1656 the Arminian Margaret Garway née Clitherow requested that she ‘be decentlie intered and buried privately by night in the parish Church of Saint Peter the poore in Bredstrete’.¹³⁶

City ladies had many reasons for choosing to reject funeral pomp. As elaborate funerals took time to prepare, corpses were embalmed and some women objected to this process as unseemly or intrusive. In 1613 Susanna Saltonstall enjoined her executors ‘neither to cause my body to be opened or cut’.¹³⁷ Joane Bolles wrote in 1636 ‘my will and mind is that after my decease my bodie shall be put into cleane white linnen, without anie searecloth or embalming and which such convenient speede as may bee after my decease.’¹³⁸

City women, both those who rejected and those who embraced funeral pomp, shared some common ground; the elements of funeral tradition which they were unwilling to give up entirely were those by which the deceased would be remembered by their community, both by individuals and by the parish and the City as a whole. Where existing traditions were in need of being updated, women adapted traditional forms of bequest to suit the reformed civic ethos, as well as to strengthen their religious networks.

Women singled out their friends amongst the elite, often leaving personalised bequests to other aldermen’s wives and confirming friendships and alliances through the bequests of rings and gowns. In 1592, Agnes, widow of Alderman Henry Prannell left ‘Mr Alderman [Cuthbert] Buckell and his wife, to either of them a mourninge gowne of twentie shillings the

¹³⁶ TNA, PROB 11/157, fols. 113-114; A. McConnell and R. Brown, ‘Garway [Garraway], Sir Henry (bap. 1575, d. 1646), *ODNB*.

¹³⁷ TNA, PROB 11/121, fo. 71r.

¹³⁸ TNA, PROB 11/171, fo. 258v.

yarde' and 'to Mrs [Elizabeth] Buckell, Mr Alderman Buckell's wife my ringe of gold, with my seale of Armes in it, in token of my good will.'¹³⁹ Women sought to confirm the bonds of trust, business and friendship between the godliest families through these bequests. In 1613 Anne Glover left her godly friend 'the worshippfull [Elizabeth] the Lady Craven a mourning gowne' to walk in her funeral, and chose Elizabeth's husband Sir William Craven to oversee her will.¹⁴⁰ Business and friendship overlapped among the elite. In 1625 Sir John and Hester Gore were renting Ann Pemberton's mansion house. Anne left 'ten poundes to make each of them a ring, in token of my love if I die, they being in the howse or else not'.¹⁴¹

Women left mourning rings in large numbers, as they did gowns, and they graded the value of the gift according to the importance of its recipient. The richest women chose to remember extended kinship and friendship networks. Anne, widow of Alderman John Harte was so rich when she made her will in 1624 that she could afford to leave rings to her cousins' wives. Anne left more valuable rings to her close friends, especially to other widows among the godly elite and clerical circles of the City; 'To [Elizabeth] the Ladie Martyn wife of Sir Richard Martyn...deceased, three poundes to make her a Ringe...' and to 'Mistress Hayward widdow late wife of Mr [John] Hayward late parson of St Marie Wollchurch in London', a 'man greatly followed in the City' who preached at Paul's Cross after the Essex rebellion, 'fortye shillings to make her a ringe'.¹⁴² City ladies honoured their relationships to their poorer friends, especially to ministers' wives, with special bequests of luxury personal items. In 1609, the fabulously wealthy Alice Spencer left 'to Mrs Judith Crooke, wife of Samuel Crooke minister one Ring or Jewell to the value of sixe poundes.' Judith was the daughter of a respected Suffolk minister, and her husband Samuel was a promising preacher but not long out of trouble with the Church

¹³⁹ TNA, PROB 11/83, fols. 92r, 94r.

¹⁴⁰ TNA, PROB 11/121, fo. 145r; I. Archer, 'c.1545-1618', *ODNB*.

¹⁴¹ TNA, PROB 11/46, fo. 277v.

¹⁴² TNA, PROB 11/145, fols. 283r, 293v; M. Morrissey, *Politics and the Paul's Cross Sermons, 1558-1642* (2001), p. 88.

for refusal to use the sign of the cross in baptism. Coming at an uncertain moment in Judith's life, Alice's bequest of a jewel provided her friend with a measure of personal security as potentially disposable income, as well as a personal luxury and an affirmation from a great lady.¹⁴³

City women also left mourning rings bearing death's heads as *memento mori* commonly bequeathed to younger kin and especially godchildren to remind them to think on their example and repent daily.¹⁴⁴ In 1595 Margaret Blanke left 'my goddaughter Mary Peirson a Ringe of gold the value of fiftie shillings with a deathes head with two letters viz. I. E.'. Death's head rings were also often left to the wives of clerics. Margaret left another 'to Mistress [Elizabeth] Nowell the nowe wife of the Deane of Paules a Ring of gold the value of three poundes with a Deathes hed'.¹⁴⁵ Other women, often amongst the godliest, simply favoured the design for all their rings. In 1627 Elizabeth Martin unusually left 'a gould ring with the picture of Deaths dead ingraven thereupon of the value of thirtie or fortie shillings' to everyone named in her schedule, including 'roaring' John Rogers, the charismatic preacher of All Hallows Honey Lane.¹⁴⁶

Across the period City ladies continued to leave long lists of blacks to kin, friends, and clergy whom they hoped to draw together to walk in their funeral procession. The abandonment of the provision of funeral blacks by City women would have meant a huge saving; black cloth represented the greatest expense for most funerals, the church as well the house of the deceased being hung in blacks, such that even peers hired fabric from parish churches that had it to avoid the expense of purchasing it outright.¹⁴⁷ The giving of blacks was a chance for a woman to draw together everyone in her life for one last time when they walked behind the hearse. In 1617

¹⁴³ TNA, PROB 11/115, fo. 169r.

¹⁴⁴ T. Cooper, *Citizen Portrait: Portrait Painting and the Urban Elite of Tudor and Jacobean England and Wales* (2012), Fig. 75; D. Scarisbrick, *Jewellery: Markers, Motifs, History and Techniques* (1989), *Rings: Symbols of Wealth, Power and Affection* (1993), *Historic Rings: Four Thousand Years of Craftsmanship* (2004); D. Scarisbrick and M. Henig, *Finger Rings: from ancient to modern* (Oxford, 2003).

¹⁴⁵ TNA, PROB 11/90, fols. 463v, 466r.

¹⁴⁶ TNA, PROB 11/152, fo. 311r.

¹⁴⁷ Harding, *Dead and the Living*, p. 197; Gittings, *Death, Burial and the Individual*, pp. 135, 181.

William Craven, by trade a woollen draper who left gowns for a hundred poor men to walk in his own funeral procession, left 'my welbeloved wife' Elizabeth £600 of cloth for her funeral.¹⁴⁸ In 1624 Anne Harte also gave £600 'to be bestowed and disposed in mourning apparel.'¹⁴⁹ With costs so high, women did not leave mourning indiscriminately and were careful to make sure the right people were not forgotten, and the wrong people did not feature in their funeral. Therefore City women's wills often featured amongst the bequests long lists of the named individuals to whom mourning was to be given. Ann Pemberton annexed to her will of 1625 a 'schedule of such mourning as I will have given' in her own italic hand, 'that there may not be any mourninge garments given but onely to such persons as are named'.¹⁵⁰ In 1627 Ursula Brooke ordered that 'no mourningeweede [was] to be given to anie persons (except unto such as shalbe herein after nominated)'.¹⁵¹

Elite women carefully stipulated which grade of cloth was to be used for a specific mourner. Distinguished mourners would be recognisable by their specially bequeathed, and fine, funeral gowns. In 1588, Margaret Bond left 'black cloth of twentie shillings by the yarde to make...gownes' to 'my lovinge brother George Bond alderman and his wife, and to my good frend, Mr Thomas Goare'.¹⁵² Gowns were usually bequeathed only to kin, and male testators commonly left gowns only to their widows and children, and occasionally to friends.¹⁵³ City ladies left gowns to a wider group of kinship, friendship and patronage circles wherever they possessed the means, often bequeathed alongside large numbers of mourning rings too. Naturally, women prioritised their closest kin when providing gowns, particularly the women who would be their principal mourners. First amongst the female kin walking in Joanna Bolles' funeral of 1636 was to be her sister to whom she left 'a mourning gowne to weare att my

¹⁴⁸ TNA, PROB 11/132, fo. 70v.

¹⁴⁹ TNA, PROB 11/145, fo. 282r.

¹⁵⁰ TNA, PROB 11/46, fo. 277v.

¹⁵¹ TNA, PROB 11/146, fo. 490v.

¹⁵² TNA, PROB 11/73, fo. 77v.

¹⁵³ Gittings, *Death, Burial and the Individual*, p. 120.

funerall'.¹⁵⁴ The character of funerals changed, as private funerals became a ceremony for family and kin, and numbers of poor mourners in gowns were monitored by lists in wills.¹⁵⁵ Yet other women across the spectrum of belief continued to provide blacks for the *poor* to walk in their funerals. In 1613 godly Anne Glover bequeathed

unto threescore and six poore persons wheeof three score to be women sixe poor men for bearers which shall attend upon my bodye at the funerall to each of them a gowne of the valence of eight shillings the yard.¹⁵⁶

In the same year the possibly Arminian Elizabeth Deane gave gowns to forty poor women of the parish to walk with her hearse to St Sepulchre.¹⁵⁷

The funeral dinner was commonly held at the house of the deceased's closest kin.¹⁵⁸ Women continued to value a funeral dinner as a last chance to show hospitality. In 1603 Elizabeth, widow of Alderman Francis Bowyer sought to draw together those who were linked through her, asking her executors to 'provide a dynner conveynient for both the Mourners, and other my deare lovinge friends and acquaintance which I desire maie be invited there to'.¹⁵⁹ In 1613, Susanna Saltonstall rejected 'giving blacks or such like' but was not willing to give up 'the charges of a banquet after my same funeral'.¹⁶⁰ Yet some women began to provide separate dinners, for godly kin and friends, and a separate dinner or dole for the poor. In 1635 the godly Joane Bolles arranged for her funeral to be held in East Ham, Essex, and nominated 'Eight poore' to 'mourne my funerall two shillings a peece for their dynners'.¹⁶¹

Many women who had the funds to do so left money to at least one livery company of which they were a member. In 1613 Anne Glover left 'unto the Company of the Dyers the somme of twentie poundes to buye them a Bason and Ewer and alsoe twentie markes for

¹⁵⁴ TNA, PROB 11/171, fo. 259r.

¹⁵⁵ Houlbrooke, 'Death, 'Church, and Family', p. 35.

¹⁵⁶ TNA, PROB 11/121, fo. 145r.

¹⁵⁷ BL Add. MS 14417, fols. 4b-5.

¹⁵⁸ Gittings, *Death, Burial and the Individual*, p. 154.

¹⁵⁹ TNA, PROB 11/110, fo. 143r.

¹⁶⁰ TNA, PROB 11/121, fo. 71r.

¹⁶¹ TNA, PROB 11/171, fo. 258v.

adynner to be made at my funerall'.¹⁶² Significant sums of money were devoted to these meals: in 1624 Anne Harte left £30 to the Grocers for a dinner on the day of her funeral.¹⁶³

Women who rejected the daytime pomp of heraldic funerals and the forms of community engagement that it supported—doles, dinners, the giving of blacks—did not reject community engagement itself. Rather they sought to improve traditional practices, by making them more ordered and edifying. Traditionally a dole, which was usually money but sometimes bread, was distributed at the church door at a funeral.¹⁶⁴ In 1600 Margaret Wythens sought to keep arrangements for poor relief separate from the event of her actual funeral and intended that 'there shalbe distributed to the poore one daye before my buryall twentye shillings'.¹⁶⁵ Women's parish and City communities expected great generosity of the elite women who were known to be wealthy and charitable. Seventeen paupers were crushed to death in the crowds that gathered in expectation of the distribution of a 6d dole at the funeral of Mary Ramsey in 1601.¹⁶⁶ Even in the aftermath of this calamity some City women continued to welcome the resort of paupers to their funerals. In 1623, Margery, widow of Alderman Richard Pyott saw no reason to fear any crush at her own funeral, and set aside five pounds 'to bee distributed at the said Church [of St Lawrence Old Jewry] on the daye of my funerall to amongst the poore resorting to the same'.¹⁶⁷

Yet others increasingly began to limit the recipients of relief to those they approved of amongst their communities, who were often personally known to them or to ministers they trusted. This change of attitude was not exclusive to women, but a wider attitude amongst the civic elite. In 1617 the incredibly wealthy William Craven was adamant that 'for the avoyding of Tumultes which be usuallie occasioned at Buryalls by doales I will that nothing be given to idell

¹⁶² TNA, PROB 11/121, fo. 145r.

¹⁶³ TNA, PROB 11/145, fo. 282r.

¹⁶⁴ Gittings, *Death, Burial and the Individual*, pp. 161-2.

¹⁶⁵ TNA, PROB 11/95, fo. 279r.

¹⁶⁶ Harding, *Dead and the Living*, p. 224.

¹⁶⁷ TNA, PROB 11/145, fo. 231r.

persons in the streets on the daye of my funerall'. Rather he directed the funds to the poorest City parishes as chosen by his executors to be distributed by churchwardens and overseers of the poor to the neediest.¹⁶⁸ In 1625 Ann Pemberton made careful provisions for a limited number of poor women to be given a dinner and a dole which they were to be told were given *instead* of blacks, and which would only be handed over to those who sat through a sermon preached for the occasion.

to the end the poore maie not loose by the privatenes of my funerall, I doe will that threescore and cleaven poore women shall have twentie shillings a peece given unto them in lewe of so many mourning gownne and twelve a peece for their dinners. And that a sermon shalbe preached at some convenient tyme after my funerall at which tyme those poore women to be present. And then to have the saied twentie shillings a peece given unto them.¹⁶⁹

Privacy did not necessarily entail a loss of obligation to the community.

Conclusion

Despite bitter disagreement about how religion in the community should operate in practice, aldermen and their wives in London across the confessional spectrum shared a common civic concern for their reputations for godliness and charity towards their neighbours. The civic elite saw no contradiction in the funeral monuments that vaunted their godliness, their wealth and the charity that it allowed them to lavish on their favoured parishes and their City. Alice and Sir John Spencer's extravagantly enormous funeral monument of 1610, in St Helen's Bishopsgate, did little, however, to endear their memory to Londoners, for their astronomical wealth was as famous as their lack of charity during their lifetimes, and was only compounded by the loss of Sir John's will. When little is known of an individual's lifetime charity, their lack of charitable bequests in their will can be misleading.¹⁷⁰ John and Christian Robinsons' more modest wall monument also erected in St Helen's Bishopsgate a decade before, in 1599, achieved a delicate

¹⁶⁸ TNA, PROB 11/132, fo. 70v.

¹⁶⁹ TNA, PROB 11/46, fo. 277r.

¹⁷⁰ I. Archer, 'Spencer, Sir John (d. 1610)', ODNB; Stow, *A survey of London* (1633), pp. 859-60.

balance. Under their coats of arms, Christian, who died five years before John, is remembered as an ideal wife of '36 yeares in holy wedlock...happy besides other worldly blessings in nyne sonnes and seaven dayghters', shown kneeling around a prayer desk. The Robinsons clearly thought of themselves as godly:

To live long and happy is an honor, bvt to dye happy a greater glory, boeth theis aspid to boeth heaven (no doubt) hath theire sovles, and this howse of stone theire bodyes where they sleepe in peace, till the som'ons of a gloriovs resvrrection wakens them.

Their funeral monument asserted that they were esteemed by their community and known for their joint 40 years of charity during their lifetimes, and expected that community to remember them fondly in death:

both mvch beloved in theire lives, and moare lamented at theire deathes especially by the poore to whome theire good deedes (being alive) begott many prayers and now (being dead) many teares...

The Robinsons' funeral monument claimed that it was possible to be a saint and to be loved by one's community in the City. Crucial in achieving this balance for elite godly women was the exercise of lifelong charity, in the parish and the City at large. Why was charity considered the least problematic object of praise of City ladies? To what extent did this praise reveal and conceal the real practice and state of charity between elite mercantile women, their household, and the community?

Chapter VI Charity, Hospitality, and the Household

Introduction

The contemporary definition of charity was expansive, and intimately connected to ideas of neighbourhood and community, and conduct towards fellow Christians.¹ Charity in London and the counties, and in its fullest sense, was valued in aldermen's wives and it was valued by elite women themselves in spite of the many obstacles to living in charity. For aldermanic households the promotion of charity both internally and as part of their neighbourhood was part of the good governance the civic elite was charged to provide and, even for those who valued religious truth very highly, the importance of social unity promoted the pursuit of concord.² Charity encompassed God's love towards man, and man's love towards God and his neighbour that would be manifested in the loving disposition towards the poor in Christ's image that animated almsgiving.³ Love of one's neighbour was in practice always 'a counsel of perfection'.⁴ It was Christian to judge hopefully the character, aims, and destinies of others, and to make allowance for their faults and shortcomings, but where resources were limited so discrimination of the recipients of charity had always been necessary.⁵ Following Weber, historians have seen in the reforming Protestant ethos, culminating in puritanism, a drive towards increasing discrimination in the provision of charitable relief to the 'deserving poor', defined as those whose poverty was not connected to idleness and whose behaviour suggested

¹ OED sv. 'charity'.

² S. Brigden, 'Religion and Social Obligation in Early Sixteenth-Century London', *P&P*, 103 (1984), pp. 110-11; I. Archer, *The Pursuit of Stability: social relations in Elizabethan London* (Cambridge, 1991), pp. 53, 76, 97; A. Walsham, *Charitable Hatred: tolerance and intolerance in England, 1500-1700* (Manchester, 2006), pp. 227-8; F. Heal, *The Power of Gifts: Gift-Exchange in Early Modern England* (Oxford, 2014), p. 26; A. Walsham, 'Cultures of Coexistence', pp. 122-3, 'Holy Families: the Spiritualisation of the Early Modern Household Revisited', in J. Doran, C. Methuen, and A. Walsham (eds.), *Religion and the Household*, SCH, 50 (Woodbridge, 2014), pp. 124; B. Kaplan, *Divided by Faith: religious conflict and the practice of toleration in early modern Europe* (Cambridge MA, 2007), p. 251; K. Luria, 'Separated by death? Burials, Cemeteries, and confessional boundaries in seventeenth-century France', *French Historical Studies*, 24 (2001), pp. xvii, 317.

³ OED sv. 'charity'.

⁴ Brigden, 'Religion and Social Obligation', pp. 67-8, and *London and the Reformation* (1989), pp. 67-82, 472.

⁵ J. Weetman, 'Testamentary Piety and Charity in London, 1259-1370', Oxford Univ. D. Phil thesis (2003), pp. 6, 144, 152, 156; Archer, *Pursuit*, pp. 163-4.

their spiritual rectitude.⁶ Discrimination in charitable giving of course was not new; where there was limited wealth to give it was both practical and responsible to target its most needful or deserving recipients.⁷ The medieval Londoners on whose traditions of relief early modern Londoners modelled their own had given discriminatingly too, however uncomfortable early modern Londoners found it to accept the legacy of their popish antecedents and however much they sought to recast discrimination in charitable giving as innovatively Protestant.⁸

Yet the scrutiny of discrimination was intensified by the opinion of the godly that charity ought to adhere to spiritual limits too, both in sentiment and in almsgiving.⁹ If charity was a Christian state of love and right feeling towards one's fellow Christians, then who might be one's true brethren, and what the right feeling towards particular neighbours might be could be shaped for the godly by the sense that the community of saints was distinct from the community at large.¹⁰ According to popular caricature recorded by John Manningham 'A puritane is such a one as loves God with all his soule, but hates his neighbour with all his hart'.¹¹

The intentions and expectations of testators making charitable bequests, though, had shifted, and this too played into the insistence of the Protestant magistracy and ministry that reformed charity was a fitter instrument for social reform, as well as relief, in the ungodly, which if neglected would draw down the wrath of a justly enraged God. Charity might become a tool of godly social control.¹² The five hospitals founded in the reign of Edward VI sought to solve

⁶ C. Hill, *Society and Puritanism in pre-Revolutionary England* (New York, 1964), pp. 259-97, 483-7, *The World Turned Upside Down: radical ideas during the English Revolution* (London, 1972), pp. 32-3, *Puritanism and revolution: studies in interpretation of the English Revolution of the 17th century* (1958), pp. 215-38; C. and K. George, *The Protestant Mind of the English Reformation* (Princeton, 1961).

⁷ M. McIntosh, 'Charity and Coercion in Elizabethan England', *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 35 (2005), pp. 457, 461-2; J. Bennett, 'Conviviality and Charity in Medieval and Early Modern England', *P&P*, 134 (1992), p. 29.

⁸ P. Lake, 'A Charitable Christian Hatred': the Godly and their Enemies in the 1630s', in C. Durston and J. Eales (eds.), *The Culture of English Puritanism, 1560-1700* (1996), p. 167.

⁹ C. Schen, *Charity and Lay Piety in Reformation London, 1500-1620* (Woodbridge, 2002), p. 126.

¹⁰ S. Brigden, *London and the Reformation* (1989), p. 20.

¹¹ P. Collinson, *The Puritan Character: polemics and polarities in early seventeenth century English Culture* (Pasadena, 1989), p. 11; Walsham, *Charitable Hatred*; Lake, 'Charitable Christian Hatred', pp. 166-7.

¹² OED sv. 'charity'. Archer, *Pursuit*, pp. 93, 98; Lake, 'Charitable Christian Hatred', pp. 152, 154.

the problems of poverty and covetousness together, claiming to provide better and more comprehensive relief than what they cast as a shamefully inadequate monastic provision, especially when combined with the windfall of personal bequests that could be directed towards the living once the abandonment of Purgatory nullified bequests seeking to speed the souls of the dead.¹³ In the shadow of the effects of joint calamities of plague and dearth, the poor lost faith in the governors of the City and began to question whether their suffering was visited on them by God or by poor governance and lack of charity.¹⁴ Practical predestinarians adhering to a solifidian soteriology would have none of the reciprocal work-based expectation of prayers to intercede for their soul, orated by the recipients of their charitable benefactions that might foster relief to as many individuals as possible.¹⁵ Praise rather than prayers from those the aldermanic elite governed might flow in thankfulness for the charity of their wives and widows, but the threat of violence when charity was seen to be limited by considerations beyond the relief of the poor stalked the elite in times of desperate need.

This chapter, together with the next, shows that godly ideas about salvation and election were far from a barrier to elite women's generous charitable giving. Need was ever increasing but the adaptation of traditional forms of giving to more measured godly iterations was flexible. Historians sense contradiction and contemporaries saw hypocrisy where even the godliest ministers earnestly saw none.¹⁶ The ideal endured, of a City community and the many communities of parishes, wards, companies and households within it, living 'in charity'. Londoners still promised to behave to one another in accordance with Christian values, none more so than the governing elite.¹⁷ Discrimination in charitable giving was an expression of

¹³ Brigden, *London and the Reformation*, pp. 475-8, 481.

¹⁴ Ibid., pp. 470; D. Palliser, *The Age of Elizabeth: England under the later Tudors, 1547-1603* (1983), p. 132; W. Hunt, *The Puritan moment: the coming of revolution in an English county* (1983), pp. 198-9, 235-8, 250.

¹⁵ J. Thomson, 'Clergy and Laity in London, 1376-1531', Oxford Univ. D. Phil thesis (1960), pp. 149, 156, 245-6; I. Ben Amos, *The Culture of Giving: Informal Support and Gift Exchange in early modern England* (Cambridge, 2008), p. 5.

¹⁶ H. Smith, *The Poore Mans Teares Opened in a Sermon* (1592), p. 13; Collinson, *Puritan Character*, p. 11; Lake, *The Boxmaker's Revenge*, p. 21; L. Dixon, *Practical Predestinarians in England, c. 1590-1640* (Farnham, 2014), pp. 218, 244.

¹⁷ Brigden, *London and the Reformation*, p. 26; K. Wrightson, *English Society, 1580-1680* (1982), p. 51.

responsible use of wealth, often expressed through their charity in life and in wills.¹⁸ The civic status of aldermen's wives shaped their charitable giving, informing a sense of responsibility, an understanding of need, and an attitude of care in giving. Women's charitable generosity reached beyond the isolated desire to refute criticism, or to further godly social control, as a deeply felt Christian duty for those in a position to exercise the charitable arm of their vocation effectively as Christ had taught.

Communities overlapped in the City, and elite women's charity reveals that they took their charitable role in neighbourhood, ward, company and City seriously. The parish was the primary unit of association for Londoners, who described their residence and their identity by parish in their wills.¹⁹ The household has been relatively overlooked as an outlet for charity, and hospitality as an expression of charitable feeling and almsgiving in London has not received the attention it deserves. These were gendered arenas of giving which held relative importance for women.²⁰ Household charity and hospitality were widely practised and valued by elite women of widely differing means, as a meaningful disposal of small but invaluable sums or goods to the poor in their household or neighbourhood whose needs were intimately known, particularly women.²¹ Previous chapters have indicated that charitable feeling in a community might wax very cold indeed. This chapter seeks to balance that analysis with evidence both qualitative and quantitative of the extent of elite women's giving in London. The sample of women includes wealthy testators alongside those whose less notable contributions represented a widow's mite, but who gave in large numbers, to the known poor as well as to strangers, with warmth as well

¹⁸ Archer, *Pursuit*, p. 53; L. Abray, *The People's Reformation: magistrates, clergy and commons in Strasbourg, 1500-1598* (Oxford, 1985), pp. 178, 151, 187-8; P. Lake, *Moderate Puritans and the Elizabethan Church* (Cambridge, 1982), p. 145; F. Heal, 'The Idea of Hospitality in Early Modern England', *Pe&P*, 102 (1984), p. 73.

¹⁹ Archer, pp. 82-4; J. Boulton, *Neighbourhood and Society: a London Suburb in the Seventeenth Century* (Cambridge, 1987), pp. 228-31; Schen, *Charity and Lay Piety*, Ch.4; J. Colson, 'Local Communities in Fifteenth Century London: Craft, Parish and Neighbourhood', London Univ., Royal Holloway PhD thesis, (2011), p. 33; Ben-Amos, *The Culture of Giving*, p. 64.

²⁰ F. Heal, *Hospitality in early modern England* (Oxford, 1990), pp. 179-83.

²¹ A. Erickson, *Women and Property in early modern England* (1993), p. 228.

as discrimination.²² Women's sensitivity to need and their talent for creating effective bequests was valued in the City, where praise of aldermen's wives placed emphasis on household charity and its particular value to women.²³

The idealisation of elite women's charity in the public sphere in London restricted women's giving by channelling it into expected outlets, which limited women's freedom of action. Yet praise of elite female charity also praised cooperation between spouses, who were often effective charitable partners.²⁴ Husbands and wives worked together to establish charitable foundations that a widow might perfect. Widows were generally able to pursue their charitable instincts with independence, often choosing to sustain their spouses' parishes or charities alongside their own endeavours.

This chapter considers how gender, religion and civic status shaped the charity of aldermen's wives. Mercantile hospitality in London and their rural communities was criticised and correspondence shows women at the heart of household management. A household book, written by an elite mercantile woman in St Michael Bassishaw, who was not an alderman's wife, stands proxy for the aldermen's wives who were her kin, friends, neighbours, and guests, in a study of sociability, hospitality and neighbourhood. This section also uses related wills, parish records and maps to situate a woman's charity in her community.

From considering the place of one elite woman in her City household in the first section, the second empirical section considers the practice of charity within the elite household using the sample of aldermen's wives' wills quantitatively and qualitatively. Women's charity within the household was an important source of relief, and it was personal, gendered and conditional

²² B. Hanawalt, 'The Widow's Mite: Provisions for Medieval London Widows', in L. Mirrer (ed.), *Upon my husband's death: Widows in the Literature and Histories of Medieval Europe* (Michigan, 1992), 21-45.

²³ J. Hect, 'Women, memory and will-making in Elizabethan England' in B. Gordon and P. Marshall (eds.), *The Place of the Dead: Death and Remembrance in late Medieval and early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, 2000), pp. 122, 152.

²⁴ M. White, 'Power Couples and Women Writers: the Public voices of Dorcas and Richard Martin, and Anne and Hugh Dowriche' in R. Voaden and D. Wolfthal (eds.), *Framing the Family: Narrative and Representation in the early medieval and early modern periods* (Tempe, 2005), p. 119.

on loyalty. Funeral sermons, verse epitaphs and lives that show this type of charity was valued in the City's female elite, particularly for its importance to women.

i) Hospitality

Was hospitality part of the charity that the poor of the parish might hope to receive from their wealthier neighbours? Hospitality was idealised as an important part of charity, and though its origins and fullest expression lay with country gentlemen, it was enjoined, valued and expected even in the urban environment.²⁵ Hospitality was expected to reduce social conflict, and demonstrate the spirit of the City to the world.²⁶ In London the poor were reliant on wages, even as the labour pool was flooded by migration and London's population, which burgeoned in spite of plague crises in 1592, 1603, 1625 and 1636 from c. 70,000 in 1550, to c.180,000 in 1580, c. 200,000 in 1600 and c.400,000 in 1650.²⁷ The poor were priced out of rising grain prices as supplies dwindled following the four successive poor harvests of 1594 and 1597, which resulted in dearth in 1596-7. Between 1500-1640 grain prices rose sixfold, so that by 1620 a day's labour, if you could get it, might buy 1/3 to 1/2 of what it would have done in 1500. London experienced a crisis of famine, starvation and its related diseases 1594-7. By 1596 grain prices rose to a record 83% above normal, and dropped only to 64% the following year, when inner city burials were almost double that of the lowest mortality in over a decade.²⁸ These crises, accompanied by a rise in criminal indictments and fear of riots, particularly concerning the urban poor brought forth the poor law legislation in 1598-1601.²⁹ Hospitality was drawn upon in London as an effective means of almsgiving and relief, amid fears for the dwindling grain supply to London in 1586-7 after a poor harvest, which would be repeated in the summer

²⁵ Heal, 'The Idea of Hospitality', p. 69.

²⁶ Heal, *Hospitality*, p. 303.

²⁷ R. Finlay, *Population and the Metropolis: the demography of London, 1580-1650* (Cambridge, 1981), pp. xi, 6, 9, 17; Palliser, *Age of Elizabeth*, p. 157, 189, 191.

²⁸ A. Appleby, *Famine in Tudor and Stuart England* (Liverpool, 1978), Ch. 8; W. Hoskins, 'Harvest Fluctuations and English History, 1480-1619', *Agricultural History Review*, 12 (1964), pp. 38-9.

²⁹ J. Sharpe, 'Social strain and social dislocation, 1585-1603', in J. Guy (ed.), *The Reign of Elizabeth I* (Cambridge, 1995), pp. 194-7, 201, 207-8; Palliser, *Age of Elizabeth*, p. 311.

of 1596. In 1596-7 charitable collections of money saved through fasts relieved the poor.³⁰ Grain prices are a useful gauge for the historian though they can hardly plumb the depths of the suffering these crises produced in London.³¹ Records kept by the clerks at St Botolph without Aldgate which recorded mortality in that impoverished parish show that desperate need for relief was glaringly evident in the City during the acute scarcity 1594-8, as the corpses of vagrants, young men and cripples were found on the streets, in the doorways where they sheltered, and in haylofts where they slept.³² That hospitality was never a legal obligation but a voluntary moral obligation heightened the cultural and social expectation of urban hospitality.³³

Such was the expectation that some felt hospitality in the City was lacking, as kinship, business and services connections muddled the waters, and criticism of the state of charity in general grew from the 1580s until falling off in the late 1630s.³⁴ Citizen landowners in the counties were absentee landlords, offering their tenants none of the hospitality of the traditional resident landowning gentry, yet according to the moralists neither did their profits go towards relief in the City. The preacher Thomas Adams's remarks in his sermon *The white deuil, or The hypocrite vncased* (1613) were direct: 'You are sick at London of one disease (I speake to you settled Citizens)'. The replacement of hospitality with luxury was a matter of shame, an un-English and un-Christian subversion of traditional English responsible governance:

Our monstrous pride, that turnes hospitallity into a dumbe shew: that which fed the belly of hunger, now feedes the eie of lust: akers of land are metamorphised into trunkes of apparell; and the soule of charity is transmigrated into the body of brauery: *this is wast*: we make our selues the compounds of all Nations: we borow of *Spaine, Italy, Germany, France, Turkie* and all; that death when he robs an Englishman, robs all Countries: where lies the wealth of England?...on Citizens tables, in Vsurers coffers...³⁵

³⁰ S. Hindle 'Dearth, Fasting and Alms: The Campaign for General Hospitality in Late Elizabethan England', *Pe&P*, 172 (2001), pp. 50-3; A. Beier, R. Finlay (eds.), *London 1500-1700: the making of the metropolis* (1986), p. 69.

³¹ D. Glass, and D. Eversley, 'Demographic Crisis in France, from the sixteenth to eighteenth century', in their *Population in history: essays in historical demography* (1965), p. 516.

³² T. Forbes, *Chronicle from Aldgate: Life and Death in Shakespeare's London* (1971), pp. xvii, xix, 3, 77-9, 120, 175.

³³ Archer, *Pursuit*, pp. 54, 188, 198; Hindle, 'Dearth, Fasting and Alms', pp. 46-7; Heal, 'Idea of Hospitality', p. 47; R. Grassby, *Kinship and Capitalism: marriage, family and business in the English speaking world, 1580-1740* (Cambridge, 2001), pp. 260-1.

³⁴ Heal, 'Idea of Hospitality', pp. 80-1.

³⁵ T. Adams, *The white deuil, or The hypocrite vncased* (1613), pp. 17-18, 26.

Yet a reputation for hospitality was important to the civic elite, not least as a means of articulating their authority and its responsible use but also to attract deference from the poor.³⁶ Traditionally, hospitality was intended to relieve the poor of the local community or neighbourhood, but these terms in themselves are slippery.³⁷ What did people have to do to be a community? In work on fifteenth-century London, neighbours are defined as those who shared social relationships concentrated within a local area. The 'density' of social interactions 'fostered by coincidence of location' is used to measure neighbourhood, and daily interaction and integration as a measure of community.³⁸ If these interactions included hospitality, then participation in it might define a community. Ian Archer's definition of community as 'the sense of people of different social statuses doing things together' encompasses those worshipping together, as well as those who ate together.³⁹ Who then might that include? Historians have been tentative about the problems of defining neighbourhood as parish. It is a meaningful definition and the one referenced by contemporaries when denoting the community of which they felt themselves to be primarily a part.⁴⁰

But could the parish really be the boundary of community and neighbourhood in so small a unit as a parish within the walls? And, if so, who ought to be relieved?⁴¹ The ideal of traditional hospitality enjoined the entertainment of 'all comers, regardless of status or acquaintance'.⁴² In practice it was accepted that with hospitality as with any other type of

³⁶ L. Stone, *An Open Elite? England 1540-1880* (Oxford, 1984), pp. 203-14; F. Heal and C. Holmes, *The Gentry in England and Wales, 1500-1700* (Basingstoke, 1994), pp. 282-9, and Ch 7; Boulton, *Neighbourhood and Society*, p. 138; Heal, 'Idea of Hospitality', pp. 66-7.

³⁷ Boulton, *Neighbourhood and Society*, pp. 228-31; Colson, 'Local Communities', p. 19; Heal, 'Idea of Hospitality', p. 67.

³⁸ Colson, 'Local Communities', pp. 18, 20; Boulton, *Neighbourhood and Society*, p. 291.

³⁹ Archer, *Pursuit*, p. 93; Brigden, 'Religion and Social Obligation', pp. 71-2; K. Wrightson, 'The Decline of Neighbourliness Revisted', in N. Jones, D. Woof, D. (eds.), *Local Identities in late medieval and early modern England* (Basingstoke, 2007), p. 29.

⁴⁰ Colson, 'Local Communities', pp. 20, 33; Ben-Amos, *Culture of Giving*, pp. 64-5; Archer, *Pursuit*, pp. 82-4; S. Rappaport, *Worlds Within Worlds: structures of life in sixteenth-century London* (Cambridge, 1989), p. 215; Wrightson, *English Society*, p. 40.

⁴¹ Wrightson, 'Decline of Neighbourliness Revisted', pp. 179-206.

⁴² Heal, 'Idea of Hospitality', pp. 67, 78.

almsgiving, resources were finite and therefore the recipients of hospitality were prioritised. Beyond the immediate family, John Downname and William Gouge discouraged indiscriminate hospitality and encouraged discrimination towards godly brethren of good moral conduct whose sociability would be strengthening to the community defined as the saints.⁴³ Stephen Denison praised Elizabeth Juxon's preference for the company of poor spiritual kindred over wealthy hypocrites or carnal sinners.⁴⁴ Priorities in hospitality beyond this were also accepted that had less to do with hospitality than sociability: the poor and needy, both known and stranger, coming at the end of a long list after kin and neighbours and friends of one's own social status. Hospitality everywhere heavily featured neighbours, tenants and social superiors, but London was accused of a more narrowly selective hospitality.⁴⁵

Did hospitality continue to be an important part of urban charity, and for whom? Was hospitality part of poor relief and social obligation at all, or had it migrated completely towards elite sociability? If hospitality was in decline or totally transfigured, what effect did that have on charitable giving more widely, if daily contact with those of a lower social statuses suffered?⁴⁶

These questions pertain particularly to elite women, because charity was gendered. Hospitality as part of domestic management was the area of expertise of wives, and widows.⁴⁷ A well run system of hospitality — thrifty, yet generous — reflected on the elite and especially the aldermanic household as a model of responsible governance and particularly on a woman's capabilities, as one of the most public ways women could maintain and acquire a reputation.⁴⁸ Felicity Heal has rightly noted that 'widows ...were most often remarked for their sustained generosity' as they were 'in a greater command of the resources of her household than a married

⁴³ Ibid., (1984), p. 83; S. Denison, *The plea of the poore. Or A treatise of beneficence and almes-deeds teaching how these Christian duties are rightly to be performed* (1616), pp. 128-38; *A learned and very useful commentary on the whole epistle to the Hebrews* (1655), Ch.6, Sect 71.

⁴⁴ Denison, *The monument*, pp. 102-3; Lake, *Boxmaker's Revenge*, pp. 39-42.

⁴⁵ Heal, 'Idea of Hospitality', p. 67; Boulton, *Neighbourhood and Society*, pp. 138-9.

⁴⁶ Archer, *Stability*, pp. 92-7.

⁴⁷ Heal, *Hospitality*, p. 179.

⁴⁸ Ibid., pp. 182-3.

woman' and some were so committed to hospitality that 'they risked conflict with a new spouse on remarriage'.⁴⁹ Yet hospitality as a collaborative endeavour between spouses also allowed women to take the lead as wives.

Mercantile women's letters survive in very small numbers but those from Mary, Lady Cockayne to her husband Alderman Sir William are full of the household business which she oversaw. Their City mansion, Cockayne House on Broad Street, was destroyed in a fire on 12 November 1623, and Mary removed with their children to their estate at Combe Nevill in Kingston-upon-Thames while Sir William remained at Austin Friars. Having received his letter of 5 December 1623, she replied immediately. Their possessions and food stocks were lost in the fire, and economies were needed. Even clothes needed to be remade; 'all Janes things were burnt'. Mary regarded domestic management as her responsibility and her expertise, and thus she adapted to her circumstances:

for our household expenses here I doe what lies in my power to lessen it and wilby Gods helpe soe continue; and I doubt not but in good time god wilbe pleased to sende you such meanes as you wilbe sufficiently satisfied as fformerly; which unto us all wilbe a greate deale of happiness.

On the difficult matter of letting domestic staff go, Mary informed Sir William of the necessary action she had already taken, listing their servants. Mary made her decision according to her appraisal of their talents, giving them fair warning of their dismissal on 21 December.

considering our greate charge of house keeping I have taken this course and I have warned 14 to provide them selves other waies against St Thomas day to say of men;...William Cocayne and his man shalbe dispatched away by Thursday if he will come to work, hee hath bene att work butt 2 dayes this fortnight; more of womenkinde I doe intende to dismissee by that day...as for John Harris if he hath not his perfect health hee is not desirous to be troublesome unto us and for Mr Clayton I hope you will be pleased to consider otherwise of him; hee hath at present 3 daughters in hand; and I make noe question but by his good service wee shall reape a far greater benefitt then the change of him comes unto...

⁴⁹ Ibid., pp. 180-1.

Mary informed Sir William of the cost of goods in evidence of her thriftiness and for his approval of the outlay, although she had already made the arrangements both for the Combe household and for Sir William's temporary residence in Austin Friars.

ffor prices of corne I have enquired of Maurice who resolves mee as follows: the best wheat 5s9d per bushel and soe as in goodnesse rye of the best sort 4s6d 4s4d and some for 4s2d:...by the barge I have...my Cousen Susan's gowne; to morrow by the barge I doe intende to sende you such linnen as you have written ffor and bowles and cuppes as many as we have redye made ffor you; by this bearer I doe send you a coller of braune....⁵⁰

Household management brought the community into women's households and embedded women in their local community.⁵¹

Household books are rare survivals, particularly for the merchant class and without such sources, as Felicity Heal has lamented, 'of individual householders, little can be said.'⁵² In St Michael Bassishaw, a tiny parish and the City's smallest ward, a rich Clothworker's wife kept a detailed household book, of which her records for the year 25 March 1594 to 6 March 1595 are extant.⁵³ This book's author Anne Trappes Blount née Birnand was not an alderman's wife, but her household was assessed at £100 in 1582, and her kinship, friendship and neighbourhood connections to the aldermanic elite of the sample place her in the same milieu.⁵⁴ This unique source provides an invaluable opportunity to illuminate elite women's hospitality in London at

⁵⁰ NRO, C3099: Lady Mary Cockayne to Sir William Cocaknye, 5 Dec 1623.

⁵¹ E. Hubbard, *City women: money, sex, and the social order in early modern London* (Oxford, 2012), Ch. 5.

⁵² Heal, *Hospitality*, p. 306.

⁵³ BL, MS Cotton Vespasian FXVI; Finlay, *Population and the Metropolis*, pp. 168-72.

⁵⁴ TNA, E179/146/339d. Anne married her last husband Sir John Egerton in Bassishaw in December 1602.

a time when charity was so needful and so maligned, by focusing on one household in one neighbourhood. Though the Blount household book has caught the notice of historians, where it has advanced beyond a footnote, failure to identify its author or the location of the household has so far limited understanding.⁵⁵

Anne was the daughter and heiress of Robert Birnand of Knaresborough, Yorkshire and Anne née Norton. Her first husband was Francis Trappes, originally of Nidd, three and a half miles from Knaresborough, but also a goldsmith of London. The Trappes were an old City family and its women were famously paragons of charity.⁵⁶ Through her first marriage, Anne's mother-in-law was Joan Trappes and her sister-in-law was Joyce Frankland, benefactresses of Gonville and Caius and Emmanuel College, Cambridge, and Lincoln College and Brasenose College, Oxford.⁵⁷ Through Joan Trappes, who was born a Crispe, Anne gained kinship to another aldermanic family. Anne was pregnant with their sixth child when Francis died in 1574. She married as her second husband William Blount, originally of Kent, a wealthy member of the Clothworkers' Company of the parish of St Michael Bassishaw, where they resided and were parishioners.⁵⁸ William was also the Keeper of Woodstreet Counter for poor debtors in the neighbouring parish of St Mary Magdalen Milk Street.⁵⁹ Poverty might not be far away in adjacent neighbourhoods; in 1593 Anne's neighbouring parish of St Mary Aldermanbury experienced such need for charitable relief of the poor that its vestry imposed a special rate.⁶⁰ Yet the small intramural parishes in which Anne socialised were generally wealthy. Elizabeth Billingsley left money to the poor of St Mary Magdalen Milk Street in 1607 'being not many nor

⁵⁵ Grassby, *Kinship and Capitalism*, p. 175; Ben-Amos, *Culture of Giving*, pp. 161-3. The British Library catalogue erroneously identifies the household as situated in the neighbouring parish of St Mary Magdalen Milk Street. I have identified Anne Blount through comparison of internal evidence with genealogical and parish records.

⁵⁶ *The Diary of Henry Machyn - Citizen and Merchant-Taylor of London (1550-1563)*, ed. J.G., Nichols (1848), p. 231; J. Stow, *A Survey of London* (1633) p. 325.

⁵⁷ T. Cooper, *Citizen Portrait: Portrait Painting and the Urban Elite of Tudor and Jacobean England and Wales* (2012), pp. 45, 105.

⁵⁸ *The A to Z of Elizabethan London* (eds.) A. Prockter, R. Taylor and J. Fisher (1979), Agas Map N3.

⁵⁹ TNA, C2/Eliz/D6/49; Agas Map M4.

⁶⁰ Beier, Finlay (eds.), *London 1500-1700*, p. 69.

greatly distressed with povertie yet in token of remembrance', in the expectation that the parish had sufficient resources to relieve its own poor.⁶¹

Anne's books make possible an account of quotidian exchanges within a tiny parish; elite women had daily contact with a variety of their neighbours of lower social status through the activities that facilitated the provision of hospitality.⁶² Domestic management centring on hospitality was a skill City women taught to their daughters. Anne Blount's book is in her own hand until early February 1594/5 when she began directing a servant to take notes.⁶³ As Anne wrote up her accounts for the third week of December 1594, her daughter Dorothy, watching her, took a pen and scribbled 'D' and 'Dorothe' and 'ssspice' and 'Dorothe neccst' all over two folios.⁶⁴ Although it has often been noted that aldermen had practical contact with their neighbours of lower social status as part of their duties towards the ward from which they were elected, elite women's contact with their community has been overlooked because it is often impossible to ascertain. Anne Blount's household book accounts for everything spent daily that pertained to household expenses. This included the coordination of victualling that was central to hospitality, as well as maintenance of the garden house and garden in St Giles Cripplegate that ensured there was a fresh supply of vegetables, and the upkeep of the fabric of the main house in Bassishaw.⁶⁵ Anne recorded by name those who received payment for performing these tasks, from her own servants whose wages she paid out to those from beyond the household who supplied goods and services to it. A comparison of the lists of servants with those who sold goods suggests that those who were permanently employed in the household also supplied it with foods. Dorothy Cooke, a permanent servant, was also a supplier of radishes, which were regularly eaten in the household. Those who were not permanent servants were

⁶¹ TNA, PROB 11/ 109/33, fo. 16v.

⁶² E. Longfellow, 'Public, Private, and the Household in Early Seventeenth-Century England', *JBS*, 45 (2006), pp. 327-8.

⁶³ BL, MS Cotton Vespasian FXVI, fo. 26r.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, fols. 21r-22r.

⁶⁵ TNA, PROB 11/131, fo. 156. This was probably because her social schedule of giving and receiving hospitality was so full. See Fig. 8.

often referred to simply by their Christian name, such as ‘Oliver the Gardner and his partner’ who were paid for ‘2 daies woorke a piece at the Garden’ in May 1594.⁶⁶

A further comparison of names suggests that the kin of Anne’s permanent servants were preferred as suppliers or carriers to the household.⁶⁷ William, Richard, and Kit Hudson were Anne’s permanent household servants.⁶⁸ William supplied the house with a ‘quarter of browne thread’ in March 1594, the family supplied ‘ale had at divers times’ in April, and in May William brought ‘radishes’ and ‘a newe Pipkin (an earthenware pot for cooking over coals) to the house while Kit supplied sack.’⁶⁹

A comparison of the names of servants and those supplying the household against the records of taxation for Bassishaw ward and the parish registers of St Michael Bassishaw indicates that Anne sourced victuals and services almost exclusively from her neighbours in the parish, tiny though it was. The Hudsons were a parish family.⁷⁰ When Anne needed ‘ribbon of divers sortes’ for clothing or upholstery, it was ‘bought of Mr Hale’, parishioner and tailor.⁷¹ When her daughter required a tutor, Anne paid fellow parishioner Nicholas Sturt ‘for teaching Judith’.⁷² When Anne sought ‘household bread’ she bought it from within her own parish, from Mr Robinson — James Robinson her fellow parishioner and the local baker.⁷³ When Anne needed work to be done on her garden in St Giles Cripplegate, she hired her neighbours in St Michael Bassishaw, ‘Mr [Nicholas] Parker’ and ‘Parkers son [Peter]’, ‘twoo daies making the Alley at the Garden’.⁷⁴ Dorothy Cooke, permanent servant and supplier of radishes, was also

⁶⁶ BL, MS Cotton Vespasian FXVI, fols. 1r, 4v.

⁶⁷ Hubbard, *City women*, p. 13.

⁶⁸ Ibid., fo. 10r.

⁶⁹ Ibid., fols. 2r-v, 5r-v.

⁷⁰ *The Registers of St Mary Magdalen Milk Street and St Michael Bassishaw, London*, ed. A. W. Hughes Clarke, (83 vols., Publications of the Harleian Society, Register Ser., 1942-4), vols. 72-74, *Parts 1 and 2, Part 1*, pp. 86, 107, 114.

⁷¹ BL, MS Cotton Vespasian FXVI, fo. 2r; *Registers of...St Michael Bassishaw*, (1942-4), *Part 1*, p. 85.

⁷² Ibid., p.86; ; BL, MS Cotton Vespasian FXVI, fo. 3v.

⁷³ Ibid., fo. 2v; *Registers of...St Michael Bassishaw*, (1942-4), *Part 1*, p. 69.

⁷⁴ Ibid., pp.116, 172, 174; BL, MS Cotton Vespasian FXVI, fols. 4v, 9r.

Anne's fellow parishioner.⁷⁵ Anne also chose to buy from her most vulnerable neighbours, such as 'broomes' and 'sweete soape' from 'Mother Goodridge', a widow of St Michael Bassishaw.⁷⁶

Anne's hospitality extended to her neighbours who supplied these goods and services.⁷⁷ One of the Hudsons' kinswomen, 'Mistress Hudson', was Anne's guest for dinner in April and June 1594, while 'Mr Hudson' joined her for supper in August.⁷⁸ Anne's neighbours Joan and John Humphrey were her guests for the evening meal of supper on Sunday 8 September 1594.⁷⁹ John was a parishioner and householder of Bassishaw ward, of the middling sort and was assessed at £10.⁸⁰ Joan was Anne's guest but also a supplier of fresh fruit and vegetables, receiving payment for 'oranges and radishes' in May 1594.⁸¹ Hospitality towards those who brought goods to the house was often *ad hoc*. John Tiffin, a 'cooke' and parishioner assessed at £4, and his wife Jane brought artichokes to the house on 19 June 1594, and stayed for supper. Later that month John was paid for 'diverse work', and was a frequent guest, dining at the house over fifteen times.⁸² These though were not the poor of the parish.

Anne invited neighbours to dine at the house with whom she was keen to maintain a relationship. Mr Baker, a parishioner and cooper, dined at the house though he was not required for work.⁸³ Anne entertained two local workmen and their wives, who worked in related trades together on 14 September 1594; 'Mr [John] Lee Carpender [carpenter]' and Mr [Randall]

⁷⁵ *Registers of...St Michael Bassishaw, (1942-4), Part 1.*, p. 121.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 162; BL, MS Cotton Vespasian FXVI, fols. 2v, 3r.

⁷⁷ B. Capp, *When gossips meet: women, family, and neighbourhood in early Modern England* (Oxford, 2003), pp. 56-7; C. Muldrew, *The economy of obligation: the culture of credit and social relations in early modern England* (Basingstoke, 1998), pp. 124-7.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, fo. 3v, 7r, 13v.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, fo. 15r.

⁸⁰ *Registers of...St Michael Bassishaw, (1942-4), Part 1.*, p. 165; TNA, E179/146/339d.

⁸¹ BL, MS Cotton Vespasian FXVI, fo. 5v.

⁸² *Registers of...St Michael Bassishaw, (1942-4), Part 1.*, pp. 79, 119, 174; TNA, E179/146/339d; BL, MS Cotton Vespasian FXVI, fols. 6r, 9v.

⁸³ *Registers of...St Michael Bassishaw, (1942-4), Part 1.*, p. 103; TNA, E179/146/339d; BL, MS Cotton Vespasian FXVI, fols. 11r, 16r.

Clerkson' plasterer, all of St Michael Bassishaw, though there is no record of her using their services at this time.⁸⁴

Anne formed connections with the neighbours she invited to dine at her table, including women of lower social status. Dorothy Lepton was a parishioner, and was paid for 'three daies woorke' on 28 March 1594. Anne always recorded married couples, when they dined together, by the husband's surname 'et uxor', but noted 'Dorothy Lepton and her husband' at dinner with her on 2 April. Dorothy was clearly something of a personal companion though she was also in Anne's employ; in May Anne paid 'Dorothie Lepton for attending when I took physic'.⁸⁵ Anne remembered her neighbour Elizabeth Satterthwaite as 'my loving friend' in her will of 1619, the only woman to be referred to as such.⁸⁶ Elizabeth was the wife of William, 'brickler' of St Michael Bassishaw, and they both joined Anne for supper on 29 April 1594, while on 2 May William was paid for lime and 500 bricks for repairs to the house and garden house, and two days later for sixteen days' work of his own and seven days' work 'of his labourer'.⁸⁷

Despite the intermingling with business and service relationships, hospitality in St Michael Bassishaw remained reciprocal, and the sociability of the elite with their neighbours of more modest means took place in those houses too.⁸⁸ Anne dined 'at Mr Humphreys' twice; on the first occasion in the evening of 4 April 1594, Joan supplying Anne with groceries just over a month later, and on the second occasion for the lunchtime meal of dinner on Sunday 15 September 1594, the Sunday after they had dined with Anne.⁸⁹ Anne's daughter Sara's tutor was 'Mr [Edmond] Iverson', of St Michael Bassishaw, who was given dinner when he was paid for his quarterly service on 4 April 1594. He was a frequent guest, dining with his son the following

⁸⁴ *Registers of...St Michael Bassishaw, (1942-4), Part 1.*, pp. 81, 161; TNA, E179/146/339d; BL, MS Cotton Vespasian FXVI, fo. 6r, 9v.

⁸⁵ *Registers of...St Michael Bassishaw, (1942-4), Part 1.*, p. 118; BL, MS Cotton Vespasian FXVI, fols. 2r, 2v, 5r.

⁸⁶ TNA, PROB 11/134, fo. 332v.

⁸⁷ *Registers of...St Michael Bassishaw, (1942-4), Part 1.*, p. 121; BL, MS Cotton Vespasian FXVI, fo. 4v.

⁸⁸ K. Wrightson, *Poverty and Piety in an English Village: Terling, 1525-1700* (1995), p. 108.

⁸⁹ BL, MS Cotton Vespasian FXVI, fols. 2v, 15r.

month, and even ‘Mr Iversons man’ was given lunch in June. In July Anne took dinner ‘at Mr Iversons’.⁹⁰

Anne certainly had sociable contact with her neighbours of lower status through hospitality, and to an extent her guests of the parish were admitted to the house at the same meals. Here conviviality comingled with alms-giving; hospitality as aid and sociability binding neighbours together.⁹¹ Parish people mixed with Anne’s kin, particularly her daughter and son-in-law Ursula and Lewis Prowde, who were also parishioners, assessed at £6 in 1599 and at £20 in 1600.⁹² On Sunday 8 September 1594 they all ate with their neighbours John and Joan Humphrey, Anne’s suppliers, guests and hosts, John Tiffin the cooke, and ‘Guy the Sexton’.⁹³ Gentlemen dined in mixed company at the Blounts’; Mr [Hugh] Mantell, Guildhall Clerk of Works assessed at £10 in 1582 dined with another gentleman, Mr Francis Tillney on 13 January 1595, alongside John Humphrey.⁹⁴ Parishioners who shared meals at Anne’s house might otherwise have been unlikely to have dined together. On 1 April 1594 Ursula Prowde joined her mother and Mr Hutchinson, ‘parson of the parish’, for dinner with Dorothy Lepton, Anne’s trusted attendant, and her husband.⁹⁵ Among Anne’s most frequent guests were Richard Wilbraham, Common Serjeant of the City (who had special responsibility for City orphans), and his wife Elizabeth, both parishioners in St Michael Bassishaw, assessed at £10 in 1598, with whom she dined more than ten times, either alone or together.⁹⁶ The Wilbrahams were often entertained with kin as much as with other parishioners, although these groups overlapped.⁹⁷

Yet the extension of hospitality and cross status sociability had limits. The only parishioner who was probably poor to whom Anne extended hospitality was ‘Goodwife

⁹⁰ *Registers of...St Michael Bassishaw, (1942-4), Part 1.*, p. 124; BL, MS Cotton Vespasian FXVI, fols. 2v, 6v, 7r, 11v.

⁹¹ Bennett, ‘Conviviality and Charity’, pp. 21-3.

⁹² TNA, E179/146/383, 399d.

⁹³ BL, MS Cotton Vespasian FXVI, fo. 15r.

⁹⁴ TNA, E179/146/339d; *Registers of...St Michael Bassishaw, (1942-4), Part 1.*, p. 170; BL, MS Cotton Vespasian FXVI, fo. 44r.

⁹⁵ BL, MS Cotton Vespasian FXVI, fo. 2v; *Registers of...St Michael Bassishaw, (1942-4), Part 1.*, p. 166.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 166, 175; E179/146/372e.

⁹⁷ BL, MS Cotton Vespasian FXVI, fols. 4r-v.

Francis', who was given supper once in June 1594, and there were no other guests invited to supper with her.⁹⁸ The normal means of showing hospitality to the poor was by the provision of 'broken meats', a practice which these accounts do not reveal.

Anne rarely extended her hospitality to guests of a lower social status than her own from beyond the parish of St Michael Bassishaw. The only identifiable instance of this is the presence of 'Mr Hutton' at dinner on 23 June 1594: John Hutton, Anne's tenant in her messuage in St Mary Axe, ate with Anne's son, her daughter and son-in-law, and John Humphrey, Anne's neighbour, guest and host. The only strangers to whom Anne's hospitality extended were guests of other guests who were previously unknown to her, and this happened only once when a couple brought 'one...with them'.⁹⁹

The group of Anne's guests who were the most frequent and abundant at her table were her kin, only a few of whom were parishioners.¹⁰⁰ Anne's children, from her Trappes and her Blount families were her most frequent guests at every meal, but her hospitality extended to remote kin from her natal and marital families from all over the country, and all her kin were commonly entertained with her modest neighbours. Anne's daughter Ursula, a parishioner, and her daughter and son-in-law Mary and Richard Cowper shared supper with Francis Langley, a local haberdasher assessed at £3 in 1600.¹⁰¹ John Tiffin, Guy the sexton, and John Humphrey dined with Anne's son-in-law Richard Cowper, her Blount step-son-in-law Clement Whitfield, her Blount brother-in-law William Atkinson, and her husband's cousin's wife. Anne's distant natal kinsman Mr William Birnand dined with Ursula, Dorothy Lepton and John Tiffin when he came to stay in May 1594.¹⁰² Anne often entertained very remote natal kin. William Ingleby was related by her uncle's marriage on her paternal side, and Sampson Ingleby was cousin from

⁹⁸ BL, MS Cotton Vespasian FXVI, fo. 7v.

⁹⁹ BL, MS Cotton Vespasian FXVI, fo. 14r.

¹⁰⁰ Wrightson, *English Society*, p. 45.

¹⁰¹ BL, MS Cotton Vespasian FXVI, fo. 2v; *Registers of...St Michael Bassishaw, (1942-4), Part 1.*, p. 92; E179/146/399d.

¹⁰² BL, MS Cotton Vespasian FXVI, fo. 5r.

the same family. Sir Robert Stapleton, described by William Camden ‘a gentleman for person, address, and skill in languages, said to have had no superior in England nor equal, except Sir Philip Sydney’ (who was William Blount’s former employer), was the father of Anne’s cousin’s wife, through an uncle on her maternal side. ‘Mr Slingsby’ who was also entertained was kin of Anne’s stepmother.¹⁰³

The focus of Anne’s hospitality to those beyond her kin was her own parish, but among parishioners the most frequent and the most abundant guests, and hosts, were not Anne’s neighbours of lower status but her social equals among the civic elite. Anne’s schedule of elite sociability through hospitality was relentless; she hardly took a meal at home without guests. If Anne was not entertaining one of her wealthiest neighbours, she was at their house enjoying their hospitality. Anne’s neighbours included three godly aldermen’s wives, Alice Elkin Owen, Anne Halliday, and Katharine Heyward. The round of reciprocal elite parish sociability never stopped.

Anne knew Alice Elkin as Alderman William Elkin’s widow. Alice invited her future husband Justice Thomas Owen, Judge of the Common Pleas, and Anne Blount to dinner in March 1594.¹⁰⁴ Thomas sent Anne venison as a gift in June, and he hosted her over fifteen times.¹⁰⁵ Thomas Owen and Anne Blount were dinner guests together at Alice Elkin’s house in December, before Alice married Thomas in 1595, and thereafter Anne invited them together with Alice’s two daughters who were of a similar age to her own and Thomas’s daughter too.¹⁰⁶ Anne Halliday was the wife of Leonard Halliday, assessor of Bassishaw who became an Alderman in 1594. William Blount sometimes dined alone with Leonard, but both dined at ‘Mr

¹⁰³ BL, MS Cotton Vespasian FXVI, fols. 4r, 6v, 26v; P. Hasler, ‘Sir Robert Stapleton (c.1547-1606), of Wighill, Yorks.’, *History of Parliament Online*.

¹⁰⁴ BL, MS Cotton Vespasian FXVI, fo. 27r; *The Correspondence of Sir Philip Sidney*, ed. R. Kuin (Oxford, 2012), i., p. 143.

¹⁰⁵ BL, MS Cotton Vespasian FXVI, fo. 9v; Heal, *Hospitality*, Ch. 8, and ‘Food Gifts, the Household and the Politics of Exchange in early modern England’, *P&P*, 199 (2008), pp. 48, 57-8.

¹⁰⁶ BL, MS Cotton Vespasian FXVI, fols. 22v, 29v, 42v.

Alderman Hollidayes' in October 1595.¹⁰⁷ Katharine, Lady Hayward was the wife of Sir Rowland Hayward. Anne dined constantly with Katharine, and was often entertained by her in return.¹⁰⁸ Anne hosted Katharine's kin at her table; Katharine's step-daughter Joan married Sir John Thynne, whose kinsman 'Mr Thynne' Anne invited to dine with her and Katharine in November 1594. In turn, Anne was received at Katharine's daughter Elizabeth Warren's residence at Layton, Essex in May-June 1594 and August 1595.¹⁰⁹ On special occasions, Anne received these parish elites together, to celebrate with her family, such as on Thursday 19 December 1594 when Justice Owen was invited to the family meal after 'my daughter Sara maryed' Thomas Smith, Katharine Hayward's brother.¹¹⁰

When Anne left Bassishaw, it was generally as a guest of members of the civic elite, though her husband dined more frequently further among colleagues. In December 1594, amid worsening scarcity, Anne dined 'at the Lord Maiors', the hugely unpopular Sir John Spencer, at his house, Crosby Place in Bishopsgate Street which he had purchased from Antonio Bonvisi and restored at enormous cost.¹¹¹ In March 1594 she dined at weekends at 'Mr Sherriff [Thomas] Bennetts' and 'Mr Sherriff [Robert] Lees' on subsequent occasions, and in May 1594 at 'Mr Sheriffe [Paul] Bannynge's'.¹¹² When Anne admitted anyone from beyond St Michael Bassishaw to her hospitality they were also members of the civic elite, dining with her family for special occasions, when she admitted no humbler guests from the parish at the table. On Thursday 16 May 1594, Anne entertained Katharine Hayward, the Prowdes, a Norton kinswoman of her maternal natal family, and her daughter and son-in-law, Elizabeth and Robert Warren, who hosted her at Layton, alongside Justice Owen. This godly company was joined by Gabriel Goodman, Dean of Westminster, and 'Mr [William] Camden' the antiquary for both meals of

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., fols. 41v, 42v.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., fols. 19r, 20r, 29v, 33r, 36v, 38r, and fols. 27v, 31v.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., fols. 7v, 19r.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., fo. 22r; I. Archer, 'SIR THOMAS SMYTHE (c. 1558-1625): A lecture delivered at Skinners' Hall, London, 26 November 2007 (unpublished paper)', Oxford University Research Archive.

¹¹¹ I. Archer, 'Spencer, Sir John (d. 1610), merchant and lord mayor of London', *ODNB*.

¹¹² BL, MS Cotton Vespasian FXVI, fols. 6v, 21v, 28r.

the day.¹¹³ Goodman was entertained again in June, and Justice Owen, the Prowdes and Anne's kinswoman ate with him again, over both meals of the day.¹¹⁴ Camden deplored the Edwardian reformers' destruction and loathed puritans, as did his friend and collaborator Goodman, Dean of Westminster while Camden taught at the school. Both were patronised by Lord Burghley as he became disillusioned with Calvinism.¹¹⁵

The preamble to Anne's will, which referenced Biblical texts on the transitory nature of human life, suggests that she believed herself to be saved. Anne described herself as

being moste certainly persuaded that my sinnes which are most grevous and heavie are fullie forgiven and my ellection sealed uppe in the bloude and merriits of my onely Lord and Saviour Jesus Christe by whome, and by none other meanes, my Redemptiōe is made sure and certaine...¹¹⁶

Yet there is no indication that those whom she invited into her home to share her hospitality were selected for their godliness. Neither were Anne's celebrations with her godly neighbours austere; she was fond of music. When Edmond Iverson, the local tutor, and his son were at supper there was 'a boy that blewe on a Treble horne', and when William Ingleby came to dinner there were 'minstrelles that plaied in the morning'.¹¹⁷ Anne also celebrated as part of her community; and recorded her payment 'gyven to the ringers' on Accession Day 1594, to ring the parish bells when Katharine Hayward and her brother, Anne's son-in-law, were dining with her on this public holiday.¹¹⁸

¹¹³ Ibid., fo. 5v.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., fo. 9v.

¹¹⁵ D. MacCulloch, *Tudor Church Militant: Edward VI and the Protestant Reformation* (1999), pp. 204, 210-3; W. Frijhoff, 'Dimensions de la coexistence confessionnelle', in C. Berkvens-Stevelinck, J. Israel, G. Posthumus Meyjes (eds.), *The Emergence of Tolerance in the Dutch Republic* (Leiden, 1997), p. 230, 233, 237; A. Walsham, 'In Sickness and In Health: Medicine and Interconfessional Relations in Post-Reformation England', in C. Scott Dixon, D. Freist, and M. Greengrass (eds.), *Living with religious diversity in early modern Europe* (Farnham, 2009), p. 167, 'Supping with Satan's Disciples: Spiritual and Secular Sociability in Post Reformation England', in N. Lewycky, A. Morton (eds.) *Getting Along? Religious Identities and Confessional Relations in Early Modern England: Essays in honour of Professor W. J. Sheils* (Woodbridge, 2012), p. 45.

¹¹⁶ TNA, PROB 11/134, fo. 331r. Psalms 144:4; Isaiah 40:8; Matthew 6:30.

¹¹⁷ BL, MS Cotton Vespasian FXVI, fols. 6v, 7v.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., fo. 20r; C. Marsh, 'At it ding dong': Recreation and Religion in the English Belfry, 1580-1640', in N. Mears, A. Ryrie (eds.), *Worship and the parish church in early modern Britain* (Farnham, 2013), pp. 151-5, 166.

Anne believed herself to be a member of the community of saints, but she was also regularly reminded that she was a member of the community of the parish and acted accordingly.¹¹⁹ She invited John Reeve ‘the parson of Bassishaw’ to the house only thrice, but we cannot know why he came so rarely.¹²⁰ Anne was in charge of paying the charitable contributions of the household to their parish church of St Michael Bassishaw each month as well as making a special Christmas contribution.¹²¹ As Keeper of the Woodstreet Counter, Anne’s husband supervised the officers of the sheriff’s court, and Anne was in contact with the officers of the parish, who collected fines paid into the poor boxes, and the ward whose wages she paid — the beadle, the churchwardens, the parson, the scavenger who collected revenues generated by the City, and the clerk.¹²²

Anne’s attitude towards the poor in her testamentary charity reflected that of her lifetime hospitality. Anne dined over ten times at Woodstreet Compter, sometimes alone, and was familiar with the plight of small debtors from all over the City imprisoned there, but she chose to leave £20 particularly to relieve ‘poore parishioners’ of St Michael Bassishaw who were imprisoned there particularly. Anne left a £5 funeral dole to her City parishes, St Michael Bassishaw, and St Giles Cripplegate ‘within three dayes of my funeral being performed’ as advised by the churchwardens. She requested that when she died her funeral be celebrated ‘the same daie without anie pompe, or sum superfluity’, but made provision for blacks, kerchiefs, and 12d each for dinner to be handed out to seventy one ‘poore widowes’ by her executors on the day of her funeral, but only if she had not selected the widows herself and ‘yf before my death I shall not deliver the some, with myne owne handes’.¹²³ Anne also arranged for her parish to enjoy a funeral dinner ‘in my dwellinge house in Bassishawe’ where she had received them,

¹¹⁹ Heal, *Hospitality*, p. 169.

¹²⁰ BL, MS Cotton Vespasian FXVI, fols. 9r, 13r, 17v.

¹²¹ Ibid., fols. 2v, 22v.

¹²² Ibid., fols. 2r, 3v, 10v; L. Orlin, *Locating Privacy in Tudor London* (Oxford, 2007), p. 34.

¹²³ TNA, PROB 11/134, fo. 323r.

and not merely for ‘the better entertayninge of such of my good friends as shall accompanye my bodye to the church’ but with separate ‘dynner alsoe provided for the parishioners of St Michael in Bassishawe’. Anne made arrangements for her death to cause as little trouble as possible to her community. She provided that her children and her servants who

shalbe willinge to continewe in my said house, shalbe dyetted, and lodged in my said dwelling house, by the space of three monthes next after my decease, att the charge of myne executors, and that he shalbe allowed the charge thereof out of myne estate.¹²⁴

In her will Anne also continued her tradition of aiding her servants, no longer able to offer the extra work on the side which supplemented their wages besides bed and board, by leaving extra sums of between 40s and £20 to aid her seven named servants. It is to the importance of such household charity that the following section turns.

ii) Charity in the household

Charity within the household has been overlooked in favour of charity beyond the household.¹²⁵

As Anne Blount’s example shows, supplementation of servants’ wages with payment for extra services, and meals for those who were not compensated with full-time bed and board, was a daily charitable exercise. Contemporaries certainly regarded bequests to servants as charity, and domestic care of the poor was universally supported, yet because servants were given small monetary bequests, typically of 40s, or material goods, benefaction to servants have often been ignored.¹²⁶ Historians have recognised the greater incidence in women’s wills of bequests to servants, particularly those of goods, but this has been attributed to the fact that the death of a widow was the occasion that finally dissolved the household, rather than considering the question of the value of household giving more widely.¹²⁷

¹²⁴ TNA, PROB 11/134, fo. 322v.

¹²⁵ I. Archer, ‘The Nostalgia of John Stow’, in D. Smith, R. Strier and D. Bevington (eds.), *The Theatrical City: culture, theatre and politics in London, 1576-1649* (Cambridge, 1995), pp. 31-2; Heal, *Hospitality*, pp. 134-6.

¹²⁶ I. Archer, ‘The Charity of London Widows in later sixteenth century and early seventeenth centuries’, in N. Jones (ed.), *Local Identities in late medieval and early modern England* (Basingstoke, 2007), p. 182.

¹²⁷ Colson, ‘Local Communities’, p. 297; Hect, ‘Women, memory and will-making’, pp. 198-203.

The aldermanic household was made up of those who shared blood, obligation and its physical space.¹²⁸ A large courtyard house such as that of Sheriff Robert Lee in Leadenhall Street, where he entertained Anne Blount, would have been home to a family and any children they fostered, their waged domestic servants — numbering eight to ten, and their apprentices. Lee's chimney piece in the great parlour was carved with 'the pictures of Justice and Charity', and indeed charity was part of the good governance of this or any household.¹²⁹ Those who entered service with an elite family in London often did so between their late teens and mid to late twenties, as part of the lifecycle, particularly young women who had lost a father.¹³⁰ Often girls came, from within London or from the counties, to join an older relative in service, or indeed joined the service of a family with whom they shared kinship. Though the turnover of servants yearly was high, those who invested in loyalty could expect to reap the rewards of the special types of charitable aid that stemmed from the trustworthiness — counsel, intimacy, protection, leisure, credit, extra employment, material goods and bequests.¹³¹ Bed and board were rendered continually and were resistant to price fluctuations, and wages were paid only quarterly, so supplementary sources were crucial to servants in their youth as much as in their old age.¹³²

The sample of the wills of aldermen's wives provides a wealth of data on the importance to elite women in London of household giving, and its value to the servants who benefitted from it. Bequests in wills represent deathbed giving alone, but together with external sources suggest that household charity was a lifetime endeavour.¹³³ As a lifetime as well as deathbed

¹²⁸ Walsham, 'Holy Families', pp. 123-4.

¹²⁹ J. Schofield, *Medieval London Houses, 1200-1600* (1994), pp. 61-2, 195, 235.

¹³⁰ V. Brodsky Elliot, 'Single women in the London marriage market: age, status and mobility, 1598-1619', in R. Outhwaite (ed.), *Marriage and Society: Studies in the History of Marriage* (1981), p. 90; M. McIntosh, 'Servants and the Household Unit in an Elizabethan English Community', *Journal of Family History*, 9 (1984), pp. 3-4, 11, 13.

¹³¹ Ben-Amos, *Culture of Giving*, pp. 59-60; Colson, 'Local Communities', p. 297; T. Meldrun, *Domestic service and gender, 1660-1750: life and work in the London household* (2000), pp. 23, 28-33, 85-95; M. Pelling, *The Common Lot: sickness, medical occupations and the urban poor in early modern England: essays* (1998), pp. 119-31; McIntosh, 'Servants', pp. 13-9; E. Hubbard, *City women*, pp. 17-20, Table 1.6.

¹³² C. Richardson, *Household servants in early modern England* (2010), pp. 57, 78-9, 84, 87, 96, 118, 196-7.

¹³³ I. Archer, 'The Charity of Early Modern Londoners', *TRHS*, 6th ser., 12 (2002), pp. 238.

outlet, household charity was a reciprocal process.¹³⁴ Elite women offered their servants extra support, for they were the poor whose needs and characters were best known to them, not merely in the reasonable hopes of extracting a quality of service in life but often on the condition of it.¹³⁵ This study of women's charity within the household considers the ways in which people of different statuses within the same household related to one another. Historians have emphasised the shift towards highly paternalistic forms of charity in return for 'deference, obedience and implicit recognition of the legitimacy of the prevailing social order', especially in early seventeenth-century London. Yet this has been thought of in gendered terms of 'paternalism and deference' largely defined by a social superior who was male.¹³⁶ Gifts articulated shared identity and friendship as well as deference.¹³⁷ This section considers the relationship between civic status, gender and charity for elite women in London.

Praise of the charity of aldermen's wives included praise of household charity and acknowledged the importance of household esteem to elite women. Good housekeeping included charity at home, and wives as well as widows were expected to exercise household charity. William Gouge urged householders not to prejudice their wives' chances of being held in esteem by loving as well as obedient servants. He recommended that a wife be free to give from the household budget, and also from a special allowance of money set aside for a wife to dispose of as she wished. This independent fund alone, he argued, would allow a wife to cultivate charitable feeling and habits within herself and also to promote the gratitude and personal loyalty of her servants. Gouge's list of priorities is telling; this money is to be disposed 'on children and seruants in the house, and others also out of the house'.¹³⁸

For so much is noted in *Salomons* description of a good wife; *She giueth meat to her houshold, and a portion to her maidens: all her houshold is clothed with scarlet* (namely, by her ordering and disposing the matter)... These things she did by virtue of that power and liberty which

¹³⁴ Ben-Amos, *Culture of Giving*, pp. 59-60.

¹³⁵ J. Thomson, 'Piety and Charity in Late Medieval England', *JEH*, 16 (1965), p. 183.

¹³⁶ Wrightson, *English Society*, pp. 40, 55, 58-9; Hect, 'Women, memory and will-making', pp. 199-201.

¹³⁷ Heal, *Power of Gifts*, p. 55.

¹³⁸ Ben-Amos, *Culture of Giving*, p. 252.

her husband gaue her: as appeareth by two points there noted: After this patterne it is meete that other husbands (whose wiues are wise and faithfull) should deale with their wiues: that in the house they might haue the more honour of children and seruants: and that out of the house they might giue the better tryall of their charity....Though she haue a generall consent to giue as she seeth cause of the common goods of the family, yet is not that so sure and sound a tryall of her charity, and mercifulnesse, as if she had something of her owne which she might retaine or giue away as pleaseth her selfe...¹³⁹

Even if husbands did not heed Gouge's advice, the household and the godly community fostered within it was the sphere in which wives could do something charitable with what they had. In his funeral sermon on Elizabeth Juxon, Stephen Denison celebrated her material and rhetorical resources:

She was like unto Dorcas...what she had not of her owne to releue Gods poore, she intreated her husband to supply. Yea, she was a very patronesse for such as were in distresse; she was a blessed instrument to stirre vp her willing husband to many secret gifts, and bountifull almes-deedes, especially vnto them which were of the houshold of faith. To my knowledge she hath giuen gold and siluer plentifully, to some more, and to some less.¹⁴⁰

Like hospitality, household charity was praised because it reflected the charitable reputation of the aldermanic household in the wider community.¹⁴¹ In 1570, in the earliest example of a verse epitaph on an alderman's wife, John Phillips praised former Lady Mayoress Agnes Avenon's reputation for charity, and expounded at length the value of household charity, particularly to female recipients. Phillips expected his epitaph to have a female audience, of both elite and humble readers.

Ye ladyes leave your sportes: your pastymes set aside
To weepe...cunduictes of streames provide.
Cast off your costly silkes: your juelles now forsake:
To decke your selves in mournynge weedes...
You damselles deare domesticall which in her house abyde.

¹³⁹ Gouge, *Of domesticall duties* (1622), pp. 403-6.

¹⁴⁰ Denison, *The monument*, p. 114.

¹⁴¹ P. Sherlock, *Monuments and Memory in early modern England* (2008), p. 152.

Yet it was not Agnes's peers so much as her dependents who Phillips expected to mourn her loss. He suggested that she gave charitably of time and counsel alongside material goods: 'you shall misse a Matrone grave in danger you to cheare./Whose Counsell in their neede, her neighbours could not want'.¹⁴² The

damselles deare domesticall which in her house abyde,
...have lost a good and godly guide
Whose lenytie and gentell hart, you all have knowen and felt
For unto you in Courteous sorte, her Gifts she ever dealt.

Where these 'damselles' were girls sent from other elite households or intimate women maidservants is not clear. Despite Agnes's special attentions to the needs of women, Phillips was also careful to emphasise that Agnes's household charity extended to all those in service under her: 'You officers that dayly serve...have lost, a Ladie kynde in deede'.¹⁴³

The appeal of the description of women's particular charitable talents in the household seems to have been limited, compared with more illustrious public achievements, and its importance was often celebrated more briefly. Helen Branche attracted three verse lives and epitaphs on her death in 1594, and the two which came from within the City celebrated her reputation for hospitality and household charity. 'S. P' suggested that her hospitality adhered to the old model of receiving all comers to the house, dispersing 'deeds of hospitalitie, whereas they saw annoy'.¹⁴⁴ Phillips praised Helen Branch's effective housekeeping, which consisted of good management of hospitality, employment, and household charity.

At no time emptie from hir gates, the hungry went away...
Hir seruants had their meate and drinke, in time and season dewe...
Unto hir friends and seruants all this kinde and louing Lady,

¹⁴² Wrightson, *English Society*, p. 55.

¹⁴³ J. Phillips, *Epitaph on the death of the virtuous Matrone, the Ladie Mayoress...Agnes Avenon* (1570).

¹⁴⁴ S.P., *An epitaph of the vertuous life and death of the right worshipfull ladie, Dame Helen Branch* (1594), p. 4.

Hath left a portion of hir store, as orderly as may be.¹⁴⁵

In the case of a woman with so many bequests of public charity to celebrate, Mary Ramsey's household charity and hospitality were completely glossed over as too mundane in comparison with more exciting details about her public charitable bequests.

Whose liberall hand was neuer frozen fast,
From Almes-deeds, so long as breath did last...
Other good deedes a number to recite,
Which tedious were, I pretermit therefore...¹⁴⁶

These sources praising women's household charity celebrated it and are suggestive of its value both to the women who gave it and the women who received it, as well as to the wider household and community, but they obscure the details of its workings.

Qualitative and quantitative analysis of the sample of aldermen's wives' wills shows that these sources present an idealistic and incomplete analysis. The assumption of household charity is certainly justified: 84% of women in the sample left legacies to servants. Even widows with the least to leave in their wills remembered their servants. Alice, widow of Alderman Richard Herne had little money to spare for charity in her will — even her kin were left goods rather than sums of money in an inventorial list of her material possessions — yet she left every servant 40s.¹⁴⁷ Women widely bequeathed a standard sum to all their servants, often differentiated by gender, though who got more was clearly a matter of personal preference. Many women left equal amounts to their male and female servants, although the sums they left depended on the wealth available to a widow to bestow in the will, as well a sense of what were appropriate or moderate sums to be left to servants.¹⁴⁸ Gertrude Style gave the same amount,

¹⁴⁵ J. Phillips. *A commemoration of the life and death of the right worshipfull and vertuous ladie; Dame Helen Branch* (1594), pp. 5, 7.

¹⁴⁶ N. Bourman, *An Epitaph on Mary Ramsey* (1602), Sigs. A3r, A4v-B1r.

¹⁴⁷ TNA, PROB 11/155, fo. 253v.

¹⁴⁸ Ben-Amos, *Culture of Giving*, p. 251.

20s, to all her servants, and Elizabeth Billingsley 40s. While Mary Weld could afford to leave every servant £2.13s.4d, Ann Harte left all her servants £4 each, and Margaret Garton Goddard Walthall Nicholson (whose first three husbands were aldermen) left every servant the relatively large sum of £5.¹⁴⁹ Others left relatively little, but were concerned that their servants should walk in their funeral procession. Alice Barnham left her servants gowns and 40s each.¹⁵⁰ Margerie Pyott left none of her servants any money, but left them all blacks to walk in her funeral.¹⁵¹ Margaret Slaney alone left more to her male than her female servants, 40s compared to 20s.¹⁵² Ursula Brooke alone made a stark contrast between the sums she left to her male servants, who received 20s each, and her maidservants who each received £5.¹⁵³

A few women left general bequests for maidservants alone; these were wealthy women disposing of large sums in their wills, so this represents a choice made without the restraint of financial considerations. Alice Owen remembered her maidservants exclusively in her general bequests, leaving every one 20s. Anne Glover left her maidservants alone a general bequest of £3 each, as did Thomasine Swinnerton.¹⁵⁴

Women left money to their household servants en masse, but they also commonly gave particular legacies to named poor. Women's household charity commonly included all household servants, but was more than twice as likely to be completely personal (directed *only* to named servants) than completely general. Just 13% of women gave money to their servants without naming a single one, whereas 35% of women left *all* their legacies to servants by name, and no general bequests to servants at all. It was common for elite women to leave money to individual servants within their household, but relatively unlikely that they would be the only

¹⁴⁹ TNA, PROB 11/167, fo. 236v; TNA, PROB 11/109, fo. 17v; TNA, PROB 11/157, fo. 24r.

¹⁵⁰ TNA, PROB 11/104, fo. 53v.

¹⁵¹ TNA, PROB 11/145, fo. 232r.

¹⁵² TNA, PROB 11/33, fo. 335r.

¹⁵³ TNA, PROB 11/153, fo. 491r.

¹⁵⁴ TNA, PROB 11/121, fo. 146v; TNA, PROB, 11/214, fo. 203v; I. Archer, Swinnerton, Sir John (bap. 1564, d. 1616), *ODNB*.

poor legatees named in an elite woman's will. 75% of women left money to poor named recipients in their wills, of which a large number were commonly servants, but only 28% of women named no other poor recipients beyond their servants.

For aldermen's wives looking to direct their charity towards the deserving poor, the moral and even spiritual character of those who lived and worshipped under their authority was best known since it was their responsibility.¹⁵⁵ Women regarded service and loyalty, and gave generously to their most trusted servants within their own households.¹⁵⁶ Usually this meant an augmented legacy compared to other servants, particularly for a woman's most intimate maidservants, who might be her trusted confidants, allies and bedfellows.¹⁵⁷ Gertrude Style left her maidservant £3 and two named male servants 20s.¹⁵⁸

Though servants were free to move between employers yearly, there were benefits to cultivating personal loyalty to an elite woman that accrued throughout a longer term of service but not least because there might be a reasonable expectation of bequests from an elderly mistress.¹⁵⁹ Both Elizabeth Martin and Margaret Slaney differentiated legacies not on gender but on length of service even in their general bequests to their servants. Both women distinguished between their new servants who had been members of the household for less than a year at their deaths, who received 20s, and loyal servants who had been with the household longer than a year, who received 40s.¹⁶⁰ Elizabeth Craven valued the service of her maidservant Mabel Raven so much that she devised a legacy that would encourage her to remain

¹⁵⁵ Lake, 'Charitable Christian Hatred', pp. 166-7.

¹⁵⁶ Archer, 'Charity of London Widows', p. 182.

¹⁵⁷ Hubbard, *City women*, Ch. 4; A. Jones, 'Maidservants of London: Sisterhoods of Kinship and Labor', in S. Frye and K. Robertson (eds.), *Maids and Mistresses, Cousins and Queens: Women's Alliances in Early Modern England* (Oxford, 1999), pp. 21-2; L. Gowing, 'The Politics of Women's Friendships in Early Modern England', in L. Gowing, M. Hunter, and M. Rubin (eds.), *Love, Friendship and Faith in Europe, 1300-1800* (Basingstoke, 2005), p. 134; I. Ben-Amos, *Adolescence and youth in early modern England* (1994), pp. 150-5.

¹⁵⁸ TNA, PROB 11/167, fo. 238r.

¹⁵⁹ Ben-Amos, *Culture of Giving*, pp. 50-60.

¹⁶⁰ TNA, PROB 11/127, fo. 331r; TNA, PROB 11/33, fo. 335r.

in her service, promising her 20s ‘for every year she hath served me’ if she was still living with Elizabeth at the time of Elizabeth’s death.¹⁶¹

Women freely rewarded loyal service. Even former servants were remembered generously. Jane Duckett left ‘Hughe Basterfild my olde servant £10’ — far more than to her current maidservant, ‘Katharine Poltan’, who got £6.13s.4d.¹⁶² Old maidservants were frequently remembered by their former mistresses. Elizabeth Craven left £5 to ‘Mary Alan sometimes my servant’, Agnes Prannell left ‘my ould servant Christian Qurell’ £10.¹⁶³ Alice Owen bequeathed her current maidservants 20s, but ‘my old maidservant Anne Powel als Evans’ £10, and another legacy to ‘my old servant Nicholas Chamberlyne’.¹⁶⁴ Elizabeth Billingsley remembered the men whom she had apprenticed and who had served her, long after they had left the household, alongside those who were still serving her. To Rowland Johnson ‘my prentize and Servante’ she left the career-changing sum of £100, and the same to ‘John Dames my servant nowe’, but she also left ‘William Nitolls sometime my prentize’ £20, alongside ‘Dennis which was my mayde’ £3.¹⁶⁵

Most women required continued loyalty as a condition of their benevolence to current members of their household. This attitude extended beyond aldermen’s wives to other elite mercantile women; Anne Blount left sums between 40s and £20, not according to gender but to individual service, to three named male servants and two named female servants, all conditional on ‘whether [he/she] shalbe my servant at the tyme of my decease’.¹⁶⁶ This was a consideration of personal loyalty, but women also recognised that the reasonable reward of faithful service might help ensure that their estate and legacies were dispensed efficiently and effectively. These arrangements also allowed women to ensure that their servants were not

¹⁶¹ TNA, PROB 11/143, fo. 493r.

¹⁶² TNA, PROB 11/123, fo. 53r.

¹⁶³ TNA, PROB 11/143, fo. 493r; TNA, PROB 11/83, fo. 94r.

¹⁶⁴ TNA, PROB 11/122, fo. 148r.

¹⁶⁵ TNA, PROB 11/109, fo. 17r.

¹⁶⁶ TNA, PROB 11/134, fo. 332v.

thrust into unemployment and out of the house unceremoniously. Anne Harte left her servant John Parker £20 on the condition that he aid her executors, which she clearly expected he would, as she also left his wife £3.¹⁶⁷ Mary Weld arranged for all her servants to have ‘meete and drink and lodging at the discretion of Mrs Wrolls’ her principal servant whom she asked to continue with them, and for them all to be paid for three months after her death so they could find new jobs as they helped conclude her business.¹⁶⁸

Elite women’s household charity was squarely focused on their own servants in their own homes, but women also remembered the servants of others.¹⁶⁹ These legatees had likely attended them in the houses of their kin or friends. A bequest would encourage a servant whose primary loyalty was to another household to take care of the testator’s interests too, and to continue to care for them after a woman’s death. Julyan Style was ‘somewhat infirme of body’ when she made her will in 1627, and expecting that she might become burdensome, made the requisite arrangements:

And if I happen to dwell in the house of my daughter Elizabeth Barret, also to all her servants, save William Richardson in respect of his extraordinary care diligence and paines taken and to be taken in future I give and bequeath the value of ten poundes.¹⁷⁰

Elizabeth Martin remembered by name ‘the two maid servants of my coson Thomas Cottesford that nowe are dwelling with him Elizabeth Daughson and Anne Longe 20s a peace.’¹⁷¹ The favoured servants of kin were not only left money, but also gowns which suggests a more personal connection. Anne Glover left ‘my daughter Robert’s mayde’ a black gown to wear at her funeral.¹⁷² Male and female servants of women’s children were the most common recipients of legacies to servants in the households of others, especially those in the households of sons;

¹⁶⁷ TNA, PROB 11/145, fo. 282v. The Parkers were Anne’s servants but were also married into her kin.

¹⁶⁸ TNA, PROB 11/141, fo. 233v.

¹⁶⁹ Colson, ‘Local Communities’, p. 297.

¹⁷⁰ TNA, PROB 11/153, fols. 49v-50r.

¹⁷¹ TNA, PROB 11/152, fols. 331r-v.

¹⁷² TNA, PROB 11/121, fo. 146v.

Elizabeth Ryvers and Ursula Brooke left sums of 40s in this way, while Margaret Wythens remembered the servants of three of her sons.¹⁷³

Kinship and spiritual obligation intermingled with service, and elite women left legacies to their poor kin in their service and to the children of servants to whom they were godmothers.¹⁷⁴ In fifteenth-century London, although god-parenting was usually among social equals it was acceptable to accept care of a child of one of considerably lower status seeking the protection of a local elite as kin.¹⁷⁵ In the context of the household as a community which worshipped together as well as lived together, care of the spiritual development of servants' children also suggests that pious City women were also ready to accept this duty as an extension of their spiritual household duties. Elizabeth Elwes left 'Richard Potter my late servant' £4 and 'to his daughter my goddaughter' the same.¹⁷⁶ Poor kin were favoured in employment, and in charitable bequests. Elizabeth Craven left 'Thomas Parker my late servant' £10, and to 'my kinswoman Mary his wife, late my maidservant', £20.¹⁷⁷

Women appointed their household charity through an assessment of need based on the vulnerability of members of their households and communities.¹⁷⁸ Mary Ramsey left a generous bequest of £10 to 'Richard Barnard the boy in my kitchen' to sustain him after her death, and left two poor servants each 'one annuitie of four markes a year' [£2.13s.4d].¹⁷⁹ Women's bequests also indicate the forms that household charity based on its recipients' circumstances took throughout women's lifetimes. Motives mingled, for women took responsibility for the wider community of their households by taking multiple members of needy families into service. Elizabeth Elwes left £4 'to Gissinge the boye that is now within and brother to my too

¹⁷³ TNA, PROB, 11/95, fo. 279v.

¹⁷⁴ W. Coster, *Baptism and spiritual kinship in early modern England* (2002), pp. 198, 211-3, 144-61.

¹⁷⁵ Colson, 'Local Communities', p. 299.

¹⁷⁶ TNA, PROB 11/147, fo. 129v.

¹⁷⁷ TNA, PROB 11/145, fo. 238r.

¹⁷⁸ Colson, 'Local Communities', p. 298.

¹⁷⁹ TNA, PROB 11/98, fo. 192r.

maides'.¹⁸⁰ Where women's care over their household faltered, they took on the responsibility this lapse created. So Elizabeth Billingsley left £20 'unto Mr Leonards sonne which he had by my mayde Anne'.¹⁸¹ Women were also diligent in offering employment to members of the community who might otherwise struggle to find work, and securing continued care for them within the family after their deaths. Margaret Bonde left William Godwin coats along with her other male servants, but also left him 40s with 'my request... to my children that they will be good unto him because he is a simple man'.¹⁸²

This assessment of need, and of vulnerability, was also gendered. Women took the particular legal constraints and social difficulties of women's lives into account when they made their bequests, giving money or goods that might make all the difference to a woman. Margaret Bonde took vulnerable women into the charity of her household. It is unclear why 'Elizabeth Aldaye, now dwellinge withe me...maide servante' was in need of support, but Margaret left her 'the some of five poundes...besides all her wages as I shall give unto her at my decease if she be then livinge'. It is likely that Elizabeth was ill or an elderly spinster, as Margaret urged 'all my children...that they will have a care of the saide Elizabeth Aldaye whilest she livethe a maide that she maye be provided of victuall meate drinke apparell and househome'.¹⁸³

Household charity towards servants encompassed both practical and emotional support, and indicates the intimate ties of affection and understanding that bound women of different statuses to one another beyond mere obligation.¹⁸⁴ Jane Duckett left £5 'to Besse Leman [sweetheart] the woman now dwelling with me', as a portion either at her majority or on her marriage, which might be considerably improved or made possible by the bequest.¹⁸⁵

¹⁸⁰ TNA, PROB 11/147, fo. 129v.

¹⁸¹ TNA, PROB 11/109, fo. 17v.

¹⁸² TNA, PROB 11/ 79, fo. 78r.

¹⁸³ TNA, PROB 11/ 79, fols. 77v-78r.

¹⁸⁴ Wrightson, *English Society*, p. 55; Hect, 'Women, memory and will-making', pp. 198-201.

¹⁸⁵ TNA, PROB 11/123, fo. 53r; S. Brigden, *Thomas Wyatt: The Heart's Forest* (2012), p. 10.

Elite women also taught their daughters to take care of vulnerable or poor kin as a matter of household charity. Elizabeth Craven was confident that her poor natal 'kinswoman Jane Whitmore', fostered in her household, would be 'dwelling with my daughter or my self', and left her £5 towards her marriage 'if she be [still] unmarried at the tyme of my decease'.¹⁸⁶ Mary Ramsey remembered one she had lost to good fortune, 'Martha who is nowe married and was my maid', to whom she left £5.¹⁸⁷ Ursula Brooke may have feared that 'Elizabeth Brewer my sometime servant' might fall on very hard times, or wished to reward her service exceptionally generously, when she left her 32s, to be converted within one month to a £20 lump sum if Elizabeth were widowed.¹⁸⁸ The poorest servants might simply be clothed, and even elite women with who thought it unwise or were unable to leave large sums of cash to their maidservants could leave them their clothes. Elizabeth Ryvers left 'Sara Everard my servant 40s [and]...halfe my wearing lynnyn'.¹⁸⁹ Alice Owen left

Mary my chambermade 20s...besides the kirtles and gownes of the worser sort that shall be left after the choice of my daughter Washbourne, the rest of my apparell as old petticoats and the like so be distributed among my kitchen maydes.¹⁹⁰

Women trusted the household as an institution and a community through which their charity could be responsibly directed to worthy recipients, and effectively administered and safeguarded after their deaths by household officers. Elite women relied on the institutions of the wider community of which they felt themselves to be a part, and used these institutions to effect their public charity. Women's household charity was at its most basic an expression of the corporal works of mercy, completed beyond the household and infused with civic sensibilities. Women's household charity demonstrated their personal and gendered understanding of need, which informed women's sense of the need for women to aid other

¹⁸⁶ TNA, PROB 11/143, fo. 493r.

¹⁸⁷ TNA, PROB 11/98, fo. 192r.

¹⁸⁸ TNA, PROB 11/153, fo. 491r.

¹⁸⁹ TNA, PROB 11/133, fo. 505v.

¹⁹⁰ TNA, PROB 11/122, fo. 148r.

women in particular. The following chapter considers how women gave charitably in their wider communities.

Conclusion

Household charity and hospitality were gendered by the way that elite women were immersed in local communities, through their administration of the households that concentrated the daily provision of hospitality in their hands. The hospitality managed by an elite godly woman combined sociability and alms-giving in parish conviviality, alongside elite civic entertainment across the religious spectrum. The parish neighbourhood was the most important sphere of charitable outreach from the household, beyond its own members and so women's charity was frequently tailored to the particular, gendered needs of its recipient, and was often intimately shared and expressed.

Chapter VII Charity in the Community

i) Women's reputation and the London charitable tradition: praiseworthy charity?

The ambitious programmes of charitable giving embarked upon by the wealthiest aldermen's wives have not gone unnoticed, and the London tradition of charitable giving has received famous attention from historians. The custom of the City, cited overwhelmingly by aldermen in their wills, provided generously for widows who, particularly if they had been widowed more than once, might find themselves with enormous wealth at their disposal.¹ W. K. Jordan focused on these 'heroic' donors in his survey of London charity, in which he argued that post-Reformation London experienced an increase of private charity which contributed more to poor relief than the poor rate, and which he attributed to a newly rational philanthropy.² Ian Archer's revision of Jordan's figures, taking into consideration inflation and the accumulated yield on endowments, suggests that there was probably a modest increase in private charity but contemporaries questioned whether the type of charity that was being given by the civic elite was sufficient or even suitable in the context of the times.³ For Jordan the pre-Reformation charitable tradition in London was compromised by its association with Catholic works-based soteriology in which donors' belief that their good works and the prayers of the poor they relieved had intercessory merit encouraged an indiscriminate approach to poor relief.⁴ But work on late medieval and early Reformation London suggests that even funeral doles were 'not completely indiscriminate', as able-bodied beggars were rejected, and that discrimination was implicitly expected of the wardens of fraternities, executors of wills, aldermen of wards and

¹ J. Thomson, 'Piety and Charity in Late Medieval England', *JEH*, 16 (1965), p. 181; C. Carlton, *The Court of Orphans* (1974); C. Barron and A. Sutton, *Medieval London Widows, 1300-1500* (1994); I. Archer, *The Pursuit of Stability: social relations in Elizabethan London* (Cambridge, 1991), p. 75; R. Grassby, *Kinship and Capitalism: marriage, family and business in the English speaking world, 1580-1740* (Cambridge, 2001), p. 343.

² W. Jordan, *Philanthropy in England 1480-1660: a study of the changing pattern of English social aspirations* (1959), and *The Charities of London 1480-1660: the aspirations and the achievements of the urban society* (1960).

³ I. Archer, *The Pursuit of Stability: social relations in Elizabethan London* (Cambridge, 1991), pp. 163-79.

⁴ J. Thomson, 'Clergy and Laity in London, 1376-1531', unpublished Oxford Univ. D. Phil thesis (1960), p. 156; S. S. Brigden, *London and the Reformation* (1989), p. 39; F. Heal, *Hospitality in early modern England* (Oxford, 1990), p. 122; P. Lake, 'A Charitable Christian Hatred': the Godly and their Enemies in the 1630s', in C. Durston and J. Eales (eds.), *The Culture of English Puritanism, 1560-1700* (1996), p. 167.

other officers to whom the performance of bequests was entrusted.⁵ Protestants who treated good works as the fruit of faith could depersonalise their charity, and turn the full force of their intention, and their wealth, to the relief of the living. Jordan's interests lay primarily not in the motivation of charitable givers, but in the amounts they gave and the outcome of their charities. These are not questions this thesis seeks to pose or to answer, in part because the work on Ian Archer on the charity of London widows among six hundred Prerogative Court of Canterbury testators in the 1550/60s and 1610/20s has been so suggestive.⁶ This thesis is concerned with impulses rather than amounts, and intentions rather than outcomes. This approach reveals what was to a large extent a continuum of charitable women giving according to a civic tradition which in its old and new iterations — traditional and reformed — shared enough that they could be praised side by side. The basis of this shared tradition was in the Christian duty of the seven corporal mercies — feeding the hungry, giving drink to the thirsty, clothing the naked, sheltering the homeless, visiting the sick, ransoming captives and burying the dead.⁷

The memorialisation of benefactors that the *Survey* recorded and created was intended to inspire new charitable endeavour, as part of a culture of the celebration of women's charity, in tables in company halls and parish churches, funeral monuments, portraits, coats of arms on founded institutions, verse epitaphs and funeral sermons.⁸ Praise of women's charity was intended to convey that charity was part of the culture of elite female virtue in the City that would win women a reputation in their lifetimes and lasting fame. It was concerned with

⁵ Thomson, 'Clergy and Laity', pp. 165-5, 182-5; Archer, *Pursuit*, pp. 169, 175; C. Schen, *Charity and Lay Piety in Reformation London, 1500-1620* (Woodbridge, 2002), p. 462; M. Rubin, *Charity and Community in Medieval Cambridge* (Cambridge, 1987), pp. 254-5.

⁶ I. Archer, 'The Charity of London Widows in later sixteenth century and early seventeenth centuries', in N. Jones (ed.), *Local Identities in late medieval and early modern England* (Basingstoke, 2007), pp. 178-206, and *Pursuit*, pp. 31-2.

⁷ Though this last was performed by guilds, so was only indirectly relieved by private donations to livery companies: Thomson, 'Clergy and Laity', p. 163; S. Brigden, 'Religion and Social Obligation in Early Sixteenth-Century London', *Pe&P*, 103 (1984), p. 102.

⁸ I. Archer, 'The Nostalgia of John Stow', in D. Smith, R. Strier and D. Bevington (eds.), *The Theatrical City: culture, theatre and politics in London, 1576-1649* (Cambridge, 1995), p. 31, and 'The arts and acts of memorialization in early modern London', in J. Merritt (ed.), *Imagining early modern London* (Cambridge, 2001), pp. 90-99; I. Ben Amos, *The Culture of Giving: Informal Support and Gift Exchange in early modern England* (Cambridge, 2008), pp. 224-5, 238.

attracting the attention of the living to imitate a past it rewrote, as well as preserved.⁹ The legacy of Catholic City women's charity therefore required careful handling by those who praised it.

Thomasine née Bonaventure was born to gentry in Cornwall, and may have come to London in 1460 as a servant, but married Sir John Percyvale, alderman and mayor of London, as her third husband in 1469. Munday's 1633 *Survey* recorded that in St Mary Woolnoth

The severall wills made by them both in ancient writing, are (to the parishes great commendation) very carefully kept and preserved in this Church, in a goodly enclosure made for the purpose and to bee turned open like folding Tables: I have not seene the like in any other Church.¹⁰

Londoners who had heard of her legend might be familiar with the tables, which they could still go and visit, which commemorated Thomasine as a paragon of lifetime giving, both in London and the counties.¹¹ After Sir John's death in 1503, Thomasine kept a large household in her Lombard Street mansion, ran the business and trained apprentices, and began to bestow some of her considerable wealth on charitable causes, including the fostering and education of several poor children, and the foundation of a free grammar school, in the hands of nineteen feoffees. Much of her charity could be praised without controversy, but Thomasine was a Catholic who used her resources in the service of souls as well as relief of the poor. Paupers in her torch-lit funeral procession carried rosary beads, and masses, dirges and trentals were said for the souls of her and her kin.¹² Even Protestants were prepared to admire Thomasine's charitable virtue; Richard Carew argued that in light of her great charitable contribution her foundation of a chantry was but 'a petty smacke onely of Popery'.¹³

⁹ P. Sherlock, *Monuments and Memory in early modern England* (Aldershot, 2008), pp. 1, 3; N. Llewellyn, *Funeral Monuments in Post Reformation England* (Cambridge, 2000); P. Marshall, *Beliefs and the Dead in Reformation England* (Oxford, 2002).

¹⁰ J. Stow, *A Survey of London* (1633), p. 223.

¹¹ M. Davies, 'Percyvale [née Bonaventure], Thomasine (d. 1512)', *ODNB*.

¹² M. Davies, 'Thomasyne Percyvale, "The Maid of Week" d. 1512', in C. Barron and A. Sutton (eds.), *Medieval London widows, 1300-1500* (1994), pp. 185-207.

¹³ R. Carew, *The survey of Cornwall* (1602), fols. 119-119b.

Nor was Catholic charity dead in the City. Barbara Champion, widow of Aldermen Henry Heardson (d. 1555) and Sir Richard Champion (d.1568), was a known Catholic. The godly alderman Francis Barnham was apprenticed to Sir Richard, and Barbara knew his wife Alice Barnham. If Barbara was known to be a Catholic, Alice was someone who went into exile for religion's sake under Mary, after taking her children to hear the martyr John Bradford preaching in prison between 1553-5. Though separated by their religious confessions, Alice and Barbara left legacies to named servants, blacks to their households, the poor and friends, a funeral dole, money to the prisons and counters, to the hospitals, to the poorest of their parishes, and loaned money to the poorer members of livery companies. As individuals their emphases differed slightly; Barbara left blacks to poor women only, while Alice left them to poor men and women equally. Some differences may reflect their religious outlook as well as their twenty year age difference; Barbara left money to top up the dowries of poor maids towards their marriages, a practice which was gradually declining, while Alice bequeathed money to support the education of poor scholars at the Universities which would further the reform of society through the Word.¹⁴

The early Reformation brought embittered rhetoric about charity in London. The Edwardian foundation of the City hospitals — St Thomas's and St Bartholomew's for the impotent and sick, Christ's for orphans, Bethlem and Bridewell for the unemployed — were the pride of the godly City.¹⁵ The hospitals were established to solve the problems of poverty and covetousness, and 'stood as a reproach to Catholics' whose provision had fallen short. Protestants prided themselves on turning the full force of their intent and their wealth to charity in institutional relief of the living, having abandoned the need to provide for the passage of

¹⁴ Archer, 'Charity of London Widows', p. 192; Rubin, *Charity and Community*, pp. 156-7; Stow, *Survey*, p. 109; L. Cowen Orlin, 'Barnham [née Bradbridge], Alice (1523-1604)', *ODNB*, and L. C. Orlin, *Locating Privacy in Tudor London* (Oxford, 2007).

¹⁵ Archer, *Pursuit*, pp. 154-63;

souls through Purgatory, but the outcome ‘often seemed the same’ in practice.¹⁶ By Elizabeth’s reign, a civic elite knit so closely together by kinship, friendship, service, neighbourhood and community, and responsible for the peace and prosperity of the City, took a practical approach to the resources of poor relief. In 1578 Barbara Champion directed her considerable relief through the City institutions which could best put it to use, leaving £50 for ‘the poor children harboured’ at Christ’s Hospital, £25.13s.4d for ‘the poore and impotent people in St Barthollmewes hospital’, and £30 for ‘the poore Lane and indigent people in St Thomas Hospital’.¹⁷ Barbara bequeathed gowns to ‘Mr Alderman Barneham and his wieff’, to walk behind her corpse en route to St Dunstan’s in the East¹⁸ Charity remained a Christian ethos and duty which bound the civic elite together, across generations, genders, and even across the spectrum of belief.

Barbara commissioned a tomb depicting her flanked by both her husbands in St Dunstan’s, so large that she sought permission for three pews to be moved to accommodate it.¹⁹ She celebrated the charity of both her husbands with the same description of the weekly almsgiving from their own hands in their own neighbourhood:

His Almes that weekely he bestowed,
 within this Parish here,
 May witnesse to the poores releefe,
 what good-will hee did beare.²⁰

The celebration of elite civic charity of women and by women, as well as by male donor, was embraced across the religious spectrum of the elite, encouraging their continued self-identification as a charitable governing group.

¹⁶ Brigden, *London and the Reformation*, pp. 477-802; Heal, *Hospitality*, p. 123.

¹⁷ TNA, PROB 11/58, fols. 200v.

¹⁸ TNA, PROB 11/58, fols. 200r-202r; TNA, PROB 11/104, fols. 53r-54r.

¹⁹ Orlin, *Locating Privacy*, pp. 40, 221.

²⁰ Stow, *Survey*, p. 139.

The celebration of reformed *female* charity was thought to be especially important for the cultivation of a charitable ethos among the governing elite, as well as for practical relief of the dependent poor.²¹ William Gouge considered charity to be essential to the wives of the mercantile elite to whom he ministered in London, as an important component of godly piety and a social obligation that was of benefit to the reliever as well as the relieved. Elite women's wealth created expectation of charity from their hands: 'by reason of their rich and costly apparell it is expected they should be bountiful', and women about the City might often find themselves 'being in places where there is iust occasion of contributing to some charitable vse'.²² Yet Gouge lamented that women lacked the independent means to put their charitable feelings into effect. He warned meaner merchants that

their wiues are not only depriued of meanes to gaine respect of their children and seruants at home, and to gratifie such as are obedient and ready to doe seruice to them, but also to performe such workes of mercie as both opportunity requireth, and also their conscience moueth them to doe. Yea many wiues of rich husbands are brought to great shame hereby... For considering the many excellent promises that are made to workes of mercy and charity, and the many terrible threatnings that are denounced not onely against such as exercise cruelty, but also against such as shew no mercy: considering also that wiues together with their husbands, are *heires of the grace of life*, it is very needfull yea euen necessary, that they should manifest their faith by some worke of mercy and charity.

If merchants' wives were given the financial scope to be charitable, the whole community would reap the benefits:

Her children rise vp and call her blessed, as for her generall cariage in the family, so for her particular fauours bestowed on themselues. As for others out of the house, it is also noted, that *she stretcheth out her hand to the poore, and reacheth forth her hands to the needie*.²³

Responsibility lay with husbands:

an husband ought according to his abilitie to commit something to her discretion and disposition: of these and such like goods she is as much bound as her husband to expend something to charitable vses: and (as God offereth occasion) *to reach forth her hand to the poore and needy*. [original italics]²⁴

²¹ Archer, *Pursuit*, pp. 92-99.

²² W. Gouge, *Of domesticall duties* (1622), p. 406.

²³ Ibid., pp. 403-6.

²⁴ Ibid., p. 304.

Women's charity enhanced their reputation and was crucial to maintaining their spiritual condition.²⁵ Women who lacked control over money could not properly cultivate their own charitable feeling and giving as an expression of their piety.

yea though she haue a generall consent to giue as she seeth cause of the common goods of the family, yet is not that so sure and sound a tryall of her charity, and mercifulnesse, as if she had something of her owne which she might retaine or giue away as pleaseth her selfe; and what she giues not away, lay vp as her owne stocke proper to her selfe.... The truest triall of a mercifull and charitable heart lieth in the distribution of that which is proper to ones selfe.

Many godly husbands already understood this:

...some giuing quarterly allowance...others giuing their wiues power to receiue a certaine portion of rent...others making their wiues an absolute estate of some inheritance...others, that are poore, suffering them to worke for themselves...²⁶

Yet seeing some husbands to be intransigent, Gouge urged the community of the godly and the charitable to convince men who remained reluctant.

in case a wife be forbidden or restrained by her husband, she ought to vse all the good meanes she can by her selfe and her friends to moue her husband to grant her some libertie, that she may haue some triall of her mercifull and charitable disposition...

If this failed, a wife's only hope was to influence her husband's choice of charitable endeavours, though this was a poor second to cultivating her own charitable programme:

if herein she cannot preuaile, then she ought to make knowne vnto her husband such persons cases as she thinkes meet to be releued, and vse all the motiues she can to perswade him to afford them some releefe.²⁷

What Gouge did not say, but perhaps inferred, was that the priorities of women's charity were different to those of their husbands. Female testators increasingly preferred to relieve other women, especially widows.²⁸

²⁵ Ben Amos, *Culture of Giving*, pp. 248-9.

²⁶ Gouge, *Of domesticall duties*, pp. 403-6.

²⁷ Ibid., p. 304.

²⁸ Archer, 'Charity of London Widows', pp. 188, 191-2, 194.

The issue of discrimination was a pressing one with implications for the way women exercised their charity. The momentum of charitable giving which was evident in the early Reformation continued into the 1570s. But by the 1590s, just as need burgeoned and the social and economic crisis of the mid-late 1590s took terrible effect, participation in poor relief narrowed.²⁹ Even the most fabulously wealthy City women had finite sums to distribute to charity and considerations of civic moderation might limit their giving. Who ought to benefit from their charity? How might worthy recipients of aid beyond women's households be identified, during women's lifetimes, and after their deaths? How might the importance of discrimination be sharpened by godly concerns for the spiritual and moral condition of the poor?³⁰ Godly City divines did not necessarily agree that discrimination in charity suited the times, when desperate and widespread want called for universal relief.³¹ Henry Smith's *The Poor Mans Teares Opened in a Sermon* (1592) held a bitter rebuke for those who for their own sakes quibbled about the morals of the poor in the midst of a crisis that called for general relief: 'let theyr bad deedes fall on their own neckes, for if they perish for want, we are in danger of God's wrath for them'.³² At any rate, as the anti-puritan Calvinist Robert Sanderson warned in 1632, one could not rely on the elect to suffer and the reprobate to thrive.³³

Contemporaries widely disagreed on the extent to which City women's reputation for charity was deserved.³⁴ John Earle's 'Shee-Precise Hypocrite' accused the godly women who prized themselves on their reputations for piety. They rejected charity as a Catholic pursuit, grounded in erroneous works-based theology and the pursuit of the intercessory prayers of the

²⁹ Brigden, *London and the Reformation*, pp. 104-5; Archer, *Pursuit*, p. 164, and 'The Charity of Early Modern Londoners', *TRHS*, 6th ser., 12 (2002), pp. 225-7; Thomson, 'Piety and Charity', p. 182.

³⁰ M. McIntosh, 'Charity and Coercion in Elizabethan England', *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 35 (2005), pp. 457, 461-2; Ben Amos, *Culture of Giving*, p. 251; D. Hickman, 'From Catholic to Protestant: the changing meaning of testamentary religious provisions in Elizabethan London', in N. Tyacke (ed.) *England's Long Reformation, 1500-1800* (1998), pp. 128-31.

³¹ Heal, *Hospitality*, pp. 125-6.

³² H. Smith, *The Poore Mans Teares Opened in a Sermon* (1592), p. 13; Archer, *Pursuit of Stability* (1991), p. 179.

³³ L. Dixon, *Practical Predestinarians in England, c. 1590-1640* (Farnham, 2014), p. 244.

³⁴ Archer, 'The arts and acts of memorialization', p. 112.

poor. Godly women, Earle claimed, preferred to spend their time stitching religious scenes with which to decorate their homes: 'Shee is so taken vp with Faith, shee ha's no roome for Charity, and vnderstands no good Workes, but what are wrought on the Sampler'.³⁵ Esteemed preacher Thomas Adams accused the citizens of living in 'sieled houses'.³⁶ This phrase conveyed their social separation from their communities while also suggesting that they were blind to the need around them, and conjured an image of the great splendour of the homes of the elite, richly wainscoted and plastered, as 'sieled' was also a homophone for 'cieled'.³⁷ The expectations of charity and hospitality created by the rich display of such homes was often disappointed, and merchants' houses came to symbolise the pride rather than the charity of the City's governors.

Godly preachers condemned this luxury. In 1612, Richard Greenham recalled that Solomon's excessive building 'was the beginning of his falling away', and the following year Stephen Egerton warned the rich to reject the pretension that the keeping of such houses suggested: 'great attendance, brave attire, gorgeous houses, stately service'.³⁸ Citizens took care to appear charitable in the City, but their country estates revealed what they took better care to conceal in London:

*you let not Gods house lie waste: yet sometimes it is found, that some of you so carefull in the Citie, are as negligent in the Country, where your lands lie; and there the Temples are often the ruines of your oppression; your poore, vndone, blood-sucked Tenants, not being able to repaire the windowes or the leades, to keep out raine or birdes...*³⁹

Adams characterised the civic elite as uncharitable, the little charity they did give being a mere sop to their London reputations and given without charitable consideration of its recipients. He

³⁵ J. Earle, *Microcosmographie* (1628), Sigs. G2r-v.

³⁶ J. Sears McGee, 'Adams, Thomas, (1583-1652)', ODNB.

³⁷ T. Adams, *The white deuil, or The hypocrite vncased* (1613), p. 15; OED, sv. 'sieled' and 'cieled'; R. Lang, 'Social Origins and Social Aspirations of Jacobean London Merchants', *Economic History Review*, 2nd ser., 27 (1974), p. 41.

³⁸ T. Hamling, *Decorating the Godly Household: Religious Art in post Reformation Britain* (2010), p. 88; F. Heal, 'The Idea of Hospitality in Early Modern England', *P&P*, 102 (1984), p. 81.

³⁹ Adams, *The white deuil*, p. 15; Stow, *Survey*, pp. 242, 306.

accused them of ill stewardship and token charity, while extorting their country estates and oppressing the poor:

It is not seasonable, nor reasonable charitie, to vndoe whole townes by your vsuries, enclosings, oppressions, impropriations; and for a kind of expiation, to giue three or foure the yeerely pension of Twentie markes [£13.2s.1d]: an Almeshouse is not so big as a village, nor thy superfluitie whereout thou giuest, like their necessitie whereout thou extortest: he is but poorly charitable, that hauing made a hundred beggars, releecues two.⁴⁰

Were elite women to be most reviled in this seemingly least controversial aspect of their lives, not only for pretending godliness but for depriving the needy through uncharitable charity? To fail in charity was to fail as a Christian, rejecting the poor in Christ's image.⁴¹ Adams accused the elite neglecting to extend even corporal mercies to the poor who surrounded them:

Cosen not your selues, ye hypocrites; if ye will not doe it to his Church, to his poore ministers, to his poore members, neither would you to Christ: if you cloth not them, neither would you cloth Christ if he stood naked at your doores. Whiles you count that money lost, which Gods seruice receaueth of you, you cannot shake away Iudas from your shoulder.⁴²

The 'vileness' of this hypocrisy, for Adams, was in how well it covered untold abuses. He characterised hypocrisy as 'a stawking horse': 'vnder long praiers many a Pharisie deuours the poore, houses, goods and all.'⁴³ Such hypocrites were part of no community at all: 'because he weares Gods liuerie, the world will not be his mother; because his heart, habit, seruice is sinwedded, God will not be his father: he hath lost earth for heauens sake, and heauen for earths sake'.⁴⁴

Yet Adams railed with a purpose, to call those who might still listen to turn from the shameful example of their contemporaries to the proud reformed Edwardian and Elizabethan

⁴⁰ Adams, *The white deuil*, p. 35; J. Simon, *Education and Society in Tudor England* (Cambridge, 1966), p. 373.

⁴¹ Brigden, *London and the Reformation*, p. 80, 'Religion and Social Obligation' (1984), p. 102.

⁴² Adams, *The white deuil*, p. 15.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 29; OED, sv. 'stalking horse.'

⁴⁴ Adams, *The white deuil*, p. 31.

City tradition of charitable relief, and to use the institutions already established to continue that legacy.

I speake not to discourage your zeale, but to harden it, but to better it. Your zeale goes through the world, yee worthy Citizens: Who builds hospitalls? the Citie. Who is liberall to the distressed Gospell? the Citie. Who is euer faithfull to the Crowne? the Citie. Beloued your workes are good; oh doe not loose their reward through hypocrisie. I am not bitter, but charitable...⁴⁵

Of the supposedly newfangled practices to be given up, Adams singled out token, deathbed giving, and self-promotion in its sterile form of self-aggrandisement. His taunt ‘You loose your charitie whiles you giue glosingly, illiberally, too late: not a window you haue erected, but must beare your names’ was close to the bone.⁴⁶ The *Survey* recorded that Elizabeth, wife of Alderman Sir Francis Jones, had glazed a window in her father’s parish of St Lawrence Jewry in 1618 when repairs were made to the church, and put her name to this gift that relieved no one. St Lawrence Jewry suffered an embarrassment of such riches: on the same side as Elizabeth’s window the fabulously wealthy alderman Sir Baptist Hicks had erected his own monument, and opposite was that of Alderman Richard Pyott’s.⁴⁷

In the counties too, City women celebrated their charitableness, and might turn whole towns and their parish churches into arenas for their beneficence by establishing institutions and bequeathing objects whose primary purpose seemed to be to advertise their donor’s gift.⁴⁸ In Chipping Camden, Gloucestershire, Elizabeth and Sir Baptist Hicks erected a market house in the main street bearing their arms, and almshouses for six poor men and women lining the road to the parish church opposite their estate, bearing their arms on the eaves. In the early 1610s they built their mansion house costing £29,000 next to St James’s church, to which they added a porch to match the masonry of their house. The Hickses roofed the chancel, built a

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 34.

⁴⁶ J. Weetman, ‘Testamentary Piety and Charity in London, 1259-1370’, Oxford Univ. D. Phil thesis (2003), p. 194.

⁴⁷ Stow, *Survey*, pp. 819, 841; R. Ashton, ‘Hicks, Baptist, first Viscount Campden (1551?-1629)’, *ODNB*.

⁴⁸ J. Colson, ‘Local Communities in Fifteenth-Century London: Craft, Parish and Neighbourhood’, London Univ., Royal Holloway Ph. D thesis (2011), p. 240; Lang, ‘Social Origins and Social Aspirations’, pp. 41-5.

gallery, gave a window, and walled the churchyard. Baptist gave an altar cloth and cushion and two communion cups, and a huge Flemish brass falcon lectern, a carved pulpit and a bell, all of which prominently featured inscriptions recording his gift. Elizabeth survived Baptist by fourteen years. She ‘piously and carefully caused this monument to be erected as a testimonie of their mutual love’, as she recorded on the enormous marble funeral monument that swamps the south chapel. Their two effigies, carved wearing fur-lined robes, huge ruffs and cuffs, lie side by side on a tomb chest beneath a canopy supported by twelve columns. Elizabeth chose an epitaph for Baptist that recorded that he ‘disposed to charitable uses, in his lifetime a large portion to the value of £10,000’.⁴⁹

Even Munday, who enjoyed such close links to aldermen’s wives to whom he dedicated works glorifying their godliness, was sensitive enough to accusations of hypocrisy, to present an equivocal stance on self promotion by the elite as he edited and updated Stow’s *Survey*. Munday praised those who embodied the quiet, careful, everyday charity towards the poor who received alms directly from donors, or through anonymous donations to institutions from those who might be celebrated:

I could enter into a further relation, concerning some yet living, whose liberall bounty and most Christian charity, doth deserve no meane commendation...But because they account it honour enough to them, that divers poore people (in private) should rather sufficiently finde it, than the world (in publike) know it, I am content to spare their nomination...they who have beene so liberall in their life time, have (no doubt) set downe extraordinary determinations, which neither death, nor any deceiving Executors, can or shall frustrate and disappoint...God stirre up the mindes of many more, to imitate them in this tonguelesse liberality.⁵⁰

Yet self-promotion and charity could and did go hand in hand for the civic elite keen to exhort others to imitate their example.

Stow’s *Survey* repeatedly emphasised lifetime giving as the type of charity most worthy to be praised. It could never be guaranteed that testamentary bequests and foundations would

⁴⁹ Sherlock, *Monuments and Memory*, pp. 21, 41, 124.

⁵⁰ Stow, *Survey*, p. 104.

be performed due to any number of opportunities for negligence or greed. Alongside a general warning to the elite, the *Survey* gave celebration of the charity of women, many of whom had only recently died.

Women be forgetfull,
Children be unkinde,
Executors bee covetous,
and take what they finde.
If any body aske where
the deads goods became,
They answer;
So God mee helpe and holydome,
hee dyed a poore man.

And now of some women, Citizens wives, deserving memory, for example to posterity, shall be noted.⁵¹

The third of the women there named, Margaret Danne had featured in the first edition of the *Survey*, where Stow recorded that in 1570, as the widow of Sherrif William Danne, she gave £2,000 to charitable causes.⁵² Munday included this gift in his edition of 1633. Margaret, as William's executrix, established a loan-stock with his company, the Ironmongers, intended to raise £100 interest yearly to be put to charitable uses. But he noted the failure of her charities 'not performed in more than thirty yeeres' after her death, as a warning to women to prioritise lifetime charity, and to show extreme caution in making testamentary bequests.⁵³

Charity distributed to the poor throughout their lives would win elite women a reputation for relief and ensure that aid reached its intended recipients. Agnes Avenon née Huchen was a London mercer's daughter, who married two London mercers before marrying Sir Alexander Avenon, alderman and lord mayor. She enjoyed such a reputation for charity that she attracted the first surviving funeral epitaph when she died in 1570. John Phillips celebrated her charity and esteem in the community.⁵⁴ The *Survey* celebrated her well considered lifetime charity that

⁵¹ Ibid., p. 107.

⁵² Stow, *Survey* (1598), p. 81.

⁵³ Stow, *Survey* (1633), pp. 107-8.

⁵⁴ J. Phillips, *Epitaph on the death of the virtuous Matrone, the Ladie Mayoress...Agnes Avenon* (1570).

employed moderate discrimination in regular local relief. During her widowhood, Agnes used her relationship with the Mercers to provide weekly relief to the poor of her parish who attended church on the Sabbath:

in the time of her widdowhood, [she] left a foundation within the Mercers Hall in London, for thirteen penny loaves of good sweet bread, to be given (in her name) among thirteen poore folkes of this Parish of Saint *Laurence* in the Old Iewrie, every Sunday at Morning Prayer for ever, in the presence of the worshipfull of the same Parish'.⁵⁵

Women were notable in the *Survey* not only for the quality and quantity of their bequests, but also for their number. Four were commemorated in 1598 edition, but 42 in Munday's edition of 1633.⁵⁶ There were current and recently deceased examples of godly charitable women galore. The inclusion of women whose charity exemplified the ancient traditions of female charity in the City harked back to a charitable past, judiciously reformed, and perhaps only recently lost, in which lifetime giving was prioritised and celebrated by women's communities.⁵⁷

The celebration of elite women's charity remained the most effective way that accusations of vanity, luxury and hypocrisy could be refuted.⁵⁸ All three verse verse epitaphs on Helen Branch in 1594 focused on her charity, her giving during her godly life and her generosity in her will. 'S. P' celebrated Helen's habitual charity to her parish community, relieving where she saw need with the means she saw fittest: 'In Abchurch parish where she dwelt, the poore she alwaies fed,/ With mony, meat, with coales for fire, somtimes with drink & bread.' Phillips dedicated a stanza to Helen's wisdom in establishing a loan stock with the Drapers 'in her lifetime free', thereby ensuring through their management of her bequest that it would prove an enduring source of charity.⁵⁹

⁵⁵ Stow, *Survey*, p. 286.

⁵⁶ Archer, 'Charity of London Widows', pp. 178, 186.

⁵⁷ Archer, 'Nostalgia of John Stow', p. 21.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 18; Stow, *Survey*, p. 236.

⁵⁹ J. Phillips, *A commemoration of the life and death of the right worshipfull and vertuous ladie; Dame Helen Branch* (1594), Sigs. A5v, p. 6; S. P., *An epitaph of the vertuous life and death of the right worshipfull ladie, Dame Helen Branch* (1594), p. 4.

Lifetime giving is a notoriously elusive area of charitable giving to measure, particularly for women for whom wills are often the only surviving evidence of their charity, recording only what they gave at the end of their lives.⁶⁰ Helen Branch's will betrays nothing of the loan stock she entrusted to the Drapers in her lifetime.⁶¹ Yet the examples of women for whom evidence beyond their will survives—in Stow, in verse epitaphs, in company records, or in their funeral inscriptions—are suggestive of a wider culture of lifetime giving among elite City women. The *Survey* differentiated between lifetime and testamentary charity when women's charitable portfolios were summarized. The *Survey* suggested that part of their charitable responsibility was to give principally in life, when women could oversee their gifts themselves, and only bestow what they could not give away in their lifetimes through carefully crafted bequests in their wills.

Mary Ramsey enjoyed one of the *Survey*'s lengthiest entries among elite women because of her exceptional charitable profile, in which lifetime giving was carefully distinguished from testamentary bequests. Mary Ramsey alluded in her will to her charitable programme as a wife and as a widow, centred on relief of the orphans in Christ's Hospital, when she asked to be buried there:

...to which hospitall, I have heretofore in the lief of my late husband Sir Thomas Ramsey Knyghte conveyed and assured all such landes and tenementes whereof I was then seised of Inheritance to the reliefe of the poore children harbored...and to other good and charitable uses tending to the reliefe of the poore...[and] since the death [of him]...I purchased the manor...in Essex and have conveyed and assured the same to the said Hospital...⁶²

Mary knew the importance of making her charity known; her pensioners marched in red caps and blue coats embroidered 'M.R' in the City's annual celebration of charity at the Easter Spital sermons.⁶³ She left a portrait of herself in a gown of aldermanic red and black to Christ's

⁶⁰ Archer, *Pursuit*, p. 178.

⁶¹ TNA, PROB 11/83, fols. 234v- 236r.

⁶² TNA, PROB 11/98, fo. 191r.

⁶³ I. Archer, 'Ramsey [née Dale; other married name Avery], Mary, Lady Ramsey (d. 1601)', *ODNB*.

Hospital where it could be seen by the orphans whose education her beneficence had funded, her right hand resting on a manuscript which appears to be her will in which she augmented her already exceptional gifts to the hospital.⁶⁴ Mary set up charities that would relieve the poor yearly, focused on the seven corporal mercies, drawing on her personal knowledge of the poor as well as relying on the institutions of the hospitals, the parishes, the universities, and the companies to secure the enduring relief of poor widows, scholars, orphans, prisoners, the sick, and the injured, and to provide sermons and education.

These were besides the provisions of her will, also itemised, which emphasised her foundation of a hospital in her native Bristol, and relief of the poor in ten Essex parishes. But the *Survey* did not have unlimited space or interest in advertising all the bequests even of a Ramsey: ‘She gave beside, the summe of three thousand pounds, to other good and godly uses’ unspecified.⁶⁵ The *Survey* also recorded the two tables of Mary Ramsey’s testamentary bequests set up in St Bartholomew the Less. They called visitors to ‘Behold the Workes of God, done by his Servant, Dame MARY RAMSEY’, erected during her lifetime in 1596, and later added to. In a rare indication outside of wills of how women’s bequests worked, Munday recorded also Ramsey’s bequest to St Peter le Poer. Munday advertised Ramsey’s sense of responsibility as a landlord in London and the counties, using her connections to the corporation and the parish to ensure that discrimination in poor relief continued to be conducted with the consent of the parish elites forever:

by her Testament...gave to [City] one messuage...situated in the Parish of Saint *Peter the poore*...to the end that they should yeerely (after her decease) pay to the Parson and Churchwardens of this Parish, forty shillings, to be distributed among the poore...at the discretion of the Parson and the Churchwardens then being, and by direction and allowance of two of the chieftest Parishioners: And to the like use for ever, twenty shillings more yeerely for ever...in the County of *Northhampton*...⁶⁶

⁶⁴ Mary Ramsey, unknown artist, early seventeenth century, oil on canvas, 116 x 93 cm, Christ’s Hospital Foundation; R. Tittler, ‘Thomas Heywood and the Portrayal of Female Benefactors’, *Early Theatre*, 11 (2008), pp. 33-52; TNA, PROB 11/98, fols. 190v–193v.

⁶⁵ Stow, *Survey*, pp. 108-9.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 155, 348.

Mary Ramsey was to be celebrated as a woman of ideal charity, indulging in self-promotion only to spur others to imitate her worthy example, which was itself modelled on the best aspects of a Catholic London tradition of elite women's charity, rewritten as a reformed and fine-tuned instrument of poor relief and social reform by generations of reformed Protestant aldermen's wives and widows.

ii) Motivation and relief in London and the Counties

Munday rehearsed the famous story of the motivation behind Alice Owen's charity, as thanksgiving to God for the blessings of her life. As a child in Islington Fields an arrow destined for her head pierced her hat and 'shee made choice to expresse her thankfulnessse to GOD, upon the Altar of her charitable Almes-houses and Schoole' in Islington.⁶⁷ Such charity could only come from a place of sincerity as her lifetime of charitable giving attested.

In her will Alice barely alluded to her extensive lifetime giving, leaving £5 to the 'Schoolmaster of my Schoole lately settled in Clerkenwell'.⁶⁸ The *Survey* recorded that Alice's monument in St Mary's, Islington said nothing of her charity. Yet Munday's celebratory entry on Alice Owen emphatically recorded her extensive lifetime charity. The *Survey* celebrated her improvements to the fabric of churches and charitable institutions, alongside her direct relief of the poor. Alice required her almswomen to attend chapel, but she kindly provided for their comfort:

This Mistris *Alice Owen*, caused (in her life time) an Hospitall to bee builded at *Istington*, for tenne poore women, with very convenient roomes, and Gardens to them adjoyning.

Alice's lifetime and testamentary bequests were listed separately, but Munday made it clear which ought to be the more imitated. Lifetime charity was more reliable, more responsible, and more valuable, to the poor who would be continually relieved, and to the benefactor herself

⁶⁷ Ibid., pp. 10-11.

⁶⁸ TNA, PROB 11/122, fo. 148r.

who would be encouraged to greater charity by the approbation of the poor and of the community. Wealthy women had the means to prefer their extended kin as well as to aid the poor.

...at the time of her death, of children and childrens children, she had no lesse than two and twenty: A motive very able to hinder charity, especially in a worldly and covetous minde. Neverthelesse...she selected out so bountifull a portion for those poore members of Christ, that...justly terme her their liberall and mercifull mother.

Our knowledge of Alice Owen's motivation to charitable giving is exceptional. For most women, even those featured most thoroughly by the *Survey*, nothing is known of their individual motives. How typical was the charity of an Owen or a Ramsey? The scale of their giving was certainly exceptional, but were their intentions?

Further insight into the charity of women can be gained through qualitative and quantitative analysis of the sample of wills. What were women's priorities in their charitable giving beyond the home? How did they discriminate between worthy recipients of relief? How did they seek to make their charity effective, in their own lifetimes and in perpetuity? What was the nature of elite City women's charitable giving, and how was it shaped by their gender, marital status, religious outlook and their civic status?

Elite women in London pursued charitable endeavours in the multiple communities to which they belonged—their City parish, their ward, the City as a whole, the livery companies, and the counties. They relied heavily on their connections to City institutions to make their charities effective. Women mediated their charity through institutions where the officers could use their personal knowledge of their poor to ensure that relief reached the most worthy recipients.⁶⁹ For the simplest gifts, in which money or material relief simply needed to be distributed, it might suffice to appoint a trusted member of the community who could identify deserving individuals. Anne Harte left a gilt tankard to her kinsman John Chambers in thanks

⁶⁹ Schen, *Charity and Lay Piety*, pp. 170, 172; Weetman, 'Testamentary Piety and Charity', p. 180; Archer 'Charity of Early Modern Londoners', p. 232.

for his distributing the £5 she left for the poor of St Leonard's Shoreditch.⁷⁰ Julyan Style left £5 to the poor of six City parishes, to be distributed by their parsons, with the help of her widowed daughter who was the executor of her will.⁷¹ For anything more complicated, whether a one-off donation or regularly recurring relief, elite women preferred to charge institutions with the management of their charity, whether churchwardens, or the officers of hospitals, prisons and livery companies.⁷²

Many women gave one-off gifts to institutions freely, according only to the discretion of those who distributed it. Mary Ramsey gave £200 each to the Grocers, Drapers, Goldsmiths and Merchant Taylors to relieve the poor of the companies personally known to the officers. In bequests to institutions where the potential pool of beneficiaries was *all* its members, who were likely to be of a more mixed moral colour, many women specified the criteria to be used by officers identifying recipients, and how they ought to be relieved. Mary Ramsey was concerned that as many worthy City prisoners imprisoned for debt be relieved as possible by her gift of £500, but that it be used to relieve only those of 'good reporte, Common reputation and honest behaviour' with 'extraordinary respecte and compassion' and the money was 'to be used sparinglye as may be for the better observation of this my purpose to enlarge them that lye myserably imprisoned for small and trifling somes'.⁷³

Elite women felt their responsibility to relieve the poor of the Companies, and they trusted the Companies to manage their endowments.⁷⁴ Far from being rare as historians have suggested, 25% of aldermen's widows in the sample left stocks to City companies to provide loans to junior merchants, the proceeds of which could be put to further charitable use.⁷⁵ Often

⁷⁰ TNA, PROB 11/145, fo. 282v.

⁷¹ TNA, PROB 11/153, fo. 49v.

⁷² Archer, *Pursuit*, pp. 97-8.

⁷³ TNA, PROB 11/98, fo. 192r.

⁷⁴ Ben Amos, *Culture of Giving*, p. 181; I. Archer, 'The Livery Companies and Charity in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries', in I. Gadd, P. Wallis, *Guilds, society & economy in London, 1450-1800* (2002), pp. 15-28.

⁷⁵ Schen, *Charity and Lay Piety*, p. 197; Archer, 'Charity of London Widows', pp. 187, 199.

the charities which institutions were asked to manage relieved their own members. Agnes Prannell lent £100 to the Vintners to be lent to four men, two of them to be merchants, at £25 a man for three years, each bound with two sureties. The total £2.13s.4d of interest she ordered to be put to 'the mayntenance, and reliefe of the poore of the sayed companie...in monye, coles, or freyse to cloth them yearely before Christmas'.⁷⁶

Elite women also expected institutions to take on management of charities.⁷⁷ Alice Owen trusted the Brewers to maintain strict moral discipline after her death in the godly almshouses and school in Islington that she had founded in 1608.⁷⁸ Alice's rules were to be read twice a year to ten women who were to be relieved only so long as they remained widows and attended church, and boys from Islington and Clerkenwell were to be instructed towards apprenticeships in honest trades.⁷⁹ Most women offered companies nothing but prestige in recompense for the expensive and burdensome management of complex gifts and endowments. Elite women sometimes supported existing projects.⁸⁰ In 1615 Anne Allot left £100 for a loan stock to the Fishmongers, to be lent to two men for three years at a time, yielding a total interest of £4, destined for 'the poor of the lesser almshouse' in Croydon, Surrey, in £3 increments yearly 23 March 'when the said Company come to Croydon to celebrate the memorie of that Reverend Archbishop of blessed memorie John Whitgift' who founded the almshouses in 1596.⁸¹

Most widows in the sample left charity to relieve communities outside London.⁸² Just 7% of elite women left charity only within London, and just 4% left charity only to the counties,

⁷⁶ TNA, PROB 11/83, fols. 92v-93r.

⁷⁷ Archer, 'Charity of Early Modern Londoners', pp. 234-7; J. Ward, 'Godliness, Commemoration and Community: The Management of Provincial Schools by London Trade Guilds', in M. McClendon, J. Ward and M. MacDonald. (eds.), *Protestant identities: religion, society, and self-fashioning in post-Reformation England* (Stanford, 1999), pp. 141-57.

⁷⁸ McIntosh, 'Charity and Coercion', p. 473.

⁷⁹ LMA, CLC/L/BF/G/058/MS06817; LMA, CLC/L/BF/G/071/MS05480A; Ben Amos, *Culture of Giving*, pp.184-5, 159, 195; C. Bowden, 'Owen [née Wilkes], Alice (1547-1613)', ODNB.

⁸⁰ Ben Amos, *Culture of Giving*, p. 366.

⁸¹ TNA, PROB 11/131, fo. 20v.

⁸² Archer, *Pursuit*, p. 175.

but 89% left money both to London and the counties. This is a minimum figure, for it cannot account for lifetime giving which clearly included both London and the counties. These figures far exceed the quarter of Prerogative Court of Canterbury testators of a broader sample of the male civic elite calculated to have left charity to the counties from the wills of the male elite.⁸³ 53% of all the parishes to which City women left charity were in London, with no clear preponderance of particular parishes, and the remaining parishes to which City women left charity were in the counties. These parishes where women had family or owned property were mostly close to London: 7% were in Middlesex, 9% in Essex, 5% in Surrey, 9% in Kent, 7% in Hertfordshire, 7% in Berkshire, but women also remembered communities further afield, in Yorkshire, Shropshire, Devon, Wiltshire and Huntingdonshire.

While the City was the focus of the greatest volume and variety of women's charitable bequests, elite women also left generously to counties where they had kinship connections. City women often left similar or even equitable charity to parishes in London and in the counties. In 1604 Alice Barnham left gowns to fifty poor men and fifty poor women, half of whom were to be chosen from London, and half from Chichester where she was born.⁸⁴ Women intended their county charities to be administered through a similar reliance on the knowledge of the officers of county institutions as those in London, so that worthy recipients could be selected.⁸⁵ In 1634 Gertrude Style left the parishioners of Westerham, Kent, where she kept a home, £20 to purchase land worth 20s a year, to be distributed to the poor by the churchwardens and overseers of the poor.⁸⁶ Where trustworthy institutions or persons were not personally known, women made alternative provisions to ensure their money at least reached a charitable end. In 1615 Anne Allott left 20s a year for repairs to the church at Sandersted, Surrey, to whoever was dwelling in her house there at the time of her death, warning that if it was used for any other

⁸³ Archer, 'Charity of early modern Londoners', p. 237; Ben Amos, *Culture of Giving*, p. 366.

⁸⁴ TNA, PROB 11/104, fo. 53v.

⁸⁵ Schen, *Charity and Lay Piety*, p. 217.

⁸⁶ TNA, PROB 11/167, fo. 236r.

purpose the grant would cease and be redirected to an almshouse for the poor where it would be safe from private pockets.⁸⁷

City women frequently gave to the poor of their county communities whose needs were personally known to them, rather than relying completely on the discrimination of others. In 1594 Agnes Prannell left gowns worth 20s, and 3s4d each, to forty poor women, and of them to ‘twelve poor Almeswomen of the companye of the Vintners in London [her late husband Henry’s company]’ but specified that gowns must also be given to ‘mother Heven of Wickley in the countye of Surrye, and mother Hammond of Barkewey’ where she held property. Beyond that, Agnes trusted the judgement of those to whom she entrusted her will to seek out those in need: ‘rest to be ould impotent persons, past labour, such as my executor and overseers, shall think meete to be releevd’.⁸⁸

All the women in the sample gave to charity. Within the female elite, some women left a comparative widow’s mite. Women who had little wealth to disburse in their wills may have given generously to charity in their lifetimes. Those who had felt thwarted from giving as much charity as they would have liked or felt was expected of them, might explain their predicament in their will, a semi-public document. In 1613 Susanna Saltonstall could leave only £5 to the poor of South Ockenden, where she was buried, 40s to the poor of St Dunstan in the East and Barkway, Hertfortshire. This seeming lack of generosity, she explained, was due to ‘the hindrance that I have sustained through my...[estranged] son Samuel’ who owed her £1600. ‘I have remembered only those who I have thought to have most heed of my helpe’.⁸⁹ Yet small sums were given and valued. In 1627 Mary Farrington had little wealth to dispose of when she wrote her will; she left only 40s to the orphans at Christ’s Hospital, and £3.6s.8d to the poor of Totteridge where she died, besides 20s to her maid Margaret.⁹⁰ Alice Herne left her goods

⁸⁷ TNA, PROB 11/131, fo. 20v.

⁸⁸ TNA, PROB 11/83, fo. 92v.

⁸⁹ TNA, PROB 11/121, fols. 71r-v.

⁹⁰ TNA, PROB 11/151, fols. 199v-200r.

inventorially in 1629 to her kin, £10 to the poor of ‘St Fosters [Vedast] parishe in Cheapside’ and just £5 ‘to the inhabitants of the six almshouses ‘erected by my husband in the burrough at Henden’ and £5 to the poor there.’⁹¹

Alice Spencer alone left very little charity in a will of 1609 which suggests that she had sufficient wealth to be extremely generous. Alice’s husband Sir John Spencer had been widely reviled in the City for his uncharitable disposition in spite of his dizzying wealth. Nothing was given in charity from his will of 1610 which was suppressed amid family intrigue, yet it was rumoured to have contained £20,000 of charitable bequests, and there was a generous dole at his funeral.⁹² Alice died a few weeks after Sir John and left huge amounts to family and friends in her will, but the charitable therein is startlingly limited. She left ‘Mary Fuller my servante’ ten pounds, and a total of £25 to three hospitals.⁹³ Stow records that she gave just £70 towards relief in the hospitals during her lifetime.

Across the spectrum of total sums given to charity in wills, and of religious confession, City women adhered to civic priorities and traditional patterns of giving, that focused on ministration of the seven corporal mercies through the parish, the ward, the hospitals, the prisons, and the companies, to relieve the poor in London and the counties. This was the type of charity that the *Survey* suggested was the most worthy to be praised, and on which verse epitaphs and lives, and funeral sermons on elite women focused as an expression of love for one’s neighbour that spoke of sincerity.⁹⁴ Stephen Denison witnessed Elizabeth Juxon’s tireless attentions to the need of the poor. Even wives who had no allowance from their husbands could attend to the corporal needs of the poor:

⁹¹ TNA, PROB 11/155, fo. 253v.

⁹² I. Archer, ‘Spencer, Sir John (d. 1610)’, *ODNB*.

⁹³ TNA, PROB 11/115, fo. 166r.

⁹⁴ Brigden, ‘Religion and Social Obligation’, p. 102; Colson, ‘Local Communities’, p. 219; Ben Amos, *Culture of Giving*, p. 242.

She was like vnto *Dorcas*, she made garments, and that both woollen and linnen, & gaue them vnto poore Christians, and to their children. She was a friend of the fatherlesse and of the widow...⁹⁵

Elite women relieved the corporal needs of the poor, and were anxious that those in the most need ought to benefit. In 1619 Elizabeth Ryvers left £5 to the parish of Hadlow, Kent, 'to the poorest and most elderly'.⁹⁶ The richest women had money to spare on the less frequently relieved in the City, such as those who had been disabled. In 1601 Mary Ramsey left £20 or 40s for life, and a coat and shoes, to ten 'poore maymed souldiers which have served in the warre'.⁹⁷

City prisons and hospitals were the institutions to which the elite most frequently made bequests. Poor prisoners, their relief or ransom, were very widely relieved: 62.5% of women gave to poor prisoners. Many women gave to multiple prisons and counters: of those who left money to prisoners, 6% gave to six prisons and counters, 19% gave to two, 9% gave to four or five, 6% gave to three and only 3% to just one. The hospitals founded in the reign of Edward VI remained hugely popular conduits of relief.⁹⁸ 69% of women left money through the hospitals in their wills, of which 31% gave to only one hospital, 13% gave to all four hospitals, 19% gave to two, and 6% gave to three, and some women aided them in their lifetimes.

Women did not habitually take in foundling children to relieve them in the household, or at least this was not recorded in their wills. Yet women continued to offer relief to orphans through Christ's Hospital, the most often and most generously relieved institution in the sample, where the children could be educated and disciplined by the City.⁹⁹ Besides Mary Ramsey's extensive charity to the hospital, other women favoured it in their bequests. In 1612 Margaret Slaney gave the princely sum of £300 to Christ's to purchase lands to support the

⁹⁵ S. Denison, *The monument or tombe-stone...* (1620), p. 114; W. Hervey, *Epicedium, a funerall song, upon the vertuous life, and godly death of the right worshipfull the Lady Helen Branch* (1594), p. 5. It is not known why he wrote this at all. It is very uncommon; S.P., *An epitaph* (1594), p. 4.

⁹⁶ TNA, PROB 11/133, fo. 504v.

⁹⁷ TNA, PROB 11/98, fo. 191v.

⁹⁸ Brigden, *London and the Reformation*, p. 477.

⁹⁹ Archer, *Pursuit*, pp. 154-63, 'Charity of London Widows', p. 189; Schen, *Charity and Lay Piety*, p. 196, 213.

orphans.¹⁰⁰ In the same year Anne Glover left £50 to Christ's, compared to the £10 she left to the three other hospitals.¹⁰¹ Elite women were keen to be associated with the relief of the orphans. In 1607 Elizabeth Bowyer left £5 to the orphans 'soe that they be present at my funerall', the expectation of all testators who left even 40s to their relief.¹⁰²

iii) Independence

The widespread culture of elite women relieving the corporal needs in each of their communities created expectations that limited women's freedom of action in their charitable giving. It was expected that relief would be offered by women even in their rich, small, intramural home parishes where need was not greatest. When Elizabeth Billingsley made her will as a wife in 1607, so intense was this pressure that she fulfilled popular expectation against own assessment of the needs of her community, leaving £3 to the poor of St Mary Magdalen Milk Street 'being not many nor greatly distressed with povertye yet in token of remembrance'.¹⁰³ Ideals of female virtue in the City created expectations that women had to continually fulfil in order to maintain their reputations. Joseph Symonds' dedication in 1639 of *The case and cure of a deserted soule* to Rebecca Romeney was made in recognition of her charity which the dedication advertised, thereby creating even more expectation of her continuing benevolence.

Along other excellencies, your charitable disposition, like a rich fountaine, running with large streames of goodnesse many wayes, renders you deservedly honoured of all. It is a true noblenesse to bee of a large and diffusive spirit... Madam I beseech you seeke to bee still more blessed in close conjunction, and sociall operation of true charity, and sincere piety, that they may stand as unwithering Crownes upon your head: and when your old age shall give up to approaching death, you maye go to Heaven full of faith, and full of workes.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰⁰ TNA, PROB 11/121, fo. 145r.

¹⁰¹ TNA, PROB 11/133, fo. 333v.

¹⁰² TNA, PROB 11/110, fo. 133r; Archer, 'Charity of Early Modern Londoners', p. 175.

¹⁰³ TNA, PROB 11/ 109/33, fo. 16v.

¹⁰⁴ J. Symonds, *The case and cure of a deserted soule* (1639), Sigs. A3r-A4v.

The inclusion of many recently deceased City women's charities in the *Survey* only increased this pressure; the entries were short, but indicated that women who could afford to give less extensively than those of a Ramsey or an Owen, could still expect recognition of their efforts.¹⁰⁵

A widow's freedom of action in giving was also constrained by her to continue or complete her husband's charitable foundations and preserve their joint reputation. Anne Pemberton's husband Sir James had been Mayor in 1611 and prided himself on his charity, which was commemorated twice in Munday's edition of the *Survey*. Pemberton's funeral monument of 1613 celebrated that

in his life time [he] founded a Free-schoole at *Heskin* in the Parish of *Ekklesden*, in *Lancashire*, [his native parish] endowing it with fifty pounds yeerely.¹⁰⁶

Anne was Sir James's sole executrix, but her own will records that it fell to her to endow lands to maintain the school's annuity of £50, for which she also obtained royal letters patent, because Sir James's had made an endowment that his estate could not support.¹⁰⁷ Anne had been backed into a corner by a subtle threat to her reputation from the school in Lancashire when she had initially allowed the 'drouping' of its fortunes after Sir James's death. William Leigh preached a sermon before Anne at the school on St James's Day at the celebration of its foundation in 1614. The author of the funeral sermon on the godly Katherine Brettergh, Leigh knew how to coerce Anne to fulfil expectations of a godly elite woman.¹⁰⁸ He expounded from a pointed choice of text, Daniel. 12. 3. 'To maintain her husband's reputation and her own, Anne would have to maintain his school. The publication of the sermon in London held Anne to her eventual decision to support Sir James's foundation from her own wealth:

it ioyeth us much here in these Northern parts to heare, see, and feele how fully you have perfected a worke so well begun...being your Ladyship's pleasure, it should be so kept, as formerly....

¹⁰⁵ Stow, *Survey*, p. 109.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., pp. 106, 322-3.

¹⁰⁷ TNA, PROB 11/146, fo. 277r; TNA, PROB 11/122, fols. 141r-142v.

¹⁰⁸ S. Wright, 'Leigh, William (1550-1639)', *ODNB*.

Anne had decided that her best option was to make the project her own.¹⁰⁹

Wills generally attest to a high degree of independence in widows' charitable bequests; women favoured the poor personally known to them, and institutions to which they had connections, and pursued religious agendas of their own.¹¹⁰ Women were concerned to make their charity effective in both lifetime gifts and testamentary bequests. The evidence of women's extensive lifetime giving suggests that they were wary of the corruption of executors and overseers, even though these were most often their closest male kin: sons or sons-in-law.¹¹¹ Women who had the opportunity to make a widowed daughter an executor sometimes took it. Women characteristically employed the self-interest of men, even their closest kin, to induce them to fulfil bequests to others women and also the poor, the elderly and children. Elite women promised male kin financial incentives to ensure the fulfilment of bequests, threatening punitive withdrawal of those incentives if their terms were violated.¹¹² Elite women also characteristically employed the self-interest of officers in City institutions who would gain prestige from the safeguarding, management and distribution of relief, often to the poor of their own institutions. Gertrude Style left 20s a year to the poor of St Margaret Lothbury to be distributed by the churchwardens, on condition that she receive free burial inside the church, and she bound the whole parish in £40 to perform this. Women attempting to secure large endowments and loan stocks as well as more modest gifts learned these techniques from one another that would ensure that men diligently pursued the execution of women's charity.

Thirty-one per cent of women left types of gifts to women specifically that were not left to men. Gifts given to large numbers of unnamed women characteristically aimed to relieve poor young maids by leaving money for a dowry, or gave to relieve elderly widows who were

¹⁰⁹ W. Leigh, *Dauids palme and cedar shewing the reward of the righteous... preached at Eccleston church in Lancashire; Iuly, 25. 1614* (1615), dedicatory epistle, Sigs. A4r-A8r.

¹¹⁰ Archer, 'Charity of London Widows', p. 178.

¹¹¹ Ibid., p. 238; R. Houlbrooke, *Death, Religion and the Family in England, 1480-1750* (Oxford, 1998), pp. 61-2.

¹¹² Testamentary manipulation based on an attitude of 'sorority' is a subject beyond the remit of this thesis, but I hope to explore it elsewhere.

not sufficiently provided for. In 1584 Elizabeth Nicholas left £100 of the residue of her estate for 'poor maides marriages', specifying that no individual was to receive more than 10s.¹¹³ In 1622 Mary Weld left loans-stocks with the Merchant Taylors and Skinners of £100 and £200 respectively, the interest from which she intended for 'relief and sustenance of poor decayed housekeepers or widows of the same company' at the feast 'commonly called Christmas'.¹¹⁴ Women preferred female legatees, either leaving more to them or types of bequests uniquely tailored to their gendered needs, particularly as widows, that might be overlooked by male testators.¹¹⁵ Elite women bequeathed greater numbers of gowns to poor women to walk in their funerals.¹¹⁶ In 1612 Anne Glover left gowns to sixty poor women, and only six poor men.¹¹⁷ In the same year Margaret Slaney left gowns for 100 women, to walk in her funeral.¹¹⁸ In 1624 Elizabeth Craven left 40 poor men gowns and 12d each, but to 100 poor women a gown and kerchief and 12d.¹¹⁹ Women often specified that the poor women receiving gowns ought to be drawn from their communities. In 1607 Elizabeth Bowyer left gowns to 50 poor women, five to be selected by her executors from St Bartholomew Exchange 'where I late dwelled', and five from Hackney where 'likewise I late dwelled', and in 1625 Margery Pyott left gowns to 50 poor women, 20 to be from Layton, Essex 'where I usually dwell'.¹²⁰ Other women desired *only* poor women to walk with their corpse, and prioritised their own communities and the poor known to them personally. In 1588 Margaret Bonde provided gowns for 50 women 'to be worne by them...that shall accompany my bodie to the place of burial', most to come from

St Margaret in Newfishstreet, St Dunstan in the East and St Helen near Bishopsgate...my will is that David Houghe his wife and Morton the gardner his wife to be two of them and other women to be taken in ells wheare to full upp the saide number of fiftie women.¹²¹

¹¹³ TNA, PROB 11/65, fo. 349v.

¹¹⁴ TNA, PROB 11/141, fols. 299v-231v.

¹¹⁵ A. Erickson, *Women and Property in early modern England* (1993), p. 228.

¹¹⁶ Archer, 'Charity of London Widows', p. 191.

¹¹⁷ TNA, PROB 11/121, fo. 125r.

¹¹⁸ TNA, PROB 11/133, fo. 335r.

¹¹⁹ TNA, PROB 11/143, fo. 492r.

¹²⁰ TNA, PROB 11/145, fo. 231r; TNA, PROB 11/110, fols. 133r-v.

¹²¹ TNA, PROB 11/79, fo. 77v.

Most elite women gave to the poor of their communities whose needs and characters they had personally discerned. 75% of women left money to named poor recipients in their wills, and 72% of women remembered poor from beyond their own household. Women felt a responsibility to relieve their own extended kin amongst the poor. In 1622 Mary Weld left £160 to ‘poor kindred of my fathers and mothers side...which I knowe not or whome I may forgett’, but if none could be found then the sum was to be distributed to the other poor kindred who had already been left small legacies by name.¹²² Even women disbursing large sums to charity in their will carefully itemised small sums to be given to named poor, primarily in their own neighbourhoods, particularly the widows of clergy and local officers, but also in other localities across the City.¹²³ In 1612 Anne Glover remembered ‘Goodwife Tripp’ with 40s.¹²⁴ In 1625 Anne Hart left 40s to ‘Goodwife Burkens’, and £3 to the ‘widow of parson Hayward of St Mary Woolchurch’.¹²⁵ In 1627 Ursula Brooke left 40s to a local porter John Williams, and £3 to ‘the widow Androwes, late wife of Robert Androwes, late Bedell of the ward where I live’. She also left ‘Goodwife Wollaston our late Sexton’s wife’ 20s and gown, alongside £50 to six named ‘widows of decayed ministers’, and £10 to unnamed decayed ministers to be selected by her executors.¹²⁶ Elite women were particularly familiar with the female poor in their communities and especially keen to relieve women who were their neighbours, their kin and vulnerable in old age.

Women also felt responsible for poor tenants of their house. They might rent to them at affordable rates, as part of good stewardship of their wealth and influence.¹²⁷ Grisild Woodroffe, daughter of alderman Stephen Kyrton and widow of Sir Nicholas Woodroffe was

¹²² TNA, PROB 11/141, fo. 232v.

¹²³ Colson, ‘Local Communities’, p. 298.

¹²⁴ TNA, PROB 11/121, fo. 146v.

¹²⁵ TNA, PROB 11/145, fo. 283v.

¹²⁶ TNA, PROB 11/153, fols. 490-491v.

¹²⁷ Heal, *Hospitality*, pp. 125.

praised by the *Survey*, for she ‘kept those houses downe Limestreet in good reparations, never put out but one Tenant, tooke no fines, nor raised rents for them, which was tenne shillings the piece yeerely’.¹²⁸ In 1599 Margaret Wythens left gowns to 60 poor women ‘whereof my poor tenants ‘Maidenhead Alley in ‘Thamstreete...to be of the said number’.¹²⁹ In 1627 Julyan Style remembered by name her tenants of her two ‘messuages on the southside of Westchape and the Cheapside in the parish of Pancras near the great conduit’.¹³⁰

Women left funeral dinners for their communities. 31% of women left a company a funeral dinner, though only 3% could afford to entertain more than one company in this manner. Most women cultivated particular loyalty to one. Historians have questioned the extent to which the funeral dinner retained any function in poor relief by the early seventeenth century when testators began to specify that only the elite of their company or their kin and friends might attend, or left two socially segregated dinners for the elite and the poor.¹³¹ Some women left dinners only to the elite. In 1612 Margaret Slaney left £20 to the Skinners for a dinner for the Master and Wardens.¹³² Women who left a dinner specifically for all members of the company actually left two distinct sums for two separate dinners, like Alice Owen who in 1613 left £20 to the Master and Wardens of the Brewers for their dinner, and £10 for a dinner for the ‘yeomandrie’.¹³³

The provision of a funeral dinner at the home of the deceased was part of hospitality as well as public relief, and an opportunity for commensality between the elite and their poorer neighbours.¹³⁴ The social composition of these funeral dinners, for the parish and for friends and kin is less clear. Traditionally funeral dinners had not necessarily been open events for all

¹²⁸ Stow, *Survey*, p. 159.

¹²⁹ TNA, PROB 11/95, fo. 279v.

¹³⁰ TNA, PROB 11/153, fo. 50rv.

¹³¹ Archer, *Pursuit*, pp. 95-6; Schen, *Charity and Lay Piety*, pp. 112, 167-8.

¹³² TNA, PROB 11/133, fo. 333v.

¹³³ PROB 11/122, fo. 148v.

¹³⁴ Heal, *Hospitality*, pp. 82, 319-2, 336.

comers. At the funeral of alderman Sir William Roche in 1523, 'the mourners' at the refreshments before the funeral and the dinner afterwards seems to denote the civic elite:

Then the ladys and gentylwomen, as the aldermen's wyfes and others, which, after dirige, cam home to his house and dranke, where they had spice-brede and comfetts, wyne, ale, and beere... On the morrow, the mourners went again in order to the church... After which... in order, again the mourners, my lord mayor, and others, returned to the house of the said Mr. Roche, where they dined all.¹³⁵

Yet Henry Machyn's accounts of funerals suggest that some aldermen's wives offered free access to funeral dinners, alongside sending food gifts within the parish and the wider City to worshipful poor. At the funeral of

good mastores Luwen, wedowe, latte the wyff of master Thomas Luwen yrmonger and altherman [in 1562]... dyd pryche for here master Goodman the dene of Westmynster; and all the crafte of the Yrmongers ther; and after to here plase, for ther was a grett dener for as mony as wold cum, and after was sent spyse bred to evere howse and about the cette unto worshephulle men and women.¹³⁶

It is possible that the poor might have been among those invited to the funeral dinners of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century. In 1607 Elizabeth Bowyer left instructions with her executor to

provide a dynner convenyient for both the Mourners, and other my deare loveinge friends and acquaintance which I desire maie be invited thereto: And doe hope and pray that my sonne Anderson aforesaid will lend his nowe dwelling howse in London, both for my bodie to be carryed out, And for my funerall dynner to be performed.¹³⁷

When women left charity to large numbers of poor not personally known to them, these bequests often lacked any instruction (at least within the will) for criteria against which worthy recipients were to be chosen. Rather, women relied on the discretion of the officers to whom the poor were personally known. Blacks were still given in large numbers to the poor by elite women, not least to those individually named in their wills, but also to unknown poor. Of the sample, 19% of women specified that they wanted no pomp at their funerals, but this was not

¹³⁵ *The Diary of Henry Machyn, Citizen and Merchant-Taylor of London (1550-1563)*, ed. J. Nichols, (Camden Society, old ser., 42, 1848), p. xxi.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 294-5.

¹³⁷ TNA, PROB 11/110, fo. 134r.

incompatible with the giving of blacks, and half of women left blacks to the poor, typically leaving either c.50-60 or c.100-150 blacks to the poor.¹³⁸ Blacks were not necessarily left indiscriminately, but like other bequests to the poor executors or institutions were expected to select worthy recipients. In 1622 Mary Weld left specified that ten of the poor receiving blacks must be of Southgreen in Middlesex, and twenty the 'poorest old men' of the Grocers.¹³⁹ More women left funeral doles than left blacks, 25%, but still a minority. This might attest to a dislike for the token relief of the poor motivated by hope of worldly reputation, even amid a wider portfolio of much more targeted forms of charity.¹⁴⁰ Some women did leave doles indiscriminately, to be given to whoever turned up in need of relief, particularly in the crisis of the mid to late 1590s. No woman at any time between 1580-1620 matched the godly severity of Alderman Richard Elkin's instruction in 1593, as the crisis began to bite, that recipients of his dole ought only to be given to 'suche as can saie the lordes prayer the duties of their belefe and the tenne commaundements in englishe without the booke'.¹⁴¹ In 1594 Agnes Prannell left a dole of £5 to be distributed 'at my buriall to such poore people as shall come thether'.¹⁴² Other women at least had an eye to public order at the time of their funeral; in 1599 Margaret Wythens left twenty shillings for a dole to 'be distributed to the poore one day before my buryall' which might be advertised only within the parish.¹⁴³ Women continued to leave doles to their communities to be distributed by churchwardens, well into the seventeenth century. In 1627 Gertrude Style left a £3 dole to both her London and Kent parishes, where they could be distributed by the churchwardens to those they deemed fit.¹⁴⁴ In this way elite women left to

¹³⁸ Archer, 'Charity of Early Modern Londoners', p. 234.

¹³⁹ TNA, PROB 11/141, fo. 233r.

¹⁴⁰ Archer, 'Charity of Early Modern Londoners', p. 235; Archer, 'Charity of London Widows', p. 187; Lake, 'Charitable Christian Hatred', p. 167.

¹⁴¹ Archer, *Pursuit*, p. 175; PROB 11/55, fo. 207; Schen, *Charity and Lay Piety*, p. 122.

¹⁴² TNA, PROB 11/83, fo. 92v.

¹⁴³ TNA, PROB 11/95, fo. 297v.

¹⁴⁴ TNA, PROB 11/167, fo. 238r.

their neighbours, but only to those who conformed to the ideals they shared with the governing officers of their communities.¹⁴⁵

When elite women did leave more specific instructions as to who was to be relieved, need was frequently the only basis of discrimination. In 1599 Margaret Wythens left 20s to the 'poorest householders' of her parish and of St Magnus the Martyr and St Mary at Hill, as judged by her executors, her son and the churchwardens, to be given four days before Christmas for nine years.¹⁴⁶ The richest women could afford to leave large sums flexibly, to meet need where it arose. In 1584 Elizabeth Nicholas left £100 to poor men and women 'not able to maintain themselves by their labour and trade dwelling in London'.¹⁴⁷ In 1624 Elizabeth Craven, noted by John Chamberlain to be 'the richest widow that ever died of a London lady', left £100 to whichever parishes in London and the liberties seemed most in need.¹⁴⁸ In 1625 Elizabeth, widow of Alderman Geoffrey Elwes left £120 to all 25 wards in London, for poor relief was needed everywhere.¹⁴⁹

Others intended their charity to be extended only to those of good conduct or moral character. In 1612 Margaret Slaney accounted for need and character when she left £200 to the relief of 'poore and worthie ministers', naming six men she had identified herself to receive £10.¹⁵⁰ In 1622 her daughter Mary Weld left £500 for the exhibition and maintenance of eight poor scholars, at £4 a year, to the 'most studious and applicable to learninge and addicted to the study of Divinity', but reserved the right to relieve her own as a priority: 'if any of my kyndred or friends shall be of the same college, they are to be appointed first'.¹⁵¹ A few women were much more specific, requiring those distributing their charity to ensure the godliness of its

¹⁴⁵ Archer, *Pursuit*, p. 175; Schen, *Charity and Lay Piety*, pp. 93, 112-3, 182-3; K. Wrightson, *English Society, 1580-1680* (1982), pp. 151-2.

¹⁴⁶ TNA, PROB 11/95, fo. 29v.

¹⁴⁷ TNA, PROB 11/65, fo. 349v.

¹⁴⁸ TNA, PROB 11/143, fo. 492r; I. Archer, 'Craven, Sir William (c.1545-1618)', *ODNB*.

¹⁴⁹ TNA, PROB 11/147, fo. 129v.

¹⁵⁰ TNA, PROB 11/133, fols. 330v-331r.

¹⁵¹ TNA, PROB 11/141, fo. 230v.

recipients. Sometimes this was implied; 16% of women left money to poor ministers, and 6% to poor ministers' widows, named by them or selected by their executors. Others intended their charity to inculcate godliness in those they relieved directly.

Not all women's educational charities, even those established by the godly elite, were established with an avowedly godly purpose beyond the setting up of youth in honest callings. In 1612 Margaret Slaney left £3 a year with the Grocers for the 'bynding forth of poor men's children to some good manual trades' in West Wickham, Kent, the parish of her godly daughter and son-in-law the Lennards, to be chosen by her executors and the lords of the manors in the local area.¹⁵² The provision of a basic education for the poor who could thereby understand the Gospel was a godly form of charity.¹⁵³ But only 9% of women left money to a school.¹⁵⁴ Mary Ramsey was particularly interested in education and in 1601 left £20 a year as a stipend for a schoolmaster for her free grammar school in Essex, and £20 a year to Christ's Hospital for 'a wryting schoole with a master and usher to teach aswell poore mens Children of the Citty of London, as Children of the said hospitall'.¹⁵⁵ In 1622 Mary Weld established a Sunday school for the sole purpose of the religious education of children in the counties. She left £200 with the minister and curate of West Wickham, for the curate weekly to catechize every child and servant of the manor house 'whereby they may learne to know God and their Duty to wards him and their superiors to be instructed on the ground of religion and of the Christian faithe', and the same to Knebworth, Hertfordshire for children and servants of the manor 'where my nephew William Litton esq now dwelleth'.¹⁵⁶

School teaching was part of a wider charitable intention to extend godly learning, which women also pursued through the relief of poor preachers and benefices and the provision of

¹⁵² I. Archer, 'Weld [née Slaney], Mary, Lady Weld (bap. 1560?, d. 1623)', *ODNB*; TNA, PROB 11/133, fo. 233v.

¹⁵³ Simon, *Education and Society*, p. 403.

¹⁵⁴ Thomson, 'Piety and Charity', p. 195; Simon, *Education and Society*, p. 373.

¹⁵⁵ TNA, PROB 11/98, fo. 191v.

¹⁵⁶ TNA, PROB 11/141, fo. 230v.

sermons. Godly women with sufficient means and a particular understanding of the importance of preaching left funds for lecture cycles, particularly to provide preaching on week days, so that those inclined might have access to preaching every day of the week.¹⁵⁷ Just 6% of elite women left money for sermons in their wills (excluding funeral sermons). Margaret Nicholson charged her executor to find ‘some sufficient preacher for a lecture or sermon one daie in the weeke for the space of a yeare after my death; to be preached within St Michael at the lower end of Cheapside where I desire my corps may be buried’, instructing him to allow the preacher £10 in the first week, and the rest only at the end. Yet when Margaret’s circumstances changed she revoked the lecture series ‘for special causes’.¹⁵⁸ Margaret Slaney and her daughter Mary Weld endowed lectures in the City, to be administered by the parishes that would benefit from them. In a codicil to her will of 1612, Margaret Slaney left funds with the parson, churchwardens and parishioners of St Swithins London Stone to buy land worth £6.13s.4d for the perpetual maintenance of the lecture.¹⁵⁹ In 1622 Mary Weld left £120 in trust with the Merchant Taylors for preachers to lecture in the mornings at the favourite puritan parish of St Antholins, and £300 to the churchwardens and parishioners of St Olave Jewry to buy property in the name of twelve feoffees to maintain a ‘Divinity Lecture every week on Wednesday for ever’, and the preacher to receive 10s a sermon. She specified that the preacher should be ‘good, grave and learned...studied and carefull in his and thier callinge’, but, anticipating friction, stipulated that either the parish minister ‘shall give way and permitt that such a godly and learned minister’ should preach, or if in three years the problem could not be solved, St Swithins London Stone would receive the endowment.¹⁶⁰ Other godly women left endowments for lectureships within their budgets. In 1588 Margaret Bonde left a lecture series for the year after her death, bequeathing £4 to St Helen’s Bishopsgate for ‘godly preachers who shall preache twelve

¹⁵⁷ Schen, *Piety and Lay Charity*, p. 140.

¹⁵⁸ TNA, PROB 11/157, fo. 24r.

¹⁵⁹ TNA, PROB 11/133, fo. 335r.

¹⁶⁰ P. Seaver, *The Puritan Lectureships: the politics of religious dissent, 1560-1662* (Stanford CA, 1970), p. 158; TNA, PROB 11/141, fols. 227v-228r.

sermons for the edifyinge of well disposed people in the said parishe...uppon severall sondaies in one yeere next after my decease'.¹⁶¹ In 1625 Anne Harte left a £4 annuity to St Swithins to support the 'godly Lecture of Divinity' to be preached 'on tewesdaie every week in the afternoon', adding to Margaret Slaney's fund for the lecture.¹⁶²

Elite women also sought to support preachers struggling to make up an income. In 1625 Margerie Pyott left £50 from the residue of her estate to relieve clergy in London, 'poor ministers such as are painfull in preaching the word of god and want meanes to maintayne their charges' and as 'shall seem meeke'.¹⁶³ In 1612 Mary Weld left £100 with the Merchant Taylors for the minister of the parish of Edmonton, Hertfordshire 'where my late husband dwelte', at £6 a year 'to the intent that the said place may be supplied with a more learned and able minister then the present maytenance belonginge to it will afford'.¹⁶⁴ The much grander schemes of Mary Weld and her mother Margaret Slaney to buy up impropriated benefices better to support ministers and improve standards of clerical provision were unique. In 1612 Margaret Slaney anticipated that her £2000 endowment to the Grocers for the 'purchasing, restoring and reverting againe to the Church of the Impropriated benefices...' might prove difficult to administer through the company, when she asked Parliament 'at any session' after her death to make a statute to 'ratifie and confirm' her bequest.¹⁶⁵ The experience of the difficulty of executing this bequest impressed upon her executors, her two daughters Mary Weld and Elizabeth Lennard, the need for Mary's own scheme to be more carefully thought out. The cooperation of elite women, particularly mothers and daughters, learning directly from the strategies of earlier generations has been overlooked. In 1622 Mary left her endowment of £2000 with the Merchant Taylors, although their reluctance to take it on meant that it was

¹⁶¹ TNA, PROB 11/73, fo. 77v.

¹⁶² Seaver, *Lectureships*, pp. 162-3; TNA, PROB 11/ 145, fo. 283v.

¹⁶³ TNA, PROB 11/145, fo. 233r.

¹⁶⁴ TNA, PROB 11/141, fo. 30v.

¹⁶⁵ TNA PROB 11/133, fo. 333v.

eventually taken up by the Haberdashers.¹⁶⁶ Her instructions included a scheme to enlarge the remit of her charity over time whereby 1/3 of the profit of parsonages not used to support the incumbent would be saved to buy up more benefices. She appealed to the godly sensibilities of twelve feoffees who would provide for each benefice a resident minister who could ‘expound the word of God every Sabbath, perform Christian duties and administration of the sacraments’. She charged them to administer her charity diligently

even as they love or tender the service of Almighty God, or the propagation of Christian Religion or the increase of Christ’s Church, or the benefit and maintenance of faythfull ministers and preachers of God’s word...¹⁶⁷

iv) Partnership

The cooperative charitable partnerships in which women took part most often were with their spouses, coordinating efforts in lifetime giving spanning their marriages as well as in their wills. This voluntary mutual support was celebrated by the *Survey*. Stow commemorated the partnership of Sir Thomas and Mary Ramsey, to emphasise that wives whose husbands allowed them the resources with which to cultivate their charitable giving would prove more charitable widows and more likely to support husbands’ charities after their decease. Sir Thomas was President of Christ’s Hospital from 1582 and it was as a wife that Mary began her grand programme of relief there that she perfected as a widow after 1590.

...about the yeare 1577. Dame *Mary Ramsey* wife to Sir *Thomas Ramsey* Mayor, being seased of landes in fee simple of her inheritance to the yearely value of 243. pound, by his consent gaue the same to *Christs* Hospitall in *London*, towards reliefe of poore children there... by monumentes erected in *Christes* Hospitall: which gift she afterward in her widowhode confirmed, and greatly augmented.¹⁶⁸

The couple endowed the hospital with lands to support St Bartholomew’s, London prisons, and scholars and fellows at Peterhouse, Cambridge, and for the orphans. As a widow, Mary added

¹⁶⁶ Archer, ‘Charity of London Widows’, pp. 197-8, ‘Weld [née Slaney], Mary, Lady Weld (bap. 1560?, d. 1623)’, *ODNB*.

¹⁶⁷ TNA, PROB 11/141, fo. 229v.

¹⁶⁸ Stow, *Survey* (1598), p. 81.

to these endowments to support a grammar school in Essex, her writing school in Christ's Hospital and the poor of three City parishes. Mary's testamentary portfolio—£200 loan stocks with five companies to support young members and poor members, £500 to relieve honest debtors, and a £2000 endowment to fund £20 for poor widows, £20 for poor soldiers, £40 a year for 12 poor scholars at the universities, £2 for sermons at Christ's, and £1000 for the poor of her native Bristol, besides the residue of her estate to clothe and relieve poor—more than bore out Stow's argument.¹⁶⁹

Mary Ramsey was exceptional in the scale and fame of her giving but not unique in continuing to support the charitable projects in her widowhood begun in partnership with her spouse.¹⁷⁰ Elizabeth Craven also left £500 to Christ's Hosital in her will of 1624 to buy land to support the orphans, augmenting the benefaction of £1000 given by Sir William, governor of the hospital since 1593 and assiduous president from 1611-18.¹⁷¹ Sir George Bolles' funeral monument in St Swithin's was erected by his widow Joan, and an epitaph added after her death in 1636 commemorated their joint, quiet charitable giving that she continued in her widowhood:

Honour, Integrity,
Compassion...
His Charity was better
felt than knowne,
For when he gave,
there was no Trumpet blown.
...All his just praise
in her life may be read...¹⁷²

Elizabeth Billingsley was the wife of Sir Henry when she wrote her will in 1607 and her bequest of £4000 to him for 'charitable uses' was celebrated by Munday. To this she also added the residue of her will, to fund 'one fellowship and scollership...in the Colleadge of St John's in Cambridge', which was Henry's old college, 'or any other...accordinge to the discretion of my

¹⁶⁹ TNA, PROB 11/98, fols. 191v-92r.; Archer, 'Ramsey [née Dale; other married name Avery], Mary', *ODNB*.

¹⁷⁰ R. Grassby, *Kinship and Capitalism: marriage, family and business in the English speaking world, 1580-1740* (Cambridge, 2001), pp. 92, 261.

¹⁷¹ TNA, PROB 11/143, fo. 492r; I. Archer, 'Craven, Sir William (c.1545-1618)', *ODNB*.

¹⁷² Stow, *Survey* (1633), p. 870.

husband'.¹⁷³ A quarter of women left bequests for the support of scholars in the universities, 58% of bequests going to the godlier colleges of Cambridge, and 42% to Oxford, but most women who remembered universities remembered them both even if they left a particular gift to a husband's college.

Even for a woman making a will as a wife, cooperation in charitable endeavours with a spouse did not preclude her giving independently to her special causes and communities. The connections of a spouse were remembered in a similar way to that in which women remembered their own, often with affection. 28% of elite women remembered parishes with which they had a connection as a widow or as a child in their wills, and 28% remembered their parish of their father's birth. In 1613 Alice Owen remembered the parishes where she began and ended her life, choosing to be buried in St Mary's Islington 'where I was borne' and giving 20 of 60 gowns for poor women to inhabitants of Islington to attend her funeral at St Michael Bassishaw.¹⁷⁴ In 1630 Margaret Nicholson left £10 to the poor of St Botolph without Aldgate 'where I nowe dwell' as a widow, while in 1631 Thomasine Swinnerton left £20 to the poor of St Olave Jewry 'where I was borne'.¹⁷⁵

Forty-one per cent of female testators cited their spouse's connection by birth, residence, company or university. Many women remembered the livery company of their husband, sometimes those of multiple husbands, but they also cultivated a personal connection to their companies. In 1612 Anne Glover left twice yearly doles of £3 to the poor almsfolk of Sir William's company, the Dyers.¹⁷⁶ Women often augmented the charities their husbands had already successfully established with their companies. In 1584 Elizabeth Nicholas left £1000 for a loan stock with the Salters, the residue to relieve the poor of their parish, to complement that set up by her husband Ambrose, alongside another £1000 for a loan stock to yield £6 a

¹⁷³ Ibid., p. 109; TNA, PROB 11/109, fo. 17r.

¹⁷⁴ TNA, PROB 11/122, fo. 147v.

¹⁷⁵ TNA, PROB 11/214, fo. 203v; TNA, PROB 11/65, fo. 44r.

¹⁷⁶ TNA, PROB 11/121, fo. 145v.

year for the poor of Nedingworth and St Ives, Huntingdonshire where he was born.¹⁷⁷ In 1624 Elizabeth Craven left £200 for a loan stock with the Merchant Taylors to fund the charity established by Sir William Craven.¹⁷⁸

Parishes were remembered most often. In 1584 Elizabeth Nicholas left gowns to 20 women, 12 of whom she stipulated ought to be almswomen relieved by Ambrose in his almshouses in Monkwell Street in St Olave in Cripplegate. She also left 20s to the poor of St Mildred Breadstreet, where their mansion was located.¹⁷⁹ In 1607 Elizabeth Billingsley left to the poor of St Katharine Coleman ‘where I nowe dwell 12d in money or brad every Saboth daie’, and the same to ‘the poor of St Austone [Augustine] parish in Watlinge Street where my first husband Rowland Martin was borne’.¹⁸⁰ In 1612 Anne Glover left poor relief and a communion cup to All Hallows the Less where she had lived with Sir William, and another £10 for a coal stock to the poor of St Stephens [Coleman Street] ‘where I am a parishioner’.¹⁸¹

Many women or their husbands were first generation Londoners and they remembered the parishes of their birth.¹⁸² Alice Barnham’s father was thrice mayor of Chichester. In 1604 she left £120 to the Mayor and Aldermen of Chichester for a loan-stock for three young men at £30 a year, 100 gowns to poor men and women equally in the city, as well as £10 to the poor. Alice also left £5 to the poor of Southwicke, Hampshire, the Barnham family home since the reign of Henry VIII, and the same to the poor of Shingleton, Sussex ‘where my father was borne’.¹⁸³ In 1618 Elizabeth Ryvers left £5 to the poor of Hadlow, Kent, where Sir John was born.¹⁸⁴ In 1624 Elizabeth Craven left £50 to poor parishes in the counties ‘where my landes lyeth’, and £100 to Appletree and Burnsall in Yorkshire where Sir William was born, besides

¹⁷⁷ TNA, PROB 11/65, fols. 347v-348r.

¹⁷⁸ TNA, PROB 11/143, fo. 292v.

¹⁷⁹ TNA, PROB 11/60, fols. 165r-167r.

¹⁸⁰ TNA, PROB 11/109, fo. 17r.

¹⁸¹ TNA, PROB 11/121, fo. 145r.

¹⁸² Schen, *Charity and Lay Piety*, pp. 145, 182.

¹⁸³ TNA, PROB 11/104, fo. 53v.

¹⁸⁴ TNA, PROB 11/133, fo. 504v.

poor relief to Tiverton, Devon to augment his charity there.¹⁸⁵ Both Margerie and Richard Pyott were born in Staffordshire, and in 1625 Margerie left £50 of the residue of her estate to the Corporation of Litchfield for 12d for every ‘Sabbath commonly called Sundaye’ to be given to the poor after the service at St Michael’s ‘in good wholesome bread’.¹⁸⁶ In 1625 Elizabeth Elwes chose to remember the natal parishes of her husband and father, but not her own, leaving endowments of £500 to relieve poor scholars ‘or other good inhabitants’ of Altham, Nottinghamshire, ‘where my late husband was borne’, and £100 for the poor of Shrewsbury ‘where my father was borne’.¹⁸⁷ Women might even honour their grandparents’ charities whose traditions they continued by supporting their foundations. In 1612 Margaret Slaney left £10 to the poor of Tottenham, Wiltshire and £5 ‘to the poor of the Alms house built by...[her paternal] grandfather’.¹⁸⁸

Conclusion

A long civic tradition of female charity was the least controversial basis for praising elite mercantile women, but the sincerity and suitability of City women’s exercise of charity was not uncontested. Elite London women overwhelmingly valued charitable giving within the household and in their communities in London and beyond, as a moral obligation during their lives and as a testamentary priority of even the briefest wills or most modest estates. Charity was shaped by the way that elite women’s household and public responsibilities immersed them in local communities. This meant that women’s charity was either directed towards those whose needs were known to them personally, or else women relied on the discrimination of the officers of the parish and civic institutions to whom they entrusted the performance of their bequests. Elite mercantile women’s charity was influenced by a gendered understanding of need as well as religious sensibilities. City women enjoyed a high degree of cooperation in charitable giving

¹⁸⁵ TNA, PROB 11/143, fo. 492r.

¹⁸⁶ TNA, PROB 11/145, fo. 233r.

¹⁸⁷ TNA, PROB 11/147, fo. 129r.

¹⁸⁸ TNA, PROB 11/133, fo. 334r.

as wives and considerable independence as widows, when many chose to perfect the charitable endeavours which their husbands had started, often in partnership with them during marriage.

Chapter VIII Catholic Wives, Widows, and Daughters of the Aldermen of London

Introduction

Only four Catholic women have been found among the civic elite, but this tiny minority had had an influence far in excess of its numbers. In the late sixteenth century, it might have seemed that the faith of the few among the civic elite who clung to the Catholicism they had been born into would die with them. Among London recusants recorded for Sir Francis Walsingham in October 1578 Barbara, Lady Champion, widow of Alderman Sir Richard Champion, in Billingsgate was a known papist, as was Sir Thomas Offley, a Marian Lord Mayor.¹ These sustained their Catholic faith in the home, and their public positions through partial conformity at Church of England services as church papists—Nicodemites who fulfilled the legal requirements of attendance at services of the established Church as a strategy reconciling their allegiance to faith and crown.² Catholicism was far from dying out in London, and it was reinvigorated by the spiritualism of the mission and by conversion.³ Catholic communities thrived in the City's suburbs. Since at least the middle years of Elizabeth's reign, Clerkenwell was home to varied Catholic community, where Catholic printers and poor spinsters shared neighbourhoods with peers of the realm who also sought the ministration of priests harboured there. Clerkenwell was a centre of recusancy to rival the aristocratic Catholic community which centred on Montague House in St Saviour's Southwark from the 1580s until 1612.⁴ The primary areas of residence in London for those who refused to attend their parish churches included St

¹ TNA, SP 15/25, fo. 202. On the civic elite and suspected Catholics see also: D. Hickman, 'The religious allegiance of London's ruling elite, 1520-1603', London Univ. Ph. D thesis (1996), p. 199; TNA, SP 53/20, fo. 26; TNA, SP 12/179, fols. 1, 3; Stow, *Survey* (1633), p. 322; E. Lane Furdell, 'Offley, Sir Thomas (c.1505–1582)', ODNB.

² A. Walsham, *Church Papists: Catholicism, Conformity and Confessional Polemic in early modern England* (1993), and *Catholic Reformation in Protestant Britain* (Farnham, 2014), p. 10.

³ J. Bossy, *The English Catholic Community, 1570-1850* (1975); A. Dickens, *Lollards and Protestants in the Diocese of York, 1509-1559* (1959); C. Haigh, *Reformation and Resistance in Tudor Lancashire* (Cambridge, 1975); M. Questier, *Conversion, Politics and Religion in England, 1580-1625* (Cambridge, 1996), p. 79; P. McGrath, 'Elizabethan Catholicism: a reconsideration', *JEH*, 35 (1984), pp. 414-428.

⁴ M. Questier, *Catholicism and Community in early modern England: Politics, Aristocratic Patronage and Religion, c. 1550-1640* (Cambridge, 2006), pp. 85-186, 189, 190, 212, 230, 259-60, 262-3, 267, 316, 320, 440-2, 516-7.

James Clerkenwell, St Andrew Holborn, St Sepulchre, St Giles in the Fields and St Dunstan in the West, all of which lay within easy access of one another.⁵

Catholicism's confident *new* converts were the children of prominent, and even godly City families for whom, having grown up in the gerontocracy of the Reformation among a civic elite where Protestantism no longer seemed revolutionary but a means of getting along, the forbidden exoticism of Catholicism was feared to be alluring.⁶ Merely conforming Church papist parents, even those who held Protestant prayer in their own homes, might connive at the recusancy of their children who regarded their parents as schismatic and sought to hold themselves to a higher standard of religious commitment. The City governors were rightly concerned about the disruptive effects of recusant children on their conformist parents.⁷ City daughters were thought to be especially vulnerable to the female missionaries from Catholic Europe who targeted them.

From the 1580s, missionary priests and nuns urged English Catholics to cleave to their consciences and to reject outright the Protestant conformity which was the minimum requirement for participation in civic life. Such rejection meant recusancy — 'the conscientious refusal to attend services of the Church of England, punishable by a fine of 12d per time, and

⁵ J. LaRocca (ed.), *Jacobean Recusant Rolls for Middlesex*, CRS, 76 (1997), p. vii, and 'James I and his Catholic Subjects, 1606-12: Some financial implications', *RH*, 18 (1987), pp. 253-5; Questier, *Conversion*, p. 109; R. Stanfield, J. Hansom (eds.), 'Proceedings against Catholics for attending Mass at the Spanish Embassy on Palm Sunday 1614', in *Miscellanea* 7, CRS, Record Series, 9 (1911), p. 122; *Middlesex County Records*, ed. J. Jeaffreson (1887), ii, pp. 107, 134, 235. On the caution required in the use of recusant rolls as a source see: J. Williams, 'Recusant Rolls: Short Guides to Records', *History*, 50 (1965), pp. 193-96; H. Bowler, *Recusant Roll No. 2 (1953-4)*, CRS, 57 (1965), pp. vii-cxiv; W. Sheils, 'Getting on' and 'Getting along' in parish and town: Catholics and their neighbours in England', in B. Kaplan, H. van Nierop and J. Pollman. (eds.), *Catholic Communities in Protestant States: Britain and the Netherlands, c. 1570-1720* (Manchester, 2009), pp. 75-77.

⁶ S. Brigden, 'Youth and the English Reformation', *P&P*, 95 (1982), pp. 37-67; N. Jones, *The English Reformation: religion and cultural adaptation* (Oxford, 2002), p. 33; A. Walsham, *Charitable Hatred: tolerance and intolerance in England, 1500-1700* (Manchester, 2006), p. 213, and 'The Reformation of the Generations: Youth, Age and Religious Change in England, c. 1500-1700', *TRHS*, 6th ser., 21 (2011), pp. 93-121; L. Underwood, 'Recusancy and the Rising Generation', *RH*, 31 (2013), pp. 511-33, and *Childhood, Youth and Religious Dissent in post-reformation England* (Basingstoke, 2014); A. Shell, 'Furor juvenilis': post-Reformation English Catholicism and exemplary youthful behaviour', in E. Shagan (ed.), *Catholics and the 'Protestant nation': Religious politics and identity in early modern England* (Manchester, 2005), pp. 185-6.

⁷ Brigden, 'Youth and the English Reformation'; Underwood, 'Recusancy and the Rising Generation', pp. 517-19.

after 1581 of £20 per lunar month'.⁸ Yet it is clear that lay Catholic recusants and church papists alike — balancing the deep instinct for living in charity with their neighbours as well as seeking public office and conserving family resources, and the claims of their conscience with the law — did not see outward observance and inward commitment in such stark terms.⁹ Church papistry as a temporary refuge could and did coexist with committed Catholicism. Recusancy and church papistry were not permanent states.¹⁰ During this period the penalties of recusancy and the definition of conformity changed in the face of political developments, against which Catholics considered their options.¹¹ As the connotations and consequences of recusancy changed and the boundaries of church papistry contracted, individuals worked out what these positions meant for them and their families, and to the state.¹² Female recusancy was valuable

⁸ Underwood, 'Recusancy and the Rising Generation', p. 511; Walsham, *Catholic Reformation*, p. 12; J. Kelly, 'Kinship and Religion: Politics among Catholic Families in England', *History*, 94 (2004), p. 33, and 'Conformity, Loyalty and the Jesuit Mission to England of 1580', in E. Glaser (ed.), *Religious tolerance in the Atlantic world: early modern and contemporary perspectives* (Basingstoke, 2014), pp. 149-170. Recusancy in this chapter is shorthand for Catholic recusancy, as Protestant 'seditious sectaries' might also refuse to attend church: 1593, 35 Eliz.1, c. 1.

⁹ J. Bossy, *Peace in the Post-Reformation* (Cambridge, 1998), Ch. 4, esp., pp. 87-91; Walsham, *Charitable Hatred*, pp. 207, 228, 277-9, and 'Cultures of Coexistence in Early Modern England: History, Literature and Religious Toleration', *The Seventeenth Century*, 28 (2013), pp. 112-4, and 'In Sickness and In Health: Medicine and Interconfessional Relations in Post-Reformation England', in C. Scott Dixon, D. Freist and M. Greengrass (eds.), *Living with religious diversity in early modern Europe* (Farnham, 2009), p. 162; C. Marsh, *The Family of Love in English Society, 1550-1630* (Cambridge, 1994), pp. 187, 190; G. Hanlon, *Confession and Community in Seventeenth-Century France* (Philadelphia, 1993); P. Lake and M. Questier, *The trials of Margaret Clitherow: persecution, martyrdom and the politics of sanctity in Elizabethan England* (2011), Ch. 4; K. Luria, 'Separated by death? Burials, Cemeteries, and confessional boundaries in seventeenth-century France', *French Historical Studies*, 24 (2001), pp. 185-222; A. Milton, 'A Qualified Intolerance: The Limits and Ambiguities of Early Stuart Anti-Catholicism', in A. Marotti (ed.), *Catholicism and Anti-Catholicism in early modern English texts* (Basingstoke, 1999), pp. 100-109; Sheils, 'Getting on', p. 68.

¹⁰ Walsham, *Church Papists*, p. 74, 95.

¹¹ 1559, 1 Eliz. I, c. 2: 12d per week for failure to attend Church; 1571, 13 Eliz. I, c. 1, 2 and 3: treasonous to call the Queen a heretic or schismatic, to be reconciled to Rome, to leave England without licence for over 6 months and forfeiture of profits of lands for life and all goods and chattels; 1581, 23 Eliz.1 c. 1: treason to reconcile or be reconciled to Rome, prohibition of the Mass under penalty of a fine of 100 marks and a year's imprisonment for those who heard it; penalties for not attending parish church £20 per lunar month, imprisonment until fine paid, or offender conformed; 1584, 27 Eliz I., c. 2: treason to be a priest and felony to shelter or assist one; 1593, 35 Eliz. I, c.1 and 2: harbourers of recusants to be fined £10 per month of hiding, Catholic recusants to be registered and remain within 5 miles of their properties, husbands made liable for the fines of recusant wives; 1606, 3 Jac.1, c. 4: Oath of Allegiance to be put to those who had not communicated twice within the year, or who had been convicted for recusancy, fines of £60 or forfeiture of 2/3 lands for refusal to communicate yearly in parish church, Catholics not in business or trade to remain 10 miles from London on pain of a £100 fine, those with recusant wives disqualified from public office, Catholic widows deprived of 2/3 their dowry and capacity to act as executrix; £100 fine for sending child or ward out of the realm; schoolmasters and their employers without licence from bishop fined 40s a day; 1610, 7&8, Jac.1, c. 6: Oath of Allegiance extended to married female recusants, husbands to keep them from prison with £10 fine, or forfeiture of 1/3 lands.

¹² Walsham, *Church Papists*, pp. 76, 84; Kelly, 'Conformity, Loyalty and the Jesuit Mission', pp. 149-170; Shagan (ed.), *Catholics and the Protestant nation*, p.8.

to the Catholic family and community, because it allowed Catholic women to continue their role as spiritual guides in the home and crucial maintainers of the underground network. If marriage threatened these roles which recusancy could maintain, religious commitment might trump marital obedience.¹³ Women, particularly before 1606 and especially before 1610, had more freedom to guard their consciences than their spouses who were caught up in their business and public office.¹⁴ Catholic London hoped that the accession of James I might herald the toleration or even restoration of the faith, but in the wake of the Gunpowder Plot preachers' calls for action against recusants had a particular piquancy in London, where the government seemed nervous to deal too harshly with City Catholics. Their loyalty was wooed by inducements in the months after the Plot, rather than imposed through chastisement.¹⁵ In April 1611 Luisa de Carvajal, the Spanish missionary nun living in London, noted that the persecution had worsened over the previous eight to ten months. She added wistfully that 'women used not be harassed as much as men, but now they are treated just the same'.¹⁶

Misogynistic misgivings about women in positions of power were magnified in a City where their marriage to the aldermen gave them influence over the households and children of the governing elite, and the prestige of a semi-official position in the civic hierarchy. Recusant wives, particularly of conforming husbands, achieved greater influence over the household religion and the education of children, which Protestants and Catholics alike held to be the right of the paterfamilias.¹⁷ Concern over the influence of Catholic wives was also expressive of

¹³ M. Rowlands, 'Harbourers and housekeepers: Catholic Women in England, 1570-1720', in Kaplan, H. van Nierop and J. Pollman, *Catholic Communities in Protestant States*, p. 203; Lake and Questier, *The trials of Margaret Clitherow*, pp. 32-41; K. Boyd McBride, 'Recusant Sisters: English Catholic Women and the Bonds of Learning', in N. Miller and N. Yavneh (eds.), *Sibling Relations and Gender in the early modern World* (Aldershot, 2006), pp. 29-32; F. Dolan, 'Gender and the 'Lost' Spaces of Catholicism', *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 32 (2002), pp. 652-8.

¹⁴ L. Orlin, *Locating Privacy in Tudor London* (Oxford, 2007), pp. 59-62; P. Crawford, 'Public duty, Conscience, and Women in Early Modern England', in J. Morrill, P. Slack and D. Woolf (eds.), *Public Duty and Private Conscience in Seventeenth-Century England: Essays Presented to G. E. Aylmer* (Oxford, 1993), pp. 57-76.

¹⁵ I. Archer, 'London and Westminster, 1603-6: Regime Change and the Shadow of the Plot' unpublished paper.

¹⁶ *The Letters of Luisa de Carvajal y Mendoza*, ed. G. Redworth (2012), ii, p. 149.

¹⁷ C. Peters, 'Religion, Household-State Authority, and the Defence of 'Collapsed Ladies' in Early Jacobean England', *Sixteenth Century Journal*, 45 (2014), pp. 631-658.

anxieties about the power that religious conviction lent to City wives, as spiritual equals and marital subordinates.¹⁸

How then can the 'literary, partisan and generically shaped sources' suggest that Catholic and Protestant kinswomen of elite City families coexisted, and how did a City so insistent upon its godliness reconcile interaction with its own Catholics?¹⁹ Catholic sons could be cut out of City inheritances and still be expected to attend to their own welfare through independent employment, and accommodated in the City outside public office. The one alderman's widow who lived as a recusant Catholic set an example which confirmed the elite's worst fantasies of the consequences of the next generation of daughters as future aldermen's wives, if they were not properly screened by their families and potential spouses for their conformity. Yet the marriage of Catholic daughters at a time when the meaning and viability of church papistry and recusancy were in flux drew City daughters into the very networks of the Catholic underground which their natal families were charged with policing. Female City kin took the lead in their protection. Religious difference and generational strife within families could strain relationships and even break them apart, but kinship could also prove resilient, and women in particular found ways to accommodate rather than abandon those who strayed, and to respect those who obeyed their consciences.²⁰

Yet conversion could be as much a declaration of freedom from institutions as a pledge of allegiance to them; some Catholic daughters of the elite who married beyond the City chose recusant lives for themselves separate from their civic birth, and religious lives for their

¹⁸ Although these historians disagree on what the cause and significance of this arrangement might have been: M. Rowlands, 'Recusant women, 1560-1640' in M. Prior (ed.) *Women in English Society, 1500-1800* (1985), pp. 157-8, 162; F. Dolan, *Whores of Babylon: Catholicism, Gender and Seventeenth-Century Print Culture* (1999), pp. 50, 88-92; Bossy, *English Catholic community*, pp. 152, 154-4; A. Rowse, *The England of Elizabeth* (1953), pp. 454-6.

¹⁹ A. Hughes, *Gangraena and the Struggle for the English Revolution* (Oxford, 2004), p. 11; P. Lake, *The Boxmaker's Revenge: 'Orthodoxy', 'Heterodoxy' and the Politics of the Parish in Early Stuart London* (Manchester, 2001), p. 5, and "A Charitable Christian Hatred": the Godly and their Enemies in the 1630s', in C. Durston and J. Eales (eds.), *The Culture of English Puritanism, 1560-1700* (1996), pp. 145-183, and 'The Significance of the Elizabethan Identification of the Pope as Antichrist', *JEH*, 31 (1980), p. 177; P. Collinson, 'Ecclesiastical Vitriol: Religious Satire in the 1590s and the Invention of Puritanism', in J. Guy (ed.), *The Reign of Elizabeth I: Court and Culture in the Last Decade* (Cambridge, 1995), pp. 150-70.

²⁰ N. Jones, *The English Reformation: religion and cultural adaptation* (Oxford, 2002), p. 33.

daughters, beyond marriage, the family and beyond England.²¹ In these endeavours too, Catholic women sought and secured the aid of their natal City families. Other Catholic women chose to express their continuing sense of civic identity and social obligation through their charity. Beyond kin, in literature and the public sphere where gendered and confessionalised stereotypes were being defined reciprocally, to ‘sublimate and channel anxieties’, define boundaries, and to mandate action, Catholic City women could never fully free themselves from the Protestant parameters of virtue with which their City births had imbued them and which were used to condemn them by society at large.²²

i) A gendered problem

In 1600 Edmund Thomas Hill, a Benedictine monk, published *A Quartron of Reasons of Catholicke Religion*, an epistolary dialogue between the Catholic son of an aldermanic family living in Antwerp and his two brothers in the City. The Catholic son had abandoned his parents, castigating them as hypocrites masquerading as puritans, who ‘little care what religion I retaine in my minde and conscience, so that I may be conformable’. They admonished him that only ‘sillie women say “it is against my conscience”’.²³ Of course, a hostile polemic ascribes low religious standards to Protestants, but it hardly paints a vicious portrait of strained relations between kin of different confessions amongst the civic elite.

Yet if sons remained obstinate, they could be expected to survive independently of their kin by finding employment.²⁴ Anne Lodge was the step-daughter of a Lord Mayor Sir William

²¹ C. Peters, ‘Single Women in early modern England: attitudes and expectations’, *Continuity and Change*, 12 (1997), p. 327; M. Wiesner, ‘Nuns, Wives, and Mothers: Women and the Reformation in Germany’, in S. Marshall (ed.) *Women in Reformation and Counter Reformation Europe* (Bloomington, 1989), p. 13.

²² Walsham, ‘Cultures of Coexistence’, pp. 125-6; B. Scribner, ‘Preconditions of Tolerance and Intolerance in Sixteenth-Century Germany’, in O. Grell and B. Scribner (eds.), *Tolerance and Intolerance in the European Reformations* (Cambridge, 1996), p. 47.

²³ E. Hill, *A Quartron of reasons of Catholicke religion* ((London [called Antwerp], 1600), Sigs. M1r, L7v.

²⁴ Sir Thomas Middleton’s elder brother William converted to the Roman Catholicism of his Flemish wife in the early 1580s and became a supplier of information to Hugh Owen, on the run since the Ridolfi Plot, and a pensioner of the Duke of Parma. Thomas maintained correspondence with him, and when he returned to London and lodged in Sir Thomas’s house on Tower Street the government sought to buy information from him: A. Dodd, ‘Mr Myddelton of Tower Street’ in S. Bindoff, J. Hurstfield and C. Williams. (eds.), *Elizabethan Government and Society* (1961), p. 265; TNA, SP 12/30, fo. 178; SP 12/31, fo. 52; SP 12/249, fo. 75; SP 12/268, fo.

Laxton, married to Lord Mayor Sir Thomas Lodge.²⁵ Her son Thomas's independence from his godly family coincided with his studies at Lincoln's Inn, surrounded by the close knit legal community's notoriously tolerant atmosphere where Catholics and Puritans, beyond civic and episcopal control, were sheltered.²⁶ Thomas seems not to have expected that Catholicism would estrange him from his parents, or from a literary career in the City. His first publication, was *An Epitaph on Lady Anne Lodge*, in praise of his mother as an ideal godly City Lady.²⁷

Anne Lodge wrote her will in 1579 as a wife 'with the consent, and at the Commandment and authoritie of my...husband', and together they attempted to restore Thomas to their faith. Anne chose their close friend Sir William Cordell, Master of the Rolls and a Catholic as her executor, indicating that the Lodges did not object to individual Catholics however much they objected to Catholicism in general, but were alarmed at the emerging Catholicism of their son. Anne left Thomas a hundred pounds and a quarter of the residue of the 'personall things which were late my mothers [Dame Joan Laxton]', together with bequests to his three brothers. Thomas was to be given an allowance out of this money 'yearlie to be paide unto him towards his finding his books in Lincolns Inn', but

if [he] will not continue at his booke at Lyncolns Inne as a good student ought to doe untill his saide age of Twentie five years but dicontinewe the same, and live otherwise unprofitable to the offence or misliking of his father...Then I will that his parte and porcion...shalbe...bestowed...amongst the rest of my saide sonnes.

A codicil made two days later revoked a grant of Mannings Manor, Essex, unless Anne passed the property to him in her lifetime 'for certain considerations me moving with the full assent of my...husband'. Instead, Anne bequeathed Thomas 'the late free chappell in Naylande in the

79.; SP 12/27, fo. 222; A. Dodd, 'The Spanish Treason, the Gunpowder Plot, and the Catholic Refugees', *EHR*, 53 (1938), p. 629.

²⁵ A. McConnell, 'Lodge, Sir Thomas (1509/10–1585)', *ODNB*; A. Halasz 'Lodge, Thomas (1558–1625)', *ODNB*.

²⁶ G. Parmiter, 'Elizabethan Popish Recusancy at the Inns of Court', *Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research*, Special supplement 11 (1976); W. Prest, *The inns of court under Elizabeth I and the early Stuarts, 1590-1640* (1972).

²⁷ *A Transcript of the Registers of the Company of Stationers, 1554-1640*, ed. E. Arber, C. Rivington, (London and Birmingham, 1875-94), ii, p. 363. The *Epitaph* is now lost.

Countie of Suffolk, and Thadvowson', as a temptation to conformity.²⁸ Sir Thomas' will of 1583 suggests that no rapprochement between scandalised father and son had occurred since the death of Anne. He made no mention of Thomas.²⁹ In a hearing after inheritances were disputed in 1593, Anne's executor Sir William Cordell complained that Lodge 'did take such a disordered corse of lyffe as he saw no lykelyhood that yt would be otherwyse'.³⁰

If Thomas's position was untenable within his family and within the civic elite, the City did not regard Lodge's residence in London as unreasonable; a recusant Catholic, he was also a kinsman to the City. Lodge's religion was confirmed in 1584 very publicly when he wrote a vituperative, religiously framed defence of the theatre in response to Stephen Gosson's puritan attack, with a dedication to Sir Philip Sidney. From 1600 Lodge, practised as a physician in the City without licence, ministering to a diverse London and country clientele and facilitating women's illegal travel to the Catholic continent.³¹ In 1603, from his house in Warwick Lane, Dr Lodge dedicated his *Treatise of the Plague* published by his brother-in-law, to the Aldermen and Sheriffs. A practical medical handbook for poor Londoners amongst whom plague was most prevalent but who had least access to doctors, Lodge offered it out of

the duetie and loue which I owe to this Citie (wherein I was bred and brought vp... in all friendship and affection...)³²

In 1625 the London aldermen took advantage of the hopeful atmosphere for greater toleration of Catholics in the first months of the new reign of Charles I when Lodge was named as a physician who might be employed in relation to the plague, which eventually took his life that

²⁸ TNA, PROB 11/62, fols. 11r-14r.

²⁹ TNA, PRO, PROB 11/68, fols. 230r-231v.

³⁰ TNA, PROB 11/68, fols. 230r-231v; C. Sisson, *Thomas Lodge and other Elizabethans* (Cambridge MA, 1933), p. 96.

³¹ Professor Walsham has drawn attention to the need for greater attention to health and medicine in the study of the cohabitation of the faithful with the unfaithful: Walsham, 'In Sickness and In Health', pp. 169-72. C. Whitney (ed.), *Thomas Lodge* (Farnham, 2011), pp. 33-4; C. Talbot (ed.), *Miscellanea. Recusant Records*, CRS, 53 (1961), p. 196; BL Add. MS 48029, fols. 121-30; E. Cuvelier, *Thomas Lodge: témoin de son temps* (Paris, 1984), pp. 145, 150-152; 'LODGE, Thomas', *Physicians and Irregular Medical Practitioners in London 1550-1640: Database* (2004); A. Suckling, *The History and Antiquities of the County of Suffolk* (1846), i, sv. Flixton; J. Strype, *Memorials of the most reverend father in God, Thomas Cranmer...* (Oxford, 1694), i, p. 401.

³² T. Lodge, *A Treatise of the Plague...* (1603), unpaginated. See also Walsham, 'In Sickness and In Health', pp. 77-9.

autumn.³³ Catholic sons of the City elite could be accommodated so long as they were debarred from official positions of power, and a spirit of community and compromise proved stronger than a will to cast out the heretic.

Lodge's translation of the *Workes of Josephus* published in London in 1603 indicates why such accommodation was impossible for Catholic *daughters*.³⁴ Women had no public office from which to be safely dismissed if they were found to be Catholics; if their public conformity could be demonstrated in the parish and at Paul's Cross, in the domestic sphere only a husband or father might regulate their influence. A Catholic wife was a wife nonetheless, and a daughter could not be cast out without abandoning all hope of her welfare. Lodge faced Protestant controversialists on the text of the Maccabean martyrs which was central to debates on purgatory and intercessory prayer.³⁵ Elizabethan Catholic writers championed the text of the martyrs as justification for the condemnation of Nicodemism, and towards an insistence on recusancy for English Catholics. The text presented mothers versed in casuistry educating their sons. The Maccabean mother promised the king, Antiochus, that her youngest son would conform to his wishes, while she told her son in their own language of Hebrew which the king could not understand, to choose martyrdom.³⁶ Without proper surveillance, a church papist wife might encourage the next generation to recusancy.

Hill's argument in *A Quartron of Reasons* that mere conformity was accepted in the City as a tolerable threshold for public life touched a nerve in Alderman Sir John Swinnerton who published a response in 1606.³⁷ In the immediate aftermath of the Gunpowder Plot, Swinnerton was one of a handful of aldermen trusted to confine in their own house the wives and female

³³ Whitney, *Thomas Lodge*, pp. 34, 103, 124.

³⁴ E. Kelly, 'Catholic Argument: Thomas Lodge's *Workes of Josephus* as a Catholic Text', *The Sixteenth Century Journal*, 34 (2003), p. 1008.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 997-8, 1003.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 1001-1003.

³⁷ J. Swinnerton, *A Christian Love-letter* (1606), sig. B2v. For Swinnerton's authorship of this pamphlet see D. Hamilton, *Anthony Munday and the Catholics, 1560-1633* (Aldershot, 2005), p. 157; E. Kelly, 'Changing Everything: Religious Conversion and the Limits of Individual Subjectivity in early modern English Drama', University of Maryland, PhD thesis (2003), p. 46; *HMC Salisbury*, 18, p. 447: 'John Swynnerton to the Earl of Salisbury, 1606'.

kin of the plotters. He took in Elizabeth Vaux.³⁸ Ostensibly addressed to the ‘Romish...with mild and charitable phrase’, Swinnerton’s reply to Hill was a response for the whole civic elite. It was printed by Anthony Munday who had a long connection with City puritans as well as with Catholics, and also with Thomasine, Swinnerton’s wife, to whom Munday had dedicated two devotional works in 1602.³⁹ Swinnerton argued that a woman’s subjection to her would-be husband must be asserted *before* marriage was proposed. He framed his reply as a *Christian Love-letter* from the son of a City family to one ‘Katharine’ whom he was courting with a view to marriage. He had noticed ‘how pitifully you were miscarried in matter of religion, how erroneously misled in your manner of doing service to the Almightye.’⁴⁰ Catholicism’s attraction for Katharine concerned him:

you thinke the custome of our young gentlewomen of your old religion, in turning their husbands hearts, to the embracing of their opinions, a laudable custome; and ought to be by you likewise as stricte to be observed.⁴¹

This problem exercised all husbands with zealous wives, particularly in London where models of all types of confident female vocation were abundant. Swinnerton’s young man criticised Katharine’s devotion to ‘the Virgin Mary whome you make no lesse then a Goddesse... and whome you give power to commande Christ her soone, and to command him by the authority of a mother’. The young man sought to supplant the Virgin, whom he described as Katharine’s ‘gracious School mistress’ but who was no different to other women who were dismissed as similarly unsuitable teachers. He proposed himself to take ‘the place of your scholemaster’, teaching her, and by implication, anyone else to be schooled within their household. Conscience and authority met in a grey area. William Perkins recognised that a wife who resisted her husband over things indifferent as a matter of conscience, ought to be pardoned. Yet amongst

³⁸ HMC Salisbury, 17, p. 645; BL MS Add. 14403, fo. 108.

³⁹ Swinnerton, *Love-letter*, Sig. Ar; T. Hill, *Anthony Munday and Civic Culture: theatre, history and power in early modern London, 1580-1633* (Manchester, 2004), pp. 33, 35, 58, 87-91, 113, 183.

⁴⁰ Swinnerton, *Love-Letter*, Sig. B1r.

⁴¹ Ibid., Sig. B3v.

the godly things indifferent might include attendance at ceremonies which were part of Church of England services.⁴² Swinnerton's pamphlet presents a husband's lack of authority over his wife's piety as a corruption of marriage, which was the ideal government of each women by one man. The City son lamented even as a single man merely courting Katharine: 'I deserve methinks to be notorious for ill husbandry'.⁴³

Hill and Swinnerton both employed narrative metalepsis to leave their reader with the sense that their model did, or should, represent reality. Hill's pamphlet bore the false imprint of Antwerp, whence the exiled brother writes home, and the City son was prompted into writing to Katharine after she handed him Hill's 'little book'.⁴⁴ Swinnerton's cautionary tale included a model for reform; the young man sets his religion before his regard, and makes his union to Katharine contingent on her submission to his religious guidance.⁴⁵ Any would-be alderman who must impress his authority over a prospective wife to guarantee his suitability for office by maintaining an ordered household.⁴⁶ Swinnerton presented Katharine as the opposite of what an alderman's wife *should* be. An alderman's wife should *not* be a Catholic; the parents and friends of a Catholic City daughter ought to try to convince her of her error, but anyone destined for public office should not marry her. Beyond these most basic guidelines lay a knot of complex considerations for Catholic City wives and daughters.

ii) Piety, politics, charity and kinship.

Messages about women were sent through a wide variety of media in the City; they were legitimated both explicitly and implicitly in terms of general public interest, both social and political; and they were 'framed in terms of generally knowable criteria of truth or interest' to a

⁴² P. Lake, 'Feminine Piety and Personal Potency: the "emancipation" of Mrs Jane Ratcliffe', *The Seventeenth Century*, 2 (1987), p. 152.

⁴³ Dolan, *Whores of Babylon*, p. 60.

⁴⁴ Swinnerton, *Love-letter*, Sig. B1r.

⁴⁵ Ibid., Sigs. L3r, L4r.

⁴⁶ Dolan, *Whores of Babylon*, pp. 48, 72, 137-8; A. Marotti, 'Alienating Catholics in early modern England: Recusant Women, Jesuits and Ideological Fantasies' in his (ed.), *Catholicism and Anti-Catholicism in early modern English texts* (Basingstoke 1999), pp. 3, 5.

popular London public, beyond the landed elite, who were 'legitimately interested and able to consider and even decide the...issue.'⁴⁷

Alderman John Moore was a factor in Spain when he took a Spanish wife Maria, a widow with a daughter Mary. Maria Moore was the daughter of an English merchant in Spain, but her mother was a Spaniard and she had been born and raised there.⁴⁸ At a time when Parliament was debating measures to subject English-born children of foreign parents to additional taxes and restrictions were placed on immigrants, Londoners could be uncharitable to their cosmopolitan neighbours.⁴⁹ In late November 1602, Moore's Spanish step-daughter was already taunted by young men, who mocked her sorry position in the City marriage market as a Catholic foreigner. One Joseph Marston told John Manningham that at Christmas 1601

he daunct with Alderman Mores wives daughter, a Spaniard borne. Fell into a strang commendation of hir witt and beauty. When he had done, she thought to pay him home, and told him she thought he was a poet. "Tis true, he said, "for poets fayne and lye, and soe dyd I when I commended your beauty, for you are exceeding foule."⁵⁰

Maria apparently conformed while Alderman Moore lived, but after his death in 1602 she returned to the faith of her childhood. It was noted in 1604 that she 'is become...a recusant and dwells in her late husband's house, a place where nothing can be done which is not observed'.⁵¹ Besieged by claimants for her husband's property, Maria petitioned Robert Cecil, claiming that she had been a faithful citizen for sixteen years. Only upon the intervention of the Spanish ambassador was she taken into royal protection against the harassment both of the authorities and litigious Londoners.⁵²

⁴⁷ P. Lake, M. Questier, 'Puritans, Papists and the Public Sphere', *Journal of Modern History*, 72 (2000), p. 590; P. Lake, S. Pincus (eds.), 'Rethinking the Public Sphere in early modern England', in their *The Politics of the Public Sphere in early modern England* (Manchester, 2007), pp. 6, 15.

⁴⁸ Maria's first husband was Alonso, son of Martino Perez de Recalde, viceroy of the West Indies. Mary was his posthumous daughter: BL Add. MS 39829, fo. 129.

⁴⁹ E. Smith, 'So much English by the mother': Gender, Foreigners, and the Mother Tongue in William Houghton's *Englishman for my Money*, *Medieval and Renaissance Drama in England*, 13 (2001), p. 174.

⁵⁰ *The Diary of John Manningham, of the Middle Temple, and of Bradbourne, Kent, barrister-at-law, 1602-1603*, ed. J. Bruce, (Camden Society, old ser. 99, 1868), p. 86.

⁵¹ *HMC Salisbury*, 16, pp. 373-4.

⁵² *HMC Salisbury*, 23, Petition 1133 a-b.

Under Spanish ambassadorial protection, Maria acted audaciously. Bishop Bancroft wrote to Robert Cecil in December 1604, that mother and daughter ‘are grown so insolent, as that they have dared to publish in a sort to the whole city their obstinacy’.⁵³ Maria lived with her daughter Mary and her son-in-law Lewis Tresham, whose brother Francis would become a Gunpowder conspirator, and she hosted the plotters at Eastbury Manor her residence in Essex in 1605.⁵⁴ The Treshams took sufficient pride in the pedigree of their Spanish kinswoman that they drew up a ‘descent’ which asserted that ‘the family of Recalde is of great credit in Spayne’, noting proudly that Mary’s uncle Sensue was ‘a ffryer’.⁵⁵ The Catholicism of Mary and Lewis’s daughter was openly celebrated. The day before the service was to take place, Maria informed her parish parson that her granddaughter was to be illegally christened in the chapel of the Spanish embassy, with the ambassador standing as godfather.⁵⁶ Bancroft noted that ‘this message is spread abroad, and many inconveniences and clamours will ensue if this course is to be suffered’. He urged that Maria and Lewis be committed to prison.⁵⁷ For 30 years, rejecting her parish community and church, Maria snubbed the attempts of civic elite to force her to behave as part of the godly City in charity, if not in piety. In 1633, pressed by Alderman Freeman, ‘being a kinde friende’ of hers, she ‘absolutely denied to contribute with the rest of her neighbours any summe of money towards the reparation of St Paules’:

att last he was urgent with her to give but five poundes that it might not bee said soe riche a widowe gave nothinge. But she continued resolute in her denial and would not give one penny, att which her peremptory refusall...hee was greatly displeased.⁵⁸

The corporation occasioned this confrontation which presented social obligation within the Church as the bare minimum to assure a woman’s good name. Being no one’s kin by blood in the City, Maria could be publicly shamed as an example to Protestant women.

⁵³ *HMC Salisbury*, 16, pp. 373-4.

⁵⁴ M. Nicholls, ‘Tresham, Francis (1567?–1605)’, *ODNB*; TNA, E154/7/5.

⁵⁵ BL MS Add. 39829, fo. 129.

⁵⁶ M. Rowlands, ‘Recusant women’, p. 156.

⁵⁷ *HMC Salisbury*, 16, pp. 373-4.

⁵⁸ TNA, SP 16/276, fo. 67.

Catholic daughters were not knowingly married back into the City, but careful matches were sought for them beyond the civic elite and they maintained strong kinship relationships with their natal kin. Mary Lake née Ryder was the eldest daughter of Elizabeth and Alderman Sir William Ryder. This family was not ostensibly godly, but they certainly conformed and participated in church services in London and the counties.⁵⁹ In 1591 Mary was married to Sir Thomas Lake, a shopkeeper's son who had risen through the diplomatic ranks.⁶⁰ Suspiciously sympathetic to Dutch Arminians and English anti-Calvinists, the Lakes became Catholic converts; Thomas was a pensioner of the Spanish ambassador, and they lived next door to the Venetian embassy.⁶¹ The Lakes maintained a close relationship with Mary's natal kin.⁶² Alderman Ryder gave the couple discretion over the marriage alliances of his granddaughters, and trusted his crypto-Catholic son-in-law to be the sole executor of his will.⁶³

Mary Lake interacted with her civic heritage and institutions in ways that she found acceptable to her conscience, fulfilling her Christian duty of charity and her familial duties of care. In her will of 1646 she left to 'Thomas Staper my grandchilde if hee bee liveing at the age of fourteene yeares and that hee may bee bound apprentice to a Marchant to learne and to be bee of the trade or profession of a Merchant a hundred pounds'.⁶⁴ Luisa de Carvajal complained in 1610 that rich Catholic households were introspective in their relief which did not extend to foreign missionaries: 'they are the kind of people for whom charity begins and ends at home, so I assure you that we do not expect so much as an Apple'.⁶⁵ Mary left no money to City churches or parish poor (which does not necessarily preclude her lifetime distribution of charity there) but she relieved and buried the poor and ransomed captives through her bequest 'to the

⁵⁹ I. Archer, 'Rider [Ryder], Sir William (c.1544–1611)', ODNB.

⁶⁰ For an outline of Sir Thomas Lake's rise see: A. Bellany, *The Politics of Court Scandal in Early Modern England* (Cambridge, 2002), pp. 44–5, 57.

⁶¹ N. Tyacke, *Anti-Calvinists: the Rise of English Arminianism, c. 1590–1640* (Oxford, 1987), p. 89.

⁶² TNA, PROB 11/118/355, fols. 281r–282v; *The Letters of John Chamberlain*, ed. N. E. McClure (Philadelphia, 1939), i, p. 316.

⁶³ TNA, PROB 11/118/355, fo. 282r–v.

⁶⁴ TNA, PROB 11/196, fols. 380v–381r.

⁶⁵ *Letters of Luisa de Carvajal*, (ed.) Redworth, ii, p. 105.

poore prisoners of the fleete to redeeme soe many of them as twenty pounds will redeeme out of prison of just poore handicrafts people and which want burial by their lyving there'.⁶⁶ Mary and Sir Thomas had bought the manor of Cannons in Little Stanmore, Middlesex in 1604, and built a residence. Mary focused her relief of the parish poor of Whitchurch there, through the almshouses 'by mee built for the same purpose' to house four poor men of over sixty five years of age, and three women of over fifty five who were to be provided with a shilling weekly, twenty shillings worth of coal every year and a black gown every Christmas, through a £33 a year rent-charge. Mary was concerned that those benefitting by her gift should not only be elderly paupers but stipulated that

all both men and woemen to be single and unmarried people and not otherwise and such as bee of just and quiet life and conversacion and will diligently frequent the Church to heare divine service and not otherwise.

Mary was also concerned that her charity not be abused:

if any...shall sell their gownes or direct them to any other use then for their owne wearing...my will is that they shall bee...utterly expelled out of the house and all benefit.

Like her Protestant contemporaries, Mary charged the churchwardens with administration of the practicalities of the charity. Whether or not she attended church there, Mary's relationship to the parish was fraught; she stipulated that selection of new beneficiaries must be performed by the churchwardens with the consent of the owners of Cannons, so long as they were Lakes. She did not trust the parish to support her charity:

...if any will hinder the poore of this my good will unto the poore of that parish to take away that house, by putting it downe or doeing it to any other use then to a Alms house then my will is that it shall bee...void.

Mary established her charity in spite of her strained relationship with the parish with regards to maintenance of the church and its services but with considerable anxiety about the performance of her will. She built her almshouses 'so nearbie that parish Church of Whitechurch in the fields

⁶⁶ TNA, PROB 11/196, fo. 380v.

called Church Fields upon the land late [of] Sir Thomas Lake deceased'.⁶⁷ Yet in October 1638 Richard Tyder, curate of Whitchurch, petitioned the King complaining that ancient custom dictated that the curate should receive a penny of every shilling of the yearly value of the unploughed and pasture lands, which Mary had withheld for her hundreds of acres for at least six years.

...for about 40 years these curates have enjoyed a dwelling house near the church, which house Lady Lake...challenges to be hers...She has also forbidden the parishioners to pay their wonted dues, threatening to trouble them if they dare to pay contrary to her command, so that now, the church being stript of all maintenance, the service of God is likely to be neglected, and petitioner, with his wife and children, to be destitute of all harbour.⁶⁸

The Council required the Attorney-General to prosecute Mary, for the vicar to be paid his arrears and quietly to continue in the possession of his house, outhouses, orchards, and gardens.⁶⁹

In the City Mary used the Fleet prison to administer her charity in London, keeping her charitable relationship to the City's poor Christians apart from her fraught relationship with the Church of England. In the counties she was reliant on the cooperation of the churchwardens and minister whom she mistrusted.

Matches made beyond the civic elite drew City daughters into active roles in the very networks of the Catholic underground in London which the aldermen sought to prosecute. Dorcas Ryvers was born to established, godly City kin. Her father Sir John, Lord Mayor 1573-4, made his fortune as a grocer in the City and was a lay clerk in the parish of St. Mary's, Hadlow in Kent, where he maintained a residence.⁷⁰ Dorcas's mother, Dame Elizabeth Ryvers, was the daughter of George Barne who attested to Edward VI's will that diverted the succession to Jane

⁶⁷ TNA, PROB 11/196, fols. 380r-v.

⁶⁸ TNA, SP 16/323, fo. 166: 20 October 1638, Petition of Richard Tyder to the King.

⁶⁹ TNA, SP 16/410, fo. 219: 31 January 1638/9, Order of Council.

⁷⁰ W. Dumbreck, *A short history of St. Mary's, Hadlow* (1983), p. 5; P. Slack, rev., 'Barne, Sir George (c.1500-1558)', ODNB.

Grey, and her brother Sir George Barne also served as Mayor in 1586. Through her mother, Dorcas was a cousin to Sir Francis Walsingham's widow, Anne, and to Sir John Garrard, Mayor in 1592. A month before Dorcas's uncle was to be elected to the mayoralty, Lady Elizabeth organised Dorcas's marriage to Sir Henry James, whose family connections to Lord Keeper Nicholas Bacon suggested sound Protestantism, yet he converted Dorcas to Catholicism.⁷¹

In spite of their conversion, neither her natal nor marital family abandoned Dorcas. She enjoyed a cordial relationship with her father-in-law Sir John who bequeathed her 'my wife's ring (with a diamond in it) and my wife's best jewel which she was wont to wear about her neck'. He also left Dorcas property in London through the lease of a house in St John's Street, Clerkenwell.⁷² There the family lived between 1593 and 1599 before being indicted for recusancy. Elizabeth née Spencer, the City heiress who was famously abducted from her

⁷¹ H. Bowler, 'Sir Henry James of Smarden, Kent, and Clerkenwell (c. 1559-1625)' in A. Hollander, W. Kellaway (eds.), *Studies in London History* (1969), pp. 289-91. His father Martin was a registrar in Chancery who rose under Bacon's patronage.

⁷² TNA, PROB 11/118/355, fols. 281r-282v.

hugely wealthy parents by the Catholic William 2nd Lord Compton, was living in Clerkenwell off St John's Street in the Manor House. The area was under tight surveillance. One informer reported:

A little beyond my howse in St John's Street on the same side I dwell⁷³ ... are divers howses together of Recusants and very suspicious peoplebeginning with Mr Henry James.⁷⁴

After their prosecution in Clerkenwell, the Jameses removed to their estate at Smarden, Kent.⁷⁵ Henry James was one of the few recusants able to pay his yearly fines of £260 in full and on 1 January 1605 had not been to church in three months.⁷⁶

The area in which the Jameses had been resident in Clerkenwell was implicated in the Gunpowder Plot.⁷⁷ Francis Tresham admitted that he had been recruited at his brother-in-law Lord Stourton's residence there; a widow of Spur Alley had unwittingly hosted Christopher Wright and Thomas Winter in the months preceding, and it was suspected Guy Fawkes had been hidden there too.⁷⁸ Families associated with the plot continued to reside in the area.⁷⁹ Though not personally implicated, in the wake of Gunpowder executions in June 1606 Henry James conformed in order to distance himself very publicly from the political agenda that recusancy implied. The application of the oath of allegiance in the shadow of the Plot yoked religious allegiance to accepted standards of political allegiance.⁸⁰ The process of conformity

⁷³ Presumably the area to the east of St John Street, towards St James, the Nunnery of St Mary, and the area enclosed by Turnmill Street and Crosse Street, see Fig. 8.

⁷⁴ TNA, SP 14/16, fo. 44.

⁷⁵ Bowler, 'Sir Henry James', p. 193; TNA, E377/9.

⁷⁶ TNA, SP 12/283, fo. 144; TNA, SP 12/284, fo. 41; *Middlesex County Records*, ed. Jeaffreson, ii, p. 10; LaRocca, 'Jacobean Recusant Rolls for Middlesex', pp. 1-2, 26; Bowler, 'Sir Henry James', pp. 296-7.

⁷⁷ Archer, 'London and Westminster, 1603-6', pp. 11-13; *Letters of Luisa de Carraval*, (ed.) Redworth, ii, pp. 149-50.

⁷⁸ *CSPD 1603-10*, pp. 258, 265, 281, 285, 295; TNA, SP 14/216/1, fo. 71; TNA, SP 14/16, fo. 44; C. Stourton, *The history of the noble house of Stourton: of Stourton, in the county of Wilts.* (1899), i, pp. 451, 457.

⁷⁹ *HMC Salisbury*, 17, no. 1104; G. Anstruther, *Vaux of Harrowden, a recusant family* (Newport, 1953), p. 385; H. Bowler (ed.), *London Sessions Records*, CRS, 34 (1934), pp. 10, 29; LaRocca, 'Jacobean Recusant Rolls', p. 79; *Middlesex County Records*, ed. Jeaffreson (1883), ii, pp. 115, 119, 130.

⁸⁰ For an overview of the bills against recusants see: F. Walker, 'The Implementation of the Elizabethan Statutes against Recusants, 1581-1603', London Univ. PhD thesis (1961), pp. 121-133; Walsham, *Church Papists*, p. 87. For debate over the ideological import of the Oath of Allegiance see: K. Fincham and P. Lake, 'The Ecclesiastical Policy of James I', *JBS*, 24 (1985), pp. 170-207; J. Gifford, 'The Controversy over the Oath of allegiance of 1606', Oxford Univ. D. Phil. thesis (1971), p. 48; Questier, *Conversion*, pp. 3, 103, 106-7, 108, 111; Walsham, *Church Papists*, p. 84; J. LaRocca, 'Who can't pray with me, can't love me': toleration and the early Jacobean recusancy policy', *JBS*, 23 (1984), pp. 22-36; LMA, DL C/ 304, fo. 333.

was made to look like conversion: having recited his offence in St Paul's, and worshipped at Westminster Abbey, Henry conversed with the curate of St Sepulchre's and listened to a full sermon preached, proving his willingness to submit to the law and the Church.⁸¹ As part of the conformity which would also return Henry to eligibility for public office, he was required to secure the conformity of his household. Henry attempted to enforce conformity on his wife and children.

Despite the endless debates of legislators keen to end the legal dilemma that rendered married women effectively immune from recusancy statutes, in practice the only punishment available for them was imprisonment.⁸² By contrast, single women and widows were vulnerable to loss of goods and life imprisonment, as were men. In reply to Amy Erickson's claim that only men convicted of treason ever suffered anything akin to the legal disabilities of women under coverture of marriage, Frances Dolan has argued that the recusancy statutes reduced a man's legal rights to those of the average married women.⁸³ The laws designed to protect Protestant patriarchy empowered recusant Catholic women, who were protected from the extent of the law by their marital status. This can be read as an indication that women took the lead in insisting on recusancy because they themselves were immune from its censures, or that their continued recusancy is representative of the failure of husbands to enforce their wives' conformity, or rather an unwillingness to allow the state to interfere in household affairs.

For Dorcas conformity and the exposure of her adolescent children to Church of England services was unacceptable, and indeed the depth of the children's own religious

⁸¹ LMA, DL C/ 304, fo. 333; Questier, *Conversion*, pp. 108-9, 111. In 1609 Henry faced the application of the increasingly stringent recusancy laws of 1609 which would require him to take Communion in the Church of England yearly on pain of a £20 fine and a renewed Oath of Allegiance which now included language derogatory to the Catholic Church and faith. It seems that receiving communion in a heretic church was more than Henry's conscience could bear: Bowler, 'London Sessions Records', pp. 68-9, 81. Henry was imprisoned in Newgate prison until he died of the plague in 1625, and Dorcas ceased to be indicted for recusancy for London, though she lived for another decade. She was personally known to the Augustinians at Louvain where her daughter Catharine professed, so she may have moved back and forth from the continent.

⁸² Rowlands, 'Recusant women', p. 153.

⁸³ A. Erickson, *Women and Property in early modern England* (1993), p. 229; Dolan, *Whores of Babylon*, p. 73.

awareness may have meant that they actively chose recusancy for themselves.⁸⁴ Dorcas's continued commitment to recusancy, and eventually her ability to secure it for her children too, was facilitated by a combination of the contradiction of Protestant patriarchal attitudes, the laws of recusancy and coverture, and the support of her natal City family. Dorcas exploited Henry's conformity which sheltered her from prosecution as his wife by her legal status as a *femme covert*. This interaction of the laws of recusancy and legal coverture disarmed *all* conforming husbands attempting to secure the conformity of a wife with no legal person of her own, and potentially no property out of which to be fined either. Recusancy laws empowered married women who were disobedient to the state to be disobedient to their husband's religious dictates in the home with impunity, regardless of whether or not their husbands were recusant. The law that dictated that no man with a recusant wife could bear public office recognised, as Sir John Swinnerton had done, that no man with a recusant wife could claim to keep order in his house. No debate since the 1590s ever ended in legislation for the removal of children from a recusant mother's influence when their father was still alive.⁸⁵

Dorcas's puritan City kin were ready to protect their natal kinswoman against abuse by her marital kin, the women taking the lead in aiding her. Dorcas named her eldest daughter after her mother Elizabeth, with whom she took refuge at Hadlow in Kent in June 1606 after fleeing Henry at nearby Smarden. In her will of 1619 Elizabeth remembered Dorcas as 'my wellbeloved daughter', with bequests no less generous than those she gave to her other 'loving' daughter Alice Carew, to whom she likewise left a 'gold ring' to wear in remembrance of her, alongside the personal effects which Dorcas would remember from her childhood home: 'my best gowne kirtle and petticote one potion potte of silver with a cover and one silver porringer'.⁸⁶ On returning to London, Dorcas lodged with her sister Alice Carew in St Dunstan in the West. Sir

⁸⁴ Underwood, 'Recusancy and the Rising Generation', pp. 512-6.

⁸⁵ Rowlands, 'Recusant Women', pp. 153-4. The state was untroubled by the removal of 'orphans' from their recusant mothers when their fathers had died.

⁸⁶ TNA, PROB 11/133, fols. 505-v.

Matthew Carew may have been willing to harbour Dorcas because his own mother Martha had been a recusant in the 1560s and 1570s in Fetter Lane and St Sepulchre where she was buried.⁸⁷

These willingly received her and shrouded her [Dorcas] from her husband, yet they did so molest her with bringing Ministers to persuade her to alter her mind and become a heretic...At length seeing this lady to remain so constant and immoveable in her religion, they left off molesting her and kindly assisted her with temporal means.⁸⁸

This description of the free aid and toleration between kinswomen of different faiths is the more remarkable for being recorded by Benedictine nuns with whom Dorcas later had contact. That the greatest support came from women suggests that the sororal recognition that women could rely on the uninterested help of one another, particularly in defence against the interests of men, persisted across the confessional spectrum within kinship and friendship networks.

The single life for women was not altogether rejected by Protestant culture, but countenanced as a state in which women could live respectable lives in the service of God.⁸⁹ Yet the model City Lady was married, often more than once, and if the single life was praised it was that of a chaste widow living alone in her old age. Dorcas's natal kinswomen aided her in the knowledge that, far from educating her daughters to become wives whose sanctification would be found through their lives within the family, the parish and the City, Dorcas was preparing them for sanctified virginity.⁹⁰

She [Dorcas] had great trouble about her children, but they were so well disposed and godly, that their Father could not make them go to Church, and do as he bid, although he kept them from their mother. The three younger daughters....he put to school in London...but at least their good Mother got means to have them away, and took them to live with her.⁹¹

⁸⁷ P. Carter, 'Carew [née Denny], Martha, Lady Carew (c.1500–1572)', *ODNB*; P. Stein, 'Carew, Sir Matthew (1531–1618)', *ODNB*.

⁸⁸ All quotations from the nuns' account taken from the transcription appended to Bowler, 'Sir Henry James', p. 313.

⁸⁹ J. Klein (ed.), *Daughters, wives and widows: writings by men about women and marriage in England, 1500-1640* (Chicago, 1992), p. 32; Peters, 'Single Women', pp. 325-7.

⁹⁰ Peters, 'Single Women', p. 327.

⁹¹ The three youngest daughters were aged between 14 and 8 at this time.

Dorcas moved her daughters back to the bosom of the Catholic community in Clerkenwell where they spent seven years amongst the ‘spinster’ recusants from 1611-18.⁹² They may have chosen the religious life freely, or have struggled to find husbands. Indeed, composing her will of 1646 Mary Lake seems to have worried for her daughter Bridgett as she doubled the £3,000 marriage portion already left by her father, and charged her heir Lancelot ‘as he will answer it to mee hee bee a most continual loving brother to her in all this that concerns her good by his care and good advice...if I doe not live to see her married by before my death’.⁹³ Yet the female religious life into which Dorcas’ three daughters entered was not a financial refuge, but expressed a deep vocation.⁹⁴ Having rejected her father’s religious authority when she married, Dorcas also rejected her husband’s when he attempted to force her to worship against her conscience. Dorcas also attempted to empower her own daughters to make the same choice, by offering them an alternative. Ralph Houlbrooke has commented on the potency of the mother-daughter bond, which Henry rightly feared, for Dorcas held a strong influence over the religious sensibilities of their children.⁹⁵ Dorcas used her three daughters’ dowries to enter them in continental convents, alongside daughters of the Vavasour and Tresham families, their Clerkenwell neighbours with whose fathers their own had been imprisoned.⁹⁶ In these communities women collectively determined what their vocations could achieve, unmolested by the City authorities which plagued women who attempted to form clandestine community in London.⁹⁷

⁹² *Middlesex County Records*, ed. Jeaffreson, ii, pp. 74, 80, 107, 110, 114; LaRocca, ‘Jacobean Recusant Rolls’, pp. 59, 81.

⁹³ TNA, PROB 11/196, fo. 381r.

⁹⁴ J. Stevenson, ‘Women Catholics and Latin Culture’, in R. Corthell, F. Dolan, C. Highley, A. Marotti. (eds.), *Catholic Culture in early modern England* (Notre Dame, 2007), p. 167.

⁹⁵ R. Houlbrooke, *The English Family, 1450-1700* (1984), p. 187.

⁹⁶ LaRocca, ‘Jacobean Recusant Rolls’, p. 182. In sending children and money abroad and travelling without permission Dorcas and her daughters faced the loss of their inheritances and nullity of their legal persons: Dolan, *Whores of Babylon*, pp. 143-4, and ‘Gender and the ‘Lost’ Spaces of Catholicism’, p. 656; J. Aveling, *The Handle and the Axe: Catholic Recusants in England from Reformation to Emancipation* (1976), pp. 90-1.

⁹⁷ *Middlesex County Records*, ed. Jeaffreson, ii, pp. 74, 80, 114, 110, 107; LaRocca, ‘Jacobean Recusant Rolls’, pp. 59, 81; Dolan, *Whores of Babylon*, pp. 66, 143.

The house of Poor Clares at Gravelines to which Dorcas James sent her daughter Martha had been set up between 1609 and 1611 by Mary Ward, an English nun.⁹⁸ Mary Ward was a Yorkshire gentlewoman whose maternal uncles were the Wright brothers of the Gunpowder Plot. She began her mission in London around 1605-6, establishing a *Schola Beata Mariae* under a Rule during her second mission in 1612.⁹⁹ The Englishwomen who worked in London under Mary Ward aimed to blend in with the communities where they sought to convert. Barbara Ward, Mary's sister, was seen in London 'dressed in a bright tafetta gown and rich petticoats, trimmed of the newest fashion, and a deep yellow ruff', suggesting that she was seeking to insinuate herself amongst fashionable City women.¹⁰⁰ By 1617 Archbishop Abbott was convinced that 'that woman does more harm to the English Church than many priests. Gladly I would exchange six or seven Jesuits for her'.¹⁰¹ Ward's school and mission in London taught that women empowered by religion, and dedicated to the work of God in their lives, could and must choose not to believe the myths of patriarchy that hindered them serving God to their utmost ability. In 1621 as her order came under pressure from Rome, Ward told her nuns, amongst whom Martha James was one, that 'There is no such difference between men and women...that women may not do great things':

I would to God that all men understood this verity, that women if they will be perfect, and if they would not make us believe we can do nothing, and that we are but women, we might do great matters...others look upon us...expecting all the world to be bettered by us...all looketh upon you as beginner of a course never thought of before, marvelling what you intend and what will be the end of you.¹⁰²

⁹⁸ TNA, SP 77/9, fo. 278: Thomas Edmondes to Earl of Salisbury, 1 June 1608; J. Hansom (ed.), 'English Benedictine nuns, Brussels, Winchester, East Bergholt, 1598-1856', *Miscellanea* 9, CRS, Record Series, 14 (1914), pp. 26, 182.

⁹⁹ C. Kenworth-Browne (ed.), *Mary Ward (1585-1645)*, CRS, 81 (Woodbridge, 2008), pp. xi, 9, 19, 21n75; M. Orchard, 'Till God Will': *Mary Ward through her own writings* (1985), pp. 5, 55.; P. Harriss, 'Mary Ward in her own writings', *RH*, 30 (2010), pp. 229-239; L. Lux-Sterritt, *Redefining female religious life: French Ursulines and English Ladies in seventeenth-century Catholicism* (Aldershot, 2005), pp. 184, 201.

¹⁰⁰ L. Gallagher, 'Mary Ward's 'Jesuitresses' and the Construction of a Typological Community' in S. Frye and K. Robertson (eds.), *Maids and Mistresses, Cousins and Queens: Women's Alliances in Early Modern England* (Oxford, 1999), p. 204.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, p. 199.

¹⁰² D. Latz, 'Glow Worm Light': *Writings of seventeenth-century English Recusant Women from Original Manuscripts* (Salzburg, 1989), pp. 162-3.

Alongside Mary Ward's mission, the threat of a foreign mission enjoying foreign aid and foreign protection grew in London. In April 1605 a Spanish gentlewoman Luisa de Carvajal made her extraordinary ministry to London, with the intention of sustaining English Catholic women and converts in the religious life in their own country.¹⁰³ Like Maria Moore, Carvajal exploited the influence of the Spanish ambassador with whom she originally lodged, before removing to a house next door where she was sustained by a pension and already had two Englishwomen living with her.¹⁰⁴ The sisters lived under a Rule as 'The Company of the Sovereign Virgin Mary our Lady', and went out into London dressed in habits and veils to advertise the same life to other women.¹⁰⁵

In June 1608, shopping for an altar cloth in Cheapside and debating religion with the shopkeepers, Carvajal, who admittedly harboured a martyr's death-wish, sensed 'danger, and not just of being arrested'. Returning to the shop two weeks later, she was taken for a three-hour examination by Alderman Sir Thomas Bennett 'in the yard under a porch' at his home.¹⁰⁶ Bennett's venom towards Carvajal seems redolent of his frustration at his inability to curb her activities due to her ambassadorial protection. 'He...told me that if it were up to him, I would be exiled from the kingdom' and that 'if he released me away they [the 200 people clamouring at his house] would give me a good hiding.' Bennett's suspicions of Carvajal's intent were close to the mark, as she taunted him:

he asked me who had given me the two Catholic maidens [that were with her], and whether they went to mass and such things...and asked me if I would be happy to have Protestant maidens. I replied...certainly...not, but that if I could not find Catholic girls then maybe I would have to.

¹⁰³ C. Senning, 'The Carvajal Affair: Gondomar and James', *Catholic Historical Review*, 56 (1970), pp. 43-5.

¹⁰⁴ G. Redworth, 'Sarmiento de Acuña, Diego, count of Gondomar in the Spanish nobility (1567-1626)', *ODNB*; G. Redworth, *The she-apostle: the extraordinary life and death of Luisa de Carvajal* (Oxford, 2008), p. 118.

¹⁰⁵ Senning, 'The Carvajal Affair', pp. 54, 47, 51, 64; A. Loomie, *Spain and the Jacobean Catholics*, CRS, 68 (1979), pp. 6-7, 16, 20; Redworth, *The she-apostle*, p. 149.

¹⁰⁶ *Letters of Luisa de Carvajal*, (ed.) G. Redworth, ii, pp. 11-12; Redworth, *The she-apostle*, p. 169.

Carvajal noted with interest that 'his daughters had been coming in and out of where we were, and his wife too.' Bennett was powerless to do more than send Carvajal to the Counter.¹⁰⁷

Archbishop Abbot became increasingly incensed by Carvajal's activities and alarmed by her success in '...getting English ladies and gentlewomen in mass' at the Venetian embassy 'and then taking them home to her house, where she speaking the English tongue well, catechised them and made exhortations in Popery'.¹⁰⁸ Carvajal died soon after Bennett raided her Spitalfields residence next to the Venetian embassy in 1613, but the converts she left behind continued to live together in London until required to cease doing so by the Crown.¹⁰⁹

Ultimately Catholic nuns could be removed from the City, but City daughters were among those whose faith their mission sustained. In a letter of September 1613 Carvajal wrote that the services in the embassy encouraged her:

One of the most inspiring and tender things to be seen here are the little children brought up in the Catholic Church whom their mothers or relatives bring to mass in the Chapel.¹¹⁰

Among them was Mary Lake. Mary and Sir Thomas Lake's long suspected conversion was publicly confirmed through the interrogations of the Venetian ambassador Antonio Foscarini in 1616, which also exposed Mary's close involvement in the Catholic community under his protection. As the residence of the Secretary of State, the Lake's house was 'next to Foscarini's, adjoining his garden'.¹¹¹ Mary had direct contact with Foscarini's neighbour Carvajal, 'the Spanish woman [whom he had granted] permission to...make a gateway by which she might enter his garden and attend mass whenever she pleased'. He had also 'allowed Sir Lake to make another', and Mary had apparently facilitated the resort of other English ladies to Mass and to

¹⁰⁷ *Letters of Luisa de Carvajal*, (ed.) Redworth, ii, pp. 13-16.

¹⁰⁸ *Report on the Manuscripts of the Marquess of Downshire: preserved at Easthampstead Park, Berkshire*, eds. E. Purnell, A. Hinds, G. Dyfnallt Owen and S. Anderson (Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts, 1924-1995), iv, p. 239.

¹⁰⁹ Senning, 'The Carvajal Affair', pp. 64-5

¹¹⁰ *Letters of Luisa de Carvajal*, (ed.) Redworth, ii, p. 317, Letter 169.

¹¹¹ McClure (ed.), *Letters of John Chamberlain*, i, p. 368. John Chamberlain was the son of Richard and Anne Chamberlain.

Carvajal's catechisms, granting 'the same privilege to the ladies who afterwards went to the Spanish woman's house'. 'The privilege of entering and leaving secretly by this door was granted to his other neighbours and to whoever wished it', and children were even baptized there. Mary took her daughters with her to the Chapel and managed their household religion. Odoardo Guatz, the interpreter, confirmed in April 1617 that 'the knight Lake and his wife at various times sent their articles of devotion to Foscarini's house for safety', and 'Sir Lake sent his wife and daughters to the church....The knight himself went there sometimes.' As Alexandra Walsham has argued, the perception that papist or church papist women were well practised at being two faced stemmed from the necessities of their covert life.¹¹² These revelations coincided with the examination of the Lake family over other covert operations.

iii) The ideal of the godly City lady reconsidered: Mary Lake and the Lake-Roos affair¹¹³

Historians have read the Lake-Roos case of 1619 as a slander case, in the light of the Overbury affair of May 1616, which also featured a nullity suit and murder, or attempted murder. Much was at stake in the case: the King's judgement of character, the career of his Secretary of State; aristocratic honour, and the consequences of Catholic City daughters' social and *religious* transgression against the ideal of female civic virtue.

The King's judgement, following his Solomon-like investigations of the Gunpowder Plot and Overbury deception, has been read as straightforwardly misogynistic, and his assertion that Mary was the architect of the schemes has been accepted uncritically.¹¹⁴ The judgement has

¹¹² Walsham, *Church Papists*, p. 82.

¹¹³ For an overview of the case see S. Gardiner, *History of England from the accession of James I to the outbreak of the civil war, 1603-1642* (1883-4) iii, pp. 189-194. For the political significance of the context of the Overbury scandal, see Bellamy, *Politics of Court Scandal*, pp. 252-54.

¹¹⁴ J. Rickman, *Love, Lust and Licence in early modern England: illicit sex and the nobility* (Aldershot, 2008), p. 86.

not been compared with events preceding the trials, the evidence presented, or traces of public opinion.¹¹⁵ Yet considering the Castlehaven case, Cynthia Herrup argues:

A verdict is the clearest point of a trial's history, but the weakest focus for an historian. It is a filter built from artificial materials and one that obscures as much as it clarifies, reinforcing rather than upsetting the notion of a trial as a story with an objective ending. Equating legal truth with actual truth hinders any meaningfully historical analysis... because it offers answers where there should be questions. It sets the law above rather than within society and the textual remnants of the law above rather than within the demands of genre.¹¹⁶

S. R. Gardiner's summation that an examination of the facts of Lake-Roos case makes it hard to ascertain Mary's guilt has been dismissed, alongside his conjecture that her daughter Anne fabricated her slanders from her memory of the Overbury scandal.¹¹⁷ Historians who have considered the case have not paid heed to Gardiner's caution.

Following David Lindley's approach to the Overbury scandal, I contend that arguments about Mary's part in the Lake-Roos case do not stand or fall ultimately on the question of her guilt, but that neither is that question trivial.¹¹⁸ As Gardiner suspected, closer inspection of the case shows Mary to have been totally or partly innocent, or crucially *no guiltier* than her husband or daughter. The way in which Mary was 'prosecuted, condemned and reviled... by a continuous process of accommodation of the narrative to stereotypical frames of misogynistic character types' does not fit congruently with other court scandals in which the supposed author of the crimes was an aristocratic woman.¹¹⁹ Rather Mary's narrative was accommodated to generally accepted ideas about what elite, Protestant City women should and should not be.

In February 1616, Mary's daughter Anne Lake married William Cecil, Lord Roos, grandson of the Earl of Exeter. By December, all of London knew that the marriage was already

¹¹⁵ Bellany, *Politics of Court Scandal*, pp. 219-20, 245; D. Lindley, *The Trial of Frances Howard: Fact and Fiction at the Court of King James* (1993); C. Herrup, *A House in Gross Disorder: Sex, Law and the 2nd earl of Castlehaven* (Oxford, 1999); Rickman, *Love, Lust and Licence*.

¹¹⁶ Herrup, *House in Gross Disorder*, p. 6.

¹¹⁷ Gardiner, *History of England*, iii, pp. 193-4.

¹¹⁸ Lindley, *Trial of Frances Howard*, pp. 6, 194.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 194.

foundering with ‘no great contentment on eyther side’, and by June 1617 news reached London of the resulting ‘warre...betwixt the Lord Rosse and his mother the Lady Lake’. Anne fled Roos to her parents’ residence and coming to her there he was ambushed by Anne’s brother and servants and injured.¹²⁰ London gossips blamed Mary Lake, for blackmailing and slandering her son-in-law. She

hath so baffled him she hath got him to assure 800l land a yeare upon her daughter and her heires, for the fear she shold publishe his insufficiencie, and so ask for nullitie; which is now come to that passe that yt is as generally spoken of as yf yt were in print.¹²¹

With the Earl of Exeter still ignorant that the cause of Roos’s impotence was his ‘former debauchment’, Roos responded to the blackmail by initiating the transfer of land at Walthamstow to Anne, but later with Exeter’s support he fled to the continent where he intended to duel with Anne’s brother.¹²² In November 1617 Exeter brought a case against the Lakes to Star Chamber as a matter of family honour, stating that he had required Roos to live apart from Anne in return for his support.¹²³ In the New Year it became clear why.

Anne had accused Exeter’s wife, Frances, forty years his junior, of incestuous relations with her step-grandson Roos, and with conspiring to poison Anne at the Cecil’s retreat in Wimbledon.¹²⁴ The scandal broke just as Sir Thomas had secured the promise of a barony from the King, who leaving for Scotland, left the matter to his counsel.¹²⁵

John Chamberlain assumed that Mary’s characteristic ‘ambition’, was behind Sir Thomas’s bid to secure a title which, alongside his Secretaryship, would give him ‘precedence

¹²⁰ TNA, SP 14/92, fo. 162.

¹²¹ TNA, SP 14/92, fo. 160.

¹²² TNA, SP 14/92, fo. 162; T. Birch and R. F. Williams (eds.), *The court and times of Charles the First* (1848), ii, pp. 25-6; TNA, SP 14/93, fo. 34.

¹²³ TNA, STAC 8/24/20: Attorney General v. Chapman.

¹²⁴ These accusations were later extended to claim that Frances, Lady Exeter also had illicit relations with Anne’s brother Arthur: K. Acheson (ed.), *Anne Clifford: the memoir of 1603 and the diary of 1616-1619* (Peterborough, 2007), pp. 100, 109. Arthur was married to Lettice née Rich who contracted and died of ‘the French disease’, ‘it being yet in question, among friends of both sides, whether the lady had them by his gift, or by her own purchase’: Birch and Williams, *The court and times of Charles the First*, ii, pp. 145, 158.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 59, 70-71.

over all the barons in England'.¹²⁶ In libels passed and posted around the City Londoners expressed their contempt of City daughters who made ambitious matches beyond the mercantile civic elite into the gentry and peerage. Alderman's widows might also *remarry* more grandly. *A lybell calld the health to divers Lords & Ladies* (1636) mocked Susan, daughter of Sir Henry Rowe, and widow of Alderman William Halliday, who had remarried Robert Rich to become Countess of Warwick, and Mary, widow of Sir William Cockayne, who married Henry Carey to become Countess of Dover.

A health to my Lady Warwick
 beeing made a Countess glories
 and to my Lord her husband
 that loves to tell strange stories...
 A health to my Lady Dover
 that was first wife to a citty
 and to my Lord her husband
 that hath more wrath than witt...¹²⁷

Worse was assumed of City daughters whose natal kin sought matches for them beyond the City outright: ambition and suspicious religion. Mary Lake's conduct seemed to bear out these assumptions: she had led Sir Thomas 'into a strange labyrinth, by accusing Lady of Exeter' for which he had imprisoned low-born witnesses, 'for it behoves him to make good proofs of so heinous imputations against a lady of her sort'.¹²⁸

Anne quickly realised that her best chances lay in gaining the King's confidence and she showed him letters in the Lady Exeter's hand confessing to attempting to poison her and begging forgiveness.¹²⁹ Suspecting forgeries, the King investigated the letters and 'upon comparing with others, suspects [them] to be counterfeit'.¹³⁰

¹²⁶ McClure, *Letters of John Chamberlain*, i, p. 367. In response to these objections, the King required Sir Thomas to choose between the Barony and the Secretaryship.

¹²⁷ BL MS Harley 6383, fols. 49r-50r: *A lybell calld the health to divers Lords & Ladies*, 1636.

¹²⁸ McClure, *Letters of John Chamberlain*, i, p. 367.

¹²⁹ With Sir James Crane, who had served Lady Exeter's first husband, Sir Thomas Smith. TNA, PC 2/29, fo. 279; Birch and Williams, *The court and times of Charles the First*, ii, pp. 70-71.

¹³⁰ Ibid., pp. 68-9; HMC Salisbury, 9, pp. 61-79.

The evidence did not appear to place Mary at the centre of the quarrel; the ‘indifferent judges do apprehend that, by some subtle and working spirit, there be tricks put upon both parties’.¹³¹ By Chamberlain’s own admission, his reports consisted entirely of hearsay from the heart of the City, reflecting public opinion coloured by his own loyalties. In February 1618, writing to Dudley Carleton, he reflected that ‘it had been better to attend the issue, than to write so uncertainly, and by guess. But, for want of other news, I do only tell you what is said in Paul’s’, where the gossips assumed that Mary must be to blame.¹³² On 15 February 1618/9 the three Lakes were taken to the Tower, hostile crowds cursing their coaches as they passed.¹³³

Alongside the slander and forgeries, litigation over Walthamstow continued in Star Chamber.¹³⁴ Weighing Mary’s guilt against blame apportioned to her, this is the best place to make sense of her role in the affair. Mary sought a jointure funded by landed income for her daughter. Anne’s match had been a triumph, until Roos’ impotence was discovered. Anne would have no heirs by Roos who, as a peer, was not bound by City custom to leave half his assets to his wife. Despite his poor opinion of Mary, Chamberlain’s comments on the case *as it was being examined* in court suggested that gossip believed Anne had inherited her temperament from Mary, but that Anne

is described and pointed out to be a very pert lady, and is said to domineer *as much over her mother*, as her mother doeth over some others [my emphasis].¹³⁵

In the trial that followed, Mary was implicated in the scandal case, though her accusations only *followed* those already made by Anne, when she was acting in defence of her daughter no less than Sir Thomas did by imprisoning witnesses.¹³⁶

¹³¹ Ibid., pp. 68-9.

¹³² Ibid., pp. 70-71.

¹³³ TNA, SP 14/105, fo. 188.

¹³⁴ TNA, STAC 8/111/26: Earl of Exeter v. Lake; STAC 8/24/19: Attorney General v. Chapman; STAC 8/111/27: Earl of Exeter v. Sandforde.

¹³⁵ Birch and Williams, *The court and times of Charles the First*, ii, p. 71.

¹³⁶ TNA, SP 14/96, fo. 66; TNA, SP 14/97, fo. 231.

In February 1619 the King heard five days of evidence before giving his judgement, which demonstrated that it was his royal instinct which had led him to the truth of the complex case. He recounted how at the end of his examination of Anne he had offered her the Bible to swear on, but ‘she started back, and refused to take it...an evident argument of a guilty conscience’.¹³⁷ The King admitted that Sir Thomas had ‘abused the authority of his place’, to which he had been raised only by the King’s favour and for which the King told the Court, ‘I am sorry for’.¹³⁸ Yet to the satisfaction of the many who repeated it in their correspondence, and in an uncomfortable casting of the narrative of Original Sin and the Fall, the King likened the part of Mary to that of Satan, who had beguiled her daughter Anne, the mere ‘Actor’, as the Serpent had poisoned the mind of Eve. Sir Thomas had been ‘seduced’ by his love for his daughter and believed the lies that she was fed by her mother and ‘did do her bidding’.¹³⁹ No one listening to the judgement could say Sir Thomas or even Anne was ‘equally guilty’ as Mary.¹⁴⁰

The order fashioned by the King from the chaos of the case followed the same logic which led to the conclusions of public opinion at the beginning of the affair, making Mary’s guilt consonant with everything Londoners could reasonably expect of her.¹⁴¹ The King’s judgement that Mary was ‘the author of this fowl practice’ was made not in respect to the evidence of the slanders and forgeries but

in respect of the business of Walthamstow, then which their hath appeared no other ground of malice in this whole triall, and that was hers: and especially her speeches...which were long before this suite was commanded, doe declare that she was hatching the accusations, which afterwards were published.¹⁴²

¹³⁷ Birch and Williams, *The court and times of Charles the First*, ii, pp. 138-40.

¹³⁸ TNA, SP 14/105, fo. 156.

¹³⁹ Birch and Williams, *The court and times of Charles the First*, ii, p. 140; TNA, SP 14/105, fo. 156.

¹⁴⁰ Rickman, *Love, Lust and Licence*, p. 90.

¹⁴¹ Bellany, *Politics of Court Scandal*, p. 250.

¹⁴² TNA, SP 14/105, fo. 156.

There was a lack of direct evidence that Mary had been the author of the slanders and forgeries, other than from the allegations of her Cecil accusers. The prosecution emphasised Mary's influence over her husband. In his letter to the King of June 1618, Roos softened the insult to the King of each revelation of his secretary's abuse of office by appending a mitigating qualification that James's support would make credible: 'this Sir Thomas Lake did at the commandment of his wife'.¹⁴³ The Cecils presented the King with an apportionment of blame which achieved their primary aim of clearing the Countess of Exeter's reputation and punishing the Lakes, while saving the King from the accusation that he had shown poor judgement in raising Lake at all.

Anne sought release from the Tower first in May 1619, when Chamberlain wrote:

The Lady Rosse hath some more freedome, yet begins to discover le pot au roses and without respect of her father, mother or other friends, to tell all she knowes, and so to purchase her liberty the sooner.¹⁴⁴

Chamberlain reported that

Though the world condemns them sufficiently for their malicious and foolish carriage in all this business, yet it doth most detest Lady Roos, for so foully betraying her father and mother more than once.¹⁴⁵

After Anne was released, Mary was kept under particularly close watch in the Tower. Sir Thomas was allowed greater freedom at first upon illness, and was fully released after he submitted in February 1620.¹⁴⁶

Mary remained imprisoned longest, but she insisted on her innocence before God of the charges of slander and forgery, though she never denied the business over Walthamstow,

¹⁴³ *HMC Salisbury*, 22, pp. 61-79; TNA, SP 14/97, fo. 231.

¹⁴⁴ TNA, SP 14/107, fo. 61. 'Découvrir le pot aux roses' is an idiomatic French expression translating roughly as 'to discover the secret' with connotations of concealment and underhand dealing. Anne's sister Elizabeth, her brothers Arthur and Thomas were also confined. The serving woman Sara Swarton, a lifelong dependent of the Lakes who had once been dismissed by Mary but had resumed working for Anne, was branded in the face with the letters F. A. for 'false accuser' for swearing to the veracity of Anne's evidence. Unlike Anne, Sara exonerated Sir Thomas and Lady Mary, blaming Anne entirely.

¹⁴⁵ Birch and Williams, *The court and times of Charles the First*, ii, pp. 175-6.

¹⁴⁶ 'William Camden's Diary: A hypertext edition by Dana F. Sutton', (The University of California, Irvine, posted February 18, 2001, modified April 26, 2002), sv. 28 January 1620.

over which she had not been convicted, but on which her conviction in the slander case was founded. When she appeared in Star Chamber in May 1620, ‘she sayd she was not guilty of Sara Swartons subornation, nor forgery of the letters, and therefore she would not do her conscience the wrong to confesse them’.¹⁴⁷ In November, Mary wrote to Lady Exeter, referring her to the 136th psalm, the refrain of which is ‘for his mercy endureth forever’. Mary wrote that she had often hoped that the two women could meet together before the King to discuss the case, but urged Lady Exeter to think on her soul as well as her reputation:

He can look where men’s judgements cannot look to, and his records must remain upon the file for ever. His lawyers will not receive bribes, nor be corrupted; these exhibits cannot be stolen in boxes. To conclude for this time, I wish my submission could make you an innocent woman, and wish you as white as a swan...¹⁴⁸

Mary did not make her submission until May 1621, but it seems this was not the end of the matter for in December 1622 there was ‘new fire’ between the two women which their families made efforts to suppress.¹⁴⁹

The King’s judgement invoked shared Protestant patriarchal animosities to facilitate what David Lindley has called ‘the easy slide from one resonance to another in the mind’, resonances which the godly City’s own model of ideal female virtue implied but which it never pronounced against its own wives and daughters, Catholic or otherwise.¹⁵⁰ The contours of what Mary could plausibly be believed to have been guilty of were delineated by her general conduct as a woman, a City daughter, a wife, a mother and a Catholic. The fruits of Mary’s mothering were seen in her daughter, whose blackmail of her husband and exposure of his impotence opened her to accusations of lust.¹⁵¹ Sir Thomas Lake took no blame beyond failure of household authority; Mary was accustomed to ruling Thomas as a zealous, Catholic wife to

¹⁴⁷ TNA, SP 14/115, fo. 29.

¹⁴⁸ BL Harl MS 4762, fo. 36: Lady Lake to Countess of Exeter, 9 November 1620.

¹⁴⁹ TNA, SP 14/134, fo. 112.

¹⁵⁰ Lindley, *Trial of Frances Howard*, p. 167.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 93-6, 104; CCRO MS CR 63/2/19, fol. 20r: *A Lybell uppon the Ladie Rosse* accused Anne of the sexual desire and promiscuity that complaint of William’s impotence made her vulnerable to.

a conforming husband.¹⁵² The day after the King had handed down judgement and sentences, he 'gave strict command in the Star Chamber, that none might be suffered to be of the commission of the peace whose wife was a recusant'. In light of the Lake's example, the King also ordered that 'a heedful eye should be had to all the papists in the land....' but especially 'of their wives; for he said, the women were the nourishers of papistry in this kingdom which our Catholic ladies take very ill'.¹⁵³ Mary's recently revealed arrangements with Foscarini for worship at the embassy chapel were the arena in which she perfected the dissimulation later employed in giving false evidence and producing forgeries.

Mary's history of transgression began with her rejection of the life she should have embraced as a Protestant City wife. Roos's letter to the King repeatedly referred to Mary's mercantile birth as 'bass' and his wife's 'generacion' as 'low', and of Anne he wrote 'so bass is the younge Tongue that she is not worthye to wipe her [Lady Exeter's] shoves'.¹⁵⁴ The Cecils considered suing for *scandalum magnatum*.¹⁵⁵ Verse libels circulating in London during Mary's long imprisonment gloated over the humbling of a City daughter, as a 'caterpillar' whose ambition had not served her turn, but rather denied her the civic reputation she might have enjoyed.¹⁵⁶ Libellers parodied genres used to praise City wives, casting Mary the alderman's daughter as the antithesis to a virtuous godly alderman's wife.¹⁵⁷ One deemed 'no man living would vouchsafe a verse/ when thou art dead, to hang uppon thy heirse', and judged that 'thy bawdy story in a Ballet/ would be distastfull to ech herbwives pallet', let alone the ears of the aldermen and their wives who were her kin and friends.¹⁵⁸ Another libeller punned on her maiden name, Ryder, suggesting that she had saddled up Sir Thomas Lake only to find she could have walked faster on foot.

¹⁵² 'William Camden's Diary', sv. 28 January 1620.

¹⁵³ Birch and Williams, *The court and times of Charles the First*, ii, pp. 135, 138.

¹⁵⁴ TNA, SP 14/97, fo. 231.

¹⁵⁵ *Scandalum magnatum* is scandal against peers of the realm or defamation against peers.

¹⁵⁶ Bodleian MS Smith 17, p. 113: *Of the Lady Lake*.

¹⁵⁷ Bodleian MS Malone 23, pp. 5-6: *Encomium infamissime et infande Cuiusdam Mulieris ignote*.

¹⁵⁸ Bodleian MS Ashmole 36-37, fo. 70r.: *Say, no man living would vouchsafe a verse...*

She Rideing loves for Ryder was her name
 Her horse Arme-strider metteld for the same
 But now saies Fate wee have orday'nd it soe
 For Rydeing fast, a foote pace she shall goe.¹⁵⁹

An Ephitaphe put uppon the Ladie Lakes Dore may have actually been pinned to her house.¹⁶⁰ It rehearsed Mary's 'virtues', just as the epitaphs on her model contemporaries did:

Heere lyes the breife of badnes vices nurse
 The badge of usurie the clergies curse,
 The staine of weomen kind, tradsmens decay
 The patroness of prid, Extortions highway
 The forge of slaunder, and each vile action
 Frend to Romes whore, Spy to the Spanish faction
 A bitch of Court, a comon stincking snake
 Worse then all these, Heere Lyes the Ladie Lake.¹⁶¹

Conclusion

In a City where aldermen's wives enjoyed influential domestic and semi-official roles, concern about the spiritual assertiveness of Catholic wives also represented a safe arena to voice unease about the general problem of religiously empowered wives as spiritual equals but marital subordinates. Among aldermen's wives Maria Moore's example represented a nadir of the consequences of an alderman taking a Catholic wife. Of greater concern was the appeal of Catholicism and recusancy to the new generation of youth in the City. Catholic sons were expected to attend to their own welfare independent of a career in the City elite and marriage, but Catholic daughters, both those who rejected their City identity as well as those who honoured it, were protected by their natal kin led by their kinswomen when their illegal religious practice drew them into courses that endangered their welfare. For Mary Lake, church papistry represented committed Catholicism that could include charitable engagement with Christian communities in London and beyond. For Dorcas James recusancy alone represented

¹⁵⁹ Bodleian MS Smith 17, p. 113.

¹⁶⁰ A. Fox, 'Ballads, Libels and Popular Ridicule in Jacobean England', *P&P*, 145 (1994), p. 61.

¹⁶¹ Bodleian MS Malone 23, p. 5 (In CCRO MS CR 63/2/19 it is entitled *An Ephitaphe put uppon the Ladie Lakes Dore*).

commitment to her faith. The exposure of her children to Protestantism in the service of a demonstration of political loyalty was unthinkable, no matter the circumstances, and the best option she could provide for her daughters was the religious life on the Catholic continent. None of these Catholic women turned away from their natal City kinship connections but rather relied on their resilience. Catholic City daughters' rejection of their birthright of a godly City career was viewed with suspicion by Londoners, hostility which was co-opted by those seeking to condemn Catholic daughters beyond the power of their City kin to aid them. The opening chapter of this thesis considered how an ideal of female civic virtue was forged against basic misogyny coupled with suspicions of the hypocrisy of the godly. This chapter suggests that the ideal also aimed to counter suspicions that City women might not only be lusty, greedy and ambitious but also Catholic, and their kin willing to aid them into territory that contradicted their duties as governors of the City.

Chapter IX Conclusions

The new insights and findings of this thesis and its eclectic approach to the sources, read alongside women's wills in the study of the charity and piety of elite mercantile women in London contribute new dimensions to the historiography of religion, women, charity and early modern London, summarised here together with suggestions of areas ripe for future research.

Ideals of elite female virtue in London were presented not only from the pulpit and in funeral sermons but also in portraiture, on the stage, in verse lives and epitaphs, and in the celebration of London women's charity in Stow and Munday's *Summy*. Women's reputations were judged in the streets: people questioned their piety and whether women's religious lives benefitted themselves and their circles alone or whether they brought benefit to the community. Whether women had achieved this impossible balance of ideals of gender and often newly acquired elite status was most commonly assessed through scrutiny of elite mercantile women's apparel — so carefully selected for their portraits — and of their charity, areas which also reflected the aldermen's ability to govern their wives' use of funds. Aldermen's wives were praised for their charity in the same terms as their Catholic predecessors in the City, though their reformed faith was expected to bring forth even more commendable fruits.

Charity then was not an uncontroversial ground for the defence of elite mercantile women's virtue, but it was far more stable than evidence of personal godliness, as misogyny and inherent suspicion of wealthy elites comingled with the notion of the puritan as arch-hypocrite. Ideal virtues and real practice were much easier to reconcile with reference to women's charity, than to their piety. Reconstruction of these ideals and stereotypes of female virtue and hypocrisy in London in comparison to evidence of women's real lives is revealing of social and religious culture in the City, and of the piety, social conduct and charity of mercantile women. Comparison with mercantile women in other English cities and with their European

counterparts, to question to what extent there was a uniquely metropolitan female experience will be a significant undertaking for future research.

Aldermen's wives enjoyed semi-official civic status, wealth, influence in the community, agency within marriage and the household, and were the subject of increasing public scrutiny, for everyone from preachers at Paul's Cross, in parish pulpits and in print, to the ordinary Londoner who might observe them at a sermon or the playhouse, and shower a woman with praise or abuse as she walked the City's streets. The male elite became anxious about the position of widows, the pervasive mistrust of whom was expressed in City comedies and enshrined in the laws of the Court of Orphans.

The City never mounted a collective defence of its kinswomen collectively on the basis of their gender, despite Elizabeth Hicks' personal connection to Rachael Speght.¹ The godliness of a few of the most pious, and controversial, women was defended principally by the puritan preachers who had known them, in funeral sermons preached and published in the City. But charity offered the best means to refute women's alleged disdain for a community beyond a spiritual or social elite.

Elite mercantile women faced constant counsel and censure, especially as widows, but against ideals and stereotypes individual characters often won out because, as exemplified by Susanna Bayning and Anne Gresham, City wives and widows had real agency and a strong sense of their own status, and the obligations of the City and kinsmen towards women enshrined in the custom and common law.²

Religious identity is elusive, even for aldermen about whom much is known in other areas of their lives, let alone their wives. A conforming, governing elite sharing a civic ethos was unlikely to pursue or embody the partisan labels of which historians are fond. Aldermen's wives

¹ See Ch. II, ii).

² See Ch. II, iv).

found unity too within shared this conforming civic attitude, though gender within patriarchal society created more space for women to follow their conscience within marriage and widowhood — which a few women clearly did, from the godly subjects of funeral sermons such as the model of godly virtues Elizabeth Juxon, to the Catholic wives Dorcas Ryvers and Mary Lake and the widow Maria Moore. Preambles, traditionally used by historians to categorise religious identity, are valuable documents related to faith in the wills of the literate women who composed them, possibly with the guidance of the clerics and scribes with whom they associated. Preambles are best treated as a starting point from which to begin investigating an individual's religious identity, followed by the study of the bequests of the body of the will, and extra-testamentary evidence wherever possible. Lay, female religious identity in particular is best approached through the study of women's lived religion, in piety and charity, as shaped by their gender, status and individual temperaments, a methodology that succeeds best when different types of sources are used together in comparison. This approach overwhelmingly reveals a broad based Protestant piety better described by the individual synthesis of commonly held strands towards certain tendencies than it is by partisan labels, and by paying attention to the contradictory tensions in the religious lives of even the most pious women.

Attitudes towards funeral pomp, often treated by historians as evidence for puritanism, were not generally confessionalised amongst aldermen's wives. Rather they are emblematic of the struggle for balance between status and virtue sought by women in other areas of their lives too, and representative of a shared reformed civic ethos. Mourners at mercantile women's funerals spanned the spectrum of conformity; funeral blacks continued to be widely given, as did doles, though dinners for poor parishioners were sometimes bequeathed separately from those for friends.

Pious mercantile women pursued their vocation in London, offering preachers spiritual and practical support, and even the godliest women patronised a wide range of clergy towards

the maintenance of preaching and of good parish pastoral care, sometimes in the face of the censure of the Church. Women's agency in supporting clerics was dependent on their means but also on their reputation, won largely through observation of their daily lives in the City. Reputation was central to the dedication of works to women through which they could vouch for the quality of a publication and so boost its commercial success, and authors, both lay and clerical, hoped that their dedicatee's vocation would be strengthened by reading these texts too.

Funeral sermons were the products of close relationships between elite women and preachers, and when they are used to furnish evidence of pious practice as well as the idealisation of female virtue they must be read as sermons preached as well as published. Funeral sermons present individuated, if idealised, portraits of women preached before communities who knew them by experience or reputation. The presentation of a personalised model of piety in a sermon, as preached and as printed, aimed to provide comfort and encouragement to other women, especially women's own daughters. Elizabeth Juxon had written down reflections on her religious life since her conversion for the edification of her kin, and these were included by Stephen Denison in his funeral sermon on her for a wider audience and readership. Both men and women were expected to be admonished and inspired by the gendered insights of women's religious experience, including the clergy with whom women enjoyed mutually edifying relationships, particularly through their spiritual learning at high levels. Helen Branche, Elizabeth Martin, Gertrude Style and Alice Owen all celebrated or were commended for their reading. Anne Lock translated, while her kinswoman Dorcas Martin translated and published. Margaret Ducke was proficient in Hebrew, Elizabeth Juxon was probably learned in Greek and Latin too, and Joan Whitelocke taught her children all three.

Funeral sermons sought to defuse suspicions about the role of the godly household as a community, even perhaps a conventicle, separated spiritually and socially from the parish community. These concerns were gendered, as the household was recognised to be a domain

in which religious empowerment and voluntary religion enhanced women's agency in relation to their spouse, children and servants. The frankness of the puritan clerical authors of funeral sermons about the social conflict surrounding pious women, blamed squarely on the ungodly, is tellingly honest about the priorities of the godly community to protect its own integrity before that of the parish, and to limit contact with profane neighbours, thereby to set an example. Some aldermen and their wives were repelled by the way puritan ministers and their female patrons divided their communities through uncharitable ministry and the retreat of the godly into an alternative community, gadding to sermons across the City and retreating to private houses beyond the parish church and society and charity of their worldly neighbours. Women's wills show that even the material culture of the mercantile household in London was constitutive of the religious environment, but also that women who patronised the godliest preachers might also leave a communion cup to their local parish community. Yet the heart of the hypocrisy of female elite was judged to be their claim to charitable virtue while recoiling from their neighbours, who remembered the profane and often humbler lives of female saints before their conversions. Preachers of funeral sermons argued that social conflict best proved that godly women were not hypocrites courting popular opinion, but the more widely cited evidence of elite women's state of charity with their community was their lifetime giving. Women's wills show that they overwhelmingly valued their identity as parishioners and their parish communities where they gave charitably, supported ministers, and asked to be buried and remembered.

Women's charity, like their piety, should be studied in the context of the state of charity in London, especially in the crisis of the 1590s, and in relation to civic reformed ideals of charity, and the supposed effects of a puritan worldview on discrimination of the deserving poor against spiritual as well as social criteria. Anne Blount's letter book shows an elite mercantile woman managing household charity, including the payment of regular, supplementary and casual wages, the payment of household public charitable contributions through the officers of ward and

parish, and the provisioning and exercise of urban hospitality. Women's agency in the household drew communities into elite mercantile women's homes, and women out into their communities. Even in the tiny intramural parish of St Michael Bassishaw the parish was focus of household activity including hospitality, which mingled with business and elite sociability, and yet remained a reciprocal practice, in which conviviality and commensality were shared by guests across the religious and social spectrum. My work on Anne Blount's book not exhausted its possibilities.

The real practice of women's public and household charity more widely can be analysed across women's wills and supported by evidence of their lifetime giving in London and the counties from the *Survey*, to consider what women's intentions were in their charitable giving, against accounts of their charity that maligned as well as celebrated their motivation. Every woman's will included bequests to charity, from a widow's mite to the huge portfolios of giving celebrated in the *Survey*. The parish remained of primary importance to elite mercantile women's charity, as did their London identity even as they gave to the parishes of their births and rural residences. Protestant women's giving continued to fulfil the seven corporal mercies celebrated in their Catholic predecessors' charity as a tradition to be maintained and improved in its reformed iterations, and women sought to give to the stranger poor who could be identified by their executors and the officers of institutions, and to those whose needs were identified by women themselves, on the basis of need before virtue or godliness. Where women could distribute charity to the poor with their own hands, this was preferred to relying on others to fulfil their bequests, and where paupers were personally known to them women specified their names in their bequests.

The expectation of relief from the female elite, and the joint nature of charitable giving within some marriages could circumscribe women's freedom of action, even as widows, and yet women enjoyed high levels of independence as widows and wives, where personal intentions

and voluntary spousal cooperation were not mutually exclusive. Women took pride in their reputations for charity, and like Mary Ramsey promoted their own achievements to encourage other women to give.

Elite mercantile women's charity was gendered, and the preponderance of their bequests to other women in number, generosity, and form of bequest was celebrated — by the *Survey* and the authors of lives and verse epitaphs for unique attention to the particular needs of women and especially widows. William Gouge applauded the positive effect of charitable giving on women as members of the household and wider community, and for the reputation for aldermen and their wives whose cooperation in charity it implied.

The reconstruction of Anne Blount's hospitality using her household book and the quantitative and qualitative analysis of wills together with a close reading of women's wills in comparison with those of their husbands, suggests that the distinctive features of women's charitable giving were informed by a gendered understanding of women's position in patriarchal society, and of the moral obligations of women towards one another. This attitude of sorority extended to other social groups whose vulnerability in a patriarchy women identified with their own. The disputes of elite mercantile women in the Court of Orphans and Chancery are a topic for future research, as are the workings of sorority between kin, particularly in relation to property through analysis of men's and women's wills, and comparison of the priorities of the mercantile elite to those of gentry and aristocratic women.

This thesis has shown that the godly did not enjoy a monopoly of religious conversion, as City women were being newly attracted to Catholicism, even from godly aldermanic families. These conversions fostered a sense of vulnerability of aldermen's daughters, who were targeted by the missions of Luisa de Carvajal and Mary Ward, from which their fathers were unable to protect them thanks to the protection of the Spanish Embassy and the large and socially mixed Catholic community around Clerkenwell, an area of London which warrants further research.

Catholicism in Protestant England made room for women to follow their consciences as the legal contradictions of recusancy protected them from the full force of state and spousal coercion. City discussions of female recusancy were reflective of male concern within the Protestant elite about the agency which religious empowerment lent women in marriage and widowhood over their husbands, children (in particular daughters), and servants. But these discussions spoke to concrete concerns too, especially of women's role in entrenching recusancy in the next generation, and Maria Moore's conduct as a recusant alderman's widow confirmed the City's worst fears of Catholicism amongst the wives of its governing elite.

The entangled fortunes of City families with their Catholic kin were gendered. Sons were cut off from the inheritance that would assure them a place in the elite, but tolerated within London, as was the case with Anne Lodge's son Thomas, who practised as playwright and physician in the City after being disinherited. City families married their Catholic daughters beyond the civic elite but Catholic women were never abandoned by their natal kinswomen, who came to respect their erroneous conscience and protected Catholic women facing spousal cruelty for following their conscience in recusancy and entering daughters into the religious life. City families trusted their Catholic kinswomen with family affairs, and Catholic women like Mary Lake relied on the parish institutions of the Church of England to perform their charitable bequests in spite of tense relations.

Ideals of City women's virtue were bound up with their Protestant identity and with anti-papery and basic misogyny. The condemnation of Mary Lake for the crimes of her family, from the judgement of James I to that of London's libellers, was founded in her rejection of reformed religion, through which she abdicated from her rightful natal inheritance of a civic career and with it the need to strive towards any of the virtues it required.

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Appendix

Table of TNA, PROB 11 wills of wives and widows of the aldermen of London by date proved [including a Prerogative Court of Canterbury will held at LMA].

Date	Name	TNA, PROB 11
1576	Barbara Champion	58, fols. 200r-202r.
1580	Anne Lodge	62, fols. 11r-14r.
1583	Elizabeth Nicholas	65, fols. 347v-350r.
1585	Anne Gunter	68, fols. 129r-132r.
1588	Margaret Bonde	79, fols. 77v-78v.
1588	Jane Pype	73, fols. 86r-v.
1590	Jane Duckett	75, fols. 53r-v.
1594	Agnes Prannell	83, fols. 92r-94r.
1594	Helen Branche	83, fols. 234v-236r.
1594	Elizabeth Buckle	84, fols. 179v-180v.
1597	Margaret Blanke	90, fols. 462r-468v.
1597	Alice Gamage	90, fols. 5v-6r.
1599	Margaret Wythens	95, fols. 279r-282r.
1601	Mary Ramsey	98, fols. 190v-193v.
1604	Alice Barnham	104, fols. 53r-54r
1607	Elizabeth Billingsley [as a wife]	109, fols. 16v-17v.
1607	Elizabeth Bowyer	110, fols. 133r-134v.
1608	Ellen Gore	111, fols. 261v-263v.
1610	Alice Spencer	115, fols. 166r-169v.
1610	Ann Jones	115, fols. 155v-166r.
1610	Dorothy Offley	116, fols. 110v-112v.

1612	Dionizie Staper	119, fols. 404v-405r.
1613	Anne Glover	121, fols. 145r-147r.
1613	Barbara Stone	121, fols. 352v-354v.
1613	Alice Owen	122, fols. 147v-149r.
1613	Margaret Webb	122, fols. 213-214r.
1613	Mary Bishop	122, fols. 99r-100r.
1613	Susanna Saltonstall	121, fols. 71r-v.
1615	Anne Whitmore	126, fols. 210v-215v.
1617	Margaret Evington	130, fols. 154v-155v.
1618	Anne Allott	131, fols. 19r-22r.
1618	Margaret Slaney	133, fols. 333r-336v.
1618	Frances Clarke	132, fols. 51v-56r.
1618	Elizabeth Craven [as a wife]	132, fols. 68r-70r.
1619	Elizabeth Ryvers	133, fols. 504v-506r.
1623	Mary Weld	141, fols. 227v-234r.
1623	Anne Soame	141, fols. 73r-74v.
1624	Alice Jolles	143, fols. 525v-526r.
1624	Elizabeth Craven [as a widow]	143, fols. 492r-494v.
1625	Margerie Pyott	145, fols. 231r-233r.
1625	Anne Harte	145, fols. 282r-284r.
1625	Ann Pemberton	146, fols. 276r-278r.
1625	Elizabeth Elwes	147, fols. 128v-130r.
1627	Ursula Brooke	153, fols. 490v-491v.
1627	Elizabeth Martin	152, fols. 311r-312r.
1628	Mary Farrington	151, fols. 199v-200r.

1628	Julyan Style	153, fols. 49r-50v.
1629	Alice Herne	155, fos. 252v-254r.
1630	Margaret Nicholson	157, fols. 23v-24v.
1631	Thomasine Swinnerton	214, fols. 202v-204v.
1632	Anne Hanford	162, fols. 10r-v.
1633	Susan Billingsley	163, fols. 15r-17r.
1634	Alice Allen	165, fols. 145r-146r.
1635	Gertrude Style	167, fols. 236r-238v.
1635	Marie Gourney	167, fols. 240r-v.
1635	Elizabeth Hicks	167, fols. 234r-v.
1636	Elizabeth Ducy	170, fols. 2v-3v.
1636	Joanna Bolles	171, fols. 258v-260v.
1636	Katharine Manning	172, fols. 244r-245v.
1637	Susan Ferrers	173, fols. 154r-156r.
1638	Judith Cockes	177, fols. 17v-18r.
1642	Alice Heylin	189, fols. 228v-229v.
1642	Dorothy Bennett	190, fols. 9v-10r.
1642	Rebecca Romeney	191, fols. 16r-17r.
1643	Hester Crispe [as Lady Pye]	191, fols. 183r-186r.
1644	Mary Clitherow	LMA, ACC/1360/341/02.
1645	Elizabeth Hicks [Dowager Viscountess Campden]	193, fols. 418r-431r.
1646	Mary Lake	196, fols. 107v-108v, and fols. 380r-381r.
1647	Anne Middleton	199, fols. 171v-174r.
1647	Mary Hamersley	200, fols. 310v-312r.
1648	Elizabeth Soame	204, fols. 54r-56v.

1648	Elizabeth Bright	205, fols. 89r-v.
1648	Elizabeth Proby	205, fols. 258r-v.
1650	Mary Lumley	212, fols. 334r-335r.
1654	Jane Barkham	240, fols. 249r-253r.
1656	Sarah Smythe, [as Dowager Countess of Leicester]	253, fols. 394v-395v.
1658	Rachel Cambell Tuerloot	283, fols. 382v-387v.
1659	Margaret Garway	257, fols. 113v-114r.

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| Museum No: 1878, 0311.41 | Oval gilt-brass cased verge watch, 1600-1610, English, 76.3 x 48.7 x 33 mm, arms of Sir Henry Jaye engraved inside the lid. |
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 only for my private use dureing my pilgrimiadge heare:
 Which when I departe this lifl leave the same to all my
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