UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHAMPTON

KEEPING HER IN THE FAMILY
WOMEN AND GENDER IN SOUTHAMPTON, *c.*1400-*c.*1600

Sian Eleri Jones

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ABSTRACT

FACULTY OF ARTS
HISTORY

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This thesis is based on the proposition that women were subordinate to men in all aspects of medieval society, an inequality constructed by a patriarchal system of *gouvernment*, operating both within and outside the family. In effect the thesis is a reply to Judith Bennett's call for local studies which could inform our understanding of patriarchy in that it examines gender relations in Southampton between 1400 and 1600.

In examining how the family constructed gender during childhood, adolescence marriage and widowhood, I look at the different roles women were expected to occupy, and conclude that these determined their ability to engage in activities beyond the household. I argue that the significance of the housewife's role has been underestimated, and provide evidence to suggest that *housewifery* provided women with a distinct economic role.

I then argue that women's familial roles both constrained and enabled their work in the formal economy, their marginal relationship to both craft production and trade is explained by the gendered organisation of the economy, and demonstrated in the structure of the alleged women's "guild" of wool-packers. Evidence suggests that the "Golden Age" did not exist in Southampton where a continuity in women's economic activity between the late-medieval and early-modern periods is demonstrated.

The gendered relations of property - including both real property and chattels - are seen to be inextricably linked with women's familial roles. Though it is suggested that some women were afforded a degree of control over chattels - and that a few women were prepared to challenge the laws of inheritance - the conclusion that women were passive carriers of the patrimony is inevitable.

Women are seen to have been required to collude with the civic power from which they were excluded. Civic authority is seen to both protect and marginalise women, especially those independent of the family; single-women, widows and others who consciously or unconsciously challenged the authority of the family, being perceived as challenging the gendered social order.

The thesis concludes that the family was the crucial to the maintenance of patriarchy, constructing marriage as the only real option for women. It provided them with a socially recognised role and - dependent on their husbands' social and economic status - enabled them to occupy albeit limited roles in society.

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This thesis is dedicated to my father, William Nathaniel Jones, the nicest patriarch I know; to the women of medieval Southampton, without whom this thesis could not have been written; and to the women of former Yugoslavia who I came to know during the war of 1991-5, and who have shown me that women have the capacity not only to survive, but to transform and transcend the worst of patriarchy.

ABBREVIATIONS

HRO	Hampshire Records Office
PRO	Public Records Office
SC	SC Series, Southampton Records Office
SRO	Southampton Records Office, now Southampton Archives Services
SOU	Southampton City Heritage, Archaeological Archive

Printed Sources [1]

Assize	The Assize of Bread Book 1477-1517
Black Book	The Black Book of Southampton
Brokage	The Brokage Books of Southampton
Examinations	Books of Examinations and Depositions, 1570-94
G.H.C.	The Cartulary of Gods' House, Southampton
HMCR	Historic Manuscripts Commission, 11th Rpt, Appendix III
Inventories	Southampton Probate Inventories, 1447-1575
Letters	Letters of the Fifteenth & Sixteenth Centuries
Oak Book	The Oak Book of Southampton
Port Books	The Port (Petty Custom) Books of Southampton
1st. R.B.	The First Book of Remembrance of Southampton
3rd R.B.	The Third Book of Remembrance of Southampton
Stewards	The Stewards' Books of Southampton
Terrier	The Southampton Terrier of 1454

[1] See bibliography for full references.

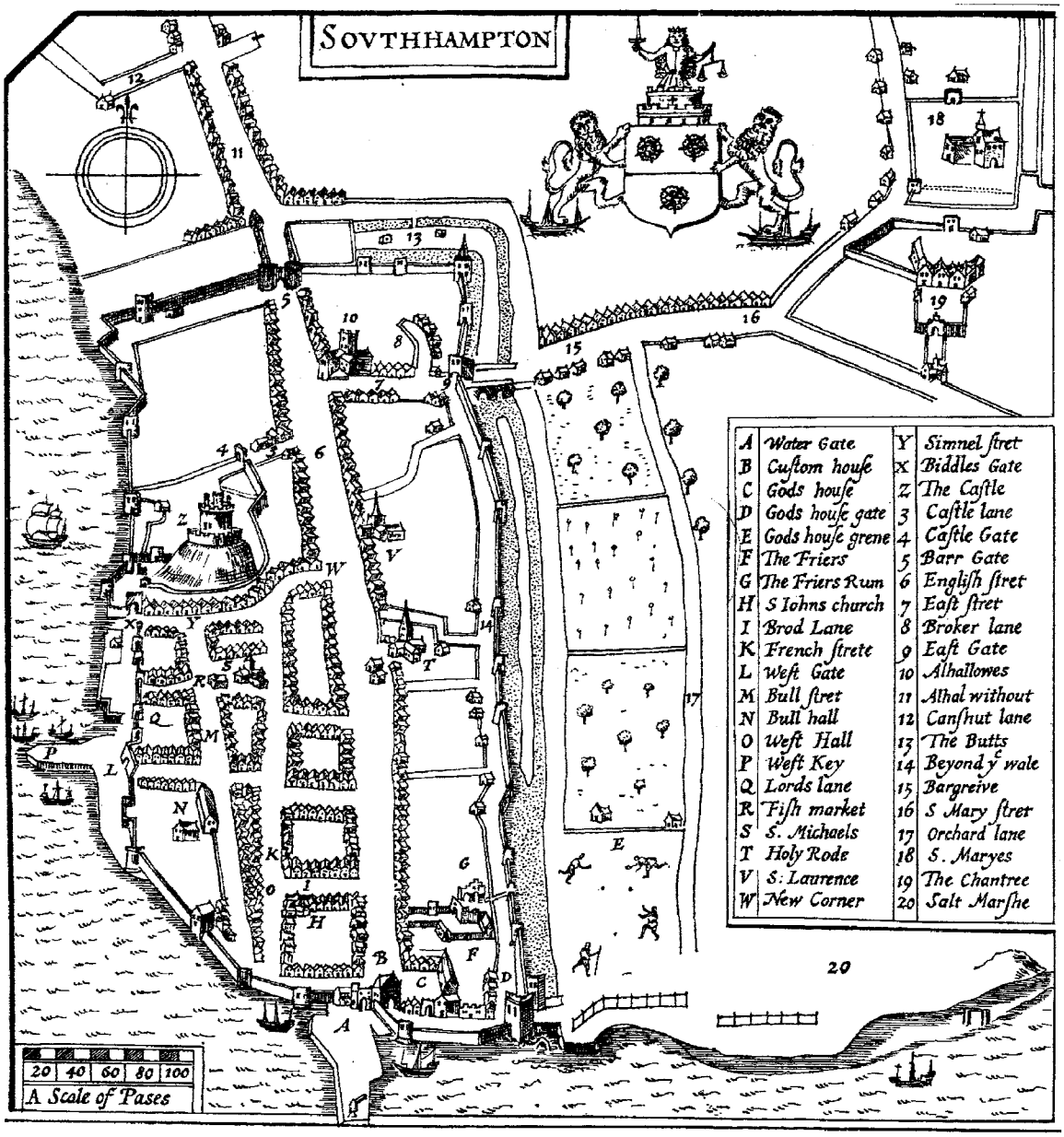

Figure 1 Southampton in 1611, (redrawn from an inset plan on John Speed's map of the Isle of Wight).
Reproduced by permission of Southampton Archive Services.

Chapter One

"Dear and well by loved frend y byseche yew that ye well have mynde in these matters and that ye enquier of good counsell in this matter against john fflemyng. for my tenanntes for dred of hym will go out of my tenantre through his manasse in gret hyndrying to me. and to the eyres of William Overey. and that ye sende me word as hastely as ye may how that y schall spede agenst hym by good counsell of law and y praie yew [mor...] with this matter to John a Skelton for ever John Flemying desyar me and all my meyntenants of landes. and with the grace of god y shall [depro...] his agenst yew in tyme commynge y write in haste this iij de day of ffev[ua]r. and y praie yew that ye speke to John a Skelton that he thanke moche William Soper for the goodnesse and frendship that he doth unto me. And that he wil speke to my lord of Gloucester to commend William Soper to be good friend to me and to my children is he hath ever y be as y shal ever be a trowe bede woman to my lord and to hym the whyle y live

By thy owne Agnes Overay".[1]

[1] SCRO CJ/28/5. The identity of the "Dear and well by loved friend" is unclear. John Fleming was mayor in 1445-7 and parliamentary burgess in 1449-50; accused of corruption during his mayoralty, he held tenements in French Street, near Agnes' properties, see Colin Platt, *Medieval Southampton. The Port & Trading Community, A.D. 1000-1600*, (London, 1973), p. 240. His grandson John acquired at least one of the Overay properties from Agnes' daughter-in-law, Joan, see A.B. Wallis Chapman, (ed.),*The Black Book of Southampton* 3, S. R.Soc.15, 1917, p.53. William Soper served as both Steward and Mayor and was parliamentary burgess between 1413 and 1449, Platt, *Medieval Southampton*, pp. 257-8. John a Skelton may have been related to Sir Thomas Skelton, a benefactor of God's House from whom Agnes Overay held much of her property, see J.M. Kaye, (ed.), *The Cartulary of God's House Southampton* I, S.R.S. 19, 1976, p. lxx, n. 2. This letter was accompanied by a draft of a deed - never enrolled - transferring Agnes' estate to her children and seven local men, CJ/28/4.

1.1 A Letter of Introduction

This letter, written some time between 1435 and 1459, is one of the few surviving records that echoes the voice of a woman who lived in late-medieval Southampton.[1] It was written on behalf of Agnes Overay, a woman for whom a comparatively large number of documentary sources survive. Yet unlike the terrier and rentals in which Agnes was listed, it enables us to construct an image of Agnes and to understand something of her emotions, her relationships, and her status in the town.

It is not the intention of this thesis to recover and recount the life-histories of individuals like Agnes. This thesis attempts to understand the nature of gender relations and the extent to which the lives of women in late-medieval Southampton were constructed by patriarchy. Agnes' relevance to this inquiry lies in the fact that the history we can construct for her, as an individual, demonstrates the partial, fragmentary and gendered nature of the documentary sources upon which this thesis is based. Agnes is unusual, though not unique, in that it is possible to trace her life-history through the records from her first marriage in 1417 to her death in around 1462. Like many other medieval women, she was absent from the records until her first marriage - to Bartholomeo Marmora, one of the first Italian merchants to settle in Southampton. [2] Agnes then disappeared from the records for almost twenty years until she re-emerged as a widow. In that time she had borne a son, Laurence, by Bartholomeo; Bartholomeo had died and Agnes had remarried, this time to William Overay, a man considerably her senior; she had also given birth to at least three more children, Juliana, William and John.[3] As a widow, Agnes was listed in the 1454 Terrier where she appears to have been one of three women in the town with substantial

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[1] Dated after the death of Agnes's husband, William Overay , d.c.1435, and before the death of William Soper in1459, Platt, *Medieval Southampton*, pp. 254 & 258.

[2] Marmora was granted denizenship in 1417, *C.P.R.*, 1416-22, p.123; Alwyn A. Ruddock, *Italian Merchants & Shipping in Southampton, 1270-1600*, S.R.S. I, 1951, pp.121-2.

[3] Overay was mayor in1398-9 and 1406-7, and parliamentary burgess in 1426, see Platt, *Medieval Southampton*, p. 254.

property interests, holding 11 properties left to her by William. [1] Yet, during her widowhood, which lasted 27 years, she was recorded in the God's House rentals, from which she held some of her properties, as unable to pay rents because of her poverty. [2]

The Terrier and the rentals present conflicting images of Agnes. Immediately the pitfalls of relying on a single source are apparent. In each source she conforms to a stereotype: the propertied widow, the survivor; the poor widow, the victim. [3] Individuals could clearly inhabit more than one role - Agnes was also a wife and mother - yet without the letter we would be unable to understand some of the reasons why, as a woman of property, she was forgiven rents because of poverty. The letter is one of those rare sources which reveals the difference between a woman's gendered role and her personal and private gendered identity.[4] Though she saw herself as the victim of John Fleming's harassment, and lacked the confidence to resolve her problems alone, she was also an active agent. As the widow of a burgess with status and influence in Southampton society, she knew that she could call on some of the most influential men in the community to help her in her predicament. She had sufficient confidence in her relationship with her anonymous friend to know that he would appreciate the urgency of her situation, advise her on legal action she could take, and influence other burgesses to act on her behalf.

The letter conveys more about Agnes as a woman than any other record, even if it was written for her by the same man who wrote each of the five entries in this

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[1] Agnes Overay 's properties included a cottage & tenement in Holyrood parish (167 & 8), two cottages (305 & 6), a vacant plot (307) and its associated capital tement (313) in St Michael's, and four cottages and four tenements (305-6, 308-9,323-326), L.A. Burgess, *The Southampton Terrier of 1454*, S.R.S.15, 1976, pp. 65, 89, 89, 91 & 93, (Burgess' s numbering). She may have accquired the vacant plot - described as "the grete yate of my lady Ouerayes", *Terrier,* p.151.

[2] "But in many years her rent was pardoned on account of poverty",1438-62, (309); "often forgiven...because formerly she paid in part when she could", (313), 1435-62, see*G.H.C.*2, pp. 242 & 251.

[3] The ambiguous role of widow in medieval society is discussed in Louise Mirer, "Introduction", in Louise Mirrer (ed.),*Upon My Husband's Death: Widows in the Literature and Histories of Modern Europe,* (Ann Arbor,1992), pp. 1- 17.

[4] "*Gender role* refers to culturally specific, normative expectations of men and women; in other words how men and women are *expected* to act. *Gender identity* is the private experience of gender role which expresses an individual's masculinity or femininity; in other words how one perceives oneself as a man or woman", Roberta Gilchrist, *Gender and Material Culture: The Archaeology of Religious Women*, (London,1994), p.16.

document. We have to assume that Agnes' voice has been mediated by the author, phrasing her concerns in the language he felt appropriate to her situation and status. Yet even if Agnes's voice was mediated by the writer, this letter remains a rare insight into the identity of an individual woman. Almost unique in the archive, in its singularity it demonstrates the huge lacunae in the sources available for this study, and reveals how little we can ever hope to recover of personal identities of the women who form the subject of this thesis. The other constraints of this study - apart from the dangers of our reliance on few documentary sources - are even more obvious. Women do not appear in medieval records with the same frequency as men, and possessed a unique legal identity for a much shorter period of their lives. Neither did most women engage in activities which medieval civic society saw fit to record; this study is based on documentary references to over 2,000 women, most of them only appeared in the records on one occasion. Few women were active agents in the construction of records: they did not occupy official positions, nor did they, with some exceptions, initiate, (other than when required by law), the noting of matters in official records. Invariably represented through the male voice, women were rarely the object and seldom the subject of record. Agnes' life, and the partial nature and the selective survival of documents relating to her, were all events constructed by a gendered society, and it is the operation of gender in medieval society, and in particular, in late-medieval Southampton, which forms the subject of this thesis.

1.2 Historiography and Theory

Until the relatively recent appearance of gender as a category of analysis in medieval studies, histories of medieval women have focused largely on cataloguing and narrating female experience.[1] Research and writing on medieval women has followed the same path as "women's history", developing in phases

[1] See, for example, Doris Mary Stenton, *The English Woman in History*, (London,1957); Eileen Power, *Medieval Women* , (ed. M.M. Postan), (Cambridge, 1975); Shulamith Shahar, *The Fourth Estate: A History of Women in the Middle Ages*, (London, 1983); Henrietta Leyser, *Medieval Women. A Social History of Women in England 450-1500*, (London, 1995).

identified as "compensatory", "contribution" and, more recently, histories of women's "experience", and research continues within each of these conceptual frameworks.[1] Compensatory histories and excellent biographies reclaiming the lives of individual women continue to be produced. [2] Women's contribution to, and participation in, identifiably male areas of activity such as craft production or the law have been documented.[3] Women's experience has of necessity been included in studies of the medieval family, particularly with regard to marriage, while research has also concentrated on exclusively female experience, with a particular focus on religious women and female spirituality. [4]

Studies of urban women ranging from the purely narrative to more analytical approaches have a relatively long history. Research has focused both on large urban centres like London and York, and smaller towns, more comparable with Southampton, such as Exeter, Salisbury and Shrewsbury.[5] However, almost all studies of urban women have concentrated on female participation in crafts and in

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[1] Gerda Lerner, '"Placing Women in History" A 1975 Perspective', in Berenice A. Carroll (ed.), *Liberating Women's History. Theoretical & Critical Essays*, (Urbana & Chicago,1976), pp. 357-67. For similar taxonomies, see Allen J. Frantzen, "When women aren't enough" in Nancy J. Partner (ed.), *Studying Medieval Women*, pp.143-69.

[2] For a recent example, see Caroline Barron & Anne F.Sutton (eds). *Medieval London Widows 1300-1500*, (London, 1994).

[3] For a survey of women and the law, see Janet S. Loengard, ' "Legal History & the Medieval English Woman" Revisited: Some New Directions,' in. Joel. T. Rosenthal, (ed.), *Medieval Women and the Sources of Medieval History*, (London,1990), pp. 210-36.

[4] For the family, see for example, Judith Bennett, *Women in the Medieval English Countryside; Gender & Household in Brigstock before the Plague*, (New York,1985); Barbara Hanawalt, *The Ties That Bound: Peasant Families in Medieval England,* (New York, 1986). On marriage, see for example, the work of Michael M. Sheehan, including, "The Formation and Stability of marriage in Fourteenth Century England: Evidence of an Ely Register", *Medieval Studies*, 33, 1971, pp. 228-63; "Choice of Marriage Partner in the Middle Ages: Development & Mode of Application", *Studies in Medieval and Renissance History*, n.s. I, 1978, pp. 3-33; "Theory & practice: Marriage of the Unfree and the Poor in Medieval Society", *Medieval Studies* 50, 1988, pp. 457-87. For female spirituality, see, for example, Caroline Walker Bynum, *Holy Feast & Holy Fast: The Religious Significance of Food to Medieval Women,* (London, 1987). Recent anthologies include subjects as varied as gynaecological practice and the relationships between wives and their parents-in-law , see Christiane Klapisch Zuber, (ed.), *A History of Women in the West, 2: Silences of the Middle Ages*, (Cambridge, Mass.,1992).See also C. Erikson & Kathleen Casey, 'Women in the Middle Ages: a working bibliography,' *Medieval Studies* XXXVIII, 1976, pp. 340-59.

[5] For London see, Anne Abraham, "Women Traders in Medieval London'", *Economic Journal* 26, 1916, pp.276-85; Marion K. Dale, "The London Silkwomen of the Fifteenth Century", *Economic History Review*, 1st ser.,4, 1933, pp. 324-35; Kay Lacey, "Women & Work in 14th & 15th century London'" in Linsey Charles & Lorna Duffin (eds.), *Women & Work in Pre-Industrial England*, (London, 1985), pp. 24-82, and Caroline Barron, 'The "golden age" of women in medieval London', in *Medieval Women in Southern England*: *Reading Medieval Studies* 15,1989, pp. 35-58. For York, see P.J.P. Goldberg, *Women, Work & Life Cycle in a Medieval Economy. Women in York & Yorkshire c1300-1520*, (Oxford, 1992); for other towns, see Maryanne Kowaleski, "Women's Work in a Market Town: Exeter in the late 14th century", in Barbara Hanawalt (ed.), *Women & Work in Pre-Industrial Europe* , (Bloomington,1986), pp. 145-164; D. Hutton, "Women in Fourteenth Century Shrewsbury'" and Sue Wright, '"Churmaids, Huswyfes and Hucksters": the Employment of Women in Tudor & Stuart Salisbury' in Charles & Duffin, *op. cit.*, pp. 83-99 &100-121.

trade. This emphasis on women's economic activity, while dictated in part by the nature of available sources - a function of civic and state regulation and record of economic activity - can also be attributed to the influential and pioneering work carried out by female economic historians earlier this century. Anne Abraham, Eileen Power and particularly Alice Clark placed medieval women into their economic context for the first time; but they also conceived the notion of a pre-industrial golden age for medieval women. [1] Ironically, though Clark emphasised the importance of women's domestic role in the medieval family economy, an importance she identified as being eroded as capitalism developed, she also argued that the middle ages were a period in which women were equally able to engage in economic activity alongside their husbands. Her thesis has therefore served to construct the notion of a great divide between the status of women in the medieval period and the early modern period. [2] This position is still held by many medievalists. That it coincides with the disciplinary divide between medievalists and early modernists can be no coincidence.[3]

This notion that life was qualitatively better for medieval women suited the aspirations of these early twentieth-century female historians, each of whom was influenced by the suffrage and women's movements. The parallels drawn by Annie Abraham - writing in 1916 - between the range of work available to medieval women and the opportunities offered to women workers in the first world war are clear. [4] A similar mood was expressed in the relative flood of women's history which developed as a result of the women's liberation movement in the

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[1] Abraham, "Women Traders in Medieval London"; Power's research on medieval women only received partial and posthumous publication, see, Eileen Power, "The Position of Women", in C.J. Crump & E.F. Jacobs, (eds.), *The Legacy of the Middle Ages,* (Oxford, 1926), and Power, *Medieval Women* ; Alice Clark, *Working Life of Women in the Seventeenth Century*, (1919; reprint, London, 1982).

[2] This responsibility may be misplaced: Clark credits Eileen Power for providing her with evidence for the medieval period, see Clark, *Working Life*, p.vii. For a discussion of Clark's work, see Miranda Chaytor & Jane Lewis, "Introduction", in Clark, *Working Life*, esp. pp. xxv-xxxiii. A medieval "golden age" was also imagined by the Victorian romantics including Georgina Hill, *Women in English Life from Medieval to Modern Times* I, (London, 1896).

[3] For a similar debate regarding the status of women before and after 1066, see Pauline Stafford, "Women and th e Norman Conquest", *Roy. Hist. Soc. Trans.*, 6th ser., 4, pp. 221-49.

[4] "At the present time when women, in response to their country's call, are entering trades usually carried on by men, it is encouraging to look back into the past and see how large a part they played in the business life of England's greatest city, in an age which, like our own, though for quite a different reason, was a period of crisis", Abraham, "Women traders in medieval London", p. 276.

1970s, which again aspired to economic equality, but also identified women as the victims of oppression. [1] Most recently, the search for independent, autonomous and single women in the medieval period can be seen as a historicising phenomenon of the 1980s, as western women increasingly entered professional, executive and management roles.

With notable exceptions, the paradigm of the golden age continues to influence work on urban women. Caroline Barron, for example, has stated that the "lifestyle of women in medieval London was quite a rosy one: their range of options and prospects differed only slightly from those of men who shared their level of prosperity" and claimed that "women lost ground in the sixteenth century...which has still to be recovered". [2] Yet, in attributing women's loss of status to their lack of political influence, Barron almost accidentally exposes the fallacy of the golden age. Though there is evidence that some women achieved economic prosperity through their activity in craft production and in trade, these women were excluded from political power. Women's status in medieval society cannot be measured by the economic success of a few individuals, but any group's lack of access to political power can be used as an indicator of their status in any society. [3] Goldberg's work on York, with its emphasis on the economic independence of single women, could be described as modified golden age, despite the statistical foundations of much of his analysis. His hankering for the golden age is best illustrated in his discussion of Kowaleski and Bennett's research, which he describes as presenting a "negative view of female economic activity".[4] But unless history is a public relations exercise for the medieval woman, a reluctance to

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[1] See for example, Kathleen Casey, "The Cheshire Cat: reconstructing the Experience of Medieval Women' in Berenice A. Carroll (ed.),*Liberating Women's History*, pp. 224-49.

[2] Barron,"Golden Age", pp. 35-58; Barron has recently suggested that the golden age was confined to London and York between 1370 and 1470, Barron, "Introduction", in *Medieval London Widows*, p. xiv. For another exposition on the "golden age", based almost verbatim on Clark, see Susan Cahn, *Industry of Devotion :The Transformation of Women's Work in England, 1500-1600*, (New York,1987).

[3] The various relationships of women to power are discussed in Mary Erler and Maryanne Kowaleski (eds.), *Women and Power in the Middle Ages*, (Athens, 1988).

[4] "The court rolls paint a rather negative image of women", Goldberg, *Women Work & Life Cycle*, pp. 83-5, discussing Maryanne Kowaleski, "Women's Work in a Market Town", and Judith Bennett, *Women in the Medieval English Countryside*.

accept the less than romantic reality than that presented by the golden age does not make for good historical practice. The golden age has of course been challenged. Judith Bennett, for example, argues against what she describes as the "dominant master narrative" and questions Clark's notion that gender relations in the medieval period were more equitable than in later centuries, forcefully arguing the case for continuity - rather than change - in women's economic status "across the great divide".[1]

1.3 A Gendered History

The idea of this thesis developed over many years, as I researched Southampton's history for my work in the city's museums and began to appreciate the wealth of information about the women of the medieval town held in Southampton's archives. What began with a catalogue of women has evolved into a response to Judith Bennett's plea for local studies that could inform our understanding of "patriarchy as a historical phenomenon". [2] Here patriarchy is taken to represent a system of social organisation that was based on masculine authority - both within the family and in society - which, in locating power with men, constructed medieval women as dependant, and without power. [3] The concept of patriarchy has few adherents, being based in an explicitly feminist perspective, and has been adopted by only a minority of female - and male - historians. Consequently relatively little research has been conducted within an explicitly feminist perspective. [4] This thesis is written from a feminist perspective in

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[1] Judith Bennett, 'Medieval Women, Modern Women: Across the Great Divide' in David Aers (ed.), *Culture and History 1350-1600: Essays on English Communities, Identities and Writing*, (Hemel Hempstead,1992), pp. 147-175; see also Olwen Hufton,*The Prospect Before Her. A History of Women in Western Europe, 1500-1800*, (London, 1995), esp. pp. 22-4.

[2] Bennett, "Feminism and History",*Gender & History* 1, 1989, pp. 251-72, quoted from p. 260.

[3] Bennett, "Medieval Women, Modern Women". For other discussions of patriarchy , see Gerda Lerner,*The Creation of Patriarchy*, (New York & Oxford,1986); Anthony Fletcher, *Gender, Sex and Subordination in England, 1500-1800*, (New York & London, 1995). For a summary of competing theories of gender inequality, see Sherry B.Ortner & Harriet Whitehead, "Introduction: Accounting for Sexual Meanings", in Ortner & Whitehead (eds.),*Sexual Meanings: The Cultural Construction of Gender & Sexuality*, (Cambridge, 1981), pp.1-27.

[4] Judith Bennett, "Medievalism & Feminism",*Speculum* 68,1993, pp. 309-31, esp. pp. 312-8. For Bennett on the difference between women's history and feminist history, see "Feminism & History",*Gender & History* 1,1989, pp. 251-72.

that it identifies women as a disadvantaged group in medieval society and argues that their status was constructed by the patriarchal gender relations which operated in that society.[1] However, I hope to be able to explain how patriarchy operated in medieval Southampton through a focus on gender - identified as the socially constructed difference between men and women - rather than on women alone. [2] In using gender as a category of analysis historians refute the assumption that biological differences between the sexes determined the differences between the expectations and experiences of women and men. Gender allows us examine the means by which these expectations and experiences were culturally constructed, and how they varied across time and space. As Fletcher has pointed out, this type of study is of necessity ahistorical. In medieval and early modern society the unequal relationship between men and women was perceived of as natural and a part of God's creation. Gender was based on the "twin foundations" of biblical teaching and contemporary beliefs in the physiological differences between men and women. [3] In medieval theology, women's subordination was their just punishment for Eve's original sin; in medieval medicine - based on the Galenic theory of the humours, men were hot and dry, women were cold and moist; men were strong and women were weak. The weakness of a woman's mind and conscience was paralleled by the weakness of her body. Nevertheless, the use of gender - rather than woman - as a category of analysis enables us to identify the mechanisms through which patriarchy operated in medieval society, and informs our understanding of the means by which male and female experience was differently constructed, giving us a better grasp of women's real status in society than would be possible if women alone were the subject of research. Therefore this thesis aims to both describe gender relations,

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[1] Bennett does not accept that a study of medieval gender relations can be *as feminist* as a study of medieval women, and fails to consider its influence on medieval studies and its relationship to an explicitly feminist perspective, "Medievalism & Feminism", pp. 314 & 321. For concerns that a focus on gender could oust women from the research agenda , see Sian Jones & Sharon Pay, "The legacy of Eve", in Peter Gathercole & David Lowenthal (eds.), *The Politics of the Past*, (London,1990), pp. 160-71, esp. pp. 170-1; see also Gisela Bock, "Women's History & Gender History: Aspects of an International debate",*Gender & History* 1,1989, pp. 7-30.

[2] For a comprehensive survey of the use of gender by historians, see Joan Scott, *Gender and the Politics of History*, (New York, 1988). See also Nancy F. Partner (ed.), *Studying Medieval Women*, (Camb., Mass, 1993).

[3] Fletcher, *Gender, Sex and Subordination*, p. xvii.

and where possible, to explain how the social relations between the sexes were constructed, controlled, legitimised, maintained and challenged, within the family and in the wider contexts of economic activity, the ownership of property and within the community of Southampton.[1] But though *gender* is my subject, I place *woman* at the centre of enquiry. Evidence for women's activity and experience is compared with that of men in order to understand the means by which gender constructed experience. My focus is, however, on the construction of femininity and on female experience, rather than on masculinity and on male experience. That. perhaps, is the subject of another thesis.

I will examine gender relations within the family, the household and in the local organisation of the economy, the property market and civic power, structuring my discussion around the different but equally gendered roles which women occupied at different stages of their life-cycle. [2] In accepting that that gender was not fixed but mutable, I will attempt to show the range of, and changes in, gendered experience, hopefully avoiding the determinism which identifies patriarchy as an immutable force. [3] This should lead us to understand how patriarchy - as an ideology - had to be continuously maintained and reinforced if it was to continue to exist. By identifying women as individuals who both conformed to and challenged their gendered roles and accepted notions of appropriate behaviour, I hope to see beyond the gendered roles which individuals, like Agnes, were expected to occupy, and explore the dynamic relationship between male power and female subordination.[4]

Though the documentary sources will inform our understanding of the gendered roles that women inhabited in medieval Southampton, they will, as documents of public record, rarely allow us to understand an individual's gendered identity. [5]

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[1] Scott, *Gender and the Politics of History*, p. 3; for a model of the relationship between gender and economy, see, Martha Howell, *Women, Production & Patriarchy in Late Medieval Cities.*

[2] This also avoids seeing gender as a structural phenomenon which precludes the notion of personal agency.

[3] Gender is examined here as a social relationship, rather than as a symbolic construction, see Henrietta L. Moore, *Feminism & Anthropology,* (Oxford, 1988), esp. chap.2.

[4] Feminist concepts of gender as a relationship structured by power have been heavily influenced by Michel Foucault, *Discipline & Punishment*, (Harmondsworth,1979).

[5] See above, p. 4.

This evidence will, on occasion, be provided only by the women who stepped outside their expected roles and into the documents; indeed we have to rely on those who did not accept their gendered roles to order to increase our understanding of those who did, and the thesis will occasionally concern itself with these exceptional women in order to understand the reality of most women's lives. It is necessary to look at both the exceptions and the rule in order to construct a history of women in Southampton that reflects the lives of medieval women, rather than a history constructed by what might be unkindly labelled the wishful thinking school of women's history.[1]

The point of departure for this investigation is the family, where patriarchal power was, in theory, located, its structure and internal relationships based on the authority of husbands and fathers and the duty of obedience of both wives and children. The medieval household, the family and marriage has been extensively studied from a variety of theoretical perspectives. [2] Yet though very different narratives have been constructed by historians of women and of gender, and the central role of the family in the reproduction and maintenance of gender has been acknowledged, family history has - until recently - failed to answer the question: why did women marry? [3] The question may seem simplistic, but given that in medieval marriage women were regarded as the dependant partner, a dependency reinforced and maintained by *couverture*, which subsumed or "covered" their identity in law, and denied married women any legal independence of action, it needs to be answered. Indeed the answer is crucial to

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[1] "Historians have difficulty in writing interpretations of the past that encompass both domination and resistance", Linda Gordon, "What's New in Women's History", in Tessa de Lauretis (ed.), *Feminist Studies/Critical Studies*, (London,1986), pp. 20-30, quoted from p. 23.

[2] For opposing views of late-medieval and early-modern family structure, see Lawrence Stone, *The Family, Sex and Marriage in England, 1570-1640*, (New York, 1977); Alan Macfarlane, *Marriage and Love in England: Modes of Reproduction, 1300- 1840*, (Oxford, 1986); Ralph Houlbrooke, *The English Family 1450-1700*, (London, 1984). Other useful studies include J.L Flandrin, *Families in former Times: Kinship, Household and Sexuality*, (Cambridge, 1979); Jack Goody, *The Development of the Family & Marriage in Europe*, (Cambridge, 1983). As Gies points out, in pre-18th century Europe, the word *familia* was understood as the whole household including unrelated persons. Here *family* is used to include all persons related by birth or by marriage, whether living in the same household or not; *household* is used to describe all persons living or working in the same house, whether related or not, Frances & Joseph Gies, *Marriage & Family in the Middle Ages*, (New York, 1987), p. 4.

[3] See Olwen Hufton, *The Prospect Before Her* ; Lyndal Roper, *The Holy Household. Women and Morals in Reformation Augsburg*, (Oxford,1989).

our understanding of the gendered roles that women occupied in the medieval society. Using a life-cycle approach, questions will be asked about the gendered roles women occupied from childhood, through adolescence, to marriage and ultimate widowhood, by exploring in the first instance, the various roles of daughter, wife and widow, and secondly, the role of a married woman as housewife and helpmeet. These roles, I will argue, provided the foundation upon which women's expectations of, experiences in, and relationships to the wider community were based. The family, I shall argue, gave women a sense of place in society, forming the matrix in which their social interactions took place and legitimising any activity they undertook beyond the family. The effects this had on the lives of single women, who were often involuntarily or actively excluded from the family, will also be explored, partially responding to Goldberg's hypothesis that non-marriage, or the delaying of marriage, was an active and positive choice made by women in periods of economic prosperity.[1]

Any attempt to understand how gender was articulated within individual families in a small medieval town is necessarily limited by the nature of the available sources. I will not be able to cite direct evidence, for example, of how the medieval ideology of the family, as expressed by theologians and moral commentators, was received and understood by women and men living in medieval Southampton [2] However, given that the period spans the turbulent years of the English Reformation, I will attempt to identify if changing ideologies impinged on ordinary realities.[3] But, while it will be possible to examine some of the gendered dynamics of family relationships, the emotional and social relationships expressed within the family will, for the most part, remain hidden.

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[1] Goldberg, *Women, Work & Life Cycle*, p. 325

[2] Two very different approaches to the effects of changing ideologies on the family can be seen in Susan Cahn, *Industry of Devotion* and Susan Dwyer Amussen, *An Ordered Society: Gender and Class in Early Modern England*, (Oxford, 1988).

[3] See Patricia Crawford, *Women and Religion in England 1500-1720*, (London, 1993), pp. 21-64. See also Merry Wiesner, "Beyond Women & the Family: Towards a Gender Analysis of the Reformation", *Sixteenth Century Journal* 18.3, 1987, pp. 311-21.

Part of the ideological construction of medieval marriage depended on the symbiotic relationship between a husband, who was expected to generate the resources to support his family, and his wife, who was expected to make the best use of these resources in her role as housewife. Despite the agreement among economic historians that women's domestic role was crucial to the medieval family economy, the literature on the late-medieval housewife is sparse. Her role is invariably summarised in a list of domestic tasks, before the author, whoever it may be, quickly passes on to women's participation in the masculine realms of craft production and trade.[1] The absence of any thorough examination of the wife as housewife has placed a disproportionate emphasis on women's participation in the market economy, and has consequently further reinforced the idea that women's domestic work was marginal and without value to medieval society.[2] The lack of research on the housewife can also be attributed to the absence of any comprehensive documentary sources for the domestic.[3] It is one of the aspects of medieval women's lives least subject to interrogation, yet sources do exist. Primarily through the use of inventories, but with the assistance of an eclectic range of other sources, I hope to be able to throw more light on the housewife's work. By using material culture analysis to interrogate inventories, it is hoped to provide an impression - if not a rigorous statistical analysis - of the range and significance of women's work as housewife. This acknowledgment and demonstration of the house-wife's work will then provide a realistic context in which women's work in the formal economy can be examined.

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[1] See, for example, Lindsey Charles, "Introduction", in Charles & Duffin (eds.), *Women & Work in Pre-Industrial England*, p. 6; Eileen Power merely mentions "house-keeping", see Power, *Medieval Women*, pp. 50-2. Goldberg, though proposing "to explore the full range of female economic activity", fails to discuss women's domestic work, *Women, Work & Life Cycle*, pp. 83-5.
For discussions of the domestic, see Barbara Hanawalt, *The Ties That Bound: Peasant Families in Medieval England*, (Oxford,1986); Christopher Middleton, "The Sexual Division of Labour in Feudal England", *New Left Review* 113-114, 1979, pp.147-68, esp. pp.162-6. For a useful description of the household as a unit of production, see Peter Laslett, *The World we have lost, further explored*, (London,3rd ed.,1983), pp. 1-21, esp. pp.1-4.

[2] For the universal lack of value placed on domestic women's work, see for example, Michelle Z. Rosaldo, "Women, culture and society: an overview", in Rosaldo & Louise Lamphere (eds.), *Women, Culture & Society*, (California,1974) pp.17-42, and Henrietta L. Moore, *Feminism and Anthropology*, (Oxford,1988), esp. pp. 42-54.

[3] The household accounts of aristocratic and gentry families provide little information about the duties for which the "housewife" was responsible, though exceptions exist, see for example, M.K.Dale & V.B.Redstone (eds.), *Household Book of Dame Alice de Bryene of Acton Hall, Sept. 1412-Sept. 1413*, (Ipswich, 1931).

Though many historians have identified, documented and analysed women's work in the urban economy, few have discussed women's work in the context of gender relations in the craft guilds, mercantile trade and waged labour.[1] This has consequently invested women's work - in, for example, craft production - with an exaggerated importance. At the same times studies actually based on a very small number of individuals have tended to assumed a higher degree of participation than can actually be observed or have, like Goldberg's work on York, aggregated examples from different towns to produce a distorted and exaggerated impression of women's work within the formal economy. [2] This lack of contextual comparison has further contributed to the concept of the golden age, a myth which this thesis sets out to question. The theory that the domestic mode of production gave women access to most crafts and trades will also be challenged through an examination of how gender determined modes of access to, and participation in, craft production and trade. Thus, in using gender as a category of analysis, the significance of women's presence in, and indeed their absence from, aspects of the formal medieval economy will be more fully understood.

I will then examine women's relationship to property, an area which has recently received increasing attention from historians, and for which the Southampton sources present an excellent record.[3] Though there have been several influential studies concerning women's relationship to property, these have focused almost entirely on the period of widowhood, or on women of the nobility and gentry, where property, power and lineage are inextricably intertwined.[4] However, work on rural women and property, particularly by Helena Graham, has shown how useful sources relating to the land-market can be, not only with regard to the

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[1] Exceptions include Heather Swanson, *Medieval Artisans. An Urban Class in Medieval England*, (Oxford,1989) and Maryanne Kowaleski, *Local Markets and Regional Trade in Medieval Exeter*, (Cambridge,1995).

[2] Goldberg, *Women, Work & Life Cycle*, pp. 82-157.

[3] For what she describes as a "return to the land", see Sue Sheridan Walker (ed.), *Wife & Widow in Medieval England*, (Michigan,1993), *passim,* quote from p. 2.

[4] *Op. cit.*, and, for example, Rowena Archer,"Women as landholders and administrators in the later Middle Ages", in Goldberg (ed.), *Woman is a Worthy Wight*, pp. 149-81.

gender relations of property-holding, but also in describing the range of female agency. [1] I will attempt a preliminary and tentative analysis of the gendered patterns of the inheritance, holding and disposal of urban property which is, as far as the author is aware, the only study of this subject to date. [2] Given that the role a woman occupied in the family determined her relationship to property at different stages of her life, this chapter will focus on her relationship to property as a single-woman, wife and widow. This enquiry has been informed by Erickson's recent study of women and property in the early-modern period, which, through its inclusion of both real and moveable property or *chattells real*, has begun to challenge the dominant discourse of studies of property relations. [3]

Finally I will explore the way in which public authority - as embodied in the burgesses and corporation of Southampton - controlled the social relations of power and constructed the gender relations of the social order in order to understand the relationship between gender and power in the public sphere. I will look at how women were both excluded from and included in the articulation of civic power, and at the relationships between the civic authorities and the people of Southampton. In so doing, I will explore the gendering of poverty, immorality and of misdemeanour, examining the corporation's different responses to women and men in the community who they perceived as a threat to the social order. In identifying these groups as marginals in the Southampton community, I will suggested that women who lived outside the family were constructed as *other* in late-medieval and early-modern society.

1.4 The Sources

Southampton is well endowed with documentary sources for the medieval period, though differential survival of different classes of document, with the exception of

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[1] Helena Graham,"A Social and Economic Study of the late medieval Peasantry: Alrewas, Staffordshire in the fourteenth century", Ph.D. thesis, University of Birmingham, 1994, esp. chap. 3.
[2] For the legal framework which structured urban women's relationship to property, see, E.W.W.Veale, "Introduction (Part 1), Burgage Tenure in medieval Bristol", in *The Great Red Books of Bristol*, Bristol Records Society Publications 2, (1931), see esp. pp. 22-28, 47-60 & 253 ff.
[3] Amy Louise Erickson, *Women and Property in Early Modern England,* (London,1993).

land transactions, make comparison across more than two centuries problematic. Though a few references will be made to comparative sources from the twelfth to the fourteenth centuries, this thesis is concerned with the late-medieval period, from around 1400, and extends into the late-sixteenth century, conventionally defined as the early-modern period. In so doing I hope to show a continuity of gendered experience which questions the appropriateness of placing boundaries around studies of the late-medieval and early-modern periods.[1]

Almost every document for the period 1400-1600 held in the Southampton City Record Office (SCRO) was included in this study, as well as relevant holdings in the Hampshire Record Office (HRO), and in other institutions including the Public Record Office (PRO).[2] Unlike some studies of urban women, the thesis is not based solely on positive sightings of individual women in the records, and the absences of women from various classes of record have been considered as carefully as their recorded appearances in others. Women's absence from the records is often as significant as their presence, and can be interpreted as being produced by a society in which exclusion was the norm.

Though the thesis starts with an individual woman and a personal text, and travels from the familial and the domestic eventually reaching the masculine realm of civic power, those who enroled the records were situated at the far end of the spectrum. Their concerns were with government, regulation, financial accountability and legal process. Those who inhabited the domestic sphere would hardly seem to be the concern of those who constructed the records; yet because the actions of the individuals they governed was very much their concern, the division between public and private was permeable. [3] Books of account were not written to illuminate the lives of individuals in the town, but we can read and interpret them in this way.

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[1] This has been questioned by, *inter alia*, Joan Kelly,"The Social Relations of the Sexes: Methodological Implications of Women's History", (1976), in Elizabeth Abel and Emily K. Abel (eds.),*The Signs Reader: Women, Gender & Scholarship,* (Chicago,1983), pp. 11-25, and Judith Bennett, "Medieval Women, Modern Women".

[2] A complete list of sources appears in the bibliography. For a survey of all demographically useful holdings covering medieval and early-modern Southampton, see T.B. James, *Southampton Sources:1086-1900,* S.R.S. 26, (1983), pp.1-153.

[3] See Janet Nelson, "The problematic in the private", *Social History*15, 1990, pp. 355-64.

The successive ordinances enroled in the Oak Book best expressed the corporate body of Southampton. These ordinances defined the roles and responsibilities of Southampton's burgesses and its other inhabitants; originally enroled *c.* 1300 at the instigation of the guild merchant, the majority of ordinances were concerned with defining the trading privileges of this merchant elite and the relationships between the elite and the remainder of the population.[1] The ordinances were revised between 1473 and 1496 by the reforming mayors, William and Thomas Overay, son and grandson of Agnes Overay. [2] Though these texts ostensibly refer to the whole community of Southampton, they give a clear indication of the gendered world which the women of Southampton inhabited. Though the masculine nouns and pronouns used in the text could be interpreted as standing for both male and female subjects, the ordinances were almost exclusively concerned with the rights and duties of burgesses and with the regulation of the trade in which they, and the other men of the community, were engaged. Women were, it will also be suggested, almost completely marginal to mercantile trade. They were, of course, also excluded from the burgess elite by and for whom these ordinances were constructed, and whose names were recorded in the admissions register from 1496 onwards. [3] The fact that women were specifically referred to in only three ordinances implies that the others were not seen as relating to them. [4] But in the records of the daily business of the mayor and corporation the women of the town begin to appear. The Books of Remembrance, dating from 1455 onwards, contain an eclectic series of memoranda covering over 150 years of decisions made by successive mayors. [5] These memoranda provide an insight

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[1] SC2/1/1; P. Studer (ed.),*The Oak Book of Southampton*, 3 vols., S.R.Soc.10-12, (1910-11).
[2] For the dating of the ordinances and their revisions, *ibid.*, pp. x -xii. Different versions are indicated thus: "Ord." for Early Laws, c. 1300; "Ca." for the English version dated to 1473 and "[Ord.]" for the revisions made between 1491-6, *Oak Book* 1, pp. 1-83, App. A, pp. 85-115, App. B, pp. 116-50.
[3] SC3/1/1; no records of admission to the franchise - which in other towns included women - exist for Southampton. The political power enjoyed by burgesses, and their relationship to franchisers and the rest of the population is discussed below, see p. 172.
[4] Ord.9 prohibited inheritance through the female line; Ord. 64 prohibited the sale of fish by any "regteresse"; Ca. 76 prohibited women and men from keeping and milking cows within the town walls,*Oak Book*, pp. 31 (87& 118), 65-7 (96 & 137) & 145. See also pp. 172-3 & 177, below.
[5] SC4/1/1-3, published, with the exception of SC4/1/2, in H.W. Gidden (ed.), *The Book of Remembrance of Southampton,* 3 vols., S.R.Soc. 27-29, (1927, 1928 & 1930) ; Alan Merson (ed.),*The Third Book of Remembrance of Southampton 1514-1602*, 3 vols., S.R.S. 2-3 & 7, (1952, 1955 & 1965); T.B. James (ed.),*The Third Book of Remembrance of Southampton 1514-1602* 4, S.R.S. 22, (1979). The second book, SC4/1/2, contains for the most part, admiralty records.

into both civic and concerns and preoccupations, and an indication of the complex relationships and conflicts in the lives of the community they governed. Orders issued by the mayor concerning trade regulations sit alongside accounts of the Salt Marsh riot; the granting of a vacant portership to a widow; the barbers' reluctance to accept a woman into their number; the custody of a child's inheritance and injunctions to women to be of good behaviour.

One of the most fruitful sources of information for this study were the steward's books, kept on an annual basis from 1428. In these books the steward accounted for income received by the town from petty customs dues, rents of town properties and other sources. He also detailed every item of expenditure on goods, materials and services purchased on behalf of the corporation, recording the names of the individuals and the amounts they were paid for goods or the work they undertook on a daily or periodic basis. [1] Though the numbers of women listed in the books are comparatively small, they appear on a regular basis as providers of both goods and services, and the stewards' books, more than any other source, indicate the range of economic activities in which women were involved.

As a port of trade, Southampton generated much of its income from the taxation it levied on the activities of merchants trading in and out of the town. Though local burgesses and merchants from some other boroughs were exempt from local taxation, duties were levied on all other merchants trading through the town. The primary sources for these activities lie in the Port Petty Custom and Brokage Books which, dating from 1430 and 1426 respectively, span more than a century of trading activity, a sequence described by T.B. James as a unique series of local records. [2] The Brokage Books dealt with goods leaving or entering the town at the Bargate, which were subject to custom, brokage - a standard fee apparently unique to Southampton - and pontage - a penny levied on each vehicle crossing the bridge at the Bargate. The name of every merchant - whether subject to

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[1] Stewards' Books: SC 5/1/-, 1428 onwards. Few have been published, see H. W. Gidden, (ed). *The Stewards' Books of Southampton* , 2 vols., (1428-34 &1434-39), S.R.Soc. 35 & 39, (1935 & 1939); Anne Thick (ed.), *The Southampton Steward's Book of 1492-3 and the Terrier of 1495,* S.R.S. 38, (1995). See also Anne Thick's forthcoming Ph. D. thesis on the stewards' books, (King Alfred's College, Winchester, 1997).

[2] James' claim is exaggerated; Exeter's Port Customs Accounts, dating from 1302 to1498, provide identical information, see Kowaleski, *Local Markets and Regional Trade*, pp. 340-1.

custom or exempt - was recorded, along with the commodities carried, the carters who transported them, and their destination or origin. [1] The parallel series of Port Books accounted for custom paid on goods imported and exported by sea, and for fees paid for anchorage, wharfage and cranage. Again all commodities were listed, along with the names of merchants and ship-owners, the accounts for alien and denizen trade being kept separately for much of the period. [2] Together, these records provide a wealth of information on local trade, and for the purposes of this study provide a realistic context in which women's participation in long-distance and international trade can be discussed.

Perhaps because of the dominance of the merchant guild, Southampton's craft guilds were relatively late in their formation. Records generated by these organisations are few and far between, and only 11 formulaic documents of incorporation survive, nine of which date to the sixteenth century. [3] The bulk of evidence for craft-based production therefore has to be gleaned from a wide range of sources. A substantial number of entries in the Books of Remembrance refer to the regulation of craft guilds and their activities, and during the fifteenth century, these books also list fines paid by individuals on taking up a craft or having breached the ordinances which regulated their trading activities. From the late fifteenth century, these fines were generally recorded in the mayor's account book, or Book of Fines, though comparison of craft entry fines in this source with the names of craftsmen given in other documents suggests that a complete record of all those who took up craft production in Southampton does not survive. [4]

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[1] Brokage Books, SC 5/5; 46 books survive for the120 years to 1550, after which the survival rate increases. Published books include Barbara Bunyard (ed.),*The Brokage Book of Southampton, 1439-40*, S.R.Soc. 40, (1940); Olive Coleman (ed.), *The Brokage Book of Southampton 1443-4*, 2 vols, S.R.S. 4 & 6, (1960 & 1961); Elisabeth A. Lewis (ed.), *The Southampton Port & Brokage Books 1448-9,* S.R.S. 36, (1993); K.F.Stevens & T.E. Olding, *The Brokage Books of Southampton 1477-8 & 1527-8,* S.R.S. 28, (1985).

[2] Port Petty Custom Books, SC 5/4; dating from 1426, again 46 books survive for the period to 1550, after which survival increases. Published books include H.S. Cobb (ed.),*The Local Port Book of Southampton for 1435 to 1436*, S.R.S. 5, (1961); Brian Foster (ed.), *The Local Port Book of Southampton, 1435-6,* S.R.S. 7, (1963); Lewis,*Port & Brokage Books1448-9*; D.B. Quinn & A.A. Rudoock (eds.), *The Port Books of the Reign of Edward IV*, 2 vols., S.R.Soc. 37 & 38, (1937 & 1938); P. Studer (ed.), *The Port Books of Southampton, A.D.1427-1430*, S.R.Soc.15, (1913); T.B. James (ed.),*The Port Book of Southampton1509-10*, 2 vols., S.R.S. 32 & 33, (1990). Details of transactions in the wool trade are given in the Weigh House Books, dating from 1496, SC5/8; after 1530 their scope broadens to include the cloth trade and occassional references to other commodities. Customs Accounts also survive for some years during this period, PRO E 122.

[3] SC 7/2/1-11.

[4] SC 5/3/1,1488-1594.

Matters relating to craft and trading offences are also found in the fragmentary Assize of Bread, which is in part a copy of fragments of the second Book of Remembrance, a document which includes the rules for the alleged guild of women wool packers. [1] The Town Court Books, similar to those used so effectively by Kowaleski in her analysis of female economic activity in Exeter, also survive for Southampton, and despite their fragmentary nature, contribute evidence of trade-related litigation in the period from 1474 to 1483. [2] After 1549 the names of all non-burgess artisans and merchants were recorded in annual Stall & Art lists which provide a valuable source from which a statistical analysis of gendered participation in crafts and trades can be derived. [3]

Sources for the legal process in Southampton are severely limited by the paucity of records. The corporations' judicial function and right to impose fines had existed in various forms from the twelfth century, but no records survive until the late sixteenth century. The town was empowered to hold quarter sessions from 1461, but the only surviving records of this court - a series of examinations and depositions - date from 1571.[4] Neither do indictments, gaol delivery or coroners' rolls survive, thus making any systematic analysis of indictable offences impossible. The records of the fifteenth-century Town and Pie Powder Courts, incorporated into quarter sessions in 1620, have already been referred to in the context of sources for local trade. They are also useful in their record of the appearances of executrices, but in most years provide very little detail about the cases listed, beyond naming the plaintiff, defendant and nature of the case.[5] However, considerably more evidence exists for non-indictable offences. Thomas

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[1] R.C. Anderson (ed.), *The Assize of Bread Book 1477-1517*, S.R.Soc. 23, (1923); SC 4/1/2, fos. 26v-28r.

[2] Maryanne Kowaleski, "Women's Work in a Market Town: Exeter in the Late Fourteenth Century". This study is far more comprehensive than any that can be undertaken in Southampton, comprising an analysis of over 4,000 debt cases in the Exeter courts over a ten year period.
Town & Pie Powder Court Rolls;SC 7/1/1 - SC 7/1/9; the earliest rolls in this series, SC 7/1/1(1374) and SC 7/1/2 (1426) are very fragmentary and contain insufficient material for analysis.

[3] SC 6/1/1-.

[4] H.W. Gidden (ed.), *The Charters of the Borough of Southampton*; 2 vols., S.R.Soc. 7 & 8, (1909 & 1910); published in part, see G.H. Hamilton (ed.), with an introduction by E.R. Aubrey, *The Books of Examinations and Depositions AD.1570-1594*, S.R.Soc.16, (1914).

[5] SC 7/1/-.

Overay, the reforming mayor, introduced the mayor's Book of Fines in 1488, a book of account which was used to record all monies received and disbursed by the mayor for over a century. As well as the fines paid for craft and burgess admissions already mentioned, it also included details of fines paid by individuals found guilty of misdemeanour. [1] Though it presents but a partial picture of the legal process, naming only those found guilty of non-felonious offences, it provides an insight into the gendering of aspects of public order found in no other source. James has suggested that the fines recorded here represent offences against the by-laws, but although these were included, fines for other offences - including fines imposed by the quarter sessions - also appear. [2] Matters relating to local by-laws form the subject of the records of the Court Leet or annual *lawday*, which all inhabitants of the town were able to attend, and at which presentments requesting remedy from the corporation or named individuals were made. The origin of the Court Leet is uncertain, and though references to the *lawday* exist from the early fifteenth century, its records only survive from 1549 onwards. [3] Presentments made to this court - which both burgesses and ordinary householders were required to attend - provide an insight into both the corporations' role in regulating individual behaviour and, in the often very personal complaints recorded, provide a picture of the nature of social, (or anti-social) interactions within the community. The regulation of behaviour perceived as challenging the moral order of the community was also the concern of the ecclesiastic courts; however, only a few cases of defamation and matrimonial dispute involving Southampton people, dating from 1531, were recorded before the consistory court at Winchester. [4]

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[1] SC5/3/1, 1488-1594. "Yf any of the Town hath done anie trespass, or thing that he is to be amerced for, besides the sessions and the courts, his mercemente shalbe taxed and sett by the discrecion of the Mayor..according to his trespass and the money to be bound to the use of the town", *Oak Book*, p.129.

[2] James, *Southampton Sources*, p. 8.

[3] SC 6/1/-, published, with the exception of the Stall & Art lists, in F.J.C. & Mrs D.M. Hearnshaw (eds.),*Southampton Court Leet Records*, 1550-1602, 2 vols., S.R.Soc. 1 & 2, (1905 & 1906). For the history and jurisdiction of this court, see F.J.C. Hearnshaw, *Leet Jurisdiction in England*, S. R.Soc. 5, (1908).

[4] HRO 21M65 C3/1-, Winchester Diocesan Records, Consistory Court Book.

The largest body of documentary sources relating to Southampton concern property, the only class of document to span most of the medieval period. Early sources include the thirteenth-century Langabulum Roll and the cartularies and rentals of the two religious houses, God's House Hospital and St Denys Priory, the former holding substantial amounts of property in the town. [1] Kaye's tenement histories for each of the God's House properties compiled from a series of rentals dating from 1245 have proved useful in a variety of contexts, not always directly related to property-holding. Because of their almost unbroken sequences of named tenants, it has been possible to use the rentals to calculate, for example, the duration of widowhood and to identify an underclass of single and widowed women living in houses of multiple occupation. [2]

Other sources for property include the Black Book which, for the most part, was used to enrol deeds and wills concerning property in which the town had some interest. It was also used to enrol over 100 conveyances in which a wife's separate acceptance of the disposal of a property was recorded, interpreted by Wallis Chapman in 1912 as indicative of women's privileged status with regard to property in Southampton. [3] More than 400 other conveyances, leases and title deeds also survive, providing an opportunity to re-examine Chapman's assertion, and to present a more considered evaluation of the gender relations of property during the late-medieval period. [4] Perhaps the most useful document of all those concerned with property is the 1454 Terrier.[5] Unlike other cartularies and terriers, this was not confined to the holdings of a single institution, but included all properties within the town. It presents the reader with both a mapping of the medieval town and its inhabitants at one moment in time, and a more fragmentary

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[1] J.M.Kaye (ed.), *A God's House Miscellany*, S.R.S. 27, (1984); Ernest O. Blake (ed.), *The St Denys Cartulary,* 2 vols., S. R.S. 24-5 , (1981); J.M. Kaye (ed.), *The Cartulary of God's House, Southampton*, 2 vols., S. R.S. 19-20 , (1976). Only a single rental of St Denys' property, dated to 1446, survives: PRO SC 11/596. A few properties were held by Beaulieu Abbey, see S.F. Hockey, (ed.), *The Beaulieu Cartulary,* S.R.S. 27, (1975).

[2] MSS.d d Queen's, boxes 44, 45 & 46, and Muniments 1-5, see Kaye, *G.H.C.*2.

[3] SC2/6/4, A.B. Wallis Chapman (ed.), *The Black Book of Southampton,* 3 vols., S.R.Soc.13-14 & 17, (1912, 1913 & 1915).

[4] SC4/2-4. Rents paid for town lands also appear annually in the Stewards' Books, SC5/1/1-. The 1495 Terrier of Town Lands, SC4/1/1, has been published, see property documents which have been published in Thick (ed.), *The Southampton Steward's Book of 1492-3 and the Terrier of 1495,* pp. 73-86.

[5] SC13/1/1, L.A. Burgess, (ed.), *The Southampton Terrier of 1454*, S.R.S.15, (1976).

view of the former and later owners of each property; the gender relations of property laid bare for all to see. Together these documents form a serious body of information from which an analysis of the gendered nature of property-holding can be derived.

In this period, no Southampton family was sufficiently self-important to leave us any personal papers, and few individuals left papers or public statements, beyond those required by the church and state. But in their wills and testaments, over 200 individuals have inadvertently bequeathed the main body of evidence from which information about Southampton families has been derived. As a source, they are limited in that the vast majority of wills which survive for Southampton date to after 1500; however, though only a few wills made by skilled labourers and a disproportionate number of wills of the relatively small mercantile elite survive, artisans, small-scale traders and others of middling rank are well represented. Women's wills, on the other hand, make up only 10% of those which survive for Southampton. Despite these factors, and the problems associated with the use of wills as a source, these wills have nevertheless proved invaluable in the information they can provide, not only with regard to the transmission of property, but also in the - albeit partial - picture they enable us to construct of the structure and size of, and relationships within, Southampton families, their households, and of the testators' social networks. [1]

Before 1500 a few wills were enroled in the cartularies of religious houses and in the Black Book when those institutions were beneficiaries, but the bulk of testamentary evidence dates to after 1500. [2] These Southampton wills were proved at the Archdeacon's Court at Winchester, or at the Bishop's Consistory Court, used in theory if the testator held property in more than one archdeaconry.[3]

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[1] For the limitations of wills as a source - their public nature, their inclusions and omissions, and the gaps between intention and reality - see, for example, Clive Burgess, "Late Medieval Wills and Pious Convention: Testamentary Evidence Reconsidered", in Michael Hicks (ed.),*Profit, Piety and the Professions in later Medieval England*, (Gloucester,1990), pp. 14-33.

[2] E.O. Blake, (ed.),*St. Denys Cartulary* ; Queen's College Oxford & SCRO: wills in God's House Records; Wallis Chapman (ed.), *Black Book* .

[3] Consistory Court, HRO B Wills; Archdeaconry Court, HRO A Wills; unclassified, HRO U wills; a few Southampton wills were also proved at the Prerogative Courts of Canterbury, PRO, PROB 11.

Some 240 wills survive for the period from 1502 to 1575, accompanied by 125 probate inventories which, with three earlier exceptions, date from 1456 to 1575. [1] The inventories have been used here almost as if they were an archaeological assemblage, their listing of testators' moveables providing an invaluable source for the domestic realm inhabited by the medieval housewife, and their structure - in listing objects room-by-room - affording the opportunity to consider the gendered use of space within the household. [2]

Documents produced by the state have also been of assistance. [3] The series of poll tax and lay subsidy returns held at the PRO were a constant reminder of the small percentage of women wealthy enough to be included in taxation enumerations. [4] But the most useful state records were the small, but significant, number of cases where Southampton women brought to Chancery as both plaintiff and defendant, equally sought redress for injustice and actively defended their interests. [5] Other useful sources included contemporary texts - including domestic manuals, recipe books and other didactic texts - as well as more recent, but sadly unpublished, records of archaeological excavations carried out in Southampton. [6]

My understanding of the changing economy and politics of late-medieval and early-modern Southampton, of its inhabitants and its institutions, has been informed by Colin Platt's magisterial study of the town. Readers of this thesis wishing fully to understand the town in which the women of Southampton lived

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[1] Published in part, see Edward Roberts & Karen Parker, *Southampton Probate Inventories, 1447-1575*, S.R.S. 35, 2 vols., (1992).

[2] See Gilchrist, *Gender & Material Culture*, esp. pp.160-9; Matthew Johnson, *Housing culture. Traditional architecture in an English landscape*, (London,1993). See also Margaret Conkey and Janet Spector, "Archaeology and the Study of Gender", in M.B.Schiffer (ed.), *Advances in Archaeological Method and Theory* 1, (Urbana & Chicago, 1984), pp.1-38.

[3] I am indebted to Colin Platt for allowing me to use his research notes based on surveys of all classes of documents held in the P.R.O. This enabled me to see the wood for the trees and pointed me in the right direction on several occasions.

[4] Poll Tax Returns: PRO E/359/8B, 1377; E/179/173/46, 1381; Subsidy Assessments: PRO E 179/173/175,1524; E 179/173/197, 1535; E 179/173/223 & 228: 1542-3; E 179/239/163 & /173/239, 1545; E 179/174/249, 1546; E 179/174/216, 1546-7. These are complimented by fragmentary local taxation records, SC 14/2/1-4a, c.1500 and the subsidy assesment 'anticipation', SC 14/2/4b. Other local rates appear in the Scavage and Poor Books, SC 15/17/1, SC10/1/1-3.

[5] PRO C Series.

[6] See p. 61, n.1; SOU reports, Southampton City Heritage.

are recommended to this text, and to Davies's history of the town. [1] Briefly, Southampton was one of the second ranking towns in England in terms of both population and trade. Probably at its highest before the Black Death, Southampton's population has been estimated at between 1,800 and 2,000 during the 1450s, falling slightly to between 1,750 to 1,950 in 1524. Like many other towns in the sixteenth century it saw its population double - mainly as the result of immigration - to around 4,200 in 1596. [2] Though international trade declined after 1525, throughout the period the port attracted both foreign merchants, and immigrants from both southern England and abroad. [3] Though never reaching the same volume of trade as its nearest competitors, Bristol and London, the port developed an economy and a community dependant on the sea - rather than on craft production - a dependency that has continued until the present century.

The mercantile, rather than industrial, basis of its economy was crucial to Southampton's identity, and its mercantile elite, present in the town even before the granting of its first charter in 1190, dominated and controlled economic, political and social relations in the town throughout the period.[4]

The women of Southampton lived in a town surrounded on two sides by the sea and, by 1400, enclosed and defended by walls, towers and gateways. Royal government was represented by the king's castle and its quay which dominated the north-west quarter of the town, while the mayor and corporation conducted their official business from a hall above the Bargate - which still stands as an expression of medieval civic identity - and later in the Audit House in the High Street. A scant five parish churches signified the secular identity of the town. The south and west gates looked out over the quays essential to the trade on which

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[1] Platt, *Medieval Southampton, passim*; Rev. J. Silvester Davies, *A History of Southampton*, (Southampton, 1883).

[2] Platt, *Medieval Southampton*, pp. 262-3; James, *3rd R.B.* 4, p. xviii.

[3] For Southampton's economy during the period 1400-1600, see Platt, *Medieval Southampton*, esp. chaps. 12, 13 & 17; the wool trade, and the relationship between the Italian community and the local mercantile elite are discussed in detail in Alwyn Ruddock, *Italian Merchants and Shipping in Southampton*, S.R.S. 1, 1951; readers are also referred to the introductions to the Port and Brokage Books published in the later SRS volumes and, for the 16th-century, to James' introduction to *3rd R.B.* 4, see above, p.19, ns. 1-2 & p. 17, n. 5.

[4] Platt, *Medieval Southampton, passim.*

the town depended, while the East Gate led to the poorer suburbs growing towards the abandoned Saxon settlement of Hamwic where St Mary's, the mother church of Southampton was located.

Much of the fabric of this late-medieval town remains: within the walls, towers and four remaining gateways, stone houses and vaults survive and timber-framed houses still stand. English Street, described by John Leland in the 1530s as "one of the fairest streates that ys yn any town of al England", still runs straight and wide from the Bargate to the Town Quay.[1] Despite the changes in the town over the past five hundred years, walking through the medieval town between the fifteenth-century gun-platform, wool warehouse and timber-framed house which are now the museums in which I work, I am constantly reminded of the world which Agnes Overay and her contemporaries inhabited. It is the way in which their experience of this world was constrained by the gendered roles and identities they inhabited that this thesis seeks to explore.

[1] Lucy Toulmin Smith (ed.), *The itinerary of John Leland in or about the years 1535-43* 1, (London, 1906), p. 278.

Chapter Two Women and the family

Most medieval women spent their lives within the family, their gendered roles in this institution defining them to the outside world. Described in almost all classes of document as "daughter of", "wife of" and ultimately as "widow of", their individual identities, and indeed that of the entire family unit, were subsumed by that of their father or husband.

Despite the wealth of literature on the medieval and early-modern family, comparatively little research has been done on the English urban family, and as Kowaleski observed, this work has been confined to the urban elite.[1] In Southampton, Platt has carried out a detailed reconstruction of the relationships between families of the merchant elite. Here he found that through inter-marriage a relatively small number of families were able to maintain dynastic power in the town for up to three generations. After that they disappeared, either because they had amassed enough wealth to buy themselves into the landed gentry or, more often, because they had failed to produce male heirs. Marriage in these families was, Platt argues, another method of acquiring property; the women in those families were a means to that end. [2]

The relationship between women and property, though inextricably intertwined with the family, will be examined in detail in chapter 5.[3] This present chapter will examine women's roles in and relationships to the family at successive stages of their lives, setting the scene for future chapters by seeking to understand how the family contributed to the construction of gender, and how the roles which women occupied in the family defined all their other relationships.

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[1] Maryanne Kowaleski, "The History of Urban Families in Medieval England", *Jnl. Medieval History* 14, 1988, pp. 47-63. Colin Platt, *Medieval Southampton*, *passim*. See also Alwyn Ruddock, *Italian Merchants*, esp. pp.117-61; Sylvia Thrupp, *The Merchant Class of Medieval London, 1300-1500*, (Chicago,1948); C. Phythian Adams, *Desolation of a City. Coventry and the Urban Crisis of the late Middle Ages*, (Cambridge,1979).

[2] "If an estate needed rounding off, or a fortune a beginning, there were the daughters or widows of associates to be courted", Platt, *Medieval Southampton*, p. 60, see also pp. 260-1.

[3] See pp. 142-70.

2.1 Infancy & childhood

Historians have paid less attention to childhood than to any other stage of life. Sources are limited and childhood itself seems to have little significance for mainstream history.[1] And yet this early period is - and always has been - the most crucial in the construction of gender. We can, of course, make analogies from observing how our own children make sense of the world they live in from an early age, rapidly assimilating cultural messages and assuming their gendered roles. But very little hard evidence exists for the culturally specific processes through which medieval children understood their place in a gendered society. Though books of advice proliferated during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, most were concerned with the conduct of adolescent males, by which time the most crucial stage in the construction of gender has been accomplished. [2]
If we begin by looking at what is known about children in Southampton, some of this process may become apparent. During the sixteenth century, testaments survive in sufficient number to enable a degree of statistical analysis. The Southampton testaments - particularly after the Reformation - are extremely detailed, listing each item bequeathed to each child, and often including bequests to an unborn child, step-children and god-children. Though they can never provide conclusive evidence, they do provide the most reliable source capable of informing our understanding of family size and structure. Though one testator left a family of 13 children this was unusual; but, the testaments suggest that at least after 1545, two-thirds of families, after infant mortality and early deaths had taken their toll, consisted of between two and three children. [3] From testaments made

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[1] For the variety of available sources, see Barbara A. Hanawalt, *Growing Up in Medieval London: The Experience of Childhood in History,* (Oxford, 1993). See also, Shulamith Shahar, *Childhood in the Middle Ages,* (London, 1990); Hufton, *The Prospect before Her,* pp.173-216.
[2] Edith Rickert, (ed.), *The Babees Book: Medieval Manners for the Young,* (New York, 1966); F.J.Furnivall, (ed.), *Early English Meals and Manners: John Russel's Boke of Nurture, etc.,* E.E.T.S., o. s. 32, (London, 1868); Barbara A. Hanawalt,'"The Childe of Bristowe" and the making of Middle Class Adolescence', in Hanawalt & David Wallace (eds.), *Bodies and Disciplines. Intersections of Literature and History in fifteenth century England,* (Minneapolis and London, 1996), pp. 155-78. For later didactic texts concerning female children see Linda Pollock,'"Teach her to live under obedience": the making of women in the upper ranks of early modern England', *Continuity & Change* 4:2, 1989, pp. 231-58.
[3] These figures are based on the number of children surviving when the will was made, and must be taken to represent minimum numbers. Adult married children who had already received a settlement may have been excluded, thus distorting the relative percentage; similarly non-inheriting minors may

after 1500 it can be estimated that around 35% of children grew up as the only child in their family, while 65% of children lived in families of two or more children.[1] After 1550, just over half of these families consisted of girls. Before 1550, sons predominated, though this could be a function of the fact that some testators tended to refer only to their main heir.

Table 2.1 Family Size and Composition [2]

Children	Female	Male	Both	"chylder"	Childless	Families
1502-45	12.2% (9)	14.9% (11)	41.9% (31)	4% (3)	27% (20)	74
1546-75	13.72% (14)	12.75% (13)	45.1% (46)	4.9% (5)	23.53% (24)	102

In the 78 families with children in the later testamentary sample, 220 children survived to see the death of at least one parent; of these 116 were female and 104 male (111f: 100 m). This higher figure for female children is reflected in the only surviving parish register. However, though not absolutely co-terminal - some of the children in the testamentary sample were already adult - they show a slightly higher incidence of male births (104f:100 m) than the wills suggest.

Table 2.2 Female and Male Births, 1552-1570 [3]

Dates	Female	Male	Unknown	Total	Ratio
1552-60	75	71	8	154	100f: 94.6m
1561-70	96	89	4	189	100f: 92.7m
Total	171	160	12	343	100f:93.6 m

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also have been excluded, though the detail of most post-reformation wills, including several references to unborn children, suggests that this is less likely. This continuity is consistent with James' argument that the population in 16th century Southampton was increased by immigration rather than by any change in the birth rate, James, *3rd. R.B.* 4, pp. xviii- xxi.

[1] The figures for 1502-45 are, respectively, 37% and 63%. "Chylder" has been taken to represent children of both sexes. The difference in the percentage of families categorised as childless might be explained by variations in infant mortality or by the brevity of a higher percentage of earlier wills.

[2] Sources: HRO wills,1502-75; because pre-Reformation wills are often highly formulaic and consequently far less detailed than later wills, the figures for family size before 1550 are less reliable. Wills made pre-1500 do not provide sufficient data to be included in this table; see also Appendix 1 : Summary of Testamentary Evidence,1443-1575.

[3] Source: PR 7/1/1, St Michael's Parish Register, 1552-70.

But the parish registers also suggest a higher rate of infant mortality amongst males: between 1552 and 1570 almost twice as many boys as girls died within a year of their birth. Though this limited data would lead us to expect a wider differential, it suggests that girls were more likely to survive their first few months.

Various sources also suggest that the domestic environment in which children were raised was more likely than not to be dominated - numerically at least - by women. Though the nuclear family predominated, children were brought up in a wide range of households of varying size and composition. Some 11% of families included children from more than one marriage, and about 5% of children were orphaned and, like illegitimate children, placed into the care of others. Wills suggest that less than 25% of Southampton families lived in households which included servants or apprentices. [1] However, it seems likely that a significant number of children could have been born into multi-generational or extended households that included their grandmothers or their unmarried aunts. [2] Though wills could often exclude adult daughters and sons who had already received their dowry or inheritance, of the children mentioned in wills, almost 60% were minors when their father died. Almost 60% of widows inherited the family tenement for life, suggesting that in the early years of marriage among propertied families at least, the household consisted of three generations, grandmothers probably assisting with child-care. [3] Testaments also suggest that almost 60% of children were minors when their father died. Though a significant number of widows with young children remarried, many children were brought up in female-headed households. [4]

As if aware of the importance of masculine role models, dying burgesses made provision for their sons to be brought up by male relatives or friends. [5] Daughters

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[1] Servants were only included in wills when they were the recipient of a bequest; this figure thus has to be seen as representing the minimum number of households with servants, see table 3.5, p. 78.
[2] For unmarried women living with kin, see p. 149, and for example, *Inventories*, pp. 423, HRO B wills, 1575/057:1-2.
[3] For widows' inheritance of family tenements, see below, pp. 147-8 & 160-2, and Appendix 1. For grandmothers, see p. 50 & n. 3.
[4] See Appendix 1. The influenza epidemic of 1558, and the return of bubonic plague in 1563-4 and in 1583 contributed to a high rate of adult deaths. 15% of the wills in a 25 year period were made in 1558. For remarriage, see pp. 55-8.
[5] See, for example, HRO B wills 1574/184:1-2, Williams.

remained with their mothers, though interestingly when the widower William Byston died in 1558, he arranged for his youngest daughter Nem to be taken into the care of the overseers, rather than that of her older married sister. [1] Indeed, men whose death would leave their children orphaned showed a touching concern for their children, particularly for their daughters. Richard Smith (d. 1544) left two daughters - Mary and Elyn - and requested the overseers to "be good unto my chyldren and not to suffer Christopher Crowcher to meddle with them nor ther goods". The probate account includes a payment of 7s 3d to Thomas Skypper and his mother for looking after the girls for a year. [2] When James Fuller died intestate in 1571, the administrators sold his estate to pay for the upbringing of his two daughters, "for there are none w[hi]ch will take the children, being young". [3] Other orphans were placed into the custody of the mayor, who then farmed them out to local families. [4]

Having suggested that children were aware of their gendered roles from an early age, is it possible to justify this assertion from the sources? Given the high percentage of children who were minors at their father's death, I would suggest that when his bequests to them were explained, children were made perfectly aware of the gendered expectations he held for them. When the merchant Thomas Goddard made his will in 1555 he described his eldest son, Henry, as being "of age", and in his bequests to his other sons gave their ages as 16, 13 and 11 respectively; the ages of his daughters - Johan & Alice - were not mentioned.[5] Though this is the only Southampton will in which ages of children were given, the omission of his daughters' ages signified the difference between them and their brothers. The gendered expectations parents held for their children were nowhere expressed more clearly than in their wills. Though inheritance is discussed in more detail in chapter 5, some conclusions are worth summarising here. Land and property did not pass to female children, unless as Erickson has

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[1] *Inventories,* p. 88, HRO B wills 1558/101-2.
[2] *Inventories*, p. 13, HRO U wills 1543/97;W.R. 4 A wills F, 1541-1544/274.
[3] *Inventories*, pp. 311-2, HRO B wills 1571/37.
[4] See p. 86. A Court of Orphans was established in 1641, *Oak Book* 2, p. xxiii.
[5] Internal evidence suggests that they were younger than Henry, and older than the others, *Inventories*, p. 61, HRO B wills1555/30-1.

observed, the laws of inheritance foundered on the rock of demography.[1] Even in families without male heirs, girls did not invariably inherit, some seeing their father's property bequeathed to his apprentice, whom the daughter was expected to marry.[2] Parental expectations were also articulated in the distribution of goods and chattels: young women were, almost without exception, equipped with the dowry they would need for their future marriage, either in the form of money or household goods; and while young men also received household goods, where possible they were also equipped with the land or tools which would enable them to make a living. Young women rarely received tools, though Nicholas Myssick, shearman (d. 1558), left both his daughters a linen "turn", a means of generating an independent income as a spinster. Only one testator, a physician, recognised that a young woman might wish for an alternative career, leaving his servant and god-daughter "my instruments for clysters".[3]

Gendered differences can also be observed in testamentary provision for children's education and training. While several testators specified the craft or occupation they expected their sons to follow, similar provisions were rarely made for daughters.[4] The widow Elizabeth Pace (d. 1570) granted rents to friends in exchange for providing her daughter Anne with a home and "meat, drink and apparel" for the next ten years; we can assume Anne became their servant. Edethe and Sarah Goddard, daughters of a merchant, were appointed a tutor - their uncle - in their fathers' will of 1573, but this was not intended to provide them with more than a basic education: their marriages had already been arranged.[5] Thus, sometimes at a very early age, a child's future was clearly mapped by gender. But though parents certainly expected their children to occupy different roles as adults, only a few made substantially different financial bequests to them, excepting the preference shown to eldest sons. The allocation of resources was

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[1] Erickson, *Women & Property*, p. 5. Testamentary bequests of real property to daughters are shown in Table 5.3, p. 147. For the fuller picture provided by (fifteenth-century) conveyances, see pp. 153-6 and Table 5.4.

[2] See below, pp. 37 & 40; see also will of John Estwell, *Black* 2, p.119.

[3] The "instruments for clysters" were for the administering of enemas, [O.E.D]; *Inventories*, pp.127 & 145, HRO B wills 1558/447-448 & 1558/286-7.

[4] See Appendix 1.

[5] *Inventories,* pp. 277-8 & p. 346, HRO U wills 1570/308-9 & B wills 1573B 58/1-2.

more likely to be determined by the family's resources than by any other factor. Similar amounts were allocated for the upbringing of children of both sexes: Arthur Cook's overseers were allocated 20 shillings to ensure that his son, Richard, was "set to an honest occupation which may teach him to read and write"; similarly the overseers were allocated 40 shillings for the upbringing of the two orphans Elizabeth and Jane Fuller.[1]

Even in the poorest families, the patterns of gendered bequests remained the same. But in these families, children adopted their gendered roles at an early age. The stewards' books frequently record boys working alongside their fathers as labourers; "children" worked with their mothers, but girls were never mentioned.[2] However, contrary to Aries' contention that they were merely smaller versions of adults, children had a separate social identity, occasionally acknowledged by the civic authorities.[3] As well as taking responsibility for orphans, the corporation *inter alia* instructed householders to make "rayles or dores" over their cellars to prevent children falling down them, and explicitly ordered "goodye Lombard" to mend her sluice because it was dangerous to children.[4] But for some, childhood was a short-lived experience: Margaryt Smith, servant, was "of thage of 12 yers as she thinketh" and Alice Davies was "of thage of nine or ther abouts" when she was arrested and accused of theft in 1577.[5]

2.2 Young women

It was only when children moved into adolescence or young adulthood that the results of childhood socialisation becomes visible. For young men it was a period in which they gained access to the occupation, possibly through apprenticeship, which would equip them with the resources to set up a household and maintain a

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[1] *Inventories*, pp. 91 & 311-2, HRO Bwills 1558/135 &1571/37. Families were paid similar amounts to take on boys and girls as poor apprentices in the 17th century , Merson, *Southampton Apprenticeships*, p. lix. See also Erickson, *Women and Property*, pp. 50-9.

[2] See SC5/1; "Women and children" were employed to gather slates after a storm in 1557-8, SC 5/1/42, fo. 23; see also SC5/1/16 fos.18v-19r. See also Barbara A. Hanawalt, "Peasant Women's Contribution to the Home Economy in Late Medieval England", in Hanawalt (ed.), *Women and Work in Pre-Industrial Europe*, (Bloomington, 1986), p. 8.

[3] Philippe Aries, *Centuries of Childhood : A Social History of the Family*, (London,1962).

[4] *Court Leet* 2, pp.167 & 101.

[5] *Examinations*, pp. 62-3 & 31.

family. [1] For young women it was time for what Hufton has described as "the strategic plan" in which marriage was the goal. [2] Young women were prepared for their future role as wife and housewife; if their family could not provide them with a dowry, then they would have to work - almost invariably as a servant - to acquire the resources and skills they would need for their eventual marriage.[3]

The conventional model that young people left home during this period is based on studies of urban males and rural adolescents. [4] Southampton's mercantile and artisan families, seem to have assumed that daughters would remain in their natal family until they married. Testators made financial provision for the upkeep of daughters "until marriage", and frequently delayed their daughters' inheritance until then, suggesting that they would not require the use of their bequests until they married. [5]

While their brothers entered apprenticeships, these young women spent their adolescence learning the art of housewifery alongside their mothers, and undertaking some of their duties: Thomas Huttoft, for example, thanked his daughter for "good service to me in my sickness" in his will, though his wife was still living. [6] A daughter's assistance could have enabled her mother to work in her husband's shop, or to engage in other income generating activities. They may have spent some time assisting their fathers, though unlike their brothers, they received no formal training. [7] And, in the few families where the mother died before the father, daughters were expected to take over their mother's role. [8]

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[1] By the 15th century apprenticeships, which lasted an average of ten years, started at around the age of sixteen, Hanawalt,"The Childe of Bristowe", pp. 155-78. Just as young people in rural communities moved into a working life without entering an apprenticeship, so the sons of skilled and unskilled men must have entered adulthood without any formal training.

[2] See Hufton, *The Prospect before Her*, pp. 59-98.

[3] For bequests to female servants towards their marriage, see *Black* 2, p. 155; HRO B wills1521/15, Johnson;1522/41, Williams; see also will of John Perchard, p.150, below.

[4] For the rural origins of urban servants, see below, p. 35, and Goldberg, *Women, Work & Life Cycle*; Hufton, *The Prospect Before Her.*

[5] Thomas Goddard bequeathed his children "meat, drink and apparrel at wife's cost until sons reach 21 and daughters marry'" *Inventories*, p. 346. Felicity Riddy has also suggested that the daughters of York's merchant class remained at home until marriage,"How the Goodwife taught her daughter", unpublished paper, Wessex Medieval Centre, University of Southampton, 26/4/95.

[6] *Inventories*, p. 61, HRO B wills 1554/139-40.

[7] See chap.4, pp. 106-8.

[8] John Peerson, a brother at God's House, was the only widower without an unmarried daughter, *Inventories*, p. 313, HRO B wills 1571/142:1-2. For the visibility of widowers, see p. 51, n. 3.

During the late sixteenth century, young women from poorer families were informally apprenticed in the arts of housewifery. In 1576, for instance, Anne Haylles was sent from Somerset to the widow Barker, a relative of a friend, "to tarry so long as yt shuld please her father, to larne exsersyse her neddell ".[1] Young orphaned women were also placed as servants by the town: in 1585 Marie Golding, wife of a ship's carpenter, took in Johanne Martyn, to "bring her uppe, fynd her meat drinke lodging & apparell in syknes as in health, and in thend of her yers doble apparell fytt for such a servant meet"; Lydia Browne was similarly apprenticed "in sowinge and worckinge" to William Pratt, painter, and his wife Catherin in 1593. [2] To a certain extent these placements foreshadow the seventeenth-century "poor child" apprenticeships by which young men were apprenticed in various trades and crafts, while young women were "instructed in household work and housewifery", or in knitting, spinning and sewing. These apprenticeships may reflect the undocumented arrangements made for daughters between families in the late medieval period.[3]

Though references to both male and female servants are plentiful, it is impossible to provide a realistic estimate of the numbers of servants in Southampton. The 22 male servants wealthy enough to be assessed at £1 in the 1524 Lay Subsidy - eight of whom worked for Sir Richard Lyster- and the servants mentioned in 25% of wills obviously under-represent the actual numbers.[4] But both wills and other sources suggest that while male servants were more likely to be found in artisan and mercantile households, female servants were more likely to be found working for wealthy merchant families, female-headed households and for single men. Given the relative numbers of these households, it would seem that fewer young women found employment as servants than their male counterparts. [5]

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[1] *Examinations,* p. 33.
[2] *3rd R. B.*, 3, pp. 40; *3rd R.B.* 4, pp. 14-15. For the placement of orphaned boys as servants in 1587 for example, see, *ibid.*, pp. 45-6.
[3] See p. 107.
[4] PRO E179/173/175; Appendix 1. Both Kowaleski and Goldberg estimate that 25% to 40% of households in Exeter and York households included servants, Kowaleski, *Local Markets and Regional Trade,* pp.167-8; Goldberg, *Women, Work & Life Cycle*, pp. 156-64.
[5] See Table 3.5, p. 78, and Appendix 1.

The servant Margaryt Smith was, as we've already seen, only 12 years old; but from the given ages of the few servants who testified at the Consistory Court between 1556 and 1602, this was unusual. [1] Thomas Sherwode, servant to John Caplin was aged 22 and had been living in Southampton for two years; Richard Daniel, servant to William Childe was 24, born in Southampton. Anne Suich was 23, and moved to Southampton from Blandford Forum, Dorset, a year and a half earlier. Averna Ham and Joan Bawey were both 20: Averna was a servant in her brother[-in-law?]'s family; Joan had moved to Southampton some two years previously.[2] The rural origins of some of these women fit with James' research, which identified 50% of female migrants between 1400 and 1600 as servants, working in the households of kin or family friends.[3] Their ages confirm that service was an occupation for the young and unmarried but for those who remained single, it could be a lifelong occupation. [4] Agnes, William Demes' servant was left a bequest by his mother-in-law, which suggests that she had been in the family's service for several years, while Maria Moriana remained with the Cini family for more than 20 years.[5]

Among the servant population, gendered differences in behaviour and expectations are very clear. Though young men and women were theoretically under the control of their masters, rather than their parents, they enjoyed a greater degree of freedom than if they lived at home; on the other hand they could find themselves open to both exploitation or temptation, which could result in the loss of their position.[6] The frequency of fines paid by male servants and apprentices for affray, *bloodshed* and similar misdemeanours suggests that young men

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[1] See above, p. 33. Goldberg suggests that 12 was the minimum age for girls entering service; he also suggests that Consistory Courts showed a preference for older witnesses, though servants as young as14 did testify, *Women, Work & Life Cycle*, pp. 169-73 & Table 4.3.

[2] HRO 21 M65 C/3/4, p.425, C/3/5, p. 90; C3/10, p. 408; C3/9 p. 94.

[3] T.B. James, "The Geographical Origins & Mobility of the Inhabitants of Southampton, 1460-1600", 2 vols., Ph. D. Thesis, University of St. Andrews, 1977.

[4] Female servants aged from15 to 50 have been identified in Salisbury between 1560-1650, see Sue Wright, '"Churmaids, Huswyfes and Hucksters", pp. 100-21.

[5] *Inventories*, p. 307, HRO B wills, 1570/113-4; Cini tried to sell her to another local Italian family. When she refused, Cini offered to pay her off with the promise of debts owed to him, which she accepted. Maria was then imprisoned for debt, and only freed after protracted appeals before Chancery, see E.C.P. 30/67; 32/52 and 148/67 & Ruddock, *Italians*, pp. 127-8.

[6] Jehanne Guyffine was sacked for not colluding in her master's crimes in 1576, *Examinations*, pp.14-15

indulged in brawling, drunkenness and other group expressions of masculinity.[1] These young men were able to express their sexuality with a degree of freedom denied to their sisters; and if they could not find a willing partner, they were able to visit prostitutes at Southampton's *stewes* without fear of prosecution. [2]

For young women, the situation was very different; sexual activity, and the prospect of pregnancy threatened their future marriage prospects. Female servants were particularly vulnerable, not only to their own sexual needs but to the desires of the men of the household in which they worked. Even if they were involved in a relationship, their position was insecure. Mary Flamstead, servant to Valentine Knightley, believed that she had "contracted herself in matrimony" to her fellow-servant Edward Colls, by whom she was pregnant. Colls was able to save his position by sending Mary to stay with his aunt in Southampton. But the pregnant Mary was arrested and ordered to leave the town on pain of imprisonment.[3] Sybell Glover had been a servant for four years when she became pregnant by one of her mistress's lodgers, and the young Margytt Smyth, was sexually assaulted when she "was making of beddes, in the chamber....about four or five of the clock in thafternoon". [4] We may assume that these few instances represent the experiences of many young women.

In mercantile and artisan families, young women were relatively protected from sexual temptation and "unsuitable" liaisons. [5] In the 1440s, John Wythyell, servant and kinsman of William Nycholl, proposed marriage to Nycoll's daughter and heir Katherine. Protecting his interests, Nycholl investigated his putative son-in-law's background, and discovered that Wythyell was married, with a wife living in Cornwall. [6] Other daughters may have been equally subject to the attentions - welcome or not - of their father's servants and apprentices.

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[1] See SC5/3/1; Merry E. Wiesner discusses similar behaviour in "Guilds, Male Bonding and Women's Work in Early Modern Germany", *Gender & History* 1.2, 1989, pp. 125-37.
[2] See p. 194.
[3] *Examinations*, pp. 52-3.
[4] *Examinations*, pp. 30 & 62-3.
[5] Hufton attributes the low incidence of illegitimacy amongst middle-class adolescents to "maternal vigilance", *The Prospect before Her*, pp. 215-6.
[6] *Letters*, p. 7. For bigamy, see p. 47, n. 4.

Katherine was protected by her position in a burgess family. For other young women, adolescence and young adulthood could be precarious; having left the relative safety of their family, they could easily find themselves earning a living on the margins of society as piece-workers, day-labourers, or as prostitutes in the *stewes* at East Street. [1]

2.3 "...until daughter is of marriageable age"[2]

It was universally expected that daughters would marry. In the majority of wills in which daughters inherited money or goods, their bequests were to be given to them on marriage - even "on the day of her marriage" - and though testators made provision for the reallocation of their bequests, "hyffe so be that she is taken before her time", testators did not entertain the possibility that their daughters would remain single. [3]

But in just under 10% of wills, all dating to between 1540 and 1575, fathers made provision for their children to inherit when they came of age - though often, for daughters, adding " or marriage", assuming they might marry before they came of age. With one exception, young men became of age between 20 and 22; the age at which daughters did so seems to have been more arbitrary: in the seven families in which age was stipulated, it varied between 14 and 21. This suggests that it was anticipated - at least in the class where inheritance mattered - even in the late sixteenth century, that young women were ready for marriage at a relatively early age. While young men were still training for future employment, their sisters were ready for marriage, and while sons received their inheritance when they came of age, irrespective of their marital status, most daughters received their inheritance on marriage, whether they married before or after their majority. Even in death, fathers curtailed their daughters' possibilities of

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[1] See pp. 140 & 192-5. Young women - and men - could lose their jobs when they became ill or were disabled by illness, or when their employers could not longer afford to keep them, see Hufton, *The Prospect Before Her*, pp. 95-7.

[2] Will of John Raynoldes, *Inventories*, p. 258, HRO B wills, 1567/133-4.

[3] HRO B wills Domer 1538/40, Devenysshe,1530/11.

independence, and by implication deemed them incapable of handling their own affairs between majority and marriage. [1]

If any man bidde the worshipe, and will wedde the,
Auysely answere hym; scorne hym noght, what he be.
Schewe it to thin frendis, and forhele it noght.
Sitte bi hym, ne stande ther synne may be wroght. [2]

Given that between 1400 and 1600 91% of Southampton women whose marital status can be identified from the records were either married or widowed, it is reasonable to assume that the vast majority of women did marry. [3] Their marriages tended to be made within the same social milieu. The dynastic intermarriages of Southampton burgesses observed by Platt in the early-medieval period are repeated in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, though dynastic longevity is not so conspicuous.[4] Indeed a new dimension was added to the marriage market from the fifteenth century when Italian merchants, eager to establish themselves in the local community, sought to marry the daughters of prominent merchant families. [5]

Though some mercantile marriages may have been arranged by fathers and putative husbands in order to cement alliances or acquire property, they may have equally been initiated by the young men and women who moved within the same social networks. Few clear examples of coercion exist: this is not to deny parental intervention, but to suggest an interplay between the two factors.

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[1] For independant actions by young women, see pp.150-1.
[2] From "The Goode Wif Thaught Hir Doughter", MS E. Huntingdon Library HM128, fos. 217b-220, in Tauno F. Mustanoja, (ed.), *The Good Wife Taught Her Daughter*, (Helsinki,1948). p. 159.
[3] Based on a data-base of some 2,000 women, of whom the marital status of approximately 90% can be identified. Given the scanty evidence for many women, and the difficulties of tracing single women into marriage, this figure is probably an underestimate. A figure of between 10% and 20% non-marrying individuals has been estimated for the early modern period, see E.A Wrigley & R.S.Schofield, *The Population History of England, 1541-1871: A Reconstruction,* (Cambridge, 1981), p. 260, Table 7.28.
[4] Platt, *Medieval Southampton*, esp. pp. 260-1.
[5] The Florentine Bartholomew Marmora was granted denizenship in 1417 perhaps as a result of his marriage to Agnes Overay, *Cal. Pat. Rolls* 1416-22, p.123; Antonio Guidotti's marriage to Dorothy Huttoft, daughter of Henry Huttoft, gave the Florentine merchant access to the family patron, Thomas Cromwell, Ruddock, *Italian Merchants*, p.128.

Katherine James' first marriage, in around 1432, at the age of 15 or 16, was indisputably arranged by her father, who married her to his close friend and associate Andrew Payn. When Payn died soon after the marriage, Katherine married again, this time to Andrew Searle. Her father, disapproving of this marriage, and the consequent transfer of Payn's property to Searle, immediately seized the property, which was only restored to Katherine and Searle after they brought action against her father in Chancery.[1] Over a century later, in 1577, Anne Haylles was sent into service in Southampton "because she had meny sutters for maryage and her father disliking of them sent her hether".[2]

Some inheritances seem to have been predicated on marriage to a specified partner. The marriage of Elizabeth, daughter of Thomas Fasshyn (d. c. 1558), to John Derycke, importer of knitted goods, was probably imminent when Thomas's bequests to them included the costs of the wedding dinner and £100. He also provided £100 for his youngest daughter Annes to be paid on her marriage to Thomas Sympson. [3] Similarly, Edethe, daughter of Richard Goddard (d. 1573), was to receive her inheritance at 17 or on marriage to her father's apprentice and kinsman; and each of his three other daughters was to lose her inheritance if she married without the family's consent. [4] Though other fathers may have merely acknowledged existing relationships in their wills, Fasshyn found appropriate marriages for three of his daughters from among his business associates, while Goddard, with no male heirs, kept his business in the family by marrying his daughter to his apprentice. Other fathers were less proscriptive: the burgess Thomas Yevan left the choice up to his children, provided they took the advice of their mother and friends. [5]

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[1] P.R.O. C/1/15/184 & C/1/73/145, see also below, pp.150-1.

[2] *Examinations*, p. 33.

[3] Draft will of Thomas Fasshyn, *c.* 1554-6, *Black Book* 3, pp.150-2; Fasshyn's son and executor, Thomas, failed to pay Sympson, resulting in a case before Chancery, PRO, ECP 11/174, no. 46. Mary Fasshyn, Thomas's eldest daughter, had married John Pydde, former apprentice to Thomas Beckingham, mercer, in 1553, PR 7/1/1553, *3rd R.B.* 2, p. 28, n.1.

[4] *Inventories*, p. 346, HRO B wills 1573 B58/1-2.

[5] HRO B wills1510/22; O'Hara suggests that approval for a forthcoming marriage was sought from peers, friends of the family, surrogate families (of servants), neighbours and other members of the community, Diana O'Hara, ' "Ruled by my friends": aspects of marriage in the diocese of Canterbury, *c.*1540-1570', *Continuity & Change* 6.1, 1991, pp. 9-41.

Marriages made by the daughters of artisan families were less predictable: Joan, daughter of a Flemish brewer, Rowland Johnson, married Henry Huttoft, one of the leading burgesses in the town, while Margaret, daughter of Richard Coode, baker, married another baker, Henry Macey.[1] In theory, canon law advocated the free choice of marriage partner, but after the Reformation, parental control of marriage partner was re-asserted; the lack of detail in most Pre-Reformation testaments makes it impossible to assess what - if any - difference this made in practice. However, in neither period do any wills refer to a son's appointed partner; so we can assume that their freedom of action with regard to marriage was always substantially more than that enjoyed by their sisters.

Many young women from merchant and artisan families left the town on marriage. Of the 17 women that James had identified as leaving Southampton on marriage between 1400-1600, young women from artisan families tended to move into nearby villages, while the daughters of merchant and gentry families tended to marry farther afield, a result both of wider social networks and degree of parental influence.[2] Similarly 50% of women identified by James as moving to Southampton in the same period, came to the town on marriage. Again, over half came from nearby towns and villages and may have had previous social contact with their spouse, but it is likely that the marriages of women from, for example, London, to Southampton men, were equally arranged by their fathers.

This suggests that where property and inheritance were less crucial, young women - and men - had more freedom in their choice of marriage partner. Therefore we should expect to find that within the servant and labouring population, marriages were more likely to be a matter of personal choice. Indeed some found it difficult to make up their minds: Sybill Glovyer, a servant, from Christchurch, brought a breach of promise case against William Perkins in 1577, alleging that he "hath begotten her with childe" and had promised to marry her. William counterclaimed, saying that he had "perceayved that one John, a miller, had to do with her and that she went away with the said miller and said she would

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[1] See below, p.104; HRO B wills, 1604.

[2] Based on James, "Geographical Origins & Mobility", Appendix 1, pp. 422-516.

marry to hym... [William] then perceaving she was of that mynde left her to shift for herself". [1] Perhaps Sybill could have used some advice from her friends; they were certainly instrumental in helping Johanne Eyres, a servant from Andover, reach a decision. Sued by Thomas Johannes for breach of promise she declared that "she denyed him except that she could get her friends good wills". On their advice, she returned a token Thomas had given her, and broke off the relationship. [2] This case, in which the woman was sued for breach of promise, is rare; in all of the cases of breach of promise held before local sessions in the 1570s, and before the Consistory Court at Winchester, the man was sued.[3]

I had hoped to be able to contribute to the debate on age at marriage but evidence from Southampton is inconclusive.[4] Though sixteenth-century fathers anticipated that their daughters might have married by the time they reached their majority, the only fifteenth-century individual for whom an age of marriage can be reliably stated is Katerina James. Having married at 15 or 16, she was widowed at the age of 17, when she appeared before the mayor in early 1435 seeking to prove herself of age.[5] Her marriage, clearly the product of her father's wishes, cannot be seen as typical. But, in the same social class a century later, another young woman, Mary Marcant, also married her first husband at the age of 16, while Collet White, (b. July1552), married William Husee, the son of a merchant, in April 1573 at the age of 20. [6]

Outside the burgess elite, there is a similar paucity of evidence for age at marriage, though if the ages of the five servants who testified to the Consistory Court are taken as typical, then it could be suggested that both young women and men in the servant population remained unmarried in their early twenties. Richard Bayle was "xii yeres or thereabouts", when in 1550, as an orphan, he was taken

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[1] *Examinations*, pp. 30 & 36.
[2] *Examinations*, p. 34.
[3] Between 1531 and 1600 there were 13 matrimonial causes concerning individuals living in Southampton, HRO 21M65 C3/1-11.
[4] See for example, J. Hajnal, "European Marriage Patterns in Perspective", in D.V.Glass and D.E.V. Eversley (eds.), *Population in History: Essays in Historical Demography*, (London, 1965), pp. 101-43; Goldberg, *Women Work & Life Cycle,* pp. 203-43, esp. pp. 204-15. For a critique of Goldberg's argument, see Mark Bailey, "Demographic decline in late medieval England: some thoughts on recent research", *Economic History Review* XLIX, no.1, 1996, pp. 1-19.
[5] *Black Book* 2, pp. 57-9.
[6] See p.43, n.3; PR7/1/1552 &1573.

into care by the town and placed as a servant; in 1567, at the age of 24, he married Alice Godle. Though it is impossible to argue on the basis of so few examples that there was a class difference in female age at marriage, it does seem likely.[1]

Neither do the Southampton archives make a significant contribution to the related issue of companionate marriage. For Southampton, the sources used by Goldberg - the ages of witnesses in the Consistory court - provide insufficient evidence from which to draw any conclusions. [2] For the record, Joan and William Diaper of Weston were both aged 32 in 1596; George and Joan Barton of Millbrook were 35 and 31 respectively in 1578; and Peter Janverin of Southampton was 45 in 1573, while his wife Mary was 36.[3] Given that it would be irresponsible to generalise from these few cases, little more can be said except that it is noticeable that companionate marriages were made by Joan Barton and Joan Diaper, both women from rural communities, the very women who Goldberg sees as least likely to make such a marriage. But such tiny slivers of evidence are hardly sufficient to either support or counter his evidence.

Only one formal marriage agreement survives for this period, dated to 1401, and made between William Lelham *dominum de Grove*, and his wife Cecilia, with John Benet of Oxford, cook, in anticipation of the marriage between William Lelham, junior, and Juliana, Benet's daughter. Perhaps because of the very different social status of these families, it may not be typical, but does serve to emphasise the financial and contractual nature of some marriages.[4] The bride was to be delivered to her parents-in-law, along with the first instalment of the dowry; Benet was to keep the couple for the first eight years of their marriage, supporting them from the rents of three tenements; after this he was to equip them

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[1] *3rd R. B.* 3, pp. 26-7; PR 7 /1/1567. For young marriages of daughters in elite families, see Kowaleski, "Urban Families in Medieval England", pp. 48-50.

[2] Though the ages of witnesses were recorded, the ages of the plaintiff and defendant were not; HRO 21M65 C3/1-11. Goldberg bases his argument for companionate marriage on a total of 47 cases, in which just over half the couples were separated by an age difference of five years or less, *Women, Work & Life Cycle*, pp. 225-8.

[3] HRO 21M65 C3/11, p.92-3; 21 M65 C3/8 p. 421-423; 21 M65 C3/5 p. 213, 248 & 214; Peter Janverin was Mary [Marcant]'s second husband, who she married sometime before 1556. She married her first husband Steven Abarrowe sometime before 1553. If her age was correctly estimated in 1573, then she married Steven at the age of16, *3rd R.B.* 3, pp. 32 & 109-10.

[4] *HMCR*, pp. 75-6.

with a the chattels they would need in their future home. The payment of a balance of 20 marks, and its return in the event of the death of William junior, suggests that Benet was making a calculated investment in acquiring a son-in-law whose status was not matched by his financial prospects. A later marriage agreement was perhaps more typical: in his will of 1571, John Reneger returned to his"well beloved wife" the parsonage of St. Mary's "as appears in the bride deed or indenture between me and Sir John Poulett made when I married my wife".[1]

What man ye wedde schall befor God with a rynge,
Honour hym and wurchipe him, and bowe ouer all thinge.
Mekely hym answere and nocht to haterlynge
And so thou schalt slake his mod and be his derlynge. [2]

As Sir Thomas Smith observed, women lost more than their legal identity and property when they married; they also lost their name.[3] Did women perceive this as a loss, or did they have more to gain from marriage than from remaining single? By the time she married, a woman had already been socialised into the role expected of her, and, given the lack of other real options, was probably eager for - or at least reconciled to - the gendered duties and responsibilities expected of her. [4]

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[1] Will of John Reneger, *Inventories*, pp. 317-8, HRO U wills 1570/355-62.
[2] Mustanoja, (ed.), *The Good Wife*, p. 161.
[3] "The wife is so much in the powere of her husband, not only her goods by marriage are straight made her husband's, and she loses administration which she had of them but also where all English men have names and surnames....our daughters as soon as they are married lose the surname of their family, and of the family and stock whereof they come, and take the surname of their husbands", Sir Thomas Smith, *De Republica Anglorum. A Discourse on the Commonwealth of England*, 1524, (ed. L. Alston, Cambridge,1906), pp. 123-25.
[4] It would be naive to assume that all medieval women enjoyed this role. The author of Holy Maidenhood, a homily which sought to persuade young women that chastity and the religious life was preferable to marriage, may been biased, but his [?] words have a degree of resonance even today, "Little knoweth a maiden of all this same trouble of wife's woe..., nor of their work so nauseous ..; nor of the pain, nor of the sorrow and the filth in the bearing and birth of a child; ...her child scream[s], the cat is at the meat ... her cake is burning on the stone....the pot is running into the fire", adapted from F.J. Furnivall (ed.), *Hali Meidenhad: An Alliterative Homily of the Thirteenth Century*, E.E.T.S., o.s. 18, 1922, in Emilie Amt (ed.),*Women's Lives in Medieval Europe. A Sourcebook,* (London,1993), p. 94.

On the positive side, marriage could give women an affectionate or loving relationship and partnership, a home of their own, motherhood and specific roles and responsibilities within the household.[1] But the emotional relationships between husbands and wives are rarely visible until the end of the marriage. Even then few women, dying after their husbands, had the opportunity to express their concern for their spouse in their will or like Elizabeth, the third wife of Sir Richard Lyster, to raise a memorial to him in 1567 which still stands in St Michael's church today. [2] Most wills make little reference to love or affection, but some masculine expressions of concern survive. However, declarations of affection made in this context were also for public scrutiny rather than private consumption, and references to the dear departed may not always have reflected the reality of the relationship when both were alive. Whether those husbands who requested burial with their wives were expressing undying affection, or were merely expressing their wish to take their expected place in their dynastic tombs, remains a matter of conjecture.

Given this cautionary note, it is still possible to see the strong emotional bonds of marriage echoed in expressions of concern for surviving partners, and in both the practical and affectionate testamentary instructions given to wives and children. Robert Byssheope (d. 1513) left money to his sons, "provided they behave well" to his widow, Joan, while in 1554 Thomas Fasshyn asked his daughters to "be good to" their mother, his second wife. [3] Few husbands were rich enough to be as demonstrably affectionate as Niccolo de Egra, who left his young wife Anna, in addition to her dowry, an annuity of £30 and a gift of £200 for the love and goodwill she had shown towards him. [4]

However, whatever their emotional relationship, a wife's legal and financial dependence - constructed by *coverture* - resulted in an unequal relationship that placed control in her husband's hands. While the *Goodwife* and theologians alike stressed obedience above all other qualities, so long as both partners were alive,

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[1] See chap. 3.
[2] The tomb has been moved against a wall, rendering most of the dedication invisible.
[3] *Black Book* 3, pp. 65-7 & 152.
[4] He also left £100 each to two illegitimate sons, and his manor at Woolston and the residue of his estate to Gerardo, his infant son by Anna: P.C.C., F.14 Pynnyng; Ruddock, *Italians*, pp.128, 250-1.

evidence for wifely obedience within the four walls of the medieval household remains elusive. [1] But because the authority a husband enjoyed over his wife was crucial to the social order, when married women transgressed the boundaries of acceptable behaviour, their husbands were publicly accountable. When Roger Dawson and John Gyst's wives' quarrels came to public attention, the men were "bound in lyke wise that their wyves shalbe of good and honest demeanour uppon payne to lese the party that first byggynys vis. viiid". In 1508, John Elton and John Walsheman were similarly charged, and in 1556 John Anderson and William Potterell were also held to account for their wives' behaviour; Potterell was also held responsible for the behaviour of his mother-in law. [2] The remit of husband's authority of necessity included control of his wife's sexuality: that her very body belonged to him is made clear in the fine imposed on Nicholas de Pres in 1486 for the "mysgovernaunce of his wiff of her body". She was later indicted "for a mysgyded woman" in 1493, and Nicholas, along with five other men who had failed to control their wives, was threatened with expulsion. Other husbands who failed to control their wives also faced public disgrace: when Katyn Borell was accused of scolding and chiding the wives of leading burgesses and sentenced to the ducking stool, her husband was said "to be disgraced'; and when Thomas Williams' wife reviled an alderman in 1598, he was ordered to shut his "shop windowes" until further notice.[3]

Though cases of adultery were properly a matter for the ecclesiastical courts, the town court also dealt with the offenders.[4] Though adulterous wives were more frequently identified as challenging social cohesion, a husband's infidelity could also be seen to threaten the proper *gouvernance* of the town. In 1503, for instance, a recognisance of 100 shillings was levied on the goods of Nicholas Deye, tailor, who had committed adultery with the wife of John Hetton, the money to be forfeit if he continued his affair with John Hetton's wife or "with any other

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[1] It was not until 1549 that a woman was required to make the promise to obey her husband in the marriage ceremony, *Book of Common Prayer,* 1549.

[2] *Ist R.B.* 3, pp. 76 & 80; *3rd R.B.* 2, p. 52.

[3] *1st R.B.* 3, p. 41 & 6; *ibid.*, p. 91;*3rd R.B.* 4, pp. 40-1.

[4] For offences related to the absence of governance and control, including sexual misconduct, in local courts from 1460 onwards, see Marjorie K. McIntosh,"Finding Language for Misconduct", in Hanawalt & Wallace (eds.), *Bodies and Disciplines,* (London, 1996), pp. 87-122, esp. pp. 97-102.

besyde his own wife".[1] In 1569, as a result of his affair with Thomas Dingley's wife - "to the great unquietness" of his own wife Alice, who was seen crying in the streets - Laurence Sendy was forbidden from associating with Dingley's wife for two years on pain of distraint of £6 13s 4d. [2] Other burgesses were among the married men who comprised 26% of men fined for visiting the prostitutes at the *stewes*. [3]

Geographical mobility also made it easier for men to abandon their wives and set up work and home elsewhere.[4] For women, leaving a marriage was much more difficult: when Alice Knight of Romsey, for instance, came to Southampton in search of her husband, a shipwright, she was "comyted to the cage" - a cell at the Bargate - though she was undoubtedly the innocent party. [5] The happiness or unhappiness of such marriages is rarely revealed, and for most women, trapped in an unhappy marriage, there was no legal remedy. [6] The degree of obedience expected of married women obviously varied from marriage to marriage, but the *coverture* of married women could place them in extremely vulnerable situations.[7] Domestic violence against both women and children was accepted by medieval society, and if the husband's authority was maintained by violence, again there was no remedy at law. Therefore it is surprising to find even one reference to domestic violence, when in 1518-19 the "bawd of stewes" was fined for "betying his gudwyf". The incident was described as "contrary to the kyngs peace", and it is likely that the bawd was fined because he assaulted his wife in public, probably at the *stewes*, rather than in the privacy of the patriarchal household.[8]

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[1] The following month John Elton, porter, was similarly threatened with forfeiture for his adultery with the wife of Wat Peers, *1st R.B*,1, p.18.

[2] *3rd R.B.* 2, pp. 104-5; Sendy's affair with a burgess wife - possibly Mrs Dingley - was also noted in 1562, *ibid.*, p. 86.

[3] For further discussion of women and men fined for sexual misconduct, see pp. 196-8.

[4] A mobility which enabled them to attempt bigamous marriages, see, for example John Wythell, above, p. 37; William Bonner bigamously married the widow of Henry Thomas in 1595, *3rd R.B.* 4, p. 24.

[5] *Examinations*, p. 23.

[6] It was an offence for a woman to leave her husband, Pollock & Maitland, *A History of English Law*, pp. 392-6; for the jurisdiction of local courts over "runaway" wives, see Hearnshaw, *Leet Jurisdiction*, pp. 56-7. See also p. 198.

[7] For vulnerability with regard to property, see Christina Neymithalf, pp. 167-8.

[8] SC 5/3/1, fo. 42v. For crimes of violence against women, see pp. 198-9.

2.4 Motherhood [1]

A married woman's role within the family was not confined to that of wife - her role as *housewife* and *helpmeet* will be considered in the next chapters - but it was as a mother that she was physically and emotionally located in the family. Given the emphasis that the church placed on the procreation of children, it is surprising and puzzling why so little attention was paid to motherhood by theologians and other writers. [2] Though her role as wife was explicitly defined in didactic texts, even the *Goodwife* allocated only one of 28 verses to instruct her daughter in how to bring up her children:

If you louie thine children wel, hold hem fol lowe
If ony of hem misdo, ne banne thou noght, ne blowe,
Bote tak a smert serde and bet hem arrowe
Til thei crien maercy and beo here gelte aknowe. [3]

Because of the dearth of didactic texts, and because there are so few references to motherhood in documentary sources, very little research has been carried out on this subject. [4] Of course, not every wife was a mother. Wills made between 1502 and 1546 suggest that 27% of couples were childless at the death of the testator, while from 1546 and 1575 the figure was around 23%. [5] Though wills suggest that the size of families was small in this period, some women could expect to give birth to between two and ten children in their reproductive lifetime.[6]

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[1] One patriarchal father - Thomas Fasshyn - expressed this role in his will; he wished to be"put unto Elizabeth Baker, my first wife...and my picture to be made in the fourme of a merchaunte and of my two wives and all my children behind them and me. That is to say v sonnes and vii daughters", *Black Book* 3, p.150. For the construction of the patriarchal father, see Joel T. Rosenthal, *Patriarchy and families of privilege in fifteenth century England*, (Philadelphia, 1991), and Fletcher, *Gender, Sex & Subordination*.

[2] In discussing the absence of sources on the ritual of churching women, Gail Mc Murray Gibson has suggested "It is surely because [it] was so much the ordinary fabric of women's lives that so few medieval written sources think to comment upon it - and so few medievalists have paused to notice it", Gibson, "Blessing from Sun and Moon, churching as women's theatre", in Barbara A. Hanawalt & David Wallace (eds.), *Bodies and Disciplines*, (London, 1996), pp. 139-54, quoted from p. 143.

[3] Though the Goodwife hints at the continuity of knowledge transmitted from mother to daughter in her penultimate verse, it is ultimately a work that prepares women for their role as wife,"Nou haui tauht ye, douuetter, so dede mi moder me", Mustanoja, (ed.), *The Good Wife*, p. 168.

[4] For exceptions, see Hanawalt, *Growing Up in Medieval London,* pp.69-72; Hufton, *The Prospect before Her*, pp. 173-216

[5] Again, the figures for pre-Reformation wills are less reliable, see above, pp. 28, n. 3 & 29, n. 2. However, it also has to be considered that the later figures do include several years when epidemics of influenza and plague resulted in many parents dying young.

[6] McLaren, Dorothy, 'Marital Fertility & Lactation 1570-1720', in Mary Prior (ed.), *Women in English Society 1500-1800,* (London,1985), pp. 22-53.

Though pre- and post-natal rates of mortality cannot be estimated, parish registers suggest that this was not an infrequent occurrence: Kateryn Symons was buried the day after the birth and death of her third child in 1563; Collette Gavey gave birth to twins, who were christened at home on 15 October 1562: Collette herself was buried five days later. [1]

Four other women gave birth to twins in St Michael's parish between 1552 and 1572. These babies hold on life was equally fragile, and most died within a few days: John Addison, for example was christened in St Michael's Church on 13 September 1560, "hys syster was baptised in the howse"; they were both buried the following day. [2] Though the death of a baby was not unexpected, infanticide was a felony. As Carrie Smith has pointed out, infanticide was by its very nature a hidden felony which rarely came to the coroners' attention, but during quarter-sessions in 1527-8 a woman was paid to "watch[ed] with the woman that kylled hyr childe". The wife of John Goddard was also suspected of infanticide in 1575, when the body of her dead baby was discovered "buryd secretlye", but no further action was taken.[3]

The extent to which mothers were assisted by midwives, and wet-nurses, is again difficult to establish. Southampton references to midwives are late, the first being to a "Mother Midwife", who donated fourpence to the poor rate in 1575. The respect these women were afforded is suggested by the granting of burgess admission in 1601 to a man because his wife, a midwife, was "of very good opinion amongst the whole inhabitants" and had "taken great pains and honest care in her function". [4] After the birth some women may have then employed wet-nurses though, again, only one is documented. [5]

After 1552, a rough estimate of the birth rate can be constructed from the St Michael's parish registers in which 40 women can be traced from marriage to the

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[1] PR7/1,18/9/1563 and 19/9/1563; Collette Gavey (nee Howgges), was married in St.Michael's Church in 1562, PR7/1.

[2] PR7/1, 1560.

[3] SC5/3/1, fo. 63v; *Court Leet*, p. 120; she may have been Seslye Goddard who was supposed to marry John Goddard, the younger, see above, p. 40; *Inventories*, p. 346, HRO B wills 1573B 58/1-2. Caroline Smith has effectively countered Hanawalt's contention that infanticide was a rare occurrence, see "Medieval Legal Records for Modern Historians", Ph. D. Thesis, University of Southampton, pp. 44-5; see Hanawalt, *The Ties that Bound*, pp. 271-3.

[4] SC5/17/1; J.W. Horrocks (ed). *The Assembly Book of Southampton, 1602-8*, S.R.Soc.19, p. ix.

[5] The wife of John Handley was described as a wet-nurse in 1586-7, *3 rd R. B.* 3, p.46.

birth of their first child. [1] This usually occurred within three years of the marriage, with 75% of children born within two years. Almost 25 % of these children had been conceived before their parents' marriage, a figure that hints at a fairly high rate of illegitimacy. In 12 cases, it is possible to trace the birth of successive children to show an interval between their births of between ten months and three years. This indicates that a woman could expect to be pregnant three to five times in a ten year span. If this figure is compared with the estimate of three children per family derived from testamentary sources, then one is lead to the conclusion that most women saw at least one of their children die in infancy or childhood. Given that a married woman could expect to become pregnant at roughly two-year-intervals a significant proportion of her time must have been taken up with child-care. The Southampton records provide us with no indication of how a mother cared for her children, we can assume that they required her care and attention until they were around four years old. [2] A few mothers may have been assisted by servants, or - especially if she still lived in the family tenement - by their mother, or mother-in-law. [3] Then, as the children grew older - for the *Goodwife* at least - a mother's most important duty was then to prepare their daughters for marriage:

Loke to thin doughters so wele that thei beth nought forlorne.
Fro that tyme that thei ben of thin body borne
gader thou muste daste to here mariage,
And zeue hem sone to man, when thei ben of age.

Sadly, under a third of parents could expect that they would both live to see their children grow up and leave home. If we ignore those marriages ended by premature deaths, marriages seem to have lasted about 20 years, a figure that

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[1] Because parish registers survive only for one parish, this exercise is somewhat limited.
[2] Hanawalt, *Growing up in Medieval London,* pp. 63-7.
[3] For bequests to grandchildren, see, for example, HRO U wills 1558/382-3, Jane Rigges. For widows living close to their children in Coventry, see Phythian-Adams, *Desolation of a City*, p. 155.

matches the average found elsewhere. But the evidence to support this - drawn from the St Michael's parish registers and other sources - is at best fragmentary. [1]

2.5 Widowhood & re-marriage

In "women's history" it has been assumed that widows are more visible in the records than married women. But in Southampton documents, between 1400 and 1600, almost exactly the same percentage of women (45%) make their first appearance as a widow, as compared to the 46% of women who make their first appearance as a married woman. Nevertheless, research has focused more on widows than on married women, perhaps because on gaining legal independence, she was able to take part in a wider range of social interactions. Though the lack of a complete record and the complications of re-marriage make an accurate estimate of the rate at which wives survived their husbands impossible, the will sample - in which 93% of married male testators left widows - suggests that the majority of wives could expect to survive their husbands. [2] As widows, and for the first time in their lives, women lived - at least in theory - outside the patriarchal authority of the family, and gained an independent, though legally and sexually ambiguous, status. [3] Consequently, their actions and activities tend to be recorded in a wider range of records; as householders, for example, they were as susceptible as males to the scrutiny of the civic fathers. [4] Medieval widowhood has been characterised as a period of independence, and as an opportunity for women to engage in craft production and trade. In Louise Mirrer's view "medieval widows had some access to power, prestige and authority in the public sphere, because they were not confined, in the role of wife, to the

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[1] Stone suggests that first marriages lasted17-20 years in the early modern period, *Family Sex & Marriage*, p. 55. Bennett suggests an adjusted average of 20 years in14th century rural communities, Bennett, *English Medieval Countryside*, p. 71; see also L.R. Poos & R.M. Smith, '"Legal Windows onto Historical Populations?" Recent Research on Demography and the Manor Court in England', *Law & History Review*, 2 (1984), pp. 128-52.

[2] See Appendix 1.

[3] But for a man's authority over his mother-in-law, see above, p. 45. The public status of a widower did not change; the term did not come into use until the 17th century, Susan Wright,"Family Life and society in sixteenth and seventeenth century Salisbury'", Ph. D. Thesis, University of Leicester, 1982, pp. 233-6.

[4] See p. 178.

private domain".[1] The relationships both married women and widows enjoyed with craft production, property and public power will be discussed in succeeding chapters. [2] Here I will consider the Southampton evidence against the paradigm of the merry widow and of widowhood as "liberation" .

Widowhood, as Rosenthal has observed, was a state women entered involuntarily, a role conferred on them "by a rite of passage over which they had no control". [3] It was, initially, a period of bereavement and dislocation, and a gradual adjustment to changed circumstances. It also seems to have been forgotten that while widows were released from their role of wife, the majority were still mothers. Perhaps because most research has been carried out on widows whose social class or age freed them from motherhood, there has been little discussion of widows as mothers. Yet, Southampton wills show that around 75% of widows were left with children, of whom some 60% were still minors. For many women, widowhood therefore brought with it the role of single parent. As well as being a mother, they had to assume the responsibilities, and the authority, of the father. The mercer, Robert Errington, was one of many men who appointed his wife "governor" of the household and of the children after his death, and children were reciprocally instructed by their fathers be governed by their mothers, to obey them and, occasionally, to support and care for them. [4] It became the widow's responsibility to find her children apprenticeships, employment as servants and suitable marriages. As a single parent, she was also responsible for the economic survival of her family, but as later chapters will show, employment opportunities for widows were extremely limited.

Many such widows remained equally confined to the familial domain, and far from entering a state of independence, embarked on a new set of relationships of dependency and of being depended upon. Conflicts generated by her inheritance of the family tenement will be discussed in chapter 5, but other more personal

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[1] Louise Mirrer, "Introduction", in *Upon my Husband's Death*, p. 3.
[2] Chaps. 4, 5, & 6.
[3] Joel T. Rosenthal, "Fifteenth Century Widows and Widowhood: Bereavement, Reintegration, and Life Choices", in Sue Sheridan Walker (ed.), *Wife and Widow in Medieval England*, (Ann Arbor, 1993), pp. 33-58.
[4] *Inventories*, p. 102, HRO U wills 1558/133-4.

conflicts could arise. Some 10% of Southampton widows were left with step-children, often formally appointed as their custodian in their husbands' wills. [1] In his draft will in 1566, Thomas Fasshyn instructed his second wife, Elizabeth Carter, to "intertaine my children - [including four adolescent daughters] - during her wydowhed"; they in turn were commanded "to Love and obbaye her as there mother notwithstanding the yvyll demanor and dihonestye that her brother did unto me". Given that Elizabeth's brother was in the middle of a legal action against Fasshyn, the relationship must have been fraught. [2] At the same time, women widowed for the second time may have become responsible for resolving the conflicting interests of children both two marriages. The potential for family conflict was enormous. It would seem that widows with minor children, far from being released from the domestic, were even more closely tied to their family. But for some widows, their relationship with their family may have been the most positive aspect of widowhood. Close-knit family relationships were often expressed in the small gifts that widows bequeathed to a wide range of a family members; other widows' wills show that they were supported by a network of close friends. [3]

Among propertied families, the property with which they were entrusted on behalf of their heirs, could, as Agnes Overay's letter suggests, become an economic and emotional burden, and provided only rarely the opportunity for economic independence.[4] Often the widow was merely a convenient carrier of the patrimony until the male heir came of age, but with the death of her husband, her interest in the family property was of deepest concern to the awaiting heirs. Where a widow inherited for life, there may have been a conflict between her needs and the interests of the next heirs. The problem was ingeniously solved by Christina, the widow of John Cosyn, his daughter Alice Fetplace and her husband who - in 1423 - leased the family tenement to Walter and Isabella Legatt, reserving the use of "the high chamber next the hall...with free entrance and exit to the same...for the

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[1] See, for example, will of John Kylebecke, HRO B wills 1540/50.
[2] For the details of Thomas Carter's actions, see *Black Book* 3, pp.150-2.
[3] For widows' wills, see pp. 164-5 & Appendix 1.
[4] See p. 1 and pp. 146-7.

use and accommodation of the said Christina". The Legatts were *inter alia* required to make annual payments to Christina "and provide for Christina and for one girl serving the same Christina, all their provision for eating and drinking as often shall be necessary during their lives". [1] A similar arrangement was made for Alice Shotyswold, widow of William (d. *c.*1480), who was left a room and adjoining garden at Shotyswold's Dolphin Inn, itself left to William Gunter and Robert Whale, who were required to pay Alice an annual rent of £3 6s 8d. [2]

As Rosenthal has observed, widows were totally dependent on the goodwill of the heirs: the "former wife, now suppliant".[3] Some, like Isabel Witegod "unlawfully thrust out" of the tenement granted her for life, may have found themselves homeless. [4] The actions, both legal and illegal, that widows like Isabel took in order to regain their inheritance will be examined in chapter 5. If they were unsuccessful - and if relationships with the heirs had completely broken down - then they were very likely to join the high proportion of widows who in lived poverty on the margins of Southampton society. [5]

Though the numbers of widows who took legal action were relatively few, almost all were appointed executrix, and were entrusted with the legal responsibility of implementing their husbands' testamentary wishes - literally responsible for carrying out their husband's will. [6] Their obligations with regard to debts and the disposal of lands, moveables and money will be discussed more fully below, but they also had other duties. Before the Reformation they were entrusted with spiritual duties, or as one testator put it, " to discharge for my soule as she think most expedient". [7] These duties could involve funeral arrangements, payments to priests to sing masses or keeping a candle alight "night and day". [8] During the fifteenth century, the widows of eight wealthy Southampton men also had to

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[1] The family was granted the right of re-entrance should the Legatts fail to pay or fail to keep the the tenement in good repair, *Black Book* 2, pp. 29-31.
[2] PRO C/1/52/150. For similar bequests of houseroom, see Erickson, *Women and Property*, pp. 164-5.
[3] Rosenthal, "Fifteenth Century Widows and Widowhood", p. 35.
[4] *Cal. Close Rolls*, 3 Henry V, p. 427.
[5] See pp.186-92.
[6] For wives who did not obey their husbands' testamentary instructions, see pp.163 & 165.
[7] HRO B wills 1509/42, Wattes.
[8] *ibid.*; HRO B wills 1521/15, Johnson & 1522/91, Grigg.

arrange the details of the elaborate obits that would be held for the souls of their husbands - and eventually their own souls - in perpetuity, or at least until 1534. [1] Few widows were left to manage these responsibilities alone: in almost every Southampton will, between one and four overseers, depending on the extent of the estate, were nominated by the testator, often from his trusted friends, to assist her in this task.[2] Overseers were often expected to act as surrogate fathers or husbands - in 1539 Jasper Pryvett beseeched his overseers "for the love of God to help my wyfe and chyldren to ther Rights" - and allocated joint responsibility for the children's welfare. [3] But not all widows enjoyed their husbands' choice of overseers or co-executors: in 1428 Alice Bradeway admitted that she had burned her husband's will because she disliked her co-executor, Adam Mersshe. [4] However the extent to which husbands sought to control their widows lives after their death has perhaps been overstated: in more than 220 wills only 14 husbands imposed conditions on their wife's inheritance, making provision for the family property to go directly to the children if their widows remarried. [5] Widowhood was not a constant: women might outlive their husbands for as little as a few days, whereas others, like Agnes Overay, lived up to 27 years after the death of their partner. [6] Widowhood was often as long as, if not longer than, marriage and has to be recognised as a changing state, in which women could again occupy a number of different roles. [7] Unless she was one of the few widows who would lose her inheritance if she remarried, her simplest survival strategy was to marry again. Though several widows were wealthy enough not to have to marry for economic reasons, clear evidence for economically independent widows is relatively rare, and few were able to support themselves through work

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[1] For the eight obits administered by the town, see for example, Thick, *Steward's Book of 1492-3*, pp. 82-86; records of these obits continue in the stewards' books until 1534.
[2] Erickson notes that some commentators have viewed the appointment of overseers as an expression of control, but quotes testamentary evidence to suggest that their role was to assist the widow, *Women & Property*, pp. 159-61.
[3] HRO B wills1540/65, Pryvett.
[4] SRO D/CJ/17.
[5] John Stavely's wife, Joan, would lose control of the children's portion of the house if she remarried, but was still to keep a rented property, *Black Book* 3, pp. 108-9. See pp.161-2 and Appendix 1 for other conditional wills.
[6] Over 46% of aristoctratic widows survived their husbands for more than 16 years, Rosenthal "Fifteenth Century Widows and Widowhood".
[7] See for example, Agnes Pewterer, Appendix 2.

in crafts and in trade. [1] The real options for widows are perhaps more accurately reflected by the fact that when the first almshouse opened in Southampton in 1552, the ten inmates included seven widows. [2] Rather than widowhood being the opening of a door into a privileged quasi-masculine status, free from family ties, widowhood maintained women's dependence on the family, yet without their enjoying a defined role within it.

No single source survives from which a comprehensive estimate of the numbers of women who re-married can be reconstructed, but by aggregating evidence from various Southampton sources, it is possible to suggest that at least a third of women re-married. [3] The reasons why the others did not marry is a matter of conjecture, upon which we should not impose ahistorical assumptions. They may have taken an active decision not to remarry; others may simply have failed to find another husband.

Ten of the 13 women who were listed in the town court books as executrices of their first husbands' wills appeared with a second husband; they had already remarried before they had finished reclaiming their husbands' debts.[4] From the wills made between 1502 and 1575, for example, it is possible to see that at least 10% of wives with children from a previous marriage were widows for a second time. Further some 15% of women recorded in grants and conveyances can also be identified in these or other sources as remarrying. [5] I would suggest that these figures, because of the problems in tracing a woman from one marriage to another, under-represent the numbers of widows who remarried. I would also suggest that women from propertied families, were less likely to remarry for economic reasons, a degree of security being provided by the family tenement. Of

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[1] For widows as tax-payers, see table 5.8, p. 159.

[2] For the poverty of widows, see below, pp.186-92.

[3] Estimates of the rate of remarriage vary. Bennett estimates 25-30% from thirteenth-century rural court rolls, *Women in the Medieval English Countryside*, pp. 74 ff. Hanawalt, using dowry suits and guardianship cases estimated 57% for late-medieval London, see "The Widow's Mite", in Mirrer (ed), *Widows*, pp. 21-45; Goldberg has used probate evidence for York from1389 to 1520 to suggest an average rate of13%; 43.5% of widowers from the same source remarried, see Goldberg, *Women Work & Life Cycle*, p. 267, Table 5.9. For Abingdon Todd has suggested that the rate of re-marriage declined from the late medieval period, from a peak of 50% between 1540 and 1600. She also suggests that younger widows were more likely to remarry, especially the 70% she identified with young children, Barbara Todd, 'The Remarrying widow: A stereotype reconsidered," in Prior, (ed.), *Women in English Society, 1500-1800*, pp. 54-92.

[4] See table 4.7.

[5] *Black Books* and SC4/2.

the widows who held substantial amounts of property in the 1454 Terrier, for example, not one re-married. [1]

Table 2.4 Intervals between widowhood and remarriage [2]

Interval	**1 yr or less**	**2-5 yrs**	**6-10 yrs**	**over 10 yrs**
% (number)	29.4% (5)	17.7% (3)	23.5% (4)	29.4% (5)

However, in the God's House rentals, it is possible to trace 17 women from the death of their first husband to their second marriage. Though no conclusions can be read from this sample size, it does indicate that - amongst these women at least - just under one third remarried within a year, some within three months. [3] Almost half remarried within five years, and though one woman remarried after 20 years, this was unusual. Few of these remarrying widows were from the social class of widows whose property has been cited as an attraction for prospective husbands. This suggests we have to look elsewhere for their reasons for their remarriage.

So why and who did women remarry? I have already suggested that women remarried for economic reasons, but emotional needs were probably as important. Young widows were more likely to remarry quickly, needing both financial and emotional resources for themselves and their children; but the fact that only 10% of widows had children surviving from more than one marriage means that we should be careful not to exaggerate the numbers who did remarry.[4] But, on the other hand, as we have already seen, few women were precluded from re-marriage by their husbands, with only one testator expressing a strong desire that his widow should remain single. [5]

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[1] See p. 144.
[2] Rentals, *GHC*, passim.
[3] There is no evidence for Southampton widows who chose the religious life after the death of their husband.
[4] For the reasons for, and quality of, second marriages and a discussion of the emotional trauma and conflicts that women may have faced as they adopted yet another coverture and another socially constructed identity see, Rosenthal, "Fifteenth Century Widows and Widowhood", pp. 37-40.
[5] See will of John Shropshire, (d.1495), *Black Book* 3, p. 17.

Widows marrying for a second time tended to marry, as they had the first, men from within the same social network. When the widowed Lady Isabel Dawtrey married Sir Richard Lyster after 1510, she remained within the the small circle of Southampton urban gentry who were peripheral to Court. Similarly the widow of Robert White "weigher of wulles" then married the broker Thomas Bytheway, marrying again within the small group of burgesses who held office in the town. [1] But again, amongst the artisan class remarriage was as varied as first marriages. Richard Coode (d. 1573) did not expect his wife to marry another baker, making it clear that if his wife remarried, she was to protect the children's interests by not letting the bakehouse. [2] Indeed, where evidence exists, it is clear that widows seldom married below the social group - and presumably below the economic level - of their first husband. Indeed, as Wall has suggested, many second marriages were characterised by a higher age difference between spouses, than first marriages. The husband was often notably older - as the second marriages of Agnes Overay and Mary Janverin suggest - and often wealthier. [3]

If widows were motivated to remarry in order to retain their financial and social status, what motivated the men who married widows? The conventional answer is that they married widows for their property, but as this explanation is invariably based on sources associated with property transactions, it is too easy an assumption to make. Were these men really so mercenary that they saw widows as a means of gaining social and material advantage? Did Mr. Goddard really marry the widow of an alderman in order to get a 50 % discount on his burgess fine of £10?[4] However, some sort of financial inducement is suggested by two marriages that were of concern to the town. In 1456-7, the town donated forty shillings to Walter Bacyn in connection with his marriage to Peryn James' widow, and in 1520 John Mulens was forgiven a debt by the town "in consideracion that the said John Mulens hadd grete costs by the marriage of the said William

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[1] Dawtrey was Controller of Customs in Southampton; Lyster was the former Lord ChiefJustice, Platt, *Medieval Southampton*, pp. 238 & 249; for Alice White/Bytheway, see p. 176.
[2] *Inventories*, p. 335, HRO B 1573/32:1.
[3] R. Wall, "Mean Household size in England from printed sources", in P. Laslett (ed)., *Household and Family in Past Times*, (Cambridge ,1972), pp.159-203.
[4] Fines, 1563/4; for other men admitted burgess by marriage, see pp.172-3.

Bisshops wiff'.[1] But the reasons for the town's interest in these marriages are not clear, and clear examples of mercenary marriages are rare.

The assertion that widows' appearances in the records signified a wider, and somehow more significant, degree of independence and social interaction than that of married women has to be questioned. In the next chapters we shall see that when widows appear in the records, though some were autonomously engaged in trade or struggling to make ends meet at the other end of the economic scale, many were still trying to deal with the effects of their husband's death, repaying his debts, or maintaining the family property or business for his heirs. Indeed, the widows who appear to have achieved some economic security, had all been provided with the means to do so by their husbands.

This conclusion seems to contradict the argument for the merry and economically independent widow. Certainly there were such widows amongst Southampton's propertied class, but their significance to the overall picture of widowhood is relative. [2] Research focusing on a relatively small percentage of the widowed population has clouded our vision of medieval widowhood.[3] As the next chapters show, most widowed women were more likely to found on the margins, rather than at the hub of Southampton society. If widowhood was as gloomy as painted here, what is left to substantiate the image of the merry widow?

Many women may have indeed welcomed freedom from the authority of their husband, and others may have felt relief when their unhappy, tedious or violent marriage came to an abrupt end. Yet beyond those who controlled a comfortable amount of personal wealth, few could enjoy any degree of freedom. As women, their scope for autonomy and action was still curtailed by gender: even had they wished to do so, few could have embarked on an outrageous lifestyle.

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[1] *3rd R.B.* 1, p. 12. SC5/1/8, fos.13 & 16.

[2] If merriness can be equated with wealth the figures for property-holding and tax-paying discussed in Chapter 5, suggest that merry widows were few in number, see pp. 143-6 and 158-9 below.

[3] For a disproportionate emphasis on wealthy widows, see Barron & Sutton (eds.), *Medieval London Widows*.

Chapter Three Housewife and Helpmeet?

The man to get, to travaile abroad, to defende: the wife, to save that which is gotten. to tarrie at home to distribute that which commeth of the husbandes labour and to kepe all at home neat and cleane. [1]

In medieval society work was "blessed labour" in which man used the bounty provided by God to sustain himself and his family. Within this scheme of things, a woman's role was to make the best of use of the resources her husband could generate for the benefit of her household. [2] Historians have also agreed that the work carried out by the married woman - in her role as housewife - was crucial to the economy of the medieval family and to the domestic mode of production. [3] Yet little research has been carried out on the housewife and her work, even though this was the single economic role which married women were actually expected to occupy. In this chapter I will attempt to explore the full meaning of the term "housewife" using evidence from Southampton to show what the housewife's work actually entailed.

This chapter is divided into three sections. The first will consider the basic range of tasks a housewife was expected to undertake, examining wherever possible, how her work varied according to her husband's economic status. In the second part, I will discuss the housewife's role as *helpmeet* - a role in which she is perceived as assisting in her husband's work. Finally, I look at what I describe as extended domestic labour, in which wives used their productive and service skills to generate income for the household's use.

Before examining the evidence, it is worth repeating that the gendered division of labour in late-medieval society constructed housewife as woman's primary

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[1] Sir Thomas Smith, *De Republica Anglorum*, c. 1565, pub, 1583, p. 12. See also Henry Smith, *A Preparative to Marriage*, (London, 1591), esp. p. 69. Earlier Catholic texts drew on similar biblical role models, see for example, Suzanne Vecchio,"The Good Wife", in Klapisch-Zuber (ed.),*Silences of the Middle Ages*, pp.105-35.

[2] Michael Roberts, "Women and work in sixteenth century English towns" in Corfield & Keene (eds.), *Work in Towns*, pp. 86-102, see pp. 88-9.

[3] See, for example, Clark,*Working Lives*; Barbara A. Hanawalt, "Introduction", in Hanawalt (ed.), *Women & Work in Pre-Industrial Europe*, (Bloomington,1986), pp. vii-xvii; Martha Howell, *Women, Production & Patriarchy in late Medieval Cities*, (Chicago,1986), esp. chap.1; Rodney Hilton, "Women Traders in Medieval England", in Hilton, *Class Conflict & the Crisis of Feudalism* , (London, 1985), esp. pp. 206-7; Peter Laslett, *The World we have lost, further explored*, (3rd edition, London,1983), pp.1-4; Hufton, *The Prospect Before Her*, esp. pp.161-172.

economic role, and that the only real training young women could expect to receive was in "the art of housewifery". From the early-sixteenth century onwards didactic texts were written with the aim of instructing married women in housewifery, both confirming their role, and in their detail providing both contemporaries and historians with the detail of the tasks expected of a model housewife. [1] These texts have provided a useful model against which the Southampton evidence can be compared, though their limitations - in that they were written by men and proposed an ideal, and may have never been read by any Southampton women - are obvious.

With the exception of these instructional texts, documentary sources did not concern themselves with housework, so the evidence for this chapter has been derived from an eclectic range of sources. In the first section of the chapter, I have relied heavily on a series of 125 inventories dating mainly from the third quarter of the sixteenth century, using the lists of household contents they contain to extrapolate evidence for domestic tasks and to provide some statistical data for the housewife's work. [2] These inventories, ranging in value from over £2,000 to under £1, were compiled for mercantile, artisan, yeoman and skilled labourers' households, and though biased towards wealthy households, nevertheless cover

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[1] For training, see pp. 34-5 &106-8. The earliest examples of this genre are *Le Livre du Chevalier de la Tour Landry*, A. de Montiaglon (ed.), (Paris, 1854), dated 1371-2, and*Le menagier de Paris, Traite de Morale et d'Economie Domestique, compose vers 1393 par un Borgeois Parisien*, 2 vols., Jerome Pichon (ed.), (Paris, 1846). See also, Eileen Power, *Medieval People*, (1st ed.,1924, London, 1986), pp. 96-119. Later manuals used as sources of reference for this chapter include, Thomas Tusser, "The preface to the booke of *Huswiferie* ", in "The points of huswiferie, united to the comfort of husbandrie, newly corrected and amplified" , in *Five Hundred Points of Good Husbandrie*, (London,1580), W Payne & Sidney J. Herrtage (eds.), (London,1878). Originally published in 1557 with a small section on housewifery, by the second edition the instructions on housewifery had been amplified into a whole section; such was the popularity of the work that it ran to 23 editions. John Fitzherbert,*The Book of Husbandry*, (London,1523), and, particularly useful for the identification of material culture used in domestic processes, Gervase Markham, *The English Housewife*, Michael R.Best (ed.), (London,1615; reprint, Kingston & Montreal,1986).

[2] Roberts & Parker, *Southampton Probate Inventories, 1447-1575*, (Southampton,1992). all but three of these inventories dated to after 1546; the others date from1447 to1516. The problems associated with using probate inventories as a source are well rehearsed, see, for example J.S. Moore, "Probate Inventories: Problems and Prospects", in P. Riden (ed.), *Probate Records and The Local Community*, (Gloucester, 1995). In the context of this study there are specific problems: firstly, a widow's personal chattels were not always included by the assessors; secondly, items of low value were sometimes omitted from inventories; thirdly, assessments were not consistent. Perhaps of most importance, my interpretations of inventories are based on the assumption that artefacts listed in a room or out-building were actually used in those locations, yet we know that objects were frequently stored in one room and used elsewhere. We also have to bear in mind that after the testator's death, family members may have appropriated items before the inventory was made.

a reasonable cross-section of the population, with the exclusion of the poorest sections of the community.

Despite the obvious pitfalls inherent in this strategy, I hope to demonstrate that housework - defined as the procurement, production and preparation of resources for domestic consumption and the servicing of the physical needs of her family - is susceptible to analysis, and certainly worthy of more attention than it has previously been afforded. [1]

3.1 Housewife

Some respit to husbands the weather may send
But huswiues affaires haue neuer an end. [2]

Thomas Tusser's evocation of the interminable nature of housework has resonances for all women, but what exactly was the urban housewife required to do, and how did her work contribute to the household economy?

When Thomas Mill, gentleman, died in 1566 he left his wife Alice "all household stuff remaining in my houses". The inventory, compiled after his death, listed the contents of his town house in Southampton and his farm at Atgrove Place, Nursling. It reveals the extent of that "household stuff", and provides a useful introduction to the range of activities for which a housewife could be responsible.[3] Indeed, this inventory suggests that Alice - albeit assisted by several servants - was a paragon of domestic virtue. Though she probably did not live at Atgrove Place, we can assume - from Tusser and Markham's texts - that the produce of the Nursling estate was processed for both domestic consumption, and for sale, under her supervision.[4] The *dye house* at Nursling functioned as a dairy, well

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[1] This methodology, in which inventories are analysed as if they were an archaeological assemblage, does have its limitations. There are also problems associated with the gendered attribution of objects and dangers in seeing material culture as reflective of gendered activity, see Gilchrist, *Gender & Material Culture*, esp. pp. 6-12.

[2] Tusser, "The preface to the booke of *Huswiferie* ", for this and other couplets quoted, see p. 162.

[3] Mill's estate at Nursling - five miles west of Southampton - included 16 cows, a breeding bull , working bullocks, more than a dozen pigs and over 30 sheep, *Inventories*, pp. 244-258, HRO B wills 1565/68-70.

[4] The town house included a "dining place for the servants" and chambers for the "Maidens"; at Nursling there were separate chambers for female and male servants, *Inventories*, pp. 244-58.

equipped with pans for settling milk, a churn, tubs and butter-pots. Three cheese vats suggest the production of cheese, perhaps stored in a *chese racke*, located in one of the back chambers. Meat from the farm was salted in *powdering tubbes*, and in Mill's cellars at Biddlesgate there were 16 quarters of salt in store, ready for use. [1] Alice, or her servants, baked bread in both households: both the *pastry* at Nursling and the *pastry* and adjacent *boulting house* in the town held meal tuns for storage, sieves for processing flour, moulding boards and other bread-making equipment. Both houses also contained storage vessels, stands and other equipment associated with domestic brewing. The equipment for each of these processes - dairying, salting, brewing and baking - was located in separate rooms or outbuildings, affording the housewife what can be described as specialised production areas. Both of the houses had well-equipped kitchens, the town house having also a buttery where table-ware was stored, a separate *store house* for pewter plate, and wet and dry larders for the storage of food.

As housewife, Alice was also responsible for the cleanliness and order of two very large houses: excluding the spaces already described, the town house included a further fourteen rooms, and the house at Nursling a further nine rooms. She was also responsible for keeping the family's clothing clean, and for the care of over £20 worth of linen - from fine damask table-cloths to coarse canvas sheets. Alice had her own water supply taken from lead cisterns in the *washing house* and outside in the court. Her washing equipment included four washing tubs, a washing *stocke*, and a *washing table for sope clothes*. Finally there was almost £200 of silver and gilt plate to be kept clean. [2]

Thomas Mill's inventory was exceptional: his goods and chattels were valued at over £1,300 - one of only two Southampton inventories valued at over £1,000. Alice's "household stuff" included over £19 worth of domestic equipment, as well as tableware and other items, valued at over £17, stored in the buttery. Other urban housewives had far fewer resources at their disposal.

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[1] Two fish-salting pans suggest that fish was also salted for domestic consumption, *ibid.*
[2] *ibid.*

Though this and the other inventories used in this chapter date towards the end of the period, I suggest that they can be legitimately used to draw conclusions about a housewife's work from the mid-fifteenth century onwards. When we compare the contents of kitchens and butteries listed in the inventories compiled between 1544 and 1575 with the three earlier Southampton inventories that survive, we find very little difference in the range and forms of cooking and eating utensils.[1] Equally, if the contents of these later inventories are compared with fifteenth-century inventories from other towns, with utensils specified in recipe books, and with the fragmentary cooking utensils recovered from archaeological excavations in Southampton, it is clear that the housewife's basic *batterie de cuisine* altered very little over the period. [2] The only real changes occur in the materials from which cooking and eating utensils were made: brass pans took the place of the ceramic cooking-pots of the fifteenth century, and ceramic and metal plates replaced wooden trenchers. Pewter, already making an appearance in 1447, increased in popularity, but silver was the prerogative of the rich in every period.[3] When the merchant Richard Thomas died in 1447, the equipment listed in his kitchen included a brass chafing-dish and mortar, brass pots and spoons; there were pewter plates, dishes and saucers, as well as cooking dishes, knives and "other instruments". There were also some old and broken pots, presumably ceramic, and six wooden trenchers.[4] Just over a century later, in 1558, when the merchant Raffe Allport died, though the serving dishes and pewter had been moved to the buttery, the kitchen equipment remained much the same. Additional utensils listed - skillets, skimmers, ladles, colanders and dripping pans - were not new forms: all have been found in excavations of fifteenth-century contexts in

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[1] Earlier Southampton inventories date to 1447,1495 & 1516, *Inventories*, pp. 2-13.
[2] For the range of medieval cooking utensils, see Ian H. Goodall, "Medieval Iron Kitchen Equipment"; John Cherry, "Metal Cooking Vessels"; John Lewis, "Bronze Mortars & Ewers"; Carole A. Morris, "Wooden Vessels in the medieval kitchen"; Stephen Moorhouse, "Pottery vessels in the medieval kitchen", and Peter Brears, "The sixteenth Century kitchen and its equipment", in "The Medieval Kitchen and its equipment", Finds Research Group and Medieval Pottery Research Group, (Leeds, 1987). For continuity in the range of kitchen equipment available between the fifteenth and early seventeenth centuries, see, for example, Thomas Austin (ed.), *Two Fifteenth Century Cookery Books*, E.E.T.S.,1888, and Markham, *English Housewife*, pp. 60-124.
[3] For the increase in the popularity and ownership of pewter during the sixteenth century, see John Hatcher & T.C. Barker, *A History of British Pewter*, (London,1974), pp. 81-115.
[4] *Inventories*, pp. 3 & 84.

Southampton. [1] The contents of kitchens were more likely to vary according to the proportion of household wealth invested in them, rather than because of any major changes in domestic technology. [2]

By the late-medieval period few Southampton housewives were as productive and self-sufficient as Alice Mill or her rural counterparts. Southampton's primary role as a port and trading centre gave housewives access to markets and shops selling a wide range of produce, but nevertheless within the urban community, and particularly in the suburban area of St Mary's, almost 17% of sixteenth-century households were - on the basis of the inventories - involved to some degree in producing food from the household's own resources.

Table 3.1 Ownership of stock

Households	Stock-owners	% of Inventories
Gents & Farmers	8	6.4%
Others	13	10. 4%
Total	21	16.8%

There are clear differences in the degrees to which gentry and yeoman households outside the town walls, and the merchant, artisan and labourers households within the walls were involved in the production and processing of agricultural produce for their own consumption. Nevertheless, table 3.1 shows that, based on the inventories, at least 10% of urban households, in which the householder was not a farmer or butcher, owned more than a single pig, sheep, cow or fowl. If single animals are included, the figure rises to around 20%. Instructional texts suggest that in these households, the housewife was sometimes responsible for day-to-day animal husbandry, and was invariably responsible for the processing of their produce. Ownership of animals was probably more widespread than the inventories suggest: urban households had been granted the right to keep cattle on the Common from the thirteenth century,

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[1] Southampton City Heritage, Archaeological Collections Database.
[2] See below, p. 79.

and also had access to pasturage on other lands around the town.[1] The importance of this right to the household economy is suggested by the repeated complaints against wealthy land-owners who overstocked the common with cattle; and the association between the domestic economy and the right to pasturage was clearly expressed in the response to a complaint made against Peter Quate in 1580. Quate was fined for keeping two colts and a cow on the common "and being a battchiller, and not keping howsse oughte not to kepe any cattall at all". [2] Although prohibited by ordinance, householders also kept their animals within the town walls, again the subject of repeated complaints to the Court Leet. In 1550, for example, householders were fined for allowing their ducks to wander the streets, for keeping hogs in their back-gardens, and for leaving their cows standing in the streets. In 1551, a Mr Baker was fined 3s 4d for letting his maids milk his cows in the street "tymes without number".[3]

Between 1546 and 1575, householders who lived within the walls and kept substantial numbers of animals included a merchant, a grocer, the butcher Thomas Weekes, a shipwright, a joiner, a brewer and an innkeeper.[4] The widow, Annes James, who lived in Holyrood parish owned six cattle, four heifers, a bullock and some geese, as well as over a dozen sheep and lambs that she bequeathed to her grandnieces and nephews and to friends' children at her death in 1566. [5] Four households also kept bees, presumably producing honey. [6] Given that inventories are biased towards land-holding families, they probably overrepresent the households that could achieve any degree of self-sufficiency, but most urban tenement plots were large enough to include a garden - regarded as the housewife's responsibility - which could provide a household with fresh

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[1] Southampton Common was granted to the town by Nicholas of Shirley in 1228, see Davies, *History of Southampton*, pp. 48-9. Other common lands included Houndwell, Hoglands, Magdalene Fields and the Salt Marsh.

[2] In 1569 Lady Dawtrey, widow of Sir Francis,was accused of over-charging the common with 120 sheep and 40 cattle and fined 4d and 6d for each animal respectively, *Court Leet* 1, pp. 53 & *Court Leet* 2, p. 200.

[3] See successive versions of Ord. 43,*Oak Book*, p. 53, 93 & 131; *Court Leet*, pp. 5 -7,11, 17 & 22.

[4] See *Inventories*, pp. 105-9, 164-75, 327, 114, 119 & 289.

[5] *Inventories*, pp. 237-9, HRO B wills1566/108-9.

[6] *Inventories*, pp. 18,178, 385 & 428.

produce. Those without their own gardens could rent garden plots within the walls or parcels of land outside the town.[1]

However, even if they did not own stock, like Alice Mill, other housewives processed and preserved meat - and fish - for household consumption. Twenty-seven households (22%) - only four of whom held stock - owned specialised equipment for salting and preserving meat in the form of *powdering tubbes* or *vattes* - covered watertight containers - or salting pans. [2] The locations of these tubs in inventories suggest that salting was carried out in the kitchen or in a specialised domestic work area or outbuilding, and perhaps left to steep in storage areas like the buttery or cellar, (see Table 3.3). The ownership of powdering tubs was fairly evenly distributed with just over 80% of these tubs listed in the 70% of inventories valued at over £20, suggesting that housewives at all levels of society salted meat, (see Table 3.5). Indeed, the figure of 22 % probably under-represents the numbers of women who engaged in this activity; almost 50% of households contained unspecified lidded tubs that could have been used for salting, while other inventories noted the value of flitches of bacon and other salted foods.[3]

Table 3.2 Incidence of brewing and baking equipment

	Household	Number	% of Inventories
Brewing equipment	**Brewers**	5[4]	4%
	Non-brewers	20 [5]	16%
Baking equipment	**Bakers**	1	0.8 %
	Non-bakers	25	20%
Both		5	4%

[1] In 1495, for example, the town rented out 6 garden plots at around 12d a year, SC4/1/1 fos. 2r-v.
[2] These were covered watertight containers, also called *poutheringe*, *poudryng* or pudrynge vats or tubs, see "Glossary", *Inventories*; p.470. For salting pans and troughs, *ibid.*, pp. 246 & 385.
[3] For example, *Inventories*, pp. 319 & 364.
[4] Brewers includes a cider-maker and two women identified as a brewer and tippler from other sources, see below, pp.104 & 136. Identifications based on Roberts & Parker, *Inventories, passim.*
[5] Excluding two inventories in which hops, but no equipment, was listed, *Inventories*, pp. 53 & 94.

Few women seem to have owned butter- and cheese-making equipment, but the presence of bread-making and brewing equipment in inventories suggests that over 32% of housewives produced their own bread or ale and beer, with 4 % having the equipment to produce both. Though the amounts of equipment varied from one household to another, around 16% of households had sufficient equipment for a housewife to brew ale or beer on a domestic scale.[1]

It is easy to differentiate domestic brewers from commercial brewers, though the extent of Alice Mills brewing equipment suggests she was capable of a scale of production beyond that of commercial brewers. The two brewers' inventories both listed brew-houses, as did the inventory of the widow - and brewer - Jane Rigges. The only other inventory including a substantial amount of brewing equipment, located in an outhouse, was that of the known tippler, Margery Hancock.[2]

Similarly the 20% of non-bakers households who possessed baking equipment - identified as kneading *kyvers,* tubs or troughs and moulding boards - and ingredients associated with bread-making are easy to distinguish from the equipment owned by known bakers, though families not known to be bakers also possessed bake-houses. [3]

Table 3.3 Location of salting, baking and brewing equipment

% (No.)	Kitchen	Buttery	D.W.A.[4]	Cellar or store	Out-house	Other
Salting (27)	25.9 (7)	18.5 (5)	29.6 (8)	11.1(3)	0	14.8 (4)
Baking (26)	23 (6)	0	30.8 (8)	7.7 (2)	7.7 (2)	30.8 (8)
Brewing (25)	32 (8)	8 (2)	28 (7)	20 (5) [5]	4 (1)	8 (2)
Total	27 (21)	9 (7)	29 (23)	13 (10)	4 (3)	18 (14)

[1] Bung-hole pitchers, in which beer or ale could be both stored and served, have also been found in 15th-century archaeological contexts. For the sale of domestically produced ale and beer, see below, p. 84.
[2] Jane Rigges and Margery Hancock are discussed below, pp.104 & 136.
[3] For bake-houses in conveyances, see *Black Book* 2, pp.16 & 72.
[4] D.W.A.: domestic work area, see pp. 67 & 69.
[5] Used for storing beer or equipment.

In total, 16% of the households for which inventories survive included separate areas for carrying out specialised domestic tasks. Though their incidence does not correalate directly with the size of the house, some 75% of these specialised areas occur in wealthier households, where estates were valued at over £100. Variously described as brew-houses, bake-houses, boulting houses, pastries, salt-, milk- and, most frequently back-houses, they can be interpreted as gendered spaces controlled and used by the housewife, or under her supervision.[1]

Table 3. 4 Identification of Household Spaces [2]

Sample size	Domestic work area	Kitchen	Shop or workshop	Hall	Buttery	Parlour
125	16%	84%	62%	97%	69%	41%

But in most households, the kitchen - where most housewives processed and prepared food for domestic and other consumption - was the only space clearly identifiable as a female domain. Some 84% of the inventories in which rooms were described included a kitchen; the exceptions being two-or three-roomed cottages, where cooking equipment was located in the hall. [3] Women at the lower end of the social scale did not have access even to a basic work-space.
While the precise location of the kitchen is difficult to establish by looking at inventories, from vernacular architecture and archaeological evidence we know that kitchens were often located in an outbuilding or built as an extension to the original tenement. [4] The size varied with that of the house: one fifteenth-century kitchen is described in a conveyance as being 16 feet long and three foot, two inches wide, extending from the back of a tenement, while a fourteenth-century kitchen extension built onto a property excavated in Bugle Street, measured six

[1] Source, *Inventories*. Excluding spaces not in use at the time of the testators death and those thought to be used for commercial production.
[2] Sample size:100.
[3] Excluding three inventories in which the room was not described as a kitchen, though its contents were compatible with other kitchen inventories.
[4] Evidence of separate kitchen buildings has been found at 58 French Street and Lower High Street, SOU 266. Separating the kitchen from the house was also a basic fire precaution.

metres (20 feet) by three metres (10 feet). [1] This kitchen was constructed on stone footings, with a clay floor and painted or plastered wattle-and-daub walls. It was roofed with slates nailed to oak and hazel beams, surmounted by green-glazed ridge tiles. A brick and stone hearth was set against one wall, and evidence of internal partitioning suggests that the kitchen was divided into separate areas, perhaps for storage or specialised activities. The clay floor-levels were frequently replaced, but the contents of the destruction level suggest that rushes or reeds were placed on the floor into which kitchen debris - which here included grain, plum stones and nuts - could be discarded until the room was swept out. [2]

Kitchens generally contained little furniture: though tables, benches, shelves and storage cupboards - aumbries and bread-hutches - are listed in a few. The best-equipped kitchens contained over 30 separate types of cooking utensils, though a basic kitchen assemblage included around a dozen basic items. The most frequently listed cooking utensils were brass cooking-pots and pans or kettles, basins or bowls, cauldrons, dishes and chafing dishes, dripping pans, knives, ladles, mortars, skillets, skimmers, trivets and trenchers. The fire-place was furnished with andirons, pot-hangers and cotterels, and broches or spits. The resources available to a housewife clearly depended on the wealth of the household, and labour-saving devices such as bread-graters and clockwork-jacks (spits) were only found in the wealthiest households, showing a direct correlation between the wealth of the household and the resources available to the housewife. [3]

Equipment associated with the production of food is rarely found in any of the other rooms in the house, except in the specialised areas already noted. Equally, kitchens contained few items of furniture, equipment or utensils that were not used for food preparation - Margaret Leche was unique in competing for space in her kitchen with her husband's "forgge w[i]th the Implementtes". [4] Commercial baking and brewing, though based on domestic skills, was carried out in specialised

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[1] *Black Book* 2, p.45.
[2] Upper Bugle Street III E, SOU 120.
[3] Inventories, p. 244. See below, p. 79.
[4] *Inventories*, p.77.

bake-houses and brew-houses. Just as the majority of artisans had a work-shop or specialised work area, in all but the poorest households, by the sixteenth century - if not before - most housewives had their own kitchen.[1] Excepting the poorest households, the process of food production and preparation had almost completely vanished from its early-medieval position in the hall, and the kitchen was the housewife's distinct and gendered domain.

But the food that she produced was eaten in the hall, a room equipped and decorated with the best furniture and hangings a householder could display. The kitchen was a space at the back of, or separated from, the house; the hall was a central and public space, the main location of consumption. In the houses of the wealthy the hall was both the location of social interaction and the expression of a family's wealth. This is clearly demonstrated in the inventories, and the contrast between the contents of the halls in Thomas Mills' house in Southampton and at his farm at Nursling illustrates the function of the urban hall. The former was laden with over £15 worth of expensive and imported furniture, hangings and paintings; the contents of the latter - valued at 30 shillings - included two old tables, a tod of wool, various working-baskets and farming equipment. [2]

The food a housewife prepared may have been eaten in the hall, but the hall was not a female domain. This separation is emphasised by the overwhelming evidence that table-ware was not stored in the kitchen, but in the buttery, a room or storage-space, identified in 69% of inventories. [3] Though the buttery cannot be securely located from inventories, in terms of gendered space, it was clearly associated with consumption rather than production. However, there was little difference in the values attributed to the contents of kitchens and butteries within the same household, a differential which has been observed and taken to indicate

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[1] John Godfray left his wife "the kechyn, parlor and garden" in his will, HRO B wills 1515/18.

[2] *Inventories*, pp. 244 & 256. Weatherill has argued that luxury goods - such as those displayed in the Mills' Southampton hall - marked the rank of the owners, enabling them to "communicate social position in a non-verbal way", see Lorna Weatherill, "The meaning of consumer behaviour in late seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century England", in John Brewer & Roy Porter (eds.), *Consumption and the World of Goods*, (London, 1993), pp. 206-27, quoted from p. 207.

[3] A"littil buttry in the hall" was constructed in one of the town's houses; the materials and processes involved suggest that it was a large built-in cupboard, see Merson, *3rd R.B.* I, p. 41, n. 2.The only utensils to be found in both butteries and kitchens were chafing dishes, used to cook food, and to keep it warm at the table; see for example, the recipe for *cryspes* or deep fried pancakes given in MS Harl. 4016, in Austin, *15th century Cookery Books*, p.93.

a culture of consumption in later centuries. [1] The buttery can nevertheless be identified as a transitional area between male and female domains, between the processing of food and its consumption. [2]

Urban households were increasingly consumers rather than producers of food. Unlike her rural counterparts, an urban housewife's regular routine included shopping for food on a frequent, if not daily, basis. In order to discharge her responsibility for maximising the household's financial resources, the model housewife needed to get to the markets early, before the forestallers and hucksters had bought the produce they would sell at higher prices later in the day. [3] From at least the fifteenth century the markets operated on three or four days a week: a housewife could buy meat from the butchers' stalls at the Shambles, near the Friary gate; fish at the covered market in St Michael's Square; and "poultry, butter, chees, egges and frute" from the "very greate multitude" of rural traders who congregated in the busy poultry market outside St Lawrence's Church in the High Street. [4] She could buy bread and beer from the town's bakers and brewers, and, if she had the means to do so, purchase a wide range of imported foods. Though the bulk of luxury imports rarely stayed in the town, in the sixteenth century at least, spices including turmeric, cummin and cloves, and dried fruits including raisins and prunes, were available from grocers like John Stavely and the apothecary John Brodocke. Stavely also sold processed and prepared foods including sugar, sugar-candy, marmalade, and treacle. [5]

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[1] For the relative values of the contents of kitchens and butteries, see p. 79. Weatherill makes a similar distinction between cooking and eating utensils, and the location of their use, using decoration as a criteria, see, "Consumer Behaviour", pp. 214-6.

[2] The only inventories which did not respect these gendered boundaries were those of single men and clerics; the widow Elizabeth Forward also showed a complete disregard for functional or gendered boundaries in her very disorganised use of household space, *Inventories*, pp.30-34

[3] See below, pp.137-9.

[4] Davies, *History of Southampton*, p.126-8. The dairy and poultry market was moved in the 1570s after parishioners' had complained that they couldn't hear the services for the noise of the market. In 1570 a new covered market - "to save and kepe ther sayd victuals from the rayne and tempest" - was constructed under the new audit house in the High Street, SC2/1/4 fos. 45v-46r. A fair was held annually at the Trinity Chapel in St. Mary's parish, though it is of uncertain origin, the rights to hold it being confirmed as late as 1496, see H. W. Gidden (ed.), *The Sign Manuals & the Letters Patent of Southampton* 2, S.R.Soc. 20, Southampton,1919, pp. 88-9.

[5] For the range and prices of imported produce, see *Inventories,* pp.172-4 & 290-300.

Though few housewives had the means to purchase these goods, all needed water and fuel. It is not clear whether the people of Southampton had access to fallen wood on the common and around the town, but for those without the time to gather fuel, there was a flourishing trade in coal and wood, and ready-cut faggots were sold by the hucksters in the streets. [1]

Few housewives had access to a household water supply, except for those situated on the western side of the town where properties built on the escarpment included wells or springs; at West Hall, there was even a fountain. [2] The presence of a well, spring or access to rain-water on a property was important enough to be specified in conveyances.[3] In 1427, when Joan and John Tyer granted William Chamberlain a kitchen, they reserved for themselves "the easements and drippings from the rain water", usually collected in water-tubs or in lead cisterns. [4] Most women had to fetch and carry water from the public cistern or public wells. [5] Southampton's municipal water-supply dated from the fourteenth century. Running off the conduit constructed by the Friars Minor, it was controlled by the corporation from 1420 when a new water-house and cistern were built on the south side of Holyrood church in the High Street. [6] It was also at this cistern, or at the "washing place for the women" built at Houndwell that the majority of women did their washing.

Washing was the only domestic activity that seems to have been subject to regulation; women who washed their dirty linen in public were regarded as a public nuisance, perhaps because they monopolised the water-cocks at the cisterns, perhaps because they threw water into the streets and perhaps because washing took women out of their households and into the company of other women. In 1490 a "washing place for women", a new well and a watering place for horses were constructed on the site of two springs at Houndwell Field, just outside the town walls. [7] From a presentment made to the Court Leet in 1601, it

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[1] See below, p. 138; *Court Leet* 2, pp. 167 &192.
[2] Davies, *History of Southampton,* p. 321.
[3] See for example,*Black Book* 2, pp. 43 & 88-9 (wells), 40-1 (springs).
[4] *ibid.*, p. 45; the Mills had two cisterns, *Inventories*, p. 248.
[5] For public wells, see for example,*Court Leet*, p. 30.
[6] Platt, *Medieval Southampton*, pp. 65 & 144.
[7] Davies, *History of Southampton,* p.117.

seems that this washing place was mainly used by women living in the suburbs.[1] Certainly, for women who lived in the town, washing at Houndwell would have meant a walk of over a mile carrying their wet washing home. Perhaps because of this, women continued to do their washing at the cocks: despite the proximity of the new washing-place, John Gore's wife was fined in 1492 for washing "clouts....under the cock at Houndwell". [2] In 1549 the mayor reiterated that noone should "washe or cause to be washed any bouckes [clothes] at any conducte... or in open stretes except at godes house". But women continued to wash where it was most convenient : in 1550 four housewives were fined for "wash[ing] buks in the stretts before ther dores". [3] From 1579 until the end of the century, complaints were made about the ruinous state of the washing place, by amongst others -"the gathering by ye wuffes at hocktyd" -, the inhabitants of the suburbs even organising a collection to fund the repair. [4] This sole reference to a collective action taken by Southampton women is indicative that washing was an opportunity for social interaction, the exchange of information and gossip. The nature of some of these interactions is hinted at in the examination of witnesses in a case of theft. In 1590 Elizabeth Syvier, the wife of a sailor, and Joane Booker, were "awashinge of a buck of clothes at one cisterne in the streate" when Jehanne Rawson, another sailor's wife, joined them. During their conversation Rawson offerred to buy her friends a "pott of beere or two", showing them seven shillings she had in her pocket. When she was later accused of stealing the money; her friends were called upon to testify against her.[5]

Some 23% of households in the inventory sample (29% of households occupied by married couples), owned specialised washing-tubs and *bucking tubs*, the latter used to bleach linen and other fabrics in a solution of water and lye.[6] Other

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[1] *Court Leet* 2, p. 343.
[2] SC 5/3/1, fo.14v
[3] *Court Leet* 1, pp. 16 & 25; for similar prohibitions in fifteenth-century Leicester and Coventry, see Goldberg, *Women, Work & Life Cycle*, p.135, n. 220. The first reference suggests that washing was often carried out by servants or washer-women on behalf of others.
[4] *Court Leet* 2, pp. 179, 195, 252 , 267, 286, 310, 330 , 343 & 360. The Court Leet was held at Hocktyde (Hock Tuesday), 23 days after Easter, see Hearnshaw, *Leet Jurisdiction*, p. 177.
[5] *Examinations & Depositions*, p.77.
[6] These were wooden tubs, see *Inventories*, p.452; women could equally have used barrels or ordinary tubs. Lye, made from vegetable ashes, was listed in one inventory, *ibid.*, p.418; see also Markham, *The English Housewife*, pp. 162-4.

washing equipment listed in inventories included washing-stocks or stools and battledores - used for smoothing linen after washing. [1] By the second half of the sixteenth century ready-made washing-aids were also available: in John Stavely's shop *sterche* - valued at 4d the pound, and a dozen *washing balls* valued at 8d - were sold.[2] And although women living in the suburbs could hang their washing out on the town walls, washing lines did exist, one inventory listing, "In the garden, viij postes to hang clothes, iijs iiijd".[3]

The housewife was also responsible for the cleanliness of her household: beds were made and changed on a regular basis, and though cleaning equipment was not often listed in inventories, brushes - valued at a penny apiece - were sold in John Goddard's shop. [4] "Mousnaches" and "ratstocks" were listed in one inventory, and the rodent skeletons found in archaeological contexts suggest that vermin were rife. [5] Certainly standards of cleanliness varied: excavations of the floor levels of two adjacent fifteenth-century houses indicate that while one was regularly swept, the floor levels in the other - occupied by the widower Peter James - contained the remains of waste food, broken pots, rodent skeletons and other debris, all of which had been trampled into the clay floor. [6]
Complaints to the Court Leet suggest that standards of cleanliness in the town were low. In 1574, for example, Mistress Butler was ordered to remove a heap of night-soil from her front garden; and in 1576 Mistress Howse and her neighbours were accused of throwing rubbish out of their garden doors onto the Castle Green.[7] But archaeological evidence clearly shows that in most properties household refuse was normally disposed of in pits dug into the grounds behind a tenement. Sometimes stone-lined, they were also used for the disposal of urine

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[1] See for example, *Inventories*, pp. 333 & 449. Some 30 inventories list linen separately, whilst a further nine include large amounts of linen: only 63% of these households owned bucking tubs.
[2] *Inventories,* pp. 172-3.
[3] In 1549 Thomas Fuller's tenants were fined for hanging clothes on the "raylles" around the town ditches, *Court Leet* , p. 7; *Inventories*, p. 405.
[4] *Examinations*, pp.62-3; see *Inventories*, p. 363, and *ibid.*, p. 195.
[5] *Inventories*, pp. 346-71.
[6] Lower High Street, SOU 266.
[7] See for example, *Court Leet*, pp. 101, 129, and others.

and excrement, and were periodically cleared out or covered over and replaced with a new pit.[1]

Good semsters be sowing of fine pretty knackes,
Good huswifes be mending and peecing their sackes
Though making and mending be huswifely ways
yet mending in time is the huswife to praies. [2]

Mary Prior has argued that the housewife made a considerable contribution to the domestic economy by making, mending and recycling clothes. [3] Most individuals possessed only a few items of clothing, considered of sufficient value to be identified in inventories and bequeathed in wills. [4] While there is no direct evidence of making and mending, relatively large quantities of bone and copper-alloy needles, pins and off-cuts of woollen and silk cloth have been found in fifteenth- and sixteenth-century domestic deposits. [5] The inventories are not so forthcoming, perhaps because these items were of little value or were regarded as a widow's personal *paraphernalia*. [6] Inventories do, however, list some of the more decorative needlework items that housewives produced. Richard Goddard, merchant, left a wife and five daughters, and it is tempting to see the contents of the "the lytell parlour" with its own small fire, more than 38 embroidered and tapestry cushions, two little work-baskets and a "flaskett to carry clothes" as a testament to their industry.[7] But this room can equally well be interpreted as indicative of the changing role of married women in wealthy mercantile families. Freed by wealth and servants from all but the supervision of housework, they had

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[1] However, in 1550 Alice Bencraft and her tenant were fined for using a well as a "jakes" or lavatory, *Court Leet*, p. 30.
[2] Tusser, *Huswiferie*, p.176.
[3] Mary Prior, "Rediscovering the Work of the Femme Couverte", paper presented at Women, Work & Wages Conference, University of Essex, June 1991. The presence of tubs of feathers in some inventories suggests that housewives were responsible for making and stuffing feather mattresses, pillows and eiderdowns, *Inventories*, pp. 285 & 333.
[4] See p. 164.
[5] See, for example, SOU 175, York Buildings, (Trench 7, contexts 4404 & 5355), and Platt, *Medieval Southampton*, p.104.
[6] The minimum value for items recorded in inventories was one penny. See also p. 61, n. 2. For *paraphernalia*, see p. 156-7.
[7] *Inventories*, p. 348.

time to occupy themselves with needlework, reading and other activities associated with the life-style of gentry women. [1]

These women were in a minority in late-sixteenth century Southampton: only 41% of houses included rooms described as a parlour, two-thirds of which were used as bedrooms, and the bulk of the remainder as shops or store-rooms. [2] But in five wealthier households, the parlour was luxuriously furnished with benches and chairs (made comfortable with cushions), and children's chairs - even a close stool. One "parlour house" included personal items among them "a tabill of our lady", wooden beads - perhaps a rosary - and for less pious moments, a "lokyng glasse". [3]

Good huswiues provide, ere an sicknes do come,
of sundrie good things in hir house to haue some.
Good Aqua composita, Vineger tart,
Rose water and treakle, to comfort the hart.. [4]

The housewife was also responsible for the health of her family, including the production of remedies for common ailments. During the sixteenth century, the art of distilling, in which herbs and other plants were used to produce both medicinal and cosmetic preparations, became a fashionable "housewifely" art. [5] By the second half of the century, 24% of the inventories included a "stillitory" or a "lymbyke", the basic equipment required for distilling. Though in two of these inventories the householders were clearly distilling on a commercial basis, the remainder were wealthy households in which we can assume that the housewives had taken up distillation. [6] The cost of the equipment - at between

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[1] Evidence for female literacy is rare, but the daughters in this family were appointed a tutor in their father's will, and the parlour also contained "a bocke of parafraces of Erasmus", *ibid.* For the library of John Hurlocke, school-master, and details of its 79 volumes, *ibid.*, 398-400 & 435-41.

[2] Some parlours seem to have been constructed within an extant hall; an inner-room which could be either a buttery or a parlour was built within the hall of a house on the Lower High Street site, SOU 266. For the later development of the parlour, see Weatherill, "Consumer Behaviour", pp. 213-4.

[3] *Inventories*, pp. 256 & 237; *ibid.*, p. 12.

[4] Tusser, "The good huswifelie *Physicke*", *Huswiferie*, p.182.

[5] See Markham, *English Housewife*, pp. xl-xlii & 125-36; it became particularly fashionable after the translation of Hieronymous von Braunschweig, *Liber de Arte Distillandi*, (1500), trans. Laurence Andrewe, 1512); see also the *Virtuose Booke of Distillacyon*, (London, 1527).

[6] The inventory of Richard Goddard, merchant, included "still house"and substantial quantities of "aqua vytye" and "swett water"; the apothecary John Brodocke's inventory listed *interalia* 80 bags of "flowers seedes, herbes & rootes" and three stillitories, *Inventories*, pp. 349-59 & 290-306.

three and ten shillings - was relatively high in comparison to the other forms of specialised domestic items. Like other domestic equipment, most stills were located in kitchens or out-buildings, but some were located in parlours and upper chambers. A contemporary illustration depicting "The Housewife's closet, with her apparatus for distillation" suggests that women in these households were able to identify yet another household space for their activities.[1]

Table 3.5 Domestic equipment and servants by wealth.

Value of Estate	**£200+**	**£199-£50**	**£49-£20**	**under £20**
Inventories	**14.4%** (18)	**19.2%** (24)	**36.8%** (46)	**29.6%** (37)
Salting	25%	29%	29%	16.5%
Washing	28.6%	21%	32%	17.8%
Baking	31.8%	22.7%	36.4%	10%
Brewing	23.1%	38.5%	23%	15%
Distilling	32%	25.8%	29%	12.8%
Spinning	6.5%	22.6%	29%	41.9%
Servants [2]	38%	22.7%	27.2%	18.1%

As this table shows, not only did wealthy housewives have access to a disproportionate amount of domestic equipment, but it was also in these families that the highest number of servants were found. Testamentary evidence has already been used to show that though mercantile families employed female domestic servants, outside these wealthier households, most servants were male, and worked with the head of the household. This suggests that comparatively few women had domestic help. After 1550, servants of both sexes appear in 41% of wills, a third of whom were female. Though two worked in mercantile households, and two others for a girdler and a widowed male brewer, the other five appear to

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[1] See title-page of *The Accomplished Ladies Delight in Preserving, Physick, Beautifying and Cookery*, B.M. Douce, p. 412; Markham, *English Housewife*, p.130.

[2] Based on references to servants in inventories and in associated wills,1546-75; see Appendix 1. We cannot assume that all testators made bequests to servants, so the figures may under-represent the real percentages of households with servants.

be acting as surrogate housewives, working for three widows, a priest, and a single man. Though some women at the higher end of the social scale may have been freed from housework, female servants were largely absent from artisan households where their labour might theoretically enable a housewife to take part in craft production.

Whatever her husband's occupation a wife's primary occupation was that of housewife, a role which, though potentially eased by wealth, demanded a considerable investment of time at all social levels. The evidence presented here suggests that a housewife's daily routine involved cooking and serving meals, marketing, fetching water, and in some households, tending animals or baking. She may have carried out activities like washing, cleaning, brewing or distilling on a weekly basis, whereas salting, for example, was probably a seasonal task.

Though it is not possible to quantify the time she spent on these duties, it seems reasonable to suggest that these activities, combined with child-care, could fully occupy her time. Neither is it possible to quantify the economic contribution her activities made to the household economy. However, if we compare the values of the contents of kitchens given in inventories against the value of the whole estate, it can be seen that, on average, around 4% of a household's material resources were invested in kitchen equipment.[1] The contents of butteries were of slightly higher value - at just over 5% of the value of the estate, while some 44% of the households' financial resources were invested in the tools, equipment and stock relating to the occupation of the household head. There was some variation between the relative amounts invested by different households in different activities - the values of kitchen contents varying from 1.2% to 9.8% of the value of the whole estate - but these variations did not always correlate directly with the relative wealth or poverty of the household. At all levels of wealth, the housewife had - in proportion to her husband - relatively few resources under her direct

[1] Based on a sample of 25 inventories ranging in value from £5 to over £2,000.

control; but at all levels, her role was to make the most of the resources he allocated to her for the benefit of all the members of his household.

3.2 *Helpmeet* [1]

And besides encouraging the others, the wife herself should be involved in the work to the extent that she knows all about it, so that she may know how to oversee his workers if her husband is absent, and to reprove them if they do not do well. [2]

This text has been interpreted to support the argument that married women were integrally involved in their their husbands' work, but the differences between "knowing about" a craft, and being involved in its "art and mystery" were clearly defined. [3] In examining the role of wife as her husband's *helpmeet* , we should be careful not to identify this relationship as a partnership, with all the mutuality that this implies. A wife's primary responsibilities as her husband's *helpmeet* have already been set out: as a mother, she took responsibility for childcare; as a housewife she freed him from domestic responsibilities and managed the resources needed to service his household.

Nevertheless, it is often suggested that married women, particularly the wives of artisans, also assisted their husbands in their work. This argument, though based on hard evidence in the textile trades, is more often based on the theory that a wife's proximity to craft production enabled her participation in it.[4] In Southampton, the inventories certainly confirm that proximity. Every artisan inventory indicates that production was carried out in, or in the grounds of , the family tenement. Similarly, merchants' houses included rooms used for retail, storage, administration and accounting. [5] Archaeological evidence for the fifteenth

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[1] Genesis 2, 18, 20.

[2] Christine de Pisan, *The Treasure of the City of Ladies*, (1405; trans. Sarah Lawson, Middlesex, 1985), p. 167.

[3] The gendered boundaries of craft production will be discussed in chap. 4.

[4] For married women in the textile crafts in both York and Bristol, see Swanson, *Medieval Artisans*, pp. 34 ff. See, for example, Linsey Charles & Lorna Duffin, "Introduction", *Women and Work in Pre-Industrial Europe*, (Beckenham, 1985), pp. 10-11.

[5] See Table 3. 4. Some 62% of inventories listed a room or building described as a shop, workshop or other production area containing equipment, fittings, tools or a room compatible with the

and sixteenth centuries confirms the domestic location of craft production. Excavation of a property known as *the Rose* in English Street - occupied throughout the fifteenth century by the blacksmith John Selder the elder, his son and granddaughter - have revealed repeated layers of hammer-scale around a structure identified as a workshop built at the back of the property. In the same area, and in sixteenth-century contexts, a linen-smoother was found on the site of a house occupied by the weaver, George Morell, and a pit full of leather off-cuts and old shoes was excavated on the property of the shoemaker, Thomas Thompson. [1] Clearly, even in the third quarter of the sixteenth century, industrial production was still firmly located in the domestic; but in Southampton at least there is room to question whether physical proximity to craft production lead to a wife's participation in it. In only two instances can anything approaching a partnership be suggested. In 1537 John Kylbeck, tailor, and Agnes his wife were both held responsible for testifying to a delivery of cloth made to James Betts, customer. [2] Similarly, in 1577, both Charles Poyntdexter and his wife Collet were "permitted to set up thoccupacon of a cobbler" when they agreed to take on an orphan, Elizabeth Darvall, as their apprentice.[3] In both instances - but in no others - were married couples held equally or jointly responsible.

The Southampton evidence would suggest that wives were in fact afforded a distinct, but secondary, role in households based on craft production. In their petition to the corporation, the mercers and drapers requested that their wives be allowed to work in same occupation. More than any other craft, mercery and drapery was based on buying and selling, and it was in retail, rather than in production, where married women found a role as *helpmeet*.[4]

In 1433-4, within a few days of each other, both John Mason and his wife sold fish to the steward. In 1526-7 and 1527-8 Isabel Hylles sold a total of 6000 rods (nails) to the steward for the the town store; her husband also supplied the town with

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householder's occupation, such as a merchant's counting house or storehouse. The figure is higher if farmers are included.

[1] *Black Book* I, p.89 & 2, pp. 93 & 131; unpublished excavation reports, York Buildings (SOU 175) and North Walls (SOU 244); for George Morell, see *Inventories*, pp. 73-4.

[2] *3rd. R.B* I, p.59.

[3] *Examinations,* p.51

[4] They required the craft to be reserved "sauff onely for the vse of hym his wyffe children and s[er]viants", *Letters,* pp. 30-2.

more rods in 1527-8. In 1555-7 John a Bargayne was active as a smith: in January 1557 his wife supplied the town with a staple, hasp and lock at Biddlesgate, and in February, sold the steward a key for the watch-house door and three pounds of spikes for mending the beam at the market. [1]

These married women were acting as their husbands' helpmeet by retailing his products in his absence. They could "mind the shop" - usually located in the chamber fronting the street - and perform other ancillary tasks without too much disruption to their work as housewives and mothers.[2] Though various ordinances limited trade and retail in many commodities to burgesses and franchisers, these wives - because they shared a legal identity with their husband - were perfectly entitled to sell goods on her husband's behalf. [3] Of course, it could be argued that these wives were also involved in the production of the same goods, their activities being documented only when they took part in this public aspect of his trade, but, as will be suggested in the next chapter, it is an argument based on shaky ground.

Though the married woman's role as helpmeet has been identified as specific to artisan families, wives also undertook an - albeit different - ancillary role in families where the husband worked outside the home as a skilled or unskilled labourer. But here they were more likely to undertake the same tasks as their husbands. During the 1560s Thomas Blackgrove was employed as a day-labourer by the town: on most occasions he worked alone or with other men but on four occasions in 1564 his wife worked alongside him, carrying stones into Ronceval and at the Watergate, cleaning the gutter at God's House gate and mending a roof; both were paid fourpence a day. Another labourer, Thomas Mullen, and his wife were similarly employed in 1561, though in the following year Mullen was said to be working with his *mayde*.[4] Other women may have worked in a similar capacity when the volume of available work was too heavy for her

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[1] *Stewards* 2, pp. 52-3 & 111; SC 5/1/35, p.21, SC 5/1/36, p.13; SC 5/1/46, pp. 6 &16, SC5/1/47, fos. 7& 19; SC 5/1/29, fo. 4r & SC 5/1/30, fo.4. Further examples, in which it is less certain that husband was still alive when his wife (*sic*) was active are cited below, pp. 131-2.

[2] For a man forced to shut his shop because of his wife's reviling, see above, p. 46. Hufton has suggested that the wives and daughters were responsible for the "casting of accounts" in sixteenth-century mercantile families, *The Prospect Before Her,* pp.149-50. See also p. 176.

[3] See Hufton, *The Prospect Before Her,* p.163.

[4] SC 5/1/45, 1563-4, fos.17,18, 38 & 41. Thomas Mullen and his wife, 5/1/43, fos. 20, 26 & 30.

husband to carry out alone: in the plague year of 1563-4, for example, both the painter and his wife were employed by the town in "making of crossis at mens doors that were infested". [1]

These cases suggest that a married woman was more likely to perform the same tasks as her husband outside the organised crafts, and outside the domestic realm. These wives were clearly acting as helpmeet: not only did they assist their husbands in their work, but by carrying out the same tasks - at the same rate of pay- were earning a wage, which in these families perhaps ensured the most effective use of household resources. Given the relationship between wives and the organised crafts discussed in the next chapter, it may have been easier for the wives of unskilled men to act as helpmeet to their husbands than it was for the wives of craftsmen.

3.3 Extended Domestic Labour [2]

Far more visible than the work she carried out as *helpmeet* is the work that married women undertook when they used their domestic skills to augment the family economy. These activities are described here as extended domestic labour, a rather ungainly term used here as shorthand for the ways in which wives used the "art of housewifery" to generate income by selling domestically produced goods or their own domestic skills.

These activities, which were carried out both within and outside the household, fall into two categories, the supply of victuals and the provision of services including cooking, cleaning, washing, childcare and nursing. The stewards' books provide the bulk of our evidence for these activities through their records of payments made to married women for goods or services required by the town. But other sources suggest that similar goods were purchased and services procured by individuals or other households. Thus although the frequency of these payments is low - those who provided victuals, as opposed to other commodities,

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[1] SC 5/3/1, fo.114 v.

[2] For the use of this term elsewhere, see Keene, "Butcher's Wives".

were often not named - I would suggest they provide a useful indicator of the range of activities categorised here as extended domestic labour.[1]

The commonest payment made to married women was for victuals, the bulk of which were raw ingredients - fish, fowl and meat - but they also included ready-prepared or processed foods. [2] In 1461-2, for example, Margrete Helyar sold brawn to the steward for a corporation dinner, while Isabelle Goer provided cheese for the auditors' annual dinner in 1470-1.[3] Though the steward usually purchased bread from known bakers or their wives, they also bought it from the *houxters* - perhaps some of the housewives with baking equipment noted above - who were allowed to sell it in the streets. [4] The stewards also obtained ale and beer from women who were neither official brewers nor the wives of known brewers. In 1433-4 the wife of Richard Marsh, minstrel, supplied ale and beer for two meetings at the Cuthorn; in 1461-2 Christine Cawse supplied seven gallons of ale on the occasion of the auditors' visit, and in 1482-3 George Sherwynge's wife provided ale for the judges visiting the town for a felony trial. [5] On similar occasions known brewers supplied the town with ale and beer, suggesting that the steward bought ale and beer from whoever had it available, whether they were women producing a domestic surplus or the town's official brewers, a practice that continued into the sixteenth century, when brewing was more closely regulated.[6] In 1542-3, for example, Humphrey Baker's wife supplied both beer and bread to the town, though known as a baker, she was certainly not one of the town's official brewers. [7]

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[1] Widows also engaged in the same range of activities; the frequency with which victuals were purchased but the name of the supplier not given could also be used to suggest a higher incidence of female activity than that given here.

[2] See for example, *1st R.B.* pp. 52-3; SC5/1/39, fo.19; SC5/1/39, fo. 42.

[3] Margrete Helyar, SC 5/1/10, fo.21; Isabelle Goer, SC 5/1/15, fo.21.

[4] SC 5/1/10, fo. 26; SC 2/7/3.

[5] Gidden, *Stewards* 1, pp. 52-3 &110-11; SC 5/1/10, fo.26; SC 5/1/8, fo.21v.

[6] These women may have been producing ale and beer in the same way as those described in, for example, Judith Bennett, "The Village Ale-Wife: Women & Brewing in fourteenth century England", in Hanawalt (ed.), *Women & Work in Preindustrial Europe*, (Bloomington,1986), pp. 20-36, and Helena Graham, *"'A woman's work....".*: Labour & Gender in the Medieval Countryside", in P.J.P. Goldberg (ed.), *Woman is a Worthy Wight. Women in English society c.1200-1500*, pp.126-48; For the town's official brewers and a fuller discussion of brewing, see pp.102-5.

[7] Humphrey Baker's wife, SC 5/1/40, fo. 39. For the other women who supplied bread to the town, see p. 99.

The cooks employed by the town for civic feasts and similar occasions were usually male, women being hired as assistants at a lower rate of pay. "Women's labour" was listed, for example in the accounts of the *Lawday* feasts in 1533-4 and 1542. [1] Women were certainly employed to serve food at feasts or, as in 1478-9, to serve the poor with ale and buns at the obits held for Adam and Joan Mershe and for William Maunsell. [2] Women were more likely to be employed as cooks by the town in a domestic setting, rather than on civic occasions: in 1470-1, for example, Margery Kyrton provided "bread, ale, wine & kitchen" for the auditors. [3] But in 1539-40, on the occasion of a feast at Calshot, several women were taken on, including the wife of the steward Robert Reneger, Agnes Pewterer, Collett Martyne and a woman called Ysbell. [4] Ysbell may have assisted Mistress Reneger, as she was paid "for her labour to help at home and at Calshot", while Collet was merely paid for "her labour". Agnes Pewterer seems to have co-ordinated the activities, being paid to supply butter for pastry, for delivering pies and supplying rose-water, all of which she could have made at home. She was also paid to pluck chickens and pigeons and for basting the meat; she procured wood for baking, and was refunded the tuppence she had paid to those "that fetched water at Houndwell". When the feast was over, she also received a shilling in compensation for a pewter dish, a saucer and a sieve stolen while she was at Calshot. [5] Each of these women was using domestic skills - whether she produced the victuals at home or outside. [6]

Wives could also earn money by undertaking other tasks such as washing and cleaning. In 1471 women were paid tuppence to clean the Audit House, taking the dust to the sea and "skrekynge the floor"", and in 1542-3, Mubery's wife was paid 16d "to kepe cleane about the audit house". Unless the Audit House was never cleaned during the 65 year interval between these two payments, we have to

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[1] When John Jenys, for example, was paid 12d for preparing the guild dinner in 1456-7, payments of 4d each were made for "women's' labour", SC5/1/8, fo. 24; see also SC5/1/38, fo.32 & SC 5/1/40, fos. 54-5.
[2] SC 5/1/16, fos. 40-1.
[3] SC 5/1/13, fo.28.
[4] Calshot castle was Henrician fort on the other side of Southampton water. Reneger's wife payment to "skalle capons, pigeons and geese" was recorded as "nil", SC 5/1/39, fo. 21. For the role of the corporation wife, see pp. 174-7.
[5] SC 5/1/39, fos.19-21. For Agnes Pewterer as a wool-packer, see p. 120 & Appendix 2.
[6] The daily rate paid to these women was 2d; half the daily rate for male labourers.

assume that this was a regular task. [1] Married women also earned money by taking in washing for the town, individuals, families and other institutions, though the two women clearly identifiable as washerwomen - Agnes *Iotrix* and Joan Lavander - were probably singlewomen. [2] The community at God's House paid its washerwoman an annual stipend of 16s, and the town also employed women to wash for them: in 1507-8 fivepence was paid "to the wife for washying of her clothes and her maydyns labor" before the annual *lawday*, and in 1566-7, the town's expenses for the Admiralty Court included 16d paid for "making clean of the gentell women's clothes". [3] Most washerwomen probably worked for private individuals, and were therefore rarely documented, except in other contexts: in 1577, for example, William Garlic, mariner, admitted to immoral behaviour with "his washerwoman"; such single men may have formed the bulk of a washerwoman's clientele. [4]

Just as a woman's domestic skills could be used to earn additional income, so could the nurturing and caring skills she employed in her role as wife and mother. The town relied on married women to care for orphaned children. Though in the fifteenth and early-sixteenth centuries, this was only an occasional occurrence - Calcar's wife, for instance, was given the *governaunce* of the orphan Richard Bayle in 1550 - by the 1570s the town was employing women to look after orphans on a regular basis, paying them by the week. [5] Wills also suggest that orphans were also placed in care by private arrangement, providing a regular source of income for a number of years. [6] A single source also points to wet-nursing as another means for married women to earn money at a time when they would have had little time available for other work: in 1585-6, Edward Denny, a

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[1] SC5/1/3, fo. 23, SC 5/3/1, fo. 81r.
[2] Agnes, *Iotrix*, *GHC* p. 261; in 1454 Joan Lavander lived in a house on the west side of Market Lane; repair work carried out by the town on this house in 1433-4 used 10 lbs of lead, suggesting that it had its own water supply, *Terrier*, p.77; *Stewards Book 1428-34*, pp. 75-81.
[3] Davies, *History of Southampton*, p.461; SC 5/1/26, fo. 45r; SC 5/1/47, fo. 42.
[4] *Examinations*, p. 88.
[5] *3rd R.B.* 2, pp. 26-7. For weekly payments made to families for looking after children, see SC5/17/1, Scavage Book, 1575.
[6] See pp. 30-1; *Inventories*, p. 13, HRO U wills 1543/97; W.R. 4 A wills F, 1541-1544/274.

miller's child, was put out to nurse to John Handley's wife at 12d a week, payable in advance. [1]

Women were also employed to take care of the sick: during the plague, for example, five women were paid for four consecutive weeks to "kepe the sycke people" while five men were paid to carry the dead away. [2] Again, women cared for the sick in a private capacity: in 1537 Phillip le Lyevre left 6s 8d each to the "two women that kyppe me in the syckness", while in 1571 Joan Davye, also described as "keeper in my sickness" was left 6s. 8d by the widower and shipwright John Weaste. [3]

Whether this work was carried out at home or elsewhere, these activities could, for the most part, be managed without too much disruption to a housewife's domestic routine. Specialised work areas were not needed and none of the activities required women to use equipment they would not have ordinarily used at home. If work was offered, then married women could take it up on an occasional basis, contingent on their household's need for additional income. Others may have provided their family with a regular source of income. Even so, as Olwen Hufton has made clear, all women's paid work was likely to be makeshift and piecemeal, and secondary to her duties as housewife.[4] And though it is hard to argue from the stewards' book alone that women made substantial contributions to their households' income through extended domestic labour, it is suggested that these documented references represent the activities of considerably more married women and widows.

However, when women who were single used their training in domestic skills to work as "charwomen" in the 1570s, there was outrage. While in Southampton it was clearly acceptable for married women to work outside their households, it was not appropriate for "young women and maidens" to do so, nor to "kepe themselves out of service". The boundaries of women's work, including

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[1] Why the town recorded what would usually be a private arrangement is uncertain, *3rd R.B.* 3, p. 45-6, n.2. See also SC5/1/3,1585-6.

[2] SC 5/3/1, fo.114v. For women employed as carers in other towns, see Goldberg, *Women, Work & Life Cycle*, pp. 134-5.

[3] HRO B wills 1537/ 51; *Inventories,* p. 326, (HRO B wills 1571/199:1-2).

[4] Olwen Hufton, "Women & the family economy in 18th century France", *French Historical Studies 9*, 1975, pp.1-22.

housework, was clearly defined. Their location in, and identification with, the family allowed married women to engage in extended domestic labour, but for single women, housework - though clearly defined as an occupation for single-women employed as servants - was not an appropriate activity if it enabled them to "work for themselves" outside the confines of the household. [1]

It is also significant that the use of domestic skills was not, with the exception of wet-nursing and washing, an exclusively female or feminised occupation. Men were the major suppliers of victuals, the producers of bread and beer on a commercial basis, and, as we have seen, the cooks employed by the town on civic occasions were invariably male. Indeed a significant number of male occupations were based on domestic skills, but when they were carried out by men as their primary occupation those skills were afforded the status of a craft or *mystery*. [2] But when men were employed as wage labourers to perform domestic tasks such as cleaning, they were - like women - paid at the going rate for unskilled labourers.[3] The gendered boundaries of work - particularly in occupations perceived as unskilled - were less clearly defined. Indeed any definitions of women's work are potentially problematic: the categories of activity which this thesis posits would have had little relevance to the women who engaged in whatever work was available to them. The same activities can often be equally identified as extended domestic labour, waged labour or as an aspect of craft production, with some activities capable of being categorised as all three. Spinning was, in the first instance, a domestic task: many women produced wool or thread for their own use. But it was also a skill which women used in extended domestic labour, or as workers in aspects of the textile trade. [4] Until the arrival of Huguenot refugees after 1577, Southampton was not a major textile town, but from archaeological evidence in the late-medieval period - in the form of bone or stone spindle whorls - and from the presence of "tornes" in the late-sixteenth century inventories, it can be suggested that suggest that spinning was a fairly

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[1] *Court Leet*, pp. 186 ,197 & 236.
[2] See pp. 97-105.
[3] SC5/1/1-48.
[4] See Clarke, *Working Lives*, and David Herlihy, *Opera Muiliebria: Women & Work in Medieval Europe*, (New York & London,1990).

widespread activity. [1] Spinning wheels, or *tornes* - for both wool and flax - were listed in 27% of the inventories. [2] Where they are listed in the houses or workshops of artisans working in the textile trades, it seems relatively safe to assume that they were used by the wives of these artisans, playing an ancillary role in their husband's craft. The weaver, Richard Nutley, for example, owned two tornes; both his wife and his cousin, Jone, who lived with them, may have produced yarn for him. Similarly, the wife, and some of the seven daughters of the cloth merchant Thomas Edmondes, may have used his tornes to produce the £6 worth of yarn left in his "woll howse" when he died in 1570.[3]

But in other inventories where *tornes* are listed, no significant amounts of wool appear. The women in these households may have spun for their own use or they may have been spinning as out-workers for the weavers and glovers. If so, any wool in the house would have been the property of the supplier, and thus not listed in the inventory. [4] But in 1570, a woman stated in evidence that she had purchased a bag of wool; this suggests that spinsters were not necessarily spinning as out-workers, but working on their own account, purchasing wool to spin at home and then selling the yarn.[5]

Though no inventories survive for single women - those traditionally seen as spinsters - the inventory evidence does suggest that married women, and in particular the wives of artisans, engaged in spinning on this basis. Unlike other domestic equipment, 42% of tornes listed in inventories were located in the 30% of households where the total value of the estate was less than £20, and where the ownership of other domestic equipment was much lower (see Table 3.5). Clark has suggested that married women worked as spinners because they were " losing their hold on other industries", but it seems more realistic to suggest that these women were engaging in another form of extended domestic labour, which

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[1] Davies, *History of Southampton*, pp. 403-5.
[2] Table 3.5. This figure excludes the inventory of John Davey, (d. 1516) described as a shearman and tailor in 1513 -14, which included a "spynnynge wheel", *Inventories*, p.13 & n.1.
[3] *Inventories,* pp. 423 & 264-8.
[4] The glovers had the sole right to buy sheepskins from the town's butchers from 1518, and were required to put all spinning out within the town from 1560, *1st R.B.*3, pp. 84-5, *3rd R.B.* 2, p.70 & n.3.
[5] *Examinations*, pp.111-2.

enabled them to earn additional income while working in their own home. [1] These women spun in their kitchens (19%), and in their chambers (25%), with relatively few (16%) spinning in shops or workshops. The purchase of a torne may well have been a strategy of poverty; they cost relatively little - between 4d and a shilling - and Nicholas Myssick, shearman, may well have had his daughters' economic prospects in mind - whether they remained single or married - when he bequeathed a linen-turn to both Alice and Joan.[2]

Spinning was perceived as an appropriate activity for women regardless of their marital status, and was certainly prevalent in the poorer parts of town.[3] It was an activity that could be categorised as domestic work or as craft production. But when married women engaged in this work, were they, as Clark has suggested, moving into the realms of waged labour? [4] Although Southampton's weaving industry grew at the end of the sixteenth century, it is not possible to establish whether the numbers of women working as piece-workers increased. If this did happen then, as Olwen Hufton has argued, this work was undertaken at cost to the household unit, in both financial and social terms.[5] But it does not - as Clark suggested - signify the end of the domestic mode of production, an argument based on the assumption that women were far more closely involved with craft production than the Southampton evidence suggests.

This chapter has shown that married women's work as housewives, *helpmeets*, or, when needed, in extended domestic labour, was crucial to the household and its economy. Housework was wide-ranging and time consuming, and allowed few women the freedom to engage in other occupations on any regular basis. But just as the family, as an economic unit, was based on the husband engaging in an occupation that would sustain his family, so it needed the housewife to maximise

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[1] See Clark, *Working Lives*, p.9.
[2] *Inventories*, p. 127, HRO B wills 1558/447-448.
[3] In 1570 a witness described the "maidens working of woll" in East Street outside the town, *Examinations*, pp.111-2.
[4] Clark, *Working Lives*, p. 9. On the other hand, Clark's contemporary, Ivy Pinchbeck argued that waged labour and capitalism freed women from the tyranny of domestic production, see Pinchbeck, *Women Workers & the Industrial Revolution 1750-1850*, (first pub.1930, London,1981).
[5] Olwen Hufton, "Women, Work & Family: towards an overview'", conference paper, "Women, Work & Wages", University of Essex, June 1991.

the resources he could generate. As housewife, her duties - expressed in the ideological construction of marriage and uniquely combined with the role of wife - endowed her with a sphere of responsibility and importance not otherwise afforded to women. The ahistorical craftswoman or the active female trader matches ill with the reality of the housewife, and as we shall see in the next chapter, independent women workers, whatever their marital status, were generally to be found at the bottom of the economic and social pile. And it is from this position that we can realistically consider women's work in the masculine domains of craft production and mercantile trade.

Chapter 4 Beyond the Domestic

This chapter focuses on the formal - and informal - economy of late medieval Southampton and on female participation in the crafts - including Southampton's alleged "guild" of wool-packers - and in trade. Here, women's work will be placed into its gendered context, and comparisons will be drawn between both female and male activity. In seeking to explain why women were more active in some occupations than others, I will identify gendered modes of access to craft occupations and, with the paradigm of the Golden Age in mind, I shall attempt to establish whether, over time, there was any significant variation in female participation in any occupation over time. By providing a context for women's work in craft production, in international, long-distance and local trade, and finally in a diverse range of occupations, it is hoped to understand more fully the significance of women's presence in, and indeed their absence from, the formal medieval economy.

4.1 Women and Craft Production

Few studies of English women's work in craft production include statistical analyses of the rates of female activity in those occupations which, by the late medieval period, were organised into craft guilds. However, though research has shown that widows, wives and daughters worked in craft-based occupations, the numbers who did so seem, at first sight, to be relatively few; moreover, though some women were full members of some guilds, these were few and far between.[1]

The argument that the location of craft production in the domestic enabled women to participate in craft production has already been mentioned. But many historians of women have failed to consider the fact that the organisation and regulation of craft production was conducted elsewhere. Thus, though any member of a

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[1] Marion Kent served on the council of the York Mercers Guild in 1474-5, M. Sellers (ed.), *The York Mercers*, pp. 64-67; Matilda Penne held office in the London skinner's guild, see, Elspeth Veale, "Matilda Penne, Skinner (d. 1392/3)", in Barron & Sutton (eds.), *Medieval London Widows*, pp. 47-54.

craftsman's family could theoretically engage in the production process, the craftsman alone participated in the organisation and regulation of that work. Even if the work performed by women in a craftsman's family was formally recognised by some crafts, women enjoyed only a peripheral relationship to the craft-guilds.[1] "Guilds joined together persons involved in the same trade or craft for their mutual economic, social and religious benefit."[2] In Southampton, as elsewhere, guilds were set up and controlled by men, their identity was masculine, and their membership almost exclusively male. [3] Access to this group was by an apprenticeship in skills specific to each craft; a masculine rite of passage that contrasted with a young woman's training for adulthood. This is not to say that women were denied any relationship with crafts and their organisation. As wives they depended on the income the craftsman generated, and used it, as housewives, in servicing their households, a dependency frequently cited by Southampton's craftsmen when petitioning for protective ordinances. [4] As members of craftsmen's families, they might receive a guild's charity or participate in its social and religious functions.[5] In every aspect of a guild, power lay with men, and this single factor is crucial to our understanding of women's roles in craft production. These factors did not prohibit women from taking part in craft production; they merely served to locate them on its margins: crafts could allow,

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[1] In York a founder was allowed to have two apprentices "because he has no wife", Swanson, *Artisans*, p.74.

[2] Maryanne Kowaleski & Judith M. Bennett, "Crafts, Guilds and Women in the Middle Ages: Fifty Years after Marian K. Dale", in Bennett *et. al.*, (eds.),*Sisters and Workers in the Middle Ages*, (Chicago & London,1989), pp.11-25, quoted from p. 11.

[3] For the few female guilds which existed in England and Europe, see Marian K. Dale, "The London Silkwomen of the Fifteenth Century", *Economic History Review* 1st Ser., 4, 1933, pp. 324-35; Kowaleski & Bennett, "Crafts, Guilds and Women", pp.19-21. For the lack of female guilds, see Power, *Medieval Women*, p. 62. Martha Howell, *Women , Production and Patriarchy in late Medieval Cities,* (Chicago & London,1986); Merry Wiesner, *Working Women in Renaissance Germany,* (New Brunswick, N.J., 1986); Grethe Jacobsen, "Women's Work and Women's Role: Ideology and Reality in Danish Urban Society,1300-1550", *Scandinavian Economic History Review* 31.1,1983, pp. 3-20; Judith Brown, "A Woman's Place was in the Home: Women's Work in Renaissance Tuscany", in Margaret Ferguson *et .al.*, (eds.) *Rewriting the Renaissance*, (Chicago, 1986), pp. 206-24.

[4] See below, p. 95.

[5] References to the religious aspect of Southampton guilds are few : John Burgess 's will asked that his "gylde" pray for him, (his occupation is unknown), HRO B wills 1521/7; the "Rules for the wool-packers" referred to their light, see p.118; and in 1519 a reference was made to the "to the light of Seynt Clement" maintained by the bakers, *3rd R.B.* I, p. 30. For the origins of guilds in fraternities - open to both brothers and sisters - which offered mutual social and spiritual support, see Swanson, *Artisans*, p. 111. For guilds as the location of masculine modes of social interaction, see Merry E. Wiesner, "Guilds, Male Bonding and Women's Work in Early Modern Germany", *Gender & History* 1.2, 1989, pp.125-37.

and even take advantage of, occasional female participation or unpaid assistance.

The masculine *habitus* of Southampton's craftsmen can be clearly seen in the Muster Book of 1544 in which responsibility for the defence of the town was apportioned to its men, as identified by their occupation. [1] The walls were to be defended by the large number of *vynteners*, while responsibility for each tower and gateway was allocated to each of other 24 occupations listed. [2] 16 of these occupations were based on production, six involved retail and two - mariners and lightermen - were linked with the town's maritime activities. Though the history of Southampton's artisans has yet to be written, various sources suggest that by the mid-sixteenth century at least nine crafts or occupations were formally organised as guilds, and that a further four had some type of formal structure. [3]

Though agreements on various practices made between the mayor and various occupations were regularly recorded, no registered ordinances survive for any of Southampton's guilds. However, self-government was granted by the corporation to at least seven craft occupations before 1550, following petitions made by the tailors, mercers and drapers, coopers, cordwainers, bakers, brewers and

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[1] For *habitus* as an unconscious sense of order, see Gilchrist, *Gender & Material Culture*, p. 14.

[2] SC 13/2/1, esp. fos. 4r-6r; the occupations listed are shown in table 4.1-2. Why barbers and shearmen, known in the 1540s, were not included is not clear.

[3] The earliest references to occupational groups appear in the *c.*1300 Ordinances, which refer to bakers and brewers (Ord. 29) and butchers (Ords. 41, 42 & 67); the earliest reference in the ordinances to any formal organisation dates to the late15th century, when an agreement with "the companie of thoccupacion of Shoemakers" is noted - post-dating their petition of 1477, (Ca. 80), *Oak Book* 1, pp. 43, 51-3, 69 & 146. The revised ordinances of 1491 refer to "constiucions and ordinaunces" granted to the crafts of tailors and *corvisers* , and prohibited the employment of strangers by any "Sherman, Cowper, Paynter, Steynore nor Corviser", and any Craftis *man* from employing servants who had not been apprenticed for up to 12 years, (nos. 20-1 & 23), *ibid.*, p. 156. Seven occupational groups - tailors, corvesers, barbers, coopers, beer-brewers and cappers, and sheremen - made annual payments to the town from 1488-9 onwards, SC5/3/1, fos. 1v & 5v.
A rough chronology of craft organisations is suggested below. Petitions (P) are taken to indicate the formal organisation of an occupation; the dates of the earliest craft entry fines (EF) is given if it predates a petition, or if no petition survives. Mercers' and drapers: (P) 1406, Anderson, *Letters*, pp. 30-2; (EF); tailors: (P)1468, SC7/1/1; (EF) 1471, *1st R.B.* 1, p. 63; corvesers, (P)1476 or 1499, SC2/7/2; shearmen, (EF)1476, *1st R.B.* 3, p.111; (P) 1570-1, SC7/2/7; coopers, 1486 reference to their livery, *1st R.B.*3, p. 65, (EF)1489, SC5/3/1 fo. 5v ; barbers, (EF) 1488, SC5/3/1 fo. 2r; cappers, (EF)1502, *1st R.B.* 1, p. 10; weavers: (EF)1498-9, SC5/3/1 fo 22v, 1520, 10 members listed, *1st R. B.* 3, p. 88, (P)1616 , SC7/2/ 9-10; bakers: (P)1517 & 1546, SC 2/7/3 & 5; brewers: (P)1543-4, SC2/7/4; butchers: (P)1556, SC2/7/6; sergemakers: (P) SC2/6/8,1616.
The occupations of chandlers and glovers were subject to an agreement with the butchers in 1518, and in1523 an agreement between the whitetawyers (glovers) and skinners was recorded, *1st R. B.* I, p. 84 & *3rd R.B.* I, p. 36; entry fines were also paid by fishmongers from 1490, SC 5/3/1 fo. 8r. However, none of these was described as a craft and may have, as Swanson has suggested, been organised as fraternities, see Swanson, *Medieval Artisans*, p. 111.

butchers.[1] Though they referred to themselves as crafts and *occupacions*, rather than as guilds - each of these groups could be so described. Though the petitions are formulaic, each was clearly initiated by a group of craftsmen with a sense of occupational identity. Each requested the "power to appoynt elect and chuse by ther comyn assent too wardens ... to have the guydying raule & ove[r]sigjht of the saide crafte & craftsmen", including the regulation of apprenticeships, entry fees, working practices, and in the brewers' and bakers' petitions, control over the product, price and points of sale. [2] Each cited the problems they faced from alien masters, their apprentices and strangers who practised in the town, and sought their exclusion, some referring to the hardship such competition brought to their wives and children. No craft requested that women be excluded; indeed the bakers' and mercers' petitions sought the right of their widows and wives respectively to be allowed to participate in these crafts. [3]

A rough estimate of the relative numbers of individuals in different occupations can be derived from James' identifications of 36% of the individuals listed in the 1524 Lay Subsidy, (see table 4.1). Of the 11 widows liable for this tax, only one - the baker, Alice Brown - can be clearly identified as a member of any occupational group. [4] It is more difficult to identify the relative rates of participation in occupations by gender with any accuracy. In table 4.2, I have compared the numbers of women recorded in all occupations over a period of 120 years with the minimum numbers of men who can be clearly identified in the same occupations in the same sources. [5] Women appear as participants in over half of these occupations -16 out of the 27 listed. Even at the best estimate, women made up between 8.5% of all recorded participants in all occupations. However, given that the figures for female participants are often based on a single reference, whereas the figures for males include those identified in several

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[1] *Letters*, pp. 30-2; SC2/7/1-7.
[2] SC 2/7/2 & 3.
[3] SC 2/7/3 & 5; *Letters*, pp. 30-2.
[4] See below, p. 101. Similarly Elyn Seynt John was the only woman with an indentifiable occupation assessed for tax in 1542, see p. 133.
[5] SC 5/1, SC5/3/1, SC5/4, SC5/5, the *Assize of Bread* and the *Books of Remembrance*.

Table 4.1 Occupational Distribution from 1524 Lay Subsidy [1]

Number	1-2	3-5	6-10	over 10
	apothecary	carter	baker (C)	merchants
	brewer (C)	porters	barber (C)	servants
	butcher (C)	skinners		tailors (C)
	capper	shipmaster		traders
	chandler	weavers		
	cooper (C)			
	corvesers(C)			
	grocers			
	mariners			
	mercers			
	pewterers			
	shearmen			
Total (127)	22 (17%)	13 (10.23%)	14 (11.02%)	78 (61.4%)

Table 4.2 Participation in Occupations by Gender, 1450-1570 [2]

Occupation	Recorded females	1-10 males	11-20 males	21-30 males	Over 31 males
bakers (C)	16				119
[barbers (C)]	1		15		
blacksmiths	1	9			
brewers (C)	3 & (3?)			28	
butchers (C)	0		14		
cappers	0	8			
chandlers	3		12		
cobblers	1	10			
coopers	0		12		
corvesers (shoem'k') (C)	3			22	
curriers	0	3			
drapers	0	3			
fishmongers	1		15		
fullers	0	5			
goldsmiths	(1?)	1			
locksmiths	(1?)	7			
lightermen	2 (1?)				50+
mariners	0				31
mercers & grocers (C)	3		12		
pewterers	(1?)	5			
saddlers	0	4			
[shearmen (C)]	1				35?
tailors (C)	0				24
tinkers	0	5			
victuallers-named as	1 (?)				17
vyntners	0	2			
weavers	(1?)	5			
Males (453)	36 + (8?)	62	65	50	276

[1] PRO E179/173/175; based on 353 individuals listed. (C) denoted organised crafts.

[2] Occupations taken from SC13/2/1; two craft occupations known to be practised at the same date have been added, and are shown in brackets; (C) denotes organised crafts.

sources - some known to have practised the same occupation for between ten and 20 years - this figure probably exaggerates the extent of female participation. However, table 4.2 does show that certain occupations were clearly gendered as masculine. Among the organised crafts - with the exception of baking and brewing - and in occupations related to Southampton's mercantile trade, very few women appear. [1] Of these women, fewer than half worked in manufacturing, the majority being involved in the victualling crafts, especially baking and brewing. Though small in number, women also seem to have been proportionately more active as chandlers, mercers and shoe-makers, than in other occupations. Given the assertion that craft organisations were gendered as masculine, we must then explain why women were so active in baking and brewing - perhaps making up some 12% of the individuals recorded as bakers - and why they were equally absent from the other organised crafts which included the barbers, butchers, coopers, shearmen and tailors, which were clearly gendered as male.

4.2 Bakers [2]

As in other late-medieval towns, bakers were one of the most important groups of victuallers, serving the needs of local householders, as well as the town's demand for bread for feasts, visitations and obits, and the lucrative market in provisioning ships visiting the port. [3] Table 4.4 suggests that almost 12% of known bakers were women, though because baking was one of the most rigorously regulated industries, we might expect to pick up a higher percentage of practitioners than in other occupations. As the numbers of bakers are derived from several different sources, it may be instructive to look at them separately.

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[1] International, inland and local trade is discussed below, see pp. 123-30.
[2] A craft interestingly excluded from the standard work, J. Blair & H.Ramsay (eds.), *English Medieval Industries*, (London, 1991).
[3] *Gudwyff* Quate was one of eight bakers who victualled the *Argosy* in 1577, supplying seven hundredweight of biscuits, *Examinations*, p.26. For regulation of the sale of biscuits in 1519, see *3rd R.B.* 1, p. 30 & SC2/7/3 fo. 1v.

The ordinances stated that the Assize of Bread was to be held "each month or at least four times a year"; however full records survive only for only a few years, as in 1482-3, when the Assize was held on 19 occasions. Unlike in other years, when only the names of those fined were recorded, here the names of some 20 bakers were listed over the year, including both those who satisfied the Assize, and those who were fined.

Table 4.3 Assize of Bread, 1482-3 [1]

Appearances	1	2-5	6-10	11-15	16-19	Bakers
1482-3	5 (25%)	5 (25%)	3 (15%)	5 (25%)	2 (10%)	20

Though Juliana Markes, pistrix, was the only female baker out of 20 listed for this year, she was one of the more active bakers, making seven appearences before the Assize. From the lack of marital status attributed to her, we have to assume that she was a single woman or, if married, was trading as a *femme sole.* [2] One of the many Romsey bakers subject to the Southampton Assize, she was active as a baker for over three decades.[3]

However if we look at fines for light or substandard bread from all sources, the percentage of female bakers more than doubles. Of these women, three-quarters can be positively identified as the widows of bakers; the remainder, with two exceptions, can be tentatively identified as the widows of bakers.

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[1] *Assize*, pp.1-8. The Assize was established by the 1266 statute *de Assisa Panis et Cervisiae*, which set the price, availability and standards of bread, and was regulated under Ord. 29, *Oak Book*, p. 43; see also *Oak Book* 2, pp. xxi & 28-37.

[2] All other female bakers were described as wife or widow. Under common law the status of *femme sole* enabled married women to make contracts independent of their husbands, and rendered them responsible for their own debts, see Bateson, *Borough Customs* 2, cxiii-cvix; Pollock & Maitland, *History of English Law* 2, pp. 434-5. A London custumal of 1340 describes the status thus "where a woman, *couverte de baron* follows a craft of her own in the city in which the husband does not intermeddle, such a woman shall be bound as a single woman as to all that concerns her craft", *Liber Albus*, pp. 203-5. London *femmes soles* included an embroidress, weavers, a silk dealer, a shepster, upholsters (sic) and hucksters, Barron, "Golden Age", pp. 39-40.

[3] *Assize,* pp. 2 & 6-9, (1482); *1st R.B* 2, p. 70, (1484-5); *1st R.B* 3, p.106 (1513); other Romsey bakers subject to the Southampton Assize included Robert Danyell (active 1482-5), succeeded by his widow, Johanne, in 1513, *ibid.*

Table 4.4 Male and Female Bakers, 1470-1570.[1]

Date	Male	Female	Total	% Female
1470-1	4	1	5	20%
1482-3	19	1	20	5%
1488-1509	5	0	5	0%
1485	9	1	10	14.3%
1512-13	11	3	14	21%
1514-19	15	1	16	6.25%
1520-9	18	3	21	14%
1530-9	21	2	23	8.7%
1540-9	3	0	3	0%
1550-60	14	4	18	22%
Total	119	16	135	11.85%

Of the female bakers who appear in the stewards' books, Watkyn (Walter) Baker's *wife*, for example, was fined for light bread in 1470-1, and in the same year, sold bread to the steward on two occasions, while work started on repairs to the ovens in the tenement she rented from the town.[2] Another three women sold bread to the steward in 1461 and 1542-3. [3] These women were not the wives of strangers allowed - under the ordinances - to sell bread, neither were they hucksters, allowed under the bakers' petition to sell bread in the market on Tuesdays and Fridays.[4] Described as the wife of a man known to be a baker, they could be assumed to be acting as their husbands' helpmeets by selling bread, but in fact

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[1] 1470-1, SC5/1/13, fo.5; 1482-3, *Assize*, pp.1-7; 1485, *1st R.B.* 2, pp. 70-3; 1512-13, *Assize*, p. 58; 1512-13, *1st R.B. 3*, p. 106 & SC5/3/1; the remainder from SC5/3/1.

[2] SC 5/1/13, fos. 44, 54 (Walter), 5, 13 & 52 (Watkyn); works on the house and ovens continued until 1475, see also SC5/1/14, fo.43, SC5/1/15 fo. 29r. As she was named as a tenant of the town, it is assumed she was a widow, though a Watkyn Baker - her son perhaps ?- was fined for light bread in 1484, *1st R.B.* 2, p. 70.

[3] Margaret Baker, SC5/1/10, fo.11; George Baker's wife and Humphrey Baker's wife, SC5/1/40, fos. 39-40.

[4] "Everie person that bringeth bread in Cartes or upon horsses to sell oughte to sel yt in the market with his owne handes, his wife or his servantes and by no other person", (Ca.55), *Oak Book*, p.137; SC7/7/3 &5. See, for example Alis, *pistore de Rumsey*, recorded entering the town with a cart of bread in 1441, SC5/5/1. fo 8r. For similar regulations in York, Leicester and Coventry, see Goldberg, *Women, Work & Life Cycle*, p. 110.

almost all these women were bakers' widows; their activities recorded long after their husbands' recorded activity as a baker had ceased. [1] These women - subject to the Assize of Bread - were fully recognised as bakers within the town. [2] Indeed, Mary Turner was named in 1571 as one of three *comen bakers* who undertook to bake three times a week, sending "his (*sic*) boye abowte" to let the inhabitants know that bread was available. [3]

Why then were widows so active in baking, when they were absent from so many other crafts? In the first instance, we know that "any bakers wyff during her widowhydd" was allowed to continue the craft under the terms of the bakers' petitions. [4] But why did the bakers, alone of all the crafts, grant this right to their widows? Given the evidence for widowed bakers before the petition of 1517, this clause probably reflected existing practice, but it is also tempting to suggest that the formal ratification of this practice was due to the influence and agency of one of those widows.

Though William Abree's wife was, in 1533-4, the only woman to pay a fine to set up the baker's craft, we know that Alice Brown - fined by the Assize in 1512-3 and in 1523-3 for baking horse-bread (an adulterated bread containing beans) - was a member of the craft. [5] Her name headed those of the 11 bakers named in the petition to the mayor in 1517. She was the only woman named in any petition, and arguably the only woman to gain access to the power-structure of a guild. As the widow of a baker, with her own flourishing business, she may have argued strongly for the rights of other widows to continue in their husbands' craft, even if only to assure her own future. [6]

But the inclusion of widows in this petition, important though it is, still does not explain why they were active as bakers in such numbers, when they are so conspicuously absent from other crafts. The answer lies, I suggest, in the fact that the skills employed in the baker's craft differed little from those required for

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[1] The appellation wife was used when the woman can be clearly identified as a widow.
[2] For female bakers in other towns, see Goldberg, *Women, Work & Lifecycle*, pp. 88-92 & 110.
[3] *Court Leet*, pp. 70 & 7. Circumstantial evidence from the Town Court Books suggests that other women were active as bakers in the 1470s, including Isabella Baker *aka* Griffith, see p. 134.
[4] SC 2/7/3 & 5.
[5] SC5/3/1, fo. 69v, *Assize* p. 58, SC5/3/1 fo. 37v & 52v.
[6] SC2/7/3; will of John Brown, baker, HRO B1508/3.

domestic baking, commercial baking being merely an extension of the activity. Women trained in the art of housewifery had already received an apprenticeship in baking; indeed some women may been more skilled than their husbands. Baking was an everyday activity, gendered as female, and recognised as such by the bakers who acknowledged that their agreement with the town should be made without prejudice to any "householder bakynge for ther owne store". [1] Access to the baker's craft may have been limited more by the availability of bake-houses than by gender, and the inheritance of a bake-house would certainly have encouraged widows to continue in business. We know that the tenement which Alice Brown inherited in 1508 had been held by bakers from at least 1454. [2] Watkyn Baker's wife, though a tenant of the town, also inherited a bake-house, and had to bear only half the costs of the repairs carried out in 1470-3, the balance being paid by the town. [3] A century later, in 1573, the baker Richard Coode clearly expecting his wife Mary to continue the business, bequeathed her his bake-house with all its equipment, instructing her not to let it to another baker until the children came of age. [4]

The high numbers of women bakers can be explained by the fact that the craft was based on a domestic skill and that baking was regarded as an appropriate activity for both men and women. Unlike other occupations in which widows inherited merely to pass on the business to her children, bakers seem to have expected their widows to continue the undertaking, confident that they had the skills and equipment to carry on the craft. [5]

However, the nature of the relationship between these women and the members of the bakers' craft is not clear. With the exception of Alice Brown and William Abree's wife, none has any recorded connections. Their right to continue the craft is indisputable, but their absence from all other recorded agreements made

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[1] SC 2/7/3. Bread making equipment was listed in 18% of inventories, but bake-houses in just under 2%, see also tables 3.3 and 3.5.

[2] *Terrier*, p. 127.

[3] See above, p. 99 n. 2, and SC5/1/14, fo. 43.

[4] For details of Mary's bequest, including "'the implementes of the bake howse" and over £30 worth of wheat, beans, *gurdyans* and bran, see *Inventories*, pp. 335-338; HRO B wills 1573/32:1-2. Her daughter, Margaret, married another baker, Richard Masey sometime before 1587, HRO Win. B, 1604.

[5] This explanation does not account for *femmes soles* like Juliana Markes, unless she was the widow, wife or daughter of a baker.

between the bakers and the town during the period, raises many questions about their practical and organisational relationship to the men who enjoyed "guydying raule & ove[r]sigjht of the saide crafte & craftsmen". [1]

4.3 Brewers

So does the argument that women gained access to the baker's craft because of its origins in domestic skills apply to other crafts? Does it apply to brewing?
No records of Southampton's Assize of Ale survive, and so the identities and numbers of brewers in the town have to be approximated from a wide variety of sources.[2]
From at least 1478-9, between two and five brewers were annually appointed as common or town brewers, many of whom, like Tilman Skluter and John Vanddresson, were Flemish immigrants. By 1544, the brewers' petition named eight beer-brewers and five ale-brewers. [3] Women were never appointed as town brewers, nor were they members of the brewers' guild. Indeed, between 1433 and 1550 only ten women can be identified as active brewers, none of whom seem to have been a brewer's widow. With the exception of the wife of John Brown listed as a beer-brewer in the stall and art lists of 1550, most were the small scale brewers, noted in chapter 3, occasionally selling what may have been a domestic surplus. [4] Other suppliers, like Mistress Echyns, were primarily victuallers.[5]
But the naming of a property boundary as *le Berewyves Gutter* in 1469 suggests that some women were - or had been - active brewers. [6] In the same year "Grete, bere woman" imported 20 quarters of wheat; in 1470-1 as "the great (*sic*) beer wife" she supplied the town with a pipe of beer, and as "Gertrude Beerwife" was recorded as paying 10s, in what appears to be an early Stall & Art list. She may

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[1] SC2/7/3.
[2] Created by the same statute as the Assize of Bread and locally regulated under the same ordinance, see p. 98, n 1.
[3] From SC5/1/16 onwards; SC7/2/2.
[4] SC6/1/2, fo.1r; she also appears in the 1559 list, though she was not named as brewer, SC6/1/4, fo 5r.
[5] In 1526-7 she supplied beer, ale and wine for the auditors, SC5/1/35, fos. 34, 46 & 70.
[6] SC6/1/2, fo. 2r; SC 4/3/9.

have been the same woman as Margaret, *berewoman*, who held a tenement from God's House from 1492-6. [1] Evidence for the scale on which other possible female brewers operated does not exist, but from the image of the ale-wife in medieval literature and from recent research, it would appear that women played a significant part in the brewing industry in both rural and urban communities. [2] However, these women have been identified as ale-brewers rather than beer-brewers. After hops were introduced into England in the early fifteenth century, brewing shifted - so the orthodoxy has it - from the domestic to the commercial and masculine domain because production of beer required more equipment and a higher degree of capital investment. Moreover, because beer kept longer than ale, brewers became involved in wider distributive networks. This quasi-industrial production, it is argued, marginalised women's brewing. [3] But in Southampton the production of ale and beer does not seem to have been gendered: domestic brewers sold both ale and beer, while the brewers' petition listed men as either beer-brewers or ale-brewers. [4] The product was not gendered, even if craft-based production was controlled by men.

But in their desire to monopolise production, the Southampton brewers made it possible for their widows to take over production after their deaths. At a time when brewing as a craft was supposedly a masculine domain, the brewers' petition of 1543 requested that they and their successors in the brew-houses they then held should be granted a monopoly in the industry. This meant - even if only by default - that the widows of brewers who inherited their husbands' brew-houses were able to become commercial brewers. [5] Jane Rigges, widow of the brewer Thomas

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[1] *Port Books, 1469-71*, p. 37, SC 5/1/13, fos. 44 & 72, *G.H.C.*, p. 229. Other women like Katherine Sus and/or KatherineSewae who also imported large quantities of grain may also have been brewers, *Port Book 1435-6*, p.12, *Brokage Book 1439-40*, p.13.

[2] For rural brewsters, see Judith Bennett, "The Village Ale-Wife: Women & Brewing in Fourteenth Century England", in Barbara Hanawalt, (ed.)*Women & Work in Pre-Industrial Europe*, (Bloomington, 1986), pp.20-36; Bennett's forthcoming work on ale wives is eagerly awaited; Helena Graham, "'A Woman's work....'". For urban brewsters, see Kowaleski, *Local Markets & Regional Trade,* pp. 131-6.

[3] Peter Clarke, *The English Ale House: A Social History, 1200-1830*, (Longman, 1983). For archaeological evidence of a large commercial brewery in Southampton in the mid-16th century, SOU 175.

[4] SC2/7/4; see also *3rd R.B.* 1, pp. 44-5.

[5] SC2/7/4. But the widows of earlier brewers do not seem to have had this privilege: the widow of Harman Johnson, town brewer to at least 1528-9, may have been the unlicensed tippler and huckster known as "hamons widdowe", SC5/1/32, fo.11, *Court Leet*, pp. 65 & 72.

Rigges (d. 1551), was one of these women. Before she died in 1558 she seems to have been engaged in brewing, bequeathing "two barrels of beer and more if it be needed" to the poor of Southampton, and her brew-house, malt, hops and over £33 of brewing equipment - including a vat for the preparation of wort, a *gylle* or fermenting vat and a *mashing* vat - to her grand-children.[1]

Nicholas Grant left his brew-house to his sons in 1558, to be divided between his daughters in the event of their death; in 1564 William Christmas, another signatory to the brewers' petition, left the residue of his estate, including a brew-house and over £28 of equipment and ingredients, equally to his son and daughter; and in 1567 Henry Russell left his brew-house in All Saints to his wife Marten for life and thence to his nephew. [2] Though inheritance was not synonymous with practice - the brewing activities of these women have left no record - brewers seemed happy to leave their craft in the hands of wives and daughters.

It is not clear why the brewers required this clause in their petition, unless a high percentage of brew-houses were located in properties that the testator was not free to dispose of to whomever he wished. In 1514 the Flemish brewer Rowland Johnson and his wife Christina built a new house and a brew-house on land which they held for three lives from God's House. Their daughter Joan was thus able to inherit the property, which she continued to hold during her marriage to Henry Huttoft. Joan rented the house to the ale-house keeper, Robert Fuller, but may have been involved in running the brew-house. As an inn-keeper Fuller was prohibited from brewing, and it was not until her widowhood that she leased the brew-house to another Flemish brewer, Adrian Mason. [3]

Nevertheless, some inn-keepers brewed: when the inn-keeper and merchant Edward Wilmot died in 1570, he left both the lease of the Dolphin Inn and his brewing equipment to his wife Margaret for life.[4] But equally when Mary Marcant

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[1] *Inventories*, pp. 154-9. Thomas Rigges, mayor in 1542-3, was listed in the brewers' petition of 1544; SC2/7/4. For her family, see 3rd *R.B.* 4, p. 91, n. 392.

[2] HRO U wills1558/208-9, B1564/34-5; *Inventories*, pp. 45, 184 & HRO B wills 1567/139.

[3] In 1494 Rowland, Christina and Joan leased a vacant plot in Bugle St for three lives, extended in 1514 for a further 50 years with covenant to build, G.H. Deeds, 490; *3rd R.B.* 3, p.10, n.11. Pers. comm., Alwyn Ruddock to Gerald Dunning.

[4] *Inventories*, pp. 280-9, HRO B wills 1570/483-4.

inherited the lease of the Star Inn from her father, Edward, in 1553, neither his will nor the inventory of his goods mentioned brewing equipment; their beer was obviously supplied by the several brewers and the tippler Madolen who were listed among Marcant's creditors. [1]

Again, the relationship between brewers' widows and the organised craft is obscure. We can only assume that - like the widows of bakers - they were able to continue the craft without paying an entry fine. It is also very likely that these women at least had engaged in brewing while their husbands were still alive. Many members of the brewers' craft were active in other occupations, and their ability to conduct these other businesses may have been facilitated by their wives' assistance in, or management of, aspects of the brewing process. [2]
Nevertheless, despite the willingness of brewers to bequeath their brew-houses to their widows, few widows appear in the sources as brewers before or after 1543. As a group, they present a very different profile to that of bakers' widows. Though commercial brewing was based on a domestic skill, it would appear that the only women who could theoretically occupy a significant role in the industry were those who married or were born into brewing families, and who, through a failure of male heirs, were able to continue their husbands' work.
Other women who continued domestic production were clearly unable to produce the sheer volume of ale and beer of which commercial brewers were capable.[3]
But many continued to earn their livings by brewing, and many women were found among the licensed and unlicensed tipplers and tapsters who were regularly fined for brewing. [4]

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[1] *Inventories*, pp. 48-51, HRO B wills 1553/133-4; Mary ran the inn with her husband Stephen Abarrowe until his death before 1556, and at leat until her marriage to Peter Janverin in 1566, see 3rd *R.B.*3, pp. 109-10. For Mary's arrest for scolding, see p.183. Madolen was probably the tippler Magdalen Stevens, p. 136, n.7.
[2] Henry Russell , bowyer, was recorded as an ale-brewer in 1543, granted the right to brew beer in 1553, admitted burgess in 1543 and elected mayor in 1562, SC2/7/4,SC3/1/3 fo. 23r; the butcher William Potterell was also described as an ale-brewer in1550, SC6/1/1 -2; Thomas Brooker was known as a brewer, inn-keeper, and baker, *3rd R.B.*2, p.117, n. 4. Jane Laughton makes a similar case in "The Alewives of Later Medieval Chester" in Rowena B. Archer (ed.), *Crown, Government and People in the Fifteenth Century*, (Stroud, 1995), pp. 191-208.
[3] 16% of non-brewer inventories included brewing equipment in 1546-75, table 3.2.
[4] See pp. 135-6.

II

In other crafts and occupations the evidence presents a far less coherent picture, and it would be both repetitive and unproductive to examine separately every occupation in which women participated. So this next section focuses on the means by which the few women who participated in craft production gained access to their occupation.

4.4 Apprenticeship

For young men the recognised method of entry to a craft and access to its *mystery* was through a formal apprenticeship, which in Southampton was set in 1491 at 12 years.[1] No register of apprentices survives, so an impression of apprenticeship in Southampton has to be drawn from a variety of sources. Twelve apprentices, for example, were admitted as burgess between 1495 and 1550, on completion of their apprenticeships with "merchant adventurers". [2] Apprentices were mentioned in the wills of - amongst others - brewers, smiths, corvesers and weavers; others apprentices were fined for various offences and recorded in the Mayor's Book; all of them were male.

The lack of evidence for female apprenticeships is not surprising.[3] But if the word "children" is taken to be gender inclusive, then the daughters of mercers and drapers could be apprenticed, as the mercers' petition stated that both their wives and children were allowed "to excersyse vse and lerne the sayde occupacyons". [4] However, only three female mercers are documented, two of them widows. [5] Unambiguous references to female apprentices in Southampton only occur towards the end of the period when the "apprenticeships" in housewifery, already

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[1] Ord. no. 23, *Oak Book* 1, p. 156.
[2] SC3/1/1.
[3] Swanson has suggested that "the training of girls ran parallel to that of boys, but without the formality of apprenticeship", *Artisans*, p.116.
[4] *Letters*, pp. 30-2.
[5] See pp. 124-5.

discussed above, begin to appear. [1] But only one of these young women - Elizabeth Darvall - was apprenticed in a craft, taken on in 1577 by the cobblers Charles and Collet Poyntdexter "for the space of 12 years". This apprenticeship, arranged by the town, permitted Charles and Collet his wife "to set up thoccupacion of a cobler for the townes p[ar]te, otherwise to dep[ar]te". [2] Post-dating the 1563 Statute of Artificers which required all apprenticeships to be indentured and registered, this placement reflects more the ways in which the town was trying to deal with poverty and immigration, than the extension of apprenticeships to young women. [3] Elizabeth was a precursor of the poor children apprenticed from 1609, when the town established registers of both craft and "poor child" apprenticeships. Because there is little earlier evidence these registers are worth examining here for the light they throw on the gendering of apprenticeships.[4] Not one girl appears in the register of 650 craft apprenticeships, but in the Poor Child Register 111 girls were apprenticed alongside 288 boys, siblings often being placed in the same family. Yet though both sexes were apprenticed to artisan and merchant families, boys were much more likely to be trained in a craft, almost 40% of them being apprenticed to weavers before 1640. Only six young women were apprenticed to a craft - almost all in the textile industry. Some 96% of the girls, though often apprenticed to both husband and wife, were apprenticed either as general servants or specifically in the skills of housewifery, needlework, knitting and spinning. [5] Though intended to prepare young women for marriage, these apprenticeships may well have equipped them with sufficient skills to earn some kind of living on the margins of Southampton's seventeenth-century textile industry. [6]

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[1] See pp. 34-5.
[2] The Poyntdexters agreed " to kepe her frely at their owne charge & therof to discharge the town in all respects", *Examinations,* p. 51.
[3] Statute of Artificers, 5 Eliz., c. 4.
[4] The Poor Child Register, introduced by statute in 1601, required parishes to apprentice poor boys until the age of 24 and poor girls until the age of 21 or the "tyme of her marriage", see Merson, *Southampton Apprenticeship Registers, 1609-1740*, pp. ix-lxxvi.
[5] Merson, *op. cit.*
[6] In Bristol between 1532-52, 98 young women were apprenticed (3.3% of all apprentices), 42% in housewifery, 32% as shepsters/tailors,18% in distributive trades and 8% in crafts, see Ilana K. Ben-Amos, "Women apprentices in the trades and crafts of early modern Bristol", *Continuity & Change* 6.2, 1991, pp. 227-52.

Evidently formal craft apprenticeships were not appropriate for young women. We can speculate that daughters helped their fathers in aspects of craft production, but - with the exception of mercery - access to a craft by apprenticeship was not an option. [1]

4.5 Formal Access

After completing his apprenticeship, a young craftsman was finally admitted to the craft, paying an entry fine of which half went to the craft and half to the town. In the unincorporated crafts, a fine was payable to the town alone. An annual average of five men paid such fines between 1488 and1558. [2] During the same period a maximum of ten women paid craft-entry or occupational fines. [3] Had all these fines followed the model of fines paid by men they might cast doubt on the assertion that apprenticeships were not open to women, but in their diversity these fines raise more questions than they answer about women's relationship to the organised crafts.

In 1549-50, Catherine, wife of Dennys Hore (d. 1554), paid a fine to "occupy mercery". We do not know if she was a mercer's daughter, but had she been a mercer's wife - allowed to occupy the craft with her husband - instead of the wife of a ship-master, she would not have been required to pay a fine; presumably she traded as a *femme sole* . [4] Similarly William Abree's wife, the only woman to pay a fine to enter the baker's craft, was the only female baker whose husband was not a baker. [5] In 1546-7, Annes, daughter-in-law of William Rigges, made a payment "to kepe her shepster's craft", which she had presumably occupied before her marriage. [6] Thus it appears that a woman who followed a different occupation to

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[1] Of 58 resident daughters in 13 towns between 1377-81, 56 worked as their fathers' assistants, Goldberg, *Women, Work & Life Cycle*, pp. 99-104.
[2] SC 5/3/1; *1st R.B.* 1-3. A number of known craftsmen are absent from these sources suggesting that some may have entered free by grant or inheritance.
[3] It is not clear whether the payment of 6s 8d to the town made by Cilla Goldsmyth "for the tooles of a goldsmyth" in 1498-9 was an entry fine, or was made for some other reason, SC5/3/1, fo. 21v.
[4] SC5/3/1 fo. 90r; his inventory shows no sign of mercery, *Inventories*, pp. 72-3.
[5] SC5/3/1 fo 69v ,1533-4.
[6] SC5/3/1 fo.86r. Two other *shepsters* (seamstresses) can be identified in God's House rentals: Eleanor Shepster, tenant in 1423, and Alice Shepster *aka* Taylour, tenant in1334-50, Kaye, *G.H.C.* 2, pp. 326-9 & 227-8.

her husband was obliged to pay an entry fine. Moreover, the incidence of fines paid for crafts gendered as female suggests that the town formally recognised skilled craftswomen. Yet the low number of these fines suggests that few women found work in skilled occupations. [1] Only two other women who were not widows - Jane the silkwoman and Katteryn Somarton - paid fines which, on the basis of their inclusion with male craft fines, could be interpreted as fines to practise an occupation. [2]

However, the relationship between women and the incorporated crafts grows even more obscure when we look at the very different conditions under which a small number of widows did take up their husbands' crafts. Johanne, widow of Marryn Barber, for instance, is the only example of a woman subject to an overt attempt to exclude her from a craft. In February 1512, Johanne came before the corporation, wishing to take up her husband's business as a barber. Though a fine of 26s. 8d. had been agreed, to be divided between the town and the barbers, "the said berbours of there froward mynde wold not agree". [3] We can only speculate at their reasons. They may have wished to exclude her purely because she was a woman, or perhaps it was more personal, possibly linked with Thomas Bird's assault on her earlier that year. Whatever the cause of concern, the matter was ultimately resolved in Johanne's favour, and the fine was paid.[4]

This case also suggests that the widows of craftsmen, other than bakers, brewers and mercers, were not automatically granted the right to practise their husband's craft, but were required to pay an entry fine. In the same year the *wife* [widow] of Ralph Langford paid a fine to set up in her husband's occupation of *shereman*, and two other entries, both late in the period, and both in the *corvesers* craft, could support this argument, though the interpretation of both entries is problematic. [5]

In 1559-60, the entry, "Itm re[ceived] of the weddowe goodwife orche for settinge upp of hir husbond the shoemaker", could be interpreted either to read that she

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[1] After 1554 the wool-packers were required to pay an entry fine, SC4/1/2 fo. 26r, see p.118 below.
[2] SC5/3/1, fo. 22v,1498-9 & fo. 78r,1538-9.
[3] "and be cause the berbours be bound by the corporation to do no thing which shalbe prejudicial to the towne, therfor it is put to there choyse", *Ist R.B.* 3, p. 83.
[4] SC5/3/1, fo. 36v.
[5] SC5/3/1, fo. 45r.

was setting up in the craft on her own account or that she was paying for a second husband to take up the craft. [1] Similarly, in 1570, "Collett the shoemakers wife" either paid 2s. to take part in her husband's craft or, as Merson suggests, was paid 2s. by the town to surrender her right to her husband's business. [2] The ambiguity of both these sources is unhelpful, as are two other putative craft fines paid by John Michell's wife and Charnill's widow in 1542-3 and 1564. [3]
The evidence, such as it is, suggests three tentative conclusions: firstly, that married women trading as *femme sole* had to pay an entry fine; secondly, that fines were paid for female occupations; and finally, that certain crafts did not grant automatic rights of entry to widows. However, this does not imply that widows were granted automatic entry into the other crafts. The infrequency of fines and the variations in the form of record, suggest that female applications to practise a craft were a rare occurrence, and that the number of women who, independent of family connections, participated in craft production was very small. Certainly, we can conclude that the customary means of access to a craft by apprenticeship and entry fine were gendered as male, and that we have to look elsewhere to understand how women gained access to craft production.

4.5 Partnership and Inheritance

In chapter 3, I suggested that marital partnerships in the crafts were most frequently articulated in a gendered division of labour whereby men took responsibility for production while their wives sold the goods. Indeed, it was only in mercery, where retail was a central activity, that a married women's role was recognised. [4] Other married women were involved in the sale of a wide variety of goods, but it is not always clear whether they were trading on their own account or undertaking the retail role in their husbands' businesses. [5] However, evidence

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1 SC5/3/1, fo.104v.
2 SC5/3/1, fo.124 r. Merson suggests that she was Collet Comes, widow, banished from the town in 1570, *3 rd R. B.* 2, p.121, n. 4. She could equally have remarried; see Collet Poyntdexter, cobbler, p. 107.
3 SC5/3/1, fos. 81v & 116 v.
4 *Letters,* pp. 30-2. Direct evidence is rare, see Goldberg, *Women, Work & Life Cycle*, p.129.
5 These women are discussed under petty traders, see pp.130-2.

that retail was an accepted role for the wives of craftsmen adds little to the argument for their participation in the production process.

The argument that women gained access to craft production through the informal training they acquired working alongside their husband or father is based on the reasonable assumption that those widows who continued their husbands' crafts after death must have had some expertise. Indeed, though the issue of competence has been avoided by historians, it was an issue for contemporaries, as two ordinances from York suggest.[1] A husband's decision to leave his business to his wife, and his widow's decision whether to continue, must have been predicated on the amount of training she had received. If she also inherited an apprentice, presumably she was thought competent to supervise the remainder of the apprenticeship. Competence could have been gained only from previous experience - widows rarely took up occupations different to those of their husbands - but finding the evidence to substantiate the argument has always been problematic. [2]

The death of a craftsman has been identified as an opportunity for widows to engage in trade. Yet widowhood was a time of loss, dislocation and personal trauma, when wives had to adapt to the new role of widow. The decision to take up craft production would have been only one of many she had to make. We should also remember that the death of a craftsman was more likely to be the occasion upon which his adult male heir was likely to take up the craft. [3]

In wills made by craftsmen between 1550 and 1575, the incidence of inheritance by sons, widows and others can be measured by bequests of craft tools, equipment, property or the residue of an estate including the above. Just over a quarter (27%) of testators explicitly bequeathed tools or equipment to their

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[1] In 1400 untrained women were prohibited from working in the textile trade; in 1426 cooks tried to prohibit the wives of other artisans from baking and roasting food for public consumption "unless they are competent to do so", Swanson, *Medieval Artisans*, p. 36 & 17, citing *Y.M.B.* 2, pp. 243 & 60.

[2] For clear examples, see Veale, "Matilda Penne, Skinner (d. 1392/3)", and Caroline Barron, "Johanna Hill (d. 1441) and Johanna Sturdy (d. *c.* 1460), Bell Founders", in *Medieval London Widows*, pp. 47-54 & 99-112. For the argument that married women's activity - in the rural brewing industry - is under-represented in the records because husbands were legally responsible for their wives' activity, see Bennett, "The Village Ale-Wife"; Graham, "'A Woman's work....'".

[3] Neither did male heirs necessarily take up their fathers' occupations: in York, an average of 51% did so, with clear variations between crafts, Swanson, *Medieval Artisans,* pp. 165-8.

widows, usually when their son - or nephew - was still in his minority. Some 23% of testators left their tools or equipment directly to their sons, while just under 10% of wills benefited apprentices or fellow craftsmen. However, a further 29% of widows, in inheriting the residue of their husbands' estate, found themselves with the wherwithall to take up production, if they chose to do so.[1]

These inheriting widows included the wives of bakers, brewers, shoe-makers and mercers: in 1554, for instance, the mercer Edmund Bishop left Agnes "my shop wares except my great coffer in recompense for her shop which she brought with her". [2] From other sources, it seems that widows were also able to take up the chandlers' craft: Johanne Pyke, widow of Thomas (?), for instance, was named as one of five town chandlers in 1508, and we can assume that the widow of Piers Barber, chandler, also continued his business as she was fined for selling false wax candles in 1525-6. [3] But in other occupations only one widow can be identified as active in the crafts of barber, shearman, dyer and weaver; widows were not recorded as tailors, cappers, coopers, or - amongst Southampton women - as butchers.[4]

The gendered boundaries around certain crafts and their organisation may have precluded widows from taking up their husbands' businesses. But there were many other reasons why widows chose not to take up a craft, apart from the lack of training already mentioned. They may have had to sell their husbands' tools or equipment to pay his debts; or been left with young children who left them little time to devote to the business; others may have been too old. Many may have had no inclination or interest. Those who were financially secure may have not have needed to work; but for others, it must have been the only visible source of

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[1] Based on 65 wills in Appendix 1. The recipients of the remaining 10% cannot be determined.
[2] Edmund Bishop, *Inventories*, p.51, HRO B wills 1554/31a-b. The shop wares were valued at £20.
[3] *1st R.B. 1*, p. 115; SC5/3/1, fo. 58r, 3rd R.B. 1, p. 29, n.4; see also Kateryn Jakes, fined for selling candles above the agreed price in 1483 and for defective tallow candles in 1486, *Assize*, p. 41, *1st R.B.* 3, p. 65; For female chandlers elsewhere, see Goldberg, *Women Work & Lifecycle*, pp. 133-4; Swanson, *Artisans*, p. 100.
[4] See above, pp. 109-10; John Norton's widow was a dyer, see below, p.125. Essebela Ayleward, who supplied the town with 14 yards of broadcloth for its livery in 1462 may have been a weaver, SC5/1/10, fo.18, but see also p.131 below. For non-local women as butchers, see p.137 below.

income. Documentary sources only hint at the discussions widows engaged in and the advice they sought in order to help them reach a decision. [1]

In their wills few husbands explicity instructed their wives to continue the business; fewer still were as direct as John Stavely (d. 1560), who left his shops to his wife Johan, and clearly stated that her future, and that of her children, was entirely dependent on the income she could generate from the shops. [2] However, a widow's inheritance of a craft or trade was very different from her actual participation in it. In April 1548 Walter Forward, tallow chandler, named his wife sole executrix and guardian of his children, leaving her the residue of his estate, including the contents of his workhouse and wax to the value of £3 6s 8d. His will was proved in September, and the following month Elizabeth appeared before the mayor "for asmoche as she is a woman alone not able to performe the promys of hyr seid husbond, she hath relesid all the bochers that hyr husbond barganed w[i]t[h] all for there tallow". [3] It was not her age, but her gendered identity as "a woman alone", which prevented Elizabeth taking up the craft. [4]

Elizabeth Forward's experience provides a note of caution: inheritance cannot be equated with practice. Even a widow did take up a craft there was no guarantee of success: the wife of Nicholas Bocher obviously tried, but was forgiven the rent of her shop in 1542, "because she was unable to raise it after the death of the said Nicholas".[5] Some husbands, like Richard Coode and Andrew Boke, clearly expected their wives to continue the family business, but only on condition they did not remarry. [6] John Stavely also decreed that if his wife were to remarry, the children's portion, which included the shops, was to be held for them by the

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[1] The shoemaker Andrew Boke left his wife Johan his whole estate "to have the government of it as she and her neighbors think good", *Inventories*, p. 262, HRO B wills 1569/22-3.

[2] "I have not sufficient goods as dothe apertayne to Johan my wife in recompense of her deservinge and kneying her [naturaditi] to hir chyldren yf she will kepe my house and shopps holle in such order as I shall by god's help leave yt and so from tyme to tyme fursnishe the same with good wares...the whiche [shop]shalbe the mayntenance of my poer onysty and hirs", *Black* 3, pp.106-15, see also HRO U wills 1560/270.

[3] *3rd R.B.* 2, pp.12-13. For chandlers' agreements with the town, see *ibid.* & *1st R.B.* 3, p.110.

[4] When she died in 1550 there was no trace of his business except "a furneis left with roper of London", *Inventories*, pp.15-18 & 30-3, HRO U wills 1548/30-31 & B wills 1550/58.

[5] SC5/2/40, fo. 64.

[6] See Appendix 1.

town. [1] Clearly, testators differed in their intentions, but it is clear that few meant to provide their widows with employment. More often, their role was to keep the business going until the children were of an age to inherit.

But when an adult son inherited his father's craft, the widow was not necessarily excluded from a role in its operation, a role sometimes formally acknowledged in the will. For instance, Thomas, son of the blacksmith, Nicholas le Neve, for instance, received a shop of smiths' wares and its tools from his father "provided that he shall be ruled and counselled in all good manners and behaviour by his mother, or else the shop be divided at her discretion". [2] Another blacksmith, John Anderson, left the tools of his trade to his two sons, with the proviso that if neither of them took up the smith's craft, they should sell the tools to Elizabeth, his wife; he also left his servant, Alexander Elcombe, 13s. 4d. to be received "if he serve his covenants with my wife". [3] Both these widows had a clear role in perhaps the most masculine of crafts. [4]

Elizabeth Anderson was not alone in continuing her husband's business with the assistance of an apprentice. The merchant Reynold Howse similarly enjoined his apprentice to serve out his years under his widow, Jane.[5] The widow of John King, baker, and Jane Rigges, brewer, were assisted by a servant and an apprentice respectively, and in 1518 Thomas Poppy's wife was assigned two apprentices, John Walcheman and Hew Pale. On this last ocassion, five men were assigned one apprentice apiece; that Poppys' wife was assigned two may be of significance. [6] We have to assume that these apprenticeships did not continue under the widow as a matter of course, but that some pre-testamentary agreements must have been made with the testator's craft.

Evidently more women gained access to craft production when they became widows that at any other stage in their lifecycle. But though testators rarely

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[1] See p. 113, n. 2.
[2] *Inventories*, p.148, HRO U wills1558/294-5.
[3] *Inventories*, p.139, HRO U wills1559/7-8.
[4] Elyn Seynt John was described as a smith, see p.133. Alice [Agnes] Smyth of Romsey must have been a blacksmith: three tons of iron were delivered to her in 1477 and another in 1482-3, *Brokage 1477-8*, pp. 7, 25 & 28, SC5/5/25, fo. 41r. For blacksmith's wives and female blacksmiths, see Jane Geddes, "The Blacksmith's Life, Wife & Work", *Tools & Trade* 1, 1983, pp. 15-37, esp. 26-9.
[5] *Inventories*, pp. 372-3, HRO B1573/70.
[6] SC 5/3/1, fo. 48v; SC 5/3/1, fo. 40 r; *1st R.B.* 3, p. 85.

intended to provide their widows with employment, some women confounded expectations and, like Alice Brown, entered an economically active widowhood, in her case, for some 15 years. But - at least in Southampton between 1450-1570 - the numbers of widows actively engaged in craft production were relatively few. Indeed, whether they were single, married or widowed, women formed a tiny minority in the crafts throughout the period. But there is no evidence that the crafts actively sought to exclude women - indeed in baking, mercery, and in brewing if only by default , they were actively included.

It was neither the oft-cited exclusionary practices nor the end of the "golden age" that prevented women from working in craft production. On the contrary, it was the gendered construction of both craft guilds and the domestic economy that had always combined to locate women on the margins of craft production.[1] In adolescence, young women were unable to gain formal access through apprenticeship; as wives, they were largely marginalised as retailers; finally, in widowhood, they were allowed to take part. For many women, this was was just too late.

4.6 The Southampton "Guild of Woolpackers" [2]

Given the scarcity of women in Southampton's craft-guilds, it is surprising to find references to a guild of women wool-packers in the town. As early as 1919, Alice Clark suggested that these women were a guild, a claim that has been taken at face value ever since. [3] The documentary source for the wool-packers dates from 1502 when "The Names and the Order of the xij women for the wulle pokes by

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[1] The argument for the exclusion of women from craft production is based almost exclusively on the actions taken by weavers' guilds after the slump of 1450. Female servants were excluded from the craft in Coventry in 1453, and women, including wives, from the craft in Bristol, Hull and Norwich , *Women, Work & Life Cycle*, p. 35 & 200, n. 157.

[2] The wool-packers are discussed in more detail in Sian Jones, "Out of the Footnotes: Southampton's Women Wool-packers" in Moira Donald (ed.), *"Scorn to be seen in the Counting House". Women in Trade and business in the medieval and early modern periods*, forthcoming.

[3] Alice Clark also described them as sorting wool, to which there is no reference in the original source, *Working Life,* pp. 195-6. This mistake is replicated by later writers, see: Power, *Medieval Women*, p.61; Alwyn Ruddock, *Italians* p. 90; Michael Roberts "Women and work in sixteenth century English Towns" in Corfield & Keene (eds.),*Work in Towns*, (Leicester, 1990), pp. 90 & 98-9, n. 24; Goldberg,*Women, Work & Life Cycle,* p. 319. Davies, a local historian, described them as a sisterhood, *History of Southampton*, p. 279.

Thomas Dymmock" was enrolled in the Second Book of Remembrance. [1] The timing of this enrollment, in the last few decades of Southampton's wool trade, is curious. But although claims to the longevity of a practice are usually suspect, here the claim that the wool-packers had long served the town, was, in the context of Southampton's wool trade, probably true. [2] Wool-packers, in some form, certainly pre-dated the document. [3] The port of Southampton seems to have be unique in its wool-packers. Though female wool-packers have been located in Leicester, and male wool-packers and graders identified at the major production centres, none have been found at other ports. [4]

The wool-packers covered measured weights of wool with canvas "at the request of any merchant" before they were reweighed and sealed for export. [5] Their work required the use of female skills - sewing the canvas supplied by the merchant to make a secure package - but it was also heavy work - pokes (half a sack of wool) and balons (two sacks) weighed around 180 lb. and 720 lb. respectively. [6] The women were supervised by two wardens, who were appointed to "serve the merchants", record the work done, and to receive and distribute payment. [7]

The document implies that the wardens were responsible for keeping order among the wool-packers, and it is to issues of order - the control and regulation of

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[1] SC 2/1/4 fos. 26v - 28r, indexed on fo.1. The first list of twelve women includes subsequent deletions and insertions of names; three further later lists of women appear in different hands, the last deleted around 1554-5 when two further paragraphs and twelve names were added. I am grateful to Sheila Thompson, former Southampton City Archivist, for introducing me to this text and her unpublished transcript.

[2] From 1275 when Southampton was established as one of the customs ports the town's wool export trade was dominated by the Italians, who were issued export licences from as early as 1244, see T.H. Lloyd, *The English Wool Trade in the Middle Ages* , (Cambridge,1977), p. 64. Ruddock, *Italians*, p.16. Though James claims that the trade was in "headlong decline" from 1503-4, the dating of the rules coincides with a relative increase in wool exports from 1500-10; in 1503-4, for example, 1,219 sacks were exported, see James, *Port Books 1509-10*, pp. ix-x; Stevens & Olding, *Brokage Books 1477-8 & 1527-8*, p. xii.

[3] "Where as it is so that of old tyme and of long contynuance hath ben usid in this towne that certeym wemen of good and honest demeneure shuld be appoyntid by the maier.. and his brethren to cover such pookes and balons of wull as by any merchant shuld be pakkid within this towne", SC 2/1/4 fo. 26v.

[4] For female wool-packers controlled by the Gild Merchant in 13th century Leicester, see Mary Bateson, (ed.), *Records of the Borough of Leicester* 1,1899, p. 216. See also Lloyd, *English Wool Trade*, pp. 297-312; Eileen Power, *The Wool Trade in English Medieval History,* (Oxford,1941), pp. 41- 3.

[5] They probably worked in the town Wool House on Porter's Lane, though Ruddock suggests the Wool House in Bugle Street, *Italians*, p. 90 & n. 54.

[6] For a merchant's purchase of canvas see Alison Hanham (ed.), *The Cely Letters 1472-1488*, E.E.T.S.,1975, p. 79.

[7] Work was recorded on a *taille* [tally] which was split in two, half for the wardens to present to the merchant, the other for the packer herself. Wooden tally sticks have been found in excavations in Southampton.

the women's behaviour, as opposed to craft practice - that most of the document is devoted. [1] The issue that had caused strife between the women, challenging not only their order but also the service they provided and ultimately the economic well-being of the town, was the fair distribution of work and of payment. The rules sought to adress the issue by laying down in detail the procedure by which each of the 12 packers had to be notified of available work. Any woman approached by a merchant was obliged to tell all of her sisters that work was available, passing the message on until each had been notified. If a woman was out, then a message was to be left with "at leste some of the hous[ehold] ... orels their next neighbur". If a woman failed to turn up then she would have no "parte of the wages" for that consignment; but, if some women took on work and failed to notify the others, then those who had not been told were entitled to a share of the payment. Further, women were prohibited from monopolising work by taking more than one covering piece at a time and were required to do the job in each others presence, so that their work could be seen to be done.

These particular procedures may well have been formulated in consultation with the wool-packers, as they were clearly intended to solve problems the women had encountered in previous years. Certainly the means by which they were to be informed that work was available seem to have been based on women's informal networks of communication.

However, it seems unlikely that the process of nomination arose from the wool-packers' exclusionary or protectionist motives. In prohibiting women from using substitutes, the document shifts back to masculine modes of control and to inflexible notions of membership. Given the increasingly irregular nature of the wool trade, it seems inevitable that women with other household, child-care or working commitments might have found it find it impossible always to be available for work, so they may well have asked female relatives or friends to substitute for them. [2] The document also suggests that other women, who worked as "free-

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[1] "there hath ben gret stryve and debate betwene the said wemen for lack of a good ordre.....which both bene aswell great trouble to the merchauant ....and also great sclaunder to the Towne", SC2/1/4, fo. 26v.

[2] Shipments of wool generally left the port between Michaelmas and Christmas, March and June, James, *Port Book*, p. ix.

lance" packers, solicited merchants for work; from 1502 these women were prohibited from working. Among the "official" wool-packers, any substitutes were to be nominated by the mayor, and then only after the expulsion or death of a wool-packer. Finally, in a further attempt to control their behaviour, the rules admonished the women "not to brawle or scold oon with an othir".

As in other crafts a system of fines existed, payable half to the town, and half "to the company... towardes their lyght", though until 1554, these were not entry fines but penalties to be paid by women who broke the rules. [1] The effectiveness of this new order, if measured by fines alone, was considerable: in 50 years only one fine was paid, "of John Hart is wyff for mysbehaveyng of her selffe among her company at the woll house." [2] In reality, the situation was different. In 1554-5, even though the wool trade was almost non-existent by then, an addendum to the rules complained that several of the 12 had absented themselves from their duties for over a year, and a new clause was added to the effect that women absent for three months would be expelled. [3] At the same time, entry conditions into what was then described as the "systeryd" were introduced. "All suche as shalbe nomynated and appoynted shall make a brekefast at their entry for a knowledge, and shallbestowe at the lest xxd or iijs or more as they lyste". The use of the term "knowledge", and the introduction of entry fines suggests that by 1554 the sisterhood was taking on of the trappings of an organised craft. If regulation did not ensure respectability and reliability, maybe the pretensions of guild structure would. But control of the wool-packers remained with the mayor and corporation, the "order and a Rule" designed to ensure that merchants, vital to Southampton's economic fortunes, continued to use the port.

In describing the wool-packers as "wemen of good and honest demeneure", Dymmock was not just using a conventional formula. The rule expressed the

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[1] Fines were large: 3s 4d for the first offence, 6s 8d for the second and expulsion for the third. This reference to "their lyght" is very unusual for Southampton. For non-craft based sisterhoods, see Miri Rubin, "Small Groups: Identity & Solidarity in the Late Middle Ages", in Jennifer Kermode (ed.), *Enterprise and Individuals in Fifteenth century England*, (Stroud,1991), pp. 132-50.

[2] SC 5/3/1, fo. 29r,1503-4.

[3] Wool was exported twice and imported once in 1557-8, Stevens & Olding, *Brokage Books 1477-8 &1527-8,* p. xii. By 1558-9 the wool-packers may have been replaced by men, see "Harry the wollpacker", SC 5/3/1, fo.103r.

corporation's determination to exclude troublesome women from the wool-packers, and their desire to select women of "good and honest demeneure" was real. [1] A total of 51 women were named in the five successive lists of wool-packers, and in the process of their identification, certain patterns began to emerge, suggesting the criteria by which these women were selected. Over half the wool-packers can be identified with varying degrees of certainty; 18 women can be identified on surname evidence alone, while only nine women cannot be identified in any way. [2]

Unfortunately the women for whom the least evidence survives were those who were elected as wardens. Though it could be suggested from the successive wardenships of Crystan and Elizabeth Staynour that these women were mother and daughter, and that another warden, Elizabeth Burgess, made a donation to the building of the bulwarks in 1521-2, little can be added as to their particular suitability for wardenship. Unlike the London Silkwomen, these wool-packers did not come from high status or merchant families, nor were they, with some exceptions, members of artisan families, though Maud Young had traded in fish, and Johanna Pyke had been one of the towns' chandlers in 1508. [3] But most of the women came from families with more precarious employment patterns, where women's wages could make a significant contribution to the household economy. Almost half of the women who worked as wool-packers can be shown to have some connection with - and therefore an element of dependancy on - the mayor and corporation. Six or seven of the women can - with varying degrees of certainty be identified as widows who appeared in town rentals, a status which proved their responsibility, gave them a certain respectability and gave the town

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[1] The methodology of identification was firstly, to match wool-packers to women with the same or similar name listed in other records within 20 years of her listing as a wool-packer. Then men with the same surname, within the same time frame, were identified, and reasonable or tentative matches proposed for wool-packers as their wives, widows or daughters. For example, Jone Malage, wool-packer in 1502, was identified as "Malache's wife" who the porter James Rutt attacked in 1498-9; she may have been the wife, or mother, of the labourer William Mallage who contributed 6d to the Bulwarks in 1521-2; no other matches could be made, SC 5/3/1 fo.21v; SC 5/1/32, fo.14/1.

[2] See Appendix 2 for full references for each of the wool-packers and suggested relationships.

[3] Kay Lacey, "The Production of 'Narrow Ware' by Silkwomen in Fourteenth & Fifteenth Century England,"*Textile History* 18.2,1987, pp.187-204. *1st R.B.* 1, p. 23, *ibid.*, 3, p. 111; other women from artisan families were "the wife of Thomas Taylour", and Joanna Sparkes, widow and executor of Robert Sparkes, cooper, in 1557.

an interest in employing them, if only to secure their rents. [1] Others, on the basis of surname evidence, may have been the dependents of men who worked for the town. This dependency is particularly clear in two cases: Agnes Pewterer's husband had worked regularly for the town; after his death Agnes was employed as a cook for the town in 1539-40, and was forgiven rent as a tenant of the town in 1542-3. Similarly, Elyn Hert, wife of the labourer John Hart, was listed as one of the "poore people'" living in the alms house when it opened in 1552. [2] Other women were - or could have been - related to men who worked either as in minor civic offices, or may, in two cases, have been the wives of stewards.[3] Four women were probably the wives of men who held the packership, that is, the right to load and unload ships in the port. [4] The mayoral preference for the wives and widows of men who known to the town though their work extended to the wives of labourers, and in one instance, the appointment of a woman - Agnes Inglett - may have made in recompense for her husband's death in the town's service. [5] This familial nepotism may also have enabled the corporation to fulfil other obligations: though perhaps only three of these women were the widows of burgesses, the town may also have felt some degree of responsibility for the dependants of its lesser officials. It is more likely, however, that in selecting their widows as wool-packers, the town was attempting to prevent these women becoming financially dependent on the town. [6] All of these women's connections with the town - with its population of less than 2,000 - could be coincidental. But if the connections and the assumptions of dependancy I have made are real, then at least one of the criteria by which the town identified women as suitable wool-

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[1] See Elizabeth Burgess, Edith Deye, Elizabeth Durrant, Sibill Hollowey, Agnes Pewterer, Margaret Westley and Maud Yong.

[2] For Agnes Pewterer, see also p. 85.

[3] Joan Blankpayne, widow or daughter of John Blankpayne, town scavenger, 1469, town sergeant 1472-3; Johanne Cobley , widow of Roger Cobley, town gunner 1527-34, forgiven rent for poverty in 1452-3; Elizabeth Staly, widow of John Staly, steward; Darlina Person , widow (?) of John Peerson, Steward, 1524-5.

[4] Mercy Senlow , wife(?) of Robert Senlow, packer 1487-8; "the wife of Robert Jackson", packer 1516 & 1524; Johanne Stoddard, widow of William Stoddard, packer, forgiven debts for poverty, 1542-3; Agnes Walis, wife(?) of Philip Walshe (*sic*), packer 1542-3. For the farm of the packership, see SC 5/1/8, and George Unwin, *The Gilds & Companies of London*, (London,1906), p. 360.

[5] Dyne Byshoppe, Emma Garnesay; Agnes Inglett's husband John was killed in an explosion on board a ship in the port in 1542-3.

[6] Elizabeth Bayle (2 & 3) may have been the wife of Gervase Bailey, admitted burgess 1530, SC3/1/3, fo. 64v.

packers can be identified. Both the linkages and the town's desire for reputable women suggests that most of the wool-packers were married women and widows, but it is possible that other family members, including single women, could also have worked as wool-packers.

My disagreement with Alice Clark's claim that the wool-packers were a guild is based on a comparison of the texts of the "rules" with those of the petitions made by Southampton's crafts. A surface reading suggests some similarities, in that both the wool-packers and the crafts were able to elect wardens, and that after the 1554 addendum, the women, like craftsmen, were required to pay an entry fine. But I suggest that these similarities derive from the fact that the only extant models for the regulation of work were of necessity based on the organisation of male labour.

The differences between the rules and the petitions are several: the petitions were originated by members of crafts; the *rule* was originated by the mayor and corporation. The detail of the petitions was based on the self-interests of the petitioning crafts; the detail of the *rule* was constructed to serve the interests of the corporation. Each of the crafts referred to themselves as a "mystery & occupacion"; until 1554, the *rule* described the work of the sisterhood solely as an "occupacion". Each of the crafts described apprenticeship and entry procedures; the wool-packers were not apprenticed, though we have to assume that "on-the-job" training existed. Finally, craftsmen controlled admissions to and membership of their organisations; admission to, and membership of, the sisterhood was controlled by the mayor and brethren, though the use of the term sisterhood in the 1554 addendum suggests that a group identity, possibly expressed in their religious function, had developed by this period. [1] Unlike the other crafts in the town the wool-packers did not organise themselves for their mutual benefit ; rather they were organised by the town to ensure that merchants exporting wool from Southampton would be provided with an efficient service.

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[1] "all suche as shall be nomynated & appoynted to be of the systeryd shall make a brekefaste at their entry for a knowledge, and shalbestowe at the least xxd or ijs or more as they lyste", SC 2/1/4 fo. 28r.

The uniqueness of the wool-packers lies not in the fact that they were - or were not - a guild, but in the fact that they were women who worked together. Though their employment was based on the domestic skill of sewing, and in its periodicity followed similar patterns to women's working patterns, these women were unusual because their work was controlled, systematised and regulated by the civic authorities. This type of regulation is unique -as far as I am aware - in its attempt to regulate female modes of working. [1]

It is the degree of regulation over their behaviour that signals the major difference between these women and the masculine crafts. No craft was subjected to such control or lack of autonomy. Neither were the porters, a parallel organisation to the wool-packers in that they were limited in number by the town and worked directly for the merchants. Both groups served the port in their gender specific tasks but, though the fact that individual porters were frequently fined for various misdemeanours suggests that their behaviour was not beyond reproach, as a group they were not subject to similar controls. [2]

In its regulation of the wool-packers, the *rule* reveals that when women's work crossed the physical and ideological boundaries of the household economy and entered the masculine world of trade, it had to be controlled. Apart from the prostitutes the wool-packers were the only group of women who worked beyond their households, where women worked with other women, dealing directly with male merchants, beyond the supervision of their household head. [3] Their crossing of this boundary could lead to the transgression of order. The authorities clearly felt it necessary to control their work, but more importantly, their behaviour, by selecting married women and widows who they thought unlikely to cause, "gret stryve and debate". The mayor and corporation of Southampton, like other men of sixteenth-century England, were well aware of the threats posed to the social order by groups of independent women.[4]

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[1] For the women themselves, wool-packing, though dependant on the seasonal and political fluctuations of the wool trade, was probably more regular than any other form of employment available.

[2] See Ord. no. 72, Oak *Book,* pp.113-4; SC5/3/1.

[3] They may have had a male servant, see "Smart the wolle packers s[erva]nte", SC 5/3/1/ fo. 61r.

[4] See pp. 183-5 & 190.

III

Though Southampton's economy was based on both international and inland trade, the wool-packers were among the few women who played an active part in the port. Built on the import of wine and export of wool during the early medieval period, Southampton's trade with France and Flanders had largely been superseded early in the fifteenth century by the Italian city states, whose agents and merchants continued to be active in the town until the early sixteenth century.[1] For local men, international trade offered a good living. The activities of the limited merchant elite and of a larger number of small-scale traders demanded the services of porters, carters, coopers, mariners, shipwrights, victuallers and a myriad other occupations, including Crown and civic officials. The only women with a specific role in the port were wool-packers; with the prostitutes they probably outnumbered all the other women who worked in the masculine realm of international trade.[2] In the section that follows next, I shall examine the evidence for women's activity in and around Southampton's trading community, and suggest why local women were almost completely excluded from the town's primary economic activity.

4.7 Women and Long Distance Trade

The key participants in, and primary beneficiaries of, Southampton's mercantile economy were the merchant community, a small but wealthy elite who, initially through the Merchant Guild and the through its successor, the corporation, controlled both economic and civic power in the town. [3]

During the late-thirteenth century one of the most prominent merchants in the town was a woman. Granted exemption from royal tallages in 1253, Dame

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[1] For the history of Southampton's trade see Platt, *Medieval Southampton* and Ruddock, *Italians*.
[2] For the construction of masculinity in 16th- and 17th-century merchants' handbooks, see Ceri Sullivan, "Cash cows: engendering credit between1580 and 1620", conference paper "Women, Trade and Business", Exeter, July 1996.
[3] For the merchant community's domination of civic power, see Platt, *Medieval Southampton*, esp. chap. 6. See also Kowaleski, *Local Markets & Regional Trade*, pp. 95-119.

Claramunda gained the king's wine contract in 1258, presumably acquiring the capital required for overseas trade through her connection to the Gloucester family. [1] Dame Claramunda achieved a status and influence that was still remembered in the town over two centuries later. [2] But although she died before the ordinances which limited trade to burgesses were enrolled in the Oak Book, her status probably owed more to her links with the Gloucesters than because the relationship between the masculine realms of civic power and mercantile activity was not yet fully entrenched. [3]

By the fifteenth century, women are conspicuous only by their absence. The Port Petty Custom Books, dating from 1426, listed all the cargoes that entered and left the port, naming their owners and their origins, and the custom due.[4] Of the thousands of individuals recorded in those books, less than 20 were female. Of these women, few could be described as merchants, and even fewer imported and exported goods outside coastal waters.

With the exception of Alice Frelond, (fl. 1429), the wife or widow of a Bristol merchant, who traded with Flanders (Middleburgh), the women who imported goods from overseas dealt in very small quantities. [5] Most female merchants like Alice and Johanna Cherle of Salisbury, who imported five tons and a pipe of wine in 1427-8, were not local women, but came from other towns in the south. [6] Lady Dawtrey, discussed below, and Isabella Mersh, widow of a merchant and mercer, who continued her husband's business, were the only local women engaged in import, though in 1509-10 Isabella brought in only one "basket continente haberdashwar". [7] All the other local women who imported goods paid custom, from which local merchants were exempt, and were merely importing goods for their own use. Female brewers imported grain, while the widow of John Norton,

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[1] *Cal.P.R. 1247-58*, p. 209; *Cal. Liberate Rolls 1251-60*, p. 438. For her biography and the Gloucester connection, see Platt, *Medieval Southampton*, p. 237. Seven other women were listed in the Pipe Rolls for this period.

[2] "Dame Cleremondes" house was used as a marker on the porters' routes in 1487, Ord. 64, *Oak Book* I, p. 98.

[3] Ords. 19-21 & 23-4, *Oak Book,* pp. 35-9.

[4] SC5/4.

[5] *Port Books 1427-30,* p. 89; her husband was active in 1427-8, *ibid.*, pp. 26, 43, 61-63.

[6] *Port Books 1427-30,* p. 60.

[7] *Port Book 1509-10*, p. 265.

who imported seven balets of woad in 1509-10, probably worked as a dyer with her brother-in-law Robert, who imported woad on two occasions in the same year. [1] The picture is very similar in the export trade: Alice Flecher of the Isle of Wight exported wine to the island from 1427-40, perhaps the most consistent small-scale female trader. [2] Agnes Weston of Havant - down the coast from Southampton - exported three pipes of wine in 1439-40, and as a merchant of Havant she paid no custom. [3]

The Brokage Books from 1430 to 1530 present a very similar picture. The only Southampton woman who engaged in mercantile trade on a regular basis and on a scale comparable to other merchants was *my lady* Dawtrey, who continued her late husband's trade in millstones for at least 14 years, possibly continuing this trade after her second marriage to Richard Lyster. Between 1521 and 1534 she rented the ground at the West Quay to "lay her millstones on", importing and exporting millstones throughout the period, as well as occasionally importing fish.[4] In 1527-8, for example, she was responsible for one third of the millstones exported by local merchants, and was prosperous enough to own her own cart; she must have also been afforded the trading privileges of a burgess, the trade in millstones being reserved for burgesses alone. [5] Almost all other local women were recorded merely as bringing in or sending goods out of the town for their own personal use.

But, at least up until the 1450s female traders, predominantly from the textile production centres of Salisbury, Wilton, and Basingstoke, do appear regularly in the Brokage Books; their absence from the later books explained by the decline

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[1] For Grete "bere woman" and Katherine Sus, see above, p. 102-3. In 1427 Jenete Lombe, who Studer suggests is female, imported 10 quarters of rye in 1427, again paying custom, *Port Books 1427-30*, p. 22, *Port Book 1509-10*, pp. 105 & 192.
[2] *Port Books 1427-30*, p. 35; *Port Books 1439-40*, pp. 6-7 & 47.
[3] *Port Books 1439-40*, pp. 20 & 107.
[4] See for example, *Brokage Books 1477-8 and 1527-8*, pp. 131,171, 187 & 193; see also p. 173.
[5] SC5/5/1-33; SC5/1 For her West Quay rents from 1521-33, see SC5/1/32- 38; by 1539 rents for the same grounds were paid by "my Lord Chief Baron" (Sir Richard Lyster), see SC5/1/39. fo.9. She also rented the loft over the "tin house" in 1513-14, and the loft over the fish market from 1526-9, SC5/1/31 & 36, fos. 71 & 7; Ord. 20, *Oak Book*, p. 35.

of the Wessex textile industry after 1450. Subsequently, fewer female merchants from other towns were listed, but those who traded through Southampton were, for the most part - like "my Lady Jones libr' London", who imported tin - specialists dealing in a narrow range of goods. [1]

As table 4.5, overleaf, shows, female merchants account on average for less than 3% of annual entries in the brokage books. However, the figures for the numbers of journeys they made mask the activities of one or two women, who in many years, commissioned most of the consignments recorded. In 1439-40, for instance, Juliana of Basingstoke was responsible for eight of the 15 journeys shown; in 1443-4, she comissioned five consignments, while Margery Hill of Wilton was responsible for another eight in the same year. Similarly, in 1527-8, tin for *my lady* Jones of London left the town on 14 occasions, while *my lady* Dawtrey of Southampton sent out four consignments of millstones. [2]

As individuals, women's trading patterns were not significantly different from those of men, the bulk of whom commissioned between two and five annual consignments - usually carried in only one cart - as shown in figure 4.[3] The merchants who traded out of Southampton - both female and male - were, for the most part, from nearby towns such as Romsey, Winchester and Salisbury, rather than Bristol, London and Coventry, destinations dominated by the mercantile elites. Both male and female traders were equally marginalised by the activities of local burgesses, London merchants and Italian agents.

These small-scale trading operations were the only activity in which, though women made up a small percentage of practitioners, their patterns of operation resembled those of men. Both traded on an episodic basis, and many of the men had other occupations, just as the women presumably also occupied domestic

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[1] *Brokage Book 1527-8*, pp. 126, 148, 152 (3 occs.), 155 (2 occs.) 156, 158, 191, 193, 197, 205 & 207.

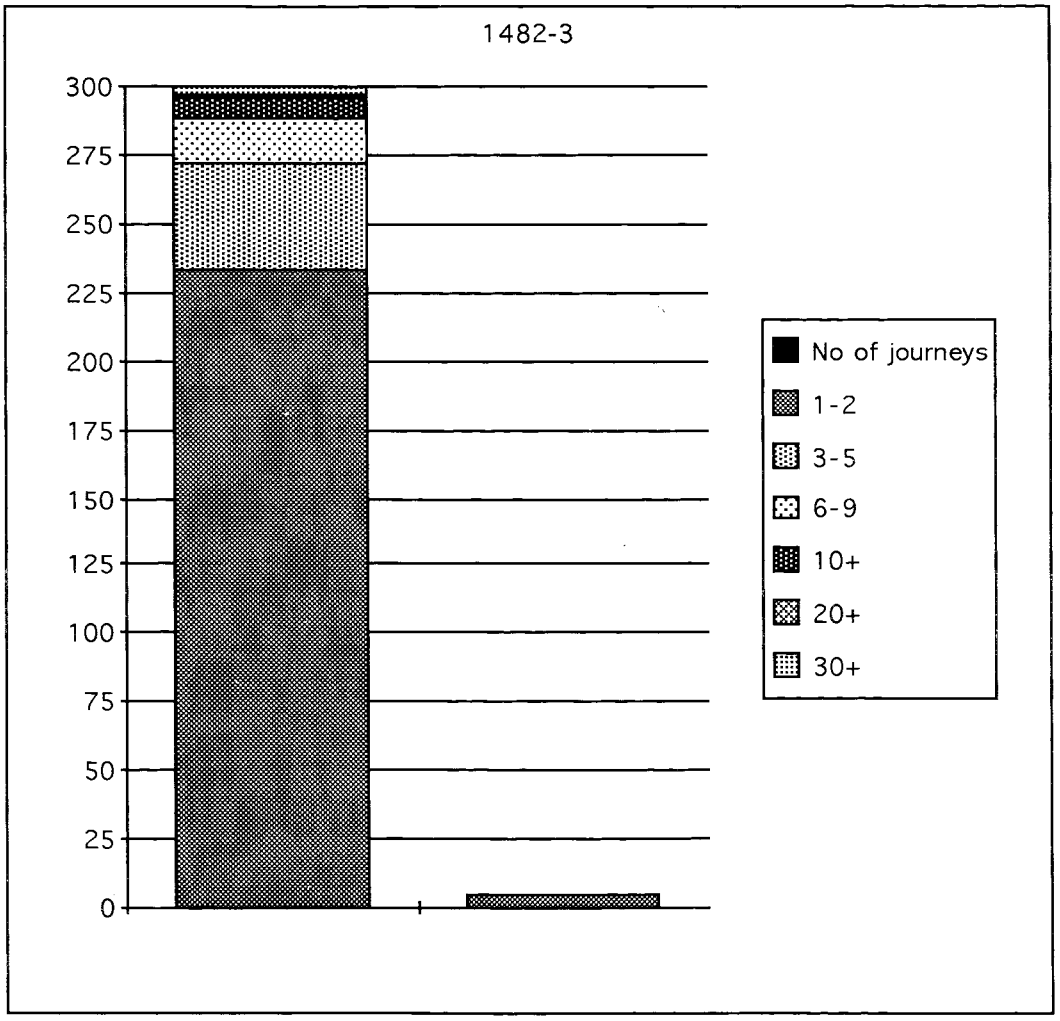
[2] See above, p. 125, n.4.

[3] Lewis found the same pattern for 1448-9, the majority of traders despatching less than five consignments, with only 22 men despatching more than 12, *Port and Brokage Books 1448-9*, pp. xiii-xiv. See also Stevens & Olding, *Brokage Book 1477-8*, pp. xv-xvii.

Table 4.5 Female Merchants in sampled Brokage Books [1]

Year	Female Merchants	No. of Journeys	All Journeys	%
1439-40	5	15	312	4.8
1440-1	4	8	246	3.35
1443-4	6	27	c. 500	c. 5.4
1456-7	5	20	1600	1.25
1470-1	7	13	845	1.53
1477-8	5	12	1276	0.9
1483-3	3	9	c.300	3.0
1526-7	3	20	1584	1.2

Figure 4 Male and female merchants by journey, 1482-3.



[1] Samples were attempted for each decade, but only one female trading on her own account was recorded in each of SC5/5/30-1 (1493-5); no books survive for the years 1495-6 to1505-6, in which year a very fragmentary book survives, SC5/5/32; neither are there any surviving books for the period 1506-1526.

roles.[1] Theoretically this periodicity should have enabled more women to act as small-scale traders, but without access to capital and to the discourse of mercantile trade, the numbers of women remain consistently low.

This does not, however, explain the almost complete absence of Southampton women, particularly the widows of Southampton merchants, when compared with the activity of widows from nearby towns. Their less than minor role in international trade is not unexpected, though one might have expected to find a handful of widows continuing their husband's overseas trade; but their absence from inland trade is more surprising. It begs the question as to the difference between Southampton, and, say, Salisbury, a manufacturing town where individual widows appear to have engaged in trade on a large scale over a number of years. The explanation must lie in Southampton's gendering of mercantile activity as exclusively masculine, controlled by and reserved for the mercantile elite which controlled the corporation, from its very beginnings as a merchant guild. These men excluded all but a few from both trade and civic power; the exclusion of women should present no surprises.[2]

Neither were women active in the infrastructure of occupations that enabled the port to function. Again, in the thirteenth century, the widow Petronilla le Fleming had been one of the primary hosts for foreign merchants, an occupation which by at least 1491 was reserved exclusively for burgesses.[3] If the conditions of hosting in Southampton were similar to those in Ipswich, then in addition to providing accommodation, alien hosts both advised alien merchants and sold goods on their behalf, earning a 25% share in their profits.[4] During the the fifteenth century,

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[1] See James, "Geographical Origins and Mobility", pp. 545-72; Kowaleski, *Local Markets & Regional Trade*, pp. 123-5

[2] For women, almost always widows, and always few in number, but active in long distance trades, see Goldberg, *Women, Work and Life Cycle*, pp. 124-5; Kowaleski,"Women's Work in a Market Town", pp. 147-8; *Local Markets and Regional Trade*, p.154.

[3] *Cal.P.R. 1258-66,* p. 258;*Cal.P.R. 1266-72*, p. 242. Platt, *Medieval Southampton*, pp. 69-70; [Ord. 24], *Oak Book*, p.156.

[4] Bateson, *Borough Customs* 2, p. 181.

no women were listed as alien hosts, but in 1549-50, Dorothy Guidotti was named in the Stall and Art List as providing lodgings for alien merchants. [1]
Other burgesses wives and widows with familial connections within the trading community were sometimes involved on the periphery of mercantile trade. Some of these women provided pledges or acted as sureties for goods imported by foreign traders, and must have had sufficient knowledge of the alien merchant community to risk their capital. Alice Cockes, who acted as surety for a Dutch merchant in 1509-10, was the widow of the former water-bailiff George Cockes (d. 1502). Agnes Baudwyn who acted as surety for an Italian merchant in the same year, and Mistress Affelde and others who provided both *ostelage* and surety for other Italian merchants must have had similar connections. [2]

A few wealthy widows also acted a source of credit for local merchants, and it is perhaps as money-lenders that some women occupied a significant role in mercantile trade. When Alice Aberie died in 1565 she was owed £109 19s; her debtors included both London and local merchants, and included the Italian, Anthony Guidotti, who owed some £66.[3] Again, Margaret Pyd, who died with an estate valued at £95, was owed over £250 by both local and London merchants, and again included the Guidottis, this time, *my lady* Gwydot.[4] However, few widows were prepared to risk their money in boat-ownership.[5] Florence Stout, who inherited the *Nicholas of Southampton* before 1349 was the last recorded female ship-owner, using her vessel to serve the king's wine contract. But when, 200 years later, the merchant John Johnson died in 1564, he left his family the proceeds of his shares in two vessels, rather than a share in their actual ownership. [6]

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[1] Records survive for 1439-45, E101/128/31, E179/173/105,107,110, see also 131-42; SC6/1/1, fo. 3r.
[2] James, *Port Book 1509-10*, p. 259 & 296. SC5/1/21 & 32, wool house books; SC5/8, weigh house books.
[3] *Inventories*, pp. 230-1.
[4] *Inventories*, pp.153-4.
[5] Mistress Bore stored masts for ships laid-up over winter, and supplied a new mast for a French ship, SC5/1/40, fos. 8 & 39.
[6] PRO SC6/1282/1; *Inventories*, p. 193.

A few women, however, owned smaller boats and worked with the lightermen who carried goods to land from larger vessels moored out in the Solent. In 1427-8 Matilda Wollman carried a total of 45 balets of woad, 30 of alum and a hogshead of wine to shore; and between May and August 1449 Alison John ferried goods from the carracks on seven occasions.[1] Mother Bettkyn also used her boat in the port - to carry staves to repair a quay - while others like Grete "Berewoman" may have used them only for their personal cargoes. [2] Women were even less likely to work among the carters who transported goods out of the town. Just two are recorded in sampled Brokage Books: Margaret, who carried loads to both Broughton and Nursling in 1441-2, and Edyth, a widow, who carried wine, oil and some haberdashery to Salisbury on behalf of William Dockett in 1482-3. [3] Women were not only marginal to Southampton's international, coastal and inland trade, but also to the infrastructure that supported it.

4.8 Petty Retailers and Hucksters [4]

Given that they were excluded from mercantile activity, were Southampton women able to work as small-scale traders in the local market that served the townspeople's daily needs? [5] They certainly seem to have been active in retail, selling everything from bread, beer and candles to nails, timber and rope. The retail activities of craftsmen's wives has already been noted, but a number of other wives, several widows and single-women were also active as petty traders. These women did not sell a single commodity, but like their male counterparts, handled a range of products: in 1456, for example, Christina Cawse sold building materials to the steward, but in 1461-2 supplied him with ale. [6] Unlike their

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[1] *Port Book,1439-40*, p. 55; *Port & Brokage 1448-9*, pp. 26-8, 41, 66-9 & 75.
[2] *Port Book*, 1427-8, p. 103; SC5/1/29 fo. 21r; *Port Books, 1469-71*, p. 37. For boat-women in Norwich and York, see Goldberg, *Women, Work & Life Cycle*, p. 136, n. 230.
[3] SC5/5/1, fo. 14r & 16v, (this book may date to 1430-1); SC5/5/25, fo. 12 v,1482-3; the only other woman carrying goods in her own cart was the brewer(?) Katherine Sewae, *Brokage Book 1439-40*, p. 13.
[4] Rodney Hilton, "Lords, Burgesses and Hucksters",*Past & Present* 97,1982, pp. 3-15, esp. p. 7, and 'Women Traders in Medieval England', in Hilton, *Class Conflict & the Crisis of Feudalism, Essays in Medieval Social History*, (London,1985), pp. 205-15.
[5] Merry Wiesner, "Paltry peddlers or essential merchants? Women in the Distributive Trades in Early modern Nuremberg", *Sixteenth Century Jnl.* 12:2,1981, pp. 3-13.
[6] SC5/1/8, fo.11.

married sisters, these women appear in the stewards' books over a number of years, clearly running their own businesses. Mistress Anne Newman was active for at least ten years, selling paper to the steward in 1487-8, and nails in 1497-8; similarly Christian Ludlow sold rope to the town in both 1472 and 1488, while John Walshmanne's widow supplied grease for the town crane on several occasions. [1] One of these widows, Agnes Underwood, supplied spices to the town: these were an expensive commodity, usually sold by grocers and mercers, suggesting that she was no mere petty trader. Though wealthy enough to lend the town 10s in 1486, she is absent from the Port Books which suggests that she was not directly involved in importing spices. [2] The only widow operating on a mercantile scale was Lady Dawtrey, whose trade in millstones and fish has already been noted; her predecesor, the first wife of Sir John, sold nails. [3] Indeed, with exception of victuals and timber, more women sold nails - up to 6,000 at a time - than any other commodity. [4] Elsewhere, nail-making has been identified as a predominantly female industry, and it is possible that some Southampton women were nail-makers.[5] Women were also relatively active in the timber trade, buying and selling laths and planks, as well as wood - Vincent Palysden's widow supplying 50 oaks to the town in 1472-3. [6] When a ship was broken up in the port in 1461-2, its timbers were purchased by Isabella Ayleward, Alsyn Restryck, Margaret Baker and seven men.[7] A few women also sold other building materials such as bricks and lead.[8]

The variety of goods offered by women reflects the diversity of the distributive trades, though again, it was men who dominated the market. But just as brewers were involved in other activities, so many small-scale traders also had other

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[1] SC5/1/22, fo. 37 & SC5/1/24, fo.13; SC5/1/14, fo.38 & SC5/1/22, fo. 47; SC5/1/31, fo. 22.
[2] *1st R.B.* 3, p.55.
[3] SC5/1/24, fo.12, (1497-8); Sir John Dawtrey 's first wife was the widow, Jane Williams, who was still alive in 1502, *Black Book* 3, pp.12-15. He then married Isabel, whose documented activities as a merchant start after his death in 1518, see Platt, *Medieval Southampton*, p. 238.
[4] Mistress Newman and wife of Borgoys, 1497-8; Gregory's wife,1507; Isobel Hylles, w. of John, 1526-7; Lady (Jane) Dawtrey, see n. 3; SC5/1/25 fo.15v ; SC5/1/ /36 fo.21 & SC5/1/24 fos.12 &14.
[5] Goldberg, *Women, Work & Life Cycle*, pp.128-9.
[6] Joan Holmhegge, 1457-8, Isabelle Aylward, 1461-2, wife of John Swanne, 1487-8, Mistress Aynger, 1525-6 and Mistress Hossy, 1530-1, SC5/1/ 9, fo.12, SC5/1/10. fo 11; SC5/1/22, fo. 37, SC5/1/34, fo. 24 & SC5/1/37, fo. 21; SC5/1/16, fo.14.
[7] SC5/1/10, fo.11.
[8] Bricks, Rotte's wife,1513-4; lead, Annys Potter, 1530-1; SC5/1/31, fo.19 & SC5/1/37, fo. 21.

interests, enabled once again by their wives. Both the butcher, John Swanne, and his wife sold timber to the town, while she also dealt in lamb and veal. [1]
Because the stewards did not always name the individuals from whom they purchased goods - particularly when purchasing large quantities of victuals or building materials - it is impossible provide an accurate figure for the relative numbers of men and women involved in small-scale trade. On the other hand, in years where most of the suppliers were named, women formed up to 5% of those - including craftsmen and other traders - who sold goods to the town. [2]

Table 4.6 Stall and Art Lists, 1549-1566 [3]

	1549	**1550**	**1558**	**1559**	**1565**	**1566**
Names	231	249	104	218	228	200
Women	3% (7)	2.8% (7)	3.5% (3)	3.2% (7)	7.4% (17)	4% (8)
Mercator	7	10	12	6	7	9
Women	-	-	1	-	-	-
Tippler	16	23	4	6	10	15
Women	6.2% (1)	4.3% (1)	-	-	20% (2)	26.6% (4)
Other trades	12	13	6	20	4	59
Women	8.3% (1)	7.6% (1)	16% (1)	5% (1)	-	-

After 1549, we have the Stall and Art lists, in which the names - and sometimes the occupations - of all household heads, excepting burgesses, were listed by parish. Thus, although they exclude married women, they do provide perhaps the most accurate estimate of the relative levels of male and female activity at this level of the formal economy. [4] Women were in a minority, making up just over 3% of the 200 to 250 individuals listed in most years, except in 1565, where unusually 17 women were listed. In the 1566 list, where women made up 4% of the 200

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[1] SC5/1/22, fo. 37, SC5/3/13, fo. 55. See Kowaleski, *Local Markets*, pp. 123-6.
[2] It is not always possible to establish whether the individual was the manufacturer or a retailer.
[3] SC6/1/1-6.
[4] These record payments made by each individual, SC6/1/1-; James, *Southampton Sources*, p. 21.

individuals listed, the occupations of 41.5% of individuals were also given, the highest percentage in any list. Of the 33 occupations recorded, 30 were occupied by between one and three individuals: the list was dominated by 16 tailors, 18 tipplers - four of whom held other occupations - and nine merchants. Half of the women were listed by occupation: all of them were tipplers.[1] The more limited information available in other years shows much the same profile. Over a period of 18 years, only one woman was listed as a *mercator* (merchant), while eight were listed as tipplers. Only three women were listed under other occupations - John Brown's widow (twice), the brewer; Dorothy Guidotte, for providing lodgings for strangers; and Elyn Seynt John, described as a smith and vendor of iron. [2] Most of these women were widows, but about a fifth of the women listed for Stall and Art seem to have been single, widows generally being described as such. "Sengelwomen" were also listed in the Town Court Books during the 1470s, though it is never clear whether they were single or married women trading as *femme sole*. The methods of recording vary from book to book, the earlier books recording some cases in great detail, while the later books merely list the names of the individuals concerned and the nature of the case. Some 82 women and between 800 and 900 men were listed in the seven books which cover the period from 1474-5 to 1482-3.

Table 4.7 Status of women listed for debt in the Town Court Books

singlewoman	**no status**	**widow**	**uxor** (joint)	**executrix**
5 (8.1%)	23 (37.1%)	6 (9.7%)	15 (24.2%)	13 (20.9%)

Some 62 women, just over 75% - approximately the same percentage as men - were listed in cases of debt. If we exclude the 13 women who can be clearly identified acting as executrix in recovering debts related to their husbands' estate,

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[1] SC6/1/6.

[2] SC6/1/2 & 4, fos. 2r & 5r; SC6/1/2, fo. 3v; SC6/1/3. fo. 1r. One woman - Widow Sulling - was included amongst 40 alien traders recorded in the town in 1589-91, SC6/2/6-8.

some 34 women can be seen to be acting alone, a third - on their first appearance, listed as plaintiff, the remainder as defendant. [1]

On the basis of Kowaleski's analysis of similar sources in Exeter, where 66% of women listed were involved in cases of debt concerned with the sale of goods - over 75% of them linked to the sale of victuals - I suggest that the women who appear in the Southampton rolls were also petty traders. [2] Around a quarter were named jointly with their husbands and described as *uxor,* suggesting that the couple were jointly responsible for the activities which had lead to the action. But of the women acting alone, 23 were listed without marital status, while five were given the appellation *sengillwoman* - including Matilda Thompson, "singlewoman of the stewes". Though it is not possible to establish how many of the 23 were single, and how many were widowed, it is clear that the most active litigant, Isabella Baker, alias Griffith, of Romsey, was probably trading as *femme sole* . [3] Given that this is one of the few sources in which we can identify the activities of single-women, these rolls and books are frustrating in their lack of detail. The extent of these debts, for example, is rarely given, though several women sued or were sued for amounts of between four and 10 shillings. There is also a suggestion that networks of credit existed. We find, for instance, that Margiam, a single woman, was sued for debt by John Rowland in 1474-5, and by John Barker in 1476-7. In the same year John Barker registered a plea of debt against Isabella Lord, *sengellwoman* and Isabella was herself sued against by Alicia Bower and Agnes Bertram.[4] Though we cannot assume that all these cases can be assumed to relate to debts incurred as a result of trading activities, the court books do suggest that some women - single, married and widowed - were involved in trading activities not documented elsewhere.[5] But though their participation in the

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[1] SC7/1/3-9. In the later books some individuals can appear up to 20 times, as the case was rescheduled; a high percentage of individuals also launched counter-claims, a process sometimes repeated several times in one year.

[2] In late-fourteenth century Exeter, women comprised 4.4% of creditors and 9.2% of debtors, Kowaleski, "Women's Work in a Market Town", pp.147-51.

[3] SC7/1/3, fos. 9r, 12r & 13v. Thomas Griffith, baker of Romsey was listed with her on fo. 9r.

[4] SC7/1/3, fo. 5r.; *Johes Barker qu' v' sus margiam sengillwoman in pl'iti deb,* SC7/1/6, fo.14v; *ibid.*, fos. 4r & 5r.

[5] Only one woman, Christian Ludlow, known to be a petty trader appears in these books; however, here she was listed - on 10 occasions - as the executrix of Gilbert Cornmonger, see for example SC7/1/9, fo. 55v .

debt litigation which "clogged every borough court" gives us some insight into women's participation in the credit-based economy which dominated late-medieval England, it does not reveal the nature of their trade. [1]

A century later, inventories demonstrate similar networks of credit. After the merchant and inn-keeper Edward Markant died in 1553, his executor paid debts to 15 people, including 43s. to Madolen - probably the tippler Magdalene Stevens - and £12 to Elizabethe Spring. Similarly when Reynolde Howse, merchant, died in 1573, 154 debtors were listed in his inventory, of whom 12 % were women. [2] Of the 110 individuals who owed money to Thomas Harryson, girdler, 14 were women, some from as far afield as Reading, while others - Elizabeth Kennynge, *goowiffe* (sic) Benche, *goodwiffe* Bellinger, for example - were local women; perhaps they were customers, or perhaps they sold the goods he made. He also owed £10 to Maistres Cobbe, *sylkewoman*, from whom he may have bought or commissioned work. [3] Girdles were made in wool and silk, as well as leather, and this debt may be the only evidence for local silk-women's work in occupations ancillary to craft production. [4]

Both the town court books and the later inventories suggest that women were more extensively involved in trade than either the stewards' books or the Stall and Art lists would suggest, though the activities in which they were engaged remain obscure.

At the other end of the social scale, the tippler Margery Hancock owed £7 8s. at her death, two-thirds of the value of her estate. Like many women in Southampton, Margery was involved in the victualling trade, in most towns the single largest occupational group, in which both craftsmen and individual traders participated.[5] In Southampton, for example, the bakers' petition allowed hucksters to sell bread on market days, provided they did not sell it from house to house. [6] The reciprocity of brewers and tipplers was also formally constructed

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[1] Kowaleski, *Local Markets*, p. 202-20, quoted from p. 202.
[2] *Inventories*, pp. 50-1, 380-3.
[3] *Inventories*, pp. 57-61.
[4] Swanson, *Artisans*, pp. 63-4.
[5] Swanson, *Medieval Artisans*, p.11; Goldberg, *Women, Work and Life Cycle*, pp. 104-8; Kowaleski, *Local Markets*, pp.132-44.
[6] SC2/7/3.

"that one may lyve by another" in a 15th century ordinance, though in 1531 the brewers had to be reminded that they were prohibited from tapping beer and ale, while the tipplers were similarly instructed that they could sell ale and beer, but were prohibited from brewing.[1] However, Margery Hancock, the widow of a barber, and a tippler from at least 1559 until her death in 1572, left a substantial quantity of brewing equipment in her back-houses; presumably serving her customers in the shop which held "an old table, twoo tresselles, an old forme & certain old hanginges about it". [2]

Although the mayor's complaint in 1531 that "every other howse is a bruer or a tapper" was probably an exaggeration, the number of tipplers in the town is impossible to estimate until around 1550. [3] A list of licensed tipplers, dated to 1548-58, named ten men and two women, listed with their sureties and admitted under a penalty of 20s; a later list of 1559-60 named eleven men and two women licensed to tipple.[4] During the same period, the Stall & Art Lists show that there were as many as 20 tipplers in the town in any one year, of whom up to a fifth were women. in 1576, when William Barwick, chandler, was contracted to supply candles to inn-keepers, taverners and tippling houses, women were not named as inn-keepers or taverners, but of the 35 tipplers named, three (8.5%) were female. [5] However, around the same period - 1571 to 81- between 26 and 50% of unlicensed tipplers presented to the Court Leet were women. [6] But though a few women like Margery Hancock and Magdalene Stevens successfully "tippled" for years, the majority of unlicensed tipplers appear more sporadically in the records, and often in more than one occupation. The widow Ester Hamon, for instance, was fined as both an unlicensed tippler and as a huckster in 1571.[7] These

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[1] Ca. 67, *Oak Book* 1, p.142; *3rd R.B* 1, pp. 44-5.
[2] William Hancocke, HRO B wills 1543/40; SC5/3/1, fo.104v; SC6/1/5-6, fos. 1v & 6r; HRO B wills 1572/41:1-2, *Inventories*, pp. 331-3.
[3] *3rd R.B.*1, p. 44; see also table 3.2.
[4] *3rd R.B.*1, p. 1; SC5/3/1, fos.103v-104r.
[5] *3rd R. B.* 3, p. 83-4; for Elizabeth Deboke, ale-house keeper in 1573,*3 rd R.B.* 3, p.11, n. 2.
[6] *Court Leet*, pp. 65, 72, 121 & 214.
[7] Magdalene Stevens was named in the stall and art lists for 1555 & 1566 as a tippler, SC6/1/5 & 6, fos. 2r & 6r; and paid a fine to tipple in 1559-60, SC5/3/1, fo. 103v. She was was fined as a huckster, along with seven other tipplers in 1571, *Court Leet*, p. 65; *ibid.* pp. 65 & 72.

widows obviously employed as many strategies as they could, in order to earn a living.

Women's role in the victualling trade has already been mentioned in the context of extended domestic labour, and though the sale of food within the town was dominated by men, women were more active in this aspect of the economy than in any other. [1] The extent of their involvement in the sale of fish was confirmed by the very ordinance that excluded them from the activity, "and if there be any regatress [that] buys fish to sell again, she shall lose it all". [2] This may explain why barrels of fish were seized from Alice Cokkes, Alice Hotton, Ann Wotton, Maud Young and seven others in 1504 .[3] But apart from a spate of fines in 1482 - when four women were fined for regrating both fish and wild-fowl - there is little further evidence. [4] But at least one woman legitimately traded in fish: in 1502 Beldam Bettes was said to owe 8s 3d to a London merchant for salt-herring she had purchased.[5]

A few women were amongst the strangers and farmers allowed to sell meat at "the Fryars benche" on Thursdays, Saturdays and festival days.[6] When in 1443-4, an assiduous broker recorded the names of every trader entering the town, 25% of the entries for butchers named Isabella Wexcombe, who paid rent for a stall at the Friars on 14 occasions. Similarly in 1511-14 Dale's wife, of Romsey, purchased whole and half-year rents for a stall. [7]

Women from the surrounding areas also dealt in "poultry, butter, chees and egges and frute" at the poultry market. [8] Probably keen to maximise their income, some of these "butter wyves and butter maydes" were involved in a major forestalling

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[1] There is little evidence for the sale of prepared foods, though John Mason's wife sold mustard sauce, *Stewards* 2, pp. 52-3. A paste containing mustard seeds was recovered from excavations in the fish-market, pers. comm., Kevin White.

[2] Ord. 64, *c.* 1300, *Oak Book* 1, p. 67; by 1473, the word is not gendered, Ca. 58, *ibid.*, p. 97.

[3] Based on Gidden's interpretation, *1st R.B.*1, p. 23.

[4] *Assize,* p. 33.

[5] *1st R.B.*1, p.16.

[6] SC2/7/6.

[7] *Brokage 1443-4*, pp. 9,29,33,48,59,74,90,101, 110, 115,128, 225, 301 & 316, see also p. 9, n.1 & p. xxi; SC5/1/29, fo.4r & SC5/1/31, fo. 4. For a description of butchers' stalls, see Keene, "Tanners' Widows", *Medieval London Widows*, pp. 11-13. Before 1450 the broker also recorded fees paid for "showing" in the market; for women paying these, see, for example, SC5/5/1, "two women", fo. 11r ; Johanna Wulf, fo. 11v; a maid of London, fos. 17r & v; see also Coleman, *Brokage* 1, p. xxi.

[8] SC 2/1/4, fo. 45v. For the "woman's merkett" in Nottingham, see W.H. Stevenson (ed.) *Records of the Borough of Nottingham*, 2 vols., (Nottingham,1883), p. 424.

scandal in 1560, when Edward Willmot, mayor and owner of the Dolphin Inn, was accused of intercepting butter wives and fishermen outside the town.[1] Similarly, Lawrence Sendy, "shumakker and fhyshemonger", and Thomas Weekes, butcher, were presented for engrossing butter and cheese, presumably from the same women, in 1551. [2] Forestalling - the buying up of goods in bulk before they had reached the market - was forbidden by ordinance. [3] With the exception of Kattren Waryette, who was accused of fore-stalling meal for the baker William Locke in 1550, few women were accused of large-scale fore-stalling, presumably because they lacked the capital or trading connections which forestalling demanded. [4]

But women were active among the huxters and regrators who purchased goods in the market-place and retailed them later in the day at a profit. Under the ordinances, they were prohibited from buying "goats, lambs, birds, geese, capons, hens, chickens or any other kind of victual, new cheese, butter, eggs" before the hour of prime (eight a.m.), though this was revised to 11 a.m. in 1571. [5] Unlike fore-stallers, huxters were accepted as part of the town's economy - the steward purchasing "good ale", bread, eggs, fish and meat from hucksters to feed the auditors in 1461-2. [6] Though mainly selling victuals, they also sold faggots of wood and candles - "all the huxsters by no candills to retayle except that they sell for the said price as the tallow chandlers sell". [7]

However, it is only possible to appreciate the extent to which women were involved by looking at those who were fined or presented , presumably - it is not always clear - when they broke the ordinance, or when their activities caused complaints about prices and scarcities. [8]

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[1] *3rd R.B.* 2, pp. 72-3.
[2] *Court Leet*, p. 27; Sendy was also fined in 1561 for selling herring before the price had been set, SC5/3/1,1572.
[3] Ord. 70, *Oak Book*, p. 71.
[4] *Court Leet*, p. 25.
[5] Ord. 70, *Oak Book* 1, p.71 & n. 29; "huxter "and "regrator " are used interchangeably in later versions; *Court Leet*, pp. 76-7, see also p. 65. The numbers of hucksters were theoretically limited after 1571.
[6] SC 5/1/10, fo. 26.
[7] *Court Leet* 2 p. 233; *1st R.B.* 3, p. 85.
[8] For example, *Court Leet*, pp. 76-7. In Exeter, only non-franchisers and strangers were fined, Kowaleski, *Local Markets*, p. 185.

Women made up around 27% of the hucksters and regrators fined before 1550, and around 35% of those presented before the Court Leet after 1549. However, few habitual offenders can be identified, so we must assume that those who made their livings as hucksters operated - at least as far as the authorities were concerned - within the ordinance. Hucksters included widows and single women - like tippling, it was one of the few occupations women with limited capital could engage in - but the majority of named hucksters were married women, sometimes artisans' wives, like the wives of two coopers, fined in 1482. [1] Most of the married hucksters seem to have been the wives of petty traders - Alison Byfleet, for example, fined as a huckster in 1449-50, was married to a timber-dealer. [2] In 1550 the women fined were not named, but described as "hukesters wyffes", in 1571 when Nicholas Riche was presented for tippling and keeping lodgings without license, his wife was presented for "missuse[ing] the market of eggs". [3] It is not unreasonable to assume that Nicholas' wife was just as active as her husband in tapping ale, and was probably completely responsible for the provision of bed and board for their lodgers. At this level of the economy, it is clear that that both husbands and wives were equally engaged in the enterprise of generating income for their households. Though women may have been peripheral to mercantile trade, they were certainly present in the local shops and markets which supplied the basic needs of the people of the town.

4.9 Labouring Women

For unskilled women unable to produce and sell a domestic surplus or purchase goods for re-sale, options for earning a living were limited. Though the wives of labourers assisted their husbands, women do not appear among the carpenters, helliers, plumbers and masons who worked for the town, and who were able to command a higher daily rate of pay than general labourers.[4]

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[1] *Assize of Bread*, p. 33.
[2] SC 5/1/ 7, fos. 3 & 32.
[3] *Court Leet*, pp. 22 & 65; Roger Halliday, fined as a huckster, was a also a tippler, *3rd R.B.* 1, p.1.
[4] Chap. 3, pp. 82-3; in 1528-9, for example, skilled men were paid 6d a day, while unskilled labourers were paid 4d, see SC5/1/36, fo.15.

But women were employed as general labourers. In 1473, for example, a woman was paid 2d to "draw the straw to the daysters hand " when a town house was re-thatched, while both women and children were employed to pick up slates after a storm in 1558. [1] Though in 1508-9, only "power [poor] men" were employed as labourers, from at least 1533-4, women were frequently taken on as labourers on civic building projects. Elener Clemente was paid 4d a day for four days' work on the conduits in 1553-4, the only female labourer actually named, and probably a single woman. [2] In 1555-6 women carried clay to repair the causeway and docks at the Bulwarks, and in the same year four women were paid for 26 days' work when Catchcold tower was rebuilt. [3] The practice of employing women as labourers continued throughout the 1560s, with women employed in 1561-2 to carry 13 tons of stones to the "town hall" and to clear builders' waste from the Weigh House. They shifted stones to the Watergate in 1562-3 and in 1563-4 carried barrows of materials to repair the causeway. Comparative rates of pay varied: in 1555-6 both men and women were paid 6d. a day to carry clay, but later the same year women were paid 3d, while men were paid 6d.[4]

Who were these women who hauled 13 tons of stones? They may, like Elener Clemente, have been single women with few other options, or, like the wife of John Blackgrove, prepared to take on any work that would augment the family income. Clearly they were women for whom financial imperatives were more important that contemporary notions of appropriate work for women. [5]

At all levels of the economy, women engaged in whatever work was available to them, the boundaries constructed by the household becoming increasingly vague the further down the social scale they found themselves. But equally at all levels of the formal economy, women were in a minority, whether they were the daughters, wives or widows of merchants, artisans or labourers. But as hucksters and petty traders they were certainly visible in the town and, in a majority of

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[1] SC5/1/14, fo.44; SC5/1/42, fo. 23.
[2] SC5/1/27a, fo. 9r; SC 5/1/38, fo. 39.
[3] SC5/1/41, fos. 28, 30-1, 34-5 & 41-2.
[4] SC5/1/43, fos. 20-1; SC5/1/44, fo.15 & SC5/1/45, fos. 39-40.
[5] Of 204 labourers listed in the 1381 York Poll Tax returns, 53 were female, Swanson, *Artisans*, p. 40.

families the income they generated - either by acting as helpmeet, or by working on their own account - was probably crucial to the survival of that family. Though, as a group, women were, at best, peripheral to mercantile trade and craft production in Southampton, if we look at women's work in the context of the family economy, the real significance of each woman's work can be recognised.

Chapter Five The gender relations of property

The legal fact that medieval women, or at least married medieval women, could not own real property seems to be both a defining and a dismal starting point to this chapter. It produces, in both medieval and modern minds, a notion of fixity in the gender relations of property. Yet in her introduction to the Black Book of Southampton, in 1912, Alice Wallis Chapman concluded that "the deeds in the Black Book suggest that the local customs were on the whole favourable to women". She suggested that, in comparison to common law, "Southampton customs appear on the whole to have favoured ownership by women".[1] Since that date, with the exception of Platt's comments on the propensity of the mercantile elite to use marriage as a means of consolidating their hold on both power and property, little attention has been paid to the gender relations of property in Southampton. [2]

This chapter will therefore review women's relationship to property in late-medieval and early modern Southampton bearing Wallis Chapman's assertion in mind. But because the possession of real property was limited to a small section of the community, I will broaden the survey to consider both land and moveable goods or chattels.

5. 1 The 1454 Terrier: a gendered mapping? [3]

Unlike most cartularies and terriers, which relate to the holdings of specific institutions or families, the Terrier of 1454 included all properties within the town walls. This was a product of its function, namely to allocate responsibility for the maintenance of a *loupe* , or particular section of town walls to each property. Described by its editor as "unique amongst medieval municipal documents", the Terrier listed all properties within the walls, naming owners, tenants and occupants in 1454, their predecessors, and in later entries, some of their

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[1] Wallis Chapman, *Black Book* 1, pp. xxxii-xxxiii.
[2] See p. 27, n. 2 and Platt, *Medieval Southampton*, esp. p. 60 and pp. 49-50 & 267-72.
[3] SC13/1/1; Burgess (ed.), *The Southampton Terrier of 1454*. The manuscript, its purpose and content are fully discussed by Burgess, *ibid.*, pp.1-19.

successors.[1] The Terrier thus provides a unique snapshot of property-holding in Southampton, revealing not only the relative percentages of properties held by women and men, but also the means by which they acquired property. But the Terrier has its limitations: excluding property outside the town walls, it presents a partial picture of property-holding and tenancy, excluding many of the poorer and female members of the community who lived in the suburbs. [2]

The Terrier lists 515 properties, of which 27 % (139) were held by God's House, St Denys Priory and other religious houses in 1454. Five per cent of the properties (26) were held by the corporation, and the balance of 350 properties was held by 55 individuals.[3] Most of these 350 properties were held by men: only 8 women (14.5% of individual property holders) owned 45 properties (12.8% of property held by individuals), percentages that remain relatively consistent throughout the period covered by the Terrier.

Table 5.1 Property Holding in the Southampton Terrier [4]

1454	**Owners**	**No. of properties**	**Tenants & Inhabitants** [5]
Women	8 (14.5%)	45 (12.9%)	24 (6.9%)
Men	47(85.5%)	304 (87.1%)	324 (93.1%)
Total	55	349	348

If these figures are compared with the figure of 16% suggested for nearby Winchester, then Wallis Chapman's assertion that Southampton women were privileged with regard to property is already called into question. Derek Keene - claiming that women occupied a "key position" in Winchester's property-holding

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[1] The names of some of those who held various properties after 1454 were added on various occasions between 1482 and 1515,*Terrier*, pp. 3-4.

[2] Women, particularly poor or single women, comprised a large percentage of the suburban population of nearby Winchester, Keene, *Survey of Medieval Winchester*, p. 387. In Southampton both prostitutes and spinsters lived outside the East Gate in the parish of All Saints Without, see p. 90, n.3 and p.192.

[3] Using Burgess's categories of owners, tenants, tenants-for-a-term and inhabitants. He describes those who hold property from God's House as owners, though they were legally lease-holders, *Terrier, passim.*

[4] Excludes corporation and ecclesiastic holdings.

[5] This column indicates the numbers of household heads who did not hold property. Based on 47 tenants and 301 "inhabitants". The proximity of figures in row three, columns two and three is coincidental.

community - has, in an analysis of conveyances, shown that 14 % of property in the city was held by women, who comprised 16% of property-holding individuals.[1]

With one possible exception, each of the eight Terrier women had obtained their property by inheritance. By contrast, less than 50% of men held property by inheritance, the remainder having either actively acquired it by purchase, or, in a few cases, gained it on marriage, medieval property law being governed by the principle of *coverture*; in which any property a woman owned became the property of her husband.[2] It is to be expected that the majority of property-owning women in Southampton were widows who had inherited properties from their husbands, their holdings being merely a reflection of the property interests of their former husbands. These inheritances ranged from a single property to the 12 properties held by Agnes Overay, and were, for the most part, held by widows for life, or at least until their children came of age.[3] Almost always, the property would be inherited by the eldest male heir, but as we have already seen in chapter 2, the will sample suggests that around a third of families failed to produce male heirs.[4]

In the Terrier, Agnes Fetplace, Joan Payn and Katherine Selder inherited their properties from their father, mother and grandfather respectively, and here some of the inconsistencies between the law in theory and practice become apparent.[5] Katherine Selder's holdings are of interest in that her grandfather bypassed his eldest son in favour of his granddaughter. But Agnes Fetplace's holdings were more unusual in that she was married - the wife, rather than the widow, of Nicholas Fetplace - yet the 14 properties she held were listed under her name,

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[1] These figures are not strictly comparable in that Keene's figure is derived from the 2,102 women appearing in Winchester conveyances. Comparable figures for Southampton are given below, see Table 5.3. He cites a figure of 7% for female householders from the 1417 Tarrage, but suggests this may be an under-representation, Keene, *Medieval Winchester*, p. 387.

[2] Freehold or copy hold property could not be disposed of without a wife's consent, see below, pp. 152-3 & n.1.

[3] Numbers given in brackets refer to Burgess' numbering of tenements, *Terrier, passim*. Unless there is specific evidence to the contrary it is assumed that the tenement has been inherited in widowhood, rather than from another male relative. R indicates that she was resident at the property, NR the contrary: Thomasina Trewtharehap [184/NR]; ww. James; Margery Hovyngham [248/NR], ww. William, mayor 1413; Joan Mersh, ww. Adam, [72/NR, 473/R, 490-1/NR]; Agnes Overay, ww. William, held all her properties, with the possible exception of [23 & 307] by inheritance.

[4] See Table 2.1 & Appendix 1.

[5] Joan Payn, [431 & 432/R]; Katherine Selder [4, 413 & 512-3].

inherited from her father in her own right. [1] Though the concept of separate estate - land or goods reserved solely for a married women's use - does not emerge until the records of the Chancery Courts appear in the late sixteenth-century, married women could hold property - usually their dowry - in their own right. [2]

A significant feature of the gendered relations of property shown by the Terrier was that almost half the men listed had actively acquired their properties. [3] Nicholas Holmhegge, for example, had gained 11 of his eighteen properties on his marriage to Joan, who had inherited them from her two previous husbands, and which she would bequeath to the town after Nicholas' death. The remainder were obtained from a range of individuals. [4] Of the eight *Terrier* women, only Christina Cauce can be seen to have acquired some of her nine properties. She held four " for a term" from the Prior of St Denys, which she rented out to tenants, and must have actively acquired at least one of the other five, though this cannot be verified in the absence of relevant conveyances or wills. [5] With the exception of Christina, these women failed to exploit their assets as effectively as men, the majority only renting out some 50% of their properties. Men rented or leased over 65% of their holdings with only 35 % of their properties being vacant in 1454. Ironically, both of the women who held a single property rented them out - neither Trewartharehap nor Hovyngam, both widows, lived at the properties they held - so we can speculate that they lived with their children: they were certainly not house-holders.

This difference challenges the assumption that property-holding widows were, firstly, guaranteed a place to live, and, secondly, a means of economic survival. In the declining land market of the mid-fifteenth century, these widows were clearly

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[1] Agnes' father, John Benet, mayor in 1413, seems to have divided his properties between his daughter Agnes and John Tyer, relationship unknown. No sources survive to show the terms of Agnes' inheritance, see nos. 23, 41-2, 293, 333, 390/T, 393/T, 405, 406/T, 430, 434-5/R, 464 & 466. This relationship is described in R393-R402 for 1423-1433: "Nicholas Fetplace and Agnes his w., dtr. of John Benet 5s.", *G.H.C*, p. 308. Agnes may, like Rosia Fortin, - who was granted two houses by her mother Lucia - have received them "by deed of gift for ever", *HCMR,* p. 70, SC4/4/4, before 1376.

[2] Erickson, *Women & Property,* pp.103-7. See will of Emma Greet, pp.157-8.

[3] See, for example, the 13 properties in the lower High Street acquired by William Soper, *Terrier,* pp. 59-63, [Tens.123-7 & 143-50].

[4] Indexed in *Terrier*, p. 165. See also p.165, n.4, below.

[5] St Denys Priory [366-9]; she held a cottage "late of [her husband] John Cauce" [440], but also held three properties "late of John Hody" [381-383], and a tenement, where she lived, "late of William Martyn' [439], - one of whom could have been her father, *Terrier,* pp.101,105 & 119.

less able than men to actively exploit their property holdings. [1] The problems Agnes Overay faced in connection with her French Street properties have already been discussed, yet these three cottages were the only properties - out of 12 - which she rented out between 1436 and 1462. She was often unable to pay the rents on the other properties she held from God's House, including the family tenement for which the rent was often forgiven: "for formerly she paid in part when she could". [2]

Table 5.2 Female property-holding by parish [3]

Parish (all properties)	**Before 1454**	**1454**	**After 1454**
All Saints (78)	3.8% (3)	7.6% (6)	4.5% (1/22)
St Laurence (48)	10.4 % (5)	6.3% (3)	10% (3/30)
Holyrood (127)	0.78% (1)	2.3% (3)	18% (13/72) [4]
St Michael (191)	8.9% (17)	16.75% (32)	3.8% (4/103)
St John (71)	1.4% (1)	1.4% (1)	4% (1/25)
Total (515)	5.2% (27)	8.7% (45)	8.7% (22/252)

The fact that women held a high number of vacant plots could also have been due to the mid-fifteenth century slump in the market, compounded by the unfashionable location of their property. All Saints was always the poorest parish but St Michael's parish was, until the fifteenth century, the wealthiest parish in the town, but by 1454 had been superseded by Holyrood. [5] This concentration of holdings in St Michael's, based on inherited properties, suggests that these women were merely maintaining resources in a less than fashionable parish. But their gender and age also worked against them. Perhaps they were unfamiliar

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[1] Platt, *King Death*, pp. 23-7.
[2] See chap.1, pp. 1-3.The capital tenement [313] had been occupied by the Overays from at least 1406; Agnes was also forgiven an annual rent of 13s 4d on tenement [309], Kaye, *GHC*, p. 251.
[3] Because of changes in ownership, all holdings, including those of the corporation and religious houses are included in this table.
[4] Includes nine properties held by the widow Elizabeth Thomas, *Terrier*, pp. 57 & 63.
[5] Platt, *Medieval Southampton*, p. 266.

with the operations of the property market, or were excluded from the networks where property was discussed or, as Agnes Overay's letter shows, found it difficult to cope with the problems of letting properties. The Terrier, in enabling us to see the use individuals made of property, clearly indicates that possession of property was not synonymous with wealth; it questions the positive emphasis placed on propertied women, and begins to undermine the dominant image of the wealthy widow. [1]

5.2 "to be delyvred at the day of her marriage " [2]

Both young women and men inherited real estate and chattels while they were still minors. But their use of real property, and for the most part, their use of chattels, was deferred until they reached their majority or married. Both land and chattels generally remained in their mother's custody - men dying before their wives in 91% of cases - or in her absence, in the custody of a relative or appointed guardian.

Table 5.3 Disposal of Real Property by Male Testators [3]

properties	Widow for life	ww until children of age	Eldest son	Daughters	Other
1450-95 (11)	9 (82%)	-	-	-	2 (18%)
1502-46 (17)	9 (53%)	2 (12%)	5 (29%)	-	-
1546-75 (43)	27 (62.7%)	4 (9.3%)	8 (18.6%)	2 (4.65%)	2 (4.65%)

Real property was at the testators' disposal in approximately 36% of all of wills made between 1450-1575. Here primogeniture ensured that eldest sons inherited the family tenement, though again their inheritance was often delayed until their majority or, because, after 1500, over half of widows were left the family tenement for life, until the death of their mother. Daughters only inherited when there were

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[1] Such women did exist, see, for example, Joan Holmehegge, p.165, below.
[2] HRO B wills 1538/40, Domer.
[3] Based only on wills where the wife survived the husband, see Appendix 1. The fifteenth century wills do not form a representative sample, as most of them survive only because the town had an interest in the property.

no male heirs, or in the few families where the testator had more than one property at his disposal. Richard Vahan, for example, was unusual in being able to leave a property to both his son and daughter, leaving the choice of tenement to his son Thomas when he came of age. [1] Only 60% of Southampton testators left surviving sons, which meant that a substantial proportion of estates were, after their mother's death, left to female siblings, collateral males or other heirs being preferred in only three instances.

In reality, few individuals had real property at their disposal, and this is reflected in the fact that the majority of testators left only moveable goods or chattels or financial bequests. [2] Though in most Southampton wills, testators did not stipulate when the bequest should be received, in those which did, inheritance was delayed until the child came of age, or on marriage, if earlier. In the distribution of moveable goods or chattels - or of financial bequests - there was a tendency to prefer the eldest son, daughters only receiving higher amounts when sons inherited the family tenement. But especially when real property was not at the disposal of the testator, there was a wide variation in patterns of distribution with regard to gender. From sixteenth-century testaments in which financial bequests were made to both sons and daughters we find that roughly 40% of testators left the same sum of money to their sons and daughters, the others maintaining a gendered hierarchy, in which sons received more than daughters. In 1540 Thomas Stonehard, for example, left each of his three sons £6 13s 4d, and £3 6s 8d to both of his daughters.[3]

It is more difficult to evaluate the balance of distribution between sons and daughters where chattels are concerned. But their distribution was clearly gendered, reflecting the future roles expected of sons and daughters: in the farming families who lived around the town, males were more likely to inherit stock; in artisan families the tools of the trade, where noted, were invariably left to

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[1] HRO B wills 1546/199.
[2] Table 5.1 indicates that the majority of people rented the property in which they lived.
[3] HRO B wills 1540/80.

sons. [1] Though a few young women were provided with the basis of economic survival, in 80% of wills where testators made specific bequests to their daughters, they inherited household goods. [2]

This was the dowry they would take into their marriage, the material basics for their anticipated role of wife. Items could range from as little as a set of spoons, to the fabric for a wedding gown, to the whole paraphernalia of a wedded woman. While Elizabeth Morley (d. 1570) left her married daughter her best gown and a thread-winder, she bequeathed her second daughter everything she would need for her future, including a feather-bed, bolster, coverlet, pillow and cover, two pairs of sheets, her second-best gown, two kirtles, a table cloth, " all linen pertaining to my body", and furniture, including a coffer, a cupboard and a chair. She also bequeathed her brewing equipment - vat, kever, galley barrell, trendle and the choice of best brewing pan - , basic kitchen equipment, two cows and three sheep. This was a substantial dowry, worth over £10, a third of Elizabeth's estate.[3] However, the widow Elizabeth Pace, who died in the same year, left only a few items of clothing to each of her four married daughters, and provided no dowry for her youngest daughter, leaving the the bulk of her estate to her sons.[4] Testators with more than one daughter tended to allocate roughly the same amount of goods to all their unmarried daughters, though John Willams' allocation of beds and bedding preferred his daughters in descending order of age.[5] Provision for marriage was also made for female relatives. The girdler Thomas Harrison, for instance, left his cousin, shortly due to marry, a bed with blankets, sheets, bolster, pillows, mattress and blanket material, as well as a gilt salt, six silver spoons and a silver pot; similarly, Richard Nutley (d. 1575) left his cousin, provided she lived with his widow until her marriage, 40s and her wedding apparel. [6]

After 1540, when wills become more detailed, they suggest that a young woman's inheritance was more likely to be predicated on marriage, with 53% of testators

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[1] See, for example, pp. 32 & 114 and Appendix 1.
[2] Appendix 1.
[3] HRO B wills 1570/294-5, *Inventories,* pp. 276-7.
[4] *Inventories,* p. 277
[5] HRO B wills 1521/41.
[6] *Inventories*, pp. 53-4 & 423; see also p. 32.

making this stipulation. John Domer's bequest of household goods, a sow and a calf, was not to be delivered to his daughter until her wedding day. This linkage between marriage and inheritance rarely appears in earlier wills, but that may be a function of their brevity and formulaic nature, rather than a reflection of changing attitudes to marriage. The inheritance of 41% of males in the will sample was similarly predicated on marriage, parents being only slightly less likely to impose this condition on their sons. But when we look at all inheritances, including bequests to sisters, cousins and nieces, the differences become even more apparent: only 28% of all male inheritance was linked to marriage, while 72% of female inheritance was predicated on marriage. But in only one instance was inheritance conditional on the executors' consent to the marriage. [1] The possibility that a daughter would not marry was never entertained, emphasised by the elaborate arrangements testators made for the redistribution of daughters' bequests should they die before they married. It was assumed that those who did not marry would continue to live with their mother until her death, where the dowry they would never receive continued to be used.

It has already been shown that there were clear differences in the ages of majority for young men and women, but very different ages of majority were specified in 19 wills, most of which date to after 1540. Thomas Stonehard, for example, specified that both his sons and daughters should receive their bequests at the age of 18, or on marriage, if this occurred earlier.[2] There was a wide variation in the age at which individual testators set the age of majority, ranging from 18 to 24 for males, with only 44% agreeing on 21, though, as John Perchard's will, made in 1542, suggested, this was "the use and customs of the same isle".[3] For young women, there was an even wider variation - between 14 and 22 - with 42% of testators agreeing that their daughters would reached their majority at the age of 18. However, when Katherine Serle appeared before the mayor's court seeking to prove herself of age in 1434, she swore that she was "fifteen years of age and

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[1] None of the Goddard children, male or female, would receive their inheritance if they married without the consent of "the family" and "the guardian", *Inventories*, p. 346.
[2] HRO B wills 1540/80.
[3] HRO B wills 1538/40.

more". "According to the custom of the town", and based on the evidence of her godfather, Walter Fetplace, her godmothers, Isabella Soper and Katerina Nycholl, and 12 burgesses, she was judged to have been aged 17 on the Feast of St. Lawrence the Martyr - August 10th, 1434. [1] Yet in the fourteenth century, when Lucy Comyn, daughter and heir of Richard Comyn, wished to grant a property in perpetuity to Nicholas Langestoke in 1363, she was required to swear before the town court that she was over 18 years of age. [2] Whatever the legal age of majority, there was a wide divergence in both civic and parental defintions. Notwithstanding these variations, and though it has not been possible to find any definitive evidence about the age at which young women married in Southampton, if Hajnal and Goldberg are correct in their assumptions that women did not marry until their early twenties, then a significant number of young single females were theoretically legally independent. Just under half of the daughters mentioned in these wills received their inheritance when they came of age, irrespective of their marital status.

Wills made by young single women rarely survive, but in the one example from Southampton, made by Alice Forward, the unmarried daughter of Walter and Elizabeth, who died in January 1551, shows she was already in possession of her dowry at around the age of 16. Reading more like an inventory than a will, this document listed the household goods in her possession including a bed, bolster and pillows, two gowns, three pieces of furniture, as well as a range of kitchen utensils.[3] (We have to assume that daughters who were married before their fathers died had already received -according to the wealth of their parents - very much the same range of goods, their bequests at their father's death invariably being of a token nature).

The importance of a young woman's dowry cannot be over emphasised, giving those fortunate enough to inherit a distinct advantage over the young women who had to work to amass what resources they could for their dowry. Some of these

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[1] She was therefore born on 10th August 1416, *Black Book* 2, pp. 57-9.
[2] SC4/2/94-6. See also *HMCR*, p. 70. Lucy also made a bond of all her goods to the Langestokes promising to repay £100 by the following Michelmas, SC4/2/97.
[3] HRO B wills, 1551/57; when her father died in 1548, she was under 16, HRO U wills 1548/30-1.

young women were assisted by their masters - if they were servants - or by a few philanthropic testators.[1] In 1492, William Gunter left "little Margaret my servant, if she lives, 3s 4d. for her marriage porcion", and in 1536 Peter Stonehard left 10 marks, beds, bedding and over 20 other items to Frances and Annes Holoway, daughters of the widow, Elizabeth Holoway. In 1542 John Perchard, in an act of albeit limited generosity, allocated his daughters' bequests - should they die before marriage - to "the marriage of poor maidens". [2]

During this period of their lives, when young women emerged from the *quasi-coverture* status of daughter, and before they entered the full legal *coverture* of wife, women could theoretically act alone with regard to property, a right which they would not subsequently enjoy until widowhood. However, as analysis of conveyances will show, the number of disposals of land made by single women was less than 1%. [3] This was to be expected: the resources under a single woman's control were intended for her dowry, a resource which few were likely to dispose of. In the very few cases where these young women did act alone with regard to property, they were, as we have already seen, subject to public scrutiny, and even if like Katherine Searle they were already widowed, still subject to parental authority. [4]

5.3 *Femmes covertes*

On marriage a woman entered a legal status known as *coverture*, in which her identity was literally covered by that of her husband. [5] Though this status has been variously interpreted *coverture* effectively meant that on marriage all of a married woman's property, real and moveable, including her personal *paraphernalia,* came under the control of her husband.[6] However, any real

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[1] Hufton, *The Prospect Before Her,* pp. 59-98; Goldberg, *Women, Work & Life Cycle,* pp.158-202.
[2] *Black Book* 2, p.155; HRO B wills 1536/ 32 & 1542/68.
[3] See Table 5.4.
[4] See p. 40.
[5] See Pollock & Maitland, *History of the English Law* 2, pp. 403-7; in the 17th century *coverture* was described as the "conglutination of persons in baron and feme", *The Lawes Resolutions of Women's Rights: Or the Lawes Provisions for Woemen*, (London,1632), p.120.
[6] A wife's personal *paraphernalia* was held to include her clothes, jewels, bed linens and plate, *The Lawes Resolutions of Women's Rights*, p.129. This could also be disposed of by a husband during his lifetime, Pollock & Maitland, *History of the English Law* 2, p. 405.

property or chattels she brought to their marriage in the form of a dowry was, under common law, held by her husband, but could not be disposed of without her consent. Though she could expect to recover it in the likely event of their husband predeceasing her, until his death, it was under her husband's control. [1]

It is now time to turn to those deeds which Wallis Chapman interpreted as indicative of women's privileged status with regard to property in fifteenth-century Southampton. [2] From the late-fourteenth century the town began to enrol details of land transactions in the Black Book, some of which related to properties in which the town had an interest. [3] The bulk of these deeds, however, consisted of conveyances of property in which a man and his wife were jointly named as grantors (78.9%), and in which married couples comprised 89% of grantees. In 65% of all such conveyances made before 1414, and in 93% of those made during the remainder of the fifteenth century, the grants were accompanied by a wife's consent to the disposal of property, separately recorded. In 1388 Joan Ryell alone,"declared the said deed to be her doing and sealed with her seal, and that she caused the said deed to be executed of her own free will....in obstruction and exclusion of her right and that of her heirs". These acceptances are largely formulaic, with the crucial clause "without the compulsion of [her] husband", repeated in all acceptances. This emphasis on the lack of compulsion is often forcefully put: Elizabeth Forester, for example, stated that she had "spontaneously caused it [the deed] to be executed without any coercion from any person whatsoever, and begged that it might be enroled." [4] "These formulaic protests suggest that these wives were merely repeating a standard oath. Nevertheless, one is still left feeling that, "The lady doth protest too much", perhaps.

Nine married women appeared alone on the day they made these acceptances, which contributed to Wallis Chapman's positive interpretation of these deeds, suggesting that these women were acting as attorney for their husbands.[5] Though

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[1] In law, free-hold or copyhold property held by the husband "in right of his wife" enabled him to derive profits from the property, but not to dispose of it without her consent, see Pollock & Maitland, *History of English Law* 2, pp. 409-11.

[2] Wallis Chapman, *Black Book* 1, pp. xxxi-xxxii.

[3] *Black Book* 1-3, *passim.*

[4] *Black Book* 1, p. 35 and, for example, pp. 37 & 43.

[5] *ibid.*, p. 95, n.2; this was not unusual, see Pollock & Maitland, *History of English Law* 2, p. 408.

she correctly observed that only one of these conveyances contains a direct reference to dower -or dowry - on closer examination and with reference to unpublished conveyances, in at least a third of conveyances recorded in the Black Book, the wife had a clear interest in the property, in that she was the widow, daughter, or other heir to the property's previous owner.[1] It is suggested that this percentage would increase if the histories of all of these properties could be reconstructed. Yet even if these wives were not the direct heirs to these properties, they were still being disadvantaged. Again under common law, a married woman was theoretically entitled to dower on the death of her husband, being a third of the property her husband had held at any time during their marriage. [2]

The same public confirmation of deeds with separate acceptances existed in Winchester, where Keene has identified the procedure as a means of establishing absolute title to a property "if only to exclude the possibility of their [the wife or widow] subsequent claim to the property". Just as in Southampton, her sworn verbal agreement, her signature and sometimes her seal provided clear evidence of her agreement to the loss of either her dowry or her dower. Martin has also suggested that this procedure was common in borough courts, where the confirmation of the deed with the mayoral seal gave legal validity to a wife's separate examination. [3]

Therefore, far from indicating women's autonomy with regard to property, these acceptances show that a process existed whereby women in Southampton, as elsewhere, could legally and formally be denied their right to both the dowry they brought to the marriage, and the extent of the dower they could expect to receive after their husbands' death. Willingly or unwillingly, they excluded themselves from future claims.

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[1] *ibid.*, p. 91, n.4.

[2] For the development of, and variations in, dower, see amongst others, George Haskins, "The development of common law dower", *Harvard Law Review* 62.1,1948, pp. 42-55.

[3] Keene also suggests that Winchester is unusual in this public enrolment of extant deeds, *Winchester in the Later Middle Ages*, pp. 11- 15 & 387 *ff.* Martin cites examples from London, Salisbury, Exeter, York and Colchester . In Nottingham, the deeds and acceptances were also accompanied by proofs of age, G.H.Martin,"The Registration of Deeds of Title in the Medieval Borough", in D.A.Bullough & R.L. Storey, (eds.),*The Study of Medieval Records. Essays in Honour of Kathleen Major*, (Oxford,1971), pp. 151-73. See also Bateson, *Borough Customs* 1, pp.18 & 21, & 2, pp.115-19.

It could of course be argued that the opportunity for a separate acceptance - where the wife was examined alone - was a means of protecting her interests, and was thus to her advantage.[1] However, given that most of these conveyances were made by burgesses, and that the mayor's court consisted of their peers, it seems unlikely that, in this very public court, wives would refuse consent. Presumably, the couple would have already discussed the matter, and perhaps agreed a mutually acceptable alternative settlement. However, these public declarations of free will may equally have masked a degree of private coercion. However, not all of these transactions were made at the husband's instigation: in 1502, the sisters Elena Parde and Alice Perys, heirs of Thomas Holman, - with their husbands - jointly granted the family tenement, a stable and three gardens, to Joan and John Dawtrey. In one of the last conveyances in the Black Book, dated to 1552, Barbara Keyser and Anne Tusser, daughters and heirs of Martin Bagworth - in return for £62 - conveyed the family tenement to William and Averine Stavely; no separate acceptances were recorded. [2]

Table 5.4 Grantors of property in corporation conveyances

Grants	**SC4/2** [3] (189)	**Black Books** (137)	**% Total**
with husband	4.2% (8)	72.3% (99)	32.8% (107)
married woman	0	6.6% (9)	2.8% (9)
widow	5.8% (11)	2.2% (3)	4.3% (14)
single woman	0.6% (1)	0	0.3% (1)
males	89.4% (169)	17.5 % (24)	59.2% (193)
other	0	1.5% (2)	0.6% (2)

[1] For husbands who disposed of their wives' dower without their consent, see pp. 162 & 167.
[2] *Black Book* 3, pp.12-15 & 116-7. For the case in Chancery by which the Bagworths established their title to this property, see p.168, below.
[3] Grants pre-dating the Black Books have been excluded for purposes of comparison.

Most surviving conveyances were not enrolled in the Black Book, but during the period 1400-1525, records of some 189 other conveyances were deposited with the town. Some 89% of these conveyances were made by men acting alone, and 4.2% by married couples, the balance being made up of women, usually widows, acting alone. [1] These figures contrast with the relative balance of conveyances made between 1300 and 1400, in which 61% of conveyances were made by men alone, and 17% by married couples. [2]

However, as table 5.4 shows, if the figures from both sets of conveyances are taken together, then it can be seen that though the numbers of men making conveyances drops to 52%, the percentage of couples rises to almost 33%, with widows remaining - at 4.3% - in a minority. Ironically, the increase in the numbers of married women involved in the disposal of property during the fifteenth century is directly related to the increasing use of a process which excluded them from use of that property. This process began in Southampton during the late-fourteenth century and continued during the town's economic recovery after the French raid of 1338 and the Black Death, just over 40% of separate acceptances being made before 1415, and another 40% before 1440. In an active land-market, a property was was obviously a far more attractive proposition if the grantee could be guaranteed against future claims.[3]

In the more intimate realm of goods and chattels, a wife had more control over her dowry during marriage than *coverture* would suggest. As Thomas Huttoft noted in his will in 1554, "to my wife, crockery, candlesticks, bedding, cusions, furniture and chests - what is in them I know not, for she hath all in her custody and keeping". [4] Though their ownership of chattels was theoretically suspended during marriage, in practice women seem to have been regarded as responsible

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[1] SC4/2 and SC4/4.

[2] Widows and single women were involved, either alone, or with others, in around 30% of conveyances recorded in the St Denys Cartulary before 1400.

[3] The introduction of jointure from 1451 onwards, as an alternative to dower, may account for the decline. In this case, property, purchased with money brought to the marriage by the wife, was held jointly by the couple during their lifetime, and was enjoyed by the survivor during her (or his) lifetime, John Baker, *An Introduction to English Legal History*, 2nd ed., (London,1979), pp. 229-30; Erickson, *Women & Property*, p. 25.

[4] *Inventories*, p. 61, HRO B wills 1554/139-40.

for the household equipment, clothing and other personal items, which they used on a daily basis. Thomas Fleming presented a more realistic perspective on his wife's dowry when he left her "all such apparel, stuff and plate moveable she brought at her marriage that is now left". [1]

In comparing the goods listed in the few examples where inventories survive for both partners, it can be seen that some chattels were regarded as hers alone. Simon and Alice Note died within a year of each other in 1557 and 1558, leaving Alice little time to accumulate more chattels. Not only was her estate valued at almost twice that of her husband, (£9 17s 10d against £5 2s 8d), but also 15 items not listed in Simon's inventory appear in hers. These included a stillitory, two tornes, a vat and beer pots, stock cards and a cradle. [2] John and Elizabeth Morley both died in 1570 within six months of each other: while there is a close correlation between the items listed in John Morley's inventory and in those listed in his widow's will and inventory, several additional items appear in the latter. Some were obviously personal - including beads, hooks and buckles - but Elizabeth's goods also included a "bote and all that pertaineth to the same".[3] Unless the definition of household equipment also extended to boats, then she must have acquired it after her husbands' death. However, the lack of other comparable inventories means that we cannot draw too many conclusions from these few examples, merely an indication that some goods - though not necessarily domestic equipment and utensils - may have been regarded as a wife's property within the marriage.

Whatever their actual status with regard to chattels, under common law married women were not empowered to make wills, though under ecclesiastical law they could make wills relating to moveable goods, provided they had the consent of their husband. [4] In practice, the percentage of married women who made wills

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[1] HRO B wills 1542/68.
[2] *Inventories,* pp. 77-8 & 129-31.
[3] *Inventories*, pp. 275-6, HRO B wills 1570/296-7 & 294-5.
[4] Michael Sheehan,"The influence of Canon Law on the property rights of married women in England", *Medieval Studies* 25,1963, pp.118-21. For a summary of the dispute between canon and

was very small, and declined significantly after the fourteenth century.[1] In Southampton, only one such will survives, made in 1502 by Emma Greet, the wife of Ralph (*aka* Rawlyn) Grete, "with the assent and consent of the said Ralph". She left, *inter alia*, a financial bequest to her confessor and - like the majority of testators in pre-Reformation Southampton - made small donations to the churches of St Swithin in Winchester and St Mary's in Southampton. She also left single items of clothing to her friends, both female and male. Significantly, and probably the reason why she chose to make a will, was that she held lands and tenements in her own right. These she bequeathed to her husband. [2]

5.4 The perils of widowhood

Becoming a widow redefined women's relationship to property, and, as Sue Sheridan Walker has suggested, a widow's relationship to property also defined the way she was perceived by contemporaries.These perceptions closely parallelled perceptions of her sexuality; widowhood was a period where she could, if sufficiently well endowed -in both senses of the word - re-enter both the property and marriage markets. [3] But which was the more common: the wealthy merry widow, or her poor sister, clutching her "widow's mite"?

We can obtain a rough guide to wealth of widows in Southampton from the series of seven tax assessments made between the fourteenth- and mid-sixteenth centuries. [4] Even though the 1454 Terrier listed women - taking into account both owners and tenants - as 6.9% of household heads within the town walls they

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lay legal theorists on this issue, see Richard H. Helmholz, "Married Women's Wills in Later Medieval England", in Walker (ed.), *Wife & Widow in Medieval England*, pp. 165-82.

[1] In Yorkshire the proportion of wills made by women fell from 23% to 14% between the late-14th and mid-15th centuries; Cullum attributes this drop entirely to the virtual disappearance of married women's wills, Patricia Cullum, '"And hir name was charite": women and charity in medieval Yorkshire', in Goldberg (ed.), *Woman is a Worthy Wight*, pp. 182-211. By the early modern period the percentage of wives' wills had further declined to around 3% of all women's wills; sources of evidence for this decline are summarised in Table 12.2, Erickson, *Women & Property*, p. 206, see also pp.139-40.

[2] HRO B wills 1502/12. Rawlyn Grete left the same properties to his second wife Alicia in 1512, HRO B wills 1512/7. The only indication of another married woman's will - made by Alice Boneyt in c.1273 - is in a grant made by Robert Boneyt, her husband and executor, implementing her testamentary wish to grant of a house and vacant plot left to her by her father, Walter le Fleming, to God's House for the maintenance of a chaplain, *G.H.C.*, p. 9 [God's House Deeds. DY356].

[3] Walker (ed.), *Wife & Widow in Medieval England*, pp. 2-4.

[4] See p. 159, n.2.

made up only 3% of tax-payers in late-medieval Southampton, a percentage which remained consistent from 1333-4 (2.7%) to 1524 (3.1%). Though higher percentages appear in table 5.5, only the 1524 Lay Subsidy is considered as a relatively accurate source, the others including - for various reasons - a much lower percentage of the population. [1]

Table 5.5 Tax-payers in Southampton, 1327-1552 [2]

Year	14th c.	c1500	1524	1535	1542-3	1545	1546	1552
Women	10	14	11	2	8	2	4	5
Men	336	116	342	100	100	66	111	83
Total	346	130	353	102	108	68	115	88
%women	2.89	10.76	3.12	1.96	7.4	2.94	3.47	5.68

Most of these women were widows, their inequality in terms of personal wealth, clearly indicated by the fact that as a group the numbers of women included in tax returns were proportionately low. However, like the majority of men, most women were assessed at the lower end of the spectrum: in 1524, for example, 63 % of women and 65% of men were assessed at £2 or less.

In death, as in life, her husband was still the author of her fortune.Though theoretically widows inherited a third of their late husbands' property, many factors could reduce them almost immediately to poverty. Most Southampton wills were proved within a year, during which time the widow had to ensure that all debts were paid, and bequests distributed, also ensuring that sufficient funds remained so that bequests held for children could be paid, sometimes several

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[1] The anomalous figure of 7.4% in 1542-3 is based on an incomplete return and therefore cannot be seen as reliable; the high figure for c. 1500 is based on a local tax, and is thus not strictly comparable, see James, *Southampton Sources*, pp. xxvi & 19-21. In Winchester figures of 8-10% probably reflect the large community of secular, pious and wealthy women attracted to the Cathedral precinct; yet even in the poorest area of the city there was a higher percentage of female tax-payers than in Southampton, Keene, *Medieval Winchester*, p. 387.

[2] For the 14th century the following documents have been aggregated: PRO E 173/173/4 (1327-8), E179/242/15a (1333-4) & E179/173/13 (1340-1). For the 15th century: 1500, SC14/12/1; 1524, PRO E179/173/175; 1535, E179/173/197; 1542-3, E179/173/228; 1545, E179/239/163; 1546, E179/174/261; 1552, E179/239/161.

years after their father's death. In his will, made in 1522, Robert Wright, instructed his widow to pay his debts - "for hyttt ys hyr dete as well as myne" - listed in two account books and a box containing "c[er]ten oblygacyoans and bylls of dette. [1] But even if Elizabeth Forward had wished to continue her husband's trade as chandler, it is unlikely that she could have afforded to: the value of his tallow and the tools of his trade, was roughly equivalent to the value of his debts.[2] From the 23 wills and inventories that list the testator's debts, I have calculated that almost a third of widows would have had to sell most of their husbands' estate in order to pay these debts; two- thirds would still have been in debt even if they had sold every item listed in their husbands' inventories.[3]

Theoretically, under common law, all widows had the right to dower during her widowhood, a third of the real property which her husband had held - at any time - during the course of their marriage.[4] Here, Wallis Chapman was correct in her assessment that Southampton widows were more privileged than under common law, in that the majority inherited the bulk of their husbands estate; but this was not unusual in an urban context. [5] Where property was at the disposal of the testator, almost 60% of Southampton women inherited the family property for life - as well as the residue of the estate - before it passed to their heirs. [6] Indeed, by the fifteenth century, explicit references to dower were few, though in the previous century, they were commonplace: in 1342, for example, Thomas Stout bequeathed his wife a tenement and appurtenances "for the time of her life as dower". [7] From the late-fourteenth century, few widows were granted more than a life interest, and the numbers of widows able to dispose of property during their

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[1] HRO B wills 1522/45; for his widow's payment of his debts, see p.176.
[2] HRO U wills 1548/30-31, *Inventories*, pp.15-18.
[3] Erickson, using early-modern sources suggests that 25% of male testators left their widows in debt, *Women & Property*, esp. p. 200.
[4] The right to dower had been granted to Southampton women from 1256, "And that no writ shall be served within the liberty of the foresaid town, except a writ of right, a writ of novel desseisin and a writ of dower", *Charters* 1, pp. 15-16 & n. & 2, p.124.
[5] Bateson, *Borough Customs*.
[6] See Appendix 1, Column 9; in the pre-Black Death period, the few surviving wills made by widows indicate that they retained control over their dower, almost 50% of widows making bequests to the Priory explicitly quit-claiming their dower-land. In 1273, for example, Isabella de Schyrliye, granted the Priory a rent of 12 shillings a year arising from her "marriage portion"' of three properties in the town, *St. Denys Cartulary*, pp. 95-6. See also, *G.H.C.*, pp. x-xv.
[7] SC2/6/2; for the ship she also inherited, see p. 129.

widowhood declined. [1] The gradual disappearance of dower as a mode of inheritance was assisted in Southampton by the separate acceptances enrolled in the Black Book. [2] By the fifteenth century, the majority of widows who inherited property in reality held it in trust for their children, and unlike their predecessors - such as Juliana de Cutellarius who was able to sell her messuage to St Denys in return for rents "for her great need" - few widows were able to dispose of any real property they had inherited during their widowhood. [3] The result was that propertied widows like Agnes Overay could spend much of their widowhood in poverty, though there is evidence that throughout the period other widows - Joan Tylby from 1402-22 and Alice Aberie in the 1560s, were able to earn a reasonable income from their properties. [4]

Very few widows were granted only the legal minimum of freebench - the right to stay in their husband's place of residence for a year. [5] By this period few husbands kept to the doctrine of parts, and even though some theoretically divided the property between his wife and children, in practice she had custody of their portion at least until the children reached their majority. However, when widows were granted the family tenement, it did not always mean that her tenure was secure. Though waiting heirs did not actually evict their elderly mothers, as we have already seen in chapter 2, the heirs of Christina Cosyn found a way of renting out most of the property while their mother was still resident. [6] We do not, however, know whether Christina had merely been granted house-room or whether she had been persuaded to revoke her rights to the use of the whole property. Alice Griggs, on the other hand, was granted the use of the family tenements only until her sons came of age, after which she had to give up both lands and tenements in return for 20s a year. [7] Other widows were less secure: in 1539 William Magis left the lease of his house to his son, allowing his widow "to

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[1] The number of widows making conveyances halves after 1350 in the SC4/2 series.
[2] For the decline of dower, see Erickson, *Women and Property*, pp. 22-30.
[3] *St. Denys Cartulary*, p. 55
[4] *HMCR*, pp. 76 & 87; *Inventories*, p. 231.
[5] See for example, will of John Bedell (d. 1462), *Black Book*, p. 127.
[6] See pp. 53-4.
[7] HRO B wills 1522/19.

live with hym as long as they may agree". [1] In the same year Robert Myllet left his house to his sister, but the rent was to be paid "at the cost and charge of his wife"; and in 1571 John Brodocke's widow was required to pay the rent on a lease bequeathed - along with £100 - to her son.[2]

The primary purpose of a widow's inheritance was to ensure that property was passed on to the next generation, though only 14 husbands found it necessary to make sure of this by making inheritance conditional on the widow remaining single.[3] This may have been because husbands trusted their wives to ensure their children would receive their rightful inheritance, or because few wished to make the very complicated arrangements which accompanied many conditional wills. Had she remarried Elizabeth Perchard, for instance, would have been required to place a surety of £500 with the mayor, while the widow of William Tanner was required to hand the 100s left to her five children to her co-executor on "the daye of [my wives] marriage". [4] However, few widows were as unfortunate as Isabel Witegod "unlawfully thrust out" of the tenement granted her for life in 1414, or Alice Coventre whose dower had been sold by her husband for 10 marks to Alice and William Ravenston in 1405-6. [5]

The majority of men named their wife as executrix. We find that in late-fifteenth- and early-sixteenth century wills, 70% of male testators appointed their wives as sole executrix, and 17% were appointed joint executrix; between 1550 to 1575, a similar total of 85% of men appointed their wife as executor.[6] Apart from their own concerns, widows, as executrices, were responsible for ensuring that that all the husband's debts were paid before other bequests were distributed. Unfortunately, few accounts survive to shed light on the process of probate, but, as already suggested, many widows were left with very little after this process had been

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[1] HRO B wills 1539/54.
[2] HRO B wills 1539/83; *Inventories*, p. 290
[3] Conditional wills are indicated in Appendix 1.
[4] HRO B wills 1542/68 & 1530/43.
[5] *Cal. Close Rolls*, 3 Henry V, p. 427; SC4/2/197-8.
[6] In nearby Salisbury during the period 1540-1639, widows were appointed sole executrix in 72% of a sample of 362 wills, and joint executor in 9%, see Susan Wright,"Family life and society in sixteenth and seventeenth century Salisbury", Ph.D. thesis, University of Leicester,1982. Erickson has shown that there was regional variation in the percentages of widows appointed as executrix, and that urban widows were more likely to be appointed executor than their rural counterparts, see, *Women & Property*, pp. 157-61, esp. Table 9.1.

completed. [1] The role of the executrix has been well rehearsed elsewhere, and given the lack of probate accounts associated with Southampton wills, little can be added. [2]

As executrix, responsible for chasing up those who owed debts to her husband, Margaret, widow and executrix of John Slegh, had to sign a deed before the mayor to acknowledge that she had eventually received £12 from William Ravenston. [3] She had probably, like many other women, unable to recover their debts in any other way, been forced to take action - in the first instance - in the local courts. Some 20% of the women who appeared before the town court during the 1470s were described as executors of their husband's estate. [4] Of these women, 73% sought to reclaim debts owed to their husband's estate; the remainder were themselves sued for debts that their husbands had died owing. [5] If they failed to find redress in the local courts then they could find themselves before Chancery. In the 38 cases in which local women appeared before this court, 55% of women appeared in the capacity of executrix, either as plaintiff or as defendant. [6] In 1502-3, Joan, the widow of John Bedell, was charged with the detention of deeds by her nephew Walter Bedell regarding his inheritance, but almost half of the cases were concerned with debts of various descriptions: Dorothy Elyatt, widow and executrix of her first husband's will appeared before Chancery between 1538-44, for failing to honour an agreement made by her husband to provide lodging and the costs of educating John Phyppynger, her first husband's apprentice. [7] In a very similar case, Joan, the widow of Thomas Bory, merchant, was taken to court for the sum of £20, which her late husband had been advanced against the expenses of sending Robert Johnson, his servant, abroad

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[1] The sisters and executors of Margery Hancock were faced with over £9 of debts, excluding funeral expenses, to be paid on a estate amounting to just over £11, *Inventories*, p. 331.

[2] Rowena B. Archer & B.E. Ferme, "Testamentary Procedure with special reference to the Executrix", *Reading Medieval Studies* 15,1989, pp. 3-24. For the only study which links wills, inventories and probate accounts in an effective analysis of the roles and responsibilities of widows as executrixes, see Erickson, *Women & Property*, esp. pp.156-61.

[3] 1395, *HMCR*, p. 80.

[4] Another 24 women - 16.7% of plaintiffs and 20.7% of defendants - appeared with their husbands, but were not described as executrices.

[5] See table 4.7, above.

[6] See table 5.6.

[7] Walter Bedell vs. John & Joan (Bedell) Wellys, PRO C/1/257/21, 1502-3. By the time she came to court, Dorothy had re-married twice, Humphrey Smith vs Robert & Dorothy Elyatt (Salter/ Case), PRO C/1/1060/37,1538-44.

for training "in language". More often, such cases were straightforward trading debts as with Joan, widow and executrix of Thomas Scullard, or Alice Pryvett, widow of James, who was required to repay a debt of £4 10s. for woad that her husband had claimed to have paid off in wheat, which had proved to be of bad quality. [1]

When it came to the end of their own lives, a small percentage of widows made wills; these make up just over 10% of all Southampton wills. [2] Given that they had little freedom with regard to real property, and that the bulk of chattels had already been promised to sons and daughters, we could assume that they had little to bequeath. But widows' wills show that some women had considerable resources at their disposal - Elizabeth Medecave and Alice Aberie, for example - and so were able to make significant bequests to their friends and family. [3] In 1566 Annes James made bequests to 18 kin and 26 other individuals, as well as leaving 2s 6d each to "six widows of Souhampton" and ordering a damask doublet to be made for each of the overseers. [4] Others, though they had little to bequeath, were equally generous. Alys Newbolt (d.1514) left gold rings to both the Friary and St Mary's church, 10s to a priest to sing for her family, and "my werying gere" to her sister Agnes and two friends: the residue was granted to her mother. [5] Marian Riche had even less to bequeath, distributing only her best kettle, two frocks, two petticoats and her wedding ring amongst four female friends. [6]

In these bequests to friends we get some indication of the networks of friendship which must have sustained them in their widowhood. Though men are equally observed making bequests to friends, and particularly to the overseers of their wills, it is the personal and intimate nature of these widows' bequests to kin and to friends which is so characteristic of women's wills. [7] The only noticeable

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[1] Henry Clark vs John & Joan Floure (Scullard), PRO C/1/974/23, 1538-44; John Yonge, clothier vs Alice Pryvett, widow, PRO C/1/1093/41; Yonge then tried to recover the same debt from Alice's son in law, PRO C/1/1093/ 42-43.
[2] Appendix 1, Column 3.
[3] HRO B wills 1550/96-7 & 1564/1-2.
[4] *Inventories*, pp. 237-8.
[5] HRO B wills 1514/20.
[6] HRO B wills 1546/149.
[7] Martha C. Howell, "Fixing Moveables: Gifts by Testament in late Medieval Douai", *Past & Present* 150, 1996, pp. 3-45.

difference in gendered patterns of disposal is that childless widows were more likely to make bequests to a wider circle of kin and friends. [1]

All testators before the Reformation made bequests to both St Swithin's in Winchester and St Mary's Church in Southampton, as well as to their own parish church if they could afford it; but unlike the wills of York widows described by Cullum, few Southampton women seem to have been more pious than their male counterparts. While widows did leave money to the poor, it was not in any greater numbers than men nor did they grant a greater proportion of their wealth, as Cullum has suggested. [2] Neither is there any noticeable gendered difference in post-Reformation bequests to either the church or the poor, though after 1540 the proprtion of testators of both sexes making donations to the poor increased. [3]

The only widow the town would clearly remember for her philanthropy and generosity was Joan Holmhegge, who in 1461-2 implemented the agreement made between herself and her husband to bequeath 13 properties - acquired in the course of her three marriages - to the town for the foundation of a chantry.[4]

5.5 Litigious women [5]

Did women respond as passively to property, and their own material fortune, as the evidence already cited suggests? A few women may have acted outside the law in order to keep what they felt was their inheritance. After her husband's death in *c.* 1428, Joan Danyell, widow and executrix of John Danyell, was instructed in his will to repay a £16 debt to the Abbot of Netley. Declaring her moveable goods insufficient to pay the debt, she was ordered to put her house in the hands of the

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[1] The bequests of Emma Great to individuals have already been noted on p. 158; she was childless; see also *Inventories*, pp. 237-8.

[2] See Appendix 1, Column 10. Cullum, "'And hir name was charitee".

[3] Appendix 1 , Column 10. See, for example, the wills of Jane Rigges, Richard Stockdale, Robert Apryce and Thomas Weekes, *Inventories*, pp. 154, 23, 28 & 43.

[4] SC4/2/292-3. Nicholas Holmhegge was her third husband, by whom she had one son, Gregory; she had previously been married to William Ledys and William Marche, by whom she had one son, and to whom she left another tenement, see SC4/2/311, (1455); see also Platt, *Medieval Southampton*, p. 243.

[5] The main holdings used for this section are the PRO C Series, though the Court of Requests also had jurisdiction over equity: Clement and his wife Alice Smith were involved in a very complicated case relating to the inheritance of the Dolphin Inn, see Merson, *3rd R.B.* 3, p. 107.

overseers to be sold, which she did. However, she had already sold the house to Walter Fetplace. [1]

The executrixes who appeared in the local courts, and before Chancery, had very little choice in the matter, but there is sufficient evidence from other cases in Chancery that women were prepared to take action to secure their own interests and challenge inheritances they felt were unfair.

Their first court of refuge was the local Town and Pie Powder Court, though most of these women who appeared before this court were seeking to reclaim debts. If appeals to the mayor or action in the local courts failed to produce the desired result, then women had to take recourse to action in the Court of Chancery at Westminster, which had jurisdiction over matters of equity. This was not as intimidating as it sounds: it has been estimated that in this period the majority of plaintiffs were of a social status lower than the gentry, and that a quarter of all litigants in Chancery were women. [2]

Table 5.6 Breakdown of Women's Actions in Chancery

	Inheritance		Trade		Other		Total
Role	**Plaintiff**	**Defend**	**P**	**D**	**P**	**D**	
Alone	1	2	8	3	-	-	14
Executrix	1	6	1	3	1	-	12
With husband	3	1	6	-	-	2	12
Total	5	9	15	6	1	2	38

Between *c.* 1450 and 1580, 38 Southampton women were involved - both as individuals and as executrixes - as either plaintiff (55%) or defendant (45%) in cases before chancery. [3] The cases are fragmentary in that though the depositions of plaintiffs and defendants are enrolled, the decisions do not survive.

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[1] c.1428, *Black Book* 1, p. 158, n. 4; ECP, Bundle 12, No. 107.

[2] Erickson, *Women & Property*, p. 31, ns. 42 & 43. I have estimated that women were plaintiffs in 25% of Hampshire cases heard in Chancery; on slightly over half of these occasions, the woman appeared jointly, usually with her husband; figures based on a survey of PRO ECP Bundles 28, 31 & 32.

[3] In the remaining three cases the woman was neither plaintiff, nor defendant, but they have been included as the cases involved disputes about widows' wills.

They can therefore not be used to examine the nature of justice, gendered or otherwise, handed down to women who appeared in this court. [1] They do, however, give an indication of the nature of the cases in which women felt compelled to take action.

During this period, only one case was listed with regard to the dower, or perhaps jointure, of a Southampton widow. In 1533, Mary Salman, widow of John Salman, claimed that her husband had agreed a certain property in her favour before their marriage. However, during his life, Salman had rented the property to Henry Champeon, butcher, who claimed that he held the property from Thomas Parnell, draper of London; Parnell, in turn, claimed that Salman had devised the property to him before his death. [2] This particular case highlights the fact that though a husband had the right to use of his wife's dower during their marriage, he did not technically have the right to dispose of it, unless of course, with his wife's consent. This case also demonstrates the importance of the deeds of consent enrolled in the Black Book if a family wished to avoid such litigation. The fact that only one case related to dower was taken to Chancery confirms its relative unimportance in this period. Before the fifteenth century Southampton women were proportionately involved in more cases related to dower than they were during the period through which the Chancery courts operated.[3]

While some widow's actions in Chancery effectively challenged their husband's authority in death, one case in Chancery - which lasted from 1459 to 1465 - demonstrates that some women, at least, were prepared to challenge their husband's authority during his lifetime. Christina Neymithalf had inherited a tenement from her first husband, the deeds of which her second husband had signed over to Thomas White to solve his debts. Neymithalf then disappeared,

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[1] A limited number of judgements do survive from the late16th century, but none refer to the cases discussed below, PRO Chancery Court Bills and Answers, C2/Eliz.

[2] Mary Salman vs. Henry Champeon, PRO/C/1/898/8-9; Thomas Parnell vs. Mary Salman, PRO/C/1/1044/5-8.

[3] See for example, the widow of Roger Norman. Giles, their son and heir died a minor, his lands reverting to the king. In order to hold onto her dower, which included a tenement in Southampton, Joan had to swear under oath not to marry without the king's licence, *Cal. Inq. P.M.*, Vol. IX, pp. 194, 208 & 233, Vol. XI, p. 254. Another case was brought by their heirs of Agnes Noschylling, ww. John; her dower lands, supposed to revert to the king, had been granted to God's House after her death by her husband, *Cal. Inq. P.M.* Vol.XIII, p. 272.

and so Christina barricaded herself and her children into a chamber at the top of the house, and with the help of her sister managed to keep White out of the house for two weeks, until he set the house on fire and Christina was forced out.[1]

The actions of Katherine Searle in *c.*1450 against her uncle, Peter James, have already been discussed, but she was not alone in ensuring that she received what was due to her. On the 18 occasions in which a Southampton woman appeared as the plaintiff with regard to a case involving inheritance, four were brought by daughters acting alone. One of them, Isabelle Thornton, challenged the authority of her own father, Michael Luke, whom she accused of withholding the inheritance due to her from her grandfather, Andrew Boret. [2] Similarly, Johanne Mannering, daughter and heir of John Flete, took action against her brother John, who claimed that their father's will, which had left her with property in Southampton, was a forgery. [3]

Indeed the most common reason for women to come before the Chancery court was in connection with their inheritance: 46% of female plaintiffs and 12.8% of female defendants appeared in such cases. Agnes White, the widow of Gabriel Fleming took action swiftly. A year after her husband's death in c.1471-2, she went to court, having received none of the rents and profits due from her husband's lands, enfeoffed to the use of Robert Bagworth and Lewis Eynes.[4] Some women spent years trying to remedy the situation. Emma Galgen was a widow by the time she appeared before Chancery in 1553, in an attempt to recover property left to her by her father, Giles Palmer, some 26 years before. [5] Anne and Barbara Bagworth, daughters and heirs of Martin Bagworth, were involved in a similar case between 1547 and 1551 to regain a messuage they had inherited in Southampton. [6]

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[1] ECP 28/522 and 29/208-10; see also Ruddock, *Italians*, pp. 177-8; Coram Rege Rolls, m. 3v (L).
[2] Aleyn & Isabelle Thornton (nee Luke) vs. Michael Luke, PRO C/1/38/262, 1472-6.
[3] Johanne Mannering (nee Flete) v. Richard Flete, PRO/C/1/72/103, late-15th century.
[4] John & Agnes (Fleming) White vs. Robert Bagworth & Lewis Eynes, PRO C/1/48/342,1473-5.
[5] Peter Stonehard had gained the deeds and possession of the properties, which had passed, after his death, to Elizabeth Bluett; following her death, they passed to her son-in-law, Roger Thomas, PRO/C/1/806/30-31.
[6] John & Barbara (nee Bagworth) Cayser & Alice (nee Bagworth) Turner, widow, vs John & Alice Masssam, PRO/C/1/1207/11-13, 1547-51. See also *Black* 3, pp. 94-5.

Most cases suggest that the women who appeared before Chancery were under financial pressure. Others may have been under pressure from their second husbands. Agnes Dun, widow and executor of the merchant John Dun, then married to Thomas Britain, took out a case against Walter Holman, a merchant of Brabant, who had been given £16 to buy goods for Dun. The ship, with 14 people aboard, had been lost at sea; though her first husband had refused to pursue the debt, feeling sorry for Holman, after his death Agnes -with her second husband - had taken out an action of debt before the pie-powder court. She then found herself before Chancery required to repay compensation of £16 for the goods.[1] Going to court was often a costly and risky business, and a step few women undertook without careful consideration.

Just as her relationship to the economy was defined by her role in the family, so a woman's relationship to property was similarly defined by her role in the family, varying as she moved from the role of daughter, to that of wife and widow. As daughters, their inheritances were provided to assist them in their future role of wife. Property did not enable them to act autonomously: if they inherited real property, any independent actions were subject to family controls and public scrutiny. Inheritance was often predicated upon marriage: those who remained spinsters remained in the family home, presumably sleeping in the beds and using the household utensils they had been bequeathed. Whether they eventually received their inheritance is never clear.

Marriage enabled women to gain not only their dowry, but the use of property that would otherwise have been denied to them. Despite its disadvantages, *coverture* afforded many women access to the use and benefit of both real property and chattels their unmarried sisters would never enjoy. Indeed, it would appear that, as housewife, she controlled - even if she did not own - the use of kitchen utensils and other gendered chattels. But again, it was only as widows, that some women were granted any autonomy with regard to property, though their use of property and chattels, and their powers of disposal were severely curtailed by the

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[1] C/1/64/337,1479-80.

testamentary imperatives that merely identified them as the means of transmitting property to future generations. Though a few women were prepared to challenge injustices done to them, most women were seemingly content to act as passive carriers of the patrimony.

Chapter Six Women and Power

In previous chapters I have suggested that the actions of medieval women were both limited and, at the same time, facilitated by their location in the family. We have seen how *coverture* mediated a married woman's extra-familial relationships and how both wives and daughters were subject to the authority of the head of their household. We have also seen how aspects of public order depended on married men's ability control of their wives behaviour.[1] The present chapter explores the relationships that constructed women's lives beyond the family, and in particular, women's relationships to civic power and to central government, as expressed by the authority of the mayor and corporation of late medieval Southampton.

That power and authority were gendered is easily demonstrated: women, just over half Southampton's population, were excluded from all offices. Yet this statement conceals the complexities of women's relationship to power. The first part of this chapter demonstrates how women, though excluded from exercising authority, occupied specific roles that enabled men to maintain their power. The second part looks at the women who were defined as marginals in late-medieval Southampton, and argues that these women - mainly single women and widows, excluded from the family involuntarily or by choice - were uniquely subject to civic control. [2]

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6.1 "Even those excluded by politics were defined by them". [3]

Though women ideologically occupied the domestic sphere, in their real lives they used and occupied public space. [4] Women sold goods and shopped in the public

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[1] Chap. 2, pp. 45-6.
[2] For definitions of marginality, see Barbara Hanawalt, "At the Margins of Women's Space", in Robert R. Edwards & Vickie Ziegler (eds.), *Matrons and Marginal Women in Medieval Society*, (Woodbridge, Suffolk,1995), pp.1-17.
[3] Joan Scott, *Gender & Politics,* p. 24
[4] Janet Nelson, "The problematic in the private".

markets, washed their clothes in the street and argued with their neighbours; the wives of artisans sold their husbands' products, while hucksters sold goods in the streets; others worked outside their home for wages; women appeared in both the town and in Chancery. Yet it was because they were subject to the head of their household that almost all these women were able to cross the gendered boundaries of the masculine realms of work, property and law. One boundary however, remained impermeable: women were neither expected nor enabled to cross the boundary drawn between those with power and those without.

As elsewhere in late-medieval England, political space was clearly described as masculine: all positions of power, from Crown nominees to the mayor and twelve *brethren* ,were occupied by men.[1] Though members of the corporation were theoretically elected by "the whole community of the town assembled in a place provided", in reality, access to civic power was limited to, and controlled by, a very small group of burgesses drawn from a mercantile elite. [2] As Platt succinctly puts it, "Every guildsman was of the franchise of the town, but not every franchiser was a guildsman." [3] This clear distinction between guildsmen - known by the fifteenth century as burgesses - and those "of the franchise" defined not only political privilege, but also the trading privileges held by the one group over the other. [4] Under the hegemony of this mercantile elite, women had no less access to power than the majority of adult men.

Southampton's burgess elite was the product of a restrictive primogeniture; only the eldest sons of burgesses automatically assumed burgess status; younger sons had to purchase admission; where a burgess had no male heirs, merchant dynasties maintained their power by admitting their nephews free. Despite intermarriage among burgess families, this mercantile elite was not prepared to compromise the gendered construction of power by allowing admission through

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[1] For a description of municipal offices and their powers, see Davies, *History of Southampton*, pp. 136-7 & 163-218. Crown nominees, and the relationship between the town and central government, are discussed extensively in Platt, *Medieval Southampton*.

[2] Ord. 32, *Oak Book*, p. 45.

[3] Platt, *Medieval Southampton*, p.18.

[4] This distinction was made in the early laws, *c.* 1300 - see, for example, Ords. 12-14, 16, 22 & 32, *Oak Book*, pp. 33-39 & 45, - and continues in later versions, see Ca. 13-13, 21 & 25 and [Ords.] 7,8,16 & 24, *ibid.*, pp. 88-90 & 95 and 119,122 & 126-7. For franchisers, see below, p. 174.

marriage or by descent through the female line. "Nor can any husband by reason of his wife, either have a seat in the guild or demand it by any right of his wife's ancestors." [1] However sometime after 1496, faced by a desperate need for men to share the responsibilities and costs of local government, the ordinances were revised to allow admission through the female line: "But no [husbande] by meane of his wife, maye haue anye place of a Burgeasse, [by reason of] his Predecessors, without he agree and paye therfore." [2] Even then, few men entered the burgess elite in this way, so we have to assumed that other modes of entry were preferred.[3] The Italian Anthony Guidotti, for example, was admitted as Mayor's burgess in 1534, nominated by his father-in-law, rather than because of his marriage to Huttoft's daughter, Dorothy. [4]

Though not listed in the admissions register, one woman may have been a burgess. Described as "alis brown burgis" when she was reviled by Richard Gilbert in 1512-13, it is possible, given her membership of and influence in the bakers' guild, that she was granted the status and trading privileges of a burgess. But there is no evidence to suggest the process by which she was granted this status or that she enjoyed any further access to power. [5] Another woman, Lady Dawtrey, must have been granted the trading privileges of a burgess, as her trade - in millstones - was reserved for burgesses alone. [6] These two exceptions signal the inextricable relationship between civic power and mercantile trade in

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[1] Ord. 9, *Oak Book*, p. 31.

[2] [Ord.] 4, *Oak Book*, p. 118. See Platt, *Medieval Southampton*, p. 176-7.

[3] Of almost 200 burgesses admitted between 1498 and 1560 only four men were admitted through the female line. In 1507 William Chalke was admitted, his fine pardoned "and geven unto his wife in co[n]sideracion of olde charite of his wif and hir husbonde", SC3/1/1 fo. 54v. After 1550 these admissions increased: in 1553, Hugh Botler, saddler, was admitted burgess, "at the special request and sute of...the Lady Jane his mother"; Bernard Courtmill was made burgess in 1555, "at the special plea of William Jeffres his father in lawe"; and in1556 William Holbier was admitted, "for consideracon that he maryed a alderman's wife", SC3/1/1, fos. 76v, 78r & 78v.

[4] SC3/1/3, fo. 66r; Davies, *History of Southampton*, pp. 167-8. For admissions through the female line in other towns, see Goldberg, *Women, Work and Life Cycle*, pp. 55 & 334.

[5] SC5/3/1, fo. 37 r. Reviling a burgess was an offence under Ord. 15, *Oak Book*, p. 33. In Exeter in1355 one woman entered the freedom at the request of two male members, Kowaleski, "Women's Work in a Market Town", p.146, n. 5 .

[6] Ord. 20, *Oak Book*, p. 35; see p. 126. In Exeter three "wealthy oligarchic widows" were granted trading privileges without access to political power, see Kowaleski, *Local Markets and Regional Trade*, p.154.

Southampton which effectively combined to exclude most women from both public and economic power.[1]

Women's relationship to the Southampton franchise is not so clear; indeed , without records of franchise admissions, the means by which any individual was defined as being "of the franchise" is not clear. However, franchisers were eligible to occupy the town's minor offices, and because the widows if these men occasionally continued their husbands' work, it could be assumed that these widows were of the franchise. Whether the franchise extended to all widows in their capacity as household head is less certain.[2]

Though excluded from holding office, the wives of burgesses were afforded a certain status in the town, and were expected in return to undertake duties that supported their husbands' status.[3] The most visible expression of this power occurred on ceremonial occasions when the ruling elite and their wives appeared in public. In 1569, for instance, in preparation for a visit by Queen Elizabeth, the aldermen of the town were reminded that their wives were required to wear *scarlot gouns* and *frentche hoods* , a practice that had obviously been neglected.[4] The detail and hierarchical differentiations of ceremonial dress were clarified by the Court Leet in 1576, when the dress required of the mayor, alderman, sheriff and bailiff and their wives was set out, detailing allowable head-gear, belts, trimmings and jewellery. [5]

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[1] For the occasional admission of daughters to the York franchise, and the admissions of men married to widows and daughters of burgesses in Wells and Canterbury respectively, see Goldberg, *Women, Work and Life Cycle*, pp. 55 & 334.

[2] Ord. 46, *Oak Book*, pp. 55-7. For the widows of officers see below, pp. 175-9. In towns where members of craft gilds had to be enfranchised, the ratio of those admitted compared to the adult male population was relatively high, and a comparatively high number of female admissions are found. However the situation in Southampton was probably analogous to that of Exeter, where the freedom was open to only a small mercantile elite, where formal craft organisations were late in developing, and women were less likely to be found as franchisers. Goldberg, *Women, Work and Life-Cycle*, pp. 49 - 57; Kowaleski, *Local Markets and Regional Trade*, pp. 99-101.

[3] Reviling a burgess' wife was tantamount to reviling a burgess, see SC5/3/1, fo. 29r.

[4] *3rd R.B.* 2, p.105. In 1576 an alderman "of thage of lxv " was brought forward to swear to the details and longevity of the custom, *Court Leet*, p. 143.

[5] *Court Leet*, pp. 141-3; dress was also regulated by central government: in 1576 the churchwardens presented "dyvers women of the towne" for wearing hats instead of white caps to church (13 Eliz. Cap. 19, 1571); in 1577 five women and four men were presented for other breaches of the Statute of Apparel (24 Hen. VIII, Cap.13, 1533), *Court Leet*, pp.138-9 & 161.

Apart from their symbolic role as corporate wives, burgess wives were expected to provide domestic support for their husbands public role. Accounting for the expenses of a feast held in 1439-40, the steward John Reneger noted "for wood and my wife's labour to skalle capons, pigeons and geese, nil", though each of the other women who prepared the feast was paid.[1] There are no other references to unpaid domestic work by other burgess wives, but in 1599 a reference to the mayor's allowance for *kitchen* suggests that the wives of mayors were expected to provide meals and hospitality. [2] The lack of record of this work is entirely in keeping with their roles as housewives and helpmeets, though another steward was careful to note that his wife was owed one noble by the mayor, which she had lent him to buy wine. [3]

Though burgess wives were excluded from the responsibilities of office, their civic duties did not end when her husband died. [4] As widows - and presumably executors - of officers responsible for collecting money for the town, they were accountable for any amounts their husbands owed at their deaths. For some widows this presented no problem: the widow of John Bawdewyn, mayor, who died in office in 1513-14, repaid the 29s 4d he owed in the same year.[5] But other men died owing higher amounts: in 1457 Katherine Serle, as a broker's widow, pleaded for mitigation; though she was forgiven £63 15s, she was required to repay Serle's outstanding debt at an annual rate of 40s. from the rent of her tenement at Bull Hall, over a period of ten years. [6] Other brokers' widows left in debt included the widow of Gebon Goodefelaw, broker 1472-1491; the widow of Thomas Avennelle, broker 1496-1502, - who took six years to clear the debt; and the widow of Thomas Wilson, who died "by his own hond" in 1509; despite paying by instalments she still owed monies in 1514.[7] Brokers collected money from

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[1] SC5/1/39, fo. 21.

[2] "the xx li. formelie allowed for his kitchen," *3rd R.B.* 4, p. 44. Another references to the provision of kitchen occurred in 1470-1, see SC5/1/13, fo. 21, 1470-1. When Margery Kerton, a widow, provided bread, ale and kitchen in the same year, she was paid 2s., SC5/1/13, fo. 28.

[3] SC5/1/10, fo. 30.

[4] For positions a burgess could occupy, see *Black Book* 2, p. 2.

[5] SC5/3/1, fo. 39v; *Assize*, p. 63.

[6] *1st R.B.* 1 p. 34.

[7] SC5/1/14, fo. 38; *1st R.B.* 1, pp. 20,30 & 77 & *ibid.* 2, p.2 (1504-1510); *1st R.B.* 2, p. 4 & 6, *3rd R.B.* 1, pp. 11-12; for Thomas Wilson's suicide, see *Assize*, pp. 45 & 49.

carters, merchants and other individuals entering and leaving the town through the Bargate; if they had not collected the payments at the time, then their widows were faced with the task of tracing debtors, without any real authority - beyond that of executrix - to seize the debt. Many of these widows must have had to find the money from their own resources.

The widows of other officers faced similar situations: in 1471 Alison James, widow of John James, water bailiff 1469-70, repaid £3, and in 1522 Mistress Wreyght repaid monies owed by Robert Wright, steward in the same year. [1] One woman found herself twice in the same predicament: in 1492-3 as the widow of Robert White, weigher of wools, she owed £12, eventually paying the final 4s. 4d. in 1496, after her re-marriage to Thomas Bytheway. Eight years later in 1504, as the widow of Thomas, steward in 1503, she was left owing the town another 30s.[2] We can only speculate whether these women's ability to reconcile their husbands' accounts is indicative of a certain degree of literacy and numeracy. Indeed after Thomas Wilson's suicide, his successor was not immediately appointed and it seems likely that his widow continued her husband's duties until Michaelmas.[3] Certainly Agnes, widow of Vincent Palysden, felt competent to act as *pesager* at the Weigh House for six weeks after her husband's death. Brought before Chancery for debt in 1485, she explained that she had continued to weigh goods for "the seid howse stode voyde and unocupyed where marchants had there recourse to wey there marchandyse ther". [4]

Though the widows of officers inherited debts rather than office, the widows of minor officers seem to have been allowed to continue in their husbands' position for a period. In 1524 Johanne Wright was granted the "hole rome [place] of one of the porters during her lyff", which her son-in-law was to occupy, and, after her

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[1] *1st R.B.* 2, p. 63; SC5/1/32, fo.14 & *3rd.R.B.*1, p. 16. In his will Wright referred to his debts as "as much hers as mine", HRO B wills 1522/45.

[2] SC5/1/23, fo.12, SC5/1/13, fo.19r; *1st R.B.*1, p. 23.

[3] See above, p.175, n.7. In 1189-90, Cecilia, widow of Robert de St. Lawrence, submitted the town's annual tax returns, Davies, *History of Southampton*, p. 31.

[4] The pesager was a crown office: in 1475 Vincent Palysden and two others had leased the Weigh House and the right to "take pesage" from the Pole family Only Palysden had occupied the office. After his death Agnes refused to pay £28 owing on the lease, claiming that another lessee had entered the tenement six weeks after her husband's death, and taken their profits, PRO ECP Bnd. 55/208-10, see also Cobb, *Port Book 1439-41*, p. clii.

death, inherit on payment of a fine; a similar grant was made to the widow Alice Harvie in 1586, again "fyndyng a sufficient labourer to use the rome". [1] Similarly in 1555-6 when the Town Scavenger died in office, his widow Margerie Fuller continued his work, carrying away "durte, duste and other offal" until the end of the year, and Robard Kennigs' widow was certainly a supervisor or "discreet" of the market in 1581, when she was accused of taking "excessyve toule" of corn, meale and poultry from "poore people of the contrey". [2] Clearly the town was capable of more flexible inheritance practices when the offices were held by franchisers rather than burgesses, a flexibility probably motivated by a desire to prevent these widows from falling into poverty - a largesse not extended to burgess widows.

This description of the roles and responsibilities of burgess wives and widows illustrates how on a functional level, "even those excluded from politics are defined by them". [3] Exclusion is probably most visible in the corporation's gendering of all their expressions of self-identity as masculine, particularly in the ordinances enrolled in the Oak Book. Though, with the exception of the clause relating to inheritance, no ordinance explicitly excluded women from power and responsibility, the presumption must be that in their very absence women were actively excluded. [4] Women were mentioned only when their activities were perceived to require regulation: in the early laws, one ordinance specifically forbade a *regteresse* (*sic*) from buying fish for resale, and in the fifteenth century a revised ordinance allowed "no manner of personage, man or woman" to keep or milk cows within the town walls.[5] In both examples we have to assume that women were involved in these activities in such numbers that they could not be

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[1] *1st R.B.* 2, p. 38; *3rd R.B.* 3, p. 41. This was not universal practice: in 1539-40, Agnes, widow of the porter Nicholas Soulby, was merely forgiven his debt, SC5/1/39, fo. 51.
[2] *3rd R.B.* 2, pp.79-80, n. 5, see also SC5/3/1; *Court Leet* 2, p. 216; Ord. 31, *Oak Book*, p.43; for other minor offices, see Davies, *History of Southampton*, pp. 211-8.
[3] Joan Scott, *Gender & the Politics of History*, p. 24
[4] Martha C. Howell, "Citizenship & Gender: Women's Political Status in Northern Medieval Cities", in Erler and Kowaleski (eds.),*Women and Power*, pp. 37-60.
[5] With the exception of *regteresse*(*sic*), all nouns and personal pronouns in the original French were masculine, Ord. 64, *Oak Book*, p. 67; in later versions the noun *huxter* is used, see Ca. 77, *Oak Book*, p. 145. The right of a mariner's widow to his last wages is included in the 14th-century "Lawes of the Sea or Charter of Oleron", *Oak Book* 2, p. 65.

ignored, yet their inclusion in these two ordinances only highlights their absence elsewhere.

6.2 "Passive citizens"?

Where their relationship to public life was mediated through their household head, women have been described as "passive citizens", their citizenship, whether acquired by birth or marriage, being derived from that of their husband or father.[1]

But as widows and single women, women were held directly accountable to the community in which they lived. A few women were listed among the free suitors - a status derived from burgage tenure - required to attend Court Leet , and as householders, were as liable as their male counterparts to be presented at Court Leet for various types of antisocial behaviour and nuisance, or for being an "evil person". [2] Between 1549 and 1575 an average of 6.5% of those presented were female heads of household, slightly less than the number of female household heads identified from all sources. [3]

And though women - with the exception of hucksters and tipplers - inevitably appeared in few presentments connected with trading offences, complaints were made about a whole range of female acitivites. In 1550, for example, women were presented for milking cows; for washing dirty clothes in the street and for hanging the clothes of "sycke and polky people" over the town ditches; in other years, their moral conduct was subject to public condemnation at the Leet. [4]

Thus women were as responsible to the community as their household head, yet were excluded from the formal power structures that regulated their behaviour. However, as Erler and Kowaleski have suggested, in redefining power as the ability to act effectively, to influence and to achieve set goals, women did have

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[1] For variants of female citizenship, see Howell, "Citizenship & Gender", p. 40.
[2] See F.J.C. Hearnshaw, *Leet Jurisdiction in England,* S.R.Soc 5, 1908, pp.181-7 & 215.
[3] A figure of 8.6% can be extrapolated from the *Terrier.*
[4] *Court Leet*, pp. 5 & 16, 7, 10, 15 & 43. See for example, pp. 183-4.

informal access to power. From within the family, they could indeed bring considerable influence to bear on the outside world. [1]

Research in this area has demonstrated the power and influence exercised by aristocratic and elite women, so it is equally possible that women of Southampton's elite adopted strategies by which they too could influence the fortune, either material or political, of their family. Hugh Bottler, for example, was admitted burgess "at the special pleading of the Lady Jane, his mother". [2]

Sadly, such references are rare, and family papers and letters, used elsewhere to demonstrate women's influence, hardly survive for Southampton. Agnes Overay's letter has already been discussed, showing how she could call on the assistance of powerful men in the town to resolve her problem; other widows may equally have enjoyed similar access to power through friendship networks.[3] Certainly testamentary evidence has suggested that some Southampton women enjoyed wide social networks, and at all levels of society women had access to informal networks where, often through the medium of gossip, they exercised some influence in their community. The two accusations of witchcraft discussed below originated from complaints made by women, and the role women played in maintaining public aspects of gender should not be underestimated. [4]

Letters written in 1596 to the mayor by Lady Frances Wilkes and by Margaret White, sister of a town sergeant, also suggest that women at all levels of society were not inhibited from making direct appeals to public authority in order to resolve family problems. [5] However, only a few individual women - Dame Claramunda in the thirteenth-century, and Lady Dawtrey in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries - visibly exercised any influence in the community, though a woman like Joan Holmhegge could buy her way into the hearts and minds of the

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[1] They also identify a woman's contribution to the family economy and her role as mother as influential, Erler and Kowaleski, "Introduction", in *Women and Power in the Middle Ages*, pp.10-11. On the difference between power and authority, see Rosaldo, "Women, culture and society", pp.17-42.

[2] See p.173, n.3, above.

[3] Chap. 1, pp.1-3.

[4] See p.184, below.

[5] Lady Wilkes wrote to the Mayor "to intreat yor spetiall favour" regarding a cousin's annuity; Margaret White sought the mayor's assistance when a witness to her brother's will withheld her small inheritance, *Letters*, pp. 209-11.

town through her substantial bequest of property.[1] Women of means also enjoyed the power of patronage: the bequest by the clerk Thomas Hutton to the "poor bretheren and sisters" of God's House was to be "ministered....at the discretion of my mistress Joen Huttoft". [2]

As we have already seen, many women took on the role of household head once they had become widows. Did they then become active citizens, assuming the duties and responsibilities of their male counterparts? Burgess widows certainly did not acquire their husbands' duties or offices, but like other householders widows were liable for taxation, were responsible to various courts, and though not themselves liable for military service, were required to make their male servants available.[3]

Some widows actively contributed to their community, making substantial loans to the town in times of need. In 1456, for example, Christina Cawse loaned the town 40s towards the fee farm; in 1486, Agnes Underwood was one of 35 individuals to lend money, in her case 10s, towards a royal visit; and in 1550 Mistress Faschyn loaned the town £100.[4] Clearly some widows had sufficient means to enable them to act as a source of credit for the town, as well as for the local merchant community.[5]

More widows could afford to make voluntary donations to civic construction projects, contributing money or providing labour. In 1521-2, nine women gave amounts of between 4d. and 11d. towards work on the bulwarks, while wealthier women like Alice Brown and Elizabeth Bluett contributed 2s. each. Women comprised 5.7% of donors, though they contributed less than 1% of the total collected. In 1555, widows made up 7.5% of those who donated work or labour to rebuilding the bulwarks, contributing 8.3% of the total. [6] When the poor rate was

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[1] See pp. 124-6. For Joan Holmhegge's bequest to the town, see p. 165.
[2] HRO U wills 1552/41; *Inventories*, pp. 47-8.
[3] Elizabeth Seynt John was listed in the 1513 Muster, *1st R.B.* 3, p.103. Three women were named in the 1583 Muster Roll, SC13/2/7. For taxation, see table 5.5, above.
[4] SC5/1/8, fos.11 & 33; *1st R.B.* 3, pp. 54-5; *3rd R.B.* 2, p. 161. Only one woman, Isabel Mundy, made a gift - of 20d - towards the fee farm in 1470-1, SC5/1/13, fo.19.
[5] Chap. 4, p.129.
[6] SC 5/1/32, loose fos. This figure is distorted by large contributions made by two men; SC5/1/41, fos.13-16; in 1550, Sampson Thomas' widow was the only woman amongst the 98 contributors to

introduced in 1552, 6.7 % of donors were widows, and by 1575, they made up 10% of donors.[1]

These voluntary contributions for the use and benefit of the town show that widows certainly felt some degree of responsibility to the town. Indeed, if women's citizenship can be measured by the degree to which they contributed to the town's finances, then, widows were active citizens. That the numbers of female donors always remained few in number, and that the amounts they gave were comparatively small, merely reflected the poverty of most widows.

6.3 Riotous Women?

Like other towns, Southampton saw periods of turbulence and dissent, particularly during the anti-Italian riots of the fifteenth century, but in general opposition to the ruling elite came from amongst the same group of privileged men. [2] Franchisers and other inhabitants were rarely able to make their voices heard on a political level in the town except through rare personal appeals to the mayor, or as groups of craftsmen. Though the Court Leet provided an opportunity for individuals to air their grievances, complaints were usually parochial or personal, sometimes challenging powerful men but never their authority. Only once did the "commoners" challenge a decision made by the burgess elite. After a suit against God's House in 1504, the town took possession of half of the Salt Marsh, an area used for pasturage southeast of the town. In 1517, the mayor issued an ordinance proposing to enclose the land and charge the inhabitants for the costs of enclosure. Within a few days "dyvers of the comyners of this towne, with many women amongist them, arose and reyotusly assemblid them selff together yn the Saltmarshe to the nomber of ccc persons or nygh there abouts of men and women". That women were specifically mentioned suggests their presence in some numbers. Following the arrest of the ring-leaders, the

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works on the barbican,*3rd R.B.*2, p. 28; in 1557-8, three widows donated money and the Mistresses Byshoppe, Goddard, Rygges and Sampson contributed two or three days labour, SC5/1/42, fo. 15.

[1] SC10/1/1-2.

[2] Ruddock,*Italians*, pp.169-73.

commoners gave in, and both men and women involved in the riot were equally required to make good the damage they had caused. [1]

If there was little opportunity to challenge authority on a collective level, some individuals were prepared to use insult and public abuse against those who held power, an offence described as reviling. Though this was largely perpetrated by men, women were not reluctant to attack powerful men in public. [2] The wife of Robert Devenysshe was fined for reviling the future mayor Peter Stonerd in 1527-8, and the following year "Margaret at the Lyon" was fined 5s for reviling John Gardyner, a constable.[3] The general tenor of these attacks is indicated in an account of another incident in 1597 when the wife of Thomas William "did yesterday in the eveninge gretlie revile and miscall Mr. Andrew Studley, Alderman, terminge him whoremonger, knave and manie other immodest, undeemly and unreverent speeches of disagree, farr beyond the bounds of modestie (and many tymes spitt in his face)".[4] Insult was not reserved for men in power, and reviling a burgess's wife or widow was tantamount to reviling a burgess. John Grosse was fined for reviling both Robert Bishop and his wife in 1493-4; a dyer was fined for reviling *a burgess wife* in 1503-4; Richard Gilbert for reviling Alice Brown in 1511-12 ; and James Hibberd for reviling Mistress Hitchins, in 1526-7. [5] Though women were usually fined less for the offence than men, and the revilers of women were fined less than the revilers of men, both men and women equally resorted to insult in challenging civic authority. [6]

Scolding, on the other hand, has been identified as a "socially disruptive activity" carried out exclusively by women.[7] The corporation certainly identified it as such,

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[1] *3rd R. B.* 1, pp. 20-6.

[2] See p. 174, n. 3, above. Fines for reviling are listed in SC5/1/3, fos. 22v., 25v.,46v., *etc.*

[3] SC5/1/3, fos. 63r & 64v.

[4] His wife was committed to the cage at the Bargate, and William was ordered to shut his shop windows until further notice, *3rd R.B.* 4, p. 41.

[5] SC5/1/3, fos. 16v, 29r, 37r & 60v.

[6] See also Laura Gowing,"Language, Power and the Law", in Kermode & Walker (eds.), *Women, Crime & the Courts*, p. 27.

[7] For competing accounts of the significance of scolding, see David Underdown, "The taming of the scold: the enforcement of patriarchal authority in early modern England', in A.J. Fletcher & J. Stevenson (eds.), *Order and Disorder in Early Modern England*, (Cambridge, 1985), pp.116-36, and Martin Ingram, "'Scolding women cucked or washed": a crisis in gender relations in early modern England?' in Kermode & Walker (eds.), *Women, crime and the courts*, pp. 48-80.

specifically forbidding the wool-packers from scolding. [1] However, across the whole period, only two women were punished as scolds: in 1526-7 a prostitute, or *meritricula* , was fined 20d for "hir mysdemeanour beyinge a common *barratrice*" and in 1529 Katyn Borrell was threatened that for "the next offence yn skolding and chydying ...to be sett in the Dokynstole at Estgate as a scold."[2] The absence of other cases is particularly surprising in view of the money spent by the town on building and transporting the scolding stool at the end of the fifteenth century. [3] Between 1529 and 1575 references to scolds and scolding stools disappear, but from 1576 through to the following century scolding women again became the subject of public concern: "Ther wantith in this towne cocking stolle for the punishment of harlots".... "for the punishment and terrour of harlots, skouldes and such malefactors".... "to punishe the manifold number of Scoldinge..& other evill livinge woemen". [4] Yet even though scolding was clearly the subject of public discourse in this period, at the same time only two women were accused of being scolds, and no records of the use of the scolding stool survive. [5] Though "quarrelsome" women were seen as socially disruptive, as in other towns during the same period, prosecution was relatively selective - the scolding stool acting more as a symbol of order than an instument of punishment. [6]

But even if women's active challenges to public authority were rare, they could, through their actions, conscious or otherwise, unwittingly challenge the patriarchal order. Just as "masterless men" were perceived as a threat to the social order of sixteenth-century England, so independent single women were perceived as a real threat to the gendered moral order. [7] Until the closure of the stewes in 1544, prostitute women were seen as a threat to chastity, while sexually

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[1] SC2/1/4, fo. 27r.
[2] SC5/1/3, fo. 61r; *1st R.B.* 3, p. 91.
[3] In 1474-5 the "scoldying stoole" was carried from West Hall to the pillory, SC5/1/15, fo. 6v. and in 1482-3 the costs of building and transporting the stool amounted to 9s. 11d, SC5/1/18, fo. 13r. In 1478-9, William Overy was paid to make a "streptour (twisted chain, O.E.D.) for the women", SC5/1/16, fo. 26.
[4] *Court Leet*, pp. 95,106, 174 & *op. cit.* 2, p. 381.
[5] In 1584 an order was issued for the arrest of Mary Janverin and her daughter Sara Abarrowe after Mary had failed to appear before the mayor for scolding on three occasions, *3rd R.B.*3, pp. 32-3.
[6] The same situation seems to have obtained elsewhere, see Ingram,'"Scolding women cucked or washed'".
[7] A.L. Beler, *Masterless Men: The Vagrancy Problem in England 1560-1640*, (London,1985).

active single women and married women beyond their husbands' control were expelled from the town. In the 1570s, the single and independent women who worked as charwomen were identified as a threat to the social order. This was clearly expressed in three presentments to Court Leet made between 1579 and 1582. "Ther be sundry mayde servants that take chambars and so lyve by themselves masterlesse and ar callyd by the name of char women, which we thincke not mete nor sufferable wch we praye yr worshipps to consider of". [1] Controlling female behaviour was, as measured by the frequency of fines and expulsions, equally an issue both before and after the Reformation; women who lived beyond the bounds of the family were always subject to control. The only significant change iwas in the incidence of complaints made against widows who seem to have been increasingly subject to masculine control towards the end of the sixteenth century. William Poterrell was held responsible for his mother's quarrelling, and in 1575 Steven Bartie for his mother's failure to attend church. The description of her as a woman "making her alonely abode within this towne" suggests that any widow's behaviour could be subject to public scrutiny.[2] The most serious accusations against widows who survived alone resulted in allegations of witchcraft: In 1579 widow Walker was accused of being a witch; the complainants asked the mayor to "permit five or six honest matrons to see hir stripped to the end to see whether she have eny bludie marke on hir bodie, w[hi]ch is comon token to knowe all witches by and so either to stop the mouthes of the people or els to procede further." [3] The voices of the gossips resonate in this text, and in 1573, when the only case of witchcraft brought from Southampton to the Bishop's Court at Winchester was heard, the majority of those who testified against Mistress Singleton were women, including Mary Janverin arrested for scolding in 1584.[4] As Larner has observed, women were only too ready to attack

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[1] *Court Leet* 1, pp. 186,197 & 236.
[2] See above p. 45 & n.4; *Court Leet*, p. 119.
[3] *Court Leet*, p.187; Sharpe identifies this as the earliest reference to women being appointed to search for "the witch's mark", a teat-like growth on the pudenda through which the alleged witch's familiar sucked blood, see Jim Sharpe, "Women, witchcraft and the legal process", in Kermode & Walker (eds.), *Women, crime and the courts*, pp. 106-124. The Southampton case is discussed on p. 108.
[4] HRO 21M65 C3/5 p.214-5, no judgement is recorded; *3rd R.B.* 3, pp. 32-3.

those whose nonconformity threatened the social order and thence the basis of their security. [1] The women accused, whether single, married or widowed, had one thing in common: they lived outside of the authority of the family, without a husband, father or master; by the rules under which women were expected to behave in a patriarchal society, theirs was a most grievous offence.

II

Conventional categorisations of marginal groups have been based on the identification of those who, defined by by social, economic, legal or political criteria, existed outside the mainstream of society. Hanawalt has defined marginal women as those "who moved beyond the boundaries of prescribed space". I want to extend this definition by proposing that all women who lived outside the family placed themselves on the margins. [2] Within this frame of reference, I will examine whether widows and single women in poverty, as well as female offenders and prostitutes were identified as marginal in Southampton society.

6.4 On the Margins? Women in Poverty

The identification of poor women as marginals does not sit easily within conventional definitions, yet it is clear that these women teetered on the boundaries of society, only prevented from falling if they managed to remain on the deserving side of poverty. [3] The primary causes of poverty had little regard for gender, though a woman's economic status was invariably dependant on that of her father and, unless she remained single, on that of her husband. Nevertheless, at all levels of society, marriage was a woman's first strategy against poverty; outside the family, she was much more likely to live in poverty. But women were

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[1] See Christina Larner, *Witchcraft and Religion: The Politics of Popular Belief*, (Oxford,1984), p. 86.
[2] See Hanawalt, "At the Margin's of Women's Space", p. 3.
[3] The concept of the deserving and undeserving poor, which was enshrined in law in 1383, has underpinned all subsequent legislation, including the Poor Law of the sixteenth century, see Beler, *Masterless Men,* esp. pp. ixx-xxii.

uniquely susceptible to poverty at two stages in their lives: if they remained single or when they became a widow. [1]

Though young single men were equally the authors of their own fortune, the passage from adolescence to adulthood for young men was significantly different from that of young women in determining their economic future. Neither did a widower - or his household - experience the same economic losses as his female counterpart; despite the contribution women made to the family economy, they were rarely the primary bread-winner. There was a gendered difference in the construction of poverty.

Single women were particularly vulnerable to poverty in a society where women's work was ideologically if not physically contained within the household. Though young single women gained employment, this period of their lives was seen as preparatory to their inevitable marriage, and for those women who did not marry, estimated at around 9% of women, there were few employment opportunities that offered more than the means of basic survival. [2] The spinster was no mere caricature: the ownership of a spinning wheel, costing as little as 4d, could mean the difference between survival and destitution.[3] Though four single women - including two silkwomen - were assessed for a local tax in *c.* 1500, their absence from other taxation records, and the fact that single women lived in the least desirable parts of the town is enough to indicate their poverty.[4]

For a few single women and widows, poverty was a positive choice, but the local women who entered the nearest female religious house in Romsey, and those who lived at God's House, were women from wealthy families, who had voluntarily chosen poverty as an act of piety. [5] At God's House both "Sister Joan, who does not eat flesh throughout the year" and Sister Elena, who ate "nothing that had suffered death" received a farthing a day, plus a clothing allowance.

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[1] See pp.159-61.

[2] See chap. 4, *passim.*, see also Hufton,*The Prospect Before Her*, p. 95 *ff.*

[3] See pp. 88-90.

[4] SC14/2/1. See above p. 143, n.2. Within the town, both widows and single women form part of the transitory population who lived in tenements of multiple occupation, see, for example, Tens. 294-6, French St, *G.H.C.*, pp. 226-30.

[5] The number of women who made this choice were few, see Power, *Medieval Women*, pp. 86-96; Judy Walker, *Romsey Abbey through the Centuries*, (Pennington,1993).

Even their poverty was relative: pauper inmates received only food and a farthing every two days. [1]

For those who did marry, unless they were deserted by their husbands, widowhood was the point at which women even from relatively wealthy families could quickly become impoverished. [2] Poor women, without the cushion of inherited wealth and property, entered an extremely precarious state of existence. It is difficult to measure the extent and rate of widows' decline into poverty: Emmota Sadeler, the widow of Thomas Campden *aka* Sadeler, (d.1436) managed to pay the rent on a tenement during the first 12 years of her widowhood before she was recorded in the steward's book of 1449 as a recipient of town alms.[3] Evidence from the 1454 Terrier has already been cited to show how eight women held the bulk of female-owned property. The remaining 24 female householders, listed in the Terrier made up 6.9% of tenants who were household heads. This suggests that up to 75% of female householders were too poor to be liable for tax, compared to 30% of all householders. [4] This snapshot of household heads does not prove that the majority of widows and single women were living in dire poverty, but given that only 3% to 5% of the tax-paying population were female, this figure though perhaps underestimating the extent of female poverty, is indicative of their likely economic status.

Before the sixteenth century the evidence for those living in poverty, whether male or female, is sporadic and uneven, though William Soper's will, made in 1458, gives some indication of its extent, leaving "to 80 of the more needy paupers of the town, six shillings and eightpence, to be distributed penny by penny". [5] References to the recipients of alms are rare, and information about the alms-giving activities of bodies within the town are not plentiful. For those who lived in real poverty, what support was available? Though the Oak Book included procedures for the relief of poverty among burgesses and in the event of the

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[1] Davies, *History of Southampton*, p. 458.
[2] See pp.158-60.
[3] *G.H.C.*, pp. 400-2.
[4] See Table 5.1, column 3, and Table 5.5, pp. 143 & 159; Platt, *Medieval Southampton,* pp. 264-5.
[5] *Black Book* 2, p. 107.

sickness or death of a guildsman, no provision was made for their families.[1] However, during the mid-fifteenth century, the town did make regular payments to a few individuals, recorded in the 1441 steward's book as "a remembrance of the almys whych the towne gewyth every weke to poore men and women". Weekly payments of between 4d and 6d were made to three individuals at any one time, usually to two men and one woman, though the criteria by which they were selected is not clear.[2] The only woman connected to a burgess family was Agnes Holdeway, paid 6d. a week from 10th October 1434 until her death in the following April. [3] No similar family connections can be made for the male recipients or for Olive Gegull, a recipient from 1434 to1442, Ballow's widow paid 6d weekly in 1441-2, Emmota Sadeler, paid 6d. a week from 1449 to 1458 and Felys John who was paid 4d a week for 12 weeks in 1472-3, until "she went unto God, the which have mercy on her soul". [4]

Evidence for charitable donations made by the Franciscan Friary, St Denys Priory and God's House Hospital is negligible. Though each received charitable donations, including *inter-vivos* land transfers and testamentary bequests, there are no records of how they discharged their responsibilities to the poor, (the Friary's contribution towards living standards through the provision of a fresh water supply has already been noted). [5] The only institution in the town explicitly established to care for the sick and poor was the Hospital at God's House which housed up to 12 poor brothers and sisters, and a limited number of beds for the sick. Analysis of their accounts for 1536 suggests that God's House was not exactly generous in its donations to the poor. [6] Neither could the poor rely on the charity of individuals. [7]

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[1] Ord. 22, *Oak Book*, p. 37.

[2] *Stewards* 2; see also SC5/1/10, fo.18 for 1461-2; "paid to the three alms-people of the town....total of all 52 weeks, £3/0/8d..".

[3] Henry Holdeway was Steward in 1398, Bailiff in 1401-2 and Mayor in 1403-4; Agnes may have been his daughter, *Stewards Book 1434-5* 2, p. 2.

[4] SC5/1/7, fo.36, 1449-50; SC5/1/8, fo.28, 1456-7; SC5/1/9, fo. 28, 1457-8. See p.187 for Emmota Sadeler .

[5] See above, p. 73. Davies, *History of Southampton*, pp. 444-7. After the Dissolution the loss of a public water supply was particularly a problem for the poor, see *Court Leet,* p.11.

[6] Kaye, *G.H.C.*, pp. xxxii-xxxiv; in 1536, less than half of their annual revenue of over £140 was directed to the poor, half of which was spent on the 20 poor brothers and sisters, Davies, *History of Southampton*, p. 461.

[7] See p. 163 and Appendix 1.

From the beginning of the sixteenth century, as Southampton fell into relative poverty, like other boroughs it was given powers of control over the poor and, as elsewhere, sought to distinguish the local poor from the, "grett nomber of beggars.....of late have resortid unto this towne and dayly do resort, as well men as wemen, and inhabit themselves here intendyng to lyve only by beggyng". [1] Measures to control and identify the poor began in the 1520s, and 64 liveries were supplied to the local beggars in 1529 at a cost of £14.[2] In 1536, the number of official beggars was reduced to 13, who were issued with tin badges and allowed to beg once a week. Over half of these died in the course of the year and were replaced with others; chosen from the old or sick, in both surviving lists over half the official beggars were women. [3]

Increasingly local widows were perceived of as the deserving poor, and in its desire to mitigate the effects of poverty on these women the town employed several strategies. [4] An increasing number of debts were forgiven to widows of men who had worked for the town in some capacity. Agnes Soulby, wife of a porter, was forgiven his debt of 15s 10d in 1539-40, "by reason that the said Nicholas had hard years in the porterage and died poor"; Harman Smith's widow was forgiven a debt of 24s 7d in 1542 "by reason of her poverty, and because her husband was killed with one of the guns in the service of the lord King and the town." [5] By 1542-3 the numbers had increased with six widows and two men forgiven rents by the town.[6]

It has already been suggested that "good and honest" women were offered employment as wool-packers, and it is probably no coincidence that Agnes Overay forgiven rent arrears in 1542, was employed by the town, both as a cook and as a wool-packer; and that Elyn Hart, another wool-packer, was listed as one of the *poore people* who lived in the newly opened alms house in 1552. [7]

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[1] Southampton was ranked 25th in terms of tax paid in 1524. By the mid 17th century, it ranked 39th, James, *3rd R.B.* 4, p. xix.
[2] Davies, *History of Southampton*, p. 293; SC5/3/1, fo. 64v; *3rd R.B.*1, pp. 52-3.
[3] *3rd R.B.*1, pp. 52-3.
[4] For similar strategies elsewhere, see Diane Willen,"Women in the Public Sphere in Early Modern England: the Case of the Urban Working Poor", *Sixteenth Century Journal* 19: 4, 1988, pp. 559-75.
[5] SC5/1/39, fo. 51; SC5/1/40, fo. 63.
[6] SC5/1/40, fo. 64.
[7] See Appendix 2; SC10/1/1, fo. 4v.

By this period, the legal responsibility for the poor had passed wholly to the parishes, and when Southampton set its first parish rate in 1552, relief was provided to 59 individuals. Some 25% of the recipients were men, though it is not clear whether they were single or married; 13.5% were men with families; 37% were single women and widows, and 15% women with children. Thus over 50% of the households receiving parish relief were headed by women, a figure which remained fairly constant throughout the rest of the century. Women received 46% of doles in 1575, 70% in 1593-4 - when almost all beneficiaries were widows - and 61% in 1595-6.[1] The amounts of money given were small: in 1552 Richard Chaunte received 8d. a week to support himself, his wife and seven children; Elizabeth Martyn, a widow with three children, also received 8d.; Maryane Gowycke, a disabled woman, received 8d. [2]

The effectiveness of this provision is debatable. Between 1524 and 1596, the population of Southampton more than doubled, probably as a result of inward migration.[3] From 1549 onwards, from when Court Leet records survive, increasing numbers of presentments were made regarding poverty, overcrowding and the numbers of undertenants, complaining of those "w[hi]ch for the most part arr so poore as dayly they lye at mens dores for ther relyffe".[4] Yet the numbers receiving parish relief did not increase; there were 59 recipients in 1552 and 55 in later years. The town's response to general levels of poverty was increasingly expressed through regulation and, if this failed, eviction.[5] Exhortations to the poor were increasingly expressed in terms of familial responsibilities: in 1579 poor men known to be gamblers were prohibited from frequenting taverns, and artisans, craftsmen or servants found in ale-houses after eight or nine o'clock were fined five shillings, for "in the meantyme theire wyves and children want both meate and drincke".[6]

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[1] SC10/1/1-3.
[2] See Elizabeth Rotheray, "Poverty in Southampton 1540-1640", Dissertation for the Diploma in English Local History, Portsmouth Polytechnic,1989.
[3] Based on estimates from the 1524 Lay Subsidy and the 1596 Muster, *3rd R.B.*4, pp. xviii-xix.
[4] *Court Leet, passim.*
[5] For 15th century expulsions, see *1st R.B., passim.*
[6] *Court Leet*, p.182.

Though both single women and married women had been expelled from the town since the late-fifteenth century, usually for challenging the moral order, now whole families - both male- and female-headed - were summarily expelled. In 1572, a poor woman with four children living in East Street was paid two shillings "to rid her out of the town"; in 1577 three men, eight women and seven married couples, some with children were expelled. In June & July 1590, three single men and seven married men and their wives were expelled. [1]

Single women were evicted as the town became increasingly concerned about illegitimate children: in 1572 a woman was paid 12d. to carry her child to Guildford to find the father, and in 1577 Mary Flamstead, an unmarried and pregnant servant, was expelled. [2] Men were also required to pay the town for the maintenance of their illegitimate children.[3]

Even if the extent of poverty in Southampton was exaggerated by contemporaries, civic provision was totally ineffective in its relief. As the numbers of those living in poverty grew, the town increasingly resorted to control and expulsion, but did not increase its provision. It would appear that the town was prepared to provide only for a small number of socially-acceptable and respectable poor, and I suggest that their definition of the deserving poor was gendered. The recipients of the town's various provisions for the poor included a disproportionately high number of widowed women: from 1502 they were offered employment as wool-packers; half the town's official beggars were widows; of the town's tenants forgiven rents, the majority were widows; seven out of the ten people living in the almshouse in 1552 were widows, and from 1552 to 1594, the number of widows receiving parish relief rose from seven to 22, while the number of men declined. Widows were unlikely to burden the town with illegitimate children, resort to prostitution or compete for work with the town's men; neither were they likely to leave the town in search of work, leaving dependants behind. They could also be provided with

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[1] Book of Fines, SC5/1/3, 1572. *Examinations*, pp. 23-25, 45, 47, 52-4,66, 71 & 79.
[2] SC5/1/3, for 1572; *Examinations*, pp. 52-3.
[3] See, for example, SC5/3/1, for 1575-6; *3rd R.B.* 4, p. 27, for 1595.

employment, as carers of the sick, orphans and illegitimate children, thus mitigating the effects of poverty on others.[1]

Though the town's bias towards widows could be explained by the fact that widows were more likely to be poor than any other group in society, the high percentage of widows in all categories of poor relief suggests that that the concept of the deserving poor was gendered, but also limited; single and married women were not included. It seems clear, however, that the town sought to prevent their widows from falling into dire poverty and into the margin of society. The effects of this unstated policy, whether it was ever articulated or not, was that the town, like the Church before it, constructed widows as dependent on the town, just as single and married women were to be dependant on their fathers and husbands. Female dependency was important to the post-Reformation state with its emphasis on the sixteenth-century version of "family values".

6.5 On the Margins: *Queans of the Stewes*

Prostitution was one strategy against poverty, though, as in all periods, we assume that becoming a prostitute was seldom an active choice but usually a last resort for women with no other means of economic survival. It is impossible to estimate the exact number of women who became prostitutes in medieval Southampton, or their marital status, though modes of recording them suggest that almost all were single women. [2] Prostitutes were perceived as a problem in Southampton as early as 1392: "All prostitutes holding the common lodging house in Estrete shall be entirely removed from the said street". The town was still trying to expel them in the sixteenth century. [3] The expulsion of prostitute women was central to the moral order and "for the sake of the chastity of those passing through the said street or setting forth abroad to the church of St. Mary's." [4] But though prostitution was not to be thrust in the face of the good burgesses and

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[1] See pp. 86-7.
[2] There were exceptions, see Annys Borman, p.195, below.
[3] *Black Book* 1, pp. 6-7; *3rd R.B.*2, pp. 4-5.
[4] *Black Book, ibid.*

burgess wives of Southampton as they made their way to church, it was, as Karras has suggested, regarded as a necessary evil, and tolerated for at least 250 years.[1] Southampton's *stewes*, or *bordell*, was located in Bag Row, in the southern part of East Street outside the town walls; prostitute women were literally and physically located beyond the boundaries.[2] Whether the Southampton *stewes* was an official brothel, as Karras has identified in Southwark and Sandwich, is not clear. [3] Several references to "the bawd of the *Stewes*" suggests that this post may have had a quasi-official status, placing the women under a degree of masculine control. [4] It is also possible that prostitution was accepted to such an extent that , like other occupations, prostitutes were subject to occupational fines: four payments made by the *harlots* in 1535-6 and 1542-3 could be interpreted as licences to trade. [5]

Like other occupations, it was also subject to regulation, although the rules can be observed only in their breach. Women were not allowed to work in the town: a "wenche of the stewes" was fined 8d "for comyng into the town without hyr tokyn on hyr hed". [6] In 1493 Alis, "a comyn woman" was fined 3s. 4d for lying with a galleyman within the town all night, and both male and female participants were fined when intercourse took place on board ship.[7] But being a prostitute was not an offence, and though prostitutes were frequently fined, it was not always directly related to their occupation.

Of the 16 fines paid between 1488 and 1550 by women identified as *queans*, *wenches* or women of the *stewes*, just under half were paid for assault, theft and

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[1] Ruth Mazo Karras, "The Regulation of Brothels in Later Medieval England", in Judith Bennett, *et al.* (eds.), *Sisters & Workers in the Middle Ages,* pp.100-34.

[2] Prostitutes expelled from nearby Winchester lived in a similar area just outside the city walls, where "theft and violence were rife", Keene,*Survey of Medieval Winchester* 1, p. 392.

[3] Karras, "The Regulation of Brothels", p.112; For other public brothels, see J.A .Brundage, *Law, Sex & Christian Society in Medieval Europe,* (Chicago, 1987), pp. 521-9.

[4] Bawds included Anthony Hall and Tristram Harrison, *3rd R.B* 2, pp. 3-4; see also, *ibid.*1, p. 75 and SC5/3/1, fo. 73v, 1535-6.

[5] SC5/3/1, fo. 81v & 82v. Two similar fines were paid in earlier years, *ibid.*, fos. 10r., 14v.

[6] SC5/3/1, fo. 36r; distinctive badges or forms of dress were used to mark prostitute women elsewhere: in Bristol they wore striped hoods, and in Southwark and Winchester prostitutes were not allowed to wear aprons, Karras, "The Regulation of Brothels", p.122, n. 83; see also Leah Lydia Otis,*Prostitution in Medieval Society: The History of an Urban Institution in Languedoc,* (Chicago, 1985), pp. 81 & 104.

[7] SC5/3/1, fos.16v & 7v.

other offences. The *stewes* also attracted violence and crime: several thefts took place there, and over 20 men were fined for assaults at the *stewes*, either on other men or on the women. But most of the fines - 94 between 1488-1550 - relating to the *stewes* were paid by men prohibited from using them, indeed over half of all fines paid by men for sexual offences related to the stewes (see table 6.1, overleaf). The stewes theoretically provided a sexual outlet for young single men, but from the fines paid by married men, priests, strangers and galleymen for visiting the stewes, it is clear that the clientele was much wider. [1]

Table 6.1 Men fined for sexual misconduct [2]

Status			**Location of Offence**		
Friar or priest	9	9.6%	In the town	26	27.7%
Galleymen	11	11.7%	At the *stewes*	54	57.4%
Married men	25	26.6%	Not identified	14	14.9%
Stranger	26	27.7%	**Total**	94	100%
Others	23	24.4%			
Total	94	100%			

The prosecution of these groups of men, rather than the women themselves, again reveals the ambivalence with which prostitutes were regarded: though stigmatised, marginalised and certainly beyond redemption, they existed to provide legitimate sexual experience for unmarried men. [3]

But as the Reformation took hold, sex outside marriage and brothels were no longer tolerated and brothels were closed all over Europe. [4] In Southampton in 1544 the attitude of the corporation hardened towards prostitution, though a degree of ambivalence remained: "Forasmoche as hit hath ben yn question

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[1] Jews, clerics, married men, and boys under 14 were prohibited from using stewes, Brundage, *Law, Sex & Christian Society,* p. 526.
[2] Based on SC5/3/1.
[3] Karras, "The Regulation of Brothels", pp. 126-7.
[4] Crawford dates the closure of brothels in England to 1546, *Women and Religion in England,* pp. 42-3.

whether hit were better to abolice and putt awey the name of the stewes in Estrete and the comyn wemen of the same or to suffer them, the mayor and his brethryn be not yett clerely resolved". At that meeting they agreed that the women should be "avoide out of the towne" and that the *bawde of the stewes,* Tristram Harrison, should keep no women in his house, but resolved to settle the matter at their next meeting. But at that meeting, and at yet another two weeks later, they still prevaricated, ostensibly because of Sir Richard Lyster's absence.[1] There is no record of their final decision, but from the lack of any subsequent references to the *stewes* it would appear that from 1544 prostitute women were prohibited from working in Southampton. [2] After this date, women accused as prostitutes were severely treated. In 1555 Anys Borman, who lived in Bag Row, and was married to a tippler, had "retoorned to hir sayd abominacion to the greate shame of the towne"; she was banished, and threatened that if she returned she would be "burned in the cheke with a hott iron and also to be banished...at a carts tayle with basons as a common harlot and strumpatt". In 1557 Elizabeth Fourde of Sarum was banished as a whore, and ordered never to return, "on payne to be whypped and burned yn the fase". [3]

6.6 On the Margins: criminous women.

Anys Borman's punishment indicates how municipal authority responded to women who transgressed the moral order in the town, and between 1461 and 1560, 35 women were fined or banished for similar transgressions. Though sexual misconduct properly came under the jurisdiction of the church courts, the town also sought to control the behaviour of its denizens. [4] Like other incorporated boroughs Southampton was empowered through a series of charters to hold its own courts, though no records of these courts survive before

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[1] Lyster had been Lord Chief Justice, though it is not clear whether he was in office in 1544.
[2] *3rd R.B.* 2, pp. 4-5. Merson suggests that national policy was moving in the same direction, citing Steele, *Proclamations 1*, no. 288, 13 April 1546, "A Proclamation to avoyd the abominable place called the stewes", *ibid.* 4, n.6.
[3] *3rd R.B.*, 2, pp. 51-2 & 58-9; SC 10/1/1, fo. 4v.
[4] McIntosh,"Finding Language for Misconduct", pp. 97-101. See also pp. 45-6, above.

1570. [1] Thus until the late-sixteenth century, from when records of examinations and depositions relating to felonious crimes survive, the Mayor's Book and the Books of Remembrance provide the only evidence from which an understanding of the gender dimensions of misconduct and its control can be derived. [2] This analysis is therefore based, unlike other studies, on an analysis of misdemeanour, rather than of felony. [3]

Only 89 women were fined for misdemeanour in the period between 1488 and 1550, in comparison to 1,445 men. The rate at which they were fined varied annually to between 0% and 25% of all fines, with an aggregated average of 5.8% - less than two fines a year. From such a small sample, is it possible to observe gendered patterns of misdemeanour or to draw any conclusions about the marital status of these women?[4] It is certainly possible to argue that the majority of female offenders were marginals for most of them were not even named; only 16 individuals (18%) were listed under their full name. By contrast, the majority of male offenders were recorded under their full names, the principal exceptions being servants, men from marginal groups, and in particular the African crews of the Italian galleys.[5] Almost a third of the women were married, 19 women (20%) described as the wife of a named man, and a further nine as the

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[1] In 1256 the town was granted the right to elect its own coroner, from 1401, to elect its own justices and, following incorporation in 1445, was granted county status with the power to issue by-laws; from 1447 it had the power to hold quarter sessions and assizes, confirmed by another grant in 1480, H.W Gidden, (ed). *The Charters of the Borough of Southampton* 1, pp. 14-17, 40-51, 70-81. Felonies were occasionally noted in other sources, see, for example, infanticide, pp. 48-9. The Mayor's book also refers to a woman killed by a galleyman, SC5/3/1, fo.10 v.

[2] 44 fines were listed in the First Book of Remembrance for 1461-1530, only some of which are duplicated in SC5/3/1, see table 6.2. The diversity of fines listed there suggests that it was used to record fines imposed by a number of different courts.

[3] Most studies of crime and gender have used assize records, and are based on felonies, rather than misdemeanours, and are concerned with indictments rather than convictions, thus extreme caution has been employed in drawing comparisons. See, for example, J.B. Given, *Society & Homicide in 13th Century England,* (California, 1977); Helena Graham, "Women Criminals in Medieval London", B.A. dissertation, University of Southampton,1982; Barbara Hanawalt, *Crime & Conflict*; Kermode & Walker (eds.), *Women, crime and the courts*; Carol Z. Wiener, "Sex Roles & Crime in Late Elizabethan Hertfordshire", *Jnl. Soc. Hist.* 8,1975, pp. 30-60.

[4] Kermode and Walker suggest that studies of criminal behaviour have tended to gloss over women's activities because women make up such a small percentage of offenders. They argue for qualitative studies to inform our understanding of both female and male criminality, and of women's relationship to courts and the law, 'Introduction', in Kermode & Walker (eds.), *Women, crime and the courts,* pp.1-25, see esp. pp. 2-5.

[5] Often of African or Mediterranean origin, galleymen were clearly identifiable as marginals in Southampton's maritime community.

wives of men described by an occupational by-name.[1] The rest (49%) were described by their ethnic origin, as Frenchwoman or "duchewomen", or merely by their gender, as woman or wench, *strumpet*, *harlot* and *quean*.[2]

One third of the women fined were described as being married, though only in one instance was a married woman's fine recorded as being paid by her husband. Here, as in other sources, I would suggest that married women were invariably recorded as such - if the town could hold a man responsible for his wife's actions, it would; thus we can reasonably assume that the remaining female offenders were single, though some may possibly have been widows. [3]

Table 6.2 Breakdown of offences by women

	1st R.B. [4]		**Book of Fines**	
sexual offence	13	29.5%	25	28%
theft or receiving	3	6.8%	16	18%
assault	0		15	16.9%
trade or debt [5]	17	38.6%	11	12.3%
nuisance	0		3	3.4%
reviling or scolding	5	11.4%	3	3.4%
other	0		4	4.5%
offence not stated	6	13.6%	12	13.5%
Total	44		89	

[1] See, for example, the ostler's wife and the basket-maker's wife, SC5/3/1, fos. 14v & 42v. In Lichfield during the 1460s, of 136 women listed for sexual offences in presentments made to the Dean of Lichfield, 20% were named as married women, the remainder being described by their first names, aliases and occupational bynames, Anne J. Kettle, "Ruined Maids: Prostitutes and Servant Girls in Later Medieval England", in Edwards & Ziegler (eds.), *Matrons and Marginal Women*, pp. 19-31, esp. pp. 26-7.

[2] SC5/3/1, fos.14v & 42 v; *ibid.*, fos. 68v. & 22r; *ibid.*, fos. 72v,16v, 7v,10v & 62v.

[3] SC5/3/1, fo. 29r.; *1st R.B.*1, pp. 6, 76,78, 80, see pp. 45-6. Occasionally men were named through women: Agnes Idrich's "man" was fined for affray at the stewes, Mistress Brigges "prentys' fined for beating Mother Forde, and both "Jone Eyres husbond" and "Joce's wifis brother" fined for affray, SC5/3/1, fos. 7r, 40r, 7r & 22v.

[4] See chap. 2, pp. 45-6 for a discussion of sexual and other offences in this column.

[5] Excludes craft entry fines.

Of 25 fines for sexual misconduct recorded in the Book of Fines, only ten were paid by women described as *harlot*, *quean* or *wench of the stewes* , the remainder being paid by married or single women fined for misrule or bawdry - the procuring of women for sexual purposes. [1] Though two men were fined for bawdry, seven women were fined for the same offence, attracting some of the most severe fines, up to 6s 8d, recorded. [2] Though one woman was fined with her husband, most of these procuresses seem to have acted on their own, and in an opportunist rather than systematic way; only the *basket maker's wife*, was fined more than once, though Agnes Stryde, described as *tapster at the stewes*, may have had a more formal role in procuring customers for the women. [3]

Prosecutions for "misrule" and other forms of sexual misconduct were most frequently made against married women who, by their actions, placed themselves beyond their husband's control and outside the family. This equally applied to women whose only offence, as with Stephen Ranch's wife, was to have fled her husband. [4]

Though men outnumbered women three to one in the number of fines paid for sexual misconduct, the percentage of men fined - 6.5% of men fined, compared with 28% of females fined - clearly shows a gendered bias in the public control of sexuality. Women who transgressed the moral order threatened public order, and by living without husbands, or beyond their husband's authority, they found themselves into direct conflict with public authority.

On the other hand it is clear that a distinction was drawn between women who willingly participated in extra-marital sex and those who were the unwilling victims of sexual assaults. Comparatively heavy fines were levied on men who committed such acts, though the unusually high fine of 40s imposed on the parson of St Johns who "followed lechery with a man's wife and her [childe]"" was probably because a child was involved; the galyman who enticed Alice Grigges' maid into

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[1] Bawdry normally came under the jurisdiction of the church courts, Karras, "Regulation of Brothels", p.115 & Table 1.

[2] A "man at the Bargate" and the French bawd were both fined for enticing maidens, SC5/3/1, fo. 70r. For female bawds, see *ibid.*, fos. 10r, 16v, 22r, 23r, 25v, 42v & 62v .

[3] SC5/3/1, fos. 22r, 42v & 16v.

[4] SC5/3/1, fo.13v, 1492; this has been discussed in more detail in chap. 2, pp. 45-6.

a chamber had to pay only 3s 4d. [1] In these, and in similar cases, it has to be assumed that rape, defined as a felony, did not take place.[2]

When we look at other offences gendered differences also emerge. Though 16% of women fined were fined for assault, they were few in number; men fined for various categories of assault comprised up to 40% of men fined per annum. Males were more likely to have caused bloodshed, and to use knives or other weapons, while the only woman who used a weapon may have just caught up the nearest item to hand: she was fined for " beating over the head with tongs".[3] However, both men and women were more likely to assault members of their own sex: 73% of women fined for assault had attacked other women, while only 37 men (2.5 %) were fined for assaults on women. [4] However, women were more likely to be victims of assault than of any other offence: 37 women, (58.7% of female victims) being recorded in the Mayor's Book. Most of these women were not named: 25% of them were prostitutes, suggesting that marginal women were particularly vulnerable to assault, though the prosecution of their assailants indicates that they were afforded the protection of the law. [5]

Though the number of women fined was low, marginal women can also be identified as perpetrators of theft. Of 11 women fined for theft, seven were women of the *stewes* who had stolen money or clothing from their clients, while two were merely listed as*woman*.[6] Two other women, both fined in 1492 - Alice Gobbes, who stole money from an *arlot* - and Isabell Lott were probably single.[7]

Each of these thefts seems to have been an opportunist crime, perhaps motivated by economic survival. However, when records of the examinations conducted at quarter sessions appear from 1570 onwards appear, women make up almost a

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[1] SC5/3/1, fo. 61r.

[2] Gidden suggests that a fine of 40s paid by Thomas Lydster in 1502, was for the rape - probably an attempted rape - of Stephen Mariner's wife, *1st R.B.*1, pp. v &11. Hanawalt similarly defines attempted rape as a trespass or fineable offence, *Crime & Conflict,* p. 144.

[3] SC5/3/1, fo. 10r.

[4] For the argument that crimes of violence were more likely to occur within peer groups, *Crime & Conflict,* pp.168-76.

[5] For the bawd of the stewes assault on his wife, see p. 47; The Southwark regulations prohibited the bawd using violence against the prostitutes, see Karras, "Regulation of Brothels", p. 133.

[6] SC5/3/1, fos. 2r, 7v, 10r, 36r, 57v, 62v & 72v; 8v & 22r. In 1486 an un-named woman was placed in St Michael's prison for four days and three nights for stealing old blankets and coverlets and a *quean* was imprisoned for stealing a piece of silver weighing 8 ounces, *1st R.B.* 3, pp. 41 & 65-6.

[7] SC5/3/1, fo. 10r; both women were possibly servants, see below.

fifth of those accused of non-maritime theft. Here, the thefts are not opportunistic, and it becomes clear that women were involved in theft and the receipt of stolen goods in a systematic way. [1] In 1577, Alice Davies, the nine-year-old daughter of Julian Davies, was alleged to have stolen small household items over a three-week period, and to have sold them variously to "old Watts", "nayllors wyffe" and "Crosses wyffe".[2] Servant women also seemed to have been involved in female networks within which stolen household goods could be disposed: in 1593, for example, Elizabeth Cooper was examined about a large quantity of goods brought to her house by Elizabeth Thomson, servant. [3] Theft was a way in which these women could make some money, and was perceived, at least among the marginal community, as socially acceptable: Jehanne Rawson made no secret of the money she had stolen in 1590, offering to buy her friends a drink with the proceeds. [4] Theft was a means to an economic end: in 1576 Margaret Garmeyne claimed that she had refused to buy stolen wax at 12d. the pound, as she would be able to get only 9d. the pound for it , and in 1593 women also seem to have been similarly involved in buying stolen wool. [5]

These women appear to have operated equally within male and female networks, and certainly confound the hypothesis that women stole only low-value household goods, clothing or food, though these do make up the bulk of thefts by women. [6] The percentage and status of women involved in theft in this period does partially support Wiener's thesis that dependent women were less likely to be involved in theft than in the receipt of stolen goods. Yet such thefts equally involved single women who were less likely to be dependent on a man for their economic survival, and women married to marginal men, the latter merely using

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[1] Hamilton & Aubrey (eds.), *Examinations & Depositions 1570-94.* Hanawalt found an indictment ratio of 10% for female felons and also suggested that women were less likely to be convicted. However she also suggests that they are more likely to be involved in petty crimes, which would suggest a higher figure than found in Southampton, *Crime & Conflict,* pp. 115-20.

[2] *ibid,* p. 31-2. Julian, her mother, was expelled from the town in 1570 for sexual misconduct, *3rd R.B.* 2, pp. 121-2.

[3] *Examinations*, pp.104-5.

[4] *ibid.*, p. 76 and see p. 89.

[5] *ibid.*, pp. 15-6 & 112.

[6] Walker has observed that women often committed crimes with other women, using female criminous networks, "Women, theft and the world of stolen goods", in Kermode & Walker (eds.), *Women, crime and the courts* , pp. 81-105, see esp. pp. 82-3.

theft as another means of generating additional financial resources for their households.[1]

Overall, despite the slender evidence, there is an immediate concordance with the low rates of female crimes observed elsewhere; from the fines it can be seen that women in Southampton were fined less often than men, and took part in a much narrower range of activities.[2] Given that these figures are based on successful prosecutions, the figure of 5.8% looks comparable with a 10% indictment rate suggested elsewhere. [3] In conclusion, it seems clear that the women fined and punished for misdemeanour during this period were more likely to be single than married and were more likely to be members of the underclass than the men fined. These women lived on the margins of Southampton society: the further they moved across the boundaries of public order, the more likely they were to be fined and consequently publicly identified as marginal.[4]

Women who acted beyond the limits imposed by their husbands and fathers found themselves in a situation where they were confronted with another form of authority. The mayor and corporation placed themselves *in loco paterfamilias* both in the protectiveness they showed to widowed women and in the punishments they meted out to immoral women. Any women whose behaviour was thought to undermine to the morality of the medieval family - whether they were single or married - or whether they consciously or unconsciously challenged the notion of women's place and role in the family - found themselves on the margins.

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[1] Hanawalt found that women were indicted in 27.5% of receiving cases, Hanawalt, *Crime & Conflict*, pp. 115-20; at the London Trailbaston Trials 30% of women indicted were indicted for receiving, Graham, "Women Criminals in Medieval London", p.13; Wiener, "Sex Roles & Crime", p. 49.

[2] Though both sexes were most frequently fined for assault, sexual misconduct and petty theft, men were also fined for the theft and unlawful killing of animals; maritime offences; and a miscellany of misdemeanours, including lodging vagabonds, financial deception and defaults on their civic duty, a reflection of their occupational and civic interests.

[3] Warren suggests that percentage of female convictions has remained at 10% since the 14th century, M.Q.Warren, *Comparing Male & Female Offenders*, (Beverly Hills,1981). Others report similar low levels female participations in felonious crimes, see Given, *Society & Homicide in 13th Century England,* pp. 187 ff; Smith, "Violence in Rural Society: Homicide in Wiltshire & Devon in the first half of the 13th century"; see also Graham, "Women Criminals in Medieval London", pp. 6 & 25 ff. The problems with these comparisons has already been noted.

[4] Prostitute women paid 18% of fines, highly disproportionate to their actual number.

Chapter Seven Some conclusions

This thesis has set out to understand the nature of patriarchy in a relatively small medieval town during the later middle ages. Thus it seemed logical to start the thesis by examining the family and marriage, where the authority of the patriarch, in the person of the husband and father, was theoretically located. In exploring personal relationships within the family, though several examples of a father exerting his authority or a husband exercising his control could be identified, a coherent body of evidence could not be extracted from the sources.[1] Yet outside the realm of inter-personal family relationships, the inequality of gendered relationships constructed by patriarchy have been only too easy to observe in every activity and institution at all levels of late-medieval and early modern society explored in this study.

Inequality, based on gender, was inevitable. Based on biblical interpretation and physiological observations, women were the inferior and weaker sex. Thus if we return to marriage and the family, and examine them as institutions rather than as inter-personal relationships, their role in maintaining patriarchy becomes clear. Women were constructed as the dependent partner in medieval marriage, a dependency reinforced and maintained by the *coverture* of married women, which subsumed or "covered" their identity as an individual in law, and denied married women any legal independence of action. Nevertheless, despite these disadvantages, so obvious to us, women continued to marry.

Accordingly, one of the aims of this thesis has been to understand, from the Southampton evidence, what marriage had to offer to women. This question had, in part, already been posed by Goldberg who asked : "Was marriage an economic necessity for women in the English later middle ages?" [2] My emphasis, though, is somewhat different. In Southampton, as elsewhere in late-medieval England, marriage was not only economically desirable, but a social and cultural necessity.

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[1] See chap. 2.

[2] Goldberg, *Women, Work & Life Cycle*, pp.1 & 324.

7.1 Better to marry than to burn?

For women to marry, the differences constructed by gender did not only have to seem to be part of the natural order of life; they had also to appear beneficial. From childhood, marriage had to be rationalised as a woman's primary aim in life. The roles that children would come to occupy as adults were clearly visible to them in the persons of their parents and the other adults they encountered. It was made explicitly clear to young women that there was no real alternative to marriage. The opportunity to enter a craft or trade through apprenticeship, or to learn skilled work alongside her father, was not open to a young woman. If she did not stay at home to work alongside her mother, service was the only real occupation on offer, but always as a preamble to marriage. Even in the late sixteenth century, when we find evidence of female apprenticeships - the precursor of the later apprenticeships that placed poor children with local families - with one possible exception, young women were not provided with a means of entry into a craft or trade. [1] Female apprenticeships were at best intended to train them in the skills of housewifery they would need in marriage; at worst, these apprenticeships were another word for service.

Among propertied families, even before a father's testamentary wishes became clear, it was apparent to young women that their inheritance would be of a different order from that of their brothers, and many young women found that their inheritance was predicated on marriage. [2] Thus, as Hufton has found, in economic terms, marriage was a young woman's first strategy against poverty. For a woman born into a landed, a merchant or an artisan family, the success of her enterprise could be measured by marriage to a man of potentially the same economic status as her father, whether the marriage was arranged by parents or was of their own choosing. [3] The economic benefits of marriage within their own class for women born into poorer families in the town were not so immediately apparent. But these

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[1] See Elizabeth Darvall's apprenticeship with the Poyntdexters, pp.106-7.
[2] Chap. 5, pp. 149-50.
[3] There were exceptions: for the marriage of a cook's daughter into a gentry family, see p. 43.

young women, contemplating the lives of those who remained single, were probably acutely aware of the lack of economically secure alternatives.

Though evidence of love and courtship remains largely hidden, a few cases have helped us to understand that the choice of marriage partner was not merely a decision about future financial prospects. [1] It was also clear to young women that marriage was the only legitimate and socially sanctioned arena for the expression of female sexuality. Though young men could visit the *stewes*, sexually active young women faced the problems of pregnancy, punishment by public humiliation, or even banishment from the town.

Marriage was offered to women as the legitimate location for sexual activity, even if sex was, in theological terms, solely for the purposes of procreation. In reality, as many as one in four marriages are likely to have been the *post facto* consequence of a pre-marital sexual relationship if the late-sixteenth-century figure for marriages which occurred after the conception of a child are reliable. [2] In addition, marriage offered women a certain status and a number of discrete and gendered roles which they could not expect to enjoy if they remained single. Though she lost her personal identity, in assuming the name of her husband she was legitimately allowed to interact in the wider community without attracting opprobrium. Obviously, those who became a "burgess wife" on marriage were granted a status not available to "the tinker's wife".[3] But, as "the wife of -------", she was more widely recognised and able to act with more autonomy than as "the daughter of -------". [4]

Marriage gave a woman the role of mother, allocating her the responsibility for the day-to-day care and socialisation of her children, as well as the task of preparing her daughters for marriage. And if her husband predeceased her, as was more than likely, she would then assume the "gouvernaunce" of the children, and the

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[1] Chap 2, p. 41

[2] *ibid.*, p. 50.

[3] Chap. 6, pp.173-5.

[4] From all documentary references it seems that married women engaged in a wider range of social interactions than single women. The numbers of young women identified as "daughter" are few in number, and appear almost exclusively in the contexts of property and marriage.

responsibility of managing the resources of the family until they could be handed on to the next generation. [1]

Marriage also conferred on women the role of house-wife. In the late-medieval period, this occupation was afforded a value which its modern equivalent does not enjoy. Young women in Southampton were apprenticed in "the art of housewifery" and the task of managing a household, and the skills involved were thought sufficiently complex to merit a plethora of instruction manuals. Others have argued how crucial housewifery was to the domestic economy. This thesis presents some of the evidence for the argument, and asserts that, in this role, women were able to exercise a degree of autonomy over the domestic sphere; powers of control denied to them in every other aspect of their marriages. Disparate sources have provided evidence for the wide range of tasks and responsibilities undertaken by the housewife, demonstrating the nature and extent of these activities and showing that evidence can be found for this neglected area of women's work. The interrogation of Southampton's sixteenth century probate inventories has shown their potential for the construction of statistical evidence to understand household activities. The same evidence has also suggested - albeit tentatively - that it may be possible to identify gendered work areas within the late-medieval house-hold. In the same chapter evidence has also been presented for the housewife's use of her skills in extended domestic labour: an important factor in contributing additional resources to the household economy.

The Southampton evidence also clearly shows that marriage was a woman's easiest way of gaining entry into the masculine realms of craft production and trade. But it is clear that the conditions of entry were highly gendered, and that the majority of women acted as helpmeets to their husbands, often undertaking the retail side of the craft. Women's actual participation in manufacturing and trade in the town was very limited, invariably contingent on the circumstances of their individual family, and their husband's occupation. It seems to be more common

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[1] 93% of married men who made wills left surviving widows, see chap. 2, p. 51.

where the occupation was susceptible to a division of labour between the marital partners, or where, as in baking, the craft involved the use of essentially domestic skills. Finally, it was marriage, or at least the end of a marriage, which enabled a number of widows to gain access to an occupation through inheritance of their husbands' estates. Women could not have done this through the formal accumulation of skills or capital.

Yet marriage subordinated women's legal, sexual and personal identity and required them to endure years of childbirth. It limited their primary economic function to the repetitive tedium of housewifery, but in addition required them to work in ancillary roles or outside the household - if the household head could not provide the resources the household needed. And, as widows, they were required to undertake the responsibilities of household head, without any of the privileges that their husbands had enjoyed.

We have to assume that for late-medieval women, the more obvious advantages of marriage far out-weighed the disadvantages. This is not to suggest that individual women did not experience dreadful, tedious or violent marriages, but that from within the family, the alternatives experienced by those Southampton women who remained single were far less alluring. The construction of experience differentiated by gender was the natural order of society, and those who questioned it were few. Women, therefore had little option but to collude in, and indeed, reinforce, their own oppression.[1]

Her loss of identity has already been noted, but neither was a woman's body her own. Marriage gave a husband the "gouvernaunce" of his wife's body, and thus complete control of and responsibility for her sexuality. [2] He also gained control over her property and her legal identity through *coverture*. Intended to be an exchange - a woman's dowry for her maintenance during marriage - the reality of *coverture* mean that all of a woman's property, whether in land or in chattels, was controlled by her husband. For the majority of women, this was not a problem; comparatively few women in Southampton held real property and the chattels

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[1] See for example, the public revocation of property rights in the town court, chap. 5, pp.153-6.
[2] Chap. 2, pp. 45-6.

they brought to a marriage were usually put to immediate use. Their partner's use of property during marriage is again hidden, but the occurrence of only two cases in which a husband disposed of his wife's dower without her consent suggests that most couples shared the resources available to them. [1]

Unhappily, Wallis Chapman's contention that Southampton women were privileged with regard to property was wide of the mark. The numbers of married women who appeared in the Black Book giving their separate consent to the disposal of property are not indicative of any privilege or autonomy with regard to property. These women were, the evidence suggests, disposing of their inheritances in the interests of their husbands and, in the long term, against their own future interests in the property. Indeed the married women, who with their husbands make up just over 4% of grantors in other conveyances, may also have been similarly releasing their dowries, without the luxury of a separate acceptance. It remains unresolved, however, why the percentages of women grantors in both groups declined steadily throughout the fifteenth century. The introduction of jointure would provide an explanation if it were not for the rise in the same figures around the turn of the century.

It was perhaps at the end of a marriage, at the point where she became a widow, that the dependency of married women in Southampton becomes most visible, and where they were most vulnerable. For younger widows who could enter a second or even a third marriage, the protective cocoon of the family could be reopened and the perils of widowhood delayed. But on widowhood, though they regained their legal identity, most women entered one of the least secure periods of their lives.

Those "rich old ladies" who hung on to life and the family property, much to the frustration of the next generation of heirs, were few and far between in late-medieval Southampton.[2] True, there were a few women like Joan Holmhegge who could amass properties through various marriages and ultimately dispose of

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[1] See chap. 5.

[2] "The crime of the rich old ladies of late-medieval England was not that they lived badly but too long", Colin Platt, *King Death. The Black Death and its aftermath in late-medieval England,* (London, 1996), p. 62.

them, providing not only for their heirs, but for the souls of the departed, and to the benefit of the town. [1] But even when women appeared to hold substantial amounts of property, as in the 1454 Terrier, their use of those properties for their own benefit was limited and inefficient. As a widow, her role was not to maximise the estate, but to pass on the patrimony to the - preferably male- heir. Though, as Erickson put it, "This patriarchal scenario founders first on the rock of demography", the fact of *coverture* and acceptances of the Black Book, suggest that property soon found itself back in male hands. [2]

Meanwhile, though the widows of the propertied classes were usually left the family tenement for life, and most Southampton women inherited rather more than the legal minimum, a woman's future was still proscribed and controlled by the wishes of her dead husband. We have seen how some widows were granted only limited tenure, or limited to only part of their home, "lodgers" in their own houses, or "unlawfully thrust out" of their homes. The women who challenged what they perceived to be an unjust inheritance in the Chancery court were few, but they suggest that there were many more who accepted their situation without remedy.

At the same time most widows found themselves undertaking the onerous duties of executrix, fulfilling their husband's' wishes even in death. Some Southampton women, once the debts had been paid, and the bequests disbursed, found themselves with few material or financial resources. It was at this point, the Southampton evidence suggests, that the majority of women did not find themselves fulfilling a long-held hope to enter a craft, or take up mercantile trade.Those who could, and did, were fortunate. Like other widows they were now responsible for their own economic survival, and the lists of widows in debt are long. Both the town and God's House forgave widows payments for rent, and the stewards' books testify to the women unable to pay the arrears that their husbands, whether broker or porter, died owing the town. Unless she was left with ample resources, *burgess widow* or not, if she looked around the community in

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[1] See p. 165.
[2] Erickson, *Women & Property,* p.5.

which she lived, she could see the widows who lived in poverty, and probably knew that the stages at which she could fall, or be pushed, into the margins of poverty were clear.

7.2 Out of the frying pan.....?

The situation of a single woman who had achieved her majority was analogous to that of the widow, in that both had a theoretical legal independence, and both enjoyed an ambivalent relationship with the family.[1] However, although we have been able to understand something of a widow's relationship to her family after her husband's death, the relationship between those single women who stayed within their natal family or lived in the household of a married sibling will almost always remain hidden.

Indeed, in Southampton, women who remained single have proved difficult to resurrect from the archives, so marginal were they to the community. [2] Very few women appear in the records described as *sengelwoman* , a term that may refer only to those who adopted a specific legal status. Most of the single-women in this thesis have been assumed to be single because they were named in their own right, and not in connection with a husband. Yet because of the difficulties of tracing a woman into marriage, these women probably include some who did marry. Equally they probably include women who had left their marriages, moving to Southampton's margins to take on a new identity in the years before such women were summarily expelled. [3]

That single women were economically disadvantaged is immediately apparent: only four of them were liable for tax in Southampton over the period between 1327 and 1552. The system of primogeniture ensured that young women inherited property only by default; they made up less than 1% of grantors and

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[1] For familial control of both single women and widows, see Chap. 5.

[2] It could be argued that the lack of evidence for single women is because they were marginal to the activities which the documents record; however, the fact that they appear in some numbers in documents concerned with control suggests that this may not be so, see below, p. 211.

[3] See Bridget Hill, "Rural-Urban Migration of Women and their Employment in Towns", *Rural History* 5:2, 1994, pp. 185-94, see. esp. p. 191.

grantees of property; only one single woman held any property in the Terrier of 1454. Single women do appear in property records, but they are more easily found among the lists of temporary tenants-at-will who rented some of God's House's least desirable properties than they are in other sources.

Young women from wealthier families did inherit property, though conveyances suggest that most settlements were not granted until after the marriage had taken place. Those who inherited before marriage tended not to be active in the land-market, taking their inheritance with them into their marriage. If they did not marry, the portions allocated or bequeathed to them conditional on marriage presumably remained with the family. But the two proof-of-age cases cited do suggest that when a single woman, or young widow as with Katherine Searle, wished to make a property transaction, her actions were subject to both familial and civic control. Indeed the lack of evidence for activity in the land-market by all but a few single women suggests that their theoretical legal autonomy was compromised by family interests. It is also significant that many of those who challenged wills in the Chancery courts, were daughters questioning the authority of their father. One such daughter, Emma Galgen, was still trying to get justice towards the end of her life.

Estimates of population ratios for the whole period from other towns suggest that for every 100 urban females, there were 90 males. In late-sixteenth century Southampton, when birth ratios can be constructed from testamentary sources, the figure - which excludes immigrants - was similar. It is thus not surprising that some women remained single. [1] The number of Southampton women who made an active choice to remain single cannot be calculated, yet given the over-riding aim of the patriarchal institution in which they had been brought up, and the lack of advantage in economic, social, political or legal spheres for single women, those who chose not to marry - rather than those who failed to marry - were few.

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[1] See, for example, Goldberg, *Women, Work & Life Cycle*, pp. 215-7. In the 17th century, the rate of non-marriage fluctuated between 10% and 20%, a higher percentage than in any succeeding period. In the 1970s and 1980s, for example, only 5-7% of women had not married by the time they reached their forties, see Erickson, *Women & Property,* p. 48.

Those who made an active decision to remain single may have been motivated more by personal experience, religious piety or sexual preference, than by the desire for economic independence. In Southampton marriage was more likely to provide a woman with access to a trade or craft. With some exceptions, single women were more likely to find themselves working on the margins of the economy. A significant percentage of the female hucksters fined by the town were single; each of the six women identified solely as *silkwoman* have to be assumed to be single, and the only named female labourer was single.[1]

The situation of single women was not unequivocally bleak. Clearly the single women who appear as petty traders in the town court books and the few who could afford to rent a property managed - through a degree of economic independence - to keep themselves within the acceptable side of society. But in the community of Southampton, single women were more likely to be situated on the boundaries of transgression. Proportionately they were fined more often for misdemeanour: more single women appear in this class of document than any other. They were the prostitutes; they were the women banished from the town; they were the "masterless" charwomen feared by the sixteenth-century civic authorities; they were the women on the edge of Southampton society. Even those who remained within the respectability of their natal families or lived quietly as spinsters, had deliberately or accidentally, placed themselves on the margins, in opposition to the overwhelming ideology of the medieval family. That marriage enabled women to act with more autonomy and freedom than single women is a testament to the effectiveness of patriarchy.

7.3 What happened to the Golden Age?

The exclusion of women from positions of power in the town presents no surprises, but the absence of Southampton women from the primary economic

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[1] In the period between 1338 and 1400, three women, all tenants of God's House, were identified as kempsters, *G.H.C.* pp. 226-30.

function of the town, mercantile trade, was more surprising, particularly when women, mainly widows, from the nearby towns of Winchester, Salisbury and Basingstoke were actively trading through the town. Given the control that the mercantile elite exercised over civic power, it may be that the absence of local women from long-distance trade was linked to their exclusion from both burgess status and "the franchise", prerequisites for those who wished to engage in trade. If, as Platt has suggested, the identity between guildsman and merchant developed soon after 1270, women's absence from mercantile trade may have been a consequence of their exclusion from power.[1] This may explain why, in the thirteenth century, more local women were engaged in long-distance trade than in the later period.

Yet though long-distance trade was an almost exclusively masculine milieu, most other ports counted more than a handful of female merchants. The explanation that women were unable to accumulate capital does not fit: some local women clearly had enough capital to lend money to Southampton's merchants. Women from other towns - many the widows of merchants - who traded out of Southampton, like their male counterparts, were able to engage in trade a small scale. Yet the widows of Southampton merchants did not continue their husbands' businesses. Southampton's women were peripheral to the primary economic function of the town, and were found only in service roles.

Here, it is appropriate to put on record that the women who packed wool in late-medieval and early-modern Southampton were not a women's guild. Yet in the unravelling of this organisation, the patriarchal power of the corporation, and its identity of interest with the mercantile elite were made crystal clear. Perhaps this signals that Southampton's elite exercised far more control over women's economic activity than elsewhere; or has the extent of women's economic activity elsewhere been exaggerated?

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[1] Platt, *Medieval Southampton*, passim. In Exeter, similarly controlled by a mercantile elite, three women, two the widows of merchants, informally enjoyed the trading privileges afforded by the freedom without being formally enrolled; only one woman was allowed to enter the freedom at the request of two male members, Kowaleski, "Women's Work in a Market Town", p.146, n. 5 & p.155, n. 58.

This leads us to look at Goldberg's argument that some women delayed or even avoided marriage, because of the economic opportunities open to them in the period up to 1470. If this is so, we would expect to find single women in Southampton employed in a wide range of economic activity, rather than as domestic servants. But Southampton was not another York, where the textile and clothing trade provided employment for women as servants and ancillary workers in a wide range of craft occupations and their associated trades. [1] The economy of Southampton, and its highs and lows, was dependent on international trade, and as we have seen, women were all but marginal to this aspect of the economy. A few women can be associated with Southampton's small weaving industry in this period, but this is not unexpected; aspects of work in the textile industry had been gendered as female since the early-medieval period. Both before and after 1470 - beyond their employment on the periphery of the town's small textile industry - single women were only just visible in Southampton's economy.

It is more significant that women, whether single, married or widowed are equally and consistently found in the same narrow range of occupations over the whole period. Admittedly, the Southampton sources bias the emphasis of this analysis to the very end of the late-medieval period, which both Goldberg, more ambiguously Barron, and all those who have adhered to Clark's original paradigm see as the end of the halcyon days of women's working lives. The Poll Taxes of the late-fourteenth century - which contributed to Goldberg's argument for the relative economic prosperity of young women in York that enabled them to delay marriage - do not survive for Southampton. [2] However, in local sources which span both the "golden age" and its aftermath, there is very little observable change. From the brokage and port books it is clear that the percentage of women trading through the town remained fairly consistent throughout the period, though their numbers, their origin and the commodities in which they traded, changed in response to changing markets and fluctuations in the economy. In any event, these were

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[1] Swanson, *Artisans*, pp. 35-6, 39, 42-3, 46 & 51-2.

[2] Goldberg, *Women, Work & Life Cycle*. For the low status of 160 female servants identified in Exeter during the same period (1373-93), see Kowaleski, *Local Markets*, pp. 168-9.

mainly widowed women, presumably continuing their husbands' business; any variation in their number was as likely be related to male mortality in the merchant class than to any other variable. The stewards' books, which also span most of the period, actually show an increase in female retailers from 1470 onwards, remaining at much the same level up to the 1530s. Neither is there any evidence of any formally concerted attempts to exclude women from craft organisations in this period. Indeed, two craftsmens' petitions explicitly allowed for the participation of their wives and widows respectively. [1]

Even towards the end of the sixteenth century, a period which Clark saw as signalling the end of the domestic mode of production, inventory evidence suggests that the majority of artisan households in Southampton still conformed to the model. In baking where there was a relatively high level of female participation, arguably because of the location of the craft within both the range of domestic skills and the domestic economy, the high figures for female bakers found in the Assize of Bread in the years around 1500 can also be found from other sources in the 1570s.

The Southampton evidence does not conflict with published evidence for women's work in other towns in medieval England. Women are present in the same areas of work, and, as far as can be deduced from other studies, in the same small numbers. That clear parallels can be seen in the economic roles occupied by women in late-medieval and early-modern Southampton, and in those occupied by women in Exeter a century earlier, only adds to the argument for continuity over a longer period. [2] On the Southampton evidence, the "golden age" is a myth and a consequence of a focus on 'women's history', which in failing to use gender as a category of analysis, has inevitably served to exaggerate the significance of women in crafts and in trade.

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[1] See chap. 4, p. 95. Goldberg's argument that women were progressively excluded from craft production is based almost entirely on their exclusion from weavers' guilds. Women servants were excluded as servants from the craft in Coventry in 1453, and from weavers' guilds in Bristol, Hull and Norwich, Goldberg, *Women, Work & Life Cycle*, p. 200, & n.157, citing C. Phythian Adams, *Desolation of a City*, pp. 87-8; F.B. Bickley (ed.), *The Little Red Book of Bristol* I, (Bristol, 1900), p.127; M.D. Lambert, *Two Thousand Years of Guild Life*, (Hull ,1891), p. 206; Hudson and Tingley (eds.), *Records of the City of Norwich* II, p. 378.

[2] Kowaleski, *Local Markets, passim.*

7.4 "Across the great Divide"[1]

Women have moved in and out of the masculine labour market throughout history, yet their status in all but a few occupations has never been more than marginal. They may have provided a source of additional labour in times of economic expansion, but the notions of gender-appropriate economic activity did not change. The factors which controlled access to craft production, discussed in chapter 4, did not show any variation throughout the period. Despite massive changes in the economy during this period, because women's primary means of gaining access to craft production was through marriage, there was little variation in their rate of participation. [2] In Southampton - and indeed elsewhere - the women who did gain access to the formal economy tended to cluster in the same limited range of occupations. [3] Occasional female participation in other areas at the low levels observed was entirely feasible, and -with the exception of the barbers' problem with Joanne Barber - these women could be tolerated with ease. Despite the literature on women's work in the formal economy, most Southampton women, throughout the period, worked as housewives, in extended domestic labour, and in casual or unregulated work, in work that was gendered as female. [4]

There were no radical changes in the gender relations of work which high levels of female participation would signify. The wool-packers, exclusively female, were subject to regulation that controlled not only their work practices, but their behaviour. Most significantly, they were denied access to any control over their own activities. Other women were equally denied access to power at all levels of society, and without a change in the balance of power the position of women could not be expected to change.

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[1] Bennett, "Medieval Women, Modern Women: Across the Great Divide."
[2] Because Southampton was never a major manufacturing centre, the hypothesis that women were enabled to enter craft production as the markets for goods expanded cannot be tested.
[3] See tables 4.1-2.
[4] Colin Platt has estimated that wage labourers and servants constituted 50 % of the tax paying population of Southampton in 1524, and suggests that 30% of the whole population were non-tax paying wage earners and paupers, Platt, *Medieval Southampton*, p. 264.

The evidence for the enduring continuity of patriarchy over the two centuries which are the span of this thesis is overwhelming. Despite massive changes in the economic fortunes of Southampton, the available evidence shows that the circumscribed areas of women's work remained the same. Through an arguably radical transformation of religious belief, the gendered relationships of marriage remained consistent. Through periods of demographic decline and massive increases in the population of Southampton, the position of women in society did not change.

This is not to say that the women of Southampton were unaware of, or unaffected by, those great changes: after the Dissolution, the women of various mercantile families benefited from the properties their husbands acquired from the estates of St Denys Priory and Netley Abbey; meanwhile the ordinary women of the town probably mourned the loss of the washing yard at the Friary, which was sold into private hands.[1] Yet, no other evidence suggests that the Reformation brought any significant or wide-ranging changes to the lives of the women and men of Southampton. As far as the surviving sources suggest, the people of Southampton adapted to the Reformation - and the counter-Reformation which saw the Friary briefly re-established under Mary - with little comment. The only dissenting voices recorded were those of Sir Richard Lyster and Margaret Welles, who in 1550 was said to have spoken of a "sturre that should be in this Realme before Mighelmas next greater than the sturre of the last yeares". [2] The absence of evidence for dissent continued throughout the century: scant few presentations were made to the Court Leet against those absented themselves from worship. Steven Bartie's mother was one of those singled out for non-attendance at church, but the text suggest that it was as much the fact that she lived alone as her failure to attend church which caused her to be presented. [3]

This woman's independent behaviour did not accord with expectations of how widows were supposed to behave during a period when widows were being

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[1] PRO SC/6/3326/Netley & 3063/St Denys; washing yard, Harl Rol. I, 14, 1540-1; for two families accused of trespass on this site, see *Examinations*, p. 89.

[2] *Letters*, pp. 78-9. The Welles family had themselves acquired lands after the Reformation, and Margaret's son briefly held the Friary site in 1545, see Platt, *Medieval Southampton*, pp. 210-11.

[3] Chap. 6, p. 184.

increasingly constructed as the deserving poor. But though the civic construction of this role could be interpreted as a new phenomenon, these women were not so different to the poor widows who had made up 30% of the recipients of the towns' alms during the previous century, Though the percentage rose to almost 60% by the 1570s - when widowed women benefited from municipal fear of the masterless men and wayward women - widows, always disadvantaged in society, would always make up the majority of the poor. The numbers of women evicted from the town also rose sharply at the end of the sixteenth century, in the context of a massive rise in population and the protectionist response of parishes that saw male and female strangers as equally undesirable. But undesirable women had been subject to summary eviction from Southampton for at least a century; it was only the civic responses to a growing population which makes them more visible to us.

Though the extent of public control over the behaviour of women who consciously or unconsciously challenged the social order varied over the period, the fundamental principles on which the social relations between the sexes were based changed very little. Always excluded from civic power, invariably excluded or marginalised by the gendering of craft production and mercantile trade as masculine, afforded no legal independence during much of their lives, women were only afforded status in the roles they occupied in the very institution in which their dependancy was legally constructed. The gendered order of Southampton society was based on a patriarchal system which - as the derivation of the word makes clear - depended upon keeping women in the family.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

Summary of Testamentary Evidence, 1443-1575 [1]

Abbreviations

People

exec.	executor or executrix
ww.	widow
s.	son
d.	daughter
s. (d.)-i-l	son (daughter)-in-law
chn.	children
m.	mother
f.	father
b.	brother
sis.	sister
g-chn.	grand-children
god-chn.	god-children
K.	other kin
F.	friends
S.	servant
app.	apprentice
Os.	overseer

Bequests

£	bequest of money
c.	small bequests to various churches
C.	large bequests to various churches
dowry	household goods bequeathed to a daughter
hh.	household goods
P.	bequests for the use of the poor
res.	residue
T.	bequest of tools
Tr.	provision for training for son or daughter
ten.	tenement or other property

Other

CB	condtional bequest
CR	conditional on widow not remarrying

Note: HRO will references have been abbreviated. The correct form is as follows: for example, HRO B wills 1550/12.

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[1] Around 5% of HRO wills have been omitted because they are either illegible or fragmentary.

Date	Source	Testator	Widow[er]	Executor	S.	D.	Ten.	Principal Heirs		Other Beq.
1443	Black 2, 136-141	Florens, Robert	(dec.)	?			*	nephew & heirs/or town		C; P
1457	Black 2, 116-121	Estwell, John	-	app. joint			*	apprentice & w.		C; S; F
1458	Black 2, 98-115	Soper, William	Joan(2nd w.)	ww. joint		1	*	ww., life/then dau.		C; P; S; F
1461	21M6s/A1/13	Holmhegge, Nicholas	Joan	ww.	1		*	ww. life/ then to town (& son)		C
1462	SRO D/LY/23/22	Holmhegge, Jone	-		1			town./13 tens.		C
1462	Black 2,126-133	Bedell, John	Christina	ww. joint	1	1	*	ww. one year/ then son		C
1471	Black 3, 24-9	James, John	Alice	ww. joint			*	ww., life, (C=obit)		P
1487	Black 2, 177-85	Gryme, Richard	Margery (2nd w)	ww. joint	1		*	ww., life, (CR & Obit)/to son		C
1487	PRO PROB 11/18	Holmage, Gregory	Agnes	ww.			?	ww./ (ten?) & res.		C; F.
1490	PRO PROB 11/18	Langford, Agnes	-	son?			*	s?/ten; F./ ten;		C; F
1492	Black 2,151-62	Gunter, William	Alice (2ndw)	ww.				ww., life, then to the town (Chantry)		C
1495	Black 3, 16-23	Shropshire, John	Marion	ww.	1	1	*	ww., life (CR)/g-chn.		S
1495	PRO PROB 11/10	Salman, Matthew	Agnes	ww.	2		*	ww., life & sons pref. by age		C
	H.R.O. WILLS	(unless stated otherwise)								
1502	WR1 p.58	Ashley, Elyn, ww.	-	d & s-i-l.	-	1?		d. & s.i.l./ res.		c.; F; K
	WR1 p. 83-4	Cokkes, George	Alice	ww.	1		?	ww./residue for life/then to son and heirs; C		C
	WR1 p. 84	Georss, Baptista, ww.		s.	1	1	*	s./res. to s. & d.		c
	WR1 p. 57	James, Walter (s)	-	bro.?	-	-	-	John Knight		c; S
	WR1 p.68	Shropshire, Marion, ww	-	s. joint	1	1	*	chn. already have prop. as husband's will		C; F
	WR1 p. 83	Skynner, John	Jo[hann]a	ww. joint	-	-	-	ww.		c
	WR1 p. 82	Stacey, Jackman	Joh[an]na	ww	-	1	-	ww./residue/ dowry to d.	c	c
1503	WR1 p. 97	Johnson, Baldwin	Isabella	ww. & s.	1	-	-	ww. & son/residue	c	C
	Black 3, 34-5	Browne, John	Margery	ww			*	ww. lands, tens & residue	c	C; K
1504	WR1 p. 197	Aylisby, Alice, ww. (m?	-	?	2?			ss/tens	C	c; F?
	WR1 p. 139	Bastyan, Elizabeth, ww.	-	ss.	2	-	-	eldest son/ possibly a minor		c
	WR1 p. 204	Benen, Adam	-		-	-	-	execs. (Agnes Start & priest)		c; S
	A p. 175	Pratt, Elizabeth, ww.		d & s.i.l.	?	1	-	dau. & son-in-law/res.		F.

Date	Source	Testator	Widow[er]	Executor	S.	D.	Ten.	Principal Heirs	Other Beq.
1505	WR1 p. 321-2	Berewyck, Matthew	Matilda	ww.				ww.	
	WR1 p. 230	Wotton, Richard	Anna	ww.	ss.	ds.	*	ww./for life; ss. & ds., £45 each	
1506	WR1 p. 289	Pyke, Thomas	Johanna	ww.				ww./residue/CR	C
	B 7	Mykelow, William	Alice	ww.	?	?		ww./all goods except small bequests	c
1508	E326/11790,98	Thomas, Thomas	Elizabeth	F & ww?	1	2	*	ww. all tens; to decide chn.'s inheritance	c; F.
	B 3	Brown, John	Alice	ww.			*	ww./all goods, house & contents	
1509	WR1 p. 309	Cotton, William (s.?)		F.				exec./res; clothes to friends	c
	B 6	Dent, Ralph	Johanna	ww.				ww./res.	c; F
	B 12	Greet, Emma	Ralph	priest			*	hsb./ lands & Tens & res.	c
	B 23	Maynard, Philip	Johanna	ww.	2			ww./residue; ss. 26/8d each	c; F
	WR1 p. 388	Mershe, Richard	Elizabeth	ww.		2?		ww./res; ds. 70s each	C
	B 42	Wattes, William	not named	w w				ww./ all goods except 2 items to f & br.	c
1510	WR1 p. 367	Baker(Lockyer), Adrian	Agnes	ww.	1	1		ww./ CR, then goods to chn.	c
	WR1 p. 371	Wattes, Henry (single)		friend				prior of St Denys/ res.	c
	B 22	Yevan, Thomas	Jackett	ww.	chn.	chn.		ww./ res (CR); chn/only if w. mar.	C
1512	B 7	Grete, Rawlyn	Alicia (w.2)	?	1		*	ww./then son	C; R; S
1513	Black 3, 64-9	Bisshop, Robert	Joan	ww.	3		*	ww for life/then s.	C
1514	B 20	Newbolt, Alice, ww.	-	mother			*	m./church/ sister and friends	c
1515	W u/c	Baylye, Thomas	-	priest?				small bequests	C
	B 18	Godfray, John	Katherine	w w	1	1?	*	ww/ kitchen, gdn & parlour; chn/£20 each	c
	B 19	Gohe (Gough), Richard	Margaret	?				ww./residue/small bequests	C
	B 38	Newman, Agnes, ww.	-	Thos. Mill			*	sis. & bro.-i-l/ dowry to female relative	c
	B 45	Russol, John	Johanna	w w				w w	C
1516	B 5	Colson, Isabel, ww.	-	s.?	1	1		s./ residue/ gifts to d. & friends	c
	B 9	de Heyen, John	not named	son.	1		*	son/ prop. in Antwerp	c
1517	B 34	Serle, William	Margery	w w	2	3		ww./bedding to all chn.	c
	B 38	Trenche, John	Johanne	ww & s.	ss.			ww. & s. /res.	c
	B43	Wyllyamson, Ric, priest,	HR	cousin				res. to cousin, John Wylyamson	c
1518	B /8	Boyar, John	Juliana	w w				ww./res.	

Date	Source	Testator	Widow[er]	Executor	S.	D.	Ten.	Principal Heirs	Other Beq.
1518	B 44	Westmyll, William	Agnes	w w				ww./ res. & debts	c
	B 45	Wright, Robert	Joan	w w				ww./ res. & big debt	c
1520	B 7	Burges, John	Margery	w w	1			ww./res; clothes to R; s./ 40s & bed.	c
1521	B 4	Benet, John	Elizabeth	w w				ww./res.; father/cloth	c
	B 15	Johnson, Rowland		d & s-i-l		1		d & s-i-l; g-chn £10 each	C; S; F;
	B 41	Williams, John	Agnes	w w		3		ww./res; ds./ bed & HH goods	c; S
1522	B 14	Carlyell, Robert	Joan	w w				ww./res.	c
	B 19	Grigg, Geoffrey	Alice	w w	1		*	ww./40s out of lands till son of age; son/lands	S
	B 38	Prysny, Matthew	Alice	w w	2			ss/ 40s each; ww/ res.	c
1523	B 27	Wyld, Joan, (s?)		priest				priest; 4d each to god-chn.	C
1524	B 2	Arche, Richard	Agnes	w w				ww.	c
	B 13	Bluet, Margery, ww.		d & s-i-l		1		d.& s-i-l./res; hh/ cousin (m)	c
	B 46	Jacson, Robert	not named	w w	1	1		ww/ res.	c
1525	B 19	Wreth, John	Elizabeth	w w				ww/res.	c
1526	B 9	Hechyns, John	Elizabeth	w w				ww/res. check	c
	B 13	Morner, Andrew	Elizabeth	ww.?	1			ww./res	c
1527	B 1	Atkyns, John	Chrystyan	w w				ww./res	c
1528	B 8	Bluet, Elizabeth		2F.				F.	c
	B 19	Flemyng, John	Sibill	ww.?	2			ww./ half moveables; res./ss.	c
1529	B 24	Maudy, John	not named	w w	1	2		ww./res	c
1530	B 11-2	Devenysse, Robert	Elizabeth	w w		1	*	ww./ then d./(dowry); rev to sis. & chn.	c
	B 241	Nichol, Mathew	Agnes	w w	?	?	* ?	ww./ res for life; then heirs	c
	B 43	Tanner, William	not named	w w	chn.	chn.	*	s./ten (C); £/4 chn. £/ ww res./ step-d./ cow	S
1533	D 321	Montuwe, Gilbert	dec.	F.				b./res; cousin/dowry.	F; S (f)
	D 354	Berrrill, Nicholas	dec.	sis. joint		1		sis & d. & s-i-l./res.	
	B 27	Peris, John	not named	?		2		d/ dowry; d.2 /silver; ww. /res?	
1534	B 11	Corrant, Thomas	Margaret	ww.	1			ww/res; s. £4	c
1536	B 32	Stonehard, Peter	?		1	?2	*	s. /shop & bedding; 2ds. or S?/dowry & £	C; S (2 f)?
1537	B 51	le Lyevre, Philip (s)		F.				execs./res.	C; S (f);women

Date	Source	Testator	Widow[er]	Executor	S.	D.	Ten.	Principal Heirs	Other Beq.
	B 40	Domer, John	Margaret	ww.		1	?	ww./ res; d./ dowry "on the day of marriage"	F
	B 70	Knygth, Luke	Agnes	?				?	
	B 83	Myllet, Robert	Joanna	ww.	1		*	sister, then s./ wife residence for life & res.	c
	B 16	Bryse, Robert	-	heir & m.				Henry Champeon	c
	B 54	Magis, William	Margaret	ss.	2		*	s/ten; ww./ dowry, £, domicile (CR); ss./res.	F; Gdchn.
1540	B 33	Gowrye, John	Jean	w w				ww./res; sister	F; S (3f)
	B 50	Kylbecke, John	Agnes	w w	2			ww/ res; ss. £; 3 gchn. £ until of age	c
	B 65	Pryvet, Japser	Alice	w w	chn.	chn.		ww/res; Os./gowns	C.
	B 80	Styonehard, Thomas	Olive	w w	3	2		ww/ res./ ss. £13 each; ds. £6 each	C
	WR. 2	Fleming	Isabelle	s?	1	3	*	s / Tens & £20; ww/ dowry, £, half gds; ds /£10;	C; F
1542	B 1543/27	Dey, Nicholas	Johanne (w2)	w w	2	3		ww/res, ten for life then s2; s/ ten; ds/£ on marriage;	c
	B1543/36	Gawyne, Peter	dec	s. & ?	1			s./ all T & res; fiance/ res. & w.'s clothes	P
	B 1342/40	Gylforde, John	Agnes	w w	1			ww/res & debts	
	B68	Perchard, John	Elizabeth	w w	2	2	*	ww/ res & ten for life (CR) then sons/chn. £	P
	B 87	Watterman, Henry	not named	ww.?				ww/res	
1543	1543/40	Hancock, William	Margery	w w				T/ barbers & app.	c; K
	U 90	Smythe, Alice (ww)	-	bro.				b/ res; nephew/ bedding	c
1545	B 36	Feverell, John	Anne	w w	1	1		ww/res & to make up debts; s & d/ £	C
	B 1544/44	Goldsmyth, Margaret	-	2F				execs/res; d/ £20 & dowry; K, F (f)/ clothing	P; C
	B 96	Jaxson, Robert	-	2F				execs/ res; god chn/£; S/ bedding (dowry)	F; K
	B 114	Lucet, William	Mabel	w w				ww. /res; bro. clothes	
1546	B 149	Ryche, Marian, ww.	-	son	1	?		s/ res; D or F?/ HH; small bequests to friends	F
	B 199	Vahan, Richard	Agnes	w w	3	1	*	s & d/ tens.; ww./ ten & farm for life then/ ss.	
1550	B 1551/57	Forward, Alice (s)		m?				m or F/hh goods	
	WR. 197 a	Medecave, Elizabeth,ww	-	s. & Os.	2	1	*	s./ land on m; d/ dowry & res;step-s./ f.' beq.	S

Published wills follow, see Roberts & Parker, Inventories.

Where inventories survive without accompanying wills, only those which give family details have been included.

Date	Source	Testator	Widow[er]	Executor	S.	D.	Ten.	Principal Heirs	Other Beq.
1544	U 97; Wr.4	Smith, Richard	dec.	ds		2		ds/ all goods	
1548	U 30-1	Forward, Walter	Elizabeth	w w	1	1	*	s/ ten at 20; d/£ ; ww./res inc T	
	U 38-9	Garnesay, Nicholas	Christian	w w	3	1	*	s/ house on age; ww/ res & ten till then; chn/stock; F;c	
	U 95-6	Pecock, Wiliam (s)	-	m			*	m/ all land left by father, other land and stock	
1549	U 127-9	Clark, Henry	Elizabeth	w w	chn	chn		ww/ res and half goods; chn;/ half goods	c
	B 95-6	Newton, John	single	god-d.				god d./ residue & rents owing	c; F
	B 1548/115-6	Stockdale, Richard	Alice	w w			*	ww/ remaining leases & res	c; p
1550	B 1549/2-3	Apryce, Robert	Margery(w2)	ww		(d)	*	ww/ lease fo life, then to d	K; F; P
	B 58	Forward, Elizabeth	ww. of Wm.					inventory only	
	U 124-5	Rocheford, John	Jane	w w	2	1		ww/ res; chn. £4 each	
	B125-6	Thomas, Sampson	Maude	w w		?	*	ww/ tens for life; then to d.?; S (f)/ dowry	P; F
1551	U 40-1	Cavell, Patrick	Julyan	w w	4	1		ww/ res; chn/ bedding, pots & £ on maj (ss) or mar (d); c	
	B 1550/84-5	Joysse, William	Jone	w w	2	0		ww/ res; s/ T & £	
	B 141-2	Weekes, Thomas	Eme	w w	3	3	*	ww/ houses for life & lease (CR: to son); s3 lease; res/ all; F	
1552	U 41	Hutton, Thomas	single	see *				all to poor at G.H. ministered by Joen Huttoft*	P
	B 133-4	Markant, Edward	Anne	d & s-i-l	?	1	*	d/ lease on the Star; ww/dowry; execs./res;	P; a £
1554	B 31a-b	Bishop, Edmund	Agnes	s.	1		*	w/shop. hh (rtn. dowry); s/ lease gdn, res; godchn; K; S; F; P	
	B 126-7	Harrison, Thomas	Annes	w w				ww/res; cousin (f)/dowry; app /£	P
	B 139-40	Huttoft, Thomas	not named	ss & ds	4	2		chn/ dowries or equivalent & res; ww/ hh goods; C; P	
1555	B 30-1	Goddard, Thomas	Ede	w w	5	2	*	s/£, leases, clothes; ss/ £ & cl. at 21; ds./£ on mar; c; S (m)	
	U 75-6	Hore, Denis	Catherine	w w	chn	chn	*	ww/ all lands & tens in Ireland for use with chn	
	U 102-3	Morrell, George	Agnes	w w		1		ww/ res; d/ dowry at m;	K; F; S?
	D2/A/1:13	Boke, Thomas		adm. s	1			inventory only	
	U 182-4	Leche, George	Margaret	adm. ww	"childe"			inventory only; £ to child	
	U 340-1	Note, Simon	Alys	w w	1			ww/ two thirds gds, res.; s. third at 21; F; K	
	U 645-6	Sparkes, Robert	Jane	w w	"chylder"			ww/res	c
	U 674-5	Sutton, Lawrence	single	F & S				execs - Agnes Prowse, S & parson/ res	c
	U 676	Swalo, John	Agnes	adm. ww				inventory only	
1558	B 6-7	Alporte, Raffe	Alice	w w		3	*	ww/ res & tens till ds. 14; 2ds/leases; ds/£	K; F; S: C; P

Date	Source	Testator	Widow[er]	Executor	S.	D.	Ten.	Principal Heirs	Other Beq.
	U 1559/5-6	Ameshin, Nicholas	(s)	F				none; small beqs to parishoners & kin (res.)	C; P;S (f)
	B 99-100	Bys, John	Joan	w w	1			ww/ res (pregnant); s/ £ at 21,Tr.	
	B 101-2	Byston, William	dec.	?	2	2		ss/ T; d2/res as dowry & wool; custody of Os.	
	B 119-20	Challys, Thomas	(s)	kinsman				exec & god-s/res	c
	B 135	Cook, Arthur	dec.	s.	1			s/ stock & res at age (custody Os), Tr; sis/stock: P	
	U 182-3	Cox, Alice	w w	ss	2			ss/ res. at 24 ; custody	F; c; P
	B 204/5	Elyn, John	Joan	w w				ww/res	c;
	U 133-4	Errington, Robert	Annes	ss	3	2	*	ss/ all; ww/ live in house (CR); ds/dowry on m; K; F	
	U 135-6	Evans, Robert	Elizabeth	w w	1	5?	*	s/farm at 21; ww/ house etc till chn. maj; ch/stock at age	
	U 147-8	Fleming, Thomas	Elizabeth	ww (m2)		2+	*	ww/part ship; house for life	F: app; S
	B 243-4	Gawin, Rowland	Katheryn	w w	2	1		ww/res inc T; chn /£ and small beq.	
	B 259-60	Gold, Henry	Margaret	w w	3	3	*	s/ lease after ww death; ww/ res; ss/£; ds £	c
	B 270-1	Grant, Nicholas	Elizabeth	w w	4	2	*	s/brewhouse; ww/ prop in Jersey	c
	U 208-9	Hawkins, Richard	Ellyn	ww (m2?)	1	4	*	ww (prgnant)/ten for life, then s; ds./£	c
	B 354-5	Kiere, Jasper	Made	w w				ww/res	C;P; K; gchn
	U 311-12	Mershe, Richard	Agnes	ww & s	1	2		ww/ ten.life, then s; d1/gdn; d2/small house;	c
	B 447-8	Myssick, Nicholas	dec.	chn	1	2		s/T; ds/£, T & dowry	K; F
	U 468-9	Note, Alice	w w	s	1			s/res; god-d/dowry	
	B 485-6	Parrett, Robert	Elizabeth	w w	1	3		ww/res; chn: spoon or ring & bedding	
	A 514	Prince, Thomas	Alice	w w	1			ww (pg)/res; s./£, bed & bedding at 20 & same to unborn chd	
	21M65/D3/96	Vouerte, John	not named	ww. (Adm)				inventory only	
1559	B 677-8	Vybard, John	Collett	ss	2		*	ww/ house, gdn (CR), £ & dowry; s/other house; ss; K res; c	
	U 7-8	Anderson, John	Elizabeth	w w	2	2		s/tT- s2 -ww; ds/£ dowry; app/ £ (C) serve ww/res; c; p;	
	U 76-7	Cornish, James	(s)	b.				Os/res; various beq./ god-chn; app & Mother H K; F; S (3)	
	B 286-7	Harrison, Charles	Agnes	F			*	ww/lease, plate, £60,iron; "student"/books; F; S; god-chn.	
	U 294-5	Le Neve, Nicholas	Agnes	w w	1	3	*	s/ T & shop (CB); ww/res; chn/small beq	
	U 353-4	Pyd, Margaret	ww.	s	1			?/farm lease; s/?	
	U 382-3	Rigges, Jane	ww. (w2)	d & gchn		2?	*	g-chn/ brewhouse & house; d.,g-chn/res; godchn; C; P; F; S	
	U'9/292-3;'8/41	Smith, John	dec. (w2)	chn	2	8		chn/res	

Date	Source	Testator	Widow[er]	Executor	S.	D.	Ten.	Principal Heirs	Other Beq.
1560	U 1560/270	Stavely, John	Joan	?	1	2	*	W & ch/ 4 parts; ww/lease, then s; chn/goods;	app to s; C; K
1562	21M65: D3/113	Etuer, Thomas	dec.					inventory only	
	B 53-4	Fletcher, John	Joan (m2)	ww	3	4	*	ww/ res; chn/goods at marriage; Fs. / prop	C; K;
	B 1561/75-6	Goddard, Henry	single	uncle				sisters/ £38 & £58 at mar; bs/debt; unle/res	C; P
1564	B 34-5	Christmas,William	dec.	s. & d	2?	1	b-h	res/ s. & d; d-i-l/hh goods; servants (3m,1f).	c; P; K; F
	B 74-5	Johnson, John	not named	d.		2	*	F/T & lease; ww &ds/sale of ship; all goods &	lease 2 to be so
	B 97-8	Lughting, John	Editha (m2)	w w	1	3		ww & chn/half goods to each; d1/ £	
	B 102-4	Morrell, William	s	?				various	C; K; F
	B 1-2	Aberie, Alice	ww. (m2)	s.	1	2		s/ gdn. gds & res; d/ gds; d2/dowry; S/dowry;	godchn; K; c
	B 39-40	Cockrell, Stephen	Elizabeth	ww & chn	chn.	chn.		w & chn/ £50 each & res; m & sis/£10 each	P
1565	B 35a-b	Cotton, John	Annys	w w		1	*	w/ house, gdn, ten & house (IOW)/ then d. & gd;	p.
	B 109-10	James, Annes	ww. (m2?)	b.?	s?		*	bs/ stock. lease; K & F: 26 bequests	S
	B 140-1	Messervye, Nowell	s	b			*	b/ house & res; 41 beq to K, F, godchn ; schools;	C; P
1566	1565/68-70	Mill, Thomas	Alice	b.			*	ww/ everything	
1567	B 133-4	Raynoldes, John	Elizabeth	w w	dec.?	1	*	ww/ lease & half goods; d. half goods on m	gdch; d-i-l
1568	B 159-60	Norton, John	Jone	w w		1		d./ large dowry; ww/ res.	P
1569	B 22-3	Boke, Andrew	Johan	w w	chn	chn		ww/ res. inc T, (CR)	
1570	B 1570/118-28	Edmondes, Thomas	Elin	ww.	6	7	*	ww/ for life; chn/£	P.
	B 1569/135-7	Lumberte, John	Jone	ww.	4	3	-	ww/ res; chn/£	c; p;
	B 296-7	Morley, John	Elizabeth	ww.	3	3		ww/res; chn/clothing	c; p;
	B 294-5	Morley, Elizabeth	ww. (John)	ss.			*	s/ farm; d.2/dowry	c; P; F; godchn
	B 308-9	Pace, Elizabeth	ww. (m2)	s.	1	4	*	s/lease; ds./clothing d 2 into care	c; F; gchn
	B 483-4	Wilmott, Edward	Margarett	ww.	1	3	*	ww/ for life, then s; ds. (inn?) & £ for life	c; Tr (s);
	B 483-4	Brodocke, John	Elyn	ww.	1		*	s/ ww. until s. 21, then to pay rent (CR)	C; P;
	Ad 12	Cooper, John	Alice	adm ww				inventory only	
	B 483-4	Demes, William	Agnes (m.2)	ww	dec?	(chn.)	*	ww/ for life & res; (T: nephew)	P; kin; S
	Ad 37	Fuller, James	dec.	2 men		2		estate to be sold for ds upbringing	
	Ad 31	Kyche, Andrew	Olive	Ad. ww				inventory only	
	B 483-4	Peerson, John	dec.	d & s.i.l	1	1	*	d. & s.i.l/ lease & Res; s. 13s	F or S. (f.)
1571	B 483-4	Record, Richard	Chrystyan	ww.		4	*	ww & ds./ equal share of lease & goods;	ww. till ds. 14.

Date	Source	Testator	Widow[er]	Executo	S.	D.	Ten.	Principal Heirs	Other Beq.
	B 1570/ 483-4	Reneger, John	Elizabeth	ww.	2	1	*	ww/ prop for life; s./ prop. each;	K; F; S (m & f)
	B 483-4	Vallet, William	Mary	ss.	2		*	ww/ hh goods, lease & orchard for life; ss./ res.	
	B 483-4	Weaste, John	dec.	s.	2	2		ss/ goods; ds/dowries; all res; chn: custody	S: m/f; godchn
1572	Ad 1570/7-8	Breame, Peter	dec	Adm ss./	2	2		inventory only	
	B 41:1-2	Hancock, Margery	ww.	fs.	-			execs., Catherine & Joan Warwick/ res & debts	
1573	B 483-4	Clark, John	Ellen	ww.				ww/res.	c.
	B 32:1-2	Coode, Richard	Mary	s-i-l	1	2		s/ ten; ww/hh gds.,ten & baking eqpt. till s. of age (CR); c; P	
	B 37: 1-2	Corle, Nicholas	Joane	w w				ww/ all goods	
	Ad 20	Maren, Branken de	Marjorie	ww. (Adm)				inventory only	
	A 25: 1-2	Gobbes, Gregory	Marye	?		1	*	ww. & d/ share lease & goods	c
	B 58: 1-2	Goddard, Richard	Sysley	ww & 2d.		4	* ?	ww/ rents & £; ds./£ (CB on m.); (ww/preg,)	S (m; 1, Tr)
	B 58: 1-2	Howse, Reynold	Jane	w w		2	*	ww/ life then ds; ds/£; S: a with ww.	C; P
	B 75: 1-2	Huttoft, Annes	single?	F.				all goods to be sold to pay debts	
	B 093: 1-2	Morley, Thomas	Elizabeth	w w	1			ww & s/ half goods each; ww. s's till 20 (CR)	c
	B 58: 1-2	Sende, Robert	dec.	f-i-l			*	f. & m.-i-leases; s-i-l/£	c: K; P;
	Ad 27	Stevens, Christopher	Elizabeth	ww. (Adm)				inventory only	
	Ad 29	Stryde, Richard	Joan	ww. (Adm)				inventory only	
	Ad 30	Votier, Robert	Margaret	ww. (Adm)		1		inventory only	
1574	Ad 19	Hodgson, John	single?					inventory only	
	Ad 20	Hurlock, John	Jane	ww. (Adm)				inventory only	
	B 120: 1-2	Nutley, Christopher	Elizabeth	?				ww (pregnant)/res;	c; p; K
	B 135: 1-2	Prouting, Edmund	Alyce	w w	1	2		ww & chn/ half each; ww/custody of chn	c
	B 184: 1-2	Williams, Laurence	"my wife"	ss	2		*	ww/ hh goods, ten & rents (CR) & ss./ prop;	Tr; K; F; S; P; C
1575	B 006: 1-2	Austen, Thomas	Jane	w w			*	ww/ res & lease (CR); then nephew	K;S; F; P; c
	Ad 13	Barrat, William	Jane	ww. (Adm)				inventory only	
	B 16: 1-2	Davidson, John	Elizabeth		chn	chn.		ww/ all goods	
	Ad 22	Follyatt, William	Joan	ww. (Adm)				inventory only	
	B 048: 1-2	Mariner, Lewes	dec. ?	s	1	1		s. /res; cow, bees, hh. goods to s-i-l	
	B 057: 1-2	Nutley, Richard	Anes	w w	5			ww/ third res, all for life, then ss; cousin/dowry (CB);	c; P
	B 076: 1-2	Raystrick, Richard	Marie (m.2)	ww. & d	dec.?	1		ww & d / res & rings; T: drays etc to porters	c; p

APPENDIX 2
Identification of woolpackers

Key

(I)	identified in another source
(S)	surname exists within same time-frame
(T)	tenant of town
(W)	man with same surname worked for the town
(1,2,3,4,5)	list in which woman is included; they date, roughly to each decade from 1502 (1) to 1554 (5).

Bayle, (Beyle) Elizabeth (2 & 3) (I & W?)
Contributed 5d to the building of the Bulwarks in 1521, SC 5/1/32 fo. 14/5. Maybe one of the few wool packers belonging to a burgess family, sharing a surname with Gervase Bailey, listed in 1524 Lay Subsidy and admitted burgess 1530, PRO E 179/173/175; SC3/1/3, fo. 64v. Not the widow of John Bailey, tenant of town in 1508-9, SC5/1/27a.

Blankpayne, Joan (1 & 2) (W)
Wife or daughter of John Blankpayne, town scavenger, 1469; town sergeant , 1469 & 1472-3, SC 5/1/12, fos. 22 & 41 & SC5/1/14, fo. 21.

Blast, Alis (4)
no data

Bright, Marian (3) (S)
Related to (?) Thomas Bright, tenant of God's House, 1501-10, *G.H.C.*, pp.300-1; replaced by Agnes Pewterer.

Burges, Elizabeth (1, warden) (T)
Tenant of town, 1500-1, SC5/1/25, fo. 4 & 30; also named as Isabell .

Burton, Johanna (5) (W)
Related to ? Robert Burton, listed for stall and art in 1549, and appointed horse-hirer by the town with 18 other men in 1558: SC6/1/1, *3rd R.B.*2, p. 61, and n.

Byshoppe, Dyne (5) (W?)
May have been related to John Byshoppe who worked for the town as a labourer in 1557-8, SC 5/1/42, fo.15.

Cobley, Johanne (4) (I & W)
Widow of Roger Cobley, forgiven rent for poverty in 1452-3, SC 5/1/40, fo. 63; Roger listed in Lay Subsidy, 1524, town gunner in 1527-34: PRO E 179/173/175, *3 rd R.B.* 1, p.41.

Crystan, Johan (1)
no data

Deye, Edith (1)
Possibly the same woman as Elizabeth, otherwise no data.

Deye, Elizabeth (2 & 3) (T?)
As Mistress Deye, tenant of town in 1542-3, and forgiven a debt of her husband's in the same year, SC5/1/40, fos.10, 15 & 11.

Durrant, Margaret, (1 & 2) (S & T?)
Sister? of Elizabeth, tenant of town, 1507-9, SC5/1/26, fos. 2 v & 5v; SC5/1/27a, fo. 3b.

Elyot, Jone (1) (S)
no data, replaced by Jone Blankpayne.

Frackley, Alicia (5) (S)
Related to ? Harye Freckle, creditor of Arthur Cook, 1558, *Inventories*, p.94.

Garnesay, Emma a (3) (W?)
A John Garnesay appears twice in the records for this period, working as a labourer for the town, SC5/1/23, fo. 15. However, given the requirement for a good and honest demeanour, Emma may not have been his wife, as she was fined for "yll rule wt anoter man" in 1522-3, SC 5/3/1, fo. 51v. Robert Gareneasy supplied the town with wood in 1513-14, SC5/1/31, fos 38 & 64. Emma is not mentioned in the the will of Nicholas Garnesay, farmer of St Mary's, 1548, *Inventories*, p, 18.

Gustas, Kateryn (4)
no data

Gydon, Welthion (5) (S)
Possibly related to William Gwydon listed for Stall & Art 1549, and to Alis Gwydyn, assaulted by James Pruett in 1553-4; SC6/1/6, SC5/3/1, fo. 70v.

Hert, Elyn (1 & 2) (I & W)
Named as the wife of John Hart (sic) when she was fined for "misbehavying herself amon her company", SC 5/1/36, fo 15. An Elyn Hert was also listed among the first inmates of the poor house in 1552, SC 10/1/1; John worked for the town, SC5/1/25a, 1500-1.

Hoile, Christian (3 & 4, warden)
no data

Hollowey, Sibill (5) (S)
May have been related to Agnes Hollweye , widow of the porter William, forgiven rents because of poverty in 1542-3, SC 5/1/40 fo.64; William appears a porter in 1524 Subsidy Assesment. Annes & Elizabeth Holoway were left bequests by Peter Stonehard, HRO B wills 1536/32.

Hugge, Johanna (3)
May be the same person as Johanna Pyke, as "Hugge" is deleted, and "Pyke" inserted; but as Johanne is a common name, they were probably two different women. The surname Hugges/Houghes does not appears until 1561-2, see SC 5/1/43. Maybe she was just a very large woman.

Hutton, Elizabeth (4) (S)
A John Hutton was the apprentice of James Cornish (d.1559), *Inventories*, p. 141.

Huys [Hulse], Kateryn de (2 & 3, warden twice) (S)
Possibly "Mother Howse" noted in the will of James Cornish, *Inventories*, p. 141.

Inglett, Agnes (4) (W)
Her husband (?) John Ynglett supplied the town with victuals in 1539-40 and was killed in an explosion on board a ship in the port in 1542-3; SC5/1/39, fo.19, SC 5/1/40, fo. 40.

Jackson,"the wife of Robert "(2) (W)
Wife (*uxor*) of Robert Jackson, burgess (?), porter, tenant of town (1512-14), water-bailiff (1518-19), and packer, died by 1524, *3rd R.B.* 1, p. 39 & n. 1; see also packer in 1514-24, SC 5/1/31-3.

Knight, Johanne (3-5, warden, 4-5) (S??)
Possibly (???) wife of William Knight, burgess, steward 1546-7, water bailiff 1547-8, collector of customs; no reference to his wife in any conveyances, see *3rd R.B.* 1, p. 60 & n.1, *Black* 3, pp. 129-30.

Luke, Johanna (2 & 3)
Several families with this surname exist, but no match can be identified, see SC 4/3, 1500; *G.H.C.*, p.248; *Inventories,* p. 254, 1566.

Malage, Joan (1) (I & W)
Possibly "Malache's wife" whom the porter James Rutt attacked in 1498-9; A carpenter and labourer, Malage was a tenant and worked for the town in 1481-2; SC 5/3/1 fo.21v, SC5/1/17, fos. 6 & 49; William Mallage contributed 6d to the Bulwarks in 1521-2; SCSC 5/1/32, fo.14/1.

Maior, Margareta (5) (I)
Probably Mary Maior who married Gregory Gobbes in 1553, PR7/1, 1552.

Medley, Alis (3 & 4) (S)
Replaced Agnes Walis. Wife? of the baker Robert Medley who contributed 6d to the Bulwarks in 1521-2, and was listed in Lay Subsidy, 1524, SC5/1/32, fo.14/6, PRO E 179/173/175.

Mevsycke, Margaret (5) (S)
Margaret Mevsyke (5) may have been a member of the Channel Islands families living in Southampton. In 1556 Nowell Messervye left £13 6 s 8d to his niece Margaret Messvy, *Inventories*, p. 240, HRO B wills 1566/140-1.

Moleys, Gilmyn (1 & 2)
no data, replaced Mercy Senlow.

Moyne, Emme (4) (S)
A John Moyne was listed in Lay Subsidy, 1524, PRO E 179/173/175.

Person, Darlina (5) (S?)
Wife or widow? of John Peers, Steward, 1524-5, SC5/1/33.

Pewterer, Agnes (3 & 4) (I ,W & T)
Employed to cook for the town in 1539-40, and compensated for kitchen utensils stolen from her, SC6/1/39, fos. 19-21.With the ww. of John George, forgiven 11d rent by the town in 1542-3, SC5/1/40, fo. 64; probably the ww. of John Pewterer listed for tax in *c.* 1500 and supplied solder and worked on the Audit House in 1526-6, SC14/2/1, SC5/1/34, fos 47-8. Replaced Marion Bright.

Pyke, Joanna (3) (I)
Town chandler between 1507-9, *1st R.B,* p.110; possibly widow of Thomas Pyke.

Roo, Alys (1 & 2) (S)
Wife of ? Richard Roo who contributed 6d to Bulwarks in 1521-2, SC5/1/32, fo14/1.

Rouse, Margaret (5) (S)
Widow ? of Richard or William Rouse, listed in Lay Subsidy, 1524, PRO E 179/173/175.

Senlow, Mercy (1) (W)
Wife? of Robert Senlow, packer 1487-8, SC5/1/22, fo. 2; assessed for tax as Seyntlow, c. 1500; SC 14/2/1, fo.1r. Replaced Gilmyn Moleys.

Sherd, Alice (1) (S)
Other members of the Sherd family appear in conveyances in 1460s; and in 1490-5; SC4/2/296 & 301-2, *GHC*, p.335.

Slate, Margaret (5)
no data

Sparke, Joanna (5) (I)
Probably Jane, later widow and executor of Robert Sparkes, cooper, (d. 1557), *Inventories*, p. 78, HRO U wills 1557/645-6.

Staly, Elizabeth (4) (S, W?)
Wife? of John Staly, listed for stall and art in 1549, SC5/1/40, fo. 64, SC6/1/1, fo. 3v. Possibly the same man as John Staly forgiven debts on his casualty book in 1561-2, SC 5/1/40, fo.64.

Staynour, Crystan (1-3, warden) (S, W?)
The longest standing wool packer. Daughter or wife of Richard Steynour, asssesed for local tax around 1500, SC14/2/1 or of Nicholas Steynour tenant of Gods' House in 1502-4, *G.H.C*, p.335.

Staynour, Johanne (1) (S)
Mother or sister of Crystan?

Stoddard, Johanne (4) (W)
Wife? of William Stoddard, one of four packers who, in 1542-3, were forgiven 20s. debts as they were "unable to raise it", SC5/1/40, fos. 2 & 62.

Taylour, "the wife of Thomas" (1 & 2), (S)
A Thomas Taylour was listed in the 1524 Lay Subsidy, 1524 PRO E 179/173/175. Replaced Alice Sherd.

Taylour, Jone (2) (S?)
Possibly the same woman as above; deleted, and replaced by Johanna Luke.

Thomlyn, Elisabeth (1& 2, warden?).
no data

Walis, Agnes (3) (W)
Wife ? of Philip Walshe (sic), one of four packers who, in 1542-3, were forgiven 20s. debts as they were "unable to raise it", SC5/1/40, fo.2. Replaced by Alis Medley.

Westely, Margaret (5) (T)
Tenant of town,1533-4, SC5/1/38 fo. 38.

Young, Maud (1& 2) (I)
Traded in fish in 1504, *1st R.B* 1, p. 23; possibly widow of Edmonde Yong, tenant of the town in 1491, SC2/1/4, fo.10v.

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now Southampton City Archive Services

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SC 3/1/1	Admissions of Burgesses, 1496-1704
SC 4/1/1	Terrier of Town Lands, 1495
SC4/2/1-	Miscellaneous property deeds 1275 -
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SC5/3/1	Mayor's Account Book/Book of Fines, 1488-1594
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SC 6/2	Stall & Art Roll, 1535
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SC 15/17/1-	Scavage Books, 1547 -
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Winchester Diocese & Archdeaconry

HRO W.R. 1	Will Register
HRO A wills	Archdeaconry Court, Wills, Administration & Inventories
HRO B wills	Consistory Court, Wills, Administration & Inventories
HRO U wills	Unclassified, Wills, Administration & Inventories
HRO 21 M65 C/1-	Consistory Court Books, 1531-

1.3 Public Records Office

C 1 (ECP)	Early Chancery Proceedings
E 122	Customs Accounts 13c -16c
E 179	Subsidy Rolls
E 179/173/-	Inquisitions as to aliens
E 301	Augmentation Office
E 372/MS 3333	Pipe Rolls
PROB 11	Registered Copy Wills, 1383-1858
PROB 12	Register Books : indexes to wills, 1383 -1858
SC 6	Ministers' and Receivers Accounts
SC 11/596	St Denys Rent Roll, 1446

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G.H.Deeds	God's House Deeds

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